GUIDE TO THE SV3 HAITI FILE

[The SV3 Haiti file is concerned with the French-speaking people of the République d'Haiti, which occupies the western third of the island of Hispaniola in the Caribbean. The material in the file is mainly concerned with the Haitian-Creole-speaking peasantry during the present century. However, a good deal of material is presented on Haitian history and on the development of the national government, particularly in 3: Leyburn. The peasantry are primarily agricultural, being dependent on maize agriculture for their daily subsistence, but also growing sugarcane, cotton and coffee.

There are three sources in the file, all of them basic. All of them are written by American anthropologists who have done field work on the island. 3: Leyburn is the most general volume, giving an excellent overview of the island's cultural and political development. While the basic text is somewhat out of date, having been published in 1941, Sidney Mintz in his introduction brings it up to date through 1965 and elucidates some of Leyburn's arguments in so doing. 1: Herskovits is a study of peasant life in the district of Mirebalais in central Haiti in 1934, concentrating on religion, but also bringing in general social and economic descriptions. 2: Courlander presents a detailed description of Haitian religion and folklore. While there are only three sources in the file, they do present

a good picture of Haitian life and culture and the file should be adequate for most comparative purposes. Researchers should note that only the Mirebalais material is localized in time and space, while the data in the other sources have a shifting focus. The file was processed between 1966 and 1970.]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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INTRODUCTION

THE VALLEY OF MIREBALAIS

THE TRAVELER comes suddenly on the valley of Mirebalais, as the road from the capital turns the shoulder of a hill. Long and narrow, the plain stretches before him with its many tones of green. Ahead is the village from which the valley takes its name, its metal roofs aglow in the sunlight, or reflecting the gray sky of the rainy season. Here and there appears a yellow, muddy slash made by the Artibonite River, while framing the valley are the mountains, rising one behind another as they complete its encirclement. 133 361

This first glimpse of the country gives no hint of a numerous population. It is as though this valley, like so many other things in Haiti, had set out to belie its own reality and, in this impression, at the very outset to point the lesson that the observer must seek well beneath the surface if he is to attain any understanding of the country and its people. For just as the unsettled appearance of this Haitian valley conceals numerous habitations, cultivated fields, and hard-working inhabitants, so the frenzy of Haitian religious rites is but a gloss upon disciplined ceremonialism, and the relatively placid everyday existence of the Haitian peasant but a mask behind which is waged a spiritual conflict that is his heritage from the dual sources of his traditions. 121

The commune of Mirebalais is situated in the heart of central Haiti. Lying some thirty-five miles from Port-au-Prince, 101 361 [191]

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both town and district are bisected by the main route between the capitals of the Haitian and the Dominican republics. Yet, once again, this geographical nearness but distorts the psychological distance between Mirebalais and the metropolis. For though the busses, converted from camions, pass to and from the coastal city several times a week, the valley and even the town which is its center drowse in essential isolation. A few hundred yards off the main road find the Haitian peasant following the mode of life of his forebears, oblivious of events outside the valley. Only for a few of the *notables* of the town, the *gros nègres*, who have personal, political, or business contacts with Port-au-Prince, is the comparative proximity to the capital meaningful.

It is not possible to say how long this valley has been inhabited. Certainly the early Indians roamed there; and there, as in other parts of the island of Hispaniola, the tragedy of their extinction under the brutality of early Spanish rule must have taken place. Moreau de St. Mery, to whom all students of Haiti must acknowledge a debt of gratitude for his painstakingly accurate reports of life on the island, gives the derivation of its name.

> "Mirebalais received its name," he says, "because of the enormous numbers of wild animals the first Frenchmen found there, which recalled to them the small district in the region of Poitou [in France], called Mirebalais, where some of them had probably first seen the light of day. These quadrupeds, first introduced by the Spaniards, had no difficulty in multiplying there after the Indians had disappeared from their native land and the Spaniards, reduced in numbers, were obliged to abandon the great plains, so that horses, cattle, etc. came to exercise exclusive domain."[1]

St. Mery's work, which traces the development of Mirebalais as one of the parishes of pre-Revolutionary Haiti, makes it

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 equaled the demand for them; in 1791 the census listed half a million
24 then living, but no writer seems to have even a vague idea of how
567 many millions were imported during the sixty years of the colony's heyday.

175 Production, particularly of sugar and coffee, steadily increased until the tiny colony ranked among the wealthiest regions of the
245 world. The Spanish Indies were declining, so that Saint-Domingue
249 alone far outranked them all combined between 1766 and 1791.
433 Splendid roads were built, extensive irrigation projects developed,
511 and stately mansions erected. Life moved along with ceremony and
565 display—for the planters; attended by their black lackeys, the white French masters entertained royally or were driven like lords in their coaches to make formal visits to neighbors. Many of these well-to-do colonials spent half their time in Paris, ostentatiously spending their riches. To be "wealthy as a Creole" came to be a common expression in France.[1] Perhaps nowhere in the Americas was existence at once so delightful and so ornamental as it was for the wealthy planters among the 36,000 whites of Saint-Domingue in 1791.

175 For the mother country, too, this small bit of tropical land was profitable during the latter days of Bourbon royalty. Neither Mar-
439 tinique nor Guadeloupe could compare with it in value. In 1789
505 nearly two thirds of the foreign commercial interests of France
648 centred in Saint-Domingue; its combined exports and imports were valued at more than $140,000,000; its sugar, coffee, indigo, and cotton supplied the home market and employed in prosperous years more than 700 ocean-going vessels, with as many as 80,000 seamen.[2]

175 Where wealth exists, social distinctions generally develop. In Saint-Domingue the evolving class system produced such discord
565 that sparks from the French Revolution eventually set off an explo-
669 sion in the colony. Casual surveys of Haitian history generally record that in 1791 the slaves revolted, and that out of this insurrection grew the war of independence. This is true; but it was not the resentment of slaves against their masters which caused the final explosion; the
175 slaves were tinder used by others to keep the conflagration burning.
565 Negro slaves, of course, did not figure in the "class" system; they
[567] were below the classes of colonial society. The class system, properly

[101] 1. The word "creole" means only "colonial born"; there is no connotation of race mixture in the term.

2. Pamphile de Lacroix, *Memoires*, II, 277.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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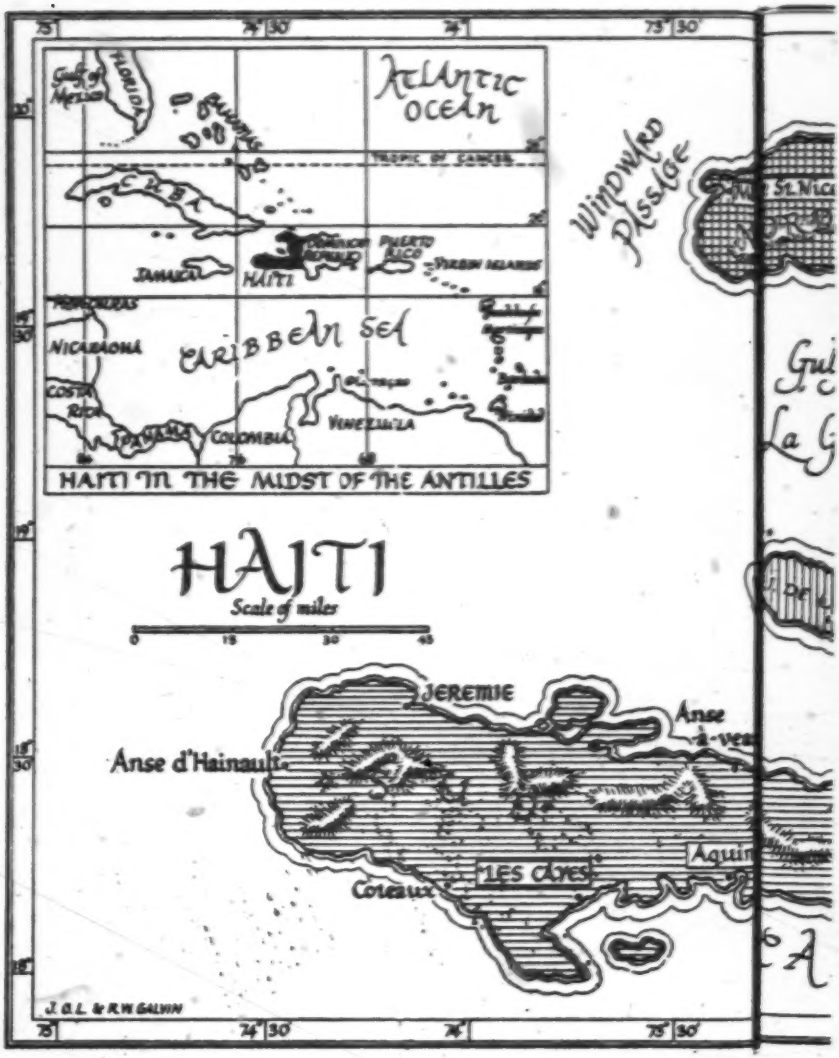

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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steps to "feed" his *loa* in order to satisfy it, for it is more important to give offerings to the spirits than to dance for them. He therefore either quietly prepares a sacrifice of cereals and liquor in his own room or sends money home so that his *loa* may be "fed" at the family habitation, and his absence explained to it.[21]

When *vodun* deities are discussed in Mirebalais, most often two "companies" of them are mentioned, the Rada and the Pétro "squads." In one list of gods that was obtained, the word *Rada*, derived from the name of the ancient principality of Allada in Dahomey, called forth the explanation "*qui veut dire Dahomey* — which is to say, Dahomey," though it should be made clear that neither the words *Rada* nor *Dahomey* are any longer recognized in Haiti as place-names, being today simply qualifying designations of *loa*. There are regional differences in the number and ranking of other categories of gods that hold no important place in Mirebalais. The existence of these other categories is, of course, well known, and one person referred to "the seventeen and twenty-one classes of *loa*," of which, however, only the following were named: Rada, Pétro, Dahomey, Guinée, Congo, Nago, Ibo, and Wangol. Of these the Congo and the Ibo gods are well known, though their worship is chiefly restricted to individual families, while the Nago and Dahomey categories, though significant from the point of view of indicating African origins, are most commonly grouped under the term *Rada*. Guinée also occasionally figures in worship as carried on in individual families, but this term is more often understood as a general designation for all *loa* outside the Rada, Nago, Congo, and Ibo groupings and for certain Pétro gods. Wangol derives from the geographical entity Angola.

From comparatively early times the impression has been given that certain of these classes of gods perform only good, and others evil. Nothing could be further from the truth than this attempt to read European concept into Haitian ideology,

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In every commune recognized by the state was an important

official appointed by the president—the *juge de paix*. The term has little relation to our "justice of the peace." It implies rather the function performed by the old English country squire, who often by his prestige managed to patch up differences between neighbors without allowing matters to come to an issue, but who if the issue were joined sat as judge. The decision of the judge was final in all civil matters up to fifty dollars—and the case was rare in which peasants dealt in affairs as large as this. In the more populous communes (those containing large villages or towns) the juge de paix was more impersonal. He might render decisions, subject to appeal, in cases up to a hundred dollars. All minor police cases came within the province of this official, whose judgment was final in matters up to a twelve-dollar fine or a jail sentence of five days. All criminal cases began with this judge, but those of the gravest sort were speedily sent to higher courts. 632 693

By and large rural Haiti got along with a minimum of civil government, and urban Haiti was governed much as a small provincial town of the nineteenth century. 369 64

Several communes made an arrondissement, another political subdivision with a distinct military cast. Through most of her history Haiti had an average of about twenty of these arrondissements, each of them presided over by an army officer of high rank appointed by the president. In arrondissements containing important capitals a general, in lesser ones a brigadier-general, exercised both military and civil authority. This man was the medium through which the central government made known its decisions and laws. Because life could be tedious in a dull country town, in a district full of peaceful peasants, many of the generals spent their time in reflecting upon the chances of a successful insurrection which might make them important in national affairs. As already noted, the standard of discipline in the army was never very high, so that the presiding officer of an arrondissement might have a real sinecure if he was not ambitious.[1] 631 701

1. The military arrondissement always bore the name of the principal town or village within its borders. The following list shows the important places during the time of Boyer: [631] [701] [103]

In the department of the North there were five arrondissements: Cap-Haïtien, Grande-Rivière, Marmelade, Port Liberté, Limbé.
In the Northwest, three: Port-de-Paix, Cap Nicolas Môle, Le Borgne.
In the Artibonite, three: Saint-Marc, Gonaïves, Mirébalais.
In the West, three: Port-au-Prince, Jacmel, Léogane.
In the South, five: Les Cayes, Jérémie, Aquin, Tiburon, Nippes.

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175 recognition to the kingdom specifically failed to pay him proper
439 respect. Moreover he seized the property of American merchants in
648 his kingdom to make good a sum of $123,955.19 he could not recover from a Baltimore firm.[6] Agriculture flourished in the North, but the English were not yet certain whether Haitian credit could be trusted. The demand of the traders for cash was allowed, and so with almost no risk British dealers supplied the steady demand for staple trade goods,[7] taking in return either coffee and sugar or the equivalent in cash.

175 Christophe was chary of publishing any specific figures on the
439 economic life of his kingdom: we have no way, therefore, of estimating either the annual production or the annual income. One of his statesmen, Baron de Vastey, affirmed that in 1817 more than 150 ships were supplied with cargoes of coffee and sugar at the Cape alone.[8] This number is equal to that which sailed from the port during its most peaceful and prosperous periods in colonial times; one suspects the baron of exaggerating. We know, however, that Christophe was the chief merchant in his kingdom, setting his own prices and disposing of his own goods before others could sell; we know, too, that he left a large fortune in his coffers when he died.

175 Like Dessalines, King Henry Christophe had his pirates, and re-
579 doubtable ones. But he warned them to prey only on French ships
439 bound for ports in Pétion's republic in the South; he did not wish his trade interfered with in the North.

The policies of Dessalines and Christophe were personal, based upon their subjective prejudices and preferences; those of Pétion were more in accord with the practice of other civilized nations of the time. They had to be, perforce, in view of the economic and political position of his republic.

175 Southern Haiti had never, even in colonial times, been so intensely
439 cultivated as the North. Foreign traders were accustomed to deal at
648 the Cape, now the capital of Christophe's dominion, while Port-au-Prince was but a secondary market. After the civil war Christophe had practically allied himself with Great Britain. If this coup were to be counterbalanced, Pétion would have to choose for allies among

6. See Ludwell L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938*, p. 48.

7. Christophe did not encourage his people to purchase any of the extravagantly rich manufactures of Europe, but rather to keep their wants simple.

8. Formerly Cap François, then Cap-Haïtien, but under Christophe renamed in his
[103] honor Cap-Henry; it is now Cap-Haïtien.

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104 GLOSSARY--definitions of native terms frequently used in the sources; orthographies and transliteration systems. See also:

Word lists and vocabulary. 108

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APPENDIX III

NOTES ON THE TEXT

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(Citations to sources give only the last name of the author, and a large roman numeral in parentheses following a name indicates that more than one title published by this writer has been used as a reference; as: "Dorsainvil (II)." Volume numbers of works in more than one volume are indicated by small roman numerals; as: "St. Mery, ii." The arabic numerals which follow are page designations.)

INTRODUCTION

[1] St. Mery, ii, 229.
[2] Ibid., 238–9; Charlevoix, ii, 414–22.
[3] St. Mery, loc. cit.
[4] Ibid., ii, 237–8.
[5] Stoddard, Ch. X, XII.
[6] Edwards, iii, 84.
[7] St. John, 41–2; Ardouin, 20–1; de Vaulx, 367.
[8] Mackenzie, ii, 122.
[9] Dorsainvil (II), 100–11.
[10] Mackenzie, ii, 111–15.
[11] Dorsainvil (II), 204–5; Mackenzie, ii, 67.
[12] Furnished through the courtesy of M. Jacques Antoine, of the Legation of Haiti in Washington.
[13] Davis, 218–23; also occasional comments in Craige and Wirkus.
[14] St. Mery, ii, 243–4.

CHAPTER I

[1] Charlevoix, ii, 498–9.
[2] St. Mery, i, 23 ff.
[3] Ibid., i, 34.
[4] Ibid., i, 28–34.
[5] This has been remarked by Dorsainvil (I), 155; see also Herskovits, M. and F. (IV), 117–35.
[6] Cf. Herskovits (II), *passim*.
[7] Cf. Herskovits, M. and F. (I), *passim*.

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APPENDIX IV

GLOSSARY OF CRÉOLE TERMS USED IN THE TEXT

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NOTE: The orthography employed in this book to render Créole terms has retained French spelling except where this is confusing to the English-speaking reader (so that, for example, *oué*, "to see," from *voir* is written *wé*, and *ouanga*, "evil charm," given as *wanga*), or where obvious African derivation makes phonetic spelling desirable (as *vodun*, "voodoo," instead of *voudou*; or *hungan*, "priest," instead of *houngan*). In such cases, vowels have the so-called "Continental" values.

acansan, an African dish which figures in offerings to the *loa* as well as in the Haitian cuisine.

açon, calabash rattle used in sacred dances.

action de grâce, a ritual comprising prayers and hymns of the Catholic Church which precedes any service for the gods of the *vodun* cult.

adjanikon, a male initiate in the *vodun* cult; also pronounced *unjanikon*.

adoration, song sung at *vodun* rites or ceremonies of the cult of the dead when offerings of money are given the officiant.

arrêt, a magic charm to ward off evil; see *drogue, garde*.

asagwe, a figure in *vodun* dances saluting the gods.

avalou, a dance of the *vodun* cycle marked by pronounced movements of arm- and shoulder-muscles; also pronounced *yanvalou*.

azeto, a witch or werewolf; see *loup-garou, mauvaise aire*.

baguette, drumstick.

baigneur des morts, the functionary who bathes the dead and watches over the body.

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104 *baka*, an evil spirit actuated by a *loa* which commonly takes the form of some animal when carrying misfortune to the one against whom it has been directed; an evil spirit who acts as emissary for the one who has entered into a compact with it; see *engagement*.

bal, name for any European type of dance.

bamboche, generic term used to denote a recreational dance; often employed in Mirebalais to designate a serious *vodun* dance by those whose only participation in it is social.

banda, an African type of social dance.

barrière, an entrance-way; the guardian of the *barrière* is Legba.

basilique, a tree whose leaves are used in making infusions employed for medico-magical purposes.

bassin, a deep pool in a stream, the favorite residence of water-spirits.

bocor, practitioner of magic.

bois, tree; also called *pié' bra*.

borné, to "restrain"; the action taken to prevent a malign spirit from inflicting harm on the person or family to whom it has come.

bossal, wild, untamed, unbaptized; used particularly for any spirit or object in the *vodun* cult prior to its consecration.

boucan, bonfire; the designation "buccaneer" derives from this word.

bula, the smallest of the trio of *vodun* drums.

caille, house; *caille mystères*, house where gods of the *vodun* cult are worshipped.

calebasse, a gourd; an African type of social dance.

calenda, an African type of social dance.

canarie, earthenware jar; *loa nan canarie*, the spirit of an ancestor rescued "from under the water."

caplata, a minor practitioner of magic, good or bad; employed as a term of derision.

cérémonie, a complex of rituals of the *vodun* cult; see *service*.

chef d'esquade, a man at whose behest others come to do co-operative agricultural labor.

chewal, *ch'wal*, horse; idiomatically, the devotee of a *loa*: the deity "mounts" his "horse" when possession occurs.

clairin, raw rum.

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combite, co-operative work-group; similar to but not as formally organized as the Société Congo of other portions of Haiti. 1024

commère, godmother; a term of derision for male homosexuals.

compère, godfather.

Congo, region of Africa, the name of which, in Haiti, is used for a "company" of *vodun* deities; name of a social dance.

connaissance, knowledge of curing and the control of supernatural forces conferred on their devotees by certain *vodun* deities.

coup de main, a small co-operative work-group.

couvert sec, minor offerings to *vodun* deities which do not include any animal sacrifices; synonym for *mangé sec*.

Créole, native to Haiti; applied to gods, human beings, and plants.

Dahomey, an African kingdom; in Haiti, name given *vodun* deities.

démon, evil spirit; male counterpart of *loup-garou*.

dernière prière, final prayer for the dead, which is made nine days after the funeral. See *novena*.

directeur, one who supervises the work of a *combite*.

dosu, the child born after twins.

drogue, a powerful magic charm which protects its owner against all inimical forces falling in a specific category, such as war or arrest. See *garde*, *arrêt*.

engagé, bondsman; white man who in pre-Revolutionary times repaid passage to Haiti by working for a given number of years on a plantation.

engagement, compact entered into between a man and a supernatural power, which binds him to fulfill exacting obligations in return for a fixed reward; always a matter of evil magic.

farine Guinée, "flour of Africa" — powdered ash used in *vodun* rites.

gammelle, a large wooden vessel used in preparing and serving food.

gangan, an important *vodun* priest; also pronounced *n'gan*.

garde, protective charm, operative in specific cases. See *arrêt*, *drogue*.

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104 *gourde,* unit of Haitian currency, at one time the equivalent of the French franc, and now stabilized at twenty cents United States currency.
Guinée, Africa.

habitant, peasant.
habitation, farm, plantation; center of relationship group.
haut chant, song saluting a *vodun* deity, usually of the warrior group.
humfort, " temple " of a *vodun* priest.
hungan, priest of the *vodun* cult.
hunsi, initiate in the *vodun* cult.
huntôr, spirit of the *vodun* drums.

Ibo, an African tribe of eastern Nigeria whose name has been given a group of *vodun* deities.
image, chromolithograph of a Catholic saint.

job, word taken from English to indicate a task one is paid to perform.
jok (*mal jok*), evil eye.

kanzo, ordeal by fire; *hunsi kanzo,* a member of the *vodun* cult who has passed through this ordeal.
kembe, to seize, to harass; used of a supernatural power or of the dead.
koklo, chicken.
kola, a sweet, non-alcoholic drink.

lambi, conch-shell horn.
lavée tête, ceremonial washing of the head when a *vodun* spirit is to be baptized; any ritual or healing washing of the head with ingredients sacred to the gods.
lettre de demande, a written proposal of marriage.
loa, deity of the *vodun* cult; see *saint, mystère.*
loup-garou, lou'gawou, werewolf; female counterpart of *démon.*
lutin, ghost of unbaptized child.

macoute, peasant's carrying basket.
magie, magic; usually employed in the sense of black magic, as

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against the term *traitement* for healing magic, and *arrêt* or *garde* for protective magic.

maison de servitude, house where worship of family *vodun* gods is centered.

Maît', master; employed in connection with supernatural powers, as *Gran' Maît'*, God; *Maît' 'Bitation*, Master of the Habitation; *Maît' Carrefour* (*Calfu*), Master of the Crossroads; *Maît' Gran' Bois*, Master of the Great Forest; *Maît' Source*, Master of the Stream; *Maît' Tête*, Master of the Head, or the ruling deity of a *vodun* initiate.

majeur, term of derision employed for shirkers at a *combite*.

malangan, a type of yam.

malheureux, unfortunates; applied to those who are poor, but not in abject poverty.

mamaloi, priestess of the *vodun* cult; a term not employed in Mirebalais.

mambu, priestess of the *vodun* cult.

mangé, a sacrifice; to eat; *mangé sec*, equivalent of *couvert sec* (q.v.); *mangé marassa*, sacrifice for the spirits of twins; *mangé morts*, feast for the family dead; *mangé moun*, idiomatic usage to denote the action of a spirit who "eats" his victim by sending fatal illness or death-dealing accident.

manman, mother; the largest drum of the *vodun* trio; the most important peg of a *vodun* drum.

manuba, a European style of dance in which only males participate.

marassa, twins; spirit of twins; one of the forces making up the supernatural universe of the Haitian.

mariage, marriage in the Church, in contrast to *plaçage*, or mating not given ecclesiastical sanction.

marré, to tie; used to denote proper control of a *vodun* deity by its devotee; *marré corde*, to make charms.

marron, runaway; wild.

marronage, state of freedom attained by Negroes who fled the plantations in pre-Revolutionary times.

Martinique, an African type of social dance especially favored at rites for the dead; name for entire cycle of social dances which follow rites for the dead.

mauvaises aires, synonym for *loup-garou* (q.v.).

mazon, an African type of dance performed as an interlude in a *vodun* dance.

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mira, a small work-group.

morts, dead; one of the three forces invoked whenever the supernatural powers of the voduist believer are being called or fêted.

mystères, African gods; synonym for *loa* and *saints.*

n'âme, soul.

Nègre, Negro; *gran' Nègre,* a person of outstanding spiritual power; *gros Nègre,* a wealthy and powerful member of the community.

neige, dew.

notable, an important member of the community.

novena, a nine-day rite for the soul of one recently dead, held on the nine nights immediately following the funeral, and completed by the *dernière prière* (q.v.).

occupation, a task; especially a task set a malign spirit to be performed before he can work his evil deeds; that is, a task impossible to perform.

ogan, iron used to sound the basic *vodun* rhythms, consisting usually of the blade of a hoe struck by a spike.

pannier, saddle-bags of basketry used by peasants to transport produce.

papaloi, priest of the *vodun* cult; term rarely employed by Haitians themselves, but favored by non-Haitian writers; see *hungan.*

pauvres, the destitute members of a community.

penitence, special dress worn to fulfill a vow made to one or several deities of the *vodun* cult, or in accordance with a desire expressed by the gods; usually made in the colors sacred to the gods.

Pétro, a group of *vodun* deities; the designation is said to be derived from the name of a powerful *vodun* priest of pre-Revolutionary days.

plaçage, type of socially sanctioned mating which does not have Church approval; opposite of *mariage* (q.v.).

placée, a woman taken as a mate without a Church wedding.

point, oblique reference to a person or situation in conversation or song; a magic charm.

porto cabesse, the central post of the *tonnelle* (q.v.), down which

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the *vodun* gods are believed to make their entrance into the dancing-space and where they remain until they are invoked; also termed *porto mita*.

prêt' savanne, " bush-priest "; an officiant at *vodun* rites and at services for the dead who reads the prayers of the Church.

Rada, name of a " squad " of *vodun* deities principally of Dahomean and Nigerian derivation; the word itself is a corruption of the name of the Dahomean town of Allada.

rade, dress; *rade de penitence*, robe of penitence (see *penitence*); *rade tambou'*, " dress " placed on a *vodun* drum.

renvoyé, term applied to the ritual of " banishing " a *vodun* deity who has been troubling a family.

saint, as in English, saint of the Catholic Church; also applied to the gods of the *vodun* cult, in which usage it is a synonym for *loa* and *mystère*.

seconde, the middle drum of the *vodun* trio.

service, term applied to any non-Catholic ritual for *vodun* gods, for twins, or for the dead that is not a dance.

simidor, a singer of songs; especially a man who leads the singing at *combites*.

Société Congo, a closely organized co-operative work-group found in certain parts of Haiti which corresponds to the loose grouping called *combite* in Mirebalais.

'ti moun, child; institution of quasi-adoption of children.

tonnelle, temporary thatched shelter for *vodun* dances.

traitement, healing by means of herbs and magic charms.

trône, the altar at a *vodun* service.

vagabond, term of opprobrium, more insulting than in English.

verver, symbolic designs for the gods traced on the ground by the *vodun* priest in white flour and ashes.

vien-vien, ghost.

vodun, " voodoo "; a complex of African belief and ritual governing in large measure the religious life of the Haitian peasantry; in a more restricted sense, a type of dance.

wanga, a charm that works evil magic.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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● 104 *zesse,* an African type of dance.

zombi, soulless being who becomes an automaton for the enrichment of a sorcerer who had " killed " him and after burial had recovered the body to set it to work without respite and without needs or desires, until the day " set by God " arrives for the natural death of this being.

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4. Notes on Orthography

104 197 87 114 [212] The problem of putting the Creole language into writing has confronted Haitian and non-Haitian scholars and writers for some time. During the past decade the problem has been an acute one for education authorities in Haiti. While there developed a consensus that teaching the largely illiterate population would have to be done in Creole and not in French, there remained a controversy about the system of orthography that should be used. One of the first attempts to teach Haitian children in their own language was made by Christian Beaulieu, a Haitian educator who worked out a written method based on traditional French orthography.[1] Subsequently, a simpler system was devised by a clergyman, the Reverend H. Ormond McConnell. Although it had numerous detractors among those who favored French orthography, it was found to be far more suitable for educational purposes. The American linguist Robert A. Hall, Jr., carried out a study, the findings of which supported the McConnell method as "perfectly phonemic and at the same time wholly practicable in that it uses only characters already available in print shops and on typewriters."[2]

104 Some Creole texts from Haiti and other West Indian islands, taken down by researchers and scholars, have been transcribed in the McConnell orthography, or in a modified one known as the McConnell-Laubach system. It is my opinion that although the system is admirable [114] for teaching purposes, and adequate for recording texts for scholarly needs, it is a disadvantage to a reader who has a French vocabulary at his command but who is not familiar with the McConnell orthography. The extent to which this system can disguise a language is easily seen if it is used, for example, to transcribe Jamaican speech. The effect is identical on French words or words of French origin. The Haitian proverb "Run from the rain, fall into the big river" is written by Hall in the McConnell-Laubach orthography: ***Kouri pou-lapli, tôbé nâ-grd***

1 [UNESCO, The Haiti Pilot Project, P. 39. Cf. P. 355, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2 [Ibid. Cf. P. 355, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

rivière.[3] A system which permits recognition of the original French words would transcribe the proverb: *Couri pou' lapluit, tombé nan grand rivière.*

In this book, I have in the main used the semi-French forms. Regardless of the status of Creole as a separate language, a great part of its vocabulary is drawn from French, old or modern, and it has seemed unnecessary to disguise the connections of Creole with its antecedents. Nevertheless, I am aware that some of my orthographic choices coincide more with the McConnell-Laubach system than with the Gallic, and some may appear to belong to neither. I hope, however, that my transcribed texts will be easily read.

In most sociological and anthropological reports on Haiti which include texts the transcriptions are based on modified French orthography. Nevertheless, there have been many inconsistencies and contradictions, as there well may be within the covers of this book. One reason may be an inadequate understanding of the Creole language. A second reason can be, and often is, differences of pronunciation in various regions.

But the most significant differences occur in setting down words of non-French or probably non-French origin. One of the more noteworthy of these is *Vodoun*—a very important word without which it would be very difficult to write of Haitian life. Writers and anthropologists have spelled it in the following ways: Melville J. Herskovits—*Vodu* and *Vodun;* George Eaton Simpson—*Vodun* (after an earlier trial of *Vódoun*); Odette Mennesson Rigaud—*Vodou;* Milo Rigaud—*Voudoo;* Robert A. Hall, Jr.—*Vaudoun;* Selden Rodman—*Vaudou;* Maya Deren—*Voudoun;* Eugène Aubin—*Vaudoux.*

Still other variations are to be found, particularly in the early literature on Haiti. In view of the general lack of agreement on this matter, it is not difficult to defend my own choice of *Vodoun* (French phonetics), which I used in previous writings.

Other important words which have numerous spellings are *hounfor* (*hunfor, humfor, hunfort, humfort, houmphor,* etc.), *hounsi* (*hunsi, hounçi,* etc.), and the names of various loa.

[3] [Hall and others, Haitian Creole, p. 199. Cf. p. 355, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 357]
[P. 356 is blank]

Glossary

CREOLE TERMS USED IN TEXT

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Abobo or *ai bobo*. A ritual singing phrase meaning "the end."

Agida. A bowed drumstick used on the middle-sized Arada drum.

Ago. An exclamation in Vodoun songs signifying "I am here."

Alfor cousin. A woven straw knapsack, from the Spanish *alforja*.

Arrête. Protective magic.

Asson. The cult priest's ritual rattle with external strikers.

Assot. A board used for striking as a percussion instrument.

Assotor. The largest drum of the Arada rites.

Badji. Altar.

Badjican. Keeper of the altar.

Baguette guinée. A grotesquely twisted drumstick.

Baka. (1) A kind of evil demon. (2) Name of the larger Pétro drum.

Baksor. Another name for the asson.

Bamboche. A "good time" dance.

Bamboché. To dance or have a good time.

Banza. Formerly a stringed instrument resembling a banjo or a trough zither. The name is now used for a fiddle.

Basse. A finger drum resembling our tambourine.

Bassin. A pool, usually referring to a special pool sacred to a deity.

Batonni. Stick dancer.

Bébé. Baby, used to designate the smallest of the Vodoun drums.

Bizango. A form of *loup-garou* seen in the form of a dog.

Bocó, or *bocor*. A cult priest, one who works with magic as well as with the loa and the dead.

Bois bourrique. A bamboo trumpet, also known as *vaccine*.

Bondieu. God.

Bossale. Wild. A *hounsi bossale* is an "untamed" hounsi; a *loa bossale*, an "untamed" loa.

Brulé zin, or *bouillé zin*. "Boiling pot," the name of a ritual in which the hounsi is elevated to the rank of kanzo.

Bula. (1) The smallest drum of the Arada rites, also called *bébé*. (2) A verb meaning to play this drum.

Bulatier. Drummer of the *bula*.

Caco. A bandit, or a mercenary soldier who hires himself out to political adventurers. Sometimes known as a *machete*. Numerous revolutions were accomplished with armies of cacos.

Caille. (1) House. (2) The Haitian version of the game known in West Africa by such names as *wari* and *mungalla*.

Canarie. A clay water vessel.

Canzo. The rank of hounsi whose loa have been "tamed" or controlled.

Capla. Another name for the houngan.

● 104 *Carré.* A type of *coumbite,* or community work group.

Carreau. A measure of land, about three and one-third acres.

Cata. To beat the basic rhythm for a song or dance.

Catalier. The one who *catas.*

Cayambouque. A container with a tight-fitting lid made from a large gourd or calabash.

Cha-cha, tcha-tcha, or *kwa-kwa.* A small gourd rattle used for keeping time for singers and drummers.

Chardette or *chadèk.* Grapefruit, grapefruit tree.

Chimin dleau. "The water road," by which loa come to and depart from the scene of a service.

Clairin. An alcoholic drink.

Claves. Wooden sticks which are beaten together as a percussion instrument.

Clochette. The tiny hand bell of the houngan, used along with his asson.

Cocomacaque. A kind of dwarf palm. Sticks made of this tree are called by the same name, or sometimes *baton cocomacaque.*

Connaissance. "Understanding." Used to indicate a houngan's mastery of his profession.

Corvée. A variety of coumbite, identical with the *carré.*

Couis. A bowl made from a half gourd or calabash.

Coumbite. The community work gathering which shares planting, harvesting, weeding, housebuilding, and other tasks.

Coundjaille. The name of a dance. It signifies "fast" or "agitated."

Criche. An earthen water bottle.

Debois. A marionette seen during carnival days.

Démon. A variety of malevolent demon.

Déssounin or *déssouné.* The rite of dispossessing a loa from the head of a deceased person.

Diné machete. "Machete dinner," a kind of coumbite.

Diri. Rice.

Divineur. One who divines, used for houngans.

Djab. A kind of demon.

Djablesse. A female ghost or demon.

Djaillé or *djaille.* Excitement motions, tension, in the religious dances.

Djévo. An inner room of the hounfor.

Doça. The first child born after twins, if it is a girl.

Docteur fé. Leaf doctor, pharmacologist.

Doçu. The first child born after twins, if it is a boy.

Douvant jou'. An early morning coumbite.

Drogue. A drug or magical potion.

Dundun. A name sometimes given to the smallest Arada drum.

Engagement. A compact with a demon.

Escorte. An association of loa, related or otherwise, who assist each other in their work.

Expedition. Aggressive magic in which a loa or a spirit is sent out by a houngan to work against some person.

Frete cache. Cracking the whip before the Pétro hounfor to "wake up" the loa.

Gage. Games played by children, usually with the objective of making someone "it." Sometimes used as synonymous with Last Prayers or Nine Night, when children play gage games.

Gamelle. A long wooden bowl used for washing clothes or for storing.

Garde corps. A protective charm, often worn by the owner.

Garde habitation. A charm devised to protect a household and its surroundings.

Gembo. A decorated shell devised to slide on a cord, used by houngans for divining.

Gori. An earthen or glass bottle in which loa and spirits are kept in the hounfor.

Grage. A sheet-metal scraping device used in secular music.

Grand famille. The eldest person in the family.

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Grand gout. Hunger. *Moin grand gout,* I am hungry.

Grisgris. A bird used for the making of charms, etc.

Grondé. (1) Grumble. (2) Middle-sized Arada drum.

Habitant. A farmer.

Habitation. A farm.

Hounaié. Another name for a loa.

Hounfor. The Vodoun temple or shrine.

Houngan. The Vodoun priest.

Houngénicon. One of the assistants of the houngan.

Hounsi. The servitors of a loa.

Hountogri. Another name for the largest of the three Arada drums.

Hountor. (1) Spirit of the drum. (2) The largest Arada drum.

Jouconjou or *joucjou.* A battery of gourd rattles carried on a pole.

Jugement de baguette. A system of divining a guilty person through the use of a rod.

Kwa-kwa. Another name for the *tcha-tcha,* or common gourd rattle.

Lacour. A group of dwellings inhabited by related families. A hamlet.

Laillé. The swirling of the skirts in a dance.

Lambi. A conch or conch trumpet.

Lampion. The metal candelabra carried by marching bands at carnival time.

Langage. This word usually refers to the "tongues" spoken by the houngan or possessed persons during Vodoun rites. It may mean language in the ordinary sense also.

Laplace. Chief assistant of the houngan.

Lavé tête. A ritual for removing a loa from a person's head.

Loa. The spirit or deity which possesses people during religious rites.

Lou-garo. Loup-garou.

Lutin. The spirit of a child that died before receiving baptism.

Mabouya. A small ground lizard.

Machete. The long all-purpose work knife. See *Caco.*

Magic. Magic.

Maît' conte. A "master" or professional storyteller.

Maît' tête. The loa who resides in one's head.

Major jonc. The baton or machete juggler of the Rara troupe.

Makanda. A specific kind of aggressive magic.

Maljok. Evil eye.

Mambo. Vodoun priestess.

Mambo caille. One of the assistants of the houngan.

Mangé. (1) To eat. (2) A feast.

Mangé assotor. Feast for the assotor drum.

Mangé diri or *goûté diri.* A rice harvest festival.

Mangé loa. A feast for one or more loa.

Mangé marasa. Feast for twins.

Mangé mort. Feast for the dead.

Mangé yam. A yam harvest festival.

Manman. (1) Mother. (2) The largest of the Arada drums.

Marasa. (1) Twins. (2) The spirit of twins.

Marimba, malimba, manimba, marimbula. The modern Haitian version of the African thumb piano.

Marré loa. To "tie" a loa, that is, to prevent him from entering one's head.

Mayamba. A gambling game using four chips for heads and tails combinations.

Mayo or *manyo.* A special shirt worn to counteract the evil eye or some other magic.

Mayoyo. A battery of rattles carried on a tall pole in some Congo services.

Mettè n'âme. The process of restoring a soul that has been taken from a body.

Morts en bas dleau. The spirits of the dead "below the water."

Moune. Man, person.

Moyen. The middle-sized Arada drum.

Mwé, moin, or *m'.* I, me.

Mystère. Another name for *loa.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

104 *Nanchon.* Nation. Usually refers to a "nation" of deities, such as Anago, Ibo, and Pétro.

Ochan. A musical salute to the loa, or to an important personage present at a service.

Ogan. The metal percussion device that accompanies the Arada drums. Traditionally, a forged iron bell, but it may be a hoe blade or any other piece of resonant iron or steel.

Ouanga. Aggressive magic.

Ouvri bayé pou' moin. "Open the gate for me (us)." Addressed to the loa Legba, to make contact with the other deities possible.

Papaloi. A term sometimes used to designate the Vodoun priest. A corruption of the Yoruba *babalao.*

Passage d'alliance. A method for divining a guilty person by means of a ring suspended on a string.

Passé. (1) Surpass. (2) Pass.

Passé balé. A method for divining a guilty person by the use of a specially prepared chair.

Parillon. The court of the hounfor.

Payé sorti. The gift that is given to a Rara troupe when it stops to play before a man's house. Literally: "Pay-to-go."

Pé. Altar.

Peristyle. The roofed court of the hounfor.

Pierre-loa. The stone in which a loa is believed to reside.

Pierre manman. A large, rounded stone regarded as a super-loa stone and a protector of the *habitation.*

Pingé. A form of wrestling that is seen at Rara time.

Piquette. A spear or sharpened stick.

Piston. Any instrument resembling a trumpet.

Plaçage. The system of polygamy practiced by some peasants.

Plaçée. A second or third wife of a man under the system of *plaçage.* The first wife may be *plaçée* also.

Po'teau mitan or *po'teau planté.* The center post of the hounfor court, around which most of the rites take place.

Pot tête. Another name for *gorí.*

Pouin. A form of protective magic.

Prêt' savane. "Priest of the plains," or "bush priest." This may have been originally *pret' savant,* "learned priest." The functionary who reads or recites Catholic prayers in a Vodoun service.

Rara, or *lara.* The rural Lenten festival. The word *rara* is also used for a wooden noisemaker.

Rafraichi tête. A ritual bath for refreshing the loa in one's head.

Reposoir. A small area, sometimes surrounded by a low wall, sacred to a deity.

Retiré n'âme. The act of removing the soul from a body.

Revenant. The troublesome spirit of a dissatisfied dead person.

Roi Lwalwadi. "King of Lwalwadi." Title given to the leader of a Rara troupe.

Ronde. A form of coumbite.

Rubaniers. Maypole dancers.

Samba. The singing leader of a coumbite.

Servi dé main. To serve with two hands. That is, to work with the loa of the Arada and Pétro "nations," or to work with the loa and with aggressive magic at the same time.

Similor. The singing leader of a coumbite.

Siro'. A sweet drink.

Société. A society. Refers usually to the association gathered around a cult temple, or an agricultural work group.

Tafia. An alcoholic drink.

Taille bas. "Low hips." A dance posture.

Tambour. Drum.

Tambourine. "Mosquito drum." A miniature two-headed drum.

Tambour maringouin. An earth bow, or a portable model of the earth bow.

Tambouyé. Drummer.

Tchancy. A metal rattle used in Rara and in some Congo rites.

Ti baka. (1) Little demon. (2) Name of the small Pétro drum.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Ti kanmbo or *ganbo*. Bamboo stampers, used as a substitute for drums.

Tonnelle. The covering of the hounfor court.

Trois-sept. A card game.

Tuyé-lèvé. Witchcraft in which the practitioner kills someone, then takes him out of the grave, restores him to life, and makes him a servant or slave.

Tymbale. A large cylindrical drum with heads at both ends.

Vaccine. A bamboo trumpet; also known as *bois bourrique*.

Vèvè. The meal or flour drawing made by the houngan on the ground.

Vodoun. (1) Rites and beliefs of the Arada "nation." (2) Rites and beliefs of all the cults except those of non-African origin. (3) A loa.

Von-von. A bull-roarer.

W'ari. A large inedible red bean or seed. Also the name of a game in which *wari* beans are used as playing pieces. See *Caille*.

Woy, woille. An exclamation.

Yamingan. A curative medicine bundle.

Zandolite. A small climbing lizard.

Zange. Another name, used regionally, for loa.

Zeauberups. According to lore, a society of cannibals.

Zin. The iron pot used in Vodoun ritual. It may, on occasion, be of clay.

Zombie. A creature supposedly disinterred from the grave, dispossessed of its soul, and made to work for a malefactor.

Zozo bef. A leather whip used on horses and burros. Literally "bull penis."

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

[p. 113]

INTRODUCTION

IF the visitor to Haiti is first struck by the wide separation between the élite and the peasant masses, the person who knows Haiti only through books is sure to think of it as a country of Voodoo. There is no error of fact here, for Voodoo is characteristic of Haiti. Nevertheless, what the American conjures up in his mind when he uses the word is almost certain to be misleading. In spite of detailed reports of anthropologists the average American clings firmly to his notion that Voodoo is Negro superstition chiefly concerned with charms or spells to "hoodoo" (a variation of the same word) an enemy. Scientists rarely succeed in correcting long-held but incorrect or one-sided impressions of the meaning of terms; they end rather by inventing a new word, or else continue the generally losing fight for precise usage, and so preserve the confusion.[1] 771

Since there is small likelihood of eradicating the inexact connotations of "Voodoo," many recent anthropologists have adopted such spellings as Vodun, Vodou, Vodoun, Vaudou, and Vodûn, all renditions of local pronunciation of the same term. *Vodun* (pronounced Vo-doon) has been chosen for use in this work, in the hope that readers will bear in mind that the folk religion is not mere idle superstition. A grasp of the real and distinctive religious beliefs and cult practices of the Haitian is very necessary to an understanding of the social picture. [104]

Like its caste system, the religious life of Haiti presents far-reaching contrasts. The only approved religion of the country is Roman Catholicism. To this faith all the élite who are religiously inclined, or wish to pay formal homage to the institution of religion, belong. No Protestant sect has ever gained a real foothold in Haiti. Catholic churches are among the imposing edifices in every town; Catholic priests are an everyday sight as they go about their parishes; Catholic brothers and sisters, with state support and approval, direct much of the higher education in the country. 771 195 184 [346] [793] [871]

1. Witness in anthropology the contrast between the popular and the scholarly meaning of *culture*, *race*, *taboo*, and *fetish*; in chemistry of *reaction* (as when a man is asked his "reaction" to an opinion); in psychology of *instinct*, *innate*, and *inherent*; and in sociology of *caste*, *institution*, and *social*.

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105 CULTURAL SUMMARY--synopsis of the whole culture (as a background for specific information); references to summaries in other works. See also:

Cultural history . . . . . 17 Ethos 181

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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114. It is interesting to speculate just why the life of the Haitian peasant, and, indeed, within the last decade, of the educated city dwellers, thus became a subject for lurid description. In its most honest manifestation actual misunderstanding or naïveté has undoubtedly been the cause; or it may be inferred that certain of the pictures drawn have been dictated by prejudice or by international political considerations. Finally, and within recent times most frequently, writers have seemed deliberately to distort and sensationalize their materials in order to attract to their work a desired notoriety.

The effect of this constant stress laid on the African cults in describing Haitian life has been not only to throw the entire picture badly out of focus, but to distract attention from the equally interesting phases of Haitian society which concern the everyday life of the people. Almost nowhere, aside from pre-Revolutionary eighteenth-century writings, can information be had about the workaday world. The rituals that accompany birth and death, the social and economic values that prevail, characteristic institutions such as the market or co-operative work-groups — one searches in vain for other than cursory mention of these in the later accounts. Even where a writer has included a discussion of such a co-operative organization as the Société Congo on the Isle à Gonave, emphasis is almost exclusively laid on its picturesque ceremonialism. Mention, it is true, is at times made of happy, "childlike" (the favored adjective), normal Haitians in the few pages that recent books have devoted to daytime activities. But with the dusk the "booming drums" are made to sound and the mysteries are again called upon to divert the reader.

114 105 182 Yet how are these descriptions of a hysterical, paranoid folk, ridden with fear of the dark forces of magic and the anger of vindictive gods, to be reconciled with the picture of the Haitian as he is shown in the second section of this book — of a man going about his affairs in matter-of-fact fashion, tending his crops, buying and selling, carrying on his amorous

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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conquests, establishing and providing for his family? The answer is that such a reconciliation is unnecessary where religion takes its place beside other interests and activities and where, psychologically, the supernatural world is on the same plane as the natural one, having its dangers as nature presents dangers, but also offering its compensations as do other phases of existence.

Investigations of native life such as this one not only require generous financial support, but have need of the sympathetic understanding of those in a position to extend helpful practical aid and advice in the field. To the many persons and institutions whose co-operation made this study possible, it is a privilege to record here my appreciation. Initial support of the work and later appropriations for preparing the material for publication were had from the Social Science Research Councils of Columbia and Northwestern Universities; while a grant-in-aid from the American Council of Learned Societies permitted the recording of songs in the field; and another from the National Research Council allowed motion pictures of motor behavior to be taken — films from which a number of the accompanying illustrations have been derived. Concepts relating to the problem of the results of contact between peoples possessing different customs, habits, and beliefs — a principle objective in the long-term program of research on Negro cultures of which this work in Haiti constitutes but a part — were sharpened through the discussions I have been privileged to have with my associates on the Committee of Acculturation of the Social Science Research Council, Professors Ralph Linton, Robert Redfield, and Donald Young.

Official aid in Haiti could not have been more generously accorded. The sympathy of His Excellency President Stenio Vincent, and M. Jacques C. Antoine, chief of the presidential secretariat in 1934 and at present Secretary to the Legation

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

[History of Haiti in 17th-18th Centuries
The Haitian White Population]

affable, generous perhaps to the point of ostentation, confident, brave, a sure friend and a good father"[19] — such are his good points as set down by one who was perhaps surer-eyed than others in seeing his deficiencies, though these traits seem to have concerned more his relations with his fellow-whites than those which affected his bearing toward his Negro slaves.

The young Créole women of this same environment were destined for early marriage — too early for their best development, whether physical or mental. Given to exacting the fulfillment of their slightest caprices, they were, like their men, creatures of passion. If they survived their first pregnancies, which as a result of too early marriages often came before they were physically in condition to support the rigors of childbirth, they soon lost their youthful allure and became the unattractive women of the type so maliciously described by the Comte de C***.[20] In such cases they frequently survived not one but several husbands. Their associations were chiefly with their Negro women slaves, who were full confidantes, sleeping in the same chamber with their mistresses and on occasion sharing informal meals with them, though they never ate at the same table. And because, by a fine turn of irony, these Negro women were often at the same time the concubines of the husbands, brothers, or sons of their mistresses, they were as often as not treated alternately with the greatest tenderness and the harshest brutality.[20]

Whatever the inner life of white Haitians, native-born or Créole, outward ostentation was the rule. In the cities poorly furnished houses were cared for by a numerous retinue of uniformed retainers; "the supreme achievement for a European being to have himself served, he hires slaves while he waits for the time when he can own them."[21] In the country, too, life was lived on as lavish a scale as possible. This is not the place to describe the houses of masters and slaves, or the buildings needed for working sugar-cane or indigo or preparing coffee, or their distribution over the plantation, for nu-

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

[History of Haiti in 17th-18th Centuries— The Haitian White Population]

175 merous contemporary accounts, and most present-day works,
105 give both texts and illustrations which make the economy of
563 the plantation clear.[52] Though many stories of the magnifi-
567 cence of plantation life are found in current works, writers
342 of the period seem to agree that but little attention was paid
175 to convenience. Inventories of the contents of houses show
105 that furnishings were at a minimum; a few chairs and small
563 tables in the sitting- and reception-rooms, beds and minor ac-
352 cessories in the way of furniture in the bedrooms, dining-room tables and chairs and a cabinet for dishes. These pieces were usually built in the colony and made of native hard woods; substantial, they were essentially plain. As Baron Wimpffen remarked, "Taste, Sir, is still Creolian at Saint Domingo; and, unfortunately, the Creolian is not the right taste, — it smells too much of the *Boucan*."[53]

175 The table set was not distinguished. Meat, though the most
105 important dish at the principal meals, was poor, but, on the
567 other hand, fish, game, and wild fowl were excellent, and the
563 best of French wines were available.[54] Whatever the fare, how-
352 ever, it was served in the grand manner, often on plate rather
[262] than chinaware, and by the many liveried house-servants which every great establishment could boast. An account of the mode of service has been preserved in the reminiscences of one who, writing some years later of a repast served him in 1787, says: "There were many more of these domestics of both sexes than there were diners. I could but admire their attention to the smallest details of the service, the whiteness of their clothing, and the beautiful kerchiefs in the Créole manner elegantly arranged about the heads of the women. . . . But
[291] all of them moved about on bare feet; this was the distinctive sign of slavery."[55]

175 As portrayed in contemporary works, Haitian white life is
181 seen to have been lived entirely in terms of material goods and
105 of display. Just as there was little intellectual life, so religion
771 was but a matter of form. One M. de Larnage, writing from
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1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

[History of Haiti in 17th-18th centuries — The Haitian white population]

Petit-Goave on 25 June 1743, complains that it is unbelievable "what indifference the people of these districts have toward spiritual matters." [48] So little attention was paid to the rites of the Church that when the baptism of an infant was to be performed, it often proved difficult to find a godfather who had taken the sacrament, and many children were therefore never baptized. As might be expected, the churches were in a bad state, often having no more than earthen walls and floors, roofed with thatch, and being used as threshing-floors as well as places of worship. The description which Père Labat has given us of a church at Cap Français,[49] and of the manner in which the communicants conducted themselves during such services as were held, shows the decadence of the one religion that had any place among the white inhabitants. The clergy, too, reflected this same decadence. For though the early libertines who posed as priests were later replaced by members of such orders as the Jacobins, the Jesuits, and the Capucins, even this did not end the scandals that, from the first days of the establishment of the Catholic Church on the island, marked its ministrations.

What impression must the Negroes have obtained from their opportunities to observe the life of their masters? What patterns of behavior, what moral codes, what concepts of the way in which the Europeans regulated their own lives and, as officials, regulated the lives of others, must have been stamped on the minds of these Africans? That the present emphasis on the importance of wealth, or that a love of and demand for display, should characterize Haitian life of the cities today is not strange. Nor is it difficult to comprehend how certain other aspects of Haitian life that have so been underscored in the last half-century by those who have written of the Haitians should have developed from this initial stimulus — not to the extent to which this emphasis would lead one to believe, to be sure, but enough to give a basis for the exaggerations which have been published.[50]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

[History of Haiti in 17th-18th Centuries]

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Some of these charges may be reviewed. One, frequently met with and already mentioned, concerns the general lack of cleanliness and sanitation that marks the cities. As has been shown, this stems directly from the patterns of life which prevailed under French control. The matter of personal morals is also often discussed with anything but praise for Haitian custom. Quite aside from the polygamous tradition of Africa, the influence of which will be discussed later, it is only necessary to recall the example set for these slaves by the sex customs of the Créoles and other Europeans with whom they came into contact to see how the ideal of monogamic union would not be entirely convincing as one to be followed in all its implications. The failure of the Catholic Church to stamp out the African cults in Haiti, and the skepticism with which, as will be pointed out, the motivation of the priests is regarded by the Haitians must have been strengthened by the tradition of the misbehavior of those who were in charge of the religion into which baptism was mandatory, before the days of freedom.

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The instability of Haitian political life, and the venality of judges and other officials have been stressed again and again in the writings of those who have passed judgment on Haiti. Yet one need but read of the readiness of the white colonists to revolt against the authority set over them by the mother country,[39] and of the manner in which during the French Revolution attempts to alleviate the position of the colored and Negro portions of the population were thwarted by the illegal political activities of the plantation slave-owners,[40] to understand at least some of the sources from which direct political action derives its sanctions. One need similarly but read comments in letters and books of the time concerning the corruption of the officials of the colony [41] to conclude that, since her independence, Haiti has in such respects but continued a tradition set by the rulers who governed the country before the Republic was established. Thus if the life of the Haitian

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

[History of Haiti in 17th-18th Centuries]

Negro peasant of today presents aspects of harshness or insta- 17
bility, it would seem proper to ask how much of this might be 66
ascribed to the examples which these Negroes were set by 105
their masters, rather than unequivocally to assume inherent racial tendencies to account for them, as is so often done.

This, of course, is far from the whole story. For just as there 178
were large numbers of colonists who were men of integrity 105
and lived in accordance with the best traditions of their French heritage, so among the Negroes were many who sensed these deficiencies in the regime to which they had been enslaved, and held tenaciously to their African traditions, not only in religion, but in social, economic, and political phases, so that, when the time was ripe, these might in some measure be re-established. To approach the matter realistically, it must be recognized that just as the Africans in the islands represented numerous tribes having varying customs, and individual members of these groups possessed varying degrees of integrity and worth, so the French who came to live there and whose slaves learned of French culture from them represented not necessarily the flower of that culture, but were in the main derived from the extremes of French society, the unadjusted and maladjusted lower classes and the aristocrats. What was bequeathed by them to the Haitians, therefore, were those aspects of French civilization which, to the extent that they were accepted by the Negroes, are partially responsible not only for the graciousness, the hospitality, and the generosity of the Haitian of today, but also for the less pleasant aspects of the culture that have resulted from his historical development since independence.

132 fires in their houses at night to keep out the damp cold that sweeps
[374] through the passes. And a man on the trail before dawn may wear a
[291] blanket over his head and carry a glowing ember with him for warmth.

132 On the south coast there are sometimes hurricanes and tidal waves, and
133 many a small fishing boat and grass-covered house has been washed away
[173] in these storms. But the great mountains of the southern range deflect the winds, so that to the north their full fury is never known.

226 In the great Bay of Gonaïves the fishing boats sail out at night with the
133 friendly winds that carry them to the fishing grounds of the island of La
172 Gonave, and they return to the shore with their catches in the morning, or in the afternoon with the setting sun. The sailing boats from the tiny fishing village called Ville Matelot each day pass the deserted islet named Isle à Cabrit, where four Indian camps once stood. Today Isle à Cabrit is only a waterless, denuded place, a hunting ground for Carib and Arawak pottery and carved stone images.

136 In the frontier lakes of the Cul-de-Sac Plain there are wild ducks and
[226] alligators. Here the villagers fish with nets from rafts and dugout canoes.
[501] Now and then an iguana is seen, but there is little other game, because the edible wildlife of the country was long ago eaten by hungry people.

137 For the things that grow wild the Haitian is grateful—the avocado,
[241] the mango, the cashew, and the cotton which once planted produces again and again each year. He is grateful for the coconut palms, the calabash tree, the gourd vines, and the medicinal herbs that grow on every side. But
[313] the gifts of nature are not prolific. Most of the great stands of timber—
[134] lignum vitae, mahogany, dyewood and pine—have been cut away. Once fertile garden spots have dried up, and the soil that produces the yams, the pumpkins, the kaffir, and the rice is tired.

181 But the Haitian himself is not tired. He has suffered from malaria,
164 yaws, and chronic hunger; yet out of the great old mountains of Haiti he has fashioned a way of life and a nation.

105 The Haitian of today was created out of the fabric of three continents—
181 Africa, America, and Europe. He was shaped out of the plains and hills of Nigeria, Dahomey, and the Congo; the summers and winters of Europe; and the mountains and mountain mists of Haiti itself. He is the synthesis of the folk beliefs of the French and Spanish peasants, the Yoruba and the Arada of West Africa, and perhaps of the Carib Indians with whom he had close contact during his first days in the New World. He has brought into affinity the religious practices of Africa and the beliefs of the Church of Rome. He is outwardly simple and poor, but inwardly he is a complicated and rich man. He is rich in music, in the capacity for spiritual expression, in tradition, in folklore, and in memories. He has been able

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

to marry work to play, drudgery to singing, and despair to hope. In his complicated world, life and death are simply different aspects of the same thing. Those who die live as long as people remember them. And those who are alive in the physical sense are receptacles for the spiritual forces that exist on all sides—the echoes of the dead, the multitude of spirit beings, good and evil, and dancing and music.

What are the origins of this simple and complicated man?

The beginnings of the Haitian came with the discovery of America and the establishment of slavery in the New World. When the Spanish colonizers first began to organize the economy of the new colony of Hispaniola, as they called it, they attempted to enslave the indigenous Caribs to work the fields. But the Indians of Haiti found no sense and no comfort in the new system. It violated their views of life and destroyed their culture. They were proud, and they were not resilient. They did not care to pan gold for the Spaniards or to grow sugar for them. They died under the conditions of slavery, or fled into the mountains, or took to the sea in their canoes, looking for sanctuary on other islands where the Europeans had not yet settled. They left the rich earth of the Haitian valleys to the conquistadores. In less than eighteen years the new Spanish colony was dying on the vine for lack of laborers. It was then that Spain, like France, England, and Portugal, turned its eyes to Africa. There were old precedents. The Spanish and Portuguese had for many years used the African for labor. They had had intimate contact with Africans during the Moorish invasion of Iberia. And the slave trade had been an old and familiar thing even before the discovery of America.

The first Africans sent to Haiti arrived there in 1510. The precise origins of these first African immigrants to the New World are not known, but they came from somewhere along that long stretch of African coast between Senegal and Angola. It was a great crossroads in world history. As much as any other ethnic group, these Africans and those who came after them built America. They, as much as any other, turned the West Indies into a prize over which the nations of Europe fought for three hundred years. And in Haiti, as in Brazil, the United States, and other American nations, they raised moral and ethical issues for the peoples of European stock which have not been solved to our own day.

The acquisition and transportation of slaves is an old and familiar story. Slavery was an ancient institution in some parts of Africa. Some of the wars between kingdoms were, in part at least, huge slave raids. In other wars, the taking of slaves was only incidental. But the selling of these human chattels to European merchants came as easily to African chieftains as it did to Arab entrepreneurs. Often they were merely selling off

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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very favorable reception by Haitian scholars and intellectuals. As its author and others have pointed out, few countries in modern times have received as bad a press at the hands of foreign observers as Haiti. A small, rugged nation, born of an exhausting and destructive revolution, its people poor, disease-ridden, illiterate, and erratically led, independent Haiti gives the impression of having drifted aimlessly for more than a century. Observers from "more developed" lands have had a field day—and still have—bemoaning the evil consequences of a mass of African slaves having turned on their French masters to destroy them and their works. It is still fashionable to allude to Haiti in deploring independence movements, racial desegregation, indigenous political leadership, and economic sovereignty. But too little scholarship has since been invested, as Leyburn invested it, in delineating the national and international forces which have operated to keep Haiti poor and backward. Nor has contemporary research led to sufficiently revealing comparisons between the social history of Haiti and that of her more colonial neighbors in the Caribbean area. Leyburn's work enhanced the possibilities for such comparisons and drew some morals which Haiti's detractors often ignore; but in making his case, the author carefully avoids lapsing into romanticism, or into the inaccuracy born of uncritical sympathy.

The book was published as the final steps were being taken to end the official United States presence in Haiti. The occupation had begun in 1915, ostensibly to restore order in a situation marked by political chaos. Haitian defaulting on debts to the French and Germans had raised the specter of foreign—that is, European—occupation, which created considerable North American anxiety; and there were large Haitian debts outstanding to United States banks as well. When the United States decided to move militarily, the abstract issue of justice was ignored, to be raised for contemplation only after the occupation itself was a fact. Military occupation continued for nineteen years, and the complete termination of United States controls over the national affairs of Haiti did not come until 1946, long after Leyburn's book had appeared. Twenty-five years have now elapsed since Leyburn wrote, and the events of these years are relevant to any retrospective view of the author's interpretations.

Much, indeed, has happened in Haiti since 1941: the United States withdrawal and the fading of the effects, both good and bad, of the occupation; the positive economic consequences for Haiti of World

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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War II and its aftermath, and the subsequent dissipation of those gains; the "social revolution" of January 1946, ushering in the Estimé regime; the boom in the arts and tourism, and their later contractions; the rise and subsequent fall of the Magloire government (1950–56), and the uneasy interregnum that followed it; and finally, the growth of the Duvalier monolith.

Over the span of those years, social science literature on Haiti has increased significantly, and outsiders, as well as the Haitians themselves, can now know much more about the country and its people. But some of the most important questions raised by Leyburn's book remain substantially unanswered. *The Haitian People* is a classic because its author phrased so well the major issues in the growth of Haitian national institutions, and no subsequent work is likely to supplant it in this regard. But its value has been heightened over the years by the lack of any equally penetrating analysis dealing with the period since 1941 or specifying the relative importance of various institutional forces in the contemporary structure of Haitian society. Thus, for instance, much too little is known of the culture and social organization of Haiti's predominantly rural population, in spite of considerable anthropological research since 1941. More detailed studies of the rural economy are particularly necessary, both to assess developmental possibilities and to understand better the relationship of rural sectors to the national economy. Sociological and economic analyses of folk religion—*vodoun*—are wanting, even though psychological and descriptive studies of this religion have appeared in large numbers. The general conceptual problem of community definition, structure, and organization, which has long plagued students in the Caribbean area, has been barely raised in the case of rural Haiti. Finally, our understanding of Haitian class structure, both local and national, and its corollaries in economic, political, and social institutions, is still slight. Here the need for more research seems particularly acute, since no adequate grasp of the nature of Haitian society at large will be possible until the fit of the rural sectors with the national class structure is better known. On this understanding, among others, may hinge the likelihood of success of any future developmental effort in Haiti.

It was with Haiti as a nation that Leyburn dealt in his book, and his analysis of national institutions and social structure excited more comment and reflection within Haiti itself than any other part of his

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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565 171 Modern usage, having borrowed the word "caste" from India, employs it loosely to mean a rigid class system of which the people are conscious.[4] In India caste was always endogamous and connected with occupation. Kroeber defines it as "an endogamous and hereditary division of an ethnic unit occupying a position of superior or inferior rank or social esteem in comparison with other such subdivisions."[5] Castes, as distinguished from social classes, "have emerged into social consciousness to the point where custom and law attempt their rigid and permanent separation from one another." By each of these criteria Haiti has castes.

565 582 [463] [461] The élite are endogamous in that they would not consider marriage into the masses. The one exception to the endogamic practice is marriage with a white foreigner. Whereas in India all members of a caste had the same general occupation, in Haiti several occupations are open to caste members; but the distinction between honorable and demeaning work is understood by all, so that no person has free choice as regards the two larger categories. Haitian law does not name the social divisions, nor does it legislate the masses into a subordinate position[6]—for the simple reason that there is no conceivable need to enact what already exists. The laws of Haiti are administered by élite officials; these men make the definitions and interpretations. The judge always knows the custom, so that (as in most countries) the same offense brings different penalties for upper- and lower-class offenders. Custom holds sway, and custom is more tyrannical than any body of law.

Inside the castes may be found social distinctions familiar in democracies and in every other kind of society. Interest in politics, business, literature, or sport draws people of like minds together and makes cliques. There are well-to-do families who outshine their neighbors, just as there are peasant landholders who dominate their rural communities. A high civil official has more prestige than a doctor with a small practice, just as among the masses a house servant for an élite family outranks a beggar.

565 511 105 185 For the majority of Haitians, life is too elemental to be concerned with artificial wants. The peasant talks, unfettered by rules of gram-

4. See also W. Lloyd Warner, "American Caste and Class," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLII, No. 2 (Sept. 1936), 234–237; and John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (New Haven, 1937), pp. 62 ff.

5. A. L. Kroeber, "Caste," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, III, 354.

6. Such efforts were made, however, in the early days of the republic. See chap. III.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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mar or any schoolmaster's correction; he behaves like his fellows; he learns by trial and error, by imitation, by the praise and ridicule of his elders, what to do and what not to do. What really matters in life is having food to eat, avoiding bad luck in health and crops, having a wife and family, keeping on the right side of the spirits, and being able at night to dance, sing, and tell tales with his friends. He wears no tight-fitting clothes, never bothers about fashions, certainly never puzzles his brain to reconcile his theological and philosophical views with each other. This is by no means a poetic or idyllic existence for him, however. The peasant is so poor that misfortune may be catastrophic; the soil he has to farm is worn out by decades of erosion and crude tillage; disease is so widespread that most people know misery. A man cannot, even if he would, save up for a rainy day; he lacks the necessary implements to plough deep while sluggards sleep. One is safe so long as he does what everyone else does, and if this rule breaks down, at least misery will have company. Keep out of harm's way if possible, but bear it stoically when it comes. Avoid what is strange—particularly all legal documents, courts, politics, city ways, and people who shout orders. The peasant is conservative because radical changes, such as come from revolutions, for example, dislocate his life, leaving him worse off than before. Progress and improvement are to him only vague abstractions, much less real than the struggle for mere existence.

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For the élite, on the other hand, life is rather a struggle to maintain and improve the standard of living. It is always easier to predict what a person will not do than what he will. It would be hard to define, therefore, a typical aristocrat. In one basic matter, however, the high-class Haitian is poles removed from the peasant: instead of accepting things as they are ("*Bon Dieu bon,*" runs the peasant saying: God is good—and the inflection of the voice implies that the second "bon" may also mean "inscrutable"), the élite person is restlessly dissatisfied with the conditions of life: economic, social, political. His unexpressed ideal is to be accepted as an equal in the cultured circles of Western society, to have the same entrée to courts, clubs, and parties abroad as cultivated white Europeans and Americans.

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Since the country has never had an accurate census, it is not possible to say precisely how many persons belong to each caste. By the most generous estimates not one out of twenty-five Haitians is élite—and such a figure stretches the category to a point which no literate

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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162 citizen would admit. The few cities and towns of Haiti do not con-
565 tain more than 250,000 people in a total population which the atlases
369 generally put around 2,500,000. Since to live in the city is one necessary mark of aristocracy, and since obviously not every town- or city-dweller is an aristocrat, it is probably nearer the mark to infer that not more than two or three per cent of the people are of the élite.

565 A slightly larger group would fit neither category. This inter-
554 mediate section would consist chiefly of those who have taken a few steps toward the upper stratum; they may wear shoes and keep a small shop and speak a few words of French, but not yet be accepted in "respectable" society; aristocrats will look down on them while the masses will regard them with curious interest. Yet these are not what Europeans would call a middle class. In their own generation, they are rootless and insecure. Their children will have as many advantages as the parents can afford, so that the next generation may increase the distance between itself and the common folk. Included in this intermediate group are also a few who, having once been up, are now on the way down.

433 If the terms "masses" and "peasants" are used interchangeably in
162 these pages, it is because the vast majority of the people get their living from the soil. Haiti is, as it has always been, an agricultural country. The end-paper map lists all towns which claim as many as 7,500 people; only one, the capital, Port-au-Prince, has more than 100,000.[7]

162 At least nine out of ten Haitians, therefore, lead rural lives, and
184 easily fit the designation of peasant. They live in little communities,
105 generally of less than a hundred persons, rather than in scattered houses. A detailed map would be dotted with place names of these

[162] 7. The estimates made by Woodring, in his *Geology of the Republic of Haiti*, p. 67,
[114] are as follows:

Port-au-Prince	125,000	Saint-Marc	10,000
Cap-Haïtien	20,000	Jacmel	10,000
Les Cayes	15,000	Port-de-Paix	7,500
Gonaïves	12,000	Jérémie	7,500

It should be noted that all eight of these towns, which by Woodring's estimate have a total of 207,000, are seaports. The country is so mountainous that no cities have grown up in the interior. The map also includes a number of towns smaller than 7,500: these are capitals of *arrondissements* or seats of courts. Woodring remarks that if the people who live in towns having a population of more than a thousand were added to the list above, the total "urban" population then would be between 225,000 and 250,000, which is barely ten per cent of the total in the country.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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tiny communities, some of them designating "villages" of only four or five houses. For numbers of peasants hidden away in the valleys or on mountain farms, the only contact with the larger world comes through visits to the nearest market town—which itself may count only a thousand souls. The peasant is thus effectively isolated. The American Financial Adviser to the Government has estimated the average *annual* income of the Haitian at $20 a head.[8] The smallness of the sum limits the material contacts of the peasant with the outside world. Rural schools are few,[9] consequently all but a small percentage of the rising generation is growing up illiterate. Lack of mental stimulus completes the isolation. Bound to the soil by the need of wresting a livelihood from rocky, gullied, and increasingly unproductive land, harassed by ill-health, and governed by a group whose own security would be threatened by improving his lot, it is little wonder that the peasant is unprogressive, or that he struggles along at a bare subsistence level.[10]

Haiti is rural and agricultural, then, with a population density of about 250 per square mile. The people, living without machine industry and with very little foreign trade, must get their living from 10,000 square miles, not of lush tropical soil but of rocky, mountainous country which, after a century and a half of poor farming, has been stripped of most of its forests and much of its topsoil.

A glance at a relief map of the West Indies would show clearly that the islands are the tops of a mountain range, whose lowlands were long since submerged by the Caribbean Sea. Looked at from above, Haiti seems a jumbled mass of mountains running in all directions.[11] Down their slopes flow many small streams which after

8. Dr. W. W. Cumberland, cited by Paul H. Douglas, "The American Occupation of Haiti," *Political Science Quarterly*, XLII (1927), 258.

9. The average monthly salary of $13 (until recently only $6) for rural schoolteachers would not draw many wide-awake young men, even if schoolhouses existed for classes. The salary, indeed, is so small that only inferior persons are attracted, often men who know little more than their pupils. See chap. XV, 3.

10. Mrs. Blair Niles, in *Black Haiti* (New York, 1926), pp. 185–186, tells of a prisoner who preferred to remain in jail rather than be freed. "When he gets out," she quotes the officer as saying, "he'll be in again. You'll see. Here he gets nine cents a day for food, an' that's more than the average Haitian ever has."

11. One can well believe the story (told by Ebenezer D. Bassett, *Haiti* [Washington, 1893], p. 3) of the English admiral who, asked by George III for a description of the island, crumpled a sheet of paper, threw it on the table, and said: "Sire, Haiti looks like that." The same tale is told of Puerto Rico, with a Spanish admiral speaking to Queen Isabella.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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it seems not radically to have affected the masses but only the fairly well-to-do.

The *Royal Almanac* for the year 1814 touches proudly upon the moral state of the kingdom. The author of the almanac, the Comte de la Limonade, says: "Great attention is paid to morals and manners. Marriage is honored, protected, and encouraged; no Haitian who is unmarried can fill any place of distinction. Divorce is not permitted." All this was true; yet the mass of Haitians still remained unmarried. Nevertheless, the quotation indicates the extent to which Christophe had gone in his effort to reform marriage and morals among his people; to set them in the European tradition and draw them out of their African and colonial backgrounds.

While Christophe was trying to effect reforms in the North, Pétion was accepting his Southern folk as they were. Hardly a law during his twelve-year administration touches the subject of marriage. The élite colored people continued to make proper legal marriages and so insure the inheritance of their legitimate children. The common folk lived their family lives without weddings, and if property questions arose, custom ruled, backed by public opinion in their little communities.

Such are the backgrounds out of which modern Haitian sex relations have developed. From African tradition came family life, the importance of property to stabilize a union, insignificance of a wedding ceremony, familiarity with matrilineal kinship and descent; from French colonial practice, formal marriage to establish a family with social ambition, casual sex relations for pleasure outside this marriage, the claim of legitimate children to all property (in contrast to folk custom, where few legitimate children were born); from Dessalines, an emphasis upon the African tradition and realism; from Christophe, an insistence upon strict French practice in marriage and in the passage of property.

From among these alternatives Haiti made a choice which is an excellent example of what Keller calls "automatic selection in the mores."[7] There was no congress to select one procedure rather than another. Because Pétion and Boyer followed a *laissez-faire* policy in social matters, the people took the path of least resistance.

7. A. G. Keller, *Societal Evolution* (revised ed., New York, 1931), chaps. IV and V.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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two rooms to house the whole family. "In these huts, filth and every species of uncleanliness prevail, for the people give themselves up to their indolent and lazy habits. It is common to see the pigs and poultry herding with the family."[19]

The furnishings in the huts were as simple as the construction. Rarely was there more than one bed, if that; the children of the family used mats for sleeping. A table, a stool, a couple of patched chairs, calabash bowls, an iron pot or two (and in later days, discarded gasoline tins), comprise the household equipment.

The fine roads of the French régime became rutted and washed, were overgrown with weeds, and soon reverted to wasteland or became nothing more than paths. Carriages ceased to be of any use, and there were few wagons; donkeys and horses became the regular means of transportation, and this was true until the Americans began to build roads again in 1916. The colonial régime had left a legacy of bridges, public buildings, parks, irrigation ditches; practically every improvement of this nature crumbled in slow decay and was not replaced. The temperate Dr. Brown closed his account of the Haiti of 1836 with the following paragraph:

> To sum up all that might be said upon the actual condition of Hayti, poverty and degradation stare one in the face wherever he goes—and the state of the whole island will be fully understood in the United States when it is bluntly asserted, that the country is one continuous negro village, built of mud cabins, and unfurnished with the usual comforts of life. The population is, with small exceptions, an indolent, naked multitude, without sustenance or a disposition to make exertions to obtain it; without enormous vices, but petty and insignificant in every thing relating to human character, and not many removes from the tribes upon the Niger in point of civilization. The fact is indisputable, that as a nation the blacks of Saint Domingo are in a retrograde movement as regards intellectual improvement, and no obstacle seems to exist to prevent this descent to barbarism. The government and institutions of the country must for the present remain unstable, and it is difficult to pronounce what the changes involved in the future will produce.[20]

Progress, as Westerners understand it, comes through contacts and competition, both of which were lacking to Haiti in large measure throughout the whole of the nineteenth century. While externally

19. Franklin, *op. cit.*, p. 396.
20. *Op. cit.*, II, 288-289.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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be given to Haiti for vast rubber plantings.[21] Opposition to Lescot comes chiefly from those who consider him too friendly with the Dominicans who killed hundreds of Haitian workers in 1937, Lescot having figured prominently in negotiations that led to the Dominican government's agreement to pay indemnities to Haiti for the slaughter.

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Reviewing the whole course of Haitian history, the field of politics seems to have marshaled itself behind a few regularities. In every case there have been voices raised to protest, yet the ruling clique, whatever its grouping, has effectively supported these characteristic political customs:

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1. Complete dominance of political life by the president. Strong men seem to be necessary to rule ignorant masses. Even the revolutions precipitated by parties campaigning for parliamentarianism have, when successful, become governments by the president. This concentration of power in one man's hands makes the next revolution possible, for it is easier to overthrow one man than to eliminate a party based upon wide suffrage and diffused responsibility.

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2. The inferior position of cabinet ministers. These have resembled neither European nor American secretaries of state in their responsibilities, but have been little more than clerks appointed by the president to serve as heads of a bureau. The treasurer-general, for example, during most of Haiti's history has merely received the moneys, while the president disbursed them. The secretary-general has neither originated nor conducted the details of public policy. Often as not, the minister has made a convenient whipping boy when the president has got himself involved in internal or foreign complications: by demanding the minister's resignation the president remained unscathed.

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3. The unimportance of the legislature. It has made useful patron-

21. The European War, threatening the supply of rubber coming to the United States from British Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies, has made the American government seek new sources. The Department of Agriculture established an experimental station and breeding gardens for rubber plants in Haiti, and the results were so successful that extensive areas were planted with rubber trees. Haiti and the United States in May, 1941, reached a long-term agreement for "the development of agriculture and economy"; the projects embraced under the agreement include not only rubber but the further development of Haiti's banana plantations, the planting of oil crops, drug plants, spices, fiber plants, the stimulation of handicraft industries, and the development of forestry resources peculiar to the tropics. A further extension of an additional $500,000 in credits will be made for use on highways, irrigation projects, and to provide transportation facilities for the areas to be planted to rubber trees.

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

United Kingdom, the United States, and Haiti, in proportion to population, were 185, 165, and 125,[18] yet Haiti had no carrying trade while the other two countries had, and so the profits were drained from the land.[19]

In short, as Haiti became accustomed to managing her own affairs, she became content with—or at least, reconciled to—little things. Inertia and tradition worked in their persistent fashion, with no effective stimulation from outside to combat them. From tradition and seclusion springs prejudice, and this became obvious whenever a change was proposed, particularly one which suggested bringing white people back to the country. To the élite it might mean the end of their social supremacy; to the masses, the end of their independence of daily action. The prejudice against sugar making was rooted in the same kind of suspicion. When a large landowner tried to institute a sugar mill on his estate, he met an adamant refusal of his hired workers to labor in it: "*Moué pas esclave!*" (I'm no slave!) The Negroes even disliked a bell to ring them to work on a plantation, for it suggested the slavery of the old régime.

Just before the Civil War in the United States a humanitarian gentleman developed a project of conducting numerous free American Negroes to Haiti in a planned migration. He discussed in a pamphlet[20] all the possible trades which might flourish in that country, if the migrants were to assume the position of a middle class; but his list is significantly small—sixteen occupations, on the order of tailoring, coopering, and blacksmithing, were all he could think of.[21] He made three comments which he hoped would attract the Negro Americans, as to a virgin field of opportunity: that in the

18. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 111–113, cites these figures, and says: "[Thus] Hayti, poor, and despised as she is, has a commerce, *in native produce*, nearly three-fourths as large, *in proportion to her population*, as our own United Kingdom, which is the great manufacturing part of the world; and seven-eighths as large as that of the United States, where the staple exports are produced by the labour of 3,000,000 slaves!"

19. Mackenzie (*Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti*, Document V) reports that in 1825 exports were valued at $5,793,758, and imports at $4,660,174; the trading was carried on in 552 *foreign* ships, of which 374 were American, 78 British, and 65 French. No Haitian ship traded abroad.

20. Benjamin S. Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans*. See particularly pp. 3–9.

21. His complete list is: tailor, shoemaker, baker, cabinetmaker, carpenter, mason, lime-burner, distiller, cooper, wheelwright, saddler, blacksmith, tinner, hatter, small-boat maker, potter.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

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towns there was a surplus of shopkeepers, but nothing like enough producers of goods; that in the country few Haitians of intelligence and capital paid any attention to agriculture; and that Haiti needed more than anything else people of brains, not afraid of physical activity, and people with capital. The author had observed well. His characterization of the Haiti of 1860 was still true fifty years later.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

[p. 290]

XVII

OUTER ASPECTS OF HAITI

[538] HAITIAN poets rarely sing the beauty of their native land, nor do the travelers who roam the earth dwell long upon this particular pearl of the Antilles. Mountains slope down into the sea, sunlight sparkles upon the foaming waves as they roll in, peninsulas and bays lend variety to the coast line: yet the majestic display does not make the visitor cherish Haiti in his mind and heart alongside Sicily or Scotland or Maine or Japan. Columbus in 1492 thought the island "enchanting," saying that "it is a wonder. Its mountains and plains, and meadows and fields, are so beautiful and rich for planting and sowing, and rearing cattle of all kinds, and for building towns and villages" that it "surpasses anything that would be believed by one who had not seen it."[1] The Spanish admiral viewed his discoveries with the eye of faith, seeing the glories which might come to be; his enthusiasm was matched by other early Spaniards. The French in the eighteenth century likewise thought the land beautiful, and with skillful management made their human habitations an ornament to generous nature.

13 105 If one could view Haiti only from the sea or from the air, he would probably, like the Spaniards and Frenchmen, speak in rhapsodies, for the land still stands up out of the sea—"the highest peak of that submerged mountain range whose summits appear as the islands of the Greater Antilles."[2] Visitors disembark from their ships or planes, however, see the poverty, the backwardness, the pathetic smallness of human effort which matches so ill with what nature originally provided, and come away with a feeling of disappointment. Not even the little things of Haiti are immediately attractive: the peasants are not "quaint," their costumes are not "picturesque," their towns are not "colorful"; even the souvenirs to take back to the tourist ship have likely as not been made in New York and imported by the local shops. Outsiders, distracted by the human element, hardly glance at the scenery; and since as conducted tourists they are not likely to penetrate far beyond the seacoast, or stay long enough

1. Christopher Columbus, *Select Letters*, R. H. Major, ed. (London, 1870), p. 3.
2. Blair Niles, *Black Haiti*, p. 6.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

105 to regard the people as neighbors, their first impression is generally
13 their abiding one.

And yet the land has its memorable beauties. To lie at anchor in
13 the harbor at Port-au-Prince early in the morning and watch the long arm of the southern peninsula turn gradually from purple vagueness to brilliant green as the sun rises back of the capital; to see a tiny ship with its patched and colored sail glide quietly by on its way out to the island of La Gonâve, lying twenty miles to the west, like a morsel about to be swallowed by the open jaws of the "mainland"; to hear the morning noises drifting across the water, with a snatch of song or laughter in the air; to watch Port-au-Prince come to life, white and sparkling as the sun strikes it—this is the proper introduction to Haiti. Beyond the capital are the hills and mountains; if one will take the time, he may look back as he climbs and see not only the whiteness of the city, but the gracious sweep of the harbor, and the peninsula losing itself in the western distance. He will think without apology of a lesser Naples, and will not miss Vesuvius. Within the country is every variety of scenery: high mountains whose peaks are frequently shrouded in misty clouds; ranges of lower mountains ("*morne*" is the eloquent Haitian name for them) which can be melancholy, kindly, or forbidding, as the spirit of the traveler wills; dull wastes of salt marshes; arid deserts where cactus grows, spiked and hairy, to enormous heights; canyons, waterfalls, dried-up streams; moors, little jungles, farms; rich plantations of sugar cane, dusty stretches of sheer barrenness—everything, in fact, from majesty to complete insipidity. Rarely can one find such utter diversity in a small space as in Haiti. One might fancy himself successively on Egdon Heath, in an Arizona desert, among the Dakota Bad Lands, in old Saint-Domingue, in tropical Africa, in the Pyrenees.

361 The sad truth remains: nothing that man has done in Haiti for a
[342] century and a quarter has been worthy of the landscape. A few government buildings in Port-au-Prince are passable, and the city as a whole is not a blemish; yet not to have seen it is to have missed no great aesthetic experience. Elsewhere the towns and villages run the gamut from monotonous small-scale structures to mere collections
311 of shanties. Great gashes have been cut in the forests by generations of earth-hungry peasants who needed farms. Much of the land looks poor; indeed, thousands of once fertile acres are now beyond any use at all, grown up in cactus, because of overuse and misuse for-

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

311 merly. Wherever the overcrowded Haitians have lived since 1815, there beauty has had to give way to gnawing necessity which lacked either the imagination or the means to be sightly.

105 One can stand upon a morne and watch a rain storm rush down the valley, bending the palm trees in its fury, and think Haiti still a magnificent sight. Then one must descend the mountainside past rickety shacks and rocky fields, and the feeling grows that not all the kindly simplicity of the people is enough to lift the country from its [134] dilapidation. As he nears the village, the afternoon scent of roasting coffee will delight him; but then he sees the squalor of village life and is reminded that three million souls are here trying to eke out an existence upon a small area of declining fertility.

Much in Haiti is picturesque if one can keep his mind from wandering to the conditions which lie behind the picturesqueness. [482] Women stride down from the hills with great loads on their heads; [443] aged crones, pipe in mouth, sit perched on the haunches of tiny donkeys with their bulging panniers; the great market square in the [492] town is a scene of noisy confusion with hundreds of women and [482] children, a mixture of smells, thousands of little piles of soap, candy, gewgaws, vegetables, gaping chickens tied together by the feet, [434] shirts, canes, bolts of cloth. All the weary women, however, must [146] trudge back up to their shanties on the mountainside when the market is over. Many of them do not see ten dollars in cash during the year, and their little children, with bellies bulging, give evidence [164] of undernourishment. Without doctors, without even the rudiments of hygiene, they manage somehow to subsist, or else die, frequently of disease which might easily have been prevented.

565 In Port-au-Prince and a few other towns live enough members of the élite to make one momentarily forget the plight of the masses. [342] The houses of the well-to-do* are substantially built, if not often [351] attractive. Their garden walls are brilliant with bougainvillea, their walks with hibiscus. Tiny red lizards (analis) make flashes of color along the walls. On shady verandas and in the parlors one hears delightful conversation, eats excellent food, savors the pleasures of [575] civilization. The clubs of the élite are pleasing, their tennis is good, [526] their dancing graceful. To be among these families as a welcome guest is an experience in gracious hospitality which can never be [535] forgotten. Too soon, however, one must leave these havens of urbanity and pass through districts of the town which haunt the mind with their grim want.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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489 mind dust, ruts, and a steady succession of bumps. To travel in the
[49] average hired car, driven by a Haitian, is one of the grim experiences of life. The driver speeds as if pursued by a demon, while the peasant pedestrians leap for safety into the ditches; the unfortunate passenger is moved to close his eyes to avoid seeing the inevitable crash which
[361] does not come. The most comfortable means of travel if one is going only to towns is by ship, for practically all of Haiti's towns are seaports.

162 To know the towns is still not to know Haiti, however, for two
577 million or more Haitians live in the rural regions. These are the people. And if they are ignorant and not too clean, they are nevertheless models of kindly generosity. It is the proud boast even of the élite that one may travel the length and breadth of the land in perfect safety, in no danger of life or of personal property.

105 Many homely sights linger in the mind: women washing the family clothes in the stream, laughing and gossiping with their neighbors; men and women talking in animated fashion to themselves, arguing, cajoling, explaining as they walk along; individuals carrying a single flower, simply because it is beautiful; barefoot women, gnarled of hand and lined of face, kneeling in the Catholic church at prayer; taxi drivers who cruise by, hissing in order to attract the attention of a visitor who obviously can afford to ride instead of walk; an apparently ceaseless procession of patient donkeys, always laden, sometimes ridden by women, sometimes urged along from behind; the so-called buses each with its witty or its florid name (Plaisance, Éclair, Grâce-à-Dieu, Polichinelle, Sauve-qui-peut, Montparnasse), which like glorified buckboards jostle woodenly from the town to country hamlets; the winsome, open smile and gay laughter of a peasant boy; the ingratiating charm of a sleeping baby in the noise of the market place. To know the average Haitian is to feel a warm affection for him. His life is never easy, yet he bears it all with true beauty of spirit. If *le bon Dieu* sends distress, he will also make it possible for distress to be borne.

576 The people are polite, whether to each other or to strangers. A younger person greets an older one as *compère* or *commère*—literally, godfather or godmother; to his equal he says "*frère*" or "*m'sieu*."
[367] Sometimes one sees a local patriarch instructing little children in
[609] "deportment." This courtesy extends to hospitality: a stranger is almost sure to be offered shelter and food wherever he stops.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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been murdered, as in 1937); and the Dominican influence can be seen in northeastern Haiti. The country as a whole, however, remains largely free from non-Haitian influence. This isolation may not continue for many more years, for successive administrations expand their health activities, try to improve economic methods, extend transportation facilities, and pursue policies of "enlightenment." Under such a regimen there will be an inevitable contact either with the experts from foreign countries or with the products of the civilization of those countries. And if Haiti should acquire foreign machines in large numbers, she would inevitably open herself to the dynamic influences which accompany a changing economy.

Such a possibility is in the near future, so that social scientists will shortly have the chance to observe cultural contact and diffusion at work. What is more immediately to the point is the query as to how much diffusion of cultural traits occurred at the beginning of Haitian national life. How much of the African tribal culture persisted through slavery and the period of forced labor into the Haiti of small properties and peasantry? How much, on the other hand, is a borrowing from the French ways of colonial times? These questions have been treated in earlier chapters, but may be here summarized. The external structure of social institutions, particularly those which characterize the life of the élite, is clearly French. Haitian government and law, upper-class marriage, the Catholic religion—all these have a French provenance. Conversely, among the masses, the Vodun religion and possibly certain economic devices (such as the coumbite) stem from Africa. Yet the round of daily life among the people is quite obviously unlike that of any single African group from which slaves were drawn, nor is it a composite of African folkways.[7] Similarly, although the bulk of the population is peasantry, the Haitian peasant is not at all a transplanted French peasant. The folkways and mores of rural Haiti are, to a degree unusual in most countries, products of local experience, uncolored by outside influence.[8]

Students of race find in writings about Haiti the usual sum of generalizations about the temperament and mental characteristics of

7. It must be emphasized that the Haitian slaves were drawn from at least thirty-eight African groups. See J. G. Leyburn, "The Making of a Black Nation," in G. P. Murdock, ed., *Essays in the Science of Society* (New Haven, 1937), pp. 377–394.

8. Herskovits' theory of the African origin of certain Haitian traits has been discussed above, pp. 199–201.

1: Herskovits, Melville J. Life in a Haitian Village. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1937.

Pp. xvi, 369, xix (pp. i-xix of index repaginated by HRAF as pp. 351-369); 12 plates (24 photographs).

Yale: Haiti Cxf sm67 937. DLC: F1926.H47. DLC card no.: 37-4442.

[The author describes the culture and society of a particular Haitian district with respect to the cultural and social conditions of Haiti in general and to their historical development. In this he concentrates upon religion, while social and economic conditions are treated in a rather generalized way. The interconnection between religion, society, and economy is not given sufficient consideration. The author draws the conclusion that the African heritage is of great importance for religion (Voodoo), art (music, dance), and certain social institutions (extended family, pronounced respect for elders, polygyny). The book contains a useful review of Haitian history.

Footnotes, appearing mostly as bibliographical citations in the text, will be found at the end of this source, category 116, pp. 327-338.]

Field date: 1934
Analyst: Sigrid Khera

Evaluation: Ethnologist-4, 5
Processed in 1967

2: Courlander, Harold. The Drum and the Hoe: Life and Lore of the Haitian People. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1960.

Pp. xvi, 371; 48 plates; 2 text figures; appendices; notes; glossary; bibliography and discography; index.

Yale Nkg65 H12 960C. DLC: GR121. H3C65 1960. DLC card no.: 60-8760.

Only introductory material and pp. 1-202, 314-371 have been processed for the Haiti File.

[After an account of Haitian history the author brings a detailed description of Haitian religion and folklore, pointing out elements which he considers to have originated in a particular African region. Social organization and economy are discussed in a generalized way.]

Field date: 1937-1955
Analyst: Sigrid Khera

Evaluation: Folklorist-5
Processed in 1967

3: Leyburn, James G. The Haitian People. With a new introduction by Sidney W. Mintz. Yale Caribbean Series, No. 9. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966.

Pp. xiviii; 342; 1 map.

Yale: Geography Library, F1921 L49 1966. DLC: F1921 .L6 1966. DLC card no.: 66-9411.

[Although written in 1941, this volume, by an American sociologist, still remains the definitive general introduction to a description of Haitian national culture and society through its analysis of those institutional and historical forces determining the nature of the growth and development of Haitian social, political, and economic organization. The method of presentation is a macroscopic rather than microscopic one: instead of analyzing the processes and internal dynamics operating within any one subculture, sector, strata, social class, or geographical area, Leyburn considers the historical forces that underly all the national institutions. The economic, social, political, and cultural structures of society become the critical mutually-determining variables for each other. For example, the author considers cogently and lucidly some of the following: the relation of the military organization to government administration, effects of commerce and national productivity on political stability, the relations of the Catholic Church to the Vodoun Cult, the effects of the class system on marriage-family-kinship patterning, the social origins of revolutions, the economic basis in the rise of dictatorship and autocracy, the legal origins of constitution formation, the effects of race relations on the class structure and national identity, and the economics of changes in land tenure and plantation organization.

3: Leyburn, James G.

The discussion of these institutional interrelations is put into an historical context ranging from the period immediately prior to Independence in 1804 to the aftermath of the American military occupation of Haiti in the 1930's. The anthropologist, however, will find missing any thorough interpretation of rural peasant society or community organization. The author's major theoretical assumption is that Haitian society is sharply split into two castes -- the rural agrarian yeomanry or peasantry (95 o/o of the population) and the urban aristocratic elite, the latter dominating the political apparatus and national institutions. Leyburn feels that the history of institutional changes can most explicitly be seen using a class or caste theoretical framework. With a class system having sharp distinctions in occupation, education, level of income, source of income, language, religion, social values, and attitudes, he argues that Haiti was never able to overcome class separateness or exclusiveness to integrate its society into a viable democratic-capitalistic system with a potential for stable economic and political growth or development. And, as Mintz points out, the elite still extorts taxes from the peasantry without using these revenues to transform the rural economy or to create institutions for rural political participation and representation. (Only the military has consistently been outside the traditional political framework; this fact may have been responsible for the frequency and violence of the nineteenth century revolutions where

3: Leyburn, James G.

the military establishment was able to mobilize both the upper and lower classes to consolidate its forces for seizing control of the state.) The main conclusions from his evaluation of Haitian political and economic history are: Haiti has been expanding statically; the urban elite were accumulating wealth and concentrating power to reinforce their privileges and prerogatives without investing substantially in agricultural or industrial capital enterprises or in spreading parliamentary government to the local levels. If the elite were strengthening the aristocratic establishment at the expense of social innovations, rural over-population, declining agricultural productivity, and traditional peasant resistance to change were further compounding the situation of peasant stagnation, poverty, and powerlessness. Leyburn sees these following characteristics of Haitian government as possible consequences. Upholding of the rigid caste ideology and structure: autocratic or despotic presidential administrations, weak cabinets and legislatures' defects in the voting and electoral system, subordination of the judiciary to the presidency, extreme militarism, government graft and corruption, and the separation of the masses from the government. If Haiti could not maintain throughout its history an open, competitive political system with separation of powers and independent controls over the government bureaucracy, this may have been due also, Leyburn argues, to various national economic liabilities which were reinforcing the totalitarian patterns. Leyburn lists some of these: exclusion of foreign

S: Leyburn, James G.

investment and capital, overmilitirization draining the resources, low agricultural outputs despite the destruction of the system of large feudal-like estates and the forced labor 'peonage' system; inefficient marketing and commerce methods restrictive tariff policies, currency inflation, dependency on a single exportable crop despite irregularities in foreign commodity markets, elite apathy with regard to internal economic growth, and economic indebtedness and defaulting on foreign loans leading to bankruptcy. Whether caste divisiveness and class exploitation is the major factor responsible for modern Haitian political and economic dilemmas is open to question. Mintz suggests, in the introduction to the text, that the extreme differentials in wealth and power within Haitian society (as visible notably in the increasing amount of authority and resources devolving upon the elite, and in the decreasing levels of agricultural production and economic instability in the rural peasant areas) may be explainable by sets of factors other than the desire to maintain class boundary lines. In fact, Mintz suggests that class lines may not be so sharply drawn as Leyburn claims, and that both social mobility and a potentially active rural and urban middle class may be found. Although the major stress of the author's comments are on political and economic history within the context of an emergent caste structure, valuable material is also found on the following: peasant-elite forms of marriage, family, kinship, and social-sexual behavior; the nature of the territorial heirarchy; changes in land tenure and in the plantation system; rural peasant economies; the nature of Vodoun ideology and cult

3: Leyburn, James G.

ceremonials; and the effects of Catholicism in transforming the indigenous religious complex. Briefer comments are also made about the historical origins of the Creole language, demographic changes and urbanization, extent and spread of public education, and developments in public health and sanitation. To sum up, this book is a penetrating overview of Haitian culture, and should provide the necessary in-depth historical perspective and insight for appreciating more particularized and specialized studies of different aspects of Haitian society. As historical sociology, this book offers a broad contextual view of national institutions that can ideally interrelate other more narrow structural-functional analyses. The introduction by Mintz also includes discussion of changes in Haitian society that took place since the publication of this book. Both Mintz and Leyburn provide extensive annotated bibliographies on much of the social science literature on Haiti.]

Field date: no date
Analyst: Gilbert Winer

Evaluation: Sociologist-4,5
Processed in 1967-1968

Bolinder, Gustaf. Det Tropiska Snöfjällets Indianer. Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Verlag, 1916.

Pp. 247; plates; map.

Yale: C71.54.

/This book contains the results of Bolinder's travels in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in 1914 and 1915 among the Cagaba, Busintana and Ika. It has not been processed because the same material is to be found in his later book processed as source no. 7 for the Cagaba file./

Surveyed in 1965.

Taylor, Griffith. Settlement Zones of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Colombia. The Geographical Review, Vol. 21, pp. 539-558. New York: American Geographical Society, 1931.

10 photographs; 4 text figures; 1 table; 4 maps.

Yale: E10 G132 21.

/This article is a brief description of the geography and settlement patterns of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta region. It contains material on the various ecological zones and on their inhabitants, including a brief description of the Cagaba village of San Andrés on the northwestern slopes./

Surveyed in 1965.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

APPENDIX V

REFERENCES

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NOTE: This list of works in no way claims completeness, since there are hundreds of titles on Haiti whose inclusion here would serve no good purpose. Only such articles and books are mentioned to which reference has actually been made in the text. It has also not seemed advisable to include works of fiction and fictionized history bearing on Haiti, such as J. B. Cineas's *La Drame de la Terre*, or Justin Lherisson's *La Famille de Pitite Caille*, or Guy Endore's *Babouk*, or John Vandercook's *Black Majesty*. Since this book presents statements of fact concerning Haitian life, these products of the creative imagination, excellent though they are, could not in the nature of the case be employed to document the exposition.

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346 794 353 778 were stacked against the wall, and set about in various places were several assons, iron crosses, Catholic lithographs, chains and iron bars for the loa Ogoun, candles set in bottles, and an old forged double bell of African design.

346 353 Some of the hounfors found elsewhere are more elaborate and reflect the richer resources of the immediate community, or the creative impulses of the houngan and his helpers, or the pressure of competition. Some cult temples are prolific with painted designs and symbolic representations of the deities. Others are unpretentious, simple, and even Spartan.

346 [113] In his book *En Haiti,* written approximately fifty years ago, Eugene Aubin describes a hounfor in the Cul-de-Sac Plain, a few miles from Port-au-Prince, as he saw it in 1906:

346 353 794 778 [The] *hounfor* is fronted by a *peristyle,* which is used for the Vodoun dances and services; it is a large area, with a floor of beaten earth, covered with a straw roof. On three sides the walls rise to support the roof; on the fourth there is the inscription:

Société la Fleur de Guinée
Roi d'Engole
[*Flower of Africa Society*
King of Angola]

indicating the name of the patron of the society [the loa Roi Angole, or Wangol], over which the *houngan* presides. The *hounfor* is an ordinary house, a little larger than average. The sanctuary contains a principal *pé* [altar], running the whole length of the room on one side, and another altar, a little smaller, in one of the corners. These *pés* are altars largely made of brick, in which the under part is decorated with hearts and stars in relief; above, draperies hang from the ceiling. The [796] lateral *pé* is divided into three compartments. There are, therefore, four sections in all, consecrated to each of the *loa* served in the *hounfor:* Aguay Aoyo [Agwé Woyo], Damballa, Ogoun Badagry, and Loco [Loko], Nago King. Maître Aguay is represented by the customary little boat; a medallion is consecrated to Monsieur Damballa, shown holding two snakes in his hand; a figure on horseback represents Ogoun Badagry, with a woman at one side holding a flag; Papa Loco is pictured in full uniform, smoking a pipe and fanning himself. The walls are covered with religious paintings [Catholic lithographs]. The back of the altar is occupied by numerous carafes in baked clay, called *canaris,* which contain the . . . *mystères* [spirits taken from the heads of the dead] gathered in the *hounfor;* in front are bottles of wine, liqueurs and vermouth presented to them in homage; then the plates, the cups for the *mangers-marassas* [feasts for the twin spirit], crucifixes, hand bells, *assons* for directing the dance or calling the *loa;* plates filled with polished stones [celts] inherited from the Indians—"thunder stones," symbols of Damballa, which Saugo [Sobo] the god of lightning hurls from the sky into the enclosure of his favorite *papalui* [*houngan*]. Beside these miraculous stones are many coins of copper or silver [property of the *loa*]. The *loa* . . . possess coins of Joseph Bonaparte, King of Spain, minted in 1811; of Frederick VII of Denmark, 1859; of Charles IV of Spain, 1783, and of President Boyer, dated year 27 and year 30 of Haitian Independence. On the ground there is placed a coconut-oil lamp; in the corner, the flags of the *hounfor* and the saber of [the] *laplace,* the man who acts as master of ceremonies in the services.

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Notes

Chapter 1: *The Making of the Haitian* (*pp. 1-7*)

[1]The name Ganda survives in Haiti as the name of a deity.

[2]Herskovits, in *The Myth of the Negro Past* (p. 47), provides a tabulation of raw data found in the manifests recorded for slaves shipped to Virginia between 1710 and 1769: 20,564 slaves were reported shipped from "Africa," 3,652 from Gambia, 6,777 from "Guinea," 9,224 from Calabar, 3,860 from Angola, and 1,011 from Madagascar. Of those shipped from the island of Madagascar, 473 were listed as coming from Mozambique.

[3]Bartolomé de Las Casas.

Chapter 2: *Man and the Universe: Vodoun* (*pp. 8-18*)

[1]See Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 7.

[2]Schweinfurth in *The Heart of Africa*, II, 31, says: "In Loango all exorcists and conjurors are called *ganga*." Leo Wiener, in *Africa and the Discovery of America* (Philadelphia: Innes and Sons, 1922), III, 32, reports: "Forms of *ganga* have in Bantu the meaning 'medicine' but also 'magic'—such as Nyika *ganga* and Kongo *nganga*."

[3]Gorer, *Africa Dancer*, p. 120; Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 208 ff.

[4]From the Fon *houn-so* or *houn-su*. Among the Arada of Dahomey a *houn-su* was regarded as a spiritual wife of the deity. She was a servant of the cult temple, and in some instances a wife of the cult priest.

[5]Translated from the French of Aubin, *En Haiti*, pp. 57-59.

[6]Deren, in her *Divine Horsemen* (pp. 119 ff.), gives an excellent report of a service for Agwé in a boat at sea. Aubin (*op. cit.*, p. 108) seems to have given the first description of this service at sea for the loa Agwé.

[7]Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. 119.

[8]*Ibid.*, p. 123. Leyburn advances the theory that Vodoun developed during this period as a result of the vacuum left by the Church. Although the Church did in effect leave the field to the African cults, one must assume that the Arada, Congo, and other cults were already organized and possessed of great vitality before the Haitian revolution. Implicit evidence points to a continuity of cult life from the earliest days of the African on Haitian soil. There are no statistics to reveal the extent of cult membership at the end of the eighteenth century, but the content and form of Vodoun today are so overwhelmingly African that it is difficult to think of Haitian cult activity as the product of a renaissance.

Chapter 3: *The Loa: Gods of the Haitian Mountains* (*pp. 19-29*)

[1]The term *vodoun*, used in this precise sense, conforms to the original Fon (Dahomean) usage. The term *hounsi*, also of Fon origin, signifies "spirit" and belongs to the same root

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as *hounfor, hounsi, houngénicon, hountor*, etc. *Mystère* is of obvious French origin. *Loa* is probably from the Bantu, but it could be from the Yoruba.

[2]Various methods and formulas are employed in "tying" a loa. Sometimes making the sign of the cross is regarded as adequate, or the saying of a prayer. In "The Vodun Service in Northern Haiti" (*American Anthropologist*, XLII, 242–243), George Eaton Simpson reports that the "tying" of a loa sometimes results in a contest between the individual concerned and his houngan. If the houngan wants the *malt' tête* to come in, he must neutralize the ritual barriers the "horse" has put in the way. "One procedure for bringing on possession in a servant who has tried to 'tie' his chief god is for the priest to stand in front of the person whom he suspects, make the sign of the cross, and strike him on the forehead three times with a sacrificial stone. Usually these blows are hard enough to make blood spurt. The servant then begs the pardon of the angry god, and as soon as possible he unties the knots in his handkerchief [the method he has used for 'tying' his loa]."

[3]Herskovits, *Dahomey*.

Chapter 4: *Death Rites* (*pp. 30–40*)

[1]Maurice Delafosse, *L'Ame nègre*. Translation from *Free France*, special issue No. 4, French Press and Information Service, New York, June, 1945.

[2]Leo A. Verwilghen, in booklet describing peoples of the Kwango region, accompanying *Music of the Western Congo*, recordings issued by the Ethnic Folkways Library.

[3]Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu*, pp. 88–89.

[4]W. M. Eiselen and I. Schapera, "Religious Beliefs and Practices," in Schapera, *The Bantu-speaking Tribes of South Africa*, p. 250.

[5]Translated from the French of Aubin, *En Haiti*, p. 212.

[6]Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, pp. 213–214.

[7]Hall and others, *Haitian Creole*, American Anthropological Association, Memoir No. 54, pp. 188–189.

[8]Simpson, "Four Vodun Ceremonies," *Journal of American Folklore*, April–June, 1946, pp. 155–162.

[9]As translated by Courlander from Simpson's Creole text, *ibid.*, p. 156. The preceding paragraph is from p. 155.

[10]Translated by Courlander from the Creole of Simpson's text.

[11]This and the preceding paragraph are from Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

[12]These shells, as indicated elsewhere, are part of the paraphernalia of the Vodoun priest and appear to be an inheritance from the priests of the Fa cult of Dahomey. The divining shells are usually thrown on the ground in fours, and the readings depend upon combinations of "heads and tails." The manner of throwing the shells, as well as the number used, corresponds closely with the Haitian secular gambling game *mayamba* (see Appendix 2), though the purpose is obviously different. In some priestly rites in Haiti, ashes rather than the customary shells are used for divining.

[13]Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

[14]*Ibid.*, p. 161.

[15]Herskovits, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

[16]Herskovits (*ibid.*) notes that persons who die of smallpox, lightning, and certain other phenomena are not buried in coffins. Some of my informants indicated this to be their understanding also, but they said that the dead are buried without coffins for strictly economic reasons as well.

[17]Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

[18]Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. 156.

[19]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 398.

[20]*Ibid.*, pp. 397–398.

[21]Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, p. 214.

[22]Hall and others, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

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● 113 ***A Selective Listing of Haitian Music on Records***

Voices of Haiti (LP), recorded in Haiti by Maya Deren. Electra. Five examples of ritual songs and dances recorded near Pétionville and Croix des Missions. On the whole, superior material. The first two pieces on the record, which are documentary, are particularly outstanding.

Haiti Dances (78 r.p.m.). Wax. Some of the information provided on the album cover is inaccurate, but the records are worth listening to. Not "documentary," but performed by a good modern folk-dance group.

Drums of Haiti (LP), recorded in Haiti by Harold Courlander. Ethnic Folkways Library. Thirteen examples of drums and other percussion instruments, demonstrating the rhythms of eleven different dances. Contains some of the selections transcribed in this volume.

Folk Music of Haiti (LP), recorded in Haiti by Harold Courlander. Ethnic Folkways Library. Eighteen examples of secular and religious music, work songs, songs of social criticism, carnival music, game songs, and a "spirit conversation" by a cult priest. Contains some of the selections transcribed in this volume.

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Haitian Piano (LP), recorded in Haiti by Harold Courlander. Folkways. Eight examples of old-style salon Meringues, etc., performed by Fabre Duroseau and the Duroseau trio.

Haitian Dances (LP). Eight arrangements of folk tunes, played on the guitar by Frantz Casséus. Folkways.

Haitian Folk Songs (LP), sung by Lolita Cuevas, guitar accompaniment by Frantz Casséus. Folkways. Excellent concert performance of traditional Haitian folk songs.

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tiny communities, some of them designating "villages" of only four or five houses. For numbers of peasants hidden away in the valleys or on mountain farms, the only contact with the larger world comes through visits to the nearest market town—which itself may count only a thousand souls. The peasant is thus effectively isolated. The American Financial Adviser to the Government has estimated the average *annual* income of the Haitian at $20 a head.[8] The smallness of the sum limits the material contacts of the peasant with the outside world. Rural schools are few,[9] consequently all but a small percentage of the rising generation is growing up illiterate. Lack of mental stimulus completes the isolation. Bound to the soil by the need of wresting a livelihood from rocky, gullied, and increasingly unproductive land, harassed by ill-health, and governed by a group whose own security would be threatened by improving his lot, it is little wonder that the peasant is unprogressive, or that he struggles along at a bare subsistence level.[10]

162 184 105 [434] [871]

Haiti is rural and agricultural, then, with a population density of about 250 per square mile. The people, living without machine industry and with very little foreign trade, must get their living from 10,000 square miles, not of lush tropical soil but of rocky, mountainous country which, after a century and a half of poor farming, has been stripped of most of its forests and much of its topsoil.

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A glance at a relief map of the West Indies would show clearly that the islands are the tops of a mountain range, whose lowlands were long since submerged by the Caribbean Sea. Looked at from above, Haiti seems a jumbled mass of mountains running in all directions.[11] Down their slopes flow many small streams which after

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8. Dr. W. W. Cumberland, cited by Paul H. Douglas, "The American Occupation of Haiti," *Political Science Quarterly*, XLII (1927), 258. [113]

9. The average monthly salary of $13 (until recently only $6) for rural schoolteachers would not draw many wide-awake young men, even if schoolhouses existed for classes. The salary, indeed, is so small that only inferior persons are attracted, often men who know little more than their pupils. See chap. XV, 3. [875]

10. Mrs. Blair Niles, in *Black Haiti* (New York, 1926), pp. 185–186, tells of a prisoner who preferred to remain in jail rather than be freed. "When he gets out," she quotes the officer as saying, "he'll be in again. You'll see. Here he gets nine cents a day for food, an' that's more than the average Haitian ever has." [114] [434]

11. One can well believe the story (told by Ebenezer D. Bassett, *Haiti* [Washington, 1893], p. 3) of the English admiral who, asked by George III for a description of the island, crumpled a sheet of paper, threw it on the table, and said: "Sire, Haiti looks like that." The same tale is told of Puerto Rico, with a Spanish admiral speaking to Queen Isabella.

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trary; they were grudgingly respected as superior beings, arbiters of the fate of the outside world, potential destroyers of the privileges of the Haitian élite should they return to the country in force. Although white men might not legally marry Haitian women, it was not every woman who could resist the opportunity of having children lighter than herself. One indication of the ambiguous attitude toward the whites was seen in religion. In 1842 out of sixty or seventy Roman Catholic priests in the island, only one was a Haitian. Many people in the country were well educated, and certainly more than equals in point of scholarship and *savoir-faire* of the rude priests imported generally from Corsica. But a feeling was current among the peasants that "colored baptism will not stick." There is no indication that the European priests, since they were well paid for their services, attacked this particular heresy. As for the élite, they derived a certain satisfaction in being served by white priests. Aside from the churchmen, however, the only white man in any place of prominence in the country was the mayor of Saint-Marc, whose father had befriended Boyer in former times.

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Few visitors had kind words to say of social conditions in the Haiti of Boyer. As a Frenchman put it:

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> Democracy was the rule; but what a democracy! A hodge-podge of the most heterogeneous ideas, an alliance of the most contrary principles, of American federalism with military control; the sovereignty of the people replaced by the sovereignty of a ruling clique; and finally, all the intellectual vainglory of a people young, inexperienced, and for a long time denied the legitimate manifestation of their own wishes. Added to all these inconsistencies is the antagonism of races.[61]

This antagonism was, indeed, paramount. The habitual hauteur and assumed pretensions of the lighter Haitians were a perpetual thorn in the flesh of the ambitious blacks, and thus the breach was everywhere widened and made permanent. The blacks retaliated against these distinctions by refusing to obey orders from mulattoes in office, or by petty outrages against private citizens among the colored group.

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The vital lack of the country, assuming that stability is desirable, was a middle class of any sort. On the base of hundreds of thousands of peasants, illiterate, unambitious, indifferent to progress, was built

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61. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, "La République d'Haïti; ses dernières révolutions; sa situation actuelle," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, XV, No. 4 (Nov., 1843), pp. 681–682.

[113]

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believe. It stuck in people's minds. Since Sir Spenser's time tourists to Haiti have habitually spent a few hours ashore, heard drumbeats from the hills, and shuddered deliciously as they conjured up images of weird goings-on—black magic, licentious dances, and frenetic orgies. Novelists during the past half-century have spun their tales full of local color, while "serious" authors have made small fortunes out of pseudo-scientific books with just enough fact mingled with their lush imaginings to give "an air of similitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative." Their language runs into such purple phrases as "blood-maddened, sex-maddened, god-maddened,"[1] to describe the religious exaltation of the people at a Vodun service. Under this constant rain of misrepresentation, Haitians who care for the good opinion of other nations have become extremely sensitive on the subject of the folk religion. Many of them deny its existence; others speak of it as something beneath their attention. The more they try to cover it over, however, with silence and professed contempt, the more mysteriously fascinating it becomes to the foreign visitor. The tourist who goes to Paris expects to see the Eiffel Tower, whatever its aesthetic faults; the tourist in Haiti wishes to see, without quite knowing what he means by the term, "a Voodoo dance." No amount of scientific writing about the real character of Vodun will change the popular misconception. For every reader of accurate ethnographical or anthropological treatises on Vodun[2] there are hundreds who feast morbidly on sensational books.

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Hairian Vodun is not the same as the hoodoo of American Negroes.[3] The word is etymologically the same, whether American Voodoo, Hairian Vodun, French Vaudoux, or Spanish judu (whence our "hoodoo"): all derive from a Dahomean (West African) word signifying "god" or "spirit."[4] It is the generic term for all deities.

1. This phrase is taken from W. B. Seabrook, *The Magic Island* (New York, 1929), p. 42, but might easily have come from half a dozen other journalistic descriptions. [114]

2. Particularly recommended are Melville J. Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley* (New York, 1937), and Dr. Jean Price-Mars, *Ainsi parla l'oncle* (Port-au-Prince, 1928). [113]

3. See Herskovits, *op. cit.*, pp. 139 ff.

4. The *Encyclopædia Britannica*, in a surprisingly superficial and brief article, gives a singular etymology to "Voodoo," tracing it to the Swiss canton of Vaud, where in the Middle Ages a heterodox faith sprang up which had to be practiced in secret. The implication is that any secret religion might be called "Vaud-ois," or "Voodoo." Evidently the author of the encyclopædia article had made no serious investigation of the subject; most modern dictionaries, on the other hand, indicate the Dahomean etymology. [192]

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of the parish church to which each party belongs, and no ceremony may be performed by a priest without the presentation of the certificate of the civil marriage. 585

According to the legal code, as well as actual practice of the upper classes, woman is man's definite inferior in rights.[7] The Haitian code follows closely that of Napoleon, and both conform in general to practice common among substantial people in the Haiti and France of the early nineteenth century. Spouses equally owe to each other fidelity, succor, and assistance; the husband owes protection to his wife, the wife obedience to her husband. Although the wife must live with her husband wherever he chooses, he conversely must receive her when she comes to live with him, and must provide food for her. No wife may purchase, sell, give, or otherwise alienate property without the consent of her husband; moreover, the husband alone has the administration of goods coming in the dowry, so long as the union endures. 562

The modern movement for women's rights has hardly touched Haiti.[8] Women may not vote, nor may they hold public office. Among the élite, in theory and in practice woman's place is in the home, caring for the household and the children. One might imagine himself in provincial France as he sees the daily life of upper-class Haitian women: the ordering of meals, directing of servants, sewing, shopping, visiting, party going, occasional novel reading, driving in the family car. Different from French practice, however, is the taboo against most manual labor: this is the task of servants only. The élite housewife may cook but not sweep, sew but not launder, bargain with a huckster but not carry home her purchases. A woman of the upper classes would demean herself to enter business. Since the American Occupation, as a matter of fact, a few women have been daring enough to become secretaries and stenographers, but there seems to be nothing like a concerted movement for the "emancipation" of élite women. There are schools for girls, but these do not reach as far as the schools for boys; women are not admitted to the law school or medical school, for a woman lawyer or doctor would be unthinkable in Haitian society. [463] [871] [463]

7. See Louis Borno, *Code civil d'Haïti annoté* (Port-au-Prince, 1892), chap. VI, articles 196–201.

8. See, however, Madeleine G. Sylvain, "The Feminist Movement in Haiti," *Bulletin of the Pan-American Union*, LXXIII, No. 6 (June, 1939), 315–321. [113]

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list except in raw form, in which it had an annual sale of only a few thousand pounds. Other subordinate exports were cotton, logwood, lignum vitae, mahogany, tortoise shells, hides, cacao, cassia, wax, ginger, bullocks' horns, and tobacco—and many of these came primarily from the Dominican rather than the Haitian part of the island, during the twenty-two year period of union. The imports were mainly clothing and provisions. That an agricultural country should need to bring in flour, butter, cheese, lard, beef, pork, candles, and especially—in the light of former days—refined sugar, is eloquent testimony to the degree to which food production had declined since colonial times. Other imports were more to be expected, since manufacture had never developed: linen, cotton goods of all kinds, some few woolens, cutlery, iron goods, wines and brandies, oil, lumber, coarse iron goods, earthenware, tin plates, and minor articles.[11]

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Gone now were the days of big things in Haiti. Estates of thousands of acres would in Boyer's time have been only a liability. Profits were measured, or rather hoped for, in terms of hundreds rather than thousands of dollars.[12] Saint-Domingue of the 1780's was one of the exciting parts of the world to traders; Haiti of fifty years later was little more than a vague name except to specialists. Any country relying for its economic security upon one crop and its sale in a foreign market must expect vicissitudes in its income. Haiti had these in full measure. And so the prosperity of the country steadily diminished.[13]

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11. See the very careful report to Great Britain by her consul, Charles Mackenzie, in 1830: *Notes on Hayti*, II, 175–190. [113]

12. Mackenzie (*Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti*, Document XI) reports in 1825: "Generally speaking, no sugar is manufactured on the estates devoted to the cultivation of the sugar cane; the juice is either inspissated to a coarse sirup, and sold for common use, or distilled into a very inferior rum, called here 'Tafia.'" Then, citing the case of Tor, an estate formerly owned by Pétion but in 1825 by Boyer, he reports: "Formerly 1,700 carreaux were in cane; 1,500 slaves were employed on it; 3 sugar mills were constantly at work, and excellent clayed sugar was made. Now only about 7 carreaux are in cultivation; 50 laborers are employed; the only produce is a little sirup and tafia, which last is retailed in a small shop by the side of the road, in front of the president's residence."

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13. These vicissitudes have been frequently noted. Droughts and hurricanes, pests and earthquakes, were causes of constant apprehension. The chief forces at work to diminish Haitian prosperity were two: the division of land into small parcels at home, and the competition of other countries with Haitian coffee abroad. The price of coffee had declined in all the European markets, making the return to the cultivator exceedingly small.

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127 NOTE: When research was first begun upon the economic and social development of Haiti, permission was asked for an examination of Haitian Archives. The reply of the governmental official was cordial and frank. He remarked: "*Nos bouleversements politiques et de nombreux incendies ont occasionné la perte ou la destruction totale d'une partie appréciable des documents haïtiens. Et, il faut l'avouer, avec peine, nous n'avons jamais eu une organisation méthodique pour la conservation des pièces et documents officiels.*" Research in the Archives Générales de la République d'Haïti revealed the truth of the official's statement: there is practically nothing relating to nineteenth-century Haiti. Reliance had, therefore, to be placed upon contemporary accounts, some published, some in manuscript, rather than upon official documents.

Republic of Haiti

113 114 *Le Moniteur* (*journal officiel de la République d'Haïti*). This newspaper, begun on Feb. 6, 1843, is an excellent source of officially approved news and comment. Certain administrations during the course of the century have shown a genius, however, for cautious editing of news.

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Documents on Haiti, in the New York Public Library. A collection of more than a hundred letters, newspapers, reports, programs, and miscellaneous material. Although certain of the documents are utterly unimportant (as, for example, a notice of the obsequies for Pétion), others on the contrary are indispensable as contemporary comment upon the state of affairs in Haiti. The collection was made by John Hearne, who resided in Port-au-Prince from 1815 to 1846.

HAITI (SAINT-DOMINGUE) BEFORE 1804

NOTE: Critical notes are appended to those works whose titles are not properly descriptive, and to those which are particularly important for an understanding of the economic and social development of Haiti.

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——— *The History Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies.* ("To which is added, an Historical Survey of the French Colony in the Island of St. Domingo.") London, 1798.

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FRANKLIN, JAMES. *The Present State of Hayti (Saint Domingo)*. London, 1828. As the title implies, this work is mostly concerned with the Haiti of Boyer; to p. 189 it is, however, a good brief history of the period before 1804. 113 114

GARRAN-COULON, J. PH. *Rapport sur les troubles de Saint-Domingue*. Paris, 1792. Worthless.

HASSALL, MARY. *Secret History; or, the Horrors of St. Domingo, in a series of letters, written by a lady at Cape François to Colonel Burr, late Vice-President of the United States, principally during the command of General Rochambeau*. Philadelphia, 1808.

LABAT, LE R. PÈRE. *Nouveau voyage aux îles de l'Amerique*. Paris, 1742. 8 vols. Occasional canny observations about social conditions.

LACROIX, PAMPHILE DE. *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la révolution de Saint-Domingue*. Paris, 1820. 2 vols. One of the most rewarding sources on the revolution.

LAUJON, A. P. M. *Précis historique de la dernière révolution de Saint-Domingue*. Paris, 1803. Concentrates on the military situation.

LEPINASSE, BEAUVAIS. *Histoire des affranchis de Saint-Domingue*. Paris, 1882. Political and economic history, detailed and straightforward.

MADIOU, THOMAS. *Histoire d'Haïti*. 4 vols. Vols. I–III, Port-au-Prince, 1848; Vol. IV, Port-au-Prince, 1904. (New ed., Port-au-Prince, 1922.) The first detailed and important history of the colonial background and the early days of independence, written by a distinguished Haitian scholar. Only in Volume III is the period of independence reached, and Volume IV is more a set of random notes than a history. Madiou's main interest was political and military manoeuvres; to this end his work is full of detailed accounts of battles and complete reports of speeches and proclamations. It is, however, free in its comments and judgments on events of the revolutionary period. An indispensable source.

MALO, CHARLES. *Histoire de l'île de Saint-Domingue, depuis l'époque de sa découverte par Christophe Colomb jusqu'à l'année 1818*. Paris, 1819. Almost a direct translation of Barket, q.v., with nothing of importance added.

MAUREL, BLANCHE. *Cahier des Doléances de la colonie de Saint-Domingue pour les États Généraux de 1789*. Paris, 1933. An important document for one brief phase of colonial participation in the French Revolution.

MILLS, H. E. *The Early Years of the French Revolution in San Domingo*. Poughkeepsie, 1892. A political monograph.

MOREAU DE SAINT-MÉRY, LOUIS ÉLIE. *Description topographique, physique, civile, politique et historique de la partie française de l'île Saint-Domingue. ("Avec des observations générales sur sa population, sur le caractère et les moeurs de ses divers habitans; sur son climat, sa culture, ses productions, son administration, &c. &c.")* Philadelphia, 1797. 2 vols. A splendid source book by a careful observer. Most of the information available about the plantation economy and the Negro slaves of the French régime is derived from this source. Moreau also published in two volumes (1798) a treatise on the Spanish part of the island.

NEMOURS, C. *Histoire militaire de la guerre de l'indépendance de Saint-Domingue*. Paris, 1925.

NEWTON, ARTHUR P. *The European Nations in the West Indies, 1493–1688*. London, 1933. A good brief history of colonial penetration.

PETITRAUD, LUCIEN. *L'Esclavage aux Antilles françaises avant 1789*. Paris, 1897. As definitive a work upon this topic as exists.

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SANNON, H. PAULÉUS. *Histoire de Toussaint-Louverture*. Port-au-Prince, 1920. 3 vols. A thorough investigation of the life of The First of the Blacks, by a Haitian scholar. Better on detail than upon the inner quality of the man.

STEWARD, T. G. *The Haitian Revolution, 1791 to 1804*. New York, 1914.

STODDARD, T. LOTHROP. *The French Revolution in San Domingo*. New York, 1914.

TONNÈRE, BOISROND. *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire d'Haïti*. Cap François, 1804. Brief memoirs by one of the leading generals of Lessalines.

VAISSIÈRE, PIERRE DE. *Saint-Domingue (1629–1789). La Société et la vie créole sous l'ancien régime*. Paris, 1909. Excellent.

VASTEY, Baron de. *Essai sur les causes de la révolution et des guerres civiles d'Hayti*. Sans Souci (Kingdom of Hayti), 1819. A historical treatise on the announced subject by the official historian of Christophe's kingdom. Everything is interpreted in terms of the cruelty of the French, and the justice of the Negro cause.

——— *Réflexions politiques sur les noirs et les blancs*. Sans Souci, 1817. Like the preceding work, an official interpretation of the Negro position.

WALLEZ, JEAN. *Précis historique des négotiations entre la France et Saint-Domingue*. Paris, 1826. Although largely concerned with the period after 1804, this work provides a background for the negotiations.

WIMPFFEN, Baron de. *A Voyage to Santo Domingo in the Years 1788, 1789, and 1790*. London, 1797. A travelogue with occasional important observations.

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ALAUX, GUSTAVE D'. *L'Empereur Soulouque et son empire*. Paris, 1856. Informative.

ARDOUIN, BEAUBRUN. *Études sur l'histoire d'Haïti*. Paris, 1833–60. 5 vols. An extensive work by a moralist. Christophe is condemned in detail, while Pétion and Boyer are generously praised. Ardouin has been called "a naïve but faithful panegyrist" of Boyer. His work is unreliable.

——— *La Géographie de l'Île d'Haïti*. Port-au-Prince, 1832. Containing a historical résumé of Haiti and an examination of her condition in 1832; very moral reflections upon Haitian folkways, and a description of Haitian places. Not very useful.

AUBIN, EUGÈNE. *En Haïti*. Paris, 1910. As good a description of the country and its people in the period before the American Occupation as exists.

BAILLY, M. *Notice sur l'Île de Saint-Domingue*. Paris, 1832. A reprint of an address delivered in the Académie des Sciences, Belles-Lettres et Arts de Besançon, *séance publique de 28 janvier 1832*. General and unimportant.

BAKER, CECIL S. "Climatic Influences in the Caribbean," *Current History*, February, 1930. Highly superficial.

BALCH, EMILY GREENE. *Occupied Haiti*. New York, 1927. One of the best accounts of the Occupation of Haiti by the American Marines, and of the work done during the first eleven years of the Occupation.

BASSETT, ESPERANCE D. *Haiti*. Bureau of the American Republics, Bulletin 62, revised to September 1, 1893. Washington, 1893. A brief survey of the country's history and geography by a former American Minister to Haiti. It is more in the nature of a guidebook than a source.

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BELLEGARDE, DANTÈS. *Haiti and Its People*. Washington, 1922. An effort by one of Haiti's most distinguished scholars and officials to make the citizens of the United States understand Haiti.

——— *La République d'Haiti et les États-Unis devant la justice international*. Paris, 1924. A well-reasoned plea against the American Occupation.

——— *L'Occupation américaine d'Haiti*. Port-au-Prince, 1929.

——— *Pour une Haiti heureuse*. Port-au-Prince, 1929. 2 vols. A thoughtful analysis of Haitian problems.

——— *Un Haïtien parle*. Port-au-Prince, 1934.

BIRD, MARK BAKER. *The Black Man; or, Haytian Independence*. New York, 1869. Second-hand history from familiar sources, with religious overtones of a Wesleyan variety. Only occasional illuminating remarks about contemporary conditions.

——— and DEHOUX, J. B. *Des Révolutions d'Haïti*. Port-au-Prince, 1867. The only significance of the title is to prove the point that Haiti needs religion.

BONNEAU, ALÉXANDER. *Haïti: ses progrès, son avenir*. ("*Avec un précis historique sur ses constitutions, le texte de la constitution actuellement en vigueur, et une bibliographie d'Haïti.*") Paris, 1862. A very fair short analysis of Haiti's progress and difficulties up to the administration of Geffrard.

BROWN, DR. JONATHAN. *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*. Philadelphia, 1837. 2 vols. All the first volume, and 140 pages of the second, deal with the period before independence. Good history and dispassionate judgments on Haitian folkways and mores. The last chapter, on Haiti in 1836, is excellent.

BUELL, RAYMOND LESLIE. *The American Occupation of Haiti*. Foreign Policy Association Publication. New York, 1929.

BUTLER, C. S. "The Medical Needs of the Republic of Haiti at the Present Time." *United States Navy Medical Bulletin 24*, No. 2. Washington, 1926.

CABON, Le R. Père ADOLPHE. *Notes sur l'histoire religieuse d'Haïti, de la révolution au concordat (1789–1860)*. Port-au-Prince, 1933. A definitive study of this question by a scholarly priest.

CANDLER, JOHN. *Brief Notices of Hayti: with Its Conditions, Resources, and Prospects*. London, 1842. This work, by an open-minded Quaker, is not a history, but rather a most temperate and very generous analysis of Haiti as the author saw it. The occasional religious digressions do not detract from its value as a source of information about the Haiti of Boyer.

CHANCY, H. *Guide des communes*. Port-au-Prince, 1935. Information geographical and administrative.

CHAPMAN, C. E. *Colonial Hispanic America*. New York, 1933. Illuminating comments on Saint-Domingue and the beginning of Haitian independence.

——— "The Development of the Intervention in Haiti." *Hispanic American Historical Review*, VII, 299–319, 1927.

CHARMANT, ALCIDE. *Haïti, vivra-t-elle?* ("*Étude sur le préjugé des races: race noire, race jaune, race blanche, et sur la doctrine de Monroe.*") Le Havre, 1905. A denunciation of the mulattoes in Haiti.

CHAUVET, HENRI. *À Travers la république d'Haïti*. Paris, 1894. An indifferent travelogue.

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CHENET, EDMOND. *Proverbs créoles*. Port-au-Prince, 1896. A collection of 1,456 proverbs with French translations.

CHRISTIE, EMERSON B. "Haiti's Contribution to Literature." *Pan American Magazine*, XLIV, 216–226, 1931.

CLARK, B. C. *A Plea for Hayti: the Last Sixty Years*. New York, 1853. Containing a historical sketch, but chiefly an apologia for Haiti. Of little value.

COURLANDER, HAROLD. *Haiti Singing*. Chapel Hill, 1939. An excellent collection of 185 songs, with melodies of 126 of them. Five superior chapters on the cultural background of Haiti.

DALENCOUR, Dr. FRANÇOIS. *Aléxandre Pétion*. Port-au-Prince, 1928. A panegyric by a hero-worshiper.

——— *Le Sauvetage national par le retour à la terre*. Port-au-Prince, 1923. Contains an illuminating analysis of the division of the national domain by Pétion and Boyer.

——— *Précis méthodique d'histoire d'Haiti*. Port-au-Prince, 1935. Sketchy as history; abominably printed.

DAVIS, H. P. *Black Democracy; the Story of Haiti*. 3d ed., revised. New York, 1936. Not only a good sketch of the early days of Haiti, but probably the best detailed description of the American Occupation. Highly recommended.

——— "Notes on Haiti and Santo Domingo." *Pan American Magazine*, vol. XXXII, 1919.

DELORME, DÉMESVAR. *La Misère au sein des richesses*. Paris, 1873. One of the first analyses of the problems which were contributing to the slow decline of Haiti in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

DENIS, LORIMER, and DUVALIER, Dr. FRANÇOIS. "La Civilisation haïtienne: notre mentalité est-elle africaine ou gallo-latine?" *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haiti*, VII, No. 23, 1–31, May, 1936. After some rather nebulous talk about psychology, a good discussion of parallels between African and Haitian religious beliefs. The upshot of the article is that the élite should not try to forswear their African heritage.

DEWEY, LORING D. *Correspondence Relative to the Emigration to Hayti of the Free People of Colour*. New York, 1824. Inception of the movement to sponsor the migration of freed American slaves to Haiti.

DORSAINVIL, Dr. J. C. *Manuel d'histoire d'Haiti*. Port-au-Prince, 1934. A textbook for Haitian schools, prepared in collaboration with the Frères de l'Instruction Chrétienne. Probably the best short history of Haiti by a Haitian.

——— *Vodou et névrose*. Port-au-Prince, 1931. A decidedly revealing analysis of the mental phenomena which accompany certain aspects of Vodun, with an attempted explanation. Well worth investigation by any student of Vodun.

DORSINVILLE, LUC. *Géographie-Atlas*. Port-au-Prince, 1929. A textbook for the "cours moyen," but giving many useful data about the area and population and resources of the country.

DOUGLAS, PAUL H. "The American Occupation of Haiti." *Political Science Quarterly*, XLII, 228–258, 368–396, 1927.

DOUGLASS, FREDERICK. *Lecture on Haiti*. Chicago, 1893. A thoughtful work of the celebrated American Negro abolitionist.

DURAND, OSWALD. *La Dernière étape*. Port-au-Prince, 1906. One of the "What's-Wrong-with-Haiti?" series.

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EDOUARD, EMMANUEL. *Essai sur la politique intérieure d'Haïti*. Paris, 1890. Too limited in scope to be useful.

FAINE, JULES. *Philologie créole*. ("*Études historiques et étymologiques sur la langue créole d'Haïti*.") Port-au-Prince, 1937. A scholarly treatise on the Créole language which is fascinating even to the layman. It contains an orderly grammar, a good vocabulary, and many aids to a better understanding of the popular language.

FIRMIN, ANTÉNOR. *Diplomates et diplomatie*. Cap-Haïtien, 1899. Sage observations by a distinguished Haitian.

——— *Haïti au point de vue politique, administratif et économique*. Paris, 1891. A good critique of the period.

——— *M. Roosevelt, président des États-Unis, et la république d'Haïti*. New York, 1905. An acceptance of the assurance of Theodore Roosevelt that no nation capable of governing itself had any need to fear American Occupation.

FLETCHER, HENRY P. "Quo vadis, Haiti?" *Foreign Affairs*, VIII, 533–548, 1930.

FORBES and TUCKERMAN. *Papers Relating to the Colonization Experiment at A'Vache*. New York, 1865. Discussion of another scheme for the settlement of freed American slaves in Haiti.

FOREIGN POLICY ASSOCIATION. *The Seizure of Haiti by the United States*. New York, 1922.

FORTUNAT, DANTÈS. *Nouvelle géographie de l'île d'Haïti*. Paris, 1888. Useful only for the period.

FRANKLIN, JAMES. *The Present State of Hayti (Saint Domingo)*. London, 1828. A good summary of Haitian history to 1826. Decidedly adverse in its criticism of Haiti's development, although not actually prejudiced. The author thinks Christophe's policy of forced labor was wise, and Pétion's *laissez-faire* policy foolish.

FROUDE, JAMES ANTHONY. *The English in the West Indies*. New York, 1888. As dramatic and as inaccurate as most of Froude's historical works.

GASTINE, CIVIQUE DE. *Histoire de la république d'Haïti*. Paris, 1819. Utterly worthless; it is not a history, but rather a plea to the European powers of the time to recognize the independence of Haiti.

GRÉGOIRE, HENRI. *De la liberté de conscience et de culte à Haïti*. (No place of publication mentioned), 1824. This is a bibliographical oddity, for in spite of the title there is no discussion of the subject at all; rather the little book is a pastoral letter by a priest.

HANNA, S. W. *Notes of a Visit to Some Parts of Haiti, January–February, 1835*. London, 1836. A breezy travelogue by a pious clergyman. Useless except as corroboration of outward aspects. Hanna explains Mackenzie's adverse criticisms of Haiti by saying that the British Minister was a mulatto, and so was not well received in Haiti.

HARVEY, W. W. *Sketches of Hayti; from the Expulsion of the French to the Death of Christophe*. London, 1827. In spite of the unassuming title, one of the most rewarding collections of source material in the early period.

HAZARD, SAMUEL. *Santo Domingo, Past and Present; with a Glance at Haiti*. New York, 1873. The glance included little of importance.

HERBOC, HUBERT. "Haitian Troubles Continue." *Current History*, XLII, 78–79, 1935. Brief statement of the months following the end of the American Occupation.

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HERSKOVITS, MELVILLE J. *Dahomey, an Ancient West African Kingdom*. New York, 1938. 2 vols. A splendid study of the region from which many of the Haitian slaves derived.

——— *Life in a Haitian Valley*. New York, 1937. One of the few ethnographical studies of a Haitian community, made by an expert. The whole range of life of the people of Mirebalais is studied in detail. The result is a book not only for scholars but for laymen. Indispensable

——— "The Significance of the Study of Acculturation for Anthropology." *American Anthropologist*, n.s. XXXIX, No. 2, 259–264.

HUNT, BENJAMIN S. *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans*. Philadelphia, 1860. Another brochure on the migration of freed American slaves. Hunt's observations are often illuminating.

HURSTON, ZORA NEALE. *Tell My Horse*. Philadelphia, 1938. A gaily written study of certain details of life in Jamaica and Haiti. Much of the detail is hearsay, some is inaccurate, but a great deal is carefully observed.

INGINAC, JOSEPH BALTHASAR. *Culture du caféier et préparation de la fève pour être livrée au commerce*. Port-au-Prince, 1840. One of the pamphlets which Boyer's meticulous secretary of state issued to the illiterate peasants to improve their economic life.

——— *Étrennes à mes concitoyens: Nécessité de l'éducation morale et religieuse en Haïti*. Port-au-Prince, 1841. A paternal homily on morals.

——— *Memoires*. Kingston (Jamaica), 18[illegible]. After the Revolution of 1843 had overthrown Boyer, Inginac went into exile with his President. In Jamaica he wrote his memoirs, which consist partly of autobiography, but mostly of an impassioned defense of every action of his long secretaryship. He never made a mistake; and if Boyer had only followed Inginac's advice, there would have been no revolution.

——— *Message à ses compatriotes, et principalement à ceux qui ont dirigé les affaires populaires de la république depuis le fin de janvier dernier*. Port-au-Prince, 1843. A brief pamphlet by Inginac, urging his innocence of any treason, and pleading with the new government to allow him to return from exile.

INMAN, SAMUEL GUY. *Through Santo Domingo and Haiti*. New York, 1919. With observations on the American Occupation.

JANVIER, LOUIS-JOSEPH. *La République d'Haiti et ses visiteurs*. Paris, 1883. Unimportant.

——— *Les Constitutions d'Haiti, 1801–85*. Paris, 1886. Excellent, not only because it contains a text of the numerous Haitian constitutions, but also for its judicious analysis of the contents of each.

JEAN-LOUIS, H. "La Race créole." *Les Annales diplomatiques et consulaires*, vol. II, No. 19, Paris, 1904, November 5.

JENKS, L. H. "The Haitian Problem," in A. C. Wilgus, ed., *The Caribbean Area*. Washington, 1934.

JOHNSON, JAMES WELDON. "Self-determining Haiti." *Nation*, August 25, September 25, 1920. The title is satirical, for Haiti in 1920 was occupied by the Americans.

JOHNSTON, Sir HARRY H. *The Negro in the New World*. New York, 1910. Well written but necessarily superficial, considering the magnitude of the topic. Certain wise judgments about Haiti.

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JONES, CHESTER LLOYD. *The Caribbean Since 1900*. New York, 1936. The section on Haiti is adequate as a brief survey.

JUSTIN, JOSEPH. *Étude sur les institutions haïtiennes*. Paris, 1894–95. 2 vols. What was wrong with Haiti under Hyppolite.

——— *Les Réformes nécessaires*. Port-au-Prince, 1915. The sad state of Haitian affairs twenty years later.

JUSTIN, PLACIDE. *Histoire politique et statistique de l'île d'Hayti, Saint-Domingue*. ("*Écrite sur des documents officiels et du notes communiquées par Sir James Barskett, agent du gouvernement brittanique dans les Antilles.*") Paris, 1826. Actually, up to 1816, a copy of the work by Basket [*q.v.*], whose name Justin misspells; for the succeeding decade, Justin's material is almost wholly political, and not particularly helpful.

KELSEY, CARL. "The American Intervention in Haiti and the Dominican Republic." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. C, March, 1922.

KUSER, JOHN D. *Haiti: Its Dawn of Progress after Years in a Night of Revolution*, Boston, 1921. Useless.

LAUJON, A. DE. *Souvenirs de trente années de voyages à Saint-Domingue*. Paris, 1835. 2 vols. Unimportant.

LAVENTURE, LÉONIDAS. *Haïti: le danger de la patrie*. Port-au-Prince, 1893. What is wrong with Haiti.

LÉGER, ABEL NICOLAS. *Histoire diplomatique d'Haïti*. Port-au-Prince, 1930. Good.

LÉGER, JACQUES NICHOLAS. *Haïti: son histoire et ses détracteurs*. (Likewise an edition in English, *Haiti: Her History and Her Detractors*.) Both: New York, 1907. An effort to correct erroneous impressions of Haiti. Léger sees even the defects of Haiti through rose-colored glasses.

——— *La Politique extérieure d'Haïti*. Paris, 1886. Inferior.

LÉGITIME, F. DÉUS. "La République d'Haïti et les races africaines en général." Port-au-Prince, 1912. A lecture given by one of Haiti's Negro ex-presidents at the Universal Congress on Race in 1911; nothing more than a superficial sketch of Haitian history.

LEPELLETIER DE SAINT-REMY, R. "La République d'Haïti: ses dernières révolutions; sa situation actuelle." *Revue des Deux Mondes*, XV, No. 4, November 15, 1845. An excellent analysis of the social, economic, and political conditions which led up to the Revolution of 1843, and the disturbances of the next two years.

——— *Saint-Domingue. Étude et solution nouvelle de la question haïtienne*. Paris, 1846. 2 vols. One of the very best sources for the economic history of Haiti through the administration of Boyer. Intelligently critical; many suggestive points of constructive nature.

LE ROUGE, GABRIEL. *Ou vivre libres et respectés ou mourir lamentablement décimées par la guerre civile*. Port-au-Prince, 1916. Another in the "What's-Wrong-with-Haiti" series.

LEVACHER, M. G. *Guide médical des Antilles*. Paris, 1847. A fair account, giving the medical knowledge of the period, of health conditions in Haiti and the other Antilles.

LHERISSON, CAMILLE. "Diseases of the Peasants of Haiti." *American Journal of Public Health*, XXV, No. 8, 924–929, August, 1935. An excellent survey by one of the most brilliant doctors of Haiti.

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Livre bleu d'Haïti. Port-au-Prince, 1920. A kind of social register, and business roster of Haiti in 1920.

LOBB, JOHN. "Caste and Class in Haiti." *American Journal of Sociology*, XLVI, No. 1, 23–34, July, 1940. A good general analysis of the élite-Noir dichotomy in modern Haiti.

LOGAN, RAYFORD W. "Education in Haiti." *Journal of Negro History*, XV, 401–460, 1930. Good.

LOPEZ, G. *Considérations sur la société haïtienne de 1804 à 1866*. Port-au-Prince, 1867. Superficial.

MACAULAY, ZACHARY. *Haïti, ou renseignemens authentiques sur l'abolition de l'esclavage et ses résultats à Saint-Domingue et à Guadeloupe. ("Avec des détails sur l'état actuel d'Haïti et des noirs émancipés qui forment sa population.") Traduit de l'Anglais*. Paris, 1835. Very disappointing. Mostly an attack on the authenticity of the report by Mackenzie of affairs in Haiti. The book includes a 139-page letter series from a Jamaican mulatto visitor to Haiti, who fulsomely praised the country, but said nothing of significance.

MACCORKLE, W. A. *The Monroe Doctrine in Its Relation to the Republic of Haiti*. New York, 1915.

MACKENZIE, CHARLES. *Notes on Hayti, Made during a Residence in That Republic*. London, 1830. 2 vols. A careful, detailed, and often adversely critical survey of Haiti by the British Minister during the first years of Boyer's administration.

MAGLOIRE, AUGUSTE. *Étude sur le tempérament haïtien*. Port-au-Prince, 1909. Wryly humorous criticism by a Haitian.

——— *Histoire d'Haïti d'après un plan nouveau basé sur l'observation des faits (1804–1909)*. Port-au-Prince, 1909. 4 vols. Occasionally astute in comment, but adding little to already existing knowledge.

——— *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social*. Port-au-Prince, 1909. Haiti puts her trust too much in political, and not enough in economic, reform.

MARCELIN, FRÉDÉRIC. *Choses haïtiennes*. Paris, 1896. Unimportant observations on the Haiti of 1895.

——— *L'Haleine du centenaire*. Paris, 1901. After nearly a century of independence, much is wrong with Haiti.

——— *Le Passé*. Paris, 1902. Nostalgic.

——— *Questions haïtiennes*. Paris, 1891.

——— *Une Évolution nécessaire*. Paris, 1898. Some of the reforms needed by Haiti.

MARCELIN, LOUIS-JOSEPH. *Haïti: ses guerres civiles, leurs causes, leurs conséquences présentes, leur conséquence future et finale*. Paris, 1892. An excellent survey of the first nine decades of revolution in Haiti; of no importance when the author looks into the future.

MILLSPAUGH, ARTHUR C. *Haiti under American Control, 1915–30*. Boston, 1931. A careful analysis of the causes of the Occupation and of the results for Haiti.

——— "Our Haitian problem." *Foreign Affairs*, VII, 556–570, 1929.

MONTAGUE, LUDWELL LEE. *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938*. Durham, 1940. Required reading for an understanding of the course of Haitian-American relations. Although the emphasis is placed upon diplomatic affairs, the author has a rare understanding of the culture of the Haitian people.

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MORPEAU, LOUIS. *Anthologie d'un siècle de poésie haïtienne, 1817–1925*. Paris, 1925. Indispensable for the student of Haitian literature. 113

——— "Un Dominion intellectuel français." *Revue de l'Amérique latine*, VIII, No. 24, 332–341, October, 1924. A good sketch of Haitian literary history. 114

NILES, [Mrs.] BLAIR. *Black Haiti*. New York, 1926. This, without professing to be a scholarly treatise, gives many excellent descriptions of Haitian life.

OULIÉ, MARTHE. *Les Antilles, filles de France*. Paris, 1935. A travelogue with a moral: the less American influence exerted upon the French-speaking Antilles, the better for them, especially Haiti.

PARET, TIMOTHÉE. *Dans la mêlée*. Paris, 1932.

PARSONS, ELSIE CLEWS. *The Spirit Cult in Hayti*. Paris, 1928. Good.

PARSONS, ROBERT P. *History of Haitian Medicine*. New York, 1930. The only existing book of its sort. Haiti's medical history has not been long or illustrious; Dr. Parsons discusses the diseases of the country.

PAUL, EDMOND. *Les Causes de nos malheurs*. Kingston (Jamaica), 1889. One of the more penetrating criticisms of conditions in Haiti during the latter part of the nineteenth century.

——— *Questions politico-économiques*. Paris, 1861–63. 3 vols.

PAULTRE, ÉMILE. *Essai sur M. Price-Mars*. Port-au-Prince, 1933. A brief biography and appreciation of one of Haiti's leading modern savants.

PIERRE-LOUIS, DAMASE. *Les Mensonges de notre démocratie*. Paris, 1933.

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PRICE-MARS, Dr. [JEAN]. *Ainsi parla l'oncle . . . Essais d'ethnographie*. Port-au-Prince, 1928. An indispensable book on Haitian life and belief by one of the country's leading historians, ethnographers, sociologists. The author not only has the confidence of the people among whom he does research, but also the intellectual equipment to write brilliantly about what he observes.

——— *La Vocation de l'élite*. Port-au-Prince, 1919. Written by one of the intellectual élite, this book is a devastating criticism of the futility on the part of the élite in condemning their African heritage, and of the refusal of the élite to participate constructively in the life of the country.

——— *Une Étape de l'évolution haïtienne*. Port-au-Prince, no date [probably 1930]. A survey of the intellectual and cultural achievements of Haiti.

RAMSFORD, MARCUS. *An Historical Account of the Black Empire of Hayti*. ("Compre-

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bending a view of the principal transactions in the revolution of Saint Domingo; with its ancient and modern state." Generally titled: *History of St. Domingo.*) London, 1805. A contemporary but rather superficial account of the period of Toussaint and Dessalines.

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RITTER, KARL. *Naturhistorische Reise nach der West Indischen Insel Hayti.* ("*Auf Kosten S^r. Majestät des Kaisers von Oesterreich.*") Stutgard (Stuttgart), 1836. By the "Gartendirector in Ungarn und Mitglied mehrerer gelehrten Gesellschaften." Ritter's journey was taken in the time of Christophe, ending in 1820. Full of acute observations about the kingdom. An excellent source.

ROSEMOND, JULES. *La Crise morale et civique.* Port-au-Prince, 1915. Merely another of the spate of books analyzing the crisis which led to the American Occupation.

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SAINT-RÉMY [des Cayes, Haïti; no given name]. *Pétion et Haïti: essai monographique et historique.* Paris, 1854–57. 5 vols. This mulatto author of Les Cayes is not to be mistaken for the Frenchman, R. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy (*q.v.*). The work is really a history of Haiti, following Madiou (*q.v.*) closely, but decidedly adulatory of Pétion. Many digressions to moralize at length. A sixth volume was planned, to analyze the work of Pétion between 1811 and 1818, but it was not achieved.

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SCHOELCHER, V. *Colonies étrangères et Haïti: résultats de l'émancipation anglaise.* Paris, 1842. 2 vols. Occasionally informative about the Haiti of Boyer.

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SÉJOURNÉ, GEORGES. "Établissement de la propriété et de la famille au lendemain de l'indépendance." *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti,* VI, No. 17, 9–22, January, 1935.

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SYLVAIN, SUZANNE. *Le Créole haïtien: morphologie et syntaxe.* Wetteren (Belgium), 1936. A scholarly treatise on the folk language.

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TAFT, EDNA. *A Puritan in Voodoo-Land.* Philadelphia, 1938. A superficial travelogue.

THOBY, ARMAND. *La Question agraire en Haïti.* Port-au-Prince, 1888. One of the best early accounts of the property situation since the time of Pétion.

THOMPSON, WALLACE. "Climatic Influences in the Caribbean." *Current History,* February, 1930. Entirely superficial.

THORPE, GEORGE C. "American Achievements in Santo Domingo, Haiti, and the Virgin Islands." *Journal of International Relations,* XI, 63–86, 1920.

TIPPENHAUER, GENTIL. *Die Insel Haiti.* Leipzig, 1893.

VAVAL, DURACINÉ. "Aléxandre Pétion: l'homme et sa vie." *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti,* III, No. 7, July, 1932.

——— *Histoire de la littérature haïtienne, ou l'âme noire.* Port-au-Prince, 1933. A compendium of information, with unimportant criticisms.

——— *Histoire financière et économique d'Haïti de l'indépendance à nos jours.* Port-au-Prince, 1934. Useful.

——— "Le Roi d'Haïti Henri Christophe." *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti,* II, No. 3, June, 1931. Good analysis of the statecraft of Christophe.

[VEILLOT and LABORDÈRE (1Anon.).] *De la Gérontocratie en Haïti.* Paris, 1860. A sound set of observations about the failure of young men to rise to leadership in mid-century Haiti.

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WILGUS, A. CURTIS, ed. *The Caribbean Area.* Washington, 1934. With a fairly good short analysis of the Haitian situation.

WILLIAMS, MARY WILHELMINE. *The People and Politics of Latin America.* Boston, 1930. A good chapter on the history of Haiti.

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NOVELS, AND OTHER WORKS OF THE IMAGINATION

BEDFORD-JONES, H. *Drums of Dumbala.* New York, 1933.

CASSIUS, MAURICE. *Viejo.* Port-au-Prince, 1935. An excellent novel, dealing with a Haitian who tried to find work in Cuba. Illuminating side lights on folkways and mores; many conversations in Créole.

CHAMBERLAIN, GEORGE A. *The Silver Cord.* New York, 1927.

CRAIGE, JOHN H. *Black Bagdad.* New York, 1933.

——— *Cannibal Cousins.* New York, 1934.

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113 DAVIS, BEALE. *The Goat without Horns*. New York, 1925. Voodoo.
114 ENDORE, GUY. *Babouk*. New York, 1935. The scene is in colonial Saint-Domingue.
FERBANK, RONALD. *Prancing Nigger*. New York, 1926.
LOEDERER, RICHARD A. *Voodoo Fire in Haiti*. New York, 1935.
MARTINEAU, HARRIET. *The Hour and the Man*. London, 1841. Toussaint.
PRICHARD, HESKETH. *Where Black Rules White*. Westminster, 1900.
ROSCOE, THEODORE. *Murder on the Way!* New York, 1935.
TAYLOR, J. GIBSON. *Dark Dawn*. New York, 1932.
VANDERCOOK, JOHN W. *Black Majesty*. New York, 1928. A vivid picture of Christophe.
WAUGH, ALEC. *No Quarter*. London, 1933. Tortuga and Saint-Domingue.
WAXMAN, PERCY. *The Black Napoleon*. New York, 1931.
WILLIAMS, JOSEPH J. *Voodoos and Obeahs*. New York, 1932. Professes to be a scholarly treatise.
WILSON, ADELAIDE. *First Woman*. New York, 1933.

NOTE: This list is by no means complete; it merely gives a fair sample of the works of imagination whose scene is laid in Haiti, early or modern.

NOTE: The author regards the following works as the outstanding and indispensable ones for an understanding of Haiti:

L. E. Moreau de Saint-Méry. *Description . . . de . . . Saint-Domingue*.
J. Brown. *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*. (1837).
H. P. Davis. *Black Democracy: the Story of Haiti*.
J. C. Dorsainvil. *Manuel d'histoire d'Haïti*.
Melville J. Herskovits. *Life in a Haitian Valley*.
Ludwell L. Montague. *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938*.
Dr. J. Price-Mars. *Ainsi parla l'oncle*.

See the Bibliography for a detailed description of each.

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LIFE IN A HAITIAN VALLEY

PREFACE

HAITI has fared badly at the hands of its literary interpreters. Condescension and caricature have been called upon, especially in recent years, to provide a short cut to an understanding of the people and their institutions. This has been glaringly true of descriptions of the religious beliefs of the peasantry, the so-called cults of "voodoo" and magic, for here are found the greatest distortion of fact, the most striking misrepresentations, and the largest measure of misplaced emphasis.

The consistency of the tone latterly taken toward this life is all the more remarkable because it is almost entirely absent from the works of the earlier writers on Haiti. For all these observers, the importance of the "voodoo" cult lay in the fact that it was a rallying point for slave revolt, and it was only with the tale of the cannibalistic "Congo bean stew," told by Sir Spencer St. John in 1880, that the accent on the more sensational phases of Haitian religion began to be heard. From his time onward, however, through the works of Froude, Franck, Pritchard, Seabrook, Blair Niles, Craige, Wirkus, and most recently, as in a rondo, back to the distorted version of the "Congo bean stew" given by Loederer, Haitian life has been told as a tale of mysterious forces in their most repellent aspects.

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114. It is interesting to speculate just why the life of the Haitian peasant, and, indeed, within the last decade, of the educated city dwellers, thus became a subject for lurid description. In its most honest manifestation actual misunderstanding or naïveté has undoubtedly been the cause; or it may be inferred that certain of the pictures drawn have been dictated by prejudice or by international political considerations. Finally, and within recent times most frequently, writers have seemed deliberately to distort and sensationalize their materials in order to attract to their work a desired notoriety.

The effect of this constant stress laid on the African cults in describing Haitian life has been not only to throw the entire picture badly out of focus, but to distract attention from the equally interesting phases of Haitian society which concern the everyday life of the people. Almost nowhere, aside from pre-Revolutionary eighteenth-century writings, can information be had about the workaday world. The rituals that accompany birth and death, the social and economic values that prevail, characteristic institutions such as the market or co-operative work-groups — one searches in vain for other than cursory mention of these in the later accounts. Even where a writer has included a discussion of such a co-operative organization as the Société Congo on the Isle à Gonave, emphasis is almost exclusively laid on its picturesque ceremonialism. Mention, it is true, is at times made of happy, "childlike" (the favored adjective), normal Haitians in the few pages that recent books have devoted to daytime activities. But with the dusk the "booming drums" are made to sound and the mysteries are again called upon to divert the reader.

114 105 182 Yet how are these descriptions of a hysterical, paranoid folk, ridden with fear of the dark forces of magic and the anger of vindictive gods, to be reconciled with the picture of the Haitian as he is shown in the second section of this book — of a man going about his affairs in matter-of-fact fashion, tending his crops, buying and selling, carrying on his amorous

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consequents, establishing and providing for his family? The answer is that such a reconciliation is unnecessary where religion takes its place beside other interests and activities and where, psychologically, the supernatural world is on the same plane as the natural one, having its dangers as nature presents dangers, but also offering its compensations as do other phases of existence.

Investigations of native life such as this one not only require generous financial support, but have need of the sympathetic understanding of those in a position to extend helpful practical aid and advice in the field. To the many persons and institutions whose co-operation made this study possible, it is a privilege to record here my appreciation. Initial support of the work and later appropriations for preparing the material for publication were had from the Social Science Research Councils of Columbia and Northwestern Universities; while a grant-in-aid from the American Council of Learned Societies permitted the recording of songs in the field; and another from the National Research Council allowed motion pictures of motor behavior to be taken — films from which a number of the accompanying illustrations have been derived. Concepts relating to the problem of the results of contact between peoples possessing different customs, habits, and beliefs — a principle objective in the long-term program of research on Negro cultures of which this work in Haiti constitutes but a part — were sharpened through the discussions I have been privileged to have with my associates on the Committee of Acculturation of the Social Science Research Council, Professors Ralph Linton, Robert Redfield, and Donald Young.

Official aid in Haiti could not have been more generously accorded. The sympathy of His Excellency President Stenio Vincent, and M. Jacques C. Antoine, chief of the presidential secretariat in 1934 and at present Secretary to the Legation

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122 of Haiti at Washington, made for co-operation by all those in the government of whom it was necessary to seek assistance. Mr. Norman Armour, then American Minister to Haiti and now Minister to Canada, was kind enough to interest himself in this study and personally saw to it that its prosecution was facilitated in innumerable ways, while Colonel Vogel, U.S.M.C., then Major General commanding the Garde d'Haiti, was helpful at a number of strategic points, as was his successor, General Calixte. Aid and inspiration were derived from many friendly conversations with the two outstanding students of Haitian folk-life, Dr. Price-Mars and Dr. J. C. Dorsainvil. My indebtedness to the works they have published on the subject is shown by the references to their publications given at the end of this volume, for their researches must be accepted as basic by any serious investigator of Haitian customs. Their cordial advice to a fellow-student constitutes one of the most pleasant memories of this field-work, as does the assistance given me by Professor Camille Lhérisson, of the Haitian Medical College, and M. Henry G. Sylvain, Engineer of the Service des Travaux Publiques.

080 In the valley of Mirebalais itself, the friendliness of those with whom it was my privilege to associate is agreeable to recollect; if they are not named here individually, it is because of the wish of many of them to remain anonymous. However, to my friends Général Léonard Cantave, his sister, Mme. Vesta Cantave, M. Léonce Joachim, and M. Galbert Constance, I cannot sufficiently express my appreciation for their co-operativeness, for the geniality with which we held long discussions of interest to us all, and for the weight which their endorsement of this work carried with the members of the community at large. Similarly, and finally, I wish also 114 123 to record my deep gratitude for the assistance given me by my wife, who not only participated fully in the rigors of field-work, as she has participated in all other field expeditions undertaken in the course of this research program, but

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whose contact with the women of the valley made it possible to obtain information of a kind that would be entirely unavailable to a man working alone. In addition, she has given freely of her knowledge while I was engaged in the preparation of this book; it is only the force of circumstances that prevents it being a collaboration, as reports of our earlier field investigations have been. [14 123]

MELVILLE J. HERSKOVITS

South Woodbury, Vermont
14 August 1936

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ever, contributed not only many slaves called by the name of that river, but also the *Mayombés*, the *Mousombés*, and the *Mondongues*, though the "true Congos" — the *Franc-Congos* — are listed as having been derived from Angola. As for the rest of the continent, "One does not see at all in Santo Domingo any Africans who have come from the remainder of the west coast of Africa, which ends at the Cape of Good Hope. . . ."[8]

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No final answer can be given about the extent to which these lists of tribal names may be regarded as valid, but the unanimity with which not only Charlevoix and St. Mery, but such other contemporary observers as Bryan Edwards for Jamaica, the Reverend C. G. A. Oldendorps for the Virgin Islands, John G. Stedman and Jan Jacob Hartsinck for Guiana — to name only four — recorded similar African regions and similar tribal names when writing of the slaves of other parts of the New World, offers strong corroborative testimony. Moreover, the fact that every tribal designation given in the lists of Charlevoix and St. Mery can be found on present-day maps of Africa in the approximate region they had indicated confirms the accuracy of these early lists.

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The characteristics of the various types of Negroes recorded by Charlevoix and St. Mery are not without interest. The Senegalese are described as tall and well made, and of an ebony color, their noses almost as straight as those of whites, their hair less tightly curled than that of other Negroes. They had the reputation of possessing a superior morality and were deemed warrior-like. St. Mery had nothing but the highest praise for the Senegalese slave.

> "He is a farmer, intelligent, good, faithful even in love, understanding, and makes an excellent domestic. Living on millet, maize, and rice, he is very sober, excellent in caring for animals, discreet, and above all taciturn, a quality sufficiently rare among the Africans and

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175 569 669 the development of European history the French Revolution sharpened the latent antagonisms between the various classes of whites in the colony, between the whites and the free persons of color, and between masters and slaves, the way had been prepared for the operations of the great military geniuses, Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, through whose leadership the freedom of Haiti was finally achieved.

175 It is not necessary here to give, even in outline, the course of Haitian history during this period of rebellion and afterwards, when Haiti was welded into a single Republic, for this has been often recounted.[40] Nor is it of importance here to continue the well-known political history of the Republic, with its many rebellions, and its wars with the Spanish portion of the island that finally resulted in the formation of the Republic of Santo Domingo; with the brief existence of the "empire" of Faustin I; and with the culmination of this history in what has been called a period of anarchy that brought about the occupation, so recently terminated, of Haiti by the American Marines.[41] Other questions, which concern the social history of independent Haiti, have been given less attention, and only tantalizing hints of their answers appear in the writings of those who have treated of the developing country. How were the impulses toward the mingling of Haitian and French aspects of culture, set in motion during the period of slavery, working out during this time? What influences dominated the scene, once the whites had been finally eliminated? What mechanisms permitted the African traditions brought by the slaves to hold their vitality? It is as through a haze that one glimpses the inner development of Haitian culture after independence; and the glimpses are the dimmer when comparison is made with the many clear and detailed descriptions of the earlier life of the island.

175 117 It is only by a close reading of the works of such travelers and foreign officials as Hanna, Mackenzie, St. John, and Hazard, that any information of this kind can be obtained. The

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attitudes of these writers were in the main far from sympathetic toward Haiti, and their interests extended but little to the customs of the great masses of Haitians. That the fear of slavery was still alive in the early part of the nineteenth century is apparent from an incident related by Mackenzie;[44] that, some decades later, the sense of racial differences continued to exist is evident from folk-sayings about the characteristics of whites, mulattoes, and Negroes recorded by St. John.[45] The concept of rank seems to have maintained itself in its full flavor, with no lack of social classes in Haitian urban society and no lack of vigor in perpetuating the earlier prejudices of caste.

The majority of the population remained on the land, for by 1830 the great estates had been completely broken up, and were cultivated in the main by small concessionaires. The dress of these country inhabitants seems to have remained much as it had been under French control, and the emphasis on good manners that so marks African social intercourse had been retained to such an extent that St. John, no admirer of the Haitian people, was forced to remark upon it.[46] Markets which were conducted in African fashion had been established, and these were supplemented by itinerant peddlers. The institution of *plaçage*, a reconciliation of African plural marriage with the monogamy of European custom, of which more will be said in a later chapter, was known in the early days of independence. The rites of birth and death were marked with their special ceremonies, and in both instances it can be seen that the African elements of the cultural heritage were not being forgotten. Dancing continued as the principal form of recreation, and to the traditional dances, which still persist, were added European styles.[47]

Above all, African religious customs were being observed. *Vodun* rites continued to flourish and magic was practiced as in the days preceding independence, as is to be seen from the notorious and all too often repeated tale of the "Congo bean

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that while some react to the supernatural with immediate and overwhelming emotion, and others, though incapable of as deep a response, do sense the mysteries of possession, there are still others who go through life without ever feeling this religious "thrill." In native explanation, it is the former to whom the gods manifest themselves, who become the *ch'val of their loa;* while to the latter the deities never make themselves known. Scientifically, the phenomenon of possession in Negro cultures, at least, is as yet unsatisfactorily explained, largely because of the almost complete absence of adequate reports on the background and incidence of specific cases. Perhaps the most satisfactory approach to its understanding is through a consideration of it in terms of differences in nervous instability, which may be thought of as predisposing different persons to experience the religious thrill in different degrees; or, in other terms, by reference to their differing susceptibility to suggestion. One must reject an hypothesis which attempts to explain the *vodun* cult of Haiti in terms of the neuroses, even when, as in the admirable exposition of Dr. Dorsainvil, the approach neglects neither accepted genetic theory in stressing the inheritance of neurotic tendencies in voduist family lines, nor the important historical forces which have been operative.[10] For in terms of the patterns of Haitian religion, possession is not abnormal, but normal; it is set in its cultural mold as are all other phases of conventional living. That it gives release from psychic tension does not alter the case; neither does the fact that it offers a way to the satisfaction of unfulfilled desires, as when the god, speaking through a woman under possession, demands a necklace or bracelet which, though forever the property of the god, will be worn by his devotee. These facts merely emphasize the compensatory character of the phenomenon. The social situation of the individual also enters; some undoubtedly simulate possession for the attention it brings them, while a person who experiences no serious difficulties in the course of his life is perhaps never

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called upon to ask whether or not he is properly serving his gods; is never placed in a situation for which possession would be a release. Hence to consider all possession as something which falls within the range of psychopathology is to approach it handicapped by a fundamental misconception.

The best evidence of the socially normal nature of possession is the existence of rules governing its incidence which are well understood by all. Not everyone who is a *ch'val* may become possessed at any dance or *service*, for the gods, if properly under control, are permitted to come only to members of the family giving the rite. At one *vodun* dance given by a priest where a number of other *houngans*, present as guests, became possessed, the host was regarded as having taken undue advantage of his visitors by bringing on their possessions. In another case Haitians from the southern peninsula who were temporarily residing in Mirebalais carefully refrained from contact with a certain *vodun* priest lest he bring on possession by their gods. At one dance for the Rada gods, the *loa* Tauream, a Pétro deity, possessed one of the drummers. Because a Pétro *loa* was neither expected nor wanted, the man was immediately removed and, when quieted, sent home. A similar situation developed at another Rada dance where Bosu "came"; the person possessed was at once taken outside the enclosure until his god had left him. If a *loa* persists in dancing at a *vodun* dance given by another family, it is either one of these *loa bossal* already described, or a *loa vagabond*, and may be scolded by the *houngan*: "You must not come here! You are not wanted! Go home where you belong!" The passion with which a person resists his god when he feels possession coming on at a rite not given by his own family is particularly instructive. Men have been seen holding so tightly to the rafters of the shelter under which the dance was being held that the muscles of their forearms formed great cords, while beads of perspiration rolled down their foreheads.[20] A person who must live away from his family for a long time usually takes

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for though some gods are feared far more than others, and some generally regarded with affection, even these latter bring great harm to a neglectful devotee, while the gods whose power validates the most malignant magic may, in certain situations, work for the good of their worshippers. Especially has there been great confusion in discussions of the so-called Dom Pédro worship. Whether or not the origin of the term as given by St. Mery is correct — that it derives from the name of its founder, a Spanish Negro from Petit-Goâve[22] — the statements that have been made concerning it are in the main misleading.[23] Thus, it is not true that the Pétro gods are unqualifiedly evil and the Rada deities unqualifiedly good; nor that blood sacrifices are made exclusively at Pétro ceremonies, while the services for other gods are innocent of such sacrificial offerings. The impression gathered in Mirebalais concerning the Pétro gods is that they are principally, though not exclusively, derived from the process of deification of powerful ancestors, which in Africa exists in forms that clearly explain the essential tradition that offers a basis for this custom as found in Haiti. This is reinforced by statements to the effect that most of the Pétro "squad" are Créole or native gods as against the Guinée deities in the other groupings. One member of the *vodun* cult, indeed, made the concept of deifying the powerful dead explicit, saying that Pétro was a great and evil *vodun* priest who had died with the *loa* not "taken from his head." For while a general principle in the cult of the dead is that in the normal course of events those who die deliver up their souls to God, making the care for these souls primarily a concern of the Church, it is recognized that there are others such as this Dom Pedro who become *loa*. This occurs when an individual, usually a priest or priestess of the *vodun* cult, who during his lifetime was known to possess great supernatural power, dies without having had his *loa* "withdrawn from his head." Burdened by these spirits, and therefore unable to get to God, his soul goes to the bottom of

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he is accidentally fed salt. Though the concept has been presented in recent years with unjustifiable sensationalism to the reading public,[10] it is indisputably a living one. One aspect of it has been responsible for much of the conviction with which positive statements are made of personal knowledge of cannibalism in Haiti, as has been shown most clearly by Dr. Parsons:

> "A *gunga* who keeps a *zombi* may transform him into a stone, perhaps in front of his house, or into any kind of animal. Transforming him into a pig or sheep or cow, he may kill him and sell him in the market. In this belief we have the basis of the gossip and court testimony about human flesh sold in the market. It is *zombi* flesh, not human flesh, that is so disposed of. But foreigners know nothing about *zombi*, nor do the native witnesses explain in court what they have in mind when they are testifying to purchases of meat from the cemetery. 'People does *eat* people at Aux Cayes, I *know* it,' said Sam, as he told of human fingernails found on pigs' feet, explaining *to my question* that the pig had been a *zombi*. Had I not followed up his first statement and learned that he had never heard of anybody killed directly for marketing, an idea which amazed him at that, I would certainly have been left with an impression of cannibalism totally misleading."[11]

Precisely the same concept exists in Mirebalais as in Jacmel, where the foregoing material was collected, except that in its elaboration it underscores the point made in the quotation just given. *Zombi* meat can be recognized by the fact that it rapidly spoils, and when cooked, brings much white foam to the top of the stew, while such meat, sold as beef, turns white like veal; all this warns against eating it, and shows the active distaste with which it is regarded. Indeed, one of the duties of a person's *loa* is said to be that of warning him when he is

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3 •
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[p. 308 is blank]

APPENDIX I

THE GODS OF THE VODUN PANTHEON

One of the most impressive facts about studies of Haitian peasant belief is the absence of any attempt at systematic treatment of the deities of the *vodun* cult, as concerns either their attributes, their functions, or their relationship to one another. Indeed, there are but two exceptions to this statement: Dorsainvil (I, pp. 174–5) has published a list of the names of gods, placing them in categories according to their African derivations, and Parsons (I, *passim*) has made available her notes on the characteristics of the deities of which she was told while working in the island. Otherwise, one reads merely of "the serpent-god Damballa," or of "Papa Ogun," or some other isolated designation. It therefore seemed of capital importance in making this study to obtain both names of deities and as much information concerning these gods as possible, and the resulting data are presented here.

One reason why perhaps not more of such "systematic theology" of *vodun* as exists has been made available is the great degree of individual variation which confronts the student seeking this kind of information, since differences of opinion are invariably encountered. Even priests do not by any means agree, for these men and women are supreme individualists, each being the worshipper of particular deities and exploiting special skills, with the result that the frame of reference within

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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776 [821] rainbow, and this is called an *arc d'alliance* between him and Aida Wedo, his wife, whose characteristic dress is blue and [171] white. Sobo, who in Dahomey is the god of thunder, is also believed in Haiti to give thunder, though he is not thought to live in the sky. As in Africa, his symbol is the ram. Aizan lives in the water, and is a favored deity because he gives his devotees the power of healing and of divining.

Erzilie, a *loa* of considerable importance, is envisaged as a pale, trembling woman who also inhabits the water. She constantly changes her dresses, of which she has many. All agree that she is a fabulously wealthy woman, who wears golden chains about her neck and has many rings, a characterization derived from her identification with Mater Dolorosa, whose chromolithographs depict her with many rich ornaments. As a Rada *loa* she "eats" the same food as Damballa, and wears white, like this other god, but has Friday as her sacred day. In her less pleasant manifestation of Erzilie Gé Rouge, the red-eyed one, she is a member of the Pétro "squad," and is held to be the wife of Simbi d'l'eau, with whom she is believed to get on especially well, since they "eat" different foods. Simbi, who is worshipped on Tuesdays and inhabits the mango and calabash trees, is said to drink heavily, however, and occasionally becomes so boistrous in his cups that he destroys the furniture and otherwise makes himself so objectionable that Erzilie is forced to leave him until he becomes sober.

[171] Ogun, in Haiti as in Nigeria, is the god of war. The Nigerian Shango is also found, though the Haitians conceive Shango as a *loa* who acts as the servant of the Ogun deities, [1782] particularly Ogun Badagri and Ogun Batala. Ogun "eats" [822] red cocks and red beans mixed with rice, and his color, red, is worn by his devotees. To this fact may be referred the custom [114] of the Caco warriors who fought against the American Ma- [648] rines in 1918–20 to wear red as their distinguishing color, something referred to by Wirkus (pp. 22 ff.), though he

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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combines an explanation having an element of correctness — "a charm against harm" — with entire misunderstanding when he speaks of the color as symbolizing a "declaration of a holy war against wrong and oppression." Some, but not all of the Ogun *loa* drink Haitian rum. Ogun himself is identified with St. James the Elder, and his sacred day is Wednesday. This *loa* is a *Nèg' défence* and protects his worshippers from bullets or wounds inflicted by weapons. Ogun Balandjo guards travelers, though he is not as strong as such others of the Ogun group as Ogun Badagri and Ogun Batala, with whom he shares the bamboo tree as a habitation. The former gives *connaissance* — knowledge — which permits those he possesses to prophesy; the latter endows with the ability to prepare healing baths. The Ogun *loa* Erzilie and Damballa are jealous gods. On the day sacred to each, a devotee puts fresh linen on his bed, places powder, soap, and a comb near by, and sleeps alone. If the devotee is a woman, her husband sleeps elsewhere; if a man, his wife must seek another place; otherwise the transgressor would die.

Agwe Woyo is god of the sea, but, as might be expected, neither he nor his son and daughter, Agweto and Agweta Woyo, figures as importantly in Mirebalais as in coastal areas. For the folk of Mirebalais the river-gods, particularly the spirit of the Artibonite River, are of much greater importance. This last-mentioned *loa*, named Clairmé, a Pèzro deity like his wife and daughter, Mme. Clairmé and Clairmézine, lives in the deepest part of the stream with the other members of his "family." Similarly, the deepest parts, or *bassins*, of tributary streams hold the spirits of those waters. And since all these tributaries flow into the Artibonite, and the Artibonite empties into the ocean, it is said that when the river is in flood, Clairmé is engaged in inspecting his domain, being greeted by the spirits of all the smaller rivers as he passes their mouths. At this time the flow of the water in each tributary is arrested until he has gone by, when, in a great swirl,

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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APPENDIX II

SOME COMMENTS ON METHOD

THE MATERIAL presented in this book was gathered during the summer of 1934, when an expedition was arranged that made it possible for Mrs. Herskovits and myself to spend a little more than three months in Mirebalais. For so comparatively short a stay, it was particularly advantageous to have two persons carry on the work, each of whom brought to the study of Haitian culture a background of experience with related Negro civilizations in the New World and in West Africa. This enabled the study to begin at a point of considerable familiarity with the underlying sanctions of Haitian institutions.

According to plan, the investigation was concentrated in a restricted region. It therefore follows that unless explicitly stated, all references to custom and belief in this book have bearing only upon the folk of the valley where the study was conducted. No sweeping generalizations for all of Haiti are to be deduced, for regional variations do exist and are of no little importance in suggesting African tribal differences in custom which have been retained because of the African tradition of cultural autonomy for separate localities.

The greatest disadvantage of a short field-study is that the resulting picture of the culture must of necessity be a seasonal one. No first-hand description of the important festivities that

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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mark the New Year, the time of harvest, All Saints' Day, or 114
Easter can be given; on the other hand, the accounts of those 121
portions of the agricultural cycle that take place during the rainy season, especially the operations of the important co-operative work-groups, could be followed carefully. In the field of religion, good fortune and a friendly entrée, the harvest of many months spent in field-work among Negro peoples elsewhere, but above all in Guinée — Africa — afforded invitations to a number of private ceremonies that might occur at any season. And the same background, together with the insatiable interest of the Negro in the nature and the functioning of his gods, made for such detailed discussions of native theological concept and philosophical point of view as could not have been bettered no matter what the time of year.

In the field, the procedure followed in earlier investiga- 122
tions was continued; a house was found in the village where it 124
was possible to settle down and quietly observe life as it drifted past the door. A number of acquaintances became habitual visitors, and these, together with those others whose services as interpreters were needed, especially in the early days of the stay when the understanding of Créole and the ability to converse in it were limited, constituted those to whom questions were most frequently put or to whom happenings that had been observed were referred for clarification. Agreement on all points, or any point, in fact, bearing either on belief or ritual observance was by no means invariably found, but soundness of method in the study of culture must recognize that there are no "correct" answers to questions of custom; and that the acceptance of the fact of individual differences of behavior and point of view within the general framework of a given set of traditions is the only valid approach to the realities of human civilization.

Obviously, not all the material presented here is the result 123
of first-hand observation, for much insight can be derived 124
from the method of question and answer when carefully used

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

incident upon culture-change enable the student to observe, under conditions of known historical control, the results of changes in settled habits and belief and behavior? 121

Foremost among the considerations that present themselves in this connection is that of the value of utilizing historical documentation as an aid in the study of culture. This has general relevance, since the obliviousness of students of primitive societies to historical records bearing upon the peoples they study is a commonplace, while no less so is the failure of historians adequately to treat the information they uncover about primitive peoples in the records through which they have worked. In a sense, this is neither surprising nor blameworthy. Each group has its own techniques, so that just as the ethnologist is not competent as an archivist, in like manner the historian finds it difficult both to assess the value of information concerning primitive folk, and to present it so that its greatest usefulness may be realized. 121 127

In studying Haitian culture, however, the employment of both historical and ethnological data is almost mandatory. The serious errors that a lack of both kinds of background has given rise to cannot be overlooked, matters so fundamental as the names of African tribes given the slaves in the early historical sources being an important case in point. Thus, the term *Caplahou*, a geographical one, is given as a tribal designation in a number of modern works, while elsewhere the Ibo are listed as a Nago sub-tribe, quite without realization that the Ibo and Yoruban Nago not only are separated by a considerable distance, but that in their cultural affiliations they differ widely. More striking, and more amusing, is the translation of the word *marassa* given by one popularizer who, lacking knowledge of the existence of the twin cult in Africa, rendered it as "the spirit of the race." 121 127 114

On the other hand, attempts to interpret Haitian culture without reference to historical documentation have also been subject to unfortunate errors. Significant here are the failures 121 127

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

[600] [114]

[7] Price-Mars (I), 206, note 1, and Wirkus, 215, define the term *combite*.

[8] Wirkus, 51, 288, differentiates these work-drums from other types.

[9] Wirkus, 191, has described the efficiency with which an organized Haitian work-group accomplished its task on the road.

[10] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 146–8.

[11] A good description of a Haitian market as observed in 1835 is to be found in Hanna, 53–6.

[12] Compare Mackenzie, i, 28–9.

[13] The poverty of the Haitians is often exaggerated, and especially the concept of wealth as held by the peasant is caricatured in a way that accentuates a misunderstanding of his economic psychology. For an extreme instance of this see Craige, 42–5.

CHAPTER V

[352] [345]

[1] Price-Mars (I), 34, speaks of the need immediately after birth of "immersing the newborn infant in a lustral bath carefully concocted by the vodun priest who consecrates the child to the divinity that can preserve him against the evil-doing of malignant spirits, and rescue him from 'the power of supernatural ills.'"

[144] [608]

[2] Craige, 68–9, and Wirkus, 97–9, both give accounts of wayside births in which the mothers resumed their journeys immediately after bearing their children.

[3] Price-Mars (I), 34, says: "It is forbidden to speak aloud the 'baptismal' name of a child under certain circumstances, above all during the night."

[4] Parsons (I), 174, notes that "an infant born with teeth is one whose birth has been delayed so long by the *moraas* [twins] that the teeth have developed."

[5] Price-Mars (I), 235, derives the importance of the godmother from the conditions of slavery, when a child was often cared for by a foster-mother. See also St. Mery, i, 35–6, and Mackenzie, i, 273–4.

CHAPTER VI

[1] The institution of *plaçage* is mentioned in passing by Craige, 203–4, and, with complete lack of understanding, by Wirkus, 73 and 307.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

heard in Haiti, but descriptive details of the practice abound." Elsewhere (p. 158) she speaks of "this higgley piggley pantheon" of *loa*, whose traits "none . . . [were] . . . able to describe . . . in all systematically." Price-Mars (I), 32, however, mentions the existence of a theology based on African beliefs not unlike that described here.

[9] Cf. Parsons (I), 168.

[10] Nowhere is the confusion with which writers on Haiti have approached and presented *vodun* theological concepts better exemplified than in the passage found in Craige, 98–9; or 71, where a charm for working evil magic is spoken of as "something having to do with voodoos."

[11] Despite the importance of possession, one would hesitate before accepting in its entirety the somewhat simplistic approach of Dorsainvil that "*le vodou se ramène à l'idée de la possession*," (I), 113.

[12] St. Mery, i. 55.

[13] Parsons (I), 169, note 2, speaks of baptism, but states "*loi* Pétrou is one you do not baptise, as you do other *loi* when they come . . ." — a custom at variance with Mirebalais procedure.

[14] Cf. Parsons (I), 163, however, where the meaning of *monté* is given "to get the spirit."

[15] See Parsons (I), 163–5, for a description of a "shrine" of a worshipper of the *loa*.

[16] Cf. Dorsainvil (I), 115 ff.

[17] This is undoubtedly the explanation of Seabrook's "hermaphroditic god" called Papa Nebo (Gede-nibo), which he shows on pp. 9 and 10 of the plates of his book. As is indicated elsewhere in this volume, Gede, who does not partake of this characteristic in the loa, has thus been woefully misunderstood by Seabrook.

[18] Dorsainvil (I), 72–4, describes possession as a *vodun* ceremony, and Wirkus, 173 ff., also gives a description of a possession scene, but his account is pitched so hysterically as materially to lessen its usefulness for serious comparisons.

[19] (I) *passim*, but especially 18–19, 58–61, 86–7, 111–12. A definition of *vodun* more acceptable to those who approach social phenomena from an ethnological and historical point of view is to be found on page 130. Price-Mars (I), 123 ff., gives an extended criticism of Dorsainvil's hypothesis, though from quite a different point of

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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view from that given here.

- Parsons (I), 171, describes how she witnessed a woman "refuse the visitation of her *loa*."
- Price-Mars (I), 54, speaks of the "*obligationes annuelles de participer par un acte quelconque aux sacrifices cultuels . . .*" laid on the voduisie.
- St. Mery, i, 51; see also Dorsainvil (I), 56.
- Seabrook's description of a "Pitro" ceremony (pp. 31 ff.) deserves, on the basis of its inner inconsistencies, to be considered a masterpiece of misstatement and misinterpretation. In effect, and the effect of others like it, have done much to perpetuate this incorrect idea of the Pitro rites.
- Dorsainvil, Price-Mars, and Parsons all employ these terms, rather than *papalói* and *mamalói*, the designations found in more popular books such as those of Craige, Seabrook, and Wirkus. The latter two of these writers seem confused about these words and fail to make it clear whether or not they mean the same or different functionaries of the vodou cult when they use the words *houngan* and *papalói*.
- Compare Dorsainvil (I), 73-7 and 121, where he expresses a low opinion of the *houngan*, holding him unreliable and insincere in his worship, as contrasted to the *vrai serviteur*.
- Op. cit., 175-9.
- Even though followers of the vodou cult are more organized in some parts of Haiti than in Mirebalais, it is at most nonsense to speak of a "supreme high priestess" of the cult, its *grande mamalói*, as does Seabrook, 117, or of a "black pope of voudoo" as Wirkus has done (in *Harper's Magazine*, Vol. 168, pp. 38-39, 188-98; December 1933-January 1934).
- A other statement of the degree of initiation into the cult (although these do not hold for Mirebalais) is to be found in Dorsainvil (I), 188-9, and also 62.

CHAPTER IX

- Price-Mars (I), 144, gives a long and excellent list of the reasons for offering sacrifices.
- A description of a *hounfort* destroyed by the Marines during their occupation, and a detailed account of its

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

1996
1994
114

contents, is given by Wirkus, 178–9.

• Compare this description with the *hounfort* pictured in Johnston, p. 194.

1996
1994
114

• It is to be emphasized that in the course of the voodoo rituals witnessed during this field-work, none of the "frenzy of the blood lust" that is so favorite an aspect of these ceremonies with writers of books on Haiti was encountered. As an extreme example of this heightening of the tone with which a ceremony is described, the work of Seabrook may be cited, for phrases such as "blood-maddened, sex-maddened, god-maddened" used by him mark perhaps an all-time record for distortion of the inner discipline of the voodoo cult.

1996
114

• Cf. Parsons's brief sketch, (I), 172–3, of a *manger loa*, though the "bloody anointing" of which she speaks was not seen to occur in Mirebalais *services*. Detailed descriptions of what apparently were *services* are given by Wirkus, 168 ff., who, though honest in recounting what he saw, realized nothing of its significance; and Seabrook (pp. 54–70), who reads so much into what he purports to have witnessed that the entire account is rendered useless.

CHAPTER X

• Compare Parsons (I), 167–72.

1996
1994
1973

• The drunkenness at serious dances reported by Parsons (I), 172, and others, would not be tolerated in Mirebalais.

• Price-Mars (I), 108, gives the name of *assotor* for the great drum.

1996
114

• Much nonsense has been written concerning these drums. Many writers—all non-Haitians—assume the existence of a drum language, which seems to be an assertion of dubious truth.

• This is a striking example of what Dorsainvil (I), 73–4 and 131 ff., calls the *manque réfléchi* in detailing the effects of possession on the features of the possessed. See also the discussion of possession in Price-Mars (I), 122–3. The Gede possession described by Craige, 73–4, must, on the basis of customary Haitian behavior under possession, be subject to reinterpretation.

• Cf. Parsons (I), 170.

CHAPTER XI

[1] Compare Parsons (I). 173-4, where the cult of twins is discussed and some of its rites described.

[2] Price-Mars (I). 55, mentions this as a power believed to be held by twins.

[3] The phrase "cult of the dead" as employed here must be sharply differentiated from its misuse by Seabrook (82 ff.).

[4] Cf. Price-Mars (I). 34.

[5] Price-Mars (I). 34, speaks of the custom of always burying charms with the dead.

[6] Wakes have been described by Seabrook, 89-91, and others, but in such a manner that it is difficult to discern out the reality of what was witnessed from the imaginative elements.

[7] Cf. Wirkus, 221-3. The custom of giving the dead food at the grave, which he describes, is not followed when burial occurs in the Mirebalais town cemetery, nor, seemingly, elsewhere in the valley.

[8] See the description of a commemorative rite for the dead in Price-Mars (I) 158-59.

[9] This is a rule followed in West African practice.

CHAPTER XII

[1] An interesting attempt to account for this is found in St. John, 230-1, where he speaks of the "two Vaudoux sects," one good and one evil.

[2] St. Mery, i, 56. The term gorde is almost entirely absent in later writings, the more sensational wanga (ouanga) being preferred.

[3] Léger, 55, note 54.

[4] Cf. Dorsainvil (I). 171.

[5] No better summary of this could be had than that in Parsons (I). 179, written after a single séance with a gangan.

[6] Pp. 324-31.

[7] Mr. J. C. Trevor informs me that during a recent field-trip to the Virgin Islands he discovered books of magic in common use, obtained from a Chicago dealer.

[8] It is not without interest to note that in the case reported in a Port-au-Prince newspaper and reproduced in facsimile by Seabrook, 334, concerning a woman from the commune of Mirebalais accused of sorcery, the name of the woman was *Aidimon*.

[9] Cf. Parsons (II). 356.

[10] See above, pp. 94-5.

[11] The closest correspondence

Ir. Herskovits I-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 HdH SV3
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to the Haitian *loka* found in the New World are the *bakra* of Dutch Guiana, who in turn derive from the "little folk" of West African belief, beings that are always important in making magic. See Herskovits, M. and F. (IV), 105–7.

[10] Dorsainvil (I), 150, mentions this rite.

[10] Notably by Seabrook, 92 ff., who made great capital of the concept and purported actually to have seen these beings! Parsons (II), ii, 592. Tale 77, I, reproduces a Haitian's account in Créole of how a Sorcerer goes about ensnaring a victim to make of him a *zombi*.

[11] Parsons (I), 178–9.

CHAPTER XIII

[1] Price-Mars (II), 96 ff., gives a detailed description of the peasant house. The beehive-shaped hut mentioned by Craige, 56, is not found in Mirebalais, though the valley is but a short distance from Hinche, of which he was writing. Seabrook, 18, also describes the interior of a peasant house.

[2] Charlevoix, ii, 42.

[3] St. John, 153.

[4] Seabrook, 104 ff., devotes some space to a discussion of *pwitrowe*, but so changes its meaning to the Haitians that it is quite useless in making a serious comparison of data.

[5] See the discussion in Dorsainvil (I), 150, concerning other retentions of African motor behavior in Haiti.

[6] Craige, Seabrook, and Wirkus, all give lively accounts of cock-fights.

[7] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 1–15, for accounts of the manner in which stories are told in Haiti. It is to be noted that the African belief that a tale must not be told during the daytime persists there.

[8] A large collection of Haitian folk-tales has been published recently by Parsons (II), ii, 470–596.

[9] Ainlain has published what is perhaps the largest collection of Créole proverbs; his work, however, is unfortunately out of print.

CHAPTER XIV

[1] Dorsainvil (I), 158.

[2] Exceptions to this statement must be made in the case of the careful study of the relationship between Catholicism and *vodun* by Price

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

Mars (I), 165 ff., and to the briefer discussions of this point in Dorsainvil (I), 35–7, and Parsons (I), *passim*, but especially p. 179. Some consideration is also given to this mingling of religious beliefs in Wirkus, 20, 22, 177, 179, and in Seabrook, 17–20, though in this latter citation the distortion of native belief usually found in Seabrook's book is not absent.

[8] Wirkus, 188–9, describes the baptism of Rada drums, though certain details in his account appear somewhat unlikely.

[9] Compare Parsons (I), 165, 175.

[10] Cf. Ortiz, *passim*.

[11] Cf. Ramos, Ch. V; Ignace; Nina-Rodrigues, *passim*.

[12] Price-Mars (I), 180–1, gives the following correspondences between *vodun*-cult deities and saints of the Church:

Legba:	St. Anthony
Ogun Balandjo:	St. James the Elder
Agaumme Tonnerre:	St. John the Baptist
Dagoy Bologuay:	St. Joseph
Roi d'Ambouzu:	St. Louis (King of France)
Grande Mambo Batala:	St. Anne
Maîtresse Ezulie:	the Holy Virgin (especially the Holy Virgin of the Nativity)
La Sirène:	the Assumption
Pierre D'Ambala:	St. Peter

Seabrook, 13, speaks of "Maîtresse Ezilée . . . the mild blessed Virgin Mary," and Wirkus, 178–9, correlates Damballa with St. Patrick, and Legba with St. Peter.

[13] The original of the part of this *oraison* given here is reproduced in facsimile by Seabrook, 309, and quoted in full by Price-Mars (I), 183–4; the latter also gives, 182–3, another of these *oraisons populaires*, to Ste. Radegonde, who is regarded in it as an associate of Baron Samedi in the cemetery. For *oraisons* used in the fetish cult of Cuba, see Ortiz, 90 ff.

[14] Price-Mars (I), 32, speaks of "*le catholicisme hybride de nos masses populaires*," as later, 38, he denominates *vodun* as an African religion "*alterée par sa juxtaposition plus que séculaire à la réligion catholique. . . .*" See also p. 122. The points of resemblance between Catholicism and *vodun* which encouraged the resulting synthesis are tellingly numbered on pp. 164–5.

2: Courlander . B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

The Drum and the Hoe is the result of studies made over a period of years. Several short sections of this book have appeared in substance in *Haiti Singing* (1939), the *Musical Quarterly*, the *Journal of Negro History*, and other journals. The song and story texts presented in several chapters were taken on disc and tape recorders during nine separate field trips to Haiti, between 1937 and 1955. They have been selected from more than six hundred examples recorded by this method.

Support for work on these recorded materials was received from the American Council of Learned Societies and the American Philosophical Society. Research on African survivals in the New World was aided by a Guggenheim fellowship. Originals or copies of some of the tape and disc recordings are now in the archives of Indiana University and Northwestern University.

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Voluska Saintvil (Ti Goave), Joseph Dérosier (Cap Haitien), Julia Immacula (Southwest Haiti), Sigbrien Bellis (Port-au-Prince), Vénéise Macélise (Léogane), André Jean (Morne l'Hôpital), Christophe Oxilas (Ti Goave), Edgar Dérosier (Port-au-Prince), Isnardé Din (Léogane), Wilfred Beauchamp (Port-de-Paix), Lydia Augustin (l'Asile), Louise Joseph (Port-au-Prince), St. Élia Alsandor (Jérémie), Georgette Alcède (Southwest Haiti), Élizia Moron (Anse-à-Veau), Prosper Louis (Port-au-Prince), Télisman Charles (Morne l'Hôpital), André Charles (Morne l'Hôpital), Daïs Charles (Anse-à-Veau), Simon Jean (Pétionville), Tonton Cabrit (Morne l'Hôpital), Micano Cassis (Cap Haitien), Louis Desbornes (Port-au-Prince), André Coyotte (Port-au-Prince), Innomine Pierre (Morne l'Hôpital), George Gabriel (Port-au-Prince), Simeon Benjamin (Port-au-Prince), Romain St. Aude (Port-de-Paix), Jean Ravel Pintro (Jérémie), La France Belvue (Anse-à-Veau), Morgina La Vache (Jacmel), Alten St. Ville (Morne l'Hôpital), Abner Juslin (Port-au-Prince), Jean Louis La Rivière (Dondon), St. Jean Nago (La Gonave), Jean Pierre Marigot (Terrier-Rouge), Libera Borderau (Morne Mardi Gras), Charles Hector (Anse-à-Veau), Immacula Lorival (Southwest Haiti), Aléanne François (Port-au-Prince), Felix Charlotin (Southwest Haiti), Julie Gentil (Port-au-Prince), Lena Hibbert (Anse-à-Veau), Ti Yogan Borderau (Léogane), César Jeanbaptiste (Southwest Haiti) and Idamente Joseph (Ti Rivière de Nippes). Special thanks are due Aléis Conrolé, a *houngan* of the region of Morne Mardi Gras, who was generous in many ways in explaining the workings of the cult temple.

I am of course indebted to the work of a number of scholars, cited

2: Courlander 3-5 (1937-1938) 1960 SV3 HaBI SV3

in the services. In the court, the bases of four sacred trees . . . are surrounded by circles of masonry [low brick walls]. These *reposoirs* are inhabited by the *loa* Legba, Ogoun, Loco and Sango.[5]

There is little in Aubin's description to suggest that hounfors were much different a half century ago from what they are today. He erra in identifying the "thunder stones" solely with Damballa. But his eye for detail was acute. In 1950 a mambo in the neighborhood of this hounfor described by Aubin affirmed that some of the loa stones and old coins which he mentioned are still to be found among the properties of a hounfor in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. Others were lost in one of the cleric-inspired raids which despoiled cult temples of drums and other paraphernalia about fifteen years ago.

Many services are held outside the hounfor and the peristyle. Some rituals, such as animal sacrifices and "talking to the loa below the water," may take place some distance from the cult buildings. Indeed, various Vodoun ceremonies may be held at waterfalls, at the seashore, in sacred groves, in ordinary homes, in a boat at sea,[6] or under a sacred tree.

The rites of the hounfor are almost without number. They are associated with the supplication or conciliation of virtually countless deities, each of which has his own special service. There are services in multitudinous combinations and permutations for the dead, for twins, for albinos, and for unborn children. There are ceremonies for the elevation of hounsi and for initiation, smoke and fire ordeals, and tests of other kinds. There are *mangé loa* (feasts for the deities) and *mangé morts* (feasts for the dead). There are services for the sick, for the crops, and for the harvest. In one context or another, Vodoun relates to nearly every aspect and phase of life—and its counterpart, death. Since every region, every locality, and, in fact, almost every hounfor has developed its own ritual out of the common materials, it is possible to see hundreds of ceremonies without ever seeing precisely the same one twice. Yet the common elements bind them all together.

One such prime element is the possession, the "mou[illegible] e human body by one of the deities. Possession is a psych[illegible] nomenon common to the rites of many cults throughout the w[illegible] known in Asia, Africa, Europe, and America. It is not the un[illegible] property of the African and his Haitian descendant. In the United States it is a commonplace not only among certain Negro cults but certain white cults as well. The United States Negro had ample West African inspiration for his seizures in the church and at the baptism. The intellectual meaning of these seizures has changed, as have their outward forms to a mea[illegible]ble extent, but their emotional content has not altered.

5 [Translated from the French of Aubin: En Haiti, pp. 57-59. Cf. p. 349, Category 116. — Analyst]

6 [Footnote appears on p. 349, Category 116. — Analyst]

2: Courlander 8-6 (1937-1962) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

The loa, like the rites, vary somewhat according to region and to the practices of the individual cult priests. New concepts spring up, and they thrive in one locality while remaining unheard of in another. Yet many new concepts travel from hounfor to hounfor. As in the old days in Dahomey, the Vodoun priests sometimes make journeys to visit other cult centers. At one service near Jacmel, on the south coast, I met a houngan from Dondon in the far north and heard him discuss with the local cult chief the appropriate behavior of a loa who had mounted a servitor. The Dondon houngan declared that in the north the loa conducted himself differently. The Jacmel houngan parried with the remark that a loa's behavior is consistent. He said there were only two possibilities concerning the possession as described by the cult chief from Dondon: either the loa had been mistakenly identified, or another deity had attempted to impersonate him. Such exchanges hasten the spread of developing theology from one area to another. They also raise contradictions which remain forever insoluble.

That confusions and contradictions are not merely of Haitian making is made clear by Herskovits' voluminous study of the pantheons of Dahomey.[3] Each of the great cults—the sky cult, the earth cult, and the thunder cult—has its own explanations of the origins and functions of the deities; and even within one cult there are contradicting explanations. The Haitians have taken over, built upon, and diverged from a Dahomean system that contained its own contradictions. In adding to it the system of the Yoruba, with its parallelisms and similarities, they have made the whole picture more complex than ever.

[3] [Herskovits, Dahomey. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

with the corpse. He wants nothing to do with the domain of the Gèdès. 775
He liberates himself from the corpse at the cemetery and retires "below the 776
water." He is no longer a friend and benefactor of the family. He cannot 764
be inherited by the children of the deceased. Such controls as the deceased once exercised over him are dissipated. He may, in fact, be angered at the treatment he has received and return only to harass the family. Thus, if a family fails to have the mait' tête of one of its members properly removed at death, it may be persecuted afterward by the "spirit" of the dead ancestor and the loa as well.

The rite of dispossessing a deceased person of his loa is called *désrouaia*, 764
or *désrouaé*. The essence of it is the transference of the mait' tête from the 776
head of the dead person into a special receptacle, an earthen jar called a *gouì* or *pot tête*. Sometimes it is transferred to the head of a child in the family, though usually this comes later.

There have been many descriptions of this ritual, and they seem to show that, though the tradition is a constant one, the specific patterns of the services are variable. Different regions, different cult centers, and different houngans conduct the rites in different ways.

Eugene Aubin wrote, for example:

On the day of death, the deceased is placed standing up; the *papaloi* [houngan] [993]
conducts the rites which retire the *mystère* [loa] from the body and introduce it
into a jar, which is then carefully sealed. On the ninth day, after the feast for the [765]
dead, the jar is broken and liberty given to the *loa*.[§]

Melville Herskovits reported:

If the dead person was a Vodun priest or otherwise had strong *connaissance*, steps [766]
are taken . . . "to remove the *loa* from his head" so that his soul will not go under
the water, for, as has been explained, such souls are held to be powerful spirits which [775]
may cause the family much harm if, after a time, an expensive and troublesome cere-
mony is not performed to bring them out and lodge them in a jar. . . . The *houngan* [993]
stands in place and calls the name of the dead. He puts some of the hair of the dead
in the jar or in a calabash, into which the *loa* is supposed to go, and, unless another
member of the family, nominated to receive the *connaissance* of the dead, is present,
the jar or calabash is sealed until these spirits can be "given" to a successor.[¶]

As Herskovits understands it, it is the "soul" of the dead person that 114
would go to live "under the water," rather than the loa. This would appear 764
to be a fusion of two separate elements—the wandering, troublesome 775
"spirit" of a dead person and the mait' tête who retires "under the water." 776
Actually, Haitians are not always consistent in their explanations of what happens, or of the difference between loa and souls. On the houngfer altar there may be some gouìs that contain "souls" or "spirits" and others that contain loa; though the distinction is readily appreciated, Haitians are

§ [Translated from The French of Aubin, En Haiti, P. 212
Cf. P. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]
¶ [Herskovits, Life in a Haitian Valley, PP. 213-214
Cf. P. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

764 764 765 776 sometimes hard put to explain the similarity of treatment of these two categories.

Another investigator, Alfred Métraux, has provided a vivid description 764 given by a Haitian of a ceremony of removing the loa. In this instance 776 the corpse was not placed in an upright position as described by Aubin but was laid on a specially prepared bed. Attending the body were the houngan, his hounsi, and a child of the dead man who was to receive the liberated loa.

> The child . . . grasps in his hand a black-and-white or a white cock. On the ground in front of the bed they arrange a fine white napkin. On top of it there are syrup, candles . . . , *tafia*, and other things. After they have finished sprinkling water, clapping their hands, singing to the *loa*, they all go around the bed of the dead person. The child, with the cock in his hand, makes the rounds with the *houngan*. They wave the rooster, they wave it back and forth two, three, four, five, six times over the dead person's head. During this time all those present get possessed by the *loa*, sing, clap their hands. The dead person's bed begins to creak. The *houngan* climbs
[193] on the bed and grabs the dead person's two arms. . . . He pulls him to a sitting position. The child (into whose head the *loa* is to be transferred) strikes the chicken three times on the head of the dead person. He lets go the chicken, and the chicken flies up and starts to run all around the room, smashing pots and vessels. They grab the chicken and let it go in the air three times, shouting: *Ai bobo loa li!* Immediately the *loa* goes into the head of the dead person's child.[1]

764 The houngan cited by Métraux is described as pulling the corpse to a 776 sitting position, but more commonly it is believed that the houngan has 793 the power to make the body sit up by itself. A man from Jérémie explained it this way:

> "The body is laid out on a mat. The houngan shakes his asson over the dead man, and talks to the loa in the head. He calls the loa's name: 'Changogolo! Changogolo! Changogolo!' He calls, calls, calls. He doesn't call the dead man's name, he calls the mait' tête. 'Changogolo! Changogolo! Get up! Wake up! Sit up!' The corpse sits up. It even talks. Then the houngan says, 'Lie down!' And the corpse lies down. But it is not the dead man who sits up. The dead man is dead. It is the mait' tête who has forced the body to sit up. After this the houngan takes the loa from the head and puts it in a pot tête. Then the body can be buried. And afterward the loa can be put in the head of someone else or freed. Or the houngan may keep the loa in the pot tête and sell it to someone who needs a loa to work for him. If they buried the corpse without a *désossain*, the loa would resent it and go away below the water."

764 George Eaton Simpson has written an excellent description of a cere- 766 mony for removal of the loa from the head of a deceased houngan.[2] The 776 793

[1] [Hall and others, Haitian Creole, American Anthropological Association, Memoir No. 64, pp. 188-189. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[2] [Simpson, "Four Vodun Ceremonies" Journal of American Folklore, April-June, 1946, pp. 155-162. Cf. p. 350, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]

house, which is on fire. But there is no grief, because Ogoun is the master of fire:

Pierre, Pierre Nanitou ah!	Pierre, Pierre Nanitou, ah!
Yaga *mondo*!!	Yaga *mondo*!!
Caille Ogoun bradé!	Ogoun's house is burning!
Gildive Ogoun bel Di!	Ogoun's distillery is beautiful!
Na *mondé*! [Ex. 88]	We *mondé* ourselves!

Some of the ritual songs that have persisted through the years have lost their explicit meaning but continue to survive because of beautiful melodies and perhaps the strange images they evoke. Such a song is this one to the loa Anti Dzi, from the Dahomey service:

Anti Dzi ah!	Anti Dzi, ah!
Yo *wapé* dit mwin	They sent to tell me
Mo *ndéli mondale*!*	The sun was sick!
Quand'm ol *vini*	When I arrived
Mwin jouni *ndéli mourri*!	I found the sun had died!
Quand'm ol *vini*	When I arrived
Mwin jouni *ndéli mourri*!	I found the sun had died!
C'est *regrettant* ça	What grief it was
Pou'm *enterré ndéli*! [Ex.89]	For me to bury the sun!

One of the truly lovely songs of the Dahomey rites, both in melody and in lyrics, is the following one to the deity Erilie. It shows clear evidence of Catholic ritual influence in both its text and its music. Erilie Fréda, who seems to be speaking most of the lines, is identified with the Virgin Mary, and the tone of this piece casts her more in her Catholic role than her African. The deity is speaking from Yaguza, a place described as being "on the other side of the water." In form the song is atypical in that it has more than one movement and progresses from one idea to another.

Erilie Nainain ah!
Erilie Nainain ah!
Erilie ah, c'est moin Yaguza!

Erilie n'ap *marché* n'ap *monté* n'ap *parlé pou' tempo* y'ap *parlé pande moin*!
Erilie n'ap *marché* n'ap *monté pou' tempo* y'ap *parlé pande mwil*!
Erilie Nainain ah!
Erilie Fréda ah Nainain ah!
Erilie Fréda ah, c'est moin Yaguza!

Mandanou nè yo chita non caille li yo vié *djoillé* ah tout *tempo ndéli pou lévé*!
Mandanou yo passé yo tombé ni à gilouza y'apé phinnoin la nuit yo!

---

* Some Haitian informants reported that *ndéli* meant "sun." Others felt that this word in the song was really Éléli, a diminutive of *Ardéli*, another name for Anti Dzi.

Like their ancestors in predatory days, the Haitians had a clear-cut 462
and equitable division of labor between the sexes which was particularly
suited to the agrarian life. The pattern of work sharing seems to have
been misunderstood by nineteenth-century chroniclers, many of whom [114]
complained that the Haitian male napped in the shade while the women
performed all the labor. It is quite true that the Haitian peasant woman
is a relentless toiler. It may even be, as Sir Harry Johnston declared early in
the twentieth century, that "the women are the best part of the Haitian
nation." This Englishman wrote glowingly of the Haitian woman's fortitude and energy:

> In the face of all discouragements, with which a bad government clouds their existence the women of Haiti . . . continue to toil, to raise poultry and cattle, till the fields, sow in their gardens, make pottery and mats. They cannot stop to sewn, but must go on working from three years old to the end of their lives. Such industry (which is almost equally supplemented by that of the peasant husbands) properly directed should make Haiti one of the richest countries in the world for its size and population.[1]

But as Johnston surmised, the Haitian man, too, treads an unstopping wheel. Although it is the women who are seen crowding the trails and roads on market days, behind the produce they vend is the work of the men. For it is primarily the men who break the ground and plant, cultivate, and harvest the crops. It is the men who cut timber and build the houses, who dig and process lime for plastering the walls, and who thatch the roofs. And the houses do not last forever but must be rebuilt time and again. It is the men who cut and transport wood for fuel, dig red clay from the clay beds for pottery, make the mortars in which the grain is pulverized, build terraces for the gardens, make charcoal, go to sea for fish, and work at the village forge. On the plantations they cut the cane and the sisal. In the city they carry the heavy coffee and sugar bags, load the ships, make bricks, and build roads.

The women, for their part, run the household, care for the children, carry water from the springs, launder at the river's edge, cook, sew, play a supporting role in the field work, carry the crops to market, sell them, and bring back things which the garden does not produce. The woman may be the business manager of the household, and sometimes from the proceeds of special projects she may be able to put aside small savings of her own.

Children slip into their work roles at an early age. Boys and girls as 859
young as three or four may be seen carrying small tins of water on 868
their heads, on their way from the springs, usually in groups with older girls or women. Young girls assume woman's work as soon as they can

[1] [Johnston, The Negro in the New World. Cf p. 352, Category 116. -- Analyst]

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[P. 126]

11. Dancing and Dance Drama

197 The dances of Haiti, like the loa, are almost beyond counting. Like the
198 loa, too, the dances have personalities of their own, sometimes too subtle
535 for the stranger to detect. If there is one valid generalization, it is that the inspiration for the Haitian dance is primarily African. There have been changes in the course of the more than four hundred years since the first Africans came to the New World. Some of the old dances have disappeared altogether; others have developed new characteristics. New dances came into being with European rather than African form. Some of the most traditional dances have become sparse and lean, stripped of the decorative pageantry of earlier days. There are also the French quadrilles and similar square dances which have survived since colonial days in remote parts of the mountains. But it is the quadrille and not the dance of African origin which is atypical in Haiti's folk culture. Dancing is deeply rooted in almost all the important events of Haitian life. It is one of the few arts that have survived from preslavery days.

535 Early European travelers in Haiti were greatly taken by the dances
198 they found there. Some observers, like Moreau de Saint-Méry, a French-
195 man born in Martinique, have left invaluable documentation of the dances of the late eighteenth century. Saint-Méry described many dances that are still known in modern Haiti, such as the Chica, the Calinda, the Vodoun, and the Pétro. From his accounts one may assume that these dances have not changed much to this day.

● 114 But many of the foreign authors and journalists of early days were astoundingly lacking in understanding and quick to bare their prejudices and to pronounce their moral judgments. Like the explorers of our own time who delight in "returning alive" from some jungle land and in commenting upon all the strange, bizarre, dangerous, and wicked things they think they have seen, the explorer of the Dark Island often described the Haitian as a depraved branch of the human species. One such ob-

Opt. Such ob- 114
server, commenting upon the dances of the elite and of the peasant 535
declared:

> All the more undisguised is the crude sensuality among the lower classes of the Haitian population. Here every restraint is obscure; and I am not at all considering the popular merrymakings or dance festivals secretly held partly in open, partly in forests, which are more like orgies, in which the African savagery, which has outlived centuries, has unbridled expression.[1]

Whatever the Haitian dance is, it is none of these things. The Haitian 535
himself is neither obscene nor unbridled. His dancing, like his everyday 831
life, is governed by social controls. He would be as surprised and offended by a sexual orgy as most Europeans. But he is not burdened with abstract concepts of chastity. Sex impulses are as fundamental and as taken [183]
for granted as rain, drought, and sunlight. The Haitian finds no virtue in living according to standards that have no relation to his realities.

The Haitian, like the West African, is undoubtedly a less tormented creature, so far as sex is concerned, than his European and American cousins. Since he is less tormented he can be more frank. And it was an expression of this frankness in certain of the Haitian secular dances that once aroused dismay among foreign chroniclers, and that still stirs the curiosity of tourists.

Yet if you were to witness fifty Haitian dances in their natural setting, you still might not see any direct sex expression. You might see more sex play and display in a dance hall or night club in New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, or Los Angeles. That is not to say that there are no sexual allusions in Haitian dancing. In the ordinary Saturday night *bamboche*, or social dance, there may be a good deal of loin movement and suggestion. In Haitian context, however, it is no more significant than two persons of opposite sexes pressing close together to the music of a dreamy orchestra at the "Roseland." In Haitian religious dancing, sexual motifs may occasionally emerge, but they are integral parts of ritualistic symbolism.

One of the deficiencies of early literature on the dances of Haiti is 114
that it did not differentiate between religious and secular dances. Further- 535
more, it is evident that writers tended to use a single name, such as Chica or Bamboula, to cover virtually any kind of dance festivity, much as many white Cubans refer today to all sorts of Afro-Cuban cult dances as Bembé. Because the terminology of ill-informed planters was adopted by the chroniclers, we are now able to form only some very general notions of Haitian dancing of the eighteenth century and before. Of all the reporters on the dance, Moreau de Saint-Méry seems to have been aware of differences, though his frequent departures into specula-

[1] [Quoted in Courlander, Haiti Singing, p. 93.
Cf. P. 352, Category 116 -- Analyst]

114 tion helped to perpetuate some prevailing misunderstandings and errors.
535 This distinguished observer wrote:

> The Negroes of the Gold Coast, warlike, bloody, accustomed to human sacrifice, know only dances as frenzies as themselves, while those from the Congo, Senegalese and other African shepherds or agricultural tribes, love dancing as a relaxation, as a source of sensual pleasure. Brought from all parts of Africa to our Colonies . . . . the Negroes brought here and preserved their taste for the dance, a taste so strong that, however tired out from work the Negro may be, he always finds strength to dance and even to travel a long distance to satisfy this desire.
>
> When the Negroes want to dance, they take two drums, that is, two hollow
114 logs, of unequal length, with one end open, while the other is covered with
533 sheepskin. These drums . . . resound under blows of the wrist and movements of
535 the fingers of a Negro who sits astride of each drum. The larger drum is beaten slowly, the other more rapidly. This monotonous and hollow sound is accompanied by the noise of a certain number of calabashes which have been filled with pebbles . . . Several *banzas*, a sort of large guitar with four strings,[2] join the
534 concert, the tempo of which is regulated by the clapping hands of the Negro women, who form a large circle. They form a sort of chorus, which responds to one or two strident solo voices, which repeat or improvise a song.[3]

535 As for the dance movements themselves, Saint-Méry wrote:

> A male and [a] female dancer, or several dancers divided into equal numbers of each sex, jump into the center of the circle and begin to dance, always two by two. This dance, which varies little, consists of a very simple step in which one foot is put forward after the other, and then drawn back quickly, while striking the toe and the heel on the ground . . . Some turn in place, or around the woman, who turns also and changes places with her partner; that is all which one sees, except for the movement of the arms which the man raises and lowers with the elbows quite close to the body and the hands almost closed. The woman holds two ends of a handkerchief, which she waves . . . One would hardly believe how lively and animated it is, and how much grace it derives from the uniteness with which the musical rhythm is followed. The dancers replace one another without respite, and the Negroes are so intoxicated with pleasure that it is necessary to force them to conclude dances of this sort, called *kalenda*.[4]

114 Saint-Méry then brings forth one of his conclusions, that this dance
971 is obviously the development of a "comparatively uncivilized people," and that it comes from Africa, "where its characteristic features exist everywhere, even among the Hottentots."

114 Here he missed the point altogether. Although many of the char-
535 acteristics of this *kalenda* (or Calinda) were African, it had already been
199 intensively hybridized with European dance concepts, such as the pairing
971 off of males and females, who danced as couples. Then, as today, the dances which amazed and shocked the European observer were precisely the ones that had taken over certain European traditions.

2 [Actually a banjo-like instrument of African provenience. The similarity of the word banza to banjo appears to be more than a coincidence. Cf. P 352, Category 116. -- Analyst]
3 [Saint-Méry, De la danse, as translated by Lillian Moore in "American as Saint-Méry and 'Danse,'" Dance Index, October, 1946, P. 238. Cf. P 352, Category 116. -- Analyst]
4 [Moore, op. cit., P. 238. Cf. P 352, Category 116. -- Analyst]

Saint-Méry also wrote about some of the religious dances, which he identified by name: 191 535

> In Santo Domingo, and especially in the western, French section, there has existed for a long time a kind of dance called the Vaudoux [Voodoo] . . . which is characterized by movements where the upper part of the body, the shoulders and the head seem to move convulsively. This dance is accompanied by the drums, the clapping of hands, and group singing . . .
>
> The Vaudoux is nothing compared to the Don Pedro . . . , another Negro dance, also known in the western part of Santo Domingo since 1768. Don Pedro was the name of a Negro of the Petit-Goave section, of Spanish origin, who by his daring character and certain superstitious practices, had acquired among the Negroes enough influence to be denounced by the government as the instigator of some alarming plots. The dance which bears his name consists, like the Vaudoux, in the shaking of the shoulders and the head, but this shaking is extremely violent, and to increase it still further the Negroes drink, while dancing, brandy in which they have mixed finely ground gunpowder . . . They dance with the most horrible contortions, until finally they fall into a sort of epilepsy . . .[1]

Making allowances for Saint-Méry's imaginative interpretation of many of the things he saw, the Haitian dance of today is not far different from that of the eighteenth century. It is cast in the West African model, with Dahomean and Yoruban motifs predominating over European and other Western infiltrations. As in Saint-Méry's day, the drummers sit at the edge of the dance court, a leader wielding a gourd rattle leads the singing, and the dancers and spectators constitute the chorus. The dancers usually move around the center of the court in a counterclockwise direction. Their steps and postures vary according to the type of dance being performed. The Jouvale, for example, is danced with a bent back, hands touching the knees. In the *Zipoule* dance the dancers are erect, and most of the movements are made with the shoulders. In the Pitro (the Don Pedro described by Saint-Méry) there is a constant, almost agitated movement of the feet. The songs accompanying these cult dances, while presented in African style, may have hybrid or even French melodies, though in the main they are more African than European. The over-all context of the cult dances, as well as most of the secular ones, is West African, with constant interplay between the singers, dancers, and drummers. Sometimes the dancers "drive" the drummers, sometimes the drummers "drive" the dancers. Certain beats of the drum are signals for special movements and postures. On hearing special beats or rolls, the dancers may leap vertically into the air, or perform a *laillé* (a swirling motion that causes the skirts to flare out), or a *djailé* (excitement motions). Increased tension among the dancers may cause the drummers to shift the beat, or to increase

[1] Brandy or rum with gunpowder is sometimes drunk by persons possessed by the god Ogoun, deity of war. Cf. p. 352, Cat. 116. --Analyst]

[2] Moore, op. cit., p. 238. Cf. p. 352, Cat. 116. --Analyst]

535 older men, they leaped into the air and came together in mock combat. First one would strike and the other would parry, then the second would strike and the first would parry, always in time to the beating Congo drums. On another signal all six dancers leaped into the air vertically, twisting into a full turn each time, landing in position to strike and parry.

Spectators standing around the dancers clapped their hands and sang:

[539]

> Mouwondi no fai la guè!
> *Eya Eya Eya!*
> Nous c'est nanchou la guè!
> Ou pas wouli comm'la-tiré?
>
> Mouwondi, we will make war!
> *Eya Eya Eya!*
> We are a nation of war!
> Don't you hear my cannon thunding?

[293] When the dancers and drummers seemed fatigued, they were offered rum to drink. The dancers drank without breaking step or interrupting the battle. The bearded man held the lip of his glass between his teeth, and without using his hands to steady it, tipped his head back and let the rum run into his mouth, all the while stamping his feet and leaping with the others.

[164] I was told later that the Mouwondi was from the north, and that the dancers were recent arrivals from Port-de-Paix. But some of the older people declared that in former times the dance was known in the south by the name Calinda.

184 535 The Calinda dance, like the Vodoun, the Pitro, and several others, is mentioned frequently in the old literature on Haiti, Trinidad, Martinique, and Guadeloupe. It has been described variously as a funeral dance, an exhibitionistic sword display, and a stick dance. It was reported by Saint-Méry as a dance in which men and women paired off. Early in the eighteenth century, Père Labat described it as a line dance, with the women on one side and the men on the other. Lafcadio Hearn saw it as a stick dance. And the word Calinda appears sometimes in songs of the Vodoun cult. The name may have lost specific meaning early in the life of the colonies; but it is more likely that early chroniclers used the term inexactly to refer to a multitude of different dances. In Haiti, [915] identification of the Calinda has been further confused by the existence of the Calinda secret society, which had special dances of its own, all called Calinda.

Although confusions and contradictions exist, the testimony of older Haitians is that the Calinda was a stick dance, known also by the name Mouwondi.

[The Vodoun Pantheon]

Aare. A snake deity.

Bessesse. A loa who likes the Rdeude dance.

Cocoroo. Loa of the calabash tree.

Cofao Pawela. An ancient snake deity. Herskovits suggests that he may represent the leopard, *aibo* being the Fon word for that animal. The wildness of the attack on the sacrificial animal by persons possessed by Cofao supports this conjecture. A deity called Dada Sogbo is prominent in the Rada Cult of Trinidad.

Sossan. A snake loa who is believed responsible for fine physical proportions and bodily strength in men.

Cosqui-Nan-Dlaoo. Probably the same as Cosqui-Nan-Mee (Agwé).

Aawoo. This loa may well be the King Agadja of Dahomey who was said to be responsible for the coming of *vodu* (loa) into that country. Herskovits tells a legend about a woman named Hwendjile who persuaded upon the king to bring the *vodu* from the kingdom of Adjaji. Hwendjile herself survives in Haiti under the name

Wemsé, or Hwemsé

Lenglesser. A rainbow loa. Persons consumed in sight of a rainbow are thought to be possessed by this deity.

Bessesser. "Mistress" with Lenglesser.

Wemsé, also called Aawé Wemsé, (King of Angola). This loa appears to be an interpolation from the Congo area.

Aawé, or Gossoo. A mischievous, dwarflike spirit who likes to discourage things and play practical jokes. Persons possessed by Aawé may break up gatherings, discommode spectators and dancers, and generally make a nuisance of themselves. Some Haitians regard this loa as belonging more to the Petro pantheon than to the Dahomé.

Molé' Bos (Master of the Woods). May be an interpolation of Molé' Grand Bois of the Congo-Guinée pantheon.

Molé' Dlaaé (Master of the Water). May refer to the loa Sisiki.

Don Wilm, or Wilm. A loa known in the Arcahaie region. The name is probably a corruption of Don Wilde.

Dya Kfed

Fon, or Nio'Fonh. The name is that of a tribe on the Calabar coast of West Africa.

Fonn Pleme. Said to be the son of Pierre Rouge.

Gédéon, Yoncoomo, or Jean Rouge. Probably the Christian name of some Dahomé loa.

Gnon Lonnonn. An aged, dwarflike loa, guardian and protector of children.

Gnon Aaaa, or Bonsoo

Gnon Aawoomee, or Monsoor Aawoomee. Believed to be a loa who was made the of the Emperor Dessalines. Some informants consider this spirit to be a dinsan or lesp-garou rather than a loa.

Hounsou. The spirit of the Arada drums. There is a difference of opinion on whether Hounsou is a loa in the proper sense or merely a drum spirit. The term is sometimes used to designate the largest drum of the Arada trio.

Jean Bettes. A loa well known in the region of Léogane. When he "enters," the possessed persons talk *langage* into a *canari* (clay water vessel).

Molé' Dorm. This loa always talks immaculate French, and persons possessed by him read cards and tell fortunes.

[Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 104. Cf. p. 254, Cat. 16.—Ans/87]

[P 338]

4. Notes on Orthography

The problem of putting the Creole language into writing has confronted Haitian and non-Haitian scholars and writers for some time. During the past decade the problem has been an acute one for education authorities in Haiti. While there developed a consensus that teaching the largely illiterate population would have to be done in Creole and not in French, there remained a controversy about the system of orthography that should be used. One of the first attempts to teach Haitian children in their own language was made by Christian Beaulieu, a Haitian educator who worked out a written method based on traditional French orthography.[1] Subsequently, a simpler system was devised by a clergyman, the Reverend H. Ormond McConnell. Although it had numerous detractors among those who favored French orthography, it was found to be far more suitable for educational purposes. The American linguist Robert A. Hall, Jr., carried out a study, the findings of which supported the McConnell method as "perfectly phonemic and at the same time wholly practicable in that it uses only characters already available in print shops and on typewriters."[2]

Some Creole texts from Haiti and other West Indian islands, taken down by researchers and scholars, have been transcribed in the McConnell orthography, or in a modified one known as the McConnell-Laubach system. It is my opinion that although the system is admirable for teaching purposes, and adequate for recording texts for scholarly needs, it is a disadvantage to a reader who has a French vocabulary at his command but who is not familiar with the McConnell orthography. The extent to which this system can disguise a language is easily seen if it is used, for example, to transcribe Jamaican speech. The effect is identical on French words or words of French origin. The Haitian proverb "Run from the rain, fall into the big river" is written by Hall in the McConnell-Laubach orthography: *Kouri pou-lapli, tombé nd-grd*

[1] [UNESCO, The Haiti Pilot Project, P 39 Cf. P 355, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[2] [Ibid. Cf. P 355, Category 116 -- Analyst]

would.[8] A system which permits recognition of the original French words would transcribe the proverb: *Cours pas' lapluie, tombé sur grand rivè.*

In this book, I have in the main used the semi-French forms. Regardless of the status of Creole as a separate language, a great part of its vocabulary is drawn from French, old or modern, and it has seemed unnecessary to disguise the connections of Creole with its antecedents. Nevertheless, I am aware that some of my orthographic choices coincide more with the McConnell-Laubach system than with the Gullic, and some may appear to belong to neither. I hope, however, that my transcribed texts will be easily read.

In most sociological and anthropological reports on Haiti which include texts the transcriptions are based on modified French orthography. Nevertheless, there have been many inconsistencies and contradictions, as there well may be within the covers of this book. One reason may be an inadequate understanding of the Creole language. A second reason can be, and often is, differences of pronunciation in various regions.

But the most significant differences occur in setting down words of non-French or probably non-French origin. One of the more noteworthy of these is *Vodoun*—a very important word without which it would be very difficult to write of Haitian life. Writers and anthropologists have spelled it in the following ways: Melville J. Herskovits—*Voda* and *Vodun*; George Eaton Simpson—*Vodun* (after an earlier trial of *Vôdoun*); Odette Menocrasse Rigaud—*Vodou*; Milo Rigaud—*Voudou*; Robert A. Hall, Jr.—*Vaudoux*; Selden Rodman—*Voudou*; Maya Deren—*Vaudoux*; Eugène Aubin—*Voudoux*.

Still other variations are to be found, particularly in the early literature on Haiti. In view of the general lack of agreement on this matter, it is not difficult to defend my own choice of *Vodoun* (French phonetics), which I used in previous writings.

Other important words which have numerous spellings are *houfor* (*houfor*, *hounfor*, *hounfort*, *hounfort*, *houmphor*, etc.), *houngi* (*hungi*, *hounyi*, etc.), and the names of various loa.

[8] [Hall and others, Haitian Creole, p. 199. Cf. p. 355, Category 116 -- Analysis]

[7 349]

Notes

Chapter 1: *The Making of the Haitian* (pp. 1-7)

[1]The name Gando survives in Haiti as the name of a deity.

[2]Herskovits, in *The Myth of the Negro Past* (p. 47), provides a tabulation of raw data found in the numbers recorded for slaves shipped to Virginia between 1700 and 1780: 20,564 slaves were reported shipped from "Africa," 3,692 from Gambia, 6,277 from "Guinea," 9,229 from Calabar, 3,800 from Angola, and 1,011 from Madagascar. Of those shipped from the island of Madagascar, 423 were listed as coming from Mozambique.

[3]Bartolomé de Las Casas.

Chapter 2: *Man and the Universe: Vodoun* (pp. 8-18)

[1]See Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 3.

[2]Schweinfurth in *The Heart of Africa*, II, 31, says: "In Lunda, all sacrifices and ceremonies are called gunga." Leo Wiener, in *Africa and the Discovery of America* (Philadelphia: Innes and Sons, 1922), III, 32, reports: "Forms of *gunga* have in Bantu the meaning 'medicine' but also 'magic'—such as Nyika *gunga* and Kongo *ngunga*."

[3]Guerre, *Afrique Danoise*, p. 1202; Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 208 ff.

[4]From the Fon *hounsi* or *houn-si*. Among the Arada of Dahomey a *houn-si* was regarded as a spiritual wife of the deity. She was a servant of the cult temple, and in some instances a wife of the cult priest.

[5]Translated from the French of Aubin, *En Haïti*, pp. 37-39.

[6]Deren, in her *Divine Horsemen* (pp. 119 ff.), gives an excellent report of a service for Agwé in a boat at sea. Aubin (*op. cit.*, p. 108) seems to have given the first description of this service at sea for the loa Agwé.

[7]Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. 119.

[8]*Ibid.*, p. 123. Leyburn advances the theory that Vodoun developed during this period as a result of the vacuum left by the Church. Although the Church did in effect leave the field to the African cults, one must assume that the Arada, Congo, and other cults were already organized and possessed of great vitality before the Haitian revolution. Implicit evidence points to a continuity of cult life from the earliest days of the African on Haitian soil. There are no statistics to reveal the extent of cult membership at the end of the eighteenth century, but the content and form of Vodoun today are so overwhelmingly African that it is difficult to think of Haitian cult activity as the product of a renaissance.

Chapter 3: *The Loa: Gods of the Haitian Mountains* (pp. 19-29)

[1]The term *vodoun*, used in this precise sense, conforms to the original Fon (Dahomean) usage. The term *hounsi*, also of Fon origin, signifies "spirit" and belongs to the same root

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as Amaïdor, Amaïd, Amaïgnaïd, Amaïdor, etc. Hystère is of obvious French origin. Lou is probably from the Fonns, but it could be from the Yorubas.

[illegible] methods and formulas are employed in "tying" a lou. Sometimes making the sign of the cross is regarded as adequate, or the saying of a prayer. In "The Voodoo Sorcerer in Northern Haiti" (*American Anthropologist*, XLII, 1940:[illegible]), George Eaton Simpson reports that the "tying" of a lou sometimes results in a contract between the individual concerned and his houngan. If the houngan wants the *mali* site to come in, he must secretly the ritual hatters the "horse" has put in the way. "One procedure for bringing on possession in a servant who has tried to 'tie' his chief god is for the priest to stand in front of the person whom he suspects, make the sign of the cross, and strike him on the forehead three times with a varilla[illegible] stone. Usually these blows are hard enough to make blood spurt. The servant then begs the pardon of the angry god, and as soon as possible he enters the houns in his hounfoutoul' [the method he has used for 'tying' his lou]."

[illegible] [illegible]Herskovits, *Dahomey*.

Chapter 4: *Death Rites* (pp. 91-97)

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[illegible]Maurice Delafosse, *L'âme négre*. Translation from *Free France*, special issue No. 4, French Press and Information Service, New York, June, 1945.

[illegible]Leo A. Verwilghen, in booklet describing peoples of the Kwango region, accompanying *Music of the Western Congo*, recordings issued by the Ethnic Folkways Library.

[illegible] [illegible]Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu*, pp. [illegible].

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[illegible]

[illegible]W. H. Lierhn and I. Schapera, "Religious Beliefs and Practices," in Schapera, *The Bantu-speaking Tribes of South Africa*, p. 190.

[illegible]
[illegible]
[113]

[illegible]Translated from the Fonnds of Aujiau, *En Haiti*, p. 111.

[illegible]Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, pp. 113-114.

[illegible]Hall and others, *Haitian Creole*, American Anthropological Association, Memoir No. 54, pp. 188-189.

[illegible]Simpson, "Four Voodoo Ceremonies," *Journal of American Folklore*, April-June, 1946, pp. 188-161.

[illegible]As translated by Courlander from Simpson's Creole text, *ibid.*, p. 156. The preceding paragraph is from p. 151.

[illegible]Translated by Courlander from the Creole of Simpson's text.

[illegible]This and the preceding paragraph are from Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

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[illegible]These shells, as indicated elsewhere, are part of the paraphernalia of the Voodoo priest and appear to be an inheritance from the priests of the Fa cult of Dahomey. The divining shells are usually thrown on the ground in fours, and the readings depend upon combinations of "heads and tails." The manner of throwing the shells, as well as the number used, corresponds closely with the Haitian secular gambling game *mapawele* (see Appendix 2), though the purpose is obviously different. In some priestly rites in Haiti, ashes rather than the customary shells are used for divining.

[illegible]Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

[illegible]*Ibid.*, p. 161.

[illegible]Herskovits, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

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[illegible]Herskovits (*ibid.*) notes that persons who die of smallpox, lightning, and certain other phenomena are not buried in coffins. Some of my informants indicated this to be their understanding also, but they said that the dead are buried without coffins for strictly economic reasons as well.

[illegible]Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

[illegible]Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. 156.

[illegible]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 308.

[illegible]*Ibid.*, pp. 307-308.

[illegible]Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, p. 214.

[illegible]Hall and others, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

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[p. v]

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EDITION

By Sidney W. Mintz*

THE *Haitian People*, by James G. Leyburn, was first published by the Yale University Press in 1941. The author, a sociologist, sought to provide his readers with a "connected story of the growth of . . . [Haiti's] social institutions out of the backgrounds of slavery and French colonial life . . . [and] of the slow shaping of these institutions through the nineteenth century" (p. v). Asserting that a people's past is an essential aspect of the full understanding of their present, Leyburn wasted no time in arguments over the disciplinary affiliation of his research results: "Whether the book be classified as social history or as sociology is largely a matter of indifference, for the line between these subjects can hardly be drawn without doing violence to comprehensive insight. To view a people with understanding in the characteristic setting of their institutions—marriage, religion, property arrangements, and the rest—one needs not only a description of their ways, but also a knowledge of how they came to be what they are" (p. vi). 114 121

The Haitian People enjoyed an immediate success. One of the very few books to deal with that country's crucial century of isolation (1804–1915), it is distinguished by careful scholarship, restrained interpretation, and a refreshing modesty; in these regards it differs from nearly every modern work written on the Republic of Haiti. And although many excellent books and articles on Haitian life have appeared since 1941, anyone who wishes to get the best interpretive overview of the history and culture of that country is well advised to start with Leyburn's contribution. 114

When *The Haitian People* first appeared, it was given a warm and

* Dr. Rémy Bastien, M. Leslie F. Manigat, Jacqueline Wei Mintz, and Mr. Michael G. Owen provided valuable critical help in the preparation of this introduction. The author of *The Haitian People*, Professor James G. Leyburn, encouraged me to undertake the writing of the introduction, and offered useful advice on its form and content. I am much indebted to all of these persons for their generous assistance, but they are in no way responsible for the interpretations I have made here.

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very favorable reception by Haitian scholars and intellectuals. As its author and others have pointed out, few countries in modern times have received as bad a press at the hands of foreign observers as Haiti. A small, rugged nation, born of an exhausting and destructive revolution, its people poor, disease-ridden, illiterate, and erratically led, independent Haiti gives the impression of having drifted aimlessly for more than a century. Observers from "more developed" lands have had a field day—and still have—bemoaning the evil consequences of a mass of African slaves having turned on their French masters to destroy them and their works. It is still fashionable to allude to Haiti in deploring independence movements, racial desegregation, indigenous political leadership, and economic sovereignty. But too little scholarship has since been invested, as Leyburn invested it, in delineating the national and international forces which have operated to keep Haiti poor and backward. Nor has contemporary research led to sufficiently revealing comparisons between the social history of Haiti and that of her more colonial neighbors in the Caribbean area. Leyburn's work enhanced the possibilities for such comparisons and drew some morals which Haiti's detractors often ignore; but in making his case, the author carefully avoids lapsing into romanticism, or into the inaccuracy born of uncritical sympathy.

The book was published as the final steps were being taken to end the official United States presence in Haiti. The occupation had begun in 1915, ostensibly to restore order in a situation marked by political chaos. Haitian defaulting on debts to the French and Germans had raised the specter of foreign—that is, European—occupation, which created considerable North American anxiety; and there were large Haitian debts outstanding to United States banks as well. When the United States decided to move militarily, the abstract issue of justice was ignored, to be raised for contemplation only after the occupation itself was a fact. Military occupation continued for nineteen years, and the complete termination of United States controls over the national affairs of Haiti did not come until 1946, long after Leyburn's book had appeared. Twenty-five years have now elapsed since Leyburn wrote, and the events of these years are relevant to any retrospective view of the author's interpretations.

Much, indeed, has happened in Haiti since 1941: the United States withdrawal and the fading of the effects, both good and bad, of the occupation; the positive economic consequences for Haiti of World

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War II and its aftermath, and the subsequent dissipation of those gains; the "social revolution" of January 1946, ushering in the Estimé regime; the boom in the arts and tourism, and their later contractions; the rise and subsequent fall of the Magloire government (1950–56), and the uneasy interregnum that followed it; and finally, the growth of the Duvalier monolith.

Over the span of those years, social science literature on Haiti has increased significantly, and outsiders, as well as the Haitians themselves, can now know much more about the country and its people. But some of the most important questions raised by Leyburn's book remain substantially unanswered. *The Haitian People* is a classic because its author phrased so well the major issues in the growth of Haitian national institutions, and no subsequent work is likely to supplant it in this regard. But its value has been heightened over the years by the lack of any equally penetrating analysis dealing with the period since 1941 or specifying the relative importance of various institutional forces in the contemporary structure of Haitian society. Thus, for instance, much too little is known of the culture and social organization of Haiti's predominantly rural population, in spite of considerable anthropological research since 1941. More detailed studies of the rural economy are particularly necessary, both to assess developmental possibilities and to understand better the relationship of rural sectors to the national economy. Sociological and economic analyses of folk religion—*vodoun*—are wanting, even though psychological and descriptive studies of this religion have appeared in large numbers. The general conceptual problem of community definition, structure, and organization, which has long plagued students in the Caribbean area, has been barely raised in the case of rural Haiti. Finally, our understanding of Haitian class structure, both local and national, and its corollaries in economic, political, and social institutions, is still slight. Here the need for more research seems particularly acute, since no adequate grasp of the nature of Haitian society at large will be possible until the fit of the rural sectors with the national class structure is better known. On this understanding, among others, may hinge the likelihood of success of any future developmental effort in Haiti.

It was with Haiti as a nation that Leyburn dealt in his book, and his analysis of national institutions and social structure excited more comment and reflection within Haiti itself than any other part of his

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114 121 treatment. In the absence of sufficient analytic material on the intervening years since his book was written, a prefatory note such as this can do little more than comment on Haitian society, either in terms of its present design or in terms of the recent events that may have modified it.

121 114 565 [178] The central thesis of Leyburn's book is that Haitian society is sharply divided into two segments, and that the national institutional structure is such that no significant alteration in that division has occurred in the entire course of Haiti's history as a sovereign nation. At the base of the society is the rural agricultural sector, making up perhaps as much as 95 per cent of the population; at the top the elite, which dominates the governmental apparatus and all national institutions. These two segments of the society differ, in Leyburn's view, in all important regards: level of income, source of income, education, language, religion, social forms, values and attitudes, and all else. By carefully describing the history of Haitian society from the eve of the revolution until the midst of the United States occupation, he reveals both the origin of this vast social cleavage and the various means employed for its perpetuation. Leyburn was so impressed by the gap which separated yeomanry and elite that he chose to label these social segments castes rather than classes. Members of the elite earn their livings as rentiers, merchants, professionals, and in government, and never engage in manual labor of any sort. They are predominantly urban in residence; their sons attend private lower schools, and then [191] go on to higher education, usually abroad. They are French-speaking, [197] although they also speak Creole, Haiti's national language. Elite re- [58] ligion is Catholicism, elite forms of marriage and domestic organiza- [59] tion are "legitimate" and "western." Elite members view themselves [829] as a kind of aristocracy, and feel little commonality in their sharing of Haiti and of Haitian history with the yeomen.

114 565 191 771 583 595 144 In sharp contrast, the yeomanry is rural, poor, works the land, is illiterate and Creole-speaking only, believes in *vodoun* rather than in orthodox Catholicism, usually marries by common law and is sometimes polygynous, and remains substantially isolated from the outer world. Finally and importantly—though its particular significance is changing—the elite differs from the rural sector in that the countryman is predominantly negroid in phenotype, while members of the elite are prevailingly lighter-skinned.

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Leyburn noted that the United States occupation affected the nature and rigidity of the barriers separating the yeomanry from the elite. For instance, he calls attention to the fact that the presidents elected during the United States occupation were light-skinned members of the elite. It seemed almost inevitable that, when the North Americans sought men through whom to prosecute their plans for "stabilizing" Haiti, they would settle on educated and worldly politicians, men who were both sufficiently trained and sufficiently pliant for the task. That these men were predominantly light-skinned was a corollary aspect of Haitian social history. In this way Washington played some part in reinforcing and expanding elite power; and herein lies a paradox with which the author of *The Haitian People* has dealt well. While the elite had been able to maintain their wealth and power in Haiti for nearly a century, the presidential succession before the United States occupation had largely been one of military chieftains, principally dark-skinned men from the north of the Republic. Michel Oreste, who had ruled for nine months in 1913–14, was the first civilian to be chosen president in Haiti's entire history up to that time; and Sudre Dartiguenave (1915–22), the North Americans' choice, was the first president since 1879 who was both a southerner and light-skinned. From the last quarter of the nineteenth century until the occupation, in other words, Haiti's presidents were almost entirely dark-skinned northern provincial leaders who literally seized power by invading Port-au-Prince and deposing their predecessors.

Hence, in describing the separation between elite and yeomanry, it is essential to notice the traditional special role of the military, with its particular overtones of color. Here was one institutional feature of Haitian society which was not directly dominated by the elite, and through which nonelite folk were able to attain special power. But in Haiti's case it is significant that the army itself was not firmly institutionalized; regional warlords, rather than a centralized officer corps, made the decisions. Leyburn cites Auguste Magloire, who enumerated *sixty-nine* "important" revolutions between 1806 and 1879; had this enumeration gone forward, it would have been much longer. Of Haiti's twenty-four chief executives between 1807 and 1915, only eight were in office for a period equal to their elected terms, and seventeen were deposed by revolution. Before the United States occupation, then, the continuing power of the elite could be seen as somewhat separate from the succession of nonelite generals who seized office over the years.

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648 The financing of these many revolutions was usually provided by
669 foreign merchants, bent upon installing a government that would
565 grant them special economic concessions (Munro, 1964:326–31). The
701 United States occupation ended this doleful succession of regimes
439 and, by throwing its weight to the elite, by suppressing military activity in the countryside, and by reforming the army, the United States gave a new meaning to the separation of the elite and the yeomanry. Leyburn's interpretation is consistent with these events; yet some Haitian scholars have differed with Leyburn's analysis.

● 114 In a lengthy review article, the dean of Haitian historians, Dr. Jean
564 Price-Mars (1942:1–50), questions the applicability of the term
563 "caste" to the social groupings of Haitian society. He notes that
671 Haitian law after the revolution never legitimized any distinction on
144 grounds of physical type, unlike a society such as the United States—that in fact, the very basis of Haitian polity was the absence of such distinctions. Furthermore, Leyburn's interpretation is qualified by the fact that the elite and the rural masses are not entirely distinctive physically. In some parts of rural Haiti, particularly in the southern peninsula, there are many light-skinned people; and many individuals who qualify as members of the elite on all other counts are very dark in appearance. The fact that being "Negro" or "white" in Haiti is viewed as a matter of degree, rather than of kind, complicated by all the other criteria of social position employed in drawing distinctions, has important implications for the way social barriers have operated in that country.*

114 Leyburn did not contend that all the effects of the United States
565 occupation were in the direction of increasing the gap between the
ELITE AND THE YEOMANRY.

563 * In this regard, Haiti is aligned with most of Latin America, in contradistinction to the
564 United States, where many persons believe that "one drop of Negro blood" [sic] makes a
171 "Negro." The failure of North Americans to distinguish between sociological and genetic
144 categories of physical type has led to considerable confusion in their dealings with Latin America and in their understanding of Latin American societies. North American race prejudice at its most extreme sees color as the primary basis for social ranking, and no individual accomplishment (for instance, in terms of economic or intellectual success) can overshadow the inferior status unalterably bestowed by certain physical traits. Haitian—and generally all Latin American—social distinctions do not rest solely on considerations of physical type; a black skin does not "doom" an individual if his attainments make him otherwise the equal of his lighter-skinned fellow citizens. Hence, it might be argued that the term "caste" would be more appropriate when applied to the Negro people of the United States (regardless of phenotype, and including those "Negroes" who are *sociologically* identified with the Negro people even if their physical appearance is dramatically Caucasian) than when applied to the peoples of Latin America.

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elite and the yeomanry. For instance, he calls attention to one unanticipated (but inevitable) result of the occupation in this connection: the large number of children whose fathers were United States Marines, and whose mothers were members of the Haitian rural masses. In this way the occupation contributed to the growth of the physically intermediate population of Haiti, especially among rural folk, and thus perhaps to some bridging of the gap between yeomen and elite. Much more important, by its contributions to a broadening of the educational system, the occupation enabled talented black-skinned youths to improve themselves and to acquire new aspirations.

Recent economic and political developments in Haiti, through the period 1941–57, have contributed grounds for modification of the Leyburn interpretation. Though Leyburn predicted that "for the present and near future it is safe to say that there will be no more black non-élite presidents" (p. 101), subsequent developments soon proved him wrong. In January 1946, the government of elite member Elie Lescot fell under military pressure. A junta consisting of Franck Lavaud, Antoine Levelt, and Paul Magloire facilitated the installation of Dumarsais Estimé as president. Estimé was a dark-skinned man from the countryside (the village of Verettes, near St. Marc, in west-central Haiti), who had received a good education, served as a minister in the Vincent cabinet and, as a deputy, married a lighter-skinned woman whose family's elite membership was secure. Estimé might well be considered a self-made member of the elite, but he was not born into it, and his accession to power was the political expression of new possibilities in Haitian life.

The changes Estimé's regime symbolized were rooted in the intellectual resistance to the United States occupation and in the search for a Haitian identity in the face of that occupation. The strangely easy domination that the United States wielded over Haitian society for several decades, and the relatively unexploitative but patronizing administration it provided, ended forever a fantasy that had gripped Haitian intellectuals for more than a century. The world of 1804, when a bloodied but defiant Haiti could bar by force of arms Napoleon's dreams of a New World empire (and assist indirectly thereby in the territorial expansion of a still weak United States) had vanished. The time when a Pétion could aid, protect, and politically influence a sick and tired Simón Bolívar was long gone. The world had changed, while Haiti, the Haitians learned under their North

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American masters, had nearly stood still. For almost a century, Haiti's elite had taken justifiable pride in their ancestors' triumph over Napoleonic France, even while they remained enthralled by French culture. This strange ambivalence would no longer do. In effect, the United States occupation compelled Haitian scholars to rediscover what it meant to be Haitian.

As the writing of Jean Price-Mars (1928) expressed that identity culturally, so the regime of Dumarsais Estimé began to express it politically. For the first time, Africa, and not simply France, became an important part of the nationalist dialogue. The Creole language began to be studied in its own right, and a program to end illiteracy through education in Creole was launched. Folkloristic studies, emphasizing the African component in Haitian rural life, especially as expressed in religion, came into vogue. Haitians began to explore their own society as a synthesis that was as much African as it was French—and as a synthesis, rather than as a mechanical alignment of two distinct traditions. The term *authentique* was employed to express what was "truly Haitian," and Haiti herself was viewed as a unique and original blending of two pasts. Under Estimé, rural folk of promise—and they were, in the nature of things, predominantly dark-skinned—were given greater opportunities, especially to be educated and to enter government service. Moreover, these developments took place at a time when Haiti's economic situation was relatively good, and Estimé enjoyed a measure of popular support rare in Haiti's entire history.

Furthermore, it was during the Estimé regime that Haitian cultural life reached some sort of climax. In the 1920s young Haitian intellectuals had been deeply shaken by the United States occupation and had begun to formulate their own answers to the questions it raised. Not only did Africa come into view as the wellspring of much that was Haitian but Haiti's status as an occupied though once-sovereign power dramatized the need for a social and political philosophy that fitted with hemispheric and international realities. French intellectual currents figured importantly in Haitian political thinking, both because the intellectuals of the French Antilles of the time were inspired by Haitian history and interested in Haiti, and because those islands and Haiti shared a curious affinity in their "Gallo-African" cultures. Anticolonial and Marxist points of view were espoused by a few Haitians, but these perspectives were complicated by changing

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attitudes toward French culture in all of its expressions, and by a new feeling of kinship for the peoples and cultures of Africa.

The variety of views expressed by Haitian intellectuals was colored by differences no more subtle than those characteristic of the intellectuals of any other country in the Caribbean region—even though North American observers unfortunately persist in treating such differences as politically irrelevant. There were those spokesmen who continued to embrace French culture and to reject "Africanism," only deploring the North American presence in Haiti. Others embodied their views in a staunchly Haitian nationalism and, as they began to view their country in a new light, invested the Haitian folk with an unrealistically romantic picturesqueness. Still others fastened upon the African theme with special intensity, and thereby gave a strong racist tinge to their nationalism.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, anthropology came to be seen as an important means for giving Haitians an accurate—that is, an "inside"—picture of their own society; a number of young ethnologists, mainly self-trained, began to publish works on Haitian culture. Soon anthropology was pressed into a political mold, anticipating similar developments in other "colonial" countries. The first novels purporting to deal with the common people, though sometimes tinged with idealized preconceptions of rural society, were published; and an impressive number of competent young poets devoted themselves to aesthetic explorations of the Haitian spirit. Haitian cultural and intellectual life, in short, was taken up with the rediscovery of Haiti and its people.

But the Estimé regime did not produce changes in the economic structure of Haitian society of importance proportionate to the national cultural renascence. Even those modifications in the class structure for which Estimé is sometimes given credit might not have occurred, were it not for educational reforms that had begun in the 1920s and the beneficial effects of Haiti's prosperity of the mid-1940s. What Estimé could do was to open the ranks of an inefficiently large bureaucracy to able, if sometimes inadequately trained, newcomers of poor rural antecedents.

At the same time, as the Comhaire-Sylvains have suggested (1959: 179–89), a qualitatively different class group was beginning to emerge in Port-au-Prince during Estimé's presidency, and the presence of such a group suggests that new economic forces were feebly stirring.

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industry, in the processing of essential oils, in extractive operations (bauxite, copper), and in the manufacture of a few essential commodities. The official attitude toward private investment, even by foreigners, was unusually benign; and coffee, the big export crop, enjoyed a boom. Again, however, little effect could be seen in the basic economic structure. By 1956–57, when the Magloire regime was toppled, the era of apparent prosperity had come to an end.

Magloire's tenure ended as had his predecessor's; after a vain attempt to prolong his regime by forcing through new laws, he was brought down by the army and was succeeded by a series of juntas. The politics of the brief interregnum preceding the accession of François Duvalier was complicated by the rival claims of four presidential aspirants: Clément Jumelle, Daniel Fignolé, Louis Déjoie, and François Duvalier. These four men represented significantly different trends in Haitian thinking and were supported by different social groups. Jumelle, although regarded as the spiritual inheritor of the Magloire administration, won the support of many Haitian intellectuals; his appeal was partly grounded in his experience as finance minister in the Magloire cabinet, but the scandalous graft of the Magloire administration worked against him. Fignolé, too, had been a cabinet minister, but his antecedents and political philosophy differed sharply from Jumelle's. An eloquent, intense man of rural lower-class origins, Fignolé was regarded by many as a dangerous demagogue. His support came largely from the poorer urban classes, and his reputation as a union leader and as a "self-made" former minister of education gave him special strength among urban groups. Déjoie, considered to be the candidate of most of the business community and of the elite, was a highly successful agronomist and businessman who had done much to build rural industry; it is also generally believed that Déjoie was the "unofficial candidate" of the United States. Duvalier, trained as a doctor of medicine and for long an enthusiastic amateur ethnologist, had been a political enemy of the Magloire regime and, as a former minister in the Estimé cabinet, saw himself as the ideological descendant of Estimé. Duvalier appears eventually to have become the army's choice, ostensibly because he was considered "manageable"; at any rate, it was Duvalier who finally emerged as president, ending the uneasy interim which followed Magloire's ejection.*

* Probably the most penetrating analysis of Haitian politics of the time is that provided by Manigat, 1964, to which this interpretation owes much.

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regime. That President Duvalier has been able to stay in power in spite of internal dissaffection, sometime hostile United States propaganda, a dire economic situation, personal ill health, and other woes, is a tribute to his political acumen, if not to his principles. None of this means, of course, that such consummate skill will continue to work; Haitian governments have a way of falling suddenly, and the Duvalier regime will probably not prove an exception.

Dr. Duvalier's success indicates that he has made certain correct assessments, not only of Haiti's social and political structure but also of United States policy with regard to Haiti. The occupation was notable for its failure to make any telling alterations in the economic structure or level of development of the country. Many beneficial changes were made, as Leyburn demonstrates, particularly in the areas of health and health services, communications, government administration, education, and transport (though the use of corvée labor on the roads led to serious abuses, and stimulated sanguinary guerilla warfare). But most significantly, the United States institutionalized the army and police forces. The ragged bands of political mercenaries of the past were dissolved; the officer-ridden army was transformed into a small, well-trained, and well-organized force. Eventual firm control by this force of weaponry, communications, and transport ended the era of presidential succession by invasion, turned the army into the major locus of nonelectoral, president-making power, and may have ended forever the possibility of an agrarian revolt against the central authority. Another political effect of the occupation was the importance it imparted to the United States ambassador, whose political opinions thereafter would matter significantly in the transmission of power at the top of the Haitian governmental system. The Duvalier regime has continuously taken full account of the consequences of United States interest; and its leaders have been able to watch the operation of that interest in the political events occurring between the fall of the Lescot government and the present.

In the view of one acute observer, President Duvalier, in order to consolidate his power, had to cope with three other loci of political strength in addition to the army and the United States ambassador. The business community, located for the most part in Port-au-Prince, had strongly supported Déjoie's candidacy during the interregnum; its leaders were mainly members of the elite, and many had strong

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Nor is it sufficient to label *Duvalierisme* "pathological" or "paranoid." The roots of this ideology are to be found in Haiti, not elsewhere; its supporters are the product of Haitian times and ideas; and their social identity, while not entirely clear, would probably pose few enigmas if enough data were available.* In order to make clear these assertions, however, it is necessary to look again at Haitian society, the Haitian society Leyburn has described so well, and to reexamine the terms that have been used by him and by others to describe it.

Though the societies of the Caribbean Sea differ significantly from each other, many of them share certain general historical experiences. Unlike the colonial areas of the Old World, these islands were largely populated from abroad, and in this regard they resemble the Atlantic lowland areas of mainland America. However, the colonial history of the islands meant that they would long remain the instruments of policy formulated in foreign capitals. Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and other islands were, during most of their postconquest history, the outposts of far-flung colonial empires, and the design of their societies was conditioned by this dependence and subjugation. As "plantation islands," their agriculture, demography, mode of settlement, and social structure were attuned to metropolitan needs and objectives. Unlike most of Africa and Asia, the Antilles lost their native populations almost entirely, owing to enslavement, overwork, disease, and war, early in the era of conquest and settlement. There remained the vestiges of native traditions, assimilated into the new, growing cultures of the postconquest period. The Indians themselves, wherever they were able to survive, were also assimilated through interbreeding with Old World migrants.

The newcomers came from Europe, Africa, and Asia, bringing with them what they could of their ancestral traditions, but never able to transfer their social heritages as intact bodies of belief and behavior. Hence the cultures of the new Caribbean societies were built up out of elements originating in many different places, while their social forms took shape under conditions of colonial control. The peoples of the islands were able to maintain some continuities with

* One interpreter of the Haitian political scene (Bastien, 1960:843–48) has suggested that Leyburn's analysis of Haitian society as a "two-caste" system greatly influenced local political thinking by strengthening one idea: "the black intellectual must regain political power for the benefit of the country's majority."

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same century in which Haiti withdrew. The yeomanry of Haiti in the nineteenth century was hence able to develop a traditionalism of unusual firmness and persistence.

This traditionalism, however, has had a high price. The economic productivity of the rural cultivator has not risen; it can be argued convincingly that poor land use, erosion, and population growth have meant lower levels of consumption for the common people in 1966 than obtained a hundred years or more ago. The rural masses, though overwhelmingly consisting of landholders, have been unable to break out of a stagnation that is economic as well as cultural. Such stasis has been based to some extent on the limited responsiveness of the rural folk to outside stimulus. But also important in maintaining the past is the national institutional system that took on its characteristic shape after 1804, and under which the rural masses still live. That system, the origins of which Leyburn has examined and assessed with such care, is controlled, as we have seen, by a numerically small segment of the national population that is markedly distinct from the yeomanry itself.

The nature and internal differentiation of the elite needs much more study, though it seems clear already that it is by no means a single solidary class embracing all but the yeomen. Whatever the structure of the elite, the relationship between the yeomen on the one hand and the real holders of power on the other must be understood if one is to understand Haiti. The yeoman is defined in terms of the elite; he is dependent upon it and subject to it. This is what is meant when it is said that the yeomanry, like the elite, forms only a part-society. Yet without the yeomen, there would be no elite. The elite live by controlling and taxing the rural masses, and find their sustenance and their power in rural productivity. Elite and yeomen, then, are bound together in unequal but interdependent relationships in Haiti as they are in other less developed societies of a similar kind. In such cases, the political role of the yeomanry is usually minor, and few opportunities may arise for the expansion of its political strength. If the yeomanry fails to increase its productivity in ways that enable it to control more of its own surpluses, its role in affecting national political decisions may grow narrower rather than wider, and this ominous possibility has become a worldwide phenomenon. It becomes more intensified wherever industry and trade grow, unaccompanied by parallel growth in yeoman productivity or in new and more widely representative national institutions.

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311 bean country, and perhaps fewer than in any country in Latin Amer-
423 ica. The agriculture itself, with the exceptions now of those very few
171 large-scale plantations in sisal and sugarcane, is adapted to small plots and is worked with intensive labor and few tools on hilly land. Com-
433 pared with agricultural production, especially of cash crops, in most
178 mainland Latin American countries, productivity is low. The yeomanry is conservative in its agricultural practices, and not ready to change unless the changes entail minimal risk and the gains to be real-
241 ized are clearly demonstrable (Erasmus, 1952:20–26). Yeomen culti-
177 vate with three goals in mind: cash income from world-market
185 commodities (for instance, coffee, sisal, vetiver); cash income from
434 items produced for local sale and consumption; and subsistence. While they are heavily involved in production for sale, their crop choices and land-use patterns rest fundamentally on a subsistence orientation. All grow a substantial part of their own food, especially sorghum, maize, sweet potatoes, taro, manioc, malanga (*Xanthosoma sagittifolium* Schott), plantains and bananas, fruits and vegetables, and
423 rice where possible. The land is invested with considerable affect:
823 gods live in it; it is the ultimate security against privation; family
471 members are buried in it; food and wealth come from it; and it is good in itself, even if not cultivated. While such attitudes are common in yeoman societies, Haiti's history of slavery, and of access to land through revolution, has given a special symbolic significance to landowning. Land is valued above all else and is sometimes held "uneconomically"—that is, even when the capital and labor power to work it are lacking.

● 114 Leyburn describes better than any other writer the history of land
175 acquisition by the yeoman after 1804. The French plantations lay in
423 ruins, never to recover, while early authoritarian attempts to restore the prerevolutionary economy under native Haitian leadership soon failed. In the course of a century, the Haitian people laid claim to their own soil, while population growth and the adoption of the French tradition of equal inheritance progressively reduced the average size of holdings. In spite of some plantation development after the United States occupation, most agricultural land in Haiti is still employed in small holdings, and "land reform" in the conventional sense—the breaking-up of large estates and the creation of a class of small landholders—is nearly irrelevant to Haiti's needs.

462 As today's yeomanry cultivates, so its womenfolk market. Nearly
443

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462 three hundred marketplaces serve the towns and countryside, some
443 of them patronized by thousands of buyers and sellers on market days. By participating in active small-scale trade, the wives of the yeomen contribute in a limited way to national economic efficiency and growth. As in all heavily agrarian economies marked by poor storage facilities, inferior transportation, and low consumer incomes there is considerable substitution of labor for capital, and there are high losses through spoilage. Except for the marketing of export commodities, much time is consumed in bargaining, in carrying, and in hand-processing of various sorts. But these activities are the accompaniments of the general low level of development of the Haitian economy, not one of its causes.

443 The economic challenges posed by agriculture on the one hand,
241 and by marketing on the other, differ significantly. Since these ac-
462 tivities are carried out predominantly along the lines of a sexual division of labor, the Haitian countrymen and their marketing wives
114 differ in some regards in their attitudes. Foreign observers of the
462 nineteenth century commented regularly on the industry and energy
174 of Haitian rural women, stressing their predominance in trade. Some
175 writers have attributed this convention to the West African tradition,
443 since women are the marketers, men the farmers, in many African
241 societies. Leyburn, however, notes that the militarism and political
433 unrest that have marked Haiti during so much of its history were serious impediments to peaceful trade. Women came to predominate in marketing, he theorizes, because men did what they could to avoid the towns, since they were often impressed into roving army bands if they traveled far from home. Whatever the historical causes may be, it has been established that the women of Haiti's countryside carry on most of the internal trade, while their husbands do most of the farming. These women, on the whole, know more about the towns, mix more easily with outsiders, and show more intrepidity in trade than the men show in agriculture. Yet it has been demonstrated that, for most of them, the scale of their enterprise is so modest and the economic opportunities open to them so restricted that their energy and daring can do little to increase the level of productive activity (Mintz, 1964:256–86).

47 Haiti's lack of large factories, mechanized production, and a skilled industrial labor force means that the country is unindustrialized by any usual measure.

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660 457 445 668 642 66 167 country. The complete enfeeblement of tourism has also led to some migration and to an accompanying decline of services and service "industries" in the capital. These losses have surely hurt Haiti and have damaged its chances for growth as well as its capacity to maintain the health, education, and morale of its people. It is not clear, however, to what extent such changes may have produced a negative political reaction to the Duvalier regime. Urban support for Dr. Duvalier appears to have come from some intellectuals, from some army officers, and from portions of the urban lower classes; but numerically most important were those low-paid but literate and aspiring wage-earners whom the Comhaire-Sylvains (1959) refer to as "Class III" members. These observers have stressed that the Class III group consisted mainly of industrial employees, those engaged in food-processing, hotel services, workshops, and the like. It was this group that the Comhaire-Sylvains credited with the Duvalier victory in 1957, pointing out in addition that "in the small country towns almost all officials, both civil and military, and traders, seemed to belong to this class" (p. 185). If the economic crisis that has gripped Haiti in recent years severely affects the position of this class, the political situation will reflect as much. But the ideology of Class III members—so far as it can be inferred at all—would suggest that one Duvalier may merely be replaced by another. At the same time, the depopulation of those groupings whose members might have led a qualitatively different kind of opposition, during the period of tenure of the United States Marine Corps Mission to Duvalier, may have indefinitely postponed the opportunity for creating a genuinely new political direction.

66 178 To state it another way, there are no signs at this time that the regime in power will be pulled down by any organized Haitian opposition. More important, since regimes resting on a narrow popular base have a way of falling without change, there is no indication that within Haiti's present national institutional structure, a genuine opposition to Duvalier-type governments can take shape. This means that even if regime should follow regime in rapid succession, there is little reason to expect that any of them could effect fundamental changes in Haitian society. If such an interpretation is correct, it presupposes an internal equilibrium or stasis so strong that no force for change in half a century has been able to make a politically significant difference.

114 This pessimistic view is supported by what is known at this time

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about Haitian society.* It does not, however, take note of the remarkable failure of foreign experts to make any adequate assessment of the potentialities of that society, or of its most-needed changes. Some of the problems of development, remarked on by Leyburn in 1941, have never even been explored adequately: the advisability of primary education in Creole; the need for an effective agricultural extension; the relationship of nutrition to work habits; and the like. Even basic sociological studies of a sort that could provide data for planned change are lacking—"of the process of socialization . . . of the motivating forces, the dominant wishes, the attitudes and social values of the masses . . . of social mobility" (pp. 308–09). Foreign-inspired development projects have been, for the most part, crash projects, designed to satisfy Haitian political goals, rather than economic or social goals. A productive relationship between foreign development agency representatives and government officials has never been achieved, nor have the failures ever been subjected to analysis or reflection. Emphasis has been put on large-scale schemes, rather than on more modest, long-term programs which would require actual cooperation with the rural masses on the local level (cf. Erasmus, 1952; Friedmann, 1955; De Young, 1958). Many—probably most—foreign planners who have worked in Haiti have never even bothered to learn the national language, let alone the fundamentals of the culture of the Haitian people.

In these terms, it is not enough merely to bemoan the feeble institutional structure of Haiti. Some attention, at least, should be given to the striking incapacity of outsiders to deal with that structure creatively. Leyburn's book exacts our respect precisely because its author, unlike most foreign visitors, makes plain that he takes Haiti, and the needs of the Haitian people, seriously.

* Some observers are less pessimistic than the writer. The sons of the elite, many of them educated abroad, elements of a Social Christian progressive movement, and possibly a few "Castro-left" radicals, may eventually coalesce into a successful opposition, it has been argued. The writer, however, remains unconvinced. Structural changes of the sort wrought by the Castro regime in Cuba were predicated on the existence of *mass* political opposition to Batista-type governments, and on the existence of industrial and rural proletarian sectors organized into large-scale movements. These "preconditions," as I see them, are entirely lacking in Haiti of today.

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——— "Peasant markets," *Scientific American*, 203 (Aug. 1960), 112–18, 120, 122. Gives an overview of market systems of the Haitian sort, based primarily on Haitian data.

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FOREWORD

The United States, embarked upon a policy of good neighborliness toward the other countries of the Western Hemisphere, is beginning to improve its acquaintance with the republics to the south. Most of its efforts at present are directed toward an understanding of the large and important powers, such as Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina, which, because of their size and resources, are potentially our greatest allies—or, if we fail in our policies, our sources of greatest danger. There are, however, twenty republics to the south of us, many of them small. A truly good neighbor does not ignore near-by families who are lacking in wealth, even those who are known to differ among themselves. 648 171

Of the twenty Latin-American republics, the second smallest is Haiti. The United States was only twenty years old when the people of this little country (which, for all its diminutive size, had been France's wealthiest colony of the eighteenth century) fought their own war of independence, and in 1804 founded the second free state in the hemisphere. Haiti has many claims upon the attention of the United States: its war against France in 1802–3 was at least a contributing factor in Napoleon's willingness to sell Louisiana to this country; it was the first independent Negro state in the modern world; its foreign policy has long been intertwined with our own; finally, the nineteen-year American Occupation of the country has brought us into an even closer relationship with Haiti than independent factors could produce. 721 648 642

When the country was young there was a spate of books trying to answer the question whether a nation ruled by blacks could long endure. In more recent years, works on the Antillean republic have generally dealt with single phases of its life, as for example its political relations with the United States, or its "Voodoo" practices. There is, however, no connected story of the growth of its social institutions out of the backgrounds of slavery and French colonial life, or of the slow shaping of these institutions through the nineteenth century. It is this growth which the present volume undertakes to describe. Political history has been introduced only so far as necessary to provide the convenient pegs upon which most of us are accus- 114 121

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121 tomed to hang our knowledge of the growth, development, and decay of social institutions. Whether the book be classified as social history or as sociology is largely a matter of indifference, for the line between those subjects can hardly be drawn without doing violence to comprehensive insight. To view a people with understanding in the characteristic setting of their institutions—marriage, religion, property arrangements, and the rest—one needs not only a description of their ways, but also a knowledge of how they came to be what they are.

167 Two centuries ago nine tenths of the Negro ancestors of the modern
178 Haitians were still in Africa, living under the mores of their own localities, and for the most part entirely unacquainted with the mores of the Western
563 World (or, as we ethnocentrically call it, the "civilized" world). First transplanted as slaves to the Caribbean island, then gaining their freedom after some mixture of blood with the white French, the Haitians have built up not only a state but a Haitian culture. The problems to be discussed in this book are as follows:

114 What social structure was set up after the independence in 1804, and by what methods? This question calls for a description of the economic, political, religious, marital, and class organization of the Haitians.

How did this structure function during the next century? There is often a difference between a people's expressed intentions and their ability to carry them out: a state sometimes borrows from some other power a type of constitution which, though logically admirable, does not work effectively under local conditions.

Which structural and functional elements of Haitian life were social heritages from the African past; which were taken over from French models; which were mergings of the two, and which seem to be variations newly produced on Haitian soil?

178 The great leaders of early days, Toussaint L'Ouverture, Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, and Boyer, made an effort to direct Haitian economic and political life along definite lines; however, the pressure of daily life, the necessity of feeding half a million people, most of whom had had no experience in solving complicated problems of any sort, soon made it obvious that logical social structures would not long remain logical. The ways evolved were characteristically Haitian; ways in general unplanned, grow-

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ing out of daily needs to make an adjustment to conditions as they were. A 178
century later we can describe, with the wisdom coming from perspective, what people of the time could hardly perceive to be happening.

The people of Haiti have had to endure so much criticism from foreign- 114
ers in past decades that it would be small wonder if they should dread the appearance of another book about their country. Herskovits, Parsons, Montague, Courlander, and other recent American authors, however, have abundantly proved that it is possible to treat the subject in scholarly fashion without wounding sensibilities. Every nation has unsavory items in its history and defects in its present state; this book has no intention of overdramatizing either the past or the present condition of Haiti.

All students who go from the United States to Haiti must sooner or later seek out Dr. Price-Mars, a true gentleman and scholar. He is not only one of the country's foremost intellectuals, but also a man of profound understanding and kindliness. I owe much to his illuminating suggestions, his practical assistance in my enterprise, and his patient answers to my questions. His works, whether historical, sociological, critical, or literary, are indispensable to an understanding of Haiti.

I am grateful likewise to Père Monteil, who during several weeks gave me the benefit of his years of experience among the people of his large parish, and who opened many avenues of research to me. The custodian of the excellent library of the Frères de l'Instruction Chrétienne constantly aided my investigation. Père Demers allowed me on occasion to accompany him in his parish work. To all these men, and to the numerous other priests who showed me hospitality, I express my thanks.

It would be impossible to name all the persons who gave me help; yet I cannot forbear to mention former President Eugène Roy; Dr. Camille Lhérisson, a brilliant physician; Dr. J.-C. Dorsainvil, the historian; the directors of the agricultural school at Damien, and of the École Professionelle, École Centrale, and École Normale; M. Jean Fouchard, chef du Cabinet particulier du Président Vincent; M. Jacques Antoine, of the Haitian Legation in Washington; M. Édouard Estève, president of the Chambre du Commerce; Mme. Andrée Marini; M. Victor Montasse; and M. Émile Roy. All of these gave me valuable information, as did many other Haitians of high rank and low. I count it a particular privilege to number

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114 among my sincere friends M. Westen Dauphin, of the Département des Finances, and his charming wife; the memory of their kindly generosity will long remain with me.

On one of my visits to Haiti Prof. John Lobb, of Mount Holyoke College, was my companion, and I owe him gratitude for his keen advice and criticism. Miss Annabel Learned gave much valuable assistance in the preparation of the manuscript. I have also profited from the suggestions of my student and friend, Mr. Alan F. Dill, who read a part of the manuscript of this book.

The true affection I feel for the Haitian people whose institutions I have here described cannot be measured in printed words.

J. G. L.

Yale University.
October, 1941.

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162 citizen would admit. The few cities and towns of Haiti do not con-
565 tain more than 250,000 people in a total population which the atlases
369 generally put around 2,500,000. Since to live in the city is one necessary mark of aristocracy, and since obviously not every town- or city-dweller is an aristocrat, it is probably nearer the mark to infer that not more than two or three per cent of the people are of the élite.

565 A slightly larger group would fit neither category. This inter-
554 mediate section would consist chiefly of those who have taken a few steps toward the upper stratum; they may wear shoes and keep a small shop and speak a few words of French, but not yet be accepted in "respectable" society; aristocrats will look down on them while the masses will regard them with curious interest. Yet these are not what Europeans would call a middle class. In their own generation, they are rootless and insecure. Their children will have as many advantages as the parents can afford, so that the next generation may increase the distance between itself and the common folk. Included in this intermediate group are also a few who, having once been up, are now on the way down.

433 If the terms "masses" and "peasants" are used interchangeably in
162 these pages, it is because the vast majority of the people get their living from the soil. Haiti is, as it has always been, an agricultural country. The end-paper map lists all towns which claim as many as 7,500 people; only one, the capital, Port-au-Prince, has more than 100,000.[7]

162 At least nine out of ten Haitians, therefore, lead rural lives, and
184 easily fit the designation of peasant. They live in little communities,
105 generally of less than a hundred persons, rather than in scattered houses. A detailed map would be dotted with place names of these

[162] 7. The estimates made by Woodring, in his *Geology of the Republic of Haiti*, p. 67,
[114] are as follows:

Port-au-Prince	125,000	Saint-Marc	10,000
Cap-Haïtien	20,000	Jacmel	10,000
Les Cayes	15,000	Port-de-Paix	7,500
Gonaïves	12,000	Jérémie	7,500

It should be noted that all eight of these towns, which by Woodring's estimate have a total of 207,000, are seaports. The country is so mountainous that no cities have grown up in the interior. The map also includes a number of towns smaller than 7,500: these are capitals of *arrondissements* or seats of courts. Woodring remarks that if the people who live in towns having a population of more than a thousand were added to the list above, the total "urban" population then would be between 225,000 and 250,000, which is barely ten per cent of the total in the country.

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tiny communities, some of them designating "villages" of only four or five houses. For numbers of peasants hidden away in the valleys or on mountain farms, the only contact with the larger world comes through visits to the nearest market town—which itself may count only a thousand souls. The peasant is thus effectively isolated. The American Financial Adviser to the Government has estimated the average *annual* income of the Haitian at $20 a head.[8] The smallness of the sum limits the material contacts of the peasant with the outside world. Rural schools are few,[9] consequently all but a small percentage of the rising generation is growing up illiterate. Lack of mental stimulus completes the isolation. Bound to the soil by the need of wresting a livelihood from rocky, gullied, and increasingly unproductive land, harassed by ill-health, and governed by a group whose own security would be threatened by improving his lot, it is little wonder that the peasant is unprogressive, or that he struggles along at a bare subsistence level.[10]

Haiti is rural and agricultural, then, with a population density of about 250 per square mile. The people, living without machine industry and with very little foreign trade, must get their living from 10,000 square miles, not of lush tropical soil but of rocky, mountainous country which, after a century and a half of poor farming, has been stripped of most of its forests and much of its topsoil.

A glance at a relief map of the West Indies would show clearly that the islands are the tops of a mountain range, whose lowlands were long since submerged by the Caribbean Sea. Looked at from above, Haiti seems a jumbled mass of mountains running in all directions.[11] Down their slopes flow many small streams which after

8. Dr. W. W. Cumberland, cited by Paul H. Douglas, "The American Occupation of Haiti," *Political Science Quarterly*, XLII (1927), 258.

9. The average monthly salary of $13 (until recently only $6) for rural schoolteachers would not draw many wide-awake young men, even if schoolhouses existed for classes. The salary, indeed, is so small that only inferior persons are attracted, often men who know little more than their pupils. See chap. XV, 3.

10. Mrs. Blair Niles, in *Black Haiti* (New York, 1926), pp. 185–186, tells of a prisoner who preferred to remain in jail rather than be freed. "When he gets out," she quotes the officer as saying, "he'll be in again. You'll see. Here he gets nine cents a day for food, an' that's more than the average Haitian ever has."

11. One can well believe the story (told by Ebenezer D. Bassett, *Haiti* [Washington, 1893], p. 3) of the English admiral who, asked by George III for a description of the island, crumpled a sheet of paper, threw it on the table, and said: "Sire, Haiti looks like that." The same tale is told of Puerto Rico, with a Spanish admiral speaking to Queen Isabella.

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color predisposed a freedman to separate himself, by marriage with a 563
person at least as light as himself, as far as possible from his slave 175
ancestors.[4]

Aside from paternity, the chief reasons for freeing a slave were 175
faithful or extraordinary service, and the readiness of a master to free
his concubine. By the time of the Revolution many of the free col- 567
ored people had not known slavery in their families for four generations, while still more had been free for two or three. During the century many had acquired wealth by inheritance from former owners. Their close association with well-to-do white planters had [556]
instilled in them the desire to improve their economic fortunes as well as their culture; friendly relationships with their benefactors afforded them the opportunity. Like the grands blancs, the prosperous gens de couleur sent their children to Paris for an education, and went there themselves for pleasure.

As the free colored people flourished, so also did the jealousy of the 175
petits blancs against them. "Society" in Saint-Domingue was beset,
as is any social system which has not yet the sanctity of long tradi- 565
tion, with heartburnings, intrigues, resentment, snobbery. Petit blanc aspired to become grand blanc; small planter longed to be received into the smart set of the wealthy plantation owners; creole resented the toplofty airs of the recent émigré from France. What was more irksome to the petit blanc than his own exclusion from high society was the acceptance into it of many colored people whose parents or grandparents had been African slaves. Since many of the gens de couleur were better educated and more cultured than the lower-class whites, inner consciousness of mental inferiority may have added fuel to the fires of jealousy.

The growing wealth of free colored people was notable in the latter years of the century. One fertile parish in the South (Jérémie) was almost entirely in their hands, while in every other part of the colony they had bought or inherited handsome plantations. They looked upon Saint-Domingue as their fatherland, not hoping (as did many of the whites) to retire to France to spend their fortunes, nor yearning (as did many slaves) to return to Africa. The less ambitious

4. Certain colonial writers diverted themselves by working out all the mathematical 114
combinations of blood mixture, with names for scores of the commoner varieties.
Since people with some part of white blood in their veins might mate with others of 565
their own kind, with lighter or with darker persons, with black or with white, it can be imagined how complicated the question of race mixture might become.

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than a hundred dollars each; wasting money, squandering men. On the other side, Dessalines and Christophe massacred every white within their reach. Rochambeau held on until November, 1803, when he surrendered with his few remaining men to the English in Jamaica.

On January 1, 1804, Dessalines proclaimed the independence of Haiti, choosing this aboriginal Indian name (meaning "mountainous") rather than the French Saint-Domingue. What the colored people had begun with their petitions to the French Assembly in 1789 had now worked itself out, but along lines entirely different from their hopes or plans. The whites were gone, but the blacks were in control. Now a struggle for precedence was to begin between the ruling blacks and the still aspiring people of color.[21]

21. The historical details rehearsed in this chapter are summarized from the many documented monographs and histories of the period cited in the Bibliography at the end of this volume. It seems unnecessary to quote authority for each historical statement made in this sketch of background material.

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vengeance but the utter extermination of that race."[12] He even ordered the execution of a mulatto woman in Gonaïves because she had prayed for the success of Pétion.

During the latter years of his reign his personal popularity waned somewhat, owing to his relentless insistence upon efficiency and to his increasing tendency to lose his temper. Defections to the South occurred almost daily. The cultivators, comparing their never-ceasing toil on Northern plantations with the reported liberty and leisure of life in the South, continually drifted away. So alluring was the paradise of ease (and poverty) of the neighboring realm that Christophe found it necessary to keep a cordon of soldiers along the borders of his kingdom to prevent desertions. His administration now embarked on actual persecution of colored people. Inflammatory pamphlets were spread abroad, designed to make the Negroes think that the mulattoes were planning to enslave them once again. Under this campaign of propaganda many light-skinned Northerners had to go into hiding.

Despite all discrimination, the important line was drawn between cultivators who formed nine tenths of the population, and aristocrats who, with the army, made up the remainder. The nobility, the directors of landed estates, and the generals directed the activities of other people, so that the colonial prejudice against manual labor was strengthened. Here lay the basis of a persistent Haitian attitude of mind: to work with one's hands is to show oneself a member of the masses; to direct others is the distinction of the upper class. Education, neglected under Dessalines altogether, was fostered by Christophe. He established a few schools, inviting as schoolmasters certain Englishmen familiar with the then popular methods of the Lancasterian system; but since the cultivators were busy on the plantations, only the children of aristocrats benefited by the limited educational system and the social distance between classes was increased.

A French commentator says that Christophe showed unusual insight in devising for his kingdom "the only organization of which an African society was capable," namely, a combination of military despotism with certain benevolent inclinations, and territorial feudalism based upon a nobility created by the King. Actually, it suited not so much the African background of the people, which lay

12. Dr. Jonathan Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo* (Philadelphia, 1837), II, 197.

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114 642 175 at least a generation behind them, but rather their complete lack of any experience in self-rule. The author continues:

> In addition to the vanity of the black which was flattered by the distribution of principalities and duchies, there was the political thought which wished to fortify things by words. The most important sugar manufactories were distributed, with the property title, to the principal officers and civil agents of the government. Workers were allotted to these very much as were the Indians to the first Spanish conquerors. . . . Moreover, since African blood dominated in the North [that is, since there were few mulattoes and lighter-skinned people], the feudal lords, aided by the color of their skin, could enforce obedience to a yoke which in name only was modified [from slavery].[13]

[471]

175 642 566 631 421 625 692 The social organization of Christophe's kingdom, then, was one of large properties, with all the feudalistic trappings, resting upon a solid base of wage-earning serfdom. In contrast to mediaeval feudalism, the king was here much more than *primus inter pares.* Thanks to the policy of Dessalines, most land had come into state ownership, so that the nobility received their estates by royal favor, and held them as leases only so long as the King pleased. As in the Middle Ages, the noblemen were petty monarchs within the district granted to their jurisdiction. Their freedom of action, however, was even here subject to scrutiny: detachments of Royal Dahomets[14] were stationed in every cantonment or parish, to enforce discipline, keep the King informed, and find their own subsistence without a drain on the royal treasury. In every district was set up a court of *sénéchaussée* to see that justice obtained.[15] The King's law, not the nobleman's private code, prevailed in the whole country.[16]

13. R. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1846), II, 167–168.

14. Organized after the model of the police force existing in France before 1789.

15. These courts were composed of a royally appointed seneschal and his assistant, a king's procurer, and a clerk.

[671]

16. The Code Henry was promulgated on January 30, 1812. It consisted of seven parts: Civil, Commercial, Shipping and Maritime, Civil Process, Criminal and Police Process, Agricultural, and Military. In general the Code followed French precedent, but the section on Agriculture was Christophe's own. Sir James Basket (in his *History of the Island of St. Domingo* [London, 1818], p. 413) calls this part "a thing unexampled among other nations." It reveals not only the King's absorption in the main economic enterprise of his state, but also his skill in devising an integrated functioning of a social order of nobility and serfs with a plantation economy based on money crops. This Agricultural Law regulated such diverse matters as the reciprocal duties of proprietors and cultivators, the policing of plantations, and the culture and preparation of the major crops. It set forth industry as the parent of virtue, and idleness as the source of vice.

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Northern Haiti flourished magnificently under Christophe's sternly benevolent rule. The King had that daring spirit of initiative which was so generally lacking in later Haitian history; he had, in addition, the power necessary to force through a new adjustment if the old way showed defects.[17] He excited artificial wants among his leaders by making nobles of them, and then compelled them to satisfy these wants without ever slipping back to a lower standard of living. Thirteen years of enforced labor and of order kept by a rigorously effective police force gave northern Haiti the kind of prosperity she had known in colonial days. Christophe encouraged commerce and protected foreign traders. He called in all debased coinage, substituting for it sound gold and silver currency. The revenue he raised was larger than it had been since 1791, amounting to about $3,500,000 annually. Probably the most eloquent testimony to his success is the fact that at his death, when the kingdom of the North was once more united with the republic of the South, more than six million dollars found their way into the republican treasury.

175 643 642 433 [438] [439] [652]

The Black King's economic system worked. It was based on a social division of the people, with the masses doing manual labor, and the aristocrats definitely set apart and recognized as upper class. By 1820 Haiti was well on its way toward the caste system.

175 565

3. *Pétion* (*1807–1818*)

171 175 631

Almost all Latin-American countries in the nineteenth century exhibited one common feature: an aristocratic landowning class lording it over peons. Haiti did not follow this pattern. She had aristocrats and peasants, but the aristocrats did not own most of the land, and the peasants were not peons. If later rulers had kept the organization of economic life begun by Toussaint and developed by his fellow blacks, Dessalines and Christophe, it is almost certain that Haitian social evolution would have resembled that of the rest of Latin America, for it would not have been a great change from

17. Duraciné Vaval, "Le Roi d'Haïti Henri Christophe," in *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti*, II, No. 3 (June 1931), p. 14, says that Haiti's periodic civil troubles and social misfortunes, both ending in a diminution of the state's autonomy, have been due to economic maladjustments. "Our weaknesses in political life derive from our immobility in material production." Immobility is an index of stagnation. Few rulers of Haiti have been at once powerful enough to overcome the immobility and wise enough to know what measures had to be taken.

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to Christophe's serfs in the North to cause defections ultimately sufficient to win the civil war for the republic.[21]

Those who would read into Pétion's democratization of land tenure the liberal convictions of a far-sighted statesman must ignore the evidence of his earliest land acts. For two or three years nothing was so apparent as that Pétion wished to please his friends, the mulatto aristocrats. He not only had the Senate restore to their former owners all lands of which Dessalines had despoiled them, but he also agreed to a law authorizing a cash payment up to the full value of crops planted and then lost during the last year of the Emperor's rule.[22] By these concessions the President immediately wiped out the rancor left behind him by Dessalines, reversed that ruler's whole land policy, gained the support of thousands of aspirants for social position, and bound in personal loyalty to his régime all the colored leaders.

He went further. Insecurity of tenure under Dessalines had worried landlords who were not actually mulcted of their estates, and so the President undertook to guarantee security. Thereafter all sales of land were to be registered by government deed, and so confirmed to the purchaser in perpetuity; government courts would be empowered to settle disputes over payment of rents; proof of the death of the testator must be forthcoming before wills could be probated. Not even the single limitation on ownership—that if the proprietor of an estate should remain away from Haiti the state might lease his property and receive the income from it—disturbed them, for they were patriots enough, and poor enough, to feel that Haitians should live at home.

As if this were not enough to please the landed gentry, the tax

21. Saint-Rémy, *Pétion et Haïti* (Paris, 1854–57), V, 165–166, suggests another reason, namely, that people will always be more ready to defend land they actually own than for an impersonal state. This sounds logical, but certainly the Negroes had fought ardently enough to drive out the French in 1803, landless though they were. Saint-Rémy continues: "And moreover, was it not time to dismember the enormous plantations which still bore the names of those colonists whose mother country might still at any moment descend to reclaim their heritage? And could this dismemberment be achieved otherwise than by giving the people an honorable title to it?"

22. Two successive laws, February 9 and March 16, 1807, achieved these ends. The former specified that all persons who, by purchase or gift or legacy, had acquired land before November 1, 1803 (when Rochambeau surrendered) or since February 7, 1804 (when Dessalines had ordered a confirmation of all titles) should be newly assured of their rights to such holdings. There was a single, possibly unimportant, limitation: the acquisition must have been *by* Haitians *from* Haitians.

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they even comment upon his unselfish generosity, which seems to have been entirely free of any desire for personal gain. They accuse him rather of taking the easiest course—that of trying to pacify every group in the republic: the masses, by giving them land and removing any external compulsion to work on it; the army, by making their enlistment profitable; the aspiring aristocrats, by validating their titles to estates and not challenging their prestige with a demand for responsibility. Strong states, the critics argue, are built on lines of discipline, not of perpetual yielding. 175 643 642

From an economic point of view a more valid criticism would ask the simple question: what was the practical result of his policies? Under the three previous Negro rulers agriculture had prospered, for these men kept state lands intact and forced the population to work; under Pétion, on the contrary, prosperity steadily declined with the division of land and the removal of compulsion. To expect a body of illiterate, inexperienced ex-slaves automatically to develop such economic virtues as industry, foresight, and thrift in a land which never knew any of these is not realistic, but merely quixotic. The Haitian critic Magloire implies that Pétion was either completely and cynically indifferent to common graft or else naïvely confident that men newly free would somehow be preternaturally honest. He goes into detail: 175 433 114 643 423

> Lands were distributed free, without order or method, each person taking what came his way and establishing himself as he could; graft and jobbery, under varied guises, governed the granting of concessions. As for properties in the towns, some people established themselves in upstairs apartments and others in ground-floor ones, without bothering to think of the lawsuits which might result from this disorder. In the sales made by the State, 50 and 100 and 200 gourdes were paid for real estate which was worth 10,000 and 20,000 and 40,000 gourdes or more. The administration put up for sale the property of towns, of communes, and of the State. Even buildings occupied in colonial days by officials, buildings whose construction had cost considerable sums, were bestowed on the people. . . .
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> By a too great fractioning of the national domain, and carried away by the influence of false egalitarian and democratic ideas, Pétion brought about what a modern writer calls "the forcible neglect of agriculture"[32] throughout the Republic.[33] [682] [24]

32. J. N. Léger, *Haiti: son histoire et ses détracteurs* (New York, 1907), p. 162.
33. Auguste Magloire, *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social* (Port-au-Prince, 1909), pp. 260–263.

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175 Practically every contemporary foreign visitor contrasted the
114 divergent policies of Christophe and Pétion to the overwhelming
433 advantage of the former. One Englishman, intent upon defending the Negro against the charge of "natural indolence," went so far as to say that the majority of the people in the republic, although "possessed of small estates, on which they earned their living," were yet no less diligent than the forced laborers on Christophe's plantations in the North.[34] His only proof of this contention, however, was the greater volume of commerce at Port-au-Prince, capital of the republic, than at Cap-Henry (now Cap-Haïtien), capital of the kingdom.

175 The economic case is strongly against Pétion. The decline of
433 large-scale agriculture, the empty treasury, governmental purchase
652 of surpluses when prices were low, debasing the coinage[35]—by such
642 practical proofs, the republic was vastly less efficient than the stern dictatorship of the kingdom. But Pétion's people had freedom, while Christophe's were serfs. And Pétion's republic endured, to become reunited Haiti. The kingdom perished with Christophe.

4. *The Final Effort toward Plantation Life* (*1818–1826*)

175 The mantle of Pétion fell in 1818 upon the shoulders of his
643 meticulous secretary and minister, Jean-Pierre Boyer. Two years
642 later, upon the death of Christophe, the kingdom of the North was once again united, without a struggle, to the South.[36] It is conceivable that the refined mulatto Boyer might have infused into his people a spirit of industry and ambition, now that tranquillity reigned after fourteen years of separation and warfare. The people of the North had had a long experience of intense activity, while those of the

34. W. W. Harvey, *Sketches of Hayti; from the Expulsion of the French, to the Death of Christophe* (London, 1827), pp. 361 ff.

[652] 35. Pétion's coins were so easily imitated that the country was inundated with counterfeit money. The government issued only five million dollars worth of this currency, but in 1818 twelve millions were in circulation, the surplus having been fabricated in Europe and the United States.

[175] [643] [642] [648] 36. In 1822–23 Boyer likewise succeeded, with little fighting, in bringing the Spanish two thirds of the island (Santo Domingo) into the republic. For the first time since 1697 the whole island was really unified under one rule. Toussaint had held it in 1801–2 and the Haitians claimed it thereafter, but real unity did not come until Boyer's time, when all the Spanish colonies in the New World were breaking away from their mother country. Santo Domingo regained its independence in 1844 shortly after the abdication of Boyer.

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of contracts. It is worthy of note that soldiers assigned to estates were responsible for their actions not to any civil authority but only to their military superiors. 175 692 24

On paper, at least, the Code meant for the worker a return to the serfdom instituted by Toussaint and continued by his black successors.[41] Boyer's new system was richer in detail than Christophe's, but it clearly owed much to that monarch's practical scheme. There is a vital difference, however: serfdom under the Negro rulers worked because discipline was enforced; Boyer's effort to reintroduce it was an abject failure. 175 566 671

Many commentators have praised the Code as able and intelligent. Since the effort to revive familiar practice did not succeed, it is important to understand the reasons for failure of an almost perfect paper plan; one similar to the system which had functioned in all Haiti from 1798 to 1806, and in northern Haiti until 1820.

To begin with—and this was in great measure its final downfall—the workers simply ignored it. When Toussaint had first introduced serfdom, many Negroes quietly moved up into remote hills where they would be out of sight; a good number had remained away from surveillance, raising children who cherished their own independence of action. The influence of this group gradually spread. Moreover, for nineteen years in the South, ever since Pétion had first become president, the masses had had increasing experience of economic freedom. There is no doubt that the majority of the people preferred a low standard of living with liberty to great national prosperity depending on personal compulsion. Northern "cultivators" had known force and efficiency under Christophe, but they, too, preferred their five-year experience of easygoing life in reunited Haiti. Such complete, antagonistic inertia toward the law made its enforcement impossible. Individual cases of sabotage might be dealt with, but not wholesale refusal of the group to sign contracts.

Aside from this, too much land had already been given away throughout at least half the country to make possible a fair and efficient functioning of the Code. Any forced-labor system would have had to depend on large plantations. Since Pétion had divided 175 423

41. R. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, "La République d'Haïti: ses dernières révolutions; sa situation actuelle," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, XV, No. 4 (Nov., 1845), p. 15, called it "*l'inféodation à la glèbe*," which it certainly was. The whole Code was designed to prevent any further parceling of the land and any further lapse into idleness on the part of the workers. [114]

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175 The result was entirely different from Boyer's expectations. As a
114 French critic graphically puts it, the Haitians
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> who had never had more than a borrowed energy—that inspired by fear of French invasion—when they saw themselves freed, by a solemn treaty, from all attack on their coasts, seemed to allow their arms to drop relaxed at their sides, saying, *Let's take a rest.* The soldier who up till now had squeezed his body into a uniform and had subjected himself to European discipline, shouldering his arms, staring straight ahead as if seeing nothing, now began to leave unbuttoned the uniform which choked him, dragged a mattress into his sentry-box so that he might sleep through his watch, and let his cross slip to the earth never to pick it up again.[44]

175 In short, the Haitian army as a disciplined force ceased to exist, and
701 with it all authority of its officers. Boyer had counted upon the
703 army to enforce the provisions of the Code Rural, but now a soldier's
671 life was a paid sinecure. By gaining political security Haiti had in-
433 advertently lost its last chance of economic prosperity through a system of forced labor.

175 Wherever the Code was put into partial operation, revenue from
423 plantations continued to decline. The price of real estate dropped
433 proportionately. It was a simple matter for workmen who had
435 signed contracts to avoid carrying out their stipulations, and just as
466 simple to evade the law requiring fifteen acres' minimum for a single holding. Practically every Haitian wanted to own a bit of land; once he had acquired his bit, however small, he had (or so he felt) earned an exemption from directed labor.

175 Only on estates near the few big towns, where government
671 officials were concentrated, was there much pretense of trying to
625 enforce the Code. Sentries at the gates of Port-au-Prince were
661 authorized to confiscate plantains, yams, or fruit brought by any worker who, in contravention of the Code, had strayed to market on a forbidden day, but sentries soon acquired the habit of not seeing countryfolk who passed the gates. Reports kept cropping up that rural policemen were robbing poor cultivators of their coffee under pretense of protecting them from the penalties for breach of the law; this suggests that the Code was used rather for graft than for the stimulation of agriculture.

175 By and large, however, the Code was merely ignored. Agents
671 could not be found who were willing to stand in any community
625 44. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, II, 181.
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175 against almost unanimous public opinion opposing enforcement. In
671 1828 it was reported that dancing, which the Code had strictly
625 limited to week ends, was a nightly diversion near the capital. One
535 of the principal dancing resorts was the house of a captain of rural
517 police, the very man who was supposed to repress such amusements.[45]

Boyer had done his best, and his best was merely a good piece of
175 office work. When his Code failed to operate, he could think of
178 nothing further to suggest for the economic rehabilitation of Haiti.
24 The last fifteen years of his administration witnessed a gradual lapse
433 into that small-scale farming which was to be characteristic of Haiti for the remainder of the nineteenth century. By comparison with former standards, production and steady industry had both fallen off since Boyer came to the presidency. The testimony of visiting foreigners is unanimous on the decline of industry.

175 The British consul, Mackenzie, said in 1827 that there was very
114 little field labor then being done, and that only elderly people,
435 principally aged "Guinea Negroes" long accustomed to steady work,
461 carried on the tradition. No measures of the government could
464 induce young people born in Haiti to labor or to change from their
184 "habitual vagrancy."[46] Another Englishman, James Franklin, remarked in 1828 that land values throughout the republic had greatly declined because no one could make a profit within any moderate time. Labor was high, he writes, for ordinary wages did not attract the workers who preferred idleness. (This word is certainly unfair: it was work at their own bidding which they preferred, not idleness.) Government lands lay untilled, no one evincing the slightest desire to purchase or utilize them. Franklin continues:

> 114 Land also in the possession of individuals is similarly circumstanced; and
> 175 those who are large proprietors cannot effect a sale of any produce which
> 433 they may have beyond the quantity which they can consume; consequently
> 423 a proprietor may have an immense extent of land, and yet be quite unable
> 425 to derive any benefit from it by cultivation, or to convert it into money,
> for the want of purchasers. Thus . . . there is no individual wealth in the country, because, although a man may have very large landed possessions, still those possessions are unavailable, for they produce him nothing, as he can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them.

[534] 45. Although dancing is spoken of here as an amusement, it is highly probable that at least a part of it had connection with the Vodun religion.

[241] 46. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti* (London, 1830), I, 100. Mackenzie is clearly exaggerating, unless by "field labor" he means work on plantations, in contrast to farming on small plots.

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can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them. There are some instances of proprietors leasing their lands to persons who undertake to cultivate them, for which they receive about one-third of the produce; but this is far from being general, and I imagine can only be accomplished by military men who have the command of troops, and who are thereby enabled to till them by working parties daily sent out for that purpose.[47]

An interesting side light is provided by a Quaker visitor, Candler, who in 1842 wrote that he was struck by the entire equality which seemed to exist between servant and master. Every workman was addressed in courteous manner, as "*mon fils*."[48] On inquiry, Candler was told that the profits of planting were good that year, laborers were scarce, and it was therefore "necessary to conciliate all by kindness, or no work would be done."

A particularly grim account of the state of cultivation near the close of Boyer's administration (1842) is given by a Frenchman:

> The fields of Haiti are dead. There where under slavery thousands of tons of sugar were made, now one sees only a few crops and a little syrup to turn into raw rum. Lively growths of cactus cover with thorns the acres of cane, of fields, of pastures deserted by the hand of man; the cactus invades the towns, coming even up to the heart of the cities, flourishing in the midst of ruins, as if to insult the inhabitants. . . . On the one hand, no one cultivates with regularity, because everyone is discouraged by the thefts of cane and fruit by people without any moral discipline, and in a country without police; while on the other hand, people complain of being poor, and of not being able to devote enough money to indispensable improvements. . . . And if the proprietors cannot even make work progress, imagine the condition of the poor![49]

As the people grew individually poorer, the value of the land sank until it was useless for an owner to try to prevent squatting on his estate. Holdings grew smaller and smaller, in spite of the prohibition on sales of real estate in parcels less than fifteen acres. Good land might be had in every part of the island quite cheaply, much of it even from the government which had enacted the restrictive law. Any man not satisfied with his condition as a paid laborer might, if

47. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti (Saint Domingo)*, (London, 1828), p. 313.
48. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti* (London, 1842), p. 37.
49. V. Schœlcher, *Colonies étrangères et Haïti: résultats de l'émancipation anglaise* (Paris, 1842), II, 263 ff.

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175 563 Color prejudice, in so far as a mass of people is concerned, is generally one-sided, directed by the upper group at the lower. The ordinary illiterate worker between 1820 and 1840 was inclined to accept without much question the superiority of the lighter-skinned Haitians. Resentment was often present, and envy, but hardly prejudice. The real contest developed between the colored élite and the blacks of ambition. The latter had reason to feel proud of their rise from slavery; many had shown ability, and felt themselves the mental and moral equals of the mulattoes; the men who had broken the power of the French, ended slavery, and founded the state were Negroes—and now Haiti was being ruled by mulattoes. The contest between the two groups was the obverse side of prejudice. The envied minority, jealously guarding their distinction, were generally conscious of prejudices which they rationalized with pronouncements about superior mentality and innate qualities. They would concede the difference between an educated black and a mere peasant, but would still cling to the feeling that all the culture in the world would not make the educated Negro a peer of the mulatto.

175 563 114 643 671 Government documents of the period can hardly be expected to call attention to color prejudice and its concomitant resentments. To foreign observers, however, it was immediately apparent and noteworthy as a dominant characteristic of the country. Testimony is unanimous as to its existence; more important, the commentators all agreed that it was growing. An acute Frenchman called Boyer "the slow martyr of his color,"[56] being a mulatto in a republic of blacks: his color made Boyer suspect, so that the President had to spend most of his time and energy trying to avoid conflicts on this issue. It is entirely possible that Boyer's dearest schemes, particularly the enforcement of the Code Rural, failed primarily because the army was controlled by Negroes, whom the President dared not drive too hard; while only the army could have enforced faithful performance by the black laborers. An American doctor stated in 1838 that "the mulattoes, to preserve the sceptre of power in the possession of their caste, are driven to compliances which a negro president would feel himself empowered to spurn from him as the basest infringement on his dignity."[57]

56. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, I, 221. This observation is much more to the point than the specious remarks which follow, attributing Boyer's inactions partly to the enervating effects of the tropical climate.

57. Brown, *op. cit.*, II, 259.

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trary; they were grudgingly respected as superior beings, arbiters of the fate of the outside world, potential destroyers of the privileges of the Haitian élite should they return to the country in force. Although white men might not legally marry Haitian women, it was not every woman who could resist the opportunity of having children lighter than herself. One indication of the ambiguous attitude toward the whites was seen in religion. In 1842 out of sixty or seventy Roman Catholic priests in the island, only one was a Haitian. Many people in the country were well educated, and certainly more than equals in point of scholarship and *savoir-faire* of the rude priests imported generally from Corsica. But a feeling was current among the peasants that "colored baptism will not stick." There is no indication that the European priests, since they were well paid for their services, attacked this particular heresy. As for the élite, they derived a certain satisfaction in being served by white priests. Aside from the churchmen, however, the only white man in any place of prominence in the country was the mayor of Saint-Marc, whose father had befriended Boyer in former times.

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Few visitors had kind words to say of social conditions in the Haiti of Boyer. As a Frenchman put it:

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> Democracy was the rule; but what a democracy! A hodge-podge of the most heterogeneous ideas, an alliance of the most contrary principles, of American federalism with military control; the sovereignty of the people replaced by the sovereignty of a ruling clique; and finally, all the intellectual vainglory of a people young, inexperienced, and for a long time denied the legitimate manifestation of their own wishes. Added to all these inconsistencies is the antagonism of races.[61]

This antagonism was, indeed, paramount. The habitual hauteur and assumed pretensions of the lighter Haitians were a perpetual thorn in the flesh of the ambitious blacks, and thus the breach was everywhere widened and made permanent. The blacks retaliated against these distinctions by refusing to obey orders from mulattoes in office, or by petty outrages against private citizens among the colored group.

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The vital lack of the country, assuming that stability is desirable, was a middle class of any sort. On the base of hundreds of thousands of peasants, illiterate, unambitious, indifferent to progress, was built

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61. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, "La République d'Haïti; ses dernières révolutions; sa situation actuelle," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, XV, No. 4 (Nov., 1845), pp. 681–682. [113]

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however, as on the masses. Nothing was done to educate the people and so inculcate in them the desire for a higher standard of living. Where food is easily got, the government gentle, and the people ignorant, one hardly looks for progress.

Foreigners who knew Haiti were prophesying doom through most of Boyer's administration. The British consul was the most vocal of these prophets. He toured the whole republic in 1828 and found only local variations on a sorry state of affairs. At Jacmel he reported a parceling of the land, a decline of plantations, and a horror of corporal punishment by the people; it seemed to surprise him that every blow given a worker was returned in kind. In the arrondissements of Saint-Marc and Gonaïves cotton continued to be the chief crop as it had been in French days but quantity and quality had declined. At Petite-Rivière relative prosperity prevailed because the lands there were under the control of a former lieutenant of Christophe, who managed to apply that king's stern discipline to his workers. From Gonaïves to Cap Nicolas Môle cultivation was at a low ebb; near Cap-Haïtien everything agricultural was in ruins.[65]

Industry and discipline, the two commonest characteristics of the Haiti of Christophe, were precisely those most notably absent from the Negro masses of 1843. Obedience had given way to independence of behavior. A visitor in 1842 describes the actual condition of a plantation in the arrondissement of Furcy. Where formerly thirty-two families had toiled industriously, under strict overseers who were free to inflict physical punishment upon laggards, now only twelve families remained, the rest having become "freeholders." These twelve had a crop-sharing agreement with the owner of the estate whereby they received the income from half the 10,000 pounds of coffee yielded by the land; but also they

appropriate to themselves almost the whole of the provisions which the land furnishes, sending down only a few of the rarer vegetables, beans, peas, and artichokes, to their master, for his table at Port-au-Prince, and supplying his need when he comes to reside for a few days in the country. This he knows very well, but has no alternative but to bear it quietly.[66]

65. See particularly *ibid.*, pp. 94, 103–105. This consul clearly felt that the only hope of salvation in Haiti was a reintroduction of some sort of coercion such as that used by Dessalines and Christophe.

66. Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

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Haiti was in constant financial straits. Money had to be borrowed

abroad; then paid back at the promised time or a foreign warship would appear at some Haitian port. The steady drain of annual indemnity payments to France,[7] the cost of subduing revolutionary movements, and the large sum eaten up even in times of peace by wages to the army made successive presidents continue to yield government land for small sums of ready cash, in spite of Geffrard's announcement that no more state lands would be alienated. Nissage Saget, coming to power by a successful revolution, paid out fifteen acres to each soldier who fought in his campaign in the South.[8] The straits of the government resembled those of the Continental Congress in America during the Revolution. 175 652 [171]

Another impulse to parcel the land came during the administration of President Lysius Salomon (1879–88). The debt to France had finally, after half a century, been paid off; that incubus removed, Salomon instituted numerous reforms, financial, military, educational. On February 26, 1883, he signed a law by which every citizen of Haiti might conceivably become a landowner even if he lacked money to buy land. Upon receipt of a written agreement to cultivate certain tropical crops—specifically, sugar, coffee, cotton, cacao, and tobacco—the government would grant provisional title to a portion of fifteen to twenty-five acres of land taken from the public domain. The grant became final if, after a period of from two to five years, three quarters of the land had been effectively cultivated. 175 643 671 423 [648]

Five hundred requests were made in 1884 for such grants, and twelve hundred in the following year.[9] Thereafter one finds no records of applications for land; the peasants had discovered the hidden trap in this apparent generosity. How could a peasant with a tiny farm lacking implements and tools, not to mention ready cash, be expected to cultivate important crops on fifteen or twenty acres of land? He would have to cut down trees, uproot wild plants, fertilize the ground, purchase equipment and seeds, and then wait several years for a crop. As Thoby says, "And even then he was not a

7. See above, pp. 70–71.

8. Law of July 12, 1870. In August of the same year, Nissage required an inventory to be taken of state lands remaining.

9. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Manuel d'histoire d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1934), p. 317, cites these figures. They are contested by Dr. F. Dalencour, *Le Sauvetage national par le retour à la terre*, p. 31, who maintains that only 800 applications came in altogether. Here, as elsewhere, Haitian records are incomplete. [114] [423]

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However, as regards caste itself we can now see that after a hundred years practically nothing has changed, even through the Occupation. In the essential structure of the Haitian social system there is still a twofold division. In the mind of élite persons the peasant exists only as a very necessary but essentially stupid part of the country's economic life. The casual visitor who, after two weeks in Port-au-Prince and its environs, has met a few distinguished Haitians, has already sensed the barriers of caste which exist between élite and the lower orders. If the sojourner remains longer and is accepted into the drawing rooms of the élite, he will hear exciting and brilliant discussions of such questions as whether Haitian civilization has in it anything of the African,[6] whether it might not be wise for Haiti to throw over both French and Créole and adopt a new language, and whether the people of the North are not superior to those of the South;[7] however, no self-satisfied member of the élite, in an expan-

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6. See, for example, the article by Lorimer Denis and Dr. François Duvalier, "La Civilisation haïtienne: notre mentalité est-elle africaine ou gallo-latine?" in *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti*, VII, No. 23 (May, 1936), pp. 1–31. Anthony Froude, in his *English in the West Indies* (New York, 1888), tells of an American consul asking a Haitian why the island was not cultivated more intensely. "The dusky soldier laid his hand upon his breast and waved his hand. 'Ah!' he said, 'that might do for English or Germans or Franks; we of the Latin race have higher things to occupy us!'"

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7. This last sentiment was noted by Sir Spenser St. John (*Hayti, or the Black Republic* [London, 1889], p. 14), who calls it a popular idea at the time he wrote and for years before, the élite of the North explaining it by the tradition of industry instilled during Christophe's reign. But Moreau de Saint-Méry had already pointed out that in colonial times there was greater fertility, more abundant rain, more intelligence in management of plantations, more slaves, more distinction and polish among the masters, in the North than in the South. Auguste Magloire (in *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social*, p. 263) thinks the North infinitely superior to the South; it did not participate in the violence of political change in the early days, yet when it did intervene it took the lead. He stated however that the North seemed to be losing its social superiority, and certainly its economic superiority, because of its cultural subordination to France: this made French ideas prevail, and one of the chief French ideas is that political power is supremely important; the North consequently came to seek political superiority when it should have preserved cultural and social preëminence. Pauléus Sannon, on the other hand (*Essai historique sur la Révolution de 1843* [Aux Cayes, 1905], pp. 5–9), regards the South as considerably more advanced intellectually. It has never, he says, been able to submit to the absolutist yoke of government, not because of the French influence, for the South was least developed under the colonial régime, but because of its geographical situation, with its long broken coast line, its ports, cities, tribunals, customs-houses, schools, and the like. Those who have outside connections are always more open minded and progressive, he says, than inhabitants of the interior. There is no important town in the South which is not on the sea. Nowhere were the affranchis more numerous or richer than in the South, and these men led the revolution. (See Beaubrun Ardouin, *Études sur l'histoire d'Haïti* [Port-au-Prince, 1833–60], I, 97.) All these influences made for a democratic spirit, but also for one of agitation.

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sive mood, will speak of the peasant and his contributions to Haiti; he thinks only in terms of his own caste.[8] Upper-class Haitians dread the sight of tourists taking pictures of native scenes, fearing that the travelers will return to their own country and label these pictures, "Typical Haitian Scenes," when, as anyone should know, typical Haiti is upper-class Haiti.[9]

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The American Occupation failed of many of its ends because it did not recognize the social situation and its implications; or, realizing them, did not consider them worthy of attention. Roads, telephones, mail service, and improved agricultural methods seemed patently desirable to progressive Americans; to install them for the Haitians seemed generously wise. Yet many well-meant efforts came to grief, for the mass of people, lacking a tradition of orderly free government, did not always understand what the Americans were about, while the élite saw in the activities of the Marines a threat to their own dominance as rulers of the country.[10]

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The antiquated, but prevalent, notion of the superior mentality of the white race also flourishes in certain quarters among the élite. Many of them say that the Negro can never originate a civilization, and that with the best of education he remains an inferior man, utterly unfitted for government, utterly incapable of making progress.

563 829

8. Witness Marthe Oulié's paragraph (*Les Antilles, filles de France* [Paris, 1935], p. 254): "My amiable host (a member of the élite) was triumphant at my surprise and enchantment. 'You did not expect to find a civilized country. What have the spiteful wits told you? That the Haitians worshipped serpents and made human sacrifices? True, the peasants on the mountain-sides are still very primitive and ignorant, but in the cities you will find many families like ours, cultivated in letters and music, careful and proud of their French culture, and absolutely set against American de-civilization.'"

[114] [829]

9. "Should you like a European to take pictures of the slums of your American cities and of the most degraded of your share-croppers, and then circulate these photographs as typical American scenes?" asked one sensitive Haitian.

10. See the *Report of the Forbes Commission to Haiti*, 1930, pp. 18–19. "Illiteracy keeps the peasant masses politically inarticulate, except in case of mobs or bandit gangs, which formerly infested the countryside and often furnished the forces of revolution. These bandit gangs have been broken up and have disappeared under American rule, but the social forces that created them still remain—poverty, ignorance, and the lack of a tradition or desire for orderly free government. It has been the aim of the American Occupation to try to broaden the base of the articulate proletariat and thus make for a sounder democracy and ultimately provide for a more representative government in Haiti. Hence its work in education, in sanitation, in agencies of communication such as roads, telephones, telegraph lines, and regular mail routes. These things naturally are deemed of secondary importance by the Elite, who see in the rise of a middle class a threat to the continuation of their own leadership."

[114] [648]

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VI

ROMAN CATHOLICISM

1. *French Colonial Backgrounds*

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WHEN France was first establishing a foothold in the New World, religion was one of the consuming passions of the French people. Priests accompanied early explorers, missionaries consecrated their lives to conversion of the Indians; monks, nuns, and parish priests were a vital part of the pioneer settlements of New France. Every family in the mother country hoped that at least one of its sons would devote himself to the service of the Church. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were, par excellence, missionary centuries.

By the time the colony of Saint-Domingue was acquired, however, this religious zeal was on the wane, and just when the colony was becoming prosperous and populous France was entering the phase of her history known as The Enlightenment. Although the growth of the colony is impressive from many points of view, religion is not one of them, for planters intent upon money-making and luxurious living in an exploitative tropical colony gave little energy to spiritual development.[1] The Roman Catholic Church, being the official church of France, was naturally the only important religious organization of the colony; the congregations authorized to send clergy to Saint-Domingue—Carmelites, Capuchins, Dominicans, and Jesuits—divided the territory and work between them. [192]

No doubt the fathers did some assiduous work. Official historians of the Roman Church in Haiti give the definite impression that their task was arduous and not very rewarding.[2] The torrid heat, diseases (especially yellow fever), the long distances and poor means of transportation were discouraging enough; until the middle of the eighteenth century there was the added difficulty of the poor human

1. It is revealing to see what characteristics of the culture of their mother country colonists bring with them to a new region. French Canadians, in contrast to French colonists in Saint-Domingue, kept many more customs of old France. See J. G. Leyburn, *Frontier Folkways* (New Haven, 1935), pp. 54–57. [114] [171] [178]

2. A good account of the inertia of religious life in colonial Saint-Domingue is given in P. A. Cabon, *Notes sur l'histoire religieuse d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1933), chap. I. [114]

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Organized

religion was never at a lower ebb in Haiti than toward the middle of the nineteenth century, as whole generations of citizens were growing up who had never known the proper forms of ritual, and had no real religious training. The outward shell of the Church covered steadily more "superstition," more homely beliefs and practices, and the long divorce from Rome permitted the growth of a native religion which later could not be eradicated, no matter how assiduous the labors of Catholic priests. 175 795 771

During Boyer's quarter-century the once Roman and Catholic Church remained the official religion of the state, but its head was now the President. Organization simplified as orthodoxy declined. By 1840 there was only one order of priesthood; no archbishop, bishops, canons, curés, or other titled dignitaries, but only "priests." The people were not taxed to maintain the state Church; there were no tithes or forced contributions for the support of public worship or the repair of parish churches, no heavy list of clergy living from levies on the people. However, if the Haitians were not burdened by imposed religious fees, they were still through their own fears subject to steady tolls for services by the degraded men who then called themselves priests. 175 795 771 659 643

Every effort of the state failing to provide proper religious leadership, Boyer resigned himself to permitting those who professed to be priests to practice in the republic. There were seventy so-called priests in the country in 1840. Some of them had once been in holy orders but were now unfrocked: they found in Haiti not only a haven but a fertile field for gain. In addition to these religious renegades came adventurers who knew just enough of ritual and theology to use the priestly garb as a cover for easy graft. Both groups encouraged crude superstition with a view to making money. They baptized houses, boats, and doorposts, and blessed fetish charms or amulets, all for a fee. Immorality was flagrant, and many of the "priests" had mistresses and children. The debauchery of some was so notorious that Secretary-General Inginac had publicly to rebuke them and even to banish a few from the country. A visiting Quaker, benignantly tolerant of most of what he saw in Haiti, was scandalized by the religious situation. He said that the sole aim of most of the clergy was to secure gold and silver "as quickly as they can, to send to Europe for investment." Excepting a very few (notably the priests at Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, and Jacmel), he 175 795 793 [114]

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175 concludes: "With regard to the ecclesiastical institutions of the
793 republic we may safely say . . . that if the standing army be one cause
795 of the degradation of the people, the Church is surely another; and
[114] the sooner it can be reformed, the better for religion, for morals, and for the physical well-being of the community."[9]

175 Eventually the state felt it necessary to protect the people from
793 these predatory priests. True, people paid for what they considered
795 to be services performed, but the legislators could not permit unlimited graft in the name of religion. An act of 1840,[10] therefore, set
659 a fee of half a dollar for each baptism;[11] $8 for a marriage with Mass, $4 for one without a Mass; an ordinary Mass, 37 cents; a High Mass, service, or funeral "of the first class" (that is, with choir, sacristan, acolytes, and churchwarden), $60; funerals of the second class, $20; funerals of the third class, $10. Articles of the act specify what shall constitute the three classes of service, and it is then stated, "Neither rectors nor vicars shall receive anything for offices at which they do not assist in person, except in cases of illness." The Haitians were not receiving true religious instruction, but at least their government tried to prevent their being mulcted by the spurious churchmen.

175 Since Haiti had no schools except the few attended by children of
771 the élite, religious instruction of youth was almost nonexistent. The
184 average élite man was openly an unbeliever, for it required little acumen to show him that if the priests represented religion there was nothing to commend it. Hunt in 1860 said: "Many of the educated are about where the French were when they left the island. They believe in Voltaire, whom I have not unfrequently heard them
[562] characterize as the greatest man who ever lived."[12] In contrast to the
[114] men, the women made more of a show of being devout and attentive to the formal duties of religion, but according to Franklin they

are not actuated by any religious feeling. Going to church is a mere matter of parade with them, the sabbath being a day of festivities, and not set aside for religious devotion. The female congregations which frequent the churches in Hayti appear better prepared for an opera, or some other public amusement, than for the sacred duties of offering up their prayers in adoration of the Deity.

9. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 98 ff.
10. Chap. IV, articles 28–31.
11. The figures cited in the Act are in gourdes.
12. Benjamin S. Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans* (Philadelphia, 1860), p. 18.

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The men seldom or never go to mass, except on the days particularly set apart by the government as public fêtes. On these occasions the president and all the officers of Hayti go in procession, but the idea of devotion, I believe, never enters their contemplation. Such days are merely set aside for celebrating some particular event, which it is wished should be handed down to posterity. These occasions present only the external symbol of religion, the whole people being either ignorant or careless of its real character. Their manner and appearance during the celebration of the mass shew that they have no inward feelings of piety or devotion.[13]

Catholicism in Haiti, then, had fallen on evil days; Protestantism, on the other hand, was unable to gain any foothold. Boyer, indifferent to all religion, did not even care to tolerate Wesleyan missionaries as Pétion had done, for when certain of them arrived and were met with "persecution and stoning by a mob," it required persuasion to gain his assent to freeing those the police had taken into custody. He forbade any further meetings of Wesleyans, on the ground that they stirred up riots. At the close of Boyer's administration it was estimated that there were only about 1,200 Protestants in the country, mostly Methodists and Baptists, and these primarily Negroes who had come from the United States to settle in the republic.

Although the Haitian government probably derived a certain satisfaction from controlling a state Church, Boyer was impelled both by circumstance and his own temperament to obtain the approval of the Holy See. His own tepid spiritual zeal had nothing to do with the case; Haitian public order would benefit by a superior group of priests, and Haitian prestige would rise, he thought, with recognition by Rome. Having already in 1826 settled the conflict between France and Haiti in the political sphere, Boyer tried assiduously to end the schism from Rome. His propositions were examined with benevolence by the Pope, who conferred upon the primate of the Indies, archbishop of Santo Domingo, the title of archbishop of Haiti. This personage, however, was a Spaniard already established in the comfortable city of Santo Domingo amidst people of his own nationality. He could not be persuaded to move to Port-au-Prince. The failure of Boyer's efforts is due more to this ecclesiastic than to uncoöperativeness on the part of Rome. From 1834 to 1860 the Court of Rome had official representatives in Haiti, but they cannot have been very effective men, for conditions in

13. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 394–395.

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[p. 131]

VII

VODUN

1. *Misconceptions*

THE second religion of Haiti is Vodun. It is not mentioned by officials as one of the spiritual assets of the country; its priests wear no regular habit; it has no town churches. Yet it is the living religion of the masses. Catholicism may have official and social sanction; indeed, most peasants do consider themselves as belonging to that faith, yet it is doubtful whether in any other Western country there is so universal an adherence to a common religion as in Haiti to Vodun. 771

If there had been a paid campaign of propagandist misinformation, it is unlikely that more untruths and half-truths could have been put into circulation about this faith of the Haitian people. Moreau de Saint-Méry describes something of it in his classic work on colonial matters, although most of what he tells concerns the dances, which he considered primarily a form of recreation. Pious visitors to Haiti in the early years of independence labeled it simply as a form of superstition and did not bother either to understand or misrepresent it. By the time of Soulouque it was known as a rather definite folk religion, but only after 1863 did what was really a simple set of religious beliefs and practices suddenly become notorious, making Haiti the object of macabre curiosity and of reports whose chief characteristic was gruesomeness. 114 771

In 1863 occurred the *Affaire de Bizoton*, and it may as well be recounted forthwith as the prime origin of all misunderstanding which has pursued Haitian religion—although to emphasize it is like giving an account of Christianity with all the emphasis on witch burnings, torture of heretics, and excesses of bigotry. 175 771

On December 27, 1863, a little girl of Bizoton named Claircine disappeared from home during the absence of her mother. Search for her was futile until after several days it was discovered that she had been killed and used as part of a sinister sacrifice by religious fanatics. An inquest, discreetly managed, resulted in the arrest of fifteen people, of whom eight were longer detained. The trial of

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175 these four men and four women began on February 4, 1864, arousing
771 all Port-au-Prince, the local population as well as the foreign lega-
[682] tions and consulates. The guilt of the accused was soon evident; following their complete confessions they were declared guilty of sorcery, cruelty, and murder, and all eight were condemned to death. They were executed on February 13, only six weeks after the crime. What these fanatics had done seemed as horrible to the Haitians as a similar crime would seem to Americans.

Much publicity was given the trial by foreign journalists who, with their flair for making the most of a dramatic tale, added whatever they could pick up by hearsay of the beliefs which had prompted the human sacrifice. The reading public, uncritical and uninformed about Haiti itself, if they gave the lurid accounts a second thought seem to have assumed that such actions were "what one might expect of Negroes." The incident would shortly have passed into that oblivion which awaits sensational news from obscure parts of the world, if it had not been kept alive by the British Minister, who was also an author.

● 114 In the 'eighties, after retirement from diplomatic service, Sir
771 Spenser St. John wrote a two-volume work called *Hayti, or The Black Republic*. It was probably no more egregious in its dramatic account than were scores of other books by Englishmen who, in the latter years of the Victorian era, were discovering darkest Africa, holding dominion over palm and pine, and taking up the white man's burden all over the "heathen" world; but it possessed the literary qualities which made people buy it and discuss with avidity its horrendous details. The adjective "black" in its title seemed almost to refer to the moral characteristics of the people rather than to their skin color. Sir Spenser made a great many accurate, if somewhat one-sided, observations on the customs of the people, giving the public the first readable book in decades about the Haitians. The grisly climax of his story, however, is the *Affaire de Bizoton*. He amassed an astonishing collection of tales, practically all at second-hand, to prove that Vodun (Voodooism, he called it) was the real religion of the Haitians (which it was), and that it was compounded of the vilest superstitions and most fiendish practices, of which the most essential was human sacrifice of "the goat without horns" followed by a cannibalistic communion. Which, needless to say, it was not.

This is the sort of dramatic tale uncritical readers seem to like to

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believe. It stuck in people's minds. Since Sir Spenser's time tourists to Haiti have habitually spent a few hours ashore, heard drumbeats from the hills, and shuddered deliciously as they conjured up images of weird goings-on—black magic, licentious dances, and frenetic orgies. Novelists during the past half-century have spun their tales full of local color, while "serious" authors have made small fortunes out of pseudo-scientific books with just enough fact mingled with their lush imaginings to give "an air of similitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative." Their language runs into such purple phrases as "blood-maddened, sex-maddened, god-maddened,"[1] to describe the religious exaltation of the people at a Vodun service. Under this constant rain of misrepresentation, Haitians who care for the good opinion of other nations have become extremely sensitive on the subject of the folk religion. Many of them deny its existence; others speak of it as something beneath their attention. The more they try to cover it over, however, with silence and professed contempt, the more mysteriously fascinating it becomes to the foreign visitor. The tourist who goes to Paris expects to see the Eiffel Tower, whatever its aesthetic faults; the tourist in Haiti wishes to see, without quite knowing what he means by the term, "a Voodoo dance." No amount of scientific writing about the real character of Vodun will change the popular misconception. For every reader of accurate ethnographical or anthropological treatises on Vodun[2] there are hundreds who feast morbidly on sensational books.

114 771

Haitian Vodun is not the same as the hoodoo of American Negroes.[3] The word is etymologically the same, whether American Voodoo, Haitian Vodun, French Vaudoux, or Spanish judu (whence our "hoodoo"): all derive from a Dahomean (West African) word signifying "god" or "spirit."[4] It is the generic term for all deities.

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1. This phrase is taken from W. B. Seabrook, *The Magic Island* (New York, 1929), p. 42, but might easily have come from half a dozen other journalistic descriptions. [114]

2. Particularly recommended are Melville J. Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley* (New York, 1937), and Dr. Jean Price-Mars, *Ainsi parla l'oncle* (Port-au-Prince, 1928). [173]

3. See Herskovits, *op. cit.*, pp. 139 ff.

4. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, in a surprisingly superficial and brief article, gives a singular etymology to "Voodoo," tracing it to the Swiss canton of Vaud, where in the Middle Ages a heterodox faith sprang up which had to be practiced in secret. The implication is that any secret religion might be called "Vaud-ois," or "Voodoo." Evidently the author of the encyclopaedia article had made no serious investigation of the subject; most modern dictionaries, on the other hand, indicate the Dahomean etymology. [192]

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114 This was recognized in colonial times by Moreau de Saint-Méry, who wrote: "According to the Arada Negroes, the real followers of *Vaudoux* in the colony, . . . *Vaudoux* signifies an all-powerful and supernatural being on whom depend all the events which come to pass on this earth."[5]

Vodun is a true religion, in the same sense that Mohammedanism, Buddhism, or Christianity are all true religions. That is to say, it is a set of beliefs and practices which claim to deal with the spiritual forces of the universe, and attempt to keep the individual in harmonious relation with them as they affect his life. The word "superstition" is relative. It is a subjective term, being generally applied to beliefs which we consider ourselves too wise, too advanced, to cling to. The sophisticated skeptic calls the belief in miracles superstition; the Christian regards the reverence for certain animals in India superstition: it is all a matter of view. Using the greatest number of criteria available for the definition of religion as distinct from vague superstition, religion may be said to be a set of beliefs about spirits or gods and their nature, about the origin of the world, about good and evil, about man's relation to the universe he knows; it includes a set of practices of worship; it is an attempt to ward off misfortune and to get good; it treats of what happens after death; it is a system of seeking security, solace, and support in the face of a supposed supernatural.[6]

Vodun is all of these.

Like any other vital religion which has spread from its original centre, endured through the years, and come into contact with other faiths, Vodun is not at the present what it was in its early days. Like others it has unconsciously borrowed—and in borrowing, transformed—ideas, concepts, practices, rites.[7] The greatest single influence exerted upon it has been that of the Roman Catholic Church with which the people have had continuous dealings, increasing in recent years, for more than a century and a half. Many aspects of

5. In his *Description . . . de la partie française de . . . Saint-Domingue*, I, 46.

6. This alliterative phrase was suggested as a partial definition of religion by Prof. Raymond Kennedy.

7. It need hardly be pointed out that Christianity is no longer the simple faith taught by Jesus, but a composite of that faith with scholarly theology, absorbed local practices, mysteries which flourished in the Roman Empire, secular philosophy—and, to put it briefly, the accretions of changing time. Similarly, Buddhism is more than the doctrines of Gautama, and Mohammedanism more (and less) than Mohammed taught.

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learn the properties of plants, both for healing and for poison. Except for the belief in spiritual beings, this folk knowledge would hardly have been classed as religious, for it was useful in every phase of daily life; the classification is that of the anthropologist, not of the simple black.

If Dahomean beliefs prevailed over others of African origin, it was chiefly because of the numerical preponderance of Dahomeans in the colony, together with the popularity of their religious dances. The Dahomean spirits or gods were Vodun; the dance in which the worshiper sought the inspiration of the spirits was a Vodun dance. Like all but the highly organized religions, this one recognized the validity of other beliefs. Its practitioners were not bigots. No hierarchy existed to keep out new accretions. Imperceptibly these were added to the original basic form: here an Arada spirit, there a Congolese prayer, and in many instances a Catholic saint, until the composite Vodun religion began to take shape.

There is no evidence that during colonial times Vodun was ever considered important by the white ruling class—certainly not as a faith. To most planters the word was the name for a vigorous dance. Judging from Moreau de Saint-Méry's description it was held openly enough, at times being witnessed by the whites as a sort of nocturnal diversion. Moreau knew, as did other whites, that there were "superstitious beliefs" connected with it, yet the offhand use of the word "superstition" was indication enough that the beliefs were not regarded as important. We have seen, however, what profitable use the slaves were able to make of the apparent innocence of their dances. When the idea of revolt began to germinate among them, gathering on each plantation at least once a week they had ample opportunity to hatch their plans. It is known that the campaign for revolt was developed partly under the stimulus of the Negro Boukman, a *houngan* or priest of Vodun. By means of drumbeats, which to the whites merely pounded out the rhythm for dancing but had for centuries been a means of communication at long distance in parts of West Africa, that ripening plot was telegraphed from one plantation to another. Even more important, perhaps, was the unity of feeling made possible, despite all incoherence of tradition and language, by the Vodun background.

The revolt of half a million slaves was a success. This fact has been rather too calmly accepted by historians of Saint-Domingue, who

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have explained it chiefly by the surprise element of the uprising. But when else in modern history have slaves successfully revolted against their armed masters and become permanently free? Successful revolutions even of people not in bodily slavery have had acknowledged leadership, whereas in Haiti no real leader appeared for the insurgents. Boukman's influence, indeed, at its widest never reached beyond a part of the northern plain; he had about the same range of power as a ward boss in the United States. On the plantations Hallaou, Hyacinthe, Lafortune, and others whose names are unimportant or unknown, Vodun houngans likewise welded slave opinion within their narrow districts. But no single great leader appeared. As the conflict was developed, without plan or unity under the divided and contradictory action of numerous blacks, what held the people together was, negatively, their hatred of the white masters; positively, their Vodun beliefs. Only later in the decade did a true leader, Toussaint L'Ouverture, emerge to consolidate their victory.

As often happens among unsophisticated people convinced of the rightness of their cause, the local Vodun leaders were sure of their own invulnerability through the protection of one or another of the spirits.[8] They convinced their followers as well, to such a degree that when an invulnerable chief fell there were dozens of reasons to explain the unexpected death rather than any disillusion. Usually, failure to follow the rigorous propitiation requirements of the protecting god offered the key to the misfortune. Various ones of them were known to be exacting and troublesome. The leader at Trou-Coffi, Romaine by name, had absorbed enough of the Roman Catholicism in Vodun to feel that the Virgin Mary was his especial patroness.[9] Beyond this specific belief in invulnerability was the general trust that Vodun spirits would lead their devotees to success, would give them a happy issue out of all their distress.

8. A parallel case of belief in invulnerability because of divine protection was that of the North American Indians both at the time of Tecumseh and later in the Sioux outbreaks at the climax of the Ghost-Dance Religion. See James Mooney, *The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890* (Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, 1892–93 [Washington, 1896]), chap. X.

9. The importance of Vodun beliefs in connection with the slave revolt is stressed by Dr. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Vodou et Névrose* (Port-au-Prince, 1931), pp. 33–34. He says of many of the chiefs: "The belief in their invulnerability was not at all the result of calculation, but was a true state of mind, a sort of autosuggestion which explains very well the chronic heroism of certain leaders of the revolution in Saint-Domingue and of the war of independence of 1802–3."

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Vodun, then, was both widespread and powerful enough to be turned to most effective ends in 1791. Contemporary accounts of it still saw it as a meeting ground of superstitions. The French naturalist, Descourtilz, for example, was primarily struck by the use of the occult in connection with Vodun; he especially describes a woman who, under the seizure of her god, took a live coal in her hand without being burnt; a husband who by the use of magic struck his inconstant wife with a languorous malady, effective for half a year; and the knowledge of poison which was combined with the practice of magic. He mentions but one of the Vodun gods by name but implies the existence of many others.[10]

Madiou, Haiti's first historian, likewise always spoke of Vodun as a savage survival; he says of a native general, "Lamour Dérance, plunged in gross errors, put his faith in *sorcery*, in the prophecy of *papas*, or priests of *African fetishism*."[11] In his scornful distaste for the vulgar he clearly indicated by his own italics some conspicuous elements of the developing religion: magic, the use of fetishes, and a Vodun priesthood. His illustration of Dérance's error was his making soldiers believe that bullets could not wound them:

> When he marched to combat he was preceded by bands of Congos, Aradas, Ibos, Nabos, Mandingues, Haoussas, who threw themselves against the French battalions with a prodigious intrepidity, crying that the bullets were but dust. But this courage which *superstition* fed was shattered against the ramparts of . . . the Europeans' square formations.

It is noteworthy that the first three black rulers set themselves against Vodun because of its potentialities for sedition. The plots to overthrow the old régime had come to fruition at apparently innocent Vodun dances. Although the ingenuous aspect of the dance gathering had deceived the white masters, Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe knew the meaning of the assemblies. All three had to drive their people hard and knew that resentment would be an inevitable consequence; it must not have an opportunity to burgeon at nightly gatherings. Toussaint was the strictest of the three, for he forbade all dances and nocturnal assemblage.[12] The other two singled

10. M. E. Descourtilz, *Voyages d'un naturaliste en Haïti, 1799–1803* (Paris, 1935 ed.), pp. 116–118.
11. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, p. 33.
12. In an order of January 4, 1800.

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The other two singled

175 out Vodun dances for their bans, permitting the purely social dances.
643 On the eve of the first anniversary of independence, "as soon as
794 retreat was sounded, African dances of all kinds began in the tents
796 and open fields; the Vaudoux dance alone was proscribed; the noise
671 of the drums did not quiet down until morning."[13] Dessalines was
659 more suspicious of Vodun than the other two for, being a superstitious man himself, he feared that some of his growing number of
798 enemies might use sorcery upon him; consequently whenever his
771 active police reported meetings of Vodun worshipers he had the offenders shot if they could be caught. Practically all Haitians knew how to distinguish the rhythms of Vodun drumbeats from those of other dances, so that it was not particularly difficult to track down the meeting places. What Christophe really believed, no one could say. He paid outward homage to Roman Catholicism, of course, but rumor persisted of his great faith in magic and the power of African fetishes.[14]

175 The élite mulatto presidents, Pétion and Boyer, did not deign to
643 dignify Vodun by prohibiting it. No revelation of their attitude
794 toward it survives, but we may note that no law of their thirty-six-
659 year tenure of the presidency mentions it. From their other opinions one concludes that they regarded it as merely another of the people's
798 innocent and harmless aberrations. Not one of the foreigners whose curiosity about the Negro republic led them to report on Haitian
796 life of this period gives an intelligent account of Vodun as it then
771 was. Macaulay, writing in 1831, for example, describes the annual
114 celebration at the source of Grande Rivière de l'Artibonite; he mentions the festive dances (not Vodun) and singing, then says: "Morning ceremonies consisted of a solemn sacrifice at which the blood of victims immolated for the feast were offered, and libations of wine were poured on the spring."[15] This was clearly a Vodun sacrifice. Brown, in 1837, writes as a religious man:

> No race is, more than the African, given to religious feelings, though these being but mere sensations entirely independent of thought and reason, manifest themselves in a display of idle fooleries, or dark and hideous terrors of the imagination. They intermix the legitimate ritual of the Catholic faith with the mysterious adoration paid to their national Fetishes, and the

13. Madiou, *op. cit.*, III, 186.
14. See Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti*, pp. 90–91.
15. Zachary Macaulay, *Haiti* (Paris, 1835), pp. 90–91.

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African obi and the Catholic priest both come in for a share of their respect and homage.[16]

This is the usual tone of the comment on native religion, as when Candler in 1842 speaks of funerals in country places "with the *rites of heathenism,* such as are practised to this day in the heart of Africa."[17] Of these conventional criticisms of Vodun, one of the more thoughtful is Bonneau's:

The shocking phantasmagorias of fetishism paralyzed the intellectual development of the African race for six thousand years; superstition is in some sort inherent in its nature. The [Haitian] people need to break with their past. Catholicism has been prodigiously patient and courageous, but it does not possess the necessary corrective for extirpating the fetishism which immobilizes the black population. The Catholic Church, by fractioning the religious sentiment, by forcing thought to diffuse itself in order to take in a thousand secondary details, by imposing on the people practices without number which tend to materialize the cult, by placing as intermediaries between God and men a multitude of saints and genies, encourages and fortifies the tendencies, even the most deplorable ones, of the black race, whose intellect has been shrouded in mist for centuries precisely because it can grasp only with difficulty the relationships between things and ideas, tending rather to lose itself in details than to rise to general and synthetic conceptions.[18]

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If the fixing of periods has any clarifying value, one might set the stages of the development of Vodun as follows:

1730–1790, its Emergence, when the importation of slaves was steadily increasing, with a gradual ascendancy of Dahomean ideas;

1790–1800, its practical Testing in the fires of revolt when, out of apparent innocence and enforced secrecy, Vodun effectively united the slaves in their action for freedom;

1800–1815, its Suppression under the black rulers;

1815–1850, its quiet Diffusion to all the people and assumption of the form it now exhibits.

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The middle of the nineteenth century was the turning point. Before then it had been so to speak in gestation; under Soulouque, then ruling, it publicly emerged. Until the mid-century élite people had

16. Dr. J. Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, II, 273.
17. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, p. 166.
18. A. Bonneau, *Haïti: ses progrès—son avenir*, pp. 24–25.

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for Vodun theology, nor any established order for the service, 771
variety is one of its chief characteristics. Impossible as it is to cite a definitive list of Vodun beliefs, those most generally held might be combined into a Creed, which would run about as follows:

I believe in scores of gods and spirits, guardians of earth and sky, and of all things visible and invisible;

I believe that all these vodun (who are called "loa" or "mystères") are potent, although less majestic than *le bon Dieu* of the Christians; that some of them came with our ancestors from our former home in Africa, while others we have learned about in our Haitian fatherland; that these loa have power to possess us, their worshipers, informing us by inspiration of their needs and desires, which we must faithfully satisfy; that these loa, like us, are capable of good and evil, gentleness and anger, mercy and revenge;

I believe in the efficacy of sacrifice; in the pleasures of living; in respect due to twins; in the careful cult of the dead, who may return to our abodes; in the spiritual causation of diseases and misfortune; in the dance through which we may be "mounted" by our loa; in the possibility of interfering with the normal flow of events by means of magic; in the efficacy of charms and spells; and in the Holy Catholic Church.

Those who conceive of religion in terms of a rigid orthodoxy, 771
monotheism, sin, a moral law, eternal rewards or punishments, will 177
not understand Haitian Vodun. It is as hospitable to new spiritual 776
conceptions as any faith could be, requiring only that the additions be applicable to life as it is lived in the Haitian hills and valleys, and that they adapt their shape and terminology to the native penchant. Monotheism is rarely the practical belief of simple people, but rather of prophets and scholars. It is easy enough to believe in an all-powerful god but much more difficult to arrive at a conception of a unique God. In Dahomey the people had reached some such stage of belief in omnipotence but not of uniqueness. When later, in slavery, transplanted Africans heard the Catholic doctrine of a god who ruled creation by the fiat of his conquering will, they assimilated the idea with a significant change: the Christian God became the Great Master of the other gods. The slaves very simply placed Him at the head of their pantheon. Even today, the first words of a Vodun [796]
service are the request for permission from the Great Master to go on 114
with the service. As Dorsainvil says: 178

This term chosen to designate the supreme God was imposed on them by 776
their environment. The colonist, the master, incarnated for the slave the

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highest idea of power and action. Logically, he could not conceive of the unique God of the Christians, by analogy and by inspiration, except in terms of the sentiment of fear mingled with the awe which the colonist inspired in him. Once this first step was taken, the rest was only the work of time. In the degree that the holy beings of Catholicism were unfolded to them, the creole Negroes everywhere identified these with the *vodun* (spirits) of the Dahomean cult.[19]

The Christian God could not stop the "deifying" process, for Vodun must have simple spiritual explanations for daily occurrences. How could a god who ruled the earth clutter his mind with such small details as the mango crop or one's private aches? There was room of necessity for more, and lesser, gods.

Orthodoxy and monotheism, then, are alien to Vodun; so likewise are the notions of sin and a moral law. These also are refined ideas. The Catholic priests do their best to instill into the minds of the people the Church doctrine on these points, but gluttony, envy, sloth, and other deadly sins are not easy to explain to a people whose worldly goods are pitifully few, whose bellies are never full, and who must work hard to live at all. Just how the simple Haitian interprets the fulminations of the fathers against sin a foreigner can hardly tell, and the priests are not at liberty to reveal the secrets of the confessional.[20] A peasant loves life. His pleasures are simple enough, partly because he lacks money for expensive ones. Puritanical self-searching is alien to the normal Haitian. The touchstone is infallible: so long as life moves along smoothly one need not worry; if misfortune comes, one of the spirits is angry or out of sorts and his worshipers must propitiate him. What spirit could mind a man's dancing, drinking clairin, watching a cockfight, or otherwise indulging himself?

Vodun does not conceive life to be a struggle between good and evil. Its conception of spirits is anthropomorphic. No man is wholly good or wholly evil, nor is any god; human beings can generally be persuaded into any mood, and so can the gods; as there is variety in human personality, so likewise the gods are not immutable. Some are more to be feared than others, some may be regarded with tender affection, but all are capable of working both weal and woe.

19. Dorsainvil, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

20. A priest once told me that a young Haitian girl in sorrow confessed, as her most heinous sin, that she had given food to a dog. Apparently her idea was that food was too precious to be given away to animals; hence she had sinned.

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A gentle spirit may cause great harm to a person who neglects his commands, while a spirit whose power makes possible the most malignant magic may bring good fortune to his devotee. By conceiving his spirits as in manner and desires resembling himself, the Haitian can understand his little universe without subjecting himself to the bewilderment which faces a simple Christian trying to reconcile an all-loving Father with the obvious evil He allows on earth. 771 776

One must approach Vodun without the religious preconceptions of Christianity or Judaism. Suspending our notions of orthodoxy, monotheism, sin, heaven, and hell, we may examine more closely the creed suggested above, in an endeavor to round out its real meaning to the Haitian.

"I believe in gods and spirits . . ." The white man would recognize most easily among the Haitian's multiple gods the God of Christianity whom every Vodun worshiper confesses. It is this God who is meant in the homely expression of native acceptance of one's lot: "*Bon Dieu bon*"—the good God is really good, however remote. Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are likewise acknowledged, although it seems probable that they do not touch the hearts of people as much as the Great Master. The Blessed Virgin, on the other hand, is very real and near—so real, in fact, that she is sometimes actually merged with a spirit of African origin who has many of the Virgin's storied characteristics. Certain angels and a select group of Christian saints have made a special appeal and so found their niche in Vodun; others are not denied but merely ignored because the Haitian is not well acquainted with them.

To the spirits (one hesitates to use such misleading words as "gods" or "divinities") not drawn from Christianity the name "loa" is applied. There seem in general to be two classes of these: those who have an African origin, and those with a Haitian background only. The former group is called "Rada," the latter "Pétro." The word Rada is derived from the principality of Allada in Dahomey, and would seem thus to indicate that all the Rada loa were Dahomean; this, however, is definitely not the case. Numerous loa can be traced to the Congo region and others to the smaller West African districts, yet all of these are indiscriminately called Rada. In current usage, accordingly, the word has lost its strict geographical significance. The term Pétro is explained in an illuminating paragraph by the Haitian savant, Dr. Dorsainvil: 776 174 192 [192 114]

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114 The common people of Haiti are continually creating [his phrase is much more revealing: "en gestation de"] *loa*, or new Vodoun "saints." Popular 196 tradition, long before independence, refers to a certain Don Pédro, a being 174 of flesh and blood who from the Spanish end of the island had come at a 776 certain period to live in the mountains of the commune of Petit-Goâve. This Don Pédro was the man who introduced into Haiti that violent dance which, by corruption, the people call "the pétro." Upon his death, Don Pédro came to occupy an honorable place in the Vodoun pantheon, bringing in his train a whole group of progeny, such as Jean-Philippe Pétro, Criminel Pétro, etc.[21]

174 As might be logically deduced, certain powerful ancestors become 776 deified as Pétro loa.

It would require field trips into every district of Haiti to compile a 184 full list of the various loa who receive homage from Haitians; some 776 appear to have only a local following, others are honored over a wide district, and a few are reverenced throughout the country. If Vodun ever reached the stage of founding a seminary of sacred theology—a highly improbable event—one of its most imperative functions would be the collection, classification, and explanation of the attributes of the hundreds of loa, specifying whether they are Haitian or African in origin, Pétro or Rada, powerful or complaisant, inclined prevailingly to benevolence or to malice. Lacking such a proper catalogue, it will suffice to mention only the most commonly accepted figures. In reflecting upon the characteristics of these gods, the well-informed reader will be struck by the numerous parallels to divinities of other faiths so remote that Haitians could not possibly have known of them; similar emotional needs seem to produce similar deities to satisfy them.[22]

776 Legba is the name of the loa most frequently invoked, not because he is the most powerful, but because he is the interlocutor between man and his gods. Before any ceremony may begin, Legba is addressed: "*Papa Legba, ouvri barrière pour nous.*" If he is not first worshiped, the other deities may not come to possess the people. Legba guards every door and gate, every highway and crossroads. He is still an important god in modern Dahomey, where his attributes are much the same as in Haiti. The people feel no necessity of

21. Dornainvil, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
22. Classical anthropologists might have called this phenomenon "parallelism"; the word is accurate enough if only similarity, not identity, be understood.

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787 The language of possession is descriptive. When a god seizes a man, he "mounts" him; the possessed person forthwith becomes the god's "horse." The words are accurate, for the god seems to have as much control over his mount as a human rider would have over a horse whose will he dominates. The person mounted does nothing of his own accord while he is possessed. Under the invisible whip of the spirit-rider the "horse" does a great many things, and says even more, that would be unnatural or even impossible to him, unridden.[26]

Possession is more than the affair of a moment. In this respect it differs again from kindred seizures known to whites. A person may have to wait for many years before he is finally mounted, but the first loa who descends upon him is the chief of his deities, taking precedence over any other who might subsequently possess him. The initial seizure is a vitally important experience, corresponding roughly to the conversion or confirmation of persons in other religions. The subject is carefully observed by experts, so that no mistake will be made in the deductions from actions and speech as to the identity of the god. This loa is baptized by sprinkling water on the head of the possessed person. Thereafter the loa is called "*mait' tête*," as a recognition of the subservience of his mount: any agreement the devotee might make with another loa under a particular possession would have to conform to the initial agreement with the mait' tête. At a man's death the loa, which has, like more than a guardian angel, accompanied him through life, is taken from his head so that the man's soul may go to God—the Christian God.[27]

The possessing god may be either male or female. It frequently happens that a male loa mounts a female devotee, in which case she is addressed by a male name, wears male clothes, eats and drinks the things her loa prefers (no matter how distasteful to her ordinarily), and otherwise manifests his characteristics. This extraordinary change of personality is accepted naturally enough by the other participants in the rites, although the transformation is to foreigners a psychological phenomenon of prime interest. Dr. Dorsainvil devotes a book to the neuroses connected with possession; as he says: "One of the first consequences of the Vodoun crisis is the substitution for the

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26. Zora Neale Hurston, in her gaily written *Tell My Horse* (Philadelphia, 1938), has a vivid chapter on the possession effected by the distinctly Haitian loa, Guédé. She entitles this chapter in Créole: "*Parley cheval m*" (Tell my horse)—the words with which the loa begins to dictate through the mouth of his mount. See pp. 232–250.

27. See Herskovits, *op. cit.*, pp. 146–152.

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normal personality of the subject a second, accidental personality which, except in the cases of conscious simulation, introduces real modifications in the ordinary state of being of the possessed person."[28] The phrase is noteworthy: "except in the cases of conscious simulation." Since the possessing loa frees his mount of his normal personality, certain persons at times try to pretend that they have been mounted in order to gain a desired end, which may be amatory, vindictive, or whatever. The people, however, are well acquainted with the normal penchants of everyone in the community; when they have their doubts about the authenticity of a seizure, they can easily by teasing words arouse the pretender's quite normal anger, by ingenious movements call forth an everyday response and so make the "mount" betray his ruse.

Since the main emphasis of this chapter is upon the religious, not the psychological, aspects of possession, no more than a passing reference can be made to the absorbing question of the normality of seizure. Two facts are important: it is confidently expected that possession will occur at every significant service; and it is known beforehand that not every worshiper will be subject to it. Some of the people seem to be definitely incapable of intense religious feeling or expression, others react almost immediately with overwhelming emotion, still a third group senses the mystery but cannot take the final step of inspiration.

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Dr. Dorsainvil, a physician and historian, considering the recognized capabilities and limitations of Vodun worshipers with regard to seizure, maintains that possession is a species of neurosis, resulting in part from the historical tradition which makes seizure respectable and desirable and in part from the inheritance of neurotic tendencies in families. Professor Herskovits, an anthropologist and ethnographer, avers on the contrary that possession is, in terms of the patterns of Haitian religion, not abnormal but normal. He would stress the first of the two facts above: seizures occur at all important services. He does not deny the release afforded from psychic tension by yielding to possession; also he grants that the seizure might secure for a man the fulfillment of his suppressed desires for material goods or physical satisfactions. What impresses him, however, is the rules which rigidly govern possession. Gods are permitted to come only to members of the family giving the rite—that is, if the loa are under

28. Dorsainvil, op. cit., p. 115.

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proper control, as they should be. If an unwanted god persists in mounting an individual, the pertinacious one is commanded to go away or the victim himself is sent home until he can recover his own personality. Many people strongly resist possession when it is imminent. Judged by our own standards, possession of the Vodun variety could certainly not be called normal; judged by Haitian standards, however, it would be absurd to call abnormal an experience known and approved by the majority of the community.[29]

Possession occurs either at the service or at the dance. Here again the white man has nothing in his religious experience to enable him to comprehend the pattern of Haitian religion. The service corresponds nearly enough to the Catholic Mass or to more realistic sacrifices in ancient Jewish rites, but neither of these faiths nor any other the white man knows well has dancing for religion's sake. In Vodun, however, the dance is of equal importance with the service.

In the tiny *houmfort* (also spelled *hounfort*) of the priest, which is little more than a hut with earthen floor, the service begins. To call this structure a temple is at once to make it too imposing and to confuse the white man in his attempt to understand the scene; it is no more of a temple than was a tiny primitive early Christian church. Most houmforts in Haiti would be crowded if twenty people were present. At one end is an altar, more or less resembling the high altar in a Catholic chapel; on it are placed a crucifix, flowers, candles, fruit and food, wine, lithographs of Catholic saints, and whatever other objects, Catholic or Vodun, local practice may dictate and individual taste prefer. Upon the floor are traced formal cabalistic patterns, generally in corn meal, both to fend off evil influences and as required by the particular loa. The officiants may be male or female or both. To the service ordinarily come only the members of the family and their specifically invited guests; neighbors and friends will attend the subsequent dance.

A student of Catholicism would find in the first part of the service a great deal of ritual borrowed from the Church. The blessing, genuflections, making the sign of the cross, responses, and the like, all clearly show a Catholic background which accords well with certain objects upon the altar. Imperceptibly the strictly Vodun element obtrudes itself. The loa are asked whether they will accept

29. The statement of the two sides of this controversy may be found in Dorsainvil, *op. cit.*, throughout; and in Herskovits, *op. cit.*, particularly pp. 146–147.

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and set apart on special plates in a separate room for them; in the afternoon the family eats the food. If the twins to whom homage is being offered are still alive, they must wear special clothes at the sacrifice.

"I believe in the careful cult of the dead . . ." Once more it is necessary to renew one's acquaintance with primitive and folk belief to grasp the Haitian attitude. Life is desirable, death is dreaded; both death and the dead are feared. In the actual world, any excursion from the comfortably familiar countryside of one's home leads to confusion and bewilderment. Except in the company of his fellows (on a religious pilgrimage to the waterfalls at Ville-Bonheur, for example), a Haitian almost never leaves his valley or mountainside and market town. Sophisticated people view the unknown with pleasurable excitement, for they have learned by experience that the unfamiliar is not necessarily frightful; it is quite the contrary with simple folk, whose meagre experience with the unfamiliar has been at least somewhat alarming.

Death is the ultimate unknown. The fearsomeness the imagination conceives to lie beyond death seems to exist in almost direct proportion to people's ignorance of the material world. The fear of ghosts is a commonplace among primitive folk, as among the uneducated in the "civilized" world. Where ghosts are considered powerful, one part of any comprehensive cult will certainly deal with the dead.

In Haitian Vodun the teachings of the Catholic Church have exerted more influence upon the cult of the dead than upon any other part of the religion. The preparation of the corpse for burial shows no traces of African practice; the watch (or wake) and wailing over the deceased is familiar; the funeral itself is conducted by a Catholic priest, with burial in consecrated ground. Thereafter, the continual efforts to secure the tranquil repose of the departed bear the earmarks of faithful Catholic practice; it is at this point, however, that the cult begins to assume distinctive features, for it is firmly believed that the dead exert tremendous power in the world of the living. This power comes from God—the Christian God. The case has been put succinctly by Sumner and Keller: "The relation between man and ghost resolves itself . . . into a relation of rights and duties, with all the rights on one side and all the duties on the other."[30] God gives

30. W. G. Sumner and A. G. Keller, *The Science of Society* (New Haven, 1927), II, 829.

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114 776 769 the dead a right to whatever their survivors possess, and moreover gives them the right to return to earth as ghosts.[31]

769 765 775 782 Strict rules of mourning prevail, both as regards clothing and behavior. The slightest lapse in the observation of these rules would cause resentment on the part of the dead; fear of retribution would be quite enough to ensure conformity even if public opinion did not. Ghosts have the power to possess mortals, not as the loa do at a Vodun service or dance, but in the manner understood by American Negroes who say they have been "ha'nted," and so, continually thinking of the dead, live in nervous fear of a streak of bad luck. Such possession is a form of persecution, with continual consequent bad luck until the survivor has carried out all his obligations. It is especially significant, however, that a departed spirit takes vengeance only in matters thought by the Haitian to concern the Church. The ghost is not whimsical in his possession of mortals, and cannot resent treatment which is his due. The kind of treatment given a corpse depends upon the kind of death he died: a person struck by lightning, for example, would have no ceremonies at all, for lightning is an act of God.

787 775 789 Where the cult of the dead departs entirely from the teachings of the Church is in the matter of magic, a topic shortly to be treated. It may be briefly stated here that ghosts can be summoned back by special adepts for purposes of divination; that certain corpses are thought to be revivified by evil persons who use these soulless, pathetic automata as slaves (these are the notorious *zombis*); and that black magic—that is, powerful influence for evil—can be worked by sorcerers who know how to command ghosts.

771 798 All other articles of the Vodun creed not already discussed, except one, come under the heading of magic. That exception is the statement: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." The fact is as simple as the affirmation. If the Catholic priests fight Vodun, preaching frequently against its beliefs and practices, that is unfortunate, think the peasants: Vodun does not retaliate by fighting Catholicism. God and the saints have their province, and the loa theirs. The mind of the Haitian is simple enough to accept both sets of spiritual beings, and not philosophical enough to worry over the contradiction. Practically every Vodun worshiper thinks of himself as a Catholic.[32]

31. See Herskovits, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

32. In this sketch of the Vodun creed, it has been constantly emphasized that each locality has its own variations both in belief and practice. The reader who is interested in pursuing the subject further should consult the works of Price-Mars, Herskovits, Dorsainvil, Parsons, Hurston, et al. See Bibliography.

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generally believed that the compact always results fatally for the man 754
who makes it, why anyone should enter into such an engagement. 776
Craving for money or some other immediate form of power, however, bedims the reason; in the face of all-consuming desire, more than one man has been willing to ignore future pain for present reward.

It would be possible to conjure up a whole phantasmagoria of 789
weird belief in connection with magic, although this would be unjust to the character of the Haitians. These people have their share of dire concepts, but no more than might be expected of a simple folk. One final magical belief must be treated, however, for it has reached the ears of the outside world in grim detail. This is the belief [114] [192]
in the *zombi*. The word, as Faine explains, comes from the Bonda language of Africa (*zumbi* there), and was probably transmitted to Haiti by Portuguese slave traders. Faine continues:

Zombi . . . designates in general a revenant, a phantom, an otherworldly 114
spirit. In popular belief, certain sorcerers have the power, by means of 754
charms and spells, to cause apparent death to individuals and then to bring them back to life again, even after they have been buried. These resuscitated persons, only half-conscious, are then, isolated in distant parts of the country, utilized for field work. Nourished on food from which salt is rigorously excluded, they are thought to be able to regain their natural senses and all their mental faculties if they taste the least grain of this substance. Such legends, circumstantially garbed and presented as actual facts by certain unscrupulous authors, have served as the theme of books which have made a great commotion in foreign countries. Taking advantage of the credulity of a public avid for exotic matters, for mysteries, for the supernatural, these writers have gained, in certain cases, the greatest success of publicity.[38]

Three attitudes are taken in regard to the zombi. There are skep- 754
tics who deny the existence of zombis altogether, setting down as fable most of the ideas current about them, and as mistaken diagnosis all the remainder. There are the credulous (including practically every peasant) who believe in and quite directly fear this potential fate. And there are those who believe that certain bocors know how to administer a subtle poison to intended victims which will cause suspended animation and give the appearance of death. Men in the prime of life suddenly sicken and die for no apparent reason. Once these pseudo-corpses are safely buried, the sinister person who has

38. *Ibid.*, p. 303.

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754 arranged the "death" will hasten to the graveyard and dig up the body; giving the proper antidote to the poison, he restores the body to activity but the mind only to semiconsciousness. In this subnormal state the victim is taken off to some remote valley where, in company with other zombis, he is made to work as a slave. Physical strength is there, but no mind with which to rebel, to ask for pay, to recognize the full extent of his sorry state.[39]

● 114 754 Zora Neale Hurston is the only foreigner who states that she has definitely seen a zombi. In her book, *Tell My Horse,* she describes the woman who had been a zombi and includes a picture of her.[40] The reader cannot suppress a query as to whether the supposed zombi might not have suffered simply from a special kind of insanity. Miss Hurston tells very graphically the peasant tales of "dead" persons made into zombis: of parents, husbands, and wives who have seen and clung to their recent relatives without the slightest responding sign of recognition, of men who are known to have zombis in their employ.

754 766 When a person has died a sudden death without apparent cause, a houngan will very likely be called to try to discover the malefactor, although it is not believed that he will be able to bring back to life the "dead" person. In cases where sudden death is regarded as suspicious, the survivors often see to it that the apparent corpse becomes a real one by plunging a knife into the heart or by cutting out some vital part, in order to spare the corpse the degradation of a zombi's slavery. Or families lacking the courage to mutilate a corpse will watch at the grave until it is certain that the body has begun to putrefy and real death has succeeded to the simulation. Once actual death has come, of course, the malefactor is thwarted and prevented from capitalizing on his evil work.

754 In a mental atmosphere of credulity, coincidence often makes magic seem to work. Belief gives power to the charm or rite. A person aware that a spell is cast upon him will sicken and die because he believes so firmly in the efficacy of the magic. A curse will be

[114] 39. In support of this theory of a poison which produces stupor, Seabrook, *op. cit.*, p. 335, cites the French text of the Code Pénal, Article 249, as follows: "*Est aussi qualifié attentat à la vie d'une personne, l'emploi qui sera fait contre elle de substances qui, sans donner la mort, produisent un effet léthargique plus ou moins prolongé, de quelque manière que ces substances aient administrés, quelles qu'en aient été les suites. Si par suite de cet état léthargique la personne a été inhumée, l'attentat sera qualifié assassinat.*"

40. Pp. 189–209.

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The truth is, marriage and moral conditions differ from economic and political conditions in that they are not so immediate and pressing in their effect upon individual lives. If these are not attended to today, tomorrow will find our bellies empty and our state overrun by enemies. But sex relations go on willy-nilly, and children are born into families: there will still be marriage and a moral problem to attend to when order has been brought into practical affairs. Toussaint was involved in a diplomatic battle in which the participants were the best minds of France, England, and the United States. Beside these mighty problems upon which depended the economic and political future of his people, the question of a standard of sex conduct was definitely secondary.

So it must have seemed to Dessalines, the founder of the state and first "law-giver" of Haiti. By his official actions it is evident that the economy of the country was his primary concern, with defense against a return of the French a close second. In his pronouncements he bowed respectfully to religion and then postponed action until some more convenient season. He pronounced likewise some very proper sentiments on marriage and morals, calling attention to the benefits of wedlock, piously deprecating sensuality and voluptuousness. His imperial constitution of 1805 encouraged lawful unions, treating marriage as a socially virtuous state to be cultivated.

This was all words, however, and came strangely from the black general who was, as everyone knew, a notorious libertine. He lectured his people on the danger of yielding to their passions, yet showed no intention of controlling his own impulses or those of his favorites. He was, indeed, the last man in Haiti to make a gesture toward sexual morality among the people, for although he was married his daily life was a complete negation of moral precept. In every town he habitually visited he established mistresses, bestowing large sums of money upon them. He employed every sort of seduction, honor, and gift to conquer the virtue of females who valued their "respectability." Actually, he did not often need to use violence, for the prevailing moral tone was not so high but that most young and attractive women would yield to their Emperor.

The sternly upright Haitian historian, Madiou, has a formidable paragraph on the vices of Dessalines. He tries partially to excuse him on the grounds of his fury at discovering conspiracies against his authority among his colored lieutenants, asserting that his early gen-

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erosity and equity now gave way to malevolence and personal license: 114

Putting no restraint upon his passions, he travelled about, followed by actors, dancers, musicians, and courtesans. An indefatigable dancer, as soon as he arrived in a place he gave a ball. Under Toussaint Louverture, in order to please the Governor-General everyone approached the holy altar; under Dessalines one gained glory by dancing well. The Emperor, giving himself up to scandalous pleasures, forgot that he was head of the state. The greatest immorality reigned about him. With a gaiety sometimes grotesque, he told the ladies who frequented his court how much he admired their beauty, no matter how ugly they actually were. Following his example, his major officers of state kept concubines in every town in the empire. . . . When the emperor entered a town, the honest women were gravely disturbed, for their virtue was menaced not only by him but also by his officers of state. Many mothers kept their daughters shut up to keep them from the notice of those who were powerful enough to take them, with impunity, by violence.[3]

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Marriage, then, looked at from the standards of any white Western country, was in a sorry state in Haiti. Continued warfare had broken up many even of the families which, though unrecognized by the white planters, had nevertheless been formed during slavery; and the camp life of soldiers roaming the countryside confirmed the casual attitude of the people toward sex. Every ex-slave was a hero, and liberty was sweet. Under Dessalines it was scarcely wise for a prominent man to marry an attractive wife, the Emperor might so soon set himself to seduce her. Above all, there was no tradition of formal marriage. This was the chief factor to bear upon future marriage and sexual customs of the Haitians; and in appraising them is the paramount fact to keep in mind.

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Meanwhile, children were being born. Their mothers were known, but often the fathers were not, for the vast majority of infants were born out of wedlock. Dessalines, a realist except in matters which touched his vanity, saw the necessity of establishing a status for these children, not on grounds of morality but for economic expediency, to avoid future disputes over inheritance. French precedent did not serve his need, for according to French law an illegitimate child may not inherit: a parent in France is not free to leave his property as he will, but must pass it on to his legitimate heirs.

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3. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 239.

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it seems not radically to have affected the masses but only the fairly well-to-do.

The *Royal Almanac* for the year 1814 touches proudly upon the moral state of the kingdom. The author of the almanac, the Comte de la Limonade, says: "Great attention is paid to morals and manners. Marriage is honored, protected, and encouraged; no Haitian who is unmarried can fill any place of distinction. Divorce is not permitted." All this was true; yet the mass of Haitians still remained unmarried. Nevertheless, the quotation indicates the extent to which Christophe had gone in his effort to reform marriage and morals among his people; to set them in the European tradition and draw them out of their African and colonial backgrounds.

While Christophe was trying to effect reforms in the North, Pétion was accepting his Southern folk as they were. Hardly a law during his twelve-year administration touches the subject of marriage. The élite colored people continued to make proper legal marriages and so insure the inheritance of their legitimate children. The common folk lived their family lives without weddings, and if property questions arose, custom ruled, backed by public opinion in their little communities.

Such are the backgrounds out of which modern Haitian sex relations have developed. From African tradition came family life, the importance of property to stabilize a union, insignificance of a wedding ceremony, familiarity with matrilineal kinship and descent; from French colonial practice, formal marriage to establish a family with social ambition, casual sex relations for pleasure outside this marriage, the claim of legitimate children to all property (in contrast to folk custom, where few legitimate children were born); from Dessalines, an emphasis upon the African tradition and realism; from Christophe, an insistence upon strict French practice in marriage and in the passage of property.

From among these alternatives Haiti made a choice which is an excellent example of what Keller calls "automatic selection in the mores."[7] There was no congress to select one procedure rather than another. Because Pétion and Boyer followed a *laissez-faire* policy in social matters, the people took the path of least resistance.

7. A. G. Keller, *Societal Evolution* (revised ed., New York, 1931), chaps. IV and V.

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581 wedding to consecrate their state. These unions might be called
565 (after Anglo-Saxon usage) common-law marriages. Many such
588 couples have, late in life, gone through the wedding ceremony at the insistence of children aspiring to social prestige.

175 Haitian writers have frequently felt it necessary to explain and justify to the outside world the practice of plaçage. Thus Saint-Rémy
114 in 1857 wrote: "*Plaçage*, or primitive marriage, is still one of the
581 Haitian customs. It requires no civil or religious formality. I must
588 confess that some of these unions are more respectable than those
565 sanctified by civil and religious law."[1] Dantès Bellegarde in 1934 implied (erroneously) that the practice had always been one limited primarily to peasants. He said:

> Haitians have been accused of immorality because they practice free unions. This reproach is unjust. Concubinage is without doubt the rule among the people [that is, the peasants and workmen]; but it constitutes a sort of *connubium injustum* (unlegal marriage) which, in many cases, has nothing immoral about it, certain "plaçages" having more solidity and seriousness than a large number of regular marriages. In order to understand the existence of this custom and its persistence in the lower classes of Haitian society, one must go back to the colonial epoch: the whites kept
> [162] numerous concubines, white women being few in Saint-Domingue. (The white population of Saint-Domingue was composed in 1789 of 30,826 souls, of whom 21,166 were men and 9,660 women—not counting soldiers and sailors.) On the other hand, the Negroes did not marry each other, because they did not care at all to have wives whom the master might "abuse," to use the word of Père du Tertre; moreover, masters did not require their slaves to be married: they mated them with a view to obtaining fine "products."
>
> Concubinage tends to disappear among us, or at least to become more discreet. In the cultivated class people generally marry, and the girls in most modest condition—having passed through the primary schools—resign themselves willingly today to the diversion of their unused affections to cats and other domestic animals if no one offers to lead such girls to the altar.[2]

175 Nineteenth-century visitors were generally shocked by plaçage,
581 just as middle-class people are usually shocked by sex ways which
588 seem franker than their own. That the Haitian practice was a practical one, based upon a desire to preserve property intact within the

1. *Pétion et Haïti*, V, 66 note.
2. *Un Haïtien parle* (Port-au-Prince, 1934), pp. 30–31.

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175 family and to make only "sensible" marriages, was a fact rarely
581 glimpsed by the critics. A good example of their attitude is the state-
588 ment of the pious English Quaker, John Candler, in 1842:

[114] But few of the merchants or principal inhabitants are married men: concubinage is common, and unhappily, regarded as not dishonorable. Whenever a ball is given, or a large party invited, the invitation is equally extended to "Monsieur and Madame ——" or to "Monsieur —— and his lady"; and by this compounding of moral distinctions among the upper classes, the evil descends to the lower ranks and becomes perpetuated.[3]

[867] And later Candler accuses Haitian mothers of being "utterly dead to all moral considerations," because they do not take pains to instill (middle-class English) ideals of morality, or teach the young the evils of "wayward passion."

175 Not even Haitian authors were willing to accept plaçage as a
114 desirable practice. Beaubrun Ardouin explained that the color preju-
581 dice of colonial times was responsible for what he clearly considered
588 an evil.[4] "The aristocracy of skin" made plaçage prevail over "divine
562 law," for whites would not often in colonial times marry colored women. The same prejudice in the republic kept light-colored men from marrying darker women, but not from living with them. Ardouin believed that Haiti would gain infinitely by adopting "*les bonnes moeurs*," not on moral grounds, but for practical reasons. With regular marriage, he says, there would result a greater fixity of the conjugal state and more confidence on the part of the women, "who too often discover that they are only the satisfaction of a whim"; also the men would reflect more upon the consequence of an infidelity which, in dividing families, might separate children from father or mother and so greatly weaken the delicate relations of paternal love and filial piety. Still another consideration was political: the dispersion which resulted in the inheritance of property when many mothers and children compete. Because of plaçage unions, quite a number of estates had been reduced to almost nothing.

175 As the century progressed, the custom of plaçage prevailed from
581 the President down to the humblest peasant. The women of the
588 President were visited publicly by him; sometimes he was accom-
643 panied on his visits by a staff or selected officers of state. The critical

3. *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 24, 25.
4. *La Géographie de l'Ile d'Haïti*, pp. 181, 96 ff.

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175 Englishman, Sir Spenser St. John, said that he had met placées of the
581 President at dinner, and was asked to trace resemblances between
588 children and their reported father. "No one seeks to conceal it, and
643 the conversation of married ladies continually turns on this subject. One excuse for it is that many of the ladies whom you meet in society were only married after the birth of their first children. However, according to French law, that ceremony renders them all legitimate. Some of those admitted into society are not married at all, but their daughters being married, prevents notice being taken of the false position of the mother."[5]

565 In recent years the élite, although many continue to contract
581 plaçage unions, keep these arrangements quieter than formerly and tend to make them with women lower in the social scale than themselves. Formal and regular marriage is expected and approved among the upper classes of today. Indeed, one modern informant in answer to the question, "What is the primary test of membership among the élite?" replied without hesitation, "Five generations of marriage in the family."[6]

583 Formal marriage is not entered into lightly among the upper
565 classes. It is a serious business watched over by state, family, and church. The interest of the state seems to be to guard against bigamy. The possibility of bigamy is the more likely since one or the other contracting party may have formerly lived in plaçage. The interest of the family is in the wisdom of the alliance. Before a wedding can be performed both parties must have obtained the formal consent of their parents, besides having their banns published at their respective places of permanent residence. There seems to be some doubt whether the courts would uphold a father in his refusal to consent to the marriage of a son over twenty-one years old; but cases are known in which such a refusal has stopped the wedding. Of course, the daughters must always obtain parental consent to marry.

585 The civil wedding, adopted in Haiti at the beginning of her independence, is usually followed by a religious ceremony. The Church, like the State, takes precautions against clandestine marriages and bigamy. Notice of a projected union must be read from the pulpit

[114] 5. *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, I, 177–178.

[581] 6. John Lobb, in "Caste and Class in Haiti" (*American Journal of Sociology*, XLVI, No. 1 [July, 1940], 29), states that "one informant defined family status as a position resulting from the recognition that in a family the parents had, for generations, been legally married in the church."
[554]

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[p. 193]

XI

DOMESTIC LIFE OF THE PEASANTS

HAITI apparently has more women than men. This is not merely the casual impression of visitors, but a general conviction among local scholars and priests who know the country intimately. There is no census, of course, so that an investigator lacks means of confirming an unusual biological situation in which, it is said, there are five women to four men, in which many more girls than boys are born, and in which the death rate is higher for females than for males.

During slavery, more men than women were imported into the colony, but the slaughters of the insurrection and the revolution more than balanced the two sexes. The colonial census of 1790, probably inaccurate, showed 452,000 blacks and 28,000 affranchis who had some degree of Negro blood; a census of 1805, which certainly could not have been more than an estimate based on reports of plantation overseers and army officers, reported only 380,000 Haitians. This would indicate a staggering loss of 100,000 within fifteen years. Even with a reasonable juggling of the figures, it is obvious that deaths increased during the troubled years, and obviously males rather than females met their death on battlefields. Commentators on Haiti under Dessalines already speak of the preponderance of women. Other writers during the nineteenth century expressed the opinion that women outnumbered men, but the only figures offered were those in one parish for 1821–26—possibly atypical even if the figures are accurate—showing that 1,305 girls were born as compared with 1,209 boys.[1]

Certain physicians whose practice takes them into country districts and also certain priests have stated their belief that the number of females born exceeds the number of males. Although these men are in a good position to judge, the statement remains an opinion not yet validated by statistics; if it should prove true, it would be an extraordinary biological freak.[2] Another observation must be set

1. These are the figures of Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti*, II, 118.

2. One physician thinks that the rate would be as high as five girls to three boys in a few parishes; and a priest recounts his experiences in baptizing girls named "Assez-filles" (Girls-enough), so called by their parents to indicate to deity that the next child should by rights be a boy. Professional observations such as these merely corroborate the general opinion as to the excess of females in the population.

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have been gathered from trees which grew wild. Both men and women labor, with the work divided according to regular custom between the sexes, the men dominating the scene only in the marketing of coffee.

Nature was opulent enough at the beginning of Haitian independence. The wars had ruined irrigation ditches, sugar refineries, and mechanical equipment, but the soil was still abundantly fertile. But generations of farming by people without knowledge of fertilization or soil conservation have worn out much of the land. Trees have been cut to provide lumber and clearings for more farms; in the rainy seasons torrents have coursed down the mountainsides, washing away soil and exposing the earth to the rays of a tropical sun. Because the country is overpopulated every available acre is put to use, and to overuse, thus still more depleting the land. It is a vicious circle, for the next generation must extract yet more from the earth and so weaken it further. Hard work is the lot of the peasant, therefore, during every month of the year except the dry season. There has never been a formal rotation of crops: a farmer continues to plant the same crop in the same field until the harvest is perceptibly smaller than before. Then he changes to another type of produce. Sooner or later he will allow the land to lie fallow for several years until, by the action of nature or the grazing over it of cattle, it has regained a measure of its fertility.

The strenuous work of clearing fields and preparing them for cultivation is man's job. Since the peasants owned their plots it has almost always been done in coöperation by the men of the neighborhood. What on the American frontier would have been called a "bee" is known in Haiti as a *coumbite*, or *combite*, often carried on as an enterprise of the local *Société Congo*, the informal neighborhood group for mutual aid and fellowship.[6]

A man who has a large job on hand announces a coumbite for any day except Sunday, always a day of rest, and whatever other week-

6. The word "coumbite" was apparently borrowed from the Spanish part of the island, and from the Spanish word *convidar*, convey. In Colombia "convite" means exactly what "coumbite" means in Haiti: a gathering of peasants to work in common, or else a coöperative society for mutual agricultural self-help.

Professor Herskovits (*Life in a Haitian Valley*, chap. IV) describes the Société Congo in detail. The use of the name "Congo" indicates the African tradition, and is particularly noteworthy in connection with a kind of coöperative work which Herskovits finds particularly Dahomean.

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476 241 574 [527] day local practice dedicates to work in one's own fields—generally Monday or Tuesday. The prospect of working with one's fellows, of a midday feast with plentiful drink, of singing, talking, and hearing the news, is enough to induce most of the neighbors to come, even though the work will be hard. As with American log-rollings and house-raisings, there is a practical reason for accepting the invitation: by participating in other coumbites a man will be able to invite his neighbors to help him in his own larger tasks. The work is [461] done in rhythm[7] as on Southern road gangs in the United States, with one man specially designated to beat the drum, blow the conch, or sing a topical song, to set the pace. While the men are at work, the women prepare the noonday feast.

114 476 574 174 171 178 241 This typical characteristic of Haitian rural life has been described in detail as it operates near the village of Mirebalais by Prof. Melville J. Herskovits. His contention is that the custom, in general and in detail, derives from Dahomey, West Africa, the home of many of the original slaves.[8] Although his evidence is impressive, there are nevertheless objections to it. Coöperative enterprise for tasks larger than one man can accomplish alone is common in the United States and in parts of Europe and South America, as well as in Africa. It is not an economic device which strikes one as requiring unusual inventiveness, for cases of it are common even where the participants have had no previous experience of it. Further, Dahomean practice could not have been kept up during slave days, nor yet during the régimes of Toussaint, Dessalines, Christophe, and Pétion. (The first three required forced labor under overseers, and landownership by peasants was still rare under Pétion, although a beginning had been made.) In the thirty years from 1790, when the last slaves arrived, until Christophe died in 1820, many old ways were certainly forgotten. Not a single one of the numerous books written by visitors during Boyer's quarter-century, 1818 to 1843, mentions the practice, which certainly must have struck Englishmen, Frenchmen, and Americans if it had been characteristic of the peasant life of the time. If one concludes that the coumbite did not become peasant practice until the mid-nineteenth century, all possibility of contact with Negroes familiar with Dahomean routine has disappeared. What

7. A Haitian poet, Charles F. Pressoir, entitles a book of his verses *Au Rythme des coumbites* (Port-au-Prince, 1933).

8. *Op. cit.*, chap. IV.

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remains is the verbal handing down of recollections, one of the most natural things in the world and one congenial to Haitian peasants. Every region, every village, has its accomplished storytellers. The phenomenal resemblances in detail of the coumbite to Dahomean coöperative work may be due therefore to this verbal tradition. 174 241 574 476 538

Once the men have cleared and prepared the field, the care of the crop devolves upon the women. For this there has been a long background of tradition. In African agricultural regions, in the plantations of Saint-Domingue during slave days, under the forced labor régimes of Toussaint and his successors, women had been field workers. They had never known anything else. We have seen that many of the present-day practices of Haiti go back to the times of Pétion and Boyer: during this period women did field work, not by decree of government but by force of circumstance. Their men were constantly taken away from the farms for service in the large army; if crops were to be raised, women must do the work. Sometimes soldiers were stationed near their own homes, and could help in production; but they could be called on to march, at short notice and in peacetime, anywhere in the country. Many of the later presidents made it a definite policy frequently to change the station of regiments, so as to prevent revolutionary projects and guard against the soldiers' being tampered with by the disaffected in any single community. 241 175 462 701

Sir Harry Johnston records his observations on the Haiti of 1910 as follows: 114

The women are the best part of the nation. They are splendid, unremitting toilers. In the face of all discouragements with which a bad Government clouds their existence the women of Haiti remind one of certain patient types of ant or termite, who, as fast as you destroy their labour of months or days, hasten to repair it with unslackening energy. The market-women that descend from the country farms to the Haitian towns know that on their way to the market-place, and in that market-place, they will be robbed by soldiers and officers until the margin of profit on the sale of their wares has practically disappeared. Yet they continue to toil, to raise poultry and cattle, till the fields, see to their gardens, make pottery and mats. They cannot stop to reason, but must go on working from three years old to the end of their lives. Such industry (which is almost equally supplemented by that of the peasant husbands) protected should make Haiti one of the richest countries in the world for its size and population; but so long 114 462 461 [701]

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114 461 462 as it is cursed by the present military despotism, the utmost that the women of Haiti can do is to keep their country just above the waters of bankruptcy and their households from complete despair.[9]

701 175 Since 1910 the military has been reformed, and the women are not mulcted by soldiers and officers; Sir Harry's prophecy regarding the material benefits of removing the curse of military despotism was overly optimistic.

441 443 175 Rounding out the economic life of the peasant is the market, which provides an outlet for whatever surplus is produced, a source of needed supplies and a modicum of money, as well as an almost imperative diversion for hard-working women. The origin of Haitian markets may have been either French or West African, for both regions had them. They were certainly in existence by 1803 in Saint-Domingue, for Madiou speaks of the trade of the plainsmen of the Cul-de-Sac with the holders of what then was called Port Républicain (now Port-au-Prince), adding: "Each Sunday at Croix-des-Bouquets a market was held which brought together more than 4,000 cultivators, male and female, with the permission of the overseers or proprietors."[10] That so large a number came to the market is an indication of the social as well as the economic nature of this institution. Similarly, in the North in 1803, "Rochambeau, now master at the Cape, set about attending to the market established at Petit-Anse in July. After having suppressed all the markets which existed around the Cape, he opened a single and general one, 13th August, at Petit-Anse, one league from the city." The French general was making use of a familiar economic device to carry forward the economic life of the colony during the trying period of the wars.

175 441 462 466 702 In independent Haiti it was an almost immediate development that the women generally should do the marketing, the men being either required to work on the land or busy at military duty. It came to be accepted quite simply that going to market was a woman's work. From 1843 on through most of the century there was an additional reason why peasant men would not go to the market towns: recruits were needed, both for the army and whatever revolutionary coup might be brewing; a man who did not relish fighting did better to stay out of sight in the hills. In fact, this has even been called the chief

9. *The Negro in the New World*, pp. 196–197.
10. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 24, 54.

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reason for which women assumed a larger part of the agricultural work than in the early days of the century: to keep their husbands indoors during the hours of daylight.

Haitian markets seemed to fascinate foreign visitors a hundred years ago as they do today. One Englishman, describing the markets at Cap-Haïtien and Gonaïves, said that riding one morning to market in the latter small town he passed 465 persons and all sorts of animals. "The women as usual were decently dressed; and the men were more respectable than any we had seen on our route: they were evidently small cultivators who live on their own freeholds. . . . All were *cheerful and happy*."[11]

Ever since force was withdrawn from the economic life of the Haitians—that is, since 1820—a steady round of criticism has been leveled at the "laziness" of the average male. Much of this can be discounted as coming from unsympathetic white foreigners who visited Haiti to find proof of Negro inferiority; some of it again is not significant, since it is the product of élite essayists who cherished the prepossession that the black was born to menial labor, and that if he did not work he had small reason for existence. The fact remains that not even friendly authors have been able to refrain from comment upon the inertia of the Haitian man, whether of the 1830's or, indeed, the present day. It is worth selecting half a dozen of the earlier criticisms, ranging from 1826 to 1860—two by Haitians, two by Englishmen, and two by Americans. Impressionistic, they nevertheless establish a basis from which to gauge the accuracy or inaccuracy of the charge.

In 1826, Placide Justin, drawing most of his material from the notes of the British agent in the Antilles, wrote: "The Haitian man is characterized by an almost unbelievable inertia. He is practically without ambition in political as well as in private life. No one seems to worry about tomorrow."[12] Two years later the Englishman, James Franklin, compared the régimes of Christophe in the North and of Pétion and Boyer in the South; with the former he was entirely sympathetic, but in 1828

the state of ignorance prevailing among the people in the mountains and the interior parts is almost inconceivable. It appears as if the work of civilization had not commenced, and that the people had not taken one

11. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Haytí*, pp. 25, 26.
12. *Mémoire politique et statistique de l'île d'Haytí*, p. 536.

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114 461 voluntary step towards improving themselves in any one thing. . . . Experiments may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coercion and want will impel the Haytian to labour; and I have my doubts as to the practicability of enforcing labour in Hayti until the people have been better instructed, and their characters become changed. . . . Nature is too generous to the Haytian; he never wants, and so never works for hire, as do free labourers in other countries.[13]

An American, Dr. Jonathan Brown of Philadelphia, in 1837 published a volume which in most respects seems quite dispassionate. He says:

[462] The females are compelled to perform most of the labor. Those of the country employ themselves in cultivating the soil, while the men spend their time in traversing the country on horseback, in drinking, smoking, and other habits equally unprofitable. The females of the town perform all the retail traffic of the country. . . . They derive a subsistence for themselves and for their families.[14]

175 241 208 178 Boyer's secretary of state, Inginac, tried by means of a pamphlet—which few Haitians could have read—to urge the peasants of 1840 to greater activity. He says that although coffee is the chief source of Haitian wealth, although every day small properties have been multiplied, although times are improving, yet the old routines are still followed in coffee cultivation, as if the men would never work and "as if the Haitians were not susceptible of making any progress in the sciences."[15]

114 461 In 1842 an English Quaker, John Candler, wrote that without a modicum of labor the peasants could not subsist at all; "but they do not, and they will not, work hard to please anybody, and hence agriculture languishes, and commerce is stationary."[16] Finally, in 1860, Benjamin Hunt, an American, remarked: "If one wants to be lazy, Hayti is the place. It is possible to get through the day with little annoyance from cold, hunger, or the police, and with the least possible amount of work."[17] Similar testimony could be greatly multiplied. It is only in recent years that any author has affirmed that

13. *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 359–362.
14. *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, II, 281.
15. Joseph Balthazar Inginac, "*Culture du caffier et préparation de la fève pour être livrée au commerce*" [a pamphlet], (Port-au-Prince, 1840), p. 1.
16. *Brief Notices of Hayti*, p. 38.
17. *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans*, p. 12.

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the men as well as the women work arduously. It seems justifiable to conclude that industry has not always been a characteristic of the Haitian male; and to ask why. 114 461

One valid reason is, of course, political. As we have seen, until the American Occupation Haiti was greatly overmilitarized. Almost every able-bodied male was at one time or another during his prime a soldier in the army. Since the bane of the country from 1804 to 1915 was its revolutions, there was room for a man to serve either in the regular army or, lured by future promises, in the guerrilla forces of a scheming general. To be drawn away from the land at the very moment of physical maturity was to predispose a youth against humdrum field work. As a soldier he traveled, knew excitement, was fed and clothed, and could loaf, except during battle. So schooled, upon retirement from the army a man was hardly disposed to settle down to steady labor. Even if as a young man he remained upon his farm, he might at any moment be called away to service, just when he was most needed for the crop. If Haiti was to be fed, the women, who alone were exempt from army service, provided the only available regular workers. 175 701 461

Tradition offers another explanation for masculine independence of hard work. The African background of female agricultural labor has been cited. In slavery the men had been degraded by being forced to do work of this sort, while the lot of women hardly differed from what it had been in the old country. Under Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, with their large armies, women, already numerically preponderant, formed the vast majority of field workers. Independent small farming hardly changed the picture. African tradition, moreover, made the man master of his property and wives, the rôle of woman being that of man's inferior and useful servant. 174 462 562 567

Disease is another partial explanation. Until recently no one seems to have been aware of the prevalence in Haiti of such diseases as hookworm, malaria, and tuberculosis which, without necessarily affecting a person outwardly, may nevertheless sap his vitality, leaving him listless and worn out by even slight exertion. Obviously much of what was called laziness was due to disease. But the flaw in this reasoning is that illness makes no discrimination between the sexes. If men were disease-ridden, so were women: yet the latter were steadily industrious. 164 461

Any foray into possible psychological reasons is guesswork. It

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two rooms to house the whole family. "In these huts, filth and every species of uncleanliness prevail, for the people give themselves up to their indolent and lazy habits. It is common to see the pigs and poultry herding with the family."[19] 342 [515]

The furnishings in the huts were as simple as the construction. Rarely was there more than one bed, if that; the children of the family used mats for sleeping. A table, a stool, a couple of patched chairs, calabash bowls, an iron pot or two (and in later days, discarded gasoline tins), comprise the household equipment. 352 [415]

The fine roads of the French régime became rutted and washed, were overgrown with weeds, and soon reverted to wasteland or became nothing more than paths. Carriages ceased to be of any use, and there were few wagons; donkeys and horses became the regular means of transportation, and this was true until the Americans began to build roads again in 1916. The colonial régime had left a legacy of bridges, public buildings, parks, irrigation ditches; practically every improvement of this nature crumbled in slow decay and was not replaced. The temperate Dr. Brown closed his account of the Haiti of 1836 with the following paragraph: 653 492 493 491 114 105

> To sum up all that might be said upon the actual condition of Hayti, poverty and degradation stare one in the face wherever he goes—and the state of the whole island will be fully understood in the United States when it is bluntly asserted, that the country is one continuous negro village, built of mud cabins, and unfurnished with the usual comforts of life. The population is, with small exceptions, an indolent, naked multitude, without sustenance or a disposition to make exertions to obtain it; without enormous vices, but petty and insignificant in every thing relating to human character, and not many removes from the tribes upon the Niger in point of civilization. The fact is indisputable, that as a nation the blacks of Saint Domingo are in a retrograde movement as regards intellectual improvement, and no obstacle seems to exist to prevent this descent to barbarism. The government and institutions of the country must for the present remain unstable, and it is difficult to pronounce what the changes involved in the future will produce.[20]

Progress, as Westerners understand it, comes through contacts and competition, both of which were lacking to Haiti in large measure throughout the whole of the nineteenth century. While externally 177 178

19. Franklin, op. cit., p. 206.
20. Op. cit., II, 188–189.

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XII

POLITICS

TO write of the politics of one country in the language of another is almost certain to foster misconceptions. Political terminology grows out of national and local experience, so that a Liberal party may actually be reactionary, a Radical group conservative, and a Conservative bloc progressive; the names are entirely the product of time and circumstance. And to generalize upon the shades of political opinion in a country is almost surely to do violence to partisan sentiment, as well as to truth itself. If, on the other hand, one attempts to deal justly with each development of political thought, one is immediately caught in the web of tedious detail. 850

All these reflections apply to Haiti. Her political history is endlessly complicated, not only in the sequence of events, but in the intertwining prejudices of color, caste, sectionalism, education, heritage. Haitian writers have concerned themselves more frequently with politics than with any other subject; their diagnoses and remedies are familiar to the thought of élite citizens. Yet it is doubtful whether these authors have ever affected the political reality, except possibly in 1843. Theory and practice have consistently diverged: both form a part of the political complexion of Haiti, yet to treat either in detail would require an overbalanced discussion of political matters in a country nine tenths of whose people are normally unconcerned with politics. Let us then try to discover briefly how rulers have achieved and lost power, and how they have managed their government. 175 114

Of all the social institutions which had to find their own shape in 1804 upon the achievement of independence, the one for which the people as a whole had least preparation was government. Assuming the major institutions of a society to consist of economic life, government, religion, and marriage, one realizes the problems which faced the free Haitians in all of these categories. Satisfactory or partial, we have seen the solutions arrived at in all respects except government —solutions which modified and adapted old French colonial practice or African tradition. Neither French nor African guides would serve in politics, however. People who have just thrown off the yoke of a 175 178 64

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can "advice and approval," rather than with the legislature subject to popular control. Even under such restrictions the politically minded found ways of exerting pressure on the Marine authorities. 175 648 666

Out of the darkest days of military subjection by a foreign power came a changed order of politics in the country. The practically unbroken line of dull incompetents who had come into the presidency ended; instead of ignorant army leaders, educated men were once more in office; instead of Northern Negroes, élites of Port-au-Prince; instead of benighted martinets bewildered by world affairs, men who, if not great statesmen, at least had minds capable of understanding Haiti's relation to international economics and politics. 642 175 643

The élite were back in power. In the mind of every friend of Haiti arose the question whether the events between 1879 and 1915 had taught them lessons which would make their return to responsibility productive of great things for the country. Because of the abnormal situation resulting from the Occupation, the world depression, and the briefness of their new ascendancy, one cannot yet speak with assurance. Nevertheless, there are few encouraging signs. Political office is still regarded by most candidates in terms of their own advancement rather than service to Haiti. Very little has been done to extend the base of voting by developing local responsibility and education among the masses. Élite youths still receive a classical education, still disdain manual labor, still cherish the ideal of a graceful life of ease. The president still rules as an autocrat supported by the gendarmerie—substitute for the army of former days. One can see no decrease in social distinctions or in the disdain of the élite for peasant people; on the contrary, there has even been an increase of this feeling because the Occupation (through its Agricultural Service particularly) seemed to open paths of development to the peasants. Social antagonism, not social responsibility, still underlies political life.[20] 175 642 [661] [666] [565] [643] [565]

To every one of these strictures there is a plausible reply. It is no light matter to unsettle the minds of nine tenths of a population by education, to cause an economic revolution by improving agricultural techniques, to admit to political life a people unaccustomed to 178 65

20. Dr. Jean Price-Mars, in *La Vocation de l'élite* (Port-au-Prince, 1919), *passim*, especially pp. 51 ff., urges the élite to accept their responsibilities rather than rest upon the debilitating assurance of their innate superiority. [114] [565]

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exceeding the jurisdiction of the local juges, these juries to be named by the doyen and his colleagues. It was a dubious reform, often a worthless privilege; at times it was definitely harmful, for no matter how explicit the law, mere technicalities in a long, involved trial could be completely befuddling to an illiterate juror. Brown tells the tale of a certain foreman of the jury who asked a juror his opinion of a defendant's innocence; the juror replied that he could not write, whereas "you have written it all down. Let us know what you have done."[3] Innocence might easily be convicted by this system, and guilt escape. The addition of a jury to the court was even useless in many instances, for the language of the lawyers was French, and that of the jurors almost certain to be Créole. Boyer's attempt to graft English court practice upon the French system already functioning in Haiti was certainly not happy; the jury system shortly disappeared.

Complicated forms are not for the peasant. He knew a soldier and a soldier's function in the countryside, but not the relation of the arrondissement to the national government; the juge de paix was understandable, but not the procedure of the civil courts at department capitals. The national government and its structure were remote, although the president's name might be familiar. Haiti was really organized from the top down rather than from the bottom up. The powers of the early presidents were arbitrary: they could not only order changes in the framework of any part of government, but might also shift at will the personnel.

Carl Becker remarks: "In 1791, the French began their spectacular feat in constitution making. Between 1791 and 1875 Taine counts thirteen French constitutions adopted in relatively rapid succession. I can find only twelve, but maybe Taine is right. It doesn't really matter. The point is that for facility, speed, and endurance in constitution making, France holds the record. Yet other nations also ran."[4] Haiti was one of them: in fact the record is properly hers, although Professor Becker does not mention the little Caribbean state. In the nineteenth century Haiti lived under fifteen constitutions, to which she has added at least two more in the twentieth century. It is not always easy to say when a constitution is new: its author may

3. Jonathan Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, II, 271–272.
4. "Afterthoughts on Constitutions," *The Yale Review*, XXVII, No. 3 (Spring, 1938), 453.

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consider it novel when it changes little but detail; and some of Haiti's seventeen documents were too short-lived to be significant. Haiti shows her Frenchness in this constitution making, this love of being logical and having the details all written down in proper order.

To try to analyze the content of so many documents would be a work of supererogation.[5] A brief comment upon each, however, will improve one's acquaintance with the mind of Haitian statesmen.

1801. Toussaint L'Ouverture's constitution, laying the framework of his venture as director of the colony while still acknowledging its relationship to France. In it he announced himself governor-general for life with the right to name his successor, thereby becoming the forerunner of the strong-man principle in politics. The most important part of this constitution was its detailed organization of the forced-labor system.

1805. Dessalines' constitution establishing the empire. In many respects it did not differ from Toussaint's previous document, for the same military organization was preserved, and the same system of forced labor; otherwise, there was little structure of government. One article was included which was to appear in every other constitution of Haiti up to 1918: "No white man shall set foot on this territory as master or as landowner."[6] In other respects there were sagacious provisions which did not endure. For example, the generic name of "blacks" was adopted for all Haitians, of whatever color. The Emperor was trying thus to forestall the dissensions which inevitably must result from the growth of social classes based on skin color. Another important provision was that every citizen who was not an ordinary cultivator must learn and practice some mechanical art. This was not merely a thrust at the aristocratic pretensions of the old affranchis, but also an endeavor to make Haiti industrious and self-sufficient. Except in the North, where Dessalines' deputy Christophe kept the requirement, the article was honored only in the breach. The social situation was touched at one other point: "No one is worthy of being a Haitian who is not a good father, a good son, a good husband, and a good soldier." Parents were forbidden to disinherit their children. Although, as has been shown, the Emperor

5. Such an analysis was made by Louis-Joseph Janvier, *Les Constitutions d'Haïti, 1801–85* (Paris, 1886).

6. He had made this declaration first on April 28, 1804; at that time the words "No white man" read "No colonist nor European."

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Cassation at Port-au-Prince. In the event that this court confirmed the judgment of the lower courts, the defendant might still appeal from it to the president, and might apply for a new trial in the lower courts. Thus the contest would proceed ad infinitum, however clear the proof that the debt was just. 175 695

The Court of Cassation exceeded all others in the slowness of its judgments. Its judges were under the surveillance of the president, and must consult with him before deciding a case. If he disagreed, and the state was a party to the case, the judges must reconsider "to see if they have not taken a wrong view of the question at issue." Even so, the grand judge might stay execution as long as he deemed advisable after a judgment was confirmed.

Judges were rarely chosen from among trained lawyers, but were appointed by the government because of political considerations. Consequently, few people had any faith in court decisions, and in general they avoided taking their problems to law. The peasants in particular were bewildered by the whole procedure. White foreigners also often complained that unless they were willing to pay heavily they had no slightest chance of getting justice in the Haitian courts. 693 695 641

It must be emphasized that the majority of cases coming before the courts were civil rather than criminal, for it has been a universal matter of comment that the Haitian people were rarely guilty of serious crimes. Minor thefts of poultry or animals have been the commonest breaches of the peace, while murder, arson, and rape have almost never occurred. Even the bitterest critics of the republic have noted the absence of crime.[9] It is noteworthy that, despite their poverty and the hardness of their life, the Haitians are, contrary to the prevailing white man's notion of Negro unreliability, passion, and lawlessness, a tranquil folk. The absence of crime speaks volumes for the wholesomeness of a people much maligned by the stories of their "Voodoo" practices and bloody revolutions. An élite ex-president spoke to me with pride of the honesty of the country people who welcomed travelers with true hospitality and with no expectation of payment. "You might sleep safely in a country cabin with a thousand dollars on your person," he said.[10] 691 674

9. Mackenzie, British consul during a part of Boyer's régime, and young Haiti's earnest critic, said that during his whole stay he knew of only one murder, and that in this case the assassin was executed. [114] [682]

10. In times of revolution, brigandage was expected but was not accounted a crime, any more than killing in warfare is called murder. [669] [682]

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Besides the figures given above must be set those of the government

budget, which is annually in the neighborhood of $7,000,000, and of 652
its annual imports and exports, neither of which generally exceeds [439]
$10,000,000 a year. Chicago, with its population of three million, has an annual budget of about $275,000,000, aside from state and federal services.

To care for all the needs of three million people in Haiti there is a sum of money less than that available annually to several of our American universities. Out of the seven million dollars must come all salaries of officials, legislators, judges, policemen, schoolteachers; the wages of all janitors and day laborers employed by the government; the upkeep of all schools, roads, lighthouses, experiment stations; the maintenance of such important public services as health, sanitation, education, soil development, reforestation. Since there [369]
are few towns, practically every improvement which takes place must be paid for by the central government.

Haiti's growth in population is not a new thing. It has been in- 161
creasing steadily since 1804 while the soil of the country was being [134]
worn out and foreign trade grew stagnant. The country is entirely [439]
agricultural, there being absolutely no manufacturing industry worth the name. The people consequently live upon a subsistence economy. 433
The soil is still fertile enough to preserve life in the teeming popula- 164
tion, though undernourishment is general. Most of the people have [134]
no "artificial" wants and could not satisfy them under present con- [511]
ditions even if they had.

Assuming the census of Dessalines in 1805 to be even approxi- 161
mately accurate, the population is now eight times what it was then. 433
The working of the Law of Population[3] is implacable: if population 178
increases while economic efficiency remains static or declines, either there will be an increasing death rate or the standard of living must sink—or both. In the case of Haiti, economic efficiency is certainly [165]
not what it was under the forced-labor system of Dessalines: the [511]
death rate has been continuously high; it is the standard of living which has suffered.

To grasp the import of Haiti's problem of overpopulation one

3. "Population tends to increase up to the limit of the supporting power of the land, relative to the economic efficiency and to the standard of living of the people at the time." (For an amplification of this discussion on overpopulation, see the note on p. 320.) The law of population as stated here is a modification of that given by Sumner and Keller, *The Science of Society*, I, 46; their statement, in turn, is that of Malthus with the added cultural items of economic efficiency and the standard of living. [114]

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2. *Health*

Historians who seek to explain the rise and fall of nations in terms of a single cause might do worse than hit upon health and disease as the all-important explanation. Unless spectacular epidemics have appeared in a country's history, the average person is rarely aware of how diet may affect a people, or of how backwardness in achievement is often directly related to disease. It may well be that the development of *medical* history will yet cause a radical revision of certain philosophies of history.

146 "The diet of the Haitian peasants has not improved since the slavery period," says Dr. Camille Lhérisson.[5] When people are 164 hungry in Haiti, they eat (if they can find food) until their hunger has been appeased; but what they eat, though it may fill their stomachs, is often decidedly deficient in the proper nourishment. Mangoes, yams, and beans are common enough so that few people actually go hungry; eggs, milk, meat, and many other essentials of a balanced diet, on the contrary, are scarce. People do not die of hunger, but rather of the diseases which accompany malnutrition. It is said that many peasants allow the fires in their homes to die out when the mangoes begin to ripen, subsisting almost wholly upon this fruit for weeks. One sees nearly naked children whose distended [261] bellies are testimony to faulty diet. There are frequent cases of geophagy (eating of dirt) both by children and by adults in their unreasoned craving for certain dietetic elements; one result of the practice is the swallowing of eggs and larvae of intestinal parasites.

178 Scientific progress in medicine during the nineteenth century and 743 the first years of the twentieth passed Haiti by completely. There 759 were during the whole history of the country until 1915 hardly a score of reputable physicians; even had there been doctors, hospital facilities and equipment were lacking. Dr. Robert P. Parsons de- 114 scribes Haiti in 1915 as "an unspeakable hotbed of diseases, ranking 164 second to none in the world in downright rottenness." He further described the "mass of three million people, sick, suffering beyond all power of words to describe, crippled, and weakened from the ravages of a host of diseases (for the most part preventable and curable), pitifully helpless and hopelessly resigned to their lot."[6]

5. "Diseases of the Peasants of Haiti," *American Journal of Public Health*, XXV, No. 8 (August, 1935), 924.
6. *History of Haitian Medicine* (New York, 1930), pp. 4–5.

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184 ranging from those requiring strict observance down to those permitting latitude of behavior.

114 It has, then, been the primary purpose of this book to show the gradual development (the word is used with no connotation of progress toward a conscious goal) of a consistent group of mores and social institutions in Haiti since the moment of her independence. The course of Haitian social history provides an almost unlimited opportunity for further study along the lines of contemporary American sociological research. Certain skeptics have pertinently criticized this sociology as narrowly provincial, calling it a social science limited only to the American scene, and valid consequently only for American society. Such a charge is precisely the reverse of that directed at European sociology, which finds congenial the development of philosophies of history independent of research in any specific field.

If the active American sociologist should extend his field of investigation he would, whatever his dominant interest, find much to reward his research in Haiti. For example, some of the most productive work in the United States has been in studies of neighborhoods,[2] communities,[3] and regions.[4] No neighborhood study has ever been made in Haiti, nor any regional study. Herskovits[5] has pointed the way to all future students of Haitian communities. Most research done by scholars in Haiti, however, has concerned itself with one or another of the social institutions (religion has been the most popular) rather than with thorough studies of individual communities.

For the social psychologist Haiti presents a rich and untouched field. It has the advantages of a limited geography and population, and so is less complex than the United States; yet Haitian problems are familiar enough to make comparison with American problems valid. Not only has there as yet been no investigation of the process of socialization, that is, of what happens to children as they take on

2. The neighborhood is generally defined as a primary group in society in which face-to-face contacts are frequent and intimate.

3. The community is a group of people living in comparative proximity, sharing basic interests and activities, having relatively common usages and traditions, and acknowledging common rule.

4. The region is a functional part of a larger area of economic, cultural, and geographical homogeneity. The Southeastern States of the United States are conceived as a region; in Haiti, the five departments are regions.

5. In his *Life in a Haitian Valley*. This is a study of the community in and around Mirebalais.

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114 the culture of their group, but also none of the broader aspects of the motivating forces, the dominant wishes, the attitudes and social values of the masses. Since the élite have often expressed in books their desires and frustrations, one feels that it would be readily possible for a trained social psychologist to learn much from upper-class informants who are anxious to be understood. To penetrate the inner life of the masses would be easier for an American than for a Haitian scholar, who would be enmeshed in the attitudes of class and caste in his own society.

565 Little has been said in this book of the small group of people, generally living in towns, who belong neither to the élite nor to the masses. How much actual social mobility occurs? Of the horizontal variety, that is, movement from place to place within the same social class, very little; of the vertical, or transition from one social class to another, there is likewise little, as has been shown at length in this book; yet there is enough to make a study of social mobility useful. Allied with such an investigation might be one of social distance. The degree of sympathy existing between élite and masses is small; on the other hand, one longs to know the degree of social distance of the individuals who are not yet élite but who regard themselves as definitely superior to the masses: what is their attitude toward the class they have left? And what is the attitude of the élite toward their aspirations?

114 Certain studies have already been made of the effect of the Vodun religion upon the personalities of its practitioners.[6] Even here the surface has been merely skimmed.

177 Haiti, because she is a colored nation in a white Western World, has been even more isolated than she would otherwise have been, even with her island position and her economic poverty. Except for the presence of American Marines for nineteen years there has been little cultural contact with outsiders, and hence little cultural conflict.

[563] It is generally estimated that there are not more than three thousand white people living in Haiti, and these mostly in the capital city. Throughout the nineteenth century it is likely that there were fewer. Haiti shares the island with the Dominican Republic, yet since the independence of the Dominicans in 1844 there has been little warfare, travel, or contact between the two peoples. Haitian workers have crossed the border, it is true, and have returned home (or have

6. See particularly Price-Mars, *Ainsi parla l'oncle*, and Dorsainvil, *Vodou et névrose*.

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127 NOTE: When research was first begun upon the economic and social development of Haiti, permission was asked for an examination of Haitian Archives. The reply of the governmental official was cordial and frank. He remarked: "*Nos bouleversements politiques et de nombreux incendies ont occasionné la perte ou la destruction totale d'une partie appréciable des documents haïtiens. Et, il faut l'avouer, avec peine, nous n'avons jamais eu une organisation méthodique pour la conservation des pièces et documents officiels.*" Research in the Archives Générales de la République d'Haïti revealed the truth of the official's statement: there is practically nothing relating to nineteenth-century Haiti. Reliance had, therefore, to be placed upon contemporary accounts, some published, some in manuscript, rather than upon official documents.

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113 *Le Moniteur* (*journal officiel de la République d'Haiti*). This newspaper, begun on
● 114 Feb. 8, 1845, is an excellent source of officially approved news and comment. Certain administrations during the course of the century have shown a genius, however, for cautious editing of news.

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HAITI (SAINT-DOMINGUE) BEFORE 1804

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MAUREL, BLANCHE. *Cahier des Doléances de la colonie de Saint-Domingue pour les États Généraux de 1789*. Paris, 1933. An important document for one brief phase of colonial participation in the French Revolution.

MILLS, H. E. *The Early Years of the French Revolution in San Domingo*. Poughkeepsie, 1892. A political monograph.

MOREAU DE SAINT-MÉRY, LOUIS ÉLIE. *Description topographique, physique, civile, politique et historique de la partie française de l'île Saint-Domingue. ("Avec des observations générales sur sa population, sur le caractère et les moeurs de ses divers habitans; sur son climat, sa culture, ses productions, son administration, &c. &c.")* Philadelphia, 1797. 2 vols. A splendid source book by a careful observer. Most of the information available about the plantation economy and the Negro slaves of the French régime is derived from this source. Moreau also published in two volumes (1798) a treatise on the Spanish part of the island.

NEMOURS, C. *Histoire militaire de la guerre de l'indépendance de Saint-Domingue*. Paris, 1925.

NEWTON, ARTHUR P. *The European Nations in the West Indies, 1493–1688*. London, 1933. A good brief history of colonial penetration.

PEYTRAUD, LUCIEN. *L'Esclavage aux Antilles françaises avant 1789*. Paris, 1897. As definitive a work upon this topic as exists.

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SANNON, H. PAULÉUS. *Histoire de Toussaint-Louverture*. Port-au-Prince, 1920. 3 vols. A thorough investigation of the life of The First of the Blacks, by a Haitian scholar. Better on detail than upon the inner quality of the man.

STEWARD, T. G. *The Haitian Revolution, 1791 to 1804*. New York, 1914.

STODDARD, T. LOTHROP. *The French Revolution in San Domingo*. New York, 1914.

TONNÈRE, BOISROND. *Memoires pour servir à l'histoi d'Haïti*. Cap François, 1804. Brief memoirs by one of the leading generals of Dessalines.

VAISSIÈRE, PIERRE DE. *Saint-Domingue (1629–1789). La Société et la vie créole sous l'ancien régime*. Paris, 1909. Excellent.

VASTEY, Baron de. *Essai sur les causes de la révolution et des guerres civiles d'Hayti*. Sans Souci (Kingdom of Hayti), 1819. A historical treatise on the announced subject by the official historian of Christophe's kingdom. Everything is interpreted in terms of the cruelty of the French, and the justice of the Negro cause.

——— *Réflexions politiques sur les noirs et les blancs*. Sans Souci, 1817. Like the preceding work, an official interpretation of the Negro position.

WALLEZ, JEAN. *Précis historique des négotiations entre la France et Saint-Domingue*. Paris, 1826. Although largely concerned with the period after 1804, this work provides a background for the negotiations.

WIMPFFEN, Baron de. *A Voyage to Santo Domingo in the Years 1788, 1789, and 1790*. London, 1797. A travelogue with occasional important observations.

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ALAUX, GUSTAVE D'. *L'Empereur Soulouque et son empire*. Paris, 1856. Informative.

ARDOUIN, BEAUBRUN. *Études sur l'histoire d'Haïti*. Paris, 1833–60. 5 vols. An extensive work by a moralist. Christophe is condemned in detail, while Pétion and Boyer are generously praised. Ardouin has been called "a naïve but faithful panegyrist" of Boyer. His work is unreliable.

——— *La Géographie de l'île d'Haïti*. Port-au-Prince, 1832. Containing a historical résumé of Haiti and an examination of her condition in 1832; very moral reflections upon Haitian folkways, and a description of Haitian places. Not very useful.

AUBIN, EUGÈNE. *En Haïti*. Paris, 1910. As good a description of the country and its people in the period before the American Occupation as exists.

BAILLY, M. *Notice sur l'île de Saint-Domingue*. Paris, 1832. A reprint of an address delivered in the Académie des Sciences, Beles-Lettres et Arts de Besançon, *séance publique de 28 janvier 1832*. General and unimportant.

BAKER, CECIL S. "Climatic Influences in the Caribbean," *Current History*, February, 1930. Highly superficial.

BALCH, EMILY GREENE. *Occupied Haiti*. New York, 1927. One of the best accounts of the Occupation of Haiti by the American Marines, and of the work done during the first eleven years of the Occupation.

BASSETT, EBENEZER D. *Haiti*. Bureau of the American Republics, Bulletin 62, revised to September 1, 1893. Washington, 1893. A brief survey of the country's history and geography by a former American Minister to Haiti. It is more in the nature of a guidebook than a source.

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BELLEGARDE, DANTÈS. *Haiti and Its People*. Washington, 1922. An effort by one of Haiti's most distinguished scholars and officials to make the citizens of the United States understand Haiti.

——— *La République d'Haïti et les États-Unis devant la justice international*. Paris, 1924. A well-reasoned plea against the American Occupation.

——— *L'Occupation américaine d'Haïti*. Port-au-Prince, 1929.

——— *Pour une Haïti heureuse*. Port-au-Prince, 1929. 2 vols. A thoughtful analysis of Haitian problems.

——— *Un Haïtien parle*. Port-au-Prince, 1934.

BIRD, MARK BAKER. *The Black Man; or, Haytian Independence*. New York, 1869. Second-hand history from familiar sources, with religious overtones of a Wesleyan variety. Only occasional illuminating remarks about contemporary conditions.

——— and DEHOUX, J. B. *Des Révolutions d'Haïti*. Port-au-Prince, 1867. The only significance of the title is to prove the point that Haiti needs religion.

BONNEAU, ALÉXANDRE. *Haïti: ses progrès, son avenir*. ("*Avec un précis historique sur ses constitutions, le texte de la constitution actuellement en vigueur, et une bibliographie d'Haïti.*") Paris, 1862. A very fair short analysis of Haiti's progress and difficulties up to the administration of Geffrard.

BROWN, Dr. JONATHAN. *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*. Philadelphia, 1837. 2 vols. All the first volume, and 140 pages of the second, deal with the period before independence. Good history and dispassionate judgments on Haitian folkways and mores. The last chapter, on Haiti in 1836, is excellent.

BUELL, RAYMOND LESLIE. *The American Occupation of Haiti*. Foreign Policy Association Publication. New York, 1929.

BUTLER, C. S. "The Medical Needs of the Republic of Haiti at the Present Time." *United States Navy Medical Bulletin 24*, No. 2. Washington, 1926.

CABON, Le R. Père ADOLPHE. *Notes sur l'histoire religieuse d'Haïti, de la révolution au concordat (1789–1860)*. Port-au-Prince, 1933. A definitive study of this question by a scholarly priest.

CANDLER, JOHN. *Brief Notices of Hayti: with Its Conditions, Resources, and Prospects*. London, 1842. This work, by an open-minded Quaker, is not a history, but rather a most temperate and very generous analysis of Haiti as the author saw it. The occasional religious digressions do not detract from its value as a source of information about the Haiti of Boyer.

CHANCY, H. *Guide des communes*. Port-au-Prince, 1935. Information geographical and administrative.

CHAPMAN, C. E. *Colonial Hispanic America*. New York, 1933. Illuminating comments on Saint-Domingue and the beginning of Haitian independence.

——— "The Developement of the Intervention in Haiti." *Hispanic American Historical Review*, VII, 299–319, 1927.

CHARMANT, ALCIUS. *Haïti, vivra-t-elle?* ("*Étude sur le préjugé des races: race noire, race jaune, race blanche, et sur la doctrine de Monroe.*") Le Havre, 1905. A denunciation of the mulattoes in Haiti.

CHAUVET, HENRI. *À Travers la république d'Haïti*. Paris, 1894. An indifferent travelogue.

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CHENET, EDMOND. *Proverbs créoles*. Port-au-Prince, 1896. A collection of 1,456 proverbs with French translations.

CHRISTIE, EMERSON B. "Haiti's Contribution to Literature." *Pan American Magazine*, XLIV, 216–226, 1931.

CLARK, B. C. *A Plea for Hayti: the Last Sixty Years*. New York, 1853. Containing a historical sketch, but chiefly an apologia for Haiti. Of little value.

COURLANDER, HAROLD. *Haiti Singing*. Chapel Hill, 1939. An excellent collection of 185 songs, with melodies of 126 of them. Five superior chapters on the cultural background of Haiti.

DALENCOUR, Dr. FRANÇOIS. *Alexandre Pétion*. Port-au-Prince, 1928. A panegyric by a hero-worshiper.

——— *Le Sauvetage national par le retour à la terre*. Port-au-Prince, 1923. Contains an illuminating analysis of the division of the national domain by Pétion and Boyer.

——— *Précis méthodique d'histoire d'Haïti*. Port-au-Prince, 1935. Sketchy as history; abominably printed.

DAVIS, H. P. *Black Democracy; the Story of Haiti*. 3d ed., revised. New York, 1936. Not only a good sketch of the early days of Haiti, but probably the best detailed description of the American Occupation. Highly recommended.

——— "Notes on Haiti and Santo Domingo." *Pan American Magazine*, vol. XXXII, 1919.

DELORME, DÉMESVAR. *La Misère au sein des richesses*. Paris, 1873. One of the first analyses of the problems which were contributing to the slow decline of Haiti in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

DENIS, LORIMER, and DUVALIER, Dr. FRANÇOIS. "La Civilisation haïtienne: notre mentalité est-elle africaine ou gallo-latine?" *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti*, VII, No. 23, 1–31, May, 1936. After some rather nebulous talk about psychology, a good discussion of parallels between African and Haitian religious beliefs. The upshot of the article is that the élite should not try to forswear their African heritage.

DEWEY, LORING D. *Correspondence Relative to the Emigration to Hayti of the Free People of Colour*. New York, 1824. Inception of the movement to sponsor the migration of freed American slaves to Haiti.

DORSAINVIL, Dr. J. C. *Manuel d'histoire d'Haïti*. Port-au-Prince, 1934. A textbook for Haitian schools, prepared in collaboration with the Frères de l'Instruction Chrétienne. Probably the best short history of Haiti by a Haitian.

——— *Vodou et névrose*. Port-au-Prince, 1931. A decidedly revealing analysis of the mental phenomena which accompany certain aspects of Vodun, with an attempted explanation. Well worth investigation by any student of Vodun.

DORSINVILLE, LUC. *Géographie-Atlas*. Port-au-Prince, 1929. A textbook for the "cours moyen," but giving many useful data about the area and population and resources of the country.

DOUGLAS, PAUL H. "The American Occupation of Haiti." *Political Science Quarterly*, XLII, 228–258, 368–396, 1927.

DOUGLASS, FREDERICK. *Lecture on Haiti*. Chicago, 1893. A thoughtful work of the celebrated American Negro abolitionist.

DURAND, OTWALD. *La Dernière étape*. Port-au-Prince, 1906. One of the "What's-Wrong-with-Haiti" series.

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EDOUARD, EMMANUEL. *Essai sur la politique intérieure d'Haïti*. Paris, 1890. Too limited in scope to be useful.

FAINE, JULES. *Philologie créole*. ("*Études historiques et étymologiques sur la langue créole d'Haïti*.") Port-au-Prince, 1937. A scholarly treatise on the Créole language which is fascinating even to the layman. It contains an orderly grammar, a good vocabulary, and many aids to a better understanding of the popular language.

FERMIN, ANTÉNOR. *Diplomates et diplomatie*. Cap-Haïtien, 1899. Sage observations by a distinguished Haitian.

——— *Haïti au point de vue politique, administratif et économique*. Paris, 1891. A good critique of the period.

——— *M. Roosevelt, président des États-Unis, et la république d'Haïti*. New York, 1905. An acceptance of the assurance of Theodore Roosevelt that no nation capable of governing itself had any need to fear American Occupation.

FLETCHER, HENRY P. "Quo vadis, Haiti?" *Foreign Affairs*, VIII, 533–548, 1930.

FORBES and TUCKERMAN. *Papers Relating to the Colonization Experiment at A'Vache*. New York, 1865. Discussion of another scheme for the settlement of freed American slaves in Haiti.

FOREIGN POLICY ASSOCIATION. *The Seizure of Haiti by the United States*. New York, 1922.

FORTUNAT, DANTÈS. *Nouvelle géographie de l'île d'Haïti*. Paris, 1888. Useful only for the period.

FRANKLIN, JAMES. *The Present State of Hayti (Saint Domingo)*. London, 1828. A good summary of Haitian history to 1826. Decidedly adverse in its criticism of Haiti's development, although not actually prejudiced. The author thinks Christophe's policy of forced labor was wise, and Pétion's *laissez-faire* policy foolish.

FROUDE, JAMES ANTHONY. *The English in the West Indies*. New York, 1888. As dramatic and as inaccurate as most of Froude's historical works.

GAÏTHER, CYRIQUE DE. *Histoire de la république d'Haïti*. Paris, 1819. Utterly worthless; it is not a history, but rather a plea to the European powers of the time to recognize the independence of Haiti.

GRÉGOIRE, HENRI. *De la liberté de conscience et de culte à Haïti*. (No place of publication mentioned), 1824. This is a bibliographical oddity, for in spite of the title there is no discussion of the subject at all; rather the little book is a pastoral letter by a priest.

HANNA, S. W. *Notes of a Visit to Some Parts of Haiti, January–February, 1835*. London, 1836. A breezy travelogue by a pious clergyman. Useless except as corroboration of outward aspects. Hanna explains Mackenzie's adverse criticisms of Haiti by saying that the British Minister was a mulatto, and so was not well received in Haiti.

HARVEY, W. W. *Sketches of Hayti; from the Expulsion of the French to the Death of Christophe*. London, 1827. In spite of the unassuming title, one of the most rewarding collections of source material in the early period.

HAZARD, SAMUEL. *Santo Domingo, Past and Present; with a Glance at Haiti*. New York, 1873. The glance included little of importance.

HERRING, HUBERT. "Haitian Troubles Continue." *Current History*, XLII, 78–79, 1935. Brief statement of the months following the end of the American Occupation.

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HERSKOVITS, MELVILLE J. *Dahomey, an Ancient West African Kingdom*. New York, 1938. 2 vols. A splendid study of the region from which many of the Haitian slaves derived.

——— *Life in a Haitian Valley*. New York, 1937. One of the few ethnographical studies of a Haitian community, made by an expert. The whole range of life of the people of Mirebalais is studied in detail. The result is a book not only for scholars but for laymen. Indispensable

——— "The Significance of the Study of Acculturation for Anthropology." *American Anthropologist*, n.s. XXXIX, No. 2, 259-264.

HUNT, BENJAMIN S. *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afro-Americans*. Philadelphia, 1860. Another brochure on the migration of freed American slaves. Hunt's observations are often illuminating.

HURSTON, ZORA NEALE. *Tell My Horse*. Philadelphia, 1938. A gaily written study of certain details of life in Jamaica and Haiti. Much of the detail is heavy, some is inaccurate, but a great deal is carefully observed.

INGINAC, JOSEPH BALTHASAR. *Culture du caffier et préparation de la fève pour être livrée au commerce*. Port-au-Prince, 1840. One of the pamphlets which Boyer's meticulous secretary of state issued to the Haitian peasants to improve their economic life.

——— *Entretiens à mes concitoyens: Notions de l'éducation morale et religieuse en Haïti*. Port-au-Prince, 1841. A paternal homily on morals.

——— *Mémoires*. Kingston (Jamaica), 18[illegible]. After the Revolution of 1843 had overthrown Boyer, Inginac went into exile with his President. In Jamaica he wrote his memoirs, which consist partly of autobiography, but mostly of an impassioned defense of every action of his long secretaryship. He never made a mistake; and if Boyer had only followed Inginac's advice, there would have been no revolution.

——— *Mémoire à ses compatriotes, et principalement à ceux qui ont dirigé les affaires publiques de la république depuis le 30 de janvier dernier*. Port-au-Prince, 1843. A brief pamphlet by Inginac, urging his innocence of any treason, and pleading with the new government to allow him to return from exile.

INGRAM, VANCE GUY. *Through Santo Domingo and Haiti*. New York, 1919. With observations on the American Occupation.

JANVIER, LOUIS-JOSEPH. *La République d'Haïti et ses visiteurs*. Paris, 1883. Unimportant.

——— *Les Constitutions d'Haïti, 1801-83*. Paris, 1886. Excellent, not only because it contains a text of the numerous Haitian constitutions, but also for its judicious analysis of the contents of each.

JEAN-LOUIS, H. "La Race créole." *Les Annales diplomatiques et consulaires*, vol. II, No. 1, Paris, 1904, November 5.

JEREZ, L. H. "The Haitian Problem," in A. C. Wilgus, ed., *The Caribbean Area*. Washington, 1934.

JOHNSON, JAMES WELDON. "Self-determining Haiti." *Nation*, August 25, September 25, 1920. The title is satirical, for Haiti in 1920 was occupied by the Americans.

JOHNSTON, SIR HARRY H. *The Negro in the New World*. New York, 1910. Well written but necessarily superficial, considering the magnitude of the topic. Certain wise judgments about Haiti.

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JONES, CHESTER LLOYD. *The Caribbean Since 1900*. New York, 1936. The section on Haiti is adequate as a brief survey.

JUSTIN, JOSEPH. *Étude sur les institutions haïtiennes*. Paris, 1894–95. 2 vols. What was wrong with Haiti under Hyppolite.

——— *Les Réformes nécessaires*. Port-au-Prince, 1915. The sad state of Haitian affairs twenty years later.

JUSTIN, PLACIDE. *Histoire politique et statistique de l'île d'Hayti, Saint-Domingue. ("Écrite sur des documents officiels et des notes communiquées par Sir James Barskett, agent du gouvernement britannique dans les Antilles.")* Paris, 1826. Actually, up to 1816, a copy of the work by Baskett [q.v.], whose name Justin misspells; for the succeeding decade, Justin's material is almost wholly political, and not particularly helpful.

KELSEY, CARL. "The American Intervention in Haiti and the Dominican Republic." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. C, March, 1922.

KIDDER, JONES D. *Haiti: Its Dawn of Progress after Years in a Night of Revolution*. Boston, 1921. Useless.

LAUJON, A. DE. *Souvenirs de trente années de voyages à Saint-Domingue*. Paris, 1835. 2 vols. Unimportant.

LAVERTUNE, LÉONIDAS. *Haïti: le danger de la patrie*. Port-au-Prince, 1893. What is wrong with Haiti.

LÉGER, ABEL NICOLAS. *Histoire diplomatique d'Haïti*. Port-au-Prince, 1930. Good.

LÉGER, JACQUES NICHOLAS. *Haïti: son histoire et ses détracteurs*. (Likewise an edition in English, *Haiti: Her History and Her Detractors*.) Both: New York, 1907. An effort to correct erroneous impressions of Haiti. Léger sees even the defects of Haiti through rose-colored glasses.

——— *La Politique extérieure d'Haïti*. Paris, 1886. Inferior.

LÉGITIMUS, F. DÉJOI. "La République d'Haïti et les races africaines en général." Port-au-Prince, 1912. A lecture given by one of Haiti's Negro ex-presidents at the Universal Congress on Race in 1911; nothing more than a superficial sketch of Haitian history.

LEPELLETIER DE SAINT-REMY, R. "La République d'Haïti: ses dernières révolutions; sa situation actuelle." *Revue des Deux Mondes*, XV, No. 4, November 15, 1845. An excellent analysis of the social, economic, and political conditions which led up to the Revolution of 1843, and the disturbances of the next two years.

——— *Saint-Domingue. Étude et solution nouvelle de la question haïtienne*. Paris, 1846. 2 vols. One of the very best sources for the economic history of Haiti through the administration of Boyer. Intelligently critical; many suggestive points of constructive nature.

LE ROUGE, GABRIEL. *Ou vivre libre et respecté ou mourir lamentablement détruites par la guerre civile*. Port-au-Prince, 1916. Another in the "What's-Wrong-with-Haiti" series.

LEVACHER, M. G. *Guide médical des Antilles*. Paris, 1847. A fair account, giving the medical knowledge of the period, of health conditions in Haiti and the other Antilles.

LEYBURN, CARLTON. "Diseases of the Peasants of Haiti." *American Journal of Public Health*, XXV, No. 8, 924–929, August, 1935. An excellent survey by one of the more brilliant doctors of Haiti.

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Livre bleu d'Haïti. Port-au-Prince, 1920. A kind of social register, and business roster of Haiti in 1920.

LOBB, JOHN. "Caste and Class in Haiti." *American Journal of Sociology*, XLVI, No. 1, 23–34, July, 1940. A good general analysis of the élite-Noir dichotomy in modern Haiti.

LOGAN, RAYFORD W. "Education in Haiti." *Journal of Negro History*, XV, 401–460, 1930. Good.

LOPEZ, G. *Considérations sur la société haïtienne de 1804 à 1866*. Port-au-Prince, 1867. Superficial.

MACAULAY, ZACHARY. *Haïti, ou renseignemens authentiques sur l'abolition de l'esclavage et ses résultats à Saint-Domingue et à Guadeloupe. ("Avec des détails sur l'état actuel d'Haïti et des noirs émancipés qui forment sa population.") Traduit de l'Anglais*. Paris, 1835. Very disappointing. Mostly an attack on the authenticity of the report by Mackenzie of affairs in Haiti. The book includes a 139-page letter series from a Jamaican mulatto visitor to Haiti, who fulsomely praised the country, but said nothing of significance.

MACCORKLE, W. A. *The Monroe Doctrine in Its Relation to the Republic of Haiti*. New York, 1915.

MACKENZIE, CHARLES. *Notes on Hayti, Made during a Residence in That Republic*. London, 1830. 2 vols. A careful, detailed, and often adversely critical survey of Haiti by the British Minister during the first years of Boyer's administration.

MAGLOIRE, AUGUSTE. *Étude sur le tempérament haïtien*. Port-au-Prince, 1909. Wryly humorous criticism by a Haitian.

——— *Histoire d'Haïti d'après un plan nouveau basé sur l'observation des faits (1804–1909)*. Port-au-Prince, 1909. 4 vols. Occasionally astute in comment, but adding little to already existing knowledge.

——— *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social*. Port-au-Prince, 1909. Haiti puts her trust too much in political, and not enough in economic, reform.

MARCELIN, FRÉDÉRIC. *Choses haïtiennes*. Paris, 1896. Unimportant observations on the Haiti of 1895.

——— *L'Haleine du centenaire*. Paris, 1901. After nearly a century of independence, much is wrong with Haiti.

——— *Le Passé*. Paris, 1902. Nostalgic.

——— *Questions haïtiennes*. Paris, 1891.

——— *Une Évolution nécessaire*. Paris, 1898. Some of the reforms needed by Haiti.

MARCELIN, LOUIS-JOSEPH. *Haïti: ses guerres civiles, leurs causes, leurs conséquences présentes, leur conséquence future et finale*. Paris, 1892. An excellent survey of the first nine decades of revolution in Haiti; of no importance when the author looks into the future.

MILLSPAUGH, ARTHUR C. *Haiti under American Control, 1915–30*. Boston, 1931. A careful analysis of the causes of the Occupation and of the results for Haiti.

——— "Our Haitian problem." *Foreign Affairs*, VII, 556–570, 1929.

MONTAGUE, LUDWELL LEE. *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938*. Durham, 1940. Required reading for an understanding of the course of Haitian-American relations. Although the emphasis is placed upon diplomatic affairs, the author has a rare understanding of the culture of the Haitian people.

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MOMPREAU, LOUIS. *Anthologie d'un siècle de poésie haïtienne, 1817–1925*. Paris, 1925. Indispensable for the student of Haitian literature. 113

——— "Un Dominion intellectuel français." *Revue de l'Amérique latine*, VIII, No. 24, 332–341, October, 1924. A good sketch of Haitian literary history. 114

NELES, [MRS.] BLAIR. *Black Haiti*. New York, 1926. This, without professing to be a scholarly treatise, gives many excellent descriptions of Haitian life.

OULIÉ, MARTHE. *Les Antilles, filles de France*. Paris, 1935. A travelogue with a moral: the less American influence exerted upon the French-speaking Antilles, the better for them, especially Haiti.

PARENT, TIMOTHÉE. *Dans la mêlée*. Paris, 1932.

PARSONS, ELSIE CLEWS. *The Spirit Cult in Haiti*. Paris, 1928. Good.

PARSONS, ROBERT P. *History of Haitian Medicine*. New York, 1930. The only existing book of its sort. Haiti's medical history has not been long or illustrious; Dr. Parsons discusses the diseases of the country.

PAUL, EDMOND. *Les Causes de nos malheurs*. Kingston (Jamaica), 1889. One of the more penetrating criticisms of conditions in Haiti during the latter part of the nineteenth century.

——— *Questions politico-économiques*. Paris, 1861–63. 3 vols.

PAULTRE, ÉMILE. *Essai sur M. Price-Mars*. Port-au-Prince, 1933. A brief biography and appreciation of one of Haiti's leading modern savants.

PIERRE-LOUIS, DAMASE. *Les Mensonges de notre démocratie*. Paris, 1933.

PRESSOIR, CHARLES F. *Au Rythme des coumbites*. Port-au-Prince, 1933. A small collection of poems, mostly about native life.

——— *La Médecine en Haïti*. Port-au-Prince, 1927. Cursory.

——— "Pages de géographie économique." *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti*, vol. III, No. 6, April, 1932.

PREVOST, JULIEN (Comte de LIMONADE). *Relation des glorieux événements qui ont porté leurs Majestés Royales sur le trône d'Haïti*. Cap-Henry (now Cap-Haïtien), 1811. Chiefly an account of the conflict between Christophe and Pétion, with a fulsome panegyric of the former.

PRICE, HANNIBAL. *De la Réhabilitation de la race Noire par la république d'Haïti*. Port-au-Prince, 1900. Superficial.

——— *The Haytian Question*. New York, 1891. The then Haitian Minister to the United States comments upon the diplomatic relations between the two countries.

PRICE-MARS, DR. [JEAN]. *Ainsi parla l'oncle . . . Essais d'ethnographie*. Port-au-Prince, 1928. An indispensable book on Haitian life and belief by one of the country's leading historians, ethnographers, sociologists. The author not only has the confidence of the people among whom he does research, but also the intellectual equipment to write brilliantly about what he observes.

——— *La Vocation de l'élite*. Port-au-Prince, 1919. Written by one of the intellectual élite, this book is a devastating criticism of the futility on the part of the élite in condemning their African heritage, and of the refusal of the élite to participate constructively in the life of the country.

——— *Une Étape de l'évolution haïtienne*. Port-au-Prince, no date [probably 1930]. A survey of the intellectual and cultural achievements of Haiti.

RAMSFORD, MARCUS. *An Historical Account of the Black Empire of Hayti*. ("Compre-

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NOTE: This list is by no means complete; it merely gives a fair sample of the works of imagination whose scene is laid in Haiti, early or modern.

NOTE: *The author regards the following* works as the outstanding and indispensable ones for an understanding of Haiti:

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See the Bibliography for a detailed description of each.

2: Courlander B-S (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

The Drum and the Hoe is the result of studies made over a period of years. Several short sections of this book have appeared in substance in *Haiti Singing* (1939), the *Musical Quarterly*, the *Journal of Negro History*, and other journals. The song and story texts presented in several chapters were taken on disc and tape recorders during nine separate field trips to Haiti, between 1937 and 1955. They have been selected from more than six hundred examples recorded by this method.

Support for work on these recorded materials was received from the American Council of Learned Societies and the American Philosophical Society. Research on African survivals in the New World was aided by a Guggenheim fellowship. Originals or copies of some of the tape and disc recordings are now in the archives of Indiana University and Northwestern University.

The persons who helped me gather songs, stories, legends, and lore were innumerable. Many of them I did not know by name, but I want to thank them as well as the following friends for their open-hearted assistance in many ways:

Voluska Saintvil (Ti Goave), Joseph Dérosier (Cap Haitien), Julia Immacula (Southwest Haiti), Sighrien Bellis (Port-au-Prince), Vénéise Macélise (Léogane), André Jean (Morne l'Hôpital), Christophe Oxilas (Ti Goave), Edgar Dérosier (Port-au-Prince), Isnardé Din (Léogane), Wilfred Beauchamp (Port-de-Paix), Lydia Augustin (l'Asile), Louise Joseph (Port-au-Prince), St. Élia Alsandor (Jérémie), Georgette Alcède (Southwest Haiti), Éliaia Moron (Anse-à-Veau), Prosper Louis (Port-au-Prince), Télisman Charles (Morne l'Hôpital), André Charles (Morne l'Hôpital), Daïs Charles (Anse-à-Veau), Simon Jean (Pétionville), Tonton Cabrit (Morne l'Hôpital), Micano Cauis (Cap Haitien), Louis Desbornes (Port-au-Prince), André Coyotte (Port-au-Prince), Innomine Pierre (Morne l'Hôpital), George Gabriel (Port-au-Prince), Simeon Benjamin (Port-au-Prince), Romain St. Aude (Port-de-Paix), Jean Ravel Pintro (Jérémie), La France Belvue (Anse-à-Veau), Morgina La Vache (Jacmel), Alten St. Ville (Morne l'Hôpital), Abner Juslin (Port-au-Prince), Jean Louis La Rivière (Dondon), St. Jean Nago (La Gonave), Jean Pierre Marigot (Terrier-Rouge), Libera Borderau (Morne Mardi Gras), Charles Hector (Anse-à-Veau), Immacula Lorival (Southwest Haiti), Aléanne François (Port-au-Prince), Felix Charlotin (Southwest Haiti), Julie Gentil (Port-au-Prince), Lena Hibbert (Anse-à-Veau), Ti Yogan Borderau (Léogane), César Jeanbaptiste (Southwest Haiti) and Idamente Joseph (Ti Rivière de Nippes). Special thanks are due Aléis Conrolé, a *houngan* of the region of Morne Mardi Gras, who was generous in many ways in explaining the workings of the cult temple.

I am of course indebted to the work of a number of scholars, cited

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

celebrated with elaborate rituals for the dead. As in Haiti, great importance is laid on the presence of all living descendants, whose numbers are calculated to influence the ancestors' behavior. And as in Haiti, the first yams and the first rice are offered to the dead, and only after the family ritual does the family divide the crop.[5]

Service for the Assotor Drum

The *assotor* drum is the largest and most sacred of all Haitian drums. Around it is built an impressive and elaborate service known as the *mangé assotor*, which, according to local traditions and circumstances, may be held as often as every three years or as infrequently as every twenty-one years. The period between mangés always consists of an odd number of years. A houngan from Jérémie declared the service might properly be held every three, five, or seven years. Another cult priest in the Cul-de-Sac Plain said it could be held every seven, seventeen, or twenty-one years. The assotor is known as the *plus grand moune* (the most venerable "man") of the hounfor. However, few cult centers possess an assotor. "Assotor c'est fort bagaille, c'est pas zaffai tout moune" (The assotor is powerful, it isn't everybody's affair), Haitians say. This is what a man from Jérémie tells about it:

"The assotor is the greatest of all things in the hounfor. The Rada drums are only for the Dahomey nation. The Congo drums are for the Congo nation. The assotor is a man of Dahomey, but he is for all nations. It is for all loa—Pétro, Congo, Bumba, Dahomey. The assotor belongs to Dahomey, but when there is a great service the assotor is the host to the loa of every rite, the loa of Haiti and of Africa. When the assotor is played, the loa are awakened everywhere. Loa who have been forgotten by the Creoles (Haitians) will come to the service and mount people, and when the loa have gone, many people don't know what loa has been riding them. Some ancient spirits from far away come only to the assotor service, and when it is over they aren't heard of again.

"The assotor drum is not for small things, it is for great occasions. For some people there are no occasions in their whole lives great enough for an assotor service. When all other things have failed, it is only then that the assotor is called upon.

"If a big houngan should have an assotor drum, he can have only one, and it is the chief of the hounfor. All other drums are its servants. You can make an assotor, but it is not necessarily an assotor. It may look like an assotor and not be an assotor. To be an assotor it must not only have the shape of an assotor but it must be accepted by the loa. There was a houngan near Jérémie who made an assotor and held a great service with it,

[5] [Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana. Cf. p. 351, category 116. -- Analyst]

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house, which is on fire. But there is no grief, because Ogoun is the master of fire:

Pierre, Pierre Narcisse oh!	Pierre, Pierre Narcisse, oh!
Yago moula-é!	*Yago moula-é!*
Caille Ogoun boulé!	Ogoun's house is burning!
Gilslive Ogoun bel Di!	Ogoun's distillery is beautiful!
Na consolé! [Ex. 88]	We console ourselves!

Some of the ritual songs that have persisted through the years have lost their explicit meaning but continue to survive because of beautiful melodies and perhaps the strange images they evoke. Such a song is this one to the loa Atti Daï, from the Dahomey service:

Atti Daï oh!	Atti Daï, oh!
Yo'voyé dit moin	They sent to tell me
Min soleil malade! *	The sun was sick!
Quan'm té rivé	When I arrived
Moin joind soleil mouri!	I found the sun had died!
Quan'm té rivé	When I arrived
Moin joind soleil mouri!	I found the sun had died!
C'est regrettant ça	What grief it was
Pou'm enterré soleil! [Ex.89]	For me to bury the sun!

One of the truly lovely songs of the Dahomey rites, both in melody and in lyrics, is the following one to the deity Èzilie. It shows clear evidence of Catholic ritual influence in both its text and its music. Èzilie Fréda, who seems to be speaking most of the lines, is identified with the Virgin Mary, and the tone of this piece casts her more in her Catholic role than her African. The deity is speaking from Yagaza, a place described as being "on the other side of the water." In form the song is atypical in that it has more than one movement and progresses from one idea to another.

Èzilie Nainain oh!
Èzilie Nainain oh!
Èzilie oh, c'est moin Yagaza!

Èzilie n'ap marché n'ap couté n'ap parlé pou' temps y'ap parlé parole moin!
Èzilie n'ap marché n'ap couté pou' temps y'ap parlé parole mwé!
Èzilie Nainain oh!
Èzilie Fréda oh Nainain oh!
Èzilie Fréda oh, c'est moin Yagaza!

Mesdames nà yo chita nan caille là yo vlé djaillé oh tout temps soleil pas lévé!
Mesdames yo pasé ya tombé tè à génoux y'apé plainaint la sort yo!

* Some Haitian informants vouched that *soleil* meant "sun." Others felt that this word in the song was really Solé, a diminutive of Atisolé, another name for Atti Daï.

534 [177] the Haitian word for "twins." They are used primarily for secular music of the Cuban type, and may in fact be an importation from Cuba. The marassa is one of the few drums on which a finger technique is used; that is, striking with individual fingers rather than with grouped fingers. Marassas are often played in concert with guitars and marimbas.

The *basse* is the shallow finger drum resembling what in the United States is called the tambourine. Constructed in the pattern of an African prototype, its head is usually fifteen or eighteen inches in diameter and made of goatskin. Small metal disks sometimes are inserted in the frame [314] to act as rattles. The head is kept well coated with resin or beeswax and [237] is tapped and rubbed with the fingers. The *basse* is used only for secular music, except in the rare instances when it is used in Congo services. Some Haitians believe that the name of the instrument comes from the word *Basque*.

534 202 It is reported that signal drums were still in use a decade ago in remote sections of the southwestern peninsula. One of these instruments, according to description, is distinguished mainly by its large belly and small mouth; like the Juba drum, it is played on its side. Another style of signal drum has a slit in the side and is played erect, much like an African slit-log drum standing on end.

534 [171] Another percussion instrument is the bamboo stamping tube, called the *ganbo* or *ti kanmbo*. It is African in origin and probably takes its name from the Loango term for the same device, *dikanmbo*.[2] The stamping tube is simply a length of bamboo, open at one end and closed at the other by a natural joint membrane. The closed end is struck sharply upon the ground, and the tone comes from the open top. The device works like an inverted drum, the closed end functioning like a drumhead. A battery of four or five ganbos may provide the percussion music otherwise played by drums. The musician corresponding to the *bulatier* of the drum orchestra plays two small stamping tubes, one in each hand. The other musicians have one each, thicker and longer than the bulatier's and producing deeper tones. Cupped hands are manipulated over the open ends for varying the sounds. This instrument [171] has survived in various parts of the New World where Africans were settled, particularly other West Indian islands, Brazil, and Venezuela. In Venezuela the stamping tubes are called *quitiplas*.[3] They have recently been reported from various areas of West Africa, including French Equatorial Africa.[4]

534 648 798 The ganbos had a singular burst of popularity in Haiti during the United States military occupation of the country after the first World War, when drums were often seized and destroyed. Drums could not

[115] 2 [Informant: Joseph Lengo, Brazzaville. Cf. P 354, Category 116. --Analyst]
3 [Library of Congress album, Folk Music of Venezuela. Cf P 354 Category 116. --Analyst]
4 [Pamphlet accompanying recording Music of Equatorial Africa (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1950). Cf P 354, Cat. 116. --Analyst]

Except for the "aperture for the escape of the sound," the Bongo instrument is identical with the Haitian earth bow. The resemblance of the instrument to a spring snare strongly suggests that it may have been developed from some such device for catching game. This possibility is strengthened by the use of the earth bow among certain of the Bambarra hunters of the French Sudan as a game lure, the music played upon it being thought to have magical properties to attract animals to the region of the hunt.[9] A "portable" type of spring snare used among the Ashanti of Ghana is strikingly similar in form to the Haitian "portable" earth bow (see fig. 80).[10] 534 171 174

This instrument has survived not only in Haiti but in the United States as well. The washtub device that is an important part of American Negro folk music is a clear development of the earth bow. The washtub is inverted and a cord is attached to the tin bottom. The other end of the cord is fastened to a stick which is braced against the lip of the bottom side of the tub. The stick and the cord are manipulated precisely like the Haitian and African instruments. There is implicit evidence that the role of the washtub has been taken over in modern jazz orchestras by the double-bass fiddle. 534 171

Another device of African provenience is the Haitian *marimba* (also called *malimba*, *manimba*, and *marimbula*). It consists of a wooden box upon which a series of metal strips is mounted in such a way that they may be plucked with the fingers. In the face of the box, directly behind the keys, there is an aperture to permit the escape of the sound. The number of keys varies from three to seven or more, though some of them may produce duplicate tones. The instrument is usually about the size of a soap box. The musician sits upon it, facing the same way as the keyboard, and plays with his hands between his knees. The marimba is used for carnival music and for dances of the secular types, frequently in combination with a guitar, claves, and a cha-cha. It is a West Indian development of the small African *m'bila* or *sansa*, or "thumb piano." Several examples of the smaller instruments played with the thumbs have been found elsewhere in the West Indies, notably in Cuba,[10] and large forms of the sansa have been reported in recent years in Africa.

Among the instruments more or less restricted to religious service are whistles and small hand bells, which are used for invoking and saluting the loa and the dead. *Canaries* (large clay water vessels) also enter into ritual use. They are sung into, tapped with sticks, and on some occasions are covered with goatskin heads and played like a drum. 534 796

[9] [Fig 80 appears on p. 112-55. -- Analyst]
[9] [Informant: Sobihas Tore, Bamako. Cf. p. 354, [115]
[10] category 116. -- Analyst]
[10] [See Courlander, Op. Cit., p. 239. Cf. p. 354 cat. 116. -- Analyst]

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LIFE IN *A HAITIAN VALLEY*

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LIFE IN A HAITIAN VALLEY

PREFACE

HAITI has fared badly at the hands of its literary interpreters. 114
Condescension and caricature have been called upon, especially in recent years, to provide a short cut to an understanding of the people and their institutions. This has been glaringly true of descriptions of the religious beliefs of the peasantry, the so-called cults of "voodoo" and magic, for here are found the greatest distortion of fact, the most striking misrepresentations, and the largest measure of misplaced emphasis.

The consistency of the tone latterly taken toward this life is all the more remarkable because it is almost entirely absent from the works of the earlier writers on Haiti. For all these observers, the importance of the "voodoo" cult lay in the fact that it was a rallying point for slave revolt, and it was only with the tale of the cannibalistic "Congo bean stew," told by Sir Spencer St. John in 1880, that the accent on the more sensational phases of Haitian religion began to be heard. From his time onward, however, through the works of Froude, Franck, Pritchard, Seabrook, Blair Niles, Craige, Wirkus, and most recently, as in a rondo, back to the distorted version of the "Congo bean stew" given by Loederer, Haitian life has been told as a tale of mysterious forces in their most repellent aspects.

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114. It is interesting to speculate just why the life of the Haitian peasant, and, indeed, within the last decade, of the educated city dwellers, thus became a subject for lurid description. In its most honest manifestation actual misunderstanding or naiveté has undoubtedly been the cause; or it may be inferred that certain of the pictures drawn have been dictated by prejudice or by international political considerations. Finally, and within recent times most frequently, writers have seemed deliberately to distort and sensationalize their materials in order to attract to their work a desired notoriety.

The effect of this constant stress laid on the African cults in describing Haitian life has been not only to throw the entire picture badly out of focus, but to distract attention from the equally interesting phases of Haitian society which concern the everyday life of the people. Almost nowhere, aside from pre-Revolutionary eighteenth-century writings, can information be had about the workaday world. The rituals that accompany birth and death, the social and economic values that prevail, characteristic institutions such as the market or co-operative work-groups—one searches in vain for other than cursory mention of these in the later accounts. Even where a writer has included a discussion of such a co-operative organization as the Société Congo on the Isle à Gonave, emphasis is almost exclusively laid on its picturesque ceremonialism. Mention, it is true, is at times made of happy, "child-like" (the favored adjective), normal Haitians in the few pages that recent books have devoted to daytime activities. But with the dusk the "lumbering drums" are made to sound and the mysteries are again called upon to divert the reader.

114 105 182 Yet how are these descriptions of a hysterical, paranoid folk, ridden with fear of the dark forces of magic and the anger of vindictive gods, to be reconciled with the picture of the Haitian as he is shown in the second section of this book—of a man going about his affairs in matter-of-fact fashion, tending his crops, buying and selling, carrying on his amorous

conquests, establishing and providing for his family? The answer is that such a reconciliation is unnecessary where religion takes its place beside other interests and activities and where, psychologically, the supernatural world is on the same plane as the natural one, having its dangers as nature presents dangers, but also offering its compensations as do other phases of existence.

Investigations of native life such as this one not only require generous financial support, but have need of the sympathetic understanding of those in a position to extend helpful practical aid and advice in the field. To the many persons and institutions whose co-operation made this study possible, it is a privilege to record here my appreciation. Initial support of the work and later appropriations for preparing the material for publication were had from the Social Science Research Councils of Columbia and Northwestern Universities; while a grant-in-aid from the American Council of Learned Societies permitted the recording of songs in the field; and another from the National Research Council allowed motion pictures of motor behavior to be taken — films from which a number of the accompanying illustrations have been derived. Concepts relating to the problem of the results of contact between peoples possessing different customs, habits, and beliefs — a principle objective in the long-term program of research on Negro cultures of which this work in Haiti constitutes but a part — were sharpened through the discussions I have been privileged to have with my associates on the Committee of Acculturation of the Social Science Research Council, Professors Ralph Linton, Robert Redfield, and Donald Young.

Official aid in Haiti could not have been more generously accorded. The sympathy of His Excellency President Stenio Vincent, and M. Jacques C. Antoine, chief of the presidential secretariat in 1934 and at present Secretary to the Legation

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122 of Haiti at Washington, made for co-operation by all those in the government of whom it was necessary to seek assistance. Mr. Norman Armour, then American Minister to Haiti and now Minister to Canada, was kind enough to interest himself in this study and personally saw to it that its prosecution was facilitated in innumerable ways, while Colonel Vogel, U.S.M.C., then Major General commanding the Garde d'Haiti, was helpful at a number of strategic points, as was his successor, General Calixte. Aid and inspiration were derived from many friendly conversations with the two outstanding students of Haitian folk-life, Dr. Price-Mars and Dr. J. C. Dorsainvil. My indebtedness to the works they have published on the subject is shown by the references to their publications given at the end of this volume, for their researches must be accepted as basic by any serious investigator of Haitian customs. Their cordial advice to a fellow-student constitutes one of the most pleasant memories of this field-work, as does the assistance given me by Professor Camille Lhérisson, of the Haitian Medical College, and M. Henry G. Sylvain, Engineer of the Service des Travaux Publiques.

080 In the valley of Mirebalais itself, the friendliness of those with whom it was my privilege to associate is agreeable to recollect; if they are not named here individually, it is because of the wish of many of them to remain anonymous. However, to my friends Général Léonard Cantave, his sister, Mme. Vesta Cantave, M. Léonce Joachim, and M. Galbert Constance, I cannot sufficiently express my appreciation for their co-operativeness, for the geniality with which we held long discussions of interest to us all, and for the weight which their endorsement of this work carried with the members of the community at large. Similarly, and finally, I wish also 114 123 to record my deep gratitude for the assistance given me by my wife, who not only participated fully in the rigors of field-work, as she has participated in all other field expeditions undertaken in the course of this research program, but

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whose contact with the women of the valley made it possible to obtain information of a kind that would be entirely unavailable to a man working alone. In addition, she has given freely of her knowledge while I was engaged in the preparation of this book; it is only the force of circumstances that prevents it being a collaboration, as reports of our earlier field investigations have been. [114 [123]]

MELVILLE J. HERSKOVITS

South Woodbury, Vermont
14 August 1936

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LIFE IN A HAITIAN VALLEY

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LIFE IN A
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INTRODUCTION

THE VALLEY OF MIREBALAIS

THE TRAVELER comes suddenly on the valley of Mirebalais, as the road from the capital turns the shoulder of a hill. Long and narrow, the plain stretches before him with its many tones of green. Ahead is the village from which the valley takes its name, its metal roofs aglow in the sunlight, or reflecting the gray sky of the rainy season. Here and there appears a yellow, muddy slash made by the Artibonite River, while framing the valley are the mountains, rising one behind another as they complete its encirclement.

This first glimpse of the country gives no hint of a numerous population. It is as though this valley, like so many other things in Haiti, had set out to belie its own reality and, in this impression, at the very outset to point the lesson that the observer must seek well beneath the surface if he is to attain any understanding of the country and its people. For just as the unsettled appearance of this Haitian valley conceals numerous habitations, cultivated fields, and hard-working inhabitants, so the frenzy of Haitian religious rites is but a glow upon disciplined ceremonialism, and the relatively placid everyday existence of the Haitian peasant but a mask behind which is waged a spiritual conflict that is his heritage from the dual sources of his traditions.

The commune of Mirebalais is situated in the heart of central Haiti. Lying some thirty-five miles from Port-au-Prince,

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both town and district are bisected by the main route between the capitals of the Haitian and the Dominican republics. Yet, once again, this geographical nearness but distorts the psychological distance between Mirebalais and the metropolis. For though the busses, converted from camions, pass to and from the coastal city several times a week, the valley and even the town which is its center drowse in essential isolation. A few hundred yards off the main road find the Haitian peasant following the mode of life of his forebears, oblivious of events outside the valley. Only for a few of the *notables* of the town, the *gros nègres*, who have personal, political, or business contacts with Port-au-Prince, is the comparative proximity to the capital meaningful.

It is not possible to say how long this valley has been inhabited. Certainly the early Indians roamed there; and there, as in other parts of the island of Hispaniola, the tragedy of their extinction under the brutality of early Spanish rule must have taken place. Moreau de St. Mery, to whom all students of Haiti must acknowledge a debt of gratitude for his painstakingly accurate reports of life on the island, gives the derivation of its name.

> "Mirebalais received its name," he says, "because of the enormous numbers of wild animals the first Frenchmen found there, which recalled to them the small district in the region of Poitou [in France], called Mirebalais, where some of them had probably first seen the light of day. These quadrupeds, first introduced by the Spaniards, had no difficulty in multiplying there after the Indians had disappeared from their native land and the Spaniards, reduced in numbers, were obliged to abandon the great plains, so that horses, cattle, etc. came to exercise exclusive domain."[1]

St. Mery's work, which traces the development of Mirebalais as one of the parishes of pre-Revolutionary Haiti, makes it

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possible to gain a historical perspective of the valley in which our interest centers. As late as 1702, he tells us, only a few individuals were settled there, and these were mainly hunters and herders, since the policy of that day, based on the official belief that the future of the valley lay in using to the full its grazing resources rather than in the development of agriculture, caused all agricultural activity to be prohibited. Two decades later, however, when the cultivation of indigo had been successfully introduced, agricultural development proceeded apace. In 1739, in addition to more than a score of indigo-production centers, the valley boasted of numerous coffee, cotton, and cocoa plantations, and by 1789 was a recognized agricultural region.

But for the fact that the great plantations are no longer there, this aspect of life in Mirebalais has been little changed by revolutions and the abolition of slavery. Indigo, of course, has lost its place as an important product, while maize is now among the most significant crops, as might be looked for in the change from a plantation system to one of small individual ownership which was brought about by Haitian independence. But cotton and sugar-cane are still major crops, and coffee, which grows well on the mountainsides, is largely cultivated.

Moreau de St. Mery, writing in 1789, speaks of the French who peopled the valley as "still showing the traits which marked the early colonials. They are good, frank, brave, and opposed to all coercion." In 1723 "they marched with others from the district of the Artibonite" in an uprising against the arbitrary policies of the French West Indies Company, which Charlevoix, one of the first historians of Haiti, so vividly described.[1] In 1729 and 1736 the folk of Mirebalais defended their eastern frontier against attacks by the neighboring Spaniards; eleven years later one hundred and ten of them helped with the defense of the town of St. Louis, which was menaced by the hostile maneuvers of the British admiral

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Davers. In 1768 and 1769 they were "but tranquil spectators of the troubles caused by the re-establishment of the militia," the local military forces numbering at this time 260 whites and 291 *affranchis*, or free men of color.[8]

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This white population was made up chiefly of those who came directly from France or were born in the colony, but also included were the Acadians, one of the most interesting groups who settled in Mirebalais. Fleeing from Newfoundland, they were brought to Haiti before they were sent to Louisiana, and in the course of this migration left some of their number in the valley. It is recorded that on the 26th day of October 1764, in consequence of "a Memorial presented by the Chamber of Agriculture of Port-au-Prince, which stressed the healthfulness of Mirebalais,"[9] each of a number of these Acadian families was allotted a plot of eight hundred square paces, not far from the town. The ending of this episode, however, was not happy, for, transported into a tropical climate that failed to measure up to the claims made for it, the Acadians paid so heavy a toll that soon all trace of them vanished.

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But facts such as these tell little of the fundamental social and economic conditions of pre-Revolutionary Haiti, where Negro slavery constituted the foundation upon which the whole structure of life was erected. That Mirebalais was no exception to the prevailing economic regime is shown by Moreau de St. Mery's figures for the district, yet what stresses existed between the masters, the free persons of color, and the slaves, no record remains to show. Despite the fact that slaves and free men of color were accepted in the armed militia, the

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situation was far from tranquil. When, after the French Revolution, there were signs that the decree[10] which accorded to the free men of color political rights equal to those of the whites was in danger of being nullified in practice, it was at Mirebalais that the colored men assembled to insist on the enforcement of this order.[11] Together with some slaves they freed, they formed the nucleus of an army "that under the leader-

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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ship of a very intelligent mulatto named Bauvais " gained some successes " over the undisciplined forces in Port-au-Prince " and forced the inhabitants of the capital to recognize the power of this group by entering into a definite treaty with them.[8]

There are other indications that life in the valley did not fail to reflect the discontent of the black slaves. Writing in 1890, Mackenzie, who was the first British Consul-General to the Haitian Republic, remarked:

> " It is said by some of the best informed Haitians, that among the mountains that stretch from the neighbourhood of Mirebalais to the coast on the east of Jacmel, there is an extensive association of the descendants of the Maroon negroes, whose independence had been recognised long before the revolution by the then existing government. "[9]

It is thus apparent that the institution of *marronage*, whereby runaway slaves established themselves in the mountains, in many instances living for years beyond the reach of capture and free from attack, was known in Mirebalais as it was elsewhere. Mirebalais was also not without contact with the great heroes of Haitian history. Toussaint L'Ouverture conquered and lost the town several times before it became a strategic point " from which his lieutenants, Dessalines and Christophe, menaced Arcahaie and the plain of the Cul-de-Sac. "[10]

If but little has been recorded concerning Mirebalais before Haitian independence, even less is known of its later history. Mackenzie, reporting the population of Haiti district by district, gives that of Mirebalais in 1890 as 35,633; but in 1893 as only 18,037.[11] Whether the region included under the term " Mirebalais " differed at the two periods, or whether the hardships resulting from the internal strife that racked Haiti after independence had been gained took a toll of the size suggested by these figures cannot be said. That Mirebalais was an

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important point in the warfare between the northern Empire of Christophe and the southern Republic of Pétion is well known, since the boundary between the two, never definitely fixed, might be roughly considered as the Artibonite, control of which, as always, depended on also obtaining control of the strategic hills about the town.[11] It is not possible to discover more than approximate figures for the population of Mirebalais at the present time, since no census of the district has been made, and the most recent figure of 51,000 for the commune is derived from the baptismal records in the parish church.[12]

From the earliest years of settlement of the valley, the town has been the center of its life. The government of the commune is located here; here the courts sit; and here the best schools and the only church of the district are found. Yet it is a small town, numbering less than two hundred and fifty houses, and crossed by but three principal thoroughfares stretching north and south, with ten or twelve cross-lanes. The houses on the principal streets, rectangular and small, are built of wood, plastered over with clay, painted, and roofed with sheet iron. On the outskirts of the town the roofing is of straw, or banana-leaf thatch, while the walls themselves are made of twilled wythes. No house lacks its veranda, however small, where people may be seen sitting late of an afternoon and early in the evening, but the life of the women is lived chiefly in the courtyards behind these houses that line the streets, where the cookhouses are found and the storehouses, and where all work is done. The place, or town square, lies at the point where the principal route between Port-au-Prince and the Dominican border turns sharply to the east. Consisting of an acre or two of cleared land, it is overgrown with weeds except when, in preparing for festive occasions, the prisoners from the town jail may be seen spending long hours, machetes in hand, cutting the grass, a few blades at a time. North of the square stands the church, a substan-

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North of the square stands the church, a substantial structure with rounded arches in the Roman style, roofed over, like most other buildings, with galvanized iron. Other public buildings are the town hall — the Mairie — and the "Hall of Justice"; near by are the stone walls of a public building begun some years ago as a school, but destined apparently to house what is known as the "Bureau of Contributions," a euphemism for the tax-collector's quarters. Despite the fact that Mirebalais was one of the most difficult regions for the American occupation to subdue during the Caco uprising of 1918–20,[18] it was one of the first districts where the Garde d'Haiti was completely Haitianized, and from which all American Marine officers were withdrawn. Only a small detachment is stationed there at present. Its well-kept barracks are near the church, and the prisons form a part of the same compound, from whence issue daily the striped-suited prisoners, men and women, under guard or alone on parole, who do communal work in the town and the near-by countryside.

The town awakens at dawn to the chattering of domesticated guinea-fowl and the crowing of cocks. Occasionally a camion rumbles through the principal thoroughfare; more rarely an automobile dashes by in great clouds of dust on its way to Las Caobas, or Hinche, or Santo Domingo City. If it is a market day, the streets are early filled with country folk on their way to dispose of their produce, and the clatter from the market place behind the church is heard everywhere until the heat of the day brings a lull to all commerce, and drowsiness once more settles over everything. By mid-afternoon during the planting season, drums can be heard over the countryside. The sounds are not those of the "throbbing" vodun drums — though they have more than once been mistaken for them by travelers — but they set the rhythm for the communal work of the *combites*, which perform cooperative agricultural labor. As the rapid dusk follows the disappearance of the sun behind the mountains, the voices of

1: Herskovits E-4, 6 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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512 neighbors paying friendly visits and of playing children gradu-
[264] ally become stilled. It is the time for the evening meal. By nine o'clock at the latest all is quiet and Mirebalais, man and beast, is asleep.

796 The *vodun* drums are heard only on Saturday nights, and
527 then the dance must be sufficiently close to the town, and the wind in the right direction, for the sound to be audible.
[556] Permits for these dances must be obtained, and are regularly given by the police officials — or were in 1934 — and word is passed on that on a given Saturday certain households will give *vodun* dances. If the dances are held in the foothills to the west, the Tombe River must be forded, and the existence of such a barrier between the village and the site of the dance makes this a favorite region in which to hold them, even though they may have official sanction. During the rainy sea-
[484] son attendance at dances on the opposite bank of the Arti-
[501] bonite River depends on the height of the stream, for when it is in flood not even the dugout canoes of the Haitians can cross it, while the ferry which Moreau de St. Mery speaks of as having been established in 1789 does not even exist in local tradition.[14] Yet no dance lacks participants or spectators, for these occasions furnish the principal opportunity for recreation even as they fill their proper religious function. Early in
[498] the week discussions can be heard of the dances to be held, and though the official frown of the Catholic priest is always to be reckoned with, the importance of these dances, and the numbers who attend them, do not seem markedly lessened by
[554] this fact. Those whose social position in the community makes them more sensitive to such criticism merely take the precaution to slip quietly out of town after dark.

796 When occasions of local or national significance and church holidays are celebrated, the town is full of country folk and
[788] visitors from the cities. Christmas and New Year's, Mardi Gras and Easter are all periods for such celebrations, while the first Sunday of every month witnesses a religious procession

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MIREBALAIS

ABOVE, *A street.*

BELOW, *The place and the church.*

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[facing P. 10]

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ABOVE, *A country dwelling.*
BELOW, *A combite at work.*

(facing P. 11)

1: Herskovits E-4, 8 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

about the square that precedes the principal mass of the day. These processions, however, are as a mere rehearsal for the great procession held during the festival of St. Louis, the patron saint of the town. At that time the statue of the saint, carried by the faithful — among whom can be seen more than one perspiring *vodun* priest and *houngan* — is taken triumphantly through the streets to insure a good year. The nearness of the valley to the village of Ville Bonheur makes the great religious festival of Saut d'Eau, where the "miracle of the Virgin" is believed to have occurred, almost a local matter. And though Saut d'Eau lies well over the mountains, July 15 finds most of the population of Mirebalais away from home celebrating the miraculous revelation with folk from other parts of Haiti. May Day is celebrated as the "Fête de l'Agriculture," and two years ago a new day of rejoicing was added to the calendar of festivals. This is known as the "Festival of the Second Independence," the anniversary of the departure of the American Marines from Haiti, and is marked by the "illumination" of all houses the night before and a solemn discourse from the mayor after a Te Deum has been sung in the church.

Thus life in the valley of Mirebalais continues the course it has followed for the past two hundred years. Though its history, as we can reconstruct it, has been marked by turbulent periods, these have been far from the rule. It is true that because of its position it has always been a point to be defended, and often, both before and after the time of Haitian independence, it has been a region where decisive encounters with those who controlled the Spanish portion of the island have taken place. Not for many years, however, until the Cacos uprising against the American Marines, did Mirebalais experience military activities on any considerable scale. After the death of Charlemagne Peraulte, when his successor selected the valley as a strategic point to be defended, a large force of Marines was encamped near the confluence of the

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Artibonite and Tombe rivers just outside the town. Today Cacos who went through this campaign will tell how sniping was carried on from the "English fort" on the heights to the east of the town and will recount how dangerous it was made for Marines to go unguarded even to the river-banks to draw water. Yet after two or three years the overthrow of the Caco forces brought peace once more to Mirebalais. And while the intervention of the United States has caused significant changes in the larger aspects of Haitian economy and in the political life of the Republic as a whole, yet as concerns the inner life of the people of this valley it seems to have passed without any discernible effect.

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Today in the *place* are found three records of its past. The first of these, in the middle of the square, is a tall palm tree, which in Haiti is the emblem of its attainment of freedom and independence, and near it a rostrum symbolizing the authority of the central government. The second is the tomb of an overlord of Mirebalais when independent Haiti was not a republic. In florid lettering can be read the tribute engraved on its top:

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Ici
Dort de l'éternel sommeil
Pierre Casimir de Vincent
décédé le 13 Août 1896, à l'âge de 71 ans
de son vivant Duc de Mirebalais
et
Commandant de la 4ème Division
Militaire de la Province de
l'Ouest

"Passant, si tu admires les vertus militaires;
Respère les cendres de celui que repose en ce lieu."

De la part de son amie
Delphonnaise Delva.

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The third is a realistic reminder of the most recent occupation of the valley by foreign forces. Cut so deeply into the "tree of liberty" that not even the red and blue paint of the national colors with which its base is repainted annually can conceal it, and contrasting with the ornate inscription on the near-by tomb, is the following legend:

L. MARLOW
AUG. 15, 1920.
U. S. M. C.
DRUNK
AS
HELL
J. F. BROWN

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PART I

THE CULTURAL ANCESTRY OF THE HAITIANS

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CHAPTER I

THE AFRICAN HERITAGE

For the study of a civilization like that of Haiti, which is the result of close and continued contact between peoples with traditions as dissimilar as those of Europe and Africa, a peculiarly lively sense of time depth is needed. Yet though it has been repeatedly stated that Haiti is the child of Africa and France, even those who proclaim this emphatically fail too often to recognize the need for as detailed a knowledge as is possible of how the strands of history were woven into the fabric of Haitian cultural life. It is for this reason that before any description of the culture of Mirebalais can be attempted, not only must the names of the African tribes from which the Haitians were derived be given, but the broad characteristics of their cultures must be considered and, where possible, the classes of their population from which were derived the Negroes who were brought to Haiti. In addition, the importance of knowing the types of Frenchmen who migrated to the island during its colonial period and of understanding the modes of life they followed and presented to their slaves must be viewed as of the first order, while, finally, the manner in which these two sets of traditions were eventually forged into the structure of Haitian life as seen today must be analyzed if more than a superficial glimpse of this life is to result. 121

Writing in 1730, a Jesuit priest named Pierre François 175 567 162

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Xavier de Charlevoix [1] designated the following varieties of slaves found on the island: the *Sénégallois*, who are "of all the Negroes the best fashioned, the easiest to discipline, and the most adapted for domestic service"; the *Bambaras*, "tallest of all, but thieves"; the *Aradas*, "those who know agriculture best, but who are the proudest"; the *Congos*, "the smallest and the most apt at fishing," but who were most prone to desert their masters; the *Nagos*, "the most human"; the *Mondongos*, "the most cruel"; the *Mines*, "the most resolute, the most capricious, and the most subject to despair of themselves."

St. Mery, the importance of whose work has already been mentioned, gives a more detailed list than that of Charlevoix.[2] Of slaves who came from tribes living in the northern part of West Africa he names the *Sénégalais*, *Yolofles*, and *Foules*, the *Bambaras*, *Quiambas*, *Mandingues*, and *Sosos*, as well as Negroes from the Bissagot Islands, though the last two categories are reported as but sparsely represented in the colony of Santo Domingo. Following the coast of Africa round its great bend, he speaks of the *Bouriquis* and the *Mesurades*, or *Cangas*, as deriving from the region between Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast, while he notes the *Aradas*, the *Caplaous*, the *Mines*, the *Agouas*, the *Socos*, and the *Fantins*, as coming from the area between Cape Appolonia and the Volta River, an area whose tribes made substantial contributions to the Haitian slave population. Farther east, from what was known as the "slave coast" and today comprises Togoland, Dahomey, and western Nigeria, were brought the *Cotocolis*, "who inhabit the kingdom of *Coto*," the *Popos*, the *Fidas*, and the *Ardras*; while from the interior of the west coast the *Fonds*, the *Maïs*, the *Aoussas*, the *Ibos*, and the *Nagos* are mentioned. Slaves from Benin, in the Niger Delta, as well as the *Mokos* and other tribes of Calabar, were also present in Haiti, though again in small numbers. The basin of the Congo River, how-

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ever, contributed not only many slaves called by the name of that river, but also the *Mayombés*, the *Mousombés*, and the *Mondongues*, though the "true Congos" — the *Franc-Congos* — are listed as having been derived from Angola. As for the rest of the continent, "One does not see at all in Santo Domingo any Africans who have come from the remainder of the west coast of Africa, which ends at the Cape of Good Hope. . . ."[8]

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No final answer can be given about the extent to which these lists of tribal names may be regarded as valid, but the unanimity with which not only Charlevoix and St. Mery, but such other contemporary observers as Bryan Edwards for Jamaica, the Reverend C. G. A. Oldendorps for the Virgin Islands, John G. Stedman and Jan Jacob Hartsinck for Guiana — to name only four — recorded similar African regions and similar tribal names when writing of the slaves of other parts of the New World, offers strong corroborative testimony. Moreover, the fact that every tribal designation given in the lists of Charlevoix and St. Mery can be found on present-day maps of Africa in the approximate region they had indicated confirms the accuracy of these early lists.

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The characteristics of the various types of Negroes recorded by Charlevoix and St. Mery are not without interest. The Senegalese are described as tall and well made, and of an ebony color, their noses almost as straight as those of whites, their hair less tightly curled than that of other Negroes. They had the reputation of possessing a superior morality and were deemed warrior-like. St. Mery had nothing but the highest praise for the Senegalese slave.

> "He is a farmer, intelligent, good, faithful even in love, understanding, and makes an excellent domestic. Living on millet, maize, and rice, he is very sober, excellent in caring for animals, discreet, and above all taciturn, a quality sufficiently rare among the Africans and

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195 which one does not find often enough even among civilized peoples."

Not all of the Mohammedan slaves, however, had the desirable qualities of the Senegalese. The Bambara, for example, were depicted as insolent and not always to be trusted, as the designations "those who steal turkeys" and "those who steal sheep" would seem to indicate.

The people between Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast were known as a hardy group prone to revolt and desertion; they were not held desirable as slaves, and thus it is not strange that few of them were found in the colony. A similar appraisal was made of the Gold Coast Negroes, for while they were described as generally well made and intelligent, they were also assessed as unreliable, deceitful, lazy, given to flattery, great consumers of food, drunkards, and wantons. And as for the Fanti and the Mina, they were spoken of as "extremely proud, waging constant warfare, capricious, and ready at any time to commit suicide."

The Negroes of the Slave Coast were favorites in Santo Domingo. Their characteristic lighter skin-color, to be observed at the present time in their peculiar yellowish or reddish hue, confirms their provenience. They were thought intelligent but avaricious, and were designated as "eaters of dogs." The Ardra women, "continuous talkers," and quarrelsome, were rarely employed as domestics, since the Negroes from the region of Dahomey apparently learned French with the greatest of difficulty, so that to understand their speech was considered to be the greatest test "for those who flatter themselves that they have command of Créole."

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195 The Ibos were found excellent for work in the fields, yet difficult to manage, for the slightest fault-finding or ridicule caused them to commit suicide,

"the idea of which, far from terrifying them, seems to hold an attraction for them, for they believe in the trans-

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> migration of souls. Too often it has come about that the *Ibos* of a given plantation have agreed all to hang themselves, in order to return to their country."

So well recognized was this tendency of the Ibo slaves to commit suicide, that they were described in Créole by the formula: "*Ibos pend' cor' a yo*—The Ibos (are those who) hang themselves." None the less, many slaves from this tribe were acquired. Their strong communal and tribal ties made it advantageous for those who owned them to obtain more of them, since newcomers "were accorded help, care, and instruction by those who had preceded them."

According to St. Mery, the Negroes most common in the colony came from the Congo coast and Angola, and were known by the generic term *Congos*. The *Franc-Congos*, who came from the kingdoms of Congo and Angola, were

> "of a docility and gayety that makes them much desired. Loving song, dance, and ornaments, they make excellent domestics, while their intelligence, their facility in speaking a pure Créole, their jovial countenances without markings . . . cause people to prefer them for house-servants; they also make good laborers and good fishermen."

That the large numbers of Congo Negroes imported into Haiti have left no more of the elements of their culture in the island than are found is perhaps due to this very devotion to their masters, for a lively tradition of the present tells how, during the slave revolts, the Congo Negroes most often remained on the side of their masters and most often betrayed their fellows.

Not all the Negroes from the Congo area were as amiable as these just mentioned. The *Mandongos* had "the most execrable excess of eating their fellows." This quotation gains special significance because of the prominence which it has

been given through its use to substantiate the many charges of cannibalism in Haiti that have been made. Yet those who, desirous of establishing such cannibalism, quote this passage from St. Mery do not always remember to quote it in its complete context:

> "Some of these butchers of human flesh are also brought to Santo Domingo . . . where, as in Africa, they are the horror of the other Negroes, notably of the Congos, who, because of their nearness to them [in Africa], are most exposed to their cruelties."[6]

These are thus the tribes who were presumably the most important in the Negro ancestry of the Haitians of today. Was there any least common denominator in language which made it possible for slaves fresh from Africa to communicate with one another after their arrival in Haiti? Was there sufficient similarity in their cultures so that this might form the basis for a retention of African beliefs and behavior despite the vicissitudes of slavery? And what were the characteristics of the African civilizations of these people?

The picture of West African life, as it is commonly drawn, emphasizes the great number of small tribal groups following dissimilar modes of life, speaking mutually unintelligible languages, and worshipping different gods. In a very general sense this is not untrue. On the face of it, the number of languages that are spoken in the area from which the slaves were derived would seem to have constituted an effective barrier not alone to any concerted action on the part of slaves, but even to communication between them, especially since in many regions of the New World it was a fixed policy to separate slaves from the same tribe.

Yet behind this semblance of sharp dissimilarities lies a basic unity of language and culture in all of West Africa, so that though languages were and are mutually unintelligible, structurally and idiomatically they are much the same. This

is why Creole, not alone in Haiti, but also in Martinique, in Trinidad, and in Louisiana, like Negro English in other portions of the New World, shows such consistency in structure and idiom. The slaves, having mastered a requisite number of words in the language of their masters, merely poured them into this mold of their own linguistic patterns and, approximating the phonetic values of such words in terms of the West African modes of speech, thus established a means of communication between one another, no matter what their tribal derivation.*

The region of West Africa which furnished the slaves was an area of great and settled political entities. Here were to be found the Fula and Mandingo empires in the western portion of the area, and the Hausa kingdom in northern Nigeria; the Ashanti and Fanti states in the Gold Coast, and, to the east, the kingdoms of Dahomey, of Yoruba, and of Benin; southward, those of Kongo and Loango. In all this vast territory law and order reigned, and regimentation of behavior under the direction of kings and priests was the rule. With this went a discipline that so deeply stamps African tradition that even the many years of European dominance have not been able to efface it.

The social life in this area, as well as its political organization, is to a very considerable extent a unit. Polygyny, the institution whereby a man may have more than one wife, is found in the entire region. Everywhere descent is counted on one side of the family, either the male or the female, and the larger significant relationship groupings that are composed of those who regard themselves as descended from a single and often mythical totemic ancestor are equally characteristic. Discipline rules within the family as well as outside it and is exacted from the earliest days in the life of a child. Needless to say, it is a far cry from this ordered state of society to the disorganized life which the stereotype of the "savage African" envisages.

Despite the influence of Mohammedanism in the north, there are certain similarities in religion to be found everywhere. Even among the Mohammedans, magic is as potent as it ever was, and as St. Mery correctly observed for his time regarding the Mohammedan slaves, the aboriginal gods have by no means been forgotten. On the west coast and in the Congo, however, pagan religions having a degree of complexity which accords with the complexity of the other aspects of these civilizations are found everywhere. Magic constitutes only one aspect of these systems in which pantheons of deities, each pantheon and each member of each pantheon with its special function, are held to control the destinies of the world and of man. The ancestral cult is another important aspect of West African belief, with the spirits of the dead envisaged as living on in another world, yet alert to manifest power for good or evil among their descendants. Not only in cosmology, but in ceremonialism as well are there patterns that characterize all West Africa. The worship of the gods through the dance, and the phenomenon of possession of devotees by their deities; the place of song in worship, and the special character of this music; the use of drums and other percussion instruments such as the rattle and iron gong in religious rites; these again are elements which all slaves in Haiti, no matter what their tribal affiliations, had in common.

Nevertheless, as one studies Haitian folk-customs and folk-belief today, recognizable survivals of traits from the cultures of all the tribes that have been named are not to be found in anything approaching a comparable degree. Little of Senegalese practice is to be seen at present, while similarly, at least in the valley of Mirebalais, far less Congo derivatives can be discerned than would be expected when the vast number of Congo slaves imported into Haiti are recalled. Practically, no traces of Gold Coast or Ivory Coast custom and belief are discoverable; the word "Ibo" appears from time to time, and several Ibo gods are worshipped; Nago deities, as will be seen,

manifest themselves in large number. The majority of African traits, however, derive from the geographical center of the slaving area, especially from the region of Dahomey. Even the famous word "voodoo" is Dahomean, as all Haitian writers and some Europeans and Americans have recognized. Whatever its meaning in Haiti at the present time, its derivation is clear. It is the *vodun* of the Fón-speaking people,—a word which is best translated as "god." Names of gods, and social and economic institutions, point their origin to this same Dahomean source. This being the case, it may be well to give a general description of the civilization of these Dahomeans, as an aid in the interpretation of the various phases of Haitian peasant life which are to be considered in the ensuing pages.[4]

In their basic attitude toward life the people of Dahomey have achieved a blend between co-operation and competition. Living in a society which, from before the time of contact with the Europeans, had a pecuniary base, with its resulting competitive drives, the desire to gain wealth both as an end in itself and for the prestige to be derived from its display is outstanding in native psychology. At the same time, and most particularly in the field of production, co-operative endeavor is to be found throughout the kingdom. As with all West African folk, agriculture is the most important element in Dahomean economy. Other forms of production are iron-working, brass-casting, weaving of cotton and raffia cloth, the making of appliquéd designs on ceremonial cloths, and the manufacture of pottery.

A large part of the heavy labor in Dahomey is done by means of the co-operative groups known by the term *dokpwe*. These associations not only clear the fields, but do the strenuous work of erecting walls for houses and compound enclosures and of thatching. When work is to be done, the one who is in need of the services of a *dokpwe* goes to the chief and arranges for the men to work for him on a given day. If he

is wealthy and the task is a considerable one, he may call two or three *dokpaw*. No fee is paid these men for their services. If a field is to be hoed, each worker takes responsibility for a row, and the line of men moves down the acreage to be prepared for planting to the rhythm of drums and gongs, and to the accompaniment of songs which are at once the most characteristic and the most joyous aspect of this communal labor. Yet the intrusion even of this co-operative spirit by the competitive drive is not absent, for if two or more groups are employed, each strives to outdo the other, while if only one *dokpaw* is working, it is divided into two squads which contest to see which one can hoe the larger plot. The reward for victory is the privilege of singing songs of derision against the laggards. When the assigned task has been completed, recompense takes the sole form of a feast, whose lavishness varies with the resources of the host for whom the work has been performed.

One aspect of West African agricultural production which is significant for the understanding of New World Negro slavery was the institution of the plantation. The fact that slavery was widespread in West African society is well known, but it is not so clearly understood that forms of African slavery existed which were far different from the comparatively mild and personal form of household servitude that is generally associated with that region. In Dahomey, and probably elsewhere along the west coast, members of the ruling class were wealthy landowners who carried on large-scale production, utilizing great numbers of slaves. These slaves were looked after by overseers who were responsible to their employers, to whom they were often related by blood. It is unnecessary to stress the importance of this fact, since not only was the slavery to which the Negroes were brought in the New World familiar to them as an institution, but work on plantations was also not unknown to them.

The primary mechanism of distribution in Dahomey and

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in all West Africa is the market. In the markets, which rotate from locality to locality in accordance with the days of the Dahomean four-day week, foodstuffs and all other products are to be found. One outstanding fact concerning West African markets is that most of the trading is carried on by women, whose economic position in the culture is a very favorable one. What women produce is theirs, to be disposed of as they wish, and the proceeds cannot be alienated by father, husband, or son. So complex is the economy of distribution that both retail and wholesale centers are to be found, and, concomitantly, a middle class exists which is not unlike that known to European countries. Its members, usually women, are not primary producers, but make a living by buying the foodstuffs at the wholesale markets that they later resell at a profit in the retail centers of trade.

Before the conquest of Dahomey by the French, the monarchy towered above the structure of Dahomean life. Firmly established in its absolutism, with an efficient administrative organization, there was no activity in the land which it did not invade and supervise. Regimentation was the order of the day, and, despite European control, has persisted to the present. It is not strange that in these highly organized kingdoms such as Dahomey, the common West African secret societies were absent, for secrecy is an invitation to revolt, and where such despotism reigned as was found in the native kingdoms of the area, efforts were not spared to see that no subversive movements were nurtured.

The household is the smallest unit of Dahomean society, and has its physical expression in the compound, a group of individual houses surrounded by a wall. Polygyny, as elsewhere not only in West Africa but over the entire African continent, is the rule, an institution which everywhere follows the widespread African belief that it is not wise for two wives to occupy the same house. The inner life of the Dahomean household is, of course, deeply conditioned by this fact of plural marriage.

Since the institution brings no reproach, the wives, living in separate dwellings, inhabit the same compound, and often welcome newcomers. Each woman in her turn cohabits with her husband during one Dahomean week of four days and during this time lives in his house, prepares his food, and otherwise cares for him. At the onset of pregnancy, a wife drops out of this regime, and does not again take her place until after her child has been born and its period of lactation is ended — a period of nearly two years and a half. Though a person in most cases belongs to his father's family, the intimate personal relationship is that between a mother and her own children. Marked affection between father and children is the exception rather than the rule, something that is reflected in the fact that though controversy over the disposal of a father's property almost invariably follows his death, the disposal of a mother's goods is rarely marked by dissension.

A compound is headed by its oldest male, and several adjoining compounds, all of whose inhabitants constitute an "extended family," heed the word of the oldest of all the brothers who are the heads of the individual units which make up the complex of households. Finally, the members of these extended families who count descent (in the male line) from the same mythological ancestor form still larger relationship groupings, which may be termed totemic sibs. As might be expected, the ranking group is that in which the descendants of royalty hold membership, and its reputed ancestor, or totem animal, the leopard, is sacred here as it is in most of West Africa. The ancestral cult of West Africa must be conceived as much a part of social organization as of religion, for the worship of the ancestors validates for sib and family heads the control they exert over the members of their relationship group. Not only are the souls of the dead powerful, but their powers increase with time. And with the inevitable logic of this belief, it is held that the souls of those who have been

most powerful for good or evil during their lifetime remain and exert greater powers after their death than ordinary folk, so that it follows that the living must see to it that the dead of their families do not become dissatisfied and impatient with them. From this stem the elaborate funeral rites, the lavish expenditures in the ceremonies of the ancestral cult, and the meticulous care to insure the sacrifice of whatever is demanded by the ancestors; for should these matters be neglected, the penalties exacted by the dead, who in time themselves become deities, follow relentlessly in a manner not far different, as a matter of fact, from the sanctions that, as will be seen, are exacted by the dead in Haiti when the rituals of death have been neglected.

Dahomean religion consists of a well-knit, closely organized system of belief which falls logically into several sub-categories.[1] The first of these concerns the Great Gods; the second has to do with a series of semi-public or familial deities associated with the silos, and the gods of the ancestral cult; the third comprises a group of personal powers or forces which include the deities behind the all-important divining cult and the souls of men; while the fourth is that of magic. Dahomean religion is most closely related to that of the Yoruban people, though in its general structure it may be taken as a more complex and explicitly stated form of the religions which characterize the cultures of all West Africa.

The three subgroups of the first category, that of the Great Gods, comprise pantheons of nature deities, which are given the generic designations of Mawu-Lisa, the Sky, Sagbata, the Earth, Xevioso or Sogbo (known in Haiti by this as well as the Yoruban designation of Shango), Thunder and the Sea. Each deity of these pantheons has its special function within the general range of powers of the group as a whole. The worship of the gods is carried on at stated periods in temples specially set aside for the purpose by priests and devotees who have undergone varying periods of initiation and have learned

[1] [Cf. Herskovits, M. and F. (I), passim. Cf. p. 327, Category 116. — Analyst]

so speak the special "languages" of their particular cults. One aspect of this initiation,[8] which has been carried over almost unchanged into some parts of Haiti (though not into Morisiania) is the ordeal by fire, in which the novitiate must plunge his hand into a pot of boiling cornmeal and rest his foot on the red-hot stones which support the pot.

The role of the family deities has already been given; of the third category, that of the personal forces, one finds first of all the soul, of which each individual is conceived as having three. More important is the cult of Fa, or Destiny, which came to Dahomey from the Yoruba, and is a part of a widely spread system of discovering the destiny of a man that characterizes not only West Africa and the remainder of the continent, but most of the Old World. In Dahomey today this end is carried out by assessing the significance of the various permutations and combinations of sixteen palm kernels "thrown" by the diviner. In addition there exist traditionally earlier and less "official" methods of divining, which in the main are those which have survived in the New World. Intimately associated with both the soul and the destiny of man is the deity who is at once a member of the great pantheons and one of the most personal of all the gods, Legba, whose African importance is attested by the extent to which he is today worshipped in many parts of the New World, and by his universality in Haiti. From the point of view of Dahomean philosophy Legba may be regarded as the god of accident, who gives to man a "way out" in a world ruled by an otherwise inexorable fate. Gross in his appetites and capricious, he is, nevertheless, beloved by the Dahomeans, and though his name is usually erroneously translated by the European term "devil," no appellation could be farther from reality. Of particular significance for his role in Haitian life as guardian of the crossroads and of the *barrière* is his place in Dahomean theology, since it is said: "Before the gods can

[8] [i.e., The initiation of devotees by priests into the religious cults of Dahomey.—Analyst]

est, Legba must be fed" — in other words, Legba is inter- [070]
locutor between man and gods.

Another figure in this category of personal deities is Dã. Briefly, it would seem that Dã is an abstraction, used to designate anything sinuous, which moves silently, undulates, and cannot be controlled. It is the principle of movement, of energy, of life itself, and, by extension, of fortune. Often spoken of as a serpent, Dã is nevertheless but the principle of mobility. If not cared for, it will weaken, be preyed upon by others of its kind, and a man's fortune will disappear. Why, then, has this Dahomean serpent cult in its Haitian form been given so important a place in the writings on Haitian religion? In the first place, the principle represented by Dã is symbolized by serpents. Again, a myth describes the rainbow serpent to be one of a pair of great snakes, the other of which lies coiled beneath the earth to support its weight, that it may not fall into the sea. But most important of all is the regard for the snake in Whydah, where it is believed to be the mythical animal ancestor of the large relationship group whose center is that coastal city. The rainbow serpent is Dã Aido Weda, [096]
sometimes known as Damballa Weda, whose importance as a Haitian deity is mentioned in all works which treat of Haitian religion, while Danghe, so often found in the literature on Haiti, is, however, this Whydah totem which with time has also been adopted more widely. Thus much that has been [096] [097]
written of serpent-worship in this region of West Africa — the place of origin of the patterns of most of the religious cults found in Haiti today — is the result of misconception resulting from a failure to analyze this belief to its ultimate significance.

It remains but to speak of magic. Magic in West Africa is not an isolated phenomenon, but is closely integrated with the other aspects of religion. In Dahomey magic charms are sold by professional workers of magic, but the derivation of the

powers which actuate their charms are variously ascribed to Legba, the Earth gods, and, most importantly, the "little folk" of the forest. Acceptance of the power of magic, however, is by no means confined to Africa, for it is characteristic of all the Old World, if not universal. Hence, as will be seen, the belief in magic held by the Africans who were imported into Haiti met with the corresponding beliefs of the Europeans who were their masters, so that today Haitian magic represents almost a complete merging of these two.

This, then, in briefest survey constitutes the culture which predominantly gave the Haitian people the African elements found in Haiti today. But the types of Europeans and of European behavior with which the slaves came into contact are also important and must next be examined, for it was these European patterns that, under contact, impinged upon the African habits of thought and action in such a way that, merging with the aboriginal customs, the Haitian culture found today was eventually shaped.

CHAPTER II

WHAT THE SLAVES FOUND IN HAITI

Thought by the time of the French Revolution "the immense army of slavery had increased to such proportions that in the face of it the white world seemed reduced to a mere handful of men,"[1] this was by no means the case in the earliest days of the colony of Santo Domingo. As late as 1681 the whites outnumbered the Negroes almost three to one,[2] and it is not until a hundred years later that, in the words of St. Mary, there were "eleven and three tenths slaves for one white."[3]

Yet in the fashioning of the present-day culture of the Haitian peasants, this "mere handful" exerted an influence out of all proportion to its size. That this should have occurred is not strange in view of the relationship between Negroes and whites, which was that between slaves and masters; that it did occur is amply shown in the contemporary accounts of Haitian and West Indian life, which tell us how the Negroes everywhere made conscious efforts to achieve the standards of those who to them represented power, wealth, and position. But while the prestige of the master-class must be acknowledged, care must be taken not to accept uncritically an assumption that has colored many accounts of the lives of primitive peoples who have come into contact with European

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cultures — namely, that the traditions and beliefs of these groups cannot withstand the impact of what is termed "civilization." What invariably seems to follow when peoples having differing customs, beliefs, and cultural heritages come into continuous contact is that both give, and each takes. What aspects of the new culture a given people will take, and what in turn they will give, must vary according to the particular historical situation under which the contact occurs. But both processes do go on, and, as will be shown in the case of Haiti, though the Negroes retained much of their African culture, they also freely took over and adopted the customs and behavior of the Europeans among whom they lived.

Certain questions, therefore, must be asked about this white element in the population. To what extent was it a unit in its derivation and in its special customs — did its members come from a single social class of the home country, or were all elements of French society represented? What were the patterns of family life, of religion, of economic organization, of morals, which the whites presented to Negro eyes? These are matters of great significance, for one telling factor in the mingling of cultures is the type of carrier through whom contact between civilizations is effected. If, for example, European missionaries or traders or administrators on short tenure and without their families are introduced into an area, a far different picture of European life will be presented to the native from that were immigrant settlers to come among them with their wives and children; and this result, moreover, to seek finer distinctions, will show additional divergencies according to the social position of these migrants. Therefore it is necessary to consider the types of Frenchmen whose modes of living were to influence the behavior which the descendants of their slaves were to perpetuate when these had attained their freedom as individuals and their independence as a nation.

The "Corps of Adventurers" who in 1652 comprised the dominant element in the population of Haiti included four

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groups: the boucaneers "who were occupied with the hunt," the filibusters "who cruised the seas," the habitants, "who cultivated the land," and the bondsmen "who, for the most part, lived with the habitants and the boucaneers."[4] Letters of the period permit a somewhat more detailed description of the social groupings of pre-Revolutionary Haiti than that just given — a matter of some importance, since it must have been at this time that the merging of African and European civilizations was at a stage when the basic outlines of its eventual structure were being formed. The early population seems to have been made up in large part of the flotsam and jetsam of Paris: "a sort of obligatory enrollment of criminals, an enforced recruiting of emigrants from those elements of the metropolitan population judged unassimilable"[5] — those who were without means of support or under suspicion of crime, insolvent debtors, "adventurers," and those for whom emigration represented the sole existence open to them.

The *engagés*, or bondsmen, were those who, lacking the funds to pay their passage, pledged themselves to planters for a period of three years. During this time they were treated like the Negro slaves, and at the expiration of their terms were turned into the world with little enough to show for their hard labor.[6] The Protestants who migrated to Haiti were a far different type of settler, but these were few in number, and some, such as the fifty-eight who came to the island in 1687, traveled in the very ships which brought convicts condemned to hard labor for life. Ex-convicts and escaped criminals, discharged soldiers and deserters were also found. In many instances, however, persons of these types seemed by their achievements to have proved themselves not undesirable additions to the population. "I have had 500 of them whom I have placed," wrote one M. de Cussy in 1686; "they are industrious folk, and the planters are very pleased with them." One escaped criminal, who was not discovered as such until many years after he had come to the colony, was permitted to buy

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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175 563 his freedom for ten thousand *livres*, "which," an official report stated, "will be used to build prisons in the Cul-de-Sac." Another did so well in his new home that, though his past was known, he was never molested and died the owner of twenty-two Negro slaves.[7] Others who came to Haiti were sent there for reasons of waywardness, or because they had been involved in escapades that threatened trouble for them or their families, or because, showing no aptitude for gainful employment, their relations chose to send them to the colony rather than to be burdened with their support. Of these early colonists de Vassière says, with apparent justification: "In truth the morale and the manners of this population were what they might be supposed to have been, execrable."[8]

These categories, however, do not give the full tale of the non-Negro peoples who eventually contributed of their blood [567] to the present-day Haitian population. In the earliest times the Spaniards sold white as well as Negro slaves to the New World, as numerous *assientos* testify. Before the time of French control of the western portion of the island, Haiti must have received her proportion of these unfortunates.[9] French women, many of them women of the streets, some mere girls who had come from convents, were imported in the early days to encourage the buccaneers and the filibusters to lead a more settled life.[10] In 1696, when the French abandoned the island of St. Croix, its inhabitants, both masters and slaves, were transported to Haiti, there to re-establish themselves on land allotted to them by the government.[11] Acadians from Newfoundland were landed at the Mole St. Nicholas in 1764, and, as has been mentioned, some of them were eventually settled in the valley of Mirebalais, there to disappear after a few years.[12] At about the same time, in accordance with a policy of increasing the white population, 2,470 Germans were brought to the island. Unlike the Acadians, these people thrived and developed an extensive cultivation of coffee, and their colony was in a healthy state at the time of the French

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Revolution.[13] St. Mery also records the importation and sale in 175
1730 of more than five hundred Natchez Indians from New 563
France (Louisiana) "as well as others at a later date, both from Louisiana and Canada."[14]

A final class of settler must be mentioned, whose coming is 175
reported to have given a better tone to the drab picture of 563
Haitian life. This class was composed of members of the 565
French nobility, who in their new home attempted to maintain the standards which characterized and regulated their lives in France. Unlike many of the earlier inhabitants, to whom the difficult life of the planter did not appeal, the nobles tended to continue their status as country gentlemen in their new environment, and, by establishing plantations, to reproduce in so far as was possible, their situation in France as a group of landed proprietors. As a result, there soon grew up 175
between these planters living on their estates and the popula- 563
tion of the cities and towns the same distinctions of caste and 565
the same blind rivalry which, before the Revolution, sepa- 369
rated the French country squires and the city dwellers in France itself.[15]

The existence of these two classes within the white population of the colony, which is commented upon by many writers of the period, must have presented to the Negro slaves strikingly different views of the life of the whites. In a manuscript of Moreau de St. Mery, at present in the archives of the Ministry of Colonies in Paris, a group of some two hundred of these gentlefolk who in 1763 lived in the region of what today is Cap-Haitien, in northern Haiti, is spoken of as that of a special class, and their existence is contrasted with that of the city folk. Living on their plantations, with the cultivation of which they were exclusively occupied, their mode of life was different from that of the inhabitants of the cities and towns, where were found dealers in wholesale produce, officers of the crown, lawyers, solicitors, and merchants. Some forty years later another writer, writing from the point of view of the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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175 563 565 369 [463] planters and expressing their contempt for the townspeople, speaks of the towns as existing primarily to serve the needs of these country squires as centers for the storage and disposal of their produce: "There are found merchants, artisans, judges, recorders, solicitors, notaries, bailiffs, doctors. But one finds neither nobles, men of property, nor persons of wit and perception."[16]

175 364 563 The physical aspect of the cities had little to recommend them, especially since the utter lack of sanitation made for extreme uncleanliness in all Haitian centers. This fact is of special interest in the light of the frequent references to this trait of Haitian cities in the writings of those Europeans who described the life of independent Haiti. Invariably in such accounts the littered state of the streets, even in the capital, is stressed, and tendered as evidence of the absence of civilization in this Negro Republic.[17] Even though occasional mention is made that this state of affairs existed before the Revolution, nowhere, whether in St. John or in the later writers who date from the time of the occupation of the country by the United States Marine Corps, is there any realization that this condition antedates the independence of Haiti. The cleanliness of Africans in Africa wherever the natives have ready access to water has been well attested, and is still true in those regions from which the ancestors of the people of Haiti principally derive.

175 571 368 563 Yet some aspects of life in the towns livened the picture of Haitian colonial existence. Outstanding were the opportunities offered by these centers for social intercourse, and even for intellectual and artistic stimulation of a kind, such as was afforded by the famous *Cercle des Philadelphes* of Cap Française, dedicated to literary, philosophical, and, above all, to political discussions.[18] Masonic lodges, later taken over by the Negroes and today of appreciable importance in Haiti, were also instituted by the French, the first having been founded at the Cap in 1740.[19] Purely social meeting-places, such as public

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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baths or public halls, were in operation, while in the towns of Cap Français, Port-au-Prince, Leogane, Saint-Marc, and Cayes, theaters were established which produced "the latest plays from Paris" and attracted large audiences.[39]

Despite all this, the canker of homesickness constantly gnawed at the colonists even in the towns — the feeling that a stay in the colony was only for the interval needed to allow a man to escape to the mother country with a fortune. On the estates the loneliness and isolation of plantation life are commented upon repeatedly. A letter of the period, without place or date, found in the family papers of the historian de Vassière, discusses this with poignancy:

> "Have pity for an existence which must be eked out far from the world of our own people. We here number five whites, my father, my mother, my two brothers, and myself, surrounded by more than two hundred slaves, the number of our negroes who are domestics alone coming almost to thirty. From morning to night, wherever we turn, their faces meet our eyes. No matter how early we awaken, they are at our bedsides, and the custom which obtains here not to make the least move without the help of one of these Negro servants brings it about not only that we live in their society the greater portion of the day, but also that they are involved in the least important events of our daily life. Should we go outside our house to the workshops, we are still subject to this strange propinquity. Add to this the fact that our conversation has almost entirely to do with the health of our slaves, their needs which must be cared for, the manner in which they are to be distributed about the estate, or their attempts at revolt, and you will come to understand that our entire life is so closely identified with that of these unfortunates that, in the end, it is the same as theirs. And despite whatever pleasure may come from that almost ab-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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175 181 569 501 563 solute dominance which it is given us to exercise over them, what regrets do not assail us daily because of our inability to have contact and correspondence with others than these unfortunates, so far removed from us in point of view, customs, and education." [21]

175 569 501 423 563 This letter speaks of the presence of five whites. The psychological state of the planter who, unmarried and alone, spent his days without the companionship of a fellow-being who as much as shared a common language with him may well be imagined. Even where there were white overseers, the prevailing sense of caste was so strong that while these ate with the head of the estate, they did not live under the same roof, for they were subordinates and were treated as such. For his most constant companions the owner had his house-servants, unless he maintained a mulatto concubine who cooked his food and looked after his personal wants, shared his confidences, and reported to him any disaffection on the part of the Negro slaves. It is understandable that, having made his fortune, the planter did not delay his return to France, where, once back in Paris, he lived lavishly on the revenues from his estates; and letters in the Ministry of Colonies show the extent to which this phenomenon of absentee ownership characterized pre-Revolutionary Santo Domingo.[22]

175 181 563 Haiti being thought of as but an interlude in a man's life, the loosening of moral tone so complained of in contemporary works resulted, and with this went the many forms of display in which these colonists indulged and those other aspects of colonial custom which were so often ridiculed by European travelers of the period. The distance of Haiti from Paris, or, in a later period, the time which had elapsed since the French loss of Haiti, has, however, lent an enchantment to "Créole life" which is reflected in an idealized portrayal of this existence, much in the manner of the effusions on the graciousness and glamour of life in what is termed "the old South." [23] One

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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cannot read the extended narrative of the young Comte de C***, reprinted by de Vassière, without questioning this myth of the idyllic life of the Haitian Créole, even though allowing for the disdain with which an exiled Parisian dandy of 1730 would regard the inhabitants of outlying possessions, and allowing also for the savory wit of the man, which undoubtedly led him to underscore the more diverting situations which he encountered.[24] 175 181 563

Mention must be made at this point of the two great divisions of the white population which, as the colonizing period continued, were created by the distinction between those born on the island and those who had migrated there. These divisions cut across the two categories of urban and country dwellers, both of which numbered Haitian-born and native European members. At the time of the French Revolution about three quarters of the whites on the island had been born outside the colony, while of those born in the colony, women comprised the major portion.[25] Haitian-born persons were known by the designation *Créole*, which, according to a definition of the period, included all those " who have first seen the light of day in Santo Domingo " and was, as it is today, a term employed in all the West Indies and in Louisiana.[26] This designation was by no means restricted to the whites, however, for there were Créole Negroes as well as Créole whites; at the present time in Haiti a distinction is even drawn between locally grown " créole " rice and that which is imported! 175 563

It is common knowledge that slavery not only affects those who are held in bondage, but deeply influences the master-class as well. In Haiti the role played by the institution of slavery in the formation of the character and personalities of Créole children brought up in a setting of servility, cupidity, brutality, and terror must have been of the utmost importance. The bad temper and domineering nature of Créole youths is commented on again and again by writers of the period. Owing to the unhealthy climate and the failure to 567 175 155 563 858 571

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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563 567 175 155 858 571 maintain adequate hygienic conditions, the health of these children was usually poor, so that from earliest infancy they were spoiled by their parents and servants; their least wishes were gratified, and their least complaints immediately rectified so as to make them petty tyrants in their households. This tyranny was most often exercised over the family slaves. Regardless of the assiduous care these young despots received, and despite the adulation lavished upon their young charges, the Negro servants were seldom sufficiently prompt or adequate in their attentiveness to escape the punishments, often severe, that were meted out to them at the behest of their young masters. This tyranny extended to the play-life of the young Haitian-born white. Surrounded only by the slave children of the plantation, he commanded his contemporaries even more imperiously than his parents commanded the grown slaves.

> " Whatever he saw, he wanted, whatever was shown him he demanded; and if some fatality brought it about that one of his small companions resisted him and he became irritated, they would hurry from all sides in response to his cries and those of the young unfortunate, who, his color having destined him for submission, learned soon enough that he would be forced to give way, perhaps even being meted some punishment to penalize the disobedience of one who had not yet the instinct for servitude." "

175 563 567 571 Grown to manhood, the young Créole continued to act as master of all he surveyed. Imperious, quick-tempered, spoiled, his life lived in large part among slaves, when his sex drive stirred, he took what slave women pleased him. Eventually he married, to be tormented with the thoughts of the possible in- [839] fidelity of his wife; the more tortured because of his extreme vanity and because, while demanding faithfulness from his spouse, he was continuing his affairs with his Negro women. [157] Yet he had some excellences of character, as well. " Frank,

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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affable, generous perhaps to the point of ostentation, confident, brave, a sure friend and a good father "[78] — such are his good points as set down by one who was perhaps surer-eyed than others in seeing his deficiencies, though these traits seem to have concerned more his relations with his fellow-whites than those which affected his bearing toward his Negro slaves.

The young Créole women of this same environment were destined for early marriage — too early for their best development, whether physical or mental. Given to exacting the fulfillment of their slightest caprices, they were, like their men, creatures of passion. If they survived their first pregnancies, which as a result of too early marriages often came before they were physically in condition to support the rigors of childbirth, they soon lost their youthful allure and became the unattractive women of the type so maliciously described by the Comte de C***.[79] In such cases they frequently survived not one but several husbands. Their associations were chiefly with their Negro women slaves, who were full confidantes, sleeping in the same chamber with their mistresses and on occasion sharing informal meals with them, though they never ate at the same table. And because, by a fine turn of irony, these Negro women were often at the same time the concubines of the husbands, brothers, or sons of their mistresses, they were as often as not treated alternately with the greatest tenderness and the harshest brutality.[80]

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Whatever the inner life of white Haitians, native-born or Créole, outward ostentation was the rule. In the cities poorly furnished houses were cared for by a numerous retinue of uniformed retainers; "the supreme achievement for a European being to have himself served, he hires slaves while he waits for the time when he can own them."[81] In the country, too, life was lived on as lavish a scale as possible. This is not the place to describe the houses of masters and slaves, or the buildings needed for working sugar-cane or indigo or preparing coffee, or their distribution over the plantation, for nu-

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175 merous contemporary accounts, and most present-day works,
105 give both texts and illustrations which make the economy of
563 the plantation clear.[33] Though many stories of the magnifi-
567 cence of plantation life are found in current works, writers
342 of the period seem to agree that but little attention was paid
175 to convenience. Inventories of the contents of houses show
105 that furnishings were at a minimum; a few chairs and small
563 tables in the sitting- and reception-rooms, beds and minor ac-
352 cessories in the way of furniture in the bedrooms, dining-room tables and chairs and a cabinet for dishes. These pieces were usually built in the colony and made of native hard woods; substantial, they were essentially plain. As Baron Wimpffen remarked, "Taste, Sir, is still Creolian at Saint Domingo; and, unfortunately, the Creolian is not the right taste, — it smells too much of the *Boucan*."[33]

175 The table set was not distinguished. Meat, though the most
105 important dish at the principal meals, was poor, but, on the
567 other hand, fish, game, and wild fowl were excellent, and the
563 best of French wines were available.[34] Whatever the fare, how-
352 ever, it was served in the grand manner, often on plate rather
[262] than chinaware, and by the many liveried house-servants which every great establishment could boast. An account of the mode of service has been preserved in the reminiscences of one who, writing some years later of a repast served him in 1787, says: "There were many more of these domestics of both sexes than there were diners. I could but admire their attention to the smallest details of the service, the whiteness of their clothing, and the beautiful kerchiefs in the Créole manner elegantly arranged about the heads of the women. . . . But
[291] all of them moved about on bare feet; this was the distinctive sign of slavery."[35]

175 As portrayed in contemporary works, Haitian white life is
181 seen to have been lived entirely in terms of material goods and
105 of display. Just as there was little intellectual life, so religion
77 was but a matter of form. One M. de Larnage, writing from
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Petit-Goave on 25 June 1743, complains that it is unbelievable "what indifference the people of these districts have toward spiritual matters." [50] So little attention was paid to the rites of the Church that when the baptism of an infant was to be performed, it often proved difficult to find a godfather who had taken the sacrament, and many children were therefore never baptized. As might be expected, the churches were in a bad state, often having no more than earthen walls and floors, roofed with thatch, and being used as threshing-floors as well as places of worship. The description which Père Labat has given us of a church at Cap Français,[51] and of the manner in which the communicants conducted themselves during such services as were held, shows the decadence of the one religion that had any place among the white inhabitants. The clergy, too, reflected this same decadence. For though the early libertines who posed as priests were later replaced by members of such orders as the Jacobins, the Jesuits, and the Capucins, even this did not end the scandals that, from the first days of the establishment of the Catholic Church on the island, marked its ministrations.

What impression must the Negroes have obtained from their opportunities to observe the life of their masters? What patterns of behavior, what moral codes, what concepts of the way in which the Europeans regulated their own lives and, as officials, regulated the lives of others, must have been stamped on the minds of these Africans? That the present emphasis on the importance of wealth, or that a love of and demand for display, should characterize Haitian life of the cities today is not strange. Nor is it difficult to comprehend how certain other aspects of Haitian life that have so been underscored in the last half-century by those who have written of the Haitians should have developed from this initial stimulus — not to the extent to which this emphasis would lead one to believe, to be sure, but enough to give a basis for the exaggerations which have been published.[52]

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Some of these charges may be reviewed. One, frequently met with and already mentioned, concerns the general lack of cleanliness and sanitation that marks the cities. As has been shown, this stems directly from the patterns of life which prevailed under French control. The matter of personal morals is also often discussed with anything but praise for Haitian custom. Quite aside from the polygamous tradition of Africa, the influence of which will be discussed later, it is only necessary to recall the example set for these slaves by the sex customs of the Créoles and other Europeans with whom they came into contact to see how the ideal of monogamic union would not be entirely convincing as one to be followed in all its implications. The failure of the Catholic Church to stamp out the African cults in Haiti, and the skepticism with which, as will be pointed out, the motivation of the priests is regarded by the Haitians must have been strengthened by the tradition of the misbehavior of those who were in charge of the religion into which baptism was mandatory, before the days of freedom.

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The instability of Haitian political life, and the venality of judges and other officials have been stressed again and again in the writings of those who have passed judgment on Haiti. Yet one need but read of the readiness of the white colonists to revolt against the authority set over them by the mother country,[39] and of the manner in which during the French Revolution attempts to alleviate the position of the colored and Negro portions of the population were thwarted by the illegal political activities of the plantation slave-owners,[40] to understand at least some of the sources from which direct political action derives its sanctions. One need similarly but read comments in letters and books of the time concerning the corruption of the officials of the colony [41] to conclude that, since her independence, Haiti has in such respects but continued a tradition set by the rulers who governed the country before the Republic was established. Thus if the life of the Haitian

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Negro peasant of today presents aspects of harshness or insta- 17
bility, it would seem proper to ask how much of this might be 66
ascribed to the examples which these Negroes were set by 105
their masters, rather than unequivocally to assume inherent racial tendencies to account for them, as is so often done.

This, of course, is far from the whole story. For just as there 178
were large numbers of colonists who were men of integrity 105
and lived in accordance with the best traditions of their French heritage, so among the Negroes were many who sensed these deficiencies in the regime to which they had been enslaved, and held tenaciously to their African traditions, not only in religion, but in social, economic, and political phases, so that, when the time was ripe, these might in some measure be re-established. To approach the matter realistically, it must be recognized that just as the Africans in the islands represented numerous tribes having varying customs, and individual members of these groups possessed varying degrees of integrity and worth, so the French who came to live there and whose slaves learned of French culture from them represented not necessarily the flower of that culture, but were in the main derived from the extremes of French society, the unadjusted and maladjusted lower classes and the aristocrats. What was bequeathed by them to the Haitians, therefore, were those aspects of French civilization which, to the extent that they were accepted by the Negroes, are partially responsible not only for the graciousness, the hospitality, and the generosity of the Haitian of today, but also for the less pleasant aspects of the culture that have resulted from his historical development since independence.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

CHAPTER III

WORKING THE AMALGAM

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THE FIRST slaves brought to the New World — those Negroes needed, according to the familiar account, to replace the Indians who preferred death to bondage — reached Haiti in 1510.[1] The sanguine hope of the colonists that the labor of one Negro would be worth more than that of four Indians was, however, not borne out by experience, for the work of these slaves was far from satisfactory, and their death-rate was distressingly high.[2] Yet though they were found to be useless in the gold mines, their owners were more than compensated by the discovery that they made excellent laborers in the cultivation of sugar-cane and the making of sugar. So profitable was this, indeed, that Haiti, with the rest of the West Indies, came to be known as the "sugar islands," and it is recounted how "the magnificent palaces erected by Charles V at Madrid and Toledo were built solely from the revenues obtained from the monopoly of the crown on the importation of sugar from the Island of Espagnole."[3]

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During these early times the fundamental rule of slavery in Haiti was laid down: "In all that has to do with slavery, custom is everything, the law is nothing."[4] In 1518 one Zuazo, a licentiate, writing to the King, stated that the control of Negro slaves depended entirely upon the treatment accorded them. "Some of those I found on my arrival were thieves,

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

while others had fled to the mountains; the first group I caused to be beaten, and cut off the ears of the others, and since then no complaint has been heard." [4] Charlevoix also tells of the brutal treatment of the early slaves; how the Negroes were given even less consideration than the Indians, since there was not only much greater difference in skin color between them and the whites than between the color of the Indians and the Europeans, but the added reason existed that

> " slavery, as far as the native Indians were concerned, was based solely on the right of the most powerful, whereas in the case of the Negroes, they having been bought and sold by their own people, it seemed that one need have less scruple in making them bear the full weight of their servitude." [5]

The rapidity with which the slave-trade grew, especially in the latter portion of the seventeenth century and the eighteenth, need not be stressed here. With the passage of the western part of the island into the hands of the French following the provisions of the treaty of Ryswick in 1697, and as a result of the picturesque but predatory activities of the buccaneers, who did much to demoralize the Spanish regime, French participation in the trade grew apace,[7] so that slightly more than a half-century later seven " companies " were engaged in carrying Negroes to the French possessions in the New World.[8] Though in the earlier decades of the eighteenth century Martinique was the best market, Haiti, because of her vast resources, came to absorb the greater part of the available slaves.[9]

From the earliest times most of the slaves were destined for work in the fields, but some were employed as house-servants. These latter had the greatest opportunities to learn the ways of the whites and, moreover, since many of the women were mistresses of their owners, not only did a mingling of traditions and modes of life result, but a merging of

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

the blood-streams of the two races as well. And though in the custom of French Santo Domingo, as elsewhere in the New World, even a suspicion of Negro ancestry was sufficient to cut a person off from social intercourse with white society, yet these mixed-bloods were to become an important factor in establishing the patterns of Haitian Negro tradition, just as their descendants were to exert no small influence in the development of Haitian culture after the establishment of independent Haiti.

Numerous terms designated the various degrees of crossing, some of which, surviving in present-day speech, are familiar to us, such as the words "mulatto" and "quadroon." But examining Moreau de St. Mery's painstaking analysis of the various possible amounts of crossing that could be recognized, reading his speculations regarding the smallest proportion of Negro blood that could be regarded as negligible, noting how he traces Negro blood to its last vestige, as in a cross which would give one part Negro as against 8,191 parts white, a telling impression is received of the great significance of race-crossing for the Haitians of that time.[10] Such words as *sacatra*, *griffe*, *marabou*, *métif*, and *mamelouc* not only gave information as to the amount of crossing represented in the persons designated by them, but even indicated which parent, father or mother, was white and which one was wholly or partially Negro. Crossing was by no means restricted to matings between white masters and their slave women, for records show that Negro men did not fail to hold an attraction for their white mistresses. Nor did all the sharpness with which the color-line was drawn prevent actual marriages between whites and persons of color. In such instances, however, the white person was cast out from association with his fellow-Europeans, as the name applied to him, *mésallié*, sufficiently shows.[11]

Slavery cut across all these varying degrees of color, so that just as there might be free Negroes who were wholly African

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

in descent, so there were "colored" folk who were slaves. As time went on, the lighter-colored slaves were usually employed as house-servants rather than field-hands, bringing about a continuous dilution of the Negro blood that flowed in these strains, and a lightening of their skins. And such was the prestige attached to light color that the mixed-bloods, even though slaves, felt themselves superior to free Negroes of undiluted African stock. This attitude derived from the fact that the lighter slaves were most often manumitted, particularly if they were the children of their owners, and that in other situations, when as slaves they gained the favor of their masters, they were permitted to engage in some remunerative enterprise with the proceeds of which they eventually might purchase their own freedom. These free people of color, or *affranchis*, formed an important part of the Haitian population in pre-Revolutionary times,[13] and played a principal role in the development of Haitian culture. It was through them that European civilization flowed, since because of the closeness of their contacts with the whites they were the instrument by means of which the aboriginal African heritage of the slaves was modified to produce the forms in which it is found in Haiti today.[14]

Yet for all the importance of the freed mixed-bloods in the attainment of Haitian independence and in the fixing of the patterns of Haitian culture, they, like the whites, were but relatively few in number, their strength being but from five to ten per cent of that of slaves.[14] In attempting to analyze the manner in which the present amalgam that is the civilization of Haiti was formed, it is consequently necessary to revert to a consideration of those who were in the majority, the full-blooded Negroes. The tribes from which these Negroes were principally derived have been indicated, together with the outlines of the civilizations of the region of Africa from which they were drawn. To this must be added, as has been for the whites with whom they came in contact, an analysis of the so-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

cial classes to which they belonged, as well as the circumstances of their enslavement, their treatment in Africa before shipment to the New World and during the voyage, their initiation into their new mode of life, and the manner in which they lived as slaves, since all of these facts had considerable bearing on the processes which shaped the behavior of their descendants who now inhabit the island.

The integrated political organization of West Africa has been described, as well as the important fact that the class stratification in that region was almost as fixed and its social implications almost as far-reaching as in France. Even the early writers recognized that not all slaves came from the same ranks of society, just as they understood that there were various ways in which enslavement could be achieved. Père Labat, who lived in the West Indies for many years, listed four classes from which slaves were drawn. First, he says, were those whose punishments against native law had been commuted to perpetual banishment — that is, to slavery " for the private profit of the kings "; second were the prisoners of war; third were those who, already the slaves of native princes or of those persons to whom they had been given by these princes, were sold to meet the need of their masters for money; while fourth, comprising the greatest proportion of the slaves, were those snatched from their homes by the marauding bands of robbers who, with the connivance of native rulers, carried on these raids to satisfy the demands of the European dealers.[14] This classification and others of the period, though generally accepted and repeated by later writers, tells little concerning the ranks of society from which the slaves were drawn, except as this may be inferred. For this one must go to present-day West Africa, where a lively tradition of the slave-trade has survived and offers valuable supplementary information.[15]

In the light of the existing traditions in Dahomey and Nigeria, it is evident that from the point of view of the African, Labat's four classes must be compressed into two — the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

captives and the criminals. Rarely, unless convicted of some crime, were the members of a tribe enslaved by their fellows, and while slave-raiding was carried on by small groups, especially by waylaying young people and abducting infants, slaves were customarily captured during the annual "wars" that were in reality but glorified man-hunts. For the Dahomeans, as a matter of fact, there were three categories of those enslaved. The largest consisted of prisoners of war, the second of criminals who had violated the law of the land, while the third was made up of political offenders. An analysis of each of these classes, especially the first and the last, will aid materially in understanding certain lines followed by Haitian Negro culture in its development.

If Dahomey again be taken as an example, we find that the reigning king of that country annually during the dry season made war against some group that bordered his ever-expanding kingdom. In accordance with African military strategy there was no declaration of war, so that the surprise attacks were usually successful and netted a large number of prisoners, particularly since all persons found in the region attacked were taken captive. Many of them were retained to work the plantations of the king and his chiefs, under overseers who did not stop at brutality in obtaining such results for their absentee employers as would bring them favor. Others, not only in Dahomey but elsewhere in West Africa where centralized governments existed, were held near the compound of the king, to be offered on ceremonial occasions as sacrifices to the royal ancestors. Those remaining were sold to the slavers, and inasmuch as little distinction as to class was made among those who were to be sold or who were to be put to work in native fields or held for sacrifice, this largest group of slaves, combining in some measure the last three categories mentioned by Père Labat, drew impartially from all classes of African society.

The criminals, never more than a small proportion, may be

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

dismissed with but little notice; even then, the fact that the definition of the word "criminal" varies from one society to another and from one period to the next, suggests that this classification is not, of itself, of great significance. No greater portion of African "criminals" were guilty of antisocial acts, certainly, than were those, let us say, so classified in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France and England. For just as Europe shipped debtors to the New World as criminals, so to the Africans an illicit love-affair with one of the wives of a man of rank, or failure to carry out some royal command to the satisfaction of the monarch, was a "criminal" offense, punishable as severely as was embezzlement or robbery.

Political prisoners were usually those who failed to agree to the succession of a king and, less frequently, those who intrigued against the power of a reigning monarch. In West Africa there was no assurance that the eldest son of the first wife of the king would inherit his throne. In Dahomey the king chose from among all his sons; elsewhere the choice was at times made by the advisers to the late ruler. Whatever the method, there was often dissatisfaction among the other potential heirs, and Dahomean tradition has it that this sometimes resulted in rebellion, which, whether successful or not, brought about the enslavement of many persons. For if the revolt was suppressed, the claimant to the succession and all those who had supported him, with the members of their households, were "banished perpetually for the profit of the king," while if the efforts of the insurrectionists succeeded, the supporters of the ruler who was replaced, as well as their families, suffered a like fate. The existence of this tradition would contradict the usual view that the New World slaves did not include leaders and men of position, even if the observations of contemporary writers were not available to negate the assumption, as, for example, the following quotation from Moreau de St. Mery:

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"The Mina Negroes have even been seen to recognize princes of their country . . . prostrating themselves at their feet and rendering them that homage whose contrast to the state of servitude to which these princes have been reduced in the colony offers a striking enough instance of the instability of human greatness." [17]

Yet another group of Africans played a significant role in determining the trends Haitian Negro culture was to take. It is a commonplace among those who have studied New World Negro life that African religion has shown greater resistance to white influence than any other phase of African culture. And to explain this one must again turn to native African tradition. The beginnings of the West African monarchies, whose ruling dynasties eventually came to command great stretches of land, were in tiny principalities that continually "warred" against each other. Tradition has it that the most intransigent of the conquered were the priests of the indigenous local cults, who, because of their activities, were punished with what native idiom still terms "banishment." In the New World these intractable priests continued their rites for their fellow-slaves and instructed the next generation so their knowledge would not be lost to the people. Before their enslavement they had been men of power and influence, and this pattern, carried over in all its strength in the New World, continued them and their descendants as natural leaders. Hence, wherever the opportunity presented itself to strike for liberty, they invoked the spiritual forces to reinforce the power and courage of the military leaders who, like them, had been sold into slavery because their countries had been conquered, or because they had rebelled against the succession in their own lands.

The composition of the slave population as inferred from these traditions is thus seen to be somewhat different from

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157 162 178 567 174 that commonly assumed, since the conclusion is inescapable that, if anything, the slaves formed a group whose aboriginal types showed a weighting on the upper end of the African social scale rather than an overwhelming proportion of the less desirable members of society. Such an assumption goes far in explaining how the "slave psychology" generally attributed to Negroes of the New World was anything but a real part of their inner lives, and makes as well for an understanding of the extent to which the Negroes suffered their slavery with a constantly active discontent that is rarely given proper recognition in the study of the history of the period, and to which the drive toward freedom and the traditions of their native land were kept alive despite the restraints imposed by the masters.

175 567 Once in the net of the slavers, however, the status of any individual mattered but little, for to the European dealers each Negro was but an added unit of cargo. All last traces of his dignity as a human being were taken from him;[18] in the grants for earlier slaving operations, and in the manifests of the ships of that time, slaves were not even invoiced as human beings, but as "pieces of the Indies" — fractions of the perfect slave, who was conceived as having a height of seven *quartas* of a little more than ten inches each. Under this practice, the stature of each slave, child or adult, having been recorded, the total length of the members of the cargo was divided by the requisite number, and thus reduced to so many of these "pieces of the Indies," the actual number of human beings in the cargo not figuring.[19]

It is unnecessary to detail the horrors of the passage to the New World, for the story has been too often told. One can but conjecture what its effect on those subjected to it must have been, especially when it is viewed as an introduction to their contact with the Europeans who were to be their masters. That the mortality on the voyage was high is well known, but death encountered while the shackled slaves passed the dan-

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gerous bar of the African coast in the native canoes, which often overturned in the surf, is seldom mentioned in the literature of the slave-trade. Yet this was perhaps as great a cause of loss of life as the hardships of the journey to the coast or even the voyage across the Atlantic. 175 567

Arrived at their destination, the slaves were given a period of rest so that they might be in the best of condition when they were placed on the market, to be inspected much as the more costly horses or heads of cattle were appraised. Sometimes the period between the voyage and their purchase was a lengthy one, since they were often held in " warehouses " for extended periods in order to regulate the market. Eventually, however, they were disposed of and, taken to the plantations, branded with the mark of the new master.[20] Induction into plantation life followed a fairly definite pattern: the new slave was first of all " introduced " to the principles of Christianity through an interpreter and then, according to his age, placed in one of the three work-groups which every plantation of any size possessed; the " great " one, composed of the most vigorous men and women; the second, to which the adolescents, the feeble, and the women who were nursing their infants were assigned; and the third, made up of children, who, under the watchful eye of an elderly woman, gathered forage. For the second and third groups the work was not too strenuous, but the members of the " great " work-group labored almost without rest except for the two hours a day allowed for meals and the few hours at night for sleep. And while conditions varied from plantation to plantation, the many contemporary accounts of the unrelenting manner in which the slaves were compelled to work at top speed testify to the harshness of the regime.[21] Small wonder that Charlevoix, contemplating the life of the slaves, wrote the moving paragraphs he composed concerning the hardships of their existence, and the slight compensations their labor afforded them.[22]

Despite the obvious fact that under such conditions the con- [178]

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tinuation of African cultural traditions was not easy, certain things did persist. While the material facts of the life of the slaves was at once subordinated to European patterns — in dress and implements and to a certain extent in housing, for example [23] — yet in other matters they could live as they had lived in Africa. Thus one account of the time, quoted by de Vassière,[24] tells how the slaves carried on communal hoeing, timing their strokes to the rhythms of songs that begged some favor of their visitor, or to songs of praise (and, when the white observer was not present, undoubtedly also singing songs of derision), in the characteristic African fashion that, as will be seen, has survived in Haitian peasant life to this day. Similarly their traditions of cooking, of eating, of fixing the time for their meals (despite St. Mery's comment that "the Negro has no other rule of eating than the demands of his appetite"), of respect for their elders; their attitudes toward death and their rituals of burial, their dances, their songs, and, above all, their non-Christian religious beliefs, all continued to be stamped with the mark of Africa.[25] On the other hand, opportunities to learn and imitate French customs were by no means neglected, for the prestige of the masters filtered through the ranks of the slaves until it reached even the field-hands, for the nearer in service the Negro was to the person of his master, the more Europeanized was his behavior and the prouder he was and the more he exploited his opportunities to follow European patterns of habit.[26] Not only did the house-servants imitate French dances,[27] but we are told how in Martinique, for example, all the slaves were taught these figures.[28] In the field of religion, also, the efforts of the Church to capitalize the royal edicts which made baptism of the slaves compulsory were far from vain, at least in so far as the outward manifestations of their acceptance of the faith were concerned. Writings of the time, however, do not omit comment on the discouragement of the missionizing Fathers who seriously undertook this task, because too often

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the baptism of their converts was followed by serious lapses from the faith, especially under conditions of stress.[79]

One of the most revolting aspects of the institution of slavery, wherever found, is the cruelty with which the suppression of human individuality is prosecuted. In this the French colony of Santo Domingo was no exception, as the list of more ingenious punishments, aside from the more usual ones such as whipping, which were devised to keep the slaves in line, demonstrates.[80] What is more important here are the defenses the Negroes built up against them. Recourse to suicide was especially common, and though the popularly accepted explanations for this range between the desire of the slave to destroy himself because he knew he was valuable property of his master, and the conviction that suicide was one way of achieving his return to the African homeland,[81] there is no reason to assume that, following African tradition, the belief that the ghost of a helpless slave could through suicide become powerful for evil and thus wreak his vengeance did not also figure.[82] But equally widespread in all the New World were the allied weapons of revolt and escape.

Both in the experience of the individual slaves and in the history of New World slavery this tendency to revolt began early. In the former case, many tales are told of how on the march to the African coast, or in the slave barracoons, or on board the slave-ship, the possibility of a desperate dash for freedom had always to be guarded against.[83] Concerning the latter, it is not generally known how early in the history of Negro slaving revolts did occur. The Negro slave-trade began with shipments of slaves to Haiti in 1510; the first slave uprising in Haiti, in 1522, thus took place only twelve years after the commencement of the traffic.[84] In the New World possessions of Spain eleven other rebellions are recorded between the years 1522 and 1553, of which those of 1533, 1537, and 1548 occurred in Santo Domingo.[85] During the following century two revolts took place, one at Port de Paix in 1679

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175 and another in 1691. The object of this latter rebellion was
567 to massacre all the whites in the district, but it was discovered
669 before the uprising could be effective, and its leaders were executed. Still another incipient revolt in the region of Cap Français was put down in 1704.[86]

In the main, however, there were too few opportunities for united action on the part of the slaves from any considerable area to permit the idea of a general revolt to germinate and grow into action; such rebellions as occurred in the years that followed were local affairs, and were principally the result of specific abuses. Yet the fear of them was always with
[194] the planters, and of this fear the *vodun* cult, characterized by St. Mery as being potentially "a terrible weapon" in the hands of the leaders of the cult, was the symbol and crystallizing agent.[87] That there was no lack of realization of the danger to the colonists from slave uprisings is made clear in letters of the period written to France; as early as 1685 M. de Cussy, reporting to the Minister of Colonies in Paris, stated: "In the Negroes we possess a formidable domestic enemy," while a hundred years later an officer of the armies of the King who was also a plantation-owner in Haiti expressed the opinion that "a colony of slaves is a city under constant threat of assault; there one walks on barrels of powder."[88]

175 More frequently, however, the expression of protest took
567 the form of *marronage*, of running away to the hills, a phenomenon not restricted to Haiti, since in other regions of the New World, notably Jamaica and Dutch Guiana, the runaways maintained themselves so successfully that they were accorded their independence by formal recognition, as was also done in Haiti in 1784.[89] Figures on the extent to which slaves made off into the mountains tell the measure of their desperation; in 1720 alone, a thousand Negroes gained their freedom in this manner; in 1751, at least 3,500. Some of the leaders of these bands were men of great ability, and the depredations they engaged in caused serious losses to the planters

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in the regions where they operated. The most renowned was Macandal, a "Guinea" Negro, who was finally apprehended and executed in 1758.[40] His name lives today in Haitian peasant tradition, where folkloristic versions of his exploits as one of the earliest of the liberators are still recounted. The pages in St. Mery which tell how the strength of the bands in the mountains behind Croix-des-Bouquets necessitated a constant augmentation of the militia on duty there, is additional evidence of the success of these runaways. The same author's description of a group operating in the parish of Jacmel, found in 1785 to number among its members men more than fifty years of age who had been born in the freedom of the mountains, shows how long the escaped Negroes were able to maintain themselves without capture.[41]

175 567

The very tradition of *marronage* was important. Psychologically, it held out to the slaves a hope, more than ephemeral, of escaping their servitude, and in consequence allowed them to maintain an attitude of mind that kept many of them from becoming a prey to despair. From the point of view of the growth of Haitian culture, moreover, the groups of runaway slaves offered a ready means for the continuation of African traditions and patterns of behavior. Though but few descriptions of the manner of life led by the fugitives in their mountain encampments are to be had, it is apparent that in order to maintain confidence in their own powers of resisting capture and re-enslavement the runaways guarded assiduously all memory of African belief and practice, while even in the material aspects of their existence they tended to revert to aboriginal modes of life. Finally, however, and most important for the future course of Haitian history, was the training of these runaways obtained in the ways of warfare, and the continuation of the warrior tradition among the Negroes. This is one of the reasons why in 1791, when Boukman and his followers stirred the first general slave revolt in the north, the blacks were ready; also when in the course of

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175 the development of European history the French Revolution
569 sharpened the latent antagonisms between the various classes
669 of whites in the colony, between the whites and the free persons of color, and between masters and slaves, the way had been prepared for the operations of the great military geniuses, Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, through whose leadership the freedom of Haiti was finally achieved.

175 It is not necessary here to give, even in outline, the course of Haitian history during this period of rebellion and afterwards, when Haiti was welded into a single Republic, for this has been often recounted.[42] Nor is it of importance here to continue the well-known political history of the Republic, with its many rebellions, and its wars with the Spanish portion of the island that finally resulted in the formation of the Republic of Santo Domingo; with the brief existence of the "empire" of Faustin I; and with the culmination of this history in what has been called a period of anarchy that brought about the occupation, so recently terminated, of Haiti by the American Marines.[43] Other questions, which concern the social history of independent Haiti, have been given less attention, and only tantalizing hints of their answers appear in the writings of those who have treated of the developing country. How were the impulses toward the mingling of Haitian and French aspects of culture, set in motion during the period of slavery, working out during this time? What influences dominated the scene, once the whites had been finally eliminated? What mechanisms permitted the African traditions brought by the slaves to hold their vitality? It is as through a haze that one glimpses the inner development of Haitian culture after independence; and the glimpses are the dimmer when comparison is made with the many clear and detailed descriptions of the earlier life of the island.

175 It is only by a close reading of the works of such travelers
114 and foreign officials as Hanna, Mackenzie, St. John, and Hazard, that any information of this kind can be obtained. The

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attitudes of these writers were in the main far from sympathetic toward Haiti, and their interests extended but little to the customs of the great masses of Haitians. That the fear of slavery was still alive in the early part of the nineteenth century is apparent from an incident related by Mackenzie;[44] that, some decades later, the sense of racial differences continued to exist is evident from folk-sayings about the characteristics of whites, mulattoes, and Negroes recorded by St. John.[45] The concept of rank seems to have maintained itself in its full flavor, with no lack of social classes in Haitian urban society and no lack of vigor in perpetuating the earlier prejudices of caste.

The majority of the population remained on the land, for by 1830 the great estates had been completely broken up, and were cultivated in the main by small concessionaires. The dress of these country inhabitants seems to have remained much as it had been under French control, and the emphasis on good manners that so marks African social intercourse had been retained to such an extent that St. John, no admirer of the Haitian people, was forced to remark upon it.[46] Markets which were conducted in African fashion had been established, and these were supplemented by itinerant peddlers. The institution of *plaçage*, a reconciliation of African plural marriage with the monogamy of European custom, of which more will be said in a later chapter, was known in the early days of independence. The rites of birth and death were marked with their special ceremonies, and in both instances it can be seen that the African elements of the cultural heritage were not being forgotten. Dancing continued as the principal form of recreation, and to the traditional dances, which still persist, were added European styles.[47]

Above all, African religious customs were being observed. *Vodun* rites continued to flourish and magic was practiced as in the days preceding independence, as is to be seen from the notorious and all too often repeated tale of the "Congo bean

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stew," which has continued current from the time of its publication by St. John until today.[48] Yet African religious practices were being constantly combated by the Catholic Church, for even in the period of revolt the priests had remained largely unharmed, and when Christophe was elevated to the throne, he appointed two archbishops. After the establishment of the Republic, Catholicism continued as the State religion, so that by the early nineteenth century, as Mackenzie mentions, thirty-eight clergy were active in Haiti, all under the control of the Bishop of Santo Domingo, and all presumably nominated and paid by the President of Haiti.[49] Though for a period there was an attempt to develop a national Church, the missionary work done during the colonial days left too strong a tradition of Catholicism to be overcome, and consequently a Concordat was signed with Rome in 1860, which has remained in effect ever since.[50]

178 Though the story of the cultural history of Haiti between 1804 and the present cannot thus be more than sketched, yet the background is known, and enough can be gathered from accounts of Haitian life during this interval to enable us to see that the varied cultural impulses were shaping the lives of the people throughout these years. With some understanding of the roots of the resulting culture in French and African [121] traditions, then, let us once more turn to the valley of Mirebalais and consider the life of the Haitian peasant as it is lived today.

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PART II

THE DAILY ROUND

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CHAPTER IV

THE SETTING OF HAITIAN LIFE

SINCE the discovery by the Spaniards that the wealth of Haiti lay rather in cultivating sugar than in the exploitation of gold mines, its dominant economy has been agricultural. In the valley of Mirebalais, as elsewhere in the island, the small cultivator holds the center of the economic stage. In the main he works his own land, inherited from his father or acquired through purchase. He may also cultivate additional plots of ground which he rents, since much of the land expropriated when independence was gained was retained by the State and today is leased for nominal fees.[1]

The life of the Haitian farmer, though hard, is simple and self-contained. With but few exceptions, he supplies all his necessities, for he commands almost the entire range of techniques known to his culture; hence Haitian economy shows a lack of specialization that in the main is only relieved by the sex division of labor. The day's work begins at dawn, the women rising before the men to prepare coffee, the invariable drink of early morning. When finished with his breakfast, the farmer goes to his field, where, except for the hottest hours, he works until sundown, his one meal being brought to him at about nine or ten o'clock in the morning. His wife meanwhile occupies herself with her household tasks, pounding grain in her mortar or working in her garden near by.

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Mirebalais

512 grain in her mortar or working in her garden near by. On
[443] market days she takes the produce of the family's fields to the
[438] town to sell. If she has young children, she cares for them
[855] while she does her other work, but when they are old enough,
[857] they help her about the house if they are girls, or, if boys, go with their father to the garden. From time to time, when
[356] house repairs are needed or there are implements to be
[241] mended, the man spends a day at home getting these odd jobs done; otherwise only serious illness in the family keeps him from his fields.

512 The times for meals have not varied since the days when
264 Moreau de St. Mery described the eating-habits of the slaves.[2] In addition to the mid-morning repast, the only other meal is that eaten after the man returns from his field, this being
[562] the largest of the day. A wife does not sit down with her
[593] husband, but usually eats earlier with her small children and holds herself ready to serve him upon his return, when, if he is alone, she remains to tell him the day's gossip. Visitors are
[594] often present, for peasant etiquette demands that all comers
[576] be offered food, and, as one Haitian expressed it, "The peasant would kill you for the insult if you did not share your meal with him." Bedtime, as might be expected, is early.

512 On Sundays and on the days of festivals this routine is in-
527 terrupted, when, if the occasion is of sufficient importance
[796] and the habitation is not too far from town, the peasant and his family attend mass. On Saturday nights there is usually a *vodun* dance, when the early hour for retirement is forgotten and all-night festivities precede Sunday's rest. On such days
[264] the principal meal is eaten at three or four o'clock in the afternoon, and all the adults share it together, while at one side the children are fed from the dishes of their parents in response to the insistent repetition of the demand "*Ba'm pa'm* — give me my portion." *

* This is an example of the elision characteristic of Haitian Créole, it being abbreviated from *Ba moin part moin* or, in French, *Donnez-moi ma part.*

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The hard work of cultivating the fields is abated only during the dry season — the winter months of December to February — though even during these months there is no dearth of tasks about the house which must be cared for, such as repairs of various sorts and, above all, rethatching. There is, however, also more time for recreation than at other seasons, so that throughout the countryside there are dances and cock-fights. With February, however, work in the fields must be resumed. 221 241

The Haitian farmer does not practice any formal rotation of crops, but continues to plant a given crop in the same field until the harvest becomes perceptibly smaller than in former years, when a change is made to another type of produce. Later, when the same phenomenon is again observed, a third crop may be planted, but sooner or later the land is "put to rest," in which case it either is allowed to lie fallow or is planted with cotton, which is not thought of in the same category as other crops, but is held to be a tree, and, like other trees that of themselves spring up in a fallow field, is believed to give strength to the exhausted earth. A field of this kind remains outside cultivation as a "fallen garden" for four or five years, and the animals are allowed to enter freely and graze in it until it has become a "new garden" again. 241 [311]

If a field is to be made out of hitherto unworked land, or ground which has lain fallow for several years is to be cultivated once again, the work is begun by cutting down the trees. The twigs are heaped preparatory to burning them, and the larger branches and the tree-trunks are used to make fences. After the dried leaves and branches have been burned, the field is cleared of small brush, and is then ready for its initial hoeing, which, according to the crops to be planted, is sometimes delayed until some months later. Usually, however, after two or three rains have cooled and softened land that has been burned over, work continues on it. The hoeing is

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done by the owner himself only if the field is very small; otherwise one of the co-operative work-groups that form such an important element in Haitian rural economy must be called.

The regulation of communal labor in Mirebalais, though extremely informal, is none the less effective. There are three or four types of such organizations, none of which requires a large outlay of funds on the part of the one whose land is being worked, and only one of which, the "mutual association," has any restriction as to membership. In this last case, three or four or five men agree to work for each other a given number of hours, rotating their working period of three hours or half a day in the fields of each of the parties to the agreement. The other co-operative groups vary principally as to their size and the time of day when their work is carried on. The smallest is the *mira*, which consists of perhaps half a dozen or ten men who come to help a neighbor in his work, and labor from early morning until about the middle of the morning. A somewhat larger group, who work from about this time until midday, is known as a *coup de main*. Finally, there is the *combite*, the Mirebalais form of the characteristic organization for mutual self-help known elsewhere in Haiti as the *Société Congo*.[3]

Though strenuous physical labor is involved in the work of the *combite*, for the Haitian it symbolizes recreation and enjoyment — the stimulus of working with one's fellows, the pleasure of gossiping with friends, and the partaking of the feast which marks the climax of the day. All this makes the occasion one to be anticipated and enjoyed, and no one witnessing ten or fifteen men on horseback, each with a hoe over his shoulder, shouting and laughing as they clatter by at full gallop, can fail to sense their eager desire to arrive at their destination, a near-by *combite*.[4]

When a man or a woman needs help in preparing a field — for women, particularly those who sell in the market, may often become wealthy and large cultivators — a request is

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made of key-men in the district informally called *chefs d'esquade*. They have the reputation of being those to whose call a number of men, perhaps a dozen, perhaps two or three times that many, will respond and come to give the aid that is desired. Such a person is given a "bouquet"—a bottle of *clairin*—which insures the appearance of himself and his group on the date set. A *combite* may be held at any time during the week except Sundays, which are dedicated to rest, and Tuesdays (in earlier times Mondays), when tradition holds a person must be free to work his own fields and care for tasks needed to be done at his own house. There is no requirement in either law or custom to respond to the call for communal work, and the larger landowners, who usually reside in the towns, rarely participate in a *combite*. So great is the pleasure derived from work of this sort, however, and so living is the realization among the peasantry of its potential benefits, that a man hesitates before he refuses to take part in a *combite* to which he has been summoned. Sometimes a man who has been faithful in his attendance at *combites* and has worked well at them falls ill during the time for planting or for clearing his ground of underbrush or for hoeing. In such case a *combite* is summoned, and even though this man is unable to offer the usual feast, his services are remembered and the men work with a will to insure the proper preparation of his ground.

The scene in a field where a large *combite* is at work is an arresting one. The men form a line, with a drummer in front of their hoes. The *simidor*, who leads the singing as he works with the others, adds the rhythm of his song to the regular beats of the drum, thus setting the time for the strokes of the implements wielded by the workers. This drum, slung about the neck of the drummer, is of the European form, never the hollowed-out African type that figures in religious rites. Its sound can carry far, however, and thus it not only beats the time for the hoes, but notifies all concerned that the *combite*

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241 is under way. The size of the *combite* is judged by the number
461 of drums and *lambi*, or conch-shell horns used, for where two
476 or three of either are required, an especially large group of
534 workers is usually assembled. It may be observed in passing that it is undoubtedly the sound of this *combite* drum, heard in the mountains or through the brush by travelers, that has so often been mistaken for the "mysterious booming" of the *vodun* drums.[8]

241 The preparation of the food is the work of the women of
504 the household giving the *combite*, aided by their female rela-
252 tions and the wives of friends and neighbors. This is no small
476 task, for goats and even a bullock may be killed to feed a large *combite*, while in addition other dishes to go with the meat must be cooked. Each woman is given charge of a great pot and does her best to see to it that an appetizing dish is ready for the men when their work is done. While the food
476 is being cooked, the real object of the *combite*, the clearing
241 of the field, is being pursued. A *chef d'esquade*, usually with
461 a small group, begins the afternoon's labor, and, being a fast worker, he himself sets the pace. As more men arrive, he walks about, encouraging the constantly increasing number of men in their efforts, seeing to it that the tempo originally set is continued, and when necessary picking up a hoe to restore a lagging rhythm. Occasionally the *chef d'esquade* will
[626] stand in front of the men to make sure that all keep together, and if the lazy cannot be roused to work by direct order or through ridicule, he will drive them away.

The work progresses with incredible speed as the line moves down the field. In one case a *combite* of between fifty and seventy-five men completely cleared a field of several acres in a single afternoon, and this without undue effort or what appeared to be the expenditure of much energy. The flashing of the hoes in the brilliant sunlight accentuates the color of the scene; each implement is raised high above the head of the one who wields it, to be brought down at the proper in-

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ABOVE, *Preparing the food for a combite feast.*
BELOW, *Drums marking the beat for the hoes.*

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[facing P. 72]

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ABOVE, *One of the workers at a combite.*
BELOW, *A Haitian cornfield.*

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stant and in almost perfect accord with the hoes of all the other men in line. Pauses are frequent, and men often drop out of the line for a longer period of rest — even those not of the type laughingly called *majeurs*, who shirk their task and come to a *combite* principally to share in the feasting — and these, for the time being, join the singing with added verve. During the periods of rest, re-alignments are made and, if necessary, the direction of the line is changed; after a short time, however, the cry of the *simidor* rings out, the initial statement of a song is sounded, and as the chorus swings into the melody, the hoes rise again, the beat of the drum is begun, the plaintive notes of the *lambi* are heard, and the workers once more move down the field.[8]

Acting as the representative of the owner of the field to be cleared is a man who is called the *directeur*. If a large number of workers, a hundred or more, are assembled, he may divide them into two groups, assigning each half of the field, and then there is competition to see which group will first complete its allotted task. On such an occasion there would not only be more than one drum, but also more than one principal singer, or *simidor*, and the songs would thereupon have improvised words boasting of the prowess of the winning side, and ridiculing its opponents. The "director" also apportions the food, for it is customary to follow the rule which holds that since not all workers are equally eager or competent, so the rewards should not be the same for all. The shirkers are well known. They come but a little before sunset, or, arriving earlier, dawdle, walking about with their hoes and accomplishing but little during the afternoon. The lack of enthusiasm of these *majeurs* for work does not escape the "director," for though all who come to the *combite* must be fed, such men receive relatively little; while those who have worked the hardest not only are rewarded with dishes heaped with especially choice morsels of meat, but often find several sous when they reach the bottom of the dish.

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461 The *combite* songs are distinctive in Haitian music for
476 their melodic quality. Sung in unison, as is characteristic of
533 most forms of Negro music, they contain the statement of a theme by the leader and a response from a chorus, so that the contrast between this great volume of sound from the chorus and the solo voice of the *simidor* is singularly effective. It is not the melodic qualities alone that make these songs so
476 appealing to the Haitians, however. At the *combite* a man
533 not only learns all the gossip of the day, but enjoys learning
461 and singing the songs which caustically comment on the
626 shortcomings of neighbors, or evaluate the hospitality of those
203 who have called *combites*, or detail scandal, phrased with sufficient directness to allow the reference of the song to remain clear, but warily, so as not to give the individual pilloried ground for direct recrimination. The *simidor* is thus a person to be feared, since in addition to his ability as a singer and a leader of song, he is also an outstanding improviser. As one Haitian expressed it, "The *simidor* is a journalist, and every *simidor* is a Judas!"

476 One or two examples of these songs will make clear their
533 favor among a people to whose natural love of gossip is added
539 a patterned relish for oblique public statement of individual
461 shortcomings. The first comments on a miserly *combite* host:
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À tè!	Down!
Moin dit, messieurs,	I say, messieurs,
Moin p'ralé nan combite ça-é	I went to that *combite*
Moin pas mangé.	[But] I did not eat.
Moin allé, moin pas joinne un grogue	I went, but I found no drink
Pour moin bwè.	To drink.
Assé-a! En é!	Enough! Up!
Moin dit, messieurs,	I say, messieurs,
M'allé nan combite ça-é	I went to that *combite*

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Moin pas joinne mangé	[But] I found no food
Pou' m'mangé.	To eat.

Another song refers to a pungent bit of local gossip, which, though known to everyone, concerned an affair that precluded the mention of names. This is usually the case, for it is not ordinarily deemed wise to make specific references; yet this must not be thought of as an invariable rule, as is shown by the fact that a number of these songs were recorded where names were mentioned with great freedom. Thus in Mirebalais as elsewhere, circumstances must govern cases; the composer of the following short song did not feel it politic to do more than recall the case:

Ca va reglé,	This will be arranged,
En é, o!	Up, o!
Affai' cousine germaine	The affair of a first cousin
A'c cousin germain.	With her first cousin.

Reference is also made to an impending quarrel where a suspicion of magic practices entered:

Moin dit, Juda,	I say, Judas,
Allé l'église;	Go to the church;
Quand ou apè tourné	When you return
Ou a quitté moin tranquille, o-o;	You will leave me in peace, o-o;
Si ou allé l'église,	If you go to the church,
Ou apè quitté moin tranquille, o-o.	You will leave me in peace, o-o.

Still another song is a challenge, for in it the singer boasts that he is the equal of the man figuratively designated in it, and will cause trouble if resisted:

À tè!	Down!
M'apé mandé qui moune	I ask what person
Qui en dedans caille là.	Is in that house.

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Compère répond':	My friend replies:
"C'e' moin qui avec cousine moin."	"It is I who am with my cousin."
Assé-é!	Enough!
Moin en dedans déjà.	I am already inside.
En é-é-o!	Up, o!
Nan point taureau	No bull
Passé taureau.	Is better than [this] bull.
En é-o!	Up, o!

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Finally, there may be cited a composition which complains against a shirker who comes and eats, but does little work:

Samba, é-é,	Samba, *é-é,*
Moin vé ou malhonnet,	I see that you are a dishonest man,
Tonnèrre!	*Tonnèrre!* *
Moin planté maïs moin,	I plant my maize,
L'année rive,	The year rolls round,
Moin planté mangé,	I plant food,
Ou apè managé li.	You eat it.
En é-é-o!	In the air!
Moin planté zaboca,	I plant avocados,
Ça pou' ou mangé,	They are for you to eat,
Ou malhonnet-o.	You are a dishonest man-o.
Tonnèrre!	*Tonnèrre!*

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The field cleared and hoed, the work of planting begins. This is carried on in accordance with a well-defined calendar of agriculture, which takes as its starting-point the beginning of the rains. Maize, which matures quickly, is the first crop, and is planted during the latter part of March or early in April, unless the rains are delayed, when it is planted later that month. Congo peas, which mature less rapidly, are put

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* *Tonnèrre,* "thunder," is a Haitian-French oath; the original is retained because in translation its force is lost.

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in at the same time, while calabashes and melon vines are 241
planted where the ash of the fires that consumed the cleared brush can fertilize them. Rice, which grows some four months before it matures, is planted between May and August in special patches reserved for this crop. Millet, planted in July, August, and September, can be harvested in January. Potatoes and manioc are put in the earth the latter quarter of the year and are harvested during the next dry season. Bananas, according to their species, are planted between April and September. Red beans, which mature twice a year and are cultivated high on the mountains surrounding the valleys, where it is cool, are planted in January and February and in August and September; they are harvested in June and January.

Sugar-cane is almost as important today as it was in the earliest days of Haitian agriculture. It is planted from May to July and gathered a year later, two fields being necessary if an annual crop is to be harvested. Once the cane is in the ground, however, it gives crop after crop without the need of preparing the fields or planting new shoots each year. Yams and *malangan* are cultivated on the mountainsides, the land [427] often being worked by a system of share-cropping whereby a farmer who lives in the valley but owns mountain land employs a near-by peasant to work for him, providing him with the necessary supplies and entering into an agreement that the crop will be divided equally between them. This system, however, is said by the landowning Haitians to be unsatisfactory, since there is no way to verify the yield without spending an excessive amount of time. The Haitian farmer grows other produce: cabbage, squash, onions, garlic, peanuts, peppers, papaya, and spices, while the trees near the houses give coconuts, oranges, avocados, mangos, guavas, and other fruits.

Crops are not planted during the first quarter of the moon, 241
the preferred time in Mirebalais being from eight days after 821
the new moon until the full moon. It is held that anything

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planted at other times will spoil. Similarly, millet and maize must not be harvested during these periods, or small insects will eat the grain." No crop whose root is used for food may be planted during the forbidden phases of the moon," say the educated cultivators also, citing experiences of their own or of their neighbors who, being skeptical, planted their potatoes or other tubers during the wrong phase of the moon, only to have them completely spoil. In some instances not only the phases of the moon, but entire months are held unpropitious for planting. Thus July is regarded as a " weak " month for planting potatoes and plantains, while April, May, June, and August are preferred ones.

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As in all Negro cultures, the Haitians dare not ignore the supernatural powers that rule the universe, where the question of getting a living is concerned. In the valley of Mirebalais, if the land where a field is to be made has a stream, a cock must be sacrificed to the spirit that resides in it, together with oil, peas, and some non-intoxicating drink. In making the offering, protection is asked against those who might steal from the field or injure it:

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> *" Maître Source, moin mandé pou' ou gadé jardin moin vini fait ici. Cé pas pou' ou laissé méchant, malfaiteur contrarié tout ça moin mété nan terr'a. Si moin bien récolté, moin va bà ou un pile mangé.* — Master of the Stream, I pray you to protect the garden I have just made here. Do not permit any evil designing person to harm all that I have put into the ground. If I harvest well, I will give you much food."

An invocation such as the following might also be pronounced on this occasion:

> *" Jesu Christ, les Saints, Marassa, les Morts: M'ap' travaillé; m'ap' planté graines-là. Pou' fai'l donné pou' moin, pou' m' join, pou' m' bai' Mystères, les Saintes, les Marassa, les Morts.* — Jesus Christ, Saints, Twins, the

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Dead: I have worked; I have planted this seed. Make it yield for me, that I may make offerings to the Mysteries, the Saints, the Twins, the Dead." 241 782 539

At the entrance to the field the cranium of a horse, a mule, or a burro may be erected on a pole as magic against evil, and a wooden cross to which limes are attached may also be raised to protect against any expression of envy that might place a spell upon the growing plants. Finally, if there is any reason to believe that evil magic may have been invoked against the owner, a *hungan*, or *vodun* priest is summoned to make a charm to ward it off, and, with a little ceremony, he inters this charm in the middle of the garden or at its entrance. 241 789

In addition to this, first fruits must be given as an offering to the supernatural forces whose goodwill has permitted a bountiful yield, particularly in the case of staple crops such as maize and rice. As the first heads of maize are brought in, they are roasted, and the kernels are cut from the cobs. The head of the household then throws them to the four cardinal points either in the garden or before his house, and as he does this, he pronounces an invocation such as the following: 241 782 [823] [539]

> *"Jesu Christ, les Saints, les Marassa, les Morts: M' jet' mai' bai' ou, c'est pou' toujou' m' gagne bai' ou, et pou' m' gagne courai' pou' travai' a'c p'tit' moin, a'c femme moin, a'c parent' moin, a'c toute famille-a. Conserve m' pou' m' pas malade, pou' m' toujours join pou, m' bai' ou.* — Jesus Christ, the Saints, the Twins, the Dead: I throw maize for you, that I may always have some to give, that I may gain courage [strength] to work, and also my children, my wife, my relations, and all my family. Care for me that I do not fall ill, so that I may always have [something] to give you."

After this ritual the new crop is available to its owner for whatever use he may care to make of it.

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241 782 The first of the rice-harvest is pounded in a mortar. A chicken is killed, or, if the farmer is a man of some means, he may offer two chickens, which are stewed together with red beans. The rice, cooked separately, is put on one platter or in a calabash and the stew in another, and these are taken to the field, where they are cast to the four quarters of the earth. Some of this is also given to the spirit residing in any stream which may be on the property. In addition, sacred trees are [778] [824] rewarded for their care over the field with some of this food placed at the foot of each, but only after they have demonstrated their merit by a successful yield. A prayer of thanks, [539] couched in terms such as these, is next pronounced:

> *"Tout ça quitté. Aidé moin à travailler durant l'année, quitté ba moin force, courage. Moin bien content jodi-a, main ça moin porté ba-ou, c'e pou' ca toujou' bon. Ba moin force l'année pou' moin travaille plus l'année prochain. Merci.* — All this remains [here for you]. Help me to work during the year, give me strength and courage. Today I am well satisfied; here is what I bring you that all may always be well with me. Give me strength this year that I may work more next year. Thank you."

The family and their friends who may be present then return to the house and eat the remaining food.

241 782 262 It is also held dangerous to eat yams until the spirits are given the first of the new crop that comes to hand.[1] This is true even though a person may not himself be a farmer, but purchases his yams in the market. Unless this is done: *"Cap' malade, cap' tué même. Marassa kèmbé 'ou, morts, too, et mystères.* — You can become ill, you can even die. Twins will seize (molest) you; the dead, too, and the *mystères.*" The ceremony occurs during November or December, and in addition to the "Guinea" yams — for this ceremony is not performed for the great coarse yams — it is necessary to have imported dried salt fish, fish from Haitian waters which are dried

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in Port-au-Prince, native or "créole" rice, red beans, and olive oil. The rice and beans are cooked separately, as are the yams and the two kinds of salt fish, each being seasoned with oil, salt, and pepper. The ordinary plates or calabashes on which food is offered the *loa*, or African deities, and the characteristic special double plates used in the twin cult, are prepared by rubbing them with olive oil. When the food is ready, it is placed in the proper containers in a closed room, and the family gather and say prayers of the Church — the Pater Noster, the Ave Maria, and the Credo — after which the *loa*, the twins, and the dead are called to come and eat. From midday until after sunset the room remains unopened, so that these beings may partake of the offerings placed there for them. Finally, when darkness has fallen, the family enter, and the food, whose essence is believed to have been consumed by the spirits, is eaten.

At times when a garden yields but little, the owner may suspect that black magic is the cause. He thereupon tries to recall any of his neighbors who might have occasion to feel envious of him, or those with whom he may have quarreled. He does nothing overt at this time except to watch for signs of hostility on the part of the suspect, but when the time for the next planting arrives, he not only obtains a strong charm to protect his own garden, but if he is particularly exercised and thinks his suspicions are well justified, he may set a countercharm in the field of his neighbor who he believes has harmed him. This would only be done in exceptional cases, where, for instance, the crops of one cultivator had failed when the fields about his had yielded well; for, in the main, garden magic is directed toward protective rather than toward malevolent ends.

A certain proportion of the harvest is reserved for use at home and the remainder is sold in the markets. Since these markets, which as the primary channel of distribution rank with farming in their importance in Haitian economy, they may next be considered.

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000 may next be considered. Two types of markets exist — those
443 in the countryside where produce is often sold at wholesale,
[442] and the town markets where retail trading takes place. In Mirebalais, as elsewhere, the principal market day is Saturday, though smaller markets are held on Thursdays, and roadside gatherings of women offering small amounts of foodstuffs or cooked foods are to be found everywhere. The country markets occur at present only on Tuesdays, though in earlier times the markets shared the days of the week in rotation. To heighten the importance of the towns, however, and to encourage the peasants to work steadily in their fields by concentrating the time spent at market, it has been officially decreed that the schedule given above be followed. Before this, the rotation of the markets in the commune of Mirebalais was as follows:

MONDAY: Yabodoun; La Civelle; Landale;
TUESDAY: Mirebalais;
WEDNESDAY: Dufailly (a fairly large country market); Labouli; Colombie (a very large market);
THURSDAY: Mirebalais;
FRIDAY: Chambo and Canarde (the most important country markets in the valley);
SATURDAY: Mirebalais.

[366] The Mirebalais market is located near the central square not far from the confluence of the Artibonite and Tombe rivers, though until relatively recent times it was held in the *place* before the church. It occupies a large fenced-in space reserved for the purpose, which on the days of the great mar-
443 kets hums with activity. Each tradeswoman has her place
626 there, which she retains by a kind of informal agreement, held to so well, for all its informality, that if a woman is compelled to be absent for a time, those who sit near by watch it for her and warn anyone who takes it that it must be relinquished
[627] when the original occupant returns. If despite this warning

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the newcomer persists in retaining the place, an informal appeal is taken to the local magistrate, who invariably settles the matter by deciding in favor of the original occupant.

Each woman tends to specialize in certain commodities, such as meat or cloths or notions or baskets. The venders of foodstuffs, other than meat, however, vary their offerings with the season. This latter class of sellers mainly comprises women who, living in the town, constitute a group of "middlemen," either buying produce at the country markets, or, going off with their pack animals into the back country, return with saddle-bags loaded with the purchases they have made direct from the farmer.[8]

Country women are also well represented among the traders, and as they come streaming into town on market days with their head burdens, or driving the heavily laden, slow-plodding donkeys, they fill the streets with color and movement that make up one of the most picturesque aspects of Mirebalais life. A load may consist of one type of produce only, or a woman may bring rice, maize, beans, and bananas, as well as home-made brooms and baskets. All transactions in the market are for cash, and there is no barter of any kind, for the pattern of a money economy has been too deeply lodged in Haitian tradition to allow any other mode of exchange. Prices are based on supply and demand rather than on any agreement between sellers, since contact with the capital causes the current prices paid there for all kinds of produce to be generally known. Another factor which enters into price-fixing, however, is prestige. It is regarded as a mark of incompetence for a woman, whether from country or town, to return home with unsold produce, and since the reputation of being a clever trader is highly valued, this is avoided when at all possible, and the vender adjusts her prices as the day wears on to insure that she will dispose of everything she has brought.

In Mirebalais, as elsewhere, the markets are best attended during harvest months, when by official count as many as

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443 eleven hundred and fifty sellers offer their wares in the course
443 of a single day. A careful tally is kept of these, since a fee for
651 the right of entry into the market is collected from all those who sell. Local tradespeople pay ten centimes each market day, but if they are sellers of meat they must pay five centimes a day for the right of entry, in addition to an annual license fee of 11.35 gourdes. A peddler of notions who goes about from one market center to another must, on coming to Mirebalais, either present a license costing 11.35 gourdes which grants the right to do business in any market of Haiti, or pay fifty centimes for permission to sell on any given market day. Other taxes collected for the upkeep of the market are particularly concerned with the transportation and sale of livestock. A fee of 3.50 gourdes is assessed when a cow is transported from one region to another or taken to the market for sale; one gourde must be paid the local tax-collector if a live animal is sold, the seller paying the tax; while if neither party to the sale knows how to write, a notary fee of two gourdes is assessed for drawing up a certificate of ownership. A fee of 3.25 gourdes is collected when a cow or bullock is butchered to be sold; for the slaughtering of a goat or pig, fees of two and one and a half gourdes, respectively, are collected.

443 A word must be said regarding the ubiquitous "small markets" that consist of a few women gathered at crossroads or at strategic points in towns on days when there is no large market, or wherever people gather. In Mirebalais such venders sit near the dispensary when it is open on Tuesdays. At cock-
[265] fights and dances or at communal celebrations a small group of women is invariably found who sell drinks, bread, sweets, and other articles of food. At these "markets," too, such cooking aids as lard are sold, which both for these small markets and the larger ones is remelted and poured into little bottles selling for five centimes each. The returns from this petty trade are very small, yet in the aggregate they probably bulk at some figure that is not insignificant in the local economy.

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While farming and marketing are by far the most widespread occupations, it must not be concluded that all specialization of economic function is lacking. The list of those in the *arrondissement* of Mirebalais who in 1934 paid license fees gives a comprehensive picture of the varied nature of their occupations: 463

2 justices of the peace	2 mattress-makers
2 notaries	2 ironworkers who repair the caldrons for boiling sugar
5 "pleaders" before the courts	15 bakers
1 doctor	21 butchers
6 surveyors	23 distillers
4 woodworkers	4 millers
48 carpenters	1 hairdresser
12 sawyers	4 jewelers
40 masons	2 general storekeepers
14 tailors	43 venders of notions in the market place
3 dressmakers	16 peddlers
4 shoemakers	

Sex division of labor cuts across these categories. Thus the baking of bread is in the hands of women, some of whom operate ovens of considerable capacity, and women are dressmakers and laundresses. Candles are made of beeswax by old women, but the cotton that is used for the wicks, or for hammocks or fish-nets or cinches of saddles, is spun by both elderly men and women. In the main, however, the rule is that manual labor outside the house is in the hands of men, while women are the housekeepers and tradespeople. Farming has been mentioned as an occupation primarily for men. All woodworking is done by men, who make furniture and fashion the dugout canoes used on the Haitian rivers; men also do basketry and weave straw hats; leather-working is in their hands as well, and they make shoes and saddles. No pottery is 462 463

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manufactured in the valley of Mirebalais, but elsewhere in Haiti men are the potters. The African knowledge of iron-working has been lost, but there are those who repair iron implements and the great pots used in making sugar, and those who work in tin. Some men specialize in making rope, others in building the mills which crush the sugar-cane. Not everyone knows how to make *clairin*, the strong drink of the peasants, and some do nothing except distill this. Painters are found who paint the larger houses built in the town, as well as those occasionally erected by the more prosperous peasants in the countryside. The calling of the mason is a well-established one. These craftsmen build the walls of the more pretentious stone houses, but more particularly find their time taken up in the erection of tombs.

565 With economic specialization goes a stratification of Haitian society, roughly drawn, but based on prestige and the command of economic resources, in which the following classes are informally recognized: [9] There are the *pauvres*, indigent folk, who for some reason have forfeited or otherwise lost their family connections and whatever they may have owned and now must actually beg to obtain enough to eat. One finds but few of these except in the larger centers; in Mirebalais they number not more than five or six. One such is an elderly man who originally came from another part of the island, lost what he owned, and when he became deaf was no longer able to earn a living. He was occasionally set at some menial task such as carrying water or gathering firewood. In another category are those known as *malheureux* — folk who are usually, though not always, incompetent, but who are generally regarded as unlucky. They may work hard on their land, but their crops fail or yield meagerly; they may obtain a *job*, but something goes wrong with it — the work is temporary, or they cannot collect the wages due them, or illness follows every period of employment.[10]

The second group comprises the middle class. This class

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contains such an overwhelming proportion of the population that no special term is applied to its members. They are comfortably situated, according to Haitian standards, living frugally on their habitations with their families where their lives follow an equitable course, and through them the body of Haitian culture flows, for they are its principal carriers. In the third class is included the *gros nègre* and the *grand nègre*. The first is a man of wealth and position, the owner of a large plantation, and frequently also a former high officer in the Haitian army or in the old Caco brigades, or a man who may have successfully stood for local or national offices. The *grand nègre* is conceived in Mirebalais to be a man of spiritual power, as represented in the more active and renowned priests of the *vodun* cult and the successful practitioners of magic. Together, the two categories may be thought of as constituting the outstandingly successful members of the community, in contrast to the first class, which includes its outstanding failures.

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CHAPTER V

BIRTH, CHILDHOOD, AND ADOLESCENCE

842 THE LOVE of children, and the prestige which a man gains as head of a large family, are factors that go far to explain the desire for a numerous progeny. In this not only is he aided by his own sophistication in matters of sex — for in Haitian peasant culture, one encounters no such conventionalized naïveté as the ignorance of physiological paternity found in certain other, non-African societies — but his desire is furthered as well by the absence of contraceptives, and the emphasis laid by Church, State, and African tradition on the desirability of 843 many offspring. [847] Though situations do arise when, because of illicit relations between a man and woman that result in conception, an abortion is held necessary, usually as soon as a woman discovers that she has conceived, she proceeds to take the necessary protective measures. First she goes to the old women of her own family, who give her herbs for the "three baths" she must take on each of the three succeeding days. This accomplished, she next visits a priest or priestess of the [951] *vodun* cult who has the confidence of her family or of her husband's, and procures other herbs also for the purpose of preparing baths, and, in addition, a magic charm to wear about her neck or about her waist. This charm protects both herself and the child in her womb against the evil eye or any

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843 other evil spirit or evil magic that may be directed against her. [751] If she is a worshipper of the African deities of the *vodun* cult, she may also ask the *vodun* priest to determine by divination what spirit will protect the child, and what her own deity asks to insure his aid. During all her pregnancy she is particularly careful to avoid eating those foods which are "hateful" to her — that is, which cause her to become ill — though in Mirebalais, at least, it is not necessary that she refrain from partaking of the foods "hateful" to her husband. A pregnant woman has privileges and powers not shared with other [753] women, as was evidenced when a Haitian man once appeared with his eye half shut, explaining that the sty was a punishment for his refusal to buy something his pregnant spouse had coveted. "They do not always know they are sending you a sty, but it is a power they have," he made clear.

Shortly before parturition is expected, both the pregnant 843 woman and her husband invoke the aid of the family deities 782 and make them offerings of a *couvert sec.** The rite is an informal one that need not necessarily take place in the familial house of worship; if it is more convenient, it may be performed inside their own house or in the courtyard. After re- 843 peating the Pater Noster and the Ave Maria, a prayer such as 782 the following is pronounced by the woman: 539

> "*Toutes mystères, tant pour papa que manman, du même de côté mari moin: m'ap mandé ou pou' moin fait un heureuse accouchement, pou' l'ouv'i chemin ba moin.* — All the gods, both of my father and of my mother, as well as those of my husband: I ask that you cause me to have a good delivery, that you open the road for me."

At the same time the family ancestors are not overlooked:

> "*Moin mandé nou' tous pou' nou' vini délivré moin, pou' nou' l'ouvri chemin pou' moin, pou' pas quitté*

* The various types of offerings will be discussed in the next section of this book.

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843 782 539 *malin esprit barré chemin qu'en moment delivrance moin apé' rivé. Nou' toutes Invisibles, les Saints, les Morts, Marassa, vini assisté moin jou'-a.*—I ask you all to come deliver me, that you open the way for me, that you do not allow evil spirits to bar my path when the time of the delivery approaches. May you all, Invisible Beings, the Saints, the Dead, Twins, come to my aid on that day."

843 782 776 Should one of the couple be a devotee of Damballa or Erzilie, both of them jealous gods, a chicken or two is added to the customary offerings, and some gift pleasing to the god, such as a dress or suit of his sacred color, is made him. Normally no further precautions need be taken. If, however, the 843 789 pregnant woman has had one or two miscarriages, she and her 793 husband go to a *vodun* priest, preferably a woman, and obtain a "medicine" to be used in bathing the abdominal and vaginal areas as a precaution against *mauvaises aires,* the werewolves believed to consume children in the womb. If the preg- 755 nancy this time terminates successfully, some of the same 793 medicine is rubbed on the child shortly after birth and several times during the ensuing weeks, but should the infant later fall ill, the *vodun* priest brings herbs and makes a smoke-fire to drive away the werewolves that are believed still to be hovering about.

844 782 At the onset of labor, if either the father or the mother of the unborn child is vowed to Damballa, another sacrifice is made to this god and to the spirits of twins, giving a *couvert sec* and one or two chickens and pigeons to each. If a *vodun* priest has determined what deity protects the child, a sacrifice is also given this spirit, and prayers are said to the spirits of twins, the dead of the families of both the man and the woman, and all other supernatural beings, saints of the Church and *vodun* gods alike.

844 Meanwhile the woman has been placed on the ground on

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a mat or a cloth, supported in a reclining position with pillows 844
and cloths, or on a covered box standing about a foot from the ground, with her legs drawn up. No fire is built in the house, all doors and windows are tightly shut, and covers are provided against a chill. A candle stands lighted at the threshold, [788]
and holy water is poured beside it; a candle is also often [782]
lighted in the church before the statue of the saint who corresponds to the *vodun* deity under whose protection the woman in labor is thought to be. In the room with her is the midwife and as many as six, seven, eight, or nine older women belonging to the families of the woman and her husband. The hands of the woman are made to rest on her knees, but where labor is prolonged, her arms are supported above her head to afford relief. She is three times given very hot tea or a drink made of [757]
the stewed leaves of the mango tree and of the *bois lait*. The midwife, with palm oil on her hands, watches the rhythm of labor and presses on the abdomen to facilitate delivery.

If it becomes evident that this will be difficult, a *vodun* 845
priest is at once called to determine by divination whether or 793
not the deities who have been propitiated are satisfied. If the 787
answer is a negative one, he promises future sacrifices or gives 782
minor offerings immediately. Care is also taken to ascertain [775]
whether the trouble is due to the discontent of the family dead who may have been angered by neglect to wear mourning for them, or because sacrifices or a *service* due them have been delayed too long. Inquiries are similarly made to determine whether the spirits of twins might not be displeased, [754]
while the possibility that evil magic may have been invoked is not overlooked, especially if the husband has several wives. If the inquiry shows that the magic of a co-wife was responsible, a strong counter-charm is made at once. Should the woman in 845
labor eventually die, however, her death is not considered to 766
be the result of any act of infidelity on her part, and does not, as in other Negro cultures, prevent the usual burial and mourning customs being carried out.

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844 The child is delivered on a mat or cloth placed on the ground, and the navel cord is cut with scissors, leaving a length of three finger-breadths. The end of the cord is cauterized with a red-hot iron, treated with oil, and bandaged with a piece of cloth. If the infant emits no cry after birth, the midwife shakes it or strikes it smartly to start its breathing, but should this be insufficient, a large *gammelle*, or wooden bowl used to serve food at feasts, is overturned so as to cover the child, and this is beaten for a few moments, a procedure which is held both to awaken the child and to give it needed warmth. After being bathed in tepid water in which calabash leaves have been steeped,[1] about a teaspoonful of muscat, palm oil, and sugar is fed the infant. An abdominal band is put on in place, and the child is dressed in a nightgown tightly pinned, so as to envelop its form and cause it to grow straight-limbed and firm of muscle. The process of moulding the head is begun at once, pressure being applied once a day for the first three days of life. The nostrils are pinched every few moments during the first day of life and several times each of the succeeding days, to cause them to be narrow. This matter of shaping the head and compressing the nostrils is sufficiently important to have figured in the accounts of birth conventions as given by a number of persons, though there is some disagreement as to the details of the practice, some maintaining that the head is shaped every eight days for two months and the nostrils compressed many times a day for a period of eight days. The baby continues to be bathed in tepid water, and, if born during the winter months, a fire always burns in the house.

[298] [824] 846 856

844 The placenta is buried in a special hole dug in the room where the birth occurred, the preferred places for this being beneath the bed or at the threshold. Any of the women in attendance may bury the placenta, though usually the midwife sees to its disposal. If delivery takes place during the day, it is buried immediately after ejection, but if the birth has oc-

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curred during the night, they wait for daylight. Salt is added to the hole, "so that the evil eye cannot take it (for magic purposes), for with salt it spoils very quickly." Neither the hole nor its contents are held to be of future importance, and though the child may be shown where the cord and placenta were buried, by that time nothing will remain of it which might be of use to a maker of charms. After three or four days the cord falls off and muscat powder is applied to heal the wound cleanly. The bit of cord is saved, and if the child becomes ill, this is boiled and the water given as a drink. Occasionally an entire umbilical cord is dried and retained; and one woman spoke of the cord of her mother as still being in existence.

The mother is also bathed in water in which calabash leaves and other ingredients have been steeped, and after being carefully dried, a band is tightly tied about her abdomen to give her support. A cloth is placed to cover the vagina, which is not cleansed until the following day, though after that the vaginal region is washed twice daily for some forty days. Red wine is given to women immediately after delivery to sustain them until food can be prepared. Bananas, salt fish, milk, chocolate, and a dish of stew made of chicken and rice are offered, and in most instances the women eat heartily.

The cloths used during childbirth are carefully guarded, the woman herself or a trusted member of her family seeing to the task of washing them, so as to prevent their being used for evil magic. If a miscarriage occurs, the fetus is buried in a hole dug in the floor of the woman's house while the woman herself is bathed and otherwise cared for as in the case of a normal delivery.

A woman is usually up and about three or four days after the birth of her child, or sooner if there is no one to help her with her household duties, in which case she may even be obliged to perform the heavy work of going to the river for water within the week, though she is careful not to bend down

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846 or to get her feet wet. When possible, however, she waits for from fifteen to twenty days before doing this kind of work, and, in any event, she will not bathe in cold water until more than a month has passed. A week or two after giving birth she may resume her selling in the market, and two months after her child is born she will take up work in her garden.[8]

852 [851] During this period of the mother's recovery the child is ritually introduced to his world and to the spirits which govern it. Three or four days after the cord drops, the midwife, water and a candle in hand, presents the child to the sun and the four corners of the earth, speaking an invocation which none but women of this profession may know or hear spoken. The child is then carried into the courtyard before the house, though he may not be taken elsewhere for as many as three weeks. When he is taken across the threshold for the first time, he is cradled in the left arm of the one who carries him; in the left hand water is held, while the right hand holds a lighted candle. Water is thrown in three directions, outward from the door and to each side of it, as the child is taken about the outside of the house. This rite is repeated by everyone present at the time, but water is "thrown" only once.

854 789 Though it is said by some that a child is not given a charm immediately after birth unless it is ill, it is nevertheless customary to place a cord about the neck of an infant on the day it is born, to remain there until some three or four years later, when it wears out and is lost. There is no difference of opinion, however, on the point that if a baby falls ill soon after birth, steps must be taken to give it spiritual protection. A [793] [994] *vodun* priest is called to make a charm for it to wear, while, in addition, another charm is placed in the house to guard its inhabitants against "all bad things," such as the evil eye—since this tends to give babies convulsions—demons, werewolves, or the "little folk" who bring bad magic. A *jok* 854 754 against harm resulting from even unconscious envy is also provided, since an individual who admires a baby because of

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its good health or good looks or some other attribute may unwittingly bring harm to it. For such reasons the child is often burned slightly on the cheek, a ritual carried out by the *vodun* priest in order that the scar may "give one with evil intentions toward the child an 'occupation' to divert his attention, that would otherwise be devoted to carrying out some evil design."

There is some question as to whether, as in so many Negro cultures, the child is given a special name at birth which is regarded as sacred and a thing to be concealed. In one instance it was stated that while one's "real" name was that given at the time of the Church baptism, everyone has a "nickname" (*petit nom*) that is known to the father and mother alone until the child is old enough to guard its secret character. This name is never spoken aloud, for if an enemy came to know it, he might use it for purposes of black magic against its owner. However, no agreement exists in Mirebalais as to this practice, which may represent a survival of a widespread West African custom.[8]

A child born with a caul is believed to be "strong" in combating all evil spirits. The caul is dried and reduced to powder, and the infant is given some of the powder in water two or three days after birth. If a child is born with the navel cord wrapped about his throat, he is believed by some to be destined for leadership, though others do not hold this to be a significant omen. A child born feet-foremost is regarded with distaste, so that where possible, he is turned about in the womb to facilitate a head presentation. If this cannot be done, the child when he grows up is reproached: "You came like a demon." More often, however, if a child with breech presentation is not stillborn, it is not believed that he will long survive. All such occurrences are attributed to bad magic, and the husband does not delay to seek out a diviner to discover for him what supernatural forces had caused the evil.

Breast-feeding begins on the third day, but if the milk does

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1337 SV3 Haiti SV3
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853 [illegible] not come, the mother goes to a woman "specialist" who
[799] knows the herbs which are believed to induce the flow. When
[854] the mother is ill or tubercular, the infant is given to a wet-nurse. Once he has begun to nurse, he is fed whenever he cries, and as soon as he can sit up he is given the same food as
846 the mother eats. For the first two or three months after the
262 birth of her child a woman refrains from eating egg-plant, fresh fish — although she may eat salt fish — white beans or any others larger than Congo peas, pork, lard, and all fruit.
304 The ears of a female child are pierced when she is about a
30 month old for the gold ear-rings which are worn by girls and women of all ages. If the parents cannot afford them at the time, however, thread is placed in the holes until a sum sufficient to provide this important trinket has been accumulated.

856 A child is taught to sit up beginning with the end of the
857 third or fourth month, and by the time he is six or seven months old he can sit quite well; girls are believed to be more precocious than boys in acquiring this skill. When about ten months old, or sooner, an older sister, a little girl, or the father or mother takes the child by the hand and teaches him to walk, later allowing him to hold one end of a stick for sup-
[754] port. A child is never left alone, for fear of the evil eye or of
[769] werewolves, so that a mother does not even cross the threshold of her house without taking her baby with her, while if for some reason she cannot avoid leaving her child while she is in the yard, an empty bottle is placed near its pillow as a pro-
856 tective device. Teething is a matter of importance, since the
855 attitudes of the parents toward a child may be determined by
763 the first teeth to appear. If these are cut in the upper jaw, it is said that the child's mother will survive his father, and when this occurs, the mother takes every precaution to conceal the fact from her husband, so he will not hate the child. Others hold, however, that the appearance of an upper tooth first denotes that either the father or the mother is soon to die.[6]

856 Instruction starts early in the life of a child. Beginning with
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his fourth or fifth month, he is reprimanded for laziness if 856
late in sitting up, and when he is taught to walk his parents 861
call out: "Come, lazy one! Come on!" He receives no physical punishment, however, until somewhat older. Thus, for example, if after a child can crawl he is told not to go beyond the threshold, he is scolded the first two or three times he disobeys, but after this he is beaten with a small stick on the buttocks or thighs. Similar means are used to teach him at the same age not to go near the fire, to avoid the thorny cacti used to fence gardens, not to put things in his mouth, and — especially because of black magic — not to pick up anything from the ground. Training for bowel and bladder control is begun 863
shortly after birth and is continued at every opportunity the mother may have to pick up the child, so that he is usually fairly well trained when a year old, though complete control is achieved only after two years or more. A child who wets his mat is beaten, but "not too hard."

Baptism takes place when all is in readiness for the cere- 851
mony, a matter of a month or two after birth, unless the child 852
is seriously ill, in which case he is baptized immediately. The 608
fee of 2.50 gourdes to the civil officer who registers the birth [651]
is paid by the father. The godfather pays a similar amount to the priest for baptizing the infant, and in adddition, if he desires and is able, he may both aid the godmother in meeting the expenses of dressing the child and give the mother a gift. The godmother furnishes the child with a shirt, a dress, a
bonnet — "a pretty one" — stockings, shoes, and, if she can [431]
afford it, silk for a ribbon-trimmed coverlet. These gifts are obligatory, and even where a hasty baptism of a sick child has made it impossible to provide properly for his outfitting, if he survives, his mother is given a present of money by both godparents so she can procure this finery.

As in most Catholic countries, the godparents play an im- 608
portant role in the life of their godchild. Not only do they "stand in the place of father and mother" at his baptism, but

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608 remembrances are expected from them on birthdays or saints' days, while the young person, when older, often brings his problems to them, knowing that they will give him their most disinterested advice. A man may turn to his godparents for aid before asking it of his family, for they are regarded as truest of friends. Nor does he stand in awe of them as he does of his older relations. There is a free joking give-and-take between godparent and godchild, which reflects this attitude of warm affection. A person even stands in a special relationship to the children of his godparents, calling them "baptismal
608 brothers" or "baptismal sisters." Among the peasants, though
582 not among the inhabitants of the larger centers, not only marriage but even those non-Church unions otherwise socially sanctioned are frowned upon between "baptismal brothers and sisters." And Mirebalais has it that when Church marriage is contemplated by two such individuals, special authorization from the Archbishop must first be obtained.[8]

851 Saturday is the day favored for baptisms, permitting as it
852 does the child to be brought to town on a market day. The
608 mother rarely attends, and usually the father is also absent when the godparents bring the infant to the baptismal font, where the priest gives him his name and receives him into the Church. Later in the day the parents are visited by their friends and relatives, who, if they can afford it, bring gifts for the child and partake of the drinks and refreshments that are provided.

851 Following the Church baptism at an interval which varies
852 with differing circumstances, the father and mother and the
782 godfather and godmother present the child to the family deities. Arriving at the family habitation the father says:

[539] *"Mystères-o, nou' même qui te après Grand Maître protège et delivre, moin vin' remercie nou'. Et en même temps main petite la pou' ga'dé pou' moin. Pas quitté mauvaise lawou gagné l'empi' sou' li. Ba li force, santé,*

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et preserve li cont'e tout mal. Ba li couraille pou' moin. Yun jou', c'est li-même qui allé remplacé nou' pou' servi nou' quan' nou' pas pè la. — O spirits, you who after the Great Master protect and deliver, I come to thank you. At the same time here is the child [you are] to protect for me. Do not let werewolves gain power over him. Grant him strength, health, and preserve him against all evil. Give him courage for me. One day he himself will replace us to serve you when we are no longer here." 851 852 539 782

Inasmuch as it is always necessary to invoke all three categories of supernatural beings, a similar invocation is pronounced for the dead and the spirits of twins. The rite, however, may be even simpler than this. If the family house of worship is near by, and the relationship group is one which numbers important members of the *vodun* cult, the child may be taken into this house, water thrown on the ground three times, and a candle lighted. In such cases no invocation is pronounced. 851 852 782 [764]

Most mothers nurse their infants until they are about eighteen months old, though children may be weaned when as young as a year. Weaning is accomplished in a day or two. On the day selected, a bitter plant called *laloi* is spread on the mother's breasts, and when the child asks and is given the breast and refuses it because of the bitter taste, his favorite food is at once offered as a substitute. So efficacious is this method that one day's training is ordinarily enough. As a further precaution the child is not allowed to sleep with his mother for three or four nights after being weaned, so that he cannot take the breast at night, and is only given a place in the mother's bed after her milk has ceased to flow. 862 [824]

The earlier years of a child are in the main free from care, and, with due allowance for the differences in individual temperaments and family traditions, he is given much his own way. Young children make "mud food" and build play-houses. When somewhat older, they organize games of 857 [855]

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857 hide-and-seek and enjoy story-telling sessions, when the tales of 'Ti Malice and Bouki are recounted. Still older ones make drums out of jars and "arrange a dance." Little girls play with dolls made for them by the older children, while boys with sticks for horses organize themselves into "armies" with their
852 seniors as officers. When a child's teeth fall out, a minor ceremony is performed. As each tooth is detached, the child throws it on the roof of the mother's house, saying:

[539]

"Rat, rat, rat,	"Rat, rat, rat,
M'jet' yun bel' 'ti dent ba 'ou,	I give you a nice little tooth,
Ba'm yun vieille dent."	Give me an old tooth."

871 At this same time a beginning of formal education is made, especially if the child lives in the town or near enough to it to
872 allow him to reach one of the schools there. These schools are under both secular and Catholic auspices, and in them the pupil is instructed in the rudiments of European education, learning to read and write and to do simple problems in arith-
873 metic. If he shows proficiency and the means of his family permit, he may go on to a secondary school at Port-au-Prince or some other center; in the main, however, this schooling is all he ever receives, if he is permitted this much.

861 It is not to be supposed that a child is allowed to grow up
593 without learning how to conduct himself in accordance with
602 the traditional code of Haitian behavior, for the punishment that follows departures from this code is always both prompt and extremely painful, beating with sticks being the mode of correction most often employed. The mechanisms of education and control operate the more effectively because they are exercised by a fairly large group of persons, which includes not only the father and mother of the child, but also his grandparents, his uncles and aunts on both sides of the family, and
603 his older brothers, sisters, and cousins. Less restraint is exer-
593 cised before grandparents than other relations, for while there
604

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are no customary playmate or joking relationships between grandparents and grandchildren, a man would rather go to his grandparents when in trouble than to his parents or uncles, because of the greater indulgence they show him.

At about the age of seven or eight the children's play-life is invaded by the serious work which they must increasingly assume. According to their sex, they are instructed by father or mother, each parent teaching the child the work he will be most occupied with as he matures. For some children, naturally, this education is deferred longer than for others, but, as a rule, boys of four or five may be seen playing about the field "helping" father by bringing him a leaf with which to light his cigarette, or "hoeing" in company with him, while girls are early permitted the pleasure of accompanying their mothers to market. By observing his father at work and by helping in small tasks the boy gradually learns how to do a man's work, until at about the age of fifteen he himself can cultivate a garden. Two or three years later he is given a field of his own and seed with which to sow it. The produce from it he brings to his mother to sell for him, and she keeps what money it brings, so that he will have his savings when he wishes to marry. Little girls, for whom acquaintance with the techniques of selling in the market is desirable, are given small articles to dispose of, and the proceeds belong to them, though some mothers demand an accounting from the young tradeswomen as a further measure of training. A woman also teaches her daughter to sew, to cook, and to wash and iron, instruction which is continued until a girl, ready to be given in marriage, is able to manage all of a woman's work.

If a family can afford the expense, children begin to be prepared for their first communion at eight or ten years of age; but members of poor families must wait until the money can be found — which means that some classes of candidates include grown men and women. At about the customary age for confirmation the children are informed of the family *vodun*

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869 [194] deities, and they are taught what must be done when a sacrifice is to be given. Parents differ widely in this as in other practices, and while some make it a point to impart this information both at this time and later in the life of the child, others refuse to answer questions, and the child must learn from what he himself observes.

864 Children in the valley of Mirebalais receive little formal sex education. Shortly before marriage young women are told enough of the mechanism of the sexual life to guard against their being frightened when their husbands come to them. As early as seven years of age, however, girls are cautioned not to permit boys to play with them sexually, while a girl who reaches puberty is carefully watched, not being permitted to go for water or firewood or on other errands unless accompanied by some child, usually younger than herself. No explanation for this is given; she is simply forbidden to leave the house alone, though eventually she learns the reasons from other girls. Neither special ritual nor special instruction follows first menstruation; the girl merely apprises her mother of the fact. She herself has learned of the phenomenon by observing her mother and her older friends and consequently is not troubled by her initial menstrual flow, but rather is pleased that she has now become a woman.

864 881

864 This absence of formal sex education does not stand seriously in the way of the young in learning the technique of sexual intercourse. Boys of six and seven surreptitiously "experiment" with girls of their own age in the sex act, despite parental warnings. This ceases, however, as soon as the girls are nubile, for then they are under strict supervision. Young boys are often given information concerning the technique of sexual intercourse by their older brothers or friends, when these gather in groups and discuss among themselves their amorous adventures. Another manner in which the child obtains sex education is by observing the behavior of his parents. Children usually share their parents' bed until they are six or

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Children usually share their parents' bed until they are six or eight years old, and the same room until they are ten or twelve. They are counted on to sleep soundly enough, but it happens that a child sometimes awakens and, unknown to his parents, observes them. Though brothers and sisters sometimes continue to sleep together until the age of puberty, it is said that attempts at intercourse between them rarely occur, for, according to Haitians, the children gradually sense that this is regarded as bad, and a boy approaching puberty who wishes to satisfy his desire for sex play goes to find a "little neighbor." Later, when the nubile girls are withdrawn from the company of the boys, the latter play with younger girls who have not yet reached puberty, or carry on "affairs" with those older than themselves; indeed, it is from these latter that they obtain full knowledge of sexual procedure.

What has been said concerning the growth and training of children applies mainly to those who live with their parents. No discussion of the development of the child, however, can neglect to mention the widespread institution of a form of quasi-adoption, found not only in Mirebalais, but in all other parts of Haiti. By this is not meant legal adoption, though that, too, is known and at times occurs. Quasi-adoption involves children who are called "*'ti moun qui 'reté à caille 'oun*—small folk who stay at your house," or, more briefly, *'ti moun*. They are the children, often of peasants, "given" to friends who live in a town or, as is the case with some families of Mirebalais, "given" to friends or acquaintances living in the capital. To what extent this relationship offers a means for the exploitation of children in other parts of Haiti cannot be said, though tales of abuses of it, especially in Port-au-Prince, are heard. To give a person a child in this manner is in Mirebalais regarded as a token of friendship, and such children as were observed, though poorly clothed, were fed not much differently from the children of the families with which they were sent to live. When the *'ti moun* grows older, he leaves and returns to his own home, though the relationship between

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597 foster-father and child may continue friendly if the young person has been well treated. Such a child repays the cost of keeping him by helping in the garden and by running errands. If his parents wish him to receive uninterrupted schooling at the secular or Catholic school, they must recompense the person responsible for the child for any cost this may be to him.

86 It is in a manner such as described in this chapter, then, that the children of Mirebalais and, to a large degree, of other parts of Haiti are born and live the earlier years of their lives, completing the training which equips them for participation in their culture. The boy has learned how to farm or to carry on whatever other calling he will inherit from his father, while the girl has been prepared for marriage and the work of the household. By means of their play-life both boys and girls have learned the technique of sex behavior. In the matter of attitudes toward other members of the family and toward the ancestral spirits, as well as in their relations to the saints of the Church and the gods of the *vodun* cult, they are also prepared, having in the latter case learned to sing and dance, and, if young men, to play the drums that sound the rhythms of the *vodun* rites. It is at this point in their lives, then, that these young people as adults take their proper places in their society, establishing their own families and carrying on the tradition of their people.

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CHAPTER VI

MATING AND MARRIAGE

THERE are two ways in which a Haitian family may be formed. 583
The first of these is through a marriage having the sanction of the Church, in token of which a ring is thereafter worn by the wife. The second mode of establishing a family is by means of the institution known as *plaçage*, wherein a man and a woman who desire to live together fulfill certain obligations and perform certain ceremonies at the home of the girl's parents, after which the new household is established.[1] The distinction between the two forms has been mentioned, though not analyzed, by several of those who traveled in the island after the period of slavery. Thus, according to Mac- 184
kenzie: 583
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> "Marriage formally solemnised is not so common as unions of another kind. . . . In the North the practice of solemnising marriages is said to be more common than in the South, owing to the preceding practice under Christophe, and the exertions of the priesthood at the Cape."[2]

Similarly, St. John speaks of not noticing "any particular ceremonies" at marriages:

> ". . . some are striving to imitate the upper classes, and have the ceremony performed in church, but the mass of the people are still not regularly married."[3]

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58 Though a certain prestige attaches to marriages solemnized by the Church, it does not follow that these are any the more stable, or effective in performing the functions of the family, than the *plaçage* unions. In the main, especially in the countryside, socially sanctioned matings which do not enjoy the approval of the Church endure as long and hold as respected a place in the community as those in which the woman wears the ring given her in a Church marriage.

There is an obvious difference in the ease with which the two types of marriages can be broken. Once the blessing of the Church has been given, canonical law makes divorce difficult in the extreme, while a *plaçage* mating needs only the mutual consent of the parties concerned to be dissolved. Yet a girl who is to be *placée* is given no less careful instruction before being sent to her mate than one destined for a Church wedding, while in similar fashion the parents of the *placée* make as sure that the man to whom she is given is able to provide for her and her offspring as they would were a Church wedding involved.

For both forms of mating, the customary age of betrothal for a girl is between fifteen and seventeen, and marriage follows when the parents of both the man and the girl are satisfied that the young people are prepared to take up life together. The young man, who must usually have reached the age of nineteen to twenty-one years,[8] must possess a house with the necessary furnishings; a field, ten or twelve goats, and a similar number of pigs, as well as a beast of burden such as a burro or a horse. Above all, however, he must properly "respect" the parents of the girl by helping them work their fields or performing other tasks, such as seeing that the men are called for a *combite* (though he would not be expected to provide the feast), or summoning those needed to do thatching.

Whether married in church or mated under the sanctions of folk-custom, the resulting union is regarded as permanent,

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so that both forms must be considered by one interested in 58
social institutions as constituting true marriage. The prestige which is derived from a Church union, however, is of appreciable significance; sufficient, indeed, to motivate weddings at which the children and even grandchildren of the principals act as attendants. A man and woman may live together as *placées* ten or fifteen years or more before they have amassed the necessary amount to pay for a legal marriage. It 585
is only when parents of young people are prosperous enough 435
to pay for a Church marriage that their union receives the stamp of approval of the Church, for the Church wedding involves considerable expenditure in terms of Haitian peasant economy. A "first class" wedding, for example, calls for the payment of 47.50 gourdes; a "second class" ceremony, 40 gourdes; and the least expensive, or "third class" rite costs 34 to 36 gourdes, while in addition to this, five gourdes must be paid the assistant who rings the church bells, and a fixed fee of 25 gourdes is assessed for the civil registration of the marriage. The wedding ring is, of course, indispensable; a modest one, of gold, costs 60 gourdes. Food and drinks served at the festivities following the Church service cost, conservatively, another fifty gourdes, while if an ox is slaughtered to provide a more elaborate feast, the amount is correspondingly greater. Finally, the person who reads the necessary prayers before the festivities begin and the musicians who play for the *bal* must also be compensated. It can readily be seen, [583]
therefore, how a man and woman may live together in a *placée* union for years before their resources permit a legal marriage.

Whatever the type of mating, the first steps toward be- 584
trothal are taken by the young man. Though he has courted the girl of his choice and his proposal is acceptable to her, customary procedure demands that she refer him to her parents, whereupon his parents appear before those of the girl to make their plea on his behalf. If both families reside

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584 in the same district, the background of the young man is well enough known so that no investigation is necessary, though unfailingly a long and formal discussion of the suitor, his qualities, and his prospects ensues. If his home is some distance away, however, meticulous inquiries are made not only concerning the young man and his immediate family, but of
584 his ancestry as well. Should the suitor live near the home of
212 the young woman, as usually happens, his own parents come with a *lettre de demand*. In earlier days the "letter" was written on flowered paper with a lacy border, but today plain colored paper does very well. When presented, it is wrapped
[603] in a green silk handkerchief, "for hope" — the handkerchief
[822] costs about five gourdes, and a similar amount is given the scribe — and is usually carried by the oldest man of the family; that is to say, the paternal grandfather if living, or if he is dead, the father, accompanied by the mother and per-
[178] haps the other grandparents. Today it is said that in the valley of Mirebalais the custom of presenting these letters of request is often disregarded, but is by no means extinct.[7]

The family of the girl is always apprised of the exact time of the visit, and refreshments are on hand. No reply is given at the time of the delivery of the "letter," since the families of both the father and the mother of the girl must consent to the match before it can be finally approved. However, at the stage of the courtship which the presentation of a "letter" implies, this delayed answer is a matter of form, for if the proposal had not been acceptable, the girl would not have
[578] been allowed to see the suitor. The refusal of a "letter" has been known to occur, but this is regarded as a deadly insult, and deep enmity between the families follows. Should the family of the girl, not wishing to be abrupt, accept the "letter" and proffer refreshments to its bearers, but later return the same "letter" as a sign of rejection, even this would be
584 bitterly resented. Under such circumstances the young man
832 takes steps to obtain revenge by providing himself with a
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love-charm designed to insure the young girl's coming to him. He then uses all persuasion to give her a child and, this achieved, abandons her to show his contempt for the family that has formally refused to accept him as a son-in-law. 584 832 578

Usually, however, the visit is returned by the family of the girl, bearing a "response" of acceptance wrapped in a red silk handkerchief, "for victory." And just as the family of the young woman had known in advance of the coming of her suitor's relatives, word of the favorable verdict is now sent through indirect channels, so that the family of the young man may also be prepared to receive the emissaries who come on behalf of the girl. 212 822

With this formal acceptance of the young man's suit, the wedding waits until he has accumulated the requisites for a household. Custom dictates that even should he be prepared, the ceremony must be delayed for several months while he remains in a probationary state, to assure the family of his fiancée of his worthiness. The young woman is also under surveillance during this time, when she may be asked to help her future mother-in-law with the housework, and particularly with the washing and ironing of linens. Generally a period of from two to three years elapses before the bridegroom accumulates enough to fulfill his obligations in marriage. During this time the family of the young woman is acquiring the things she is expected to bring to her husband: linens and dishes — though in the poorer peasant families these items would not be provided her — cooking utensils, water-containers, knives, forks, and other things needed for the household. Her father also presents her with a horse, a donkey, six or seven pigs, the same number of goats, as well as chickens, guinea-hens, and turkeys. 583 584

Tokens of virginity are not demanded before the match, since Mirebalais custom requires that the girl tell before her marriage whether she has had relations with other men. She may be sent away if it is discovered that she has told an un- 584 836

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584 truth, but the matter is recognized as one which concerns
836 only her husband and herself, and if he is willing to keep
836 her, it is his own affair. Consensus of opinion in Mirebalais
369 is that the percentage of girls who do not have pre-marital sexual relations is relatively small, but the belief is expressed that chastity is more prevalent among country women than among those of the town, where, in turn, it is more frequent than in larger centers such as Port-au-Prince. Even though
836 pre-marital relations are commonplace, however, the preg-
848 nancy of an unmarried girl is regarded as both reprehensible and unfortunate, and she is severely beaten for it by her family. In such cases, if the father of the unborn child will take the girl, his parents are sent to bring her, but where the parents of the man refuse to ask for the girl because they do not approve of her, then, if he still desires her, he must himself face the anger of her parents. Should he not wish to come for her, she may either remain with her family or seek work in another community. In any event, her child will be well cared for by her family, and no reproach will attach to it because of the circumstances of its birth.

585 Before a mating of any type is consummated, the familial
782 spirits must be notified of the approaching event so that they
776 may be well disposed toward it, for no union where this is neglected can enjoy happiness or peace. One Mirebalais woman was pointed out as an object lesson of the necessity of doing this. Though a devotee of several gods, neither she nor her husband was willing to perform the necessary rites for
[753] her gods before their marriage. She was suffering from an
[828] acute case of melancholia after the birth of her first child, and the prevailing opinion was that she was going mad because of the neglect of her duty toward her deities. Shortly before a woman goes to her husband, therefore, a *couvert sec* for the Rada deities is given both by herself and by her betrothed. If the family of either the young man or the woman possess deities of the powerful Pétro group, more inclusive offerings

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are necessary, and the elders of the family must see to it that 585
these gods are instructed not to trouble the newly married 782
pair. If either or both of them are devotees of deities such 776
as Damballa, Erzilie, Ogun, or Aida Wedo, all of whom are known to be extremely jealous, these gods must be specially placated.

For the actual ceremony the couple appear each with a 585
candle in hand, pour water on the ground in the family house 782
of worship, and kneel and pray. The god may "come to 787
the head" of the girl or the man or some relative of each and advise them. If it asks a gift at this time, it is either given at the moment or a promise is made to fulfill the request later. If the spirit objects to the marriage, it is wooed with offerings. Thus, for example, should the young woman be possessed by the serpent-god Damballa, who, speaking through his devotee, registered an objection to the marriage, the girl would be given such gifts as a white silk dress, white silk stockings, or some other valued object in the sacred color of the god, or some perfume which might also serve to mollify him. Or should the man's deity who registered objection be Ogun, the god of war, a fine red kerchief might be offered [822] in honor of this god, whose color is red.[a]

The dead of both families are also notified by means of a 585
visit to the cemetery. The days for these pilgrimages are Mon- 769
days or Fridays, and the pilgrimages must be made during 782
either the morning or the early afternoon, since visits at night are only for evil purposes. As candles are lighted, announcement is made to the family dead of the marriage which is soon to take place, and their good offices are asked to bring it happiness. After all the family dead have been invoked, a candle is [776] lighted before the large cross for Baron Samedi, and another behind it for Gede, the first as the ruler of cemeteries and the graves of the dead, and the second as his handy-man. Another candle is lighted for the "abandoned souls" of the family, who have died without consecration, and yet another

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585 769 782 for the victims of smallpox. If family traditions also tell of those shot, not in war, but as prisoners, perhaps, a candle is lighted for them outside the cemetery wall. Though the couple may perform this ceremony together, each makes this request of the dead of his or her own family as the candles are lighted. This call on the dead is repeated several days after the marriage or later, when candles are again lighted.

591 583 585 769 The sole exception to the performance of these rites before the new household is begun occurs in those cases of *plaçage* where a girl continues to live at her own home. This is rare, however, for the house of a man is usually built near that of his father, and he takes his wife there. But if special circumstances dictate otherwise, the ceremony of notifying and pacifying the family deities may be deferred, though a man must eventually present every woman with whom he lives to his family gods and in turn must be presentéd to the gods of the woman's family. In similar fashion the dead of both families must be adequately notified.

585 [777] [796] Marriages rarely take place in the months of November and December, the former being disliked because it is "the month of the dead," during which All Saints' Day occurs, and the latter because it ends the year. Except for the Church [583] wedding and less elaborate festivities to celebrate the event, the rites which mark a *plaçage* mating do not greatly differ from those which mark a legal marriage, which may be de- [777] scribed in outline. The favorite day for Church marriages is Saturday, "the day of the Virgin," and the time for the ceremony is always early morning, before the heat of the day has set in. If the home of the girl is some distance from Mirebalais, the party come to town the preceding day, the girl spending the night with some friend. Otherwise the bridegroom, accompanied by his relatives and friends, goes to the house of the girl early Saturday morning. Before the couple leave the [782] home of her parents, water must be thrown on the ground in [788] front of them, and also sprinkled by them before the en-

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trance of the house — three times if there is one door (for the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost), three times before each door if there are two entrances, and once before each door if there are three. The wedding procession goes to church on foot. The men, if they are from the countryside, are stiff, uncomfortable, and hot in their unaccustomed "best" clothing and their often painful shoes, while the women are also self-conscious in their new dresses. The elaborateness of the ceremony varies with the fee paid the priest, but at all events the clanging church bell is heard notifying the town and its environs that a marriage is being consecrated.

If the family of the bride or groom are well known in Mirebalais, a wedding reception may be given at their house for friends of the couple and of their parents, but the real festivities are held after the return to the new family home. As the procession approaches it, the "bush-priest," a functionary who, because of his knowledge of French, can read the prayers of the Church, waits at the gate with two aides, small boys or girls, each with a flag, one red and one white. He has sacred water in one hand and a lighted candle in the other, and as he pours this water on the ground three times he intones the Pater Noster, the Ave Maria, the Credo, and other prayers. These concluded, hymns are sung by all the participants, and singing, a procession is formed with the "bush-priest" in the lead, followed by the flag-bearers, the couple who have just been married, arm in arm, the "godfather" and "godmother" of the marriage, as the witnesses are called, the parents of the bride and groom, and other close relatives. As the procession reaches the door of the house, it pauses and water is thrown on the ground three times; the circuit of the house is made twice again, and each time, as the door is reached, water is thrown, until, the third tour completed, the participants solemnly enter.

There coffee, liqueurs, wine, *kola*, and cakes are served to the principals and the more important members of the com-

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585 munity. All others stay under the brush shelter which has been erected at the side of the house, where men are served the common drink of the Haitian peasant, *clairin*, raw rum. The feast, furnished by the bridegroom, includes beef, pork, and many fowls. "We do not eat badly at a wedding!" is the comment of Haitians. At the weddings of more prosperous folk there may be dancing, but no *vodun* dances are danced. "This is not a thing of *vodun*, but of the Church," is the explanation proffered.

The feasting begun, the bridal couple must submit to much speech-making. Long "lessons in morality" are pronounced by grandfathers, godfathers, and elderly male friends; in fact, anyone moved to speak expounds upon "the road to follow" for the good, the worthy life, and many a warning is given with moving examples of the fate of those who disregarded the counsel given them. The food and drinks consumed, the speech-makers silenced, and the dancers tired, the wedding guests begin to take leave, until by sundown many are gone, and soon the young couple find themselves alone.

175 That plural marriage has existed in Haïti since the time of
595 independence is evident from the available accounts. Little
567 can be learned of slave matings prior to 1804, but it may be assumed that these were in the main temporary and existed at the will of the masters; and while the practice of polygyny among the slaves must have been difficult, if only because of the greater proportion of males, the African pattern seems to have had enough vitality to bring about the re-establishment of the institution as soon as slavery was abolished. Thus, writing in 1830, Makenzie notes a man "not inaptly named 'Taureau'" who "though his means were small, and his cottage still smaller . . . had a harem of no less than six wives."[9]
175 St. John, some fifty years later, also remarks on the fact that
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> "In the interior, a well-to-do black lives openly with several women as wives, and I have seen the patriarch

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sitting at the door of the central house, with huts all 175
around in which his younger wives lived, as they could 595
not be made to dwell under the same roof. . . . The French priests attempted to alter this state of things, but they did not succeed, as the wives, surrounding the intruders, asked them what was to be their position if the husband selected one among them and abandoned the rest." [10]

Elsewhere St. John speaks of the institution of *plaçage* by [583]
name, mentioning its prevalence prior to the period of his residence in Haiti.[11] Mackenzie, though not calling it by this term, tells of a rural Negro who, in the course of a long conversation during which the name of an officer of rank in the Republic came up, made the observation "with admirable naiveté and exquisite logic, 'C'est mon beau frère, parceque je vis avec sa sœur.'" [12]

Plural marriage is no less common in the valley of Mire- 184
balais than elsewhere in Haiti. Despite the insistence of the 595
Church on monogamy, many men have two "wives," a few have three or four, while one important priest of the *vodun* cult is said to have eight. The force of the sanctions behind [177]
monogamy and Church unions, however, has undoubtedly [152]
influenced the psychological "set" of the Haitian toward polygyny, as is especially to be seen in the violent manifestations of jealousy shown by co-wives toward one another. It is primarily because of this that polygynous households, such as are mentioned in earlier writings, are not found in present-day Mirebalais, and this also explains why a man with more than one spouse sees to it that where possible his "wives" live at such distance from one another that they have but little opportunity to meet. Even then, on occasion, a newly taken *placée* will pace in front of the house of her man's other spouse, flaunting the clothes and trinkets she has received from him. Or if women who share the same mate meet in the

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595 or a woman who shares the same place, [illegible] in the
533 market place, quarreling is invariably heard; or if one of them sings *point* — derisive songs — against the other and goes so far as to name the object of derision, fighting and court action follow.

58 Though many cases of *plaçage* are the result of affairs be-
595 tween young people which result in conception, it is essential
684 in any event that the consent of the families of the man and the woman concerned be obtained to give the mating social validity. When the union is once entered upon, divorce occurs only with the abandonment or mistreatment of the woman, or her infidelity, for in these *plaçage* matches, the moral support of her family makes a man reluctant to send his wife away without ample justification. When a man does divorce a *placée* wife for reasons of infidelity, she may either go to another man or return to the home of her parents, where she supports herself. If after a period of years she has not established a household with another man, it often happens that her husband takes her back. Most frequently, however, where children have been born to a mating, a woman's infidelity is punished merely by beating; and proof that a wife is a wife whether or not she is legally "married" is offered by the Haitian man in this fact that a *placée* is beaten for this and less serious reasons as readily as a legal wife. Prompt
[754] action is taken against the adulterer, which, though it may on occasion be as drastic as murder, generally takes the form of
[848] recourse to magic charms. Women who carry on illicit relationships take all care, therefore, to guard unceasingly against the birth of offspring.

595 Many men, at least, hold that a man is often much closer
593 to a *placée* than to a legal wife, for the former is more attentive and less demanding than the wife with her legally assured status and permanence of tenure. Thus it comes about that
[454] *placée* spouses are frequently given generous money gifts, to be saved for the future of their children, while as a man grows older he may take up his residence with a *placée* wife, where

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he is assured of more solicitous care from her and more deferential treatment from her children. And though when this has occurred his "legal" wife may at his death come with a justice of the peace to claim his body and his effects, this move is anticipated, so that what he has given the *placée* wife and her children is usually well out of the way. "Often they find only the four walls of the house."

A certain number of unmarried men result from this system of plural matings, some of whom remain single by preference, particularly in the cities, where the incidence of homosexuality far exceeds that found in the country. In Mirebalais itself, when the final withdrawal of the American Marines from Haiti was being celebrated, a dance called *manuba*, significantly enough the only one held indoors, was one in which male dancers danced together in couples. The sexual problem of the younger unmarried men is more often solved by means of liaisons with married women, though this has its dangers in the countryside, where the movements of every individual are known and the least tendency to unsanctioned social behavior is soon the subject for widespread gossip. Prostitutes are found everywhere, and they are by no means visited by unmarried men alone. On the whole, sex "adventures" are more indulged in by men than women, even allowing for the tendency of some women to have affairs with youths. A belief widely held, that plural wives tend so to exhaust the virility of a man that he must seek "remedies" of a magical nature from the priests of the *vodun* cult and from sorcerers, must also be mentioned. Frigidity is a principal cause for female homosexuality, and, because of a wife's reluctance to satisfy her husband, it not infrequently happens that she is sent back to her parents, where she may seek out other women. The most prevalent Haitian attitude toward homosexuality in either sex, it may be remarked, is one of derision rather than vindictiveness, as the term applied to effeminate men, *commères*, may suggest.

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595 The fact that Haitian law recognizes only monogamy in-
593 troduces numerous overtones into the daily life of the people.
671 If a church-wed wife discovers that her husband makes periodic visits to another woman, whether *placée* or not, serious quarreling between the legal wife and her husband follows. The "wife" may refuse to give food to her husband or to speak to him, and will upbraid him before their children, calling him *vagabond* — a strong word of opprobrium to the Haitian — and other terms which her facile tongue readily finds at hand. The status of the children under this dual family system is another reflection of the values it engenders. And though the account of this given in Mirebalais represents a folk-reaction rather than official procedure — for according to officials in the capital it does not exist in Haitian law — its value as a living belief which gives insight into the relevant attitudes outweighs its possible lack of validity in a legal sense.

858 In Mirebalais it is held that there are what may be spoken of as three classes of offspring. The first, which may be termed "natural" children, are those born to a man by his *placée* wife or wives before his Church marriage, or to a *placée* woman whose mating with him was later legalized by the rites of Church and State. The second class, the "legitimate" children, comprises those born to couples married in the strict legal sense of the word. Finally, a third category consists
[848 of those who may be called "illegitimate" children, and in-
818] cludes all the offspring of any *placée* spouse of a man taken by him after his Church marriage, or children of any of his earlier *placée* wives born subsequent to this marriage. None of these classes of children are at any special social disadvantage, and all not only inherit the African deities of their father, but must also fulfill their spiritual obligations toward him after his death by wearing mourning and performing all other required rituals.

582 Legally, however, the matter is different, for only the chil-
671 dren born to a marriage recorded by the justice of the peace
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belong to the father, who, in turn, is the legally recognized 582
father of all the offspring of his wife unless he divorces her — 671
something which, because of Church regulations, occurs but 858
rarely. Children born outside legal marriage have no right to 851
the name of their father. Such a one is entered under his moth- 848
er's name in the record of births, though he may and often does 858
take his father's name in school or later in life, this ultimately 551
becoming the name by which he is known and which he hands
on to his children. It is in the inheritance of the father's prop- 428
erty that children born of the various types of matings are 858
said to be most strongly differentiated, though it was particu- 848
larly with this method of distributing heritable goods reported in Mirebalais that officials in the capital disagreed. The assertion is made that while the children of a "legal" wife inherit three quarters of the estate, and the other "natural" children receive one fourth, the "illegitimate" offspring have no legal right to any of the dead man's property. They must either be provided for by their father before his death or be aided on occasion by a natural brother who has inherited from their common father and feels a moral obligation toward these children of their father. Children of plural 595
wives call each other by the terms "brother" and "sister," 593
and in some instances they get on fairly well together. More [601]
generally, however, their attitudes toward one another are colored by those of their mothers, so that verbal if not physical encounters may take place when they meet.

Where, as perhaps in the majority of cases, there is a 593
monogamous union, "legal" or "*placée*," cemented by mutual affection and mutual interest in the future of the children, life goes on calmly. Each spouse performs the tasks allotted by custom, and the children are reared in an atmosphere which varies with the fortunes and temperaments of those who make up the household. Fathers are said to prefer their daughters, and mothers their sons, among their children, but for this the Haitian has no explanation other than the phrase: "This is natural."

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000 the phrase: "This is natural." Children are not spaced, for
842 normally a man resumes intercourse with his wife the second
163 or third month after childbirth. Except for the drinking of
833 coconut milk and salt, which is believed to be effective in preventing conception if taken before intercourse, contraceptives are not known to women, which means that pregnancies
162 follow in rapid succession. Families are not too large, how-
165 ever, despite this, those numbering seven or eight children being rare, even in the hills. The reason for this is a high incidence of infant mortality, which is obvious despite the
847 absence of vital statistics. Abortions are usually resorted to by young women, who sustain the operation done by the uncertain skill of an old woman, in the fear that bearing a child will later stand in the way of a desirable legal marriage.
842 Some men, however, take the precaution of placing a grain
263 of native salt on the tongue while having intercourse during an illicit affair, believing that this will be effective in preventing conception.

842 A childless woman first goes to a *vodun* priest, to have him
789 determine by divination if a co-wife has not invoked magic
782 against her. If her question receives an affirmative answer, she
[789] acquires a "counter-charm" to offset the effect of the other
[595] woman's magic. Should such a charm be ineffective, she would
[788] offer her prayers before the shrines of the saints and make
[539] pilgrimages to such sacred places as Saut d'Eau, there phrasing her petition to the Virgin in some manner such as the prayer overheard as a woman lighted a candle and held it in her hand before placing it on a sacred rock:

> *"Vièrge Miracles, Manman, voilà, depuis six ans depuis qui moins marié; moin apé vivre seul avec pauvre malhereux moin-a. Ça fait trois fois moin vini nan pié ou. Pas 'blié mandé moin fait ou, pour charité, moin ou petit pitite. Moin va minnin li ba ou. Moin apé parti, Manman, s' ou' pli, songé ça pitite m' mandé ou.—*

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Virgin of Miracles, Mother, I have been married for six years; I am still living alone with my poor unfortunate one. This is the third time I come to you. For charity's sake, do not forget to send me a child. I have brought this for you. Now I am about to leave [but], Mother, please think of the little one I ask of you."

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CHAPTER VII

PROPERTY, WEALTH, AND THE FAMILY

596 THE WORD "family" as employed in Haiti can be understood only in terms of a broader meaning than is given it in Europe and America, where it describes only the most immediate relationship group. Though in Haiti this type of organization, consisting of mother, father, and children, lies at the base of its social structure, the Haitian "family" includes a wide range of relatives, direct and collateral, on the sides of both parents. The immediate family is thus but a part of a larger group, to which it is in many instances subordinate.

611 198 197 It becomes apparent, from even so brief a statement, that Haitian society has not retained that exclusive emphasis on descent in the maternal or the paternal line that characterizes most of the civilizations of Africa. And while a more detailed discussion of the manner in which African and European traditions are combined in Haitian culture must be reserved for later pages, this much may at the moment be made clear: The Africans who peopled Haiti, coming from cultures where descent is counted solely on the side of the mother or the father, and coming into contact with the French, whose custom binds children with equal strength to the families of both parents, molded both traditions into the social forms found

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today not only in Mirebalais, but, in their essential outlines, throughout the Republic.

The larger relationship grouping originates in the immediate family, and the formation of new extended families is a continuing arc. Characteristically, the process begins when a man leaves the habitation of his father and, with his wife, settles on land somewhat remote from the dwellings of either his people or those of his wife. As the sons of this couple grow up and marry, they make their homes near that of their father, so that in time a group of immediate families related in the paternal line clusters about the dwelling of this original settler, forming a habitation. The continuation of the process depends upon the amount of land available to the group; in any event, given enough time, land to permit all the male descendants of the founder to support themselves and their families will be lacking, so that the younger men will repeat the process that has been described, and themselves become the founders of new habitations whose members, with the passing of generations, will eventually be lost to the original group. While land is available, a young man is given several hectares by his father when he marries, and here he establishes his household. If the family have prospered, additional land is bought as more young men grow up, so that the relationship group may become a community of considerable size.

In accordance with this rule of residence, only rarely will a man settle on the property of his wife's parents, since to do so reflects unfavorably on his personal status. When this does occur, it is probably because of a serious quarrel with his own people. In such a case, if his marriage endures, he becomes a quasi-member of his wife's family, but unless he has committed some extremely grave offense, such as publicly insulting or striking a parent or grandparent, he does not forfeit membership in his own group.[1] Similarly, the fact of his having settled away from the habitation of his family does not disinherit him, for, as will be seen, this occurs in but the

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591 596 428 rarest of instances, and only by fixed legal procedure, since mere verbal denial of family rights cannot deprive a person of his inheritance.

594 432 434 454 Within the immediate family it is the duty of the man to procure food for his wife and children. When his fields have been harvested, the produce is taken to the house and given to the wife, who retains a portion of it for the needs of the household and sells the surplus at the market, using the money to buy clothing and other necessaries for her husband, her children, and herself. A part of the sum she receives may be used to purchase animals to be used for transport, food, or breeding-purposes; and whatever money is left over is saved, particularly if a desirable plot of ground is available, or a mass and ceremony for the ancestors or promised rituals for the gods are in prospect. The woman, who is held to be more thrifty than the man, is thus the banker of the family. Her opinion is prized by her husband, and though a man has the legal right to dispose of a horse or a cow or his own land as he desires, in most households nothing would be done until [593] the wife was consulted. It is true that quarrels often arise concerning family funds held by the wife, especially when a man questions the accounting given him, or on occasion when he wants money to bet on a cock-fight or for drinking or other personal needs whose cost he does not care to have reviewed. But for many men the problem is quite well solved by the expedient of deducting a sum from his earnings without telling his wife that she has not been given the full amount.

596 It is only in relatively small matters that the membership of a household acts as a self-determining unit. In affairs of greater moment the extended family must figure, for despite the informality of its organization — at least as manifested in Mirebalais — and its lack of legal sanction, its power, especially as lodged in the old folk, is none the less real. It is because of this that it is said: "The peasant consults his elders about everything he does." When a transaction of some im-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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portance is being considered, particularly where the buying or selling of some land is involved, all the members of a habitation may be consulted and the opinion of the oldest man in the family, the "family head," is almost invariably followed. At the death of a man his widow inherits all his property for the duration of her lifetime or until she remarries. Her children by her dead husband, if minors, do not receive their inheritance at once, but the elders of the habitation of their father hold this property in trust for them and act as their guardians. The deities of the *vodun* cult are believed to be inherited in family lines, a tradition that gives the larger family one of its most pronouncedly African traits; while the accompanying African belief in the inheritance of the soul within the family, despite its existence in Mirebalais principally as a survival, is yet of importance in adding its sanction to help maintain the inner cohesion of the group.[2]

It may be well at this point to investigate the position, duties, and powers of the oldest male member of the group, who is the head of this informal extended family.[3] His house must be in the ancestral habitation, though he need not live in the same dwelling as his predecessor. Just as he is consulted on projects of a secular nature, his is the important voice in the worship of the ancestors and the family gods. He does not carry on the actual routine of the cult unless he is a priest, but no ceremony would be attempted without his consent and full instructions from him, and the call for the rite would be made in his name.

Examples of the exercise of his power in various circumstances are given. "He may threaten: 'Very well. If you will not listen, I am through. Do what you like.'" In such a case he will refuse "to extend his hand" when a member of his family meets some difficulty, and a man thus punished forfeits the outstanding economic advantage of belonging to his relationship group, the right to call on the members of his family for aid when he is in trouble. For otherwise all relatives

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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596 help one who, for example, has run afoul of the law because
626 of attendance at a forbidden *vodun* dance and needs a certain sum to pay a fine, or who in some dispute with a neighbor has had a judgment of the court entered against him. Obviously, therefore, the family head, who holds the power of withholding family support from one in need of it, is not flouted except under great provocation.

596 Another instance of the exercise of the family head's power
584 is given when a man or woman desires to marry or to enter
626 into the relationship of *plaçage* with someone held undesirable by the elders of his group. Should this oldest member in particular indicate his disapproval of the proposed match, it is most unlikely that the mating would take place. The reasons of the elders may be based on situations quite unknown to their younger relative who proposed the match; the existence of old enmities between the families of the two young people would perhaps necessitate inflicting the humiliation of a refusal when the "letter" was presented. If the young people persist, the elders may say: "Do what you like, but we will not support you," and should they fail to heed this warning, trouble for them is believed inescapable, since it is held that the elders thus place a curse on the new family. Nevertheless, when difficulties do arise that the two cannot cope with alone, the mother of the one in trouble would do her utmost to help, despite family displeasure, and would use all her gifts of persuasion to soften the attitude of the family elders until she succeeded in having the ones who had defied the family edict taken back into the group. Some degree of estrangement would persist and, as has been seen, might cause a man to find it desirable to make his home with his wife's people. The elders may also take the initiative in arranging marriages, exerting pressure on a reluctant young man whose inclinations have directed him elsewhere, in favor of a young woman of desirable family. But should such a marriage not

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be successful, he can count on the members of his family for financial and moral support. 596 584

These are not all the rights of the older members of the family, especially of the family head, over their juniors. All elders may punish by beating, though the oldest member of the family exercises that right most freely and may chastise those who are themselves grown men and women. If there is gossip about a boy or a girl, the family head calls the culprit to reprimand him or, if he believes the case a serious one, to beat him. Among the peasants, particularly, grown men go down on their knees before their elders, when so ordered, for a beating. Such punishments may be particularly severe if the culprit does not soon ask pardon, for since all who are older have the right to beat a younger relative, it sometimes happens that the punishment administered by the head of the family is not considered adequate, and another takes up the stick when the family head has put it down, so that two or three wands may be broken over the back of a stubborn offender. If such a one were to fight back, he would become "accursed," ceasing any longer to be considered a member of the family, and even though no legal steps might be taken to disinherit him, he would lose all caste. This right to beat is accorded by custom rather than by law, but an adult beaten by one of the elders of his own family would think long before he would sue. "There is always a consultation, and a man is discouraged from going to court." 596 627 [626] [691]

Lest the impression may have been given, in considering the role of the elders and their relationship to the younger members of the family, that it is those in the father's line alone who are concerned, it must be emphasized that relatives of both parents exercise substantial control over a person. More than this, since marriage constitutes an agreement between families as well as between an individual man and woman, it follows that both paternal and maternal grand- 596 [581] [603]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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596 parents are friendly toward each other, so that the conflict
[581] that might result from a division of authority rarely develops.
[603] Were it otherwise, it could easily happen that a person who had been ordered, or forbidden, to do something against his own wishes by the head of his paternal family would plead with the head of his mother's group and receive support to justify his disobedience. To most Haitians such a hypothetical incident was amusing to contemplate, for the elders are said always to work together. Rare is the occasion when one interferes with the decision of another, and never to the knowledge of the subject of such a decision.

596 A family elder who has no sons to care for him is well
888 looked after by the other members of the group "until the
626 grave." Fear as well as a moral obligation prompts this. "He might curse you," it is explained, or "He might say: 'Watch out for your own old age! You mistreated me in my old age, and you will suffer in yours.'" Such pronouncements are greatly dreaded, especially because of his control over the supernatural forces that aid or harm the family and its members.

428 The closeness of the tie between social institutions and economic life is most evident in the matter of inheritance. For though the prestige that accrues from the possession of wealth makes for strong competition through the exercise of individual initiative, yet supporting the struggle of an individual for the augmentation of his holdings are the forces of family sanction and family aid, while his very start in life is obtained primarily through the help of his relatives during their lifetime or the property he inherits from them at their death.

428 As has been suggested, all a man's children by a "legally"
858 married wife inherit from him, or, if he has not espoused a wife by a Church wedding, the children of his *placée* wife or wives receive his property. Whether or not it is true that the
428 "legitimate" children inherit three quarters of the posses-
858 sions of their father, the "natural" children one fourth, and
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1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the "illegitimate" none, it would seem that the children of the legal marriage have a "social duty" to care for those of a *placée* wife who receive nothing, a moral obligation which is met because of a far stronger sanction than the fear of gossip. The belief holds that the dead will deeply resent an injustice to any of his children and will cause misfortune to befall a man who does not fulfill his duty toward those who should have shared in the property of their father.

Those who do inherit divide the land, flocks, herds, and all other possessions of the deceased equally, regardless of age or sex. If a man is wealthy, he may draw up a will providing for the disposal of such items of his property as under Haitian law it is not mandatory to apportion among his children. Where there is not enough land to permit each of the survivors to work an individual plot, this may be sold and the money distributed, or those who retain the land may buy an equivalent acreage elsewhere for the others, so that some of the members of the family leave the habitation to make new homes of their own in the manner already described. Similarly, though in dividing the land it is customary to allot a good parcel to the son who has worked it, if the other land is much worse and the division is disputed, an arrangement paralleling the one described may be made to allow of a fairer division. When an heir who, for instance, has taken up permanent residence in Port-au-Prince wishes to dispose of his share instead of returning to work it or of having it cultivated for him, he sells it to his brothers and sisters, or, rarely, to a stranger, for all effort is made to retain ancestral land within the family. Similarly, a part of the property of the dead may be sold to meet claims on his estate—debts or funeral costs or the expense of erecting a tomb. This would be particularly true if these expenses had been met by one of the heirs, in which case he must be compensated before the estate may be divided. Consultation with the family elders always precedes such action, however.

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428 The division of the land is said almost invariably to entail
423 lawsuits, and some litigations have been known to stretch
691 over a period of a decade and more, for, as one resident of Mirebalais remarked, "Because of a few feet of land a peasant will, if necessary, spend a thousand gourdes at court." If a woman is the heir, her husband may intervene in a dispute to protect her interests, but if the matter goes to court, only the husband of a "married" wife has a right to appear as an interested party; the mate of a *placée* may only act as a witness. When minor grandchildren inherit, their mother, whether married or *placée*, is their legal guardian and may enter suit to protect their interests.

428 The rights of a woman to the property of her father may be
423 nullified if a dowry has been given her husband at the time
583 of her "legal" marriage, though dowries are rarely given
562 among peasants. If she is a *placée*, or if a dowry had not passed at the time of her "marriage," the land she inherits from her parents is held by her for her children, who will in time inherit it from her, so that many parcels of land deemed by natives to belong to a single family group are found to be divided among people who bear different surnames. It is not without interest to note in passing that in contrast to the acrid disputes which characterize the settlement of a father's goods, the distribution of a mother's property is seldom disturbed by dissension.

42 In addition to land and money, which form the most important part of any estate, are the flocks, herds, and beasts of burden of the dead man, and his personal tools and implements. These are sometimes willed to brothers and sisters or favorite nephews. Land and money, however, may not be alienated, but must go to the man's own children or to such others as may have been legally adopted. A child can be deprived of participation in the estate only if formally disinherited by means of a sworn document attested before a
000 notary. As has been stated, daughters who have been given

~~It has been stated, daughters who have been given~~ 428
a dowry forfeit their share, but even when a formal *dot* has 683
not passed, the number of animals given her when she went 626
to her husband is mentioned and she is sometimes asked to waive a corresponding portion of her share in consideration of what she has already received. If she refuses to do this, however, there is no recourse but to allow her her full share, though public opinion would censure such greed.

Debts incurred by the dead must be repaid before the estate 428
can be settled, while attempts are also made to collect all loans 426
made by him. Where no written statement of a debt exists, a declaration by the dying man before witnesses is necessary; otherwise his heirs acknowledge their obligation at their pleasure. Conversely, if no statement attested by a notary exists to verify a loan made by him, his heirs have no means of collecting it. On the whole, lending has been found through experience to be ill-advised unless such a "paper" has been executed before a notary, and land has been pledged as collateral either before the head of the family of the borrower or before a magistrate. For though interest is not demanded by the peasants, and loans are made as a gesture of friendship, "even the people of the hills" — to use the Mirebalais idiom for the most naïve rustics — have learned that just debts are often not repaid where there is no legally enforceable claim.

A man who dies childless leaves his property to his brothers 428
and sisters by the same father and mother. The husband of a "legally" married woman who dies childless is said to have the right to one fourth of her property, the rest going to her relatives, but most often "they drive him away," giving him nothing, and since a man is customarily too proud to contest the matter, he does not insist on receiving his due. A childless [768]
widow continues to live in her dead husband's house until her death, and she also receives one fourth of her husband's property. At her death the house passes to her husband's relatives, but the quarter of his estate which she had received goes to her family.

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One other aspect of the apportionment of the land of an estate remains to be considered, the matter of leaving land for the support of ancestral ceremonies. There is no general agreement in Mirebalais as to the customary practice. It was first stated that four or five *carreaux* of land, which a man himself had "held in trust," are added to the inheritance of the eldest son, to be similarly held by him. The "trustee" calls in the other members of the family to help work this land, and the proceeds from marketing its entire yield are devoted to the support of family rituals, or used for such other general purposes as aiding a member of the family who requires funds to save himself from disgrace, and the family from scandalous gossip.

The practice of alienating land to provide for the worship of the ancestors would appear to be common in the southern peninsula and in the plain of the Cul-de-Sac; and one person, not a native of Mirebalais, told how he found it impossible to buy some land he wished to acquire because it had been consecrated for this purpose. Certain men cited examples of land which had belonged to the "old, old people of the family," control of which was vested in the family head and could therefore never be divided or sold. But this is land where the family house of worship stands and where ceremonies for the family deities and ancestors are held, something not at all comparable with setting aside workable land to yield a yearly income for services of the dead. The closest resemblance to this found in Mirebalais is when a man or a woman during life sets aside a portion of land or other belongings, declaring: "When I die, dispose of this and with the proceeds care for the expenses of my funeral and discharge these obligations which I leave you." Other persons spoke of land, which having been in the family for a very long period of time may not be sold, since it had proved to be extremely good, and the "will of the ancients" is that it never be alienated. Those who men-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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tioned this latter instance advanced it as a possible alternative to the custom found elsewhere in Haiti, adding that it was the duty of the living to honor their ancestors, and not for the ancestors to make provision to honor themselves, particularly since the dead can enforce the discharge of this duty by sending illness, bad fortune, and death to those of their descendants who are remiss.

To a very appreciable degree, what is inherited forms the foundation of whatever wealth a man may accumulate during his lifetime. Yet there are few, among the peasants at least, who do not seek by all means to add to their heritage, for among those folk the ambition to obtain more and more land is a dominating one. To this end the peasant skimps and saves, depriving himself even of his important needs, until at the proper time some choice parcel of ground comes on the market.

How does a man go about accumulating the funds necessary to amass property? Ordinarily a young man is given a plot of ground by his father, and the produce, as mentioned, is marketed for him by his mother, who saves the proceeds for him. When he marries, his wife takes over this task, and together the two strive to extract as large earnings as possible from his plot. In addition, a man may take a *job*. Such work, always paid for by the unit rather than by the day or week, is usually that of cultivating a plot of ground for its owner, and the amount agreed upon is paid when the field has been harvested. The young man at the same time can also cultivate his own fields and participate in communal labor. Another way of adding to the earnings of his fields is to help the large landowners on their cotton plantations. This work is paid for in kind with baskets of cotton, which in turn are sold to factors who come from the coast to buy both large and small quantities. A man may also increase his income by working in the cane-fields or at the caldrons when the sirup is boiled. Each

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433 434 556 worker receives about ten gourdes a week, in addition to his food, and the work often is of several months' duration. To do this, however, it is necessary for him to hire another to work his own garden for the period he is thus engaged. As extra [454] money is gradually accumulated, more land is purchased, so that the returns become greater; and the process is accelerated when, upon the death of a man's father, other family land is added to what he already owns.

437 454 556 Thus the drive to obtain property is an obsession with the Haitian peasant. The question of a few centimes, to say nothing of a gourde, is hotly argued; for instance, in the bidding for unclaimed lost animals held periodically at the Mairie in Mirebalais, bids are often raised by as little as five centimes, with the bidder waiting until the last possible moment, the third call of the auctioneer, before pledging the additional sum. Those who have money prefer silver to paper and usually keep it in a trunk at home, but if troublous times impend, the money is put in jars and hidden in the ground. In this way it happens that when a man dies, much of his money is lost to his heirs, for he rarely tells even his wife or children what he has done with it.

556 Yet this point must be stressed — in the mind of the Haitian peasant, though wealth is desired for the prestige it gives, it is rarely prized for the display it permits. Frequently when a person of large means is pointed out in the market place, he will be simply if not poorly dressed. To make undue display of possessions would arouse envy, and envy brings upon a man's household the evil eye. Wealth is rather manifested in extensive farms, in elaborate ceremonies for the rituals held for family ancestors and for family gods, in the education of children to the end that they may eventually move to the capital and there attain social and political position of importance. Wealth brings prestige to its owner through the word-of-mouth comment of his neighbors, and with this he is content,

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not deeming it necessary to emphasize his position through the conspicuous display of his resources. His children who get to the capital are seldom as prudent, and, as native expression has it, "It takes four generations to achieve the march from the village to the capital, and back to the ancestral village."

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PART III

HAITIAN RELIGION

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CHAPTER VIII

WHAT IS "VOODOO"?

MORE than any other single term, the word "voodoo" is called to mind whenever mention is made of Haiti. Conceived as a grim system of African practices, it has come to be identified with fantastic and cruel rites and to serve as a symbol of daring excursions into the esoteric. Not only has emphasis been placed on its frenzied rites and the cannibalism supposed on occasion to accompany them, but its dark mysteries of magic and "zombis" have been so stressed that it has become customary to think of the Haitians as living in a universe of psychological terror. 771

What, then, is "voodoo"? "Voodoo," or *vodun*, as it will be termed here, following native pronunciation, is a complex of African beliefs and ritual governing in large measure the religious life of the Haitian peasantry.[1] It also has an even more restricted meaning in Mirebalais, where the word often simply denotes a form of sacred dance accompanied by spirit-possession or merely a dance which on occasion may take its place along with the *calenda*, the *martinique*, the *zezze*, and other social dances at public celebrations, where an occurrence of possession would be rare and in questionable taste. This latter meaning was recognized by St. Mery: 184 991 635 989 171 991 535

"The Calenda and the Chica are not the only dances in the colony which have come from Africa. There is an-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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171 other one which has been known there for many years,
771 principally in the west, which bears the name of *Vau*
595 *doux*. . . . But it is not only as a dance that the *Vaudoux* merits consideration, for it occurs under circumstances which assign to it a place among the institutions where superstition and bizarre practices play a considerable part."[8]

171 In Dahomey, whence the term has come, *vodun*, as has al-
771 ready been stated, signifies "god" and is a general name for
776 all deities. This source of the word has likewise long been
[192] known, as a reading of St. Mery shows:

> "According to the Arada Negroes, the real followers of *Vaudoux* in the colony . . . *Vaudoux* signifies an all-powerful and supernatural being on which depend all the events that come to pass on this globe."[9]

171 Similarly, de Vassière[9] quotes with approval a parallel defini-
771 tion from Peytraud, while modern Haitian writers also em-
776 phasize its Dahomean origin.[6] This meaning of the word had,
192 however, undergone a change in its new home even during
178 pre-Revolutionary times, for, according to St. Mery, the "all-
825 powerful and supernatural being" had come to be a non-venomous serpent that stood as a symbol "for all those who
184 professed this same doctrine." Today in Mirebalais even this
771 identification is a thing of the past, though the prominence
776 given serpent-worship in Haiti by most writers[6] would make
825 it reasonable to suppose that elsewhere in the island serpents are maintained by priests of the *vodun* cult and play an important role in the rites at which the gods are worshipped. Indeed, one priest from Arcahaie encountered in Mirebalais mentioned the fact that in his own temple he kept such a snake. Yet in our valley no worship of serpents as such was encountered, and there were even those who declared that they had no hesitation in killing any snake, though these brave assertions could not be tested. Serpent-worship in Mirebalais

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Serpent-worship in Mirebalais

may perhaps be said to have come to this: Adherents of the African cults refrain from killing the snake, and should they do so by accident, the African custom of giving ceremonial burial to any creature having supernatural importance is followed as an atonement. Where this is omitted, difficulties of so serious a nature are felt to threaten that to prevent them a priest of the cult is called upon to offer up a sacrifice and to beg forgiveness even after the little ceremony of burial has been performed.[7]

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Inasmuch as *vodun* flourishes in Mirebalais despite the minor role of serpent-worship, it is evident that in seeking to understand its nature and its philosophy other aspects must be considered. Two historical facts must be kept constantly in mind in making this analysis, for without them, what follows would be meaningless. The first is that *vodun* derives from a background of African theology and ceremonialism. The second is that the Negroes have continuously been subjected to the influence of Catholicism during the centuries that have passed since their introduction into the island.

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Yet another point may prove suggestive in providing a useful point of view for an analysis of the *vodun* cult. This bears upon a difficulty impossible and happily unnecessary to resolve in the field study of religion, which arises out of the degree of variation in answers to questions dealing with the same point. These answers differ not only according to the status of the individual in the cult, since layman and priest have understandably different concepts of the functions of deities based on unequal degrees of expert knowledge, but the extent to which an individual has religious interests or is indifferent to them influences the nature of his responses. A fundamental fallacy results from the fact that except where there is an officially sanctioned theology — which makes for dogma, and often for perfunctory worship, in contrast with the living dynamic nature of Haitian peasant belief and ritual — there are no "real" answers to questions in the field of religion. The

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184 student pursuing the "correct" statement will find that no
991 matter how painstaking his method and how extensive his precautions, the versions of different persons can never be entirely reconciled, unless a false appearance of truth is given to his findings.[8]

178 If the underlying philosophy of the universe held by the
779 Haitian is summarized, as it can be abstracted from his expres-
779 sions of belief and from his observed behavior, this philosophy might be phrased somewhat as follows: The ruler of the universe is God, its Creator, who shares this task with His son Jesus, the saints of the Church, and the Holy Ghost. Man has been endowed with a soul, and the soul, which has come from God, returns to God for judgment and, if necessary, for punishment at the end of its sojourn on earth. From Africa — *Guinée* — the Negroes brought other deities, termed variously *loa, mystères,* or *saints,*[9] and these deities have been inherited through succeeding generations by the descendants of those who brought them to Haiti. The specific function of the African spirits in the Haitian system was given in the following terms by one of their devotees: "The *loa* are occupied with men, their task is to cure. They can make a person work better than he otherwise would. When the *loa* possess people, they give helpful advice. But they cannot do the things that God does. They can protect a garden, but they cannot make a garden grow, for streams, rain, and thunder come from God." Another statement clearly shows the same concept: "God made the *loa,* but did not make them so they might do evil.
[424] When a man purchases a *loa* for money, that spirit will do
[425] evil as well as good, but God becomes angry and will not accept these bad spirits into the sky, and He drives them away."

776 In the ordering of his daily life, however, the forces which are foremost in the consciousness of the Haitian make up the triad expressed in the phrase "*les mystères, les morts, et les marasa* — the *loa,* the dead, and the twins." Because of their special character, an examination of the twin cult and the cult

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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of the dead must be deferred for a later chapter. Similarly, the discussion of the final element in Haitian religion, the belief in magic, must also be reserved for later pages, stressing here only its separate identity from the worship of the *loa*, with which it has been too often confused.[10]

The most striking element in the *vodun* cult is the manner in which the gods possess their devotees. Despite the fact that this is the aspect of Haitian religion that seems to the casual observer its least restrained and least disciplined, possession occurs according to well-defined rules and under specifically defined circumstances. And since it is through an analysis of possession that the clearest understanding can be reached of the meaning of the *loa* to those who worship them, the manner in which they influence the lives of their devotees and exert their powers for good or evil, possession may be treated at some length.[11]

When a person is possessed for the first time, the spirit which is said to animate him is known as a *loa bossal*, an "untamed" god. The word *bossal*, which in the early days was applied to newly arrived Africans,[12] has always been a term of contumely, and today the same feeling-tone is continued through the belief that since all things in the universe are subject to observable regulation, and animals and plants and human beings must all live according to these rules, the *loa*, as members of society, may not manifest the unrestrained and often dangerous traits of unpredictable behavior which characterize them before they have been "baptized" and thus brought under proper control.

Baptism of a deity most often occurs when a boy or girl is possessed by a family *loa*, especially if it is one which gives that knowledge of healing and divination meant by the word *connaissance*. Sometimes, though not always, this possession is violent, and the prospective devotee rages about the house, destroying whatever comes to hand. On occasion, since custom frowns on possession at a ceremony not given by the family of

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the one possessed, possessions of this kind mean either that the *loa* needs baptism; or that, being baptized, its devotee has been negligent in serving the god.

No actual rite of baptism of a *loa* — or, as it is also termed, of *lavé tête*, "washing the head" — was witnessed, but the account of the ceremony given here, obtained independently from several persons, represents an adequate exposition of the rite as performed in Mirebalais. A room is prepared where the person whose *loa* is to be baptized must remain for three days. The mat or bed on which the neophyte rests is covered with fresh sheets and pillow-cases, and three changes of clothing are made ready, one of which must be entirely new for the last day of the ceremony. These are in the color of the god being "baptized"; that is, if the *loa* were revealed to be such a one as Damballa, Aida Wedo, or Gran' Erzilie, everything would be white, but if it were Gran' Siligbo, the colors would be blue and white; if Ogun, everything would be red; if Ossangè, blue; where the god is one of the Pètro suite, such as 'Ti Kita or Bosu, everything would be black.*

During the three days' "retreat" the one whose *loa* is being consecrated lies alone. All day long the men and women of the family sit in the next room or outside the house, singing and praying, though at night they sleep, since "this is not a wake." They not only sing the songs sacred to the *loa* being baptized, but also the canticles of the Virgin, while prayers of the Church are recited under the leadership of the *prêt' savanne*, the "bush-priest" whose ability to read the prayers makes him an essential figure in all *vodun* rites. They may from time to time have "a little procession" about the room where the novitiate lies, when small banners in the color of the god are carried. Soft drinks and a *mangé sec* — a "dry" offering — are given the god, and white tapers and an oil lamp are

* A detailed listing of the names, attributes, and powers of the more widely worshipped *loa*, the colors, days, and trees or other places sacred to them, and the "squads" into which they are conceived to be formed, will be found in an appendix at the end of this book.

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lighted. Chicken and rice may also be cooked for any god except Gede, while chocolate and rice with milk are favored, since it is said "the *loa* love deserts" — a commentary on the very immediate and human character of these spirits.

The actual baptism, or "washing of the head," is performed on the third day of the ceremony by a *vodun* priest or priestess who is a member of the family, though any member who has important *loa* and the necessary *connaissance* may officiate if the membership of the family includes no priest. As at any baptism, there must be a godfather and godmother, and preference is given those who are the parents of twins or are themselves twins. The officiant must be possessed at the time, since, it is said, "one *loa* baptizes another." Leaves of the basilique tree are steeped in perfumed cold water, and the hands of the one who baptizes are first immersed in the liquid; then, while songs of the *loa* and canticles of the Virgin are sung, he washes the head of the person to be baptized. Possession occurs immediately, and the new devotee lies back, half conscious, while all others kneel, seeking word from the *loa* to learn if it is satisfied. If an affirmative answer is given, all retire, the person possessed remaining in the room to sleep through the night. A "ball," but not a *vodun* dance, may celebrate the event either the next day or later, but this is not obligatory, and most often those present, after eating, quietly disperse. The following day the one who has been baptized goes to the family place of worship and greets those who have helped him. Only one further rite is necessary, and this solely when the *loa bossal* is revealed to be a hostile god. Then the *loa*, after having been baptized, is "restrained" by being placed in a jar and buried, so it cannot later emerge and trouble the family of the one to whom it has come.[14]

The ceremony of baptism, in Mirebalais, is in no sense a first step into any *vodun* hierarchy, for, as will be seen, no such hierarchy exists in this valley. One important priest there derives his power from *loa* that have never been bap-

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tized at all, but merely respond to an innate ability to control them. To have a baptized *loa*, then, merely means that the worship of the *loa* is thereafter carried on in regular form. The worshipper learns how to *marré*, or "tie,"[14] his spirit, so as to enjoy the social aspects of a *vodun* dance without fear that his *loa* will come unbidden. He gives it small offerings from time to time, and if it becomes insistent, or if his family is being troubled by its gods, he takes full part in the rituals that are staged.[15]

In native idiom, a person when possessed is "mounted" by his god, and thereafter becomes his *ch'val*, or "horse." A devotee may come under the influence of a number of spirits during a single ceremony or dance, one *loa* succeeding another. The first deity that ever came to a person, however, for him constitutes the chief of his gods — his *mait' tête* — and the leader of any deities which may subsequently possess him. It is this *loa* alone that is "baptized," and this one alone "taken from his head" at his death; and, as far as he is concerned, all his other gods are under the control of this *mait' tête*, so that any agreement which he may enter into with this principal spirit must be respected by all the others.

Fundamentally, to be possessed by a *loa* means that an individual's spirit is literally dispossessed by that of the god. Personalities undergo radical change in accordance with the nature of the deity,[16] while even the sex of the one possessed is disregarded if it differs from that of the god, so that, for example, a woman "mounted" by Ogun is always addressed as Papa Ogun.[17] One wears the colors of the god and the ornaments he likes, eating and drinking those things he prefers, and otherwise manifesting his peculiar characteristics — rolling on the earth, if possessed by Damballa or chattering incessantly if by Gede.[18]

Not everyone, by any means, is subject to states of possession. If the existence of individual differences in the capacity for religious expression be recognized, it becomes apparent

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that while some react to the supernatural with immediate and overwhelming emotion, and others, though incapable of as deep a response, do sense the mysteries of possession, there are still others who go through life without ever feeling this religious "thrill." In native explanation, it is the former to whom the gods manifest themselves, who become the *ch'wal* of their *loa;* while to the latter the deities never make themselves known. Scientifically, the phenomenon of possession in Negro cultures, at least, is as yet unsatisfactorily explained, largely because of the almost complete absence of adequate reports on the background and incidence of specific cases. Perhaps the most satisfactory approach to its understanding is through a consideration of it in terms of differences in nervous instability, which may be thought of as predisposing different persons to experience the religious thrill in different degrees; or, in other terms, by reference to their differing susceptibility to suggestion. One must reject an hypothesis which attempts to explain the *vodun* cult of Haiti in terms of the neuroses, even when, as in the admirable exposition of Dr. Dorsainvil, the approach neglects neither accepted genetic theory in stressing the inheritance of neurotic tendencies in voduist family lines, nor the important historical forces which have been operative.[10] For in terms of the patterns of Haitian religion, possession is not abnormal, but normal; it is set in its cultural mold as are all other phases of conventional living. That it gives release from psychic tension does not alter the case; neither does the fact that it offers a way to the satisfaction of unfulfilled desires, as when the god, speaking through a woman under possession, demands a necklace or bracelet which, though forever the property of the god, will be worn by his devotee. These facts merely emphasize the compensatory character of the phenomenon. The social situation of the individual also enters; some undoubtedly simulate possession for the attention it brings them, while a person who experiences no serious difficulties in the course of his life is perhaps never

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787 781 called upon to ask whether or not he is properly serving his gods; is never placed in a situation for which possession would [114] be a release. Hence to consider all possession as something which falls within the range of psychopathology is to approach it handicapped by a fundamental misconception.

787 794 The best evidence of the socially normal nature of possession is the existence of rules governing its incidence which are well understood by all. Not everyone who is a *ch'wal* may become possessed at any dance or *service*, for the gods, if properly under control, are permitted to come only to members of the family giving the rite. At one *vodun* dance given by a priest where a number of other *hungans*, present as guests, became possessed, the host was regarded as having taken undue advantage of his visitors by bringing on their possessions. In another case Haitians from the southern peninsula who were temporarily residing in Mirebalais carefully refrained from contact with a certain *vodun* priest lest he bring on possession by their gods. At one dance for the Rada gods, the *loa* Taureau, a Pétro deity, possessed one of the drummers. Because a Pétro *loa* was neither expected nor wanted, the man was immediately removed and, when quieted, sent home. A similar situation developed at another Rada dance where Bosu "came"; the person possessed was at once taken outside the enclosure until his god had left him. If a *loa* persists in dancing at a *vodun* dance given by another family, it is either one of these *loa bossal* already described, or a *loa vagabond*, and may be scolded by the *hungan:* "You must not come here! You are not wanted! Go home where you belong!" The passion with [781] which a person resists his god when he feels possession coming on at a rite not given by his own family is particularly instructive. Men have been seen holding so tightly to the rafters of the shelter under which the dance was being held that the muscles of their forearms formed great cords, while beads of [782] perspiration rolled down their foreheads.[20] A person who must live away from his family for a long time usually takes

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steps to "feed" his *loa* in order to satisfy it, for it is more important to give offerings to the spirits than to dance for them. He therefore either quietly prepares a sacrifice of cereals and liquor in his own room or sends money home so that his *loa* may be "fed" at the family habitation, and his absence explained to it.[21]

When *vodun* deities are discussed in Mirebalais, most often two "companies" of them are mentioned, the Rada and the Pétro "squads." In one list of gods that was obtained, the word *Rada,* derived from the name of the ancient principality of Allada in Dahomey, called forth the explanation "*qui veut dire Dahomey* — which is to say, Dahomey," though it should be made clear that neither the words *Rada* nor *Dahomey* are any longer recognized in Haiti as place-names, being today simply qualifying designations of *loa.* There are regional differences in the number and ranking of other categories of gods that hold no important place in Mirebalais. The existence of these other categories is, of course, well known, and one person referred to "the seventeen and twenty-one classes of *loa,*" of which, however, only the following were named: Rada, Pétro, Dahomey, Guinée, Congo, Nago, Ibo, and Wangol. Of these the Congo and the Ibo gods are well known, though their worship is chiefly restricted to individual families, while the Nago and Dahomey categories, though significant from the point of view of indicating African origins, are most commonly grouped under the term *Rada.* Guinée also occasionally figures in worship as carried on in individual families, but this term is more often understood as a general designation for all *loa* outside the Rada, Nago, Congo, and Ibo groupings and for certain Pétro gods. Wangol derives from the geographical entity Angola.

From comparatively early times the impression has been given that certain of these classes of gods perform only good, and others evil. Nothing could be further from the truth than this attempt to read European concept into Haitian ideology,

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for though some gods are feared far more than others, and some generally regarded with affection, even these latter bring great harm to a neglectful devotee, while the gods whose power validates the most malignant magic may, in certain situations, work for the good of their worshippers. Especially has there been great confusion in discussions of the so-called Dom Pédro worship. Whether or not the origin of the term as given by St. Mery is correct — that it derives from the name of its founder, a Spanish Negro from Petit-Goâve [22] — the statements that have been made concerning it are in the main misleading.[23] Thus, it is not true that the Pétro gods are unqualifiedly evil and the Rada deities unqualifiedly good; nor that blood sacrifices are made exclusively at Pétro ceremonies, while the services for other gods are innocent of such sacrificial offerings. The impression gathered in Mirebalais concerning the Pétro gods is that they are principally, though not exclusively, derived from the process of deification of powerful ancestors, which in Africa exists in forms that clearly explain the essential tradition that offers a basis for this custom as found in Haiti. This is reinforced by statements to the effect that most of the Pétro "squad" are Créole or native gods as against the Guinée deities in the other groupings. One member of the *vodun* cult, indeed, made the concept of deifying the powerful dead explicit, saying that Pétro was a great and evil *vodun* priest who had died with the *loa* not "taken from his head." For while a general principle in the cult of the dead is that in the normal course of events those who die deliver up their souls to God, making the care for these souls primarily a concern of the Church, it is recognized that there are others such as this Dom Pedro who become *loa*. This occurs when an individual, usually a priest or priestess of the *vodun* cult, who during his lifetime was known to possess great supernatural power, dies without having had his *loa* "withdrawn from his head." Burdened by these spirits, and therefore unable to get to God, his soul goes to the bottom of

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a stream, there to remain until, becoming impatient, it demands to be taken out. A ceremony then brings back the tortured soul and makes of it a "*loa nan canarie*—a *loa* in a jar"—which thereafter acts as a guard for its family.

There is little agreement as to the place of residence of the *loa*. In general, it is believed that they come from Guinée each time they are called, returning when they have, in the native idiom, "descended from the heads of their horses"—that is, when the possession of their devotees has ceased. Those "under the water," however, being Haitians, remain in Haiti for seven years until the ceremony just mentioned, of putting them *nan canarie*, has been performed, when they, like the other *loa*, return to Guinée. At the same time, all recognize the African character of the *loa*, whether they be gods brought from Africa or the Créole *loa* from Haiti itself.

Worship of the *loa* is directed by priests of the cult. The terms *papaloi* and *mameloi* as designations for male and female priests, almost universally employed by non-Haitian writers, are practically unknown in Mirebalais, where, as in most regions of Haiti, a priest is called a *hungan*, a priestess a *mambu*.[24] Besides the *hungan* (or *mambu*), and the *gangan*, a term applied to a *hungan* of renown, is the *bocor*, a practitioner of magic, not a member of any *vodun* priesthood, but a man who has acquired his power by the purchase of spirits. He is particularly differentiated from the *hungan* and *mambu* by the fact that the *loa* of their own accord are believed to have given "*connaissance*"—the knowledge of healing and helping, to these latter.[25] Not all gods can endow their devotees with this *connaissance*. Some of the Rada deities, in addition to those of the Ogun group who give it, are Legba, Damballa, Aizan, Bosu, St. Jean, and Agwe Woyo; among the Pétro gods it is conferred by Bosu Trois Cornes, Simbi d'leau, Gede, Ossange, Mait' Gran' Bois, and Mait' Calfou (Carrefour). Simbi en Deux Eaux and Simbi Proméné both give magic power, the former conferring knowledge of excellent protectives against

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793 776 755 werewolves as well as of the ingredients to concoct healing baths. Certain priests worship and control a large number of deities, as is shown by those which comprise the personal pantheon of a *gangan* from the valley of Mirebalais: Gedenibo, Erzilie Gé Rouge; 'Ti Kita Demembré; Simbi en Deux Eaux; Bumba Trois Îlé; Legba; St. Jacques; Ogun Ferraille, Ogun Balandjo, Ogun Ashade; Lemba; Aizan Keleké, Aizan Wedo, Aida Wedo, Damballa Wedo; Baron Samedi, Bosu Trois Cornes; Congo Wangol, Maît' Mapou; Agasu; Agwe, Agweto Woyo; Kadia Bosu; Sobo Gran'; l'Afrique Guinée. Whatever his ability, the *hungan* can cure only diseases " sent by man " — that is, those caused by magic — and by the *loa*, since against illness sent by God he can do nothing. Gossip [521] disapprovingly whispers how in more than one instance a *hungan* took advantage of his position and the trust of his clients, falsely to represent himself as able to cure an illness " sent by God " through stating it was due to magic.

793 787 An important function of the *hungan* or *mambu* is to foretell the future, and it is as a diviner that the *vodun* priest or priestess is most often employed. No major rite would be considered by a family unless divination were resorted to, but consultation is made for a far wider range of affairs than those of a purely religious nature, and no proposed undertaking of any importance in the secular field is begun without visiting a diviner to discover whether or not the fates are propitious. When divining, the priest is usually under possession by his gods, but other methods, such as gazing into a crystal or basin of water, may also be employed. Several divining séances were visited, but no description of them need be given here, since a number of accounts, including an especially full one by Parsons, are available.[26]

793 184 Though a certain hierarchy seems to exist among the *vodun* priests in other districts of Haiti, in Mirebalais the organization of the cult is informal to an extreme degree.[27] In the [755] [789] minds of the cult members, various priests in the same region

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are differentiated according to the types of healing in which they have had the greatest success, and the "miracles" to their credit, such as a *hungan* who had achieved a wide reputation for being able to resuscitate dead children. One *hungan* of the valley is spoken of as having powers which rank him with the greatest in the land, but now that he is old, a nephew of his is being called upon to act in his place. In a relatively short time, say his friendly clients, he will take his place even among great *hungans* elsewhere.

Under the *hungan* and *mambu* are assistants called *hunsi*, or sometimes, in the case of men, termed *adjanikon*. In some parts of Haiti, particularly in the plain of the Cul-de-Sac and the southern peninsula, there are degrees of initiation for the *hunsi*, which include the ordeal by fire that makes them *hunsi kanzo*.[28] In Mirebalais, however, the *kanzo* rite, though known by name, is neither required nor performed. The *hunsi* and *adjanikon* know the rituals in a general way, hold and wave the banners used to salute the gods, sing the songs for the *loa*, aid in bringing the possessed dancers out of their possessions, and perform such other ritual tasks as helping the officiating *hungan*. Some members of the cult group have special ability to sing large numbers of the ritual songs for any *loa* which may be called, while others perform the animal sacrifices. It is among these male assistants that the most expert drummers are found.

This, then, constitutes an outline of that system of belief included under the term *vodun*. Once more, in summary, it may be emphasized that *vodun* is neither the practice of black magic, nor the unorganized pathological hysteria it is so often represented to be. The gods are known to their worshippers, and the duties owed them are equally well understood. The reward for the performance of these duties is good health, good harvests, and the goodwill of fellow-men; the punishment for neglect is corresponding ill fortune. On this basis of belief is erected the ceremonial of worship.

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CHAPTER IX

VODUN WORSHIP: THE SERVICE

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THE *loa* make known their desires by means of possessing their devotees and speaking through them, or by divination, and if these desires are not gratified, they will mildly harass the family of their devotees, until, thoroughly angered, they will seek full vengeance for this neglect.[1] Fortunately, the wants of many of the gods are modest, and they are satisfied if a candle is occasionally lighted, some water "thrown away" in the place of worship, and they are kept informed of family happenings. But when the *loa* finally clamor for a sacrifice, the time when it is to be made is deferred until the necessary preparations can be completed, for the attitude of the Haitians toward the gods in such matters, as one explained it, is that "*Mystère c'est 'ti moun, faut les derigé*—The *loa* are like children, and must be told what to do," and "If the *loa* are promised a sacrifice, they must accept the date set by the one who serves them." But when that date arrives, the ceremony must be held or the *loa* will cause their worshippers much trouble. This does not mean that a poor person, or one who has met with reverses, may not plead with his god and count on being permitted to defer the offering if he is unable to provide what is asked.

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Simple annual rites are held for the gods in January, each family giving small offerings in its house of worship to its own deities. These minor ceremonies are not to be confused with the extended rituals which a family may perform but once in a decade or a generation. Because of the extensive preparation and large outlay these entail, such rites are often postponed from year to year. According to some, this postponement is sought through an *action de grâce,* based on Church ritual, while others maintain that it is but necessary on his special day to appeal to the deity who is troubling the family, give a small offering — a *mangé sec* — and ask for the desired respite. This may be done several times, until crop failures, sudden deaths, and the loss of valuable property begin to afflict the family, whereupon the family head seeks out a *hungan,* who by divination determines the supernatural forces that are responsible for these misfortunes; and when his statement that the gods have reached the end of their patience is confirmed independently by several other priests who are consulted, active preparations for the major rite are finally set in motion.

Any such important ceremony must be held on the ancestral habitation, and centers in the *maison de servitude,* the family house of service for the gods. The house itself, to be differentiated from the *humfort,* or "temple" of the *vodun* priest, may be elaborate or simple in accordance with the status of family members in the *vodun* cult.[2] At one end of the sacred house is a platform about two and one half feet high on which are placed calabash plates for the *loa,* six for the Créole deities, three for the Mystères Guinée, and a white plate with a "thunder stone," or Neolithic celt, and a necklace for Damballa. Not all *cailles mystères* are painted, but some, it is said, are green "for hope," and some red "for victory," while one was said to have designs of flowers and snakes painted on the wall above the platform.[3] These houses usually have two rectangular rooms, each with a separate entrance and each having its platform at the narrow end facing the doorway. One of

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346 the rooms is consecrated to the *loa*, the other to the spirits of
778 twins and the family dead. If the house is a large one with
776 three rooms, the third will be for the Congo *loa*. It was also
794 said that occasionally such places of worship reserve one room
798 for the Rada deities, a second for the Pétro *loa*, and the third for the Congo gods, the dead and twins being worshipped elsewhere. For the Ibo gods, however, it is agreed in Mirebalais that there is never a separate room. But whether the gods are worshipped in a single-room thatched shelter or a more impressive "temple" with a metal roof, none of the major categories of supernatural powers are neglected.

776 In the main, large ceremonies are concerned with the task
78 of restraining, or less often of pacifying, deities that have been
796 molesting a family, and of making content those who have
794 been demonstrating their goodwill toward the group. Such rites must be sharply differentiated from the ordinary *vodun* dance which, coming after the family ritual, forms but a part of this complex, and serves to express joy at the dangers averted and gratitude for the good that the friendly *loa* are to bring. At the ceremony drums may or may not be employed; at *vodun* dances they are indispensable. Possession is induced at the ceremony by the *hungan's* invocations; at the dance by the rhythm of the drums. The ceremony is attended only by members of the family and those who are specially invited; invitations to the *vodun* dance are broadcast over the countryside, and all take part in the social phases of the evening. For the ceremony, sacrifices not alone of cereals and drinks but also of the blood of animals are provided; at the *vodun* dance only minor offerings are given. And while both types of ritual are a part of a single functioning religious system, it is at the first where the most important end is achieved, that of obtaining protection from hostile gods and gaining the favor of those who are friendly.

78 The pattern of the ceremony — called a *service loa* — is
79 sufficiently definite to allow a generalized version to be given,

based on the rituals that were observed. In every case at least two major officiants are necessary, the *prêt' savanne* and the *hungan*, though the role of the latter is the all-important one. Last-minute preparations are made during the final morning, but what is needed will have been accumulated over a period of many months. Tables to hold offerings — sometimes two, sometimes more — are arranged at the sacred places on the family habitation, usually near streams or great trees where the gods reside. Eggs, cereals, drinks, and cornmeal — the food of the gods — are brought, and the animals to be sacrificed are tethered near by. Early in the afternoon the family, dressed in white, assemble, while the *vodun* priest with cornmeal describes on the ground the cabalistic designs called *verver*, and he sees to it that all has its proper place on the altar, whether it be the ever-present crucifix, or the chromolithographs of the saints, or the bottles of "drink" — usually non-alcoholic — or cereals and flour of various kinds. Consecrated water must be on hand, particularly at the big "altar," as the table covered by a canopy to protect the sacred objects is called.

The first part of the ceremony is an *action de grâce*, which in Mirebalais requires an hour or more, but which is said to last two or three hours in southern Haiti. This ritual, entirely derived from the litany of the Church, must always precede any *vodun* ceremony of the kind being considered here. Its purpose is said "to set the *loa* in movement" and to notify them of the rites that are to come, but psychologically it also serves to assure the participants that they are not proceeding to the worship of African gods without having paid friendly homage to God, the ruler of the universe, and the saints. The songs and prayers are brought to a close by an *adoration*, when offerings of money are made by members of the family to pay the officiant. At this point the songs change to a more African rhythm, and the *vodun* priest takes active charge.

As darkness falls, on the first day of the rite, he summons the

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78 79 776 *loa* troubling the family, or, if it is the second, those which have helped them, to tell whether or not they are willing to receive the sacrificial animals. The omen which indicates their acceptability to the gods is their nibbling at leaves or pecking at grains of corn and other cereals offered them, after which the gods themselves come, possessing their servitors. At midnight or later, as the violence of the possession recedes, the sac-
[184] rifices are offered. In Mirebalais, at least, the hysteria said to mark the moment "when the blood flows" is not present. The actual killing of the animals, witnessed in numerous instances, is one of the more routine aspects of the ritual.[4]

After the animals have been killed, a long period of quiet ensues while the work of dressing and cooking them takes place, the ceremony beginning anew when this is done. If evil deities are to be banished or "restrained," they are called once more, and the priest may have to battle with those possessed by them, for these gods have no desire to be driven away, or incarcerated where they cannot escape. Most of the food given such gods is placed in large pots and buried in the earth with them, but, with characteristic human perversity, if the sacrifices have been for good *loa*, these are only allowed to have small portions. The ceremony closes with the coming of day.[5]

78 79 791 776 184 This pattern varies in details, and to the Haitian these differences are important. This is shown by the response of a person in whose company two similar rites were observed, to the question whether the second would resemble the first. The answer was decisive. "No, the ceremony will not be the same. In the first one the most important spirit lived in a mango tree; in the second, it is in a bamboo." The Pétro gods receive black or gray-colored animal offerings, the Rada deities white, red, and vari-colored ones. Only Bosu Trois Cornes, Pelicon, and 78 796 794 776 Pelib are given bullocks, the first because he, like this animal, is horned; the second because he is even more dangerous than Bosu; and Pelib because as a water-god he will otherwise take

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cattle and all other animals when the river floods. Rituals involving these larger sacrifices, however, are held only on the rarest of occasions, and are thus much less common than the ceremony which, typical of those witnessed, may now be described.

This *service* was held in a habitation southwest of Mirebalais, across the Tombe River in the foothills of the mountains. It was said to be the first ceremony of its kind given by this family, and would not have to be repeated for a generation or more. The immediate cause was the occurrence of numerous illnesses and deaths. When members independently consulted their *hungans* to discover the reason for these misfortunes, they were informed that the family *loa* demanded such a rite. Finally one priest, more powerful than the others, became possessed and described in great detail the type of ceremony that was desired: of how many days' duration, the number and kind of sacrifices, what gods were to be called, which troublesome ones must be "sent away" or "restrained," and those of the friendly *loa* who were to be fed.

The entire ritual was conducted outside doors, and at about half past four in the afternoon of Thursday, 5 July, 1934, when first seen, the *action de grâce* had already begun. It was being chanted by the *prêt' savanne*, a bespectacled, middle-aged man, who read from an old prayerbook, while the *hungan* sat quietly by. The officiant was standing in a cleared space with his back toward a grove of trees, facing the "altar." Opposite was a grassy slope, which was separated from this grove by a brook where the Malt' Source lives who watches over the habitation of the family. A white banner hung high in one of the trees a little behind the altar.

This altar, called the *trône*, was a table covered with a white cloth, spread over a frame to form a canopy sheltering its sides and back. A black cloth was beneath the white covering. Under the table a wooden bowl — a *gamelle* — contained water in which sacred leaves had been steeped; near it was a

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calabash filled with bananas, millet, rice, beans, egg-plant, and squash. On the table, under the canopy, were a crucifix and holy water, lighted white candles, a lamp of palm oil in a drinking-glass with a floating wick, food — rice cooked in milk, a stew of rice and beans, cooked chicken — and sweetened drinks — *kola*, and orange drinks among the rest, together with small drinking-glasses containing coffee. In addition, roasted and grilled corn, pineapples, fig-bananas, cassava, and sirup could be seen. Fastened to the inside of the canopy were *images*, chromolithographs depicting the saints, there being represented, among others, the Mater Dolorosa (for Ernilie, in honor of those long dead), Our Mother of Perpetual Aid, St. James and St. Anthony. Some thirty feet away, under a palm tree, was another table, for Simbi, without a canopy, on which also stood various cooked and uncooked foods. Still farther away was the "first" table, the most important in the ceremony, for Bosu. It likewise held food and drink; while near it was a large fire, the all-important *bouzan* for Legba. The sacrifices, tethered to trees not far from the *trône*, consisted of animals and fowls: one very large black boar, two smaller black pigs, and a black goat, a black turkey, a guinea-hen, two white pigeons, and several chickens, including a black one with ruffled feathers and a number of varicolored ones.

During the Catholic-like ritual the singing, led by the *prêt' souanne*, was desultory. The members of the family, some twenty-five persons, were gathered directly in front of the *trône*. From time to time the leader, holding a lighted candle in his hand, would pour water into a small depression that had been dug directly in front of the altar. All knelt for the prayers, the Pater Noster, the Credo, the Ave Maria, and for the long *adoration* and benediction. Throughout this *action de grâce* and much of the rest of the ceremony, two women *hunsi* in white, members of the family, waved red and white banners before the *trône* or later before the table where rit-

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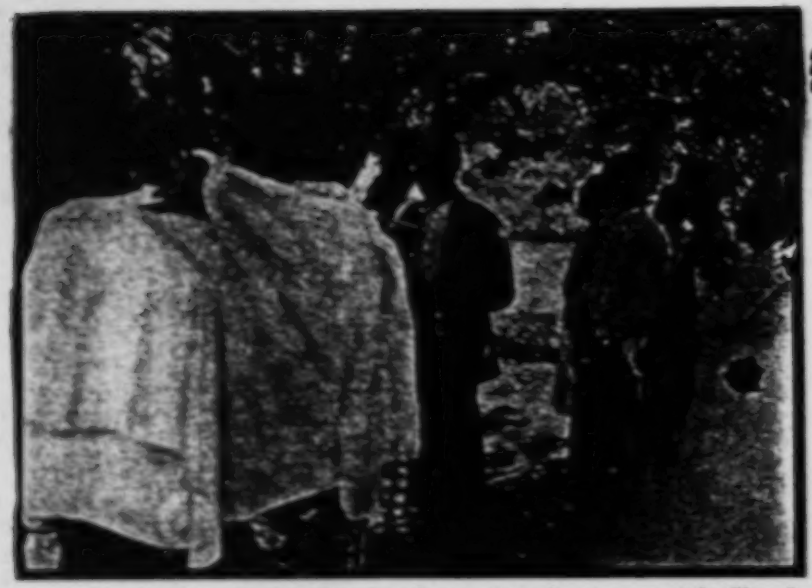

ABOVE, *An* action de grâce *preceding a* vodun *service, when prayers of the Church are read by the* prêt' savanne.

BELOW, *As the* vodun *priest takes over, he twirls a member of the family to bring on possession.*

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ABOVE, *The possessed woman offering a candle and pouring sanctified water before the altar.*

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BELOW, *The* vodun *priest exhorting the possessed woman.*

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uals were being performed. If they failed to wave their banners vigorously or often enough, the one in charge chided them for their lack of zeal, whereupon their movements would become a kind of dance. During the *adoration* each member of the family was called upon to give coins or candles, the first for the *prêt' savanne*, though this was not his entire fee. 78 79

With the benediction, the *action de grâce* came to an end, and the solemn, tired voice of the *prêt' savanne* was heard intoning a hymn, which, in the usual fashion, was repeated by the assembled group until, without interlude, without even a pause, the interpolations of the chorus gradually changed, so that the rhythm became African, and, with the transition, the *vodun* priest took over the leadership. The *hungan* began by repeating several times the phrase which throughout the entire ceremony was to punctuate all its climaxes, "*Grâce* [*et*] *mise'corde*," and the family murmured it in response. He then ordered each member of the family to address himself to the *loa*, telling what troubles had befallen him and what favors he desired. An assistant now took six candles from the *trône*. Proceeding in a counter-clockwise direction, he described a large circle about that part of the meadow where the ceremony was to take place, fixing a candle in the ground at intervals. Four of these were for the four corners of the earth, one was for Mait' 'Bitation — the deity termed Master of the Habitation — and one for the Mait' Source — the Master of the Stream. When the members of the family, each holding a lighted candle, had formed in a line, they were bidden to place these candles in the earth within the area described by the six already there, and as they scattered over the sacred ground, little flickering flames dotted the hillside and the grassy meadow behind the *trône* in the deepening dusk. 78 79 533 78 79 776

Then all returned to the altar, and the *hungan*, taking the first of three plates made ready for him, began to describe *verser*. One plate held white cornmeal flour, one was filled with gray ashes, called Guinea flour, and the third contained 78 793 796 532

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78 a black powder of ground, roasted coffee beans. Starting at the
793 tree near the "first" table for Bosu, he traced a white line
796 that, passing the second table and the trees for Simbi, con-
532 tinued to the *trône,* to which subsidiary motifs were then added in gray and black, making of the designs an intricate geometric composition.

78 With bell in hand and a small whistle in his mouth, both of
79 which later were entrusted to his assistants, the *hungan* went about, blowing the whistle at intervals to call the *loa.* Singing,
[533] he directed that a wooden boat-shaped basin containing water be placed in front and a little to the left of the *trône* for washing the feet of the sacrificial animals. Though all the family were present, they were again ritually summoned in song to come with the sacrifices and were ordered to stand near by with lighted candles while the animals were bathed. As they gathered, the *hungan* became possessed by Simbi, who took it upon himself to set the fee for conducting this ceremony at 117.10 gourdes. When he announced this sum, loud pleas of poverty were heard from the family, while speaking through the priest, the god bargained with them until the sum of 110 gourdes was finally agreed upon.

[533] The *hungan* now sang a long invocation, inviting the gods of all those places where Africans live to come. First the feet of the fowl were washed, then those of the pigs, and finally of the goat. Each fowl was passed over the body and head of every
[822] member of the family as it was presented with the requisite song to the proper *loa* — the red and black cock for Legba, the black fowl for Gede, the red one for Ogun, the white for Damballa, and the fowl with ruffled plumage for Congo Zandor. Then each was placed on the ground in front of three small piles of food taken from the *trône.* They were watched with anxiety by all present, for the pecking at the food is a signal that the god accepts the animal given him. The small pigs for 'Ti Kita Demembré, and the boar for Bosu, were offered the same food as the fowls; the goat for Erzilie Gé Rouge was pre-

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sented with the leaves on a branch of the sacred tree. All the animals ate, a favorable omen. 78 79

This ceremony was held during the rainy season, but the usual afternoon rains had held off. At this time, however — about eight o'clock — threatening clouds came up and soon the tropical downpour began. The heavy rain continued for more than an hour and the subsequent drizzle did not end until almost midnight, but this was not permitted to interfere with the proceedings. Now the participants took places before the "first" table, for Bosu, again with their offerings. Inasmuch as Bosu was the deity who had shown the greatest ill will toward the family, those present awaited the decision with heightened tenseness as the goat, frightened by the many people gathered about, hesitated long before he nibbled at the leaves held out to him by the *hungan*. But eventually all the animals ate, meeting this paramount test, and as each partook of the food the *hungan* several times called out "*Grâce mise'corde,*" the family echoing their response with emotion. Now two men who had strong Bosu gods knelt before the table, and the fowls were again and again touched to their heads and passed over their bodies in gestures that described the sign of the cross, in order to induce their gods to come to them.

As the singing became louder and more rhythmical, various [533] members of the family became possessed. The deities who responded to the calls were, in the order of their appearance, [516] Kita, Erzilie, Simbi, Bosu, Damballa, and finally Gede (Papa Gedenibo). The possessions took their characteristic African form, with some of the possessed running about, jumping into the fire for Legba, and stamping on the embers with their bare feet, others reeling with arms waving, still others rolling on the ground, which, as the rain continued, soon became very muddy. Most of those under possession were women, but about nine-thirty one man became possessed by Simbi, and [516] later another by Gede. As the *loa* "came" in ever greater

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78 number, exclamations of pleasure were heard that the gods
79 were responding. Outwardly, the ritual seemed completely
776 disorganized, the "*loa*" and the spectators moving, mud-bespattered, tense, from the table for Bosu to that for Simbi, and back, or to the *trône*.

533 The singing went on without interruption to the accom-
539 paniment of the bell and occasional blasts of the whistle.
78 Among the songs heard during this period of possession were:
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Bosu li join' qui chose a tè,	Bosu found something on the ground,
Pas remassé li.	Do not pick it up.
Bosu ma'ché,	Bosu goes about,
Li join qui chose a tè',	He found something on the ground,
Pas remassé li.	Do not pick it up.
Un va entrave	You will come to harm
Si ou ramassé li.	If you pick it up.
Va enragé Bosu.	You will anger Bosu.
Simbi en Deux Eaux,	Simbi en Deux Eaux
M'we fé p'ou,	I do for you,
F'e p'moin,	Do for me,
Fi-a, Congo,	Help, O Congo,
Congo Zandor.	Congo Zandor.
Simbi Kita Kita, travaille pour nous,	Simbi Kita Kita, work for us,
Joch-a pour nous,	Today for us,
Demain pou' zott'.	Tomorrow for others.
Erzilie, o Lemba,	Erzilie, o Lemba,
M'ap' mandé coté Erzilie ye.	I ask, where is Erzilie.
Mangé a'paré.	The food is ready.
Gedenibo, derrière la croix, Gede,	Gedenibo, behind the cross, Gede.

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Devant Baron, Gede,	Before Baron, Gede,
Derrière la croix, Gede,	Behind the cross, Gede,
Jodi-a m'p' nan sang m'we,	Today I am troubled,
Gedevi, thele Gede, ça Gede,	Gedevi, call Gede, this Gede,
Jodi-a m'pas nan sang moin.	Today I am troubled.
Balai, rousé, cerclé, quitté.	Cease to sweep, sprinkle, hoe.
Moin pas nan sang, Baron Samedi.	I am troubled, Baron Samedi.

Shortly after eleven o'clock the *hungan* intervened to calm those possessed, for the time was at hand to give the sacrifices. Summoning the family to assemble again before the *trône* with the offerings, he commenced a long ritual in which each creature was prepared by being carefully washed and combed, while the boar for Bosu was also fastidiously perfumed and powdered. At the direction of the *hungan*, the fowls were first offered, the killing taking place at a distance of some thirty or forty feet behind the *trône*. The chickens were held with the two wings and the head in the left hand, so that the neck was exposed. The knife was passed twice over the neck to describe a cross, after which each fowl was cleanly and skillfully dispatched. One of the assistants of the *hungan* held a small calabash in which some of the blood of each animal was caught, and another, knife in hand, sang with him that they were offering this *koklo* to the deity for whom it was intended. As the last of the chickens was being killed, the *hungan* left the *trône* and quietly strangled the pigeons for Damballa.

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All possessions had ceased, except that of a man "mounted" by Gede and a woman by Simbi. The man particularly attracted much attention, for Gede is known as a gossip, and so diverting were his revelations of family scandal that all were too absorbed listening to him to show any interest in the sacrifice of the animals.

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78 79 533 fice of the animals. At one point the *adjanikon* holding the calabash in which the blood was caught threw it on the ground in anger, declaring that animals should not be killed for people who were too indifferent to come and sing the songs that accompany the giving of offerings. Some of those present thereupon detached themselves and came to watch the killing of the two small pigs, as the song, repeated over and over, changed to:

[539]

O minmin, moin couteau la,	Oh, here, here is my knife,
Soso na pé tué, soso,	A pig is to be killed, a pig,
Jodi-a.	Today.

78 79 At this point several other men joined in handling the larger animals, for now the one killing the sacrifices could only hold the mouth of each beast before he cut its throat. And when the boar was to be sacrificed, even more assistance was needed, and a line of rope had to be fastened about his snout before he could be handled at all. The killing was ended when the [533] sacrificial goat was slaughtered, to the accompaniment of the [539] song:

Ma'ze Louisa,	Miss Louisa,
M'ap' tué ou jodi-a,	I kill you today,
Pour Erzilie, 'Ti Kita,	For Erzilie, 'Ti Kita,
Gé Rouge, Pié Sèche.	Gé Rouge, Pié Sèche.

The calabash containing the blood was now placed on the *trône*, while the carcasses were gathered in an orderly pile in front of it. The *kungan* described a circle about the massed bodies with cornmeal, also making two white lines in the form of a cross over them. He then began to sing the *adoration* that [465] follows every killing, while the family and all others present threw coins for him into the dish that rested on the bodies, only a few sous of which he gave to his assistants. This rite ended as the women came to him one by one, each to take a

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chicken for cleaning and cooking; the larger animals were given to the men, who carried them some distance behind the *trône* to dress them. For a time Gede continued to possess the young man, who went about talking nasally, demanding gifts and distributing rum, but all others sat quietly about, talking as they worked.

After the food was cooked, preparations were made for the concluding part of the night's ceremony, when the *loa* who had been troubling the family were to be *renvoyé* (sent away) or *borné* (restrained). Those thus "sent away" and buried were Erzilie Gé Rouge, Bosu Trois Cornes, 'Ti Kita Demembré, and 'Ti Jean Pié Sèche, while Lemba and Simbi djo (Simbi nan d'leau) were "restrained." The head, feet, intestines, heart, liver, kidneys, and some meat of each beast and fowl having been separately prepared, they were placed in proper receptacles, large jars or baskets, each of which also contained a number of needles with broken eyes, and thread. This was to give these undesirable spirits an *occupation*. For the *loa*, when buried, is told that before it may again come to harass the family it must thread the needles, and since it can never insert the thread in an eyeless needle, it can never reappear.

Preparations over, the troublesome *loa* were called to the table for Simbi, and as each entered the head of a devotee, the possessed one fought with the *hungan*, for the *loa*, not wishing to be restrained, offered stubborn resistance. "If the *hungan* had not been masterful, much evil could have happened at this time, because he had to fight three strong *loa*." When they had at last been subdued, the *hungan*, bearing a large wooden cross, walked to a place outside the habitation, where first he made *veruer* and then caused a hole to be dug, in which he placed the baskets of food. As he did this he formally announced that this food was for the family's *loa* for whom there was no further need; that having given this food, the family had no further obligation toward them; and they must there-

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fore never return to trouble the living. As witness to this, he was now putting the cross in place, "which causes everything that is evil to flee," to remain until it rotted away.

Simbi djo was "restrained" where the *trône* had been; Lemba under the mango tree near the place of the table for Bosu. Some of the meat of the pigs was buried in these places with all other kinds of cooked food, and the gods were told that they were to repose there for from seven to seventeen years, after which they would again be fed. A cross of iron was buried with the cooked meat, and as each jar, both now and earlier, was put in place, this song was sung:

Poussé allé,	Get you gone,
Poussé allé,	Get you gone,
Icit pas pays ou.	This is not your country.
Ça lan Guinée,	It is Guinée,
Qui pays ou.	That is your country.

A violent rain-storm not only made it impossible to reach the place of the ceremony the following day, but also made it necessary for the family to defer all but a few of the more essential rites. The second day's ritual was thereupon put over to Saturday, when according to original intentions the *vodun* dance that had been planned to close this complex of ceremonies was to have occurred, but which in consequence was postponed until some weeks later.

The ritual of the second day of this *cérémonie* began much earlier than that of the first, for by about one-thirty in the afternoon the *action de grâce* was almost completed. As one approached, a newly dug mound of earth with a cross over it where the troublesome deities had been buried was to be seen just outside the land belonging to the family. The cross was draped with a black cloth, and was itself painted blue and white, while a rosary and a magic *garde* of native twine were suspended from it.

On this afternoon the ritual was performed in two places, a

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spot somewhat farther down the stream than the site of the earlier ceremony, and later at the family habitation on the hill. There was one table arranged as a *trône* and under its canopy, beside the *images*, the candles, and the crucifix, were white foods such as rice and white beans. Instead of Pétro *loa*, this time the ceremony was to bring Rada gods who were to be asked for children, good health, and good fortune. The *trône* was just below the confluence of two brooks, near some great palm trees. Near by was a weir, while in the larger stream, below the point of juncture, were two small natural pools.

When the *action de grâce*, which did not differ from that witnessed earlier, was ended, the *hungan* again made his *verver*, and these were yet richer in design than on the previous occasion. As he finished he took a number of the women of the family by the right hand, spinning each in turn several times to induce possession. The *loa* Damballa Siligwe "came" almost at once, possessing a woman who threw herself into the stream, threshing about as a "serpent." No one troubled himself to attend to her, however, as she emerged and walked about in her wet clothes behind the *trône* and in front of it, so that, according to the *hungan*, the *loa* became angry and would not come, thus making it necessary to sing many more songs of praise and entreaty. As he sang, the *hungan* seized one member of the family after another by the hand, spinning them about and making them kneel before the *trône* to bring the *loa*.

Moin dit Gran',	I say, Gran',
Bonjou', Gran',	Good-day, Gran',
Bonjou', bonjou'.	Good-day, good-day.
Enfants, la yo, Gran',	It is their children, Gran',
Qui ap mandé cousses nous ye-e,	Who ask how you are,
Enfants yo	Their children
Qui ap dit bonjou'.	Who say good-day.

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Damballa Wedo,	Damballa Wedo,
Papa, nan pié boi',	Papa, in the tree,
Moin pa' pe' monté.	I cannot climb.
Papa ou c'è' coulev',	Papa, you are a serpent,
Papa ou c'è' Dagowe.	Papa, you are Dagowe.
Damballa Siligwe, Anvalou,	Damballa Siligwe, Anvalou,
Nous saluè ou.	We salute you.
Ça nous dit,	What do you say,
Alada Sisigwe?	Alada Sisigwe?
Papa Damballa moin,	Papa Damballa mine,
Signalé nous,	Show us,
Signalé nous Dahomey.	Show us Dahomey.
Nous acè! Nous acè!	We are here! We are here!
Papa Ogun qui met' pié	Papa Ogun who enters
Nan humfort.	The *humfort*
Ago, ago-e!	*Ago, ago-e!*
Kadia Bosu,	Kadia Bosu,
Nous acè,	We are here,
Kadia Bosu.	Kadia Bosu.

78 79 These songs failed to bring the gods, and the mother of the girl who had been possessed was sternly commanded to take her up the hill to the house and dress her in clean dry clothes. Before she could return, another young woman who, it was later learned, was a member of the family from the region of Grand Bois, some distance away, came running down the hill possessed by Damballa. Crying out for more room, she ordered those sitting near the *trône* to move on as she roughly pulled others toward her. Now the *loa* came rapidly, with six or seven immediate possesions; and even one reluctant girl who stood by nervously, hesitating to soil the fresh white dress trimmed in blue which she, like the other women of the family, was wearing, was soon "mounted" by her *loa*.

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Once again the *hungan* made *verver* and, as he did so, the woman possessed by Damballa, leaping across the brook, climbed into a calabash tree, holding to the near-by palm fronds for support as she shook the tree to punctuate her shouted directions and demands. As she climbed higher and higher, the *hungan* pleaded: "Go no further, Papa. Climb no further," but to no avail. By this time it was after four o'clock, and since this day the rains did not delay, the *hungan* entreated her to descend from the tree, to permit him and the others assembled there to go up the hill out of the downpour. Wooing the "*loa*" with song, he urged:

Verver ci mè' a tè,	Here is *verver* on the ground,
Pinga cé'émonie moin,	Take heed of my ceremony,
Shango, ago-e!	Shango, *ago-e!*

While he sang, he made *verver* about the base of the tree on which the woman was standing and along the bank of the stream. But he still had no success, for she persisted with much violence to recount the wrong that had been done by the family to provoke the anger of the gods — how one member had bargained with a *hungan* to induce him to send evil *loa* to the other members of the family, that they might die and his inheritance might be the greater. Before she would consent to descend, all the sacrifices had to be brought for her inspection, and all those possessed were required to go up the hill and dress in clean clothes. Returning in the rain, the freshly dressed women gathered about the base of the tree, exhibiting the sacrificial animals to the *loa*, the chickens held high in the hands of their donors, and the goats and sheep prominently placed. Slowly, very slowly, as the downpour continued, the woman began to descend, and many times she hesitated, so that it was more than ten minutes before she reached the ground.

But even after she was on the ground and the *hungan* was

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78 79 preparing to seek shelter from the rain, new possessions continued, until, saying: "The *loa* are greater than I am," he went on with the ceremony, singing:

[533] [539]

Ossange Damballa Wedo,	Ossange Damballa Wedo,
Laissé coulé, Ossange-o!	Permit coiling, Ossange!
Ai-bobo!	*Ai-bobo!*
Moin entré,	I enter,
M'ap saluë loa.	I salute the *loa.*
Ogun, Ogun Achade,	Ogun, Ogun Ashade,
O, Ogun Achade,	O, Ogun Ashade,
Hier soir Ogun fai' yun rêve'-o	Last night Ogun dreamed a dream-o
Rêve' li tourné lègèdé.	Dreamed he turned a spy.

A woman became possessed by Damballa, as did the young man who had "had" Gede the preceding night of the ceremony; the woman was in a gay mood, going about smiling and laughing, while the man threw himself in the water and rolled like a snake. And since the *loa* were coming so strongly, the *hungan* began the ceremony of washing and presenting the sacrificial animals, which this time included two white male goats, one very large and one smaller, a white sheep, and six or seven fowls of various colors. The presentation made, the entire group marched singing up the path to the houses, the flag-bearers saluting with their banners the woman so happy in her possession.

[346] As the procession came up the hill, it passed a newly built small house, intended to serve as the family place of worship for the *loa* now introduced into the habitation, and a framework of brush, or *tonnelle,* that had been erected as a shelter under which the postponed *vodun* dance was to have taken place. Without pausing, they proceeded slowly to the gate-

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way, where a ceremony was held for Legba, the guardian of entrances, that he might permit the other *loa* to pass. 78 79

At the direction of the *hungan*, the bars of the gateway were let down as prayers, the Pater Noster and the Ave Maria, were said. Then he sang: [539] [533]

Papa Legba,	Papa Legba,
Fé ou gagné patience	Have patience
Pou' ou service.	At your *service.*
Ago, ago-e!	*Ago, ago-e!*
Papa Legba,	Papa Legba,
Sorti lan Guinée,	Come from Guinea,
Pou' nou' passé.	That we may pass.

As this song and others of similar tenor were sung, the man who had been first possessed by Gede, and earlier in the afternoon by Damballa, strode shouting along the path beside the entrance, into the near-by fire, which was made the hotter as several men blew on it and poured rum into the flames; he stamped in it until he was seized and calmed. The *hungan* once more began to make *verver*, this time at the gateway, as he sang: [533] [539]

Papa Legba,	Papa Legba,
Na pé mandé,	We ask you,
Ça wé la?	What do you see there?
Adoré-é-o	We worship, oh,
A-i bobo!	*A-i bobo!*
Papa Legba,	Papa Legba,
Ouvri barrière pou' nou', ago-ye!	Open the gateway for us, *ago-ye!*
Ouvri chemin pou' moin.	Open the path for me.

As he sang, he passed the red and black cock for Legba over the body of the possessed man sitting in a chair, who thereupon resumed his excited movements, reeling along the path 78 79 533 539

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[533]
[539]

and from time to time again tramping in the fire, as these songs were heard:

Legba cuiscuignon,	Legba who limps along,
À la longtemps,	It is a long time
Moin pas wé 'ou.	I have not seen you.
Papa Legba, wé!	Papa Legba, look!
L'ouvri barrière pou' nous passé.	Open the gateway that we may pass.
E-ago-ye!	*E-ago-ye!*
Legba chita lan barrière	Legba who sits on the gate
Ba nou' passé.	Give us the right to pass.
Ago-ye-e!	*Ago-ye-e!*

The chicken was also passed over other members of the family, but without bringing on any new possessions, and was several times presented on both sides of the entrance-way, wings outstretched, the *hungan* occasionally half-kneeling. Finally stepping inside the entrance, he wrung the neck of the animal, which was destined later to be roasted and to hang for several days over the gateway. While the *loa* Legba was dancing in the fire, Gran' Erzilie "came to the head" of a woman who, after violent possession and a great deal of pacing back and forth in company with "Legba," went down on her knees. Still another woman became possessed, by Damballa, and rolled in the mud. Another procession, for the return to the *tonnelle*, was formed as a lilting song was sung, with everyone dancing to it. "Legba," walking backwards, led the way, calling out: "This way, Papa, come this way." The one possessed by Gran' Erzilie followed on her knees, while, some distance behind, "Damballa" rolled from side to side as she moved her body face-downward along the path. After a few moments the woman on her knees began to beat the ground rhythmically as she proceeded, and as "Damballa" caught up with her, she beat this rhythm on the thighs and buttocks

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of the other. Arrived at the *tonnelle*, both were finally induced to come to their feet, to be immediately sent away and freshly dressed. 78 79

Inside the family shrine, on the ground at the right hand as one entered, were the articles of food and drink that usually constitute a "dry" offering, or *mangé sec*—rolls, cassava, cakes, grilled maize, coffee grounds, sirup, and bowls of cornmeal called *accansan*, with water. The *hungan* made more *ववर* just inside this door to honor the gods that were to be worshipped here, as the "ceremony of the sheep," a sacrifice for the Rada *loa* named St. John the Baptist, was begun. A table was placed under the *tonnelle*, and a container of water in which the animal was first washed. He was then made to stand on the table, where a fresh white table-cloth had been spread, while he was combed, powdered, and perfumed. A piece of white cotton cloth was tied about the horns of the animal, and a lighted white candle was held in place on the right horn or at times between the horns by an attendant. While a song honoring Damballa Wedo was sung, the *hungan* went into the small house to care for the two women, who were still in a state of possession. He set them dancing inside and after a few minutes they were led forth by "Legba," each to pour water and to light a candle before the sheep. The two goats were next washed and "dressed," white cloths and soft beeswax candles also being twisted about their horns. Other offerings under the *tonnelle* were a white pigeon for Damballa and a red cock for Ogun. [346]

Each member of the family now took the fowl or animal that was his offering, as all were summoned inside the shrine, where final directions were given regarding the disposal of the sacrifices, and invocations were spoken to the gods. After this they came out, placing the animals before the men who were waiting to see to the killing, which was carried out in a manner even more matter-of-fact than on the first night of the ceremony. By this time it was about half past six o'clock, and

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night had fallen. As before, the men addressed themselves to the task of butchering the animals, the women to that of preparing and cooking the fowls.

It was perhaps five o'clock in the morning before all the food was made ready to serve. The *hungan*, who had been taking a well-deserved rest, was called, and prepared a plate for each *loa*. After giving every member of the family a dish, he arranged them in two rows before the small house of worship, himself heading the group, attended by two *hunsi* with white and red candles and sacred water. First reciting the Pater Noster, the Ave Maria, and the Credo, he announced to the Rada *loa* that their food was ready and that they were invited to come and partake of it. As he said this, each person entered the house as directed, to place the plate he carried on the table, where a cloth, knives, forks, spoons, and condiments already had been arranged. Many members of the family became possessed, an excellent omen that the Rada *loa* were eagerly coming to partake of the offerings. The head of the goat was placed on the floor, the roasted cock was hung above the gate leading to the habitation. Then the door of the house of worship was closed that the *loa* might eat undisturbed, and for several hours people sat quietly by. Finally the *hungan* knocked at the door to announce his entrance and asked if the *loa* had finished. He then called the family to come and eat what the gods had left, and by ten o'clock that morning, everything was consumed.

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CHAPTER X

VODUN WORSHIP: THE DANCE

THE *vodun* dance, the most public aspect of Haitian peasant ritual, has been more frequently observed and reported on than any other rites of the cult. The worship of the *loa* by an individual, the baptism of his *loa*, and the minor periodic sacrifices he makes to it that it may protect him are entirely private in nature, while presence at the *service* for the *loa* is essentially restricted to members of the family. The *vodun* dance, however, is viewed quite differently, for news of it is widely spread by word of mouth, so that, in contrast to the private character of all other rituals, *vodun* dances are important social occasions, and their success is measured by the numbers in attendance and the enthusiasm of the participants which makes a dance *chaud'* — "hot"!

The *vodun* dance may be said to function in several ways. Above all, it is an integral part of the worship of the *loa*, and as such is marked by repeated possessions which indicate the presence of the gods. Yet it also offers an important opportunity for recreation, as is indicated by the fact that in Mirebalais the term *bamboche*, which means a dance at which one merely enjoys oneself, is often applied to it. By no means do all who go to a dance become possessed, for of one hundred to one hundred and fifty persons present, no more than twenty or twenty-five will come under the power of their gods. The old

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796 535 men and women exchange gossip and sit about, joining in the songs or merely observing the proceedings; while the young people form part of the singing, dancing circle that revolves almost without pause about the central post of the *tonnelle*, the shelter where the festivities are held.

796 To speak of discipline in connection with these dances is to evoke new and astonishing images for readers familiar with the more popular literature on Haiti. It is admittedly true that as one first witnesses a *vodun* dance, one's reaction is that this is a performance governed solely by the dictates of individual possession. These ceremonies are usually held at night, deep in the bush, lighted only by a small, smoking oil lamp and by the candles fastened to the pegs of the drums, while the participants dress in anything but their best clothing, and in their belts the men carry the machetes always worn by the Haitian peasant. Add to this the effect of the unceasing rhythms of the drumming, the blanket of sound from the unison singing of the participants, the violence of the possessions, and it is not strange that the untrained observer tends to assess what he sees in almost any terms but those of the underlying discipline that defines all activity in the worship of the gods. A release of psychic tension is undoubtedly afforded those who become possessed, and this is also experienced to a lesser degree by all those in attendance. Nevertheless, it must be emphasized, despite so much that has been written to the contrary, that this form of worship of the *loa* is neither unrestrained hysteria nor drunken orgiastic satisfaction of the sex drive. The behavior of the participants, in terms of the accepted patterns of European and American religious decorum, often seems uncouth, vigorous, violent, and even dangerous, when it is merely the expression of a different tradition. And as for the orgiastic aspects of these rites, Haitians have ample opportunity to satisfy their sexual impulses elsewhere, without making this a basic and constant element in the worship of their gods.

[416] [291] [411] [533] [194] 796 786

996 *Vodun* dances, in Mirebalais as elsewhere, take place on

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Saturday nights. This is not because of the especially sacred character of the day, but rather because the Haitian government, in order to assure a continuous working week, refuses permits for other days. The occasions for the dances are varied, as is evident from those given during the course of this field-work. One of these was that of a *hungan* as a compliment to visitors "who knew Dahomey" and was conducted as a serious rite in the worship of the *loa*. Two dances marked the end of *services* for family gods, and were variously interpreted as tributes to the family dead and the twins, who must not be neglected in any religious observance, and as celebrations offered in praise of the gods who were to protect the families, giving the dances, to mark the "restraining" of the evil spirits responsible for their troubles. Two other dances celebrated the "baptism" and initial use of new sets of drums. As has been pointed out, there are also non-religious occasions on which *vodun* dances are given. On days of secular celebrations, such as the anniversary of the declaration of Haitian independence, or the withdrawal of the Marines, the *vodun* dancing is purely social, though the ritual drums are used, the sacred songs are sung, and the steps of the dances are those seen at any Saturday-night gathering. Added to the fact that no possessions or other manifestations of serious worship of the *loa* occur, the "secular" *vodun* dances differ from the others in that they are held away from any family shrine, taking place within towns or cities, something never permitted in their non-social, religious counterparts.

The *vodun* dance — and in the remainder of this chapter only the dance which has significance in the worship of the *loa* will be considered — is patterned like all other ceremonies of the cult.[1] It is held at a family habitation, under an open brush shelter known as a *tonnelle*, constructed for the occasion next to the family *maison de servitude*. If the habitation at which the dance is given is not the one where this house of worship is found, the shelter is built near a hut so that those possessed
will have a place to retire.

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796 346 will have a place to retire. The *tonnelle*, which is merely a flat brush roof supported by a number of upright posts, must be built strongly enough to withstand the assaults of those possessed, who not only lean heavily on the supports, but sometimes climb through the brush roof to lie for a time on the cross-beams which form the base for this flimsy covering. Its ostensible aim is to protect the participants from what is known as the *neige*, or "snow," as the heavy dew is called, but, as might be expected, the structure has a ceremonial as well as a utilitarian purpose. Of particular importance is the central post, called the *porto cabesse*, or the *porto mita*, because the gods are believed to wait there until their drum rhythms sound, when they use this to descend into the *tonnelle*. The fire which burns during the whole period of the dance near the entrance to the habitation is also characteristic and indispensable. It is for Legba, who, as guardian of the entrance-way must first be worshipped, in order that he may permit the other deities to come.

796 The dances may begin shortly after sundown, but are not fully under way until two or three hours later, and last all night. In no case was a dance witnessed which began while there was daylight, though during the dry months, January and February, when there is no work to be done in the fields, dances open at a somewhat earlier hour. The rectangular dancing-space under the *tonnelle* is lined with spectators, who are seated on such chairs and boxes as the family giving the dance can provide or such others as have been brought by their owners, though, in the main, people stand. The vigor of the dance varies as the night progresses. It is usually slow in starting, people drifting in later as they finish their evening meal, while the best drummers are rarely present at the outset. [793] Unless the dance follows an earlier ceremony, such as the baptism of drums, or a *humfort*, the *hungan* in charge also does not appear until a late hour and even when there has been an earlier rite, such a personage may well go to his home to rest before returning for the night's effort.

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before returning for the night's effort. By midnight the dance 796
is in full swing. Though individuals here and there may absent themselves for a time, the attendance remains relatively constant, until as the crowing of cocks marks the approaching dawn, the number of dancers begins to dwindle rapidly, and with full daylight few remain other than members of the family. Only rarely does a *vodun* dance last well into the morning; what one sees after sunrise are the poorer drummers beating their mediocre rhythms for the young people who continue a desultory circling about the central pole. This does not mean that the *vodun* deities shun the daylight. It is merely because the participants must hurry away to get into their Sunday clothes for early mass in the village church.

The obligations of the family giving a dance are clearly established by tradition. Most important is the *tonnelle,* which they must build, and the drums and their accessory gong and rattles, which they must furnish. The drummers are not paid, but are given much attention when the refreshments that must be provided are distributed. These usually take the form of *clairin,* though coffee and bread may also be offered the guests early in the morning. The *clairin,* or raw rum, is passed [273]
from time to time, but not in sufficient quantity to cause inebriation. Those who supplement this with a generous supply of their own, and show the effect of it, are regarded with anything but approval.[3] Other accessories for the dance which must be at hand are the banners used to salute the deities, and the candles and water needed to bring those possessed out of the more violent stages of their seizures. If anything else is [265]
required or the guests desire further refreshments, these may [343]
always be bought from the women who set up their little stands at every dance.

Drums, iron, and rattles are indispensable for a *vodun* 796
dance. The drums, of the characteristic hollow-log African 537
type, tuned with pegs inserted in the sides and reinforced with twine wound about the stretched heads of cow-hide or goat-

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skin, are played in batteries of three, the largest being called *manman*,[8] the middle the *seconde*, and the smallest the *bula*.[9] To be used in dances, the drums, like the *loa* of the worshippers, must be "baptized," as will be seen when an account of their making and consecration is given in a later chapter. The iron, or *ogan*, usually consists of the blade of a hoe struck by a large spike, and the rattle, *açon*, in the form most often encountered, is a rounded calabash, containing seeds or pebbles. The iron and the rattles set the basic, steady beat about which the complex drum rhythms play. The smallest drum first takes the time after the iron and the rattles have begun, the notes being played with an accessory figure by means of two thin sticks. The medium-sized drum is next heard, while the *manman*, ritually the most important of the three, comes in last. The *seconde* also has two sticks, one short, thick, and straight, the other a small bow, which gives an added resilience to the notes of the drums' subsidiary rhythms. In playing the great drum, the single crooked stick, called a *baguette*, is held in the right hand, while the left strikes the drumhead with heel or fingers according to the quality of tone desired. The drumstick itself is wielded either against the skin head or against its wooden side, thus permitting a further variation in tone.

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When "salutes" to the gods are called for by the drums, it is the voice of the *manman* that signals the sweeping circular movements of the dancers, dictating with its beat the dips and semi-prostrations of this figure in the ritual dancing, called *asagwe*. The drum rhythms are always distinctive for each type of *loa*, and every devotee knows the rhythms which call his god.

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The drums and iron are the focus of all activity of the dance, especially since those who are possessed dance facing the drums, in whose beat is heard the voice of the gods. Hence the spectators cluster most closely about them, for anything of significance which happens must happen here. The players of the rattles — it is but rarely that more than one rattle is not

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employed — do not remain with the drummers. These instruments are ordinarily in the hands of *hunsi*, who join the massed ring of dancers that constantly circles about the center pole. These dancers are not under possession, but are merely enjoying the evening or participating in the social aspect of the dance preparatory to becoming possessed. The rattle is held high above the heads of the dancers, and its sharp, steady notes are produced by quick, short, measured movements of the wrist. The end of a song, which sometimes does not come until fifteen or twenty minutes after its initial statement, is usually marked by a continuous shaking of a rattle, a process which effectually breaks the rhythm and makes it possible to begin a new song. The player of the rattle is an outstanding singer, who usually initiates the fresh refrain and continues to sing its repetitions as soloist in the alternation of solo and chorus which marks Haitian *vodun* singing as it marks most West African and New World Negro religious music.

When a possession occurs, the songs for the deity who has "arrived" are taken up as the drums play the rhythm of the god. As his possession comes on, the devotee falls to the ground, rolling before the drums, or staggers blindly about the dancing-space, or otherwise follows the characteristic behavior attributed to his god. After a time he begins to dance, whereupon a *hunsi* or the *hungan*, taking a calabash of water in one hand and a lighted candle in the other, dances opposite him, saluting the god as he performs his every movement in reverse; if he turns clockwise, the one dancing with him turns counter-clockwise; if he moves to the right, the other moves to the left. Except when executing these turns, the functionary of the cult never takes his eyes from the eyes of the possessed person, almost, as it were, hypnotizing him to help him come to himself. Eventually the possessed one recovers sufficiently to take the candle and the calabash of water in his own hands. Often spilling water as he moves, he makes his way to the central pole, pouring an offering and making the sign of the cross with the candle before it.

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787 with the candle before it. He next does the same before the *ogan*, then before each of the drums in order, continuing to dance before the drums, usually with great violence, while the few "social" dancers who still may be circling about the center pole make way so that he may execute his steps. Gradually his dancing becomes calmed, until he is taken either to the *maison de servitude* or to a near-by house, where he rests and if, as often happens, he has rolled on muddy ground during his possession, washes and changes his clothes.

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159 Several examples of the force of this tradition of being "mounted" by the *loa* may be given. One of these which is of especial interest concerns the possession of a man of good education, in the early thirties, who throughout his childhood and early manhood had had no association with the *vodun* cult, but had been encouraged by his family and his own ambition to promote the activities of the Catholic Church. In discussing his earlier experiences and background with one of his intimates, it seemed that on the side of both father and mother many of his relatives were affiliated with the cult, and it was recounted how, at an important ceremony at his ancestral habitation, some years before, he had become possessed. But it was also made clear that he had not been any the less active in the affairs of the Church because of this transient experience, nor had he affiliated himself in any way with any *vodun* group. Why he wished once more to participate in the *vodun* rituals cannot be said; certainly during the weeks immediately preceding his possession he had become interested in the philosophy of *vodun*, and his non-voduistic, if not anti-voduistic background seemed to accentuate his interest in ascertaining the hold of these rites, which had always been presented to him as repellent, on their followers. As an example of the duality of his interest, it may be stated that though he had remarked how "disgusting" it was to roll in the mud when possessed by Damballa, he had also been im-

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pressed with the temerity of those who danced in the fire for Legba.

At a certain dance, however, he volunteered to help in a small way in promoting the activities of the evening, such as serving *clairin* to the drummers, while he himself danced the social dance about the central post of the *tonnelle*. As the tempo of the dance heightened, he became more deeply imbued with the spirit of the occasion and shouted: "If the *loa* comes to me, I will accept it!" as he plunged again into the circle of dancers. When the drums sounded the salute to the gods, he would awkwardly execute the accompanying backward turning movement of the figure.

After a time he left the *tonnelle*, but before many moments had elapsed a commotion was heard at the near-by *barrière*, where he was reeling in the first stage of possession, just inside the gate, while a fully possessed woman in a figured dress stalked back and forth. An *adjanikon*, with candle and calabash of water, was trying to "settle" his possession, but he fell to the ground and rolled on his back, lying prostrate with legs and arms outstretched and twitching. The *adjanikon*, putting aside the candle and water, lifted his limp body to its feet and then slowly, according to the accepted pattern, holding him upright, swayed with him in time to the song that all twelve or fifteen persons present were by now singing, until, staggering, the possessed man was able to support himself:

Damballa-o, Damballa-e,	Damballa-o, Damballa-e,
Damballa-o, Damballa Wedo,	Damballa-o, Damballa Wedo,
'Gadé ça ou fait' moin.	See what you have done to me.

Steadily fixing his eyes on the possessed one, the *adjanikon* now danced with him, turning always in the opposite direction as he offered him the candle and the water, which, how-

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796 ever, the man was not yet able to hold. Moving backwards
798 toward the *maison de servitude*, all the spectators continued
789 to sing the song of Damballa, while the man to whom the god
159 had come half-danced and was half-carried up the path to the *tonnelle* and taken into the family house of worship.

[783] When he had sufficiently recovered to be able to hold the candle and the water, he poured the water and unsteadily bowed three times in the accepted manner before the *coverts sec* to the Rada gods. He now was enough in control of himself to emerge, and, with the *adjanikon* dancing before him with water and a candle, he once again came into the *tonnelle*, before the drums. As he appeared, the drummers stopped the Ogun rhythm they had been sounding, and in an intense silence all waited for the god to announce himself. Half on his
[533] knees before the drums, the one possessed began to sing in a
[539] cracked voice:

Damballa Wedo,	Damballa Wedo,
Papa m' c'est coulev'-o,	Papa, I am a serpent-o,
Na poi' bois	There is no tree
Moin pa' li monté.	I cannot climb.

With this initial statement, the Damballa rhythm rolled from the drums, and all echoed the song in chorused response, while the possessed figure, in strict conformity to the pattern, first poured water at the central post and then consecutively before the iron and each of the drums. Returning to the central post, he whirled about it, almost but never quite falling, until he could dance before the drums, awkwardly but acceptably, before he disappeared to rest in a near-by house.

796 The explanation offered by this man of the manner in
789 which he became possessed, and his varying attitudes toward
159 his possession, are revealing. On several previous occasions
793 the *hungan* who officiated at the dance had noticed that he was attending *vodun* rites and had joked with him about his interest in them. Once at an earlier dance this *hungan* had

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given him a piercing glance, not without significance, for as the man, who believed himself the victim of the *hungan's* machinations, said, "Whatever you believe, these *hungans* have some kind of power. . . ." On his arrival at the dance where the possession occurred, the *hungan* had encountered this man sitting alone, some distance from the *tonnelle*. Giving him a drink of liquor, the *hungan*, as he pressed his hand in greeting, sportively turned him about in the manner in which possession is induced. After this the man recollected but little; he did not remember having said he would accept the god, or circling backwards, or bowing to the drums when the "salutes" were played. He dimly remembered having been sent to the *barrière* with some liquor for Bosu, who, not a Rada *loa*, had come unauthorized to one of the spectators and, according to custom, had been removed from the dancing-place. He also just recalled that a woman had become possessed by Legba, but did not know that it was when she touched him that his own possession had begun. The remainder of the night's experience was completely blank, even though the actual state of possession occupied only a small part of it.

Later during the dance, when he had returned, he was heard to say: "It was not a pretty trick that the *hungan* played on me"—a feeling not assuaged when, the next morning at mass, the priest in his sermon preached against following false gods and recounted the miseries in store for those who desert the true faith; nor when he reflected that, by his possession, he had in a sense become affiliated with a group whose position in society was anything but such as to enhance his own social status. The *hungan*, however, promised him that he would not bring on another possession, adding, as an aside: "It is good, though, that a Haitian should have this experience." None the less, to make sure that this *loa bossal* would not come to him at awkward moments, it was going to be necessary for him to baptize it, thus continuing the process which

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some termed his "Haitianization." There were those who expressed surprise at the occurrence, but the majority held that though this man had himself been a devout follower of the Church, and his parents before him, Damballa was a *loa* of his family, and therefore it was reasonable that it should come to him when called at a dance.

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Another "unauthorized" possession, that of a woman in mourning, was also witnessed. Like the *service* of one night's duration, which this dance followed, it was but poorly organized and provided for, and in this it reflected the status of the family, which had but few resources, since its head had recently come into the valley and therefore lacked the backing which only his own relationship group could give him. Here there was no *maison de servitude*, and the *tonnelle* had been erected in an open field where the only shelter was offered by a crude hut near by. The *hungan* did not appear until late, while the host lived up to his reputation by drinking more *clairin* than was good for him. None the less, one violent possession by a *loa bossal* occurred relatively early in the evening, though the *loa* concerned did not "announce himself" through the song of the one he had possessed.

The woman in mourning sang continuously as she sat among the spectators, and since she was not supposed to dance, she executed dance movements in place. As the drumming became more and more *chaud* — "hot" — she became correspondingly more excited until, suddenly leaping from her seat, she began a frenzied dance. She refused the water and candle, however, and when finished with her dancing, she fell exhausted into her chair, where she remained in a coma during the next hour. She roused herself later and again joined the singing, but though she was near possession, this never came on. Her *loa*, like the other *loa bossal* that came earlier in the evening, did not "announce itself," and since it was her first — and not unwelcome — possession, she stated that at the termination of her period of mourning she would

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have a *hungan* divine its identity so that she might thereafter worship it and be under its protection. As in the other case discussed, the personality involved here is not without interest. The woman was one of the shrewdest traders in the Mirebalais market, and noted for her hardness. Underneath this, however, the presence of much vital energy could be felt as well as a passionate desire for gayety and attention from members of the other sex. That the essential lack of satisfaction of these drives in her life, as discussed and observed, figured in bringing on her possession cannot be doubted, and, as such, throws significant light on the nature of the psychological aspects of the phenomenon.

These instances, however, must not be thought of as a regular part of the ritual of the dances. Though a dance was attended almost every Saturday night during the course of an entire summer, and a number of *services* and other *vodun* rites in addition, these were the only occasions when a *loa boisal* appeared. In order, therefore, to document the pattern of the *vodun* dance that has already been given, some of the dances witnessed may be described in outline.

The first of these is a dance which, originally intended as the culmination of the *service* described in the preceding chapter, failed to fulfill its end because of a quarrel between two important members of the family. None the less, it proved to be one of the most spirited and typical dances witnessed. The habitation, when reached shortly after six o'clock, was deserted, except for a few people who seemed to be waiting disconsolately. Among them were several *hunsi* in white, and two who carried banners, while the three drums, each "dressed" in its skirt-like covering, stood before the entrance, the drumsticks and the *ogan* lying on the *barrière* itself. Since the *hungan* had not arrived, one or two of the men present took charge as darkness came on. Before this dance began, it was necessary to introduce the drums ceremonially into the compound, and as this was the first *vodun* dance after the es-

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tablishment of the family *maison de servitude*, a special ritual for Legba at the *barrière* was required. The one who took charge threw some rum on the *bouean* that had been made for Legba. Taking a candle, he struck the drums with it; then described *vervet* and placed an egg on the white flour he piled just inside the *barrière*. The rite proceeded no farther, however, for with the appearance of the head of the family, accompanied by his wife and son, who was the young man who had been possessed by Gede the first night of the *service*, a discussion arose which soon developed into a quarrel, because the family head felt that he had not been notified of this dance in the manner due his position. Finally with the cry: "If anything happens to the family because of this, I am not responsible," he departed in a rage. This was regarded as serious, because should a dance which ended an important rite be held with some of the family absent, the gods might be angered and serious consequences might follow. The woman, who had been instrumental in seeing that the *service* was given and had cared for most of the preparations, bravely decided to continue with the ritual, however, and the drumming was resumed.

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Alcohol and flour were thereupon poured on the drumheads, while a number of songs were sung by all present:

Bonjou' manman, bonjou' papa,	Good-day, mamma, good-day, papa,
Ma p' mandé coumen nou' yè	I ask how are you.
Lan Guinée gangnin dent'.	In Guinea there are teeth.
Moin entré, moin entré,	I entered, I entered,
Ou pas salué moin.	You did not greet me.
Agoue-e, hunto	Agowe, hunto (spirit in the drum)
Agasu-e	Agasu-e
Agoué-e hunto, e-o.	Agowe hunto, e-o.

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1936) 1937 SV2 Haiti SV2
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Jean Pétro,	Jean Pétro,
Depuis moin sorti la ville	Since I left town
Moin apé cassé pié moin.	I have broken my foot.
Ça qui fait petit moun fronté.	That is what makes the children impertinent.
Yawé-é-é	Yawé-é-é,
Gedenibo Mazaca	Gedenibo Mazaca,
M'apé rhélé Saints forts	I call the strong saints,
Yawé-é	Yawé-é-é,
Saints forts-é-é	Strong gods-é-é.
P'ti Garçon Lemba,	Little boy Lemba,
P'ti' pilon ça,	A small pestle he,
Na pilé yo, Lemba-o.	Crush them, Lemba-o.

Finally the instruments were lifted over the *barrière*, the *ogan* and rattles first, then the drums in order from smallest to largest, followed by the spectators. Ahead of the procession were *hunsi* with flags, and all continued singing until the *maison de servitude* and the *tonnelle* used during the *service* were reached. 796 [797]

The drums were carried about the house three times in procession before being taken inside. There, facing the place where the food had been offered — for the house was as yet quite bare, with no suggestion of an altar — the drums were beaten and songs sung to the Rada gods whose sanctuary this was. Though at the moment none of the good drummers had arrived, the drums were placed in line with the north end of the house, and the drumming for the dance commenced. Dancing began about the center pole, but no possessions occurred until shortly after eight o'clock. By that time better drummers had come, and the crowd had so increased that the drums were moved to accommodate those dancing, the drummers now having their backs to the front wall of the sacred house. A candle was attached to a peg of each drum, which,

1: Herskovits I-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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A candle was attached to a peg of cane grass, which, with the lantern that hung near the central post, gave unusually good light. However, as possessions began, the candles on the drums were extinguished as those possessed fell against them, and no more than one could be kept lighted.

With the arrival of the *hungan* at about half past nine, the dancing became even more animated, and Ogun "came" as soon as he took over the *manman* drum, but despite this, the *hungan* continued the ritual invocation to call all the *loa*:

Moin rhelé Papa Legba, St. Jo,	I call Papa Legba, St. Joseph,
Moin rhelé Damballa papa,	I call Papa Damballa,
Moin rhelé Papa Damballa, St. Jo,	I call Papa Damballa, St. Joseph,
Moin rhelé Loko Atinou, St. Jo.	I call Loko Atinsu, St. Joseph.
La vie nan mains Bon Dieu,	Life is in the hands of God,
Seigneur, moin rhelé Ogun Ferraille, St. Jo.	Master, I call Ogun Ferraille, St. Joseph.
Moin rhelé Damballa Wedo,	I call Damballa Wedo,
Moin rhelé Aida Wedo, Seigneur.	I call Aida Wedo, Master.
La vie nan mains Bon Dieu.	Life is in the hands of God.
Moin rhelé Papa Agasu, St. Jo, Dokwe Agwe,	I call Papa Agasu, St. Joseph, Dokwe Agwe,
Moin rhelé Malt' Ossange,	I call Master Ossange,
Moin rhelé Malt' St. Jean,	I call Master St. John,
Moin rhelé Gran' Siligbo,	I call Gran' Siligbo,
Moin rhelé Agwe Woyo,	I call Agwe Woyo,
Moin rhelé Loa 'Bitation,	I call the *loa* of the habitation,

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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ABOVE, *A voduu altar: both Catholic and African religious symbols are to be seen.*
BELOW, *Mystical designs traced in cornmeal on the ground about a shrine.*

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[facing p. 192]

J: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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AT A VODUN DANCE

ABOVE, *The dancers crowding about the central post of the shelter.*
BELOW, *Drums and drummers.*

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[facing p. 193]

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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Moinvhelé Aizan,	I call Aizan,
Moin vhelé Sobo, St. Jo, Dokwe Agwe,	I call Sobo, St. Joseph, Dokwe Agwe,
Moin vhelé Papa Gede,	I call Papa Gede,
Moin vhelé toutes mystères.	I call all the gods.

When he had ended his song a number of the "salutes" were played on the drums, to which all danced backward in circles, ending the figure in bows before the drums, which were rolling out the call. In the course of the evening a large number of gods were summoned, but, as would be expected, only the *loa* of the family came to this ceremony. Possessions were observed for Legba, Damballa, Ogun Balandjo, Ogun Galloné, Ogun Ferraille, Gede, and Kadya Bosu. St. John, Ossange, Aizan, Ashadé Bokor, Gran' Bosu, Magie, Jean Pétro, Congo, Guinée, Sobo, Bade, and Agwe Woyo, were the *loa* who refused their summons. Though no deity held the center of the stage for too long a time, the evening was notable because it was marked by an unusually large number of Ogun and Damballa possessions, which seemed constantly to alternate. Damballa being the stronger *loa*, his appearance when Ogun was present necessitated the retirement of the latter; but since the possession of Ogun by one woman was particularly persistent, this god returned again and again. As at a number of dances, the *haut chant* for Ogun Galloné, the French marching-song that salutes the "general," was among the songs heard, when those possessed by the god skipped from one end of the *tonnelle* to the other before the drums.

One particularly striking Damballa possession came on suddenly. As a tall, strong man was seized by the god, he gave a great shout and grasped the beams of the *tonnelle*, disappearing upward through the thatch. For a moment it did not seem that he had climbed on the roof of the *tonnelle*, until a head and arms which appeared between the palm fronds showed he

1: Herskovits 8-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Microbatch

796 787 [194] was there. To bring him down, a *hunsi* holding water and a candle at once began slowly to dance under him, fixing him with the usual unvarying stare. After some five minutes the candle and water were quickly given to those near by, and in a flash the possessed one was safely on the ground, candle in hand, pouring water before the center pole and the drums, and dancing magnificently.

796 793 787 593 Shortly after midnight the head of the family and his wife returned to the scene of the dance, the explanation given for this return revealing the native conception of the power of the *hungan*. Before his arrival, it was said he had been told of the quarrel; hence on his way to the dance he passed the *barrière* of the house of the family head, though he did not stop to speak with him. Prior to leaving his home, however, he was supposed to have performed a rite which, soon after he began drumming at the dance, so affected the children of the family head that they became possessed and at once ran to the *tonnelle*. Since their children were present, the father and mother were forced to come, and this was followed by a reconciliation of those who had quareled. To make doubly sure that the *loa* would take no offense, however, another dance which formally ended the *service* was given jointly by all members of the family several weeks later.

796 787 One phase of the ceremonial always encountered, but unusually frequent on this occasion, was the salutation of the assembled company by the *loa*. One woman, possessed by Ogun, greeted all present first by shaking hands with wrists crossed in the customary manner, and then kissing each person on both cheeks. Another, possessed by Ossange, took the neckerchief from about his neck and wiped the faces of all those present, paying particular attention to the drummers. The son of the family head was again possessed by Gede as at the *service*, and his greeting to the assembled company was especially dramatic. His possession took the form of a hysteri-

J: Herskovits E-4, 8 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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cal, rapid, continuous jumping, with the body held rigid. As he bobbed up and down, holding his candle under his chin so that the light distorted his features and emphasized the vacant stare in his eyes, he monotonously repeated the sharp sounds of his god: "*Ke-ke-ke-ke-ke-ke-ke!*" or "*Hoi! Hoi! Hoi!*" Standing before some, he would greet them by taking their crossed hands in his strong grip and bringing them down in a single movement that shook the entire body. Once he removed the red kerchief he wore, extending it as an indication he wished gifts of money; he used it to wipe the perspiration from the faces of others; while he would merely run his hands through the hair of still others.[4] 796 987

As daybreak neared, the crowd thinned, so that by half 796
past five few of the good drummers or important men remained. Persons who had been sleeping roused themselves, and there was a general exodus. Most of those who had been at the dance did not go to sleep, however, for early Sunday morning mass an hour later found them at the church saying their prayers and listening to the sermon of the priest.

In contrast, another dance visited was noteworthy for its 796
many and varied possessions. It was held at the habitation of 987
one of the fathers-in-law of a *hungan*, and began somewhat later, the drums not arriving until almost eight o'clock. Only a minor ceremony was necessary to bring them through this gateway. The host three times poured water inside the gate, while three men played on the drums and a fourth tapped the
ogan for a moment. The proceedings began when an elderly [533]
hunsi summoned Legba, invoking in her song Siligbo Vavou, Dahomey, Ogun, Bade, and "all *loa*." The *hungan* who was host himself arrived at nine o'clock, and the excellence of his drumming caused one possession to follow another with great rapidity. The dance was a large one, and by midnight there were at least two hundred persons in attendance, while at one time fifty or more were dancing about the central post and as many as seven or eight were possessed at once.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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many as seven or eight were possessed at once. During the night of this dance the following thirty-one *loa* "came" in the order named:

Ossange Damballa Wedo	Papa Loko Dahomey
Sobo	Ogun Batala
Bumba	Ogun Batagri
Congo	Ogun Balandjo
Si Adaman	Ogun Shango
Simbi Djo	Malt' Ogun
Agau Témèré	Ogun Ferraille
Damballa	Ogun Ashadé
Odanil Yewe	Ibo Lélé
Ogun Ferraille	Ossange
Bosu Trois Cornes	Agau (Malt' Woyo)
Bosu d'Eau	Malt' Aiman
Simbi (nan d'Eau)	Shango
Damballa Wedo	Damballa
Simbi Kita	Simbi en Deux Eaux
	Bosu

The only deity that was called but failed to respond was Gran' Bra. And it is to be noted that both Rada and Pétro gods "came" in response to the summons, though *loa* of the two categories were not present under the *tonnelle* at the same time. Each person possessed was looked after very carefully, women's ear-rings being taken off so that they would not be lost, the contents of men's pockets being emptied, and knives always being removed from their sheaths. When one man was violently possessed by Papa Loko Dahomey and danced "strongly," attempts were made to wrest from him the walking-stick he carried. They were not successful, however, and all dodged him as he brandished it. The *hungan* host was always present to take the possessed one inside the house which formed one side of the *tonnelle*, to "treat" him.

A number of comments on the possessions by several of the

.1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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gods may be made. Si Adaman, known as a *loa* Dominicaine, 787
possessed a woman who, with another possessed by Sobo, came 796
to greet the white visitors and ask for *kola*, a non-alcoholic 796
drink much desired by Rada gods. The woman possessed by Agasu Tèmèré was also at one time or another during this dance "mounted" by ten other *loa*. On one occasion, when possessed by this Rada deity, she went to the *barrière* because under the *tonnelle* they were dancing for Simbi — "who is not of my family." Asking another dancer to whom Sobo had come to accompany her, she sang "Saddle and bridle my mount for me," and "Sobo goes with Agasu; he stays in my house." Historically this is significant, since Agasu is the deified ancestor of the royal Dahomean sib, and Sobo the Dahomean god of thunder.

Bosu Trois Cornes came violently to a young girl dressed in red. She was taken inside the house against which the *tonnelle* had been erected, and while a number of men held her, the *hungan* worked over her. She was in a dangerous state, for Ti Kita Demembré, who is much feared, often goes with Bosu, and in this instance of what was said to be a first possession was believed to be "not far away" because of the rigidity with which the arms of the girl were held, in positions almost to dislocate them. The *hungan* scolded the *loa* — "Be off! You are not wanted here!" After the girl had been brought far enough through her possession to pour water and take a candle before the drums, she was sent home, carefully attended. It was held absolutely essential that there be no delay before baptizing her *loa* and sending away its harmful companions; otherwise, when possession next occurred, she might do harm to herself.

Early in the morning one of the several visiting *hungans* 796
became possessed by Damballa, and, imitating the serpent, 787
climbed through the roof of the *tonnelle*. The priest who was host, after bringing him down, danced with him, carrying his guest, still possessed, about the dancing-space on his back as

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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a great outcry of acclamation was heard from those present. Afterwards the visitor, always under the influence of his god, greeted everyone with the crossed-arm handshake of the *loa*,* and ended by dancing opposite the young woman to whom so many gods came — now possessed by still another deity.

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This dance offered an especially striking demonstration of the hold of the Church on the people of Mirebalais. Feeling that motion pictures of an actual *vodun* dance should be made available so that the real nature of the ceremony could be demonstrated and comparisons made between the Haitian and Dahomean practices of which his visitors had told him, the *hungan* himself made all effort to continue the dance until the morning light would permit pictures to be taken; as an inducement to remain, additional *clairin* and biscuits were provided. As daylight approached, however, on one of the few mornings when no early fog obscured the light, the participants began to slip away, so that by sunrise only the usual fifteen or twenty young folk shuffling about the central post were to be seen. Later, in the village, the procession held the first Sunday of each month before the principal mass of the day passed through the square. Many of those who, as dancers or possessed ones, had been active in this *vodun* dance could be seen in it; while next to the priest himself marched the woman who had been possessed by her eleven *vodun* gods during the night just ended.

1: Herskovits E-4, 6 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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CHAPTER XI

THE CULT OF TWINS AND OF THE DEAD

SHARING powers and prerogatives with the *loa* in the supernatural world are the souls of the dead, the spirits of twins, and, in a specialized sense, magic, all working parts of a universe the ultimate force in which is God, who is sometimes spoken of as its Gran' Maît'. Their relative importance, however, is not easy to determine; and much less the manner in which the supernatural personalities in these divisions are linked with one another. Therefore, when such problems are presented to a group of Haitians, as whether or not the dead become *loa*, or the spirits of twins are related to those of the dead, or whether twins are the equivalent of the *loa*, or what the role of all these in magic may be, different opinions will always be heard.

One of these matters was explained by an elderly *hunsi* as follows: "*Marassa gagné morts longtemps, li deviennent loa* — Twins who have been dead a long time become *loa*," and "*Gagné gran' moun morts longtemps, deviennent loa* — There are those long dead who become *loa*," and she added: "But how this happens, I do not know." Despite a flat contradiction of this opinion by a man who was present, and a heated discussion between them, she persisted in maintaining the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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776 769 845 184 correctness of her view, while making an honest avowal of her inability to explain how this came about. On another occasion discussion turned upon the manner in which the powers of these supernatural beings are conceived in various parts of Haiti. Said one *hungan:* " Twins are stronger than the saints (the *loa*). The *marassa* are the mothers of the saints. So it is said at Arcahaie." The reply came: " In Mirebalais they say the saints are stronger."

During a lively discussion of the point by a group of active voduists the suggestion was made by one that the relative power of the *loa*, the dead, and the twins might be determined if the numerical strength of the following of each cult could be roughly ascertained. Since all give sacrifices for the dead — even strict Church members — and all who worship the *loa* give for the *loa* and the dead, while only some of this latter group give for the *loa*, the twins, and the dead, the person who had suggested this line of inquiry concluded that the dead were therefore strongest, because no one dared ignore them. Still another opinion, though in agreement with this, was based rather on the fact that the *loa* always exhibit fear before manifestations of death, as at dances where persons possessed by Damballa or Aida Wedo avoid those possessed by Gede, since he stands so close to the dead. However, it was pointed out by others in Mirebalais that the most costly and elaborate offerings are for the *loa*, that those for the dead are smaller, and those given the twins are least impressive, which was evidence enough for them that the *loa* are the most powerful of these three categories. All agreed, however, in ascribing to the twins the least power of the three, though what the *marassa* do for good or evil they do with intensity and dispatch.

174 776 769 845 There is ample justification, on both theological and historical grounds, for placing twins and the dead in a single general category. For, as one educated Haitian put it in pointing out that both twins and dead are worshipped on the same day, "*Marassa et morts font une chapitre pour nous* — The twins and the dead make a single chapter for us."

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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twins and the dead make a single chapter for us." This point of view is supported by a study of the twin cult as found in that part of West Africa from which so much of Haitian culture came, where a single category of the supernatural world, comprising all ancestors, includes both twins and the dead, as well as all others "who have passed through the womb of a woman." As might be expected, the concept is more elaborated in West Africa than in Haiti; but the important point is that in Haiti, though less explicitly formulated, it has persisted.

To worship twins it is not necessary either for a family to number them among its members of this generation, or to have included them within the memory of those living, for it is sufficient if a tradition exists that twins had once been born to some member of the family. If the twins are alive or lived in recent times, sacrifices are given both at Christmas and at harvest time; otherwise only at Christmas. Some families, indeed, worship twins because a *hungan* has divined that their unknown ancestors in "Guinée" had included them. There are still others who decide to worship the *marassa* without the advice of a diviner, because certain benefits are believed to come to those who worship twins, because of their power for good or evil.[1]

The source of this power is vague; one characteristic answer to a question concerning it was: "Their power comes from God. Do we ourselves know how twins are made?" It is agreed, however, that St. Nicholas is their spiritual father — an opinion based on the tale of this saint, held to have been a sorcerer who, in very early times, killed three *marassa* (the twins themselves and the *dosu*, or child after twins) and salted them away in a barrel. The mother of the children came to him to offer up her prayers, and, touched by her sorrow, he resuscitated them, since when he has been their "father." The power of twins, whatever its source, is very real to the Haitians. They are believed to be able to predict rain, for ex-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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845 ample, long before ordinary folk.[1] If promised offerings in the
[789] event of an ample harvest, their aid in bringing about this
[782] desired end is even more fruitful than that of the *loa* or the
[769] dead, who are therefore appealed to only indirectly.

Twins, however, are capricious beings, ready to do harm if they are not humored. Consequently, twins must be given anything they ask for, and it is especially important to provide them with the clothes they covet, when giving a *mangé marassa*. If their father fails to provide these new clothes, they
[753] will *kembé* (seize) him, and he may at once have an attack of fever or a bad toothache or earache; or, more likely still, he will be seriously constipated, since this is the punishment particularly favored by the *marassa*, just as the *loa* most frequently send dysentery, and the dead cause headaches. If lack
845 of resources makes it impossible to provide what they demand,
599 a painstaking explanation must be given them or they will
828 drive a person mad in the manner recounted in the following *marassa* myth:

> There were once twins, one good and one evil. They were working a field with another brother, but the evil one refused to help. The other two, therefore, said they would not give him any food. Because of this the evil twin drove the third brother insane. After they had long prayed that he reconsider, he finally agreed to restore sanity to his brother, but insisted on inflicting deafness as a punishment, so that this brother was deaf until he died.

845 At the birth of twins, special "twin plates" are provided
778 when their birth is announced to the *loa* — either before or
[769] after their Church baptism — where offerings to the spirits of twins are placed. Usually paired, the plates may be three in number, in which case the third is for the *dosu*, the child born after twins, who is believed to be even more powerful than twins themselves and is thus an important figure in the cult.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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Preferably, these cult objects are made of pottery, joined by a ligature in twos or threes, as required. The plates rest in a box or on a small table which stands in a corner of an inner room of the house. If the family worshipping the twins is a poor one, joined calabashes or wooden plates are acceptable, and such are found more often in the valley of Mirebalais than pottery plates. The "altar" made by the plates is completed by an *image* — a chromolithograph — of the twin saints, Comas and Damien, placed on the wall above them.

The principal rite of the twin cult is the *mangé marassa*. A minor ceremony, if the family has living twins or twins recently dead, it is held, as has already been said, at Christmas and at harvest time; otherwise only at Christmas. Yams and salt fish are separately cooked, and a dish of beans mixed with olive oil is provided. In the morning this food is taken to a closed room, where it is deposited both in the *marassa* plates and in ordinary containers placed for those who attend the rite. As the offering is made, songs such as the following are sung:

Marassa, m'a pé mandé,	Spirit of twins, I ask,
Ça wé la si 'ou content?	Are you content with what you see there?
Ago-e-e.	*Ago-e-e.*
Adoré nan pié Damballa,	Worship at the tree of Damballa,
Ago-e-e.	*Ago-e-e.*
Marassa bra,	Twins of the forest,
Marassa carrefour,	Twins of the crossroad,
M'a pé mandé,	I ask,
Ça wé la si 'ou content?	Are you content with what you see there?
Adoré nan pié humfort,	Worship at the *humfort*,
Assuré-e, ago!	Care for us, *ago!*
Marassa dé, trois, quatre,	Twins two, three, four,

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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M'a pé mandé,	I ask,
Ça wé la si 'ou content?	Are you content with what you see there?

The food is eaten the same afternoon. If the twins are actually alive, everything they wear must be new and they must have identical clothes. At the sacrifice of the January harvest, native rice, cakes, okra, bananas, and one, two, or three chickens, designated by the twins themselves, are offered. The food is put in place, and as songs are sung it is left until the following day, when it is eaten. The worship of
[184] twins differs markedly in various parts of Haiti. In Leogane, for example, some have such a ceremony only at harvest time, and have a greater *mangé marassa* every five years, when a goat and a chicken are killed and offered with the usual non-animal foods.

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Twins stand in a peculiarly intimate relation to each other, as might be expected from the traditional African belief that twins share a single soul, which, as far as could be determined, only survives in attitude in Mirebalais. Should one die, the living twin must put aside a bit of all food he eats, or a small part of any gift given him, for the other. If the twins are both girls, the attempt is usually made to have them betrothed and married at about the same time. If the female twin of a pair is married, she must give a present to her twin brother, and similarly her husband sees to it that his wife's male twin also receives a substantial gift from him as a peace offering, for it is dangerous to wait until the other decides on some overt mischief. The perplexing factor in dealing with twins is that they themselves often do not consciously will the trouble they bring. For example, should the twin of a married woman not feel friendly toward his sister's husband, though he might make a conscious effort to overcome this dislike, his spirit might proceed to use its full power to harass the man in such a way as to trouble the relationship of the couple.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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The cult of the dead [a] is to be differentiated from the worship of the *loa* and from the twin cult in that its African form has been modified to a far greater extent than these others by the influence of the Catholic Church. Yet, though the modes in which respect is shown the dead are principally those of the Church, the attitudes and beliefs which underlie the cult — the meticulousness with which the tranquillity of the dead is insured, the fear in which they are held, and, above all, their close association with magic as an important sanction behind this force — all these take on a distinctly African tinge. Perhaps the point of view taken toward the dead, and the manner in which the living cope with their power, can best be set forth at the outset by giving a sketch of the pattern of funerary and post-funeral rites, since these form the basis of the entire cult. 769 177

Wailing by all present begins with the approach of death. There are cries such as: "*Adieù, bon Dieu, Manman ma-o, wai, wai! Jodi-a tel-ei-tel quitté mouwi! Côté m'ap wé li enco'?* — Good-by, O good God, O my mother, *wai, wai!* Today such-and-such a one has died! Where will I see him again?" The members of the family tie white or black kerchiefs about their waists, while others present use kerchiefs of any color at hand. The doors of any *humfort* or *maison de servitude* in the habitation are closed, and thorny acacia branches are placed in front of them, so that the dead, who are believed to go about everywhere, cannot "spoil" the sacred place by entering it. 763 764 [346]

The body is laid in a shallow trench dug in the floor of the room, and there washed and prepared for the funeral by a professional *baigneur des morts* — man or woman according to the sex of the dead — and his assistants. Some member of the family watches them to see that the "three drops" of moisture believed to be in every dead person's mouth are not caught on a cloth when the body is turned over, for they are held to have great potency for the working of black magic, and a sorcerer would give a great deal for them. Cold water, 764 [154]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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764 to which orange leaves and alcohol have been added, and soap are used to bathe the corpse, though limes are substituted for [198] orange leaves if the dead was tubercular.[4] In earlier days caolin (white lime) — sacred in Africa — was mixed with the water, but this is no longer done. The corpse is turned on its face to permit the washing of side and back, and the body is dried with a towel, while the soiled water is either thrown into a small ravine or into a hole dug for the purpose.

764 The corpse is next dressed in new clothing, unless the one 775 who died owned a wardrobe which included black garments. No buttons or pins are used on new clothes, which are sewn into place, and if the body is dressed in clothing he wore while alive, the pockets are torn so that nothing can be [198] carried away in them. Shoes were at one time put into the coffin — or sandals in the country — beside the dead, rather than on his feet, so that he would not be tempted to walk, but today in Mirebalais and the surrounding country the dead are buried barefoot or in stocking feet, since, as it was explained, "otherwise they make too much noise as they go about." Black stockings are always used. In the coffin are placed a rosary, a scapulary, soap, a comb, a handkerchief, a pipe (if the dead had been a smoker), and face powder; but no strong drink is included because, were the spirit of the dead person to become drunk, this would be dangerous; and no money, for if so much as a single sou were given the dead, he would return and take the rest of the family wealth. Similarly no food is put in the coffin, for otherwise it is believed that the ghost would be so busy eating he would never find the route to the sky. Pins are carefully excluded, because if the dead were given sharp objects, he would return to prick 764 the family. If it is suspected that death had been caused by 775 sorcery, and the soul of the dead may later be taken to aid in 754 working black magic, some plants of the type called *hoholi* 824 are placed in the coffin with the body. These plants are said to contain so many seeds that since one who comes to take the

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dead must first count them, he can never accomplish this before daylight. From these precautions, it is evident that for the Haitian the reality of existence after death is no fictional one, as is even more vividly illustrated in the answer given to the question whether or not a flute, such as young boys play, would be placed in the coffin of a lad: "What! And have the dead going about all the time blowing it?"[4]

When dressed, the body is placed on a mat or mattress or in a hammock and covered with a clean cloth. A *bande de machoire*, which goes under the chin and over the head to hold the jaw in place, in earlier days, as today in remote sections of the valley, served the double purpose of making possible the identification of a ghost as such, and of keeping the moisture inside the mouth. At present, however, it is usually removed when the body is placed in the coffin. In earlier times also, as today among the peasants in the hills, the nostrils and ears were plugged with cotton. The body and head are shaved of all hair, and the finger- and toe-nails clipped; hair and clippings are later placed in the coffin and buried with the body. The eyes usually close naturally; it is a bad sign if they do not, indicating, as it does, that magic has caused death. Putrefaction, or any unusual sign connected with death such as when a cadaver swells, or a body remains warm and perspires, or, as mentioned, when the eyes remain open, is held to be an indication that the soul has been taken by a sorcerer and the person "sold"—all signalling a "bad" death and requiring that a dagger be struck into the body and burial take place immediately.

Some time later, the *prêt' savanne* comes to read prayers if the death has occurred in the countryside, or the priest of the local Catholic church if in the town or near it. After the prayers have been said and relatives and friends have addressed the dead and "given him commissions," such as "Say good-day to my mother," "Ask my father to help us, for the weather has been bad this year for the crops . . ." the body is

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764 placed in the coffin, which must always be used for burial. Even if a person is poor, "he can always borrow a plank from a neighbor, for people are charitable in matters of death," or, if a family cannot immediately afford to have carpenters make the coffin, they are paid later, a few gourdes at a time. This [967] also holds for the professional bather of corpses, who receives three to five gourdes in the countryside, fifteen gourdes in Mirebalais, and, it is said, perhaps fifty in Port-au-Prince. A pig or a goat is killed to feed those who dig the grave and carry the coffin, "so they can do their work well." Otherwise these men receive no payment, for "people do such things for each other."

The wake,* which takes place on the night of death, is one of the most important ceremonies in the cycle of rites for the [966] dead. Wakes are held for all dead, even for very young chil- [851] dren if they have been baptized, though if a baby dies before baptism, it is buried without ceremony in a little box in the courtyard of the habitation. During the wake the body lies in the second room of the house, the long white candle used at the deceased's first communion standing lighted at his feet. If the dead was not a communicant, newly bought candles are placed at his head and feet. The wife and children either stay with the corpse or are near by with friends. The one who bathed the corpse remains constantly at its side as the members of the family come and go, since the body must never remain alone. Wailing goes on all night, and as more relatives arrive, those already there echo their cries.

On a table in another room a white cloth is spread, and a crucifix, images of the saints, flowers, lighted candles, and a lamp of oil are placed on it. The singers bring their song- [533] books, since the canticles of the Church are almost the only songs heard. At times songs are specially composed for the occasion, but these always concern themselves with death. Those who stand before the table, principally women, lead the singing, the others acting as a chorus. People come and go

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People come and go 764
and, wearying of the singing, join the group outside the house, 524
where those playing games and the story-tellers are gathered. One popular game is "forfeits," and a forfeit, if reclaimed by a girl, requires the singing of a *chanson de romance*, or if by a man, calls for the recitation of a poem or a humorous folk-tale. Before a forfeit is returned, all sing to a hand-clapping [533] accompaniment: [539]

C'est bien bon,	It is very good,
C'est bien bon,	It is very good,
Aha!	Aha!

Card-games, such as *mariai* (marriage), *trois-sept*, and *bezique*, are also played. All these games are entered into with zest, for an important purpose in holding the wake is to amuse the dead, whose body lies near by, and thus send him away in good humor. When drinks are passed, the recipients must 764 make three libations before drinking, one explanation hold- [782] ing that this is in accordance with the formula Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, another that the offering is for the *loa*, the dead, and the *marassa*. At about five o'clock in the morning the angelus closes the wake, after which most of those present leave, and only close friends and relatives remain to help with preparations for the funeral. This must take place the day following death, not only because of a legal requirement, but because of the fact that were a body to remain unburied for two nights, the expense of two wakes would have to be met. Before the ceremony of burial takes place, small children are [775] often passed over the coffin three times, in leave-taking, that [788] the spirit of the dead may not return for them.

The funeral itself is held in accordance with the rites of the Church, the difference between funerals consisting principally in the elaborateness of the ritual and the length of time the church bells are tolled, which in turn is determined by the ability of the family of the dead to meet the varying fees. Thus at the funeral of the mother of the *député* from Mire-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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764 balais the setting was most elaborate, in striking contrast to the bareness of the rites for a young man who was a *'ti moun* in a town family and came from poor peasant folk in the hills. Whatever the type of funeral, the coffin, carried by four men, leaves the house of death preceded by the priest and his acolytes. After mass has been sung, the priest and mourners walk in procession to the graveyard, where the body is placed in a tomb if one has been prepared for it, or interred underground, awaiting the building of a tomb. Before his death, should a person in a quarrel decree that certain others must never touch his coffin, and should these for the sake of public opinion attempt to carry it, it is believed that the coffin will fall to the ground. Such occurrences are extremely rare and cause a great deal of gossip. Following the funeral, friends sometimes remain with the mourners for several days, caring for the house and doing the cooking; otherwise the women of the household are obliged to take up their work at once. The trench which held the body during the washing is filled in as soon as the corpse is taken from the house, and a smudge of orange leaves is made "to take away the odor of death." Objects employed in the last illness, such as the mat on which the body lay and the towel used to dry the corpse, are taken to a large river and washed, after which they may be used by the heirs, provided death did not result from a contagious disease. Work in the fields is also resumed a few days after the funeral, for custom does not dictate when the mourners may again take up their tasks.

765 Next in the cycle of the rituals of death is the *dernière prière*, which ends a novena.[7] It was stated that the novena must begin on the Saturday after burial, so that it might end on a Sunday night, but one such ceremony actually occurred on a Friday night, which would be in accordance with the assertion that the *dernière prière* may take place on Monday, Friday, or Saturday nights. Others, however, maintained that this is only town custom, and that in the countryside this rite

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always takes place on a Sunday. The prayers of the novena, whatever week-day they may begin, are recited either by the priest, if in town, or by a *prêt' savanne*. The family and a few friends, who gather to hear the prayers and to sing hymns, take their places about a table covered with a white cloth, on which are placed *images* of the saints, a crucifix, two candles which must burn for the nine days, and two bouquets of flowers. A lamp of oil in a glass with a floating wick must also burn day and night. Each session of the novena lasts some two hours, and no refreshments are served those who attend.

On the day of the *dernière prière* those invited come to help cover the walls of the room with white sheets — sometimes the ceiling is also covered — and hang white curtains over doors and windows. Wreaths are placed on the table and attached to the sheets on the walls, and *images* of the saints are pinned to the white table-cloth as it hangs down. Liquor, cakes, *kola*, *clairin* and other refreshments are made ready, according to the family means, these being held so essential that if the family lacks the funds at the moment to provide them, the novena may be stopped on the eighth day, and the *dernière prière* postponed for a month or even two. The same type of song is sung at this rite as at wakes, and the mourners wail once again, though not so loudly as just after the occurrence of death. At about eleven o'clock, after having recited the last prayer of the novena, a *libera* is sung to "drive the dead from the house," since now they are through with him — followed by an *adoration* for the *prêt' savanne*. Since, unlike the custom at *vodun* ceremonies, these coins are his entire fee for the novena as well as for this evening's ceremony, he sees to it that the song which marks it continues until all members of the family have donated a sum that he regards adequate. The *adoration* over, the refreshments are passed, so that the *dernière prière* most often ends at midnight, though those in attendance sometimes remain until morning, playing games, telling stories, and singing canticles as at wakes.

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769 On the following night the *mangé mort* is held, when sacrifices are given the recent and earlier dead of the family. The day is used for preparing the food, after which a table is set as for a dinner, with plates, knives, forks, salt and pepper; and sometimes chairs are placed, though this is not necessary, since it is felt that the dead prefer to eat standing. Chicken, rice, and many other types of dishes are provided, so that the tastes of all the dead may be satisfied. A stew of maize, red beans, salt beef, and pigs' feet cooked with peppers and spices are included for the *morts Guinée*. Under the table are two wooden food-containers, one for the children of the family, the other for the dogs of the household.

Shortly after darkness has fallen, the room containing the table is locked, to remain closed for some two hours, while the family, a few friends, and the *prêt' savanne* pray and sing canticles as they wait for the dead to do their feasting. Before the prayers an announcement is made for whom the food is being given; the known dead of the family are called by name, while "those drowned, those shot," and "those who come from the four corners of the earth" are also summoned. When it is judged that the dead have finished their meal, the *prêt' savanne* or an elder of the family knocks three times on the closed door before he enters and takes up a cup of sacred water and a sprig of orange leaves, with which he blesses the table by sprinkling it. He then carries one of the wooden containers to the gateway and, turning to the children, asks them three times: "*Nous content?*—Are you satisfied?" to which the answer: "*Oui!*" is given. The priest makes a motion as though to place the container on the ground, but instead raises it again, repeating this maneuver for each of the four corners of the earth before he finally puts it down, whereupon all the children rush forward, each striving to obtain as much food as he can. When the children have finished eating, they wipe [576] their hands on the hair of the mistress of the house, saying: "*Grâce mise'corde.*" The family then take the other con-

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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tainer to a crossroad, where it is deposited as an offering for Legba, and its contents are eaten by the dogs, who significantly, in Dahomey are the animals sacred to this deity. Following this, the adults enter the closed room, to feast at the laden table.

Several days after the funeral two gourdes are paid a priest — "a real one," not a *petit savanne* — to chant a *libera* at the grave, a rite that must be repeated each year on All Saints' Day. Each year, also, food is given the dead, though "not so much as following a funeral." Chickens, beans, rice, and coffee are the principal part of such an offering, for which no priest need be called, as the ceremony is merely to let the dead know that they are not forgotten. Every three or five years, however, a large *mangé* must be given for all the family dead, and if held on the family habitation, there is social dancing, where such favorites of the ancestors as the *martinique*, the *banda*, the *calebase*, and the *zesse* are danced.[8]

Differences in procedure mark various modes of death. When a person is killed by lightning, a justice of the peace must be called and the burial is performed at once. Such a one has no "last prayer," because, death by lightning being a punishment of God, it is felt that the dead probably made an oath which he subsequently violated. Those killed by lightning or who die of smallpox are not mourned, but no explanation could be obtained for this obvious survival of African custom. If a leper has concealed his disease, mourning is worn for him, though if the cause of death is generally known this is forgone. There is customarily no mourning for suicides, and never where the regulations of the Church are rigorously applied.

If the dead person was a *vodun* priest or otherwise had strong *connaissance*, steps are taken before his death to "remove the *loa* from his head" so that his soul will not go under the water, for, as has been explained, such souls are held to be powerful spirits which may cause their family much harm

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764 if, after a time, an expensive and troublesome ceremony is
766 not performed to bring them out and lodge them in a jar.
775 The *hungan* who performs the rite of removing these *loa* is
764 preferably himself a member of the family and is usually left
766 alone with one or two assistants and an elderly relative of the
776 dead, but if the family includes no *hungan*, the one who is
773 called, even though greatly trusted, is most carefully watched, because a strange priest might take for himself the valued gods of the dead, leaving only the weak ones. The *hungan* stands in place and calls the name of the dead. He puts some of the hair of the dead in the jar or in a calabash, with which the *loa* is supposed to go, and, unless another member of the family, nominated to receive the *connaissance* of the dead, is present, the jar or calabash is sealed until these spirits can be "given" to a successor.

766 No special purification is needed for a house where death
[764] has occurred except when the deceased was tubercular or a
[785] leper, when everything except his money is buried or thrown in some unfrequented place. The body of one who has died of smallpox, though washed, is buried as soon after death as possible without being enclosed in a coffin. Those who die of smallpox or leprosy, suicides, or persons shot as a punishment for crime are not buried in the communal cemetery, but in special sections of the graveyard, the lepers and victims of smallpox being separated from the others, for the Church declares these have died of the plague. One who drowns is buried at the riverside where his body is recovered, though if the corpse is not too badly decomposed, the authorities give permission, and the family of the dead can afford the expense of transportation, the body may be brought home. Children are
[561] buried in the cemetery, but, on the principle that "the young
[771] must serve their elders," the funeral of a child is attended only by those relations who are younger than the dead; for in Haiti, as in Africa, it is not held seemly that the young should be followed to the grave by their elders. At the house, however,

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older relatives participate in the rites as at any death; moreover, the rule *gran' moun pas sui' 'ti moun* holds only where a father, mother, grandparent, or older sister or brother is concerned.*

Unless the dead was known to be a sorcerer his house is not abandoned. If, unlike most of his kind, a reputed sorcerer is survived by children, they continue to live in his house, and though no gesture of marked social disapprobation is made, few persons attend the funeral and fewer still put foot inside the house afterwards, which means there is little of the habitual calling on the survivors. An abandoned house of this type is called *caille yun moun lou' garou* — the house of a werewolf. If a stranger were to buy such a house, he would first have to "restrain" the evil spirits who continued there. Generally, however, a man will not buy land unless a diviner ascertains that no evil beings have ever been associated with it.

Such, in outline, are the principal rites for the dead and the outer manifestations of the sanctions which validate the cult for its followers. Fundamentally, these derive from the power which the dead wield in the world of the living — power that is held to come directly from God, who has not only given the dead all the rights of the living, but also the right to return to earth as ghosts. There are several types of dead, two of these being the *vien-viens* and the *zombi*. The *vien-viens* are ordinary ghosts; the latter, who will be discussed in the next chapter, are those whose souls have been "sold" by sorcerers and are therefore doomed to wander the earth until their destined time arrives to return to God. Still another type of dead are the ghosts of children who die before baptism, called *lutins*, who ride young horses, so that when a wild colt with a tangled mane is seen, it is said that a *lutin* has been on his back. The souls of the dead are held first to go to God in the sky, where they are condemned to purgatory or hell or permitted to remain in paradise; "It is God who creates, therefore when someone dies, he returns to Him." And as for the effect of pur-

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775 gatory on those who are possessed by *loa* who go unharmed in fire, it is said: " It is the *loa* that go into the fire. The soul is another thing."

All agree that the dead do not possess folk in the manner of the *loa*, as might be expected from the fact that the most important rituals in the cult of the dead are not only dominated by the Church, but carried out by its priest. In the matter of consulting the dead when questions of importance for the family are involved, however, there is no consensus of opinion. The most widespread point of view holds that only those dead whose *loa* have not been removed from their heads can be summoned, and that this is done only to permit them to " go to God," so their souls may be at rest. Otherwise, " when the dead are called, it is a matter of magic, for the dead are never good and one always must fear them." And though a Malt' 'Bitation that is an old, old ancestor may " mount the head " of a member of the family, he would never be specially called and in most cases, if he did come, would be " restrained." On the other hand, it was recounted how during the Caco rebellion the soul of Dessalines was brought into a jar and asked for his counsel. It is said, however, that he was so angered at the consistent defeats sustained by the Haitians that he struck everyone to earth and roundly scolded them for having lost the liberty with which he endowed them, departing without giving the desired advice. And since the spirits of Christophe and Toussaint are believed to be even stronger, no one had sufficient courage to summon them!

765 The immediate nature of the relation between the dead and the living is best seen in the conventions and attitudes surrounding the wearing of mourning, which is required of all children of the deceased, whether " legitimate " or otherwise. Black is worn twelve months for a father, eighteen months for a mother; and half-mourning — black and white — is worn for a sister, brother, cousin, uncle, or aunt. In the country, before full mourning is put on, the black cloth is

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taken to the *pret' savanne* to be blessed with holy water; in the town the Catholic priest is said to do this. In full mourning, black is worn on Sundays, Mondays, and Fridays, the days sacred to the dead, but since full mourning means that one must be dressed in one's best and it is impossible to wear these clothes all day long even in the first weeks after death, the rule is to remain at home, fully dressed, on Sundays, Mondays, and Fridays, wearing the full mourning outside the house only to Sunday mass. 765

When full mourning for a parent cannot be worn immediately following death, the fulfillment of the obligation is postponed. If this duty is not ultimately met, however, the dead take vengeance, so that a child of the one who was remiss perhaps falls ill, or some other misfortune comes to him. If the negligent one is no longer living, then the penalty for his neglect will be assessed on his children, who, on consulting a diviner, will be told that they must wear mourning not only for their own parents, but for their grandparents as well. Such is the case of a dying woman whose story is recounted, for a diviner ascertained that though she had worn mourning for her own father, he had not worn it for his parent; as soon as she put on full mourning for her grandfather, she is said to have immediately recovered. 765 775 784 [787] [755]

A widower wears mourning for a legally married wife for a year, and a widow for her husband during a similar period, and it is believed that if a man were to remarry before the year has elapsed, his second wife would die, so that a woman will not go sooner to a widower, while it is equally dangerous for a widow to take a husband before the first anniversary of the death of her spouse. Should a *placée* wife die, however, another may be taken in her stead before the year has passed, for it is only in matters where the Church is concerned that the dead take vengeance. Furthermore, a man who has more than one mate may go to his other wives at any time after the death of a spouse, and though he would, of course, not go to them 765 587 [583] [595]

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765
[595]
[583]

soon after the death of one for whom he had deep affection, the matter is entirely one which concerns his own feelings. If a woman who cannot afford proper mourning clothes remarries in the Church before she has discharged the obligation to wear mourning for her dead husband, gossip will be heard, but, on the other hand, a woman who has been legally married, and who therefore may not remarry for a year after her husband's death, may be taken as *placée* by another before that period has elapsed. In this case, however, she must wear full mourning and otherwise observe all the necessary rites before the other man with safety may seek the approval of the Church for the union.

76

Though children who have lived until about twelve years of age and have been baptized are given a *dernière prière* and must not be forgotten when sacrifices are made to the family dead, there is but little mourning for them. "*'Ti moun pas gagné deuilles* — Children do not merit the wearing of mourning," it is said, and they are called "*'ti z'anges* — little angels" — for they are too young to have sinned. "It is only when one makes love that the important sins begin." Therefore, if a young person dies, not only do his parents, grandparents, and older brothers and sisters not follow his coffin to the grave, but they do not mourn for him. Only those younger brothers and sisters who were of his age — twelve or thirteen years old — wear semi-mourning.

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CHAPTER XII

MAGIC, GOOD AND BAD

In opening any discussion of Haitian magic, the fact must be stressed that magic, though but one of the forces active in the universe, is a system in itself. As such, it is a thing apart from the *vodun* cult, a point which must also be emphasized, for although most writers draw a perfunctory distinction between magic and *vodun*, this distinction, once stated, is too often promptly lost sight of.[1] At the same time, the differences between the worship of the *loa* and the practice of magic must not be so juxtaposed as to name the second as the antibody of the first. For, though some of the *loa* can work harm, and some of them, indeed, are primary forces behind the working of evil rather than beneficial magic, the good and bad they do is general in nature. Magic, on the other hand, whether good or bad, always operates in very specific instances: to cause a given woman to love a given man, or to make a certain field of a certain enemy yield poorly.

Yet these distinctions, when drawn, are found in practice to be neither as sharp nor as consistent as the foregoing statements might imply, especially since the system of magic is empowered and validated by many of the *loa*, as well as being closely affiliated with the cult of the dead. The phenomenon dealt with here, and its not illogical contradictions, arise, however, from the fact that the realistic African world view has by

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771 no means given way to that separation of the categories of
776 good and evil that governs much of European thinking. A *loa*
789 that helps a man when friendly toward him may, if slighted or vexed, set about to do him harm, or, at best, merely remain passive when danger is to be averted. For the *loa*, like human beings, are creatures of mood and may take umbrage at some act which had created no displeasure before. Similarly, not all uses of magic are necessarily reprehensible, something at once evident when it is pointed out that much of Haitian folk-medicine derives its psychic force from its magical basis. In short, Haitian belief, of which magic forms a part, does not allow a world view drawn only in blacks and whites. All tones of gray are found, and these merge one into another almost imperceptibly, as the fortunes of a man wax and wane during his lifetime.

771 That the Haitian envisages his universe in terms other than
789 those of warring and changeless powers of good and evil should not be taken for a moment to mean that he fails to draw a clear distinction between the benevolent and malevolent forces behind the magic employed in specific instances. This realization is reflected in the terminology he gives the charms that are the outer symbols of these supernatural powers, the *garde*, *arrêt*, and *drogue* protecting him against harm, the *wanga* being the carrier of dark magic, and the antisocial agent. The actuating forces behind these charms come from
[776] all important members of all groups of *loa*, to say nothing of God and the saints of the Church; but the charm itself is a thing which results from the control of these by man himself: "*Wanga, moun qui fait ça* — It is men who make *wangas*."

789 One other point may here be clarified, since it has made for confusion: namely, the fact that when the Haitian employs the term *magie* he does not mean what the European signifies when using the word "magic." To the student, the vast body of Haitian magico-medical practices, prescribed and administered by both those who know how to manipulate the super-

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natural and those whose remedies are based principally on an 789
inherited knowledge of the curative powers of herbs and roots, are all to be gathered under the rubric of magic. For the native, however, a difference of the first order exists between a *traitement* to heal an illness, and magic employed to gain an end, protect from harm, or injure another, even though the same gods be called upon to validate the healing remedies employed to effect cures as are used to actuate a *garde* or a *wanga*.

The belief in magic figures importantly even in the early 175
writings on Haiti. Thus St. Mery says: 789

> "The Negroes believe in magic and that the power of their fetiches has followed them across the sea. . . . Little rude figures of wood or stone, representing men or animals, are for them things of supernatural power, and they call them *garde-corps*. There are a great number of Negroes who acquire absolute power over the others by this means. . . ."[2]

It is reported that in the early days the black and mulatto concubines of white Haitians often had recourse to reputedly potent charms to insure their attraction for these men and to guard themselves against their white mistresses. One Hyacinthe, a leader in the uprising of 1792, "believed that an ox-tail which he always carried in his hand had the power of preserving him from bullets; he was regarded as invulnerable."[3] And numerous citations could be given to show not only that since that day has the use of charms persisted, but that comment on this use has come to be outstanding in all descriptions of Haitian life.

To understand the various types of practitioners of magic, 789
it is necessary to refer again to the concept that any force habitually actuating evil magic may be directed toward less malevolent ends, while any benevolent supernatural power may exert itself to bring harm. Hence those who make *arrêts* to ward off evil from their clients, or *gardes* to protect them

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789 from its ill effects after the evil has been exorcised, must also know the forces they are combating if they are to achieve any
789 measure of success. By the same token, practitioners of black
791 magic must know what steps may be taken to counteract their
793 *wangas* so that, if necessary, they can in turn call forth super-
754 natural emissaries to strengthen the evil impulses originally
756 set in motion. In this sense, therefore, the *hungan,* the *gangan,* the *bocor,* and the *caplata* employ essentially the same techniques and operate with the same forces, the difference between them being one of degree rather than of kind. "*Hungan, c'est magazin. Gaigné un pile marchandise* — The *hun-*
[538] *gan* is like a shop. He has a lot of merchandise" says the Haitian, quoting a well-known proverb as he makes the point.

In the main, it can be said that though the *hungan* and the *gangan* practice magic, their main preoccupation is with the *loa* — the maladies they send to affect a man and his possessions — while the *bocor* is concerned almost exclusively with setting in motion the agents that actuate black magic, and the
789 *caplata* dabbles in anything that is wanted. One important
776 means whereby the sorcerer obtains his powers is the evil *loa,*
791 but there is this essential difference between them: the gods
793 of the *hungan* are family gods who come to him through the
754 natural course of inheritance, endowing him with the *connais-*
424 *sance* that gives him his control over the supernatural world,
425 while the *bocor* buys his gods. And when a god is bought, it is always acquired so as to enhance the position of its owner at all costs, despite the knowledge that the power thus purchased is dearly bought, bringing its own eventual punishment. Sometimes an ambitious *hungan* adds to his familial *loa* other "purchased" gods, but this is resented by the deities who have given him his powers, so that in time these benevolent powers take all means to humble and crush him. Furthermore, gods acquired in this way pass on to unwilling members of their owner's family and, after a generation or two of mischief-
000 making, must be "restrained" or "banished." A number of

points — or oblique designations — makes clear the distinction between the two, for the *bocor* invariably and certain *hungans* on occasion are called *nèg' mazi maza,* "Negro who wears his back to the front," or, again, those who "serve with both hands." Though by no means shunning the services of the practitioner, the Haitians of Mirebalais nevertheless look upon the working of magic with a cynicism that is reflected in the gossip about happenings that befall all who practice it, in any form, and particularly those who work evil magic. It is said: "The *hungan* often dies an evil death, and the *bocor* who makes *wanga* almost always. These people kill each other by magic"; or one hears of a woman who one day went to the cemetery to obtain materials needed for her unsavory work and was struck and killed by the thunderbolts which are believed to smite sorcerers.

To keep his reputation, a practitioner of magic, good or evil, must make continual demonstration of his powers. For example, in prescribing a magical cure, it is incumbent upon the *hungan* or *mambu* to foresee all eventualities, even where the directions are not followed, a prescription which is regarded as a strong check on the charlatan and is the reason why a practitioner is prudent in refusing to accept a case beyond his power to aid, since persistent failure to achieve cures will lose a *hungan* his reputation and his practice. Naturally, certain practitioners do not fail on occasion to turn the anxiety of a family over a serious illness to their own account, but inasmuch as the cures made by a man are the most adequate proof of his power, the feeling is that his clients have an unquestioned safeguard against chicanery. This point of view, it may be noted, is of undoubted importance in perpetuating a living faith in magic.

An example of how rapidly a practitioner of magic can lose prestige when some mishap occurs to him was encountered when an important *gangan* of the valley was brought into court charged with the theft of a pig which he claimed was

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558 793 685 given him by a third party for whom he had done what was euphemistically called "a piece of work." The evidence clearly showed that the animal, which he had killed to feed a *combite*, had been stolen, and since this *gangan* could not establish his defense that he was an innocent receiver of stolen goods, he was convicted and sentenced to three months in prison, and to pay the owner of the pig the exorbitant sum — sixty-five gourdes — asked as damages. Sympathy was very generally with the *gangan*, but the opinion most often heard expressed was that his power had obviously been lessened by his misuse of the *connaissance* the gods had given him, or they would not have permitted even his arrest, much less his conviction. To reinforce the point, specific reference was repeatedly made to the *hungan* most popular in the valley at the time, about whom it was said that, for example, were he accused before a court, the officers might even enter his house in search of him while he was present, but they would still be unable to see that he was before them.

793 435 554 Other attitudes held toward workers of magic developed in connection with this case. The popular *hungan* was often called on, it was said, because his work was well done and his fees were not too high; it was pointed out that there were renowned *vodun* priests who charged five hundred gourdes for a *service* which this man directed effectively for but little over one hundred; moreover, such men often failed to remove the evil deities which were troubling the family that employed them, but would instead add more, so that their clients would 793 435 706 984 soon have need of them again. Practices such as these, especially that of overcharging, are frowned upon by the *loa*, and if persisted in they "spoil" the power of the priest. This was one of the reasons why, in the opinion of many individuals, the *gangan* in question had been convicted. "He was once a remarkable *gangan*, but he has spoiled his *loa* by using them for evil, and by asking too much money for what he was employed

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to do. The *loa* would come, but they wouldn't give him the same *connaissance.*"

One of the most important of the forces behind all magic is the *Malt' Carrefour,* the Master of the Crossroads. The possible identity of this *loa* with Legba, who guards the entrance to houses and is also thought of as a guardian of the highways, was a question that could not be satisfactorily resolved, though it seems most likely that the two are quite distinct, since Legba is but rarely called upon when magic is being performed. One Haitian versed in magic stated:

> "The *Malt' Carrefour* is like the president. Legba is like a minister. God sent the *Malt' Carrefour.* He commands Baron Samedi. Before going to the cemetery to perform [black] magic you must pass the crossroads, and therefore he is able to restrain you if he is not properly worshipped. He commands Damballa. He commands the Rada and Pétro gods. He commands all the saints because all of these must pass the crossroads. Therefore when one has a *garde carrefour,* a person will die a death sent by God [that is, a natural death] and not one caused by *magie* or the *mystères.*"

The *Malt' Carrefour* must be "paid" each year on All Saints' Day, when seven cents in copper coins are given and a white chicken is killed, cooked, and placed in a wooden container with rice, biscuits, cassava, potatoes, bananas, and other kinds of food, both cooked and uncooked, to be deposited at a crossroad with the statement: "Here is food; thank you for having cared for me. If evil *loa* wish to harm me, *Malt' Carrefour,* restrain them." As this is said, a candle is lighted and an invocation pronounced:

> *"Au nom de Malt' Carrefou'; au nom de Malt' Grand Bois; au nom de Baron Cimitière! Jodia, premier la*

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[539]

Toussaint, voici un couvert moin porté ba ou. Ou gardé vot' enfant, comme vot' père et vot' mère dans la maison. — In the name of the Master of the Crossroads; in the name of the Master of the Great Forest; in the name of Baron Cemetery! Today, the first of All Saints' Day, here are offerings I bring you. Guard your child as your father and your mother in the house."

[788] *Clairin* is thrown three times at each fork of the crossroads, and some is also sprinkled in the center and at each corner of the container of food. Three bits of earth are finally lifted from the corners of the crossroads and taken to the home of the worshipper. Here they are put in a plate with *clairin*, which is first lighted and then extinguished, so that the members of the family can anoint themselves with it and receive strength with which to face the new year.

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Good magic has many expressions. Thus there is said to be secret knowledge, transmitted in certain families from generation to generation, of how to control the rains. Those who have control of magic of this sort are to be recognized when they are seen to be completely dry while walking in a downpour. Generally such powers are used to insure a rainless day for a *combite* or *service*, or to cause rain to fall the day after a *combite* has made the field ready for hoeing, or when the proper time for planting is at hand. Eventually, it is said, in response to a temptation too great to be resisted, the possessor [784] of such magic will put it to other, evil ends. Then sooner or later the punishment for this abuse of his knowledge is visited upon him, so that in the end he meets his death by being struck by the avenging lightning.

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The most powerful type of protective magic is known as a *drogue*. One of the most potent of these — of the type referred to by Léger in commenting on the ox-tail carried by Hyacinthe, or such a one as tradition holds Christophe possessed, which gave him immunity from all but silver bullets — makes

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it possible for the owner to go to war without being harmed. 789
Even were the possessor of such a *drogue* to be struck by a bullet, the wound would be a minor one; while the thrust of a machete or saber would leave him unscathed, poison placed in drink or food would be impotent, and a trap set against the warrior would be ineffective. Some *drogues,* it is held, allow the owner to disappear when trapped by enemies. For such an [784] important *drogue* a special day, designated by its maker, is [834] set aside for the observance of certain taboos, the most important being the requirement of sexual abstinence on that day.[4] Some men possess as many as seven of these *drogues,* in which case one day every seventh week is reserved for each. Said a man who had taken part in the rebellion of 1918–20 against the Marine occupation: "I have a small, small *drogue.* I had it in the Caco fighting. I have need of a big one." When it was observed that there is no more fighting in Haiti, the reply came promptly: "A man must be prepared. Nobody knows what will come."

The grandfather of this man was said by him to have owned 789
a *drogue* which came from Guinée. He knew how to resuscitate 754
those who had met their death from unnatural — magical — causes; he had only to come to the *barrière* before the house where the body lay, call the name of the victim, and the dead would arise. He was once attacked when he was returning home with a purse filled with money he had won at cards, and his assailants beat him to death and threw him into a well. The next morning, when he was found, he revived in a few moments and asked to be buried beside the well. The following day one of the men who had assaulted him died; the next day another died, and so for five days, until all of them were dead.

Love-charms form an important category of good magic, as 832
also charms to aid in selling in the markets or in keeping a job or to hold the affection of a spouse. Old men are believed 789
to have important magical powers for good, and one such 888

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789 [888] person of great experience was pointed out who was believed able to stop a runaway horse without putting a finger on him. One widely spread type of charm is an *arrêt* against the *mal jok*, or evil eye. Mention has been made of protective charms when the measures taken to guard growing crops were discussed, and also in connection with safeguarding the well-being of infants. The power in this latter type of *garde* often is made to reside in a seed on a string or chain, or a cross of beads sewed on cloth, to represent the four corners of the earth.

789 793 Because charms are the outer symbols of magic, detailed examples of their making will give insight into the nature of charms in general. The first of these which may be described [829] was a *garde*, made by a *mambu*, to relieve a pregnant woman [787] whose milk had begun to flow before the birth of her child [954] — a sign that an evil spirit had been sent her by an enemy, and that her delivery would therefore be fraught with danger. [787] During the séance the *mambu* was continuously possessed by her god, Ogun, whose identity was shown by her whistling. Before the *mambu* as she commenced her incantation were some *clairin*, lighted red candles, a new piece of soap, incense, sulphur, garlic, light brown shoemaker's thread, an empty bottle, a bottle filled with a green, evil-smelling lotion called *baigne de mambu*, a chick, and three iron nails. As she tied the cord in knots she muttered her spell; then, taking the empty bottle, she put in it a bit of the incense, sulphur, garlic, some soap, some *clairin*, and some *baigne de mambu*. With the knotted cord she tied a cross made of two nails to the neck of the bottle, repeating her formula before she put it down. Instructing the pregnant woman to take the bottle, she said: "Speak into it and say everything you wish."

[825] She then took the chick, opened its beak, and wrote on it with a pencil, continuing the incantation the while. With the pencil she also made marks on the thighs, the wings, the upper joints, and the leg joints before she handed it to her client

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with the words: "Tell it what you have to say. Tell it that you are passing on to it all your pain, everything." When she had finished, the *mambu* once again took the chick, holding its head as she described three crosses on the ground with its beak. She now put some of the earth in which she had made the crosses into a white dish, returning the chick to the woman and telling her to speak to it again, and this time to expectorate three times into its open beak as she finished. The *mambu*, holding the fowl in one hand, thereupon poured some of the mixture from the bottle, and some *clairin*, in the plate that contained the earth, lighting the *clairin* with her free hand and directing the patient to rub her nipples with it. Then she returned the bottle to the pregnant woman, telling her to recount her need to it once more, and then to cork it.

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The *mambu* next chewed some of the soap and rubbed it over the cork to "seal" the bottle, saying: "When you send a letter through the mail, you seal it," and instructed the pregnant woman to place the bottle in her house and see to it that it was not uncorked, for in it was contained her life and the life of her child. "Open it before delivery and pass its contents over your abdomen." A cord was put about the waist of the woman and tied tightly, not to be untied until the growing child in her womb should cause it to break of itself. While the *garde* was being made the *mambu* sang this song:

[533] [539]

M' pas 'ti bête,	I am not a little animal,
M' pas 'ti cochon,	I am not a little pig,
Pou' on cové,	That one can confine me,
Pou' on marré moin.	That one can tie me up.
Ça qui fait bien,	He who does good,
Cé bien li wé;	Good he will see;
Ça qui fait mal,	He who does evil,
Cé mal li wé.	Evil he will see.
Côté marré corde moin,	Where I tie my cord,
Yo passa la qui li.	They are stronger than it [the evil?].

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789 The chick was released in the open countryside. Were a per-
825 son to capture and eat it, the evil that had been transferred to the fowl would come to him. Many such fowl live wild in the woods, and no one touches them.

789 There was no hesitation in permitting spectators to witness the making of this charm; rather it was held to be good business to allow anything pertaining to a cure to become widely known. Had the transaction involved evil magic, great secrecy would have been exacted of the principals, and no others would have been present. The operation of sympathetic magic in this case — the fact that the ingredients were either cleansing or evil-smelling, for example, indicates the concept behind the charm. Similarly, the assertion that the
825 chick which figured so prominently in the rite would carry away the *wanga* sent against the pregnant woman shows how the forces of "white" magic are manipulated to combat "black."

Another *garde* had for its purpose the protection of its owner against evil, and, being a *garde Mait' Carrefour,* was especially designed to enable him to go about unharmed at night. Though carefully made, it was not actuated by its power at the end of the séance, nor were extraordinary demands made of it and reciprocal promises of rewards for gratifying them, since it was then explained that it was desired as an example rather than an actively potent charm which, because of the difficulties of properly serving it away from Haiti, might cause its possessor harm. To make this charm the following ingredients were furnished:

One half-ell of red cotton	Roasted maize
A bottle of *kola*	Seven "red" copper sous
Clairin	A candle
Cakes	A spool of black thread
Cassava bread	Some ashes

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In addition, the maker of the charm brought a candle with him, and, more importantly, earth from the four corners of a crossroad. 789

All shutters and doors of the house where the ritual was performed were closed and barred so that no passer-by might report the performance to the authorities, inasmuch as the practice of magic in any form is severely punished and the house was in the town itself. This constituted a departure from the usual practice, for in ordinary cases the rite would have been carried out at a crossroad in the countryside, where chances of detection would be slight.

The maker of the charm began by kneading the earth he had taken from a crossroad into the form of a small pear, about the size of a child's fist. Then taking seven plus seven measures of thread, he first burned the ends and then passed the resulting bundle of fourteen strands repeatedly over one of the native beeswax candles, twisting and doubling it so that it made a length of substantial cord. When completed, he put it to one side and made another like it, saying as he did so: [539]

Au nom de St. Garde,	In the name of St. Garde,
Aujourd'hui, Lundi, nous cordé votre garde.	Today, Monday, we twine your *garde.*
Au nom de Malt' Carrefu',	In the name of the Master of the Crossroads,
Au nom de prière garde,	In the name of the prayer of charms,
Au nom Marie Shango,	In the name of Marie Shango,
Au nom de Gran' Malolu,	In the name of Gran' Malolu,
Qui marche accompagné Malt' Calfu'.	Who goes together with the Master of the Crossroads.

The purpose of this invocation was to summon both the Master of the Crossroads and his wife, Malolu, and the name of [176]

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the *loa* was pronounced as the cord was actually finished. *Clairin* was then poured in three places on the threshold and drunk by all present.

Seated on a mat, the dealer in magic next placed the molded earth near by and put a dish of cassava bread, cake, and corn and a bottle of *kola* beside it, with the seven coppers and the red cotton, while he placed a candle on an empty white plate and lighted it. From his pocket he took a thick white candle of his own, and a razor, with which he cut it into three pieces. He then removed his shoes. After two pieces of the candle had been placed upright against the plate, the red cloth was torn in half and one portion of it, folded once, was laid on the white plate, the molded earth being set down in the center of this piece of cloth with the thread near by, as the officiant intoned:

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Au nom Dieu de Tè'	In the name of the God of the Earth,
Au nom Dieu dit Fils,	In the name of God called the Son,
Au nom Dieu du Cièl,	In the name of God of the Sky,
Au nom de Ste. Vierge,	In the name of the Holy Virgin,
Au nom de St. Louis,	In the name of St. Louis.*
Au nom de Vierge de Ca'mel,	In the name of the Virgin of Carmel,
Voici poin' garde	Here is a *point garde*
Qui pr' allé marré ce soir, Lundi.	Which I am tying this evening, Monday.

He thereupon poured *clairin* on the four corners of the cloth and on the earth, "since the soul of Maît' Carrefour is in the earth."

Taking up the red cloth with the earth in it, he tied it with

[776]

* The patron saint of Mirebalais.

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the cord once over the center, and then at right angles so as to form a cross, crying: "*A-i bobo!*" To hold the cloth in place, he continued to pass the thread about the ball of earth again and again, though according to no special design after the first right angle had been made. As he did this, he sang:

Garde la monté.	This *garde* is fashioned.
Dié nou e-e na coffré yo-o	O God, close them-o.
Moin dit garde la monté.	I say this *garde* is fashioned.
Dié nou e-e na coffré yo-o	O God, close them.
Garde-e, na coffré yo.	*Garde-e,* close them.
Calefou', cé nou minmé,	Crossroads, it is we who are here,
Nou Pemba pa joué.	Pemba, do not play.
Ça nou minmé.	It is we who are here.
Loa Pemba, joué na joué,	*Loa Pemba,* playing he plays,
Magie loa,	*Loa* of magic,
Magie Calfou',	Magic of the Crossroads,
Ça nou minmé.	It is we who are here.

His singing was interrupted by this invocation:

Au nom de Dieu,	In the name of God,
Au nom de Sainte Vierge,	In the name of the Holy Virgin,
Au nom de St. Louis,	In the name of St. Louis,
Au nom de Marassa,	In the name of the Twins,
Voici poin' garde pou' épargné malin esprits marché dans la nuit.	Here is a charm to foil the evil spirits who walk by night.
Au nom de Saints du Ciél,	In the name of the Saints of the Sky,
Au nom de Saints de Té',	In the name of the Saints of the Earth,

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Au nom de Saints de la Lune,	In the name of the Saints of the Moon,
Au nom de Saints des Étoiles,	In the name of the Saints of the Stars,
Au nom de Saint de Vent,	In the name of the Saint of the Wind,
Au nom de Saint de Tempête,	In the name of the Saint of the Tempest,
Voici yun garde protection pou' marché dans la nuit,	See, here is a *garde* which gives protection as one walks at night,
Pou' Malt' Calefu'.	For the Master of the Crossroads.

(533) The entwining of the *garde* ended with this song:

Zoumba-é, ai papa, ai manman,	*Zumba-é, ai* father, *ai* mother,
Calefu' barré yo,	The Crossroads bars them,
Cimitière barré yo,	The Cemetery bars them,
Moin monté garde moin,	I fashion my *garde,*
Ai manman, ai papa,	*Ai* mother, *ai* father,
Zoumba-é-é.	*Zumba-é-é.*

789 With the specially treated earth from the crossroads now safely enclosed in its red cotton, the officiant placed it in a white plate and made *verver* about it, using cinders which are termed *farine Guinée,* "the flour of Guinea," and lighted two bits of red candle. The *verver* circled the plate, and also described two long straight lines which crossed at right angles at the center of the circle, each being terminated by a candle — two large and two small. On the floor, near one of the large candles, the seven coppers were placed, and four small piles of cinders were heaped inside the circle, in the following manner:

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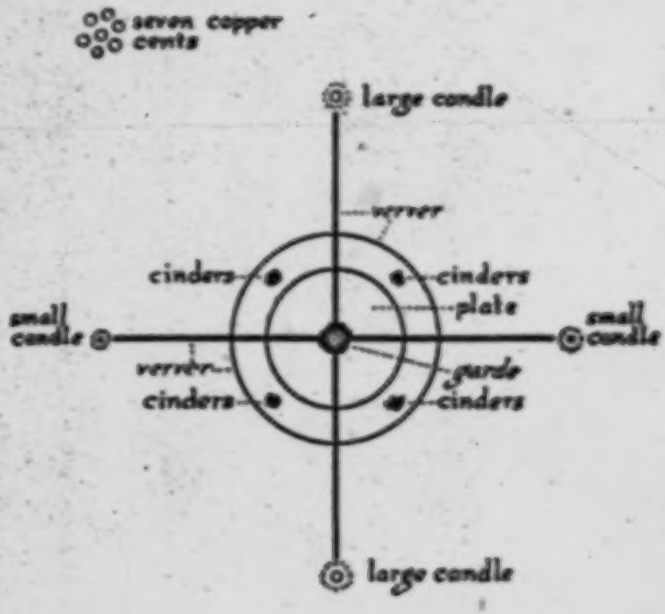

Clairin was sprayed from the mouth of the maker to sprinkle the *garde*, and then another lighted candle was passed four times around the circumference of the plate, this being repeated with the two larger candles on the floor. The food was piled in the plate, and on it the coppers and the *garde* were set, after which, as flame leaped from one wick to another, the sorcerer passed the fire from candle to candle, making circular movements with each as he did so. Taking the other half of the red cloth, he removed the small candles, and changed the large one from 8 to o o, placing the bottles where the candles had stood, while he intoned: "I serve *Maît' Carrefour*, and I take the responsibility on myself for

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789 making this *garde*. I have not obligated anyone else in any way."

789 He now poured *clairin* on the plate, lighted it, and stepped
539 five times over the fire, twice turning the *garde* about in the flame, rubbing his face, hands, and head with the burning liquid, as he pronounced the following invocation:

Au nom de Malt' Grand Bois,	In the name of the Master of the Great Forest,
Qui soldat Malt' Carrefour,	Who is a soldier of the Master of the Crossroads,
Au nom Malt' Cimitière,	In the name of Malolu, of the Cemetery,
Au nom de Malolu,	In the name of Malolu,
Au nom de Kadia-Bosu,	In the name of Kadia-Bosu,
Qui soldat Malt' Carrefour nan toute pays,	Who is the soldier of the Master of the Crossroads in all countries,
Voici un couvert qui preparé ce soir pou' 'ou.	Here is an offering prepared this evening for you.

Extinguishing the *clairin*, he relighted it and repeated what he had just done as another Haitian, a spectator, commented: "If it were not a good *garde*, he would be burned." Finally
[533] he sang the following song, which ended this part of the ceremony:

Garde la wé magie carrefou',	This *garde* sees the magic of the Crossroads,
Moin prulé sond'é point.	I am going to test a charm.
Magie cimitière,	Magic of the cemetery,
Moin prulé sond'é point.	I am going to test a charm.

789 The officiant, gathering up the food, the plate, the candles, and the remaining half of the red cloth, prepared to go to

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the crossroads, where he alone would have to conduct the 789
brief rite that was necessary to complete the making of this *garde*. As he arrived at his destination — this portion of the description is his — the plate was put down with the *kola* beside it, and *clairin* was poured on the ground. The lighted candles were placed near by, and with arms outstretched, he [539]
spoke the following formula:

Au nom de Mait' Carrefour,	In the name of the Master of the Crossroads,
Voici un couvert sec deposé jodi-a, Lundi.	Here is an offering placed today, Monday.
Au nom de Mait' Gran' Bra,	In the name of the Master of the Great Forest,
Ce couvert est pou' vous.	This offering is for you.
Mait' Carrefou', pour garde moin, sorti pou' 'ou.	Master of the Crossroads, for [the sake of] my charm, which comes from you.
Moin mandé pou' gardé	I ask that you protect me
Nan tout ces moin capab' trouvé moin	In all I may encounter
Pou' bien, nan pou' mal.	Of good, and of evil.

Before leaving the crossroads, the maker of the *garde* touched [788]
the plate and bottles three times to earth, calling the names of Master of the Crossroads, Master of the Great Forest, and Master of the Cemetery.

While the nature and forms of good magic that have been 789
thus far discussed show a characteristic African pattern, the 177
presence of the factor of medieval European magic is evident, though this is not as sharply identifiable here as in the functioning of the less pleasant aspects of these supernatural powers. That this merging of two traditions is fundamental in all Haitian magical practice must nevertheless be patent to all who have had experience with it, unless in their intentness on

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789 177 esoteric African survivals they have been blinded to the European elements.[6] It was, as a matter of fact, well-nigh impossible to discuss magic, whether good or evil, with a native for any length of time without hearing the names of three pamphlets published in Paris, *Le Grand Albert*, *Le Petit Albert*, and *La Poule Noire*. So portentous do the folk of Mirebalais hold the information contained in these works — though actually, when read, their contents are found to include nothing more dangerous than names of the proper roots and herbs with which to concoct a love-potion, or, far more frequently, magic for preventing wine from turning to vinegar, or for enabling one to gentle a wild colt — that their importation into Haiti is said to be prohibited by law, a statement which was not checked except in so far as inquiries for the pamphlets in Port-au-Prince bookstores proved in vain. The contents of these works on magic differ but little from those of a document written in Créole, said by Seabrook, who reprinted it, to have come from the files of the Marine Corps, where it was deposited after having been taken during the rebellion of 1918–20 from the body of a fallen Caco chief known to have been a *bocor*.[8] The source of inspiration of a large number of these formulas and of many of their objectives is obviously in such European pamphlets.[9]

789 754 Turning now from the more passive, protective, and socially desirable forms of magic, a similar analysis may be made of its aggressive, destructive, and antisocial manifestations. That magic of this latter sort is much feared is a truism; yet that the fear of it goes as far or is as constant as most accounts of its workings state may be marked as gross exaggeration. For just as the practitioner of good magic knows how to bring about evil, so for every force that harms there is a cure, and for every *wanga* there is a *garde*.

754 789 177 The malignant powers in the world of the Haitian are, like other phases of his life, of both European and African derivation. From Europe he has taken the *démon* and the associated

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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term *loup-garou*, or werewolf. From Africa has come the concept of the *baka*, though this he has merged with that of the *démon*, and all operate through the power of Lucifer and the Devil, conceived as two separate beings. In addition, as will be seen, the cult of the dead also contributes to this system, since the *loa* who rule the cemeteries are indispensable for the practice of magic, as it bears especially on the concept of *zombi*, concerning which so much has been made in recent years.

The evil *loups-garous* are women whose real nature is revealed by their red eyes, though some hold that they have a black spot in the corner of the eye. Another word less frequently heard to designate the *loup-garou* is the Dahomean term *azeto*, employed in Africa for witches and vampires, a concept which in Haiti has become merged with that of the werewolf.[8] The *loup-garou*, with her male counterpart, the *démon*, is empowered by the *bocor*. As might be expected, she is greatly feared, and should an old woman suspected of being one of them come to a house, someone will see to it that in an adjoining room two brooms are crossed as the woman's name is pronounced three times, so that if she is actually a *loup-garou*, she cannot escape.[9] Children in particular carry counter-charms both against these women and against demons; one such, for a woman with child, has been mentioned in an earlier chapter,[10] and the making of another *garde* of this type has just been described. With a charm of this kind "you can leave at midnight for Port-au-Prince [instead of waiting for dawn] and fear nothing. You may meet a band of horned demons carrying candles in their hands, but they will stand aside and let you pass."

In Mirebalais, *baka* are usually mentioned when these evil beings are discussed, particularly since it is in connection with them that the term *engagement* is most often heard. An *engagement*, which is more feared than a *wanga*, the word usually encountered in the literature when evil magic is under discussion, designates a pledge made by a person, usually to

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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"give" a collateral member of his own family to an evil spirit in return for some important gain to himself. The spirit, however, is insatiable, and never rests content with a single victim. Thus it happens that when one member of a family dies and then another, and another, the *hungans* who are consulted declare such an *engagement* to exist. As soon as this is revealed, all other members take steps to safeguard their houses spiritually — perhaps in the manner of those whose *service* was described in an earlier chapter, which, it will be remembered, was motivated by just such a discovery. Unfailingly, however, the *baka* is there at the appointed hour, clamoring for his due, and proceeds to satisfy himself by turning upon the one who has made the *engagement*, killing his own wife and children, and finally himself.

Why, knowing this, do people enter into such compacts? The answer is usually a shrug of the shoulders, or the statement that human beings are at times driven to such desperation that nothing will restrain them. "A man may even pledge half his own life." Often the reason for such a compact is a craving to advance the status of his children, and that is why when a man who has been consistently unfortunate in worldly matters suddenly becomes affluent, gossip of an *engagement* is heard. But such wealth, it is believed, "passes like the wind."

There are several types of *baka*.[11] Some go about "devouring" men — the term *mangé moun*, in Haiti as in Africa, is idiomatic for sending fatal illness or bringing about an accidental death — while others, who stay in the house of their master, go forth only to procure him riches. These latter are jealous spirits and "make their conditions" — which means that they will ultimately destroy the members of their master's family, particularly his children, or, should a man repent of his bargain and dismiss them, they will return to kill him. To bring wealth to their master, they rob others. Some believe that *baka* are *loa* who change into these creatures from time to

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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time, or are animals given power as *baka* by these *loa*. The "squad" of the *baka* includes the following: 776 787 754

'Ti Kita Demembré	Simbi Proméné
'Ti Jean Pié Sèche	Simbi en Deux Eaux
Erzilie Gé Rouge	Simbi Troi' Z'ilé

Baka appear as small bearded human-like figures with flaming eyes, or as cattle, horses, asses, goats, bears(?), and dogs. Sheep never become *baka* because the sheep, as represented on the chromolithographs, is the animal of the Virgin and therefore cannot be a creature of evil. The mule also is never a *baka* for reasons given in the myth explaining how it came to be accursed. 776 825

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> One day Jesus came down a path astride a mule. When he came to a crossroads a snake so frightened the mule that he reared on his hind legs, throwing Jesus to the ground. Jesus became angry and cursed him, saying that from that day onward mules would never bear offspring. He also cursed the snake, saying that thereafter it must forever go about on its belly.

Whether because of this or because of its long, alert ears, the mule is favored for night travel, for this animal is held able to sense these creatures of evil and give his rider warning of them. A black cat can become a *baka*, but there are also good black cats that drive away evil spirits. Even if a black cat-*baka* is sent away, nothing happens to its owner.

A *baka* named Babako, sometimes called Bakuba Baka, is believed to live in the *mapou* tree, where he is "fed" in December. "He is the chief of [evil] magic, is magic itself," it is said, and "*C'est baggai diabolique, gros baka*—he is a thing of the Devil, a great *baka*." For this reason the *mapou* tree is greatly feared, and that is why those who "serve" the gods of the *mapou* do it in secret and are dealt with circumspectly. 776 824

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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754 Some *baka* are believed to be " doubles " of sorcerers who take
776 animal form and roam at night doing evil. Pigs encountered
825 at night are especially dreaded because of this, and those of a gray color, held to be more potent for evil than those of any other shade, are sedulously avoided. The tale is told of a man who, having encountered a gray pig at midnight which passed between his legs at great speed, was ill for months afterwards. It is also recounted how several men of uncommon bravery waited for one such pig and beat it, and how the next morning an old woman was found on whose bent back wounds inflicted
776 by sticks could be seen. It is because of stories such as this that it is held important to worship the good *loa*. For if the devotee of a *loa* meets a *baka* at night, the *loa* comes to his head and the *baka* flees in terror. An autobiographical incident was related to make this point. When a lad, the man who told the tale joined his playmates in an escapade which had as its aim to frighten some young women returning home late from a *vodun* dance. Draped in white sheets they stationed themselves near a bridge, turning about before lighted candles in the ground. The young women were possessed by their *loa* the instant they caught sight of these apparitions, who promptly fled the scene to avoid capture by those who came running in reply to the songs and cries emitted by the protecting gods!

776 *Baka* are often employed to guard buried money. " In this
454 country, when you find money buried in jars, it is an affair of *baka*. There is never one jar, but always two or three, and you must call a *hungan* to find out which one you may take and which you must not touch. Generally the finder is allowed to take half of the treasure, for if he took all, he would be tormented by the *baka* who had been left as guardian." Such jars, it is said, are usually found with human bones beside them or under them, and tradition has it that the slave-owners who are believed to have been strong in magic customarily killed the most evil slave on a plantation that his spirit might keep watch over the jars. If the owner never returned, the spirit of the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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slave, as a "sold *baka*," remained to wreak vengeance upon anyone who dared disturb his charge. 776 454

The reality of the *baka* to the Haitian was made dramatically vivid by an incident involving an old blind and deaf horse. It occurred one night on the principal streets of the town of Mirebalais itself. The horse was first noticed as the sun set, groping his way along, and finally circling the turn of the road. Though people shouted at the animal, he would not give way. As darkness came and doors and windows were barred, the horse blundered into the small veranda of a house inhabited by an elderly woman, her daughter, and her grandchildren. The younger woman cried out with fright when, timidly peering about the side of the house, she saw their visitor, but the older woman, whose age made her fearless in the face of this supernatural danger, opened a window and vigorously attacked the animal with a heavy stick, while he unhurriedly tried to get clear of the blows and finally moved on to the next veranda, and so from house to house down the street. On this night the habitual tranquillity did not settle over the town, and all of the next day and many days thereafter there was quiet talk of the danger that had been abroad, and much speculation of its intended destination. 776 825

The *baka* are sometimes confused with the *démons*, as is seen in the fragmentary information that was obtained about the existence of secret societies, so feared by Mirebalais folk because of their reputation for working all kinds of evil that it was with difficulty that even the names of two of them could be learned — the "Bissago," whose members appear at night wearing horns and holding candles, and "Les Cochons sans Poils." The former, termed *démons*, are believed to be able to change into animals when they do their evil work, a feat which would seem to make them *baka*. The societies all meet in the open country at night, and each has a small drum. They are called together by the beating of one rock against another in a manner reminiscent of the Zangbeto society of Porto Novo, Dahomey. 754 776 575 [202] [171]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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754 776 575 Novo, Dahomey. The members are, of course, not known, but there is always gossip, and occasionally a man, when quarreling, says: "Take care! You don't know who I am. . . ."

776 *Baka, loups-garous,* and *démons* are not the only supernatural beings that a person may encounter from time to time. Though not all are creatures of magic, and not all are evil, all of them are treated with due caution. Such are the "river [793] people" — children with six fingers, who are believed to belong to the Maît' Source, the Master of the Stream, and are destined to become *hungans* — this being an example of the good that may come from such supernatural association — or persons with light hair. Those with light hair are more dangerous, however, since occasionally such folk are taken for a time under the water, the men by female spirits and the women by males. One person in Mirebalais told of a distant cousin who disappeared as she went to the river to draw water. She was mourned as dead, but returned after a year and was welcomed home. As she began to recount her adventures, however, she was struck dumb, and never recovered her speech. Another spoke of his experience as a boy with such a water-spirit, a *Maîtresse d'Eaux.* With a companion, he was walking along the bank of the Tombe River, when a woman was seen sitting on a rock combing her long light-colored hair. The other lad was invited to help her and went nearer, step by step, until, as he almost touched the comb, he turned and ran. Some time later he died.

754 764 775 Another category of spirits, already referred to in discussing the cult of the dead, are *zombi.* To understand their nature, however, the use of magic to bring about death or its simulacre, and the measures taken to guard against this, must be first considered. In the preceding chapter it was observed how *hoholi* seeds are placed in the coffin of one suspected of an "unnatural" death to prevent the sorcerer from reaping the [789] fruits of his deed. A cross of pine-wood, made by the *hungan* and empowered by him to repel evil, is frequently also put

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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ABOVE, *At a* vodun *dance: those possessed whirling about the central post.*
BELOW, *Making the* vodun *drum: describing the sign of the cross with lighted candles over the unheaded bodies.*

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[facing p. 244]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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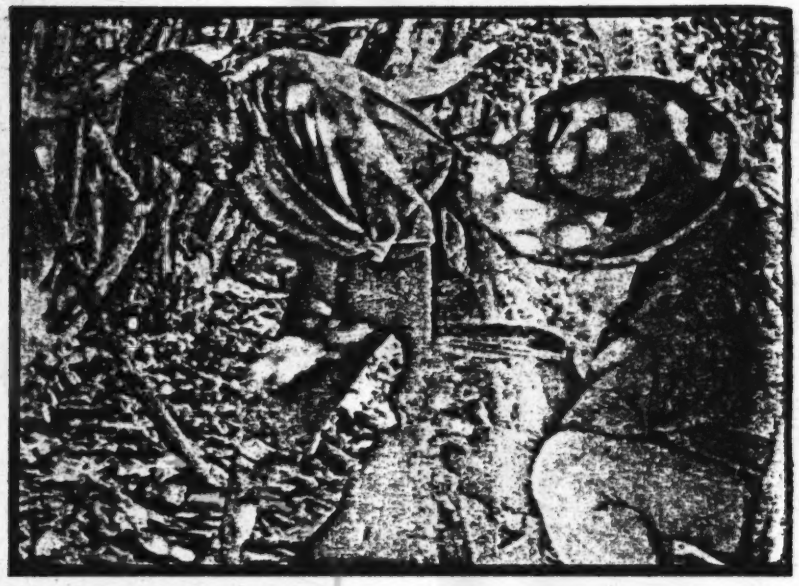

ABOVE, *Making the* vodun *drum: stretching the cow-hide heads.*

BELOW, *Consecrating the drums: they must be "dressed," like anyone who is baptized.*

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[facing p. 245]

with it, or the body is made to lie face downwards in the coffin, since the discomfort of this position causes the spirit of the dead to avenge itself on the sorcerer who caused the death. When a man has been killed by magic, his surviving relatives go to a *hungan* or a *bocor* to discover the culprit. The names of those suspected of the deed are called. Before the diviner stands a pottery jar filled with magically treated water. When the unwilling image of the guilty one finally appears, the *hungan* plunges his knife into it, and as the water turns red, those watching know that when the specified number of days have passed, the guilty one will be dead.[12] Should a suspect be innocent, the image of the Virgin Mary or of St. John is sometimes seen when he is called; but if one known to be guilty does not appear, it is proof that his magic is stronger than that used to call him. Recourse is then had to a powerful *wanga*, or poison, or to the spirit of someone dead, an *âme abandonée* who has led a life of evil and himself been a murderer. "They would certainly not send the spirit of the one just killed. He is too green" — to bring death to the killer. If none of these measures prevail, no further acts of revenge are attempted against the suspect, the feeling being that he has supplied himself with too powerful magic to allow effective revenge to be taken.

On occasion, an apparent death is felt not to be a real death, but rather the simulacre of death brought about by the machination of a sorcerer. The corpse is thereupon given poison or stabbed with a dagger, to make certain that an apparent death becomes an actual one, but the person who stabs the body must stand behind it in order that the corpse as slave of the sorcerer may not reveal who had stabbed him when summoned, and thus make of the one who had robbed him of his prey a substitute victim. If poison has not been administered to the corpse, or if the body was not stabbed, after the funeral the sorcerer recovers the body, which, deprived of its soul, works for him as a *zombi*, only returning to the grave when the time decreed by God for his natural death is reached, or if

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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he is accidentally fed salt. Though the concept has been presented in recent years with unjustifiable sensationalism to the reading public,[13] it is indisputably a living one. One aspect of it has been responsible for much of the conviction with which positive statements are made of personal knowledge of cannibalism in Haiti, as has been shown most clearly by Dr. Parsons:

> "A *ganga* who keeps a *zombi* may transform him into a stone, perhaps in front of his house, or into any kind of animal. Transforming him into a pig or sheep or cow, he may kill him and sell him in the market. In this belief we have the basis of the gossip and court testimony about human flesh sold in the market. It is *zombi* flesh, not human flesh, that is so disposed of. But foreigners know nothing about *zombi,* nor do the native witnesses explain in court what they have in mind when they are testifying to purchases of meat from the cemetery. 'People does *eat* people at Aux Cayes, I *know* it,' said Sam, as he told of human fingernails found on pigs' feet, explaining *to my question* that the pig had been a *zombi.* Had I not followed up his first statement and learned that he had never heard of anybody killed directly for marketing, an idea which amazed him at that, I would certainly have been left with an impression of cannibalism totally misleading."[14]

Precisely the same concept exists in Mirebalais as in Jacmel, where the foregoing material was collected, except that in its elaboration it underscores the point made in the quotation just given. *Zombi* meat can be recognized by the fact that it rapidly spoils, and when cooked, brings much white foam to the top of the stew, while such meat, sold as beef, turns white like veal; all this warns against eating it, and shows the active distaste with which it is regarded. Indeed, one of the duties of a person's *loa* is said to be that of warning him when he is

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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about to eat such food, for he feels a shudder pass through his body, and his arm becomes heavy, as was the case with a woman who three times dropped a piece of "beef" she was about to place in her mouth, before she realized the warning. 775 [776]

It can readily be seen how varied are the manifestations of evil magic. What are the forces behind them? What gives them power? What makes their unsavory ends possible of attainment? Their power comes from God, for, according to belief, everything comes from God, in the sense that God made the world as it exists. Therefore all beings are free to do anything they can contrive to do, though once dead they are called to account for their deeds. "Good and evil are two brothers; life and death are two brothers. All four come from God. They do not come from the *loa*." 754 771 776

But more immediately this power comes in great measure from the dead. Before a *bocor* makes a *wanga*, he asks permission of God, the Devil, Maît' Carrefour, Maît' Cimitière, Maît' Gran Bra, and Maît' d'l'Eau. Baron Samedi, perhaps the most important figure among those who aid in working black magic, lives in the cemetery. Though he is a *loa* and may possess those who appeal to him to work evil, this role is subordinate to his role as the power behind magic that kills. He controls the souls of those whose end has come as a result of magic, and when he is called at midnight, the sound of the clanking of chains is heard as he comes. He is envisaged as a dwarf. After his approval has been purchased for a projected deed, appeal is then made to Gede, for especially where it is a question of killing, though everything may have been made ready with Baron, Gede must "dig the grave." Herein lies the importance of Gede, for he is the court of last resort, the final power in matters of death. 754 776 [791]

Gede, however, is just, and even though Baron has marked a victim, Gede can refuse to concur in his decision. "If you do not merit death, Gede will refuse it," say the Haitians. It therefore sometimes comes about that though all preparations have

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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been made to kill through the use of black magic, Gede refuses to "dig the grave," no matter what measures the *bocor* may take. In such a case the victim may be desperately ill, but will not die. When a *hungan* divines the cause, offerings are made to Gede for having saved him from the *magie* of Baron. For, in the final analysis, "if Gede is in accord with Baron, death can come, but if the two are not in accord, the man against whom a *wanga* has been sent will only suffer."

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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PART IV

HAITI, A CULTURAL MOSAIC

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CHAPTER XIII

AFRICA AND EUROPE IN HAITIAN LIFE

With the historical background of Haitian culture and its present-day organization in mind, we may now seek to disentangle the varied sources from which the institutions described in the preceding pages have been derived. The formalized expressions of religion will be treated in the chapter which follows; here the manner in which Europe and Africa have determined the forms of other phases of Haitian peasant life will be analyzed. 121

Even such a simple aspect of peasant life as the house, or *caille*, as it is termed, furnishes an illustration of this intermingling of cultures. In the countryside the typical dwelling is a rectangular structure of two rooms with a thatched gabled roof and walls of woven withes daubed with mud.[1] The rectangular floor plan and the roof are of West African type, but since both of these are also familiar in Europe, the house thus probably represents the coalescence of two dwelling forms which were originally not strikingly unlike each other. The type of thatching is purely African, as is the wall construction, for walls of twilled withes can be seen in West Africa today. On the other hand, what there is of furniture is entirely European. The African stool has given way to the 342 171 352 177

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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352 197 European straight chair, and if peasants often sleep on mats laid on the ground in African fashion, this is only because their resources do not permit them the luxury of beds. The 342 accessory field-house is called an *ajupa*, a designation which represents one of the few recognizable contributions of the aboriginal inhabitants of the island to its present-day culture, since, according to Charlevoix,[2] it was first applied to the huts of the buccaneers, called by them *aioupas*, a name taken over from the Spaniards, who themselves had adapted it from the native Indian term.

291 197 Clothing is also of European style. The men, who wear shirt and trousers, long ago discarded the West African loincloth and the covering great-cloth worn toga-fashion, while the hats they wear are of course equally of European type. The absence of shoes, though characteristic of Africa, is not necessarily of significance, for shoes are not only an accepted article of dress, but are symbols of worldliness, and when lacking from the costume, indicate only an inability to purchase them. The dress of women is no less European, though only the old women continue the fashions of the days of St. John, who reported that "the females generally keep to a long white chemise, covered over with a blue cotton dress that reaches to their bare feet, and is drawn in around the waist."[3] As in his time, white is favored for days of festivity, and the head-kerchief is also seen, even if it is less omnipresent than in his day. The younger women who count themselves sophisticated scorn the kerchiefs and wear hats, but elderly women wind white kerchiefs about their heads in the West [793] African manner. The invariable mark of the *mambu*, in addition to her jeweled fingers, is the white kerchief with a very large straw hat worn over it.

292 197 996 One special form of dress that represents a complex merging of European and African secular and religious customs is the *rade de pénitence*. For men this takes the form of a multicolored shirt, for women a dress whose colors are dictated by

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the *loa*. In one instance a man wore a red shirt with black crosses appliquéd on it; dresses of this type worn by women or children are made of cotton cloth, pieced together patchwork-quilt fashion, of either three, seven, seventeen, or twenty-one different colors or patterns, with reds, blues, and white predominating. These garments are worn for a specified time, also named by the *loa*. The term *pénitence* has been taken from Church terminology, and the motivating sanction derives equally from African and Christian concepts;[4] for example, the wearing of the garment is a compliment to the African deities represented by the colors, while the various rules about abstinence during its term of wearing is the European pattern of "penitence."

The elaborate cicatrizations, or raised designs made by scarifying the body, which marked the slaves newly arrived from Africa have quite disappeared, but a few scars can be discerned on the body or arms of a man by a practiced eye. These represent an African carry-over in the form of a *garde* applied by the injection of some magically endowed substance into a cut which thereafter gives what may be thought of as a kind of spiritual inoculation. African fashions of hair-tying have been retained by the women almost unchanged, and, as in Africa, hair-braiding is a highly developed art, so that the styles in which hair can be braided seem innumerable. This is particularly true of dressing the hair of small girls, whose heads are decorated with braids going the length of the skull, or dividing the scalp into small squares, each with its tuft of hair, or by a part in the middle with lines going at right angles from it across the head. These styles of braiding are not named as in other parts of the New World and in Africa, but the tradition of intricate braiding has lost none of its vigor.

The implements of the Haitian are both of European and African derivation. The ubiquitous machete, a saber-like tool employed in all manner of ways, from chopping down trees

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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to cutting fruit, though seen in Africa, was probably introduced there by the early traders, and all machetes found today in Haiti are imported from Europe or America. The same is true of the hoe, for the short-handled, broad-bladed West African hoe has given way to the European long-handled type, though the blade of the Haitian hoe is somewhat broader than that used in America and Europe. Despite the presence of domesticated animals to draw the plow, this implement has never gained favor in Haiti, nor have recent efforts to teach the Haitian peasant the use of the plow achieved any degree of success. He prefers his African mode of cultivation, to say which implies more than just the employment of a certain implement, since even such matters as the manner in which he employs his hands and feet in the process of planting are included. When the Dahomean plants, for example, he holds a calabash of seed under his left arm, from which he takes the grains with his right hand. As he moves down the rows of newly turned earth, he makes a depression with the heel of his right foot, drops a few grains into this depression and, replacing the earth with his toes, takes a step so that he can repeat the process with his left foot. This is exactly the manner in which Haitians were observed planting in the valley of Mirebalais.[a] Unlike the usage in Africa, however—where the men clear the ground, the men and women plant, and the women tend the growing crops—the European pattern, which places agriculture in all its essential phases in the hands of men, has been taken over almost in its entirety.

The women have retained almost without change the African modes of preparing food. Grain is first pounded in an African-like mortar, with an aboriginal type of pestle, while the shelled kernels are winnowed in a large round basketry tray. The cooking is either done on a raised mud platform in the cooking shelter, as in West Africa, or on three stones, employed as rests for the pots, a method equally characteristic of Africa. In the Haitian cuisine the prevalence of stews, of

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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In the Haitian cuisine the prevalence of African dishes fried in deep fat, of the generous use of pepper in seasoning, are all African, as are even the names of certain dishes, such as *acassan*, a Nigerian-Dahomean term which designates the cooked balls of cornmeal. One of the few European intrusions is white bread, while the cassava cakes, also important in native diet, derive from the aboriginal Indian inhabitants.

In its outward forms the economic system under which the Haitian peasant lives seems entirely based upon European pecuniary patterns. Money follows the French system, even to the official use of the French designation, *centimes*, for the smallest parts of the principal unit of currency, the *gourde*. Both paper money and coins are used, and as the result of the Marine occupation American money is as well known as the currency of the country itself. Buying and selling goes on in the accepted European manner, the price of such export crops as cotton, sugar-cane, and coffee responding to the fluctuations of the world market. In many of its inner aspects also, the values of the Haitian are influenced by the money economy taken over from Europe and America.

The conclusion that the economy of Africa has been swept aside by that of Europe needs, nevertheless, to be qualified if certain historical and psychological factors are not to be ignored. It must not be forgotten that in West Africa, long before the period of European contact, a monetary system based on the cowrie shell had been fully developed. The prestige of wealth, the resulting drive to obtain property, the pursuits of buying and selling, and other aspects of a pecuniary civilization were as current in West Africa at the time of slaving, and continue today, as in Europe or in Haiti. When some of the attitudes associated with the economic life are analyzed, it is no simple matter, therefore, to state whether they stem from African or European sources, or both.

One pattern common to both economies, the validation of position through the conspicuous display of resources, has

1: Herskovits 3-4, 8 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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been largely lost in the peasant culture, possibly because of a prudence dictated by conditions of life wherein evidences of the possession of wealth — certainly in the case of a peasant — were an invitation to those who would despoil him. Only when a family of position gives a ceremony, or when one of its members is married or dies, is the lavishness of its preparations such as to suggest the importance of its place in the community. This does not hold for the individual. Personal ostentation is the more strongly inhibited by the belief that another's envy may bring ill fortune to the one against whom it is directed. In Mirebalais it has almost become a byword that the really substantial citizens look as though they were the poorest. This tradition in no way interferes with the preoccupation with adding to one's possessions, or with the desire to exert the power and enjoy the position that go with a command of large resources, or the will to pass on as large an inheritance as possible to children. In their origin, such drives can be ascribed neither to Europe nor to Africa, nor, for that matter, to the experiences of slavery, but rather to the interplay of two homologous patterns of culture that has produced the economic system and the economic motivations found in Haiti today.

In the matter of land tenure, and in attitudes toward private property, African tradition has disintegrated almost completely. Under the characteristic West African form of land tenure, land of a tribe is vested in the tribal head, who allots it to families for use. Trespass upon it is not permitted while it is under active cultivation, and the produce of the land is the property of the one who has worked it. Only palm trees are privately owned by those who have planted them; otherwise land that goes uncultivated for a longer period than is necessary to restore its fertility may be re-allotted. In some regions land worked by an individual is his because of his membership in a large relationship group, whose ownership derives from the power of its ancestors who had lived on this

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land, whose bodies are buried in it, and whose spirits watch over it. As has been shown in the discussion of property, land in Haiti is owned privately, and, once title has passed, is subject to no alienation, except at the will of the owner — an attitude also held toward property of other categories, as is evidenced by the fact that most of the possessions of a man, particularly his livestock, are marked for identification, and theft is severely punished. Even the disposal of stray animals whose owners cannot be identified must follow well-defined legal procedure, in accordance with which they are held by the officers of the commune for a stated period of time before being sold at public auction. All marks on these animals are carefully noted in the records, so that title to them may be duly established.

In the organization of production and distribution an African mold, if not full content, predominates. The co-operative work-system, which is so important in maintaining agricultural production, is directly related to comparable groupings of West Africa, of which a distinctive form is the *dokpwe* of Dahomey, described when the African origins of Haitian culture were examined. The *combite*, as an instrument of co-operative labor and mutual self-help, with its tradition of giving no pecuniary reward for work done, but of making the feast which comes at the end of the day's labor adequate return — all these represent pure retentions of African practice. Even more striking is the carry-over in the attitudes which go with these outer forms — the manner in which the participants look forward with pleasant anticipation to taking part in *combites*, the enjoyment which they derive from their group work, and the verve with which the work is done are clear expressions of these attitudes. The role of the *combite*-song in exercising social control and enforcing conformity to local custom is entirely African, as is its function in stimulating work by setting a rhythm for it.

African, too, is the institution of the market, though in this

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443 171 178 case certain aspects of the historical development of Haiti have doubtless tended to reinforce African custom. Reference has been made to the fact that the great proportion of traders are women, a truism in Africa as in Haiti, where by general rule men are the producers and women the distributors of goods. In Haiti, however, the fact that for many decades men [102] were likely to be arbitrarily impressed into military service by local chieftains when they came to town — particularly in Mirebalais, which had always been one of the centers of Caco activity — discouraged them from attending the markets. Thus African usage has here been reinforced by the historical fact of Haitian political instability. The fact that the proceeds 1453 434 562 178 171 from trading belong to the woman who does the trading, and that in consequence women are encountered who, though married, command independent means and exercise full control over their resources, is a carry-over of African tradition and, as in Africa, this gives to women a position in the economic world quite foreign to conventional European practice.

59 611 178 [171] The form of the family as found in Mirebalais demonstrates that the African social grouping which comprises all those descended on one side of the family has largely disappeared there, though it is possible that at least the vestiges of it may have survived in other regions of Haiti. Yet in West Africa, though descent is legally counted on but one side of the family, psychological adherence to the families of both par- [177] ents is everywhere important. Therefore it is logical to assume that this concept, reinforced by the pattern of dual descent and double familial affiliation of the French, has been retained in Haiti to the neglect of the aboriginal larger groupings, where, as has been seen, not only is relationship counted on both sides of the family, but, more significantly, the right to reprimand and punish is held and exerted by elders in both the maternal and the paternal lines. On the other hand, it is apparent that the feeling for larger relationship groups has not been entirely lost, particularly in the paternal line, when

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such matters as the passing on of the *loa* in families, the duties toward family dead, and the possible inheritance of food taboos are recalled. Like all these survivals, that of food taboos is not as clear in its expression in Haiti as in its aboriginal setting. Its determination is largely by trial and error, so that a mother, before the birth of her child, not only abstains from eating the foods harmful to her, but later carefully tries these on the child to ascertain their effect. Yet the custom, at best, is a tenuous one. Sometimes, if food uncongenial to a parent has ill effects on a person, "he goes on eating it until he becomes accustomed to it"—though this statement brought forth an emphatic dissent from another Haitian: "Not I! If a food harms me once, I am through with it."

Africanisms are particularly marked in the organization of and attitudes toward the ancestral cult. Today the fear of the power of the dead is as living in Haiti as in West Africa, despite the influence of the Catholic Church in changing concepts of the heavenly world of the dead and the role of ghosts on earth. It is quite true that the outer forms of ceremonialism taken by ancestor-worship in West Africa have disappeared; but when the meticulousness with which the rites of death are carried out, and the institution of *mangé morts* are remembered, it is seen that the spirit of African ritual observances has by no means been lost. African elements have survived even in the services for the dead, now largely taken over by the Church. On the anniversary of death a special commemorative mass is sung in the church, which the family of the dead attend in a body. Before they leave the habitation for the mass, however, animals are killed to provide meat for the feast which follows the Church service, and for the *mangé morts*, which also takes place at the same time. Immediately after the mass a reception takes place at the house of some member of the family who lives in town, or at the home of a friend, where cakes and liquors are served. At about noon, however, family and friends proceed to the habitation, where

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769 17 a *mangé* is given, and that evening, when the feast ends, dances are held. Two or three *tonnelles* are provided, the most important of these being the one where the Martinique cycle, the social dances most beloved by the ancestors, is danced. In one of the remaining two a European *bal* is held, and in the other are the *vodun* dancers. Thus even in connection with a commemorative Church mass for the dead the *mangé morts* and the dancing of African dances are included.

595 109 108 [554] The institution of plural marriage, which is socially recognized though not legally sanctioned, is obviously African. Though the *placée* is held in respect and her place in society carries no reproach for herself or her children because of any connotation of immorality, it is of significance for an understanding of the manner of cultural change that prestige in marriage goes with the monogamic union blessed by the Church, and that the "wife"—the woman who is addressed as "Madame"—holds definitely higher social position than the *placée*. Officially the Haitian State is in accord with the position of the Church and recognizes only the European monogamic marriage. Socially, however, African plural marriage is not only tolerated but accepted as a matter of course, and in those instances where plural marriage takes on its most exuberant form, as when men of position have as many as six or seven *placées* in addition to a legal wife, its very size tends to give such a family group, or at least its head, the enviable esteem of his fellow-citizens.

17 [593] [606] [583] Within the family, the deference toward older members and the duties and attitudes toward parents-in-law are African both in form and in spirit. The exaction of guarantees from a young man before marriage, and the necessity of his proving to the family of his fiancée that he can support her, are perhaps in their generalized form universals, but as found in Haiti show once more a retention of specific aboriginal traditions. On the other hand, such aspects of marriage as the [584] formal *lettre de demand* sent when a match is arranged, or the

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fact that a family will often strike out for itself, deserting the parental home, show a European independence foreign to native African thought. Yet the arrangement of meal-times, and the fact that a wife rarely eats with her husband, are African, as are the modes of correction, especially the feeling that flogging with a stick is the best disciplinary method. Indeed, the characteristic snap of the fingers employed by the Haitian to indicate a beating is exactly that which is used in Dahomey to signify beheading! In the attitude toward children African traditions have been warped by European custom, which has introduced a certain hardness of feeling that, whatever the cost, children must be brought in line with social convention, together with a resulting harshness of treatment that is anything but African.

Another important facet of Haitian life in which the effect of contact is telling includes art and recreational activities. Perhaps because of the conditions of slavery, or the difficulties of life after independence had been attained, much of these forms of African tradition has been lost, not to be replaced by corresponding borrowings from European sources. Wood-carving, an outstanding element in the æsthetic life of West Africa, is almost entirely absent. Near Mirebalais lives a man who can carve a pipe in the likeness of a human face, but there is no similarity between the products of his craft and West African figurines or masks, and he is thought of as an unusual person whose carving is an interesting but not socially significant avocation. It was stated, though without adequate corroboration, that before the Marine occupation Mirebalais boasted *vodun* drums on which heads " like the ones on these pipes " had been carved. Today the only form of decorative work in wood to be seen is the scroll-work designs which act as ventilating devices over doorways. They are done with the jigsaws of the carpenters, and no fertility of conception or felicity in composition marks these artistically crude efforts.

Other African crafts, which, though essentially utilitarian

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178 other African crafts, which, though essentially utilitarian in Africa, also allow play for the æsthetic impulse, have been [325] lost as well. Ironworking is absent not only because the necessary [326] deposits of iron ore are lacking, but because the technique of shaping the metal into various forms, which in Africa is in the hands of specialists, was apparently suppressed in the time [286] of slavery. No native cloth is woven. Basketry has survived, 178 but whereas in Africa designs of no small artistic merit are 285 achieved in this medium, it is markedly utilitarian in Haiti. Even from a technical point of view, the basketry forms are of the simplest, the panniers used for transportation of products on mule-back being merely an in-and-out weave, and the plaited strips of which hats and the *macoute*, or carrying basket, are made are of a parallel simplicity.

524 Few African recreational forms have survived. *Wari*, the 525 draughts-like West African game found today in many parts 178 of the West Indies, is unknown in the interior of Haiti, though it has been introduced into Port-au-Prince, where it is played by longshoremen who have learned it from the sailors of near-by islands. String figures, important in West Africa, are not encountered, and no children's pursuits comparable to the play of young Africans were seen in Mirebalais, if the minor ceremony of marking the loss of childhood teeth be excepted. African types of recreation have in the main given way to cock-fights and card-games, both of which derive their interest from the opportunities they offer for gambling—a fact important in itself, since gambling is not one of the widespread African vices. The most important card-games are *trois-sept*, *marriage*, and *bezique*, and both men and women [541] know them and play them for stakes. Similarly cock-fighting, particularly during the dry season, is a passionate avocation of the men. Large sums are wagered on the results of an encounter, and feeling often runs high.[6]

533 The Haitian genius for art and recreation is best embodied 535 in the dance and its accompanying songs and drum rhythms. Virtuosity is attained not only by the dancers, but even more

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especially by the drummers. Experience among other Caribbean Negro cultures and in Africa itself has failed to reveal greater skill in calling forth intricate rhythms from batteries of drums than can be found at any Haitian religious gathering. The enthusiasm with which a man takes his place at a drum, the manner in which he loses himself in his drumming, the skill with which he maintains the time of his complex beats in common with two other drummers and those who manipulate the rattles and the iron, bespeak long training and a passionate devotion to the art. The same is true of dancing. The best drummer, the finest dancer, hold positions of esteem in the community, and on occasion their fame will go beyond the valley, an occurrence as unusual as it is valued. The excellence of the drumming and dancing and the concomitant artistry in song can be understood when one considers the age at which training is begun in these arts. At Mirebalais an infant of no more than two years has been seen to dance creditably, while a young boy of six gave a demonstration of drumming that spoke eloquently of his promise as a drummer of talent. Before every *vodun* dance the boys take over the drums while the younger girls dance to their rhythms. They are watched with a critical eye by their elders, who from time to time correct them or praise those who do well.

The accompanying musical forms are almost entirely African in their rhythmic structure, but European influence is traceable in their melodic line, which varies from unchanged European folk-melodies to purely African songs. In the use of the falsetto, however, in the statement of a theme by a leader and its repetition by a chorus, and in the countless modulations introduced into the song, the singing is entirely African, as are the postures struck by those singing.

The importance of the dance is apparent from the large range of dances. Of *vodun* dances there are the *avalou*, or *yanvalou*, a word meaning supplication in the speech of Whydah; the specialized steps for the various Rada and Pétro gods; for

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535 177 178 [096] *magic* and for the Congo, Ibo, and Nago *loa;* the *mazon,* as an interlude dance between possessions; and steps of the *asagwe,* or salute to the gods. There is also the Martinique cycle of secular dances, including the *zesse, callebasse,* and *banda;* the *rara* dances found only at Easter time, and the social Congo dances. Finally European dancing, called *bal,* is performed to the sound of a drum, a phonograph record, or a small orchestra. With a qualified exception of the last, the type of dancing in all these is African. The essence of style in these dances lies in the manipulation of feet and the muscles of the body, particularly those of shoulders, hips, and buttocks, the patterns of which have been carried over in their entirety from the aboriginal homeland. For men and women to dance with arms about each other, as do Europeans, is still regarded in Mirebalais as immoral.

538 178 The trait of African culture that has survived most tenaciously in all the New World, even where European influence has been strongest, is that of folk-literature — of tales, proverbs, and riddles.[7] Though these have flourished in Haiti as elsewhere, prolonged story-telling sessions, so characteristic of other Negro groups, were not encountered in Mirebalais. It is likely that this is principally a seasonal phenomenon, and the failure to find long evenings of story-telling during the summer months, when the rains are at their height and work in the fields is hardest, may properly be an expression of this seasonal variation. As elsewhere in Negro societies, tales and riddles are told at wakes, though their enjoyment by children and their function as a part of the education of the child are as important as in Africa itself. The familiar types of African animal stories and the tales of human tricksters and magicians are well known, and well told. The figure who corresponds to Br'er Rabbit, or to the spider Anansi, is the little 'Ti Malice, while the foil for his pranks is the great awkward Bouki.[8]

One folkloristic element that gives Haitian life a strong African flavor is the proverb, which, as elsewhere in Negro

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cultures, is used not only to point morals for the young but as an expression of the characteristically oblique forms of Negro expression in a quarrel, or in sounding a warning, or in commenting acidly on some social situation. A famous proverb, quoted from the earliest days, is today heard often in Mirebalais: "*Zafai' mouton pas zafai' cabrit*—The affairs of the sheep are not the affairs of the goat"—an injunction against gossip. When a person boasts that no one can harm him, the reply may come: "It is on a narrow path that one has to deal with a difficult horse." Should a man dismiss an experience as of but little consequence to him, he may hear the comment: "Often one pays an ox for a goat." When one person does harm to another, his victim may warn him with the phrase: "Behind the mountains are other mountains." If a man whose fortunes are flourishing attempts to console another who has suffered misfortune, or a rich man jibes at a poor one, the retort may be: "The rock under the water doesn't know how the rock in the sun suffers." To such an extent do proverbs comment on all aspects of life that almost no extended conversation occurs without them. Some of these are of European origin, but both numerically and in their use their character is preponderantly African, as is shown by their specific correspondence to proverbs used today in the regions from which the Negroes of Haiti were derived.[9]

In the practice of magic, and more especially of black magic, it has been noted that African and European traditions have combined into an integrated cultural unit. The outward expression of magic in the charm or "fetish" as an aspect of African life is so obvious that it has been commented on by all observers. In Haiti, though the charms are not prominently displayed and personal charms especially are worn beneath the clothing, this concept of their importance in coping with life has been retained. Yet, as has been seen, Haitian magic is not African alone. For while the forces behind protective magic are primarily the *loa*, and those behind black magic are

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789 754 177 178 the powers that control the souls of the dead and those creatures of evil whose powers come from Satan — all this being African enough, in the sense that evil magic exists in Africa as elsewhere — the point, which bears repetition, is that the primary sanctions for evil magic have been reinforced by the books of magic handed down from medieval Europe.

789 177 178 In this system, however, not only do European books of magic figure, but the Church also has its place. "The things of the Church are always affairs of magic," remarked one Haitian, meaning that they are best adapted to this purpose and are used when the opportunity is had. It is for this reason that great care is taken to keep all sacred objects in churches from the hands of unauthorized persons. To have something that has come from a church, such as a bit of a priest's robe or a few splinters from the statue of a saint, enlists the power of these on behalf of any objective that the maker of magic has in view, and invests any *garde* made with these with the power of God Himself. Thus the twofold meaning of the proverb: [539] "*Vrai maré corde, vrai wanga, c'est l'Eglise* — The real tying of the cord, the true *wanga,* is the Church," or, similarly: "*Vrai hungan c'est l'Église* — The true *hungan* is the [754] Church." However, whether it be through such African-like practices as the use of colored cloth, or caolin, or the tying of knots, or whether objects filched from the sanctuary of the church be employed, evil magic, derived alike from African and European sources, continues as a potent force of Haitian peasant life. For perhaps in magic more than in any other aspect of his culture has the peasant achieved a synthesis of the two currents that have contributed to his civilization. He has taken from both, and inasmuch as both adhere to a more general pattern which marks all the Old World, neither tradition has had to give way to the other.

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CHAPTER XIV

CATHOLICISM AND VODUN

In considering the origins of Haitian religious belief and ritual, those African elements which have been retained in their aboriginal purity may be first presented. The importance of the Dahomean and Nigerian elements in the *vodun* cult are self-evident when the deities derived from the peoples of these areas are detailed. It has been stated that the name of one of the important "companies" of gods, Rada, is a contraction of the word *Arada,* which is the name of the Dahomean town Allada. This group includes Damballa Wedo, Aida Wedo, Aizan, Legba, Agwe Woyo, Agweto, Sobo, and Sobo-Bade, which come directly from Dahomey, where they are members of the heavenly pantheons; and Agasu, Siligbo, and Loko, who are sacred ancestors of Dahomean relationship groups. The term *Dahomey* itself also figures in the name of such *loa* as Erzilie Freda Dahomey, where Freda with all consistency represents a corruption of the name of Whydah, a Dahomean seaport. The Nago, or Yoruban peoples of Nigeria, have a religious system which parallels that of Dahomey, so that many Rada gods, such as 'Batala, the Yoruban "great god," or Ogun, the Yoruban deity of war, or Shango, the god of thunder, are of Nago origin; Badagri, on the other hand, is the name of a Nigerian town. A prominent *loa* derived from this general area not found to be exclusive to the Rada group is Gedeonsu, or Gede, a Dahomean totem. Of the Pétro group, Wangol (Roi

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776 171 [162] d'Angole) is obviously Angola, while the designations Ibo and Congo speak for themselves. Simbi is a Congo deity, as are Bumba and Lemba. Finally, in the categories of gods important in the regions of Haiti other than Mirebalais are the Loa Sénégal, and the Loa Mondong, both of which are names of African tribes mentioned in the early literature as contributing to the Haitian slave population. But all recognition of geographical names as such has disappeared, and they have been transmuted into designations of gods.

192 199 Outstanding here is the word *vodun* itself, already indicated as Dahomean, where it is a general term for "deity," though in Haiti its use has become more restricted and the symbol for deity has become the word *loa*, or *mystère*. The origin of the designation *loa*, which has been claimed to be a corruption of the French *roi*, is debatable. It is true that in West Africa certain deities are regarded as kings, yet this derivation is not convincing in view of the fact that in the *vodun* cult as found in Haiti at present or as described in earlier sources the *loa* are never generally referred to as kings, something that tends to strengthen statements that have been made to the effect that the word comes from the language of a Congo tribe.[1] The source of the root *hun-*, which figures in the terms *hungan*, *hunsi*, and *humfort*, is clear, for in Dahomey it is a synonym for the word *vodun*. *Hungan* and *hunsi* are even more definitely traceable than *humfort*, since the ending *-gan*, the Dahomean word for chief, designates the priest as the chief of the spirits, and *-si*, "wife," is employed in the sense of "wife of the god" or his devotee, in Africa as in Haiti. The female counterpart of *hungan*, *mambu*, cannot be definitely assigned, but may be of Bantu derivation, and is certainly an African word.

776 171 178 [121] 769 Other uncontaminated Africanisms can be discerned in the attitude of the Haitians toward the *loa* and in the ceremonies for them. One of the most characteristic is the inheritance of *loa* in families, a direct survival of the belief which not only

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makes for deification of the family dead, but constitutes the oldest ancestor of a relationship group one of the great gods and thus causes families to give primary allegiance to a restricted number of deities. The most striking aspect of this tradition preserved in Haiti is that all ceremonies must be given by family groups, and at them only members of the family may with propriety become possessed. Possession itself, and the elements which constitute the possession complex — the use of the drums, the rhythms associated with particular gods, the importance of songs in calling the spirits, the mode of worship through specific dances for specific deities — these make up another series of Africanisms. In the dance itself the use of iron to sound basic rhythms for the drums, the outer form and function of the rattle, and the fact that the circle of participants always rotates in a counter-clockwise direction, are equally African. The modes of behavior to be observed as possession comes on and the psychological release that follows it both derive from the same source, as do the beliefs that rituals must be held on the days sacred to the particular god being worshipped.

Another retention of African tradition is a belief in the importance of sacrifice. It will be remembered that it is held to be more essential to "feed" the gods than to dance for them. This is also the tradition of all peoples of the region from which the slaves were derived, and in a sense reflects the very immediate relationship that obtains between Africans, or Haitians, and their gods. Since in both regions each deity performs the double role of doing good for those who worship it properly and harassing those who neglect it, the importance of giving adequate sacrifices to avert evil is evident. In both Haiti and Africa, however, these may differ with the wealth of the individual giving the offering, with the number of persons who contribute toward the ceremony where offerings are given, or with the seriousness of the situation which the deity is being asked to remedy. That the gods permit such varia-

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171 178 782 tion is a further comment both upon the human traits ascribed to them, and upon the realism with which they take cognizance — as only African gods can — of the financial position of their devotees!

171 178 776 78 It is not only in the immediacy of the Haitian gods to their worshippers and in their human qualities, however, that these beings have retained African traits, for in the full reciprocity that must prevail in the relationship between deities and their followers is to be seen a point of view that is entirely non-European. Between man and the gods the rule of *quid pro quo* must always be in operation; and this rule may only be regarded as but another contribution of Africa toward Haitian religious ideology. While this reciprocal giving flavors all aspects of worship whether it be of the *loa*, the dead, or the twins, it takes a yet more prominent, and more familiar place in the field of magic, since here the *engagement* owes much to European belief, though the element of reciprocity is much more emphasized than was ever the case in medieval European diabolism.

178 776 794 The psychological values of the *vodun* cult, especially the general tone found in the feeling toward the terms *Guinée* or *Rada*, perhaps most convincingly show the attitudes that aided in the retention of things recognizably African. For while the [184] Pétro gods are by no means viewed as altogether bad, or are always held unwelcome, the fact that in Mirebalais, as in Haiti generally, the Rada gods are those least feared, most desired, and in connection with whose cult wrongdoing is most rarely present, is of the greatest significance, especially when the related fact is recalled that the Pétro gods are the more powerful in the matter of evil magic, while the Rada deities are said to exert their power to protect their devotees from the dark forces that may be set in motion against them.

178 776 776 In attitudes toward the gods, then, in the names of the gods themselves, in the manner in which they function in the lives of Haitians, and in the importance of the ceremonial con-

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nected with them, much of African tradition which has carried over into Haitian religious life has been retained in pure form. Yet the intrusion of Catholic custom into these African patterns — often noted, though generally in passing — also must be studied if the significance of the forms of Haitian folk-religion is to be grasped. That this aspect of *vodun* has received the scant attention it has had is probably to be ascribed to two causes.[3] The first takes the Catholic element for granted, so that even where a particularly dramatic element of Catholic practice is seen in an African setting, such as a crucifix or the portraits of the saints on a *vodun* altar, specific mention is made of this without attempting to dissect its historic or psychological role. The second reason for the comparative disregard of Catholic influence is that for Europeans it is a commonplace. Spirit possession and sacrifices, African song and drum rhythms are more "exciting" than prayers or hymns of the Church. Underlying both these causes is the deep-rooted and unquestioned assumption that, in contact with any non-European culture, the patterns that govern European behavior must prevail. Consequently, is it not in the nature of things that Catholicism should have taken root in the *vodun* cult? Is not rather the matter to be stressed that African traditions should have been retained at all? That the process should actually have been one of amalgamation rather than of dominance is rarely taken into account. Yet to go deeper into the significance of this process in Haitian life is to open far-reaching vistas.

An outstanding sanction taken by the *vodun* cult from Catholicism is that of the baptismal rites. Though ceremonies of consecration are a commonplace in Africa, and the African ritual of washing the head — *lavé tête*, as it is termed — has not been forgotten, in Mirebalais the importance of baptism as a means whereby human beings obtain their place in this world and in the next has been carried over and applied to all matters of ceremonial significance. Thus just as in the lives of

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the saints of the Church the sacrament of baptism was a crucial rite, so the *loa* must be baptized before they become forces which act in a recognized and predictable manner. Just as the objects used in the rituals of the Church must be sanctified by being blessed and sprinkled with holy water, so in the *vodun* cult a *humfort*, the drums, the iron, and the rattle must all undergo a similar sanctification, not only that they may possess proper supernatural power, but more importantly that they may perform their functions in the very serious and African matter of calling the *loa* and placating the supernatural beings of the *vodun* cult.

Herein lies the importance of the *prêt' savanne*. Since the official representatives of the Church not only have nothing to do with the *vodun* cult, but excoriate it on all occasions, the *prêt' savanne*, as a man who can read the prayers of the Church, plays an indispensable role and to that extent is to be regarded as a functioning member of the *vodun* cult, despite the fact that he has no control over the *loa* and, as far as was observed, does not participate actively in their worship. At the same time, it must not be inferred that in borrowing "baptism" from the Church this rite has been elevated to the most important place in the ritual of the *vodun* cult, for though the *prêt' savanne* must read prayers "from the book" and sprinkle his holy water, the actual "baptizing" is carried out by the *hungan*. In sanctifying a *humfort*, the end in view is to induce the *loa* to come after the baptism and to insure that no unaccountable or untoward deeds may come to pass within it. Similarly, though drums must be baptized with Church prayers and holy water that they may perform their allotted tasks, without the concomitant ritual of the *hungan* they would be no more empowered to call the gods than they were before the prayers of the Church were read over them. An analogous comparison can be made between the role of the *prêt' savanne* and that of the *hungan* in the *service*. Since the world

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is ruled by God, it is necessary to invoke God with the ritual of His Church before the rites to placate the *loa* may begin. But the important business of the occasion is to placate the *loa*, and it is only when the *hungan* takes over from the *prêt' savanne* that the series of rituals commence which, for the Haitian, hold emotional force and psychological value. 177 793 794 788

In the description of the baptism of a *loa* given in a preceding chapter, the use of Church ritual in bringing the African spirits under control will be remembered. No clearer illustration can be given of this merging of traditions than in a detailed account of the manner of making and validating *vodun* drums. These drums are of the characteristic African hollow-log type, with skin heads held in place and tuned by means of pegs, which are tied fast about the drumhead with cord. Before the tree which furnished the bodies was cut, an invocation was pronounced by their maker and an offering — a *mangé sec* — was made, that all the gods might come when called by the finished drums. A candle was lighted and *verver* described about the base of the tree. Eggs, broken against the trunk, were rubbed on the bark; while both soft and alcoholic drinks were given as libations, since not all the gods desire the same refreshment. After the tree had been felled and that part of the trunk that was needed for the drums was cut off, the maker was free to proceed with shaping the bodies of the drums by first gouging out the inside of the trunk, then stripping the bark, and finally carving the characteristic foot at the base. Before the next step of boring the holes for the pegs was taken, *clairin* was poured inside each drum, at the entrance to the habitation of the maker, and toward the man's cornfield. The first hole bored in each drum was carefully marked, for this was the significant *manman*. Here the first peg is inserted; the skin head is first attached here; and here the cord about the head is first knotted; while it is the peg in this hole that must always be first struck when the completed drum is tuned. 534 782 798 [177] [322]

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534 782 798 The drumheads were cut from a large ox-hide, purchased in the market place. In the early morning sunlight another "little ceremony" was performed before they were attached. Placing the three unheaded bodies of the drums in a row, with the iron in its place, the maker poured *clairin* before each, and having cut a native candle in three pieces, he took them in his left hand as he crossed himself, saying: "*Au nom d' Père, au nom d' Fils, au nom d' Saint Esprit.*" He then [788] lighted the three wicks, and taking each lighted candle in turn in his right hand, he made the sign of the cross with it and attached it to the "mother peg" of each drum. There the flames were allowed to flicker for a moment before the work of heading the drums began.

534 The hide was first attached to the "mother peg," then to the one opposite, and then to the two at right angles to the first pair. This is hard work, for to obtain the proper degree of initial tautness several men must strain at the resistant hide, and that is why four cuts are made where a peg is to go instead of the three that are needed, for frequently a strip breaks and the extra hole is used to re-thread the peg. The great drum has nine pegs, the one of medium size seven, and the small one six, not five, "because the *boula* is a thief, taking the beat away from the iron." The head was cut away from the rest of the great ox-hide only after it was in place. The final step was to knot the cord — braided the day before, of native sisal — to the *manman* peg of each drum, and then to twine it eight, six, or five times about their bodies.

534 798 788 The drums, now finished, were then put aside for a week to allow the damp heads to dry, awaiting the final sanctification. During this period they could not be played. It was held unwise to do more than tap them lightly with the finger-nail to test their resonance and the extent to which the heads were dry. Meanwhile preparations were being made for the bap- [292] tism. Drums, like human beings, must be clothed when they appear in public, and *rades*, apron-like garments, a white bro-

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cade for Damballa, a red print for Ogun, and a third, a flowered blue material, for all the other gods, were first made. They were ruffled at the bottom, with strips of the material, attached as are apron-strings, to hold them in place. Four eggs, three "native" candles, three white candles, white flour, corn flour, two cassava cakes, two biscuits, three small-sized loaves of bread, two bottles of *kola, clairin,* and holy water, were also provided for the baptism. Finally on the appointed day — a Saturday, so that the drums could afterwards be used for a *vodun* dance — the drums, drumsticks, and iron, with the dresses and the food that had been provided for the ceremony, were taken to the scene of the rite, a habitation where a *tonnelle* had been built for the accompanying dance. 534 778 788 [292]

The ceremony began at about five o'clock in the afternoon, the drums being dressed by their godmothers. Just as a child who is to be baptized in church must have godparents, so drums must have their godparents, and following the logic of this position, since the owner of the drums is regarded as their father, he uses the terms *compère* and *commère* for those who have "stood up" with his drums, just as he would for those who might sponsor his children. The *prêt' savanne* first called for some twigs from an orange tree and a bit of cotton, as the drums, standing on end, were covered with a clean white cloth. Grouped about them and ranged behind the officiant were the owner and godparents of the drums, holding lighted candles in their hands, with which they made the sign of the cross from time to time. As the prayers began, the participants crossed themselves, and the *prêt' savanne* sprinkled the drums with holy water, using a spray of orange-leaves. Among his prayers were the Credo, the Ave Maria, the Pater Noster, and the Salve, interspersed with hymns sung by the assembled group. After about half an hour of prayer the officiant, holding an egg in his hand, made the sign of the cross three times over each of the drumheads. Ordinarily the eggs would have been broken, their contents rubbed on the drum- [608] [793]

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534 778 788 heads, and *clairin* poured over these, but on this occasion the rite was postponed, for the eggs would have dampened the drumheads so they could not have been played for the evening's dance. Yet this deviation from the strict ritual did not permit any laxity in meeting the obligation when promised—that is, the day following the dance.

534 778 788 793 The *hungan* took charge as soon as the prayers were finished. Placing the drums to form a triangle on the ground, with the iron, rattles, and sticks near by, he put the offerings inside the space enclosed by the bodies, and with white cornmeal made *vèvèr* about them, while at the foot of each drum he placed an egg; then, covering the drums with a clean cloth, he threw parched corn on it. From time to time he interrupted his silent invocations by ringing a bell held in one hand, until the arrival of the time for the vehement haggling over the price of his services, which interrupted the ritual. [552] This matter settled, he asked for the names to be given the drums, and proceeded to "christen" the small one Gran' Siligbo, the middle-sized Damballa, and the great drum Ogun Shango. At this point, were the owner desirous of having special powers given his drums, as is frequently the case, the *hungan* would endow them with a *n'âme*, or soul, at the same time instructing the spirit of the drums, called *hunsôr*, in what was desired of it, and prescribing what must be given the drums by their owner to make their powers effective. But in this case no such *n'âme* was asked, and the ceremony continued.

Summoning the gods, he lifted the cloth over the drums and instructed the "father" to pour water in three places between them, to set the drums on end, and to beat one of them. This was the *seconde*, called Damballa, and its having been initially struck indicated that the god after whom it was named was most important for this set. This ended the ceremony of baptism, and the drummers took charge so that the evening's dance might begin, for now the drums were ready

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for all uses to which those of their type are put. During their making and after their completion they had been sanctified by rites that vividly illustrate the merging of traditions in Haitian religion: by means of offerings to the African gods, and through baptism by the rites of the Church.*

The *action de grâce* is another integral part of *vodun* ceremonialism that is essentially Catholic, since its lengthy service is composed entirely of prayers and hymns of the Church. As has been shown, the *action de grâce*, which precedes a *vodun service*, takes place before an "altar" which, important both then and at the later, more African rites, in itself documents in no small measure the combining of Catholicism and *vodun*. One, employed at a *service* not described in the earlier chapters, was covered with a red and white checked table-cloth, on top of which a smaller white cloth was spread.* Pinned to the canopy and to the front of the table-cloth were various chromolithographs of the saints; St. Michael attacking the Devil, Mater Dolorosa, St. James, the Virgin Mary and Jesus (the Assumption), and St. Expeditius. In front of the representation of St. James stood a crucifix with the figure of Jesus, in accordance with the custom of never omitting to have one of these at any *vodun* ceremonial. The table bore many offerings; at the back were four bottles of soft drinks, with cups; while also to be seen were several hard rolls, an ear of corn, a dish containing eggs, and another holding, among other things, rice. One of the containers on the table held holy water, while candles for use both in the *action de grâce* and in the later *vodun* rituals lay beside this. Thus crucifix, candles, pictures of the saints, and holy water were combined in this ceremony with offerings of food and drink to be given the gods that the ancestors had brought from Africa.* The songs sung at the voduistic portions of these *services* also reflect the psychological unity of Catholic and African elements in *vodun* worship. One of these declares:

* This altar is shown in the illustration facing p. 190.

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Je crois en Dieu,	I believe in God,
Oui, Santa Maria.	Yes, St. Mary.
Santa Maria,	St. Mary,
Qui sorte nan Guinée.	Who came from Guinea.
Je crois en Dieu,	I believe in God,
Oui, Santa Maria.	Yes, St. Mary.

Another for the Virgin of Allada, sung in Leogane, is as follows:

Santa Maria la Madaleine,	St. Mary Magdalene
Prié pou' loa yo.	Pray for their *loa.*
O Allada-e,	O Allada-e,
Sonné une sonne pou' moin,	Ring a bell for me,
Pour m'allé.	So I may go.
M'dit, Allada-o,	I say, Allada-o
Sonné une sonne	Ring a bell
Pou' les pitites nagé.	For the drowned children.

Of these elements, the portraits of the saints, or *images,* offer one of the most vivid instances of the mingling of African and European elements in Haitian belief, for they are the outward symbol of the psychological reconciliation that has been effected between the saints of the Church and the African deities. This is nothing peculiar to Haiti alone. In West Africa, wherever Catholicism has obtained something of a foothold, certain pagan deities are regularly identified with saints of the Church, and the same phenomenon is found in Cuba[a] and Brazil.[a] This identification of saints with the *loa,* whether initiated as a ruse against the detection of African worship or emanating from a reasoned analogy, would seem in Haiti, at least, to act as a device to achieve an adjustment between two conflicting systems by emphasizing the resemblance between Catholic saints and African nature deities. The importance of the *images* as symbolizing the reconcilia-

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tion is consequently of the first order, while the presence of these chromolithographs in every Haitian hut and on the altars of *vodun* ceremonies indicates how deeply the acceptance of this identification has gone. In the house occupied in Mirebalais during this investigation, the following *images* were found on the wall:

Moses	St. Augustine	Our Lady of Mount Carmel
St. Peter the Apostle	St. Michael	St. Clara
Baptism of Christ	Peter and Paul	

It is perhaps worth mentioning that the owner of the house, when renting it, stipulated that these *images* were to remain in place, for their power kept the house, its contents and occupants from harm.

No greater concurrence of opinion is had in the designations of saints given to corresponding *loa* than in any other facet of Haitian belief. Those here listed were obtained in two ways: either the equivalents of *loa* were named in the course of discussions with priests and other members of the *vodun* cult, or the *images* themselves were shown to members of the cult, and the names of the corresponding *loa* were recorded. Mater Dolorosa is held by most persons to be Gran' Erzilie, but in one instance this figure was equated with Erzilie Freda Dahomey with the insistent qualification that the two were not the same *loa*. The saint is represented as richly clothed, wearing many rings and necklaces and surrounded by other evidences of great wealth, so that the correspondence arises from the fact that Erzilie is held to be the richest of the *loa*. Notre Dame d'Alta Gracia is related to the *loa* Kpanyol, or the Spanish *loa*, while Notre Dame de Grâce is the water-goddess

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known as La Sirène. St. Anne and St. Philomena are also regarded as water-deities, the first being Adamisil Wedo, the second the *loa* Christalline, a strong evil spirit dwelling in the sea. With one exception, Legba was held the equivalent of St. Anthony; in this other instance his similarity to St. Peter was stressed. St. Peter is held by most persons to be the *loa* St. Pierre, though this again is disputed, *loa* St. Pierre being believed by some to be the spirit who validates the sacred polished stone axes which in Haiti, as in Africa, are called "thunder stones." The identity of St. Andrew was also disputed, some saying he is Simbi, others that he is Azaka Mede, a river god whose name is clearly derived from that of the stream across which, it is believed in Dahomey, all dead must pass. One person identified Aizan with Christ, but this would seem to be a conclusion personal to him.

Of the Ogun *loa*, St. James is conceived as Ogun Ferraille. St. Joseph is identified with Ogun Balandjo, because this *loa* is a healer, and St. Joseph is shown holding a child, his hand upraised in blessing. St. Patrick, on whose *image* serpents appear, is correlated with Damballa Wedo Tokan, or simply the rainbow serpent Damballa Wedo, while Moses, because of the miracle he performed before Pharaoh, is held to be the father of Damballa. St. Expeditus is Agwe, and St. Anthony the Hermit either Ti Jean Pétro or Simbi en Deux Eaux. St. Louis, the patron saint of Mirebalais, is a *loa* Wangol, as are two of the kings who figure in the adoration of the Christ-child, Balthazar and Gaspar. The *marasa*, logically enough, are believed the same as the twin saints, Cosmas and Damien, while the "protector of the *marasa*" is St. Nicholas, because the several children on his *image* are interpreted as *marasa*, *dosu*, and their succeeding siblings.[1]

The Haitian often carries this matter further, either conceiving saints as themselves powerful *loa*, or creating "saints" for himself out of the forces of nature or other powers in the universe. The most outstanding example in the former cate-

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gory is St. John the Baptist, worshipped as *loa* St. Jean Baptiste, who sends the thunder and lightning. The power and irresponsibility which characterize him contrast strangely with the gentle child holding a lamb, shown on the *image*. The connection becomes apparent in the light of African mythology, however, where the ram is the emblem of the god of thunder, while following this same belief lambs are sacrificed to St. Jean Baptiste in Haiti. The following myth is told of him:

> On a given day of the year God permits each saint to have control over the universe. St. John the Baptist, however, is so irresponsible, and his rage so violent, that God fears the consequences if he were allowed to exert his power on his day. By plying him with drink the day before, he is therefore made so drunk that when he falls asleep he does not awaken for five days. When he is told his day has already passed, his rage is so terrible that great storms flay the earth, and it is a commonplace in Mirebalais that this day is marked by thunder and lightning storms of almost hurricane proportions. Though he can do some damage, his power is now limited, however, to his own sphere.

In the second category are the forces of nature personified and worshipped as saints. Among those specifically named were St. Soleil (St. Sun), St. la Lune (St. Moon), Sts. Etoiles (St. Stars), and St. la Terre (St. Earth). Even more striking is the concept that the power capable of bringing reverses is to be worshipped, as a copy of an oraison to St. Bouleversé which was obtained clearly shows:

> St. Bouleversé, you who have the power to overturn the earth, you are a saint and I am a sinner. I invoke you, and I take you for my patron from today onward. I send you to seek out such-and-such a one; overturn his head,

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overturn his memory, overturn his thought, overturn his house, overturn for me my enemies visible and invisible; cause the thunder and the tempest to break them into pieces. And in honor of St. Bouleversé, three Paters and three Ave Marias. . . .[8]

Thus it is seen how Catholicism invades the beliefs and rites of the *vodun* cult. In an analogous fashion *vodun* has not failed to make itself felt in certain festivals of the Church,[9] for while elements of *vodun*, rigidly suppressed inside the Catholic churches, are absent except in so far as they can be carried on surreptitiously, they are nevertheless integral parts of these fêtes in the minds of the folk who make pilgrimages to them. So arresting is the resulting mingling of practices, and so significant for the amalgamation of cultures that has taken place in Haiti, that a detailed discussion will be given of the most prominent instance of this type, the festival in honor of the Virgin of the Palms, which takes place each year on July fifteenth at Ville-Bonheur, or, as it is better known, at Saut d'Eau. The festival of 1926 has been described by Price-Mars;[10] here certain observations made during the fête of 1934 may be given, especially as they have to do with those aspects of the mythology which validate the festival, and as they illustrate the non-Catholic, voduistic phases of the celebration, of importance for the points being considered in this chapter.

Beside the church, Ville-Bonheur has three especially sacred spots, St. John, En bas Palmes, and Saut d'Eau — the falls themselves. At St. John is a large *campêche* tree surrounded by many palms, from beneath which flow streams of water. St. John is said to have appeared here, carrying his scepter as in the chromolithographs, and at that time water began to flow in the sacred springs, and except for one short period has continued ever since as holy water, being used for drinking and bathing, but never for purposes of cooking. The priests

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ABOVE, *Consecrating the drums: the "godfathers" and "godmothers" standing by with lighted candles as prayers of the Church are recited.*

BELOW, *The* vodun *priest employing African rites to complete the consecration of the drums.*

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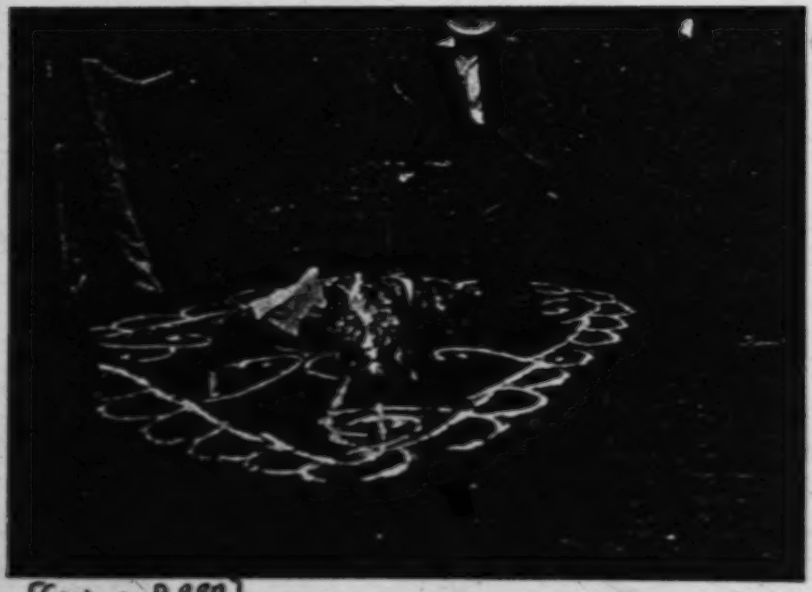

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AT SAUT D'EAU

ABOVE, *Large crowds of worshippers drawn by this fête of the Church.*
BELOW, *Possession coming on as a* vodun *deity "mounts the head" of a devotee who, climbing a tree, exhorts those gathered to hear him.*

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stationed near by did not at first believe in this miracle, until after several appearances of the saint the higher authorities of the Church gave the fête their sanction. Many tales are recounted of skeptics who, though coming to scoff, became filled with awe when they put foot in the holy place and — significantly for the merging of the two religions — were possessed by *loa* for the first time. A church which has since burned and a small chapel were erected at the site which now is the entrance to the enclosure before the present church. This is the old calvary enlarged, and here the statue of the Virgin, saved when the earlier church burned, is found. Next to this church are the uncompleted walls of the structure which is to be a new and larger church. It is said, however, that this edifice has given much trouble, for each time the walls reach a certain height they fall. The people say: "The Virgin does not like this place," and believe that a simpler church should be built where the old one stood.

The vision of the Virgin at En bas Palmes is believed to have occurred several times, most recently as placed by a lively tradition in the days of the American Marine occupation, when a priest is said to have caused both St. John and En bas Palmes to be closed for several years because, as at present, many who prayed at the church also took occasion to worship their *loa*.

During the fête, however, the tale goes, the Virgin appeared on a palm tree. The people, on their knees worshipping, sent to the priest to come and pray. He declared it merely superstition, however, and called an American Marine captain stationed at Mirebalais to help him suppress this worship. The captain ordered a Haitian sergeant to shoot the vision, but the Virgin merely moved to another tree; another shot, and she moved again. They cut down the tree, and those who looked on with terror saw the vision slowly ascend to the sky. As the priest

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turned to leave, word came that his house had burned and nothing in it was saved. Later he suffered a paralytic stroke from which he never recovered. Some say that the American captain became ill and was sent to the States "as a punishment for what he had done." Several days later the sergeant was found mad, wandering in the woods. Since he had fired under orders, however, his punishment was but temporary, and on being cured he returned to Ville-Bonheur to ask pardon of the Virgin. Today he lives in Mirebalais. When they saw the American ill, the priest paralyzed, the sergeant mad, and the presbytery burned, "public clamor" became so strong that both St. John and En bas Palmes were reopened.[11]

In 1932 a cyclone at St. John tore down trees and houses and hurt but did not kill the worshippers who had gathered there. An eyewitness insisted he had seen the enormous whirling cloud rise from the sacred place. He had no time to reach his house, for with a noise like a cannon-shot the whirlwind came, and an enormous oak tree fell just behind him — "I saw death staring at me." Today he carries two scapularies to the Virgin to protect him.

The third sacred spot is at the falls themselves, where the grandeur and beauty of the scene is such as to induce the religious thrill almost unaided, and where great numbers go in the course of their pilgrimage to Ville-Bonheur. There are two falls, situated at a distance of several miles from the village, one for Damballa and one for Aida Wedo, and it is believed that those who bathe in the sacred streams become possessed. It is said that the palms near by are sacred to the Virgin, but others hold that they are for Damballa. Many visit the falls on the day preceding the fête, but the largest throng hurries there immediately after the principal mass, when the greatest number of possessions and the most violent seizures by the *loa* occur. The falls, therefore, in association

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The falls, therefore, in association with the purely Catholic rituals carried on at the village church, are seen to hold an important if unofficial place in the complex of rites known in the Haitian Church calendar as the Fête of Saut d'Eau.

During the two or three days preceding the fête and on the fifteenth of July itself, an air of great gayety not unlike the carnival spirit accompanying European Church festivals pervades the surrounding country. Camions traverse the almost impassable side road, bringing crowds of people from Port-au-Prince, from the Dominican border, and even from the north, who throng the streets and the shrines and tramp the miles from the village to the waterfalls or visit the nearer sacred sites of St. John's Wood and En bas Palmes, to light candles and ask the satisfaction of their needs. Like the falls themselves, these spots by their very beauty awaken a sense of emotional awareness, and it is not strange that here, as at the falls, many possessions occur. At night, in particular, the great trees with their interlacing serpent-like roots, the gaping earth which at En bas Palmes is witness to the uprooting of the palm trees where the miracle occurred, and the stream of sacred water, all make a scene of indescribable eeriness, heightened by the flickering candles given as offerings, and the open lamps of those who stay the night here to fulfill their vows.

In the town itself gambling and other games go on, and dances of all kinds are held at night, among them *vodun* and *bal*, though at these public dances no possessions are countenanced. One of the most colorful aspects of the scene is the *penitants*, wearing clothing of varied colors in fulfillment of a request by the *loa* they worship or an obligation to them. Such folk are not permitted in church unless the clothing which marks them is covered by ordinary dress, but they walk the streets, often possessed and often using their power to heal those whom they encounter. Possessions by Ogun, by Gede, by Baron Samedi, by Damballa, by Erzilie and other *vodun* deities were observed, particularly at the shrines, where their devotees prophesied and healed the sick.

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000 796 782 776 177 devotees prophesied and healed the sick. Even at the church, however, where all go to offer the prayers that are the central observance of the fête, the many candles placed on the rocks at the entrance are usually for St. Anthony; that same St. Anthony who, it will be recalled, is the *loa* named Legba, the guardian of all entrances.

771 177 It is obvious, from the examples given, that the world view held by the Haitian and the motivations which underlie Haitian life cannot be understood unless both the Catholic and the *vodun* contributions to them are held in mind. But certain further questions bearing upon the effect of these two influences present themselves. What proportion of Haitians hold membership in the Church, and how many are affiliated with the *vodun* sect? What attitudes are manifested toward the Church and its priests as contrasted with their attitude toward the *loa* and their ministrants? How does the Church meet the challenge of *vodun*? And how does the Haitian peasant, in his inner life, reconcile these two conflicting forces?

The impression gained from reading available works on Haiti is that voduists and Catholics constitute two distinct [184] groups. While this may obtain in some parts of the Republic, it is not true either in Mirebalais or in those other portions of Haiti which came under direct though brief observation in the course of this study. All discussions with natives that began with the assumption of the existence of two such separate groups led to confusion, and statements which had seemed evasions were not clarified until the incorrectness of such an assumption became apparent. Thus when it was stated that in all Haiti the Pater Noster was one of the first things taught every child, the question: " Is this not true for Catholic families only? " was met with a vigorous denial that was slowly justified as the realization grew that, if not true for all Haitians, such an assertion was certainly valid for the vast majority of them in Mirebalais and probably elsewhere.[12] The identity of membership in the two groups became apparent from ob-

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servation when, for example, the baptismal rites which received into the Church the children of known active participants in *vodun* ceremonies were witnessed. It became even more convincing when experience taught that the best place to encounter an elusive *hungan* or *mambu* was at early Sunday-morning mass. Only when it was realized that no dichotomy exists in Mirebalais between Catholicism and *vodun*, but that both are necessary if all the supernatural beings that control man and man's destiny are properly to be worshipped, was a true perspective obtained.[13]

There are certain Protestant sects which have been increasingly successful in making converts among the Haitian people, particularly in the north, whose adherents stand in strong hostility to *vodun*. A type of Protestantism that has had the best reception is one comparable to the "shouting" sects of the United States and the British West Indies, where the appeal through patterns of possession, dancing, and other aspects of ritual close to the familiar African forms of behavior is evident and relatively little psychological shift is needed to make membership in such a church acceptable.[14] The Protestant church in Mirebalais, however, is more sober. It commands only a very small proportion of the townspeople, and draws even fewer from the surrounding countryside, while the Catholic voduists look upon it with a scorn that is exemplified in the answer to a question about the ritual of Protestant funerals: "*Moun chita, chanté zhymnes*—People sit, and sing hymns!" Two or three well-substantiated cases of conversion to Protestantism came about because, despite the sacrifices made to the inherited *loa* and the prayers to the saints, these individuals continued to experience ill fortune, until in desperation the Protestant minister had been called to banish the family *loa*, to cut down the sacred trees on the family habitation, and to destroy the house of worship, with the objects in it. These deeds of "desecration" were, however, followed by no renewed disasters, and while from the point of view of

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the voduists this is not regarded as decisive proof of the power of Protestantism, for those immediately concerned it is held sufficient.[15]

What, then, of the attitudes held by voduists toward the Catholic Church? The correlation of Catholic ritual with *vodun* practice made by Haitians is of utmost significance in this connection. In discussing the Church service, it was pointed out that church bells announce mass or any other rite, and this, it was explained, is for Legba — "*Toute cloche c'est pou' Legba, même l'église, oui* — All sounding of bells is for Legba, even in church," for he must be notified so that he can "open the gate" for God, Jesus Christ, and the saints. "*Nou' même nou' connai' ça. C'est Bon Dieu crée tout* — You yourself know that. It is God who created everything." It was also recounted how when the priest preaches, he is possessed by the *mystères* of the sacred Trinity, for does he not gesticulate and become excited like any other possessed person?

Furthermore, it is believed that Gede, Ogun, and Damballa "are always at the church," often insisting that their worshippers take communion. Indeed, occasionally the *loa* of a woman may demand a Church marriage from a man to whom she is a *placée*. The sacraments of baptism, first communion, marriage, confession, and extreme unction are received by members of the *vodun* cult, though, as will be seen, when voduists confess, they say nothing of their *loa*. The *hungans* themselves "are most often at the sacred table to take communion," and one particular *hungan* not only attended mass, but was seen continually employing his rosary in the *vodun* ceremonies at which he officiated. While Haitians from the southern peninsula stated that the *hungans* there do not go to church, it was pointed out at the same time that all other voduists attend regularly.

The principal resentment held by Mirebalais voduists against the Church is for the cost of Church rites, and for the

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refusal to accord Church burial to certain faithful followers 779
because of the inability of their surviving relations to pay for 798
their funeral masses. As expressed most clearly, it is felt that the Church is expensive, exacting fees for baptisms, marriage ceremonies, and funerals, while *vodun* worship, on the other hand, costs but little: a bit of *clairin*, the animals one must sacrifice — only, however, to insure the help of the *lòa* in causing the remaining ones to increase in number — and the "presents" to be given the gods, costs the less oppressive because they are usually shared by all members of one's family. Another source of discontent is said to be the failure of the Church to adhere to its agreement in the Concordat to "Haitianize" the clergy. This has been emphasized in Mirebalais because the priest of its church is one of the relatively few in Haiti who is himself a Haitian. One of the sentiments about the Church most frequently heard during this field-work, coming as it did just at the end of the American occupation, was: "The *Garde* has finally been Haitianized. Now it is the turn of the Church."

The attitude of the Church toward *vodun* is one of intran- 798
sigent hostility. The anger with which the priest preached 648
his sermon on the Sunday morning following a *vodun* dance held close enough to town so that the sound of the drums, plainly audible, "disturbed" him the night long, clearly indicates how deeply the priests of the Church resent the worship of the African gods. In Mirebalais they tell how, at the instance of the Church, *vodun* rites were unmercifully suppressed by the Americans during the occupation, to whom it was represented as a potential focus for revolt. In the *place* huge bonfires were made of *vodun* drums painted and "dressed" in elaborate manner. Everything found in the *humforts* and the private houses of worship was confiscated, and the "thunder stones," necklaces of the devotees, and other sacred objects that would not burn were thrown into the Artibonite River. Today the Church takes full advantage 000

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797 today the church takes full advantage
798 of its status as the only recognized religious organization in Haiti to dictate the official position of government toward *vodun*. Permission for *vodun* dances and for *services* must be obtained from the officer commanding the local detachment of the Garde d'Haiti, and this is not always granted. Penalties [688] for illicit dances and ceremonies are severe, and because gossip is ubiquitous and no man lacks enemies, apprehension is prompt. Thus in the instance of one *service*, a misunderstanding regarding the permit was sufficient to cause the detention for some hours of the one responsible for the rite.

797 Is it possible, then, for a person to be a communicant of the
178 Church and partake of the sacrament without feeling this
179 weight of spiritual and official disapprobation? More particularly, is it possible for him to omit from his confession all allusion to his worship of "false" gods? It is here that one encounters a singularly tenacious survival of African traditional belief. In Africa the conquest of one people by another meant the mutual interchange and acceptance of the respective deities. The conquerors added to their own pantheons the gods of those whom they had overcome so that these forces might not wreak a supernatural vengeance upon them; while to the conquered the power of the gods of those who had defeated them was self-evident. If the worship of the Christian God and of the saints of the Church intruded on the aboriginal religious patterns of the Negroes brought to Haiti, the acceptance of such worship did not imply rejection of the old gods. Nor does membership in the Church today mean such complete acquiescence in its doctrines and pronouncements that the worshipper of the *loa* will offer himself for the malediction of the priest by confessing his adherence to their cult. The situation somewhat parallels that in Africa itself, where the first effort of Protestant missionaries is directed toward inducing their converts to abjure polygyny. This dictum is complied with readily enough on the surface, so that a man will have but one wife — in one village! In Haiti the

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problem of confession is met in the manner explained by a woman who is a devotee of the *loa:* "The *loa* are not the things of the priest. Why should I tell him about them? If I come and take this book of yours, it isn't mine, and I am a thief. If the priest tells me I must not worship my *loa*, they are not his *loa*, and he cannot take them from me. Does anyone expect me to come and tell him that my father, my mother, my sisters and brothers, and all my family serve the *loa*?"

For the Haitian, therefore, the forces of the universe are under dual control. And though, as has been stated when the cosmology of the system of *vodun* worship was discussed, he may reconcile this duality, yet in practice he must observe the rites of his *loa* separately; he must pray to God and the saints apart. His reconciliations he keeps to himself, and in his everyday life both the African beliefs and those of the Church have their place. No better illustration of this could be had than in the incident of the white cock named for the serpent-god Damballa, that had been spared until the final day of this field-work when, as the last of a large brood, his time had come to be killed for the table of his owner. On this afternoon, when he was "to meet his destiny," the cook took him up quietly. A number of feathers were plucked from him, and then, as the sharp knife, describing a cross, ended his life, the whispered phrase could just be heard: "*Damballa, je crois en Dieu* — Damballa, I believe in God."

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CHAPTER XV

SOME WIDER IMPLICATIONS

158 No student of Haitian institutions can elude a progressively
182 sharpened awareness of the psychological conflict that is being waged within the frame of Haitian society. And though examples of the divergent forces which lie at the root of this conflict have been set forth in the preceding chapters, some of the more important of these may be recalled here.

178 In his social relationships the Haitian is constantly exposed
182 to the demands of a code of morality which requires marriage
595 to be monogamic. Yet the African tradition of polygyny, and
158 the undoubtedly satisfactory arrangements of both an economic and a social nature that can be made under the terms
178 of plural marriage, pull him toward this form. The case is even
182 stronger in the field of religion, which in Haiti is not a thing
771 remote from life, but an intimate part of existence. On the one
158 hand, because of his inheritance of the *loa*, he must meet his obligations toward these ancestral gods of Africa who punish harshly those who fail them, so that he must either continue their traditional worship or learn to know the consequences
[197] of their anger. Yet on the other hand, the priest thunders his maledictions and threats of eternal damnation — in Mirebalais, at least, often in Créole, a language which the peasant can understand — against those of his flock, the vast majority

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of whom are sincere practicing voduists as they are sincere practicing Catholics, who do not put an end to the worship of false gods.

The absence of graphic and plastic arts in Haitian culture, commented upon in a preceding chapter, must also be regarded as a case in point in laying bare the anatomy of this inner conflict of tradition, since it is important to recognize that the suppression of these forms of the prevalent African tradition would seem to have lost to the Haitian an important outlet for the resolution of inner tensions caused by pent-up drives. Even more revealing is the substitution of games of chance for those games of skill which in most African and New World Negro societies are played for their own sake alone—that is, for the prestige accruing to the skillful player. The strain that accompanies this play for stakes, often of no inconsiderable value in terms of the resources of the players, is patent to the most casual observer. The question here arises whether or not the craving for excitement of this kind may not in Haiti be traceable to the inhibition, under slavery, of some of the more gracious forms of African life which there make for social equilibrium. Might it not represent a kind of compensation for the thwarted psychic ease with which a culturally undisturbed people approach their own existence—a state of being which, in contrast, is quite lacking in Haiti?

A singularly illuminating comment upon these manifestations of instability in Haitian life has been made by Dr. J. C. Dorsainvil, who in drawing his conclusion called both upon his own medical training and on his experience of many years as a profound student of his own people. "It has perhaps been insufficiently remarked to what an astonishing degree the Haitian people live on their nerves."[1] As might be expected, he advances a number of possible explanations of the causes that underlie this state of "living on nerves." The wear and tear of life in the tropics is given as one reason; another is the excitement of the *vodun* dances with their frenzy of possession;

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158 while even the hypothesis of an inherited racial psychosis is proposed to account for the phenomenon.

Let us examine these suggestions. An appeal to the natural environment offers but unsure ground, since it is known that not all peoples who live in the tropics experience a comparable psychic strain. Again, if the participation in *vodun* rites and the experience of possession were given as a reason for lack of stability, it would be expected that these changes in behavior would only occur before, during, or shortly after the ceremonies themselves, something that is by no means the case; and, moreover, that this state of "living on nerves" would be shared by all Negro peoples among whom the experience of possession is the commonplace that it is in Haitian peasant religion. This brings us to the suggestion that Haitian mentality may be the product of a racial psychosis. Here it is important to stress that from the point of view of Haitian culture, as from that of Africa, possession as a part of religious experience is both normal and desirable, so that the actions of an individual in such a state are to be judged neurotic only on the basis of standards that are those of a foreign culture. Add to this the fact that it is becoming more and more apparent that skepticism is the only scientifically admissible attitude when the question of referring the behavior of any people to specific racial endowment is raised, and the necessity becomes apparent of seeking other explanations for Haitian psychology than those that have been advanced.

158 17 What, then, of this matter of "living on the nerves"? It is an arresting image for the characteristic instability of attitude and emotional expression found in the Haitian, but in attempting to understand the phenomenon, it would seem that we are on the firmest ground when we look to those historical forces which were considered in the first chapters of this book. Stated in general terms, an explanation might be sought in the influences which cultures in contact bring to bear upon the

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individuals who must meet the demands of two traditions which, in many aspects, are in anything but accord. As regards the Haitian, it must be recognized that the two ancestral elements in his civilization have never been completely merged. As a result, his outwardly smoothly functioning life is full of inner conflict, so that he has to raise his defenses in order to make his adjustment within the historical and cultural combination of differing modes of life that constitute his civilization.

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The kind of adjustment that seems to dominate may perhaps best be called *socialized ambivalence*, since, more than any other phrase, it describes this tendency to manifest those rapid shifts in attitude toward people and situations that characterize the responses of the Haitian peasant to such a marked degree that the same man will hold in high regard a person, an institution, an experience, or even an object that has personal significance to him, and simultaneously manifest great disdain and even hatred for it. As outwardly observable, this takes the form of recurring and often rapid changes in behavior toward the object of attention. In attitude, there is vacillation from one emotional tone to another. In its broader implications, as a matter of fact, it is entirely possible that this socialized ambivalence underlies much of the political and economic instability of Haiti, so that, arising from a fundamental clash of custom within the culture, it is responsible for the many shifts in allegiance that continually take place, as it is for the change in attitudes in everyday association.

Since far more detailed studies of individuals must be at hand before the full power of this ambivalent drive can be gauged with any degree of sureness, the problem alone is sketched here. Yet this type of approach cannot but give insight into such occurrences as that of the man whose unwilling possession by the gods of his ancestors was, as described, brought about through the fascination of their forbidden

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154 rites for him, despite his strict Catholic upbringing. His vacillation between the desire to understand and worship the gods of his ancestors and his utter remorse after he had done this illustrates one way in which conflicts in a cultural setting can affect the outward responses and unsettle the inner adjustment of the individual who is exposed to such a situation. From a broader point of view, such an analysis of Haitian psychology suggests a more realistic understanding of the individuals in other cultures who have likewise fallen heir to conflicting traditions.

154 182 However revealing this type of analysis of the springs of Haitian behavior may prove, it will be adding only a fragment of esoteric information unless it, like all other aspects of the investigation of this single society and its mode of life, is pointed toward an understanding of the larger problems of the relation between man and his culture. For just as a study of the effect of the dual character of Haitian behavior upon the personality of the Haitians is important in throwing light on the study of the relationship between culture and personality in general, so the study of Haitian institutions may hold equal significance when questions are raised about the less subjective aspects of human civilization — that is, when attempts are made to understand what may be termed the dynamics of culture.

197 Most important in this connection is the demonstration made in this book how cultures in contact influence each other. This would seem self-evident but for the fact that very generally when such a proposition has been stated, it rarely enters into the actual studies of primitive cultures in contact with European civilizations without being neutralized by a counter-assumption that the force of European achievement overwhelms peoples with a differing cultural heritage. As will be seen, the failure to recognize this fact of the reciprocal effects of cultural contacts has entered to a very significant degree into the determination of basic atti-

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tudes governing Negro-white relationships in this country at the present time.

Haiti has experienced as long and perhaps as intensive a degree of exposure to European influences as any area where non-Europeans have lived in contact with European patterns of life. It has, in addition, completely passed through initial and secondary periods of contact into a state where the social milieu represents more than a century of consolidation of the original influences. Yet the Haitian Negro has by no means been overwhelmed by European tradition, just as he has not retained his aboriginal African heritage without any change. The process is seen to be one of selection, of working over, of revamping and recombining the elements of the contributing cultures, with the result that the ensuing combinations, though of recognizable derivation, differ from their aboriginal forms.

More problems of general interest are also pointed and illustrated by the material from Haiti. One assumption often made in viewing the course of cultural change is that the intangible aspects of a culture are less prone to give way before foreign influences than are its technological and economic aspects. The "natural" conservatism of religion and social organization is often particularly stressed in contrast with the relatively greater tendency to change shown by tools and weapons, clothing, housing, and utensils of various sorts. And though such assertions have some basis in fact, as both our own culture and the cultures of numerous other folk show, yet in the material on Haiti it is clear that neither in technology nor in economic organization have the traditions of Europe entirely prevailed over those of Africa, nor are they in any sense absent in the fields of social organization, religion, music, and dancing. It would seem that while a certain hospitality to European concepts and customs is apparent, there has at the same time been a retention of African modes of life in all sectors of Haitian culture to a degree which

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179 178 suggests that generalizations as to the relative pliability of any specific phases of a culture under exposure to another are premature.

562 178 Are women more conservative than men in respect to cultural change? The appropriateness of the affirmative answer often given can be tested to advantage in studies such as this. The answer, in Haiti, would seem to be that where work at home shields women from the influences of the outer world, this conservatism is found, but where they have an opportunity to come into contact with new trends, no less change enters into their activities than into that of the men. Thus in such matters as the organization of the Haitian household, the cuisine, or the time of meals, the logic of the situation has caused women to preserve Africanisms in full vigor, while historical causes have also similarly aided them in such things as retaining their African role as traders in the markets. In other phases of their lives, however, women, like men, have accepted European patterns, as is evidenced in the field of religion, where no greater resistance has been shown by women toward new forms than by men.

182 Other examples might be cited, but these indicate how a culture such as that of Haiti, as regards both its inner values and the psychological responses made to them, and its outer form and the manner in which its present-day character was attained, aids in sharpening and clarifying the questions that must be asked and answered if a better grasp of the dynamics of custom and the way in which tradition plays upon the inner being of those who are its carriers is to be had. However, it is not alone in general considerations such as these that the study of Haitian life can be of use. Much that is perplexing in that particular facet of the problem of race which in America is termed the "Negro problem" has both analogy and contrast in Haitian life. It must not be forgotten that the slaves who were brought to continental America were of the same types and of the same background as those imported

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into other parts of the New World. Consequently a knowledge of the strains which came to Haiti, of the manner in which they met the situation they found there, and of how the cultural influences that played upon them have worked out in terms of patterns of behavior, should throw light on the way in which American Negroes have met, and are meeting, their own social situation. 182

Thus the study of Haiti offers contributions of particular value in examining the nature and accuracy of underlying attitudes held toward Negroes by non-Negroes, and the attitudes of Negroes toward themselves. One example is the widespread belief about the quality of the cultures from which the slaves were drawn. This holds that the African peoples who contributed the slave populations to the New World were "savages" whose civilizations were of a lower order than that to which the slaves were introduced. Obviously this view is a natural by-product of European ethnocentrism, but its many repetitions have persuaded the Negroes to accept it completely. Nevertheless, the material in the preceding chapters shows that this concept is anything but valid; that the regions of Africa from which slaves were derived comprise the area where the high cultures of the continent existed, where complex social and political organizations and high forms of religion and art were and are to be found; that their rank, if cultures can be ranked, would rather be with Europe of the Middle Ages than with the most simple societies of nonliterate folk. In addition, investigation into Haitian history has pointed out that of these populations it was not necessarily the deficient who made up the slave cargoes. Despite the widespread acceptance of this notion — among Negroes, again, no less than among whites — it has been seen that a considerable proportion of the slaves were upper-class Africans; that at the very least the slave population represented an adequate cross-section of the societies from which its members were derived.[8] 17 182

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Another deep-lying source of the attitude taken toward the Negro concerns his supposed readiness to suffer his slave status. To find the assertion that the Negro is a born servitor, best adapted to caring for those of a higher order in the biological world, it is not necessary to search among the statements of those who, before the Civil War, issued variations on this theme in support of their position. Yet otherwise why did the Negro accept his slave status to the extent to which he did? And, further, just how great was that acceptance? Again, in analyzing the material from Haiti, light is thrown on both questions. Slavery as an institution was one of the few patterns of his new life that rang familiar to past experience, for, as has been seen, slavery—and not necessarily household slavery, but that of the plantation variety which prevailed in the New World—was deeply ingrained in African tradition. Even then, once in the New World, certainly in Haiti and to a far greater extent than is ordinarily grasped elsewhere in the region where slaving prevailed, his acquiescence in his new status was but briefly held, if at all. The tale of slave revolts, beginning but a few years after the original introduction of slaves into Hispaniola and continuing there and elsewhere in the Caribbean, the Guianas, and North and South America until the abolition of slavery, has yet to be told. When it is realized that these rebellions were intermittent throughout the period and took place everywhere in the region; that they resulted in freedom for the Maroons of Jamaica and for the slaves who escaped from the plantations of Haiti before the French were expelled from the island, and in the eventual attainment of independence by the Haitians and, *de facto*, by the Bush Negroes of Dutch Guiana; and that everywhere they held the white population in terror of life and property, the significance of these episodes as pointing the error of current concepts concerning the inner make-up of the Negro is patent. Add to this the revolts of slaves in the barracoons of Africa itself, and on board the ships which

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brought them to the New World — "revolt insurance" was often carried by the masters of slave-ships — and the demonstration of the falsity of this concept of the Negro as a born slave is complete.

These ideas, however, are fundamental to the Negro problem as it exists at the present time. Admittedly, it is no simple matter to change points of view so generally held, especially when to the weight of economic drives is added the force exerted by the depth in tradition at which they lie. Nevertheless, when current attempts to solve the "Negro problem" come to mind, one is struck by the slight attention paid to such factors as these. Simple solutions, rapid in their operation, are almost invariably sought and inevitably rejected when immediate resolution of the difficulty is not forthcoming. Does it perhaps occur, again pointing lessons derived from the Haitian material, that there are forces of unrecognized power at work which derive from the elementary fact not only that, as has been stated, cultures in contact influence one another, but that in contact they exhibit far greater tenacity than is ordinarily credited them?

The cultural heritage of the African, it has been seen, was not a negligible one. In the entire area from which Africans were drawn it was of sufficient unity so that the differences between the behavior of peoples was but a gloss on the deeper resemblances between their traditions. The slaves were brought to the New World, North America as elsewhere, in great numbers, so that many persons from the same tribes remained in contact with each other. Even though this were not the case, no insuperable linguistic barriers existed. For as with cultures, so with languages; though mutually unintelligible, they were so based on the same grammatical constructions, and so presented the same idiomatic expressions, that the language of the masters spoken in the old patterns sufficed to preserve and hand on the traditions of the forefathers.

What of the belief in the United States that nothing of

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Africa remains? That this has the widest currency needs no explanation, nor, again, that it is held as true by Negroes as by whites. Indeed, any demonstration to the contrary invariably meets with remonstrance, while indications that Africanisms have even invaded white patterns of behavior are received with incredulity. This reaction is understandable enough if it is referred to the other belief already mentioned concerning the "savage" nature of aboriginal Negro background. Yet despite popular acceptance, despite "scientific" pronouncements that Negro music, Negro speech, Negro games, and Negro folk-beliefs stem from European sources, the student who is equipped with a background of African custom and West Indian practice can see the essential unsoundness of such claims. Cultures do not entirely give way one before another, even where the one was carried by slaves and the other by masters; even though the one is separated from its source by thousands of miles and hundreds of years, and the other derives a continuous renewal of vitality from constant contact with its original home. Once again reference to Haiti is to be made: to the fact that in economic life, in social organization, in religion, in music and dance, Africa has not disappeared, nor, at the same time, have the influences from France failed to stamp themselves on present-day behavior. Cannot the same be said of all areas of the New World where Negroes are gathered in great numbers?[9]

These questions can only be raised here; their answer is the matter of long years of patient investigation yet ahead. But may it not be true that the Negro in the United States has preserved some vestiges of his aboriginal heritage even in outward institutionalized forms; that in his attitudes, points of view, and characteristic responses to social situations the factors of his dual heritage have not been entirely lost; and, as would follow elsewhere as it has followed in Haiti, that this may be reflected in his resulting personality types? Even the possibility of affirmative answers strongly suggests that further in-

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vestigation of these matters may point the surest road toward racial understanding and toward eventually alleviating the strains that exist between the Negro and white groups in the population.

Great care must be exercised, however, if the implications of the point regarding the tenaciousness of Negro civilization—which has everywhere in the New World permitted the carrying over of a far greater number of African beliefs, traditions, and modes of behavior than is ordinarily conceived possible—for the practical problems of Negro-white relations are to be explored, the more so since the urgency of this problem rarely permits discussion of Negro peoples and their customary behavior to achieve detachment. It seems timely, therefore, to enter here a note of caution against the uses to which findings pointing to such a conclusion are reported as being made by those who are proponents of programs of action rather than seekers after knowledge.

Disconcertingly enough, it is those holding extreme opinions concerning the Negro who sense the opportunity to bolster their particular theses by reference to the fact that Africanisms have been retained in the New World. On the left, the point of view taken conceives the Negroes of the United States as a subject "nation," whose true freedom and full citizenship may come only after the establishment of an autonomous Black Republic in the South shall have permitted the fulfillment of the inherent genius of this people. What better theoretical base for such a program could be found than in material which seems to show that American Negroes, under their skins, are but Africans whose suppressed racial tendencies will, when released, furnish the drive needed for working out their own destiny? At the same time, those on the extreme right, who urge social and economic segregation for the American Negro, also vindicate their position by contemplating the Africanisms retained in American Negro life. Is this not evidence, they say, of the inability of the

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Negro to assimilate white culture to any workable degree, and should not Negroes therefore be encouraged to develop their own peculiar "racial" gifts — always, that is, within the bounds of the Negro's "place"?

Neither conclusion is in the least justified. To say that American and New World Negroes have retained certain African patterns of behavior and certain African aspects of belief within a varying range is not to suggest that in this country, for example, they have not assimilated American culture. They have, in fact, assimilated it to the degree that their opportunities have permitted, as have all other folk whose ancestors were not indigenous to this country — which is to say, of course, as have all peoples of the United States with the single exception of the American Indians. It is not counted as strange that the descendants of the British colonists now living in New England should have retained certain speech or food habits of England; nor that the city of Milwaukee, whose population is predominantly German-American, should have a flavor that is a carry-over of the culture of Germany; nor that the special traditions brought by Italian and Scandinavian and Jewish and Polish and other groups should not have entirely given way before the patterns that characterize the culture of the country as a whole. In all these groups, parents have both consciously and unconsciously handed down their knowledge, beliefs, and habits of motor behavior to their children, which is precisely what is meant, and all that is meant, when it is pointed out that the Negro's heritage from the culture of Africa has not been entirely lost. And from this it follows, and follows emphatically, that any distinctively African traits of behavior retained by the Negroes cannot be claimed to make him a unique phenomenon; this merely marks him as a group no different from all the others that go to make up the citizenry of the United States.

Thus, just as in Haiti the Negroes once free were at liberty to work out their culture in such terms as the logic of their

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background impelled, so elsewhere in the New World to varying degrees the same process has been operative. In the study of these situations as they are found at present, then, and especially in the study of the culture of Haiti as it has developed over the years since independence was achieved, clues may be available not only for a clearer understanding of the processes of culture as a whole, but also to point the way toward a more fundamental approach to the immediate problems of race as they are found in the New World, thus at once furthering the ends of scientific understanding and a more satisfactory social adjustment.

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APPENDIX I

THE GODS OF THE VODUN PANTHEON

ONE of the most impressive facts about studies of Haitian peasant belief is the absence of any attempt at systematic treatment of the deities of the *vodun* cult, as concerns either their attributes, their functions, or their relationship to one another. Indeed, there are but two exceptions to this statement: Dorsainvil (I, pp. 174–5) has published a list of the names of gods, placing them in categories according to their African derivations, and Parsons (I, *passim*) has made available her notes on the characteristics of the deities of which she was told while working in the island. Otherwise, one reads merely of "the serpent-god Damballa," or of "Papa Ogun," or some other isolated designation. It therefore seemed of capital importance in making this study to obtain both names of deities and as much information concerning these gods as possible, and the resulting data are presented here. 776 114 [121]

One reason why perhaps not more of such "systematic theology" of *vodun* as exists has been made available is the great degree of individual variation which confronts the student seeking this kind of information, since differences of opinion are invariably encountered. Even priests do not by any means agree, for these men and women are supreme individualists, each being the worshipper of particular deities and exploiting special skills, with the result that the frame of reference within 776 184 794 [193]

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which a gven priest operates differs from that of his colleagues — thougl, of course, always within the limitations set by the general pattern of the cult.

This range of opinion cannot be better illustrated than by giving, at the outset, three of the lists of *vodun* deities that were obtained, since here only so simple a matter is involved as names of gods. These lists, it must be remarked, were given by peopleliving in the same valley; were they to be compared with lists collected from other parts of the island even greater disparities would appear, as will be evident if the collection of nanes of *loa* given by Dorsainvil is consulted. Certain deities, wiose names recur below and are also to be found in Dorsainvl's list and in Parsons' notes would be included in any enuneration of gods of the cult, since their worship prevails throughout Haiti. Such would be Legba, Damballa, Aida Weto, Aizan, Ogun, Agwe, Loko, Shango, Ossange, Bosu, Simbi, Wangol, Baron Samedi, Gede, and Erzilie. Others, though rot enjoying as widespread a following, are worshipped over large areas. A number, however, either are gods that have resulted from the process of deifying the souls of those who, in a given locality, were renowned for their spiritual powe, or represent survivals of regional African deities that havebeen preserved in certain large family groups.

Turning now to the lists themselves, the first of these was obtained from a woman functionary of the cult. A single asterisk after aname indicates that its exact counterpart is found in the second list presented here, while two asterisks show the precise name was included in the third listing.

Aida	*Pétro*
Damballa Wedo**	Pétro
Aizan Damballa**	Bosu Trois Cornes*
Aida Wedo	Bosu Djo
Ogun Galloné	Gedeonsu*
Ogun Ferraille* **	'Ti Kita Demembré*
Ogun Balandjo* **	'Ti Jean pié sèche*

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Ogun Sabaho
Legba Avardra
Mon Loa
Solugui
Azao Comble (*or* Coumbe)
Azao Pemba*
Ashade Bokor
Agasu Wedo
Agasu Djeme
Shango
Nago Shango
Acque Fer
Golimé
Agwe Woyo*
Agwesi (*his son*)
Agweta (*his daughter*)
Kadia Bosu
Sobo
Taureau

Congo Zandor* **
Congo Savanne
Congo Wangol
Congo Guinée
Erzilie Mapiangle*
Erzilie Gé rouge* **
Simbi Proméné*
Simbi troi' zilé*
Simbi Wangol
Simbi en Deux Eaux* **
Simbi Galloné
Bakala Baka (*or* Babako Baka)
Lemba Zahou
Bumba*
Gran' Alouba
Gran' Agersi
Gran' Siligbo**
Mait' d'habitation
Mait' Carrefour** (*called* Louis di' fils)
Mari boben
Nangovi
Nangozên
Pélécon*
Ossange Batagri
Ossange Batala
Mait' Mapou (*called* Garçon Mgampé)
Mait' des Eaux
Clairmé
Mme. Clairmé
Clairmézine
Mait' Baleine (Cong' la Mè')

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The second list was given by a woman prominent in the worship of the *loa;* the deities in the preceding list whose names were also included in this (that is, those that were marked with a single asterisk) are not given here, but a double asterisk indicates, as before, that they are also found in the third list.

Rada	*Pétro*
Damballa-Aida-Wedo**	Jean Pétro
Maît' Damballa	Bosu d'l'eaux
Maît' Aizan	Maît' Bosu
Ogun Batagri**	Gedenibo**
Général Ogun	Gedeou
Legba grand-chemin	Maît' Clairmé
Legba nan barrière	Fille Clairmé
Legba Maît' 'bitation	Lemba**
Maît' Azaou	Seli-ho
Maît Ashade	
Maît' Bokor	
Maît' Agasu	
Agweta Woyo	
Sobo-Bade	
Papa Pierre	
Gran' Alouba	
Gran' Aguera	
Gran' nan Canari (*or* Gosen)	
Général Malugué	
Lt. Général Jean Baptiste	
Gran' Erzilie	
Erzilie Freda Dahomey	
Maît' Ossange**	
Maît' Batala	

The third list is that given by a minor functionary of the *vodun* cult, known for his ability as a leader of songs. In ad-

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dition to the *loa* marked with doubled asterisks above, the deities he named were:

Rada	*Pétro*
Aizan	Kita
Aizan Marché	Erzilie
Aizan Marché loko	Papa Simbi
Ogun d'l'eaux	Simbi Gran' Bois
Ogun Batala	Simbi Cimitière
Ogun Ashade	Simbi caille moin
Papa Ogun	Simbi Carrefour
Papa Agasu	Simbi Kita
Agasu Tèmèré	Simbi Magie
Siligbo en bas d'l'eaux	Simbi Pétro
Siligbo Vavou	Simbi Macaya
Loko Kisigwé	Gran' Bois
Loko Yai	Baron Samedi
Pa Loko	Gran' Siligbo
Marassa Nundé	
Loa Créole	
Dahomey Freda	

Some of the inconsistencies and individual variations in the naming of the gods as demonstrated in these lists may be specified. Outstanding are the differences found in the manner of naming a single god, as when Général Ogun is called Ogun Galloné or Papa Ogun, or when Aizan Damballa is listed as two *loa*, Maît' Damballa and Maît' Aizan. Lack of agreement, however, is manifested in other ways. Though Taureau is given as a Rada god, during one *vodun* dance for the Rada deities, when a man was possessed by this *loa*, he was quickly led away and brought out of his possession, since Taureau, regarded by the group giving the dance as a Pétro deity, could not properly come to a rite for gods of another "company." Or again, whereas the second list names Maît' Ossange and Maît' Batala as Rada *loa*, the first list places them

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776 in the Pétro group. The Erzilie gods are put in both cate-
794 gories, while Gran' Siligbo, designated in the first list as Pétro,
184 was assigned to both " companies " by the person who gave the third list, and named as a Rada deity by the one who gave the second. Furthermore, the third list, that of the singer, comprises *loa* whose " names " are undoubtedly the result of the acceptance by this man of certain phrases from his songs as valid designations of gods, especially such names as " Aizan Marché Loko " or " Loko Kisigwé." It is not without interest to speculate on this as a possible mechanism by means of which new names are added to the *vodun* pantheon.

Only one of the lists specifically assigned gods to other than the Rada and Pétro categories. One of these was termed *Guinée* and included the following names of deities:

Kaplaou	Congo
Enwizo	Loa Sinegal
Wangol	Cangaron

The other was the Ibo group, accorded two names, the Loa Mondongue and a *loa* named Ibo Lélé.

776 More variable, however, than classifications of the *loa* are accounts of attributes and interrelationships, and details of their worship. Yet certain traits and functions of the gods and aspects of their ritual can be set forth. One way in which
[533] the Haitians determine such matters is by reference to the songs sung in honor of the gods. Again and again the texts of such songs were cited as authority, suggesting that they are the " holy word " of *vodun* theology and an important device in stabilizing the details of belief. The attributes of the gods which follow are the result of extended discussions with folk who possessed all degrees of knowledge of the details of the cult and who were all active participants in it.

Legba, guardian of the crossroads, the highway, and the *barrière*, the entrance to every house, yard, or garden, is one of the most important *vodun* deities. He is generally conceived

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as a limping old man, clad in tatters, but in his several manifestations has more specific characteristics. Thus Legba Pié Cassé is described as having paralyzed legs, with arms held stiff and crooked before him, and Legba Avardra is spoken of as a *vagabond* who continually wanders the principal highways. Legba must first be summoned before any ceremony may begin, and when it was asked how Legba could be expected to come when called simultaneously to three or four or twenty or fifty places, the parallel given was that of the multiple manifestations of which God or Christ or a saint is capable. Legba, identified with St. Anthony, has Tuesday as his sacred day, and the plum tree is reserved for him. He "eats" a varicolored type of cock known as *poule zinga*, marked like a guinea-fowl, and in this differs from other gods who must indicate through a possessed devotee or a diviner what specific offering among the things they favor is wanted on the occasion of each sacrifice. Though in southern Haiti the smallest chick from each hatching is reserved for Legba, and at least once during his lifetime a man puts aside a bullock or a male goat as a sacrifice for this god, these customs do not prevail in Mirebalais. Here, when an offering to the gods is in prospect, Legba is included among the *loa* to whom a certain animal is promised, and, as in the case of other deities, this animal is thereafter under his protection. But this is the nearest approach to any special offerings for this god.

Damballa, an important Rada god whose symbol is the serpent, is said to bring rain because they sing "*Damballa nan l'eau*—Damballa in the water." The sacred color of this deity, worn by devotees under possession, is white, and the full initiates wear white necklaces as well as white clothing. This god, identified with St. Patrick, is especially worshipped on Thursdays, and shares the white fig tree with Erzilie and Gran' Siligbo. Damballa "eats" sacrifices of white chickens and pigeons, rice, milk, eggs, pineapples, and fig-bananas; and "drinks" *kola* and sweetened coffee. Damballa forms the

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776 [821] rainbow, and this is called an *arc d'alliance* between him and Aida Wedo, his wife, whose characteristic dress is blue and [171] white. Sobo, who in Dahomey is the god of thunder, is also believed in Haiti to give thunder, though he is not thought to live in the sky. As in Africa, his symbol is the ram. Aizan lives in the water, and is a favored deity because he gives his devotees the power of healing and of divining.

Erzilie, a *loa* of considerable importance, is envisaged as a pale, trembling woman who also inhabits the water. She constantly changes her dresses, of which she has many. All agree that she is a fabulously wealthy woman, who wears golden chains about her neck and has many rings, a characterization derived from her identification with Mater Dolorosa, whose chromolithographs depict her with many rich ornaments. As a Rada *loa* she "eats" the same food as Damballa, and wears white, like this other god, but has Friday as her sacred day. In her less pleasant manifestation of Erzilie Gé Rouge, the red-eyed one, she is a member of the Pétro "squad," and is held to be the wife of Simbi d'l'eau, with whom she is believed to get on especially well, since they "eat" different foods. Simbi, who is worshipped on Tuesdays and inhabits the mango and calabash trees, is said to drink heavily, however, and occasionally becomes so boistrous in his cups that he destroys the furniture and otherwise makes himself so objectionable that Erzilie is forced to leave him until he becomes sober.

[171] Ogun, in Haiti as in Nigeria, is the god of war. The Nigerian Shango is also found, though the Haitians conceive Shango as a *loa* who acts as the servant of the Ogun deities, [782] particularly Ogun Badagri and Ogun Batala. Ogun "eats" [822] red cocks and red beans mixed with rice, and his color, red, is worn by his devotees. To this fact may be referred the custom [114] of the Caco warriors who fought against the American Ma- [648] rines in 1918–20 to wear red as their distinguishing color, something referred to by Wirkus (pp. 22 ff.), though he

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combines an explanation having an element of correctness — "a charm against harm" — with entire misunderstanding when he speaks of the color as symbolizing a "declaration of a holy war against wrong and oppression." Some, but not all of the Ogun *loa* drink Haitian rum. Ogun himself is identified with St. James the Elder, and his sacred day is Wednesday. This *loa* is a *Nèg' défence* and protects his worshippers from bullets or wounds inflicted by weapons. Ogun Balandjo guards travelers, though he is not as strong as such others of the Ogun group as Ogun Badagri and Ogun Batala, with whom he shares the bamboo tree as a habitation. The former gives *connaissance* — knowledge — which permits those he possesses to prohesy; the latter endows with the ability to prepare healing baths. The Ogun *loa* Ezilie and Damballa are jealous gods. On the day sacred to each, a devotee puts fresh linen on his bed, places powder, soap, and a comb near by, and sleeps alone. If the devotee is a woman, her husband sleeps elsewhere; if a man, his wife must seek another place; otherwise the transgressor would die.

Agwe Woyo is god of the sea, but, as might be expected, neither he nor his son and daughter, Agweto and Agweta Woyo, figures as importantly in Mirebalais as in coastal areas. For the folk of Mirebalais the river-gods, particularly the spirit of the Artibonite River, are of much greater importance. This last-mentioned *loa*, named Clairmé, a Pétro deity like his wife and daughter, Mme. Clairmé and Clairmézine, lives in the deepest part of the stream with the other members of his "family." Similarly, the deepest parts, or *bassins*, of tributary streams hold the spirits of those waters. And since all these tributaries flow into the Artibonite, and the Artibonite empties into the ocean, it is said that when the river is in flood, Clairmé is engaged in inspecting his domain, being greeted by the spirits of all the smaller rivers as he passes their mouths. At this time the flow of the water in each tributary is arrested until he has gone by, when, in a great swirl,

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776 823 it joins the flooded Artibonite as its master accompanies Claimé on his way to consult with the great ruler of the sea, Agwe. Actually, at the height of the rainy season the force of the light colored muddy water of the major stream holds back the darker colored flow of its tributaries in a manner which accords with the legend, so that, observing the Tombe River at one such time, the Haitians who were present said: "The Tombe is waiting for its master to pass."

776 [184] [799] Gede, a deity who figures in both the Rada and the Pétro groups as chief functionary under Baron Samedi, ruler of cemeteries, is tolerated rather than favored, though his rewards to his devotees include the refusal to dig a premature grave for them. When Gede possesses a devotee at a dance, Dambulla, Ogun, and the other Rada gods "leave" at once, and those who are possessed by them come out of their possessions. For though Gede is no less a *loa* than other gods, "He is a *zombi* and is fed apart"; as the Haitians say: "The *loa* are like human beings. They will not mingle with the dead, and Gede is of the dead." His color is black, and Saturday is his sacred day. He "eats" anything, hot peppers, cassava, roasted corn, roasted bananas, and other roasted foods. He drinks *clairin* — much of it — and at great ceremonies a black goat and chickens are killed for him, as well as those chickens with ruffled feathers called *djakati*, which in all the New World, as in Africa, are believed to discover and dig up magic charms set against their owners. He lives in the cemetery, "behind the cross." There are a number of deities whose names are compounded with the name of Gede — Gedehou, Gedeconou, Gedehun — and hence the question whether or not this is a generic term or a specific designation is pertinent. There is no agreement on this point, and it could only be established that those *loa* who bear the same name, such as all Ogun or Bosu or Simbi deities, are brothers; but who the parents of these groups may have been is not known.

[822] [782] [825]

Associated with Simbi and Gede in the Pétro "squad" are

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the various forms of Boss and 'Ti Kita. Some hold that Boss lives in the mountains and the cemeteries, but not in the water; others state that he does not live in the mountains, but in the water and on the plain. As a matter of fact, there is a Boss of the water, and there would also seem to be one of the plain, of the crossroads, and of the mountains, each with its own name. 'Ti Kita, conceived as a woman, is also associated with the cult of magic and the dead. She is "fed" a goat, which is almost invariably referred to as Maria Louisa, or Louisa.

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APPENDIX II

SOME COMMENTS ON METHOD

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THE MATERIAL presented in this book was gathered during the summer of 1934, when an expedition was arranged that made it possible for Mrs. Herskovits and myself to spend a little more than three months in Mirebalais. For so comparatively short a stay, it was particularly advantageous to have two persons carry on the work, each of whom brought to the study of Haitian culture a background of experience with related Negro civilizations in the New World and in West Africa. This enabled the study to begin at a point of considerable familiarity with the underlying sanctions of Haitian institutions.

According to plan, the investigation was concentrated in a restricted region. It therefore follows that unless explicitly stated, all references to custom and belief in this book have bearing only upon the folk of the valley where the study was conducted. No sweeping generalizations for all of Haiti are to be deduced, for regional variations do exist and are of no little importance in suggesting African tribal differences in custom which have been retained because of the African tradition of cultural autonomy for separate localities.

The greatest disadvantage of a short field-study is that the resulting picture of the culture must of necessity be a seasonal one. No first-hand description of the important festivities that

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mark the New Year, the time of harvest, All Saints' Day, or Easter can be given; on the other hand, the accounts of those portions of the agricultural cycle that take place during the rainy season, especially the operations of the important co-operative work-groups, could be followed carefully. In the field of religion, good fortune and a friendly entrée, the harvest of many months spent in field-work among Negro peoples elsewhere, but above all in Guinée — Africa — afforded invitations to a number of private ceremonies that might occur at any season. And the same background, together with the insatiable interest of the Negro in the nature and the functioning of his gods, made for such detailed discussions of native theological concept and philosophical point of view as could not have been bettered no matter what the time of year.

In the field, the procedure followed in earlier investigations was continued; a house was found in the village where it was possible to settle down and quietly observe life as it drifted past the door. A number of acquaintances became habitual visitors, and these, together with those others whose services as interpreters were needed, especially in the early days of the stay when the understanding of Créole and the ability to converse in it were limited, constituted those to whom questions were most frequently put or to whom happenings that had been observed were referred for clarification. Agreement on all points, or any point, in fact, bearing either on belief or ritual observance was by no means invariably found, but soundness of method in the study of culture must recognize that there are no "correct" answers to questions of custom; and that the acceptance of the fact of individual differences of behavior and point of view within the general framework of a given set of traditions is the only valid approach to the realities of human civilization.

Obviously, not all the material presented here is the result of first-hand observation, for much insight can be derived from the method of question and answer when carefully used

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123 with a native resident of the locality that is being studied. A
124 great deal was observed, but observation is at best a matter of chance, as, for example, in the matter of birth-customs, which were not witnessed because no birth occurred in a family with whom close relations had been established, as against the ritual of death, where information was checked through observation when a death occurred in the family of friends. If observation alone were relied upon for authentic information, no rounded picture of any culture could be achieved much short of a lifetime of effort. It is entirely possible for an ethnographer who is conversant with the outlines of the culture of a given society to check statements made to him against their probability in terms of the inner logic of the culture he is studying; it is even a simpler matter to obtain independent statements concerning the same facet of behavior and to discover whether, allowing for variations within the logic of the culture, a given explanation or description of a certain custom is to be accepted as valid. There is no question that suspicion or misunderstanding of purpose is the cause of the passing on of much misinformation; but it is remarkable how often, if the student knows patience and does not attempt to probe the most secret phases of a culture during the initial period of his stay, a misleading or evasive explanation given in the early days will later be corrected voluntarily as "a mistake."

123 Much nonsense has been written about the need for the student of the customs of a people to become a "participant observer" of those customs, by doing what, in common parlance, is termed "going native." This may be feasible among some folk — in the South Seas, perhaps — but let it be stated emphatically that this is neither possible nor of benefit among West African Negroes and their New World Negro descendants. There is no tradition that is more deeply shared among them than that of the importance of valuing individual iden-

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tity in the scheme of things. Implicit in this is a sense of dig- 123
nity that does not permit a man to escape the dictates set by any caste lines that may be drawn. The ethnographer, again, especially if he be a white man, has what has been called a high degree of social visibility, and any attempt to live according to the canons of native life would forthwith expose him to the thrusts of a deadly weapon in the hands of the Negro, the weapon most destructive of that mutual respect that is the basis for all free and friendly intercourse between two human beings, whatever their race — ridicule. In Negro cultures the white student must be content to remain what he actually is, an observer. He can and must be, if his work is to be of real worth, a sympathetic observer, and given patience, tact, and sincerity, he will form warm friendships among the native folk after he comes to know them well, so that as a friend it will not be denied him to share with them their inner values. It is on this basis that the work reported on in this volume was carried out.

Another aspect of method is implicit in the form in which 121
the field material has been presented in this book. Studies such as this, concerned with a people whose ascertainable past history shows the effect of first-hand, continued contact between two cultures, have in recent years come to be termed *acculturation studies*. Investigations of this sort differ from those of a more conventional type in that they not only recognize and stress the fact that contact between peoples is basic to human life; but on the assumption that all cultures, no matter how remote or primitive, reflect this fact, frankly take as their material the customs of societies where the technology, habits, and beliefs are the result of definitely ascertainable historic contacts. For this approach holds that if a competent analysis is made of the base-line from which the process of change in a given society took its beginnings, and if the effects of the applications of these stimuli are carefully recorded, a more pre-

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cise determination of the dynamics of cultural change and the inner relationship of cultural elements will be possible than can come from the use of any other method.

It is not suggested that other approaches to these problems have not made their contributions of importance, nor that they will not in the future continue to aid in throwing light on the difficult questions relating to the nature of culture and its interaction with its human carriers. But those who are devoting themselves to the discovery of historical processes through "reconstructions" of the movements of peoples and cultures tend to neglect the inner relationships that give to a culture the significance it has for those who live under it. In similar fashion, those who abjure history and devote themselves to the analyses of the interrelationships and functioning of the elements of a single remote "simple" society are handicapped by the static nature of their approach, by their neglect of the basic principle that every culture is a unique historical continuum, and by their resulting naïveté in the face of cultural change.

The gap between these positions is filled by the study of acculturation. If this approach be considered from the side of cultural dynamics, it is seen that of all who study primitive societies, the student of acculturation alone works under the conditions of control afforded by reference to recorded history. On the other hand, he is also in a strategic position to study the interrelationship between the elements of a given culture and the manner in which the functioning whole influences the individuals who live under it. For how better analyze the mechanisms of culture than under those conditions where, to varying degrees, forces that are known entities rather than hypothetical reconstructions have been operative or are actually at work? How better attack the difficult problems of the inner relationships between the elements of a given culture and their influence on the human psyche than in those situations where the psychological stresses and strains

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incident upon culture-change enable the student to observe, under conditions of known historical control, the results of changes in settled habits and belief and behavior? 121

Foremost among the considerations that present themselves in this connection is that of the value of utilizing historical documentation as an aid in the study of culture. This has general relevance, since the obliviousness of students of primitive societies to historical records bearing upon the peoples they study is a commonplace, while no less so is the failure of historians adequately to treat the information they uncover about primitive peoples in the records through which they have worked. In a sense, this is neither surprising nor blameworthy. Each group has its own techniques, so that just as the ethnologist is not competent as an archivist, in like manner the historian finds it difficult both to assess the value of information concerning primitive folk, and to present it so that its greatest usefulness may be realized. 121 127

In studying Haitian culture, however, the employment of both historical and ethnological data is almost mandatory. The serious errors that a lack of both kinds of background has given rise to cannot be overlooked, matters so fundamental as the names of African tribes given the slaves in the early historical sources being an important case in point. Thus, the term *Caplahou*, a geographical one, is given as a tribal designation in a number of modern works, while elsewhere the Ibo are listed as a Nago sub-tribe, quite without realization that the Ibo and Yoruban Nago not only are separated by a considerable distance, but that in their cultural affiliations they differ widely. More striking, and more amusing, is the translation of the word *marasa* given by one popularizer who, lacking knowledge of the existence of the twin cult in Africa, rendered it as "the spirit of the race." 121 127 114

On the other hand, attempts to interpret Haitian culture without reference to historical documentation have also been subject to unfortunate errors. Significant here are the failures 121 127

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121 to recognize that many of the condemned traits of Haitian
127 culture ascribed to innate Negro characteristics actually represent retentions of the patterns of the pre-Revolutionary masters of the island. In the combination of the two disciplines, then — the utilization of available historical sources concerning a people to aid in an understanding of their ethnology, and the use of material derived from the study of present-day primitive folk to aid the historian in evaluating and elucidating his findings — the potentialities of this dual approach are evident in this study of the forces behind Haitian acculturation, and its results.

121 Attention may finally be called to the range of problems inherent in the phenomenon of socialized ambivalence marking so much of Haitian psychology, whose attack should add to an understanding of the influence of culture upon the formation of personality. For evidently those situations where acculturation is continuing or has constituted a factor of importance in the ascertainable historic past of a people afford many more searching leads than those others where a stable, "uncontaminated" series of cultural patterns create far fewer problems of adjustment and maladjustment.

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APPENDIX III

NOTES ON THE TEXT

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(Citations to sources give only the last name of the author, and a large roman numeral in parentheses following a name indicates that more than one title published by this writer has been used as a reference; as: "Dorsainvil (II)." Volume numbers of works in more than one volume are indicated by small roman numerals; as: "St. Mery, ii." The arabic numerals which follow are page designations.)

INTRODUCTION

[1] St. Mery, ii, 229.
[2] Ibid., 238–9; Charlevoix, ii, 414–22.
[3] St. Mery, loc. cit.
[4] Ibid., ii, 237–8.
[5] Stoddard, Ch. X, XII.
[6] Edwards, iii, 84.
[7] St. John, 41–2; Ardouin, 20–1; de Vaissière, 367.
[8] Mackenzie, ii, 122.
[9] Dorsainvil (II), 108–11.
[10] Mackenzie, ii, 111–15.
[11] Dorsainvil (II), 104–5; Mackenzie, ii, 67.
[12] Furnished through the courtesy of M. Jacques Antoine, of the Legation of Haiti in Washington.
[13] Davis, 218–23; also occasional comments in Craigt and Wirkus.
[14] St. Mery, ii, 243–4.

CHAPTER I

[1] Charlevoix, ii, 438–9.
[2] St. Mery, i, 23 ff.
[3] Ibid., i, 34.
[4] Ibid., i, 28–34.
[5] This has been remarked by Dorsainvil (I), 135; see also Herskovits, M. and F. (IV), 117–23.
[6] Cf. Herskovits (II), passim.
[7] Cf. Herskovits, M. and F. (I), passim.

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CHAPTER II

[1] De Vaussière, 153–4.
[2] Ibid., 20, note 2.
[3] St. Mery, i, 5.
[4] Charlevoix, ii, 9.
[5] De Vaussière, 45.
[6] Ibid., 52; St. Mery, i, 24–5.
[7] De Vaussière, 52–3.
[8] Ibid., 53.
[9] Scelle, i, 218–20.
[10] De Vaussière, 21; Wimpffen, 82–83.
[11] Labat, i, Book II, 73–4.
[12] St. Mery, ii, 25 ff.
[13] Ibid., ii, 27–8, 47–50.
[14] Ibid., i, 80–1.
[15] De Vaussière, 104–5.
[16] Quoted by de Vaussière, 105.
[17] Compare, for example, de Vaussière, 330 ff., with St. John, 4–7.
[18] St. Mery, i, 348 ff.
[19] De Vaussière, 333.
[20] Ibid., 333–4.
[21] Ibid., 280–1.
[22] Letter of Mm. de Lamotte and Lalanne from Port-au-Prince, 25 October 1752; quoted by de Vaussière, 300–1.
[23] Stoddard, 34–6.
[24] De Vaussière, 255–75.
[25] St. Mery, i, 9.
[26] Ibid., i, 12.
[27] Ibid., i, 12–13.
[28] Ibid., i, 16.
[29] Ibid., i, 21; de Vaussière, 267 ff.
[30] St. Mery, i, 22; de Vaussière, 314–15.
[31] St. Mery, i, 11.
[32] Labat, i, Book II, plate opp. p. 215; de Vaussière, opp. 289.
[33] Wimpffen, 103.
[34] Ibid., 103–5; de Vaussière, 295–6.
[35] De Vaussière, 297, quoting Laujon, i, 135.
[36] Quoted by de Vaussière, 80.
[37] Labat: *Nouveau Voyage*, vii, 125, 130, quoted by de Vaussière, 81–2.
[38] Bellegarde, 53 ff., comments interestingly on this fact.
[39] De Vaussière, 56 ff.
[40] Dorsainvil (II), 83 ff.; Stoddard, *passim*.
[41] Summarized in de Vaussière, 89 ff.

CHAPTER III

[1] Scelle, i, 125–6.
[2] Ibid., i, 131.
[3] Charlevoix, i, 422.
[4] De Vaussière, 174.
[5] Scelle, i, 131–2.
[6] Charlevoix, i, 422.
[7] Madiou, i, *passim*; Davis, 16–23.
[8] De Vaussière, 153–6.
[9] Gaston-Martin, 219, 230; de Vaussière, 164–5.
[10] St. Mery, i, 86–7.
[11] Ibid., i, 99.
[12] Ibid., i, 68.
[13] Stoddard, *passim*, but especially Ch. IV.

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[14] E.g., St. Mery, i, 5; de Vaissière, 155; Léger, 41; Stoddard, 8–9.

[15] Labat, ii, 39; for another classification see Snelgrave, 158–9.

[16] Herskovits, M. and F. (III).

[17] St. Mery, i, 29–30.

[18] De Vaissière, 156–8; Gaston-Martin, 112.

[19] Scelle, i, 303–6.

[20] Labat, ii, 48; de Vaissière, 158, note 1; Gaston-Martin, 122 ff.

[21] De Vaissière, 165–9.

[22] Charlevoix, ii, 436–8.

[23] St. Mery, i, 38–9.

[24] Op. cit., 201–2.

[25] St. Mery, i, 42–3, 63–4; Charlevoix, ii, 301 ff.; de Vaissière, 177 ff.

[26] St. Mery, i, 38.

[27] Ibid., i, 51.

[28] Labat, ii, 53.

[29] Charlevoix, ii, 302–3; de Vaissière, 209–11.

[30] De Vaissière, 189 ff.

[31] Labat, ii, 1, 149; St. Mery, i, 61–2; de Vaissière, 230–1, 238–43.

[32] Herskovits, M. and F. (II), 75.

[33] Snelgrave, 162 ff.; Gaston-Martin, 102 ff.

[34] Charlevoix, i, 422–4.

[35] Scelle, i, 167.

[36] Charlevoix, ii, 122–4, 235–6; de Vaissière, 232.

[37] St. Mery, i, 50–1.

[38] Quoted by de Vaissière, 229–30.

[39] Stoddard, 63.

[40] De Vaissière, 235–8, 243–8.

[41] St. Mery, ii, 509, 497–503.

[42] Dorsainvil (II), 56 ff.; Davis, 36–114; Stoddard, *passim*.

[43] Dorsainvil (II), 189–342; Léger, 160–233; Davis, 114 ff.

[44] Mackenzie, i, 49–50.

[45] St. John, 158–9.

[46] St. John, 139.

[47] St. John, Mackenzie, Hazard, and others, *passim*.

[48] St. John, 211 ff.

[49] Mackenzie, ii, 1[illegible]–30.

[50] Dorsainvil (II), [illegible]1; Léger, 186–7.

CHAPTER IV

[1] Dorsainvil (II), 200–1; Mackenzie, i, 36; ii, 133–4.

[2] St. Mery, i, 42–3. More recently the idea that the Haitian peasant has no regular time for meals has again developed, as in Wirkus, 72.

[3] Hall gives the most considered account of the Société Congo as it flourishes on the Isle à Gonave; Wirkus, 215 ff., also describes this organization, but in a popularized and, when compared to Hall's scientific statement, distorted version.

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[000] [114] [852] [845] [844] [608]

[1] Price-Mars (I), 206, note 1, and Wirkus, 215, define the term *combite*.

[2] Wirkus, 51, 288, differentiates these work-drums from other types.

[3] Wirkus, 191, has described the efficiency with which an organized Haitian work-group accomplished its task on the road.

[4] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 146–8.

[5] A good description of a Haitian market as observed in 1835 is to be found in Hanna, 55–6.

[6] Compare Mackenzie, i, 28–9.

[7] The poverty of the Haitians is often exaggerated, and especially the concept of wealth as held by the peasant is caricatured in a way that accentuates a misunderstanding of his economic psychology. For an extreme instance of this see Craige, 42–5.

CHAPTER V

[1] Price-Mars (I), 34, speaks of the need immediately after birth of "immersing the newborn infant in a lustral bath carefully concocted by the *vodun* priest who consecrates the child to the divinity that can preserve him against the evil-doing of malignant spirits, and rescue him from 'the power of supernatural ills.'"

[2] Craige, 68–9, and Wirkus, 97–9, both give accounts of wayside births in which the mothers resumed their journeys immediately after bearing their children.

[3] Price-Mars (I), 34, says: "It is forbidden to speak aloud the 'baptismal' name of a child under certain circumstances, above all during the night."

[4] Parsons (I), 174, notes that "an infant born with teeth is one whose birth has been delayed so long by the *marasa* [twins] that the teeth have developed."

[5] Price-Mars (I), 235, derives the importance of the godmother from the conditions of slavery, when a child was often cared for by a foster-mother. See also St. Mery, i, 35–6, and Mackenzie, i, 273–4.

CHAPTER VI

[1] The institution of *plaçage* is mentioned in passing by Craige, 203–4, and, with complete lack of understanding, by Wirkus, 73 and 307.

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[2] Mackenzie, ii, 124.
[3] St. John, 162.
[4] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 201–2.
[5] Price-Mars (I), 205, gives this as the proper age for a man of the region of Kenskoff, near Port-au-Prince, to marry.
[6] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 216.
[7] Ibid., 211–12. A facsimile of this letter is given on pp. 213–15.
[8] Ibid., 216–17.
[9] Mackenzie, i, 58.
[10] St. John, 145–6.
[11] St. John, 145.
[12] Mackenzie, i, 57. Wirkus, 222, mentions a case of polygyny on the Isle à Gonave where the wives apparently inhabited one compound with their mutual husband.

CHAPTER VII

[1] This seems to differ in various parts of Haiti; thus, near Port-au-Prince, the father of the girl "designates to his future son-in-law the land where his house is to be built," according to Price-Mars (I), 216.
[2] Cf. Parsons (I), 165.
[3] Among the obligations of the peasant mentioned by Price-Mars (I), 54, is "the respect due to the elders who are the repositories of tradition."

CHAPTER VIII

[1] Whether or not vodun is a religion, a problem which Haitian writers (e.g., Price-Mars (I), 32 ff.) are prone to debate at length, need not be considered here, since to an ethnologist the answer is too patently affirmative to require discussion.
[2] St. Mery, i, 45–6.
[3] Ibid., i, 46.
[4] De Vastibra, 178–9.
[5] Dorsainvil (I), 156 ff.; Price-Mars (I), 39.
[6] For a useful resumé of statements concerning Haitian serpent-worship, the grievous misunderstanding of which is an outstanding characteristic of this honest but ill-conceived work, see Williams, passim.
[7] Price-Mars (I), 118 ff., also records his belief that serpent-worship is far less important than it has been represented, saying: "We believe it to be well-nigh abolished." Seabrook, 310–11, also holds to this view.
[8] Parsons (I), 155, states: "There is little or no philosophic or religious expression of the theory to be

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heard in Haiti, but descriptive details of the practice abound." Elsewhere (p. 158) she speaks of "this higgledy piggledy pantheon" of *loa*, whose traits "none . . . [were] . . . able to describe . . . at all systematically." Price-Mars (I), 52, however, mentions the existence of a theology based on African beliefs but unlike that described here.

[9] Cf. Parsons (I), 168.

[10] Nowhere is the confusion with which writers on Haiti have approached and presented *vodun* theological concepts better exemplified than in the passage found in Craige, 58–9; or 71, where a charm for working evil magic is spoken of as "something having to do with voodoo."

[11] Despite the importance of possession, one would hesitate before accepting in its entirety the somewhat simplistic approach of Dorsainvil that "*le vodou se résume à l'idée de la possession*," (I), 115.

[12] St. Mery, i, 55.

[13] Parsons (I), 169, note 2, speaks of baptism, but states "*loi* Pétrou is one you do not baptize, as you do other *loi* when they come . . ." — a custom at variance with Mirebalais procedure.

[14] Cf. Parsons (I), 165, however, where the meaning of *marré* is given "to get the spirit."

[15] See Parsons (I), 164–5, for a description of a "shrine" of a worshipper of the *loa*.

[16] Cf. Dorsainvil (I), 115 ff.

[17] This is undoubtedly the explanation of Seabrook's "hermaphroditic god" called Papa Nebo (Gede-nibo), which he shows on pp. 9 and 10 of the plates of his book. As is indicated elsewhere in this volume, Gede, who does not partake of this characteristic in the least, has thus been woefully misunderstood by Seabrook.

[18] Dorsainvil (I), 72–4, describes possession as a *vodun* ceremony, and Wirkus, 173 ff., also gives a description of a possession scene, but his account is pitched so hysterically as materially to lessen its usefulness for serious comparisons.

[19] (I) *passim*, but especially 18–19, 58–61, 86–7, 111–12. A definition of *vodun* more acceptable to those who approach social phenomena from an ethnological and historical point of view is to be found on page 190. Price-Mars (I), 123 ff., gives an extended criticism of Dorsainvil's hypothesis, though from quite a different point of

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view from that given here.

[88] Parsons (I), 171, describes how she witnessed a woman "refuse the visitation of her *loa*."

[89] Price-Mars (I), 34, speaks of the "*obligations annuelles de participer par un acte quelconque aux sacrifices cultuels* . . ." laid on the voduist.

[90] St. Mery, i, 51; see also Dorsainvil (I), 48.

[91] Seabrook's description of a "Pétro" ceremony (pp. 31 ff.) deserves, on the basis of its inner inconsistencies, to be considered a masterpiece of misstatement and misinterpretation. Its effect, and the effect of others like it, have done much to perpetuate this incorrect idea of the Pétro rites.

[92] Dorsainvil, Price-Mars, and Parsons all employ these terms, rather than *papaloi* and *mamaloi*, the designations found in more popular books such as those of Craige, Seabrook, and Wirkus. The latter two of these writers seem confused about these words and fail to make it clear whether or not they mean the same or different functionaries of the *vodun* cult when they use the words *houngan* and *papaloi*.

[93] Compare Dorsainvil (I), 75–7 and 121, where he expresses a low opinion of the *houngan*, holding him unreliable and insincere in his worship, as contrasted to the *vrai serviteur*.

[94] Op. cit., 175–9.

[95] Even though followers of the *vodun* cult are more organized in some parts of Haiti than in Mirebalais, it is arrant nonsense to speak of a "supreme high priestess" of the cult, its *grande mamaloi*, as does Seabrook, 117, or of a "black pope of voodoo" as Wirkus has done (in *Harper's Magazine*, Vol. 168, pp. 38–43, 188–98; December 1933–January 1934).

[96] A sober statement of the degrees of initiation into the cult (although these do not hold for Mirebalais) is to be found in Dorsainvil (I), 188–9, and also 62.

CHAPTER IX

[1] Price-Mars (I), 144, gives a long and excellent list of the reasons for offering sacrifices.

[2] A description of a *hounfort* destroyed by the Marines during their occupation, and a detailed account of its

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contents, is given by Wirkus, 178–9.

[1] Compare this description with the *humfort* pictured in Johnston, p. 194.

[2] It is to be emphasized that in the course of the *vodun* rituals witnessed during this field-work, none of the "frenzy of the blood lust" that is so favorite an aspect of these ceremonies with writers of books on Haiti was encountered. As an extreme example of this heightening of the tone with which a ceremony is described, the work of Seabrook may be cited, for phrases such as "blood-maddened, sex-maddened, god-maddened" used by him mark perhaps an all-time record for distortion of the inner discipline of the *vodun* cult.

[3] Cf. Parsons's brief sketch, (I), 172–3, of a *mangé loi*, though the "bloody anointing" of which she speaks was not seen to occur in Mirebalais *services*. Detailed descriptions of what apparently were *services* are given by Wirkus, 168 ff., who, though honest in recounting what he saw, realized nothing of its significance; and Seabrook (pp. 54–70), who reads so much into what he purports to have witnessed that the entire account is rendered useless.

CHAPTER X

[1] Compare Parsons (I), 167–72.

[2] The drunkenness at serious dances reported by Parsons (I), 172, and others, would not be tolerated in Mirebalais.

[3] Price-Mars (I), 208, gives the name of *assotè* for the great drum.

[4] Much nonsense has been written concerning these drums. Many writers—all non-Haitians—assert the existence of a drum language, which seems to be an assertion of dubious truth.

[5] This is a striking example of what Dorsainvil (I), 73–4 and 131 ff., calls the *masque réalisique* in detailing the effects of possession on the features of the possessed. See also the discussion of possession in Price-Mars (I), 122–3. The Gede possession described by Craige, 73–4, must, on the basis of customary Haitian behavior under possession, be subject to reinterpretation.

[6] Cf. Parsons (I), 170.

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CHAPTER XI

[1] Compare Parsons (I), 173–4, where the cult of twins is discussed and some of its rites described.

[2] Price-Mars (I), 35, mentions this as a power believed to be held by twins.

[3] The phrase "cult of the dead" as employed here must be sharply differentiated from its misuse by Seabrook (82 ff.).

[4] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 34.

[5] Price-Mars (I), 34, speaks of the custom of always burying charms with the dead.

[6] Wakes have been described by Seabrook, 89–91, and others, but in such a manner that it is difficult to dissect out the reality of what was witnessed from the imaginative elements.

[7] Cf. Wirkus, 221–3. The custom of giving the dead food at the grave, which he describes, is not followed when burial occurs in the Mirebalais town cemetery, nor, seemingly, elsewhere in the valley.

[8] See the description of a commemorative rite for the dead in Price-Mars (I) 148–50.

[9] This is a rule followed in West African practice.

CHAPTER XII

[1] An interesting attempt to account for this is found in St. John, 230–1, where he speaks of the "two Vaudoux sects," one good and one evil.

[2] St. Mery, i, 56. The term *gerde* is almost entirely absent in later writings, the more sensational *wanga* (*ouange*) being preferred.

[3] Léger, 55, note 54.

[4] Cf. Dorsainvil (I), 171.

[5] No better summary of this could be had than that in Parsons (I), 175, written after a single séance with a *gangan*.

[6] Pp. 324–31.

[7] Mr. J. C. Trevor informs me that during a recent field-trip to the Virgin Islands he discovered books of magic in common use, obtained from a Chicago dealer.

[8] It is not without interest to note that in the case reported in a Port-au-Prince newspaper and reproduced in facsimile by Seabrook, 334, concerning a woman from the commune of Mirebalais accused of sorcery, the name of the woman was *Azémar*.

[9] Cf. Parsons (II), 396.

[10] See above, pp. 91–3.

[11] The closest correspondence

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to the Haitian *bake* found in the New World are the *bakru* of Dutch Guiana, who in turn derive from the "little folk" of West African belief, beings that are always important in making magic. See Herskovits, M. and F. (IV), 105–7.

[12] Dorsainvil (I), 130, mentions this rite.

[13] Notably by Seabrook, 92 ff., who made great capital of the concept and purported actually to have seen these beings! Parsons (II), ii, 591. Tale 77, I, reproduces a Haitian's account in Créole of how a Sorcerer goes about ensnaring a victim to make of him a zombi.

[14] Parsons (I), 178–9.

CHAPTER XIII

[1] Price-Mars (II), 96 ff., gives a detailed description of the peasant house. The beehive-shaped hut mentioned by Craige, 36, is not found in Mirebalais, though the valley is but a short distance from Hinche, of which he was writing. Seabrook, 18, also describes the interior of a peasant house.

[2] Charlevoix, ii, 42.

[3] St. John, 153.

[4] Seabrook, 104 ff., devotes some space to a discussion of *pwitence*, but so changes its meaning to the Haitians that it is quite useless in making a serious comparison of data.

[5] See the discussion in Dorsainvil (I), 130, concerning other retentions of African motor behavior in Haiti.

[6] Craige, Seabrook, and Wirkus, all give lively accounts of cock-fights.

[7] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 1–15, for accounts of the manner in which stories are told in Haiti. It is to be noted that the African belief that a tale must not be told during the daytime persists there.

[8] A large collection of Haitian folk-tales has been published recently by Parsons (II), ii, 470–556.

[9] Audain has published what is perhaps the largest collection of Créole proverbs; his work, however, is unfortunately out of print.

CHAPTER XIV

[1] Dorsainvil (I), 138.

[2] Exceptions to this statement must be made in the case of the careful study of the relationship between Catholicism and voodoo by Price-

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Mars (I), 165 ff., and to the briefer discussions of this point in Dorsainvil (I), 35–7, and Parsons (I), *passim*, but especially p. 179. Some consideration is also given to this mingling of religious beliefs in Wirkus, 20, 22, 177, 179, and in Seabrook, 17–20, though in this latter citation the distortion of native belief usually found in Seabrook's book is not absent.

* Wirkus, 188–9, describes the baptism of Rada drums, though certain details in his account appear somewhat unlikely.
* Compare Parsons (I), 165, 175.
* Cf. Ortiz, *passim*.
* Cf. Ramos, Ch. V; Ignace Nina-Rodrigues, *passim*.
* Price-Mars (I), 180–1, gives the following correspondences between vodou-cult deities and saints of the Church:

Legba:	St. Anthony
Ogun Balendjo:	St. James the Elder
Agaman Tonnerre:	St. John the Baptist
Sogny Balagueze:	St. Joseph
Roi d'Arcahaie:	St. Louis (King of France)
Grande Mambo Ezouli:	St. Anne
Mahesse Erzulie:	the Holy Virgin (especially the Holy Virgin of the Nativity)
La Sirène:	the Assumption
Pierre D'Ambalo:	St. Peter

Seabrook, 13, speaks of "Mahesse Erilie . . . the mild blessed Virgin Mary," and Wirkus, 178–9, correlates Damballa with St. Patrick, and Legba with St. Peter.

* The original of the part of this *ossuion* given here is reproduced in facsimile by Seabrook, 309, and quoted in full by Price-Mars (I), 183–4; the latter also gives, 182–3, another of these *ossuions populaires*, to Ste. Radegonde, who is regarded in it as an associate of Baron Samedi in the cemetery. For *ossuions* used in the fetish cult of Cuba, see Ortiz, 90 ff.
* Price-Mars (I), 52, speaks of "*le catholicisme hybride de nos masses populaires*," as later, 58, he denominates vodou as an African religion "*altérée par sa juxtaposition plus que séculaire à la religion catholique. . . .*" See also p. 122. The points of resemblance between Catholicism and vodou which encouraged the re-

nubing symbols are trilingly numbered on pp. 184–5.

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[10] (I), 169 ff.

[11] The tale of the priest's paralysis is also told in Price-Mars (I), 172.

[12] According to Price-Mars (I), 171, there are three classes of religionists in Haiti: Catholics, voduists, and those who hold simultaneously to both forms.

[13] Cf. Dorsainvil (I), 40-2.

[14] See Price-Mars (I), 158-9, for a description of the services in a "shouting" American Negro church he visited in Washington, D.C., which makes the point brought forward here.

[15] Compare Dorsainvil (I), 18-19.

CHAPTER XV

[1] (I), 60.

[2] Herskovits, M. and F. (III), and Herskovits (III).

[3] Herskovits (II).

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APPENDIX IV

GLOSSARY OF CRÉOLE TERMS USED IN THE TEXT

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NOTE: The orthography employed in this book to render Créole terms has retained French spelling except where this is confusing to the English-speaking reader (so that, for example, *oui*," *ui* see, " from *voir* in written *wi*, and *ouanga*, " evil charm," given as *wanga*), or where obvious African derivation makes phonetic spelling desirable (as *vodun*, " voodoo," instead of *voudou*; or *houngan*, " priest," instead of *houngaw*). In such cases, vowels have the so-called " Continental " values.

acassan, an African dish which figures in offerings to the *loa* as well as in the Haitian cuisine.

ayee, calabash rattle used in sacred dances.

action de grâce, a ritual comprising prayers and hymns of the Catholic Church which precedes any service for the gods of the vodun cult.

adjaïkou, a male initiate in the vodun cult; also pronounced *wajaïkou*.

adoration, song sung at vodun rites or ceremonies of the cult of the dead when offerings of money are given the officiant.

avrit, a magic charm to ward off evil; see *dragon*, *gede*.

aunger, a figure in vodun dances saluting the gods.

avoiou, a dance of the vodun cycle marked by pronounced movements of arm- and shoulder-muscles; also pronounced *yawoiou*.

aziza, a witch or werewolf; see *loup-garou*, *mamaloi aiza*.

baguette, drumstick.

baigneur des morts, the functionary who bathes the dead and watches over the body.

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104 *baka*, an evil spirit actuated by a *loa* which commonly takes the form of some animal when carrying misfortune to the one against whom it has been directed; an evil spirit who acts as emissary for the one who has entered into a compact with it; see *engagement*.

bal, name for any European type of dance.

bamboche, generic term used to denote a recreational dance; often employed in Mirebalais to designate a serious *vodun* dance by those whose only participation in it is social.

bamda, an African type of social dance.

barrière, an entrance-way; the guardian of the *barrière* is Legba.

basilique, a tree whose leaves are used in making infusions employed for medico-magical purposes.

bassin, a deep pool in a stream, the favorite residence of water-spirits.

bawo, practitioner of magic.

bois, tree; also called *pié bois*.

bornol, to "restrain"; the action taken to prevent a malign spirit from inflicting harm on the person or family to whom it has come.

bossal, wild, untamed, unbaptized; used particularly for any spirit or object in the *vodun* cult prior to its consecration.

bouceau, bonfire; the designation "buccaneer" derives from this word.

boula, the smallest of the trio of *vodun* drums.

caille, house; *caille mystères*, house where gods of the *vodun* cult are worshipped.

calebasse, a gourd; an African type of social dance.

calenda, an African type of social dance.

canarie, earthenware jar; *loa nan canarie*, the spirit of an ancestor rescued "from under the water."

caplata, a minor practitioner of magic, good or bad; employed as a term of derision.

cérémonie, a complex of rituals of the *vodun* cult; see *service*.

chef d'escouade, a man at whose behest others come to do co-operative agricultural labor.

chewal, *ch'wal*, horse; idiomatically, the devotee of a *loa*: the deity "mounts" his "horse" when possession occurs.

clairin, raw rum.

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combite, co-operative work-group; similar to but not as formally organized as the Société Congo of other portions of Haiti.
commère, gulmother; a term of derision for male homosexuals.
compère, gulfather.
Congo, region of Africa, the name of which, in Haiti, is used for a "company" of *vodun* deities; name of a social dance.
connaissance, knowledge of curing and the control of supernatural forces conferred on their devotees by certain *vodun* deities.
coup de main, a small co-operative work-group.
couvert sec, minor offerings to *vodun* deities which do not include any animal sacrifices; synonym for *mangé sec*.
Créole, native to Haiti; applied to gods, human beings, and plants.

Dahomey, an African kingdom; in Haiti, name given *vodun* deities.
démon, evil spirit; male counterpart of *loup-garou*.
dernière prière, final prayer for the dead, which is made nine days after the funeral. See *novena*.
directeur, one who supervises the work of a *combite*.
dosu, the child born after twins.
drogue, a powerful magic charm which protects its owner against all inimical forces falling in a specific category, such as war or arrest. See *garde*, *arrêt*.

engagé, bondsman; white man who in pre-Revolutionary times repaid passage to Haiti by working for a given number of years on a plantation.
engagement, compact entered into between a man and a supernatural power, which binds him to fulfill exacting obligations in return for a fixed reward; always a matter of evil magic.

farine Guinée, "flour of Africa" — powdered ash used in *vodun* rites.

gammelle, a large wooden vessel used in preparing and serving food.
gangan, an important *vodun* priest; also pronounced *n'gan*.
garde, protective charm, operative in specific cases. See *arrêt*, *drogue*.

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104 *gourde*, unit of Haitian currency, at one time the equivalent of the French franc, and now stabilized at twenty cents United States currency.
Guinée, Africa.

habitant, peasant.
habitation, farm, plantation; center of relationship group.
haut chant, song saluting a *vodun* deity, usually of the warrior group.
humfort, "temple" of a *vodun* priest.
hungan, priest of the *vodun* cult.
hunsi, initiate in the *vodun* cult.
hunsór, spirit of the *vodun* drums.

Ibo, an African tribe of eastern Nigeria whose name has been given a group of *vodun* deities.
image, chromolithograph of a Catholic saint.

job, word taken from English to indicate a task one is paid to perform.
jok (*mal jok*), evil eye.

kanzo, ordeal by fire; *hunsi kanzo*, a member of the *vodun* cult who has passed through this ordeal.
kembe, to seize, to harass; used of a supernatural power or of the dead.
koklo, chicken.
kola, a sweet, non-alcoholic drink.

lambi, conch-shell horn.
lavée tête, ceremonial washing of the head when a *vodun* spirit is to be baptized; any ritual or healing washing of the head with ingredients sacred to the gods.
lettre de demande, a written proposal of marriage.
loa, deity of the *vodun* cult; see *saint*, *mystère*.
loup-garou, *lou'gawou*, werewolf; female counterpart of *démon*.
lutin, ghost of unbaptized child.

macoute, peasant's carrying basket.
magie, magic; usually employed in the sense of black magic, as

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against the term *traitement* for healing magic, and *arrêt* or *garde* for protective magic.

maison de servitude, house where worship of family *vodun* gods is centered.

Maît', master; employed in connection with supernatural powers, as *Gran' Maît'*, God; *Maît' 'Bitation*, Master of the Habitation; *Maît' Carrefour* (*Calfu*), Master of the Crossroads; *Maît' Gran' Bois*, Master of the Great Forest; *Maît' Source*, Master of the Stream; *Maît' Tête*, Master of the Head, or the ruling deity of a *vodun* initiate.

majeur, term of derision employed for shirkers at a *combite*.

malengen, a type of yam.

malheureux, unfortunates; applied to those who are poor, but not in abject poverty.

mamaloi, priestess of the *vodun* cult; a term not employed in Mirebalais.

mambu, priestess of the *vodun* cult.

mangé, a sacrifice; to eat; *mangé sec*, equivalent of *couvert sec* (q.v.); *mangé marassa*, sacrifice for the spirits of twins; *mangé morts*, feast for the family dead; *mangé moun*, idiomatic usage to denote the action of a spirit who "eats" his victim by sending fatal illness or death-dealing accident.

manman, mother; the largest drum of the *vodun* trio; the most important peg of a *vodun* drum.

manuba, a European style of dance in which only males participate.

marassa, twins; spirit of twins; one of the forces making up the supernatural universe of the Haitian.

mariage, marriage in the Church, in contrast to *plaçage*, or mating not given ecclesiastical sanction.

marré, to tie; used to denote proper control of a *vodun* deity by its devotee; *marré corde*, to make charms.

marron, runaway; wild.

marronage, state of freedom attained by Negroes who fled the plantations in pre-Revolutionary times.

Martinique, an African type of social dance especially favored at rites for the dead; name for entire cycle of social dances which follow rites for the dead.

mauvaises aires, synonym for *loup-garou* (q.v.).

mazon, an African type of dance performed as an interlude in a *vodun* dance.

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mire, a small work-group.

morts, dead; one of the three forces invoked whenever the supernatural powers of the voduist believer are being called or fêted.

mystères, African gods; synonym for *loa* and *saints*.

n'âme, soul.

Nègre, Negro; *gros' Nègre*, a person of outstanding spiritual power; *gros Nègre*, a wealthy and powerful member of the community.

neige, dew.

notable, an important member of the community.

novena, a nine-day rite for the soul of one recently dead, held on the nine nights immediately following the funeral, and completed by the *dernière prière* (q.v.).

occupation, a task; especially a task set a malign spirit to be performed before he can work his evil deeds; that is, a task impossible to perform.

ogan, iron used to sound the basic *vodun* rhythms, consisting usually of the blade of a hoe struck by a spike.

pannier, saddle-bags of basketry used by peasants to transport produce.

papaloi, priest of the *vodun* cult; term rarely employed by Haitians themselves, but favored by non-Haitian writers; see *hungan*.

pauvres, the destitute members of a community.

penitence, special dress worn to fulfill a vow made to one or several deities of the *vodun* cult, or in accordance with a desire expressed by the gods; usually made in the colors sacred to the gods.

Pétro, a group of *vodun* deities; the designation is said to be derived from the name of a powerful *vodun* priest of pre-Revolutionary days.

plaçage, type of socially sanctioned mating which does not have Church approval; opposite of *mariage* (q.v.).

placée, a woman taken as a mate without a Church wedding.

point, oblique reference to a person or situation in conversation or song; a magic charm.

poteau cabesse, the central post of the *tonnelle* (q.v.), down which

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the *vodun* gods are believed to make their entrance into the dancing-space and where they remain until they are invoked; also termed *porte mita*.

prêt' savanne, "bush-priest"; an officiant at *vodun* rites and at services for the dead who reads the prayers of the Church.

Rada, name of a "squad" of *vodun* deities principally of Dahomean and Nigerian derivation; the word itself is a corruption of the name of the Dahomean town of Allada.

rada, dress; *rada de penitente*, robe of penitence (see *penitente*); *rada tambou'*, "dress" placed on a *vodun* drum.

rawoyé, term applied to the ritual of "banishing" a *vodun* deity who has been troubling a family.

saint, as in English, saint of the Catholic Church; also applied to the gods of the *vodun* cult, in which usage it is a synonym for *loa* and *mystère*.

sevande, the middle drum of the *vodun* trio.

service, term applied to any non-Catholic ritual for *vodun* gods, for twins, or for the dead that is not a dance.

simidor, a singer of songs; especially a man who leads the singing at *combites*.

Société Congo, a closely organized co-operative work-group found in certain parts of Haiti which corresponds to the loose grouping called *combite* in Mirebalais.

'ti moun, child; institution of quasi-adoption of children.

tonnelle, temporary thatched shelter for *vodun* dances.

traitement, healing by means of herbs and magic charms.

trône, the altar at a *vodun* service.

vagabond, term of opprobrium, more insulting than in English.

veve, symbolic designs for the gods traced on the ground by the *vodun* priest in white flour and ashes.

vien-vien, ghost.

vodun, "voodoo"; a complex of African belief and ritual governing in large measure the religious life of the Haitian peasantry; in a more restricted sense, a type of dance.

wanga, a charm that works evil magic.

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104 *arase*, an African type of dance.

zombi, soulless being who becomes an automaton for the enrichment of a sorcerer who had "killed" him and after burial had recovered the body to set it to work without respite and without needs or desires, until the day "set by God" arrives for the natural death of this being.

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NOTE: This list of works in no way claims completeness, since there are hundreds of titles on Haiti whose inclusion here would serve no good purpose. Only such articles and books are mentioned to which reference has actually been made in the text. It has also not seemed advisable to include works of fiction and fictionized history bearing on Haiti, such as J. B. Cineas's *La Drame de la Terre*, or Justin Lhérisson's *La Famille de Pitite Caille*, or Guy Endore's *Babouk*, or John Vandercook's *Black Majesty*. Since this book presents statements of fact concerning Haitian life, these products of the creative imagination, excellent though they are, could not in the nature of the case be employed to document the exposition.

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[pp. i-ii contain no textual material]

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THE DRUM AND THE HOE

Life and Lore of the Haitian People

BY HAROLD COURLANDER

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS
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[Title Page]

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For Emma

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Preface

Every student of Haitian life is soon impressed by the richness of the materials spread out before him and the necessity of limiting his field of investigation. A study of Haitian religious practices, for example, draws one deeper and deeper into profusion, variation, and contradiction. One finds little difficulty in drawing a generalized picture with swift, bold lines; but when he descends into detail he discovers that the broad generalizations of the religious system contain within them many shifting and even warring motifs, and that what in one region is held to be true is not so regarded in another. The gods of *Vodoun* that are revered in one village are given only perfunctory treatment in another. Rites for the dead have a common denominator everywhere in the country, but each community brings to them something of its own or emphasizes traditions that elsewhere are forgotten. So it is also with music and dancing. A traditional drum rhythm may have one name in the north and another in the south, or a certain rhythm may be called by different names. There are diverse opinions about which dances are preferred by certain deities. The meaning of a song can be interpreted differently by different people. It is therefore no wonder that competent works on Haiti do not completely agree with one another in many respects, or that they seem, now and then, to be saying different or even contradictory things. Yet in many instances the seeming inconsistencies are in reality only minor variants within an overall scheme.

The purpose of this book is to present a broad view of certain aspects of Haitian culture and wherever possible to extract some of the flavor of Haitian thinking as well as its sense. It is easy to be fooled in regard to both. I remember seeing an old bearded man in the mountains beyond Furcy walking around his freshly hoed garden breaking a ripe tomato into small juicy bits which he scattered on the ground. It was about as primitive a method of planting as I had ever seen, and I wondered if even

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one seed from that tomato would ever take root under the hot sun. Some time later, when I knew this man well, I talked to him about the care with which seeds must be planted if they are to grow properly. I told him how *we* grew *our* tomatoes. He listened carefully, nodding his head. When I had finished he said: "Yes, that must be a good way to do things in your country. But here in this valley God is good. He does not forget his children. From the broken tomato many plants will sprout. When God is good to you, you do not have to count the seeds." I suggested that perhaps one should not waste any of the precious seeds that God had provided; and to this he replied: "How is there waste? My garden is made to flourish by Zaka [the country man's special deity]. Some people give Zaka a feast every year, but between times they forget. Zaka helps me in my work, and I don't forget him. When I break the tomato and put it on the ground that way, it is a little taste for Zaka. Whatever I plant, I give him some. He is good to me, I am good to him."

What I learned from many incidents like this one was that the eye does not always see correctly. The old man was not just planting tomatoes, nor was he performing a conventionalized ritual act. It was a highly personalized act of faith in nature and confidence in the deity who shared his work.

A large part of this book deals with Vodoun, the religious practices based on West African traditions. One soon discovers that the songs and dances of Vodoun ritual are not merely music and motion supplementing and decorating more serious affairs. Virtually every aspect of Vodoun ritual is placative or invocational. The songs that are sung and the dances that are danced are direct supplication of various supernatural forces.

Undoubtedly, a number of principles which are put forward in this study do not apply equally to every region of Haiti; but they are, I think, true in general terms. Not until one has accepted the fact that different explanations exist for given phenomena, that the same rites are performed in different fashion in different places, and that the cult priests themselves do not agree on many details, may one begin to work toward a general view of the Haitian scene.

All of Haitian life is not Vodoun. And there are of course some Haitians who are relatively outside the central circle of its influence. But the inner meanings of Vodoun and its relationship to the total view of life permeate the entire scene. Music, too, binds together practically the entire fabric of Haitian existence. It is essential not only to the cult temple but to countless workaday activities. Agrarian work groups often perform their tasks to the accompaniment of a drum. And in the cult temple, the iron hoe of the fields often serves as a percussion instrument.

The Drums and the Hoe is the result of studies made over a period of

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The Drum and The Hoe is the result of studies made over a period of years. Several short sections of this book have appeared in substance in *Haiti Singing* (1939), the *Musical Quarterly*, the *Journal of Negro History*, and other journals. The song and story texts presented in several chapters were taken on disc and tape recorders during nine separate field trips to Haiti, between 1937 and 1955. They have been selected from more than six hundred examples recorded by this method. 114 126 128

Support for work on these recorded materials was received from the American Council of Learned Societies and the American Philosophical Society. Research on African survivals in the New World was aided by a Guggenheim fellowship. Originals or copies of some of the tape and disc recordings are now in the archives of Indiana University and Northwestern University. 122 126

The persons who helped me gather songs, stories, legends, and lore were innumerable. Many of them I did not know by name, but I want to thank them as well as the following friends for their open-hearted assistance in many ways: 115

Voluska Saintvil (Ti Goave), Joseph Dérosier (Cap Haitien), Julia Immacula (Southwest Haiti), Sigbrien Bellis (Port-au-Prince), Vénéise Macélise (Léogane), André Jean (Morne l'Hôpital), Christophe Oxilas (Ti Goave), Edgar Dérosier (Port-au-Prince), Isnardé Din (Léogane), Wilfred Beauchamp (Port-de-Paix), Lydia Augustin (l'Asile), Louise Joseph (Port-au-Prince), St. Élia Alsandor (Jérémie), Georgette Alcède (Southwest Haiti), Élizia Moron (Anse-à-Veau), Prosper Louis (Port-au-Prince), Télisman Charles (Morne l'Hôpital), André Charles (Morne l'Hôpital), Daïs Charles (Anse-à-Veau), Simon Jean (Pétionville), Tonton Cabrit (Morne l'Hôpital), Micano Cassis (Cap Haitien), Louis Desbornes (Port-au-Prince), André Coyotte (Port-au-Prince), Innomine Pierre (Morne l'Hôpital), George Gabriel (Port-au-Prince), Simeon Benjamin (Port-au-Prince), Romain St. Aude (Port-de-Paix), Jean Ravel Pintro (Jérémie), La France Belvue (Anse-à-Veau), Morgina La Vache (Jacmel), Alten St. Ville (Morne l'Hôpital), Abner Juslin (Port-au-Prince), Jean Louis La Rivière (Dondon), St. Jean Nago (La Gonave), Jean Pierre Marigot (Terrier-Rouge), Libera Borderau (Morne Mardi Gras), Charles Hector (Anse-à-Veau), Immacula Lorival (Southwest Haiti), Aléanne François (Port-au-Prince), Felix Charlotin (Southwest Haiti), Julie Gentil (Port-au-Prince), Lena Hibbert (Anse-à-Veau), Ti Yogan Borderau (Léogane), César Jeanbaptiste (Southwest Haiti) and Idamente Joseph (Ti Rivière de Nippes). Special thanks are due Aléis Conrolé, a *houngan* of the region of Morne Mardi Gras, who was generous in many ways in explaining the workings of the cult temple.

I am of course indebted to the work of a number of scholars, cited 127

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127 herein, who have reported on various aspects of the Haitian scene. And to Dr. Melville J. Herskovits, Dr. William Bascom, Dr. George Eaton Simpson, and Dr. George Herzog I wish to express my appreciation for their many acts of encouragement and support of this study. For permission to reproduce some of their photographs, my thanks go to Dr. George Eaton Simpson, Roger Coster, and Mme Odette Mennesson Rigaud.
126 The music transcriptions in chapter 19 were prepared by Dr. Mieczyslaw
128 Kolinski.

HAROLD COURLANDER

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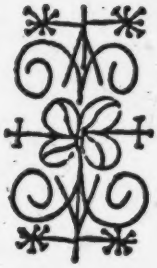

1. The Making of the Haitian

If you come to Haiti by sea, a way that is old-fashioned but full of magic, 133
you are first aware of the island as a range of hills rising out of the water, and then, as you sail closer, new ranges come into view behind the first, and eventually you see that everything is mountains. The ranges pile up in the distance and finally lose themselves in the white morning mists that the country people call "snow." A Haitian proverb says, "Behind the mountains are mountains," and that is a true picture of the island.

In the summer after the rains have come, the hills and mountain slopes 134
are green; but later they turn brown, and it is then that one notices the 132
deep gashes where the earth has eroded and washed away into the valleys below and into the sea.

From the top of the range called La Selle ("The Saddle"), when the 132
heavy mists form and settle across the highland valleys one sees nothing 133
but the great rounded sugar-loaf peaks, which appear as floating islands in a vast sea of white.

From a distant ship in the Caribbean in the full glare of daylight it is 361
hard to imagine that millions of people have made a home of these mountains. But at night it is different. The mountains are alive then with twinkling spots of light made by cooking fires, torches, and electric bulbs. For 361
the hillsides as well as the coastal lowlands are dotted with tiny huts and 487
homesteads, and the trails from one village to another crisscross and lie on the land like a woven net. They lead from the high-up places down to the seacoast towns, through the waterless mesa of the frontier, through the pine forests of the southern range, through dense blankets of wild strawberries, wild-bamboo groves, and plantations of coffee. They find their way to the salt marches, the rice fields of the Artibonite Valley, and the cities.

In the lowlands the days are hot and tropical. It is there the sugar cane, 132
bananas, and plantains grow so lushly. In the mountains the people have [241]

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132 fires in their houses at night to keep out the damp cold that sweeps
[324] through the passes. And a man on the trail before dawn may wear a
[291] blanket over his head and carry a glowing ember with him for warmth.

132 On the south coast there are sometimes hurricanes and tidal waves, and
133 many a small fishing boat and grass-covered house has been washed away
[131] in these storms. But the great mountains of the southern range deflect the winds, so that to the north their full fury is never known.

226 In the great Bay of Gonaïves the fishing boats sail out at night with the
133 friendly winds that carry them to the fishing grounds of the island of La
172 Gonave, and they return to the shore with their catches in the morning, or in the afternoon with the setting sun. The sailing boats from the tiny fishing village called Ville Matelot each day pass the deserted islet named Isle à Cabrit, where four Indian camps once stood. Today Isle à Cabrit is only a waterless, denuded place, a hunting ground for Carib and Arawak pottery and carved stone images.

136 In the frontier lakes of the Cul-de-Sac Plain there are wild ducks and
[226] alligators. Here the villagers fish with nets from rafts and dugout canoes.
[501] Now and then an iguana is seen, but there is little other game, because the edible wildlife of the country was long ago eaten by hungry people.

137 For the things that grow wild the Haitian is grateful—the avocado,
[241] the mango, the cashew, and the cotton which once planted produces again and again each year. He is grateful for the coconut palms, the calabash tree, the gourd vines, and the medicinal herbs that grow on every side. But
[313] the gifts of nature are not prolific. Most of the great stands of timber—lignum vitae, mahogany, dyewood and pine—have been cut away. Once
[134] fertile garden spots have dried up, and the soil that produces the yams, the pumpkins, the kaffir, and the rice is tired.

181 But the Haitian himself is not tired. He has suffered from malaria,
164 yaws, and chronic hunger; yet out of the great old mountains of Haiti he has fashioned a way of life and a nation.

105 The Haitian of today was created out of the fabric of three continents—
181 Africa, America, and Europe. He was shaped out of the plains and hills of Nigeria, Dahomey, and the Congo; the summers and winters of Europe; and the mountains and mountain mists of Haiti itself. He is the synthesis of the folk beliefs of the French and Spanish peasants, the Yoruba and the Arada of West Africa, and perhaps of the Carib Indians with whom he had close contact during his first days in the New World. He has brought into affinity the religious practices of Africa and the beliefs of the Church of Rome. He is outwardly simple and poor, but inwardly he is a complicated and rich man. He is rich in music, in the capacity for spiritual expression, in tradition, in folklore, and in memories. He has been able

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to marry work to play, drudgery to singing, and despair to hope. In his complicated world, life and death are simply different aspects of the same thing. Those who die live as long as people remember them. And those who are alive in the physical sense are receptacles for the spiritual forces that exist on all sides—the echoes of the dead, the multitude of spirit beings, good and evil, and dancing and music. 105 181

What are the origins of this simple and complicated man?

The beginnings of the Haitian came with the discovery of America and the establishment of slavery in the New World. When the Spanish colonizers first began to organize the economy of the new colony of Hispaniola, as they called it, they attempted to enslave the indigenous Caribs to work the fields. But the Indians of Haiti found no sense and no comfort in the new system. It violated their views of life and destroyed their culture. They were proud, and they were not resilient. They did not care to pan gold for the Spaniards or to grow sugar for them. They died under the conditions of slavery, or fled into the mountains, or took to the sea in their canoes, looking for sanctuary on other islands where the Europeans had not yet settled. They left the rich earth of the Haitian valleys to the conquistadores. In less than eighteen years the new Spanish colony was dying on the vine for lack of laborers. It was then that Spain, like France, England, and Portugal, turned its eyes to Africa. There were old precedents. The Spanish and Portuguese had for many years used the African for labor. They had had intimate contact with Africans during the Moorish invasion of Iberia. And the slave trade had been an old and familiar thing even before the discovery of America. 175 567

The first Africans sent to Haiti arrived there in 1510. The precise origins of these first African immigrants to the New World are not known, but they came from somewhere along that long stretch of African coast between Senegal and Angola. It was a great crossroads in world history. As much as any other ethnic group, these Africans and those who came after them built America. They, as much as any other, turned the West Indies into a prize over which the nations of Europe fought for three hundred years. And in Haiti, as in Brazil, the United States, and other American nations, they raised moral and ethical issues for the peoples of European stock which have not been solved to our own day.

The acquisition and transportation of slaves is an old and familiar story. Slavery was an ancient institution in some parts of Africa. Some of the wars between kingdoms were, in part at least, huge slave raids. In other wars, the taking of slaves was only incidental. But the selling of these human chattels to European merchants came as easily to African chieftains as it did to Arab entrepreneurs. Often they were merely selling off

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175 "surplus" stock. The African's motives sometimes were political rather
567 then mercenary—to weaken and disperse unfriendly neighboring tribes. Occasionally, members of a royal family, possible contenders for tribal power and all the prerogatives that went along with it, were "exiled" in this extremely effective and final way. Although Africans were the victims of this monstrous commerce, it is clear that without the participation and coöperation of other Africans the slave trade as it existed in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries would not have been possible. The African, along with the Asian and the European, shares the guilt for the indecencies and degradation that grow out of human barter.

The voyage to the New World was at best horrible and inhuman. Nothing that can be said about the manner in which the captains of the slavers attempted to care for their cargoes can change the picture. The slaves suffered from thirst, disease, hunger, seasickness, and impersonal brutality. The anxiety and dread which these captives must have suffered in anticipation of things to come are difficult to imagine. A strange, unfamiliar world awaited them across an ocean larger than Africa itself. Some slaves killed themselves. Others who had survived long overland marches died of exhaustion or disease aboard the slave vessels. And many a slaver had to report in its log that a number of chained males, taking advantage of a brief spell on the upper decks, had leaped into the sea.

But among those who reached port in the New World there was a fierce determination to survive. The history of African slavery in the Americas is full of accounts of resistance and revolt against the European masters. The shipwrecked slaves who took over the Island of St. Vincent and came to be known as the Black Caribs, the Ashanti who revolted and vanquished the Dutch armed forces in Surinam, the Maroons of Jamaica, and the ex-slaves of Haiti who destroyed Napoleon's armies, all bear witness to the unquenched spirit of those millions of Africans exiled from their own land.

175 Whereas the Indians of Haiti were not resilient, the Africans were.
162 More and more slaves were poured into Hispaniola. By the eighteenth
567 century the slave population represented countless tribes and kingdoms of West Africa. There were Senegalese, Foulas, Poulards, Sosos, Bambarras, Kiambaras, Mandingos, and Yolofs from northwest Africa. There were Aradas, Mahis, Haoussas, Ibos, Anagos or Yorubas, Bini, Takwas, Fidas, Amines, Fantis, Agouas, Sobos, Limbas, and Adjas from the coast and interior of the great bulge of Africa. From Angola and the Congo basin came the Solongos, the Mayombés, the Mousombés, the Moundongues, the Bumbas, the Kangas, and others. Although there is no official record, Haitians themselves say that there were also those tall

people known as the Jangheys, or Dinkas, from the region of the Upper Nile, and Bagandas from Uganda.[1] A few proper names that have survived, such as Ras Médé, suggest that there may have been men from Ethiopia among them. Old slavers' records show that numerous shipments were made from Madagascar and Mozambique on the East African coast.[2]

175 162 567

These transplanted people came from all classes and stations of life. Some were criminals condemned and sold by their own tribesmen; others were prisoners captured in intertribal raids or by Arab slave hunts. There were men of royal blood among them, as well as artisans and tribal scholars. The slave cargoes included leaf doctors, bards, musicians, wood carvers, metalworkers, drum makers, boatbuilders, hunters, and farmers.

In Haiti they were thrown together into a common mold. Shoulder to shoulder in the plantation fields were Bambarras, Anagos, Takwas, and Bumbas—peoples with different backgrounds, different languages, different legends, and different traditions. There were Moslems and so-called pagans, herdsmen and river-boatmen. Each of them brought something of his past and unwittingly poured it into the new amalgam that was to be the Haitian.

And into this amalgam flowed some of the literature, the traditions, the religious thoughts, and the superstitions of Europe. Under Spanish, French, and English rulers the slaves were constantly subjected to ways and ideas that were new to them. They absorbed and digested, and out of the diverse and even contradictory elements they worked out new patterns of life and thinking. This was the strength and resiliency of the West African in the New World. His capacity for adaptation and for remembering what was valuable to him and forgetting what had ceased to be useful preserved his spirit and his pride.

17 567

Among the things that were lost in this vast process of adaptation were the traditions of wood carving, bronze and brass casting, and weaving. Remembered, however, were music, dancing, games, religious beliefs, concepts of nature and the supernatural, folk tales, and legends. It was the outward, material things that were abandoned, and the inward, nonmaterial things that tended to survive.

The slave system itself was largely responsible for the loss of special arts and skills. Craftsmen with specialized knowledge in metalwork were set to repairing wagons and hoes, or they simply wielded hoes in the fields. Wood carvers found no patrons to encourage them to carve images and stools. The colonial emphasis was on mass production of sugar. Other things were valueless. There was little leisure or incentive for the slave to follow his artistic aptitudes.

[1] [The name Ganda survives in Haiti as the name of a deity. Cf. P. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]
[2] [For footnote, see Category 116, P. 349--Analyst]

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And yet the things that survived were able to do so, in certain respects, because of the particular brand of thinking of the colonial masters. Why has so much of the African past survived in Haiti when it has been all but obliterated in the United States? The answer lies primarily in the Catholic background of the Europeans who controlled the colony—first the Spanish, and then the French. The Catholic Church regarded every slave as a soul to be saved, as a complete and finished man except for salvation. And though it was an official of the Church who is alleged to have suggested African slavery in the New World,[3] the Church itself took the view that the differences between the slave owner and the slave were only worldly and transient things. The Church did not insist on washing out of the African mind everything that was there. It regarded its mission as that of supplying the single quality that was lacking—salvation. Its attitudes during the past four hundred years in Haiti have been vacillating and erratic; it has often pressed for destruction of the African cults; but on the whole it has been satisfied with conversion.

The Protestant churches in Haiti, on the contrary, have demanded that their converts become new people. They have forbidden their adherents to take any part in non-Christian rituals or other activities—including even the dance. They have presented them with a simple and painful choice.

These were the essential attitudes that prevailed during slavery days in the United States. In the beginning, while plantation owners fought against church activities among the Negroes, the church and the plantation owners were largely united in their war against "heathen" practices. Africanisms which might have either died in due course or persisted were stamped out with Puritan fervor. Significantly, it was in French-Catholic Louisiana that African-style drumming, singing, and dancing survived in the United States to the beginning of this present century.

The Catholic attitude of tolerance-by-necessity in Haiti won for it most of the country's four million souls. Today, many a Haitian who participates in the rites of Vodoun on Saturday worships in a Catholic chapel on Sunday.

Such sporadic efforts as were made to wipe out African memories in Haiti were unsuccessful. Slowly the uprooted slaves found a common denominator. The peoples of different origins developed a common language based on the French spoken by the masters. Their different religious systems merged one into another.

17 181

The necessity for adaptation and amalgamation produced a cultural hybrid of an energetic and vital kind. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the people of African descent in Haiti were a cultural alloy, fired

[3] [Bartolomé de Las Casas. Cf. p. 349, Category 116. -- Analyst]

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and hardened and ready to deal with the French, the Spanish, and the English in battle or in politics. They were no longer slaves struggling to cope with a new and strange system. Little by little, imperceptibly they had become true Haitians.

[P 8]

2. Man and the Universe: Vodoun

175 When the African slaves stepped ashore in the New World they brought
179 with them highly developed religious beliefs and attitudes toward life.
791 But Africa was a continent of many cultures and nations, and its belief systems varied. The Congo African did not have the same view of the natural and supernatural as the Senegalese, for example; and even neighboring peoples such as the Ibos, the Yoruba, and the Mahis did not have common religious traditions. Yet in the strange new land that was Haiti, the common elements in their religious beliefs were accented. In time a new composite religious system emerged. It was called Vodoun.

175 The preponderance of Africans in Haiti came from the region of Da-
167 homey, Togoland, Nigeria, and the Congo River basin. Among them the
179 Dahomeans were the most numerous, and it was they who provided the
791 framework for the Afro-Haitian religious system.

The word Vodoun itself is Dahomean in origin. Among the Fon-speak-
192 ing people of West Africa it signified "spirit," or "deity." In Haiti the word came to be applied in a general sense to all the activities of cult life, from the ritual of the "temple" to the songs and dances, though in some old songs it still applies specifically to the idea of a supernatural spirit. However, the Congo word *loa* came to be used to designate the deities.[1]

791 In a literal sense, Vodoun in Haiti consists of the rites, beliefs, and prac-
194 tices of the Vodoun cult, built around the similar religious systems of the
197 Dahomeans and the Nagos. In a wider sense it applies to similar but distinct ritual activities of other cults. The Ibo-Kanga rites and dances are in a specific sense "not quite" Vodoun. The rites in the Congo-Guinée cult group—made up of Congo, Bambarra, "Guinée," and miscellaneous elements—have separate practices and deities of their own, and are often regarded as not Vodoun at all. Yet the term Vodoun is used in a generic sense to include all these rites, and examination of the beliefs and activities of these cult groups shows that they have drawn in considerable measure upon a common inheritance.

[1] [See Courlander, Haiti Singing, p. 7. Cf. P349, Category 116.--Analyst]

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Vodoun is clearly more than ritual of the cult temple. It is an integrated system of concepts concerning human behavior, the relation of mankind to those who have lived before, and to the natural and supernatural forces of the universe. It relates the living to the dead and to those not yet born. It "explains" unpredictable events by showing them to be consistent with established principles. In short, it is a true religion which attempts to tie the unknown to the known and thus create order where chaos existed before. 771

As in Dahomey, it is not a system imposed from above but one which pushes out from below. It is bred and nurtured in the family, in the towns, and in the fields. It is common law, with deep roots in an unbroken and continuous past. The priests of Vodoun do not control it and direct its course. They, like the least fortunate peasant, simply move about within it and make use of its resources. They are its servants and its interpreters. In their cult centers, the principles of Vodoun are brought into sharp focus and dramatized. Vodoun is democratic in concept. Any man or woman may have direct contact with the deities or dead ancestors without the intervention of the cult priest. There is no place or situation beyond the influence of the loa or beyond the limits of Vodoun. At every crossroads is the spirit of the crossroads guardian, Legba, and on every long trail is the spirit of the Master of the Highway. 771 793 794 776

The cult priest nevertheless plays a significant and essential role. He translates beliefs that otherwise might tend to become amorphous into formalized action. He is a teacher, a repository of cult learning, and a vital catalyst. He gives form to abstraction, and practical meaning to symbols. He is the intellectualizing agency of a tremendous emotional force. Through his knowledge of the substance and forms of Vodoun, his experience in dealing with the loa, and in some instances his capacity to set magical forces into action, the cult priest is a dynamic power within his community. 793 182

Though the making of *pouins* and *magie* (ritual magic) and *ouangas* (aggressive magic directed against individuals) is within the realm of the cult priest's activities, these things are part of Vodoun only in a subsidiary sense. Magic lurks on the periphery of Vodoun. It has little or no place in the placating of the deities or the dead. It concerns the relationship of the living with each other and with *lou-garos* (*loups-garous*) and *baka* (demons). Although cult rituals include various pouin and magie ceremonies, the cult priest draws upon magic as he draws upon other mystic arts and fields of learning—leaf doctoring, divination, Catholic ritual, and Masonic symbolism. He attempts to bring together all thinking that widens the scope of Vodoun, in order to strengthen his hand to deal with 793 789 754 771

all aspects of the natural and supernatural. But the reputable cult priest does not dabble in "black" magic—the kind that maims or destroys human beings. One who does so is said to "work with two hands": one for the loa and one for evil. (The expression *servi dé main*—"serving with two hands"—is also applied to a cult chief who deals with deities of more than one "nation.") Many a cult priest in making his ritual flour drawings on the earth holds his left hand behind his back and draws with his right, giving testimony that he "works with one hand" only.

Each cult priest maintains his own cult temple, or *hounfor*. There are no cult officials above him, as there is no formal religious organization beyond the hounfor itself. Within his own special community he is therefore the chief religious functionary, the apex of an intratemple social organization. Under the cult priest, ordinarily, there are two grades of assistants, and below them two classes of servitors.

The cult priest is usually referred to as a *houngan*, a Fon (Dahomean) title signifying "spirit chief." Sometimes he is called *gangan* (a Bantu word meaning "conjuror" or "doctor")[2] or *capla*. He also is known by the title *bocó* or *bocor*, which seems to be derived from *bocono*, the diviner or priest of the Dahomean Fa cult.[3] The bocor is, in fact, sometimes referred to as a *divineur*, and he is regarded by some Haitians as a clairvoyant and a practitioner of magic. As in Dahomey, the bocor in Haiti foretells fate through the throwing of shells or chips, much in the manner of the secular game *mayamba*. He also reads destiny with small sticks or ashes. In earlier days the cult priest was sometimes known by the Yoruba name *babalao*, a title which has been corrupted to *papaloi*. A female cult leader is known as a *mambo*. She is presumed to have, in a general way, the same powers as the houngan, though in some quarters her *connaissance*, or "understanding," is not regarded so highly, and her status is believed to be somewhat lower.

Directly under the houngan is his chief assistant, the *laplace*, and perhaps a little below him on the ladder, the *mambo caille*. The laplace is regarded as the vice-houngan, and he assumes responsibility for running the hounfor in the absence of his chief. The mambo caille, a woman, runs the cult center in the absence of both the houngan and the laplace. One step farther down the ladder is the *houngénicon*, who acts as a sort of chief of the main body of devotees. These high-ranking assistants to the houngan are sometimes called *badjicans*, or keepers of the altar.

The servitors of the cult are known as *hounsi*, or "spirit wives," a name that was given to certain categories of cult servants in Dahomey.[4] There are two main groups of hounsi: *kanzo* (those who have passed through a ritual fire test) and *bossale* (those whose loa are wild or untamed). The

[2] [Footnote appears on P. 349, Category 116. --Analyst]
[3] [Gorer, Africa Dances, P. 129; Herskovits, Dahomey, I, 208 ff. Cf. P. 349, Category 116. --Analyst]
[4] [Foot note appears on P. 349, Category 116. --Analyst]

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loa makes his appearance in Vodoun ritual by possessing ("mounting") one or more of the participants. When these possessions first occur, the possessed persons lapse into a kind of frenzy without controls or direction. They may stagger, fall, and go into convulsions. The deity must be controlled so that he will not harm the person whose body he takes over. The houngan eventually establishes a conditioned, formalized response to possession; and once this is achieved, the loa is regarded as having been tamed. The *hounsi bossale* then becomes eligible for elevation to the status of kanzo. The term *kanzo* means "to tie fire"; that is, to conquer or show mastery over fire. Demonstrations of supremacy of possessed persons over flames, hot coals, and red-hot metal characterize many Vodoun rituals. In the kanzo ritual the initiate must undergo the test of boiling oil.

The hierarchy of the cult temple, in general, looks like this:

Houngan (or *Mambo*)—chief of the hounfor
Laplace—first assistant to the houngan
Mambo caille—"mistress of the house"
Houngénicon—topmost of all the hounsi
Hounsi kanzo—the highest grade of hounsi
Hounsi bossale—the lowest grade of hounsi

Among the hounsi there are some who have special duties or functions. There is the *reine silence*, for example, whose job is to maintain order. The one assigned to cook the various sacrifices is called the *hounsi cuisinière*, and so on.

There is no single, clear-cut process for becoming a Vodoun priest. A man with special talents may rise from the rank of hounsi and eventually become a houngan by succession. Or a person with a strong *connaissance* may simply feel the call—sometimes in a dream—and establish himself as a houngan or bokor. If such a man demonstrates that he is "strong," a following will gather around him to constitute his *société*.

When a houngan dies, his cult center may be abandoned, or it may be taken over by another established houngan or by the deceased man's protégé. Frequently the laplace will inherit the cult temple and all that goes with it. Acquisition of a cult center by inheritance is looked upon as a means of keeping an established hounfor intact. The man who wishes to achieve the rank of houngan applies to the oldest and most venerable cult priest in the district and announces that he wishes to receive the *asson* (the ritual rattle) that is, to become a houngan. If the elder priest approves and wishes to sponsor the younger man's elevation, he consults other reputable houngans and arranges for a *grand service* for purification and investiture. The elder cult priest conducts the ceremonies. He is regarded as especially wise because of his age and long experience in dealing with the loa, whose

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793 approval of the candidate's elevation is needed. He is also regarded as
[069] being on more intimate terms with the family ancestors who, likewise,
must be in accord with the proceedings. The candidate for the asson is
[783] confined within the hounfor for a number of days, during which he takes
purification baths and participates in other rituals. The rites that take
place during this period are prescribed by the elder priest who has as-
sumed responsibility. When the purification is ended, the candidate
emerges into the *peristyle* (roofed court) to participate in the general serv-
ice, and to undergo further tests.

Present during the ceremonies are all the principal houngans of the
region—men who will be friendly associates of the new priest or, pos-
sibly, unfriendly competitors. The candidate is tested on his knowledge
[787] of how to use the asson and the tiny hand bell, and in the course of the
service he is mounted by the loa who is the chief protector of the cult tem-
[782] ple. Animals are sacrificed, and all the loa sacred to the hounfor are in-
voked and asked for their approval and support. But it is not only the loa
[794] and the dead who must indicate their approval. The elder houngan polls
the hounsi kanzo on whether they will accept their new cult chief and fol-
[533] low him. He also asks the chief drummer, who polls his assistant drum-
mers. It is taken for granted that the decision is in the hands of the hounsi.
The consensus is known before the actual service, but the formality of
asking the question is observed. Should the hounsi refuse to accept the
candidate for the asson, the elevation cannot take place.

793 The city and the countryside contain many self-styled houngans and
554 bocors who are not recognized as bona fide by the community, regardless
62 of the route by which they claim to have achieved their station. Sometimes
[791] they are regarded as *pas fort* (not strong); that is, they do not have pro-
found knowledge and understanding. The Haitian is quick to detect the
difference between a houngan who knows and one who does not know.
Many are stated to be outright fakes. One man who attempted to hold
a service in Port-au-Prince aroused such contempt and disgust that a num-
ber of persons who had been drawn by genuine interest walked out with
remarks that the man should be punished. In fact, his failure to show any
[533] essential qualifications for the houngan's role was commented upon in
a song of ridicule that made its appearance at a secular dance that same
night. The song noted some of the humorous aspects of the service, such
as when the "impostor" struck himself vigorously on the head with the
flat of a machete to show his "strength" and virtually incapacitated him-
self for the rest of the evening.

346 It is easily observed that no two hounfors are exactly alike. They differ

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in many details. But, in general, the cult establishment consists of a central building of one or more rooms with an adjoining court, or peristyle, over which there is a covering—usually a straw roof. The covering, called the *tonnelle,* is supported by a number of poles, one of which is placed squarely in the center of the court. This center pole—the *po'teau mitan* or *po'teau planté*—is the focus of most of the ritual activities. The loa who descend upon the service enter by way of this pole. The ritual *vèvès,* or flour paintings, are made at its foot. Around it all the dancing takes place. On certain rare occasions when rituals are held in the open, a carefully selected tree becomes the center post—though it is by no means certain that the po'teau mitan is not, in fact, a symbolic tree.

The building adjoining the peristyle contains the inner sanctum. Here are deposited the paraphernalia of the cult, such as ritual bottles and jars, flags of the société, and the iron kettles used in various ceremonies. On the walls there may be primitive paintings of the special loa of the hounfor, or perhaps of his symbol. The loa of the sea, Agwé, may be represented by a ship. Damballa, the serpent-rainbow loa, may be represented by a snake or a rainbow. Usually there are colored lithographs of Catholic saints, who have both Catholic and African names. And there are hand-beaten iron crosses, dishes containing Indian celts in which loa are believed to reside, gourd bowls, and carved wooden double and triple bowls used for services to dead twins and triplets. Upon the altar place, called *badji,* there are the *criches* or *govis,* earthen jars or bottles in which rest the loa removed from the heads of people who have died. Sometimes special niches are built on the hounfor grounds for the deities. Each cult priest designs his hounfor in his own way.

A hounfor belonging to a mambo near the town of Croix des Missions gave the appearance of having a large and prosperous société. Under the tonnelle eight beautifully carved Arada drums were suspended from a single peg. At a respectable distance hung a Martinique drum used only for dances on the occasion of a Nine Night. Inside the hounfor was an impressive display of sacred objects and decorations. One corner of the room was reserved for Symbi Yendézo, a patron loa of drinking water and rainfall. He was portrayed on the wall as a long, thin snake crawling in a maze of crosses. On the ground beneath the picture was a small concrete pool, in which two water snakes swam. Another corner was reserved for Agwé, and on his wall was a picture of a steamship. Along the back of the altar was an impressive array of govis, containing the spirits removed from the heads of deceased persons. There was a large plate of loa stones, and various protective charms stood near by. Flags and sabres

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346 794 353 778 were stacked against the wall, and set about in various places were several assons, iron crosses, Catholic lithographs, chains and iron bars for the loa Ogoun, candles set in bottles, and an old forged double bell of African design.

346 353 Some of the hounfors found elsewhere are more elaborate and reflect the richer resources of the immediate community, or the creative impulses of the houngan and his helpers, or the pressure of competition. Some cult temples are prolific with painted designs and symbolic representations of the deities. Others are unpretentious, simple, and even Spartan.

346 [113] In his book *En Haiti,* written approximately fifty years ago, Eugene Aubin describes a hounfor in the Cul-de-Sac Plain, a few miles from Port-au-Prince, as he saw it in 1906:

346 353 794 778 [The] *hounfor* is fronted by a *peristyle,* which is used for the Vodoun dances and services; it is a large area, with a floor of beaten earth, covered with a straw roof. On three sides the walls rise to support the roof; on the fourth there is the inscription:

Société la Fleur de Guinée
Roi d'Engole
[*Flower of Africa Society*
King of Angola]

indicating the name of the patron of the society [the loa Roi Angole, or Wangol], over which the *houngan* presides. The *hounfor* is an ordinary house, a little larger than average. The sanctuary contains a principal *pé* [altar], running the whole length of the room on one side, and another altar, a little smaller, in one of the corners. These *pés* are altars largely made of brick, in which the under part is decorated with hearts and stars in relief; above, draperies hang from the ceiling. The [176] lateral *pé* is divided into three compartments. There are, therefore, four sections in all, consecrated to each of the *loa* served in the *hounfor:* Aguay Aoyo [Agwé Woyo], Damballa, Ogoun Badagry, and Loco [Loko], Nago King. Maître Aguay is represented by the customary little boat; a medallion is consecrated to Monsieur Damballa, shown holding two snakes in his hand; a figure on horseback represents Ogoun Badagry, with a woman at one side holding a flag; Papa Loco is pictured in full uniform, smoking a pipe and fanning himself. The walls are covered with religious paintings [Catholic lithographs]. The back of the altar is occupied by numerous carafes in baked clay, called *canaris,* which contain the . . . *mystères* [spirits taken from the heads of the dead] gathered in the *hounfor;* in front are bottles of wine, liqueurs and vermouth presented to them in homage; then the plates, the cups for the *mangers-marassas* [feasts for the twin spirit], crucifixes, hand bells, *assons* for directing the dance or calling the *loa;* plates filled with polished stones [celts] inherited from the Indians—"thunder stones," symbols of Damballa, which Saugo [Sobo] the god of lightning hurls from the sky into the enclosure of his favorite *papaloi* [*houngan*]. Beside these miraculous stones are many coins of copper or silver [property of the *loa*]. The *loa* . . . possess coins of Joseph Bonaparte, King of Spain, minted in 1811; of Frederick VII of Denmark, 1859; of Charles IV of Spain, 1783, and of President Boyer, dated year 27 and year 30 of Haitian Independence. On the ground there is placed a coconut-oil lamp; in the corner, the flags of the *hounfor* and the saber of [the] *laplace,* the man who acts as master of ceremonies in the services.

in the services. In the court, the bases of four sacred trees . . . are surrounded by circles of masonry [low brick walls]. These *reposoirs* are inhabited by the *loa* Legba, Ogoun, Loco and Saugo.[5]

There is little in Aubin's description to suggest that hounfors were much different a half century ago from what they are today. He errs in identifying the "thunder stones" solely with Damballa. But his eye for detail was acute. In 1950 a mambo in the neighborhood of this hounfor described by Aubin affirmed that some of the loa stones and old coins which he mentioned are still to be found among the properties of a hounfor in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. Others were lost in one of the cleric-inspired raids which despoiled cult temples of drums and other paraphernalia about fifteen years ago.

Many services are held outside the hounfor and the peristyle. Some rituals, such as animal sacrifices and "talking to the loa below the water," may take place some distance from the cult buildings. Indeed, various Vodoun ceremonies may be held at waterfalls, at the seashore, in sacred groves, in ordinary homes, in a boat at sea,[6] or under a sacred tree.

The rites of the hounfor are almost without number. They are associated with the supplication or conciliation of virtually countless deities, each of which has his own special service. There are services in multitudinous combinations and permutations for the dead, for twins, for albinos, and for unborn children. There are ceremonies for the elevation of hounsi and for initiation, smoke and fire ordeals, and tests of other kinds. There are *mangé loa* (feasts for the deities) and *mangé morts* (feasts for the dead). There are services for the sick, for the crops, and for the harvest. In one context or another, Vodoun relates to nearly every aspect and phase of life—and its counterpart, death. Since every region, every locality, and, in fact, almost every hounfor has developed its own ritual out of the common materials, it is possible to see hundreds of ceremonies without ever seeing precisely the same one twice. Yet the common elements bind them all together.

One such prime element is the possession, the "mounting" of the human body by one of the deities. Possession is a psychological phenomenon common to the rites of many cults throughout the world. It is known in Asia, Africa, Europe, and America. It is not the unique property of the African and his Haitian descendant. In the United States it is a commonplace not only among certain Negro cults but certain white cults as well. The United States Negro had ample West African inspiration for his seizures in the church and at the baptism. The intellectual meaning of these seizures has changed, as have their outward forms to a measurable extent, but their emotional content has not altered.

[5] [Translated from the French of Aubin, En Haiti, pp. 57-59. Cf. p. 349, Category 116. --Analyst

[6] [Footnote appears on p. 349, Category 116. --Analyst]

787 In Haiti the possession takes many forms, according to the nature of the deity who has entered the body, and depending on whether the possessed person has learned to "control" that deity. The possessing, or "mounting," of the possessed individual is manifest proof of the loa's existence and his constant proximity. Vodoun is built upon the premise [771] of the existence of loa, and the possession is the instrument of direct con- [776] tact and of constant proof of the loa's imminence.

771 Although much of Vodoun is cast in the Dahomean mold, it is no 776 longer what it was originally in Dahomey. Many of the original deities 776 of the Dahomean Earth pantheon, the Sky pantheon, and the Thunder pantheon have survived. Others have been forgotten, but in their place there has grown a vast array of loa, recruited partly from the Yoruba deities and perhaps from deities of other West African tribes. By far the largest group has come into existence in Haiti—loa whose names, at least, probably would go unrecognized in West Africa.

777 There have been prolific intrusions into Vodoun from the rites of the 777 Catholic Church, though they have not affected the general framework 777 of the system. The original Dahomean supreme being, Nananbuluku, is 776 nearly forgotten; in her place the Christian God is named in many a Vodoun service. Yet, though God is the supreme creator, giver, and taker, it 771 is the loa who must be supplicated and mollified. Most important Vodoun 793 rituals are begun under the supervision of the *prêt' savane,* or "bush 777 priest," who leads off with brief prayers from the Catholic rites. While 777 the Catholic Church itself rejects any direct part in Vodoun, the self- 775 tutored prêt' savane, unordained and unsponsored by the Church, brings elements of its theology into the hounfor. The origins of the prêt' savane are not clear. But there is little doubt that his place in Haitian life became assured during the years of conflict between postrevolutionary governments and the Church of Rome. After the slave revolts of 1791, the priests of the French colony fled from the scene or went into hiding along with the other white colonists. From the date of Haitian independence throughout the following half century, Haiti was "in open schism from the Roman Catholic Church."[1] Some Haitian presidents were friendly toward the Catholic Church; others even had the objective of making Catholicism a state religion with the president at its head. Henry Christophe, for example, made the Catholic Church official but stipulated that [659] ecclesiastical decrees must be approved by the president. Alexandre Pétion's constitution for southern Haiti (the country was divided) also established the Church as official but laid upon it strong restrictions.

775 Leyburn points out that in 1814 there were in Christophe's kingdom 659 only three priests, one of whom Christophe had named archbishop. Dur- 793

[1] Leyburn, The Haitian People, p. 119. Cf. p. 349, Category 116. -- Analyst]

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175 793 [659]

ing Boyer's administration, 1818–1843, Catholicism was the state religion but the president was its chief. Leyburn notes:

> Every effort of the state failing to provide proper religious leadership, Boyer resigned himself to permitting those who professed to be priests to practice in the republic. There were seventy so-called priests in the country in 1840. Some of them had once been in the holy orders but had been unfrocked: they found in Haiti not only a haven but a fertile field for gain. In addition to these religious renegades came adventurers who knew just enough of ritual and theology to use the priestly garb as a cover for easy graft. . . . They baptized houses, boats, and doorposts, and blessed fetish charms or amulets, all for a fee.[8]

175 659

It was not until 1860, after the death of the "Emperor" Soulouque, that Haiti signed a concordat with the Roman Church.

175 793

The role of the prêt' savane became defined after the slave revolts of 1791. His cue was taken from the activities of freebooting Europeans who apparently needed neither religious orders nor profound Catholic knowledge for their pseudo-clerical work. And the long period without a responsible priesthood gave the "bush priest" an opportunity to flourish.

793 177 [554]

The prêt' savane of today has a respected place in the community, though his prestige is not so great as that of the houngan on the one hand or the Catholic priest on the other. His place is guaranteed by his ability to bring to the Vodoun service elements of a competing system which the houngan, operating within the framework of African tradition, does not provide. Acceptance of these Catholic elements as a peripheral part of Vodoun is characteristic of much West African religious thinking, in which new deities and rituals may be added to the old when circumstances require.

793 78

The prêt' savane opens many Vodoun services with an *action de grâce*, reads prayers when a death has occurred, participates in marriage rites, and "baptizes" the hounfor, the cult drums, and the sacred rattles—not to mention the loa themselves! But it is the houngan's powers that are paramount. The "bush priest" is in a sense performing a service for the Vodoun priest, whose rituals and administrations are regarded as the effective and vital ones. The prêt' savane is a cultural afterthought.

[184]

In certain remote and isolated mountain places the prêt' savane is virtually unknown. But there is no sense of deprivation, for the cult priests —even the poorest and the most rustic—have their own way of dealing with the saints, God, and the forces of nature. An aged houngan of the Morne la Selle region explained it this way:

"In everything that is done, God's permission is asked first. Most houngans in the mountains do not know how to read, and they don't know how to pray. But they know many things. They know where the sun rises,

1

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

They know where the sun rises,

and they address St. Nicholas, who opens the day, and they know the wish of God. In the name of St. Nicholas they raise a glass of water and ask God for the power to do."

In ordinary usage the Haitian refers to the various cults or "nations" as though they were quite separate and mutually exclusive. He speaks of the *service* Pétro, or *rite* Nago, or the *nanchon* Ibo. Yet in practice the cults are usually bound together into two or three major groups.

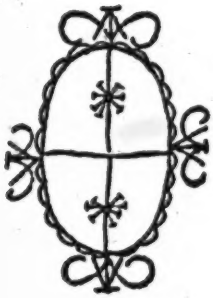
The "nations" belonging to the Vodoun (or Dahomey) group include the Arada or Dahomé, the Anago, the Mahi, the Amine, and the Ibo. There is ample evidence that the cults of these "nations" were once separate and apart. Even today in isolated regions of Haiti there are cult centers devoted exclusively to Nago deities. Elsewhere, Mahi or Ibo services are held without the intrusion of "foreign" rites and deities. Some cult centers have several hounfors—one for Dahomé, one for Nago, one for Ibo, and so on, with a separate building for the "dead" spirit Gèdé. More often, however, one finds a single hounfor containing separate altars. Of all the "nations" within the Vodoun group, the Ibo perhaps has the most independent status, and in some regions it is tied in with Pétro rather than Vodoun rites.

The Pétro group also includes numerous "nations," some completely absorbed, others more loosely affiliated. Within this group, which for convenience may be called the Congo-Guinée family, are the Pétro, Bumba, Moundongue, Bambarra, Congo Loangue (Loango), and other "nations." In certain regions the Congo cult, like the Ibo, is regarded as separate and apart. Sometimes the Pétro service is kept distinct from the others, though it has drawn so heavily on them for its roster of deities that the distinction is not easily seen. In places such as Port-au-Prince where the cults have deeply infiltrated one another, major differences between the Vodoun and Congo-Guinée rites have disappeared, and altars to both Pétro and Dahomé deities may be found within the same hounfor.

It is not difficult to detect a certain pattern of regional grouping within the Vodoun and Congo-Guinée families. Within the Vodoun family are gathered "nations" from Dahomey, Togoland, and Nigeria, while in the Congo-Guinée cycle are "nations" from Central Africa, miscellaneous "nations" such as the Bambarra, and the Pétro cult which is regarded as "Haitian" rather than "African," but whose rites and loa have been recruited in large measure from other services.

One often hears of Kitta services, or Chango services, or Legba rites. These are not separate cults but simply rituals for specific loa.

[P.19]



3. The Loa: Gods of the Haitian Mountains

The supernatural world of the common people of Haiti is a vast, rich, and unexplored world. It is peopled with thousands of gods who may at any time come down a rocky mountain trail, or up from the bottom of the sea, or out of the springs where people drink, to enter the hounfor of the Vodoun priest or the humblest of thatched huts. The gods—variously called *loa, mystère, hounaié,* or *vodoun*[1]—may come at strange, unexpected moments to the unlikeliest places. Yet whenever they come they are recognized for what they are. The things they say and do bear the mark of their character and their special powers, and usually there is little disagreement over their identity. 776

The Haitians tell you that the loa live "in Africa," or on "the island below the sea," or "beneath the water," or in a mythological city called La Ville-aux-Camps. The loa are believed to share this residing place with the spirits of certain categories of the dead. What goes on in the land of the loa is no man's knowledge and every man's conjecture. They say that a few privileged people have been able to go down "below the water" and return. 776 772 787

In the region of Gros Morne there is a legend of a woman named Madame Ste Ile who went under the water and returned after seven years. There is another widespread tale of a man near La Bai Moustique who, in full public view, walked into the bay and disappeared, and returned in a few hours bearing a cake in his hands—a gift from the loa below the water. And in the hills near Aux Cayes in the south a story is told about a loa named Général Clermeil, who drove up in a fine carriage and carried off a woman to his place below the water. 776 787

On certain occasions the loa come to pass the time among their "children" in Haiti. When a loa comes to the people he enters the body of one or another of them, or he enters many of them at the same time. In cult terminology, these people are his "horses." The loa mounts his horses, as

[1] [For footnote, see category 116, pp. 349-350.--Analyst]

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776 they say, and "rides" them. What the possessed persons do then depends
787 upon the personality and whim of the loa. Generally they take on the special personal characteristics of the loa. Their voices and manners change and their postures and attitudes undergo transfiguration. They may talk about the "island below the water," about community ancestors, about intimate affairs of the community, or about how things are going back in Africa. Sometimes they utter words or phrases recognized as "African language." And on occasion possessed persons talking *langage* are said to be speaking Greek, Arabic, Hebrew, or Spanish. At the moment of first impact, when the loa enter their heads, they stagger, jerk, and tremble, often falling on the ground. Then, soon afterward, their behavior begins to move in a groove of conventionalized activity.

[346] Most commonly the loa arrive during religious rituals or dances. They
come by way of the *po'teau mitan*, the center pole which supports the roof
[178] of the peristyle. It is around this pole that the sacred vèvès, or flour draw-
[782] ings, are made. At the foot of the pole sacrifices are offered and libations are poured.

787 Yet possession may occur anywhere and at any time. The sound of a
793 certain drumbeat may be the signal for it, or a sudden fright, or an emo-
[533] tional crisis, or any situation to which possession has been conditioned. The houngan or the mambo may facilitate possession, control it, and terminate it. The cult priest is acutely sensitive to the conditions favorable to possession. He knows how to heighten emotional tension and how to soften it. A competent houngan "plays" his service as though it were a delicate instrument. He takes everything in, issues instructions to his servitors from time to time, orders the drum tempo increased or diminished, knows how to change pace. Sometimes he hovers in the background unobtrusively, encouraging the singing and dancing like a benevolent father. At other times he comes to the center of the activities and takes command. He becomes the focus of all eyes. His slightest action is watched with intensity. He may take the hand of one of the servitors, pirouette him about, and compel the loa to enter. When the servitor is "mounted," the houngan may conduct him through ritual activity. At the right moment the houngan may help the loa to leave.

776 The spectators who observe possession in others are usually aware of the
787 identity of the loa who has entered. When the ancient loa Damballa Wèdo comes in, his "horse" falls to the ground, wriggles like a snake, and makes what are considered to be snakelike sounds in his throat. For Damballa is the venerable deity identified with the rainbow, which in ancient Dahomean lore was thought to be the great serpent come out from the underworld to drink after a rain. When the loa Ogoun Chango enters,

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his "horse" may trample in glowing coals, plunge his hands in boiling oil, or play with red-hot iron bars. For Ogoun Chango is a fire-eater—a deity of the forge and of battle. The deity Legba is characterized as a limping old man. A "horse" possessed by Legba may cavort about on a kind of cane-crutch called a Legba stick. Each loa has his distinctive mark. As the Haitians say, "you learn about the loa by watching his horses."

In addition to having homes in Africa or below the water, most loa have special residing places in Haiti, such as stones, caves, trees, waterfalls, or springs. One may come across a boulder or a bamboo grove sacred to a certain loa, and food offerings are likely to be seen there. Many loa are identified with some specific variety of tree and will "inhabit" all such trees throughout the country. Loa Calbassie, for example, lives in the calabash tree, and Loa Général Brisé in the chardette tree. Offerings to these deities are set out underneath the tree or hung in its branches, and services may be held around the trunk.

Loa also live in the old Carib and Arawak celts which are found from time to time. These "loa stones," as they are called, are identified by their forms and their ability to pass certain tests. Some Haitians declare the stones must be able to "whistle," to perspire when blown upon, and to "talk." The loa stones ordinarily are passed on from one generation to another, in the hounfor and in the peasant hut alike. In this way the loa who inhabit them are inherited. Sometimes, but rarely, stones are sold; disposing of a loa stone requires an elaborate ceremony to guarantee that the seller will not be injured by the loa, who is likely to feel "wounded." In such a ceremony the loa is fed and placated and asked to go his way in peace. The loa stones are sometimes called "thunder stones," in the belief that they were hurled to earth by the deities Kebiosu, Sobo, and Chango (all of whom had similar functions among the Arada and Yoruba peoples of West Africa). The stones are cared for by their owners with the greatest reverence.

Loa are acquired by individuals in various ways. Many Haitians hold that every infant is born with a *mait' tête*—a spirit who is "master of the head." In this light, no individual is without a loa, although the deity may never manifest interest in the individual by an act of possession. A man may acquire a loa in the course of his life, although in that event the original mait' tête must be retired from his head. The "inherited" loa are usually not the personal deities but the special protectors of the household or the hounfor and are known as "loa of the house" or "family loa."

Should a man acquire a new loa to replace the old as his mait' tête, he must undergo a ceremony known as *lavé tête*—the "washing of the head." The old loa is retired and sent away, leaving the field clear for the new

one. Sometimes a loa who is making life too hard for a devotee will be retired without a replacement. The "washing of the head" must be accompanied by ritual safeguards, and all possible circumstances must be taken into account by the officiating cult priest. There are many stories of people who became mentally deranged as a result of the removal of their loa from their heads.

The mait' tête must also be removed from the head of a person who dies. Should this not be done, the spirit of the deceased will go to reside "below the water" and may cause trouble for the family. This loa is usually transferred to a special jar as a temporary resting place, and later perhaps into the head of another member of the family.

Though the loa is a powerful ruling force in the life of the individual, the human "horse" has controls over his deity too. He may reproach or admonish his loa for bad behavior or for failing to protect him. He may expose the loa's irresponsibility in public through the use of songs in religious rites. And though the loa is frequently encouraged to "enter," steps may be taken to restrain him from possession. This is called *marré loa* —"tying the loa." A woman may "tie" her loa by fixing a hairpin in her hair in a special way. A man may do it by placing his hands in cold water.[3]

Nevertheless, the loa are always lurking in the background. They are a constant and dramatic element in the religious life of the people. They may sometimes be controlled by the houngan, but they are an authority stronger than the priesthood. They give advice, courage, consolation, and status to their followers. They add much to an otherwise hard and ungenerous environment and evoke remembrances of Africa from which the Haitians' ancestors were uprooted. They can also cause concern and anxiety; for the loa are not always benevolent, and they are frequently unpredictable.

Many of the loa are ancient deities, sib-founders and ancestors who loom out of a misty, half-forgotten past. Nananbouclou, Legba, and Ayida Wèdo have been known for many lifetimes in Dahomey. Chango, Ogoun, and Loko were old spirits in Nigeria before the first slave ships sailed from Africa to the New World. Their names and many others in present-day Haiti come from an ancient lore. They recall places, tribes, and old kingdoms from Senegal in northwestern Africa to the heart of the Congo. They are a bond which holds the people of Haiti to Africa. In the mountains people sometimes say, "Haiti is the child of Dahomey," or "Haiti is the child of Guinée." The gods divide their time between their Haitian and their African children.

Yet in some respects the Haitians' concept of their loa is no longer purely African. The African religious patterns have been infiltrated by the lore

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of the Catholic Church and fused with old folk beliefs of Europe. In Dahomey, which was the wellspring for much of Haiti's culture, there was no supreme deity quite like the one introduced to the slaves by the missionaries. There was a pantheon of gods with Mawu and Lisa at the top. They were children of a common parent, Nananbuluku. None of these deities was strictly comparable to our idea of a supreme being. Nananbuluku survives in Haiti as Nananbouclou or Nananbélécou, one of many loa. Among the neighboring Yoruba the high god was Olorun. Like the Dahomean Mawu and Lisa, Olorun was quite remote from the lives of men. The gods who were invoked and placated were the several hundred *orisha* created by Olorun. The nearby Ashanti people had a simpler pantheon, with the sky god Nyame supreme among them. 776 171 177 797

In the present Haitian concept of the supernatural, God is at the very apex of the pantheon, though he is distinctly of another order. His power as the supreme source of all things is fully recognized. A Haitian song, associated with Vodoun ritual but of probable recent origin, goes: 771 776 78

> C'est Bondieu qui voyé moin, quand li vlé moin l'apprend. [Ex. 37] [539]
>
> It is God who sent me, when he wants me he'll take me.

Another song, from the Guinée service, goes:

> Oh, Kitta, oh so'ti nan dleau, li tout mouillé!
> Oh, nen point houngan passé Bondieu nan pays-ya! [Ex. 36]
>
> Oh, Kitta comes out of the water, he is dripping wet!
> Oh, there is no houngan in this country greater than God!

Although it is recognized, or at least stated, that God is a supreme force, God is not regarded as the entire supernatural force of the world. In many Vodoun services the houngan may invoke, as separate categories of the unseen, the loa, the dead, the *marassas* (twin spirits), and God. Haitians do not have a consistent schematized picture of the supernatural world. God comes first, but (as in West Africa) he is less immediate than the loa. He is identified with destiny; yet within the framework of that destiny man's lot can be bettered or worsened through dealings with the dead, the baka and lou-garos (demons and vampires), and the cult priests.

In many of the folk tales of Haiti, God appears as another character in a cast which may include as protagonists animals, loa, Christian saints, and ordinary men and women. One such tale is about a visit which all the dogs decided to pay to God. They started off through the woods together, but one of them was distracted by the smell of carrion. He left his friends for a brief time, found the carrion, and ate some of it. Then he hurriedly joined his companions again. Together they came to God's house and were admitted to the parlor, where they sat around making polite conver- 776 539

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sation with God and one another. But after a while God caught the scent of the carrion which was still smeared on the nose of the dog who had eaten it. He sniffed the air several times to test the unpleasant odor. Misjudging it, he concluded that one of the dogs had befouled his parlor, and he demanded to know who had done this impolite thing. The dogs were deeply concerned that one of their party had desecrated God's house. They immediately began to run around smelling each other to determine who the culprit was. But they never found the evidence, because it was on a dog's nose. The dogs still, to this day, are trying to discover who committed a deed that never actually happened.

In some of the tales God competes in the real world with other supernatural and natural forces. One story tells how he was overcome by a Vodoun priest:

A houngan named Bocor Zandolite once held a great ritual service. People came from the whole countryside. It was a long service, scheduled to last for seven weeks. Chickens, goats, and bulls were sacrificed. The finest drummers in the country were drumming. Everyone danced, and the celebration went on day after day, night after night, without stopping. The noise was deafening. God heard it. It kept him from sleeping at night, and in the daytime he could not concentrate on his work. Finally, God decided he would have to put a stop to it. So he called St. John and instructed him to go down and order Bocor Zandolite to bring the service to an end. St. John went down and approached the gate of Bocor Zandolite's hounfor. Bocor Zandolite met him at the gate. He took St. John by the hand. St. John sang:

> Factionnaire ouv'é bayè pou' moin passé!
>
> Guard, open the gate for me to pass!

And Bocor Zandolite replied by singing:

> Wa wa ilé londja londja!
> Bocor Zandolite wa wa ilé londja londja! [Ex. 38]

[This is supposed to represent the houngan talking *langage*.] Then he shook St. John's hands three times and pirouetted him around, first to the left and then to the right. Suddenly St. John staggered and began to talk *langage*. He grasped the center pole of the dance court and twirled round and round it. Then Bocor Zandolite gave him a lighted candle and a glass of water, and St. John spilled a bit of the water on the ground in honor of the loa who had entered his head.

When a week went by and St. John didn't come back, God became angry. The noise of the drumming and singing was getting worse. So he

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called St. Patrick and sent him down to stop the ceremony. St. Patrick approached the hounfor and sang: 776 539

Factionnaire ouv'é bayè pou' moin passé!

And again Bocor Zandolite came to the gate and sang:

Wa wa ilé londja londja!
Bocor Zandolite wa wa ilé londja londja!

He took St. Patrick by the hands, pirouetted him around, and a loa came into St. Patrick's head, too.

Another week went by, and when St. Patrick didn't return, God sent St. Michael. The same thing happened to St. Michael. God then sent St. Anthony, and later he sent St. Peter. But when St. Peter didn't return, God became very angry indeed. He hadn't slept for weeks. So he decided to go down himself and put an end to the affair. He approached the hounfor singing "Factionnaire ouv'é bayè pou' moin passé!" And Bocor Zandolite replied as he had before. He took God by the hands to greet him. He shook hands downward three times, then he pirouetted God to the right and to the left. God suddenly staggered and reeled from one end of the habitation to the other. The drummers beat a special salute, and the singers sang loudly and clapped their hands, for God had a loa in his head.

This tale appears to relish the superiority of the loa over God. Yet there is no sense of sacrilege. Although the Haitian concept of God is that of a supreme force, and a source of good, the Christian deity also has some of the attributes of paramount gods in certain West African religious systems which make him less remote and even, on occasion, somewhat fallible. He figures in Haitian lore very much like the Ashanti sky god, Nyankonpon, who has dealings with animals and human beings and is sometimes outwitted by them. Although Nyankonpon has the power to dispense favors, justice, and punishment to mortals, he himself lives within, rather than superior to, a well-established physical system. His marvelous deeds are only slightly superior to those of other, lesser gods, or of sorcerers, or of the trickster Anansi. In fact, in one Ashanti tale Nyankonpon finds himself very much in the same situation as God in the Haitian tale, being forced to dance to the music of the trickster's drum. 776 539 171 177

The Christian saints, too, have been incorporated into the Haitian system, and they also have been syncretized with Vodoun elements. They have become identified with various loa according to their most obvious characteristics. St. Patrick, because he is always pictured with snakes, has become one with Damballa and Ayida, who are also symbolized by snakes. Èzilie Fréda, the female loa characterized by purity, has become 776 177

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one with the Holy Virgin. St. Jacques has become one with Ogoun, St. George with Linglessou, St. Anthony and St. Christopher with Legba, guardian of the highway, and St. Nicholas with Marassa Trois. In northern Haiti the word *zange* (from the French, *les anges*—the angels) sometimes is used synonymously with loa or mystère. As for the saints, they are sometimes identified with one loa, sometimes with another.

No one in Haiti knows all the loa. Some of them are so ancient as to be nearly forgotten. Others are spontaneous creations or revelations on the part of a possessed person. Some loa names may be the result of a devotee's seizing upon a word or phrase in a religious song and imparting to it the concept of a loa. Sometimes a word in a phrase of *langage* is taken to be a loa's name, and sometimes agglutinated Creole words become the name of a loa.

The possibility of frequent additions to the list of loa is heightened still further by the general illiteracy of the Haitian people and the lack of a stabilizing influence in the written word. The Creole language has marked regional differences. Furthermore, change of consonants or vowels is a commonplace occurrence, so that a single loa's name may have several forms. One may well wonder whether Aza, Adja, and Akadja were not originally a single individual. Nevertheless, in the Haitian scheme they are now different personalities.

There is one more complicating factor in identifying loa or compiling a comprehensive roster—the use of multiple names. In addition to the names by which they are generally known, many of the deities have a variety of nicknames. Some of these nicknames are in Creole, some appear to be of West African provenience. The deity Agwé, for example, is frequently called Coqui-nan-Mer—Coqui-in-the-Sea. A loa may have four, five, or even more such nicknames. Sometimes short forms are used. Damballa may be called Da, Sobo may be called So, Azaka may be called Za. In addition, some deities have "secret" names, which theoretically are known only to the priesthood and the inner circle of servitors. Multiple naming and the reservation of certain names for special occasions appear to have West African precedents.

In the naming of the loa no neat and methodical system is apparent at any point. The "surname," or what may be in some cases a generic designation, may appear first or last. One may hear Ogoun Chango or Chango Ogoun, Général Brisé or Brisé Général, Congo Savane or Savane Congo. (This is characteristic of everyday speech. A former president of Haiti, Nord Alexis, is often called Alexis Nord.) The "surname" can be a description of "tribal" or "national" affiliation, regional provenience, character and temperament, or an indication of function. Thus we find

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Boulicha Nago, or Boulicha of the Nagos; Èzilie Wèdo and Èzilie Doba, possibly from Wèdo and Doba in Dahomey; Tijean Pied Chèche (Tijean Dry Feet), a loa of bad character, "dry feet" signifying malevolence; and Legba Grand Chimin, or Legba of the Highway. 776 171 552

Identification of loa is often made difficult by the use of the generic or family title only. The term Nago covers all the loa associated with this "nation" (Nago Piment, Amine Nago, Boulicha Nago, etc.), but in a song or service any one of them is as likely as not to be referred to simply as Nago, with no clue to his exact identity. Each listener takes the name to designate the Nago loa with whom he is most familiar, unless possession occurs and the loa is otherwise identified by the behavior of his "horse." 776 552

On the whole, it appears that there was in the beginning a strong awareness of regional origins. There are names among the cult pantheons which indicate Senegal, Dahomey, Nigeria, Congo, and Angola origins. Many loa bear the names of African towns. Among the Ogoun family of loa, for example, are such regional designations as Badagry and Jèkkè, the first being a town in Nigeria and the second in Dahomey. It is clear that a detailed geographical knowledge of certain West African regions would considerably illuminate a study of Haitian loa. 776 174 552

Local shrines, too, doubtless enter into the naming system. Badagry is the name of a town in Nigeria, and it is also a Dahomean word designating the structure in which young men used to be circumcised and initiated into the secrets of warriors. In this particular light, the loa Ogoun Badagry might be regarded as the deity of that particular ritual center. 346 174 776 552

In discussing the complicated relationship of their loa, Haitians sometimes say: "There are seven of everything. There are seven Marassas, seven Ogouns, seven Èzilies. There are seven brothers and sisters in every family of loa." Or they say something such as: "There is only one Legba, but there are seven. There is only one Ogoun, but he has many moods and names. There is only one Èzilie, but she has seven faces." This concept is also held by the Arara (Arada) cult of Cuba. It is interesting to note the extent to which duplications and new generations of loa have been set up into family households in the most literal sense. Those families are still growing. In the Gèdé family I have counted more than thirty seemingly distinct individuals (see Appendix I).[1] Herskovits mentions a number of others, and still more have been cited by other writers on the subject. When I pointed out to some Haitians that the Gèdé family numbered far more than seven individuals, they were unable to account for the situation. Other Haitians took the vast army of Gèdés as a matter of course. The Ogoun family, too, is large and growing. Twenty-seven Ogouns are listed in the compilation in Appendix I. Still more have been recorded elsewhere. 776 801

[1] [See p. 317 ff., Category 116.-- Analyst]

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776 Another factor that may explain some of the confusion over which rites a loa is attached to is the concept of the *escorte*, a kind of army or association of loa which may include deities of different nations. In discussing the loa Wanilé, for example, one Haitian noted:

"Wanilé is neither Rada nor Dahomé, but Pétro. She is an escorte, and she walks with Dahomé. In the escorte, Dahomé and Pétro walk together. A big loa—a loa with a big name—has many other loa who walk with him. In an escorte there are twenty-one in all. The escorte has a chief, and under the chief there are soldiers—that is, smaller loa who must do what the chief says.

776 754 "For example, a man goes to a houngan and gets him to send a strong loa against you to hurt you in some way—to make you sick or lose your crop. Your own loa may be a strong one, but the houngan has sent a still stronger one against you, and so your own loa can't really protect you. So he will go away and send in his place one of his escorte. This smaller loa is not as strong perhaps as the one he is replacing, but he is stronger in that the houngan did not calculate on him. He has certain abilities which he can use to help you. And it isn't suspected that he is your protector. So in this way he is in a better position than your own loa.

776 "The smaller loa go together in an escorte. Many people may have a certain loa, and he is busy all the time. If someone needs him and he can't go, he will send one of his escorte, the next one below him.

776 753 754 "If you are made sick by a loa, there are so many in his escorte you don't know which one made you sick, so you can't do anything about it. It is difficult sometimes to identify the loa that is hurting you. You really have to dig to find out who he is. You have to give a *mangé*. There is a big ceremony, and you have to be bought back from the loa. But some loa who are persecuting you won't sell you back. They won't go away. Rather than leave you alone they would see you die. Perhaps the person who sent this loa against you sent him to kill. If your own loa can't protect you he will send one of his escorte to do it. *Gainyain connain passé connain* [There is knowledge that surpasses knowledge]. *Si fer pas coupé fer, machoquette pas gainyain travaille* [If iron didn't cut iron, the blacksmith would have no work to do]."

776 This concept of the escorte, some of whose members may be Rada and some Pétro, helps to explain why certain deities are identified with rites [801] of different "nations." For the Haitian himself it provides a way of accounting for "families" that have grown beyond the ritual number seven. Yet there are some Haitians who declare that every member of an escorte is simply a different manifestation of a single deity.

680 The loa, like the rites, vary somewhat according to region and to the

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

The loas, like the rites, vary somewhat according to region and to the practices of the individual cult priests. New concepts spring up, and they thrive in one locality while remaining unheard of in another. Yet many new concepts travel from hounfor to hounfor. As in the old days in Dahomey, the Vodoun priests sometimes make journeys to visit other cult centers. At one service near Jacmel, on the south coast, I met a houngan from Dondon in the far north and heard him discuss with the local cult chief the appropriate behavior of a loa who had mounted a servitor. The Dondon houngan declared that in the north the loa conducted himself differently. The Jacmel houngan parried with the remark that a loa's behavior is consistent. He said there were only two possibilities concerning the possession as described by the cult chief from Dondon: either the loa had been mistakenly identified, or another deity had attempted to impersonate him. Such exchanges hasten the spread of developing theology from one area to another. They also raise contradictions which remain forever insoluble.

That confusions and contradictions are not merely of Haitian making is made clear by Herskovits' voluminous study of the pantheons of Dahomey.[3] Each of the great cults—the sky cult, the earth cult, and the thunder cult—has its own explanations of the origins and functions of the deities; and even within one cult there are contradicting explanations. The Haitians have taken over, built upon, and diverged from a Dahomean system that contained its own contradictions. In adding to it the system of the Yoruba, with its parallelisms and similarities, they have made the whole picture more complex than ever.

3 [Herskovits, Dahomey. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. — Analyst]

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[P. 30]

4. Death Rites

775 776 The community of the Haitian is one that extends far beyond his immediate family and his village, for it takes in not only the various loa but multitudinous dead relatives and ancestors. Some Haitians believe that the dead live in close proximity to the loa, in a place called "Under the Water." Others hold that the dead have no special residing place. But it is the view of many that a dead person may eventually become a loa in his own right. How this happens is not entirely clear. Under certain circumstances the spirits of the newly dead do not go quietly on their way but [969] remain behind to annoy and harass the living. They must be buried with suitable ritual and properly placated throughout the years; otherwise their activities and influences will be unpredictable. Many of them, under special conditions, become almost indistinguishable from loa. And a few, in the course of time, become minor deities in the pantheons. The main loa of the Pétro cult, Dan Pétro, formerly was believed by some Haitians to be a houngan of the eighteenth century who had been buried without having [171] his own loa removed from his head. There are African precedents for deified ancestors' becoming deities. Indeed, some of the great *vodounns* and *orisha* of the Dahomean and Yoruban pantheons in West Africa are believed to be deified clan ancestors or great kings.

775 191 Whether they achieve the status of loa or not, the spirits of the dead must forever be coped with. This Haitian view of the dead is essentially that held in many parts of West Africa. Speaking of West African belief in general, Maurice Delafosse noted:

> After a creature dies, only his spirit remains. It survives with the same character, the same personality, affections and hatreds as during his lifetime, but it can no longer command the vital breath. It becomes all the more powerful on escaping from the confines of its material envelope, since it no longer needs to direct and control the functions of the body, and is not itself regulated by the vital breath. . . . These spirits are all of the same nature. They are invisible but can see and judge everything that happens. They are easily angered and mete out severe punishment to anyone

offending them. They are also vain and capricious, can be conciliated by prayers and gifts, and propitiated by sacrifices. This animistic religion . . . includes many variants of the worship of countless spirits of men's ancestors and innumerable spirits of nature, all ranking as gods.[1] 775 171

Another observer, speaking of the Bapindi, the Babunda, and other related tribes of the western Congo draws quite similar conclusions:

The people of these tribes recognize a supreme deity, Nzambi, creator of all things. But this supreme spirit is too distant from men to enlist active worship on their part. The basic worship is to the ancestors of the clan. The clan is in effect a community consisting of all the living and the dead descended from a common ancestor. Towards the dead it is necessary to make offerings as a mark of deference when one wishes to consult them on problems. The dead are spoken to through the chief, who uses a special drum for this purpose. The dead have the responsibility of protecting their descendants.[2]

Among the Bantu people of South Africa, also, the worship of ancestors is based upon the belief that when a man dies he continues to influence the lives of his relatives remaining on earth. He is as interested as ever in descendants who remain "outside on the earth," but indifferent to members of other communities unless they bear them some grudge. The characters of people who die are not changed by death. They are as prone to jealousy in death as in life, and as rancorous toward descendants who wound their vanity, flout their wishes, squander their bequests, or infringe the ancient laws and customs of their clans; but they are also as willing as ever to help those of their lineage who treat them with becoming respect and obedience.[3] The affairs of mankind in general do not concern them; they are exclusively interested in their own family and tribe, and without their help and guidance their living descendants cannot hope to flourish. As long as the moral code is strictly followed, they confer blessings and abundance; but if offended by any breach of custom, they can also send drought, cattle plague, tribal or personal disaster, sickness, or death.[4] 171 769 775

This deeply rooted concept of the relationship of the family to its ancestors continues to motivate the Haitian in his observance of services for the dead. 769 775

In addition to the ordinary dead with whom the Haitian has to deal, there are the spirits of twins, known as *marassas*. As there are feasts for the ordinary family dead, the mangé morts, so there are feasts for living and dead twins, the mangé marassas. Twins are believed to have special powers, and even when alive they are given more than usual consideration. The spirits of dead twins are especially willful and capricious, and unless properly placated they may cause illness and misfortune. Once each year, on dates fixed by local custom, special services are held for the marassas. 769 775 845

[1,2] [Footnotes appear on p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]
[3] [Willoughby, The Soul of The Bantu, pp. 88-89. Cf. p. 350 Category 116. -- Analyst]
[4] [Footnote appears on p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

769 845 The dead twins are offered food in special earthen or gourd bowls. In any market place where pottery is sold you will find the joined marassa double or triple bowls. The annual rites for the marassas are routine, but once every five years there is a *grande service* for them.

It is not merely the twins of one's immediate family that are served, but twins—that is, the spirit of twins—in general. They are supplicated even when a family knows of no incidence of twins. In part, this precaution is a recognition that there may have been twins among ancestors long dead and forgotten. It is also recognition of a twin spirit as a separate force affecting all people. The twin spirit has been personified in the loa named Marassa. The child born after twins is believed by many Haitians to be even "stronger" and more to be placated than twins themselves. He is known as a *doçu* if a boy, *doça* if a girl. Their patron loa are known as [776] Marassa Doçu and Marassa Doça. The patron loa of triplets is Marassa Trois. Triplets are regarded as a special category of twins. Some Haitians, in fact, believe that the twins are merely a partial manifestation of the group of three, which is completed on the birth of the doçu or doça. In the marassa feast, triplets are served in the triple clover-leaf bowl, as are twins in combination with their doçu or doça. It is also believed by some that the child born before twins is "weak" both in physical vitality and psychic powers, because his strength has been sapped by the marassas who have followed him.

776 768 [184] For some Haitians the loa Marassa is the most potent of forces to be placated at the time of death. They hold that he is only incidentally the patron of twins and triplets. His significance is said to lie in the fact that he is the spirit of the first of all human children who died. And as the child precedes the man, Marassa is the first and foremost of all loa. When a service is held for Marassa, he is given foods and beverages that all children love.

769 Rites for the dead continue endlessly for the living. Before a child is witness to a death in his own family he may observe many rituals for the family ancestors, twins, and the unknown dead. For those who are a part of Vodoun, the cycle is a perpetual one in an endless system of integration and continuity.

775 776 764 Special rites are held to remove the loa from the head of a deceased person. It is believed that the spirit of a person who has not had his loa removed will be restive and perhaps will even cause difficulties for his family and his descendants. And there is also the matter of the loa's welfare. The *maît' tête* is, in a sense, a captive in the head of the person who has died. The head is his home. But should the corpse be taken to the graveyard without the loa's having been removed, the loa would refuse to be buried

with the corpse. He wants nothing to do with the domain of the Gèdés. 775
He liberates himself from the corpse at the cemetery and retires "below the 776
water." He is no longer a friend and benefactor of the family. He cannot 764
be inherited by the children of the deceased. Such controls as the deceased once exercised over him are dissipated. He may, in fact, be angered at the treatment he has received and return only to harass the family. Thus, if a family fails to have the maît' tête of one of its members properly removed at death, it may be persecuted afterward by the "spirit" of the dead ancestor and the loa as well.

The rite of dispossessing a deceased person of his loa is called *déssounin*, 764
or *déssouné*. The essence of it is the transference of the maît' tête from the 776
head of the dead person into a special receptacle, an earthen jar called a *govi* or *pot tête*. Sometimes it is transferred to the head of a child in the family, though usually this comes later.

There have been many descriptions of this ritual, and they seem to show that, though the tradition is a constant one, the specific patterns of the services are variable. Different regions, different cult centers, and different houngans conduct the rites in different ways.

Eugene Aubin wrote, for example:

On the day of death, the deceased is placed standing up; the *papaloi* [houngan] [793]
conducts the rites which retire the *mystère* [loa] from the body and introduce it
into a jar, which is then carefully sealed. On the ninth day, after the feast for the [765]
dead, the jar is broken and liberty given to the *loa*.[5]

Melville Herskovits reported:

If the dead person was a Vodun priest or otherwise had strong *connaissance*, steps [766]
are taken . . . "to remove the *loa* from his head" so that his soul will not go under [775]
the water, for, as has been explained, such souls are held to be powerful spirits which
may cause the family much harm if, after a time, an expensive and troublesome cere-
mony is not performed to bring them out and lodge them in a jar. . . . The *houngan* [793]
stands in place and calls the name of the dead. He puts some of the hair of the dead
in the jar or in a calabash, into which the *loa* is supposed to go, and, unless another
member of the family, nominated to receive the *connaissance* of the dead, is present,
the jar or calabash is sealed until these spirits can be "given" to a successor.[6]

As Herskovits understands it, it is the "soul" of the dead person that 114
would go to live "under the water," rather than the loa. This would appear 764
to be a fusion of two separate elements—the wandering, troublesome 775
"spirit" of a dead person and the maît' tête who retires "under the water." 776
Actually, Haitians are not always consistent in their explanations of what happens, or of the difference between loa and souls. On the hounfor altar there may be some govis that contain "souls" or "spirits" and others that contain loa; though the distinction is readily appreciated, Haitians are

[5] [Translated from The French of Aubin, En Haiti, P. 212
Cf. P. 350, category 116. -- Analyst]
[6] [Herskovits, Life in a Haitian Valley, PP. 213-214
Cf. P. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

764 sometimes hard put to explain the similarity of treatment of these two
775 categories.
776

Another investigator, Alfred Métraux, has provided a vivid description
764 given by a Haitian of a ceremony of removing the loa. In this instance
776 the corpse was not placed in an upright position as described by Aubin but was laid on a specially prepared bed. Attending the body were the houngan, his hounsi, and a child of the dead man who was to receive the liberated loa.

> The child . . . grasps in his hand a black-and-white or a white cock. On the ground in front of the bed they arrange a fine white napkin. On top of it there are syrup, candles . . . , *tafia,* and other things. After they have finished sprinkling water, clapping their hands, singing to the *loa,* they all go around the bed of the dead person. The child, with the cock in his hand, makes the rounds with the *houngan.* They wave the rooster, they wave it back and forth two, three, four, five, six times over the dead person's head. During this time all those present get possessed by the *loa,*
[793] sing, clap their hands. The dead person's bed begins to creak. The *houngan* climbs on the bed and grabs the dead person's two arms. . . . He pulls him to a sitting position. The child (into whose head the *loa* is to be transferred) strikes the chicken three times on the head of the dead person. He lets go the chicken, and the chicken flies up and starts to run all around the room, smashing pots and vessels. They grab the chicken and let it go in the air three times, shouting: *Ai bobo loa à!* Immediately the *loa* goes into the head of the dead person's child.

764 The houngan cited by Métraux is described as pulling the corpse to a
776 sitting position, but more commonly it is believed that the houngan has
793 the power to make the body sit up by itself. A man from Jérémie explained it this way:

"The body is laid out on a mat. The houngan shakes his asson over the dead man, and talks to the loa in the head. He calls the loa's name: 'Changogolo! Changogolo! Changogolo!' He calls, calls, calls. He doesn't call the dead man's name, he calls the maît' tête. 'Changogolo! Changogolo! Get up! Wake up! Sit up!' The corpse sits up. It even talks. Then the houngan says, 'Lie down!' And the corpse lies down. But it is not the dead man who sits up. The dead man is dead. It is the maît' tête who has forced the body to sit up. After this the houngan takes the loa from the head and puts it in a pot tête. Then the body can be buried. And afterward the loa can be put in the head of someone else or freed. Or the houngan may keep the loa in the pot tête and sell it to someone who needs a loa to work for him. If they buried the corpse without a *déssounin,* the loa would resent it and go away below the water."

764 George Eaton Simpson has written an excellent description of a cere-
766 mony for removal of the loa from the head of a deceased houngan.[8] The
776 [Hall and others, Haitian Creole, American Anthropological
793 Association, Memoir No. 54, pp. 188-189. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[8] [Simpson, "Four Vodun Ceremonies" Journal of American Folklore, April-June, 1946, pp. 155-162. Cf. p. 350, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]

rites took place in the region of Plaisance in northern Haiti. Such a ceremony, Simpson notes, may be attended by several houngans other than the Vodoun priest who is officially in charge. They "share the obligation and pleasure of conducting this service for their colleague, their former rival, and perhaps their former enemy." In a room of the deceased houngan's house is the body, attended by the family, relatives, close friends, and the officiating houngan and his assistants. 764 766 793 776

. . . Near the body, which is covered by a sheet, are placed a jug and a new canari (a large earthen jar). The officiating houngan makes the sign of the cross, mumbles a few ritual formulas, and taking a spoon puts some "manger les morts" (special food for the dead) in the canari: plantains, yams, bananas, tairauts, sweet potatoes, corn meal, roasted corn, bread, cakes, rice, millet, meat, chicken, pistachio, chopped coconut, and other kinds of food. He then adds some water and stirs this mixture. . . . The other houngans perform the same rite. The family, friends, and others in the room imitate the acts of the houngans with the green branches which they hold in their hands. In a grave voice and with solemn gestures the officiant then appeals to the *lous* with songs and prayers. He invites them to come to the aid of their faithful servant, to protect him in the other world as they have protected him in this world. Following the songs and prayers the leader pronounces these words: 764 766 793 776 539

"Innocent! A good man has left us!
The mother of the children weeps.
Weep, console yourselves.
Boss Accelon, he was here.
He died.
Master Pierre Jean-Baptiste, he was here.
He died.
General Baptiste, he was here.
He died.
Marius who was left,
He died.
But Brother Joseph survives,
We will cry, we will console ourselves."[9]

The weeping and the cries redouble, but the *père-savanne* [prêt' savane] and the houngan carry on. In the other room the *père-savanne* solemnly intones:

"I have only one soul
Which must be saved.
By the eternal flame,
I must preserve it."[10]

The officiating houngan speaks directly to the dead man: "Boss Marius, here is a canari that your heirs have especially prepared for you so that in the future you will not have any trouble and demand other sacrifices of them. You others, the dead, are always unreasonable. Because you have peace you forget that the times are hard and that on this earth we unfortunate men are crushed by suffering. Leave your family in peace after this service, Boss Marius. Do not torment them, and do not send illnesses to their children or misery to their older people. You were always a good

9 [As translated by Courlander from Simpson's Creole text, ibid., p. 156. The preceding paragraph is from p. 155. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

10 [Translated by Courlander from the Creole of Simpson's text. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

764 father when you were living. Continue to protect your family after death. If you
766 need other services give abundantly to your heirs in order to obtain satisfaction. Oh,
793 good father, good servant, good parent, good friend! Good-bye! Do not forget us as
776 we shall not forget you."[11]
[539]

Then the houngan goes to the canarie, strikes it three times with a piece of palm bark, and chants an invocation to the loa and to God, while members of the family dance where they stand, shaking the green branches
[787] they hold. There follows an invocation to twins. After a number of loa have "entered" the service, as manifested by possessions, the houngan undertakes to find out how death came to the deceased man. An assistant brings the sacred divining shells[12] of the dead man, and the officiating houngan throws them on the floor, pours tafia three times, and lights a candle. The shells are then consulted. Three times he goes through the procedure of casting the shells and consulting them. Later he announces
[775] that "the death of Boss Marius is not the death of an ordinary man, that he is now resting in La Ville-au-Camp (capital of the loas which is 'under the water'), and that the loas will continue to protect his descendants provided that they show themselves worthy of protection."[13] There is more singing and ritual, and then the canarie is covered. The loa from the head of Marius has found a temporary resting place. A little later in the service "the houngan raises the canari as high as possible, almost as high as his face, as he repeats the last line: 'Where may I find refuge?' With a quick movement the canari is shattered. The food is scattered, the loas are satisfied, and the crowd breaks into disorderly flight. . . ."[14] A few hours later the body of the deceased is buried.

764 It is obvious that these rituals vary a good deal according to regional
184 practices and according to the importance of the persons for whom they
776 are conducted. Furthermore, there is a good deal of difference of opinion among Haitians as to what actually takes place when the maît' tête is taken from the head of the deceased man.

793 Although the prêt' savane (bush priest) is subsidiary to the houngan at
764 death rites, his is nevertheless a conspicuous presence. He may begin the
184 services with prayers for the dead, in which the family joins, while the houngan remains in the background. Later, the houngan takes over. In certain regions, however, the prêt' savane is dispensed with altogther, his function being absorbed by the houngan.

764 As reported by Herskovits, the wake for the dead is one of the most important ceremonies in the death rites. He says:

[766] Wakes are held for all dead, even for very young children if they have been baptized, though if a baby dies before baptism, it is buried without ceremony in a little box in the courtyard of the habitation. . . . The wife and the children either stay

11 [This and the preceding paragraph are from Simpson, Op. Cit., P. 156. Cf. P. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]
12 [For footnote, see Category 116, P. 350. --Analyst]
13 [Simpson, Op. Cit., P. 159, Cf. P. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]
14 [Ibid, P. 161. Cf. P. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

with the corpse or are nearby with friends. The one who bathed the corpse remains constantly at its side as members of the family come and go, since the body must never be alone.[15] 764

But outside the house another kind of activity goes on. There the young people usually gather to sing gay songs, to play games, and to listen to stories. A professional storyteller, or a nonprofessional of repute, is called upon to entertain the children. He may give an entire night to Bouki and Malice stories, or to *contes* with interspersed songs in which the audience participates. Special singing games, stick games, and card games are played. But the drums are silent, both in the dead person's house and in the countryside at large. Rhythms for the game songs are provided by hand-clapping, or by vocal sounds which simulate percussion instruments. 764 524 53

Burial ceremonies vary according to local tradition and the status of the deceased person. Near the little fishing village of Petit Goave in southwestern Haiti, I witnessed a funeral cortege which might have been seen almost anywhere in the country. It was led by the widow of the dead man. She rode on a white horse, followed by four men carrying the dead body on a litter made of plain planks. There was no coffin, the body being covered only by its white shroud.[16] Behind the corpse plodded a group of twelve or fifteen peasants, friends and relatives of the dead man. Some of them had just come in from the fields and still carried their machetes in their hands. Others carried short *cocomacaque* sticks, which are believed useful for warding off baka and other demons who lurk along the path of the traveler. 764 [184]

The woman on the horse lamented loudly. When she came to where other peasants stood respectfully at the road's edge, she stopped her horse and faced them, raising her voice to an anguished pitch, calling on them to take note of her bereavement and of the fine virtues of the dead man. Some of the spectators whom she addressed, standing with their hats in hand, nodded and tried to say consoling words, such as "Oui Manman, li grand moune" (Yes, Mama, he was a fine man), or "Quand Bondieu vlé ou li prend" (When God wants you he takes you). A market woman with a load on her head suddenly became possessed by a loa as the cortege passed her. This seemed to increase the anguish of the widow, who lamented with increased vigor.

The four men carrying the corpse sometimes moved in a zigzag course, first to one side of the road, then to the other. When the procession came to a crossroad it stopped momentarily. The houngan, scarcely distinguishable from the other peasants in blue denim, came forward and stood in the center of the crossroads shaking his tiny hand bell and calling upon Mait' Kalfu (Master of the Crossroads) to grant safe passage. While he [793] [796]

[15] [Herskovits, op. cit., p. 208. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.--Analyst]
[16] [For footnote, see Category 116, p. 350.--Analyst]

764 invoked the loa, the pallbearers brought the body forward as though to go straight ahead, but then they began to lurch and sway as though an invisible force were pushing them around. They veered as though to take the right turn, and again they lurched and staggered. At last they turned toward the left, and in this direction they found the road clear. The houngan thanked the Master of the Crossroads, the widow took her place at the head of the procession, and it proceeded on its way to the cemetery.

793 764 766 In the services for a dead houngan described by Simpson, the body is placed in a coffin, which is carried to all the places sacred to the loa of the hounfor before being taken to the cemetery. First it is taken to the sacred trees where the loa reside, then to the sacred spring "whose waters have cured many sicknesses which physicians had pronounced incurable . . . [823] The bearers of the coffin circle the spring several times. The coffin is swung [toward] each of the four cardinal points." Afterward the procession continues its way to the burial ground.[17]

766 174 761 But the treatment given to the dead may vary according to the manner in which they died. Leyburn notes, for example, that "a person struck by lightning . . . would have no ceremonies at all, for lightning is an act of God."[18] It may well be that the Haitian rationale for not holding ceremonies for an individual killed by lightning is that God has already held the final ceremony. But in the Haitian mind all deaths are, in the last analysis, acts of God, even though magic, poison, or accident may have played an immediate part. Why, then, should the corpse struck by lightning be treated so differently? The answer would appear to lie in a custom 171 766 761 of the Yoruba of dispensing with all burial rites for persons killed by lightning, such persons being considered enemies of the lightning deity [174] Chango. In Dahomey, Herskovits reports, the same attitude prevails in regard to persons killed by lightning:

> If a person is killed by lightning he . . . stands convicted by this fact of some grave crime which has incurred the displeasure of the god of the Thunder Pantheon (Xevioso). A person so killed is never buried by his family, but the body is turned over to the chief priest and cult-members of these deities. It is believed that a man killed in this fashion remains upright until the chief priest questions him and forces him to confess the crimes he had committed to be so punished. No one touches any [768] of the belongings of such a man, not even his money. The house in which he lived [784] is allowed to go to ruin, an *azan* of palm fronds being placed around it to guard [824] against anyone entering it. The moveable property of such a man, his clothes, his stools, and his dishes, are thrown away at the crossroads . . .[19]

766 The burial of a Haitian who dies of smallpox likewise differs from that of one who dies a "normal" death. The victim of smallpox is buried without a coffin in a segregated part of the cemetery. The reason for this lies

17 [Simpson, Op. Cit., p. 161. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]
18 [Leyburn, The Haitian People, p. 156. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]
19 [Herskovits, Dahomey, I, 398. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

beyond the obvious fear of contagion. In his study of Dahomey, Herskovits notes: 766 [171]

> . . . Small-pox is believed to be sent as a punishment for grave offenses in the eyes of these [the Sagbata] deities, and it is taken to indicate that either the dead person himself or a member of his family has committed some heinous crime such as the practice of black magic. A person who dies of small-pox may only be buried after permission has been given by the chief priest of the Earth cult.[20]

Thus, in Haiti, though the connections with the past are clouded, it is clear that victims of lightning and smallpox are treated as a special class of criminals or malefactors. 174 753 766

Ordinary malefactors such as malevolent criminals and murderers—until recent years, at least—were not buried in the common graveyard. They, too, were segregated at the periphery of the cemetery or buried at the edge of a trail or road where the traffic would not permit them to rest and where their graves would be under constant surveillance. The roadside grave sometimes was also the fate of a person killed by lightning. 766

That these special burials are related to the Dahomean and Yoruban concepts of retribution for crimes against the deities is supported by the similarity of treatment accorded victims of lightning and disease and common criminals. In Haiti, Herskovits observes: "Those who die of small-pox or leprosy, suicides, or persons shot as a punishment for crime are not buried in the communal cemetery, but in special sections of the graveyard," the suicides and criminals being set apart from the others.[21] 761 753 766 [174] [171] [681] [762]

Graves found near the seashore, lake shores, or riverbanks frequently are declared to belong to persons who died of drowning. 766

Approximately nine days after a person's death, the "last prayers" are said, and the soul of the deceased is presumed to have departed from the house. Once more, under the tonnelle outside there are games, storytelling, and singing. On this night, however, there is also drumming and dancing of a special kind. Usually it is the Juba, or Martinique, dance, which is believed to be specially enjoyed by the dead, and it is the older people, rather than the young, who participate. These festivities are believed to give cheer to the deceased and to "encourage" him on his way. On the next night comes the mangé mort, the feast for the family dead, a ritual which continues periodically through the years. 765 53 [775] [524] [769]

Sometimes in Haiti you may come upon an old tomb or grave before which a dish of specially prepared food has been set. This is part of the mangé mort ritual. 764 769

A man may make provision in advance of his death for the rites which follow his burial. He may designate special animals to be killed, leave 763 764

[20] [Ibid., pp. 397–398. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.--Analyst]

[21] [Herskovits, Life in a Haitian Valley, p. 214. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.--Analyst]

763 special funds to defray expenses, or even set a day for the "last prayers";
764 and it is said that misfortune is likely to overtake his family if his wishes
are not carried out. Métraux cites a story of a man who had told his wife
763 that if he should happen to die on a Sunday she should hold "last prayers"
764 for him on a Tuesday. It happened to be a Tuesday when the man died.
784

They held the burial in the afternoon. As they began the prayers on Wednesday, the last prayer finished on Wednesday week. But as Brother Lédan had always said they should hold his last prayer on a Tuesday, his wife was quite willing to hold it Tuesday. One Tuesday when everyone knew that the last prayer was being held, his wife heard her brother-in-law who told her that wasn't customarily done [that is, shortening the period of prayers]. Then she put off the last prayer.

Thereupon, according to the story, two strangers appeared in the house. They were offered chairs and they sat down. Suddenly, one of the men arose and said that the woman had announced that a last prayer was to be said that day. She said she had put it off. Then the other man got up and said: "Wasn't it today I ordered you to hold the last prayer?" The woman asked, "Who are you?" But both men disappeared. The woman fell unconscious, and died three days later.[22]

769 The cycle of honoring, encouraging, and placating the spirits of the dead moves continuously. There is no beginning and no end. Although those who have died are no longer seen, they are part of the great community which encompasses those whose names are remembered and those who are forgotten, including ancestors who never left the shores
[761] of Africa. Death is merely another aspect of life, and its forces are ever present.

22 [Hall and others, op. cit., p. 173. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

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[P 41]

5. Services for the Loa and the Family Ancestors

The Ordeal by Fire: Kanzo

To advance beyond the lowest status in the hounfor, the hounsi must undergo the test of fire. This ritual is known as *kanzo,* meaning "to tie fire." In the drama of the hounfor there are many tests and ordeals. When certain loa enter, the mounted persons will eat broken glass. Other loa will cause their "horses" to rub hot pepper in their eyes. Still others will compel possessed persons to cut themselves with machetes. But these are bravado actions of the deities who have entered into the bodies of the servitors. The kanzo test is a formalized and premeditated ritual, in which it is demonstrated that the power of the cult—and the spirit of the individual—is superior to fire. Once having passed through this rite, the ordinary hounsi becomes a *hounsi kanzo.* 794 789 796 787

The kanzo ceremony—or, as it is known in some parts of Haiti, the *brulé zin* (the boiling pot)—is performed in diverse ways according to the tradition of the particular hounfor. But common to all is the dipping of the hands into boiling oil.

The common hounsi, the bossale, is prepared gradually for kanzo. In the course of certain rites she undergoes a smoke ordeal. On all fours, her head close to a fire, she must breathe in smoke without choking or coughing. When these and other tests indicate that she is ready, she will be permitted to undergo the rite of the brulé zin.

Near the town of Thomazeau in the Cul-de-Sac Plain I witnessed one of these rituals. It began with a dance, in which only the hounsi of the cult participated. They were all dressed in white. The chief drummer wore a woman's blouse, a kerchief on his head, and on top of that a woman's straw hat. He played alone while the houngan invoked the loa Legba. [793] Then there were songs for Ogoun, and the dancing resumed.

The dance court was larger than average—about forty feet by sixty.

793 794 787 796 789 Attached to the ever-present po'teau mitan, or center post, were three oil lamps which threw a flickering light. At the entrance to the dance court a glowing-hot iron bar stood erect in a charcoal fire—the symbol of kanzo and of the loa Ogoun.

When the preliminary dances were over, the hounsi retired to one side of the court, where they sat in two rows facing the center.

Ritual rattle and bell in hand, the houngan took his place by the sacred center post. He was an elderly man with a gray beard. He wore a red kerchief like a turban around his head. He smoked a cigar, and in his free hand he held a bottle of rum. The red kerchief, the rum, and the cigar were all in honor of Ogoun. He moved back and forth across the center of the court, talking casually, even joking and laughing. The drums began again, on a signal from the houngan, and a number of visiting houngans [535] and mambos came forward and began a stately Jenvalo dance. The backs of their hands touching their knees, their backs bent low, they moved slowly counterclockwise around the center post. The mambos outnumbered the houngans four to one. The hounsi sitting on the sidelines sang. The song was for Maitresse Ezilie. The houngan in charge stood by patiently, deep in thought. His assistant, the laplace, kept time with a small rattle and led the singing.

When the song came to an end, the visiting cult priests and priestesses retired from the dance ground. Again the hounsi danced. Afterward the houngan began to talk *langage,* twirling his bottle of rum about recklessly. He was speaking to a loa. The chief drummer beat out a salute to Ogoun. Then the houngan raised the bottle and placed it to his ear. It gurgled away, some of the liquid trickling down his face. He seemed to be swallowing the rum.

While all the hounsi, with bowed heads, sat on the ground, the houngan recited from the ritual of the Catholic service. Latin words, then Creole words in Latin cadences. After a while the houngan's assistant took over the recitation, and the hounsi answered him responsively.[1] When the prayers were over, the hounsi arose and passed into the hounfor. The drums began a fast Nago rhythm, and the hounsi emerged with brilliant silk flags studded with tiny brass rivets. The houngan's chief assistants—the laplace and the houngénicon—carried military sabers upraised. The dancers circled in single file around the center post, a triumphal military heralding of the deity of war and the forge.

To the accompaniment of a crescendo of drums, the procession suddenly reversed its direction. Watching the upraised saber of the laplace for a signal, the hounsi reversed their direction again.

000 When the dance drama ended, the hounsi carried the flags back into

[1] [Note that the houngan and the laplace are performing services normally performed by the petit savane. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analys]

when the dance drama ended, the hounsi carried the flags back into the hounfor. Then they sat on the ground while the houngan came forward to the center post to make his ritual flour drawing. Holding the flour in his hand, he allowed a little of it to trickle out in a fine white line. He worked rapidly, with half-closed eyes, speaking *langage*. A complicated white geometric pattern grew on the earth around the center post. Among its intricate designs highly stylized phallic forms were discernible. When the houngan had finished the drawing, he wrote the name of the loa whom they were serving: Ogoun Badagry. Then the other houngans and mambos came forward, one at a time, to add to the design. When the vèvè was completed it covered virtually the entire dance court. 793 794 787 789 796 532

The laplace came from the hounfor with a bundle of brilliantly colored beads. He stood by the houngan at the center post. One by one the hounsi came before the houngan, dropped on their knees, and kissed the ground. Around each hounsi's neck the houngan placed a string of beads. He raised her, pirouetted her first to the right, then to the left. The pirouette was to encourage possession by the loa. 793 794 782 789 796

From the hounfor the hounsi now brought herbs and vegetables for the sacrifice. Baskets and bottles were set out neatly on the ground, along with bundles of sticks and the iron pots, or *zins*. [782]

The dance was resumed in a single rotating line around the houngan and the ritual offerings. Two hounsi in the center of the circle built fires, one on each side of the court. Over the fires they set the ritual iron pots. They poured oil into the pots and began the preparation of ritual food balls, like dumplings, from the ingredients at hand. One by one they dropped the dumplings into the oil, which was soon boiling.

The drumming, singing, and dancing were sustained at a high tension. A second team of drummers took over without a break in the music. The dancers now were almost exhausted. With a quick motion, the houngan spilled some rum into one of the boiling pots. A blue alcohol flame shot high into the air. Some of the hounsi screamed but continued to dance. Three of them fell to the ground, their limbs jerking uncontrollably. The loa had entered. Two of the "mounted" hounsi arose and continued to dance, staggering and jerking across the dance court. The third had to be lifted and carried into the hounfor.

The man who was to undergo initiation was waiting in the *djévo*, a special room in the hounfor. For the past seven days he had lain on a mat in the djévo, in virtual isolation except for visits from the houngan and the laplace.

Now the kanzo initiate was brought out, completely covered with a white cloth. Only his hands and feet could be seen. With one hand on the shoulder of the laplace, who preceded him, he moved with the dancers

794 in a circle around the two boiling pots. On the seventh circuit of the
787 course, the laplace stopped him at the first pot. The houngan grasped the
789 man's free hand and, bending down, dipped it into the boiling oil. There
796 was no visible indication of pain. They moved to the second pot, and the
793 man's hand was dipped again. They proceeded again to the first pot, where the dipping was repeated, then back again to the second pot. The neophyte's hand entered the boiling oil seven times in all. He made no sound, showed no resistance, no reflexes. Then the hounsi took him back to the hounfor. It was all over. After three days of isolation, they said, he would be kanzo.

The houngan peeled an orange, while everyone crowded close to watch. In it he found a two-gourde note. He peeled another orange and found in it a slip of paper with the name of a woman on it. She came forward, and everyone laughed. She was an old woman, the oldest of the hounsi. The houngan held the two-gourde note between his teeth. The old woman took the other end of the note in her teeth, but she had to kiss the houngan before he would let go.

796 The ritual of brulé zin, or kanzo, is of unmistakable West African ori-
794 gin. Herskovits has described a ceremony in Dahomey which in many
171 details could easily have taken place in Haiti. The Dahomean rite was in honor of the gods of the Thunder pantheon. Here, too, we find a pot of boiling palm oil, in which are the sacred dumplings: "When the fire had finally subsided and only a faint column of smoke issued from the pot, the initiate came dancing toward it, thrust her hand into the boiling oil, and lifted out a dumpling. . . ."[2]

Family Rites at Léogane

769 These services for family ancestors took place in the mountains above
796 Léogane at the ancestral home of my friend Libera Borderau. They were
787 conducted on the grounds of his grandmother's house. The ritual began
778 with dancing. Against the wall of the house sat the three drummers with their Arada drums. Near them, leaning against the wall, were the flags of the family loa. Also near by was a long high table serving as a makeshift altar called the *jé*. In the very center of the table in a clean white dish lay eight loa stones—old Carib artifacts. The stones were identical in shape, all of them perfectly symmetrical, resembling small, pointed cigars. In the *pierre-loas* lived the family deities, and much of the ceremony was built around them. The stones had been bathed and polished in oil for the occasion. Set around the plate of stones were numerous small *criches* (French, *cruches*—clay water jugs), glass bottles, and earthenware jars which also contained loa. On the low bench before the table, seven dishes

[2] [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 165. Cf. P 351, Cat. 116.—Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

were set out in a row, and before them four *conis*, the half-gourd bowls used in services to the marassas, the twin spirits. 769 796 787 778

In the house, at the center of the floor, was a round flat stone about ten inches in diameter and about two inches thick, resembling a millstone. This was the *pierre-manman*, the mother stone responsible for the coming of the other loa stones and who cared for them in the absence of the family. In this stone, they said, was the spirit of the old loa Nananbouclou. On a mat in the corner of the room two children slept.

Outside, on a chair, his back against the wall of the house, the houngan sat, his rattle and bell in hand. He had come several miles to conduct the service. Most of those who danced were his own hounsi. The houngan was "strong" and well known in the region; people said he had worked for high government officials, including the president himself. 769 796 787 793

After several rounds of Arada dancing in which children as well as adults took part, the drums stopped. The houngan and his laplace moved up to the building which served for the night as the hounfor. It was up a steep slope, about a hundred feet from the dance court. There they prepared for the sacrifice to Chébo Profiel, the honored loa of the evening. Passing in and out among the spectators was a woman who would be possessed by Papa Chébo; since he was the guest of the service, she (or the loa in her head) was free to come and go as she chose, to speak as she pleased, and to do what she wished. Mostly she shook hands with people, a ceremony which continued throughout the night. First she would offer the right hand, then the left; or perhaps both at once, in which case the hands would be shaken downward vigorously three or four times. Someone ignorantly said, "Bon soir, Madame!" and she turned on him to reprimand his insolence. She was not "Madame," she was *l'Autorité*, the Authority. 769 796 794 787

During the course of the evening the conviction became stronger and stronger in her that she was Chébo Profiel. From the time we first saw her until the end of the evening her personality underwent marked changes. She "became" Papa Chébo.

The houngan sat before a small hole, possibly a foot deep and ten inches in diameter, in front of the hounfor. The fresh earth was piled neatly to the side, and an enameled plate was set on top of it. Around the hole were the various dishes to be offered to Chébo Profiel. The laplace prayed in Latin, a short Catholic service. Then the houngan, shaking his beaded rattle and tinkling his bell, called for Chébo to "enter." He made a small maize-flour drawing around the hole, and then began the feeding of the loa. The plates arranged for the feast contained roasted maize, roasted peanuts, bread, cassava, rice, and other foods. There were bottles of rum, 782 793 796 787 769 [532]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

793 kola (a soft drink), *clairin*, and syrup. The houngan, entreating Chébo to
796 accept, poured a little *clairin* into the hole. The loa seemed to accept, for
782 the *clairin* was quickly absorbed in the ground. The houngan took rice
787 from the plate with his fingers, about the amount he might place in his
769 own mouth, and put it gently into the hole. He was feeding Papa Chébo, literally placing the food in his mouth. After the rice, which was dry, the houngan poured in a little more *clairin* to moisten it. He ordered the laplace to break up the bread, and then he placed a small piece in the hole and washed it down with a little rum. The houngan seemed to understand that Papa Chébo Profiel was hungry, and that he was also an epicure. He allowed him to taste the roasted corn, and then washed it down with a trickle of kola. Then he gave him a taste of the roasted peanuts, and another morsel of bread. Once Chébo got his mouth too full in his zest for the meal, and the assemblage had to wait for him to finish "coughing." Then the houngan gave him a long drink of kola to clear his windpipe. After that the houngan was more careful in the way he fed him—a little cassava, a drink, a little bread. As the houngan fed the loa, some of the spectators reached over and placed small coins in the empty dish by the hole. These too were for Chébo. Finally, Chébo was through eating. The food was gone.

769 The houngan, shaking his rattle and his bell, blew two sharp notes on
794 his whistle. At the door of the hounfor appeared l'Autorité, the hounsi
787 possessed by Papa Chébo. More than ever she resembled the loa, and less
796 than ever she resembled herself. In one hand she held a saber. Her bodily
[793] movements were spasmodic, as though she was being forced to do things
[534] to which she was not accustomed. She moved slowly into the circle, her eyes almost closed; she leaned backward, then twisted grotesquely around, jerked this way and that, buffeted by the loa. Suddenly she began to whirl.
[793] The houngan called "Tambouyé!" and the drummers beat a slow complicated rhythm, a salute to Chébo. The loa had really "entered" now. There was no mistaking the jerky, irresponsible movements of the hounsi's head and shoulders. She leaned backward as though about to fall, incredibly kept her balance, rolled forward as though she were going to plunge to the ground, and twisted herself upright once more. The saber passed close to the faces of the spectators, even scratched some of them and cut their clothing. Her movements had a definitely masculine character. Chébo Profiel was a man.

782 She reached over to seize a chicken that was held out to her. Grasping
787 its legs with her free hand, she continued her spinning, twisting, lurching
794 dance. Then she cradled the chicken, rocking it back and forth until it
796 was in a hypnotic trance. She placed it on the ground before a tiny pile
769

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

of ground maize prepared by the laplace. The chicken, released, sat motionless, making no effort to escape. All watched attentively, the houngan shaking his rattle and bell. Suddenly the chicken cocked its head and, seeming to see the corn for the first time, reached out and pecked at it. This was the loa receiving the sacrifice—a difficult conception if one thinks of the chicken itself as the sacrifice. "Chébo," l'Autorité, snatched the chicken up, danced violently about, the loa in full possession of her body. With a swift movement of the saber, she cut the chicken's throat and caused the first drop of blood to fall into the hole. When the chicken stopped struggling, it was left there, head downward. L'Autorité took up a cock which was given her, cradled him, and set him before the ground maize. When he pecked at it, she picked him up and danced, around and around, jerking, lunging, never quite falling. She took his comb between her teeth, supporting his body gently with her hands, and spun around and around. Then she released him, cut his throat, and placed him in the hole with the chicken.

At the side of the hounfor, waiting, was a goat (called by the ritual name Dogwé). He had a fine silky white coat and a long beard. He was brought in to the place of sacrifice, and l'Autorité dropped to her knees to embrace his neck with her arms. She remained there a moment, her cheek against his, talking to him. Then she arose, a machete in hand instead of a saber, and began to pirouette while three men threw the goat on his side. Then she cut with the machete, and the goat's blood, too, began to run into the hole. For the first time her dance became unquestionably frenzied. She swung strong, full blows of the machete at the goat's neck, finally severing the head. From the hindquarters she cut a piece of red meat and placed it in her mouth.

At a signal from the houngan, three men carried the goat's body away to be dressed and cooked, and a woman came forward to wipe the blood from Papa Chébo's face.

The drums began again, a Dahomé dance, and the people relaxed. Many joined in the dancing while l'Autorité strutted about shaking hands and talking *langage*. She also danced, with gestures and movements wholly masculine. At one point she briefly advanced on another woman, making sexual gestures.

The houngan and his houngénicon retired to the front room of the hut. A new mat had been placed there for the houngénicon. She lay down on it, and the houngan sat in a chair against the wall. This was the beginning of the ceremony of calling *les morts en bas dleau* (the dead below the water).

Meanwhile, before the hounfor, the laplace and a hounsi were building

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

769 the *card*, a hogan-like structure made of bent saplings covered with cotton
793 cloth.
794 Rain had been threatening all evening, and now it began. Some people
796 crowded into the hut where the goat was being barbecued. Others came
[346] into the hut where the houngénicon lay; in the back room, with the pé, Chébo, l'Autorité, strutted and shook hands with the visitors. The straw roof leaked a little, but no one minded very much. The houngan and his houngénicon, who had been under a strain, relaxed. The rain would mark the length of the intermission. Except for the sound of the rain and "Chébo's" *langage*, there was no noise. No one spoke. Then the houngan,
769 his eyes closed, began to sing an Ibo song.
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796
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Ibo Lazile oh, éya!
Grand gout manqué tuyé moin!
A la yon an six mois m' sous la mer,
Grand gout manqué tuyé moin!

Ibo Lazile, oh, éya!
Hunger has not killed me!
One year and six months I have been under the sea,
Hunger has not killed me!

The others sang responsively:

Ibo Lazile, oh, Ibo!
Ibo grand gout pas tuyé'm, Ibo!

Ibo Lazile, oh, Ibo!
Ibo, hunger has not killed me, Ibo!

After a while the houngan called "Abobo!"—which was the signal to conclude. The rain was still coming down, and he called "Abobo!" for the rain to cease also. But it did not stop, and everyone laughed. He began another song, also Ibo:

Ianman Ibo lélé!
Ianman Ibo lélé!
Pilet pied'm mandé pardon,
Ça pardon wa fai pou moin?
Ça ou gainyan con ça? [Ex. 80]

Ianman Ibo lélé!
Ianman Ibo lélé!
Step on my foot and ask my pardon,
What will the pardon do for me?
What do you have [what are you doing] like that?

And the others came in, spiritedly:

Ianman, oh, un hunh!
Ianman, con ça'm dansé Ibo!
Ianman, oh, un hunh!

Ianman, oh, un hunh!
Ianman, like this I dance, Ibo!
Ianman, oh, un hunh!

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

While those in the front room were singing, l'Autorité, in the inner room, was suddenly thrown about violently by her possession. She raced into one wall of the hut, striking her head, flung herself back against the opposite wall, kicking, trembling, calling out strange *langage*. She crashed into the pé, upsetting the dishes, and then fell across the mat where the children were lying half asleep. One of them, a boy of about four, became hysterical. He knew the woman, but he had never seen her like this. His mother carried him to the front room, where she finally quieted his crying. L'Autorité, spent for the moment, lay across the mat. No one touched her. Later, when the singing was resumed, she got to her feet and made the rounds once more, shaking hands again and again. She was now smoking a pipe.

When the houngan heard the rain subsiding, he again called out "Abobo!" as though he were giving the order to cease, and everyone, himself included, laughed again. When it had definitely stopped, someone went out to shake the water from the canopy. The drums were brought out of their shelter, and although the ground was sticky with mud, the dancing was resumed. The houngan asked for a fast Nago dance, and the front room of the hut was once more emptied of everyone except the houngan and his houngénicon.

The laplace and his assistant went up the hill to put the finishing touches to the *card*, the temporary structure in which the houngan was going to receive the loa and the dead. From a small chest of chinaware, the houngénicon set a "table" for the loa on the ground where she sat. The sacrifice had been for a single loa, Chébo; the rest of the service was for all the loa served by the family. The houngan, sitting next to the houngénicon, sounded his rattle and spoke *langage*. He sang quietly, a song which only the houngénicon could hear, watching her intently. A large basket of dishes, bottles, and various other paraphernelia was brought by a hounsi. Candles were lighted and set on the ground. The houngan gave a signal, and the hounsi brought a large square of white cotton cloth, which they stretched tight over the houngénicon like a canopy. The candle flame and the silhouette of the houngénicon could be seen through the cloth, but the details of the service were not visible. Sometimes, the houngan, his bell and rattle in hand, would go under the cloth to assist in the calling of the loa. Then, without warning, things began to happen very rapidly.

One of the hounsi who sat before the door began to quiver and make strange noises in her throat: "Ka, ka, k-k-k-k-k-k-a!" Her body shook violently, and her head rolled on her shoulders. Almost simultaneously something began to happen under the cloth where the houngénicon was, and the members of the family crowded up to the *card* by the hounfor. The houngénicon lay stiffly, her eyes closed, the white cloth removed. The

769 houngan carried out the large round basket in which lay the bottles and
793 the pierre-loas. The hounsi gathered around it, ten of them, to carry it to
794 the *cord*. In the bottles were *les morts en bas dlean* (the spirits of the dead
796 from below the water). Carrying the flags, three hounsi danced, singing,
787 up to the *cord*. After them the laplace came, carrying in his left hand a plate of maize flour from which he made vèvès in the line of advance, simple marks symbolizing the crossroads. The drums were beating a special salute to the loa. The ten hounsi carrying the basket danced and sang. As they moved up the hill, they rotated, so that the basket revolved like the
[535] hub of a wheel. Their progress was not smooth, however; they jerked forward and backward as they rotated. Arriving before the *cord*, first one, then a second, was entered by her loa. They fell, jerked, and stumbled. This was all a very good omen. The houngan called "Aboboi" for them to resist such possession, and the hounsi all sat down on the ground. The houngan placed the basket inside the *cord* and entered after it. He called for his little bell, which the laplace passed in to him. The laplace closed the flap down tight, from the outside, and placed the flags against it.

Upon a signal given from within, the hounsi began a song:

[539]

> La famille semblé,
> Oh semblé nous!
> La famille semblé,
> Oh nous semblé pou nou pa'lé parole nous là!
> La famille semblé!
>
> The family gathers,
> Oh, we gather!
> The family gathers,
> Oh, we gather to speak our words here!
> The family gathers!

769 The laplace took his position, his back to the *cord*, while inside, because
796 of the candle burning there, the houngan could be seen setting out the
787 contents of the basket. The candle went out, and in the *cord* the little bell
[794] began to tinkle. The singing stopped. The houngan was beginning to
[793] talk to the dead below the water. First he talked *langage*. Then his voice was heard through the constant sound of the tiny bell, supplicating Papa Loko to talk a little bit with his "children." A faint, tremulous voice, that of a tired old grandfather, was heard to answer. Papa Loko was stirring himself out of a long silence. He talked a long while to the houngan. Sometimes they both spoke at once. Faintly he was heard to say that he had come a long way to see his children, and that he was very tired. But as he talked his strength returned to him, and, asking the houngan to wait, he spoke directly to his "children," who sat, respectfully and awed,

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around the *card*. Here everyone participated. This was why they had come. Benevolently Papa Loko greeted them: "Bonjou, ti moune moin yo, c'est Papa Loko" (Good day, all my children, this is Papa Loko). Together they all answered eagerly: "Bon soir, Papa!" "Bon soir, Grand!" "Bon soir, cher Papa!" "Bon soir, cher Loko!" Papa Loko told them about his journey, and persons long dead whom he had seen below the water, and he passed on the news from the island below the sea. Then he began to address them singly, asking questions, giving news of dead relatives, and showing a vital interest in the problems of his "children." They answered him. "Oui, Papa," and "Non, Papa Loko," and took deeply to heart anything he said, whether praise or criticism:

Bon jour, Télisman!	Good day, Télisman!
Bon soir, Papa!	Good evening, Papa!
Comment nou yé, Télisman?	How are you, Télisman?
Tout bien, Papa Loko!	Everything is fine, Papa Loko!
C'est ou même qui travaille tres dit?	Are you one who works very hard?
Oui, Papa, moin travaille an pile.	Yes, Papa, I work a great deal.
Ou travaille pou' vié maman ou?	You care for your old mother?
Oui, Papa.	Yes, Papa.
Télisman, pitit moin, faut ou planté jardin ou encore. Graine, li pas bon.	Télisman, my child, you will have to plant your garden again. The seeds you planted are no good.
Merci, cher Loko!	Thank you, dear Loko!
Ou poco blié'm, Télisman.	You do not forget me, Télisman.
Non, cher Loko.	No, dear Loko.
Yo dit ou praillé travaille en ville.	They say you are going to work in the city.
Lé'm capab', Papa.	When I can, Papa.
Pas blié moune morne ça yo, Télisman.	Do not forget the people of the hills, Télisman.
Non, cher Loko, m' pas blié yo.	No, dear Loko, I will not forget them.
Papa ou dit'm ba ou bon soir pou'li.	Your father asked me to say good evening to you for him.
Merci, Papa.	Thank you, Papa.
Papa Loko fini pa'lé ou, Télisman.	Papa Loko is through talking to you, Télisman.
Merci, Papa.	Thank you, Papa.
Chongé 'm, Télisman.	Remember me, Télisman.

Papa Loko talked in turn to everyone in the family who was present, and inquired, sometimes suspiciously, after those who were absent. After many minutes, Papa Loko said regretfully that he had to go away, and bade them au revoir. They were all sorry he was leaving, because he was well loved. He spoke a few words with the houngan, and then his voice faded away. Only the tinkling of the little bell remained.

769 796 789 Then, faintly, came the broken voice of an old woman who was crying. The houngan said her children were waiting to see her, and asked her to enter. Moyise had been dead many generations already, but she was still crying over the circumstances of her death, and because she had left her children behind her. The houngan, speaking gently, asked her to try to stop crying because her children were waiting. Little by little she controlled herself. She greeted them all and talked with each member of the family in turn. She showed a special interest in the women and children and was concerned about family problems.

After Moyise went away, Docile, Moyise' daughter, came. She greeted them all and then complained that when she had died she had been buried in a grave near that of a thief; now she wished for her body to be moved. Aliae, on whose place the grave was situated, promised to take care of the matter, and Docile became placated. Her voice faded away. Inside the *cord*, the houngan talked *langage* and rang his bell.

After Docile came Joseph and his son Jougleau. Joseph and Jougleau timed their entrance badly and came in together, both talking at once. The houngan tried to straighten out the situation, and for a moment the three of them were conversing simultaneously. Then Jougleau withdrew and returned when his father was through. After Jougleau came still later generations, represented by Ti Perci and her children, Na and Bernicia. Bernicia came crying bitterly about something. The houngan asked her to stop, because he could not bear to hear women crying. Everyone laughed, and Bernicia controlled herself.

[776] Then Damballa Wèdo, the ancient loa, came, speaking with an aged and broken voice. Feebly he sang his song in "African" language:

[539]

Ago! Damballa Wèdo!
Oh Damballa Wèdo kian kian!
Oh Damballa Wèdo kian kian!
Oh ha ha ha Damballa Wèdo kian kian!
Oh Damballa Wèdo kian kian! [Ex. 39]

[776] Later, Damballa sang again, calling on Legba to act as witness to his words:

[539]

Ago-é Antibon Legba oh é!
Oh Damballa Wèdo é kélé manyan!
Oh gainyain jou' yo changé moin li kélé manyan!
Oh Damballa Wèdo é kélé manyan!
Oh Ayida Wèdo é kélé manyan!
Oh gainyain jou' pou' changé moin li kélé manyan! [Ex. 40]

Ago-é Antibon Legba *oh é!*
Oh, Damballa Wèdo *é, kélé manyan!*

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Oh, a day will come when they will remember me here, *kèlè manyan!*
Oh, Damballa Wèdo *è, kèlè manyan.*
Oh, Ayida Wèdo *è, kèlè manyan!*
Oh, a day will come for you to remember me here, *kèlè manyan!*

During the evening about twenty loa and ancestors came into the *cavd* to talk. When the last had finished speaking the hills were already light, and the service was over.

Service for Èzilie Fréda and St. Jacques Majeur

This service took place not in the open but under a tonnelle surrounded by four walls, adjoining the hounfor of Alexis Stephan on the west fringes of Port-au-Prince. Separate from the hounfor and dance court was a shrine to the "dead" loa Gèdé Nimbo. The shrine was a small shed open on one side. Within, lighted by flickering oil lamps, was a life-size effigy of Gèdé, a scarecrow-like figure dressed in the loa's traditional attire—black tail coat and trousers, and a tall opera hat. On the otherwise blank face of the figure were smoked glasses with white rims.

The dancing was progressing under the supervision of the houngan's adjutant, the laplace. He wandered among the drummers and dancers, encouraged the singing, and issued orders here and there. No one seemed to take him very seriously. There was a good deal of joking, and the gathering seemed very much like an old-fashioned family reunion. There were perhaps a hundred dancers and spectators—friends, relatives, and devotees of Stephan's hounfor. Everyone was watching with affection an old woman who could not be restrained from dancing. She executed old classical steps and postures with a skill that called for running comment all around her. As each piece came to an end someone would step up to her and say something like: "Woy, Manman, mais ou passé mwé!" (Oh, Mother, you are better than me!). Then they would attempt to get her to sit down again, but she would only shake them off and urge the drummers to get going if they were not too tired.

Eventually, the houngan, Stephan, made a casual entrance through the door of his adjoining hounfor. He held the usual ritual rattle and bell in his hand, and sauntered around to chat with his friends.

Gradually, almost imperceptibly, the dancing became more serious. Soon, only the hounsi, the female servitors, were dancing. The drums played a salute to Legba, the first loa to be called upon in a Vodoun service. For it is Legba who opens all gates and all highways, and who paves the way for communication with other deities. Though he is not the greatest of the loa, he is one of the most ancient. The houngan spilled water on the ground as a libation, and the dancing continued.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

796 Then a well-dressed young man entered, and the drummers swiftly
793 changed to the salute reserved for guests of distinction. The hounsi sang,
[554] "Président passe là, l'ap monté au gouvernment!" and waved paper flags
[202] and kerchiefs. The young man was a distant relative of Stephan's; he also was a houngan.

After a while Stephan brought from his hounfor a second asson, or ritual rattle, and another small hand bell, both of which he handed to the
[576] young man. He was extending the courtesy of his hounfor, sharing his instruments of authority and religious power with his fellow houngan. Then followed an exhibition between the two houngans that was half duel and half ballet. They stood face to face, each of them holding the asson in one hand and the tiny bell in the other. Stephan was "testing" the young houngan for the edification of all present. Each tiny move made by Stephan was duplicated simultaneously by his guest, as though he were a mirrored reflection.

Every posture Stephan made was duplicated instantly by his guest. The assons and the bells were agitated constantly. The rattle in the young man's hand did precisely what Stephan's did. The two men looked into each other's eyes with intensity, as though this bound their movements together and unified them. When Stephan twisted to the left, the other houngan twisted to the right. Every contortion of the young man was an exact replica of Stephan's movements. The two assons rattled out the same rhythms and the same signals; so did the bells. The backdrop for this "test" was provided by the drummers. The faces of the two men broke into a sweat from the intense nervous effort. At last it came to an end. A woman came forward and wiped their faces with a colored kerchief. The "testing" ceremony was over. The visiting houngan had been proved.

796 Stephan then made a ritual vèvè, or maize-flour ritual drawing on the
793 ground. Afterward there was more singing and dancing by the hounsi.
787 They sang several songs for Ezilie Fréda, the "pure" loa. And Alexis
[532] Stephan went into a trance. It was unexpected. The servitors had not
[794] prepared for it. In this emergency the visiting houngan took over. He
[276] seemed a little anxious. He was unfamiliar with the particular psychological factors at play in this particular hounfor. He was not certain of the character of Stephan's possession. But he took over grimly. The houngénicon, an older woman, stepped forward to help. While the young houngan wielded the asson and bell, the woman issued instructions. Stephan, his head hanging back, his eyes closed, was supported by two of the hounsi. Other servitors hurriedly brought out a white sheet and spread it on the ground. A chair and a table were set upon the sheet, and Stephan was placed in the chair, where he now sat with his head hanging limply on his chest.

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Stephan had been mounted by Ezilie Fréda, the deity of whiteness and purity. That was why he was protected from the earth by the white sheet beneath him. While the drums continued to beat, the hounsi placed upon the table a bottle of wine, a clean glass, and a white plate with boiled maize meal, topped by a whole egg. Then they held over Stephan—who had become, for the time being, Ezilie—a second white sheet. The possessed houngan began to bend forward and back with great rapidity, toward the surface of the table and back to an upright position, his arms hanging quietly downward. The hounsi fluttered the covering sheet in such a way that the spectators could not see what was going on beneath it. In less than a minute, Stephan's movements ceased. The sheet was removed. Stephan sat limply, talking *langage*. In the white dish only the broken shells of the egg and a small portion of the meal remained. Some of the wine was gone from the upright bottle. The glass still had a little wine in the bottom. Ezilie had accepted the sacrifice. Not once had Stephan's hands changed from their hanging position or approached the table. The eggshells themselves were clean, but a tiny trickle of liquid yolk ran from the corner of Stephan's mouth. The visiting houngan rattled his asson before Stephan, who arose wearily, with the help of the hounsi, and followed him through the door into the hounfor.

Again there was dancing, and a little while later Stephan emerged from the hounfor in a bizarre military costume of red velvet, wearing black glasses, a blue military cap with a red feather, and a sword. He was almost as weird as the effigy of Gèdé that stood outside. The houngan had now become St. Jacques Majeur, or Ogoun, the loa of war and the forge. His personality had undergone a dramatic change. Strictly speaking, Stephan was not in a trance as he had been a little earlier. He was in control of his movements, which were completely conscious, and yet he was certainly not in a "normal" state of mind. Previously Stephan had been in a state of possession; now, one might say, he was in a state of obsession. He had identified himself with St. Jacques. He strode and swaggered like St. Jacques. His bearing was regal, military, and awesome. His costume should have seemed funny, like similar costumes seen during Mardi Gras days, but instead it was unworldly and impressive.

He carried a rum bottle in his hand, and he moved through the gathering making people drink from it. Those who drank from the bottle were sharing with St. Jacques. Stephan poured more rum into an iron pot on the ground and set it afire. The hounsi kanzo, the servitors of the higher order who had been through the fire ordeal, came forward and washed their hands and arms with the burning rum, so that at times their whole arms were aflame, until they quickly snuffed the fire out. Some of the hounsi brought their children forward and washed their arms in the burn-

796 ing rum also, as a foretaste of the kanzo rites they might one day go
787 through.
793
[794] There was dancing again for others besides the hounsi. The tension had passed. The ceremony was over, and the rest of the night was simply for pleasure.

796 Gèdé Nimbo, the "Dead" Loa

Gèdé Nimbo, also known as Baron Samedi, is one of the most powerful deities of the Haitian pantheon. He guards the cemetery and protects the graves, especially those of children. But Gèdé Nimbo is not simply another loa, he is a personification of death. Like death, he is given to whim. He is an intruder. He forces his way into services being held for other deities, behaves badly, and has to be wheedled to depart. He indulges in ribald humor when the mood strikes him, and the most solemn occasions are likely to be disturbed by his pranks. Gèdé Nimbo can be formidable when aroused, as he can be gentle and forbearing when it suits him.

Gèdé is always dressed in black, usually with a tail coat and top hat. He is always represented in this attire in the shrines where effigies of him are to be found. Elsie Clews Parsons, a number of years ago, reported this Haitian description of Gèdé:

> He is a *grande diable*. He makes all kinds of motions to make you laugh, but you must not laugh at him, for if you do he makes you "stop laughing" . . . Anything you touch, he takes and never returns, and you have to give him more and more. He smokes cigarettes, not cigars. He wears a coat and a hat, and carries a stick. He can make himself short or . . . as tall as a mast.[8]

The kind of motions Gèdé makes would in certain other cultures be regarded as obscenities. In Haiti they are merely public violations of social restraints and taboos, things no Haitian would think of doing in public view. But Gèdé, the loa of the graveyard, has special prerogatives. He does not fear criticism. He flouts propriety at will, he embarrasses, provokes, and insults with impunity.

796 At a Nago ceremony which I witnessed near Port-au-Prince, the strong-
787 hold of the Gédé cult, Gèdé Nimbo entered with such gusto that he virtu-
796 ally made a shambles of the service. The first person to be mounted by the loa was the aplace, the houngan's understudy. He stiffened, twisted, jerked, and thrashed about. As the more violent phase of his possession wore off, he began to make lascivious loin movements, as though copulating with the center post. Afterward, he moved about, shaking hands and greeting various persons with insulting remarks calculated to make others laugh at the indignities. Stopping before a distinguished-looking spectator, Gèdé made a few loin movements in his direction. Grasping another man by the hands, he greeted him vigorously and inquired whether it was

[8] [Parsons, Spirit Cult in Haiti. Cf. p. 351, Cd-116.--Amelia]

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his *zozo* (penis) to which his glasses were affixed. As the dance progressed, the possessions came rapidly. The possessed persons, men and women alike, leaped about the tonnelle, mimicking copulation. They broke drinking glasses on the ground, threw themselves upon the drummers, and careened and crashed into spectators and dancers. In the course of the service there were nearly twenty possessions—all of them noteworthy for their portrayal of Gèdé Nimbo as a loa who has contempt for proprieties. For he is the spirit of the cemetery, the one who laughs last and best. 776 787 796

Near the mountain town of Kenskoff I saw another service for Gèdé, which showed a different aspect of the loa of the graveyard. It took place inside the hut of a rural houngan, who was conducting the affair for his own immediate family and a few close friends. The hut itself was small. Its single room had been partitioned into two by hanging a sheet in the middle. On one side of the sheet a young child was lying on a mat next to the carefully stored Arada drums. On the other side the ceremony was taking place. Great bouquets of red flowers were arranged in a corner; above them hung a colored lithograph of the Christ child; below, on the floor, was a crude oil lamp with a floating wick. The floor area was no more than seven feet square, but at least twelve persons were crowded there, and others clustered in the doorway. Ritual flags leaned against the wall, one of red silk with a gold fringe, another of white silk with blue polka dots. A tiny space remained in the center of the floor for the houngan, whose "possession" by Gèdé was the feature of the service. [793]

The houngan was dressed in a black stovepipe hat, a blue blouse with white polka dots, and a black skirt over black trousers. In his hand he carried a walking stick. He smoked a pipe constantly, a variation of the customary cigarette. In the tiny space in the center of the room, the houngan—or, more properly, Gèdé Nimbo—danced. The houngan's personality had changed—his voice, his postures, all his mannerisms. He spoke only through his nose, for that is the way Gèdé talks, as though he had a cleft palate. 776 787 796 793

He whirled around and around, singing and talking *langage* in turn. His family sang: [539]

> Gèdé-vi yo wè ago-é!
> Gèdé-vi yo wè!
> Papa Gèdé c'est loa!
>
> It is Gèdé-vi they see, *ago-é!* *
> It is Gèdé-vi they see!
> Papa Gèdé is a *loa!*

---

* *Ago:* exclamatory, signifying "I am here."

776 He was the center of all eyes. Most of the time he danced alone, gyrating
787 recklessly. Sometimes he danced with his houngénicon. Those who
793 watched clapped hands and uttered sounds imitating drums, for drums
796 were not being used in this service. The houngan carried the inevitable *clochette*, or tiny hand bell.

When newcomers arrived, Gèdé greeted them by shaking both their hands downward, vigorously, three times. Then he wiped their faces with his kerchief, a ceremony which he repeated from time to time. He
[535] danced with each of them a kind of Jenvalo step, simple, restrained, and dignified. One of the visitors fell to his knees to converse with him.

The entire evening was built around the houngan's representation of Gèdé. Properly speaking, the houngan was not in a trance. He was in full possession of all his normal faculties and was conscious of the slightest inconveniences and disturbances. Several times the clay bowl of his pipe fell from the reed stem, scattering hot ashes on the ground, and each time he paused to allow the houngénicon to clear them away. Yet he was carried away by his certainty that he was Gèdé. The obvious conviction of those who watched seemed to fortify him in his role. As the evening wore on, he became more and more detached from his normal personality. His psychic condition was not that of one who had been "mounted" by a loa; it was, rather, a continuously progressive ecstasy.

776 Gèdé is, in fact, more than a loa of the cemetery; he is a personification
761 of death in all its macabre, humorous, and unpredictable aspects. Death is not merely a thing dying; it is an entity, a positive force in nature. Death is Gèdé Nimbo. I believe that when the houngan became Gèdé, all who had crowded into his hut felt themselves to be in the presence of death itself. Death, a dynamic, aggressive force, danced and pirouetted among them, talking the language of the dead and of old Africa.

776 Gèdé is often stern, austere, and forbidding, but he has other aspects. Haitians take amused pleasure at the terror he can strike into the hearts of the mighty. An old Gèdé song goes:

[539]

Papa Gèdé bel ga'çon!	Papa Gèdé is a handsome fellow!
Papa Gèdé bel ga'çon!	Papa Gèdé is a handsome fellow!
L'habillé tout en noi'!	He is dressed all in black
Pou'l monté au palais!	For he is going up to the palace!
L'habillé tout en blanc	When he's dressed all in white
Li semblé yun deputé!	He looks like a deputy!
L'habillé tout en noi'!	When he's dressed all in black
Li semblé yun senateur!	He resembles a senator!

776 According to tradition, the song had its origin in a march on the capital
788 by some houngans many years ago. The story is very old and no one
793 remembers many of the details.
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remembers many of the details. But during the administration of President Louis Borno (1922–1930) there was a reënactment of the original march. There suddenly appeared in the streets of Port-au-Prince a crowd of Gèdé *mystères*—houngans "possessed" by Gèdé Nimbo and attired in Gèdé dress: tall black hats, long black tail coats, smoked glasses, black skirts over their black trousers. They carried flags, waved polka-dot kerchiefs, shook their ceremonial rattles, and paused sometimes to wipe the perspiration from one another's faces. They became the nucleus of a huge, noisy crowd moving up the hill toward the palace. Market women followed instead of going home; street gamins screamed and raced among them. Before they had arrived at the palace grounds they had taken on the semblance of a huge Mardi Gras band. They swerved through the gates of the palace grounds and along the drive, right to the steps of the palace itself. The guards, taken by surprise, waited helplessly for their officers to arrive.

At the palace door, the houngans demanded money from the president. Borno was in a dilemma. He was reputed to be sympathetic to Vodoun ritual but was only surreptitiously so. He feared the houngans, and he feared public opinion. What would the upper class of Port-au-Prince think, the Latin-culture Haitians? With Gèdé's worst manners, the Gèdé mystères cavorted on the palace steps. Finally Borno gave in. He sent the money out to them, and then the crowd of Gèdés marched out of the palace grounds, waving their flags and shaking their rattles.

Service for the Hounsi Bossale

This ritual of calling the loa to speak through the mouth of the Vodoun priest took place in the Bolosse section of Port-au-Prince. The hounfor was situated in a congested slum area of the city, but the grounds around it were spacious. The hounfor itself was small and unpretentious, and except for the adjoining tonnelle would easily have been mistaken for another small wooden house. The houngan was a heavy-set man with a black mustache. Quick to laugh and easy in his movements, he nevertheless commanded solemn respect from the hounsi and the other participants. His soft-spoken voice expressed assurance and authority.

There were a number of possessions in the course of the dancing, all more or less routine. Each time a possession occurred, the houngan came forward with his asson and bell, gave a pitcher of water and a candle to the possessed devotee, and conducted her through a ritual at the foot of the center post.

Later, one of the hounsi came and sat at the houngan's feet. She was not possessed but obviously was in a state of high tension. Other servitors brought from the hounfor a wooden washtub and set it on the ground

793 before the houngan. Staring into the tub, he shook his asson and called
794 upon a certain loa to enter. Then he placed a lighted candle upright in the
796 tub and watched it for a moment. The flame was suddenly snuffed out.
787 The houngan looked concerned. He removed the candle and called for another one. When he placed the new candle in the tub it remained burning. The houngan smiled. The loa had agreed to enter. The houngan and his chief assistant placed the tub upon the head of the waiting hounsi. She trembled violently as though she had received a shock, then leaped to her feet. The loa had mounted her and presumably was sitting in the tub on her head. She began to stagger back and forth across the dance court, while the drums beat a salute. The tub tottered dangerously but did not fall. The possessed hounsi then began to whirl. She stopped, and the tub continued to spin for a few seconds on her head. She twirled again in the opposite direction. Each time she stopped she waited for the tub to stop spinning. The twirling motion was accompanied by a constant jerking and lurching, as though she were about to lose her balance, but she never stumbled or fell. After perhaps five minutes of this violent "riding" by the loa, the houngan approached her with his asson and conducted her into the hounfor, the tub still on her head. Inside the hounfor he removed the tub, sent the loa away, and left the hounsi to rest.

[346] There was more dancing, and after a while the service was transferred to a small temporary cloth-covered structure resembling an American Indian hogan. The hounsi bossale—the servitors whose loa had not been "tamed" or conditioned—lay before the structure on their faces, side by side. There were twelve of them. The other hounsi covered them completely with white sheets. The houngan entered the hogan-like structure (the *card*) with a candle and a bell. He tinkled his bell and began to call upon the loa to speak to the hounsi bossale. Through his mouth, first one spirit and then another made comments. The hounsi under the sheets were tensely quiet, until one of them began to jerk and scream. Several others, as though responding to a trigger, joined in the screaming. Older women came to quiet them. The hysterical reaction of the hounsi bossale was regarded as simply a reflection of their beginners' status. Their loa had not yet been controlled. The ritual continued until the early hours of the morning, the loa and ancient ancestors coming in to speak, one after another.

The First Yams and the First Rice

244 [796] Each year, when the yams are harvested there is a great festival known as
the *mangé yam*. Of all things grown in Haiti, the yam is perhaps the most
[262] significant. It is the most vital of all staples, and it is traditional. The yam

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The yam 244 171 192

itself was transplanted from Africa, where in old times as well as in modern it was a staff of life among those who lived by agriculture. The word "yam" is known throughout large parts of Africa, crossing language lines and forests. It signifies the big root on which the African is so dependent, and it also has the general meaning of "eat." In Senegal it is called *nyami*, while across the width of Africa and in the upper Nile region it is called *nyam*.

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In Haiti the yam is a tie with the past and a symbol of fertility. When the yams are plentiful, there is food for the winter months and a sense of well-being. When the yam crop is poor, there is insecurity and even hunger. Whatever occurs, lurking in the background is the shadow of the family ancestors, for it is they who have the power to enhance the crops or blight them. This is the concept around which the mangé yam is built.

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The annual harvest feast, on the twenty-fifth of November, is rooted in the need for placating the ancestors, so that the dead will insure the fertility of the fields. Before the feast, no yams may be eaten, for the crop must be "baptized" first. Should this rule be violated the yams will spoil and those who eat them will become sick. The precise form of the mangé yam varies from region to region. Sometimes it is held on the premises of the cult chief for the community at large. More traditionally it is held on the family *habitation*, with a houngan in attendance. It is felt that an important obligation rests upon those who have wandered away from the homestead to return for the occasion. For the fate of the family depends to a large degree upon the successful appeal to the vast host of the ancestral dead, and the solidarity of the living in this effort is regarded as vital. Even if one belongs to a Christian sect which proscribes Vodoun, he is obligated and ready to come, for the welfare of the family is paramount. Catholics, Adventists, and Protestants alike participate. As the Haitians say, it is an affair for all who eat yams, and that means all Haitians.

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Yams are washed and prepared for eating during the service. They are cut in small portions, placed in dishes or calabash bowls, and offered to the dead, who have prime rights. All categories of the dead are fed—those who are remembered, those who can be recalled only by name, and those whose names are forgotten. The dead of Haiti are invoked, then the dead of Africa. The marassa dead are fed from separate gourds or bowls, and a special table is set for the ancient dead who move slowly because of their age or infirmities, and who may take a long while to arrive at the mangé. A share of the yams is offered to the family loa. Then the members of the family receive symbolic portions. There is singing, drumming, and dancing, and sometimes ritual baths are taken. Afterward, when the yam feast is ended, the crops may be gathered, stored, and eaten.

243 In the Artibonite Valley, where much rice is grown, a similar ceremony
707 takes place before the rice is gathered from the fields. In this ceremony it
718 is rice that is shared with the family ancestors, who have first rights, and
769 with close friends who have aided with the planting. This feast is called
[252] *mangé diri*, or sometimes *goutè diri*, the tasting of the rice. Small amounts of rice are taken from the fields, cooked with red beans or Congo beans, or perhaps made into dumplings. The farmer's friends and relatives gather
[524] while the food is still cooking, and play games such as *wari* and *trois-sept*.
[538] The children play *gage* games and sing songs, and sometimes a *malt' conte*—a storyteller—comes to entertain them.

When the food is finally ready, the family ancestors are given their share. The farmer takes a calabash bowl of the rice and walks around the house grounds calling upon his immediate ancestors to accept their share. He drops a little food on the ground for the remembered dead, for the unknown dead who preceded them, for the Haitian dead, and for the dead of Africa. He also drops small portions for the dead twins, the dead albinos, the deformed dead, and the dead who have lost limbs, and for the distressed dead who have been improperly buried, or who may not have received the feasts that were due them. Afterward, he offers food to those who died of drowning, or who were lost at sea and never heard of again.

Each course is shared with the ancestors. The farmer takes a pitcher of water, spilling a little here and a little there until the dead have quenched their thirst. He also gives a little of everything to the family loa. Then the calabashes are set out on a bench or table reserved for the dead, and this food is not disturbed. Food for the marassas is set out separately on the ground in three small *couis*, or gourd dishes.

The family ancestors whose good will has made the harvest possible having been taken care of, the food is now shared among the extended family and the friends who helped in the fields. Later there are prayers
[782] to the loa, the saints, and God, led by the houngan or a prêt' savane. To
[776] finish the affair, there may be Juba-type dances for the older people, while
[535] the children watch or play *gage* games.
[524] Only after this service are the farmer and his family and his *coumbite* (mutual labor group), if he belongs to one, free to go out and harvest the rice.[4]

243 These feasts of the rice and yam harvests are not of New World origin.
243 Similar harvest festivals for yams or rice are held over a wide area of West
776 Africa. There, as in Haiti, the fundamental concern is with the family
769 ancestors, whose good will must be constantly nourished so that the rains
171 continue to fall, the crops flourish, and human beings remain fertile. Among the Ashanti of Ghana, for example, the yam and rice harvests are

4 [Account given by Jean Ravel Pintro. Cf. P. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

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celebrated with elaborate rituals for the dead. As in Haiti, great importance is laid on the presence of all living descendants, whose numbers are calculated to influence the ancestors' behavior. And as in Haiti, the first yams and the first rice are offered to the dead, and only after the family ritual does the family divide the crop.[5] 243 244 796 769 171

Service for the Assotor Drum

The *assotor* drum is the largest and most sacred of all Haitian drums. Around it is built an impressive and elaborate service known as the *mangé assotor*, which, according to local traditions and circumstances, may be held as often as every three years or as infrequently as every twenty-one years. The period between mangés always consists of an odd number of years. A houngan from Jérémie declared the service might properly be held every three, five, or seven years. Another cult priest in the Cul-de-Sac Plain said it could be held every seven, seventeen, or twenty-one years. The assotor is known as the *plus grand moune* (the most venerable "man") of the hounfor. However, few cult centers possess an assotor. "Assotor c'est fort bagaille, c'est pas zaffai tout moune" (The assotor is powerful, it isn't everybody's affair), Haitians say. This is what a man from Jérémie tells about it: 534 796 778

"The assotor is the greatest of all things in the hounfor. The Rada drums are only for the Dahomey nation. The Congo drums are for the Congo nation. The assotor is a man of Dahomey, but he is for all nations. It is for all loa—Pétro, Congo, Bumba, Dahomey. The assotor belongs to Dahomey, but when there is a great service the assotor is the host to the loa of every rite, the loa of Haiti and of Africa. When the assotor is played, the loa are awakened everywhere. Loa who have been forgotten by the Creoles (Haitians) will come to the service and mount people, and when the loa have gone, many people don't know what loa has been riding them. Some ancient spirits from far away come only to the assotor service, and when it is over they aren't heard of again. 534 796 778 184 787 [776]

"The assotor drum is not for small things, it is for great occasions. For some people there are no occasions in their whole lives great enough for an assotor service. When all other things have failed, it is only then that the assotor is called upon. 534 796 778. 787.

"If a big houngan should have an assotor drum, he can have only one, and it is the chief of the hounfor. All other drums are its servants. You can make an assotor, but it is not necessarily an assotor. It may look like an assotor and not be an assotor. To be an assotor it must not only have the shape of an assotor but it must be accepted by the loa. There was a houngan near Jérémie who made an assotor and held a great service with it,

[5 [Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana. Cf. p. 351, category 116. -- Analyst] [115]

534 796 778 787 but it wasn't a genuine assotor and the loa didn't come. The drummer beat the assotor, but none of the loa came. As he played, the stick kept falling out of his hand. This was a bad signal (omen). None of the people got loa in their heads. The houngan was in a great sweat, but nothing happened. Another houngan came after the third day and told him to bring the service to an end. He did that. They threw the false assotor away and no one would touch it.

534 796 778 782 787 [796] "To make an assotor, there is first a service. The houngan goes into the woods to find a great tree that is suitable. The trunk must be big enough so that the drum is at least as tall as a man. Most assotors are six feet high or more. The houngan must buy the tree from Maît' Grand Bois, the loa who is Master of the Forest. There is a service under the tree, a goat or a bull is killed, and the houngan places money on the ground for Maît' Grand Bois. Then Maît' Grand Bois mounts his horses. He enters the head of the houngénicon or the laplace. Sometimes he rides the houngan himself. He is very rough with his horses. But if he accepts the money, the houngan has the tree cut down, and he has an assotor drum made. When the drum is finished, a special stick must be made to beat it. Again they go to the woods. They carry the great assotor drum with them. There is singing but no dancing or drumming. They find a tree from which they will cut the drumstick, and there is a service. The houngan must buy the branch from which the drumstick will be made. He offers money to Maît' Grand Bois, the same as before. He spills a little water on the ground for Maît' Grand Bois. He holds a candle in his hand. They sing to Maît' Grand Bois to let them have the stick. Maît' Grand Bois is the master of all the trees, but he is thinking also of the other loa and how they feel about it. On the Island Below the Water he consults with them. If he agrees to give the stick, he makes it known by mounting some of the hounsi, or the houngan, or maybe the man who will be the special assotor drummer. Then they cut down the branch and make the drumstick.

534 778 796 "The assotor drum is not dedicated to Ogoun or Èzilie or any other single loa. If it is baptized, it is given its own name, Assotor. The spirit of the assotor is multiple, for it is the *rappel* for all loa everywhere. The spirit of the assotor is called Assotor, and it is a kind of loa, but it is not one loa but all loa.

534 796 778 796 "In the assotor service, all loa come. Ogoun, Damballa, Legba, Tijean Pétro, Dan Pétro, Gèdé, Maît' Cimitière, they all come. The big loa come and the little loa, the chiefs and their escortes. Every big loa has an escorte of twenty-one smaller loa. Some of the smaller loa have their own escortes. Damballa comes crawling like a snake. Makanda comes crawling like a snake. Ogoun comes fighting, chewing on nails or anything iron. Badé

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comes quietly. Pié Cassé comes crawling because of his broken feet. Each loa comes in his own way. 534 796

"First there is dancing for the Congo and Pétro loa. There is dancing for the Kanga and Ibo nation. Last of all is Dahomé, for the assotor belongs to the Dahomé nation, and Dahomé is the host. 778 776 [184]

"The assotor service is the biggest of all services. It last fifteen days. Old people say that once there were services lasting more than twenty days. Every day, animals are killed—bulls, goats, pigs, chickens, turkeys—all according to the loa who are there to be fed. When Moundongue is fed, a dog's ears are clipped in his honor, because Moundongue is fond of dogs. More happens in the assotor mangé than all the rest of the year. Dahomé is host to the other nations, so the Rada service comes last. But the assotor drum is the host even to Dahomé, and it is fed last of all. [782]

"The assotor drum is dressed in the finest of clothing and kerchiefs during the mangé. It is the king of everything.

"When the mangé assotor is ended, when the drum has been fed, there is an immediate Mass held in church for the souls in purgatory. You don't need to have any special reason, but you must hold the Mass for all the dead. You serve coffee, sandwiches, cake, and other refreshments for all the people. 534 796 769.

"When there is no mangé going on, the assotor is kept in a special place in the hounfor. Every seven or nine months the houngan has a special *rappel* beaten for it on the Rada drums, and rum is spilled on the ground for it. It is a great responsibility to own an assotor. But it does great things for the houngan who owns it."[6] 534 778 796

Service for Maît' Grand Bois at Anse-à-Veau

Orthodox tradition in the region of Anse-à-Veau places the loa Maît' Grand Bois as the most potent and venerable of deities. He is the supreme mystère, whose good will or eccentric whim determines the fortunes of all men. Somewhat subsidiary to Grand Bois, but served within the same rites, are two other non-Dahomé loa—Moundongue (of Congo origin) and Ibo. Older people of Anse-à-Veau regard this trilogy, along with Femme Grand Bois (the wife of Maît' Grand Bois), as the core of "Guinée" ritual. There is also a second group of deities, consisting primarily of Ogoun Feraille, Èzilie, and Fréda Dahomé; these loa are of the Dahomey family and are regarded as somewhat less important. Should services for any of them be held, they follow rites for the Grand Bois constellation. People in this region hold that there is only one Ibo loa, one Moundongue, one Ogoun, and one Èzilie, each of them with many names or manifestations. Legba, the Dahomean spirit of procreation, 184. 776

[6] [For footnote, see Category 116, P. 351. --Analyst]

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184 the gate, and the crossroads, is not regarded in the same light as the other
776 loa but as a messenger and interceder, and as the crossroads protector. He it is who helps in the placation of the major gods, and who guards people against accident, chance, and evil spirits on the highway.

796 In traditional form, services for Maît' Grand Bois and Femme Grand
782 Bois are conducted by the family without the aid of a houngan, under
776 the direction of the oldest male member of the family. The rites begin on a Thursday. With a tiny bell in his hand, the elder who directs the service (he is called *grand famille*) calls upon Maît' Grand Bois to
[787] come and receive his feast. The procedures are solemn. The grand famille and the family sing. At last Grand Bois enters the head of the old man who is conducting the rites. Then the sacrificial animals are brought forward and killed, and the women take the meat and begin the cooking of the mangé. While the food is cooking, the family sits and waits. Sometimes the grand famille begins a song, in which others join. The cooking takes a long while. Sometime during the night, when the food is ready, it is placed in two baskets—one for Maît' Grand Bois and one for his wife, Femme Grand Bois. Into each basket goes meat, corn meal, rice, bread, cookies, peanut cakes, cassava, and other delicacies. The two baskets are hung by ropes from the roof of the tonnelle, or from the branch of a tree. During the entire night, none of the family eats. Maît' Grand Bois and his wife partake of the feast as they please. At six o'clock in the morning, the baskets are taken down, and the family is free to eat what the loa have left for them.

When the food is gone, the bones that are left are carried to a nearby stream and washed until they are white and shining. The bones are then placed in a large calabash bowl. Sweet-scented leaves from special trees are placed in the bowl with the bones, and water is added. The
[783] mixture becomes a ritual lotion, or "bath." The entire family kneels before the liquid, which they rub on their faces, heads, arms, hands, legs, and feet. When the ritual bathing is over, they sing:

[539]

La famille vin' payé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
La famille vin' payé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
Cérémonie là c'est fini! [Ex. 41]	The ceremony is finished!

Afterward, each member of the family places a small coin in the calabash dish with the bones and leaves, and the residue is then buried in a deep hole at a crossroads. A heavy post (*borne*) is erected at the site, with
[211] markings to indicate the date of the service, and the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, each representing a year. Every year one of the numbers is checked off, and at the end of four years another service for Maît' Grand Bois and Femme Grand Bois is held.

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If it should happen that on the appointed day four years later the family is unable to hold the regular feast for Grand Bois, the grand famille goes to the tree sacred to the loa, with a bottle of *siro'* and other token gifts. He explains the difficulties of the family; he tells the loa that it has been a bad year, that the crops have been poor, and that the family has not been able to accumulate enough money to buy sacrificial animals. He asks Grand Bois for a six-month postponement. The loa agrees to the postponement, making his intentions clear through various signs when the grand famille is possessed. "Grand Bois is a good loa," people say, "but if you fail to meet your obligations to him he will be very stern. If you don't keep your promise to him, he may seize you [i.e., kill you]."

When the rites for Maît' Grand Bois are finished, services for Ogoun and the Dahomé deities may be held, beginning on Friday and running through the week end. The Ogoun service is a festive affair. There is much singing and dancing, and early on Saturday morning the sacrificial bull is dressed and decorated with red and blue kerchiefs. Red and blue ribbons are tied to his horns, and he is led on a grand tour to various places, including Ogoun's tree. The drummers walk behind him, and after them members of the family, some dancing, some singing, and some mounted by the loa Ogoun. The procession passes three times around the cemetery, then heads back toward the family *habitation*. When the participants reach the tree sacred to Legba, they sing to this loa, invoking him to "ouvri bayè pou' moin" (open the gate for me). Finally, when the procession reaches the *habitation*, the sacrificial bull is killed. After Ogoun has been served his mangé, the rites are terminated with an *action de grâce*.

Near Anse-à-Veau there is a dried-up spring. It is said that many years ago during a big service for Maît' Grand Bois a man mounted by this loa rushed to the foot of a large tree and began clawing at the ground. He dug a hole there with his hands, and when it was only a few feet deep, water began to flow. The members of the société later enlarged the hole and lined it with stone. It was discovered that a giant crab was living in this water. One year, a service to Maît' Grand Bois was missed. The crab disappeared from the spring, and soon the water stopped flowing. "Grand Bois gives," the people say, "but if he is not remembered he also takes back."

Possession by the Loa Pinga Maza

On the outskirts of Port-au-Prince there is a hounfor dedicated to the loa Pinga Maza, also known by the name Bakulu Baka. He is a ferocious and fearsome spirit of the Pétro family who is known for his propensity

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776 to "eat" people; that is, to destroy them. To do this he employs such
753 means as disease, insanity, and destruction of crops. If a man serves
828 Pinga Maza well, the loa protects him in return; but for those who anger
731 him, Pinga is a menacing and vengeful creature. People often say, "Pinga, c'est djab" (Pinga is a devil).

346 The Pinga hounfor in Port-au-Prince is called the *Société de la Belle*
353 *Jeune Fleur*. Its peristyle is simple and is hardly distinguishable from
794 those of other small hounfors. Around the base of the center pole is
798 a three-foot-high wall of masonry, decorated with simple cult symbols. The outer room of the hounfor proper also resembles many another. The familiar pot têtes containing loa stand on a wooden altar, and there are Catholic lithographs on the walls. But the inner room belongs exclusively to Pinga Maza. Here are all the accoutrements and objects sacred to the deity. Everything is red. Pinga's clothing and kerchiefs are red. On the walls are painted esoteric designs—hands, skulls, and crosses—all in red. The bottles, magic bundles, and govis on the altar are decorated with red cloth, ribbons, or paint. In the middle of the earthen floor is embedded a heavy wooden cross. On each end of the crossbeam hangs a large calabash resembling a bulbous hand. And on top of the upright is affixed a human skull. The total impression of this hounfor is that of a bizarre aberration, calculated to intimidate and terrify. The houngan himself is relatively young, literate, and city wise. His personality is smooth and sharp, and he lacks the air of sincerity and easy simplicity which most often characterizes the houngan of the mountains.

353 In this inner room, before the skull and the cross, there took place a
754 small service for a client, to determine what kind of magic was needed
755 to fend off malevolent actions of an enemy. On the day of the divining session, there hung from the rafters of the tonnelle a long rope, which extended into a deep hole in the earth near the door. Hanging on the rope, down inside the hole, were two gray dolls tightly bound together. Hanging still farther down were a knife, a fork, and other, unidentifiable objects. This cluster of magic paraphernalia was an *expédition* at work; it was an elaborate pouin, which was working against an enemy who lived far away.

793 Before entering the hounfor, the houngan took a long rope whip
755 from the wall and cracked it seven times before the door. This process, known as *frete cache*, was to "wake up" the loa within. The houngan then entered, followed by the client who was seeking help. They paused briefly in the outer room, where the houngan took up his asson and bell and made a small vèvè on the ground. He spoke briefly in *langage* and then passed on through the door to the inner room. There the

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houngan took his place before the small altar and the cross surmounted by the skull. Again he spoke *langage* and rattled his asson. He took from the altar a small-necked bottle containing a white alcoholic liquid and a tight-fitting iron cross. The presence of the iron cross inside the bottle was represented as a magical phenomenon. The houngan took a mouthful of the white liquid and sprayed it out in a fine mist over the skull. Twice more he sprayed the mist, in different directions. Then he poured a little of the liquid directly on the skull. The room was filled with the smell of alcohol. The houngan lighted a candle and sat in a low chair facing the altar. He shook his asson rhythmically and spoke *langage* to Pinga Maza. Suddenly Pinga Maza entered the houngan's head. The houngan became violent. He jerked this way and that, making strange noises in his throat. He seized a machete from the altar, waved it around, and struck the flat of it against his head. He continued for a while to beat his head fiercely with the machete. Gradually he became quiet. His assistants placed Pinga's red jacket on him. Now he spoke in the tired voice of an old man. He complained that he was hungry, that he had not eaten for a long while. His assistant handed him a razor blade. He placed it in his mouth, chewed it up, and swallowed it, washing it down with more of the white liquid in the bottle. He asked for more, and they gave him a second blade to eat. He demanded a third, and ate that, too, spitting out small fragments of steel that caught in his teeth.

His assistant told him there was a man present seeking advice about a pouin. The possessed houngan looked around with half-closed eyes. He asked the man his name, and what he wanted. After hearing the client's story, the houngan took out a deck of cards and placed them one at a time, face up, on a winnowing tray. After studying the cards he said: "You are strong, but not strong enough. You already have some protections, but they do not protect you from the dangers coming your way. You have powerful enemies. You must have a new pouin." The man said yes, he wanted a new pouin, but how much would it cost? Pinga replied through the mouth of the houngan: "Twenty-five dollars." The man said: "I will get the money and return." He went out after placing five gourdes on the winnowing tray with the cards. Pinga became drowsy. The houngan's head fell forward on his chest and he slept. The divining session was ended.

The Water Road

The land where the loa live, the place "below the water," is not thought of as being in the water itself. It is dry and airy, like the countryside of Haiti. But the route to it is through water.

of Haiti. But the route to it is through water. When the Haitians say "under the water" they do not mean under the sea. The ocean is regarded as the special domain of Agwé, La Sirène, and a few related deities, but it has nothing to do with most loa. "Under the water" specifically means under the springs, the rivers, and the fresh-water lakes. Fresh water has the greatest of significance in relation to most of the Vodoun deities.

When a loa comes to visit his Haitian children he comes by way of the *chimin dlesu* (the water road)—that is to say, by way of the river, the waterfall, or the spring. Because the spring is the primary source of fresh water, it is the most direct means of contact with the land of the loa. Tales are heard everywhere of persons who, drawing water from the spring at night, heard the voices of loa or the sound of singing and drumming coming up from somewhere below. And virtually all the tales about human beings who visited the land of the loa describe them as descending into a river or disappearing into a waterfall.

The loa are accustomed to traveling by the "water road." And in all aspects of the Vodoun service, this "water road" is refreshed and replenished. When the road is dry, contact with the loa is diminished. When it is moist, the loa travel easily.

Thus, the houngan constantly uses water to entice and invite the deities. He holds a glass or pitcher of water at the center pole of his peristyle. He extends it toward the four cardinal points. He spills water at the foot of the center pole. He spills water in the hounfor at the foot of the *pé*, or altar. He sets a pitcher of water at the gateway of his *habitation*. And often, during a service, he pours a pathway of water in the dust from his gateway into his peristyle. Within nearly every hounfor there is at least one *bassin*, or pool, dedicated to the loa who is the *maît' caille*, the master of the house. These pools are carefully filled with water drawn from the springs. They are places of rest and refreshment for the deities whose names or portraits are inscribed on the walls above.

Sometimes rites and services are held at the site of the spring, the houngan and his entourage marching down to it from the hounfor for the occasion. So, too, there are annual pilgrimages to waterfalls such as Saut d'Eau, where the loa mount their "horses" in profusion.

Within the hounfor, during a service, the cult priest and the servitors pour "libations" of water on the earth, so that the loa may be refreshed. And virtually without end, the hounfor is the scene of ritual ceremonies in which the loa is bathed and thus "renewed" in the heads of his servitors.[1]

[1] [For footnote, see category 116, P. 351--Analyst]

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The importance of water in Vodoun has a fundamentally West African character. Among the Yoruba and the Ashanti and in Dahomey, for example, water rites are a significant aspect of religious ritual. Herskovits notes the frequency of religious pilgrimages to streams in West Africa.

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In one instance, at Abenkata, a bedecked procession of worshipers left a shrine atop a high hill, followed a long path to the riverside over two miles away, and returned before the ceremonies could be carried out at the shrine of the god. On one occasion, in Dahomey, the bed of the sacred stream run dry was "filled" from nearby wells so that this water could be ritually redrawn for use in an especially important ceremony. Among the Ashanti, pilgrimages to Lake Bosumtwe and other sacred bodies of water regularly occur. And it is on such occasions that the spirit of the river or lake or sea manifests itself, by "entering the head" of the devotee and causing him to fling himself, possibly possessed, into the water.[8]

So it is also in Haiti, where possession at the river's edge may cause the devotee to leap into the river. At Saut d'Eau, possessed persons plunge into the waterfall without regard for their safety, being in the care of the loa who have mounted them.

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Into this water complex the Christian rite of baptism has been easily absorbed, providing merely a new act of veneration for water and its properties. In the Haitian mind baptism is not far removed from the *lavé tête* ritual, the washing of the head, or the *rafraîchi tête*, the "refreshing" of the head, both of which are acts in propitiation of the loa.[9] So related is the baptismal concept in the Haitian mind, that the term "baptise" is used to describe the lavé tête; it is said that the loa is being "baptized." So also are drums "baptized," not to menton yams, and even the hounfor itself.

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Marriage to a Loa

Although the term *hounsi* (spirit wife, or wife of the spirit) is applied to a large class of servitors of the Vodoun temple, only a small number of servitors ever pass through rites which give them a husband-wife or wife-husband relationship with a loa. Reasons for these mystic marriages vary, but usually the rituals take place upon the prescription of a cult priest who interprets the will of the deities concerned. Most of the mystic marriages of which I have heard have taken place in the general area of Port-au-Prince and the Cul-de-Sac Plain. In some other areas of Haiti it appears that no such rites have taken place locally within the memory of the elder inhabitants. One aged man living near Belladère declared: "It [marriage to a loa] is impossible. People serve loa, they do not marry them. A man does not marry his burro. A loa

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8 A [Herskovits, The Myth of the Negro Past, p. 233. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

9 A [It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

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588 does not marry his horse. People marry people. Loa marry loa. A man
588 may have a compact with a loa. That is not a marriage. Some of the
184 things that are going on down there in the Plain are not right. They are not the old way. In the old days we did things differently. We did not always run to the houngan. The grand famille knew how to talk to the loa. Up here we don't do things the way they do them down below in the city. People marry people. Loa marry loa."

588 Nevertheless, the practice in the neighborhood of Port-au-Prince and
776 the Cul-de-Sac Plain is for mystic marriages to take place when deemed
[184] useful, essential, or unavoidable. Foremost among the loa involved in these rites is Ezilie Wèdo, the "pure" one, the deity of love, sometimes identified with the Virgin Mary. Other loa known to have taken part in mystic marriages are Damballa, Ogoun, Ayida, Agwé, Gèdé Nimbo or one of his brothers, Cousin Zaka, and Général Clermeil. All these loa—significantly, I think—have clearly defined personalities; much is known about their character and behavior, their likes and dislikes.

588 A man married to Ezilie has special obligations to her for the dura-
[834] tion of his life. On certain days (especially Thursday, which is sacred to this deity), the mortal "husband" may not have sexual intercourse, even though he has a human wife.

588 Circumstances leading to a mystic marriage vary widely, but in each
755 case it is a cult priest who determines whether the rites should be
793 held. Perhaps a person has been afflicted with a series of illnesses or mis-
776 fortunes. He goes to his houngan, who begins a series of communications with the client's loa or with his own. Sometimes many loa are consulted before the desired information is available. Eventually it is determined that a certain deity, for reasons which may or may not
[753] be clear, wishes to have nuptial ties with the client. The illnesses or mis-
[777] fortunes that have been sent are a means of informing or warning the person concerned.

Sometimes the houngan relies on well-established divining methods to ascertain the cause of the difficulties. He may employ the *gembo* (a shell that slides on a string), ashes, or small shells that are thrown on
[787] the ground. Or he may rely on possession by a loa to provide the information.

If it is found that a loa is demanding marriage, arrangements are then made. The rites that follow may take place in a hounfor or at the house of the human bride or groom. Both a prêt' savane and a houngan officiate.

588 The person directly involved, like the loa, usually has something to
554 gain from a mystic marriage. For one thing, he can reasonably expect

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special future help and consideration from the loa (including the cessation of the illnesses or other misfortunes that have led to the marriage). A man (or woman) united with a loa in "matrimony" is "stronger" (*plus fort*) in his relationship to his environment and to other people. For this reason, the initiative for a mystic marriage does not always come from a loa. An ambitious person may seek such a marriage to strengthen his hand, to provide protection against other deities or human enemies, or to gain wealth or position. One observer, Odette Mennesson Rigaud, expresses the opinion that in such instances the marriage "is no longer a religious union of mystic love, but a magic pact."[10] The implicit element of "pact" is so evident in all mystic marriages, even when the initiative comes from the loa, that the distinction is not easily appreciated. However, persons suspected of "pushing" for a marriage with a loa are regarded as presumptuous or reckless, and often they are believed to have hidden motives. It is felt by many that the benefits of such a union can be only temporary and that catastrophe will ultimately follow.

A human party to marriage with a loa is deeply committed. He is subject to jealousy and anger on the part of his mystic mate. His behavior in the *hounfor* as in his daily life must be beyond the loa's reproach. He must avoid possession by other loa. And he must fulfill endless obligations. Sometimes the prospect of such binding ties is more than a man (or woman) is ready to face, and through the intercession of a strong houngan the loa may be induced to withdraw his demand for marriage. In that event, a special service is held, in the course of which the person buys his freedom with promises of special gifts and feasts for the deity.

One young man I knew was caught in a special dilemma—the houngan and the loa on one side, the Protestant Church on the other. The man, named Maurice, came from the mountains near Léogane. He was married but had no children. His wife's family, still living in Léogane, was Protestant. Maurice himself was a follower of Vodoun, and nominally a Catholic. When his wife was afflicted with a long series of headaches and earaches, Maurice consulted a houngan of Port-au-Prince. The houngan said that the loa Ayida Wèdo was demanding marriage with Maurice, and that the wife's illnesses were an indication of jealousy.

At the same time, the wife's parents came from Léogane and insisted that the girl's illnesses were brought about by God because Maurice was a follower of Vodoun. They demanded that he sever all his connections with Vodoun and become a Protestant.

After considerable anxiety, Maurice "purged" himself of Vodoun and

10 [Odette Mennesson Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Voudoun 'Loa'," in Appendix A of Deren, Divine Horsemen, p. 264. Cf. p. 351, category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1946) 1965 SV3 Hait SV3

159 588 753 783 joined the Protestant Church. Subsequently his wife's illnesses subsided somewhat, but she never bore children. Maurice suspected that the latter misfortune was the result of his spurning his mystic suitor.

588 (1993) The actual ceremonies by which a mystic marriage is performed carry over many of the customs and trappings of ordinary mortal marriages. The petit' savane reads prayers and officiates until the two parties are deemed wed. The loa is represented by a "stand-in," usually a person possessed by the loa and dressed in appropriate garb. Gold wedding rings are placed upon the fingers of the couple. There are wedding cakes and wedding contracts. Nothing appropriate to an ordinary wedding is omitted.

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[P. 95]

6. Songs of the Peristyle

The songs that are sung in the peristyle are virtually numberless and have a wide range of themes. In general, they are in the spirit of supplication or placation. Preponderantly they relate in some way to the deities. A loa may be described, invoked, or called upon to perform certain deeds. He may be cajoled, joked with, and even criticized. But it is all a family affair. The servitors and the *fidèles* are the loa's "children," his "horses," his "leaves in the woods." The loa, the spirits of the dead, and the living members of the cult are all members of the same "nation." Whether supplication or admonition, the songs of the peristyle and the hounfor all have an intimate character. The affairs of the loa are the affairs of the société. What concerns one individual concerns all. 533 782 794 796 [769]

The themes of the songs have to do with the drama of the cult ritual, the coming and going of the deities, sickness and death, the welfare of the dead, and the behavior of the living. 533 794 796 796

The cult service is a dramatic presentation which synchronizes and brings into sharp focus the heritage of religious and folk beliefs. The songs describe and evaluate what is going on. Sometimes they are cryptic and tangent, but to those participating and those watching they are clues. As the action is usually related and progressive, so are the songs. Each song has its own place and its own meaning. One song is not readily interchangeable with another. Each service has its appropriate music. So does each developing phase of the hounfor ritual.

Some of the songs are addressed to the loa; others seem to be the words of the loa themselves. In many of the songs there is an implicit dialogue between one or more loa and the singers. This dialogue is not rendered in a form which is immediately understandable to a stranger. There is a constantly shifting point of view, so that sometimes the words are third-person comments about the loa or the situation,

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

533 sometimes they are the words of the deity, sometimes words addressed
794 to the deity. The name of the loa may appear anywhere in the song, as
796 both an invocational word and a rhythmic device, with the result that
796 unless one is aware of the song structure he may lose the sense and
533 intent of the words. In these two lines, for example:

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> Master Agwé comes from the sea,
> My cannon is loaded.

The first line describes what happens, from the standpoint of a third person; the second line is a statement by the loa Agwé. Or, take this single line:

> Marie Louise oh, we are mixed up!

Here Marie Louise seems to be the person addressed, but in fact it is Marie Louise who is talking. Again:

> I don't see my blood, Master Ogoun!

It is not Ogoun who is addressed; the words are his own.

As in nonreligious songs, there is a pattern stanza which is repeated over and over again. As the song goes on, there may be variations for interest and certain embellishments, but by and large the form remains constant. In religious singing there are relatively few examples of songs which progress from one idea to another. When the theme has been stated, that is the song.

533 One of the preliminary songs in many ritual services is a greeting to
539 the men and women of the société who are present. It is an *[illegible]*, or
794 salute of welcome, and comes before the loa themselves are addressed:
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Messieurs-dames bonsoir!	Gentlemen and ladies, good evening!
M'apé mandé nou!	I ask you!
Messieurs-dames bonsoir!	Gentlemen and ladies, good evening!
M'apé mandé nou	I ask you
Qui gens nous yé! [Ex. 42]	What people are we?

The answer to the question is implicit, for they are the people of the société, members of the Arada "nation" or Anago "nation," as the case may be.

782 In almost any service of the Dahomey "nation" the first supplicatory
796 song is addressed to Legba, the keeper of the gate, the guardian of the
533 crossroads, and the "go-between" who intercedes with other loa in the
794 affairs of men. The first appeal to Legba is to open the gate, over which he is master, so that the voices of supplication may be heard and understood. The open gate also provides access for other loa to the service.

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Attibon Lejba ouvri bayè pou' moin ago!
Ou wè Attibon Legba ouvri bayè pou' moin ouvri bayè!
M'apé rentr quand ma tourné,
Ma salut lo yo!

Attibon Lejba, open the gate for me, *ago!*
You see, Attibon Legba, open the gate for me, open the gate!
I will enter when I return,
I salute the loa!

After this appeal or sometimes while it is being sung, the houngan spills a little water on the earth at the base of the po'teau mitan. It is an inducement for the loa to "enter," for the loa reside "below the water" and their passage into the hounfor is made easier by water. The houngan may spill his water in a long path from the entrance of the peristyle to the po'teau mitan, or extend his pitcher invitingly to the four points of the compass. Then, perhaps, another song is sung to Legba:

[793]
[823]
[798]

Papa Legba nan hounfor moin!
Papa Legba nan hounfor moin!
Papa Legba nan hounfor moin!
Ou même qui porté drapeau,
C'est ou même ka paré soleil pou' loa yo!
Papa Legba, Papa Legba!

Papa Legba is in my hounfor!
Papa Legba is in my hounfor!
Papa Legba is in my hounfor!
You who carry the flag,
It is you who shade the loa from the sun!
Papa Legba, Papa Legba!

As the ritual gets under way, there may be a general song of welcome to all the loa of the cult, such as this one:

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Bonjou' oh bonjou' bonjou' bonjou' bonjou'!
Bonjou' oh bonjou' bonjou' bonjou' bonjou'!
Oh bonjou' oh bonjou' loa moin! [Ex. 43]

Good day, oh, good day, good day, good day, good day!
Good day, oh, good day, good day, good day, good day!
Oh, good day, oh, good day my loa!

When the service is well in progress, the songs may describe the qualities of the deities—their character, behavior and needs. If it is Balindjo, for example, the song may advertise that persons with this loa in their heads are immune to poison:

Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh Ogoun oh!

Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh, Ogoun, oh!

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Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh Ogoun oh!
C'est pas mangé rangé
Pral tuyé chwal moin! [Ex. 44]

Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh, Ogoun, oh!
There is no poisoned food
That will kill my horse!

Ogoun Fai, known also by the Christian name St. Jacques, is the deity of war, and this song describes his courage and valor:

St. Jacques Majeur a voyé dit'm ga'çon déjà!
St. Jacques oh voyé dit'm ga'çon déjà!
St. Jacques Majeur a voyé dit'm ga'çon la-guè!
St. Jacques oh voyé dit'm ga'çon la-guè! [Ex. 45]

Major St. Jacques sent to tell me he is already a man!
St. Jacques, oh, sent to tell me he is already a man!
Major St. Jacques sent to tell me he is a man of war!
St. Jacques, oh, sent to tell me he is a man of war!

Should the service be to the loa Damballa Wèdo, symbolized as a rainbow and a great serpent, this song might be sung, commenting that he cannot be drowned in the water:

Papa Damballa ou c'est coulève oh!
Pouq'ou pas *néyé*?
Pouq'ou pas *néyé*?
Damballa pouq'ou pas *néyé* nan dlesu? [Ex. 46]

Papa Damballa you are a snake, oh!
Why don't you drown?
Why don't you drown?
Damballa, why don't you drown in the water?

[778] [823] Damballa, the rainbow, is in fact the source of the water that bubbles from the earth in springs. He is a patron of the spring, and there he often lives in the form of a water snake. In many a hounfor where Damballa is specially revered there is a *bassin*, or pool, dedicated to him. [532] On the wall behind the pool there is usually a painting of Damballa and Ayida, depicted as great serpents, sometimes with a feathered headdress. The pool is kept filled with fresh water from the spring, and [231] here one or more small snakes—symbols of Damballa and Ayida—reside:

Ala loa marché nan dlesu
C'est Damballa!
Ala loa marché nan dlesu
C'est Damballa!
Papa Damballa c'est tête à dlesu!
Papa Damballa c'est tête à dlesu!

There is a loa who lives in the water,
It is Damballa!

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There is a loa who lives in the water,
It is Damballa!
Papa Damballa is the spring!
Papa Damballa is the spring!

Ayida Wèdo, another aspect of Damballa, is also known as a snake and a rainbow. A song describing Ayida's attributes goes:

Ayida c'est arc-en-ciel oh!
Ou ap' vin' fai coulève!
Ayida c'est arc-en-ciel!
Pas wè n'ap fai coulève? [Ex. 47]

Ayida is a rainbow, oh!
You will come in like a snake!
Ayida is a rainbow!
Don't you see I come in as a snake?

Agwé Woyo, one of the major deities of the sea, is believed to be responsible for thunder over the ocean, which is described as the sound of his cannon shooting:

Mak' Agwé so'ti nan la mer,
Canon'm chargé-é!
Mak' Agwé so'ti nan la mer,
Canon'm chargé!
Mak' Agwé so'ti nan la mer,
Canon'm chargé oh!
Canon'm chargé pou'm tiré Mak' A'Woyo! [Ex. 48]

Master Agwé comes from the sea,
My cannon is loaded!
Master Agwé comes from the sea,
My cannon is loaded!
Master Agwé comes from the sea,
My cannon is loaded, oh!
My cannon is loaded to fire, Master Agwé Woyo!

The loa Kitta, or Simbi Kitta, of the Guinée pantheon is one of the water deities. He is described as coming out of the water dripping wet:

Kitta oh so'ti nan dleau li tou' mouillé!
Oh Kitta oh so'ti nan dleau li tou' mouillé!
Oh Kitta so'ti nan dleau li tou' mouillé!
Oh nen point houngan passé Bondieu nan pays-yà! [Ex. 37]

Kitta, oh, comes out of the water, he is all wet!
Oh, Kitta, oh, comes out of the water, he is all wet!
Oh, Kitta comes out of the water, he is all wet!
Oh, there is no houngan in this country greater than God!

Tijean Pétro of the Pétro "nation" is small, and agile even though he has only one foot. (Some people say that Tijean Petro has no feet at all.) This somewhat malevolent deity hides in the leaves of the coconut palm, and from there he sometimes preys on passers-by, particularly children. Persons mounted by Tijean Pétro may move about as though
They have no feet and climb into the nearest palm tree. [987]

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they have no feet and climb into the nearest palm tree. This song comments on Tijean's ability to climb with his single foot. (Haitians do not "shinny" up trees, but walk up, bracing the soles of the feet against the trunk.)

Tijean ou pas gainyain pieds,
Tijean ou pas gainyain pieds,
Comment ou fai monté cocoyé?
Lans bayè ro Legba, Jean Pétro,
Lans bayè ro!

Tijean, you have no feet,
Tijean, you have no feet,
How do you climb the coconut tree?
By using Legba's gate, Jean Pétro,
By using the gate!

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When the loa begin to arrive in the hounfor to participate in the ceremonies, there is usually a song taking note of their coming. Sometimes the words describing the action are the deity's own account of what is happening, as in this song to the loa Sobo:

C'est passé n'ap passé là!
C'est passé ma passé là!
É hounsi bossale é yo lommain nom moin!
Yo lommain nom moin yo lommain nom moin!
Yo rélé hounsi kanzo!
Yo rélé Daromain!
Yo rélé mwé! [Ex. 50]

I am passing through, I am passing through!
I am passing, I am passing here!
É, the hounsi bossale call my name!
They are calling for me, they are calling for me!
The hounsi kanzo are calling!
Dahomey is calling!
They are calling me!

In another rite one might hear this song about the arrival of the deity Simba, from the point of view of the servitors rather than of the loa:

Simba Kitta vini wè moin, oh!
Oh Simba wa vini wè moin là, oh saints yà! [Ex. 51]

Simba Kitta comes to see me, oh!
Oh, Simba will come to see me here, oh saints!

When the deity Boulicha Nago comes in, there is a call for the drums to be played:

Nago 'rivé-é,
Boulicha Nago 'rivé-é!
Nago 'rivé-é,
Boulicha Nago 'rivé-é!
Li lè li tempe bata là!
Li lè li tempe bata là!
Nago 'rivé jodi-à oh enhé! [Ex. 52]

Nago arrives,
Boulicha Nago arrives!
Nago arrives,
Boulicha Nago arrives!
It is time, beat the drums!
It is time, beat the drums!
Nago comes today, oh, *enhé!*

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Sobo, too, demands his drums as he arrives, as well as all the other paraphernalia for his ritual: 533 539 776 794 796

Coté yo coté yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Sobo mandé hounsi 'Llada!	Sobo asks for his Allada hounsi!
Coté yo coté yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Coté yo coté yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Sobo mandé tambou' Rada!	Sobo asks for his Arada drums!
Coté yo coté yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Coté yo coté yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Sobo mandé pouin Allada!	Sobo asks for his Allada magic!
Coté yo coté yo? [Ex. 53]	Where are they, where are they?

When more than one loa comes into the service at the same time there is confusion. Each loa is supposed to await his turn, so that the ritual and the dance may be conducted in an orderly way. Sometimes, however, two or more dieties come in at once, throwing the orderly process out of gear. This song takes note of the simultaneous arrival of the loa Adja, Loko, Sobo, Sedje, and others.

Adja non mélé, oh Adja oh!
Adja non mélé!
Non mélé Papa Loko, non mélé jodi-à!

Adja non mélé, oh Adja oh!
Adja non mélé!
Non mélé Sedje assez non mélé jodi-à!

Adja non mélé, oh Adja oh!
Adja non mélé!
Non mélé kilé oudé Nèg' Sobo non mélé jodi-à! [Ex. 54]

Adja we are mixed, oh, Adja, oh!
Adja we are mixed!
We are mixed Papa Loko, we are mixed up today!

Adja we are mixed, oh, Adja, oh!
Adja we are mixed!
We are mixed Sedje, enough, we are mixed up today!

Adja we are mixed, oh, Adja, oh!
Adja we are mixed!
We are mixed all the time, Nèg' Sobo, we are mixed up today!

When the loa come in en masse this way, some are asked to retire so that the service can proceed smoothly. In a similar instance, the deity Marie Louise is willing to withdraw from the scene but demands that a present or sacrifice be given to her first. [782]

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Marie Louise oh nou mélé!	Marie Louise, oh, we are mixed up!
Marie Louise oh nou mélé!	Marie Louise, oh, we are mixed up!
Coté ça ou ba main pou'm allé?	Where is my gift so that I can go?

Often, when it is time to leave the service, the deity announces through the medium of the song that he has other affairs to attend to elsewhere. Ogoun Achadé, for example, makes a swift departure:

Ogoun volé!	Ogoun flies!
Anago!	Anago!
Ogoun volé Achadé!	Ogoun flies Achadé!
Anago Papa! [Ex. 55]	Anago Papa!

As the deity Général Brisé departs, he tells his servitors that he is "going to God," and that he turns responsibility for their affairs over to them:

Général Brisé pays ya nan main oh!
Ago-é! Ago-é-é!
Général Brisé pays ya nan main oh!
Pays ya nan main
M'pral Bondieu djab oh! [Ex. 56]

General Brisé, the country is in your hands, oh!
Ago-é! Ago-é-é!
General Brisé, the country is in your hands, oh!
The country is in your hands,
I am going to God, oh!

The loa Bumba, in reply to a query, declares that he must go because he has work to do in his fields:

Bumba qui coto prallé?	Bumba, where are you going?
Bumba qui coto prallé?	Bumba, where are you going?
Bumba qui coto prallé?	Bumba, where are you going?
Bumba qui coto prallé?	Bumba, where are you going?
M'planté manga!	I am planting mangas!
Planté patate!	Planting potatoes!
Planté jawmoun!	Planting pumpkins!
Planté banane!	Planting plantains!
Waille Bumba qui coto prallé? [Ex. 57]	*Waille* Bumba, where are you going?

The deities Mait' Bois and Mait' Dleau declare as they depart that they are on their way to Africa, and leave the impression that things are pretty nice over there:

Mait' Dleau qui so'ti nans dleau!	Mait' Dleau who comes out of the water!
Mait' Bois qui so'ti nans bois!	Mait' Bois who comes out of the woods!
Nan Guinée plaisi-à belle oh!	In Africa pleasure is beautiful, oh!
A n'allé wè yo! [Ex. 58]	We are going to see!

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As the loa Mambo Ayida of the Guinée pantheon leaves the hounfor to return to Africa, her "children" ask her not to stay there too long. And they ask her to bring back to Haiti with her some good magic for use in the hounfor: 533 539 776 794 796

Mambo Ayida é!
Pral nan Guinée-à, pinga ou misé-à m'tendé!
Si ou joind bon ouanga wa po'té!
Si ou joind bon lotion wa po'té! [Ex. 59]

Mambo Ayida *é!*
Go to Africa, take care not to stay, I am waiting!
If you find a good ouanga, bring it!
If you find a good lotion, bring it!

Giving food to the loa is a focal point in religious rituals. Many songs describe the sacrifice, signify that the loa are waiting for their food, or otherwise dramatize this significant activity. In the following song the deity Damballa asks for the goat with which he is to be fed. 533 539 776 794 796 782

Damballa Wèdo oh c'est sang-é!
Damballa mandé tête cabrit,
C'est sang li mandé!
Damballa Wèdo oh c'est sang-é!
Damballa mandé tête cabrit,
C'est sang li mandé!
Damballa Wèdo oh c'est sang li mandé!
Oh assez! [Ex. 60]

Damballa Wèdo, oh, it is blood *é!*
Damballa asks for the head of the goat,
It is blood he asks for!
Damballa Wèdo, oh, it is blood *é!*
Damballa asks for the head of the goat,
It is blood he asks for!
Damballa Wèdo, oh, it is blood he asks for!
Oh, enough!

For Ogoun they sometimes sing:

Papa Ogoun qui gain' yun mangé
Tout moune pas mangé li!
Enhé enhé, oh! [Ex. 61]

It is Papa Ogoun who has a feast,
Not everyone may eat it!
Enhé enhé, oh!

But sometimes Ogoun is dissatisfied that there is no feast ready for him, and he complains.

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533 Ogoun é oh moin blessé!
539 Ogoun é oh moin blessé!
776 A pas m'blessé Ferei,
782 M'pas wè sang moin!
794 M'pas wè sang'm Malt Ogoun,
796 Moin pas wè sang moin!
M'pas wè sang'm Badagry,
Moin pas wè sang moin là! [Ex. 62]

Ogoun é, oh, I am hurt!
Ogoun é, oh, I am hurt!
Now I am hurt, Ferei,
I don't see my blood!
I don't see my blood, Master Ogoun,
I don't see my blood!
I don't see my blood, Badagry
I don't see my blood here!

The loa Moundongue, like Damballa, likes goat meat, and it can be cooked in two ways:

Yè yè yè!
Moundongue oh!
Oh Moundongue oh yè yè yè!
Moundongue mangé cabrit boulé,
Moundongue mangé cabrit boucané! [Ex. 63]

Yè yè yè!
Moundongue, oh!
Oh, Moundongue, oh, *yè yè yè!*
Moundongue eats boiled goat,
Moundongue eats roasted goat!

Or again, the servitors may sing:

Coto passé na ba'ou mangé, oh Ti Moundongue nà!
Coto passé na ba'ou mangé, Moundongue nà! [Ex. 64]

Wherever you are, we give you food, oh, Ti Moundongue there!
Wherever you are, we give you food, Moundongue there!

[787] [789] The loa Adja also has animal sacrifices and special dishes for his mangé, but sometimes he—and the "horses" he mounts—will eat broken glass:

Oh Adja mangé bounda dèmijon!
Adja véco' véco'!
Adja mangé bounda dèmijon!
Adja véco' véco'! [Ex. 65]

Oh, Adja eats the bottom of a bottle!
Adja, old one, old one!
Adja eats the bottom of a bottle!
Adja, old one, old one!

For the loa Ianman Ibo the proper sacrifice is a rooster, and the deity declares:

Nanchon Ibo m'ta mangé gros coq oh nanchon Ibo!
Nanchon Ibo m'ta mangé gros coq!
Nanchon Ibo m'ta mangé gros coq oh nanchon Ibo!
Waille waille waille! [Ex. 66]

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Ibo nation, I am going to eat a large cock, oh, Ibo nation!
Ibo nation, I am going to eat a large cock!
Ibo nation, I am going to eat a large cock, oh, Ibo nation!
Waille waille waille!

The Ibo service is often a strictly family affair rather than a broad community ritual. The family replies to the Ibo loa in the following song. [184]

La famille vin' payé sang,
Vin' payé sang!
La famille vin' payé sang,
Ibo Lazile volonté! [Ex. 41]

The family comes to pay blood,
Comes to pay blood!
The family comes to pay blood,
It is Ibo Lazile's wish!

The loa Nago frankly tells the people that if they want to come to his house (his shrine, or the hounfor) they will have to pay something for the privilege:

Si nou wè coté'm demeuré,
Si nou wè coté'm demeuré,
Fau'm payé bonbon pou' ça!
Anago Nago!
Vin' wè coté'm demeuré! [Ex. 67]

If you see where I live,
If you see where I live,
You have to give cookies for that!
Anago Nago!
Come see where I live!

The "dead" spirit Gèdé Nimbo, the guardian or master of the cemetery, who often engages in bizarre activities which poke fun at the codes of social behavior, is sometimes regarded as a special protector of children. Precisely because he is overlord of all that has to do with the grave, his good will is sought, particularly in behalf of the young; and in many services of the Nago rites his protection is bought by money gifts:

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Gèdé main la'gent,
M'apé ba ou la'gent la'gent,
M'apé ba ou la'gent pou' ga'dé zenfants la yo!
M'apé ba ou la'gent pou' ga'dé zenfants la yo!

[539]
[533]

Gèdé, take the money,
I will give you money, money,
I will give you money to guard the children!
I will give you money to guard the children!

In the course of the ceremonies when, from time to time, the honored loa of the occasion enters into the head of one of the servitors, the houngan will place in the hands of the mounted person a lighted candle and a pitcher of water. The possessed servitor approaches the sacred center post and spills a little water on the ground for the deity. After certain other rituals, the houngan, or one of his assistants, conducts the mounted "horse" into the hounfor to the altar. In the following song, as the possession comes on, there is a call for a lighted candle.

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Simbi non wè oh!
Simbi djab non wè!
Oh Simbi non wè oh!
Simbi non wè oh!
Simbi wa lumé chandelle pou' clairé moin! [Ex. 68]

Simbi doesn't see, oh!
Stern Simbi doesn't see!
Oh, Simbi doesn't see, oh!
Simbi doesn't see, oh!
Simbi [says] you will light the candle so I can see!

Some of the songs refer to the dancing of the loa who enter the bodies of the servitors. The deity Loko asks for his hounsi, through whom he will dance:

Coté pitits moin yo,
Mainain'm nan hounfor, m'ap djaillé!
Na pas Loko,
Coté pitits moin yo! [Ex. 69]

Where are my children,
Take me into the hounfor, I will *djaillé!*
Now, Loko,
Where are my children!

Another deity, who is not expressly named, tells his "leaves in the woods"—that is, his hounsi—that he has danced since he was a child:

Fé nan bois hélé moin!	Leaves in the woods call me!
Oh dépi'm pitit m'ap dansé!	Oh, since I was small I have danced!
Fé nan bois hé-é!	Leaves in the woods *hé-é!*
Fé nan bois hélé moin oh!	Leaves in the woods call me, oh!
Oh fé nan bois hélé moin oh!	Oh, leaves in the woods call me, oh!
Dépi'm pitit m'ap dansé!	Since I was small I have danced!
Fé nan bois hélé moin! [Ex. 70]	Leaves in the woods call me!

In the following song the loa Macaya Bumba is called upon by the hounsi to hurry up and get on with his dancing.

Macaya Bumba Bumba!	Macaya Bumba Bumba!
Lèvé dansé!	Get up and dance!
Macaya Bumba!	Macaya Bumba!
Bumba mon cher vini dansé! [Ex. 71]	Bumba my dear, come and dance!

A song for the deity Ianman in the course of the Ibo dancing and ritual goes:

Ibo lélé!
Ibo lélé!
Nanchon Ibo ça ou gainyain con ça Ibo lélé!

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Ianman con ça, con ça!
Ianman con ça'm dansé Ibo!
Ianman con ça, con ça!
Ianman con ça'm dansé Ibo!
Ianman con ça, con ça!
Ianman é-wa é-wa é-wa! [Ex. 72]

Ibo *Hii!*
Ibo *Hii!*
Ibo Nation, what are you doing there, Ibo *Hii!*
Ianman, like that, like that!
Ianman, like that I dance the Ibo!
Ianman, like that, like that!
Ianman, like that I dance the Ibo!
Ianman, like that, like that!
Ianman *é-wa é-wa é-wa!*

Another song containing the same zestful appreciation of dancing is for the loa Kitta. The words "my mother isn't dead" and "my father isn't dead" are simply expressions of good fortune and happiness which embellish the command to do the Kitta steps:

Ai ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!

Manman pas mouri ba'm pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!

M'dit pitit ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!

Papa pas mouri ba'm pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta! [Ex. 73]

Ai, little man, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps!

My mother is not dead, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps!

I say little man, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps!

My father is not dead, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps! [1]

A song for the loa Bambarra describes the movements of his dance. Bambarra is symbolized by the crab, and the dance posture with "low hips" is regarded as characteristic of the crab's movements: [535]

Bambarra kap proméné, taille bas!
Bambarra allé proméné, taille bas!

[1] [For footnote, see category 116, p. 351. --Analyst]

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Bamharra is walking, low hips!
Bamharra is going to walk, low hips!

Damballa Wèdo, being a snake deity, "threads" or "winds" his way like a serpent, and this song describes a serpentine course taken by the dancers as Damballa (here identified as a Nago man) arrives:

Filé na filé, Damballa Wèdo vini wè moin!
Filé na filé, Nèg' Nago vini wè'm là! [Ex. 74]

Wind, we wind, Damballa Wèdo comes to see me!
Wind, we wind, the Nago man comes to see me here!

After the dancing has been going on for a long while and the pace is fast, there may be a song of banter, such as the following from the Dahomey rites. The dancers sing *laillé, laillé!*, describing a figure of the dance in which the skirts are swirled, and note that they have worn out the drummers. They even offer to carry on their backs those dancers who are ready to fall by the wayside:

Laillé laillé!
Oh laillé laillé oh viéco'!
Tambouyé bouké!
Tambouyé bouké viéco'!
Laillé laillé oh viéco'!
Laillé laillé tambouyé bouké houngan'm!
M'po'té sou corps moin vié sor!
Tambouyé bouké ça!
Laillé laillé! [Ex. 75]

Laillé laillé!
Oh, *laillé laillé*, oh, old people!
The drummers are tired!
The drummers are tired, old people!
Laillé laillé, oh, old people!
Laillé laillé, the drummers are tired, my *houngan!*
I'll carry you on my back, old sister!
The drummers are tired there!
Laillé laillé!

Interspersed among the songs of the hounfor there are sometimes warnings or admonitions. Usually they are tangent and indirect in statement, and may be from the point of view of the loa or of the houngan. In the following pouin song, which accompanies the ritual of making magic, there is a warning to certain people who will feel the effects of the magic. The ceremony includes, among other things, the dropping of lemons, roots, and leaves by the houngan into his sacred basin or pond. The houngan sings:

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Trois fé trois citron oh!
Trois fé trois citron oh!
Moin dit rwo, youn jour ou wa besoin moin!
Trois fé trois racine oh!
Moin dit oui, youn jour ou wa besoin moin!
Gainyain bassin moin trois racine tombé ladans,
Quand ou wa' blié fau' ramassé chongé! [Ex. 76]

Three leaves, three lemons, oh!
Three leaves, three lemons, oh!
I say *rwo*, one day you are going to need me!
Three leaves, three roots, oh!
I say yes, one day you are going to need me!
I have my pond into which three roots fall,
When you wish to forget you will have to remember!

In another song the houngan warns against ingratitude on the part of persons for whom special magical services have been carried out:

Ouanga ça oh ouanga chaud!
Ouanga ça ouanga chaud!
Lè pou' payé li pinga ou fachè!
Ou mandé'm ouanga là ou content!
Ou mandé'm ouanga là ou content!
Lè pou' payé li pinga ou fachè! [Ex. 77]

This ouanga, oh, hot ouanga!
This ouanga, oh, hot ouanga!
When it's time to pay for it don't be angry!
You ask me for the ouanga, you are happy!
You ask me for the ouanga, you are happy!
When it's time to pay for it don't be angry!

Somberly and in metaphor, the deity Kitta Démambré speaks of an unhappy event which occurred in the town of Léogane, and warns those concerned that it must not happen again:

Kitta Démambré, pinga ou fai'm ça 'core oh!
Nan Léogane ti poule-là mouri nan aé!
Nan Léogane ti poule-là mouri nan aé oh!
Kitta Démambré, pinga ou fai'm ça encore oh! [Ex. 78]

Kitta Démambré, take care that you don't do that to me again, oh!
In Léogane the little chicken died in its egg!
In Léogane the little chicken died in its egg!
Kitta Démambré, take care that you don't do that to me again!

An unnamed spirit warns that the moment for placation has come and suggests that calling on him after he has gone from the *perillos* of the houngan Derèa would be of no use.

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M'apé rélé moin en bas pavillon loa moin!
Laissé'm démêlé moin en bas pavillon oh Derés!
Jou'm allé pinga you lomenain nom moin! [Ex. 79]

I will call, I am under the loa's canopy!
Let me get straightened out under Derés's canopy!
The day I am gone take care they do not call my name!

In a lighter vein, to the gayest of music, there is this admonition that a wrong cannot be righted simply by saying "excuse me":

Ilso kôô!
Ilso kôô!
Pilé pied'm ou mandé'm pardon!
Pilé pied'm ou mandé'm pardon!
Ça pardon-là wa fait pou' moin? [Ex. 80]

Ilso *kôô!*
Ilso *kôô!*
You step on my foot and ask my pardon!
You step on my foot and ask my pardon!
The pardon, what good will it do me?

And the deity Ogoun Kénison warns those who do not speak of him with respect that he is not ready to accept such a slight as a light matter.

Ogoun Yèkkè Yèkkè ça Nèg' Kénison *él*
Ogoun Yèkkè ça Nèg' Kénison *él*
Oh tous les jours c'est pa'lé Ogoun mal!
Ogoun pas coun' betise!! [Ex. 81]

Ogoun Yèkkè Yèkkè there, man of Kénison!
Ogoun Yèkkè there, man of Kénison!
Oh, constantly talking bad about Ogoun!
Ogoun doesn't like joking!

The loa Ogoun Panama, like ordinary mortals, is concerned about people who "come to look and go away to talk."

Ogoun oh m' c'est Nèg' Panama *él*
Ogoun oh m' c'est Nèg' Panama *él*
Yo vini ga'dé!
Yo vini pa'lé!
Oh Ogoun oh m' c'est Nèg' Panama *él* [Ex. 82]

Ogoun, oh, I am the Panama man *él*
Ogoun, oh, I am the Panama man *él*
They come to look!
They come to look!
Oh, Ogoun, oh, I am the Panama man *él*

The loa Alson complains more vigorously of the bad behavior of human beings:

> Alson Alson!
> Dipis tempo y'ap pa'lé sou moin!
> Coté ça yo gainyain?
> Bouche à yo paya paya!
> Djoule à yo pèté pèté!
> Coté ça pou' yo pa'dan ah? [Ex. 83]
>
> Alson, Alson!
> For a long time they have been talking about me!
> What's wrong with them?
> Their mouths go *paya paya!*
> Their jaws go *pèté pèté!*
> What is the excuse?

Even on routine business the loa are inclined to be petulant, or to protest that they have been mistreated, that their followers gossip about them, or that they are not ardent enough. Here the deity Simbi en des Eaux complains bitterly that she is not loved by her servitors, the "leaves in the woods," and asks a hounsi named Lolo for news to take to spirits of the ancestors who live "below the water":

> Fè nan bois con ça nou yè!
> Nèn point ratmain pas manmè quint!
> Fè nan bois con ça nou yè!
> Nèn point ratmain pas manmè quint!
> Simbi en des Eaux,
> Qui sorti en bas dlow!
> Gardé ça yo fai moin!
> M'dè Lolo, ba moin nouvelle pou'm ba yo! [Ex. 84]
>
> Leaves in the woods, that's the way you are!
> There is no love that does not ask to end!
> Leaves in the woods, that's the way you are!
> There is no love that does not ask to end!
> Simbi en des Eaux,
> Who comes from below the water!
> See what they do to me!
> I say, Lolo, give me the news to give them!

But if the loa complain about the behavior of their followers, the servitors also may complain. Songs sung in the hounfor may chide the deities for antisocial deeds, for forgetting their "children," or for carelessness. In the following song the spirit Malt' Grand Chimin is criticized for mounting his "horses" with such fury that they are thrown about

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violently. The houmi complain that Malt' Grand Chimin treats them as though they were flour being ground in a mill:

Temp' changé nouvelle allé!
Bonjou' Papa bonjou' Roi Grand Chimin!
M'mandé Papa ça'm fai!
Temp' changé nouvelle allé!
Bonjou' Papa bonjou' Roi Grand Chimin!
M'mandé Papa ça'm fai!
Papa m'pas main moulin!
Nous dit na bougé moin!
Papa m'pas main moulin!
Nous dit na bougé moin! [Ex. 85]

Times change, the news goes out!
Good day, Papa, good day, Roi Grand Chimin!
I ask you, Papa, what did I do?
Times change, the news goes out!
Good day, Papa, good day, Roi Grand Chimin!
I ask you, Papa, what did I do?
Papa, I am not corn flour!
You say you will grind me!
Papa, I am not corn flour!
You say you will grind me!

When there is sickness within the société there may be songs for the absent ones. Here is a song for an ailing houmi:

Moin allé wé li, houmi malade oh!
Moin allé wé ça, houmi malade oh!
Moin allé wé bourgan, houmi malade oh! [Ex. 86]

I am going to see there, the houmi is sick, oh!
I am going to see it, the houmi is sick, oh!
I am going to see, bourgan, the houmi is sick, oh!

Again, the members of the société call upon Ogoun, or St. Jacques, to help one of their number who is sick:

St. Jacques maré cheval li,
Li pas dit personne oh,
Vévé li pou' moin!
Li met gainyain vers,
Li met gainyain maline nan dos,
St. Jacques oh!
Ba li lavie pou' moin! [Ex. 87]

St. Jacques ties his horse,
He tells no one, oh,
Take care of him for me!
He may have worms,
He may have sores on his back,
St. Jacques, oh!
Protect him for me!

Ogoun is the dispenser of rum, and in virtually all Ogoun rituals rum is at some time or another in evidence. Sometimes rum is poured into a hot iron pot and bursts into flame. The iron pot is described as Ogoun's

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1938) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

house, which is on fire. But there is no grief, because Ogoun is the master of fire:

Pierre, Pierre Narcisse oh!	Pierre, Pierre Narcisse, oh!
Yago moula-é!	*Yago moula-é!*
Caille Ogoun boulé!	Ogoun's house is burning!
Gibline Ogoun bel Di	Ogoun's distillery is beautiful!
Na consolé! [Ex. 88]	We console ourselves!

Some of the ritual songs that have persisted through the years have lost their explicit meaning but continue to survive because of beautiful melodies and perhaps the strange images they evoke. Such a song is this one to the loa Atti Daï, from the Dahomey service:

Atti Daï oh!	Atti Daï, oh!
Yo voyé dit moin	They sent to tell me
Min soleil maladé! *	The sun was sick!
Quan'm té rivé	When I arrived
Moin joind soleil mouri!	I found the sun had died!
Quan'm té rivé	When I arrived
Moin joind soleil mouri!	I found the sun had died!
C'est regrettant ça	What grief it was
Pou'm enterré soleil! [Ex.89]	For me to bury the sun!

One of the truly lovely songs of the Dahomey rites, both in melody and in lyrics, is the following one to the deity Èzilie. It shows clear evidence of Catholic ritual influence in both its text and its music. Èzilie Fréda, who seems to be speaking most of the lines, is identified with the Virgin Mary, and the tone of this piece casts her more in her Catholic role than her African. The deity is speaking from Yagaza, a place described as being "on the other side of the water." In form the song is atypical in that it has more than one movement and progresses from one idea to another.

Èzilie Nainain oh!
Èzilie Nainain oh!
Èzilie oh, c'est moin Yagaza!

Èzilie n'ap marché n'ap couté n'ap parlé pou' temps y'ap parlé parole moin!
Èzilie n'ap marché n'ap couté pou' temps y'ap parlé parole mwé!
Èzilie Nainain oh!
Èzilie Fréda oh Nainain oh!
Èzilie Fréda oh, c'est moin Yagaza!

Mesdames nà yo chita nan caille là yo vlé djoillé oh tout temps soleil pas lévé!
Mesdames yo pasé yo tombé tè à génoux y'apé plainnin le soit yo!

* Some Haitian informants vouched that *soleil* meant "sun." Others felt that this word in the song was really Solé, a diminutive of Anisolé, another name for Atti Daï.

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Ezilie Nainain oh!
Ezilie Nainain oh!
Ezilie oh ho' c'est moin Yagaza!

Larouzé fai handa tout temps soleil pas lévé!
Larouzé fai handa tout temps soleil pas lévé!
Ezilie Nainain oh!
Ezilie Nainain oh!
Ezilie Fréda oh, esté moin ho' Yagaza!

Ezilie Fréda Nèg' Sobo Nèg' Grand Chimin Nèg' Balairouzé Cercléquinté abobo ça!
Ezilie Nainain oh!
Ezilie Nainain oh!
Ezilie Fréda esté ou yé? Moin là Yagaza! [Ex. 90]

Grandmother Ezilie, oh!
Grandmother Ezilie, oh!
It is I Ezilie, Yagaza!

Ezilie we are walking, we are listening, we are speaking, they are speaking my words now!
Ezilie we are walking, we are listening, they are speaking my words now!
Grandmother Ezilie, oh!
Ezilie Fréda, oh, Grandmother, oh!
Ezilie Fréda, oh, it is I, Yagaza!

The women sitting in the house there, they want to have a good time, oh, until the sun comes up!
The women go by, they fall on the earth on their knees, they complain about their troubles!
Grandmother Ezilie, oh!
Grandmother Ezilie, oh!
Ezilie, oh, it is I on Yagaza side!

The dew glisters until the sun comes up!
The dew glisters until the sun comes up!
Grandmother Ezilie, oh!
Grandmother Ezilie, oh!
Ezilie Fréda, oh, I am on Yagaza side!

Ezilie Fréda, Nèg' Sobo, Nèg' Grand Chimin, Nèg' Balairouzé, Cercléquinté, finish there! *
Grandmother Ezilie, oh!
Grandmother Ezilie, oh!
Ezilie Fréda, where are you? I am on Yagaza side!

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* These various lwa are being called upon here to withdraw and not to intrude upon the scene while Ezilie is present.

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7. In the Mapou Tree: Magic, Demons, and Compacts

It is said by many Haitians that the loa are inclined to shun the mapou tree, for it is the secret rendezvous of countless kinds of demons. On certain nights, they say, you may see a chink of light showing through the trunk of the great mapou, indicating that the demons are in macabre session. 796 798 824

Sometimes it is the baka who meet there to feast and discuss their blood-curdling plans. The baka are described as small and evil creatures, human in form, with red eyes, and legs or arms covered with skin but no flesh. They change into animals at will and may roam the countryside as cats, dogs, or cattle. The baka are notorious sorcerers, and they perform only malevolent acts. They are reputed to "eat people," literally as well as figuratively. Stories are heard of such-and-such a man or child who disappeared and was presumed to have been eaten at a feast in the mapou tree. One man who passed a mapou in the dark of night reported that he heard muffled singing coming from within its trunk, accompanied by the pounding of mortars in which a gruesome feast was being pulverized. But the baka "eat" people also in the sense that they destroy them. It is said sometimes that a person with a withered arm or leg has been "eaten" by a baka. Perhaps he was an innocent victim; possibly he struck a horse or dog which was really a baka; or perhaps he simply brushed against a baka in the market place. Sometimes the baka directs his evil in the most indiscriminate sort of way, "eating" whatever human being he meets. Animals which behave strangely are suspected of being baka in disguise, and they are given wide berth. 776 [732] 796 825

A cow once found within an old brick-covered spring was taken to be a baka because no cow could have passed through the small doorway of the spring. It was assumed that she had entered as a small baka and had then changed to her animal form. The spring went unused for days, until some children reported that the baka had vanished. The cow was

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1953) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

never seen again, and after a prêt' savane had read prayers over the spring the people again drew water from it.

Baka more often change themselves into gray or red pigs, but one ingenious baka was said to have transformed himself into a bicycle, which was seen traveling alone at night on the road from Port-au-Prince to Léogane.

Some people wear charms against the baka's malevolence; but the most effective weapon is the cocomacaque stick. The cocomacaque, or monkey palm, is a palm tree that grows only a few feet high. It has magical powers to drive off not only baka but other evil beings as well. When the tree is growing in its natural state, it is said, you must never mention its name in its own presence. Should you say within its hearing, for example, "Look at the cocomacaque," it will wilt and fall over, losing all its vital powers. The trunk of this midget palm is a favorite material for fashioning a walking stick or a short baton. A man going on a long journey into strange country may carry a cocomacaque stick with him to brandish at the crossroads where baka lurk, or to drive off strange animals that may be baka in disguise.

In their relationships with human beings, the baka are not always random. Sometimes, for a terrible price, they will undertake to make a man rich or to "eat" his enemies for him.

In some parts of Haiti, baka seemingly have found their way into the ranks of the loa. In the Congo-Guinée pantheon there is a deity called Bakulu Baka, or Babuku Baka. He is a malevolent spirit who "eats" people in the best baka tradition, and he lives, significantly, in the mapou tree, which is shunned by all good loa.

The *engagements*, or compacts, in which baka sometimes figure are usually made with another sort of creature, the *djab*, or devil. A djab is a manlike being but is superhuman, ferocious, and terrible. Some djab are small, some large, some innocent in appearance, some grotesque. They are supernatural sorcerers who deal out riches in exchange for human beings. A frustrated or desperate man may go to a djab and ask for a favor, which will usually be granted for a heart-rending price. Persons who appear to gain wealth suddenly may be suspected of having entered into an *engagement* with a powerful djab.

One story is about a man of Port-au-Prince who, needing a large sum of money, went to a famous djab who lives in a cave known as Trou Fourban. This powerful djab agreed to provide all the money required, but only on condition that the man deliver to him each year one of his children. The man suddenly came into a large fortune. But when the anniversary of his compact arrived, he did not go to Trou Fourban

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1950) 1960 SV3 HaBI SV3

with one of his children as he had agreed. That night his oldest child died. The next year to the day, his second child died. And the third year, the third child died. On the fourth anniversary, the man's wife died. On the fifth, he himself died. The djab of Trou Fourbon had collected his debt.

Another great djab lives on the northern mountain called Morne Ronde. A man of Cap Haitien was said to have made a compact with him for wealth. One day there was a great hubbub in front of the man's house. A crowd gathered and stood peering inside his door. What they saw was a rain of money falling down from the rafters. The floor was covered with ten-gourde bills. When the *gendarmerie* came to investigate, they stood at the doorway in awe, watching the money float to the floor. The man finally closed the door. That night he moved away, and no one in Cap Haitien ever saw him again.

The djab are insatiable. For their favors—which range from providing wealth and political position to destroying one's enemies—they always demand more in return than the recipient has counted on. Catholic ritual is called upon in some instances to break the djab's chain of demands.

Some tales are told in which human beings outwit the djab, particularly the lesser ones; but more often than not, the djab have the last laugh. During the big hurricane which hit Haiti in 1954, a huge landslide occurred near the place called Bayè Roche in the La Selle Mountains. An entire village was wiped out, covered by the falling rocks. Throughout this region the disaster was attributed to the action of a djab reputed to live in one of the nearby caves. Many lost cattle were found wandering near Bayè Roche, and they were believed to be people whom the malevolent djab had transformed into animals.

The height of bravado is to demand to be confronted with a big djab face to face. There is a song which goes:

> Conduit'm allé oh!
> Conduit'm allé djab nan Trou Fourbon!
> Conduit'm allé! [Ex. 91]
>
> Take me, oh!
> Take me to the djab in Trou Fourbon!
> Take me!

There are still other supernatural creatures in Haitian lore who must be guarded against, such as the *djablesse*, the *revenant*, and the *loup*. The *djablesse* is a female ghost who must live in the woods for a number of years before she can enter heaven, as a punishment for the crime of

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1953) 1960 SV3 Hebi SV3

775 having died a virgin. The *lutin* is the spirit of a child who died before baptism.[1] The *revenant* is a spirit of a dead person who feels he has been mistreated, and who returns to the world of the living to plague their families or their enemies.

776 754 The *lou-garo* (*loup-garou*) is a being of another kind, a vampire. She is human in form but sheds her skin and assumes animal forms at night when she roams the countryside seeking a victim. Salt is her nemesis. Should her human skin be found and salt sprinkled inside it, she would not be able to put it back on and would be destroyed.

776 778 A special form of the lou-garo is the *bizango*, a kind of enormous dog that runs in packs at night seeking people to eat. Also related to the lou-garo is the *démon*, a male creature of amorphous personality and character who can convert himself into an animal at will. There are sociétés of démons which, like those of the baka, meet in the dark of night in their assembly hall inside the mapou tree. Haitians who are conversant with such matters agree that there are many such trees, but that the most notorious of them are Mapou Miteppe in Miragoane, Mapou Simon in Aux Cayes, and Mapou Danpiise at Léogane.

Other fearsome beings such as the *zombeaupo*—human cannibals—also gather in the mapou to conduct their affairs.

789 [776] Against all these creatures, and against black magic in general, there are many magical protections, the most common of which is the *garde corps* (protect the body), or simply the *garde*. It is usually obtained from a bocor and consists of a small bag of mysterious ingredients. The owner wears it around his waist or around his neck. Sometimes it is merely a cord with a number of ritually made knots. The garde corps is made to prescription and protects the wearer against specific things such as a lou-garo, poison, or death from a bullet or knife. In describing a garde corps he had prepared for a client, a bocor revealed that it contained dried chicken blood, extract of *wari* bean, and *gris-gris* powder, among "a thousand and one" ingredients. The *gris-gris* powder is made from a dried *gris-gris* bird.[2]

There is another form of protective magic, broader in scope, called the *arrête*. It is used to protect not merely an individual but an entire household, or even a group of households. In addition to warding off [754] supernatural creatures and protecting people against assassins, the arrête is a neutralizing agent against various forms of black magic such as the *ounga* and the *makanda*. The arrête bundle or object is hung in the house or in a nearby tree, or it is buried somewhere on the grounds. Sometimes it is nothing more than a pointed stick placed in a certain way before a door or gate, or at one side of the trail leading to the

[1] Simpson, "Haitian Magic," Social Forces, October, 1940, p. 97. Cf. p. 351, category 116. --Anais
[2] [For footnote, see category 116, p. 351 -- Anais]

I: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 HAR1 SV3

house. A round, polished Indian stone is occasionally used as a *garde habitation*. And old people speak of a very powerful charm known as a *gros arrête* which in former times was placed on the trail to protect entire villages or valleys. 789

Still another potent defensive charm is the *pouin*, which is the product of ritual magic within the cult temple. A pouin may be an actual bundle containing a formula of special ingredients; more often, it is invisible, consisting of magical forces unleashed into space by the houngan. There are many ceremonies in the hounfor devoted to the projecting of these magical forces. They are called *cérémonie pouin* or *cérémonie magie* and are dramatized by special cult songs and dances. Sometimes the magic ceremony is woven into a more generalized cult ritual. The powers of the pouin are regarded as wider and more potent than those of the arrête. Pouins are said to protect an individual or a group not only against other magic but also against natural phenomena and accident. A pouin may ward off lightning, for example, or protect one from falling trees or from shipwreck or drowning. But it is not solely defensive magic. It may bring success in fishing, or produce a good crop in one's garden, or aid human fertility. 789 794 796 [777] [842]

Since the crops and the garden are the substance of life, much attention is given to their protection. An enemy may attack a man or his household through garden magic. He may bury a ouanga in the earth, to bring sickness or ruin. He may poison a tree by performing a special rite at its foot, and its fruits will then carry disease or death to the one who eats them. Or he may make a compact with the earth so that it will dry up and refuse to produce for the one who tills it. Against all these malevolent possibilities, as well as against common thieves, the Haitian peasant has many magical and practical resources. Some people are said to employ zombies as watchmen. These fearsome creatures will capture a trespasser and hold him for the owner of the field.[3] Or perhaps the owner will place special arrêtes in his garden. Occasionally a man will protect his fields by planting *piquettes* in the earth. The *piquette* is a piece of sharpened bamboo or hard wood. Its point is dipped into poison, and it is placed in the ground, sharpened end up. An unwary intruder who steps on a piquette may die of his wound. 789 685 [754] [775]

To counteract the *maljek*, or evil eye, a man may procure from a bocor a special shirt made of wide strips of red, white, and blue cloth sewed together. This shirt, called a *maye* or *mayo*, is worn for seven days if the *maljek* is a rather ordinary one. If the evil force is a particularly virulent one, however, the *maye* will be worn as long as twenty-one 754 789 791

[3] [Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy" Journal of Negro History, October, 1940, p. 503. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

days, according to the bocor's prescription. It is also employed to protect an individual against various forms of the ouanga.

Against poisons, the usual protection is the *drogue*, prepared by a bocor or a leaf doctor who specializes in such things. After having drunk a drogue, a man is regarded as immune to poison. Should a man be a "horse" of the loa Ogoun Balindjo, however, no drogue is necessary, for Balindjo's people are regarded as immune even without such precautions.

Foretelling the future and divination take two general forms. In one variety, a bocor or *divineur*, using ritual paraphernalia such as cards, flour, or ashes, takes personal responsibility for the divination. In the other form, the divineur functions only when possessed by a loa, and it is the deity himself who foretells and foresees. An account of this kind of divination is given in chapter 6. "Horses" of the loa Mäit' David when possessed are given packs of cards, for they are reputed to be able to divine the future.

Certain houngans use the instrument known as the *gembo* as a divining device. This is a small shell about the size of a lemon, through which a long cord is passed. When there is no tension on the cord, the shell can easily be slid back and forth. When the cord is taut, the shell will not slide. The houngan holds one end of the cord under his foot, the other end with his hand above it. He starts his divination with the shell at the top and the cord taut. Shaking his asson with the other hand, he talks *language* and asks questions. To indicate a "yes" answer he relaxes the tension on the cord and the shell slips downward an inch or so. The typical gembo is decorated with beads, old coins, religious medals, snake bones, and a fragment of mirror.

There are several ceremonies for locating a thief or other guilty person. One is called *passage d'alliance*. A ring suspended on a string is held over a person's head. If it moves in a regular pendulous way, the person is innocent; but if it swings in a circle, his guilt is established. Another method is the use of a long stick. The stick is pointed at one man, then another, and when the end vibrates in a circular manner the guilty party has been located. This technique is known as *jugement de baguette*. A third method is the one known as *passé balai*. A man sits in a low chair and small branches and leaves of the *balai* (broom) tree are placed under the chair and fastened to its uprights. A guilty person sitting in this chair will cause the *balai* branches to vibrate and close in on him.

The role of the *docteur fé*—the leaf doctor—straddles the field of magic and pharmacology. Many of his potions are of a mystical and

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many of his potions are of a mystical and 759
semiritual nature; yet from roots and leaves he brews specific medicines 755
for specific illnesses, such as rheumatism, fevers, malaria, worms, and 757
yaws. Sometimes his cures are effective, sometimes they fail. The leaf doctor is consulted for poisons and their antidotes, though many poisons, such as that in the wari bean, may be gathered and dispensed by anyone.

One of the macabre figures in Haitian folk belief is the *zombie*. In 775
the most general sense, the name designates the bland soul of a person who died without the distinction of having a loa in his head. The soul or spirit has no special will. It cannot affect the living in any way, unlike the lutin, the djablesse, and those who were buried possessed of mystéres. It does not harass enemies or importune its descendants. It is an undynamic, simple, otherworldly spirit, a sort of negative afterimage. It does not need to be placated or feared.

But the word *zombie* has another, more popular meaning, signifying 775
a human being who has "died" and been resurrected from the graveyard 789
by members of the Zeaubeaup Society, by a wicked sorcerer, or by some 754
other person who has realized the "power" to perform this act.

The Haitian countryside is full of tales about fresh graves that have been robbed of their bodies by practitioners of this special form of black magic. By a secret formula these soulless "dead" are revived and given a semblance of life. They lack only the power of will. Without that, they are at the complete command of the sorcerer who has disinterred them. They are presumed to be spirited away and put to work at drudgery in some remote place. Stories are told of plantations in the mountains whose entire labor force is made up of zombies, the animated dead. You can tell a zombie when you see him. His eyes are dull and glazed, he gives no sign of recognition to people he once knew, he moves slowly and plodding at his tasks, and he takes orders only from his master. He neither sings nor dances, and he eats and drinks without interest. His facial expression never changes. He is emotionally and mentally dead. Neither the rites of the Church nor those of Vodoun can help him. There is only one formula for breaking the spell. If he eats [183] salt he will either regain full life or die a merciful death. The master therefore takes great care that his zombies never have salt.

Haitians have many explanations of this mystical phenomenon. Some [184] hold that the sorcerer has the unique power to revive the dead. Others believe that the victim is not really dead but has succumbed to a virulent poison which numbs all the senses and stops bodily functions but does not truly kill. Upon disinterment, the victim is given an antidote which restores most physical processes but leaves the mind in an inert state, without will or the power to resist.

2: Courlander B-A (1937-1968) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

171 The connection between the Haitian zombie and certain soulless beings
715 of West Africa is quite apparent. Herskovits has observed that in
754 Dahomey there are tales of persons thought to be dead who were found wandering in far-off places. These individuals had no memories of their former lives. "They were soulless beings, whose death was not real, but resulted from the machinations of sorcerers who made them appear as dead, and then, when buried, removed them from their graves and sold them into servitude in some far-away land."*

764 According to stories told by some Haitians, in ceremonies for the
715 dead where there is suspicion that the deceased was the victim of this particular kind of poisoning a close relative stabs the body with a knife before burial to assure that it will not become a zombie. In other instances, close guard is kept over the grave for a number of days and nights, so that the body cannot be stolen.

715 Some members of the elite publicly dismiss the whole business as
789 savage fantasy but privately say something like: "I don't believe in this
184 sort of thing, but how can you explain the case of Marie Zamham in Cap Haitien?" And then they will tell of curious events of which they have firsthand knowledge.

538 There are numerous legends of persons who died and were buried,
715 only to reappear perhaps years later in some mountain village, or in the
789 big city of Port-au-Prince. An educated man in Port-au-Prince declared
754 that a dead cousin of his reappeared one day in the city ten years after her burial. He tried to speak with her, but she answered only haltingly and gave no sign of recognition. After this one appearance, he said, she was never seen again. Another Haitian from the north told of a graveyard watch in his village to prevent disinterment of the grave of a young girl who had just died. The two watchers dozed fitfully, and suddenly awoke to see a man removing the girl's body. When they jumped to their feet and went after him he escaped into the shadows. But the girl staggered about, fell to the ground, and gave birth to a baby. Both the girl and her newborn child were taken to the village and given salt to eat. Both of them recovered.

One villager from the southern mountains reported that in his travels he came upon a coffee plantation on the sparsely populated mountain called Morne la Selle, and found all the laborers to be zombies. They did not sing as they worked, their movements were slow and cumbersome, and they did not sweat in the hot sun. When he asked for a drink of water, no one replied. While he stood trying to converse, the master of the plantation came with a hard leather whip and angrily ordered him to leave.

* [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, p 243. Cf p 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

When they are not working, it is said, zombies are tied with special ropes made from the leaves of the banana tree. One popular song goes:

> Nans Léogane
> Yo marré zombie nans paille fig-banane!
> Aholo wye-oh!
>
> In Léogane
> They tie the zombie with banana straw!
> That is all, *wye-oh!*

Some Haitians tell you they know there are zombies because they have seen them. Not too many years ago a visiting writer stoutly declared that she, too, knew there were zombies because she had seen one—in the mental hospital at Pont Beudet. Although her reasoning was not quite airtight, the possibility that mental defectives are sometimes mistaken for zombies is worth considering.

Houngans who "work with two hands" are reputed to be able to gain permanent control over persons by means of a formula known as *tuyé-lèvé* (kill and raise). Either for himself or a client, the houngan gains power over the victim by "killing" him through special magic and then "removing the soul" (*retiré n'âme*). The victim, presumed to be normally dead, is buried by his family; the houngan then retrieves the body and "restores the soul" (*mettè n'âme*). With his soul restored, the victim has, in effect, become a slave of the houngan, who can do with him as he wishes. He differs from a zombie in that he has a soul, whereas the zombie has none.

Some Haitians believe that even one who has died a nonmagic death may be raised from the dead. To accomplish this, the houngan or bocor stands over the body, goes through a specified ritual, and calls out the dead person's name: "Albert Moreau! Albert Moreau! Albert Moreau! Lèvé non! Lèvé non! Lèvé non!" ("Get up! Get up! Get up!") Then, it is said, the dead man may awaken.

It is believed that a houngan may also command the souls of dead persons to perform services for him against an enemy. The souls at his disposal for this work are those which he keeps in earthern jars in his hounfor. Should he wish to plague an enemy, he will send one of these souls to the man's house to make him sick, or lazy, or insane. Usually, the man does not know what is happening to him; but if he becomes aware that a dead soul is working on him, he attempts to find out which houngan has sent it. Perhaps the houngan can be bought off. If not, another houngan may provide relief.

While some believe in the reality of the various demons and spectres,

2:Courlander B-6 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

others only half believe, and many look upon these creatures as imaginary but exciting to talk about.

The zombie finds a favored place in the tales children make up to tell one another, and the traditional song played by children on the earth bow or mosquito drum goes:

Maringouin pinga zombie oh, Bobo Maria!
Maringouin pinga zombie!
Maringouin pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie!
Maringouin pinga zombie! [Ex. 92]

Mosquito beware the zombie, oh, Bobo Maria!
Mosquito beware the zombie!
Mosquito beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie!
Mosquito beware the zombie!

Or they may sing with great bravado, to the clapping of hands.

Chaingulaing, nou yal mangé zombie!
Chaingulaing, tezu tezu!
Chaingulaing, nou yal mangé zombie!
Chaingulaing, colorezu!
Chaingulaing, nou yal mangé zombie!
Chaingulaing, kalainkainaing! [Ex. 93]

Chaingodaing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingodaing, tezu tezu!
Chaingodaing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingodaing, colorezu!
Chaingodaing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingodaing, kalainkainaing!

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[P 105]

8. Mardi Gras and Rara: Jugglers, Maypoles, and Kings

From early in January until Easter, each year, the Haitian countryside 541
is infected with a riotous carnival spirit that puts all else in the background. First comes Mardi Gras, beginning early in January and building to a great climax at Shrovetide. And then on Ash Wednesday begins the seven-week festival known as Rara, Lwalwadi, or Chariopié.

Every week end in the Mardi Gras season the country roads and 541
villages are alive with special music, dancing bands, and traditional 533
kinds of masquerading. The little crossroads in the mountains where the *habitants* usually hold their markets are suddenly swarming with drummers, trumpeters, magicians, jugglers, masked dancers, and acrobats. Each band has its own name, its banners and paraphernalia, new topical songs composed for the occasion, and sometimes a dance virtuoso. Each [535]
roving band competes for the attention and admiration of the spectators, and its ranks are often swelled by passers-by moving in the same direction who choose to dance their way along the roads rather than walk. Often women and girls on distant market errands will join in [482]
the celebration, seemingly unencumbered by the heavy loads they carry on their heads.

The Mardi Gras of the mountains and the plains is a dynamic spring 184
rite of which the urban elite version is only a pale and feeble imitation. 541
There are no pretty floats, no exhibits of female beauty, and no Coca-Cola advertisements. Sometimes the country bands move into Port-au-Prince and join the urban activities.

One by one the spectacles pass by on their uncertain way—to north 541
or south, into the town or out of the town, wherever chance leads them. In addition to the musicians, acrobats, jugglers, and masked dancers, there are baton twirlers, comedians on stilts, and mimes. Each group has its own theme. One may call itself the Zombeaupe, another the Cochons Gris, another Cochons Rouges—names designating legendary

2; Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1900 SV3 Haiti SV3

541 half-demon cannibals who meet in secret in the hollow heart of the mapou tree. Some are dressed in comic ancient military attire, replete with swords, epaulets, medals, and outlandish beards, representing "the Generals." Others, under the name Bande Autophonique, follow a human phonograph—a leader singing through an antique Edison horn.

541 53 And there are bands of male *rubaniers*, or Maypole dancers, some of them attired as women, weaving their colored ribbons around portable poles, to the accompaniment of guitars, marimbulas, and cha-chas. Male stick dancers known as *batonni*, dressed in women's clothing, crouch in circles and perform baton-tapping dances to the accompaniment of drumming and singing. Other small bands wander about impersonating characters from folklore or politics in grotesque homemade costumes. One might see, for example, a fanciful bocor driving before him a band of zombies, wielding a whip, and barking out weird raucous commands.

After the cataclysmic grand finale of the Mardi Gras at Shrovetide there is the briefest of lulls, and then the country is in the throes of Rara. The day of the *roi* Lwalwali (the King of Lwalwali) has arrived. Hundreds of Rara bands move through the towns and villages, each with its orchestra of bamboo trumpets or conch-shell horns and its "king"—an ornately clad dancer or baton juggler. The Rara bands move from place to place, dance, sing, exhibit their featured performers, and then move on, pressed perhaps by other bands behind them or jostled by another group moving in the opposite direction. When darkness comes, the bands light their way with wooden torches or candelabra [416] of tiny oil lamps. Every week end for seven weeks, in the heat of day and the darkness of night, the mountain trails are alive with these processions.

541 The Rara festivities reach their climax on Good Friday week end, and by Easter morning they are ended. During these final days there is a last grand display, with troupes coming in from the mountains and the plains to the larger cities and towns. One of the traditional Rara convocation centers in the south is the town of Léogane. On Good Friday week end, Léogane is transformed into a milling, surging, trumpeting mass of celebrating country people.

[533] The songs heard during Rara are full of praise or derision for well-[331] known personalities. Some of them are boldly ribald or licentious. And [535] often the dancing itself is openly sexual in its implications. Haitians humorously refer to this kind of dancing as *ranagé* (enraged, crazy).

541 675 Early in January, even while the Mardi Gras is in progress, each community gets down to the business of organizing its Rara group. It may be organized in one of several ways. In certain communities there

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

In certain communities there is some continuity over a period of years, the Rara or Chariopié band remaining more or less intact. Normally it has a *mait'* Rara, also called *major* or *président*, who assumes the organizational responsibilities for the group. This means getting new costumes for the participants when required, refurbishing the old costumes and musical instruments, and recruiting special talent—perhaps a new "king." Where the same group continues from year to year, the mait' Rara actually serves as a sort of executive secretary. In some instances, however, the initiative for forming a group is undertaken by the mait' Rara himself. He chooses the costumes and *décor* of the group; he recruits the musicians and the young women and girls who form the singing and dancing chorus; and he chooses the roi Lwalwali, who will be the group's main feature. He may decide upon the theme around which the group will be built, and may even decide upon the repertoire of songs it will sing. The mait' Rara has specific responsibilities and is obligated to provide his band with refreshments and food. 541 575 624

Expenses of the group are defrayed by collections made in the course of its "exercises." The band will stop before a crowd of spectators, or before a house, and will perform until it receives a gift known as *payé sorti* (pay to go) money. After receiving its payé sorti, the group performs an encore and then moves on. This custom of performing for gifts appears to have been known in colonial days. Eugène Aubin notes that the slaves on the plantations celebrated on New Year's Day with drums and dances.[1] At midnight they appeared before the foreman or owner of the plantation. One of the slaves would recite a speech to him, or perhaps the group would sing a song praising the master's virtues. Then, over the heads of the celebrants, a slave would extend a long bamboo pole with a beribboned basket fastened to the end. The plantation master would place his gift in the basket, after which the group would leave the house. 541 575 195

Some few groups do not have a "king" but are built around musical instruments or other features. However, the "king" is regarded as an old tradition. Aubin reported that the roi Lwalwali dates from the time of the Emperor Soulouque in the nineteenth century. Soulouque is said to have named the first roi Lwalwali in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. But there are reasons to suspect that these dancing virtuosi, by whatever name they were called, existed long before Soulouque entered the picture. 575 175 535

The roi Lwalwali is a dancer of very special talents, and it is said that, though his title is not hereditary, his dances have been handed down within the family from rois of other years. Much care is given to the costume he wears. It is sometimes made of expensive satin or velvet 575 535 [292]

[1 [Aubin, En Haiti, p. 42. Cf. p. 351, Category 18b.—Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

and covered with tiny mirrors or bits of colored glass. The towering headdress of antlers or papier-mâché sculpture unavoidably recalls similar headdresses in West Africa. Each roi has his own style of dance, which is usually accompanied by drums. It may be a belly dance, a dance of delicate balance, or one of complicated footwork and semiacrobatics such as the imitation of a pair of scissors at work. Throughout the dancing the headdress remains majestically erect.

In addition to the roi Lwalwali and the mâit' Rara (who is constantly in the midst of things, blowing his whistle), there are other traditional Rara personalities: the *major jone*, who juggles with a metal baton (sometimes two or three of these jugglers work together), and the *jongleur*, a juggler or strong man who performs such feats as dancing while holding a fully set table off the ground with his teeth.

On the southwest peninsula, in the region around Jérémie, there is a splurge of wrestling exhibitions during Rara days. Known as *pingé*, this festival wrestling is done with a background of excited drumming and has a striking resemblance to wrestling traditions in West Africa. Local "champions" will invade a neighboring community, sometimes traveling considerable distances to make a challenge. As in West Africa, some of these wrestlers take their own musicians with them. The musicians often are provided by the village in which the events take place. If a challenge is accepted, the spectators form a large circle, with the wrestlers in the center and the musicians to one side. There may be drums and bamboo flutes, occasionally supplemented by large earthern jars and lengths of bamboo beaten with sticks. The wrestlers are dressed only in shorts. When a man is thrown, the event is over, and another pair of wrestlers takes over. Sometimes a "champion" will take on a series of opponents until he is tired. Afterward he may move on to another community to find new competition, perhaps accompanied by a large group of friends and supporters from his own village. When the Rara season comes to an end, pingé is over for the year. It is one of the few athletic sport activities of the Haitian peasant.

And now and then during Rara a *debois* is seen. The *debois* is a carved wooden marionette with a short handle below. Its arms and legs are moved by pulling a string. It is usually painted, and sometimes it is dressed. One debois observed was provided with a loose dresslike costume; when the string was pulled, a large phallus hinged into view in an erect position. This marionette was an object of endless fun-making among spectators.[8]

Another type of marionette is the "Two Kings," made of papier-mâché and operated with strings. The "Two Kings," sitting in a papier-

[8] [Footnote appears in Category 16, p 351. --Ana 1957]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 HaRi SV3

mâché carriage or on papier-mâché horses, make their appearance during Rara as well as on the Day of the Kings (*Les Rois*). 541 536

Among the traditional paraphernalia carried by Rara groups are cocomacaque sticks, cha-cha rattles, metal rattles called *tchancy*, a set of rattles on a tall thin pole (called *joucoujou*), candelabra bearing candles or oil lamps (*lampions*), banners and flags, and such miscellaneous musical instruments as the *grage* scraper, bamboo scraping devices, the *hatse* finger drum, *assots* (beating boards), and various kinds of secular drums. 541 575 534

The general tone of Rara is nonreligious. The dancing is free from the decorous restraints which characterize most religious ritual, and some early observers of the festival were shocked by what they saw. Some of them went so far as to attribute Haiti's dense population to the "licentious activities" and reckless abandon of the spring carnival. The Catholic Church and some political administrators have sporadically sought to suppress Rara, along with Vodoun ritual. And even today in Port-au-Prince the foreign visitor often is urged to watch the elite Mardi Gras with its floats and mulatto queens as a substitute. 541 [535] [795] [656]

Although Rara has an over-all tone of secular abandon, it has links with both Catholic and Vodoun ritual. Good Friday is given over in good measure to miming the story of Jesus and Judas. A perambulating band may carry an effigy of Judas hanging from a pole. Another will burn the Judas effigy, or drag it in the dust as the crowd moves along the road. In another group a man playing the part of Judas may crawl on his hands and knees along the trail, while Jesus' avengers pursue him with long, cracking whips. 541 179 536

Tying in with Vodoun ritual, virtually all Rara drums and other paraphernalia are "dedicated" or "rededicated" before Lent in special houngfor services. And on the last day of Rara, usually late in the night, prayers are said, the loa are called upon, and some of the festive paraphernalia is thrown into a fire to be consumed. 541 796 534 [178]

[P.110]

9. Land and Work

There is a common Haitian saying which goes: "Ptit mangé, travaille youn pik" (A little food, but tremendous work). This is the way the Haitian peasant sees it. There is endless labor in the fields or in the perpetually eroding mountain gardens, on landholdings that are too small to give any promise of a better life. The rains that give life to the crops take away, year by year, the nourishment of the soil. Where forests or lush groves once grew on the hillsides, there are now deep, dry gullies. Where coffee plants, cotton, and yams once grew abundantly, there are now fields of stones. This is the heritage of the peasant farmer of today. Small holdings on the hillsides and in the valleys have become smaller through the years as the population has swelled and the land been subdivided. Three and a half million people must take their sustenance from that land. More than three hundred persons must share each square mile of soil. But most of Haiti is mountainous and formidable to agriculture. Two-thirds of the land area is untillable by modern standards. There is less than one acre of useful land per person. The best of the land in the alluvial valleys is held by large corporations producing sugar and sisal. Flat, arid stretches elsewhere are semi-desert.

In the small gardens the peasants grow maize, *ti mis* (millet), coffee, bananas and plantains, cotton, beans of various kinds, yams, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, and manioc. In the delta areas they grow rice, and along the long coastline thousands of fishermen sail out in crude but sturdy boats to bring back fish from the sea. Citrus trees, mango trees, and avocado trees grow wild; but they are fewer than in the old days. The Haitian works the soil and manages to subsist, but nature and history have not been kind to him.

Even less kind have been some of the chroniclers of the past, who have sought to disparage the Haitian as a lazy and careless creature who would

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1950) 1969 BV3 (1962) BV3

rather starve than work. An Englishman, James Franklin, wrote in 1828, for example:

> Experiments may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coercion and want will impel the Haytian to labour; and I have my doubts as to the practicability of enforcing labour in Hayti until the people have been better instructed, and their characters become changed.

As Franklin summarized it: "Nature is too generous to the Haytian; he never wants, and so never works for hire, as do free labourers in other countries."

The early nineteenth century saw a flood of such bitter comments about the remains of the once rich and flourishing French colony of St. Domingue. The vast productivity of Haiti under French rule had made that colony one of the richest in the New World. The country was dotted with sugar mills, brick-covered wells, and warehouses; and carefully built brick aqueducts, irrigation canals, locks, and dams assured water for the plantations. In 1790, under the slave system, Haiti had exported 163,000,000 pounds of sugar. In 1826, a quarter of a century after the revolution, it was reported to have exported 33,000 pounds.

This falling off in production and exports doubtless had many causes, but one of the most significant was the Haitian's revolt not only against slavery but also against continuing the same kind of work he had performed as a slave. He saw not too much difference between forced, unpaid labor and working for any large landholder at subsistence wages. To the Haitian slave the inspiring battle cry of the French Revolution did not mean that all men would work together on another's man plantation and receive the same wages. It meant that every man would have his own garden to work for himself as he chose; every man would be a full citizen, with land of his own, free to come and go, to plant what he wished, to sell what he could. Despite long years under a colonial slave system, the Haitian still remembered a different way of life in Africa, where mass production for export was not the primary objective of labor.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the population of Haiti was not much more than half a million—less than one sixth of what it is today. There was plenty of land, and much of it had not yet been wasted by constant tilling and erosion. When the French were driven out, the Haitian peasant re-created an economic world of his own liking. The plantation system which had poured out sugar and coffee and indigo for Europe faded away, and in its place there sprang up an agrarian system which has continued until the present day. In the early

[Franklin, The Present State of Hayti, p. 362. Cf. p. 361, Category 116. -- Analyst]

S: Contender 8-5 (1957-1958) 1960 SV3 Hait SV3

In the early years of independence, Emperor Henry Christophe in the north and President Pétion in the south tried to stem the disintegration of the magnificent plantations. Christophe's measures in the region he controlled were sometimes stern, according to legend; but the plantation system and the plantations themselves gradually fell into decay, along with the aqueducts, the warehouses, and the sugar mills. For the Haitian had returned to a tradition of landholding antedating his enslavement.

Europe's loss of the Pearl of the Antilles aroused bitter words from Frenchmen and Englishmen for the better part of the century. They accused the Negro of laziness and lack of ability, repeating endlessly that only as a colony could Haiti ever be of any use to anybody. The London *Times* deplored the Haitian's unwillingness to work for wages, speculating that he had "no desire for property strong enough to induce him to labor with sustained power." In the United States, antiabolitionist enthusiasts cited the Haitian situation as an example of what would happen to the American economy if the slaves were freed.

The Haitian's reluctance to work for wages did not reflect an aversion to owning property, however, as the London *Times* supposed. On the contrary, it was engendered by his desire for property. The land was there and waiting, only needing a house to be built upon it, and to be cleared and tilled. The typical Haitian wanted not dubious, seasonal wage work but a farm of his own. The more ambitious peasant aspired to two farms, or even three, with a homestead and a family on each.

If a man worked hard and made a success of one plot, he could put away money and eventually buy a second. The additional land might be separated by some miles from the original farm. On the new ground the man would build another house and take another wife to take care of it in his absence. Known as *plaçage*, this arrangement had complete community sanction. A man whose energies and good fortune made an extra household possible was expected to make such an arrangement. It was not a new institution bred in the chaos following the Revolution, nor was it, as some missionaries held, an evidence of moral deterioration of the Haitian character. It was simply a persisting concept of West African life.[8] The woman who occupied the second or third household was not a concubine. Like the first wife, she had enhanced prestige in her community. She had authority and responsibility. Her work, her position, and her rewards were not essentially different from those of the first wife.[9] It is true that her marriage was not consecrated by a church or civil ceremony, but, ordinarily, neither was that of the first wife. Contrary to European misconceptions, such unions were true marriages in the sense that they had full sanction of the community.

8, 9 [Footnotes appear in Category 116, pp 35-36 -- Analyst]

2: Coutlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P 112-A]

133
137

c. *The Marbial River, a branch of the Grandine, in southern Haiti. Twenty-eight thousand people, many of them women or charcoaypers, depend upon agriculture in the Marbial Valley for their livelihood.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-AA]

133
764

[782] 37. *A small graveyard in the mountains at Furcy. The little alcoves in the tombs are for food offerings on special anniversaries.*

312

[776] 38. *Stone and brick covering of spring on Morne l'Hôpital believed to have been constructed in colonial times. Many persons have testified that here the voices of the loa have been heard bubbling up with the water.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P 112-B]

133
139

[139] 2. *Haiti's "Pine Forest," once a dense woodland, is an expanse of mountain terrain denuded of most of its trees and scarred by gullies. The timber was cut primarily for fuel for limekilns.*

Z: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-BB]

585
291

39. *A wedding scene near Plaisance.*

142
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535

40. *Saturday night bamboche.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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482

[491
B89]

3. Country people carrying produce to market. The highways of Haiti's economic life are the mountain trails and the unpaved roads over which the produce of countless small gardens is carried in bundles and baskets.

[P 112-C]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-CC]

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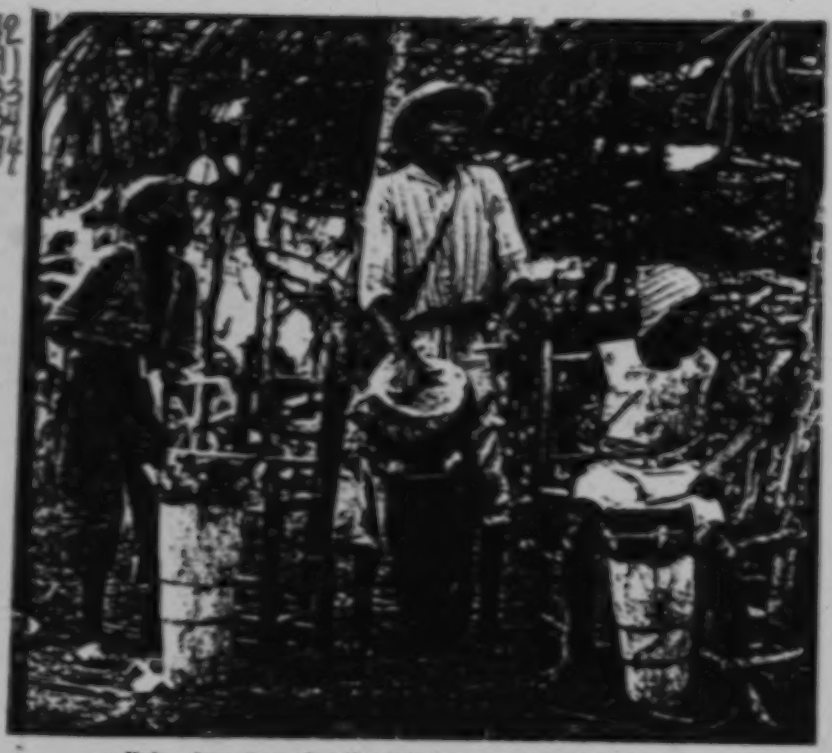

41. Voodoo drummers, northern Haiti. The drums are characteristic of that region. The boy at left, although only twelve or thirteen years old, is an accomplished drummer.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P-112-D]

+ A peasant of the Mirebalais Haiti region, southern Haiti

142
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516

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-DD]

326
998
[B76]

42. *Forged iron "saber" of the loa Damballa, from a houmfor near Léogane. Height, 31 inches.*

43. *Forged iron standard for holding ritual objects, from a houmfor in the region of Léogane. Height, 18 inches.*

[532
B76]

[534]

44. *Ancient iron figure of the loa Quanqon Fer, from a houmfor near Léogane. Height, 12 inches.*

45. *Old iron ritual bell, or ogan, from a houmfor in southern Haiti. Height, 11 inches.*

In Courlander B-5 (1937-1938) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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219

[P.112-E]

5 and 6. Cane workers near Croix-des-Bouquets. Only on the large company plantations are cane and cane mill.

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2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-EE]

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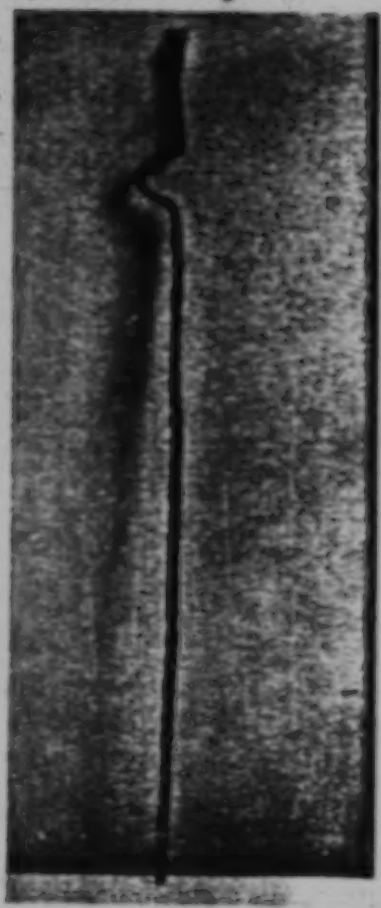

46. Forged iron rod in the stylized form of a snake, representing the loa Damballa, from southern Haiti. Height, 34 inches.

532
908
326

47. Iron sculpture on a Nago altar of a houmfor near Gonaives, representing a bird sitting on a tree.

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48. A sculptured iron standard in a houmfor in the Cul-de-Sac Plain.

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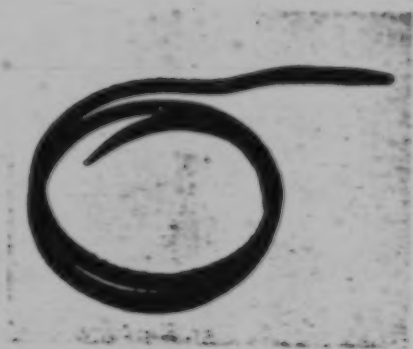

49. Forged snake, representing Damballa, from southern Haiti. Length in coiled form, 9 inches.

J: Coverlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P112-F]

241
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476
412

7. A small coverlider, southern Haiti.

133
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534

8. Coverlider, southern Haiti. Vaccine players at the right; flag of the rooster at the left.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112 - FF]
326
796
978

50. *Representation of the loa La Sirène, made by a contemporary blacksmith.*

51. *Representation of the loa St. Jacques by the same blacksmith.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-G]

142
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476

9. *Calling the coumbite: signaling on a conch-shell trumpet.*

243
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476
516

10. *A women's coumbite weeding a cornfield near the town of Plaisance.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-66]
532
PR

52 and 53. Wall paintings representing loa, in a small houfor on Morne l'Hôpital.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-H]

11 and 12. *Market day. On each woman's head is the agricultural produce she will sell in the village or city market. When she returns she will carry a lighter load of things she has purchased, and tied in her handkerchief will be a few small coins.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-HH]

296
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532

54. Inside surface of a calabash bowl used in rituals of the houngfor, painted in black and white. The figure represents the graveyard loa, Baron Samedi, with a pick, shovel, and tombstone. Length, 15 inches.

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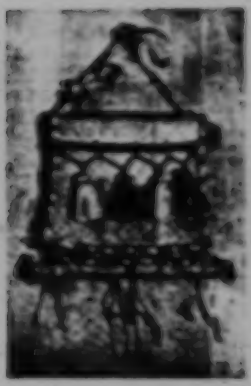

55. An alper cousin, the traditional peasant knapsack.

524

56. Wari board cut from a mahogany log. Length, 29 inches.

[P 112-2]

133
142
205
217
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472
487

[314]

13. Donkey with a load of charcoal. Where the terrain is not too rugged, donkeys or small horses do some of the carrying. The making of charcoal has helped to denude the mountains of their forests.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-II]

322
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776
191

57. *Old wood carving of an unidentified deity, from a houefor near Lèogane. It is startlingly similar to the African carving shown in no. 58.*

58. *A wood carving from the Bambala tribe, western Belgian Congo. (Collection of Segy Gallery.)*

322
532
776

59. *Carvings of more recent date, representing the loa of twins, from a houefor in southern Haiti. Height, 12 and 14 inches.*

2: Cowichandar B-5 (1927-1955) 1960 SV3 Bath SV3
[P 112-J]

252
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231
412

15. Fishermen gaff into mud. The canoe and paddle are standard Quoiam forms.

142
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801

14. Fishermen of Villa de Mandar, on the Bay of Cumaná.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-JJ]

322
532
[198]
[196]
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60. *A carved cane head from the southwestern mountains.*

61. *Detail of a wood carving made about 1930 in the region of Port-au-Prince, representing the loa Loko. Work of this kind in mahogany has in the past thirty years deteriorated into neo-"African" carvings made for the tourist trade.*

322
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415
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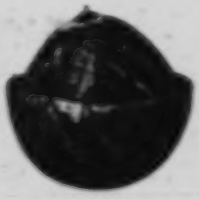

62. *A coyembouque. Cut from a single calabash, the two parts fit together tightly to form a single container. Some coyembouques are a foot or more tall. Height, 8 inches.*

63. *Terra-cotta figurines from the Cap Haïtien region.*

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532
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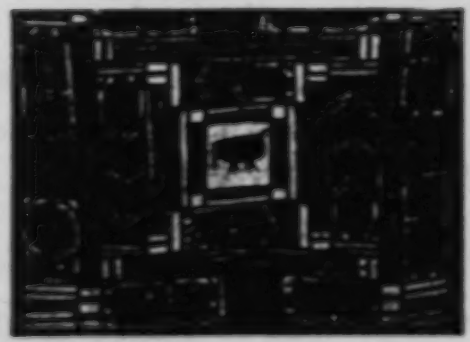

64. *Detail of a dye-painted burlap cloth. Animal and flower figures and geometric designs are used interchangeably.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-K]

142
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412
516

16. *Man with a machete making a wari board. The machete is used for cutting trees, trimming brush, weeding gardens, fashioning wooden objects such as drums and mortars, and many other purposes.*

243
252
291
415

17. *Winnowing grain with a woven tray.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-KK]
532

65 and 66. *Modern "primitive" paintings by Bourmond Byron. (Collection of Roger Coster.)*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3 [P-112-L]

142
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302
891

18. Young Haitians in school. After a century and a half of independence, education remains one of Haiti's most acute problems. Only a small percentage of the country's children are in schools.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-LL]

532

67. A contemporary "primitive" by M. Stephane.

532
541

68. A painting by G. Abélard showing a Rara group led by a juggler holding a table in his teeth. (Collection of Marshall Stearns.)

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[R 112-M]

346
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19. Vodoun altar of the hounfor "Caille Aguwé" in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. On the wall behind the altar are names of favored loa. On the altar are jars containing loa and souls of dead persons. Painted on its front wall, against which swords and flags are leaning, is the ship of Loa Aguwé.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 112 - MM]

541
575
591
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535

69. *Rara dancing near Gonaives. Vaccine players are at the left.*

70. *A Rara group near Port-au-Prince. At the left are the baka drum and a tymbale. One of the four vaccines, center, is made of metal. Behind the musicians are the socialé's flag and a lampion.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 112 - N]

346
353
532
778

20. *A Vodoun altar in northern Haiti, scarcely distinguishable from a Catholic shrine. Houmfors range from the simple to the complex, from the poor to the rich, from the primitive to the sophisticated, and from the bizarre to the artistic.*

[794]
[776]

21. *Altar in the houmfor "Société de la Belle Jeune Fleur" in Port-au-Prince dedicated to the loa Pinga Maza. The cross surmounted by the skull represents the deity. Behind the table, leaning against the cross, is the pestle with which this loa "grinds" his enemies. On the other table are razor blades for Pinga Maza to eat.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-NN]
541
575
212

71. Rara at Léogane. Behind the dancing majoret juncs a member of the group holds their banner, which depicts a bird catching a lizard. The costumes are traditional and are believed to date from colonial days.

[P-112-0]

978

22. *An assortment of stones (Indian artifacts) from the altar of a houngfor in the mountains above Jacmel. All are regarded as thunder stones thrown to earth by the loa Sobo and Kébiosu, or as stones containing the essence of other deities.*

793
787
778
142
302
416

23. *A houngan of southern Haiti divining with the aid of his asson, bell, and (right) gembo.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-00]

541
292

72. *A roi Lavalwadi in the Cul-de-Sac Plain.*

541
575
595
292

73. *Rara stick dancers in Port-au-Prince.*

142
291
993

24. *A houngan of a small cult center in northern Haiti.*

25. *A petit savane. This lay cleric reads the scriptures at appropriate times in the Vodoun rituals.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-PP]
541
535
292

74. *Chalusha dancers in Port-au-Prince.*

75. *Maypole dancers. Musicians are sitting next to the pole.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1939) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P.112-Q]

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794
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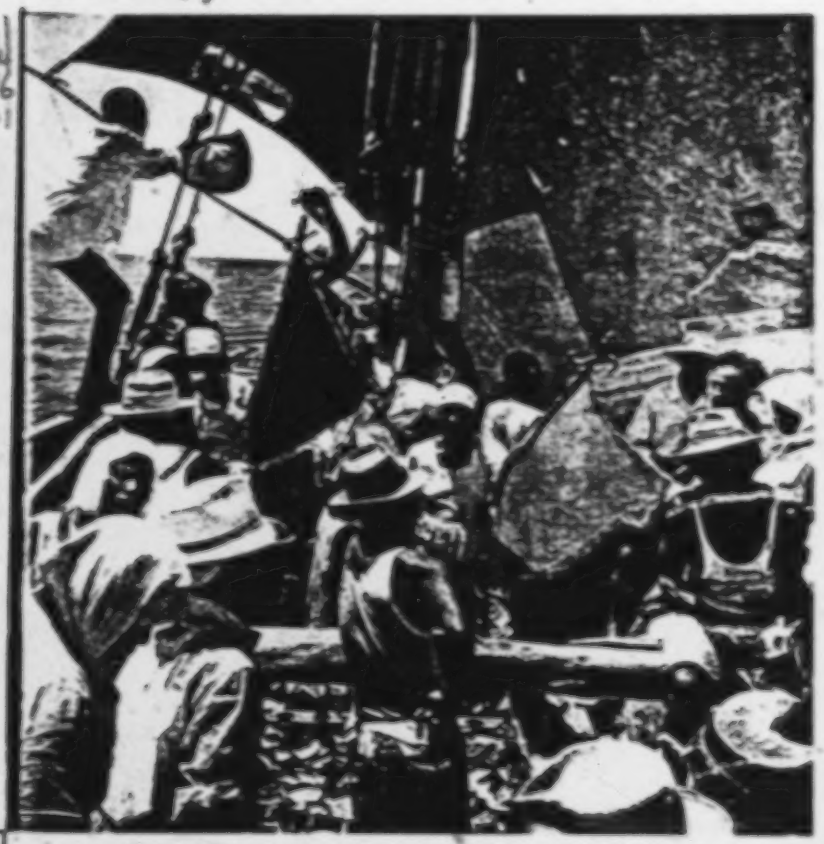
501



[796]
[534]

26. Service for the lion d'Agwé in a boat at sea. In the center, two houngs hold the vessel's flags. Between them and the houngan is the bedecked barque d'Agwé, a replicky miniature vessel which will be set adrift. An organ and a drum are at the lower right.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P-112-QQ]
541
575
992

[184] [171] 76. *A Rara group near Plaisance. The costumes differ from those in the south. Note the Madras waistcloths, reminiscent of West African dress.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-R]

77. Saluting the loa. In the center, with sword, is the houngan, flanked by two houmsi carrying sequin-studded flags. In the background, left, is the houngan with his assen.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-RR]

857
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1+2
291

77. Playing Thiano.

142
291
524
857

78. Playing Rabouat Yayo.

2:Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[? 112-5]

16. A yam harvest festival. The men are carrying the yams onto the portico of the houseface to be cut up and shared with the family ancestors and the lwa.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-SS]

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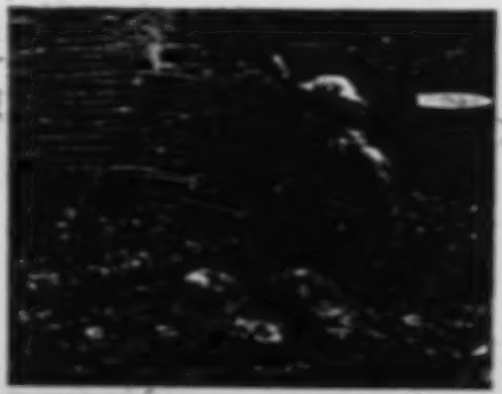


79 and 80. *Playing the tambour maringuoin, or vouquoin drum. Beneath the curch bow is a portable variant. The player plucks the string with one hand and with the other varies the pitch by pressure on the end of the bow.*

534
191

81. *A miniature brass casting, an Ashanti gold weight, in the form of a spring snare used for catching small game. The device can be recognized as an antecedent of the Haitian portable vouquoin drum.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-T]

291
347
353
792

29. *The bain de Noël, or Christmas bath. The men are pulverizing leaves in the mortar, to the accompaniment of singing by the women and drumming. Later, a "tisane" will be made of the powdered leaves, and all will share it.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P-112-TT]

142
291
302
516
634

82. *Playing the sikomba, or bamboo stampers.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

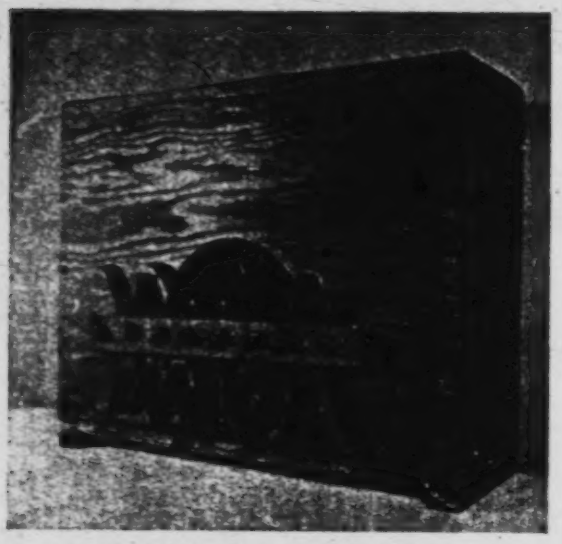
[P. 112-U]

285
787
796
794

30. A Christmas service near Léogane: ritual "bathing" in fire. The two young women are hounsi possessed by a loa of the Gédé family, probably Jean Zombie. Their nostrils are stuffed with cotton and their jaws are bound in the manner of corpses, in honor of the deity, who is a "dead" loa. In a state of possession they seem to be impervious to the intense heat.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-UU]

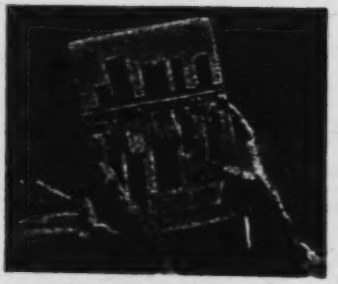
534



83. *Haitian marimbula with keys made of steel springs. Height of box, approximately 18 inches, width 24 inches. The player sits on the box and plays the keys with his finger tips. Compare with nos. 84 and 85.*

534
171

84. *A simple African sansa, or likembe, played with the thumbs. This one is from the Topoke people in the Congo.*



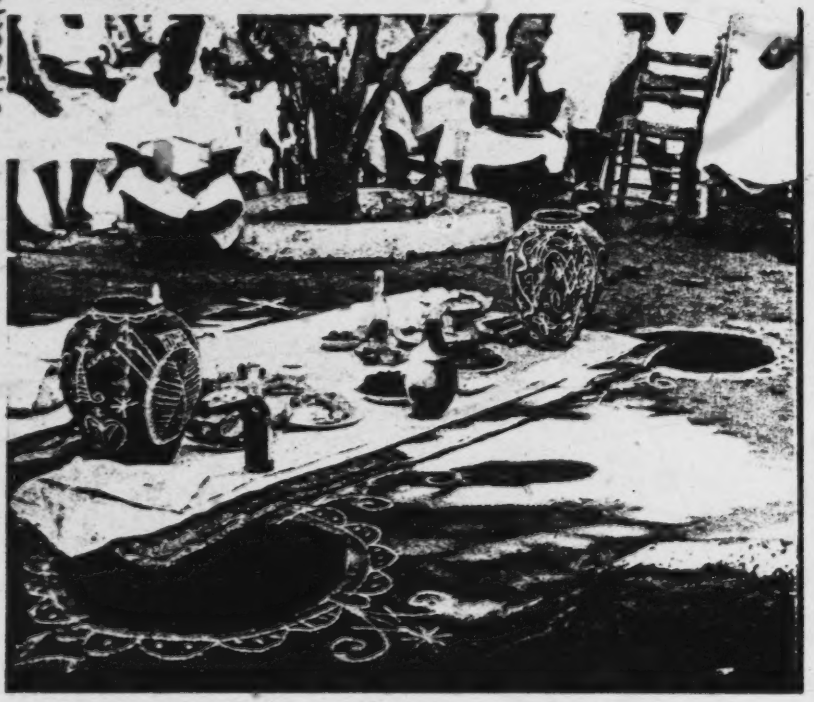
85. *A marimbula from Cuba, still small enough to play with the thumbs in the manner of its African prototype. The heavy steel springs are like those on the Haitian instrument.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 112-V]

291
516
776
782
798
532
415

31. *An Ibo service in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. Laid out on the mat is a feast for the Ibo loa. The houngan ritually feeds the deities by placing food in the holes at each end of the mat. Designs on the pots are the symbolic patterns found generally in vèvès. The tree in the background, surrounded by a low curbing, is sacred to the loa.*



[P. 112-VV]

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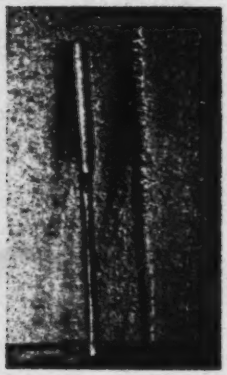


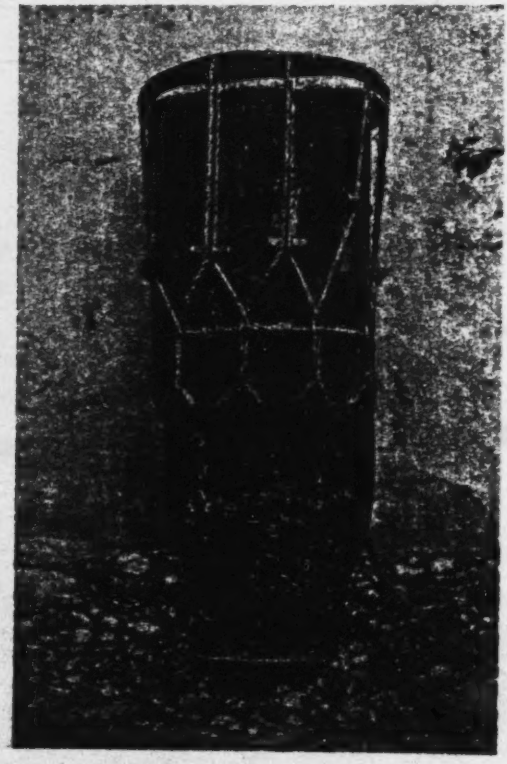
86. *The dentlé, or notched scraping stick.*

87. *Sacred calabash rattle from northern Haiti.*

88. *The tchancy, a metal rattle used chiefly for secular music.*

[778]

89. *A houngan's asson, showing network of beads and snake bones.*



90. *A ka drum, showing method of lacing and the sliding rope tighteners.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-W]

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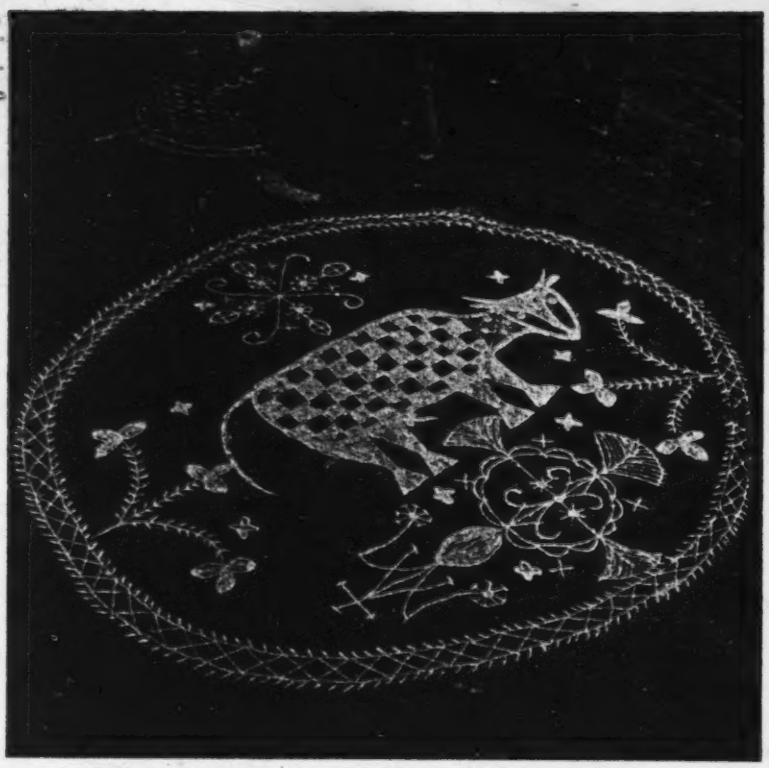

32. *Maize-flour drawing, or vèvè, for the loa Simbi.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-X]

534
532
778

33. *An ancient assotor drum, believed to have been made early in the nineteenth century. Seen faintly on the painted surface are a guinea hen and a palm tree.*

34. *An assotor drum in full regalia for a service in the Cul-de-Sac Plain.*

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2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-Y]

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35. *A hounsi in the first stage of possession by a loa.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-Z]
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36. *Possessed by the loa Gèdé Nimbo, two women dance the deity's favorite step, the Banda.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Like their ancestors in preslavery days, the Haitians had a clear-cut and equitable division of labor between the sexes which was particularly suited to the agrarian life. The pattern of work sharing seems to have been misunderstood by nineteenth-century chroniclers, many of whom complained that the Haitian male napped in the shade while the women performed all the labor. It is quite true that the Haitian peasant woman is a relentless toiler. It may even be, as Sir Harry Johnston declared early in the twentieth century, that "the women are the best part of the Haitian nation." This Englishman wrote glowingly of the Haitian woman's fortitude and energy: 462 [114]

> In the face of all discouragements, with which a bad government clouds their existence the women of Haiti . . . continue to toil, to raise poultry and cattle, till the fields, see to their gardens, make pottery and mats. They cannot stop to reason, but must go on working from three years old to the end of their lives. Such industry (which is almost equally supplemented by that of the peasant husbands) protected should make Haiti one of the richest countries in the world for its size and population.[4]

But as Johnston surmised, the Haitian man, too, treads an unstopping wheel. Although it is the women who are seen crowding the trails and roads on market days, behind the produce they vend is the work of the men. For it is primarily the men who break the ground and plant, cultivate, and harvest the crops. It is the men who cut timber and build the houses, who dig and process lime for plastering the walls, and who thatch the roofs. And the houses do not last forever but must be rebuilt time and again. It is the men who cut and transport wood for fuel, dig red clay from the clay beds for pottery, make the mortars in which the grain is pulverized, build terraces for the gardens, make charcoal, go to sea for fish, and work at the village forge. On the plantations they cut the cane and the sisal. In the city they carry the heavy coffee and sugar bags, load the ships, make bricks, and build roads.

The women, for their part, run the household, care for the children, carry water from the springs, launder at the river's edge, cook, sew, play a supporting role in the field work, carry the crops to market, sell them, and bring back things which the garden does not produce. The woman may be the business manager of the household, and sometimes from the proceeds of special projects she may be able to put aside small savings of her own.

Children slip into their work roles at an early age. Boys and girls as young as three or four may be seen carrying small tins of water on their heads, on their way from the springs, usually in groups with older girls or women. Young girls assume woman's work as soon as they can 857 868

[4] [Johnston, The Negro in The New World. Cf P. 352, Category 116. -- Analyst]

857 868 handle it; lighter work first, heavier work later. Small boys tend cattle and help the men in the fields.

178 511 The Haitian *habitant* (the peasant) is poorer and hungrier today than he was fifty years ago, or even twenty years ago. In 1955 I visited a number of peasant families I had known since 1932, and with hardly an exception I found them worse off than they had been before. Their tiny landholdings had shrunk. Some land that had been lush had dried [134] up and eroded. Little groves of trees had disappeared. Clothes had become shabby, and many of the men could no longer afford to wear the inexpensive traditional blue denim costume that was once so common. In the cities there is evidence that some of the elite have improved their life. But in a large part of the countryside the peasants are finding that the old system that served them for a hundred and fifty years can no longer feed them adequately.

423 178 One of the adverse forces is the shrinking of landholdings. Once a peasant family may have owned and worked fifty or seventy acres of ground. But it is traditional that on a man's death his land is divided [428] among the heirs. If a man with fifty acres of land has two sons, each son inherits approximately twenty-five acres. On their deaths, the land 423 is again subdivided. But even this is not the whole story. A UNESCO 427 survey of the Marbial Valley region in south Haiti in 1948–1949 reported:

> At the turn of the century there were numerous peasant families who lived in relatively easy circumstances, and who possessed as much as thirty to forty *carreaux* * [425] of land planted with coffee and subsistence crops. The heirs of these lands, when they found themselves in straitened circumstances, would sell some parcels of it in the hope of being able to increase their holdings again later on. In the worst cases they became the tenants of absentee landlords who lived in the cities. Nowadays, not only is the size of holdings very small, sometimes only one-eighth of a *carreau*, but they are also scattered, and most peasants are obliged to go from one place to another to cultivate their various owned, rented, or share-cropped fields.[5]

671 595 Haitian law—the civil code—does not recognize the rights of illegitimate children born after a legal marriage. But Haitian custom does. 423 As a result, a Haitian who has a *placée* wife in addition to his "legal" 848 wife may circumvent the law by deeding to her a portion of his gardens during his lifetime, thereby diminishing his holdings.

423 691 Furthermore, many landholdings are not clearly defined. There are few accurate surveys, and often the boundaries are vague. Titles to many of the holdings cannot be clearly established, and as a result there are constant lawsuits. To pay the expenses of defending his interests in court, a Haitian may have to sell a strip of his land.

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* A *carreau* is about three and a third acres.

5 [UNESCO, The Haiti Pilot Project, p. 18. Cf. P352, category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

For many Haitians, the struggle to obtain a piece of ground and to hold onto it is the very heart of the struggle for existence. On Morne l'Hôpital in 1932 I knew a man who owned ten acres of gardens. He had it planted in bananas and plantains, yams, and cotton. He had two cows and a calf and a grove of mango trees and coconut palms. His house was clean, tidy, and by Haitian standards well furnished. Eighteen years later he had less than an acre of land, no trees, no cotton, and no cattle. His family had become impoverished. He had three grown children and virtually no land to leave to them except that on which the house stood. His troubles began with a lawsuit over his land title. He sold his cattle to raise money to pay his court expenses. He lost half of his land as a result of the lawsuit, most of it the part with the good trees. Later, he sold more land to raise "eating money," and then rented it from the new owner. He could not grow enough cash crops to pay the rent and was finally evicted. Today he has not enough ground left on which to grow food for himself and his wife the year round. 423 691 511

The diminution of adequate landholdings has resulted in the disappearances of many of the *lacours* (hamlets) that were a familiar sight a few decades ago. Young people traditionally built their houses near the family homesteads until there were five, six, or a dozen houses in a group. There was a natural family community which shared a common social life and the work of the fields. But as the population increased and the landholdings shrank, young people and old began to move away in search of new land, or work in the cities. Often where the lacour remains it is only as a settlement of landless house renters who work where they may for wages. 178 423 361 166 [596] [621]

Economic refugees from rural areas seek wage work in the cities, returning to their original homes only on special festive days for family reunions. The men find employment as gardeners, servants, construction laborers, and stevedores. Some find work on the sugar and sisal plantations, others in craft industries making straw hats, baskets, shoes, chairs, and mahogany ware for export. The struggle in the big city of Port-au-Prince is for many of them worse than the poverty they left behind. There are the inevitable slums and the constant threat of hunger. It is in the big city that one hears most often the words *moin grand gout* (I am hungry), and least often the words *Bondieu bon* (God is good). 166 464

The land hunger increases, and the overflow of the mountain settlements continues to move cityward. In former years there was a trend toward emigration across the eastern border into the Dominican Republic, which has a population density roughly one third or one fourth that of Haiti. This trend was checked, temporarily at least, in 1937 by 167 195 [648]

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167 175 [648] a massacre in the western part of the Dominican Republic which took the lives of an estimated five thousand to fifteen thousand Haitians. The survivors fled homeward, and many were settled in frontier areas by the government. Even so, today there are believed to be some sixty or seventy thousand Haitians still living east of the border. Large numbers of Haitians, particularly men, migrated to Cuba in the years following World War I, in search of better wages in the cane fields. By 1931 there were more than eighty thousand Haitians in that country.[5] But resentment by local Cuban labor and the onset of the depression combined to force the repatriation of great numbers of them. Thirty thousand Haitians came home from Cuba in the years 1936 and 1937 alone.

16 [842] Solution of Haiti's problem of overpopulation does not seem imminent. The obvious answers would seem to be birth control, emigration, wiser use of natural resources, and industrialization. Since the country is predominantly Catholic, and since much social value is placed on children, birth control seems unlikely. And as health facilities become more widespread and infant mortality drops, the pressure will become more acute. Emigration seems to offer no hope, since neighboring islands and countries [311] on the mainland give no encouragement. The Haitian may yet learn to conserve his land and to get more out of it, to stock his lakes with fish, and to [47] bring more fish in from the sea. But this will not suffice. Nothing is left but industrialization, and that seems to be a thing of the far-distant future.

181 167 461 Nevertheless, the character of Haitian life remains essentially agrarian. The displaced peasant, whether he is now a hotel "houseboy," a taxi driver, or a cane cutter, dreams of returning to the land some day and growing bananas, coffee, and cotton that will make him independent. In far-off places such as Havana and New York, Haitians work and save money with the expectation that one day they will come home, buy fifteen or twenty acres of ground, build a new house, and live out their lives as decently prosperous *habitants*. The traditions of the agricultural [128] society, along with Vodoun, continue to play a significant role in the life of the people.

496 241 One such tradition is the institution of the *coumbite*, a loosely knit coöperative work party of neighbors and friends. The word itself probably comes from the Spanish *convide*, or *convite*, meaning "to invite." A member of the group holds a coumbite by notifying his fellow members that on such-and-such a day his fields will require clearing or hoeing. There are several variants of the work gathering. One, called *carré* or *corvée*, meets at irregular intervals and only on special invitation. There are no regular reciprocal obligations in the *corvée;* the workers are

[5] [Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," Journal of Negro History, October, 1940, P. 515. Cf. P. 352, Category 116. --Analyst)

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compensated by a "feast" and party given at the end of the day by the host. More usual than the *corvée* is the regular sharing of work on one another's fields—the *ronde*, or "taking turns." 476 241

An early morning work gathering is known as a *dourant jou'*. It meets early in the day, sometimes before dawn, continues until ten or eleven in the morning, when the sun becomes hot, and then disperses. An afternoon coumbite is called a *diné-machete* (dinner machete) and lasts from about two in the afternoon until early evening. When the work is finished, the men go to the house of the host, where they have dinner, much in the manner of the American threshing party. An all-day affair is called a grand coumbite.

Essential to all coumbites are musicians and singing leaders. The instruments used are various, according to local custom. In the south they are usually drums, *tymbales*, and bamboo trumpets. In some areas of the north, the *lambi*, or conch-shell trumpet, is favored. 476 241 533 [534]

According to the custom in the south, on the day of the coumbite the drummers arise in the false dawn before sunrise and begin a roundabout march to the home of the host. They pass before the huts of all the neighbors who are going to join the party, playing a *rappel* on the drums. By one's and two's the workers come down the trails to join the procession, bringing hoes, machetes, or sickles as required. As the marching group grows larger, there is talking, laughter, and perhaps singing. Most of the men who join the procession are from close by. Others who may have to travel from a distance, perhaps from the next valley, go directly to the house of the host. When the workers arrive there, the women of the house serve coffee. This is the usual breakfast of the Haitian peasant. [272] [264]

Then the drummers play another *rappel*, and the men go down to the field that is to be tilled. There may be ten, twenty, or fifty of them. Some coumbites are even larger. If the group is a small one, the men line up together. The singing leader, called a *samba* or *simidor*, begins a song, the drummers play, the hoes begin to rise and fall in unison, and the workers join in the singing. If the group is large it will divide into two or three squads, each trying to outdo the other. The men stand shoulder to shoulder, moving the hoes up and down together, syncopating their movements by pauses as they sing their responsive parts. Sometimes tafia or rum is portioned out. The squads move forward slowly, inching their way across the field. The samba beats on his hoe blade with a stone to keep time for his song. His job is to "encourage" the men. He may sing old familiar songs or compose new ones, songs with humor and bite in them, ribald songs, and songs of ridicule. They may criticize 476 241 533 461

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476 241 533 461 men who have failed to join the coumbite, or praise the host, or single out various individuals for comment. The songs of the coumbite are a newspaper of the affairs of the people. The news is personalized, editorialized, and replete with comic vignettes.[A]

476 241 461 574 At noon the drummers signal a halt, and the workers shoulder their hoes, wipe off their machetes, and adjourn to the house for food. If it is a grand coumbite, the men rest for several hours, talking, catching up on sleep, or playing cards or *mayamba*. About three o'clock they go back to the fields to work until evening. Then comes the feast, under the canopy adjoining the house. The host and his wife have killed and cooked one or more goats, depending on the size of the group. The men are served meat, rice, beans, and whatever else has been prepared. [273] Afterward, women join the party, and there is more tafia or rum. Some of the men then drift homeward, but most stay on for dancing. Zesse, Congo, or Juba drums are brought out, and the festivities begin. If another coumbite is not scheduled for the next day, the music and dancing may last well into the night.

476 562 Women, too, have coumbites to perform various kinds of large tasks, from field work to winnowing and coffee sorting, though in general the women's work groups lack the festive character of the men's gatherings.

476 241 575 There is a more tightly knit form of coumbite, known as a *société*. In southern Haiti there are the société Congo and the société Martinique; in northern Haiti there is the société Ciyé. These sociétés are clubs built around mutual work needs and recreational activities. The société Congo that appears in the town or city streets during Rara days, with bamboo or conch-shell trumpets, drums, flags, and masks, is usually composed of the men who have joined forces to till the fields. In some instances, it may also conform roughly to membership in a particular hounfor, or cult center. Unlike the ordinary coumbite, the société is not a group which meets only at ground-breaking or harvesting time; it is a permanent organization with regular, sometimes day-to-day, obligations. Week after week it moves from one man's land to another, doing the tasks that have to be done. There is no question of "Can you come?" The group goes first to one man's land, then to another's until all the work has been done. If a member of the société falls sick, so that he cannot work his own field, the société takes over his tasks for him.

476 Coumbites are held not only for agricultural work but for house-building, and sometimes for the building of a hounfor.

[171] The Haitian coöperative work group has much in common with European and American husking and barn-building parties; but it has

[A] [For footnote see Category 116, P. 352. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

many non-European characteristics. The manner of work, even down to specific motor activity, has direct and hardly disputable West African connections. Instead of the short-handled West African hoe, the Haitians use a long-handled one, and they work more erect than stooped. But the rhythmic, synchronized use of the hoe, the singing leader and the musicians who stand to one side to "encourage" the workers, the calling of the workers by drum *rappels*, the special consideration for the sick, and the concept of long-term community endeavor are all of West African beginnings. The coumbite is the legitimate descendant of the Dahomean *dokpwe*, the *kurum* of the Mambila (Cameroons), the *ku* of the Kpelle (Liberia), and other West African coöperative systems.

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Although the *dokpwe* of Dahomey is a more formal and intricate institution, permeated with certain abstract and ritual concepts, its social and functional characteristics are not greatly different from those of the Haitian coumbite, in which coöperation is marked. Herskovits notes that working with the Dahomean *dokpwe*

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> represents recreation rather than labor to the individual member. There is song and dance to drumming and the sound of gongs, on the way and after arrival, and there is feasting and an exhibition of skill. It is an impressive sight to see from forty to a hundred men kneading earth for walls, or laying thatch, or hoeing the earth with unison movements to the accompaniment of conversation and laughter, and the songs of such of their fellows, who, for the moment at rest, have constituted themselves the chorus.

When more than one *dokpwe* is summoned for work on the same project, Herskovits notes,

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> there is great rivalry among the organizations to see which one will first complete its allotted task. If only one *dokpwe* is present, there is either individual rivalry, or the *dokpwe* may be divided into two groups which compete one against the other. The food which is provided at these times of collective labor is as rich fare as the owner can afford . . .[8]

An underlying factor in the Dahomean *dokpwe* is awareness of itself as "the manpower of Dahomey," and the members regard themselves as exercising their fundamental privilege as Dahomeans. This attitude toward the coumbite continues to prevail in Haiti. Like the hounfor—but even more significantly in terms of routine, workaday life—the coumbite and the société are an expression of social ties and of the pervading interest in the common welfare.

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Certain patterns of the coumbite have been carried over into non-agrarian labor in the towns and cities, wherever group work is required. The carrying of coffee and sugar bags in the warehouses, the loading of ships, and the repairing of roads—all are traditionally performed

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[8] [Herskovits, "Some Aspects of Dahomean Ethnology," Africa, Vol. V (July, 1932), pp. 266-296. Cf p. 352, Category 116. -- Analyst]

533 476 rhythmically, to the accompaniment of drums, *catas*, or horns, while a 178 461 singing leader composes topical songs in which the laborers join.

171 412 The tools which a rural Haitian chooses, and the way he uses them, often are in a West African tradition. He performs a multitude of tasks with his machete, or bush knife: weeding a garden, peeling an orange, cutting down a tree, making a drum or mortar, opening a coconut. It is an all-purpose tool, as it is in Africa. Until a few years ago it was supplemented by the extra-long, heavier, "double machete." The axe and the chisel are known and used too, but the machete is supreme. 492 The hoe is the tool for tilling the soil, even in the flat country, and even [241] though the Haitian has horses and cattle which could pull a plow. [412] Horses are for riding and not for pulling. In carrying loads, the Haitian peasant still prefers the head to the shoulders. If he has a donkey, the [538] donkey will carry for him. An old Haitian proverb goes: "Meçi Bondieu pou' bourrique lâ, si nous pas gainyain bourrique lâ faut Haitien pa'té tout bagaille" (Thank God for the donkey, if we didn't have the donkey the Haitian would have to carry everything)." Generally speaking, the 489 491 493 rough and rocky terrain of Haiti and inadequate secondary roads have done nothing to encourage the use of carts or wagons.

171 [251] Corn is stored in the trees, as in West Africa, or in granaries built upon stilts, also as in West Africa. The Haitian makes his fire in the [372] African fashion, with several long sticks or poles meeting point-to-point in the heart of the fire. As the ends are consumed, the sticks are pushed [252] toward the center. Grain is pulverized in large wooden mortars, as [229] in West Africa, and winnowed in a woven tray. Fish traps are some- [226] times woven in the traditional West African manner, and fishermen often set their nets in converging spirals and beat the water with sticks to [501] drive the fish to the center. And on the rivers and lakes are to be seen dugout canoes of a kind familiar on the inland waters of West Africa.

171 241 The folklore of the fields contains many themes known to the West African. One old Haitian farmer, discussing the spiritual relationship of the planter to the earth, declared that a man must be strong and potent when he plants, else the crops will be vitiated and sickly. For [834] this reason, he said, a man must not plant seeds the day after he has had sexual intercourse, because he has been temporarily drained of his life-giving powers.[9]

171 538 The tale of the hoe that worked by itself in the fields is also widespread. It enters many animal and Bouki stories, and also is known in a form that is familiar in West Africa. In this story, there was once a man who owned a hoe which worked by itself whenever a magical formula was pronounced. It would stop working whenever the magical

[9] [For footnote, see Category 116, P 352.-- Analyst]

2: Courlander 8-5 (1837-1955) 1960 SV3 HaRI SV3

counterorder was given. The owner of the hoe was happy and prosperous until one day a thief (in one version, the trickster Anansi) stole the hoe and put it to work in his own fields. But the thief knew only the words to command the hoe to begin, not the words to stop it. He could not stop the hoe from working, and it worked its way out of the valley until it came to the country of the white people.[10] The whites knew the words to stop the hoe, and so they gained control of it. It is said by some that the whites fashioned the hoe into a plow.

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[10] [For footnote, see category 116, p 352.--Analyst]

[P. 122]

10. The Arts– Flour, Wood, and Iron

122 It is the nonmaterial arts and traditions that have thrived best in Haiti
128 through the years of slavery, political unrest, and poverty. Religious con-
53 cepts, music, dancing, folk tales, proverbs, and games are found every-
567 where in profusion. Material arts of the past have fared less well. Today, nothing is left of the old African knowledge of wood carving, metal casting, appliqué work, and weaving. Why such major African arts have died out in Haiti is no mystery. They disappeared simply because there was no place for them under the slave system or in the new Haitian society which followed it.

122 Under the colonial masters, the demands made on the New World
128 African were for coffee, cotton, and indigo. His creative talents were
567 channeled into carpentry, masonry, and the building of facilities for
532 production. There were no traditional artistic outlets or patrons for the wood carver, and no need for the weaver. Nor, during the years of slavery, was there much leisure for the craftsman to do his work even for the fun of it, should he be so inclined; indeed, this approach to wood carving or any other art would have been little understood or appreciated by most West Africans. A man who made an art object purely and simply to express a creative urge rather than to fill an express need would have been regarded as slightly eccentric. The old West African wood carvings with which we are now familiar were made because they were *required for* some purpose. A figure of a deity was needed in a shrine, a carved protective guard was needed for the household, a grave marker or a ceremonial mask was obligato y.

122 In Haiti the needs of those who ruled were different. The slave with
128 knowledge of the forge was not put to work making spears, ceremonial
567 axes, and the like; he was assigned the task of making grillwork for
532 houses, hinges and bolts, iron tires for coach wheels, and metal parts for the sugar mills. The anonymous African ironworker did his job well.

And when the revolution came he produced for the Haitian armies knives, gun parts, and wheels to transport cannon. By the tens of thousands he made ingeniously devised metal objects to be thrown on the roads, before the French cavalry troops—objects so shaped that, no matter how they fell, a single sharp point stood erect to cripple the enemy horses. Yet knowledge of the West African uses of iron did not altogether disappear, and during the first century of independence the Haitian blacksmith created many old-style knives, spears, and ritual objects for the cult temple.

Even today, some of this old-style work is to be found in houngfors in the southwestern peninsula. One may see simple or ornate iron standards, made to support ceremonial offerings or candles, strikingly similar to standards in ancestral shrines in Dahomey. There are iron bells, both single and double, made in pure West African style; ornate ritual swords and sabers which are the crests of certain deities; coiled and uncoiled iron serpents representing the gods Damballa and Ayida; and stylized or semirealistic portraits of the deities. Many of these old pieces are nineteenth-century survivals; others have been forged within the past decade.

An over-all impression of Haitian material culture is that artistic decoration is almost entirely absent and that the prime emphasis is on utility. Wooden cooking spoons are efficient in form, but missing from them is the delicate decorative carving often found in West Africa. The long wooden washing bowl, or *gamelle*, and the wooden mortar in which grain is pulverized are likewise clean-cut but stark and plainly utilitarian. Clay bowls, bottles, and storage jars are usually of simple, uniform design, with only accidental variations; there is little use of glazes, and the clay is often heavy and thick. Should there be a washboard in the peasant hut, the chances are that it is roughly made, without legs or carved designs. Dugout canoes are usually crude in appearance, heavy and thick-walled, and irregular in form.

Yet there are many evidences—though one must seek them out—that esthetic impulses are quite alive. The gay peasant straw knapsack, or *sifter*, without which no mountain man makes a journey, has a charm and grace that is not diminished by familiarity and cheapness. Decorated with sisal braid and tassels, and colored with green and magenta dyes, each *sifter* on close inspection appears to be unique. In some communities in the south and southwest, burlap squares also are painted with these traditional dyes. About forty inches across, and made of sugar bags, these paintings swarm with geometric patterns and sometimes with figures of flowers and animals. They are purely decorative, being

[See plates 42-51, pp. 112-DD—112-FF.--Analyst]

used for wall hangings much as appliquéd cloths are used in Dahomey. Near Cap Haïtien, in the north, ceramic workers make crude clay figurines of roosters, pigs, dogs, cows, and people. The "purpose" of these figurines is obscure, but it is likely that they are intended for use in Vodoun ritual, a number of them having been observed in hounfors in the vicinity of the town of Grande Rivière du Nord. In some mountain villages, canes carved with animal and human heads are commonly seen. Nor is the tradition of carving gourds and calabashes, popular in various regions of West Africa, altogether forgotten. The *cayambouque*, a divided calabash with the top ingeniously cut to fit into the lower part so as to form a sealed container, is sometimes covered with carved geometric designs, usually crude and haphazard but on occasion meticulous. Until recent years the common *cha-cha*, or gourd rattle, was similarly carved.

Most of the visible traditional art is to be found in the environs of the cult temple. The inner walls of many hounfors are covered with ritual designs and symbols and portraits of the deities. On the altar, sometimes, crude wood carvings of deities are seen, along with forged iron objects, carved maraca bowls, and grotesquely shaped drumsticks known as *baguettes guinée*. All the wooden objects are characterized by a plainness that relegates them to the category of purely functional and expendable things. The wood carving of a deity is not an image, it is a representation; it can be sold or otherwise disposed of, even thrown away if infested with beetles, and another object can be used to replace it. The only concern of the cult priest in this matter is that the deity concerned should understand the situation properly and not take offense. Thus there is no strong feeling that the wood carving should be a realistic representation or that it should be "beautiful." One relatively antique wood carving, completely West African in style, was found some years ago in a hounfor near Léogane and is now in the collection of the Musée du Peuple Haïtien in Port-au-Prince (see fig. 57).

One of the most flourishing arts of the hounfor is the *vèvè*, or ritual drawing made on the earth in the course of a service. Most commonly these beautiful and ornate designs are made with white meal or flour, and in a few of the cults, primarily the Pétro, lampblack and red brick dust are also used. The vèvè is made by the houngan or the mambo. With sure, practiced movements, the cult priest allows the meal to trickle through his fingertips onto the ground where the rites are taking place, usually in the peristyle of the hounfor itself. The drawings he makes are composed of a multiplicity of cabalistic symbols—heart shapes, stars, interlocked V's, flags, abstract phallic forms, crosses, swords,

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

machetes, circles, mortar shapes, and so on—each with its own specific meaning. Sometimes the vèvè becomes openly pictorial, and there emerges a ship for the loa Agwé, snakes for Damballa and Ayida, a bull for the loa Taureau, a knapsack for the loa Azaka, or even a portrait of a deity, perhaps smoking a pipe or holding a sword. 788 532

The vèvè is not a permanent record. It is made as an act of supplication or veneration, and once it is finished it has no further value. In the ensuing ritual and dance, the vèvè is obliterated by the feet that pass across it. At the hands of one houngan, this invocational act results in a crude, even childlike, design. At the hands of another, it produces a drawing of beauty, integration, and highly developed form.

The drum-making craft, too, has offered an unbroken sequence of opportunity for satisfying artistic urges. The drum has a traditional form that cannot be tampered with; its shape is predetermined by its function, by the log from which it is hewn, and by existing standards. And yet, the drum maker has found it an object on which he can devise new decorative motifs, and he may even give it personal uniqueness. Some drums have styles that may be associated with specific regions of the country, others bear the stamp of the individual artist. Paint has been used on Haitian drums for a hundred years or more as a complement to carving. One assotor drum dating from the earliest days of the Republic, and now preserved in a collection owned by the Bureau of Ethnology in Port-au-Prince, is decorated with a medallion showing the Haitian coat of arms, grenadiers, red and yellow snakes, and a sun with a face. This magnificent instrument, apparently the only one of its age and kind to have survived the years, is one of Haiti's art treasures. 178 534 531

The *cowis*, or calabash bowl, of the hounfor rites is another object which is decorated with motifs. Abstract designs, ritual symbols, and sometimes human and animal figures are painted on the inner or concave surface of the bowl. 322 531 [532]

The rural traditional arts of Haiti have had a belated impact on the arts of the city. Within the past fifteen years there have appeared a number of painters, sculptors in wood and ceramics, and ironworkers who constitute an art movement sometimes referred to as the Haitian "renaissance." Many of these artists draw heavily on national lore and legend for inspiration and subject matter. Some of them are men who came only recently from villages or distant farms. Their work adorns many public buildings in Port-au-Prince and is eagerly sought by art collectors. Members of the elite class who once looked with embarrassment on the "primitive" countryside are finding increasing respect for the potentialities of their country cousins. 184 531 532 32 [571]

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[p. 126]

11. Dancing and Dance Drama

197 The dances of Haiti, like the loa, are almost beyond counting. Like the
178 loa, too, the dances have personalities of their own, sometimes too subtle
535 for the stranger to detect. If there is one valid generalization, it is that the inspiration for the Haitian dance is primarily African. There have been changes in the course of the more than four hundred years since the first Africans came to the New World. Some of the old dances have disappeared altogether; others have developed new characteristics. New dances came into being with European rather than African form. Some of the most traditional dances have become sparse and lean, stripped of the decorative pageantry of earlier days. There are also the French quadrilles and similar square dances which have survived since colonial days in remote parts of the mountains. But it is the quadrille and not the dance of African origin which is atypical in Haiti's folk culture. Dancing is deeply rooted in almost all the important events of Haitian life. It is one of the few arts that have survived from preslavery days.

535 Early European travelers in Haiti were greatly taken by the dances
178 they found there. Some observers, like Moreau de Saint-Méry, a French-
175 man born in Martinique, have left invaluable documentation of the dances of the late eighteenth century. Saint-Méry described many dances that are still known in modern Haiti, such as the Chica, the Calinda, the Vodoun, and the Pétro. From his accounts one may assume that these dances have not changed much to this day.

114 But many of the foreign authors and journalists of early days were astoundingly lacking in understanding and quick to bare their prejudices and to pronounce their moral judgments. Like the explorers of our own time who delight in "returning alive" from some jungle land and in commenting upon all the strange, bizarre, dangerous, and wicked things they think they have seen, the explorer of the Dark Island often described the Haitian as a depraved branch of the human species. One such ob-

One such ob- 114
server, commenting upon the dances of the elite and of the peasant 535
declared:

> All the more undisguised is the crude sensuality among the lower classes of the Haitian population. Here every motion is obscene; and I am not at all considering the popular merrymakings or dance festivals secretly held partly in open, partly in forests, which are more like orgies, in which the African savagery, which has outlived centuries, has unbridled expression.[1]

Whatever the Haitian dance is, it is none of these things. The Haitian 535
himself is neither obscene nor unbridled. His dancing, like his everyday 831
life, is governed by social controls. He would be as surprised and offended by a sexual orgy as most Europeans. But he is not burdened with abstract concepts of chastity. Sex impulses are as fundamental and as taken [183]
for granted as rain, drought, and sunlight. The Haitian finds no virtue in living according to standards that have no relation to his realities.

The Haitian, like the West African, is undoubtedly a less tormented creature, so far as sex is concerned, than his European and American cousins. Since he is less tormented he can be more frank. And it was an expression of this frankness in certain of the Haitian secular dances that once aroused dismay among foreign chroniclers, and that still stirs the curiosity of tourists.

Yet if you were to witness fifty Haitian dances in their natural setting, you still might not see any direct sex expression. You might see more sex play and display in a dance hall or night club in New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, or Los Angeles. That is not to say that there are no sexual allusions in Haitian dancing. In the ordinary Saturday night *bamboche*, or social dance, there may be a good deal of loin movement and suggestion. In Haitian context, however, it is no more significant than two persons of opposite sexes pressing close together to the music of a dreamy orchestra at the "Roseland." In Haitian religious dancing, sexual motifs may occasionally emerge, but they are integral parts of ritualistic symbolism.

One of the deficiencies of early literature on the dances of Haiti is 114
that it did not differentiate between religious and secular dances. Further- 535
more, it is evident that writers tended to use a single name, such as Chica or Bamboula, to cover virtually any kind of dance festivity, much as many white Cubans refer today to all sorts of Afro-Cuban cult dances as Bembé. Because the terminology of ill-informed planters was adopted by the chroniclers, we are now able to form only some very general notions of Haitian dancing of the eighteenth century and before. Of all the reporters on the dance, Moreau de Saint-Méry seems to have been aware of differences, though his frequent departures into specula-

[1] [Quoted in Courlander, Haiti Singing, p. 73. Cf. p. 352, Category 116 -- Analyst]

114 535 tion helped to perpetuate some prevailing misunderstandings and errors. This distinguished observer wrote:

> The Negroes of the Gold Coast, warlike, bloody, accustomed to human sacrifice, know only dances as ferocious as themselves, while those from the Congo, Senegalese and other African shepherds or agricultural tribes, love dancing as a relaxation, as a source of sensual pleasure. Brought from all parts of Africa to our Colonies . . . , the Negroes brought here and preserved their taste for the dance, a taste so strong that, however tired out from work the Negro may be, he always finds strength to dance and even to travel a long distance to satisfy this desire.
>
> 114 533 535 When the Negroes want to dance, they take two drums, that is, two hollow logs, of unequal length, with one end open, while the other is covered with sheepskin. These drums . . . resound under blows of the wrist and movements of the fingers of a Negro who sits astride of each drum. The larger drum is beaten slowly, the other more rapidly. This monotonous and hollow sound is accompanied by the noise of a certain number of calabashes which have been filled with [534] pebbles . . . Several *banzas*, a sort of large guitar with four strings,[2] join the concert, the tempo of which is regulated by the clapping hands of the Negro women, who form a large circle. They form a sort of chorus, which responds to one or two strident solo voices, which repeat or improvise a song.[3]

535 As for the dance movements themselves, Saint-Méry wrote:

> A male and [a] female dancer, or several dancers divided into equal numbers of each sex, jump into the center of the circle and begin to dance, always two by two. This dance, which varies little, consists of a very simple step in which one foot is put forward after the other, and then drawn back quickly, while striking the toe and the heel on the ground . . . Some turn in place, or around the woman, who turns also and changes places with her partner; that is all which one sees, except for the movement of the arms which the man raises and lowers with the elbows quite close to the body and the hands almost closed. The woman holds two ends of a handkerchief, which she waves . . . One would hardly believe how lively and animated it is, and how much grace it derives from the strictness with which the musical rhythm is followed. The dancers replace one another without respite, and the Negroes are so intoxicated with pleasure that it is necessary to force them to conclude dances of this sort, called *kalendas*.[4]

[114] [171] Saint-Méry then brings forth one of his conclusions, that this dance is obviously the development of a "comparatively uncivilized people," and that it comes from Africa, "where its characteristic features exist everywhere, even among the Hottentots."

114 535 172 [171] Here he missed the point altogether. Although many of the characteristics of this *kalenda* (or Calinda) were African, it had already been intensively hybridized with European dance concepts, such as the pairing off of males and females, who danced as couples. Then, as today, the dances which amazed and shocked the European observer were precisely the ones that had taken over certain European traditions.

2 [Actually a banjo-like instrument of African provenience. The similarity of the word banza to banjo appears to be more than a coincidence. Cf. P. 352, category 116. -- Analyst]
3 [Saint-Méry, De la danse, as translated by Lillian Moore in Moreau de Saint Méry and "Danse" Dance Index, October, 1946, P. 238. Cf. P. 352, Category 116. -- Analyst]
4 Moore, op. cit., P. 238. Cf. P. 352, Category 116. -- Analyst]

Saint-Méry also wrote about some of the religious dances, which he identified by name: 171 535

> In Santo Domingo, and especially in the western, French section, there has existed for a long time a kind of dance called the Vaudoux [Vodoun] . . . which is characterized by movements where the upper part of the body, the shoulders and the head seem to move convulsively. This dance is accompanied by the drums, the clapping of hands, and group singing . . .
>
> The Vaudoux is nothing compared to the Don Pedro . . . , another Negro dance, also known in the western part of Santo Domingo since 1768. Don Pedro was the name of a Negro of the Petit-Goave section, of Spanish origin, who by his daring character and certain superstitious practices, had acquired among the Negroes enough influence to be denounced by the government as the instigator of some alarming plots. The dance which bears his name consists, like the Vaudoux, in the shaking of the shoulders and the head, but this shaking is extremely violent, and to increase it still further the Negroes drink, while dancing, brandy in which they have mixed finely ground gunpowder . . . They dance with the most horrible contortions, until finally they fall into a sort of epilepsy . . .

Making allowances for Saint-Méry's imaginative interpretation of many of the things he saw, the Haitian dance of today is not far different from that of the eighteenth century. It is cast in the West African mold, with Dahomean and Yoruban motifs predominating over European and other Western infiltrations. As in Saint-Méry's day, the drummers sit at the edge of the dance court, a leader wielding a gourd rattle leads the singing, and the dancers and spectators constitute the chorus. The dancers usually move around the center of the court in a counterclockwise direction. Their steps and postures vary according to the type of dance being performed. The Jenvalo, for example, is danced with a bent back, hands touching the knees. In the Zépaule dance the dancers are erect, and most of the movements are made with the shoulders. In the Pétro (the Don Pedro described by Saint-Méry) there is a constant, almost agitated movement of the feet. The songs accompanying these cult dances, while presented in African style, may have hybrid or even French melodies, though in the main they are more African than European. The over-all context of the cult dances, as well as most of the secular ones, is West African, with constant interplay between the singers, dancers, and drummers. Sometime the dancers "drive" the drummers, sometimes the drummers "drive" the dancers. Certain beats of the drum are signals for special movements and postures. On hearing special beats or rolls, the dancers may leap vertically into the air, or perform a *laillé* (a swirling motion that causes the skirts to flare out), or a *djaillé* (excitement motions). Increased tension among the dancers may cause the drummers to shift the beat, or to increase 177 178 533 535 [114]

[Brandy or rum with gunpowder is sometimes drunk by persons possessed by the loa Ogoun, deity of war. Cf. P. 352 Cat. 116. --Analyst]

[Moore, OP. Cit., P. 238. Cf. P. 352, Cat. 116. --Analyst]

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tempo. The chorus and leader sing responsively, their parts overlapping in traditional African style. The shoulder movements, foot movements, the way the arms are carried, and the typical posture of feet flat on the ground, bent knees, and swayed back—all are of African derivation. These postures and movements are broad and direct. There are few of the decorative and "fine" movements that one sees in the dances of Indonesia, Cambodia, and India. Where the Javanese lays stress on the pose of the hands and the delicate movements of the fingers, the Haitian dancer is concerned with the position of the arms and the motions of the shoulders. The Indonesian sense of poised balance or suspended movement is absent. In its place there is an attitude of strong frontal assault against natural forces such as gravity, or direct submission to those forces. There is almost always a feeling of solidity and stability in Haitian posture, and of a proximity between the body and the earth, but the total effect is dynamic. Indonesian dancing seems to express a comprehension of the unseen and the supernatural; Haitian dancing seems to express an intimate understanding of nature.

Dancing touches on virtually every aspect of life in Haiti. It plays a part in the supplication of loa, the placation of the dead, and the making of magic; in the consecration of a hounfor, the installation of a houngan, and the initiation of cult members; in planting, harvesting, and house-building. Catholic Church holidays, Nine Nights, baptisms, the election of a new president, and ordinary social gatherings—all are celebrated, in part, at least, by dancing.

Haitian dancing is participative rather than exhibitionistic. It is to join rather than to watch. There are some dances, however, which require special skills, and a few which are highly individualistic. Several types of dances are described elsewhere in this book. Verbal description cannot do justice to an art such as dancing, of course; but some brief sketches may help to suggest the differences between one Haitian dance and another.

In the Congo Mazonne, for example, men and women pair off and dance face to face, making contact occasionally but only briefly. The arms are stretched forward as though to embrace the partner around the waist, but the actual embrace never materializes. The partners dance sometimes as though they are unaware of each other and are simply part of a larger group; then they approach, move as mirrored reproductions, and separate. Loin movement is free, and there is a restrained sexual intensity, though direct sexual implications are not necessarily present. Sometimes the woman holds the hem of her skirt in her hands, while the man holds his jacket open toward his partner.

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535 The Pétro dance is similar in many respects to other serious cult dances, but it is primarily a complicated and sometimes agitated foot dance. The second of the two drums beats "rest-two-three." On "two" the right foot pushes forward in a thrusting, sliding motion, and on "three" the left moves outward and the right moves in. The position is held on the "rest," though there is no visible pause, because of the speed of the dance. Shoulder movement is only of secondary importance in the Pétro, though the arms are constantly moving gracefuly to balance the foot movements. Women sometimes use a typical Congo pose, with the left hand on the hip and the right hand held poised in the air.

The Jenvalo, the supplication dance of the Dahomey rites, is quite different in both spirit and technique. The dancers, usually older rather than younger people, move in a generally counterclockwise direction around the sacred center post of the dance court. They dance with gracefully bent backs, their hands touching their knees. The shoulders and the upper part of the body move forward and back in a gentle, graceful, undulating movement. The dancers pirouette lightly from time to time, the women holding their long skirts out to the side to make a restrained *laillé*. They sometimes pause to perform a brief cross step with other dancers, but there is no pairing off. They are dancing as individuals—or, more accurately, as a group. There is occasional improvising, inventing, and performing of difficult maneuvers; but the individual dancer moves always with the others in a slowly revolving amorphous circle around the center post. The graceful bending and undulating of the upper body give even to strangers an impression of respectful supplication.

Near the town of Jérémie in southern Haiti some years ago I saw a performance of the Mousondi "battle-dance," an activity of the Congo [291] "nation." The dance was performed by six men, several of them stripped to the waist, the others wearing the traditional blue denim peasant jackets. The leader of the dancers was a bearded man about fifty years [301] old, lean and athletic. On his legs he wore anklets made of seed pods and [534] beer-bottle caps which rattled rhythmically as he moved. On a string around his neck he wore a wooden whistle, which he blew from time to time to accent the beat of the drums and to give signals.

[533] The dancing took place around a bonfire. The music was provided by three musicians, two playing Congo drums and the third beating hardwood sticks against a board. Each of the dancers carried a stick about thirty inches long. They moved first clockwise, then counterclockwise, then half of them moved in one direction and half in the other, weaving in and out, holding their sticks like sabers. On a signal given by the

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535 older man, they leaped into the air and came together in mock combat. First one would strike and the other would parry, then the second would strike and the first would parry, always in time to the beating Congo drums. On another signal all six dancers leaped into the air vertically, twisting into a full turn each time, landing in position to strike and parry.

Spectators standing around the dancers clapped their hands and sang:

[539]

Mousondi na fai la guè!
Éya éya éya!
Nous c'est nanchon la guè!
Ou pas tendé canon'm tiré?

Mousondi, we will make war!
Éya éya éya!
We are a nation of war!
Don't you hear my cannon shooting?

[293] When the dancers and drummers seemed fatigued, they were offered rum to drink. The dancers drank without breaking step or interrupting the battle. The bearded man held the lip of his glass between his teeth, and without using his hands to steady it, tipped his head back and let the rum run into his mouth, all the while stamping his feet and leaping with the others.

[184] I was told later that the Mousondi was from the north, and that the dancers were recent arrivals from Port-de-Paix. But some of the older people declared that in former times the dance was known in the south by the name Calinda.

114 535 The Calinda dance, like the Vodoun, the Pétro, and several others, is mentioned frequently in the old literature on Haiti, Trinidad, Martinique, and Guadaloupe. It has been described variously as a funeral dance, an exhibitionistic sexual display, and a stick dance. It was reported by Saint-Méry as a dance in which men and women paired off. Early in the eighteenth century, Père Labat described it as a line dance, with the women on one side and the men on the other. Lafcadio Hearn saw it as a stick dance. And the word Calinda appears sometimes in songs of the Vodoun cult. The name may have lost specific meaning early in the life of the colonies; but it is more likely that early chroniclers used the term inexactly to refer to a multitude of different dances. In Haiti, [515] identification of the Calinda has been further confused by the existence of the Calinda secret society, which had special dances of its own, all called Calinda.

Although confusions and contradictions exist, the testimony of older Haitians is that the Calinda was a stick dance, known also by the name Mousondi.

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Mousondi. In present-day Trinidad there is a Calinda dance which closely resembles the Mousondi; Puerto Rico has its Bomba Calindán; and under another name the "battle dance" survives among Negro communities in Surinam. The counterpart of the Calinda in Brazil is the Capoeira, for which musical accompaniment is provided by African-style "belly harps" (musical bows with gourd resonators) called *berimbau*. The tradition lingers on in Haiti in modern mock prize-fighting dances sometimes performed in Rara season.

The stick dance (*Battonie*) of the Haitian carnival season, mentioned in chapter 8, is of more than passing interest for the reason that almost identical dances have been reported from some areas of West Africa. In the Haitian dance (see fig. 73) the baton wielders, all males, for unexplained reasons are attired in women's clothing. A photograph made in 1958 of a baton dance among the Ewe people of Togoland depicts a scene scarcely distinguishable from a Haitian Rara performance, and it is noteworthy that its all-male cast is in women's dress.[7]

In addition, there remain a number of fragments of dances of the past. In religious ritual, on rare occasions, one may see animal dances in which the performers mimic animal movements, holding in their hands long sticks to simulate front legs. This type of dance has been reported frequently in West Africa, particularly in connection with totemic rituals.

There is a dance in the Arada ritual in which the loa Legba is invoked. A hounsi—usually a man—comes onto the dance court wearing a kind of cane-crutch called the *baton* Legba, or Legba stick. The baton is about the length of a cane, with a long, grotesquely twisted "handle" that fits under the crotch of the legs. The dancer wraps one leg around the stick and walks as though he has only one foot. In the dance, he spins around on the stick, leaps, and pirouettes. Identification of the stick as well as the dance with Legba, and its position between the legs, seem clearly to relate it to the phallic sticks used in dances for Legba in Dahomey.

Among the secular exhibitionistic dances of Haiti, there is one in which a man stands on his head and goes through erotic motions to the accompaniment of drums.

In addition to the almost countless dances of African origin or inspiration, there is the ever-popular Meringue, a European-type social dance which is known in many forms. Haitian connoisseurs of this dance believe there are three main forms of the Meringue: the "Meringue de Concert," in which the rhythm is slow and "caressing"; the "dance Meringue," in which the rhythm is quasi-fast and very gay; and the "Meringue Coundjaille," in which the rhythm is very fast. The last

[7] [United Nations Photograph no. 62065. Cf P 352, category 116. -- Analyst]

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The last

535 form is heard most often during carnival days. In all variations of the Meringue, the dance is performed by couples in ballroom style. Among [831] the elite, it is restrained. Elsewhere it is much more animated, with free and uninhibited pelvic motions similar to those seen at the Saturday night *bamboche*. Although the Haitian regards his Meringue as a national 171 popular dance, Spanish-type music has infiltrated heavily from the Do- 177 minican Republic, Cuba, and other islands of the West Indies. Thousands 53 of Haitians returning from contract labor in Cuba have brought with them not only Cuban songs and rhythms but Cuban instruments as well. It has not been a one-way affair, however, for the Arada cults of eastern Cuba have been built substantially around immigrants from Haiti, and in the Cuban mountains you may hear music and see dances of Afro-Haitian origin.

Still other kinds of dances are to be found in remote villages of Haiti—the old folk dances of Europe. The villagers still know and perform the waltz, the polka, the mazurka and the quadrille, usually to the accompaniment of violins or guitars, or possibly an accordion.

But the influences are not all ancient ones. Jazz has infiltrated the Meringue. And some years ago a small boy asked me with some concern whether I had taken proper account of a very important dance called *le black bottom*.

535 Following is a list of dances known to Haitians today. Some of them [178] are found throughout Haiti, some are known only regionally, and a few are on the verge of extinction.

Dances Connected with Vodoun Ritual

***Arada*, or *Rada*:** One of the main dances of the Vodoun service, named after the Dahomean city and cult center, Allada.

***Anago*, or *Nago*:** Named after the Nagos, a branch of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria. For deities of Nago origin.

***Mahi*:** Named after the Mahi people of Dahomey.

***Déréal*:** A Mahi dance of northern Haiti.

***Parigale*:** Another Mahi type of dance. Possibly from *pas régal* (royal step).

***Jenvalo*, or *Yenvalo*:** A supplication dance, variously called Jenvalo Doba (*dos bas*, low back), Jenvalo Jénon (*genoux*, knees), and Dobado.

***Zépaule*:** A supplication dance in which the movements are made primarily by the shoulders (*les épaules*). It is sometimes called Jenvalo Zépaule or Jenvalo Débout (standing Jenvalo).

***Flavorodoun*:** Another type of shoulder dance known in the north.

***Banda*, or *Chica*:** A gay and sometimes ribald dance, said to be much favored by the loa Cousin Zaka and the loa Gèdé.

***Masonne Rada*:** The "Masonic" Rada dance; often danced for the loa Gèdé.

***Carabienne* or *Crabienne*:** A rest dance, interspersed into long-drawn-out Arada

[i.e., the "Meringue Coundjaille" in which the rhythm is very fast. -- Analyst]

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rites to break the tension. The name appears to have come from the word "Caribbean." 535

Magie: A dance accompanying a magic-making ritual.

Pouin: A dance accompanying the making of a pouin.

Calebasse: A dance accompanying the calabash ritual, for the dead. [764]

Dahomé: One of the principal dances of the Vodoun group, named after Dahomey.

Bambocha: Another rest dance, from northern Haiti. Carried over into secular dancing, it has become the commonplace Bomboche.

Bouleverse: From northern Haiti.

Mannba, or *Maniba:* A dance associated with Dahomey rites, accompanied by percussion music played on small drums hung around the neck.

Assotor: A dance accompanying rites for the assotor drum.

Dances Connected with Congo and Pétro Ritual

Pétro, or *Dan Pétro:* The principal dance of the Pétro cult.

Kitta Mouillé: The "Wet Kitta," danced for the Simbi family of loa, patrons of rain and the spring. Sometimes called Danse Simbi. On rare occasions the Kitta Mouillé is accepted as Vodoun rather than Pétro.

Kitta Chèche, or *Sèche:* The "Dry Kitta," danced for loa of the Kitta group other than the patrons of the spring. Sometimes identified with Vodoun rites rather than with the Pétro.

Bumba, or *Limba:* Named after Congo tribes.

Moundongue: A dance for the loa Moundongue. Named after a tribe in the northern Congo.

Salongo, or *Kinan:* From southwestern Haiti. Salongo is the name of a tribe in Angola.

Bambarra: Named after the Bambarras of northwestern Africa.

Congo Loangue, or *Congo Franc:* Named after Loango in the Congo.

Congo Mazonne: The "Masonic" Congo dance, known also as Congo Larose and Congo Créole. Some informants believe the dance originated in a hounfor called Société La Rose, from which it derives one of its names.

Pastorel: A Congo rest dance.

Mousondi: A battle dance.

Moutchétché: A dance of northern Haiti for paying a debt to a loa.

Mayoyo: This dance is nearly extinct.

Mazonne Pétro: The "Masonic" dance of the Pétro rites.

Dances on the Periphery of the Vodoun Group

Ibo: Named after the Ibo people of Nigeria and used in rites for the Ibo family of loa.

Kanga or *Caplïou:* Named after West African tribes.

Dances of the Juba Group

Juba, or *Martinique:* Danced on the occasion of Last Prayers, when the spirit of a newly deceased person has been sent on its way. It is also danced on various coumbite occasions, and sometimes at the special request of a loa or an ancestor. [764] [775]

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535 ***Baboule*, or *Bamboula:*** Danced on the occasion of building a new house.

535 ***Mascort:*** Danced by a société after communal work on the land of one of its members.

476 ***Ti Coumba:*** Another société work dance, sometimes closely related to Vodoun ritual. Known in Brazil as Macumba.

Kounc*, or *Coundjaille: A dance connected with communal work celebrations.[8]

Rara and Carnival Dances

535 541 ***Rara*, also called *Chariopié*, *Lavaluadi*, and *Vaccine:*** The perambulating dances of the Rara festival.

Mascaron*, or *Cocoyé: Danced for the Mardi Gras.

Paillette: Any carnival dance in costume.

Batonnie: A carnival stick dance with West African precedents.

Trèsé Riban: The carnival Maypole dance.

Congo Paillette: The "Straw Congo," or "Costume Congo," the carnival dance of the *société* Congo. It is also known as Ciyé and Congo Mardi Gras.

Rabordage: A Mardi Gras perambulating dance.

Chaluska: A Mardi Gras dance in which the participants are dressed as nineteenth-century generals. Comic mimicry. Also referred to as Charles Oscar.

Zizipan

Roboto

Mayousse

Other Secular and Miscellaneous Dances

535

Zesse: A *gage* dance of northern Haiti.

Calinda: A mock battle dance. Also a dance of the Calinda "secret society."

Ka: A dance which takes its name from the *ka*, a secular drum.

Bèlè*, or *Belair

Mangouline

Ti Crip: This is regarded by some informants as one of the Pétro dances.

Malfini: "The Hawk," a dance of northern Haiti.

Pinyique: A simple "good time" dance.

Bambilé: A simple "good time" dance.

Bamboche: A "good time" dance. The term is often used to designate any social dance. As a verb, *bamboché* means "to dance" or "to have a good time."

Secular Dances of European Type

535 177 ***Meringue:*** There are three main types of Meringue—the drawing-room Meringue, the ordinary "ballroom" Meringue, and the Meringue Coundjaille (which is fast and agitated). A development of the last decade or so is the jazz Meringue.

Ti Bobine: This is a sort of square dance, though it is sometimes danced in Meringue style.

Ménuet*, or *Ménuat: The minuet.

Polka

Waltz

Quadrille

Mazurka

Contradanse

[8] [Footnote appears on p. 352, Category 116.--Analyst]

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[P. 137]

12. Songs of Complaint, Recrimination, and Gossip

The use of the song as a weapon of social criticism is an ancient and honored tradition in Haitian life. In West Africa it is common for villagers to air their complaints against, or their praise of, their neighbors, their chiefs, and the Europeans with whom they have dealings, by means of specially composed songs. Usually an ordinary offended person will not approach an official of prestige and denounce him straightforwardly. Such behavior might involve risks, or even violate social decorum. But an acceptable and effective way to make such criticism is through singing. It carries with it the sanction of propriety, custom, and good manners. The songs of criticism seek to air situations that otherwise might remain local or private affairs, and to set in motion public opinion. Thus there are songs which complain about a person's behavior, others that protest against injuries, and still others that expose an individual to ridicule. Often the themes are expressed indirectly by parable, sometimes directly. Among the Negro cultures of America the song of social criticism remains a vital and effective instrument for alleviating a sense of hurt and bringing offending persons before the bar of public opinion. It is found throughout the New World wherever Negroes have settled, from Brazil to the West Indies and the United States. In Surinam there is a formalized presentation of protest and derision songs called *lobi singi*, the function of which is to publicly embarrass and shame someone who has offended.[1] In the United States the song of criticism and complaint has survived strongly in the Negro work songs and blues, and has even infiltrated by this route into the popular "white" music of the country. Countless blues pieces complain of personal mistreatment by husbands, wives, and sweethearts; others, of hardships and injustice. Still others hold up the spotlight of ridicule. The subjects vary from sexual faithlessness to the rigors of prison.

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In Haiti this tradition has remained vital and powerful. A work gang

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[1] [See Herskovits and Herskovits, Suriname Folk-Lore, pp. 23-32. Cf. p. 353, Category 116.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

* 533 626 may sing that it is being driven too hard, or that it is underpaid. A president may be disparaged, a neighbor who has violated a social propriety may be ridiculed, and one who has committed an indiscretion may be exposed. Such affairs are the property of the community. They are gay or grim editorials on people and institutions. There is no special ceremonial occasion, as in Surinam, when criticism may be voiced. It can happen almost anywhere, at almost any time. Songs of ridicule or complaint may be heard at the ordinary "good time" secular dance, in the Rara festivities, or even in the middle of a Vodoun religious service. If the coumbites working in the fields are not singing songs of praise, the chances are they are singing songs of criticism. Even a lone worker may sing such songs, with the expectation that they will be heard and passed on. One woman I know, who had been abused in the market place of Port-au-Prince, composed a song of recrimination which she sang loudly all along the road to Kenskoff, some twenty miles away.

Even though the songs may be quite personal, referring to situations that affect only an individual or a small group of people, once they are performed in public they are community property. They survive or fade away according to the appeal they have for others. A song which catches on may outlive its protagonists by many decades. Such a song does not lose its moral point, if it has one, or its satirical punch. It can be revived for use on appropriate occasions—usually without change, sometimes with slight modification to give it direct and timely significance.

* 533 * 539 626 572 One of the recurrent themes of protest has to do with faithlessness of friends. This song, couched in bitter metaphor, declares that the only friends to be trusted are those who are not present:

Zamis près moin quitté ma zamis loin moin yo!
Zamis près moin quitté ma zamis loin moin!
Zamis loin moin c'est la'gent sèré!
Zamis près moin c'est couteau débord, quitté ma zamis loin moin! [Ex. 94]

Friends close to me, go far away from me, friends!
Friends close to me, go far away from me, friends!
Friends far away from me are saved money!
Friends close to me are a two-edged knife, go far away from me, friends!

A variant of this theme goes:

Zami cila c'est pas zami pou' moin!
Zami cila c'est pas zami pou' moin trahison!
Moin passé caille a li li ba moin chaise moin chita!
L'al pa'lé mal a moin!

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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That friend there, he is not a friend for me!
That friend there, he is not a friend for me, treason!
I pass his house, he gives me a chair to sit in!
He goes around speaking bad words about me!

Or again, you may hear:

Nèg' nwè, con ça ou yé, ago-é!
Nèg' nwè, con ça ou yé!
Y'ap mangé avé ou!
Y'ap bwè avé ou!
Y'ap coupé lavie ou débor! [Ex. 95]

Black man, like this you are, *ago-é!*
Black man, like this you are!
He will eat with you,
He will drink with you,
He will cut the life out of you!

A man regards his child's godfather as his closest friend outside the family circle. Should either of the two friends fail to fulfill the high standard of behavior demanded by their tie, the other may express disappointment and recrimination, as in this song:

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Compè à moin compè ou malhonnête!
Ou malhonnête compè compè à moin compè ou malhonnête!
Premier pitit moin fai'm ba ou batisé!
Malheur rivé'm nan hounfor ou pas vini wè moin!

My comrade, comrade, you are dishonest!
You are dishonest comrade, my comrade, comrade, you are dishonest!
I gave you my first child to baptize!
When misfortune comes to me in the hounfor, you do not come to see me!

Sometimes even the most domestic of grievances are aired in public through means of song:

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Isamise oh!
Ste Hélène oh!
Isamise oh!
Ste Hélène oh!
Trois pairs souflettes mari'm ba moin!
Maladie-à prend moin! [Ex. 96]

Isamise, oh!
St. Hélène, oh!
Isamise, oh!
St. Hélène, oh!
Three pairs of slaps my husband gave me!
This misfortune has taken me!

*533 *539 626 [576] A protest theme that runs through many a song stems from the feeling of having been slighted or improperly received in the house of another person. The following song airs the complaint of a person who feels he has been treated shabbily. Metaphorically, he says he is used to eating from an earthern bowl but has been served food in a gourd dish, from which only the poorest of people eat.

Ma 'bitué mangé nan bolle,
M'pap mangé nan couis ciyé! [Ex. 97]

I'm accustomed to eating from a bowl;
I'm not going to eat from a cut gourd!

[574] Or again, there is the story of the unwelcome voyager, a person who travels all the way from Jérémie, far out on the southern peninsula, to the distant town of Arcahaye, only to find that he is not wanted there:

Moin sort' Jérémie!	I come from Jérémie!
Moin passé Aux Cayes!	I pass through Aux Cayes!
M'rivé L'Arcahaye, mes amis!	I arrive in Arcahaye, my friends!
C'est moin même yo pas vlé wè yà,	It is me they don't wish to see here,
Moin ya wè!	It is me they see!
C'est moin même yo pas vlé wè yà,	It is me they don't wish to see here,
Moin ya wè oh!	It is me they see, oh!
C'est moin même yo pas vlé wè yà,	It is me they don't wish to see here,
Moin ya wè oh!	It is me they see, oh!

[461] A man complains sometimes of the work that has been foisted upon him by an employer, or by a neighbor with whom he exchanges labor:

M'pas mulette oh moin pas mulette oh!
Habitant prend moin po'té café!

I'm not a mule, oh, I'm not a mule, oh!
The farmer takes me to carry coffee!

*533 *539 794 626 Even the officials of the hounfor may be publicly reproached in song for acts of injustice. In the following example the houngénicon, the Vodoun priest's assistant, is taken to task. The song probably was first heard in the course of a ceremony at which the houngénicon was present:

Daromain y wa, houngénicon oh!
Daromain y wa, 'génicon é!
Daromain y wa, yo fai mangé raison moin!
Lè moin vlé pa'lé ou pas vlé moin pa'lé!
Lè moin vlé chanté ou pas vlé moin chanté là!
Daromain y wa, yo fai mangé raison moin! [Ex. 98]

Dahomey *y wa*,* houngénicon, oh!
Dahomey *y wa*, houngénicon, *é!*
Dahomey *y wa*, they do me wrong!

* The word Dahomey is frequently used as an exclamation.

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When I want to talk you do not want me to talk!
When I want to sing you do not want me to sing!
Dahomey *y ava*, they do me wrong! *

Another note of criticism within the hounfor concerns a person who has been putting on airs of importance. The song states that he (or she) in reality has not even qualified for the lowest order within the cult, even though he behaves as though he were the cult chief:

Ou poco hounsi oh!	You are not yet a hounsi, oh!
Ou dit'm ou c'est houngan!	You tell me you are a houngan!
Ou poco hounsi!	You are not yet a hounsi!
Ou dit'm ou c'est houngan c'est ça!	You tell me you are a houngan, it is so!
Oh Paille à Terre!	Oh, Straw on Earth! †
Pousé allé!	Push and go!
Oh Allada malade oh! [Ex. 99]	Oh, Allada is sick, oh! ‡

Poverty is so normal in Haitian life that a man who accumulates wealth in any form becomes conspicuous. Ordinarily he does not welcome this conspicuousness. It makes him a target of gossip and rumors, and of those who might wish to collect debts from him, borrow money, or obtain other favors. He becomes a *gros nèg'*, and finds himself increasingly cut off from the community of ordinary, poor people. Needless to say, Haitians, like other people, dream of striking it rich. Wherever poverty has been acute, whether in Europe, Asia, or America, the folklore is full of tales of finding great treasures. Haiti is no exception. Many Haitian folk tales and folk songs deal with this theme, particularly with obtaining wealth by magical or supernatural means. Sometimes riches are obtained through *engagements*, unholy compacts with devils or demons. In some stories loa facilitate the discovery of treasure, in others a powerful bocor accomplishes it through magical practices. If a man suddenly becomes well-to-do, therefore, rumors may spread in regard to how he came by his wealth. If he is suspected of dealings with devils or with a powerful bocor, his apparent success in his venture makes him a neighbor to be feared. To avoid incurring envy and hostility, people tend to play down their financial successes and pretend they have nothing in life but the clothes they wear, their houses, and their gardens. Spreading word that a poor man has hidden money is regarded as a mean and reprehensible act. Numerous folk songs protest against this injustice:

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Désastre tombé nans lacour-wà!
Si m'apé travaille là nans cour-wà,

* Literally: They eat my rights.
† An exclamation, the name of a certain message.
‡ Allada, the name of a town in Dahomey, used in the sense of "people of Dahomey." The line means, "Things are in a bad state of affairs."

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Yo dit'm gainyain largent séré, oh vrai!
Yo mètè conplotaille oh lì sou dos moin!
Oh yo mètè conplotaille oh lì sou dos moin!
Fai'm payé largent, évo!
Mandé Bondieu pou' nou wè li, so! [Ex. 100]

Disaster descends on my yard!
If I work in the yard there
They say I have hidden money, in truth!
They plot behind my back!
Oh, they plot behind my back!
Make me pay money, *évo!*
I ask God to see it.

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Another theme that runs deeply through Haitian life is the need for a mother. In a society where plaçage is normal and where fathers frequently are transient, the mother has been the stabilizing factor in family life. A *placée* family might see the father only at certain times of the year. If he is a farmer, it will usually be when he comes to work his gardens; then he will move on to other gardens and possibly to another family elsewhere. The loss of a mother, under these conditions, is felt very deeply. Many Haitian songs, in various moods, emphasize the role of the mother in the house. Some of them are gay, like this one, with an undercurrent of sadness:

Oh dèpis manman moin fai moin,	Oh, since my mother made me,
M'pas jamais wè manman moin!	I've never seen my mother!
Waille waille waille waille!	*Waille waille waille waille!* *
Waille waille waille waille!	*Waille waille waille waille!*
M'pas conné manman moin!	I do not know my mother!
Zandolite fai'm!	A *zandolite* made me!
Mabouya fai'm!	A *mabouya* made me!
Zandolite fai'm!	A *zandolite* made me!
Mabouya fai'm! [Ex. 171]	A *mabouya* made me!

The *zandolite* and *mabouya* to which the song refers are small lizards which constantly skitter about on the rocks and in the trees, as though they have no home. The metaphor is clear.

One more song on this subject stresses the importance of having a mother as compared, say, to an unreliable man:

Ma crié,
Oh qua'm perdit manman moin ma rélé!
Ma rélé,
Oh qua'm perdit manman moin crié!
Qua'm perd' un garçon moin join' l'eau' oh!

* Exclamation.

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Qua'n perd' un gaçon main jain' l'aut' ah!
Ma rélé,
Oh qua'n perdit manman main ma crié! [Ex. 102]

I cried,
Oh, when I lost my mother I cried!
I cried,
Oh, when I lost my mother I cried!
When I lost a man I found another, ah!
When I lost a man I found another, ah!
I cried,
Oh, when I lost my mother I cried!

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Protest or complaint songs are sometimes directed against no one in particular but simply call the attention of listeners to the singer's misfortunes. In many such songs the president or one of the deities is mentioned by name. The singer in this way implicitly places responsibility for help. In the following song, one complains of hunger, another theme that runs throughout Haitian folklore and Haitian life.

Rwa! President qui voyé rélé'm!
Main pas bwè main pas mangé!
M'pas bwè main pas mangé!
Oh m'pas bwè main pas mangé!
President qui voyé rélé'm rwa!
M'pas bwè main pas mangé! [Ex. 103]

Rwa! * The President sends for me!
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!
Oh, I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!
The President sends for me, *rwa!*
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!

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Here the loa Ogoun Balindjo is called upon to take note of prying, insincere people who come to a person's house, observe what is going on, and go away to gossip:

Ogoun Balindjo
Yo vini gè'dé'm
Pou' y'alé valé ah!
Ogoun Balindjo
Li yé wè bouche yé ah!
Ogoun Balindjo
Pa wè yo vini gè'dé main? [Ex. 104]

Ogoun Balindjo
They come to look at me

* An exclamation.

To go away and talk, oh!
Ogoun Balindjo
The eyes see, the mouth is closed, oh!*
Ogoun Balindjo
Don't you see they come to look at me?

Or again, the loa Ogoun and Loko Atino are invoked to witness a person's misery, though in this song the cause is not explained:

Ogoun oh gi'lil mim!
Papa Ogoun ou wa gi'lil mim!
Gi'lil mim ch Lok' Atino gi'lil mim li yé! [Ex. 109]

Ogoun, oh, look at my misery!
Papa Ogoun, you will look at my misery!
Look at my misery, oh, Loko Atino, look at my misery here!

The impulse to criticism most often stems from personal injuries, but on occasion songs are used as a community affair to exert social pressures on an errant member of the neighborhood:

Fal' Jean-Pierre wa quitté boit tafia!
Fal' Jean-Pierre ó mouse yo mouri!

Brother Jean-Pierre, stop drinking tafia!†
Brother Jean-Pierre, the little children are naked!

Although discussions of neighbors' affairs tend to have this moral tone, a vast number of songs are pure gossip and are sung for their ribald or wry humor, as the case may be. In some the objects of ridicule are named; in others the allusions are indirect, so that only those who are familiar with the situation will know the people concerned. Open quarreling often provides amusement and substance for satire. The community can sense petulance, stupidity, and stubbornness through a confusion of charges and countercharges, and is quick to burlesque them. Thus there are public pressures against petty and needless disturbances. The following song refers to a dispute over ownership of an unnamed article.

Moin di c'ou bagaille grand mouse! Ciyé!
C'ou bagaille grand mouse! Ciyé!
Moin di c'ou mofui grand mouse! Ciyé!
C'ou bagaille grand mouse! Ciyé!
Moin di n'ap chouté li! Ciyé!
M'ap pouté li! Ciyé!
Moin di c'ou bagaille grand mouse! Ciyé!
C'ou bagaille grand mouse! Ciyé! [Ex. 110]

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* That is to say, the eyes should see and the mouth should be closed.
† An alcoholic drink.

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I say it belongs to the old man! *Ciyé!* *
It's the old man's thing! *Ciyé!*
I say it's the old man's affair! *Ciyé!*
It's the old man's thing! *Ciyé!*
I say I'll look for it! *Ciyé!*
I'm going to take it! *Ciyé!*
I say it belongs to the old man, *Ciyé!*
It's the old man's thing, *Ciyé!*

Another burlesque of a quarrel concerns a mother who has sent her daughter down to the river to do the washing. Some question arises as to whether the girl went down to the river at all, or whether she went elsewhere. There is implicit suggestion that the girl may have been at a rendezvous. The mother and the girl argue back and forth:

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Mais wapé Lanmeri nan dlèwa,	I sent Lanmeri to the water,
Li pas alé!	She didn't go!
Mais wapé Lanmeri nan dlèwa,	I sent Lanmeri to the water,
Li pas alé!	She didn't go!
Mais wapé Lanmeri nan dlèwa,	I sent Lanmeri to the water,
Li pas alé!	She didn't go!
Mais wapé Lanmeri nan dlèwa,	I sent Lanmeri to the water,
Li pas alé!	She didn't go!
Lanmeri ouèl ou té yé?	Lanmeri, where are you?
Li'm té yé!	I was there!
Li'm té yé!	I was there!
Li'm té yé!	I was there!
Li'm té yé!	I was there!
Li'm! [Ex. say]	There!

Most of the scandal songs are fragmentary and tangent, though clear in implication, like this one:

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C'est pas faute moin!
C'est pas faute moin!
C'est pas faute moin!
C'est pas faute moin!
C'est pas faute moin mamman!
C'est pas faute moin!
Gainyain manmè t'ap manché dèyè bien!
Ewa wapé
Gainyain manmè t'ap manché dèyè bien!
Gainyain manmè nan lamer à,
Pannal manvèlle ah, ou! [Ex. call]

It wasn't my fault!
It wasn't my fault!
It wasn't my fault!

* Used as an exclamation.

It wasn't my fault!
It wasn't my fault mother!
It wasn't my fault!
There was a man looking for a bargain!
Ohw wayo! *
There was a man looking for a bargain!
There was a man in the yard,
Carry the news, oh, *eo!* †

Another scandal song, spiced with ridicule, refers tangently to a specific situation and points a moral:

Coulié li yé waille-o! Coulié li yé waille-o!
Coulié li yé waille-o! Coulié li yé waille-o!
Si ou prend yun femme pas vlé lavé pied
Ou pas besoin mandé qui gen li yé! [Ex. 109]

Now she is there, *waille-o!* Now she is there, *waille-o!* ‡
Now she is there, *waille-o!* Now she is there, *waille-o!*
If you take a woman who doesn't want to wash her feet
You don't have to ask what kind she is!

The practice of washing one's feet before an intimacy enters into numerous gossip songs. In the following one, the woman asks her friend Pierre for water to wash with so that she may take advantage of Joseph's absence in the city:

Ba moin dleau nèg' moin pou' moin lavé pied moin!
Mandé dleau mon chè' Pierre pou' moin lavé pied moin!
Mandé dleau pou' moin lavé pied moin!
Joseph danger pas là, l'allé laville oh!
Joseph danger pas là, l'allé laville oh!

Give me water, my fellow, to wash my feet!
I ask for water, my dear Pierre, to wash my feet!
I ask for water to wash my feet!
Joseph who is dangerous is not here, he has gone to the city!
Joseph who is dangerous is not here, he has gone to the city!

Another bit of gossip with perhaps a more graphic account of the woman's deceit tells what happens in Achélo's house when he isn't home:

Viré do' allé!
Oh viré do' allé!
Achélo viré do' allé!
Viré do' allé!
Oh viré do' allé!

* Exclamatory.
† Exclamatory.
‡ Exclamatory.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Achélo viré do' allé!
A la papa viré ga'çon entré nan chamb'!
A la papa viré ga'çon monté cabaa! [Ex. 110]

Turns his back and goes!
Oh, turns his back and goes!
Achélo turns his back and goes!
Turns his back and goes!
Oh, turns his back and goes!
Achélo turns his back and goes!
When papa turns, a man goes into his room!
When papa turns, a man climbs into his bed!

But a note of sympathy for Achélo creeps into the last stanza:

Viré do' allé!
Viré do' allé!
Achélo ou pas nan rence oh!

Turns his back and goes!
Turns his back and goes!
Achélo, you are not in the joke, oh!

In the following song, a young man confesses to having despoiled a girl and blemished the family's reputation, but he tells the father and mother not to worry about it.

Bonjou' bonjou' Manman Sono,
Fille ou c'est perdu.
Bonjou' bonjou' Papa Sono,
Ti fille ou c'est perdu.
Pé, ma ba ou l'a'gent.

Good evening, good evening Mother Sono,
Your daughter is ruined.
Good evening, good evening Father Sono,
Your little daughter is ruined.
Don't say a word, I will pay you for it.

An elderly gentleman named Alman fails to come out of his adventure with the same self-assurance, and the community takes full note of the details:

Alman allé bambilé,
Alman allé bambilé,
Alman allé bambilé,
Li retou'né pied cassé!
Pas pa'lé parole çila.
Si ou pa'lé parole çila
Gain yun grand mouse
Qui va facher!

Alman went on a spree,
Alman went on a spree,
Alman went on a spree,
He came home with a broken foot!
Don't say a word about it.
If you say anything about it
There is an old gentleman
Who will be angry!

[P 148]

13. Comments on the Mighty: Political Songs

* 533 538 626 178 The African-style song of social criticism has found no worthier subjects than the historic political figures of Haiti. There is no doubt that the African slaves used this art form to express their feelings toward the white masters as they had used it to comment upon the behavior of their own chiefs and fellow tribesmen. The worthy leaders were praised in song; the unworthy were castigated and their sins, failures, and social misdemeanors publicized in folk songs. By the beginning of the [569] nineteenth century, slavery had come to an end in Haiti. The deep democratic sense of human dignity had outlasted the colonial masters and emerged tempered and sharp. The songs of criticism became not * 533 538 626 178 666 only comments upon political figures but campaign propaganda as well. They dwelt upon the accomplishments or faults of the candidates for political office. Friendly songs sought out every virtue, and invented others, in the man or woman being praised. Unfriendly songs lashed out and lacerated or poked biting fun at the subject, not even sparing his physical deformities.

* 533 538 [666] Yet the political songs are more than statements of merit or fault. Cumulatively they are a kind of folk history of Haiti. No political aspirant ever went unsung by his peasant army, or unridiculed by his opponent's followers. The songs the people sang about their heroes and [173] their enemies recall events and details that formal history has forgotten or ignored. The memory of the folk song is powerful and long. Some of the recollections go back more than a century.

175 412 [643] History books tell us that in December, 1843, Major Charles Hérard aîné Rivière was elected to the office of the presidency, and that a new constitution was drawn up by the Constituent Assembly. The new constitution was an accomplishment of the liberal and democratic forces of the nation. It guaranteed certain civil rights to the people. It provided that judges be elected instead of appointed, abolished life terms for

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

presidents, and emphatically declared the army to be within and under the law. 175 642

The new President, finding his office without the prerogatives he had expected it to have, openly complained of the restraints imposed on him by the new constitution. He broke campaign promises he had made to the peasants in the south and stirred up antagonisms on every side. Finally, while he was on a military expedition in the Spanish part of the island, revolution broke out at home. His army was beaten by the Dominicans, too, which completely shattered his morale. He fled by ship to Jamaica, the traditional refuge of outgoing Haitian presidents. In memory of his administration the peasants sang: 175 643 669 533* 539* [648]

Rivière Président gainyain zyeux vairon!
Li dit l'ap piyé l'armé Bélanton!
Piyé lévé trésor!
Piyé lévé trésor!
Piyé lévé trésor!
Yo voyé Lambam depuis Lowinsor!

La Constitution cé trouva Colombe
Quand yo voit pays soufri trop misère!
Li dit yo fait comme Henry!
Li dit yo fait comme Henry!
Li dit yo fait comme Henry!
Pou' fai sang coulé pou' rangé pays!

Colonel Déro soldat Diplaro
Marché fanfaron comme un grand fantin!
Li cré qui li té roi!
Li cré qui li té roi!
Li cré qui li té roi!
'Pagnol chasse li, li couri con chien qui prend frai charogne!

President Rivière was cross-eyed!
He said that he was going to pillage Belanton's army!
Loot for treasure!
Loot for treasure!
Loot for treasure!
They sent everyone from Lowinsor to Lambam!

The Constitution was founded by Columbus
When the country suffered too much misery!
He said he would do like Henry [Christophe]!
He said he would do like Henry!
He said he would do like Henry!
Make blood run to poison the countryside!

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From Colonel Déro to Private Diplaro,
They marched with fanfare, a great army of foot soldiers!
He thought that he was king!
He thought that he was king!
He thought that he was king!
The Spaniards chased him, he ran like a dog after fresh carrion!

175 Forty-five years later, in 1888, there was a big political rally in Port-
539 au-Prince. The two presidential candidates were General Séide Télé-
666 maque and Déus Légitime. Their supporters clashed near the palace,
686 and Télémaque was killed in an exchange of gunfire. Légitime naturally was accused of having murdered his rival, though his supporters would not believe that he had committed such a crime. Evidence for a trial was entirely lacking, and Déus Légitime became president. But feeling ran
* [533] high, and the followers of Télémaque began to sing:
* [539]

Écoutez chers amis l'histoire de Légitime!
Assassin de Séide, et lui est président!
Écoutez bien l'histoire, le gens du nord marchaient
Sur Port-au-Prince un fois pou' vengé la mort de Séide!
Allez au diable, bandit Déus!
Échappez vous, ingrat Déus!
Si vous perdre le temps, Déus,
Florvil vous feura fusillé!

Listen my friends to the story of Légitime!
Assassin of Séide, and he is President!
Listen well to the story, the people of the north will march
On Port-au-Prince one day to avenge the death of Séide!
Go to the devil, bandit Déus!
Escape, ingrate Déus!
If you lose time, Déus,
Florvil will have you shot!

Légitime had this possibility clearly in his mind. And the next year,
[669] when Florvil Gélin Hippolyte marched from the north with an army of *cacos* (peasant troops who hired out to political aspirants), Légitime hurriedly boarded a steamer in the harbor and sailed for Jamaica. Séide Télémaque was considered avenged, as the army bugles still bear witness. For now when the bugle plays reveille it is supposed to be saying:

* [539]

Séide Télémaque, Légitime has fled!
Séide Télémaque, Légitime has fled!

175. The new President, Florvil Hippolyte, died in office in 1896. J. N.
643 Leger, a Haitian historian, tells soberly of Hippolyte's end in the following words.

For some time the President, who was sixty-nine years old, had not been in good health, and disregarding the friendly warning of those who were interested in his welfare he refused to give up his hard work and to take the rest of which he was in sore need. Against the advice of his doctor he decided to undertake a long journey to Jacmel. He started on the 24th of March, 1896, at three o'clock in the morning, but before he even had time to leave Port-au-Prince, he fell from his horse dead in a fit of apoplexy, at a short distance from the executive mansion.[1] 175 643

The legend of Hippolyte's death passed on in song is not nearly so dispassionate. It is told that Hippolyte was going out on a drastic punitive trip to Jacmel, where there were rumblings of political opposition and revolution. Among other things, the President was going to seize the powerful Vodoun priest Mérisier, regarded as a powerful force in the opposition. Hippolyte also had sworn to reduce Jacmel to ashes and wipe out the entire population except one male and one female to repopulate the land. As he prepared to leave on his mission, his wife and his son stood by the door to see him off. 533* 539* 173 643

Li lévé Mardi bon matin, Li fai sélé cheval à li. En montant sa cheval li, Panama li sorti tombé.	He arose early on Tuesday morning, He saddled his horse. As he climbed on his horse, His hat came off and fell.
L'Hérison rélé "Papa," Li dit'l, "Papa à moin, Panama ou sorti tombé, Cé déjà youn mauvais signal."	L'Hérison * called out, "Papa!" He said to him, "Father, Your hat has come off and fallen. That is already a bad omen."
Li répond ni, "Pitit à moin, Moin déjà met' l'armée déhors, L'armée moin déjà nan portaille. Y faudra que moin parti."	He replied to him, "My child, I have already sent the army ahead, My army is already at the city gate, I have to go."
Arrivé sou Pont Gentil, Li tombé sans connaisance. Yo voyé rélé Doctor Jules, "Vin sauver Florvil Gélin!"	Arrived at Pont Gentil, He fell unconscious. They sent for Dr. Jules, "Come to save Florvil Gélin."
Doctor Jules tomba à genoux. Li rélé Manman Ste Anne, Li rélé St. Augustin, "Vine sauver Florvil Gélin!"	Dr. Jules fell on his knees. He called Mother St. Anne, He called St. Augustin, "Come to save Florvil Gélin!"
Ste Anne dit, " 'l faut mouri." St. Augustin dit, " 'l faut mouri." Li rélé St. Jacques Majeur "Vine sauver Florvil Gélin!"	St. Anne said, "He has to die." St. Augustin said, "He has to die." He called St. Jacques Majeur, "Come to save Florvil Gélin."

* Hippolyte's son.

[1] [Léger, Haiti, Her History and Her Detractors. Cf p. 353, Category 116. -- Analyst]

*533 Mérisier rété Jacmel,
*539 Li souqué baksor à li.
173 Li conné ça qui gainyain.
643 Tout ti trou déjà bouché!

Mérisier waited at Jacmel.
He shook his sacred rattle.
He knew what was going on.
All the small holes were filled.*

Victoire dit con ça,
Quand Florvil ta va mourit
Li tap fai youn belle soirée
Avec tout ti gens la yo.

Victoire said
When Florvil dies
She will hold a beautiful party
With all the young people.

CHORUS

En allé Dodo!
En allé Dodo!
En allé ce soir
Caille la belle Victoire!

CHORUS

We are going to dance! †
We are going to dance!
We are going this evening
To the house of beautiful Victoire! ‡

The legend of Hippolyte's falling hat is preserved in another folk song called "Panama'm Tombé":

Panama'm tombé,
Panama'm tombé,
Panama'm tombé; ça qui dèyè
Ramassé li ba moin!

My hat fell down,
My hat fell down,
My hat fell down; whoever is behind,
Pick it up for me!

*533 Mérisier, the Vodoun priest whom Hippolyte regarded as an enemy,
*539 was not pleased with the rumors and talk about him that was going the
173 rounds in the capital. His displeasure is recorded in a protest song with
643 a familiar theme:
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Mérisier yo vini ga'dé moin pou' y'allé pa'lé, wo wa é!
Mérisier yo vini ga'dé ça pou' y'allé pa'lé ça!
Kénan moin yo wè!
Kénan yo séré nan mal!
Mérisier pas là, sonné ochan wa wa é!

Mérisier [says] they come to see me to go away and talk, *wo wa é!*
Mérisier [says] they come to see it and go away to talk about it!
What is mine you see!
What is yours you evilly hide!
Mérisier isn't there, sound the salute, *wa wa é!*

173 Seven days after Hippolyte's death, General Simon Sam was elected
643 to the presidency. His friends and his enemies had different things to say
*533 about him. One song makes a tart comment on Sam's administration.
*539

* That is, the affair was finished.
† *Allé dodo* literally means "to go to sleep," but there was a dance called Allé Dodo.
‡ Hippolyte's young wife.

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A la youn président,
C'est Tirésius Augustin Simon Sam.
Si tout té con ça,
Haiti ta fini! [Ex. 111]

There was a president,
He was Tirésius Augustin Simon Sam.
If they were all like him,
Haiti would be finished!

In 1902 General Nord Alexis became the chief executive of Haiti. His abilities and accomplishments are still being debated, but he appears to have been a rather lovable old man whom everyone called by the affectionate term Uncle. His administration was fairly stable and prosperous—as prosperity is known in Haiti—and in large measure peaceful. When his election was confirmed, the people were convinced that the nation was in for a period of law and order, and that the constant threat of cacos and brigandage would come to an end. One of the election-year songs goes:

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[533]*
[539]*

Nous crions vive, c'est pou' l'armé du Nord!
Tintin cila ça va fini!
Nous crions vive, c'est pou' soldats du Nord!
Tintin cila ça va fini!
Tintin cila, tintin cila, tintin cila va fini!
Bassin Vodoun, Bassin Vodoun, Bassin Vodoun c'est pou' nous! [Ex. 112]

We cry long live Nord's army!
The chaos will be ended!
We cry long live Nord's soldiers!
The chaos will be ended!
The chaos, the chaos, the chaos will be ended!
Bassin Vodoun,* Bassin Vodoun, Bassin Vodoun is for us!

One of the serious problems confronting Nord Alexis after his election was that of a disappearing national currency. Haitian paper money was circulating elsewhere in the West Indies and in South America and was becoming increasingly scarce in Haiti itself. Nord Alexis called in all the old currency and issued new, with the happy result that large quantities of money were again seen in the Republic. The common people who made the songs seem to have been very grateful:

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[539]*

Alexis Nord Papa ou bon chef oh!
Ou ba nous moné, ou ba nous papier!
Alexis Nord Papa ou bon chef oh!
Ou ba nous moné, ou ba nous papier!

* Probably a place name.

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Nous pas mandé ou anyien!
Nous pas mandé l'a'gent enco'!
Papa Nord ça nous ta mandé oh chef,
C'est bamboche nous mandé ou! [Ex. 113]

Alexis Nord, Papa, you are a good chief, oh!
You gave us money, you gave us paper!
Alexis Nord, Papa, you are a good chief, oh!
You gave us money, you gave us paper!
We don't ask you for anything more!
We don't ask you again for money!
Papa Nord, only one thing we are going to ask you, chief,
It is a big celebration we ask for!

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The president's wife, Çéçé, seems to have been very proud of him and very sure of his talents. When the army bugles blow a general assembly call, they are supposed to be saying:

Çéçé té dit Alexis Nord grand moune nan tout corps li!
Çéçé té dit Alexis Nord grand moune nan tout corps li!
Çéçé té dit la quitté pour voir l'heure li vlé!
Çéçé té dit Tonton Nord grand moune nan tout corps li! [Ex. 114]

Çéçé said Alexis Nord is a thoroughly fine man!
Çéçé said Alexis Nord is a thoroughly fine man!
Çéçé said he will quit his office whenever he sees fit!
Çéçé said Uncle Nord is a thoroughly fine man!

Another bugle call, with words attributed to Nord's wife, contains a note of complaint:

Çéçé said *waille!*
Çéçé said that, said that!
Çéçé said if you don't have any money you can't have a woman!
Çéçé said *waille!*
Çéçé said that, said that!
Çéçé said we are working our guts out!
Çéçé said *waille!*
Çéçé said that, said that!
Çéçé said Alexis Nord is president!

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Çéçé was not the only one in Haiti who had confidence in Nord's staying power. One popular song of the period goes:

Alexis Nord Papa,
Bondieu qui metté ou là!
Consolidé là yo
Qui vlé ba ou traka!

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Alexis Nord, c'un bon Papa!
Ou pas metté ou pas manyien!
Pinga ou manyien, pinga ou manyien!
Pinga ou manyien Alexis Nord! [Ex. 115]

Alexis Nord, Papa,
It is God who put you there!
Take care of those
Who wish to make trouble for you!

Alexis Nord is a good papa!
You didn't put him there, you can't take him away!
Don't try to remove him, don't try to remove him!
Don't try to remove Alexis Nord!

Nord Alexis remained as president until 1909. He was then more than 175
eighty years old, and he planned to turn the government over to General 643
Jean-Gilles, who would carry on the policies of the administration. But 669
Antoine Simon, an assembly delegate from the south, had other plans.
He marched on Port-au-Prince with an army of three hundred cacos,
who sang: [533]* [539]*

Tonton oh cher, Antoine pas nen betise oh!
L'apprend l'armée du sud, cher,
L'a fai ou marché zigzag!
Débor débor débor!
Nèg' Nord mandé fusillé!
Débor débor débor!
Nég' Nord mandé corigé!

Dear Uncle, Antoine is not joking!
He brings the army of the south, my friend,
He will make you go zigzag.
Débor débor débor! *
Nord's men are asking for gunfire!
Débor débor débor!
Nord's men are asking for a lesson!

After Nord Alexis had vacated the palace and embarked for Jamaica, Antoine Simon became president. Historians often refer to the period that followed as the "Epoch of Ephemeral Presidents." Simon was not in the palace long before a man named Cincinnatus Leconte was successfully stirring up a new caco movement in the north, and people were singing: [533]* [539]*

* Probably "outflanked."

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Antoine Simon pressé oh pou' allé!
Ou pas tendé l'armée Leconte Gonaïves? [Ex. 116]

Antoine Simon, you'd better leave!
Haven't you heard Leconte's army is at Gonaïves?

In August, 1912, Leconte marched on the capital, and Antoine Simon sailed for Jamaica. General Leconte was duly elected to the presidency; but less than a year after he took office a terrific explosion wrecked the palace, killing Leconte, his son, and a number of militia. It was believed by many that this disaster was an act of vengeance by Antoine Simon:

Clairon sonnin, m'mandé ça qui gainyain
C'est Chapuzette qui débordé encore.
Maribaroux min li vini encore,
Ça'l vin' chaché, li vin' mandé revanche.

Nan Ouanaminthe fusil pas té tiré,
Qui raison ça pou' yo té fait pillage?
Bourriques, mulet' jusqu'à feuilles tôle, Chapuzette,
Tout ça passé au prix de trois centimes.

Machetes Leconte pis raide passé jalap,
C'est avec ça Chapuzette bai médicine.
Si ou vlé conné comment bai "vent-main-nez,"
Mandé Oreste avec Antoine Simon.

Antoine Simon té dit avant'l parti,
Li ta va quitté yun bomb nan mitan yo.
Lè l'éclatté, lè-à la va Kingston,
La marré rein'l pou'l ri peuple souvrain.

Aux Cayes du Fond m'tendé Mapou Simon,
Nan Léogane m'tendé Mapou Danpisse.
Lè nou rivé na wè ça qui gainyain,
Couis couvri couis, Antoine viré sou dos.

REFRAIN

Honneur à Chapuzette, St. Juste avec Delphin,
Ducasse et Corvoisier, vive Cincinattus.

The bells ring, I ask what is going on?
It is Chapuzette now who has revolted.
But Maribaroux he comes again,
What he is looking for is revenge.

In Ouanaminthe the guns are quiet,
What was the reason for this pillage?
They have carried off the donkeys, mules, and even the iron roofing,
Everything that was worth more than three centimes.

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Leconte's soldiers are stronger than a *jalap*,*
It is with them that Chapuzette gives medicine.
If you want to know how to give the "stomach-hand-nose" †
Ask Oreste and Antoine Simon.

Antoine Simon said before he left
That he would leave a bomb in the middle of the palace.
When it went off he was already in Kingston.
He will pay for laughing at a sovereign people.

In Aux Cayes du-Fond, I heard of the Mapou Simon,
In Léogane I heard of the Mapou Danpisse
When we arrive there we'll see what will happen.
Bowl covers bowl, ‡ Anteine will turn over on his back.

REFRAIN

Honor to Chapuzette, St. Juste and Delphin,
Ducasse and Corvoisier, long live Cincinnatus.

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Two more presidents—Tancrede Auguste and Michele Oreste—divided the next eighteen months between them. Two caco movements to remove Oreste started simultaneously, one under the leadership of Davilmar Théodore, the other under the Zamor brothers, Charles and Oreste. The Zamor cacos first chased Théodore's army into the mountains and then marched on the capital. Oreste Zamor was elected to the presidency on a reform program, which quickly evaporated into thin air. One song describes the arrival of the President's brother Charles and his "Réform" at the gates of Port-au-Prince, where a crowd of enthusiasts had gathered: [668]

Attention la Réform c'est jeunes jens Port-au-Prince,
C'est jeunes jens Port-au-Prince, la Réform viré dos ha yo.
Yo lèvé Mardi bon matin, l'habillé tout en blanc,
L'habillé tout en blanc pou' y'al entré Charles Zamor.
Al entren Port-au-Prince la Réform débordé,
La Réform débordé, la Réform viré dos ha yo.

Hail the Reform! It is the young men of Port-au-Prince,
The young men of Port-au-Prince, and the Reform turns its back on them.
They arose early Tuesday morning, dressed all in white,
They dressed all in white to meet Charles Zamor.
At the gates of Port-au-Prince the Reform reversed itself,
The Reform reversed itself and turned its back on them.

The Zamors and the reform administration held the palace less than nine months before Davilmar Théodore's cacos were marching on the capital singing the song that other presidents had heard.

* A violent purgative.
† That is, upset stomach, hand on the nose.
‡ That is, force replies to force.

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Oreste Zamor, pressé pou' embarké!
Oreste Zamor, pressé pou' embarké!
Ou pas tendé l'armée Davilmar rentré pou' Gonaïves?

Oreste Zamor, you'd better embark!
Oreste Zamor, you'd better embark!
Haven't you heard Davilmar's army has entered Gonaïves?

Gonaïves seems to have been the crucial point for invading armies from the north. Whenever revolutionary troops entered this town, the president holding office prepared to leave. True to the tradition, the Zamors sailed for a foreign shore, and Davilmar Théodore became the new executive. Although his tenure was to last only three months, there was much excitement when he entered the capital:

A la théatre, à la bamboche!
Pou' djolle musique à droit à gauche!
La ville embrende ça qui gainyain,
C'est Davilmar kapé rentré!
Davilmar, dur, dur!
Manchete caco pas nen betise!
Papa Da dur, dur!
Manchete Leconte pas nen betise!
Davilmar, dur, dur!

Celebrations and dancing!
Tooting horns to right and left!
The city is in an uproar,
It is Davilmar who is coming in!
Davilmar, hard, hard!
The cacos were nothing to laugh at!
Papa Da is hard, hard!
Leconte's army was nothing to laugh at!
Davilmar is hard, hard!

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[662]

In 1915 came the United States intervention in Haiti, with the prime objective of freezing out German commercial and political interests. A president named Guillaume Sam had assassinated his political enemies in the prison at Port-au-Prince and had, in turn, been dragged out of the French consulate and killed. The benefits of the American occupation of Haiti are hotly debated to this day, though it is about thirty years since the United States military forces were withdrawn. Some Haitians think the occupation was a good lesson in politics, and that Haiti benefited in many ways. Others continue to look upon it as an overt expression of American diplomacy by force. One of the early assignments of the U.S. Marines in Haiti was the destruction of the

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roaming bands of cacos, generally regarded as bandit elements. Caco chiefs were imprisoned or killed as outlaws, though much of their activity was directed against the American occupation rather than the civil government. Many of the injustices of the occupation were the result of inadequate understanding of the Haitian people and their way of life. There was much unspoken bitterness against the occupation forces, and in some popular songs the Marines were referred to by the peaceful peasantry as "cacos in khaki." During President Borno's administration the people in the north were singing:

> Grand Prevost ou pas tendé cacos Bayé Bouteille?
> Grand Prevost n'allé wè cacos Bayé Bouteille!
> Ala kilé nen dé nations:
> Americains dévant, cacos deuxieme!
>
> Grand Prevost, didn't you hear the cacos are at the Bottle Gate?
> Grand Prevost, we are going to see the cacos at the Bottle Gate!
> Now we have two species:
> The Americans are the worst, the cacos come second!

When President Borno's tenure of office came to an end, it was felt in some quarters that Madame Borno was taking the prospective change of residence very hard:

> Madame Borno ça ou gainyain ou apé crié?
> Ou té tou conné palais a parti pou' ou!
> Madame Borno ça ou gainyain ou apé crié?
> Ou té tou conné yun jour pou' oté laissé!
>
> Madame Borno, what is the matter, why are you crying?
> You always knew one day you would have to leave the palace!
> Madame Borno, what is the matter, why are you crying?
> You always knew one day you'd have to give it up!

In 1930 Sténio Vincent came into office. He was a generally unpopular executive who managed to hold on to the presidency by suppressing the political opposition. When he was elected, the progressives were hopeful, and his supporters were singing: "Sténio Vincent bon garçon." But public sentiment shifted. Times were hard for the Haitian people during the Vincent administration. The darker citizens felt Vincent was "too light" to have their interests at heart. They were violently aroused, too, by his gingerly handling of the massacre of Haitians in the Dominican Republic in 1937. During his administration there were a number of abortive caco demonstrations and an unsuccessful revolt of high-ranking army officers. But in the early days a Meringue

But in the early days Merinque

175 643 piece called "Merci Papa Vincent" was very popular. According to the
* 533 song, the noteworthy achievement of the President was the law he
* 539 sponsored to drive the "Syrians" out of the retail trades:
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Nous conné moune qui raimé peuple là,
C'est Président Vincent!
Nous conné moune qui raimé peuple li,
C'est Président Vincent!
Nous conné moune qui raimé peuple li,
C'est Président Vincent!
Nous conné moune qui raimé peuple,
C'est Président Vincent!
A nous rélé, merci Papa Vincent!
A nous rélé, merci Papa Vincent!
A nous crié, merci Papa Vincent!

Qui moune qui bai commerce en detail là?
C'est Président Vincent!
Qui moune qui bai commerce en detail là?
C'est Président Vincent!
Qui moune qui bai commerce en detail là?
C'est Président Vincent!
A nous rélé, merci Papa Vincent!
A nous rélé, merci Papa Vincent!

We know the man who loves the people,
He is President Vincent!
We know the man who loves the people,
He is President Vincent!
We know the man who loves the people,
He is President Vincent!
We know the man who loves the people,
He is President Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!

Who is the man who gave us the retail business?
It is President Vincent!
Who is the man who gave us the retail business?
It is President Vincent!
Who is the man who gave us the retail business?
It is President Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!

175 This song soon became the "official" musical theme of the President and
178 was heard in the carnival festivities, at salon dances, and at military
643 functions. But as discontent with Vincent grew, less adulatory versions
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of "Merci Papa Vincent" sprang up in the side streets of Port-au-Prince. One rendition (as translated) went: 175 178 643 533* 539*

> We know the man who loves the people,
> He is Sténio Vincent!
> Who made my wife leave me to go to her family?
> He is Président Vincent!
> Who made my skin show through my worn out pants?
> He is Président Vincent!
> Who is the man who made my house fall down?
> He is Président Vincent!
> Oh, we call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!

So widespread did the burlesques on the original become that the tune itself became suspect. One never knew which versions were running through the minds of the listeners.

In 1950, during the administration of President Estimé, there was a new public works program which provided employment for a good many needy people in the Port-au-Prince area, and a coumbite song of the period went: 175 643 533* 539* [653]

> Président Estimé waille, oh!
> Quembé pays yà pas lagué oh!
> C'est Bondieu nans ciel là qui ba moin président!
> C'est Bondieu nans ciel là qui ba moin président cila!
> Quembé pays yà pas lagué oh!
> Port-au-Prince oh tourné Havane oh! [Ex. 117]

> President Estimé *waille*, oh!
> Hold on to the country, don't let go, oh!
> It is God in heaven who gave me this president!
> It is God in heaven who gave me this president!
> Hold on to the country, don't let go, oh!
> Port-au-Prince, oh, is turning into a Havana, oh!

When Estimé was overthrown by a military coup, the melody lingered on, but the name of the protagonist was changed. [669]

No president of Haiti has served his term of office, either for good or bad, without providing the raw materials for a folk song. His heroic deeds, his failures, and his foibles are as likely as not to be perpetuated in the music of the people. 643 533*

As for the presidency itself, it is held in the highest esteem. A rousing salute song, reminiscent of the Marseillaise, sends every new president-elect on the way to the palace: [539]*

> Président passé là,
> L'ap monté au gouvernment!

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Président passé là,
L'ap monté au gouvernment! [Ex. 118]

The President passes by,
He is taking over the government!
The President passes by,
He is taking over the government!

*533 758 646 It is not only great political events that are perpetuated in songs like these; many are the comments on little people in the government, such as a legislator named Daniel Fignolé. One of Fignolé's deeds, probably apocryphal, which is recorded in folk song has to do with an act of justice in a hospital in Port-au-Prince. According to the song, Fignolé entered the hospital and found the rich patients on beds and the poor patients on mats on the floor. He promptly ordered the rich patients placed on the floor and the poor patients placed on the beds. (A few years later, after serving as president for less than three weeks, Fignolé became a political exile in the United States.) [643]

*533 499 496 There is also an old song about a government engineer named Louis Gentil Tippenhauer—or Ti 'Benhauer (Little 'Benhauer), as he was commonly known. Tippenhauer is now an old man, but when he was young he was in charge of the construction of a section of the Haitian narrow-gauge railway. There was an accident in which a smoking locomotive jumped the tracks. Though small in stature, Tippenhauer had a forceful personality. He quickly assembled his workmen, and with chains, ropes, and crowbars they wrestled the locomotive back on the rails. The song commemorating the dramatic event was born at the height of the rescue operation. It is marked with concern for the feelings of Engineer Tippenhauer:

*[539]

Ti 'Benhauer rélé, "Porté cord pou' marré li!"
Ti 'Benhauer rélé, "Porté chaine pou' enchainé li!"
Si ou marré'l la laguè, devant Bondieu!
Pau' diab', pau' 'Benhauer, machine na deraillé!
Pau' diab', pau' 'Benhauer, machine na deraillé!

Ti 'Benhauer shouts, "Bring a rope to tie it!"
Ti 'Benhauer shouts, "Bring a chain to chain it!"
If you tie it, it unties itself, before God!
Poor devil, poor 'Benhauer, the machine is derailed!
Poor devil, poor 'Benhauer, the machine is derailed!

It is more than half a century since the affair of the derailed locomotive, and the railroad itself is not much longer for this world. But the song is still sung, and mostly by people who have no personal knowledge of the man named Tippenhauer.

[P. 163]

14. Songs of Bravado and Boasting

Among the secular songs are many which have boasting, bravado, or challenges as their central theme. Usually this kind of song is playful in tone, though sometimes there may be a serious or even an ominous undercurrent. Often the challenges are directed toward, or concern, djabs and *démons*. Just as often they involve persons of great prestige and power, perhaps the president himself. These songs say, in effect, "Who's afraid of the lou-garo?"—or of the president, or of the demon of such-and-such a mountain, as the case may be. Sometimes the bravado motif is implicit, but as often as not the singer challenges the world to take him before some feared personage, human or supernatural, and see what will happen. 533* 538

In one such song, the singer boasts that he is ready to be conducted before a fearful and malevolent deity named Jean Zombie. As though to assure the listeners that he is in his right mind, the challenger emphasizes that he has not been drinking anything intoxicating and is perfectly sober: 533* 539* 775

Rwo! Jean Zombie oh vini wè moin, conduit'm allé!
Rwo! Jean Zombie oh vini wè moin, conduit'm allé!
M'pas bwè tafia pou' nou fait tintin!
Devant hounfor moin conduit'm allé!
Jean Zombie oh wie wa conduit'm allé!
M'pas bwè tafia pou' nou fait tintin! [Ex. 119]

Rwo! Jean Zombie, oh, comes to see me, take me to him!
Rwo! Jean Zombie, oh, comes to see me, take me to him!
I haven't drunk tafia, I am not drunk!
I am at my hounfor, take me to him!
Jean Zombie, oh wie wa, take me to him!
I haven't drunk tafia, I am not drunk!

Another song challenges the community to take the singer to face the president—right into the president's parlor. The fact that the president 533* 539* 643

533 533 643 named in the song has been dead for years does not seem to matter very much:

Mèsé'm allé ch parlour!	Take me to the parlor!
Mèsé'm allé!	Take me!
Mèsé'm allé!	Take me!
Mèsé'm allé ch parlour Bernal	Take me to Bernal's parlor!
Mèsé'm allé ché! [Fa. 120]	Take me, ché!

533 533 625 Sometimes the challenge is directed to a more lowly level of authority, such as the gendarme:

> Gendarme, mèsé'm nan bureau!
> Rwa, gendarme ché! [Fa. 121]

> Gendarme, take me to the police station!
> [illegible]

158 683 579 [183] [626] Haitians are notable for their restraint from physical violence. During holiday celebrations it is not uncommon to see men who have drunk enough tafia to make them act up. Some of them may even be morose and bellicose. But the disturbances of the peace more often than not are verbal. So long as the first blow is not struck, the social pressures against violence operate effectively. But physical assault against an individual—a push, a blow, a slap—is an affront to personal dignity which relieves the victim of the social restraints and gives him the right to bodily revenge. I have seen waterfront rows, fierce and vocal, in which no one but the participants showed much interest. But should one man shove or strike another, the spectators would immediately interfere, for that single physical contact would have removed the barriers to the worst violence. Sometimes at carnival time a man assumes the guise of belligerence. Such a bully may roll up one trouser leg to indicate he is challenging all and sundry to a fight. Usually, passers-by move aside good-naturedly when he approaches. He is not taken seriously; but neither is he challenged, except by another man in the same frame of mind. When two men with rolled trouser legs meet, there may be a verbal encounter, possibly from opposite sides of the street, to the general entertainment of the bystanders. It is usually a serio-comic affair. Some of the folk songs memorialize occasions on which a man has publicly spoiled for a fight, real or imaginary. This song comments briefly on a man named Çalira, who looked for trouble:

533 533 683 579

> Woy woy woy!
> Woy woy woy!
> Woy woy woy!
> Çac bien arrangé corps yo!
> Mène en bataille là!

Çalin Çalin çal
Mîne en bataille lîl
Ço qui fin arangé ceuye pal
Mîne en bataille lîl [En. 120]

Way way way!
Way way way!
Way way way!
Those who can't fight, take care of yourselves!
Take me into the battle!
Çalin, this Çalin!
Take me into the battle!
Those who are delicate, take care of yourselves!
Take me into the battle!

Another battle cry in song goes:

C'est nous même, c'est nous même!
C'est nous même, c'est nous même!
Pas wi'm déjà gous Nôg' rwa!
Na mainpain djab lîl

It is me myself, it is me myself!
It is me myself, it is me myself!
Don't you see I am a big man, rwa?
I will hold that devil!

In the following song an aggrieved man declares he is strong as a bull, and warns his enemy to beware.

Anou mayain ti glisé nou c'est lîl oh!
Anou mayain ti glisé nou c'est lîl oh!

I'll fix you, treacherous fellow,* I am a bull, oh!
I'll fix you, treacherous fellow, I am a bull, oh!

Even a successful game of dice is the subject of bragging:

Paul foi,
Oh paul bête,
Paul un beauté!
Paul foi,
Oh paul bête,
Paul un beauté!
Yr é soir frappé zes,
Non fai trois beau! [En. 121]

More than sweet,
Oh, more than handsome,
More than a beauty!
More than sweet,
Oh, more than handsome,
More than a beauty!
Last night I played dice,
I made three aces!

* *Ti glisé*, literally "slippery cards," means a person who is treacherous.

[P.166]

15. Secret-Society Songs

577 Secret societies were more numerous in Haiti, as they were in other parts of
191 the New World where West Africans settled in large numbers. The institution of the secret society was strong in various parts of West Africa from which the slaves came. The tradition was particularly notable among the tribes of Nigeria. In the New World it offered to slaves and to freed Negroes an opportunity for social organization and fraternal relationships which otherwise had been pretty well shattered by the nature of slavery and the profuse admixture of cultures. A number of elderly Haitians have
[548] suggested that it was the Haitian secret societies rather than the Vodoun and Congo cults which fomented underground resistance and slave revolts against the French in the last years of the eighteenth century.

174 At this late date it is difficult to reconstruct much of the secret-society
178 picture. Such groups as may have survived until recently did so in vitiated
575 and changed form. They have been supplanted in large measure by the
[476] *société*, a kind of mutual-aid association with both economic and recreational functions. It is exclusive, but not irrevocably so, and it is not secret. The société often corresponds roughly with the membership of a hounfor, or cult temple.

575 Old people still talk about true secret societies, however. There was a
178 Moundongue secret society, separate from the Moundongue cult, whose
266 members were recruited from the survivors of the Moundongue tribe and
173 their descendants. Other secret societies were not based on tribal affiliation but were recruited from the population at large. One such group was the Vinbindingue, also known as the Blinbindingue and the Balbindingue. Its practices were feared. According to tradition, the Vinbindingue was predatory and held cannibalistic rites, as did other groups such as the Moundongue Society, the Cochon Rouge (the Red Pig Society), the Zezuberaupe, the Cochon Gris (the Gray Pig Society), and the Calinda
578 Society. How much of their reputation for cannibalism was deserved is

[Herskovits, Dahomey, I P.256. Cf. P.353, Category 116. -- Analyst]

How much of their reputation for cannibalism was deserved is a matter of speculation. Bizarre tales told by the colonists, as well as rumors and legends propagated about the societies by nonmembers who feared them, did result in a body of folklore which portrays these groups as malevolent. The societies themselves, no doubt, often supported such beliefs to increase the awe in which they were held. 173 595 266

In modern Haiti, however, there is no secret or fraternal society of the kind that probably existed in prerevolutionary days. Nor is there anything comparable to the Abakwa, or Carabali, an Ibo secret society that has survived in Cuba.[2] 178 575

Curiously enough, the most significant noncult organization in Haiti today is the Masonic order. Yet it has not remained distinct from the cults but has become interwoven with them. Many Vodoun and Congo services have rites or dances that are designated as Mazonne (Masonic). Houngans often feel that affiliation with the Masonic order offers distinction and prestige for the hounfor that the ordinary cult center does not have. 575 794

As for the Calinda, the Cochon Rouge, the Cochon Gris, the Zeaubeaup, the Vinbindingue, and the Moundongue societies, they appear to survive in name rather than in fact. The rumors and tales go on, as they do about zombies, devils and lou-garos. It is mostly at carnival time that their names are heard. A Mardi Gras band, appropriately costumed, may herald itself as a Calinda or a Cochon Rouge group. It will sing songs it regards as appropriate to the kind of effect it is trying to achieve. Such groups are not taken seriously. They are merely part of the carnival fun. But to members of older generations they do recall tales about the secret societies that met under the limbs of the mapou tree by torchlight to conduct their nocturnal affairs. 178 575

The songs that follow are reputed to belong to the Calinda, Vinbindingue, and Zeaubeaup societies; but they are infected with a frivolous quality which suggests they may have been heard for the first time in the carnival celebration rather than in the dark shadows of the mapou. 533* 575

One of the legends concerning the Balbindingue, or Vinbindingue, is that of the dancing drum. The theme is a special one, but it is related to other stories about dancing calabashes in the Calbasse ritual and about dancing hoes. This song describes a gathering at such a dance: 533* 539* 575

Balbindingue!
C'ex lì n'homme mwé yé!
Cimiziri monerre!
Balbindingue!
C'ex yun seul tambour qui dansé!
Pardon mon plez!
Balbindingue!
C'ex lì n'homme mwé yé! [Ex. 124]

2 [See Courlander "Abakwa Meeting in Guanabacoa", Journal of Negro History, XXIX (1944), 461ff. Cf. Cat. 116, P. 353. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1952) 1960 SV3 Ha21 SV3

Rabindingue!
It is here my men are!
Cemetery thunder!
Rabindingue!
It is a single drum which dances!
Pardon, my father!
Rabindingue!
It is here my men are!

It is told of the Vinbindingue that their members are sometimes required to subject themselves to the ordeal of rubbing hot peppers in their eyes, which results in acute pain and temporary blindness. According to some explanations, this is one of the "tests" of a Vinbindingue man. Red, inflamed eyes are a standard symbol of malevolence. One informant explained that the Vinbindingue members blind themselves so that they cannot see what kind of flesh they are eating:

M'm pété m'pas wè ladans ma mètè pimen!
M'm pété m'pas wè ladans ma mètè diri! [Ex. 125]

My eyes are blind, I can't see, I've put pepper in them!
My eyes are blind, I can't see, I've put fire in them!

Another Vinbindingue song is a humorously macabre dialogue between the members of the society and a victim. He is asked whether he would prefer to be quartered or eaten whole. Each time they are about to act according to his wishes he changes his mind:

Dévor a déquanier ça ou pèlè? Déquanier!
C'est cancha dévoré ça ou pèlè?
Mèin'm souri déquanier!

C'est cancha dévoré ça ou pèlè?
Dévor a déquanier ça ou pèlè?
Mèin pèut dévoré!

Dévor a déquanier ça ou pèlè?
Dévor a déquanier ça ou pèlè?
Mèin pèut déquanier! [Ex. 126]

Devoured or quartered, which do you prefer? To be quartered!
Cut up or devoured, which do you prefer?
I've been quartered enough!

Cut up or devoured, which do you prefer?
Devoured or quartered, which do you prefer?
I'd sooner be devoured!

Devoured or quartered, which do you prefer?
Devoured or quartered, which do you prefer?
I'd sooner be quartered!

2: Courlander 9-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

A brief song identifies by name a man who has participated in a Vin-bindingue affair: 533* 539* 266 575

> Y'r é mi' Cimila mangé ti mouse yo!
> Y'r é mi' Cimila mangé ti mouse yo! [Ex. 127]
>
> Last night Cimila ate little children!
> Last night Cimila ate little children!

A Calinda song speaks more tangently of its business. It refers to doing "washing," a very special kind of washing that requires no bluing: 533* 539* 575

> Waille waille waille, savonné sans méné 'dlgo!
> Waille waille waille, savonné sans méné 'dlgo! [Ex. 128]
>
> Waile waile waile, wash without bluing!
> Waile waile waile, wash without bluing!

And a Zezuhexup song complains that a ouanga (a black-magic bundle) has been swallowed by a snake. It seems to specify that some of the members of the group are zombies, the animated dead: 533* 539* 575 775

> L'Arrahaye mous là mous là!
> L'Arrahaye mous là mous là!
> L'Arrahaye, coulève vaté ouanga moin!
> Ti gi'gnou mon zombexuqu, waille waille mes zombexuqu!
> Ti gi'gnou mon zombexuqu, waille waille mes zombexuqu!
> Ti gi'gnou mon zombexuqu, waile waile mes zombies!
>
> Arrahaye I was there I was there!
> Arrahaye I was there I was there!
> Ai Arrahaye a snake swallowed my ouanga!
> Young men, my zombexuqu, waile waile my zombexuqu!
> Young men, my zombexuqu, waile waile my zombexuqu!
> Young men, my zombexuqu, waile waile my zombies!

[P. 170]

16. Folk Tales: Bouki, Malice, and Jean Saute

538 In the folk tales and legends of Haiti there has been a powerful assimilation from many cultures. There are stories of European and African derivation, and countless others that are to be found in one form or another in the Middle East, Asia, and throughout the Americas. The precise origins of many of these stories probably will never be known. Some of them are as ancient as the Panchatantra and have variants in India, Indonesia, Korea, Egypt, West Africa, and northern Europe. It is likely that many tales with this broad distribution came into Haiti by way of Europe, along with the French, Spanish, and English settlers. But numerous stories told in Europe are well known in West and Central Africa too. The folk tales of the world have an astonishing universality. The adventures of the West African hare and spider are closely paralleled in the tales of the American Negro Br'er Rabbit, the hare of Thailand, and the mouse deer of Indonesia.

538 In Haiti today, as in other islands of the West Indies, there is an endless repertoire of folk stories of many kinds—animal tales; trickster tales; stories about magicians, kings, and princesses; *contes* fables; and stories that account for the beginnings of things, the behavior of certain animals, [177] and their physical appearance. There are European dragons and devils, and beasts of the African forests. Some of the stories are long and episodic, some are so brief—even curt—that they have lost their original core. They may point out moral or ethical values or, more commonly, strike completely amoral levels in which the humor depends upon acts that in real life would be regarded as cruel. Like the folk songs, the tales are often used to express the democratic equality of the small person with the great. In many instances it is the small man who triumphs over the powerful and rich. In the Bouki-Malice cycle it is usually the little wily trickster who wins over the larger and physically stronger opponents.

None of the Haitian tales are meant to be *read*, for storytelling is a

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

dramatic art. The narrator interprets his characters as he goes along, 538
providing different voices, singing, giving humorous or tragic emphasis, and changing his facial expressions to convey the temper and mood of the protagonists. He imitates the movements and actions of the animals. In print, his broad gestures and sly intimations are all lost. The Haitian tale is a vehicle for the actor, who plays his theme according to circumstances and the responsiveness of his audience. The storyteller, like the musician, is likely to be found almost anywhere. But there are storytellers of special renown, known as *mait' contes*—who may be called upon to entertain young people at a party or Nine Night gathering. They have seemingly endless repertoires and can go on indefinitely telling tales about Bouki and Malice, or Jean Saute and Jean L'Esprit. In former times, [178] the mait' conte used an instrument such as the *banza* to intersperse his [533] narration with music. Old people recall that trough zithers and other in- [534] struments of African design were once employed for this purpose.

Anansi, the spider trickster-hero and buffoon of West Africa, has survived 171
in Haiti as well as elsewhere in the Antilles. In Jamaica and other British 538
islands, Anansi has become Brother Anansi, Sister Nancy, or just plain Nancy. Although he usually figures in tales dealing with other animals, he has more and more come to assume a human form, as he has in Haitian tales. But in Haiti the name Anansi is only rarely heard. Anansi's cleverness and stupidity are now attributed to two characters named Ti Malice and Nonc' Bouki, both of whom are regarded as human beings.

In West Africa the spider hero directed his mischief against the great and strong creatures of the forest, now one, now another. In Haiti, Ti Malice, who has inherited Anansi's wit and guile, pits himself mostly against Bouki, who has inherited Anansi's stubborn nature and his pompous stupidities. Ti Malice (whose first name probably comes from the Spanish *tío*, uncle) has become the slick sharpy of the city, the clever and predatory "operator," the practical joker. Like his spider prototype, Ti Malice has humor as well as cunning, though he is often remorseless. Bouki is full of self-confidence but is slow-witted and an easy prey for Ti Malice. He is thought of as a clumsy peasant of the mountains. He has a constant desire to pit himself against Ti Malice, and a capacity for involving himself in utterly fantastic situations which appeal to the Haitian sense of the ridiculous.

In many respects this team of comedians resembles another pair known in South and Central America—Tío Conejo (Uncle Rabbit) and Tío Coyote; both are pranksters, but the rabbit usually manages to outwit the coyote. Ti Malice and Bouki also figure in the universal tar-baby story, and in many other tales known in the United States in which Br'er Rabbit

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

171 538 and Br'er Fox are the protagonists. Many of these tales, like the characters themselves, have West African prototypes, though others seem to have been created out of the workaday substance of Haitian life. They are not, however, essentially children's tales. Some of them involve risqué or ribald escapades.

Among the Haitian tales are numerous themes which stem directly from African lore, such as the hoe that worked by itself in the fields; the single grain of seed corn which, when drawn across the ground, grew an entire field of maize; and the pot that boiled without fire. There are many remnants also of the African tale in which a "tail feather" of an elephant is required for some magic purpose. There is a pursuit which follows the acquisition of the elephant hairs, and the pursued person saves himself with three magical eggs. When he throws one on the ground, a huge river springs up behind him. When he throws down another, a forest appears behind him, and so on.[1] The elephant's tail feather is regarded as a very powerful protective charm in many regions of West Africa. That the memory of it should continue in Haiti so precisely, although there are no elephants, is striking.

177 538 Although Haitian folk tales are abundant and are well loved, over the years they have tended to become more and more simple. The episodic European tales of kings and princesses and monsters that have been taken over are, generally, of a naïve kind without moral or intellectual significance. They are interesting for the twists and turns of fate and for momentary laughs.

The tale of Grandmother's Bath is a case in point. In this story, Jean Saute (Stupid John) is left at home to care for Grandmother while Jean L'Esprit (Smart John) goes to market. Jean Saute puts Grandmother in a tub and pours boiling water over her, killing her instantly. He looks at the grimace on her face and concludes that she is enjoying it immensely; so he sticks her pipe in her mouth and pours more water over her. When Jean L'Esprit returns, Jean Saute is very proud of himself. But Jean L'Esprit discovers that Grandmother is dead. The brothers then pack their belongings to go to the city. There follows a series of strange and bizarre adventures. Jean L'Esprit sends his dull-witted brother back for something he has forgotten; Jean Saute misunderstands and brings the door off the house. Throughout their adventures Jean Saute carries the door with him. When they get to the forest they climb into a tree to sleep for the night, Jean Saute carrying his door along. While they are there, a convocation of devils (*djob*) takes place under the tree. Jean Saute has to urinate, and he does so into the middle of the convocation. The devils shout gleefully that it is wine from heaven and try to catch the water. Eventually the door

[1] [Footnote appears on P. 353, Category 116. --Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

falls from the tree and frightens them away. The two brothers continue on their way and come to a country where it is always night—a great dragon with seven heads has swallowed the sun.* The two brothers kill the dragon, with the help of Jean Saute's stupidity. They cut into the monster and find a silver box, which they open, releasing the sun from captivity. The news goes on ahead. When they arrive at the city, the king, in appreciation, offers them the choice of his daughters. Jean L'Esprit, as might be expected, chooses the youngest and most beautiful. Jean Saute turns them all down and asks to marry the king's cook. 172 538

This story seems to be one of the most extended tales in Haitian lore, unless one groups all the Bouki-Malice stories together in a single cycle. However, most European-style tales (Beauty and the Beast and Jack and the Beanstalk, for instance) have suffered considerable deterioration. In the process of adaptation, such tales lost much of the original detail and decorative motif that made them interesting to the European. They became stark and brief, fragmentary anecdotes about kings, devils, and snakes.

With some few exceptions, the African stories have undergone less change: the Singing Tortoise (found later in this chapter) and Anansi's Tug of War, for example. But even in the tales of African origin there has been simplification to the extent that many of them are mere fragments; in some even the central point itself has been lost. The Bouki-Malice tales, counterparts of the Anansi stories of West Africa, have lost the contemplative tone found in the African originals. Moral points of the kind commonly made in African tales have almost entirely disappeared and are to be found only in proverbs. If the good wins over the bad, that is simply an accident of fate; for the bad wins over the good just as frequently. Death and sadism are constant themes. But the prime conflict remains the smart against the stupid, and the small and weak against the large and powerful. 171 533

Like kindred tales elsewhere in the West Indies and in the United States, many of the stories have standard beginnings and endings. The storyteller begins by saying "Cric," and his audience replies, "Crac." When he comes to the end he usually uses a variant of: 538

"I was there and saw it. And Malice gave me a kick and sent me all the way here to tell you about it." Or: "So I have run all the way here to tell it to you." Or: "That's the story, and if you don't believe me, tafia will never kill you." Or: "They gave me a blow, and I have just come to my senses." Or again: "So he kicked me over the house and here I am." These formula endings often provide a dramatic punch for the children who are listening.

* [Foot note appears on p. 353, Category 116—Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

539 The stories that follow are "typical" tales, recorded in various parts of Haiti.

THE PRESIDENT WANTS NO MORE OF ANANSI

Anansi and all his smart ways irritated the President so much that the President told him one day: "Anansi, I'm tired of your foolishness. Don't you ever let me see your face again." So Anansi went away from the palace. And a few days later he saw the President coming down the street, so he quickly stuck his head into the open door of a limekiln.

Everyone on the street took off their hats when the President passed. When he came to the limekiln, he saw Anansi's behind sticking out. He became angry and said, "Qui bounda ça qui pas salué mwé?" (Whose behind is it that doesn't salute me?) Anansi took his head out of the limekiln and said, "C'est bounda 'Nansi qui pas salué ou." (It's Anansi's behind which didn't salute you.)

The President said angrily, "Anansi, you don't respect me."

Anansi said: "President, I was just doing what you told me to do. You told me never to let you see my face."

The President said: "Anansi, I've had enough of your foolishness. I don't ever want to see you again, clothed or naked."

So Anansi went away. But the next day when he saw the President coming down the street he took his clothes off and put a fish net over his head. When the President saw him he shouted, "Anansi, didn't I tell you I never wanted to see you again clothed or naked?" And Anansi said, "My President, I respect what you tell me. I'm not clothed and I'm not naked."

This time the President told him, "Anansi, if I ever catch you again on Haitian soil I'll have you shot."

So Anansi boarded a boat and sailed to Jamaica. He bought a pair of heavy shoes and put sand in them. Then he put the shoes on his feet and took another boat back to Haiti. When he arrived at Port-au-Prince he found the President standing on the pier.

"Anansi," the President said sternly, "didn't I tell you that if I ever caught you on Haitian soil again I'd have you shot?"

"You told me that, Papa, and I respected what you said. I went to Jamaica and filled my shoes with sand. So I didn't disobey you because I'm now walking on English soil."[3]

[Footnote appears on P. 353, Category 116.--Analysis

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

BOUKI AND TI MALICE GO FISHING

Criel Crael

539

Bouki and Ti Malice went into the fishing business together. Ti Malice painted the name St. Jacques on the front of the boat, poured some rum over it and christened it. Bouki took some rum and poured it over the back end of the boat and christened it Papa Pierre. They went out to sea and caught fish. When they came home, Ti Malice counted the fish. "There are eighteen fish," he said. "How shall we divide?"

"I'll take one and you take one until they're gone," Bouki said.

Malice said: "There are so few fish it isn't worth while. You take all the fish today and I'll take all the fish tomorrow."

"Oh no," Bouki said, "I'm not totally stupid. You take all today and I'll take all tomorrow." So Malice took all the fish.

They went out again the next day, and when they came home Malice counted again and said, "There are so few, you take all today and I'll take all tomorrow."

"Oh no," Bouki said, "you're trying to cheat me. You take all today and I'll take all tomorrow." So Malice took all.

The next day they went out again. And when they were returning Ti Malice said, "*Waille,* such a small catch. I'm glad it's your turn to take all today."

Bouki became angry and said, "Are you trying to break my head? I'm no fool. You take the catch today and I'll take it tomorrow."

Every day Ti Malice took the whole catch. Every day Bouki got nothing. Malice got fatter and Bouki got thinner. Every day it was this way, until one day Bouki looked at Malice and saw how fat he was getting. It came to him suddenly that he had been cheated. He shouted at Ti Malice and began to chase him. They ran through the peristyle of the town hounfor, and Ti Malice said "cata-cata," imitating the sound of a drum, and called on Ogoun and Damballa to save him.

They ran through the church, where the priest was holding a service. Malice crossed himself and said a quick prayer, without stopping for a second, and ran out again. They ran, ran, ran, and Bouki was getting closer. Ti Malice came to a limekiln with a hole in it. He tried to crawl through, but he stuck at the hips. No matter how hard he tried, he couldn't get through. Finally Bouki came along. He stopped and looked in all directions. There was no Ti Malice, only the behind facing him from the limekiln.

Bouki put on his best manners, and said, "Behind, have you seen Ti Malice?"

539 The behind replied, "Take off your hat when you address me."

Bouki took off his hat to Ti Malice's behind. He said politely, "Why are you smiling at me? I only asked if you saw Ti Malice?"

"I smile when I please," the behind said.

"Have you seen Ti Malice?" Bouki said.

"Push me and I'll tell you," the behind said.

Bouki pushed.

"Harder," the behind said.

Bouki pushed harder.

"Harder yet," the behind said.

Bouki gave a big push, and Ti Malice went through the hole into the limekiln. And that was the way he made his escape.[1]

BAPTIZING THE BABIES

Cric! Crac!

Malice and Bouki made a coumbite together. First they were going to cultivate Malice's garden; afterward Bouki's garden. So they took their machetes and started to work cultivating Malice's peas and yams.

Malice said, "Did you hear someone calling me?" Bouki replied, "I didn't hear anything."

They chopped weeds some more, and Ti Malice said, "Someone is calling me." He put down his machete and went over the hill. He went to Bouki's house and took down Bouki's honey gourd. He sat in the shade of Bouki's house and drank as much honey as he could. Then he hung the gourd up and went back to his field, where Bouki was working, working, working.

"Who was it?" Bouki asked. "Oh, those people wanted me to be godfather to their baby." Bouki asked, "What did you name the baby?" Ti Malice said "I named him *Coummencé* (Beginning)."

They chopped more weeds, and Malice said, "Excuse me, someone is calling me again." He put down his machete and went over the hill back to Bouki's house. He took down the honey gourd and sat in the shade and drank as much as he could. Bouki was still in Malice's garden, working, working, working. Malice put the honey gourd back and returned to his garden.

"Some important people wanted me for godfather," Malice said. Bouki asked, "What did you name the baby?" Ti Malice answered, "I called this one *Dé Fois* (Two Times)."

They worked some more, and Malice said, "*Waille*, they are calling me again." He put his machete down and went over the hill to Bouki's house

[1] [Footnote appears on P. 353, Category 116.--Analyst]

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and got the honey gourd down again. He drank, drank, drank until it was all gone. Then he came back. 539

Bouki had finished weeding Malice's garden. "What did you call this baby?" Bouki asked. "Oh, this one was the last, so I called him *Ai Bobo* (Finish)," Malice said.

Malice's garden was all cultivated. He said to Bouki, "Now we will cultivate your garden." But Bouki was exhausted from doing Malice's work as well as his own. He said, "I'll have to let my own weeds grow. I'm done in."

He went home and took his honey gourd down for a drink, but it was empty. He was so angry he kicked me all the way here to tell you about it.*

UNCLE BOUKI GETS WHEE-AI

Uncle Bouki went down to the city to market, to sell some yams, and while he was there he got hungry. He saw an old man squatting by the side of the road, eating something. The old man was enjoying his food tremendously, and Bouki's mouth watered. Bouki tipped his hat and said to the old man, "Where can I get some of whatever you are eating?" But the old man was deaf. He didn't hear a word Bouki said. Bouki asked him then, "What do you call that food?" Just then the old man bit into a hot pepper, and he said loudly, "Whee-ai!" Bouki thanked him and went into the market. He went everywhere asking for five centimes worth of whee-ai. The people only laughed. Nobody had any whee-ai.

He went home thinking about whee-ai. He met Ti Malice on the way. Ti Malice listened to him and said, "I will get you some whee-ai." Malice went down and got some cactus leaves. He put them in a sack. He put some oranges on top of the cactus leaves. He put a pineapple on top. Then a potato. Then he brought the sack to Bouki. Bouki reached in and took out a potato. "Tha's no whee-ai," he said. He reached in and took out a pineapple. "That so whee-ai," Bouki said. He reached in and took out oranges. "That's no whee-ai," he said. Then he reached way to the bottom and grabbed the cactus leaves. The needles stuck into his hand. He jumped into the air. He shouted, "Whee-ai!"

"That's your whee-ai," Malice said.

BOUKI AND TI BEF

Bouki and Ti Bef (Calf). The calf's mother had died. He was an orphan. Bouki was crossing the fields one day and he saw Ti Bef grazing all by himself. Bouki's mouth watered. He wanted to eat Ti Bef. So he said, "Ti

* [Footnote appears on p. 353, Category 116.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

539 Bef, I haven't seen you for a long time. Where do you live these days?" But the calf knew Bouki. So he said, "I sleep over there on top of the hill."

That night Bouki took a sack and crept to the top of the hill; but he couldn't find Ti Bef. Ti Bef was sleeping in the woods. Bouki looked all night without finding him, and when he went home his children said, "Where is Ti Bef?" Bouki just slapped them and told them to keep quiet. The next day Bouki saw Ti Bef grazing, and he asked, "Ti Bef, where were you last night? I dropped by and I didn't find you home."

Ti Bef said: "Oh, last night I found a place in the woods. That is where I sleep now."

The next night Bouki searched in the woods, but he didn't find the calf. The next day, he said to Ti Bef, "Oh Ti Bef, I just happened to drop by the woods last night, but I didn't find you home. Where were you?" And the calf replied, "Last night I found a nice place by the spring. That's where I sleep now."

So the next night Bouki took his sack and searched by the spring, but he didn't find Ti Bef. He began to get very angry.

When he saw Ti Bef the next day he said, "Ti Bef, you have been telling me lies. Where do you really live?" Ti Bef said to him, "None' Bouki, I really live in that cave there in the mountain."

The cave belonged to a tiger. That night Bouki took his sack and went up to the cave. He said, "Are you there?" And the tiger replied, "Of course I'm here." So Bouki went into the dark cave, took hold of the tiger, and tried to put him in the sack. But the tiger knocked Bouki down. He tore his clothes off, he bit him, and he mauled him. Bouki ran home. His children wanted to know where Ti Bef was. Bouki said, "Woy, that Ti Bef is a devil! He is so small and weak in the daytime, but at night he's as ferocious as a tiger! So if you happen to meet him anywhere, show him the greatest respect."

I asked Bouki about it myself, and he kicked me from there to here to tell you about it.

JEAN SAUTE MAKES THE KING'S DAUGHTER LAUGH

One day Jean Saute's mother sent him to the city to work as an apprentice with a storekeeper. After Jean had worked with the storekeeper for a month, the man gave him a small goat for his wages. Jean carried the goat home on his head. When the neighbors saw him coming they all had to laugh at Jean's stupidity, and Jean's mother was very embarrassed. "That's no way to do with a goat," she scolded. "You tie it on a cord and put it on the ground."

But the next month the storekeeper paid Jean in money. So Jean tied a string to the money and dragged it on the ground till he got home. Jean's mother was angry. "That's not what you do with money," she said. "You put it in your pocket!" 539

When Jean got back to the city the king was offering a reward to anyone who could make his daughter laugh. It was said that the king's daughter had never laughed since she was born.

The storekeeper paid Jean off with a donkey the next time. Remembering the scolding his mother had given him, Jean tried to put the donkey in his pocket. Just then the king's daughter passed. When she saw Jean Saute trying to put the donkey in his pocket, she had to laugh. And when the king heard about it he gave Jean Saute the reward.

THE SINGING TORTOISE

A tortoise was crawling along slowly one day when he came to a fine garden where many birds were eating. They were eating the peas and millet of a farmer named Pierre Jean. The turkey, the chicken, the pigeon, the duck, and even the *récinole* [nightingale] were there. They invited the tortoise to eat with them. But he replied: "Oh, no. If the farmer who owns the garden surprises us, you can fly away. But where would I be? He would catch me and beat me."

The birds said, "We will give you wings." And each of the birds took some of its feathers and attached them to the tortoise. So he came and ate with them. But while they were eating, the récinole called out, "Habitant 'rivé! Habitant 'rivé!" (The farmer is coming! The farmer is coming!). And in a panic they all grabbed the feathers they had given the tortoise and flew away. Tortoise crawled, crawled, crawled; but he was too slow. Uncle Pierre Jean caught him. He was going to beat him. But the tortoise began to sing:

> Colico Pierre Jean oh!
> Colico Pierre Jean oh!
> Si'm capab' m'pito volé, enhé!
> C'est regrettant ça, m'pas gainyain zel!
>
> Colico Pierre Jean, oh!
> Colico Pierre Jean, oh!
> If I could I would fly, *enhé!*
> What a tragedy, I have no wings!

The farmer was amazed to hear a tortoise sing. He liked the tortoise's song, and he asked him to sing again. Tortoise sang his song again. Pierre Jean took the tortoise home and put him in a box. Then he went to

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539 Port-au-Prince and asked the people to make bets with him. He said he would bet them any amount of money he had a tortoise that could sing. Some people bet one gourde, some people bet five gourdes. And then the President came along in his carriage. When he saw the crowd he stopped and said, "Ça nous gainyain icite?" ("What is going on here?")

When he heard about Pierre Jean's singing tortoise, the President said, "This man is a Ti Malice; there aren't any tortoises that sing. I will bet you one hundred thousand gourdes." But Pierre Jean said, "I can't bet that much. I am a poor man." The President said, "Nevertheless, you are a vagabond trying to cheat the people. I will bet you one hundred thousand gourdes. If you lose the bet I will have you shot."

Meanwhile Madame Pierre Jean heard rumors that her husband had a talking tortoise in the house. She searched until she found the tortoise, and she asked him to sing. "I can only sing by the edge of the river," the tortoise said. So she took him to the edge of the river. "My feet must be wet," the tortoise said. So she put him in the water by the bank of the river. And then he crawled into the water quickly and swam away. Madame Pierre Jean heard the crowd coming up to the house from the city. She was frightened. She ran home, and on the way she caught a small lizard. She put the lizard in the box and closed the lid. When the men from the city arrived, Pierre Jean took them to the box. The President said, "Let the singing begin."

Pierre Jean said then, "Sing, tortoise, sing." The lizard replied from inside the box, "Cric!" Pierre Jean said again, "Sing, tortoise sing!" And the lizard replied, "Crac!" The President was angry and said, "You call that singing? Open the box!" They opened the box and found only the small zandolite. The President said, "You are a cheat. Take this man down to the river to have him shot." So they took Pierre Jean down to the river and stood him by a tree to shoot him. And just at that moment the tortoise stuck his head out of the water and sang:

Colico Pierre Jean oh!
Colico Pierre Jean oh!
Si ou capab' ou pito volé enhé!
C'est regrettant ça, ou pas gainyain zel!

Colico Pierre Jean, oh!
Colico Pierre Jean, oh!
If you could you would fly, *enhé!*
What a tragedy you have no wings!

"Ah, that is my tortoise!" Pierre Jean said. "Listen to him sing!" And the tortoise continued to sing.

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Colico Président, oh!
Colico Président, oh!
Nonc' Pierre Jean pa'lé trop enhé!
Sotte pas tuyé Haitien, fai li siè!

Colico President, oh!
Colico President, oh!
Uncle Pierre Jean talks too much, *enhé!*
Stupidity doesn't kill a Haitian, it makes him sweat!

When the President heard that, he turned Pierre Jean loose and paid him the hundred thousand gourdes. But it was the last they saw of the singing tortoise.*

FROG, CHIEF OF THE WELL

One time there was a drought, and there was no place for the animals to get water. So God provided a well where all the animals could come to drink, and he put Frog in charge. Frog was to receive the animals who came to quench their thirst. But when the animals came, the frog refused to provide them with water. When the cow came to drink, the frog sang from inside the well:

M'apé mandé ça qui là donc, enhé, ça qui là?
M'apé mandé ça qui là donc, enhé, ça qui là?

I am asking who is there, *enhé*, who is there?
I am asking who is there, *enhé*, who is there?

And the cow sang back:

C'est moin bèf qui nan pi à!

It is I, the cow, at the well!

And the frog replied:

Moin dit bèf allez donc,
Pi à chèche! [Ex. 177]

I say, cow, go away,
The well is dry!

The cow went away and died from thirst. Then the horse came and asked for water, and the frog conversed in the same way with him as he had with the cow:

M'apé mandé ça qui là donc, enhé, ça qui là?
M'apé mandé ça qui là donc, enhé, ça qui là?
C'est moin ch'wal qui nan pi à!
Moin dit ch'wal nen point dleau,
Pi à chèche!

* [Footnote appears on p. 353, Category 116.--Analyst]

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I am asking who is there, *enhé*, who is there?
I am asking who is there, *enhé*, who is there?
It is I, the horse, at the well!
I say, horse, there is no water,
The well is dry!

The horse went away suffering, and he died of thirst. The other animals came in turn: the donkey, the goat, the dog, the cat, and the birds. The frog turned them all away in the same manner, and they suffered and died of thirst.

So, one day, God said: "What is this? I put Frog in charge of the water. I will have to go and see what is the matter." So he went to the well, and when he got there the frog called out:

M'apé mandé ça qui là, enhé, ça qui là?
M'apé mandé ça qui là, enhé, ça qui là?

And God replied:

C'est moin Papa Bondieu qui nan pi à!

It is I, Father God, who is at the well!

And Frog answered:

Papa Bondieu nen point dleau,
Pi à chêche!

Father God, there is no water,
The well is dry!

So God cut off the frog's tail. From that time on, the frog has had no tail; but you still find him in the well.

UN, DEUX, TROIS, CINQ, SIX

In a small village on the edge of a forest there lived a woman with an only son, a hunchback named Jean. She sent Jean into the forest to gather firewood one day. The boy went a little farther in his search than he had ever gone before, and he came upon a clearing in which a crowd of little *djab* (devil) children were playing games. He stood on the edge of the clearing and watched them. As they danced around in a circle they sang:

Un, deux, trois, cinq, six,
C'est con ça ti djab fai ti mi.

One, two, three, five, six,
That's the way little djab make millet.

One of the djab children saw him and invited him to join in the game. So he joined them, dancing the way they did and singing their song. They

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were so delighted with him that they took him to the djab village, which lay deeper in the forest. They told their fathers and mothers about how nice Jean was, and how he played djab games with them. The big djab gathered around and asked him to sing the song for them. He sang: 539

> One, two, three, five, six,
> That's the way little djab make millet.

The djab were so pleased with Jean that they removed the hump from his back and gave him a bag of gold. Jean went home, and when his mother saw he no longer had a hump she was very happy. He told her what had happened, and he gave her the bag of gold.

Next door to the poor woman there lived a rich widow with a spoiled and arrogant boy just Jean's age. His name was Jacques. When the widow heard of the gold Jean had brought home from the djab, she sent Jacques into the forest too. She gave him three empty sacks to fill with treasure, and he went to the clearing where the little djab were playing. They were singing:

> One, two, three, five, six,
> That's the way the little djab make millet.

Without waiting to be invited, he ran forward and said, "What's the matter with you stupid djab, don't you know how to count? The song should go like this:

> Un, deux, trois, QUATRE, cinq, six,
> Djab saute ça yo pas con' fai anyien.

> One, two, three, FOUR, five, six,
> The stupid djab don't know how to do anything.

The djab children stopped their playing. But they took Jacques home to their village and told the big djab, "This boy says we don't know how to do anything." The big djab gathered around and asked the boy to sing for them. Again he sang:

> One, two, three, FOUR, five, six,
> The stupid djab don't know how to do anything.

The big djab frowned and asked him what his empty sacks were for. He told them, "The hunchbacked boy came and you took care of him. I came so you could take care of me."

The djab told Jacques, "We will do something for you, too." And they took the hump they had removed from Jean's back and put it on Jacques' back, and they put rocks in his empty sacks. When he got home, his mother shrieked at the sight of him, but it was too late.

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539 That is why people sometimes warn other people not to be arrogant by saying "Djab saute ça yo pas conné fai anyien."

THE FOUR HUNCHBACKS

Three hunchbacked brothers lived with their father in a village in the deep woods. They were all woodcutters. One day the father, who was an old man, died. When he had been buried and the *gage* had been held for him, the brothers said to each other, "There is no need for us to stay any longer in the woods. Let us go to our brother in the city."

So they dressed in their best clothes and went to the city. They found the shop which their brother owned, and they entered. Their brother, also a hunchback, was not there, but his wife was tending the shop. When they told her who they were, her heart sank. She said to herself, "Now my husband will want to take care of these hillbillies. We'll have to share everything with them!" But she talked nicely as though they were welcome, and she took them to her house and fed them; but she put poison into their food so that they died.

Then she found a man with a boat, and she told him she'd give him twenty-five gourdes if he'd take a body out to sea and dispose of it. So he came to the house, and she showed him one of the bodies. He put it in a sack and carried it down to his boat. He took the body out to sea and threw it overboard. Then he came back for his money. She then showed him the body of the second brother and said, "But you haven't done the work yet. Here is the body just where I left it." The boatman was confused. He was sure he had already done the job. But he put the second body in his sack, lugged it to his boat, and went out to sea with it.

He returned after that to the woman's house, but she said, "What kind of a man are you that wants to be paid before he works?" And she showed him the body of the third brother. The boatman became furious. "So you've come back!" he shouted at the body. "This time you are going out to sea to stay!" And he carted the body down to his boat. This time he sailed far out to sea and disposed of it. "That is the end," the boatman said. "Now I will get my money."

He returned to the woman's house. Night was just falling, and the woman's husband was just returning. When the boatman's eyes fell on him he went into a rage.

"So!" he shouted, "So you're back again! And walking around, too! I'll fix you this time." He leaped upon the woman's husband and killed him, dragged his body down to the sea, and threw it in.

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17. Children's World: Gage Songs and Games

On the night of last prayers for a deceased person, and on other party occasions, children while away the hours until bedtime with special songs and games. Sometimes the games are led by an older member of the family. More often, left to their own devices, the children play unsupervised. It is regarded as fitting that the youngest members of the community should be enjoying themselves while the last rites are being held for one who has recently died. This view is held not merely in regard to children; older people, too, engage in gay activities, such as dancing the Juba. 533 524 764 [535]

Many children's games are known throughout the country, others have only a regional popularity. The games mentioned here are among those played in southern Haiti, mainly in the neighborhood of the capital, Port-au-Prince. 184 524

One favorite is known as Balancé Yaya. The children—as few as four or as many as ten or twelve—crouch on the ground in a circle. Each of them has a stone in his hand, which he strikes rhythmically on the earth as they sing together: 524 [533] [539]

Jésus, Marie, Joseph oh,
Rat li mangé pigeon moin.
Jésus, Marie, Joseph oh,
Rat li mangé pigeon moin.
Rat passé, Rabinette passé,
Fai' ti Marie marché, allé li. . . . [Ex. 129]

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, oh,
The rat has eaten my pigeon.
Jesus, Mary, Joseph, oh,
The rat has eaten my pigeon.
The rat goes by, Rabinette goes by,
Make little Mary walk, go there. . . .

524 On the words *allé là*, each of the players slides his stone in front of another
533 person. There is no fixed direction of rotation, and the stone may be passed to the left or to the right, or even across the circle. This passing of stones continues while the players sing:

539 *Balancé* Yaya,
Yaya oh,
Yaya Madame Mongo,
Balancé Yaya main,
Main lai' prière main,
C'est pour' Yaya,
Balancé Yaya
Yaya oh
Yaya Madame Mongo. [Ex. 129]

Even up, Yaya,
Yaya, oh,
Yaya Madame Mongo,
Even up, say Yaya,
I say my prayers,
They are for Yaya,
Even up, Yaya,
Yaya, oh,
Yaya Madame Mongo.

While this part of the song is being sung, the stones are being passed rapidly this way and that. Players may use only one hand for this purpose, and at some stage one of them finds himself with more stones in front of him than he can dispose of, and he is declared gage, or "is." Then the game begins anew.

524 In another animated game called Thézee, the boys and girls stand in a circle and sing, clapping hands and going through a variety of postures, gestures, and dance steps. It is a sort of "follow the leader" routine. First, one of the group makes rhythmic motions in time to the music, and the other players must do the same thing. The leader may swing his hips, do fancy footwork, posture with his arms, or twist about, and the others in the circle are obliged to imitate him. Then another child gets his turn to set the pace. One of the songs heard with this game is the following, which imitates the voice of the guinea hen:

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Cipan Cimalé
C'est qu mamman'm té dit main,
Cipan Cimalé
C'est qu mamman'm té dit main,
Cipan Cimalé
Ate tain tain Cimalé
Reing taing taing Cimalé
Taink taink taink taink Cimalé
Wa taink taink Cimalé
(And so on, with variations.) [Ex. 130]

Cipan Cimalé
This is what my mother told me,
Cipan Cimalé
This is what my mother told me,
Cipan Cimalé
Ate tain tain Cimalé

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Raing taing taing Cimabé
Tainh tainh tainh tainh Cimabé
Wa tainh tainh Cimabé

For the game called Délina, two chairs are required as props. They are placed a few feet from each other, facing toward the center. Behind one chair is a boy, behind the other a girl. The other children clap their hands and sing:

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Cotd'in pawé, Délina!
Cotd'in viré, c'est Délina!
Mamman mamman, Délina!
Papa papa, Délina!
Mamman mamman, Délina!
Papa papa, Délina!
Cotd'in pawé, Délina!
Cotd'in viré, c'est Délina!
Délina jobé oh jobé, Délina!
Jobé pou' la'gent, Délina! [Ex. 131]

Wherever I pass is Délina!
Wherever I turn is Délina!
Grandmother, Délina!
Grandfather, Délina!
Grandmother, Délina!
Grandfather, Délina!
Wherever I pass is Délina!
Wherever I turn is Délina!
Délina works, oh, works, Délina!
Works for money, Délina!

The two children in the center, at a given signal, begin to move, each circling his own chair. The circling continues, the girl pacing her movements in an effort to avoid meeting the boy face to face. The boy times his movements so that he may meet the girl face to face. If and when he accomplishes his purpose he takes his reward—an embrace—and another couple comes forward to repeat the play.

Another game of the courting variety is called Find a Beautiful Woman. A chair is placed in the center of the play area, and a girl is designated to sit there as the "beautiful woman." She has nothing else to do. The others sing:

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Chach' yan femme qui belle oh!
Sindé, Sindé Macaya!
Chach' yan femme qui belle, hé?
Sindé, Sindé Macaya! [Ex. 132]

Look for a woman who is beautiful, oh!
Sindé, Sindé Macaya!
Look for a woman who is beautiful, hey!
Sindé, Sindé Macaya!

Holding a kerchief in his hand, one of the children marches or dances around the chair of the "beautiful woman." After several trips around, he retires and drops the kerchief in the lap of another player, who comes forward and repeats the performance. Anyone who refuses to pay his respects to the "beautiful woman" is "it."

Some games are of the personal "test" or ordeal kind. In one of them

524 the objective is to refrain from laughing. A player stands in the middle of a circle of seated participants, each of whom in turn gives a laugh of some kind—a giggle, a loud laugh, an ironic laugh, a laugh of ridicule, and so on. If the player in the center cannot refrain from laughing with the others, he loses and someone else takes his place in the middle.

Various kinds of blindfold games go by the name Boulè, or Boulè. In one of them, a blindfolded player moves from one seated child to another, feeling them with his hands as he goes, and trying to identify them by touch. When he guesses correctly, the identified person changes places with him, and the game continues.

In a second form of Boulè, it is the person in the center who can see, and the seated players who are blindfolded. The one in the center moves around the inside of the circle with a kerchief in his hand, pressing it against the lap of each blindfolded player as he passes. Somewhere en route he leaves the handkerchief in a lap. It is so light that it is not easily detected. If a blindfolded person guesses correctly that the handkerchief is in his lap he is freed from the circle and comes to the center. If he guesses incorrectly, it a mark against him.

Still another type of game is based on quick and accurate responses. This one is called Uncle Pierre. Each player in the group is given a name specifying a number of sheep. That is, the first player's name may be Ten Sheep; the next one, Fourteen Sheep; the next one, Seven Sheep; the next one, Nineteen Sheep; and so on.

The "master" of the group begins by saying, "Uncle Pierre went to my farm and took Seven Sheep."

The person named Seven Sheep must reply, "Tomantor."

The "master" asks, "How many sheep did he take?"

And Seven Sheep replies, selecting the name of one of the other participants, "Nineteen Sheep."

The one named Nineteen Sheep replies, "Tomantor."

The "master" call out, "How many sheep did he take?"

Nineteen Sheep answers, "Fourteen Sheep."

Fourteen Sheep answers, "Tomantor."

And so on. If a player answers to the wrong number, or if he gives a name for which there isn't a corresponding player, he loses and is *gage*.[1]

[1] [The description of this game is from Paul, "Les Jeux à gage," Bulletin du Bureau d'Ethnologie, July, 1947, P. 51. Cf. P. 353, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[P. 189]

18. Musical Instruments

The Haitian people have drawn heavily on both Europe and Africa for their musical inspiration. In music, as in other traditions, the country is bicultural. There is, on the one hand, the music of the so-called *élite*—the literate and educated class which is concentrated in the cities—and on the other hand, the music of the peasants, the plantation laborers, and the lower economic groups of the town. The *élite* music is in the European or Western tradition, while the true folk music of Haiti follows, in the main, in the wake of West African musical culture. The instruments of *élite* music are primarily those of Western Europe. The instruments of the folk music of the country are those which can best interpret the mainstream currents of the West African heritage—instruments of African design and function. European-style instruments have infiltrated into the folk music too, but the over-all picture is that of a survival of African musical devices to interpret music cast in an African mold. It is the folk-music instruments which call for examination—the instruments that are made in the villages and tiny huts in the mountains, the instruments on which the significant music of Haiti depends.

The materials from which these instruments are made are usually those found upon the land. If a man wishes to make a drum, he cuts down a tree for the purpose. For material for a bamboo trumpet he goes to the bamboo grove. For a flute, he cuts a reed. Metal is used for making African-style bells, rattles, singing horns, and substitutes for bamboo trumpets.

The drum in its many forms is the most common instrument of all. It is used for dances of all kinds, for cult rites, for work music on the road and in the field, and for assembly calls and signals. Not very many years ago the older people in the south of Haiti still spoke of the "talking drums" they had seen as children.

The craft of drum making is a very skilled one, but the tools are

of drum making is a very skilled one, but the tools are simple: chisels, machetes, and fire. The core of the log is removed by burning and gouging, and the outside is shaped with a machete, or sometimes a hatchet. The wood is selected and processed carefully. Firing of the core of the log depends a good deal on how dry the wood is, for the wood must burn slowly. It is believed that wood cut at the right stage of growth and at the right phase of the moon is resistant to the ever-present powder-post beetles. Mahogany was once favored because it was durable and beetle resistant, even though it was heavy. But in recent decades mahogany has become scarce, and modern drums are made of lighter woods.

Drums made in the nineteenth century not only conformed to the patterns of certain West African prototypes but were also carved and decorated. Some of these old drums are still to be seen, but there are not many left. An ancient carved *assator* drum (previously cited) has fortunately been preserved by the Bureau d'Ethnologie. But between the ravages of the powder-post beetles, age, and the periodic orgies of drum burning by the church and misguided public officials, most of these ancient works of art have long since disappeared. During the American occupation of Haiti—from World War I to 1932—American military personnel also contributed to the mania for drum burning. And as late as 1941 there was a massive, cleric-inspired drive to wipe out these instruments as remnants of *savage* elements in Haitian life.

The effect of this war against the drum was only to improve the manners of the professional drum maker. Drums had become expendable, hence they were made simpler. The carved decorations disappeared. Paint was substituted, and less attention was given to detail. The important thing was to produce a good functional instrument. But the creative instincts of the drum makers sometimes still take over, and many of the modern drums are beautifully proportioned, with delicate geometric patterns carved around the base, or foot. Among certain categories of drums the painted decorations consist solely of the name of the loa to whom the instruments have been dedicated—St. Jacques perhaps, or Papa Pierre, or Erzilie.

Drums differ in design according to the use for which they are intended. The Arada or Vodoun drums are used primarily in connection with the dances and rituals of the Vodoun cult—the cult built around the gods and rites of Arada and Yoruba theology. They resemble closely drums which are used today in Dahomey, Nigeria, and Togoland. They usually come in sets of three. The largest, the *manman* (also called *hounsor* or *hounsongri*), may be three to four feet high. The middle-sized drum, or *second* (also called *grandé* or *mayen*), is about two feet

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 193]

[P 191]

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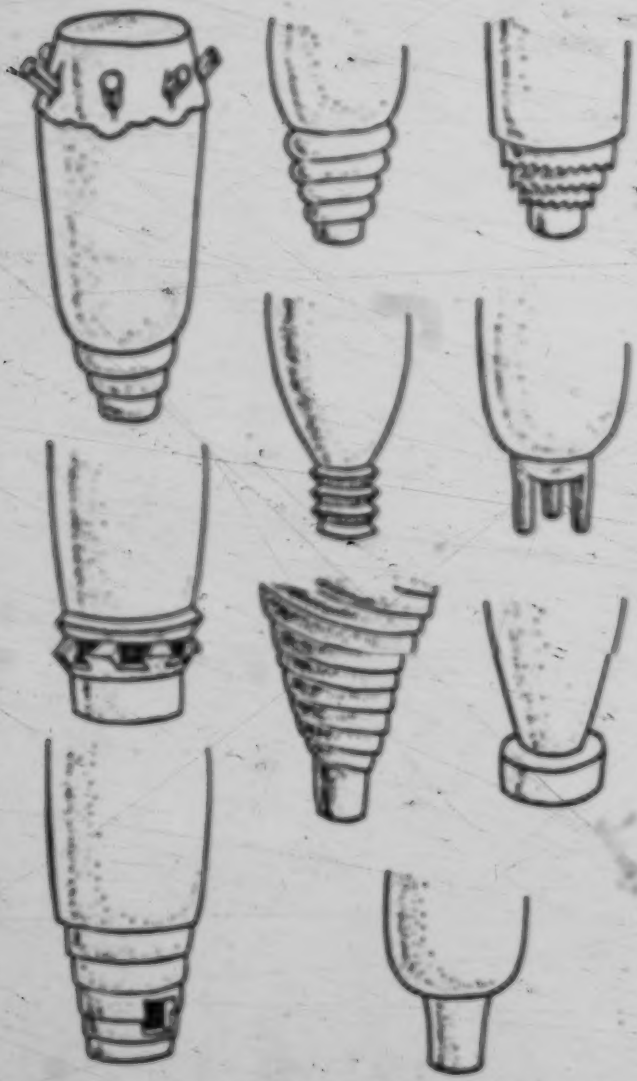
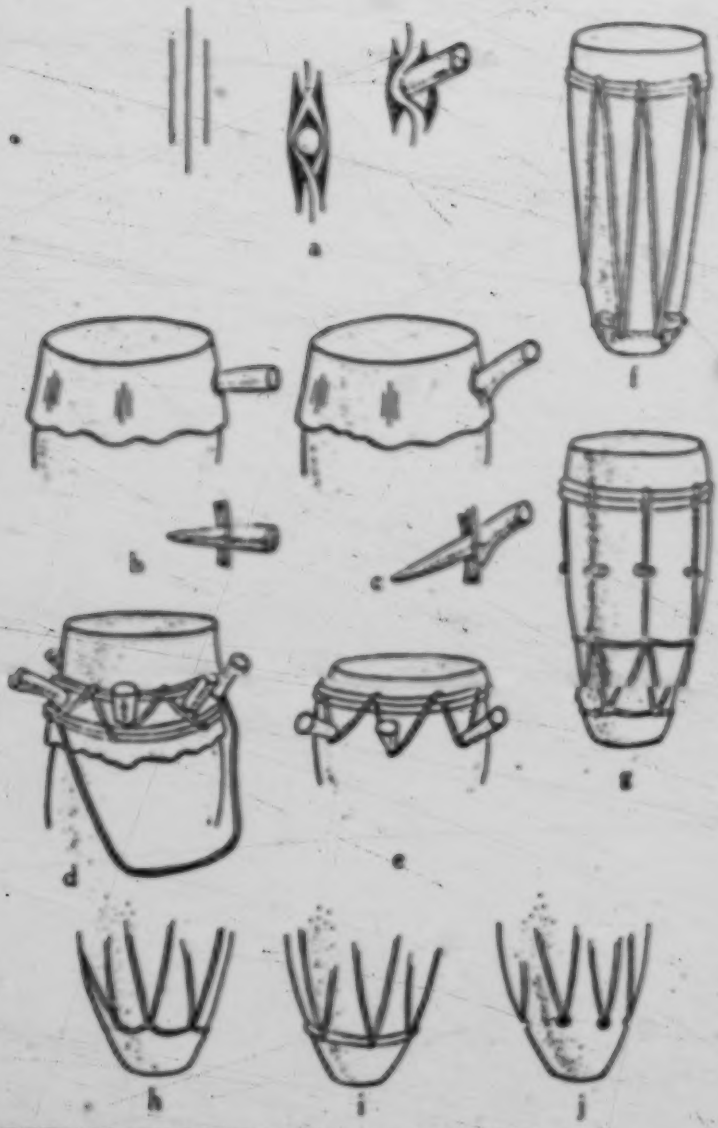


INDIVIDUALITY IN DRUM DESIGNS: Although the Arada or Dahomey-style drum is distinct from those of other "nations" or cults, there is a noteworthy variety of artistic decoration in the carving of the base. Some patterns are found only in certain regions or villages.

[P.192]

534



MOUNTING OF DRUMHEADS: To fasten the Azande drumhead to the drum, three slits are made in the skin over the peg hole, forming two shift strips (*a*; left); peg or hook is inserted as shown in *a*, center and right. *b*, peg mounting. *c*, hook mounting. *d*, traditional pattern for lacing of cord. *e*, Azande drum showing combination of peg and hoop mounting techniques: the skin is fastened around the lower hoop; the upper hoop, laced to the pegs, holds it in place. Congo and Jaba-type mountings are shown in *f* and *g*: in *f*, wooden on the cords is provided by hammering down the wedges at the base; in *g*, the tourniquet method is used. *h*–*j*, three ways of fastening the cords to the base of these drums. In *h*, a cord loop is employed, and in *i*, a wooden hoop. Sometimes holes are provided in the base, through which the cords are laced, as in *j*.

D: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 HaR1 SV3

high. The smallest—the *hula*, or *bélé* (sometimes called *dandan*)—is 534
about eighteen or twenty inches high. They are all called sometimes by the Yoruba name *bata*, originally applied to a two-headed instrument.

Arada drumheads are of cowhide, held in place by hardwood pegs set into the bodies of the drums at an angle. The drums are tuned by [171]
driving in or loosening the pegs. Even the slitting of the skins where the pegs pass through them is African in pattern. In Cuba the drums of the Arada (there called Arara) cult are made in precisely the same way, though they are used in batteries of four rather than three.

In a variation of the peg type of fastening, the skin is attached to a 184
hoop, which, in turn, is held in place by ropes laced to the pegs. Each 534
drum maker has his own preference as to the angle and size of the pegs, the proportions of the drums, and the wood from which they are made. One drum maker near Léogane claimed to be able to identify the region from which a drum came by examination of the pegs and the carvings around the base.

The small Arada drum, the *hula*, is usually "whipped" with two long 534
thin sticks to provide a sharp and penetrating sound. The middle-sized 191
drum is played with one bare hand and a stick. The stick may be straight or bowed. The bowed drumstick is known as an *egida*, the name used for the same type of stick in Dahomey.[1] On infrequent occasions the *mayen* drum is played with two sticks—one straight and one bowed. The large drum, the *mamman*, is played by the most accomplished of the drummers in the orchestra. He plays with one bare hand and one stick, which may be of various forms. It may be straight, have a hook-shaped head, or be mallet-shaped; or it may be the grotesquely twisted stick known as a *bagarite Gaindé*. All these forms are known in Dahomey and elsewhere in West Africa.

The three Haitian Arada drums, supplemented by an African-style 171
bell known as an *ogan* and small gourd rattles (cha-chas), form the 178
standard orchestra for most dances of the Vodoun cult. The *ogan*—the 534
forged iron bell with an external striker—has all but disappeared in 796
recent years, along with the institution of the village forge. In its place one may see any kind of metallic object, such as a hoe blade, a link of chain, or a length of pipe, all of which are referred to by the old name *ogan*. In Cuba the Arada cult preserves the bell, both in single and double form, under the same name. The word *ogan* probably derives from the Yoruba term for this instrument, *ogonon*.

Playing in concert, the three Arada drums produce a range of tones, 533
and the player of the *mamman*—the chief of orchestra—adds to the 534
effect by frequently striking his stick against the side of the drum above

[1] [Herskovits and Herskovits, Suriname Folk-Lore, p. 99 The stick is also known in Suriname. Cf. p. 363, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

534 533 the pegs. High notes are achieved by striking the drumhead near the rim, and low notes near the center.

534 516 The drummers usually sit together on a bench or in chairs at one side of the dance court. The larger and middle drums are slightly tipped to keep their "mouths" open; the *boda* stands squarely on its base and is therefore somewhat muted. The player of the *manman* often drums in a standing position, bracing the instrument by means of a cord around his thigh.

534 996 Another drum associated with the Arada rites is the *assator*. This drum is usually about six feet high, and may be from two to two and a half feet in diameter. It is played in an upright position, and two or three small "windows" near the base permit the sound to emerge. [994] This big drum is used only for the Assator service, at which the Dahomey "nation" plays host to the loa of all the various rites. Usually there is only a single drummer, who plays while standing on a bench or raised platform; but on occasion, two or even three drummers play simultaneously on the single drumhead.

534 197 It is interesting to note in passing that most of the Vodoun drums have Dahomean names and are of Dahomean design, despite the fact that Yoruban religious motifs have survived. The Yoruban double-headed *bata* drum, used in Nigeria for invocation of the principal deities, appears to have survived in decadent form on the island of La Gonave, where it is known as *pongavi*. Curiously, it is played not like the Yoruban *bata* (one hand on each head) but like another Yoruban instrument, 534 the *dundun*, or pressure drum. The instrument is held under one arm and played only on the forward head. Significantly enough, this drum [994] is said to be used only for Nago (Yoruba) rites. Another drum reserved [996] for Nago services is found in the region of Léogane. It resembles the Arada drum in every respect except that it stands on three carved legs.

Drums associated with the services of the Congo "nation" are distinctly different from those found in Vodoun ritual. No drumsticks are used, and the heads are of goatskin rather than cowhide and are held in place by a system of cords and hoops. The Congo drum seen today stands about three feet high; old people say that within their memory there was a variety of Congo drum as tall as a man. Unlike the Arada [531] drum, the Congo drum usually has no carved or painted decoration. For the "pure" Congo rites, two of these instruments, accompanied by gourd or metal rattles of various kinds, constitutes an orchestra. One typically Congo rattling device, called *mayaya*, consists of three large gourds containing pebbles, on the top of a long pole.

A variant of the Congo drum is used for Pétro rites. It is similar

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

in construction but stands a little shorter. Two Pétro drums of slightly 534
different sizes and tones, called *baka* and *ti baka*, in combination with one or more rattles, an iron percussion device, and sometimes an assot, make up an orchestra.

The *assot* is a small board which is beaten with sticks. Often these sticks are flat, and sometimes a small wooden bench is substituted for the board.

Dances for which the Congo or Pétro drums are used include Pétro, 534
Kitta, Bumba, Salongo, Bambarra, Moundongue, Congo Loangue, Pas- 535
torel, Mourondi, and Moutchétché. The drum for the Congo Loangue dance formerly was somewhat taller and narrower than the present Pétro drum, but the distinction is no longer maintained.

The Juba, or Martinique, drum is similar to the Pétro or Congo but wider and squatter. It is laid on its side for playing, the drummer sitting astride and pressing his heel against the drumhead to mute it or change the pitch. For Juba or related music, a second man, called the *catalier* (the one who *catas*), beats sticks against the body of the instrument behind the drummer.

In the northern part of Haiti one also finds the Zesse drum, used 184
exclusively for the Zesse dance. It is cylindrical, about thirty inches 534
high, and is played in an upright position. A wire is stretched across the goatskin head in the manner of a snare drum. Like all drums with goatskin heads, it is beaten with the naked hands.

A large two-headed drum called the *tymbale* is used as a work drum 534
for labor societies and for processions, and in combination with other [461]
drums it sometimes appears in the Juba and secular Congo dances. The [535]
heads are mounted on hoops, which are held fast by lacing. The drum [487]
is carried by a rope slung over the shoulder or around the neck. Sometimes an assot striking board is affixed to the body of the drum.

A miniature copy of the tymbale is called a *tambourine*. It is used in carnival dances, notably the Mascaron. Carried by a cord which hangs around the neck, it is played with two diminutive sticks. Drumming [462]
is primarily a man's prerogative, but during carnival days women or girls may be seen playing the *tambourine*.

In southwestern Haiti, and possibly elsewhere, special drums are used 184
for the Manuba dance. The Manuba drum is about a foot long, cylindrical, 534
and about five inches in diameter, with two drumheads held together 535
with cords. A pair of these drums is joined by a rope about two feet long, which is hung around the neck so that the two drums are in convenient playing position on the chest.

Twin drums which are hung over the knee are known as *marasso*— 534
[192]
The Haitian word for "twins."

534 [177] the Haitian word for "twins." They are used primarily for secular music of the Cuban type, and may in fact be an importation from Cuba. The marassa is one of the few drums on which a finger technique is used; that is, striking with individual fingers rather than with grouped fingers. Marassas are often played in concert with guitars and marimbas.

The *basse* is the shallow finger drum resembling what in the United States is called the tambourine. Constructed in the pattern of an African prototype, its head is usually fifteen or eighteen inches in diameter and made of goatskin. Small metal disks sometimes are inserted in the frame [314] to act as rattles. The head is kept well coated with resin or beeswax and [237] is tapped and rubbed with the fingers. The *basse* is used only for secular music, except in the rare instances when it is used in Congo services. Some Haitians believe that the name of the instrument comes from the word *Basque*.

534 202 It is reported that signal drums were still in use a decade ago in remote sections of the southwestern peninsula. One of these instruments, according to description, is distinguished mainly by its large belly and small mouth; like the Juba drum, it is played on its side. Another style of signal drum has a slit in the side and is played erect, much like an African slit-log drum standing on end.

534 [171] Another percussion instrument is the bamboo stamping tube, called the *ganbo* or *ti kanmbo*. It is African in origin and probably takes its name from the Loango term for the same device, *dikanmbo*.[2] The stamping tube is simply a length of bamboo, open at one end and closed at the other by a natural joint membrane. The closed end is struck sharply upon the ground, and the tone comes from the open top. The device works like an inverted drum, the closed end functioning like a drumhead. A battery of four or five ganbos may provide the percussion music otherwise played by drums. The musician corresponding to the *bulatier* of the drum orchestra plays two small stamping tubes, one in each hand. The other musicians have one each, thicker and longer than the bulatier's and producing deeper tones. Cupped hands are manipulated over the open ends for varying the sounds. This instrument [171] has survived in various parts of the New World where Africans were settled, particularly other West Indian islands, Brazil, and Venezuela. In Venezuela the stamping tubes are called *quitiplas*.[3] They have recently been reported from various areas of West Africa, including French Equatorial Africa.[4]

534 648 798 The ganbos had a singular burst of popularity in Haiti during the United States military occupation of the country after the first World War, when drums were often seized and destroyed. Drums could not

[115]

[2] [Informant: Joseph Lengo, Brazzaville. Cf. P 354, Category 116. --Analyst]

[3] [Library of Congress album, Folk Music of Venezuela. Cf P 354 Category 116. --Analyst]

[4] [Pamphlet accompanying recording, Music of Equatorial Africa (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1950) Cf P 354, Cat. 116. --Analyst]

easily be hidden, but the ganbos were simply slipped into the straw 534
roofs and thus put out of sight. Moreover, by some strange process of 648
reasoning, military authorities regarded the bamboos as "harmless," 798
though they were used for the same purposes as the contraband drums.

There are numerous other kinds of simple percussion devices. One 534
such instrument, now less commonly seen than previously, is a length of open bamboo laid in the crotches of two Y-shaped sticks set in the ground. Like other *catas*, the bamboo is beaten with two sticks. Some Haitians believe that in former days such bamboos were played in batteries like a xylophone.

Sometimes a light-weight wooden cylinder, or perhaps a drum de- [461]
nuded of its playing head, is carried by the timekeeper of a coumbite. [476]
It, also, is played on the side with sticks.

Wooden mortars for pulverizing grain take on the character of musical 534
instruments when used in combination with voices. When two or more 533
mortars are used, with two men or women wielding the long polelike 412
pestles in each mortar, the rhythmic effects can become fairly complicated.

The *claves* or *palos* (small hardwood sticks) are used primarily in 534
connection with secular dances of a Cuban type, or to accompany such 535
instruments as the guitar and the marimba. One stick is held loosely in [177]
the natural fold of the hand, so that it is free to vibrate, and is struck sharply with the second stick. The tone is almost metallic because of [824]
the hardness of the wood, usually lignum vitae. The name of the instrument is recognizable as a form of *clavar*, or *clavo*, Spanish for "peg" or "nail." It is thought that wooden shipbuilding pegs provided the [171]
name for this device, which has equivalents in West Africa.

Among the folk instruments there are various kinds of horns and 534
trumpets. Cows' horns are played musically in some parts of the southern 184
peninsula, though usually they are used as ritual instruments and signaling devices. Wooden trumpets called *pistons* are carved from the stems [824]
of the papaya tree. Conch-shell trumpets, known as *lambis*, are com- [202]
monly used as signaling devices by fishermen. They are also to be found among the coumbites, in Rara festivities, and occasionally in rituals, where they are usually identified with sea deities. In carnival [541]
times the old fashioned phonograph horn makes its appearance as a com- [216]
bined trumpet and voice amplifier.

Probably the most important of the trumpets is the one made of 534
bamboo. It is called a *vaccine* or *bois bourrique*. Both names have in- 755
teresting origins. The cow's horn was at one time used for magico- [237]
medical purposes. The leaf doctor used it as an "applicator" of powders and potions. A small opening was made in the point of the horn, and
[See plate 8, P. 112-F. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

534 755 the horn itself was filled with the magico-medical preparation, which was called *vaccine*. The point of the horn was applied to parts of the body which needed treatment, and the powers of the potion were thus transmitted to the affected areas. In time, the cow's horn itself came to be known as a *vaccine*. Eventually the horn used for musical purposes took over the name, which was then transferred to the bamboo trumpet. The other name by which the bamboo trumpet is known, *bois bourrique*, means burro wood. But it probably is a corruption of *voix bourrique*, meaning "donkey's voice," an accurate description of the sound it makes.

534 533 The vaccine consists of a length of bamboo, with a joint membrane at one end cut into a mouthpiece. Trumpets of different sizes give different tones, and three to five of them together constitute a vaccine orchestra. Vaccines are employed by the coumbites in the fields, and they are heard in the towns and cities primarily during the pre-Easter festivities. In the Rara festivals the vaccine players march together, blowing and tapping their trumpets with sticks, followed by a crowd of dancers. Traditionally, the bamboo trumpet is not employed in religious music, although in recent years it has made its appearance occasionally in Congo-Guinée rites.

534 There are two kinds of musical scrapers. The one more often seen is the *grage*, a piece of sheet metal perforated in the fashion of our common kitchen grater. It is "played" by scraping a piece of wire or a nail across its rough surface. Found in secular rather than religious settings, the grage is likely to be used in combination with such instrument as the *tambourine*, marimba, claves, and basse. The second form of scraper is the *dentlé*, or *dentli*, a notched stick played with a bamboo scraping blade. The free end of the stick is sometimes braced against a bench or a plank, which acts as a sounding board. Some Haitians reported that in the old days gourds were used as sounding chambers. 534 171 The scraper in one form or another appears to have both Indian and West African precedents. Its relationship to the washboard as used in Negro folk music in the United States is obvious. The notched gourd [172] called the *guiro*, found in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and other West Indian islands, appears to be present in Haiti only as an imported instrument.

534 535 Rattles of various types are used in religious and secular dances, in the invocation of deities, and as accompaniment for solo singing. The most common of the rattles is the simple cha-cha, or *kwa-kwa*. It is a small gourd with a wooden handle, with seeds inside. It is usually played by the singing leader as a device to keep time. Sometimes the long dry seed pods of the cha-cha tree are used as a substitute.

008 In the Rara season two special rattles are used. One of them is made

In the Rara season two special rattles are used. One of them is made of metal and resembles a tin can with a wooden handle. The metal sometimes is perforated with numerous small holes, and inside are *hoholi* seeds, which act as rattlers. This instrument, known as a *tchancy*, is usually decorated with colorful ribbons when in use. (In northern Haiti the term *tchancy* is used to designate metal wrist rattles worn by drummers.) The other Rara rattle, called *jouconjou* or *joucjou*, is made of three gourds carried on a long pole. One of the gourds is affixed to the end of the pole, and the others are fastened to the terminals of a short crossbar, giving the effect of a cross with bulbous ends. Since many of the Rara processions are dramatizations of the Christ epic, the instrument could be interpreted as a Christian symbol, though its conversion into a noisemaker appears to be an African conception. The *jouconjou* may be a variant of the small rattle-cross which is used by the Abakwa secret society in Cuba.[8]

534 541 [824] [531] [171]

The sacred gourd rattle of the cult priest is called *asson* or *baksor*. It is pear-shaped and covered with a network of beads which act as external strikers. It is used by the houngan to summon the spirits of the dead, to praise or call upon the deities, and to accompany the performance of magic. The asson is of West African derivation, and its counterparts are to be found among the cults of Martinique, Trinidad, Cuba, Brazil, Venezuela, and elsewhere where African traditions have left their mark. The gourds from which the assons are made are grown in a special grove sacred to the loa.

534 78 171 778

A large calabash rattle has been reported from several isolated regions of Haiti, primarily from the north. Some rattles of this kind have been described as more than twenty inches in height and covered by a network of external strikers, usually wari beans. The calabash rattles are used in groups of three. They are shaken and thumped against the palm of the hand, producing both deep and high-pitched sounds. These oversize rattles are employed without drums and are said to be associated with Arada-Nago rites. They appear to be a survival of the instrument known among the Yoruba as the *shèkèrè* and are found in Cuba in both Dahomey and Lucumi (Yoruba) cult centers.

534 [184] [171]

Probably one of the oldest of Haitian folk instruments is the earth bow, known as the *tambour maringouin*, or mosquito drum. Traditionally the mosquito drum is made in the following way:

A hole is dug in the earth, perhaps a foot or more deep. It is covered with palm or banana bark, which is pegged firmly all around. A cord is attached to the center of the bark membrane and drawn taut to a bent green sapling, one end of which is buried in the ground at a slight angle. The cord is plucked and snapped with the fingers of one hand, while

8 [See Courlander, "Musical Instruments of Cuba," Musical Quarterly, April, 1942, pp. 233-234. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst)

534 its tension is varied by pressure on the bowed stick with the other hand, producing a change of pitch. The covered hole acts as a sound chamber.

In a "portable" model of the mosquito drum a tin pail or can is used for a sounding chamber. The pail is inverted and fastened to a small plank, to which the sapling also is affixed. It is believed by some observers that the instrument has special significance during the pre-Easter holidays (Mardi Gras and Rara),* but it may be used at almost any time of the year. The "accompaniment" for the mosquito drum usually consists of some kind of *cata*—sticks beaten upon a board or on the drumhead itself. On occasion, two or three of these instruments are beaten together, and the rough bark membrane may be rasped for additional effects. Most of the songs that go with the mosquito drum are secular. One of the appropriate songs favored by children goes:

[541]

[533] [534]

> Maringouin dit moin ta zwing oh!
> Maringouin dit moin ta zwing!
> Ta zwing oh!
> Ta zwing! [Ex. 166]
>
> Mosquito says I will zwing, oh!
> Mosquito says I will zwing!
> Will zwing, oh!
> Will zwing! *

534 191 The earth bow has a clear African ancestry. In almost identical form it has been found in the French Sudan, among the Washambala of East Africa, the Bongos in the eastern Congo, the Bafia and Baya in the Cameroons, the Fulbe in the Sahara region, and the Futaljallon people in Nigeria.

The German explorer Georg Schweinfurth might have been describing a Haitian scene when he wrote, some eighty-five years ago, of the Bongos:

> Performers may be seen sitting for an hour together with an instrument of this sort: They stick one end of the bow into the ground, and fasten the string over a cavity covered with bark, which opens into an aperture for the escape of the sound. They pass one hand from one part of the bow to another, and with the other they play upon the string with the bamboo twig and produce a variety of humming airs which are really rather pretty. This is a common pastime with the lads who are put in charge of the goats. I have seen them apply themselves very earnestly and with obvious interest to their musical practice, and the ingenious use to which they apply the secrets of the theory of sound.

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* The hum of the mosquito as it strikes.

[Comhaire Sylvain, Les Contes haitiens, pp. 97-98. Cf. p. 394, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[Curt Sachs, Geist und Werden der Musikinstrumente (Berlin, 1929), pp. 60-61. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]

[Schweinfurth, The Heart of Africa, I, 287. Cf. p. 354 Category 116. -- Analyst]

Except for the "aperture for the escape of the sound," the Bongo instrument is identical with the Haitian earth bow. The resemblance of the instrument to a spring snare strongly suggests that it may have been developed from some such device for catching game. This possibility is strengthened by the use of the earth bow among certain of the Bambarra hunters of the French Sudan as a game lure, the music played upon it being thought to have magical properties to attract animals to the region of the hunt.[9] A "portable" type of spring snare used among the Ashanti of Ghana is strikingly similar in form to the Haitian "portable" earth bow (see fig. 80).

This instrument has survived not only in Haiti but in the United States as well. The washtub device that is an important part of American Negro folk music is a clear development of the earth bow. The washtub is inverted and a cord is attached to the tin bottom. The other end of the cord is fastened to a stick which is braced against the lip of the bottom side of the tub. The stick and the cord are manipulated precisely like the Haitian and African instruments. There is implicit evidence that the role of the washtub has been taken over in modern jazz orchestras by the double-bass fiddle.

Another device of African provenience is the Haitian *marimba* (also called *malimba*, *manimba*, and *marimbula*). It consists of a wooden box upon which a series of metal strips is mounted in such a way that they may be plucked with the fingers. In the face of the box, directly behind the keys, there is an aperture to permit the escape of the sound. The number of keys varies from three to seven or more, though some of them may produce duplicate tones. The instrument is usually about the size of a soap box. The musician sits upon it, facing the same way as the keyboard, and plays with his hands between his knees. The marimba is used for carnival music and for dances of the secular types, frequently in combination with a guitar, claves, and a cha-cha. It is a West Indian development of the small African *m'bila* or *sansa*, or "thumb piano." Several examples of the smaller instruments played with the thumbs have been found elsewhere in the West Indies, notably in Cuba,[10] and large forms of the sansa have been reported in recent years in Africa.

Among the instruments more or less restricted to religious service are whistles and small hand bells, which are used for invoking and saluting the loa and the dead. *Canaries* (large clay water vessels) also enter into ritual use. They are sung into, tapped with sticks, and on some occasions are covered with goatskin heads and played like a drum.

[9] [Fig 80 appears on p. 112-55. -- Analyst]
[Informant: Sobihas Tore, Bamako. Cf. p. 354, [115] category 116. -- Analyst]
[10] [See Courlander, op. cit., p. 239. Cf. p. 354 cat. 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

534 [541] Among the noisemakers heard mostly at the time of the Rara festival (usually on Good Friday) are the *von-von*, or bull-roarer—a thin flat piece of wood whirled on the end of a cord—and the *rara*, the common wooden ratchet. Various types of wooden flutes, usually of bamboo, are also used.

[184] In the remoter parts of the mountains you may now and then hear of an instrument known as the *banza*. A century ago, it would appear, the *banza* was a stringed instrument resembling a banjo. The similarity of names is striking, in view of the instrument's early form. Today, [177] however, the word *banza* is applied to the homemade fiddle which is used to accompany the minuet and other old dances of European origin.

534 524 178 A children's instrument seen sometimes in the mountains is constructed of half of a calabash shell, across the opening of which have been stretched a number of cords. This plucked device appears to be a decadent form of the African trough zither.

[pp. 203-313 not processed]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[p. 315]
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Appendixes

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1. The Pantheons

Most of the loa of Haiti appear to belong to two major cult groupings: the Vodoun (dominated by Dahomé rites and traditions) and the Congo-Guinée (dominated mainly by the Pétro deities). In the Vodoun pantheon one finds deities of Dahomean and Yoruban origin, and others whose names seem to identify them with West African peoples such as the Mahis, the Amines, the Adjas, the Foulas, the Sousous, and the Haoussas. The so-called Congo-Guinée group, in addition to the Pétro escorte, appears to have absorbed many loa from Central Africa. Among the Congo-Guinée loa are such names as Mayombé, Loango, Bumba, Moundongue, Mousondi, Angole, Congo, Baganda, and Solongo, all of them designations of regions or tribes of the Congo area. Also in this pantheon are loa bearing the names Bambarra and Siningal (Senegal), from northwestern Africa. 776 794 184

It is not possible to group the loa in such a way that the system will reflect accurately the tradition and usage in all parts of the country. Had all the old cults or "nations" survived intact, the pantheons might have resembled the following:

Arada or Dahomey loa
Anago or Yoruba loa
Mahi loa
Congo loa (including the Moundongue, the Solongo, the Bumba, etc.)
Ibo loa
Kanga loa
Pétro loa
Etc.

In certain parts of Haiti, in scattered and isolated places, one finds Congo, Ibo, and Nago cults that have resisted absorption; but this pattern does not hold for most of the country. In general, Congo and Pétro tend to "march" together; Anago has become a "nation" within

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1954) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

776 a "nation" in the Dahomé rites; and the Ibo group, though still distinct,
184 is frequently allied with the Dahomé rites or the Guinée rites.
794 The following list does not pretend to include all the loa known in Haiti. It is doubtful that a complete list could ever be compiled, in view of the continual generation of new deities and the constant cross-
[128] fertilization between "nations." The loa are grouped here according to most widespread usage. There are contradictions from which there is no possible escape, and these general groupings will not necessarily correspond to the concepts and practices of any specific locality. It is intended here to give a broad and generalized view.

128 Under "The Vodoun Pantheon" I have placed constellations of deities
776 of Dahomean and Yoruban origin, along with others that are clearly
794 identified with Vodoun rites. Under "The Congo and Pétro Pantheons" I have listed the Congo-Guinée loa—consisting mainly of deities associated with Central Africa and deities affiliated with the Pétro rites. Ibo and Kanga loa are grouped together, because in many regions of Haiti the two pantheons appear to be interlocked. A separate listing is given for the Simbi family of water deities in view of their ambivalence; they are sometimes found in the Pétro group and sometimes in the Dahomé, according to local practice.

THE VODOUN PANTHEON

776 Damballa Wèdo, or Dan Wèdo. One of the most venerable of Haitian loa. He is
191 generally recognized as the husband of Ayida Wèdo, though occasionally the two deities are merged in a personality called Damballa-Ayida. The concept of a single identity for Damballa and Ayida conforms to Dahomean belief. In both Haiti and West Africa, Damballa is identified with the rainbow and is symbolized as a snake.[1] In Haiti he is associated also with rainfall, springs, and fertility. He is sometimes
[782] described as "white," and the proper food offering to him is a white chicken. Persons
[187] possessed by Damballa usually take on stylized characteristics of snakes. Along with
[199] many other important loa, he has become identified with characters in Christian religious belief. There are, in fact, "two" Damballa Wèdos. One, identified with Moses, comes in talking; the other, identified with St. Patrick, never talks. Food
[782] offerings for the St. Patrick version of Damballa consist of eggs, flour, sugar, and almond syrup. Damballa remains one of the chief gods of the Dahomey cult in Cuba, and he survived into the last century in New Orleans under the name Danny.

[822] Ayida Wèdo. Generally regarded in Haiti as the wife of Damballa, Ayida is also symbolized by snake and rainbow, and her color, like Damballa's, is "white." In Dahomey and Nigeria, Ayida is known as a male rather than a female spirit and is regarded there as the same divinity as Damballa, or Dji. In Dahomey, Ayida Wèdo was the great serpent who held up the world. According to one myth, the Creator of the World assigned to Ayida the task of holding up the earth to keep it from falling into the sea. The great serpent coiled himself, tail in mouth, and lay below

1. [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 245 ff. Cf. p. 354, Curaçao 46. --Analyst]

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the earth like the carrying pad that women wear to support bundles on their heads. Wherever Ayido Wido shifted his position there were earthquakes.* When the rainbow appeared after a rain it was said that Ayido had come out from under the earth to drink of the fresh water. 796 191 321

Dumballa Grand Chemin (Dumballa of the Highway). Another manifestation of Dumballa as a protector of those on long journeys. 414

Dumballa Vieux. Another manifestation of Dumballa.

Damballa Wedo. Considered to be the daughter of Dumballa. The ending of her name (-o) suggests that at one time she may have been considered a wife rather than a daughter.

Dosu Wedo. A member of Dumballa's family.

Aziliu Wedo. A member of Dumballa's family. Said to be a "work loa" who aids men with their gardens, especially in time of illness. 241

Erzulie Dosu, or Dosuu, sometimes spelled Ezouloo. One of the "big" loa of the Dahomey pantheon, a symbol of purity, and sometimes identified with the Virgin Mary. Her color is white, and services to her include a ritual sweeping and sprinkling of the earth and a perfuming of the air. Food offerings to her include corn meal and eggs. Male "horses" of Erzulie are sometimes bound to her by mystic marriages, and they are obligated to refrain from sexual intercourse on certain days which belong to her. There are a number of Erzulies, regarded as members of the same family or, in some cult centers, as different manifestations of the same deity. Some Haitians regard Erzulie Dahomey as the ancestor of the Erzulie family and refer to her as Grand Erzulie. Note that there is a Dahomean town named Dogbo at approximately 6° 6' E., 6° 40' N. 199 322 [illegible]

Erzulie Fedee, or Erzulie Dantemont (Dahomey), or Erzulie Fedee Dantemont. Like Erzulie Dahomey, she is a symbol of purity and is identified with the Virgin Mary. Mystic marriages are performed with her, and her "horses" are obligated to refrain from sexual intercourse on certain days. She is also a giver of wealth. 199 [illegible]

Erzulie Wedo. A sister or daughter of Erzulie Dahomey and also related to Dumballa.

Erzulie Mazoo. A sister of Erzulie Fedee.

Erzulie Rouge. A manifestation of Erzulie who is especially fond of the Rada dances.

Erzulie Heuvreux (Red Eyes). A mean and hard Erzulie who is often identified with Petro rather than Dahomey rites.

Aloso Fedee. A member of the Erzulie family, regarded as a market-place protector. In Dahomey, Aloso was a protector of all public gathering places. 193 191

Aloso Bockeye

Aloso Dagbe Bene Bene

Mahyeuse Mazoo. A special form of Erzulie as prisoner.

Mahyeuse Ezouloo, or Tuzulu. A person mounted by this Erzulie talks only Spanish. 192 191

Sogo, or Sogoo. A thunder deity who hurls stones to the earth when angered. Some of the stones thrown by Sogo are regarded as the sacred residence of various loa. Sobo (or Sogbo) is a member of the original Thunder pantheon of Dahomey. 796 191

Sogo Badé, or Sogo Bade, or simply Badé. A close relative of Sobo, regarded as the protector of the hunter (*Badé*). In Dahomey, Badé is sometimes referred to as the son of the deity Sobo.

*[See Ellis, The Ewe-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, pp. 47-49; and Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 245ff. Cf. p. 354 Category 116. -- Analyst]

†[Ellis, op. cit., p. 52. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst]

‡[Herskovits, op. cit., pp. 152ff. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]

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Aiwadi Tomenor, also pronounced Awadi Tomenor. Another thunder bag. Ahoui (or Aghoui) is the name of an ancient capital of Dahomey.

Dadu. The wife of Sebo Badé.

So Nomenon, also called Sogo Nuniaw, or simply So. A thunder bag of Dahomean origin. In Dahomey he is regarded as an offspring of Mawu and Lisa, and a member of the Sky pantheon.

Kiliwo, or Kiliwon. A thunder bag who, like Sebo, lands never to the earth. In Dahomey he is known as Xevioso and is thought to be the same deity as So. In Haiti, persons killed by lightning are thought to be enemies of Kiliwo and are given special treatment in burial.

Aqué Wiwo, known also as Gran Mon-bleu. He is a bag of the sea; thunder and lightning over the waters are thought to be Aqué shooting his cannon. He is usually symbolized in pictures by a sailing or steam vessel. His colors are blue and white, and the primary sacrificial animal for him is a male goat. High ceremonies for Aqué are begun in the lagoons and consummated in a sailing boat on the open sea, from which is launched a highly decorated and stylized miniature ship containing food for the deity. This very craft is known as the *barque d'Aqué*. Houses housing this spirit usually have a small boat hanging from the rafters. In Dahomey, Aqué is also a sea deity and a member of the Thunder pantheon.

Aziwiwo Wiwo. She is thought to be Aqué Wiwo's wife, though in Dahomey she was considered to be his daughter.

Another Wiwodor. Said to be the son of Aqué.

La Sirène. Another deity of the sea, a lamentor visualized as a mermaid. La Sirène is usually thought of as belonging to a separate family, though she is frequently served along with Aqué. Some scribes do not recognize her at all.

Nonnemenor, or Nonno Bertomon. A bag of herbs and medicines. In Dahomey the spirit was considered the grandparent of all deities, the progenitor of Mawu and Lisa from whom all demigods are descended; she is still remembered in the Dahomey cults of Cuba.

Lisa or Leza. Probably the Lisa of Dahomey, child of Nonnemenor.

Aziawe Legba, or Legba Sé. One of the most important of Haitian bag, frequently the first one invoked in any service. He is the guardian of the gateway, the crossroads, and the highway. Cocks and male goats are his favorite foods, as in West Africa. In Dahomean tradition, Legba is the youngest offspring of Mawu and Lisa, the progenitor of all Dahomean deities. He is a divine trickster who is both feared and loved, a force that is capriciously malevolent or benevolent. Today, as in earlier times in Dahomey, the image of Legba, made of clay, stands or sits before the entrance to many villages. Sometimes the image is nothing more than a mound or column of earth symbolizing a phallus. Legba's mischief and tricks are directed against the other deities and human beings. In Haiti, as in Dahomey, Legba is not a personal deity. As Herskovits points out, Legba has no "character" and cannot be relied on. He is the intermediary between mankind and the deities. It is in this sense that he "opens the gate," providing a channel of communication between man and god; and it is for this reason that he is often supplicated first in religious ritual. In Dahomean lore, Legba's mischief is often in the realm of sex. In ritual dances for

[Ibid., pp 101 ff. Cf. p 354, Category 116. -- Ann Lis]

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Legba in Dahomey, the performers hold a carved phallus between their legs and perform capsizing movements. The Haitian Legba is depicted as an aged limping Ion, and the carved phallus has become a gnarled crutch-cane that fits into the crotch of the legs. The Dahomean Legba is remembered elsewhere in the New World, notably in Dutch Guiana, Brazil, and Cuba. Until relatively recent times he was known among the Negroes of Louisiana by the name Papa Lebat.[1]

Lonsa Gonsa Gunsu (Legba of the Highway). A special manifestation of Legba who guards the highway.

Lonsa Kanu (Legba of the Crossroads). A special manifestation of Legba who guards the crossroads.

Lonsa Mele' Bonsuru (Legba Master of the Household). The Legba who protects the house and its grounds.

Lonsa Lonsuwemi. One of the Legba family.

Lonsa Kiri. One of the Legba family.

Lonsa Aziwuru. Said to be a "Nago" deity.

Aziwuru Kiri. One of the Legba family.

Aziwuru Sunsuru. One of the Legba family.

Aziwuru Kori. One of the Legba family.

Ogun Fumilayo, often referred to as Mele' Ogun. The chief and ancestor of a large family of Ion whose activities have to do with blacksmithing and war, which are closely related. Ogun Feraille is a patron of warriors and the forge; his symbol is a piece of forged iron, such as a machete, a hoe blade, a saber, or a piece of iron chain. In West Africa, Ogun is considered a patron of hunters as well.[2] He was widely known by various peoples in Dahomey and Nigeria. In Dahomey he was considered a child of the divine Mawu and Lisa,[3] and among the Yoruba of Nigeria he was regarded as a brother of Changa and Dada,[4] two spirits who survive in the Haitian pantheon. An altar to Ogun Feraille, like that of the Ion Changa, may consist of a pile of iron scrap, perhaps a broken sugar vat. In Cuba, Ogun Feraille is a prominent deity in both the Arara (Dahomey) and the Lucumi (Yoruba) cults. Although absorbed exclusively into the Dahomi family of rites in Haiti, Ogun Feraille and his entire family and owners are designated as belonging to the Nago "nation." Their color, like that of heated iron, is red. Ogun Feraille survived until recent times in Louisiana as Joe Feraille.[5]

Ogun Fio (Ogun Iron). He is sometimes called Ogun St. Jacques, St. Jacques Majeur, or simply St. Jacques, being identified with the saint of that name.

Ogun Mamuwuru (Ogun Bracelet).

Ogun Bokoto. One of the Ogun brothers.

Ogun Balasa Moon. One of the Ogun brothers.

Ogun Jimoru, or Hacoru. One of the Ogun brothers.

Ogun Badagry, or Bowuru. Said to be a "grandson" of Mele' Ogun. He is a "work" Ion, as well as an ironworker and a warrior, and helps in the fields, especially in time of sickness. Badagry is the name of a town near the mouth of the Ogun River in western Nigeria. According to a priest of the Cuban Dahomi cult, the word Badagri was used to designate the circumcision house in Dahomey. Ogun Badagry does may have been associated with that shrine.

Ogunsu, or Ogun Ogunsu. A member of the Ogun family and, like most of his brothers, a warrior and ironworker. Changa's altar is usually a pile of scrap iron, or

[1 (Elli), pp. 201 ff. Cf. p. 354 Category 116. -- Analyst]
[2 (Ellis), The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, p. 67. Cf. p. 354 Category 116. -- Analyst]
[3 (Herskovits), Op. Cit., pp. 105 ff. Cf. p. 354 Cat. 116. -- Analyst
[4 (Ellis), The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples, pp. 45, 60 ff. Cf. p. 354 Cat. 116. -- Analyst]
[5 (Library of Congress Recording), No. 101. Cf. p. 354 Cat. 116. -- Analyst]

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776 171 any iron object, such as a sugar vat. In West Africa, Chango (or Shango) and Ogoun were considered separate deities. In Nigeria, according to Ellis, they were brothers, closely associated with each other. Among the Yoruba, Chango was a thunder-and-lightning god and he is believed to have been one of the early kings of Oyo. The African Chango, like the Haitian, is identified with fire, a corollary of lightning, and persons possessed by him may carry pots of fire on their heads and perform other fire tests.[11]

Chango Gold. Another manifestation of Ogoun Chango.

Ogoun Bachango. Possibly the same as Ogoun Chango, or he may be named after the Bachangos, a Congo tribe. A warrior and ironworker.

Ogoun Balizal. One of the Ogoun family.

Nimbo Nimbo. One of the Ogoun family.

Archardé, Acharbé, Chardé, or Chadé. One of the Ogoun escorte, sometimes called Ogoun Chadé, or Chadé Bocor.

Ogoun Yemoin. One of the Ogoun brothers.

Obatala, or Batala. A loa of war. Among the Yoruba people of Nigeria, Obatala was a sky deity and protector of the town gates. He was thought to form children in the womb and was therefore believed responsible for albinism and congenital deformities.[12] Obatala and Chango are among the main Lucumí (Yoruba) deities in Cuba.

Ogoun Bayé. An aspect of Ogoun who functions as a gateway guardian.

Ogoun Blanc (White Ogoun). He does not drink rum, which is a favorite beverage of his brothers.

Ogoun Jebba

Ogoun Jèkka, Jèkkè, or Yèkkè. A warrior and ironworker. Jèkkè may have been a shrine or regional designation.

Ogoun Kèrèk

Ogoun Kénison

Yalodé, or Ogoun Loodé. Brother of Ogoun Badagry and the other Ogouns. Yalodé is clearly of Dahomean origin.[13]

Ogoun Panama, or Ogoun Palama. Guardian against sunstroke, or spirit responsible for sunstroke. A brother of Ogoun Badagry. He is usually seen wearing a Panama hat.

Ogoun Pierre Narcisse

Ogoun Jèrouge (Ogoun Red Eyes). A malevolent Ogoun brother, red eyes being a mark of bad behavior. Some people feel that he is a member of the Pétro rather than the Vodoun pantheon.

Nago Piment. A member of the Ogoun escorte. He eats hot peppers.

Boulicha Nago

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776 346 [184] Gèdé Nimbo, or Nibo, also called Brave Gèdé. One of the powerful deities of the Vodoun pantheon, particularly in the region of Port-au-Prince, where many houmfors cater extensively to him. Gèdé Nimbo, along with his numerous brothers and his vast escorte, is a "dead" loa, a spirit of the graveyard, a sexual rascal, and a violator [178] of propriety. He is served apart from the other loa, and usually he has a separate altar or shrine outside the central houmfor. Cult centers for Gèdé are often near graveyards, though not necessarily so. Gèdé services abound around the main cemetery of Port-au-Prince. Gèdé Nimbo has various manifestations, but he is usually 776

[11] [Ellis, The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples, p. 47; W. R. Bascom in Introduction to record album Drums of the Yoruba of Nigeria (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1950). Cf. p. 354, Category 116. — Analyst]

[12] Ellis, The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples p. 38 ff. Cf. p. 359 (cat. 116. — Analyst)

[13] Ellis, The Ewe-Speaking Peoples, pp. 71-74; Herskovits, op. cit. I, 39 Cf. p. 354, cat. 116. — Analyst]

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dressed in a black frock coat, black top hat, and black trousers or a blue, white polka-dotted skirt. He carries a cane and smokes a pipe or a cigarette, according to which manifestation of Gédé he represents. He talks with a strong nasal accent, which is acquired by anyone mounted by him. Gédé Nimbo is always asking for money. Persons possessed by him may rub hot peppers on their tongues or in their eyes. In some parts of Haiti, Gédé is thought to be identical with Baron Samedi. In a Vodoun service, no other loa cares to enter while a Gédé is present; and Gédé delights in appearing suddenly, uninvited, and obstructing the orderly progress of a ritual. Although Herskovits points out that Gedeonou, or Gédé, is a Dahomean [171] [196] [189]
[187]
[166]
[189]
[189]
[189

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996 Atrou Lawou, or Brou Lawou. Spoken of as "chief" of the cemetery, the one who [illegible] the cross over the grave.

Brou [illegible], or Pawol (Rum Dog)

Brou Sa. (Rum Fatik, or Dirty Rum)

Brou Cuta. The Rum who sits on the graves.

Brou Tiaud

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[995] Atrou Miel, or Zeul Miel. Herskovits reports that Atoka Miel is the name of the stream which Dahomeans believe all the dead must cross.[illegible]

Cousin Zoka. The peasant Zoka, special patron of the country farmers and the people of the mountains. He is always portrayed as wearing the blue denim costume of the peasant, carrying the women peasant knapsack called an *alber* *couve* and a encouragage stick, and smoking a clay pipe. Persons possessed by Cousin Zoka are dressed in this way, and they speak in the manner of the mountain men, a style that is heard only in the most remote communities.

(D 87) Minou Zoka, or Minouou Zoka. An aspect of Cousin Zoka. Minouou Zoka is a sort of Minister of Agriculture and a patron of peasant farmers.

Se Atoka. The wife of Minouou Zoka.

Atoka Tonnerre, or Tonnel. The Atoka who brings thunder and rain.

Atoka Bojou Bozou. One of the Atoka family.

Mawou. The lua of twins. The Mawou family of deities are in a special category, somewhat apart from other spirits. In an important Vodoun service, for example, there are invocations to the lua in general, to the Mawous, to the family ancestors, and to God.

Mawou Degue. Patron of the first child after twins if it is a boy.

Mawou Dogo. Patron of the first child after twins if it is a girl.

Mawou Blanc. Patron of white twins.

Mawou Tron. Patron of triplets.

Mawou Gemeli. Patron of twins when one is a boy and one a girl.

Mawou Quat'. Patron of quadruplets, or of two consecutive sets of twins.

Mawou Bon (Mawou of the Woods). He is considered an "unbaptized" or "untamed" lua, and very savage. He likes sweets and never eats salt.

Mawou Doazé, or Mawou Cowo. Patron of consecutive twins and triplets.

Mawou Cosso (Mawou of the House). This one eats salt.

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[191] Loko Atrou. He is usually pictured as the protector of the houngan, or cult temple, and as the keeper of the altar (*pé*). In Dahomey, Loko is a deity of the Sky pantheon and a son of the divine Mawu and Lisa.[illegible] He is still remembered in the Arada (Dahomey) cults of Cuba. He is also called Sinsé or Singé.

Loko Atrouwé. Said to be Loko Atrou's wife.

Loko Atrou, or Diou. A member of Loko Atrou's family.

Loko Diouk. A brother of Loko Adiou (Diou + Jobo).

Loko Diouto

Loko Tonnerre

Loko Dossou

Loko Bossé

The Loko

[illegible] [Ibid., p. 280. Cf. p. 354 Category 116. --Analyst]

[illegible] [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 103-109. Cf. p. 354 Cat. 116. --Analyst]

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Avlin Lemo Bevk. A crossroads protector of the Loko family. 776
Lemo Dlo Pvd.

Dvmu Ovmu. Among the Tshi-speaking people of West Africa there was a spirit called Adumu, a malignant giantess.[1] (171)
Ovmu Jumuw
Sumuw Tlumuw

Zumuw
Mumuwu
Mumuwu Ewuwu

Anowu. An aged female lwa. Sacrifices to her consist of rice, sugar cane, lima beans, and eggs. As in services for the dairy Fvlin, perfumes are used during services for her. (182)
Anowu Gowuwu, Lovlowuwu. A member of the Anowu family. Anowu is the name of a tribe of Dahomey.
Anowu Nuwu. Another member of the Anowu family.

Gbadwu, Clowuwu, or Pelowuwu Clowuwu. He is said to be the "father" and parent of all light children born to dark parents. Stories are sometimes heard of men who wrongly accused their wives of infidelity because of the lightness of their children, and who were finally reunited and punished by Clowuwu. (183)
Clowuwuwu. The light-skinned daughter of the dark Gbadwu Clowuwu.

The family relationships or ancestry of the following deities are not clear. Some of them may belong to one or another of the foregoing groups, or to still unrelated families.

Aeja. A female lwa associated with the arts of pharmacy. The Yoruba of Nigeria had a spirit named Adja who carried men and women off into the forest to teach them about the medicinal properties of roots and herbs.[2] In Haiti, Adja's mangé consists of cookies and chicken. Persons possessed by her sometimes eat broken glass. (191) (192) (193)
Aeja Bwu, Aeja Bwu, or Kwaja Bwu. This deity is also known in Dahomey. (191)
Agwanwu. A male deity characterized as a cameleon, a small lizard capable of changing colors. A person mounted by Agwanwu sometimes climbs trees or posts. Some Haitians claimed that a person possessed by this lwa will change color, from dark to light. (187)
Aguwu. In Dahomey, according to Herskovits, Agwu is the name of the panther fetish.[3] Dahomeans regard this deity as of special significance to the royal family. He was remembered among Negroes in Louisiana under the name Agwanwu. (191)
Aguwu Yuwuwu. Related to Agwu.
Dwuwu. Among the Yoruba, Dwuwu was a brother of Ogun and Ogunja, and was a patron of vegetables.[4]
Ayizwuli, also known as St. Soleil. Persons mounted as a result of exposure to the sun are thought to be possessed by this lwa. The association of Ayizwuli with the sun may be a syncretism. (189)
Ayizwuwu
Aja. A lwa who likes the lobs dance.

[1] [illegible], The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa, p.62. Cf. p.354 (Category 16.--Analyst)
[illegible] The Tshi-speaking Peoples, pp.95-96. Cf. p.354 (Cat 16. --Analyst)
[illegible] The Ewe-speaking Peoples, p.83.
[illegible] Cf. p.354 (Category 16. --Analyst)
[illegible] The Ewe-speaking Peoples, pp.45, 96. Cf. p.354 (Cat 16. --An

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1938) 1960 SV3 10:21 SV3

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796 Aizo. A snake deity.

Bumoxa. A loa who likes the Rabenda dance.

Cumanon. Loa of the calabash tree.

Cuiba Pwenda. An ancient snake deity. Herskovits suggests that he may represent the leopard, *cibo* being the Fon word for that animal. The wildness of the attack on the sacrificial animal by persons possessed by Cibiba supports this conjecture. A deity called Dada Sogbo is prominent in the Rada Cult of Trinidad.

[174] [171]

Sunsun. A snake loa who is believed responsible for fine physical proportions and healthy strength in men.

Congo-Nan-Dayer. Probably the same as Congo-Nan-Mer (Agwé).

[171] Ahwoya. This loa may well be the King Agaja of Dahomey who was said to be responsible for the coming of *ondo* (loa) into that country. Herskovits tells a legend about a woman named Hwandjile who prevailed upon the king to bring the *ondo* from the kingdom of Adja. Hwandjile herself survives in Haiti under the name

Wandé, or Hwandé.

Lowkowe. A rainbow loa. Persons measured in sight of a rainbow are thought to be possessed by this deity.

[871] [878]

Bumoxwe. "Mother" with Lingbowo.

Wanoe, also called Aizoe Wanoe, (King of Angola). This loa appears to be an interpolation from the Congo rites.

[199] Aizoe, or Gomaoe. A mischievous, dwarfish spirit who likes to discourage things and play practical jokes. Persons possessed by Aizoe may break up gatherings, discommode spectators and dancers, and generally make a nuisance of themselves. Some Haitians regard this loa as belonging more to the Petro pantheon than to the Dahomé.

Molé' Bon (Mover of the Winds). May be an interpolation of Molé' Grand Bois of the Congo-Guinée pantheon.

Molé' Dlaoo (Mover of the Water). May refer to the loa Simbi.

Dou Wiza, or Wiza: A loa known in the Arcahaie region. The name is possibly a corruption of Dou Wéla.

Dya Kéwé.

Fon, or Nio' Fon. The name is that of a tribe on the Cobbar coast of West Africa.

Fonn Pierre. Said to be the son of Pierre Boisin.

Gédéon, Tonnerre, or Jean Bouvier. Probably the Christian name of some Dahomé loa.

Gnon Lingbowo. An aged, dwarfish loa, guardian and protector of children.

Gnon Aizoe, or Aizoe.

Gnon Anonnimbo, or Mamon Anonnimbo. Believed to be a loa who was made slave of the Emperor Dessalines. Some informants consider this spirit to be a dibouan or loup-garou rather than a loa.

Hounsou. The spirit of the Arada drums. There is a difference of opinion as whether Hounsou is a loa in the precise sense or merely a drum spirit. The term is sometimes used to designate the largest drum of the Arada trio.

[184] Jean Bouvier. A loa well known in the region of Léogane. When he "comes," the possessed persons talk *langage* into a *canari* (clay water vessel).

[887] Molé' Dlaoo. This loa always talks immaculate French, and persons possessed by him read cards and tell fortunes.

[Herskovits, Dahomey, I, 104 Cf p. 354, Cab 116. -- Anchier]

Mahi' Gaxon Gunsoo (Master of the Highway). Probably Legba.

Mawusu. Believed to be the spirit of the famous Ewongan Mahundzi, who lived during the revolutionary period. He is symbolized as a snake which lives in the ground. Some informants think he is a Fetoo rather than a Dahomi lua.

Mawsu Çoçu

Tejuse Dowsu (Ancient Tejuse)

Wetsuse Wuse. Whydah is the name of a seacoast town in Dahomey.

Zu. A fire deity of clear Dahomean origin.

Ohoxsu

Ohoi, or Ohoxsu. Known also among the Lawsoi cults of Cuba. May be any one of the Ohongan mentioned by Herskovits.

Ohoxsu Likli

Ohoxçosi

Futo Dowsu

Fuxsu Bosoto. This lua is sometimes identified with St. Peter.

Fuxsu Dosmella, Dosmesu, or Dosmesu. Sometimes identified with St. Peter.

Fuxsu Wuse. Referred as Whydah Wuse.

Fuxsu, or Fuxsu. This name is probably a tribal designation.

Sokoto. Described as a lua of ancient times. Sokoto or Sogbeto is the so-called small-pox group of deities of Dahomey.

Sisso. A female deity, thought by some to belong to the Exile Fohlo family.

Sisso Gudzu. In Dahomey, according to Herskovits, Sisso is an ancient ancestor.

Sosoyo

Tuxsoxo

Ti Gosu. This is a "false name"; this lua keeps his real name a secret.

THE AMBIVALENT SIMBI FAMILY

This group of lua in certain regions has attached itself to the Vodoun pantheon, elsewhere to the Congo-Guinda pantheon; but it has not maintained any kind of independent or semi-independent status. The deity Simbi and his family are of Congo origin.

Simbi. A snake deity, patron of rain and drinking water. Said to be the father of the Simbi brothers.

Simbi Dlanzi. The best known of the Simbi family. Like his father, he is the patron of fresh water, is associated with the spring, and usually is symbolized as a snake. The color sacred to him is white. Altars to Simbi Dlanzi usually are found at the spring or the well. Sometimes ponds are constructed for him within the houses.

Simbi Kotsu

Simbi Tonnilra, or Simbi Nsio Di Zoxsu (Simbi in Two Waters). Symbolized as a water snake who lives in the "upper" waters and the "lower" waters.

Gaxsu Simbi. The parent of Simbi, and ancestor of the entire family of water lua.

Simbi Tsoo Zuli (Simbi of Three Islands)

Simbi Mazoto

Simbi Gaxsu Sisu (Simbi of the Forest)

[illegible] (1957), The Sacre-Speaking People, pp. 93-96. Cf. p. 354, Cabildo of [illegible]. -- Analyst

Sisiwi Wanda.
Sisiwi Yandwa
Sisiwi Lawuwi (The Dew Sisiki)
Sisiwi Dwaari Bonwu (Sisiki Before God)
Sisiwi Twin Fi (Sisiki Three Leaves—the name of a pawin)
Sisiwi Twin Ruwu (Sisiki Three Roots—the name of a pawin)

THE IBO AND KANGA PANTHEONS

Cuchiro. A Kanga lwa. His name appears to be a survival of the Cuchiro tribe. Some persons feel he is a member of the Nimo group.

Iwa Fiesta. An Ibo lwa. Note that both Ibo and Fonin are tribal designations.

Iwa Mowwu, or Mowwuwi. An Ibo lwa.

Iwa Hipowwi. An Ibo lwa.

Iwa Jiowwu (Ibo Red Eyes). A malevolent spirit. Food offerings to her consist mainly of pigs and cocks.

Iwa Lozza. An Ibo lwa. The food offering to this lwa is a goat.

Iwa Lilid, or Lozzuwi Iwa. An Ibo lwa.

Kowwa. A Kanga lwa. A "hard" or "mean" spirit, thought by some people to be the same as Cuchiro. Persons consumed by him play with fire and eat hot peppers.

Kowwa Twin. A Kanga lwa.

Lozzu Iwa. The Ibo form of the Voodoo Legba.

Mowwu Kowwa, or Iwa Kowwa. An Ibo lwa.

Mowwu Lozzuwi. An Ibo lwa.

Nikiloza Iwa. An Ibo lwa.

Iwa Sowwowwi. An Ibo lwa.

Iwa Wowlowwi. An Ibo lwa.

Nowwowwowwi. An Ibo lwa.

Twowwowwi. An Ibo lwa.

Bowwu. An Ibo lwa.

Ue Fuu Ue Muu Ue Ji (One Foot, One Hand, One Eye). An Ibo lwa.

Aawuwu. An Ibo lwa.

Du L'Aw. An Ibo lwa.

Fuwu Zoo. A Kanga lwa.

Zoo Lowwi. A Kanga lwa.

Kowwu Lowwu. A Kanga lwa.

Ço Ou Mowwi Cow Ço (What Do You Eat Like That). An Ibo lwa.

Twowwu, or Sowwi Aawu. An Ibo lwa. When he comes in he speaks "unknown" languages.

THE CONGO AND PETRO PANTHEONS

Moli' Gowwo Bow (Master of the Woods). In Congo view this lwa is regarded as one of the most important of deities, holding a place equivalent to that of Damballa in the Dahomey service. When he "comes in" he makes a great din and racket.

Fowwo Gowwo Bow. The wife of Moli' Gowwo Bow.

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Wanon. (King of Angola). He also appears in other rites.

Yanzul, or Mevanzul. This name is a tribal designation, referring to the Mayombés of the Congo region.

Wanon, Dlaso (Wanzul of the Water)

Mevanzulu. Often considered to be a "hard" loa. Ritual service to him includes, on special occasions, the cutting off of dogs' ears and tails. He is fond of dogs and is benevolent toward them. The name derives from that of a tribe of the upper Congo region. [182]

Ti Mevanzulu. Said to be a "son" of Mouzubengue.

Mevanzulu Mevanzulu. A member of Mouzubengue's family.

Bakulou, or Bakulou. A loa identified with the morning star, also called Balaou. There is also a town in Dahomey by this name.

Gunou, or Bakulou, also called Nig' Gundo. A deity taking the name of the Gundo people of Uganda.

Gunou Yanzulou. A benevolent loa associated with curing and protecting the sick. Certain curative medicine bundles are called yanzigues. [155]

Mazoto Bumba, sometimes called Coya. He takes his name from the Bumba people of the upper Congo River region. The Bumba are near neighbors of the Mouzubengues.

Mazoto Bumba. One of the Bumba family.

Mokouo Mouzubengue. One of the Mouzubengue family.

Roi Loangue (King of Loango). Refers to the old African kingdom of that name.

Nanzinne. A warrior deity.

Ambidedé. Known primarily in southern Haiti. [184]

Don Pèdro. A rather malevolent loa, from whom the Pèdro cult takes its name. The emblem for Don Pèdro is a pig. Early observers speculated that Don Pèdro was originally a powerful houngan of pre-revolutionary days.[22] [182] [173]

Anna Pèdro. A Pèdro version of the Vodoun Ayida Wèdo.

Bakulu Bako, known in some regions by the name Plaga Mona. He is a malevolent spirit who "eats"—i.e., destroys—people. Some informants are inclined to believe that Bakulu and Plaga are separate loa, both of a variety akin to hoko or dèmon.

Bakulu Bako. Related to Bakulu Bako.

Bonnemer Talou. He is visualized as a sea crab. *Talou bo* in Creole means "low hips" and is used to describe a clumsy person. The surname Talou therefore may describe the movements of this loa as he moves about like a crab. [42]

Bolou Bolou

Bord Côtelou, or Côtelou Bord. He is enormously large and formidable in appearance. A special loa of the country people. Although stern, he is fond of children. He is symbolized as an owl; his home is in the shoulder tree. His physical description suggests that he may be a deification of the epic folklore character Brer Mouquin, or Bonde Mouquin.

Cocomoro

Cocoro Jhoron (Congo Red Eyes). A malevolent snake spirit. Loa with red eyes are always of bad character.

Cocoro Mouzoro, or Mouzoro. A malevolent spirit.

Cocoro Savane, or Cocoro Savane (Congo of the Plains). Malevolent, fierce, and

22 [Saint-Méry, *Loc. cit.*, p. 62. Cf. p. 354 (cat. 18.—Author)]

[The Congo and Pétro Pantheons]

776 [122] [911] among, he is a man-eater; constant reference is made to his mortar in which he grinds people. His ritual color is white; some people believe that his skin is also white. The grinding of a person in a mortar is an African symbolism. A bas-relief in Dahomey reported by Gover[*] shows King Glele pounding a vanquished king's head in a mortar.

Bosu Tonn Cosson

Bosu Yimaw

Bosu Sos Yimaw Yimaw

Dada Fenin

Fenin Bouzan

Fenin Un Main Un Pied Un Jé (Exile One Hand, One Foot, One Eye)

Fenin Belzowa

Fenin Dandaf

Fenin Hanwa (Exile Red Eyes). A malevolent spirit.[*]

Fenin Matwano, or Matwanan. A malevolent spirit.

Fenin Fumo Pitan

Fenin Aowen

Gaano Awanan

Jean Pierre Pierrard

Lomba Zim. A deity of Congo origin.

Damella Lolomoso

Moli' Pierre. Said to be father of Zim Pimba.

Mama Aroma (Priestess Apida). A Pitro version of the Vodoun Apida.

Marieuse Cosson. A malevolent female lwa.

Marieuse Pied Cochon (Marieuse Dry Feet). Sister to Marieuse Bras Chèche, and equally malevolent.

Ogoew Hanwa (Ogoun Red Eyes). A malevolent spirit. A Pitro form of the Vodoun deity, with a different character.

Ogoew Dabar (Ogoun of the Waterfall). Leader of Ogoun Jiwage.

Ogoew Lolomoso. A fire lwa. Wherever comes in he plays with hot coals, hot iron, and flames.

Ogoew Pitan. He is malevolent and "rent" men.

Pierre, or Pierre

Qwanpoe Fer (Iron Pants)

Kitta Bawa (Chir Kitta)

Kitta Bark (Kitta of the Gate). A gateway guardian.

Kitta Cosson

Kitta Kawa

Kitta Lomba. Possibly the same as Kitta Bark.

Ratana

Rasa. A brother to Cérémi Brisé. A benevolent lwa.

Roi Gaano Cosson (King of the Highway). May refer to Legba or to another highway lwa.

Salomon Raymond

Tanzan Pitan. A Pitro version of the Vodoun Tanzan.

Tipaw Pitan. A malevolent lwa who preys on children from the foliage of the coconut palm.

Tipaw Pied Fer (Tipaw No Feet). Brother to Tipaw Pitan.

[*] [Gover, Africa Dances, p. 188. Cf. p. 304, col. 1&2. --Analyst]

[*] [See footnote, See Col. 1&2, p. 304. --Analyst.]

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Tijean Pied Calcus (Tijean Dry Feet). One of the malevolent Tijean brothers. 776
Tiritta Démanmé, or Kitta Démanmé. Thought to be the son of Kita Bayé.
Yanoé Lingal. A deity of Congo origin.
Zin Pinna
Zaka Tonnerre (Zaka Thunder)
Zaka Gwiz
Zaka L'Orage (Zaka Storm)
Yaki Bonnar
Gouvernor
Matinéwan
Sénégal (Senegal). When this lwa enters, the mounted person talks "Arabic." [787.91]

2. Games

THE GAME OF CAILLE, OR WARI

524 [184] The African counting game played with beans or stones in a carved wooden tray (known in various parts of Africa as *wari*, *omangala*, *oili*, etc.) is still known and played in the southwestern mountains of Haiti, particularly in the region south of the Léogâne Plain. In Africa the game has innumerable variants. Most often the carved playing board or tray has two rows of six, seven, or eight holes, or pockets, sometimes with a large pocket at each end for winnings. In Ethiopia the playing board consists of three rows of six pockets each. In the upper Congo region a form of the game uses a board of twenty-eight pockets in four rows. Among wandering herding peoples in East Africa the holes are simply dug in the earth, and for playing pieces stones or dried camel droppings are used. The game not only is widespread throughout Africa but has an ancient tradition in Indonesia, the Philippines, southern and southeastern Asia, and the Arabic Middle East.

In Haiti the game is usually called *caille*, or "hawk." It is played on a long, sixteen-hole board of the kind used in West Africa. The playing pieces are usually maize kernels, dried peas, or wari beans. Where wari beans are used, the game is sometimes called by that name. This is a curious circumstance. The wari bean itself is so named because of a black marking which looks like a smile, in Creole *wa ri* ("going to laugh"). There are several ways of playing wari in Haiti; all have the common objective of capturing pieces on the opponent's side of the board. This is referred to as entering his "house" and "eating" the occupants, a terminology that is employed elsewhere where the game is known.

524 One method of playing is as follows. Starting with four pieces in every hole, a player takes up all the pieces from any hole on his own side of the board and redistributes them in a counterclockwise direction, dropping one into each hole as far as they will go. When his last piece is

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dropped, he picks up the contents of the next hole and continues the re- 524
distribution. Should his last piece eventually fall into an empty pocket, his turn is ended and his opponent begins. However, if his last piece falls into a hole containing one or two pieces, he "eats" these pieces along with the piece which he places there. He continues the play as before, starting with the following hole, monopolizing the play until he ends in an empty hole. The one who takes the most pieces wins. In some [184]
Haitian variants of the game, each person's play is limited to the distribution of the contents of a single hole.

THE GAME OF MAYAMBA

This game, like *coulir*, appears to be of African origin. It is played with [191]
four chips made of shell, baked clay, or broken chinaware. One side of each chip is white, the other usually blue. Any number of players may participate, and, as in dice, all compete against the thrower. *Mayamba* [525]
has a strictly gambling incentive. If a player throws two whites and two blues, or four whites, or four blues, he wins. If he throws any odd combination he loses.

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3. Proverbs

539 *Jour li mouki nave dinne c'est pas jou'l pouri.*
The day a bird falls in the water is not the day it rots. (Don't count your chickens before they're hatched.)

Dirri mouse gaisyain mouse.
Behind the mountains are mountains. (No matter how powerful someone is, there are others with powers equal to his.)

C'est pas tout chien qui jappi ou pour sirl gi'dil.
You don't have to turn around and look at every dog that barks at you. (Don't worry about every complaint or threat that you hear.)

Chien quat' quat' pattes mai'l pas ça fair quat' chimin.
A dog has four feet but he can't travel four roads at once. (Said when someone is making excessive demands.)

Bois plus rave dil'l ut lain, gaisse pouchit dil'l ut plus lain.
The high tree says he sees far, the walking (traveling) seed says he sees farther. (The small and weak may have more sense than the large and strong.)

Rat mangi cane, mabolin souffri innocent.
The rat eats the sugar cane, the mabolin does innocent. (One person commits an offense, an innocent person is punished.)

Ca'q ba ou conseil achetil cheval grou ventr' saison lapluie mais saison sec li pas ardil ou mani.
A person who gives you advice to buy a horse with a big belly in the rainy season won't help you feed yourself when the dry season comes. (That is, a horse with a big belly is a big eater; there is plenty of grass for him when it rains but not much in the dry season, and a person who gives the foolish advice to buy such a horse isn't likely to be helpful in an emergency.)

Cane jou piquant mais li jour ou marchil bouki.
Encouragement isn't sharp but it makes you leap. (That is, it isn't like a thorn, but if you step in it, it throws you off your stride. Said about some unpleasant affair you'd like to ignore but cannot.)

Bouse ba ou pouin mais l'pas dit ou dormi grand chimin.
The horse gives you a pounding shove but he doesn't tell you to sleep in the middle of the highway. (Even if you feel safe, don't take unnecessary risks.)

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Jean cherché, Jean trouvé.
Jean seeks, Jean finds. (If you look for trouble you find it.)

Rajé gain' oreille.
The woods have ears. (Take care not to speak your business loudly.)

Chat chaudé nanz dlèvre chaud li où dlèvre frère li peur.
If a cat is burned with hot water, when he sees cold water he is afraid. (Once burned twice shy.)

Cochon marron connaî ouèji bois li fortè.
A wild pig knows on which tree he should scratch himself. (A person knows how to take care of himself.)

Tor' bawlé jam' gran.
The bellowing bull is never fat. (Refers to a person who brags but accomplishes little.)

Prison pas fait pour' chien.
Prisons weren't built for dogs. (If a person commits a bad act, no one is surprised if justice catches up with him.)

Roche nanz dlèvre pas connaî douleur roche nanz solèil.
A rock in the water doesn't comprehend the suffering of the rock in the sun. (If you haven't suffered you can't understand the suffering of others.)

Tambour pèlé pas fait bon danse.
A borrowed drum doesn't make a good dance. (A person who lends a drum may exclaim in no way concerns. If you are dependent on others you are at their mercy.)

Sotte pas mort ou, li fait ou cuit.
Stupidity doesn't kill you, but it makes you sweat.

Chanyanz chanyanz.
What is mine is mine. (Perhaps what I have isn't as good as someone else's, but it belongs to me.)

Zeffaire Nèg' pas point mais c'est jam' quinquin qui fin.
The man's affairs aren't small, it's just that his pants are too tight. (Said of a person who may look ludicrous but who nevertheless is well off.)

Bel Français, pas bagnol pour' ça.
Your speaking good French doesn't mean you're smart.

Rouj chien mais dji dans li blanche.
Here the dog has say his teeth are white. (Give the devil his due. Though you despise a person remember that he is not without reason to injure you.)

Bel qui gaingnain quinze pas jambé dji.
A cow with a tail doesn't walk across a fire. (People in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.)

Li où bouche pé.
The eyes see, the mouth is silent. (Don't talk about everything you observe.)

Bel chien mais mouf' mèl li.
His the dog but listen for his master.

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539 *Jardin loin gombo dur.*
If the garden is far, the okra is hard. (If you can't reach the grapes, they're sour.)

Batton qui bat' chien noir c'est li qui i'a' chien blanc.
The stick that beats the black dog [also] beats the white dog. (A knife cuts both ways, or a misfortune can happen to you, too.)

Bourrique fait pitit pou' dat'l pad.
A donkey has children so that he can rest his back.

Li ba'b nemi ou pend dji mettl ba'b ou à latemp.
When your friend's beard catches fire, put your beard to sinking.

Venre gout' gout pas gain' oreille.
A starving belly doesn't have ears. (That is, it doesn't listen to explanations.)

Mapou tombé, cabrit mangé jé li.
The mapou tree falls, the goat eats its leaves. (When the mighty fall they are helpless even before the weak. This proverb is also used to comment on ingratitude, for the goat eats the leaves that have given him shade.)

Pas quitté bourrique pou' bat' manian.
Don't leave the donkey to beat the mulle basket. (Don't lose your head and allow the donkey to run away.)

Zoreille pas gainyain oreille.
A hard grain has no ears.

Zaffai' mouton pas saffai' cabrit.
The sheep's affair is none of the goat's business.

Fer coupé fer.
Iron cuts iron. (A person may be strong, but he is not invincible.)

Cordo coupé cordo.
Cord cuts cord.

Si fer pas coupé fer machoquer pas gain' travaille.
If iron didn't cut iron, the blacksmith wouldn't have any work. (There's an antidote for everything.)

Après danse, tambour toujour lourd.
After the dance is over the drum is always heavy.

Jour jé tombé nano dirou c'est pas jour li coulé.
The day a leaf falls into the water isn't the day it sinks. (The battle isn't over yet.)

Tombouyé pas capabl' danse.
The drummer can't dance. (Each person has his role. A person can't do too many things at once.)

Dé mouton pas capabl' rencontré, dé mouton capabl'.
Two mountains cannot meet, two men can. (That is, agreement is possible among people.)

Piti pied'm ou mandé pardon, ça pardon ou fait pas' mainé?
You step on my foot and ask my pardon, what good will the pardon do me? (If you injure me the damage is done and it is too late to apologize.)

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Yon zwel dwèt pas capàb' manjé gombo.
A single finger can't eat okra. (Food is picked up by the fingers. A single finger is inadequate. Used in the sense of "two heads are better than one," or cooperation makes possible what a person cannot do alone.)

Tèt milèt capàb' ensanpé soleil, mais li pas capàb' ensanpé lapluie.
A reed can find the sun, but it can't find the rain. (A person may get by in certain situations, but if he has deficiencies they will show up when the real test comes.)

Jour malheur loit ralé zwel sur ou.
On a bad day clabbered milk breaks your head. (That is, when things are going badly even clabbered milk can hurt if it falls on you.)

Fourmi pas jour mouri ou bo lavinyon ouf.
The ant never dies under a barrel of sugar.

Gouvè ouvri gouvè, ou rouzi ouvri rouzi.
Gouvè covers gouvè, or barrel covers barrel. (For every force there is an equal or superior force.)

2: Courlander 3-4 (1937-1953) 1960 SV3 HA21 SV3

[P. 338]

4. Notes on Orthography

The problem of putting the Creole language into writing has confronted Haitian and non-Haitian scholars and writers for some time. During the past decade the problem has been an acute one for education authorities in Haiti. While there developed a consensus that teaching the largely illiterate population would have to be done in Creole and not in French, there remained a controversy about the system of orthography that should be used. One of the first attempts to teach Haitian children in their own language was made by Christian Beaulieu, a Haitian educator who worked out a written method based on traditional French orthography.[1] Subsequently, a simpler system was devised by a clergyman, the Reverend H. Ormond McConnell. Although it had numerous detractors among those who favored French orthography, it was found to be far more suitable for educational purposes. The American linguist Robert A. Hall, Jr., carried out a study, the findings of which supported the McConnell method as "perfectly phonemic and at the same time wholly practicable in that it uses only characters already available in print shops and on typewriters."[2]

Some Creole texts from Haiti and other West Indian islands, taken down by researchers and scholars, have been transcribed in the McConnell orthography, or in a modified one known as the McConnell-Laubach system. It is my opinion that although the system is admirable for teaching purposes, and adequate for recording texts for scholarly needs, it is a disadvantage to a reader who has a French vocabulary at his command but who is not familiar with the McConnell orthography. The extent to which this system can disguise a language is easily seen if it is used, for example, to transcribe Jamaican speech. The effect is identical on French words or words of French origin. The Haitian proverb "Run from the rain, fall into the big river" is written by Hall in the McConnell-Laubach orthography: *Kouri pawlapli, ribé ralgrd*

[1] [UNESCO, The Haiti Pilot Project, p. 34. Cf. p. 355, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[2] [Ibid. Cf. p. 355, Category 116. -- Analyst]

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well.[1] A system which permits recognition of the original French words would transcribe the proverb: *Cowri pas' lapluie, ramblé nan grand rivie.*

In this book, I have in the main used the semi-French forms. Regardless of the status of Creole as a separate language, a great part of its vocabulary is drawn from French, old or modern, and it has seemed unnecessary to disguise the connections of Creole with its antecedents. Nevertheless, I am aware that some of my orthographic choices coincide more with the McConnell-Laubach system than with the Gallic, and some may appear to belong to neither. I hope, however, that my transcribed texts will be easily read.

In most sociological and anthropological reports on Haiti which include texts the transcriptions are based on modified French orthography. Nevertheless, there have been many incon-sistencies and contradictions, as there well may be within the covers of this book. One reason may be an inadequate understanding of the Creole language. A second reason can be, and often is, differences of pronunciation in various regions.

But the most significant differences occur in writing down words of non-French or probably non-French origin. One of the most noteworthy of these is *Vodoun*—a very important word without which it would be very difficult to write of Haitian life. Writers and anthropologists have spelled it in the following ways: Melville J. Herskovits—*Vodu* and *Vodun*; George Eaton Simpson—*Vodun* (also an earlier trial of *Vôdoun*); Odette Mennesson Rigaud—*Vodou*; Milo Rigaud—*Vaudou*; Robert A. Hall, Jr.—*Vaudoux*; Selden Rodman—*Vaudou*; Maya Deren—*Voudoun*; Eugène Aubin—*Vaudoux*.

Still other variations are to be found, particularly in the early literature on Haiti. In view of the general lack of agreement on this matter, it is not difficult to defend my own choice of *Vodoun* (French phonetics), which I used in previous writings.

Other important words which have numerous spellings are *kouyée* (*kouyée*, *kouyée*, *kouyée*, *kouyée*, *kouyée*, etc.), *kouzé* (*kouzé*, *kouzé*, etc.), and the names of various lwa.

[1] [Hall and others, Haitian Creole, p. 199. Cf. p. 395, Category IIG — analysis]

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5. Translations of Songs in Chapter 19

[533] [539] Many of the Creole song texts included with the music in chapter 19 are translated and explained in earlier chapters. The following examples are translations of song texts in chapter 19 to which there is no reference elsewhere in the book.

EXAMPLE 133

> Folle Wide, aya, oh!
> The Creoles say like this,
> I am not in Africa any more,
> I shall do as I please!
> The Creoles say like this,
> I am not in Africa any more,
> I shall do as I please, oh!
> I being myself,
> I take myself away,
> I do what I please, oh!

[534] [542] (Folle Wide is the name of a lion. She boasts that she comes to Haiti and returns to Africa whenever she wishes. The word aya is exclamatory and means something like "I am here.")

EXAMPLE 134

> The Forty Days [Lent], these women, these virgins,
> Prayers for the sinner, prayers for the wicked sinner!
> Prayers for the lion Saint Antoine, oh, we ask your pardon!

EXAMPLE 135

> In Africa are lion, oh!
> Kow dow, hooral hooral!
> Kow dow, hooral hooral!
> In Africa are lion, oh[illegible]!

(Eyo Ayo is ritual language. Hausa kanzu are the survivors of the hounfor being addressed by an unidentified lwa.)

Ensemble 136

Achadi, ah, ah!
Achadi, I have no mother here to speak for me!
Achadi, ah!
Achadi, I have no mother here to speak for me!
Oh Achadi, ah!
Ogoun is bad, ah!
Achadi Papa!
Ogoun is bad, ah!
Etc.

(The song is addressed to the lwa Achadi; it complains of the behavior of another lwa, Ogoun.)

Ensemble 137

Beat the drum for me!
I shall . . . . , beat the drum for me!
Etc.
Three times after the Angelus, ah!
Three times after the Angelus, ah!

(This appears to be a children's game song. Thrice "times" after the Angelus would be three hours after six o'clock in the evening.)

Ensemble 138

Liberia fell down!
Liberia fell down! *Adieu!*
I am sending a whip for his back!
Etc.

(A children's game song.)

Ensemble 139

Adelina!
Mépensada Alaka, my Loko, Adelina!
Mépensada Alaka, my Loko, Adelina!
Mépensada my Loko, Adelina!
Etc.

(This is a song of supplication to the lwa Loko. The word *mépensada* signifies supplication.)

Ensemble 140

The cause is not a dollar,
Cousin, don't take crumbs, ah, crumbs!

Cousin, oh, cousin, oh,
Cousin, don't take cousin, oh, cousin!

(A *gourdain* is one-quarter of a gourde, or the equivalent of five cents in United States money. *Dé gourdain* is ten cents.)

EXAMPLE 141 consists entirely of ritual language.

EXAMPLE 142

Call Dumballa, call Damiri, call Dumballa White,
Dumballa, call Dumballa White, Dumballa.

(Dumballa and Damiri are the names of lwa.)

EXAMPLE 143

Iho, I am a big man, oh!
Iho, I am a big man, oh!
Iho, I am the patriarch, oh, I am the patriarch, oh,
I am the chief of my house!

(Iho is the name of a lwa, from whose point of view the song is being sung. Iho is stating his seniority in his house, or family, for there are other lwa related to him. The word *grand* in Creole, as used here, is difficult to translate. It means good or elder, or both. A *grand famille* is the eldest in the extended family, and usually carries the connotation of head or chief.)

EXAMPLE 144

Iho Iho é, Samandi Kanna!
Etc.

(Samandi Kanna is the name of a lwa of the Iho family. The song consists of a repetition of his name, with variations.)

EXAMPLE 145

Iho Iho é, Marianni é!
Etc., with variations.

(This is a song to the lwa Marianni, of the Iho family. Except for his name, in various combinations, there are no words.)

EXAMPLE 146 is a song for the making of magic. It is entirely in ritual language.

EXAMPLE 147

Call Ouanga, call Lahoun in the water!
Ouanga, oh, call Ouanga in the water!
Ouanga, oh, call Ouanga in the water!

(A song for the loa Osange. Literally, the song specifies Osange "in the water," but the sense is "under the water," where the loa reside. 533 539 [192]

EXAMPLE 148

Yabofé my dear, they don't need me!
I will see [enter through] the center post if they *djagwé*!
Yabofé my dear, they don't need me!
I will see the center post if they *djagwé*!
Ferei doesn't see me any more!
I will see the center post if they *djagwé*!

(Yabofé and Ferei are the names of loa. Even though addressed as "Yabofé my dear," it is Yabofé who is speaking. If one thinks of it as "Dear Yabofé says," the shifting point of view becomes less confusing. The term *djagwé* indicates a kind of tension and excitement which builds up before possessions take place. Yabofé says that if the people *djagwé* he is prepared to enter through the center post.) [176]

EXAMPLE 149

Take me (to go), oh!
To the house, oh!

EXAMPLE 150

Damballa! Damballa!
Damballa Wèdo Damballa!
Damballa, *cuhé*!
Sacred Damballa! Damballa!

(The song is an invocation to the loa Damballa. The word *cuhé* is exclamatory.) [182] [192]

EXAMPLE 151

Ibo Lélé, oh!

(Ibo Lélé is the name of a loa.)

EXAMPLE 152

We thread our way [like a snake],
Damballa Wèdo is a snake, oh!

(The "threading" is a description of conventionalized dance movements suggesting the crawling of a snake. The loa Damballa is identified as a snake.) [535] [176]

EXAMPLE 153

Loko Sindé asks for wind, é!

533
539 Wind, wind, wind, Loko Sinlé asks for wind!
Wind, wind, wind!

[1976] (The loa Loko Sinlé calls for wind to make the sailboat move.)

EXAMPLE 154

Innocent, don't you see I'm innocent!
It is God in heaven who will judge me!
Innocent, don't you see I'm innocent!
It is God in heaven who will judge me!
Ferri's goat here looks for the water small!
The goat of the saints seeks the road to the house!
In Africa everyone is sick, oh!
Papa, I will save them!

EXAMPLE 155

Marianni, oh!
Adié, Moundongue!
Marianni!
To the other side I am passing!
I am leaving here!

[1976] (This is a song to the loa Marianni Moundongue. He says he is leaving the hounfor to return to the other side—that is, Africa.)

EXAMPLE 156

Azui, oh, I am a snake, oh!
Azui Papa, I am a snake, oh!
Azui, oh, I am a snake, oh!
Azui Papa, I am a snake, oh!
Don't you see the pouin there is spoiled?
Don't you see the pouin there is spoiled?
It has rolled into the mud!
I sound my sonnet!

[1976] (Azui is a loa characterized as a snake. The second part of the song is topical. It appears that a pouin, or magic bundle, has fallen into the mud and been soiled. The last line represents words of the houngan, who shakes his ritual rattle.)

EXAMPLE 157

Ah! It is I, it is I, it is I!
It is I, oh, it is Mademoiselle Ayida, it is I!
Sitting by the boat there they speak ill of us (me), oh!
It is I, oh, it is I, centerpost, it is I!

[1976] (Mademoiselle Ayida is the loa Ayida Wèdo.)

EXAMPLE 158

Apida isn't joking, oh!
Apida isn't joking with them!
Ende, [visual] language, oh!
Apida isn't joking, oh!
Apida isn't joking with them!
Those who wish to be satisfied are satisfied!
Those who wish to be angry are angry, oh!
Apida, oh!
Apida isn't joking with them!

EXAMPLE 159

Long live the king and dear queen, oh!
Another misfortune, [they] talk behind my back!
Long live the king and dear queen, oh!
Another misfortune, [they] talk behind my back!
Fire, oh, heat!
Fire, oh, heat, oh!
Another misfortune, [they] talk behind my back!

EXAMPLE 160

Legba Agunsi *ti*
Oh what lea are you?
Age I am a lea!
Legba Agunsu *ti*
Oh what lea are you here?
Quinti quinti yé, oh, I am a Nago lea!
Legba Agunsu *ti* What lea are you!

EXAMPLE 161

Oh, *colire ye ye*, my little banza, *colire!*
In truth, *colire ye ye*, my little banza, *colire!*
Colire ye ye, my little banza, *colire!*
A non pailli colire ye ye, my little banza, *colire!*

(A children's story song. The italicized parts are not translatable. The banza is a small musical instrument; currently the word is used for a banjo or fiddle, formerly it designated an instrument of African origin.) [534]

EXAMPLE 162

Adid Complete Frog, that is not running!
Frog hops, ti dang, ti dang dang, frog hops!

(A children's song from a story about a race between the frog and the horse.)

533 Example 163
539
524

The pig says waiu!
The pig says waiu, but *mamai*!
Etc.
See the pig having fun!
Kokki, cokki, but *mamai*!

(A children's *gogo* song.)

Example 164

Bwiwum *ewui*!
Adiwu, Bwiwum, make Bwiwum walk!
Bwiwum, that's it, that's it, Bwiwum!
Make Bwiwum walk!

(A children's game song.)

533 Example 165
539

You arrive, Rigal, you *ewui*!
You arrive, Rigal, you arrive!
When Rigal turned into a large pig,
He came to [*ewui*] to eat us!

(This song names a specific individual, Rigal, as having turned into a pig, like a member of the Vinbinlingur Society, but it is not clear whether it is intended to be taken seriously or is merely banter.)

Example 166

I will *zwing*, eh!
The mosquito says I will *zwing*, eh!
Etc.

(534) (*Zwing* is the sound the mosquito makes. The song is usually sung to the accompaniment of the *tambour moringouin*, or mosquito drum.)

Example 167

The small boy stands on the terrace,
He stamps his feet *dao dao*!
The small boy stands on the terrace,
He stamps his feet *dao dao*!
Oh, [unchained?] gives them *pailette*, eh!
The small boy stands on the terrace,
He stamps his feet *dao dao*!
[Unchained?] gives them *pailette*, eh!
Furiously gives them *pailette*, eh!
Mayouma!
Find your woman, *mayouma*!
Mayou-youma!

Your dues, mayoumé!
Find your woman, mayoumé!
Mayoumé!

(*Pwèlèrèr* means "all decorated up," "fancy," "in carnival regalia." It is also the name of a dance, as is *mayoumé*, used here as an exclamation.)

Example 168 was said to be in "Spanish."

Example 169

Go to your mother's house,
Go to your mother's house,
Go to your mother's house, my dear,
Do not come and give me an argument!
Go to your mother's house, my dear,
Go to your mother's house, my dear,
Go to your mother's house, my dear,
And do not give me an argument!
Little girl who doesn't know how to wash and iron,
Go home to your mother,
Little girl who doesn't know how to wash and iron,
Go home to your mother!
Angélica, Angélica, go to your mother's house!
Angélica, Angélica, go to your mother's house!

Example 170

Oh I'm not a mule,
Oh I'm not a mule, oh!
The farmer takes me to carry his coffee!

(A good-natured protest song of the kind often sung by crumbiers.)

Example 173 has no text. It is exclamatory throughout.

Example 174

E Laïza, where should I go, Laïza ê!
Laïza, the children are hypocrites, oh!
Etc.

Example 175

Ewa Mamba Sonn, I am cutting trees
To take away the honey!

Example 176

Adiou kining kining kining.
Oh I say my prayer to God to send rain!

(The first line is ritual language, but it appears to have been originally a phrase recited by the petit savane.)

533
532
531 Examples 178

Oun, ah, Lili, ah!
Oun, ah, Lili, ah!
They take the sense of the lies and serve evil, ah!
Let a stick!

(692) (The song criticizes someone who has become a hungan and has used his
(696) powers wrongly. Oun Lili is the lwa to whom the complaint is being addressed, or he may be the one lodging the complaint.)

Examples 179

Farmer, call the lwa for me, *ogwé*!
Farmer, call the lwa for me now,
Call the lwa for me now,
Gilé has engaged me!

(698) (*Gi-lé* is a lwa. *Habitant* signifies "farmer" or "peasant" but could be trans-
(699) lated as "countryman.")

Examples 180

Bouloko, I arrive,
See my criminals!
I will cut them, I have no knife!
Bouloko Nago, I will cut them, *malouté*!

(699) (The lwa Bouloko Nago announces his arrival and complains that people
(699) have mistreated him. He says he will avenge himself without a knife. *Malouté* is ritual language.)

Examples 181

I am going to see the honest hounfo, ah,
I am going to see if they are in accord with me.
Eie.

Examples 182

I cry honor before my lwa's altar,
Cry honor, and no one replied!
I cry honor before my lwa's altar,
Cry honor, and no one replied!
All who speak well [of me], I am here, I will listen, ah!
All who speak evil [of me], I am here, I will listen to them!
They sign my name, Alleluia, but they do not sign my fate,
I ask where will they see me!

(p. 349)

Notes

Chapter 1: *The Making of the Haitian* (pp. 1-7)

[illegible]

[1] The name Cimbi survives in Haiti as the name of a deity.

[2] Herskovits, in *The Myth of the Negro Past* (p. 47), provides a tabulation of raw data found in the manifests recorded for slaves shipped to Virginia between 1700 and 1769: 20,564 slaves were reported shipped from "Africa," 3,693 from Carolina, 6,277 from "Guinea," 9,224 from Calabar, 3,800 from Angola, and 1,002 from Madagascar. Of those shipped from the island of Madagascar, 473 were listed as coming from Mozambique.

[3] Nicolas de Las Casas.

Chapter 2: *Man and the Universe: Vodoun* (pp. 8-18)

[1] See Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 3.

[2] Schweinfurth in *The Heart of Africa*, II, 31, says: "In Lunda all musicians and conjurers are called gangas." Leo Wiener, in *Africa and the Discovery of America* (Philadelphia: Innes and Sons, 1922), III, 31, reports: "Forms of ganga have in Ewe the meaning 'medicine' but also 'magic'—such as Nyika ganga and Kongo nganga."

[3] Gaunt, *Africa Dances*, p. 120; Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 208 ff.

[4] Vodu, the Fon *bosu* or *hosu*. Among the Arada of Dahomey a *bosu* or *vodu* was regarded as a spiritual wife of the deity. She was a servant of the cult temple, and in some instances a wife of the cult priest.

[5] Translated from the French of Métraux, *En Haïti*, pp. 37-39.

[6] Deren, in her *Divine Horsemen* (pp. 119 ff.), gives an excellent report of a service for Agwé in a boat at sea. Métraux (*op. cit.*, p. 108) seems to have given the first description of this service at sea for the loa Agwé.

[7] Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. 119.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 123. Leyburn advances the theory that Vodoun developed during this period as a result of the vacuum left by the Church. Although the Church did in effect leave the field to the African cults, one must assume that the Arada, Congo, and other cults were already organized and possessed of great vitality before the Haitian revolution. Implicit evidence points to a continuity of cult life from the earliest days of the Africans on Haitian soil. There are no statistics to reveal the extent of cult membership at the end of the eighteenth century, but the content and form of Vodoun today are so overwhelmingly African that it is difficult to think of Haitian cult activity as the product of a vacuum.

Chapter 3: *The Loa: Gods of the Haitian Mountains* (pp. 19-29)

[1] The term *vodoun*, used in this precise sense, conforms to the original Fon (Dahomean) usage. The term *hounsi*, also of Fon origin, signifies "spirit" and belongs to the same root

as *bouqiter*, *bouwel*, *bouwgliacon*, *bouwtou*, etc. Hystère is of obvious French origin. *Lou* is probably from the Fanti, but it could be from the Yoruba.

[illegible] Various methods and formulas are employed in "tying" a lou. Sometimes making the sign of the cross is regarded as adequate, or the saying of a prayer. In "The Voodoo Sorcerer in Northern Haiti" (*American Anthropologist*, XLII, 1940-1942), George Eaton Simpson reports that the "tying" of a lou sometimes results in a contract between the individual concerned and his houngan. If the houngan wants the *mulé* *ale* to come in, he must neutralize the ritual between the "lover" lou put in the way. "One procedure for bringing an possession to a servant who has tried to 'eat' his chief god is for the priest to stand in front of the person whom he suspects, make the sign of the cross, and strike him on the forehead three times with a sacrificial sword. Usually these blows are hard enough to make blood spurt. The servant then begs the pardon of the angry god, and as soon as possible he enters the house in his handkerchief (the method he has used for 'tying' his lou)."

[illegible] [illegible]Herskovits, *Dahomey*.

Chapter 4: *Death River* (pp. [illegible])

[illegible] [illegible]Maurice Delafosse, *L'âme négre*. Translation from *Free France*, special issue No. 2, French Press and Information Service, New York, June, 1946.

[illegible] [illegible]Leo A. Verwilghen, in booklet describing peoples of the Kasongo region, accompanying *River of the Western Congo*, recordings issued by the Ethnic Folkways Library.

[illegible] [illegible]Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu*, pp. [illegible].

[illegible] [illegible]W. M. Eiselen and I. Schapera, "Religious Beliefs and Practices," in Schapera, *The Bantu-speaking Tribes of South Africa*, p. [illegible].

[illegible] [illegible]Translated from the French of Anéus, *En Haïti*, p. [illegible].

[illegible] [illegible]Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, pp. [illegible].

[illegible] [illegible]Hall and others, *Haitian Creole*, American Anthropological Association, Memoir No. [illegible], pp. [illegible].

[illegible] [illegible]Simpson, "Four Voodoo Ceremonies," *Journal of American Folklore*, April-June, 1948, pp. [illegible].

[illegible] [illegible]As translated by Courlander from Simpson's Creole text, *ibid.*, p. [illegible]. The preceding paragraph is from p. [illegible].

[illegible] [illegible]Translated by Courlander from the Creole of Simpson's text.

[illegible] [illegible]This and the preceding paragraph are from Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. [illegible].

[illegible] [illegible]These shells, as indicated elsewhere, are part of the paraphernalia of the Vodoun priest and appear to be an inheritance from the priests of the Fa cult of Dahomey. The divining shells are usually thrown on the ground in bears, and the readings depend upon combinations of "heads and tails." The manner of throwing the shells, as well as the number used, corresponds closely with the Haitian secular gambling game *mayanbe* (see Appendix 2), though the purpose is obviously different. In some priestly rites in Haiti, cubes rather than the customary shells are used for divining.

[illegible] [illegible]Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. [illegible].

[illegible] [illegible]*Ibid.*, p. [illegible].

[illegible] [illegible]Herskovits, *op. cit.*, p. [illegible].

[illegible] [illegible]Herskovits (*ibid.*) notes that persons who die of smallpox, lightning, and certain other phenomena are not buried in coffins. Some of my informants indicated this to be their understanding also, but they said that the dead are buried without coffins for strictly economic reasons as well.

[illegible] [illegible]Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. [illegible].

[illegible] [illegible]Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. [illegible].

[illegible] [illegible]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, [illegible].

[illegible] [illegible]*Ibid.*, pp. [illegible].

[illegible] [illegible]Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, p. [illegible].

[illegible] [illegible]Hall and others, *op. cit.*, p. [illegible].

Chapter 5: *Sacrifices for the Law and the Family Ancestors* (pp. 91-94)

[1171]

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relations between the husband and the wife's family, it is nevertheless commonplace for men who can afford it to have more than one wife.

*Simpson, in "Sexual and Familial Institutions in Northern Haiti," *American Anthropologist*, October-December, 1941, p. 690, observes that in northern Haiti there are three distinct types of plaçage. "A *fanmi-ouèlè* shares her mom's house, while a *mamzèl petite* is a woman who has born children for a man without living in his house. A *fanmi plaçée* does not live in her consort's house, and she has given him no children." Although none of these women has any legal rights of inheritance, Simpson notes, "sexual choice to a man's property stand in descending order for these three classes of plaçée."

*Johnson, *The Negro in the New World*.

*UNESCO, *The Haiti Film Project*, p. 18.

*Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 311.

*The group work patterns of Haiti show a common ancestry with Negro gang work patterns in the United States. While nothing so formalized as the *counting pattern* among American Negroes, similarities are striking. The emphasis on rhythm, the swinging of hammers or picks in unison, the need for a singing leader, the responsive chorus, and the frequent use of some kind of percussion to keep time, all derive from a common concept of the nature of group work.

*Herskovits, "Some Aspects of Dahomean Ethnology," *Africa*, Vol. V (July, 1932), pp. 266-268.

*Cardinall, *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 104), observes that among the Krachi people of Togoland "no man may have sexual intercourse with a woman for seven days before he goes hunting."

*This Ashanti story told by Rattray in *Akan-Ashanti Folk-Tales* credits the hedgehog with owning the original bow; according to this version, the bow escaped across the sea to the country of the white men, who then possessed the secret. Afterward, the white men brought many bows to Ashanti.

CHAPTER III: *Dancing and Dance Drama* (pp. 126-178)

*Quoted in Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 73.

*Actually a banjo-like instrument of African provenience. The similarity of the word *banza* to *banjo* appears to be more than a coincidence.

*Saint-Méry, *Dr la danse*, as translated by Lillian Moore in "Moreau de Saint-Méry and Dance," *Dance Index*, October, 1948, p. 238.

*Moore, op. cit., p. 238.

*Brandy or rum with gunpowder is sometimes drunk by persons possessed by the loa Ogoun, deity of war.

*Moore, op. cit., p. 238.

*United Nations photograph no. 62163.

*Students of United States Negro life will recognize the word *counjaille* as a variant of *counjaire*, a dance known on the lower Mississippi. According to one observer, Dr. Willis James of Spelman College, Atlanta, small Negro boys on the docks used to call to the boat passengers:

> "Throw me a nickel
> Throw me a dime
> If you want to see me
> Do the counjaire."

The term *counjaire* is still used to mean hand-loading of cotton bales on river boats. When this loading was done mainly by hand some years ago, the stevedores worked rhythmically in a line and sang. An old man from Louisiana testified that within his own memory the dockside *counjaire* was accompanied by rudimentary drums and other percussion.

Chapter 12: *Songs of Complaint, Recrimination, and Gossip*

[pp. 138-142]

[illegible] *and Herskovits, Dahomean Folk-Lore*, pp. 127-31.

Chapter 13: *Comments on the Mighty: Political Songs* (pp. 148-162)

[illegible] *Hunt, 187 History and Her Romances.*

Chapter 15: *Self-Identity Songs* (pp. 186-189)

[illegible] *Herskovits, Dahomey*, I, p. 368.

[illegible] Courlander, "Haitian Hunting in Guatemala," *Journal of Negro History*, XXXII (1947), 480-6.

Chapter 16: *Folk Tales: Bouki, Malice, and Jean Sonnet* (pp. 190-204)

"The theme of growing simple objects upon the ground to word off a pursuer is widely known, but the only one told in Africa has special characteristics of its own, such as the elephant hair. In A[illegible] tale, the price is the tail of the queen elephant, which is needed to serve as a rudder.

"This part of the tale, or hoax, dealing with the dragon that swallowed the sun, seems to be unique to we[illegible] Europe. Some reports of the tale of Gwandoulout's faith have come from France.

"Variants of "The Persistent Wager Not Worth Anyone" are widely known around the world. The story [illegible] with among the Bemoth of East Africa, with the legendary character Abumowen, a Persi[illegible] trickster hero, playing the title role. Anansi plays the same part in West Africa, and o[illegible] trickster heroes are identified with the same adventures in India and Southeast Asia. The tale has been reported also from the West Indian island of St. Martin ("He Meets the King's Conditions," in Parsons, *Folk-Lore of the Antilles, French and English*, Part II).

"The fishing and mermaid here, except for the show, is found in many versions in West Africa. The central part of the tale, the pursuit, has a special Haitian flavor. Bouki choosing Malice the[illegible] with the cob chief's usual grounds and the church, with Malice trying to make appropriate [illegible] use of the situation, is a special delight to Haitians. The dialogue between Bouki and Malice's brother is also regarded as very humorous.

"Known in vir[illegible]lly all Negro communities in the Americas, the tale of eating the honey (or butter, p[illegible]ch, or lard) seems to have come to the New World by way of Africa, although it is also known in Europe.

"The theme of the singing tortoise (or other animal, or an object such as a shell) has appeared in folk t[illegible] its singing from West Africa through the Americas to the Far East. This Haitian variant bears a striking resemblance to a tortoise story from the Gold Coast (Ghana). In the Gold Coast variant the tortoise asks the hunter who finds him to keep his singing ability a[illegible] secret, but the hunter has to tell about his discovery. When the village headman hears abo[illegible] it, he calls for a test. The tortoise refuses to sing, and the hunter is punished. Then the tortoise sings his song, which emphasizes the hunter's bad faith. The philosophical tone of the Haitian tortoise's songs, particularly the last one, is quite similar. The last line of the song is from a Haitian proverb.

Chapter 17: *Children's World: Game Songs and Games* (pp. 183-188)

"The description of this game is from Paul, "Les jeux à gage," *Bulletin du Bureau d'Ethnologie*, July, [illegible], p. 51.

Courtesy of Musical Instruments (pp. [illegible])

Herskovits and Herskovits, *Suriname Folklore*, p. [illegible]. The stick is also known in Surinam.

Performance: Joseph Lange, Greenville.

Library of Congress album, *Folk Music of Venezuela*.

Pamphlet accompanying recordings, *Music of Equatorial Africa* (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, [illegible]).

See Courlander, "Musical Instruments of Cuba," *Musical Quarterly*, April, [illegible], pp. [illegible].

Lambert-Sybille, *Les Canes Indiens*, pp. [illegible].

Curt Sachs, *Geist und Werden der Musikinstrumente* (Berlin, [illegible]), pp. [illegible].

Schweinfurth, *The Heart of Africa*, I, [illegible].

Performance: Jubilee Yard, Kingston.

See Courlander, op. cit., p. [illegible].

Accounts of The Funeral (pp. [illegible])

Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, [illegible] ff.

See Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa*, pp. [illegible] and Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, [illegible] ff.

Ellis, op. cit., p. [illegible].

Herskovits, op. cit., pp. [illegible] ff.

Ibid., pp. [illegible] ff.

Ibid., pp. [illegible] ff.

Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa*, p. [illegible].

Herskovits, op. cit., pp. [illegible] ff.

Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, pp. [illegible], [illegible] ff.

Library of Congress Recording No. [illegible].

Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, p. [illegible]; W. R. Bascom, in Introduction to sound album *Drums of the Yoruba of Nigeria* (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, [illegible]).

Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, pp. [illegible] ff.

Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples*, pp. [illegible]; Herskovits, op. cit., I, [illegible].

Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, p. [illegible].

Ibid., p. [illegible].

Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, [illegible].

Ellis, *The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa*, p. [illegible].

Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, pp. [illegible].

Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, [illegible] ff. Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples*, p. [illegible], says that this dance was especially important in the town of Aghome.

Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, pp. [illegible].

Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, [illegible].

Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples*, pp. [illegible].

Maximilien, *De la danse*, p. [illegible].

Cuney, *African Dances*, p. [illegible].

Wind open as a symbol of underdance appears in the folklore of many Negro cultures. Our own American ballad about the gambler Stackalee states:

> "The judge says, 'Stackalee, I would spare your life,
> But I know you're a bad man, I can see it in your red eyes.'"

Notes 255

Annotations to Notes on Ornithography (pp. 250-255)

[illegible], *The Gulf Pilot Project*, p. 36.
Ibid.
[illegible] and others, *Golden Creek*, p. [illegible].

[P.357]
[P.356 is blank]

Glossary

CREOLE TERMS USED IN TEXT

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Aboke or a Aoke. A ritual singing phrase meaning "the end."

Agida. A bowed drumstick used on the middle-sized Arada drum.

Aja. An exclamation in Yoruba songs signifying "I am here."

Alfar ensale. A needle-nose languado, from the Spanish *alfanje.*

Arofin. Protective magic.

Asson. The cult priest's ritual rattle with ceremonial emblem.

Aunt. A bowed wand for striking as a percussion instrument.

Aunpon. The largest drum of the Arada rites.

Bafiji. Altar.

Baliyan. Keeper of the altar.

Bagaster gaiole. A grasshopper-colored drumstick.

Bakia. (1) A kind of evil demon. (2) Name of the larger Petro drum.

Bakjon. Another name for the asson.

Bamboche. A "good time" dance.

Bamboché. To dance or have a good time.

Banza. Formerly a stringed instrument resembling a banjo or a rough zither. The name is now used for a fiddle.

Basse. A larger drum resembling our tambourine.

Basin. A pool, usually referring to a special pool sacred to a deity.

Batonnel. Stick dance.

Bebé. Baby, used to designate the smallest of the Vodoun drums.

Bizango. A form of leap game seen in the form of a dog.

Bocó, or Bocor. A cult priest, one who works with magic as well as with the live and the dead.

Boiz Amerique. A bamboo trumpet, also known as cornion.

Bondieu. God.

Bonsoir. Wild. A bowed Arada is an "untamed" bowed; a *bon Arada,* an "untamed" lion.

Bouil' eau, or bouillé eau. "Boiling pot," the name of a ritual in which the bowed is elevated to the rank of hounfo.

Boula. (1) The smallest drum of the Arada rites, also called *Bébé.* (2) A verb meaning to play this drum.

Bulaiier. Drummer of the Boula.

Caco. A bandit, or a mercenary soldier who hires himself out to political adventurers. Sometimes known as a *marbrie.* Numerous revolutions were accomplished with armies of caco.

Calin. (1) House. (2) The Haitian version of the game known in West Africa by such names as *owé* and *mangalla.*

Canaris. A clay water vessel.

Canon. The rank of bagged where lwa have been "tamed" or controlled.

Capin. Another name for the bizango.

Gard. A type of association, or community work group.

Garoua. A measure of land, about three and one-third acres.

Gate. To beat the basic rhythm for a song or dance.

Gaudes. The one who eats.

Gayambagan. A container with a tight-fitting lid made from a large gourd or calabash.

Gbaribo, ebaribo, or Igwebwe. A small gourd cup used for keeping time for singers and dancers.

Gbaskete or ebaskiji. Grapefruit, grapefruit tree.

Gbesin dikun. "The water mark," by which he came to and depart from the scene of a service.

Gbeto. An alcoholic drink.

Gbeto. Wooden sticks which are beaten together as a percussive instrument.

Gbokete. The tiny hand bell of the bawagan, used along with his staff.

Gerewagan. A kind of dwarf palm. Sticks made of this tree are called by the same name, or sometimes *Ikere ewerewagan.*

Gnosiwaan. "Understanding." Used to indicate a bawagan's mastery of his profession.

Gorde. A variety of association, identical with the *gard.*

Gosin. A bowl made from a half gourd or calabash.

Gowabor. The community work gathering which shows planting, harvesting, weeding, housebuilding, and other tasks.

Gowejelle. The name of a dance. It signifies "lost" or "upturned."

Grafe. An earthen water bottle.

Gubain. A masquerade seen during carnival days.

Gunan. A variety of malevolent demon.

Gunnanin or ginnanni. The rite of dispersing a lot from the head of a deceased person.

Gwi marken. "Marken dance," a kind of association.

Gwi. Rice.

Gwiwan. One who divines, used for bawagans.

Gyah. A kind of demon.

Gyabiwan. A female ghost or demon.

Gyalli or eballi. Environment, mission, mission, in the religious domain.

Gyiro. An inner room of the boundar.

Gyo. The first child born after twins, if it is a girl.

Gwiwan jil. Leaf divner, pharmacologist.

Gyo. The first child born after twins, if it is a boy.

Gunnanni yai. An early morning consultation.

Gwagan. A drug or magical potion.

Gundan. A name sometimes given to the smallest female demon.

Engagement. A compact with a demon.

Eneyen. An association of lot, related or otherwise, who assist each other in their work.

Expedition. Aggressive magic in which a lot or a spirit is sent out by a bawagan to work against some person.

Fetu ewiki. Crushing the whip before the Ifiro boundar to "wake up" the lot.

Gage. Games played by children, usually with the objective of making someone "it." Sometimes used as synonymous with Lost Prayers or Mass Night, when children play gage games.

Gawelle. A long wooden bowl used for washing clothes or for eating.

Gerde corps. A protective charm, often worn by the owner.

Gerde habitation. A charm devised to protect a household and its surroundings.

Gerde. A decorated shell devised to slide on a cord, used by bawagans for divining.

Gori. An earthen or glass bottle in which lot and spirits are kept in the boundar.

Gorge. A decorated scraping device used in secular music.

Grand famille. The oldest person in the family.

Grand gent. Hungan. Main grand gent, I am hungan.

Gregrin. A hard wood for the making of chairs, etc.

Grenadil. (i) Grenadin. (ii) Middle-sized Arada drum.

Habitant. A farmer.

Habitation. A farm.

Hounsi. Another name for a lwa.

Hounfor. The Vodoun temple or shrine.

Houngan. The Vodoun priest.

Houngbenion. One of the ministers of the houngan.

Hounsi. The servitors of a lwa.

Hounsongui. Another name for the largest of the three Arada drums.

Hounton. (i) Spirit of the drum. (ii) The largest Arada drum.

Jamboise or jamjim. A battery of gourd rattles carried on a pole.

Jugement de Saguette. A system of divining a guilty person through the use of a rod.

Kou-kou. Another name for the ako-ako, or common gourd rattle.

Lacour. A group of dwellings inhabited by related families. A hamlet.

Lalili. The swinging of the skirts in a dance.

Lambi. A conch or conch trumpet.

Lampion. The metal candelabra carried by marching bands at carnival time.

Langage. This word usually refers to the "tongues" spoken by the houngan or possessed persons during Vodoun rites. It may mean language in the ordinary sense also.

Laplace. Chief assistant of the houngan.

Lavé tête. A ritual for removing a lwa from a person's head.

Loa. The spirit or deity which possesses people during religious rites.

Loa-gara, Loaj-garan.

Lolo. The spirit of a child that died before receiving baptism.

Makouya. A small ground lizard.

Parlour. The long ship-passage with berths for Cara.

Pigre. Magic.

Rif' cocos. A "master" or professional conjurer.

Rif' tête. The lwa who resides in one's head.

Sapo pour. The house or machine baggage of the Rara troupe.

Sakpata. A specific kind of aggressive magic.

Salad. Evil eye.

Sanctu. Vodoun priestess.

Sonnette rattle. One of the ministers of the houngan.

Sangé. (i) To see. (ii) A feast.

Sangé ancien. Feast for the ancestor drum.

Sangé dini or gourd dini. A rice harvest festival.

Sangé lwa. A feast for one or more lwa.

Sangé marassa. Feast for twins.

Sangé mort. Feast for the dead.

Sangé pays. A yam harvest festival.

Sassaw. (i) Mother. (ii) The largest of the Arada drums.

Sawan. (i) Twins. (ii) The spirit of twins.

Sawindo, sawindoh, sawindoh, sawindoh. The modern Haitian version of the African dumb piano.

Sawé lwa. To "lift" a lwa, that is, to prevent lwa from entering one's head.

Siquenche. A gambling game using four chips for heads and tails combinations.

Sogo or sosogo. A special shirt worn to counteract the evil eye or some other magic.

Sogogo. A battery of rattles carried on a tall pole in some Congo services.

Sortir d'ème. The process of removing a soul that has been taken from a body.

Sortir en bas dlème. The spirits of the dead "below the water."

Sosoro. Man, person.

Sogon. The middle-sized Arada drum.

Sued, sosie, or ser. I, me.

Sysoire. Another name for lwa.

Bian-bian. Violins. Usually refers to a "ensemble" of violins, such as Sangu, Erhu, and Hiru.

Gehun. A musical refrain to the lua, or to an important phrase or passage present in a spirit.

Ogun. The metal percussion device that accompanies the Arada drums. Traditionally, a hinged iron bell, but it may be a low blade or any other piece of resonant iron or steel.

Ganaya. Aggressive magic.

Gwoi kayi pou' *mwen.* "Open the gate for me (pl.)." Addressed to the lua Legba, to make contact with the other deities possible.

Papalwi. A term sometimes used to designate the Vodoun priest. A variation of the Yoruba babalawo.

Sassaya d'alliance. A method for divining a guilty person by means of a ring suspended on a string.

Pawl. (1) Surpass. (2) Pass.

Pawl kali. A method for divining a guilty person by the use of a specially prepared chain.

Pwalim. The center of the houngan.

Pwal mwen. The gift that is given to a Rara troupe when it stops to play before a man's house. Literally: "Pay-me."

Pi. Shut.

Pitinyò. The sacred room of the houngan.

Pèwo-lua. The moon in which a lua is believed to reside.

Pèwo-mapoman. A large, crescent moon regarded as a super lua moon and a protector of the habitation.

Pingl. A form of wrestling that is seen at Rara time.

Piquette. A spear or sharpened stick.

Pitou. Any instrument resembling a trumpet.

Plaçage. The system of polygamy practiced by some peasants.

Plaçle. A second or third wife of a man under the system of *plaçage*. The first wife may be *plaçle* also.

Pèlèwo mèmè or *pèlèwo planèt.* The center post of the houngan peristyle, around which most of the rites take place.

Pot ròb. Another name for *gwoi*.

Prèsè. A form of protective magic.

Pèlè *mèmè.* "Horse of the plains," or "bush guinea." This may have been originally *pèlè* *mèmè*, "beyond pèlè." The houngan who reads or recites Catholic prayers in a Vodoun service.

Rara, or Sara. The rural Lenten festival. The word *sara* is also used for a wooden noisemaker.

Rèyanchè vèlo. A ritual bath for relieving the lua in one's head.

Reposoir. A small area, sometimes surrounded by a low wall, sacred to a deity.

Retiré *n'ème.* The act of removing the soul from a body.

Revenant. The troublesome spirit of a deceased dead person.

Roi Lendemain. "King of Lendemain." Title given to the leader of a Rara troupe.

Rondo. A form of ceremony.

Rabouwèz. Magpie dancers.

Sanèlo. The singing leader of a ceremony.

Sèvi *dè* *mèsè.* To serve with two hands. That is, to work with the lua of the Arada and Hiru "nations," or to work with the lua and with aggressive magic at the same time.

Sèmèlèr. The singing leader of a ceremony.

Sòrè. A sweet drink.

Société. A society. Refers usually to the association gathered around a club temple, or an agricultural work group.

Tafia. An alcoholic drink.

Taffè kòc. "Love kiss." A dance pressure.

Tambour. Drum.

Tambourin. "Mosquito drum." A miniature two-headed drum.

Tambour maringouin. An earth lute, or a portable model of the earth lute.

Tanbanpil. Drumsticks.

Tchèwy. A spiral earth seed in Rara and in some Congo rites.

Ti Jodo. (1) Little demon. (2) Name of the small Hiru drum.

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Ti (pronounced as gnatha). Bamboo transport, used as a substitute for drawing.

Tumulu. The covering of the bamboo coach.

Tunkungu. A card game.

Tupi-Ghul. Witchcraft in which the practitioner kills someone, then takes bone out of the grave, restores him to life, and makes him a servant or slave.

Tyashali. A large cylindrical drum with heads at both ends.

Uaccoo. A bamboo transport, also known as Ami Ammigan.

Vlati. The small or floor drawing made by the bamboo on the ground.

Vulcan. (i) Rites and beliefs of the female "vulcan." (ii) Rites and beliefs of all the cults except those of non-African origin. (iii) A fan.

Vu-cum. A bathroom.

Wari. A large bedstead and bean or seed. Also the name of a game in which seed beans are used as playing pieces. See Gadi.

Way, wadi. An exclamation.

Yamingum. A carotine medicine bundle.

Zambalau. A small climbing board.

Zango. Another name, used especially for bee.

Zimbwanga. According to lore, a society of cannibals.

Zin. The iron pot used in Vulcan ritual. It may, on occasion, be of clay.

Zombie. A corpse supposedly disinterred from the grave, dispossessed of its soul, and made to work for a sorcerer.

Zum-bel. A leather whip used on horses and horses. Literally "bull penis."

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DISCOGRAPHY

113 ### *A Selective Listing of Haitian Music on Records*

Voices of Haiti (LP), recorded in Haiti by Maya Deren. Electra. Five examples of ritual songs and dances recorded near Pétionville and Croix des Missions. On the whole, superior material. The first two pieces on the record, which are documentary, are particularly outstanding.

Haiti Dances (78 r.p.m.). Wax. Some of the information provided on the album cover is inaccurate, but the records are worth listening to. Not "documentary," but performed by a good modern folk-dance group.

Drums of Haiti (LP), recorded in Haiti by Harold Courlander. Ethnic Folkways Library. Thirteen examples of drums and other percussion instruments, demonstrating the rhythms of eleven different dances. Contains some of the selections transcribed in this volume.

Folk Music of Haiti (LP), recorded in Haiti by Harold Courlander. Ethnic Folkways Library. Eighteen examples of secular and religious music, work songs, songs of social criticism, carnival music, game songs, and a "spirit conversation" by a cult priest. Contains some of the selections transcribed in this volume.

Songs and Dances of Haiti (LP), recorded in Haiti by Harold Courlander, with the exception of two selections recorded by Marshall Stearns. Ethnic Folkways Library. One side of the record contains cult songs and dances as performed by an authentic but rehearsed group; the other side has a song by a minstrel, a "jazz" Meringue, and two excellent documentary carnival recordings. Contains some of the selections transcribed in this volume.

Calypso and Meringues (LP). Folkways. One side of this disc contains Haitian material, "jazz" Meringues played by village professionals, recorded by Harold Courlander.

Haitian Piano (LP), recorded in Haiti by Harold Courlander. Folkways. Eight examples of old-style salon Meringues, etc., performed by Fabre Duroseau and the Duroseau trio.

Haitian Dances (LP). Eight arrangements of folk tunes, played on the guitar by Frantz Casséus. Folkways.

Haitian Folk Songs (LP), sung by Lolita Cuevas, guitar accompaniment by Frantz Casséus. Folkways. Excellent concert performance of traditional Haitian folk songs.

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songs of complaint, recrimination and gossip -- pp. 137-147
political songs -- pp. 148-162
songs of bravado and boasting -- pp. 163-165
secret society songs -- pp. 167-169.]

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[For the themes of various Haitian songs, see categories 533 and 539.]

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539

[For the texts of Haitian songs, see category 116, pp. 138-169.]

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[For information on the polygynous aspects of placage, as a socially acceptable form of marriage in the society, see also category 596.]

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[For a listing of the Vodoun Pantheon, see category 116, pp. 318-327; the ambivalent Simbi family pantheon, pp. 327-328; the Ibo and Kanga pantheons, p. 328; and the Congo and Pétro pantheons, pp. 328-331.]

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[For a listing of cult and ritualistic dances, see category 116, pp. 134-136.]

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[Information on the removal of the loa or maît'tête from the head of the deceased will be found in category 764.]

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[For information on small scale family ceremonies, see category 78.]

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[title page]

THE HAITIAN PEOPLE

BY

JAMES G. LEYBURN

WITH A NEW INTRODUCTION BY
SIDNEY W. MINTZ

NEW HAVEN AND LONDON
YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1966

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[p. v]

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EDITION

By Sidney W. Mintz*

THE *Haitian People*, by James G. Leyburn, was first published by the Yale University Press in 1941. The author, a sociologist, sought to provide his readers with a "connected story of the growth of . . . [Haiti's] social institutions out of the backgrounds of slavery and French colonial life . . . [and] of the slow shaping of these institutions through the nineteenth century" (p. v). Asserting that a people's past is an essential aspect of the full understanding of their present, Leyburn wasted no time in arguments over the disciplinary affiliation of his research results: "Whether the book be classified as social history or as sociology is largely a matter of indifference, for the line between these subjects can hardly be drawn without doing violence to comprehensive insight. To view a people with understanding in the characteristic setting of their institutions—marriage, religion, property arrangements, and the rest—one needs not only a description of their ways, but also a knowledge of how they came to be what they are" (p. vi). 114 121

The Haitian People enjoyed an immediate success. One of the very few books to deal with that country's crucial century of isolation (1804–1915), it is distinguished by careful scholarship, restrained interpretation, and a refreshing modesty; in these regards it differs from nearly every modern work written on the Republic of Haiti. And although many excellent books and articles on Haitian life have appeared since 1941, anyone who wishes to get the best interpretive overview of the history and culture of that country is well advised to start with Leyburn's contribution. 114

When *The Haitian People* first appeared, it was given a warm and

* Dr. Rémy Bastien, M. Leslie F. Manigat, Jacqueline Wei Mintz, and Mr. Michael G. Owen provided valuable critical help in the preparation of this introduction. The author of *The Haitian People*, Professor James G. Leyburn, encouraged me to undertake the writing of the introduction, and offered useful advice on its form and content. I am much indebted to all of these persons for their generous assistance, but they are in no way responsible for the interpretations I have made here.

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very favorable reception by Haitian scholars and intellectuals. As its author and others have pointed out, few countries in modern times have received as bad a press at the hands of foreign observers as Haiti. A small, rugged nation, born of an exhausting and destructive revolution, its people poor, disease-ridden, illiterate, and erratically led, independent Haiti gives the impression of having drifted aimlessly for more than a century. Observers from "more developed" lands have had a field day—and still have—bemoaning the evil consequences of a mass of African slaves having turned on their French masters to destroy them and their works. It is still fashionable to allude to Haiti in deploring independence movements, racial desegregation, indigenous political leadership, and economic sovereignty. But too little scholarship has since been invested, as Leyburn invested it, in delineating the national and international forces which have operated to keep Haiti poor and backward. Nor has contemporary research led to sufficiently revealing comparisons between the social history of Haiti and that of her more colonial neighbors in the Caribbean area. Leyburn's work enhanced the possibilities for such comparisons and drew some morals which Haiti's detractors often ignore; but in making his case, the author carefully avoids lapsing into romanticism, or into the inaccuracy born of uncritical sympathy.

The book was published as the final steps were being taken to end the official United States presence in Haiti. The occupation had begun in 1915, ostensibly to restore order in a situation marked by political chaos. Haitian defaulting on debts to the French and Germans had raised the specter of foreign—that is, European—occupation, which created considerable North American anxiety; and there were large Haitian debts outstanding to United States banks as well. When the United States decided to move militarily, the abstract issue of justice was ignored, to be raised for contemplation only after the occupation itself was a fact. Military occupation continued for nineteen years, and the complete termination of United States controls over the national affairs of Haiti did not come until 1946, long after Leyburn's book had appeared. Twenty-five years have now elapsed since Leyburn wrote, and the events of these years are relevant to any retrospective view of the author's interpretations.

Much, indeed, has happened in Haiti since 1941: the United States withdrawal and the fading of the effects, both good and bad, of the occupation; the positive economic consequences for Haiti of World

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War II and its aftermath, and the subsequent dissipation of those gains; the "social revolution" of January 1946, ushering in the Estimé regime; the boom in the arts and tourism, and their later contractions; the rise and subsequent fall of the Magloire government (1950-56), and the uneasy interregnum that followed it; and finally, the growth of the Duvalier monolith. 175 105

Over the span of those years, social science literature on Haiti has increased significantly, and outsiders, as well as the Haitians themselves, can now know much more about the country and its people. But some of the most important questions raised by Leyburn's book remain substantially unanswered. *The Haitian People* is a classic because its author phrased so well the major issues in the growth of Haitian national institutions, and no subsequent work is likely to supplant it in this regard. But its value has been heightened over the years by the lack of any equally penetrating analysis dealing with the period since 1941 or specifying the relative importance of various institutional forces in the contemporary structure of Haitian society. Thus, for instance, much too little is known of the culture and social organization of Haiti's predominantly rural population, in spite of considerable anthropological research since 1941. More detailed studies of the rural economy are particularly necessary, both to assess developmental possibilities and to understand better the relationship of rural sectors to the national economy. Sociological and economic analyses of folk religion—*vodoun*—are wanting, even though psychological and descriptive studies of this religion have appeared in large numbers. The general conceptual problem of community definition, structure, and organization, which has long plagued students in the Caribbean area, has been barely raised in the case of rural Haiti. Finally, our understanding of Haitian class structure, both local and national, and its corollaries in economic, political, and social institutions, is still slight. Here the need for more research seems particularly acute, since no adequate grasp of the nature of Haitian society at large will be possible until the fit of the rural sectors with the national class structure is better known. On this understanding, among others, may hinge the likelihood of success of any future developmental effort in Haiti. 114 121

It was with Haiti as a nation that Leyburn dealt in his book, and his analysis of national institutions and social structure excited more comment and reflection within Haiti itself than any other part of his

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114 treatment. In the absence of sufficient analytic material on the inter-
121 vening years since his book was written, a prefatory note such as this can do little more than comment on Haitian society, either in terms of its present design or in terms of the recent events that may have modified it.

121
114 The central thesis of Leyburn's book is that Haitian society is sharply
565 divided into two segments, and that the national institutional struc-
[178] ture is such that no significant alteration in that division has occurred in the entire course of Haiti's history as a sovereign nation. At the base of the society is the rural agricultural sector, making up perhaps as much as 95 per cent of the population; at the top the elite, which dominates the governmental apparatus and all national institutions. These two segments of the society differ, in Leyburn's view, in all important regards: level of income, source of income, education, language, religion, social forms, values and attitudes, and all else. By carefully describing the history of Haitian society from the eve of the revolution until the midst of the United States occupation, he reveals both the origin of this vast social cleavage and the various means employed for its perpetuation. Leyburn was so impressed by the gap which separated yeomanry and elite that he chose to label these social segments castes rather than classes. Members of the elite earn their livings as rentiers, merchants, professionals, and in government, and never engage in manual labor of any sort. They are predominantly urban in residence; their sons attend private lower schools, and then
[191] go on to higher education, usually abroad. They are French-speaking,
[197] although they also speak Creole, Haiti's national language. Elite re-
[58] ligion is Catholicism, elite forms of marriage and domestic organiza-
[59] tion are "legitimate" and "western." Elite members view themselves
[829] as a kind of aristocracy, and feel little commonality in their sharing of Haiti and of Haitian history with the yeomen.

114 In sharp contrast, the yeomanry is rural, poor, works the land, is
565 illiterate and Creole-speaking only, believes in *vodoun* rather than in
191 orthodox Catholicism, usually marries by common law and is some-
771 times polygynous, and remains substantially isolated from the outer
583 world. Finally and importantly—though its particular significance is
595 changing—the elite differs from the rural sector in that the country-
144 man is predominantly negroid in phenotype, while members of the elite are prevailingly lighter-skinned.

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Leyburn noted that the United States occupation affected the nature and rigidity of the barriers separating the yeomanry from the elite. For instance, he calls attention to the fact that the presidents elected during the United States occupation were light-skinned members of the elite. It seemed almost inevitable that, when the North Americans sought men through whom to prosecute their plans for "stabilizing" Haiti, they would settle on educated and worldly politicians, men who were both sufficiently trained and sufficiently pliant for the task. That these men were predominantly light-skinned was a corollary aspect of Haitian social history. In this way Washington played some part in reinforcing and expanding elite power; and herein lies a paradox with which the author of *The Haitian People* has dealt well. While the elite had been able to maintain their wealth and power in Haiti for nearly a century, the presidential succession before the United States occupation had largely been one of military chieftains, principally dark-skinned men from the north of the Republic. Michel Oreste, who had ruled for nine months in 1913–14, was the first civilian to be chosen president in Haiti's entire history up to that time; and Sudre Dartiguenave (1915–22), the North Americans' choice, was the first president since 1879 who was both a southerner and light-skinned. From the last quarter of the nineteenth century until the occupation, in other words, Haiti's presidents were almost entirely dark-skinned northern provincial leaders who literally seized power by invading Port-au-Prince and deposing their predecessors.

Hence, in describing the separation between elite and yeomanry, it is essential to notice the traditional special role of the military, with its particular overtones of color. Here was one institutional feature of Haitian society which was not directly dominated by the elite, and through which nonelite folk were able to attain special power. But in Haiti's case it is significant that the army itself was not firmly institutionalized; regional warlords, rather than a centralized officer corps, made the decisions. Leyburn cites Auguste Magloire, who enumerated *sixty-nine* "important" revolutions between 1806 and 1879; had this enumeration gone forward, it would have been much longer. Of Haiti's twenty-four chief executives between 1807 and 1915, only eight were in office for a period equal to their elected terms, and seventeen were deposed by revolution. Before the United States occupation, then, the continuing power of the elite could be seen as somewhat separate from the succession of nonelite generals who seized office over the years.

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648 The financing of these many revolutions was usually provided by
669 foreign merchants, bent upon installing a government that would
565 grant them special economic concessions (Munro, 1964:326–31). The
701 United States occupation ended this doleful succession of regimes
439 and, by throwing its weight to the elite, by suppressing military activity in the countryside, and by reforming the army, the United States gave a new meaning to the separation of the elite and the yeomanry. Leyburn's interpretation is consistent with these events; yet some Haitian scholars have differed with Leyburn's analysis.

114 In a lengthy review article, the dean of Haitian historians, Dr. Jean
564 Price-Mars (1942:1–50), questions the applicability of the term
563 "caste" to the social groupings of Haitian society. He notes that
671 Haitian law after the revolution never legitimized any distinction on
144 grounds of physical type, unlike a society such as the United States—that in fact, the very basis of Haitian polity was the absence of such distinctions. Furthermore, Leyburn's interpretation is qualified by the fact that the elite and the rural masses are not entirely distinctive physically. In some parts of rural Haiti, particularly in the southern peninsula, there are many light-skinned people; and many individuals who qualify as members of the elite on all other counts are very dark in appearance. The fact that being "Negro" or "white" in Haiti is viewed as a matter of degree, rather than of kind, complicated by all the other criteria of social position employed in drawing distinctions, has important implications for the way social barriers have operated in that country.*

- 114 Leyburn did not contend that all the effects of the United States
- 565 occupation were in the direction of increasing the gap between the ELITE AND THE YEOMANRY.

563 * In this regard, Haiti is aligned with most of Latin America, in contradistinction to the
- 564 United States, where many persons believe that "one drop of Negro blood" [sic] makes a "Negro." The failure of North Americans to distinguish between sociological and genetic
171 categories of physical type has led to considerable confusion in their dealings with Latin Amer-
- 144 ica and in their understanding of Latin American societies. North American race prejudice at its most extreme sees color as the primary basis for social ranking, and no individual accomplishment (for instance, in terms of economic or intellectual success) can overshadow the inferior status unalterably bestowed by certain physical traits. Haitian—and generally all Latin American—social distinctions do not rest solely on considerations of physical type; a black skin does not "doom" an individual if his attainments make him otherwise the equal of his lighter-skinned fellow citizens. Hence, it might be argued that the term "caste" would be more appropriate when applied to the Negro people of the United States (regardless of phenotype, and including those "Negroes" who are *sociologically* identified with the Negro people even if their physical appearance is dramatically Caucasian) than when applied to the peoples of Latin America.

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elite and the yeomanry. For instance, he calls attention to one unanticipated (but inevitable) result of the occupation in this connection: the large number of children whose fathers were United States Marines, and whose mothers were members of the Haitian rural masses. In this way the occupation contributed to the growth of the physically intermediate population of Haiti, especially among rural folk, and thus perhaps to some bridging of the gap between yeomen and elite. Much more important, by its contributions to a broadening of the educational system, the occupation enabled talented black-skinned youths to improve themselves and to acquire new aspirations.

Recent economic and political developments in Haiti, through the period 1941–57, have contributed grounds for modification of the Leyburn interpretation. Though Leyburn predicted that "for the present and near future it is safe to say that there will be no more black non-élite presidents" (p. 101), subsequent developments soon proved him wrong. In January 1946, the government of elite member Elie Lescot fell under military pressure. A junta consisting of Franck Lavaud, Antoine Levelt, and Paul Magloire facilitated the installation of Dumarsais Estimé as president. Estimé was a dark-skinned man from the countryside (the village of Verettes, near St. Marc, in west-central Haiti), who had received a good education, served as a minister in the Vincent cabinet and, as a deputy, married a lighter-skinned woman whose family's elite membership was secure. Estimé might well be considered a self-made member of the elite, but he was not born into it, and his accession to power was the political expression of new possibilities in Haitian life.

The changes Estimé's regime symbolized were rooted in the intellectual resistance to the United States occupation and in the search for a Haitian identity in the face of that occupation. The strangely easy domination that the United States wielded over Haitian society for several decades, and the relatively unexploitative but patronizing administration it provided, ended forever a fantasy that had gripped Haitian intellectuals for more than a century. The world of 1804, when a bloodied but defiant Haiti could bar by force of arms Napoleon's dreams of a New World empire (and assist indirectly thereby in the territorial expansion of a still weak United States) had vanished. The time when a Pétion could aid, protect, and politically influence a sick and tired Simón Bolívar was long gone. The world had changed, while Haiti, the Haitians learned under their North

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American masters, had nearly stood still. For almost a century, Haiti's elite had taken justifiable pride in their ancestors' triumph over Napoleonic France, even while they remained enthralled by French culture. This strange ambivalence would no longer do. In effect, the United States occupation compelled Haitian scholars to rediscover what it meant to be Haitian.

As the writing of Jean Price-Mars (1928) expressed that identity culturally, so the regime of Dumarsais Estimé began to express it politically. For the first time, Africa, and not simply France, became an important part of the nationalist dialogue. The Creole language began to be studied in its own right, and a program to end illiteracy through education in Creole was launched. Folkloristic studies, emphasizing the African component in Haitian rural life, especially as expressed in religion, came into vogue. Haitians began to explore their own society as a synthesis that was as much African as it was French—and as a synthesis, rather than as a mechanical alignment of two distinct traditions. The term *authentique* was employed to express what was "truly Haitian," and Haiti herself was viewed as a unique and original blending of two pasts. Under Estimé, rural folk of promise—and they were, in the nature of things, predominantly dark-skinned—were given greater opportunities, especially to be educated and to enter government service. Moreover, these developments took place at a time when Haiti's economic situation was relatively good, and Estimé enjoyed a measure of popular support rare in Haiti's entire history.

Furthermore, it was during the Estimé regime that Haitian cultural life reached some sort of climax. In the 1920s young Haitian intellectuals had been deeply shaken by the United States occupation and had begun to formulate their own answers to the questions it raised. Not only did Africa come into view as the wellspring of much that was Haitian but Haiti's status as an occupied though once-sovereign power dramatized the need for a social and political philosophy that fitted with hemispheric and international realities. French intellectual currents figured importantly in Haitian political thinking, both because the intellectuals of the French Antilles of the time were inspired by Haitian history and interested in Haiti, and because those islands and Haiti shared a curious affinity in their "Gallo-African" cultures. Anticolonial and Marxist points of view were espoused by a few Haitians, but these perspectives were complicated by changing

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attitudes toward French culture in all of its expressions, and by a new feeling of kinship for the peoples and cultures of Africa. 175 829 186

The variety of views expressed by Haitian intellectuals was colored by differences no more subtle than those characteristic of the intellectuals of any other country in the Caribbean region—even though North American observers unfortunately persist in treating such differences as politically irrelevant. There were those spokesmen who continued to embrace French culture and to reject "Africanism," only deploring the North American presence in Haiti. Others embodied their views in a staunchly Haitian nationalism and, as they began to view their country in a new light, invested the Haitian folk with an unrealistically romantic picturesqueness. Still others fastened upon the African theme with special intensity, and thereby gave a strong racist tinge to their nationalism.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, anthropology came to be seen as an important means for giving Haitians an accurate—that is, an "inside"—picture of their own society; a number of young ethnologists, mainly self-trained, began to publish works on Haitian culture. Soon anthropology was pressed into a political mold, anticipating similar developments in other "colonial" countries. The first novels purporting to deal with the common people, though sometimes tinged with idealized preconceptions of rural society, were published; and an impressive number of competent young poets devoted themselves to aesthetic explorations of the Haitian spirit. Haitian cultural and intellectual life, in short, was taken up with the rediscovery of Haiti and its people. 175 829 814

But the Estimé regime did not produce changes in the economic structure of Haitian society of importance proportionate to the national cultural renascence. Even those modifications in the class structure for which Estimé is sometimes given credit might not have occurred, were it not for educational reforms that had begun in the 1920s and the beneficial effects of Haiti's prosperity of the mid-1940s. What Estimé could do was to open the ranks of an inefficiently large bureaucracy to able, if sometimes inadequately trained, newcomers of poor rural antecedents. 175 433 565 647 555

At the same time, as the Comhaire-Sylvains have suggested (1959: 179–89), a qualitatively different class group was beginning to emerge in Port-au-Prince during Estimé's presidency, and the presence of such a group suggests that new economic forces were feebly stirring. 114 175 565

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175 565 These newcomers in the class structure enjoyed regular urban employment, were mostly literate and legally married, and harbored strong ambitions for the education of their children. Such persons were certainly not elite members, and their behavior (as, for instance, in their preference for speaking Creole rather than French) showed it; yet they were not part of the rural masses, nor merely an example of Marx's *Lumpenproletariat*. Yet significance of this new group for the Leyburn "caste" theory of the elite is considerable. Even today, if such persons lapse into poverty, their ideology will continue to matter politically. Estimé's regime also loosed new political trends, since at first some encouragement was given to labor unions, and the construction of urban low-cost housing was undertaken. We are unable to measure the long-term effects of these changes, but their reality raises some questions about the rigidity that Leyburn's analysis imputed to Haitian social structure.

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175 669 643 159 In May 1950, after an unsuccessful bid to extend his term of office illegally, Estimé's regime was toppled, again by a military junta. To power came Paul Magloire, the first military figure to become chief executive since the start of the United States occupation. Like Estimé before him, Magloire symbolized certain effects of the occupation upon Haiti's social and political structure and the way that structure was continuing to change. Magloire's origins were not within the elite, to judge by the traditional criteria. He was a black man, and from the north; born in Quartier Morin, he associated himself with the elite of the north coast port of Cap Haïtien, Haiti's second largest city. By marriage to a "Capoise," whose family status was much higher than his own, and by a successful career in the military during the occupation, Magloire penetrated elite circles. As commander of the Palace Guard, he had been a member of the junta that ousted Lescot in 1946, replacing him with Estimé. In 1950, when Magloire became president, after the army had forcibly discharged both houses of the legislature, he apparently had the support of the elite and of the business class, if not of the popular forces that had backed Estimé.

175 643 Magloire may be said to have moderated considerably the intensity of Haitian politics, and his administration was not marked by so sharp an ideological concern with the relative roles of elite and countryman. Times were good, and levels of life, both in the countryside and in the capital, were probably as high as they had been at any time in Haitian history. Certain economic gains were made in the tourist

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industry, in the processing of essential oils, in extractive operations (bauxite, copper), and in the manufacture of a few essential commodities. The official attitude toward private investment, even by foreigners, was unusually benign; and coffee, the big export crop, enjoyed a boom. Again, however, little effect could be seen in the basic economic structure. By 1956–57, when the Magloire regime was toppled, the era of apparent prosperity had come to an end.

Magloire's tenure ended as had his predecessor's; after a vain attempt to prolong his regime by forcing through new laws, he was brought down by the army and was succeeded by a series of juntas. The politics of the brief interregnum preceding the accession of François Duvalier was complicated by the rival claims of four presidential aspirants: Clément Jumelle, Daniel Fignolé, Louis Déjoie, and François Duvalier. These four men represented significantly different trends in Haitian thinking and were supported by different social groups. Jumelle, although regarded as the spiritual inheritor of the Magloire administration, won the support of many Haitian intellectuals; his appeal was partly grounded in his experience as finance minister in the Magloire cabinet, but the scandalous graft of the Magloire administration worked against him. Fignolé, too, had been a cabinet minister, but his antecedents and political philosophy differed sharply from Jumelle's. An eloquent, intense man of rural lower-class origins, Fignolé was regarded by many as a dangerous demagogue. His support came largely from the poorer urban classes, and his reputation as a union leader and as a "self-made" former minister of education gave him special strength among urban groups. Déjoie, considered to be the candidate of most of the business community and of the elite, was a highly successful agronomist and businessman who had done much to build rural industry; it is also generally believed that Déjoie was the "unofficial candidate" of the United States. Duvalier, trained as a doctor of medicine and for long an enthusiastic amateur ethnologist, had been a political enemy of the Magloire regime and, as a former minister in the Estimé cabinet, saw himself as the ideological descendant of Estimé. Duvalier appears eventually to have become the army's choice, ostensibly because he was considered "manageable"; at any rate, it was Duvalier who finally emerged as president, ending the uneasy interim which followed Magloire's ejection.*

* Probably the most penetrating analysis of Haitian politics of the time is that provided by Maingot, 1964, to which this interpretation owes much.

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175 643 66 The course of events leading up to Duvalier's election are difficult to assess. Fignolé, whom the army had permitted to serve as president for sixteen days during the interregnum, had been denied official recognition by the United States, suggesting that this country feared the implications of his political philosophy; his attempts at passing a whole new code of far-reaching social legislation apparently frightened the army, which removed him on grounds of "maintaining order." By the time an election decree was promulgated in August 1957, Fignolé was disqualified, and Jumelle had been forced to withdraw from candidacy. By election day, September 1957, only Déjoie and Duvalier were in contention, while Jumelle had gone into hiding. An attempted general strike, probably led by Déjoieiste elements, was stopped by the army, and Dr. François Duvalier was elected to power.

175 642 66 701 643 The Duvalier regime, beyond any doubt, has added something new to the Haitian political scene. To begin with, it must be stressed that Duvalier enjoys some popular support in the countryside as well as in the urban centers. For many Haitians, Duvalier epitomizes the return of the Estimé philosophy to Haiti, and it would be a serious political error to suppose that the present regime is no more than an elite-hating dictatorship backed by machine guns. At the same time, the readiness of the Duvalieristes to use force probably exceeds that of any Haitian government in more than a century. Its excesses, moreover, appear to break certain traditions of political behavior—for instance, the unwillingness to take familial connections into account when political revenge is being carried out, the violence committed against women and adolescents regarded as political enemies, and so on. The most important break with tradition, however, has been the gradual undermining of the army as a political force—a force created in the first instance during the United States occupation.

175 642 648 643 In carrying out its plans, the Duvalier government has played more creatively upon inconsistencies in United States policy than any preceding regime. It used United States military and economic power to consolidate itself, while employing a posture of anti-North American hostility in its search for other internal sources of political support. Most strikingly, it has capitalized on the deterioration of the United States design in the Caribbean region, both to exact concessions and to enhance an international image of itself as a stalwart "democratic"

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regime. That President Duvalier has been able to stay in power in spite of internal dissaffection, sometime hostile United States propaganda, a dire economic situation, personal ill health, and other woes, is a tribute to his political acumen, if not to his principles. None of this means, of course, that such consummate skill will continue to work; Haitian governments have a way of falling suddenly, and the Duvalier regime will probably not prove an exception.

Dr. Duvalier's success indicates that he has made certain correct assessments, not only of Haiti's social and political structure but also of United States policy with regard to Haiti. The occupation was notable for its failure to make any telling alterations in the economic structure or level of development of the country. Many beneficial changes were made, as Leyburn demonstrates, particularly in the areas of health and health services, communications, government administration, education, and transport (though the use of corvée labor on the roads led to serious abuses, and stimulated sanguinary guerilla warfare). But most significantly, the United States institutionalized the army and police forces. The ragged bands of political mercenaries of the past were dissolved; the officer-ridden army was transformed into a small, well-trained, and well-organized force. Eventual firm control by this force of weaponry, communications, and transport ended the era of presidential succession by invasion, turned the army into the major locus of nonelectoral, president-making power, and may have ended forever the possibility of an agrarian revolt against the central authority. Another political effect of the occupation was the importance it imparted to the United States ambassador, whose political opinions thereafter would matter significantly in the transmission of power at the top of the Haitian governmental system. The Duvalier regime has continuously taken full account of the consequences of United States interest; and its leaders have been able to watch the operation of that interest in the political events occurring between the fall of the Lescot government and the present.

In the view of one acute observer, President Duvalier, in order to consolidate his power, had to cope with three other loci of political strength in addition to the army and the United States ambassador. The business community, located for the most part in Port-au-Prince, had strongly supported Déjoie's candidacy during the interregnum; its leaders were mainly members of the elite, and many had strong

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175 business and personal ties with North Americans and other foreign
643 groups. Among the families of these leaders are Swiss, German, and
66 French nationals, and some Syrians and Lebanese who hold United
795 States citizenship. The business community had played a part in the downfall of the Magloire regime, and business strikes were a typical political instrument for putting pressure on presidential incumbents. In addition, the clergy—particularly the Catholic clergy—exerted political influence. Duvalier, while well aware of this, also attended to the importance of vodoun* in Haiti, and to the influence wielded by its cult leaders, particularly in the countryside and among the urban poor. Finally, the President understood the strength of groups such as the university students, the small but politically aware labor unions, and certain professional associations, whose political strength could be felt particularly in times of crisis. The Duvalier regime has displayed intelligence as well as ruthlessness in dealing with these diverse centers of political strength and potential opposition.

175 The official request for a United States Marine Corps mission to
648 "train" the Haitian Army was a brilliant political move by Duvalier,
701 apparently designed to serve several objectives simultaneously. It is
702 entirely correct that the renewed presence of the Marines in Haiti
66 created considerable rancor in some circles, but it also strengthened Duvalier's hand in his dealings with all sources of internal opposition. To some extent it apparently reassured the business community; and it turned out to have reduced, rather than to have increased, the maneuverability of the United States in developing a "corrective" or "restraining" policy toward the Duvalier regime. Perhaps most important, it helped Duvalier in his plan to build a praetorian guard to counterbalance the power of the army itself.

625 The *tonton macoute*—a Creole epithet for the bogeyman—is an extremely interesting variation on the security police theme. Its members wear no official uniform (though blue denim pants and felt hats
[701] are affected). Members of the "TTM" carry out acts of terrorism against groups and individuals and have seriously weakened the po-
[652] licing function and prestige of the regular army. Some calculations put the operating costs of the TTM as high as one third of the governmental budget. Though small groups of the TTM are distributed

* Or, as it is more commonly called, "voodoo." Creole words employed in this introduction are transcribed in Laubach orthography (see Hall, 1953). It was not possible to extend this transcription to the original Leyburn text, where a "Gallic" orthography is followed.

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throughout the country, the central administration remains in the capital; urban units are dispatched to the countryside at times, if any show of internal political resistance is sensed. TTM members also sometimes engage in struggles with each other over political spoils; but too little is known to analyze internal strains within this paramilitary, secret-police organization. The TTM has proved particularly useful for carrying out the murders of outspoken individual political opponents and for crushing draconically any threat of strikes in the Port-au-Prince business community. 625

Little is known of the antecedents of TTM members. While it is customary among the elite to describe these myrmidons as "trash," some of them are literate, have some education, vaunt a political ideology—a kind of nationalist-*négritude* mystique, with strong Fascist elements—and differ dramatically from the ragged, illiterate followers of the warlords of pre-1915 Haiti. In fact, the TTM lieutenants are a direct, if somewhat deformed, product of the Estimé regime, a decade of structurally unsound prosperity, a culturally nationalistic ideology, and, more remotely, of the United States occupation itself. 178 625

With regard to the army, Duvalier has followed a policy of careful attrition. While the United States Marine Corps "mission" was (probably unknowingly) serving to immobilize opposition, Duvalier began to change the character of the army general staff. In the course of less than seven years he completely revamped the leadership of the army five times; this process not only kept the colonels off balance but allowed the President to reward loyal younger followers—principally those with dark skins, it is said—with rapid promotions. 643 701

The relationship between the Duvalier regime and the Catholic clergy has been one of increasing alienation. At times members of the clergy stood high in the regime, two having even served as members of the cabinet; but not the slightest Church resistance has been tolerated. The low point in Duvalier–Church relations was the interruption of a mass by an armed TTM unit in downtown Port-au-Prince; leading members of the hierarchy later were summarily ejected from the country, and the Jesuit order was banned. Church power has waned significantly, both in the capital and in the countryside, as the regime has consolidated itself. Some observers believe that Duvalier is not so unwise as to aim at the complete elimination of the Church, but that he hopes instead to "nationalize" the clergy on some mutually agreeable basis. 642 795 661

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643 771 795 At the same time, the President has expressed his favorable interest in vodoun and is said to practice it; this statement, however, has overtones of malevolence that are not appropriate. Vodoun is a religion, though it lacks a centralized priestly hierarchy or administrative organization. Outside the elite, Catholicism in Haiti has always been colored by vodoun elements. The Haitian people as a whole invest no effort in distinguishing what is "really Catholic" from what is not, in their religious practices; in this regard Haitian countrymen do not really differ from folk practitioners of Catholicism anywhere. By its misreading of the piety of the Haitian masses, and its unceasing hostility to vodoun—quite different from the church policy in the so-called "Indian countries" of Latin America—the Church had failed to secure its influence over the Haitian people. In contrast, Duvalier's understanding of Haitian religious sociology has proved superior, and is consistent with the *authentique* ideology of the 1940s, though doubtless much more extreme in its implications.

642 871 467 204 661 Finally, the Duvalier regime has invaded such institutions as the National University and the trade unions, and maintains close surveillance over any individuals it regards as politically suspicious. Loyalty oaths are required at the university; a public press no longer exists; the unions, never strong, are now entirely powerless. But it should be clear from this description of the Duvalier regime that repression is not the key to Duvalier power so much as the means for perpetuating that power under Haitian conditions. The key to Duvalier power is to be found instead in the structure of Haitian society, in the social history of the past two decades, and in the policy of the United States, weakened by its inescapable preference for "stability" over "radicalism." In his own way, President Duvalier is as radical as he can be; but he is no Castro. It is now an open secret that Haiti's support for sanctions against Cuba approved at Punta del Este was matched by economic concessions from the United States; that the Marines, knowingly or not, immobilized anti-Duvalier opposition in a period when its supporters could be picked off, driven into exile, or jailed; that the official Duvalier offer of Môle St. Nicholas to the United States as a substitute for Guantánamo, though irrelevant, was warmly reassuring to some North American political thinkers; and that Duvalier, while he employs considerable "blackmail diplomacy" in his dealings with the United States and is now out of favor, is still considered "reliable" in that most important respect.

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Nor is it sufficient to label *Duvalierisme* "pathological" or "paranoid." The roots of this ideology are to be found in Haiti, not elsewhere; its supporters are the product of Haitian times and ideas; and their social identity, while not entirely clear, would probably pose few enigmas if enough data were available.* In order to make clear these assertions, however, it is necessary to look again at Haitian society, the Haitian society Leyburn has described so well, and to reexamine the terms that have been used by him and by others to describe it.

Though the societies of the Caribbean Sea differ significantly from each other, many of them share certain general historical experiences. Unlike the colonial areas of the Old World, these islands were largely populated from abroad, and in this regard they resemble the Atlantic lowland areas of mainland America. However, the colonial history of the islands meant that they would long remain the instruments of policy formulated in foreign capitals. Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and other islands were, during most of their postconquest history, the outposts of far-flung colonial empires, and the design of their societies was conditioned by this dependence and subjugation. As "plantation islands," their agriculture, demography, mode of settlement, and social structure were attuned to metropolitan needs and objectives. Unlike most of Africa and Asia, the Antilles lost their native populations almost entirely, owing to enslavement, overwork, disease, and war, early in the era of conquest and settlement. There remained the vestiges of native traditions, assimilated into the new, growing cultures of the postconquest period. The Indians themselves, wherever they were able to survive, were also assimilated through interbreeding with Old World migrants.

The newcomers came from Europe, Africa, and Asia, bringing with them what they could of their ancestral traditions, but never able to transfer their social heritages as intact bodies of belief and behavior. Hence the cultures of the new Caribbean societies were built up out of elements originating in many different places, while their social forms took shape under conditions of colonial control. The peoples of the islands were able to maintain some continuities with

* One interpreter of the Haitian political scene (Bastien, 1960:845–48) has suggested that Leyburn's analysis of Haitian society as a "two-caste" system greatly influenced local political thinking by strengthening one idea: "the black intellectual must regain political power for the benefit of the country's majority."

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The people of the islands were able to maintain some continuities with
177 the past, even while the new setting and changing conditions led to the development of certain innovations in society and culture. In a few Caribbean societies, Haiti included, freedom brought with it the opportunity to create a yeomanry—an independent, landholding class of agriculturists who produced most of their own consumption needs and also produced commodities for sale. These were "reconstituted yeomen," whose ways of life combined elements from the African and American Indian past, as well as considerable European and Asian influences, in new cultural constellations.

177 Haitian country folk are a particularly good example of such a
231 historical process. The crops Haitian yeomen cultivate include the
241 maize, sweet potatoes, and manioc of the indigenous American Indian
412 (Taino) people, and other cultigens such as papaya and avocado which had been domesticated in mainland aboriginal America; and items like taro and mangoes from Oceania, sesame and sugarcane which originated in the Middle East and India, and vegetables from Europe. Their domestic animals, including cattle, swine, and fowls, are nearly all from the Old World. The chief agricultural tools—hoe, billhook, and dibble, which are well adapted to Haiti's shallow topsoil and hilly terrain—may be European or African in origin; the practice of burning off weeds before planting may be African or American Indian. In the case of each trait—crop, tool, practice—one is confronted by the diverse and entangled culture history of the
177 Haitian people. What is true of agriculture is true of all else. The re-
771 ligion of Haiti is at once two religions rather than one: Catholicism
19 *and* vodoun. Yet these two belief systems form a single ideology for most Haitians, particularly in the rural areas and among those of the urban lower classes. The Creole language is similarly complex in origin. While its lexicon is predominantly derived from French, parts of its syntax are not of Romance origin. For instance, the use of postpositive nominalizing particles and the absence of gender typify Haitian Creole, and are decidedly not Romance in character. Terminology shows much the same; for example, animal names and anatomical terms are mainly French in origin, but some cooked foods carry names of African provenience.

177 The "mixing" of various elements of culture from different tradi-
174 tions is, of course, neither uniquely Caribbean nor uniquely Haitian. All cultures are growths out of the past, and change by losing and gaining traits and by combining and recombining their substance in

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new ways. The virtual extirpation of indigenous culture, however, occurred in few areas outside the New World; it was particularly characteristic of the coastal and lowland areas of this hemisphere. Hence, Caribbean culture is almost entirely transplanted and recently synthesized. In the Caribbean area, an additional distinction lay in the persistently colonial character of the islands and in the effects of this colonialism on local life. Wherever the plantation flourished, large populations of African origin grew out of the original importations of slaves. This was true from the southern United States to Brazil, but was especially marked in the islands, where local populations of European extraction were either absent or reduced by the spread of the plantation. Only in Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Santo Domingo, and in some of the smaller islands that developed no plantation system, were substantial proportions of Europeans to be found. In Haiti, the early cultural admixture of Colonial Spanish and Indian was soon swamped by the cultures of Africa, and the European cultural component became predominantly French after 1697, when the western third of Hispaniola—today's Haiti—was ceded to France.

But Haitian society did not come to be purely African, in any sense, nor is that society more than broadly similar to the other societies of the Caribbean. The kind of society in which the French masters and their African slaves met and mixed, and the subtropical, colonial environment in which they lived, imposed their own conditions for culture growth. What the Haitian people could keep as a living part out of the African past was limited by the regimen of slave plantation life; what they could borrow or copy from their masters was affected by the nature of the social relationships between those who held power and those who had to bend to it. Ultimately, independence meant that the Haitian people could employ what they already knew and practiced under slavery, but in a wholly new social setting.

The substantial isolation that followed independence led to slowed change, both social and cultural, and to the gradual spread of the yeoman way of life throughout rural Haiti. From 1804 until the United States occupation, Haiti was probably less affected by external developments than any other country in the hemisphere. In this regard, its social history is noticeably different from that of the other Caribbean islands, some of which, like Puerto Rico and Cuba, were forcibly brought back into the mainstream of world developments in the

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same century in which Haiti withdrew. The yeomanry of Haiti in the nineteenth century was hence able to develop a traditionalism of unusual firmness and persistence.

This traditionalism, however, has had a high price. The economic productivity of the rural cultivator has not risen; it can be argued convincingly that poor land use, erosion, and population growth have meant lower levels of consumption for the common people in 1966 than obtained a hundred years or more ago. The rural masses, though overwhelmingly consisting of landholders, have been unable to break out of a stagnation that is economic as well as cultural. Such stasis has been based to some extent on the limited responsiveness of the rural folk to outside stimulus. But also important in maintaining the past is the national institutional system that took on its characteristic shape after 1804, and under which the rural masses still live. That system, the origins of which Leyburn has examined and assessed with such care, is controlled, as we have seen, by a numerically small segment of the national population that is markedly distinct from the yeomanry itself.

The nature and internal differentiation of the elite needs much more study, though it seems clear already that it is by no means a single solidary class embracing all but the yeomen. Whatever the structure of the elite, the relationship between the yeomen on the one hand and the real holders of power on the other must be understood if one is to understand Haiti. The yeoman is defined in terms of the elite; he is dependent upon it and subject to it. This is what is meant when it is said that the yeomanry, like the elite, forms only a part-society. Yet without the yeomen, there would be no elite. The elite live by controlling and taxing the rural masses, and find their sustenance and their power in rural productivity. Elite and yeomen, then, are bound together in unequal but interdependent relationships in Haiti as they are in other less developed societies of a similar kind. In such cases, the political role of the yeomanry is usually minor, and few opportunities may arise for the expansion of its political strength. If the yeomanry fails to increase its productivity in ways that enable it to control more of its own surpluses, its role in affecting national political decisions may grow narrower rather than wider, and this ominous possibility has become a worldwide phenomenon. It becomes more intensified wherever industry and trade grow, unaccompanied by parallel growth in yeoman productivity or in new and more widely representative national institutions.

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That the separateness of yeomanry and elite had visible and sociologically important expression in physical type in Haiti was a clear consequence of the history of that country. But the traditional preponderant light skins at the top of the structure and the preponderant darkness at its base are less important than the domination of the total structure, and of the institutional means for changing it, by a mere fraction of the national population. It is the *power* of the elite which has mattered through time; its physical appearance has been only a historically derived expression of that power. Such a balance of politically weak masses against numerically sparse power holders is common, perhaps particularly in the "less developed world"; but each such case has certain special characteristics. Haiti's special nature is not simply in its being a yeoman country, and one in which a small group dominates the mass. As a rural, agrarian, unindustrialized, politically sovereign, and quasi-capitalistic country, Haiti shares much with other lands; but in each regard its own particularity needs to be assessed.

The rurality of Haiti is extreme, not simply because there are no concentrations of population in excess of 25,000 except for Port-au-Prince and Cap Haïtien but also because towns of intermediate size are few in number, and the urban concentrations in the country's two cities are substantially of relatively recent rural origin. Port-au-Prince dominates the Republic in all of its economic, political, and social activities. Furthermore, the rural towns have been losing to the capital, not gaining from it. Until the United States occupation, the larger towns of the coast, such as Jérémie, Jacmel, and St. Marc, were united economically with each other, and to some extent with the capital, by a lively coastwise shipping system, and the inland towns were tributary to those of the coast. The growth of inland transport during the occupation strengthened the interior towns while coastwise shipping declined, but the capital grew even more important as the sole economic center of the Republic. Since the 1940s, the rapid deterioration of the road system has left both inland and coastal towns enfeebled; only Port-au-Prince has remained strong.

The dominion of Port-au-Prince is firm, and there is no focus of power in the countryside that can counteract it. Those few foreign enterprises in Haiti that base themselves outside the capital city use local port facilities (e.g. Miragoâne for Reynolds Aluminum, Cap Haïtien for the sisal plantations of the north) and do not affect the development of the interior transport.

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369 development of interior transport. The only passable roads in the
494 Republic run from Aux Cayes in the south to the capital, and from
646 Cap Haïtien in the north to the capital. Transport and communications simply symbolize the power that Port-au-Prince wields, since the same circumstances characterize all national institutional arrangements. Thus Haiti is an extreme example of urban domination, even though its urban population is a fraction of the national total. The consequence has been to keep most of the rural folk cut off from the apparatus that effects national decisions and shapes national policy. Haiti's national legislature, never important in limiting presidential power, is less so today than ever; at best, it had only represented the interests of provincial towns as opposed to the capital, and never the interests of the mass of country people.

701 The local military and judiciary officials possess the formal author-
692 ity vested in them by the state, and their power is very considerable.
642 Few local people would dare challenge their decisions, and the de-
369 vices for appeal against arbitrary exercise of authority are few. Admittedly, at the lowest local level the *chef de section*—who is traditionally appointed by the captain of the military in the *commune* center and is himself a yeoman—is subject to some genuine restraint by local inhabitants. Jean Comhaire-Sylvain (1955:620–24) has argued convincingly that the people of a community are capable of insisting on democratic procedure in those matters requiring decision that come to the attention of local authority. But such decisions have little or nothing to do with larger issues. The yeomanry cannot directly make its wishes felt in national politics; and national politics are conducted almost without reference to the aspirations of the rural masses. It is precisely in the separateness of local life from the mainstream of national decision-making that the political impotence of the yeomanry is demonstrated.

311 Haiti's agrarian nature cannot be expressed simply by saying it is a
423 rural and yeoman country. Haiti does not have a "land problem," as
171 that phrase is conventionally applied to Latin America. It does, it is true, suffer from land shortage, inasmuch as too little land is worked at too low a level of productivity and must feed too many mouths. But a very substantial proportion of the rural masses owns land, or has regular access to it. It is true that most land is held in small plots and without clear title. But those persons who own no land or who lack land to work are proportionally fewer than in any other Carib-

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bean country, and perhaps fewer than in any country in Latin America. The agriculture itself, with the exceptions now of those very few large-scale plantations in sisal and sugarcane, is adapted to small plots and is worked with intensive labor and few tools on hilly land. Compared with agricultural production, especially of cash crops, in most mainland Latin American countries, productivity is low. The yeomanry is conservative in its agricultural practices, and not ready to change unless the changes entail minimal risk and the gains to be realized are clearly demonstrable (Erasmus, 1952:20–26). Yeomen cultivate with three goals in mind: cash income from world-market commodities (for instance, coffee, sisal, vetiver); cash income from items produced for local sale and consumption; and subsistence. While they are heavily involved in production for sale, their crop choices and land-use patterns rest fundamentally on a subsistence orientation. All grow a substantial part of their own food, especially sorghum, maize, sweet potatoes, taro, manioc, malanga (*Xanthosoma sagittifolium* Schott), plantains and bananas, fruits and vegetables, and rice where possible. The land is invested with considerable affect: gods live in it; it is the ultimate security against privation; family members are buried in it; food and wealth come from it; and it is good in itself, even if not cultivated. While such attitudes are common in yeoman societies, Haiti's history of slavery, and of access to land through revolution, has given a special symbolic significance to landowning. Land is valued above all else and is sometimes held "uneconomically"—that is, even when the capital and labor power to work it are lacking.

Leyburn describes better than any other writer the history of land acquisition by the yeoman after 1804. The French plantations lay in ruins, never to recover, while early authoritarian attempts to restore the prerevolutionary economy under native Haitian leadership soon failed. In the course of a century, the Haitian people laid claim to their own soil, while population growth and the adoption of the French tradition of equal inheritance progressively reduced the average size of holdings. In spite of some plantation development after the United States occupation, most agricultural land in Haiti is still employed in small holdings, and "land reform" in the conventional sense—the breaking-up of large estates and the creation of a class of small landholders—is nearly irrelevant to Haiti's needs.

As today's yeomanry cultivates, so its womenfolk market. Nearly

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462 three hundred marketplaces serve the towns and countryside, some
443 of them patronized by thousands of buyers and sellers on market days. By participating in active small-scale trade, the wives of the yeomen contribute in a limited way to national economic efficiency and growth. As in all heavily agrarian economies marked by poor storage facilities, inferior transportation, and low consumer incomes there is considerable substitution of labor for capital, and there are high losses through spoilage. Except for the marketing of export commodities, much time is consumed in bargaining, in carrying, and in hand-processing of various sorts. But these activities are the accompaniments of the general low level of development of the Haitian economy, not one of its causes.

443 The economic challenges posed by agriculture on the one hand,
241 and by marketing on the other, differ significantly. Since these ac-
462 tivities are carried out predominantly along the lines of a sexual division of labor, the Haitian countrymen and their marketing wives
114 differ in some regards in their attitudes. Foreign observers of the
462 nineteenth century commented regularly on the industry and energy
174 of Haitian rural women, stressing their predominance in trade. Some
175 writers have attributed this convention to the West African tradition,
443 since women are the marketers, men the farmers, in many African
241 societies. Leyburn, however, notes that the militarism and political
433 unrest that have marked Haiti during so much of its history were serious impediments to peaceful trade. Women came to predominate in marketing, he theorizes, because men did what they could to avoid the towns, since they were often impressed into roving army bands if they traveled far from home. Whatever the historical causes may be, it has been established that the women of Haiti's countryside carry on most of the internal trade, while their husbands do most of the farming. These women, on the whole, know more about the towns, mix more easily with outsiders, and show more intrepidity in trade than the men show in agriculture. Yet it has been demonstrated that, for most of them, the scale of their enterprise is so modest and the economic opportunities open to them so restricted that their energy and daring can do little to increase the level of productive activity (Mintz, 1964:256–86).

47 Haiti's lack of large factories, mechanized production, and a skilled industrial labor force means that the country is unindustrialized by any usual measure.

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any usual measure. But Haitians do produce by traditional craft methods a surprisingly large number of the articles they need for daily life. In the countryside it is possible to see many persons engaged, mostly on a part-time basis, in craft activities and home industry that have their roots in the prerevolutionary era. Leatherworkers operating small, crude tanneries still flourish. Charcoal-burners, and operators of small lime kilns that produce building material, are found in every village. Smiths make and repair simple tools, working with forges of archaic design. Combs are made from cows' horns and tortoiseshell, buttons from bone; carrying-bags, fish traps, and a wide variety of baskets from withes, bamboo strips, and grasses; wooden bowls, mortars and pestles, tool handles and spoons from local woods; dippers, pots, and candelabra from tin cans; and sandals from tires and inner tubes. Sawyers cut and dress timber; cabinetmakers still manufacture simple furniture of traditional design from the fast-disappearing tropical woods; many women, working either with the simplest sorts of sewing machines or by hand, make clothing for use and for sale. Along the coasts there are dugout-makers, shipbuilders, and sail- and seine-makers. Simple mattresses, fabricated from local grasses, are sold in every large marketplace, as are crude ceramic wares made by local potters. At the start of the twentieth century, Italian immigrants brought a sturdy tradition of cobbling to Haiti, which has been destroyed only recently by the flood of American imported shoes with their attached prestige, until recently, *vitièlo* was a colloquial term for shoe, coming from the name of the most famous of those Italian cobblers.

One of the striking features of Haiti's craft traditions is its relative stability since the revolution. It was under slavery that Haitians first became "westernized," learning what were then standard French craft practices, adjusted to local colonial conditions, probably with some modifying features coming from the African past. It was before the revolution that the Haitian people learned and stabilized their consumer tastes, agricultural and craft standards, and work procedures. Such preferences and standards were worked out primarily in terms of the demands of the plantation regime itself; but even the most repressive social system leaves some opportunity for acculturation. Today's sugar-making shops and rural rum distilleries employ techniques centuries old and little modified over time. Housebuilding and woodworking techniques in the countryside are substantially

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342 322 178 unchanged from an earlier era. The prevailing quality of Haitian rural and craft industry, then, is one of great stability and conservatism.

493 463 At the same time, of course, major events since the revolution have left their imprint on this part of life. Hardly a roadside village in Haiti today, for instance, lacks an automobile mechanic, even though these men are mostly self-educated and work with hardly any tools. Their skills became part of Haitian culture in this century and are often of a simple order no longer typical of more developed areas. Tire 383 177 tubes, for instance, are "vulcanized" by the use of an ingenious device made from a board and an old piston, kerosene providing the heat to make the seal; this technique, along with the sewing of damaged truck tires, was almost certainly introduced and diffused by the United States Marines.

47 31 178 But these quaint additions do not alter the fact that shop and factory industry are nearly absent, and extractive industry virtually nonexistent. Haiti's one alumina extraction enterprise, foreign-owned, is now shut down. There is but one flour mill, and that is foreign-[258] owned as well. One or two textile mills and sugar factories, estab-[339] lished with foreign capital, still function, as do a modern cement [464] factory and a few other small plants established in the 1950s. These industries, scanty as they are, were of great importance to Haiti, since they represented substantial investments, held out the promise of reduced dependence on imports in significant categories, and contributed to the beginnings of an industrial proletariat. However, they involved only a tiny fraction of the national labor force, and they have not proved entirely successful. As a result, Haiti lacks any reserve of labor acquainted with modern industry, even though many people, both urban and rural, work at tasks that might be considered more industrial than agricultural.

- 47 433 - 178 171 Most important for the present discussion, the minor developments in Haitian industry have not led to an expanded market and have not resulted in any firm increase in productivity. Industrial growth, in the sense in which it has occurred in countries such as those of Western Europe—or for that matter in Mexico or Argentina—is entirely lacking. The absence of such growth is perhaps especially significant if Haiti be compared with a neighbor such as Jamaica or Puerto Rico. [648] These countries, one now independent, the other a North American dependency—have both gained real increments from the investment activities of outsiders;

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activities of outsiders; Haiti has experienced few such increments, even as a result of the United States occupation. Its citizens cannot readily migrate anywhere; its educational system cannot prepare its people adequately for the modern world; its civil service has proved neither stable nor reliable; its labor force has limited experience with the factory system; and even two decades of active North American intervention did nothing to remake the economic and political structure of the nation. In more recent years, some of the "development projects" foisted on the people of a sovereign Haiti by foreigners working with Haitian officials would not have been tolerated by the colonial representatives of any foreign power obligated to report its activities before the United Nations Trusteeship Council. In view of these things, one is tempted to claim that Haiti has suffered from all the disadvantages of political sovereignty while enjoying none of its advantages.

Unlike those colonial dependencies that were able, over time, to develop internal political ideologies through which to face the pressures imposed by the colonial powers, Haiti was tested by hardly any challenge but its own lack of development. In this sense only can it be said that the freedom Haiti had won in an incredible revolution against powerful enemies came to be a punishment. The struggle brought the Haitian people justified admiration in many quarters, but its price has been isolation and virtual abandonment.

It was the United States occupation that made a lie of Haitian sovereignty, and even of the invincibility of its people. The Haitian "bandits," variously estimated to have numbered from 2,000 to 6,000, who died in what is probably best described as a war of resistance against the North Americans, were barely able to maintain even a brief local conflict against several well-armed companies of United States Marines. Yet that occupation gave Haiti little in return for its denial of the claim of national sovereignty. The public works and reform programs instituted by the United States, designed to give the country roads, schools, hospitals, a disciplined army, a "legitimate" government, and a schooled civil service, hardly endured longer than the occupation itself, since nothing had been done to transform the social and economic base of the society. Within a decade of the North American withdrawal, the gleaming superstructure the occupation created had begun to decay. The major effect of North Amer-

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The major effect of the North

Amer-
648 ican tenure seems to have been to make possible a much more telling
642 centralism in political control than had been operative in Haiti at any time since the fall of the Christophe regime; and the consequences of this change are still being felt.

241 Small-scale rural cultivators are famous for their tendency to con-
565 fine their consumption to culturally conventionalized levels—that is,
433 to live as their predecessors lived before them. Though they are in-
178 volved in commercial spheres larger than the communities in which
185 they live, they seek to limit that involvement and to maintain their
511 cash expenditures at a low level. It is in this sense that Haiti might be
472 called a "quasi-capitalistic" society. To put it another way, yeomen of this sort do not seek to change or to expand their production—rather, they aim to conserve a way of life set by tradition. The ideology of resistance to social and cultural change is one of the major obstacles to development; but it would be rash to damn such an ideology without reflection. In Haiti, for instance, there has long been pressure upon the rural masses to expand their production of coffee, the major export crop. However, this pressure has not been accompanied by any serious grass-roots attempt to improve coffee production or to offer genuine incentives to the cultivators. The yeomanry has no assurance at all that any expansion of effort will lead to gains *for them*; and they are little prepared to invest such effort merely because they are told that it will be good for Haiti. In fact, it is likely
[439] that the production of subsistence crops has expanded in recent years at the cost of coffee production, for the yeoman knows that he can at least be sure of eating and of selling locally such crops as maize, sorghum, and yams, regardless of what may happen in Port-au-Prince or to the world coffee market. This view, combined with the yeoman's painfully acquired distrust of those who prate at length concerning his welfare, has meant a virtual stagnation of agricultural export production, even though the whole land quite literally depends on this production in order to progress.

241 The effect of this rural resistance is to create an apparent very sharp
565 difference in goals between countryman and bureaucrat. It is per-
433 fectly understandable that the countryman should fail to see the con-
185 nection between heightened coffee production and a higher level of public welfare and social services. His experiences hardly persuade him that it is his surplus-producing capacity that underlies the kind and quality of public institutions with which the state provides him.

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241 565 185 433 Nor does his effort in producing more and better cash crops translate itself directly into higher consumption, since he has no say in setting the price for his coffee. Under the circumstances, it is naïve to suppose that "education" alone can make the yeoman's role in economic or political development a more active one. The disposition to maintain a habitual level of consumption, rather than to believe that an increase in productivity will result in expanding services or improved consumption, is difficult to change; and the quasi-capitalistic quality of Haitian agricultural production is merely one way of saying as much. Economic change, in this sense, has to depend partly on changes in attitudes toward production. Until an agricultural extension service worthy of the name is able to make a massive attack on the shortcomings of yeoman cultivation in Haiti, this conservatism will perpetuate itself. And agricultural extension will not be able to wage this battle for change—even when its services become adequate in quality and quantity—unless the promises of greater economic rewards or of improved social services for the rural masses are occasionally honored.

47 433 565 178 The term "quasi-capitalistic" has much less force, of course, when applied to urban enterprise. But there, too, economic activity has a curiously static quality when compared to enterprise in more developed countries. The Port-au-Prince capitalist is famous for "playing it safe." Import-export trade, tourist hotels, guided tours, gas stations, and urban slum real estate are more rewarding spheres of investment than shops or commercial farms. A small but economically important Syrian–Lebanese–Italian group limits its local investment accordingly, as do most of those "native" Haitians who carry on their businesses in the towns and cities. Elite families consist largely of siblings who interlock their economic activities with government, the military, agricultural processing and exporting, consumer-goods importing, tourist-connected services, and the professions. A slum block, a post in the ministry of tourism, a colonelcy, or a tour agency, can be a lucrative investment; few indeed are the Haitians prepared to take the risks needed to develop highly productive farms, to produce improved strains of poultry, or to introduce industrial skills through a modern machine shop. And the reasons for this lack of verve and daring are easy to find. Governmental instability, excessive [648] taxation, lack of access to markets, and the absence of roads, communication, small-scale credit facilities, and the like mean that special

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intrepidity in enterprise is required. It is striking that those foreign
648 captains of industry—mainly from the United States—who invest in Haiti, expect (and often get) governmental guarantees of a sort they could not dream of in their own countries; in this regard, they merely conform to Haitian expectations.

433 Haiti's problems, then, are not simply those that face any less de-
47 veloped country, vast though such problems may be. Nor is it intelli-
178 gent to lay Haiti's problems at the feet of the nation's present rulers. The structure of the national economy has not changed significantly during the past twenty-five years—except that boom years could provide a temporary aura of prosperity—regardless of the philosophy
648 or popularity of the regime in power. If nothing else, the present
652 nadir of Haiti's fortunes demonstrates that United States aid averag-
433 ing twelve and a half million dollars yearly over more than a decade has produced no enduring improvements of any kind. It may further demonstrate that, shockingly poor as the country is, it emphatically does not depend on such aid. As of 1964, the regime in power was operating on a monthly budget of $1,800,000, only $400,000 of which went for purposes other than salaries. In other words, the ministries
[511] do little more than perpetuate themselves unchanged. The yeomanry, living near subsistence level, continues to produce most of what it needs, while restricting its cash expenditures even more severely than in the past. The risks—in terms, say, of public health—of running a society under these circumstances are great; but there is no reason to suppose that regimes of the Haitian sort will be destroyed or improved by a show of popular unrest originating in the countryside.
[369] Difficult as life is for the Haitian countryman, and no people in Latin America lives more poorly, the real pinch is probably being experienced more acutely among the city folk than among their rural fellow citizens. It matters politically, therefore, who these city folk are and what they do.

463 To begin with, there has been a significant loss of professional
167 people, almost all of whom were urban, through migration and exile, especially since 1958. Haitian doctors, dentists, and other professionals are widely scattered today, both in the developed and the less developed countries of the world. Former army officers, journalists, diplomats, businessmen, and academicians have fled political repression, perhaps with the hope of eventually returning to their own country.

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country. The complete enfeeblement of tourism has also led to some migration and to an accompanying decline of services and service "industries" in the capital. These losses have surely hurt Haiti and have damaged its chances for growth as well as its capacity to maintain the health, education, and morale of its people. It is not clear, however, to what extent such changes may have produced a negative political reaction to the Duvalier regime. Urban support for Dr. Duvalier appears to have come from some intellectuals, from some army officers, and from portions of the urban lower classes; but numerically most important were those low-paid but literate and aspiring wage-earners whom the Comhaire-Sylvains (1959) refer to as "Class III" members. These observers have stressed that the Class III group consisted mainly of industrial employees, those engaged in food-processing, hotel services, workshops, and the like. It was this group that the Comhaire-Sylvains credited with the Duvalier victory in 1957, pointing out in addition that "in the small country towns almost all officials, both civil and military, and traders, seemed to belong to this class" (p. 185). If the economic crisis that has gripped Haiti in recent years severely affects the position of this class, the political situation will reflect as much. But the ideology of Class III members—so far as it can be inferred at all—would suggest that one Duvalier may merely be replaced by another. At the same time, the depopulation of those groupings whose members might have led a qualitatively different kind of opposition, during the period of tenure of the United States Marine Corps Mission to Duvalier, may have indefinitely postponed the opportunity for creating a genuinely new political direction.

To state it another way, there are no signs at this time that the regime in power will be pulled down by any organized Haitian opposition. More important, since regimes resting on a narrow popular base have a way of falling without change, there is no indication that within Haiti's present national institutional structure, a genuine opposition to Duvalier-type governments can take shape. This means that even if regime should follow regime in rapid succession, there is little reason to expect that any of them could effect fundamental changes in Haitian society. If such an interpretation is correct, it presupposes an internal equilibrium or stasis so strong that no force for change in half a century has been able to make a politically significant difference.

This pessimistic view is supported by what is known at this time

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about Haitian society.* It does not, however, take note of the remarkable failure of foreign experts to make any adequate assessment of the potentialities of that society, or of its most-needed changes. Some of the problems of development, remarked on by Leyburn in 1941, have never even been explored adequately: the advisability of primary education in Creole; the need for an effective agricultural extension; the relationship of nutrition to work habits; and the like. Even basic sociological studies of a sort that could provide data for planned change are lacking—"of the process of socialization . . . of the motivating forces, the dominant wishes, the attitudes and social values of the masses . . . of social mobility" (pp. 308–09). Foreign-inspired development projects have been, for the most part, crash projects, designed to satisfy Haitian political goals, rather than economic or social goals. A productive relationship between foreign development agency representatives and government officials has never been achieved, nor have the failures ever been subjected to anal/sis or reflection. Emphasis has been put on large-scale schemes, rather than on more modest, long-term programs which would require actual cooperation with the rural masses on the local level (cf. Erasmus, 1952; Friedmann, 1955; De Young, 1958). Many—probably most—foreign planners who have worked in Haiti have never even bothered to learn the national language, let alone the fundamentals of the culture of the Haitian people.

In these terms, it is not enough merely to bemoan the feeble institutional structure of Haiti. Some attention, at least, should be given to the striking incapacity of outsiders to deal with that structure creatively. Leyburn's book exacts our respect precisely because its author, unlike most foreign visitors, makes plain that he takes Haiti, and the needs of the Haitian people, seriously.

* Some observers are less pessimistic than the writer. The sons of the elite, many of them educated abroad, elements of a Social Christian progressive movement, and possibly a few "Castro-left" radicals, may eventually coalesce into a successful opposition, it has been argued. The writer, however, remains unconvinced. Structural changes of the sort wrought by the Castro regime in Cuba were predicated on the existence of mass political opposition to Batista-type governments, and on the existence of industrial and rural proletarian sectors organized into large-scale movements. These "preconditions," as I see them, are entirely lacking in Haiti of today.

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FOREWORD

The United States, embarked upon a policy of good neighborliness toward the other countries of the Western Hemisphere, is beginning to improve its acquaintance with the republics to the south. Most of its efforts at present are directed toward an understanding of the large and important powers, such as Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina, which, because of their size and resources, are potentially our greatest allies—or, if we fail in our policies, our sources of greatest danger. There are, however, twenty republics to the south of us, many of them small. A truly good neighbor does not ignore near-by families who are lacking in wealth, even those who are known to differ among themselves. 648 171

Of the twenty Latin-American republics, the second smallest is Haiti. The United States was only twenty years old when the people of this little country (which, for all its diminutive size, had been France's wealthiest colony of the eighteenth century) fought their own war of independence, and in 1804 founded the second free state in the hemisphere. Haiti has many claims upon the attention of the United States: its war against France in 1802–3 was at least a contributing factor in Napoleon's willingness to sell Louisiana to this country; it was the first independent Negro state in the modern world; its foreign policy has long been intertwined with our own; finally, the nineteen-year American Occupation of the country has brought us into an even closer relationship with Haiti than independent factors could produce. 721 648 642

When the country was young there was a spate of books trying to answer the question whether a nation ruled by blacks could long endure. In more recent years, works on the Antillean republic have generally dealt with single phases of its life, as for example its political relations with the United States, or its "Voodoo" practices. There is, however, no connected story of the growth of its social institutions out of the backgrounds of slavery and French colonial life, or of the slow shaping of these institutions through the nineteenth century. It is this growth which the present volume undertakes to describe. Political history has been introduced only so far as necessary to provide the convenient pegs upon which most of us are accus- 114 121

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121 tomed to hang our knowledge of the growth, development, and decay of social institutions. Whether the book be classified as social history or as sociology is largely a matter of indifference, for the line between those subjects can hardly be drawn without doing violence to comprehensive insight. To view a people with understanding in the characteristic setting of their institutions—marriage, religion, property arrangements, and the rest—one needs not only a description of their ways, but also a knowledge of how they came to be what they are.

167 Two centuries ago nine tenths of the Negro ancestors of the modern
178 Haitians were still in Africa, living under the mores of their own localities, and for the most part entirely unacquainted with the mores of the Western
563 World (or, as we ethnocentrically call it, the "civilized" world). First transplanted as slaves to the Caribbean island, then gaining their freedom after some mixture of blood with the white French, the Haitians have built up not only a state but a Haitian culture. The problems to be discussed in this book are as follows:

114 What social structure was set up after the independence in 1804, and by what methods? This question calls for a description of the economic, political, religious, marital, and class organization of the Haitians.

How did this structure function during the next century? There is often a difference between a people's expressed intentions and their ability to carry them out: a state sometimes borrows from some other power a type of constitution which, though logically admirable, does not work effectively under local conditions.

Which structural and functional elements of Haitian life were social heritages from the African past; which were taken over from French models; which were mergings of the two, and which seem to be variations newly produced on Haitian soil?

178 The great leaders of early days, Toussaint L'Ouverture, Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, and Boyer, made an effort to direct Haitian economic and political life along definite lines; however, the pressure of daily life, the necessity of feeding half a million people, most of whom had had no experience in solving complicated problems of any sort, soon made it obvious that logical social structures would not long remain logical. The ways evolved were characteristically Haitian; ways in general unplanned, grow-

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ing out of daily needs to make an adjustment to conditions as they were. A century later we can describe, with the wisdom coming from perspective, what people of the time could hardly perceive to be happening. 178

The people of Haiti have had to endure so much criticism from foreigners in past decades that it would be small wonder if they should dread the appearance of another book about their country. Herskovits, Parsons, Montague, Courlander, and other recent American authors, however, have abundantly proved that it is possible to treat the subject in scholarly fashion without wounding sensibilities. Every nation has unsavory items in its history and defects in its present state; this book has no intention of overdramatizing either the past or the present condition of Haiti. 114

All students who go from the United States to Haiti must sooner or later seek out Dr. Price-Mars, a true gentleman and scholar. He is not only one of the country's foremost intellectuals, but also a man of profound understanding and kindliness. I owe much to his illuminating suggestions, his practical assistance in my enterprise, and his patient answers to my questions. His works, whether historical, sociological, critical, or literary, are indispensable to an understanding of Haiti.

I am grateful likewise to Père Monteil, who during several weeks gave me the benefit of his years of experience among the people of his large parish, and who opened many avenues of research to me. The custodian of the excellent library of the Frères de l'Instruction Chrétienne constantly aided my investigation. Père Demers allowed me on occasion to accompany him in his parish work. To all these men, and to the numerous other priests who showed me hospitality, I express my thanks.

It would be impossible to name all the persons who gave me help; yet I cannot forbear to mention former President Eugène Roy; Dr. Camille Lhérisson, a brilliant physician; Dr. J.-C. Dorsainvil, the historian; the directors of the agricultural school at Damien, and of the École Professionelle, École Centrale, and École Normale; M. Jean Fouchard, chef du Cabinet particulier du Président Vincent; M. Jacques Antoine, of the Haitian Legation in Washington; M. Édouard Estève, president of the Chambre du Commerce; Mme. Andrée Marini; M. Victor Montasse; and M. Émile Roy. All of these gave me valuable information, as did many other Haitians of high rank and low. I count it a particular privilege to number

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114 among my sincere friends M. Westen Dauphin, of the Département des Finances, and his charming wife; the memory of their kindly generosity will long remain with me.

On one of my visits to Haiti Prof. John Lobb, of Mount Holyoke College, was my companion, and I owe him gratitude for his keen advice and criticism. Miss Annabel Learned gave much valuable assistance in the preparation of the manuscript. I have also profited from the suggestions of my student and friend, Mr. Alan F. Dill, who read a part of the manuscript of this book.

The true affection I feel for the Haitian people whose institutions I have here described cannot be measured in printed words.

J. G. L.

Yale University.
October, 1941.

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The map of Haiti, preceding the text, shows its five departments, the capitals of its arrondissements, and its position in the Antilles. It was drawn by Robert W. Galvin.

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PART I

CASTE AND CLASS

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I

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR COUNTRY

IN the ten thousand square miles of Haiti's mountains and valleys more than two and a half million people—some say more than three million—are crowded together. Some are black, some light-skinned, but less than five thousand are white, and these are almost all recent immigrants to the country. Modern Haiti has its racial roots primarily in Africa, but its social roots lie as much in Europe as in Africa; if it is "American" at all, geography and a few fairly superficial characteristics are the only American qualities it displays. 161 162 144 181

Carrying our own cultural interpretations with us when we visit our Caribbean neighbor, we are likely to misunderstand what we see in Haiti, for it is very easy to think of all colored people in terms of our own. To do so is to remain completely ignorant of Haiti. Whereas in the United States we use "Negro" and "colored" indiscriminately as synonyms, making a real distinction only between "black" and "mulatto," all four terms are taboo in polite society in Haiti. A new descriptive vocabulary, an entirely new frame of reference, must be acquired by the friendly foreign visitor to this West Indian republic.[1] 829 576

Probably the most striking phenomenon in the country is its division into two social groups. So rigidly are the class lines set that 565

1. No greater error of tact can be made by visitors to Haiti than to use such commonly accepted American terms as Negro, colored, mulatto, blacks, Africans. Whereas in the United States such words are employed to describe people with a greater or less degree of Negro blood, in Haiti they are generally regarded as opprobrious epithets, emphasizing the color of the epidermis as all important, while ignoring the essential matters of culture, standard of living, and social background. Not many Haitians would have the grace to reply, as President Pétion suggested to a subaltern who was incensed at a white man for calling him "un nègre," "Why, then, did you not call him 'un blanc'?" Probably the most offensive of all the terms is *mulâtre*, for it calls attention to miscegenation in the family. The educated people in general regard themselves as darker Frenchmen, not as transplanted Africans. Books about Haiti which refer to the "black republic" seem to them to ignore the important fact that the blacks, though numerically preponderant, do not rule. The visitor must accordingly acquire a new vocabulary of color. It is safer not to make any allusion at all to the matter; but if occasion demands, one speaks of "jaune" and "brun," not white and black. 829 576 186

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565 *caste* is the only word to describe the effective separation of aristocrats from the masses. The caste system is a vivid fact, for it regulates a person's profession, speech, religion, marriage, family life, politics, clothes, social mobility—in short, his whole life from cradle to grave.

175 Haiti won its freedom from the France of Napoleon in 1804,
648 becoming thus the second independent state in the Western Hemisphere. It had been during the eighteenth century France's most prosperous colony, its wealth depending upon slavery and the planta-
565 tion system. With the whites driven out, social distinctions which
642 actually had their roots in colonial times began immediately to develop among the people, all of whom had some proportion of African blood in their veins. During the course of the next century the criteria for aristocracy slowly assumed recognizable form, so that now even the most casual observer is aware that Haiti cannot by any stretch of the imagination be called a democratic country, with an open class system. The two castes are the élite and the masses. They are as different as day from night, as nobleman from peasant; and they are as separate as oil and water. The élite are generally reckoned
[162] to compose at the outside not more than three per cent of the population.

565 The élite do not work with their hands. This is the cardinal rule of Haitian society. Upon it rests the whole economic structure of the
463 country, and to this the course of national history has led. All the
[461] professions, most governmental and military offices, and the large business enterprises are effectively closed to young men of the masses. Indeed, so completely accepted are caste rules, so practically difficult would it be for peasant youths to acquire the money and education necessary for such careers, that at birth a boy's future place in economic life is, within narrow limits, already predetermined. For the élite, law is the most popular of the professions, partly because it is the quickest avenue of approach to high political office; government, in turn, is the only career which can make a man rich within a few years. Next in popularity to law comes medicine. Teaching is not lucrative enough to attract many promising youths, and the priests of the Roman Catholic Church are almost all white Frenchmen.[2]

793 2. An effort was once made by the Catholic Church to train native Haitian priests,
797 but the peasants would have none of them after they were ordained. They drove them out, saying, "Go away! How do you expect God to listen to you? You are not white; you don't know anything." And the Haitian priests had to be transferred as missionaries to Africa.

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The distinction between castes on the basis of occupation is nowhere more clearly seen than in the feminine sphere. The peasant woman, from childhood onward, is an indefatigable laborer, absolutely indispensable to the economic life of the country. She not only performs the usual domestic functions but works in the fields as well. She carries marketable goods, sometimes for miles, to the town for sale. The aristocratic woman, on the other hand, is rarely active in business. Indeed, until very recent years no career was open to her outside the home, nor would custom have allowed her to follow one; even now, teaching and a few clerical positions in government service are her only business opportunities. She directs the household economy but has servants if she can possibly afford them. Her place is definitely in the home. 565 562

The second infallible test of membership in the élite caste is education and an ability to speak French. When Haiti was a slave colony belonging to France, the hundreds of thousands of blacks imported from Africa had no common tongue, coming as they did from wide stretches of the continent; the French spoken by their overseers, a development of the Norman dialect,[3] became their one language, known as Créole. Every Haitian, high and low, knows and uses this language, for nursemaids speak it to the upper-class children in their charge, and all servants speak it. The élite consequently learn it at a tender age, and must use it in all their dealings with the lower orders. Among themselves, however, they speak French. The official language of the country is French. To speak correct French is an immediate announcement that one has had the advantage of schooling and has been in contact with the aristocracy. Theoretically, Haitian education is free and democratic; actually, no peasant child could be spared from labor long enough for schooling, or find money for proper clothes to go to school in. 565 197 [87]

Inevitably the standard of living is a reflection of caste membership. "The élite wear shoes," explained General Butler laconically to the United States Senate investigating committee, when asked what characterized the classes of Haiti. His elliptical remark is true. Peasants, indeed, could not afford to purchase shoes, but more particularly they could not afford to dress up to the standard set by the shoes. When a man of the masses dons the castoff shoes of some aristocrat, the logical assumption by everyone is that this man is pre- 565 511

3. See chap. XVIII.

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565 511 paring to try to move one step up the social ladder. Shoes are a symbol: wearing these, one must also wear a suit instead of a faded shirt and patched trousers; the suit demands personal cleanliness and a better home; all these lead the country man to town life with its additional expenses. So arduous a climb does not allure many of the Haitian common folk.

565 181 Because the standard of living, with its tangibles and intangibles, clearly separates the castes, the élite observe all the rules with rigor. Their etiquette is formal. Culture (in the popular, not the anthropological meaning) is respected with almost religious devotion.

565 511 434 Since the maintenance of a high standard of living is costly, it is obvious that another source of caste distinction lies in the inequalities of wealth and property. Wealth is a relative term, however, and the Haitian peasant is so poor that by contrast a few hundred dollars' income a year will seem like riches. The élite live economically by American standards, yet even parsimonious spending of money may, when governed by a consciousness of social distinctions, make the peak of aristocracy unassailable.

565 369 The élite live in towns. Many of them own country estates, but regard these as secondary to their residences in Port-au-Prince, Pétionville, Cap-Haïtien, Jérémie, and the other few towns. To live a rural life is to be isolated, out of the stream of fashion, news, social activity. What profession can one follow in a rustic valley? One who is class-conscious must see and be seen by others of his class, otherwise he would be forgotten by "those who count." In the towns are the schools; there French is spoken; there, and there only, financial and social opportunities exist. True, plebeians form the majority of the population even in the towns, so that urbanization alone is not a mark of caste; it must be taken in conjunction with the others.

565 581 Formal marriage is another requisite for membership in the élite. As will shortly be apparent, sex relations in Haiti are quite casual, as judged by American standards. The majority of Haitian families are established by parents who have gone through neither a civil nor a religious ceremony. This is not to imply that spouses are unfaithful to each other, or that there is not mutual respect within the family circle; it merely means that most people regard formal marriage as a luxury which they cannot afford, or in any case as a ceremony which custom has made superfluous. Once again, however, the aristocrat holds to the form. If a family can point to legal marriages among

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several generations of ancestors, there can be little question of its high social position. 565 571

Religion affords still another distinction between high and low. Haiti has a folk religion which American tourists call Voodoo (a name which makes them think immediately of superstitious emotionalism or some kind of occult balderdash), but which is more properly called Vodun. It is a true religion in that it answers for the native the questions arising in the world he knows, while giving him confidence to face the crises of life. Vodun is African in origin, Créole in its language, and homely in its creed and practice; none of these makes it any less a religion. The official religion of the country, on the other hand, is Roman Catholicism. Few members of the élite, however their hearts may yearn for the consoling securities of Vodun, dare openly either to acknowledge their "atavism" or to participate in the cult. They must be Catholics or agnostics. It is often remarked that below the surface many a professing Catholic aristocrat cherishes Vodun beliefs; the important fact is that he keeps his folk worship secret. Because the outside world ridicules Vodun as superstition, and because the approved Catholic Church fights it, government restrictions effectively keep its ritual out of the public gaze. All the discriminatory laws, however, have not weakened its hold upon the masses. It is because Vodun is a *folk* religion that the élite cannot permit themselves to adhere to it openly. 565 771

The final and most complicated distinction between the two castes is skin color. Any generalization on this matter is open to numerous exceptions; moreover, the whole question of color in Haiti touches the most sensitive nerves of the upper classes. One must begin by such casual observations as these: the vast majority of the lower orders are definitely dark or even black; the lighter the skin, the more likely a person is to belong to the élite. It is true that there are black aristocrats, and it is equally true that numbers of peasants have light complexions. At almost any function in high society, however, the proportion of dark-skinned persons is decidedly small. Among the youth, the tendency is always to select a spouse whose skin color is light; marriages are often made between aristocrats and white foreigners resident in Haiti, so that the children may lighten the family complexion. While it is therefore inaccurate to assert that no full-blooded Negroes belong to the élite, it is also clear that lighter persons tend to have social advantages. 565 829 581 144

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565 171 Modern usage, having borrowed the word "caste" from India, employs it loosely to mean a rigid class system of which the people are conscious.[4] In India caste was always endogamous and connected with occupation. Kroeber defines it as "an endogamous and hereditary division of an ethnic unit occupying a position of superior or inferior rank or social esteem in comparison with other such subdivisions."[5] Castes, as distinguished from social classes, "have emerged into social consciousness to the point where custom and law attempt their rigid and permanent separation from one another." By each of these criteria Haiti has castes.

565 512 [463] [461] The élite are endogamous in that they would not consider marriage into the masses. The one exception to the endogamic practice is marriage with a white foreigner. Whereas in India all members of a caste had the same general occupation, in Haiti several occupations are open to caste members; but the distinction between honorable and demeaning work is understood by all, so that no person has free choice as regards the two larger categories. Haitian law does not name the social divisions, nor does it legislate the masses into a subordinate position[6]—for the simple reason that there is no conceivable need to enact what already exists. The laws of Haiti are administered by élite officials; these men make the definitions and interpretations. The judge always knows the custom, so that (as in most countries) the same offense brings different penalties for upper- and lower-class offenders. Custom holds sway, and custom is more tyrannical than any body of law.

Inside the castes may be found social distinctions familiar in democracies and in every other kind of society. Interest in politics, business, literature, or sport draws people of like minds together and makes cliques. There are well-to-do families who outshine their neighbors, just as there are peasant landholders who dominate their rural communities. A high civil official has more prestige than a doctor with a small practice, just as among the masses a house servant for an élite family outranks a beggar.

565 511 105 185 For the majority of Haitians, life is too elemental to be concerned with artificial wants. The peasant talks, unfettered by rules of gram-

4. See also W. Lloyd Warner, "American Caste and Class," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLII, No. 2 (Sept. 1936), 234-237; and John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (New Haven, 1937), pp. 62 ff.

5. A. L. Kroeber, "Caste," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, III, 254.

6. Such efforts were made, however, in the early days of the republic. See chap. III.

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mar or any schoolmaster's correction; he behaves like his fellows; he 565
learns by trial and error, by imitation, by the praise and ridicule of 511
his elders, what to do and what not to do. What really matters in life 105
is having food to eat, avoiding bad luck in health and crops, having a 185
wife and family, keeping on the right side of the spirits, and being able at night to dance, sing, and tell tales with his friends. He wears no tight-fitting clothes, never bothers about fashions, certainly never puzzles his brain to reconcile his theological and philosophical views with each other. This is by no means a poetic or idyllic existence for him, however. The peasant is so poor that misfortune may be catastrophic; the soil he has to farm is worn out by decades of erosion and crude tillage; disease is so widespread that most people know misery. A man cannot, even if he would, save up for a rainy day; he lacks the necessary implements to plough deep while sluggards sleep. One is safe so long as he does what everyone else does, and if this rule breaks down, at least misery will have company. Keep out of harm's way if possible, but bear it stoically when it comes. Avoid what is strange—particularly all legal documents, courts, politics, city ways, and people who shout orders. The peasant is conservative because radical changes, such as come from revolutions, for example, dislocate his life, leaving him worse off than before. Progress and improvement are to him only vague abstractions, much less real than the struggle for mere existence.

For the élite, on the other hand, life is rather a struggle to maintain 565
and improve the standard of living. It is always easier to predict what 511
a person will not do than what he will. It would be hard to define, 185
therefore, a typical aristocrat. In one basic matter, however, the high-class Haitian is poles removed from the peasant: instead of accepting things as they are ("*Bon Dieu bon,*" runs the peasant saying: God is good—and the inflection of the voice implies that the second "bon" may also mean "inscrutable"), the élite person is restlessly dissatisfied with the conditions of life: economic, social, political. His unexpressed ideal is to be accepted as an equal in the cultured circles of Western society, to have the same entrée to courts, clubs, and parties abroad as cultivated white Europeans and Americans.

Since the country has never had an accurate census, it is not possible to say precisely how many persons belong to each caste. By the 162
most generous estimates not one out of twenty-five Haitians is élite— 565
and such a figure stretches the category to a point which no literate 369

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162 citizen would admit. The few cities and towns of Haiti do not con-
565 tain more than 250,000 people in a total population which the atlases
369 generally put around 2,500,000. Since to live in the city is one necessary mark of aristocracy, and since obviously not every town- or city-dweller is an aristocrat, it is probably nearer the mark to infer that not more than two or three per cent of the people are of the élite.

565 A slightly larger group would fit neither category. This inter-
554 mediate section would consist chiefly of those who have taken a few steps toward the upper stratum; they may wear shoes and keep a small shop and speak a few words of French, but not yet be accepted in "respectable" society; aristocrats will look down on them while the masses will regard them with curious interest. Yet these are not what Europeans would call a middle class. In their own generation, they are rootless and insecure. Their children will have as many advantages as the parents can afford, so that the next generation may increase the distance between itself and the common folk. Included in this intermediate group are also a few who, having once been up, are now on the way down.

433 If the terms "masses" and "peasants" are used interchangeably in
162 these pages, it is because the vast majority of the people get their living from the soil. Haiti is, as it has always been, an agricultural country. The end-paper map lists all towns which claim as many as 7,500 people; only one, the capital, Port-au-Prince, has more than 100,000.[7]

162 At least nine out of ten Haitians, therefore, lead rural lives, and
184 easily fit the designation of peasant. They live in little communities,
105 generally of less than a hundred persons, rather than in scattered houses. A detailed map would be dotted with place names of these

[162] 7. The estimates made by Woodring, in his *Geology of the Republic of Haiti*, p. 67,
[114] are as follows:

Port-au-Prince	125,000	Saint-Marc	10,000
Cap-Haïtien	20,000	Jacmel	10,000
Les Cayes	15,000	Port-de-Paix	7,500
Gonaïves	12,000	Jérémie	7,500

It should be noted that all eight of these towns, which by Woodring's estimate have a total of 207,000, are seaports. The country is so mountainous that no cities have grown up in the interior. The map also includes a number of towns smaller than 7,500: these are capitals of *arrondissements* or seats of communes. Woodring remarks that if the people who live in towns having a population of more than a thousand were added to the list above, the total "urban" population then would be between 225,000 and 250,000, which is barely ten per cent of the total in the country.

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tiny communities, some of them designating "villages" of only four or five houses. For numbers of peasants hidden away in the valleys or on mountain farms, the only contact with the larger world comes through visits to the nearest market town—which itself may count only a thousand souls. The peasant is thus effectively isolated. The American Financial Adviser to the Government has estimated the average *annual* income of the Haitian at $20 a head.[8] The smallness of the sum limits the material contacts of the peasant with the outside world. Rural schools are few,[9] consequently all but a small percentage of the rising generation is growing up illiterate. Lack of mental stimulus completes the isolation. Bound to the soil by the need of wresting a livelihood from rocky, gullied, and increasingly unproductive land, harassed by ill-health, and governed by a group whose own security would be threatened by improving his lot, it is little wonder that the peasant is unprogressive, or that he struggles along at a bare subsistence level.[10]

Haiti is rural and agricultural, then, with a population density of about 250 per square mile. The people, living without machine industry and with very little foreign trade, must get their living from 10,000 square miles, not of lush tropical soil but of rocky, mountainous country which, after a century and a half of poor farming, has been stripped of most of its forests and much of its topsoil.

A glance at a relief map of the West Indies would show clearly that the islands are the tops of a mountain range, whose lowlands were long since submerged by the Caribbean Sea. Looked at from above, Haiti seems a jumbled mass of mountains running in all directions.[11] Down their slopes flow many small streams which after

8. Dr. W. W. Cumberland, cited by Paul H. Douglas, "The American Occupation of Haiti," *Political Science Quarterly*, XLII (1927), 258.

9. The average monthly salary of $13 (until recently only $6) for rural schoolteachers would not draw many wide-awake young men, even if schoolhouses existed for classes. The salary, indeed, is so small that only inferior persons are attracted, often men who knew little more than their pupils. See chap. XV, 3.

10. Mrs. Blair Niles, in *Black Haiti* (New York, 1926), pp. 185-186, tells of a prisoner who preferred to remain in jail rather than be freed. "When he gets out," she quotes the officer as saying, "he'll be in again. You'll see. Here he gets nine cents a day for food, an' that's more than the average Haitian ever has."

11. One can well believe the story (told by Ebenezer D. Bassett, *Haiti* [Washington, 1893], p. 3) of the English admiral who, asked by George III for a description of the island, crumpled a sheet of paper, threw it on the table, and said: "Sire, Haiti looks like that." The same tale is told of Puerto Rico, with a Spanish admiral speaking to Queen Isabella.

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133 rains become torrents, washing away crops and soil. Brooks which run most of the year the Haitians dignify by the name of "rivière"; not even the largest, however—the Artibonite, which drains over a fifth of the country—is navigable for anything above a rowboat. The second largest "river," Les Trois Rivières, is only 96 kilometres long. Many of the smaller streams disappear into sinkholes or caves in limestone, veritable lost rivers. Even some of the lakes are ephemeral.

133 Most of the best land of the country lies in its few plains flanking
311 the mountains near the coasts, or extending like wedges into the mountainous regions. In the northeast in the country back of Cap-
175 Haitien is the Plaine du Nord; here in colonial times were the most
[134] flourishing of the French plantations, the palatial residences, and the slaves who in 1791 began the insurrection which ultimately led to Haiti's independence. In the middle region are the Artibonite Plain near the coast, and the Central Plain back of the Black Mountains. Eastward from Port-au-Prince, the capital, is the Cul-de-Sac; and in the southwestern peninsula is the small plain of Les Cayes. All over the country in French days sugar cane grew in abundance, making white men wealthy. The irrigation systems have long since disappeared; fertilizer is far too costly for use; trees have been cut down to make room for hundreds of tiny farms to support the increasing population.

133 Not even all the plains are naturally productive. Many of them, on
134 the contrary, are arid, sterile, and forbidding, covered with cacti and other spiny plants. Indeed, the most arid areas of Haiti, including its salt marshes, are lowlands.

13 Although the country is wholly in the tropics, the usual preconceived notion of the tropics does not apply. There are no impenetrable rain forests or jungles, no wild beasts, and very few snakes.
132 Because of the mountains, there are wide differences in rainfall, soil, and vegetation, within a short distance. Occasional hurricanes do great damage to shipping and the water fronts. Infrequent droughts sometimes last for two or three months. Hailstorms that damage growing crops are fairly common. Taken as a whole, the country has an ample but not heavy rainfall; coming generally from the east and northeast, the trade winds strike the high ridges in the north and there deposit the greater part of their moisture in the Plaine du Nord. By the time they have passed down the western slope and across the Central Plain they are dried and rarefied, so that this region becomes

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increasingly arid as its altitude decreases. Next to the Plaine du Nord, the best-watered part of Haiti is the southwestern peninsula, which projects far beyond the shelter of the mountains in the rest of the island. 132

When one subtracts from the 10,000 square miles all the sterile wastes of cactus, the salt marshes and brackish lakes, and the rock barrens, one realizes the inevitability of a low standard of living for the mass of the people. Other nations buy little from Haiti, local industries never reach even the proportions familiar to small-town Americans, and the total national budget is less than seven million dollars a year. Not even the élite are well-to-do by American small-town standards; it is only by comparison with the masses that they can be said to constitute a favored economic class. They rule the country, however, and what benefits accrue to Haiti rarely get beyond their pockets. 433 [439] [651] [565]

The resident of Haiti can never lose sight of the social distinctions between the two castes, for they permeate every phase of Haitian life. It has been so since the first hours of the republic. Indeed, the origins of the caste system lie in the French colonial days of the eighteenth century. 565 175 178

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[p. 14]

II

FRENCH COLONIAL ORIGINS

175 648 FRANCE'S wealthiest colony in 1791 was, and had been for decades, the small territory of Saint-Domingue, as Haiti was known at that time. It had belonged to France for less than a century. French freebooters and buccaneers of the seventeenth century actually presented the colony to their mother country, for these sea rovers, harrying the Spanish Main, used as a base for their predatory raids the small island of Tortuga (La Tortue, The Turtle) off the northern coast of Haiti. They often came over to the western part of the large Spanish island of Santo Domingo (Haiti), then almost deserted, to shoot wild cattle for food; then they would hasten back to Tortuga for safety. At first Tortuga had been shared by English, Dutch, and French buccaneers, but gradually the French came to outnumber the others, so that when the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697 concluded the War of the Grand Alliance, France claimed and Spain ceded the western third of the island of Santo Domingo. The English and Dutch were meanwhile picking up other Caribbean fragments of the decaying Spanish Empire.

175 563 24 The early years of this new French colony were unimpressive, the majority of its residents being former buccaneers, who could hardly have regarded agricultural life as other than dull, and who certainly did not make successful farmers. Only when new immigrants from France in the seventeen-twenties demonstrated that steady profits could be made by raising indigo, sugar, coffee, and cocoa, all of which flourished in the region, did the era of prosperity begin. [461] [439] Plantations were soon staked out all over Saint-Domingue. The great problem was to find adequate labor for the fields. Whoever had crops to sell was sure of a ready market, but crops would not grow 175 24 567 without cultivation. Since there were no natives in Saint-Domingue for the French planters to exploit, the colonizers chose the other favorite alternative of the eighteenth century: Negro slavery. In the 1710's Saint-Domingue began to compete with England's North American colonies for the cargo of the steady stream of slave ships from Africa. There is no indication that the supply of blacks ever

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175 equaled the demand for them; in 1791 the census listed half a million
24 then living, but no writer seems to have even a vague idea of how
567 many millions were imported during the sixty years of the colony's heyday.

175 Production, particularly of sugar and coffee, steadily increased until the tiny colony ranked among the wealthiest regions of the
245 world. The Spanish Indies were declining, so that Saint-Domingue
249 alone far outranked them all combined between 1766 and 1791.
433 Splendid roads were built, extensive irrigation projects developed,
511 and stately mansions erected. Life moved along with ceremony and
565 display—for the planters; attended by their black lackeys, the white French masters entertained royally or were driven like lords in their coaches to make formal visits to neighbors. Many of these well-to-do colonials spent half their time in Paris, ostentatiously spending their riches. To be "wealthy as a Creole" came to be a common expression in France.[1] Perhaps nowhere in the Americas was existence at once so delightful and so ornamental as it was for the wealthy planters among the 36,000 whites of Saint-Domingue in 1791.

175 For the mother country, too, this small bit of tropical land was profitable during the latter days of Bourbon royalty. Neither Mar-
439 tinique nor Guadeloupe could compare with it in value. In 1789
505 nearly two thirds of the foreign commercial interests of France
648 centred in Saint-Domingue; its combined exports and imports were valued at more than $140,000,000; its sugar, coffee, indigo, and cotton supplied the home market and employed in prosperous years more than 700 ocean-going vessels, with as many as 80,000 seamen.[2]

175 Where wealth exists, social distinctions generally develop. In Saint-Domingue the evolving class system produced such discord
565 that sparks from the French Revolution eventually set off an explo-
669 sion in the colony. Casual surveys of Haitian history generally record that in 1791 the slaves revolted, and that out of this insurrection grew the war of independence. This is true; but it was not the resentment of slaves against their masters which caused the final explosion; the
175 slaves were tinder used by others to keep the conflagration burning.
565 Negro slaves, of course, did not figure in the "class" system; they
[567] were below the classes of colonial society. The class system, properly

[101] 1. The word "creole" means only "colonial born"; there is no connotation of race mixture in the term.

2. Pamphile de Lacroix, *Mémoires*, II, 277.

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175 speaking, consisted of the three groups known as *grands blancs, petits*
blancs, and *gens de couleur*.[3] Although no precise English term will
565 translate either of the first two categories, the former embraced the important whites—owners of large plantations, wealthy merchants, and high officials of the state; the latter designated all other whites of the colony—shopkeepers, artisans, small planters with only a few slaves, little people busily engaged in social climbing, and shiftless whites lazily slipping downhill. The 28,000 gens de couleur included all free persons who had African blood in their veins.

It is highly probable that without this third group there would have been no violent outbreak in 1791, no achievement of final independence in 1804, and no such caste system as exists in Haiti at the present time.

175 That there were free people of color in the colony was due to a
code of laws emanating from Louis XIV, who died in 1715, years
567 before Saint-Domingue had shown any signs of becoming prosper-
641 ous. In 1685 the Grand Monarch had issued a Code Noir to cover all
648 colonial dealings with Negro slaves. Article 59 specified that when a slave secured his liberty, either by cash purchase or by gift of his white master or parent, he was to be regarded as a full French citizen. He might own land, dispose of his wealth as he pleased, bear testimony in legal cases (even against whites), marry as he pleased, vote, bear arms, travel where he wished, embrace any career, own slaves or free them. To Louis and his ministers such provisions probably did not seem particularly magnanimous, for race prejudice was not a characteristic of the French, and it could hardly have been supposed that enough slaves would ever be freed to create much of a problem.

175 In the course of the next hundred years, however, many persons of
563 color in the colony achieved their freedom, and with it French citi-
641 zenship. The greatest number had been granted their liberty because they were the children of white masters by Negro mothers—for race mixture is always a concomitant of white ownership of black slaves.
[595] Concubinage was so regularly practiced in Saint-Domingue that it was considered quite normal. If many of the first freedmen were
563 mulattoes (half-white, half-Negro), by 1791 their descendants might
175 be quadroons, octoroons, or near-whites, for consciousness of skin

3. The gens de couleur were also often called *affranchis*, freedmen, a term which strictly would be inaccurate as applied to a free colored person of the second or third generation.

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color predisposed a freedman to separate himself, by marriage with a 563
person at least as light as himself, as far as possible from his slave 175
ancestors.[4]

Aside from paternity, the chief reasons for freeing a slave were 175
faithful or extraordinary service, and the readiness of a master to free
his concubine. By the time of the Revolution many of the free col- 567
ored people had not known slavery in their families for four generations, while still more had been free for two or three. During the century many had acquired wealth by inheritance from former owners. Their close association with well-to-do white planters had [556]
instilled in them the desire to improve their economic fortunes as well as their culture; friendly relationships with their benefactors afforded them the opportunity. Like the grands blancs, the prosperous gens de couleur sent their children to Paris for an education, and went there themselves for pleasure.

As the free colored people flourished, so also did the jealousy of the 175
petits blancs against them. "Society" in Saint-Domingue was beset,
as is any social system which has not yet the sanctity of long tradi- 565
tion, with heartburnings, intrigues, resentment, snobbery. Petit blanc aspired to become grand blanc; small planter longed to be received into the smart set of the wealthy plantation owners; creole resented the toplofty airs of the recent émigré from France. What was more irksome to the petit blanc than his own exclusion from high society was the acceptance into it of many colored people whose parents or grandparents had been African slaves. Since many of the gens de couleur were better educated and more cultured than the lower-class whites, inner consciousness of mental inferiority may have added fuel to the fires of jealousy.

The growing wealth of free colored people was notable in the latter years of the century. One fertile parish in the South (Jérémie) was almost entirely in their hands, while in every other part of the colony they had bought or inherited handsome plantations. They looked upon Saint-Domingue as their fatherland, not hoping (as did many of the whites) to retire to France to spend their fortunes, nor yearning (as did many slaves) to return to Africa. The less ambitious

4. Certain colonial writers diverted themselves by working out all the mathematical 114
combinations of blood mixture, with names for scores of the commoner varieties.
Since people with some part of white blood in their veins might mate with others of 565
their own kind, with lighter or with darker persons, with black or with white, it can be imagined how complicated the question of race mixture might become.

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175 565 took their place in the business life of the towns, sending their children to parish schools. Colored youths served in the colonial constabulary and in the militia, acquiring a knowledge of arms and warfare later to be useful to them.

175 565 423 567 162 Estimates of their wealth vary. Some say that in 1791 they owned a third of all the land in the colony and a fourth of all the slaves; others more conservative put the figure at one fifth of each. Even this is impressive enough to account for much of the growing jealousy of their position. And by 1791 the whites outnumbered them only ten to seven.[5]

562 595 563 175 581 White women in general added their support to a movement instigated by the petits blancs for discrimination against all gens de couleur. Many wives felt resentment against the colored people because of the frequency with which their husbands took colored mistresses.[6] Moreover, the wealth of the colony attracted an immigration of Frenchwomen with marriageable but undowered daughters—in the candid French phrase, "*de filles à marier et sans dot*"—who seem to have assumed that young planters would want white French wives, even though impecunious ones. It was a shock to quite a number of them to discover that a colonial youth might prefer a colored girl who brought a dowry with her.[7]

175 565 829 Indiscreet affranchis often gave additional grounds for resentment against their group. Wishing to dissociate themselves altogether from their Negro ancestry and to be assured of social eminence, some accounted for their dark complexions by reference to obscure Indian progenitors. On this ground many secured letters patent from local government officials, of course on payment of a fee, legally estab-

162 5. The census listed 40,000 whites to 28,000 colored. L. E. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description . . . de la partie française . . . de Saint-Domingue* (Philadelphia, 1797), I, 285, gave the following figures for 1790:

	Square Leagues	*Population*	*Whites*	*Affranchis*	*Slaves*
North	480	195,000	16,000	9,000	170,000
West	820	194,000	14,000	12,500	168,000
South	186	130,000	10,000	6,500	114,000
Totals	1,486	519,000	40,000	28,000	452,000

6. One governor reported to Paris that he considered sexual jealousy the greatest cause of unrest in the colony.

7. See Sir Harry H. Johnston, *The Negro in the New World* (New York, 1910), p. 141.

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lishing their freedom from the taint of any black admixture. Having entered white society by such means, and further diluted their Negro blood by judicious marriages, these social climbers frequently became the most pitiless masters of slaves in the colony, the most rigid sticklers for a color line, ruthless enemies of recent freedmen and of those who acknowledged the dark strain in their blood; and having now "passed over" as whites, they snubbed the petits blancs.

The rising tide of color prejudice became apparent in the passage of discriminatory laws. The first of any importance was enacted by the representative Council of the colony, sitting at the capital, Cap Français, in 1758. It prohibited all colored people, except police and militiamen, from carrying swords, sabres, or other side arms—thus denying them one of the outward marks of gentlemen. Four years later the prohibition was extended to the bearing of all firearms, except in service, while in 1767 the sale of munitions to colored persons was forbidden unless ordered by a white officer. Obviously the instigators of prejudice had by this time won a number of ruling grands blancs to the notion that the presence of numerous people of color might constitute a menace to the physical safety of the whites.

Louis XV, the reigning monarch, took no steps to enforce the liberal provisions of the Code Noir of his grandfather; on the contrary, he seems to have favored the passage of discriminatory laws. He made it difficult for colored planters to travel freely in France. The colonial perpetrators of indignities to the gens de couleur, seeing the success of their first efforts, began to propose increasingly severe restrictions, and were gratified by Louis XV's official "Instructions to Administrators" (1771), which stressed the necessity of maintaining a line between the two races which colored people and their descendants might never cross.

For the next two decades the affranchi had to face openly avowed discrimination. One by one his rights in the Code were abrogated. He might not fill any responsible office either in the courts or the militia, for that would elevate him above white persons. Certain careers, such as goldsmithing, were closed to him, because they brought wealth; others, notably medicine and the apothecary's art, were forbidden on the ground that whites might be poisoned;[8] law and religion were barred to him because of their public and honorific

8. It was a common belief in slave colonies that all persons with Negro blood had some "instinctive" knowledge of the science and art of poisoning.

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175 nature.[9] Colored women were forbidden in 1768 to marry white
563 men. In 1779 began a series of laws designed to humiliate the colored
565 person in public: his clothes must be of a different material and cut
671 from the white person's; he must be indoors by nine o'clock in the evening; he might not sit in the same section of churches and theatres with whites.[10]

175 Just at the moment when prejudice and hatred seem to have
648 reached their most menacing proportions, when even moderate
829 white planters began to feel that such passions had been aroused
[669] among both white and colored folk that only brutal severity could
[565] hold them in check, the Revolution began in France. Both sides in the colony hoped to make use of it. The whites saw in the mother country's confusion an opportunity to win self-government for the colony—with themselves, of course, as the untrammeled rulers. The gens de couleur, taking to heart the noble Declaration of the Rights of Man, hoped to regain their full rights as French citizens, guaranteed to them in Louis XIV's Code, but now in abeyance.

175 During the fateful years 1788 to 1793 colonial affairs were inter-
646 twined with developments in France. Men and messages went back
648 and forth between Cap Français and Paris, following the startling
671 announcement that after a lapse of 150 years the States-General would be convoked in May, 1789. At a meeting of the colonial assembly in September, 1788, called to nominate delegates, the group of grands blancs who controlled colonial affairs decided on two daring steps, which later proved to be blunders: first, they named thirty-seven deputies to represent Saint-Domingue; second, they drew up a *Cahier des Doléances*—a list of grievances whose sole palliation, it was implied, would be the granting of permission to the white planters to govern the colony without interference from France. These two decisions, be it said, were not unanimously approved in the assembly at Cap Français; cautious minds warned against pretentious demands which might do nothing more than attract concentrated attention to the state of affairs in Saint-Domingue: it might be wiser, they argued, to let sleeping dogs lie, and ignore the convocation of the States-General. The cautious were outvoted.

[565] 9. A colored lawyer might win a case against a white man; a colored priest might
[829] have to hear the confession of a white woman.

[565] 10. When certain mulattoes arrived at church in Cap Français wearing clothes of the same texture as the whites', constables tore the garments from the backs of male and female alike, leaving them "with no other veil than their shame."

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At Paris the following May, therefore, the thirty-seven delegates presented themselves. Only six were admitted as deputies. And the colonial skeptics proved correct in their apprehensions: revolutionary France soon became very much interested in the state of affairs in Saint-Domingue. 175 648

There had recently been formed in Paris a humanitarian group, considered at the time to be ultra-radical, whose announced purpose was the complete abolition of Negro slavery in all French possessions. Following the principle of demanding much in order to gain something, these *Amis des Noirs* concentrated their most serious efforts on regaining for colored colonial freedmen their former political rights. The recently promulgated "Rights of Man" made it very difficult for the French National Assembly[11] to deny the proposal of the Amis;[12] moreover, at this juncture the colored landlords of Saint-Domingue sent to Paris an offer to make the new French Republic a free gift of one fifth of their wealth on condition of being no longer subject to the creole tyranny of caste. 175 648 567 668

The strategical blunder of the self-assertive white planters having now become entirely apparent to their deputies in Paris, these left no stone unturned to thwart the objective of the Amis des Noirs. By indefatigable manoeuvring they at least partially succeeded, for the National Assembly passed an ambiguous resolution which, while apparently granting political rights to colored people, nevertheless left the interpretation of the grant to already existing colonial authorities. 175 642 648

In the colony complete confusion reigned when news of the resolution was received. Colored people everywhere joyfully demanded their rights, only to be indignantly refused. The whites, with no intention of yielding an inch, were nevertheless undecided as to a proper course of action to pursue: one group wished to announce the colony's immediate independence from France, offering the familiar argument that only white planters knew how to manage the colony's peculiar affairs; the other group still cautiously counseled inaction and waiting for the storm to blow over. A young mulatto, Ogé, educated in France and encouraged by the Amis des

11. The National Assembly had succeeded the States-General.

12. The Assembly was finding "liberté, égalité, fraternité" as uncomfortable a motto to live up to as Americans were finding their own declaration, in 1776, of belief in the "self-evident" proposition that *all men* are created free and equal.

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175 648 642 Noirs, having returned to Saint-Domingue to campaign for the political rights of his group, led with his friend Chavanne a demonstration at Cap Français. The white authorities seized and executed them with notable brutality.

175 648 563 565 This occurred in March, 1791. In May came the news that the National Assembly in France had finally yielded to pressure, and had decreed that men of mixed blood born of free parents should be admitted to representation in colonial assemblies. The chagrin and anger of the whites at this decree was so violent that the governor-general of Saint-Domingue immediately suspended its operation. 175 567 669 The issue was now clearly drawn: free colored men knew that they would never secure their rights except by force. But before they could bring to maturity their plan of action, suddenly the calculations of both parties were completely upset. The Negro slaves revolted.

If ever slaves had reason to rebel, the Negroes of Saint-Domingue did. The same harshness which the whites showed to free colored people marked the treatment of black slaves; and as racial antagonism deepened, white masters seemed to become utterly heartless in their treatment of the inarticulate blacks. Allowing for the exceptions which accompany most generalizations, it is clear from the record that the planters were, in the main, callous, ruthless, some of them even fiendish, in their treatment of slaves. Flogging a man to death was not uncommon; certain slaves were buried alive; pregnant women were forced to work so hard that miscarriage resulted. Some of the punishments meted out were merely brutal; others were torture; and some were sadistic, the masters relishing the pain they were causing. A certain slave in the North was nailed by his hands to a wall, and then, after standing all day in the burning sun, was made to eat his own amputated ears. A woman planter had the tongues of all her slaves cut out; another woman caused the starvation of her maid by having a gag fixed around the child's head.[13] Visitors to the colony in the 1780's often commented on the general want of self-control on the part of the planters—their violent gusts of anger and passionate outbreaks over trifles; and the victims of these outbursts

13. An officer of the court of the Negro king Christophe later wrote in two volumes a gruesome account of the treatment of slaves by French masters in the latter days of the colony. Although certainly exaggerated, it probably contains a measure of truth. See Baron de Vastey, *Réflexions politiques sur les noirs et les blancs* (Sans Souci, 1817); and *Essai sur les causes de la révolution et des guerres civiles d'Hayti* (Sans Souci, 1819).

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were the slaves. Most of the blacks accordingly needed only leadership to arouse them and direct their vengeance. 175

Very little of the background of the insurrection is known. The certain facts are these: on the night of August 14, 1791, at a pretended Vodun ceremony in the woods of the Turpin plantation, during a violent storm, several wily and powerful slaves laid plans for a general uprising. Their intentions were communicated, apparently by drum signals, to neighboring plantations. Six days later the attack began, the blacks in that section of the North indiscriminately slaughtering every white man, woman, and child on whom they could lay their hands. From this centre the massacre spread, accompanied by general arson, until practically every plantation in the fertile northern plain was a shambles. The whites who had escaped destruction cowered in the capital city. 567 669

The insurrection of 1791 returned measure for measure to the planters for their previous cruelties. Whether one reads accounts written by Haitian patriots or by white apologists, the story is the same: the ferocities on both sides were almost incredible. Blacks gutted children and raped women, whites broke captured Negroes on the wheel, poured boiling oil in their ears, and flayed them alive. The Reign of Terror in France was decorous by comparison. The pent-up hatred of decades was working itself out.

Against half a million riotous blacks the handful of whites had no chance. All who could leave the country fled precipitately. The gens de couleur, on the contrary, although at first alarmed, soon discovered that the revolting slaves were inclined to be friendly to them. They accordingly tried to turn the insurrection to their own purpose, to seize the rule of the colony now being depopulated of whites. France, herself in turmoil, sent over various commissioners whose thankless duty it was to try to restore order; but they were incompetent, often worked at odds with each other, and sometimes engaged in actual treachery. Matters were, if anything, complicated by their ministrations. 175 669 [648]

In addition, Spain and England, always ready to harass the French, sent troops into Saint-Domingue on the pretext of trying to put down the slave insurrection lest it spread to their neighboring colonies of Santo Domingo and Jamaica. The French general in the colony, Laveaux, would shortly have been defeated if help had not come from two natives, one a well-to-do mulatto, the other a black [648]

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175 669 ex-slave, each of whom aroused his own group to fight off the invading Spaniards and English.

These two men emerging from the maelstrom were the cultured colored general, Rigaud, and the powerful Negro, Toussaint. United in purpose in 1793, they soon began to oppose each other. Their dissent foreshadowed the rift which was permanently to divide free Haiti.

175 159 669 Rigaud, born at Les Cayes in 1761,[14] had been brought up in Bordeaux, France, where he was taught the trade of a goldsmith. Like many other colored colonial youths, he went briefly to Georgia to fight on the side of the Americans in their revolution against England. Gifted with extraordinary military talent, he rose to prominence in Saint-Domingue following the slave insurrection, and played a major part in expelling the British from the colony. He was fiery, intellectual, and brilliant, but lacking in self-control and political subtlety, which put him at a disadvantage with Toussaint. Rigaud's admirers—almost the whole body of free colored people—included all the influential persons in the colony once the whites had been cowed or driven out; the South was devoted to him body and soul, and he had numerous partisans in the provinces of the North and West. But Toussaint was the idol of the half-million blacks.

Born a slave, Toussaint was fortunate in having a kindly master who permitted him the sort of work which gave him leisure for reading. He studied eagerly, devouring all accounts he could find of the military exploits of Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar. Apparently he took no part in the slave uprising; on the contrary, he helped his master escape to the United States and later regularly provided him with money. Then he himself went to the Spanish part of the island, where he made a military reputation in the Spanish colonial army. When General Laveaux sought his aid against the invaders of harassed Saint-Domingue, the ex-slave accepted his overtures. Detractors of Toussaint call him a "cunning hypocrite" for joining and then deserting the Spaniards, and for accepting high rank under a French general whom he was even then (so it is asserted) planning to supersede. His decision to return to Saint-Domingue was certainly crucial, for it began his meteoric ascent to power. [648]

Accompanied by the black troops he had captained in the Spanish

[632] 361 14. Les Cayes, the third largest town in modern Haiti, was even in colonial times an important seaport. It is located on the southwestern peninsula.

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colony, he fought engagements with several Spanish detachments on the way back to Saint-Domingue, and soon achieved the return to France of all the territory Spain had recently won from her. Seeing that his ineffectively trained black troops were as yet no match for the disciplined British, he temporarily withdrew from public sight in order to build his army into a coördinated, smoothly functioning machine. Then he not only defeated the British, but forced their complete withdrawal from the island. He freed General Laveaux, whom they had imprisoned in Cap Français, thereby putting his own commanding officer under personal obligation to him. By 1796 Toussaint was the undisputed hero of his soldiers and, through their praise, of the mass of black ex-slaves; moreover, the French commander trusted and respected him; even the whites of the former régime looked to him with hope, for they had grudgingly to concede that, black though he was, he alone had the power to restore peace and order in the colony.

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Only the colored group looked askance at him. They had welcomed the insurrection of the slaves in 1791 as an invaluable, if bloody, aid in their struggle for equality with the whites; but they were not inclined to be ruled by an ex-slave whose eminence was already a threat to the social order they wished to establish. When, in 1793, the French commissioners had abolished slavery in Saint-Domingue,[15] the action had been as distasteful to the free colored people as it was to the whites; both groups wanted to continue to own slaves; the gens de couleur merely wanted their share also in governing the colony. In their opinion, the struggle was getting out of hand. They gave their allegiance, consequently, not to Toussaint, but to their own man, Rigaud.

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The black general now began to show himself as astute a politician as he had been a skilful soldier. He had a romantic streak, which made him assume the prophetic surname Louverture;[16] but beneath the romanticism was a peculiar diplomatic realism. When a newly arrived governor-general tried to stir up dissension between blacks and colored people, on the principle of divide and rule, Toussaint

15. In order to pacify the blacks and to win their support against the invading armies of Spain and England.

16. The name Louverture, now generally written L'Ouverture, is ordinarily conceded to imply Toussaint's conviction that he would provide the opening through which his fellow blacks might achieve freedom. According to another account the name was given him because of his ability to make a breach in the ranks of the enemy; still another explanation refers to his missing front teeth.

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deftly had him promoted out of colonial office. When another group of commissioners came, he agreed in conference with them that the remaining whites should be expelled for the sake of peace; as soon as this was done, however, he effected the nomination of both the chief commissioner and General Laveaux as representatives of the colony in the French Assembly, sitting in Paris. Under guise of bestowing honors, he had got rid of every white person who had the slightest claim to rule. By 1797 Toussaint was the supreme leader in Saint-Domingue, his authority disputed only by Rigaud and the colored group. A civil war was needed to settle the issue between them, and since his forces were much more numerous than Rigaud's, Toussaint emerged victor in the brief conflict. Rigaud fled to France, the power of the mulattoes was broken, and no one was left openly to contest Toussaint's rule.

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"The First of the Blacks," as Toussaint was called, is a bewildering anomaly, and full of contradictions. He had been a slave for fifty years before the insurrection, and was to live only eleven after it. In that short period he became one of the most talked-of men in the world. His Spanish superior officer had said that "God in this terrestrial globe could not commune with a purer spirit"; the Frenchman, Lacroix, remarked, "No one approaches him without fear, and no one leaves him without respect." Even his enemies paid him homage: an English officer, as "a man, a governor, and a general"; a white Frenchman, as "a philosopher, a general, and a good citizen." When he died Wordsworth wrote a moving sonnet to him who had strengthened human faith in "man's unconquerable mind." Yet Toussaint had been a deserter and a schemer, and ruthlessly exploited his power to achieve absolute authority. His own deep conviction of his special mission to lead his people from misery to security has always for his apologists excused the more dubious aspects of his character.

To many Toussaint was a hero with elements of saintliness. In the overheated atmosphere of prejudice and hatred in Saint-Domingue he pursued a calm policy of moderation. Under him, anarchy and massacres came to an end. With an army at his beck and call, he used force only to maintain freedom for his fellow blacks and to defend the colony against foreign invasion. As nominal governor-general after 1799 he revived prosperity, inculcated discipline as an antidote to the intoxication of liberty, respected his contracts, and was a friend of law and order. On the other hand, he had moments

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of inordinate vanity, and would brook no interference. His henchmen had to endure merciless tongue-lashings. His own people's freedom, about which he was publicly so solicitous, was in many respects little better than slavery. 175 642 643

What he did is more easily told than what he was. Emerging, after a long reign of terror, as a leader in a land which had once been a paradise for whites, he checked among his people the passion and fear which had led to violence. With the restoration of peace, labor began once more on the plantations. The Negroes, though no longer slaves, were ordered back to work, and they docilely obeyed. The return of prosperity between 1799 and 1802 was amazing.

But the brilliance of Toussaint's rule was first dimmed and then completely extinguished by the rising star of Napoleon in France.[17] Haitian history between 1802 and 1804, although apparently incidental to the story of the contest between blacks and colored people which here concerns us, is nevertheless significant for an understanding of what was to transpire in Haitian social affairs. Napoleon was irritated beyond measure at the effrontery of Toussaint's seizure of power in the colony. The black leader had shown canny statesmanship in winning the friendly coöperation of the president of the United States, John Adams. The supplies and ships that Adams sent enabled Toussaint not only to defeat Rigaud but to achieve independence from France in all but name. With American assistance, Toussaint negotiated an advantageous treaty with England. Probably even more annoying to the First Consul than these political triumphs was Toussaint's audacious success in aping and even anticipating the spacious actions by which Napoleon was trying to make himself majestic in the world's eyes.[18] 175 648 669

It is possible that Napoleon might not have paid so much attention

17. It seems strange that this black, a veritable genius whatever his faults, should be so mildly honored in modern Haiti. True, he is regarded with respect, and there are a few statues of him; but the homage of the people is paid rather to his successor, General Dessalines, the antithesis of Toussaint in everything but courage. It was Dessalines, of course, who struck the final blow for Haitian freedom, but even this triumph seems to the foreigner small in comparison with the very real achievements of Toussaint. [643]

18. For example: Napoleon had given a new constitution to France after his *coup d'état* of the 18 Brumaire; similarly Toussaint, having effected his own coup in Saint-Domingue by deposing the French civil agent, citizen Roume, immediately thereafter gave *his* people a new constitution. In it he not only assumed all political power for life, but also ascribed to himself the right of naming his successor. Bonaparte was unable to take so daring a step for another year. There is ample evidence to show that meanwhile he chafed under the idea of being imitated and anticipated by a "gilded African," as he called Toussaint.

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175 to Toussaint if Saint-Domingue had been merely a colony like
648 Martinique, and not the single centre from which measures for
rebuilding the French colonial system could radiate. France was once
669 more taking over Louisiana from Spain; but before Bonaparte could
effectively reach Louisiana to establish his New World empire, he
must make sure of Saint-Domingue. The very real power of Toussaint had to be crushed, and through the whole of 1801 Napoleon was making preparations for the annihilation of the black governor.[19]

175 The plans were as follows: to send his brother-in-law, Leclerc,
648 with a formidable French army to "succeed" Toussaint as governor;
721 to try to persuade the blacks that the new régime was entirely
benevolent to their race, so that no armed resistance would be offered; if persuasion and diplomacy failed, to fight and conquer the Negroes, subduing them once more to slavery; and, above all, to capture Toussaint with all his black counselors and send them as prisoners to France. Napoleon undertook to prepare the way for Leclerc by writing personally to Toussaint: "Assist the Captain-General [Leclerc] with your counsels, your influence, and your talents. What can you desire?—the liberty of the blacks? You know that in all the countries where we have been, we have given it to the people who had it not." He repeated this assurance in his message a week later to the French legislature (November 22, 1801): "At Saint-Domingue and at Guadeloupe there are no more slaves. All are free there; all will remain free." Still further, the proclamation he drew up for Leclerc to publish upon his arrival, as a reassurance to the blacks, ran: "If you are told that these forces are destined to ravish your liberty, answer: The Republic has given us liberty, the Republic will not suffer it to be taken from us!"

Leclerc with his army arrived at Cap Français late in January, 1802. He hoped to be received at the capital as a friend, but Christophe, the black general in charge of the city, repulsed his advances. Leclerc was obliged to attack; on February 5 Christophe set fire to the city and withdrew to the neighboring hills. The war of independence had begun.

19. The part played by Toussaint for a brief moment in the history of the United States is full of significance. Certain historians are of the opinion that if Napoleon had been successful in the reconquest of Saint-Domingue he would have turned his attention to America rather than to Europe, for he had great colonial schemes. His failure in the colony, according to this theory, made him try to withdraw gracefully from the New World by selling Louisiana to the United States.

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For three months Toussaint's vigorous fighting broke the force of the French attack; one white army was swept away. But Toussaint made two fatal errors of judgment: he relied upon his trained army with its Negro generals, instead of arming his half-million Negroes for guerrilla warfare; and he trusted the pledged word of honor of Leclerc. His army fought bravely enough against the French legions, but the consensus of military experts is that Toussaint's officers, jealous of his domination and feeling that eventually France must win, treacherously gave over their posts and forces to Leclerc. Christophe surrendered on April 26, and Toussaint had no alternative but to put himself in Leclerc's hands. 175 648 726 728

Napoleon's private orders to Leclerc were positive and precise: "Follow your instructions exactly, and the moment you have rid yourself of Toussaint, Christophe, Dessalines, and the principal brigands, and the masses of the blacks have been disarmed, send over to the continent all the blacks and mulattoes who have played a rôle in the civil troubles. . . . Rid us of these gilded Africans, and we shall have nothing more to wish." Leclerc set himself methodically to carry out these instructions; by April, 1802, he had disarmed the blacks and received Christophe's surrender; the next task was to rid himself of Toussaint. By an apparently innocent invitation to dine and discuss the affairs of the colony, he lured Toussaint into his headquarters on June 10.[10] In the course of the meal Toussaint was seized, bound, and hurried on board a waiting ship. Haiti never saw him again; within a year he died of cold and starvation in a dungeon high in the Jura Mountains of southeastern France. 175 648

With Toussaint out of the way, it was now in order to proceed to the second part of Napoleon's plan—the reestablishment of slavery. Leclerc was to use his own discretion as to the precise moment and manner of announcing this. His instructions from the Minister of Marine, Decrès (June 14, 1802), read in part: 175 648 727 567

> As regards the return of the blacks to the old régime, the bloody struggle out of which you have just come victorious with glory commands us to use the utmost caution. Perhaps we should only entangle ourselves in it anew if we wished precipitately to break that idol of liberty in whose name so much blood has already flowed. For some time yet vigilance, order, a discipline at once rural and military, must take the place of the positive and pronounced slavery of the colored people of your colony. Especially the

10. There is evidence to show that Christophe suggested this stratagem to Leclerc.

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175 master's good usage must re-attach them to his rule. When they shall have
648 felt by comparison the difference between a usurping and tyrannical yoke
727 [apparently he means such a yoke as Toussaint's] and that of the legitimate
567 proprietor interested in their preservation, then the moment will have arrived for making them return to their original condition, from which it was so disastrous to draw them.

175 The plan to reëstablish slavery, however, was never carried out,
648 nor was its scheduled sequel, the occupation of Louisiana. The French soldiers in Saint-Domingue began to succumb to an invisible assailant
727 —yellow fever. The first French army of 17,000 men had been largely consumed in the task of conquering Toussaint's armies; the second was now being swept away by disease. Leclerc's letters to Napoleon pleading for reinforcements soon became frantic in their despair. Fever was weakening the army at the very moment when rumors of impending reënslavement were strengthening the number of active antagonists to the French. The black generals who had deserted Toussaint for Leclerc now swung back again to the opposition. Then Leclerc himself fell ill of the fever. Apparently all-conquering in June, 1802, by November he was dead.

175 This was the turning point in Napoleon's whole American policy.
727 The war had ruined Saint-Domingue economically; it had destroyed plantations, paralyzed labor, and reduced the population to bar-
721 barism. To resume the conquest would have cost France heavily; the
648 army dreaded service in a region where death was almost certain; the financial expense had been frightful: one year of war had consumed 50,000 men and several million dollars, yet at least as many men and as much money would still be needed before any return could be expected. Consequently, Napoleon decided to withdraw from his whole American experiment, saving face as far as possible. He appointed the brave but incompetent Rochambeau to succeed Leclerc, promised him reënforcements—and then broke the Peace of Amiens, so that France became embroiled in a European war. Affairs in Saint-Domingue (including the troops promised to Rochambeau) were conveniently forgotten after March, 1803; and the whole Louisiana territory was sold to the United States.

175 The end of French control in Saint-Domingue came shortly.
648 Rochambeau, as well as he could, waged desultory warfare, hanging, shooting, drowning, burning all the Negroes he could catch; hunting them with fifteen hundred bloodhounds bought in Jamaica for more

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than a hundred dollars each; wasting money, squandering men. On the other side, Dessalines and Christophe massacred every white within their reach. Rochambeau held on until November, 1803, when he surrendered with his few remaining men to the English in Jamaica. 175 648

On January 1, 1804, Dessalines proclaimed the independence of Haiti, choosing this aboriginal Indian name (meaning "mountainous") rather than the French Saint-Domingue. What the colored people had begun with their petitions to the French Assembly in 1789 had now worked itself out, but along lines entirely different from their hopes or plans. The whites were gone, but the blacks were in control. Now a struggle for precedence was to begin between the ruling blacks and the still aspiring people of color.[31] 175 642 648

31. The historical details referred to in this chapter are summarized from the many documented monographs and histories of the period cited in the Bibliography at the end of this volume. It seems unnecessary to quote each entry for each historical statement made in this sketch of background material. [114]

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III

THE FORMATIVE YEARS, 1804–1843

1. *Dessalines (1804–1806)*

175 613 159 If ever a country had an opportunity to start absolutely fresh in choosing its own social institutions, Haiti had that opportunity in 1804. Free at last, with no traditions to uphold, the first independent Negro state in the world, owing allegiance to no man or nation, the Haitians might (theoretically, at least) have invented an entirely new little world of economic, political, religious, and social life. All paths were open to them. Dessalines,[1] as head of state, had only to lead them. His mental limitations, however, were such that he could only follow where the hated French had led, and soon set the Haitians upon the road to a caste system.

175 642 643 The first part of the story of independent Haiti is to a certain extent the story of the alternative lines of action laid down by four great men, the black Dessalines and his equally black successor Christophe, the mulatto Pétion and his worshipful mulatto disciple Boyer.

On New Year's Day, 1804, Dessalines made a stirring proclamation of independence. In it were many references to *liberté* but none whatever to *égalité* or *fraternité*. The two years of his rule show clearly that he had no use for such abstractions as equality or fraternity, while liberty to him was synonymous only with freedom from French dominance. He was a tyrant whose very tyranny unwittingly prepared the way for eventual control by the colored group over the blacks.

Accompanying the proclamation of Dessalines was another signed by his generals, naming him governor-general for life, swearing "to obey blindly all laws emanating from his authority," giving him the right to make peace or war, and permitting him to name his successor. Absolutism was the order of the day. In the same paragraph in which he condemned French despotism, Dessalines said to his

1. Jean-Jacques Dessalines had been born a slave on a plantation near Grande-Rivière du Nord in the seventeen-fifties or -sixties. Unlike Toussaint, whose leading general he was, Dessalines was illiterate. The outstanding characteristic of his temperament was his violent passion.

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people: "If ever you refuse, or grumblingly accept, the laws which the genius guarding your destinies dictates to me for your happiness, you will merit the fate of ungrateful people. But perish that hideous idea!" There can be little doubt that he wished Haiti under his direction to become prosperous; but it is likewise clear that he was personally self-centred and inordinately grasping. 175 642 645

Each step Dessalines took to further his ambitions either for Haitian prosperity or for his own fortunes had its bearing upon the development of social classes in the country. Extermination of all remaining whites was one of the first tasks he set himself. On a promise of clemency he lured several hundred gullible French out of hiding, and butchered them in cold blood. His campaign of extirpation was methodical and thorough. To try to penetrate into the psychological background of this violence is to desert fact for speculation: it may have been a desire for revenge on the French, pure and simple; it may have been gloating sadism; he may have wished to warn France against any future attempts to regain possession of the country; or he may have wanted to notify his subjects of his intention to rule with severe discipline. Certainly this last aim was achieved, if any of his people did not already know, after two years of warfare, the extent of his ruthlessness. He ruled by fear and by threats, never by the cultivation of loyalties.

Apparently he was afraid that Napoleon would renew his efforts to subdue the former colony. To forestall such an attempt he ordered each of his governing subalterns to construct one great fort on the most prominent hill in their district—a scheme which led immediately to the institution of forced labor. He likewise devised a plan, not actually put into effect, for destroying all towns and plantations near the coast and moving the capital to an inland village; and so isolating Haitians from all contact with the outside world. 175 643 466 712 361

Turning to domestic policy, he faced a herculean task. The warfare of 1802–3 had left the country in chaos. Plantations and agricultural projects were almost totally ruined. All habits of steady industry had been lost. Dread of a possible new attack by the French made necessary a great army, and this in turn removed most able-bodied men from productive labor in the fields, while the construction of fortresses still further depleted the labor supply. The first census of free Haiti, in 1805 (probably not highly accurate), showed only 380,000 people, with the women outnumbering men by almost three to two. 175 643 433 701 464 712 175 162

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175 162 [566] two. Here was a decline of about 150,000 from 1790.[2] It is a commentary on the man's forcefulness that in spite of all difficulties Dessalines established an effective economic organization. Its basis was serfdom.

175 463 642 656 [562] Every citizen, he announced, must consider himself in one of two categories, laborer or soldier. There were to be no shirkers in the new Haiti; if a man was not in the army, he must do manual labor. Artisans who followed a craft counted as laborers. Women, since they could not join the army, must work shoulder to shoulder with their men. It was understood that direction of Haiti's new order would be carried on by state officials who were neither laborers nor soldiers, but these officials were to be so few that they would not constitute a separate third category.

175 642 565 This step of Dessalines' was a radical one. It proclaimed the mastery of state over individual; and even more significantly it divided the people according to economic task, rather than birth, wealth, color, or social status. At first the more ambitious citizens bore patiently with the arbitrary decree, thinking they might be able to achieve comfortable status under a lenient definition of "soldier" or else by sinecure tasks as officials. Their disillusionment was swift. Even swifter was the chagrin of the lowly folk who had been slaves, for they found themselves now in actual bondage to one of their own color.

175 516 466 All people except soldiers, ran the decree, must be "attached as cultivators to a plantation." This might be translated to read "bound to the soil." The vast majority of the people were forced willy-nilly into agriculture. It was "formally prohibited for a cultivator to desert the plantation to which he was assigned"; conversely, it was a crime to give asylum to a runaway cultivator, male or female.[3] If such conditions differed from slavery, they were at least close to [433] what the mediaeval world knew as serfdom. But under this régime of forced labor the recently ravaged fields once more became productive: cotton plantations again covered the plain of the Artibonite, and sugar refineries were slowly rebuilt all over the country.

To forestall complaint from the people once again driven into

2. See, for an analysis of population figures, Placide Justin, *Histoire politique et statistique de l'île d'Hayti, Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1826), pp. 502–503.

3. A certain Mlle. Chapotin, of respectable family, was accused of having harbored a fugitive female cultivator, and, since she was unable to pay immediately the fine imposed upon her by the police at Port-au-Prince, she was condemned to serve a jail term.

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field labor, the ruler emphasized the clemency of his new régime. Labor the people must, but not under the whip; that arch symbol of slavery was abolished forever. The working day was shortened by a third. It was provided that, if just reason were shown, a man might even secure permission from his district commissioner to move from the plantation to which he was attached. 175 566 466

These were words. Facts were another matter. The overseers had been ordered to exact so much labor from their underlings, yet without whips; knowing no persuading power other than chastisement, they backed up their commands with blows of *lianes*, thick pliable vines which could be gathered anywhere in the island. Thus the laggard was driven, the law kept to the letter, and the overseer praised by his superiors. As for the working day, crops must be tended at the proper moment, so that the boasted shortening of hours generally came to little. Finally, the right to secure permission to move away from a plantation was effectively limited by the refusal of commissioners to grant any such request.

Every public expression of Dessalines showed a solicitude for the welfare of the workers, while his every act indicated that he regarded them as impersonal parts of the machine of state. He knew by his own former experience as a slave what a day's stint should be and the ruses used by laborers to avoid steady work; he was therefore able to order agricultural labor on a realistic basis.

The economic organization created by Dessalines provided the roots for the peasantry which was soon to develop as a characteristic form of Haitian life. Among these fundamental conditions were the existence of agriculture as a prevalent occupation, the immobility of all workers on the land, and a thorough schooling of the people in patient acceptance. Dessalines might theoretically have established some other economic system—a division of estates into small properties, for example, with each farmer a master of his own destiny; a democratic coöperative economy; slavery again; feudalism with a landed gentry. At critical times, one leader's choice may affect the whole future life of the country. The decision of Dessalines to keep the bulk of his people in servitude, without using the terminology of slavery, gave the new freemen no opportunity to become acquainted with work other than tillage. They were sent back to the only tasks they had ever known, their horizons were just as limited as before, their personal freedom just as restricted. The worst punishments of slavery, together with torture and gross overwork, 175 178 463 24 433 566 175 566

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175 were abolished; with such concessions the people must be satisfied.
566 Dessalines tacitly confessed his inability to follow any course but the French colonial system, with modifications introduced by Toussaint.

167 Many of the blacks, having tasted a moment's freedom, were not
175 inclined to give it up. Before the new order of Dessalines was firmly established, therefore, they ran away with their families into the hills, where they escaped official notice. As squatters they lived out their lives unmolested. By the time they were officially rediscovered, all Haiti had become a land of peasants.

175 At the other end of the ladder from the laborers were the officials,
463 who might be great men or small clerks, members of the entourage
555 of the governor-general or merely overseers of a plantation. In order to keep the vast agricultural economy functioning smoothly it was
647 necessary to have hundreds of agents, directors, clerks, and overseers,
565 each of whom must report to a superior. In this official class there was at least a possibility of realizing an ambition for oneself; there was a basis of comparison; more important, there was some possibility of attracting favorable attention of persons in high places and so of gaining promotion. Inevitably something of the colonial state of mind must have carried over into the new era, so that an ex-slave would consider himself as having risen in the world to be now performing a task which only white men used to do—to be spared field labor and to direct the work of others. Out of this group of petty agents rose a few men of ambition who were later to belong to the élite.

175 Higher officers of state were in a much more favorable position to
565 achieve social eminence. Not only did they perform no manual
647 labor; they were twice removed from that life, since they directed the men who directed the workers. They handled funds. They came
[212] into contact with Dessalines himself. Many former gens de couleur filled these important posts, for the number of Haitians who could read and write was woefully limited.

175 The army was the great power in the country, for the new state
701 was a military one. Since fear of a return of the French required the maintenance of a large standing army,[4] Dessalines made a virtue of this apparent necessity, using his soldiers to enforce discipline among the cultivators. On whom else could he rely for his local administra-

tion.

4. Humboldt estimated that the army of Dessalines numbered 37,300, which would be one tenth of the total population. Other estimates run as low as 15,000. Even this figure would be about a tenth of the male population.

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tion? Here again, the decision of a leader fixed the direction of Haitian life for decades to come. It is agreed by commentators that overmilitarization was the bane of nineteenth-century Haiti. One tenth of all able-bodied men were constantly in active army service. Moreover, all the male cultivators on plantations must hold themselves in readiness to obey the government's call to arms; ammunition and arms were stored in every parish. A military mentality was nourished, the people early learning the lesson (apparently unchallenged by any liberal) that the army should rule and the people obey. 175 701 [162] [181]

Although the common soldiers were ex-slaves who, upon dismissal from service, would return to the ranks of agricultural workers, their officers had a higher status. Noncommissioned officers had a long road to travel to eminence, but like the overseers they had at least a glimpse of the promised land of distinction. Captains and generals had this vision within their grasp: they were already of the élite.

In the subcategory of "artisans" were included all the townspeople who carried on crafts or trades. It must be remembered that Haiti had no cities, and that its two largest towns then numbered probably no more than 10,000 people each, so that artisans were not numerous. Since there was a distinction in the arduousness of various pursuits as well as in their financial return there existed in this category, as in the official and military, some chance for social prestige. 175 463 361

The only persons remaining outside the categories mentioned were colored landowners who had held estates in the colonial period. Dessalines took active steps to gain control of most of the land in the country, but at his death in 1806 there were still many of the old proprietors left who were, in the main, determined to hold their land and preserve their dignity as non-laborers. 175 471 423 425

Assassination by his political foes ended the career of Dessalines only two years after he assumed power. In 1805 he had had himself crowned emperor in imitation of Napoleon, but unlike Napoleon he permitted no nobility. "*Moi seul, je suis noble!*" he replied to ambitious henchmen who asked for the establishment of a peerage. It was the Emperor's tactless handling of the social situation which caused his murder, for he touched sensitive nerves on the raw in attacking property rights, inherited privilege, color distinctions, and social aspirations. The cultivators grumblingly accepted his decrees; the ambitious upper group did not. 175 643

The former affranchis fully intended to keep their lands once the

The former affranchis fully intended to keep their lands once the

175 French were driven out. They could not but be alarmed as they saw
423 the steady direction of Dessalines' moves toward a complete mo-
425 nopoly of land ownership by the state. On the very day following
471 independence, a decree proclaimed that all lands owned by France in colonial days now belonged to Haiti. Next (February 7, 1804) Dessalines canceled all sales and donations made to mulattoes and ex-slaves by fleeing French who, in a last despairing effort to salvage something from the wreckage of olden days, had "entrusted" their lands to non-whites. By these two strokes all lands owned by white men before 1803 became state property,[5] but only the second clipped the wings of socially ambitious colored people.

175 Serious uneasiness was caused by the next measure, an order for a
421 general verification of property titles. This would have been a deli-
[693] cate task at best, considering the disorder of the past thirteen years. It was made more complicated to carry out by the serious lack of men trained in law. A few like Balthasar Inginac, later an important adviser and trusted friend of two presidents, were scrupulously conscientious, but by the same token highly unpopular with those whom they deprived of newly (and shadily) acquired "estates." The majority of officials, according to report, listened to the pleading of many who had managed by hook or crook to secure a tenuous claim to vacant properties, validating their fraudulent titles for them. It has been claimed, without rebuttal, that most of these officials were not above taking bribes. When complaint was made to Dessalines of such actions he took steps to make his appointees do their duty, but each confiscation made new enemies for Dessalines.

Some of the mulattoes, citing their French paternity, claimed land formerly owned by their French fathers, even though these parents had never regarded their sons as more than bastards. Dessalines once broke out in furious answer to such a claimant: "*Et les pauvres*
175 *nègres dont les pères sont en Afrique, ils n'auront donc rien!*"
425 The state took over thousands of acres. Those Haitians, colored or
536 black, who aspired to landownership as the foundation of position,

[642] 5. The hatred of the Haitians for the French, and because of them, for white people
[648] in general, was seen not only in these confiscations but in commitments for the future. A proclamation of April 28, 1804, suppressed to "all foreigners" the right to own property in land. The first Haitian constitution, May 20, 1805, took an even more drastic step in saying that "no white man shall henceforth set foot in this country as a landowner," and that "*all* property formerly belonging to a white Frenchman" was now confiscate to the profit of the state.

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prestige, and the normal fulfillment of dignity, were thus frustrated in their efforts. They began to see that the Emperor intended to withhold from them freedom, room for the exercise of ability or power, fullness of life in whatever form. Not only was there little opportunity for achieving prestige; the repressive and contemptuous attitude of Dessalines denied them even ordinary negative respect, without which dignity of life is impossible.

By confiscation of vacant and falsely claimed estates, Dessalines created a vast public domain. He did not hesitate to secure other lands which he considered valuable, resorting to arbitrary and often cruel means—even, it is said, to forgery and murder—to dispossess those who stood firm in their claims. This attack on private property added other dissidents to his enemies—men who felt themselves clearly in the right legally and morally, men who with clear consciences joined the movement to put down a tyrant. The land thus acquired was leased in parcels at an annual rent to the highest bidders.[6]

The Emperor was blind to the normal human needs of the better elements of the population. He deprived them of property in land, the only basis they knew for wealth and independence; he forbade enterprises undertaken by individual initiative; he continually wounded delicate sensibilities. The Emperor was not a man to spare people's feelings, and he dared use the frank but dangerous words Negro and mulatto. He once shouted to a group of pleaders for position: "*Prenez garde à vous, nègres et mulâtres! Nous avons tous combattu contre les blancs; les biens que nous avons conquis en versant notre sang, appartiennent à nous tous; j'entends qu'ils soient partagés avec équité!*" It was not only Dessalines' idea of "equity" which aroused the *anciens libres* but his use of the descriptive nouns they hated.

The colored people were well aware of the hostility of Dessalines to their group. He was inferior to them in learning, and knew it. He was certainly, by the world's judgment, inferior to them in birth. His very deficiencies by comparison with his colored subjects made him hate them more: for example, he was passionately fond of dancing, preferring compliments on his grace to praise of his statesmanship; yet his awkwardness on the ballroom floor even

6. Although there are no records extant to show the exact amount of land which Dessalines succeeded in bringing into state ownership, it is estimated that more than two thirds of all the productive plantations in Haiti in 1806 were in the hands of the government. Other estimates range as high as ninety per cent.

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175 beside other ex-slaves was too evident to avert ridicule, which
643 Dessalines quickly noted. Few opportunities escaped the Emperor,
563 therefore, of making the light-skinned Haitians quake in their boots.
661 He wrote to Pétion (August 24, 1804), leader of the colored people, that in his slaughter of white Frenchmen he had often been "unable" to distinguish between whites and light-colored Haitians. Pétion and his friends knew that Dessalines did not regret his inability to make the distinction.[7]

175 Possibly Dessalines was clear-sighted enough to realize that the old
563 distinctions of color, if allowed to continue in the new state as in-
643 dicative of social prestige, might cause endless strife within the nation. Possibly, on the other hand, he wished to make the lighter-skinned Haitians realize that he, a Negro, was more than their equal. Whatever his underlying motives, he was impatient with the struggle for prestige. The steps he took to eradicate distinctions based upon color were characterized by his usual blunt tactlessness. In 1805 he informed Pétion, the outstanding mulatto general, that a union of black and colored people was essential to the happiness of the Empire; he said he wanted the Haitian people to become *bronzed* by this union, so that there would be no longer any important difference of skin color. All this was preface to a proposal that Pétion, as the ablest of the mulattoes, should marry the Emperor's black daughter, Célimène. Pétion, refined, highly educated, and gently cynical, was considerably perturbed and frankly embarrassed by the suddenness of this radical suggestion. His reply, that he was not inclined to marry at all, offended Dessalines and made him suspect a slight, but he dismissed Pétion with the pointed suggestion that he "think the matter over." Pétion knew, as the Emperor did not, that one of his aides-de-camp, Chancy, was not only in love with Célimène but had already got her with child. It is entirely possible, too, that he was aware of the growing underground opposition to Dessalines and that, as the Emperor's star was beginning to decline, he did not wish

[721] 7. It must be said to the credit of the black masses that they did not relish the systematic slaughter of the whites which so pleased Dessalines. Negro cultivators frequently collected potential victims, hiding them and aiding their escape from the country. The repugnance of the masses for such massacre was so evident that their generals had at times to drive them at bayonet's point. "The blacks of the plain behaved very well," said an exile in a letter (June 1, 1804) written from Jamaica to Moreau de Saint-Méry. Madiou says that after the massacre of the whites some Haitian blacks abandoned their country and went to join former masters in a foreign land.

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to ally himself with the ruling family. When Dessalines shortly discovered his daughter's condition, he burst into maledictions against all mulattoes, saying that they had plotted this disgrace to him and to his family. He went so far as to speak of having them all executed. 175 563 643

The Emperor's determination, and all his measures, could not quench the social ambition of his leading subjects. They bore what must be borne, conspiring meanwhile to get rid of him. They still had the advantage over the masses of a superior education, and they knew the path to eminence, once the obstacle of the Emperor was removed.

Nothing was done during the reign of Dessalines to cultivate the minds of the laboring class. Discipline backed by force was the guiding principle in dealing with them. Instead of trying to educate his people to understand their duties and to take an active part in statecraft, Dessalines—his generals and counselors, mulatto and black alike, thoroughly approving—used only compulsion. There was actually little difference between the attitude of this ruling clique toward the mass of laborers and that of their former white owners. Both looked upon them as cattle. A few of his advisers tried to persuade the Emperor to provide moral and religious education for the people so that they would not be seduced into completely evil ways, but the Emperor replied, "You are wrong: the laborers can be controlled only by fear of punishment and even death; I shall lead them only by these means; my 'morale' shall be the bayonet." 175 643 661 641 [871]

In short, between 1804 and 1806 no prominent figure in Haitian life seems even to have dreamed of "liberal" institutions. Those who had education, knowledge, and culture preserved them carefully for themselves. The wisdom, even the possibility, of enlightening the masses was doubted. Most Haitians remained in complete ignorance of what went on in the outside world. 175 565 641

Dessalines was killed by ambush near Port-au-Prince on October 17, 1806. The mulattoes were generally supposed to have planned the assassination, for it was well known that they had no cause to be fond of him. His callousness had raised up enemies in all walks of life. The cultivators were glad he was gone, because of his harshness. They were virtually slaves again in all but name; it was reported that upon his personal estates he had made unsatisfactory workers run the gauntlet between lines of soldiers armed with thorny switches, and 175 643 661

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175 such an example of rigor might spread. The moral element of the
643 population had long looked askance at his libertinage; his first act
661 upon entering a town during a visit of state was regularly to have his aides select for him the most attractive females in the vicinity, with whom he would spend more time than at the business of governing.
[703] Not even his army was sorrowful over his death. He had let his loyal troops go for months without pay, and then, reviewing a group of them one day, taunted and railed at them for their ragged uniforms. "You look as naked as a bunch of old bottles!" he cried.

Dessalines had restored order to his country and had founded a state. Both achievements rested upon a display of force which inspired cringing fear and denied normal human aspirations. His entire social and economic order was based upon the subservience of the many to the few.

2. *Christophe* (*1807–1820*)

175 Until 1807 all Haitians had the same political background—the French colonial régime, revolution, the governorship of Toussaint,
178 and the stern rule of Dessalines. Now the common path forked. Two avenues were opened up during the next dozen years, one by Christophe, the other by his Southern and mulatto rival, Pétion. The former was the road of discipline, hard work, and feudal control; the latter was one of persuasion, *laissez faire*, and small properties. Haiti ultimately chose the second.

175 The logical successor to Dessalines was his powerful Negro hench-
643 man, Christophe.[8] This black general felt so certain of his leadership that he did not even bother to attend the *Assemblée Constituante*
642 which was to choose the new head of state. The mulattoes, however, had agreed among themselves that they had had enough of rule by
662 ignorant ex-slaves. They consequently performed the very skillful manoeuvre of preparing a constitution which should effectively shear a new president of dictatorial power; this done, they dutifully elected Christophe to the presidential office. The wrathful general peremptorily declined to rule by virtue of so anaemic a document, and led his army southward to demand proper respect for his august

8. The name Christophe was taken from the English Caribbean island of St. Christopher, on which this black slave was born. Later in life he took as his first name Henry, spelling it in the English fashion rather than the French, as an indication of his wholehearted admiration of English people and English ways.

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person. To his evident surprise he was met not by meek submission, but by the army of the mulatto Pétion. Christophe was not defeated; neither was he victorious. He was obliged to retire in high dudgeon to his loyal supporters in the North, where he proceeded to set up a state according to his own idea of what a state should be. 175 643 642 662

The Assembly thereupon outlawed Christophe on the ground of rebellion against constituted authority, electing in his stead their great favorite Pétion, whose power as president of the Republic was to be limited by the new constitution. For the next thirteen years, from 1807 to 1820, the tiny country with its 10,000 square miles was divided, Christophe ruling in the North and in the fertile valley of the Artibonite, and Pétion governing until his death in 1818 in the West and South, the main strongholds of the colored element.

Christophe was of the stuff that myths are made of. He was indisputably Haiti's most dynamic, relentlessly effective, and dramatic ruler of the nineteenth century. Like Toussaint and Dessalines, he was a black ex-slave, and like them he had won his spurs as a military leader during the revolution. He was an ardent patriot whose love for his country did not lead to retrogressive chauvinism. Whereas Dessalines through fear and hatred of the French had excluded all white men from Haiti, Christophe had the perspicacity to see that the country could benefit from the contribution of whites. Englishmen he especially welcomed. Like his predecessors Christophe drove his people—with a tyrant's lash, many thought—but only to increase the glory of Haiti. 175 643 663

Christophe had a vaulting imagination which brought glamour even to practical expedients. He built a colossal fortress on a high mountain in the North, partly for defense, but partly to make his contemned Negro people feel that they could achieve one of the architectural and engineering marvels of the age. His exquisite palace, Sans Souci, not only satisfied his own vanity as a ruler but also provided a focal point for the imagination and loyalty of his subjects. In 1811 he had himself crowned king, Henry I, amidst pomp and circumstance—and then created a royal court, partly to reward his leaders, partly to get the fees for patents of nobility, but primarily to bind all important men in the country to himself and to the Haitian state with unbreakable personal bonds. Dramatic in almost every particular of his life and reign, he ruled for thirteen years more through force of personality than by tyranny. Taxes were heavy [712] [644]

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Taxes were heavy

175 651 652 and work strenuous; but there were a sound currency, commercial and agricultural prosperity, and a full treasury.

Like many a great man he was an overweening egotist. His 175 643 159 energy and ambition, for Haiti as well as for himself, neither understood nor tolerated a lesser determination than his own. At times he seemed more intent upon the letter than upon the spirit of his laws. Probably his chief defect, a common failing of strong men, was a disregard for humble individual worth. To write of him invites the most colorful vocabulary. He is Black Majesty and the Emperor Jones. By almost any standards of leadership he would be accounted a great man. He lacked only those few final, subtle qualities which make for sheer genius. In 1820, stricken by paralysis and faced with defections in his army, he died as he had lived, dramatically, ending his life with a specially saved bullet (folklore says a silver one), in his palace of the ironic name, Sans Souci.

175 643 In no significant respect did Christophe change the feudal structure of economic organization begun by Toussaint and carried on by Dessalines. It was in administration, especially as it affected social status, that the thirteen years of Christophe were important for the [641] future of Haiti. Where the Emperor had been an unpredictable tyrant whose heavy hand inspired only terror, Christophe was a sternly just father whose well-disciplined children respected, admired, and even loved him.

175 427 475 655 566 643 The land policy of the two régimes was similar. Government estates were farmed out on five-year leases to the highest bidders among the well-to-do; large plantations belonging to the state were tilled by cultivators who might, without taking the term too harshly, be called *serfs; loyal supporters and wealthy individuals were entrusted* with responsibility. Like Dessalines, Christophe added wealth to power and rendered all his subjects dependent upon himself rather than on their own resources and influence—but all this with a difference.

175 643 642 565 Where the Emperor had denied the natural vanity of his aides by refusing them nobility, Christophe accepted their ambition as perfectly normal and made use of it for his own purposes. Four years after he had established his state, he changed it from a republic to a kingdom; all his important men he made dukes, barons, counts, knights. He warned them that he would expect them to live up to the dignities conferred upon them. Pomp and regalia are costly;

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therefore plantations must be made to yield the uttermost farthing if the nobleman was to pay for the necessities of strict court etiquette. It was by no means a childish whim which prompted Christophe to call himself a king; rather an intelligent utilization of the human material the leader had to work with. Vanity was to serve an economic and a political purpose. 175 643 642 565

Christophe perceived that the defect of Dessalines' reign had been lack of security, both of person and property. Agriculture is a long-term investment and so must be hedged about by orderly rules. To this end the monarch stated his laws clearly, charged a fixed tax—one fourth of the annual crop—which would enrich the kingdom while allowing the tenant-proprietor a reasonable profit, and then guaranteed that no arbitrary demands would be made. Certainly there was no pampering of the wealthy, but there was ample prosperity resulting from regularity and security. 175 651

The ordinary citizen was, as he had been, bound to the soil as an agricultural laborer. This quasi-serfdom, however, was comparative freedom. It simply meant that the home and work of a manmust be at the plantation on which he had been born. Saturday afternoons and Sundays were free, so that the laborers might make the most of their opportunities to visit the nearest market village, to buy and sell small goods, gossip, and enjoy the sociability of being part of a crowd. Being bound to the soil meant simply that they could not move, when the impulse seized them, to another plantation or another part of the country. Those whose mothers or relatives were natives of a plantation must return to that estate, being forbidden to live in towns. No person, military or other, who did not drive his living from a plantation, could marry an agricultural worker—a prohibition designed to prevent workers from leaving estates because of family ties, and particularly to prevent women, as mothers of future cultivators, from deserting agriculture. 175 566 641 466 [582]

Mediaeval serfdom itself went no further in binding people to the soil. Indeed, it did not go so far in regulating the daily life of serfs. Under Christophe the cultivators lived according to a routine as strict as that of a school. Reveille was rung as early as three o'clock to arouse women to prepare breakfasts for their menfolk; by four or four-thirty the bell was sounded for the commencement of work, which began after prayers had been led by the overseer. At nine o'clock there was a pause for luncheon, and then a resumption of 175 566 512 466

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175 work until noon. A two-hour siesta followed, but from two until
566 sunset there was steady work. Only after evening prayers was the
512 worker free. During the day no cultivator might leave his task except
466 for direst need. The lame and the halt were not required to till the fields, but must carry around buckets of drinking water, take care of the children, and do odd jobs about the estate.

175 Christophe made a steady and, in the main, successful effort to
566 explain to the people the necessity of hard work on the plantation.
466 As with the noblemen, the serfs knew precisely what was expected of them, and why. Their regimentation was strict, but understandable. It was clearly stipulated that if a worker shirked his job he was to be put in prison and made to do forced labor there. Laziness in the fields was to be punished by strokes from the overseer's liane. Hard and steady work was demanded during the whole thirteen years of Christophe's rule, but only rarely was there complaint, as there had been constantly under Dessalines, of cruelty on the part of overseers.

175 The quarter part of the total crop of any plantation was to go to
465 the workers as wages, and, since production increased and prices rose, this quarter which they were free to spend as they pleased provided a powerful incentive to further industry. As compared with anything they had known before, the workers were now recipients of an ample income. On the plantations they cultivated
[423] the money crops of sugar and coffee. In addition, each family had
[241] its own garden plot on which to raise the food crops—yams, plantains, beans, and bananas—for personal use.[9]

175 Christophe was so far ahead of his time that he tried to introduce
177 British methods of agriculture into his kingdom. The results were
407 insignificant. The plough, although obviously superior in efficiency
178 to the hoe, eliminated the sociable companionship of working in unison, and demanded horses and mules which the country lacked. The innovations were consequently too radical to be accepted. In the main, the agricultural methods of the kingdom continued to be those familiar in slave days.

175 Thirteen years of careful direction can fix many patterns of social
178 routine. One of Christophe's rules was that no cultivator attached to

[241] 9. The staples of other countries, such as Irish potatoes, wheat, barley, and oats, did not flourish in Haiti. On the large plantations, indigo and cotton, which had been money crops in the French régime, were generally neglected, as they had been in the time of Dessalines.

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One of Christophe's rules was that no cultivator attached to

a plantation—and every ordinary country person was so attached 175
—might leave the estate without permission from a military officer." 566
Two of the common folkways of Haitian peasant life since his time 178
have been immobility and general acceptance of orders from the [484]
military. Both characteristics had been fostered by slavery and by the régimes of Toussaint and Dessalines, and these folkways became fixed under Christophe.

Other rules introduced by the King, however, lapsed shortly after 175
his strong hand was removed. For example, the monarch required of 178
the whole population that whenever they visited the capital on feast 291
days or went to the market towns on Saturdays they be decently clad 527
in clean clothes." Since the time of Christophe, neatness of appear- 183
ance has hardly been a folk characteristic, probably because of
poverty rather than lack of desire to dress well. Nor did scrupulous [44]
regularity of work in the fields continue as a folkway later, when the great plantations were broken up.

Like a father the King tried to inculcate moral standards of honesty 175
in his people. To prevent theft he had small valuables, such as watches 577
or jewelry or purses, "planted," and if the finder did not immediately 177
turn them over to the nearest Dahomet, punishment was meted out. Such a policy made honesty contagious. Thefts and depredation were soon almost unknown. The most tempting store of wealth could be left safely unlocked or in the open air. Christophe's achievement in this matter is eloquent testimony to his success as a paternal leader, for it is no small task to initiate moral ideas among people who for a generation have lacked them. Even today it is the proud boast of the Haitians that their people are honest.

As compared with the liberties of farmers in the United States of 175
the same period, the Haitian agricultural workers' freedom was 566
infinitesimally small, but by contrast with the bondage of slavery, their new status was definitely higher.

10. Christophe called his royal police force "Dahomets," after the West African kingdom, Dahomey, from which most of the men had come. They were not ordinary [625] soldiers but especially imported and carefully selected men whose intelligence made them stand out from their fellows. Each Dahomet was given a course of training in his task as administrator before being sent out. The general consensus of foreign visitors was that these Dahomets were efficient even in small matters.

11. This rule was partly an indication of Christophe's vanity, personal and national, for he was deeply desirous of the good opinion of white visitors, especially those from England. He wanted Europeans to respect Haiti as they would respect any small state, and not to praise it merely as an example of "Negro progress." [577] [186]

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000 their new status was definitely higher. Mild serfdom might be
175 thought of as the first intermediate step toward freedom. Democracy
565 was still far off, there being no real middle class upon which to build
566 it. Only the artisans of the towns and the ex-soldiers or the cultivators who had managed to lease small estates could be considered middle class. Christophe forced every dweller in villages or towns to have a manual skill. The only alternative was field work on a plantation.

The "aristocrats" of the kingdom were prevailingly black rather than colored. It was not to be expected that a vain man would soon forget the trick by which the mulattoes had frustrated him in his expectation of becoming the ruler of all Haiti. To say that the inter-
175 mittent civil war between Christophe's kingdom of the North and
669 Pétion's republic of the South was a struggle between blacks and
643 colored people would not do great violence to the essential truth.
563 Christophe's suspicion of gens de couleur was so well known that few were surprised at the high death rate of mulatto generals in the North. The murder of General Clervaux was definitely laid at Christophe's door.

The fact remains that among the nobility were men of all degrees of color. The King liked to say that he neither accepted nor yet took exception to the color of a man's epidermis—that in this matter he was *vert* (green), which is to say, neutral and indifferent. When he was angry his wrath fell indiscriminately upon the offender of whatever complexion. Similarly, when he found a light-skinned man who faithfully supervised a leased estate, thus proving his
175 loyalty, the man was rewarded and promoted. Nevertheless, an
643 underlying prejudice remained in his breast, bursting out occasionally
721 at crises, and having ultimately a serious effect upon the loyalty of
563 many of his people. When some of his subjects, enticed by the easy-going régime of the South, ran away to Pétion's republic, Christophe was angry enough to renew the war against Pétion (1811). The South won the encounter, thereby adding fuel to Christophe's rage.
[727] Three hundred prisoners he had captured he ordered tortured, and the angry King abused and insulted his own officers and executed several soldiers for having lost the battle. These actions caused more defections, renewed punishments, and a more abiding rancor. As one writer put it, the King "now regarded the mulattoes with a hatred so deep and fiendlike, that nothing would satisfy the direness of his

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vengeance but the utter extermination of that race."[10] He even ordered the execution of a mulatto woman in Gonaïves because she had prayed for the success of Pétion.

During the latter years of his reign his personal popularity waned somewhat, owing to his relentless insistence upon efficiency and to his increasing tendency to lose his temper. Defections to the South occurred almost daily. The cultivators, comparing their never-ceasing toil on Northern plantations with the reported liberty and leisure of life in the South, continually drifted away. So alluring was the paradise of ease (and poverty) of the neighboring realm that Christophe found it necessary to keep a cordon of soldiers along the borders of his kingdom to prevent desertions. His administration now embarked on actual persecution of colored people. Inflammatory pamphlets were spread abroad, designed to make the Negroes think that the mulattoes were planning to enslave them once again. Under this campaign of propaganda many light-skinned Northerners had to go into hiding.

Despite all discrimination, the important line was drawn between cultivators who formed nine tenths of the population, and aristocrats who, with the army, made up the remainder. The nobility, the directors of landed estates, and the generals directed the activities of other people, so that the colonial prejudice against manual labor was strengthened. Here lay the basis of a persistent Haitian attitude of mind: to work with one's hands is to show oneself a member of the masses; to direct others is the distinction of the upper class. Education, neglected under Dessalines altogether, was fostered by Christophe. He established a few schools, inviting as schoolmasters certain Englishmen familiar with the then popular methods of the Lancasterian system; but since the cultivators were busy on the plantations, only the children of aristocrats benefited by the limited educational system and the social distance between classes was increased.

A French commentator says that Christophe showed unusual insight in devising for his kingdom "the only organization of which an African society was capable," namely, a combination of military despotism with certain benevolent inclinations, and territorial feudalism based upon a nobility created by the King. Actually, it mired not so much the African background of the people, which lay

10. Dr. Jonathan Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo* (Philadelphia, 1837), II, 199.

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at least a generation behind them, but rather their complete lack of any experience in self-rule. The author continues:

> In addition to the vanity of the black which was flattered by the distribution of principalities and duchies, there was the political thought which wished to fortify things by words. The most important sugar manufactories were distributed, with the property title, to the principal officers and civil agents of the government. Workers were allotted to these very much as were the Indians to the first Spanish conquerors. . . . Moreover, since African blood dominated in the North [that is, since there were few mulattoes and lighter-skinned people], the feudal lords, aided by the color of their skin, could enforce obedience to a yoke which in name only was modified [from slavery].[13]

The social organization of Christophe's kingdom, then, was one of large properties, with all the feudalistic trappings, resting upon a solid base of wage-earning serfdom. In contrast to mediaeval feudalism, the king was here much more than *primus inter pares*. Thanks to the policy of Dessalines, most land had come into state ownership, so that the nobility received their estates by royal favor, and held them as leases only so long as the King pleased. As in the Middle Ages, the noblemen were petty monarchs within the district granted to their jurisdiction. Their freedom of action, however, was even here subject to scrutiny: detachments of Royal Dahomeys[14] were stationed in every cantonment or parish, to enforce discipline, keep the King informed, and find their own subsistence without a drain on the royal treasury. In every district was set up a court of *chef-chasseur* to see that justice obtained.[15] The King's law, not the nobleman's private code, prevailed in the whole country.[16]

13. R. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1846), II, 167–168.

14. Organized after the model of the police force existing in France before 1789.

15. These courts were composed of a royally appointed *chasseur* and his assistant, a king's procurer, and a clerk.

16. The Code Henry was promulgated on January 30, 1812. It consisted of seven parts: Civil, Commercial, Shipping and Maritime, Civil Process, Criminal and Police Process, Agricultural, and Military. In general the Code followed French precedent, but the section on Agriculture was Christophe's own. Sir James Basket (in his *History of the Island of St. Domingo* [London, 1818], p. 413) calls this part "a thing unexampled among other nations." It reveals not only the King's absorption in the main economic enterprise of his state, but also his skill in devising an integrated functioning of a social order of nobility and serfs with a plantation economy based on money crops. This Agricultural Law regulated such diverse matters as the reciprocal duties of proprietors and cultivators, the policing of plantations, and the culture and preparation of the major crops. It set forth industry as the parent of virtue, and idleness as the source of vice.

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Northern Haiti flourished magnificently under Christophe's sternly benevolent rule. The King had that daring spirit of initiative which was so generally lacking in later Haitian history; he had, in addition, the power necessary to force through a new adjustment if the old way showed defects.[17] He excited artificial wants among his leaders by making nobles of them, and then compelled them to satisfy these wants without ever slipping back to a lower standard of living. Thirteen years of enforced labor and of order kept by a rigorously effective police force gave northern Haiti the kind of prosperity she had known in colonial days. Christophe encouraged commerce and protected foreign traders. He called in all debased coinage, substituting for it sound gold and silver currency. The revenue he raised was larger than it had been since 1791, amounting to about $3,500,000 annually. Probably the most eloquent testimony to his success is the fact that at his death, when the kingdom of the North was once more united with the republic of the South, more than six million dollars found their way into the republican treasury.

175 643 642 433 [438] [439] [652]

The Black King's economic system worked. It was based on a social division of the people, with the masses doing manual labor, and the aristocrats definitely set apart and recognized as upper class. By 1820 Haiti was well on its way toward the caste system.

175 565

3. *Pétion* (*1807–1818*)

171 175 631

Almost all Latin-American countries in the nineteenth century exhibited one common feature: an aristocratic landowning class lording it over peons. Haiti did not follow this pattern. She had aristocrats and peasants, but the aristocrats did not own most of the land, and the peasants were not peons. If later rulers had kept the organization of economic life begun by Toussaint and developed by his fellow blacks, Dessalines and Christophe, it is almost certain that Haitian social evolution would have resembled that of the rest of Latin America, for it would not have been a great change from

17. Duraciné Vaval, "Le Roi d'Haïti Henri Christophe," in *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti*, II, No. 3 (June 1931), p. 14, says that Haiti's periodic civil troubles and social misfortunes, both ending in a diminution of the state's autonomy, have been due to economic maladjustments. "Our weaknesses in political life derive from our immobility in material production." Immobility is an index of stagnation. Few rulers of Haiti have been at once powerful enough to overcome the immobility and wise enough to know what measures had to be taken. [114]

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171 feudal holdings to absolute ownership of land by the influential. It is
175 strangely paradoxical that an aristocrat, the light-skinned Pétion,
631 representing the cultured group in society, broke the economic power of his own aristocratic class and made the former slaves not serfs but peasants. It is doubtful whether he intended either result.

175 Alexandre Pétion was the antithesis of Haiti's three eminent blacks
643 in all but military skill. Toussaint's genius as a fighter lay in his
159 surprise moves, Dessalines' in his recklessness, Christophe's in his bulldog determination; but Pétion was a great general because he knew when to retire and so lead his enemy into an exposed position. The three Negroes had been born in slavery; Pétion, coming of a cultured and sophisticated affranchi family, grew up in France. Dessalines was a crude ruffian by comparison, while in the face of Pétion's suavity Christophe's impetuousness seemed rankly uncouth. Where they bludgeoned, Pétion persuaded; where they hacked their way through opposition in the determination to gain an end, he graciously yielded and so won new friends. Tactful at every point, he survived even such contretemps as his refusal of the hand of the Emperor's daughter.

As leader of a young nation, Pétion might almost be said to have had too broad an understanding of human nature. He was a gentle ruler over his people; when they erred he did not punish or upbraid, but excused their misdeeds by assuming the cause to be some fatal compulsion over which they momentarily had no control. He had no wish to drive the nation to "success." Neither did he care to use his position for personal aggrandizement. His mind was supple and practical, disdainful of abstractions, undeluded by resounding slogans, fertile in compromise, not finical as to means, always unsurprised, exquisitely tactful. When crises arose to dismay his ministers, Pétion's philosophic calm was undisturbed.

Cynically tolerant, he gave office to political enemies if they chanced to be able. A representative of the topmost class of society,
[648] he managed to moderate antagonisms based on color. He gave
[87] sanctuary and financial succor to the Spanish-American liberator,
[423] Simón Bolívar; he established the foundations of an educational system; he defended the state against Christophe's power; he ruled constitutionally; and he gave land to his people, even to the humblest of them. When he died, his subjects for miles around came into Port-au-Prince, where they stood weeping about his palace, refusing

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to be comforted. They had lost their best friend and their "*petit père*." 175

Dessalines would be emperor and Christophe king, but Pétion 643
was content to remain a simple president. He was an anomaly—as if 159
a Parisian of delicate sensibilities and mellow tolerance had somehow come to power with a darker skin in an alien land.

He has been highly praised and is worthy of eulogy. The fact remains that his country was rich when he came to power and poor when he died; united in 1806 and divided in 1818. Candor compels his admirers to admit that many of the calamities of the social and economic history of Haiti can be traced back to Pétion's administration.

The crucial act of Pétion was to parcel the land. From that policy 175
flowed the enduring consequences which became the predominant 423
socio-economic characteristics of Haiti. 421

Until Pétion's time the island had never known small properties. 178
Large estates had been the mark of social distinction in the French colony; Toussaint had kept the plantations large,[18] while Dessalines and Christophe had absorbed more and more land for the state, leasing it out in great blocks. The constitution of 1806[19] gave no indication of impending change, for it specifically declared all land to be the property of the Haitian nation. Within three years, however, the process of dividing and giving away the state's lands was well under way.

It would be illuminating to know what mental process in Pétion moved him to make so radical an about-face in land policy. The reasons he gave were, first, that the people had ably defended their country and so deserved a reward; second, that he wanted all the people to have a vital interest in the actual soil itself.[20] These may have been his only reasons. Others suggest themselves: the republic owed wages to its large standing army, which were more easily paid in land, of which the state had much, than in cash, of which it had little and progressively less; it would be much easier to keep peace in a country where men were free than where they were serfs; and the example of free ownership in the South would seem alluring enough

18. He permitted the leasing of plantations as small as fifty acres if the soil were especially rich. [427]

19. December 27. This document was largely the handiwork of Pétion.

20. The former explanation he consistently gave in his various messages to the Senate proposing progressive parcellings of the land; the latter he wrote to a friend, saying that he wished to "*travailler dans mes l'amour du sol.*"

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to Christophe's serfs in the North to cause defections ultimately sufficient to win the civil war for the republic."

Those who would read into Pétion's democratization of land tenure the liberal convictions of a far-sighted statesman must ignore the evidence of his earliest land acts. For two or three years nothing was so apparent as that Pétion wished to please his friends, the mulatto aristocrats. He not only had the Senate restore to their former owners all lands of which Dessalines had despoiled them, but he also agreed to a law authorizing a cash payment up to the full value of crops planted and then lost during the last year of the Emperor's rule.[22] By these concessions the President immediately wiped out the rancor left behind him by Dessalines, reversed that ruler's whole land policy, gained the support of thousands of aspirants for social position, and bound in personal loyalty to his régime all the colored leaders.

He went further. Insecurity of tenure under Dessalines had worried landlords who were not actually mulcted of their estates, and so the President undertook to guarantee security. Thereafter all sales of land were to be registered by government deed, and so confirmed to the purchaser in perpetuity; government courts would be empowered to settle disputes over payment of rents; proof of the death of the testator must be forthcoming before wills could be probated. Not even the single limitation on ownership—that if the proprietor of an estate should remain away from Haiti the state might lease his property and receive the income from it—disturbed them, for they were patriots enough, and poor enough, to feel that Haitians should live at home.

As if this were not enough to please the landed gentry, the tax

22. Saint-Rémy, *Pétion et Haïti* (Paris, 1854-57), V, 165-166, suggests another reason, namely, that people will always be more ready to defend land they actually own than for an impersonal state. This sounds logical, but certainly the Negroes had fought ardently enough to drive out the French in 1803, landless though they were. Saint-Rémy continues: "And moreover, was it not time to dismember the enormous plantations which still bore the names of those colonies whose mother country might still at any moment descend to reclaim their heritage? And could this dismemberment be achieved otherwise than by giving the people an honorable title to it?"

22. Two successive laws, February 9 and March 16, 1807, achieved these ends. The former specified that all persons who, by purchase or gift or legacy, had acquired land before November 1, 1803 (when Rochambeau surrendered) or since February 7, 1804 (when Dessalines had ordered a confirmation of all titles) should be newly assured of their rights to such holdings. There was a single, possibly unimportant, limitation: the acquisition must have been by Haitians from Haitians.

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of one quarter of the crop was abolished.[23] This tax worked moderately well on great plantations with hundreds of workers and a large annual budget, but it bore heavily, sometimes unfairly, on smaller farms. To give up the government's fourth meant a tremendous drop in state revenues, but this was to be compensated by a new tax of ten *gourdes* (a gourde was then worth about five cents) on every thousand pounds of coffee sold in the country, and by an export tax on coffee. A man might raise sugar or make syrup, tafia (raw rum), and distilled rum, without paying any tax at all. Coffee culture required little careful cultivation, while sugar required a great deal; removing the tax from sugar would, it was hoped, encourage the cultivation of cane. The President was putting into practice the then novel idea of Adam Smith that the more freedom an enterpriser is allowed, the more he will produce, so that by pursuing his own self-interest he unintentionally benefits the state. To know definitely what taxes will be imposed, reasoned Pétion, is more of an inducement to a landlord than to face the double fluctuation of crop prices and the state's quarter. Small proprietors and sugar planters were now, like the larger landholders, attracted to Pétion's régime.

His final boon to proprietors, and one which Adam Smith would not have approved, was that of governmental subsidies in bad years. When prices of coffee and sugar were low, the state bought large quantities of these crops for the purpose of raising their price. The result was to increase the debt and to make the people feel that the state was responsible for individual economic success, rather than their own efforts.

These first concessions were all made to the important people of the South—to the mulattoes, families of the old régime, persons who desired economic prominence in order to bolster social position. The small folk of the Republic came next. The President recommended to the Senate the abolition of the law dating back to Toussaint's time which prohibited the holding of plantations of less than a minimum acreage. The Senate accordingly[24] reduced the minimum holding to thirty acres.[25] Actually this legislation did not bring

23. By a law of March 9, 1807. This tax was instituted by Toussaint and continued in effect by Dessalines and Christophe.

24. On April 21, 1807.

25. Or ten carreaux. Toussaint's law had allowed properties of fifty acres only in cases of exceptional fertility of land. See Note 18.

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175 423 about any radical change, for few of the common people could find money to pay for thirty acres, while the well-to-do all wanted more.

[433] Every concession desired by the landed proprietors had now been granted—with the result that economic prosperity was showing a steady decline. It was only when this fact was abundantly apparent that Pétion took the step for which he has since been so fulsomely praised and so roundly criticized. By permission of the Senate, in a law of December 30, 1809, he began to give away state lands: fifteen acres of cultivable soil to every soldier in the army, to be held in perpetuity, with proportionately larger grants to higher officers.

Opposition immediately arose to this measure, and from expected quarters. The owners of great estates protested that if soldiers had farms, other people would soon want (and receive) them, leaving no workers on the large plantations. Social climbers protested, for when practically anyone can own land there is no particular social distinction in having it. Pétion's minister, Bonnet, opposed the permanent alienation of the chief financial resource of the state, proposing instead the grant of long-term loans to soldiers for the purchase of land. Pétion was not insensible to the logic of some of these objections; he said, however, that a nation which relied upon the willing labor of masses of its citizens was ultimately stronger than one which depended upon forced labor of any kind. As for the socially aspiring, he could ignore their arguments since they were not publicly and openly expressed. To his minister he pointed out that loans, if made, would in all probability never be repaid, so that one might as well face the reality at once and give people the land.

All through the next decade Pétion made new and democratic divisions of the land. Able generals were given large tracts, partly as wages, partly as a stimulus to productive agriculture on their part. By another enactment, military invalids were rewarded with land. Eventually most of the rest of the public domain was either put on sale at such moderate price that thousands of humble Haitians might purchase their bit, or was effectively occupied by people who "squatted" far up in the hills, out of official view.

175 471 24 The democratization of land led to new adjustments in the economic system. People who owned small farms would obviously not continue to raise sugar and coffee, but rather turn to food crops for immediate family consumption. Only the large plantations could carry on the cultivation of money crops. These in turn, no longer able

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to command the forced labor of serfs, had to develop a new technique for securing manual labor. Legislation soon recognized the new state of affairs by enactments which kept distinct *la grande culture* and *la petite culture*. The former had to do with the production of sugar and coffee, from which the republic derived its wealth; the latter with small farming. *La petite culture* was simple cultivation of whatever the small owner wished to raise. Large-scale culture, on the other hand, became rather complicated.

Owners of great estates had to guide them only their experience of slave days and of serfdom under Toussaint and Dessalines. Now that both were gone, few planters were wealthy enough to pay wages for day labor; a new variation was needed. It was forthcoming in the *métayer* system—a crop-sharing arrangement with tenants closely resembling that which prevails today in some parts of the United States. The owner leased his estate in large or small plots to tenants. Half the income went to the landlord and half to the tenant; but the landlord must furnish the sugar mill and other necessary machinery where cane was raised. Laws were passed to give a measure of security to the proprietor. The contract between him and the tenant (*fermier*)[16] must be signed before a civil official; the engagement must extend through the harvesting of one crop; tenants even then might not abandon their contracts except after notice of three months, with a declaration to the local official.

Punishments were stipulated for the breaking of contracts. A tenant who had made an agreement and then abandoned the *habitation*, even for a visit elsewhere, without a certificate attesting his regularity, might be imprisoned for eight days the first time, a month the second, and three months the third, such imprisonment to be spent in hard labor on public works. Any disputes arising between plantation owners and tenants were to be taken before the local justice. If they threatened to develop into serious cases, the justice was to notify the commandant of the nearest important town. A person who fomented disturbance of such agreements (the Haitian equivalent of "labor agitators," style 1810) might be imprisoned for a year, as also his accomplices. Commandants of each arrondissement must put down disorder as soon as requested by landlords, tenant farmers, or overseers. They must likewise make frequent patrols of

16. The word "fermier" must not be translated simply as "farmer"; the idea of a contract and a rental fee is implicit in the French word.

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175 their districts, principally during the working hours of the day. They
675 were held responsible for all consequences of their own negligence.
692

This whole flow of legislation was designed primarily for the
175 protection of the great landed proprietors, yet there were other laws
671 which aided the masses. In former days workers had been coerced
466 through corporal punishment. This was by law now abolished. Temporary assignments of garden plots were required for each family of laborers; medical care must be provided at the expense of the planter; the aged and infirm must be guaranteed the right to keep their homes and gardens even though no longer able to work. Expectant mothers in the fourth month of pregnancy must be relieved of field work, with no limitation of their right to share in the estate's income; mothers of nursing children must be permitted to remain at home until the weaning of their infants.

175 A great concession to the workers was made by abolishing the
647 office of "inspector of cultures." In the days of Toussaint and Des-
271 salines each district of the country had had its inspector, whose duty it was to see that crop cultivation proceeded according to schedule.[27] This man's disapproval of conditions resulted in fines and personal chastisement. By abolishing the office Pétion effected a great saving in salaries, for there had been thousands of these inspectors; on the other hand, the watchfulness of the inspectors had kept agricultural production at a high level. With no officials to dog the footsteps of the workers, crops immediately fell off.

175 Pétion clearly expected la grande culture to be the prevailing mode
466 of agriculture in the republic. He fostered all kinds of legislation
24 regulating it, even aside from that already mentioned. For example,
656 a complete schedule was prepared for the division of income of the estate.[28] But the entire system was too neatly worked out and artificial to be effective, particularly since it was not backed up with force. The threat of punishment removed, most workers began gradually, often deliberately, to sabotage the system. It was much more pleasant

27. Christophe followed his predecessors in keeping the district inspectors.

[466] [465] 28. This could be very complicated. A tenant farmer might hire workers, and so have to share his half of the income with them. In such cases, the division of the money crops was to be made in kind or in money, at current prices, in the presence of the local justice, his assessors, and an officer of the gendarmerie. The workers' "fourth" was divided into portions of which three went to the first foreman, two to each of the skilled workers, one and a half to each male or female worker, and one half to each child laborer between ten and fourteen years of age.

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to spend one's time in the allotted garden patch than to cultivate sugar cane steadily in the heat of the day. In a garden there was more variety to the work, and more independent decision; in a cane field all must work in unison to be effective. Moreover, the yield from the garden was a daily thing, while that of the cane fields came but once a year. Less and less were the overseers able to get the tenants away from their gardens and into the fields. 175 466 24 656

Not all the sabotage came from the common folk. Landowners had their normal share of profit motive. The complex system of social security and benevolent stewardship ate away much of the income of the estate.[29] More important, the owners had had no experience of plantation management other than by directing forced labor. Corporal punishment was now abolished, but to the owner it was still unthinkable that there should be no coercion in plantation work. The laws protecting labor therefore left them bewildered, and they did not hold up their part of the system. Finding it expensive to maintain sugar machinery, impossible to engage docile workers, and necessary to finance social security, most of the "aristocrats" simply took the easier path of leasing their estates in small subdivisions, getting out of them what they could. 175 466 471 24

Another unexpected result of Pétion's general policy was to shift the main produce of the republic from sugar to coffee. Sugar had for decades been the staple crop of southern Haiti; but its cultivation requires scrupulous care and expensive machinery. Coffee, on the other hand, grows wild both in the lowlands and at heights of three thousand feet. It is "wild" in the sense that plants spring from seeds dropped by parent trees, without careful planting. When it became obvious that the workers were not to be persuaded to regular work in the cane fields, the landlords broke up the large plantations so necessary to sugar cultivation. Each tenant farmer was almost sure to find coffee trees on his rented plot of land. He would harvest the berries but would do little or nothing to tend and improve the plants, as he did not own them. In French days coffee trees had been pruned, fertilized, grafted; the new Haitian farmer simply let nature take its course. Pétion's careful planning resulted consequently in an entirely unplanned, accidental, and automatic adjustment to new conditions of life. 175 433 245 249

29. That the landlords did not too vigorously protest this system of care for the workers was due to their familiarity with similar care in slave days. [466]

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175 Haitian writers sometimes praise Pétion for his democratic lean-
642 ings, by implication criticizing Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe
178 for their feudalistic notions. If the blacks were undemocratic, at least
433 they had experience back of the system they selected for administering the land: their methods worked. Pétion's plan, on the contrary, admirable though it seemed to later "liberals," was unexpectedly disappointing. The national income declined; estates were steadily broken up and sub-leased to small farmers; sugar disappeared from the state's balance sheet, while coffee did not supply an equivalent income; discipline of the workers gave way to individualism. Although the whole legislative code favored the landlords, la grande culture crumbled. One is driven to conclude that Pétion simply tried one device after another—always the easiest he could find—to keep state economy functioning.

175 When Pétion came to power, the common folk of southern Haiti
178 were serfs with a memory of slavery; when he died, they were
565 peasants. At the beginning of his régime the mulattoes and other social aspirants felt they were struggling for very existence against the relentless policies of black rulers; as it closed they were beyond any doubt aristocrats, but by the same token progressively less well-to-do. No one any longer attacked their social pretensions; but the worldly wealth on which these pretensions were based was disappearing along with the country's prosperity, so that new criteria had to be developed.

175 As we have said, the keynote of Pétion's rule was persuasion.
671 Where Dessalines ordered, Pétion suggested; where Christophe decreed, Pétion recommended. There is not a single act one could cite during his entire presidency which had the effect of tightening up the organization of the republic. When laws were not properly observed, instead of penalties being made more severe or sure of application, the laws themselves were calmly allowed to lapse. In fact, the period from 1807 to 1818 was one of transition, of experiment, of discovering a congenial way of life. Since it was clear that the mass of citizens were peacefully disposed and unambitious, the President was inclined to let custom rule in each little community. Laws were not repealed, but they were enforced only when general public opinion was clearly in their favor. At many points the upper class would have liked more disciplinary control over the masses and said so to Pétion; yet they realized that in a less than ideal world one

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may not have all the heart desires. Under Dessalines there had been stern discipline of the workers but no recognition of the aristocracy; now under Pétion the people went their own inefficient way, but aristocratic eminence was happily recognized. 175 671

Examples of experimental legislation abound. Some proposals succeeded but more failed. One of the partial successes was the establishment of an agricultural holiday, *la fête de l'Agriculture*, to stimulate interest in good cultivation. Two months before the day set, the commandants of departments, arrondissements, and cantons, together with the justices of these divisions, were to nominate the laborer in each parish who had done the best work of the year. A prize medal was awarded not only for the sake of honoring him but also to stimulate his fellows. Similarly the officials would choose a child between seven and ten years of age, living on the best cultivated *habitation* in the district and belonging to parents most distinguished by their conduct and fondness for work, to be brought up and educated at the expense of the state. The annual feast was celebrated for many years after Pétion's death, but the officials became too lax to make careful selections of prize-winners. The holiday was kept, therefore, but served none of its original purposes. 175 527

As a case of legislation that failed may be cited the highly moral measure encouraging, but not requiring, legitimate marriages among cultivators rather than the customary informal union without ceremony. The preamble of this law pointed out that legal marriages were 175 582 588

the only means of assuring a person of all the advantages of society; of procuring consolation, care, and help in sorrows and in sickness; of making purity of customs, so necessary for the happiness of men and the conservation of their health, reign among the people; of steadily increasing the population of each habitation; of extending agriculture and of increasing production.[30]

The mass of people, however, had had no experience of legal marriage. In the time of slavery such unions would not have been respected by an owner who wished to sell his slaves, and Dessalines had seemed to care very little whether people married or merely lived together informally. It will shortly be seen in detail how lasting was this inertia of tradition.[31]

30. Cited in Saint-Rémy, op. cit., V, 29.
31. See Part III, "Sex Relations and Home Life."

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175 In his easygoing republic Pétion saw prosperity slowly wane,
433 cultivation decline, profits give way to deficits. He issued a large
652 amount of paper currency, and continually hoped for better times
534 which did not come. The days of large fortunes were over. The economic system affected the aristocrats: although they were still landowners, so also were thousands of common folk. The criterion of rank became increasingly not wealth, but rather pursuit of a career which demanded no manual labor. Distinctions, if they are to be effective, must be made on the basis of conditions not easily achieved by all and sundry. Education and good French met this requirement; even more did a light skin color.

175 Pétion, darling of the mulattoes though he was, never drew a color
643 line. There is no suggestion in any of his actions that he gave prefer-
641 ence in his appointments to people of his own color. He suppressed
563 at least one insurrection led by men who would have liked to stir up color prejudice. He often tried by quiet irony to make his people less sensitive to their complexions. It is eloquent testimony to his fairness that the 200,000 blacks in the republic never faltered in their love for him. They had ample reason to mistrust the haughty and ambitious colored people, some of whom had lorded it over them in colonial days; but they knew that the President did not share their pretentious attitude. One look at the North, ruled by a black, was enough to convince any Southerner that his happiness was safer in the hands of a mulatto than in those of a Negro ex-slave. At Pétion's death, therefore, there was no demur at the succession to power of another light-skinned man.

175 Haitians of a later day have discussed at great length the wisdom
643 of Pétion's parceling of state lands. His supporters (and they are
642 numerous) as well as his critics generally keep the controversy on the lofty plane of ideals, intentions, and hypothetical contingencies. Pétion is praised for being generous to humble folk where all other rulers of his country had been severe; for being a realist in accepting and adjusting his measures to the limitations of the average Haitian's character; for building a patriotism upon love of one's own small plot of land; for ruling constitutionally, with his Senate, rather than dictatorially. Most especially, Pétion is the one man among the early rulers who seemed to have any realization of the human values involved. Material gain is desirable but not at the expense of liberty. Freedom means something, even in poverty.

The critics do not challenge Pétion's good intentions or integrity;

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they even comment upon his unselfish generosity, which seems to have been entirely free of any desire for personal gain. They accuse him rather of taking the easiest course—that of trying to pacify every group in the republic: the masses, by giving them land and removing any external compulsion to work on it; the army, by making their enlistment profitable; the aspiring aristocrats, by validating their titles to estates and not challenging their prestige with a demand for responsibility. Strong states, the critics argue, are built on lines of discipline, not of perpetual yielding.

From an economic point of view a more valid criticism would ask the simple question: what was the practical result of his policies? Under the three previous Negro rulers agriculture had prospered, for these men kept state lands intact and forced the population to work; under Pétion, on the contrary, prosperity steadily declined with the division of land and the removal of compulsion. To expect a body of illiterate, inexperienced ex-slaves automatically to develop such economic virtues as industry, foresight, and thrift in a land which never knew any of these is not realistic, but merely quixotic. The Haitian critic Magloire implies that Pétion was either completely and cynically indifferent to common graft or else naively confident that men newly free would somehow be preternaturally honest. He goes into detail:

> Lands were distributed free, without order or method, each person taking what came his way and establishing himself as he could; graft and jobbery, under varied guises, governed the granting of concessions. As for properties in the towns, some people established themselves in upstairs apartments and others in ground-floor ones, without bothering to think of the lawsuits which might result from this disorder. In the sales made by the State, 50 and 100 and 200 gourdes were paid for real estate which was worth 10,000 and 20,000 and 40,000 gourdes or more. The administration put up for sale the property of towns, of communes, and of the State. Even buildings occupied in colonial days by officials, buildings whose construction had cost considerable sums, were bestowed on the people. . . .
>
> By a too great fractioning of the national domain, and carried away by the influence of false egalitarian and democratic ideas, Pétion brought about what a modern writer calls "the forcible neglect of agriculture" throughout the Republic.[32]

32. J. H. Léger, *Haiti: son histoire et ses détracteurs* (New York, 1907), p. 162.
33. Auguste Magloire, *L'Heure révolutionnaire et mon chef Boyer* (Port-au-Prince, 1946), pp. 260–263.

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175 Practically every contemporary foreign visitor contrasted the
114 divergent policies of Christophe and Pétion to the overwhelming
433 advantage of the former. One Englishman, intent upon defending the Negro against the charge of "natural indolence," went so far as to say that the majority of the people in the republic, although "possessed of small estates, on which they earned their living," were yet no less diligent than the forced laborers on Christophe's plantations in the North.[34] His only proof of this contention, however, was the greater volume of commerce at Port-au-Prince, capital of the republic, than at Cap-Henry (now Cap-Haitien), capital of the kingdom.

175 The economic case is strongly against Pétion. The decline of
433 large-scale agriculture, the empty treasury, governmental purchase
652 of surpluses when prices were low, debasing the coinage[35]—by such
642 practical proofs, the republic was vastly less efficient than the stern dictatorship of the kingdom. But Pétion's people had freedom, while Christophe's were serfs. And Pétion's republic endured, to become reunited Haiti. The kingdom perished with Christophe.

4. *The Final Effort toward Plantation Life (1818–1826)*

175 The mantle of Pétion fell in 1818 upon the shoulders of his
643 meticulous secretary and minister, Jean-Pierre Boyer. Two years
642 later, upon the death of Christophe, the kingdom of the North was once again united, without a struggle, to the South.[36] It is conceivable that the refined mulatto Boyer might have infused into his people a spirit of industry and ambition, now that tranquillity reigned after fourteen years of separation and warfare. The people of the North had had a long experience of intense activity, while those of the

34. W. W. Harvey, *Sketches of Hayti; from the Expulsion of the French, to the Death of Christophe* (London, 1827), pp. 361 ff.

[652] 35. Pétion's coins were so easily imitated that the country was inundated with counterfeit money. The government issued only five million dollars worth of this currency, but in 1818 twelve millions were in circulation, the surplus having been fabricated in Europe and the United States.

[175] [643] [642] [648] 36. In 1822–23 Boyer likewise succeeded, with little fighting, in bringing the Spanish two-thirds of the island (Santo Domingo) into the republic. For the first time since 1697 the whole island was really unified under one rule. Toussaint had held it in 1801–2 and the Haitians claimed it thereafter, but real unity did not come until Boyer's time, when all the Spanish colonies in the New World were breaking away from their mother country. Santo Domingo regained its independence in 1844 shortly after the abdication of Boyer.

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South in general had the most loyal feeling toward a government which had been benevolently generous to them. A blend of the two might have been fruitful. 175 642 643

It was not any want of patriotism that caused Boyer to miss his great opportunity but rather a defect of ability. Desiring, like Pétion, to lead rather than to drive his people, he nevertheless lacked even more than his former chief the force of personality which might have persuaded them to work hard for the greater glory of Haiti. Despising the brutal compulsion exercised by Dessalines and Christophe, which he regarded as savage and too closely resembling the earlier methods of slave owners; wishing to emulate solely the gentleness of his predecessor, Boyer hoped for a number of years that his people would become industrious of their own accord. His hopes were frustrated. During his twenty-five-year presidency the mass of Haitians became so indifferent to pecuniary inducements that little work could be got from them beyond that required to produce necessary food. As commerce declined, the President was driven to fresh issues of debased currency and to the opening of mines in different parts of the country, though he knew that the richest mine Haiti possessed was its still fertile soil. 175 433 [652] [316]

For the first seven years Boyer pursued a policy based on hopeful expectation, refusing to inaugurate any of the forceful measures of his black predecessors. But by 1823 the treasury, enriched though it had been by the surplus from Christophe's exchequer, was empty; in 1824 disbursements exceeded income. Convinced in 1825 that his *laissez-faire* policy was failing to produce results, he decided to heed the insistent counsel of those (including most of the aristocratic, landholding class) who advised the reestablishment of a coercive system of agriculture. His officials showed him that nowhere in the country were sugar plantations any longer being cultivated on a great scale—except for a few estates run by government officials who could command the forced labor of convicts. The policy of offering cultivators a fourth of the total crop of a plantation as wages was luring practically no laborers to work.[37] Even the few owners who offered the fourth plus daily wages had no success. Quite simply, the average Haitian preferred to be his own master, working only when he wished, and particularly working only for himself and his family. 175 652 24 433 466

37. This fourth in wages must not be confused with the quarter in taxes abolished by Pétion. See page 48 for a discussion of the quarter-crop wage system.

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175 Convinced at last that the easygoing policy was a failure, Boyer
24 devised by way of remedy a new set of agricultural laws. Where his
671 predecessors in the North had forced action first and then issued
643 simple laws to fix the practice, Boyer, always cerebral rather than active, planned a complete Code which was designed to call forth action. On May 1, 1826, following an address by the President, the Senate issued the Code Rural, an ingenious attempt of Boyer and his secretary-general, Inginac, to reorder the agricultural life of Haiti.

Never again in the history of the country was so detailed a scheme worked out. It was an attempt on a grand scale to order the life of all people for common prosperity. In addition to its own broad scope and elaborate detail, it was fortified by almost unanimous support among the aristocracy, not only the ex-peers of Christophe's defunct kingdom, but also the large landowners of the republic who under Pétion had never known large incomes. In considering the Code, one cannot restrain a certain admiration of Boyer's ingenious mind. Yet it marked the end rather than the beginning of plantation agriculture, for it utterly failed of its purpose. It was the impressive monument over the tomb of state control.

To examine it further, we must desert the world of men for one of pure economic device. The journey is hardly one of discovery, for Boyer and his aides were simply attempting to freshen up for use the methods which had served colonial Saint-Domingue and feudal Haiti. For all the tedium of a voyage through the mazes of an economic plan which came to naught, the Code will be found significant as marking the end of a way of life, even when the way which succeeded it had already begun to take form.

175 The dominating principle of the Code was the Haitian's "obligation" to work on the land. To this end, the worker was once more
671 legally attached to the soil. Every individual who was not a public
24 functionary, and who had not private means or a profession—in plain
566 English, every Haitian except the aristocrat, the official, the artisan,
693 and the soldier—was bound to the land with no right to separate himself from it except in case of imminent danger. An agricultural worker might apply to the local *juge de paix*[38] for permission to quit the countryside to live in a town or village, but the judge was not to give the permission without being assured of the morality of the

38. A functionary who combined the offices of civil judge, justice of the peace, and notary.

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applicant, of his regular conduct, and his ability to maintain himself economically in the town. Land laborers might not send their children to school or have them apprenticed in a town without a certificate from the same judge. Under no pretext might a worker establish a shop or sell his produce in the countryside; certain exceptions were made of necessary articles of food and home manufacture. No laborer might build a house in rural parts except on the plantation to which he was attached.

An individual, once placed by the government in the category of "cultivator," might never be removed from that class except by official authorization. Even with the consent of the proprietor and the agricultural administrator of the district, he was not to quit the estate to which he was bound for more than eight days.

We may further note in the Code that coöperative enterprise among the workers is forbidden. Anticipating the possible tendency of laborers to set up what in modern times would be called a producers' coöperative, presumably to lapse thereafter into laziness, the Code requires that every worker engage himself individually by authentic contract to the service of a proprietor or lessee. Such engagements for la grande culture are not to be for less than three years, or more than nine. Penalties for infractions of these rules are fines, imprisonment, or forced labor on public works in the chief town of the commune.

The Code directs the management of agricultural property and grazing establishments,[19] also the making of contracts between the proprietor and his hirelings. Rural police are established, in imitation of Christophe's Dahomeens, to act as inspectors of plantations and of the workers on them.

The section repressing vagrancy is very full. All persons not proprietors or lessees, yet living in rural parts without having made a contract with some producer, are classed as vagabonds, to be arrested and taken before the magistrate. This official will warn them that by law they are bound to make a contract, and that if they refuse they will be sent to prison. Should a vagabond persist in refusing to sign a contract after eight days of confinement, he is condemned to labor on public works until he agrees. Should the prisoner be a minor, he will be sent to his parents.

19. This latter item was inserted as an adjustment to one of the primary occupations of the Spanish end of the island.

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[1804-1843]

175 A cultivator who loafs on his assigned job shall spend twenty-four
566 hours in jail for his first offense and lose his wages; for a second
671 offense he must work on public projects. Field labor shall be regu-
24 larly carried on from Monday morning until Friday evening, except
for legal holidays; work begins at dawn, continues except for a
half-hour at breakfast until noon, stops then for two hours, and is
[843] once more resumed until sunset. Pregnant females are to be assigned
to light work only, and after the fourth month of pregnancy need
[846] do no field work. Four months after delivery, a mother is to return
to field work, but with three hours a day less than before, until she
has weaned her child. Disobedience and insult to overseers are
punishable by imprisonment. Since Saturdays, Sundays, and holi-
[528] days are free, there is to be no dancing or any other festivity by
night or day from Monday through Friday.

175 On each estate is to be a hierarchy of directors, all of whom the
671 workers shall obey. In ascending order, these men are drivers (or
913 squad foremen),[a] jobbers, sublessees, lessees, proprietors and man-
24 agers, overseers of districts, and police.

175 In establishing a system of remuneration Boyer kept the accus-
785 tomed method of allotting a proportion of the marketed crop to the
24 workers in lieu of hourly or daily wages. In any season from a
quarter to a half of the gross receipts of the estates was to go to the
laborers, the exact proportion in any year to be determined by the
government. It was assumed by Boyer and Inginac that there would
be an added inducement to work if the laborers' share were dis-
tributed not equally, but rather in proportion to the merit and worth
of the individual, these evaluations to be made by the recommenda-
tion of overseers.

175 Enforcement of the Code was placed in the hands of local justices
692 and the army. Soldiers were to be assigned to each plantation, re-
24 ceiving their living from it, in return preserving order and routine.
Although the whip was once more prohibited, steady labor might
still be enforced by other means; the law definitely stated that soldiers
were to discipline the lazy, the lawless, and the vagrant. Local
justices were to deal with any civil difficulties arising in the execution

[192] a. The word "driver" was commonly used in West Indian slave colonies with no other meaning than that attached to the word when one speaks of a man "driving" his horses. It is not necessary to beat a horse to make it go properly; a word of direction may suffice.

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of contracts. It is worthy of note that soldiers assigned to estates were responsible for their actions not to any civil authority but only to their military superiors.

On paper, at least, the Code meant for the worker a return to the serfdom instituted by Toussaint and continued by his black successors.[41] Boyer's new system was richer in detail than Christophe's, but it clearly owed much to that monarch's practical scheme. There is a vital difference, however: serfdom under the Negro rulers worked because discipline was enforced; Boyer's effort to reintroduce it was an abject failure.

Many commentators have praised the Code as able and intelligent. Since the effort to revive familiar practice did not succeed, it is important to understand the reasons for failure of an almost perfect paper plan; one similar to the system which had functioned in all Haiti from 1798 to 1806, and in northern Haiti until 1820.

To begin with—and this was in great measure its final downfall—the workers simply ignored it. When Toussaint had first introduced serfdom, many Negroes quietly moved up into remote hills where they would be out of sight; a good number had remained away from surveillance, raising children who cherished their own independence of action. The influence of this group gradually spread. Moreover, for nineteen years in the South, ever since Pétion had first become president, the masses had had increasing experience of economic freedom. There is no doubt that the majority of the people preferred a low standard of living with liberty to great national prosperity depending on personal compulsion. Northern "cultivators" had known force and efficiency under Christophe, but they, too, preferred their five-year experience of easygoing life in reunited Haiti. Such complete, antagonistic inertia toward the law made its enforcement impossible. Individual cases of sabotage might be dealt with, but not wholesale refusal of the group to sign contracts.

Aside from this, too much land had already been given away throughout at least half the country to make possible a fair and efficient functioning of the Code. Any forced-labor system would have had to depend on large plantations. Since Pétion had divided

41. R. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, "La République d'Haïti: ses dernières révolutions; sa situation actuelle," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, XV, No. 4 (Nov., 1841), p. 15, called it "l'infidelation à la glèbe," which it certainly was. The whole Code was designed to prevent any further parcelling of the land and any further leisure on the part of the workers.

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175 423 up so many of these, there was no way short of a revolution to reconstitute the now parceled estates. Obviously the Code did not envisage the control of serfs by small property owners, yet there were more small owners than large.

175 184 466 In the third place, the Spanish-speaking masses of the eastern part of the island had never experienced the kind of forced labor with which most Haitians had been at one time or another familiar. Their noncooperation made enforcement difficult.

175 647 Finally, the administration of so detailed a plan called for the establishment, at once and yet in complete order, of a fully trained corps of bureaucrats, perfectly cooperating with each other, most of them educated, and all incorruptibly honest. If every literate person in the state had been drafted for service, Boyer could not have filled all the offices required by the Code.

175 465 434 After brief and piecemeal experience with the law in operation, moreover, even the few remaining large landholders turned against it. While they approved the provisions for forced labor, they discovered that to turn over to the workers a quarter or half of the annual crop, in a falling world market, gave too slim a profit.[42] Without the support even of its original sponsors, failure of the law was inevitable.

175 648 652 These factors alone would have been enough to kill the Code; but its real death blow came from an entirely different quarter. The year before the agricultural laws were passed, Boyer had achieved what he considered to be a political master stroke. He had made a financial settlement with France whereby Haiti, in return for a large sum in cash and regular annual payments for sixty years thereafter, should receive full recognition of independence from France; also the former mother country would renounce all claims to any properties in the country. Boyer had felt that the chief debilitating influence on the political and economic life of his people was the constant dread that France might one day return to claim her lost colony. To rid the nation of that incubus, therefore, seemed to him a high feat of statesmanship, no matter what the financial cost.[43]

[433] [247] 42. Coffee, now the staple crop of Haiti, was meeting competition from the other coffee-producing countries of the world. To put the sugar manufacturers into working condition again called for more money than was available.

[643] [648] 43. Boyer's hand was forced to a certain extent by France, which had been exerting diplomatic pressure upon Haiti; the President, however, seemed to regard the indemnity as a distinct gain.

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The result was entirely different from Boyer's expectations. As a French critic graphically puts it, the Haitians

> who had never had more than a borrowed energy—that inspired by fear of French invasion—when they saw themselves freed, by a solemn treaty, from all attack on their coasts, seemed to allow their arms to drop relaxed at their sides, saying, *Let's take a rest.* The soldier who up till now had squeezed his body into a uniform and had subjected himself to European discipline, shouldering his arms, staring straight ahead as if seeing nothing, now began to leave unbuttoned the uniform which choked him, dragged a mattress into his sentry-box so that he might sleep through his watch, and let his cross slip to the earth never to pick it up again.[44]

In short, the Haitian army as a disciplined force ceased to exist, and with it all authority of its officers. Boyer had counted upon the army to enforce the provisions of the Code Rural, but now a soldier's life was a paid sinecure. By gaining political security Haiti had inadvertently lost its last chance of economic prosperity through a system of forced labor.

Wherever the Code was put into partial operation, revenue from plantations continued to decline. The price of real estate dropped proportionately. It was a simple matter for workmen who had signed contracts to avoid carrying out their stipulations, and just as simple to evade the law requiring fifteen acres' minimum for a single holding. Practically every Haitian wanted to own a bit of land; once he had acquired his bit, however small, he had (or so he felt) earned an exemption from directed labor.

Only on estates near the few big towns, where government officials were concentrated, was there much pretense of trying to enforce the Code. Sentries at the gates of Port-au-Prince were authorized to confiscate plantains, yams, or fruit brought by any worker who, in contravention of the Code, had strayed to market on a forbidden day, but sentries soon acquired the habit of not seeing countryfolk who passed the gates. Reports kept cropping up that rural policemen were robbing poor cultivators of their coffee under pretense of protecting them from the penalties for breach of the law; this suggests that the Code was used rather for graft than for the stimulation of agriculture.

By and large, however, the Code was merely ignored. Agents could not be found who were willing to stand in any community

44. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, II, 181.

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175 against almost unanimous public opinion opposing enforcement. In
671 1828 it was reported that dancing, which the Code had strictly
625 limited to week ends, was a nightly diversion near the capital. One
535 of the principal dancing resorts was the house of a captain of rural
517 police, the very man who was supposed to repress such amusements.[45]

175 Boyer had done his best, and his best was merely a good piece of
178 office work. When his Code failed to operate, he could think of nothing further to suggest for the economic rehabilitation of Haiti.
24 The last fifteen years of his administration witnessed a gradual lapse
433 into that small-scale farming which was to be characteristic of Haiti for the remainder of the nineteenth century. By comparison with former standards, production and steady industry had both fallen off since Boyer came to the presidency. The testimony of visiting foreigners is unanimous on the decline of industry.

175 The British consul, Mackenzie, said in 1827 that there was very
114 little field labor then being done, and that only elderly people,
435 principally aged "Guinea Negroes" long accustomed to steady work,
461 carried on the tradition. No measures of the government could
464 induce young people born in Haiti to labor or to change from their
184 "habitual vagrancy."[46] Another Englishman, James Franklin, remarked in 1828 that land values throughout the republic had greatly declined because no one could make a profit within any moderate time. Labor was high, he writes, for ordinary wages did not attract the workers who preferred idleness. (This word is certainly unfair: it was work at their own bidding which they preferred, not idleness.) Government lands lay untilled, no one evincing the slightest desire to purchase or utilize them. Franklin continues:

114 Land also in the possession of individuals is similarly circumstanced; and
175 those who are large proprietors cannot effect a sale of any produce which
433 they may have beyond the quantity which they can consume; consequently
423 a proprietor may have an immense extent of land, and yet be quite unable
425 to derive any benefit from it by cultivation, or to convert it into money, for the want of purchasers. Thus . . . there is no individual wealth in the country, because, although a man may have very large landed possessions, still those possessions are unavailable, for they produce him nothing, as he can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them.

[534] 45. Although dancing is spoken of here as an amusement, it is highly probable that at least a part of it had connection with the Vodun religion.

[241] 46. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti* (London, 1830), I, 100. Mackenzie is clearly exaggerating, unless by "field labor" he means work on plantations, in contrast to farming on small plots.

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can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them. There are some instances of proprietors leasing their lands to persons who undertake to cultivate them, for which they receive about one-third of the produce; but this is far from being general, and I imagine can only be accomplished by military men who have the command of troops, and who are thereby enabled to till them by working parties daily sent out for that purpose.[47]

An interesting side light is provided by a Quaker visitor, Candler, who in 1842 wrote that he was struck by the entire equality which seemed to exist between servant and master. Every workman was addressed in courteous manner, as "*mon fils*."[48] On inquiry, Candler was told that the profits of planting were good that year, laborers were scarce, and it was therefore "necessary to conciliate all by kindness, or no work would be done."

A particularly grim account of the state of cultivation near the close of Boyer's administration (1842) is given by a Frenchman:

> The fields of Haiti are dead. There where under slavery thousands of tons of sugar were made, now one sees only a few crops and a little syrup to turn into raw rum. Lively growths of cactus cover with thorns the acres of cane, of fields, of pastures deserted by the hand of man; the cactus invades the towns, coming even up to the heart of the cities, flourishing in the midst of ruins, as if to insult the inhabitants. . . . On the one hand, no one cultivates with regularity, because everyone is discouraged by the thefts of cane and fruit by people without any moral discipline, and in a country without police; while on the other hand, people complain of being poor, and of not being able to devote enough money to indispensable improvements. . . . And if the proprietors cannot even make work progress, imagine the condition of the poor![49]

As the people grew individually poorer, the value of the land sank until it was useless for an owner to try to prevent squatting on his estate. Holdings grew smaller and smaller, in spite of the prohibition on sales of real estate in parcels less than fifteen acres. Good land might be had in every part of the island quite cheaply, much of it even from the government which had enacted the restrictive law. Any man not satisfied with his condition as a paid laborer might, if

47. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti (Saint Domingo)*, (London, 1828), p. 313.
48. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti* (London, 1842), p. 37.
49. V. Schoelcher, *Colonies étrangères et Haïti: résultats de l'émancipation anglaise* (Paris, 1842), II, 263 ff.

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175 he could save or borrow the money, buy a small patch and become a
425 freeholder in his own right. And in the mountains, if one were willing to endure isolation, one could get much land by squatter's claim.

175 A vivid indication of the declining economic condition of the country will be found in the actual scale of real-estate prices. In the
435 eighteen-twenties the finest land in the republic did not sell for more
423 than $60 an acre, even when contiguous to a port for shipping or extremely fertile. Such a price would have been ridiculous in the days of the French colony. Farms in the plains and mountains, suitable for cocoa and cotton, could be had in Boyer's time for $20 or $30 an acre in any quantity from ten to five hundred acres. In the rich Artibonite Valley small plots for horticultural purposes sold for $40 an acre; indigo and cotton land rarely brought over $30; and a complete cotton plantation which had borne richly in colonial days sold for from $12 to $20 an acre. In the North, despite its fertility and more careful cultivation under Christophe, land seldom brought more than $40 or $45, while pasture lands could scarcely find purchasers at $40. A lot in Port-au-Prince with a frontage of sixty feet and a depth of fifty, well situated for trading purposes, brought only $200.[30] Fifteen years later even these prices were fantastically high, for by them no one was wealthy enough to purchase an estate.

5. *Lapse into Peasantry (1827–1843)*

463 "Peasant" is one of those words whose meaning everyone knows
241 yet whose definition is never precise. It clearly carries the connotation of farming the land by conservative, generally uneducated, persons whose families have for generations lived on the same plot of earth without any great ambition to move away or change their economic lot. It means small ownership. And most particularly it means a comparatively low social status, for we think of peasantry as existing only in those countries which have a clear-cut social class system, with a stratification which would make it difficult for a person to move from one class to another. His land is to the peasant both home and living; his household is dependent almost solely upon the product of its own labor. He is generally conceived to be too complacent, if not too ignorant or too dull, to take advantage of commercial opportunities which might bring him wealth. "It is increasingly

30. These figures for 1824–28 are from Franklin, *op. cit.*, p. 314.

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recognized that the really important characteristics peculiar to the peasant are his sentiments and attitudes, the intense attachment to his native soil and family tradition, which, even in the economic sphere, take precedence over the desire for individual advancement and gain."[51]

Haiti in 1804 was still a country of large estates, and Dessalines and Christophe strove to keep it so. Under the active generosity of Pétion and the passive indifference of Boyer after his Code Rural had failed, few great plantations were left intact. The recorded donations of these two presidents to their generals, civil functionaries, and lesser officers, are as follows:[52]

134 grants of 150 carreaux (about 450 acres).			Total: 59,300 acres.
176	35	105	18,480
639	30	90	57,510
721	25	75	54,325
2,322	20	60	139,320
8,000	5	15	120,000
			Grand total: 448,935 acres.

Haiti followed French law rather than British, so that the rule of primogeniture did not prevail. It requires only a moment's reflection to see that even within a single generation the thousands of small properties noted in the table would be subdivided many times, since a father apportioned his land to all his sons. By 1842 it is probable that not a single plantation of the size common in colonial times was still intact.[53] On the testimony of numerous government officials and commandants of arrondissements, it was estimated in that year that 46,610 small landed properties were under fair cultivation.[54] If the population at that time be estimated at 800,000, seven eighths of whom were engaged in agriculture, there would accordingly be about fifteen people (including children) to each rural property. But

A large number of small estates are left out of this account, which are said to be *badly* cultivated, or neglected. Taking the number of each separate

51. C. von Dietze, "Peasantry," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, XII, 50.
52. This table is compiled from figures cited in Armand Thoby, *La Question agraire en Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1888), *passim*, and Dr. P. Dalencour, *Le Sauvetage national par le retour à la terre* (Port-au-Prince, 1923), p. 18.
53. See Raymond Renaud, *Le Régime foncier en Haïti* (Paris, 1934), pp. 42–45.
54. Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

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175 241 family on an average, at 5 persons, husband, wife, and three children, we arrive at the conclusion, that the head of every third family in the state is engaged in cultivating his own freehold; a proportion of independent [311] proprietors, such as perhaps scarcely any other country in the world can exhibit. The number of acres cultivated by these small proprietors, varies [231] from 9 to 30; many of them keep horses, cows, and goats: they raise sufficient provisions of the bread kind, such as yams, plantains, and bananas, for [437] the main support of their families; they kill hogs for meat, and they dispose [431] of their coffee, cotton, hemp, castor oil, and fruit, at the public market for money, to purchase clothing, furniture, and other necessaries. The houses [342] they live in, though poorly furnished, are decent habitations; and many of them have gardens attached, neatly fenced in with bamboo, or with logwood, or aloe hedges.[33]

175 423 427 If these figures are even approximately accurate, the majority of the people of Haiti had not yet become peasants in the sense of being landowners, for in the statement cited only a third of the people owned their land. Another large group, however, possibly a third of the population, were squatters, living on land which technically belonged to someone else but from which they were never ejected. The remaining third, excluding the town and village dwellers, were in the intermediate stage between hirelings and peasants. Some worked for a given rate of wages, but the larger number worked for shares of the produce on the land of large proprietors.

175 423 427 24 The crop-sharing system (Americans of the twentieth century call it share-cropping) of the 'thirties and 'forties was an automatic but temporary adjustment worked out in perfect disregard of the Code Rural. In general, two arrangements prevailed. By one the laborers worked in return for half the total produce of the estate, raising food for themselves in gardens provided by the owner; under the other they worked for a quarter of the produce, the proprietor guaranteeing to keep them in provisions. There was no general concurrence in Haiti at the time as to which plan was the more economical to the laborer and his family. Certainly both schemes were prejudicial to large crops of coffee and sugar, and therefore to the economic prosperity of the proprietors and the state; since this was so, the crop-sharing expedient was short-lived. Workers participating in it lived in the huts and cabins which, under the old régime, had been inhabited by their slave ancestors. As these fell to pieces others, cheaper and less soundly built, were constructed to take their place.

The crop-sharing system, economically debilitating though it was,

33. *Ibid.*

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The crop-sharing system, economically debilitating though it was,

had one great advantage to the laborer: he felt himself free and independent, with the right to engage himself to any man or to refrain from working altogether. No longer was he bound to the soil of one plantation, forced to labor under a "driver," forbidden to dance or to sleep when the mood seized him. This new freedom imparted to him a self-consequence which made him, in his own estimation, almost as important as a freeholder. The master could not say to his men, "Go into such a field and dig cane holes. The clouds are gathering and we must get in the young plants"; or, "Weed such a field," or "Prune the coffee trees today." Neither could he send a band of young people at his discretion to pick the coffee berries as they ripened, or to cull the bad berries, when pulped and dried, from the good. Every man was, so to speak, master of his own house and his own hours, considering himself at liberty to work with his family at almost any time and in any manner he pleased.

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Herein lay the fatal defect of the crop-sharing system. There was no way of coming to an agreement among the laborers on an estate as to the amount of labor to be performed by each. One man was weaker than another; one more disposed to drink or to loaf than another. The whole group of, say, twenty families was to share in common the half or the quarter of the gross produce; but who should measure the exact proportion which would fall in justice to each family?

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These annual disagreements led to a compromise which ultimately broke down even the moderate-sized estates. The proprietor, in order to avoid disputes, divided his fields among his laborers, allowing one family five acres, another ten, a third twenty, according to the nature of the land and the sort of produce which could be raised upon it. True, the proprietor lost by this division all the benefits of concentrating labor in a particular field at a particular season; also, if he wished to have necessary work done in haste which required a large number of laborers, he had to bribe them (generally by a drink of rum or tafia). Obviously, when such difficulties stood in the way of necessary repairs and improvements, the proprietors simply preferred to allow their estates to deteriorate. Like the workers, they acquired an attitude of not worrying about the future; unlike the frame of mind of the workers, their attitude came from resigned acceptance of the inevitable, not from preoccupation with the present.

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Certain astute proprietors tried to get as many families together as could act in concert without jarring or jealousy, and to induce them,

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175 by persuasion, to do as much work as possible for his and their own
473 interests. In a few cases the success of such efforts was tolerably good;
427 but one worker disposed to be sullen or idle, or even not physically
24 strong, might throw the whole scheme into disorder. One's own
425 profits would be cut by the mindless of others even when one had
96 himself been industrious. This caused a decline of incentive, sometimes among a whole group of potentially good workers, because one or two of the number slacked. Probably the most pernicious evil of such arrangements was that every laborer realized that he did not suffer as directly for idleness or neglect as when working for himself; his fellow workers shared the consequences of his misconduct in some degree, and his employer in a still greater measure. The driving force of individual responsibility was removed.

[692] Boyer and Inginac, foreseeing just such disorder, had tried to
[696] provide against it in the Code Rural by giving summary powers to local judges to inflict penalties upon lazy or malingering workers. Quite aside, however, from the loss of time and the inconvenience to both parties in going constantly to a judge for his decision, the proprietor was afraid to act on this principle to any extent, since if he did so he might lose his laborers altogether.

175 It was a rare proprietor, then, who could hope to make much of a
473 fortune out of his plantation. More and more the landowners, having
427 subdivided their fields, grew lax in overseeing them. The workers,
24 freed from constant supervision, accustomed by long habit to living
466 in one hut, and unconsciously developing a mentality which made
425 them feel, as did American squatters on frontier lands, that they had
178 a right to the land they tilled, imperceptibly developed into peasants. The state's remaining properties, no longer under cultivation, were invaded by families of small farmers, and the government took no steps to oust them or send them back to privately owned plantations. The estates of individual aristocrats underwent the same fate if not
[625] carefully watched. Theoretically, it was the duty of the army to drive out squatters, to force laborers back into "proper" agricultural work; but the army consisted of peasant youths who would not turn against people of their own group.

671 Legal irregularity was gradually sanctioned by the passage of
178 time, usage being a stronger guarantor of rights than unenforced laws on the statute books.

880 Haitian peasantry, to sum up, began as the unplanned, undesired

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result of two policies intended to achieve ends quite different; first, presidential gifts of land, the chief purpose of which had been to pay the soldiers of the republic; and second, the crop-sharing system adopted by landlords after the failure of Boyer's Code.

6. *The Drawing of Caste Lines (1820–1843)*

Almost every major presidential aim of Boyer came to grief. His tranquil quarter-century rule, the unified island, the financial surplus with which his presidency began, the peace with France after 1825—all these advantages combined with his good intentions did not save his projects from shipwreck. Near the beginning of his régime he announced that, like his revered predecessor Pétion, he felt the safety of Haiti to lie in the abolition of all color distinctions and prejudices. Just as his great Code Rural proved a complete failure, however, so did his efforts to do away with the color line. On the contrary, it was during Boyer's time that class distinctions became fixed, in large part although not wholly, on the basis of color.

Stating that the policy of his government was to put an end, as far as possible, to jealousies of caste, he consistently for a few years promoted a black every time a promotion had been given to a mulatto or other light-skinned person. This procedure soon met an insuperable obstacle. Government posts in general required literacy, and only a very small number of blacks were educated, so that the supply of Negroes was not sufficient to furnish him with candidates. Since one of the few roads to lucrative success lay in official positions, ambitious young colored men sought eagerly for government office, and Boyer soon had no alternative but to advance men of his own complexion. In the army, on the other hand, literacy was not necessary for promotion. Ambitious Negro youths, therefore, frequently chose this career which, while not very profitable in monetary rewards, at least gave a man a certain social status and economic security.

Because of the state of education in the republic, consequently, an ugly situation developed, with the civil arm of government almost wholly in control of the colored element and the military force dominated by blacks. Fortunately for the country no crisis developed during the 1820's and 1830's which made an open breach between army and state.

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Color prejudice, in so far as a mass of people is concerned, is generally one-sided, directed by the upper group at the lower. The ordinary illiterate worker between 1820 and 1840 was inclined to accept without much question the superiority of the lighter-skinned Haitians. Resentment was often present, and envy, but hardly prejudice. The real contest developed between the colored élite and the blacks of ambition. The latter had reason to feel proud of their rise from slavery; many had shown ability, and felt themselves the mental and moral equals of the mulattoes; the men who had broken the power of the French, ended slavery, and founded the state were Negroes—and now Haiti was being ruled by mulattoes. The contest between the two groups was the obverse side of prejudice. The envied minority, jealously guarding their distinction, were generally conscious of prejudices which they rationalized with pronouncements about superior mentality and innate qualities. They would concede the difference between an educated black and a mere peasant, but would still cling to the feeling that all the culture in the world would not make the educated Negro a peer of the mulatto.

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Government documents of the period can hardly be expected to call attention to color prejudice and its concomitant resentments. To foreign observers, however, it was immediately apparent and noteworthy as a dominant characteristic of the country. Testimony is unanimous as to its existence; more important, the commentators all agreed that it was growing. An acute Frenchman called Boyer "the slow martyr of his color,"[56] being a mulatto in a republic of blacks: his color made Boyer suspect, so that the President had to spend most of his time and energy trying to avoid conflicts on this issue. It is entirely possible that Boyer's dearest schemes, particularly the enforcement of the Code Rural, failed primarily because the army was controlled by Negroes, whom the President dared not drive too hard; while only the army could have enforced faithful performance by the black laborers. An American doctor stated in 1838 that "the mulattoes, to preserve the sceptre of power in the possession of their caste, are driven to compliances which a negro president would feel himself empowered to spurn from him as the basest infringement on his dignity."[57]

56. Leyseltier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, I, 211. This observation is much more to the point than the specious remarks which follow, attributing Boyer's inaction partly to the enervating effects of the tropical climate.

57. Brown, *op. cit.*, II, 259.

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Next to the agricultural system, the state of education in the republic probably had as much to do as anything with fixing the caste system upon Haiti. So long as the mass of people were not only black but illiterate as well, they would have no means of reaching a social status beyond the one in which they existed. Certainly the aspiring Negroes would not wish to enlighten them, for to stir up the whole people would destroy the very possibility of distinction. As W. S. Gilbert puts it, "When everyone is somebody, then no one's anybody." Public education, consequently, hardly advanced a step during Boyer's twenty-five years. It had had a feeble enough beginning under Pétion and remained, as it had been, a prerogative of the well-to-do.[58]

Under the complaisant rule of Boyer, accordingly, the people of color came to regard themselves as the unquestioned élite. Their claim was shared, though not always acknowledged, by a small number of blacks (mostly from the North) who had been ancien libres in colonial Saint-Domingue or noblemen under Christophe; who were literate, or whose wealth and ambition attracted attention. Boyer's boast that "all the feelings and prejudices, either of olden times or of national origin, have been superseded by an intense patriotism" was pure buncombe, as he certainly knew.

If only the best brains of the colored group had been content to serve the government, Haiti might have profited from her situation; but lesser government offices were merely springboards for foreign trade in coffee and mahogany, or for the manipulation of business deals. Not "intense patriotism," as Boyer liked to think, but financial gain was the motivating force of the élite, as it had been from colonial times. The man who could amass a modest fortune, so that his children might be educated and their security assured, had done his duty, and he would have been regarded as quixotic to renounce business opportunities for the dubious honor of minor political office. As a consequence of this natural search for gain, the government during Boyer's administration became less and less efficient. Relatives of élite businessmen were given posts because the President could not afford to offend important families. These minor officials then performed their duties awkwardly, or neglected them, in "the unfailing obliquity of dullness."

Skin color became the obsession of high society. Those who had no other merit of which to boast could still revel in their complex-

58. See chap. XVI.

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ions. Intermarriages between persons of widely different color became extremely rare, being regarded by many lighter Haitians with actual disgust. Everyone with social pretensions wanted to be whiter. Dr. Brown stated it baldly: "The pure negro seeks to ally himself to the griffe,[59] the griffe to the mulatto, the mulatto to the quateroon, the latter to a mustif, and the mustif, having but an untraceable tinge of African blood in his organization, is uproariously indignant if he is accused of having any at all."[60] An educated young black of several generations of free parents was scornfully turned down by a lighter-skinned woman considerably his inferior in breeding and wealth because her children would be darker than herself—"*petits enfants griffes*," as she put it. The prejudices of colored people against blacks was almost as great, if not quite as intense, as the former prejudice of whites against colored people in colonial times. No one forgot that there had been black as well as colored freedmen in the colony; but it was much simpler for people of color to claim their long career as free than for blacks to do so.

The attitude of upper-class Haitians toward whites in the midst of all this color prejudice was an interesting mixture. On the one hand, all good Haitians professed to dread a return of the whites; on the other, they welcomed white businessmen in the country. In a certain respect the whites were regarded much as were the Jews of Europe in the Middle Ages: they were wealthy—and therefore legitimate objects of pillage, necessary evils for the sake of finance. Theft from a white man by government action was a service to the state. Laws were consequently varied from time to time with the sole purpose of profiting from a foreigner's position. True, the trader might protest to his home government, but if England or the United States took a strong stand, Haiti could always retreat; if those governments did not stand firm, Haiti had gained. In the Haitian courts the whites had little show, for Article 38 of the Constitution forbade them to own real estate or to become citizens; they might not even hold a lease for more than ten years; and they might not marry Haitian women.

[673] [671] [641] [423]

Nevertheless, the analogy with medieval Jews falls down at one vital point: whites were not viewed with contempt. Quite the con-

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59. A term denoting those parts in four of Negro blood. This term as well as "mustif" goes back to colonial white society; neither was, or is, used by cultivated Haitians.

60. Brown, op. cit., II, 283-284.

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tary; they were grudgingly respected as superior beings, arbiters of the fate of the outside world, potential destroyers of the privileges of the Haitian élite should they return to the country in force. Although white men might not legally marry Haitian women, it was not every woman who could resist the opportunity of having children lighter than herself. One indication of the ambiguous attitude toward the whites was seen in religion. In 1842 out of sixty or seventy Roman Catholic priests in the island, only one was a Haitian. Many people in the country were well educated, and certainly more than equals in point of scholarship and savoir-faire of the rude priests imported generally from Corsica. But a feeling was current among the peasants that "colored baptism will not stick." There is no indication that the European priests, since they were well paid for their services, attacked this particular heresy. As for the élite, they derived a certain satisfaction in being served by white priests. Aside from the churchmen, however, the only white man in any place of prominence in the country was the mayor of Saint-Marc, whose father had befriended Boyer in former times.

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Few visitors had kind words to say of social conditions in the Haiti of Boyer. As a Frenchman put it:

> Democracy was the rule; but what a democracy! A hodge-podge of the most heterogeneous ideas, an alliance of the most contrary principles, of American federalism with military control; the sovereignty of the people replaced by the sovereignty of a ruling clique; and finally, all the intellectual vainglory of a people young, inexperienced, and for a long time denied the legitimate manifestation of their own wishes. Added to all these inconsistencies is the antagonism of race.[61]

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This antagonism was, indeed, paramount. The habitual hauteur and assumed pretensions of the lighter Haitians were a perpetual thorn in the flesh of the ambitious blacks, and thus the breach was everywhere widened and made permanent. The blacks retaliated against these distinctions by refusing to obey orders from mulattoes in office, or by petty outrages against private citizens among the colored group.

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The vital lack of the country, assuming that stability is desirable, was a middle class of any sort. On the base of hundreds of thousands of peasants, illiterate, unambitious, indifferent to progress, was built

61. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, "La République d'Haïti: ses dernières révolutions; sa situation actuelle," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, XV, No. 4 (Nov., 1843), pp. 661-662.

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175 an ineffective government, momentarily in the hands of colored
563 elite. Attempting to dominate politics was a numerically small group
565 of colored people and a still smaller group of Negroes. Although
[701] prevailingly black, the army might be, and in the later nineteenth
[669] century was continually, used by whichever group offered more.
A third power, a middle class, might have balanced these antagonistic factions. Lacking such a moderating influence, Haiti was the victim of recurrent revolutionary movements.

175 At the time of Boyer, actual democracy would have been no safe-
178 guard, for it would have meant the supremacy of ignorance. His
642 rule was the beginning of unfortunate days for Haiti. After the
643 auspicious opening years, the President became an impotent onlooker as his country declined. It is instructive to compare the Haiti of Dessalines and Christophe with the Haiti of 1843, only one generation later.[62]

175 The Haiti of 1806 had been a beehive of activity. Soldiers, fore-
178 men, and policemen then stood over the workers with lashes to
642 force them to labor for the benefit of their state. Production was
433 carefully planned, an ordered hierarchy making every person in the
446 country responsible to another higher than himself until the ruler was reached at the pinnacle. The cardinal fault of any laborer was to shirk at his task. The year 1843, on the contrary, found Haiti in a condition of quiescence which, to those who remembered the old days, resembled torpor. The central government had ceased to drive its citizens, and its half-hearted attempts at persuasion were futile. Overseers, drivers of gangs of workers, soldiers whose duty it was to enforce labor, had disappeared from the scene. Every man was his own master.

175 The standard of living in 1806 as in 1843 was low; but in the earlier
178 year there had been a promise of great things to come once Haiti
511 had rebuilt what war had destroyed. The succeeding years, however, failed to inculcate into the people a desire for any higher standard of life. Country dwellers were benighted; ignorance deepened the habit

[162] 62. Haiti has never had an accurate census, so that it is impossible even to estimate
[175] the total population of the country either in 1806 or in 1843. The figures of 380,000 and 800,000 given by some authors for the two years are mere guesses. Likewise, one can only deduce the proportion of people in the main economic and social categories; probably seventy-five per cent of the Haitians were serfs in 1806 and the same percentage peasants in 1843; the "aristocracy," including all who did not derive a living by manual labor or army service, could hardly have reached five per cent in either year; the army, house servants, day laborers in the towns, and petty businessmen would make up the other twenty per cent.

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of living only for the day by making people content with a low level of physical existence. Haitian peasants were isolated from the rest of the world; and one who has no standard of comparison rarely has the incentive to improve his living conditions.

Production declined between 1806 and 1843 both in quantity and in quality. Sugar, the staple of colonial trade and still an important export under Christophe, disappeared from the market figures altogether under Boyer. Most of the cane which was raised was worked into syrup and then into tafia (raw rum) for local consumption. Careful attention and the well-ordered machinery necessary for sugar manufacture were both lacking in 1843. Sugar cane was almost never newly planted, but simply lasted on from French days; what plants there were had little attention: they were not manured, or ploughed, or stripped of their dead leaves. Everything was left to nature. The producing of coffee in actual number of pounds stood up well, although the quality fell off through lack of cultivation; the price in world markets steadily declined, however, so that the crop of 1843 brought in only twelve million francs as compared with twenty million for the smaller crop of 1822.[63]

Practically every acre of the fertile soil of Haiti was cultivated in 1806, the methods steadily improving under Christophe. Irrigation projects were then being developed to replace those destroyed in the wars, and a measure of experimentation went on with new crops and fertilizers. In 1843, however, what was called a coffee "plantation" was actually only a large tract of land on which coffee trees grew wild. There was no laying out of the lands nor any improvement of the soil or pruning of the trees to strengthen the parent stem. Until the berries were ready to be picked the coffee tree was rarely touched, except when pigs scratched their backs on it, or goats and donkeys cropped the grass around it. Cotton likewise received little cultivation. Cocoa raising practically ceased altogether, for it required intelligent management.

Haiti under Dessalines still had many buildings of French con-

63. The state figures for 1843 revealed only four money crops, no one of which was as productive of income as sugar had been. In the comparative tables given below it must be remembered that prices declined between 1822 and 1843.

	3-Year Average, 1822–26	1843
Coffee	34,000,000 pounds	35,000,000 pounds
Cotton	678,000 "	2,000,000 "
Campêche	5,600 "	30,000,000 "
Acajou	2,480,000 feet	6,000,000 feet

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Haiti under Dessalines still had many buildings

175 of French con-
171 struction, both plantation mansions and slave quarters. With forced
331 labor available these had been kept in a measure of repair. Christophe, not content with leftovers from colonial days, had sponsored architectural activity all over his kingdom; if his citadel is the most noteworthy example, there are also to his credit lesser palaces and government warehouses. Almost no building was done by Pétion and Boyer, however, and by the 1840's the constructions of the French
[721] had fallen into serious disrepair. Severe earthquakes and fires quickly ruined what time had already weakened. By the middle of the century one saw, instead of trim slave quarters near great mansions, a few straggling towns of one-story houses, the hillsides dotted with ramshackle huts, and the plains with dashed shacks.

175 From great estates to tiny plots; from carefully tilled fields to
178 small gardens in a wilderness; from financial prosperity to debt;
181 from directed enterprise to sloth; from an attitude of hopeful de-
433 termination to one of tolerance for things as they are—these are the striking contrasts of the two periods. It could hardly have been imagined in Christophe's day that the smart, disciplined Dahomet would be succeeded by casual ragamuffins who dozed on their tilted chairs while on sentry duty. Christophe had liked his subjects to be well dressed, and insisted on it; but the British consul in Boyer's time wrote that "the laborers are, generally speaking, nearly naked; in fact, adults only wearing what is barely necessary to prevent indecent exposure, while the children of both sexes run about without covering of any kind."[64]

175 It was the parcelling of landed estates combined with the disap-
178 pearance of forced labor which initiated the transition from serfdom
433 to peasantry. Personalities as dynamic as Christophe's or as brutal as
[441] Dessalines' would have been required to keep the people in a servile
[443] condition in a land of tropical fertility. Contemporary foreign judg-
[461] ment was almost unanimous in placing the blame for declining
[164] prosperity upon indolence (the word is continually repeated, generally preceded by the adjective "natural"). It may be noted in passing that no one at the time seems to have realized how widespread were the debilitating diseases of hookworm and malaria, which can make apparently husky men prefer rest to work. Responsibility for economic failure rests as much upon the governing class,

64. Charles Mackenzie, *Communications Received at the Foreign Office [of Great Britain] Relative to Hayti* (1829), p. 86.

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however, as on the masses. Nothing was done to edu[illegible] the people and so inculcate in them the desire for a higher stan[illegible]ard of living. Where food is easily got, the government gentle, [illegible]d the people ignorant, one hardly looks for progress.

Foreigners who knew Haiti were prophesying [illegible] from through most of Boyer's administration. The British consul [illegible] was the most vocal of these prophets. He toured the whole republic [illegible] in 1828 and found only local variations on a sorry state of affairs. At Jacmel he reported a parceling of the land, a decline of plan[illegible]tations, and a horror of corporal punishment by the people; it seem[illegible]ed to surprise him that every blow given a worker was returned i[illegible] kind. In the arrondissements of Saint-Marc and Gonaïves cotton c[illegible]ntinued to be the chief crop as it had been in French days but quant[illegible]ity and quality had declined. At Petite-Rivière relative prosperity pre[illegible]vailed because the lands there were under the control of a former [illegible]lieutenant of Christophe, who managed to apply that king's stern [illegible] discipline to his workers. From Gonaïves to Cap Nicolas Mô[illegible] cultivation was at a low ebb; near Cap-Haïtien everything agric[illegible]ultural was in ruins.[65]

Industry and discipline, the two commonest charac[illegible]teristics of the Haiti of Christophe, were precisely those most notabl[illegible] absent from the Negro masses of 1843. Obedience had given way to [illegible] independence of behavior. A visitor in 1842 describes the actual c[illegible]ondition of a plantation in the arrondissement of Port-[illegible]. Where for[illegible]merly thirty-two families had toiled industriously, under strict c[illegible]ommanders who were free to inflict physical punishment upon laggar[illegible]ds, now only twelve families remained, the rest having become [illegible]freeholders. These twelve had a crop-sharing agreement with the [illegible]owner of the estate whereby they received the income from half the [illegible]0,000 pounds of coffee yielded by the land; but also they

appropriate to themselves almost the whole of the provisi[illegible]ons which the land furnishes, sending down only a few of the rarer veg[illegible]etables, beans, peas, and artichokes, to their master, for his table at Port-[illegible]au-Prince, and supplying his need when he comes to reside for a few days i[illegible] the country. This he knows very well, but has no alternative but to bear i[illegible] quietly.[66]

65. See particularly *ibid.*, pp. 94, 123–125. The consul clearly felt th[illegible] the only hope of salvation in Haiti was a reintroduction of some sort of coercion su[illegible] as that used by Dessalines and Christophe.

66. Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

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IV

CASTE LINES BECOME PERMANENT

175 178 THE contrast between the golden days of forced labor and the stagnating mediocrity of Boyer's Haiti was as vivid to thinking Haitian americans as it was to foreign whites. Particularly the young "intellectuals" of the thirties who knew something of the progress taking place in the rest of the Western World felt that the time had come to stem the wave of economic disintegration at home. In a series of pronouncements they pointed out that the advancement of Haiti had "been constantly slowed up for some time. . . . Haiti is stationary, is retrograde: we need no other proof of it than this frightful uncertainty about the future which so deeply disturbs all serious minds and sincere patriots." One may discount the phrase 175 about "sincere patriots," for peasants were patriots even though 668 undisturbed by the economic stagnation. The agitation for reform won a wide following among all the elite who cherished a glowing recollection of earlier days.

Leaders of the young men called upon Boyer in 1838 to introduce stronger methods of forced labor; but Boyer, remembering the fate of his Code Rural in which he had tried to do precisely this, could think of no effective way of tinkering again with the economic system. From the young men he received the most contradictory advice as to specific methods. The result of the appeal was therefore merely continued inaction by the government. The agitators, ex- 175 cellent critics if poor reformers, accordingly persisted in their cam- 668 paign, adding new converts to their cause until the movement pro- 669 duced a crisis. Revolution broke out in January 1843 at Torbeck in the South, and rapidly spread toward the capital; within two months 663 Boyer and his faithful secretary-general, Inginac, had departed for exile.[1]

[663] [159] 1. Boyer went first to Jamaica, and then to Paris. In the latter capital King Louis-Philippe gave him an audience and called him "prince." Boyer replied, "Sire, I am no prince. I have merely been the head of a small republic." The King of France thereupon affectionately pressed Boyer's hand, remarking, "When one has governed a million people for twenty-five years, he is raised to the rank of princes." . . . Boyer died in Paris in 1850.

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Political history of the next seventy-two years is a complicated story, of which only enough need be told here to illuminate the evolution of caste and social distinctions. Even a short summary reveals the bewildering confusion. Of the twenty-two heads of state between 1843 and 1915 only one served out his prescribed term of office;[2] three died while serving, one was blown up with his palace, one presumably poisoned, and one hacked to pieces by a mob; one resigned. The other fourteen were deposed by revolution after incumbencies ranging in length from three months to twelve years. 175 643

The Revolution of 1843 brought back into national prominence the whole matter of color and caste. The young revolutionaries, mostly light-skinned, seem to have assumed that their group was permanently in control. With cavalier highhandedness they set about capturing the last stronghold of Negro eminence: the army. They soon found, however, that they had caught a Tartar; their attempt to rule was fatal to them and their clique. 175 669

In the Constitutional Assembly convened to make a new constitution for the country, they professed astonishingly democratic doctrines. Proclaiming that the fault of former governments had been reliance upon military power, they now proposed to make civil power paramount by allowing the common people to vote. Since up to this time the franchise had been strictly limited to army officers and ancient lineage, such a radical departure as general suffrage makes no sense unless conceived as an attempt to break the power of the Negro-controlled army, for surely the élite had no confidence in the wisdom of the peasantry. Weight is given to this explanation by the paradoxical action of the revolutionaries in promoting to high army rank some of the strongest mulatto partisans of civil government. 175 668 646 642 641 701

The new constitution was an immediate failure. Most of the colored élite condemned the giving of voting rights to peasants and workers; the army chiefs, generally black and illiterate, some of them aging veterans of 1803, bitterly resented being made subservient to young, inexperienced civil officers; in fact, even the new mulatto president, Rivière-Hérard, had no conception of government other than by military dictatorship. 175 642 641

Not only was the constitution a failure; so was the government of the young revolutionaries. A part of their weakness lay in their 175 643

2. The presidential term varied under different constitutions; some allowed a four-year term with the right of reélection, some six years with no reélection.

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175 choice of a leader. Not gifted with administrative ability, Hérard
643 blundered first by imprisoning one of the most popular Negro leaders in the country, thereby turning much of the population of the South against him. Next, learning of conspiracies in the Spanish
[669] end of the island, he tried to stamp out revolt by exile and jail sentences, only to precipitate there a real revolution for independence. In his fight against the Dominican separatists he was roundly defeated, and his prestige sank rapidly to the vanishing point. Within two months after his inauguration, he had only one third of the island left over which to attempt to rule. Within a year he was out of power altogether and with him the colored people.

175 The Revolution of 1844, although supported by certain old friends
669 of Boyer, was chiefly a movement of Negroes—followers of the imprisoned black, Salomon; peasants from the South who had been promised much by the previous year's revolutionaries and had got nothing; and particularly the Negro army clique. The significant part of the new revolution was its announced purpose, to lessen the influence of the colored group in government, to have a black president, and to dispossess certain reputedly well-to-do citizens by
[643] dividing their estates among the people. Quickly successful, the insurgents promoted to the presidency the illiterate octogenarian black general, Guerrier, who in Christophe's kingdom had been Duke of Marmalade[3] and Duke of Avancé.

175 For the first time in a quarter-century the Negro element was again in the saddle, where it was to remain for the next fifteen years.
643 Everyone recognized Guerrier's personal courage and admired the
662 common sense which made him prefer conciliation to unnecessary violence as a method of government, but the colored people were shocked at having to live under the rule of another black ex-slave. The idea evoked grim memories. Knowing Guerrier's addiction to drink, the colored faction managed to make him a tool for their own use, so that his brief administration, ending with his death in 1845, was generally known as a "government of understudies." Guerrier was followed in the presidency by another black, likewise an octo-
175 genarian: Louis Pierrot, the handsome brother-in-law of King
643 Christophe. But Pierrot was even more ignorant than Guerrier and

[554] 3. This title generally evokes amusement among non-Haitians. Christophe had merely named his peers after districts whose names had been given by French planters in the eighteenth century. Another of his noblemen was a Count of Limonade.

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already showed signs of senile dementia; his tyrannical crotchets speedily raised up a revolt against him, and in 1846 he gave way to still another black, General Riché. Like his two predecessors, Riché was aged and illiterate. Nevertheless, he began his rule auspiciously by putting an end to dictatorship and surrounding himself with wise counselors. In 1847, just when the country was beginning to appreciate his good qualities, he died a victim of drugs taken to increase his vigor.

These four presidents, who had among them ruled less than four years, did not appreciably alter the social situation, for they had all been preoccupied with the suppression of revolutions. But Haiti was still in a position to take some definite step toward economic progress, education of the people, conciliation of the antagonistic colored and black elements. Because of a stupid whim, the country was precipitated down exactly the opposite path. The Senate gathered to select Riché's successor found itself unable to rally a majority vote for any candidate; whereupon one Senator proposed the name of an ignorant, entirely unillustrious, black general, Faustin Soulouque. The chamber immediately gave him a majority, for the supporters of each candidate saw in this complete nonentity a chance for another "government by understudies," in which they themselves would actually rule. When the Senatorial delegation arrived to inform Soulouque of his election, that unimpressive Negro, lying stretched out in his hammock, refused at first to take it seriously. He had more than once been the victim of practical jokes, and this looked like a particularly malicious one.[4] It took persuasion to convince him that he was indeed the new president of Haiti.

Soulouque's accession to power marked the beginning of a twelve-year nightmare for Haiti. During his first year of office the new president walked warily over the unfamiliar terrain. Those who had named him for their own ends felt justified in their scheme, for each opposing group still looked forward to controlling the government with Soulouque as a front. Meanwhile, however, the President had been carefully observing everything that went on around him, arriving at his own judgment of men and measures.

4. Many years before, Boyer had prophesied a period of disorder in Haiti and is reported to have said that in such a time "any man in Haiti might become president, even that stupid Negro over there," indicating Soulouque. It is told that Soulouque mumbled, "Please, Mr. President, don't make a fool of me."

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175 643 Suddenly, without warning, he reversed what had been mistaken for docile inactivity, and assumed complete personal command of the reins of office. By means of a well-organized body of secret police, [625] he inspired his own counselors with fear not only for their positions but for their lives. Although illiterate, Soulouque never signed a bill presented to him by his ministers until he was sure he knew its essential core. The hopeful "understudies" were forcibly awakened to the realization that they were hoist on their own petard.

175 643 563 669 The colored element was particularly apprehensive at Soulouque's amazing activity, for the President was clearly setting himself against their group, both in the cabinet and out. Determining clandestinely to get rid of their puppet before he became a Frankenstein's monster to destroy his creators, they fomented a new revolution. This, however, proved to be a strategic error of the first magnitude, for the President was already much stronger than they imagined. The insurrection was quashed with massacre and attendant frightfulness. In the aftermath, as Bouzon mordantly remarks, "the republic was calm—with all the tranquillity of a tomb!" By their ineptitude, the colored group had now made themselves completely insecure.

175 565 643 642 [555] In the second year of his régime Soulouque decided to imitate Dessalines by turning the state into an empire. His coronation was extremely gaudy, as well as expensive. Calling himself Emperor Faustin I, he created a peerage drawn chiefly from among his black generals—four princes, fifty-nine dukes, and numerous counts, barons, and knights. This was merely outward pomp to gratify their craving for prestige, for they had no functions to perform, nor even the necessity of Christophe's peers to pay for their regalia. As nobles they were given no responsibilities in directing economic activity nor any increased political power over districts of the empire. The Emperor's own vanity was flattered by having a peerage. He ruled as an autocrat with blatant despotism. For ten years following the coronation Haiti had to accustom itself to costly expeditions against the Dominican Republic, nearly all ending in defeat for Haiti. The outcome of these intermittent wars was neither gain nor loss of territory by either side, but only temporary rule of occupied districts. Haiti likewise had to accustom itself to sudden executions, to the shabby grandeur of court display, and to financial trickery which would not have deceived a schoolboy. While the heads of his opponents and even his loyal counselors fell, Soulouque's infantile "empire" tottered to economic ruin.

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"empire" tottered to economic ruin. Graft, default on the debt, increasing deficits, and debased currency were the order of the day, and so continued until 1859, when the accumulation of anger over the useless wars and the humiliating defeats made the Emperor so unpopular that a new and more carefully planned revolution accomplished his downfall. 175 643 652 669

Fifteen years of administration by Negro rulers had broken the political power of the colored élite. Only three light-skinned men became president thereafter until the occupation of Haiti by the American Marines in 1915; in the seventy-two years following Boyer's downfall, mulattoes ruled during only eight. The army under a black general was too powerful, a colored president too hampered by suspicion, to make the political game worth the candle. The colored élite, therefore, adapted themselves to existing conditions as best they could, controlling the business life of Haiti, filling the law offices and, because of their literacy, the secretaryships of state, and indulging in honorific cultural pursuits. 175 643 178 564

In the years after Soulouque the basic realities of Haitian life were changed hardly at all by shifting political administrations. Some of the presidents were mildly progressive, many were indifferent; still more were actually harmful; but the lives of the mass of peasants were not often touched by presidential vagaries. Politics was an affair almost wholly of townspeople, of the army, the élite, and the pseudo-élite. Revolutions, counterrevolutions, movements of reform, international tangles, financial woes, and most of the other complications to which unstable states are heir, absorbed the attention of rulers and upper-class folk who were politically inclined. 175 643 66

Constitutions were made by presidents and changed by their successors; the Senate passed contradictory laws in the same session if the chief executive so recommended; the courts were presided over by the president's men. Haitian law in the latter half of the nineteenth century was what the president's immediate strength and wish made it—or else it was folk custom, undisturbed by the rulers. 175 642 671 692

Never once, in the three quarters of a century after Boyer's time, did Haiti approach the high standard of production known in colonial days or in the early years of independence. The pattern of Haitian social and economic life became fixed in this seventy-five years. Haiti became a country of small-scale tillage by a peasant population, with only enough external trade to provide moderate 175 178 433 565 439

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175 178 365 433 439 [423] [428]

fortunes, that is, a few thousands of dollars, for a small number of élite, and to make the presidency a position economically rewarding enough to justify revolutionary conspiracies. The growth of a peasantry set in train during the long régime of Boyer continued, unbroken even by the numerous insurrections, until fixed in the mores. Land owned by the countryfolk was divided and redivided among their heirs, so that even holdings of moderate size became smaller.

175 643 566 423

Not one of the twenty-two rulers following Boyer made the slightest effort to return the country to the forced labor system of Dessalines and Christophe. They seemed to recognize the inevitability of a peasant way of life, or at least the impossibility of luring the people back to directed labor after a long experience of freedom. On the contrary, several presidents still further parceled the land.

175 643 423

President Guerrier, for example, the very year after Boyer was deposed, put on sale at moderate prices those state lands in the North not reserved for public use.[5] If the revolutionaries of 1843 had hoped to bring back Christophe's system of forced labor, their hopes were doomed to disappointment because of the state's need of immediate income. Christophe's state land areas were now broken up in the one part of the country where a few large plantations still existed.

175 643 421 423

President Geffrard in 1862 gave his blessing to small ownership, the basis of peasantry. Whereas Pétion's laws had prohibited sales of land in parcels less than fifteen acres, Geffrard's law regularized the leasing and sale of national property in lots of fifteen acres *at most*. Geffrard was the first president openly to admit that many government lands had been lost to citizens by squatting. In an endeavor to give legality to land held by squatters' rights, his law demanded that squatters register their claims, announcing that within a short time there would be no further dismemberment of the national patrimony except by grants and sales.[6] Few registrations were made, however, for the Haitian peasant had already acquired a suspicion of legal documents he could not read or understand, and he could see no reason for legalizing a status in which, with the squatter's tenacity and inertia, he already felt himself secure.

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Haiti was in constant financial straits. Money had to be borrowed

5. By a law of September 23, 1844.
6. Law of August 14, 1862. The articles cited here are 2 and 4.

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Haiti was in constant financial straits. Money had to be borrowed

abroad; then paid back at the promised time or a foreign warship would appear at some Haitian port. The steady drain of annual indemnity payments to France,[7] the cost of subduing revolutionary movements, and the large sum eaten up even in times of peace by wages to the army made successive presidents continue to yield government land for small sums of ready cash, in spite of Geffrard's announcement that no more state lands would be alienated. Nissage Saget, coming to power by a successful revolution, paid out fifteen acres to each soldier who fought in his campaign in the South.[8] The straits of the government resembled those of the Continental Congress in America during the Revolution.

Another impulse to parcel the land came during the administration of President Lysius Salomon (1879–88). The debt to France had finally, after half a century, been paid off; that incubus removed, Salomon instituted numerous reforms, financial, military, educational. On February 26, 1883, he signed a law by which every citizen of Haiti might conceivably become a landowner even if he lacked money to buy land. Upon receipt of a written agreement to cultivate certain tropical crops—specifically, sugar, coffee, cotton, cacao, and tobacco—the government would grant provisional title to a portion of fifteen to twenty-five acres of land taken from the public domain. The grant became final if, after a period of from two to five years, three quarters of the land had been effectively cultivated.

Five hundred requests were made in 1884 for such grants, and twelve hundred in the following year.[9] Thereafter one finds no records of applications for land; the peasants had discovered the hidden trap in this apparent generosity. How could a peasant with a tiny farm lacking implements and tools, not to mention ready cash, be expected to cultivate important crops on fifteen or twenty acres of land? He would have to cut down trees, uproot wild plants, fertilize the ground, purchase equipment and seeds, and then wait several years for a crop. As Thoby says, "And even then he was not a

7. See above, pp. 70–71.

8. Law of July 12, 1870. In August of the same year, Nissage required an inventory to be taken of state lands remaining.

9. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Manuel d'histoire d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1934), p. 317, cites these figures. They are contested by Dr. F. Dalencour, *Le Sauvetage national par le retour à la terre*, p. 31, who maintains that only 800 applications came in altogether. Here, as elsewhere, Haitian records are incomplete.

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175 proprietor in the true sense of the word, for he might not change his
643 crops and cultivate bananas, potatoes, yams, peas, or other food-
671 stuffs."[10] Critics of Salomon point out that these conditional grants
423 were designed to make of the peasant a simple fiscal workman for the state, to force him once more to labor for the public rather than for himself. The legislators of 1883 were preoccupied not with the welfare of the peasant, but solely with the increase of production and of fiscal revenue.

The law of 1883, then, like the Code Rural of 1826, fell into desuetude. The peasant was canny enough to see that passing a law did not change realities: he might still squat on government land and yet not be thrown off by the government. Both Boyer's Code and Salomon's law, although of entirely different inspiration, tried to regiment the Haitian peasant in agricultural lines beneficial to state finances but uncongenial to himself.

175 Up to the time of the American Occupation of 1915, there were
423 no other measures of much influence upon the status of the peasant. The whole impulse of the common people seemed to be toward the acquisition of plots of land for themselves. By the indifference or impotence of the state, they were allowed to install themselves upon government lands, there to found families and pass on the property upon which they had settled. Thus occurred what might be called a "natural"—certainly unplanned and automatic—development of small property. At first it came at the expense of the great domains; next, through allowing state leases to expire and be given cheaply into the hands of small farmers; finally there were the grants and sales at low prices to thousands of soldiers.

Time validated the peasants' claims, but the state has never formally done so. Legally it might be argued that only a small fraction of the population of Haiti has an indisputable right to the land on which it lives. By strict interpretation most of the peasants are still squatters whom the government might dispossess. The American Occupation, in view of this confusion, tried in businesslike fashion to survey the land and establish property rights. The task proved so extremely difficult that it was soon given up. It met with the stubborn refusal of the peasants to state their claims or take any interest in legalizing their rights. No administration has been foolhardy enough

10. Armand Thoby, *La Question agraire en Haïti*, p. 45.

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to attempt to retrace the path of property evolution, which has steadily taken its own course since the time of Pétion." 175 423

With the peasants prevailingly satisfied in their daily round of life, the separation of upper and lower castes in Haitian society has gradually become an accepted fact. At least ninety per cent of the total population now belong to the peasant group, whose members are as much reconciled to their status as in the United States the poorest colored folk to theirs. Vaguely they may often wish they had the privileges and luxuries of those above them; often, likewise, they feel resentment at the way in which they are treated; but in so far as it is permissible to generalize about two million people, it is fair to say that the Haitian peasant rarely complains of his lot. 565 [162]

Of the remaining ten per cent of the population a small fraction look upon themselves as élite. Some families of this group can be traced back to colonial times when their ancestors were already affranchis; others began to take on aristocracy under Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, and Boyer. Those whose forebears have become élite only since 1843 are less firmly entrenched in the topmost class. However, since no president since Boyer has ever succeeded in weakening caste lines, the élite one or two per cent may be said to constitute a stable social group. [178]

It is significant that although the blacks had the government in their hands for three quarters of a century they were unable to effect any slight change either in caste membership or in caste lines.

The part of the population which is neither élite nor peasant is not "middle class," as that term is understood in the Western World. It is rather a shifting percentage of Haitians whose one prevailing characteristic is their residence in towns. Some are wage earners, some small tradesmen; some are ex-élite on the way down the 565 369

11. The intimate observer of the Haitian peasant never fails to comment upon his love of the land. Whereas the colonial planter attached a value to his estate because it produced wealth, the peasant loves his little plot because it is his home. Through all the sixteen successive constitutions of Haiti, the one unchangeable article has been the prohibition of sale to foreigners of real estate in the country. Haitian land is for Haitian people—or was so until after the American Occupation. Likewise, the peasant is suspicious of any law which seems likely to reintroduce the system of large properties, for these might condemn him to leave his land and work at wages for the benefit of a master who, whether kindly or pitiless, would still deprive him of his present liberty. Therefore the Haitian countryman defends with all his force this soil to which his liberty attaches him, and which he cultivates after his own manner. "The Haitian loves his land almost as a man loves his woman." [181] [421] [425] [423] [24]

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565 social ladder, while others are ex-peasants on the way up. Acceptance
569 by the élite entails requirements severe enough to discourage many aspirants; at the same time, the heavens can be stormed by those
[55] willing to endure the heat and strain of battle. Lacking descent from former affranchis, the only means by which the ambitious may achieve entrance into the élite caste is by money, education, sustained social show and leisure, "proper" marriage, and separation from lower caste friends; and one generation rarely suffices to win acceptance by the élite.

565 The townspeople rarely attempt to break down the caste barrier. Servants, day laborers, delivery clerks, menials in general, they consider themselves one step removed from the peasants, and they know their place in the social hierarchy. By the scrupulous observances of the élite, by the casual acceptance of their status by the peasants, even by the very effort of the ambitious to improve their lot, the caste system is constantly reaffirmed and fulfilled.

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[p. 99]

V

CASTES SINCE THE AMERICAN OCCUPATION OF 1915

IN 1915 American Marines entered Haiti. One of the major reasons for their intervention may have been economic; certainly this explanation or accusation has been frequently made by opponents of American dollar diplomacy. Nevertheless, the ground was well prepared by political incompetency in Haiti in the years preceding 1915, and the reason given to the world by American statesmen to justify the Occupation was essentially a political one: Haiti was in a state of anarchy. 175 648 642

As has been abundantly shown, Haiti never had a semblance of democracy. From its beginning the country was governed either by a despot—the president, who might or might not be benevolent—or by an oligarchy. The failure of Haitian politics from 1843 onward was the inability of the titular ruler and the oligarchy to work in harmony; indeed, the oligarchy was continually divided against itself. Only three of Haiti's presidents from 1843 to 1915 were more than mediocre statesmen.[1] It is merely a question of degree, whether such phrases as "political and economic stagnation" and "social inertia" are more accurately descriptive than words like decay and degeneration. 175 642

A brief résumé of politics between 1900 and 1915 will set the stage for a view of the Occupation in relation to the development of caste. 175 643 642

1. With this judgment by a foreigner Haitians may obviously disagree. In the author's opinion the presidents Geffrard (1859–67), Salomon (1879–88), and Hyppolite (1889–96) were relatively distinguished men. To Geffrard may be credited the following: increase of educational facilities; construction of much-needed public works; an attempt to form a true middle class, even by importing Negroes from the United States; reduction of the size of the army by half; healing of a sixty-year breach with the Holy See, so that Haiti might once again have approved priests; the opening of closed ports to commerce; and improvement of agricultural methods. Salomon was an educated man with European experience; his achievements were to create a national bank, establish a sound currency, retire the public debt, lower tariffs, bring in schoolteachers from France, open rural schools, bring Haiti into the International Postal Union. Hyppolite's chief triumphs were in the field of public works—much-needed buildings, bridges, docks, telephone and telegraph lines. 175 643 65

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175 643 642 The twentieth century began inauspiciously with a succession of dull incompetents in the presidency. General Sam's administration (1896–1902) had been distinguished only by lethargic calm. Nord Alexis (1902–8), over eighty when elected, prolonged the peace by doing nothing to disturb it; he solved his financial problems by issuing paper money, while his political "policy" involved nothing more significant than the sponsoring of festivals to celebrate Haiti's hundred years of independence. The mild revolution which displaced him substituted a president more puerile than oppressive, Antoine Simon (1908–11), who is best revealed in a terse comment by a Haitian author: "When he passed by on a street or through a public square, everyone, foreigners as well as Haitians, must stand still, even stop smoking, and respectfully salute the Head of State. At any instant, without reason, the functionaries of the capital might be called to the Palace to endure his interminable and insipid discourses."[2] A revolution cut short his tedious régime.

Within the next four years six presidents rose and fell. Their administrations were worse than ephemeral; indeed, they hardly deserve the name of governments. Not one of the six had a happy time in office; the first was blown up with his palace, the second is generally thought to have been poisoned, the next three were quickly deposed by revolutions, and the last, after massacring his imprisoned political enemies, was horribly cut into small bits by an infuriated mob. Anarchy then ensued.

175 652 648 For years Haitian presidents had staved off financial collapse by heavy borrowing abroad. United States financial interests were involved in the Bank of Haiti and in a railroad company, while the American government, through its Monroe Doctrine, was disturbed by French and German threats to collect their Haitian debts by force. When President Guillaume Sam[3] was hacked to pieces by the mob, the United States landed Marines from gunboats which were conveniently just outside the harbor of Port-au-Prince. Beginning on July 28, 1915, the Occupation lasted for nineteen years.

128 648 With the question of America's justification in the matter of occupying Haiti this book cannot pretend to deal. As with most large matters of policy, convincing arguments can be offered on both sides. The important fact for this study is that the presence of white

2. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Manuel d'histoire d'Haïti*, p. 338.
3. Not to be confused with Simon Sam, who had ruled twenty years earlier.

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American Marines in Haiti during the next two decades had definite effects upon the social life of the country. 128 648

One of the most immediately observable results was the termination of the long political domination by the blacks, and reëstablishment of the colored élite in government control. The four presidents since 1915, Dartiguenave (1915–22), Borno (1922–30), Roy (1930), and Vincent (1930–41), have all been light-skinned. The United States forces had a definite hand in the election of the first two of these men. America's concern was certainly not to return the government to the colored group, but rather to have as titular heads of state men who were educated, temperate of mind, civil in manners—and, of course, mentally "supple" enough to carry out policies agreeable to the State Department at Washington. Since education had for long been a perquisite of the élite only, and since colored élite outnumbered black élite, the chances were good that the choice should fall upon a colored man in 1915 and 1922. Even so, it may have been pure coincidence that the Americans supported mulattoes rather than Negroes; it can hardly be coincidence that the mulatto presidents since 1915 have filled the key offices with colored men. They would assuredly maintain that they had tried to select persons best fitted for office. The fact remains that there are few blacks in the important ministries. 175 648 643 563

This return to political power of the colored element was one of the most sweeping transformations effected by the Marines, for once again, as in the golden days of Pétion and Boyer, political prestige accompanied and fortified social position. Since 1843 one black or almost black general had succeeded another as president of the republic, and the élite class had perforce to endure them. Socially tolerated these parvenu generals had been, but accepted never. When the Marines arranged the election of President Dartiguenave they effectively reversed the tradition of a century. Since 1915 there have been several Negro candidates for the presidency; in coming elections there are sure to be others; for the present and the near future it is safe to say there will be no more black non-élite presidents.

Such a prophecy is made with a certain assurance because of another result of the Occupation: reform of the army. All true friends of Haiti knew, as most Haitian statesmen had understood for a hundred years, that the huge standing army was an unmitigated burden to the economic, political, and social stability of the country. 175 701 648 177

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701 Since it was an entrenched interest, however, no responsible states-
648 man had dared to threaten its hold. The Marines swept it out of
177 existence, undertaking to substitute for it a trained constabulary of
625 only 2,000 men who should combine routine military tasks with
652 police duty in the scattered towns. Results were immediately ap-
669 parent: the weighty incubus of soldiers' wages was lifted from the treasury; thousands of men were deprived of sinecures and put back into productive economic activities; the constant threat of armed revolution was removed; better order was kept by 2,000 trained men in trim uniform than by twelve times that number of ragged loafers who called themselves soldiers; and since the army was no longer the great steppingstone to political office, the élite felt more secure from assault by ambitious but uneducated army men. From 1843 to 1915 the élite had endured many lower-caste presidents because these were able to control the army; now the army had disappeared.

175 The Marines did much that was of indisputable benefit to Haiti.
648 This was acknowledged even by the most vocal patriots who soon
[743] began to campaign for an end of the Occupation. Where there had been no real work in public health, Americans now built hospitals,
[744] established clinics, cleaned up the sources of many diseases, laid down
[365] sewage systems, gave the towns pure water. In 1915 there were only three automobiles in the country, and no roads for them to travel;
[491] the Americans built many miles of paved roads. In 1915 there had been only one wharf, two short stretches of railroad, two lighthouses,
[45] one electric plant; the Americans undertook electrification, telephone systems, the construction of administration buildings, and other public conveniences. Whether in such visible matters or in the obscurer realms of currency, banking, and budgets hardly a phase of daily life was left untouched. And judged by the standards of civilization the Marines improved what they touched.

175 But rancor against the Americans began early and continued to
648 the bitter end in 1934. The pride of all Haitians was deeply wounded
642 by the Occupation. For 111 years they had governed themselves and had assumed themselves to be a sovereign nation; the Marines patroling the countryside were vivid reminders that Haiti had never been independent except by sufferance, and that white men were once more overseeing the destinies of colored and Negro men. Nevertheless, the reasons proclaimed for opposing the Occupation were not those of hurt vanity. Some of those given were entirely

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plausible, such as the race prejudice displayed by many individual Marines;[4] the unnecessary slaughter in the suppression of *caco* (guerrilla) rebellions in the North; the continued holding of offices (and salaries) by Americans too impatient to train Haitians, as by the Agreement of 1915 they were supposed to do; the fostering rather than elimination of military psychology among the people by the presence of armed Marines. 175 648 642

The campaign against the Occupation was generally on the highest level of patriotism, for it threw out one variation after another on the same theme: We Haitians are not being allowed to govern ourselves. Some realists knew that their hurt national pride was accompanied by disappointment that certain salaries were not reaching Haitian pockets, certain prestige of office not redounding to the credit of Haitian men. What if the real reason for opposition were not the openly avowed one? The Marines must go! Order had been restored and government reëstablished. It was patent that any administration which could effect the withdrawal would be immensely popular: it was equally patent that if the Americans left the country, the benefits of their efficiency and material improvement would remain as a tangible boon to Haiti. 175 648 642 668

President Sténio Vincent, elected in 1930 after a campaign in which the Americans did not interfere, began the negotiations with Washington. With President Hoover he made headway toward reforms, but President Roosevelt's attitude was more actively cooperative. In 1934 Vincent had a series of conferences with the President of the United States; the latter, in pursuit of his good-neighbor policy, persuaded the American Senate to order the Occupation at an end and turn over without cost to Haiti many buildings, supplies, and equipment used by the Marines. Vincent personally benefited from the withdrawal of 1934. He called himself Haiti's "second Liberator,"[5] and made the anniversary of the American departure a national holiday. Indirectly the élite also benefited for now, entrenched in office, they could govern without white supervision. The material equipment was there to be enjoyed by the whole people at no further expense to them. 175 648 642 [643] [159] [527] [563]

4. The United States government in the early days had sent Marines from the Southern States to Haiti, on the theory that they would, from long acquaintance with Negroes, know how to "handle" them. This stupid blunder was shortly rectified.
5. Dessalines had, of course, been the first.

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175 648 642 423 563 The Occupation had had other far-reaching consequences. It had removed from the Constitution an article which had endured from the very first—the prohibition against ownership of land by white people. Americans argued that since Haiti's greatest potential source of wealth was agricultural (sugar and coffee in particular), new methods were needed if rehabilitation were to occur. Only foreign whites had both the necessary wealth and the requisite agricultural knowledge: therefore, whites must be attracted into the country by an opportunity to establish plantations. Although the Senate of Haiti protested violently against this reversal of tradition, which struck at the people's long pride in their complete ownership of the land, the Americans yielded only on the point of requiring five years' residence of the white landlord in the country. The influx of foreign whites has not been large, but in the Plaine du Nord and Port-au-Prince the white "colonies" are considerably larger now than in 1914.

175 648 563 Up to the present moment the white element in Haiti has not exerted any noticeable pressure on the government. Its mere presence, however, is bound to be a restraining influence on politicians, for most of the whites are Americans, and the government at Washington may not always follow a good-neighbor policy. With the clannishness so usual in white colonists living among darker people, the Americans in Haiti have their private clubs and their closed social set. For the first time since 1804 the élite are socially not the highest-ranking persons in the country.

175 648 563 144 The physical presence of several hundred white Marines for nineteen years had also one unplanned but inevitable result: an increase in the amount of white blood in the population. For many decades numerous élite had rested comfortably beneath their light skins, knowing that only they, with their greater mobility in the world, had any real chance to sustain a white strain. The Occupation, however, brought white men in contact with black women; there was a steady average of 2,000 white Marines in the country for two [554] decades. The light skin of resulting offspring suggested to many the possibility of a climb up the social ladder now that the most difficult rung had already been achieved. No figures are available on the number of children born in Haiti between 1915 and 1934 of white fathers, but it was a perceptible influx in the lower class.

175 458 Haitian businessmen enjoyed a greater economic prosperity during the Occupation than they had ever known before. It is commonly

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reported in Haiti that although they joined patriotically in the cheering when the Marines embarked in 1934, many of them shed tears to see the departure of 2,000 monthly salaries, most of which had been enriching the local tills. Indeed, the country came much closer to establishing a mercantile middle class during the Occupation than ever before. The only real control left behind by the Americans was an overseer of the national budget, destined to leave as soon as Haiti's external debt was finally paid off. To that end the government saved rather than spent, so that businessmen found no comfort in the state of economic affairs, particularly during a decade of world depression and European disturbance. Nationalist economic theories in Europe have upset Haitian markets, so that the élite thriftily save their pennies against hard times instead of spending them freely on present luxuries. The American overseer of the budget withdrew in 1941.

175 458 [648] [653]

At many points the forces of the Occupation touched unwittingly upon deep-rooted prejudices of the Haitian people. In order to secure laborers for road construction the Marines revived an old corvée law of Christophe's time, requiring forced labor on public works at the need of the government. Many of the ill-nourished peasants were taxed beyond their physical powers by work on the roads, so that an armed revolt by caco guerrillas broke out. Its suppression required months of time and cost many lives, leaving in its train a great deal of ill will.

175 648 466 669 653

The efficient Americans also came to grief when they attempted to make Haitians orderly in the American way. Land titles were in chaos, as we have noted. American experts wished to find a basis for internal taxation, so that economic reform might be effective and permanent. The effort to have people declare their claims so that these might be properly registered had to be given up after a few weeks, for the peasant owners knew without written deeds their local boundaries, and among the squatters those who realized their title might not stand under strict investigation were understandably averse to having questions of property tenure raised by the authorities of an alien and interfering government.

175 648 423

Wherever Marine barracks were located, there were centres of a cultural dissemination which was bound in the long run to affect Haitian ideas and practices. Automobiles, radios, amusements, even the daily conversation of the Marines, all left their mark upon a people who had been effectively isolated from the world for more than a century.

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However, as regards caste itself we can now see that after a hundred years practically nothing has changed, even through the Occupation. In the essential structure of the Haitian social system there is still a twofold division. In the mind of élite persons the peasant exists only as a very necessary but essentially stupid part of the country's economic life. The casual visitor who, after two weeks in Port-au-Prince and its environs, has met a few distinguished Haitians, has already sensed the barriers of caste which exist between élite and the lower orders. If the sojourner remains longer and is accepted into the drawing rooms of the élite, he will hear exciting and brilliant discussions of such questions as whether Haitian civilization has in it anything of the African,[6] whether it might not be wise for Haiti to throw over both French and Créole and adopt a new language, and whether the people of the North are not superior to those of the South;[7] however, no self-satisfied member of the élite, in an expan-

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6. See, for example, the article by Lorimer Denis and Dr. François Duvalier, "La Civilisation haïtienne: notre mentalité est-elle africaine ou gallo-latine?" in *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti*, VII, No. 23 (May, 1936), pp. 1–31. Anthony Froude, in his *English in the West Indies* (New York, 1888), tells of an American consul asking a Haitian why the island was not cultivated more intensely. "The dusky soldier laid his hand upon his breast and waved his hand. 'Ah!' he said, 'that might do for English or Germans or Franks; we of the Latin race have higher things to occupy us!'"

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7. This last sentiment was noted by Sir Spencer St. John (*Hayti, or the Black Republic* [London, 1889], p. 14), who calls it a popular idea at the time he wrote and for years before, the élite of the North explaining it by the tradition of industry instilled during Christophe's reign. But Moreau de Saint-Méry had already pointed out that in colonial times there was greater fertility, more abundant rain, more intelligence in management of plantations, more slaves, more distinction and polish among the masters, in the North than in the South. Auguste Magloire (in *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social*, p. 263) thinks the North infinitely superior to the South; it did not participate in the violence of political change in the early days, yet when it did intervene it took the lead. He stated however that the North seemed to be losing its social superiority, and certainly its economic superiority, because of its cultural subordination to France: this made French ideas prevail, and one of the chief French ideas is that political power is supremely important; the North consequently came to seek political superiority when it should have preserved cultural and social preeminence. Pauléus Sannon, on the other hand (*Essai historique sur la Révolution de 1843* [Aux Cayes, 1905], pp. 5–9), regards the South as considerably more advanced intellectually. It has never, he says, been able to submit to the absolutist yoke of government, not because of the French influence, but because of its geographical situation, with its long broken coast line, its ports, cities, tribunals, customs-houses, schools, and the like. Those who have outside connections are always more open minded and progressive, he says, than inhabitants of the interior. There is no important town in the South which is not on the sea. Nowhere were the affranchis more numerous or richer than in the South, and these men led the revolution. (See Beauboun Ardouin, *Études sur l'histoire d'Haïti* [Port-au-Prince, 1853–60], I, 97.) All these influences made for a democratic spirit, but also for one of agitation.

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sive mood, will speak of the peasant and his contributions to Haiti; he thinks only in terms of his own caste.[8] Upper-class Haitians dread the sight of tourists taking pictures of native scenes, fearing that the travelers will return to their own country and label these pictures, "Typical Haitian Scenes," when, as anyone should know, typical Haiti is upper-class Haiti.[9] 175 178 565 829

The American Occupation failed of many of its ends because it did not recognize the social situation and its implications; or, realizing them, did not consider them worthy of attention. Roads, telephones, mail service, and improved agricultural methods seemed patently desirable to progressive Americans; to install them for the Haitians seemed generously wise. Yet many well-meant efforts came to grief, for the mass of people, lacking a tradition of orderly free government, did not always understand what the Americans were about, while the élite saw in the activities of the Marines a threat to their own dominance as rulers of the country.[10] 175 648 177

The antiquated, but prevalent, notion of the superior mentality of the white race also flourishes in certain quarters among the élite. Many of them say that the Negro can never originate a civilization, and that with the best of education he remains an inferior man, utterly unfitted for government, utterly incapable of making progress. 563 829

8. Witness Marthe Oudin's paragraph (*Les Antilles, filles de France* [Paris, 1935], p. 254): "My amiable host (a member of the élite) was triumphant at my surprise and enchantment. 'You did not expect to find a civilized country. What have the spiteful wits said you? That the Haitians worshipped serpents and made human sacrifices? True, the peasants on the mountain-sides are still very primitive and ignorant, but in the cities you will find many families like ours, cultivated in letters and music, careful and proud of their French culture, and absolutely set against American de-civilization.'" [114] 829

9. "Should you like a European to take pictures of the slums of your American cities and of the most degraded of your share-croppers, and then circulate these photographs as typical American scenes?" asked one sensitive Haitian.

10. See the *Report of the Forbes Commission to Haiti*, 1930, pp. 18–19. "Illiteracy keeps the peasant masses politically inarticulate, except in case of mobs or bandit gangs, which formerly infested the countryside and often furnished the forces of revolution. These bandit gangs have been broken up and have disappeared under American rule, but the social forces that created them still remain—poverty, ignorance, and the lack of a tradition or desire for orderly free government. It has been the aim of the American Occupation to try to broaden the base of the articulate proletariat and thus make for a sounder democracy and ultimately provide for a more representative government in Haiti. Hence its work in education, in sanitation, in agencies of communication such as roads, telephones, telegraph lines, and regular mail routes. These things naturally are deemed of secondary importance by the Elite, who see in the rise of a middle class a threat to the continuation of their own leadership." [114] 648

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563 829 ren. Others point out the difference between the lower-class Negro of the large commercial towns and the black peasants who live in the plains and mountains. The former, in contact with the roughest of white sailors, are a disgrace to any people, while the countryfolk, seeing only a select few of the whites, appear "to have an innate idea of the white man's superiority," and so treat him with respect. The peasants, according to these speakers, have all the virtues and vices of "wild races": they may acquire a kind of French varnish, but they are "essentially an African people removed from their parent country."[11]

565 186 There are among the élite broad-minded, tolerant, and cultured persons. The average member of the caste, however, like the average American, is full of prejudices of all kinds. Travel produces a superficial polish; their patriotism consists of antagonism toward the outside world and an effort to secure position for themselves; they are sure that Haiti's laws are sounder, her culture superior, her schools more advanced, her civilization in general higher, than those of most other nations (France generally excepted).

563 829 There are evidences also of certain psychological twists. It used to be said that mulatto Haitians "hate their fathers and despise their mothers," meaning that in colonial times and for a short time after the élite did not like to remember that they derived from a master-slave union. They realize nowadays that they would be accepted as social equals in few countries, and this makes them protest by self-assertion. Certainly a majority of the élite would be completely unwilling to admit that things are anywhere better done than in Haiti.

184 565 181 829 One generation after the wars which led to independence, the greater number of Haitians had practically forgotten that there was an outside world. Haiti was all they knew. With no standard of comparison for their lot in life the peasants ate, slept, raised their families, fell ill, and died without bothering their heads about such academic abstractions as equality. This uncomplaining acceptance of life, routine, and fate seems to be the essence of peasant existence. The Haitian peasant has been bound to the soil by mental inertia and by tradition more effectively than ever by law. When he has revolted it has been through conviction that someone was trying to change the old familiar ways, or because of physical maltreatment. Peasants have been bribed and paid to revolt, but as mercenaries they have entered only half-heartedly into warfare.

11. The phrases quoted here are fragments of statements made by Haitian élite to the author.

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In most countries in which Westerners are familiar, social distinctions take the form of classes, which are to a greater or less degree mutable. In Haiti, as we have repeatedly indicated, the distinctions are so rigid that *caste* is the only properly descriptive term. There is hardly a Haitian who would not be able to state immediately whether he or any person he knew was, or was not, élite. So it has been with steady persistence ever since Dessalines and Christophe gave way to Pétion and Boyer. Élite youth marries élite girl, and the folkways of the group are passed on from parent to children, thus perpetuating the distinctions. In the pages which follow, all the marks of separation of castes will be examined: religion, economic occupation, marriage, language, manners, and the rest. 565 178

Certain aspects of the classic example of the caste system, seen in India, are lacking in Haiti. Religion, for instance, does not require caste endogamy, nor does civil law implicitly acknowledge caste lines by reference to the rights of people of a certain occupation. Custom does more than religion and law could, however, to enforce conformity to the understood rules. Probably the most open efforts to enact caste lines into law were the pronouncements of Dessalines and Christophe that all but a few people should be bound to the soil; and Boyer's Code Rural—a feeble echo of days gone by. The two black rulers were able to enforce the distinctions they made; but when they died their feudal arrangements lapsed, while the separation of classes continued. With the recurrence of revolutions after 1843 it behooved the élite, when occasionally they were in authority, not to lay themselves open to fresh attack upon grounds of aristocratic presumption, for they never knew when they might need the support of the masses. Any black revolutionary leader would have been able to turn an enacted caste law to his own ends, even if a Senate consisting predominantly of light-colored men had had the power to enact such a law. Time and inertia won the battle for the élite. By not joining issue with the masses at any definite point, the aristocrats gained their end of caste distinction, for they were willing to endure the self-discipline necessary to the maintenance of social standards, as the masses were not. [564] [170]

Just as in colonial days the ambition of the well-to-do freedman was to go to France for his education and his holidays, so in free Haiti the lure of France has continued to be strong for the aristocrat. There is not a trace of animosity against the country which enslaved the Negroes, and which in 1802–3 tried by trickery to take away the 565 484 177 186

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565 rights of people of Negro blood. As a distinguished Haitian re-
484 marked, "It is from France that we draw our culture, our language,
177 our literature, our attitudes of mind: why should we not love her?"
186 The more time the élite spend in France, the less kinship they feel with the masses. There is not necessarily any conscious snobbery in this increasing discrepancy; it simply results from a life spent in entirely different environments. The Boston Brahmin, for example, may be kindhearted and yet feel little kinship with a Mississippi share-cropper.

564 Inside the castes one may find social distinctions familiar in democracies. There are well-to-do élite who set the standards of manners and entertainment, and there are peasant landholders who through force of personality dominate their rural neighborhoods. The intellectual man of the upper classes stands somewhat apart from the social whirl of "high society." An important government official has more prestige among the leisured classes than a small businessman, just as a powerful religious adept is more honored among the peasants than a happy-go-lucky ragamuffin. It is obvious, however, that within the élite caste social discrimination occurs more frequently and is more accurately observed than among the country people.

[184] Such phrases as "Haitian religion" or "Haitian public opinion"
[77] are accurate only in so far as the person who uses them defines the
[208] adjective "Haitian." One might describe truly a phenomenon characteristic of ninety-five out of a hundred Haitians and yet, in the opinion of those who dominate the economic, political, and social life, do injustice to Haiti.

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PART II

RELIGION

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INTRODUCTION

IF the visitor to Haiti is first struck by the wide separation between the élite and the peasant masses, the person who knows Haiti only through books is sure to think of it as a country of Voodoo. There is no error of fact here, for Voodoo is characteristic of Haiti. Nevertheless, what the American conjures up in his mind when he uses the word is almost certain to be misleading. In spite of detailed reports of anthropologists the average American clings firmly to his notion that Voodoo is Negro superstition chiefly concerned with charms or spells to "hoodoo" (a variation of the same word) an enemy. Scientists rarely succeed in correcting long-held but incorrect or one-sided impressions of the meaning of terms; they end rather by inventing a new word, or else continue the generally losing fight for precise usage, and so preserve the confusion.[1] 771

Since there is small likelihood of eradicating the inexact connotations of "Voodoo," many recent anthropologists have adopted such spellings as Vodun, Vodou, Vodoun, Vaudou, and Vodûn, all renditions of local pronunciation of the same term. *Vodun* (pronounced Vo-doon) has been chosen for use in this work, in the hope that readers will bear in mind that the folk religion is not mere idle superstition. A grasp of the real and distinctive religious beliefs and cult practices of the Haitian is very necessary to an understanding of the social picture. [104]

Like its caste system, the religious life of Haiti presents far-reaching contrasts. The only approved religion of the country is Roman Catholicism. To this faith all the élite who are religiously inclined, or wish to pay formal homage to the institution of religion, belong. No Protestant sect has ever gained a real foothold in Haiti. Catholic churches are among the imposing edifices in every town; Catholic priests are an everyday sight as they go about their parishes; Catholic brothers and sisters, with state support and approval, direct much of the higher education in the country. 771 195 184 [346] [793] [871]

1. Witness in anthropology the contrast between the popular and the scholarly meaning of *culture*, *race*, *taboo*, and *fetish*; in chemistry of *reaction* (as when a man is asked his "reaction" to an opinion); in psychology of *instinct*, *innate*, and *inherent*; and in sociology of *caste*, *institution*, and *social*.

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Paralleling the accepted form and existing at the same time, is the Vodun religion. To this faith practically every member of the lower caste adheres; but no casual visitor ever sees a Vodun "temple," or would recognize one if he saw it. Vodun "priests" likewise have no characteristic dress to set them apart from their barefoot country neighbors. The state gives absolutely no support to this folk religion, which has no seminaries, no orders, no publishing house, nor even any orthodoxy. One is not a member of the Vodun religion or church; rather one believes and practices Vodun.

The paradox of the religious situation in Haiti lies in the fact that although the masses are Vodun worshipers, most of them are likewise Catholics; that although the élite formally disapprove of Vodun, many of them are profoundly interested in it; that although the state supports the Catholic Church and officially frowns on Vodun, it does not, cannot, and apparently would not if it could, suppress it altogether. The result of these contradictions is a strange intermixture of creed and ritual, mental struggles among certain of the élite, supersensitiveness to foreign opinion in connection with "Voodoo," and a clandestine air which adds to the mystery most strangers are determined to find in Vodun.

An understanding of these religious ambiguities must depend to some degree upon a knowledge of Haitian history, for both Catholicism and Vodun have colonial origins, together with local peculiarities and historical developments, which make them characteristically Haitian.

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VI

ROMAN CATHOLICISM

1. *French Colonial Backgrounds*

WHEN France was first establishing a foothold in the New World, religion was one of the consuming passions of the French people. Priests accompanied early explorers, missionaries consecrated their lives to conversion of the Indians; monks, nuns, and parish priests were a vital part of the pioneer settlements of New France. Every family in the mother country hoped that at least one of its sons would devote himself to the service of the Church. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were, par excellence, missionary centuries. 175 771

By the time the colony of Saint-Domingue was acquired, however, this religious zeal was on the wane, and just when the colony was becoming prosperous and populous France was entering the phase of her history known as The Enlightenment. Although the growth of the colony is impressive from many points of view, religion is not one of them, for planters intent upon money-making and luxurious living in an exploitative tropical colony gave little energy to spiritual development.[1] The Roman Catholic Church, being the official church of France, was naturally the only important religious organization of the colony; the congregations authorized to send clergy to Saint-Domingue—Carmelites, Capuchins, Dominicans, and Jesuits—divided the territory and work between them. [792]

No doubt the fathers did some assiduous work. Official historians of the Roman Church in Haiti give the definite impression that their task was arduous and not very rewarding.[2] The torrid heat, diseases (especially yellow fever), the long distances and poor means of transportation were discouraging enough; until the middle of the eighteenth century there was the added difficulty of the poor human

1. It is revealing to see what characteristics of the culture of their mother country colonists bring with them to a new region. French Canadians, in contrast to French colonists in Saint-Domingue, kept many more customs of old France. See J. G. Leyburn, *Frontier Folkways* (New Haven, 1935), pp. 54–57. [114] [771] [178]

2. A good account of the inertia of religious life in colonial Saint-Domingue is given in P. A. Cabon, *Notes sur l'histoire religieuse d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1933), chap. I. [114]

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175 material—Frenchmen who lived "in a deplorable state of morals,
171 too often recalling those of the freebooters and buccaneers" who were their ancestors and predecessors. Even when the calibre of the colonists improved, religion was a minor concern, business and pleasure pushing it well into the background.

There was no great antagonism toward the fathers; indeed, not enough attention was paid to the priests and their work to warrant any very strong feeling. It was indifference and insolence the fathers had to face, or, if they showed too great an interest in the welfare of slaves upon a plantation, suspicion and peremptory curbs. By the old
[671] Code Noir under which the colony theoretically operated, masters were obligated to send their slaves to Mass on Sundays and feast days under penalty of heavy fines; the Code likewise prescribed the baptism of all blacks and their instruction in the Catholic faith. But just as the colonists ignored all parts of the Code antagonistic to their own economic interests, so specifically did they disregard the sections dealing with their religious obligations.

Some priests were in any case not too zealous. It was much more
175 agreeable to attend only to external forms, and so participate in the
793 charming life of high society, than to stand firm against laxity. If a
662 priest showed enthusiasm for his duties to his African charges he was
567 almost certain to be accused by the planters of stirring up the slaves
[792] and undermining the foundations of colonial society. This was, in fact, the very accusation leveled at the Jesuits to bring about their expulsion from the colony in 1764. The example was not lost upon other priests.

"The safety of the whites demands that the Negroes be kept in
175 profound ignorance," said one of the later governors in a message to
171 France. This sentiment, perfectly expressing the conviction of the
563 majority of planters, not only prevented any secular education of the blacks, but actually kept many of them from instruction in catechism, creed, or any part of the Catholic faith. If instruction is forbidden, few of the sacraments can be administered, for how can a person be confirmed, confess, do penance, if he know not even the first principles of the faith? Few masters objected to the baptism of slave children; on the other hand, they roundly disapproved of the sacrament of marriage for their blacks, since this might place an obstacle in the way of slave sales, and even open the way for assimilation of blacks and whites in the colony.

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Granted these obvious difficulties, there is still little to be said for the zeal or integrity of churchmen in Saint-Domingue. Father Cabon cites a report to Rome in 1794, which, he remarks, "was not designed to be made public, and does not bear the earmarks of passion," and which flatly states that "since the expulsion of the Jesuits, the curés have for the most part led lives so indecent . . . that the citizens and Negroes have lost all the sentiments of religion which the Jesuits gave them."[3] There had been distinguished churchmen in Saint-Domingue before 1750, authors, scientists, teachers of some note, but none appeared thereafter. The rich French colony was not a bright star in the Catholic crown. 175 193 192

Undeterred by those who might have been their spiritual guides, the white people followed the easy path of self-indulgence. The universal testimony of visitors is that, with a few notable exceptions, immorality and cruelty were daily commonplaces. To make a fortune was the prime ambition of every white man, since money made possible the luxurious enjoyment of this world's goods. Protest against money-making or soft living would have been futile. Administrative agents turned public office to their own profit; judges sold justice to the highest bidder; planters drove their slaves to death; and priests dispensed religious solace for a tidy sum. 175 556 185 647 661 693 466 193

The freedmen, who in everything patterned their lives after social leaders in the white planter class, had no more concern for religion than their models. They attended Mass occasionally as a social event, where they might see and be seen. When in the latter days of the colony discriminatory legislation required that colored persons sit in separate parts of the church, most of the affranchis simply refrained from attending Mass: their religious zeal was not so great as to make them submit to the public shame of segregation. In their daily lives, likewise, they followed the example of the white planters in pursuing pleasure rather than sobriety, "culture" rather than religious zeal. Like the whites, they were often licentious in their conduct. When it came their turn to direct affairs of state in free Haiti, there was little interest in spiritual matters among them. The intellectuals of the group paid homage to the liberal philosophers of the century rather than to religious thinkers. 175 771 184

If religion was at a low ebb in the prosperous days of the colony, it almost disappeared in the excitement of the years following the revolt of the slaves (1791). 175 771

3. Ibid., p. 33.

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175 771 643 659 revolt of the slaves (1791). Priests fled or went into hiding with the other whites, so that Masses lapsed or were said by religious but unordained mulattoes. Upon his accession to power in Haiti Toussaint L'Ouverture made several attempts to rehabilitate religion in the country, for the Church he felt was a stable institution which might help in giving order to the turbulent land. He tried to accomplish the return of priests to the island parishes and churches. There are indications that Toussaint was not himself deeply religious; his pronouncements are formal, but one cannot say that they appear to be deeply felt. In his proclamation of October 10, 1798, announcing the expulsion of the English, he orders thanks to the God of Hosts, recommends to his chiefs of corps that the soldiers pray morning and evening and faithfully attend Mass on Sundays. In a public address he enjoins upon parents the duty of teaching the catechism to their children.

175 659 795 The use of Catholicism as an aid to statecraft is apparent in his official dealings with the Church. His constitution of May 9, 1801, states that "the Catholic religion, apostolic and Roman, is the sole religion publicly professed." To obtain priests he besought the return of many who had fled the slave insurrection; he likewise turned to France, but France at this time was less than ardent in religion; nor were French priests likely to wish to come to an island ruled by blacks, particularly one which Napoleon was quite obviously planning to subdue. Toussaint addressed himself, therefore, to a schismatic abbé, Grégoire by name, in whom he saw a friend. Whether Grégoire might have helped him to establish the Catholic Church firmly as a part of Haitian life, with only a handful of repatriated colonial priests, we cannot know, for in 1802 the final war of independence began and the island, in convulsion, had no time for spiritual matters.

2. *Catholicism in Independent Haiti*

175 643 659 795 Dessalines, the passionate, violent, and licentious founder of the new state, although not an enemy of the Church was not its active friend. In his slaughter of whites he spared several priests who had come to the country under Toussaint's persuasion, either because these clerics were obviously inoffensive or might later prove useful to him. Just as he controlled every other detail of Haitian life, he was determined to direct church affairs. He reserved to himself the right to fix the limits of jurisdiction of each priest and to nominate, even

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175 643 659 795 [793]

to appoint, curés to the vacant parishes. His independence of action could not fail to give offense to Church authorities. One of his first appointees was a black ex-slave, Félix, who had been a drum major in the native army. Félix was made curé in the important town of Saint-Marc.

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The constitution of his empire (May, 1805) indicates that Dessalines did not intend to make himself head of the Church, but rather planned a complete separation of Church and State. Article 50 reads: "The law admits no dominant religion"; while the next article grants freedom to all cults and refuses state support to any denomination or minister. No attack was made, therefore, upon Catholicism, yet the disestablishment of that Church was a serious blow to its prestige. Not in the specific provisions regarding religion was the Church most weakened, but rather in the "liberality" of articles dealing with actions upon which the Church had taken a firm moral stand. Thus Article 14 declared that "marriage is an act purely civil [582] and authorized by the government," while Article 15 permits [586] divorce by the state. Early laws of the empire still further undermined the position of Church doctrine. Illegitimate children were [848] granted the same legal rights as legitimate ones—a generous provision which removed one of the strong reasons for marriage; separation of husband and wife except by divorce was forbidden, and this prohibition practically encouraged the divorce disapproved by the Church; finally, the grounds upon which divorce might be allowed were broader than those existing anywhere else in the Western World at the time: mutual consent, application from one party to the marriage, or simple allegation of incompatibility of temperament or character.

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From the promulgation of this constitution in 1805 and for the next fifty-five years, Haiti was in open schism from the Roman Catholic Church. The Holy See refused to recognize either the Haitian state or the provisions of its constitution, and it declined to allow priests to enter the country. Certain Haitian presidents were friendly enough to Catholicism, and others were openly desirous of reëstablishing a state religion, but the breach once made was not healed by mere good wishes. The longer the schism endured, the farther the people grew away from the doctrines and practices of a religion in which they had never been firmly grounded. At the moment of independence, when all minds were more open to new

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175 795 648 771 178 ideas than in later years, the habits of regular attention to religious duties might have been fixed; by 1860 it was too late. Religion existed during those years, but it was a strange gallimaufry of Catholicism and folk belief.

175 795 642 643 659 On the whole, the rulers of young Haiti were tolerant of the Catholic Church even to the point of advancing its interests, in so far as these might benefit the state. Their pronouncements and actions, nevertheless, were not those of ardent personal believers. Pétion's constitution of the republic in 1806 once more established Catholicism as the official Church. What it gave with one hand, however, it took away with the other. Thus:

> *Art. 35.* The Catholic, apostolic, and Roman religion being that of all Haitians, is the religion of the state. It and its ministers will be protected.
>
> *Art. 36.* The law assigns to each minister of that religion the extent of his spiritual administration. These ministers may not, under any pretext, form a body within the state.
>
> *Art. 37.* If in the course of time other religions are introduced, no person shall be hindered, so long as he conforms to the laws, in following the cult he has chosen.

The Catholic, then, is the state religion, but only because the Haitians have heretofore been nominal Catholics. It occupies a position of practical fact which it would lose if by the introduction of other cults Haitians should be drawn away from it. Its ministers will be carefully watched to see that they do not, as a group, try to exert political pressure. And what freedom of action is possible to a church whose ecclesiastical parishes can be limited or extended in size by the civil legislature?

Pétion no more fought religion than he fought any other conventional institution approved by civilized people; but he did little to foster it. He received certain Wesleyan missionaries with considerable hospitality, remarking that "education increases the dignity of mankind." He appeased the good Catholics by repealing the law [848 878] concerning the rights of illegitimate children, substituting for it a [871] more moderate French rule.[4] Likewise, he invited the Catholic Church to participate in the education of Haitian youth.

[848 878] 4. The French practice allowed an illegitimate child recognized before a wedding equal rights of inheritance with legitimate offspring, while giving only quarter rights to a child recognized after marriage.

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Christophe had a great deal more to say about religion than any of the other early Haitian rulers. In a speech following the promulgation of his constitution, after severe censure of the government of Dessalines, he said:

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> It is necessary to raise again the dignity of religion, for weakened morals leave young people open to the licenses of their age. Liberty has been assailed by traitors, enemies of their fellow citizens, and sold to our cruelest enemies. It is assured to you now, have no doubt! Shortly you will see these vicious men and their criminal efforts vanish like clouds.
>
> Public education, after religion and liberty the most precious benefit mankind enjoys, will be reanimated and sustained by morality; it will again be held in honor and reverence amongst us. Divorce, that traitor among customs, is rigorously prohibited and proscribed forever.[5]

[871] [586]

Like Pétion, Christophe made the Catholic Church official, but he indicated the dictatorial path he intended to follow by adding that no ecclesiastical decree or law might become effective without the consent of the President.[6] He completely overturned the law of Dessalines concerning illegitimate children; his decree deprived such offspring of any claims of inheritance whatever.[7] In a country where practically no one had been legally married such a ruling was severe, but Christophe hoped that his severity would force his subjects into wedlock, and this the Catholic Church was bound to approve.

[848]

Making the Church official did not strengthen its hold upon the people. In 1814 (seven years after he had promised "to raise again the dignity of religion") the kingdom was served by only three priests, one of whom Christophe had named archbishop. The King was preoccupied with form, and having created a nobility he needed a church to lend dignity to his realm. Consequently in 1811 he reorganized the clergy in his kingdom, establishing an archiepiscopal see and three bishoprics. The reorganization, except for the archbishop, remained a paper plan because the Pope refused to coöperate by giving the schismatic church his approval.

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All the early rulers seem to have been rather innocent in their dealings with Rome. They felt, apparently, that as heads of state they had but to express a desire in order to have His Holiness ap-

5. This speech, made on February 18, 1807, is cited in Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1848), II, 354–355.
6. See the law of March 18, 1807.
7. Law of March 25, 1807.

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prove. Dessalines had sent a small number of Negro youths to Rome to receive consecration and ordination from the Pope, so that they might return to initiate a black priesthood for the black state. Pius VII (through the interference of Napoleon, it was held by the Haitians) refused to consecrate the aspirants to holy orders, and they had to return as they had come. Christophe thought to avoid such a snub by presenting His Holiness with a *fait accompli*. Having in his kingdom a Spanish Capuchin named Brelle who had formerly anointed Dessalines emperor, Christophe made this friar head of his reorganized church as "archbishop of Haiti and grand almoner to the King," giving him a "palace" and a yearly income derived from the revenues of his "see." This achieved he asked papal approval, but had sorrowfully to announce, "*Le roi d'Haïti eut la douleur de ne pas même recevoir une réponse de Sa Sainteté et passa outre.*"

Pétion's legislators were even more naïve. Their constitution of 1816 (of course, really the President's) granted to the President the right to have a bishop come to Port-au-Prince "to elevate to the priesthood those young Haitians who feel called to embrace the ecclesiastical state."[8] It was apparently assumed that without the approval of the Pope any bishop could come in and forthwith "make" priests. The insertion of this article in the constitution confesses the disadvantages of schism. The last surviving priests of the old régime, those few who had remained in spite of the breach with Rome, were dying off; no new priests were being sent in; therefore, if the Catholic Church was to endure in the republic, it must have Haitian priests. Certain clerics fleeing political revolutions in South America came to Haiti, but since they spoke French badly, did not improve the religious situation. It was impossible to get sympathetic priests from France, in view of the relations of the two countries at the time. The provision of the 1816 constitution, however childish, was at least an effort to perpetuate the church in Haiti.

It is nowhere recorded that either Pétion or Boyer had any opportunity to persuade a bishop to come and consecrate the desired priests. Deprived of support by the Papal See, in open schism, the Haitian republic was forced to make all regulations governing religious affairs. Boyer carried on various negotiations with Rome looking toward rapprochement, but the schism endured. Organized

8. Article 50 of the 1816 constitution.

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Organized

religion was never at a lower ebb in Haiti than toward the middle of the nineteenth century, as whole generations of citizens were growing up who had never known the proper forms of ritual, and had no real religious training. The outward shell of the Church covered steadily more "superstition," more homely beliefs and practices, and the long divorce from Rome permitted the growth of a native religion which later could not be eradicated, no matter how assiduous the labors of Catholic priests. 175 795 771

During Boyer's quarter-century the once Roman and Catholic Church remained the official religion of the state, but its head was now the President. Organization simplified as orthodoxy declined. By 1840 there was only one order of priesthood; no archbishop, bishops, canons, curés, or other titled dignitaries, but only "priests." The people were not taxed to maintain the state Church; there were no tithes or forced contributions for the support of public worship or the repair of parish churches, no heavy list of clergy living from levies on the people. However, if the Haitians were not burdened by imposed religious fees, they were still through their own fears subject to steady tolls for services by the degraded men who then called themselves priests. 175 195 771 659 643

Every effort of the state failing to provide proper religious leadership, Boyer resigned himself to permitting those who professed to be priests to practice in the republic. There were seventy so-called priests in the country in 1840. Some of them had once been in holy orders but were now unfrocked: they found in Haiti not only a haven but a fertile field for gain. In addition to these religious renegades came adventurers who knew just enough of ritual and theology to use the priestly garb as a cover for easy graft. Both groups encouraged crude superstition with a view to making money. They baptized houses, boats, and doorposts, and blessed fetish charms or amulets, all for a fee. Immorality was flagrant, and many of the "priests" had mistresses and children. The debauchery of some was so notorious that Secretary-General Inginac had publicly to rebuke them and even to banish a few from the country. A visiting Quaker, benignantly tolerant of most of what he saw in Haiti, was scandalized by the religious situation. He said that the sole aim of most of the clergy was to secure gold and silver "as quickly as they can, to send to Europe for investment." Excepting a very few (notably the priests at Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, and Jacmel), he 175 795 793 [114]

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175 concludes: "With regard to the ecclesiastical institutions of the
793 republic we may safely say . . . that if the standing army be one cause
795 of the degradation of the people, the Church is surely another; and
[114] the sooner it can be reformed, the better for religion, for morals, and for the physical well-being of the community."[9]

175 Eventually the state felt it necessary to protect the people from
793 these predatory priests. True, people paid for what they considered
795 to be services performed, but the legislators could not permit unlimited graft in the name of religion. An act of 1840,[10] therefore, set
659 a fee of half a dollar for each baptism;[11] $8 for a marriage with Mass, $4 for one without a Mass; an ordinary Mass, 37 cents; a High Mass, service, or funeral "of the first class" (that is, with choir, sacristan, acolytes, and churchwarden), $60; funerals of the second class, $20; funerals of the third class, $10. Articles of the act specify what shall constitute the three classes of service, and it is then stated, "Neither rectors nor vicars shall receive anything for offices at which they do not assist in person, except in cases of illness." The Haitians were not receiving true religious instruction, but at least their government tried to prevent their being mulcted by the spurious churchmen.

175 Since Haiti had no schools except the few attended by children of
771 the élite, religious instruction of youth was almost nonexistent. The
184 average élite man was openly an unbeliever, for it required little acumen to show him that if the priests represented religion there was nothing to commend it. Hunt in 1860 said: "Many of the educated are about where the French were when they left the island. They believe in Voltaire, whom I have not unfrequently heard them
[562] characterize as the greatest man who ever lived."[12] In contrast to the
[114] men, the women made more of a show of being devout and attentive to the formal duties of religion, but according to Franklin they

are not actuated by any religious feeling. Going to church is a mere matter of parade with them, the sabbath being a day of festivities, and not set aside for religious devotion. The female congregations which frequent the churches in Hayti appear better prepared for an opera, or some other public amusement, than for the sacred duties of offering up their prayers in adoration of the Deity.

9. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 98 ff.
10. Chap. IV, articles 28–31.
11. The figures cited in the Act are in gourdes.
12. Benjamin S. Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans* (Philadelphia, 1860), p. 18.

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The men seldom or never go to mass, except on the days particularly set apart by the government as public fêtes. On these occasions the president and all the officers of Hayti go in procession, but the idea of devotion, I believe, never enters their contemplation. Such days are merely set aside for celebrating some particular event, which it is wished should be handed down to posterity. These occasions present only the external symbol of religion, the whole people being either ignorant or careless of its real character. Their manner and appearance during the celebration of the mass shew that they have no inward feelings of piety or devotion.[13]

Catholicism in Haiti, then, had fallen on evil days; Protestantism, on the other hand, was unable to gain any foothold. Boyer, indifferent to all religion, did not even care to tolerate Wesleyan missionaries as Pétion had done, for when certain of them arrived and were met with "persecution and stoning by a mob," it required persuasion to gain his assent to freeing those the police had taken into custody. He forbade any further meetings of Wesleyans, on the ground that they stirred up riots. At the close of Boyer's administration it was estimated that there were only about 1,200 Protestants in the country, mostly Methodists and Baptists, and these primarily Negroes who had come from the United States to settle in the republic.

Although the Haitian government probably derived a certain satisfaction from controlling a state Church, Boyer was impelled both by circumstance and his own temperament to obtain the approval of the Holy See. His own tepid spiritual zeal had nothing to do with the case; Haitian public order would benefit by a superior group of priests, and Haitian prestige would rise, he thought, with recognition by Rome. Having already in 1826 settled the conflict between France and Haiti in the political sphere, Boyer tried assiduously to end the schism from Rome. His propositions were examined with benevolence by the Pope, who conferred upon the primate of the Indies, archbishop of Santo Domingo, the title of archbishop of Haiti. This personage, however, was a Spaniard already established in the comfortable city of Santo Domingo amidst people of his own nationality. He could not be persuaded to move to Port-au-Prince. The failure of Boyer's efforts is due more to this ecclesiastic than to uncoöperativeness on the part of Rome. From 1834 to 1860 the Court of Rome had official representatives in Haiti, but they cannot have been very effective men, for conditions in

13. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 394–395.

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175 religious life were not improved and the schism endured. The arch-
795 bishop of Haiti seemed to regard his new title as applying vaguely to
648 the island, not the country, of Haiti, and since all his vicars were
659 Spaniards unable to speak either French or the Créoe dialect, they
643 did nothing for religion in the Haitian republic.
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Ties broken by a single radical action may require endless patience and persistence to knit together their severed threads. The impetuosity of Dessalines caused the rupture; it was prolonged by indifference to religion, absorption in economic and political matters, fear that France might use to her profit any *rapprochement* with Rome, and a certain complacency in subordinating Church to state. Inertia, however, was the real obstacle in the way of healing the breach. It is much less trouble to let conditions remain as they are than to make a change whose results no one can foretell. But the longer the rupture, the less understanding the people had of steps necessary to reëstablish the Church.

175 When in 1847 Faustin Soulouque, the ignorant, became president,
771 the horizon had never seemed darker for organized religion. The black general, suddenly impelled by a quirk of fortune into high office, was a man of the people in his religious attitudes. All their belief in magic, in the mystical power of certain rites, in charms and spells—all their "superstition" as the Catholics called it—Soulouque shared. For the first time in Haitian history one is aware that the folk beliefs brought over from Africa had become welded into a recognizable form, under the name of Vodun. To colonial writers "Vaudoux" had been primarily a name for certain dances; to the early Haitian élite it seems to have connoted either occult rites or vulgar claptrap compounded of gibberish, old wives' remedies, and sensual dances. But in the long and deepening twilight of Catholicism, the various elements were fused, until by Soulouque's time the Haitian was familiar with the general beliefs, rites, and "priesthood" of Vodun. As Soulouque had broken with the tradition of presidents who wished Haiti to be recognized as one of the community of civilized Western nations, so he allowed the traditional respect for Catholicism to die. As an emperor he was a transplanted African chief; as a believer he was a follower of Vodun. The rites were practiced and the sacrifices made openly now. Men in high places dared to reveal their belief in native tenets. For twelve years Vodun flourished with official approval.

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The depths to which Haiti descended under Soulouque made the task of his successor relatively simple. It would prove wise and generally popular to reverse the Emperor's action, in whatever respect. President Geffrard was the more successful as an antidote to the Emperor because of his practical intelligence. The best time to strike for the revival of Catholicism would be immediately after the heyday of Vodun. In 1859, the first year of his incumbency, Geffrard consequently undertook negotiations with the Holy See, sending two plenipotentiaries for the discussions. Because the Haitian delegates persuasively depicted the sorry state of religion in their country, because they showed themselves and their President willing to defer to papal wishes, and because the new Pope was filled with missionary zeal to reclaim Haiti for the Faith, all problems were overcome. An early agreement was reached, and the Concordat, signed in Rome on March 28, 1860, was approved by the Haitian Senate on the first of April. A commission was dispatched to Haiti immediately, one which did thoroughly and well its task of delimiting the boundaries of dioceses, allocating bishops and other clergy, and founding a seminary. An archbishop of Port-au-Prince was consecrated, and the Catholic Church, Roman and apostolic, at long last became officially established once more in the republic. The breach of fifty-five years was healed.

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In one sense the reform had come too late. All the peasants were by this time thoroughly imbued with the ideas of Vodun, as were the lower orders in the towns. Most of the élite either clandestinely practiced Vodun or ignored religion altogether. On the other hand, practically no Haitian was opposed to Catholicism, not even the most ardent devotee of the obscurer cult. The native faith had grown up quietly enough, making its adjustments to the outward forms of Catholicism which still existed in the country. To every Vodun worshiper there were simply two hierarchies of spiritual beings, each with its own powers; to believe in one was not to deny the other. The new Catholic priests, then, met no hostility; what they had to deal with was an ineradicable folk religion which accepted everything and rejected little in the spiritual realm.

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The Archbishop, his band of forty priests, and a small group of Brothers and Sisters set to work with fervor. Nearly everything had to be rebuilt from the ground. Church buildings were in such disrepair that it was considered more economical to erect new ones than

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175 795 346 to try to renovate the old. Gradually the work became established, increasing in scope with the years.

175 795 It is not necessary to present a detailed history of the work of Catholicism in Haiti since 1860. The most striking feature of these years is its relationship to Vodun, which will be treated shortly. The progress made by the Church itself can best be seen by a summary of conditions in 1930.

794 795 162 Haiti is divided into dioceses named after its principal towns and cities. The population statistics are based upon figures of births covering more than fifty years, and although estimates, they are probably as accurate as any other population statistics for Haiti:

Archdiocese of Port-au-Prince	942,700
Diocese of Cap-Haïtien	453,000
Diocese of Les Cayes	628,000
Diocese of Gonaïves	475,000
Diocese of Port-de-Paix	153,590
Total	2,652,290

793 To care for this large and predominantly illiterate population there are 205 priests,[14] only 8 of whom are Haitians; 105 Brothers; and 366 Sisters.[15] The assiduous educational work of these *religieux* will be discussed in another connection.

794 162 The country's 10,200 square miles are divided into 112 parishes, which generally correspond to the political communes, although there are several parishes in the larger centres of population. In the rural sections 465 mission chapels are located at strategic points.[16]

580 Any casual attempt to assess the importance of religion in the daily

[794] 14. Of these, 156 are in charge of parishes or missions (the secular priests). The remaining 49 are regular clergy (that is, belonging to a religious or monastic order). All parishes in the diocese of Port-de-Paix and two in Port-au-Prince are in charge of the regular clergy; the other regular monks are doing educational work or other special service connected with the dioceses.

[793] [792] 15. The Brothers are Frères de l'Instruction Chrétienne; of the number 83 are French, 10 French Canadian, 9 Spanish, and 3 Haitian. The Sisters belong to three congregations: 146 to St. Joseph de Cluny, 198 to Les Filles de la Sagesse, and 22 to Les Filles de Marie.

16. All the figures cited above are drawn from the *Report of the Forbes Commission to Haiti*, 1930, pp. 16–17.

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Any casual attempt to assess the importance of religion

in the daily

lives of the people is sure to prove erroneous, for in no phase of life 771
are outward appearances so deceptive. What the unsophisticated 184
peasant believes can be ascertained on the whole more accurately than the beliefs of the intelligent élite. To the foreign observer, Roman Catholicism seems to play as large and as small a part in the thinking of the Haitian upper classes as among members of upper-class French society. Outwardly, the élite are professing Catholics or not religious at all. It is considered proper to attend Mass and [554] otherwise to pay respect to religious forms; actually one loses noth- [558] ing in prestige if he is not a practicing Christian. Society seems to exert no pressure in the matter. Only if a member of the upper class fears for the security of his social position, or knows that rumors are afloat of his addiction to Vodun, does he feel impelled to become assiduous in his open attentions to the Church.

The national sensitiveness to skin color is apparent in the priestly 793
complexions. Since the old tradition lingers that "baptism by a black 829
will not stick," not even the peasants welcome native Catholic 563
priests. The God and saints of Christianity need the intercession of white men, just as the Vodun spirits need that of natives. In the early days peasants stoned Negro priests who tried to administer the Catholic sacraments. Such an attitude toward a black clergy falls in well with the preferences of the élite. If there were Haitian priests, they would probably be drawn from the élite class since this is the educated group; but it might happen that some devout peasant would rise to the priesthood and so have the care of a parish including élite—a contingency unthinkable to the aristocrat. Snobbishness, 796
indeed, affects the usefulness of the town priests, for the élite mem- 191
bers of the congregation insist on having sermons in French, a language which only the small minority understand, rather than in the Créole which is the speech of everyone, intelligible to gentry and humble alike. The Mass is consequently celebrated for the people at large in unknown tongues, Latin for the ritual, French for the sermon; the benefit they derive from it must be wholly from their inner communion stimulated by the actions of the service. The town 793
priests are often willing enough to accede to élite pressure in the mat- 191
ter of language, for they know French as their mother tongue and 796
would have to learn Créole; although some of the more devoted priests become adept in native speech, using it in their personal

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ministry and in sermons in country chapels.[17] For the élite, well groomed, sitting with his missal in a seat bearing his name plate, the psychic elation to be derived from hearing a sermon preached in a language which the rabble seated around him does not know must be very great—and very Christian.

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17. I have heard a sermon in the chapel at fashionable Kenscoff preached in Créole, with the President of the republic, himself a master—and a politically astute user—of Créole in the congregation. Likewise, I have met priests who, although they have lived in the country for a generation, have never learned the tongue used by ninety-five out of a hundred of their parishioners all the time, and by a hundred per cent of them some of the time.

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[p. 131]

VII

VODUN

1. *Misconceptions*

THE second religion of Haiti is Vodun. It is not mentioned by 771
officials as one of the spiritual assets of the country; its priests wear no regular habit; it has no town churches. Yet it is the living religion of the masses. Catholicism may have official and social sanction; indeed, most peasants do consider themselves as belonging to that faith, yet it is doubtful whether in any other Western country there is so universal an adherence to a common religion as in Haiti to Vodun.

If there had been a paid campaign of propagandist misinformation, 114
it is unlikely that more untruths and half-truths could have been put 771
into circulation about this faith of the Haitian people. Moreau de Saint-Méry describes something of it in his classic work on colonial matters, although most of what he tells concerns the dances, which he considered primarily a form of recreation. Pious visitors to Haiti in the early years of independence labeled it simply as a form of superstition and did not bother either to understand or misrepresent it. By the time of Soulouque it was known as a rather definite folk religion, but only after 1863 did what was really a simple set of religious beliefs and practices suddenly become notorious, making Haiti the object of macabre curiosity and of reports whose chief characteristic was gruesomeness.

In 1863 occurred the *Affaire de Bizoton*, and it may as well be 175
recounted forthwith as the prime origin of all misunderstanding 771
which has pursued Haitian religion—although to emphasize it is like giving an account of Christianity with all the emphasis on witch burnings, torture of heretics, and excesses of bigotry.

On December 27, 1863, a little girl of Bizoton named Claircine disappeared from home during the absence of her mother. Search for her was futile until after several days it was discovered that she had been killed and used as part of a sinister sacrifice by religious fanatics. An inquest, discreetly managed, resulted in the arrest of fifteen people, of whom eight were longer detained. The trial of

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these four men and four women began on February 4, 1864, arousing all Port-au-Prince, the local population as well as the foreign legations and consulates. The guilt of the accused was soon evident; following their complete confessions they were declared guilty of sorcery, cruelty, and murder, and all eight were condemned to death. They were executed on February 13, only six weeks after the crime. What these fanatics had done seemed as horrible to the Haitians as a similar crime would seem to Americans.

Much publicity was given the trial by foreign journalists who, with their flair for making the most of a dramatic tale, added whatever they could pick up by hearsay of the beliefs which had prompted the human sacrifice. The reading public, uncritical and uninformed about Haiti itself, if they gave the lurid accounts a second thought seem to have assumed that such actions were "what one might expect of Negroes." The incident would shortly have passed into that oblivion which awaits sensational news from obscure parts of the world, if it had not been kept alive by the British Minister, who was also an author.

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In the 'eighties, after retirement from diplomatic service, Sir Spenser St. John wrote a two-volume work called *Hayti, or The Black Republic.* It was probably no more egregious in its dramatic account than were scores of other books by Englishmen who, in the latter years of the Victorian era, were discovering darkest Africa, holding dominion over palm and pine, and taking up the white man's burden all over the "heathen" world; but it possessed the literary qualities which made people buy it and discuss with avidity its horrendous details. The adjective "black" in its title seemed almost to refer to the moral characteristics of the people rather than to their skin color. Sir Spenser made a great many accurate, if somewhat one-sided, observations on the customs of the people, giving the public the first readable book in decades about the Haitians. The grisly climax of his story, however, is the *Affaire de Bizoton.* He amassed an astonishing collection of tales, practically all at second-hand, to prove that Vodun (Voodooism, he called it) was the real religion of the Haitians (which it was), and that it was compounded of the vilest superstitions and most fiendish practices, of which the most essential was human sacrifice of "the goat without horns" followed by a cannibalistic communion. Which, needless to say, it was not.

This is the sort of dramatic tale uncritical readers seem to like to

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believe. It stuck in people's minds. Since Sir Spenser's time tourists to Haiti have habitually spent a few hours ashore, heard drumbeats from the hills, and shuddered deliciously as they conjured up images of weird goings-on—black magic, licentious dances, and frenetic orgies. Novelists during the past half-century have spun their tales full of local color, while "serious" authors have made small fortunes out of pseudo-scientific books with just enough fact mingled with their lush imaginings to give "an air of similitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative." Their language runs into such purple phrases as "blood-maddened, sex-maddened, god-maddened,"[1] to describe the religious exaltation of the people at a Vodun service. Under this constant rain of misrepresentation, Haitians who care for the good opinion of other nations have become extremely sensitive on the subject of the folk religion. Many of them deny its existence; others speak of it as something beneath their attention. The more they try to cover it over, however, with silence and professed contempt, the more mysteriously fascinating it becomes to the foreign visitor. The tourist who goes to Paris expects to see the Eiffel Tower, whatever its aesthetic faults; the tourist in Haiti wishes to see, without quite knowing what he means by the term, "a Voodoo dance." No amount of scientific writing about the real character of Vodun will change the popular misconception. For every reader of accurate ethnographical or anthropological treatises on Vodun[2] there are hundreds who feast morbidly on sensational books.

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Haitian Vodun is not the same as the hoodoo of American Negroes.[3] The word is etymologically the same, whether American Voodoo, Haitian Vodun, French Vaudoux, or Spanish judu (whence our "hoodoo"): all derive from a Dahomean (West African) word signifying "god" or "spirit."[4] It is the generic term for all deities.

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1. This phrase is taken from W. B. Seabrook, *The Magic Island* (New York, 1929), p. 42, but might easily have come from half a dozen other journalistic descriptions. [114]

2. Particularly recommended are Melville J. Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley* (New York, 1937), and Dr. Jean Price-Mars, *Ainsi parle l'oncle* (Port-au-Prince, 1928). [113]

3. See Herskovits, *op. cit.*, pp. 139 ff.

4. The *Encyclopædia Britannica*, in a surprisingly superficial and brief article, gives a singular etymology to "Voodoo," tracing it to the Swiss canton of Vaud, where in the Middle Ages a heterodox faith sprang up which had to be practiced in secret. The implication is that any secret religion might be called "Vaud-ois," or "Voodoo." Evidently the author of the encyclopædia article had made no serious investigation of the subject; most modern dictionaries, on the other hand, indicate the Dahomean etymology. [192]

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114 This was recognized in colonial times by Moreau de Saint-Méry,
771 who wrote: "According to the Arada Negroes, the real followers of *Vaudoux* in the colony, . . . *Vaudoux* signifies an all-powerful and supernatural being on whom depend all the events which come to pass on this earth."[5]

771 Vodun is a true religion, in the same sense that Mohammedanism, Buddhism, or Christianity are all true religions. That is to say, it is a set of beliefs and practices which claim to deal with the spiritual forces of the universe, and attempt to keep the individual in harmonious relation with them as they affect his life. The word "superstition" is relative. It is a subjective term, being generally applied to beliefs which we consider ourselves too wise, too advanced, to cling to. The sophisticated skeptic calls the belief in miracles superstition; the Christian regards the reverence for certain animals in India superstition: it is all a matter of view. Using the greatest number of criteria available for the definition of religion as distinct from vague superstition, religion may be said to be a set of beliefs about spirits or gods and their nature, about the origin of the world, about good and evil, about man's relation to the universe he knows; it includes a set of practices of worship; it is an attempt to ward off misfortune and to get good; it treats of what happens after death; it is a system of seeking security, solace, and support in the face of a supposed supernatural.[6]

Vodun is all of these.

771 Like any other vital religion which has spread from its original
177 centre, endured through the years, and come into contact with other faiths, Vodun is not at the present what it was in its early days. Like others it has unconsciously borrowed—and in borrowing, transformed—ideas, concepts, practices, rites.[7] The greatest single influence exerted upon it has been that of the Roman Catholic Church with which the people have had continuous dealings, increasing in recent years, for more than a century and a half. Many aspects of

5. In his *Description . . . de la partie française de . . . Saint-Domingue*, I, 46.

6. This alliterative phrase was suggested as a partial definition of religion by Prof. Raymond Kennedy.

7. It need hardly be pointed out that Christianity is no longer the simple faith taught by Jesus, but a composite of that faith with scholarly theology, absorbed local practices, mysteries which flourished in the Roman Empire, secular philosophy—and, to put it briefly, the accretions of changing time. Similarly, Buddhism is more than the doctrines of Gautama, and Mohammedanism more (and less) than Mohammed taught.

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Vodun, therefore, show the Catholic influence, exerted in the main unconsciously. 771 171

Unlike the great religions, Vodun lacks a formal theology. As has been said, no seminary exists for the training of priests and priestesses, no congress or college of fathers states or amends the creed; there is no church court to discipline the individual enthusiast, or catechism for the young; no scriptures or sermons are printed or read to strengthen the faith. Vodun is an informal religion of action, not a formal one of reason. It flourishes because it is malleable, adaptive, suited to the needs of a people living close to nature and without education. To give a single lucid description of this Haitian folk religion, created as it is by everybody and by nobody, is about as possible as to give one description of home life, which varies according to the couple. We may, however, outline the common elements of creed and practice. 794 771

2. *Formative Days*

To say casually that Vodun is African in origin is to say little more than that it does not stem from the great world religions. There is no unity in Africa today; there was still less in the eighteenth century when slaves were being imported into Haiti. At that period it was possible to find a new dialect and a different set of folkways every few miles along the western seacoast. Two slaves from one geographical region (the Gold Coast, for example) might not understand each other or have the slightest predisposition to sympathize with each other's customs. 771 174

Colonial planters experimented with slaves from various regions in Africa, just as they might compare breeds of horses; setting tractability off against originality, brute strength against skill, intelligence against health. In this quest for a perfect slave, Negroes were imported from all parts of the Dark Continent, from Senegal in the northwest around the five thousand miles of seacoast to Mozambique and Madagascar in the east. Partly because trading conditions were more favorable in the Dahomey and Congo regions, and partly because the qualities of Dahomean and Congolese were preferred, Negroes from these two sections soon came to predominate over others in the colony. Whereas "Congo" was merely a geographical term, implying no community of feeling among the natives living 175 567

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175 567 along that river, Dahomey was the name of a powerful kingdom under a political administration which embraced a fair amount of interchange of ideas and similarity of social institutions, including religion.

175 567 178 Discretion made the planters separate slaves who knew each other, in order to minimize opportunities for revolt among them. This policy, although it prevented the rapid growth of "slave" customs, at the same time dispersed Dahomeans all over the colony; beliefs and practices held in common among the slaves were likely to take on a Dahomean cast. Since their work was directed, their freedom of movement limited, and their family life broken up, there was practically no opportunity for the outcropping of *any* African ideas relating to economic life, government, property, education, or 175 marriage. The one sphere in which it was possible for Old World 178 beliefs to continue was the religious. No slave dealer could penetrate 796 the minds of his workers or silence their folk tales and folk songs in 771 the evening when work was done; even the strictest plantation 535 owners allowed dances in the slave quarters on Saturday nights and Sunday. It is the dance, a vital part of Dahomean religion, which seems to have formed the nucleus around which the diverse beliefs of African tribesmen grouped themselves, for it was a form of action which need not involve anything more than amusement or emotional release, if the participant were not religiously inclined. In the beginning, as Goethe observes, was the Act. To this simple Act of dancing, the Word, with thought behind it, could easily be added later. Practically all African tribesmen danced; and the numerous Dahomeans had a dance which was ostensibly for diversion but could be turned to a religious purpose as well.

771 171 174 Here, then, was the skeleton of a slave religion. Although every single African tribe had its own beliefs and ritual, each (so far as we know) had common elements with every other one. For example, all slaves, whether Senegalese or Angolese, believed in a multiplicity of spiritual beings, some of whom controlled the aspects of nature—lightning and storms, the sea, the sky. They thought that disease and other ill fortune came from spirits who must be placated in order to win back health and well-being. All felt that the normal course of events could be altered by magical spells, formulae, or charms; that one could bring misfortune to an enemy, luck to oneself, or ward off otherwise inevitable fate. Most of them had been accustomed to

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learn the properties of plants, both for healing and for poison. Except for the belief in spiritual beings, this folk knowledge would hardly have been classed as religious, for it was useful in every phase of daily life; the classification is that of the anthropologist, not of the simple black.

If Dahomean beliefs prevailed over others of African origin, it was chiefly because of the numerical preponderance of Dahomeans in the colony, together with the popularity of their religious dances. The Dahomean spirits or gods were Vodun; the dance in which the worshiper sought the inspiration of the spirits was a Vodun dance. Like all but the highly organized religions, this one recognized the validity of other beliefs. Its practitioners were not bigots. No hierarchy existed to keep out new accretions. Imperceptibly these were added to the original basic form: here an Arada spirit, there a Congolese prayer, and in many instances a Catholic saint, until the composite Vodun religion began to take shape.

There is no evidence that during colonial times Vodun was ever considered important by the white ruling class—certainly not as a faith. To most planters the word was the name for a vigorous dance. Judging from Moreau de Saint-Méry's description it was held openly enough, at times being witnessed by the whites as a sort of nocturnal diversion. Moreau knew, as did other whites, that there were "superstitious beliefs" connected with it, yet the offhand use of the word "superstition" was indication enough that the beliefs were not regarded as important. We have seen, however, what profitable use the slaves were able to make of the apparent innocence of their dances. When the idea of revolt began to germinate among them, gathering on each plantation at least once a week they had ample opportunity to hatch their plans. It is known that the campaign for revolt was developed partly under the stimulus of the Negro Boukman, a *houngan* or priest of Vodun. By means of drumbeats, which to the whites merely pounded out the rhythm for dancing but had for centuries been a means of communication at long distance in parts of West Africa, that ripening plot was telegraphed from one plantation to another. Even more important, perhaps, was the unity of feeling made possible, despite all incoherence of tradition and language, by the Vodun background.

The revolt of half a million slaves was a success. This fact has been rather too calmly accepted by historians of Saint-Domingue, who

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114 175 669 668 have explained it chiefly by the surprise element of the uprising. But when else in modern history have slaves successfully revolted against their armed masters and become permanently free? Successful revolutions even of people not in bodily slavery have had acknowledged leadership, whereas in Haiti no real leader appeared for the insurgents. Boukman's influence, indeed, at its widest never reached beyond a part of the northern plain; he had about the same range of power as a [793] ward boss in the United States. On the plantations Hallaou, Hyacinthe, Lafortune, and others whose names are unimportant or unknown, Vodun houngans likewise welded slave opinion within their narrow districts. But no single great leader appeared. As the conflict was developed, without plan or unity under the divided and contradictory action of numerous blacks, what held the people together was, negatively, their hatred of the white masters; positively, their Vodun beliefs. Only later in the decade did a true leader, Toussaint L'Ouverture, emerge to consolidate their victory.

776 793 761 782 781 As often happens among unsophisticated people convinced of the rightness of their cause, the local Vodun leaders were sure of their own invulnerability through the protection of one or another of the spirits.[8] They convinced their followers as well, to such a degree that when an invulnerable chief fell there were dozens of reasons to explain the unexpected death rather than any disillusion. Usually, failure to follow the rigorous propitiation requirements of the protecting god offered the key to the misfortune. Various ones of them were known to be exacting and troublesome. The leader at Trou-Coffi, Romaine by name, had absorbed enough of the Roman Catholicism in Vodun to feel that the Virgin Mary was his especial [789] patroness.[9] Beyond this specific belief in invulnerability was the general trust that Vodun spirits would lead their devotees to success, would give them a happy issue out of all their distress.

[171] [781] 8. A parallel case of belief in invulnerability because of divine protection was that of the North American Indians both at the time of Tecumseh and later in the Sioux outbreaks at the climax of the Ghost-Dance Religion. See James Mooney, *The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890* (Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, 1892–93 [Washington, 1896]), chap. X.

[114] [781] 9. The importance of Vodun beliefs in connection with the slave revolt is stressed by Dr. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Vodou et Névrose* (Port-au-Prince, 1931), pp. 33–34. He says of many of the chiefs: "The belief in their invulnerability was not at all the result of calculation, but was a true state of mind, a sort of autosuggestion which explains very well the chronic heroism of certain leaders of the revolution in Saint-Domingue and of the war of independence of 1802–3."

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Vodun, then, was both widespread and powerful enough to be turned to most effective ends in 1791. Contemporary accounts of it still saw it as a meeting ground of superstitions. The French naturalist, Descourtilz, for example, was primarily struck by the use of the occult in connection with Vodun; he especially describes a woman who, under the seizure of her god, took a live coal in her hand without being burnt; a husband who by the use of magic struck his inconstant wife with a languorous malady, effective for half a year; and the knowledge of poison which was combined with the practice of magic. He mentions but one of the Vodun gods by name but implies the existence of many others.[10]

Madiou, Haiti's first historian, likewise always spoke of Vodun as a savage survival; he says of a native general, "Lamour Dérance, plunged in gross errors, put his faith in *sorcery*, in the prophecy of *papas*, or priests of *African fetishism*."[11] In his scornful distaste for the vulgar he clearly indicated by his own italics some conspicuous elements of the developing religion: magic, the use of fetishes, and a Vodun priesthood. His illustration of Dérance's error was his making soldiers believe that bullets could not wound them:

> When he marched to combat he was preceded by bands of Congos, Aradas, Ibos, Nabos, Mandingues, Haoussas, who threw themselves against the French battalions with a prodigious intrepidity, crying that the bullets were but dust. But this courage which *superstition* fed was shattered against the ramparts of . . . the Europeans' square formations.

It is noteworthy that the first three black rulers set themselves against Vodun because of its potentialities for sedition. The plots to overthrow the old régime had come to fruition at apparently innocent Vodun dances. Although the ingenuous aspect of the dance gathering had deceived the white masters, Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe knew the meaning of the assemblies. All three had to drive their people hard and knew that resentment would be an inevitable consequence; it must not have an opportunity to burgeon at nightly gatherings. Toussaint was the strictest of the three, for he forbade all dances and nocturnal assemblage.[12] The other two singled

10. M. E. Descourtilz, *Voyages d'un naturaliste en Haïti, 1799–1803* (Paris, 1935 ed.), pp. 116–118.
11. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, p. 33.
12. In an order of January 4, 1800.

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The other two singled

175 out Vodun dances for their bans, permitting the purely social dances.
643 On the eve of the first anniversary of independence, "as soon as
794 retreat was sounded, African dances of all kinds began in the tents
796 and open fields; the Vaudoux dance alone was proscribed; the noise
671 of the drums did not quiet down until morning."[13] Dessalines was
659 more suspicious of Vodun than the other two for, being a superstitious man himself, he feared that some of his growing number of
798 enemies might use sorcery upon him; consequently whenever his
771 active police reported meetings of Vodun worshipers he had the offenders shot if they could be caught. Practically all Haitians knew how to distinguish the rhythms of Vodun drumbeats from those of other dances, so that it was not particularly difficult to track down the meeting places. What Christophe really believed, no one could say. He paid outward homage to Roman Catholicism, of course, but rumor persisted of his great faith in magic and the power of African fetishes.[14]

175 The élite mulatto presidents, Pétion and Boyer, did not deign to
643 dignify Vodun by prohibiting it. No revelation of their attitude
794 toward it survives, but we may note that no law of their thirty-six-
659 year tenure of the presidency mentions it. From their other opinions
798 one concludes that they regarded it as merely another of the people's innocent and harmless aberrations. Not one of the foreigners whose curiosity about the Negro republic led them to report on Haitian
796 life of this period gives an intelligent account of Vodun as it then
771 was. Macaulay, writing in 1831, for example, describes the annual
114 celebration at the source of Grande Rivière de l'Artibonite; he mentions the festive dances (not Vodun) and singing, then says: "Morning ceremonies consisted of a solemn sacrifice at which the blood of victims immolated for the feast were offered, and libations of wine were poured on the spring."[15] This was clearly a Vodun sacrifice. Brown, in 1837, writes as a religious man:

> No race is, more than the African, given to religious feelings, though these being but mere sensations entirely independent of thought and reason, manifest themselves in a display of idle fooleries, or dark and hideous terrors of the imagination. They intermix the legitimate ritual of the Catholic faith with the mysterious adoration paid to their national Fetishes, and the

13. Madiou, *op. cit.*, III, 186.
14. See Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Haiti*, pp. 90–91.
15. Zachary Macaulay, *Haiti* (Paris, 1835), pp. 90–91.

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African obi and the Catholic priest both come in for a share of their respect and homage.[16]

This is the usual tone of the comment on native religion, as when Candler in 1842 speaks of funerals in country places "with the *rites of heathenism*, such as are practised to this day in the heart of Africa."[17] Of these conventional criticisms of Vodun, one of the more thoughtful is Bonneau's:

The shocking phantasmagorias of fetishism paralyzed the intellectual development of the African race for six thousand years; superstition is in some sort inherent in its nature. The [Haitian] people need to break with their past. Catholicism has been prodigiously patient and courageous, but it does not possess the necessary corrective for extirpating the fetishism which immobilizes the black population. The Catholic Church, by fractioning the religious sentiment, by forcing thought to diffuse itself in order to take in a thousand secondary details, by imposing on the people practices without number which tend to materialize the cult, by placing as intermediaries between God and men a multitude of saints and genies, encourages and fortifies the tendencies, even the most deplorable ones, of the black race, whose intellect has been shrouded in mist for centuries precisely because it can grasp only with difficulty the relationships between things and ideas, tending rather to lose itself in details than to rise to general and synthetic conceptions.[18]

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If the fixing of periods has any clarifying value, one might set the stages of the development of Vodun as follows:

1730–1790, its Emergence, when the importation of slaves was steadily increasing, with a gradual ascendancy of Dahomean ideas;

1790–1800, its practical Testing in the fires of revolt when, out of apparent innocence and enforced secrecy, Vodun effectively united the slaves in their action for freedom;

1800–1815, its Suppression under the black rulers;

1815–1850, its quiet Diffusion to all the people and assumption of the form it now exhibits.

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The middle of the nineteenth century was the turning point. Before then it had been so to speak in gestation; under Soulouque, then ruling, it publicly emerged. Until the mid-century élite people had

16. Dr. J. Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, II, 273.
17. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, p. 166.
18. A. Bonneau, *Haïti: ses progrès—son avenir*, pp. 24–25.

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175 ignored when they did not frown upon it. As we have seen, the
771 aristocratic Madiou spoke of Vaudoux as "the sorcerers of our coun-
794 try districts," and President Riché in 1846 whenever he heard a suspect drum, went himself to silence it. Under Soulouque, on the other hand, the élite did not dare to show contempt for practices so dear to His Imperial (if benighted) Highness; indeed, one priestess of Vodun then boasted, "If I were to beat the sacred drums and march through the city, not one from the Emperor downwards but would humbly follow me."

175 For at least a century Vodun had developed with no real obstacles
771 beyond the twenty-year prohibition of the Three Great Blacks. The
794 white planters in the colonial era had been too indifferent and imper-
798 ceptive to stop it, while the élite of the republic were too proud to concern themselves. The Catholic Church, which might have been its most effective enemy, was too lax and too much hampered in colonial times to curb "slave superstition," while from 1805 until 1860 because of the schism no real Catholic priesthood labored in the country. All this changed after Soulouque: the schism was healed; priests of true missionary spirit came to Haiti; the *Affaire de Bizoton* gave the enemies of Vodun a focal point of attack. Since 1860 the Catholic Church has not ceased its war against the folk religion. Occasionally, as in the days of Toussaint, a ruler has suppressed it. Such executives have probably known, however, that it was much too late to eradicate Vodun. It had decades in which to send down its roots. Efforts against it have about the same effect as the persecution of the early Christians—a strengthening of the faith of believers, an outward submission to restrictive rules but increased devotion to rites now performed secretly, and in the case of Vodun at least, an added attraction to the cult because of this very secrecy. At least one president has been known to be an ardent worshiper. Today, much as the élite turn up their noses at Vodun, there are many who look to it in their hour of need, when the Catholic faith seems to fail or medicine proves helpless.

3. *Vodun Belief*

771 The sincere Vodun worshiper is generally an illiterate peasant or humble laborer who would never bother his mind to formulate a definite statement of his beliefs. Because there is no clearing-house

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for Vodun theology, nor any established order for the service, 771
variety is one of its chief characteristics. Impossible as it is to cite a definitive list of Vodun beliefs, those most generally held might be combined into a Creed, which would run about as follows:

I believe in scores of gods and spirits, guardians of earth and sky, and of all things visible and invisible;

I believe that all these vodun (who are called "loa" or "mystères") are potent, although less majestic than *le bon Dieu* of the Christians; that some of them came with our ancestors from our former home in Africa, while others we have learned about in our Haitian fatherland; that these loa have power to possess us, their worshipers, informing us by inspiration of their needs and desires, which we must faithfully satisfy; that these loa, like us, are capable of good and evil, gentleness and anger, mercy and revenge;

I believe in the efficacy of sacrifice; in the pleasures of living; in respect due to twins; in the careful cult of the dead, who may return to our abodes; in the spiritual causation of diseases and misfortune; in the dance through which we may be "mounted" by our loa; in the possibility of interfering with the normal flow of events by means of magic; in the efficacy of charms and spells; and in the Holy Catholic Church.

Those who conceive of religion in terms of a rigid orthodoxy, 771
monotheism, sin, a moral law, eternal rewards or punishments, will 177
not understand Haitian Vodun. It is as hospitable to new spiritual 776
conceptions as any faith could be, requiring only that the additions be applicable to life as it is lived in the Haitian hills and valleys, and that they adapt their shape and terminology to the native penchant. Monotheism is rarely the practical belief of simple people, but rather of prophets and scholars. It is easy enough to believe in an all-powerful god but much more difficult to arrive at a conception of a unique God. In Dahomey the people had reached some such stage of belief in omnipotence but not of uniqueness. When later, in slavery, transplanted Africans heard the Catholic doctrine of a god who ruled creation by the fiat of his conquering will, they assimilated the idea with a significant change: the Christian God became the Great Master of the other gods. The slaves very simply placed Him at the head of their pantheon. Even today, the first words of a Vodun [796]
service are the request for permission from the Great Master to go on 114
with the service. As Dorsainvil says: 178

This term chosen to designate the supreme God was imposed on them by 776
their environment. The colonist, the master, incarnated for the slave the

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highest idea of power and action. Logically, he could not conceive of the unique God of the Christians, by analogy and by inspiration, except in terms of the sentiment of fear mingled with the awe which the colonist inspired in him. Once this first step was taken, the rest was only the work of time. In the degree that the holy beings of Catholicism were unfolded to them, the creole Negroes everywhere identified these with the *vodun* (spirits) of the Dahomean cult.[19]

The Christian God could not stop the "deifying" process, for Vodun must have simple spiritual explanations for daily occurrences. How could a god who ruled the earth clutter his mind with such small details as the mango crop or one's private aches? There was room of necessity for more, and lesser, gods.

Orthodoxy and monotheism, then, are alien to Vodun; so likewise are the notions of sin and a moral law. These also are refined ideas. The Catholic priests do their best to instill into the minds of the people the Church doctrine on these points, but gluttony, envy, sloth, and other deadly sins are not easy to explain to a people whose worldly goods are pitifully few, whose bellies are never full, and who must work hard to live at all. Just how the simple Haitian interprets the fulminations of the fathers against sin a foreigner can hardly tell, and the priests are not at liberty to reveal the secrets of the confessional.[20] A peasant loves life. His pleasures are simple enough, partly because he lacks money for expensive ones. Puritanical self-searching is alien to the normal Haitian. The touchstone is infallible: so long as life moves along smoothly one need not worry; if misfortune comes, one of the spirits is angry or out of sorts and his worshipers must propitiate him. What spirit could mind a man's dancing, drinking clairin, watching a cockfight, or otherwise indulging himself?

Vodun does not conceive life to be a struggle between good and evil. Its conception of spirits is anthropomorphic. No man is wholly good or wholly evil, nor is any god; human beings can generally be persuaded into any mood, and so can the gods; as there is variety in human personality, so likewise the gods are not immutable. Some are more to be feared than others, some may be regarded with tender affection, but all are capable of working both weal and woe.

19. Dorsainvil, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

20. A priest once told me that a young Haitian girl in sorrow confessed, as her most heinous sin, that she had given food to a dog. Apparently her idea was that food was too precious to be given away to animals; hence she had sinned.

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A gentle spirit may cause great harm to a person who neglects his commands, while a spirit whose power makes possible the most malignant magic may bring good fortune to his devotee. By conceiving his spirits as in manner and desires resembling himself, the Haitian can understand his little universe without subjecting himself to the bewilderment which faces a simple Christian trying to reconcile an all-loving Father with the obvious evil He allows on earth. 771 776

One must approach Vodun without the religious preconceptions of Christianity or Judaism. Suspending our notions of orthodoxy, monotheism, sin, heaven, and hell, we may examine more closely the creed suggested above, in an endeavor to round out its real meaning to the Haitian.

"I believe in gods and spirits . . ." The white man would recognize most easily among the Haitian's multiple gods the God of Christianity whom every Vodun worshiper confesses. It is this God who is meant in the homely expression of native acceptance of one's lot: "*Bon Dieu bon*"—the good God is really good, however remote. Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are likewise acknowledged, although it seems probable that they do not touch the hearts of people as much as the Great Master. The Blessed Virgin, on the other hand, is very real and near—so real, in fact, that she is sometimes actually merged with a spirit of African origin who has many of the Virgin's storied characteristics. Certain angels and a select group of Christian saints have made a special appeal and so found their niche in Vodun; others are not denied but merely ignored because the Haitian is not well acquainted with them.

To the spirits (one hesitates to use such misleading words as "gods" or "divinities") not drawn from Christianity the name "loa" is applied. There seem in general to be two classes of these: those who have an African origin, and those with a Haitian background only. The former group is called "Rada," the latter "Pétro." The word Rada is derived from the principality of Allada in Dahomey, and would seem thus to indicate that all the Rada loa were Dahomean; this, however, is definitely not the case. Numerous loa can be traced to the Congo region and others to the smaller West African districts, yet all of these are indiscriminately called Rada. In current usage, accordingly, the word has lost its strict geographical significance. The term Pétro is explained in an illuminating paragraph by the Haitian savant, Dr. Dorsainvil: 776 174 192 [192 114]

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114 The common people of Haiti are continually creating [his phrase is much more revealing: "en gestation de"] *loa*, or new Vodoun "saints." Popular
196 tradition, long before independence, refers to a certain Don Pédro, a being
174 of flesh and blood who from the Spanish end of the island had come at a
776 certain period to live in the mountains of the commune of Petit-Goâve. This Don Pédro was the man who introduced into Haiti that violent dance which, by corruption, the people call "the pétro." Upon his death, Don Pédro came to occupy an honorable place in the Vodoun pantheon, bringing in his train a whole group of progeny, such as Jean-Philippe Pétro, Criminel Pétro, etc.[21]

174 As might be logically deduced, certain powerful ancestors become
776 deified as Pétro loa.

It would require field trips into every district of Haiti to compile a
184 full list of the various loa who receive homage from Haitians; some
776 appear to have only a local following, others are honored over a wide district, and a few are reverenced throughout the country. If Vodun ever reached the stage of founding a seminary of sacred theology—a highly improbable event—one of its most imperative functions would be the collection, classification, and explanation of the attributes of the hundreds of loa, specifying whether they are Haitian or African in origin, Pétro or Rada, powerful or complaisant, inclined prevailingly to benevolence or to malice. Lacking such a proper catalogue, it will suffice to mention only the most commonly accepted figures. In reflecting upon the characteristics of these gods, the well-informed reader will be struck by the numerous parallels to divinities of other faiths so remote that Haitians could not possibly have known of them; similar emotional needs seem to produce similar deities to satisfy them.[22]

776 Legba is the name of the loa most frequently invoked, not because he is the most powerful, but because he is the interlocutor between man and his gods. Before any ceremony may begin, Legba is addressed: "*Papa Legba, ouvrí barrière pour nous.*" If he is not first worshiped, the other deities may not come to possess the people. Legba guards every door and gate, every highway and crossroads. He is still an important god in modern Dahomey, where his attributes are much the same as in Haiti. The people feel no necessity of

21. Dorsainvil, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

22. Classical anthropologists might have called this phenomenon "parallelism"; the word is accurate enough if only similarity, not identity, be understood.

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making Legba (or any of their other loa) unusually handsome or admirable; he is, on the contrary, honored none the less because he is a lame old man who wanders about clothed in rags. His homely aspect seems to be a part of his comfortable nature: the "Papa" with which his invocation is prefaced, though not unusual in addressing loa, seems generally to be spoken with overtones of real affection, with the same feeling of kindliness one has for a benevolent uncle in the neighborhood. In parts of Haiti Legba is associated with the Catholic Saint Anthony.[23] As with other loa, there are special attributes, sacrifices, places, and traditions pertaining to him which are characteristic only of limited localities.

Erzulie is the most generally acknowledged female loa. She is especially interesting because of her resemblances to the Virgin Mary. Although she is Dahomean in origin, she is conceived as pale, almost white, probably by the influence of countless lithographs of the Virgin circulated in Haiti as in any other Catholic country. Erzulie is very wealthy, possessing many different dresses and much jewelry. In these aspects she is unique among the loa. It is quite possible that there is a causal connection between the conception of lightness of color and that of wealth, for the only women who possess jewelry and large wardrobes in Haiti are the light-skinned élite; on the other hand, many pictures of the Virgin depict her in queenly robes and adorned with gems, so that the idea may have been derived principally from her. Erzulie is a trembling woman inhabiting the water. She seems to have no one specific function in connection with which she is worshiped, as with Legba, who guards thresholds; rather, she is approachable in a confidential way, as an understanding mistress might be. Her favorite color being white, all animals sacrificed to her are white, whether turkeys, chickens, or goats.

In somewhat the same manner as Christians conceive of their God in diverse manifestations—Christ as priest or king, God as father or judge—so the Haitians in a more direct, illogical, and naïve way, think of their loa in different manifestations. Maîtresse Erzulie, for example, seems to change her major characteristics altogether when she is Erzulie Gé-rouge (that is, the Red-eyed); then she is Pétro, not Rada; boisterous and rather hearty, not trembling.

The third loa, Damballa, is so prominent that some of the early

23. Price-Mars, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

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776 commentators thought him the most important Vodun god.[24] There are two plausible reasons for this emphasis: Damballa is the bringer of rain, a necessity for good crops but a menace resulting in desolating floods when it is too copious; second, his symbol is the serpent. To Christians this is a symbol of such long standing that it is easy to assume in connection with its appearance in Vodun the guile, diabolism, or occult force which it has at times represented in Christian tradition. Damballa, however, is certainly not evil in the same way as Satan; he is not even generally baleful. To honor him is quite fitting, and this attitude is at poles removed from the diabolism [136] of the Middle Ages. There are practically no snakes in Haiti. Because of Damballa's symbol he is quite naturally associated with Saint Patrick.[25] Like Maîtresse Erzulie, all his sacrificial animals must be white, for this is his color. Like her, too, he is Dahomean in origin and therefore Rada.

These three, Legba, Erzulie, and Damballa, can by no means be conceived as a trinity. On the contrary, it would be easily possible to select an entirely different group from the commonest loa, justifying inclusions and eliminations. There is, for example, Ogun, the god of war, who derives from Nigeria in Africa. Ogun can, if properly persuaded, protect his petitioners against bullets and weapon wounds. Like blood, he is red. This is also his favorite color, and so he prefers sacrifices of red cocks and food offerings of red beans with rice. There are likewise Damballa's wife, Ayida Oueddo, whose symbol is the rainbow; Agwé, god of the sea; Baron Samedi, patron spirit watching over cemeteries; Simbi, who lives in mango and calabash trees and is a bit too fond of drink. In any one country district, certain other loa might far outshine any of those mentioned. The longer one lives among the people, the more clearly he sees the validity of the first article of the creed: "I believe in gods and spirits."

787 "I believe that these loa have power to possess their worshipers . . ." It is more difficult to make intelligible to "civilized" people the phenomenon of possession than any other part of Vodun religion. Centuries of training in self-control have made us unwilling to give public vent to our emotions, whether religious or, indeed, of any sort. Not only does our tradition of good manners inhibit such ex-

24. See, for example, Bonneau, *op. cit.*, pp. 25–26 n.

[776] 25. He is sometimes also associated with Moses, who "lifted up the serpent in the wilderness."

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pression, but in the case of religion the nature of our worship interposes barriers between us and the manifestation of feeling. Almost every denomination which has risen to prominence, no matter how anti-ritualistic in its beginnings, has grown more formally proper as it moved from simple meeting-houses to churches, or as it began to draw upon the middle and upper classes for its clientèle, if its origin was humble. Not many Americans would care to recall the fact that their own ancestors rolled upon the ground in religious frenzy or were seized with uncontrollable fits of jerking and shouting when "the spirit of the Lord" was upon them; yet such emotional displays were a regular feature of camp meeting revival services in the Ohio Valley frontier region and elsewhere. 787

In order even vaguely to apprehend Vodun possession, one must disburden one's mind of all notions of formalism, for although the priest as officiant has his place in the service, there is direct participation of the people in every Vodun service and dance. The religion is theirs, not the priests'. One must forego the idea of self-restraint, adopting rather the view that the chief end of worship is to establish direct communication with the gods. One must forget the belief that to lose consciousness, roll one's eyes, scream, and speak in a strange voice are signs of mental derangement, and regard all these abnormalities as very desirable achievements in religious life, symptoms to be contemplated with satisfaction by friends and family. A person possessed has no retrospective feeling of shame. Quite the contrary: he has won through to new peace and security, for a god has spoken through his mouth, revealing divine will. 787 796

Vodun possession is therefore something more than the elation of the Holy Roller, and less than the mystical exaltation of the enraptured saints, yet partaking of elements of both. The descending efflatus is more discriminate than in a Holy Roller service, for rarely is more than one out of five worshipers seized by the god; inversely, it is more general than the ecstasy of a saint, whose experience is partly notable because it is rare. Actually, there is in civilized experience no precise parallel to Vodun possession, which runs the gamut of emotions from gay fun to mordant depression. To emphasize the uniqueness of the Haitian variety of possession, it must be noted that it occurs according to definitely understood rules and clearly defined circumstances. If a worshiper in his enthusiasm should let himself be seized "out of turn," so to speak, he would be instantly called to order. 787

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The language of possession is descriptive. When a god seizes a man, he "mounts" him; the possessed person forthwith becomes the god's "horse." The words are accurate, for the god seems to have as much control over his mount as a human rider would have over a horse whose will he dominates. The person mounted does nothing of his own accord while he is possessed. Under the invisible whip of the spirit-rider the "horse" does a great many things, and says even more, that would be unnatural or even impossible to him, unridden.[26]

Possession is more than the affair of a moment. In this respect it differs again from kindred seizures known to whites. A person may have to wait for many years before he is finally mounted, but the first loa who descends upon him is the chief of his deities, taking precedence over any other who might subsequently possess him. The initial seizure is a vitally important experience, corresponding roughly to the conversion or confirmation of persons in other religions. The subject is carefully observed by experts, so that no mistake will be made in the deductions from actions and speech as to the identity of the god. This loa is baptized by sprinkling water on the head of the possessed person. Thereafter the loa is called "*maît' tête,*" as a recognition of the subservience of his mount: any agreement the devotee might make with another loa under a particular possession would have to conform to the initial agreement with the maît' tête. At a man's death the loa, which has, like more than a guardian angel, accompanied him through life, is taken from his head so that the man's soul may go to God—the Christian God.[27]

The possessing god may be either male or female. It frequently happens that a male loa mounts a female devotee, in which case she is addressed by a male name, wears male clothes, eats and drinks the things her loa prefers (no matter how distasteful to her ordinarily), and otherwise manifests his characteristics. This extraordinary change of personality is accepted naturally enough by the other participants in the rites, although the transformation is to foreigners a psychological phenomenon of prime interest. Dr. Dorsainvil devotes a book to the neuroses connected with possession; as he says: "One of the first consequences of the Vodoun crisis is the substitution for the

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26. Zora Neale Hurston, in her gaily written *Tell My Horse* (Philadelphia, 1938), has a vivid chapter on the possession effected by the distinctly Haitian loa, Guédé. She entitles this chapter in Créole: "*Parlay cheval ou*" (Tell my horse)—the words with which the loa begins to dictate through the mouth of his mount. See pp. 232–250.

27. See Herskovits, *op. cit.*, pp. 146–151.

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normal personality of the subject a second, accidental personality which, except in the cases of conscious simulation, introduces real modifications in the ordinary state of being of the possessed person."[28] The phrase is noteworthy: "except in the cases of conscious simulation." Since the possessing loa frees his mount of his normal personality, certain persons at times try to pretend that they have been mounted in order to gain a desired end, which may be amatory, vindictive, or whatever. The people, however, are well acquainted with the normal penchants of everyone in the community; when they have their doubts about the authenticity of a seizure, they can easily by teasing words arouse the pretender's quite normal anger, by ingenious movements call forth an everyday response and so make the "mount" betray his ruse. 787

Since the main emphasis of this chapter is upon the religious, not the psychological, aspects of possession, no more than a passing reference can be made to the absorbing question of the normality of seizure. Two facts are important: it is confidently expected that possession will occur at every significant service; and it is known beforehand that not every worshiper will be subject to it. Some of the people seem to be definitely incapable of intense religious feeling or expression, others react almost immediately with overwhelming emotion, still a third group senses the mystery but cannot take the final step of inspiration.

Dr. Dorsainvil, a physician and historian, considering the recognized capabilities and limitations of Vodun worshipers with regard to seizure, maintains that possession is a species of neurosis, resulting in part from the historical tradition which makes seizure respectable and desirable and in part from the inheritance of neurotic tendencies in families. Professor Herskovits, an anthropologist and ethnographer, avers on the contrary that possession is, in terms of the patterns of Haitian religion, not abnormal but normal. He would stress the first of the two facts above: seizures occur at all important services. He does not deny the release afforded from psychic tension by yielding to possession; also he grants that the seizure might secure for a man the fulfillment of his suppressed desires for material goods or physical satisfactions. What impresses him, however, is the rules which rigidly govern possession. Gods are permitted to come only to members of the family giving the rite—that is, if the loa are under 114 787

28. Dorsainvil, op. cit., p. 113.

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787 proper control, as they should be. If an unwanted god persists in
114 mounting an individual, the pertinacious one is commanded to go away or the victim himself is sent home until he can recover his own personality. Many people strongly resist possession when it is imminent. Judged by our own standards, possession of the Vodun variety could certainly not be called normal; judged by Haitian standards, however, it would be absurd to call abnormal an experience known and approved by the majority of the community.[29]

796 Possession occurs either at the service or at the dance. Here again
535 the white man has nothing in his religious experience to enable him
787 to comprehend the pattern of Haitian religion. The service corresponds nearly enough to the Catholic Mass or to more realistic sacrifices in ancient Jewish rites, but neither of these faiths nor any other the white man knows well has dancing for religion's sake. In Vodun, however, the dance is of equal importance with the service.

778 In the tiny *hounfort* (also spelled *hounfort*) of the priest, which is
346 little more than a hut with earthen floor, the service begins. To call
796 this structure a temple is at once to make it too imposing and to confuse the white man in his attempt to understand the scene; it is no more of a temple than was a tiny primitive early Christian church. Most houmforts in Haiti would be crowded if twenty people were present. At one end is an altar, more or less resembling the high altar in a Catholic chapel; on it are placed a crucifix, flowers, candles, fruit and food, wine, lithographs of Catholic saints, and whatever other objects, Catholic or Vodun, local practice may dictate and individual taste prefer. Upon the floor are traced formal cabalistic patterns, generally in corn meal, both to fend off evil influences and as required by the particular loa. The officiants may be male or female or both. To the service ordinarily come only the members of the family and their specifically invited guests; neighbors and friends will attend the subsequent dance.

796 A student of Catholicism would find in the first part of the service
788 a great deal of ritual borrowed from the Church. The blessing,
177 genuflections, making the sign of the cross, responses, and the like,
782 all clearly show a Catholic background which accords well with
787 certain objects upon the altar. Imperceptibly the strictly Vodun element obtrudes itself. The loa are asked whether they will accept

29. The statements of the two sides of this controversy may be found in Dorsainvil, op. cit., throughout; and in Herskovits, op. cit., particularly pp. 146–147.

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the sacrifices; food is set before the sacrificial animal, and if this food is eaten by the creature or creatures, it is known that the loa is satisfied. Then comes the actual sacrifice of the animal, a slaying neither ostentatious nor dramatic, since often it does not occur in the houmfort itself. It is at this juncture that possession is looked for. The loa, by seizing one or more of his devotees—or, if possession fails, by the divination of the priest—makes known his desires. The demands of the loa are likely to be modest: a candle, a special article of food, certain specific attentions. Occasionally he insists upon an impressive sacrifice. Whatever his desires, they must be gratified or else the loa will mildly harass the family; long refusal will produce anger and full vengeance. If the god is Rada, his sacrifice will be white, red, or vari-colored; if he is Pétro, he will wish black or gray animals—chickens, turkeys, goats, bullocks.

The service itself, then, is entirely religious in nature, consisting wholly of ceremonies and rituals conducted by officiating priests, with the purpose of restraining or pacifying gods who may have been pursuing a family with misfortune, or gratifying those who have made it happy. The dance following the service apparently expresses the joy of the family at dangers averted and gratitude for blessings bestowed.

In contrast to the private character of the service, the dance has all the appearance of a social event. Invitations to it are sent all over the countryside. People attend for good fellowship, gossip, and the sheer delight of dancing, but in the background one is always aware of a religious element as well. The dance is held in a specially constructed *tonnelle*, a roof of boughs and leaves supported by uprights. Drums are not always used at the earlier service, but no dance could be held without them. The crowd drifts in slowly, so that the dance may be long in getting under way. The best drummers in the community may not arrive until after two or three hours. Three drums of different sizes, all properly baptized, set the rhythms, and sometimes gourd rattles embroider a commentary upon the beat. Whereas at the service possession comes as a result of the priest's invocations, at the dance it is inspired by the drumming. Each loa has his own particular rhythm, so that as soon as it is determined what god has seized upon a dancer the drummers take up the rhythm of that god. The officiant immediately rushes to the mounted person with a calabash of water and a candle; by following the "horse" around and

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steadying his attention, he practically hypnotizes him back into full consciousness. As soon as the possessed is normal again, water out of the calabash is poured at the central post and a sign of the cross is made with the candle before it.

Contrary to the expectation of thrill-seeking white visitors, the Vodun dance does not merit the name of an orgy. True, the dancers wear their old clothes, for they are going to have violent exercise; true also, those who are possessed give the impression of losing some of their inhibitions. But the dancers do not embrace each other as at a white man's dance; the drinking which occurs is hardly ever excessive; and the climax of a successful dance is a religious experience. The Haitian is no more obsessed by sex than is the American; indeed, living simply and without many of the artificial restraints of "civilization," he is probably less so. What white visitors sometimes see, under the impression that they are witnessing a Vodun dance, is nothing more than a secular Saturday night social dance. It, too, has drum rhythms instead of an orchestra, musical instruments being rare in Haiti; but the dance has no more religious (or "Voodoo") significance than a barn dance in the United States.

Creed and practice go hand in hand in Haiti. The Vodun worshiper believes in the loa of his faith and does the things necessary to get in touch with them. These conceptions are the major part of his creed, as the corresponding actions form the bulk of his religious activity.

A few articles of the creed remain. "I believe in respect to twins . . ." Hundreds of so-called primitive peoples see in twins some special significance, now fortunate, now tragic. Many of the tribes along the Atlantic coast of Africa thought of twins as an omen, so that the presence of ritual regard for them in Haiti is hardly surprising. It is probably incorrect to speak of the worship, or the cult, of twins, for they are not deified, nor is there a common ritual for them: thousands of persons pay them no homage whatever. One family has a high regard for twins because it has numbered them among its ancestors or recent relatives; another family pays respect to all twins because a priest has advised seeking the good luck which comes from *marassa* (twins). There seems to be some confusion of thought about this aspect of religion: twins are not gods, but merely omens from the gods; yet sacrifices are made to them. Christmas and harvest are the usual seasons for the offering. Food is prepared in the morning

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and set apart on special plates in a separate room for them; in the afternoon the family eats the food. If the twins to whom homage is being offered are still alive, they must wear special clothes at the sacrifice.

"I believe in the careful cult of the dead . . ." Once more it is necessary to renew one's acquaintance with primitive and folk belief to grasp the Haitian attitude. Life is desirable, death is dreaded; both death and the dead are feared. In the actual world, any excursion from the comfortably familiar countryside of one's home leads to confusion and bewilderment. Except in the company of his fellows (on a religious pilgrimage to the waterfalls at Ville-Bonheur, for example), a Haitian almost never leaves his valley or mountainside and market town. Sophisticated people view the unknown with pleasurable excitement, for they have learned by experience that the unfamiliar is not necessarily frightful; it is quite the contrary with simple folk, whose meagre experience with the unfamiliar has been at least somewhat alarming.

Death is the ultimate unknown. The fearsomeness the imagination conceives to lie beyond death seems to exist in almost direct proportion to people's ignorance of the material world. The fear of ghosts is a commonplace among primitive folk, as among the uneducated in the "civilized" world. Where ghosts are considered powerful, one part of any comprehensive cult will certainly deal with the dead.

In Haitian Vodun the teachings of the Catholic Church have exerted more influence upon the cult of the dead than upon any other part of the religion. The preparation of the corpse for burial shows no traces of African practice; the watch (or wake) and wailing over the deceased is familiar; the funeral itself is conducted by a Catholic priest, with burial in consecrated ground. Thereafter, the continual efforts to secure the tranquil repose of the departed bear the earmarks of faithful Catholic practice; it is at this point, however, that the cult begins to assume distinctive features, for it is firmly believed that the dead exert tremendous power in the world of the living. This power comes from God—the Christian God. The case has been put succinctly by Sumner and Keller: "The relation between man and ghost resolves itself . . . into a relation of rights and duties, with all the rights on one side and all the duties on the other."[30] God gives

30. W. G. Sumner and A. G. Keller, *The Science of Society* (New Haven, 1927), II, 829.

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114 776 769 the dead a right to whatever their survivors possess, and moreover gives them the right to return to earth as ghosts.[31]

769 Strict rules of mourning prevail, both as regards clothing and behavior. The slightest lapse in the observation of these rules would 765 cause resentment on the part of the dead; fear of retribution would 775 be quite enough to ensure conformity even if public opinion did not. 782 Ghosts have the power to possess mortals, not as the loa do at a Vodun service or dance, but in the manner understood by American Negroes who say they have been "ha'nted," and so, continually thinking of the dead, live in nervous fear of a streak of bad luck. Such possession is a form of persecution, with continual consequent bad luck until the survivor has carried out all his obligations. It is especially significant, however, that a departed spirit takes vengeance only in matters thought by the Haitian to concern the Church. The ghost is not whimsical in his possession of mortals, and cannot resent treatment which is his due. The kind of treatment given a corpse depends upon the kind of death he died: a person struck by lightning, for example, would have no ceremonies at all, for lightning is an act of God.

787 Where the cult of the dead departs entirely from the teachings of 775 the Church is in the matter of magic, a topic shortly to be treated. It 789 may be briefly stated here that ghosts can be summoned back by special adepts for purposes of divination; that certain corpses are thought to be revivified by evil persons who use these soulless, pathetic automata as slaves (these are the notorious *zombis*); and that black magic—that is, powerful influence for evil—can be worked by sorcerers who know how to command ghosts.

771 All other articles of the Vodun creed not already discussed, except one, come under the heading of magic. That exception is the state- 798 ment: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." The fact is as simple as the affirmation. If the Catholic priests fight Vodun, preaching frequently against its beliefs and practices, that is unfortunate, think the peasants: Vodun does not retaliate by fighting Catholicism. God and the saints have their province, and the loa theirs. The mind of the Haitian is simple enough to accept both sets of spiritual beings, and not philosophical enough to worry over the contradiction. Practically every Vodun worshiper thinks of himself as a Catholic.[32]

31. See Herskovits, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

32. In this sketch of the Vodun creed, it has been constantly emphasized that each locality has its own variations both in belief and practice. The reader who is interested in pursuing the subject further should consult the works of Price-Mars, Herskovits, Dorsainvil, Parsons, Hurston, et al. See Bibliography.

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Worship of the loa is directed by priests and priestesses. They grow into their positions by a kind of tolerant apprenticeship. Young men and women discover their abilities in dealing with loa or their desire to participate actively in serving them; they assist the officiating priests; they listen carefully to the lore of their elders, keeping their eyes open meanwhile. The priest is generally called a houngan, or sometimes a *papaloi;* the priestess a *mambu* or a *mamaloi.*[33] No ceremony marks the progression of a novice through any set stages to final priesthood; rather, the people in the community simply recognize growing expertness. The more effective and capable a houngan, the greater his prestige and the wider his reputation. There is nothing even vaguely resembling the ordered hierarchy of priests in the Catholic Church, nor is there any control of one houngan over another. No holy robes adorn the officiants, although they occasionally wear certain colors or ornaments to please the loa. Most of the Vodun priests and priestesses are simple peasants, working in the fields and going about the daily round of life. When they are called to perform a ritual, an offering is taken up in the early part of the service to recompense them for their offices.

Actually, the Vodun houngan and mambu correspond much more closely to the primitive medicine man or shaman than to the Catholic priest. They are thought to have power, through certain Rada and Pétro loa, to cure illnesses caused either by adverse magic of one's enemies or by a loa; they are not able, however, to cure sickness sent by the Christian God. Likewise they can remedy or avert misfortune whose origin is magic or the loa. One of their highly important functions is foretelling the future: no important service would be contemplated by a family without previous resort to divination to determine the propitiousness of the time, nor would it be sensible to undertake a secular business of importance without preliminary reassurance by this means. To see into the future effectively, the priest must be possessed by the loa.[34]

33. The second of these names in each case derives from "papa" and "mama," or master and mistress; and from the familiar loa or god. It is not implied that the officiants dominate the loa but only that they deal expertly with them.

34. In addition to the houngans and mambu, there are also *bocors* who specialize in magic without conducting regular religious rites. These bocors probably deserve the name of sorcerers.

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4. *Magic*

771 It is difficult enough to make a distinction between religion and superstition; it is practically impossible, in dealing with a people who in their closeness to nature are not accustomed to the refinements of "civilized" thinking, to make one between magic and certain aspects of religion. Underlying both is belief in the supernatural; characteristic of both is a faith which recognizes a higher order of cause and effect operating with the lower one familiar in commonplace matters. Anthropologists hold various theories about magic, some saying that it is the set of practices out of which religion evolved, others that it exists for personal and practical ends and has little to do with religion; still others that it is a development out of religion, paralleling and complementing it.[35]

771 One element which distinguishes religious practice from magic is
789 the attitude toward spirits. In religion, the worshiper pays homage and humbly petitions, preserving meanwhile an attitude of humility
782 to spirits or gods who must be propitiated; in magic, the human being, by coercive words and actions, commands the services of spirits who (if the magical rites have been properly performed) must obey. The distinction is not between good and evil, for a god may have both characteristics and be entirely capable of working harm to mortals. As already noted, in the Haitian system the gods are like men in being mixtures of both principles.

771 Another difference between religion and magic concerns time.
789 Religion is social, open to all worshipers or at least to all of a group or social rank. Its rites are continually and repeatedly performed.
796 Magic, on the contrary, though sometimes public and social, is generally private and, since it is for a specific purpose, is performed only when the need arises. A man who was thoroughly conversant with magic might go through his whole life without ever feeling the need of employing it or having to exert himself to fend it off. One turns to magic as a sophisticated man might turn to medicine. Either may be done without; both may be used to excess.

789 In Haitian Vodun, magic interweaves itself with the general faith.

791 35. See, for example, Ruth Benedict, "Magic," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*,
793 X, 39–44; A. Goldenweiser, *Early Civilization* (New York, 1922), chaps. X–XI; J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (London, 1907–15), *passim;* R. R. Marett, *The Threshold of Religion* (New York, 1914), *passim;* and Sumner and Keller, *op. cit.*, II, chaps. XXIX–XXXI.

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Everyone believes in it, though few would make nice distinctions between the two. Starting with extremes, the houngan conducting a service with sacrifice is officiating at a purely religious rite, while the bocor (sorcerer) concocting a love charm is dealing wholly in magic. It is perfectly proper, however, for a respectable houngan to brew a mixture, calling on the loa meanwhile for assistance, to cure a sick person: is this magic? Certainly it is private, specific, practical. A respectable houngan will not permit himself to dabble in evil magic, destined to bring misfortune to someone else;[36] but such work is the stock in trade of the bocor, who knows the dangers of his profession yet is willing to run the risk for the sake of high profit. Between the reputable houngan and the awesome bocor may sometimes be found the *caplata*, a sort of jack-of-all-trades, who professes to be able to achieve whatever is demanded of him in magic, whether beneficial or harmful, but whose reputation is not high enough to make men trust him with important magical enterprises. 789 793 791

There exists one continual check to save the gullible from charlatanism on the part of the practitioner: the performer of any kind of magic must make frequent exhibitions of his powers. If the specialist cannot make his magic work, he soon loses his reputation. The career of magic is not one to be entered lightly. Constant search for medicinal plants, constant experimentation, comparison of practice—the requirements of the profession are as strenuous as those for the successful American doctor. Magic is like a live wire: it cannot be handled with impunity. The slightest slip on the part of the bocor might loose divine wrath on the bungler and quack. It is said that almost every bocor dies an evil death, hoist on his own petard. For the houngan the risk is not so great, since in general he relies upon the might of his own special loa, who of old has been familiar with him. True, he may run the risk of purchasing the services of other loa, but it is a risk, since his family loa, quick to feel insult, might punish him. 789 791

Magic runs the gamut from passive to active, simple to complex. The commonest manifestation of magic in Haitian daily life is one familiar to most peoples in the world—the charm. As in Italy and other southern European countries, the Haitian peasant believes in the evil eye. "Maldioque," it is called—a term not far removed from the Italian "*mal occhio*." The common belief is that certain persons, 789 [171]

36. This is commonly called "black" magic.

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789 generally through no wish of their own, have the uncanny ability to cause evil simply by a glance. One look is enough to do the damage. Although theory is a bit vague on this point, it appears that certain irritable spirits use the agency of the human eye to vent their spleen on mortals who are fortunate: good looks and strokes of luck act, consequently, as lodestones to the fateful glance. And where the [175] glance falls ill luck may spread, harming all within reach. In the days [304] of slavery people had such a fear of the evil eye that they did not hesitate to disfigure infants who at birth seemed to be particularly handsome and so likely to attract attention. Nowadays the practice 777 is to avert the glance by making an *arrêt*. This "halt" may be either a 789 special charm worn on the person or else the mark of a half-moon done with a caustic vegetable substance on the cheek. As with Europeans who believe in the evil eye, certain specialists ply a lucrative trade through their reputation for effective charms against the maldioque.

Other charms may be mentioned. There is the *garde* which protects its wearer against evil of any variety—the near relative of the good-luck charm worn by thousands of "civilized" people. There is the *ouanga*, or *wanga*, compounded to achieve a special end, generally an evil one. Faine remarks that ouanga is

[192] A Créole word of African origin [signifying] a philtre or simple of a special kind, compounded by an *houngan* out of such diverse ingredients as a dead chicken, some grains of indigo and maize, amulets, pieces of money, asafoetida, etc., the whole contained in a half-calabash. . . . The Ouanga, placed in the home of an enemy, is designed to bring him bad luck even to the extent of giving him elephantiasis ("gros pied") when he has inadvertently stepped on the ouanga.[37]

The ouanga is the Haitian equivalent of the hoodoo, for through its influence one may (or so he believes) bring illness, misfortune, or death to an enemy. For every ouanga there is a garde, for every evil a cure. The art lies in finding out the nature of the ouanga causing harm, and then knowing exactly what to do to fend it off.

751 Historically the most interesting garde is that called a *drogue*, 789 which is thought to insulate one against wound by weapons or bullets. Reference has already been made to the utter abandon with which the Negroes, both at the time of the insurrection and later in

[37. Jules Faine, *Philologie Créole* (Port-au-Prince, 1937), p. 319.

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the struggle for independence, threw themselves against the formidable weapons of the whites. Whenever in spite of the drogue a man was wounded, there was always the explanation of other potent magic, never a surrender of the belief in drogues. Tradition has it that Christophe wore a drogue giving him immunity against all but silver bullets, and that he kept a silver bullet for suicide in case the need should arise—as it did. Drogues were worn by the caco guerrillas, active from 1919 to 1922, who harassed the Marines during the Occupation of the country.

Such forms of magic are found among practically every known folk. There are traces of charms in the folklore of most "civilized" people, as well as in actual, if secret, use by many apparent sophisticates.

The next commonest application of magic has to do with disease. Haiti is a poor and prevailingly illiterate country in which there are not enough trained medical doctors to serve adequately even the small population of the towns. People who live in the secluded valleys and on the mountainsides receive practically no medical attention. The disease rate if accurate figures could be obtained would certainly be shockingly high, with hookworm and malaria all but universal, and yaws, elephantiasis, and tuberculosis common. In the case of disease and its treatment, it is fair to say that the Haitian peasant is typically primitive.

Sickness is thought to be caused either as a punishment or a warning by one of the loa, or by evil magic wrought by one's enemies. When a man falls ill, therefore, he sends for the specialist, whether houngan, bocor, or caplata, to discover the responsible loa; next, he must learn whether the loa is angry with him, and if so, for what reason; if it is found that the loa is acting through magical compulsion of an enemy, the treatment of the disease will be different from the case of a loa acting without human compulsion. An angry spirit can be appeased by proper sacrifices; a spirit acting as an agent of evil magic must be fought by another spirit, compelled by the countermagic of the patient's specialist. Sometimes the countermagic is simple exorcism by spells and incantations. At other times it is highly involved and dangerous, requiring exotic plants, continuous attention, even illegal practices such as mutilating a corpse. Casual observation might fail to detect the magical element in some of the operations, for they resemble merely the brews or applications of old wives' tales.

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755 Specialists in the magic of healing sometimes hit upon remarkable remedies, just as those who concentrate upon causing ailments learn the most effective ways of poisoning a victim's body or, by suggestion, of ruining his peace of mind. In the soil of infinite belief in spiritual powers the seeds of suspicion take firm root.

754 776 From the realm of recognized magic in which most natives at one time or another indulge, one crosses the threshold into a world of sorcery, perversion, and evil mystery. Here no normal person walks, for it is perilous ground. Here is no illumination from any loa or saint, but a grisly darkness coming down by tradition through centuries of whispered fear. From European folklore by way of French storytellers the Haitian peasant has taken the idea of the werewolf, whom he conceives always to be feminine. The male counterpart is [266] the demon. These creatures are men and women who have a passion for eating human flesh and drinking human blood; cannibalism being abhorrent to normal persons, these abnormal ones through the blackest of magic are believed to be able to transform themselves into werewolves and demons, in which shape they glut themselves before effecting the change once more into human form. One does well to beware of persons with red eyes or black spots in the corner of the eye: these are the telltale marks of the cannibalistically inclined. No accredited ethnographer has ever received a direct report of encounter with werewolves or demons, but the haunting fear is present among the people. There is always an old man who lives in the next valley who has definite knowledge of them, and there are bocors who are "well known" to be able to give this vile power of lycanthropy to people. A person particularly afraid of werewolves will wear a special garde to ward off this evil.

754 776 From Africa comes the belief in the *baka*, an evil spirit who has a family resemblance to former Christian notions of the devil. The baka will make a bargain with a man, giving him some special power or greatly desired boon in return for the life of a member of his family. The bargain seems always to be cumulative, so that the mortal is never out of debt. When first one member of a family dies, and then a second and a third, the family is sure to consult a houngan in order to discover whether such an engagement exists. The knowledge apparently does little good, for the baka is always there at the appointed hour, mowing down one member after another until finally the bargainer himself is killed. One might wonder, since it is

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generally believed that the compact always results fatally for the man 754
who makes it, why anyone should enter into such an engagement. 776
Craving for money or some other immediate form of power, however, bedims the reason; in the face of all-consuming desire, more than one man has been willing to ignore future pain for present reward.

It would be possible to conjure up a whole phantasmagoria of 789
weird belief in connection with magic, although this would be unjust to the character of the Haitians. These people have their share of dire concepts, but no more than might be expected of a simple folk. One final magical belief must be treated, however, for it has reached the ears of the outside world in grim detail. This is the belief [114]
in the *zombi*. The word, as Faine explains, comes from the Bonda [192]
language of Africa (*zumbi* there), and was probably transmitted to Haiti by Portuguese slave traders. Faine continues:

Zombi . . . designates in general a revenant, a phantom, an otherworldly 114
spirit. In popular belief, certain sorcerers have the power, by means of 754
charms and spells, to cause apparent death to individuals and then to bring them back to life again, even after they have been buried. These resuscitated persons, only half-conscious, are then, isolated in distant parts of the country, utilized for field work. Nourished on food from which salt is rigorously excluded, they are thought to be able to regain their natural senses and all their mental faculties if they taste the least grain of this substance. Such legends, circumstantially garbed and presented as actual facts by certain unscrupulous authors, have served as the theme of books which have made a great commotion in foreign countries. Taking advantage of the credulity of a public avid for exotic matters, for mysteries, for the supernatural, these writers have gained, in certain cases, the greatest success of publicity.[38]

Three attitudes are taken in regard to the zombi. There are skep- 754
tics who deny the existence of zombis altogether, setting down as fable most of the ideas current about them, and as mistaken diagnosis all the remainder. There are the credulous (including practically every peasant) who believe in and quite directly fear this potential fate. And there are those who believe that certain bocors know how to administer a subtle poison to intended victims which will cause suspended animation and give the appearance of death. Men in the prime of life suddenly sicken and die for no apparent reason. Once these pseudo-corpses are safely buried, the sinister person who has

38. *Ibid.*, p. 303.

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754 arranged the "death" will hasten to the graveyard and dig up the body; giving the proper antidote to the poison, he restores the body to activity but the mind only to semiconsciousness. In this subnormal state the victim is taken off to some remote valley where, in company with other zombis, he is made to work as a slave. Physical strength is there, but no mind with which to rebel, to ask for pay, to recognize the full extent of his sorry state.[39]

114 754 Zora Neale Hurston is the only foreigner who states that she has definitely seen a zombi. In her book, *Tell My Horse,* she describes the woman who had been a zombi and includes a picture of her.[40] The reader cannot suppress a query as to whether the supposed zombi might not have suffered simply from a special kind of insanity. Miss Hurston tells very graphically the peasant tales of "dead" persons made into zombis: of parents, husbands, and wives who have seen and clung to their recent relatives without the slightest responding sign of recognition, of men who are known to have zombis in their employ.

754 766 When a person has died a sudden death without apparent cause, a houngan will very likely be called to try to discover the malefactor, although it is not believed that he will be able to bring back to life the "dead" person. In cases where sudden death is regarded as suspicious, the survivors often see to it that the apparent corpse becomes a real one by plunging a knife into the heart or by cutting out some vital part, in order to spare the corpse the degradation of a zombi's slavery. Or families lacking the courage to mutilate a corpse will watch at the grave until it is certain that the body has begun to putrefy and real death has succeeded to the simulation. Once actual death has come, of course, the malefactor is thwarted and prevented from capitalizing on his evil work.

754 In a mental atmosphere of credulity, coincidence often makes magic seem to work. Belief gives power to the charm or rite. A person aware that a spell is cast upon him will sicken and die because he believes so firmly in the efficacy of the magic. A curse will be

[114] 39. In support of this theory of a poison which produces stupor, Seabrook, *op. cit.*, p. 335, cites the French text of the Code Pénal, Article 249, as follows: "*Est aussi qualifié attentat à la vie d'une personne, l'emploi qui sera fait contre elle de substances qui, sans donner la mort, produisent un effet léthargique plus ou moins prolongé, de quelque manière que ces substances aient administrés, quelles qu'en aient été les suites. Si par suite de cet état léthargique la personne a été inhumée, l'attentat sera qualifié assassinat.*"

40. Pp. 189–209.

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pronounced; later the lightning will strike, the disease will come, the child will die: the connection between curse and calamity will seem too obvious for contradiction. About certain persons is a look (some call it an aura) of evil which is almost palpable: folk belief has an explanation. For much of the mysterious coincidence in life a sophisticate will simply shrug his shoulders and attempt no explanation; he accepts his doctor's diagnosis or his lawyer's advice, and when these betray him falls back upon the many insurances of civilization. The Haitian needs an explanation for his ills, for he lacks doctors, lawyers, insurance: the explanation of magic may be incorrect, but it is the only one he has and it is backed up by events often enough to seem true. 754

Life is full of mishaps. The Haitian's loa are as real to him as the mountains and trees of his country. It is not to be wondered, therefore, that the peasant thinks his loa directly responsible for much of the evil that befalls. In this explanation the Haitian is not different from millions of other people, even Christians. It would, however, be a great mistake to emphasize the fear in Vodun faith and in the magic which proceeds from it to such an extent that the bright side is forgotten. The gods are likewise responsible for the good luck of mankind. If a man deeply desires to attain a specific good, there is room in both religion and magic for that also. It may be the love of a girl, money to pay a debt, a propitious day for holding a *coumbite* (or coöperative working bee), the birth of a son instead of a daughter: religion and magic avail for all of these, more with some individuals than with others. When an entire community holds a belief, the magic has a double chance of working. It is easier for a man to win his wife if she knows he is working magic to that end, than to persuade her without magic. This kind of magic is also easier to work than that which depends wholly upon the complaisance of the loa, as when rain is needed for crops at the proper time. 776 789 771

Religion, with its sister magic, is not for the Haitian a matter of special days, vague abstractions, or formal propriety. It is a daily strength for daily needs. 771

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[p.166]

VIII

RELIGIOUS BORROWINGS

771 ROMAN Catholicism in Haiti is, as we have seen, the officially approved, socially proper, and outwardly recognized religion. Vodun, on the contrary, is legislated against and driven into the background by the élite who are ashamed to have foreigners see the power in their country of a folk religion which has its crude side. These two are Haiti's faiths.

774 No one takes a census in Haiti, for the peasants have their suspicions of officials who pry into personal affairs. There is consequently no way of knowing precisely how many Haitians regard themselves as "belonging" to the Catholic Church. The priests list the whole population of a diocese as Catholic. In so doing they are probably not far wrong, for although not every person gets to confession each year or attends to his other religious duties, certainly nineteen out of twenty Haitians, élite and common folk alike, would claim to be Catholics. On the whole, it may be that the simple people are more sincere in this, for they are not touched with skepticism where things spiritual are concerned.

771 171 In the United States censuses of religious bodies, if an individual is listed as a member of one denomination he cannot be listed as a member of another. We are trained to religious exclusiveness: we are *either* Baptists *or* Methodists, Jews *or* Catholics. Not every people, however, has schooled itself to such sharp distinctions. The Japanese Buddhist may regard himself as a worshiper of Shinto as well; the Chinese can be Taoist and Confucian at the same time. By our rigidity we deny ourselves a great deal of inner comfort: I may like the earnest fervor of the Missionary Baptists but like as well the stately ritual of Anglo-Catholicism; I must accept one or the other, however, for if I am a member of the former sect I cannot at the same time be admitted to all the rights and privileges of the latter. There is probably a spiritual compensation resulting from such single-minded allegiance, but we are frequently forced to deny

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validity to forms and ideas which we know, in our hearts, might sustain us.[1]

The Haitian peasant is not interested in making formal distinctions. If he is critical, it is only of results, rarely of the means used to obtain those results. If he cannot gain his ends in one way he is not too proud to try another, and still a third. Nineteen out of twenty Haitians, then, being Roman Catholics in religion, are likewise worshipers of Vodun. There is so much mystery in the world, so much misfortune, beauty, sorrow, and joy that it would be unthinkable to deny God or the gods: mankind has worship enough for them all, and need enough of them all. There is to the peasant no conflict between Vodun and Catholicism; the two are complementary, even if sometimes the Catholic priests make coöperation impossible.

Let us recall for a moment the earlier history of the country. In the days of slavery one may imagine the Church would have found it difficult, even if its priests and planters had been willing, to train all the blacks as thorough Catholics. Some concepts took root, some rites immediately appealed. Below the surface, however, the African ideas of the preponderant Dahomeans were spreading through the plantations. In the crucial early days of independence, when the customs and social institutions of the Haitians (as Haitians, not as expatriate slaves) were in process of formation, the country's rulers were not deeply religious; moreover the State was in open schism from the Church. For fifty-five years no approved churchman was at work with the people. The seventy men whom some historians mention as priests were on the whole venal and self-seeking, even vicious. Their least concern was to wean the people away from their superstitions, for precisely in these folk beliefs lay the greatest source of gain. By the time the breach between State and Church was healed it was too late to make single-minded Catholics of the Haitian peasants. They would accept what the new and active priests taught them, but not to the exclusion of what they had believed for a century.

With the élite the Church has had more success; assiduous teach-

1. This either-or dichotomy is not limited to religion: we divide ourselves similarly in politics, family life, residence, and so on. If I am a Lutheran, a Republican, a married man with a home in New York, I cannot at the same time be an Episcopalian, a Democrat, and a voter in Chicago with a second spouse and family there. What is impossible and ridiculous for Americans, however, is in some ways the normal course of life for the Haitian.

565 ing since 1860 has had its effect upon the children of the upper classes.
771 Two hundred churchmen working with a population of more than two million cannot distribute their benefits equally. Teachers must devote themselves to those whose minds are educable, who have access to schools, and who can afford time for daily classes. An element of social snobbishness entered as well. Catholicism was socially accepted in the Western World whose approval the élite coveted, where Vodun if known at all was regarded as a mere superstition. To prove his separation from the peasant black, the élite person was therefore Catholic or nothing.

[797] It would have required many times two hundred teaching brothers and sisters, all with the zeal of fanatics and the energy of dynamos, to convert the masses away from Vodun. In acquainting the peasants with Church forms and certain beliefs the priests have been entirely successful; in making exclusive Catholics of them they have had no success at all.

771 Every vital social institution is continually in a process of change.
177 Vodun, a very living faith, has steadily borrowed more and more from Catholicism, the only other religion with which the people come in close contact. When one can go from a Saturday night Vodun sacrifice and dance to a Sunday morning Catholic Mass with no feeling of incongruity, it is obvious that the minds of the worshipers are actively predisposed to assimilation of creed and ritual.

796 We have suggested in a previous chapter some traces of the Catholic Mass in Vodun ceremony. The Vodun service regularly begins with a long ritual which the observer who knows both the Créole language and the Catholic liturgy recognizes as being almost entirely Roman. While the Vodun houngan sits quietly by, a special officiant known as the *prêt' savanne* (bush priest) reads or pretends to read from the Catholic prayer book. For the Pater Noster, the creed, the Ave Maria, the Salve Regina, and the prayers, the worshipers kneel or stand as they would in church. Candles burn, water is sprinkled, the sign of the cross is made, the chants are sung. When the benediction completes this part of the service, the houngan takes over to conduct the purely African rites; yet his first words are, "*Grâce mise'-corde,*" and many Catholic interpolations appear even in this second part of the service.

[778] The Vodun ritual is conducted before an altar, in Haitian Créole
[192] called a "trône," which is a perfect marriage between Vodun and

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Catholicism. I have seen such an altar, with its adjacent table, bearing a crucifix, candles, (holy) water, lithographs of the "Assumption of the Virgin," "St. George and the Dragon," the "Adoration of the Kings," and certain unrecognized but distinctly European saints; in addition to these objects, however, were such unecclesiastical articles as bananas, rice, beans, squash, various bottles of drinks, and plates of food. Near by were the sacrificial animals. 796 [778] [192]

Vodun makes use frequently of one sacrament of the Church—baptism. Needless to say, this rite is not a monopoly of Christianity, and its use in the folk religion may very well have come from Africa. Constant witnessing of the rite in church must nevertheless have influenced its adoption for all important Vodun ceremonials. The drums used in the dance are baptized; so also is the first loa to possess a devotee; at many other special times the rite is likewise performed, generally with a set of prayers which invoke Catholic saints and Vodun loa alike. [177]

Mention has already been made of the identification of Rada and Pétro loa with certain saints and martyrs of the Church. Such identifications are not uniform, but vary in different parts of the country. Legba is generally associated with Saint Anthony, but often (and to the Christian, more understandably) with Saint Peter who traditionally guards the gates of heaven; the Virgin Mary quite obviously is related, whether as Queen of Heaven, as the Sorrowing Mother, or as the innocent Virgin, with numerous manifestations of Maîtresse Erzulie; Damballa, whose symbol is the serpent, is sometimes Moses (whose brother's rod became a serpent consuming other serpents, and who by lifting up a serpent in the wilderness cured the people of their snake bites) and sometimes Saint Patrick (whose association with snakes is well known). Other identifications are numerous, showing the penchant of the people for combining what they know of both religions.[2] 776 177 [184]

Many of the loa have, like the Catholic saints, their symbols, their special days, colors, and other associations. Some like white, some red; the serpent, the rainbow, the crossroads are among the symbols; sacred days occur weekly, Tuesday being Legba's, Wednesday Ogun's, Friday Erzulie's, and Saturday Baron Samedi's. It may be

2. The distinguished Haitian ethnographer, sociologist, and historian, Dr. Jean Price-Mars, has made a list of some of these identifications in his *Ainsi parle l'oncle*, pp. 180–181.

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that Catholic practice in these matters did no more than to fortify an African tendency already in evidence; indeed, it is a common tendency of folk religions anywhere to associate days and colors with their honored spirits. The very similarity of conventions indicates the ease with which borrowing of religious ideas might occur.

Every Catholic priest is well aware of the hold Vodun has upon the people, just as all desire to see the ultimate triumph of the Church. The battle is unending, but the method of attack varies. Open firmness is the approach favored by some priests, subtle indirection by others. Sermons against Vodun do little good apparently, for the faith of the worshipers is sufficient to maintain in their own minds the validity of what the preachers inveigh against. When zealous clerics cut down trees sacred to Damballa or try otherwise to eradicate signs and symbols of the loa, the people have rarely tried to stop them; but when the slightest bad luck comes to the iconoclasts—and misfortune comes to every man sooner or later—the people are quick to interpret the stroke as the loa's punishment for the desecration of holy things. On one occasion a shrine was destroyed, the priest calling in an American officer to shoot at a supposed apparition of the Virgin: shortly thereafter the priest's house was burned to the ground, the priest himself suffered a paralytic stroke from which he never recovered, and the captain was ordered back to the United States, "as a punishment for what he had done," said the people. *Post hoc ergo propter hoc*—what followed was a direct consequence of what had gone before; this has been the basis of belief from time immemorial. Who shall say it was not cause and effect? Similar cases have been numerous. One concludes that the method of direct assault will never achieve its purpose.

Subtlety of attack, on the other hand, requires infinite patience, infinite willingness to compromise for the present. Both are qualities which the Catholic Church has amply demonstrated in times past. Certain of the priests whose parishes include country districts are masters in the art of patient indirection, willing to accept apparent failure in their lifetime in the hope of ultimate victory for the Church. Their method is to discover which Vodun practices are of prime importance and, ignoring minor beliefs and practices, slowly lure—not intellectually persuade—the people away from them. This process may be clearly illustrated by a service in the hills in 1937.

A Catholic chapel had been erected in recent years upon a hilltop

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A Catholic chapel had been erected in recent years upon a hilltop

long respected as a favorite haunt of the loa Damballa. Apparently this was no slight, for Vodun gods are not monopolistic. On the hill, however, once stood a tree in which a snake made his home, symbol of Damballa. Many years earlier a forthright Catholic priest had ordered his parishioners to fell the tree, an insult direct to the loa which none of the faithful dared give. The determined cleric therefore performed the task himself, but left a sizable stump on which has now been placed a small statue of the popular Catholic Saint Anthony. 798 796 177

The feast day was well attended, and while the Mass and sermon were proceeding in the crowded chapel dozens of men and women who could not get into the building, or who preferred not to try, remained outside. Many were simply standing about in groups, chatting; others were more significantly engaged. Some kneeled before the tree stump at whose foot many candles were burning; there, as at a shrine, they prayed. Were their prayers Catholic petitions to Saint Anthony or Vodun prayers to Damballa? At another corner of the church under the shade of a tree sat a venerable woman dispensing a liquid concoction, which seemed particularly popular with the women and children. Holding out their hands they received a palmful each of the syrupy substance, which they then smeared upon their bodies; on the eyes or face, on their legs, or on more private parts. The Catholic priest later explained the liquid as a "Voodoo brew," and again as a charm; more accurately, it was a garde to turn away illness from the parts of the body rubbed with it.

The officiating priest knew perfectly well that not all the candles burning at the tree stump were for Saint Anthony; he was also aware of the woman dispensing her liquid, yet took no steps to stop her. He assumed that with the small statue of Saint Anthony on the stump, there were already children growing up unaware of Damballa's connection with the place. He hoped to find money for a larger, more imposing statue so that as generations passed the memory of the loa, as related to worship on this hill, would be supplanted. As for the woman, why bother to drive her away? It would merely cause antagonism, and would certainly not stop the practice. Her being there might draw a few more peasants to the feast, where they would have an opportunity to learn the true Word.

As soon as the Mass in the chapel was finished, the people poured out and began to form a line of march. Headed by the priest the whole congregation, including many who had not penetrated to the

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798 chapel, wended their way down the hill and across to a clearing
796 among the trees. On the way many of the women stopped beside
177 the path to pluck a handful of long grass or reached up to break twigs from the smaller trees. At the clearing, primitively decorated with colored cloth, the priest made a short discourse; then he intoned three times, "Notre Dame d'Alta Gracia," and the worshipers, raising their wisps of greenery above their heads, rustled the twigs until the air was filled with a sound like the hissing of many serpents. "*Priez pour nous!*" they responded each time to the rustling accompaniment. The Virgin of Alta Gracia is the miraculous saint of Higuey, as much renowned among Haitians as among the Spanish-speaking Dominicans farther east. The supplication to the Virgin is proper enough to a Catholic feast, but the hissing, reminiscent of Damballa, is an intimation that the Vodun loa is not yet forgotten on his holy hill.

This festival of Notre Dame d'Alta Gracia shows not only the adaptability of Catholicism to Vodun, but likewise that of Vodun to Catholicism. Not even with the will to preserve their faith and practice pure can most men resist the infiltration of surrounding beliefs; in Haiti, the will to resist is itself lacking. This the Church knows, and counts upon for ultimate victory. In other words, there is to be not precisely a conversion of worshipers away from Vodun, but a slow transformation of Vodun itself into a true Catholic faith within the hearts of the people.

In its long experience in adaptability, the Church has in many a country learned to establish a ground of common understanding with lowly folk, while keeping its touch with aristocrats. Following the principle that where a belief or rite is apparently ineradicable it is advisable to turn it to Catholic uses, the Church in Haiti has often made this kind of adjustment, just as in earlier times with the Aztecs, Mayans, and other continental American Indians. An example of it may be observed at Saut d'Eau, near Ville-Bonheur.

787 Here, near the centre of Haiti, in 1884 there appeared in a palm
778 tree the vision of a beautiful Virgin blessing the people. She re-
798 mained so long that according to tradition the whole countryside saw her. The parish priest, unwilling to permit this obsession of the people to continue, came to drive away the apparition. The Virgin departed, apparently of her own will. People saw her no more, but many came to the palm tree and were miraculously cured and

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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marvelously aided in distress. The priest, not willing to allow even this "delusion," tried to cut down the tree but was wounded by his own machete. Eventually, however, the tree was destroyed by natural causes, and a church erected on the site. Fire destroyed the church. Each successive church building has likewise been destroyed, by fire or by lightning. No longer now does the Catholic Church combat the sanctity of Saut d'Eau: after all, it was the Virgin who appeared, not a loa. The great celebrations on every fifteenth of July draw pilgrims from all over Haiti. Although the Church now grudgingly approves the feast it is still recognizably Vodun in character, for devout souls who bathe in the water are "mounted" by loa. The Church has a hard battle ahead of it to win this festival for Catholicism.

Three factors work in favor of the Catholic struggle to win Haitians completely away from Vodun: the world-wide organization of the Church, which can always throw trained reserves into the battle; the superior intellectual equipment of the priests, enabling them to plan their campaign and use psychological weapons; and the plasticity of Vodun itself, which is a conglomeration of human feelings, ideas, and traditions rather than a rigid sect with an inflexible ritual.[3] Even with these advantages, it is still the battle of a few dozen men on one side with the Haitian masses (more than two million) on the other. So far as one is ever justified in prophecy, it seems safe to assume that Vodun will continue to assimilate more and more fragments of Catholicism; that its appeal will remain so long as education and medicine are not extended to the whole countryside; that eventually—it may be centuries hence—Vodun rites may sink back into the status of living folklore, to which the simple turn in their deepest need.

One of the strongest missionary advantages of the Roman Catholic Church has been the breadth given it by two thousand years of experience. In so long a life it has had to be all things to all men; out of necessity it has developed around the central core so wide a variety of belief, doctrine, form, and traditional practice, that there is something for every believer, whether scholarly or untutored, powerfully important or humbly obscure. What the cultivated

3. The absence of any written formulation of Vodun must certainly be a factor in its flexibility. Recorded tradition and written history tend to create definiteness of pattern.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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WHAT THE CULTIVATED

771 177 [184] member of the Haitian élite takes from Catholicism is quite different probably from what the peasant absorbs: the point is that the peasant does not find the faith either incomprehensible, or uncongenial to his own tradition and penchants—as he might find the tenets of, say, Unitarianism or Presbyterianism. It is easy to fit the Trinity, the Virgin, the saints, the Mass, holy water, Lent, and practically every other external aspect of belief and ritual into his mental set. He makes his own selection and his own reconciliations. It seems the most natural thing in the world to him to light a candle and make the sign of the cross as he baptizes a new drum for use in the Vodun dance. The Haitian peasant, in fact, makes a tranquil unity of his two religions, to match the obvious oneness of his universe.

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PART III

SEX RELATIONS AND HOME LIFE

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IX
HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDS

TOLERANT understanding of the ways of alien people is rare in matters relating to sex. Occasionally we may regard marital and sexual practices which differ from our own as amusing or ridiculous; more frequently we find them distasteful and disgusting. A long religious heritage has implanted in us a definite personal morality, familiar in Puritanism and in the codes of the great majority of early American pioneers. Accompanying and dominated by this religious aspect has been the legal idea of sexual morality. A middle-class tradition of private property, hence of orderly marriages legally recognized, has schooled us for centuries to approve certain moral and sexual rules: monogamic marriage, children born in wedlock, a public wedding ceremony by approved authorities, censure of sexual relations which might confuse the passage of property. Although sympathetic tolerance for foreign ways has never been an outstanding American characteristic, it is least evident in connection with divergent sexual practices. We do not remind ourselves of the utilitarian basis of a part of our own sexual codes.

Where people have economic and social backgrounds different 577
from those of Western Europe and the United States, other codes 171
will prevail. Elements which have made American moral standards 831
what they are were lacking or appeared in different form in Haiti. Instead of middle-class European tradition there was African tribal practice; instead of diffused small private properties there was slavery; instead of the Puritan notion that sex relations were in general sinful was the less rigorous view that sexual intercourse was entirely normal; instead of the example of monogamous family life constantly before the minds of children growing up, there was the example of libertinage among lofty whites and laxness among the blacks.

Nothing in the experience of the slave régime could have predis- 175
posed toward orderly marriage these people, soon to become Hai- 567
tians. Certain masters actually prohibited weddings among their 581
slaves, while most others discouraged it, since the development of family ties among the blacks would only have made for complication

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175 when slaves were to be sold. Even when whole families were brought
567 over together from Africa, it was considered discreet in Saint-
581 Domingue to separate the various members at the slave market, so that there would be little chance of combinations and intrigues.
[794] Theoretically the Church was in favor of regular marriages between slave men and women, but even if the Africans had understood or desired the "sacrament," the opposition of the white planters would have been enough to curb missionary insistence on this point; the Jesuits had already been expelled from the colony for their too great zeal in plantation reforms.

175 As a usual thing, then, slaves simply cohabited. It was not against
567 the rules of a plantation for a slave and the woman with whom he consorted to live together in a slave hut with the children born to
588 them; but neither was it against the rules for the overseer to put
[843] other slaves into the same hut, or to sell promising slave children as if they were cattle.[1] Little was done to prevent sex relations between slaves, although masters had varying attitudes toward the results of these relations: some planters welcomed births as a stockbreeder welcomes additions to his herd; others resented the pregnancy of slave women as an obstacle to necessary field work. In the former case, a planter's capital was increased; in the latter, abortions resulted when the overseer drove pregnant women to hard work under the tropical sun.

175 The freedom of the planters with the persons of their attractive
567 female slaves likewise weakened any tendency toward monogamous
588 family life as conceived by bourgeois European society. The relationship between master and slave woman was momentary. Not often was a woman so beguiling that she could be called a concubine; still less often was she a mistress. The latter estate was the height of any female slave's worldly ambition, for not only might she then be freed, but she could live a life of leisure. In rare cases she might hope to persuade her white paramour into marriage. Almost certainly her mulatto children would be free.

175 In so far as there was any predisposition toward strict observance of
565 European marriage practices, it was most clearly exhibited by the
581 group of affranchis. As freedmen they were intent upon establishing

[567] [581] 1. Under exceptional circumstances slaves found themselves under a benevolent, religious master who allowed them to be married by a priest and thereafter to live together as a family.

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themselves and their families economically and socially. Property was important, so they took pains to insure the legitimacy of their heirs; color was crucial, and so they regulated the marriages of their children to be sure there was no reversion to the black strain. They guarded their fortunes solicitously, provided their daughters with dowries large enough sometimes even to lure a white husband, educated their sons in Paris—behaved, in short, as if they had been pillars of society in provincial France. Like the white planters, the male affranchis often had relations with slave women, but even more rarely than whites were they seduced into marriage with women of the lower orders. 175 565 581

When the slave insurrection and its aftermath freed the half-million blacks in Saint-Domingue it was not to be expected that European middle-class morals and practices should suddenly prevail. Modern usage emerges from the womb of tradition. Neither in Africa nor in the colony had tradition taught the blacks respect for monogamy or for marriage entered into by religious ceremony. If the ex-slaves had reverted to their Dahomean, Congolese, or other African background, they might have introduced the bride price; but to pay a bride price is to assume the existence of wealth, an assumption contrary to fact among the ex-slaves in Saint-Domingue of the 1790's, and Haiti of the 1800's. In neither Dahomey nor the Congo was there much ceremony at the union of a couple; what there was consisted mostly of singing and dancing. If, on the other hand, the people went only by what they had observed in slave days, there was no tradition of binding union or strict codes, as we understand them. A man knew when to stay away from another man's woman; children remained near their mother—these two statements almost cover the situation as of 1796 among the newly freed slaves. 175 581 [583] [585] [837] [855]

Toussaint, apparently a conventional person in what concerned social behavior, wished his people to be "moral." He instituted a time of "holy masses, mystic communions, biblical psalms, and divine ecstasies"[2] for his private edification, and recommended the same for his people. He could not possibly have instilled into them a desire for Christian marriage, however; even if he could, priests would not have been available for the wholesale marrying of scores of thousands of men and women. Local records of weddings at this period are very scanty. 175 643 788 582

2. Saint-Rémy, *Pétion et Haïti*, III, 93.

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The truth is, marriage and moral conditions differ from economic and political conditions in that they are not so immediate and pressing in their effect upon individual lives. If these are not attended to today, tomorrow will find our bellies empty and our state overrun by enemies. But sex relations go on willy-nilly, and children are born into families: there will still be marriage and a moral problem to
175 attend to when order has been brought into practical affairs. Tous-
643 saint was involved in a diplomatic battle in which the participants were the best minds of France, England, and the United States.
648 Beside these mighty problems upon which depended the economic and political future of his people, the question of a standard of sex
831 conduct was definitely secondary.

So it must have seemed to Dessalines, the founder of the state and
175 first "law-giver" of Haiti. By his official actions it is evident that the
643 economy of the country was his primary concern, with defense
831 against a return of the French a close second. In his pronouncements he bowed respectfully to religion and then postponed action until some more convenient season. He pronounced likewise some very proper sentiments on marriage and morals, calling attention to the benefits of wedlock, piously deprecating sensuality and voluptuous-
[582] ness. His imperial constitution of 1805 encouraged lawful unions, treating marriage as a socially virtuous state to be cultivated.

This was all words, however, and came strangely from the black
175 general who was, as everyone knew, a notorious libertine. He lec-
643 tured his people on the danger of yielding to their passions, yet
159 showed no intention of controlling his own impulses or those of his
831 favorites. He was, indeed, the last man in Haiti to make a gesture toward sexual morality among the people, for although he was married his daily life was a complete negation of moral precept. In every town he habitually visited he established mistresses, bestowing large sums of money upon them. He employed every sort of seduction, honor, and gift to conquer the virtue of females who valued their "respectability." Actually, he did not often need to use violence, for the prevailing moral tone was not so high but that most young and attractive women would yield to their Emperor.

114 The sternly upright Haitian historian, Madiou, has a formidable
643 paragraph on the vices of Dessalines. He tries partially to excuse him
159 on the grounds of his fury at discovering conspiracies against his
831 authority among his colored lieutenants, asserting that his early gen-

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erosity and equity now gave way to malevolence and personal license: 114

Putting no restraint upon his passions, he travelled about, followed by 643
actors, dancers, musicians, and courtesans. An indefatigable dancer, as soon 159
as he arrived in a place he gave a ball. Under Toussaint Louverture, in 831
order to please the Governor-General everyone approached the holy altar; under Dessalines one gained glory by dancing well. The Emperor, giving himself up to scandalous pleasures, forgot that he was head of the state. The greatest immorality reigned about him. With a gaiety sometimes grotesque, he told the ladies who frequented his court how much he admired their beauty, no matter how ugly they actually were. Following his example, his major officers of state kept concubines in every town in the empire. . . . When the emperor entered a town, the honest women were gravely disturbed, for their virtue was menaced not only by him but also by his officers of state. Many mothers kept their daughters shut up to keep them from the notice of those who were powerful enough to take them, with impunity, by violence.[3]

Marriage, then, looked at from the standards of any white Western 175
country, was in a sorry state in Haiti. Continued warfare had broken 831
up many even of the families which, though unrecognized by the 581
white planters, had nevertheless been formed during slavery; and the camp life of soldiers roaming the countryside confirmed the casual attitude of the people toward sex. Every ex-slave was a hero, and liberty was sweet. Under Dessalines it was scarcely wise for a prominent man to marry an attractive wife, the Emperor might so soon set himself to seduce her. Above all, there was no tradition of formal marriage. This was the chief factor to bear upon future marriage and sexual customs of the Haitians; and in appraising them is the paramount fact to keep in mind.

Meanwhile, children were being born. Their mothers were 175
known, but often the fathers were not, for the vast majority of 848
infants were born out of wedlock. Dessalines, a realist except in 428
matters which touched his vanity, saw the necessity of establishing a status for these children, not on grounds of morality but for economic expediency, to avoid future disputes over inheritance. French precedent did not serve his need, for according to French law an illegitimate child may not inherit: a parent in France is not free to leave his property as he will, but must pass it on to his legitimate heirs.

3. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 239.

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175 While the broad problems of marriage, inheritance, and legiti-
582 macy were not to be solved by the official act of any ruler, the efforts made, particularly those by Dessalines and Christophe, had their effect upon the development of the marital institution in Haiti.

671 "Whereas," begins the preamble of Dessalines' law of May 28,
848 1805, "it is necessary to fix in immutable order the status and rights of children born out of wedlock, and whereas it is important to reconcile what nature and society owe them with the political interests of the state," therefore it behooves the government to lay
[581] down the specific rules which follow. Nothing in the law pushes the people toward marriage, but every provision strengthens the family, which they had known both in Africa and in the slave régime of the colony.

175 Henceforth no stigma is to attach to the fact of illegitimacy, nor is
671 there to be discrimination in favor of children born in wedlock. The status of a child will depend upon recognition by its parents. If a
848 child's maternal connection is established, he has rights in her
428 property; if the father likewise recognize his offspring, the child has rights in the paternal property; even if the recognition of a child is so long delayed that the parents die, that child who can prove his descent is to receive the name and his own share of property from the deceased. There is but one single provision in which an illegitimate child has an inferior status: should a couple decide to be legally married, they must recognize the natural offspring of either party before or during the wedding ceremony, if such children are to have full claims of inheritance; delay until after the ceremony cuts their claim to only one fourth that of children born legitimately; refusal to recognize the natural child disinherits him, unless he can prove his descent.

[422] Since the Emperor was already engaged upon his campaign to
[423] acquire lands for the state, the property rights guaranteed would refer chiefly to personal property, and only secondarily to land still owned by individuals. Both men and women owned personal property, however, and must therefore pass on this property, a definite percentage going to each son and daughter.

The law is weak in some of its details. It does not specify, for example, how an unmarried father shall leave his property—whether by name to each child he has recognized as his own, or by name to the mothers of his children. It is strong in that it is simple: property

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must pass to an illegitimate child if recognition is accorded. It is likewise strong in its harmony with actual conditions: in the absence of legal marriage among the people, it would have been manifestly unfair to favor a few fortunate children. Dessalines argued that the revolution had legitimized all Haitians; that it was unjust to prevent a child's inheriting from the person who had given him life; and that since all Haitians had come out of slavery and degradation into freedom, no new inequalities should be instituted.[4]

If this law encouraged family life, it weakened marriage both of the civil and religious kind: where was the sense in the expensive luxury of a wedding when children were just as legitimate without it? By conforming to folk practice the Emperor confirmed it. Only the aristocrats disliked his law, for it seemed to make light of one of the distinctions they cherished—the formal wedding. It irked them to have the State place a casual child upon an equal plane with one born after proper marriage.

At still another point the law accorded with living conditions at the time. During the years of fighting many men had been killed, and always the large standing army kept thousands of others away from settled farm life. Home, then, was for a child the abode of his mother—a fact recognized by the law's insistence upon maternal relationship rather than paternity. Such a word as "matriarchate" has no place here; but from the days of Dessalines to modern times, the lowly Haitian thinks of his home primarily as where his mother lives.

As if the advantages of formal wedding were not already sufficiently weakened by this law, other enactments of the empire struck at other phases of marriage. Divorce was permitted for adultery, for incompatibility of temperament or character, and by mutual consent. Such provisions not only broke away completely from Catholic practice, but made getting out of wedlock a casual matter of taking an oath. The complaint of incompatibility need be made by only one spouse; "mutual consent" as a ground for divorce was probably not allowed in 1805 in any other country of the Western World.

Dessalines did not appear to care one whit for the good opinion of white foreigners. It sufficed for him if Haiti endured, whatever Europeans thought of her. Christophe, on the other hand, was extremely sensitive to foreign disapproval. Many of his official acts can

4. According to the testimony of Madiou, *op. cit.*, III, 216.

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175 643 648 be explained only as efforts to win outside respect for his kingdom of blacks. He was aware of the scorn in which white people held the apparent absence of all sexual morality in Haiti, and so set about introducing reforms. Even as a general he had opposed the dissoluteness of Dessalines.

175 643 582 671 581 [595] In an early pronouncement Christophe proscribes concubinage (by which he meant the unmarried unions of the people), libertinage, and "all those disorders which weaken the family." To proscribe an evil is not necessarily to put an end to it, however, and so he tried also to persuade and educate his people to the habit of full legal marriage. His steps at persuasion were various. In speeches he urged weddings upon his subjects; yet a man could see little reason for tying himself to one woman for life, assuming *legal* responsibilities at an expense, when already from experience he knew that he could have a woman's loyalty without the ceremony. Although weddings somewhat increased after 1806, Christophe's verbal campaign was a failure. He next tried force. In one town he made all the females assemble in the public square; then, separating the married from the unmarried, commanded his royal guards to advance, each to select an unmarried woman who should become his wife. At other times he selected young men and women by lot and had them married "by their King's authority." No nobleman in the kingdom could long remain unwed: indeed, Queen Victoria might have approved Christophe's solicitude for the moral uprightness of the Haitian court.

175 671 848 428 Another means by which Christophe forced his people into formal marriage was the indirect one of attacking property rights. Realizing that Dessalines' law by guaranteeing inheritance to natural children encouraged people to remain unmarried, he rescinded it by one of the first acts of his rule.[5] This act reëstablished French practice, making it all but impossible for illegitimate children to inherit anything. Most persons of property found this law persuasive where words had left them cold. Madiou thought the law "excessively severe in a country where nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of the population were born out of wedlock,"[6] and he spoke of its disharmony with general practice at the time. Actually,

5. Law of March 25, 1807.
6. Madiou, *op. cit.*, III, 411.

it seems not radically to have affected the masses but only the fairly well-to-do.

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it seems not radically to have affected the masses but only the fairly well-to-do.

The *Royal Almanac* for the year 1814 touches proudly upon the moral state of the kingdom. The author of the almanac, the Comte de la Limonade, says: "Great attention is paid to morals and manners. Marriage is honored, protected, and encouraged; no Haitian who is unmarried can fill any place of distinction. Divorce is not permitted." All this was true; yet the mass of Haitians still remained unmarried. Nevertheless, the quotation indicates the extent to which Christophe had gone in his effort to reform marriage and morals among his people; to set them in the European tradition and draw them out of their African and colonial backgrounds.

While Christophe was trying to effect reforms in the North, Pétion was accepting his Southern folk as they were. Hardly a law during his twelve-year administration touches the subject of marriage. The élite colored people continued to make proper legal marriages and so insure the inheritance of their legitimate children. The common folk lived their family lives without weddings, and if property questions arose, custom ruled, backed by public opinion in their little communities.

Such are the backgrounds out of which modern Haitian sex relations have developed. From African tradition came family life, the importance of property to stabilize a union, insignificance of a wedding ceremony, familiarity with matrilineal kinship and descent; from French colonial practice, formal marriage to establish a family with social ambition, casual sex relations for pleasure outside this marriage, the claim of legitimate children to all property (in contrast to folk custom, where few legitimate children were born); from Dessalines, an emphasis upon the African tradition and realism; from Christophe, an insistence upon strict French practice in marriage and in the passage of property.

From among these alternatives Haiti made a choice which is an excellent example of what Keller calls "automatic selection in the mores."[7] There was no congress to select one procedure rather than another. Because Pétion and Boyer followed a *laissez-faire* policy in social matters, the people took the path of least resistance.

7. A. G. Keller, *Societal Evolution* (revised ed., New York, 1931), chaps. IV and V.

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X

HOME LIFE OF THE ÉLITE

565 581 ONE brief characterization of the élite might be that they are those who carefully observe the proprieties. The proprieties are those of France, and among them is "common sense" in marriage.

175 565 831 581 People of privilege in colonial times, which were the fountainhead of élite tradition, lived at ease and did not concern themselves with manual labor. Nor were they burdened by puritanical codes of sexual morality, but on the contrary enjoyed sex relations with whatever attractive women came their way. But they would have thought it sheer folly to allow momentary delight to interfere with the very practical matter of choosing a wife. Marriage meant increasing one's fortune, strengthening one's social position and connections, establishing one's children. Romance was as irrelevant to all this as to choosing a business partner. This attitude of the French planters, current even in France of the present day, was the standard for freedmen.

175 565 588 581 Even when wealth was most plentiful in colonial society it had not been always easy to find the proper wife for an affranchi youth. For a man to remain single, however, did not mean that he remained celibate. He might, on the contrary, contract a fairly permanent informal union of love, while discreetly refraining from a marriage which would jeopardize his own or his family's status. Such informal unions were not generally regarded as immoral. Good taste, it was felt, was a sufficient guide in all matters of sex outside of marriage.

175 565 581 The unsettled condition of the colony between the slave insurrection of 1791 and the achievement of independence in 1803–4 did not change the affranchi concept of suitable marriage. During the brief two-year rule of Dessalines, the ideal of propriety in marriage remained the same in spite of the Emperor's efforts to undermine the importance of legal weddings and the legitimacy of children. Pétion, upon his accession in 1806, showed himself a true member of the mulatto aristocratic group—indifferent to the morals of the masses so long as custom settled their problems for them, and content with the marriage traditions of the élite. He said publicly what was neces-

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175 565 581 sary for a president to say as to proper respect for moral principles, then left morality to take care of itself.

175 588 565 581 During Pétion's time and that of Boyer there came into common usage the convenient term "*plaçage*" to describe the extramarital unions of respectable people. "Concubinage" was a crude word, with definite overtones of disapprobation; plaçage was more indirect, and carried no connotation of disrepute. Briefly, plaçage was the union of a man and a woman for pleasure, companionship, and a measure of home life, without the assumption by either person of any legal obligations. A man might make as many of these tentative unions as his disposition, his finances, and his tact dictated. Often enough they were with women of his own social class, for Haiti had an excess of women over men; but generally they were contracted with pleasing women of the lower social orders. Young men not yet financially able to marry, younger brothers whose inheritance was too small to support a family, husbands who had married for practical purposes rather than for love, and eagerly lustful men—these were the usual participators in plaçage.

Although for a woman a church wedding might be the height of ambition, and proper parents tried to see that their daughters achieved it, there came to be a feeling that no disgrace attached to being *placée*. Certainly at the beginning a wife outranked a placée, just as in colonial New England a wife outranked an old maid; but to be placée was a far better lot in Haiti than to be a spinster in Massachusetts Bay colony. No one would have thought of calling a placée by so inaccurate a term as "mistress"; still less would anyone have assailed her moral standing. A man who had a mistress might keep his arrangements with her secret; but plaçage unions were, or came to be, quite open. The one great flaw in the arrangement was that near middle age a man might cease to care about his union with the woman. Foresight and adaptability were the only safeguards against this fate.

565 581 588 Nowhere else in the Western World has there been so little actual marriage in proportion to the population as in Haiti. Whether technically it is correct to speak of peasant unions as examples of plaçage is a matter of opinion; certainly the peasants rarely marry. Thousands of Haitian couples in all walks of life could be found at any period since 1804 living quietly together from youth to age, bringing up a family of children with as much order as do others who have had a

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581 wedding to consecrate their state. These unions might be called
565 (after Anglo-Saxon usage) common-law marriages. Many such
588 couples have, late in life, gone through the wedding ceremony at the insistence of children aspiring to social prestige.

175 Haitian writers have frequently felt it necessary to explain and
114 justify to the outside world the practice of plaçage. Thus Saint-Rémy in 1857 wrote: "*Plaçage*, or primitive marriage, is still one of the
581 Haitian customs. It requires no civil or religious formality. I must
588 confess that some of these unions are more respectable than those
565 sanctified by civil and religious law."[1] Dantès Bellegarde in 1934 implied (erroneously) that the practice had always been one limited primarily to peasants. He said:

> Haitians have been accused of immorality because they practice free unions. This reproach is unjust. Concubinage is without doubt the rule among the people [that is, the peasants and workmen]; but it constitutes a sort of *connubium injustum* (unlegal marriage) which, in many cases, has nothing immoral about it, certain "plaçages" having more solidity and seriousness than a large number of regular marriages. In order to understand the existence of this custom and its persistence in the lower classes of Haitian society, one must go back to the colonial epoch: the whites kept numerous concubines, white women being few in Saint-Domingue. (The
> [162] white population of Saint-Domingue was composed in 1789 of 30,826 souls, of whom 21,166 were men and 9,660 women—not counting soldiers and sailors.) On the other hand, the Negroes did not marry each other, because they did not care at all to have wives whom the master might "abuse," to use the word of Père du Tertre; moreover, masters did not require their slaves to be married: they mated them with a view to obtaining fine "products."
>
> Concubinage tends to disappear among us, or at least to become more discreet. In the cultivated class people generally marry, and the girls in most modest condition—having passed through the primary schools—resign themselves willingly today to the diversion of their unused affections to cats and other domestic animals if no one offers to lead such girls to the altar.[2]

175 Nineteenth-century visitors were generally shocked by plaçage,
581 just as middle-class people are usually shocked by sex ways which
588 seem franker than their own. That the Haitian practice was a practical one, based upon a desire to preserve property intact within the

1. *Pétion et Haïti*, V, 66 note.
2. *Un Haïtien parle* (Port-au-Prince, 1934), pp. 30–31.

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175 family and to make only "sensible" marriages, was a fact rarely
581 glimpsed by the critics. A good example of their attitude is the state-
588 ment of the pious English Quaker, John Candler, in 1842:

[114] But few of the merchants or principal inhabitants are married men: concubinage is common, and unhappily, regarded as not dishonorable. Whenever a ball is given, or a large party invited, the invitation is equally extended to "Monsieur and Madame ——" or to "Monsieur —— and his lady"; and by this compounding of moral distinctions among the upper classes, the evil descends to the lower ranks and becomes perpetuated.[3]

[867] And later Candler accuses Haitian mothers of being "utterly dead to all moral considerations," because they do not take pains to instill (middle-class English) ideals of morality, or teach the young the evils of "wayward passion."

175 Not even Haitian authors were willing to accept plaçage as a
114 desirable practice. Beaubrun Ardouin explained that the color preju-
581 dice of colonial times was responsible for what he clearly considered
588 an evil.[4] "The aristocracy of skin" made plaçage prevail over "divine
563 law," for whites would not often in colonial times marry colored women. The same prejudice in the republic kept light-colored men from marrying darker women, but not from living with them. Ardouin believed that Haiti would gain infinitely by adopting "*les bonnes moeurs,*" not on moral grounds, but for practical reasons. With regular marriage, he says, there would result a greater fixity of the conjugal state and more confidence on the part of the women, "who too often discover that they are only the satisfaction of a whim"; also the men would reflect more upon the consequence of an infidelity which, in dividing families, might separate children from father or mother and so greatly weaken the delicate relations of paternal love and filial piety. Still another consideration was political: the dispersion which resulted in the inheritance of property when many mothers and children compete. Because of plaçage unions, quite a number of estates had been reduced to almost nothing.

175 As the century progressed, the custom of plaçage prevailed from
581 the President down to the humblest peasant. The women of the
588 President were visited publicly by him; sometimes he was accom-
643 panied on his visits by a staff or selected officers of state. The critical

3. *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 24, 25.
4. *La Géographie de l'Ile d'Haïti*, pp. 181, 96 ff.

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175 Englishman, Sir Spenser St. John, said that he had met placées of the
581 President at dinner, and was asked to trace resemblances between
588 children and their reported father. "No one seeks to conceal it, and
643 the conversation of married ladies continually turns on this subject. One excuse for it is that many of the ladies whom you meet in society were only married after the birth of their first children. However, according to French law, that ceremony renders them all legitimate. Some of those admitted into society are not married at all, but their daughters being married, prevents notice being taken of the false position of the mother."[5]

565 In recent years the élite, although many continue to contract
581 plaçage unions, keep these arrangements quieter than formerly and tend to make them with women lower in the social scale than themselves. Formal and regular marriage is expected and approved among the upper classes of today. Indeed, one modern informant in answer to the question, "What is the primary test of membership among the élite?" replied without hesitation, "Five generations of marriage in the family."[6]

583 Formal marriage is not entered into lightly among the upper
565 classes. It is a serious business watched over by state, family, and church. The interest of the state seems to be to guard against bigamy. The possibility of bigamy is the more likely since one or the other contracting party may have formerly lived in plaçage. The interest of the family is in the wisdom of the alliance. Before a wedding can be performed both parties must have obtained the formal consent of their parents, besides having their banns published at their respective places of permanent residence. There seems to be some doubt whether the courts would uphold a father in his refusal to consent to the marriage of a son over twenty-one years old; but cases are known in which such a refusal has stopped the wedding. Of course, the daughters must always obtain parental consent to marry.

585 The civil wedding, adopted in Haiti at the beginning of her independence, is usually followed by a religious ceremony. The Church, like the State, takes precautions against clandestine marriages and bigamy. Notice of a projected union must be read from the pulpit

[114] 5. *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, I, 177–178.

[581] 6. John Lobb, in "Caste and Class in Haiti" (*American Journal of Sociology*, XLVI, No. 1 [July, 1940], 29), states that "one informant defined family status as a position
[554] resulting from the recognition that in a family the parents had, for generations, been legally married in the church."

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of the parish church to which each party belongs, and no ceremony may be performed by a priest without the presentation of the certificate of the civil marriage. 585

According to the legal code, as well as actual practice of the upper classes, woman is man's definite inferior in rights.[7] The Haitian code follows closely that of Napoleon, and both conform in general to practice common among substantial people in the Haiti and France of the early nineteenth century. Spouses equally owe to each other fidelity, succor, and assistance; the husband owes protection to his wife, the wife obedience to her husband. Although the wife must live with her husband wherever he chooses, he conversely must receive her when she comes to live with him, and must provide food for her. No wife may purchase, sell, give, or otherwise alienate property without the consent of her husband; moreover, the husband alone has the administration of goods coming in the dowry, so long as the union endures. 562

The modern movement for women's rights has hardly touched Haiti.[8] Women may not vote, nor may they hold public office. Among the élite, in theory and in practice woman's place is in the home, caring for the household and the children. One might imagine himself in provincial France as he sees the daily life of upper-class Haitian women: the ordering of meals, directing of servants, sewing, shopping, visiting, party going, occasional novel reading, driving in the family car. Different from French practice, however, is the taboo against most manual labor: this is the task of servants only. The élite housewife may cook but not sweep, sew but not launder, bargain with a huckster but not carry home her purchases. A woman of the upper classes would demean herself to enter business. Since the American Occupation, as a matter of fact, a few women have been daring enough to become secretaries and stenographers, but there seems to be nothing like a concerted movement for the "emancipation" of élite women. There are schools for girls, but these do not reach as far as the schools for boys; women are not admitted to the law school or medical school, for a woman lawyer or doctor would be unthinkable in Haitian society. [463] [871] [463]

7. See Louis Borno, *Code civil d'Haïti annoté* (Port-au-Prince, 1892), chap. VI, articles 196–201.

8. See, however, Madeleine G. Sylvain, "The Feminist Movement in Haiti," *Bulletin of the Pan-American Union*, LXXIII, No. 6 (June, 1939), 315–321. [113]

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562 The male, by contrast, is master in all matters, including those pertaining to home life. Obviously, he is much freer in his sexual life than is his wife.

586 Divorce is comparatively rare, thanks to the careful solicitude of all parties before formal marriage is contracted, and to the disapproval of the Catholic Church. Since the husband is not, by custom or by public opinion, bound to limit his sexual attentions to his legal wife, one of the common causes of divorce is removed. The code [837] allows formal divorce to the husband for the wife's adultery, and to the wife for her husband's adultery "when he shall bring his concubine into the common dwelling house." Both spouses may secure divorce for excess, for injurious cruelty, for life sentences imposed by [587] a court—"*peines afflictives et infamantes.*" A woman whose marriage has been dissolved by divorce cannot remarry before the expiration of one year, nor is she permitted to remarry her former husband. [562] The opposition of the Church to divorce is a distinct deterrent to élite [771] women who crave freedom, for women are generally the more devout members of the Church.

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XI

DOMESTIC LIFE OF THE PEASANTS

HAITI apparently has more women than men. This is not 162
merely the casual impression of visitors, but a general conviction among local scholars and priests who know the country intimately. There is no census, of course, so that an investigator lacks means of confirming an unusual biological situation in which, it is said, there are five women to four men, in which many more girls than boys are born, and in which the death rate is higher for females than for males. [159] [163] [165]

During slavery, more men than women were imported into the 175
colony, but the slaughters of the insurrection and the revolution more 162
than balanced the two sexes. The colonial census of 1790, probably inaccurate, showed 452,000 blacks and 28,000 affranchis who had some degree of Negro blood; a census of 1805, which certainly could not have been more than an estimate based on reports of plantation overseers and army officers, reported only 380,000 Haitians. This would indicate a staggering loss of 100,000 within fifteen years. Even with a reasonable juggling of the figures, it is obvious that deaths increased during the troubled years, and obviously males rather than females met their death on battlefields. Commentators on Haiti under Dessalines already speak of the preponderance of women. Other writers during the nineteenth century expressed the opinion that women outnumbered men, but the only figures offered were those in one parish for 1821–26—possibly atypical even if the figures are accurate—showing that 1,305 girls were born as compared with 1,209 boys.[1]

Certain physicians whose practice takes them into country districts 163
and also certain priests have stated their belief that the number of [114]
females born exceeds the number of males. Although these men are in a good position to judge, the statement remains an opinion not yet validated by statistics; if it should prove true, it would be an extraordinary biological freak.[2] Another observation must be set

1. These are the figures of Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti*, II, 118.

2. One physician thinks that the rate would be as high as five girls to three boys in a few parishes; and a priest recounts his experiences in baptizing girls named "Assez-filles" (Girls-enough), so called by their parents to indicate to deity that the next child should by rights be a boy. Professional observations such as these merely corroborate the general opinion as to the excess of females in the population. [114] [163] [55]

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Another observation must be set

588 alongside this professional testimony: many men, both aristocrats
162 and common folk, have more than one placée, yet there seem to be enough women for Haitian men.

595 Although peasants in Haiti are rarely married by formal ceremony,
565 the family is a dominant characteristic of peasant life. This sums up the domestic situation among the masses.

When it is recalled that the Negro, from the time he was taken from Africa on slave ships, had almost no experience of the European tradition of conventional marriage, one has a partial explanation of the absence of peasant weddings. For the rest the people are realists, arguing that a man should have as many women as he needs to carry on the economy of his land holdings; the law forbids polygamy, but exerts no control over plural unions which are entered without formal ceremony. It has therefore come to be regularly accepted in the mores that practical need should determine the number of women to one man. If a peasant increases his land holdings, if he buys or inherits a second farm on the other side of the mountain, it is only common sense for him to take a second woman, raise a family by her, and thus have an overseer and a labor supply resident on each of his properties. Everyone in the community knows what women belong to what man, and custom strongly taboos any tampering with another man's spouses.

162 Only the Catholic Church has statistics to reveal the infrequency
581 of marriages among the masses. The story was the same a century
163 ago as now. In the important parish of Gonaïves in 1825 the proportion of marriages to births was as 1 to 62; in 1826 they were as 1 to 54.[3] Both figures include marriages and births among the élite, and Gonaïves is a town: in the countryside the proportion of marriages would be much lower. The parish priest of Carrefours, which numbers about a thousand households, stated that in 1936 there had been only ten marriages among his six or eight thousand parishioners.
[848] Another parish priest estimated that only one half of one per cent of the baptisms performed were of children born to parents legally married. Even in the parish of Pétionville, home of many élite, a priest estimates that less than one child in five is born to married
595 parents. A century ago a commandant at Léogane, speaking of a high army officer, said, "He is my brother-in-law: I live with his sister." Near Port-au-Prince lived a rural police captain with six placage

3. Mackenzie, op. cit., II, 119–120.

Spencer,

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595 spouses. In the hills more than one peasant house was surrounded, as it would have been in Dahomey, by huts in each of which lived a "wife" of the farmer. Matters are not very different nowadays, except that men have learned the wisdom of not having their women live too close to each other.

162 From the guesses of experienced observers, it is probably not far
582 wide of the mark to estimate that only one couple out of a hundred is married according to the approved mode of the Western World.

The State apparently does not care; or, to put it another way, government officials know how impossible it would be to alter a custom confirmed by long usage; one which, moreover, works well enough, since it causes practically no violence or legal cases for the
795 State to attend to. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, is eager
582 to persuade the people to observe the sacrament of holy matrimony. The priests have assiduously endeavored to explore the peasant mind in order to learn what deters the average person from formal marriage. The reasons for the indifference to weddings might be listed as follows:

581 1. Inertia. There is no convincing reason to vary time-honored
178 practice which works well enough, particularly since a wedding is likely to cause a great disturbance of daily routine and even a measure of jealousy on the part of those who have not made the display.

581 2. Suspicion of legal documents and civil officials. People who put
821 their names (or marks) on documents and who call the attention of governmental officials to themselves are almost sure to rue the day. A man knows what can be demanded of him by custom in his informal unions; but who can say what the law would hold him responsible for?

581 3. Expense. The civil license costs; the priest and his assistants
585 must be paid; to be married in church, one should wear shoes; if one wears shoes, one should dress up to them; a church wedding calls for a feast. At least two days must be spent away from work if the proper formalities are carried out.

581 4. Common sense in an inevitable situation. Both State and
585 Church would try to limit a man to one wife; prosperity might demand two or more. Is it sensible to discriminate against a second woman, who might be just as much help to a man as his legal wife?

581 The Church through its priests works unceasingly to answer these
794 arguments, but without notable success. Inertia is hard to overcome;

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581 suspicion of legal complications is well founded: the priests therefore
794 try to concentrate their attack upon the remaining motives. Thus one priest issued a notice at a certain mountain chapel that he would perform no weddings there for persons who wore shoes; an increase in weddings followed. By such devices, and by constant sermons on the significance of the sacrament, he has persuaded many of his parishioners to be married, yet the vast majority of them continue in plaçage.[4]

581 Informally entered unions among the peasants, then, rest upon a sound, practical, economic basis. If the priests are ever to be successful in their campaign for more weddings, Haitian peasant economy must undergo a change; even then the plurality of women (if indeed it exists), now more or less absorbed by plaçage, will work against the reform.

562 It is confusing to speak of "status" in connection with the domestic
565 life of hard-working people, for status implies law, and law hardly touches peasant life. Custom governs all—inevitably, since the majority of peasant women have not been legally married, and since no peasant would willingly take a case to law. Yet women have a definite status as compared with men.

In almost every detail a peasant woman's life differs from that of élite women. The rule of life in country districts is unremitting labor
462 for the female from childhood up. She cooks and makes clothes,
565 labors in the fields after the men have cleared them, does the family
443 washing in the nearest stream, carries water, does whatever housework is required. Practically every Haitian peasant woman has her experience of going to market to sell the vegetables, trinkets, or
[484] other wares her family may produce, and to buy necessities. This trip to market may be short, or as long as twenty miles. One of the characteristic sights of Haiti is the seemingly endless procession of women coming down from the hills trudging, or rather swinging majestically along, with a great load on the head, or riding on the haunches of a tiny donkey loaded with bulging panniers. Arrived at

4. As a result of his campaign for more weddings he has had some unusual experiences. Once, in the midst of the wedding ceremony, a bride rushed out of the chapel and shortly gave birth to a child; when she was able to move again, the ceremony was resumed. Again, traveling into the mountains to perform a similar ceremony, he found a crowd assembled under a tree, assisting at another birth of an infant to a bride-to-be. Sometimes he encounters the argument by a peasant that he will not consent to a wedding until his spouse has proved her fecundity by bearing a certain number of children.

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the market, the women sit all day in the broiling sun, and in Port-au-Prince at least, sometimes sleep near by for the night, in order to complete their purchases and sales and to get their fill of companionable gossip. They are often accompanied by the youngest of their children, some of whom have to be carried. 462 565 443

Some observers profess to see evidences of a matriarchate among the peasants, for as a general rule the woman attends to the business dealings of the market place, handles the money, directs her children, and manages the household. If the man has more than one placée spouse, complete control of the farm is the woman's during the absence of her man. It is a superficial judgment, however, to speak of the peasant mother as a matriarch. The man owns the land, chooses his women, calls for help at the moment he pleases for preparation of the ground for planting; and when he knows his end to be near, summons all his families and disposes of his property as he sees fit. His decision is final. But he is no more a patriarch than his woman is a matriarch: they are economic partners in a struggle for existence. 562 593 592

By our standards, the woman is inferior to the man not only in rights but in being one spouse of several. He may contract several unions, while she may have only one. She does more steady, if not more actual, physical labor than the man. When he is at home, she must offer him the best of the food. As usual in simple societies, however, the issue rarely arises as to superiority or inferiority of the sexes. Customary behavior is followed without much question. 562

There is one great contrast between élite and peasant women, in the matter of childbirth. The élite mother takes as much care of herself during pregnancy and parturition as would an American woman in well-to-do circles. The peasant mother, on the contrary, cannot allow herself the luxury of medical attention, nor can she spare the time to rest quietly. Like many so-called "primitive" women, she apparently finds herself little incommoded either by pregnancy or birth. Babies are born frequently in the market place, the mother having come down from the hills only that day with her goods. It is not unusual to hear of the birth of a child in a roadside ditch or in a grove by the path to and from the market town. The care given mother and infant is primitive: the navel cord is cut with a sharp stone or a piece of broken glass; a short rest is thought sufficient before the mother resumes her task. As might be expected, the death rate from infection is high and women age prematurely. 565 844 846 [165] [145]

Parents are generally kind to their children, so far as physical

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Parents are generally kind to their children, so far as physical
855 punishment is concerned. The average peasant child can hardly
861 properly be said to be "brought up": he merely grows, eats whatever
152 his family eats or whatever fruits he can pick up, and learns his place in the community as he matures. In anger, parents are likely to use in correction the first thing that comes to hand. There is a surprising callousness to pain among these generally kindly people: they beat their donkeys unmercifully, and strap harness over open sores; they carry chickens, head down and feet tied together and mouths gaping, for miles in the sun; they revel in gory cockfights. If, therefore, a parent is minded to beat his child, he will probably do a thorough
[578] job of it. A peasant woman, pommeling her son with a broomstick, replied to the protests of a white passer-by, "*Li nègue; li pas fait li mal.*" ("He's a Negro; it won't hurt him.") The interference of a stranger in the beating of a wife by her man, armed with a club, was resented by both man and woman as an interference with a purely family quarrel.

831 The concept of sexual continence is lacking among the peasants.
834 Sex, indeed, hardly enters the realm of morality except in connection
864 with adulterous dalliance of one man with another's woman. There is no virtue in abstaining from sex relations when the sexual urge is strong. Mothers tell love stories in all their frank details to their young daughters, and some who care about such matters are adept in all lore connected with stimulating and satisfying a man's desire.[5]
[342] Since huts are small and the whole family sleeps in the same room, children have ample opportunity to observe the sexual life of their parents. If a girl, as a result of her own experiments, has a child born to her, there is no disgrace. Practically every peasant is "illegitimate," so that the term means nothing; a baby will soon be old enough to assist in the work of the home, thus becoming an asset. It is expected that as soon as a youth grows up he will find a mate and begin a family of his own.

241 The family is as important an element of peasant life as formal
439 marriage is unimportant. It is the economic unit. Ever since the days
593 of Pétion Haitian economy has been one of small things: even the crops are small subsistence crops of maize, millet, beans, rice, yams, and frequently trees of bananas, plantains, and coffee, which require no particular cultivation. Enough coffee has been produced in Haiti for annual export ever since 1804, but until recent years the beans

5. See Zora Neale Hurston, *Tell My Horse*, pp. 22 ff.

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have been gathered from trees which grew wild. Both men and women labor, with the work divided according to regular custom between the sexes, the men dominating the scene only in the marketing of coffee.

Nature was opulent enough at the beginning of Haitian independence. The wars had ruined irrigation ditches, sugar refineries, and mechanical equipment, but the soil was still abundantly fertile. But generations of farming by people without knowledge of fertilization or soil conservation have worn out much of the land. Trees have been cut to provide lumber and clearings for more farms; in the rainy seasons torrents have coursed down the mountainsides, washing away soil and exposing the earth to the rays of a tropical sun. Because the country is overpopulated every available acre is put to use, and to overuse, thus still more depleting the land. It is a vicious circle, for the next generation must extract yet more from the earth and so weaken it further. Hard work is the lot of the peasant, therefore, during every month of the year except the dry season. There has never been a formal rotation of crops: a farmer continues to plant the same crop in the same field until the harvest is perceptibly smaller than before. Then he changes to another type of produce. Sooner or later he will allow the land to lie fallow for several years until, by the action of nature or the grazing over it of cattle, it has regained a measure of its fertility.

The strenuous work of clearing fields and preparing them for cultivation is man's job. Since the peasants owned their plots it has almost always been done in coöperation by the men of the neighborhood. What on the American frontier would have been called a "bee" is known in Haiti as a *coumbite*, or *combite*, often carried on as an enterprise of the local *Société Congo*, the informal neighborhood group for mutual aid and fellowship.[6]

A man who has a large job on hand announces a coumbite for any day except Sunday, always a day of rest, and whatever other week-

6. The word "coumbite" was apparently borrowed from the Spanish part of the island, and from the Spanish word *convidar*, convey. In Colombia "coervite" means exactly what "coumbite" means in Haiti: a gathering of peasants to work in common, or else a coöperative society for mutual agricultural self-help.

Professor Herskovits (*Life in a Haitian Valley*, chap. IV) describes the Société Congo in detail. The use of the name "Congo" indicates the African tradition, and is particularly noteworthy in connection with a kind of coöperative work which Herskovits finds particularly Dahomean.

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476 241 574 [527] day local practice dedicates to work in one's own fields—generally Monday or Tuesday. The prospect of working with one's fellows, of a midday feast with plentiful drink, of singing, talking, and hearing the news, is enough to induce most of the neighbors to come, even though the work will be hard. As with American log-rollings and house-raisings, there is a practical reason for accepting the invitation: by participating in other coumbites a man will be able to invite his neighbors to help him in his own larger tasks. The work is [461] done in rhythm[7] as on Southern road gangs in the United States, with one man specially designated to beat the drum, blow the conch, or sing a topical song, to set the pace. While the men are at work, the women prepare the noonday feast.

114 476 574 174 171 178 241 This typical characteristic of Haitian rural life has been described in detail as it operates near the village of Mirebalais by Prof. Melville J. Herskovits. His contention is that the custom, in general and in detail, derives from Dahomey, West Africa, the home of many of the original slaves.[8] Although his evidence is impressive, there are nevertheless objections to it. Coöperative enterprise for tasks larger than one man can accomplish alone is common in the United States and in parts of Europe and South America, as well as in Africa. It is not an economic device which strikes one as requiring unusual inventiveness, for cases of it are common even where the participants have had no previous experience of it. Further, Dahomean practice could not have been kept up during slave days, nor yet during the régimes of Toussaint, Dessalines, Christophe, and Pétion. (The first three required forced labor under overseers, and landownership by peasants was still rare under Pétion, although a beginning had been made.) In the thirty years from 1790, when the last slaves arrived, until Christophe died in 1820, many old ways were certainly forgotten. Not a single one of the numerous books written by visitors during Boyer's quarter-century, 1818 to 1843, mentions the practice, which certainly must have struck Englishmen, Frenchmen, and Americans if it had been characteristic of the peasant life of the time. If one concludes that the coumbite did not become peasant practice until the mid-nineteenth century, all possibility of contact with Negroes familiar with Dahomean routine has disappeared. What

7. A Haitian poet, Charles F. Pressoir, entitles a book of his verses *Au Rythme des coumbites* (Port-au-Prince, 1933).
8. *Op. cit.*, chap. IV.

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remains is the verbal handing down of recollections, one of the most natural things in the world and one congenial to Haitian peasants. Every region, every village, has its accomplished storytellers. The phenomenal resemblances in detail of the coumbite to Dahomean coöperative work may be due therefore to this verbal tradition.

Once the men have cleared and prepared the field, the care of the crop devolves upon the women. For this there has been a long background of tradition. In African agricultural regions, in the plantations of Saint-Domingue during slave days, under the forced labor régimes of Toussaint and his successors, women had been field workers. They had never known anything else. We have seen that many of the present-day practices of Haiti go back to the times of Pétion and Boyer: during this period women did field work, not by decree of government but by force of circumstance. Their men were constantly taken away from the farms for service in the large army; if crops were to be raised, women must do the work. Sometimes soldiers were stationed near their own homes, and could help in production; but they could be called on to march, at short notice and in peacetime, anywhere in the country. Many of the later presidents made it a definite policy frequently to change the station of regiments, so as to prevent revolutionary projects and guard against the soldiers' being tampered with by the disaffected in any single community.

Sir Harry Johnston records his observations on the Haiti of 1910 as follows:

> The women are the best part of the nation. They are splendid, unremitting toilers. In the face of all discouragements with which a bad Government clouds their existence the women of Haiti remind one of certain patient types of ant or termite, who, as fast as you destroy their labour of months or days, hasten to repair it with unslackening energy. The market-women that descend from the country farms to the Haitian towns know that on their way to the market-place, and in that market-place, they will be robbed by soldiers and officers until the margin of profit on the sale of their wares has practically disappeared. Yet they continue to toil, to raise poultry and cattle, till the fields, see to their gardens, make pottery and mats. They cannot stop to reason, but must go on working from three years old to the end of their lives. Such industry (which is almost equally supplemented by that of the peasant husbands) protected should make Haiti one of the richest countries in the world for its size and population; but so long

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114 461 462 as it is cursed by the present military despotism, the utmost that the women of Haiti can do is to keep their country just above the waters of bankruptcy and their households from complete despair.[9]

701 175 Since 1910 the military has been reformed, and the women are not mulcted by soldiers and officers; Sir Harry's prophecy regarding the material benefits of removing the curse of military despotism was overly optimistic.

441 443 175 Rounding out the economic life of the peasant is the market, which provides an outlet for whatever surplus is produced, a source of needed supplies and a modicum of money, as well as an almost imperative diversion for hard-working women. The origin of Haitian markets may have been either French or West African, for both regions had them. They were certainly in existence by 1803 in Saint-Domingue, for Madiou speaks of the trade of the plainsmen of the Cul-de-Sac with the holders of what then was called Port Républicain (now Port-au-Prince), adding: "Each Sunday at Croix-des-Bouquets a market was held which brought together more than 4,000 cultivators, male and female, with the permission of the overseers or proprietors."[10] That so large a number came to the market is an indication of the social as well as the economic nature of this institution. Similarly, in the North in 1803, "Rochambeau, now master at the Cape, set about attending to the market established at Petit-Anse in July. After having suppressed all the markets which existed around the Cape, he opened a single and general one, 13th August, at Petit-Anse, one league from the city." The French general was making use of a familiar economic device to carry forward the economic life of the colony during the trying period of the wars.

175 441 462 466 702 In independent Haiti it was an almost immediate development that the women generally should do the marketing, the men being either required to work on the land or busy at military duty. It came to be accepted quite simply that going to market was a woman's work. From 1843 on through most of the century there was an additional reason why peasant men would not go to the market towns: recruits were needed, both for the army and whatever revolutionary coup might be brewing; a man who did not relish fighting did better to stay out of sight in the hills. In fact, this has even been called the chief

9. *The Negro in the New World*, pp. 196–197.
10. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haiti*, III, 24, 54.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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reason for which women assumed a larger part of the agricultural work than in the early days of the century: to keep their husbands indoors during the hours of daylight.

Haitian markets seemed to fascinate foreign visitors a hundred years ago as they do today. One Englishman, describing the markets at Cap-Haïtien and Gonaïves, said that riding one morning to market in the latter small town he passed 465 persons and all sorts of animals. "The women as usual were decently dressed; and the men were more respectable than any we had seen on our route: they were evidently small cultivators who live on their own freeholds. . . . All were cheerful and happy."[11]

Ever since force was withdrawn from the economic life of the Haitians—that is, since 1820—a steady round of criticism has been leveled at the "laziness" of the average male. Much of this can be discounted as coming from unsympathetic white foreigners who visited Haiti to find proof of Negro inferiority; some of it again is not significant, since it is the product of élite essayists who cherished the prepossession that the black was born to menial labor, and that if he did not work he had small reason for existence. The fact remains that not even friendly authors have been able to refrain from comment upon the inertia of the Haitian man, whether of the 1830's or, indeed, the present day. It is worth selecting half a dozen of the earlier criticisms, ranging from 1826 to 1860—two by Haitians, two by Englishmen, and two by Americans. Impressionistic, they nevertheless establish a basis from which to gauge the accuracy or inaccuracy of the charge.

In 1826, Placide Justin, drawing most of his material from the notes of the British agent in the Antilles, wrote: "The Haitian man is characterized by an almost unbelievable inertia. He is practically without ambition in political as well as in private life. No one seems to worry about tomorrow."[12] Two years later the Englishman, James Franklin, compared the régimes of Christophe in the North and of Pétion and Boyer in the South; with the former he was entirely sympathetic, but in 1828

the state of ignorance prevailing among the people in the mountains and the interior parts is almost inconceivable. It appears as if the work of civilization had not commenced, and that the people had not taken one

11. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 25, 26.
12. *Histoire politique et statistique de l'île d'Haïti*, p. 536.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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114 461 voluntary step towards improving themselves in any one thing. . . . Experiments may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coërcion and want will impel the Haytian to labour; and I have my doubts as to the practicability of enforcing labour in Hayti until the people have been better instructed, and their characters become changed. . . . Nature is too generous to the Haytian; he never wants, and so never works for hire, as do free labourers in other countries.[13]

An American, Dr. Jonathan Brown of Philadelphia, in 1837 published a volume which in most respects seems quite dispassionate. He says:

[462] The females are compelled to perform most of the labor. Those of the country employ themselves in cultivating the soil, while the men spend their time in traversing the country on horseback, in drinking, smoking, and other habits equally unprofitable. The females of the town perform all the retail traffic of the country. . . . They derive a subsistence for themselves and for their families.[14]

175 241 208 178 Boyer's secretary of state, Inginac, tried by means of a pamphlet—which few Haitians could have read—to urge the peasants of 1840 to greater activity. He says that although coffee is the chief source of Haitian wealth, although every day small properties have been multiplied, although times are improving, yet the old routines are still followed in coffee cultivation, as if the men would never work and "as if the Haitians were not susceptible of making any progress in the sciences."[15]

114 461 In 1842 an English Quaker, John Candler, wrote that without a modicum of labor the peasants could not subsist at all; "but they do not, and they will not, work hard to please anybody, and hence agriculture languishes, and commerce is stationary."[16] Finally, in 1860, Benjamin Hunt, an American, remarked: "If one wants to be lazy, Hayti is the place. It is possible to get through the day with little annoyance from cold, hunger, or the police, and with the least possible amount of work."[17] Similar testimony could be greatly multiplied. It is only in recent years that any author has affirmed that

13. *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 359–362.
14. *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, II, 281.
15. Joseph Balthazar Inginac, "*Culture du caffier et préparation de la fève pour être livrée au commerce*" [a pamphlet], (Port-au-Prince, 1840), p. 1.
16. *Brief Notices of Hayti*, p. 38.
17. *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans*, p. 12.

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the men as well as the women work arduously. It seems justifiable to conclude that industry has not always been a characteristic of the Haitian male; and to ask why. 114 461

One valid reason is, of course, political. As we have seen, until the American Occupation Haiti was greatly overmilitarized. Almost every able-bodied male was at one time or another during his prime a soldier in the army. Since the bane of the country from 1804 to 1915 was its revolutions, there was room for a man to serve either in the regular army or, lured by future promises, in the guerrilla forces of a scheming general. To be drawn away from the land at the very moment of physical maturity was to predispose a youth against humdrum field work. As a soldier he traveled, knew excitement, was fed and clothed, and could loaf, except during battle. So schooled, upon retirement from the army a man was hardly disposed to settle down to steady labor. Even if as a young man he remained upon his farm, he might at any moment be called away to service, just when he was most needed for the crop. If Haiti was to be fed, the women, who alone were exempt from army service, provided the only available regular workers. 175 701 461

Tradition offers another explanation for masculine independence of hard work. The African background of female agricultural labor has been cited. In slavery the men had been degraded by being forced to do work of this sort, while the lot of women hardly differed from what it had been in the old country. Under Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, with their large armies, women, already numerically preponderant, formed the vast majority of field workers. Independent small farming hardly changed the picture. African tradition, moreover, made the man master of his property and wives, the rôle of woman being that of man's inferior and useful servant. 174 462 562 567

Disease is another partial explanation. Until recently no one seems to have been aware of the prevalence in Haiti of such diseases as hookworm, malaria, and tuberculosis which, without necessarily affecting a person outwardly, may nevertheless sap his vitality, leaving him listless and worn out by even slight exertion. Obviously much of what was called laziness was due to disease. But the flaw in this reasoning is that illness makes no discrimination between the sexes. If men were disease-ridden, so were women: yet the latter were steadily industrious. 164 461

Any foray into possible psychological reasons is guesswork. It

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Any foray into possible psychological reasons is guesswork. It
461 might be hazarded that the men felt they had fought for freedom and so deserved to enjoy its benefits; or that agriculture smacked of the old days of slavery and should be avoided by the superior male; or that since ambition for progress was not a Haitian characteristic, and the work of women produced enough food, there was no reason to change a routine which did very well. One cannot speak with definiteness on these matters. And it was upper-class Haitians and foreigners who adjudged peasant men lazy; slaves and "forced" laborers always appear lazy to their masters.

462 In modern times at least, male peasants toil strenuously, although not so continuously as their females. The preparation of the ground for planting is hard work, and is done entirely by men. Harvesting, housebuilding, marketing the coffee (one form of marketing not beneath a man's dignity)—these are men's major contributions to economic life.

177 People who live in isolation commonly tend to slide back in such
178 externalities as clothes, manners, neatness of person and of dwelling, speech, and social ritual. Almost from the very beginning of Haitian history, most of the people were effectively isolated from the rest of the world, so that the superficial aspects of daily life exhibited to all visitors the spectacle of retrogression.

175 Christophe, who had frequent English visitors in his kingdom,
656 forced his subjects to dress neatly. After his time no ruler made
291 regulations for dress. The men commonly wore a pair of cotton trousers and an abbreviated shirt, while women's dress was a loose-fitting garment which might be called a Mother Hubbard. Children could, and can now, be seen up to the age of four or five without
[369] any clothes at all. The nearer the countrypeople live to towns, where the example of the élite is before them, the better their dress is likely to be.

342 Slave cabins on the former plantations were inhabited by the free Haitians until decay set in and the cabins fell down. They were ordinarily superseded by huts which could be constructed of withes
[333] and thatch. The British Minister during the eighteen-twenties saw a man near Plaisance building his house, "plastering the wattling, of which the walls were composed, with a mixture of mud and ashes," using his hand as a trowel.[18] Almost never did a hut have more than

18. Mackenzie, op. cit., I, 150.

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two rooms to house the whole family. "In these huts, filth and every species of uncleanliness prevail, for the people give themselves up to their indolent and lazy habits. It is common to see the pigs and poultry herding with the family."[19] 342 [515]

The furnishings in the huts were as simple as the construction. Rarely was there more than one bed, if that; the children of the family used mats for sleeping. A table, a stool, a couple of patched chairs, calabash bowls, an iron pot or two (and in later days, discarded gasoline tins), comprise the household equipment. 352 [415]

The fine roads of the French régime became rutted and washed, were overgrown with weeds, and soon reverted to wasteland or became nothing more than paths. Carriages ceased to be of any use, and there were few wagons; donkeys and horses became the regular means of transportation and this was true until the Americans began to build roads again in 1916. The colonial régime had left a legacy of bridges, public buildings, parks, irrigation ditches; practically every improvement of this nature crumbled in slow decay and was not replaced. The temperate Dr. Brown closed his account of the Haiti of 1836 with the following paragraph: 653 492 493 491 114 105

> To sum up all that might be said upon the actual condition of Hayti, poverty and degradation stare one in the face wherever he goes—and the state of the whole island will be fully understood in the United States when it is bluntly asserted, that the country is one continuous negro village, built of mud cabins, and unfurnished with the usual comforts of life. The population is, with small exceptions, an indolent, naked multitude, without sustenance or a disposition to make exertions to obtain it; without enormous vices, but petty and insignificant in every thing relating to human character, and not many removes from the tribes upon the Niger in point of civilization. The fact is indisputable, that as a nation the blacks of Saint Domingo are in a retrograde movement as regards intellectual improvement, and no obstacle seems to exist to prevent this descent to barbarism. The government and institutions of the country must for the present remain unstable, and it is difficult to pronounce what the changes involved in the future will produce.[20]

Progress, as Westerners understand it, comes through contacts and competition, both of which were lacking to Haiti in large measure throughout the whole of the nineteenth century. While externally 177 178

19. Franklin, op. cit., p. 396.
20. Op. cit., II, 228–229.

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177 the country slowly became dilapidated, its economic and social insti-
178 tutions were taking on the unplanned characteristics already described. The only disturbing element in Haitian life was that of political machinations by ambitious military men. When these reached a peak in 1915 the United States intervened. For the first time in a century, really, the Haitian came into contact with the outside world.

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PART IV

POLITICS AND ECONOMICS

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[p. 211]

XII
POLITICS

TO write of the politics of one country in the language of another is almost certain to foster misconceptions. Political terminology grows out of national and local experience, so that a Liberal party may actually be reactionary, a Radical group conservative, and a Conservative bloc progressive; the names are entirely the product of time and circumstance. And to generalize upon the shades of political opinion in a country is almost surely to do violence to partisan sentiment, as well as to truth itself. If, on the other hand, one attempts to deal justly with each development of political thought, one is immediately caught in the web of tedious detail.

All these reflections apply to Haiti. Her political history is endlessly complicated, not only in the sequence of events, but in the intertwining prejudices of color, caste, sectionalism, education, heritage. Haitian writers have concerned themselves more frequently with politics than with any other subject; their diagnoses and remedies are familiar to the thought of élite citizens. Yet it is doubtful whether these authors have ever affected the political reality, except possibly in 1843. Theory and practice have consistently diverged: both form a part of the political complexion of Haiti, yet to treat either in detail would require an overbalanced discussion of political matters in a country nine tenths of whose people are normally unconcerned with politics. Let us then try to discover briefly how rulers have achieved and lost power, and how they have managed their government.

Of all the social institutions which had to find their own shape in 1804 upon the achievement of independence, the one for which the people as a whole had least preparation was government. Assuming the major institutions of a society to consist of economic life, government, religion, and marriage, one realizes the problems which faced the free Haitians in all of these categories. Satisfactory or partial, we have seen the solutions arrived at in all respects except government —solutions which modified and adapted old French colonial practice or African tradition. Neither French nor African guides would serve in politics, however. People who have just thrown off the yoke of a

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175 178 64 slave system are not likely to assume it again; and the aristocrats, ever intent upon forgetting their African forebears, would certainly not turn to the Dark Continent for political inspiration.

175 642 701 643 Although the revolution had brought to the fore men of military experience and even genius, it had driven out or killed every single person of experience in civil government. The affranchis of the old régime had been denied political rights long before 1791; by 1804 few could have had any memory of active participation in government.[1] Toussaint was dead. The only authority of any significance was military. Consequently the new state was built upon army control and directed by army officers. Dessalines as commander in chief took the title of governor-general, later of emperor, but was in reality a military ruler. Fearful as he was of a new French invasion, he set his generals over the districts, organized his people as an army ready for immediate mobilization, and ruled as dictator.

175 642 This was all the Haitians had as political background: a military dictatorship. The Founding Fathers of Haiti, if so they might be called, had almost nothing to work with, nothing to build upon: neither a Magna Carta of the Blacks, nor any precedent of an independent Negro state anywhere in this white man's world; neither heritage of local responsibility and political debate to sow the seeds of democracy, nor any example of self-government in the American tropics to offer a pattern[2]—many of the known forms of government were a practical impossibility for the Haitians because of their need of continued defense against foreign enemies, their slave heritage, their inexperience in self-government, their complete lack of a middle class.

175 668 Hardly one tenth of the people in any case was capable of giving detailed thought to the form which government should take. The mass of ex-slaves had been fighting only *against* slavery, against the hated white rulers, not *for* democracy or any other abstraction. Their freedom achieved, they would not be the ones to make decisions. [642] All political choices would be made by the generals, by men of property and position, by the few whose persistent ambition made them stand out from the masses.

1. Such participation in French colonial politics would have been before the restrictive laws of 1771.

2. It must be recalled that Haiti was the second free country to be established in the Western Hemisphere, and that Liberia, in Africa, was still far in the future.

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Immediately a division of political opinion was evident, one which was to persist throughout the century. No one denied the inevitability in 1804 of making Dessalines the head of state: he was the victorious commander, clearly the most powerful man in Haiti. The division of opinion arose over the manner in which he should rule, whether as military dictator, or as a responsible president. Dessalines settled the matter peremptorily—if only for the time being—by asserting himself as a dictator. 175 643

The issue did not die with his decision, however, for it had deep roots. Supporting Dessalines wholeheartedly was the group of generals who were all Negroes, all ex-slaves, all practically illiterate. The three most influential of these blacks were Christophe, later to succeed his general; Chanlette, and Boisrond-Tonnère. Those who preferred a government in which the president shared power with a legislature of important men were, on the contrary, almost all affranchis of the old régime, therefore the most cultured and educated men in the country. Most of them were mulattoes or at least of a lighter complexion than the Negroes, although of course some blacks adhered to their position. The leaders of this group were Pétion, Boyer, Inginac, and Gérin. This division of opinion went back even into the decade preceding independence, when the island, free of slavery, was still technically under the rule of France, and the ex-slave Toussaint had to fight and conquer the mulatto leader Rigaud before he could establish his rule as dictator. 175 642 [643]

For a brief moment after independence, all differences were reconciled, since all had been united in a common cause against the enemy. Dessalines was then commanding in the Artibonite Valley, and Christophe in the North; two of Rigaud's former lieutenants, Pétion and Geffrard, commanded in the West and South. Apparently there was genuine respect among these men for each other. Dessalines, for example, with evident sincerity calls his colleague Pétion "that man of upright heart." The unity was short-lived, however. Not only was it evident that Dessalines meant to rule like an African despot-chief, taking advice only when he liked it; it was even more plain that through his cruelty, impetuosity, and crudeness he was bent on isolating Haiti from all contacts with the culture and polish of the outer world. Pétion and his group looked on with pained disgust as he indulged his violence against the whites who had hopefully remained in the country; the general's bloody procession throughout 175 643 642 66

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175 the land, leaving a trail of misery and death, was an augury of what
643 to expect from a tyrant. They opposed his plan to destroy all coastal
642 towns and move the people inland where, protected by their mountains, they would be immune to foreign attack and foreign ideas.
66 They resented their loss of property by state expropriation, and could not fail to be shocked by the grim exultation of Boisrond-Tonnère: "To draw up the act of independence, we used the skin of a white man for parchment, his skull for an inkstand, his blood for ink, and a bayonet for pen!"[3]

Even without such cogent objections to Dessalines the mulattoes would have opposed his dictatorship, for as intellectuals and as social élite they wanted a real share in the government. For this they had agitated since before 1791, and it would be a grim irony if after fourteen years of intermittent conflict the successful expulsion of whites should be followed by a continued exclusion of mulattoes from the government. It would be a worse irony to throw off the white yoke only to take on a black one. When in 1805 Dessalines made himself emperor they asked for the creation of a nobility, thinking to share the rule with him; but the Emperor's curt "*Moi seul je suis noble*" dashed this hope. Although detailed proof is lacking, it is generally accepted in Haiti that the conspiracies against the Emperor's life began with this intransigent statement.

Here, then, was the issue which in half a dozen varying forms was to split political opinion for decades: rule by a single tyrant vs. rule by the cultured class. It even made two nations of one between the years 1806 and 1820.

175 When Dessalines was assassinated, a Constituent Assembly was
642 summoned to draw up a new constitution and select a new ruler. The mulattoes were in control of the Assembly which under Pétion's skilful guidance sat at the mulatto stronghold, Port-au-Prince, and there drew up a constitution assuring the limitation of the president's power by a Senate, and requiring election and reëlection of the
[667] president instead of permitting him life tenure. This achieved, the Assembly dutifully elected the black general Christophe president of Haiti. However, belonging as he did to Dessalines' school of thought —unrestricted rule by a strong man—he indignantly refused to be bound by such a constitution; when the Assembly, instead of yielding

3. This statement is cited, with evident distaste, by Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 114.

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to his demands for revision and for his selection as president for life, retained the constitution they had written and chose Pétion president in his stead, the rupture was instant and complete. 175 642 [667]

Dictator as against restricted president, strong man as against class or group rule, Negro against mulatto, army against civil government, executive against legislature, North against South—these are the phases of the subsequent dichotomy in Haitian politics. 175 665

A good case can easily be made for the advocates of force in Haitian government, particularly in its early days. For years the majority of men had lost the habit of steady work on the land; a strong hand was needed to reëstablish in the countryside that economic order without which liberty shrivels. The people had become accustomed to taking orders from their military leaders, and these from their commanding officer. Those, moreover, were times of crisis, when France might suddenly descend again upon her former colony: few crises can be dealt with by debating societies. Looking back on the course of Haitian history, one may point out also that the country prospered under the dictatorships of Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe as it never did under the limited presidencies.[4] 175 642 433 656

In 1806, therefore, the aristocratic party got its wish, although only at the price of splitting the country in two. They established a government with a president of their own and a Senate filled with their representatives. The earliest legislation naturally enough favored their own landholding group. When prosperity did not result, Pétion began to recommend to the Senate a division of the land. More and more, although the representative form was preserved, Pétion ruled as a dictator. He was mild enough not to arouse antagonism; as is always the case when freedom of speech is curbed and summary legislation required, the plea of crisis was used to justify extraordinary measures. 175 642 665 646 643

The legislative party was firmly in the saddle by 1820 when Boyer reunited North and South, and shared his power with the Senate. 175 642 643

4. The arguments for dictatorship is familiar to the modern world. A defense of "totalitarianism," published in 1816 by authority of Christophe (then King Henry I), is amazingly like certain European utterances of the nineteen-thirties: "The King has the sweet satisfaction of seeing that the cultivators [who were forced to work on the land whether they wanted to or not], being everywhere regularly paid [though the sum might be tiny], are praising the freedom they enjoy." And again: "Hayti chose a kingdom in order to shun forever that chaos, that confusion and perpetual clashing, which result from those monstrous associations known under the name of *popular bodies*." Anon., *Haytian Papers* (1816), pp. 109, 113. [829]

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175 642 643 Since he was president for twenty-five years (normal ones, as things go in Haiti), it is worth while to examine the functioning of the kind of government the upper class favored.

175 642 643 692 President Boyer's education and outlook were wholly French. He had formed his views of government principally upon French models, yet when he became head of state he could not forget his own military career. He said repeatedly that he wished to supersede the military by the civil power, but somehow never got around to it. The country was full of black generals, and it would have been difficult to retire them, primarily because they were black. He established courts to insure the rights of man, but since his newborn judiciary lacked the prestige to command respect, interpretation of the law came from the President—until before long he was himself the law. With a logic characteristic of the French, he tried to make the whole administration of the country orderly and tidy by codifying laws, laying out spheres of governmental departments, and properly ticketing matters in general. He had to be the sole judge of the intention and operation of statutes, however, and if necessary modify the nature of an act to suit his view of the public need. His honest and generally upright character perhaps made his enormous prerogatives conducive to the public good; but Boyer was a dictator in spite of his Senate, since when he found a law working badly he simply turned it from its normal course and gave it a quite contrary effect.

[646] [661] As the years of his long rule proceeded, he took more power to himself. When his Senate would not pass bills as he proposed them, he waited until they adjourned and then either neglected to execute their laws, or instructed the government printing office to change the wording. He clearly regarded the legislature as a necessary nuisance, to be kept as a sop to the élite and to preserve the appearance of republicanism before the world. Representatives from the various communes were recommended by the President, his nomination amounting almost always to election.[5]

600 Boyer was overthrown by the Revolution of 1843, by all odds the

[643] 5. The task of governing the whole island was obviously heavier than governing a fraction of it, so Boyer may have felt justified in his departures from strict constitutionality. He was always an indefatigable worker, whose intentions were uniformly laudable. He tried to rule alone, as had his illustrious predecessor. The hitch came because he was not of their caliber. He was worthy, virtuous—and mediocre. He would probably have made an excellent mayor of a French provincial town.

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Boyer was overthrown by the Revolution of 1843, by all odds the

most important of Haitian upheavals. Since its effects were to be felt for the next seventy years in the extinction of representative government and the eclipse of the élite as political rulers, it is worthy of special attention. Paradoxically, it was a revolution fomented by the élite themselves. Its background and outcome reveal the power in word, and the impotence in deed, of this group by 1843. 175 669

The constitution of 1816, devised by Pétion's henchmen, had granted the president initiative in all laws except those concerning taxation. After the agreement of 1825 with France,[6] however, Boyer, hard pressed by the need of paying the indemnity each year, began to restrict the number of officials, diminish their salaries, and veto all projects favorable to the development of public instruction and improvement which might cause further expenditure. By temperament he was an autocrat.[7] Every valuable measure must come from him alone; whatever another person proposed he would find a thousand reasons to discard. Sarcastic and vain, he did not know how to smooth ruffled feelings or make conflicting groups reconcile their differences. His personal weaknesses of character alienated the sympathies of many once-devoted officials. 175 642 643 652 661

During his long presidency Boyer also systematically ignored the younger generation, men who admired the efforts of Pétion, ardent reformers who wished to devote their energies to the improvement of Haiti. The military career had no attraction for them: the higher ranks, alone bringing sufficient salary for a congenial way of life, were too few and one could achieve them only with difficulty, for since 1825 advancement had been submitted to rigorous rules. On the other hand, the paths of administration were severely guarded by those admirable great functionaries left over from the government of Pétion—men like Inginac and Imbert. But age had slowed their activity, and still Boyer kept them on. The younger generation mocked this "gerontocracy" and supported the parliamentary opposition. 175 643 665

The youth of the élite class continued to go to France for their education, returning to Haiti to take part in the lively political discussions which made one of their chief occupations. During the first decade of Boyer's administration they generally supported him, for 175 665 871 664

6. By which France recognized the independence of Haiti in return for the payment of a large annual indemnity.

7. "In everything, he wishes to dominate," Pétion had said of him.

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175 he seemed to be leading the country to progressive action; about
665 1830, however, a group better educated and more ambitious than
664 their predecessors arose. Nourished on ideas acquired in France, they
871 were shocked on their return by the miseries and governmental inaction which prevailed in Haiti. True, when Boyer pressed them to suggest constructive measures of reform they had little to suggest. Like many other critics they were better at tearing down than at building up.

175 By the constitution of 1816 they had the right of free speech and
642 press, and made use of it to publish journals of criticism—*Le Phare*,
204 *Le Télégraphe*, *La Feuille de Commerce*. Their sustained criticism kept
208 alive the parliamentary opposition and gave it a focus; they were at
665 least partially responsible for the Revolution of 1843. In spite of their diatribes, Boyer did not suppress these newspapers. If he had done so it is possible the Revolution might have come sooner. Not every dictator-president would permit such boldness as the following paragraph which appeared in 1843 in *Le Patriote*, an adversary of Boyer's own journal *Le Temps:*

> Let one look well at the things which are happening among us and then say whether, considering our first steps along the path, our progress has not been constantly slowed up now for some time, and whether this does not lead to a state of things in our country in which the most vital part of our civilization is struck by an immobility, almost a paralysis. Haiti is stationary, is retrograde: we need no other proof of it than this frightful uncertainty about the future which so deeply disturbs all serious minds and sincere patriots.

175 In 1838 Hérard Dumesle, president of the Chamber and a leader of
665 the opposition, drew up and secured the passage of an "Address to
646 the President of the Republic," which expressed certain just ideas of
643 progress and pointed out that failure to achieve it was due to the
664 mistakes of the administration. It was a bitterly critical and sometimes passionate document. Boyer was intensely angry and proceeded to violate the constitution: relying on the majority always at his disposal in the Chamber, he excluded from among the deputies those most hostile to his government.[8] But at the election of 1842 the communes of Les Cayes, Aquin, and Jérémie reëlected the expelled representatives, so confirming their criticism of the President.

8. Hérard Dumesle, Lasalle, Lartigue, and David Saint-Preux.

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When the Chamber of 1842 assembled Boyer once more forced the elimination of these men and several of their political friends.[9] The majority in the Chamber was so agitated over this expulsion that only twenty-eight out of seventy-two deputies thereafter appeared at any session. A dozen communes, among them the most important in the country (Port-au-Prince, Les Cayes, Gonaïves, Santo Domingo), had no representation. The deputies of the South avenged themselves by instituting a series of "patriotic banquets." At the plantations of adversaries of the government dinners were given for dozens of guests; the meals were followed by vibrant speeches, full of criticisms of the government. Thanks to the talent of these orators, the opposition likewise gradually filtered its way into the mass of the people, slowly but implacably undermining Boyer's government.

The President also had bad luck to contend with. During his presidency many catastrophies saddened the country. The arsenal blew up in 1827, burning the state warehouses and causing a loss of 5,000,000 piastres. A cyclone in 1831 desolated the South. Fires in 1832 and 1843 practically wiped out Port-au-Prince. An earthquake in 1842 shook the whole island, destroyed Santiago and Port-de-Paix, and transformed Cap-Haïtien into a mass of ruins; the fire which broke out in consequence was accompanied by pillaging which went on for several days. The parliamentary opposition to Boyer made use of these natural calamities to sharpen displeasure at the government.

In August, 1842, a secret association, The Society of the Rights of Man and of Citizen, was formed at Les Cayes to exploit this discontent and prepare the fall of Boyer. It circulated clandestinely throughout the South the ringing Manifesto by Praslin, a résumé of the charges of the opposition which was soon covered with signatures. When adherents of the society were numerous enough, an executive committee was formed with the commandant Rivière Hérard as president. At the end of January, 1843, an uprising occurred on the Praslin plantation.[10] General Borgella, head of the department of the South, proved irresolute; the insurrection, fostered by this indecision, spread rapidly among the troops, even generals joining in. By Febru-

9. The most important of the excluded deputies were Dumai Lespinasse, Corvington Aîné, Dominique, Benoît, Pontbriand, Dumesnilville Dumesnil.
10. At Torbeck, in the department of the South.

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175 669 [645] [159]

ary, 1843, Boyer realized that it was futile to oppose the revolutionaries and departed for exile, going by way of Jamaica to Paris.

Now came the test of the revolutionary leaders.[11] The state was in their hands; their own representative, Rivière Hérard, was the new president. They proceeded to concoct a ridiculously naïve constitution which by granting a popular vote alienated large bodies of their mulatto support; to insult the black army leaders; and to allow the defeat of Haitian forces by Dominican revolutionaries, thus losing two thirds of the island's area. Every act weakened the party favoring representative government. Within a year Rivière was ousted and a black general was ruling Haiti with a rod of iron. The Revolution of 1843 from which so much was expected had by its very success ruined the parliamentarians, for with power in their hands they showed themselves utterly inept.

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A succession of black generals now came to the presidency. When Faustin Soulouque became president in 1847, the fourth Negro within four years, and made himself emperor two years later, Haiti found herself once more back at the strong-man principle. The élite were out of office, relegated to inferiority in all phases of political life.

175 642 643

In the middle of the nineteenth century the groups upholding the conflicting principles in politics became organized political parties. Those favoring parliamentary rule called themselves Liberals; those believing in the sole rule of a strong dictator were called Nationalists. But by no stretch of the imagination could the Liberal party be considered democratic. The noble principles expressed in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the American Declaration of Independence were uncongenial to Haiti. One of the prime tenets of the Liberals, indeed, was that men were not created equal; rather that certain men (the élite) were clearly the superiors of others. Liberty

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[175] [669]

11. The revolution was almost wholly an affair of the élite caste. The mulatto Boyer was deposed, and the mulatto Rivière Hérard took his place. If anyone thought of the peasants, it was only to use them to manipulate and maneuver the "taut" into office. Boyer's secretary-general, deposed along with the President, appealed to his countrymen against their accusation of treason against him, saying "My last wishes will be for the prosperity of Haiti and the regeneration of the African caste, to which I have consecrated myself wholeheartedly for forty years, without ever thinking of my own interests." (Joseph Balthazar Inginac, *Mémoire à ses compatriotes, et principalement à ceux qui ont dirigé les affaires populaires de la république depuis la fin de janvier dernier* [Port-au-Prince, March 18, 1843], p. 6). Yet if there are more than hopeful words, they refer only to the distribution of the land which made peasants of the "African caste," and to Inginac's pamphlets on how to raise coffee and other products—which none of the peasants could read.

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was well enough, but all upper-class landlords wanted the privilege 175
of living in leisure on an income derived from the menial labor of 665
black workers. Fraternity was a principle ridiculous to a group whose 565
never-ceasing struggle was to confirm the separation of castes. The term "Liberal," then, was borrowed not from the revolutionary documents of the late eighteenth century, but from the parliamentary parties of the nineteenth—those who saw more opportunity for themselves and their group if the power of tyrants and kings could be curbed by legislatures. The idea was particularly congenial to the Haitian intelligentsia for the simple reason that the powerful rulers of Haiti, past and present, were Negroes who did not share the aims and ideals of the social upper class.[12]

By holding such "liberal" views, the mulatto élite saw their one 175
opportunity not only for curbing the strong men among the Negroes 565
who again and again tried to rule Haiti as if it were a native African 646
state and themselves the supreme chieftains, but also for indulging 665
their own special penchants. A Senate filled with élite politicians 664
suited the talents of the educated aristocrats. They liked constitutions and codes; the law was their favorite profession; they were adepts at drawing near distinctions between this and that in an academic issue; polished oratory, skilful argument, fluent speech were knacks peculiar to them by temperament, position, education. Boyer had been the beau-ideal of the academic "liberals," with his talkative Senate, his complete set of Codes and national system of courts; the mid-century party members came to realize what they had lost by driving him out.

Every time the Nationalists came to power the colored élite 175
suffered. Under Dessalines they lost greatly in property and position; 661
Christophe had hated and hounded them; Soulouque put many of 565
their leaders to death. The only monarchs Haiti ever had were 643
blacks, and the two most tyrannical presidents in the first seventy-five years after independence were Nationalists (Pierrot, 1845–46, and Domingue, 1874–76).

The experience of the Liberal presidents with parliamentary insti- 175
tutions was not entirely a happy one, however. Pétion and Boyer had 643

12. It must be recalled that no parliaments of England, France, or the United States in the early nineteenth century had true democratic representation. Property qualifications for voting, rotten boroughs, and the persistence of privilege ensured that only the "classes" should have full representation, and so rule the masses. [646] [171]

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Pétion and Boyer had

175 suavity enough to rule constitutionally with a Senate which, since
643 class interests were being served by the executive, did not curb their
646 virtual dictatorships. Later presidents had more difficulty. Geffrard,
642 for example, elected as a Liberal after the fall of Soulouque's grim empire, had made parliamentary government a battle cry of his campaign. In office, however, he was continually at loggerheads
[669] with his Senate, until he exercised his presidential privilege of dissolving it; in the end a revolution overthrew the Liberal parliamentarian because he had become a dictator. So with his successor Salnave (1867–69), likewise a Liberal, who almost immediately upon inauguration found it impossible to work with such a group of talkers. So once more with Nissage-Saget (1870–74), who followed Salnave: a professed believer in legislative responsibility, he refused to yield to the legislature on any important matter. A black Nationalist succeeded for two years, ruling despotically. Then came the last of the Liberal presidents, Boisrond-Canal (1876–79). This man was apparently determined to allow his legislature its full constitutional rights. As a result Haiti had more talk in the capital, and less action, than in almost any régime up to that time; then, as Montague says, "convinced that the constitutional régime was a failure, Haiti's most scrupulous president resigned in disgust."[12]

175 The Liberal party virtually disappeared from the scene in 1883,
665 after two abortive coups by their leader of the moment, Boyer
669 Bazelais. The first occurred in 1879 when the retiring President,
[666] Boisrond-Canal, gave Haiti one of her very rare honest elections, resulting in the choice of the Nationalist candidate Salomon. Bazelais and his men forsook their professed principles, rising in arms to seize power. They were suppressed. Four years later when the moment again seemed auspicious Bazelais led another revolution, which the President so effectively crushed that the leader himself was killed. The leaderless Liberals were no longer effective competitors in presidential politics. From that time until the American Occupation, the élite were out of power. One president only during those thirty-five years was a mulatto: Tancrède Auguste, one of the weakest rulers in Haitian history. He died, presumably poisoned, after eight months of office.

600 The era from 1883 to 1915 was Haiti's worst, politically. Revo-

12. Ludwell L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938* (Durham, 1940), p. 18.

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The era from 1883 to 1915 was Haiti's worst, politically. Revo-

175 lution succeeded revolution; the country sank deep into graft and 669 scandal; foreign powers made Haiti debase herself before them. Some 668 of the élite, backed by foreign merchants resident in the country, 648 went so far as to urge annexation by the United States rather than 642 endure continued disorder in economics and degradation in social 643 life. They felt matters had come to such a pass that only so radical a change could clean the Augean stables. This was the period of a succession of political pamphlets[34] written by élite thinkers to set forth the necessary steps of reform. Every president was a black autocrat, holding power by his control over the masses. If an occasional one was more than mediocre (Hyppolite, for example), his good qualities were sure to be more than offset by the ignorant boors (such as Nord Alexis) who followed him.

175 True, even the most incompetent of the Negro presidents was 643 obliged to employ a few élite, for literacy was necessary in the foreign 645 office if nowhere else. The aristocrats were impotent, however, for 565 Haitian problems had tremendously increased at the very period when they were losing control of government policy. Reforms were imperative, as every member of the élite knew; but no black president saw the need, or seeing it, had the vaguest idea how to proceed toward effecting them. Beyond the shameful disgrace of Haiti's [648] position in the world of independent nations, the thoughtful could glimpse the anarchy which must inevitably result from continued ineffectiveness.

175 Reforms were not forthcoming. Rather, anarchy came, bringing 642 international complications in its wake. The American Marines 648 occupied the country. An era was ended.

175 It had been a strange journey in political ideas from the time of 643 Pétion and Christophe to that of the Occupation. The early leaders seemed to envision triumphs for Haiti in a world of great powers, and to see themselves as men with a mission. After Boyer the vision dimmed. We have Soulouque, whose tinsel empire was mere stage setting for the act of a neighborhood bully; the tyrant Domingue; the senile Nord Alexis; the utterly incompetent fly-by-nights in the decade before the Occupation. Even Geffrard the reformer, prob-

34. Among the most lucid of these were: Démocrate Delorme, *Le Malaise ou crise des idées* (1877); Edmond Paul, *Les Causes de nos malheurs* (1884); Liénidas Lescouflair, *Haïti: le danger de la guerre* (1891); Alcius Clermont, *Haïti, réforme-toi!* (1904); and Augustin Magloire, *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social* (1904).

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Even Geffrard the reformer,

175 643 661 ably the ablest president in the second half-century, who was pledged to reduce the expenses of government (a promise which, since he was accustomed to a life of penury, should have been easy to fulfill), increased his own salary to $50,000 a year, and allowed himself $20,000 more annually for secret service and a similar sum "for the encouragement of arts and sciences." He bought two estates with government money; the meat bill of his family was charged to the budget of his bodyguard, and the family champagne bill to a hospital. After Geffrard, the presidency was openly regarded as the juiciest financial plum in Haiti which, if one could pluck it, would justify the necessary expenditures for a revolution. It seems from contemporary comment, indeed, that Geffrard's actions aroused not censure but rather envy, as if every ambitious Haitian would have welcomed the opportunity to do likewise. The bitingly critical Englishman, Sir Spenser St. John, railed with some justice, "Every Haitian appears fully persuaded that his countrymen never seek office except for the purpose of improving their private fortunes."[13]

175 643 646 The legislature was never a real check upon the President. It was useful to him at times when he wished to delay action on some embarrassing imbroglio with a foreign power, for by referring a measure to the Senate he could stall it in tedious debate. Almost without exception, however, the legislature consisted of the President's men. Its halls were palaces of idle oratory. One whole session was devoted to a discussion of fitting the hall with cushioned seats; another to the propriety of appointing an interpreter for representatives who understood only Créole and not French. To make a man a Senator was a satisfactory way of paying a political debt. To be a Senator was to have social prominence, a salary of $1,600 (decidedly a competence in nineteenth-century Haiti), an opportunity to speak before an audience—and no real responsibility.

178 One may grant without debate the difficulties facing this small and poor country, a Negro state with great white neighbors who regarded it with something less than deference. Yet Haiti in its early days had real promise. Wherein lay its defects? Haitian thinkers knew the answers, and frequently indicted themselves.

175 871 565 658 The want of education was a basic weakness. Those who believe in democracy need no rehearsal of the benefits of popular enlightenment. Because the great Negro heads of state were themselves im-

13. *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, p. 185.

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perfectly educated, and because other matters seemed infinitely more pressing than the setting up of schools, the early Haitians, united in 1804, fell apart within a single generation. On one hand were the élite and a few other townspeople who knew at least something of the outside world; on the other the masses of toiling countryfolk to whom tiny Haitian valleys were the whole universe. The young men of these two classes coming to power could not understand each other; they could not make concessions to each other; and as they fought for what they held true, each grew suspicious of the other if not permanently hostile. The lack of common understanding might still have been repaired in any one generation, but no single president had the vision to inaugurate universal education. Aside from the expense, certain powerful élite citizens often expressed their doubts as to the educability of the peasants; as property owners they would undoubtedly have objected to the unsettling of the economic order, which was based upon the work of an ignorant mass of blacks.[16]

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Without education, the political sphere went unenriched by any flow of new blood from the people. Politics existed in a vacuum. The earthy, candid criticisms of a politically conscious folk never invigorated the discussion of national affairs. Without education, the people had no standards of comparison of Haiti with other nations, and were the easy dupes of whatever insurrectionary agitator could persuade them that their daily woes were caused by the current administration. Without education, high political office became a prerogative of the few, a contest between the Ins and the Outs, a path to personal wealth. Without education, Haiti could never be more than a dictatorship by a man or a clique, her stability endangered with the downfall of each incumbent, for dictatorships rarely provide for continuity in government.

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Another great weakness was the notion that national happiness could be achieved by political means primarily. After the germinal ideas of Christophe and Pétion, which had a basis in economic behavior, hardly another important concept came out of a century of presidents. Haitian politicians have been great arrangers: they have given the country eighteen constitutions and innumerable codes, all admirable in their loving solicitude for precise detail. The common feeling of political aspirants has been, "If we are given power, all will

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16. This argument is clearly stated in Madiou, op. cit., III, 176 ff.

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178 prosper." Yet every change of administration saw merely a new
181 embroidery on the old theme of sterility.[17]

175 The further weakness of social or class-consciousness has already
565 been treated at length. It kept the whole nation divided from top to bottom, setting black against colored, North against South, countryside against town. It meant a perennial civil war, latent at times, but constantly breaking out in new insurrections.

175 Some day a diligent scholar may try to catalogue the revolutions
669 which Haiti has undergone. Magloire discusses sixty-nine "impor-
701 tant" ones between 1806 and 1879;[18] but the latter date was merely the threshold of renewed revolutionary activity. There seems to have been very little pattern in these uprisings, except that almost never were they a spontaneous revolt of the masses, as the Slave Insurrection of 1791 had been. The peasants were constantly being impressed into service with the army of a general who had presidential ambitions. From the middle years of the nineteenth century certain peasants found fighting a more profitable trade than any other, and began to hire themselves out as mercenaries. In the North these professional guerrilla warriors were known as *cacos*, in the South as *piquets*. Their methods were those of terror and rapine. They were a constant menace to the peace, and their suppression was one of the announced purposes of the American Occupation, for every revolutionary chief felt it necessary to hire their services.

176 Another recognized procedure of revolution was incendiarism.
369 Haitian politics is almost wholly the affair of townsmen, and more
669 narrowly of the men of the six important towns—Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, Jérémie, Les Cayes, Gonaïves, and Saint-Marc. Except for their principal buildings and villas, these towns are constructed of wood or other inflammable material. Leaders of insurrections therefore have habitually set fire to the poorer sections of the towns, and as frequently as not this threat has won over the populace, who preferred overthrowing the government to having their homes burned. Support of the insurrection becomes a form of fire insurance. Such a state of affairs is eloquent testimony to the cynical attitude of the political leaders toward the masses.

660 A revolution directed by a general of real ambition was likely to

17. Auguste Magloire, *Histoire d'Haïti d'après un plan nouveau* (Port-au-Prince, 1905), I, 230, 243, 250–251, develops this theme at length.
18. *Ibid.*, Vol. II.

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A revolution directed by a general of real ambition was likely to involve an appeal to foreign powers. Haiti being almost roadless, ships were important for moving troops and blockading seaports. Many a chieftain has purchased six or eight ships abroad, and with this "navy" won his fight. Financial intrigue was frequent. By borrowing money from France, Germany, or England, with the promise to reshape Haitian financial policy to the benefit of the creditor country, several revolutionaries have secured funds for arms and the necessary soldiers to effect a coup. Sooner or later also one might expect to see the Môle Saint Nicolas, which guards the Windward Passage pathway between Cuba and Haiti, come into the picture. Cession of the Mole has frequently been held out as bait for foreign support, but popular opposition to white ownership of any Haitian land has always stopped actual cession. When Haiti's debt to Germany was due, she borrowed from France to pay it, and then later borrowed from the United States to pay France. All such appeals to foreign powers have merely drawn attention to the defenseless position of the country; many a successful revolutionary chief has lived to regret his appeal for aid.[19]

175 669 648 457 [491] [505]

The one time between 1804 and 1915 when political opinion was vocal and truly significant was in the latter years of Boyer's administration. Then it took pains to attack specific evils with steady persistence, even though the cures suggested were vague. Yet after the successful elimination of Boyer, politicians who had worked so brilliantly in the opposition showed themselves even more incapable. Political thought, at a low ebb for the next forty years, revived only when, after 1883, the Liberals were eliminated from politics. Their complete defeat seems to have given élite thinkers time for sober reflection upon the plight of their country. Before 1843 the critics had been in a position to make their words effective; after 1883 they wrote—soberly, brilliantly, persuasively—but their books and pamphlets were read only by a small group of fellow aristocrats who already thought as they did, or disagreed with them in print. Political homilies made no impression upon the minds of the peasants left uneducated by all the élite presidents of Haiti.

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In the crucial days of the American Occupation, once again political debate rose to brilliant heights. The rude shock of seeing foreign [648]

19. See, on this whole subject of Haiti's foreign relations, an excellent chapter in Munroe, op. cit., chap. IX.

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175 665 208 648 whites patrolling the streets seems to have given reality to criticism which before then would have been academic. The élite were back again in the political forum. Unreflecting patriotism urged the immediate withdrawal of the Marines, but a considerable number of the legislature saw that it would be years before they left. The problem, then, they saw variously: some wished to be eloquent spokesmen for the patriotic anti-whites and did their best to embarrass the Occupation; some, feeling that the Americans were benefiting the country, tried to make things move smoothly; while others, seeing a fertile field for gain, tried to ingratiate themselves with the American authorities.

175 643 642 648 662 The twenty years between 1915 and 1934 heard many eloquent, impassioned speeches, not all of them coming to the same conclusions. The élite were divided in most issues raised by the Occupation, so that the old neat dichotomy between élite and army no longer prevailed. The President, Dartiguenave (1915–22), was for the first time since 1879 a Southerner and a mulatto; yet in 1922 when he was a candidate for reelection it was Southern élite votes which defeated him. Executive, legislature, and judiciary all had just enough power under the Occupation to make subtle manoeuvres, and all three branches of the government displayed a real genius for the political game. They often succeeded in putting the onus of an unpopular act upon the Americans, and in taking the credit for popular measures with which they had had little to do. They prodded and pricked all the weaknesses in the logic of the American State Department. They forced numerous concessions. If at times they seem to have been overclever, playing the game of politics merely for an opportunity to display their skill, at other times many of them showed a deep understanding of realities which had to be faced.

175 648 666 642 The Occupation, ordered by that high prophet of democracy, Woodrow Wilson, professed its determination to give Haiti her first opportunity to be democratic. Yet the Marines really dictated the choice both of Dartiguenave in 1915 and of Borno in 1922 and 1926. The constitution of 1918 was prepared in Washington; it was submitted to a plebiscite, but the farcical vote—69,337 for and 335 against—was clearly the result of electioneering by the Marines. The presidents of Haiti ruled with executive councils, subject to Ameri-

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can "advice and approval," rather than with the legislature subject to popular control. Even under such restrictions the politically minded found ways of exerting pressure on the Marine authorities. 175 648 666

Out of the darkest days of military subjection by a foreign power came a changed order of politics in the country. The practically unbroken line of dull incompetents who had come into the presidency ended; instead of ignorant army leaders, educated men were once more in office; instead of Northern Negroes, élites of Port-au-Prince; instead of benighted martinets bewildered by world affairs, men who, if not great statesmen, at least had minds capable of understanding Haiti's relation to international economics and politics. 642 175 643

The élite were back in power. In the mind of every friend of Haiti arose the question whether the events between 1879 and 1915 had taught them lessons which would make their return to responsibility productive of great things for the country. Because of the abnormal situation resulting from the Occupation, the world depression, and the briefness of their new ascendancy, one cannot yet speak with assurance. Nevertheless, there are few encouraging signs. Political office is still regarded by most candidates in terms of their own advancement rather than service to Haiti. Very little has been done to extend the base of voting by developing local responsibility and education among the masses. Élite youths still receive a classical education, still disdain manual labor, still cherish the ideal of a graceful life of ease. The president still rules as an autocrat supported by the gendarmerie—substitute for the army of former days. One can see no decrease in social distinctions or in the disdain of the élite for peasant people; on the contrary, there has even been an increase of this feeling because the Occupation (through its Agricultural Service particularly) seemed to open paths of development to the peasants. Social antagonism, not social responsibility, still underlies political life.[10] 175 642 [661] [666] [565] [643] [565]

To every one of these strictures there is a plausible reply. It is no light matter to unsettle the minds of nine tenths of a population by education, to cause an economic revolution by improving agricultural techniques, to admit to political life a people unaccustomed to 178 65

10. Dr. Jean Price-Mars, in *La Vocation de l'élite* (Port-au-Prince, 1919), passim, especially pp. 51 ff., urges the élite to accept their responsibilities rather than rest upon the debilitating consciousness of their innate superiority. [114] [565]

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178 it. Moreover, the Haitian budget is in the neighborhood of seven
65 million dollars, for which sum not much in the way of great improvement for three million people can be expected. The task of regenerating Haiti calls for self-sacrificing genius—at present the élite hardly qualify either as self-denying servants of the public or as geniuses.

175 Haitian affairs during the 1930's were under the direction of
643 President Sténio Vincent, an able man to whose credit much can be
642 said. He devoted himself to his task with assiduity, talking face to
648 face with the peasants in Créole, urging them to assist in reforestation
241 and to use wisdom in crop rotation. He settled serious disputes with the neighboring Dominican Republic in amicable fashion. It was he who carried on the delicate and successful negotiations with President Roosevelt to give Haiti control of her own affairs once more. In coffee culture, assistance to trade, financial matters, and other economic details, he often proceeded expertly, particularly in view of the world depression which began as he assumed office. On the other hand, Vincent made the legislature his servant rather than a partner. He was a dictator (fortunately a benevolent one) who changed the constitution by highhanded methods in order to gain his own reelection. His régime rested upon his alliance with the efficient Garde d'Haiti. There were few signs of democracy or of respect for civil liberties, as Americans understand those terms, in Vincent's eleven years.

175 The spectator has a feeling that he has seen all this before, when
643 for example Geffrard was elected to assure parliamentary government, only to become an effectively benevolent dictator as soon as the legislature opposed him. Geffrard was on the whole a good president, as Vincent was; but the former did not succeed in setting Haiti upon the path of economic and social security, and one hardly dared expect it of his modern counterpart.

175 In April, 1941, Élie Lescot, former Haitian Minister to the United
643 States, was elected as the thirtieth president of the republic. Vincent
648 had refused to call a plebiscite to approve an extension of his presidential term for an additional five years, as he had done in 1935 near the end of the six-year term to which he was elected in 1930. Lescot had begun his presidency with many advantages, chiefly the friendly support of his predecessor, his acquaintance with United States officials, and a recent negotiated pact by which American aid will

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be given to Haiti for vast rubber plantings.[11] Opposition to Lescot comes chiefly from those who consider him too friendly with the Dominicans who killed hundreds of Haitian workers in 1937, Lescot having figured prominently in negotiations that led to the Dominican government's agreement to pay indemnities to Haiti for the slaughter.

Reviewing the whole course of Haitian history, the field of politics seems to have marshaled itself behind a few regularities. In every case there have been voices raised to protest, yet the ruling clique, whatever its grouping, has effectively supported these characteristic political customs:

1. Complete dominance of political life by the president. Strong men seem to be necessary to rule ignorant masses. Even the revolutions precipitated by parties campaigning for parliamentarianism have, when successful, become governments by the president. This concentration of power in one man's hands makes the next revolution possible, for it is easier to overthrow one man than to eliminate a party based upon wide suffrage and diffused responsibility.

2. The inferior position of cabinet ministers. These have resembled neither European nor American secretaries of state in their responsibilities, but have been little more than clerks appointed by the president to serve as heads of a bureau. The treasurer-general, for example, during most of Haiti's history has merely received the moneys, while the president disbursed them. The secretary-general has neither originated nor conducted the details of public policy. Often as not, the minister has made a convenient whipping boy when the president has got himself involved in internal or foreign complications: by demanding the minister's resignation the president remained unscathed.

3. The unimportance of the legislature. It has made useful patron-

11. The European War, threatening the supply of rubber coming to the United States from British Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies, has made the American government seek new sources. The Department of Agriculture established an experimental station and breeding gardens for rubber plants in Haiti, and the results were so successful that extensive areas were planted with rubber trees. Haiti and the United States in May, 1941, reached a long-term agreement for "the development of agriculture and economy"; the projects embraced under the agreement include not only rubber but the further development of Haiti's banana plantations, the planting of oil crops, drug plants, spices, fiber plants, the stimulation of handicraft industries, and the development of farmers' cooperatives peculiar to the tropics. A further extension of an additional $300,000 in credits will be made for use on highways, irrigation projects, and to provide transportation facilities for the areas to be planted to rubber trees.

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3. The unimportance of the legislature. It has made useful patron

646 age for the president to dispense, and has preserved the semblance of
642 republican government; but hardly half a dozen legislative sessions in all Haitian history have contributed seminal ideas in politics or initiated true reforms. How could they, indeed, when the president was consistently a dictator of policy?

666 4. The undemocratic nature of the vote. Senators are chosen by
642 the representatives, and the two groups together have generally elected the president, when he did not come to power by revolution. The only chance people have had to vote has been for local officials and representatives. In these cases, the vote has been limited to the élite and the army, with the president's henchmen counting the ballots. Since the Occupation there have been plebiscites on constitutional changes, the people having the right to vote Yes or No.

692 5. The subservience of the courts to the president. They have been
643 filled with president's men, generally astute enough to consult presi-
642 dential wishes before handing down a decision. Foreign merchants soon learned that they could expect little "justice" from the courts if their own cause conflicted with special Haitian interests. Foreign diplomats likewise learned that in crises the courts could involve the simplest issue in such verbal complexity that months of patience would be necessary to unwind the red tape.

641 6. The pliability of "constitutional rights." Freedom of speech and
661 of the press has been notably lacking, although scurrilous attacks on the administration's enemies have often been permitted. Legislators
642 have been expelled. Graft has flourished. In 1833, for example, two representatives were expelled from the House "for systematically opposing the measures of the executive, and persisting in a demand for a statement of public expenditures." A century later a senator was expelled for almost the same reasons.

701 7. Militarism. Only in this respect is any real change apparent since
178 the American Occupation. The army was always large up to 1915, and so constituted an economic drain as well as a political menace.
642 Generals had great power: they ruled each department and each
669 arrondissement, were subject only to the president, and were at the bottom of every revolutionary movement.[20] Since the Occupation

[162] [701] 20. In 1842, when the population was still less than 1 million, there were in the civil government: 9 generals, 63 colonels, 48 lieutenant colonels, 9 captains, 1 lieutenant, and 28 medical officers; and in the standing army 33 colonels, 35 lieutenant colonels, 823 captains, 634 lieutenants, 377 adjutants and ensigns, 6,813 commissioned officers, and 23 medical officers. The army had 18,000 soldiers and cost about $600,000 a year. See John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 56 ff.

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numbers in the army have been radically reduced; yet in that very fact there is the possibility for the only armed persons in Haiti, the present Garde d'Haiti, to effect political coups But at least the budget is not strained by the salaries of thousands of unnecessary soldiers, as was true in pre-Occupation days.

8. The separation of the masses from government. By providing a minimum of local government, but that fairly effective, the national government has been able to keep the peasant out of all but revolutionary politics. Rural communities have ordinarily got along well enough without formal government, so thatthe history of Haitian political thought and the analysis of Haitian political forms would treat of affairs interesting to only a fraction of the population.

It need hardly be repeated, after a reflection upon these apparent permanencies of political life, that Haiti is not a democracy.

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[p. 234]

XIII

CONSTITUTIONS AND POLITICAL FORMS

369 64 QUITE aside from its castes and the political separation of 1807–20, Haiti has always consisted of two nations, one living in and near the towns and so within reach of established government, the other rural and yet capable of ordering its own affairs by folk rules without much actual governmental machinery. It is through the former that Haiti has a political history. Indeed, one is tempted to say that more than half the people have continually got along without any government whatever of a formal sort, for being peaceably inclined they have found custom and usage [669] sufficient for their needs. These people have been rarely disturbed by the state's rulers; revolutionary chieftains alone have found it worth their while to stir up the country folk to an active interest in politics.

631 177 The formal subdivisions of Haiti have been, through most of its history, three: the *commune*, roughly corresponding to the American township; the *arrondissement*, a group of communes, just as the American county is a group of townships; and the *département*, comprising several arrondissements. All three terms were borrowed from France, although their significance was altered when applied to the Haitian scene.

175 24 475 701 632 In the days of Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, the government had owned vast plantations which were under the control of the military. Pétion and Boyer instituted the commune by combining numerous estates and farms into a group likewise to be controlled by soldiers. Until the American Occupation the police system of the country was military, with ordinary soldiers keeping order and making arrests when necessary. Since few people are less given to disorder than the Haitian peasants, the task of keeping order was not a serious one; indeed, soldiers were frequently stationed among their friends and relatives, who never thought of them as police. It sometimes happened, however, that soldiers were assigned to other parts [283] of the country, where they swaggered about with their *coumangues* (heavy-jointed canes), using these or the flat of their swords to enforce their often arbitrary commands.

In every commune recognized by the state was an important

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In every commune recognized by the state was important

official appointed by the president—the *juge de paix*. The term has little relation to our "justice of the peace." It implies rather the function performed by the old English country squire, who often by his prestige managed to patch up differences between neighbors without allowing matters to come to an issue, but who if the issue were joined sat as judge. The decision of the judge was final in all civil matters up to fifty dollars—and the case was rare in which peasants dealt in affairs as large as this. In the more populous communes (those containing large villages or towns) the juge de paix was more impersonal. He might render decisions, subject to appeal, in cases up to a hundred dollars. All minor police cases came within the province of this official, whose judgment was final in matters up to a twelve-dollar fine or a jail sentence of five days. All criminal cases began with this judge, but those of the gravest sort were speedily sent to higher courts. 632 693

By and large rural Haiti got along with a minimum of civil government, and urban Haiti was governed much as a small provincial town of the nineteenth century. 369 64

Several communes made an arrondissement, another political subdivision with a distinct military cast. Through most of her history Haiti had an average of about twenty of these arrondissements, each of them presided over by an army officer of high rank appointed by the president. In arrondissements containing important capitals a general, in lesser ones a brigadier-general, exercised both military and civil authority. This man was the medium through which the central government made known its decisions and laws. Because life could be tedious in a dull country town, in a district full of peaceful peasants, many of the generals spent their time in reflecting upon the chances of a successful insurrection which might make them important in national affairs. As already noted, the standard of discipline in the army was never very high, so that the presiding officer of an arrondissement might have a real sinecure if he was not ambitious.[1] 631 701

1. The military arrondissements always bore the name of the principal town or village within its boundary. The following list shows the important places during the time of Boyer: [631] [701] [103]

In the department of the North there were five arrondissements: Cap-Haïtien, Grande-Rivière, Marmelade, Port Liberté, Limbé.
In the Northwest, there: Port-de-Paix, Cap Haïtien Mêle, Le Borgne.
In the Artibonite, there: Saint-Marc, Gonaïves, Mirebalais.
In the West, there: Port-au-Prince, Jacmel, Léogane.
In the South, five: Les Cayes, Jérémie, Aquin, Tiburon, Nippes.

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631 [34] Overlapping these military arrondissements have been financial arrondissements, generally six in number. The capital of each of these was a port, with a customs house: Port-au-Prince and Jacmel in the West, Les Cayes and Jérémie in the South, Cap-Haïtien in the North, and Gonaïves in the Artibonite.

Finally there were the five *départements*. These seem never to have been much more than geographical divisions to which it was convenient occasionally to refer. In more recent years, as records have been kept with more accuracy, the departments have developed important clerical significance.

[162]

Département	*Capital*	*Estimated Population (1930)*
North	Cap-Haïtien	450,000
Northwest	Port-de-Paix	150,000
Artibonite	Gonaïves	475,000
West	Port-au-Prince	950,000
South	Les Cayes	650,000

According to the present constitution, the country still has its five administrative departments, but has increased its other political subdivisions. There are 27 arrondissements to attend to governmental details, and in addition, 10 prefectures overlapping the arrondissements and serving as units of police control. The arrondissements are still further subdivided into 94 communes, 43 military posts, and 551 rural sections. Each commune is administered by a communal magistrate, appointed by the secretary of the interior, and so subordinate to the central government. This magistrate is assisted by a communal council or a municipal council, composed of elected prominent citizens.[2]

692 693 Courts have existed only in the important towns, which since Boyer's presidency have varied in number from four to eight. Each of these courts has consisted of a president or *doyen*, four judges, four substitute judges, a commissioner appointed by the president of the republic to keep watch over the proceedings of the body, and various inferior clerks and secretaries. Judges are politically appointed, either by the president of the republic or by his cabinet. Civil cases which exceed fifty dollars in extent have been handled by these courts, as also all appeals from decisions of local juges de paix. To the judges were added in 1826 juries to assist in criminal cases

693 695

2. See Luc Dominique, *Géographie-Atlas* (Port-au-Prince, 1945), passim.

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exceeding the jurisdiction of the local juges, these juries to be named by the doyen and his colleagues. It was a dubious reform, often a worthless privilege; at times it was definitely harmful, for no matter how explicit the law, mere technicalities in a long, involved trial could be completely befuddling to an illiterate juror. Brown tells the tale of a certain foreman of the jury who asked a juror his opinion of a defendant's innocence; the juror replied that he could not write, whereas "you have written it all down. Let us know what you have done."[5] Innocence might easily be convicted by this system, and guilt escape. The addition of a jury to the court was even useless in many instances, for the language of the lawyers was French, and that of the jurors almost certain to be Créole. Boyer's attempt to graft English court practice upon the French system already functioning in Haiti was certainly not happy; the jury system shortly disappeared.

Complicated forms are not for the peasant. He knew a soldier and a soldier's function in the countryside, but not the relation of the arrondissement to the national government; the juge de paix was understandable, but not the procedure of the civil courts at department capitals. The national government and its structure were remote, although the president's name might be familiar. Haiti was really organized from the top down rather than from the bottom up. The powers of the early presidents were arbitrary: they could not only order changes in the framework of any part of government, but might also shift at will the personnel.

Carl Becker remarks: "In 1791, the French began their spectacular feat in constitution making. Between 1791 and 1875 Taine counts thirteen French constitutions adopted in relatively rapid succession. I can find only twelve, but maybe Taine is right. It doesn't really matter. The point is that for facility, speed, and endurance in constitution making, France holds the record. Yet other nations also ran."[6] Haiti was one of them: in fact the record is properly hers, although Professor Becker does not mention the little Caribbean state. In the nineteenth century Haiti lived under fifteen constitutions, to which she has added at least two more in the twentieth century. It is not always easy to say when a constitution is new: its author may

5. Jonathan Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, II, 271-272.
6. "Afterthoughts on Constitutions," *The Yale Review*, XXVII, No. 3 (Spring, 1938), 422.

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114 consider it novel when it changes little but detail; and some of Haiti's
175 seventeen documents were too short-lived to be significant. Haiti
642 shows her Frenchness in this constitution making, this love of being
171 logical and having the details all written down in proper order.

175 To try to analyze the content of so many documents would be a work of supererogation.[5] A brief comment upon each, however, will improve one's acquaintance with the mind of Haitian statesmen.

175 1801. Toussaint L'Ouverture's constitution, laying the framework
642 of his venture as director of the colony while still acknowledging its
466 relationship to France. In it he announced himself governor-general for life with the right to name his successor, thereby becoming the forerunner of the strong-man principle in politics. The most important part of this constitution was its detailed organization of the forced-labor system.

175 1805. Dessalines' constitution establishing the empire. In many
642 respects it did not differ from Toussaint's previous document, for the
563 same military organization was preserved, and the same system of forced labor; otherwise, there was little structure of government. One article was included which was to appear in every other constitution of Haiti up to 1918: "No white man shall set foot on this territory as master or as landowner."[6] In other respects there were sagacious provisions which did not endure. For example, the generic name of "blacks" was adopted for all Haitians, of whatever color.
175 The Emperor was trying thus to forestall the dissensions which
642 inevitably must result from the growth of social classes based on skin
[463] color. Another important provision was that every citizen who was not an ordinary cultivator must learn and practice some mechanical art. This was not merely a thrust at the aristocratic pretensions of the old affranchis, but also an endeavor to make Haiti industrious and self-sufficient. Except in the North, where Dessalines' deputy Christophe kept the requirement, the article was honored only in the breach. The social situation was touched at one other point: "No one is worthy of being a Haitian who is not a good father, a good son, a good husband, and a good soldier." Parents were forbidden to
[429] disinherit their children. Although, as has been shown, the Emperor

5. Such an analysis was made by Louis-Joseph Janvier, *Les Constitutions d'Haïti, 1801–83* (Paris, 1886).

6. He had made this declaration first on April 28, 1804; at that time the words "No white man" read "No citoyen nor European."

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175 put little stress upon strictly legal marriage, he did try to foster
642 family ties and to strengthen family life.

1806. Pétion's first constitution, drawn up with his fellow mulattoes. Taking his model from the United States constitution, he [643] established a republic with a president and a legislature, although the president of Haiti had greater relative powers than the president of the United States. He might be reëlected, but was not to be a dictator.

1807. Christophe's reply to the mulattoes, establishing the "state" of Haiti which should (he hoped) overwhelm the "republic" of Haiti. His political and social systems were in few respects different from those of Toussaint and Dessalines.

1811. Christophe's second constitution, establishing his kingdom and creating a nobility, but otherwise maintaining the forced-labor system.

1816. Pétion's second constitution, the longest-lived in Haitian history. Having been several times reëlected president he now adopted the principle of a life presidency, with the right of the incumbent to name his successor. The legislature and forms of a representative republic were retained.

1843. The completely unrealistic constitution of the young revolutionaries who succeeded in overthrowing Boyer. The fight of the anti-Boyeristes had been for effective parliamentary government; to that end they provided for the direct election of the president by the people, a democratic vote, the exercise of legislative power by the Chamber of Representatives and the Senate, and the subordination of military to civil authority. Such democracy was too radical for either élite or army to endure, and this constitution was shortly superseded.

1846. Riché's return (in most respects) to the constitution of 1816. He kept the principle that the president should be elected, not appointed for life by his predecessor; but the election was by the combined Senate and Chamber, rather than by democratic vote of the people.

1849. Soulouque's constitution, founding his personal and gaudy Second Empire.

1859. Geffrard's return to the Pétion constitution of 1816, as revised by Riché in 1846, with a few details added to meet changes in social conditions in the last decade.

1867. Salnave's modifications of the constitution of 1859. The parliamentarians were in control once more, and inserted the require-

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175 ment that two thirds of the members of either Chamber must be
642 present before a law could be voted—a stipulation making it possible
[646] for any clique to hold up legislation by absenting itself.

1874. The constitution of Domingue who, having defeated the
[643] Liberals, promulgated a constitution "profoundly modifying" the language of the 1867 document. It legally concentrated power in the hands of the president—where, indeed, it had always been in spite of constitutional declarations.

1879. Salomon's first constitution, which professed to be a re-examination of Haitian institutions, but was actually not different in essentials from the document of 1846. The line from Pétion to Riché to Salomon and his successors was the main one from which deviations, such as those of Soulouque, occurred.

1886. Salomon's second constitution, a mild revision of his first.

(178) 1889. Hyppolite, the new president, felt it necessary to have a new constitution, although like the constitution of 1886 this was little more than a revision of that of 1879. Under the 1889 document Haiti continued to function, more and more haltingly, up to the time of the American Occupation.

[648] 1918. The constitution drawn up in Washington[7] and forced
[423] through in Haiti by a farcical plebiscite. Its most debated provision was the elimination of the prohibition against ownership of land by foreign whites, thus ending the one common point in all previous constitutions since 1805. For the rest, it changed little of the actual
[641] structure of Haitian government, but provided a great number of unaccustomed democratic rights: freedom of assembly, trial by jury in political cases, direct election of senators, submission of amendments to popular vote, freedom of the press.

[641] 1927. Although this is considered merely a revision of the 1918 constitution, its changes were actually more noteworthy than many expected by the so-called new constitutions. Thirteen amendments were carried by popular vote, again so overwhelming as to be ridiculous, restricting many of the democratic liberties granted in 1918 which had proved embarrassing both to President Borno and

7. Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his campaign for the vice-presidency of the United States in 1920, claimed that he had written most of this constitution while he was Woodrow Wilson's assistant-secretary of the navy. (See the *New York Times*, August 19, 1920.) The constitution was approved in Haiti by a vote of 69,337 to 335.

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to the Americans who ruled Haiti through his office. This constitution once more increased the power of the president. 642 [641]

1932. Vincent's constitution, professing to be quite different from the two in effect during the Occupation, but actually closely resembling the 1927 revision with its concentration of power in executive hands. In 1935 an important amendment was added, making it possible for the president to be reëlected. [643]

Despite this welter of constitutions, the essential framework of Haitian government has consisted, except for brief interruptions, of a president, a legislature, and courts. The term of the presidency has varied from four to seven years (in the early days, for life) with the privilege of reëlection being now forbidden, now granted. Two presidents who tried to extend their terms, Salnave and Salomon, were deposed by revolutions for their temerity. Their distinction of being among the few to serve out the allotted term was thus marred by an ignominious end. 642 643

Regularly the president was obligated to "maintain internal peace" —a requirement few heads of state have been able to carry out, since internal peace has been most elusive. To aid him in his task he has been given wide powers: he commands the army (always large until 1915; every president except one between 1804 and 1915 was a general) and the navy (never more than a few ill-conditioned vessels, but these important in the general roadless condition of the country); most constitutions also gave him the right to issue necessary proclamations in order to deal with special crises. He "watches over" tribunals by means of appointed commissioners; by this arrangement he may obviously exert pressure for favorable judgments in cases which interest him. 643 [701] [706] [716] [792]

The one body which might conceivably check the president, namely, the legislature, has generally been composed of the president's men, for the Senate has usually been elected by the lower house from a list of candidates proposed by the president, while the representatives would hardly dare defy the man who controlled the army (which presided over such elections) and could dissolve the legislature. By most of the constitutions the president proposed to the legislature all laws except those concerning taxation; even here, since he directed the receipt and issue of public moneys, he was not really limited. Over foreign affairs the executive had effective control by 643 [646] [646]

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643 reason of his power to name agents accredited to foreign governments; with the approval of the Senate he made treaties and wars. In cases of malversation, or gross corruption, the president might be denounced by the Senate (his own nominees), and the High Court of Justice (his own appointees) would sit in judgment on him; matters [669] have never reached this pass, however, for the Haitian method of checking a president's "malversation" has been the more direct one of revolution.

643 At a salary generally set in the neighborhood of thirty or forty thousand dollars the president could live luxuriously, the highest-[665] paid person in Haiti. The salary combined with the prestige and [661] perquisites of office was enough to explain the eagerness with which men sought the position. "Perquisites" often enough included graft.

645 Details of administration have been in the hands of various departments of state, their number depending upon the constitution then in force. As has been said, the president generally regarded his cabinet members as little more than clerks to attend to details. Only a few in the whole nineteenth century stand out prominently as directors of policy—Boyer as Pétion's secretary-general; Inginac, holding the same position under Boyer; Anténor Firmin, Hyppolite's foreign secretary; and a handful of others. During the four years, 1843–47, of "ephemeral governments" the cabinet ministers sometimes managed to rule their offices, and under the succession of ignorant Negro generals at the end of the century, if the educated élite secretaries had not taken charge of affairs no one would have handled them. Constitutional language made the cabinet officers seem more important than they were, however, for the actual position of a minister was usually that of head clerk, chief errand boy and handy man for the president, and convenient scapegoat when crises arose in foreign affairs, finances, public works, or other spheres.

646 The legislative body has ordinarily consisted of two chambers, the Senate and the Chamber of Representatives. Senators must be thirty years old. They have ordinarily served a nine-year term, being available for reelection only after three years out of office. The method of choice curbed their power: the lower house selected each senator from a list of three nominated by the president for each vacancy. For a salary of sixteen hundred dollars and freedom from arrest in civil cases, all the senator had to do was to correspond with the president and lower house on public affairs, and decree appro-

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priations of supplies to the branches of government; the Senate did not initiate legislation. In so far as the Senate checked the president, this check consisted in the body's being in permanent session. A vacation might be voted, but even during this period a resident committee was in the capital, so that attention to presidential actions might always be called by a senator's speeches; and the Senate could reconvene suddenly at will. 646

The Chamber of Representatives, composed of men of twenty-five and over, was chosen every five years by the "electoral colleges" of the communes—men elected by the leading citizens of the commune. No law is effective "whose draft has not been proposed by the executive, discussed and adopted by the representatives, and decreed by the Senate." It might seem that the phrase, "discussed and adopted by the representatives," would give much power to a Chamber in office for five years; actually the Chamber has rarely proved obstinate, and for good reason. At the expiration of the term of the legislators, the president convokes the communal assemblies to choose new deputies or to reëlect old ones; the army "keeps order" at the election, the Electoral College is hand-picked, and so the president's men have generally been chosen. Their pay has been two hundred dollars a month during the sitting, and a dollar a league for traveling expenses. [666] [701]

Pétion's constitution of 1816 evolved a masterpiece of deceptive generosity in stating that there should be "universal suffrage—except for women, criminals, idiots, and menials—by ballot." Although the group of criminals and idiots might be small, women were more than half the population, and "menials" was interpreted to mean not only house servants but also peasants; in other words, there was "universal suffrage" of about three per cent of the population at the outside. The élite and the army were the only potential voters. Since the elections were held under the watchful eye of the soldiers, and the ballots counted by presidential appointees, there was often extraordinary unity of public opinion. 641 [666]

The judicial branch of the national government, as distinct from the juge de paix of the commune and the courts in the important towns, existed in part only on paper. There was generally a provision in the constitution, for example, for a High Court of Justice, which should have jurisdiction in all charges preferred by the legislative bodies against their own members, against the president of the re- 692

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692 public, or against any of the secretaries of state or other important officials; but if this court was ever convoked, records of its actions are lacking.[8]

The most important actually functioning court was that of Cassation. In American terminology this would be called the Court of Appeals, reviewing cases coming up from the civil and criminal courts of the important towns. It sat at Port-au-Prince, and consisted of fourteen judges appointed by the president and his cabinet.

[177] Boyer had borrowed most of the forms of important Haitian courts from France, but he could not transfer to his country the spirit and tradition which made those courts function in France. The High Court of Justice remained a mere plan; the national Court of Cassation and the so-called department courts in the four to eight large towns operated under close presidential scrutiny; only the juges de paix, dealing with small and homely cases, had comparative freedom.

175 It was generally acknowledged throughout the nineteenth century
695 that Haitian judges, whether of the Court of Cassation or of the
693 department courts, could be influenced by pecuniary and political considerations. The odds were heavy in favor of any suitor who was
175 liberal in his bribes to the judges; "justice" could be bought, and
693 was. By French tradition of justice, the prisoner was assumed to be guilty until he was proved innocent. In Haiti he was bullied, cajoled, and cross-questioned in order to force a confession, and to make him state in open court what he was said to have admitted in his preliminary examination. Confessions were obtained by beatings, and prisoners were occasionally even tortured to death.

175 Another characteristic of the nineteenth-century courts—and not
695 in Haiti alone—was the tardiness of their procedure. Consider the civil case in one of the department courts. If a creditor instituted a suit against a debtor in one department and obtained a favorable verdict, the defendant was permitted to appeal from the sentence to the court of an adjoining department, and so on in succession throughout the whole series; if the last court confirmed the judgment of the first, the defendant could then move it into the Court of

[692] 8. This Supreme Court would, according to the constitution, be formed only by proclamation of the Senate (and therefore under the ultimate control of the president), and might not hold its sessions in a spot more than twelve leagues from the seat of the Senate. Consisting of fifteen judges to be chosen by lot from the tribunals of the five Haitian departments, a two-thirds majority would be necessary for conviction, and no appeal might be made from its decisions.

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Cassation at Port-au-Prince. In the event that this court confirmed the judgment of the lower courts, the defendant might still appeal from it to the president, and might apply for a new trial in the lower courts. Thus the contest would proceed ad infinitum, however clear the proof that the debt was just. 175 695

The Court of Cassation exceeded all others in the slowness of its judgments. Its judges were under the surveillance of the president, and must consult with him before deciding a case. If he disagreed, and the state was a party to the case, the judges must reconsider "to see if they have not taken a wrong view of the question at issue." Even so, the grand judge might stay execution as long as he deemed advisable after a judgment was confirmed.

Judges were rarely chosen from among trained lawyers, but were appointed by the government because of political considerations. Consequently, few people had any faith in court decisions, and in general they avoided taking their problems to law. The peasants in particular were bewildered by the whole procedure. White foreigners also often complained that unless they were willing to pay heavily they had no slightest chance of getting justice in the Haitian courts. 692 695 641

It must be emphasized that the majority of cases coming before the courts were civil rather than criminal, for it has been a universal matter of comment that the Haitian people were rarely guilty of serious crimes. Minor thefts of poultry or animals have been the commonest breaches of the peace, while murder, arson, and rape have almost never occurred. Even the bitterest critics of the republic have noted the absence of crime.[9] It is noteworthy that, despite their poverty and the hardness of their life, the Haitians are, contrary to the prevailing white man's notion of Negro unreliability, passion, and lawlessness, a tranquil folk. The absence of crime speaks volumes for the wholesomeness of a people much maligned by the stories of their "Voodoo" practices and bloody revolutions. An élite ex-president spoke to me with pride of the honesty of the country people who welcomed travelers with true hospitality and with no expectation of payment. "You might sleep safely in a country cabin with a thousand dollars on your person," he said.[10] 691 674

9. Mackenzie, British consul during a part of Boyer's régime, and young Haiti's earnest critic, said that during his whole stay he knew of only one murder, and that in this case the assassin was executed. [114] [682]

10. In times of revolution, brigandage was expected but was not accounted a crime, any more than killing in warfare is called murder. [669] [682]

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674 Soldiers, then, had no great difficulty policing town and country-
369 side, for there was little more crime in the towns than in rural regions. A person arrested would be haled before the nearest juge de
696 paix who would, if necessary, sentence him to jail—which meant
697 sending him to one of the larger towns. This was rather a severe penalty, for the jails were filthy; moreover, only about ten cents a week was ordinarily allotted to each prisoner for food with the result that if a prisoner's family did not supply him, he was likely to be near starvation. Extra work was required for extra fare. Haiti was probably no worse off in respect to its jails than most European and American countries at the time, for this was before the era of prison reform. Inmates of jails were likely to be only petty thieves.

697 During certain régimes the presidents or their generals managed to have members of convicts sentenced to hard work, in order to have forced labor on their private estates or projects dear to them. Under any administration there were likely to be a few convicts who performed repair work on streets and roads. It was the usual practice to chain or rope them together by pairs, three yards apart; accompanied by soldiers with loaded muskets, the convicts labored from daylight to sunset, with an hour and a half for a meal at noon. The government pretended to provide for them, but in order to save expense two of the criminals accompanied by two soldiers with fixed bayonets were sent about the neighborhood to beg for the group. The result was that the wretches went ill fed and half naked. They slept in jail on beds which were little more than boards.

701 The final and most persistent branch of government has been the
175 army.[11] Owing to the overmilitarization of Haiti, generals were perennially participating in the civil government—or engaged in overthrowing it. It was to be expected that following the revolution the new independent state formed in 1804 should have a military cast. Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, Geffrard, Boyer, Cangé, Yayou, Magloire Ambroise, Férou, François, Capoix, Rigaud—these were the great generals and the only important statesmen. It was as if in America not only Washington had been a military leader, but also Adams, Jefferson, Franklin, Jay, Hamilton, Madison, Pinckney,

[647] 11. In most governments there has been a body which, although connected with the legislature, had functions pertaining to the law. This was the Chamber of Accounts, a body of five men who examined into and reported to the president upon every branch of expenditure and collection of revenues. It might recommend to him certain financial reforms or improvements, but had no power to enforce its suggestions.

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Patrick Henry, Randolph, and Samuel Adams as well. Madiou estimates that there were 52,500 men in the army in 1804, when Haiti's population was less than 400,000.[12] 175 701

Fear of the return of the French kept the army large, and the administration of agricultural affairs under both Dessalines and Christophe was in charge of it. The construction of a fortress in every district put laborers under the direct influence of the military.[13] In addition to the corvée, or forced labor, required to construct these fortifications, the workers of the nation in the time of Dessalines also had to clear the hillsides and the ravines connecting valleys, and plant them with bananas, yams, plantains, and other provisions to supply the garrisons which manned the forts. 175 712 466 [705]

The Emperor left his army to feed and clothe itself. Occasional rations were given as a part of wages, but they were irregularly distributed. In the South particularly the troops began to murmur and desert, stirred up by their mulatto officers who were themselves no better rewarded, and who were already beginning their plot to overthrow the Emperor. The accusation was made that the money which should have gone to the army was being used on Dessalines' mistresses. The soldiers indulged themselves in that most damaging of Haitian weapons, the witty song, full of double meanings but deadly in its thrust at public personages; by these symbolic songs the fall of Dessalines was not only predicted but actually prepared. 175 705 701

Christophe kept a military state, but he had learned many lessons from watching affairs under Dessalines. Realizing that he could not trust the preservation of his régime to the fickleness of an army which had seen his rise to power and had already deserved its first commander in chief, knowing too that there was treason even among his own guards, he made a contract with a company of foreign merchants for the transportation of twenty thousand blacks from Africa. These were to make up a military force independent of the Haitians, 175 643 701 625

12. *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 122.

13. Each general was commanded by Dessalines to build a fort on one of the mountains in his district. The design seems to have been left to the general. A few of the fortifications were truly impressive. Christophe built La Ferrière near Milot in the North; Pétion the fortress of Jean-Jacques at Grand Fond, four leagues from Port-au-Prince; Capoix called his Les Trois Pavillons, in the range of mountains back of Port-de-Paix; Cangé and Yayou together built Campan near Léogane; Magloire Ambroise constructed a fortress near Cap Rouge and called it by that name; Geffrard built Platon near Les Cayes; Férou built Madrane near Jérémie; François began but did not finish Le Bonnet Carré near Aquin. [712]

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643 and being the personal property of the monarch and recipients of his
701 royal favor, were to constitute the perpetual support of his throne.
625 Only four thousand of these compulsory immigrants came, but
625 Christophe made them into very effective companies of police, whom he named the Royal Dahomets from the country of their origin. They performed the duties of a gendarmerie in all the districts of the North, drove the cultivators to their labors, watched over property and the security of the proprietors, and maintained industry and a strict subordination among all ranks of people in the kingdom.

175 Christophe's regular troops were well clothed and armed. They
701 were kept under stern discipline, no mercy or relaxation being
[703] shown them; delinquency on their part brought flagellation or a military execution. The troops received only a nominal stipend, and each soldier was required to gain his subsistence by cultivating a few acres of ground allotted to him out of the national domain. The usual quarter of this income had, of course, to be turned over as a tax to the state. Although the King's power was maintained by soldiers, he never coddled them. "The soldiers of the army as well as the laborers of the plantations lived in perpetual dread of the rod of authority," wrote Brown.[14] They seem to have developed a tradition of some special fetish power possessed by Christophe, a sort of *mana*, to use anthropological terminology. Even princes and dukes were chastised by the King's orders, and then made to do menial work by way of further punishment.

Conditions in the republic of Pétion were similar and yet different —similar in that soldiers formed the support of the government, different in that Pétion did not rule by fear. Every individual man between 16 and 60, a few cultivators excepted, was required by law to be a soldier, either in the *corps solde* (regular troops of the line), or in the *corps non solde* (national guard). The former, both under Pétion and in the early days of Boyer, had about 40,000 men distributed in strong detachments in towns and communes all over the
[914] country. Their costume, instead of being neat, uniform, and daily inspected as with Christophe's army, was ragged and mismated; they
[465] managed according to popular parlance "to find linen on every hedge." They were paid from fifty cents to a dollar a month, ac-
[541] cording to the existing solvency or exigency of the state. Each week
[512] end a parade and review was held, and then a small fatigue party was taken to do actual duty, the others being dismissed until the next

14. Op. cit., II, 209.

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Saturday to use their time cultivating the soil, pursuing some mechanical craft, or acting as day laborers.

It must be once more emphasized that the civil was everywhere subservient to the military power. The administration of justice in tribunals was carried out only at the pleasure of the army chiefs. No person would have dared bring suit against a high officer; the only efficacious way of obtaining justice against petty offenders was through summary decision and corporal chastisement by the commanding officer.

By the close of Boyer's rule, during which he had kept the army up to its full numbers while pursuing a policy of economy, the outward appearance of the troops was almost ludicrous. They appeared at review wearing generally what pleased them or what they could scrape together, for they had to supply their own clothing and arms. The only effectual employment of the soldiery was as armed police, for Haiti never had to fight external powers. The soldiers drummed and fifed, mustered on parade and went through the formations, but otherwise merely stood (or sat) sentry at the doors of public offices, hunted up at the command of the magistrates *les malfaiteurs noirs*, guarded prisons and prisoners on chain-gang duty, loitered at barriers, collected tolls, and examined permits.

A large army, practically idle, could easily be seduced into the support of revolutionary movements. Principles of discipline and loyalty current in European armies of the day were nonexistent in nineteenth-century Haiti. The numbers in the army varied from twenty to forty or fifty thousand. A strange estimate was made for the year 1867: 6,500 general officers and staff; 7,000 regimental officers; and only 6,500 soldiers.[15] It was said that "tout *Haitien qui n'était pas général de division était un mauvais soldat*." The higher grades became rewards for political service; the lower ranks had to be filled up by recruiting parties—when these were abroad, all men who did not desire a period of enforced leisure away from home remained in hiding.

While the army was not alone responsible for the tragedies of insurrection and mismanagement which consistently befell the country, it was never uninvolved in these misfortunes. Only the radical reforms undertaken by the American Occupation saved modern Haiti from continued military domination.

15. Sir Spencer St. John, *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, p. 310.

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[p. 250]

XIV

COMMERCE

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THIS book is no more fundamentally concerned with the detailed economic history of Haiti than with its intimate political events; our attention is best here, as elsewhere, on the broad functioning of social institutions. Peasant agricultural life has already been depicted: the products of the peasant's labor, when marketed, have brought whatever prosperity the state and its ruling caste have enjoyed. These marketed products have consisted chiefly of coffee, with a very little sugar and cotton. The present section concerns Haiti's economic relations with the outside world.

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It was the commerce of the colony of Saint-Domingue which made that small division of the Antillean island so valuable to its mother country. Exports in the last year before the revolution are estimated at fifty million dollars (461 million livres) in terms of modern money.[1] Although commerce was seriously interrupted by the troubled state of affairs in the 1790's, the upswing of prosperity under Toussaint indicated that the country had still highly profitable enterprises. Merchants in the young United States were particularly intent upon the benefits to be derived from trade in molasses. All foreign trade was violently interrupted once more in 1802–3, when the revolution was in progress; but the interest of larger nations in what would issue from the Haitian declaration of independence in 1804 was out of all apparent proportion to the size of the tiny country. Their interest was partially in the question of whether ex-slaves could rule themselves politically; even more they were interested in the economic future of Haiti.

Three divergent economic policies were pursued by the early rulers, three variations among which future presidents might choose the one in their opinion most profitable. That of Dessalines was progressively to isolate Haiti, tolerating foreign trade only so long as it seemed necessary to establish the country's self-sufficiency. Christophe's, on the other hand, was the traditional monarch's

1. H. P. Davis, *Black Democracy* (2d ed., New York, 1929), p. 25; Antenor Firmin, *M. Roosevelt, président des Etats-Unis, et la république d'Haïti* (New York, 1905), pp. 435–436.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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policy of encouraging trade with his friends and prohibiting it with his enemies—both arbitrarily. The variation of Pétion was a sort of mercantilism, with set high tariffs.

What Dessalines planned was in terms of Western statecraft so weird that white onlooks felt they were restrained in calling Dessalines a transplanted African tribal chieftain. So passionately intense was the fury of that general against all whites that he took every precaution he could devise to prevent face-to-face dealings between his Haitians and foreigners. By deceit, treachery, and ingenious cruelty he conducted a massacre which deserves comparison with that of Saint Bartholomew: this effectively rid the country of white residents. Since for a time Haiti would have to depend for economic survival upon trade with foreigners, Dessalines next conceived a project whereby the whole population would be gathered in the centre of the island, in the most protected valleys and the gorges of the highest mountains. In these fastnesses the people would never see a white but would work on the land, producing sugar and coffee and cotton for export without ever leaving their local habitations. On the seacoast would be established certain "counters" over which a few incorruptible Haitians, chosen by the Emperor himself, would sell local products and buy the necessary imported goods. Impregnable fortresses were to guard access to the interior,[2] which would be reached by new roads from the seacoast "counters." Every seaport was to be destroyed as soon as new towns could be built in the back country. Already when his death intervened Dessalines had moved his capital from the Cape (that is, Cap-Haïtien, formerly Cap Français) to the inland village of Marchand (in the department of the Artibonite; now renamed Dessalines), and his next plan was to transfer Port-au-Prince eight leagues inland to the plantation Dérance, among the mountains.

Dessalines has been thought absurd, childish, barbaric. But there is something poignant, even tragic, in this fiery determination of the black chieftain, bitter over the cruelties and indignity to which his people had been subject for decades, to use this alien island as best he could and preserve his people at any cost from such another domination.

Despite his scheme for ultimate isolation of the people, Dessalines kept everyone steadily at work by the forced-labor system instituted

2. See p. 247 and note 13. under Toussaint.

3; Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 439 427

under Toussaint. The ravages of warfare were partially repaired, so that commerce once again appeared at the seaports. English, American, Danish, Swedish, and German vessels now shared what once the French had monopolized. Toussaint's export duties of ten per cent on sugar, coffee, cotton, and cacao were kept by Dessalines, and import duties likewise remained just about the same as formerly: twelve per cent.

175 439 427

A strange stopgap trading scheme was devised. Dessalines named the specific ports at which foreign ships might enter, then established a number of Haitian "consignees" at each of these ports. Numbers were given to each of these men. The first ship which entered the harbor was consigned to the shop of the trader having Number 1, the second to Number 2, and so on until each consignee had dealt with a foreigner, when Number 1 would receive the right to a second ship's cargo.[3] The captain of a vessel sent to Haiti did not know until his arrival in port who would be his consignee. If the probity of the Haitian merchant to whom fate assigned the captain did not inspire confidence, he was not obliged to sell goods to him—but was prohibited from selling them thereafter anywhere else in the country.

In this system there was room for every sort of irregularity and graft. More often than not Dessalines gave the assignments to his favorites, this to a military leader, that to an administrative officer, the other to some simple citizen whom he wished to reward. Often two ships would appear on the horizon at the same time: a consignee would then rush to the officer of the port and promise him half or a quarter of his commission if he would assign the more important of the vessels to his own number; the officer would then order the richer vessel in first.

Violent discontent arose over this system, which meant great profit to the beneficiaries of the monopoly and nothing to those excluded from it. As usual under a rigid system, means were found to evade the monopoly. Foreign ship captains found it well worth their while to sell clandestinely to individuals not high in the favor of the Emperor. This smuggling increased, the captains being both ingenious and adaptable to the needs of their dealers; sometimes the trade was wholesale, sometimes retail. Naturally enough, the Emperor imposed heavy fines on the smuggling operations when detected, but the illicit trade did not cease.

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3. This mode of consignment was sanctioned by a decree of Dessalines on September 6, 1805.

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175 Haiti under Dessalines seemed to be flourishing, although it was
433 less productive than under the French colonial régime. This was partly because the material damage of the wars had been too great to be quickly repaired; partly it was because many of the free Haitians had discovered ways of disappearing into the remote valleys, there to live the life of independent squatters, safe from the blows of Dessalines' overseers. Tables of exports showed that sugar production was rapidly declining, and that coffee was now becoming the principal crop of the country.[4] Many cane fields, indeed, were turning into rugged thickets, their mills and refineries falling to ruins beside the clogged irrigation ditches.

175 It was a bewildering "system," then, this instituted by Dessalines:
466 intense activity of serfs on government plantations, but an increasing
439 number of deserting squatters; foreign trade encouraged, yet run by
579 principles of local favoritism. Even the old-fashioned practice of piracy was reestablished, for the Emperor gave letters of marque to some of his subjects who owned ships, allowing them to pursue French and Spanish vessels as the rightful prey of an enemy country. Sometimes these Haitian corsairs even disturbed smaller English merchant ships. Finally, it was Dessalines who said to his favorites, "*Plumez la poule* [that is, the Haitian people], *mais prenez garde qu'elle ne crie pas.*"

175 Christophe, upon his accession to power in the North, completely
439 abandoned the fantastic schemes of Dessalines for putting an end to
437 all contact between Haitians and foreigners. Among his earliest acts were efforts to undo the economic measures of the Emperor. In his first address he proclaimed certain free ports, announcing that the flags of all nations would be respected and property protected.[5] Next he abolished the consignment system of trading, allowing all foreign traders free access to Haitian merchants. This open system did away with the need of smuggling.

175 Because Christophe was almost pathetically anxious to make a
439 good impression upon Great Britain, he was scrupulous in living up
698 to his promises of security of property and justice in commercial dealings—to British merchants. The United States fared ill at the King's hands, for it was a young republic which had by refusing

4. See note on this chapter, p. 320, section 4.
5. His constitution of 1807 likewise makes this promise: "The government solemnly guarantees to foreign merchants the security of their persons and property."

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175 439 648 recognition to the kingdom, specifically failed to pay him proper respect. Moreover he seized the property of American merchants in his kingdom to make good a sum of 223,955.19 he could not recover from a Baltimore firm.[6] Agriculture flourished in the North, but the English were not yet certain whether Haitian credit could be trusted. The demand of the traders for cash was allowed, and so with almost no risk British dealers supplied he steady demand for staple trade goods,[7] taking in return either coffee and sugar or the equivalent in cash.

175 439 Christophe was chary of publishing any specific figures on the economic life of his kingdom: we have no way, therefore, of estimating either the annual production or the annual income. One of his statesmen, Baron de Vastey, affirmed that in 1817 more than 150 ships were supplied with cargoes of coffee and sugar at the Cape alone.[8] This number is equal to that which sailed from the port during its most peaceful and prosperous periods in colonial times; one suspects the baron of exaggerating. We know, however, that Christophe was the chief merchant in his kingdom, setting his own prices and disposing of his own goods before others could sell; we know, too, that he left a large fortune in his coffers when he died.

175 579 439 Like Dessalines, King Henry Christophe had his pirates, and undoubtable ones. But he warned them to prey only on French ships bound for ports in Pétion's republic in the South; he did not wish his trade interfered with in the North.

The policies of Dessalines and Christophe were personal, based upon their subjective prejudices and preferences; those of Pétion were more in accord with the practice of other civilized nations of the time. They had to be, perforce, in view of the economic and political position of his republic.

175 439 648 Southern Haiti had never, even in colonial times, been so intensely cultivated as the North. Foreign traders were accustomed to deal at the Cape, now the capital of Christophe's dominion, while Port-au-Prince was but a secondary market. After the civil war Christophe had practically allied himself with Great Britain. If this coup were to be counterbalanced, Pétion would have to choose for allies among

6. See Ludwell L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938*, p. 48.

7. Christophe did not encourage his people to purchase any of the extravagantly rich manufactures of Europe, but rather to keep their wants simple.

8. Formerly Cap François, then Cap-Haïtien, but under Christophe renamed in his honor Cap-Henry; it is now Cap-Haïtien.

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the still weak United States, France—the traditional enemy of Haitians, and moribund Spain, who was in fact shortly to lose most of her empire in the New World. Since he did not mean to drive his people to work, he resolved to exploit to the full the benefits of foreign trade in the hope that profits from exports would stimulate production. As for allies, he cultivated the friendship of the United States, but also sought to wean British merchants from the Northern ports. To this end, although he levied duties of twelve per cent on goods of other nations, he reduced duties on English goods to five per cent.[9]

175 439 648 [651]

Pétion, content to govern without an impressive court, gave the greatest encouragement possible to trade; he shunned expenses and managed to balance his budget. In 1818, for example, his revenues were $2,646,000 and his expenses $2,144,000, giving the republic a respectable surplus of $502,000.

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Because Boyer was Pétion's disciple he followed in his predecessor's footsteps, thus fixing in his quarter-century administration the pattern of foreign trade under a tariff system. The Haitian élite seem never to have taken to commercial enterprise, nor has the country ever developed an economist even of fifth rank. Haitian thought, so eloquently articulate along political lines, has simply never turned its attention in any solid and serious way to economic problems. Nearly the whole of the foreign commerce of the republic from the earliest days was conducted by foreign merchants resident in Haiti. This was partly because the credit of the Haitians was not so generally established as to inspire confidence, but mostly it was due to lack of interest of the people in foreign trade.

175 439 652 [444] [452]

In the eighteenth century Saint-Domingue had been almost the only colony producing such tropical products as sugar and coffee on a large scale; the absence of effective competition accounted for most of the prosperity of the French colony. In the nineteenth century, however, competition developed rapidly; and at this very time the laws and court decisions of Haiti began to hamper the business of the foreign merchants dealing there. By Article 21 of Boyer's Law of Patents, all persons engaging in any trade or profession except that of cultivation of the soil must be provided with a license or patent; all foreigners admitted as merchants into the republic must first secure the president's permission to acquire a patent; and when

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9 See the Arrêté of October 15, 1814.

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175 finally the license was obtained, it authorized the foreigner to carry
959 on only a wholesale business—not with other foreign traders or with
656 any resident aliens, but with Haitians in the six open ports.[10] The
444 minimum of goods to be sold in any deal was fixed, so that no foreigner could inadvertently enter the retail business. Such licenses cost between $1,600 and $2,000, sums so large that few foreigners were drawn to the island.

Quite obviously the government sought to keep the external trade of Haiti under its control; it is equally obvious that under the licensing system, with its high fees and strict surveillance, only a small number of dealers were attracted, who consequently monopolized what little trade there was. Retail business being prohibited to them, their imports had to be sold by Haitians.

175 Not even this necessity created a middle class in the country, for
565 the purchasing power of the peasants and other lower-caste Haitians
434 was small; also the total sum of imports and exports was not large
443 enough to support a middle class. The retail trade was chiefly in the
441 hands of town women. These *marchandes*, as they were called, employed a number of hucksters—likewise women—to traverse the countryside surrounding the open ports, attend the markets, and report either every evening, or every week or month, depending upon their findings. The white man let his *marchande* know how much coffee he required, and this information was passed on to the local speculator who, at a very moderate profit, collected the coffee beans from the peasants in his neighborhood. Imports were distributed in like manner over the countryside. In its small way this system worked well enough, for the good faith of respectable *marchandes* could be counted upon both by the white trader and by the local dealers. A few European and American traders found it profitable to set up as *marchandes* the women with whom they cohabited, for this arrangement brought them nearer to the retail trade.

175 During Boyer's long administration the staple export was coffee,
439 still cultivated on a few remaining plantations but mostly picked
24 from plants growing wild, and sold by the peasants as their one source of money income. Sugar disappeared almost wholly from the

[504] 10. Namely, Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, Gonaïves, Jacmel, Les Cayes, and Jérémie; from 1822 to 1844 there were also two open ports in the Spanish part of the island which, during those years, was a part of Haiti.

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list except in raw form, in which it had an annual sale of only a few thousand pounds. Other subordinate exports were cotton, logwood, lignum vitae, mahogany, tortoise shells, hides, cacao, cassia, wax, ginger, bullocks' horns, and tobacco—and many of these came primarily from the Dominican rather than the Haitian part of the island, during the twenty-two year period of union. The imports were mainly clothing and provisions. That an agricultural country should need to bring in flour, butter, cheese, lard, beef, pork, candles, and especially—in the light of former days—refined sugar, is eloquent testimony to the degree to which food production had declined since colonial times. Other imports were more to be expected, since manufacture had never developed: linen, cotton goods of all kinds, some few woolens, cutlery, iron goods, wines and brandies, oil, lumber, coarse iron goods, earthenware, tin plates, and minor articles.[11]

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Gone now were the days of big things in Haiti. Estates of thousands of acres would in Boyer's time have been only a liability. Profits were measured, or rather hoped for, in terms of hundreds rather than thousands of dollars.[12] Saint-Domingue of the 1780's was one of the exciting parts of the world to traders; Haiti of fifty years later was little more than a vague name except to specialists. Any country relying for its economic security upon one crop and its sale in a foreign market must expect vicissitudes in its income. Haiti had these in full measure. And so the prosperity of the country steadily diminished.[13]

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11. See the very careful report to Great Britain by her consul, Charles Mackenzie, in 1830: *Notes on Hayti*, II, 175–190. [113]

12. Mackenzie (*Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti*, Document XI) reports in 1825: "Generally speaking, no sugar is manufactured on the estates devoted to the cultivation of the sugar cane; the juice is either inspissated to a coarse sirup, and sold for common use, or distilled into a very inferior rum, called here 'Tafia.'" Then, citing the case of Tor, an estate formerly owned by Pétion but in 1825 by Boyer, he reports: "Formerly 1,700 carreaux were in cane; 1,500 slaves were employed on it; 3 sugar mills were constantly at work, and excellent clayed sugar was made. Now only about 7 carreaux are in cultivation; 50 laborers are employed; the only produce is a little sirup and tafia, which last is retailed in a small shop by the side of the road, in front of the president's residence." [249] [267] [274]

13. These vicissitudes have been frequently noted. Droughts and hurricanes, pests and earthquakes, were causes of constant apprehension. The chief forces at work to diminish Haitian prosperity were two: the division of land into small parcels at home, and the competition of other countries with Haitian coffee abroad. The price of coffee had declined in all the European markets, making the return to the cultivator exceedingly small.

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175 If contemporary testimony can be credited, the complete indifference of the Haitian élite to business was matched by their ignorance
452 of finance when this was anything more complicated than cash pay-
453 ment transactions or face-to-face exchange. They seem to have been wholly unfamiliar with the uses of commercial paper, the meaning of overdrafts, or bills of exchange. Individual credit was not understood, nor was a signature enough to start a flow of business. As one person from France put it in 1846, "It takes 10,000 francs of money to do 10,000 francs of business."[14] If a merchant doing a good business found his purse empty and needed only to borrow in order to purchase other goods, that circumstance offered to his mind "a redoubtable extremity enveloped in profound mystery; and it is a rule of loyalty and of honor to which Haitian commerce is never false, that the paper on which a man has placed his signature should remain, until the day the loan is paid back, impenetrably shut up in the portfolio of the lender."

[426] Interest, if money could be borrowed at all, was at the rate of one per cent a day, three per cent a month, and from sixteen per cent to twenty per cent a year. Thus letters of credit and promissory notes never moved the slightest business transaction in the country. To seek credit was to confess one's financial embarrassment.

175 The economic ills which harassed Haiti under Boyer were, to a
45 greater or less degree, the same that bedeviled the country for the rest of the century. It seems worth while to list them, for they reveal the mentality of the ruling clique and caste—a mentality which could see no reason for altering of these basic matters, and which during administration after administration devoted itself to superficialities. Haiti's weaknesses were not entirely due to folly and clumsiness, however, but to a perfectly natural ignorance. There was no background for economic thinking: how should ex-slaves with a handful of old freedmen be familiar with credit, banking, overdrafts, and the like? Even education in France would not necessarily offer enlightenment on these matters. "Culture" meant literature, not economics.

These, then, have been the major economic defects of Haiti, 1806 to 1915, due partly to ineptitude, partly to imperfect education:

175 1. The exclusion of all foreign or white investment, industry, and
454 capital. One article in every constitution was given over to this
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14. R. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, II, 187.

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quarantine: "Haiti for the Haitians." At first the prohibition on white ownership of land and financial investment in the country was attributable to a fear of reënslavement; then to a fear that financial commitments (which no Haitian really understood) would somehow lead to political subjection; and always the feeling of pride, combined with a desperate need of self-justification, made the Haitians want to keep their country entirely under control of their own people. It is, of course, possible that if white people had been allowed free access to the country, they might have destroyed the "Black Republic"; excluding white men altogether, however, seriously curtailed economic activity.

2. Overmilitarization. The army, numerous out of all proportion to the population, took the ablest men out of production, drained the treasury, and was a constant source of revolutionary activity.

3. Poor methods of agriculture. Critics often complained that Haiti ought to return to the system of large estates and forced labor; it apparently occurred to no one to suggest that education of the peasants might have made the land productive once more, by teaching the people new methods. Dividing up the land was an inevitable necessity unless every ruler were as willing as Christophe to be a dictator and as capable; but to keep the peasants in ignorance was not a necessity. Peasant landowners in Europe frequently tend their acres with skill, while in Haiti, with neither experience nor instruction in methods of tillage on small farms, the people developed steadily more destructive ways of farming.

4. Inefficient marketing. Assuming Haiti's dependence upon the staple crop of coffee and the handling of this crop by foreign merchants, every government seemed intent upon putting obstacles in the path of efficient marketing procedure.[15] The white trader could deal only with Haitians (who were ignorant in matters of international trade); although the foreigner had to pay a huge license fee in order to deal at all in Haitian products, he got no security in return, for he might not own land or obtain a lien on the real property of a citizen.[16] Banking and exchange facilities were wholly lacking.

15. In 1833 Boyer thought to "encourage" Haitians to commercial effort by gradually expelling foreign traders, refusing to grant them any new licenses to trade. His scheme failed, for the élite were not interested. Indeed, the actual effect of his plan was to disrupt the steady flow of exports and increase discontent with Boyer on the part of the élite plantation owners whose small profits were momentarily interrupted.

16. See James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 374 ff.

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Justice in the courts was administered by Haitians whose narrow patriotism biased their decisions.

5. A temperamental tariff policy. Not only were imports subject to a tariff which might be changed at the whim of any president, but exports also were taxed. When an administration was in need of funds it might suddenly, without warning, raise the tax on coffee exports and so disrupt a merchant's business plans. The customs-houses were in charge of Haitians who steadily became more inefficient and grasping as the century progressed, until many foreign merchants felt that the only way of getting business dispatched was by means of bribes. Examinations at customs were long drawn out, often there was open thievery, and erroneous valuations were common.

6. The burden of the indemnity to France. Contracted by Boyer in 1825, this annual payment for sixty years was an incubus to every administration, leaving no surplus in the treasury for public works, education, or any internal development; likewise, it made the threat of foreign interference all the more imminent.

7. A debased currency. Pétion was the first president to devalue money, and his example was frequently followed thereafter. Counterfeiting was general. When a country's monetary system is unstable, its officials accustomed to bribery and graft,[17] and its financial structure almost nonexistent, there is little chance for sound economic development.

8. Dependence upon a single crop. Haitian economy was tied to the staple coffee, grown with indifferent care, prepared for the market in outmoded fashion, and sold in competition with coffee from more scientifically run plantations in other tropical countries.

9. Political instability. The recurrent revolutions in Haiti made foreigners chary of participating in the country's business, since the government which made a contract might be out of office before the ink was dry.

10. Indifference of the élite to economic pursuits. What profits were obtainable went into the pockets of foreign merchants, not those of Haitian businessmen. In 1842 the comparative exports of the

17. Sir Spenser St. John, always a bitter critic of Haiti, remarked (*Hayti, or The Black Republic*, p. 88) sardonically that "Boyer had the rare quality of being honest, and left in the treasury, on his departure, the sum of £200,000, the first and last chief who was ever guilty of so unaccountable a weakness."

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United Kingdom, the United States, and Haiti, in proportion to population, were 185, 165, and 125,[18] yet Haiti had no carrying trade while the other two countries had, and so the profits were drained from the land.[19]

In short, as Haiti became accustomed to managing her own affairs, she became content with—or at least, reconciled to—little things. Inertia and tradition worked in their persistent fashion, with no effective stimulation from outside to combat them. From tradition and seclusion springs prejudice, and this became obvious whenever a change was proposed, particularly one which suggested bringing white people back to the country. To the élite it might mean the end of their social supremacy; to the masses, the end of their independence of daily action. The prejudice against sugar making was rooted in the same kind of suspicion. When a large landowner tried to institute a sugar mill on his estate, he met an adamant refusal of his hired workers to labor in it: "*Moué pas esclave!*" (I'm no slave!) The Negroes even disliked a bell to ring them to work on a plantation, for it suggested the slavery of the old régime.

Just before the Civil War in the United States a humanitarian gentleman developed a project of conducting numerous free American Negroes to Haiti in a planned migration. He discussed in a pamphlet[20] all the possible trades which might flourish in that country, if the migrants were to assume the position of a middle class; but his list is significantly small—sixteen occupations, on the order of tailoring, coopering, and blacksmithing, were all he could think of.[21] He made three comments which he hoped would attract the Negro Americans, as to a virgin field of opportunity: that in the

18. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 111–113, cites these figures, and says: "[Thus] Hayti, poor, and despised as she is, has a commerce, *in native produce*, nearly three-fourths as large, *in proportion to her population*, as our own United Kingdom, which is the great manufacturing part of the world; and seven-eighths as large as that of the United States, where the staple exports are produced by the labour of 3,000,000 slaves!"

19. Mackenzie (*Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti*, Document V) reports that in 1825 exports were valued at $5,793,758, and imports at $4,660,174; the trading was carried on in 552 *foreign* ships, of which 374 were American, 78 British, and 65 French. No Haitian ship traded abroad.

20. Benjamin S. Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans*. See particularly pp. 3–9.

21. His complete list is: tailor, shoemaker, baker, cabinetmaker, carpenter, mason, lime-burner, distiller, cooper, wheelwright, saddler, blacksmith, tinner, hatter, small-boat maker, potter.

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towns there was a surplus of shopkeepers, but nothing like enough producers of goods; that in the country few Haitians of intelligence and capital paid any attention to agriculture; and that Haiti needed more than anything else people of brains, not afraid of physical activity, and people with capital. The author had observed well. His characterization of the Haiti of 1860 was still true fifty years later.

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PART V

MODERN HAITI

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XV

HAITIAN PROBLEMS

FOR a citizen of the United States or a European country, national problems have to do with external as well as internal affairs. Foreign relations, armaments, international trade, treaties and commitments, loom as large as do unemployment, business depression, labor troubles, and social maladjustment. Political parties rise and fall with their promises or failures to deal successfully with matters arising from the country's position relative to world movements. In Haiti such generalizations do not hold. Her international relations have been and are comparatively minor, while her internal problems have been of a different order from those which trouble most of the rest of the Western World. This is not meant to imply that a world depression leaves Haiti unscathed, or that the country does not suffer when its trade in coffee is interrupted, but rather that its persistent problems would continue to exist whatever the state of world politics and economics. 178 66 648

Contacts of the Haitian people with the outside world between 1804 and 1915 were meagre. The slaughter of whites by Dessalines, the economic decline of the country, unwillingness of white nations to treat with a Negro state, the schism in the Catholic Church, restrictive legislation against white foreigners, general illiteracy of the people—all these shut Haiti off from the world. Christophe, it is true, invited in a few English schoolmasters and agricultural experts, but these remained only a short while and had little influence even among the élite. For a century Haiti saw no foreigners except the few traders at seaports, an occasional Wesleyan missionary, a limited number of consuls and ministers, certain travelers interested in odd corners of the earth, and, after 1860, Catholic priests and sisters. For the peasants there ceased to be any knowledge of the world outside of Haiti; for the élite France once more became the centre of the social universe, as it had been for the affranchis in colonial times. From Boyer's time onward élite youths went to Paris for an education, if they could afford it; the "culture" they acquired there had little relationship to Haitian problems. 175 648 [871] [242] [797] [871]

Foreign relations, in the political sense, revolved during most of

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Foreign relations, in the political sense, revolved during most of

175 the nineteenth century about loans and insurrections. Haiti main-
648 tained legations in those countries to which she exported most of her coffee and from which she might obtain credit. Revolutionary leaders sometimes promised as a bait for foreign assistance either tariff preferences or the cession of Môle Saint Nicolas for a naval base; if successful, they might fulfill the first promise but, because of the Monroe Doctrine and the watchful jealousy of the big powers, the Môle was never ceded. The United States had varied dealings with Haiti. Before the Civil War there was more than one movement to transplant freed slaves from this country to Haiti; after the war the United States came very near annexing Haiti; and negotiations over the cession of the Môle did not end until America acquired Guantanamo Bay, across the Windward Passage in Cuba, as a naval base to guard the entrance to the Caribbean.[1]

It was finally the combination of complicated economic affairs and political collapse which produced the Occupation of 1915. In the
175 preceding year both France and Germany threatened to send war-
652 ships to collect loans due them, and were stopped only by the out-
457 break of the World War. An American bank held as its subsidiary the Bank of Haiti, in which the government deposited its funds; when in 1914–15 the presidents followed each other in rapid succession, the bank on instructions from New York refused to allow the government to withdraw its funds. Haiti in retaliation threatened to seize its deposits by force, but the New York bank persuaded the United States government to send a ship to transfer the gold from Port-au-Prince to New York. There were other financial complications, particularly those relating to defaulted payments to a railroad
175 company. What finally precipitated the Occupation, however, was
648 anarchy. When, in July, 1915, President Sam slaughtered 168 politi-
[579] cal prisoners and was himself mobbed and murdered, the American government ordered the landing of its Marines from a warship conveniently anchored in the harbor near Port-au-Prince.[2]

From 1915 to 1934 the foreign affairs of Haiti were under the direction of the United States, whose main concern was to order the economic relations of the country in such fashion that Haiti should

1. The foreign relations of Haiti with the United States have been clearly treated in Ludwell L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States*, 1714–1938.

2. One of the best accounts of the events leading up to the Occupation is that of H. P. Davis, *Black Democracy*.

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not find herself constantly embroiled with European states and American financial interests. The Haitian debt was funded, and a financial adviser remained in the country even after the Occupation came to an end. It is expected that by 1943 the last debt will be paid; the financial adviser, however, withdrew in 1941. Since the Occupation, although the republic has been free to manage her own affairs, she has consulted frequently with the State Department in Washington.

Nineteen years of occupation ended the century of Haitian isolation. The Americans built roads, conducted health campaigns, made their presence felt even in remote hamlets and valleys. American authors, political, romantic, and sensational, discovered the Antillean republic. Steamship companies stopped their cruises for a few hours at Cap-Haïtien to allow tourists to visit the Citadel, and at Port-au-Prince to see the sights of the capital. Every Haitian now realizes that there is a world outside.

Whatever crises have arisen in Haitian affairs, certain problems have persisted. For whom do they constitute a source of worry? Since the government has always been a dictatorship, limited or absolute, subject to no party control, the incumbents of office have never had the experience of being constantly reminded by their opponents of the misery or daily worries of the population. After a hundred years the people have learned that relief is not to be expected from politicians. Occasionally a dramatic revolutionary leader has persuaded some of the people that the officials in power were responsible for their distress, and so worked up a following; yet even when such movements succeeded, the masses never benefited. To most governments of the past century Haiti's problem has been only one: to frustrate insurrection. There is evidence that recent administrations have busied themselves assiduously with the country's internal problems, although none of them has been adequately solved. The élite, at least as a group, do not feel any apparent responsibility for the maladjustments, nor obligation to effect the necessary reforms. A few patriots, and those almost without exception not in office, know what ails the country and say so; a smaller number propose reasonable solutions. The problems remain. Of these the three outstanding are overpopulation with all its accompanying ills, health, and education.

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1. *Overpopulation*

161 Two and a half or possibly three million people live within 10,200 square miles. These figures, if they are to convey a reality, must be conceived in more familiar terms. Haiti is just about the size of Vermont, but has six times as many people crowded together among its mountains In a list of countries still independent in 1935 Haiti ranked among the first ten in density of population, yet its economic life was agricultural, while the other nine have a high degree of industrialization.

161 171 As one looks at a full-page map of the Western Hemisphere it is difficult even to find the tiny wisp of color which marks the Caribbean republic of Haiti. Of the twenty-two American countries, including Canada, Haiti is next to last in size (El Salvador is smaller), yet ranks thirteenth in population, and far and away the first in *density* of population, in the whole hemisphere. The figures are revealing:

Country	*Population*	*Area in Square Miles*	*Density*
1. United States	131,669,275	3,026,701	43.5
2. Brazil	43,246,931	3,275,510	13.2
3. Mexico	19,478,791	763,944	25.5
4. Argentina	12,762,000	1,078,278	11.7
5. Canada	11,012,724	3,694,863	2.9
6. Colombia	8,730,000	448,794	19.4
7. Peru	6,600,000	532,184	12.3
8. Chile	4,626,508	296,717	15.6
9. Cuba	4,108,650	41,164	99.8
10. Venezuela	3,451,677	352,051	9.8
11. Bolivia	3,426,296	537,792	6.3
12. Guatemala	3,044,490	45,452	67.0
13. Haiti	3,000,000	10,204	294.9

161 Haiti's density per square mile is therefore greater than that of China or India—two world examples of overpopulation—and even greater than that of New York State, with its enormous city areas. Haiti's largest town has a population of 100,000; there are seven towns ranging from 7,500 to 20,000. The density of distribution through the countryside is therefore evident.

wo Beside the figures given above must be set those of the government

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budget, which is annually in the neighborhood of $7,000,000, and of its annual imports and exports, neither of which generally exceeds $10,000,000 a year. Chicago, with its population of three million, has an annual budget of about $275,000,000, aside from state and federal services. 652 [439]

To care for all the needs of three million people in Haiti there is a sum of money less than that available annually to several of our American universities. Out of the seven million dollars must come all salaries of officials, legislators, judges, policemen, schoolteachers; the wages of all janitors and day laborers employed by the government; the upkeep of all schools, roads, lighthouses, experiment stations; the maintenance of such important public services as health, sanitation, education, soil development, reforestation. Since there are few towns, practically every improvement which takes place must be paid for by the central government. [369]

Haiti's growth in population is not a new thing. It has been increasing steadily since 1804 while the soil of the country was being worn out and foreign trade grew stagnant. The country is entirely agricultural, there being absolutely no manufacturing industry worth the name. The people consequently live upon a subsistence economy. The soil is still fertile enough to preserve life in the teeming population, though undernourishment is general. Most of the people have no "artificial" wants and could not satisfy them under present conditions even if they had. 161 [134] [439] 433 164 [134] [511]

Assuming the census of Dessalines in 1805 to be even approximately accurate, the population is now eight times what it was then. The working of the Law of Population[3] is implacable: if population increases while economic efficiency remains static or declines, either there will be an increasing death rate or the standard of living must sink—or both. In the case of Haiti, economic efficiency is certainly not what it was under the forced-labor system of Dessalines: the death rate has been continuously high; it is the standard of living which has suffered. 161 433 178 [165] [511]

To grasp the import of Haiti's problem of overpopulation one

3. "Population tends to increase up to the limit of the supporting power of the land, relative to the economic efficiency and to the standard of living of the people at the time." (For an amplification of this discussion on overpopulation, see the note on p. 320.) The law of population as stated here is a modification of that given by Sumner and Keller, *The Science of Society*, I, 46; their statement, in turn, is that of Malthus with the added cultural items of economic efficiency and the standard of living. [114]

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To grasp the import of Haiti's problem of population one

161 should imagine the number of Vermonters sextupled, working with
433 hand tools and using methods which their great-grandfathers would
171 have considered antiquated; imagine the state with only a hundred
511 miles of paved roads, with no harnessed water power, no substantial fortunes, no middle class; imagine the farms gullied and worn out; ninety-five per cent of the people illiterate and undernourished; the state having no industry and practically no goods imported from New York, Massachusetts, or any other part of the United States. Under such conditions the low standard of living would be readily understandable.

Haiti might also be compared with Mississippi. Less than a quarter the size of that American state, it nevertheless has a larger population. Both Haiti and Mississippi are agricultural, with few towns, although no part of Haiti now has land as richly fertile as that of the Yazoo Delta. The low standard of living of the Mississippi share-cropper, whether Negro or white, is notorious—yet he has access to a few of the perquisites of civilization, whether these be elementary schools or moving pictures; the Haitian peasant lacks even these. In America the undercurrent of feeling is that something should be, probably eventually will be, done to improve the lot of the share-cropper. Certainly there is wealth enough in the country at large to alleviate conditions where they are deemed to be socially unhealthy. Not so in Haiti: the land is poorer, the numbers even greater, the area much smaller; and there is no wealth in the country, nor enough social vision among the upper classes to deal with the relentless increase of numbers.

168 How conceivably might this problem be dealt with? The first answer which would occur to many Americans, namely, birth control, is out of the question at present. Expense would stand in the way of its use by people who hardly ever see money; the peasants, unable to read, suspicious of new-fangled ways, untouched by all efforts to "uplift" them, and with no educational agencies, could hardly be converted to the use of contraceptives; while the Catholic
[795] Church, which until now has not had to raise its voice against birth control in Haiti, would fight any proposal to introduce it as it fought the campaign in Puerto Rico.

167 Another possible answer is migration. This solution many Haitians
648 have tried without prompting. With little money available for

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travel, the peasants are limited in their migrations to near-by countries; specifically Cuba, which can be reached by sailing vessels, and the Dominican Republic. For many years there was a seasonal migration from Haiti to each of these neighboring countries, where wages on the sugar plantations, although low, have been better than nothing. Native Cubans and Dominicans, however, have quite understandably resented the influx of cheap labor which throws them out of work, depresses the wage scale, and thwarts efforts to improve working conditions; as the tide of Haitian immigration to the two adjacent countries increased during the 'twenties and the depression period of the 'thirties, resentment flamed into action. Murders occurred; ships to Cuba were not allowed to land; workmen were beaten and otherwise persecuted. In 1937 the Cuban dictator, Batista, expelled thousands of Haitians from the island. But the climax was reached in the autumn of the same year when the news gradually leaked out that in the Dominican Republic thousands of Haitians had been murdered in cold blood. It was estimated at that time that as many as 60,000 Haitians were living across the border; of these, certainly as many as 5,000 were butchered or drowned, and it is likely that 20,000 would be a more accurate figure if the whole truth were known.[4] In the world at the present time there seems to be no haven for penniless migrants, particularly illiterate blacks. 167 648

Even if Haiti could devise within her tiny budget a way to finance a whole series of public works, the problem of overpopulation would not be solved. Expenditures for internal improvements would merely lessen unemployment for the time being; it would not prevent the people from having large families of undernourished children. 161

It is easy enough to say that the problem of overpopulation could be solved by a combination of birth control, education, improvement of the soil and of agricultural techniques, introduction of manufacture, and public works projects. Each of these "solutions" is a major problem in itself, considering the limitations of the country. 168

4. This massacre was protested with all diplomatic vigor by Haiti. The gendarmerie, since the American Occupation the only military force in the country, numbered only 2,500 men and was no match for the military power of the Dominican Republic, so that diplomatic protest to the American nations was the only course open to President Vincent. A joint committee of the United States, Mexico, and Cuba investigated and awarded Haiti damages of $750,000, of which the Dominican government (meaning Trujillo) immediately paid $250,000, promising the rest in installments. [648]

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2. *Health*

Historians who seek to explain the rise and fall of nations in terms of a single cause might do worse than hit upon health and disease as the all-important explanation. Unless spectacular epidemics have appeared in a country's history, the average person is rarely aware of how diet may affect a people, or of how backwardness in achievement is often directly related to disease. It may well be that the development of *medical* history will yet cause a radical revision of certain philosophies of history.

146 "The diet of the Haitian peasants has not improved since the slavery period," says Dr. Camille Lhérisson.[5] When people are 164 hungry in Haiti, they eat (if they can find food) until their hunger has been appeased; but what they eat, though it may fill their stomachs, is often decidedly deficient in the proper nourishment. Mangoes, yams, and beans are common enough so that few people actually go hungry; eggs, milk, meat, and many other essentials of a balanced diet, on the contrary, are scarce. People do not die of hunger, but rather of the diseases which accompany malnutrition. It is said that many peasants allow the fires in their homes to die out when the mangoes begin to ripen, subsisting almost wholly upon this fruit for weeks. One sees nearly naked children whose distended [261] bellies are testimony to faulty diet. There are frequent cases of geophagy (eating of dirt) both by children and by adults in their unreasoned craving for certain dietetic elements; one result of the practice is the swallowing of eggs and larvae of intestinal parasites.

178 Scientific progress in medicine during the nineteenth century and 743 the first years of the twentieth passed Haiti by completely. There 759 were during the whole history of the country until 1915 hardly a score of reputable physicians; even had there been doctors, hospital facilities and equipment were lacking. Dr. Robert P. Parsons de- 114 scribes Haiti in 1915 as "an unspeakable hotbed of diseases, ranking 164 second to none in the world in downright rottenness." He further described the "mass of three million people, sick, suffering beyond all power of words to describe, crippled, and weakened from the ravages of a host of diseases (for the most part preventable and curable), pitifully helpless and hopelessly resigned to their lot."[6]

5. "Diseases of the Peasants of Haiti," *American Journal of Public Health*, XXV, No. 8 (August, 1935), 924.
6. *History of Haitian Medicine* (New York, 1930), pp. 4-5.

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So it had been with the subject peoples of the island ever since its discovery. The Spaniards introduced a wide variety of European diseases to Española (an epidemic of smallpox in 1500 was estimated to have killed 200,000 Indians in the island) which did not disappear as the Indians gave way to Negroes. Three centuries of the slave trade brought blacks from many parts of Africa, and with them most of the deadliest plagues of that continent. During the flourishing days of French control over Saint-Domingue, Negro slaves were afflicted by a wide variety of diseases, the commonest being yaws, tetanus, intestinal worms, malaria, leprosy, smallpox, and scrofula, although others were certainly not absent. Only to yellow fever, probably brought with them from Africa, did the blacks seem to develop a certain immunity. Most plantations had a doctor in attendance, but medical skill during the eighteenth century was not advanced enough to cope successfully with scourges whose cause was then unknown.

After freedom there were fewer doctors than ever, less sanitation, and a worse diet. When a person was ill, his one alternative to suffering the disease to take its course was to consult the Vodun priest, for the commonly accepted explanation of disease was a spiritual one. If God (that is, the Christian God) had sent the illness, nothing could be done except to bear it, for God's will was unalterable; if it were the result of magic worked by some enemy, the identity of that enemy and the magical means used must be ferreted out so that countermagic might be employed. Vodun practitioners were, indeed, quite as important in their rôle of healing as in performing strictly religious rites. In the course of their efforts to cure disease they often stumbled upon homely but effective cures; no doubt also the mental effect of the patient's faith sometimes helped him to recover, even when the medicines administered had no specific value.

The "triple threat" to Haitian health is the morbid group: malaria, hookworm, and yaws. The first two are familiar enough in parts of the United States, and require only short comment. For centuries malaria has sapped the vitality of people in southern lands, giving them a reputation for indolence which is not wholly deserved. Haitian peasants were during the entire nineteenth century accused of laziness; when a strapping man lay all day in the shade of a tree, it was logical enough for a white visitor to suppose that he was willfully loafing. The critics might have been more temperate if they had known what it was to be perpetually full of malaria, with a body

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164 apparently hale and hearty, but lassitude sapping all energy. A group
744 of doctors from the Rockefeller Foundation discovered that among
164 4,439 persons examined in various surveys two decades ago sixty-seven per cent showed malarial parasites in the blood. Since the American Occupation steps have been taken to control the disease and much progress has resulted: some of the towns are now practically free of it. But the battle against malaria will never be won so long as the anopheles mosquito breeds in the island; it means an endless war of constant vigilance as well as education—one which must be carried on simultaneously in the neighboring Dominican Republic.

Hookworm, like malaria, is also ordinarily quite undramatic in its symptoms. There is no specific pain, but rather a progressive inertia. Since practically every country person goes barefoot it would be miraculous if hookworm were not widespread, for sanitation is entirely lacking in peasant communities. Dr. Lhérisson reported in 1935 that twenty-six per cent of the mass of Haitian people examined
[369] up to that time had been found infested by hookworms. The final
[291] figure will probably be revised upward, for the persons most easily examined are townspeople who have better sanitation and more shoes. Only the Cul-de-Sac plain, extending east from Port-au-Prince, is free of the disease, for the larvae do not develop in salty ground. Hookworm attacks not only the barefoot, but likewise the
[261] well shod. Poor sanitation and geophagy suggest themselves as two explanations of this fact.

Like malaria, hookworm has been accepted calmly enough as one of the normal burdens of life. In slave days and for some time thereafter it was called "stomach trouble," and since it was common, was not even a case for the Vodun practitioner. It was not until 1924 that the Rockefeller Foundation through its Payne mission revealed the significance of the disease and began to establish dispensaries in
[291] country districts and undertake a campaign of sanitation. If every Haitian were to wear shoes the incidence of the disease would, of course, decidedly decrease; but the advice to wear shoes is a counsel of perfection, for large peasant families are no more able to afford this luxury than all American families are able to buy champagne and caviar. Progress has been made along the lines of hygiene and sanitation, but hookworm continues to undermine the energy of the people.

164 Yaws is, of the morbid triad, the most virulent and the common-

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est. It was brought over from Africa apparently as early as 1509.[7] Oviedo describes it in 1526 as "a terrible pustular disease."[8] It so closely resembles syphilis that it has often been mistaken for that malady.[9] Untreated or wrongly treated it ravages the bodies of its victims, making them loathesome to behold. In the neighborhood of Port-au-Prince the Rockefeller staff found, out of 2,564 persons examined, 78 per cent affected with yaws. What is even more disturbing is that the young are afflicted. Dr. Lhérisson's investigations in one district revealed that 61.1 per cent of the cases were of children under ten. 164

An American, Dr. Paul Wilson, in 1922 first called yaws the primary physical curse of Haiti. He insisted "that the first need of rural Haiti was soap, salvarsan, and sunshine, and that the good Lord would furnish the sunshine."[10] The Haitian government immediately began to spend large sums to combat the disease. In the Jacmel region in one year (1925–26) 167,267 cases of yaws were treated; in 1926 over 200,000 injections of arsenicals against the disease were administered throughout the republic; and by 1931 the Public Health Service had given in twelve years 2,655,386 injections. Progress has been swift, but the fight against yaws is one which has to be waged continually. 164 744

It would probably be not far from the truth to say that for two centuries the majority of Haitian Negroes have been afflicted to a greater or less degree with malaria, hookworm, and yaws, either singly or together. Next to these dire diseases comes a group which seems to have affected from a tenth to one half the population: tuberculosis, dysentery, enteritis, and granular conjunctivitis. Tuberculosis progresses rapidly when it appears. The people have never developed a specific immunity to it, and promiscuous sex relations play their part in spreading the disease by contagion. In seven hundred autopsies performed in one year at the General Hospital of Port-au-Prince, twenty-six per cent of the deaths were due to tuberculosis. Spring water in the country districts is frequently pol- 164 [836] [837] [165]

7. M. G. Levacher, *Guide médical des Antilles* (Paris, 1847), p. 280.
8. Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdés, *La Historia natural y general de las Indias* (Madrid, 1558).
9. Dr. Parsons, *History of Haitian Medicine*, p. xviii, speaks of it as "blood brother of European syphilis, if not the same disease modified by age incidence, social environment, and racial difference."
10. *Ibid.*, p. xviii.

Spring water in the country districts is frequently

164 polluted by all sorts of excreta; the watering of milk is a common
[364] practice, and samples of milk have been generally found to contain
[272] many times the normal amount of bacilli. The cases of tuberculosis are practically always complicated by malaria.

Dysentery, when caused by bacilli, is epidemic in nature. In Haiti this form, known as "colerin," annually affects about a quarter of the rural population. Another type, caused by a variety of amoeba, affects another ten or twenty per cent, according to the region. Enteritis is less serious than dysentery but just as prevalent, being
[146] caused by protozoa and intestinal worms. Poor diet, the abuse of
[273] alcohol, premature weaning, and unwise nursing are also responsible.
[853] Granular conjunctivitis affected sixteen per cent of the children examined by the Rockefeller Foundation.

Cancer seems to strike only a normal number of Haitians; goitre is common in the mountain districts; leprosy has become a menace in the West and South; elephantiasis is present, particularly in the South; gusarola (characterized by patches of skin assuming different color) is fairly common in the Cul-de-Sac plain; chicken pox, influenza, and meningitis epidemics are occasionally serious.

164 The health of the peasant women is seriously and continuously
462 endangered by their mode of life and work. It is customary for
482 females, from girlhood onward, to carry heavy burdens on their heads—over steep paths in the mountains, along rocky trails, up hill
145 and down. The commonest sight in Haiti is to see a woman swinging along with a great load of fuel, a tin of water, a bundle of building material, a basket of fruit, on her head. Cranial bones are flattened, the spine is bent, internal organs are strained or damaged. For ill-nourished persons to carry heavy weights for long distances with
[461] little rest means undue pressure on the heart and lungs, and so an
[843] increasing tendency to cardiac and pulmonary infections as well as chronic anemia. Overwork frequently results in miscarriages.

844 As has been said, childbirth often occurs by the roadside, on the way to market, or in the market place. In no case can a peasant
[846] woman remain in bed for a proper period either before or after
[164] parturition. Midwives are untrained; they use primitive methods which inevitably result in defective development of infants, lessened
853 resistance to disease, high infant mortality, and a prevalence of abdominal diseases in women. Pressure of work, whether in the field or on the way to market, makes a mother soon stop nursing her

3: Leyburn Z-4.5 (no date) 1966
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baby: when she does she substitutes a mode of feeding on fruits and solids which favors digestive disturbance and nutritive diseases in the infant. 853

At the age when children of the élite would be starting to school, peasant children are beginning work in the fields, hoeing, weeding, and carrying, always under the tropical sun. Cuts and bruises, sometimes serious, are improperly treated when they occur and so lead to tetanus or to enormous ulcers. 857 752 184 164

Hard work and a simple mode of outdoor life prove, in Haiti at least, not to be the keys to good health which a romantic might fancy them. Haiti has been one of the unhealthiest places in the world. One feels that it has been lucky to escape such scourges as typhus, cholera, and bubonic plague; that smallpox has not been violent in its epidemics, and that the people developed an immunity to yellow fever. It has, indeed, been luck rather than cleanliness and proper medical care which has protected the people in these instances. 164

In 1838 Boyer founded a hospital school at Port-au-Prince, giving it the name of The National School of Medicine. It did not function as a school, however, until 1860 when Geffrard reorganized it and gave it life. Geffrard also sent young men to Europe to study, installed laboratories of physics and chemistry in the upper schools of the capital, and made possible the appearance of an intellectual élite.[11] The next burst of energy in matters of hygiene came around 1890 when, under the influence of Dr. Léon Audain, the first health records were kept, and the spirit of scientific research reached Haitian medicine. 874 744 742

From 1804 to 1860, then, there was practically no proper care for sick people. In the latter years of the century a few trained physicians, with sadly deficient equipment, practiced in the towns. Not until after the Occupation was the rural mass of the population even touched by the medical knowledge which had been developing all over the civilized world for decades. Clinics, wholesale vaccinations and inoculations, and campaigns of enlightenment have in the past twenty years worked wonders. The Vodun practitioner, however, still is the "expert" who treats most illnesses, and healing remains one of his major functions. 744 759 756

11. Geffrard established schools of law, music, painting, and navigation. The latter two collapsed. The same president founded the high schools of Port-au-Prince, Jacmel, and Gonaïves. [873]

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3. *Education*

871 To a people like the Americans who accept democracy as desirable, and regard universal education as a necessary basis for democracy, it would seem a simple matter for the Haitians to build schools all over the countryside, pass laws requiring attendance, and so within a decade, or at the outside a generation, reform the whole country. To the American, education is the fount from which all democratic blessings flow. For the Haitian the problem is neither so clearly defined nor so simply solved.

565 871 The élite, who are solidly in control of the government, are aristocrats partly (largely, one might even say) because they are educated. Because of the maxim of Haitian life since the beginning that a literate man should not do manual labor, any program which proposed universal education would cut the ground from under the present social structure by giving the masses equal opportunities with the élite, and at the same time ruin the economic organization by making peasants want to desert field labor for professions and business. An ordinary degree of self-interest is quite sufficient to explain the lack of enthusiasm of the ruling class when the subject of general education is broached.

871 Good reasons are often given by people in lieu of real reasons for their actions. One of the good reasons advanced by Haitian ministries for the failure of the government to promote universal education is its cost. Those American states whose population is prevailingly rural know the validity of this reasoning. With children [369] scattered over the rural regions—and nine out of ten Haitians do not live in towns or large villages—it would require thousands of new school buildings to reach the prospective students. Salaries of teachers, purchase of supplies, and general upkeep would have to be added annually to the national budget in addition to the initial outlay for the erection of school buildings. Here one comes up immediately against the unyielding fact of the puny national income. Its $7,000,000 could under no circumstances be stretched to cover an architectural program commensurate with Haiti's educational needs.

871 178 Another good reason for the failure of democratic education is the demonstrated apathy of the masses. In the zeal for improvement during the early days of the Occupation, rural schools were estab-

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lished in many parts of the country. Attendance was fair for a few days, then rapidly declined. It is obviously a task requiring patience, persistence, originality, and tact on the part of the teacher to keep the students interested enough in school to make them attend regularly, for certainly the parents, who themselves have had no education, will not force their children to attend. On the contrary, the average peasant parent feels it much more important for his children to be at work in the fields, doing something useful, than to waste time learning to read and write—accomplishments which peasants have done without from time immemorial. Forced attendance is clearly out of the question. Obviously, too, at the small wages paid to country teachers the necessary qualities of personality are uncommon, to say the least. Five thousand men and women with the consecration of missionaries would be required even to begin the work of general education.

A practically insoluble problem, given current attitudes, is that of the language to be used in rural schools, assuming that these are built. The only official language of Haiti is French; the only language understood by the masses is Créole, which in spite of its French origin is as different from that tongue as Dutch from German. Now every Haitian, high and low, knows Créole, so that the question immediately arising is: Why should not the rural teachers teach in Créole? The answer involves every sort of inward prejudice, yearning, and instilled doctrine. The teacher is almost sure to be struggling up to the élite class, and to require him to deny himself the luxury of speaking French (to him almost a patent of nobility) would be heart-rending. Likewise, he would have his "good" reason for teaching school in French: the unity of the country demands a single language; all schoolbooks are in French, none in Créole; and Créole has no literature, nor even an accepted spelling. The fact remains that except in rare instances all schoolteachers use French to their pupils, and not one peasant out of a hundred can even guess what is being said in that language.

Assuming that schools were available, as well as trained teachers willing to speak the folk language, the next problem would be the curriculum. The whole tradition of élite education is literary, not practical. Teachers trained in this tradition might teach Racine and Montaigne, but not soil conservation and new methods of planting. Peasants with a knowledge of French literature would, of course, be

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871 no longer peasants. What good would a literary education do them? Yet those who have advocated a technical or practical curriculum have been met with a perfect storm of opposition. Such training would, it has been argued, merely augment and perpetuate the social stratification of the country; moreover, since no Haitian élite have been technically trained nor had any desire to be, the teaching of the whole rural mass would have to be in the hands of aliens—white Americans, more than likely. Once again, it is a matter of [875] current attitudes: the rural teacher keen to rise out of the masses into the upper class would, if the curriculum were technical, be required to abandon the gratifying display of his literary knowledge, and devote his talents instead to the manual skills from which he had been trying to escape.

871 It is hardly necessary to mention the insuperable problem of train-
875 ing the teachers and persuading them to dedicate their lives to rural education: to live away from the amenities of urban life, at a minute salary, among an ignorant peasantry. Only the devotion of rare patriots would prompt such complete self-sacrifice, even if the government had a tithe of the funds necessary for educating teachers for their jobs and paying them a living wage.

175 A glance at Haitian history will also help to explain the sorry state
871 of education. In 1804, of course, there was not a single school in the country, and Dessalines was too much preoccupied with other affairs to give the matter a thought; besides, being illiterate himself, he may well have thought learning unimportant, or at least, embarrassing. Both Christophe and Pétion showed an exemplary zeal for education, although the results accomplished by them seem small enough. They were both impressed by the Lancasterian method then in vogue in England, and modeled the few schools they sponsored upon it. Christophe, always an Anglophile, established five "*grandes écoles nationales*" at Cap-Henry, Port-de-Paix, Sans Souci, Gonaïves, and Saint-Marc, with English masters at the head of each.[12] Pétion established at Port-au-Prince a Lycée Haïtien in 1816, and assigned an "instructeur" in every parish. The curriculum of the Lycée—ancient and modern languages, rhetoric, logic, ethics, elements of mathematics, ancient and modern history, geography, and drawing—is an indication of the limited scope of the program. It was purely

12. Placide Justin, *Histoire politique et statistique de l'île d'Hayti, Saint-Domingue*, pp. 534–535.

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for the élite, and was purely cultural. By 1828 there were lower schools in six towns of the country, but only one higher school in the whole of Haiti.[13] 175 871

A report on the condition of education in 1842 showed that the Lycée still existed, its curriculum now limited to French, English, Spanish, Latin, mathematics, composition, history, and fencing.[14] Only 150 students were enrolled. By 1843 there were eleven secondary schools. The question was even raised whether Boyer's failure to promote education during the twenty-five tranquil years of his rule might not have been deliberate, on the principle that it is easier to govern ignorance than knowledge.[15] Actually, however, there was little pressure for education, and so Boyer did nothing.

Geffrard more than any other president of the nineteenth century encouraged education, with the result that almost 20,000 children received some kind of schooling. The census of 1875 made the following estimates:[16]

4 lyceums	with	543 pupils	[162]
6 girls' high schools		563	
5 girls' secondary schools		350	
165 primary schools		11,784	
200 rural schools		5,939	
1 medical school		25	
1 school of music		46	
Total		19,250 pupils	

To these must be added a few pupils in private schools and in the recently established Catholic schools of the Frères de l'Instruction Chrétienne and the Sisters of Cluny. [797]

Toward the turn of the century, when reformers were writing books while the whole country seemed to be slowly dying under its stupid presidents, many a proposal was made which hit squarely upon the need of education and the necessity of a specifically practical curriculum. Joseph Justin[17] urged technical training by experts, and many others hammered away at the same idea. A small sum

13. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti*, I, 83, 120–122, 158.
14. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 74 ff.
15. Mark B. Bird, *The Black Man* (New York, 1869), p. 140.
16. Cited by Sir Spenser St. John, *Hayti, or The Black Republic*, p. 293.
17. *Étude sur les institutions haïtiennes* (Paris, 1894–95), 2 vols.

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175 was put into the national budget to be used for schools, but it seems
871 generally to have been used as a fund for presidential patronage. There were even "school teachers" who could not read, but were nevertheless paid a regular monthly stipend. The principal of the Lycée at Gonaïves could neither read nor write, the music teacher there knew not a note of music, and the medical director could not name the simplest drugs.[18] Dantès Bellegarde, one of Haiti's notable intellectuals, as a minister under Nord Alexis (1902–8) made definite proposals which, had they been carried out, would have gone far toward effecting a radical reform. Minister again under Oreste (1913–14), he succeeded in building up an educational fund, but before he could spend it properly Oreste was deposed and the money used by his successor, Zamor, for military purposes.[19]

175 By 1915, before the Occupation began, the country had about
87 730 public schools. Of these, 6 gave advanced courses in medicine, law, applied science, and commerce; 10 offered a secondary classical education; 8 were special secondary boys' schools; and 15 were special secondary girls' schools. The teachers all got their training in Haiti, and the curricula and methods were almost entirely French.[20] Bellegarde had divided the country into 14 school districts, and by 1919 the official figures showed the following enrollment:[21]

[162]

387 elementary rural schools	with	21,960 pupils
206 elementary urban schools		13,881
105 presbyterial schools		4,836
49 mixed private schools		825
29 Catholic girls' schools		5,141
8 Catholic boys' schools		2,576
10 mixed popular schools		1,009
2 girls' professional schools		133
1 manual training school		555
60 national high schools		2,012
Private elementary schools		5,481
Private high schools		2,904
Total		61,313 pupils

18. See Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 276.
19. Dantès Bellegarde, *Pour une Haïti heureuse* (Port-au-Prince, 1929), pp. 100 ff.
20. Dantès Bellegarde, *Un Haïtien parle*, p. 31.
21. *Livre bleu d'Haïti*, 1919–20 (Port-au-Prince, 1920), pp. 21–22.

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These figures seem moderately impressive by comparison with those of 1875; but a government report of 1931 states[22] that of the 361 rural schools visited by investigators, 89 had no seats for their pupils, and 157 had only from one to three benches; 122 had neither desks nor tables upon which the pupils might work; 341 had no maps. Of the total number of 977 benches found in all the rural schools, 303 were almost unusable, and of the 26 maps in existence, 13 were entirely beyond use. Of the 355 teachers examined, 257 could not read, and 278 could not add, subtract, multiply, or divide. The average monthly salary was 32.07 gourdes, or $6.21. Of the 17,679 pupils enrolled in rural schools, only 4,022 attended. In this same report President Vincent claims to have made a radical reform in all these matters. His rural teachers are trained, many of them at the government agricultural school at Damien; school equipment has been distributed; salaries have been raised to 65 gourdes, or $13. 175 87

The American Occupation showed itself keen to assist education, but unintentionally the measures taken by the whites ran afoul of politics to a serious degree. The excellent agricultural experiment school at Damien was filled with élite students who attended it, in the opinion of many, chiefly in order to receive the scholarships offered; moreover, the class question was raised and bitterly argued: Should peasant students live and study with the élite, and should the curriculum be the same for both? Finally, education was one of the few matters not specifically included in the treaty between Haiti and the United States as under American direction. The result was unhappy: the Occupation was accused of setting up a rival educational "system" to that of the government. Even Bellegarde, most of whose ideas the Americans were trying to carry out, found himself in opposition, chiefly as a result of methods and political implications involved. 648 871 [565]

If only the budget of the country could be increased, one feels that the rural educational problem might be dealt with, for more and more people are aware of what education might do for the country. Even so, there are still many élite who betray their fear that with education the masses will desert the land and cease to be subservient. 871 565

That the élite, who in fact control the country, should receive a training which would fit them for technical skills is a proposal often

22. "*L'Oeuvre d'éducation rurale du gouvernement du Président Vincent*" (Imprimerie de l'État, Port-au-Prince, 1936).

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871/ heard among the more thoughtful.[23] The whole country is teeming
565 with opportunities for engineers, doctors, foresters, agronomists, for scientists and specialists of all kinds. Instead of training themselves for such careers the average young men still hanker after the purely honorific career of law, which may lead to governmental posts. A cultured Haitian in 1920 told Dr. Carl Kelsey: "Those of us who have been trained have never been trained to work physically; we do not believe in it; we have no respect for it. We have got to go into the government service; that is the only outlet for any large number of us."[24] And so the average élite boy goes on with his classical training which fits him for nothing but cultured leisure.[25]

23. See especially J. Price-Mars, *La Vocation de l'élite* (Port-au-Prince, 1919), pp. 51 ff.

24. Quoted in Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

[871] [565] 25. In the examinations there is often bribery and other dishonesty, according to credible informants. Some of the élite youths seem to feel that because their fathers hold governmental posts they themselves should be passed, no matter what their showing; and not all teachers have fortitude enough to resist the pressure of important parents, for they fear reprisals in the form of dismissal.

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XVI

PROBLEMS OF THE ÉLITE

TO associate for any length of time with the upper classes of Haitian society is to be aware of a deep unrest, which social charm may cover for the most part, but which inadvertently reveals itself. One discovers a large number of topics which had better not be discussed at all, for they bring a look of distress, wariness, or nervous tension to the face of one's host. To generalize from personal experience is dangerous, if not futile; the present section, therefore, must be read with skepticism. The writer has rarely passed more thoroughly delightful and stimulating hours than in the homes of Haitians. It must not be considered any reflection upon these kindly persons, consequently, if he notes that many of them seemed always to be taking care to guard their faces and their words, lest by look or speech they might be betrayed. What lies behind that guard? What worries the élite? 565

Sensitivity to the opinion of the white world, first of all. The cultured Haitians know that white people generally are inclined to think of all dark-skinned people as Negroes, all originally from Africa, the Dark Continent of superstition, cannibalism, and savagery; they know it to be commonly held that the Negro is mentally inferior to the white, incapable of first-rate achievement in any art or science, always on the verge of a lapse back into barbarism; and they know that in large parts of the white world social lines are firmly held against the Negro. On the other hand, they have been brought up in cultured homes, where stress has always been laid upon things of the intellect. Good manners, correct speech, decorum, social *savoir-faire*—all these and other ingredients of gentle living the élite children have known since infancy, in their homes and in their social circle. It is expected that a person will know what is going on in Paris, will have read the new novels, will be able to talk about philosophical tendencies and intellectual currents. 565 829

In other words, the élite man knows that he is a cultured gentleman in the truest sense. For years he has seen tourist ships landing hundreds of Americans each week at Port-au-Prince and Cap-Haïtien; he has seen the mad revelry of some of these whites, their

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565 ill-mannered vulgarity, their superficiality of mind, their poor taste.
829 He knows well enough that it is not fair to judge a whole nation by a few representatives, yet it is clear to him that these raucous whites regard themselves, and are by others regarded, as lords of creation who need never worry about social acceptance. The Haitian knows himself the superior of most of these white people, whether the test be intellectual or on the basis of gentility. Nevertheless, the white inferior is preferred by all the world to his Haitian superior. The white American can go anywhere and, with his carefree self-assurance, see all doors open to him; the cultured Haitian can go few places away from home, and in even those few many doors are yet closed in his face.

Whether the result of his reflections, which must be provoked anew each time the tourist invasion begins, leads him to bitterness or to cynical acceptance depends upon his temperament. It would be almost impossible not to envy the assurance of the white man. And what must life be like when the thought of one's birth, over which one had no control, forever rises as a spectre to haunt one's daily awareness?

Distress of mind may lead the élite in public to impassioned defense of Haitian achievement, but in private he will be all the while imitating the white man and accepting his judgments. The word "ambivalence" is descriptive of his attitude: he wishes to go both ways, to justify Haiti, yet to be regarded as white. Haitian tradition pulls him in one direction, white superiorities the other. There is probably not a single member of the élite who does not feel as if half life's burdens would disappear if only one were white. The darker complexion is one of those hard facts which simply cannot be got around. But one's children can be lighter, and one's grandchildren lighter still, if one marries wisely.

565 This is a hope of the future. Meantime there is a pattern of be-
55 havior for the present. What has made the white man master of the Western World seems to have been a combination of money, political power, intellectual attainment, and social domination of inferiors. After these, therefore, the proper youth must strive indefatigably. Since these aims are common to the élite they are hardly mentioned; indeed, one wonders sometimes whether even the people themselves are aware of the foundations of their ambition.

No élite man in Haiti ever made money by working with his

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hands. In colonial times fortunes came to plantation owners, and since then have come only to political officeholders. With money one can go to France where he will be accepted as a human being, not turned aside as a Negro; with money one can get an education, live a life of leisure, acquire luxuries. Hence the popularity of law as a profession, for it is the career by which one enters politics. That a president should begin life as an impecunious barrister and end it as a well-to-do landlord, the owner of several villas and motorcars, seems praiseworthy, natural, logical. The American success story is "from log cabin to White House," but with no implication of monetary gain from such progress; the Haitian success story is rather "from penury to plutocracy."

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It is not enough, however, to aim high in the material sphere. In proportion to their numbers the élite are extraordinarily ambitious for intellectual achievement. A distinction is sometimes made between the social élite and the intellectual élite, the former being decidedly more numerous.[1] Conversation in a Haitian drawing room is likely to be on about the same intellectual plane as in America except in specifically literary and artistic circles. Poetry, philosophy, literary trends, historical speculation are staples of discussion in more than a few homes. A recent president wrote many metaphysical poems. An American author, attending a social function consisting chiefly of secretaries of state, was amazed to find the group absorbed in a dispute about poetry.[2]

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Aristocrats have always kept the lower orders at a distance socially. In Haiti this rule is observed with rigor. To suggest that a possible reason for such harshness of attitude and behavior toward servants and working people might be fear lest white visitors should class all persons of color together would be unkind, though not unsound. In general, there is a deep conviction that the masses are stupid. Although persons of culture exist who are generally solicitous for the betterment of their life, there is really no comparison which will make clear to the white reader the ordinary attitude of mind of

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1. This distinction is clearly made in John Lobb, "Caste and Class in Haiti," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLVI, No. 1 (July, 1940), p. 30 ff.

2. W. B. Seabrook, *The Magic Island*, p. 161. "On my way home from the palace," concludes the author, "I reflected how queer it would seem for a group of cabinet ministers and Treasury officials at the White House to be earnestly discussing the poetry of an American anthology which included metaphysical love-lyrics by Calvin Coolidge."

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élite toward *les noirs*. The mildest expression of general opinion is that it would be a waste of time to try to educate the masses, for they are so nearly like animals that they could not absorb even the simplest education. Peasants eat when they are hungry, rise and go to sleep with light and darkness, are unable to count, like animals sense changes in weather; peasants are kindly but stupid, like donkeys: this is the kind of summary one hears from the mouths of the élite. It is possible that the élite are merely imitating the attitude toward the Negro of many white people they have seen.

[466]

Treatment of servants is revealing. They are often reviled for their thickheadedness. When one remonstrates with an employer for his frequent upbraiding of workmen, there is sure to be a look of pained surprise. Said one man: "You can no more hurt the feelings of a peasant than you can hurt the feelings of a mule." Servants simply do not feel as human beings do, but must be "broken," like a horse. This is not to say that many kindly employers do not exist, but rather that working people are not regarded as belonging to the higher orders of nature. A Catholic priest who devoted a good part of his time to work in the hills was told by some of his élite parishioners that this was a waste of time, for such dull people could not possibly benefit from his teachings.

Thoughtful men, on the other hand, know well enough that it is possible to improve the lot of the people. But if the peasant should be well educated he would become ambitious; where then would be the monopoly which is now held by the aristocrats on wealth, government, education? Merest self-interest prompts one to defend the status quo. This definitely worries many of the upper group. Aware that so long as conditions remain as they are Haiti will be poor and backward, they are nevertheless not ready to promote what would be a thoroughgoing social revolution. If any government should become oversolicitous for the well-being of the masses, it would soon find itself bitterly opposed by the upper class. In the long run, what will be the result of keeping things as they are? Élite who know their history can find several possible answers, no one of which appeals to them: a peasants' revolt, a Reign of Terror, intervention by a foreign power. They are on the horns of a dilemma: if as rulers they promote material welfare, they lose their present positions of security; if they do not promote a change, violent change will unseat them.

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Probably no white man will ever succeed in fathoming the heartache of a sensitive individual of a people not highly regarded. To be born white gives one, as matters stand at present, a head-start in the world; to be a citizen of a world power means security upon which one can depend. The Haitian wants to be accepted in the outside world, but his skin color puts up one high barrier against him, and his citizenship in Haiti is no great recommendation to special consideration. The intellectual man comes to feel that he exists almost in a vacuum. Haiti is in the Western Hemisphere, yet is the only independent country in that hemisphere which has French as its official language and France as its cultural mother. Whereas the intellectual of the United States feels a common bond with the whole English-speaking world, and the intellectual of Spanish America speaks the language of seventeen neighboring states, the Haitian savant is not often honored in France nor yet by learned compeers in the Western Hemisphere. The more he looks to France as the centre of the cultural world, the greater will be his isolation in Latin America.

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XVII

OUTER ASPECTS OF HAITI

[538] HAITIAN poets rarely sing the beauty of their native land, nor do the travelers who roam the earth dwell long upon this particular pearl of the Antilles. Mountains slope down into the sea, sunlight sparkles upon the foaming waves as they roll in, peninsulas and bays lend variety to the coast line: yet the majestic display does not make the visitor cherish Haiti in his mind and heart alongside Sicily or Scotland or Maine or Japan. Columbus in 1492 thought the island "enchanting," saying that "it is a wonder. Its mountains and plains, and meadows and fields, are so beautiful and rich for planting and sowing, and rearing cattle of all kinds, and for building towns and villages" that it "surpasses anything that would be believed by one who had not seen it."[1] The Spanish admiral viewed his discoveries with the eye of faith, seeing the glories which might come to be; his enthusiasm was matched by other early Spaniards. The French in the eighteenth century likewise thought the land beautiful, and with skillful management made their human habitations an ornament to generous nature.

13 105 If one could view Haiti only from the sea or from the air, he would probably, like the Spaniards and Frenchmen, speak in rhapsodies, for the land still stands up out of the sea—"the highest peak of that submerged mountain range whose summits appear as the islands of the Greater Antilles."[2] Visitors disembark from their ships or planes, however, see the poverty, the backwardness, the pathetic smallness of human effort which matches so ill with what nature originally provided, and come away with a feeling of disappointment. Not even the little things of Haiti are immediately attractive: the peasants are not "quaint," their costumes are not "picturesque," their towns are not "colorful"; even the souvenirs to take back to the tourist ship have likely as not been made in New York and imported by the local shops. Outsiders, distracted by the human element, hardly glance at the scenery; and since as conducted tourists they are not likely to penetrate far beyond the seacoast, or stay long enough

1. Christopher Columbus, *Select Letters*, R. H. Major, ed. (London, 1870), p. 5.
2. Blair Niles, *Black Haiti*, p. 6.

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105 to regard the people as neighbors, their first impression is generally
13 their abiding one.

And yet the land has its memorable beauties. To lie at anchor in
13 the harbor at Port-au-Prince early in the morning and watch the long arm of the southern peninsula turn gradually from purple vagueness to brilliant green as the sun rises back of the capital; to see a tiny ship with its patched and colored sail glide quietly by on its way out to the island of La Gonâve, lying twenty miles to the west, like a morsel about to be swallowed by the open jaws of the "mainland"; to hear the morning noises drifting across the water, with a snatch of song or laughter in the air; to watch Port-au-Prince come to life, white and sparkling as the sun strikes it—this is the proper introduction to Haiti. Behind the capital are the hills and mountains; if one will take the time, he may look back as he climbs and see not only the whiteness of the city, but the gracious sweep of the harbor, and the peninsula losing itself in the western distance. He will think without apology of a lesser Naples, and will not miss Vesuvius. Within the country is every variety of scenery: high mountains whose peaks are frequently shrouded in misty clouds; ranges of lower mountains ("*morne*" is the eloquent Haitian name for them) which can be melancholy, kindly, or forbidding, as the spirit of the traveler wills; dull wastes of salt marshes; arid deserts where cactus grows, spiked and hairy, to enormous heights; canyons, waterfalls, dried-up streams; moors, little jungles, farms; rich plantations of sugar cane, dusty stretches of sheer barrenness—everything, in fact, from majesty to complete insipidity. Rarely can one find such utter diversity in a small space as in Haiti. One might fancy himself successively on Egdon Heath, in an Arizona desert, among the Dakota Bad Lands, in old Saint-Domingue, in tropical Africa, in the Pyrenees.

361 The sad truth remains: nothing that man has done in Haiti for a
[342] century and a quarter has been worthy of the landscape. A few government buildings in Port-au-Prince are passable, and the city as a whole is not a blemish; yet not to have seen it is to have missed no great aesthetic experience. Elsewhere the towns and villages run the gamut from monotonous small-scale structures to mere collections
311 of shanties. Great gashes have been cut in the forests by generations of earth-hungry peasants who needed farms. Much of the land looks poor; indeed, thousands of once fertile acres are now beyond any use at all, grown up in cactus, because of overuse and misuse for-

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311 merly. Wherever the overcrowded Haitians have lived since 1815, there beauty has had to give way to gnawing necessity which lacked either the imagination or the means to be sightly.

105 One can stand upon a morne and watch a rain storm rush down the valley, bending the palm trees in its fury, and think Haiti still a magnificent sight. Then one must descend the mountainside past rickety shacks and rocky fields, and the feeling grows that not all the kindly simplicity of the people is enough to lift the country from its [134] dilapidation. As he nears the village, the afternoon scent of roasting coffee will delight him; but then he sees the squalor of village life and is reminded that three million souls are here trying to eke out an existence upon a small area of declining fertility.

Much in Haiti is picturesque if one can keep his mind from wandering to the conditions which lie behind the picturesqueness. [482] Women stride down from the hills with great loads on their heads; [443] aged crones, pipe in mouth, sit perched on the haunches of tiny donkeys with their bulging panniers; the great market square in the [492] town is a scene of noisy confusion with hundreds of women and [482] children, a mixture of smells, thousands of little piles of soap, candy, gewgaws, vegetables, gaping chickens tied together by the feet, [434] shirts, canes, bolts of cloth. All the weary women, however, must [146] trudge back up to their shanties on the mountainside when the market is over. Many of them do not see ten dollars in cash during the year, and their little children, with bellies bulging, give evidence [164] of undernourishment. Without doctors, without even the rudiments of hygiene, they manage somehow to subsist, or else die, frequently of disease which might easily have been prevented.

565 In Port-au-Prince and a few other towns live enough members of the élite to make one momentarily forget the plight of the masses. [342] The houses of the well-to-do are substantially built, if not often [351] attractive. Their garden walls are brilliant with bougainvillea, their walks with hibiscus. Tiny red lizards (analis) make flashes of color along the walls. On shady verandas and in the parlors one hears delightful conversation, eats excellent food, savors the pleasures of [575] civilization. The clubs of the élite are pleasing, their tennis is good, [526] their dancing graceful. To be among these families as a welcome guest is an experience in gracious hospitality which can never be [535] forgotten. Too soon, however, one must leave these havens of urbanity and pass through districts of the town which haunt the mind with their grim want.

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There are sections, particularly in the capital, in which shanties more resembling chicken coops than dwellings house whole families under leaky roofs of crude thatch. Privacy, cleanliness, sanitation, are not to be thought of. That the sun is warm in Haiti is a blessing, for cold would creep through the gaping walls. Where the shanty dwellers go in the rain, where they get their food, what relieves the dreary round of daily monotony the important people of Haiti do not know, nor do many of them seem to care. President Vincent undertook to clear away a section of the most abject slums in Port-au-Prince, erected in their place a series of two-room (likewise two-family) houses about a central square. Compared with the hovels they replaced the new houses are palatial; compared with houses Americans would consider adequate, they look more like unimaginative garages. With what rapidity an epidemic of serious nature might sweep the lower sections of the city, which are but one vast slum, is a thought too harrowing to entertain. 362

In the whole city there are hardly half a dozen buildings which would detain the lover of architecture. The president's palace is a gleaming white structure, somewhat resembling the White House in Washington. With its background of lofty mountains it makes an impressive picture, although it stands naked in the vast public square of the city. Young palm trees are now growing in the square, and may before many years provide for the palace the setting it deserves. Inside the palace one's chief impression is of emptiness. Other government buildings range from plain white edifices which fulfill their practical function without any suggestion of aesthetic graciousness, down through the inferior grades to wooden structures which one passes without a second glance. The cathedral, placed upon an eminence, is unattractive both in its exterior and in the glaring interior. Upon one of its finger towers at night gleams a light to guide ships into the harbor. The clubs and a few of the villas are pleasant to look at; the colleges of the lay brothers are impressively large, but bespeak the provincial town. 344 644 344 346 [349]

Indeed, one wanders up and down the country in search of man-made beauty and finds only two examples, both partially ruined, and both in the North: Christophe's magnificent citadel, La Ferrière, and the shattered shell of his charming palace, Sans Souci. 712 344

The citadel is breath-taking. Astride a great peak the huge edifice resembles the mighty beak of a ship about to soar off into the atmosphere. Inside one can wander through endless vaults, gaze from 712

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712 the battlements far off across the tortuous mass of mountains and
[713] green valleys, admire the sheer strength of will which made His Majesty's subjects bear four hundred cannon up the steep and rocky path—not to mention thousands of cannon balls now rusting away after a century of disuse, or the powder and shot which once filled
[173] the magazines. It is said that five thousand soldiers could be housed in the fortress at once. If this is hyperbole, one hardly dare challenge
[703] it, for the whole Citadel belittles the individual man. It is likewise said that Christophe once made a battalion of soldiers march off the cliff to their death merely to demonstrate his absolute control over
[766] them. Such stories grow up around His Black Majesty. He lies entombed in his useless but still superb fortress—and lives in the memory of the Northerners, one of whom said proudly: "We of the North have a great heritage, and you will find that we are all dominated by *une psychologie citadelienne*."

Dungeons, secret passages, royal apartments, separate rooms for each of the old Dutch, Spanish, French, and English cannon, some of them dating back to the seventeenth century—all the paraphernalia of the storybook fortress is present. From a bastion one gazes, as from an alp, for miles in any direction, and feels that La Ferrière is certainly one of the most impressive, and one of the most futile, edifices in the world. If the silent cannon had ever been fired, their balls would have rumbled harmlessly down the mountainside. The suspicion grows that Christophe achieved his architectural miracle not primarily as a defense against the French, but to make his subjects proud of what a nation of despised ex-slaves could accomplish.

344 Five miles away, at the foot of the mountain, is the village of
644 Milot, with the ruins of the palace of Sans Souci. Of yellow stone, it spreads out spaciously like a French château. Its rooms must have been magnificent. The palace is so situated that one may look out across the northern plains to the sea, or up the valleys to mountain peaks. In Sans Souci Christophe shot himself in 1820 when he knew that only *souci* would remain to him if he lived.

489 Transportation from one part of the country to another is far from
[496] easy. There are no railroads—unless one counts the short line running north a few miles from Port-au-Prince to nowhere in particular, and the equally short line coming west into Cap-Haïtien from the fields
[491] of the northern plain. Roads built by the American Marines make automobile travel between the main towns possible, if one does not

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489 mind dust, ruts, and a steady succession of bumps. To travel in the
[49] average hired car, driven by a Haitian, is one of the grim experiences of life. The driver speeds as if pursued by a demon, while the peasant pedestrians leap for safety into the ditches; the unfortunate passenger is moved to close his eyes to avoid seeing the inevitable crash which
[361] does not come. The most comfortable means of travel if one is going only to towns is by ship, for practically all of Haiti's towns are seaports.

162 To know the towns is still not to know Haiti, however, for two
577 million or more Haitians live in the rural regions. These are the people. And if they are ignorant and not too clean, they are nevertheless models of kindly generosity. It is the proud boast even of the élite that one may travel the length and breadth of the land in perfect safety, in no danger of life or of personal property.

105 Many homely sights linger in the mind: women washing the family clothes in the stream, laughing and gossiping with their neighbors; men and women talking in animated fashion to themselves, arguing, cajoling, explaining as they walk along; individuals carrying a single flower, simply because it is beautiful; barefoot women, gnarled of hand and lined of face, kneeling in the Catholic church at prayer; taxi drivers who cruise by, hissing in order to attract the attention of a visitor who obviously can afford to ride instead of walk; an apparently ceaseless procession of patient donkeys, always laden, sometimes ridden by women, sometimes urged along from behind; the so-called buses each with its witty or its florid name (Plaisance, Éclair, Grâce-à-Dieu, Polichinelle, Sauve-qui-peut, Montparnasse), which like glorified buckboards jostle woodenly from the town to country hamlets; the winsome, open smile and gay laughter of a peasant boy; the ingratiating charm of a sleeping baby in the noise of the market place. To know the average Haitian is to feel a warm affection for him. His life is never easy, yet he bears it all with true beauty of spirit. If *le bon Dieu* sends distress, he will also make it possible for distress to be borne.

576 The people are polite, whether to each other or to strangers. A younger person greets an older one as *compère* or *commère*—literally, godfather or godmother; to his equal he says "*frère*" or "*m'sieu*."
[867] Sometimes one sees a local patriarch instructing little children in
[609] "deportment." This courtesy extends to hospitality: a stranger is almost sure to be offered shelter and food wherever he stops.

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527 On Saturday nights one hears the drums beating all over the
[534] country, but if one follows the sound he is more than likely to end
[535] up at nothing more esoteric than a neighborhood dance. Other musical instruments than drums are rare, but any community has drums; and these set a rhythm to which one can dance. Generally food is available at these affairs, as well as drinks both hard and soft.
273 It is not extraordinary to discover that a few of the men have drunk rather freely of clairin, the raw rum of the country; most drunkenness seems to lead to good-natured ribaldry rather than to offensive violence. It is unusual for a drunken man to cause damage of any
535 serious nature. The dancing corresponds neither to American ballroom dancing nor to set folk dancing. Most of it is done solo, and an
533 individual participates or remains on the outskirts of the enclosure as the mood of the moment impels him. Over the beat of the drum can be heard one of the current songs, more than likely a bit smutty in nature, and frequently poking fun at some well-known personage, or making allusions which in normal speech might seem crude.

541 One of the popular Sunday afternoon sports is the *gaguère*, or cock-
[525] fight, held under a shelter back of a home. Much small betting goes on. The spectators sit or stoop close around the dusty ring, talking to the cock they are backing, commenting on the fight, offering advice to the owner. Between rounds the cocks are rubbed down, sprayed with water or rum, fondled and excited anew. Toward the latter stages of any fight the spectacle becomes gory and, to the uninitiated, distinctly cruel.

526 There is singularly little sport in Haiti. Élite youths play tennis; boys enjoy football; and swimming is a common diversion. Few sports are competitive and, so far as the writer has observed, the peasants have in their games practically nothing resembling organization.

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XVIII

THE CRÉOLE LANGUAGE

JUST as Haiti is a country of two distinct social strata, so it possesses two distinct languages, French and Créole. Only the élite speak French, but everyone in the country, from the president to the humblest dullard, speaks Créole. Aristocrats call the latter language disparagingly a *patois*. But is it? When does a patois or a dialect become a true language? When it has definite rules of grammar, declension, rhetoric? Créole has them all, even though the users are unaware of the rules. When it acquires the dignity of a literature? Increasingly the most original Haitian authors write their novels and poems in Créole or with large passages in that tongue—and did English suddenly cease to be a patois and become a language only when Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* appeared? When it is the language of passion, of sorrow, of delicate nuance? Here more than anywhere Créole meets the requirements, as any honest Haitian would confess by his lapse into Créole at moments of emotion. When it gains wide concurrence? No Haitian is ignorant of Créole.

Two centuries have witnessed the birth of this new tongue, but because it has been the speech of the lower orders this has not been accounted a noteworthy phenomenon, has not been praised as a philological achievement, has only recently been studied by linguists. Most people have been content to regard it as a debasement of French—and poor French at that. Yet were not Italian and French likewise debasements of Latin by the common folk, and English even more of a debasement and a hodgepodge? In 1700 Créole existed only in germ; by 1800 it was already formed—a kind of social cement which held together all that diffuse humanity which was shortly to become an independent nation.

Créole is not, as most people (even cultured Haitians) assume, the degeneration of French which occurred when benighted African slaves tried to learn and speak a new language. On the contrary, it was already a language when the slaves were brought into Saint-Domingue. They learned it quickly, and in the course of two hundred years they and their descendants, who have known no other tongue, have modified it only as any people slowly transform

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197 a language into their daily speech. What the Americans have done to English, the Haitians in general have done to Créole. It is pertinent briefly to review the early history of Créole in order to comprehend the distinctly Haitian contributions to the language.

175 579 Through most of the seventeenth century Caribbean waters were full of pirates and buccaneers preying upon Spanish shipping. The effective monopoly which lordly Spain held in the preceding century over the trade of Europe with her rich Mexican and South American colonies began, in the early years of the new century, to crumble before the ingenious, speedy, and daring assaults of non-Spanish raiders. French, Dutch, and English sailors were all ready to try their hand at capturing laden Spanish ships. The rich cargoes of gold, silver, and merchandise were alluring enough to make the risk seem worth taking. And indeed the risk was not too great, for Spain's stately galleons were antiquated and cumbersome, generally no match for the flyboats[1] which had speed and much greater manageability. More and more Spanish control over the Caribbean, the Spanish Main, declined as the freebooters increased.

175 579 648 French sailors were among the most numerous and reckless of the gadflies who made life miserable for the Spanish traders. Drawn from the northern and northwestern provinces of France, these men had been seafarers all their lives. Harrying Spanish shipping was the most lucrative career for French sailors, and as the seventeenth century wore on their numbers in the Caribbean increased. By 1660 they had established a raiding base on La Tortue, an island off the northern coast of Haiti, where they developed a characteristic way of life —economic, political, and social—between raids.[2] Their presence near Haiti gave France a claim, in the Treaty of Ryswick (1697), to the western part of the island. For the next hundred years this region was to be known as Saint-Domingue.

175 579 197 Créole was born of buccaneering. In the seventeenth century the French of Ile-de-France had not yet supplanted the dialects of the French districts; the buccaneers consequently spoke their native speech, and since Norman sailors far outnumbered the others

[175] [192] 1. Origin of "flibustier," "filibuster," and "freebooter."

2. It was here that they came to be called "buccaneers." They raided the relatively deserted main island of Haiti (then still under Spanish control) for cattle roaming wild. These cattle they cooked over an open fire, with a certain kind of wood; the process was called "boucanning," and they themselves "boucaniers." They imported wives from the seaport towns of Normandy, and families began to be raised on La Tortue.

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175 579 197

Norman French became the dominant tongue of the French buccaneers. Words were naturally added from the patois of the neighboring French provinces of Picardy, Brittany, and Anjou, but Norman remained the matrix.[3] With La Tortue as their home base, the buccaneers roamed the Caribbean, coming into constant contact with other people—contact which left its mark, as meetings generally do, upon the speech of the travelers.

175 197 192 193

There were still Indians left in some of the islands, and Indians outnumbered Spaniards on the mainland. From these aborigines Créole borrowed many individual words, these being generally the names of things—flora and fauna, food, objects of daily life more or less common throughout the Caribbean world.[4] The grammatical contributions of the Indians were apparently only an emphasis upon tendencies already present in Norman French, such as that of keeping the verb form constant while making other words in the sentence do the work of indicating past, present, or future, continuous or completed action, and the like.

175 197 192

Engaged in buccaneering with the French were hundreds of English privateers. Often English and French raided in partnership; for many years both groups shared La Tortue. This contact left a heavy mark upon Créole—a congenial one, indeed, for Norman French had been for more than four centuries the official language of England. Now in the seventeenth century English was giving back to Norman many words in exchange for the ones it had taken.[5] More important than its verbal gift, however, was the influence it exerted toward a simple syntax. As compared with French forms,

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3. An outstanding linguist, Jules Faine, in *Philologie créole*, p. 1, estimates that three out of four words in Créole are Norman.

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4. A very few of these Indian words have become familiar in French, and still fewer in English; but one finds most of them, in one form or another, in the whole Caribbean basin. Examples are:

agouti, a small rodent	*hamac*, hammock
ainutou, a dish whose base is corn	*ouragan*, hurricane
caïman, alligator	*bayahonde*, a very hard wood
iguane, a large lizard	*campêche*, another hard wood
avocat, the avocado pear	*mabouya*, small lizard
calebasse, calabash	*barbacoa*, barbecue
corossol, a green prickly fruit	*cassava*, a starch plant
goayave, guava	*lambi*, a mollusk or conch
gnanne, yam	*tom-tom*, a purée of bananas

5. Henry Moiry, *Glossaire comparatif Anglo-Normand* (Caen, 1888), points out that the modern Norman dialect contains more than 5,000 words common to English and Norman, but not recognized in official French.

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175 Norman ones were less complicated; English, simpler still, reën-
192 forced the Norman tendency.
197 From the Spaniards of the Caribbean region Créole borrowed not only nouns (generally the most assimilable of words), but a large number of adjectives, pronouns, auxiliary verbs, and certain subtler characteristics of speech.

This amalgam, then, three quarters Norman French, was the Créole language as of 1697 when France acquired Saint-Domingue, when buccaneering became unprofitable, and many of the filibusters settled down to begin a respectable life as plantation owners in the
567 new colony. African slaves were soon imported to satisfy the demand
197 for labor. First a few, then thousands a year and increasing thousands,
192 were brought to Saint-Domingue. In all externalities, of which
175 language is one, slaves must yield up their old ways and take on new. The question of interest here is to what extent the Negroes influenced Créole, giving it an "African" character.

The answer, surprising at first, is that the Negro influence was almost negligible.

175 In the first place, Créole was now already a language with a rich
177 vocabulary, all the grammatical equipment, and the necessary regu-
197 larities. The slaves came to the colony from all parts of Africa, and so with widely differing languages. Linguistic maps of Africa indicate the presence of hundreds of dialects up and down the west coast; tribes living fifteen miles apart spoke languages which, although belonging to the same stock, were as different as Spanish and Italian from each other. Owing to the habit of dispersing the slaves, the
[191] average Negro had no common basis of understanding with his fellow slaves on the same plantation. Practically all white foremen and overseers gave orders in Créole; this within one generation became the *lingua franca* of the plantations, an economic necessity, and socially indispensable.

In the second place, there was in Saint-Domingue no equivalent to the familiar objects of life in Africa. Trees, houses, earth there were, of course, but different kinds of trees, houses, and soil. Economic tasks were performed in a different manner with new techniques and organization. Every outward form of life was foreign to the African background. Even assuming that there had been a common Negro speech, it would have found little to attach itself to in the New World. It should be noted that Negroes likewise made few contribu-

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tions to the English language in the southern United States, where they were slaves for seventy years longer than in Haiti.

Common African economic ways yielded to the plantation system and slavery; the Negroes had no opportunity to govern themselves or settle their own disputes; they mated rather than married; their families might be broken up if the master wished to sell a slave. The one part of life in which they were permitted to follow unhindered their African ways was the intimate one of religion which, since it needed no buildings or organization, did not interfere with work, and could be entirely personal and private, was not suppressed. As has been pointed out, the Dahomean form of religion prevailed over all others and, modified, gained wide adherence among the slaves. It is precisely in Vodun that Créole has taken over its only important African words, such as Vodun, zombi, houngan, marassa, loa, houmfort, bocor, ouanga.

It would be erroneous to imply that the Negroes had no effect upon the language of which they soon became the predominant users.[6] Their operations were of a subtle sort, however. As with the Negroes of the United States, the letter "r" proved difficult, and often disappeared altogether, leaving many words softly slurred. "Marcher," for example, generally sounds as if it were *ma'ché*. Likewise in the course of years they gave the language their own accent, their own modulation and tone, which make Créole sound different on their lips from a white man's way of speaking it. Some scholars attribute this to a *racial* influence—that is, to the morphology of the Negro throat and tongue. It might be pointed out to the contrary that Americans, white like the English, have given the mother tongue *their* own accent, modulation, and tone. It has certainly not yet been proved that race has anything to do with speech.

Words in imitation of a sound grow up in every language. Several western African dialects, especially Mandingue, seemed fond of onomatopoeia; in Haiti, consequently, one hears many an expressive additional word. Moreau de Saint-Méry[7] noticed this in colonial Saint-Domingue, citing such cases as the addition of "*bap*" to the verb "*tomber*," if one had fallen down lightly, or "*boum*" if heavily;

6. Suzanne Sylvain, *Le Créole haïtien* (Wetteren, Belgium, 1936), p. 10, says that although the African contribution to Haitian Créole is generally considered to be slight, she has personally found 170 words of undeniable African origin, and feels sure that there are many more.

7. *Description . . . de . . . Saint-Domingue*, II, 36–37.

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175 192 if a blow were given on the face the word "*pimme*" was added to the verb describing that blow, but if a stick had been used, "*bimme*" was added, and if a whip, then "*v'lap v'lap*."

175 193 One of the Negro contributions which gives a delightful charm to the language is the principle of doubling, whether the word is adjective, adverb, verb, or pronoun. Faine cites the following examples:

ioun bel, bel femme—an extraordinarily beautiful woman.
li té bien, bien malade—he was very gravely ill.
li marcher, l'marcher, l'marcher—he kept on walking and walking.
li-minme, li-minme—it is really he himself.[8]

175 538 Still another and very important Negro contribution is the wealth of proverbs. A person may say practically anything he chooses in proverbs, particularly if he uses to its fullest the significant tones of which his voice is capable. As many as 1,500 of these proverbs have been collected, and there is reason to believe that as many more could be found.[9] In general they say the same things proverbs say in any language:

Fer couper fer. Il faut du fer pour couper le fer; which is to signify, "Great needs demand great remedies."

Tit cochon tit sang. Un petit cochon a peu de sang; that is, "From each according to his means."

Sel pas besoin vanter tête li. Le sel n'a pas besoin de se vanter; or, "Real merit never needs to boast."

Since some of the proverbs make allusions to elephants and tigers, animals not found in the Caribbean region, it is clear that these at least, and maybe others, go far back in the wisdom of the folk.

538 Storytelling is a well-cultivated art in Haiti. The folklore of Créole is rich, some of it bearing close resemblance to the Negro tales current in the southern United States, particularly the Br'er Rabbit tales. When a group gathers and a story is about to begin, the teller says, "Cric?"—as if to say, "Shall I tell you a story?" or, "Are you ready?" To this his listeners reply, "Crac!"—or, "Please do! Certainly!" or, "We are listening." The two words together make a sort of rapport between raconteur and audience, an overture, "Once upon a time."

8. Faine, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

9. J. J. Audain, *Proverbes* (Port-au-Prince, 1877), cites 1,011 Haitian proverbs in Créole, and E. Chenet, *Proverbes créoles* (Port-au-Prince, 1896), records 1,456 proverbs.

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Only a beginning has been made of collecting the thousands of "Cric? Crac!" stories current in Haiti.

It is only recently that people have written Créole, so that there is no standard orthography. Every writer spells words phonetically, with consequent irregularities, and with wide differences between two people writing the same thing. Recent etymological studies may lead eventually to a dictionary and a standard spelling. In order that the reader may see the resemblance of Créole to French, yet its differences from that language, we shall quote a part of one of La Fontaine's fables put into Créole verse by Georges Sylvain.[10] His own French retranslation accompanies the fable, turning such phrases as "female pig" into "sow."

Nan temps toutt bett té palé,	*Au temps où toutes les bêtes parlaient,*
Té g'ain (palant pa respé)	*Il y avait (sauf votre respect)*
Té g'ain gnou fémel cochon.	*Il y avait une truie.*
Zott connin gen cochon bon?	*Vous savez comme les truies sont bonnes gens?*
Cila-là té fait zanmi	*Celle-ci avait fait amitié*
Avec gnou fémel chien, qui	*Avec une chienne, qui*
Té prett pou mi bas. Chien-là,	*Était sur le point de mettre bas. La chienne*
Gnou jou, dit cochon con ça:	*Un jour, dit à la truie:*
"Moin pré pou moin accouché,	*"Me voilà près d'accoucher,*
"Ma conmé, t'en pri! souplé,	*"Ma commère, je vous en prie, s'il vous plaît,*
"Pémett moin prété gnou coin	*"Permettez-moi d'emprunter un coin*
"Nan pac ou, pou pititt moin."	*"De votre parc, pour mes enfants."*[11]

The terseness of the language is fascinating, a situation is hit off precisely in a few words: a stuffed shirt has been deflated, and the truth has been told. A Haitian was heard to say, "Nègue riche li mulatte; mulatte pauvre li nègue"—a rich Negro is accounted a mulatto; a poor mulatto is to all intents and purposes no better than a Negro. And there is a profound comment on the whole caste system.

Wherever the French went in the Caribbean region the Créole language spread—in Louisiana, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Guiana. Each region has its own peculiarities, but in general it may be said that these other regions show much more French (as distinct from Norman) influence on Créole, and much less Spanish and English influence. Similarly in Haitian towns, where the élite speak French

10. *Cric? Crac! Fables de La Fontaine racontées par un montagnard haïtien et transcrites en vers créoles* (Port-au-Prince, 1929), p. 21.

11. "*Zott*" means "*vous autres*"; "*gnou*" is "*une*."

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Similarly in Haitian towns, where the élite

 speak French

197 and where French is taught in the schools, the Créole is less "pure"
191 than in the untutored countryside. Even there the language is chang-
193 ing, for there is steadily operating that "law of simplification" which reduces the complications of language when it has only an oral tradition."[12] Abridgment occurs more and more frequently, agglutination is more apparent, and words tend toward the monosyllabic.

191 Everyone in Haiti speaks and understands Créole. Nursemaids
197 teach it to their élite charges, so that children know it from infancy; élite lovers lapse into its expressive phrases in order to say something particularly intimate which might sound sentimental in French; priests must use it in their parish work if they are to be understood at all. Even the élite presidents have found it wise to speak often to the countrypeople in their own tongue. The gendarmes would be helpless in their police work without it, as would the agricultural, health, and other governmental services. It is the language in which all the small business of Haiti is conducted.[13] Ernest Douyon has written brilliantly and revealingly about it:

> If, on the one hand, we have a business language, an official tongue, which is French, our true maternal language, on the other hand, that one which we first lisp, that of the country as a whole (I had almost said "of the true country," for such is the case), that of the city people as well as of countryfolk, that of all families whatever their differences in education, the language one hears not only in humble huts but in luxurious villas, not only in offices or among the masses but also in private apartments and salons, that which for the crudest as for the most finely cultivated minds (even when these latter through snobbery try to deny the fact) is at all times the most naturally expressive, that which perfectly translates our deepest sentiments (jubilation, anger, love, or whatever) precisely when these are most strongly felt, that which all of us, all (with the rarest exceptions) use spontaneously—is Créole! I know that it is not considered proper in polite society, that it sometimes lends a certain impression of vulgarity, that it is not the correct language for distinguished people—when they are in public! But who is the man of propriety, who the society woman, who in private does not continually use Créole![14]

12. See P. Crouzet, *Les Ponts romains* (Toulouse, 1929), p. 18.

[796] [793] 13. It must be noted that in the Vodun service the houngan sometimes speaks in *langage*, which is not Créole. It purports to be pure African, but is more likely to be mere gibberish.

14. In his Preface to Faine, *op. cit.*, p. v.

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XIX

SOCIOLOGICAL POSTSCRIPT

ALTHOUGH conceived along sociological lines, this book has made an effort to avoid the use of many technical sociological terms, and to keep discussion on a basis intelligible to the layman. The emphasis has been placed upon the major institutions of Haiti, with such excursions into political history as were necessary to establish sequences; the main objective has constantly been to show what adjustments a group of ex-slaves in a tropical country made to their sudden independence, and to indicate the course of readjustments during the succeeding century or more. /2/

It is never given to a people to start with a clean slate. This generation is inevitably, to a large degree, what the preceding generation made it, in habits of mind, in rules of behavior, in ambitions, in taste. The younger generation does not succeed the older, but rather lives along with it, becoming a part of all it has been, unconsciously assimilating traditional rules, attitudes, ways. Yet young people, meeting their own crises, are perpetually restive under the codes of their elders, and are continually exerting pressure to change, or even effecting minor changes. The result is that the mental characteristics we know as "culture" are never stationary. Some cultures change rapidly under the stimulus of crisis and international contacts, while others give the impression of being quiescent because of isolation and lack of outside pressure.

In spite of the fact that mankind never has the opportunity to begin wholly afresh, shaking off the trammels of a miserable past, it nevertheless sometimes happens that the retaining walls which have kept culture within narrow channels may, like the collapse of a dyke, suddenly give way, allowing a flood of rapid changes to occur. Eventually the turbulence will subside, and then one can see, as it were, a relatively placid lake with new landmarks hardly recognizable in terms of what used to exist when the old dykes held. The Russian Revolution of 1917 and the end of the dictatorship of Díaz in Mexico are examples.

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175 178 This was the situation in Haiti after 1791, and especially after 1804. The boundary walls of a slave economy, carefully built by the French in the eighteenth century and scrupulously guarded by all the whites, were smashed. The constricted limits in which Negro life had moved during slavery now ceased to exist as a channel. For years there was an unceasing effort on the part of Haitian leaders to give a new direction to the life of the blacks, but all those leaders (except Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe) found it more discreet, more congenial, even more logical, to follow the tide rather than to try to stem and direct it.

Between 1791 and 1804, then, the retaining walls of the old economic and political institutions disappeared. The next forty years were ones of experiment in stabilizing a new set of social institutions.[1] Efforts to make the new social structure efficient, orderly, progressive, all failed; by mid-century the undramatic and unconsciously exerted pressure of daily behavior on the part of hundreds of thousands of untutored Negroes gave Haitian institutions their new and recognizable character. The presidents thereafter rarely attempted serious reform in these institutions; on the contrary, they generally tried only to make use of them for their own personal benefit. The Haiti of 1860 was radically different from the Haiti of 1791–1804, while 1915 closely resembled 1860. Only since the Occupation by American Marines has the process of change begun to accelerate again.

Most adjustments arrived at by a whole society occur unconsciously. Great leaders may suggest new ways for a nation to follow which break with the past and are clearly more progressive and rational than the old ways, but it is the people who eventually accept or reject the novelty. They perform, as people always and continuously do, an act of unconscious, automatic selection upon the variations, eliminating this one and adopting that for reasons often apparently irrational or prejudiced. The result of such a steady process of selection is a recognizable group of folkways and mores which make Haitian culture, for instance, distinguishable from the culture of other near-by islands, Cuba or Jamaica, for example.

It is not always a great man who suggests a variation in the folkways and mores, nor yet even an important personage like a cabinet

1. The term "social institution" is here used to mean a consistent pattern of folkways and mores clustering about a fundamental human interest.

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minister or an outstanding intellectual. Variations are frequently 175
(some even say generally) mere casual accidents, surprising inspira- 178
tions of the moment. The changes which have come over the face of [77]
the Vodun religion are examples: in almost no instance can the additions or emendations be traced back to their originators, yet Vodun is clearly different now from what it was in Boyer's time. Just as no one knows who initiates a change in the folkway of language, coining a slang phrase, modifying a pronunciation, so the makers of most variations in folkways and mores are anonymous.

Given infinite time and patience, one might compile a list of mores in any country, beginning first with those which require absolute conformity from all persons, and running down to those which express social ideals but which may nevertheless be honored in the breach. In our own country, the mores condemning incest and cannibalism are not only our rules but our unanimous practice; and if a person breaks either we punish him severely. At the other end of our list are those mores requiring truthfulness and honor. In calling these American mores we pay homage to an ideal—and then tell our white lies as a part of the observance of social amenities, or make our "shrewd" business deals in order to get on in the world. For neither of these breaches of the mores is there any concerted social punishment; on the contrary, we have been known to praise those who broke them. In describing the culture of a society, therefore, it is necessary to report both the mores as ideal and the mores as practice.

The larger and more complex a society becomes, the fewer the 184
mores shared in common by all members of that society. In a small colonial American village, isolated from much contact with strangers, the whole population was bound by scores of mores touching all phases of life. In modern America, on the contrary, if one should consider American society as a whole it would probably be difficult to find a dozen mores shared commonly by us all, or if shared, exerting the same force to conformity. We have had to develop a measure of tolerance with our 130 million neighbors, a live-and-let-live principle which has been aptly called "antagonistic coöperation."

Each district in Haiti, in the effective isolation of illiteracy and sedentary life, has developed its own characteristic mores, of which a limited number correspond with those of other Haitian districts. It is these general correspondences which have been treated in this book. Within each district, likewise, there is the usual hierarchy of rules

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184 ranging from those requiring strict observance down to those permitting latitude of behavior.

114 It has, then, been the primary purpose of this book to show the gradual development (the word is used with no connotation of progress toward a conscious goal) of a consistent group of mores and social institutions in Haiti since the moment of her independence. The course of Haitian social history provides an almost unlimited opportunity for further study along the lines of contemporary American sociological research. Certain skeptics have pertinently criticized this sociology as narrowly provincial, calling it a social science limited only to the American scene, and valid consequently only for American society. Such a charge is precisely the reverse of that directed at European sociology, which finds congenial the development of philosophies of history independent of research in any specific field.

If the active American sociologist should extend his field of investigation he would, whatever his dominant interest, find much to reward his research in Haiti. For example, some of the most productive work in the United States has been in studies of neighborhoods,[2] communities,[3] and regions.[4] No neighborhood study has ever been made in Haiti, nor any regional study. Herskovits[5] has pointed the way to all future students of Haitian communities. Most research done by scholars in Haiti, however, has concerned itself with one or another of the social institutions (religion has been the most popular) rather than with thorough studies of individual communities.

For the social psychologist Haiti presents a rich and untouched field. It has the advantages of a limited geography and population, and so is less complex than the United States; yet Haitian problems are familiar enough to make comparison with American problems valid. Not only has there as yet been no investigation of the process of socialization, that is, of what happens to children as they take on

2. The neighborhood is generally defined as a primary group in society in which face-to-face contacts are frequent and intimate.

3. The community is a group of people living in comparative proximity, sharing basic interests and activities, having relatively common usages and traditions, and acknowledging common rule.

4. The region is a functional part of a larger area of economic, cultural, and geographical homogeneity. The Southeastern States of the United States are conceived as a region; in Haiti, the five departments are regions.

5. In his *Life in a Haitian Valley*. This is a study of the community in and around Mirebalais.

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114 the culture of their group, but also none of the broader aspects of the motivating forces, the dominant wishes, the attitudes and social values of the masses. Since the élite have often expressed in books their desires and frustrations, one feels that it would be readily possible for a trained social psychologist to learn much from upper-class informants who are anxious to be understood. To penetrate the inner life of the masses would be easier for an American than for a Haitian scholar, who would be enmeshed in the attitudes of class and caste in his own society.

565 Little has been said in this book of the small group of people, generally living in towns, who belong neither to the élite nor to the masses. How much actual social mobility occurs? Of the horizontal variety, that is, movement from place to place within the same social class, very little; of the vertical, or transition from one social class to another, there is likewise little, as has been shown at length in this book; yet there is enough to make a study of social mobility useful. Allied with such an investigation might be one of social distance. The degree of sympathy existing between élite and masses is small; on the other hand, one longs to know the degree of social distance of the individuals who are not yet élite but who regard themselves as definitely superior to the masses: what is their attitude toward the class they have left? And what is the attitude of the élite toward their aspirations?

114 Certain studies have already been made of the effect of the Vodun religion upon the personalities of its practitioners.[6] Even here the surface has been merely skimmed.

177 Haiti, because she is a colored nation in a white Western World, has been even more isolated than she would otherwise have been, even with her island position and her economic poverty. Except for the presence of American Marines for nineteen years there has been little cultural contact with outsiders, and hence little cultural conflict.

[563] It is generally estimated that there are not more than three thousand white people living in Haiti, and these mostly in the capital city. Throughout the nineteenth century it is likely that there were fewer. Haiti shares the island with the Dominican Republic, yet since the independence of the Dominicans in 1844 there has been little warfare, travel, or contact between the two peoples. Haitian workers have crossed the border, it is true, and have returned home (or have

6. See particularly Price-Mars, *Ainsi parla l'oncle*, and Dorsainvil, *Vodou et névrose*.

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177 been murdered, as in 1937); and the Dominican influence can be seen in northeastern Haiti. The country as a whole, however, remains largely free from non-Haitian influence. This isolation may not continue for many more years, for successive administrations expand their health activities, try to improve economic methods, extend transportation facilities, and pursue policies of "enlightenment." Under such a regimen there will be an inevitable contact either with the experts from foreign countries or with the products of the civilization of those countries. And if Haiti should acquire foreign machines in large numbers, she would inevitably open herself to the dynamic influences which accompany a changing economy.

177 Such a possibility is in the near future, so that social scientists will shortly have the chance to observe cultural contact and diffusion at
105 work. What is more immediately to the point is the query as to how much diffusion of cultural traits occurred at the beginning of Haitian national life. How much of the African tribal culture persisted through slavery and the period of forced labor into the Haiti of small properties and peasantry? How much, on the other hand, is a borrowing from the French ways of colonial times? These questions have been treated in earlier chapters, but may be here summarized. The external structure of social institutions, particularly those which characterize the life of the élite, is clearly French. Haitian government and law, upper-class marriage, the Catholic religion—all these have a French provenance. Conversely, among the masses, the Vodun religion and possibly certain economic devices (such as the coumbite) stem from Africa. Yet the round of daily life among the people is quite obviously unlike that of any single African group from which slaves were drawn, nor is it a composite of African folkways.[7] Similarly, although the bulk of the population is peasantry, the Haitian peasant is not at all a transplanted French peasant. The folkways and mores of rural Haiti are, to a degree unusual in most countries, products of local experience, uncolored by outside influence.[8]

157 Students of race find in writings about Haiti the usual sum of generalizations about the temperament and mental characteristics of

[567] 7. It must be emphasized that the Haitian slaves were drawn from at least thirty-eight African groups. See J. G. Leyburn, "The Making of a Black Nation," in G. P. Murdock, ed., *Essays in the Science of Society* (New Haven, 1937), pp. 377–394.

8. Herskovits' theory of the African origin of certain Haitian traits has been discussed above, pp. 199–201.

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a whole people. The Negroes, as distinct from the people of lighter color, are genial or kindly or lighthearted, as white authors have often said American Negroes were. But are they? If so, how does it happen that people of a certain skin color have distinct mental traits? If the generalizations are false, how does it happen that the same characteristics have been attributed to Negroes in both countries? Are the distinctive temperaments of people in different nations merely imagined, or are they real? And if real, are they taken on as a part of culture or inherent in the blood? 157

The United States is gradually beginning to be aware of the republics which lie to the south of her. Haiti is not as large or important as her neighboring states, but more than many others her future depends upon this country. The sociologist will find her three million citizens worthy of study. 648

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NOTES

CHAPTER II

The period between 1789 and 1803 may be summarized as follows: 175

1789–1791. Struggle for precedence between whites and free colored people, with the balance in favor of the whites. [565]

1791–1793. The slave insurrection, with consequent anarchy, and futile attempts of French commissioners to restore order. Both whites and colored people pushed into the background. [669] [563]

1793–1796. Invasion of the colony by English and Spanish; rise of the mulatto general Rigaud and the black general Toussaint. [648]

1796–1799. Consolidation of power by Toussaint; defeat and expulsion of Rigaud; emigration of whites. [643]

1799–1802. Toussaint in full power as governor-general.

1802–1803. Leclerc's expedition, with its initial successes and ultimate failure. Final achievement of Haitian independence under Dessalines and Christophe. [642]

PART III

Various efforts were made by American abolitionists working with Haitian presidents to colonize freed American Negro slaves in Haiti in the period before the Civil War.[1] All these projects came to unfortunate ends, some even to grimly tragic ones. During Boyer's time about 13,000 American Negroes went to Haiti, the government assigning to each family a portion of land upon its arrival. Very shortly most of those who could afford it returned to this country, and within ten years hardly one was still living upon the land. An American writer, Hunt, says that during his seventeen years in Haiti (before 1860) he had known of but 13 Negroes from America who had been moderately successful; of these, 7 were merchants or traders, 4 mechanics, and 2 lawyers; and all were mulattoes. Five others were barely independent, and all the rest were day laborers or worse. In spite of this, Hunt planned another aided migration of American Negroes to Haiti. Warning them not to expect too much in the way of improvements in agriculture, he adds a significant paragraph: "Should the immigrant obtain quiet possession of unoccupied lands, and begin to use the plough instead of the hoe, his new methods of culture would be likely to draw upon him the jealousy and ill-will of his neighbors. For when new ways are *too* new to be accepted as an example, they are very apt to be felt and resented as a rebuke. More than one of Boyer's old immigrants have told me that they were obliged to give up agriculture and take to trading in towns, on account of annoyances of this sort. They found their fences down, or their water let off, of a morning; or evidences that cattle had been fed on their grounds over night; or the neighboring idlers, of which there are many, had stolen all their plantains and sweet potatoes, fit for the market. I do not mean to say that these Haytian cultivators are worse than any other rude people. On the contrary, I 175 563

1. An excellent description of these projects is found in L. L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938* (Durham, 1940), chap. IV.

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175 563 believe they are less bad than many others in like circumstances. For not having great strength of character, they have neither great virtues nor great vices. The English farmers, Birkbeck and Flower, encountered similar troubles, and worse, when, forty years ago [that is, between 1820 and 1830], they brought over their English habits, and settled down with them among our farmers in Illinois."[2]

Montague sums up the general fate of American Negroes who migrated to Haiti by saying that some were exploited by the élite (who treated their own blacks in the same fashion), others persecuted by resentful peasant neighbors, and still others, who had expected manna to fall from the Haitian heaven, simply disillusioned at having to work, and so lost heart.[3]

CHAPTER XII

175 643 The following table of the presidents of Haiti summarizes in general the shifting political fortunes of the country. Those presidents who belonged to the élite caste are designated with an asterisk (*). It will be noted that the presidency has generally been in the hands of men from three departments: the North, where Negroes are predominant even among the leaders; the South, always a stronghold of the mulattoes; and the West, where the capital, Port-au-Prince, is located. The Department of the Northwest has never had a president, and the Artibonite only three. The color of the presidents is indicated.

Heads of State	*Color*	*Dates*	*Department*
1. Dessalines	Black	1804–6	North
2. Christophe	Black	1807–20	North
2. *Pétion	Light	1807–18	West
3. *Boyer	Light	1818–43	West
4. *Rivière-Hérard	Light	1843–44	South
5. Guerrier	Black	1844–45	Artibonite
6. Pierrot	Black	1845–46	North
7. Riché	Black	1847–47	North
8. Soulouque	Black	1847–59	West
9. *Geffrard	Dark	1859–67	South
10. *Salnave	Dark	1867–69	North
11. *Nissage-Saget	Light	1870–74	Artibonite
*12. Domingue	Dark	1874–76	South
13. *Boisrond-Canal	Light	1876–79	South
14. Salomon	Black	1879–88	South
15. Légitime	Black	1888–89	South
16. *Hyppolite	Black	1889–96	North
17. Simon Sam	Black	1896–1902	North
18. Nord Alexis	Black	1902–8	North
19. Simon	Black	1908–11	South
20. Leconte	Dark	1911–12	North

2. Benjamin S. Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans*, pp. 14, 11.
3. *Op. cit.*, pp. 71–72.

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Heads of State	*Color*	*Dates*	*Department*
21. Auguste	Light	1912–13	North
22. Oreste	Dark	1913–14	West
23. Zamor	Dark	1914	Artibonite
24. Théodore	Black	1914–15	North
25. Guillaume Sam	Black	1915	North
26. *Dartiguenave	Light	1915–22	South
27. *Borno	Light	1922–30	West
28. *Roy	Light	1930	West
29. *Vincent	Light	1930–41	West
30. *Lescot	Light	1941–	North

Summarizing this table, it can be seen that of the 31 heads of state only 13 have definitely belonged to the élite group. A few of the others might, by stretching the category, be regarded as members of this group. These 13, however, have governed for a total of 87 years, as compared with a rule of only 64 years by the representatives of the army clique. (It will be remembered that from 1807 to 1820 Haiti was separated and so had two heads of state.)

There have been 14 Negro rulers, 11 mulatto presidents, and 6 presidents who had at least a slight degree of white blood.

Of the 31, 13 represented the North (Christophe is included in this number, although he was born on the island of St. Christopher, from which he took his name); 8 came from the South; 7 from the West; 3 from the Artibonite; and none from the Northwest. The Northerners were in control of the government for 42 years; Southerners for 32 years; Westerners for 69 years; and the Artibonite presidents for less than 6 years.

CHAPTER XIV

1. *Taxation*

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The formative period of Haitian history, it is now evident, was between 1807 and 1820, when the young country was offered two sets of policies, generally opposed, to choose between: Pétion's and Christophe's. It is likewise clear that, since Pétion's required less discipline and self-restraint, and the country became reunited under Pétion's adoring secretary, Boyer, the easier path of Pétion was the one generally followed.

This choice is abundantly clear in the matter of taxation. Although the civil war between the two rulers was draining his treasury, Pétion either did not care or did not dare to tax his people. He relied rather upon heavy duties on trade in his ports, thus embarrassing commerce and taking away much of the profit from coffee. Christophe, on the other hand, without a scruple got millions by a tax on production amounting to one quarter of the annual crops of his kingdom;[4] consequently commerce in the North was free and that part of the island busy with prosperous trade. Christophe also taxed his nobles, charging a heavy fee for a patent of nobility, and also receiving annually a fourth of the crops raised upon their estates.

4. Copied from the practice of Toussaint and Dessalines.

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175 Boyer carried on Pétion's policy of no taxation. It was not until the American
657 Occupation that Haitians could be said to be taxed. Ninety per cent of the state's
[652] income between 1900 and 1915 regularly came from tariffs, and only ten per cent from internal taxes. Even the efforts of the Americans, resulting in the laws of 1924 and 1928, were on the whole restricted to a few excise taxes. A land tax was hopeless, due to the utter confusion of titles and the stubborn impassivity of peasant squatters.[5]

2. *Monetary Policy of Pétion and Boyer*

175 The monetary situation in Haiti was chaotic in its early days. The gold money
652 of France, Spain, England, and the United States circulated, as did small French coins, and the coins and paper money created by the Haitian rulers, who had complete control over money. For example, Pétion decreed[6] an increase in the value of the *gourde d'Espagne* from 8 livres 5 sols, to 9 livres; of the French *écu* of 6 francs from 9 livres to 9 livres 15 sols; and the 5 franc écu from 7 livres 10 sols to 8 livres 5 sols; this almost doubled the value of money in circulation. He also struck small coins to replace the pieces of 30, 24, 15, 12, and 6 sols of France. His small coins were merely token money.[7] The paper currency created by Pétion and so easily counterfeited has been mentioned.

[433] Boyer was continually in financial perplexities. Production was declining while expenditures had to be radically increased on account of the settlement with France in 1825. Boyer's budget was not a large one judged by modern standards, the average expenditure each year being about $5,000,000. To meet this, customs duties on imports and exports brought in about $2,200,000 annually; territorial duties on produce, houses, patents or licenses, market fees, and the like, a similar
[316] sum; but some half-million dollars had to be borrowed each year. The government
[425] hoped to get something from developing mines in the Spanish part of the island, but this hope failed. It was thought also that the sale of government lands might
[454] bring in some revenue, but few people wanted to invest money, when they had it, in land, with agricultural affairs developing as they were and no way of making
[465] people work: investment in trade was more promising. The national treasury was so empty that both the civil and military officials were poorly paid. It was fre-
[661] quently said that almost all administrators and persons in authority were open to bribery. Meantime the number of civil servants was increasing: there was a swarm
[647] of hirelings and subalterns in every commune, like a host of vampires. By their lack of honesty, conscientiousness, and efficiency, immense sums were lost annually to the treasury.

5. See the *Report of the American High Commissioner* (1929), p. 19.

6. May 4, 1808.

7. *Pétion voyant s'échapper de ses États les gourdes qu'effrayaient ses démêlés avec Christophe, eut pour les retenir l'ingénieuse idée d'y pratiquer une fraude. Ce moyen était trop efficace pour ne pas réussir, et il était trop simple pour que l'emploi n'en fut pas généralisé au moins par un équivalent. Ainsi, lorsqu'il en vint à battre monnaie, le chef de l'état du Sud descendit le titre de sa gourde à peu près au titre de la gourde espagnole taxée par son empreinte-pièce. Il lui donne 858 millièmes de fin.*" Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, II, 194.

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3. *Pétion, Boyer, and Inginac as Administrators*

Pétion lived very simply in the South, like a plain republican magistrate. He sat on his piazza, accessible to all his people. He had a quiet way of answering his opponents which did not make enemies of them. He made his secretary answer every letter that arrived, no matter how small; many were simply inquiries about the President's health. Yet the wars between Pétion and Christophe dragged on from 1807 to 1812,[8] draining the finances of the republic. Not only the crops declined: so also did most of the public improvements instituted by the colonial planters; so did trade; so did habits of industry. Everything seemed to conspire against hard work. The rich plains of the Cul-de-Sac and the Artibonite Valley were ravaged by fire and warfare; necessary equipment for sugar making was destroyed, the money for new machines and buildings was unavailable; and the men were drawn away from their land by military duties.

Inginac, Boyer's secretary of state, after the Revolution of 1843 had got rid of both the President and his secretary, wrote his memoirs. There are some revealing passages. Inginac reports that Pétion told him only forty days before his death that Boyer was a man of probity and delicacy, "but unhappily he is petulant; he is too set in his ways to conciliate those who might assist him. In everything *he* wants to dominate, and he will bring unhappiness to the country if he does not change." Inginac cites cases to show that Pétion's prophecy was correct. Boyer in 1820 repealed the most unpopular laws, particularly those requiring personal corvée and the repair of public roads; but instead of taking advice from his cabinet on important economic matters, he frequently announced that he was president and would not be run by anybody. Consequently, according to Inginac, he made mistakes which might have been avoided.[9] Defending himself, the former secretary offers a clue to the failure of the régime—possibly unavoidable—by showing that the administration merely suggested, did not require, action:

"Have I not constantly, not only preached and corresponded about the necessity of making agriculture prosperous, but also given work at as high wages as the treasury could afford; Have I not created habitations on lands formerly totally uncultivated, putting formerly idle men to work; Have I not published at my own expense, although I directed the National Printery, methods for cultivating tobacco and coffee plants, of which I distributed gratis several thousand copies?"[10]

In spite of all encouragement which the administration could offer, agricultural production continued to decline, while expenses increased, and external trade fell off from a third to a half. The government had to borrow from the banking firm of Lafitte in Paris to find even the interest for payments due to the French government.

8. Hostilities between the two parts of Haiti ceased about 1812 because of the mutual fear on the part of Christophe and Pétion of Napoleon's ascendancy, and the threat which this constituted to the whole former colony. Their war had ravaged the plantations and removed laborers from the soil. Then came the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain, cutting off many of the supplies which Haiti drew from both countries. There was accordingly an unwritten truce, with no further hostilities. A neutral territory of ten leagues between the boundaries of the two states was tacitly agreed upon: neither army was to enter it. This was the rich plain of Boucassin, once the garden of the island, now a wilderness.

9. Joseph Balthazar Inginac, *Memoirs* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1843), pp. 32, 34, 38.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

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of Lafitte in Paris to find even the interest for payments due to the French government.

4. *Exports from Haiti*

Sugar was the great crop of French colonial days in Saint-Domingue, with coffee, indigo, and cotton lucrative secondary crops. The first table shows the rapid decline of sugar, indigo, and cotton between 1791 and 1839, near the end of Boyer's administration.

CROPS

	Sugar	*Indigo*	*Cotton*
1791 (colony)	163,405,220 lbs.	930,016 lbs.	6,286,126 lbs.
1802 (Toussaint)	53,400,000	37,600	4,050,000
1804 (Dessalines)	47,600,000	35,400	3,000,000
1818 (Pétion)	1,896,449	0	384,001
1825 (Boyer)	2,020	0	815,697
1839 (Boyer)	6,000	0	1,402,792

By contrast coffee production, although it declined, remained large enough to provide the state with some income. After 1810 it was the principal crop of the country.

Coffee Production

1791	68,151,180 lbs.	1818	20,280,589 lbs.
1802	34,370,000	1825	36,034,300
1804	31,000,000	1839	43,854,666

In 1935–36 the Vincent government reported the export of 76,600,000 pounds of sugar, 79,400,000 pounds of coffee, and 12,700,000 pounds of cotton.[11]

CHAPTER XV

What Haiti faces, economically and socially, can be seen in terms of the law of population: "Population tends to increase up to the limit of the supporting power of the land, relative to the economic efficiency and to the standard of living of the people at the time." This law may be better visualized by stating it in terms of an equation:

$$\frac{\text{Population}}{\text{Productivity of land}} = \frac{\text{Economic Efficiency}}{\text{Standard of Living}}$$

Another way of stating the law is this:

Population + Standard of Living = Productivity of Land + Economic Effi-

11. These tables are compiled from material in Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description . . . de . . . Saint-Domingue, passim*; Great Britain Foreign Office, *Communications Relative to Hayti* (London, 1825), p. 159; Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti*, II, 172 ff.; Alexandre Bonneau, *Haïti: son propriété, son avenir* (Paris, 1862), pp. 35, 36; John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, p. 105; L.-J. Marcelin, *Haïti: ses guerres civiles* (Paris, 1892), p. 32; Charles F. Pressoir, "Pages de géographie économique," *Revue de la Société d'Histoire*, III, vi, 18; James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 318 ff.; *Rapport annuel du représentant fiscal d'Haïti*, October, 1935–September, 1936, pp. 189–195.

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ciency. It is immediately evident that no one of the four variables can be increased or lowered without disturbing the balance.

In French colonial times, the white and colored population was but 68,000. This figure excludes all the Negro slaves. The land was highly productive. Economic efficiency was likewise high. Now, after a century and a half, the population is near 3,000,000, the land is wearing out, and economic efficiency is almost a negative quantity. The standard of living has obviously suffered tremendously as compared with that of the French planters and free colored people of colonial times. Even if it be protested that the comparison should rather be between early and modern Haitians than between upper-caste colonials and modern Haitians, we should still compare a population of 380,000 with one of 3,000,000 on just about the same amount of land, for what has been taken up by clearing away forests has been compensated for by erosion and reversion to waste. And as has been said economic efficiency has deteriorated.

If, then, the standard of living—the usual test of a people's prosperity and contentment—is to be raised, Haiti must:

a. Lower the birth rate, and so work on its population.

b. Rebuild and fertilize its soil (that is, improve its land).

c. Adopt machinery, learn scientific methods, apply intelligent management.

All three must be done seriatim or in combination. To foreigners, particularly to visitors from the United States, there is a moral imperative in the Haitian situation, a feeling that something ought to be done, and that right early. To Haitian peasants, on the other hand, "progress" would mean change, and change is an uncomfortable interruption of the familiar. Knowing this attitude, the Haitian government is not goaded into action.

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HANNA, S. W. *Notes of a Visit to Some Parts of Haiti, January–February, 1835*. London, 1836. A breezy travelogue by a pious clergyman. Useless except as corroboration of outward aspects. Hanna explains Mackenzie's adverse criticisms of Haiti by saying that the British Minister was a mulatto, and so was not well received in Haiti.

HARVEY, W. W. *Sketches of Hayti; from the Expulsion of the French to the Death of Christophe*. London, 1827. In spite of the unassuming title, one of the most rewarding collections of source material in the early period.

HAZARD, SAMUEL. *Santo Domingo, Past and Present; with a Glance at Haiti*. New York, 1873. The glance included little of importance.

HERRING, HUBERT. "Haitian Troubles Continue." *Current History*, XLII, 78–79, 1935. Brief statement of the months following the end of the American Occupation.

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HERSKOVITS, MELVILLE J. *Dahomey, an Ancient West African Kingdom*. New York, 1938. 2 vols. A splendid study of the region from which many of the Haitian slaves derived.

——— *Life in a Haitian Valley*. New York, 1937. One of the few ethnographical studies of a Haitian community, made by an expert. The whole range of life of the people of Mirebalais is studied in detail. The result is a book not only for scholars but for laymen. Indispensable

——— "The Significance of the Study of Acculturation for Anthropology." *American Anthropologist*, n.s. XXXIX, No. 2, 259–264.

HUNT, BENJAMIN S. *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans*. Philadelphia, 1860. Another brochure on the migration of freed American slaves. Hunt's observations are often illuminating.

HURSTON, ZORA NEALE. *Tell My Horse*. Philadelphia, 1938. A gaily written study of certain details of life in Jamaica and Haiti. Much of the detail is hearsay, some is inaccurate, but a great deal is carefully observed.

INGINAC, JOSEPH BALTHASAR. *Culture du caféier et préparation de la fève pour être livrée au commerce*. Port-au-Prince, 1840. One of the pamphlets which Boyer's meticulous secretary of state issued to the illiterate peasants to improve their economic life.

——— *Étrennes à mes concitoyens: Nécessité de l'éducation morale et religieuse en Haïti*. Port-au-Prince, 1841. A paternal homily on morals.

——— *Memoires*. Kingston (Jamaica), 1843. After the Revolution of 1843 had overthrown Boyer, Inginac went into exile with his President. In Jamaica he wrote his memoirs, which consist partly of autobiography, but mostly of an impassioned defense of every action of his long secretaryship. He never made a mistake; and if Boyer had only followed Inginac's advice, there would have been no revolution.

——— *Message à ses compatriotes, et principalement à ceux qui ont dirigé les affaires populaires de la république depuis le fin de janvier dernier*. Port-au-Prince, 1843. A brief pamphlet by Inginac, urging his innocence of any treason, and pleading with the new government to allow him to return from exile.

INMAN, SAMUEL GUY. *Through Santo Domingo and Haiti*. New York, 1919. With observations on the American Occupation.

JANVIER, LOUIS-JOSEPH. *La République d'Haïti et ses visiteurs*. Paris, 1883. Unimportant.

——— *Les Constitutions d'Haïti, 1801–85*. Paris, 1886. Excellent, not only because it contains a text of the numerous Haitian constitutions, but also for its judicious analysis of the contents of each.

JEAN-LOUIS, H. "La Race créole." *Les Annales diplomatiques et consulaires*, vol. II, No. 19, Paris, 1904, November 5.

JENKS, L. H. "The Haitian Problem," in A. C. Wilgus, ed., *The Caribbean Area*. Washington, 1934.

JOHNSON, JAMES WELDON. "Self-determining Haiti." *Nation*, August 25, September 25, 1920. The title is satirical, for Haiti in 1920 was occupied by the Americans.

JOHNSTON, Sir HARRY H. *The Negro in the New World*. New York, 1910. Well written but necessarily superficial, considering the magnitude of the topic. Certain wise judgments about Haiti.

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JONES, CHESTER LLOYD. *The Caribbean Since 1900*. New York, 1936. The section on Haiti is adequate as a brief survey. 113 114

JUSTIN, JOSEPH. *Étude sur les institutions haïtiennes*. Paris, 1894–95. 2 vols. What was wrong with Haiti under Hyppolite.

——— *Les Réformes nécessaires*. Port-au-Prince, 1915. The sad state of Haitian affairs twenty years later.

JUSTIN, PLACIDE. *Histoire politique et statistique de l'île d'Hayti, Saint-Domingue*. ("*Écrite sur des documents officiels et du notes communiquées par Sir James Barskett, agent du gouvernement brittanique dans les Antilles.*") Paris, 1826. Actually, up to 1816, a copy of the work by Basket [*q.v.*], whose name Justin misspells; for the succeeding decade, Justin's material is almost wholly political, and not particularly helpful.

KELSEY, CARL. "The American Intervention in Haiti and the Dominican Republic." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. C, March, 1922.

KUSER, JOHN D. *Haiti: Its Dawn of Progress after Years in a Night of Revolution*. Boston, 1921. Useless.

LAUJON, A. DE. *Souvenirs de trente années de voyages à Saint-Domingue*. Paris, 1835. 2 vols. Unimportant.

LAVENTURE, LÉONIDAS. *Haïti: le danger de la patrie*. Port-au-Prince, 1893. What is wrong with Haiti.

LÉGER, ABEL NICOLAS. *Histoire diplomatique d'Haïti*. Port-au-Prince, 1930. Good.

LÉGER, JACQUES NICHOLAS. *Haïti: son histoire et ses détracteurs*. (Likewise an edition in English, *Haiti: Her History and Her Detractors*.) Both: New York, 1907. An effort to correct erroneous impressions of Haiti. Léger sees even the defects of Haiti through rose-colored glasses.

——— *La Politique extérieure d'Haïti*. Paris, 1886. Inferior.

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LEPELLETIER DE SAINT-REMY, R. "La République d'Haïti: ses dernières révolutions; sa situation actuelle." *Revue des Deux Mondes*, XV, No. 4, November 15, 1845. An excellent analysis of the social, economic, and political conditions which led up to the Revolution of 1843, and the disturbances of the next two years.

——— *Saint-Domingue. Étude et solution nouvelle de la question haïtienne*. Paris, 1846. 2 vols. One of the very best sources for the economic history of Haiti through the administration of Boyer. Intelligently critical; many suggestive points of constructive nature.

LE ROUGE, GABRIEL. *Ou vivre libres et respectés ou mourir lamentablement décimées par la guerre civile*. Port-au-Prince, 1916. Another in the "What's-Wrong-with-Haiti?" series.

LEVACHER, M. G. *Guide médical des Antilles*. Paris, 1847. A fair account, giving the medical knowledge of the period, of health conditions in Haiti and the other Antilles.

LHERISSON, CAMILLE. "Diseases of the Peasants of Haiti." *American Journal of Public Health*, XXV, No. 8, 924–929, August, 1935. An excellent survey by one of the most brilliant doctors of Haiti.

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Livre bleu d'Haïti. Port-au-Prince, 1920. A kind of social register, and business roster of Haiti in 1920.

LOBB, JOHN. "Caste and Class in Haiti." *American Journal of Sociology*, XLVI, No. 1, 23–34, July, 1940. A good general analysis of the élite-Noir dichotomy in modern Haiti.

LOGAN, RAYFORD W. "Education in Haiti." *Journal of Negro History*, XV, 401–460, 1930. Good.

LOPEZ, G. *Considérations sur la société haïtienne de 1804 à 1866*. Port-au-Prince, 1867. Superficial.

MACAULAY, ZACHARY. *Haïti, ou renseignemens authentiques sur l'abolition de l'esclavage et ses résultats à Saint-Domingue et à Guadeloupe. ("Avec des détails sur l'état actuel d'Haïti et des noirs émancipés qui forment sa population.") Traduit de l'Anglais*. Paris, 1835. Very disappointing. Mostly an attack on the authenticity of the report by Mackenzie of affairs in Haiti. The book includes a 139-page letter series from a Jamaican mulatto visitor to Haiti, who fulsomely praised the country, but said nothing of significance.

MACCORKLE, W. A. *The Monroe Doctrine in Its Relation to the Republic of Haiti*. New York, 1915.

MACKENZIE, CHARLES. *Notes on Hayti, Made during a Residence in That Republic*. London, 1830. 2 vols. A careful, detailed, and often adversely critical survey of Haiti by the British Minister during the first years of Boyer's administration.

MAGLOIRE, AUGUSTE. *Étude sur le tempérament haïtien*. Port-au-Prince, 1909. Wryly humorous criticism by a Haitian.

——— *Histoire d'Haïti d'après un plan nouveau basé sur l'observation des faits (1804–1909)*. Port-au-Prince, 1909. 4 vols. Occasionally astute in comment, but adding little to already existing knowledge.

——— *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social*. Port-au-Prince, 1909. Haiti puts her trust too much in political, and not enough in economic, reform.

MARCELIN, FRÉDÉRIC. *Choses haïtiennes*. Paris, 1896. Unimportant observations on the Haiti of 1895.

——— *L'Haleine du centenaire*. Paris, 1901. After nearly a century of independence, much is wrong with Haiti.

——— *Le Passé*. Paris, 1902. Nostalgic.

——— *Questions haïtiennes*. Paris, 1891.

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MILLSPAUGH, ARTHUR C. *Haiti under American Control, 1915–30*. Boston, 1931. A careful analysis of the causes of the Occupation and of the results for Haiti.

——— "Our Haitian problem." *Foreign Affairs*, VII, 556–570, 1929.

MONTAGUE, LUDWELL LEE. *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938*. Durham, 1940. Required reading for an understanding of the course of Haitian-American relations. Although the emphasis is placed upon diplomatic affairs, the author has a rare understanding of the culture of the Haitian people.

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MORPEAU, LOUIS. *Anthologie d'un siècle de poésie haïtienne, 1817–1925*. Paris, 1925. Indispensable for the student of Haitian literature. 113

——— "Un Dominion intellectuel français." *Revue de l'Amérique latine*, VIII, No. 24, 332–341, October, 1924. A good sketch of Haitian literary history. 114

NILES, [Mrs.] BLAIR. *Black Haiti*. New York, 1926. This, without professing to be a scholarly treatise, gives many excellent descriptions of Haitian life.

OULIÉ, MARTHE. *Les Antilles, filles de France*. Paris, 1935. A travelogue with a moral: the less American influence exerted upon the French-speaking Antilles, the better for them, especially Haiti.

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PAUL, EDMOND. *Les Causes de nos malheurs*. Kingston (Jamaica), 1889. One of the more penetrating criticisms of conditions in Haiti during the latter part of the nineteenth century.

——— *Questions politico-économiques*. Paris, 1861–63. 3 vols.

PAULTRE, ÉMILE. *Essai sur M. Price-Mars*. Port-au-Prince, 1933. A brief biography and appreciation of one of Haiti's leading modern savants.

PIERRE-LOUIS, DAMASE. *Les Mensonges de notre démocratie*. Paris, 1933.

PRESSOIR, CHARLES F. *Au Rythme des coumbites*. Port-au-Prince, 1933. A small collection of poems, mostly about native life.

——— *La Médecine en Haïti*. Port-au-Prince, 1927. Cursory.

——— "Pages de géographie économique." *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti*, vol. III, No. 6, April, 1932.

PREVOST, JULIEN (Comte de LIMONADE). *Relation des glorieux évènemens qui ont porté leurs Majestés Royales sur le trône d'Hayti*. Cap-Henry (now Cap-Haïtien), 1811. Chiefly an account of the conflict between Christophe and Pétion, with a fulsome panegyric of the former.

PRICE, HANNIBAL. *De la Réhabilitation de la rcce Noire par la république d'Haïti*. Port-au-Prince, 1900. Superficial.

——— *The Haytian Question*. New York, 1891. The then Haitian Minister to the United States comments upon the diplomatic relations between the two countries.

PRICE-MARS, Dr. [JEAN]. *Ainsi parla l'oncle . . . Essais d'ethnographie*. Port-au-Prince, 1928. An indispensable book on Haitian life and belief by one of the country's leading historians, ethnographers, sociologists. The author not only has the confidence of the people among whom he does research, but also the intellectual equipment to write brilliantly about what he observes.

——— *La Vocation de l'élite*. Port-au-Prince, 1919. Written by one of the intellectual élite, this book is a devastating criticism of the futility on the part of the élite in condemning their African heritage, and of the refusal of the élite to participate constructively in the life of the country.

——— *Une Étape de l'évolution haïtienne*. Port-au-Prince, no date [probably 1930]. A survey of the intellectual and cultural achievements of Haiti.

RAMSFORD, MARCUS. *An Historical Account of the Black Empire of Hayti*. ("Compre-

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113 114 hending a view of the principal transactions in the revolution of Saint Domingo; with its ancient and modern state." Generally titled: *History of St. Domingo.*) London, 1805. A contemporary but rather superficial account of the period of Toussaint and Dessalines.

REDPATH, JAMES. *A Guide to Haiti.* Boston, 1861. Interesting and moderately informative, concerning the Haiti of Soulouque and Geffrard.

RENAUD, RAYMOND. *Le Régime foncier en Haïti.* Paris, 1934. The best monograph on the modern property systems in Haiti, based upon careful personal research.

RITTER, KARL. *Naturhistorische Reise nach der West Indischen Insel Hayti.* ("*Auf Kosten S^r. Majestät des Kaisers von Oesterreich.*") Stutgard (Stuttgart), 1836. By the "Gartendirector in Ungarn und Mitglied mehrerer gelehrten Gesellschaften." Ritter's journey was taken in the time of Christophe, ending in 1820. Full of acute observations about the kingdom. An excellent source.

ROSEMOND, JULES. *La Crise morale et civique.* Port-au-Prince, 1915. Merely another of the spate of books analyzing the crisis which led to the American Occupation.

ST. JOHN, Sir SPENSER. *Hayti, or the Black Republic.* 2d ed. London, 1889. (1st ed., London, 1884.) The British Minister to Haiti was an acute observer, with a good literary style; but he had a profound antipathy to the country and its ways. The purpose of his book is to show the general decline of Haiti during the nineteenth century, and to prove the existence of cannibalism as an essential part of "Vaudoux," Biting, sarcastic criticism.

SAINT-RÉMY [des Cayes, Haïti; no given name]. *Pétion et Haïti: essai monographique et historique.* Paris, 1854–57. 5 vols. This mulatto author of Les Cayes is not to be mistaken for the Frenchman, R. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy (*q.v.*). The work is really a history of Haiti, following Madiou (*q.v.*) closely, but decidedly adulatory of Pétion. Many digressions to moralize at length. A sixth volume was planned, to analyze the work of Pétion between 1811 and 1818, but it was not achieved.

SANNON, H. PAULÉUS. *Essai historique sur la révolution de 1843.* Aux Cayes, 1905. One of the better accounts of the events leading up to the revolution which displaced Boyer.

[SAUNDERS, PRINCE.] *By Authority: Haytian Papers.* London, 1816. The high lights of Christophe's reign, told by the King's official toady, and designed to extol Christophe to the British, whom Christophe admired. Of little value.

SCHOELCHER, V. *Colonies étrangères et Haïti: résultats de l'émancipation anglaise.* Paris, 1842. 2 vols. Occasionally informative about the Haiti of Boyer.

SEABROOK, W. B. *The Magic Island.* New York, 1929. An overwrought account of presumably personal experiences. When the author is not intent upon being dramatic, he is an acute observer. Valuable appendices. This book has been the cause of much resentment and of bitter replies by modern Haitians.

SÉJOURNÉ, GEORGES. "Établissement de la propriété et de la famille au lendemain de l'indépendance." *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti,* VI, No. 17, 9–22, January, 1935.

SIMPSON, GEORGE E. "The Vodun Service in Northern Haiti." *American Anthropologist,* n.s. XLII, No. 2, 236–254. An ethnographical study.

STREIT, CLARENCE. "Haiti: Intervention in Operation," *Foreign Affairs,* VI. 615–632, 1928.

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SYLVAIN, GEORGES. *Cric? Crac!* ("Fables de La Fontaine racontées par un montagnard haïtien et transcrites en vers créoles.") 2d ed. Port-au-Prince, 1929. A charming collection of fables in Créole. 113 114

SYLVAIN, SUZANNE. *Le Créole haïtien: morphologie et syntaxe.* Wetteren (Belgium), 1936. A scholarly treatise on the folk language.

SYLVAIN, SUZANNE COMHAIRE-. *Les Contes haïtiens.* Wetteren (Belgium), 1937. 2 vols. A collection of Créole tales, with critical comments upon their origin and their relation to stories told in other parts of the world by Negroes.

TAFT, EDNA. *A Puritan in Voodoo-Land.* Philadelphia, 1938. A superficial travelogue.

THOBY, ARMAND. *La Question agraire en Haïti.* Port-au-Prince, 1888. One of the best early accounts of the property situation since the time of Pétion.

THOMPSON, WALLACE. "Climatic Influences in the Caribbean." *Current History,* February, 1930. Entirely superficial.

THORPE, GEORGE C. "American Achievements in Santo Domingo, Haiti, and the Virgin Islands." *Journal of International Relations,* XI, 63–86, 1920.

TIPPENHAUER, GENTIL. *Die Insel Haiti.* Leipzig, 1893.

VAVAL, DURACINÉ. "Aléxandre Pétion: l'homme et sa vie." *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti,* III, No. 7, July, 1932.

——— *Histoire de la littérature haïtienne, ou l'âme noire.* Port-au-Prince, 1933. A compendium of information, with unimportant criticisms.

——— *Histoire financière et économique d'Haïti de l'indépendance à nos jours.* Port-au-Prince, 1934. Useful.

——— "Le Roi d'Haïti Henri Christophe." *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti,* II, No. 3, June, 1931. Good analysis of the statecraft of Christophe.

[VIEILLOT and LABORDÈRE (†Anon.).] *De la Gérontocratie en Haïti.* Paris, 1860. A sound set of observations about the failure of young men to rise to leadership in mid-century Haiti.

WEATHERFORD, W. D. *The Negro from Africa to America.* New York, 1924. Superficial.

WILGUS, A. CURTIS, ed. *The Caribbean Area.* Washington, 1934. With a fairly good short analysis of the Haitian situation.

WILLIAMS, MARY WILHELMINE. *The People and Politics of Latin America.* Boston, 1930. A good chapter on the history of Haiti.

WIRKUS, FAUSTIN, and DUDLEY, TANEY. *The White King of La Gonâve.* New York, 1931. An American Marine's account of his experiences in charge of the island lying off Port-au-Prince.

NOVELS, AND OTHER WORKS OF THE IMAGINATION

BEDFORD-JONES, H. *Drums of Dumbala.* New York, 1933.

CASSEUS, MAURICE. *Viejo.* Port-au-Prince, 1935. An excellent novel, dealing with a Haitian who tried to find work in Cuba. Illuminating side lights on folkways and mores; many conversations in Créole.

CHAMBERLAIN, GEORGE A. *The Silver Cord.* New York, 1927.

CRAIGE, JOHN H. *Black Bagdad.* New York, 1933.

——— *Cannibal Cousins.* New York, 1934.

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113 DAVIS, BEALE. *The Goat without Horns*. New York, 1925. Voodoo.
114 ENDORE, GUY. *Babouk*. New York, 1935. The scene is in colonial Saint-Domingue.
FIRBANK, RONALD. *Prancing Nigger*. New York, 1926.
LOEDERER, RICHARD A. *Voodoo Fire in Haiti*. New York, 1935.
MARTINEAU, HARRIET. *The Hour and the Man*. London, 1841. Toussaint.
PRICHARD, HESKETH. *Where Black Rules White*. Westminster, 1900.
ROSCOE, THEODORE. *Murder on the Way!* New York, 1935.
TAYLOR, J. GIBSON. *Dark Dawn*. New York, 1932.
VANDERCOOK, JOHN W. *Black Majesty*. New York, 1928. A vivid picture of Christophe.
WAUGH, ALEC. *No Quarter*. London, 1933. Tortuga and Saint-Domingue.
WAXMAN, PERCY. *The Black Napoleon*. New York, 1931.
WILLIAMS, JOSEPH J. *Voodoos and Obeahs*. New York, 1932. Professes to be a scholarly treatise.
WILSON, ADELAIDE. *First Woman*. New York, 1933.

NOTE: This list is by no means complete; it merely gives a fair sample of the works of imagination whose scene is laid in Haiti, early or modern.

NOTE: The author regards the following works as the outstanding and indispensable ones for an understanding of Haiti:

L. E. Moreau de Saint-Méry. *Description . . . de . . . Saint-Domingue.*
J. Brown. *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo.* (1837).
H. P. Davis. *Black Democracy; the Story of Haiti.*
J. C. Dorsainvil. *Manuel d'histoire d'Haïti.*
Melville J. Herskovits. *Life in a Haitian Valley.*
Ludwell L. Montague. *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938.*
Dr. J. Price-Mars. *Ainsi parla l'oncle.*

See the Bibliography for a detailed description of each.

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[The information on the Haitian 'caste' organization, which the author discusses throughout the text, is here dealt with under category 565. See Mintz' introduction to the text (category 116) for the distinction between class and caste, as applied to Haiti. The concept of class (565) more closely and sharply defines the phenomena the author refers to in the text than does the concept of caste (564).]

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Mirebalais

INTRODUCTION

THE VALLEY OF MIREBALAIS

THE TRAVELER comes suddenly on the valley of Mirebalais, as the road from the capital turns the shoulder of a hill. Long and narrow, the plain stretches before him with its many tones of green. Ahead is the village from which the valley takes its name, its metal roofs aglow in the sunlight, or reflecting the gray sky of the rainy season. Here and there appears a yellow, muddy slash made by the Artibonite River, while framing the valley are the mountains, rising one behind another as they complete its encirclement. 133 361

This first glimpse of the country gives no hint of a numerous population. It is as though this valley, like so many other things in Haiti, had set out to belie its own reality and, in this impression, at the very outset to point the lesson that the observer must seek well beneath the surface if he is to attain any understanding of the country and its people. For just as the unsettled appearance of this Haitian valley conceals numerous habitations, cultivated fields, and hard-working inhabitants, so the frenzy of Haitian religious rites is but a gloss upon disciplined ceremonialism, and the relatively placid everyday existence of the Haitian peasant but a mask behind which is waged a spiritual conflict that is his heritage from the dual sources of his traditions. 121

The commune of Mirebalais is situated in the heart of central Haiti. Lying some thirty-five miles from Port-au-Prince, 101 361 [491]

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CHAPTER I

THE AFRICAN HERITAGE

For the study of a civilization like that of Haiti, which is the result of close and continued contact between peoples with traditions as dissimilar as those of Europe and Africa, a peculiarly lively sense of time depth is needed. Yet though it has been repeatedly stated that Haiti is the child of Africa and France, even those who proclaim this emphatically fail too often to recognize the need for as detailed a knowledge as is possible of how the strands of history were woven into the fabric of Haitian cultural life. It is for this reason that before any description of the culture of Mirebalais can be attempted, not only must the names of the African tribes from which the Haitians were derived be given, but the broad characteristics of their cultures must be considered and, where possible, the classes of their population from which were derived the Negroes who were brought to Haiti. In addition, the importance of knowing the types of Frenchmen who migrated to the island during its colonial period and of understanding the modes of life they followed and presented to their slaves must be viewed as of the first order, while, finally, the manner in which these two sets of traditions were eventually forged into the structure of Haitian life as seen today must be analyzed if more than a superficial glimpse of this life is to result.

Writing in 1730, a Jesuit priest named Pierre François

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in descent, so there were "colored" folk who were slaves. As time went on, the lighter-colored slaves were usually employed as house-servants rather than field-hands, bringing about a continuous dilution of the Negro blood that flowed in these strains, and a lightening of their skins. And such was the prestige attached to light color that the mixed-bloods, even though slaves, felt themselves superior to free Negroes of undiluted African stock. This attitude derived from the fact that the lighter slaves were most often manumitted, particularly if they were the children of their owners, and that in other situations, when as slaves they gained the favor of their masters, they were permitted to engage in some remunerative enterprise with the proceeds of which they eventually might purchase their own freedom. These free people of color, or *affranchis*, formed an important part of the Haitian population in pre-Revolutionary times,[13] and played a principal role in the development of Haitian culture. It was through them that European civilization flowed, since because of the closeness of their contacts with the whites they were the instrument by means of which the aboriginal African heritage of the slaves was modified to produce the forms in which it is found in Haiti today.[13]

Yet for all the importance of the freed mixed-bloods in the attainment of Haitian independence and in the fixing of the patterns of Haitian culture, they, like the whites, were but relatively few in number, their strength being but from five to ten per cent of that of slaves.[14] In attempting to analyze the manner in which the present amalgam that is the civilization of Haiti was formed, it is consequently necessary to revert to a consideration of those who were in the majority, the full-blooded Negroes. The tribes from which these Negroes were principally derived have been indicated, together with the outlines of the civilizations of the region of Africa from which they were drawn. To this must be added, as has been for the whites with whom they came in contact, an analysis of the so-

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121 174 567 162 cial classes to which they belonged, as well as the circumstances of their enslavement, their treatment in Africa before shipment to the New World and during the voyage, their initiation into their new mode of life, and the manner in which they lived as slaves, since all of these facts had considerable bearing on the processes which shaped the behavior of their descendants who now inhabit the island.

171 567 The integrated political organization of West Africa has been described, as well as the important fact that the class stratification in that region was almost as fixed and its social implications almost as far-reaching as in France. Even the early writers recognized that not all slaves came from the same ranks of society, just as they understood that there were various ways in which enslavement could be achieved. Père Labat, who lived in the West Indies for many years, listed four classes from which slaves were drawn. First, he says, were those whose punishments against native law had been commuted to perpetual banishment — that is, to slavery " for the private profit of the kings "; second were the prisoners of war; third were those who, already the slaves of native princes or of those persons to whom they had been given by these princes, were sold to meet the need of their masters for money; while fourth, comprising the greatest proportion of the slaves, were those snatched from their homes by the marauding bands of robbers who, with the connivance of native rulers, carried on these raids to satisfy the demands of the European dealers.[15] This classification and others of the period, though generally accepted and repeated by later writers, tells little concerning the ranks of society from which the slaves were drawn, except as this may be inferred. For this one must go to present-day West Africa, where a lively tradition of the slave-trade has survived and offers valuable supplementary information.[16]

000 In the light of the existing traditions in Dahomey and Nigeria, it is evident that from the point of view of the African, Labat's four classes must be compressed into two — the

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stew," which has continued current from the time of its publication by St. John until today.[48] Yet African religious practices were being constantly combated by the Catholic Church, for even in the period of revolt the priests had remained largely unharmed, and when Christophe was elevated to the throne, he appointed two archbishops. After the establishment of the Republic, Catholicism continued as the State religion, so that by the early nineteenth century, as Mackenzie mentions, thirty-eight clergy were active in Haiti, all under the control of the Bishop of Santo Domingo, and all presumably nominated and paid by the President of Haiti.[49] Though for a period there was an attempt to develop a national Church, the missionary work done during the colonial days left too strong a tradition of Catholicism to be overcome, and consequently a Concordat was signed with Rome in 1860, which has remained in effect ever since.[50]

178 Though the story of the cultural history of Haiti between 1804 and the present cannot thus be more than sketched, yet the background is known, and enough can be gathered from accounts of Haitian life during this interval to enable us to see that the varied cultural impulses were shaping the lives of the people throughout these years. With some understanding of the roots of the resulting culture in French and African traditions, then, let us once more turn to the valley of Mirebalais and consider the life of the Haitian peasant as it is lived today.

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CHAPTER XIII

AFRICA AND EUROPE IN HAITIAN LIFE

With the historical background of Haitian culture and its present-day organization in mind, we may now seek to disentangle the varied sources from which the institutions described in the preceding pages have been derived. The formalized expressions of religion will be treated in the chapter which follows; here the manner in which Europe and Africa have determined the forms of other phases of Haitian peasant life will be analyzed. 121

Even such a simple aspect of peasant life as the house, or *caille*, as it is termed, furnishes an illustration of this intermingling of cultures. In the countryside the typical dwelling is a rectangular structure of two rooms with a thatched gabled roof and walls of woven withes daubed with mud.[1] The rectangular floor plan and the roof are of West African type, but since both of these are also familiar in Europe, the house thus probably represents the coalescence of two dwelling forms which were originally not strikingly unlike each other. The type of thatching is purely African, as is the wall construction, for walls of twilled withes can be seen in West Africa today. On the other hand, what there is of furniture is entirely European. The African stool has given way to the 342 171 352 179

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APPENDIX I

THE GODS OF THE VODUN PANTHEON

ONE of the most impressive facts about studies of Haitian peasant belief is the absence of any attempt at systematic treatment of the deities of the *vodun* cult, as concerns either their attributes, their functions, or their relationship to one another. Indeed, there are but two exceptions to this statement; Dorsainvil (I, pp. 174–5) has published a list of the names of gods, placing them in categories according to their African derivations, and Parsons (I, *passim*) has made available her notes on the characteristics of the deities of which she was told while working in the island. Otherwise, one reads merely of "the serpent-god Damballa," or of "Papa Ogun," or some other isolated designation. It therefore seemed of capital importance in making this study to obtain both names of deities and as much information concerning these gods as possible, and the resulting data are presented here. 776 114 [121]

One reason why perhaps not more of such "systematic theology" of *vodun* as exists has been made available is the great degree of individual variation which confronts the student seeking this kind of information, since differences of opinion are invariably encountered. Even priests do not by any means agree, for these men and women are supreme individualists, each being the worshipper of particular deities and exploiting special skills, with the result that the frame of reference within 776 184 794 [793]

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APPENDIX II

SOME COMMENTS ON METHOD

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THE MATERIAL presented in this book was gathered during the summer of 1934, when an expedition was arranged that made it possible for Mrs. Herskovits and myself to spend a little more than three months in Mirebalais. For so comparatively short a stay, it was particularly advantageous to have two persons carry on the work, each of whom brought to the study of Haitian culture a background of experience with related Negro civilizations in the New World and in West Africa. This enabled the study to begin at a point of considerable familiarity with the underlying sanctions of Haitian institutions.

According to plan, the investigation was concentrated in a restricted region. It therefore follows that unless explicitly stated, all references to custom and belief in this book have bearing only upon the folk of the valley where the study was conducted. No sweeping generalizations for all of Haiti are to be deduced, for regional variations do exist and are of no little importance in suggesting African tribal differences in custom which have been retained because of the African tradition of cultural autonomy for separate localities.

The greatest disadvantage of a short field-study is that the resulting picture of the culture must of necessity be a seasonal one. No first-hand description of the important festivities that

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mark the New Year, the time of harvest, All Saints' Day, or 114
Easter can be given; on the other hand, the accounts of those 121
portions of the agricultural cycle that take place during the rainy season, especially the operations of the important co-operative work-groups, could be followed carefully. In the field of religion, good fortune and a friendly entrée, the harvest of many months spent in field-work among Negro peoples elsewhere, but above all in Guinée — Africa — afforded invitations to a number of private ceremonies that might occur at any season. And the same background, together with the insatiable interest of the Negro in the nature and the functioning of his gods, made for such detailed discussions of native theological concept and philosophical point of view as could not have been bettered no matter what the time of year.

In the field, the procedure followed in earlier investiga- 122
tions was continued; a house was found in the village where it 124
was possible to settle down and quietly observe life as it drifted past the door. A number of acquaintances became habitual visitors, and these, together with those others whose services as interpreters were needed, especially in the early days of the stay when the understanding of Créole and the ability to converse in it were limited, constituted those to whom questions were most frequently put or to whom happenings that had been observed were referred for clarification. Agreement on all points, or any point, in fact, bearing either on belief or ritual observance was by no means invariably found, but soundness of method in the study of culture must recognize that there are no "correct" answers to questions of custom; and that the acceptance of the fact of individual differences of behavior and point of view within the general framework of a given set of traditions is the only valid approach to the realities of human civilization.

Obviously, not all the material presented here is the result 123
of first-hand observation, for much insight can be derived 124
from the method of question and answer when carefully used

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tity in the scheme of things. Implicit in this is a sense of dignity that does not permit a man to escape the dictates set by any caste lines that may be drawn. The ethnographer, again, especially if he be a white man, has what has been called a high degree of social visibility, and any attempt to live according to the canons of native life would forthwith expose him to the thrusts of a deadly weapon in the hands of the Negro, the weapon most destructive of that mutual respect that is the basis for all free and friendly intercourse between two human beings, whatever their race — ridicule. In Negro cultures the white student must be content to remain what he actually is, an observer. He can and must be, if his work is to be of real worth, a sympathetic observer, and given patience, tact, and sincerity, he will form warm friendships among the native folk after he comes to know them well, so that as a friend it will not be denied him to share with them their inner values. It is on this basis that the work reported on in this volume was carried out. 123

Another aspect of method is implicit in the form in which the field material has been presented in this book. Studies such as this, concerned with a people whose ascertainable past history shows the effect of first-hand, continued contact between two cultures, have in recent years come to be termed *acculturation* studies. Investigations of this sort differ from those of a more conventional type in that they not only recognize and stress the fact that contact between peoples is basic to human life; but on the assumption that all cultures, no matter how remote or primitive, reflect this fact, frankly take as their material the customs of societies where the technology, habits, and beliefs are the result of definitely ascertainable historic contacts. For this approach holds that if a competent analysis is made of the base-line from which the process of change in a given society took its beginnings, and if the effects of the applications of these stimuli are carefully recorded, a more pre- 121

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•121 cise determination of the dynamics of cultural change and the inner relationship of cultural elements will be possible than can come from the use of any other method.

It is not suggested that other approaches to these problems have not made their contributions of importance, nor that they will not in the future continue to aid in throwing light on the difficult questions relating to the nature of culture and its interaction with its human carriers. But those who are devoting themselves to the discovery of historical processes through "reconstructions" of the movements of peoples and cultures tend to neglect the inner relationships that give to a culture the significance it has for those who live under it. In similar fashion, those who abjure history and devote themselves to the analyses of the interrelationships and functioning of the elements of a single remote "simple" society are handicapped by the static nature of their approach, by their neglect of the basic principle that every culture is a unique historical continuum, and by their resulting naïveté in the face of cultural change.

The gap between these positions is filled by the study of acculturation. If this approach be considered from the side of cultural dynamics, it is seen that of all who study primitive societies, the student of acculturation alone works under the conditions of control afforded by reference to recorded history. On the other hand, he is also in a strategic position to study the interrelationship between the elements of a given culture and the manner in which the functioning whole influences the individuals who live under it. For how better analyze the mechanisms of culture than under those conditions where, to varying degrees, forces that are known entities rather than hypothetical reconstructions have been operative or are actually at work? How better attack the difficult problems of the inner relationships between the elements of a given culture and their influence on the human psyche than in those situations where the psychological stresses and strains

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incident upon culture-change enable the student to observe, under conditions of known historical control, the results of changes in settled habits and belief and behavior? 121

Foremost among the considerations that present themselves in this connection is that of the value of utilizing historical documentation as an aid in the study of culture. This has general relevance, since the obliviousness of students of primitive societies to historical records bearing upon the peoples they study is a commonplace, while no less so is the failure of historians adequately to treat the information they uncover about primitive peoples in the records through which they have worked. In a sense, this is neither surprising nor blameworthy. Each group has its own techniques, so that just as the ethnologist is not competent as an archivist, in like manner the historian finds it difficult both to assess the value of information concerning primitive folk, and to present it so that its greatest usefulness may be realized. 121 127

In studying Haitian culture, however, the employment of both historical and ethnological data is almost mandatory. The serious errors that a lack of both kinds of background has given rise to cannot be overlooked, matters so fundamental as the names of African tribes given the slaves in the early historical sources being an important case in point. Thus, the term *Caplahou*, a geographical one, is given as a tribal designation in a number of modern works, while elsewhere the Ibo are listed as a Nago sub-tribe, quite without realization that the Ibo and Yoruban Nago not only are separated by a considerable distance, but that in their cultural affiliations they differ widely. More striking, and more amusing, is the translation of the word *marassa* given by one popularizer who, lacking knowledge of the existence of the twin cult in Africa, rendered it as "the spirit of the race." 121 127 114

On the other hand, attempts to interpret Haitian culture without reference to historical documentation have also been subject to unfortunate errors. Significant here are the failures 121 127

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121 to recognize that many of the condemned traits of Haitian
127 culture ascribed to innate Negro characteristics actually represent retentions of the patterns of the pre-Revolutionary masters of the island. In the combination of the two disciplines, then — the utilization of available historical sources concerning a people to aid in an understanding of their ethnology, and the use of material derived from the study of present-day primitive folk to aid the historian in evaluating and elucidating his findings — the potentialities of this dual approach are evident in this study of the forces behind Haitian acculturation, and its results.

121 Attention may finally be called to the range of problems inherent in the phenomenon of socialized ambivalence marking so much of Haitian psychology, whose attack should add to an understanding of the influence of culture upon the formation of personality. For evidently those situations where acculturation is continuing or has constituted a factor of importance in the ascertainable historic past of a people afford many more searching leads than those others where a stable, " uncontaminated " series of cultural patterns create far fewer problems of adjustment and maladjustment.

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Preface

Every student of Haitian life is soon impressed by the richness of the materials spread out before him and the necessity of limiting his field of investigation. A study of Haitian religious practices, for example, draws one deeper and deeper into profusion, variation, and contradiction. One finds little difficulty in drawing a generalized picture with swift, bold lines; but when he descends into detail he discovers that the broad generalizations of the religious system contain within them many shifting and even warring motifs, and that what in one region is held to be true is not so regarded in another. The gods of *Vodoun* that are revered in one village are given only perfunctory treatment in another. Rites for the dead have a common denominator everywhere in the country, but each community brings to them something of its own or emphasizes traditions that elsewhere are forgotten. So it is also with music and dancing. A traditional drum rhythm may have one name in the north and another in the south, or a certain rhythm may be called by different names. There are diverse opinions about which dances are preferred by certain deities. The meaning of a song can be interpreted differently by different people. It is therefore no wonder that competent works on Haiti do not completely agree with one another in many respects, or that they seem, now and then, to be saying different or even contradictory things. Yet in many instances the seeming inconsistencies are in reality only minor variants within an overall scheme.

The purpose of this book is to present a broad view of certain aspects of Haitian culture and wherever possible to extract some of the flavor of Haitian thinking as well as its sense. It is easy to be fooled in regard to both. I remember seeing an old bearded man in the mountains beyond Furcy walking around his freshly hoed garden breaking a ripe tomato into small juicy bits which he scattered on the ground. It was about as primitive a method of planting as I had ever seen, and I wondered if even

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

one seed from that tomato would ever take root under the hot sun. Some time later, when I knew this man well, I talked to him about the care with which seeds must be planted if they are to grow properly. I told him how *we* grew *our* tomatoes. He listened carefully, nodding his head. When I had finished he said: "Yes, that must be a good way to do things in your country. But here in this valley God is good. He does not forget his children. From the broken tomato many plants will sprout. When God is good to you, you do not have to count the seeds." I suggested that perhaps one should not waste any of the precious seeds that God had provided; and to this he replied: "How is there waste? My garden is made to flourish by Zaka [the country man's special deity]. Some people give Zaka a feast every year, but between times they forget. Zaka helps me in my work, and I don't forget him. When I break the tomato and put it on the ground that way, it is a little taste for Zaka. Whatever I plant, I give him some. He is good to me, I am good to him."

What I learned from many incidents like this one was that the eye does not always see correctly. The old man was not just planting tomatoes, nor was he performing a conventionalized ritual act. It was a highly personalized act of faith in nature and confidence in the deity who shared his work.

A large part of this book deals with Vodoun, the religious practices based on West African traditions. One soon discovers that the songs and dances of Vodoun ritual are not merely music and motion supplementing and decorating more serious affairs. Virtually every aspect of Vodoun ritual is placative or invocational. The songs that are sung and the dances that are danced are direct supplication of various supernatural forces.

Undoubtedly, a number of principles which are put forward in this study do not apply equally to every region of Haiti; but they are, I think, true in general terms. Not until one has accepted the fact that different explanations exist for given phenomena, that the same rites are performed in different fashion in different places, and that the cult priests themselves do not agree on many details, may one begin to work toward a general view of the Haitian scene.

All of Haitian life is not Vodoun. And there are of course some Haitians who are relatively outside the central circle of its influence. But the inner meanings of Vodoun and its relationship to the total view of life permeate the entire scene. Music, too, binds together practically the entire fabric of Haitian existence. It is essential not only to the cult temple but to countless workaday activities. Agrarian work groups often perform their tasks to the accompaniment of a drum. And in the cult temple, the iron hoe of the fields often serves as a percussion instrument.

The Drum and the Hoe is the result of studies made over a period of

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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[p. v]

INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EDITION

By Sidney W. Mintz*

THE *Haitian People*, by James G. Leyburn, was first published by the Yale University Press in 1941. The author, a sociologist, sought to provide his readers with a "connected story of the growth of . . . [Haiti's] social institutions out of the backgrounds of slavery and French colonial life . . . [and] of the slow shaping of these institutions through the nineteenth century" (p. v). Asserting that a people's past is an essential aspect of the full understanding of their present, Leyburn wasted no time in arguments over the disciplinary affiliation of his research results: "Whether the book be classified as social history or as sociology is largely a matter of indifference, for the line between these subjects can hardly be drawn without doing violence to comprehensive insight. To view a people with understanding in the characteristic setting of their institutions—marriage, religion, property arrangements, and the rest—one needs not only a description of their ways, but also a knowledge of how they came to be what they are" (p. vi). 114 121

The Haitian People enjoyed an immediate success. One of the very few books to deal with that country's crucial century of isolation (1804–1915), it is distinguished by careful scholarship, restrained interpretation, and a refreshing modesty; in these regards it differs from nearly every modern work written on the Republic of Haiti. And although many excellent books and articles on Haitian life have appeared since 1941, anyone who wishes to get the best interpretive overview of the history and culture of that country is well advised to start with Leyburn's contribution. 114

When *The Haitian People* first appeared, it was given a warm and

* Dr. Rémy Bastien, M. Leslie F. Manigat, Jacqueline Wei Mintz, and Mr. Michael G. Owen provided valuable critical help in the preparation of this introduction. The author of *The Haitian People*, Professor James G. Leyburn, encouraged me to undertake the writing of the introduction, and offered useful advice on its form and content. I am much indebted to all of these persons for their generous assistance, but they are in no way responsible for the interpretations I have made here.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

War II and its aftermath, and the subsequent dissipation of those gains; the "social revolution" of January 1946, ushering in the Estimé regime; the boom in the arts and tourism, and their later contractions; the rise and subsequent fall of the Magloire government (1950-56), and the uneasy interregnum that followed it; and finally, the growth of the Duvalier monolith.

Over the span of those years, social science literature on Haiti has increased significantly, and outsiders, as well as the Haitians themselves, can now know much more about the country and its people. But some of the most important questions raised by Leyburn's book remain substantially unanswered. *The Haitian People* is a classic because its author phrased so well the major issues in the growth of Haitian national institutions, and no subsequent work is likely to supplant it in this regard. But its value has been heightened over the years by the lack of any equally penetrating analysis dealing with the period since 1941 or specifying the relative importance of various institutional forces in the contemporary structure of Haitian society. Thus, for instance, much too little is known of the culture and social organization of Haiti's predominantly rural population, in spite of considerable anthropological research since 1941. More detailed studies of the rural economy are particularly necessary, both to assess developmental possibilities and to understand better the relationship of rural sectors to the national economy. Sociological and economic analyses of folk religion—*vodoun*—are wanting, even though psychological and descriptive studies of this religion have appeared in large numbers. The general conceptual problem of community definition, structure, and organization, which has long plagued students in the Caribbean area, has been barely raised in the case of rural Haiti. Finally, our understanding of Haitian class structure, both local and national, and its corollaries in economic, political, and social institutions, is still slight. Here the need for more research seems particularly acute, since no adequate grasp of the nature of Haitian society at large will be possible until the fit of the rural sectors with the national class structure is better known. On this understanding, among others, may hinge the likelihood of success of any future developmental effort in Haiti.

It was with Haiti as a nation that Leyburn dealt in his book, and his analysis of national institutions and social structure excited more comment and reflection within Haiti itself than any other part of his

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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114 treatment. In the absence of sufficient analytic material on the inter-
121 vening years since his book was written, a prefatory note such as this can do little more than comment on Haitian society, either in terms of its present design or in terms of the recent events that may have modified it.

121
114 The central thesis of Leyburn's book is that Haitian society is sharply divided into two segments, and that the national institutional structure is such that no significant alteration in that division has occurred in the entire course of Haiti's history as a sovereign nation. At the base of the society is the rural agricultural sector, making up perhaps as much as 95 per cent of the population; at the top the elite, which dominates the governmental apparatus and all national institutions. These two segments of the society differ, in Leyburn's view, in all important regards: level of income, source of income, education, language, religion, social forms, values and attitudes, and all else. By carefully describing the history of Haitian society from the eve of the revolution until the midst of the United States occupation, he reveals both the origin of this vast social cleavage and the various means employed for its perpetuation. Leyburn was so impressed by the gap which separated yeomanry and elite that he chose to label these social segments castes rather than classes. Members of the elite earn their livings as rentiers, merchants, professionals, and in government, and never engage in manual labor of any sort. They are predominantly urban in residence; their sons attend private lower schools, and then go on to higher education, usually abroad. They are French-speaking, although they also speak Creole, Haiti's national language. Elite religion is Catholicism, elite forms of marriage and domestic organization are "legitimate" and "western." Elite members view themselves as a kind of aristocracy, and feel little commonality in their sharing of Haiti and of Haitian history with the yeomen.

In sharp contrast, the yeomanry is rural, poor, works the land, is illiterate and Creole-speaking only, believes in *vodoun* rather than in orthodox Catholicism, usually marries by common law and is sometimes polygynous, and remains substantially isolated from the outer world. Finally and importantly—though its particular significance is changing—the elite differs from the rural sector in that the countryman is predominantly negroid in phenotype, while members of the elite are prevailingly lighter-skinned.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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FOREWORD

THE United States, embarked upon a policy of good neighborliness toward the other countries of the Western Hemisphere, is beginning to improve its acquaintance with the republics to the south. Most of its efforts at present are directed toward an understanding of the large and important powers, such as Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina, which, because of their size and resources, are potentially our greatest allies—or, if we fail in our policies, our sources of greatest danger. There are, however, twenty republics to the south of us, many of them small. A truly good neighbor does not ignore near-by families who are lacking in wealth, even those who are known to differ among themselves.

Of the twenty Latin-American republics, the second smallest is Haiti. The United States was only twenty years old when the people of this little country (which, for all its diminutive size, had been France's wealthiest colony of the eighteenth century) fought their own war of independence, and in 1804 founded the second free state in the hemisphere. Haiti has many claims upon the attention of the United States: its war against France in 1802–3 was at least a contributing factor in Napoleon's willingness to sell Louisiana to this country; it was the first independent Negro state in the modern world; its foreign policy has long been intertwined with our own; finally, the nineteen-year American Occupation of the country has brought us into an even closer relationship with Haiti than independent factors could produce.

When the country was young there was a spate of books trying to answer the question whether a nation ruled by blacks could long endure. In more recent years, works on the Antillean republic have generally dealt with single phases of its life, as for example its political relations with the United States, or its "Voodoo" practices. There is, however, no connected story of the growth of its social institutions out of the backgrounds of slavery and French colonial life, or of the slow shaping of these institutions through the nineteenth century. It is this growth which the present volume undertakes to describe. Political history has been introduced only so far as necessary to provide the convenient pegs upon which most of us are accus-

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

121 tomed to hang our knowledge of the growth, development, and decay of social institutions. Whether the book be classified as social history or as sociology is largely a matter of indifference, for the line between those subjects can hardly be drawn without doing violence to comprehensive insight. To view a people with understanding in the characteristic setting of their institutions—marriage, religion, property arrangements, and the rest—one needs not only a description of their ways, but also a knowledge of how they came to be what they are.

167 Two centuries ago nine tenths of the Negro ancestors of the modern
178 Haitians were still in Africa, living under the mores of their own localities,
563 and for the most part entirely unacquainted with the mores of the Western World (or, as we ethnocentrically call it, the "civilized" world). First transplanted as slaves to the Caribbean island, then gaining their freedom after some mixture of blood with the white French, the Haitians have built up not only a state but a Haitian culture. The problems to be discussed in this book are as follows:

114 What social structure was set up after the independence in 1804, and by what methods? This question calls for a description of the economic, political, religious, marital, and class organization of the Haitians.

How did this structure function during the next century? There is often a difference between a people's expressed intentions and their ability to carry them out: a state sometimes borrows from some other power a type of constitution which, though logically admirable, does not work effectively under local conditions.

Which structural and functional elements of Haitian life were social heritages from the African past; which were taken over from French models; which were mergings of the two, and which seem to be variations newly produced on Haitian soil?

178 The great leaders of early days, Toussaint L'Ouverture, Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, and Boyer, made an effort to direct Haitian economic and political life along definite lines; however, the pressure of daily life, the necessity of feeding half a million people most of whom had had no experience in solving complicated problems of any sort, soon made it obvious that logical social structures would not long remain logical. The ways evolved were characteristically Haitian; ways in general unplanned, grow-

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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XIV
COMMERCE

•121 489 THIS book is no more fundamentally concerned with the detailed economic history of Haiti than with its intimate political events; our attention is bent here, as elsewhere, on the broad functioning of social institutions. Peasant agricultural life has already been depicted: the products of the peasant's labor, when marketed, have brought whatever prosperity the state and its ruling caste have enjoyed. These marketed products have consisted chiefly of coffee, with a very little sugar and cotton. The present section concerns Haiti's economic relations with the outside world.

175 439 It was the commerce of the colony of Saint-Domingue which made that small division of the Antillean island so valuable to its mother country. Exports in the last year before the revolution are estimated at fifty million dollars (461 million livres) in terms of modern money.[1] Although commerce was seriously interrupted by the troubled state of affairs in the 1790's, the upswing of prosperity under Toussaint indicated that the country had still highly profitable enterprises. Merchants in the young United States were particularly intent upon the benefits to be derived from trade in molasses. All foreign trade was violently interrupted once more in 1802–3, when the revolution was in progress; but the interest of larger nations in what would issue from the Haitian declaration of independence in 1804 was out of all apparent proportion to the size of the tiny country. Their interest was partially in the question of whether ex-slaves could rule themselves politically; even more they were interested in the economic future of Haiti.

Three divergent economic policies were pursued by the early rulers, three variations among which future presidents might choose the one in their opinion most profitable. That of Dessalines was progressively to isolate Haiti, tolerating foreign trade only so long as it seemed necessary to establish the country's self-sufficiency. Christophe's, on the other hand, was the traditional monarch's

1. H. P. Davis, *Black Democracy* (2d ed., New York, 1929), p. 25; Antenor Firmin, *M. Roosevelt, président des États-Unis, et la république d'Haïti* (New York, 1905), pp. 435–436.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

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XIX

SOCIOLOGICAL POSTSCRIPT

ALTHOUGH conceived along sociological lines, this book has made an effort to avoid the use of many technical sociological terms, and to keep discussion on a basis intelligible to the layman. The emphasis has been placed upon the major institutions of Haiti, with such excursions into political history as were necessary to establish sequences; the main objective has constantly been to show what adjustments a group of ex-slaves in a tropical country made to their sudden independence, and to indicate the course of readjustments during the succeeding century or more. /21

It is never given to a people to start with a clean slate. This generation is inevitably, to a large degree, what the preceding generation made it, in habits of mind, in rules of behavior, in ambitions, in taste. The younger generation does not succeed the older, but rather lives along with it, becoming a part of all it has been, unconsciously assimilating traditional rules, attitudes, ways. Yet young people, meeting their own crises, are perpetually restive under the codes of their elders, and are continually exerting pressure to change, or even effecting minor changes. The result is that the mental characteristics we know as "culture" are never stationary. Some cultures change rapidly under the stimulus of crisis and international contacts, while others give the impression of being quiescent because of isolation and lack of outside pressure.

In spite of the fact that mankind never has the opportunity to begin wholly afresh, shaking off the trammels of a miserable past, it nevertheless sometimes happens that the retaining walls which have kept culture within narrow channels may, like the collapse of a dyke, suddenly give way, allowing a flood of rapid changes to occur. Eventually the turbulence will subside, and then one can see, as it were, a relatively placid lake with new landmarks hardly recognizable in terms of what used to exist when the old dykes held. The Russian Revolution of 1917 and the end of the dictatorship of Díaz in Mexico are examples.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

184 ranging from those requiring strict observance down to those permitting latitude of behavior.

114 It has, then, been the primary purpose of this book to show the gradual development (the word is used with no connotation of [121] progress toward a conscious goal) of a consistent group of mores and social institutions in Haiti since the moment of her independence. The course of Haitian social history provides an almost unlimited opportunity for further study along the lines of contemporary American sociological research. Certain skeptics have pertinently criticized this sociology as narrowly provincial, calling it a social science limited only to the American scene, and valid consequently only for American society. Such a charge is precisely the reverse of that directed at European sociology, which finds congenial the development of philosophies of history independent of research in any specific field.

If the active American sociologist should extend his field of investigation he would, whatever his dominant interest, find much to reward his research in Haiti. For example, some of the most productive work in the United States has been in studies of neighborhoods,[2] communities,[3] and regions.[4] No neighborhood study has ever been made in Haiti, nor any regional study. Herskovits[5] has pointed the way to all future students of Haitian communities. Most research done by scholars in Haiti, however, has concerned itself with one or another of the social institutions (religion has been the most popular) rather than with thorough studies of individual communities.

For the social psychologist Haiti presents a rich and untouched field. It has the advantages of a limited geography and population, and so is less complex than the United States; yet Haitian problems are familiar enough to make comparison with American problems valid. Not only has there as yet been no investigation of the process of socialization, that is, of what happens to children as they take on

2. The neighborhood is generally defined as a primary group in society in which face-to-face contacts are frequent and intimate.

3. The community is a group of people living in comparative proximity, sharing basic interests and activities, having relatively common usages and traditions, and acknowledging common rule.

4. The region is a functional part of a larger area of economic, cultural, and geographical homogeneity. The Southeastern States of the United States are conceived as a region; in Haiti, the five departments are regions.

5. In his *Life in a Haitian Valley*. This is a study of the community in and around Mirebalais.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

conquests, establishing and providing for his family? The answer is that such a reconciliation is unnecessary where religion takes its place beside other interests and activities and where, psychologically, the supernatural world is on the same plane as the natural one, having its dangers as nature presents dangers, but also offering its compensations as do other phases of existence. 114 105 182

Investigations of native life such as this one not only require generous financial support, but have need of the sympathetic understanding of those in a position to extend helpful practical aid and advice in the field. To the many persons and institutions whose co-operation made this study possible, it is a privilege to record here my appreciation. Initial support of the work and later appropriations for preparing the material for publication were had from the Social Science Research Councils of Columbia and Northwestern Universities; while a grant-in-aid from the American Council of Learned Societies permitted the recording of songs in the field; and another from the National Research Council allowed motion pictures of motor behavior to be taken — films from which a number of the accompanying illustrations have been derived. Concepts relating to the problem of the results of contact between peoples possessing different customs, habits, and beliefs — a principle objective in the long-term program of research on Negro cultures of which this work in Haiti constitutes but a part — were sharpened through the discussions I have been privileged to have with my associates on the Committee of Acculturation of the Social Science Research Council, Professors Ralph Linton, Robert Redfield, and Donald Young. 122

Official aid in Haiti could not have been more generously accorded. The sympathy of His Excellency President Stenio Vincent, and M. Jacques C. Antoine, chief of the presidential secretariat in 1934 and at present Secretary to the Legation

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

122 of Haiti at Washington, made for co-operation by all those in the government of whom it was necessary to seek assistance. Mr. Norman Armour, then American Minister to Haiti and now Minister to Canada, was kind enough to interest himself in this study and personally saw to it that its prosecution was facilitated in innumerable ways, while Colonel Vogel, U.S.M.C., then Major General commanding the Garde d'Haiti, was helpful at a number of strategic points, as was his successor, General Calixte. Aid and inspiration were derived from many friendly conversations with the two outstanding students of Haitian folk-life, Dr. Price-Mars and Dr. J. C. Dorsainvil. My indebtedness to the works they have published on the subject is shown by the references to their publications given at the end of this volume, for their researches must be accepted as basic by any serious investigator of Haitian customs. Their cordial advice to a fellow-student constitutes one of the most pleasant memories of this field-work, as does the assistance given me by Professor Camille Lherisson, of the Haitian Medical College, and M. Henry G. Sylvain, Engineer of the Service des Travaux Publiques.

000 In the valley of Mirebalais itself, the friendliness of those with whom it was my privilege to associate is agreeable to recollect; if they are not named here individually, it is because of the wish of many of them to remain anonymous. However, to my friends Général Léonard Cantave, his sister, Mme. Vesta Cantave, M. Léonce Joachim, and M. Galbert Constance, I cannot sufficiently express my appreciation for their co-operativeness, for the geniality with which we held long discussions of interest to us all, and for the weight which their endorsement of this work carried with the members of the community at large. Similarly, and finally, I wish also to record my deep gratitude for the assistance given me by my wife, who not only participated fully in the rigors of field-work, as she has participated in all other field expeditions undertaken in the course of this research program, but

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1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

mark the New Year, the time of harvest, All Saints' Day, or Easter can be given; on the other hand, the accounts of those portions of the agricultural cycle that take place during the rainy season, especially the operations of the important co-operative work-groups, could be followed carefully. In the field of religion, good fortune and a friendly entrée, the harvest of many months spent in field-work among Negro peoples elsewhere, but above all in Guinée — Africa — afforded invitations to a number of private ceremonies that might occur at any season. And the same background, together with the insatiable interest of the Negro in the nature and the functioning of his gods, made for such detailed discussions of native theological concept and philosophical point of view as could not have been bettered no matter what the time of year.

In the field, the procedure followed in earlier investigations was continued; a house was found in the village where it was possible to settle down and quietly observe life as it drifted past the door. A number of acquaintances became habitual visitors, and these, together with those others whose services as interpreters were needed, especially in the early days of the stay when the understanding of Créole and the ability to converse in it were limited, constituted those to whom questions were most frequently put or to whom happenings that had been observed were referred for clarification. Agreement on all points, or any point, in fact, bearing either on belief or ritual observance was by no means invariably found, but soundness of method in the study of culture must recognize that there are no "correct" answers to questions of custom; and that the acceptance of the fact of individual differences of behavior and point of view within the general framework of a given set of traditions is the only valid approach to the realities of human civilization.

Obviously, not all the material presented here is the result of first-hand observation, for much insight can be derived from the method of question and answer when carefully used

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

The Drum and the Hoe is the result of studies made over a period of years. Several short sections of this book have appeared in substance in *Haiti Singing* (1939), the *Musical Quarterly*, the *Journal of Negro History*, and other journals. The song and story texts presented in several chapters were taken on disc and tape recorders during nine separate field trips to Haiti, between 1937 and 1955. They have been selected from more than six hundred examples recorded by this method. 114 126 128

Support for work on these recorded materials was received from the American Council of Learned Societies and the American Philosophical Society. Research on African survivals in the New World was aided by a Guggenheim fellowship. Originals or copies of some of the tape and disc recordings are now in the archives of Indiana University and Northwestern University. 122 126

The persons who helped me gather songs, stories, legends, and lore were innumerable. Many of them I did not know by name, but I want to thank them as well as the following friends for their open-hearted assistance in many ways: 115

Voluska Saintvil (Ti Goave), Joseph Dérosier (Cap Haitien), Julia Immacula (Southwest Haiti), Sigbrien Bellis (Port-au-Prince), Vénéise Macélise (Léogane), André Jean (Morne l'Hôpital), Christophe Oxilas (Ti Goave), Edgar Dérosier (Port-au-Prince), Isnardé Din (Léogane), Wilfred Beauchamp (Port-de-Paix), Lydia Augustin (l'Asile), Louise Joseph (Port-au-Prince), St. Élia Alsandor (Jérémie), Georgette Alcède (Southwest Haiti), Élizia Moron (Anse-à-Veau), Prosper Louis (Port-au-Prince), Télisman Charles (Morne l'Hôpital), André Charles (Morne l'Hôpital), Daïs Charles (Anse-à-Veau), Simon Jean (Pétionville), Tonton Cabrit (Morne l'Hôpital), Micano Cassis (Cap Haitien), Louis Desbornes (Port-au-Prince), André Coyotte (Port-au-Prince), Innomine Pierre (Morne l'Hôpital), George Gabriel (Port-au-Prince), Simeon Benjamin (Port-au-Prince), Romain St. Aude (Port-de-Paix), Jean Ravel Pintro (Jérémie), La France Belvue (Anse-à-Veau), Morgina La Vache (Jacmel), Alten St. Ville (Morne l'Hôpital), Abner Juslin (Port-au-Prince), Jean Louis La Rivière (Dondon), St. Jean Nago (La Gonave), Jean Pierre Marigot (Terrier-Rouge), Libera Borderau (Morne Mardi Gras), Charles Hector (Anse-à-Veau), Immacula Lorival (Southwest Haiti), Aléanne François (Port-au-Prince), Felix Charlotin (Southwest Haiti), Julie Gentil (Port-au-Prince), Lena Hibbert (Anse-à-Veau), Ti Yogan Borderau (Léogane), César Jeanbaptiste (Southwest Haiti) and Idamente Joseph (Ti Rivière de Nippes). Special thanks are due Aléis Conrolé, a *houngan* of the region of Morne Mardi Gras, who was generous in many ways in explaining the workings of the cult temple.

I am of course indebted to the work of a number of scholars, cited 127

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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Mirebalais

whose contact with the women of the valley made it possible to obtain information of a kind that would be entirely unavailable to a man working alone. In addition, she has given freely of her knowledge while I was engaged in the preparation of this book; it is only the force of circumstances that prevents it being a collaboration, as reports of our earlier field investigations have been. [114 123]

MELVILLE J. HERSKOVITS

South Woodbury, Vermont
14 August 1936

[p. xii is blank]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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123 124 with a native resident of the locality that is being studied. A great deal was observed, but observation is at best a matter of chance, as, for example, in the matter of birth-customs, which were not witnessed because no birth occurred in a family with whom close relations had been established, as against the ritual of death, where information was checked through observation when a death occurred in the family of friends. If observation alone were relied upon for authentic information, no rounded picture of any culture could be achieved much short of a lifetime of effort. It is entirely possible for an ethnographer who is conversant with the outlines of the culture of a given society to check statements made to him against their probability in terms of the inner logic of the culture he is studying; it is even a simpler matter to obtain independent statements concerning the same facet of behavior and to discover whether, allowing for variations within the logic of the culture, a given explanation or description of a certain custom is to be accepted as valid. There is no question that suspicion or misunderstanding of purpose is the cause of the passing on of much misinformation; but it is remarkable how often, if the student knows patience and does not attempt to probe the most secret phases of a culture during the initial period of his stay, a misleading or evasive explanation given in the early days will later be corrected voluntarily as "a mistake."

123 Much nonsense has been written about the need for the student of the customs of a people to become a "participant observer" of those customs, by doing what, in common parlance, is termed "going native." This may be feasible among some folk — in the South Seas, perhaps — but let it be stated emphatically that this is neither possible nor of benefit among West African Negroes and their New World Negro descendants. There is no tradition that is more deeply shared among them than that of the importance of valuing individual iden-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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tity in the scheme of things. Implicit in this is a sense of dignity that does not permit a man to escape the dictates set by any caste lines that may be drawn. The ethnographer, again, especially if he be a white man, has what has been called a high degree of social visibility, and any attempt to live according to the canons of native life would forthwith expose him to the thrusts of a deadly weapon in the hands of the Negro, the weapon most destructive of that mutual respect that is the basis for all free and friendly intercourse between two human beings, whatever their race — ridicule. In Negro cultures the white student must be content to remain what he actually is, an observer. He can and must be, if his work is to be of real worth, a sympathetic observer, and given patience, tact, and sincerity, he will form warm friendships among the native folk after he comes to know them well, so that as a friend it will not be denied him to share with them their inner values. It is on this basis that the work reported on in this volume was carried out.

Another aspect of method is implicit in the form in which the field material has been presented in this book. Studies such as this, concerned with a people whose ascertainable past history shows *the effect of first-hand, continued contact* between two cultures, have in recent years come to be termed *acculturation* studies. Investigations of this sort differ from those of a more conventional type in that they not only recognize and stress the fact that contact between peoples is basic to human life; but on the assumption that all cultures, no matter how remote or primitive, reflect this fact, frankly take as their material the customs of societies where the technology, habits, and beliefs are the result of definitely ascertainable historic contacts. For this approach holds that if a competent analysis is made of the base-line from which the process of change in a given society took its beginnings, and if the effects of the applications of these stimuli are carefully recorded, a more pre-

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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mark the New Year, the time of harvest, All Saints' Day, or Easter can be given; on the other hand, the accounts of those portions of the agricultural cycle that take place during the rainy season, especially the operations of the important co-operative work-groups, could be followed carefully. In the field of religion, good fortune and a friendly entrée, the harvest of many months spent in field-work among Negro peoples elsewhere, but above all in Guinée — Africa — afforded invitations to a number of private ceremonies that might occur at any season. And the same background, together with the insatiable interest of the Negro in the nature and the functioning of his gods, made for such detailed discussions of native theological concept and philosophical point of view as could not have been bettered no matter what the time of year.

In the field, the procedure followed in earlier investigations was continued; a house was found in the village where it was possible to settle down and quietly observe life as it drifted past the door. A number of acquaintances became habitual visitors, and these, together with those others whose services as interpreters were needed, especially in the early days of the stay when the understanding of Créole and the ability to converse in it were limited, constituted those to whom questions were most frequently put or to whom happenings that had been observed were referred for clarification. Agreement on all points, or any point, in fact, bearing either on belief or ritual observance was by no means invariably found, but soundness of method in the study of culture must recognize that there are no "correct" answers to questions of custom; and that the acceptance of the fact of individual differences of behavior and point of view within the general framework of a given set of traditions is the only valid approach to the realities of human civilization.

Obviously, not all the material presented here is the result of first-hand observation, for much insight can be derived from the method of question and answer when carefully used

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Miscellaneous

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2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 HaRi SV3

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1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

incident upon culture-change enable the student to observe, under conditions of known historical control, the results of changes in settled habits and belief and behavior? 121

Foremost among the considerations that present themselves in this connection is that of the value of utilizing historical documentation as an aid in the study of culture. This has general relevance, since the obliviousness of students of primitive societies to historical records bearing upon the peoples they study is a commonplace, while no less so is the failure of historians adequately to treat the information they uncover about primitive peoples in the records through which they have worked. In a sense, this is neither surprising nor blameworthy. Each group has its own techniques, so that just as the ethnologist is not competent as an archivist, in like manner the historian finds it difficult both to assess the value of information concerning primitive folk, and to present it so that its greatest usefulness may be realized. 121 127

In studying Haitian culture, however, the employment of both historical and ethnological data is almost mandatory. The serious errors that a lack of both kinds of background has given rise to cannot be overlooked, matters so fundamental as the names of African tribes given the slaves in the early historical sources being an important case in point. Thus, the term *Caplahou*, a geographical one, is given as a tribal designation in a number of modern works, while elsewhere the Ibo are listed as a Nago sub-tribe, quite without realization that the Ibo and Yoruban Nago not only are separated by a considerable distance, but that in their cultural affiliations they differ widely. More striking, and more amusing, is the translation of the word *marasa* given by one popularizer who, lacking knowledge of the existence of the twin cult in Africa, rendered it as "the spirit of the race." 121 127 114

On the other hand, attempts to interpret Haitian culture without reference to historical documentation have also been subject to unfortunate errors. Significant here are the failures 121 127

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

121 to recognize that many of the condemned traits of Haitian
127 culture ascribed to innate Negro characteristics actually represent retentions of the patterns of the pre-Revolutionary masters of the island. In the combination of the two disciplines, then — the utilization of available historical sources concerning a people to aid in an understanding of their ethnology, and the use of material derived from the study of present-day primitive folk to aid the historian in evaluating and elucidating his findings — the potentialities of this dual approach are evident in this study of the forces behind Haitian acculturation, and its results.

121 Attention may finally be called to the range of problems inherent in the phenomenon of socialized ambivalence marking so much of Haitian psychology, whose attack should add to an understanding of the influence of culture upon the formation of personality. For evidently those situations where acculturation is continuing or has constituted a factor of importance in the ascertainable historic past of a people afford many more searching leads than those others where a stable, "uncontaminated" series of cultural patterns create far fewer problems of adjustment and maladjustment.

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

[p. 322]

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127 NOTE: When research was first begun upon the economic and social development of Haiti, permission was asked for an examination of Haitian Archives. The reply of the governmental official was cordial and frank. He remarked: "*Nos bouleversements politiques et de nombreux incendies ont occasionné la perte ou la destruction totale d'une partie appréciable des documents haïtiens. Et, il faut l'avouer, avec peine, nous n'avons jamais eu une organisation méthodique pour la conservation des pièces et documents officiels.*" Research in the Archives Générales de la République d'Haïti revealed the truth of the official's statement: there is practically nothing relating to nineteenth-century Haiti. Reliance had, therefore, to be placed upon contemporary accounts, some published, some in manuscript, rather than upon official documents.

Republic of Haiti

113 *Le Moniteur (journal officiel de la République d'Haïti).* This newspaper, begun on
114 Feb. 8, 1845, is an excellent source of officially approved news and comment. Certain administrations during the course of the century have shown a genius, however, for cautious editing of news.

Annual reports of the Service National de la Production Agricole et de l'enseignement rural.

Annual reports of the Représentant fiscal.

Constitution de la République d'Haïti, ratifiée par le plébiscite du 2 juin 1935.

Loi sur le bien rural de famille insaisissable, promulguée en 1934.

Great Britain

Communications Received at the Foreign Office Relative to Hayti (1829). In pursuance of an Address to His Majesty George III on June 10, 1828, the British consul in Haiti, Charles Mackenzie, was directed to make detailed reports upon the economic situation of Haiti. The resulting communications provide an excellent source of information about the Haiti of Boyer's time.

United States

Annual Report of the American High Commissioner at Port-au-Prince, 1923–29.

Report of the President's Commission for the Study and Review of Conditions in the Republic of Haiti, 1930.

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a "nation" in the Dahomé rites; and the Ibo group, though still distinct, is frequently allied with the Dahomé rites or the Guinée rites.

The following list does not pretend to include all the loa known in Haiti. It is doubtful that a complete list could ever be compiled, in view of the continual generation of new deities and the constant cross-fertilization between "nations." The loa are grouped here according to most widespread usage. There are contradictions from which there is no possible escape, and these general groupings will not necessarily correspond to the concepts and practices of any specific locality. It is intended here to give a broad and generalized view.

Under "The Voloun Pantheon" I have placed constellations of deities of Dahomean and Yoruban origin, along with others that are clearly identified with Voloun rites. Under "The Congo and Pétro Pantheons" I have listed the Congo-Guinée loa—consisting mainly of deities associated with Central Africa and deities affiliated with the Pétro rites. Ibo and Kanga loa are grouped together, because in many regions of Haiti the two pantheons appear to be interlocked. A separate listing is given for the Simbi family of water deities in view of their ambivalence; they are sometimes found in the Pétro group and sometimes in the Dahomé, according to local practice.

THE VOIXOUN PANTHEON

Damballa Wedo, or Dan Wedo. One of the most venerable of Haitian loa. He is generally recognized as the husband of Ayida Wèdo, though occasionally the two deities are merged in a personality called Damballa-Ayida. The concept of a single identity for Damballa and Ayida conforms to Dahomean belief. In both Haiti and West Africa, Damballa is identified with the rainbow and is symbolized as a snake.[1] In Haiti he is associated also with rainfall, springs, and fertility. He is sometimes described as "white," and the proper food offering to him is a white chicken. Persons possessed by Damballa usually take on stylized characteristics of snakes. Along with many other important loa, he has become identified with characters in Christian religious belief. There are, in fact, "two" Damballa Wèdos. One, identified with Moses, causes in talking; the other, identified with St. Patrick, never talks. Food offerings for the St. Patrick version of Damballa consist of eggs, flour, sugar, and almond syrup. Damballa remains one of the chief gods of the Dahomey cult in Cuba, and he survived into the last century in New Orleans under the name Damballa.

Ayida Wèdo. Generally regarded in Haiti as the wife of Damballa, Ayida is also symbolized by snake and rainbow, and her color, like Damballa's, is "white." In Dahomey and Nigeria, Ayida is known as a male rather than a female spirit and is regarded there as the native divinity as Damballa, or Dji. In Dahomey, Ayida Wèdo was the great serpent who held up the world. According to one myth, the Creator of the World assigned to Ayida the task of holding up the earth to keep it from falling into the sea. The great serpent coiled himself, tail in mouth, and lay below

1. [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 245 ff. Cf. p 359, Courlander 46.—Am. 1961]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 643 642 The twentieth century began inauspiciously with a succession of dull incompetents in the presidency. General Sam's administration (1896–1902) had been distinguished only by lethargic calm. Nord Alexis (1902–8), over eighty when elected, prolonged the peace by doing nothing to disturb it; he solved his financial problems by issuing paper money, while his political "policy" involved nothing more significant than the sponsoring of festivals to celebrate Haiti's hundred years of independence. The mild revolution which displaced him substituted a president more puerile than oppressive, Antoine Simon (1908–11), who is best revealed in a terse comment by a Haitian author: "When he passed by on a street or through a public square, everyone, foreigners as well as Haitians, must stand still, even stop smoking, and respectfully salute the Head of State. At any instant, without reason, the functionaries of the capital might be called to the Palace to endure his interminable and insipid discourses."[2] A revolution cut short his tedious régime.

Within the next four years six presidents rose and fell. Their administrations were worse than ephemeral; indeed, they hardly deserve the name of governments. Not one of the six had a happy time in office; the first was blown up with his palace, the second is generally thought to have been poisoned, the next three were quickly deposed by revolutions, and the last, after massacring his imprisoned political enemies, was horribly cut into small bits by an infuriated mob. Anarchy then ensued.

175 652 648 For years Haitian presidents had staved off financial collapse by heavy borrowing abroad. United States financial interests were involved in the Bank of Haiti and in a railroad company, while the American government, through its Monroe Doctrine, was disturbed by French and German threats to collect their Haitian debts by force. When President Guillaume Sam[3] was hacked to pieces by the mob, the United States landed Marines from gunboats which were conveniently just outside the harbor of Port-au-Prince. Beginning on July 28, 1915, the Occupation lasted for nineteen years.

128 648 With the question of America's justification in the matter of occupying Haiti this book cannot pretend to deal. As with most large matters of policy, convincing arguments can be offered on both sides. The important fact for this study is that the presence of white

2. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Manuel d'Histoire d'Haïti*, p. 356.
3. Not to be confused with Simon Sam, who had ruled twenty years earlier.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

American Marines in Haiti during the next two decades had definite effects upon the social life of the country.

One of the most immediately observable results was the termination of the long political domination by the blacks, and reëstablishment of the colored élite in government control. The four presidents since 1915, Dartiguenave (1915–22), Borno (1922–30), Roy (1930), and Vincent (1930–41), have all been light-skinned. The United States forces had a definite hand in the election of the first two of these men. America's concern was certainly not to return the government to the colored group, but rather to have as titular heads of state men who were educated, temperate of mind, civil in manners—and, of course, mentally "supple" enough to carry out policies agreeable to the State Department at Washington. Since education had for long been a perquisite of the élite only, and since colored élite outnumbered black élite, the chances were good that the choice should fall upon a colored man in 1915 and 1922. Even so, it may have been pure coincidence that the Americans supported mulattoes rather than Negroes; it can hardly be coincidence that the mulatto presidents since 1915 have filled the key offices with colored men. They would assuredly maintain that they had tried to select persons best fitted for office. The fact remains that there are few blacks in the important ministries.

This return to political power of the colored element was one of the most sweeping transformations effected by the Marines, for once again, as in the golden days of Pétion and Boyer, political prestige accompanied and fortified social position. Since 1843 one black or almost black general had succeeded another as president of the republic, and the élite class had perforce to endure them. Socially tolerated these parvenus generals had been, but accepted never. When the Marines arranged the election of President Dartiguenave they effectively reversed the tradition of a century. Since 1915 there have been several Negro candidates for the presidency; in coming elections there are sure to be others; for the present and the near future it is safe to say there will be no more black non-élite presidents.

Such a prophecy is made with a certain assurance because of another result of the Occupation: reform of the army. All true friends of Haiti knew, as most Haitian statesmen had understood for a hundred years, that the huge standing army was an unmitigated burden to the economic, political, and social stability of the country.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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133 rains become torrents, washing away crops and soil. Brooks which run most of the year the Haitians dignify by the name of "rivière"; not even the largest, however—the Artibonite, which drains over a fifth of the country—is navigable for anything above a rowboat. The second largest "river," Les Trois Rivières, is only 96 kilometres long. Many of the smaller streams disappear into sinkholes or caves in limestone, veritable lost rivers. Even some of the lakes are ephemeral.

133 Most of the best land of the country lies in its few plains flanking
311 the mountains near the coasts, or extending like wedges into the
175 mountainous regions. In the northeast in the country back of Cap-
[134] Haïtien is the Plaine du Nord; here in colonial times were the most flourishing of the French plantations, the palatial residences, and the slaves who in 1791 began the insurrection which ultimately led to Haiti's independence. In the middle region are the Artibonite Plain near the coast, and the Central Plain back of the Black Mountains. Eastward from Port-au-Prince, the capital, is the Cul-de-Sac; and in the southwestern peninsula is the small plain of Les Cayes. All over the country in French days sugar cane grew in abundance, making white men wealthy. The irrigation systems have long since disappeared; fertilizer is far too costly for use; trees have been cut down to make room for hundreds of tiny farms to support the increasing population.

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134 the contrary, are arid, sterile, and forbidding, covered with cacti and other spiny plants. Indeed, the most arid areas of Haiti, including its salt marshes, are lowlands.

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

[p. 290]

XVII

OUTER ASPECTS OF HAITI

[538] HAITIAN poets rarely sing the beauty of their native land, nor do the travelers who roam the earth dwell long upon this particular pearl of the Antilles. Mountains slope down into the sea, sunlight sparkles upon the foaming waves as they roll in, peninsulas and bays lend variety to the coastline: yet the majestic display does not make the visitor cherish Haiti in his mind and heart alongside Sicily or Scotland or Maine or Japan. Columbus in 1492 thought the island "enchanting," saying that "it is a wonder. Its mountains and plains, and meadows and fields are so beautiful and rich for planting and sowing, and rearing cattle of all kinds, and for building towns and villages" that it "surpasses anything that would be believed by one who had not seen it."[1] The Spanish admiral viewed his discoveries with the eye of faith, seeing the glories which might come to be; his enthusiasm was matched by other early Spaniards. The French in the eighteenth century likewise thought the land beautiful, and with skillful management made their human habitations an ornament to generous nature.

• 13 105 If one could view Haiti only from the sea or from the air, he would probably, like the Spaniards and Frenchmen, speak in rhapsodies, for the land still stands up out of the sea—"the highest peak of that submerged mountain range whose summits appear as the islands of the Greater Antilles."[2] Visitors disembark from their ships or planes, however, see the poverty, the backwardness, the pathetic smallness of human effort which matches so ill with what nature originally provided, and come away with a feeling of disappointment. Not even the little things of Haiti are immediately attractive: the peasants are not "quaint," their costumes are not "picturesque," their towns are not "colorful"; even the souvenirs to take back to the tourist ship have likely as not been made in New York and imported by the local shops. Outsiders, distracted by the human element, hardly glance at the scenery; and since as conducted tourists they are not likely to penetrate far beyond the seacoast, or stay long enough

1. Christopher Columbus, *Select Letters*, R. H. Major, ed. [London, 1870], p. 5.
2. Blair Niles, *Black Haiti*, p. 6.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

to regard the people as neighbors, their first impression is generally their abiding one.

And yet the land has its memorable beauties. To lie at anchor in the harbor at Port-au-Prince early in the morning and watch the long arm of the southern peninsula turn gradually from purple vagueness to brilliant green as the sun rises back of the capital; to see a tiny ship with its patched and colored sail glide quietly by on its way out to the island of La Gonâve, lying twenty miles to the west, like a morsel about to be swallowed by the open jaws of the "mainland"; to hear the morning noises drifting across the water, with a snatch of song or laughter in the air; to watch Port-au-Prince come to life, white and sparkling as the sun strikes it—this is the proper introduction to Haiti. Beyond the capital are the hills and mountains; if one will take the time, he may look back as he climbs and see not only the whiteness of the city, but the gracious sweep of the harbor, and the peninsula losing itself in the western distance. He will think without apology of a lesser Naples, and will not miss Vesuvius. Within the country is every variety of scenery: high mountains whose peaks are frequently shrouded in misty clouds; ranges of lower mountains ("morne" is the eloquent Haitian name for them) which can be melancholy, kindly, or forbidding, as the spirit of the traveler wills; dull wastes of salt marshes; and deserts where cactus grows, spiked and hairy, to enormous heights; canyons, waterfalls, dried-up streams; moors, little jungles, farms; rich plantations of sugar cane, dusty stretches of sheer barrenness—everything, in fact, from majesty to complete insipidity. Rarely can one find such utter diversity in a small space as in Haiti. One might fancy himself successively on Egdon Heath, in an Arizona desert, among the Dakota Bad Lands, in old Saint-Domingue, in tropical Africa, in the Pyrenees.

The sad truth remains: nothing that man has done in Haiti for a century and a quarter has been worthy of the landscape. A few government buildings in Port-au-Prince are passable, and the city as a whole is not a blemish; yet not to have seen it is to have missed no great aesthetic experience. Elsewhere the towns and villages run the gamut from monotonous small-scale structures to more collections of shanties. Great gashes have been cut in the forests by generations of earth-hungry peasants who needed farms. Much of the land looks poor; indeed, thousands of once fertile acres are now beyond any use at all, grown up in cactus, because of overuse and misuse for-

1: Hamilton E-4,5 (1934) 1937 EV3 Haiti EV3
Mirebalais

ship of a very intelligent mulatto named Bauvais" gained some successes "over the undisciplined forces in Port-au-Prince" and forced the inhabitants of the capital to recognise the power of this group by entering into a definite treaty with them.[8]

There are other indications that life in the valley did not fail to reflect the discontent of the black slaves. Writing in 1830, Mackenzie, who was the first British Consul-General to the Haitian Republic, remarked:

> "It is said by some of the best informed Haitians, that among the mountains that stretch from the neighbourhood of Mirebalais to the coast on the east of Jacmel, there is an extensive association of the descendants of the Maroon negroes, whose independence had been recognised long before the revolution by the then existing government."[9]

It is thus apparent that the institution of marronage, whereby runaway slaves established themselves in the mountains, in many instances living for years beyond the reach of capture and free from attack, was known in Mirebalais as it was elsewhere. Mirebalais was also not without contact with the great heroes of Haitian history. Toussaint L'Ouverture conquered and lost the town several times before it became a strategic point "from which his lieutenants, Dessalines and Christophe, menaced Arcahaie and the plain of the Cul-de-Sac."[10]

If but little has been recorded concerning Mirebalais before Haitian independence, even less is known of its later history. Mackenzie, reporting the population of Haiti district by district, gives that of Mirebalais in 1820 as 53,645; but in 1825 as only 18,037.[11] Whether the region included under the term "Mirebalais" differed at the two periods, or whether the hardships resulting from the internal strife that racked Haiti after independence had been gained took a toll of the size suggested by these figures cannot be said. That Mirebalais was an

Jr Hawkeyes E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

important point in the warfare between the northern Empire of Christophe and the southern Republic of Pétion is well known, since the boundary between the two, never definitely fixed, might be roughly considered as the Artibonite, control of which, as always, depended on also obtaining control of the strategic hills about the town.[10] It is not possible to discover more than approximate figures for the population of Mirebalais at the present time, since no census of the district has been made, and the most recent figure of 51,000 for the commune is derived from the baptismal records in the parish church.[11]

From the earliest years of settlement of the valley, the town has been the center of its life. The government of the commune is located here; here the courts sit; and here the best schools and the only church of the district are found. Yet it is a small town, numbering less than two hundred and fifty houses, and crossed by but three principal thoroughfares stretching north and south, with ten or twelve cross-lanes. The houses on the principal streets, rectangular and small, are built of wood, plastered over with clay, painted, and roofed with sheet iron. On the outskirts of the town the roofing is of straw, or banana-leaf thatch, while the walls themselves are made of twilled wythes. No house lacks its veranda, however small, where people may be seen sitting late of an afternoon and early in the evening, but the life of the women is lived chiefly in the courtyards behind these houses that line the streets, where the cookhouses are found and the storehouses, and where all work is done. The *place*, or town square, lies at the point where the principal route between Port-au-Prince and the Dominican border turns sharply to the east. Consisting of an acre or two of cleared land, it is overgrown with weeds except when, in preparing for festive occasions, the prisoners from the town jail may be seen spending long hours, machetes in hand, cutting the grass, a few blades at a time. North of the square stands the church, a substan-

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

[p. 1 -A]

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3
[p. 1-B]

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[P. 1]

1. The Making of the Haitian

If you come to Haiti by sea, a way that is old-fashioned but full of magic, 133
you are first aware of the island as a range of hills rising out of the water, and then, as you sail closer, new ranges come into view behind the first, and eventually you see that everything is mountains. The ranges pile up in the distance and finally lose themselves in the white morning mists that the country people call "snow." A Haitian proverb says, "Behind the mountains are mountains," and that is a true picture of the island.

In the summer after the rains have come, the hills and mountain slopes 134
are green; but later they turn brown, and it is then that one notices the 132
deep gashes where the earth has eroded and washed away into the valleys below and into the sea.

From the top of the range called La Selle ("The Saddle"), when the 132
heavy mists form and settle across the highland valleys one sees nothing 133
but the great rounded sugar-loaf peaks, which appear as floating islands in a vast sea of white.

From a distant ship in the Caribbean in the full glare of daylight it is 361
hard to imagine that millions of people have made a home of these mountains. But at night it is different. The mountains are alive then with twinkling spots of light made by cooking fires, torches, and electric bulbs. For 361
the hillsides as well as the coastal lowlands are dotted with tiny huts and 487
homesteads, and the trails from one village to another crisscross and lie on the land like a woven net. They lead from the high-up places down to the seacoast towns, through the waterless mesa of the frontier, through the pine forests of the southern range, through dense blankets of wild strawberries, wild-bamboo groves, and plantations of coffee. They find their way to the salt marches, the rice fields of the Artibonite Valley, and the cities.

In the lowlands the days are hot and tropical. It is there the sugar cane, 132
bananas, and plantains grow so lushly. In the mountains the people have [241]

2: Courlander 8-4 (1937-1939) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

132 fires in their houses at night to keep out the damp cold that sweeps
[324] through the passes. And a man on the trail before dawn may wear a
[291] blanket over his head and carry a glowing ember with him for warmth.

132 On the south coast there are sometimes hurricanes and tidal waves, and
133 many a small fishing boat and grass-covered house has been washed away
[131] in these storms. But the great mountains of the southern range deflect the winds, so that to the north their full fury is never known.

226 In the great Bay of Gonaïves the fishing boats sail out at night with the
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136 In the frontier lakes of the Cul-de-Sac Plain there are wild ducks and
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137 For the things that grow wild the Haitian is grateful—the avocado,
[241] the mango, the cashew, and the cotton which once planted produces again and again each year. He is grateful for the coconut palms, the calabash tree, the gourd vines, and the medicinal herbs that grow on every side. But
[313] the gifts of nature are not prolific. Most of the great stands of timber—
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181 But the Haitian himself is not tired. He has suffered from malaria,
164 yaws, and chronic hunger; yet out of the great old mountains of Haiti he has fashioned a way of life and a nation.

105 The Haitian of today was created out of the fabric of three continents—
181 Africa, America, and Europe. He was shaped out of the plains and hills of Nigeria, Dahomey, and the Congo; the summers and winters of Europe; and the mountains and mountain mists of Haiti itself. He is the synthesis of the folk beliefs of the French and Spanish peasants, the Yoruba and the Arada of West Africa, and perhaps of the Carib Indians with whom he had close contact during his first days in the New World. He has brought into affinity the religious practices of Africa and the beliefs of the Church of Rome. He is outwardly simple and poor, but inwardly he is a complicated and rich man. He is rich in music, in the capacity for spiritual expression, in tradition, in folklore, and in memories. He has been able

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

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3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

increasingly arid as its altitude decreases. Next to the Plaine du Nord, the best-watered part of Haiti is the southwestern peninsula, which projects far beyond the shelter of the mountains in the rest of the island. 132

When one subtracts from the 10,000 square miles all the sterile wastes of cactus, the salt marshes and brackish lakes, and the rock barrens, one realizes the inevitability of a low standard of living for the mass of the people. Other nations buy little from Haiti, local industries never reach even the proportions familiar to small-town Americans, and the total national budget is less than seven million dollars a year. Not even the élite are well-to-do by American small-town standards; it is only by comparison with the masses that they can be said to constitute a favored economic class. They rule the country, however, and what benefits accrue to Haiti rarely get beyond their pockets. 433 [431] [651] [565]

The resident of Haiti can never lose sight of the social distinctions between the two castes, for they permeate every phase of Haitian life. It has been so since the first hours of the republic. Indeed, the origins of the caste system lie in the French colonial days of the eighteenth century. 565 175 178

L: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 HAITI SV3
Mirebalais

INTRODUCTION

THE VALLEY OF MIREBALAIS

THE TRAVELER comes suddenly on the valley of Mirebalais, as the road from the capital turns the shoulder of a hill. Long and narrow, the plain stretches before him with its many tones of green. Ahead is the village from which the valley takes its name, its metal roofs aglow in the sunlight, or reflecting the gray sky of the rainy season. Here and there appears a yellow, muddy slash made by the Artibonite River, while framing the valley are the mountains, rising one behind another as they complete its encirclement. 133 361

This first glimpse of the country gives no hint of a numerous population. It is as though this valley, like so many other things in Haiti, had set out to belie its own reality and, in this impression, at the very outset to point the lesson that the observer must seek well beneath the surface if he is to attain any understanding of the country and its people. For just as the unsettled appearance of this Haitian valley conceals numerous habitations, cultivated fields, and hard-working inhabitants, so the frenzy of Haitian religious rites is but a gloss upon disciplined ceremonialism, and the relatively placid everyday existence of the Haitian peasant but a mask behind which is waged a spiritual conflict that is his heritage from the dual sources of his traditions. 121

The commune of Mirebalais is situated in the heart of central Haiti. Lying some thirty-five miles from Port-au-Prince, 101 361 [191]

[P. 1]

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For the things that grow wild the Haitian is grateful—the avocado, the mango, the cashew, and the cotton which once planted produces again and again each year. He is grateful for the coconut palms, the calabash tree, the gourd vines, and the medicinal herbs that grow on every side. But the gifts of nature are not prolific. Most of the great stands of timber—lignum vitae, mahogany, dyewood and pine—have been cut away. Once fertile garden spots have dried up, and the soil that produces the yams, the pumpkins, the kaffir, and the rice is tired.

But the Haitian himself is not tired. He has suffered from malaria, yaws, and chronic hunger; yet out of the great old mountains of Haiti he has fashioned a way of life and a nation.

The Haitian of today was created out of the fabric of three continents—Africa, America, and Europe. He was shaped out of the plains and hills of Nigeria, Dahomey, and the Congo; the summers and winters of Europe; and the mountains and mountain mists of Haiti itself. He is the synthesis of the folk beliefs of the French and Spanish peasants, the Yoruba and the Arada of West Africa, and perhaps of the Carib Indians with whom he had close contact during his first days in the New World. He has brought into affinity the religious practices of Africa and the beliefs of the Church of Rome. He is outwardly simple and poor, but inwardly he is a complicated and rich man. He is rich in music, in the capacity for spiritual expression, in tradition, in folklore, and in memories. He has been able

[9 112-A]

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1. The Marbial River, a branch of the Guaudin, in southern Haiti. Twenty-eight thousand people, many of them runners or disembarkers, depend upon agriculture in the Marbial Valley for their livelihood.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P-412-AA]

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[782] 37. *A small graveyard in the mountains at Furcy. The little alcoves in the tombs are for food offerings on special anniversaries.*

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[776] 38. *Stone and brick covering of spring on Morne l'Hôpital believed to have been constructed in colonial times. Many persons have testified that here the voices of the loa have been heard bubbling up with the water.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 112-B]

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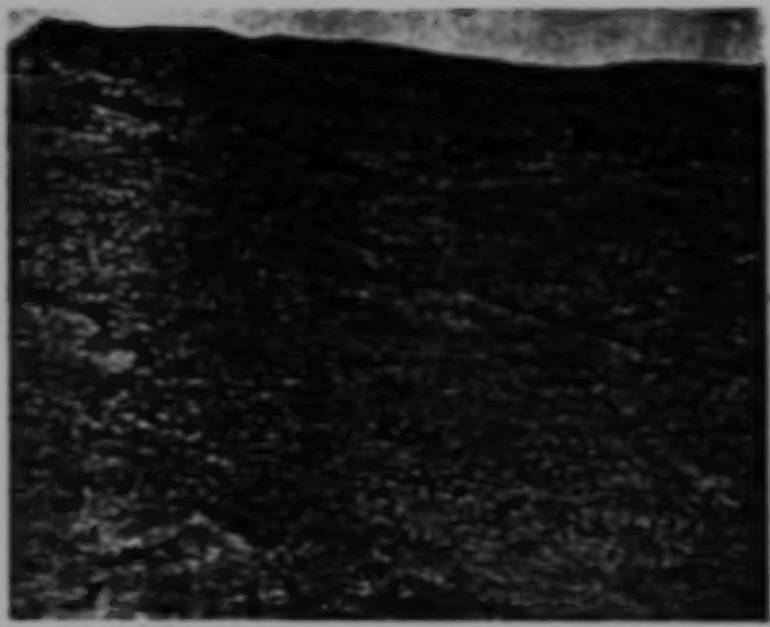

[139] 2. *Haiti's "Pine Forest," once a dense woodland, is an expanse of mountain terrain denuded of most of its trees and scarred by gullies. The timber was cut primarily for fuel for lumber.*

A: Cowslander B-3 (1937-1955) 1964 EV3 Rank EV3
[P112-F]

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7. A small cowslander, southern Maine.

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8. Cowslander, southern Maine. Vanner gliders at the right; flag of the outfit at the left.

Jt Coordinator B-5 (1957-1958) 1960 SV3 Halls SV3

[P 112-I]

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19. Donkeys with a load of charcoal. Where the terrain is not too rugged, donkeys or small horses do some of the carrying. The making of charcoal has helped to denude the mountains of their forests.

3: Leyburn 2-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

[p. 1-A]

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3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

[p.1-8]

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

tiny communities, some of them designating "villages" of only four or five houses. For numbers of peasants hidden away in the valleys or on mountain farms, the only contact with the larger world comes through visits to the nearest market town—which itself may count only a thousand souls. The peasant is thus effectively isolated. The American Financial Adviser to the Government has estimated the average *annual* income of the Haitian at $20 a head.[8] The smallness of the sum limits the material contacts of the peasant with the outside world. Rural schools are few,[9] consequently all but a small percentage of the rising generation is growing up illiterate. Lack of mental stimulus completes the isolation. Bound to the soil by the need of wresting a livelihood from rocky, gullied, and increasingly unproducing land, harassed by ill-health, and governed by a group whose own security would be threatened by improving his lot, it is little wonder that the peasant is unprogressive, or that he struggles along at a bare subsistence level.[10]

Haiti is rural and agricultural, then, with a population density of about 250 per square mile. The people, living without machine industry and with very little foreign trade, must get their living from 10,000 square miles, not of lush tropical soil but of rocky, mountainous country which, after a century and a half of poor farming, has been stripped of most of its forests and much of its topsoil.

A glance at a relief map of the West Indies would show clearly that the islands are the tops of a mountain range, whose lowlands were long since submerged by the Caribbean Sea. Looked at from above, Haiti seems a jumbled mass of mountains running in all directions.[11] Down their slopes flow many small streams which after

8. Dr. W. W. Cumberland, cited by Paul H. Douglas, "The American Occupation of Haiti," *Political Science Quarterly*, XLII (1927), 258.

9. The average monthly salary of $13 (until recently only $6) for rural schoolteachers would not draw many wide-awake young men, even if schoolhouses existed for classes. The salary, indeed, is so small that only inferior persons are attracted, often men who know little more than their pupils. See chap. XV, 3.

10. Mrs. Blair Niles, in *Black Haiti* (New York, 1926), pp. 185–186, tells of a prisoner who preferred to remain in jail rather than be freed. "When he gets out," she quotes the officer as saying, "he'll be in again. You'll see. Here he gets nine cents a day for food, an' that's more than the average Haitian ever has."

11. One can well believe the story (told by Ebenezer D. Bassett, *Haiti* [Washington, 1893], p. 3) of the English admiral who, asked by George III for a description of the island, crumpled a sheet of paper, threw it on the table, and said: "Sire, Haiti looks like that." The same tale is told of Puerto Rico, with a Spanish admiral speaking to Queen Isabella.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

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132 Because of the mountains, there are wide differences in rainfall, soil, and vegetation, within a short distance. Occasional hurricanes do great damage to shipping and the water fronts. Infrequent droughts sometimes last for two or three months. Hailstorms that damage growing crops are fairly common. Taken as a whole, the country has an ample but not heavy rainfall; coming generally from the east and northeast, the trade winds strike the high ridges in the north and there deposit the greater part of their moisture in the Plaine du Nord. By the time they have passed down the western slope and across the Central Plain they are dried and rarefied, so that this region becomes

[P. 1]

1. The Making of the Haitian

If you come to Haiti by sea, a way that is old-fashioned but full of magic, 133
you are first aware of the island as a range of hills rising out of the water, and then, as you sail closer, new ranges come into view behind the first, and eventually you see that everything is mountains. The ranges pile up in the distance and finally lose themselves in the white morning mists that the country people call "snow." A Haitian proverb says, "Behind the mountains are mountains," and that is a true picture of the island.

In the summer after the rains have come, the hills and mountain slopes 134
are green; but later they turn brown, and it is then that one notices the 132
deep gashes where the earth has eroded and washed away into the valleys below and into the sea.

From the top of the range called La Selle ("The Saddle"), when the 132
heavy mists form and settle across the highland valleys one sees nothing 133
but the great rounded sugar-loaf peaks, which appear as floating islands in a vast sea of white.

From a distant ship in the Caribbean in the full glare of daylight it is 361
hard to imagine that millions of people have made a home of these mountains. But at night it is different. The mountains are alive then with twinkling spots of light made by cooking fires, torches, and electric bulbs. For 361
the hillsides as well as the coastal lowlands are dotted with tiny huts and 487
homesteads, and the trails from one village to another crisscross and lie on the land like a woven net. They lead from the high-up places down to the seacoast towns, through the waterless mesa of the frontier, through the pine forests of the southern range, through dense blankets of wild strawberries, wild-bamboo groves, and plantations of coffee. They find their way to the salt marches, the rice fields of the Artibonite Valley, and the cities.

In the lowlands the days are hot and tropical. It is there the sugar cane, 132
bananas, and plantains grow so lushly. In the mountains the people have [241]

132 fires in their houses at night to keep out the damp cold that sweeps
[324] through the passes. And a man on the trail before dawn may wear a
[291] blanket over his head and carry a glowing ember with him for warmth.

139 On the south coast there are sometimes hurricanes and tidal waves, and
133 many a small fishing boat and grass-covered house has been washed away
[131] in these storms. But the great mountains of the southern range deflect the winds, so that to the north their full fury is never known.

226 In the great Bay of Gonaïves the fishing boats sail out at night with the
133 friendly winds that carry them to the fishing grounds of the island of La
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[241] the mango, the cashew, and the cotton which once planted produces again and again each year. He is grateful for the coconut palms, the calabash tree, the gourd vines, and the medicinal herbs that grow on every side. But
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[134] lignum vitae, mahogany, dyewood and pine—have been cut away. Once fertile garden spots have dried up, and the soil that produces the yams, the pumpkins, the kaffir, and the rice is tired.

181 But the Haitian himself is not tired. He has suffered from malaria,
164 yaws, and chronic hunger; yet out of the great old mountains of Haiti he has fashioned a way of life and a nation.

105 The Haitian of today was created out of the fabric of three continents—
181 Africa, America, and Europe. He was shaped out of the plains and hills of Nigeria, Dahomey, and the Congo; the summers and winters of Europe; and the mountains and mountain mists of Haiti itself. He is the synthesis of the folk beliefs of the French and Spanish peasants, the Yoruba and the Arada of West Africa, and perhaps of the Carib Indians with whom he had close contact during his first days in the New World. He has brought into affinity the religious practices of Africa and the beliefs of the Church of Rome. He is outwardly simple and poor, but inwardly he is a complicated and rich man. He is rich in music, in the capacity for spiritual expression, in tradition, in folklore, and in memories. He has been able

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 112 - B]

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[139] 2. *Haiti's "Pine Forest," once a dense woodland, is an expanse of mountain terrain denuded of most of its trees and scarred by gullies. The timber was cut primarily for fuel for limekilns.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

857 868 handle it; lighter work first, heavier work later. Small boys tend cattle and help the men in the fields.

178 511 The Haitian *habitant* (the peasant) is poorer and hungrier today than he was fifty years ago, or even twenty years ago. In 1955 I visited a number of peasant families I had known since 1932, and with hardly an exception I found them worse off than they had been before. Their tiny landholdings had shrunk. Some land that had been lush had dried [134] up and eroded. Little groves of trees had disappeared. Clothes had become shabby, and many of the men could no longer afford to wear the inexpensive traditional blue denim costume that was once so common. In the cities there is evidence that some of the elite have improved their life. But in a large part of the countryside the peasants are finding that the old system that served them for a hundred and fifty years can no longer feed them adequately.

423 178 One of the adverse forces is the shrinking of landholdings. Once a peasant family may have owned and worked fifty or seventy acres of ground. But it is traditional that on a man's death his land is divided [428] among the heirs. If a man with fifty acres of land has two sons, each son inherits approximately twenty-five acres. On their deaths, the land 423 is again subdivided. But even this is not the whole story. A UNESCO 427 survey of the Marbial Valley region in south Haiti in 1948–1949 reported:

> At the turn of the century there were numerous peasant families who lived in relatively easy circumstances, and who possessed as much as thirty to forty *carreaux** [425] of land planted with coffee and subsistence crops. The heirs of these lands, when they found themselves in straitened circumstances, would sell some parcels of it in the hope of being able to increase their holdings again later on. In the worst cases they became the tenants of absentee landlords who lived in the cities. Nowadays, not only is the size of holdings very small, sometimes only one-eighth of a *carreau*, but they are also scattered, and most peasants are obliged to go from one place to another to cultivate their various owned, rented, or share-cropped fields.[§]

671 595 Haitian law—the civil code—does not recognize the rights of illegitimate children born after a legal marriage. But Haitian custom does. 423 As a result, a Haitian who has a *placée* wife in addition to his "legal" 848 wife may circumvent the law by deeding to her a portion of his gardens during his lifetime, thereby diminishing his holdings.

423 691 Furthermore, many landholdings are not clearly defined. There are few accurate surveys, and often the boundaries are vague. Titles to many of the holdings cannot be clearly established, and as a result there are constant lawsuits. To pay the expenses of defending his interests in court, a Haitian may have to sell a strip of his land.

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* A *carreau* is about three and a third acres.

§ [UNESCO, The Haiti Pilot Project, p. 18. Cf. P352, category 116. -- Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

tiny communities, some of them designating "villages" of only four or five houses. For numbers of peasants hidden away in the valleys or on mountain farms, the only contact with the larger world comes through visits to the nearest market town—which itself may count only a thousand souls. The peasant is thus effectively isolated. The American Financial Adviser to the Government has estimated the average *annual* income of the Haitian at $20 a head.[8] The smallness of the sum limits the material contacts of the peasant with the outside world. Rural schools are few,[9] consequently all but a small percentage of the rising generation is growing up illiterate. Lack of mental stimulus completes the isolation. Bound to the soil by the need of wresting a livelihood from rocky, gullied, and increasingly unproductive land, harassed by ill-health, and governed by a group whose own security would be threatened by improving his lot, it is little wonder that the peasant is unprogressive, or that he struggles along at a bare subsistence level.[10]

Haiti is rural and agricultural, then, with a population density of about 250 per square mile. The people, living without machine industry and with very little foreign trade, must get their living from 10,000 square miles, not of lush tropical soil but of rocky, mountainous country which, after a century and a half of poor farming, has been stripped of most of its forests and much of its topsoil.

A glance at a relief map of the West Indies would show clearly that the islands are the tops of a mountain range, whose lowlands were long since submerged by the Caribbean Sea. Looked at from above, Haiti seems a jumbled mass of mountains running in all directions.[11] Down their slopes flow many small streams which after

8. Dr. W. W. Cumberland, cited by Paul H. Douglas, "The American Occupation of Haiti," *Political Science Quarterly*, XLII (1927), 258.

9. The average monthly salary of $13 (until recently only $6) for rural schoolteachers would not draw many wide-awake young men, even if schoolhouses existed for classes. The salary, indeed, is so small that only inferior persons are attracted, often men who know little more than their pupils. See chap. XV, 3.

10. Mrs. Blair Niles, in *Black Haiti* (New York, 1926), pp. 185–186, tells of a prisoner who preferred to remain in jail rather than be freed. "When he gets out," she quotes the officer as saying, "he'll be in again. You'll see. Here he gets nine cents a day for food, an' that's more than the average Haitian ever has."

11. One can well believe the story (told by Ebenezer D. Bassett, *Haiti* [Washington, 1893], p. 3) of the English admiral who, asked by George III for a description of the island, crumpled a sheet of paper, threw it on the table, and said: "Sire, Haiti looks like that." The same tale is told of Puerto Rico, with a Spanish admiral speaking to Queen Isabella.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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133 rains become torrents, washing away crops and soil. Brooks which run most of the year the Haitians dignify by the name of "rivière"; not even the largest, however—the Artibonite, which drains over a fifth of the country—is navigable for anything above a rowboat. The second largest "river," Les Trois Rivières, is only 96 kilometres long. Many of the smaller streams disappear into sinkholes or caves in limestone, veritable lost rivers. Even some of the lakes are ephemeral.

133 Most of the best land of the country lies in its few plains flanking
311 the mountains near the coasts, or extending like wedges into the
175 mountainous regions. In the northeast in the country back of Cap-
[134] Haïtien is the Plaine du Nord; here in colonial times were the most flourishing of the French plantations, the palatial residences, and the slaves who in 1791 began the insurrection which ultimately led to Haiti's independence. In the middle region are the Artibonite Plain near the coast, and the Central Plain back of the Black Mountains. Eastward from Port-au-Prince, the capital, is the Cul-de-Sac; and in the southwestern peninsula is the small plain of Les Cayes. All over the country in French days sugar cane grew in abundance, making white men wealthy. The irrigation systems have long since disappeared; fertilizer is far too costly for use; trees have been cut down to make room for hundreds of tiny farms to support the increasing population.

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134 the contrary, are arid, sterile, and forbidding, covered with cacti and other spiny plants. Indeed, the most arid areas of Haiti, including its salt marshes, are lowlands.

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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have been gathered from trees which grew wild. Both men and women labor, with the work divided according to regular custom between the sexes, the men dominating the scene only in the marketing of coffee.

Nature was opulent enough at the beginning of Haitian independence. The wars had ruined irrigation ditches, sugar refineries, and mechanical equipment, but the soil was still abundantly fertile. But generations of farming by people without knowledge of fertilization or soil conservation have worn out much of the land. Trees have been cut to provide lumber and clearings for more farms; in the rainy seasons torrents have coursed down the mountainsides, washing away soil and exposing the earth to the rays of a tropical sun. Because the country is overpopulated every available acre is put to use, and to overuse, thus still more depleting the land. It is a vicious circle, for the next generation must extract yet more from the earth and so weaken it further. Hard work is the lot of the peasant, therefore, during every month of the year except the dry season. There has never been a formal rotation of crops: a farmer continues to plant the same crop in the same field until the harvest is perceptibly smaller than before. Then he changes to another type of produce. Sooner or later he will allow the land to lie fallow for several years until, by the action of nature or the grazing over it of cattle, it has regained a measure of its fertility.

The strenuous work of clearing fields and preparing them for cultivation is man's job. Since the peasants owned their plots it has almost always been done in coöperation by the men of the neighborhood. What on the American frontier would have been called a "bee" is known in Haiti as a *coumbite*, or *combite*, often carried on as an enterprise of the local *Société Congo*, the informal neighborhood group for mutual aid and fellowship.[6]

A man who has a large job on hand announces a coumbite for any day except Sunday, always a day of rest, and whatever other week-

6. The word "coumbite" was apparently borrowed from the Spanish part of the island, and from the Spanish word *convidar*, convey. In Colombia "convite" means exactly what "coumbite" means in Haiti: a gathering of peasants to work in common, or else a coöperative society for mutual agricultural self-help.

Professor Herskovits (*Life in a Haitian Valley*, chap. IV) describes the Société Congo in detail. The use of the name "Congo" indicates the African tradition, and is particularly noteworthy in connection with a kind of coöperative work which Herskovits finds particularly Dahomean.

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Besides the figures given above must be set there of the government

budget, which is annually in the neighborhood of $7,000,000, and of its annual imports and exports, neither of which generally exceeds $10,000,000 a year. Chicago, with its population of three million, has an annual budget of about $275,000,000, aside from state and federal services. 652 [439]

To care for all the needs of three million people in Haiti there is a sum of money less than that available annually to several of our American universities. Out of the seven million dollars must come all salaries of officials, legislators, judges, policemen, schoolteachers; the wages of all janitors and day laborers employed by the government; the upkeep of all schools, roads, lighthouses, experiment stations; the maintenance of such important public services as health, sanitation, education, soil development, reforestation. Since there are few towns, practically every improvement which takes place must be paid for by the central government. [369]

Haiti's growth in population is not a new thing. It has been increasing steadily since 1804 while the soil of the country was being worn out and foreign trade grew stagnant. The country is entirely agricultural, there being absolutely no manufacturing industry worth the name. The people consequently live upon a subsistence economy. The soil is still fertile enough to preserve life in the teeming population, though undernourishment is general. Most of the people have no "artificial" wants and could not satisfy them under present conditions even if they had. 161 [134] [439] 433 164 [134] [511]

Assuming the census of Dessalines in 1805 to be even approximately accurate, the population is now eight times what it was then. The working of the Law of Population[3] is implacable: if population increases while economic efficiency remains static or declines, either there will be an increasing death rate or the standard of living must sink—or both. In the case of Haiti, economic efficiency is certainly not what it was under the forced-labor system of Dessalines: the death rate has been continuously high; it is the standard of living which has suffered. 161 433 178 [165] [511]

To grasp the import of Haiti's problem of overpopulation one

3. "Population tends to increase up to the limit of the supporting power of the land, relative to the economic efficiency and to the standard of living of the people at the time." (For an amplification of this discussion on overpopulation, see the note on p. 320.) The law of population as stated here is a modification of that given by Sumner and Keller, *The Science of Society*, I, 46; their statement, in turn, is that of Malthus with the added cultural items of economic efficiency and the standard of living. [114]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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311 merly. Wherever the overcrowded Haitians have lived since 1815, there beauty has had to give way to gnawing necessity which lacked either the imagination or the means to be sightly.

105 One can stand upon a morne and watch a rain storm rush down the valley, bending the palm trees in its fury, and think Haiti still a magnificent sight. Then one must descend the mountainside past rickety shacks and rocky fields, and the feeling grows that not all the kindly simplicity of the people is enough to lift the country from its [134] dilapidation. As he nears the village, the afternoon scent of roasting coffee will delight him; but then he sees the squalor of village life and is reminded that three million souls are here trying to eke out an existence upon a small area of declining fertility.

Much in Haiti is picturesque if one can keep his mind from wandering to the conditions which lie behind the picturesqueness. [482] Women stride down from the hills with great loads on their heads; [443] aged crones, pipe in mouth, sit perched on the haunches of tiny donkeys with their bulging panniers; the great market square in the [492] town is a scene of noisy confusion with hundreds of women and [482] children, a mixture of smells, thousands of little piles of soap, candy, gewgaws, vegetables, gaping chickens tied together by the feet, [434] shirts, canes, bolts of cloth. All the weary women, however, must [146] trudge back up to their shanties on the mountainside when the market is over. Many of them do not see ten dollars in cash during the year, and their little children, with bellies bulging, give evidence [164] of undernourishment. Without doctors, without even the rudiments of hygiene, they manage somehow to subsist, or else die, frequently of disease which might easily have been prevented.

565 In Port-au-Prince and a few other towns live enough members of the élite to make one momentarily forget the plight of the masses. [342] The houses of the well-to-do are substantially built, if not often [351] attractive. Their garden walls are brilliant with bougainvillea, their walks with hibiscus. Tiny red lizards (analis) make flashes of color along the walls. On shady verandas and in the parlors one hears delightful conversation, eats excellent food, savors the pleasures of [575] civilization. The clubs of the élite are pleasing, their tennis is good, [526] their dancing graceful. To be among these families as a welcome guest is an experience in gracious hospitality which can never be [535] forgotten. Too soon, however, one must leave these havens of urbanity and pass through districts of the town which haunt the mind with their grim want.

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[374] through the passes. And a man on the trail before dawn may wear a
[291] blanket over his head and carry a glowing ember with him for warmth.

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133 many a small fishing boat and grass-covered house has been washed away
[131] in these storms. But the great mountains of the southern range deflect the winds, so that to the north their full fury is never known.

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137 For the things that grow wild the Haitian is grateful—the avocado,
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181 Africa, America, and Europe. He was shaped out of the plains and hills of Nigeria, Dahomey, and the Congo; the summers and winters of Europe; and the mountains and mountain mists of Haiti itself. He is the synthesis of the folk beliefs of the French and Spanish peasants, the Yoruba and the Arada of West Africa, and perhaps of the Carib Indians with whom he had close contact during his first days in the New World. He has brought into affinity the religious practices of Africa and the beliefs of the Church of Rome. He is outwardly simple and poor, but inwardly he is a complicated and rich man. He is rich in music, in the capacity for spiritual expression, in tradition, in folklore, and in memories. He has been able

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776 commentators thought him the most important Vodun god.[24] There are two plausible reasons for this emphasis: Damballa is the bringer of rain, a necessity for good crops but a menace resulting in desolating floods when it is too copious; second, his symbol is the serpent. To Christians this is a symbol of such long standing that it is easy to assume in connection with its appearance in Vodun the guile, diabolism, or occult force which it has at times represented in Christian tradition. Damballa, however, is certainly not evil in the same way as Satan; he is not even generally baleful. To honor him is quite fitting, and this attitude is at poles removed from the diabolism [136] of the Middle Ages. There are practically no snakes in Haiti. Because of Damballa's symbol he is quite naturally associated with Saint Patrick.[25] Like Maîtresse Erzulie, all his sacrificial animals must be white, for this is his color. Like her, too, he is Dahomean in origin and therefore Rada.

These three, Legba, Erzulie, and Damballa, can by no means be conceived as a trinity. On the contrary, it would be easily possible to select an entirely different group from the commonest loa, justifying inclusions and eliminations. There is, for example, Ogun, the god of war, who derives from Nigeria in Africa. Ogun can, if properly persuaded, protect his petitioners against bullets and weapon wounds. Like blood, he is red. This is also his favorite color, and so he prefers sacrifices of red cocks and food offerings of red beans with rice. There are likewise Damballa's wife, Ayida Oueddo, whose symbol is the rainbow; Agwé, god of the sea; Baron Samedi, patron spirit watching over cemeteries; Simbi, who lives in mango and calabash trees and is a bit too fond of drink. In any one country district, certain other loa might far outshine any of those mentioned. The longer one lives among the people, the more clearly he sees the validity of the first article of the creed: "I believe in gods and spirits."

787 "I believe that these loa have power to possess their worshipers . . ." It is more difficult to make intelligible to "civilized" people the phenomenon of possession than any other part of Vodun religion. Centuries of training in self-control have made us unwilling to give public vent to our emotions, whether religious or, indeed, of any sort. Not only does our tradition of good manners inhibit such ex-

24. See, for example, Bonnesu, *op. cit.*, pp. 25–26 n.

[776] 25. He is sometimes also associated with Moses, who "lifted up the serpent in the wilderness."

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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[p. 112-A]

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1. *The Marbial River, a branch of the Guaimine, in southern Haiti. Twenty-eight thousand people, many of them renters or sharecroppers, depend upon agriculture in the Marbial Valley for their livelihood.*

[P. 112-B]

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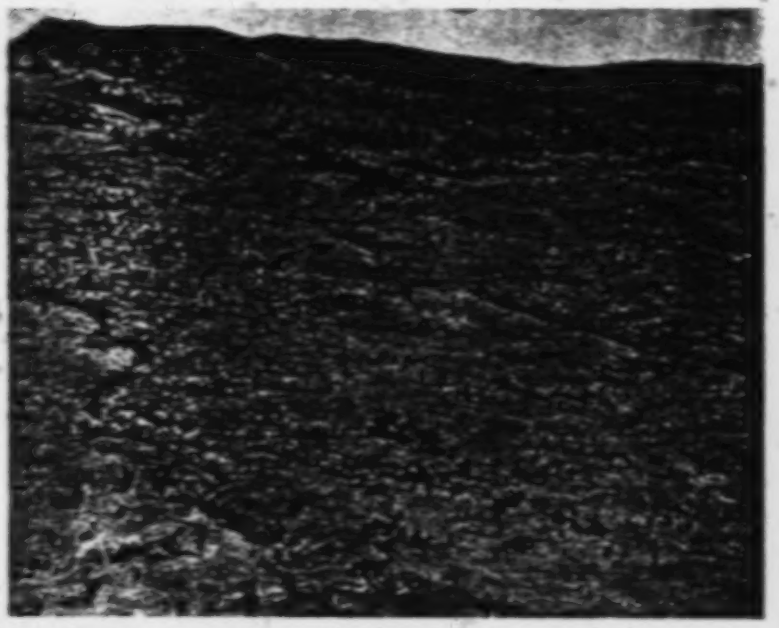

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1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

175 162 567

ever, contributed not only many slaves called by the name of that river, but also the *Mayombés*, the *Mousombés*, and the *Mondongues*, though the "true Congos" — the *Franc-Congos* — are listed as having been derived from Angola. As for the rest of the continent, "One does not see at all in Santo Domingo any Africans who have come from the remainder of the west coast of Africa, which ends at the Cape of Good Hope. . . ."[8]

175 162 567

No final answer can be given about the extent to which these lists of tribal names may be regarded as valid, but the unanimity with which not only Charlevoix and St. Mery, but such other contemporary observers as Bryan Edwards for Jamaica, the Reverend C. G. A. Oldendorps for the Virgin Islands, John G. Stedman and Jan Jacob Hartsinck for Guiana — to name only four — recorded similar African regions and similar tribal names when writing of the slaves of other parts of the New World, offers strong corroborative testimony. Moreover, the fact that every tribal designation given in the lists of Charlevoix and St. Mery can be found on present-day maps of Africa in the approximate region they had indicated confirms the accuracy of these early lists.

175 162 157 567 142

The characteristics of the various types of Negroes recorded by Charlevoix and St. Mery are not without interest. The Senegalese are described as tall and well made, and of an ebony color, their noses almost as straight as those of whites, their hair less tightly curled than that of other Negroes. They had the reputation of possessing a superior morality and were deemed warrior-like. St. Mery had nothing but the highest praise for the Senegalese slave.

> "He is a farmer, intelligent, good, faithful even in love, understanding, and makes an excellent domestic. Living on millet, maize, and rice, he is very sober, excellent in caring for animals, discreet, and above all taciturn, a quality sufficiently rare among the Africans and

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

which one does not find often enough even among civilized peoples."

Not all of the Mohammedan slaves, however, had the desirable qualities of the Senegalese. The Bambara, for example, were depicted as insolent and not always to be trusted, as the designations "those who steal turkeys" and "those who steal sheep" would seem to indicate.

The people between Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast were known as a hardy group prone to revolt and desertion; they were not held desirable as slaves, and thus it is not strange that few of them were found in the colony. A similar appraisal was made of the Gold Coast Negroes, for while they were described as generally well made and intelligent, they were also assessed as unreliable, deceitful, lazy, given to flattery, great consumers of food, drunkards, and wantons. And as for the Fanti and the Mina, they were spoken of as "extremely proud, waging constant warfare, capricious, and ready at any time to commit suicide."

The Negroes of the Slave Coast were favorites in Santo Domingo. Their characteristic lighter skin-color, to be observed at the present time in their peculiar yellowish or reddish hue, confirms their provenience. They were thought intelligent but avaricious, and were designated as "eaters of dogs." The Ardra women, "continuous talkers," and quarrelsome, were rarely employed as domestics, since the Negroes from the region of Dahomey apparently learned French with the greatest of difficulty, so that to understand their speech was considered to be the greatest test "for those who flatter themselves that they have command of Créole."

The Ibos were found excellent for work in the fields, yet difficult to manage, for the slightest fault-finding or ridicule caused them to commit suicide,

> "the idea of which, far from terrifying them, seems to hold an attraction for them, for they believe in the trans-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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ABOVE, *One of the workers at a combine.*
BELOW, *A Haitian cornfield.*

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[facing p. 93]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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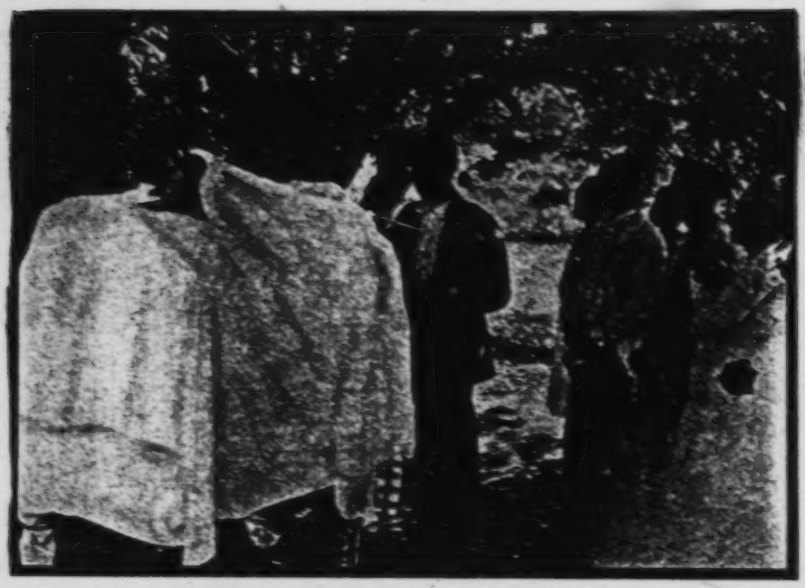

ABOVE, *An* action de grâce *preceding a* vodun *service, when prayers of the Church are read by the* prêt' savanne.

BELOW, *As the* vodun *priest takes over, he twirls a member of the family to bring on possession.*

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[facing p. 160]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-BB]

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39. *A wedding scene near Plaisance.*

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40. *Saturday night bamboche.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-CC]

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41. *Vodoun drummers, northern Haiti. The drums are characteristic of that region. The boy at left, although only twelve or thirteen years old, is an accomplished drummer.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P.112-D]

4. A peasant of the Montagnes Noires region, southern Haiti.

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2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-G]

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9. *Calling the coumbite: signaling on a conch-shell trumpet.*

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10. *A women's coumbite weeding a cornfield near the town of Plaisance.*

[P. 112-I]

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[314]

13. *Donkey with a load of charcoal. Where the terrain is not too rugged, donkeys or small horses do some of the carrying. The making of charcoal has helped to denude the mountains of their forests.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-J]

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15. *Pulverizing grain into meal. The mortar and pestle are standard kitchen fixtures.*

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14. *Fishermen of Ville des Matelots, on the Bay of Gonaïves.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-K]

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16. *Man with a machete making a wari board. The machete is used for cutting trees, trimming brush, weeding gardens, fashioning wooden objects such as drums and mortars, and many other purposes.*

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17. *Winnowing grain with a woven tray.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3 [P.112-L]

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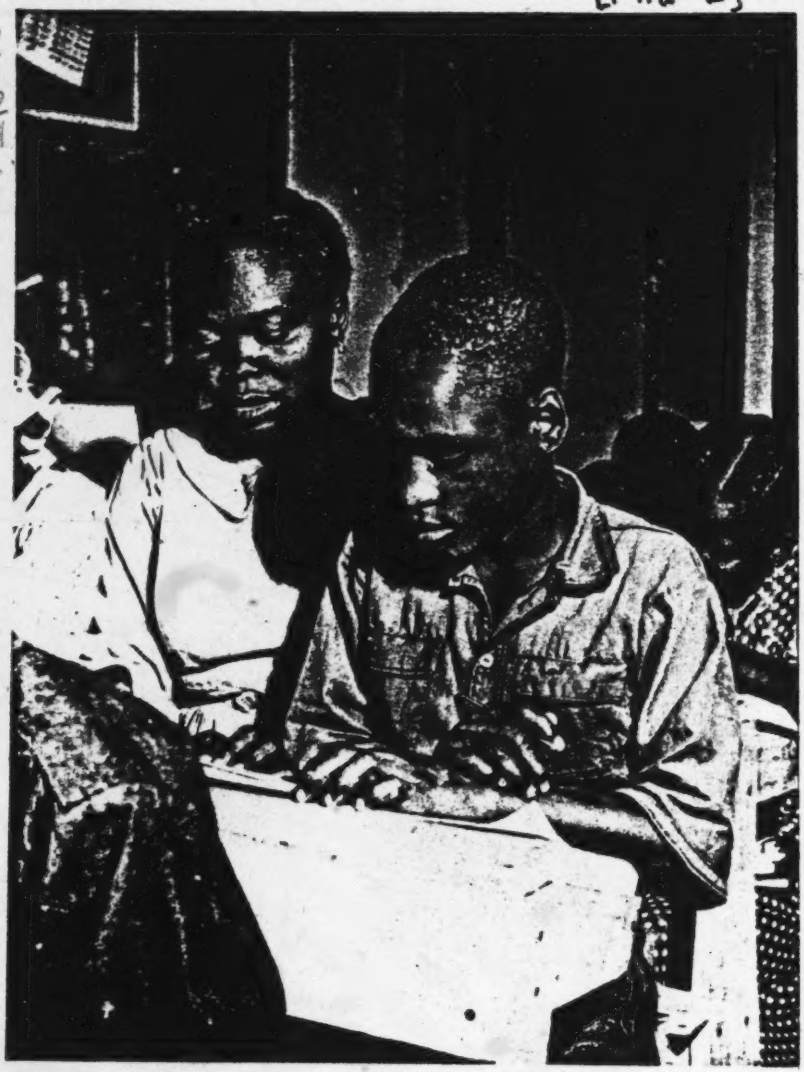

18. *Young Haitians in school. After a century and a half of independence, education remains one of Haiti's most acute problems. Only a small percentage of the country's children are in schools.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P.112-0]

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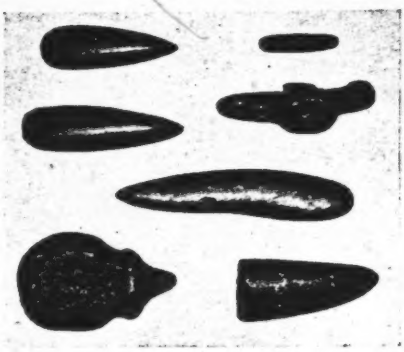
22. *An assortment of stones (Indian artifacts) from the altar of a hounfor in the mountains above Jacmel. All are regarded as thunder stones thrown to earth by the loa Sobo and Kébiosu, or as stones containing the essence of other deities.*



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23. *A houngan of southern Haiti divining with the aid of his asson, bell, and (right) gembo.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112- P]
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24. *A houngan of a small cult center in northern Haiti.*

25. *A prêt' savane. This lay cleric reads the scriptures at appropriate times in the Vodoun rituals.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-R]

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27. *Saluting the loa. In the center, with sword, is the laplace, flanked by two hounsi carrying sequin-studded flags. In the background, left, is the houngan with his asson.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-RR]

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77. *Playing Théatre.*

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78. *Playing Balancé Yaya.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-SS]

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79 and 80. *Playing the tambour maringouin, or mosquito drum. Beneath the earth bow is a portable variant. The player plucks the string with one hand and with the other varies the pitch by pressure on the end of the bow.*

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81. *A miniature brass casting, an Ashanti gold weight, in the form of a spring snare used for catching small game. The device can be recognized as an antecedent of the Haitian portable mosquito drum.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 112-TT]

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82. *Playing the tikambos, or bamboo stampers.*

Z: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-Y]

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35. *A hounsi in the first stage of possession by a loa.*

Z: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-Z]
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36. Possessed by the loa Gèdé Nimbo, two women dance the deity's favorite step, the Banda.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

114 treatment. In the absence of sufficient analytic material on the inter-
121 vening years since his book was written, a prefatory note such as this can do little more than comment on Haitian society, either in terms of its present design or in terms of the recent events that may have modified it.

121
114 The central thesis of Leyburn's book is that Haitian society is sharply
565 divided into two segments, and that the national institutional struc-
[178] ture is such that no significant alteration in that division has occurred in the entire course of Haiti's history as a sovereign nation. At the base of the society is the rural agricultural sector, making up perhaps as much as 95 per cent of the population; at the top the elite, which dominates the governmental apparatus and all national institutions. These two segments of the society differ, in Leyburn's view, in all important regards: level of income, source of income, education, language, religion, social forms, values and attitudes, and all else. By carefully describing the history of Haitian society from the eve of the revolution until the midst of the United States occupation, he reveals both the origin of this vast social cleavage and the various means employed for its perpetuation. Leyburn was so impressed by the gap which separated yeomanry and elite that he chose to label these social segments castes rather than classes. Members of the elite earn their livings as rentiers, merchants, professionals, and in government, and never engage in manual labor of any sort. They are predominantly urban in residence; their sons attend private lower schools, and then
[191] go on to higher education, usually abroad. They are French-speaking,
[197] although they also speak Creole, Haiti's national language. Elite re-
[58] ligion is Catholicism, elite forms of marriage and domestic organiza-
[59] tion are "legitimate" and "western." Elite members view themselves
[829] as a kind of aristocracy, and feel little commonality in their sharing of Haiti and of Haitian history with the yeomen.

114 In sharp contrast, the yeomanry is rural, poor, works the land, is
565 illiterate and Creole-speaking only, believes in *vodoun* rather than in
191 orthodox Catholicism, usually marries by common law and is some-
771 times polygynous, and remains substantially isolated from the outer
583 world. Finally and importantly—though its particular significance is
595 changing—the elite differs from the rural sector in that the country-
144 man is predominantly negroid in phenotype, while members of the elite are prevailingly lighter-skinned.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

648 669 565 701 439 The financing of these many revolutions was usually provided by foreign merchants, bent upon installing a government that would grant them special economic concessions (Munro, 1964:326–31). The United States occupation ended this doleful succession of regimes and, by throwing its weight to the elite, by suppressing military activity in the countryside, and by reforming the army, the United States gave a new meaning to the separation of the elite and the yeomanry. Leyburn's interpretation is consistent with these events; yet some Haitian scholars have differed with Leyburn's analysis.

114 564 563 671 144 In a lengthy review article, the dean of Haitian historians, Dr. Jean Price-Mars (1942:1–50), questions the applicability of the term "caste" to the social groupings of Haitian society. He notes that Haitian law after the revolution never legitimized any distinction on grounds of physical type, unlike a society such as the United States—that in fact, the very basis of Haitian polity was the absence of such distinctions. Furthermore, Leyburn's interpretation is qualified by the fact that the elite and the rural masses are not entirely distinctive physically. In some parts of rural Haiti, particularly in the southern peninsula, there are many light-skinned people; and many individuals who qualify as members of the elite on all other counts are very dark in appearance. The fact that being "Negro" or "white" in Haiti is viewed as a matter of degree, rather than of kind, complicated by all the other criteria of social position employed in drawing distinctions, has important implications for the way social barriers have operated in that country.*

114 565 Leyburn did not contend that all the effects of the United States occupation were in the direction of increasing the gap between the ELITE AND THE YEOMANRY.

563 564 171 144 * In this regard, Haiti is aligned with most of Latin America, in contradistinction to the United States, where many persons believe that "one drop of Negro blood" [sic] makes a "Negro." The failure of North Americans to distinguish between sociological and genetic categories of physical type has led to considerable confusion in their dealings with Latin America and in their understanding of Latin American societies. North American race prejudice at its most extreme sees color as the primary basis for social ranking, and no individual accomplishment (for instance, in terms of economic or intellectual success) can overshadow the inferior status unalterably bestowed by certain physical traits. Haitian—and generally all Latin American—social distinctions do not rest solely on considerations of physical type; a black skin does not "doom" an individual if his attainments make him otherwise the equal of his lighter-skinned fellow citizens. Hence, it might be argued that the term "caste" would be more appropriate when applied to the Negro people of the United States (regardless of phenotype, and including those "Negroes" who are *sociologically* identified with the Negro people even if their physical appearance is dramatically Caucasian) than when applied to the people of Latin America.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

elite and the yeomanry. For instance, he calls attention to one unanticipated (but inevitable) result of the occupation in this connection: the large number of children whose fathers were United States Marines, and whose mothers were members of the Haitian rural masses. In this way the occupation contributed to the growth of the physically intermediate population of Haiti, especially among rural folk, and thus perhaps to some bridging of the gap between yeomen and elite. Much more important, by its contributions to a broadening of the educational system, the occupation enabled talented black-skinned youths to improve themselves and to acquire new aspirations.

Recent economic and political developments in Haiti, through the period 1941–57, have contributed grounds for modification of the Leyburn interpretation. Though Leyburn predicted that "for the present and near future it is safe to say that there will be no more black non-élite presidents" (p. 101), subsequent developments soon proved him wrong. In January 1946, the government of elite member Élie Lescot fell under military pressure. A junta consisting of Franck Lavaud, Antoine Levelt, and Paul Magloire facilitated the installation of Dumarsais Estimé as president. Estimé was a dark-skinned man from the countryside (the village of Verettes, near St. Marc, in west-central Haiti), who had received a good education, served as a minister in the Vincent cabinet and, as a deputy, married a lighter-skinned woman whose family's elite membership was secure. Estimé might well be considered a self-made member of the elite, but he was not born into it, and his accession to power was the political expression of new possibilities in Haitian life.

The changes Estimé's regime symbolized were rooted in the intellectual resistance to the United States occupation and in the search for a Haitian identity in the face of that occupation. The strangely easy domination that the United States wielded over Haitian society for several decades, and the relatively unexploitative but patronizing administration it provided, ended forever a fantasy that had gripped Haitian intellectuals for more than a century. The world of 1804, when a bloodied but defiant Haiti could bar by force of arms Napoleon's dreams of a New World empire (and assist indirectly thereby in the territorial expansion of a still weak United States) had vanished. The time when a Pétion could aid, protect, and politically influence a sick and tired Simón Bolívar was long gone. The world had changed, while Haiti, the Haitians learned under their North

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

[p. 3]

I

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR COUNTRY

IN the ten thousand square miles of Haiti's mountains and valleys more than two and a half million people—some say more than three million—are crowded together. Some are black, some light-skinned, but less than five thousand are white, and these are almost all recent immigrants to the country. Modern Haiti has its racial roots primarily in Africa, but its social roots lie as much in Europe as in Africa; if it is "American" at all, geography and a few fairly superficial characteristics are the only American qualities it displays. 161 162 144 181

Carrying our own cultural interpretations with us when we visit our Caribbean neighbor, we are likely to misunderstand what we see in Haiti, for it is very easy to think of all colored people in terms of our own. To do so is to remain completely ignorant of Haiti. Whereas in the United States we use "Negro" and "colored" indiscriminately as synonyms, making a real distinction only between "black" and "mulatto," all four terms are taboo in polite society in Haiti. A new descriptive vocabulary, an entirely new frame of reference, must be acquired by the friendly foreign visitor to this West Indian republic.[1] 829 576

Probably the most striking phenomenon in the country is its division into two social groups. So rigidly are the class lines set that 565

1. No greater error of tact can be made by visitors to Haiti than to use such commonly accepted American terms as Negro, colored, mulatto, blacks, Africans. Whereas in the United States such words are employed to describe people with a greater or less degree of Negro blood, in Haiti they are generally regarded as opprobrious epithets, emphasizing the color of the epidermis as all important, while ignoring the essential matters of culture, standard of living, and social background. Not many Haitians would have the grace to reply, as President Pétion suggested to a subaltern who was incensed at a white man for calling him "un nègre," "Why, then, did you not call him 'un blanc'?" Probably the most offensive of all the terms is *mulâtre*, for it calls attention to miscegenation in the family. The educated people in general regard themselves as darker Frenchmen, not as transplanted Africans. Books about Haiti which refer to the "black republic" seem to them to ignore the important fact that the blacks, though numerically preponderant, do not rule. The visitor must accordingly acquire a new vocabulary of color. It is safer not to make any allusion at all to the matter; but if occasion demands, one speaks of "jaune" and "brun," not white and black. 829 576 186

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

several generations of ancestors, there can be little question of its high social position. 565 581

Religion affords still another distinction between high and low. Haiti has a folk religion which American tourists call Voodoo (a name which makes them think immediately of superstitious emotionalism or some kind of occult balderdash), but which is more properly called Vodun. It is a true religion in that it answers for the native the questions arising in the world he knows, while giving him confidence to face the crises of life. Vodun is African in origin, Créole in its language, and homely in its creed and practice; none of these makes it any less a religion. The official religion of the country, on the other hand, is Roman Catholicism. Few members of the élite, however their hearts may yearn for the consoling securities of Vodun, dare openly either to acknowledge their "atavism" or to participate in the cult. They must be Catholics or agnostics. It is often remarked that below the surface many a professing Catholic aristocrat cherishes Vodun beliefs; the important fact is that he keeps his folk worship secret. Because the outside world ridicules Vodun as superstition, and because the approved Catholic Church fights it, government restrictions effectively keep its ritual out of the public gaze. All the discriminatory laws, however, have not weakened its hold upon the masses. It is because Vodun is a *folk* religion that the élite cannot permit themselves to adhere to it openly. 565 771

The final and most complicated distinction between the two castes is skin color. Any generalization on this matter is open to numerous exceptions; moreover, the whole question of color in Haiti touches the most sensitive nerves of the upper classes. One must begin by such casual observations as these: the vast majority of the lower orders are definitely dark or even black; the lighter the skin, the more likely a person is to belong to the élite. It is true that there are black aristocrats, and it is equally true that numbers of peasants have light complexions. At almost any function in high society, however, the proportion of dark-skinned persons is decidedly small. Among the youth, the tendency is always to select a spouse whose skin color is light; marriages are often made between aristocrats and white foreigners resident in Haiti, so that the children may lighten the family complexion. While it is therefore inaccurate to assert that no full-blooded Negroes belong to the élite, it is also clear that lighter persons tend to have social advantages. 565 829 581 144

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 The Occupation had had other far-reaching consequences. It had
648 removed from the Constitution an article which had endured from
642 the very first—the prohibition against ownership of land by white
423 people. Americans argued that since Haiti's greatest potential source
563 of wealth was agricultural (sugar and coffee in particular), new methods were needed if rehabilitation were to occur. Only foreign whites had both the necessary wealth and the requisite agricultural knowledge: therefore, whites must be attracted into the country by an opportunity to establish plantations. Although the Senate of Haiti protested violently against this reversal of tradition, which struck at the people's long pride in their complete ownership of the land, the Americans yielded only on the point of requiring five years' residence of the white landlord in the country. The influx of foreign whites has not been large, but in the Plaine du Nord and Port-au-Prince the white "colonies" are considerably larger now than in 1914.

175 Up to the present moment the white element in Haiti has not
648 exerted any noticeable pressure on the government. Its mere pres-
563 ence, however, is bound to be a restraining influence on politicians, for most of the whites are Americans, and the government at Washington may not always follow a good-neighbor policy. With the clannishness so usual in white colonists living among darker people, the Americans in Haiti have their private clubs and their closed social set. For the first time since 1804 the élite are socially not the highest-ranking persons in the country.

175 The physical presence of several hundred white Marines for nine-
648 teen years had also one unplanned but inevitable result: an increase in
563 the amount of white blood in the population. For many decades
144 numerous élite had rested comfortably beneath their light skins, knowing that only they, with their greater mobility in the world, had any real chance to sustain a white strain. The Occupation, however, brought white men in contact with black women; there was a steady average of 2,000 white Marines in the country for two
[554] decades. The light skin of resulting offspring suggested to many the possibility of a climb up the social ladder now that the most difficult rung had already been achieved. No figures are available on the number of children born in Haiti between 1915 and 1934 of white fathers, but it was a perceptible influx in the lower class.

175 Haitian businessmen enjoyed a greater economic prosperity during
458 the Occupation than they had ever known before. It is commonly

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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the market, the women sit all day in the broiling sun, and in Port-au-Prince at least, sometimes sleep near by for the night, in order to complete their purchases and sales and to get their fill of companionable gossip. They are often accompanied by the youngest of their children, some of whom have to be carried. 462 565 443

Some observers profess to see evidences of a matriarchate among the peasants, for as a general rule the woman attends to the business dealings of the market place, handles the money, directs her children, and manages the household. If the man has more than one placée spouse, complete control of the farm is the woman's during the absence of her man. It is a superficial judgment, however, to speak of the peasant mother as a matriarch. The man owns the land, chooses his women, calls for help at the moment he pleases for preparation of the ground for planting; and when he knows his end to be near, summons all his families and disposes of his property as he sees fit. His decision is final. But he is no more a patriarch than his woman is a matriarch: they are economic partners in a struggle for existence. 562 593 592

By our standards, the woman is inferior to the man not only in rights but in being one spouse of several. He may contract several unions, while she may have only one. She does more steady, if not more actual, physical labor than the man. When he is at home, she must offer him the best of the food. As usual in simple societies, however, the issue rarely arises as to superiority or inferiority of the sexes. Customary behavior is followed without much question. 562

There is one great contrast between élite and peasant women, in the matter of childbirth. The élite mother takes as much care of herself during pregnancy and parturition as would an American woman in well-to-do circles. The peasant mother, on the contrary, cannot allow herself the luxury of medical attention, nor can she spare the time to rest quietly. Like many so-called "primitive" women, she apparently finds herself little incommoded either by pregnancy or birth. Babies are born frequently in the market place, the mother having come down from the hills only that day with her goods. It is not unusual to hear of the birth of a child in a roadside ditch or in a grove by the path to and from the market town. The care given mother and infant is primitive: the navel cord is cut with a sharp stone or a piece of broken glass; a short rest is thought sufficient before the mother resumes her task. As might be expected, the death rate from infection is high and women age prematurely. 565 844 846 [165] [145]

Parents are generally kind to their children, so far as physical

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

Spring water in the country districts is frequently not-

164 [364] [272] luted by all sorts of excreta; the watering of milk is a common practice, and samples of milk have been generally found to contain many times the normal amount of bacilli. The cases of tuberculosis are practically always complicated by malaria.

Dysentery, when caused by bacilli, is epidemic in nature. In Haiti this form, known as "colerin," annually affects about a quarter of the rural population. Another type, caused by a variety of amoeba, affects another ten or twenty per cent, according to the region. Enteritis is less serious than dysentery but just as prevalent, being [146] [273] caused by protozoa and intestinal worms. Poor diet, the abuse of alcohol, premature weaning, and unwise nursing are also responsible. Granular conjunctivitis affected sixteen per cent of the children [853] examined by the Rockefeller Foundation.

Cancer seems to strike only a normal number of Haitians; goitre is common in the mountain districts; leprosy has become a menace in the West and South; elephantiasis is present, particularly in the South; gusarola (characterized by patches of skin assuming different color) is fairly common in the Cul-de-Sac plain; chicken pox, influenza, and meningitis epidemics are occasionally serious.

164 462 482 145 The health of the peasant women is seriously and continuously endangered by their mode of life and work. It is customary for females, from girlhood onward, to carry heavy burdens on their heads—over steep paths in the mountains, along rocky trails, up hill and down. The commonest sight in Haiti is to see a woman swinging along with a great load of fuel, a tin of water, a bundle of building material, a basket of fruit, on her head. Cranial bones are flattened, the spine is bent, internal organs are strained or damaged. For ill-nourished persons to carry heavy weights for long distances with [461] [843] little rest means undue pressure on the heart and lungs, and so an increasing tendency to cardiac and pulmonary infections as well as chronic anemia. Overwork frequently results in miscarriages.

844 [846] [164] 853 As has been said, childbirth often occurs by the roadside, on the way to market, or in the market place. In no case can a peasant woman remain in bed for a proper period either before or after parturition. Midwives are untrained; they use primitive methods which inevitably result in defective development of infants, lessened resistance to disease, high infant mortality, and a prevalence of abdominal diseases in women. Pressure of work, whether in the field or on the way to market, makes a mother soon stop nursing her

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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2. *Health*

Historians who seek to explain the rise and fall of nations in terms of a single cause might do worse than hit upon health and disease as the all-important explanation. Unless spectacular epidemics have appeared in a country's history, the average person is rarely aware of how diet may affect a people, or of how backwardness in achievement is often directly related to disease. It may well be that the development of *medical* history will yet cause a radical revision of certain philosophies of history.

146 164 "The diet of the Haitian peasants has not improved since the slavery period," says Dr. Camille Lhérisson.[5] When people are hungry in Haiti, they eat (if they can find food) until their hunger has been appeased; but what they eat, though it may fill their stomachs, is often decidedly deficient in the proper nourishment. Mangoes, yams, and beans are common enough so that few people actually go hungry; eggs, milk, meat, and many other essentials of a balanced diet, on the contrary, are scarce. People do not die of hunger, but rather of the diseases which accompany malnutrition. It is said that many peasants allow the fires in their homes to die out when the mangoes begin to ripen, subsisting almost wholly upon this fruit for weeks. One sees nearly naked children whose distended [261] bellies are testimony to faulty diet. There are frequent cases of geophagy (eating of dirt) both by children and by adults in their unreasoned craving for certain dietetic elements; one result of the practice is the swallowing of eggs and larvae of intestinal parasites.

178 743 759 Scientific progress in medicine during the nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth passed Haiti by completely. There were during the whole history of the country until 1915 hardly a score of reputable physicians; even had there been doctors, hospital facilities and equipment were lacking. Dr. Robert P. Parsons de- 114 scribes Haiti in 1915 as "an unspeakable hotbed of diseases, ranking 164 second to none in the world in downright rottenness." He further described the "mass of three million people, sick, suffering beyond all power of words to describe, crippled, and weakened from the ravages of a host of diseases (for the most part preventable and curable), pitifully helpless and hopelessly resigned to their lot."[6]

5. "Diseases of the Peasants of Haiti," *American Journal of Public Health*, XXV, No. 8 (August, 1935), 924.
6. *History of Haitian Medicine* (New York, 1930), pp. 4–5.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Spring water in the country districts is frequently

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[364] luted by all sorts of excreta; the watering of milk is a common practice, and samples of milk have been generally found to contain
[272] many times the normal amount of bacilli. The cases of tuberculosis are practically always complicated by malaria.

Dysentery, when caused by bacilli, is epidemic in nature. In Haiti this form, known as "colerin," annually affects about a quarter of the rural population. Another type, caused by a variety of amoeba, affects another ten or twenty per cent, according to the region. Enteritis is less serious than dysentery but just as prevalent, being
[146] caused by protozoa and intestinal worms. Poor diet, the abuse of
[273] alcohol, premature weaning, and unwise nursing are also responsible. Granular conjunctivitis affected sixteen per cent of the children
[853] examined by the Rockefeller Foundation.

Cancer seems to strike only a normal number of Haitians; goitre is common in the mountain districts; leprosy has become a menace in the West and South; elephantiasis is present, particularly in the South; gusarola (characterized by patches of skin assuming different color) is fairly common in the Cul-de-Sac plain; chicken pox, influenza, and meningitis epidemics are occasionally serious.

164 The health of the peasant women is seriously and continuously
462 endangered by their mode of life and work. It is customary for
482 females, from girlhood onward, to carry heavy burdens on their heads—over steep paths in the mountains, along rocky trails, up hill
145 and down. The commonest sight in Haiti is to see a woman swinging along with a great load of fuel, a tin of water, a bundle of building material, a basket of fruit, on her head. Cranial bones are flattened, the spine is bent, internal organs are strained or damaged. For ill-nourished persons to carry heavy weights for long distances with
[461] little rest means undue pressure on the heart and lungs, and so an
[843] increasing tendency to cardiac and pulmonary infections as well as chronic anemia. Overwork frequently results in miscarriages.

As has been said, childbirth often occurs by the roadside, on the
844 way to market, or in the market place. In no case can a peasant
[846] woman remain in bed for a proper period either before or after
[164] parturition. Midwives are untrained; they use primitive methods which inevitably result in defective development of infants, lessened
853 resistance to disease, high infant mortality, and a prevalence of abdominal diseases in women. Pressure of work, whether in the field or on the way to market, makes a mother soon stop nursing her

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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311 merly. Wherever the overcrowded Haitians have lived since 1815, there beauty has had to give way to gnawing necessity which lacked either the imagination or the means to be sightly.

105 One can stand upon a morne and watch a rain storm rush down the valley, bending the palm trees in its fury, and think Haiti still a magnificent sight. Then one must descend the mountainside past rickety shacks and rocky fields, and the feeling grows that not all the kindly simplicity of the people is enough to lift the country from its [134] dilapidation. As he nears the village, the afternoon scent of roasting coffee will delight him; but then he sees the squalor of village life and is reminded that three million souls are here trying to eke out an existence upon a small area of declining fertility.

Much in Haiti is picturesque if one can keep his mind from wandering to the conditions which lie behind the picturesqueness. [482] Women stride down from the hills with great loads on their heads; [443] aged crones, pipe in mouth, sit perched on the haunches of tiny donkeys with their bulging panniers; the great market square in the [492] town is a scene of noisy confusion with hundreds of women and [482] children, a mixture of smells, thousands of little piles of soap, candy, gewgaws, vegetables, gaping chickens tied together by the feet, [434] shirts, canes, bolts of cloth. All the weary women, however, must trudge back up to their shanties on the mountainside when the [146] market is over. Many of them do not see ten dollars in cash during the year, and their little children, with bellies bulging, give evidence [164] of undernourishment. Without doctors, without even the rudiments of hygiene, they manage somehow to subsist, or else die, frequently of disease which might easily have been prevented.

565 In Port-au-Prince and a few other towns live enough members of the élite to make one momentarily forget the plight of the masses. [342] The houses of the well-to-do are substantially built, if not often [351] attractive. Their garden walls are brilliant with bougainvillea, their walks with hibiscus. Tiny red lizards (analis) make flashes of color along the walls. On shady verandas and in the parlors one hears delightful conversation, eats excellent food, savors the pleasures of [575] civilization. The clubs of the élite are pleasing, their tennis is good, [526] their dancing graceful. To be among these families as a welcome guest is an experience in gracious hospitality which can never be [535] forgotten. Too soon, however, one must leave these havens of urbanity and pass through districts of the town which haunt the mind with their grim want.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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sitting at the door of the central house, with huts all 175
around in which his younger wives lived, as they could 595
not be made to dwell under the same roof. . . . The French priests attempted to alter this state of things, but they did not succeed, as the wives, surrounding the intruders, asked them what was to be their position if the husband selected one among them and abandoned the rest."[10]

Elsewhere St. John speaks of the institution of *plaçage* by [583]
name, mentioning its prevalence prior to the period of his residence in Haiti.[11] Mackenzie, though not calling it by this term, tells of a rural Negro who, in the course of a long conversation during which the name of an officer of rank in the Republic came up, made the observation "with admirable naiveté and exquisite logic, 'C'est mon beau frère, parceque je vis avec sa sœur.'"[12]

Plural marriage is no less common in the valley of Mire- 184
balais than elsewhere in Haiti. Despite the insistence of the 595
Church on monogamy, many men have two "wives," a few have three or four, while one important priest of the *vodun* cult is said to have eight. The force of the sanctions behind [177]
monogamy and Church unions, however, has undoubtedly [152]
influenced the psychological "set" of the Haitian toward polygyny, as is especially to be seen in the violent manifestations of jealousy shown by co-wives toward one another. It is primarily because of this that polygynous households, such as are mentioned in earlier writings, are not found in present-day Mirebalais, and this also explains why a man with more than one spouse sees to it that where possible his "wives" live at such distance from one another that they have but little opportunity to meet. Even then, on occasion, a newly taken *placée* will pace in front of the house of her man's other spouse, flaunting the clothes and trinkets she has received from him. Or if women who share the same mate meet in the

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

one. Sometimes a loa who is making life too hard for a devotee will be retired without a replacement. The "washing of the head" must be accompanied by ritual safeguards, and all possible circumstances must be taken into account by the officiating cult priest. There are many stories of people who became mentally deranged as a result of the removal of their loa from their heads.

The mait' tête must also be removed from the head of a person who dies. Should this not be done, the spirit of the deceased will go to reside "below the water" and may cause trouble for the family. This loa is usually transferred to a special jar as a temporary resting place, and later perhaps into the head of another member of the family.

Though the loa is a powerful ruling force in the life of the individual, the human "horse" has controls over his deity too. He may reproach or admonish his loa for bad behavior or for failing to protect him. He may expose the loa's irresponsibility in public through the use of songs in religious rites. And though the loa is frequently encouraged to "enter," steps may be taken to restrain him from possession. This is called *marré loa* —"tying the loa." A woman may "tie" her loa by fixing a hairpin in her hair in a special way. A man may do it by placing his hands in cold water.[2]

Nevertheless, the loa are always lurking in the background. They are a constant and dramatic element in the religious life of the people. They may sometimes be controlled by the houngan, but they are an authority stronger than the priesthood. They give advice, courage, consolation, and status to their followers. They add much to an otherwise hard and ungenerous environment and evoke remembrances of Africa from which the Haitians' ancestors were uprooted. They can also cause concern and anxiety; for the loa are not always benevolent, and they are frequently unpredictable.

Many of the loa are ancient deities, sib-founders and ancestors who loom out of a misty, half-forgotten past. Nananbouclou, Legba, and Ayida Wèdo have been known for many lifetimes in Dahomey. Chango, Ogoun, and Loko were old spirits in Nigeria before the first slave ships sailed from Africa to the New World. Their names and many others in present-day Haiti come from an ancient lore. They recall places, tribes, and old kingdoms from Senegal in northwestern Africa to the heart of the Congo. They are a bond which holds the people of Haiti to Africa. In the mountains people sometimes say, "Haiti is the child of Dahomey," or "Haiti is the child of Guinée." The gods divide their time between their Haitian and their African children.

Yet in some respects the Haitians' concept of their loa is no longer purely African. The African religious patterns have been infiltrated by the lore

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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named in the song has been dead for years does not seem to matter very much:

Mènè'm allé oh parleur!	Take me to the parlor!
Mènè'm allé!	Take me!
Mènè'm allé!	Take me!
Mènè'm allé oh parleur Borno!	Take me to Borno's parlor!
Mènè'm allé oh! [Ex. 120]	Take me, oh!

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Sometimes the challenge is directed to a more lowly level of authority, such as the gendarme:

Gendarme, mènè'm nan bureau!
Rwo, gendarme oh! [Ex. 121]

Gendarme, take me to the police station!
Rwo, gendarme, oh!

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Haitians are notable for their restraint from physical violence. During holiday celebrations it is not uncommon to see men who have drunk enough tafia to make them act up. Some of them may even be morose and bellicose. But the disturbances of the peace more often than not are verbal. So long as the first blow is not struck, the social pressures against violence operate effectively. But physical assault against an individual—a push, a blow, a slap—is an affront to personal dignity which relieves the victim of the social restraints and gives him the right to bodily revenge. I have seen waterfront rows, fierce and vocal, in which no one but the participants showed much interest. But should one man shove or strike another, the spectators would immediately interfere, for that single physical contact would have removed the barriers to the worst violence. Sometimes at carnival time a man assumes the guise of belligerence. Such a bully may roll up one trouser leg to indicate he is challenging all and sundry to a fight. Usually, passers-by move aside good-naturedly when he approaches. He is not taken seriously; but neither is he challenged, except by another man in the same frame of mind. When two men with rolled trouser legs meet, there may be a verbal encounter, possibly from opposite sides of the street, to the general entertainment of the bystanders. It is usually a serio-comic affair. Some of the folk songs memorialize occasions on which a man has publicly spoiled for a fight, real or imaginary. This song comments briefly on a man named Çalira, who looked for trouble:

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Woy woy woy!
Woy woy woy!
Woy woy woy!
Çac bien arrangé corps yo!
Mène en bataille là!

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Parents are generally kind to their children, so far as physical
855 punishment is concerned. The average peasant child can hardly
861 properly be said to be "brought up": he merely grows, eats whatever
● 152 his family eats or whatever fruits he can pick up, and learns his place in the community as he matures. In anger, parents are likely to use in correction the first thing that come to hand. There is a surprising callousness to pain among these generally kindly people: they beat their donkeys unmercifully, and strap harness over open sores; they carry chickens, head down and feet tied together and mouths gaping, for miles in the sun; they revel in gory cockfights. If, therefore, a parent is minded to beat his child, he will probably do a thorough
[578] job of it. A peasant woman, pommeling her son with a broomstick, replied to the protests of a white passer-by, "*Li nègue; li pas fait li mal.*" ("He's a Negro; it won't hurt him.") The interference of a stranger in the beating of a wife by her man, armed with a club, was resented by both man and woman as an interference with a purely family quarrel.

831 The concept of sexual continence is lacking among the peasants.
834 Sex, indeed, hardly enters the realm of morality except in connection
864 with adulterous dalliance of one man with another's woman. There is no virtue in abstaining from sex relations when the sexual urge is strong. Mothers tell love stories in all their frank details to their young daughters, and some who care about such matters are adept in all lore connected with stimulating and satisfying a man's desire.[5]
[342] Since huts are small and the whole family sleeps in the same room, children have ample opportunity to observe the sexual life of their parents. If a girl, as a result of her own experiments, has a child born to her, there is no disgrace. Practically every peasant is "illegitimate," so that the term means nothing; a baby will soon be old enough to assist in the work of the home, thus becoming an asset. It is expected that as soon as a youth grows up he will find a mate and begin a family of his own.

241 The family is as important an element of peasant life as formal
439 marriage is unimportant. It is the economic unit. Ever since the days
593 of Pétion Haitian economy has been one of small things: even the crops are small subsistence crops of maize, millet, beans, rice, yams, and frequently trees of bananas, plantains, and coffee, which require no particular cultivation. Enough coffee has been produced in Haiti for annual export ever since 1804, but until recent years the beans

5. See Zora Neale Hurston, *Tell My Horse*, pp. 22 ff.

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796 535 men and women exchange gossip and sit about, joining in the songs or merely observing the proceedings; while the young people form part of the singing, dancing circle that revolves almost without pause about the central post of the *tonnelle,* the shelter where the festivities are held.

796 To speak of discipline in connection with these dances is to evoke new and astonishing images for readers familiar with the more popular literature on Haiti. It is admittedly true that as one first witnesses a *vodun* dance, one's reaction is that this is a performance governed solely by the dictates of individual [416] possession. These ceremonies are usually held at night, deep in [291] the bush, lighted only by a small, smoking oil lamp and by the [411] candles fastened to the pegs of the drums, while the participants dress in anything but their best clothing, and in their belts the men carry the machetes always worn by the Haitian [533] peasant. Add to this the effect of the unceasing rhythms of the drumming, the blanket of sound from the unison singing of the participants, the violence of the possessions, and it is not strange that the untrained observer tends to assess what he sees in almost any terms but those of the underlying discipline that defines all activity in the worship of the gods. A release of [154] psychic tension is undoubtedly afforded those who become possessed, and this is also experienced to a lesser degree by all 796 those in attendance. Nevertheless, it must be emphasized, de- 786 spite so much that has been written to the contrary, that this form of worship of the *loa* is neither unrestrained hysteria nor drunken orgiastic satisfaction of the sex drive. The behavior of the participants, in terms of the accepted patterns of European and American religious decorum, often seems uncouth, vigorous, violent, and even dangerous, when it is merely the expression of a different tradition. And as for the orgiastic aspects of these rites, Haitians have ample opportunity to satisfy their sexual impulses elsewhere, without making this a basic and constant element in the worship of their gods.

796 *Vodun* dances, in Mirebalais as elsewhere, take place on

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individuals who must meet the demands of two traditions which, in many aspects, are in anything but accord. As regards the Haitian, it must be recognized that the two ancestral elements in his civilization have never been completely merged. As a result, his outwardly smoothly functioning life is full of inner conflict, so that he has to raise his defenses in order to make his adjustment within the historical and cultural combination of differing modes of life that constitute his civilization.

The kind of adjustment that seems to dominate may perhaps best be called *socialized ambivalence*, since, more than any other phrase, it describes this tendency to manifest those rapid shifts in attitude toward people and situations that characterize the responses of the Haitian peasant to such a marked degree that the same man will hold in high regard a person, an institution, an experience, or even an object that has personal significance to him, and simultaneously manifest great disdain and even hatred for it. As outwardly observable, this takes the form of recurring and often rapid changes in behavior toward the object of attention. In attitude, there is vacillation from one emotional tone to another. In its broader implications, as a matter of fact, it is entirely possible that this socialized ambivalence underlies much of the political and economic instability of Haiti, so that, arising from a fundamental clash of custom within the culture, it is responsible for the many shifts in allegiance that continually take place, as it is for the change in attitudes in everyday association.

Since far more detailed studies of individuals must be at hand before the full power of this ambivalent drive can be gauged with any degree of sureness, the problem alone is sketched here. Yet this type of approach cannot but give insight into such occurrences as that of the man whose unwilling possession by the gods of his ancestors was, as described, brought about through the fascination of their forbidden

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154 rites for him, despite his strict Catholic upbringing. His vacillation between the desire to understand and worship the gods of his ancestors and his utter remorse after he had done this illustrates one way in which conflicts in a cultural setting can affect the outward responses and unsettle the inner adjustment of the individual who is exposed to such a situation. From a broader point of view, such an analysis of Haitian psychology suggests a more realistic understanding of the individuals in other cultures who have likewise fallen heir to conflicting traditions.

154 182 However revealing this type of analysis of the springs of Haitian behavior may prove, it will be adding only a fragment of esoteric information unless it, like all other aspects of the investigation of this single society and its mode of life, is pointed toward an understanding of the larger problems of the relation between man and his culture. For just as a study of the effect of the dual character of Haitian behavior upon the personality of the Haitians is important in throwing light on the study of the relationship between culture and personality in general, so the study of Haitian institutions may hold equal significance when questions are raised about the less subjective aspects of human civilization — that is, when attempts are made to understand what may be termed the dynamics of culture.

197 Most important in this connection is the demonstration made in this book how cultures in contact influence each other. This would seem self-evident but for the fact that very generally when such a proposition has been stated, it rarely enters into the actual studies of primitive cultures in contact with European civilizations without being neutralized by a counter-assumption that the force of European achievement overwhelms peoples with a differing cultural heritage. As will be seen, the failure to recognize this fact of the reciprocal effects of cultural contacts has entered to a very significant degree into the determination of basic atti-

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cannot read the extended narrative of the young Comte de C***, reprinted by de Vastière, without questioning this myth of the idyllic life of the Haitian Créole, even though allowing for the disdain with which an exiled Parisian dandy of 1790 would regard the inhabitants of outlying possessions, and allowing also for the savory wit of the man, which undoubtedly led him to underscore the more diverting situations which he encountered.[24] 175 181 563

Mention must be made at this point of the two great divisions of the white population which, as the colonizing period continued, were created by the distinction between those born on the island and those who had migrated there. These divisions cut across the two categories of urban and country dwellers, both of which numbered Haitian-born and native European members. At the time of the French Revolution about three quarters of the whites on the island had been born outside the colony, while of those born in the colony, women comprised the major portion.[25] Haitian-born persons were known by the designation *Créole*, which, according to a definition of the period, included all those "who have first seen the light of day in Santo Domingo" and was, as it is today, a term employed in all the West Indies and in Louisiana.[26] This designation was by no means restricted to the whites, however, for there were Créole Negroes as well as Créole whites; at the present time in Haiti a distinction is even drawn between locally grown "créole" rice and that which is imported! 175 563

It is common knowledge that slavery not only affects those who are held in bondage, but deeply influences the master-class as well. In Haiti the role played by the institution of slavery in the formation of the character and personalities of Créole children brought up in a setting of servility, cupidity, brutality, and terror must have been of the utmost importance. The bad temper and domineering nature of Créole youths is commented on again and again by writers of the period. Owing to the unhealthy climate and the failure to 567 175 155 563 858 571

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maintain adequate hygienic conditions, the health of these children was usually poor, so that from earliest infancy they were spoiled by their parents and servants; their least wishes were gratified, and their least complaints immediately rectified so as to make them petty tyrants in their households. This tyranny was most often exercised over the family slaves. Regardless of the assiduous care these young despots received, and despite the adulation lavished upon their young charges, the Negro servants were seldom sufficiently prompt or adequate in their attentiveness to escape the punishments, often severe, that were meted out to them at the behest of their young masters. This tyranny extended to the play-life of the young Haitian-born white. Surrounded only by the slave children of the plantation, he commanded his contemporaries even more imperiously than his parents commanded the grown slaves.

> " Whatever he saw, he wanted, whatever was shown him he demanded; and if some fatality brought it about that one of his small companions resisted him and he became irritated, they would hurry from all sides in response to his cries and those of the young unfortunate, who, his color having destined him for submission, learned soon enough that he would be forced to give way, perhaps even being meted some punishment to penalize the disobedience of one who had not yet the instinct for servitude." "

175 563 567 591 [839]

Grown to manhood, the young Créole continued to act as master of all he surveyed. Imperious, quick-tempered, spoiled, his life lived in large part among slaves, when his sex drive stirred, he took what slave women pleased him. Eventually he married, to be tormented with the thoughts of the possible infidelity of his wife; the more tortured because of his extreme vanity and because, while demanding faithfulness from his spouse, he was continuing his affairs with his Negro women. [157] Yet he had some excellences of character, as well. " Frank,

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ever, contributed not only many slaves called by the name of that river, but also the *Mayombés*, the *Mousombés*, and the *Mondongues*, though the "true Congos" — the *Franc-Congos* — are listed as having been derived from Angola. As for the rest of the continent, "One does not see at all in Santo Domingo any Africans who have come from the remainder of the west coast of Africa, which ends at the Cape of Good Hope. . . ."[8]

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No final answer can be given about the extent to which these lists of tribal names may be regarded as valid, but the unanimity with which not only Charlevoix and St. Mery, but such other contemporary observers as Bryan Edwards for Jamaica, the Reverend C. G. A. Oldendorps for the Virgin Islands, John G. Stedman and Jan Jacob Hartsinck for Guiana — to name only four — recorded similar African regions and similar tribal names when writing of the slaves of other parts of the New World, offers strong corroborative testimony. Moreover, the fact that every tribal designation given in the lists of Charlevoix and St. Mery can be found on present-day maps of Africa in the approximate region they had indicated confirms the accuracy of these early lists.

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The characteristics of the various types of Negroes recorded by Charlevoix and St. Mery are not without interest. The Senegalese are described as tall and well made, and of an ebony color, their noses almost as straight as those of whites, their hair less tightly curled than that of other Negroes. They had the reputation of possessing a superior morality and were deemed warrior-like. St. Mery had nothing but the highest praise for the Senegalese slave.

> "He is a farmer, intelligent, good, faithful even in love, understanding, and makes an excellent domestic. Living on millet, maize, and rice, he is very sober, excellent in caring for animals, discreet, and above all taciturn, a quality sufficiently rare among the Africans and

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which one does not find often enough even among civilized peoples."

Not all of the Mohammedan slaves, however, had the desirable qualities of the Senegalese. The Bambara, for example, were depicted as insolent and not always to be trusted, as the designations " those who steal turkeys " and " those who steal sheep " would seem to indicate.

The people between Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast were known as a hardy group prone to revolt and desertion; they were not held desirable as slaves, and thus it is not strange that few of them were found in the colony. A similar appraisal was made of the Gold Coast Negroes, for while they were described as generally well made and intelligent, they were also assessed as unreliable, deceitful, lazy, given to flattery, great consumers of food, drunkards, and wantons. And as for the Fanti and the Mina, they were spoken of as " extremely proud, waging constant warfare, capricious, and ready at any time to commit suicide."

The Negroes of the Slave Coast were favorites in Santo Domingo. Their characteristic lighter skin-color, to be observed at the present time in their peculiar yellowish or reddish hue, confirms their provenience. They were thought intelligent but avaricious, and were designated as " eaters of dogs." The Ardra women, " continuous talkers," and quarrelsome, were rarely employed as domestics, since the Negroes from the region of Dahomey apparently learned French with the greatest of difficulty, so that to understand their speech was considered to be the greatest test " for those who flatter themselves that they have command of Créole."

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The Ibos were found excellent for work in the fields, yet difficult to manage, for the slightest fault-finding or ridicule caused them to commit suicide,

" the idea of which, far from terrifying them, seems to hold an attraction for them, for they believe in the trans-

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> migration of souls. Too often it has come about that the *Ibos* of a given plantation have agreed all to hang themselves, in order to return to their country."

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So well recognized was this tendency of the Ibo slaves to commit suicide, that they were described in Créole by the formula: "*Ibos pend' cor' a yo*—The Ibos (are those who) hang themselves." None the less, many slaves from this tribe were acquired. Their strong communal and tribal ties made it advantageous for those who owned them to obtain more of them, since newcomers "were accorded help, care, and instruction by those who had preceded them."

According to St. Mery, the Negroes most common in the colony came from the Congo coast and Angola, and were known by the generic term *Congos*. The *Franc-Congos*, who came from the kingdoms of Congo and Angola, were

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> "of a docility and gayety that makes them much desired. Loving song, dance, and ornaments, they make excellent domestics, while their intelligence, their facility in speaking a pure Créole, their jovial countenances without markings . . . cause people to prefer them for house-servants; they also make good laborers and good fishermen."

That the large numbers of Congo Negroes imported into Haiti have left no more of the elements of their culture in the island than are found is perhaps due to this very devotion to their masters, for a lively tradition of the present tells how, during the slave revolts, the Congo Negroes most often remained on the side of their masters and most often betrayed their fellows.

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Not all the Negroes from the Congo area were as amiable as these just mentioned. The *Mondongos* had "the most execrable excess of eating their fellows." This quotation gains special significance because of the prominence which it has

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maintain adequate hygienic conditions, the health of these children was usually poor, so that from earliest infancy they were spoiled by their parents and servants; their least wishes were gratified, and their least complaints immediately rectified so as to make them petty tyrants in their households. This tyranny was most often exercised over the family slaves. Regardless of the assiduous care these young despots received, and despite the adulation lavished upon their young charges, the Negro servants were seldom sufficiently prompt or adequate in their attentiveness to escape the punishments, often severe, that were meted out to them at the behest of their young masters. This tyranny extended to the play-life of the young Haitian-born white. Surrounded only by the slave children of the plantation, he commanded his contemporaries even more imperiously than his parents commanded the grown slaves.

> " Whatever he saw, he wanted, whatever was shown him he demanded; and if some fatality brought it about that one of his small companions resisted him and he became irritated, they would hurry from all sides in response to his cries and those of the young unfortunate, who, his color having destined him for submission, learned soon enough that he would be forced to give way, perhaps even being meted some punishment to penalize the disobedience of one who had not yet the instinct for servitude." [27]

175 563 567 571 [839]

Grown to manhood, the young Créole continued to act as master of all he surveyed. Imperious, quick-tempered, spoiled, his life lived in large part among slaves, when his sex drive stirred, he took what slave women pleased him. Eventually he married, to be tormented with the thoughts of the possible infidelity of his wife; the more tortured because of his extreme vanity and because, while demanding faithfulness from his spouse, he was continuing his affairs with his Negro women. [157] Yet he had some excellences of character, as well. " Frank,

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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affable, generous perhaps to the point of ostentation, confident, brave, a sure friend and a good father "[28] — such are his good points as set down by one who was perhaps surer-eyed than others in seeing his deficiencies, though these traits seem to have concerned more his relations with his fellow-whites than those which affected his bearing toward his Negro slaves.

The young Créole women of this same environment were destined for early marriage — too early for their best development, whether physical or mental. Given to exacting the fulfillment of their slightest caprices, they were, like their men, creatures of passion. If they survived their first pregnancies, which as a result of too early marriages often came before they were physically in condition to support the rigors of childbirth, they soon lost their youthful allure and became the unattractive women of the type so maliciously described by the Comte de C***.[29] In such cases they frequently survived not one but several husbands. Their associations were chiefly with their Negro women slaves, who were full confidantes, sleeping in the same chamber with their mistresses and on occasion sharing informal meals with them, though they never ate at the same table. And because, by a fine turn of irony, these Negro women were often at the same time the concubines of the husbands, brothers, or sons of their mistresses, they were as often as not treated alternately with the greatest tenderness and the harshest brutality.[30]

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Whatever the inner life of white Haitians, native-born or Créole, outward ostentation was the rule. In the cities poorly furnished houses were cared for by a numerous retinue of uniformed retainers; "the supreme achievement for a European being to have himself served, he hires slaves while he waits for the time when he can own them."[31] In the country, too, life was lived on as lavish a scale as possible. This is not the place to describe the houses of masters and slaves, or the buildings needed for working sugar-cane or indigo or preparing coffee, or their distribution over the plantation, for nu-

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1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

"The Mina Negroes have even been seen to recognize princes of their country . . . prostrating themselves at their feet and rendering them that homage whose contrast to the state of servitude to which these princes have been reduced in the colony offers a striking enough instance of the instability of human greatness." [17]

Yet another group of Africans played a significant role in determining the trends Haitian Negro culture was to take. It is a commonplace among those who have studied New World Negro life that African religion has shown greater resistance to white influence than any other phase of African culture. And to explain this one must again turn to native African tradition. The beginnings of the West African monarchies, whose ruling dynasties eventually came to command great stretches of land, were in tiny principalities that continually "warred" against each other. Tradition has it that the most intransigent of the conquered were the priests of the indigenous local cults, who, because of their activities, were punished with what native idiom still terms "banishment." In the New World these intractable priests continued their rites for their fellow-slaves and instructed the next generation so their knowledge would not be lost to the people. Before their enslavement they had been men of power and influence, and this pattern, carried over in all its strength in the New World, continued them and their descendants as natural leaders. Hence, wherever the opportunity presented itself to strike for liberty, they invoked the spiritual forces to reinforce the power and courage of the military leaders who, like them, had been sold into slavery because their countries had been conquered, or because they had rebelled against the succession in their own lands.

The composition of the slave population as inferred from these traditions is thus seen to be somewhat different from

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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that commonly assumed, since the conclusion is inescapable that, if anything, the slaves formed a group whose aboriginal types showed a weighting on the upper end of the African social scale rather than an overwhelming proportion of the less desirable members of society. Such an assumption goes far in explaining how the "slave psychology" generally attributed to Negroes of the New World was anything but a real part of their inner lives, and makes as well for an understanding of the extent to which the Negroes suffered their slavery with a constantly active discontent that is rarely given proper recognition in the study of the history of the period, and to which the drive toward freedom and the traditions of their native land were kept alive despite the restraints imposed by the masters.

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Once in the net of the slavers, however, the status of any individual mattered but little, for to the European dealers each Negro was but an added unit of cargo. All last traces of his dignity as a human being were taken from him;[18] in the grants for earlier slaving operations, and in the manifests of the ships of that time, slaves were not even invoiced as human beings, but as "pieces of the Indies" — fractions of the perfect slave, who was conceived as having a height of seven *quartas* of a little more than ten inches each. Under this practice, the stature of each slave, child or adult, having been recorded, the total length of the members of the cargo was divided by the requisite number, and thus reduced to so many of these "pieces of the Indies," the actual number of human beings in the cargo not figuring.[19]

It is unnecessary to detail the horrors of the passage to the New World, for the story has been too often told. One can but conjecture what its effect on those subjected to it must have been, especially when it is viewed as an introduction to their contact with the Europeans who were to be their masters. That the mortality on the voyage was high is well known, but death encountered while the shackled slaves passed the dan-

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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177 been murdered, as in 1937); and the Dominican influence can be seen in northeastern Haiti. The country as a whole, however, remains largely free from non-Haitian influence. This isolation may not continue for many more years, for successive administrations expand their health activities, try to improve economic methods, extend transportation facilities, and pursue policies of "enlightenment." Under such a regimen there will be an inevitable contact either with the experts from foreign countries or with the products of the civilization of those countries. And if Haiti should acquire foreign machines in large numbers, she would inevitably open herself to the dynamic influences which accompany a changing economy.

177 Such a possibility is in the near future, so that social scientists will shortly have the chance to observe cultural contact and diffusion at 105 work. What is more immediately to the point is the query as to how much diffusion of cultural traits occurred at the beginning of Haitian national life. How much of the African tribal culture persisted through slavery and the period of forced labor into the Haiti of small properties and peasantry? How much, on the other hand, is a borrowing from the French ways of colonial times? These questions have been treated in earlier chapters, but may be here summarized. The external structure of social institutions, particularly those which characterize the life of the élite, is clearly French. Haitian government and law, upper-class marriage, the Catholic religion—all these have a French provenance. Conversely, among the masses, the Vodun religion and possibly certain economic devices (such as the coumbite) stem from Africa. Yet the round of daily life among the people is quite obviously unlike that of any single African group from which slaves were drawn, nor is it a composite of African folkways.[7] Similarly, although the bulk of the population is peasantry, the Haitian peasant is not at all a transplanted French peasant. The folkways and mores of rural Haiti are, to a degree unusual in most countries, products of local experience, uncolored by outside influence.[8]

157 Students of race find in writings about Haiti the usual sum of generalizations about the temperament and mental characteristics of

[567] 7. It must be emphasized that the Haitian slaves were drawn from at least thirty-eight African groups. See J. G. Leyburn, "The Making of a Black Nation," in G. P. Murdock, ed., *Essays in the Science of Society* (New Haven, 1937), pp. 377–394.

8. Herskovits' theory of the African origin of certain Haitian traits has been discussed above, pp. 199–201.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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a whole people. The Negroes, as distinct from the people of lighter color, are genial or kindly or lighthearted, as white authors have often said American Negroes were. But are they? If so, how does it happen that people of a certain skin color have distinct mental traits? If the generalizations are false, how does it happen that the same characteristics have been attributed to Negroes in both countries? Are the distinctive temperaments of people in different nations merely imagined, or are they real? And if real, are they taken on as a part of culture or inherent in the blood? 157

The United States is gradually beginning to be aware of the republics which lie to the south of her. Haiti is not as large or important as her neighboring states, but more than many others her future depends upon this country. The sociologist will find her three million citizens worthy of study. 648

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1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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CHAPTER XV

SOME WIDER IMPLICATIONS

158 No student of Haitian institutions can elude a progressively
182 sharpened awareness of the psychological conflict that is being waged within the frame of Haitian society. And though examples of the divergent forces which lie at the root of this conflict have been set forth in the preceding chapters, some of the more important of these may be recalled here.

178 In his social relationships the Haitian is constantly exposed
182 to the demands of a code of morality which requires marriage
595 to be monogamic. Yet the African tradition of polygyny, and
158 the undoubtedly satisfactory arrangements of both an economic and a social nature that can be made under the terms
178 of plural marriage, pull him toward this form. The case is even
182 stronger in the field of religion, which in Haiti is not a thing
771 remote from life, but an intimate part of existence. On the one
158 hand, because of his inheritance of the *loa*, he must meet his obligations toward these ancestral gods of Africa who punish harshly those who fail them, so that he must either continue their traditional worship or learn to know the consequences of their anger. Yet on the other hand, the priest thunders his
[197] maledictions and threats of eternal damnation — in Mirebalais, at least, often in Créole, a language which the peasant can understand — against those of his flock, the vast majority

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

of whom are sincere practicing voduists as they are sincere practicing Catholics, who do not put an end to the worship of false gods.

The absence of graphic and plastic arts in Haitian culture, commented upon in a preceding chapter, must also be regarded as a case in point in laying bare the anatomy of this inner conflict of tradition, since it is important to recognize that the suppression of these forms of the prevalent African tradition would seem to have lost to the Haitian an important outlet for the resolution of inner tensions caused by pent-up drives. Even more revealing is the substitution of games of chance for those games of skill which in most African and New World Negro societies are played for their own sake alone—that is, for the prestige accruing to the skillful player. The strain that accompanies this play for stakes, often of no inconsiderable value in terms of the resources of the players, is patent to the most casual observer. The question here arises whether or not the craving for excitement of this kind may not in Haiti be traceable to the inhibition, under slavery, of some of the more gracious forms of African life which there make for social equilibrium. Might it not represent a kind of compensation for the thwarted psychic ease with which a culturally undisturbed people approach their own existence—a state of being which, in contrast, is quite lacking in Haiti?

A singularly illuminating comment upon these manifestations of instability in Haitian life has been made by Dr. J. C. Dorsainvil, who in drawing his conclusion called both upon his own medical training and on his experience of many years as a profound student of his own people. "It has perhaps been insufficiently remarked to what an astonishing degree the Haitian people live on their nerves."[1] As might be expected, he advances a number of possible explanations of the causes that underlie this state of "living on nerves." The wear and tear of life in the tropics is given as one reason; another is the excitement of the *vodun* dances with their frenzy of possession;

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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158 while even the hypothesis of an inherited racial psychosis is proposed to account for the phenomenon.

Let us examine these suggestions. An appeal to the natural environment offers but unsure ground, since it is known that not all peoples who live in the tropics experience a comparable psychic strain. Again, if the participation in *vodun* rites and the experience of possession were given as a reason for lack of stability, it would be expected that these changes in behavior would only occur before, during, or shortly after the ceremonies themselves, something that is by no means the case; and, moreover, that this state of "living on nerves" would be shared by all Negro peoples among whom the experience of possession is the commonplace that it is in Haitian peasant religion. This brings us to the suggestion that Haitian mentality may be the product of a racial psychosis. Here it is important to stress that from the point of view of Haitian culture, as from that of Africa, possession as a part of religious experience is both normal and desirable, so that the actions of an individual in such a state are to be judged neurotic only on the basis of standards that are those of a foreign culture. Add to this the fact that it is becoming more and more apparent that skepticism is the only scientifically admissible attitude when the question of referring the behavior of any people to specific racial endowment is raised, and the necessity becomes apparent of seeking other explanations for Haitian psychology than those that have been advanced.

158 19 What, then, of this matter of "living on the nerves"? It is an arresting image for the characteristic instability of attitude and emotional expression found in the Haitian, but in attempting to understand the phenomenon, it would seem that we are on the firmest ground when we look to those historical forces which were considered in the first chapters of this book. Stated in general terms, an explanation might be sought in the influences which cultures in contact bring to bear upon the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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individuals who must meet the demands of two traditions which, in many aspects, are in anything but accord. As regards the Haitian, it must be recognized that the two ancestral elements in his civilization have never been completely merged. As a result, his outwardly smoothly functioning life is full of inner conflict, so that he has to raise his defenses in order to make his adjustment within the historical and cultural combination of differing modes of life that constitute his civilization.

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The kind of adjustment that seems to dominate may perhaps best be called *socialized ambivalence,* since, more than any other phrase, it describes this tendency to manifest those rapid shifts in attitude toward people and situations that characterize the responses of the Haitian peasant to such a marked degree that the same man will hold in high regard a person, an institution, an experience, or even an object that has personal significance to him, and simultaneously manifest great disdain and even hatred for it. As outwardly observable, this takes the form of recurring and often rapid changes in behavior toward the object of attention. In attitude, there is vacillation from one emotional tone to another. In its broader implications, as a matter of fact, it is entirely possible that this socialized ambivalence underlies much of the political and economic instability of Haiti, so that, arising from a fundamental clash of custom within the culture, it is responsible for the many shifts in allegiance that continually take place, as it is for the change in attitudes in everyday association.

Since far more detailed studies of individuals must be at hand before the full power of this ambivalent drive can be gauged with any degree of sureness, the problem alone is sketched here. Yet this type of approach cannot but give insight into such occurrences as that of the man whose unwilling possession by the gods of his ancestors was, as described, brought about through the fascination of their forbidden

. 1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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with the candle before it. He next does the same before the *ogan*, then before each of the drums in order, continuing to dance before the drums, usually with great violence, while the few "social" dancers who still may be circling about the center pole make way so that he may execute his steps. Gradually his dancing becomes calmed, until he is taken either to the *maison de servitude* or to a near-by house, where he rests and if, as often happens, he has rolled on muddy ground during his possession, washes and changes his clothes.

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Several examples of the force of this tradition of being "mounted" by the *loa* may be given. One of these which is of especial interest concerns the possession of a man of good education, in the early thirties, who throughout his childhood and early manhood had had no association with the *vodun* cult, but had been encouraged by his family and his own ambition to promote the activities of the Catholic Church. In discussing his earlier experiences and background with one of his intimates, it seemed that on the side of both father and mother many of his relatives were affiliated with the cult, and it was recounted how, at an important ceremony at his ancestral habitation, some years before, he had become possessed. But it was also made clear that he had not been any the less active in the affairs of the Church because of this transient experience, nor had he affiliated himself in any way with any *vodun* group. Why he wished once more to participate in the *vodun* rituals cannot be said; certainly during the weeks immediately preceding his possession he had become interested in the philosophy of *vodun*, and his non-voduistic, if not anti-voduistic background seemed to accentuate his interest in ascertaining the hold of these rites, which had always been presented to him as repellent, on their followers. As an example of the duality of his interest, it may be stated that though he had remarked how "disgusting" it was to roll in the mud when possessed by Damballa, he had also been im-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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pressed with the temerity of those who danced in the fire for Legba.

At a certain dance, however, he volunteered to help in a small way in promoting the activities of the evening, such as serving *clairin* to the drummers, while he himself danced the social dance about the central post of the *tonnelle*. As the tempo of the dance heightened, he became more deeply imbued with the spirit of the occasion and shouted: " If the *loa* comes to me, I will accept it! " as he plunged again into the circle of dancers. When the drums sounded the salute to the gods, he would awkwardly execute the accompanying backward turning movement of the figure.

After a time he left the *tonnelle*, but before many moments had elapsed a commotion was heard at the near-by *barrière*, where he was reeling in the first stage of possession, just inside the gate, while a fully possessed woman in a figured dress stalked back and forth. An *adjanikon*, with candle and calabash of water, was trying to " settle " his possession, but he fell to the ground and rolled on his back, lying prostrate with legs and arms outstretched and twitching. The *adjanikon*, putting aside the candle and water, lifted his limp body to its feet and then slowly, according to the accepted pattern, holding him upright, swayed with him in time to the song that all twelve or fifteen persons present were by now singing, until, staggering, the possessed man was able to support himself:

Damballa-o, Damballa-e,	Damballa-o, Damballa-e,
Damballa-o, Damballa Wedo,	Damballa-o, Damballa Wedo,
'Gadé ça ou fait' moin.	See what you have done to me.

Steadily fixing his eyes on the possessed one, the *adjanikon* now danced with him, turning always in the opposite direction as he offered him the candle and the water, which, how-

Jr Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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796 ever, the man was not yet able to hold. Moving backwards
797 toward the *maison de servitude*, all the spectators continued
787 to sing the song of Damballa, while the man to whom the god
159 had come half-danced and was half-carried up the path to the *tonnelle* and taken into the family house of worship.

[188] When he had sufficiently recovered to be able to hold the candle and the water, he poured the water and unsteadily [illegible] *see* to the Rada gods. He now was enough in control of himself to emerge, and, with the *adjanikon* dancing before him with water and a candle, he once again came into the *tonnelle*, before the drums. As he appeared, the drummers stopped the Ogun rhythm they had been sounding, and in an intense silence all waited for the god to announce himself. Half on his
[533] knees before the drums, the one possessed began to sing in a
[534] cracked voice:

Damballa Wedo,	Damballa Wedo,
Papa m' c'est coulev'-o,	Papa, I am a serpent-o,
Na poi' bois	There is no tree
Moin pa' li monté.	I cannot climb.

With this initial statement, the Damballa rhythm rolled from the drums, as all echoed the song in chorused response, while the possessed figure, in strict conformity to the pattern, first poured water at the central post and then consecutively before the iron and each of the drums. Returning to the central post, he whirled about it, almost but never quite falling, until he could dance before the drums, awkwardly but acceptably, before he disappeared to rest in a near-by house.

796 The explanation offered by this man of the manner in
787 which he became possessed, and his varying attitudes toward
159 his possession, are revealing. On several previous occasions
793 the *hungan* who officiated at the dance had noticed that he was attending *vodun* rites and had joked with him about his interest in them. Once at an earlier dance this *hungan* had

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given him a piercing glance, not without significance, for as the man, who believed himself the victim of the *hungan's* machinations, said, "Whatever you believe, these *hungans* have some kind of power. . . ." On his arrival at the dance where the possession occurred, the *hungan* had encountered this man sitting alone, some distance from the *tonnelle*. Giving him a drink of liquor, the *hungan*, as he pressed his hand in greeting, sportively turned him about in the manner in which possession is induced. Since this the man recollected but little; he did not remember having said he would accept the god, or circling backwards, or bowing to the drums when the "salutes" were played. He dimly remembered having been sent to the *barrière* with some liquor for Bosu, who, not a Rada *loa*, had come unauthorized to one of the spectators and, according to custom, had been removed from the dancing-place. He also just recalled that a woman had become possessed by Legba, but did not know that it was when she touched him that his own possession had begun. The remainder of the night's experience was completely blank, even though the actual state of possession occupied only a small part of it.

Later during the dance, when he had returned, he was heard to say: "It was not a pretty trick that the *hungan* played on me"—a feeling not assuaged when, the next morning at mass, the priest in his sermon preached against following false gods and recounted the miseries in store for those who desert the true faith; nor when he reflected that, by his possession, he had in a sense become affiliated with a group whose position in society was anything but such as to enhance his own social status. The *hungan*, however, promised him that he would not bring on another possession, adding, as an aside: "It is good, though, that a Haitian should have this experience." None the less, to make sure that this *loa bossal* would not come to him at awkward moments, it was going to be necessary for him to baptize it, thus continuing the process which

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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some termed his "Haitianization." There were those who expressed surprise at the occurrence, but the majority held that though this man had himself been a devout follower of the Church, and his parents before him, Damballa was a *loa* of his family, and therefore it was reasonable that it should come to him when called at a dance.

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Another "unauthorized" possession, that of a woman in mourning, was also witnessed. Like the *service* of one night's duration, which this dance followed, it was but poorly organized and provided for, and in this it reflected the status of the family, which had but few resources, since its head had recently come into the valley and therefore lacked the backing which only his own relationship group could give him. Here there was no *maison de servitude*, and the *tonnelle* had been erected in an open field where the only shelter was offered by a crude hut near by. The *hungan* did not appear until late, while the host lived up to his reputation by drinking more *clairin* than was good for him. None the less, one violent possession by a *loa bossal* occurred relatively early in the evening, though the *loa* concerned did not "announce himself" through the song of the one he had possessed.

The woman in mourning sang continuously as she sat among the spectators, and since she was not supposed to dance, she executed dance movements in place. As the drumming became more and more *chaud* — "hot" — she became correspondingly more excited until, suddenly leaping from her seat, she began a frenzied dance. She refused the water and candle, however, and when finished with her dancing, she fell exhausted into her chair, where she remained in a coma during the next hour. She roused herself later and again joined the singing, but though she was near possession, this never came on. Her *loa*, like the other *loa bossal* that came earlier in the evening, did not "announce itself," and since it was her first — and not unwelcome — possession, she stated that at the termination of her period of mourning she would

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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have a *hungan* divine its identity so that she might thereafter worship it and be under its protection. As in the other case discussed, the personality involved here is not without interest. The woman was one of the shrewdest traders in the Mirebalais market, and noted for her hardness. Underneath this, however, the presence of much vital energy could be felt as well as a passionate desire for gayety and attention from members of the other sex. That the essential lack of satisfaction of these drives in her life, as discussed and observed, figured in bringing on her possession cannot be doubted, and, as such, throws significant light on the nature of the psychological aspects of the phenomenon.

These instances, however, must not be thought of as a regular part of the ritual of the dances. Though a dance was attended almost every Saturday night during the course of an entire summer, and a number of *services* and other *vodun* rites in addition, these were the only occasions when a *loa boussal* appeared. In order, therefore, to document the pattern of the *vodun* dance that has already been given, some of the dances witnessed may be described in outline.

The first of these is a dance which, originally intended as the culmination of the *service* described in the preceding chapter, failed to fulfill its end because of a quarrel between two important members of the family. None the less, it proved to be one of the most spirited and typical dances witnessed. The habitation, when reached shortly after six o'clock, was deserted, except for a few people who seemed to be waiting disconsolately. Among them were several *houssi* in white, and two who carried banners, while the three drums, each "dressed" in its skirt-like covering, stood before the entrance, the drumsticks and the *ogan* lying on the *barrière* itself. Since the *hungan* had not arrived, one or two of the men present took charge as darkness came on. Before this dance began, it was necessary to introduce the drums ceremonially into the compound, and as this was the first *vodun* dance after the ex-

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 HaRI SV3

special future help and consideration from the loa (including the cessation of the illnesses or other misfortunes that have led to the marriage). A man (or woman) united with a loa in "matrimony" is "stronger" (*plus fort*) in his relationship to his environment and to other people. For this reason, the initiative for a mystic marriage does not always come from a loa. An ambitious person may seek such a marriage to strengthen his hand, to provide protection against other deities or human enemies, or to gain wealth or position. One observer, Odette Mennesson Rigaud, expresses the opinion that in such instances the marriage "is no longer a religious union of mystic love, but a magic pact."[10] The implicit element of "pact" is so evident in all mystic marriages, even when the initiative comes from the loa, that the distinction is not easily appreciated. However, persons suspected of "pushing" for a marriage with a loa are regarded as presumptuous or reckless, and often they are believed to have hidden motives. It is felt by many that the benefits of such a union can be only temporary and that catastrophe will ultimately follow.

A human party to marriage with a loa is deeply committed. He is subject to jealousy and anger on the part of his mystic mate. His behavior in the hounfor as in his daily life must be beyond the loa's reproach. He must avoid possession by other loa. And he must fulfill endless obligations. Sometimes the prospect of such binding ties is more than a man (or woman) is ready to face, and through the intercession of a strong houngan the loa may be induced to withdraw his demand for marriage. In that event, a special service is held, in the course of which the person buys his freedom with promises of special gifts and feasts for the deity.

One young man I knew was caught in a special dilemma—the houngan and the loa on one side, the Protestant Church on the other. The man, named Maurice, came from the mountains near Léogane. He was married but had no children. His wife's family, still living in Léogane, was Protestant. Maurice himself was a follower of Vodoun, and nominally a Catholic. When his wife was afflicted with a long series of headaches and earaches, Maurice consulted a houngan of Port-au-Prince. The houngan said that the loa Ayida Wèdo was demanding marriage with Maurice, and that the wife's illnesses were an indication of jealousy.

At the same time, the wife's parents came from Léogane and insisted that the girl's illnesses were brought about by God because Maurice was a follower of Vodoun. They demanded that he sever all his connections with Vodoun and become a Protestant.

After considerable anxiety, Maurice "purged" himself of Vodoun and

[10] [Odette Mennesson Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Voudoun Loa," in Appendix A of Deren, Divine Horsemen, p. 264. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

159 588 753 783 joined the Protestant Church. Subsequently his wife's illnesses subsided somewhat, but she never bore children. Maurice suspected that the latter misfortune was the result of his spurning his mystic suitor.

588 [1793] The actual ceremonies by which a mystic marriage is performed carry over many of the customs and trappings of ordinary mortal marriages. The prêt' savane reads prayers and officiates until the two parties are deemed wed. The loa is represented by a "stand-in," usually a person possessed by the loa and dressed in appropriate garb. Gold wedding rings are placed upon the fingers of the couple. There are wedding cakes and wedding contracts. Nothing appropriate to an ordinary wedding is omitted.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 565 These newcomers in the class structure enjoyed regular urban employment, were mostly literate and legally married, and harbored strong ambitions for the education of their children. Such persons were certainly not elite members, and their behavior (as, for instance, in their preference for speaking Creole rather than French) showed it; yet they were not part of the rural masses, nor merely an example of Marx's *Lumpenproletariat.* Yet significance of this new group for the Leyburn "caste" theory of the elite is considerable. Even today, if such persons lapse into poverty, their ideology will continue to matter politically. Estimé's regime also loosed new political trends, since at first some encouragement was given to labor unions, and the construction of urban low-cost housing was undertaken. We are unable to measure the long-term effects of these changes, but their reality raises some questions about the rigidity that Leyburn's analysis imputed to Haitian social structure.

175 669 643 159 In May 1950, after an unsuccessful bid to extend his term of office illegally, Estimé's regime was toppled, again by a military junta. To power came Paul Magloire, the first military figure to become chief executive since the start of the United States occupation. Like Estimé before him, Magloire symbolized certain effects of the occupation upon Haiti's social and political structure and the way that structure was continuing to change. Magloire's origins were not within the elite, to judge by the traditional criteria. He was a black man, and from the north; born in Quartier Morin, he associated himself with the elite of the north coast port of Cap Haïtien, Haiti's second largest city. By marriage to a "Capoise," whose family status was much higher than his own, and by a successful career in the military during the occupation, Magloire penetrated elite circles. As commander of the Palace Guard, he had been a member of the junta that ousted Lescot in 1946, replacing him with Estimé. In 1950, when Magloire became president, after the army had forcibly discharged both houses of the legislature, he apparently had the support of the elite and of the business class, if not of the popular forces that had backed Estimé.

175 643 Magloire may be said to have moderated considerably the intensity of Haitian politics, and his administration was not marked by so sharp an ideological concern with the relative roles of elite and countryman. Times were good, and levels of life, both in the countryside and in the capital, were probably as high as they had been at any time in Haitian history. Certain economic gains were made in the tourist

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175 669 ex-slave, each of whom aroused his own group to fight off the invading Spaniards and English.

These two men emerging from the maelstrom were the cultured colored general, Rigaud, and the powerful Negro, Toussaint. United in purpose in 1793, they soon began to oppose each other. Their dissent foreshadowed the rift which was permanently to divide free Haiti.

175 159 669 Rigaud, born at Les Cayes in 1761,[14] had been brought up in Bordeaux, France, where he was taught the trade of a goldsmith. Like many other colored colonial youths, he went briefly to Georgia to fight on the side of the Americans in their revolution against England. Gifted with extraordinary military talent, he rose to prominence in Saint-Domingue following the slave insurrection, and played a major part in expelling the British from the colony. He was fiery, intellectual, and brilliant, but lacking in self-control and political subtlety, which put him at a disadvantage with Toussaint. Rigaud's admirers—almost the whole body of free colored people—included all the influential persons in the colony once the whites had been cowed or driven out; the South was devoted to him body and soul, and he had numerous partisans in the provinces of the North and West. But Toussaint was the idol of the half-million blacks.

Born a slave, Toussaint was fortunate in having a kindly master who permitted him the sort of work which gave him leisure for reading. He studied eagerly, devouring all accounts he could find of the military exploits of Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar. Apparently he took no part in the slave uprising; on the contrary, he helped his master escape to the United States and later regularly provided him with money. Then he himself went to the Spanish part of the island, where he made a military reputation in the Spanish colonial army. When General Laveaux sought his aid against the invaders of harassed Saint-Domingue, the ex-slave accepted his overtures. Detractors of Toussaint call him a "cunning hypocrite" for joining and then deserting the Spaniards, and for accepting high rank under a French general whom he was even then (so it is asserted) planning to supersede. His decision to return to Saint-Domingue was certainly crucial, for it began his meteoric ascent to power. [648]

Accompanied by the black troops he had captained in the Spanish

[632] 361 14. Les Cayes, the third largest town in modern Haiti, was even in colonial times an important seaport. It is located on the southwestern peninsula.

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colony, he fought engagements with several Spanish detachments on the way back to Saint-Domingue, and soon achieved the return to France of all the territory Spain had recently won from her. Seeing that his ineffectively trained black troops were as yet no match for the disciplined British, he temporarily withdrew from public sight in order to build his army into a coördinated, smoothly functioning machine. Then he not only defeated the British, but forced their complete withdrawal from the island. He freed General Laveaux, whom they had imprisoned in Cap Français, thereby putting his own commanding officer under personal obligation to him. By 1796 Toussaint was the undisputed hero of his soldiers and, through their praise, of the mass of black ex-slaves; moreover, the French commander trusted and respected him; even the whites of the former régime looked to him with hope, for they had grudgingly to concede that, black though he was, he alone had the power to restore peace and order in the colony.

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Only the colored group looked askance at him. They had welcomed the insurrection of the slaves in 1791 as an invaluable, if bloody, aid in their struggle for equality with the whites; but they were not inclined to be ruled by an ex-slave whose eminence was already a threat to the social order they wished to establish. When, in 1793, the French commissioners had abolished slavery in Saint-Domingue,[15] the action had been as distasteful to the free colored people as it was to the whites; both groups wanted to continue to own slaves; the gens de couleur merely wanted their share also in governing the colony. In their opinion, the struggle was getting out of hand. They gave their allegiance, consequently, not to Toussaint, but to their own man, Rigaud.

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The black general now began to show himself as astute a politician as he had been a skilful soldier. He had a romantic streak, which made him assume the prophetic surname Louverture;[16] but beneath the romanticism was a peculiar diplomatic realism. When a newly arrived governor-general tried to stir up dissension between blacks and colored people, on the principle of divide and rule, Toussaint

15. In order to pacify the blacks and to win their support against the invading armies of Spain and England.

16. The name Louverture, now generally written L'Ouverture, is ordinarily conceded to imply Toussaint's conviction that he would provide the opening through which his fellow blacks might achieve freedom. According to another account the name was given him because of his ability to make a breach in the ranks of the enemy; still another explanation refers to his missing front teeth.

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III

THE FORMATIVE YEARS, 1804–1843

1. *Dessalines (1804–1806)*

175 643 ● 159 If ever a country had an opportunity to start absolutely fresh in choosing its own social institutions, Haiti had that opportunity in 1804. Free at last, with no traditions to uphold, the first independent Negro state in the world, owing allegiance to no man or nation, the Haitians might (theoretically, at least) have invented an entirely new little world of economic, political, religious, and social life. All paths were open to them. Dessalines,[1] as head of state, had only to lead them. His mental limitations, however, were such that he could only follow where the hated French had led, and soon set the Haitians upon the road to a caste system.

175 642 643 The first part of the story of independent Haiti is to a certain extent the story of the alternative lines of action laid down by four great men, the black Dessalines and his equally black successor Christophe, the mulatto Pétion and his worshipful mulatto disciple Boyer.

On New Year's Day, 1804, Dessalines made a stirring proclamation of independence. In it were many references to *liberté* but none whatever to *égalité* or *fraternité*. The two years of his rule show clearly that he had no use for such abstractions as equality or fraternity, while liberty to him was synonymous only with freedom from French dominance. He was a tyrant whose very tyranny unwittingly prepared the way for eventual control by the colored group over the blacks.

Accompanying the proclamation of Dessalines was another signed by his generals, naming him governor-general for life, swearing "to obey blindly all laws emanating from his authority," giving him the right to make peace or war, and permitting him to name his successor. Absolutism was the order of the day. In the same paragraph in which he condemned French despotism, Dessalines said to his

1. Jean-Jacques Dessalines had been born a slave on a plantation near Grande-Rivière du Nord in the seventeen-fifties or -sixties. Unlike Toussaint, whose leading general he was, Dessalines was illiterate. The outstanding characteristic of his temperament was his violent passion.

Taxes were heavy

175 651 652 and work strenuous; but there were a sound currency, commercial and agricultural prosperity, and a full treasury.

Like many a great man he was an overweening egotist. His 175 643 energy and ambition, for Haiti as well as for himself, neither understood nor tolerated a lesser determination than his own. At times he seemed more intent upon the letter than upon the spirit of his laws. 159 Probably his chief defect, a common failing of strong men, was a disregard for humble individual worth. To write of him invites the most colorful vocabulary. He is Black Majesty and the Emperor Jones. By almost any standards of leadership he would be accounted a great man. He lacked only those few final, subtle qualities which make for sheer genius. In 1820, stricken by paralysis and faced with defections in his army, he died as he had lived, dramatically, ending his life with a specially saved bullet (folklore says a silver one), in his palace of the ironic name, Sans Souci.

175 643 In no significant respect did Christophe change the feudal structure of economic organization begun by Toussaint and carried on by Dessalines. It was in administration, especially as it affected social status, that the thirteen years of Christophe were important for the [641] future of Haiti. Where the Emperor had been an unpredictable tyrant whose heavy hand inspired only terror, Christophe was a sternly just father whose well-disciplined children respected, admired, and even loved him.

175 427 475 655 566 643 The land policy of the two régimes was similar. Government estates were farmed out on five-year leases to the highest bidders among the well-to-do; large plantations belonging to the state were tilled by cultivators who might, without taking the term too harshly, be called serfs; loyal supporters and wealthy individuals were entrusted with responsibility. Like Dessalines, Christophe added wealth to power and rendered all his subjects dependent upon himself rather than on their own resources and influence—but all this with a difference.

175 643 642 565 Where the Emperor had denied the natural vanity of his aides by refusing them nobility, Christophe accepted their ambition as perfectly normal and made use of it for his own purposes. Four years after he had established his state, he changed it from a republic to a kingdom; all his important men he made dukes, barons, counts, knights. He warned them that he would expect them to live up to the dignities conferred upon them. Pomp and regalia are costly;

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171 feudal holdings to absolute ownership of land by the influential. It is
175 strangely paradoxical that an aristocrat, the light-skinned Pétion,
631 representing the cultured group in society, broke the economic power of his own aristocratic class and made the former slaves not serfs but peasants. It is doubtful whether he intended either result.

175 Alexandre Pétion was the antithesis of Haiti's three eminent blacks
643 in all but military skill. Toussaint's genius as a fighter lay in his surprise moves, Dessalines' in his recklessness, Christophe's in his
159 bulldog determination; but Pétion was a great general because he knew when to retire and so lead his enemy into an exposed position. The three Negroes had been born in slavery; Pétion, coming of a cultured and sophisticated affranchi family, grew up in France. Dessalines was a crude ruffian by comparison, while in the face of Pétion's suavity Christophe's impetuousness seemed rankly uncouth. Where they bludgeoned, Pétion persuaded; where they hacked their way through opposition in the determination to gain an end, he graciously yielded and so won new friends. Tactful at every point, he survived even such contretemps as his refusal of the hand of the Emperor's daughter.

As leader of a young nation, Pétion might almost be said to have had too broad an understanding of human nature. He was a gentle ruler over his people; when they erred he did not punish or upbraid, but excused their misdeeds by assuming the cause to be some fatal compulsion over which they momentarily had no control. He had no wish to drive the nation to "success." Neither did he care to use his position for personal aggrandizement. His mind was supple and practical, disdainful of abstractions, undeluded by resounding slogans, fertile in compromise, not finical as to means, always unsurprised, exquisitely tactful. When crises arose to dismay his ministers, Pétion's philosophic calm was undisturbed.

Cynically tolerant, he gave office to political enemies if they chanced to be able. A representative of the topmost class of society,
[648] he managed to moderate antagonisms based on color. He gave
[87] sanctuary and financial succor to the Spanish-American liberator, Simón Bolívar; he established the foundations of an educational
[423] system; he defended the state against Christophe's power; he ruled constitutionally; and he gave land to his people, even to the humblest of them. When he died, his subjects for miles around came into Port-au-Prince, where they stood weeping about his palace, refusing

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to be comforted. They had lost their best friend and their "*petit père.*" 175

Dessalines would be emperor and Christophe king, but Pétion was content to remain a simple president. He was an anomaly—as if a Parisian of delicate sensibilities and mellow tolerance had somehow come to power with a darker skin in an alien land. 643 159

He has been highly praised and is worthy of eulogy. The fact remains that his country was rich when he came to power and poor when he died; united in 1806 and divided in 1818. Candor compels his admirers to admit that many of the calamities of the social and economic history of Haiti can be traced back to Pétion's administration.

The crucial act of Pétion was to parcel the land. From that policy flowed the enduring consequences which became the predominant socio-economic characteristics of Haiti. 175 423 421

Until Pétion's time the island had never known small properties. Large estates had been the mark of social distinction in the French colony; Toussaint had kept the plantations large,[18] while Dessalines and Christophe had absorbed more and more land for the state, leasing it out in great blocks. The constitution of 1806[19] gave no indication of impending change, for it specifically declared all land to be the property of the Haitian nation. Within three years, however, the process of dividing and giving away the state's lands was well under way. 178

It would be illuminating to know what mental process in Pétion moved him to make so radical an about-face in land policy. The reasons he gave were, first, that the people had ably defended their country and so deserved a reward; second, that he wanted all the people to have a vital interest in the actual soil itself.[20] These may have been his only reasons. Others suggest themselves: the republic owed wages to its large standing army, which were more easily paid in land, of which the state had much, than in cash, of which it had little and progressively less; it would be much easier to keep peace in a country where men were free than where they were serfs; and the example of free ownership in the South would seem alluring enough

18. He permitted the leasing of plantations as small as fifty acres if the soil were especially rich. [427]

19. December 27. This document was largely the handiwork of Pétion.

20. The former explanation he consistently gave in his various messages to the Senate proposing progressive parcelings of the land; the latter he wrote to a friend, saying that he wished to "*enraciner chez tous l'amour du sol.*"

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IV

CASTE LINES BECOME PERMANENT

175 178 THE contrast between the golden days of forced labor and the stagnating mediocrity of Boyer's Haiti was as vivid to thinking Haitian aristocrats as it was to foreign whites. Particularly the young "intellectuals" of the 'thirties who knew something of the progress taking place in the rest of the Western World felt that the time had come to stem the wave of economic disintegration at home. In a series of pronouncements they pointed out that the advancement of Haiti had "been constantly slowed up for some time. . . . Haiti is stationary, is retrograde: we need no other proof of it than this frightful uncertainty about the future which so deeply disturbs all serious minds and sincere patriots." One may discount the phrase 175 about "sincere patriots," for peasants were patriots even though 668 undisturbed by the economic stagnation. The agitation for reform won a wide following among all the élite who cherished a glowing recollection of earlier days.

Leaders of the young men called upon Boyer in 1838 to introduce stronger methods of forced labor; but Boyer, remembering the fate of his Code Rural in which he had tried to do precisely this, could think of no effective way of tinkering again with the economic system. From the young men he received the most contradictory advice as to specific methods. The result of the appeal was therefore merely continued inaction by the government. The agitators, ex- 175 cellent critics if poor reformers, accordingly persisted in their cam- 668 paign, adding new converts to their cause until the movement pro- 669 duced a crisis. Revolution broke out in January 1843 at Torbeck in the South, and rapidly spread toward the capital; within two months 643 Boyer and his faithful secretary-general, Inginac, had departed for exile.[1]

[643] [159] 1. Boyer went first to Jamaica, and then to Paris. In the latter capital King Louis-Philippe gave him an audience and called him "prince." Boyer replied, "Sire, I am no prince. I have merely been the head of a small republic." The King of France thereupon affectionately pressed Boyer's hand, remarking, "When one has governed a million people for twenty-five years, he is raised to the rank of princes." . . . Boyer died in Paris in 1850.

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already showed signs of senile dementia; his tyrannical crotchets speedily raised up a revolt against him, and in 1846 he gave way to still another black, General Riché. Like his two predecessors, Riché was aged and illiterate. Nevertheless, he began his rule auspiciously by putting an end to dictatorship and surrounding himself with wise counselors. In 1847, just when the country was beginning to appreciate his good qualities, he died a victim of drugs taken to increase his vigor.

These four presidents, who had among them ruled less than four years, did not appreciably alter the social situation, for they had all been preoccupied with the suppression of revolutions. But Haiti was still in a position to take some definite step toward economic progress, education of the people, conciliation of the antagonistic colored and black elements. Because of a stupid whim, the country was precipitated down exactly the opposite path. The Senate gathered to select Riché's successor found itself unable to rally a majority vote for any candidate; whereupon one Senator proposed the name of an ignorant, entirely unillustrious, black general, Faustin Soulouque. The chamber immediately gave him a majority, for the supporters of each candidate saw in this complete nonentity a chance for another "government by understudies," in which they themselves would actually rule. When the Senatorial delegation arrived to inform Soulouque of his election, that unimpressive Negro, lying stretched out in his hammock, refused at first to take it seriously. He had more than once been the victim of practical jokes, and this looked like a particularly malicious one.[4] It took persuasion to convince him that he was indeed the new president of Haiti.

Soulouque's accession to power marked the beginning of a twelve-year nightmare for Haiti. During his first year of office the new president walked warily over the unfamiliar terrain. Those who had named him for their own ends felt justified in their scheme, for each opposing group still looked forward to controlling the government with Soulouque as a front. Meanwhile, however, the President had been carefully observing everything that went on around him, arriving at his own judgment of men and measures.

4. Many years before, Boyer had prophesied a period of disorder in Haiti and is reported to have said that in such a time "any man in Haiti might become president, even that stupid Negro over there," indicating Soulouque. It is told that Soulouque mumbled, "Please, [illegible] President, don't make a fool of me."

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plausible, such as the race prejudice displayed by many individual Marines;[4] the unnecessary slaughter in the suppression of *caco* (guerrilla) rebellions in the North; the continued holding of offices (and salaries) by Americans too impatient to train Haitians, as by the Agreement of 1915 they were supposed to do; the fostering rather than elimination of military psychology among the people by the presence of armed Marines. 175 648 642

The campaign against the Occupation was generally on the highest level of patriotism, for it threw out one variation after another on the same theme: We Haitians are not being allowed to govern ourselves. Some realists knew that their hurt national pride was accompanied by disappointment that certain salaries were not reaching Haitian pockets, certain prestige of office not redounding to the credit of Haitian men. What if the real reason for opposition were not the openly avowed one? The Marines must go! Order had been restored and government reëstablished. It was patent that any administration which could effect the withdrawal would be immensely popular: it was equally patent that if the Americans left the country, the benefits of their efficiency and material improvement would remain as a tangible boon to Haiti. 175 648 642 668

President Sténio Vincent, elected in 1930 after a campaign in which the Americans did not interfere, began the negotiations with Washington. With President Hoover he made headway toward reforms, but President Roosevelt's attitude was more actively cooperative. In 1934 Vincent had a series of conferences with the President of the United States; the latter, in pursuit of his good-neighbor policy, persuaded the American Senate to order the Occupation at an end and turn over without cost to Haiti many buildings, supplies, and equipment used by the Marines. Vincent personally benefited from the withdrawal of 1934. He called himself Haiti's "second Liberator,"[5] and made the anniversary of the American departure a national holiday. Indirectly the élite also benefited for now, entrenched in office, they could govern without white supervision. The material equipment was there to be enjoyed by the whole people at no further expense to them. 175 648 642 643 159 527 563

4. The United States government in the early days had sent Marines from the Southern States to Haiti, on the theory that they would, from long acquaintance with Negroes, know how to "handle" them. This stupid blunder was shortly rectified.

5. Dessalines had, of course, been the first.

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The truth is, marriage and moral conditions differ from economic and political conditions in that they are not so immediate and pressing in their effect upon individual lives. If these are not attended to today, tomorrow will find our bellies empty and our state overrun by enemies. But sex relations go on willy-nilly, and children are born into families: there will still be marriage and a moral problem to attend to when order has been brought into practical affairs. Toussaint was involved in a diplomatic battle in which the participants were the best minds of France, England, and the United States. Beside these mighty problems upon which depended the economic and political future of his people, the question of a standard of sex conduct was definitely secondary.

So it must have seemed to Dessalines, the founder of the state and first "law-giver" of Haiti. By his official actions it is evident that the economy of the country was his primary concern, with defense against a return of the French a close second. In his pronouncements he bowed respectfully to religion and then postponed action until some more convenient season. He pronounced likewise some very proper sentiments on marriage and morals, calling attention to the benefits of wedlock, piously deprecating sensuality and voluptuousness. His imperial constitution of 1805 encouraged lawful unions, treating marriage as a socially virtuous state to be cultivated.

This was all words, however, and came strangely from the black general who was, as everyone knew, a notorious libertine. He lectured his people on the danger of yielding to their passions, yet showed no intention of controlling his own impulses or those of his favorites. He was, indeed, the last man in Haiti to make a gesture toward sexual morality among the people, for although he was married his daily life was a complete negation of moral precept. In every town he habitually visited he established mistresses, bestowing large sums of money upon them. He employed every sort of seduction, honor, and gift to conquer the virtue of females who valued their "respectability." Actually, he did not often need to use violence, for the prevailing moral tone was not so high but that most young and attractive women would yield to their Emperor.

The sternly upright Haitian historian, Madiou, has a formidable paragraph on the vices of Dessalines. He tries partially to excuse him on the grounds of his fury at discovering conspiracies against his authority among his colored lieutenants, asserting that his early gen-

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erosity and equity now gave way to malevolence and personal license: 114

Putting no restraint upon his passions, he travelled about, followed by actors, dancers, musicians, and courtesans. An indefatigable dancer, as soon as he arrived in a place he gave a ball. Under Toussaint Louverture, in order to please the Governor-General everyone approached the holy altar; under Dessalines one gained glory by dancing well. The Emperor, giving himself up to scandalous pleasures, forgot that he was head of the state. The greatest immorality reigned about him. With a gaiety sometimes grotesque, he told the ladies who frequented his court how much he admired their beauty, no matter how ugly they actually were. Following his example, his major officers of state kept concubines in every town in the empire. . . . When the emperor entered a town, the honest women were gravely disturbed, for their virtue was menaced not only by him but also by his officers of state. Many mothers kept their daughters shut up to keep them from the notice of those who were powerful enough to take them, with impunity, by violence.[3] 643 159 831

Marriage, then, looked at from the standards of any white Western country, was in a sorry state in Haiti. Continued warfare had broken up many even of the families which, though unrecognized by the white planters, had nevertheless been formed during slavery; and the camp life of soldiers roaming the countryside confirmed the casual attitude of the people toward sex. Every ex-slave was a hero, and liberty was sweet. Under Dessalines it was scarcely wise for a prominent man to marry an attractive wife, the Emperor might so soon set himself to seduce her. Above all, there was no tradition of formal marriage. This was the chief factor to bear upon future marriage and sexual customs of the Haitians; and in appraising them is the paramount fact to keep in mind. 175 831 581

Meanwhile, children were being born. Their mothers were known, but often the fathers were not, for the vast majority of infants were born out of wedlock. Dessalines, a realist except in matters which touched his vanity, saw the necessity of establishing a status for these children, not on grounds of morality but for economic expediency, to avoid future disputes over inheritance. French precedent did not serve his need, for according to French law an illegitimate child may not inherit: a parent in France is not free to leave his property as he will, but must pass it on to his legitimate heirs. 175 848 428

3. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 239.

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175 669 ary, 1843, Boyer realized that it was futile to oppose the revolution-
[643] aries and departed for exile, going by way of Jamaica to Paris.
[159] Now came the test of the revolutionary leaders.[11] The state was in
their hands; their own representative, Rivière Hérard, was the new
175 president. They proceeded to concoct a ridiculously naïve constitu-
642 tion which by granting a popular vote alienated large bodies of their
648 mulatto support; to insult the black army leaders; and to allow the
669 defeat of Haitian forces by Dominican revolutionaries, thus losing two thirds of the island's area. Every act weakened the party favoring representative government. Within a year Rivière was ousted and a black general was ruling Haiti with a rod of iron. The Revolution of 1843 from which so much was expected had by its very success ruined the parliamentarians, for with power in their hands they showed themselves utterly inept.

175 A succession of black generals now came to the presidency. When
642 Faustin Soulouque became president in 1847, the fourth Negro
643 within four years, and made himself emperor two years later, Haiti found herself once more back at the strong-man principle. The élite were out of office, relegated to inferiority in all phases of political life.

175 In the middle of the nineteenth century the groups upholding the
665 conflicting principles in politics became organized political parties.
565 Those favoring parliamentary rule called themselves Liberals; those believing in the sole rule of a strong dictator were called Nationalists. But by no stretch of the imagination could the Liberal party be considered democratic. The noble principles expressed in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the American Declaration of Independence were uncongenial to Haiti. One of the prime tenets of the Liberals, indeed, was that men were not created equal; rather that certain men (the élite) were clearly the superiors of others. Liberty

[175] [669] 11. The revolution was almost wholly an affair of the élite caste. The mulatto Boyer was deposed, and the mulatto Rivière Hérard took his place. If anyone thought of the peasants, it was only to use them to manipulate and manoeuvre the "outs" into office. Boyer's secretary-general, deposed along with the President, appealed to his countrymen against their accusation of treason against him, saying "My last wishes will be for the prosperity of Haiti and the regeneration of the African caste, to which I have consecrated myself wholeheartedly for forty years, without ever thinking of my own interests." (Joseph Balthasar Inginac, *Message à ses compatriotes, et principalement à ceux qui ont dirigé les affaires populaires de la république depuis la fin de janvier dernier* [Port-au-Prince, March 18, 1843], p. 6). Yet if these are more than hopeful words, they refer only to the distribution of the land which made peasants of the "African caste," and to Inginac's pamphlets on how to raise coffee and other products—which none of the peasants could read.

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175 441 439 648 Justice in the courts was administered by Haitians whose narrow patriotism biased their decisions.

175 651 489 5. A temperamental tariff policy. Not only were imports subject to a tariff which might be changed at the whim of any president, but exports also were taxed. When an administration was in need of funds it might suddenly, without warning, raise the tax on coffee exports and so disrupt a merchant's business plans. The customs-houses were in charge of Haitians who steadily became more inefficient and grasping as the century progressed, until many foreign merchants felt that the only way of getting business dispatched was by means of bribes. Examinations at customs were long drawn out, often there was open thievery, and erroneous valuations were common.

175 657 [648] 6. The burden of the indemnity to France. Contracted by Boyer in 1825, this annual payment for sixty years was an incubus to every administration, leaving no surplus in the treasury for public works, education, or any internal development; likewise, it made the threat of foreign interference all the more imminent.

7. A debased currency. Pétion was the first president to devalue money, and his example was frequently followed thereafter. Counterfeiting was general. When a country's monetary system is unstable, its officials accustomed to bribery and graft,[17] and its financial structure almost nonexistent, there is little chance for sound economic development.

175 245 8. Dependence upon a single crop. Haitian economy was tied to the staple coffee, grown with indifferent care, prepared for the market in outmoded fashion, and sold in competition with coffee from more scientifically run plantations in other tropical countries.

175 439 66 9. Political instability. The recurrent revolutions in Haiti made foreigners chary of participating in the country's business, since the government which made a contract might be out of office before the ink was dry.

175 439 565 10. Indifference of the élite to economic pursuits. What profits were obtainable went into the pockets of foreign merchants, not those of Haitian businessmen. In 1842 the comparative exports of the

[643] [159] [661] 17. Sir Spenser St. John, always a bitter critic of Haiti, remarked (*Hayti, or The Black Republic*, p. 88) sardonically that "Boyer had the rare quality of being honest, and left in the treasury, on his departure, the sum of £200,000, the first and last chief who was ever guilty of so unaccountable a weakness."

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3. Pétion, Boyer, and Inginac as Administrators

Pétion lived very simply in the South, like a plain republican magistrate. He sat on his piazza, accessible to all his people. He had a quiet way of answering his opponents which did not make enemies of them. He made his secretary answer every letter that arrived, no matter how small; many were simply inquiries about the President's health. Yet the wars between Pétion and Christophe dragged on from 1807 to 1812,[8] draining the finances of the republic. Not only the crops declined: so also did most of the public improvements instituted by the colonial planters; so did trade; so did habits of industry. Everything seemed to conspire against hard work. The rich plains of the Cul-de-Sac and the Artibonite Valley were ravaged by fire and warfare; necessary equipment for sugar making was destroyed, the money for new machines and buildings was unavailable; and the men were drawn away from their land by military duties.

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Inginac, Boyer's secretary of state, after the Revolution of 1843 had got rid of both the President and his secretary, wrote his memoirs. There are some revealing passages. Inginac reports that Pétion told him only forty days before his death that Boyer was a man of probity and delicacy, "but unhappily he is petulant; he is too set in his ways to conciliate those who might assist him. In everything *he* wants to dominate, and he will bring unhappiness to the country if he does not change." Inginac cites cases to show that Pétion's prophecy was correct. Boyer in 1820 repealed the most unpopular laws, particularly those requiring personal corvée and the repair of public roads; but instead of taking advice from his cabinet on important economic matters, he frequently announced that he was president and would not be run by anybody. Consequently, according to Inginac, he made mistakes which might have been avoided.[9] Defending himself, the former secretary offers a clue to the failure of the régime—possibly unavoidable—by showing that the administration merely suggested, did not require, action:

[466]

"Have I not constantly, not only preached and corresponded about the necessity of making agriculture prosperous, but also given work at as high wages as the treasury could afford? Have I not created habitations on lands formerly totally uncultivated, putting formerly idle men to work? Have I not published at my own expense, although I directed the National Printery, methods for cultivating tobacco and coffee plants, of which I distributed gratis several thousand copies?"[10]

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In spite of all encouragement which the administration could offer, agricultural production continued to decline, while expenses increased, and external trade fell off from a third to a half. The government had to borrow from the banking firm of Lafitte in Paris to find even the interest for

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8. Hostilities between the two parts of Haiti ceased about 1812 because of the mutual fear on the part of Christophe and Pétion of Napoleon's ascendancy, and the threat which this constituted to the whole former colony. Their war had ravaged the plantations and removed laborers from the soil. Then came the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain, cutting off many of the supplies which Haiti drew from both countries. There was accordingly an unwritten truce, with no further hostilities. A neutral territory of ten leagues between the boundaries of the two states was tacitly agreed upon: neither army was to enter it. This was the rich plain of Boucassin, once the garden of the island, now a wilderness.

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9. Joseph Balthazar Inginac, *Memoirs* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1843), pp. 32, 34, 38.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

payments due to the French government.

a massacre in the western part of the Dominican Republic which took the lives of an estimated five thousand to fifteen thousand Haitians. The survivors fled homeward, and many were settled in frontier areas by the government. Even so, today there are believed to be some sixty or seventy thousand Haitians still living east of the border. Large numbers of Haitians, particularly men, migrated to Cuba in the years following World War I, in search of better wages in the cane fields. By 1931 there were more than eighty thousand Haitians in that country. But resentment by local Cuban labor and the onset of the depression combined to force the repatriation of great numbers of them. Thirty thousand Haitians came home from Cuba in the years 1936 and 1937 alone.

Solution of Haiti's problem of overpopulation does not seem imminent. The obvious answers would seem to be birth control, emigration, wiser use of natural resources, and industrialization. Since the country is predominantly Catholic, and since much social value is placed on children, birth control seems unlikely. And as health facilities become more widespread and infant mortality drops, the pressure will become more acute. Emigration seems to offer no hope, since neighboring islands and countries on the mainland give no encouragement. The Haitian may yet learn to conserve his land and to get more out of it, to stock his lakes with fish, and to bring more fish in from the sea. But this will not suffice. Nothing is left but industrialization, and that seems to be a thing of the far-distant future.

Nevertheless, the character of Haitian life remains essentially agrarian. The displaced peasant, whether he is now a hotel "houseboy," a taxi driver, or a cane cutter, dreams of returning to the land some day and growing bananas, coffee, and cotton that will make him independent. In far-off places such as Havana and New York, Haitians work and save money with the expectation that one day they will come home, buy fifteen or twenty acres of ground, build a new house, and live out their lives as decently prosperous *habitants*. The traditions of the agricultural society, along with Vodoun, continue to play a significant role in the life of the people.

One such tradition is the institution of the *coumbite*, a loosely knit cooperative work party of neighbors and friends. The word itself probably comes from the Spanish *convide*, or *consite*, meaning "to invite." A member of the group holds a coumbite by notifying his fellow members that on such-and-such a day his fields will require clearing or hoeing. There are several variants of the work gathering. One, called *coré* or *convée*, meets at irregular intervals and only on special invitation. There are no regular reciprocal obligations in the *convée*; the workers are

[Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," Journal of Negro History, October, 1940, p. 515. Cf. p. 352, Category 116. --Analyst)

[P.110]

9. Land and Work

There is a common Haitian saying which goes: "Ptit mangé, travaille youn pile" (A little food, but tremendous work). This is the way the Haitian peasant sees it. There is endless labor in the fields or in the perpetually eroding mountain gardens, on landholdings that are too small to give any promise of a better life. The rains that give life to the crops take away, year by year, the nourishment of the soil. Where forests or lush groves once grew on the hillsides, there are now deep, dry gullies. Where coffee plants, cotton, and yams once grew abundantly, there are now fields of stones. This is the heritage of the peasant farmer of today. Small holdings on the hillsides and in the valleys have become smaller through the years as the population has swelled and the land been subdivided. Three and a half million people must take their sustenance from that land. More than three hundred persons must share each square mile of soil. But most of Haiti is mountainous and formidable to agriculture. Two-thirds of the land area is untillable by modern standards. There is less than one acre of useful land per person. The best of the land in the alluvial valleys is held by large corporations producing sugar and sisal. Flat, arid stretches elsewhere are semi-desert.

In the small gardens the peasants grow maize, *ti mis* (millet), coffee, bananas and plantains, cotton, beans of various kinds, yams, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, and manioc. In the delta areas they grow rice, and along the long coastline thousands of fishermen sail out in crude but sturdy boats to bring back fish fom the sea. Citrus trees, mango trees, and avocado trees grow wild; but they are fewer than in the old days. The Haitian works the soil and manages to subsist, but nature and history have not been kind to him.

Even less kind have been some of the chroniclers of the past, who have sought to disparage the Haitian as a lazy and careless creature who would

R. Courlander 8-6 (1937-1950) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

rather starve than work. An Englishman, James Franklin, wrote in 1828, for example:

> Experiments may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coercion and want will impel the Haytian to labour; and I have my doubts as to the practicability of enforcing labour in Hayti until the people have been better instructed, and their characters become changed.

As Franklin summarized it: "Nature is too generous to the Haytian; he never wants, and so never works for hire, as do free labourers in other countries."

The early nineteenth century saw a flood of such bitter comments about the remains of the once rich and flourishing French colony of St. Domingue. The vast productivity of Haiti under French rule had made that colony one of the richest in the New World. The country was dotted with sugar mills, brick-covered wells, and warehouses; and carefully built brick aqueducts, irrigation canals, locks, and dams assured water for the plantations. In 1790, under the slave system, Haiti had exported 163,000,000 pounds of sugar. In 1826, a quarter of a century after the revolution, it was reported to have exported 33,000 pounds.

This falling off in production and exports doubtless had many causes, but one of the most significant was the Haitian's revolt not only against slavery but also against continuing the same kind of work he had *performed as a slave. He saw not too much difference* between forced, unpaid labor and working for any large landholder at subsistence wages. To the Haitian slave the inspiring battle cry of the French Revolution did not mean that all men would work together on another's man plantation and receive the same wages. It meant that every man would have his own garden to work for himself as he chose; every man would be a full citizen, with land of his own, free to come and go, to plant what he wished, to sell what he could. Despite long years under a colonial slave system, the Haitian still remembered a different way of life in Africa, where mass production for export was not the primary objective of labor.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the population of Haiti was not much more than half a million—less than one sixth of what it is today. There was plenty of land, and much of it had not yet been wasted by constant tilling and erosion. When the French were driven out, the Haitian peasant re-created an economic world of his own liking. The plantation system which had poured out sugar and coffee and indigo for Europe faded away, and in its place there sprang up an agrarian system which has continued until the present day. In the early

[Franklin, The Present State of Hayti, p. 362. Cf. p. 351, category 116. -- Analyst].

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Not is it sufficient to label *Duvalierisme* "pathological" or "paranoid." The roots of this ideology are to be found in Haiti, not elsewhere; its supporters are the product of Haitian times and ideas; and their social identity, while not entirely clear, would probably pose few enigmas if enough data were available.* In order to make clear these assertions, however, it is necessary to look again at Haitian society, the Haitian society Leyburn has described so well, and to reexamine the terms that have been used by him and by others to describe it.

Though the societies of the Caribbean Sea differ significantly from each other, many of them share certain general historical experiences. Unlike the colonial areas of the Old World, these islands were largely populated from abroad, and in this regard they resemble the Atlantic lowland areas of mainland America. However, the colonial history of the islands meant that they would long remain the instruments of policy formulated in foreign capitals. Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and other islands were, during most of their postconquest history, the outposts of far-flung colonial empires, and the design of their societies was conditioned by this dependence and subjugation. As "plantation islands," their agriculture, demography, mode of settlement, and social structure were attuned to metropolitan needs and objectives. Unlike most of Africa and Asia, the Antilles lost their native populations almost entirely, owing to enslavement, overwork, disease, and war, early in the era of conquest and settlement. There remained the vestiges of native traditions, assimilated into the new, growing cultures of the postconquest period. The Indians themselves, wherever they were able to survive, were also assimilated through interbreeding with Old World migrants.

The newcomers came from Europe, Africa, and Asia, bringing with them what they could of their ancestral traditions, but never able to transfer their social heritages as intact bodies of belief and behavior. Hence the cultures of the new Caribbean societies were built up out of elements originating in many different places, while their social forms took shape under conditions of colonial control. The peoples of the islands were able to maintain some continuities with

* One interpreter of the Haitian political scene (Bastien, 1960:245–48) has suggested that Leyburn's analysis of Haitian society as a "two-caste" system greatly influenced local political thinking by strengthening one idea: "the black intellectual must regain political power for the benefit of the country's majority."

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same century in which Haiti withdrew. The yeomanry of Haiti in the nineteenth century was hence able to develop a traditionalism of unusual firmness and persistence.

This traditionalism, however, has had a high price. The economic productivity of the rural cultivator has not risen; it can be argued convincingly that poor land use, erosion, and population growth have meant lower levels of consumption for the common people in 1966 than obtained a hundred years or more ago. The rural masses, though overwhelmingly consisting of landholders, have been unable to break out of a stagnation that is economic as well as cultural. Such stasis has been based to some extent on the limited responsiveness of the rural folk to outside stimulus. But also important in maintaining the past is the national institutional system that took on its characteristic shape after 1804, and under which the rural masses still live. That system, the origins of which Leyburn has examined and assessed with such care, is controlled, as we have seen, by a numerically small segment of the national population that is markedly distinct from the yeomanry itself.

The nature and internal differentiation of the elite needs much more study, though it seems clear already that it is by no means a single solidary class embracing all but the yeomen. Whatever the structure of the elite, the relationship between the yeomen on the one hand and the real holders of power on the other must be understood if one is to understand Haiti. The yeoman is defined in terms of the elite; he is dependent upon it and subject to it. This is what is meant when it is said that the yeomanry, like the elite, forms only a part-society. Yet without the yeomen, there would be no elite. The elite live by controlling and taxing the rural masses, and find their sustenance and their power in rural productivity. Elite and yeomen, then, are bound together in unequal but interdependent relationships in Haiti as they are in other less developed societies of a similar kind. In such cases, the political role of the yeomanry is usually minor, and few opportunities may arise for the expansion of its political strength. If the yeomanry fails to increase its productivity in ways that enable it to control more of its own surpluses, its role in affecting national political decisions may grow narrower rather than wider, and this ominous possibility has become a worldwide phenomenon. It becomes more intensified wherever industry and trade grow, unaccompanied by parallel growth in yeoman productivity or in new and more widely representative national institutions.

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I

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR COUNTRY

IN the ten thousand square miles of Haiti's mountains and valleys more than two and a half million people—some say more than three million—are crowded together. Some are black, some light-skinned, but less than five thousand are white, and these are almost all recent immigrants to the country. Modern Haiti has its racial roots primarily in Africa, but its social roots lie as much in Europe as in Africa; if it is "American" at all, geography and a few fairly superficial characteristics are the only American qualities it displays. 161 162 144 181

Carrying our own cultural interpretations with us when we visit our Caribbean neighbor, we are likely to misunderstand what we see in Haiti, for it is very easy to think of all colored people in terms of our own. To do so is to remain completely ignorant of Haiti. Whereas in the United States we use "Negro" and "colored" indiscriminately as synonyms, making a real distinction only between "black" and "mulatto," all four terms are taboo in polite society in Haiti. A new descriptive vocabulary, an entirely new frame of reference, must be acquired by the friendly foreign visitor to this West Indian republic.[1] 829 576

Probably the most striking phenomenon in the country is its division into two social groups. So rigidly are the class lines set that 565

1. No greater error of tact can be made by visitors to Haiti than to use such commonly accepted American terms as Negro, colored, mulatto, blacks, Africans. Whereas in the United States such words are employed to describe people with a greater or less degree of Negro blood, in Haiti they are generally regarded as opprobrious epithets, emphasizing the color of the epidermis as all important, while ignoring the essential matters of culture, standard of living, and social background. Not many Haitians would have the grace to reply, as President Pétion suggested to a subaltern who was incensed at a white man for calling him "un nègre," "Why, then, did you not call him 'un blanc'?" Probably the most offensive of all the terms is *mulâtre*, for it calls attention to miscegenation in the family. The educated people in general regard themselves as darker Frenchmen, not as transplanted Africans. Books about Haiti which refer to the "black republic" seem to them to ignore the important fact that the blacks, though numerically preponderant, do not rule. The visitor must accordingly acquire a new vocabulary of color. It is safer not to make any allusion at all to the matter; but if occasion demands, one speaks of "jaune" and "brun," not white and black. 829 576 186

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tiny communities, some of them designating "villages" of only four or five houses. For numbers of peasants hidden away in the valleys or on mountain farms, the only contact with the larger world comes through visits to the nearest market town—which itself may count only a thousand souls. The peasant is thus effectively isolated. The American Financial Adviser to the Government has estimated the average *annual* income of the Haitian at $20 a head.[8] The smallness of the sum limits the material contacts of the peasant with the outside world. Rural schools are few,[9] consequently all but a small percentage of the rising generation is growing up illiterate. Lack of mental stimulus completes the isolation. Bound to the soil by the need of wresting a livelihood from rocky, gullied, and increasingly unproductive land, harassed by ill-health, and governed by a group whose own security would be threatened by improving his lot, it is little wonder that the peasant is unprogressive, or that he struggles along at a bare subsistence level.[10]

Haiti is rural and agricultural, then, with a population density of about 250 per square mile. The people, living without machine industry and with very little foreign trade, must get their living from 10,000 square miles, not of lush tropical soil but of rocky, mountainous country which, after a century and a half of poor farming, has been stripped of most of its forests and much of its topsoil.

A glance at a relief map of the West Indies would show clearly that the islands are the tops of a mountain range, whose lowlands were long since submerged by the Caribbean Sea. Looked at from above, Haiti seems a jumbled mass of mountains running in all directions.[11] Down their slopes flow many small streams which after

8. Dr. W. W. Cumberland, cited by Paul H. Douglas, "The American Occupation of Haiti," *Political Science Quarterly*, XLII (1927), 258.

9. The average monthly salary of $13 (until recently only $6) for rural schoolteachers would not draw many wide-awake young men, even if schoolhouses existed for classes. The salary, indeed, is so small that only inferior persons are attracted, often men who know little more than their pupils. See chap. XV, 3.

10. Mrs. Blair Niles, in *Black Haiti* (New York, 1926), pp. 185–186, tells of a prisoner who preferred to remain in jail rather than be freed. "When he gets out," she quotes the officer as saying, "he'll be in again. You'll see. Here he gets nine cents a day for food, an' that's more than the average Haitian ever has."

11. One can well believe the story (told by Ebenezer D. Bassett, *Haiti* [Washington, 1893], p. 3) of the English admiral who, asked by George III for a description of the island, crumpled a sheet of paper, threw it on the table, and said: "Sire, Haiti looks like that." The same tale is told of Puerto Rico, with a Spanish admiral speaking to Queen Isabella.

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not find herself constantly embroiled with European states and American financial interests. The Haitian debt was funded, and a financial adviser remained in the country even after the Occupation came to an end. It is expected that by 1943 the last debt will be paid; the financial adviser, however, withdrew in 1941. Since the Occupation, although the republic has been free to manage her own affairs, she has consulted frequently with the State Department in Washington.

Nineteen years of occupation ended the century of Haitian isolation. The Americans built roads, conducted health campaigns, made their presence felt even in remote hamlets and valleys. American authors, political, romantic, and sensational, discovered the Antillean republic. Steamship companies stopped their cruises for a few hours at Cap-Haïtien to allow tourists to visit the Citadel, and at Port-au-Prince to see the sights of the capital. Every Haitian now realizes that there is a world outside.

Whatever crises have arisen in Haitian affairs, certain problems have persisted. For whom do they constitute a source of worry? Since the government has always been a dictatorship, limited or absolute, subject to no party control, the incumbents of office have never had the experience of being constantly reminded by their opponents of the misery or daily worries of the population. After a hundred years the people have learned that relief is not to be expected from politicians. Occasionally a dramatic revolutionary leader has persuaded some of the people that the officials in power were responsible for their distress, and so worked up a following; yet even when such movements succeeded, the masses never benefited. To most governments of the past century Haiti's problem has been only one: to frustrate insurrection. There is evidence that recent administrations have busied themselves assiduously with the country's internal problems, although none of them has been adequately solved. The élite, at least as a group, do not feel any apparent responsibility for the maladjustments, nor obligation to effect the necessary reforms. A few patriots, and those almost without exception not in office, know what ails the country and say so; a smaller number propose reasonable solutions. The problems remain. Of these the three outstanding are overpopulation with all its accompanying ills, health, and education.

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1. *Overpopulation*

161 Two and a half or possibly three million people live within 10,200 square miles. These figures, if they are to convey a reality, must be conceived in more familiar terms. Haiti is just about the size of Vermont, but has six times as many people crowded together among its mountains In a list of countries still independent in 1935 Haiti ranked among the first ten in density of population, yet its economic life was agricultural, while the other nine have a high degree of industrialization.

161 171 As one looks at a full-page map of the Western Hemisphere it is difficult even to find the tiny wisp of color which marks the Caribbean republic of Haiti. Of the twenty-two American countries, including Canada, Haiti is next to last in size (El Salvador is smaller), yet ranks thirteenth in population, and far and away the first in *density* of population, in the whole hemisphere. The figures are revealing:

Country	*Population*	*Area in Square Miles*	*Density*
1. United States	131,669,275	3,026,701	43.5
2. Brazil	43,246,931	3,275,510	13.2
3. Mexico	19,478,791	763,944	25.5
4. Argentina	12,762,000	1,078,278	11.7
5. Canada	11,012,724	3,694,863	2.9
6. Colombia	8,730,000	448,794	19.4
7. Peru	6,600,000	532,184	12.3
8. Chile	4,626,508	296,717	15.6
9. Cuba	4,108,650	41,164	99.8
10. Venezuela	3,451,677	352,051	9.8
11. Bolivia	3,426,296	537,792	6.3
12. Guatemala	3,044,490	45,452	67.0
13. Haiti	3,000,000	10,204	294.9

161 Haiti's density per square mile is therefore greater than that of China or India—two world examples of overpopulation—and even greater than that of New York State, with its enormous city areas. Haiti's largest town has a population of 100,000; there are seven towns ranging from 7,500 to 20,000. The density of distribution through the countryside is therefore evident.

Beside the figures given above must be set those of the government

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Besides the figures given above must be set there of the government

budget, which is annually in the neighborhood of $7,000,000, and of its annual imports and exports, neither of which generally exceeds $10,000,000 a year. Chicago, with its population of three million, has an annual budget of about $275,000,000, aside from state and federal services. 652 [439]

To care for all the needs of three million people in Haiti there is a sum of money less than that available annually to several of our American universities. Out of the seven million dollars must come all salaries of officials, legislators, judges, policemen, schoolteachers; the wages of all janitors and day laborers employed by the government; the upkeep of all schools, roads, lighthouses, experiment stations; the maintenance of such important public services as health, sanitation, education, soil development, reforestation. Since there are few towns, practically every improvement which takes place must be paid for by the central government. [369]

Haiti's growth in population is not a new thing. It has been increasing steadily since 1804 while the soil of the country was being worn out and foreign trade grew stagnant. The country is entirely agricultural, there being absolutely no manufacturing industry worth the name. The people consequently live upon a subsistence economy. The soil is still fertile enough to preserve life in the teeming population, though undernourishment is general. Most of the people have no "artificial" wants and could not satisfy them under present conditions even if they had. 161 [134] [439] 433 164 [134] [511]

Assuming the census of Dessalines in 1805 to be even approximately accurate, the population is now eight times what it was then. The working of the Law of Population[3] is implacable: if population increases while economic efficiency remains static or declines, either there will be an increasing death rate or the standard of living must sink—or both. In the case of Haiti, economic efficiency is certainly not what it was under the forced-labor system of Dessalines: the death rate has been continuously high; it is the standard of living which has suffered. 161 433 178 [165] [511]

To grasp the import of Haiti's problem of overpopulation one

3. "Population tends to increase up to the limit of the supporting power of the land, relative to the economic efficiency and to the standard of living of the people at the time." (For an amplification of this discussion on overpopulation, see the note on p. 320.) The law of population as stated here is a modification of that given by Sumner and Keller, *The Science of Society*, I, 46; their statement, in turn, is that of Malthus with the added cultural items of economic efficiency and the standard of living. [114]

To grasp the import of Haiti's problem of population one

THE HAITIAN PEOPLE

161 should imagine the number of Vermonters sextupled, working with
433 hand tools and using methods which their great-grandfathers would
171 have considered antiquated; imagine the state with only a hundred
511 miles of paved roads, with no harnessed water power, no substantial fortunes, no middle class; imagine the farms gullied and worn out; ninety-five per cent of the people illiterate and undernourished; the state having no industry and practically no goods imported from New York, Massachusetts, or any other part of the United States. Under such conditions the low standard of living would be readily understandable.

Haiti might also be compared with Mississippi. Less than a quarter the size of that American state, it nevertheless has a larger population. Both Haiti and Mississippi are agricultural, with few towns, although no part of Haiti now has land as richly fertile as that of the Yazoo Delta. The low standard of living of the Mississippi share-cropper, whether Negro or white, is notorious—yet he has access to a few of the perquisites of civilization, whether these be elementary schools or moving pictures; the Haitian peasant lacks even these. In America the undercurrent of feeling is that something should be, probably eventually will be, done to improve the lot of the share-cropper. Certainly there is wealth enough in the country at large to alleviate conditions where they are deemed to be socially unhealthy. Not so in Haiti: the land is poorer, the numbers even greater, the area much smaller; and there is no wealth in the country, nor enough social vision among the upper classes to deal with the relentless increase of numbers.

168 How conceivably might this problem be dealt with? The first answer which would occur to many Americans, namely, birth control, is out of the question at present. Expense would stand in the way of its use by people who hardly ever see money; the peasants, unable to read, suspicious of new-fangled ways, untouched by all efforts to "uplift" them, and with no educational agencies, could hardly be converted to the use of contraceptives; while the Catholic
[795] Church, which until now has not had to raise its voice against birth control in Haiti, would fight any proposal to introduce it as it fought the campaign in Puerto Rico.

167 Another possible answer is migration. This solution many Haitians
648 have tried without prompting. With little money available for

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travel, the peasants are limited in their migrations to near-by countries; specifically Cuba, which can be reached by sailing vessels, and the Dominican Republic. For many years there was a seasonal migration from Haiti to each of these neighboring countries, where wages on the sugar plantations, although low, have been better than nothing. Native Cubans and Dominicans, however, have quite understandably resented the influx of cheap labor which throws them out of work, depresses the wage scale, and thwarts efforts to improve working conditions; as the tide of Haitian immigration to the two adjacent countries increased during the 'twenties and the depression period of the 'thirties, resentment flamed into action. Murders occurred; ships to Cuba were not allowed to land; workmen were beaten and otherwise persecuted. In 1937 the Cuban dictator, Batista, expelled thousands of Haitians from the island. But the climax was reached in the autumn of the same year when the news gradually leaked out that in the Dominican Republic thousands of Haitians had been murdered in cold blood. It was estimated at that time that as many as 60,000 Haitians were living across the border; of these, certainly as many as 5,000 were butchered or drowned, and it is likely that 20,000 would be a more accurate figure if the whole truth were known.[4] In the world at the present time there seems to be no haven for penniless migrants, particularly illiterate blacks.

Even if Haiti could devise within her tiny budget a way to finance a whole series of public works, the problem of overpopulation would not be solved. Expenditures for internal improvements would merely lessen unemployment for the time being; it would not prevent the people from having large families of undernourished children.

It is easy enough to say that the problem of overpopulation could be solved by a combination of birth control, education, improvement of the soil and of agricultural techniques, introduction of manufacture, and public works projects. Each of these "solutions" is a major problem in itself, considering the limitations of the country.

4. This massacre was protested with all diplomatic vigor by Haiti. The gendarmerie, since the American Occupation the only military force in the country, numbered only 2,500 men and was no match for the military power of the Dominican Republic, so that diplomatic protest to the American nations was the only course open to President Vincent. A joint committee of the United States, Mexico, and Cuba investigated and awarded Haiti damages of $750,000, of which the Dominican government (meaning Trujillo) immediately paid $250,000, promising the rest in installments.

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of Lafitte in Paris to find even the interest for payments due to the French government.

4. *Exports from Haiti*

Sugar was the great crop of French colonial days in Saint-Domingue, with coffee, indigo, and cotton lucrative secondary crops. The first table shows the rapid decline of sugar, indigo, and cotton between 1791 and 1839, near the end of Boyer's administration.

CROPS

	Sugar	*Indigo*	*Cotton*
1791 (colony)	163,405,220 lbs.	930,016 lbs.	6,286,126 lbs.
1802 (Toussaint)	53,400,000	37,600	4,050,000
1804 (Dessalines)	47,600,000	35,400	3,000,000
1818 (Pétion)	1,896,449	0	384,001
1825 (Boyer)	2,020	0	815,697
1839 (Boyer)	6,000	0	1,402,792

By contrast coffee production, although it declined, remained large enough to provide the state with some income. After 1810 it was the principal crop of the country.

Coffee Production

1791	68,151,180 lbs.	1818	20,280,589 lbs.
1802	34,370,000	1825	36,034,300
1804	31,000,000	1839	43,854,666

In 1935–36 the Vincent government reported the export of 76,600,000 pounds of sugar, 79,[illegible]00,000 pounds of coffee, and 12,700,000 pounds of cotton.[11]

CHAPTER XV

What Haiti faces, economically and socially, can be seen in terms of the law of population: "Population tends to increase up to the limit of the supporting power of the land, relative to the economic efficiency and to the standard of living of the people at the time." This law may be better visualized by stating it in forms of an equation:

$$\frac{\text{Population}}{\text{Productivity of land}} = \frac{\text{Economic Efficiency}}{\text{Standard of Living}}$$

Another way of stating the law is this:

Population + Standard of Living = Productivity of Land + Economic Effi-

11. These tables are compiled from material in Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description . . . de . . . Saint-Domingue, passim;* Great Britain Foreign Office, *Communications Relative to Hayti* (London, 1825), p. 159; Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti*, II, 172 ff.; Aléxandre Bonneau, *Haïti: ses progrès, son avenir* (Paris, 1862), pp. 35, 36; John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, p. 105; L.-J. Marcelin, *Haïti: ses guerres civiles* (Paris, 1892), p. 32; Charles F. Pressoir, "Pages de géographie économique," *Revue de la Société d'Histoire*, III, vi, 18; James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 318 ff.; *Rapport annuel du représentant fiscal d'Haïti*, October, 1935–September, 1936, pp. 189–195.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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ciency. It is immediately evident that no one of the four variables can be increased or lowered without disturbing the balance.

In French colonial times, the white and colored population was but 68,000. This figure excludes all the Negro slaves. The land was highly productive. Economic efficiency was likewise high. Now, after a century and a half, the population is near 3,000,000, the land is wearing out, and economic efficiency is almost a negative quantity. The standard of living has obviously suffered tremendously as compared with that of the French planters and free colored people of colonial times. Even if it be protested that the comparison should rather be between early and modern Haitians than between upper-caste colonials and modern Haitians, we should still compare a population of 380,000 with one of 3,000,000 on just about the same amount of land, for what has been taken up by clearing away forests has been compensated for by erosion and reversion to waste. And as has been said economic efficiency has deteriorated.

If, then, the standard of living—the usual test of a people's prosperity and contentment—is to be raised, Haiti must:

a. Lower the birth rate, and so work on its population.

b. Rebuild and fertilize its soil (that is, improve its land).

c. Adopt machinery, learn scientific methods, apply intelligent management.

All three must be done seriatim or in combination. To foreigners, particularly to visitors from the United States, there is a moral imperative in the Haitian situation, a feeling that something ought to be done, and that right early. To Haitian peasants, on the other hand, "progress" would mean change, and change is an uncomfortable interruption of the familiar. Knowing this attitude, the Haitian government is not goaded into action.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

ship of a very intelligent mulatto named Bauvais" gained some successes "over the undisciplined forces in Port-au-Prince" and forced the inhabitants of the capital to recognize the power of this group by entering into a definite treaty with them.[7]

There are other indications that life in the valley did not fail to reflect the discontent of the black slaves. Writing in 1830, Mackenzie, who was the first British Consul-General to the Haitian Republic, remarked:

> "It is said by some of the best informed Haitians, that among the mountains that stretch from the neighbourhood of Mirebalais to the coast on the east of Jacmel, there is an extensive association of the descendants of the Maroon negroes, whose independence had been recognised long before the revolution by the then existing government."[8]

It is thus apparent that the institution of *marronage*, whereby runaway slaves established themselves in the mountains, in many instances living for years beyond the reach of capture and free from attack, was known in Mirebalais as it was elsewhere. Mirebalais was also not without contact with the great heroes of Haitian history. Toussaint L'Ouverture conquered and lost the town several times before it became a strategic point "from which his lieutenants, Dessalines and Christophe, menaced Arcahaie and the plain of the Cul-de-Sac."[9]

If but little has been recorded concerning Mirebalais before Haitian independence, even less is known of its later history. Mackenzie, reporting the population of Haiti district by district, gives that of Mirebalais in 1802 as 53,649; but in 1825 as only 16,037.[10] Whether the region included under the term "Mirebalais" differed at the two periods, or whether the hardships resulting from the internal strife that racked Haiti after independence had been gained took a toll of the size suggested by these figures cannot be said. That Mirebalais was an

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

important point in the warfare between the northern Empire of Christophe and the southern Republic of Pétion is well known, since the boundary between the two, never definitely fixed, might be roughly considered as the Artibonite, control of which, as always, depended on also obtaining control of the strategic hills about the town.[11] It is not possible to discover more than approximate figures for the population of Mirebalais at the present time, since no census of the district has been made, and the most recent figure of 51,000 for the commune is derived from the baptismal records in the parish church.[12]

From the earliest years of settlement of the valley, the town has been the center of its life. The government of the commune is located here; here the courts sit; and here the best schools and the only church of the district are found. Yet it is a small town, numbering less then two hundred and fifty houses, and crossed by but three principal thoroughfares stretching north and south, with ten or twelve cross-lanes. The houses on the principal streets, rectangular and small, are built of wood, plastered over with clay, painted, and roofed with sheet iron. On the outskirts of the town the roofing is of straw, or banana-leaf thatch, while the walls themselves are made of twilled wythes. No house lacks its veranda, however small, where people may be seen sitting late of an afternoon and early in the evening, but the life of the women is lived chiefly in the courtyards behind these houses that line the streets, where the cookhouses are found and the storehouses, and where all work is done. The *place*, or town square, lies at the point where the principal route between Port-au-Prince and the Dominican border turns sharply to the east. Consisting of an acre or two of cleared land, it is overgrown with weeds except when, in preparing for festive occasions, the prisoners from the town jail may be seen spending long hours, machetes in hand, cutting the grass, a few blades at a time. North of the square stands the church, a substan-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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CHAPTER I

THE AFRICAN HERITAGE

For the study of a civilization like that of Haiti, which is the result of close and continued contact between peoples with traditions as dissimilar as those of Europe and Africa, a peculiarly lively sense of time depth is needed. Yet though it has been repeatedly stated that Haiti is the child of Africa and France, even those who proclaim this emphatically fail too often to recognize the need for as detailed a knowledge as is possible of how the strands of history were woven into the fabric of Haitian cultural life. It is for this reason that before any description of the culture of Mirebalais can be attempted, not only must the names of the African tribes from which the Haitians were derived be given, but the broad characteristics of their cultures must be considered and, where possible, the classes of their population from which were derived the Negroes who were brought to Haiti. In addition, the importance of knowing the types of Frenchmen who migrated to the island during its colonial period and of understanding the modes of life they followed and presented to their slaves must be viewed as of the first order, while, finally, the manner in which these two sets of traditions were eventually forged into the structure of Haitian life as seen today must be analyzed if more than a superficial glimpse of this life is to result. 121

Writing in 1730, a Jesuit priest named Pierre François 175 567 162

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Xavier de Charlevoix [1] designated the following varieties of slaves found on the island: the *Sénégallois*, who are "of all the Negroes the best fashioned, the easiest to discipline, and the most adapted for domestic service"; the *Bambaras*, "tallest of all, but thieves"; the *Aradas*, "those who know agriculture best, but who are the proudest"; the *Congos*, "the smallest and the most apt at fishing," but who were most prone to desert their masters; the *Nagos*, "the most human"; the *Mondongos*, "the most cruel"; the *Mines*, "the most resolute, the most capricious, and the most subject to despair of themselves."

St. Mery, the importance of whose work has already been mentioned, gives a more detailed list than that of Charlevoix.[2] Of slaves who came from tribes living in the northern part of West Africa he names the *Sénégalais*, *Yoloffes*, and *Foules*, the *Bambaras*, *Quiambas*, *Mandingues*, and *Soses*, as well as Negroes from the Bissagot Islands, though the last two categories are reported as but sparsely represented in the colony of Santo Domingo. Following the coast of Africa round its great bend, he speaks of the *Bouriquis* and the *Mesurades*, or *Congas*, as deriving from the region between Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast, while he notes the *Aradas*, the *Caplaous*, the *Mines*, the *Agouas*, the *Socos*, and the *Fantins*, as coming from the area between Cape Appolonia and the Volta River, an area whose tribes made substantial contributions to the Haitian slave population. Farther east, from what was known as the "slave coast" and today comprises Togoland, Dahomey, and western Nigeria, were brought the *Cotocolis*, "who inhabit the kingdom of *Coto*," the *Popos*, the *Fidas*, and the *Ardras*; while from the interior of the west coast the *Fonds*, the *Mais*, the *Aoussas*, the *Ibos*, and the *Nagos* are mentioned. Slaves from Benin, in the Niger Delta, as well as the *Mokos* and other tribes of Calabar, were also present in Haiti, though again in small numbers. The basin of the Congo River, how-

1: Herskovits E-4, 8 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

ever, contributed not only many slaves called by the name of that river, but also the *Mayombés*, the *Mousombés*, and the *Mondongues*, though the "true Congus" — the *Franc-Congus* — are listed as having been derived from Angola. As for the rest of the continent, "One does not see at all in Santo Domingo any Africans who have come from the remainder of the west coast of Africa, which ends at the Cape of Good Hope. . . ."[8]

No final answer can be given about the extent to which these lists of tribal names may be regarded as valid, but the unanimity with which not only Charlevoix and St. Mery, but such other contemporary observers as Bryan Edwards for Jamaica, the Reverend C. G. A. Oldendorp for the Virgin Islands, John G. Stedman and Jan Jacob Hartsinck for Guiana — to name only four — recorded similar African regions and similar tribal names when writing of the slaves of other parts of the New World, offers strong corroborative testimony. Moreover, the fact that every tribal designation given in the lists of Charlevoix and St. Mery can be found on present-day maps of Africa in the approximate region they had indicated confirms the accuracy of these early lists.

The characteristics of the various types of Negroes recorded by Charlevoix and St. Mery are not without interest. The Senegalese are described as tall and well made, and of an ebony color, their noses almost as straight as those of whites, *their hair less tightly curled than that of other Negroes. They* had the reputation of possessing a superior morality and were deemed warrior-like. St. Mery had nothing but the highest praise for the Senegalese slave.

> "He is a farmer, intelligent, good, faithful even in love, understanding, and makes an excellent domestic. Living on millet, maize, and rice, he is very sober, excellent in caring for animals, discreet, and above all taciturn, a quality sufficiently rare among the Africans and

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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which one does not find often enough even among civilized peoples."

Not all of the Mohammedan slaves, however, had the desirable qualities of the Senegalese. The Bambara, for example, were depicted as insolent and not always to be trusted, as the designations "those who steal turkeys" and "those who steal sheep" would seem to indicate.

The people between Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast were known as a hardy group prone to revolt and desertion; they were not held desirable as slaves, and thus it is not strange that few of them were found in the colony. A similar appraisal was made of the Gold Coast Negroes, for while they were described as generally well made and intelligent, they were also assessed as unreliable, deceitful, lazy, given to flattery, great consumers of food, drunkards, and wantons. And as for the Fanti and the Mina, they were spoken of as "extremely proud, waging constant warfare, capricious, and ready at any time to commit suicide."

The Negroes of the Slave Coast were favorites in Santo
[142] Domingo. Their characteristic lighter skin-color, to be observed at the present time in their peculiar yellowish or reddish hue, confirms their provenience. They were thought intelligent but avaricious, and were designated as "eaters of dogs." The Ardra women, "continuous talkers," and quarrelsome, were rarely employed as domestics, since the Negroes from the region of Dahomey apparently learned French with the greatest of difficulty, so that to understand their speech was considered to be the greatest test "for those who flatter themselves that they have command of Créole."

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The Ibos were found excellent for work in the fields, yet difficult to manage, for the slightest fault-finding or ridicule caused them to commit suicide,

"the idea of which, far from terrifying them, seems to hold an attraction for them, for they believe in the trans-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

> migration of souls. Too often it has come about that the *Ibos* of a given plantation have agreed all to hang themselves, in order to return to their country."

So well recognized was this tendency of the Ibo slaves to commit suicide, that they were described in Créole by the formula: "*Ibos pend' cor' a yo*—The Ibòs (are those who) hang themselves." None the less, many slaves from this tribe were acquired. Their strong communal and tribal ties made it advantageous for those who owned them to obtain more of them, since newcomers "were accorded help, care, and instruction by those who had preceded them."

According to St. Mery, the Negroes most common in the colony came from the Congo coast and Angola, and were known by the generic term *Congos*. The *Franc-Congos*, who came from the kingdoms of Congo and Angola, were

> "of a docility and gayety that makes them much desired. Loving song, dance, and ornaments, they make excellent domestics, while their intelligence, their facility in speaking a pure Créole, their jovial countenances without markings . . . cause people to prefer them for house-servants; they also make good laborers and good fishermen."

That the large numbers of Congo Negroes imported into Haiti have left no more of the elements of their culture in the island than are found is perhaps due to this very devotion to their masters, for a lively tradition of the present tells how, during the slave revolts, the Congo Negroes most often remained on the side of their masters and most often betrayed their fellows.

Not all the Negroes from the Congo area were as amiable as these just mentioned. The *Mondongos* had "the most execrable excess of eating their fellows." This quotation gains special significance because of the prominence which it has

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

been given through its use to substantiate the many charges of cannibalism in Haiti that have been made. Yet those who, desirous of establishing such cannibalism, quote this passage from St. Mery do not always remember to quote it in its complete context:

> "Some of these butchers of human flesh are also brought to Santo Domingo . . . where, as in Africa, they are the horror of the other Negroes, notably of the Congos, who, because of their nearness to them [in Africa], are most exposed to their cruelties." *

These are thus the tribes who were presumably the most important in the Negro ancestry of the Haitians of today. Was there any least common denominator in language which made it possible for slaves fresh from Africa to communicate with one another after their arrival in Haiti? Was there sufficient similarity in their cultures so that this might form the basis for a retention of African beliefs and behavior despite the vicissitudes of slavery? And what were the characteristics of the African civilizations of these people?

The picture of West African life, as it is commonly drawn, emphasizes the great number of small tribal groups following dissimilar modes of life, speaking mutually unintelligible languages, and worshipping different gods. In a very general sense this is not untrue. On the face of it, the number of languages that are spoken in the area from which the slaves were derived would seem to have constituted an effective barrier not alone to any concerted action on the part of slaves, but even to communication between them, especially since in many regions of the New World it was a fixed policy to separate slaves from the same tribe.

Yet behind this semblance of sharp dissimilarities lies a basic unity of language and culture in all of West Africa, so that though languages were and are mutually unintelligible, structurally and idiomatically they are much the same. This

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

CHAPTER II

WHAT THE SLAVES FOUND IN HAITI

Though by the time of the French Revolution "the immense army of slavery had increased to such proportions that in the face of it the white world seemed reduced to a mere handful of men,"[1] this was by no means the case in the earliest days of the colony of Santo Domingo. As late as 1681 the whites outnumbered the Negroes almost three to one,[2] and it is not until a hundred years later that, in the words of St. Mery, there were "eleven and three tenths slaves for one white."[3]

Yet in the fashioning of the present-day culture of the Haitian peasants, this "mere handful" exerted an influence out of all proportion to its size. That this should have occurred is not strange in view of the relationship between Negroes and whites, which was that between slaves and masters; that it did occur is amply shown in the contemporary accounts of Haitian and West Indian life, which tell us how the Negroes everywhere made conscious efforts to achieve the standards of those who to them represented power, wealth, and position. But while the prestige of the master-class must be acknowledged, care must be taken not to accept uncritically an assumption that has colored many accounts of the lives of primitive peoples who have come into contact with European

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

in descent, so there were "colored" folk who were slaves. As time went on, the lighter-colored slaves were usually employed as house-servants rather than field-hands, bringing about a continuous dilution of the Negro blood that flowed in these strains, and a lightening of their skins. And such was the prestige attached to light color that the mixed-bloods, even though slaves, felt themselves superior to free Negroes of undiluted African stock. This attitude derived from the fact that the lighter slaves were most often manumitted, particularly if they were the children of their owners, and that in other situations, when as slaves they gained the favor of their masters, they were permitted to engage in some remunerative enterprise with the proceeds of which they eventually might purchase their own freedom. These free people of color, or *affranchis*, formed an important part of the Haitian population in pre-Revolutionary times,[13] and played a principal role in the development of Haitian culture. It was through them that European civilization flowed, since because of the closeness of their contacts with the whites they were the instrument by means of which the aboriginal African heritage of the slaves was modified to produce the forms in which it is found in Haiti today.[14]

Yet for all the importance of the freed mixed-bloods in the attainment of Haitian independence and in the fixing of the patterns of Haitian culture, they, like the whites, were but relatively few in number, their strength being but from five to ten per cent of that of slaves.[15] In attempting to analyze the manner in which the present amalgam that is the civilization of Haiti was formed, it is consequently necessary to revert to a consideration of those who were in the majority, the full-blooded Negroes. The tribes from which these Negroes were principally derived have been indicated, together with the outlines of the civilizations of the region of Africa from which they were drawn. To this must be added, as has been for the whites with whom they came in contact, an analysis of the so-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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cial classes to which they belonged, as well as the circumstances of their enslavement, their treatment in Africa before shipment to the New World and during the voyage, their initiation into their new mode of life, and the manner in which they lived as slaves, since all of these facts had considerable bearing on the processes which shaped the behavior of their descendants who now inhabit the island.

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The integrated political organization of West Africa has been described, as well as the important fact that the class stratification in that region was almost as fixed and its social implications almost as far-reaching as in France. Even the early writers recognized that not all slaves came from the same ranks of society, just as they understood that there were various ways in which enslavement could be achieved. Père Labat, who lived in the West Indies for many years, listed four classes from which slaves were drawn. First, he says, were those whose punishments against native law had been commuted to perpetual banishment — that is, to slavery " for the private profit of the kings "; second were the prisoners of war; third were those who, already the slaves of native princes or of those persons to whom they had been given by these princes, were sold to meet the need of their masters for money; while fourth, comprising the greatest proportion of the slaves, were those snatched from their homes by the marauding bands of robbers who, with the connivance of native rulers, carried on these raids to satisfy the demands of the European dealers.[14] This classification and others of the period, though generally accepted and repeated by later writers, tells little concerning the ranks of society from which the slaves were drawn, except as this may be inferred. For this one must go to present-day West Africa, where a lively tradition of the slave-trade has survived and offers valuable supplementary information.[15]

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In the light of the existing traditions in Dahomey and Nigeria, it is evident that from the point of view of the African, Labat's four classes must be compressed into two — the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV2 Haiti SV2

"The Mina Negroes have even been seen to recognize princes of their country . . . prostrating themselves at their feet and rendering them that homage whose contrast to the state of servitude to which these princes have been reduced in the colony offers a striking enough instance of the instability of human greatness."[11]

Yet another group of Africans played a significant role in determining the trends Haitian Negro culture was to take. It is a commonplace among those who have studied New World Negro life that African religion has shown greater resistance to white influence than any other phase of African culture. And to explain this one must again turn to native African tradition. The beginnings of the West African monarchies, whose ruling dynasties eventually came to command great stretches of land, were in tiny principalities that continually "warred" against each other. Tradition has it that the most intransigent of the conquered were the priests of the indigenous local cults, who, because of their activities, were punished with what native idiom still terms "banishment." In the New World these intractable priests continued their rites for their fellow-slaves and instructed the next generation so their knowledge would not be lost to the people. Before their enslavement they had been men of power and influence, and this pattern, carried over in all its strength in the New World, continued them and their descendants as natural leaders. Hence, wherever the opportunity presented itself to strike for liberty, they invoked the spiritual forces to reinforce the power and courage of the military leaders who, like them, had been sold into slavery because their countries had been conquered, or because they had rebelled against the succession in their own lands.

The composition of the slave population as inferred from these traditions is thus seen to be somewhat different from

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Hald SV3

that commonly assumed, since the conclusion is inescapable that, if anything, the slaves formed a group whose aboriginal types showed a weighting on the upper end of the African social scale rather than an overwhelming proportion of the less desirable members of society. Such an assumption goes far in explaining how the "slave psychology" generally attributed to Negroes of the New World was anything but a real part of their inner lives, and makes as well for an understanding of the extent to which the Negroes suffered their slavery with a constantly active discontent that is rarely given proper recognition in the study of the history of the period, and to which the drive toward freedom and the traditions of their native land were kept alive despite the restraints imposed by the masters.

Once in the net of the slavers, however, the status of any individual mattered but little, for to the European dealers each Negro was but an added unit of cargo. All last traces of his dignity as a human being were taken from him;[18] in the grants for earlier slaving operations, and in the manifests of the ships of that time, slaves were not even invoiced as human beings, but as "pieces of the Indies" — fractions of the perfect slave, who was conceived as having a height of seven quarter of a little more than ten inches each. Under this practice, the stature of each slave, child or adult, having been recorded, the total length of the members of the cargo was divided by the requisite number, and thus reduced to so many of these "pieces of the Indies," the actual number of human beings in the cargo not figuring.[19]

It is unnecessary to detail the horrors of the passage to the New World, for the story has been too often told. One can but conjecture what its effect on those subjected to it must have been, especially when it is viewed as an introduction to their contact with the Europeans who were to be their masters. That the mortality on the voyage was high is well known, but death encountered while the shackled slaves passed the dan-

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

the phrase: "This is natural." Children are not spaced, for normally a man resumes intercourse with his wife the second or third month after childbirth. Except for the drinking of coconut milk and salt, which is believed to be effective in preventing conception if taken before intercourse, contraceptives are not known to women, which means that pregnancies follow in rapid succession. Families are not too large, however, despite this, those numbering seven or eight children being rare, even in the hills. The reason for this is a high incidence of infant mortality, which is obvious despite the absence of vital statistics. Abortions are usually resorted to by young women, who sustain the operation done by the uncertain skill of an old woman, in the fear that bearing a child will later stand in the way of a desirable legal marriage. Some men, however, take the precaution of placing a grain of native salt on the tongue while having intercourse during an illicit affair, believing that this will be effective in preventing conception.

A childless woman first goes to a *vodun* priest, to have him determine by divination if a co-wife has not invoked magic against her. If her question receives an affirmative answer, she acquires a "counter-charm" to offset the effect of the other woman's magic. Should such a charm be ineffective, she would offer her prayers before the shrines of the saints and make pilgrimages to such sacred places as Saut d'Eau, there phrasing her petition to the Virgin in some manner such as the prayer overheard as a woman lighted a candle and held it in her hand before placing it on a sacred rock:

> *"Vièrge Miracles, Manman, voilà, depuis six ans depuis qui moins marié; moin apé vivre seul avec pauvre malheureux moin-a. Ça fait trois fois moin vini nan pié ou. Pas 'blié mandé moin fait ou, pour charité, moin ou petit pitite. Moin ua minnin li ba ou. Moin apé parti, Manman, s' ou' pli, songé ça pitite m' mandé ou.—*

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

d'Angole) is obviously Angola, while the designations Ibo and Congo speak for themselves. Simbi is a Congo deity, as are Bumba and Lemba. Finally, in the categories of gods important in the regions of Haiti other than Mirebalais are the Loa Sénégal, and the Loa Mondong, both of which are names of African tribes mentioned in the early literature as contributing to the Haitian slave population. But all recognition of geographical names as such has disappeared, and they have been transmuted into designations of gods.

Outstanding here is the word *vodun* itself, already indicated as Dahomean, where it is a general term for "deity," though in Haiti its use has become more restricted and the symbol for deity has become the word *loa*, or *mystère*. The origin of the designation *loa*, which has been claimed to be a corruption of the French *roi*, is debatable. It is true that in West Africa certain deities are regarded as kings, yet this derivation is not convincing in view of the fact that in the *vodun* cult as found in Haiti at present or as described in earlier sources the *loa* are never generally referred to as kings, something that tends to strengthen statements that have been made to the effect that the word comes from the language of a Congo tribe.[1] The source of the root *hun-*, which figures in the terms *hungan*, *hunsi*, and *humfort*, is clear, for in Dahomey it is a synonym for the word *vodun*. *Hungan* and *hunsi* are even more definitely traceable than *humfort*, since the ending *-gan*, the Dahomean word for chief, designates the priest as the chief of the spirits, and *-si*, "wife," is employed in the sense of "wife of the god" or his devotee, in Africa as in Haiti. The female counterpart of *hungan*, *mambu*, cannot be definitely assigned, but may be of Bantu derivation, and is certainly an African word.

Other uncontaminated Africanisms can be discerned in the attitude of the Haitians toward the *loa* and in the ceremonies for them. One of the most characteristic is the inheritance of *loa* in families, a direct survival of the belief which not only

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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"surplus" stock. The African's motives sometimes were political rather then mercenary—to weaken and disperse unfriendly neighboring tribes. Occasionally, members of a royal family, possible contenders for tribal power and all the prerogatives that went along with it, were "exiled" in this extremely effective and final way. Although Africans were the victims of this monstrous commerce, it is clear that without the participation and coöperation of other Africans the slave trade as it existed in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries would not have been possible. The African, along with the Asian and the European, shares the guilt for the indecencies and degradation that grow out of human barter.

The voyage to the New World was at best horrible and inhuman. Nothing that can be said about the manner in which the captains of the slavers attempted to care for their cargoes can change the picture. The slaves suffered from thirst, disease, hunger, seasickness, and impersonal brutality. The anxiety and dread which these captives must have suffered in anticipation of things to come are difficult to imagine. A strange, unfamiliar world awaited them across an ocean larger than Africa itself. Some slaves killed themselves. Others who had survived long overland marches died of exhaustion or disease aboard the slave vessels. And many a slaver had to report in its log that a number of chained males, taking advantage of a brief spell on the upper decks, had leaped into the sea.

But among those who reached port in the New World there was a fierce determination to survive. The history of African slavery in the Americas is full of accounts of resistance and revolt against the European masters. The shipwrecked slaves who took over the Island of St. Vincent and came to be known as the Black Caribs, the Ashanti who revolted and vanquished the Dutch armed forces in Surinam, the Maroons of Jamaica, and the ex-slaves of Haiti who destroyed Napoleon's armies, all bear witness to the unquenched spirit of those millions of Africans exiled from their own land.

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Whereas the Indians of Haiti were not resilient, the Africans were. More and more slaves were poured into Hispaniola. By the eighteenth century the slave population represented countless tribes and kingdoms of West Africa. There were Senegalese, Foulas, Poulards, Soses, Bambaras, Kiambaras, Mandingos, and Yolofs from northwest Africa. There were Aradas, Mahis, Haussas, Ibos, Anagos or Yorubas, Bini, Takwas, Fidas, Aminos, Fantis, Agouas, Sobos, Limbas, and Adjas from the coast and interior of the great bulge of Africa. From Angola and the Congo basin came the Solongos, the Mayombés, the Mousombés, the Moundongues, the Bumbas, the Kangas, and others. Although there is no official record, Haitians themselves say that there were also those tall

2: Courlander 9-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

people known as the Jangheys, or Dinkas, from the region of the Upper Nile, and Bagandas from Uganda.[1] A few proper names that have survived, such as Ras Médé, suggest that there may have been men from Ethiopia among them. Old slavers' records show that numerous shipments were made from Madagascar and Mozambique on the East African coast.[2]

These transplanted people came from all classes and stations of life. Some were criminals condemned and sold by their own tribesmen; others were prisoners captured in intertribal raids or by Arab slave hunts. There were men of royal blood among them, as well as artisans and tribal scholars. The slave cargoes included leaf doctors, bards, musicians, wood carvers, metalworkers, drum makers, boatbuilders, hunters, and farmers.

In Haiti they were thrown together into a common mold. Shoulder to shoulder in the plantation fields were Bambaras, Anagos, Takwas, and Bumbas—peoples with different backgrounds, different languages, different legends, and different traditions. There were Moslems and so-called pagans, herdsmen and river-boatmen. Each of them brought something of his past and unwittingly poured it into the new amalgam that was to be the Haitian.

And into this amalgam flowed some of the literature, the traditions, the religious thoughts, and the superstitions of Europe. Under Spanish, French, and English rulers the slaves were constantly subjected to ways and ideas that were new to them. They absorbed and digested, and out of the diverse and even contradictory elements they worked out new patterns of life and thinking. This was the strength and resiliency of the West African in the New World. His capacity for adaptation and for remembering what was valuable to him and forgetting what had ceased to be useful preserved his spirit and his pride.

Among the things that were lost in this vast process of adaptation were the traditions of wood carving, bronze and brass casting, and weaving. Remembered, however, were music, dancing, games, religious beliefs, concepts of nature and the supernatural, folk tales, and legends. It was the outward, material things that were abandoned, and the inward, nonmaterial things that tended to survive.

The slave system itself was largely responsible for the loss of special arts and skills. Craftsmen with specialized knowledge in metalwork were set to repairing wagons and hoes, or they simply wielded hoes in the fields. Wood carvers found no patrons to encourage them to carve images and steels. The colonial emphasis was on mass production of sugar. Other things were valueless. There was little leisure or incentive for the slave to follow his artistic aptitudes.

[1] [The name Ganda survives in Haiti as the name of a deity. Cf. P. 349 Category 116.--Analyst]
[2] [For footnote, See Category 116 P. 349--Analyst]

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[7 349]

Notes

Chapter 1: *The Making of the Haitian* (pp. 1-7)

[1]The name Ganda survives in Haiti as the name of a deity.

[2]Herskovits, in *The Myth of the Negro Past* (p. 47), provides a tabulation of raw data found in the numbers recorded for slaves shipped to Virginia between 1710 and 1769: 20,964 slaves were reported shipped from "Africa," 3,842 from Gambia, 6,777 from "Guinea," 9,224 from Calabar, 3,800 from Angola, and 1,011 from Madagascar. Of those shipped from the island of Madagascar, 473 were listed as coming from Mozambique.

[3]Translated de Las Casas.

Chapter 2: *Man and the Universe: Vodoun* (pp. 8-18)

[1]See Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 3.

[2]Schweinfurth in *The Heart of Africa*, II, 32, says: "In Lunda all exorcists and conjurers are called gangas." Leo Wiener, in *Africa and the Discovery of America* (Philadelphia: Innes and Sons, 1922), III, 32, reports: "Forms of ganga have in Fanti the meaning 'medicine' but also 'magic'—such as Nyika ganga and Kongo nganga."

[3]Gunn, *Africa Dances*, p. 120; Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 208 ff.

[4]From the Fon *houn-on* or *houn-on*. Among the Arada of Dahomey a *houn-on* was regarded as a spiritual wife of the deity. She was a servant of the cult temple, and in some instances a wife of the cult priest.

[5]Translated from the French of Aubin, *En Haiti*, pp. 57-59.

[6]Deren, in her *Divine Horsemen* (pp. 119 ff.), gives an excellent report of a service for Agwé in a boat at sea. Aubin (*op. cit.*, p. 108) seems to have given the first description of this service at sea for the lwa Agwé.

[7]Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. 119.

[8]*Ibid.*, p. 123. Leyburn advances the theory that Vodoun developed during this period as a result of the vacuum left by the Church. Although the Church did in effect leave the field to the African cults, one must assume that the Arada, Congo, and other cults were already organized and powerful of great vitality before the Haitian revolution. Implicit evidence points to a continuity of cult life from the earliest days of the African on Haitian soil. There are no statistics to reveal the extent of cult membership at the end of the eighteenth century, but the content and form of Vodoun today are so overwhelmingly African that it is difficult to think of Haitian cult activity as the product of a renaissance.

Chapter 3: *The Loa: Gods of the Haitian Mountains* (pp. 19-29)

[1]The term vodoun, used in this precise sense, conforms to the original Fon (Dahomean) usage. The term hounsi, also of Fon origin, signifies "spirit" and belongs to the same root

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[p. 3]

I

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR COUNTRY

IN the ten thousand square miles of Haiti's mountains and valleys more than two and a half million people—some say more than three million—are crowded together. Some are black, some light-skinned, but less than five thousand are white, and these are almost all recent immigrants to the country. Modern Haiti has its racial roots primarily in Africa, but its social roots lie as much in Europe as in Africa; if it is "American" at all, geography and a few fairly superficial characteristics are the only American qualities it displays.

Carrying our own cultural interpretations with us when we visit our Caribbean neighbor, we are likely to misunderstand what we see in Haiti, for it is very easy to think of all colored people in terms of our own. To do so is to remain completely ignorant of Haiti. Whereas in the United States we use "Negro" and "colored" indiscriminately as synonyms, making a real distinction only between "black" and "mulatto," all four terms are taboo in polite society in Haiti. A new descriptive vocabulary, an entirely new frame of reference, must be acquired by the friendly foreign visitor to this West Indian republic.[1]

Probably the most striking phenomenon in the country is its division into two social groups. So rigidly are the class lines set that

1. No greater error of tact can be made by visitors to Haiti than to use such commonly accepted American terms as Negro, colored, mulatto, blacks, Africans. Whereas in the United States such words are employed to describe people with a greater or less degree of Negro blood, in Haiti they are generally regarded as opprobrious epithets, emphasizing the color of the epidermis as all important, while ignoring the essential matters of culture, standard of living, and social background. Not many Haitians would have the grace to reply, as President Pétion suggested to a subaltern who was incensed at a white man for calling him "un nègre," "Why, then, did you not call him 'un blanc'?" Probably the most offensive of all the terms is *noirs*, for it calls attention to miscegenation in the family. The educated people in general regard themselves as darker Frenchmen, not as transplanted Africans. Books about Haiti which refer to the "black republic" seem to them to ignore the important fact that the blacks, though numerically preponderant, do not rule. The visitor must accordingly acquire a new vocabulary of color. It is safer not to make any allusion at all to the matter; but if occasion demands, one speaks of "jaune" and "brun," not white and black.

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565 caste is the only word to describe the effective separation of aristocrats from the masses. The caste system is a vivid fact, for it regulates a person's profession, speech, religion, marriage, family life, politics, clothes, social mobility—in short, his whole life from cradle to grave.

175 Haiti won its freedom from the France of Napoleon in 1804,
648 becoming thus the second independent state in the Western Hemisphere. It had been during the eighteenth century France's most prosperous colony, its wealth depending upon slavery and the planta-
565 tion system. With the whites driven out, social distinctions which
642 actually had their roots in colonial times began immediately to develop among the people, all of whom had some proportion of African blood in their veins. During the course of the next century the criteria for aristocracy slowly assumed recognizable form, so that now even the most casual observer is aware that Haiti cannot by any stretch of the imagination be called a democratic country, with an open class system. The two castes are the élite and the masses. They are as different as day from night, as nobleman from peasant; and they are as separate as oil and water. The élite are generally reckoned [162] to compose at the outside not more than three per cent of the population.

565 The élite do not work with their hands. This is the cardinal rule of Haitian society. Upon it rests the whole economic structure of the
463 country, and to this the course of national history has led. All the
[464] professions, most governmental and military offices, and the large business enterprises are effectively closed to young men of the masses. Indeed, so completely accepted are caste rules, so practically difficult would it be for peasant youths to acquire the money and education necessary for such careers, that at birth a boy's future place in economic life is, within narrow limits, already predetermined. For the élite, law is the most popular of the professions, partly because it is the quickest avenue of approach to high political office; government, in turn, is the only career which can make a man rich within a few years. Next in popularity to law comes medicine. Teaching is not lucrative enough to attract many promising youths, and the priests of the Roman Catholic Church are almost all white Frenchmen.*

783 2. An effort was once made by the Catholic Church to train native Haitian priests,
787 but the peasants would have none of them after they were ordained. They drove them out, saying, "Go away! How do you expect God to listen to you? You are not white; you don't know anything." And the Haitian priests had to be transferred as missionaries to Africa.

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mar or any schoolmaster's correction; he behaves like his fellows; he learns by trial and error, by imitation, by the praise and ridicule of his elders, what to do and what not to do. What really matters in life is having food to eat, avoiding bad luck in health and crops, having a wife and family, keeping on the right side of the spirits, and being able at night to dance, sing, and tell tales with his friends. He wears no tight-fitting clothes, never bothers about fashions, certainly never puzzles his brain to reconcile his theological and philosophical views with each other. This is by no means a poetic or idyllic existence for him, however. The peasant is so poor that misfortune may be catastrophic; the soil he has to farm is worn out by decades of erosion and crude tillage; disease is so widespread that most people know misery. A man cannot, even if he would, save up for a rainy day; he lacks the necessary implements to plough deep while sluggards sleep. One is safe so long as he does what everyone else does, and if this rule breaks down, at least misery will have company. Keep out of harm's way if possible, but bear it stoically when it comes. Avoid what is strange—particularly all legal documents, courts, politics, city ways, and people who shout orders. The peasant is conservative because radical changes, such as come from revolutions, for example, dislocate his life, leaving him worse off than before. Progress and improvement are to him only vague abstractions, much less real than the struggle for mere existence.

For the élite, on the other hand, life is rather a struggle to maintain and improve the standard of living. It is always easier to predict what a person will not do than what he will. It would be hard to define, therefore, a typical aristocrat. In one basic matter, however, the high-class Haitian is poles removed from the peasant: instead of accepting things as they are ("*Bon Dieu bon*," runs the peasant saying: God is good—and the inflection of the voice implies that the second "bon" may also mean "inscrutable"), the élite person is restlessly dissatisfied with the conditions of life: economic, social, political. His unexpressed ideal is to be accepted as an equal in the cultured circles of Western society, to have the same entrée to courts, clubs, and parties abroad as cultivated white Europeans and Americans.

Since the country has never had an accurate census, it is not possible to say precisely how many persons belong to each caste. By the most generous estimates not one out of twenty-five Haitians is élite—and such a figure stretches the category to a point which no literate

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162 citizen would admit. The few cities and towns of Haiti do not con-
565 tain more than 250,000 people in a total population which the atlases
369 generally put around 2,500,000. Since to live in the city is one necessary mark of aristocracy, and since obviously not every town- or city-dweller is an aristocrat, it is probably nearer the mark to infer that not more than two or three per cent of the people are of the élite.

565 A slightly larger group would fit neither category. This inter-
554 mediate section would consist chiefly of those who have taken a few steps toward the upper stratum; they may wear shoes and keep a small shop and speak a few words of French, but not yet be accepted in "respectable" society; aristocrats will look down on them while the masses will regard them with curious interest. Yet these are not what Europeans would call a middle class. In their own generation, they are rootless and insecure. Their children will have as many advantages as the parents can afford, so that the next generation may increase the distance between itself and the common folk. Included in this intermediate group are also a few who, having once been up, are now on the way down.

433 If the terms "masses" and "peasants" are used interchangeably in
162 these pages, it is because the vast majority of the people get their living from the soil. Haiti is, as it has always been, an agricultural country. The end-paper map lists all towns which claim as many as 7,500 people; only one, the capital, Port-au-Prince, has more than 100,000.[1]

162 At least nine out of ten Haitians, therefore, lead rural lives, and
184 easily fit the designation of peasant. They live in little communities,
105 generally of less than a hundred persons, rather than in scattered houses. A detailed map would be dotted with place names of these

[162] [114] 1. The estimates made by Woodring, in his *Geology of the Republic of Haiti*, p. 87, are as follows:

Port-au-Prince	125,000	Saint-Marc	10,000
Cap-Haïtien	30,000	Jacmel	10,000
Les Cayes	15,000	Port-de-Paix	7,500
Gonaïves	12,000	Jérémie	7,500

It should be noted that all eight of these towns, which by Woodring's estimate have a total of 207,000, are seaports. The country is so mountainous that no cities have grown up in the interior. The map also includes a number of towns smaller than 7,500: these are capitals of arrondissements or seats of communes. Woodring remarks that if the people who live in towns having a population of more than 1 thousand were added to the list above, the total "urban" population then would be between 225,000 and 250,000, which is barely ten per cent of the total in the country.

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tiny communities, some of them designating "villages" of only four or five houses. For numbers of peasants hidden away in the valleys or on mountain farms, the only contact with the larger world comes through visits to the nearest market town—which itself may count only a thousand souls. The peasant is thus effectively isolated. The American Financial Adviser to the Government has estimated the average *annual* income of the Haitian at $20 a head.[8] The smallness of the sum limits the material contacts of the peasant with the outside world. Rural schools are few,[9] consequently all but a small percentage of the rising generation is growing up illiterate. Lack of mental stimulus completes the isolation. Bound to the soil by the need of wresting a livelihood from rocky, gullied, and increasingly unproductive land, harassed by ill-health, and governed by a group whose own security would be threatened by improving his lot, it is little wonder that the peasant is unprogressive, or that he struggles along at a bare subsistence level.[10]

Haiti is rural and agricultural, then, with a population density of about 250 per square mile. The people, living without machine industry and with very little foreign trade, must get their living from 10,000 square miles, not of lush tropical soil but of rocky, mountainous country which, after a century and a half of poor farming, has been stripped of most of its forests and much of its topsoil.

A glance at a relief map of the West Indies would show clearly that the islands are the tops of a mountain range, whose lowlands were long since submerged by the Caribbean Sea. Looked at from above, Haiti seems a jumbled mass of mountains running in all directions.[11] Down their slopes flow many small streams which after

8. Dr. W. W. Cumberland, cited by Paul H. Douglas, "The American Occupation of Haiti," *Political Science Quarterly*, XLII (1927), 258.

9. The average monthly salary of $13 (until recently only $6) for rural schoolteachers would not draw many wide-awake young men, even if schoolhouses existed for them. The salary, indeed, is so small that only inferior persons are attracted, often men who know little more than their pupils. See chap. XV, 3.

10. Mrs. Blair Niles, in *Black Haiti* (New York, 1926), pp. 183–186, tells of a prisoner who preferred to remain in jail rather than be freed. "When he goes out," she quotes the officer as saying, "he'll be in again. You'll see. Here he gets nine cents a day for food, an' that's more than the average Haitian ever has."

11. One can well believe the story (told by Ebenezer D. Bassett, *Haiti* [Washington, 1893], p. 3) of the English admiral who, asked by George III for a description of the island, crumpled a sheet of paper, threw it on the table, and said: "Sire, Haiti looks like that." The same tale is told of Puerto Rico, with a Spanish admiral speaking to Queen Isabella.

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175 565 took their place in the business life of the towns, sending their children to parish schools. Colored youths served in the colonial constabulary and in the militia, acquiring a knowledge of arms and warfare later to be useful to them.

175 565 423 567 162 Estimates of their wealth vary. Some say that in 1791 they owned a third of all the land in the colony and a fourth of all the slaves; others more conservative put the figure at one fifth of each. Even this is impressive enough to account for much of the growing jealousy of their position. And by 1791 the whites outnumbered them only ten to seven.[5]

562 595 563 175 581 White women in general added their support to a movement instigated by the petits blancs for discrimination against all gens de couleur. Many wives felt resentment against the colored people because of the frequency with which their husbands took colored mistresses.[6] Moreover, the wealth of the colony attracted an immigration of Frenchwomen with marriageable but undowered daughters—in the candid French phrase, "*de filles à marier et sans dot*"—who seem to have assumed that young planters would want white French wives, even though impecunious ones. It was a shock to quite a number of them to discover that a colonial youth might prefer a colored girl who brought a dowry with her.[7]

175 565 829 Indiscreet affranchis often gave additional grounds for resentment against their group. Wishing to dissociate themselves altogether from their Negro ancestry and to be assured of social eminence, some accounted for their dark complexions by reference to obscure Indian progenitors. On this ground many secured letters patent from local government officials, of course on payment of a fee, legally estab-

162 5. The census listed 40,000 whites to 28,000 colored. L. E. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description . . . de la partie française . . . de Saint-Domingue* (Philadelphia, 1797), I, 283, gave the following figures for 1790:

	Square Leagues	Population	White	Affranchis	Slaves
North	480	195,000	16,000	9,000	170,000
West	820	194,000	14,000	11,500	168,000
South	186	130,000	10,000	6,500	114,000
Totals	1,486	519,000	40,000	28,000	452,000

6. One governor reported to Paris that he considered sexual jealousy the greatest cause of unrest in the colony.

7. See Sir Harry H. Johnston, *The Negro in the New World* (New York, 1910), p. 641.

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people: "If ever you refuse, or grumblingly accept, the laws which the genius guarding your destinies dictates to me for your happiness, you will merit the fate of ungrateful people. But perish that hideous idea!" There can be little doubt that he wished Haiti under his direction to become prosperous; but it is likewise clear that he was personally self-centred and inordinately grasping. 175 642 643

Each step Dessalines took to further his ambitions either for Haitian prosperity or for his own fortunes had its bearing upon the development of social classes in the country. Extermination of all remaining whites was one of the first tasks he set himself. On a promise of clemency he lured several hundred gullible French out of hiding, and butchered them in cold blood. His campaign of extirpation was methodical and thorough. To try to penetrate into the psychological background of this violence is to desert fact for speculation: it may have been a desire for revenge on the French, pure and simple; it may have been gloating sadism; he may have wished to warn France against any future attempts to regain possession of the country; or he may have wanted to notify his subjects of his intention to rule with severe discipline. Certainly this last aim was achieved, if any of his people did not already know, after two years of warfare, the extent of his ruthlessness. He ruled by fear and by threats, never by the cultivation of loyalties.

Apparently he was afraid that Napoleon would renew his efforts to subdue the former colony. To forestall such an attempt he ordered each of his governing subalterns to construct one great fort on the most prominent hill in their district—a scheme which led immediately to the institution of forced labor. He likewise devised a plan, not actually put into effect, for destroying all towns and plantations near the coast and moving the capital to an inland village; and so isolating Haitians from all contact with the outside world. 175 643 712 361

Turning to domestic policy, he faced a herculean task. The warfare of 1802–3 had left the country in chaos. Plantations and agricultural projects were almost totally ruined. All habits of steady industry had been lost. Dread of a possible new attack by the French made necessary a great army, and this in turn removed most able-bodied men from productive labor in the fields, while the construction of fortresses still further depleted the labor supply. The first census of free Haiti, in 1805 (probably not highly accurate), showed only 380,000 people, with the women outnumbering men by almost three to two. 175 643 433 701 464 712 175 162

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two. Here was a decline of about 150,000 from 1790.[2] It is a commentary on the man's forcefulness that in spite of all difficulties Dessalines established an effective economic organization. Its basis was serfdom.

Every citizen, he announced, must consider himself in one of two categories, laborer or soldier. There were to be no shirkers in the new Haiti; if a man was not in the army, he must do manual labor. Artisans who followed a craft counted as laborers. Women, since they could not join the army, must work shoulder to shoulder with their men. It was understood that direction of Haiti's new order would be carried on by state officials who were neither laborers nor soldiers, but these officials were to be so few that they would not constitute a separate third category.

This step of Dessalines' was a radical one. It proclaimed the mastery of state over individual; and even more significantly it divided the people according to economic task, rather than birth, wealth, color, or social status. At first the more ambitious citizens bore patiently with the arbitrary decree, thinking they might be able to achieve comfortable status under a lenient definition of "soldier" or else by sinecure tasks as officials. Their disillusionment was swift. Even swifter was the chagrin of the lowly folk who had been slaves, for they found themselves now in actual bondage to one of their own color.

All people except soldiers, ran the decree, must be "attached as cultivators to a plantation." This might be translated to read "bound to the soil." The vast majority of the people were forced willy-nilly into agriculture. It was "formally prohibited for a cultivator to desert the plantation to which he was assigned"; conversely, it was a crime to give asylum to a runaway cultivator, male or female.[3] If such conditions differed from slavery, they were at least close to what the mediaeval world knew as serfdom. But under this régime of forced labor the recently ravaged fields once more became productive: cotton plantations again covered the plain of the Artibonite, and sugar refineries were slowly rebuilt all over the country.

To forestall complaint from the people once again driven into

2. See, for an analysis of population figures, Placide Justin, *Histoire politique et statistique de l'île d'Haïti, Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1826), pp. 322–323.

3. A certain Mlle. Chaperon, of respectable family, was accused of having harbored a fugitive female cultivator, and, since she was unable to pay immediately the fine imposed upon her by the police at Port-au-Prince, she was condemned to serve a jail term.

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tion? Here again, the decision of a leader fixed the direction of Haitian life for decades to come. It is agreed by commentators that overmilitarization was the bane of nineteenth-century Haiti. One tenth of all able-bodied men were constantly in active army service. Moreover, all the male cultivators on plantations must hold themselves in readiness to obey the government's call to arms; ammunition and arms were stored in every parish. A military mentality was nourished, the people early learning the lesson (apparently unchallenged by any liberal) that the army should rule and the people obey.

Although the common soldiers were ex-slaves who, upon dismissal from service, would return to the ranks of agricultural workers, their officers had a higher status. Noncommissioned officers had a long road to travel to eminence, but like the overseers they had at least a glimpse of the promised land of distinction. Captains and generals had this vision within their grasp: they were already of the élite.

In the subcategory of "artisans" were included all the townspeople who carried on crafts or trades. It must be remembered that Haiti had no cities, and that its two largest towns then numbered probably no more than 10,000 people each, so that artisans were not numerous. Since there was a distinction in the arduousness of various pursuits as well as in their financial return there existed in this category, as in the official and military, some chance for social prestige.

The only persons remaining outside the categories mentioned were colored landowners who had held estates in the colonial period. Dessalines took active steps to gain control of most of the land in the country, but at his death in 1806 there were still many of the old proprietors left who were, in the main, determined to hold their land and preserve their dignity as non-laborers.

Assassination by his political foes ended the career of Dessalines only two years after he assumed power. In 1805 he had had himself crowned emperor in imitation of Napoleon, but unlike Napoleon he permitted no nobility. "*Moi seul, je suis noble!*" he replied to ambitious henchmen who asked for the establishment of a peerage. It was the Emperor's tactless handling of the social situation which caused his murder, for he touched sensitive nerves on the raw in attacking property rights, inherited privilege, color distinctions, and social aspirations. The cultivators grumblingly accepted his decrees; the ambitious upper group did not.

The former affranchis fully intended to keep their lands once the

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recognized that the really important characteristics peculiar to the peasant are his sentiments and attitudes, the intense attachment to his native soil and family tradition, which, even in the economic sphere, take precedence over the desire for individual advancement and gain."[51] 463 241

Haiti in 1804 was still a country of large estates, and Dessalines and Christophe strove to keep it so. Under the active generosity of Pétion and the passive indifference of Boyer after his Code Rural had failed, few great plantations were left intact. The recorded donations of these two presidents to their generals, civil functionaries, and lesser officers, are as follows:[52] 175 24 423 671 425

134 grants of 150 carreaux (about 450 acres). Total: 59,300 acres.

176	35	105	18,480
639	30	90	57,510
711	25	75	54,325
2,322	20	60	139,320
8,000	5	15	120,000

Grand total: 448,935 acres.

Haiti followed French law rather than British, so that the rule of primogeniture did not prevail. It requires only a moment's reflection to see that even within a single generation the thousands of small properties noted in the table would be subdivided many times, since a father apportioned his land to all his sons. By 1842 it is probable that not a single plantation of the size common in colonial times was still intact.[53] On the testimony of numerous government officials and commandants of arrondissements, it was estimated in that year that 46,610 small landed properties were under fair cultivation.[54] If the population at that time be estimated at 800,000, seven eighths of whom were engaged in agriculture, there would accordingly be about fifteen people (including children) to each rural property. But 175 428 178 423 (311) [162]

A large number of small estates are left out of this account, which are said to be *badly* cultivated, or neglected. Taking the number of each separate 175 241

51. C. von Dietze, "Peasantry," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, XII, 50.
52. This table is compiled from figures cited in Armand Thoby, *La Question agraire en Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1888), *passim*, and Dr. F. Dalencour, *Le Sauvetage national par le retour à la terre* (Port-au-Prince, 1923), p. 18.
53. See Raymond Renaud, *Le Régime foncier en Haïti* (Paris, 1934), pp. 42–45.
54. Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

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175 563 565 [701] [669] an ineffective government, momentarily in the hands of colored élite. Attempting to dominate politics was a numerically small group of colored people and a still smaller group of Negroes. Although prevailingly black, the army might be, and in the later nineteenth century was continually, used by whichever group offered more. A third power, a middle class, might have balanced these antagonistic factions. Lacking such a moderating influence, Haiti was the victim of recurrent revolutionary movements.

175 178 642 643 At the time of Boyer, actual democracy would have been no safeguard, for it would have meant the supremacy of ignorance. His rule was the beginning of unfortunate days for Haiti. After the auspicious opening years, the President became an impotent onlooker as his country declined. It is instructive to compare the Haiti of Dessalines and Christophe with the Haiti of 1843, only one generation later.[62]

175 178 642 433 466 The Haiti of 1806 had been a beehive of activity. Soldiers, foremen, and policemen then stood over the workers with lianes to force them to labor for the benefit of their state. Production was carefully planned, an ordered hierarchy making every person in the country responsible to another higher than himself until the ruler was reached at the pinnacle. The cardinal fault of any laborer was to shirk at his task. The year 1843, on the contrary, found Haiti in a condition of quiescence which, to those who remembered the old days, resembled torpor. The central government had ceased to drive its citizens, and its half-hearted attempts at persuasion were futile. Overseers, drivers of gangs of workers, soldiers whose duty it was to enforce labor, had disappeared from the scene. Every man was his own master.

175 178 511 The standard of living in 1806 as in 1843 was low; but in the earlier year there had been a promise of great things to come once Haiti had rebuilt what war had destroyed. The succeeding years, however, failed to inculcate into the people a desire for any higher standard of life. Country dwellers were benighted; ignorance deepened the habit

[162] [175] 62. Haiti has never had an accurate census, so that it is impossible even to estimate the total population of the country either in 1806 or in 1843. The figures of 380,000 and 800,000 given by some authors for the two years are mere guesses. Likewise, one can only deduce the proportion of people in the main economic and social categories; probably seventy-five per cent of the Haitians were serfs in 1806 and the same percentage peasants in 1843; the "aristocracy," including all who did not derive a living by manual labor or army service, could hardly have reached five per cent in either year; the army, house servants, day laborers in the towns, and petty businessmen would make up the other twenty per cent.

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to attempt to retrace the path of property evolution, which has steadily taken its own course since the time of Pétion.[11] 175 423

With the peasants prevailingly satisfied in their daily round of life, the separation of upper and lower castes in Haitian society has gradually become an accepted fact. At least ninety per cent of the total population now belong to the peasant group, whose members are as much reconciled to their status as in the United States the poorest colored folk to theirs. Vaguely they may often wish they had the privileges and luxuries of those above them; often, likewise, they feel resentment at the way in which they are treated; but in so far as it is permissible to generalize about two million people, it is fair to say that the Haitian peasant rarely complains of his lot. 565 [162]

Of the remaining ten per cent of the population a small fraction look upon themselves as élite. Some families of this group can be traced back to colonial times when their ancestors were already affranchis; others began to take on aristocracy under Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, and Boyer. Those whose forebears have become élite only since 1843 are less firmly entrenched in the topmost class. However, since no president since Boyer has ever succeeded in weakening caste lines, the élite one or two per cent may be said to constitute a stable social group. [178]

It is significant that although the blacks had the government in their hands for three quarters of a century they were unable to effect any slight change either in caste membership or in caste lines.

The part of the population which is neither élite nor peasant is not "middle class," as that term is understood in the Western World. It is rather a shifting percentage of Haitians whose one prevailing characteristic is their residence in towns. Some are wage earners, some small tradesmen; some are ex-élite on the way down the 565 369

11. The intimate observer of the Haitian peasant never fails to comment upon his love of the land. Whereas the colonial planter attached a value to his estate because it produced wealth, the peasant loves his little plot because it is his home. Through all the sixteen successive constitutions of Haiti, the one unchangeable article has been the prohibition of sale to foreigners of real estate in the country. Haitian land is for Haitian people—or was so until after the American Occupation. Likewise, the peasant is suspicious of any law which seems likely to reintroduce the system of large properties, for these might condemn him to leave his land and work at wages for the benefit of a master who, whether kindly or pitiless, would still deprive him of his present liberty. Therefore the Haitian countryman defends with all his force this soil to which his liberty attaches him, and which he cultivates after his own manner. "The Haitian loves his land almost as a man loves his woman." [181] [42] [425] [423] [24]

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The men seldom or never go to mass, except on the days particularly set apart by the government as public fêtes. On these occasions the president and all the officers of Hayti go in procession, but the idea of devotion, I believe, never enters their contemplation. Such days are merely set aside for celebrating some particular event, which it is wished should be handed down to posterity. These occasions present only the external symbol of religion, the whole people being either ignorant or careless of its real character. Their manner and appearance during the celebration of the mass shew that they have no inward feelings of piety or devotion.[13]

Catholicism in Haiti, then, had fallen on evil days; Protestantism, on the other hand, was unable to gain any foothold. Boyer, indifferent to all religion, did not even care to tolerate Wesleyan missionaries as Pétion had done, for when certain of them arrived and were met with "persecution and stoning by a mob," it required persuasion to gain his assent to freeing those the police had taken into custody. He forbade any further meetings of Wesleyans, on the ground that they stirred up riots. At the close of Boyer's administration it was estimated that there were only about 1,200 Protestants in the country, mostly Methodists and Baptists, and these primarily Negroes who had come from the United States to settle in the republic.

Although the Haitian government probably derived a certain satisfaction from controlling a state Church, Boyer was impelled both by circumstance and his own temperament to obtain the approval of the Holy See. His own tepid spiritual zeal had nothing to do with the case; Haitian public order would benefit by a superior group of priests, and Haitian prestige would rise, he thought, with recognition by Rome. Having already in 1826 settled the conflict between France and Haiti in the political sphere, Boyer tried assiduously to end the schism from Rome. His propositions were examined with benevolence by the Pope, who conferred upon the primate of the Indies, archbishop of Santo Domingo, the title of archbishop of Haiti. This personage, however, was a Spaniard already established in the comfortable city of Santo Domingo amidst people of his own nationality. He could not be persuaded to move to Port-au-Prince. The failure of Boyer's efforts is due more to this ecclesiastic than to uncoöperativeness on the part of Rome. From 1834 to 1860 the Court of Rome had official representatives in Haiti, but they cannot have been very effective men, for conditions in

13. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 394–395.

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175 to try to renovate the old. Gradually the work became established, increasing in scope with the years.

It is not necessary to present a detailed history of the work of Catholicism in Haiti since 1860. The most striking feature of these years is its relationship to Vodun, which will be treated shortly. The progress made by the Church itself can best be seen by a summary of conditions in 1930.

Haiti is divided into dioceses named after its principal towns and cities. The population statistics are based upon figures of births covering more than fifty years, and although estimates, they are probably as accurate as any other population statistics for Haiti:

Archdiocese of Port-au-Prince	942,700
Diocese of Cap-Haitien	453,000
Diocese of Les Cayes	628,000
Diocese of Gonaives	475,000
Diocese of Port-de-Paix	153,590
Total	2,652,290

To care for this large and predominantly illiterate population there are 205 priests,[14] only 8 of whom are Haitians; 105 Brothers; and 366 Sisters.[15] The assiduous educational work of these *religieux* will be discussed in another connection.

The country's 10,200 square miles are divided into 112 parishes, which generally correspond to the political communes, although there are several parishes in the larger centres of population. In the rural sections 465 mission chapels are located at strategic points.[16]

Any casual attempt to assess the importance of religion in the daily

14. Of these, 156 are in charge of parishes or missions (the secular priests). The remaining 49 are regular clergy (that is, belonging to a religious or monastic order). All parishes in the diocese of Port-de-Paix and two in Port-au-Prince are in charge of the regular clergy; the other regular monks are doing educational work or other special service connected with the dioceses.

15. The Brothers are Frères de l'Instruction Chrétienne; of the number 83 are French, 10 French Canadian, 9 Spanish, and 3 Haitian. The Sisters belong to three congregations: 146 to St. Joseph de Cluny, 198 to Les Filles de la Sagesse, and 22 to Les Filles de Marie.

16. All the figures cited above are drawn from the *Report of the Forbes Commission to Haiti*, 1930, pp. 16–17.

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581 wedding to consecrate their state. These unions might be called
565 (after Anglo-Saxon usage) common-law marriages. Many such
518 couples have, late in life, gone through the wedding ceremony at the insistence of children aspiring to social prestige.

175 Haitian writers have frequently felt it necessary to explain and
114 justify to the outside world the practice of plaçage. Thus Saint-Rémy
581 in 1857 wrote: "*Plaçage*, or primitive marriage, is still one of the Haitian customs. It requires no civil or religious formality. I must
588 confess that some of these unions are more respectable than those
565 sanctified by civil and religious law."[1] Dantès Bellegarde in 1934 implied (erroneously) that the practice had always been one limited primarily to peasants. He said:

> Haitians have been accused of immorality because they practice free unions. This reproach is unjust. Concubinage is without doubt the rule among the people [that is, the peasants and workmen]; but it constitutes a sort of *mariage coutumier* (unlegal marriage) which, in many cases, has nothing immoral about it, certain "plaçages" having more solidity and seriousness than a large number of regular marriages. In order to understand the existence of this custom and its persistence in the lower classes of Haitian society, one must go back to the colonial epoch: the whites kept numerous concubines, white women being few in Saint-Domingue. (The
> [162] white population of Saint-Domingue was composed in 1789 of 30,826 souls, of whom 21,166 were men and 9,660 women—not counting soldiers and sailors.) On the other hand, the Negroes did not marry each other, because they did not care at all to have wives whom the master might "abuse," to use the word of Père du Tertre; moreover, masters did not require their slaves to be married: they mated them with a view to obtaining fine "products."
>
> Concubinage tends to disappear among us, or at least to become more discreet. In the cultivated class people generally marry, and the girls in most modest condition—having passed through the primary schools—resign themselves willingly today to the diversion of their unused affections to cats and other domestic animals if no one offers to lead such girls to the altar.[2]

175 Nineteenth-century visitors were generally shocked by plaçage,
581 just as middle-class people are usually shocked by sex ways which
588 seem franker than their own. That the Haitian practice was a practical one, based upon a desire to preserve property intact within the

1. *Pétion et Haïti*, V, 66 note.
2. *Un Haïtien parle* (Port-au-Prince, 1934), pp. 30–32.

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[p. 193]

XI

DOMESTIC LIFE OF THE PEASANTS

HAITI apparently has more women than men. This is not merely the casual impression of visitors, but a general conviction among local scholars and priests who know the country intimately. There is no census, of course, so that an investigator lacks means of confirming an unusual biological situation in which, it is said, there are five women to four men, in which many more girls than boys are born, and in which the death rate is higher for females than for males.

During slavery, more men than women were imported into the colony, but the slaughters of the insurrection and the revolution more than balanced the two sexes. The colonial census of 1790, probably inaccurate, showed 452,000 blacks and 28,000 affranchis who had some degree of Negro blood; a census of 1805, which certainly could not have been more than an estimate based on reports of plantation overseers and army officers, reported only 380,000 Haitians. This would indicate a staggering loss of 100,000 within fifteen years. Even with a reasonable juggling of the figures, it is obvious that deaths increased during the troubled years, and obviously males rather than females met their death on battlefields. Commentators on Haiti under Dessalines already speak of the preponderance of women. Other writers during the nineteenth century expressed the opinion that women outnumbered men, but the only figures offered were those in one parish for 1821–26—possibly atypical even if the figures are accurate—showing that 1,305 girls were born as compared with 1,209 boys.[1]

Certain physicians whose practice takes them into country districts and also certain priests have stated their belief that the number of females born exceeds the number of males. Although these men are in a good position to judge, the statement remains an opinion not yet validated by statistics; if it should prove true, it would be an extraordinary biological freak.[2] Another observation must be set

1. These are the figures of Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Haiti*, II, 118.

2. One physician thinks that the rate would be as high as five girls to three boys in a few parishes; and a priest recounts his experiences in baptizing girls named "Assez-filles" (Girls-enough), so called by their parents to indicate to deity that the next child should by rights be a boy. Professional observations such as these merely corroborate the general opinion as to the excess of females in the population.

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Another observation must be set

588 alongside this professional testimony: many men, both aristocrats
162 and common folk, have more than one placée, yet there seem to be enough women for Haitian men.

595 Although peasants in Haiti are rarely married by formal ceremony,
525 the family is a dominant characteristic of peasant life. This sums up the domestic situation among the masses.

When it is recalled that the Negro, from the time he was taken from Africa on slave ships, had almost no experience of the European tradition of conventional marriage, one has a partial explanation of the absence of peasant weddings. For the rest the people are realists, arguing that a man should have as many women as he needs to carry on the economy of his land holdings; the law forbids polygamy, but exerts no control over plural unions which are entered without formal ceremony. It has therefore come to be regularly accepted in the mores that practical need should determine the number of women to one man. If a peasant increases his land holdings, if he buys or inherits a second farm on the other side of the mountain, it is only common sense for him to take a second woman, raise a family by her, and thus have an overseer and a labor supply resident on each of his properties. Everyone in the community knows what women belong to what man, and custom strongly taboos any tampering with another man's spouses.

162 Only the Catholic Church has statistics to reveal the infrequency
581 of marriages among the masses. The story was the same a century
163 ago as now. In the important parish of Gonaïves in 1825 the proportion of marriages to births was as 1 to 62; in 1826 they were as 1 to 54.[3] Both figures include marriages and births among the élite, and Gonaïves is a town: in the countryside the proportion of marriages would be much lower. The parish priest of Carrefours, which numbers about a thousand households, stated that in 1936 there had been only ten marriages among his six or eight thousand parishioners.
[848] Another parish priest estimated that only one half of one per cent of the baptisms performed were of children born to parents legally married. Even in the parish of Pétionville, home of many élite, a priest estimates that less than one child in five is born to married
595 parents. A century ago a commandant at Léogane, speaking of a high army officer, said, "He is my brother-in-law: I live with his sister." Near Port-au-Prince lived a rural police captain with six plaçage

3. Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, II, 119–120.

Spouses,

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595 spouses. In the hills more than one peasant house was surrounded, as it would have been in Dahomey, by huts in each of which lived a "wife" of the farmer. Matters are not very different nowadays, except that men have learned the wisdom of not having their women live too close to each other.

● 162 From the guesses of experienced observers, it is probably not far
582 wide of the mark to estimate that only one couple out of a hundred is married according to the approved mode of the Western World.

The State apparently does not care; or, to put it another way, government officials know how impossible it would be to alter a custom confirmed by long usage; one which, moreover, works well enough, since it causes practically no violence or legal cases for the
795 State to attend to. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, is eager
582 to persuade the people to observe the sacrament of holy matrimony. The priests have assiduously endeavored to explore the peasant mind in order to learn what deters the average person from formal marriage. The reasons for the indifference to weddings might be listed as follows:

581 1. Inertia. There is no convincing reason to vary time-honored
178 practice which works well enough, particularly since a wedding is likely to cause a great disturbance of daily routine and even a measure of jealousy on the part of those who have not made the display.

581 2. Suspicion of legal documents and civil officials. People who put
821 their names (or marks) on documents and who call the attention of governmental officials to themselves are almost sure to rue the day. A man knows what can be demanded of him by custom in his informal unions; but who can say what the law would hold him responsible for?

581 3. Expense. The civil license costs; the priest and his assistants
585 must be paid; to be married in church, one should wear shoes; if one wears shoes, one should dress up to them; a church wedding calls for a feast. At least two days must be spent away from work if the proper formalities are carried out.

581 4. Common sense in an inevitable situation. Both State and
595 Church would try to limit a man to one wife; prosperity might demand two or more. Is it sensible to discriminate against a second woman, who might be just as much help to a man as his legal wife?

581 The Church through its priests works unceasingly to answer these
794 arguments, but without notable success. Inertia is hard to overcome;

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3. The unimportance of the legislature. It has made useful patro...

646 age for the president to dispense, and has preserved the semblance of
642 republican government; but hardly half a dozen legislative sessions in all Haitian history have contributed seminal ideas in politics or initiated true reforms. How could they, indeed, when the president was consistently a dictator of policy?

666 4. The undemocratic nature of the vote. Senators are chosen by
642 the representatives, and the two groups together have generally elected the president, when he did not come to power by revolution. The only chance people have had to vote has been for local officials and representatives. In these cases, the vote has been limited to the élite and the army, with the president's henchmen counting the ballots. Since the Occupation there have been plebiscites on constitutional changes, the people having the right to vote Yes or No.

692 5. The subservience of the courts to the president. They have been
643 filled with president's men, generally astute enough to consult presi-
642 dential wishes before handing down a decision. Foreign merchants soon learned that they could expect little "justice" from the courts if their own cause conflicted with special Haitian interests. Foreign diplomats likewise learned that in crises the courts could involve the simplest issue in such verbal complexity that months of patience would be necessary to unwind the red tape.

641 6. The pliability of "constitutional rights." Freedom of speech and
661 of the press has been notably lacking, although scurrilous attacks on the administration's enemies have often been permitted. Legislators
642 have been expelled. Graft has flourished. In 1833, for example, two representatives were expelled from the House "for systematically opposing the measures of the executive, and persisting in a demand for a statement of public expenditures." A century later a senator was expelled for almost the same reasons.

701 7. Militarism. Only in this respect is any real change apparent since
178 the American Occupation. The army was always large up to 1915, and so constituted an economic drain as well as a political menace.
642 Generals had great power: they ruled each department and each
669 arrondissement, were subject only to the president, and were at the bottom of every revolutionary movement.[22] Since the Occupation

[162]
[701]

22. In 1842, when the population was still less than a million, there were in the district governments 9 generals, 63 colonels, 48 lieutenant colonels, 9 captains, 1 lieutenant, and 28 medical officers; and in the standing army 33 colonels, 95 lieutenant colonels, 825 captains, 654 lieutenants, 577 sublieutenants and ensigns, 6,815 noncommissioned officers, and 25 medical officers. The army had 28,000 soldiers and cost about $600,000 a year. See John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 86 ff.

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631 [361] Overlapping these military arrondissements have been financial arrondissements, generally six in number. The capital of each of these was a port, with a customs house: Port-au-Prince and Jacmel in the West, Les Cayes and Jérémie in the South, Cap-Haïtien in the North, and Gonaïves in the Artibonite.

Finally there were the five *départements*. These seem never to have been much more than geographical divisions to which it was convenient occasionally to refer. In more recent years, as records have been kept with more accuracy, the departments have developed important clerical significance.

•[162]

Département	*Capital*	*Estimated Population (1950)*
North	Cap-Haïtien	450,000
Northwest	Port-de-Paix	150,000
Artibonite	Gonaïves	475,000
West	Port-au-Prince	950,000
South	Les Cayes	650,000

According to the present constitution, the country still has its five administrative departments, but has increased its other political subdivisions. There are 27 arrondissements to attend to governmental details, and in addition, 10 prefectures overlapping the arrondissements and serving as units of police control. The arrondissements are still further subdivided into 94 communes, 43 military posts, and 551 rural sections. Each commune is administered by a communal magistrate, appointed by the secretary of the interior, and so subordinate to the central government. This magistrate is assisted by a communal council or a municipal council, composed of elected prominent citizens.[2]

692 693 Courts have existed only in the important towns, which since Boyer's presidency have varied in number from four to eight. Each of these courts has consisted of a president or *doyen*, four judges, four substitute judges, a commissioner appointed by the president of the republic to keep watch over the proceedings of the body, and various inferior clerks and secretaries. Judges are politically appointed, either by the president of the republic or by his cabinet. Civil cases which exceed fifty dollars in extent have been handled by these 693 courts, as also all appeals from decisions of local juges de paix. To 695 the judges were added in 1826 juries to assist in criminal cases

2. See Luc Dominville, *Géographie-Atlas* (Port-au-Prince, 1929), *passim*.

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for the élite, and was purely cultural. By 1828 there were lower schools in six towns of the country, but only one higher school in the whole of Haiti.[13] 175 871

A report on the condition of education in 1842 showed that the Lycée still existed, its curriculum now limited to French, English, Spanish, Latin, mathematics, composition, history, and fencing.[14] Only 150 students were enrolled. By 1843 there were eleven secondary schools. The question was even raised whether Boyer's failure to promote education during the twenty-five tranquil years of his rule might not have been deliberate, on the principle that it is easier to govern ignorance than knowledge.[15] Actually, however, there was little pressure for education, and so Boyer did nothing.

Geffrard more than any other president of the nineteenth century encouraged education, with the result that almost 20,000 children received some kind of schooling. The census of 1875 made the following estimates:[16]

4 lycées	with	543 pupils	[162]
6 girls' high schools		563	
5 girls' secondary schools		350	
165 primary schools		11,784	
200 rural schools		5,939	
1 medical school		25	
1 school of music		46	
Total		19,250 pupils	

To these must be added a few pupils in private schools and in the recently established Catholic schools of the Frères de l'Instruction Chrétienne and the Sisters of Cluny. [797]

Toward the turn of the century, when reformers were writing books while the whole country seemed to be slowly dying under its stupid presidents, many a proposal was made which hit squarely upon the need of education and the necessity of a specifically practical curriculum. Joseph Justin[17] urged technical training by experts, and many others hammered away at the same idea. A small sum

13. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti*, I, 83, 120–122, 158.
14. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 74 ff.
15. Mark B. Bird, *The Black Man* (New York, 1869), p. 140.
16. Cited by Sir Spenser St. John, *Hayti, or The Black Republic*, p. 293.
17. *Étude sur les institutions haïtiennes* (Paris, 1894–95), 2 vols.

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176 871 was put into the national budget to be used for schools, but it seems generally to have been used as a fund for presidential patronage. There were even "school teachers" who could not read, but were nevertheless paid a regular monthly stipend. The principal of the Lycée at Gonaïves could neither read nor write, the music teacher there knew not a note of music, and the medical director could not name the simplest drugs.[18] Dantès Bellegarde, one of Haiti's notable intellectuals, as a minister under Nord Alexis (1902–8) made definite proposals which, had they been carried out, would have gone far toward effecting a radical reform. Minister again under Oreste (1913–14), he succeeded in building up an educational fund, but before he could spend it properly Oreste was deposed and the money used by his successor, Zamor, for military purposes.[19]

175 87 By 1915, before the Occupation began, the country had about 730 public schools. Of these, 6 gave advanced courses in medicine, law, applied science, and commerce; 10 offered a secondary classical education; 8 were special secondary boys' schools; and 15 were special secondary girls' schools. The teachers all got their training in Haiti, and the curricula and methods were almost entirely French.[20] Bellegarde had divided the country into 14 school districts, and by 1919 the official figures showed the following enrollment:[21]

[162]

387 elementary rural schools	with	21,960 pupils
206 elementary urban schools		13,881
105 presbyterial schools		4,836
49 mixed private schools		825
29 Catholic girls' schools		5,141
8 Catholic boys' schools		2,576
10 mixed popular schools		1,009
2 girls' professional schools		133
1 manual training school		555
60 national high schools		2,012
Private elementary schools		5,481
Private high schools		2,904
Total		61,313 pupils

18. See Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 276.
19. Dantès Bellegarde, *Pour une Haïti heureuse* (Port-au-Prince, 1929), pp. 100 ff.
20. Dantès Bellegarde, *Un Haïtien parle*, p. 32.
21. *Livre bleu d'Haïti*, 1919–20 (Port-au-Prince, 1920), pp. 21–22.

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488 mind dust, ruts, and a steady succession of bumps. To travel in the
[49] average hired car, driven by a Haitian, is one of the grim experiences of life. The driver speeds as if pursued by a demon, while the peasant pedestrians leap for safety into the ditches; the unfortunate passenger is moved to close his eyes to avoid seeing the inevitable crash which
[34] does not come. The most comfortable means of travel if one is going only to towns is by ship, for practically all of Haiti's towns are seaports.

● 142 To know the towns is still not to know Haiti, however, for two
577 million or more Haitians live in the rural regions. These are the people. And if they are ignorant and not too clean, they are nevertheless models of kindly generosity. It is the proud boast even of the élite that one may travel the length and breadth of the land in perfect safety, in no danger of life or of personal property.

105 Many homely sights linger in the mind: women washing the family clothes in the stream, laughing and gossiping with their neighbors; men and women talking in animated fashion to themselves, arguing, cajoling, explaining as they walk along; individuals carrying a single flower, simply because it is beautiful; barefoot women, gnarled of hand and lined of face, kneeling in the Catholic church at prayer; taxi drivers who cruise by, hissing in order to attract the attention of a visitor who obviously can afford to ride instead of walk; an apparently ceaseless procession of patient donkeys, always laden, sometimes ridden by women, sometimes urged along from behind; the so-called buses each with its witty or its florid name (Plaisance, Éclair, Grâce-à-Dieu, Polichinelle, Sauve-qui-peut, Montparnasse), which like glorified buckboards jostle woodenly from the town to country hamlets; the winsome, open smile and gay laughter of a peasant boy; the ingratiating charm of a sleeping baby in the noise of the market place. To know the average Haitian is to feel a warm affection for him. His life is never easy, yet he bears it all with true beauty of spirit. If *le bon Dieu* sends distress, he will also make it possible for distress to be borne.

576 The people are polite, whether to each other or to strangers. A younger person greets an older one as *compère* or *commère*—literally, godfather or godmother; to his equal he says "*frère*" or "*m'sieu*."
[967] Sometimes one sees a local patriarch instructing little children in
[608] "deportment." This courtesy extends to hospitality: a stranger is almost sure to be offered shelter and food wherever he stops.

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the phrase: "This is natural." Children are not spaced, for normally a man resumes intercourse with his wife the second or third month after childbirth. Except for the drinking of coconut milk and salt, which is believed to be effective in preventing conception if taken before intercourse, contraceptives are not known to women, which means that pregnancies follow in rapid succession. Families are not too large, however, despite this, those numbering seven or eight children being rare, even in the hills. The reason for this is a high incidence of infant mortality, which is obvious despite the absence of vital statistics. Abortions are usually resorted to by young women, who sustain the operation done by the uncertain skill of an old woman, in the fear that bearing a child will later stand in the way of a desirable legal marriage. Some men, however, take the precaution of placing a grain of native salt on the tongue while having intercourse during an illicit affair, believing that this will be effective in preventing conception.

A childless woman first goes to a *vodun* priest, to have him determine by divination if a co-wife has not invoked magic against her. If her question receives an affirmative answer, she acquires a "counter-charm" to offset the effect of the other woman's magic. Should such a charm be ineffective, she would offer her prayers before the shrines of the saints and make pilgrimages to such sacred places as Saut d'Eau, there phrasing her petition to the Virgin in some manner such as the prayer overheard as a woman lighted a candle and held it in her hand before placing it on a sacred rock:

> "*Vièrge Miracles, Manman, voilà, depuis six ans depuis qui moins marié; moin apé vivre seul avec pauvre malhereux moin-a. Ça fait trois fois moin vini nan pié ou. Pas 'blié mandé moin fait ou, pour charité, moin ou petit pitite. Moin va minnin li ba ou. Moin apé parti, Manman, s' ou' pli, songé ça pitite m' mandé ou.* —

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[p. 193]

XI

DOMESTIC LIFE OF THE PEASANTS

HAITI apparently has more women than men. This is not merely the casual impression of visitors, but a general conviction among local scholars and priests who know the country intimately. There is no census, of course, so that an investigator lacks means of confirming an unusual biological situation in which, it is said, there are five women to four men, in which many more girls than boys are born, and in which the death rate is higher for females than for males. 162 [69] [163] [165]

During slavery, more men than women were imported into the colony, but the slaughters of the insurrection and the revolution more than balanced the two sexes. The colonial census of 1790, probably inaccurate, showed 452,000 blacks and 28,000 affranchis who had some degree of Negro blood; a census of 1805, which certainly could not have been more than an estimate based on reports of plantation overseers and army officers, reported only 380,000 Haitians. This would indicate a staggering loss of 160,000 within fifteen years. Even with a reasonable juggling of the figures, it is obvious that deaths increased during the troubled years, and obviously males rather than females met their death on battlefields. Commentators on Haiti under Dessalines already speak of the preponderance of women. Other writers during the nineteenth century expressed the opinion that women outnumbered men, but the only figures offered were those in one parish for 1821–26—possibly atypical even if the figures are accurate—showing that 1,305 girls were born as compared with 1,209 boys.[1] 175 162

Certain physicians whose practice takes them into country districts and also certain priests have stated their belief that the number of females born exceeds the number of males. Although these men are in a good position to judge, the statement remains an opinion not yet validated by statistics; if it should prove true, it would be an extraordinary biological freak.[2] Another observation must be set 163 [114]

1. These are the figures of Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Haiti*, II, 118.

2. One physician thinks that the rate would be as high as five girls to three boys in a few parishes; and a priest recounts his experiences in baptizing girls named "Assez-filles" (Girls-enough), so called by their parents to indicate to deity that the next child should by rights be a boy. Professional observations such as these merely corroborate the general opinion as to the excess of females in the population. [114] [163] [55]

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Another observation must be set

588 alongside this professional testimony: many men, both aristocrats
162 and common folk, have more than one placée, yet there seem to be enough women for Haitian men.

595 Although peasants in Haiti are rarely married by formal ceremony,
525 the family is a dominant characteristic of peasant life. This sums up the domestic situation among the masses.

When it is recalled that the Negro, from the time he was taken from Africa on slave ships, had almost no experience of the European tradition of conventional marriage, one has a partial explanation of the absence of peasant weddings. For the rest the people are realists, agreeing that a man should have as many women as he needs to carry on the economy of his land holdings; the law forbids polygamy, but exerts no control over plural unions which are entered without formal ceremony. It has therefore come to be regularly accepted in the mores that practical need should determine the number of women to one man. If a peasant increases his land holdings, if he buys or inherits a second farm on the other side of the mountain, it is only common sense for him to take a second woman, raise a family by her, and thus have an overseer and a labor supply resident on each of his properties. Everyone in the community knows what women belong to what man, and custom strongly taboos any tampering with another man's spouses.

162 Only the Catholic Church has statistics to reveal the infrequency
581 of marriages among the masses. The story was the same a century ago as now. In the important parish of Gonaïves in 1825 the propor-
● 163 tion of marriages to births was as 1 to 62; in 1826 they were as 1 to 54.[3] Both figures include marriages and births among the élite, and Gonaïves is a town: in the countryside the proportion of marriages would be much lower. The parish priest of Carrefours, which numbers about a thousand households, stated that in 1936 there had been only ten marriages among his six or eight thousand parishioners.
[848] Another parish priest estimated that only one half of one per cent of the baptisms performed were of children born to parents legally married. Even in the parish of Pétionville, home of many élite, a priest estimates that less than one child in five is born to married
595 parents. A century ago a commandant at Léogane, speaking of a high army officer, said, "He is my brother-in-law: I live with his sister." Near Port-au-Prince lived a rural police captain with six plaçage

3. Mackenzie, op. cit., II, 119–120.

Spouses,

132 fires in their houses at night to keep out the damp cold that sweeps
[374] through the passes. And a man on the trail before dawn may wear a
[291] blanket over his head and carry a glowing ember with him for warmth.

132 On the south coast there are sometimes hurricanes and tidal waves, and
133 many a small fishing boat and grass-covered house has been washed away
[131] in these storms. But the great mountains of the southern range deflect the winds, so that to the north their full fury is never known.

226 In the great Bay of Gonaïves the fishing boats sail out at night with the
133 friendly winds that carry them to the fishing grounds of the island of La
172 Gonave, and they return to the shore with their catches in the morning, or in the afternoon with the setting sun. The sailing boats from the tiny fishing village called Ville Matelot each day pass the deserted islet named Isle à Cabrit, where four Indian camps once stood. Today Isle à Cabrit is only a waterless, denuded place, a hunting ground for Carib and Arawak pottery and carved stone images.

136 In the frontier lakes of the Cul-de-Sac Plain there are wild ducks and
[220] alligators. Here the villagers fish with nets from rafts and dugout canoes.
[501] Now and then an iguana is seen, but there is little other game, because the edible wildlife of the country was long ago eaten by hungry people.

137 For the things that grow wild the Haitian is grateful—the avocado,
[241] the mango, the cashew, and the cotton which once planted produces again and again each year. He is grateful for the coconut palms, the calabash tree, the gourd vines, and the medicinal herbs that grow on every side. But
[313] the gifts of nature are not prolific. Most of the great stands of timber—
[134] lignum vitae, mahogany, dyewood and pine—have been cut away. Once fertile garden spots have dried up, and the soil that produces the yams, the pumpkins, the kaffir, and the rice is tired.

181 But the Haitian himself is not tired. He has suffered from malaria,
164 yaws, and chronic hunger; yet out of the great old mountains of Haiti he has fashioned a way of life and a nation.

105 The Haitian of today was created out of the fabric of three continents—
181 Africa, America, and Europe. He was shaped out of the plains and hills of Nigeria, Dahomey, and the Congo; the summers and winters of Europe; and the mountains and mountain mists of Haiti itself. He is the synthesis of the folk beliefs of the French and Spanish peasants, the Yoruba and the Arada of West Africa, and perhaps of the Carib Indians with whom he had close contact during his first days in the New World. He has brought into affinity the religious practices of Africa and the beliefs of the Church of Rome. He is outwardly simple and poor, but inwardly he is a complicated and rich man. He is rich in music, in the capacity for spiritual expression, in tradition, in folklore, and in memories. He has been able

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Haiti under Dessalines still had many building

175 of French con-
178 struction, both plantation mansions and slave quarters. With forced
331 labor available these had been kept in a measure of repair. Christophe, not content with leftovers from colonial days, had sponsored architectural activity all over his kingdom; if his citadel is the most noteworthy example, there are also to his credit lesser palaces and government warehouses. Almost no building was done by Pétion and Boyer, however, and by the 1840's the constructions of the French
[731] had fallen into serious disrepair. Severe earthquakes and fires quickly ruined what time had already weakened. By the middle of the century one saw, instead of trim slave quarters near great mansions, a few straggling towns of one-story houses, the hillsides dotted with ramshackle huts, and the plains with daubed shacks.

175 From great estates to tiny plots; from carefully tilled fields to
178 small gardens in a wilderness; from financial prosperity to debt;
181 from directed enterprise to sloth; from an attitude of hopeful de-
433 termination to one of tolerance for things as they are—these are the striking contrasts of the two periods. It could hardly have been imagined in Christophe's day that the smart, disciplined Dahomet would be succeeded by casual ragamuffins who dozed on their tilted chairs while on sentry duty. Christophe had liked his subjects to be well dressed, and insisted on it; but the British consul in Boyer's time wrote that "the laborers are, generally speaking, nearly naked; in fact, adults only wearing what is barely necessary to prevent indecent exposure, while the children of both sexes run about without covering of any kind."[64]

175 It was the parceling of landed estates combined with the disap-
178 pearance of forced labor which initiated the transition from serfdom
433 to peasantry. Personalities as dynamic as Christophe's or as brutal as
[442] Dessalines' would have been required to keep the people in a servile
[433] condition in a land of tropical fertility. Contemporary foreign judg-
[461] ment was almost unanimous in placing the blame for declining
[164] prosperity upon indolence (the word is continually repeated, generally preceded by the adjective "natural"). It may be noted in passing that no one at the time seems to have realized how widespread were the debilitating diseases of hookworm and malaria, which can make apparently husky men prefer rest to work. Responsibility for economic failure rests as much upon the governing class,

64. Charles Mackenzie, *Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti* (1829), p. 86.

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the struggle for independence, threw themselves against the formidable weapons of the whites. Whenever in spite of the drogue a man was wounded, there was always the explanation of other potent magic, never a surrender of the belief in drogues. Tradition has it that Christophe wore a drogue giving him immunity against all but silver bullets, and that he kept a silver bullet for suicide in case the need should arise—as it did. Drogues were worn by the caco guerrillas, active from 1919 to 1922, who harassed the Marines during the Occupation of the country.

Such forms of magic are found among practically every known folk. There are traces of charms in the folklore of most "civilized" people, as well as in actual, if secret, use by many apparent sophisticates.

The next commonest application of magic has to do with disease. Haiti is a poor and prevailingly illiterate country in which there are not enough trained medical doctors to serve adequately even the small population of the towns. People who live in the secluded valleys and on the mountainsides receive practically no medical attention. The disease rate if accurate figures could be obtained would certainly be shockingly high, with hookworm and malaria all but universal, and yaws, elephantiasis, and tuberculosis common. In the case of disease and its treatment, it is fair to say that the Haitian peasant is typically primitive.

Sickness is thought to be caused either as a punishment or a warning by one of the loa, or by evil magic wrought by one's enemies. When a man falls ill, therefore, he sends for the specialist, whether houngan, bocor, or caplata, to discover the responsible loa; next, he must learn whether the loa is angry with him, and if so, for what reason; if it is found that the loa is acting through magical compulsion of an enemy, the treatment of the disease will be different from the case of a loa acting without human compulsion. An angry spirit can be appeased by proper sacrifices; a spirit acting as an agent of evil magic must be fought by another spirit, compelled by the countermagic of the patient's specialist. Sometimes the countermagic is simple exorcism by spells and incantations. At other times it is highly involved and dangerous, requiring exotic plants, continuous attention, even illegal practices such as mutilating a corpse. Casual observation might fail to detect the magical element in some of the operations, for they resemble merely the brews or applications of old wives' tales.

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the men as well as the women work arduously. It seems justifiable to conclude that industry has not always been a characteristic of the Haitian male; and to ask why. 114 461

One valid reason is, of course, political. As we have seen, until the American Occupation Haiti was greatly overmilitarized. Almost every able-bodied male was at one time or another during his prime a soldier in the army. Since the bane of the country from 1804 to 1915 was its revolutions, there was room for a man to serve either in the regular army or, lured by future promises, in the guerrilla forces of a scheming general. To be drawn away from the land at the very moment of physical maturity was to predispose a youth against humdrum field work. As a soldier he traveled, knew excitement, was fed and clothed, and could loaf, except during battle. So schooled, upon retirement from the army a man was hardly disposed to settle down to steady labor. Even if as a young man he remained upon his farm, he might at any moment be called away to service, just when he was most needed for the crop. If Haiti was to be fed, the women, who alone were exempt from army service, provided the only available regular workers. 175 701 461

Tradition offers another explanation for masculine independence of hard work. The African background of female agricultural labor has been cited. In slavery the men had been degraded by being forced to do work of this sort, while the lot of women hardly differed from what it had been in the old country. Under Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, with their large armies, women, already numerically preponderant, formed the vast majority of field workers. Independent small farming hardly changed the picture. African tradition, moreover, made the man master of his property and wives, the rôle of woman being that of man's inferior and useful servant. 174 462 562 567

Disease is another partial explanation. Until recently no one seems to have been aware of the prevalence in Haiti of such diseases as hookworm, malaria, and tuberculosis which, without necessarily affecting a person outwardly, may nevertheless sap his vitality, leaving him listless and worn out by even slight exertion. Obviously much of what was called laziness was due to disease. But the flaw in this reasoning is that illness makes no discrimination between the sexes. If men were disease-ridden, so were women: yet the latter were steadily industrious. 164 461

Any foray into possible psychological reasons is guesswork. It

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not find herself constantly embroiled with European states and American financial interests. The Haitian debt was funded, and a financial adviser remained in the country even after the Occupation came to an end. It is expected that by 1943 the last debt will be paid; the financial adviser, however, withdrew in 1941. Since the Occupation, although the republic has been free to manage her own affairs, she has consulted frequently with the State Department in Washington.

Nineteen years of occupation ended the century of Haitian isolation. The Americans built roads, conducted health campaigns, made their presence felt even in remote hamlets and valleys. American authors, political, romantic, and sensational, discovered the Antillean republic. Steamship companies stopped their cruises for a few hours at Cap-Haïtien to allow tourists to visit the Citadel, and at Port-au-Prince to see the sights of the capital. Every Haitian now realizes that there is a world outside.

Whatever crises have arisen in Haitian affairs, certain problems have persisted. For whom do they constitute a source of worry? Since the government has always been a dictatorship, limited or absolute, subject to no party control, the incumbents of office have never had the experience of being constantly reminded by their opponents of the misery or daily worries of the population. After a hundred years the people have learned that relief is not to be expected from politicians. Occasionally a dramatic revolutionary leader has persuaded some of the people that the officials in power were responsible for their distress, and so worked up a following; yet even when such movements succeeded, the masses never benefited. To most governments of the past century Haiti's problem has been only one: to frustrate insurrection. There is evidence that recent administrations have busied themselves assiduously with the country's internal problems, although none of them has been adequately solved. The élite, at least as a group, do not feel any apparent responsibility for the maladjustments, nor obligation to effect the necessary reforms. A few patriots, and those almost without exception not in office, know what ails the country and say so; a smaller number propose reasonable solutions. The problems remain. Of these the three outstanding are overpopulation with all its accompanying ills, health, and education.

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Besides the figures given above must be set there of the government

budget, which is annually in the neighborhood of $7,000,000, and of 652
its annual imports and exports, neither of which generally exceeds [439]
$10,000,000 a year. Chicago, with its population of three million, has an annual budget of about $275,000,000, aside from state and federal services.

To care for all the needs of three million people in Haiti there is a sum of money less than that available annually to several of our American universities. Out of the seven million dollars must come all salaries of officials, legislators, judges, policemen, schoolteachers; the wages of all janitors and day laborers employed by the government; the upkeep of all schools, roads, lighthouses, experiment stations; the maintenance of such important public services as health, sanitation, education, soil development, reforestation. Since there [369]
are few towns, practically every improvement which takes place must be paid for by the central government.

Haiti's growth in population is not a new thing. It has been in- 161
creasing steadily since 1804 while the soil of the country was being [134]
worn out and foreign trade grew stagnant. The country is entirely [439]
agricultural, there being absolutely no manufacturing industry worth the name. The people consequently live upon a subsistence economy. 433
The soil is still fertile enough to preserve life in the teeming popula- 164
tion, though undernourishment is general. Most of the people have [134]
no "artificial" wants and could not satisfy them under present con- [511]
ditions even if they had.

Assuming the census of Dessalines in 1805 to be even approxi- 161
mately accurate, the population is now eight times what it was then. 433
The working of the Law of Population[3] is implacable: if population 178
increases while economic efficiency remains static or declines, either there will be an increasing death rate or the standard of living must sink—or both. In the case of Haiti, economic efficiency is certainly [165]
not what it was under the forced-labor system of Dessalines: the [511]
death rate has been continuously high; it is the standard of living which has suffered.

To grasp the import of Haiti's problem of overpopulation one

3. "Population tends to increase up to the limit of the supporting power of the land, relative to the economic efficiency and to the standard of living of the people at the time." (For an amplification of this discussion on overpopulation, see the note on p. 320.) The law of population as stated here is a modification of that given by Sumner and Keller, *The Science of Society*, I, 46; their statement, in turn, is that of Malthus with the added cultural items of economic efficiency and the standard of living. [114]

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2. *Health*

Historians who seek to explain the rise and fall of nations in terms of a single cause might do worse than hit upon health and disease as the all-important explanation. Unless spectacular epidemics have appeared in a country's history, the average person is rarely aware of how diet may affect a people, or of how backwardness in achievement is often directly related to disease. It may well be that the development of *medical* history will yet cause a radical revision of certain philosophies of history.

146 "The diet of the Haitian peasants has not improved since the slavery period," says Dr. Camille Lhérisson.[5] When people are
164 hungry in Haiti, they eat (if they can find food) until their hunger has been appeased; but what they eat, though it may fill their stomachs, is often decidedly deficient in the proper nourishment. Mangoes, yams, and beans are common enough so that few people actually go hungry; eggs, milk, meat, and many other essentials of a balanced diet, on the contrary, are scarce. People do not die of hunger, but rather of the diseases which accompany malnutrition. It is said that many peasants allow the fires in their homes to die out when the mangoes begin to ripen, subsisting almost wholly upon this fruit for weeks. One sees nearly naked children whose distended
[261] bellies are testimony to faulty diet. There are frequent cases of geophagy (eating of dirt) both by children and by adults in their unreasoned craving for certain dietetic elements; one result of the practice is the swallowing of eggs and larvae of intestinal parasites.

178 Scientific progress in medicine during the nineteenth century and
743 the first years of the twentieth passed Haiti by completely. There
759 were during the whole history of the country until 1915 hardly a score of reputable physicians; even had there been doctors, hospital facilities and equipment were lacking. Dr. Robert P. Parsons de-
114 scribes Haiti in 1915 as "an unspeakable hotbed of diseases, ranking
164 second to none in the world in downright rottenness." He further described the "mass of three million people, sick, suffering beyond all power of words to describe, crippled, and weakened from the ravages of a host of diseases (for the most part preventable and curable), pitifully helpless and hopelessly resigned to their lot."[6]

5. "Diseases of the Peasants of Haiti," *American Journal of Public Health*, XXV, No. 8 (August, 1935), 924.
6. *History of Haitian Medicine* (New York, 1930), pp. 4–5.

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So it had been with the subject peoples of the island ever since its discovery. The Spaniards introduced a wide variety of European diseases to Española (an epidemic of smallpox in 1500 was estimated to have killed 200,000 Indians in the island) which did not disappear as the Indians gave way to Negroes. Three centuries of the slave trade brought blacks from many parts of Africa, and with them most of the deadliest plagues of that continent. During the flourishing days of French control over Saint-Domingue, Negro slaves were afflicted by a wide variety of diseases, the commonest being yaws, tetanus, intestinal worms, malaria, leprosy, smallpox, and scrofula, although others were certainly not absent. Only to yellow fever, probably brought with them from Africa, did the blacks seem to develop a certain immunity. Most plantations had a doctor in attendance, but medical skill during the eighteenth century was not advanced enough to cope successfully with scourges whose cause was then unknown.

After freedom there were fewer doctors than ever, less sanitation, and a worse diet. When a person was ill, his one alternative to suffering the disease to take its course was to consult the Vodun priest, for the commonly accepted explanation of disease was a spiritual one. If God (that is, the Christian God) had sent the illness, nothing could be done except to bear it, for God's will was unalterable; if it were the result of magic worked by some enemy, the identity of that enemy and the magical means used must be ferreted out so that countermagic might be employed. Vodun practitioners were, indeed, quite as important in their rôle of healing as in performing strictly religious rites. In the course of their efforts to cure disease they often stumbled upon homely but effective cures; no doubt also the mental effect of the patient's faith sometimes helped him to recover, even when the medicines administered had no specific value.

The "triple threat" to Haitian health is the morbid group: malaria, hookworm, and yaws. The first two are familiar enough in parts of the United States, and require only short comment. For centuries malaria has sapped the vitality of people in southern lands, giving them a reputation for indolence which is not wholly deserved. Haitian peasants were during the entire nineteenth century accused of laziness; when a strapping man lay all day in the shade of a tree, it was logical enough for a white visitor to suppose that he was willfully loafing. The critics might have been more temperate if they had known what it was to be perpetually full of malaria, with a body

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apparently hale and hearty, but lassitude sapping all energy. A group of doctors from the Rockefeller Foundation discovered that among 4,439 persons examined in various surveys two decades ago sixty-seven per cent showed malarial parasites in the blood. Since the American Occupation steps have been taken to control the disease and much progress has resulted: some of the towns are now practically free of it. But the battle against malaria will never be won so long as the anopheles mosquito breeds in the island; it means an endless war of constant vigilance as well as education—one which must be carried on simultaneously in the neighboring Dominican Republic.

Hookworm, like malaria, is also ordinarily quite undramatic in its symptoms. There is no specific pain, but rather a progressive inertia. Since practically every country person goes barefoot it would be miraculous if hookworm were not widespread, for sanitation is entirely lacking in peasant communities. Dr. Lhérisson reported in 1935 that twenty-six per cent of the mass of Haitian people examined up to that time had been found infested by hookworms. The final figure will probably be revised upward, for the persons most easily examined are townspeople who have better sanitation and more shoes. Only the Cul-de-Sac plain, extending east from Port-au-Prince, is free of the disease, for the larvae do not develop in salty ground. Hookworm attacks not only the barefoot, but likewise the well shod. Poor sanitation and geophagy suggest themselves as two explanations of this fact.

Like malaria, hookworm has been accepted calmly enough as one of the normal burdens of life. In slave days and for some time thereafter it was called "stomach trouble," and since it was common, was not even a case for the Vodun practitioner. It was not until 1924 that the Rockefeller Foundation through its Payne mission revealed the significance of the disease and began to establish dispensaries in country districts and undertake a campaign of sanitation. If every Haitian were to wear shoes the incidence of the disease would, of course, decidedly decrease; but the advice to wear shoes is a counsel of perfection, for large peasant families are no more able to afford this luxury than all American families are able to buy champagne and caviar. Progress has been made along the lines of hygiene and sanitation, but hookworm continues to undermine the energy of the people.

Yaws is, of the morbid triad, the most virulent and the common-

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est. It was brought over from Africa apparently as early as 1509.[7] Oviedo describes it in 1526 as "a terrible pustular disease."[8] It so closely resembles syphilis that it has often been mistaken for that malady.[9] Untreated or wrongly treated it ravages the bodies of its victims, making them loathesome to behold. In the neighborhood of Port-au-Prince the Rockefeller staff found, out of 2,564 persons examined, 78 per cent affected with yaws. What is even more disturbing is that the young are afflicted. Dr. Lhérisson's investigations in one district revealed that 61.1 per cent of the cases were of children under ten. 164 •

An American, Dr. Paul Wilson, in 1922 first called yaws the primary physical curse of Haiti. He insisted "that the first need of rural Haiti was soap, salvarsan, and sunshine, and that the good Lord would furnish the sunshine."[10] The Haitian government immediately began to spend large sums to combat the disease. In the Jacmel region in one year (1925–26) 167,267 cases of yaws were treated; in 1926 over 200,000 injections of arsenicals against the disease were administered throughout the republic; and by 1931 the Public Health Service had given in twelve years 2,655,386 injections. Progress has been swift, but the fight against yaws is one which has to be waged continually. 164 744

It would probably be not far from the truth to say that for two centuries the majority of Haitian Negroes have been afflicted to a greater or less degree with malaria, hookworm, and yaws, either singly or together. Next to these dire diseases comes a group which seems to have affected from a tenth to one half the population: tuberculosis, dysentery, enteritis, and granular conjunctivitis. Tuberculosis progresses rapidly when it appears. The people have never developed a specific immunity to it, and promiscuous sex relations play their part in spreading the disease by contagion. In seven hundred autopsies performed in one year at the General Hospital of Port-au-Prince, twenty-six per cent of the deaths were due to tuberculosis. Spring water in the country districts is frequently pol- 164 [836] [837] [165]

7. M. G. Levacher, *Guide médical des Antilles* (Paris, 1847), p. 280.

8. Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdés, *La Historia natural y general de las Indias* (Madrid, 1558).

9. Dr. Parsons, *History of Haitian Medicine*, p. xviii, speaks of it as "blood brother of European syphilis, if not the same disease modified by age incidence, social environment, and racial difference."

10. *Ibid.*, p. xviii.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

Spring water in the country districts is frequently

164 [364] [272] luted by all sorts of excreta; the watering of milk is a common practice, and samples of milk have been generally found to contain many times the normal amount of bacilli. The cases of tuberculosis are practically always complicated by malaria.

Dysentery, when caused by bacilli, is epidemic in nature. In Haiti this form, known as "colerin," annually affects about a quarter of the rural population. Another type, caused by a variety of amoeba, affects another ten or twenty per cent, according to the region. Enteritis is less serious than dysentery but just as prevalent, being [146] [273] caused by protozoa and intestinal worms. Poor diet, the abuse of alcohol, premature weaning, and unwise nursing are also responsible. [853] Granular conjunctivitis affected sixteen per cent of the children examined by the Rockefeller Foundation.

Cancer seems to strike only a normal number of Haitians; goitre is common in the mountain districts; leprosy has become a menace in the West and South; elephantiasis is present, particularly in the South; gusarola (characterized by patches of skin assuming different color) is fairly common in the Cul-de-Sac plain; chicken pox, influenza, and meningitis epidemics are occasionally serious.

164 462 482 145 The health of the peasant women is seriously and continuously endangered by their mode of life and work. It is customary for females, from girlhood onward, to carry heavy burdens on their heads—over steep paths in the mountains, along rocky trails, up hill and down. The commonest sight in Haiti is to see a woman swinging along with a great load of fuel, a tin of water, a bundle of building material, a basket of fruit, on her head. Cranial bones are flattened, the spine is bent, internal organs are strained or damaged. For ill-nourished persons to carry heavy weights for long distances with [461] [843] little rest means undue pressure on the heart and lungs, and so an increasing tendency to cardiac and pulmonary infections as well as chronic anemia. Overwork frequently results in miscarriages.

844 As has been said, childbirth often occurs by the roadside, on the way to market, or in the market place. In no case can a peasant [846] woman remain in bed for a proper period either before or after (164) parturition. Midwives are untrained; they use primitive methods which inevitably result in defective development of infants, lessened 853 resistance to disease, high infant mortality, and a prevalence of abdominal diseases in women. Pressure of work, whether in the field or on the way to market, makes a mother soon stop nursing her

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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baby: when she does she substitutes a mode of feeding on fruits and solids which favors digestive disturbance and nutritive diseases in the infant.

At the age when children of the élite would be starting to school, peasant children are beginning work in the fields, hoeing, weeding, and carrying, always under the tropical sun. Cuts and bruises, sometimes serious, are improperly treated when they occur and so lead to tetanus or to enormous ulcers.

Hard work and a simple mode of outdoor life prove, in Haiti at least, not to be the keys to good health which a romantic might fancy them. Haiti has been one of the unhealthiest places in the world. One feels that it has been lucky to escape such scourges as typhus, cholera, and bubonic plague; that smallpox has not been violent in its epidemics, and that the people developed an immunity to yellow fever. It has, indeed, been luck rather than cleanliness and proper medical care which has protected the people in these instances.

In 1838 Boyer founded a hospital school at Port-au-Prince, giving it the name of The National School of Medicine. It did not function as a school, however, until 1860 when Geffrard reorganized it and gave it life. Geffrard also sent young men to Europe to study, installed laboratories of physics and chemistry in the upper schools of the capital, and made possible the appearance of an intellectual élite.[11] The next burst of energy in matters of hygiene came around 1890 when, under the influence of Dr. Léon Audain, the first health records were kept, and the spirit of scientific research reached Haitian medicine.

From 1804 to 1860, then, there was practically no proper care for sick people. In the latter years of the century a few trained physicians, with sadly deficient equipment, practiced in the towns. Not until after the Occupation was the rural mass of the population even touched by the medical knowledge which had been developing all over the civilized world for decades. Clinics, wholesale vaccinations and inoculations, and campaigns of enlightenment have in the past twenty years worked wonders. The Vodun practitioner, however, still is the "expert" who treats most illnesses, and healing remains one of his major functions.

11. Geffrard established schools of law, music, painting, and navigation. The latter two collapsed. The same president founded the high schools of Port-au-Prince, Jacmel, and Gonaïves.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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311 merly. Wherever the overcrowded Haitians have lived since 1815, there beauty has had to give way to gnawing necessity which lacked either the imagination or the means to be sightly.

105 One can stand upon a morne and watch a rain storm rush down the valley, bending the palm trees in its fury, and think Haiti still a magnificent sight. Then one must descend the mountainside past rickety shacks and rocky fields, and the feeling grows that not all the kindly simplicity of the people is enough to lift the country from its [134] dilapidation. As he nears the village, the afternoon scent of roasting coffee will delight him; but then he sees the squalor of village life and is reminded that three million souls are here trying to eke out an existence upon a small area of declining fertility.

Much in Haiti is picturesque if one can keep his mind from wandering to the conditions which lie behind the picturesqueness. [482] Women stride down from the hills with great loads on their heads; [443] aged crones, pipe in mouth, sit perched on the haunches of tiny donkeys with their bulging panniers; the great market square in the [492] town is a scene of noisy confusion with hundreds of women and [482] children, a mixture of smells, thousands of little piles of soap, candy, gewgaws, vegetables, gaping chickens tied together by the feet, [434] shirts, canes, bolts of cloth. All the weary women, however, must trudge back up to their shanties on the mountainside when the [146] market is over. Many of them do not see ten dollars in cash during the year, and their little children, with bellies bulging, give evidence [164] of undernourishment. Without doctors, without even the rudiments of hygiene, they manage somehow to subsist, or else die, frequently of disease which might easily have been prevented.

565 In Port-au-Prince and a few other towns live enough members of the élite to make one momentarily forget the plight of the masses. [342] The houses of the well-to-do are substantially built, if not often [351] attractive. Their garden walls are brilliant with bougainvillea, their walks with hibiscus. Tiny red lizards (analis) make flashes of color along the walls. On shady verandas and in the parlors one hears delightful conversation, eats excellent food, savors the pleasures of [575] civilization. The clubs of the élite are pleasing, their tennis is good, [526] their dancing graceful. To be among these families as a welcome guest is an experience in gracious hospitality which can never be [535] forgotten. Too soon, however, one must leave these havens of urbanity and pass through districts of the town which haunt the mind with their grim want.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

000 the phrase: "This is natural." Children are not spaced, for
842 normally a man resumes intercourse with his wife the second
163 or third month after childbirth. Except for the drinking of
833 coconut milk and salt, which is believed to be effective in preventing conception if taken before intercourse, contraceptives are not known to women, which means that pregnancies follow in rapid succession. Families are not too large, however, despite this, those numbering seven or eight children being rare, even in the hills. The reason for this is a high incidence of infant mortality, which is obvious despite the absence of vital statistics. Abortions are usually resorted to by young women, who sustain the operation done by the uncertain skill of an old woman, in the fear that bearing a child will later stand in the way of a desirable legal marriage. Some men, however, take the precaution of placing a grain of native salt on the tongue while having intercourse during an illicit affair, believing that this will be effective in preventing conception.

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842 A childless woman first goes to a *vodun* priest, to have him
789 determine by divination if a co-wife has not invoked magic
787 against her. If her question receives an affirmative answer, she
[194] acquires a "counter-charm" to offset the effect of the other
[195] woman's magic. Should such a charm be ineffective, she would
[788] offer her prayers before the shrines of the saints and make
[539] pilgrimages to such sacred places as Saut d'Eau, there phrasing her petition to the Virgin in some manner such as the prayer overheard as a woman lighted a candle and held it in her hand before placing it on a sacred rock:

> *"Vièrge Miracles, Manman, voilà, depuis six ans depuis qui moins marié; moin apé vivre seul avec pauvre malhereux moin-a. Ça fait trois fois moin vini nan pié ou. Pas 'blié mandé moin fait ou, pour charité, moin ou petit pitite. Moin va minnin li ba ou. Moin apé parti, Manman, s' ou' pli, songé ça pitite m' mandé ou.—*

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

[p. 193]

XI

DOMESTIC LIFE OF THE PEASANTS

HAITI apparently has more women than men. This is not merely the casual impression of visitors, but a general conviction among local scholars and priests who know the country intimately. There is no census, of course, so that an investigator lacks means of confirming an unusual biological situation in which, it is said, there are five women to four men, in which many more girls than boys are born, and in which the death rate is higher for females than for males. 162 [69] [163] [165]

During slavery, more men than women were imported into the colony, but the slaughters of the insurrection and the revolution more than balanced the two sexes. The colonial census of 1790, probably inaccurate, showed 452,000 blacks and 28,000 affranchis who had some degree of Negro blood; a census of 1805, which certainly could not have been more than an estimate based on reports of plantation overseers and army officers, reported only 380,000 Haitians. This would indicate a staggering loss of 100,000 within fifteen years. Even with a reasonable juggling of the figures, it is obvious that deaths increased during the troubled years, and obviously males rather than females met their death on battlefields. Commentators on Haiti under Dessalines already speak of the preponderance of women. Other writers during the nineteenth century expressed the opinion that women outnumbered men, but the only figures offered were those in one parish for 1821–26—possibly atypical even if the figures are accurate—showing that 1,305 girls were born as compared with 1,209 boys.[1] 175 162

Certain physicians whose practice takes them into country districts and also certain priests have stated their belief that the number of females born exceeds the number of males. Although these men are in a good position to judge, the statement remains an opinion not yet validated by statistics; if it should prove true, it would be an extraordinary biological freak.[2] Another observation must be set 163 [114]

1. These are the figures of Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Haiti*, II, 118.

2. One physician thinks that the rate would be as high as five girls to three boys in a few parishes; and a priest recounts his experiences in baptizing girls named "Assez-filles" (Girls-enough), so called by their parents to indicate to deity that the next child should by rights be a boy. Professional observations such as these merely corroborate the general opinion as to the excess of females in the population. [114] [163] [551]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

the market, the women sit all day in the broiling sun, and in Port-au-Prince at least, sometimes sleep near by for the night, in order to complete their purchases and sales and to get their fill of companionable gossip. They are often accompanied by the youngest of their children, some of whom have to be carried. 452 565 443

Some observers profess to see evidences of a matriarchate among the peasants, for as a general rule the woman attends to the business dealings of the market place, handles the money, directs her children, and manages the household. If the man has more than one placée spouse, complete control of the farm is the woman's during the absence of her man. It is a superficial judgment, however, to speak of the peasant mother as a matriarch. The man owns the land, chooses his women, calls for help at the moment he pleases for preparation of the ground for planting; and when he knows his end to be near, summons all his families and disposes of his property as he sees fit. His decision is final. But he is no more a patriarch than his woman is a matriarch: they are economic partners in a struggle for existence. 562 593 592

By our standards, the woman is inferior to the man not only in rights but in being one spouse of several. He may contract several unions, while she may have only one. She does more steady, if not more actual, physical labor than the man. When he is at home, she must offer him the best of the food. As usual in simple societies, however, the issue rarely arises as to superiority or inferiority of the sexes. Customary behavior is followed without much question. 562

There is one great contrast berween élite and peasant women, in the matter of childbirth. The élite mother takes as much care of herself during pregnancy and parturition as would an American woman in well-to-do circles. The peasant mother, on the contrary, cannot allow herself the luxury of medical attention, nor can she spare the time to rest quietly. Like many so-called "primitive" women, she apparently finds herself little incommoded either by pregnancy or birth. Babies are born frequently in the market place, the mother having come down from the hills only that day with her goods. It is not unusual to hear of the birth of a child in a roadside ditch or in a grove by the path to and from the market town. The care given mother and infant is primitive: the navel cord is cut with a sharp stone or a piece of broken glass; a short rest is thought sufficient before the mother resumes her task. As might be expected, the death rate from infection is high and women age prematurely. 565 844 846 [165] [145]

Parents are generally kind to their children, so far as physical

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Besides the figures given above must be set there of the

budget, which is annually in the neighborhood of $7,000,000, and of its annual imports and exports, neither of which generally exceeds $10,000,000 a year. Chicago, with its population of three million, has an annual budget of about $275,000,000, aside from state and federal services. 652 [439]

To care for all the needs of three million people in Haiti there is a sum of money less than that available annually to several of our American universities. Out of the seven million dollars must come all salaries of officials, legislators, judges, policemen, schoolteachers; the wages of all janitors and day laborers employed by the government; the upkeep of all schools, roads, lighthouses, experiment stations; the maintenance of such important public services as health, sanitation, education, soil development, reforestation. Since there are few towns, practically every improvement which takes place must be paid for by the central government. [369]

Haiti's growth in population is not a new thing. It has been increasing steadily since 1804 while the soil of the country was being worn out and foreign trade grew stagnant. The country is entirely agricultural, there being absolutely no manufacturing industry worth the name. The people consequently live upon a subsistence economy. The soil is still fertile enough to preserve life in the teeming population, though undernourishment is general. Most of the people have no "artificial" wants and could not satisfy them under present conditions even if they had. 161 [134] [439] 433 164 [134] [511]

Assuming the census of Dessalines in 1805 to be even approximately accurate, the population is now eight times what it was then. The working of the Law of Population[1] is implacable: if population increases while economic efficiency remains static or declines, either there will be an increasing death rate or the standard of living must sink—or both. In the case of Haiti, economic efficiency is certainly not what it was under the forced-labor system of Dessalines: the death rate has been continuously high; it is the standard of living which has suffered. 161 433 178 [165] [511]

To grasp the import of Haiti's problem of overpopulation one

1. "Population tends to increase up to the limit of the supporting power of the land, relative to the economic efficiency and to the standard of living of the people at the time." (For an amplification of this discussion on overpopulation, see the note on p. 320.) The law of population as stated here is a modification of that given by Sumner and Keller, *The Science of Society*, I, 46; their statement, in turn, is that of Malthus with the added cultural terms of economic efficiency and the standard of living. [114]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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est. It was brought over from Africa apparently as early as 1509.[7] Oviedo describes it in 1526 as "a terrible pustular disease."[8] It so closely resembles syphilis that it has often been mistaken for that malady.[9] Untreated or wrongly treated it ravages the bodies of its victims, making them loathesome to behold. In the neighborhood of Port-au-Prince the Rockefeller staff found, out of 2,564 persons examined, 78 per cent affected with yaws. What is even more disturbing is that the young are afflicted. Dr. Lhérisson's investigations in one district revealed that 61.1 per cent of the cases were of children under ten. 164

An American, Dr. Paul Wilson, in 1922 first called yaws the primary physical curse of Haiti. He insisted "that the first need of rural Haiti was soap, salvarsan, and sunshine, and that the good Lord would furnish the sunshine."[10] The Haitian government immediately began to spend large sums to combat the disease. In the Jacmel region in one year (1925–26) 167,267 cases of yaws were treated; in 1926 over 200,000 injections of arsenicals against the disease were administered throughout the republic; and by 1931 the Public Health Service had given in twelve years 2,655,386 injections. Progress has been swift, but the fight against yaws is one which has to be waged continually. 164 744

It would probably be not far from the truth to say that for two centuries the majority of Haitian Negroes have been afflicted to a greater or less degree with malaria, hookworm, and yaws, either singly or together. Next to these dire diseases comes a group which seems to have affected from a tenth to one half the population: tuberculosis, dysentery, enteritis, and granular conjunctivitis. Tuberculosis progresses rapidly when it appears. The people have never developed a specific immunity to it, and promiscuous sex relations play their part in spreading the disease by contagion. In seven hundred autopsies performed in one year at the General Hospital of Port-au-Prince, twenty-six per cent of the deaths were due to tuberculosis. Spring water in the country districts is frequently pol- 164 [836] [837] [165]

7. M. G. Levacher, *Guide médical des Antilles* (Paris, 1847), p. 280.

8. Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdés, *La Historia natural y general de las Indias* (Madrid, 1535).

9. Dr. Parsons, *History of Haitian Medicine*, p. xviii, speaks of it as "blood brother of European syphilis, if not the same disease modified by age incidence, social environment, and racial difference."

10. *Ibid.*, p. xviii.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

For many Haitians, the struggle to obtain a piece of ground and to hold onto it is the very heart of the struggle for existence. On Morne l'Hôpital in 1932 I knew a man who owned ten acres of gardens. He had it planted in bananas and plantains, yams, and cotton. He had two cows and a calf and a grove of mango trees and coconut palms. His house was clean, tidy, and by Haitian standards well furnished. Eighteen years later he had less than an acre of land, no trees, no cotton, and no cattle. His family had become impoverished. He had three grown children and virtually no land to leave to them except that on which the house stood. His troubles began with a lawsuit over his land title. He sold his cattle to raise money to pay his court expenses. He lost half of his land as a result of the lawsuit, most of it the part with the good trees. Later, he sold more land to raise "eating money," and then rented it from the new owner. He could not grow enough cash crops to pay the rent and was finally evicted. Today he has not enough ground left on which to grow food for himself and his wife the year round.

The diminution of adequate landholdings has resulted in the disappearances of many of the *lacours* (hamlets) that were a familiar sight a few decades ago. Young people traditionally built their houses near the family homesteads until there were five, six, or a dozen houses in a group. There was a natural family community which shared a common social life and the work of the fields. But as the population increased and the landholdings shrank, young people and old began to move away in search of new land, or work in the cities. Often where the lacour remains it is only as a settlement of landless house renters who work where they may for wages.

Economic refugees from rural areas seek wage work in the cities, returning to their original homes only on special festive days for family reunions. The men find employment as gardeners, servants, construction laborers, and stevedores. Some find work on the sugar and sisal plantations, others in craft industries making straw hats, baskets, shoes, chairs, and mahogany ware for export. The struggle in the big city of Port-au-Prince is for many of them worse than the poverty they left behind. There are the inevitable slums and the constant threat of hunger. It is in the big city that one hears most often the words *moin grand gout* (I am hungry), and least often the words *Bondieu bon* (God is good).

The land hunger increases, and the overflow of the mountain settlements continues to move cityward. In former years there was a trend toward emigration across the eastern border into the Dominican Republic, which has a population density roughly one third or one fourth that of Haiti. This trend was checked, temporarily at least, in 1937 by

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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and set apart on special plates in a separate room for them; in the afternoon the family eats the food. If the twins to whom homage is being offered are still alive, they must wear special clothes at the sacrifice.

"I believe in the careful cult of the dead . . ." Once more it is necessary to renew one's acquaintance with primitive and folk belief to grasp the Haitian attitude. Life is desirable, death is dreaded; both death and the dead are feared. In the actual world, any excursion from the comfortably familiar countryside of one's home leads to confusion and bewilderment. Except in the company of his fellows (on a religious pilgrimage to the waterfalls at Ville-Bonheur, for example), a Haitian almost never leaves his valley or mountainside and market town. Sophisticated people view the unknown with pleasurable excitement, for they have learned by experience that the unfamiliar is not necessarily frightful; it is quite the contrary with simple folk, whose meagre experience with the unfamiliar has been at least somewhat alarming.

Death is the ultimate unknown. The fearsomeness the imagination conceives to lie beyond death seems to exist in almost direct proportion to people's ignorance of the material world. The fear of ghosts is a commonplace among primitive folk, as among the uneducated in the "civilized" world. Where ghosts are considered powerful, one part of any comprehensive cult will certainly deal with the dead.

In Haitian Vodun the teachings of the Catholic Church have exerted more influence upon the cult of the dead than upon any other part of the religion. The preparation of the corpse for burial shows no traces of African practice; the watch (or wake) and wailing over the deceased is familiar; the funeral itself is conducted by a Catholic priest, with burial in consecrated ground. Thereafter, the continual efforts to secure the tranquil repose of the departed bear the earmarks of faithful Catholic practice; it is at this point, however, that the cult begins to assume distinctive features, for it is firmly believed that the dead exert tremendous power in the world of the living. This power comes from God—the Christian God. The case has been put succinctly by Sumner and Keller: "The relation between man and ghost resolves itself . . . into a relation of rights and duties, with all the rights on one side and all the duties on the other."[30] God gives

30. W. G. Sumner and A. G. Keller, *The Science of Society* (New Haven, 1927), II, 829.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

policy of encouraging trade with his friends and prohibiting it with his enemies—both arbitrarily. The variation of Pétion was a sort of mercantilism, with set high tariffs.

What Dessalines planned was in terms of Western statecraft so weird that white onlookers felt they were restrained in calling Dessalines a transplanted African tribal chieftain. So passionately intense was the fury of that general against all whites that he took every precaution he could devise to prevent face-to-face dealings between his Haitians and foreigners. By deceit, treachery, and ingenious cruelty he conducted a massacre which deserves comparison with that of Saint Bartholomew: this effectively rid the country of white residents. Since for a time Haiti would have to depend for economic survival upon trade with foreigners, Dessalines next conceived a project whereby the whole population would be gathered in the centre of the island, in the most protected valleys and the gorges of the highest mountains. In these fastnesses the people would never see a white but would work on the land, producing sugar and coffee and cotton for export without ever leaving their local habitations. On the seacoast would be established certain "counters" over which a few incorruptible Haitians, chosen by the Emperor himself, would sell local products and buy the necessary imported goods. Impregnable fortresses were to guard access to the interior,[a] which would be reached by new roads from the seacoast "counters." Every seaport was to be destroyed as soon as new towns could be built in the back country. Already when his death intervened Dessalines had moved his capital from the Cape (that is, Cap-Haïtien, formerly Cap Français) to the inland village of Marchand (in the department of the Artibonite; now renamed Dessalines), and his next plan was to transfer Port-au-Prince eight leagues inland to the plantation Dérance, among the mountains.

Dessalines has been thought absurd, childish, barbaric. But there is something poignant, even tragic, in this fiery determination of the black chieftain, bitter over the cruelties and indignity to which his people had been subject for decades, to use this alien island as best he could and preserve his people at any cost from such another domination.

Despite his scheme for ultimate isolation of the people, Dessalines kept everyone steadily at work by the forced-labor system instituted

a. See p. 247 and note 13. under Toussaint.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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Davers. In 1768 and 1769 they were "but tranquil spectators of the troubles caused by the re-establishment of the militia," the local military forces numbering at this time 260 whites and 291 *affranchis*, or free men of color.[3]

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This white population was made up chiefly of those who came directly from France or were born in the colony, but also included were the Acadians, one of the most interesting groups who settled in Mirebalais. Fleeing from Newfoundland, they were brought to Haiti before they were sent to Louisiana, and in the course of this migration left some of their number in the valley. It is recorded that on the 26th day of October 1764, in consequence of "a Memorial presented by the Chamber of Agriculture of Port-au-Prince, which stressed the healthfulness of Mirebalais,"[4] each of a number of these Acadian families was allotted a plot of eight hundred square paces, not far from the town. The ending of this episode, however, was not happy, for, transported into a tropical climate that failed to measure up to the claims made for it, the Acadians paid so heavy a toll that soon all trace of them vanished.

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But facts such as these tell little of the fundamental social and economic conditions of pre-Revolutionary Haiti, where Negro slavery constituted the foundation upon which the whole structure of life was erected. That Mirebalais was no exception to the prevailing economic regime is shown by Moreau de St. Mery's figures for the district, yet what stresses existed between the masters, the free persons of color, and the slaves, no record remains to show. Despite the fact that slaves and free men of color were accepted in the armed militia, the

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situation was far from tranquil. When, after the French Revolution, there were signs that the decree[5] which accorded to the free men of color political rights equal to those of the whites was in danger of being nullified in practice, it was at Mirebalais that the colored men assembled to insist on the enforcement of this order.[6] Together with some slaves they freed, they formed the nucleus of an army "that under the leader-

[P. 8]

2. Man and the Universe: Vodoun

175 When the African slaves stepped ashore in the New World they brought
179 with them highly developed religious beliefs and attitudes toward life.
791 But Africa was a continent of many cultures and nations, and its belief systems varied. The Congo African did not have the same view of the natural and supernatural as the Senegalese, for example; and even neighboring peoples such as the Ibos, the Yorubas, and the Mahis did not have common religious traditions. Yet in the strange new land that was Haiti, the common elements in their religious beliefs were accented. In time a new composite religious system emerged. It was called Vodoun.

175 The preponderance of Africans in Haiti came from the region of Da-
167 homey, Togoland, Nigeria, and the Congo River basin. Among them the
179 Dahomeans were the most numerous, and it was they who provided the
791 framework for the Afro-Haitian religious system.

The word Vodoun itself is Dahomean in origin. Among the Fon-speak-
192 ing people of West Africa it signified "spirit," or "deity." In Haiti the word came to be applied in a general sense to all the activities of cult life, from the ritual of the "temple" to the songs and dances, though in some old songs it still applies specifically to the idea of a supernatural spirit. However, the Congo word *loa* came to be used to designate the deities.[1]

791 In a literal sense, Vodoun in Haiti consists of the rites, beliefs, and prac-
791 tices of the Vodoun cult, built around the similar religious systems of the
179 Dahomeans and the Nagos. In a wider sense it applies to similar but distinct ritual activities of other cults. The Ibo-Kanga rites and dances are in a specific sense "not quite" Vodoun. The rites in the Congo-Guinée cult group—made up of Congo, Bambarra, "Guinée," and miscellaneous elements—have separate practices and deities of their own, and are often regarded as not Vodoun at all. Yet the term Vodoun is used in a generic sense to include all these rites, and examination of the beliefs and activities of these cult groups shows that they have drawn in considerable measure upon a common inheritance.

[1] [See Courlander, Haiti Singing, p. 7. Cf. P349, Category 116.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

For many Haitians, the struggle to obtain a piece of ground and to hold onto it is the very heart of the struggle for existence. On Morne l'Hôpital in 1932 I knew a man who owned ten acres of gardens. He had it planted in bananas and plantains, yams, and cotton. He had two cows and a calf and a grove of mango trees and coconut palms. His house was clean, tidy, and by Haitian standards well furnished. Eighteen years later he had less than an acre of land, no trees, no cotton, and no cattle. His family had become impoverished. He had three grown children and virtually no land to leave to them except that on which the house stood. His troubles began with a lawsuit over his land title. He sold his cattle to raise money to pay his court expenses. He lost half of his land as a result of the lawsuit, most of it the part with the good trees. Later, he sold more land to raise "eating money," and then rented it from the new owner. He could not grow enough cash crops to pay the rent and was finally evicted. Today he has not enough ground left on which to grow food for himself and his wife the year round. 423 691 511

The diminution of adequate landholdings has resulted in the disappearances of many of the *lacours* (hamlets) that were a familiar sight a few decades ago. Young people traditionally built their houses near the family homesteads until there were five, six, or a dozen houses in a group. There was a natural family community which shared a common social life and the work of the fields. But as the population increased and the landholdings shrank, young people and old began to move away in search of new land, or work in the cities. Often where the lacour remains it is only as a settlement of landless house renters who work where they may for wages. 178 423 361 166 [596] [621]

Economic refugees from rural areas seek wage work in the cities, returning to their original homes only on special festive days for family reunions. The men find employment as gardeners, servants, construction laborers, and stevedores. Some find work on the sugar and sisal plantations, others in craft industries making straw hats, baskets, shoes, chairs, and mahogany ware for export. The struggle in the big city of Port-au-Prince is for many of them worse than the poverty they left behind. There are the inevitable slums and the constant threat of hunger. It is in the big city that one hears most often the words *moin grand gout* (I am hungry), and least often the words *Bondieu bon* (God is good). 166 464

The land hunger increases, and the overflow of the mountain settlements continues to move cityward. In former years there was a trend toward emigration across the eastern border into the Dominican Republic, which has a population density roughly one third or one fourth that of Haiti. This trend was checked, temporarily at least, in 1937 by 167 175 [648]

167 175 [648] a massacre in the western part of the Dominican Republic which took the lives of an estimated five thousand to fifteen thousand Haitians. The survivors fled homeward, and many were settled in frontier areas by the government. Even so, today there are believed to be some sixty or seventy thousand Haitians still living east of the border. Large numbers of Haitians, particularly men, migrated to Cuba in the years following World War I, in search of better wages in the cane fields. By 1931 there were more than eighty thousand Haitians in that country.[6] But resentment by local Cuban labor and the onset of the depression combined to force the repatriation of great numbers of them. Thirty thousand Haitians came home from Cuba in the years 1936 and 1937 alone.

16 [842] Solution of Haiti's problem of overpopulation does not seem imminent. The obvious answers would seem to be birth control, emigration, wiser use of natural resources, and industrialization. Since the country is predominantly Catholic, and since much social value is placed on children, birth control seems unlikely. And as health facilities become more widespread and infant mortality drops, the pressure will become more acute. Emigration seems to offer no hope, since neighboring islands and countries [311] on the mainland give no encouragement. The Haitian may yet learn to conserve his land and to get more out of it, to stock his lakes with fish, and to [47] bring more fish in from the sea. But this will not suffice. Nothing is left but industrialization, and that seems to be a thing of the far-distant future.

181 167 461 Nevertheless, the character of Haitian life remains essentially agrarian. The displaced peasant, whether he is now a hotel "houseboy," a taxi driver, or a cane cutter, dreams of returning to the land some day and growing bananas, coffee, and cotton that will make him independent. In far-off places such as Havana and New York, Haitians work and save money with the expectation that one day they will come home, buy fifteen or twenty acres of ground, build a new house, and live out their lives as decently prosperous *habitants*. The traditions of the agricultural [178] society, along with Voodoun, continue to play a significant role in the life of the people.

476 241 One such tradition is the institution of the *coumbite*, a loosely knit coöperative work party of neighbors and friends. The word itself probably comes from the Spanish *convide*, or *convite*, meaning "to invite." A member of the group holds a coumbite by notifying his fellow members that on such-and-such a day his fields will require clearing or hoeing. There are several variants of the work gathering. One, called *carré* or *corvée*, meets at irregular intervals and only on special invitation. There are no regular reciprocal obligations in the *corvée;* the workers are

[6] [Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," Journal of Negro History, October, 1940, p. 515. Cf. p. 352, Category 116. --Analyst)

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

Nor is it sufficient to label *Duvalierisme* "pathological" or "paranoid." The roots of this ideology are to be found in Haiti, not elsewhere; its supporters are the product of Haitian times and ideas; and their social identity, while not entirely clear, would probably pose few enigmas if enough data were available.* In order to make clear these assertions, however, it is necessary to look again at Haitian society, the Haitian society Leyburn has described so well, and to reexamine the terms that have been used by him and by others to describe it.

Though the societies of the Caribbean Sea differ significantly from each other, many of them share certain general historical experiences. Unlike the colonial areas of the Old World, these islands were largely populated from abroad, and in this regard they resemble the Atlantic lowland areas of mainland America. However, the colonial history of the islands meant that they would long remain the instruments of policy formulated in foreign capitals. Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and other islands were, during most of their postconquest history, the outposts of far-flung colonial empires, and the design of their societies was conditioned by this dependence and subjugation. As "plantation islands," their agriculture, demography, mode of settlement, and social structure were attuned to metropolitan needs and objectives. Unlike most of Africa and Asia, the Antilles lost their native populations almost entirely, owing to enslavement, overwork, disease, and war, early in the era of conquest and settlement. There remained the vestiges of native traditions, assimilated into the new, growing cultures of the postconquest period. The Indians themselves, wherever they were able to survive, were also assimilated through interbreeding with Old World migrants.

The newcomers came from Europe, Africa, and Asia, bringing with them what they could of their ancestral traditions, but never able to transfer their social heritages as intact bodies of belief and behavior. Hence the cultures of the new Caribbean societies were built up out of elements originating in many different places, while their social forms took shape under conditions of colonial control. The peoples of the islands were able to maintain some continuities with

* One interpreter of the Haitian political scene (Bastien, 1960:845–48) has suggested that Leyburn's analysis of Haitian society as a "two-caste" system greatly influenced local political thinking by strengthening one idea: "the black intellectual must regain political power for the benefit of the country's majority."

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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intrepidity in enterprise is required. It is striking that those foreign
648 captains of industry—mainly from the United States—who invest in Haiti, expect (and often get) governmental guarantees of a sort they could not dream of in their own countries; in this regard, they merely conform to Haitian expectations.

433 Haiti's problems, then, are not simply those that face any less de-
47 veloped country, vast though such problems may be. Nor is it intelli-
178 gent to lay Haiti's problems at the feet of the nation's present rulers. The structure of the national economy has not changed significantly during the past twenty-five years—except that boom years could provide a temporary aura of prosperity—regardless of the philosophy
648 or popularity of the regime in power. If nothing else, the present nadir of Haiti's fortunes demonstrates that United States aid averag-
652 ing twelve and a half million dollars yearly over more than a decade
433 has produced no enduring improvements of any kind. It may further demonstrate that, shockingly poor as the country is, it emphatically does not depend on such aid. As of 1964, the regime in power was operating on a monthly budget of $1,800,000, only $400,000 of which went for purposes other than salaries. In other words, the ministries
[511] do little more than perpetuate themselves unchanged. The yeomanry, living near subsistence level, continues to produce most of what it needs, while restricting its cash expenditures even more severely than in the past. The risks—in terms, say, of public health—of running a society under these circumstances are great; but there is no reason to suppose that regimes of the Haitian sort will be destroyed or improved by a show of popular unrest originating in the countryside.
[369] Difficult as life is for the Haitian countryman, and no people in Latin America lives more poorly, the real pinch is probably being experienced more acutely among the city folk than among their rural fellow citizens. It matters politically, therefore, who these city folk are and what they do.

463 To begin with, there has been a significant loss of professional
167 people, almost all of whom were urban, through migration and exile, especially since 1958. Haitian doctors, dentists, and other professionals are widely scattered today, both in the developed and the less developed countries of the world. Former army officers, journalists, diplomats, businessmen, and academicians have fled political repression, perhaps with the hope of eventually returning to their own country.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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country. The complete enfeeblement of tourism has also led to some migration and to an accompanying decline of services and service "industries" in the capital. These losses have surely hurt Haiti and have damaged its chances for growth as well as its capacity to maintain the health, education, and morale of its people. It is not clear, however, to what extent such changes may have produced a negative political reaction to the Duvalier regime. Urban support for Dr. Duvalier appears to have come from some intellectuals, from some army officers, and from portions of the urban lower classes; but numerically most important were those low-paid but literate and aspiring wage-earners whom the Comhaire-Sylvains (1959) refer to as "Class III" members. These observers have stressed that the Class III group consisted mainly of industrial employees, those engaged in food-processing, hotel services, workshops, and the like. It was this group that the Comhaire-Sylvains credited with the Duvalier victory in 1957, pointing out in addition that "in the small country towns almost all officials, both civil and military, and traders, seemed to belong to this class" (p. 185). If the economic crisis that has gripped Haiti in recent years severely affects the position of this class, the political situation will reflect as much. But the ideology of Class III members—so far as it can be inferred at all—would suggest that one Duvalier may merely be replaced by another. At the same time, the depopulation of those groupings whose members might have led a qualitatively different kind of opposition, during the period of tenure of the United States Marine Corps Mission to Duvalier, may have indefinitely postponed the opportunity for creating a genuinely new political direction.

To state it another way, there are no signs at this time that the regime in power will be pulled down by any organized Haitian opposition. More important, since regimes resting on a narrow popular base have a way of falling without change, there is no indication that within Haiti's present national institutional structure, a genuine opposition to Duvalier-type governments can take shape. This means that even if regime should follow regime in rapid succession, there is little reason to expect that any of them could effect fundamental changes in Haitian society. If such an interpretation is correct, it presupposes an internal equilibrium or stasis so strong that no force for change in half a century has been able to make a politically significant difference.

This pessimistic view is supported by what is known at this time

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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121 tomed to hang our knowledge of the growth, development, and decay of social institutions. Whether the book be classified as social history or as sociology is largely a matter of indifference, for the line between those subjects can hardly be drawn without doing violence to comprehensive insight. To view a people with understanding in the characteristic setting of their institutions—marriage, religion, property arrangements, and the rest—one needs not only a description of their ways, but also a knowledge of how they came to be what they are.

●167 Two centuries ago nine tenths of the Negro ancestors of the modern
178 Haitians were still in Africa, living under the mores of their own localities, and for the most part entirely unacquainted with the mores of the Western
563 World (or, as we ethnocentrically call it, the "civilized" world). First transplanted as slaves to the Caribbean island, then gaining their freedom after some mixture of blood with the white French, the Haitians have built up not only a state but a Haitian culture. The problems to be discussed in this book are as follows:

114 What social structure was set up after the independence in 1804, and by what methods? This question calls for a description of the economic, political, religious, marital, and class organization of the Haitians.

How did this structure function during the next century? There is often a difference between a people's expressed intentions and their ability to carry them out: a state sometimes borrows from some other power a type of constitution which, though logically admirable, does not work effectively under local conditions.

Which structural and functional elements of Haitian life were social heritages from the African past; which were taken over from French models; which were mergings of the two, and which seem to be variations newly produced on Haitian soil?

178 The great leaders of early days, Toussaint L'Ouverture, Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, and Boyer, made an effort to direct Haitian economic and political life along definite lines; however, the pressure of daily life, the necessity of feeding half a million people, most of whom had had no experience in solving complicated problems of any sort, soon made it obvious that logical social structures would not long remain logical. The ways evolved were characteristically Haitian; ways in general unplanned, grow-

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175 were abolished; with such concessions the people must be satisfied.
566 Dessalines tacitly confessed his inability to follow any course but the French colonial system, with modifications introduced by Toussaint.

•167 Many of the blacks, having tasted a moment's freedom, were not
175 inclined to give it up. Before the new order of Dessalines was firmly established, therefore, they ran away with their families into the hills, where they escaped official notice. As squatters they lived out their lives unmolested. By the time they were officially rediscovered, all Haiti had become a land of peasants.

175 At the other end of the ladder from the laborers were the officials,
463 who might be great men or small clerks, members of the entourage of the governor-general or merely overseers of a plantation. In order
555 to keep the vast agricultural economy functioning smoothly it was
647 necessary to have hundreds of agents, directors, clerks, and overseers,
565 each of whom must report to a superior. In this official class there was at least a possibility of realizing an ambition for oneself; there was a basis of comparison; more important, there was some possibility of attracting favorable attention of persons in high places and so of gaining promotion. Inevitably something of the colonial state of mind must have carried over into the new era, so that an ex-slave would consider himself as having risen in the world to be now performing a task which only white men used to do—to be spared field labor and to direct the work of others. Out of this group of petty agents rose a few men of ambition who were later to belong to the élite.

175 Higher officers of state were in a much more favorable position to
565 achieve social eminence. Not only did they perform no manual
647 labor; they were twice removed from that life, since they directed the men who directed the workers. They handled funds. They came
[212] into contact with Dessalines himself. Many former gens de couleur filled these important posts, for the number of Haitians who could read and write was woefully limited.

175 The army was the great power in the country, for the new state
701 was a military one. Since fear of a return of the French required the maintenance of a large standing army,[4] Dessalines made a virtue of this apparent necessity, using his soldiers to enforce discipline among the cultivators. On whom else could he rely for his local administra-
tion

4. Humboldt estimated that the army of Dessalines numbered 37,300, which would be one tenth of the total population. Other estimates run as low as 15,000. Even this figure would be about a tenth of the male population.

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vengeance but the utter extermination of that race."[12] He even ordered the execution of a mulatto woman in Gonaïves because she had prayed for the success of Pétion.

During the latter years of his reign his personal popularity waned somewhat, owing to his relentless insistence upon efficiency and to his increasing tendency to lose his temper. Defections to the South occurred almost daily. The cultivators, comparing their never-ceasing toil on Northern plantations with the reported liberty and leisure of life in the South, continually drifted away. So alluring was the paradise of ease (and poverty) of the neighboring realm that Christophe found it necessary to keep a cordon of soldiers along the borders of his kingdom to prevent desertions. His administration now embarked on actual persecution of colored people. Inflammatory pamphlets were spread abroad, designed to make the Negroes think that the mulattoes were planning to enslave them once again. Under this campaign of propaganda many light-skinned Northerners had to go into hiding.

Despite all discrimination, the important line was drawn between cultivators who formed nine tenths of the population, and aristocrats who, with the army, made up the remainder. The nobility, the directors of landed estates, and the generals directed the activities of other people, so that the colonial prejudice against manual labor was strengthened. Here lay the basis of a persistent Haitian attitude of mind: to work with one's hands is to show oneself a member of the masses; to direct others is the distinction of the upper class. Education, neglected under Dessalines altogether, was fostered by Christophe. He established a few schools, inviting as schoolmasters certain Englishmen familiar with the then popular methods of the Lancasterian system; but since the cultivators were busy on the plantations, only the children of aristocrats benefited by the limited educational system and the social distance between classes was increased.

A French commentator says that Christophe showed unusual insight in devising for his kingdom "the only organization of which an African society was capable," namely, a combination of military despotism with certain benevolent inclinations, and territorial feudalism based upon a nobility created by the King. Actually, it suited not so much the African background of the people, which lay

12. Dr. Jonathan Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo* (Philadelphia, 1837), II, 197.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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To grasp the import of Haiti's problem of
270 over-population one

161 should imagine the number of Vermonters sextupled, working with
433 hand tools and using methods which their great-grandfathers would
171 have considered antiquated; imagine the state with only a hundred
511 miles of paved roads, with no harnessed water power, no substantial fortunes, no middle class; imagine the farms gullied and worn out; ninety-five per cent of the people illiterate and undernourished; the state having no industry and practically no goods imported from New York, Massachusetts, or any other part of the United States. Under such conditions the low standard of living would be readily understandable.

Haiti might also be compared with Mississippi. Less than a quarter the size of that American state, it nevertheless has a larger population. Both Haiti and Mississippi are agricultural, with few towns, although no part of Haiti now has land as richly fertile as that of the Yazoo Delta. The low standard of living of the Mississippi share-cropper, whether Negro or white, is notorious—yet he has access to a few of the perquisites of civilization, whether these be elementary schools or moving pictures; the Haitian peasant lacks even these. In America the undercurrent of feeling is that something should be, probably eventually will be, done to improve the lot of the share-cropper. Certainly there is wealth enough in the country at large to alleviate conditions where they are deemed to be socially unhealthy. Not so in Haiti: the land is poorer, the numbers even greater, the area much smaller; and there is no wealth in the country, nor enough social vision among the upper classes to deal with the relentless increase of numbers.

168 How conceivably might this problem be dealt with? The first answer which would occur to many Americans, namely, birth control, is out of the question at present. Expense would stand in the way of its use by people who hardly ever see money; the peasants, unable to read, suspicious of new-fangled ways, untouched by all efforts to "uplift" them, and with no educational agencies, could hardly be converted to the use of contraceptives; while the Catholic
[795] Church, which until now has not had to raise its voice against birth control in Haiti, would fight any proposal to introduce it as it fought the campaign in Puerto Rico.

167 Another possible answer is migration. This solution many Haitians
648 have tried without prompting. With little money available for

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

travel, the peasants are limited in their migrations to near-by countries; specifically Cuba, which can be reached by sailing vessels, and the Dominican Republic. For many years there was a seasonal migration from Haiti to each of these neighboring countries, where wages on the sugar plantations, although low, have been better than nothing. Native Cubans and Dominicans, however, have quite understandably resented the influx of cheap labor which throws them out of work, depresses the wage scale, and thwarts efforts to improve working conditions; as the tide of Haitian immigration to the two adjacent countries increased during the 'twenties and the depression period of the 'thirties, resentment flamed into action. Murders occurred; ships to Cuba were not allowed to land; workmen were beaten and otherwise persecuted. In 1937 the Cuban dictator, Batista, expelled thousands of Haitians from the island. But the climax was reached in the autumn of the same year when the news gradually leaked out that in the Dominican Republic thousands of Haitians had been murdered in cold blood. It was estimated at that time that as many as 60,000 Haitians were living across the border; of these, certainly as many as 5,000 were butchered or drowned, and it is likely that 20,000 would be a more accurate figure if the whole truth were known.[4] In the world at the present time there seems to be no haven for penniless migrants, particularly illiterate blacks.

Even if Haiti could devise within her tiny budget a way to finance a whole series of public works, the problem of overpopulation would not be solved. Expenditures for internal improvements would merely lessen unemployment for the time being; it would not prevent the people from having large families of undernourished children.

It is easy enough to say that the problem of overpopulation could be solved by a combination of birth control, education, improvement of the soil and of agricultural techniques, introduction of manufacture, and public works projects. Each of these "solutions" is a major problem in itself, considering the limitations of the country.

4. This massacre was protested with all diplomatic vigor by Haiti. The gendarmerie, since the American Occupation the only military force in the country, numbered only 2,500 men and was no match for the military power of the Dominican Republic, so that diplomatic protest to the American nations was the only course open to President Vincent. A joint committee of the United States, Mexico, and Cuba investigated and awarded Haiti damages of $750,000, of which the Dominican government (meaning Trujillo) immediately paid $250,000, promising the rest in installments.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

powers which actuate their charms are variously ascribed to Legba, the Earth gods, and, most importantly, the "little folk" of the forest. Acceptance of the power of magic, however, is by no means confined to Africa, for it is characteristic of all the Old World, if not universal. Hence, as will be seen, the belief in magic held by the Africans who were imported into Haiti met with the corresponding beliefs of the Europeans who were their masters, so that today Haitian magic represents almost a complete merging of these two.

This, then, in briefest survey constitutes the culture which predominantly gave the Haitian people the African elements found in Haiti today. But the types of Europeans and of European behavior with which the slaves came into contact are also important and must next be examined, for it was these European patterns that, under contact, impinged upon the African habits of thought and action in such a way that, merging with the aboriginal customs, the Haitian culture found today was eventually shaped.

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

[History of Haiti in 17th-18th centuries — The Haitian white population]

Petit-Goave on 25 June 1743, complains that it is unbelievable "what indifference the people of these districts have toward spiritual matters."[26] So little attention was paid to the rites of the Church that when the baptism of an infant was to be performed, it often proved difficult to find a godfather who had taken the sacrament, and many children were therefore never baptized. As might be expected, the churches were in a bad state, often having no more than earthen walls and floors, roofed with thatch, and being used as threshing-floors as well as places of worship. The description which Père Labat has given us of a church at Cap Français,[27] and of the manner in which the communicants conducted themselves during such services as were held, shows the decadence of the one religion that had any place among the white inhabitants. The clergy, too, reflected this same decadence. For though the early libertines who posed as priests were later replaced by members of such orders as the Jacobins, the Jesuits, and the Capucins, even this did not end the scandals that, from the first days of the establishment of the Catholic Church on the island, marked its ministrations.

What impression must the Negroes have obtained from their opportunities to observe the life of their masters? What patterns of behavior, what moral codes, what concepts of the way in which the Europeans regulated their own lives and, as officials, regulated the lives of others, must have been stamped on the minds of these Africans? That the present emphasis on the importance of wealth, or that a love of and demand for display, should characterize Haitian life of the cities today is not strange. Nor is it difficult to comprehend how certain other aspects of Haitian life that have so been underscored in the last half-century by those who have written of the Haitians should have developed from this initial stimulus — not to the extent to which this emphasis would lead one to believe, to be sure, but enough to give a basis for the exaggerations which have been published.[28]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

[History of Haiti in 17th - 18th Centuries]

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Some of these charges may be reviewed. One, frequently met with and already mentioned, concerns the general lack of cleanliness and sanitation that marks the cities. As has been shown, this stems directly from the patterns of life which prevailed under French control. The matter of personal morals is also often discussed with anything but praise for Haitian custom. Quite aside from the polygamous tradition of Africa, the influence of which will be discussed later, it is only necessary to recall the example set for these slaves by the sex customs of the Créoles and other Europeans with whom they came into contact to see how the ideal of monogamic union would not be entirely convincing as one to be followed in all its implications. The failure of the Catholic Church to stamp out the African cults in Haiti, and the skepticism with which, as will be pointed out, the motivation of the priests is regarded by the Haitians must have been strengthened by the tradition of the misbehavior of those who were in charge of the religion into which baptism was mandatory, before the days of freedom.

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The instability of Haitian political life, and the venality of judges and other officials have been stressed again and again in the writings of those who have passed judgment on Haiti. Yet one need but read of the readiness of the white colonists to revolt against the authority set over them by the mother country,[39] and of the manner in which during the French Revolution attempts to alleviate the position of the colored and Negro portions of the population were thwarted by the illegal political activities of the plantation slave-owners,[40] to understand at least some of the sources from which direct political action derives its sanctions. One need similarly but read comments in letters and books of the time concerning the corruption of the officials of the colony [41] to conclude that, since her independence, Haiti has in such respects but continued a tradition set by the rulers who governed the country before the Republic was established. Thus if the life of the Haitian

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[History of Haiti in 17th-18th Centuries]

Negro peasant of today presents aspects of harshness or instability, it would seem proper to ask how much of this might be ascribed to the examples which these Negroes were set by their masters, rather than unequivocally to assume inherent racial tendencies to account for them, as is so often done. 17 66 105

This, of course, is far from the whole story. For just as there were large numbers of colonists who were men of integrity and lived in accordance with the best traditions of their French heritage, so among the Negroes were many who sensed these deficiencies in the regime to which they had been enslaved, and held tenaciously to their African traditions, not only in religion, but in social, economic, and political phases, so that, when the time was ripe, these might in some measure be re-established. To approach the matter realistically, it must be recognized that just as the Africans in the islands represented numerous tribes having varying customs, and individual members of these groups possessed varying degrees of integrity and worth, so the French who came to live there and whose slaves learned of French culture from them represented not necessarily the flower of that culture, but were in the main derived from the extremes of French society, the unadjusted and maladjusted lower classes and the aristocrats. What was bequeathed by them to the Haitians, therefore, were those aspects of French civilization which, to the extent that they were accepted by the Negroes, are partially responsible not only for the graciousness, the hospitality, and the generosity of the Haitian of today, but also for the less pleasant aspects of the culture that have resulted from his historical development since independence. 178 105

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"The Mina Negroes have even been seen to recognize princes of their country . . . prostrating themselves at their feet and rendering them that homage whose contrast to the state of servitude to which these princes have been reduced in the colony offers a striking enough instance of the instability of human greatness." [17]

Yet another group of Africans played a significant role in determining the trends Haitian Negro culture was to take. It is a commonplace among those who have studied New World Negro life that African religion has shown greater resistance to white influence than any other phase of African culture. And to explain this one must again turn to native African tradition. The beginnings of the West African monarchies, whose ruling dynasties eventually came to command great stretches of land, were in tiny principalities that continually "warred" against each other. Tradition has it that the most intransigent of the conquered were the priests of the indigenous local cults, who, because of their activities, were punished with what native idiom still terms "banishment." In the New World these intractable priests continued their rites for their fellow-slaves and instructed the next generation so their knowledge would not be lost to the people. Before their enslavement they had been men of power and influence, and this pattern, carried over in all its strength in the New World, continued them and their descendants as natural leaders. Hence, wherever the opportunity presented itself to strike for liberty, they invoked the spiritual forces to reinforce the power and courage of the military leaders who, like them, had been sold into slavery because their countries had been conquered, or because they had rebelled against the succession in their own lands.

The composition of the slave population as inferred from these traditions is thus seen to be somewhat different from

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175 178 567 [177] tinuation of African cultural traditions was not easy, certain things did persist. While the material facts of the life of the slaves was at once subordinated to European patterns — in dress and implements and to a certain extent in housing, for example[23] — yet in other matters they could live as they had lived in Africa. Thus one account of the time, quoted by [161] [533] de Vassière,[24] tells how the slaves carried on communal hoeing, timing their strokes to the rhythms of songs that begged some favor of their visitor, or to songs of praise (and, when the white observer was not present, undoubtedly also singing songs of derision), in the characteristic African fashion that, as will be seen, has survived in Haitian peasant life to this day. Similarly their traditions of cooking, of eating, of fixing the time for their meals (despite St. Mery's comment that "the Negro has no other rule of eating than the demands of his appetite"), of respect for their elders; their attitudes toward death and their rituals of burial, their dances, their songs, and, above all, their non-Christian religious beliefs, all continued to be stamped with the mark of Africa.[25] On the •17 567 other hand, opportunities to learn and imitate French customs were by no means neglected, for the prestige of the masters filtered through the ranks of the slaves until it reached even the field-hands, for the nearer in service the Negro was to the person of his master, the more Europeanized was his behavior and the prouder he was and the more he exploited his opportunities to follow European patterns of habit.[26] Not only did the house-servants imitate French dances,[27] but we are told how in Martinique, for example, all the slaves were taught these figures.[28] In the field of religion, also, the efforts [199] of the Church to capitalize the royal edicts which made baptism of the slaves compulsory were far from vain, at least in so far as the outward manifestations of their acceptance of the faith were concerned. Writings of the time, however, do not omit comment on the discouragement of the missionizing Fathers who seriously undertook this task, because too often

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the baptism of their converts was followed by serious lapses from the faith, especially under conditions of stress.[20]

One of the most revolting aspects of the institution of slavery, wherever found, is the cruelty with which the suppression of human individuality is prosecuted. In this the French colony of Santo Domingo was no exception, as the list of more ingenious punishments, aside from the more usual ones such as whipping, which were devised to keep the slaves in line, demonstrates.[20] What is more important here are the defenses the Negroes built up against them. Recourse to suicide was especially common, and though the popularly accepted explanations for this range between the desire of the slave to destroy himself because he knew he was valuable property of his master, and the conviction that suicide was one way of achieving his return to the African homeland,[21] there is no reason to assume that, following African tradition, the belief that the ghost of a helpless slave could through suicide become powerful for evil and thus wreak his vengeance did not also figure.[22] But equally widespread in all the New World were the allied weapons of revolt and escape.

Both in the experience of the individual slaves and in the history of New World slavery this tendency to revolt began early. In the former case, many tales are told of how on the march to the African coast, or in the slave barracoons, or on board the slave-ship, the possibility of a desperate dash for freedom had always to be guarded against.[23] Concerning the latter, it is not generally known how early in the history of Negro slaving revolts did occur. The Negro slave-trade began with shipments of slaves to Haiti in 1510; the first slave uprising in Haiti, in 1522, thus took place only twelve years after the commencement of the traffic.[24] In the New World possessions of Spain eleven other rebellions are recorded between the years 1522 and 1553, of which those of 1533, 1537, and 1548 occurred in Santo Domingo.[25] During the following century two revolts took place, one at Port de Paix in 1679

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such matters as the passing on of the *loa* in families, the duties toward family dead, and the possible inheritance of food taboos are recalled. Like all these survivals, that of food taboos is not as clear in its expression in Haiti as in its aboriginal setting. Its determination is largely by trial and error, so that a mother, before the birth of her child, not only abstains from eating the foods harmful to her, but later carefully tries these on the child to ascertain their effect. Yet the custom, at best, is a tenuous one. Sometimes, if food uncongenial to a parent has ill effects on a person, "he goes on eating it until he becomes accustomed to it" — though this statement brought forth an emphatic dissent from another Haitian: "Not I! If a food harms me once, I am through with it."

Africanisms are particularly marked in the organization of and attitudes toward the ancestral cult. Today the fear of the power of the dead is as living in Haiti as in West Africa, despite the influence of the Catholic Church in changing concepts of the heavenly world of the dead and the role of ghosts on earth. It is quite true that the outer forms of ceremonialism taken by ancestor-worship in West Africa have disappeared; but when the meticulousness with which the rites of death are carried out, and the institution of *mangé morts* are remembered, it is seen that the spirit of African ritual observances has by no means been lost. African elements have survived even in the services for the dead, now largely taken over by the Church. On the anniversary of death a special commemorative mass is sung in the church, which the family of the dead attend in a body. Before they leave the habitation for the mass, however, animals are killed to provide meat for the feast which follows the Church service, and for the *mangé morts*, which also takes place at the same time. Immediately after the mass a reception takes place at the house of some member of the family who lives in town, or at the home of a friend, where cakes and liquors are served. At about noon, however, family and friends proceed to the habitation, where

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769 a *mangé* is given, and that evening, when the feast ends, dances
● 17 are held. Two or three *tonnelles* are provided, the most important of these being the one where the Martinique cycle, the social dances most beloved by the ancestors, is danced. In one of the remaining two a European *bal* is held, and in the other are the *vodun* dancers. Thus even in connection with a commemorative Church mass for the dead the *mangé morts* and the dancing of African dances are included.

595 The institution of plural marriage, which is socially recog-
177 nized though not legally sanctioned, is obviously African.
178 Though the *placée* is held in respect and her place in society
[554] carries no reproach for herself or her children because of any connotation of immorality, it is of significance for an understanding of the manner of cultural change that prestige in marriage goes with the monogamic union blessed by the Church, and that the "wife"—the woman who is addressed as "Madame"—holds definitely higher social position than the *placée*. Officially the Haitian State is in accord with the position of the Church and recognizes only the European monogamic marriage. Socially, however, African plural marriage is not only tolerated but accepted as a matter of course, and in those instances where plural marriage takes on its most exuberant form, as when men of position have as many as six or seven *placées* in addition to a legal wife, its very size tends to give such a family group, or at least its head, the enviable esteem of his fellow-citizens.

17 Within the family, the deference toward older members
[593] and the duties and attitudes toward parents-in-law are Afri-
[606] can both in form and in spirit. The exaction of guarantees
[583] from a young man before marriage, and the necessity of his proving to the family of his fiancée that he can support her, are perhaps in their generalized form universals, but as found in Haiti show once more a retention of specific aboriginal
[584] traditions. On the other hand, such aspects of marriage as the formal *lettre de demand* sent when a match is arranged, or the

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fact that a family will often strike out for itself, deserting the parental home, show a European independence foreign to native African thought. Yet the arrangement of meal-times, and the fact that a wife rarely eats with her husband, are African, as are the modes of correction, especially the feeling that flogging with a stick is the best disciplinary method. Indeed, the characteristic snap of the fingers employed by the Haitian to indicate a beating is exactly that which is used in Dahomey to signify beheading! In the attitude toward children African traditions have been warped by European custom, which has introduced a certain hardness of feeling that, whatever the cost, children must be brought in line with social convention, together with a resulting harshness of treatment that is anything but African.

Another important facet of Haitian life in which the effect of contact is telling includes art and recreational activities. Perhaps because of the conditions of slavery, or the difficulties of life after independence had been attained, much of these forms of African tradition has been lost, not to be replaced by corresponding borrowings from European sources. Wood-carving, an outstanding element in the æsthetic life of West Africa, is almost entirely absent. Near Mirebalais lives a man who can carve a pipe in the likeness of a human face, but there is no similarity between the products of his craft and West African figurines or masks, and he is thought of as an unusual person whose carving is an interesting but not socially significant avocation. It was stated, though without adequate corroboration, that before the Marine occupation Mirebalais boasted *vodun* drums on which heads " like the ones on these pipes " had been carved. Today the only form of decorative work in wood to be seen is the scroll-work designs which act as ventilating devices over doorways. They are done with the jigsaws of the carpenters, and no fertility of conception or felicity in composition marks these artistically crude efforts.

Other African crafts, which, though essentially utilitarian

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158 while even the hypothesis of an inherited racial psychosis is proposed to account for the phenomenon.

Let us examine these suggestions. An appeal to the natural environment offers but unsure ground, since it is known that not all peoples who live in the tropics experience a comparable psychic strain. Again, if the participation in *vodun* rites and the experience of possession were given as a reason for lack of stability, it would be expected that these changes in behavior would only occur before, during, or shortly after the ceremonies themselves, something that is by no means the case; and, moreover, that this state of " living on nerves " would be shared by all Negro peoples among whom the experience of possession is the commonplace that it is in Haitian peasant religion. This brings us to the suggestion that Haitian mentality may be the product of a racial psychosis. Here it is important to stress that from the point of view of Haitian culture, as from that of Africa, possession as a part of religious experience is both normal and desirable, so that the actions of an individual in such a state are to be judged neurotic only on the basis of standards that are those of a foreign culture. Add to this the fact that it is becoming more and more apparent that skepticism is the only scientifically admissible attitude when the question of referring the behavior of any people to specific racial endowment is raised, and the necessity becomes apparent of seeking other explanations for Haitian psychology than those that have been advanced.

158 ●17 What, then, of this matter of " living on the nerves "? It is an arresting image for the characteristic instability of attitude and emotional expression found in the Haitian, but in attempting to understand the phenomenon, it would seem that we are on the firmest ground when we look to those historical forces which were considered in the first chapters of this book. Stated in general terms, an explanation might be sought in the influences which cultures in contact bring to bear upon the

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individuals who must meet the demands of two traditions which, in many aspects, are in anything but accord. As regards the Haitian, it must be recognized that the two ancestral elements in his civilization have never been completely merged. As a result, his outwardly smoothly functioning life is full of inner conflict, so that he has to raise his defenses in order to make his adjustment within the historical and cultural combination of differing modes of life that constitute his civilization.

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The kind of adjustment that seems to dominate may perhaps best be called *socialized ambivalence,* since, more than any other phrase, it describes this tendency to manifest those rapid shifts in attitude toward people and situations that characterize the responses of the Haitian peasant to such a marked degree that the same man will hold in high regard a person, an institution, an experience, or even an object that has personal significance to him, and simultaneously manifest great disdain and even hatred for it. As outwardly observable, this takes the form of recurring and often rapid changes in behavior toward the object of attention. In attitude, there is vacillation from one emotional tone to another. In its broader implications, as a matter of fact, it is entirely possible that this socialized ambivalence underlies much of the political and economic instability of Haiti, so that, arising from a fundamental clash of custom within the culture, it is responsible for the many shifts in allegiance that continually take place, as it is for the change in attitudes in everyday association.

Since far more detailed studies of individuals must be at hand before the full power of this ambivalent drive can be gauged with any degree of sureness, the problem alone is sketched here. Yet this type of approach cannot but give insight into such occurrences as that of the man whose unwilling possession by the gods of his ancestors was, as described, brought about through the fascination of their forbidden

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into other parts of the New World. Consequently a knowledge of the strains which came to Haiti, of the manner in which they met the situation they found there, and of how the cultural influences that played upon them have worked out in terms of patterns of behavior, should throw light on the way in which American Negroes have met, and are meeting, their own social situation. 182

Thus the study of Haiti offers contributions of particular value in examining the nature and accuracy of underlying attitudes held toward Negroes by non-Negroes, and the attitudes of Negroes toward themselves. One example is the widespread belief about the quality of the cultures from which the slaves were drawn. This holds that the African peoples who contributed the slave populations to the New World were "savages" whose civilizations were of a lower order than that to which the slaves were introduced. Obviously this view is a natural by-product of European ethnocentrism, but its many repetitions have persuaded the Negroes to accept it completely. Nevertheless, the material in the preceding chapters shows that this concept is anything but valid; that the regions of Africa from which slaves were derived comprise the area where the high cultures of the continent existed, where complex social and political organizations and high forms of religion and art were and are to be found; that their rank, if cultures can be ranked, would rather be with Europe of the Middle Ages than with the most simple societies of nonliterate folk. In addition, investigation into Haitian history has pointed out that of these populations it was not necessarily the deficient who made up the slave cargoes. Despite the widespread acceptance of this notion — among Negroes, again, no less than among whites — it has been seen that a considerable proportion of the slaves were upper-class Africans; that at the very least the slave population represented an adequate cross-section of the societies from which its members were derived.[3] 17 182

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Another deep-lying source of the attitude taken toward the Negro concerns his supposed readiness to suffer his slave status. To find the assertion that the Negro is a born servitor, best adapted to caring for those of a higher order in the biological world, it is not necessary to search among the statements of those who, before the Civil War, issued variations on this theme in support of their position. Yet otherwise why did the Negro accept his slave status to the extent to which he did? And, further, just how great was that acceptance? Again, in analyzing the material from Haiti, light is thrown on both questions. Slavery as an institution was one of the few patterns of his new life that rang familiar to past experience, for, as has been seen, slavery — and not necessarily household slavery, but that of the plantation variety which prevailed in the New World — was deeply ingrained in African tradition. Even then, once in the New World, certainly in Haiti and to a far greater extent than is ordinarily grasped elsewhere in the region where slaving prevailed, his acquiescence in his new status was but briefly held, if at all. The tale of slave revolts, beginning but a few years after the original introduction of slaves into Hispaniola and continuing there and elsewhere in the Caribbean, the Guianas, and North and South America until the abolition of slavery, has yet to be told. When it is realized that these rebellions were intermittent throughout the period and took place everywhere in the region; that they resulted in freedom for the Maroons of Jamaica and for the slaves who escaped from the plantations of Haiti before the French were expelled from the island, and in the eventual attainment of independence by the Haitians and, *de facto*, by the Bush Negroes of Dutch Guiana; and that everywhere they held the white population in terror of life and property, the significance of these episodes as pointing the error of current concepts concerning the inner make-up of the Negro is patent. Add to this the revolts of slaves in the barracoons of Africa itself, and on board the ships which

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brought them to the New World — " revolt insurance " was often carried by the masters of slave-ships — and the demonstration of the falsity of this concept of the Negro as a born slave is complete.

These ideas, however, are fundamental to the Negro problem as it exists at the present time. Admittedly, it is no simple matter to change points of view so generally held, especially when to the weight of economic drives is added the force exerted by the depth in tradition at which they lie. Nevertheless, when current attempts to solve the " Negro problem " come to mind, one is struck by the slight attention paid to such factors as these. Simple solutions, rapid in their operation, are almost invariably sought and inevitably rejected when immediate resolution of the difficulty is not forthcoming. Does it perhaps occur, again pointing lessons derived from the Haitian material, that there are forces of unrecognized power at work which derive from the elementary fact not only that, as has been stated, cultures in contact influence one another, but that in contact they exhibit far greater tenacity than is ordinarily credited them?

The cultural heritage of the African, it has been seen, was not a negligible one. In the entire area from which Africans were drawn it was of sufficient unity so that the differences between the behavior of peoples was but a gloss on the deeper resemblances between their traditions. The slaves were brought to the New World, North America as elsewhere, in great numbers, so that many persons from the same tribes remained in contact with each other. Even though this were not the case, no insuperable linguistic barriers existed. For as with cultures, so with languages; though mutually unintelligible, they were so based on the same grammatical constructions, and so presented the same idiomatic expressions, that the language of the masters spoken in the old patterns sufficed to preserve and hand on the traditions of the forefathers.

What of the belief in the United States that nothing of

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people known as the Jangheys, or Dinkas, from the region of the Upper Nile, and Bagandas from Uganda.[1] A few proper names that have survived, such as Ras Médé, suggest that there may have been men from Ethiopia among them. Old slavers' records show that numerous shipments were made from Madagascar and Mozambique on the East African coast.[2] 175 162 567

These transplanted people came from all classes and stations of life. Some were criminals condemned and sold by their own tribesmen; others were prisoners captured in intertribal raids or by Arab slave hunts. There were men of royal blood among them, as well as artisans and tribal scholars. The slave cargoes included leaf doctors, bards, musicians, wood carvers, metalworkers, drum makers, boatbuilders, hunters, and farmers.

In Haiti they were thrown together into a common mold. Shoulder to shoulder in the plantation fields were Bambarras, Anagos, Takwas, and Bumbas—peoples with different backgrounds, different languages, different legends, and different traditions. There were Moslems and so-called pagans, herdsmen and river-boatmen. Each of them brought something of his past and unwittingly poured it into the new amalgam that was to be the Haitian.

And into this amalgam flowed some of the literature, the traditions, the religious thoughts, and the superstitions of Europe. Under Spanish, French, and English rulers the slaves were constantly subjected to ways and ideas that were new to them. They absorbed and digested, and out of the diverse and even contradictory elements they worked out new patterns of life and thinking. This was the strength and resiliency of the West African in the New World. His capacity for adaptation and for remembering what was valuable to him and forgetting what had ceased to be useful preserved his spirit and his pride. 17 567

Among the things that were lost in this vast process of adaptation were the traditions of wood carving, bronze and brass casting, and weaving. Remembered, however, were music, dancing, games, religious beliefs, concepts of nature and the supernatural, folk tales, and legends. It was the outward, material things that were abandoned, and the inward, nonmaterial things that tended to survive.

The slave system itself was largely responsible for the loss of special arts and skills. Craftsmen with specialized knowledge in metalwork were set to repairing wagons and hoes, or they simply wielded hoes in the fields. Wood carvers found no patrons to encourage them to carve images and stools. The colonial emphasis was on mass production of sugar. Other things were valueless. There was little leisure or incentive for the slave to follow his artistic aptitudes.

[1] [The name Ganda survives in Haiti as the name of a deity. Cf. P. 349, Category 116:--Analyst]
[2] [For footnote, See Category 116, P. 349--Analyst]

17 797 567 And yet the things that survived were able to do so, in certain respects, because of the particular brand of thinking of the colonial masters. Why has so much of the African past survived in Haiti when it has been all but obliterated in the United States? The answer lies primarily in the Catholic background of the Europeans who controlled the colony—first the Spanish, and then the French. The Catholic Church regarded every slave as a soul to be saved, as a complete and finished man except for salvation. And though it was an official of the Church who is alleged to have suggested African slavery in the New World,[3] the Church itself took the view that the differences between the slave owner and the slave were only worldly and transient things. The Church did not insist on washing out of the African mind everything that was there. It regarded its mission as that of supplying the single quality that was lacking—salvation. Its attitudes during the past four hundred years in Haiti have been vacillating and erratic; it has often pressed for destruction of the African cults; but on the whole it has been satisfied with conversion.

The Protestant churches in Haiti, on the contrary, have demanded that their converts become new people. They have forbidden their adherents to take any part in non-Christian rituals or other activities—including even the dance. They have presented them with a simple and painful choice.

These were the essential attitudes that prevailed during slavery days in the United States. In the beginning, while plantation owners fought against church activities among the Negroes, the church and the plantation owners were largely united in their war against "heathen" practices. Africanisms which might have either died in due course or persisted were stamped out with Puritan fervor. Significantly, it was in French-Catholic Louisiana that African-style drumming, singing, and dancing survived in the United States to the beginning of this present century.

The Catholic attitude of tolerance-by-necessity in Haiti won for it most of the country's four million souls. Today, many a Haitian who participates in the rites of Vodoun on Saturday worships in a Catholic chapel on Sunday.

Such sporadic efforts as were made to wipe out African memories in Haiti were unsuccessful. Slowly the uprooted slaves found a common denominator. The peoples of different origins developed a common language based on the French spoken by the masters. Their different religious systems merged one into another.

17 181 The necessity for adaptation and amalgamation produced a cultural hybrid of an energetic and vital kind. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the people of African descent in Haiti were a cultural alloy, fired

[3] [Bartolomé de Las Casas. Cf. p. 349, Category 116. --Analyst]

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and hardened and ready to deal with the French, the Spanish, and the English in battle or in politics. They were no longer slaves struggling to cope with a new and strange system. Little by little, imperceptibly they had become true Haitians.

The people of the islands were able to maintain some continuity with
117 the past, even while the new setting and changing conditions led to the development of certain innovations in society and culture. In a few Caribbean societies, Haiti included, freedom brought with it the opportunity to create a yeomanry—an independent, landholding class of agriculturists who produced most of their own consumption needs and also produced commodities for sale. These were "reconstituted yeomen," whose ways of life combined elements from the African and American Indian past, as well as considerable European and Asian influences, in new cultural constellations.

197 Haitian country folk are a particularly good example of such a
231 historical process. The crops Haitian yeomen cultivate include the
241 maize, sweet potatoes, and manioc of the indigenous American Indian
412 (Taino) people, and other cultigens such as papaya and avocado which had been domesticated in mainland aboriginal America; and items like taro and mangoes from Oceania, sesame and sugarcane which originated in the Middle East and India, and vegetables from Europe. Their domestic animals, including cattle, swine, and fowls, are nearly all from the Old World. The chief agricultural tools—hoe, billhook, and dibble, which are well adapted to Haiti's shallow topsoil and hilly terrain—may be European or African in origin; the practice of burning off weeds before planting may be African or American Indian. In the case of each trait—crop, tool, practice—one is confronted by the diverse and entangled culture history of the
197 Haitian people. What is true of agriculture is true of all else. The re-
771 ligion of Haiti is at once two religions rather than one: Catholicism
19 *and* vodoun. Yet these two belief systems form a single ideology for most Haitians, particularly in the rural areas and among those of the urban lower classes. The Creole language is similarly complex in origin. While its lexicon is predominantly derived from French, parts of its syntax are not of Romance origin. For instance, the use of postpositive nominalizing particles and the absence of gender typify Haitian Creole, and are decidedly not Romance in character. Terminology shows much the same; for example, animal names and anatomical terms are mainly French in origin, but some cooked foods carry names of African provenience.

197 The "mixing" of various elements of culture from different tradi-
174 tions is, of course, neither uniquely Caribbean nor uniquely Haitian. All cultures are growths out of the past, and change by losing and gaining traits and by combining and recombining their substance in

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been given through its use to substantiate the many charges of cannibalism in Haiti that have been made. Yet those who, desirous of establishing such cannibalism, quote this passage from St. Mery do not always remember to quote it in its complete context:

> "Some of these butchers of human flesh are also brought to Santo Domingo . . . where, as in Africa, they are the horror of the other Negroes, notably of the Congos, who, because of their nearness to them [in Africa], are most exposed to their cruelties." [4]

These are thus the tribes who were presumably the most important in the Negro ancestry of the Haitians of today. Was there any least common denominator in language which made it possible for slaves fresh from Africa to communicate with one another after their arrival in Haiti? Was there sufficient similarity in their cultures so that this might form the basis for a retention of African beliefs and behavior despite the vicissitudes of slavery? And what were the characteristics of the African civilizations of these people?

The picture of West African life, as it is commonly drawn, emphasizes the great number of small tribal groups following dissimilar modes of life, speaking mutually unintelligible languages, and worshipping different gods. In a very general sense this is not untrue. On the face of it, the number of languages that are spoken in the area from which the slaves were derived would seem to have constituted an effective barrier not alone to any concerted action on the part of slaves, but even to communication between them, especially since in many regions of the New World it was a fixed policy to separate slaves from the same tribe.

Yet behind this semblance of sharp dissimilarities lies a basic unity of language and culture in all of West Africa, so that though languages were and are mutually unintelligible, structurally and idiomatically they are much the same. This

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is why Créole, not alone in Haiti, but also in Martinique, in Trinidad, and in Louisiana, like Negro English in other portions of the New World, shows such consistency in structure and idiom. The slaves, having mastered a requisite number of words in the language of their masters, merely poured them into this mold of their own linguistic patterns and, approximating the phonetic values of such words in terms of the West African modes of speech, thus established a means of communication between one another, no matter what their tribal derivation.[8]

The region of West Africa which furnished the slaves was an area of great and settled political entities. Here were to be found the Fula and Mandingo empires in the western portion of the area, and the Hausa kingdom in northern Nigeria; the Ashanti and Fanti states in the Gold Coast, and, to the east, the kingdoms of Dahomey, of Yoruba, and of Benin; southward, those of Kongo and Loango. In all this vast territory law and order reigned, and regimentation of behavior under the direction of kings and priests was the rule. With this went a discipline that so deeply stamps African tradition that even the many years of European dominance have not been able to efface it.

The social life in this area, as well as its political organization, is to a very considerable extent a unit. Polygyny, the institution whereby a man may have more than one wife, is found in the entire region. Everywhere descent is counted on one side of the family, either the male or the female, and the larger significant relationship groupings that are composed of those who regard themselves as descended from a single and often mythical totemic ancestor are equally characteristic. Discipline rules within the family as well as outside it and is exacted from the earliest days in the life of a child. Needless to say, it is a far cry from this ordered state of society to the disorganized life which the stereotype of the "savage African" envisages.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

Despite the influence of Mohammedanism in the north, there are certain similarities in religion to be found everywhere. Even among the Mohammedans, magic is as potent as it ever was, and as St. Mery correctly observed for his time regarding the Mohammedan slaves, the aboriginal gods have by no means been forgotten. On the west coast and in the Congo, however, pagan religions having a degree of complexity which accords with the complexity of the other aspects of these civilizations are found everywhere. Magic constitutes only one aspect of these systems in which pantheons of deities, each pantheon and each member of each pantheon with its special function, are held to control the destinies of the world and of man. The ancestral cult is another important aspect of West African belief, with the spirits of the dead envisaged as living on in another world, yet alert to manifest power for good or evil among their descendants. Not only in cosmology, but in ceremonialism as well are there patterns that characterize all West Africa. The worship of the gods through the dance, and the phenomenon of possession of devotees by their deities; the place of song in worship, and the special character of this music; the use of drums and other percussion instruments such as the rattle and iron gong in religious rites; these again are elements which all slaves in Haiti, no matter what their tribal affiliations, had in common.

Nevertheless, as one studies Haitian folk-custom and folk-belief today, recognizable survivals of traits from the cultures of all the tribes that have been named are not to be found in anything approaching a comparable degree. Little of Senegalese practice is to be seen at present, while similarly, at least in the valley of Mirebalais, far less Congo derivatives can be discerned than would be expected when the vast number of Congo slaves imported into Haiti are recalled. Practically no traces of Gold Coast or Ivory Coast custom and belief are discoverable; the word "Ibo" appears from time to time, and several Ibo gods are worshipped; Nago deities, as will be seen,

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

manifest themselves in large number. The majority of African traits, however, derive from the geographical center of the slaving area, especially from the region of Dahomey. Even the famous word "voodoo" is Dahomean, as all Haitian writers and some Europeans and Americans have recognized. Whatever its meaning in Haiti at the present time, its derivation is clear. It is the *vodun* of the Fōn-speaking people,—a word which is best translated as "god." Names of gods, and social and economic institutions, point their origin to this same Dahomean source. This being the case, it may be well to give a general description of the civilization of these Dahomeans, as an aid in the interpretation of the various phases of Haitian peasant life which are to be considered in the ensuing pages.[8]

In their basic attitude toward life the people of Dahomey have achieved a blend between co-operation and competition. Living in a society which, from before the time of contact with the Europeans, had a pecuniary base, with its resulting competitive drives, the desire to gain wealth both as an end in itself and for the prestige to be derived from its display is outstanding in native psychology. At the same time, and most particularly in the field of production, co-operative endeavor is to be found throughout the kingdom. As with all West African folk, agriculture is the most important element in Dahomean economy. Other forms of production are iron-working, brass-casting, weaving of cotton and raffia cloth, the making of appliquéd designs on ceremonial cloths, and the manufacture of pottery.

A large part of the heavy labor in Dahomey is done by means of the co-operative groups known by the term *dokpwe*. These associations not only clear the fields, but do the strenuous work of erecting walls for houses and compound enclosures and of thatching. When work is to be done, the one who is in need of the services of a *dokpwe* goes to the chief and arranges for the men to work for him on a given day. If he

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

to speak the special "languages" of their particular cults. One aspect of this initiation,[3] which has been carried over almost unchanged into some parts of Haiti (though not into Mirebalais) is the ordeal by fire, in which the novitiate must plunge his hand into a pot of boiling cornmeal and rest his foot on the red-hot stones which support the pot.

The role of the family deities has already been given; of the third category, that of the personal forces, one finds first of all the soul, of which each individual is conceived as having three. More important is the cult of Fa, or Destiny, which came to Dahomey from the Yoruba, and is a part of a widely spread system of discovering the destiny of a man that characterizes not only West Africa and the remainder of the continent, but most of the Old World. In Dahomey today this end is carried out by assessing the significance of the various permutations and combinations of sixteen palm kernels "thrown" by the diviner. In addition there exist traditionally earlier and less "official" methods of divining, which in the main are those which have survived in the New World. Intimately associated with both the soul and the destiny of man is the deity who is at once a member of the great pantheons and one of the most personal of all the gods, Legba, whose African importance is attested by the extent to which he is today worshipped in many parts of the New World, and by his universality in Haiti. From the point of view of Dahomean philosophy Legba may be regarded as the god of accident, who gives to man a "way out" in a world ruled by an otherwise inexorable fate. Gross in his appetites and capricious, he is, nevertheless, beloved by the Dahomeans, and though his name is usually erroneously translated by the European term "devil," no appellation could be farther from reality. Of particular significance for his role in Haitan life as guardian of the crossroads and of the *barrière* is his place in Dahomean theology, since it is said: "Before the gods can

[3] [i.e., The initiation of devotees by priests into the religious cults of Dahomey--Analyst]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

eat, Legba must be fed" — in other words, Legba is interlocutor between man and gods.

Another figure in this category of personal deities is Dã. Briefly, it would seem that Dã is an abstraction, used to designate anything sinuous, which moves silently, undulates, and cannot be controlled. It is the principle of movement, of energy, of life itself, and, by extension, of fortune. Often spoken of as a serpent, Dã is nevertheless but the principle of mobility. If not cared for, it will weaken, be preyed upon by others of its kind, and a man's fortune will disappear. Why, then, has this Dahomean serpent cult in its Haitian form been given so important a place in the writings on Haitian religion? In the first place, the principle represented by Dã is symbolized by serpents. Again, a myth describes the rainbow serpent to be one of a pair of great snakes, the other of which lies coiled beneath the earth to support its weight, that it may not fall into the sea. But most important of all is the regard for the snake in Whydah, where it is believed to be the mythical animal ancestor of the large relationship group whose center is that coastal city. The rainbow serpent is Dã Aido Wedo, sometimes known as Damballa Wedo, whose importance as a Haitian deity is mentioned in all works which treat of Haitian religion, while Dangbe, so often found in the literature on Haiti, is, however, this Whydah totem which with time has also been adopted more widely. Thus much that has been written of serpent-worship in this region of West Africa — the place of origin of the patterns of most of the religious cults found in Haiti today — is the result of misconception resulting from a failure to analyze this belief to its ultimate significance.

It remains but to speak of magic. Magic in West Africa is not an isolated phenomenon, but is closely integrated with the other aspects of religion. In Dahomey magic charms are sold by professional workers of magic, but the derivation of the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

cial classes to which they belonged, as well as the circumstances of their enslavement, their treatment in Africa before shipment to the New World and during the voyage, their initiation into their new mode of life, and the manner in which they lived as slaves, since all of these facts had considerable bearing on the processes which shaped the behavior of their descendants who now inhabit the island.

The integrated political organization of West Africa has been described, as well as the important fact that the class stratification in that region was almost as fixed and its social implications almost as far-reaching as in France. Even the early writers recognized that not all slaves came from the same ranks of society, just as they understood that there were various ways in which enslavement could be achieved. Père Labat, who lived in the West Indies for many years, listed four classes from which slaves were drawn. First, he says, were those whose punishments against native law had been commuted to perpetual banishment — that is, to slavery " for the private profit of the kings "; second were the prisoners of war; third were those who, already the slaves of native princes or of those persons to whom they had been given by these princes, were sold to meet the need of their masters for money; while fourth, comprising the greatest proportion of the slaves, were those snatched from their homes by the marauding bands of robbers who, with the connivance of native rulers, carried on these raids to satisfy the demands of the European dealers.[15] This classification and others of the period, though generally accepted and repeated by later writers, tells little concerning the ranks of society from which the slaves were drawn, except as this may be inferred. For this one must go to present-day West Africa, where a lively tradition of the slave-trade has survived and offers valuable supplementary information.[16]

In the light of the existing traditions in Dahomey and Nigeria, it is evident that from the point of view of the African, Labat's four classes must be compressed into two — the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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CHAPTER VIII

WHAT IS "VOODOO"?

MORE than any other single term, the word "voodoo" is called to mind whenever mention is made of Haiti. Conceived as a grim system of African practices, it has come to be identified with fantastic and cruel rites and to serve as a symbol of daring excursions into the esoteric. Not only has emphasis been placed on its frenzied rites and the cannibalism supposed on occasion to accompany them, but its dark mysteries of magic and "zombis" have been so stressed that it has become customary to think of the Haitians as living in a universe of psychological terror. 771

What, then, is "voodoo"? "Voodoo," or *vodun*, as it will be termed here, following native pronunciation, is a complex of African belief and ritual governing in large measure the religious life of the Haitian peasantry.[1] It also has an even more restricted meaning in Mirebalais, where the word often simply denotes a form of sacred dance accompanied by spirit-possession or merely a dance which on occasion may take its place along with the *calenda*, the *martinique*, the *zesse*, and other social dances at public celebrations, where an occurrence of possession would be rare and in questionable taste. This latter meaning was recognized by St. Mery: 184 771 635 787 171

"The Calenda and the Chica are not the only dances in the colony which have come from Africa. There is an- 771 535

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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171 other one which has been known there for many years,
771 principally in the west, which bears the name of *Vau-*
535 *doux*. . . . But it is not only as a dance that the *Vaudoux* merits consideration, for it occurs under circumstances which assign to it a place among the institutions where superstition and bizarre practices play a considerable part." [2]

171 In Dahomey, whence the term has come, *vodun*, as has al-
771 ready been stated, signifies "god" and is a general name for
776 all deities. This source of the word has likewise long been
[192] known, as a reading of St. Mery shows:

> "According to the Arada Negroes, the real followers of *Vaudoux* in the colony . . . *Vaudoux* signifies an all-powerful and supernatural being on which depend all the events that come to pass on this globe." [3]

171 Similarly, de Vassière [4] quotes with approval a parallel defini-
771 tion from Peytraud, while modern Haitian writers also em-
776 phasize its Dahomean origin.[5] This meaning of the word had,
192 however, undergone a change in its new home even during
178 pre-Revolutionary times, for, according to St. Mery, the "all-
825 powerful and supernatural being" had come to be a non-venomous serpent that stood as a symbol "for all those who
184 professed this same doctrine." Today in Mirebalais even this
771 identification is a thing of the past, though the prominence
776 given serpent-worship in Haiti by most writers [6] would make
825 it reasonable to suppose that elsewhere in the island serpents are maintained by priests of the *vodun* cult and play an important role in the rites at which the gods are worshipped. Indeed, one priest from Arcahaie encountered in Mirebalais mentioned the fact that in his own temple he kept such a snake. Yet in our valley no worship of serpents as such was encountered, and there were even those who declared that they had no hesitation in killing any snake, though these brave assertions could not be tested. Serpent-worship in Mirebalais

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Serpent-worship in Mirebalais

may perhaps be said to have come to this: Adherents of the African cults refrain from killing the snake, and should they do so by accident, the African custom of giving ceremonial burial to any creature having supernatural importance is followed as an atonement. Where this is omitted, difficulties of so serious a nature are felt to threaten that to prevent them a priest of the cult is called upon to offer up a sacrifice and to beg forgiveness even after the little ceremony of burial has been performed.[7]

184 771 776 825 782 766

Inasmuch as *vodun* flourishes in Mirebalais despite the minor role of serpent-worship, it is evident that in seeking to understand its nature and its philosophy other aspects must be considered. Two historical facts must be kept constantly in mind in making this analysis, for without them, what follows would be meaningless. The first is that *vodun* derives from a background of African theology and ceremonialism. The second is that the Negroes have continuously been subjected to the influence of Catholicism during the centuries that have passed since their introduction into the island.

771 171 177

Yet another point may prove suggestive in providing a useful point of view for an analysis of the *vodun* cult. This bears upon a difficulty impossible and happily unnecessary to resolve in the field study of religion, which arises out of the degree of variation in answers to questions dealing with the same point. These answers differ not only according to the status of the individual in the cult, since layman and priest have understandably different concepts of the functions of deities based on unequal degrees of expert knowledge, but the extent to which an individual has religious interests or is indifferent to them influences the nature of his responses. A fundamental fallacy results from the fact that except where there is an officially sanctioned theology — which makes for dogma, and often for perfunctory worship, in contrast with the living dynamic nature of Haitian peasant belief and ritual — there are no "real" answers to questions in the field of religion. The

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twins and the dead make a single chapter for us." This point of view is supported by a study of the twin cult as found in that part of West Africa from which so much of Haitian culture came, where a single category of the supernatural world, comprising all ancestors, includes both twins and the dead, as well as all others "who have passed through the womb of a woman." As might be expected, the concept is more elaborated in West Africa than in Haiti; but the important point is that in Haiti, though less explicitly formulated, it has persisted.

To worship twins it is not necessary either for a family to number them among its members of this generation, or to have included them within the memory of those living, for it is sufficient if a tradition exists that twins had once been born to some member of the family. If the twins are alive or lived in recent times, sacrifices are given both at Christmas and at harvest time; otherwise only at Christmas. Some families, indeed, worship twins because a *hungan* has divined that their unknown ancestors in "Guinée" had included them. There are still others who decide to worship the *marassa* without the advice of a diviner, because certain benefits are believed to come to those who worship twins, because of their power for good or evil.[1]

The source of this power is vague; one characteristic answer to a question concerning it was: "Their power comes from God. Do we ourselves know how twins are made?" It is agreed, however, that St. Nicholas is their spiritual father —an opinion based on the tale of this saint, held to have been a sorcerer who, in very early times, killed three *marassa* (the twins themselves and the *dosu*, or child after twins) and salted them away in a barrel. The mother of the children came to him to offer up her prayers, and, touched by her sorrow, he resuscitated them, since when he has been their "father." The power of twins, whatever its source, is very real to the Haitians. They are believed to be able to predict rain, for ex-

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845
769
[533]
[539]

M'a pé mandé,	I ask,
Ça wé la si 'ou content?	Are you content with what you see there?

The food is eaten the same afternoon. If the twins are actually alive, everything they wear must be new and they must have identical clothes. At the sacrifice of the January harvest, native rice, cakes, okra, bananas, and one, two, or three chickens, designated by the twins themselves, are offered. The food is put in place, and as songs are sung it is left until the following day, when it is eaten. The worship of [184] twins differs markedly in various parts of Haiti. In Leogane, for example, some have such a ceremony only at harvest time, and have a greater *mangé marassa* every five years, when a goat and a chicken are killed and offered with the usual non-animal foods.

845 Twins stand in a peculiarly intimate relation to each other, [171] as might be expected from the traditional African belief that [184] twins share a single soul, which, as far as could be determined, only survives in attitude in Mirebalais. Should one die, the [769] living twin must put aside a bit of all food he eats, or a small part of any gift given him, for the other. If the twins are both girls, the attempt is usually made to have them betrothed and married at about the same time. If the female twin of a pair is married, she must give a present to her twin brother, and similarly her husband sees to it that his wife's male twin also receives a substantial gift from him as a peace offering, for it is dangerous to wait until the other decides on some overt mischief. The perplexing factor in dealing with twins is that they themselves often do not consciously will the trouble they bring. For example, should the twin of a married woman not feel friendly toward his sister's husband, though he might make a conscious effort to overcome this dislike, his spirit might proceed to use its full power to harass the man in such a way as to trouble the relationship of the couple.

The family then take the other con-
tainer to a crossroad, where it is deposited as an offering for 769
Legba, and its contents are eaten by the dogs, who significantly, in Dahomey are the animals sacred to this deity. Following this, the adults enter the closed room, to feast at the laden table. [782]

Several days after the funeral two gourdes are paid a priest [793]
— "a real one," not a *prêt' savanne* — to chant a *libera* at the [765]
grave, a rite that must be repeated each year on All Saints' Day. Each year, also, food is given the dead, though "not so much as following a funeral." Chickens, beans, rice, and coffee are the principal part of such an offering, for which no priest need be called, as the ceremony is merely to let the dead know that they are not forgotten. Every three or five years, however, [535]
a large *mangé* must be given for all the family dead, and if held on the family habitation, there is social dancing, where such favorites of the ancestors as the *martinique*, the *banda*, the *calebasse*, and the *zesse* are danced.[8]

Differences in procedure mark various modes of death. 766
When a person is killed by lightning, a justice of the peace must be called and the burial is performed at once. Such a one has no "last prayer," because, death by lightning being a punishment of God, it is felt that the dead probably made an oath which he subsequently violated. Those killed by light- [171]
ning or who die of smallpox are not mourned, but no explanation could be obtained for this obvious survival of African custom. If a leper has concealed his disease, mourning is worn for him, though if the cause of death is generally known this is forgone. There is customarily no mourning for suicides, [762]
and never where the regulations of the Church are rigorously applied.

If the dead person was a *vodun* priest or otherwise had 764
strong *connaissance*, steps are taken before his death to "re- 766
move the *loa* from his head" so that his soul will not go under 776
the water, for, as has been explained, such souls are held to 775
be powerful spirits which may cause their family much harm

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764 if, after a time, an expensive and troublesome ceremony is
766 not performed to bring them out and lodge them in a jar.
776 The *hungan* who performs the rite of removing these *loa* is
775 preferably himself a member of the family and is usually left
764 alone with one or two assistants and an elderly relative of the
766 dead, but if the family includes no *hungan,* the one who is
776 called, even though greatly trusted, is most carefully watched,
793 because a strange priest might take for himself the valued gods of the dead, leaving only the weak ones. The *hungan* stands in place and calls the name of the dead. He puts some of the hair of the dead in the jar or in a calabash, with which the *loa* is supposed to go, and, unless another member of the family, nominated to receive the *connaissance* of the dead, is present, the jar or calabash is sealed until these spirits can be "given" to a successor.

766 No special purification is needed for a house where death
[764] has occurred except when the deceased was tubercular or a
[783] leper, when everything except his money is buried or thrown in some unfrequented place. The body of one who has died of smallpox, though washed, is buried as soon after death as possible without being enclosed in a coffin. Those who die of smallpox or leprosy, suicides, or persons shot as a punishment for crime are not buried in the communal cemetery, but in special sections of the graveyard, the lepers and victims of smallpox being separated from the others, for the Church declares these have died of the plague. One who drowns is buried at the riverside where his body is recovered, though if the corpse is not too badly decomposed, the authorities give permission, and the family of the dead can afford the expense of transportation, the body may be brought home. Children are
[561] buried in the cemetery, but, on the principle that "the young
[71] must serve their elders," the funeral of a child is attended only by those relations who are younger than the dead; for in Haiti, as in Africa, it is not held seemly that the young should be followed to the grave by their elders. At the house, however,

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slave, as a "sold *baka*," remained to wreak vengeance upon anyone who dared disturb his charge. 776 454

The reality of the *baka* to the Haitian was made dramatically vivid by an incident involving an old blind and deaf horse. It occurred one night on the principal streets of the town of Mirebalais itself. The horse was first noticed as the sun set, groping his way along, and finally circling the turn of the road. Though people shouted at the animal, he would not give way. As darkness came and doors and windows were barred, the horse blundered into the small veranda of a house inhabited by an elderly woman, her daughter, and her grandchildren. The younger woman cried out with fright when, timidly peering about the side of the house, she saw their visitor, but the older woman, whose age made her fearless in the face of this supernatural danger, opened a window and vigorously attacked the animal with a heavy stick, while he unhurriedly tried to get clear of the blows and finally moved on to the next veranda, and so from house to house down the street. On this night the habitual tranquillity did not settle over the town, and all of the next day and many days thereafter there was quiet talk of the danger that had been abroad, and much speculation of its intended destination. 776 825

The *baka* are sometimes confused with the *démons*, as is seen in the fragmentary information that was obtained about the existence of secret societies, so feared by Mirebalais folk because of their reputation for working all kinds of evil that it was with difficulty that even the names of two of them could be learned — the "Bissago," whose members appear at night wearing horns and holding candles, and "Les Cochons sans Poils." The former, termed *démons*, are believed to be able to change into animals when they do their evil work, a feat which would seem to make them *baka*. The societies all meet in the open country at night, and each has a small drum. They are called together by the beating of one rock against another in a manner reminiscent of the Zangbeto society of Porto Novo, Dahomey. 754 776 575 [202] [171]

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CHAPTER XIII

AFRICA AND EUROPE IN HAITIAN LIFE

With the historical background of Haitian culture and its present-day organization in mind, we may now seek to disentangle the varied sources from which the institutions described in the preceding pages have been derived. The formalized expressions of religion will be treated in the chapter which follows; here the manner in which Europe and Africa have determined the forms of other phases of Haitian peasant life will be analyzed. 121

Even such a simple aspect of peasant life as the house, or *caille*, as it is termed, furnishes an illustration of this intermingling of cultures. In the countryside the typical dwelling is a rectangular structure of two rooms with a thatched gabled roof and walls of woven withes daubed with mud.[1] The rectangular floor plan and the roof are of West African type, but since both of these are also familiar in Europe, the house thus probably represents the coalescence of two dwelling forms which were originally not strikingly unlike each other. The type of thatching is purely African, as is the wall construction, for walls of twilled withes can be seen in West Africa today. On the other hand, what there is of furniture is entirely European. The African stool has given way to the 342 171 352 177

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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to cutting fruit, though seen in Africa, was probably introduced there by the early traders, and all machetes found today in Haiti are imported from Europe or America. The same is true of the hoe, for the short-handled, broad-bladed West African hoe has given way to the European long-handled type, though the blade of the Haitian hoe is somewhat broader than that used in America and Europe. Despite the presence of domesticated animals to draw the plow, this implement has never gained favor in Haiti, nor have recent efforts to teach the Haitian peasant the use of the plow achieved any degree of success. He prefers his African mode of cultivation, to say which implies more than just the employment of a certain implement, since even such matters as the manner in which he employs his hands and feet in the process of planting are included. When the Dahomean plants, for example, he holds a calabash of seed under his left arm, from which he takes the grains with his right hand. As he moves down the rows of newly turned earth, he makes a depression with the heel of his right foot, drops a few grains into this depression and, replacing the earth with his toes, takes a step so that he can repeat the process with his left foot. This is exactly the manner in which Haitians were observed planting in the valley of Mirebalais.[8] Unlike the usage in Africa, however — where the men clear the ground, the men and women plant, and the women tend the growing crops — the European pattern, which places agriculture in all its essential phases in the hands of men, has been taken over almost in its entirety.

The women have retained almost without change the African modes of preparing food. Grain is first pounded in an African-like mortar, with an aboriginal type of pestle, while the shelled kernels are winnowed in a large round basketry tray. The cooking is either done on a raised mud platform in the cooking shelter, as in West Africa, or on three stones, employed as rests for the pots, a method equally characteristic of Africa. In the Haitian cuisine the prevalence of stews, of

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In the Haitian cuisine the prevalence of stews, of dishes fried in deep fat, of the generous use of pepper in seasoning, are all African, as are even the names of certain dishes, such as *acansan*, a Nigerian-Dahomean term which designates the cooked balls of cornmeal. One of the few European intrusions is white bread, while the cassava cakes, also important in native diet, derive from the aboriginal Indian inhabitants.

In its outward forms the economic system under which the Haitian peasant lives seems entirely based upon European pecuniary patterns. Money follows the French system, even to the official use of the French designation, *centimes*, for the smallest parts of the principal unit of currency, the *gourde*. Both paper money and coins are used, and as the result of the Marine occupation American money is as well known as the currency of the country itself. Buying and selling goes on in the accepted European manner, the price of such export crops as cotton, sugar-cane, and coffee responding to the fluctuations of the world market. In many of its inner aspects also, the values of the Haitian are influenced by the money economy taken over from Europe and America.

The conclusion that the economy of Africa has been swept aside by that of Europe needs, nevertheless, to be qualified if certain historical and psychological factors are not to be ignored. It must not be forgotten that in West Africa, long before the period of European contact, a monetary system based on the cowrie shell had been fully developed. The prestige of wealth, the resulting drive to obtain property, the pursuits of buying and selling, and other aspects of a pecuniary civilization were as current in West Africa at the time of slaving, and continue today, as in Europe or in Haiti. When some of the attitudes associated with the economic life are analyzed, it is no simple matter, therefore, to state whether they stem from African or European sources, or both.

One pattern common to both economies, the validation of position through the conspicuous display of resources, has

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556 [177] been largely lost in the peasant culture, possibly because of a prudence dictated by conditions of life wherein evidences of the possession of wealth — certainly in the case of a peasant — were an invitation to those who would despoil him. Only when a family of position gives a ceremony, or when one of its members is married or dies, is the lavishness of its preparations such as to suggest the importance of its place in the community. This does not hold for the individual. Personal [626] [177] ostentation is the more strongly inhibited by the belief that another's envy may bring ill fortune to the one against whom it is directed. In Mirebalais it has almost become a byword that the really substantial citizens look as though they were the poorest. This tradition in no way interferes with the preoccupation with adding to one's possessions, or with the desire to exert the power and enjoy the position that go with a command of large resources, or the will to pass on as large an inheritance as possible to children. In their origin, such drives [177] [178] can be ascribed neither to Europe nor to Africa, nor, for that matter, to the experiences of slavery, but rather to the interplay of two homologous patterns of culture that has produced the economic system and the economic motivations found in Haiti today.

423 [17] [178] In the matter of land tenure, and in attitudes toward private property, African tradition has disintegrated almost completely. Under the characteristic West African form of land tenure, land of a tribe is vested in the tribal head, who allots it to families for use. Trespass upon it is not permitted while it is under active cultivation, and the produce of the land is the property of the one who has worked it. Only palm trees are privately owned by those who have planted them; otherwise land that goes uncultivated for a longer period than is necessary to restore its fertility may be re-allotted. In some regions land worked by an individual is his because of his membership in a large relationship group, whose ownership derives from the power of its ancestors who had lived on this

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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land, whose bodies are buried in it, and whose spirits watch over it. As has been shown in the discussion of property, land in Haiti is owned privately, and, once title has passed, is subject to no alienation, except at the will of the owner — an attitude also held toward property of other categories, as is evidenced by the fact that most of the possessions of a man, particularly his livestock, are marked for identification, and theft is severely punished. Even the disposal of stray animals whose owners cannot be identified must follow well-defined legal procedure, in accordance with which they are held by the officers of the commune for a stated period of time before being sold at public auction. All marks on these animals are carefully noted in the records, so that title to them may be duly established.

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In the organization of production and distribution an African mold, if not full content, predominates. The co-operative work-system, which is so important in maintaining agricultural production, is directly related to comparable groupings of West Africa, of which a distinctive form is the *dokpwe* of Dahomey, described when the African origins of Haitian culture were examined. The *combite,* as an instrument of co-operative labor and mutual self-help, with its tradition of giving no pecuniary reward for work done, but of making the feast which comes at the end of the day's labor adequate return — all these represent pure retentions of African practice. Even more striking is the carry-over in the attitudes which go with these outer forms — the manner in which the participants look forward with pleasant anticipation to taking part in *combites,* the enjoyment which they derive from their group work, and the verve with which the work is done are clear expressions of these attitudes. The role of the *combite*-song in exercising social control and enforcing conformity to local custom is entirely African, as is its function in stimulating work by setting a rhythm for it.

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African, too, is the institution of the market, though in this

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1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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443 171 178 case certain aspects of the historical development of Haiti have doubtless tended to reinforce African custom. Reference has been made to the fact that the great proportion of traders are women, a truism in Africa as in Haiti, where by general rule men are the producers and women the distributors of goods. In Haiti, however, the fact that for many decades men [102] were likely to be arbitrarily impressed into military service by local chieftains when they came to town — particularly in Mirebalais, which had always been one of the centers of Caco activity — discouraged them from attending the markets. Thus African usage has here been reinforced by the historical fact of Haitian political instability. The fact that the proceeds 443 434 562 178 171 from trading belong to the woman who does the trading, and that in consequence women are encountered who, though married, command independent means and exercise full control over their resources, is a carry-over of African tradition and, as in Africa, this gives to women a position in the economic world quite foreign to conventional European practice.

59 61 178 The form of the family as found in Mirebalais demonstrates that the African social grouping which comprises all those descended on one side of the family has largely disappeared there, though it is possible that at least the vestiges of it may [171] have survived in other regions of Haiti. Yet in West Africa, though descent is legally counted on but one side of the family, psychological adherence to the families of both parents is everywhere important. Therefore it is logical to assume [177] that this concept, reinforced by the pattern of dual descent and double familial affiliation of the French, has been retained in Haiti to the neglect of the aboriginal larger groupings, where, as has been seen, not only is relationship counted on both sides of the family, but, more significantly, the right to reprimand and punish is held and exerted by elders in both the maternal and the paternal lines. On the other hand, it is apparent that the feeling for larger relationship groups has not been entirely lost, particularly in the paternal line, when

1: Herskovits E-4, 8 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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especially by the drummers. Experience among other Caribbean Negro cultures and in Africa itself has failed to reveal greater skill in calling forth intricate rhythms from batteries of drums than can be found at any Haitian religious gathering. The enthusiasm with which a man takes his place at a drum, the manner in which he loses himself in his drumming, the skill with which he maintains the time of his complex beats in common with two other drummers and those who manipulate the rattles and the iron, bespeak long training and a passionate devotion to the art. The same is true of dancing. The best drummer, the finest dancer, hold positions of esteem in the community, and on occasion their fame will go beyond the valley, an occurrence as unusual as it is valued. The excellence of the drumming and dancing and the concomitant artistry in song can be understood when one considers the age at which training is begun in these arts. At Mirebalais an infant of no more than two years has been seen to dance creditably, while a young boy of six gave a demonstration of drumming that spoke eloquently of his promise as a drummer of talent. Before every *vodun* dance the boys take over the drums while the younger girls dance to their rhythms. They are watched with a critical eye by their elders, who from time to time correct them or praise those who do well.

The accompanying musical forms are almost entirely African in their rhythmic structure, but European influence is traceable in their melodic line, which varies from unchanged European folk-melodies to purely African songs. In the use of the falsetto, however, in the statement of a theme by a leader and its repetition by a chorus, and in the countless modulations introduced into the song, the singing is entirely African, as are the postures struck by those singing.

The importance of the dance is apparent from the large range of dances. Of *vodun* dances there are the *avalou*, or *yanvalou*, a word meaning supplication in the speech of Whydah; the specialized steps for the various Radá and Pétro gods; for

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

CHAPTER XIV

CATHOLICISM AND VODUN

In considering the origins of Haitian religious belief and ritual, those African elements which have been retained in their aboriginal purity may be first presented. The importance of the Dahomean and Nigerian elements in the *vodun* cult are self-evident when the deities derived from the peoples of these areas are detailed. It has been stated that the name of one of the important "companies" of gods, Rada, is a contraction of the word *Arada*, which is the name of the Dahomean town Allada. This group includes Damballa Wedo, Aida Wedo, Aizan, Legba, Agwe Woyo, Agweto, Sobo, and Sobo-Bade, which come directly from Dahomey, where they are members of the heavenly pantheons; and Agasu, Siligbo, and Loko, who are sacred ancestors of Dahomean relationship groups. The term *Dahomey* itself also figures in the name of such *loa* as Erzilie Freda Dahomey, where Freda with all consistency represents a corruption of the name of Whydah, a Dahomean seaport. The Nago, or Yoruban peoples of Nigeria, have a religious system which parallels that of Dahomey, so that many Rada gods, such as 'Batala, the Yoruban "great god," or Ogun, the Yoruban deity of war, or Shango, the god of thunder, are of Nago origin; Badagri, on the other hand, is the name of a Nigerian town. A prominent *loa* derived from this general area not found to be exclusive to the Rada group is Gedeonsu, or Gede, a Dahomean totem. Of the Pétro group, Wangol (Roi

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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776 d'Angole) is obviously Angola, while the designations Ibo
●171 and Congo speak for themselves. Simbi is a Congo deity, as
are Bumba and Lemba. Finally, in the categories of gods im-
[162] portant in the regions of Haiti other than Mirebalais are the Loa Sénégal, and the Loa Mondong, both of which are names of African tribes mentioned in the early literature as contributing to the Haitian slave population. But all recognition of geographical names as such has disappeared, and they have been transmuted into designations of gods.

192 Outstanding here is the word *vodun* itself, already indicated
199 as Dahomean, where it is a general term for "deity," though in Haiti its use has become more restricted and the symbol for deity has become the word *loa*, or *mystère*. The origin of the designation *loa*, which has been claimed to be a corruption of the French *roi*, is debatable. It is true that in West Africa certain deities are regarded as kings, yet this derivation is not convincing in view of the fact that in the *vodun* cult as found in Haiti at present or as described in earlier sources the *loa* are never generally referred to as kings, something that tends to strengthen statements that have been made to the effect that the word comes from the language of a Congo tribe.[1] The source of the root *hun-*, which figures in the terms *hungan*, *hunsi*, and *humfort*, is clear, for in Dahomey it is a synonym for the word *vodun*. *Hungan* and *hunsi* are even more definitely traceable than *humfort*, since the ending *-gan*, the Dahomean word for chief, designates the priest as the chief of the spirits, and *-si*, "wife," is employed in the sense of "wife of the god" or his devotee, in Africa as in Haiti. The female counterpart of *hungan*, *mambu*, cannot be definitely assigned, but may be of Bantu derivation, and is certainly an African word.

776 Other uncontaminated Africanisms can be discerned in the
179 attitude of the Haitians toward the *loa* and in the ceremonies
178 for them. One of the most characteristic is the inheritance of
424 *loa* in families, a direct survival of the belief which not only
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1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

makes for deification of the family dead, but constitutes the oldest ancestor of a relationship group one of the great gods and thus causes families to give primary allegiance to a restricted number of deities. The most striking aspect of this tradition preserved in Haiti is that all ceremonies must be given by family groups, and at them only members of the family may with propriety become possessed. Possession itself, and the elements which constitute the possession complex — the use of the drums, the rhythms associated with particular gods, the importance of songs in calling the spirits, the mode of worship through specific dances for specific deities — these make up another series of Africanisms. In the dance itself the use of iron to sound basic rhythms for the drums, the outer form and function of the rattle, and the fact that the circle of participants always rotates in a counter-clockwise direction, are equally African. The modes of behavior to be observed as possession comes on and the psychological release that follows it both derive from the same source, as do the beliefs that rituals must be held on the days sacred to the particular god being worshipped.

Another retention of African tradition is a belief in the importance of sacrifice. It will be remembered that it is held to be more essential to "feed" the gods than to dance for them. This is also the tradition of all peoples of the region from which the slaves were derived, and in a sense reflects the very immediate relationship that obtains between Africans, or Haitians, and their gods. Since in both regions each deity performs the double role of doing good for those who worship it properly and harassing those who neglect it, the importance of giving adequate sacrifices to avert evil is evident. In both Haiti and Africa, however, these may differ with the wealth of the individual giving the offering, with the number of persons who contribute toward the ceremony where offerings are given, or with the seriousness of the situation which the deity is being asked to remedy. That the gods permit such varia-

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

171 178 782 tion is a further comment both upon the human traits ascribed to them, and upon the realism with which they take cognizance — as only African gods can — of the financial position of their devotees!

171 178 776 78 It is not only in the immediacy of the Haitian gods to their worshippers and in their human qualities, however, that these beings have retained African traits, for in the full reciprocity that must prevail in the relationship between deities and their followers is to be seen a point of view that is entirely non-European. Between man and the gods the rule of *quid pro quo* must always be in operation; and this rule may only be regarded as but another contribution of Africa toward Haitian religious ideology. While this reciprocal giving flavors all aspects of worship whether it be of the *loa*, the dead, or the twins, it takes a yet more prominent, and more familiar place in the field of magic, since here the *engagement* owes much to European belief, though the element of reciprocity is much more emphasized than was ever the case in medieval European diabolism.

178 776 794 The psychological values of the *vodun* cult, especially the general tone found in the feeling toward the terms *Guinée* or *Rada*, perhaps most convincingly show the attitudes that aided in the retention of things recognizably African. For while the [184] Pétro gods are by no means viewed as altogether bad, or are always held unwelcome, the fact that in Mirebalais, as in Haiti generally, the Rada gods are those least feared, most desired, and in connection with whose cult wrongdoing is most rarely present, is of the greatest significance, especially when the related fact is recalled that the Pétro gods are the more powerful in the matter of evil magic, while the Rada deities are said to exert their power to protect their devotees from the dark forces that may be set in motion against them.

178 776 In attitudes toward the gods, then, in the names of the gods themselves, in the manner in which they function in the lives of Haitians, and in the importance of the ceremonial con-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

Je crois en Dieu,	I believe in God,
Oui, Santa Maria.	Yes, St. Mary.
Santa Maria,	St. Mary,
Qui sorte nan Guinée.	Who came from Guinea.
Je crois en Dieu,	I believe in God,
Oui, Santa Maria.	Yes, St. Mary.

Another for the Virgin of Allada, sung in Leogane, is as follows:

Santa Maria la Madaleine,	St. Mary Magdalene
Prié pou' loa yo.	Pray for their *loa.*
O Allada-e,	O Allada-e,
Sonné une sonne pou' moin,	Ring a bell for me,
Pour m'allé.	So I may go.
M'dit, Allada-o,	I say, Allada-o,
Sonné une sonne	Ring a bell
Pou' les pitites nagé.	For the drowned children.

Of these elements, the portraits of the saints, or *images,* offer one of the most vivid instances of the mingling of African and European elements in Haitian belief, for they are the outward symbol of the psychological reconciliation that has been effected between the saints of the Church and the African deities. This is nothing peculiar to Haiti alone. In West Africa, wherever Catholicism has obtained something of a foothold, certain pagan deities are regularly identified with saints of the Church, and the same phenomenon is found in Cuba[8] and Brazil.[9] This identification of saints with the *loa,* whether initiated as a ruse against the detection of African worship or emanating from a reasoned analogy, would seem in Haiti, at least, to act as a device to achieve an adjustment between two conflicting systems by emphasizing the resemblance between Catholic saints and African nature deities. The importance of the *images* as symbolizing the reconcilia-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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776 [821] rainbow, and this is called an *arc d'alliance* between him and Aida Wedo, his wife, whose characteristic dress is blue and [171] white. Sobo, who in Dahomey is the god of thunder, is also believed in Haiti to give thunder, though he is not thought to live in the sky. As in Africa, his symbol is the ram. Aizan lives in the water, and is a favored deity because he gives his devotees the power of healing and of divining.

Erzilie, a *loa* of considerable importance, is envisaged as a pale, trembling woman who also inhabits the water. She constantly changes her dresses, of which she has many. All agree that she is a fabulously wealthy woman, who wears golden chains about her neck and has many rings, a characterization derived from her identification with Mater Dolorosa, whose chromolithographs depict her with many rich ornaments. As a Rada *loa* she "eats" the same food as Damballa, and wears white, like this other god, but has Friday as her sacred day. In her less pleasant manifestation of Erzilie Gé Rouge, the red-eyed one, she is a member of the Pétro "squad," and is held to be the wife of Simbi d'l'eau, with whom she is believed to get on especially well, since they "eat" different foods. Simbi, who is worshipped on Tuesdays and inhabits the mango and calabash trees, is said to drink heavily, however, and occasionally becomes so boistrous in his cups that he destroys the furniture and otherwise makes himself so objectionable that Erzilie is forced to leave him until he becomes sober.

[171] Ogun, in Haiti as in Nigeria, is the god of war. The Nigerian Shango is also found, though the Haitians conceive Shango as a *loa* who acts as the servant of the Ogun deities, [782] particularly Ogun Badagri and Ogun Batala. Ogun "eats" [822] red cocks and red beans mixed with rice, and his color, red, is worn by his devotees. To this fact may be referred the custom [114] of the Caco warriors who fought against the American Ma- [648] rines in 1918–20 to wear red as their distinguishing color, something referred to by Wirkus (pp. 22 ff.), though he

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

CHAPTER XI

[1] Compare Parsons (I), 173–4, where the cult of twins is discussed and some of its rites described.

[2] Price-Mars (I), 35, mentions this as a power believed to be held by twins.

[3] The phrase "cult of the dead" as employed here must be sharply differentiated from its misuse by Seabrook (82 ff.).

[4] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 34.

[5] Price-Mars (I), 34, speaks of the custom of always burying charms with the dead.

[6] Wakes have been described by Seabrook, 89–91, and others, but in such a manner that it is difficult to dissect out the reality of what was witnessed from the imaginative elements.

[7] Cf. Wirkus, 221–3. The custom of giving the dead food at the grave, which he describes, is not followed when burial occurs in the Mirebalais town cemetery, nor, seemingly, elsewhere in the valley.

[8] See the description of a commemorative rite for the dead in Price-Mars (I) 148–50.

[9] This is a rule followed in West African practice.

CHAPTER XII

[1] An interesting attempt to account for this is found in St. John, 230–1, where he speaks of the "two Vaudoux sects," one good and one evil.

[2] S. Mery, i, 36. The term *gede* is almost entirely absent in later writings, the more sensational *wanga* (*ouanga*) being preferred.

[3] Léger, 55, note 34.

[4] Cf. Dorsainvil (I), 171.

[5] No better summary of this could be had than that in Parsons (I), 179, written after a single séance with a *ganga*.

[6] Pp. 324–31.

[7] Mr. J. C. Trevor informs me that during a recent field-trip to the Virgin Islands he discovered books of magic in common use, obtained from a Chicago dealer.

[8] It is not without interest to note that in the case reported in a Port-au-Prince newspaper and reproduced in facsimile by Seabrook, 334, concerning a woman from the commune of Mirebalais accused of sorcery, the name of the woman was *Azéman*.

[9] Cf. Parsons (II), 596.

[10] See above, pp. 94–5.

[11] The closest correspondence

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

to the Haitian *baka* found in the New World are the *bakru* of Dutch Guiana, who in turn derive from the "little folk" of West African belief, beings that are always important in making magic. See Herskovits, M. and F. (IV), 105–7.

[12] Dorsainvil (I), 130, mentions this rite.

[13] Notably by Seabrook, 92 ff., who made great capital of the concept and purported actually to have seen these beings! Parsons (II), ii, 592, Tale 77, I, reproduces a Haitian's account in Créole of how a Sorcerer goes about ensnaring a victim to make of him a *zombi*.

[14] Parsons (I), 178–9.

CHAPTER XIII

[1] Price-Mars (II), 96 ff., gives a detailed description of the peasant house. The beehive-shaped hut mentioned by Craige, 36, is not found in Mirebalais, though the valley is but a short distance from Hinche, of which he was writing. Seabrook, 18, also describes the interior of a peasant house.

[2] Charlevoix, ii, 42.

[3] St. John, 153.

[4] Seabrook, 104 ff., devotes some space to a discussion of *pénitence*, but so changes its meaning to the Haitians that it is quite useless in making a serious comparison of data.

[5] See the discussion in Dorsainvil (I), 150, concerning other retentions of African motor behavior in Haiti.

[6] Craige, Seabrook, and Wirkus, all give lively accounts of cock-fights.

[7] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 1–15, for accounts of the manner in which stories are told in Haiti. It is to be noted that the African belief that a tale must not be told during the daytime persists there.

[8] A large collection of Haitian folk-tales has been published recently by Parsons (II), ii, 470–596.

[9] Audain has published what is perhaps the largest collection of Créole proverbs; his work, however, is unfortunately out of print.

CHAPTER XIV

[1] Dorsainvil (I), 158.

[2] Exceptions to this statement must be made in the case of the careful study of the relationship between Catholicism and *vodun* by Price-

all aspects of the natural and supernatural. But the reputable cult priest does not dabble in "black" magic—the kind that maims or destroys human beings. One who does so is said to "work with two hands": one for the loa and one for evil. (The expression *servi dé main*—"serving with two hands"—is also applied to a cult chief who deals with deities of more than one "nation.") Many a cult priest in making his ritual flour drawings on the earth holds his left hand behind his back and draws with his right, giving testimony that he "works with one hand" only.

Each cult priest maintains his own cult temple, or *hounfor*. There are no cult officials above him, as there is no formal religious organization beyond the hounfor itself. Within his own special community he is therefore the chief religious functionary, the apex of an intratemple social organization. Under the cult priest, ordinarily, there are two grades of assistants, and below them two classes of servitors.

The cult priest is usually referred to as a *houngan*, a Fon (Dahomean) title signifying "spirit chief." Sometimes he is called *gangan* (a Bantu word meaning "conjuror" or "doctor")[2] or *capla*. He also is known by the title *bocó* or *bocor*, which seems to be derived from *bocono*, the diviner or priest of the Dahomean Fa cult.[3] The bocor is, in fact, sometimes referred to as a *divineur*, and he is regarded by some Haitians as a clairvoyant and a practitioner of magic. As in Dahomey, the bocor in Haiti foretells fate through the throwing of shells or chips, much in the manner of the secular game *mayamba*. He also reads destiny with small sticks or ashes. In earlier days the cult priest was sometimes known by the Yoruba name *babalao*, a title which has been corrupted to *papaloi*. A female cult leader is known as a *mambo*. She is presumed to have, in a general way, the same powers as the houngan, though in some quarters her *connaissance*, or "understanding," is not regarded so highly, and her status is believed to be somewhat lower.

Directly under the houngan is his chief assistant, the *laplace*, and perhaps a little below him on the ladder, the *mambo caille*. The laplace is regarded as the vice-houngan, and he assumes responsibility for running the hounfor in the absence of his chief. The mambo caille, a woman, runs the cult center in the absence of both the houngan and the laplace. One step farther down the ladder is the *houngénicon*, who acts as a sort of chief of the main body of devotees. These high-ranking assistants to the houngan are sometimes called *badjicans*, or keepers of the altar.

The servitors of the cult are known as *hounsi*, or "spirit wives," a name that was given to certain categories of cult servants in Dahomey.[4] There are two main groups of hounsi: *kanzo* (those who have passed through a ritual fire test) and *bossale* (those whose loa are wild or untamed). The

[2] [Footnote appears on p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]
[3] [Gorer, Africa Dances, p. 129; Herskovits Dahomey, II, 208ff. Cf. p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]
[4] [Foot note appears on p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

in the services. In the court, the bases of four sacred trees . . . are surrounded by circles of masonry [low brick walls]. These *reposoirs* are inhabited by the *loa* Legba, Ogoun, Loco and Saugo.[5]

There is little in Aubin's description to suggest that hounfors were much different a half century ago from what they are today. He errs in identifying the "thunder stones" solely with Damballa. But his eye for detail was acute. In 1950 a mambo in the neighborhood of this hounfor described by Aubin affirmed that some of the loa stones and old coins which he mentioned are still to be found among the properties of a hounfor in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. Others were lost in one of the cleric-inspired raids which despoiled cult temples of drums and other paraphernalia about fifteen years ago.

Many services are held outside the hounfor and the peristyle. Some rituals, such as animal sacrifices and "talking to the loa below the water," may take place some distance from the cult buildings. Indeed, various Vodoun ceremonies may be held at waterfalls, at the seashore, in sacred groves, in ordinary homes, in a boat at sea,[6] or under a sacred tree.

The rites of the hounfor are almost without number. They are associated with the supplication or conciliation of virtually countless deities, each of which has his own special service. There are services in multitudinous combinations and permutations for the dead, for twins, for albinos, and for unborn children. There are ceremonies for the elevation of hounsi and for initiation, smoke and fire ordeals, and tests of other kinds. There are *mangé loa* (feasts for the deities) and *mangé morts* (feasts for the dead). There are services for the sick, for the crops, and for the harvest. In one context or another, Vodoun relates to nearly every aspect and phase of life—and its counterpart, death. Since every region, every locality, and, in fact, almost every hounfor has developed its own ritual out of the common materials, it is possible to see hundreds of ceremonies without ever seeing precisely the same one twice. Yet the common elements bind them all together.

One such prime element is the possession, the "mounting" of the human body by one of the deities. Possession is a psychological phenomenon common to the rites of many cults throughout the world. It is known in Asia, Africa, Europe, and America. It is not the unique property of the African and his Haitian descendant. In the United States it is a commonplace not only among certain Negro cults but certain white cults as well. The United States Negro had ample West African inspiration for his seizures in the church and at the baptism. The intellectual meaning of these seizures has changed, as have their outward forms to a measurable extent, but their emotional content has not altered.

[5] Translated from the French of Aubin, En Haiti, pp. 57-59. Cf. p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst

[6] [Footnote appears on p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]

his "horse" may trample in glowing coals, plunge his hands in boiling oil, 776
or play with red-hot iron bars. For Ogoun Chango is a fire-eater—a deity 787
of the forge and of battle. The deity Legba is characterized as a limping old man. A "horse" possessed by Legba may cavort about on a kind of cane-crutch called a Legba stick. Each loa has his distinctive mark. As the Haitians say, "you learn about the loa by watching his horses."

In addition to having homes in Africa or below the water, most loa 776
have special residing places in Haiti, such as stones, caves, trees, waterfalls, 778
or springs. One may come across a boulder or a bamboo grove sacred to [782]
a certain loa, and food offerings are likely to be seen there. Many loa are identified with some specific variety of tree and will "inhabit" all such trees throughout the country. Loa Calbassie, for example, lives in the calabash tree, and Loa Général Brisé in the chardette tree. Offerings to [782]
these deities are set out underneath the tree or hung in its branches, and services may be held around the trunk.

Loa also live in the old Carib and Arawak celts which are found from time to time. These "loa stones," as they are called, are identified by their forms and their ability to pass certain tests. Some Haitians declare the stones must be able to "whistle," to perspire when blown upon, and to "talk." The loa stones ordinarily are passed on from one generation to another, in the hounfor and in the peasant hut alike. In this way the loa who inhabit them are inherited. Sometimes, but rarely, stones are sold; [432]
disposing of a loa stone requires an elaborate ceremony to guarantee that [782]
the seller will not be injured by the loa, who is likely to feel "wounded." In such a ceremony the loa is fed and placated and asked to go his way in peace. The loa stones are sometimes called "thunder stones," in the belief [171]
that they were hurled to earth by the deities Kebiosu, Sobo, and Chango (all of whom had similar functions among the Arada and Yoruba peoples of West Africa). The stones are cared for by their owners with the greatest reverence.

Loa are acquired by individuals in various ways. Many Haitians hold 776
that every infant is born with a *maît' tête*—a spirit who is "master of the head." In this light, no individual is without a loa, although the deity may never manifest interest in the individual by an act of possession. A man may acquire a loa in the course of his life, although in that event the original maît' tête must be retired from his head. The "inherited" loa are usually not the personal deities but the special protectors of the household or the hounfor and are known as "loa of the house" or "family loa."

Should a man acquire a new loa to replace the old as his maît' tête, he 776
must undergo a ceremony known as *lavé tête*—the "washing of the head." 789
The old loa is retired and sent away, leaving the field clear for the new

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one. Sometimes a loa who is making life too hard for a devotee will be retired without a replacement. The "washing of the head" must be accompanied by ritual safeguards, and all possible circumstances must be taken into account by the officiating cult priest. There are many stories of people who became mentally deranged as a result of the removal of their loa from their heads.

The mait' tête must also be removed from the head of a person who dies. Should this not be done, the spirit of the deceased will go to reside "below the water" and may cause trouble for the family. This loa is usually transferred to a special jar as a temporary resting place, and later perhaps into the head of another member of the family.

Though the loa is a powerful ruling force in the life of the individual, the human "horse" has controls over his deity too. He may reproach or admonish his loa for bad behavior or for failing to protect him. He may expose the loa's irresponsibility in public through the use of songs in religious rites. And though the loa is frequently encouraged to "enter," steps may be taken to restrain him from possession. This is called *marré loa* —"tying the loa." A woman may "tie" her loa by fixing a hairpin in her hair in a special way. A man may do it by placing his hands in cold water.[2]

Nevertheless, the loa are always lurking in the background. They are a constant and dramatic element in the religious life of the people. They may sometimes be controlled by the houngan, but they are an authority stronger than the priesthood. They give advice, courage, consolation, and status to their followers. They add much to an otherwise hard and ungenerous environment and evoke remembrances of Africa from which the Haitians' ancestors were uprooted. They can also cause concern and anxiety; for the loa are not always benevolent, and they are frequently unpredictable.

Many of the loa are ancient deities, sib-founders and ancestors who loom out of a misty, half-forgotten past. Nananbouclou, Legba, and Ayida Wèdo have been known for many lifetimes in Dahomey. Chango, Ogoun, and Loko were old spirits in Nigeria before the first slave ships sailed from Africa to the New World. Their names and many others in present-day Haiti come from an ancient lore. They recall places, tribes, and old kingdoms from Senegal in northwestern Africa to the heart of the Congo. They are a bond which holds the people of Haiti to Africa. In the mountains people sometimes say, "Haiti is the child of Dahomey," or "Haiti is the child of Guinée." The gods divide their time between their Haitian and their African children.

Yet in some respects the Haitians' concept of their loa is no longer purely African. The African religious patterns have been infiltrated by the lore

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

of the Catholic Church and fused with old folk beliefs of Europe. In Dahomey, which was the wellspring for much of Haiti's culture, there was no supreme deity quite like the one introduced to the slaves by the missionaries. There was a pantheon of gods with Mawu and Lisa at the top. They were children of a common parent, Nananbuluku. None of these deities was strictly comparable to our idea of a supreme being. Nananbuluku survives in Haiti as Nananbouclou or Nananbélécou, one of many loa. Among the neighboring Yoruba the high god was Olorun. Like the Dahomean Mawu and Lisa, Olorun was quite remote from the lives of men. The gods who were invoked and placated were the several hundred *orisha* created by Olorun. The nearby Ashanti people had a simpler pantheon, with the sky god Nyame supreme among them.

In the present Haitian concept of the supernatural, God is at the very apex of the pantheon, though he is distinctly of another order. His power as the supreme source of all things is fully recognized. A Haitian song, associated with Vodoun ritual but of probable recent origin, goes:

> C'est Bondieu qui voyé moin, quand li vlé moin l'apprend. [Ex. 37]
>
> It is God who sent me, when he wants me he'll take me.

Another song, from the Guinée service, goes:

> Oh, Kitta, oh so'ti nan dleau, li tout mouillé!
> Oh, nen point houngan passé Bondieu nan pays-ya! [Ex. 36]
>
> Oh, Kitta comes out of the water, he is dripping wet!
> Oh, there is no houngan in this country greater than God!

Although it is recognized, or at least stated, that God is a supreme force, God is not regarded as the entire supernatural force of the world. In many Vodoun services the houngan may invoke, as separate categories of the unseen, the loa, the dead, the *marassas* (twin spirits), and God. Haitians do not have a consistent schematized picture of the supernatural world. God comes first, but (as in West Africa) he is less immediate than the loa. He is identified with destiny; yet within the framework of that destiny man's lot can be bettered or worsened through dealings with the dead, the baka and lou-garos (demons and vampires), and the cult priests.

In many of the folk tales of Haiti, God appears as another character in a cast which may include as protagonists animals, loa, Christian saints, and ordinary men and women. One such tale is about a visit which all the dogs decided to pay to God. They started off through the woods together, but one of them was distracted by the smell of carrion. He left his friends for a brief time, found the carrion, and ate some of it. Then he hurriedly joined his companions again. Together they came to God's house and were admitted to the parlor, where they sat around making polite conver-

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

called St. Patrick and sent him down to stop the ceremony. St. Patrick approached the hounfor and sang:

> Factionnaire ouv'é bayè pou' moin passé!

And again Bocor Zandolite came to the gate and sang:

> Wa wa ilé londja londja!
> Bocor Zandolite wa wa ilé londja londja!

He took St. Patrick by the hands, pirouetted him around, and a loa came into St. Patrick's head, too.

Another week went by, and when St. Patrick didn't return, God sent St. Michael. The same thing happened to St. Michael. God then sent St. Anthony, and later he sent St. Peter. But when St. Peter didn't return, God became very angry indeed. He hadn't slept for weeks. So he decided to go down himself and put an end to the affair. He approached the hounfor singing "Factionnaire ouv'é bayè pou' moin passé!" And Bocor Zandolite replied as he had before. He took God by the hands to greet him. He shook hands downward three times, then he pirouetted God to the right and to the left. God suddenly staggered and reeled from one end of the habitation to the other. The drummers beat a special salute, and the singers sang loudly and clapped their hands, for God had a loa in his head.

This tale appears to relish the superiority of the loa over God. Yet there is no sense of sacrilege. Although the Haitian concept of God is that of a supreme force, and a source of good, the Christian deity also has some of the attributes of paramount gods in certain West African religious systems which make him less remote and even, on occasion, somewhat fallible. He figures in Haitian lore very much like the Ashanti sky god, Nyankonpon, who has dealings with animals and human beings and is sometimes outwitted by them. Although Nyankonpon has the power to dispense favors, justice, and punishment to mortals, he himself lives within, rather than superior to, a well-established physical system. His marvelous deeds are only slightly superior to those of other, lesser gods, or of sorcerers, or of the trickster Anansi. In fact, in one Ashanti tale Nyankonpon finds himself very much in the same situation as God in the Haitian tale, being forced to dance to the music of the trickster's drum.

The Christian saints, too, have been incorporated into the Haitian system, and they also have been syncretized with Vodoun elements. They have become identified with various loa according to their most obvious characteristics. St. Patrick, because he is always pictured with snakes, has become one with Damballa and Ayida, who are also symbolized by snakes. Èzilie Fréda, the female loa characterized by purity, has become

one with the Holy Virgin. St. Jacques has become one with Ogoun, St. George with Linglessou, St. Anthony and St. Christopher with Legba, guardian of the highway, and St. Nicholas with Marassa Trois. In northern Haiti the word *zange* (from the French, *les anges*—the angels) sometimes is used synonymously with loa or mystère. As for the saints, they are sometimes identified with one loa, sometimes with another.

No one in Haiti knows all the loa. Some of them are so ancient as to be nearly forgotten. Others are spontaneous creations or revelations on the part of a possessed person. Some loa names may be the result of a devotee's seizing upon a word or phrase in a religious song and imparting to it the concept of a loa. Sometimes a word in a phrase of *langage* is taken to be a loa's name, and sometimes agglutinated Creole words become the name of a loa.

The possibility of frequent additions to the list of loa is heightened still further by the general illiteracy of the Haitian people and the lack of a stabilizing influence in the written word. The Creole language has marked regional differences. Furthermore, change of consonants or vowels is a commonplace occurrence, so that a single loa's name may have several forms. One may well wonder whether Aza, Adja, and Akadja were not originally a single individual. Nevertheless, in the Haitian scheme they are now different personalities.

There is one more complicating factor in identifying loa or compiling a comprehensive roster—the use of multiple names. In addition to the names by which they are generally known, many of the deities have a variety of nicknames. Some of these nicknames are in Creole, some appear to be of West African provenience. The deity Agwé, for example, is frequently called Coqui-nan-Mer—Coqui-in-the-Sea. A loa may have four, five, or even more such nicknames. Sometimes short forms are used. Damballa may be called Da, Sobo may be called So, Azaka may be called Za. In addition, some deities have "secret" names, which theoretically are known only to the priesthood and the inner circle of servitors. Multiple naming and the reservation of certain names for special occasions appear to have West African precedents.

In the naming of the loa no neat and methodical system is apparent at any point. The "surname," or what may be in some cases a generic designation, may appear first or last. One may hear Ogoun Chango or Chango Ogoun, Général Brisé or Brisé Général, Congo Savane or Savane Congo. (This is characteristic of everyday speech. A former president of Haiti, Nord Alexis, is often called Alexis Nord.) The "surname" can be a description of "tribal" or "national" affiliation, regional provenience, character and temperament, or an indication of function. Thus we find

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Boulicha Nago, or Boulicha of the Nagos; Èzilie Wèdo and Èzilie Doba, possibly from Wèdo and Doba in Dahomey; Tijean Pied Chêche (Tijean Dry Feet), a loa of bad character, "dry feet" signifying malevolence; and Legba Grand Chimin, or Legba of the Highway. 776 171 552

Identification of loa is often made difficult by the use of the generic or family title only. The term Nago covers all the loa associated with this "nation" (Nago Piment, Amine Nago, Boulicha Nago, etc.), but in a song or service any one of them is as likely as not to be referred to simply as Nago, with no clue to his exact identity. Each listener takes the name to designate the Nago loa with whom he is most familiar, unless possession occurs and the loa is otherwise identified by the behavior of his "horse." 776 552

On the whole, it appears that there was in the beginning a strong awareness of regional origins. There are names among the cult pantheons which indicate Senegal, Dahomey, Nigeria, Congo, and Angola origins. Many loa bear the names of African towns. Among the Ogoun family of loa, for example, are such regional designations as Badagry and Jèkkè, the first being a town in Nigeria and the second in Dahomey. It is clear that a detailed geographical knowledge of certain West African regions would considerably illuminate a study of Haitian loa. 776 174 552

Local shrines, too, doubtless enter into the naming system. Badagry is the name of a town in Nigeria, and it is also a Dahomean word designating the structure in which young men used to be circumcised and initiated into the secrets of warriors. In this particular light, the loa Ogoun Badagry might be regarded as the deity of that particular ritual center. 346 174 776 552

In discussing the complicated relationship of their loa, Haitians sometimes say: "There are seven of everything. There are seven Marassas, seven Ogouns, seven Èzilies. There are seven brothers and sisters in every family of loa." Or they say something such as: "There is only one Legba, but there are seven. There is only one Ogoun, but he has many moods and names. There is only one Èzilie, but she has seven faces." This concept is also held by the Arara (Arada) cult of Cuba. It is interesting to note the extent to which duplications and new generations of loa have been set up into family households in the most literal sense. Those families are still growing. In the Gèdé family I have counted more than thirty seemingly distinct individuals (see Appendix I).[1] Herskovits mentions a number of others, and still more have been cited by other writers on the subject. When I pointed out to some Haitians that the Gèdé family numbered far more than seven individuals, they were unable to account for the situation. Other Haitians took the vast army of Gèdés as a matter of course. The Ogoun family, too, is large and growing. Twenty-seven Ogouns are listed in the compilation in Appendix I. Still more have been recorded elsewhere. 776 801

[1] [See p. 317ff., Category 116.-- Analyst]

[P. 30]

4. Death Rites

775 776 The community of the Haitian is one that extends far beyond his immediate family and his village, for it takes in not only the various loa but multitudinous dead relatives and ancestors. Some Haitians believe that the dead live in close proximity to the loa, in a place called "Under the Water." Others hold that the dead have no special residing place. But it is the view of many that a dead person may eventually become a loa in his own right. How this happens is not entirely clear. Under certain circumstances the spirits of the newly dead do not go quietly on their way but [769] remain behind to annoy and harass the living. They must be buried with suitable ritual and properly placated throughout the years; otherwise their activities and influences will be unpredictable. Many of them, under special conditions, become almost indistinguishable from loa. And a few, in the course of time, become minor deities in the pantheons. The main loa of the Pétro cult, Dan Pétro, formerly was believed by some Haitians to be a houngan of the eighteenth century who had been buried without having his own loa removed from his head. There are African precedents for [171] deified ancestors' becoming deities. Indeed, some of the great *vodouns* and *orisha* of the Dahomean and Yoruban pantheons in West Africa are believed to be deified clan ancestors or great kings.

775 171 Whether they achieve the status of loa or not, the spirits of the dead must forever be coped with. This Haitian view of the dead is essentially that held in many parts of West Africa. Speaking of West African belief in general, Maurice Delafosse noted:

> After a creature dies, only his spirit remains. It survives with the same character, the same personality, affections and hatreds as during his lifetime, but it can no longer command the vital breath. It becomes all the more powerful on escaping from the confines of its material envelope, since it no longer needs to direct and control the functions of the body, and is not itself regulated by the vital breath. . . . These spirits are all of the same nature. They are invisible but can see and judge everything that happens. They are easily angered and mete out severe punishment to anyone

offending them. They are also vain and capricious, can be conciliated by prayers and gifts, and propitiated by sacrifices. This animistic religion . . . includes many variants of the worship of countless spirits of men's ancestors and innumerable spirits of nature, all ranking as gods.[1] 775 171

Another observer, speaking of the Bapindi, the Babunda, and other related tribes of the western Congo draws quite similar conclusions:

The people of these tribes recognize a supreme deity, Nzambi, creator of all things. But this supreme spirit is too distant from men to enlist active worship on their part. The basic worship is to the ancestors of the clan. The clan is in effect a community consisting of all the living and the dead descended from a common ancestor. Towards the dead it is necessary to make offerings as a mark of deference when one wishes to consult them on problems. The dead are spoken to through the chief, who uses a special drum for this purpose. The dead have the responsibility of protecting their descendants.[2]

Among the Bantu people of South Africa, also, the worship of ancestors is based upon the belief that when a man dies he continues to influence the lives of his relatives remaining on earth. He is as interested as ever in descendants who remain "outside on the earth," but indifferent to members of other communities unless they bear them some grudge. The characters of people who die are not changed by death. They are as prone to jealousy in death as in life, and as rancorous toward descendants who wound their vanity, flout their wishes, squander their bequests, or infringe the ancient laws and customs of their clans; but they are also as willing as ever to help those of their lineage who treat them with becoming respect and obedience.[3] The affairs of mankind in general do not concern them; they are exclusively interested in their own family and tribe, and without their help and guidance their living descendants cannot hope to flourish. As long as the moral code is strictly followed, they confer blessings and abundance; but if offended by any breach of custom, they can also send drought, cattle plague, tribal or personal disaster, sickness, or death.[4] 171 769 775

This deeply rooted concept of the relationship of the family to its ancestors continues to motivate the Haitian in his observance of services for the dead. 769 775

In addition to the ordinary dead with whom the Haitian has to deal, there are the spirits of twins, known as *marassas*. As there are feasts for the ordinary family dead, the mangé morts, so there are feasts for living and dead twins, the mangé marassas. Twins are believed to have special powers, and even when alive they are given more than usual consideration. The spirits of dead twins are especially willful and capricious, and unless properly placated they may cause illness and misfortune. Once each year, on dates fixed by local custom, special services are held for the marassas. 769 775 845

[1,2] [Footnotes appear on p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]
[3] [Willoughby, The Soul of the Bantu, pp. 88-89. Cf. p. 350 Category 116. -- Analyst]
[4] [Footnote appears on p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

764 invoked the loa, the pallbearers brought the body forward as though to go straight ahead, but then they began to lurch and sway as though an invisible force were pushing them around. They veered as though to take the right turn, and again they lurched and staggered. At last they turned toward the left, and in this direction they found the road clear. The houngan thanked the Master of the Crossroads, the widow took her place at the head of the procession, and it proceeded on its way to the cemetery.

793 764 766 In the services for a dead houngan described by Simpson, the body is placed in a coffin, which is carried to all the places sacred to the loa of the hounfor before being taken to the cemetery. First it is taken to the sacred trees where the loa reside, then to the sacred spring "whose waters have cured many sicknesses which physicians had pronounced incurable . . . [823] The bearers of the coffin circle the spring several times. The coffin is swung [toward] each of the four cardinal points." Afterward the procession continues its way to the burial ground.[17]

766 174 761 But the treatment given to the dead may vary according to the manner in which they died. Leyburn notes, for example, that "a person struck by lightning . . . would have no ceremonies at all, for lightning is an act of God."[18] It may well be that the Haitian rationale for not holding ceremonies for an individual killed by lightning is that God has already held the final ceremony. But in the Haitian mind all deaths are, in the last analysis, acts of God, even though magic, poison, or accident may have played an immediate part. Why, then, should the corpse struck by lightning be treated so differently? The answer would appear to lie in a custom 171 766 of the Yoruba of dispensing with all burial rites for persons killed by 761 lightning, such persons being considered enemies of the lightning deity [174] Chango. In Dahomey, Herskovits reports, the same attitude prevails in regard to persons killed by lightning:

> If a person is killed by lightning he . . . stands convicted by this fact of some grave crime which has incurred the displeasure of the god of the Thunder Pantheon (Xevioso). A person so killed is never buried by his family, but the body is turned over to the chief priest and cult-members of these deities. It is believed that a man killed in this fashion remains upright until the chief priest questions him and forces him to confess the crimes he had committed to be so punished. No one touches any [768] of the belongings of such a man, not even his money. The house in which he lived [784] is allowed to go to ruin, an *azan* of palm fronds being placed around it to guard [824] against anyone entering it. The moveable property of such a man, his clothes, his stools, and his dishes, are thrown away at the crossroads . . .[19]

766 The burial of a Haitian who dies of smallpox likewise differs from that of one who dies a "normal" death. The victim of smallpox is buried without a coffin in a segregated part of the cemetery. The reason for this lies

17 [Simpson, Op. Cit., p. 161. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]
18 [Leyburn, The Haitian People, p. 156. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]
19 [Herskovits, Dahomey, I, 398. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

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beyond the obvious fear of contagion. In his study of Dahomey, Herskovits notes: 766 [171]

> . . . Small-pox is believed to be sent as a punishment for grave offenses in the eyes of these [the Sagbata] deities, and it is taken to indicate that either the dead person himself or a member of his family has committed some heinous crime such as the practice of black magic. A person who dies of small-pox may only be buried after permission has been given by the chief priest of the Earth cult.[20]

Thus, in Haiti, though the connections with the past are clouded, it is clear that victims of lightning and smallpox are treated as a special class of criminals or malefactors. 174 753 761 766

Ordinary malefactors such as malevolent criminals and murderers—until recent years, at least—were not buried in the common graveyard. They, too, were segregated at the periphery of the cemetery or buried at the edge of a trail or road where the traffic would not permit them to rest and where their graves would be under constant surveillance. The roadside grave sometimes was also the fate of a person killed by lightning. 766

That these special burials are related to the Dahomean and Yoruban concepts of retribution for crimes against the deities is supported by the similarity of treatment accorded victims of lightning and disease and common criminals. In Haiti, Herskovits observes: "Those who die of small-pox or leprosy, suicides, or persons shot as a punishment for crime are not buried in the communal cemetery, but in special sections of the graveyard," the suicides and criminals being set apart from the others.[21] 761 753 766 [174] [211] [681] [762]

Graves found near the seashore, lake shores, or riverbanks frequently are declared to belong to persons who died of drowning. 766

Approximately nine days after a person's death, the "last prayers" are said, and the soul of the deceased is presumed to have departed from the house. Once more, under the tonnelle outside there are games, storytelling, and singing. On this night, however, there is also drumming and dancing of a special kind. Usually it is the Juba, or Martinique, dance, which is believed to be specially enjoyed by the dead, and it is the older people, rather than the young, who participate. These festivities are believed to give cheer to the deceased and to "encourage" him on his way. On the next night comes the mangé mort, the feast for the family dead, a ritual which continues periodically through the years. 765 53 [795] [524] [769]

Sometimes in Haiti you may come upon an old tomb or grave before which a dish of specially prepared food has been set. This is part of the mangé mort ritual. 764 769

A man may make provision in advance of his death for the rites which follow his burial. He may designate special animals to be killed, leave 763 764

[20] [Ibid., pp. 397–398. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.—Analyst]

[21] [Herskovits, Life in a Haitian Valley, p. 214. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.—Analyst]

in a circle around the two boiling pots. On the seventh circuit of the course, the houngan stopped him at the first pot. The houngan grasped the man's free hand and, bending down, dipped it into the boiling oil. There was no visible indication of pain. They moved to the second pot, and the man's hand was dipped again. They proceeded again to the first pot, where the dipping was repeated, then back again to the second pot. The neophyte's hand entered the boiling oil seven times in all. He made no sound, showed no resistance, no reflexes. Then the houngan took him back to the hounfor. It was all over. After three days of isolation, they said, he would be kanzo.

The houngan peeled an orange, while everyone crowded close to watch. In it he found a two-gourde note. He peeled another orange and found in it a slip of paper with the name of a woman on it. She came forward, and everyone laughed. She was an old woman, the oldest of the hounsi. The houngan held the two-gourde note between his teeth. The old woman took the other end of the note in her teeth, but she had to kiss the houngan before he would let go.

The ritual of brulé zin, or kanzo, is of unmistakable West African origin. Herskovits has described a ceremony in Dahomey which in many details could easily have taken place in Haiti. The Dahomean rite was in honor of the gods of the Thunder pantheon. Here, too, we find a pot of boiling palm oil, in which are the sacred dumplings: "When the fire had finally subsided and only a faint column of smoke issued from the pot, the initiate came dancing toward it, thrust her hand into the boiling oil, and lifted out a dumpling. . . ."[8]

Family Rites at Léogane

These services for family ancestors took place in the mountains above Léogane at the ancestral home of my friend Libera Borderas. They were conducted on the grounds of his grandmother's house. The ritual began with dancing. Against the wall of the house sat the three drummers with their Arada drums. Near them, leaning against the wall, were the flags of the family loa. Also near by was a long high table serving as a makeshift altar called the *jé*. In the very center of the table in a clean white dish lay eight loa stones—old Carib artifacts. The stones were identical in shape, all of them perfectly symmetrical, resembling small, pointed cigars. In the *pierre-loas* lived the family deities, and much of the ceremony was built around them. The stones had been bathed and polished in oil for the occasion. Set around the plate of stones were numerous small *cruches* (French, *cruches*—clay water jugs), glass bottles, and earthenware jars which also contained loa. On the low bench before the table, seven dishes

[8] [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 165. Cf P 351, Cat. 16.—Author]

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The yam 244 17 192

itself was transplanted from Africa, where in old times as well as in modern it was a staff of life among those who lived by agriculture. The word "yam" is known throughout large parts of Africa, crossing language lines and forests. It signifies the big root on which the African is so dependent, and it also has the general meaning of "eat." In Senegal it is called *nyami*, while across the width of Africa and in the upper Nile region it is called *nyam*.

In Haiti the yam is a tie with the past and a symbol of fertility. When the yams are plentiful, there is food for the winter months and a sense of well-being. When the yam crop is poor, there is insecurity and even hunger. Whatever occurs, lurking in the background is the shadow of the family ancestors, for it is they who have the power to enhance the crops or blight them. This is the concept around which the mangé yam is built. 244 79 182

The annual harvest feast, on the twenty-fifth of November, is rooted in the need for placating the ancestors, so that the dead will insure the fertility of the fields. Before the feast, no yams may be eaten, for the crop must be "baptized" first. Should this rule be violated the yams will spoil and those who eat them will become sick. The precise form of the mangé yam varies from region to region. Sometimes it is held on the premises of the cult chief for the community at large. More traditionally it is held on the family *habitation*, with a houngan in attendance. It is felt that an important obligation rests upon those who have wandered away from the homestead to return for the occasion. For the fate of the family depends to a large degree upon the successful appeal to the vast host of the ancestral dead, and the solidarity of the living in this effort is regarded as vital. Even if one belongs to a Christian sect which proscribes Vodoun, he is obligated and ready to come, for the welfare of the family is paramount. Catholics, Adventists, and Protestants alike participate. As the Haitians say, it is an affair for all who eat yams, and that means all Haitians. 244 79 184

Yams are washed and prepared for eating during the service. They are cut in small portions, placed in dishes or calabash bowls, and offered to the dead, who have prime rights. All categories of the dead are fed—those who are remembered, those who can be recalled only by name, and those whose names are forgotten. The dead of Haiti are invoked, then the dead of Africa. The marassa dead are fed from separate gourds or bowls, and a special table is set for the ancient dead who move slowly because of their age or infirmities, and who may take a long while to arrive at the mangé. A share of the yams is offered to the family loa. Then the members of the family receive symbolic portions. There is singing, drumming, and dancing, and sometimes ritual baths are taken. Afterward, when the yam feast is ended, the crops may be gathered, stored, and eaten. 244 79 189

243 707 118 769 In the Artibonite Valley, where much rice is grown, a similar ceremony takes place before the rice is gathered from the fields. In this ceremony it is rice that is shared with the family ancestors, who have first rights, and with close friends who have aided with the planting. This feast is called [1252] *mangé diri*, or sometimes *goûté diri*, the tasting of the rice. Small amounts of rice are taken from the fields, cooked with red beans or Congo beans, or perhaps made into dumplings. The farmer's friends and relatives gather [524] while the food is still cooking, and play games such as *wari* and *trois-sept*. [538] The children play *gage* games and sing songs, and sometimes a *mal' conte*—a storyteller—comes to entertain them.

When the food is finally ready, the family ancestors are given their share. The farmer takes a calabash bowl of the rice and walks around the house grounds calling upon his immediate ancestors to accept their share. He drops a little food on the ground for the remembered dead, for the unknown dead who preceded them, for the Haitian dead, and for the dead of Africa. He also drops small portions for the dead twins, the dead albinos, the deformed dead, and the dead who have lost limbs, and for the distressed dead who have been improperly buried, or who may not have received the feasts that were due them. Afterward, he offers food to those who died of drowning, or who were lost at sea and never heard of again.

Each course is shared with the ancestors. The farmer takes a pitcher of water, spilling a little here and a little there until the dead have quenched their thirst. He also gives a little of everything to the family loa. Then the calabashes are set out on a bench or table reserved for the dead, and this food is not disturbed. Food for the marassas is set out separately on the ground in three small *conis*, or gourd dishes.

The family ancestors whose good will has made the harvest possible having been taken care of, the food is now shared among the extended family and the friends who helped in the fields. Later there are prayers [782] to the loa, the saints, and God, led by the houngan or a prêt' savane. To [776] finish the affair, there may be Juba-type dances for the older people, while [535] the children watch or play *gage* games.
[524]

Only after this service are the farmer and his family and his *coumbite* (mutual labor group), if he belongs to one, free to go out and harvest the rice.[4]

243 243 796 769 171 These feasts of the rice and yam harvests are not of New World origin. Similar harvest festivals for yams or rice are held over a wide area of West Africa. There, as in Haiti, the fundamental concern is with the family ancestors, whose good will must be constantly nourished so that the rains continue to fall, the crops flourish, and human beings remain fertile. Among the Ashanti of Ghana, for example, the yam and rice harvests are

4 [Account given by Jean Ravel Pintro. Cf. P. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1953) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

celebrated with elaborate rituals for the dead. As in Haiti, great importance is laid on the presence of all living descendants, whose numbers are calculated to influence the ancestors' behavior. And as in Haiti, the first yams and the first rice are offered to the dead, and only after the family ritual does the family divide the crop.[5]

243 244 796 769 171

Service for the Assotor Drum

The *assotor* drum is the largest and most sacred of all Haitian drums. Around it is built an impressive and elaborate service known as the *mangé assotor*, which, according to local traditions and circumstances, may be held as often as every three years or as infrequently as every twenty-one years. The period between mangés always consists of an odd number of years. A houngan from Jérémie declared the service might properly be held every three, five, or seven years. Another cult priest in the Cul-de-Sac Plain said it could be held every seven, seventeen, or twenty-one years. The assotor is known as the *plus grand moune* (the most venerable "man") of the hounfor. However, few cult centers possess an assotor. "Assotor c'est fort bagaille, c'est pas zaffai tout moune" (The assotor is powerful, it isn't everybody's affair), Haitians say. This is what a man from Jérémie tells about it:

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"The assotor is the greatest of all things in the hounfor. The Rada drums are only for the Dahomey nation. The Congo drums are for the Congo nation. The assotor is a man of Dahomey, but he is for all nations. It is for all loa—Pétro, Congo, Bumba, Dahomey. The assotor belongs to Dahomey, but when there is a great service the assotor is the host to the loa of every rite, the loa of Haiti and of Africa. When the assotor is played, the loa are awakened everywhere. Loa who have been forgotten by the Creoles (Haitians) will come to the service and mount people, and when the loa have gone, many people don't know what loa has been riding them. Some ancient spirits from far away come only to the assotor service, and when it is over they aren't heard of again.

534 796 778 184 787 [116]

"The assotor drum is not for small things, it is for great occasions. For some people there are no occasions in their whole lives great enough for an assotor service. When all other things have failed, it is only then that the assotor is called upon.

534 796 778 787

"If a big houngan should have an assotor drum, he can have only one, and it is the chief of the hounfor. All other drums are its servants. You can make an assotor, but it is not necessarily an assotor. It may look like an assotor and not be an assotor. To be an assotor it must not only have the shape of an assotor but it must be accepted by the loa. There was a houngan near Jérémie who made an assotor and held a great service with it,

[5] [Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana. Cf. p. 351, category 116. -- Analyst] [115]

The importance of water in Vodoun has a fundamentally West African character. Among the Yoruba and the Ashanti and in Dahomey, for example, water rites are a significant aspect of religious ritual. Herskovits notes the frequency of religious pilgrimages to streams in West Africa. 171 291 823 296 778

In one instance, at Abeokuta, a bedecked procession of worshipers left a shrine atop a high hill, followed a long path to the riverside over two miles away, and returned before the ceremonies could be carried out at the shrine of the god. On one occasion, in Dahomey, the bed of the sacred stream ran dry was "filled" from nearby wells so that this water could be ritually endowed for use in an especially important ceremony. Among the Ashanti, pilgrimages to Lake Bosumtwe and other sacred bodies of water regularly occur. And it is on such occasions that the spirit of the river or lake or sea manifests itself, by "entering the head" of the devotee and causing him to fling himself, possibly possessed, into the water.[8]

So it is also in Haiti, where possession at the river's edge may cause the devotee to leap into the river. At Saut d'Eau, possessed persons plunge into the waterfall without regard for their safety, being in the care of the loa who have mounted them. 823 787 778

Into this water complex the Christian rite of baptism has been easily absorbed, providing merely a new act of veneration for water and its properties. In the Haitian mind baptism is not far removed from the *lavé tête* ritual, the washing of the head, or the *rafraîchi tête*, the "refreshing" of the head, both of which are acts in propitiation of the loa.[9] So related is the baptismal concept in the Haitian mind, that the term "baptême" is used to describe the lavé tête; it is said that the loa is being "baptized." So also are drums "baptized," not to menton yama, and even the hounfor itself. 177 797 823 778 787 795 851

Marriage to a Loa

Although the term *hounsi* (spirit wife, or wife of the spirit) is applied to a large class of servitors of the Vodoun temple, only a small number of servitors ever pass through rites which give them a husband-wife or wife-husband relationship with a loa. Reasons for these mystic marriages vary, but usually the rituals take place upon the prescription of a cult priest who interprets the will of the deities concerned. Most of the mystic marriages of which I have heard have taken place in the general area of Port-au-Prince and the Cul-de-Sac Plain. In some other areas of Haiti it appears that no such rites have taken place locally within the memory of the elder inhabitants. One aged man living near Belladère declared: "It [marriage to a loa] is impossible. People serve loa, they do not marry them. A man does not marry his burro. A loa 588 [794]

8 A [Herskovits, The Myth of the Negro Past, p. 233. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

9 A [It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1945) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

171 The connection between the Haitian zombie and certain soulless beings
715 of West Africa is quite apparent. Herskovits has observed that in
754 Dahomey there are tales of persons thought to be dead who were found wandering in far-off places. These individuals had no memories of their former lives. "They were soulless beings, whose death was not real, but resulted from the machinations of sorcerers who make them appear as dead, and then, when buried, removed them from their graves and sold them into servitude in some far-away land."[4]

764 According to stories told by some Haitians, in ceremonies for the
715 dead where there is suspicion that the deceased was the victim of this particular kind of poisoning a close relative stabs the body with a knife before burial to assure that it will not become a zombie. In other instances, close guard is kept over the grave for a number of days and nights, so that the body cannot be stolen.

715 Some members of the elite publicly dismiss the whole business as
788 savage fantasy but privately say something like: "I don't believe in this
787 sort of thing, but how can you explain the case of Marie Zamhum in
184 Cap Haitien?" And then they will tell of curious events of which they have firsthand knowledge.

538 There are numerous legends of persons who died and were buried,
715 only to reappear perhaps years later in some mountain village, or in the
789 big city of Port-au-Prince. An educated man in Port-au-Prince declared
754 that a dead cousin of his reappeared one day in the city ten years after her burial. He tried to speak with her, but she answered only haltingly and gave no sign of recognition. After this one appearance, he said, she was never seen again. Another Haitian from the north told of a graveyard watch in his village to prevent disinterment of the grave of a young girl who had just died. The two watchers dozed fitfully, and suddenly awoke to see a man removing the girl's body. When they jumped to their feet and went after him he escaped into the shadows. But the girl staggered about, fell to the ground, and gave birth to a baby. Both the girl and her newborn child were taken to the village and given salt to eat. Both of them recovered.

One villager from the southern mountains reported that in his travels he came upon a coffee plantation on the sparsely populated mountain called Morne la Selle, and found all the laborers to be zombies. They did not sing as they worked, their movements were slow and cumbersome, and they did not sweat in the hot sun. When he asked for a drink of water, no one replied. While he stood trying to converse, the master of the plantation came with a hard leather whip and angrily ordered him to leave.

4 [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, p. 243. Cf p. 351, category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1945) 1960 SV3 HaRI SV3

and covered with tiny mirrors or bits of colored glass. The towering headdress of antlers or papier-mâché sculpture unavoidably recalls similar headdresses in West Africa. Each roi has his own style of dance, which is usually accompanied by drums. It may be a belly dance, a dance of delicate balance, or one of complicated footwork and semiacrobatics such as the imitation of a pair of scissors at work. Throughout the dancing the headdress remains majestically erect.

In addition to the roi Lwalwali and the mâit' Rara (who is constantly in the midst of things, blowing his whistle), there are other traditional Rara personalities: the *major jouc*, who juggles with a metal baton (sometimes two or three of these jugglers work together), and the *jongleur*, a juggler or strong man who performs such feats as dancing while holding a fully set table off the ground with his teeth.

On the southwest peninsula, in the region around Jérémie, there is a splurge of wrestling exhibitions during Rara days. Known as *pingé*, this festival wrestling is done with a background of excited drumming and has a striking resemblance to wrestling traditions in West Africa. Local "champions" will invade a neighboring community, sometimes traveling considerable distances to make a challenge. As in West Africa, some of these wrestlers take their own musicians with them. The musicians often are provided by the village in which the events take place. If a challenge is accepted, the spectators form a large circle, with the wrestlers in the center and the musicians to one side. There may be drums and bamboo flutes, occasionally supplemented by large earthern jars and lengths of bamboo beaten with sticks. The wrestlers are dressed only in shorts. When a man is thrown, the event is over, and another pair of wrestlers takes over. Sometimes a "champion" will take on a series of opponents until he is tired. Afterward he may move on to another community to find new competition, perhaps accompanied by a large group of friends and supporters from his own village. When the Rara season comes to an end, pingé is over for the year. It is one of the few athletic sport activities of the Haitian peasant.

And now and then during Rara a *debois* is seen. The *debois* is a carved wooden marionette with a short handle below. Its arms and legs are moved by pulling a string. It is usually painted, and sometimes it is dressed. One debois observed was provided with a loose dresslike costume; when the string was pulled, a large phallus hinged into view in an erect position. This marionette was an object of endless funmaking among spectators.[2]

Another type of marionette is the "Two Kings," made of papier-mâché and operated with strings. The "Two Kings," sitting in a papier-

[2] [Footnote appears in category 116, p. 351. --Analyst]

[P 112-II]

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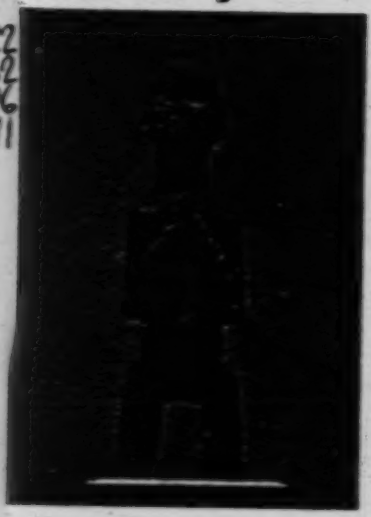

57. *Old wood carving of an unidentified deity, from a houngfor near Léogane. It is startlingly similar to the African carving shown in no. 58.*

58. *A wood carving from the Bambala tribe, western Belgian Congo. (Collection of Segy Gallery.)*

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59. *Carvings of more recent date, representing the loa of twins, from a houngfor in southern Haiti. Height, 12 and 14 inches.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-QQ]

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[184] [171] *76. A Rara group near Plaisance. The costumes differ from those in the south. Note the Madras waistcloths, reminiscent of West African dress.*

[P.112-SS]

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79 and 80. *Playing the tambour maringouin, or mosquito drum. Beneath the earth bow is a portable variant. The player plucks the string with one hand and with the other varies the pitch by pressure on the end of the bow.*

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81. *A miniature brass casting, an Ashanti gold weight, in the form of a spring snare used for catching small game. The device can be recognized as an antecedent of the Haitian portable mosquito drum.*

[P. 112-UU]

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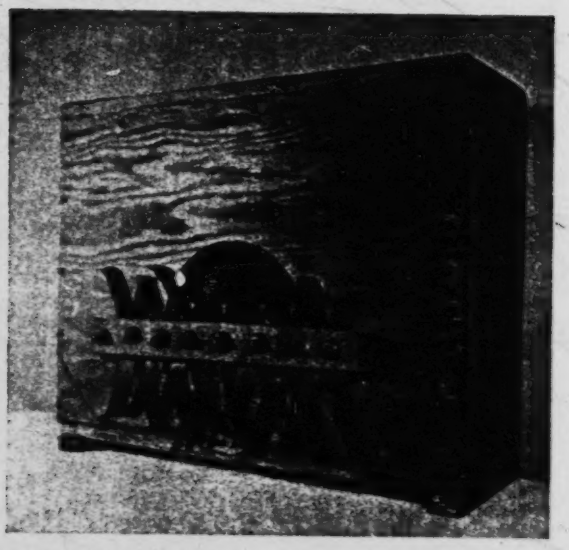

83. *Haitian marimbula with keys made of steel springs. Height of box, approximately 18 inches, width 24 inches. The player sits on the box and plays the keys with his finger tips. Compare with nos. 84 and 85.*

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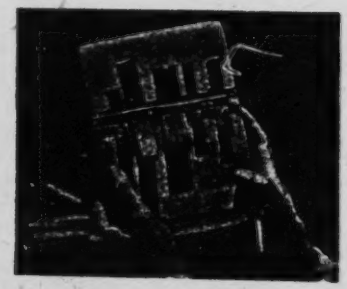
84. *A simple African sansa, or likembe, played with the thumbs. This one is from the Topoke people in the Congo.*



85. *A marimbula from Cuba, still small enough to play with the thumbs in the manner of its African prototype. The heavy steel springs are like those on the Haitian instrument.*

476 241 530 461 men who have failed to join the coumbite, or praise the host, or single out various individuals for comment. The songs of the coumbite are a newspaper of the affairs of the people. The news is personalized, editorialized, and replete with comic vignettes.

476 241 461 574 At noon the drummers signal a halt, and the workers shoulder their hoes, wipe off their machetes, and adjourn to the house for food. If it is a grand coumbite, the men rest for several hours, talking, catching up on sleep, or playing cards or *mayamba*. About three o'clock they go back to the fields to work until evening. Then comes the feast, under the canopy adjoining the house. The host and his wife have killed and cooked one or more goats, depending on the size of the group. The men are served meat, rice, beans, and whatever else has been prepared. [273] Afterward, women join the party, and there is more tafia or rum. Some of the men then drift homeward, but most stay on for dancing. Zesse, Congo, or Juba drums are brought out, and the festivities begin. If another coumbite is not scheduled for the next day, the music and dancing may last well into the night.

476 562 Women, too, have coumbites to perform various kinds of large tasks, from field work to winnowing and coffee sorting, though in general the women's work groups lack the festive character of the men's gatherings.

476 241 575 There is a more tightly knit form of coumbite, known as a *société*. In southern Haiti there are the société Congo and the société Martinique; in northern Haiti there is the société Ciyé. These sociétés are clubs built around mutual work needs and recreational activities. The société Congo that appears in the town or city streets during Rara days, with bamboo or conch-shell trumpets, drums, flags, and masks, is usually composed of the men who have joined forces to till the fields. In some instances, it may also conform roughly to membership in a particular hounfor, or cult center. Unlike the ordinary coumbite, the société is not a group which meets only at ground-breaking or harvesting time; it is a permanent organization with regular, sometimes day-to-day, obligations. Week after week it moves from one man's land to another, doing the tasks that have to be done. There is no question of "Can you come?" The group goes first to one man's land, then to another's until all the work has been done. If a member of the société falls sick, so that he cannot work his own field, the société takes over his tasks for him.

476 Coumbites are held not only for agricultural work but for house-building, and sometimes for the building of a hounfor.

[171] The Haitian coöperative work group has much in common with European and American husking and barn-building parties; but it has

[For footnote see Category 116, P. 352. -- Analyst]

many non-European characteristics. The manner of work, even down to specific motor activity, has direct and hardly disputable West African connections. Instead of the short-handled West African hoe, the Haitians use a long-handled one, and they work more erect than stooped. But the rhythmic, synchronized use of the hoe, the singing leader and the musicians who stand to one side to "encourage" the workers, the calling of the workers by drum *rappels*, the special consideration for the sick, and the concept of long-term community endeavor are all of West African beginnings. The coumbite is the legitimate descendant of the Dahomean *dokpwe*, the *kurum* of the Mambila (Cameroons), the *ku* of the Kpelle (Liberia), and other West African coöperative systems.

Although the *dokpwe* of Dahomey is a more formal and intricate institution, permeated with certain abstract and ritual concepts, its social and functional characteristics are not greatly different from those of the Haitian coumbite, in which coöperation is marked. Herskovits notes that working with the Dahomean *dokpwe*

> represents recreation rather than labor to the individual member. There is song and dance to drumming and the sound of gongs, on the way and after arrival, and there is feasting and an exhibition of skill. It is an impressive sight to see from forty to a hundred men kneading earth for walls, or laying thatch, or hoeing the earth with unison movements to the accompaniment of conversation and laughter, and the songs of such of their fellows, who, for the moment at rest, have constituted themselves the chorus.

When more than one *dokpwe* is summoned for work on the same project, Herskovits notes,

> there is great rivalry among the organizations to see which one will first complete its allotted task. If only one *dokpwe* is present, there is either individual rivalry, or the *dokpwe* may be divided into two groups which compete one against the other. The food which is provided at these times of collective labor is as rich fare as the owner can afford . . .[8]

An underlying factor in the Dahomean *dokpwe* is awareness of itself as "the manpower of Dahomey," and the members regard themselves as exercising their fundamental privilege as Dahomeans. This attitude toward the coumbite continues to prevail in Haiti. Like the hounfor—but even more significantly in terms of routine, workaday life—the coumbite and the société are an expression of social ties and of the pervading interest in the common welfare.

Certain patterns of the coumbite have been carried over into non-agrarian labor in the towns and cities, wherever group work is required. The carrying of coffee and sugar bags in the warehouses, the loading of ships, and the repairing of roads—all are traditionally performed

[8] [Herskovits, "Some Aspects of Dahomean Ethnology," Africa, Vol. V (July, 1932), pp. 266-296. Cf. p. 352, Category 116. -- Analyst]

533 476 178 461 rhythmically, to the accompaniment of drums, *catas*, or horns, while a singing leader composes topical songs in which the laborers join.

171 412 The tools which a rural Haitian chooses, and the way he uses them, often are in a West African tradition. He performs a multitude of tasks with his machete, or bush knife: weeding a garden, peeling an orange, cutting down a tree, making a drum or mortar, opening a coconut. It is an all-purpose tool, as it is in Africa. Until a few years ago it was supplemented by the extra-long, heavier, "double machete." The axe and the chisel are known and used too, but the machete is supreme. 492 The hoe is the tool for tilling the soil, even in the flat country, and even [241] though the Haitian has horses and cattle which could pull a plow. [412] Horses are for riding and not for pulling. In carrying loads, the Haitian peasant still prefers the head to the shoulders. If he has a donkey, the [538] donkey will carry for him. An old Haitian proverb goes: "Meçi Bondieu pou' bourrique là, si nous pas gainyain bourrique là faut Haitien po'té tout bagaille" (Thank God for the donkey, if we didn't have the donkey the Haitian would have to carry everything)." Generally speaking, the 489 492 493 rough and rocky terrain of Haiti and inadequate secondary roads have done nothing to encourage the use of carts or wagons.

171 [251] [392] [252] [222] [226] [501] Corn is stored in the trees, as in West Africa, or in granaries built upon stilts, also as in West Africa. The Haitian makes his fire in the African fashion, with several long sticks or poles meeting point-to-point in the heart of the fire. As the ends are consumed, the sticks are pushed toward the center. Grain is pulverized in large wooden mortars, as in West Africa, and winnowed in a woven tray. Fish traps are sometimes woven in the traditional West African manner, and fishermen often set their nets in converging spirals and beat the water with sticks to drive the fish to the center. And on the rivers and lakes are to be seen dugout canoes of a kind familiar on the inland waters of West Africa.

171 241 The folklore of the fields contains many themes known to the West African. One old Haitian farmer, discussing the spiritual relationship of the planter to the earth, declared that a man must be strong and potent when he plants, else the crops will be vitiated and sickly. For [834] this reason, he said, a man must not plant seeds the day after he has had sexual intercourse, because he has been temporarily drained of his life-giving powers.[9]

171 538 The tale of the hoe that worked by itself in the fields is also widespread. It enters many animal and Bouki stories, and also is known in a form that is familiar in West Africa. In this story, there was once a man who owned a hoe which worked by itself whenever a magical formula was pronounced. It would stop working whenever the magical

9 [For footnote, see Category 116, P 352.-- Analyst]

counterorder was given. The owner of the hoe was happy and prosperous until one day a thief (in one version, the trickster Anansi) stole the hoe and put it to work in his own fields. But the thief knew only the words to command the hoe to begin, not the words to stop it. He could not stop the hoe from working, and it worked its way out of the valley until it came to the country of the white people.[10] The whites knew the words to stop the hoe, and so they gained control of it. It is said by some that the whites fashioned the hoe into a plow.

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[10] [For footnote, see category 116, p. 352.--Analyst]

And when the revolution came he produced for the Haitian armies knives, gun parts, and wheels to transport cannon. By the tens of thousands he made ingeniously devised metal objects to be thrown on the roads, before the French cavalry troops—objects so shaped that, no matter how they fell, a single sharp point stood erect to cripple the enemy horses. Yet knowledge of the West African uses of iron did not altogether disappear, and during the first century of independence the Haitian blacksmith created many old-style knives, spears, and ritual objects for the cult temple.

Even today, some of this old-style work is to be found in hounfors in the southwestern peninsula. One may see simple or ornate iron standards, made to support ceremonial offerings or candles, strikingly similar to standards in ancestral shrines in Dahomey. There are iron bells, both single and double, made in pure West African style; ornate ritual swords and sabers which are the crests of certain deities; coiled and uncoiled iron serpents representing the gods Damballa and Ayida; and stylized or semirealistic portraits of the deities. Many of these old pieces are nineteenth-century survivals; others have been forged within the past decade.

An over-all impression of Haitian material culture is that artistic decoration is almost entirely absent and that the prime emphasis is on utility. Wooden cooking spoons are efficient in form, but missing from them is the delicate decorative carving often found in West Africa. The long wooden washing bowl, or *gamelle*, and the wooden mortar in which grain is pulverized are likewise clean-cut but stark and plainly utilitarian. Clay bowls, bottles, and storage jars are usually of simple, uniform design, with only accidental variations; there is little use of glazes, and the clay is often heavy and thick. Should there be a wari gameboard in the peasant hut, the chances are that it is roughly made, without legs or carved designs. Dugout canoes are usually crude in appearance, heavy and thick-walled, and irregular in form.

Yet there are many evidences—though one must seek them out—that esthetic impulses are quite alive. The gay peasant straw knapsack, or *alfor*, without which no mountain man makes a journey, has a charm and grace that is not diminished by familiarity and cheapness. Decorated with sisal braid and tassels, and colored with green and magenta dyes, each *alfor* on close inspection appears to be unique. In some communities in the south and southwest, burlap squares also are painted with these traditional dyes. About forty inches across, and made of sugar bags, these paintings swarm with geometric patterns and sometimes with figures of flowers and animals. They are purely decorative, being

[See plates 42-51, pp. 112-DD—112-FF.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

used for wall hangings much as appliquéd cloths are used in Dahomey. Near Cap Haitien, in the north, ceramic workers make crude clay figurines of roosters, pigs, dogs, cows, and people. The "purpose" of these figurines is obscure, but it is likely that they are intended for use in Vodoun ritual, a number of them having been observed in hounfors in the vicinity of the town of Grande Rivière du Nord. In some mountain villages, canes carved with animal and human heads are commonly seen. Nor is the tradition of carving gourds and calabashes, popular in various regions of West Africa, altogether forgotten. The *cayambouque*, a divided calabash with the top ingeniously cut to fit into the lower part so as to form a sealed container, is sometimes covered with carved geometric designs, usually crude and haphazard but on occasion meticulous. Until recent years the common *cha-cha*, or gourd rattle, was similarly carved.

Most of the visible traditional art is to be found in the environs of the cult temple. The inner walls of many hounfors are covered with ritual designs and symbols and portraits of the deities. On the altar, sometimes, crude wood carvings of deities are seen, along with forged iron objects, carved marassa bowls, and grotesquely shaped drumsticks known as *baguettes guinée*. All the wooden objects are characterized by a plainness that relegates them to the category of purely functional and expendable things. The wood carving of a deity is not an image, it is a representation; it can be sold or otherwise disposed of, even thrown away if infested with beetles, and another object can be used to replace it. The only concern of the cult priest in this matter is that the deity concerned should understand the situation properly and not take offense. Thus there is no strong feeling that the wood carving should be a realistic representation or that it should be "beautiful." One relatively antique wood carving, completely West African in style, was found some years ago in a hounfor near Léogane and is now in the collection of the Musée du Peuple Haitien in Port-au-Prince (see fig. 57).

One of the most flourishing arts of the hounfor is the *vèvè*, or ritual drawing made on the earth in the course of a service. Most commonly these beautiful and ornate designs are made with white meal or flour, and in a few of the cults, primarily the Pétro, lampblack and red brick dust are also used. The vèvè is made by the houngan or the mambo. With sure, practiced movements, the cult priest allows the meal to trickle through his fingertips onto the ground where the rites are taking place, usually in the peristyle of the hounfor itself. The drawings he makes are composed of a multiplicity of cabalistic symbols—heart shapes, stars, interlocked V's, flags, abstract phallic forms, crosses, swords,

114 535 tion helped to perpetuate some prevailing misunderstandings and errors. This distinguished observer wrote:

> The Negroes of the Gold Coast, warlike, bloody, accustomed to human sacrifice, know only dances as ferocious as themselves, while those from the Congo, Senegalese and other African shepherds or agricultural tribes, love dancing as a relaxation, as a source of sensual pleasure. Brought from all parts of Africa to our Colonies . . . , the Negroes brought here and preserved their taste for the dance, a taste so strong that, however tired out from work the Negro may be, he always finds strength to dance and even to travel a long distance to satisfy this desire.
>
> 114 533 535 When the Negroes want to dance, they take two drums, that is, two hollow logs, of unequal length, with one end open, while the other is covered with sheepskin. These drums . . . resound under blows of the wrist and movements of the fingers of a Negro who sits astride of each drum. The larger drum is beaten slowly, the other more rapidly. This monotonous and hollow sound is accompanied by the noise of a certain number of calabashes which have been filled with [534] pebbles . . . Several *banzas*, a sort of large guitar with four strings,[3] join the concert, the tempo of which is regulated by the clapping hands of the Negro women, who form a large circle. They form a sort of chorus, which responds to one or two strident solo voices, which repeat or improvise a song.[3]

535 As for the dance movements themselves, Saint-Méry wrote:

> A male and [a] female dancer, or several dancers divided into equal numbers of each sex, jump into the center of the circle and begin to dance, always two by two. This dance, which varies little, consists of a very simple step in which one foot is put forward after the other, and then drawn back quickly, while striking the toe and the heel on the ground . . . Some turn in place, or around the woman, who turns also and changes places with her partner; that is all which one sees, except for the movement of the arms which the man raises and lowers with the elbows quite close to the body and the hands almost closed. The woman holds two ends of a handkerchief, which she waves . . . One would hardly believe how lively and animated it is, and how much grace it derives from the strictness with which the musical rhythm is followed. The dancers replace one another without respite, and the Negroes are so intoxicated with pleasure that it is necessary to force them to conclude dances of this sort, called *kalendas*.[4]

[114] [171] Saint-Méry then brings forth one of his conclusions, that this dance is obviously the development of a "comparatively uncivilized people," and that it comes from Africa, "where its characteristic features exist everywhere, even among the Hottentots."

114 535 177 [171] Here he missed the point altogether. Although many of the characteristics of this *kalenda* (or Calinda) were African, it had already been intensively hybridized with European dance concepts, such as the pairing off of males and females, who danced as couples. Then, as today, the dances which amazed and shocked the European observer were precisely the ones that had taken over certain European traditions.

3 [Actually a banjo-like instrument of African provenience. The similarity of the word banza to banjo appears to be more than a coincidence. Cf. P. 352, category 116. -- Analyst]
4 [Saint-Méry, De la danse, as translated by Lillian Moore in "Moreau de Saint-Méry and 'Danse,'" Dance Index, October, 1946, P. 238. Cf. P. 352, category 116. -- Analyst]
4 Moore, op. cit., P. 238. Cf. P. 352, Category 116. -- Analyst]

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Saint-Méry also wrote about some of the religious dances, which he identified by name: 171 535

> In Santo Domingo, and especially in the western, French section, there has existed for a long time a kind of dance called the Vaudoux [Vodoun] . . . which is characterized by movements where the upper part of the body, the shoulders and the head seem to move convulsively. This dance is accompanied by the drums, the clapping of hands, and group singing . . .
>
> The Vaudoux is nothing compared to the Don Pedro . . . , another Negro dance, also known in the western part of Santo Domingo since 1768. Don Pedro was the name of a Negro of the Petit-Goave section, of Spanish origin, who by his daring character and certain superstitious practices, had acquired among the Negroes enough influence to be denounced by the government as the instigator of some alarming plots. The dance which bears his name consists, like the Vaudoux, in the shaking of the shoulders and the head, but this shaking is extremely violent, and to increase it still further the Negroes drink, while dancing, brandy in which they have mixed finely ground gunpowder . . .* They dance with the most horrible contortions, until finally they fall into a sort of epilepsy . . .*

Making allowances for Saint-Méry's imaginative interpretation of many of the things he saw, the Haitian dance of today is not far different from that of the eighteenth century. It is cast in the West African mold, with Dahomean and Yoruban motifs predominating over European and other Western infiltrations. As in Saint-Méry's day, the drummers sit at the edge of the dance court, a leader wielding a gourd rattle leads the singing, and the dancers and spectators constitute the chorus. The dancers usually move around the center of the court in a counterclockwise direction. Their steps and postures vary according to the type of dance being performed. The Jenvalo, for example, is danced with a bent back, hands touching the knees. In the Zépaule dance the dancers are erect, and most of the movements are made with the shoulders. In the Pétro (the Don Pedro described by Saint-Méry) there is a constant, almost agitated movement of the feet. The songs accompanying these cult dances, while presented in African style, may have hybrid or even French melodies, though in the main they are more African than European. The over-all context of the cult dances, as well as most of the secular ones, is West African, with constant interplay between the singers, dancers, and drummers. Sometime the dancers "drive" the drummers, sometimes the drummers "drive" the dancers. Certain beats of the drum are signals for special movements and postures. On hearing special beats or rolls, the dancers may leap vertically into the air, or perform a *laillé* (a swirling motion that causes the skirts to flare out), or a *djaillé* (excitement motions). Increased tension among the dancers may cause the drummers to shift the beat, or to increase 177 178 533 535 [114]

* [Brandy or rum with gunpowder is sometimes drunk by persons possessed by the loa Ogoun, deity of war. Cf. p. 352, Cat. 116.--Analyst]

* Moore, op. cit., p. 238. Cf. p. 352, Cat. 116.--Analyst]

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Mousondi. In present-day Trinidad there is a Calinda dance which closely resembles the Mousondi; Puerto Rico has its Bomba Calindán; and under another name the "battle dance" survives among Negro communities in Surinam. The counterpart of the Calinda in Brazil is the Capoeira, for which musical accompaniment is provided by African-style "belly harps" (musical bows with gourd resonators) called *berimbau*. The tradition lingers on in Haiti in modern mock prize-fighting dances sometimes performed in Rara season.

The stick dance (*Battonie*) of the Haitian carnival season, mentioned in chapter 8, is of more than passing interest for the reason that almost identical dances have been reported from some areas of West Africa. In the Haitian dance (see fig. 73) the baton wielders, all males, for unexplained reasons are attired in women's clothing. A photograph made in 1958 of a baton dance among the Ewe people of Togoland depicts a scene scarcely distinguishable from a Haitian Rara performance, and it is noteworthy that its all-male cast is in women's dress.[7]

In addition, there remain a number of fragments of dances of the past. In religious ritual, on rare occasions, one may see animal dances in which the performers mimic animal movements, holding in their hands long sticks to simulate front legs. This type of dance has been reported frequently in West Africa, particularly in connection with totemic rituals.

There is a dance in the Arada ritual in which the lwa Legba is invoked. A hounsi—usually a man—comes onto the dance court wearing a kind of cane-crutch called the *baton* Legba, or Legba stick. The baton is about the length of a cane, with a long, grotesquely twisted "handle" that fits under the crotch of the legs. The dancer wraps one leg around the stick and walks as though he has only one foot. In the dance, he spins around on the stick, leaps, and pirouettes. Identification of the stick as well as the dance with Legba, and its position between the legs, seem clearly to relate it to the phallic sticks used in dances for Legba in Dahomey.

Among the secular exhibitionistic dances of Haiti, there is one in which a man stands on his head and goes through erotic motions to the accompaniment of drums.

In addition to the almost countless dances of African origin or inspiration, there is the ever-popular Meringue, a European-type social dance which is known in many forms. Haitian connoisseurs of this dance believe there are three main forms of the Meringue: the "Meringue de Concert," in which the rhythm is slow and "caressing"; the "dance Meringue," in which the rhythm is quasi-fast and very gay; and the "Meringue Coundjaille," in which the rhythm is very fast. The last

7 [United Nations Photograph no. 62065. Cf P 352, category 116. -- Analyst]

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The 1951

535 form is heard most often during carnival days. In all variations of the Meringue, the dance is performed by couples in ballroom style. Among [831] the elite, it is restrained. Elsewhere it is much more animated, with free and uninhibited pelvic motions similar to those seen at the Saturday ● 171 night *Bamboche*. Although the Haitian regards his Meringue as a national 177 popular dance, Spanish-type music has infiltrated heavily from the Do- 53 minican Republic, Cuba, and other islands of the West Indies. Thousands of Haitians returning from contract labor in Cuba have brought with them not only Cuban songs and rhythms but Cuban instruments as well. It has not been a one-way affair, however, for the Arada cults of eastern Cuba have been built substantially around immigrants from Haiti, and in the Cuban mountains you may hear music and see dances of Afro-Haitian origin.

Still other kinds of dances are to be found in remote villages of Haiti—the old folk dances of Europe. The villagers still know and perform the waltz, the polka, the mazurka and the quadrille, usually to the accompaniment of violins or guitars, or possibly an accordion.

But the influences are not all ancient ones. Jazz has infiltrated the Meringue. And some years ago a small boy asked me with some concern whether I had taken proper account of a very important dance called *le Mack button*.

535 Following is a list of dances known to Haitians today. Some of them [178] are found throughout Haiti, some are known only regionally, and a few are on the verge of extinction.

Dances Connected with Vodoun Rituals

Arada, or Rada: One of the main dances of the Vodoun service, named after the Dahomean city and cult center, Allada.

Aizan, or Nago: Named after the Nagos, a branch of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria. For deities of Nago origin.

Mahi: Named after the Mahi people of Dahomey.

Dèvèl: A Mahi dance of northern Haiti.

Parigale: Another Mahi type of dance. Possibly from *pas régal* (royal step).

Jovenin, or Yovenin: A supplication dance, variously called Jovenin Dabo (*dos bas*, low back), Jovenin Jèsen (*genoux*, knees), and Dabouin.

Épaule: A supplication dance in which the movements are made primarily by the shoulders (*les épaules*). It is sometimes called Jovenin *Épaule* or Jovenin Débout (standing Jovenin).

Flavoudoun: Another type of shoulder dance known in the north.

Banda, or Chèze: A gay and sometimes ribald dance, said to be much favored by the loa Cousin Zaka and the loa Gédé.

Mazoune Rada: The "Masonic" Rada dance; often danced for the loa Gédé.

Cavalcoune or Crabicoune: A rou dance, interpreted into long-drawn-out Arada

3/A [i.e., the "Meringue Coundjaille" in which the rhythm is very fast. -- Analyst]

[P. 139]

12. Songs of Complaint, Recrimination, and Gossip

The use of the song as a weapon of social criticism is an ancient and honored tradition in Haitian life. In West Africa it is common for villagers to air their complaints against, or their praise of, their neighbors, their chiefs, and the Europeans with whom they have dealings, by means of specially composed songs. Usually an ordinary offended person will not approach an official of prestige and denounce him straightforwardly. Such behavior might involve risks, or even violate social decorum. But an acceptable and effective way to make such criticism is through singing. It carries with it the sanction of propriety, custom, and good manners. The songs of criticism seek to air situations that otherwise might remain local or private affairs, and to set in motion public opinion. Thus there are songs which complain about a person's behavior, others that protest against injuries, and still others that expose an individual to ridicule. Often the themes are expressed indirectly by parable, sometimes directly. Among the Negro cultures of America the song of social criticism remains a vital and effective instrument for alleviating a sense of hurt and bringing offending persons before the bar of public opinion. It is found throughout the New World wherever Negroes have settled, from Brazil to the West Indies and the United States. In Suriname there is a formalized presentation of protest and derision songs called *lobi singi*, the function of which is to publicly embarrass and shame someone who has offended.[1] In the United States the song of criticism and complaint has survived strongly in the Negro work songs and blues, and has even infiltrated by this route into the popular "white" music of the country. Countless blues pieces complain of personal mistreatment by husbands, wives, and sweethearts; others, of hardships and injustice. Still others hold up the spotlight of ridicule. The subjects vary from sexual faithlessness to the rigors of prison.

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In Haiti this tradition has remained vital and powerful. A work gang

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[1] [See Herskovits and Herskovits, Suriname Folk-Lore, pp. 23-32. Cf. p. 353, Category IK.--Author]

[P.166]

15. Secret-Society Songs

575 Secret societies were once common in Haiti, as they were in other parts of
191 the New World where West Africans settled in large numbers. The institution of the secret society was strong in various parts of West Africa from which the slaves came. The tradition was particularly notable among the tribes of Nigeria. In the New World it offered to slaves and to freed Negroes an opportunity for social organization and fraternal relationships which otherwise had been pretty well shattered by the nature of slavery and the profuse admixture of cultures. A number of elderly Haitians have
[648] suggested that it was the Haitian secret societies rather than the Vodoun and Congo cults which fomented underground resistance and slave revolts against the French in the last years of the eighteenth century.

194 At this late date it is difficult to reconstruct much of the secret-society
198 picture. Such groups as may have survived until recently did so in vitiated
575 and changed form. They have been supplanted in large measure by the
[196] *société*, a kind of mutual-aid association with both economic and recreational functions. It is exclusive, but not irrevocably so, and it is not secret. The *société* often corresponds roughly with the membership of a hounfor, or cult temple.

575 Old people still talk about true secret societies, however. There was a
198 Moundongue secret society, separate from the Moundongue cult, whose
266 members were recruited from the survivors of the Moundongue tribe and
193 their descendants. Other secret societies were not based on tribal affiliation but were recruited from the population at large. One such group was the Vinbindingue, also known as the Blinbindingue and the Balbindingue. Its practices were feared. According to tradition, the Vinbindingue was predatory and held cannibalistic rites, as did other groups such as the Moundongue Society, the Cochon Rouge (the Red Pig Society), the Zeaubeaupe, the Cochon Gris (the Gray Pig Society), and the Calinda
000 Society. How much of their reputation for cannibalism was deserved is

[Herskovits, Dahomey, I P.256. Cf. P.353, Category 116. -- Analyst]

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[P. 170]

16. Folk Tales: Bouki, Malice, and Jean Saute

538 In the folk tales and legends of Haiti there has been a powerful assimilation from many cultures. There are stories of European and African derivation, and countless others that are to be found in one form or another in the Middle East, Asia, and throughout the Americas. The precise origins of many of these stories probably will never be known. Some of them are as ancient as the Panchatantra and have variants in India, Indonesia, Korea, Egypt, West Africa, and northern Europe. It is likely that many tales with this broad distribution came into Haiti by way of Europe, along with the French, Spanish, and English settlers. But numerous stories told in Europe are well known in West and Central Africa too. The folk tales of the world have an astonishing universality. The adventures of the West African hare and spider are closely paralleled in the tales of the American Negro Br'er Rabbit, the hare of Thailand, and the mouse deer of Indonesia.

538 In Haiti today, as in other islands of the West Indies, there is an endless repertoire of folk stories of many kinds—animal tales; trickster tales; stories about magicians, kings, and princesses; *cantes* fables; and stories that account for the beginnings of things, the behavior of certain animals, and their physical appearance. There are European dragons and devils, and beasts of the African forests. Some of the stories are long and episodic, some are so brief—even curt—that they have lost their original core. They may point out moral or ethical values or, more commonly, strike completely amoral levels in which the humor depends upon acts that in real life would be regarded as cruel. Like the folk songs, the tales are often used to express the democratic equality of the small person with the great. In many instances it is the small man who triumphs over the powerful and rich. In the Bouki-Malice cycle it is usually the little wily trickster who wins over the larger and physically stronger opponents.

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None of the Haitian tales are meant to be read, for storytelling is a

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dramatic art. The narrator interprets his characters as he goes along, providing different voices, singing, giving humorous or tragic emphasis, and changing his facial expressions to convey the temper and mood of the protagonists. He imitates the movements and actions of the animals. In print, his broad gestures and sly intimations are all lost. The Haitian tale is a vehicle for the actor, who plays his theme according to circumstances and the responsiveness of his audience. The storyteller, like the musician, is likely to be found almost anywhere. But there are storytellers of special renown, known as *mait' contes*—who may be called upon to entertain young people at a party or Nine Night gathering. They have seemingly endless repertoires and can go on indefinitely telling tales about Bouki and Malice, or Jean Saute and Jean L'Esprit. In former times, the mait' conte used an instrument such as the *hawa* to interspersse his narration with music. Old people recall that trough zithers and other instruments of African design were once employed for this purpose.

Anansi, the spider trickster-hero and buffoon of West Africa, has survived in Haiti as well as elsewhere in the Antilles. In Jamaica and other British islands, Anansi has become Brother Anansi, Sister Nancy, or just plain Nancy. Although he usually figures in tales dealing with other animals, he has more and more come to assume a human form, as he has in Haitian tales. But in Haiti the name Anansi is only rarely heard. Anansi's cleverness and stupidity are now attributed to two characters named Ti Malice and Nonc' Bouki, both of whom are regarded as human beings.

In West Africa the spider hero directed his mischief against the great and strong creatures of the forest, now one, now another. In Haiti, Ti Malice, who has inherited Anansi's wit and guile, pits himself mostly against Bouki, who has inherited Anansi's stubborn nature and his pompous stupidities. Ti Malice (whose first name probably comes from the Spanish *tio*, uncle) has become the slick sharpy of the city, the clever and predatory "operator," the practical joker. Like his spider prototype, Ti Malice has humor as well as cunning, though he is often remorseless. Bouki is full of self-confidence but is slow-witted and an easy prey for Ti Malice. He is thought of as a clumsy peasant of the mountains. He has a constant desire to pit himself against Ti Malice, and a capacity for involving himself in utterly fantastic situations which appeal to the Haitian sense of the ridiculous.

In many respects this team of comedians resembles another pair known in South and Central America—Tio Conejo (Uncle Rabbit) and Tio Coyote; both are pranksters, but the rabbit usually manages to outwit the coyote. Ti Malice and Bouki also figure in the universal tar-baby story, and in many other tales known in the United States in which Br'er Rabbit

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and Br'er Fox are the protagonists. Many of these tales, like the characters themselves, have West African prototypes, though others seem to have been created out of the workaday substance of Haitian life. They are not, however, essentially children's tales. Some of them involve risqué or ribald escapades.

Among the Haitian tales are numerous themes which stem directly from African lore, such as the hoe that worked by itself in the fields; the single grain of seed corn which, when drawn across the ground, grew an entire field of maize; and the pot that boiled without fire. There are many remnants also of the African tale in which a "tail feather" of an elephant is required for some magic purpose. There is a pursuit which follows the acquisition of the elephant hairs, and the pursued person saves himself with three magical eggs. When he throws one on the ground, a huge river springs up behind him. When he throws down another, a forest appears behind him, and so on. The elephant's tail feather is regarded as a very powerful protective charm in many regions of West Africa. That the memory of it should continue in Haiti so precisely, although there are no elephants, is striking.

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Although Haitian folk tales are abundant and are well loved, over the years they have tended to become more and more simple. The episodic European tales of kings and princesses and monsters that have been taken over are, generally, of a naïve kind without moral or intellectual significance. They are interesting for the twists and turns of fate and for momentary laughs.

The tale of Grandmother's Bath is a case in point. In this story, Jean Saute (Stupid John) is left at home to care for Grandmother while Jean L'Esprit (Smart John) goes to market. Jean Saute puts Grandmother in a tub and pours boiling water over her, killing her instantly. He looks at the grimace on her face and concludes that she is enjoying it immensely; so he sticks her pipe in her mouth and pours more water over her. When Jean L'Esprit returns, Jean Saute is very proud of himself. But Jean L'Esprit discovers that Grandmother is dead. The brothers then pack their belongings to go to the city. There follows a series of strange and bizarre adventures. Jean L'Esprit sends his dull-witted brother back for something he has forgotten; Jean Saute misunderstands and brings the door off the house. Throughout their adventures Jean Saute carries the door with him. When they get to the forest they climb into a tree to sleep for the night, Jean Saute carrying his door along. While they are there, a convocation of devils (*djab*) takes place under the tree. Jean Saute has to urinate, and he does so into the middle of the convocation. The devils shout gleefully that it is wine from heaven and try to catch the water. Eventually the door

[Footnote appears on p. 353, Category 116. --Ann 157]

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falls from the tree and frightens them away. The two brothers continue on their way and come to a country where it is always night—a great dragon with seven heads has swallowed the sun.* The two brothers kill the dragon, with the help of Jean Saute's stupidity. They cut into the monster and find a silver box, which they open, releasing the sun from captivity. The news goes on ahead. When they arrive at the city, the king, in appreciation, offers them the choice of his daughters. Jean L'Esprit, as might be expected, chooses the youngest and most beautiful. Jean Saute turns them all down and asks to marry the king's cook. 172 538

This story seems to be one of the most extended tales in Haitian lore, unless one groups all the Bouki-Malice stories together in a single cycle. However, most European-style tales (Beauty and the Beast and Jack and the Beanstalk, for instance) have suffered considerable deterioration. In the process of adaptation, such tales lost much of the original detail and decorative motif that made them interesting to the European. They became stark and brief, fragmentary anecdotes about kings, devils, and snakes.

With some few exceptions, the African stories have undergone less change: the Singing Tortoise (found later in this chapter) and Anansi's Tug of War, for example. But even in the tales of African origin there has been simplification to the extent that many of them are mere fragments; in some even the central point itself has been lost. The Bouki-Malice tales, counterparts of the Anansi stories of West Africa, have lost the contemplative tone found in the African originals. Moral points of the kind commonly made in African tales have almost entirely disappeared and are to be found only in proverbs. If the good wins over the bad, that is simply an accident of fate; for the bad wins over the good just as frequently. Death and sadism are constant themes. But the prime conflict remains the smart against the stupid, and the small and weak against the large and powerful. 173 538

Like kindred tales elsewhere in the West Indies and in the United States, many of the stories have standard beginnings and endings. The storyteller begins by saying "Cric," and his audience replies, "Crac." When he comes to the end he usually uses a variant of: 538

"I was there and saw it. And Malice gave me a kick and sent me all the way here to tell you about it." Or: "So I have run all the way here to tell it to you." Or: "That's the story, and if you don't believe me, tafia will never kill you." Or: "They gave me a blow, and I have just come to my senses." Or again: "So he kicked me over the house and here I am." These formula endings often provide a dramatic punch for the children who are listening.

* [Footnote appears on p. 353, Category 18.—Analysis]

534 322 [412] The craft of drum making is a very skilled one, but the tools are simple: chisels, machetes, and fire. The core of the log is removed by burning and gouging, and the outside is shaped with a machete, or sometimes a hatchet. The wood is selected and processed carefully. Firing of the core of the log depends a good deal on how dry the wood is, for the wood must burn slowly. It is believed that wood cut at the right stage of growth and at the right phase of the moon is resistant to the ever-present powder-post beetles. Mahogany was once favored because [824] it was durable and beetle resistant, even though it was heavy. But in recent decades mahogany has become scarce, and modern drums are made of lighter woods.

534 398 [531] 971 Drums made in the nineteenth century not only conformed to the patterns of certain West African prototypes but were also carved and decorated. Some of these old drums are still to be seen, but there are not many left. An ancient carved assotor drum (previously cited) has fortunately been preserved by the Bureau d'Ethnologie. But between the ravages of the powder-post beetles, age, and the periodic orgies of drum burning by the church and misguided public officials, most of these [648] ancient works of art have long since disappeared. During the American occupation of Haiti—from World War I to 1932—American military personnel also contributed to the mania for drum burning. And as late as 1941 there was a massive, cleric-inspired drive to wipe out these instruments as remnants of *sauvage* elements in Haitian life.

534 178 531 The effect of this war against the drum was only to improve the business of the professional drum maker. Drums had become expendable, hence they were made simpler. The carved decorations disappeared. Paint was substituted, and less attention was given to detail. The important thing was to produce a good functional instrument. But the creative instincts of the drum makers sometimes still take over, and many of the modern drums are beautifully proportioned, with delicate geometric patterns carved around the base, or foot. Among certain categories of drums the painted decorations consist solely of the name of the loa to whom the instruments have been dedicated—St. Jacques perhaps, or Papa Pierre, or Ezilie.

534 191 [784] 172 534 Drums differ in design according to the use for which they are intended. The Arada or Vodoun drums are used primarily in connection with the dances and rituals of the Vodoun cult—the cult built around the gods and rites of Arada and Yoruba theology. They resemble closely drums which are used today in Dahomey, Nigeria, and Togoland. They usually come in sets of three. The largest, the *manman* (also called *hounsor* or *hounsogri*), may be three to four feet high. The middle-sized drum, or *second* (also called *grandé* or *mayen*), is about two feet

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high. The smallest—the *bula*, or *bébé* (sometimes called *dundun*)—is 534
about eighteen or twenty inches high. They are all called sometimes by the Yoruba name *bata*, originally applied to a two-headed instrument.

Arada drumheads are of cowhide, held in place by hardwood pegs set into the bodies of the drums at an angle. The drums are tuned by driving in or loosening the pegs. Even the slitting of the skins where the pegs pass through them is African in pattern. In Cuba the drums of the Arada (there called Arara) cult are made in precisely the same way, though they are used in batteries of four rather than three. [171]

In a variation of the peg type of fastening, the skin is attached to a 184
hoop, which, in turn, is held in place by ropes laced to the pegs. Each 534
drum maker has his own preference as to the angle and size of the pegs, the proportions of the drums, and the wood from which they are made. One drum maker near Léogane claimed to be able to identify the region from which a drum came by examination of the pegs and the carvings around the base.

The small Arada drum, the *bula*, is usually "whipped" with two long 534
thin sticks to provide a sharp and penetrating sound. The middle-sized 191
drum is played with one bare hand and a stick. The stick may be straight or bowed. The bowed drumstick is known as an *egida*, the name used for the same type of stick in Dahomey.[1] On infrequent occasions the *moyen* drum is played with two sticks—one straight and one bowed. The large drum, the *mawman*, is played by the most accomplished of the drummers in the orchestra. He plays with one bare hand and one stick, which may be of various forms. It may be straight, have a hook-shaped head, or be mallet-shaped; or it may be the grotesquely twisted stick known as a *baguette Guinée*. All these forms are known in Dahomey and elsewhere in West Africa.

The three Haitian Arada drums, supplemented by an African-style 171
bell known as an *ogan* and small gourd rattles (cha-chas), form the 178
standard orchestra for most dances of the Vodoun cult. The *ogan*—the 534
forged iron bell with an external striker—has all but disappeared in 796
recent years, along with the institution of the village forge. In its place one may see any kind of metallic object, such as a hoe blade, a link of chain, or a length of pipe, all of which are referred to by the old name *ogan*. In Cuba the Arada cult preserves the bell, both in single and double form, under the same name. The word *ogan* probably derives from the Yoruba term for this instrument, *agaran*.

Playing in concert, the three Arada drums produce a range of tones, 533
and the player of the *mawman*—the chief of orchestra—adds to the 534
effect by frequently striking his stick against the side of the drum above

[Herskovits and Herskovits, Suriname Folk-Lore, p. 99
The stick is also known in Suriname. Cf. p. 353,
Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

534 533 the pegs. High notes are achieved by striking the drumhead near the rim, and low notes near the center.

534 516 The drummers usually sit together on a bench or in chairs at one side of the dance court. The larger and middle drums are slightly tipped to keep their "mouths" open; the *bula* stands squarely on its base and is therefore somewhat muted. The player of the *manman* often drums in a standing position, bracing the instrument by means of a cord around his thigh.

534 796 Another drum associated with the Arada rites is the assotor. This drum is usually about six feet high, and may be from two to two and a half feet in diameter. It is played in an upright position, and two or three small "windows" near the base permit the sound to emerge. [794] This big drum is used only for the Assotor service, at which the Dahomey "nation" plays host to the loa of all the various rites. Usually there is only a single drummer, who plays while standing on a bench or raised platform; but on occasion, two or even three drummers play simultaneously on the single drumhead.

534 171 It is interesting to note in passing that most of the Vodoun drums have Dahomean names and are of Dahomean design, despite the fact that Yoruban religious motifs have survived. The Yoruban double-headed *bata* drum, used in Nigeria for invocation of the principal deities, appears to have survived in decadent form on the island of La Gonave, where it is known as *pangavé*. Curiously, it is played not like the Yoruban *bata* (one hand on each head) but like another Yoruban instrument, 534 the *dundun*, or pressure drum. The instrument is held under one arm and played only on the forward head. Significantly enough, this drum [994] is said to be used only for Nago (Yoruba) rites. Another drum reserved [796] for Nago services is found in the region of Léogane. It resembles the Arada drum in every respect except that it stands on three carved legs.

Drums associated with the services of the Congo "nation" are distinctly different from those found in Vodoun ritual. No drumsticks are used, and the heads are of goatskin rather than cowhide and are held in place by a system of cords and loops. The Congo drum seen today stands about three feet high; old people say that within their memory there was a variety of Congo drum as tall as a man. Unlike the Arada [531] drum, the Congo drum usually has no carved or painted decoration. For the "pure" Congo rites, two of these instruments, accompanied by gourd or metal rattles of various kinds, constitutes an orchestra. One typically Congo rattling device, called *mayaya*, consists of three large gourds containing pebbles, on the top of a long pole.

A variant of the Congo drum is used for Pétro rites. It is similar

534 the Haitian word for "twins." They are used primarily for secular
[177] music of the Cuban type, and may in fact be an importation from Cuba. The marassa is one of the few drums on which a finger technique is used; that is, striking with individual fingers rather than with grouped fingers. Marassas are often played in concert with guitars and marimbas.

The *basse* is the shallow finger drum resembling what in the United States is called the tambourine. Constructed in the pattern of an African prototype, its head is usually fifteen or eighteen inches in diameter and made of goatskin. Small metal disks sometimes are inserted in the frame
[314] to act as rattles. The head is kept well coated with resin or beeswax and
[237] is tapped and rubbed with the fingers. The *basse* is used only for secular music, except in the rare instances when it is used in Congo services. Some Haitians believe that the name of the instrument comes from the word *Rasqne*.

534 It is reported that signal drums were still in use a decade ago in
202 remote sections of the southwestern peninsula. One of these instruments, according to description, is distinguished mainly by its large belly and small mouth; like the Juba drum, it is played on its side. Another style of signal drum has a slit in the side and is played erect, much like an African slit-log drum standing on end.

534 Another percussion instrument is the bamboo stamping tube, called
[171] the *ganbo* or *ti kaumbo*. It is African in origin and probably takes its name from the Loango term for the same device, *dikaumbo*.[2] The stamping tube is simply a length of bamboo, open at one end and closed at the other by a natural joint membrane. The closed end is struck sharply upon the ground, and the tone comes from the open top. The device works like an inverted drum, the closed end functioning like a drumhead. A battery of four or five ganbos may provide the percussion music otherwise played by drums. The musician corresponding to the *bulatier* of the drum orchestra plays two small stamping tubes, one in each hand. The other musicians have one each, thicker and longer than the bulatier's and producing deeper tones. Cupped hands are manipulated over the open ends for varying the sounds. This instrument
[171] has survived in various parts of the New World where Africans were settled, particularly other West Indian islands, Brazil, and Venezuela. In Venezuela the stamping tubes are called *quiriplas*.[3] They have recently been reported from various areas of West Africa, including French Equatorial Africa.[4]

534 The ganbos had a singular burst of popularity in Haiti during the
548 United States military occupation of the country after the first World
798 War, when drums were often seized and destroyed. Drums could not
[115]

[1 [Informant: Joseph Lengo, Brazzaville. Cf P 354, Category 116. --Analyst]
[2 [Library of Congress album, Folk Music of Venezuela. Cf P 354 Category 116. --Analyst]
[3 [Rumpler accompanying recording Music of Equatorial Africa (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1950) Cf P 354, Cat. 116. --Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

easily be hidden, but the ganbos were simply slipped into the straw roofs and thus put out of sight. Moreover, by some strange process of reasoning, military authorities regarded the bamboos as "harmless," though they were used for the same purposes as the contraband drums. 534 648 798

There are numerous other kinds of simple percussion devices. One such instrument, now less commonly seen than previously, is a length of open bamboo laid in the crotches of two Y-shaped sticks set in the ground. Like other *catas*, the bamboo is beaten with two sticks. Some Haitians believe that in former days such bamboos were played in batteries like a xylophone. 534

Sometimes a light-weight wooden cylinder, or perhaps a drum denuded of its playing head, is carried by the timekeeper of a coumbite. It, also, is played on the side with sticks. [461] [476]

Wooden mortars for pulverizing grain take on the character of musical instruments when used in combination with voices. When two or more mortars are used, with two men or women wielding the long polelike pestles in each mortar, the rhythmic effects can become fairly complicated. 534 533 412

The *claves* or *palos* (small hardwood sticks) are used primarily in connection with secular dances of a Cuban type, or to accompany such instruments as the guitar and the marimba. One stick is held loosely in the natural fold of the hand, so that it is free to vibrate, and is struck sharply with the second stick. The tone is almost metallic because of the hardness of the wood, usually lignum vitae. The name of the instrument is recognizable as a form of *clavar*, or *clavo*, Spanish for "peg" or "nail." It is thought that wooden shipbuilding pegs provided the name for this device, which has equivalents in West Africa. 534 535 [177] [824] [171]

Among the folk instruments there are various kinds of horns and trumpets. Cows' horns are played musically in some parts of the southern peninsula, though usually they are used as ritual instruments and signaling devices. Wooden trumpets called *pistons* are carved from the stems of the papaya tree. Conch-shell trumpets, known as *lambis*, are commonly used as signaling devices by fishermen. They are also to be found among the coumbites, in Rara festivities, and occasionally in rituals, where they are usually identified with sea deities. In carnival times the old fashioned phonograph horn makes its appearance as a combined trumpet and voice amplifier. 534 184 [824] [202] [541] [216]

Probably the most important of the trumpets is the one made of bamboo. It is called a *sarrine* or *bois bourrique*. Both names have interesting origins. The cow's horn was at one time used for magico-medical purposes. The leaf doctor used it as an "applicator" of powders and potions. A small opening was made in the point of the horn, and 534 755 [237]

[See plate 8, P. 112-F. -- Analyst]

534 the horn itself was filled with the magico-medical preparation, which
755 was called *vaccine*. The point of the horn was applied to parts of the body which needed treatment, and the powers of the potion were thus transmitted to the affected areas. In time, the cow's horn itself came to be known as a *vaccine*. Eventually the horn used for musical purposes took over the name, which was then transferred to the bamboo trumpet. The other name by which the bamboo trumpet is known, *bois bourrique*, means burro wood. But it probably is a corruption of *voix bourrique*, meaning "donkey's voice," an accurate description of the sound it makes.

534 The vaccine consists of a length of bamboo, with a joint membrane at
533 one end cut into a mouthpiece. Trumpets of different sizes give different tones, and three to five of them together constitute a vaccine orchestra. Vaccines are employed by the coumbites in the fields, and they are heard in the towns and cities primarily during the pre-Easter festivities. In the Rara festivals the vaccine players march together, blowing and tapping their trumpets with sticks, followed by a crowd of dancers. Traditionally, the bamboo trumpet is not employed in religious music, although in recent years it has made its appearance occasionally in Congo-Guinée rites.

534 There are two kinds of musical scrapers. The one more often seen is the *grage*, a piece of sheet metal perforated in the fashion of our common kitchen grater. It is "played" by scraping a piece of wire or a nail across its rough surface. Found in secular rather than religious settings, the grage is likely to be used in combination with such instruments as the *tambourine*, marimba, claves, and bass. The second form of scraper is the *dentli*, or *dentli*, a notched stick played with a bamboo scraping blade. The free end of the stick is sometimes braced against a bench or a plank, which acts as a sounding board. Some Haitians reported that in the old days gourds were used as sounding chambers.

534 The scraper in one form or another appears to have both Indian and
171 West African precedents. Its relationship to the washboard as used in Negro folk music in the United States is obvious. The notched gourd
[172] called the *guiro*, found in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and other West Indian islands, appears to be present in Haiti only as an imported instrument.

534 Rattles of various types are used in religious and secular dances, in
535 the invocation of deities, and as accompaniment for solo singing. The most common of the rattles is the simple cha-cha, or *kwa-kwa*. It is a small gourd with a wooden handle, with seeds inside. It is usually played by the singing leader as a device to keep time. Sometimes the long dry seed pods of the cha-cha tree are used as a substitute.

008 In the Rara season two special rattles are used. One of them is made

2: Courlander B-S (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Rara season two special rattles are used. One of them is made of metal and resembles a tin can with a wooden handle. The metal sometimes is perforated with numerous small holes, and inside are *hoholi* seeds, which act as rattlers. This instrument, known as a *tchancy*, is usually decorated with colorful ribbons when in use. (In northern Haiti the term *tchancy* is used to designate metal wrist rattles worn by drummers.) The other Rara rattle, called *jouconjou* or *jouejou*, is made of three gourds carried on a long pole. One of the gourds is affixed to the end of the pole, and the others are fastened to the terminals of a short crosshar, giving the effect of a cross with bulbous ends. Since many of the Rara processions are dramatizations of the Christ epic, the instrument could be interpreted as a Christian symbol, though its conversion into a noisemaker appears to be an African conception. The *jouconjou* may be a variant of the small rattle-cross which is used by the Abakwa secret society in Cuba.[8]

534 541 [824] [531] [171]

The sacred gourd rattle of the cult priest is called *asson* or *hakour*. It is pear-shaped and covered with a network of beads which act as external strikers. It is used by the houngan to summon the spirits of the dead, to praise or call upon the deities, and to accompany the performance of magic. The asson is of West African derivation, and its counterparts are to be found among the cults of Martinique, Trinidad, Cuba, Brazil, Venezuela, and elsewhere where African traditions have left their mark. The gourds from which the assons are made are grown in a special grove sacred to the loa.

534 78 171 178

A large calabash rattle has been reported from several isolated regions of Haiti, primarily from the north. Some rattles of this kind have been described as more than twenty inches in height and covered by a network of external strikers, usually wari beans. The calabash rattles are used in groups of three. They are shaken and thumped against the palm of the hand, producing both deep and high-pitched sounds. These oversize rattles are employed without drums and are said to be associated with Arada-Nago rites. They appear to be a survival of the instrument known among the Yoruba as the *shékèré* and are found in Cuba in both Dahomey and Lucumi (Yoruba) cult centers.

534 [184] [171]

Probably one of the oldest of Haitian folk instruments is the earth bow, known as the *tambour maringouin*, or mosquito drum. Traditionally the mosquito drum is made in the following way:

A hole is dug in the earth, perhaps a foot or more deep. It is covered with palm or banana bark, which is pegged firmly all around. A cord is attached to the center of the bark membrane and drawn taut to a bent green sapling, one end of which is buried in the ground at a slight angle. The cord is plucked and stopped with the fingers of one hand, while

[8] [See Courlander, "Musical Instruments of Cuba," Musical Quarterly, April, 1942, pp. 233-24. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst]

534 its tension is varied by pressure on the bowed stick with the other hand, producing a change of pitch. The covered hole acts as a sound chamber.

In a "portable" model of the mosquito drum a tin pail or can is used for a sounding chamber. The pail is inverted and fastened to a small plank, to which the sapling also is affixed. It is believed by some observers that the instrument has special significance during the pre-Easter holidays (Mardi Gras and Rara),* but it may be used at almost any time of the year. The "accompaniment" for the mosquito drum usually consists of some kind of *cata*—sticks beaten upon a board or on the drumhead itself. On occasion, two or three of these instruments are beaten together, and the rough bark membrane may be rasped for additional effects. Most of the songs that go with the mosquito drum are secular. One of the appropriate songs favored by children goes:

[541]

[533] [534]

> Maringouin dit moin ta swing oh!
> Maringouin dit moin ta swing!
> Ta swing oh!
> Ta swing! [Ex. 166]
>
> Mosquito says I will swing, oh!
> Mosquito says I will swing!
> Will swing, oh!
> Will swing! *

534 191 The earth bow has a clear African ancestry. In almost identical form it has been found in the French Sudan, among the Washambala of East Africa, the Bongos in the eastern Congo, the Bafia and Baya in the Cameroons, the Fulbe in the Sahara region, and the Futadjallon people in Nigeria.[1]

The German explorer Georg Schweinfurth might have been describing a Haitian scene when he wrote, some eighty-five years ago, of the Bongos:

> Performers may be seen sitting for an hour together with an instrument of this sort: They stick one end of the bow into the ground, and fasten the string over a cavity covered with bark, which opens into an aperture for the escape of the sound. They pass one hand from one part of the bow to another, and with the other they play upon the string with the bamboo twig and produce a variety of humming airs which are really rather pretty. This is a common pastime with the lads who are put in charge of the goats. I have seen them apply themselves very earnestly and with obvious interest to their musical practice, and the ingenious use to which they apply the secrets of the theory of sound.[3]

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* The hum of the mosquito as it strikes.

1 (Combaire Sylvain, Les Contes haïtiens, pp. 97-98. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst)
2 (Curt Sachs, Geist und Werden der Musikinstrumente (Berlin, 1929), pp. 60-61. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. -- Analyst)
3 (Schweinfurth, The Heart of Africa, I, 287. Cf. p. 354 Category 116. -- Analyst)

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Except for the "aperture for the escape of the sound," the Bongo instrument is identical with the Haitian earth bow. The resemblance of the instrument to a spring snare strongly suggests that it may have been developed from some such device for catching game. This possibility is strengthened by the use of the earth bow among certain of the Bambarra hunters of the French Sudan as a game lure, the music played upon it being thought to have magical properties to attract animals to the region of the hunt.* A "portable" type of spring snare used among the Ashanti of Ghana is strikingly similar in form to the Haitian "portable" earth bow (see fig. 80).* 534 171 174

This instrument has survived not only in Haiti but in the United States as well. The washtub device that is an important part of American Negro folk music is a clear development of the earth bow. The washtub is inverted and a cord is attached to the tin bottom. The other end of the cord is fastened to a stick which is braced against the lip of the bottom side of the tub. The stick and the cord are manipulated precisely like the Haitian and African instruments. There is implicit evidence that the role of the washtub has been taken over in modern jazz orchestras by the double-bass fiddle. 534 171

Another device of African provenience is the Haitian *marimba* (also called *malimba*, *manimba*, and *marimbula*). It consists of a wooden box upon which a series of metal strips is mounted in such a way that they may be plucked with the fingers. In the face of the box, directly behind the keys, there is an aperture to permit the escape of the sound. The number of keys varies from three to seven or more, though some of them may produce duplicate tones. The instrument is usually about the size of a soap box. The musician sits upon it, facing the same way as the keyboard, and plays with his hands between his knees. The marimba is used for carnival music and for dances of the secular types, frequently in combination with a guitar, claves, and a cha-cha. It is a West Indian development of the small African *m'bila* or *sanza*, or "thumb piano." Several examples of the smaller instruments played with the thumbs have been found elsewhere in the West Indies, notably in Cuba,* and large forms of the sanza have been reported in recent years in Africa.

Among the instruments more or less restricted to religious service are whistles and small hand bells, which are used for invoking and inhuing the lwa and the dead. *Canaries* (large clay water vessels) also enter into ritual use. They are sung into, tapped with sticks, and on some occasions are covered with goatskin heads and played like a drum. 534 116

* (Fig. 80 appears on p. 112-55. -- Analyst)
* (Informant: Sobinas Tore, Bernard. Cf. p. 354, [115] in Category 116. -- Analyst)
* (See Courlander, op. cit., p. 239. Cf. p. 354 Cat. 116. -- Analyst)

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

776 184 794 a "nation" in the Dahomé rites; and the Ibo group, though still distinct, is frequently allied with the Dahomé rites or the Guinée rites.

The following list does not pretend to include all the loa known in Haiti. It is doubtful that a complete list could ever be compiled; in view of the continual generation of new deities and the constant cross-fertilization between "nations." The loa are grouped here according to [128] most widespread usage. There are contradictions from which there is no possible escape, and these general groupings will not necessarily correspond to the concepts and practices of any specific locality. It is intended here to give a broad and generalized view.

128 776 794 Under "The Vodoun Pantheon" I have placed constellations of deities of Dahomean and Yoruban origin, along with others that are clearly identified with Vodoun rites. Under "The Congo and Pétro Pantheons" I have listed the Congo-Guinée loa—consisting mainly of deities associated with Central Africa and deities affiliated with the Pétro rites. Ibo and Kanga loa are grouped together, because in many regions of Haiti the two pantheons appear to be interlocked. A separate listing is given for the Simbi family of water deities in view of their ambivalence; they are sometimes found in the Pétro group and sometimes in the Dahomé, according to local practice.

THE VODOUN PANTHEON

776 791 Damballa Wedo, or Dan Wedo. One of the most venerable of Haitian loa. He is generally recognized as the husband of Ayida Wédo, though occasionally the two deities are merged in a personality called Damballa-Ayida. The concept of a single identity for Damballa and Ayida conforms to Dahomean belief. In both Haiti and West Africa, Damballa is identified with the rainbow and is symbolized as a snake.[1] In Haiti he is associated also with rainfall, springs, and fertility. He is sometimes [782] described as "white," and the proper food offering to him is a white chicken. Persons [789] possessed by Damballa usually take on stylized characteristics of snakes. Along with [799] many other important loa, he has become identified with characters in Christian religious belief. There are, in fact, "two" Damballa Wédos. One, identified with Moses, causes in talking; the other, identified with St. Patrick, never talks. Food [782] offerings for the St. Patrick version of Damballa consist of eggs, flour, sugar, and almond syrup. Damballa remains one of the chief gods of the Dahomey cult in Cuba, and he survived into the last century in New Orleans under the name Danup.

[822] Ayida Wédo. Generally regarded in Haiti as the wife of Damballa, Ayida is also symbolized by snake and rainbow, and her color, like Damballa's, is "white." In Dahomey and Nigeria, Ayida is known as a male rather than a female spirit and is regarded there as the same divinity as Damballa, or Dji. In Dahomey, Ayida Wédo was the great serpent who held up the world. According to one myth, the Creator of the World assigned to Ayida the task of holding up the earth to keep it from falling into the sea. The great serpent coiled himself, tail in mouth, and lay below

1. [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 245 ff. Cf. p 354, Courlander 46. --Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[The Vodoun Pantheon]

the earth like the carrying pad that women wear to support bundles on their heads. Wherever Ayida Wèdo shifted his position there were earthquakes.[1] When the rainbow appeared after a rain it was said that Ayida had come out from under the earth to drink of the fresh water. [776] [171] [821]

Damballa Grand Chemin (Damballa of the Highway). Another manifestation of Damballa as a protector of those on long journeys. [484]

Damballa Vèrèr. Another manifestation of Damballa.

Dossi Wèdo. Considered to be the daughter of Damballa. The ending of her name (-o) suggests that at one time she may have been considered a wife rather than a daughter.

Doki Wèdo. A member of Damballa's family.

Acio Wèdo. A member of Damballa's family. Said to be a "work loa" who aids men with their gardens, especially in time of illness. [241]

Erzulie Dèsa, or Dèssa, sometimes spelled Erzulie. One of the "big" loa of the Dahomey pantheon, a symbol of purity, and sometimes identified with the Virgin Mary. Her color is white, and services to her include a ritual sweeping and sprinkling of the earth and a perfuming of the air. Food offerings to her include corn meal and eggs. Male "horses" of Erzulie are sometimes bound to her by mystic marriages, and they are obligated to refrain from sexual intercourse on certain days which belong to her. There are a number of Erzulies, regarded as members of the same family or, in some cult centers, as different manifestations of the same deity. Some Haitians regard Erzulie Dèsa as the ancestor of the Erzulie family and refer to her as Grand Erzulie. Note that there is a Dahomean town named Dèsa at approximately 0° 6' E., 6° 52' N. [199] [822] [782] [587] [834] [588]

Erzulie Fèfèn, or Erzulie Dèssèssou (Dahomey), or Erzulie Fèfèn Dèssèssou. Like Erzulie Dèsa, she is a symbol of purity and is identified with the Virgin Mary. Mystic marriages are performed with her, and her "horses" are obligated to refrain from sexual intercourse on certain days. She is also a giver of wealth. [199] [588] [787] [834]

Erzulie Wèdo. A sister or daughter of Erzulie Dèsa and also related to Damballa.

Erzulie Mèmè. A sister of Erzulie Fèfèn.

Erzulie Bawa. A manifestation of Erzulie who is especially fond of the Bawa dance.

Erzulie Jèèwèn (Red Eyes). A stern and hard Erzulie who is often identified with Pèrèo rather than Dahomey rites.

Alèwo Fèfèn. A member of the Erzulie cosmos, regarded as a market-place protector. In Dahomey, Alèwo was a protector of all public gathering places.[2] [493] [171]

Alèwo Badadré

Alèwo Dèssè Bèsè Bèsè

Malèvèwo Mèsèwo. A special form of Erzulie as priestess.

Malèvèwo Ezèzèzèzè, or Tèzèzèzè. A person mounted by this Erzulie talks only Spanish. [787] [171]

Sèwo, or Sèwèn. A thunder deity who hurls stones to the earth when angered. Some of the stones thrown by Sèwo are regarded as the sacred residence of various loa. Sèwo (or Sogbo) is a member of the original Thunder pantheon of Dahomey. [776] [171]

Sèwo Badé, or Sèwo Bèdé, or simply Badé. A close relative of Sèwo, regarded as the protector of the houndor (*hodè*). In Dahomey, Badé is sometimes referred to as the son of the deity Sèwo.[3]

[1 [See Ellis, The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, pp. 47-49; and Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 245ff. Cf. p. 354 Category 116. -- Analyst]
[2 [Ellis, op. cit., p. 52. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst]
[3 [Herskovits, op. cit., pp. 152ff. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[The Vodoun Pantheon]

776 Avaad Tonnerre, also pronounced Avaad Tonnerre. Another thunder loa. Abomé (or Agbomé) is the name of an ancient capital of Dahomey.

Bruiso. The wife of Sobo Badé.

So Nancrine, also called Sogo Nancrine, or simply So. A thunder loa of Dahomean origin. In Dahomey he is regarded as an offspring of Mawu and Lisa, and a member of the Sky pantheon. [171]

Kétonne, or Kétonne. A thunder loa who, like Sobo, hurls stones to the earth. In Dahomey he is known as Xevioso and is thought to be the same deity as So. In Haiti, persons killed by lightning are thought to be enemies of Kétonne and are given special treatment in burial. [171] [166]

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776 Agué Wedo, known also as Coquet-Nan-Mer. He is a loa of the sea; thunder and lightning over the ocean are thought to be Agué showing his cannon. He is usually symbolized in pictures by a sailing or steam vessel. His colors are blue and white, and the primary sacrificial animal for him is a male goat. High ceremonies for Agué are begun in the boundar and consummated in a sailing boat on the open sea, from which is launched a highly decorated and stylized miniature ship containing food for the deity. This tiny craft is known as the *Barque d'Agué*. Houngans honoring this spirit usually have a small boat hanging from the rafters. In Dahomey, Agué is also a sea deity and a member of the Thunder pantheon. 782 [321] [322] [171]

776 Agwétte Wedo. She is thought to be Agué Wedo's wife, though in Dahomey she was considered to be his daughter. [171]

Agwétte Wedo[illegible]. Said to be the son of Agué

La Sirène. Another deity of the sea, a lesser one visualized as a mermaid. La Sirène is usually thought of as belonging to a separate family, though she is frequently served along with Agué. Some sociétés do not recognize her at all.

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776 Nanchoumèdé, or Nanan Bourokou. A loa of herbs and medicines. In Dahomey this spirit was considered the grandparent of all deities, the progenitor of Mawu and Lisa from whom all demigods are descended. She is still remembered in the Dahomey cults of Cuba. 191

Lisa or Lisa. Probably the Lisa of Dahomey child of Nanchoumèdé.

Attibon Legba, or Legba Sé. One of the most important of Haitian loa, frequently the first one invoked in any service. He is the guardian of the gateway, the crossroads, and the highway. Cocks and male goats are his favorite foods, as in West Africa. In Dahomean tradition, Legba is the youngest offspring of Mawu and Lisa, the progenitors of all Dahomean deities. He is a divine trickster who is both feared and loved, a force that is capriciously malevolent or benevolent. Today, as in earlier times in Dahomey, the image of Legba, made of clay, stands or sits before the entrance to many villages. Sometimes the image is nothing more than a mound or column of earth symbolizing a phallus. Legba's mischief and tricks are directed against the other deities and human beings. In Haiti, as in Dahomey, Legba is not a personal deity. As Herskovits points out, Legba has no "character" and cannot be relied on. He is the intermediary between mankind and the deities. It is in this sense that he "opens the gate," providing a channel of communication between man and loa; and it is for this reason that he is often supplicated first in religious ritual. In Dahomean lore, Legba's mischief is often in the realm of sex. In ritual dances for 782 [321] [322]

[Ibid., pp. 101 ff. Cf. p. 354 Category 116. --Analysis]

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Legba in Dahomey, the performers hold a carved phallus between their legs and perform copulating movements. The Haitian Legba is depicted as an aged limping loa, and the carved phallus has become a gnarled crutch-cane that fits into the crutch of the legs. The Dahomean Legba is remembered elsewhere in the New World, notably in Dutch Guiana, Brazil, and Cuba. Until relatively recent times he was known among the Negroes of Louisiana by the name Papa Lebat.[1]

Legba Grand Chemin (Legba of the Highway). A special manifestation of Legba who guards the highway.

Legba Kalfu (Legba of the Crossroads). A special manifestation of Legba who guards the crossroads.

Legba Maît' Bèrèyèw (Legba Master of the Household). The Legba who protects the house and its grounds.

Legba Lapèlèrèwèd. One of the Legba family.

Legba Kèvè. One of the Legba family.

Legba Aètèwa. Said to be a "Nago" deity.

Atèwèn Kèkè. One of the Legba family.

Atèwèn Sèmèèn. One of the Legba family.

Atèwèn Kònè. One of the Legba family.

Ogoun Ferraille, often referred to as Maît' Ogoun. The chief and ancestor of a large family of loa whose activities have to do with blacksmithing and war, which are closely related. Ogoun Ferraille is a patron of warriors and the forge; his symbol is a piece of forged iron, such as a machete, a hoe blade, a saber, or a piece of iron chain. In West Africa, Ogoun is considered a patron of hunters as well.[1] He was widely known by various peoples in Dahomey and Nigeria. In Dahomey he was considered a child of the divine Mawu and Lisa,[2] and among the Yoruba of Nigeria he was regarded as a brother of Changó and Dada,[3] two spirits who survive in the Haitian pantheon. An altar to Ogoun Ferraille, like that of the loa Changó, may consist of a pile of iron scrap, perhaps a broken sugar vat. In Cuba, Ogoun Ferraille is a prominent deity in both the Arara (Dahomey) and the Lucumí (Yoruba) cults. Although absorbed exclusively into the Dahomey family of rites in Haiti, Ogoun Ferraille and his entire family and retinue are designated as belonging to the Nago "nation." Their color, like that of heated iron, is red. Ogoun Ferraille survived until recent times in Louisiana as Joe Ferraille.[4]

Ogoun Fer (Ogoun Iron). He is sometimes called Ogoun St. Jacques, St. Jacques Majeur, or simply St. Jacques, being identified with the saint of that name.

Ogoun Maréchaux (Ogoun Blacksmith).

Ogoun Balèndo. One of the Ogoun brothers.

Ogoun Balèndo Mèrèn. One of the Ogoun brothers.

Ogoun Jèrèmèn, or Jèrèmèn. One of the Ogoun brothers.

Ogoun Batonèn, or Batonèn. Said to be a "grandson" of Maît' Ogoun. He is a "work" loa, as well as an innovator and a warrior, and helps in the fields, especially in time of sickness. Badagry is the name of a town near the mouth of the Ogoun River in western Nigeria. According to a priest of the Cuban Dahomey cult, the word *badagri* was used to designate the circumcision house in Dahomey. Ogoun Badagry then may have been associated with that shrine.

Ogoun, or Ogoun Cocoron. A member of the Ogoun family and, like most of his brothers, a warrior and innovator. Ogoun's altar is usually a pile of scrap iron, or

1 [illegible], pp. 201 ff. Cf. p. 359 Courlander 116. — Author
2 [illegible], The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, p. 69. Cf. p. 359 Courlander 116. — Author
3 [illegible], op. cit., pp. 105 ff. Cf. p. 359 Cd. 116. — Author
4 [illegible], The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples, pp. 95, 609 ff. Cf. p. 359 Cd. 116. — Author
[illegible] Library of Congress Recording, No. 101. Cf. p. 359 Cd. 116. — Author

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any iron object, such as a sugar vat. In West Africa, Changó (or Shango) and Ogún were considered separate deities. In Nigeria, according to Ellis, they were brothers, closely associated with each other. Among the Yoruba, Changó was a thunder-and-lightning god and he is believed to have been one of the early kings of Oyo. The African Changó, like the Haitian, is identified with fire, a corollary of lightning, and persons possessed by him may carry pots of fire on their heads and perform other fire tests.[12]

Chango Gono. Another manifestation of Ogún Changó.

Ogún Bachanon. Possibly the same as Ogún Changó, or he may be named after the Bachongon, a Congo tribe. A warrior and ironworker.

Ogún Balenu. One of the Ogún family.

Nizaro Nizaro. One of the Ogún family.

Aruisaré, Aruisaré, Cisaré, or Cisaré. One of the Ogún escorte, sometimes called Ogún Cisaré, or Cisaré Bocon.

Ogún Yamok. One of the Ogún brothers.

Ossyela, or Bayela. A lou of war. Among the Yoruba people of Nigeria, Ossala was a sky deity and protector of the town gates. He was thought to form children in the womb and was therefore believed responsible for albinism and congenital deformities.[13] Ossala and Changó are among the main Lucumí (Yoruba) deities in Cuba.

Ogún Bosé. An aspect of Ogún who functions as a gateway guardian.

Ogún Boate (White Ogún). He does not drink rum, which is a favorite beverage of his brothers.

Ogún Jiaba.

Ogún Jiaka, Jiaal, or Yiaal. A warrior and ironworker. Jiaki may have been a shrine or regional designation.

Ogún Kiwin.

Ogún Kiwum.

Yalodé, or Ogún Lodé. Brother of Ogún Badagry and the other Ogúns. Yalodé is clearly of Dahomean origin.[14]

Ogún Panama, or Ogún Panam. Guardian against sunstroke, or spirit responsible for sunstroke. A brother of Ogún Badagry. He is usually seen wearing a Panama hat.

Ogún Pitoe Nortoe.

Ogún Hoeya (Ogún Red Eyes). A malevolent Ogún brother, red eyes being a mark of bad behavior. Some people feel that he is a member of the Petro rather than the Vodoun pantheon.

Nozo Pimoet. A member of the Ogún escorte. He eats hot peppers.

Bayanna Nozo.

Gédé Nimbo, or Nimi, also called Baron Gédé. One of the powerful deities of the Vodoun pantheon, particularly in the region of Port-au-Prince, where many houseboys cater extensively to him. Gédé Nimbo, along with his numerous brothers and his vast escorte, is a "dead" lou, a spirit of the graveyard, a sexual rascal, and a violent [illegible] of property. He is served apart from the other lou, and usually he has a separate altar or shrine outside the central houmfor. Cult centers for Gédé are often near graveyards, though not necessarily so. Gédé services abound around the main cemetery of Port-au-Prince. Gédé Nimbo has various manifestations, but he is usually

[12] Ellis, The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples, p. 97. (cf. R. Bastide, in Introduction to Pedro's Oliveira Drums of the Yoruba of Nigeria (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1960). Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst)

[13] Ellis, The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples, p. 58 ff. (cf. p. 359 of ms. -- Analyst)

[14] Ellis, The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples, p. 91-96, [illegible] cf. I, 39 (cf. p. 359 of ms. -- Analyst)

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dressed in a black frock coat, black top hat, and black trousers or a blue, white polka-dotted skirt. He carries a cane and smokes a pipe or a cigarette, according to which manifestation of Gédé he represents. He talks with a strong nasal accent, which is acquired by anyone mounted by him. Gédé Nimbo is always asking for money. Persons possessed by him may rub hot peppers on their tongues or in their eyes. In some parts of Haiti, Gédé is thought to be identical with Baron Samedi. In a Vodoun service, no other loa cares to enter while a Gédé is present; and Gédé delights in appearing suddenly, uninvited, and obstructing the orderly progress of a ritual. Although Herskovits points out that Gédéonne, or Gédé, is a Dahomean term,[1] it is worth noticing that in Haiti the Gédé sites are often regarded as belonging to the Nago "nation."

Gédé Nimbo Mamba. A Gédé brother.

Gédé Orlème. A Gédé brother.

Gédé L'Ouragan. A thunder or storm Gédé. Like the other Gédés, he is closely associated with death, and he is considered more of a malefactor than most. He is repulsive in appearance, with a dwarfish nature.

Gédé Medème. A Gédé brother.

Gédé Nawèl. A Gédé brother.

Gédé Nèwèwèl. A Gédé brother.

Gédé Vi. Said to be a wife of Gédé Nimbo, though some Haitians regard this loa as a female, possibly Gédé Nimbo's wife.

Gédé Zèclair. A loa of lightning, thought to be responsible for death by lightning, violent death in general, and destruction of cattle and other property by natural forces. He seems to be a Gédé version of Kébinou or Sobo.

Jean Zombie. One of the Gédé brothers, a "dead" spirit.

Gédé Ti Pòm (Gédé Little Fire)

Gédé Ravèl (Gédé Tear Off)

Gédé Jovèyèx (Happy Gédé)

Tèwèl Gédé, or Gédé Tèwèl Pèsèl. This Gédé is one that makes mischief as he enters a houngan service.

Gédé Zèd (Gédé of the Island)

Gédé Yèwèx

Gédé Tèwèl

Cèrèdèpèrèl Gédé (The Gédé Who Mows Down)

Jèwèxèx Bèrèxèx. A loa who works with the Gédé family, one of Gédé Nimbo's graveyard associates. He is described as having a white skin, suggesting that his nomenclature is a corruption of "British."

Mèxèx Gédé. A sister of the Gédé brothers.

Brèdèxèl. One of the Gédé brothers. His name means to "sweep and sprinkle," a ritual activity characteristic of certain Vodoun ceremonies.

Mèxèl Bèxèx, or Mèxèxèx Bèxèx. The mother of the Gédé brothers.

Mèlè' Èxèxèx. One of the Gédé sexes.

Bèxèx Sèxèx. One of a group of Bèxèxs who match with the Gédés. They are so closely identified that some Haitians feel that Baron Samedi is merely another name for Gédé Nimbo. Persons possessed in ceremonies are thought to be mounted by Baron Samedi or one of his brothers. Like the Gédés, the Bèxèxs are spoken of as "dead" spirits.

Bèxèx Pèxèxèx. The loa in charge of grave digging.

[Herskovits, Life in a Haitian Valley, p. 267, cf. p. 359, Category 156. — Analyst]

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116 Aziwo Lawen, or Bawo Lawen. Spoken of as "chief" of the cemetery, the one who plants the cross over the grave.

Bawo Pocoul, or Pocoul (Bawo Dun)

Bawo Sa. (Bawo Fath, or Deity Bawo)

Bawo Cozza. The Bawo who sits on the graves.

Bawo Tiwal

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[115] [117] Aziza Miel, or Zeul Miel. Herskovits reports that Aziza Miel is the name of the stream which Dahomeyans believe all the dead must cross.[10]

Cosyen Zeka. The peasant Zeka, special patron of the country farmers and the people of the mountains. He is always portrayed as wearing the blue denim costume of the peasant, carrying the western peasant knapsack called an *alfor cassee* and a cocomacque stick, and smoking a clay pipe. Persons possessed by Cousin Zeka are dressed in this way, and they speak in the manner of the mountain men, a style that is heard only in the most remote communities.

Minnie Zeka, or Minnieze Zeka. An aspect of Cousin Zeka. Minister Zeka is a sort of Minister of Agriculture and a patron of peasant farmers.

Si Aziza. The wife of Minister Zeka.

Aziza Tonnerre, or Tonnel. The Aziza who brings thunder and rain.

Aziza Bonsi Bozo. One of the Aziza family.

Mawu. The lua of twins. The Mawu family of deities are in a special category, somewhat apart from other spirits. In an important Vodoun service, for example, there are invocations to the lua in general, to the Mawuse, to the family ancestors, and to God.

Mawu Degu. Patron of the first child after twins if it is a boy.

Mawu Dega. Patron of the first child after twins if it is a girl.

Mawu Blanc. Patron of white twins.

Mawu Tom. Patron of triplets.

Mawu Gendo. Patron of twins when one is a boy and one a girl.

Mawu Qwe'. Patron of quadruplets, or of two consecutive sets of twins.

Mawu Bon (Mawu of the Woods). He is considered an "unbaptized" or "untamed" lua, and very savage. He likes sweets and never eats salt.

Mawu Dozé, or Mawu Cog. Patron of consecutive twins and triplets.

Mawu Cozza (Mawu of the House). This one eats salt.

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[111] Loko Aziza. He is usually pictured as the protector of the houses, or cult temple, and as the keeper of the altar (*ze*). In Dahomey, Loko is a deity of the Sky pantheon and a son of the divine Mawu and Lisa.[11] He is still remembered in the Aziza (Dahomey) cults of Cuba. He is also called Sobó or Sogé.

Loko Azizaza. Said to be Loko Aziza's wife.

Loko Aziza, or Dizza. A member of Loko Aziza's family.

Loko Dizza. A brother of Loko Aziza (Dizza + *fabre*).

Loko Dizza

Loko Tonnerre

Loko Dozé

Loko Bonsi

Tin Loko

[10 [Ibid., P 280. Cf. P 354 Category 116. --Analyst]

[11 [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 108-109. Cf. P 354 Cat 116. --Analyst]

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Anlo Lonso Bavè. A crossroads protector of the Loko family.
Lonso Dio Pèd

Dinsu Ogun. Among the Tshi-speaking people of West Africa there was a spirit called Adinsi, a malignant giantess.[171]
Ogun Jassow
Sogwo Yimasw

Zoosma
Mazmesma
Mazmesma Espera

Ansuwa. An aged female loa. Sacrifices to her consist of rice, sugar cane, lima beans, and eggs. As in services for the deity Ezilie, perfumes are used during services for her. [182]
Ansuwa Gotsoo, Lasalasso. A member of the Ansuwa family. Ansuwa is the name of a tribe of Dahomey.
Ansuwa Nsoo. Another member of the Ansuwa family.

Gèdèon Clermèil, or Pèdèment Clermèil. He is said to be the "father" and patron of all light children born to dark parents. Stories are sometimes heard of men who wrongly accused their wives of infidelity because of the lightness of their children, and who were finally mounted and punished by Clermèil. [187]
Clermèilèsse. The light-skinned daughter of the dark Général Clermèil.

The family relationships or ancestry of the following deities are not clear. Some of them may belong to one or another of the foregoing groups, or to still uncited families.

Adja. A female loa associated with the arts of pharmacy. The Yoruba of Nigeria had a spirit named Adja who carried men and women off into the forest to teach them about the medicinal properties of roots and herbs.[171] In Haiti, Adja's mangé consists of cookies and chicken. Persons possessed by her sometimes eat broken glass. [171] [182] [187]
Adja Boso, Akadja Boso, or Kadja Boso. This deity is also known in Dahomey. [171]
Adjassan. A male deity characterized as a *sandalier*, a small lizard capable of changing colors. A person mounted by Agassou sometimes climbs trees or posts. Some Haitians assumed that a person possessed by this loa will change color, from dark to light. [187]
Agasu. In Dahomey, according to Herskovits, Agasu is the name of the panther fetish.[171] Dahomeans regard this deity as of special significance to the royal family. He was remembered among Negroes in Louisiana under the name Agassou. [171]
Agasu Yansan. Related to Agasu.
Dosu. Among the Yoruba, Dadsi was a brother of Ogun and Ciyanga, and was a patron of vegetables.[171]
Atinsah, also known as St. Sauze. Persons mounted as a result of exposure to the sun are thought to be possessed by this loa. The association of Atinsah with the sun may be a synecdoche. [189]
Azimasoo
Azo. A loa who likes the Jube dance.

[171] Ellis, The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa, P.68. Cf. P.354, Category 116.--Analyst]
[172] Ellis, The Yoruba-speaking Peoples, pp.79-80 Cf. P.354, Cat. 116.--Analyst]
[173] Herskovits, Dahomey, I, 166 Cf. Ellis, The Ewe-speaking Peoples, P.83. [and that Dos is a name commonly important in the Dos of Dahomey. Cf. P. 354, category 116.--Analyst]
[174] Ellis, The Yoruba-speaking Peoples, pp.45, 46. Cf. P.354, Cat. 116.--Ana.]

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796 AZIVI. A snake deity.

BABOULE. A loa who likes the Baboule dance.

CALBASSE. Loa of the calabash tree.

CHÉBO PROFILÈ. An ancient male deity. Herskovits suggests that he may represent the leopard, *sébo* being the Fon word for that animal. The wildness of the attack on the sacrificial animal by persons possessed by Chébo supports this conjecture. A deity called Dada Segbo is prominent in the Rada Cult of Trinidad.

[114] [171]

SIMALO. A male loa who is believed responsible for fine physical proportions and bodily strength in men.

CIQUI-NAN-DLEAU. Probably the same as Ciqui-Nan-Mer (Agwé).

[171] AKADJA. This loa may well be the King Agadja of Dahomey who was said to be responsible for the coming of *vodu* (loa) into that country. Herskovits tells a legend about a woman named Hwandjile who prevailed upon the king to bring the *vodu* from the kingdom of Adja.[31] Hwandjile herself survives in Haiti under the name

WANILÉ, or HOUANILÉ

[82] [187] LINGLESSOU. A rainbow loa. Persons mounted in sight of a rainbow are thought to be possessed by this deity.

BLINGLESSOU. "Marches" with Linglessou.

WANGOL, also called ALOVI WANGOL (King of Angola). This loa appears to be an interpolation from the Congo rites.

[187] ALOVI, or GADALOVI. A masculine, dwarflike spirit who likes to disarrange things and play practical jokes. Persons possessed by Alovi may break up gatherings, discommode spectators and dancers, and generally make a nuisance of themselves. Some Haitians regard this loa as belonging more to the Pétro pantheon than to the Dahomé.

MAÎT' BOIS (Master of the Woods). May be an interpolation of Maît' Grand Bois of the Congo-Guinée pantheon.

MAÎT' DLEAU (Master of the Water). May refer to the loa Simbi.

DAN WÈZO, or WÉZO. A loa known in the Artibonite region. The name is possibly a corruption of Dan Wèdo.

DJA KÉKÉ

ÉVO, or NÈG' ÉVO. The name is that of a tribe on the Calabar coast of West Africa.

FARO PIERRE. Said to be the son of Pierre Basico.

GÉNÉRAL YENBATISTE, or JEAN BAPTISTE. Probably the Christian name of some Dahomé loa.

GRAND LESSAIGNE. An aged, dwarflike loa, guardian and protector of children.

GRAND ALABA, or ALOUBA

GRAND ALOUMANDIA, or MANMAN ALOUMANDIA. Believed to be a loa who was maît' tête of the Emperor Dessalines. Some informants consider this spirit to be a démon or loup-garou rather than a loa.

HOUNTOR. The spirit of the Arada drums. There is a difference of opinion on whether Hountor is a loa in the precise sense or merely a drum spirit. The term is sometimes used to designate the largest drum of the Arada trio.

[184] JEAN BATEAU. A loa well known in the region of Léogane. When he "enters," the possessed persons talk *langage* into a *canarie* (clay water vessel).

[187] MAÎT' DAVID. This loa always talks immaculate French, and persons possessed by him read cards and tell fortunes.

[31] [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 104. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116.--Analyst]

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Maly' Grand Chemin (Master of the Highway). Probably Legba. 176

Makanda. Believed to be the spirit of the famous houngan Makandal, who lived during the revolutionary period. He is symbolized as a snake which lives in the ground. Some informants think he is a Pétro rather than a Dahomé loa. [175]

Mando Ça̧ça

Tijlan Danyon (Ancient Tijean)

Whydah Wald. Whydah is the name of a seacoast town in Dahomey.

Zo. A fire deity of clear Dahomean origin.

Olocha

Ogal, or Ogander. Known also among the Lucumí cults of Cuba. May be any one of the Ogangrs mentioned by Herskovits. [171]

Ogander Lilé

Ogunjaré

Papa Danhomé

Pierre Bassoo. This loa is sometimes identified with St. Peter. [177]

Pierre Damballa, Danbarra, or Dandara. Sometimes identified with St. Peter.

Pierre Wald. Related to Whydah Wala.

Poula, or Foula. This name is probably a tribal designation.

Sabata. Described as a loa of ancient times. Sabata or Saglata is the so-called small-pox group of deities of Dahomey.

Sala. A female deity, thought by some to belong to the Erilie Fréda family.

Silibo Gwéto. In Dahomey, according to Herskovits, Silibo is an ancient sib-founder. [171]

Silebja

Taunkau

Ti Chan. This is a "false name"; this loa keeps his real name a secret.

THE AMBIVALENT SIMBI FAMILY

This group of loa in certain regions has attached itself to the Vodoun pantheon, elsewhere to the Congo-Guinée pantheon; but it has not maintained any kind of independent or semi-independent status. The deity Simbi and his family are of Congo origin. [171]

Simba. A male deity, patron of rain and drinking water. Said to be the father of the Simba brothers.

Simbi Dilau. The best known of the Simbi family. Like his father, he is the patron of fresh water, is associated with the spring, and usually is symbolized as a snake. The color sacred to him is white. Altars to Simbi Dilau usually are found at the spring or the well. Sometimes ponds are constructed for him within the hounfor. [823] [822] [178]

Simbi Kitta

Simbi Yenvéno, or Simbi Nan Dé Zeaux (Simbi in Two Waters). Symbolized as a water snake who lives in the "upper" waters and the "lower" waters.

Grand Simba. The parent of Simba, and ancestor of the entire family of water loa.

Simbi Trois Zilé (Simbi of Three Islands)

Simbi Macaya

Simbi Grand Bois (Simbi of the Forest)

22 [Ellis, The Ewe-speaking Peoples, pp. 71-74. Cf. p. 354, category 116.--Analyst]

[The Congo and Pétro Pantheons]

776 [822] [971] strong, he is a man-eater; constant reference is made to his mortar in which he grinds people. His ritual color is white; some people believe that his skin is also white. The grinding of a person in a mortar is an African symbolism. A bas-relief in Dahomey reported by Gorer[24] shows King Glele pounding a vanquished king's head in a mortar.

Bonz Tron Cornus

Bonz Yimaim

Bonz Swi Yimaim Yimaim

Dada Fèlix

Fèlix Boucan

Fèlix Un Main Un Pied Un Jé (Felix One Hand, One Foot, One Eye)

Fèlix Bellanne

Fèlix Danafaé

Fèlix Jéroma (Felix Red Eyes). A malevolent spirit.[25]

Fèlix Mapomas, or Mapomas. A malevolent spirit.

Fèlix Fumas Pétro

Fèlix Achupi

Grand Annoulo

Jean Pierre Poumaré

Linda Zin. A deity of Congo origin.

Damballa Laflambeau

Moli' Pierra. Said to be father of Zin Pimba.

Marian Ayida (Princess Ayida). A Pétro version of the Vodoun Ayida.

Marinette Cornu. A malevolent female loa.

Marinette Pied Cochon (Marinette Dry Feet). Sister to Marinette Bras Chiche, and equally malevolent.

Ogoun Jéroua (Ogoun Red Eyes). A malevolent spirit. A Pétro form of the Vodoun deity, with a different character.

Ogoun Dlau (Ogoun of the Water). Brother of Ogoun Jérouge.

Ogoun Laflambeau. A fire loa. When he comes in he plays with hot coals, hot iron, and flames.

Ogoun Pétro. He is malevolent and "eats" men.

Pierra, or Pierra

Quanqoin Fer (Iron Pants)

Kitta Blanca (Chic Kitta)

Kitta Bayé (Kitta of the Gate). A gateway guardian.

Kitta Cornu

Kitta Kanna

Kitta Lagra. Possibly the same as Kitta Bayé.

Racine

Rigal. A brother to Général Brisé. A benevolent loa.

Roi Grand Chemin (King of the Highway). May refer to Legba or to another highway loa.

Soliliwo Boqoussé

Taureau Pétro. A Pétro version of the Vodoun Taureau.

Tijean Pétro. A malevolent loa who preys on children from the foliage of the coconut palm.

Tijean Pied Pin (Tijean No Feet). Brother to Tijean Pétro.

24 [Gorer, Africa Dances, P. 188. Cf. P.354, Cat. 116. --Analyst]

25 [For footnote, See Cat. 116, P.354. --Analyst]

2. Games

THE GAME OF CAILLE, OR WARI

524 The African counting game played with beans or stones in a carved wooden tray (known in various parts of Africa as *oware*, *mangala*, *adi*, etc.) is still known and played in the southwestern mountains of Haiti, particularly in the region south of the Léogane Plain. In Africa the game has innumerable variants. Most often the carved playing board or tray has two rows of six, seven, or eight holes, or pockets, sometimes with a large pocket at each end for winnings. In Ethiopia the playing board consists of three rows of six pockets each. In the upper Congo region a form of the game uses a board of twenty-eight pockets in four rows. Among wandering herding peoples in East Africa the holes are simply dug in the earth, and for playing pieces stones or dried camel droppings are used. The game not only is widespread throughout Africa but has an ancient tradition in Indonesia, the Philippines, southern and southeastern Asia, and the Arabic Middle East.

In Haiti the game is usually called *caille*, or "house." It is played on a long, sixteen-hole board of the kind used in West Africa. The playing pieces are usually maize kernels, dried peas, or wari beans. Where wari beans are used, the game is sometimes called by that name. This is a curious syncretism. The wari bean itself is so named because of a black marking which looks like a smile, in Creole *wa ri* ("going to laugh"). There are several ways of playing wari in Haiti; all have the common objective of capturing pieces on the opponent's side of the board. This is referred to as entering his "house" and "eating" the occupants, a terminology that is employed elsewhere where the game is known.

524 One method of playing is as follows. Starting with four pieces in every hole, a player takes up all the pieces from any hole on his own side of the board and redistributes them in a counterclockwise direction, dropping one into each hole as far as they will go. When his last piece is

[p. 332]

2: Courlander 3-4 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 IS81 SV3

dropped, he picks up the contents of the next hole and continues the redistribution. Should his last piece eventually fall into an empty pocket, his turn is ended and his opponent begins. However, if his last piece falls into a hole containing one or two pieces, he "eats" those pieces along with the piece which he places there. He continues the play as before, starting with the following hole, monopolizing the play until he ends in an empty hole. The one who takes the most pieces wins. In some Haitian variants of the game, each person's play is limited to the distribution of the contents of a single hole. 524 184

THE GAME OF MAYAMBA

This game, like *caille*, appears to be of African origin. It is played with four chips made of shell, baked clay, or broken chinaware. One side of each chip is white, the other usually blue. Any number of players may participate, and, as in dice, all compete against the thrower. *Mayamba* has a strictly gambling incentive. If a player throws two whites and two blues, or four whites, or four blues, he wins. If he throws any odd combination he loses. 191 525

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Notes

Chapter 1: *The Making of the Haitian* (pp. 1-7)

[1]Thereafter Gando survives in Haiti as the name of a deity.

[2]Herskovits, in *The Myth of the Negro Past* (p. 47), provides a tabulation of raw data found in the manifests recorded for slaves shipped to Virginia between 1700 and 1769: 20,564 slaves were reported shipped from "Africa," 3,652 from Gambia, 6,377 from "Guinea," 9,225 from Calabar, 3,800 from Angola, and 1,011 from Madagascar. Of those shipped from the island of Madagascar, 473 were listed as coming from Mozambique.

[3]Bartolomé de Las Casas.

Chapter 2: *Man and the Universe: Vodoun* (pp. 8-18)

[1]See Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 3.

[2]Schweinfurth in *The Heart of Africa*, II, 31, says: "In Loango all exorcists and sorcerers are called gangas." Leo Wiener, in *Africa and the Discovery of America* (Philadelphia: Innes and Son, 1922), III, 32, reports: "Fetiss of gangs have in Fanti the meaning 'medicine' but also 'magic'—such as Nyika ganga and Kongo ganga."

[3]Gore, *Africa Dancer*, p. 120; Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 308 ff.

[4]From the Fon *houn-an* or *houn-on*. Among the Arada of Dahomey a *houn-an* was regarded as a spiritual wife of the deity. She was a servant of the cult temple, and in some instances a wife of the cult priest.

[5]Translated from the French of Aubin, *En Haïti*, pp. 37-39.

[6]Deren, in her *Divine Horsemen* (pp. 119 ff.), gives an excellent report of a service for Agwé is a boat at sea. Aubin (*op. cit.*, p. 108) seems to have given the first description of this service at sea for the loa Agwé.

[7]Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. 109.

[8]*Ibid.* p. 123. Leyburn advances the theory that Vodoun developed during this period as a result of the vacuum left by the Church. Although the Church did in effect leave the field to the African cults, one must assume that the Arada, Congo, and other cults were already organized and possessed of great vitality before the Haitian revolution. Implicit evidence points to a continuity of cult life from the earliest days of the African on Haitian soil. There are no statistics to reveal the extent of cult membership at the end of the eighteenth century, but the content and form of Vodoun today are so overwhelmingly African that it is difficult to think of Haitian cult activity as the product of a renaissance.

Chapter 3: *The Loa: Gods of the Haitian Mountains* (pp. 19-29)

[1]The term *vodoun*, used in this precise sense, conforms to the original Fon (Dahomean) usage. The term *loawah*, also of Fon origin, signifies "spirit" and belongs to the same root

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as bouefor, bouzoi, bouzoufrion, bouzoire, etc. Bijoutier is of obvious French origin. *Lwa* is probably from the Fanti, but it could be from the Yoruba.

Various methods and formulas are employed in "tying" a lwa. Sometimes making the sign of the cross is regarded as adequate, or the saying of a prayer. In "The Voduu Service in Northern Haiti" (*American Anthropologist*, XLII, 242-245), George Eaton Simpson reports that the "tying" of a lwa sometimes results in a contract between the individual concerned and his houngan. If the houngan wants the *mait' tête* to come in, he must remember the usual honours that "horse" has put in the way. "One procedure for bringing an possession is a servant who has tried to 'eat' his chief god in for the priest to stand in front of the person whom he suspects, make the sign of the cross, and strike him on the forehead three times with a varnished stick. Usually these blows are hard enough to make blood spurt. The servant then begs the pardon of the angry god, and as soon as possible he enters the knots in his handkerchief [the method he has used for 'tying' his lwa]."

[illegible] [8]Herskovits, *Dahomey*.

Chapter 4: *Death Rites* (pp. 50-51)

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[1]Maurice Delafosse, *L'âme noire*. Translation from *Free France*, special issue No. 4, French Press and Information Service, New York, June, 1946.

[2]Leo A. Verwilghen, in booklet describing peoples of the Kwango region, accompanying *Music of the Western Congo*, recordings issued by the Ethnic Folkways Library.

[illegible] [3]Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu*, pp. 88-89.

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[4]W. M. Eiselen and I. Schapera, "Religious Beliefs and Practices," in Schapera, *The Bantu-speaking Tribes of South Africa*, p. 250.

[5]Translated from the French of Métraux, *En Haiti*, p. 212.

[6]Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, pp. 213-214.

[7]Hall and others, *Haitian Crowds*, American Anthropological Association, Memoir No. 54, pp. 188-189.

[8]Simpson, "Four Voduu Communities," *Journal of American Folklore*, April-June, 1946, pp. 155-162.

[9]As translated by Courlander from Simpson's Creole text, *ibid.*, p. 156. The preceding paragraph is from p. 155.

[10]Translated by Courlander from the Creole of Simpson's text.

[11]This and the preceding paragraph are from Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

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[12]These shells, as indicated elsewhere, are part of the paraphernalia of the Voduu priest and appear to be an inheritance from the priests of the Fa cult of Dahomey. The divining shells are usually thrown on the ground in fours, and the readings depend upon combinations of "heads and tails." The manner of throwing the shells, as well as the number used, corresponds closely with the Haitian secular gambling game *mayombe* (see Appendix 2), though the purpose is obviously different. In some priestly rites in Haiti, ashes rather than the customary shells are used for divining.

[13]Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

[14]*Ibid.*, p. 161.

[15]Herskovits, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

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[16]Herskovits (*ibid.*) notes that persons who die of smallpox, lightning, and certain other phenomena are not buried in coffins. Some of my informants indicate, lip to be their understanding also, but they said that the dead are buried without coffins for strictly economic reasons as well.

[17]Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

[18]Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. 156.

[19]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 358.

[20]*Ibid.*, pp. 357-358.

[21]Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, p. 214.

[22]Hall and others, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

Chapter 5: *Services for the Loa and the Family Ancestors* (pp. 40-56)

[illegible] that the houngan and the hajiaw are performing services normally performed by the *petit serviteur*.

[illegible]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 169.

[illegible]Turnbull, *Spirit Cult in Haiti*.

[illegible]Account given by Jean Raoul Pierre.

[illegible]Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana.

[illegible]Account given by Yehudu Sainvil. A. W. Cardinall notes in his book *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 62): "Twins are in most cases treated with respect. Before a man does [illegible] one for a cement he must and invariably does sacrifice to his spirit and apologizes for the harm he is about to do it."

[illegible]The *vèvè* of *rajaalèli* *ville* is conducted periodically for a *mèlé* after the original *lavè* *ville* ceremony. The purpose is to "refresh" the loa and make him content with his residence in the head of the devotee.

[illegible]Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, p. 113.

[illegible]It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water cults in certain Negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form.

[illegible]Odette Mennesson Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Vodoun Loa," in Appendix A of Deren, *Divine Horsemen*, p. 264.

Chapter 6: *Songs of the Peristyle* (pp. 73-94)

[illegible]This theme is further commented on in chap. 13. Compare with the following excerpt from a Surinam song reported by Herskovits in *Suriname Folk-Lore* (p. 684):

> I have no mother there,
> I have no father there,
> I have no sister there,
> I haven't got anybody there.

Chapter 7: *In the Mapou Tree: Magic, Demons, and Compacts* (pp. 95-104)

[illegible]Simpson, "Haitian Magic," *Social Forces*, October, 1940, p. 87.

[illegible]Note the coincidence of the term *grigris* or *grigri* as used in the United States, where it has the same meaning as magic, or "voodoo" charm.

[illegible]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 393.

[illegible]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, p. 243.

Chapter 8: *Mardi Gras and Rara: Jugglers, Maypoles, and Kings* (pp. 105-119)

[illegible]Arbain, *En Haiti*, p. 40.

[illegible]Marionettes of this kind have been observed in both East and West Africa and are well known in the region of Senegal. I saw a phallic marionette, virtually identical with the Haitian version, in the neighborhood of Khartoum, Sudan.

Chapter 9: *Land and Work* (pp. 120-131)

[illegible]Franklin, *The Present State of Haiti*, p. 360.

[illegible]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 300 ff., describes Dahomean polygamous marriage in its various forms. Although Dahomean plural marriage is complex in terms of gifts, obligations, and

relations between the husband and the wife's family, it is nevertheless commonplace for men who can afford it to have more than one wife.

[6]Simpson, in "Sexual and Familial Institutions in Northern Haiti," *American Anthropologist*, October-December, 1941, p. 656, observes that in northern Haiti there are three distinct types of plaçage. "A *fermme-caille* shares her man's house, while a *maman petite* is a woman who has born children for a man without living in his house. A *fermme plaçée* does not live in her consort's house, and she has given him no children." Although none of these women has any legal rights of inheritance, Simpson notes, "moral claims to a man's property stand in descending order for these three classes of plaçées."

[7]Johnston, *The Negro in the New World*.

[8]UNESCO, *The Haiti Pilot Project*, p. 18.

[9]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 505.

[10]The group work patterns of Haiti show a common ancestry with Negro gang work patterns in the United States. While nothing so formalized as the complete pattern among American Negroes, similarities are striking. The emphasis on rhythm, the swinging of hammers or picks in unison, the need for a singing leader, the responsive chorus, and the frequent use of some kind of percussion to keep time, all derive from a common concept of the nature of group work.

[11]Herskovits, "Some Aspects of Dahomean Ethnology," *Africa*, Vol. V (July, 1932), pp. 266-276.

[12]Cardinall, *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 109), observes that among the Krachi people of Togoland "no man may have sexual intercourse with a woman for seven days before he goes hunting."

[13]An Ashanti story told by Rattray in *Akan-Ashanti Folk-Tales* credits the hedgehog with owning the original hoe; according to this version, the hoe escaped across the sea to the country of the white men, who then possessed the secret. Afterward, the white men brought many hoes to Ashanti.

Chapter 11: *Dancing and Dance Drama* (pp. 126-136)

[1]Quoted in Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 73.

[2]Actually a banjo-like instrument of African provenience. The similarity of the word *banza* to *banjo* appears to be more than a coincidence.

[3]Saint-Méry, *De la danse*, as translated by Lillian Moore in "Moreau de Saint-Méry and 'Danse,'" *Dance Index*, October, 1946, p. 238.

[4]Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[5]Brandy or rum with gunpowder is sometimes drunk by persons possessed by the loa Ogoun, deity of war.

[6]Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[7]United Nations photograph no. 6205.

[8]Students of United States Negro life will recognize the word *crowdjaille* as a variant of *crawfish*, a dance known on the lower Mississippi. According to one observer, Dr. Willis James of Spelman College, Atlanta, small Negro boys on the docks used to call to the boat passengers:

> "Throw me a nickel
> Throw me a dime
> If you want to see me
> Do the *crawfish*."

The term *crawfish* is still used to mean hand-loading of cotton bales on river boats. When this loading was done mainly by hand some years ago, the stevedores worked rhythmically in a line and sang. An old man from Louisiana testified that within his own memory the dockside *crawfish* was accompanied by makaskit drums and other percussion.

2: Courlander 3-5 (1937-1939) 1963 893 Note: 893

Chapter 12: *Songs of Complaint, Recrimination, and Gossip* (*pp. 127–147*)

[5]See Herskovits and Herskovits, *Suriname Folk Lore*, pp. 13–32.

Chapter 13: *Comments on the Mighty: Political Songs* (*pp. 148–162*)

[1]*Egypt, Haiti, Her History and Her Detractors.*

Chapter 15: *Secret-Society Songs* (*pp. 166–169*)

[1]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, p. 196.
[2]See Courlander, "Alukwa Meeting in Guadeloupe," *Journal of Negro History*, XXIX (1944), 46 ff.

Chapter 16: *Folk Tales: Bouki, Malice, and Jean Sonnet* (*pp. 170–184*)

[1]The theme of throwing magic objects upon the ground to ward off a pursuer is widely known, but the story as told in Africa has special characteristics of its own, such as the elephant hair. In Ashanti tales, the prize is the tail of the queen elephant, which is needed to serve as a collar.

[2]This part of the tale, at least, dealing with the dragon that swallowed the sun, seems to be known in western Europe. Some reports of the tale of Gambrinus's Bath have come from France.

[3]Variants of "The President Wants No More of Anansi" are widely known around the world. The story is told among the Somali of East Africa, with the legendary character Abumowen, a Persian trickster hero, playing the title role. Anansi plays the same part in West Africa, and other trickster heroes are identified with the same adventure in India and Southeast Asia. The tale has been reported also from the West Indian island of St. Martin ("He Meets the King's Conditions," in Parsons, *Folk-Lore of the Antilles, French and English*, Part II).

[4]The fishing story narrated here, except for the chase, is found in many versions in West Africa. The second part of the tale, the pursuit, has a special Haitian flavor. Bouki chasing Malice through the cult chief's ritual grounds and the church, with Malice trying to make appropriate use of the situation, is a special delight to Haitians. The dialogue between Bouki and Malice's behind is also regarded as very humorous.

[5]Known in virtually all Negro communities in the Americas, the tale of eating the honey (or butter, pork, or lard) seems to have come to the New World by way of Africa, although it is also known in Europe.

[6]The theme of the singing tortoise (or other animal, or an object such as a shell) has appeared in folk tales ranging from West Africa through the Americas to the Far East. This Haitian variant bears a striking resemblance to a tortoise story from the Gold Coast (Ghana). In the Gold Coast variant the tortoise asks the hunter who finds him to keep his singing ability a secret, but the hunter has to tell about his discovery. When the village headman hears about it, he calls for a test. The tortoise refuses to sing, and the hunter is punished. Then the tortoise sings his song, which emphasizes the hunter's bad faith. The philosophical tone of the Haitian tortoise's songs, particularly the last one, is quite similar. The last line of the song is from a Haitian proverb.

Chapter 17: *Children's World: Game Songs and Games* (*pp. 185–188*)

[1]The description of this game is from Paul, "Les jeux," 2 pages," *Bulletin du Bureau d'Ethnologie*, July, 1948, p. 50.

2: Courlander 8-6 (1937-1945) 1969 SV3 Gabl SV3

Chapter 18: *Musical Instruments* (pp. 189-201)

[1] Herskovits and Herskovits, *Suriname Folk-Lore*, p. 83. The stick is also known in Surinam.

[2] Informant: Joseph Lange, Bronxville.

[3] Library of Congress album, *Folk Music of Venezuela*.

[4] Pamphlet accompanying recordings, *Music of Equatorial Africa* (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1957).

[5] See Courlander, "Musical Instruments of Cuba," *Musical Quarterly*, April, 1941, pp. 212-226.

[6] Combarieu Sylvain, *Les Cuivres Antiques*, pp. 97-98.

[7] Curt Sachs, *Geist und Werden der Musikinstrumente* (Berlin, 1929), pp. [illegible].

[8] Herskovits, *The Heart of Africa*, I, 283.

[9] Informant: Ishidan Torl, Ramako.

[10] See Courlander, op. cit., p. 230.

Appendix 1: *The Pantheon* (pp. 203-301)

[1] Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 108 ff.

[2] See Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa*, pp. 47-50, and Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 108 ff.

[3] Ellis, op. cit., p. 50.

[4] Herskovits, op. cit., pp. 150 ff.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 102 ff.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 102 ff.

[7] Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa*, p. 67.

[8] Herskovits, op. cit., pp. 108 ff.

[9] Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, pp. 65, 67 ff.

[10] Library of Congress Recording No. 101.

[11] Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, p. 47; W. R. Bascom, in introduction to sound album *Dances of the Yoruba of Nigeria* (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1950).

[12] Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, pp. 58 ff.

[13] Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples*, pp. 31-32; Herskovits, op. cit., I, 33.

[14] Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, p. 189.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 180.

[16] Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 108-109.

[17] Ellis, *The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa*, p. 68.

[18] Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, pp. 79-80.

[19] Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 163 ff. Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples*, p. 83, says that this deity was especially important in the town of Aglonou.

[20] Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, pp. 45, 76.

[21] Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 109.

[22] Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples*, pp. 31-34.

[23] Saint-Méry, *De la danse*, p. 48.

[24] Cuney, *African Dances*, p. 188.

[25] Red eyes are a symbol of malevolence appear in the folklore of many Negro cultures. Our own American ballad about the gambler Stackalee states:

> "The judge says, Stackalee, I would spare your life,
> But I know you're a bad man, I can see it in your red eyes."

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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648 The financing of these many revolutions was usually provided by
669 foreign merchants, bent upon installing a government that would
565 grant them special economic concessions (Munro, 1964:326–31). The
701 United States occupation ended this doleful succession of regimes
439 and, by throwing its weight to the elite, by suppressing military activity in the countryside, and by reforming the army, the United States gave a new meaning to the separation of the elite and the peasantry. Leyburn's interpretation is consistent with these events; yet some Haitian scholars have differed with Leyburn's analysis.

114 In a lengthy review article, the dean of Haitian historians, Dr. Jean
564 Price-Mars (1942:1–50), questions the applicability of the term
563 "caste" to the social groupings of Haitian society. He notes that
671 Haitian law after the revolution never legitimized any distinction on
144 grounds of physical type, unlike a society such as the United States—that in fact, the very basis of Haitian polity was the absence of such distinctions. Furthermore, Leyburn's interpretation is qualified by the fact that the elite and the rural masses are not entirely distinctive physically. In some parts of rural Haiti, particularly in the southern peninsula, there are many light-skinned people; and many individuals who qualify as members of the elite on all other counts are very dark in appearance. The fact that being "Negro" or "white" in Haiti is viewed as a matter of degree, rather than of kind, complicated by all the other criteria of social position employed in drawing distinctions, has important implications for the way social barriers have operated in that country.*

114 Leyburn did not contend that all the effects of the United States
565 occupation were in the direction of increasing the gap between the
ELITE AND THE PEASANTRY.

568 * In this regard, Haiti is aligned with most of Latin America, in contradistinction to the
564 United States, where many persons believe that "one drop of Negro blood" [sic] makes a
171 "Negro." The failure of North Americans to distinguish between sociological and genetic
144 categories of physical type has led to considerable confusion in their dealings with Latin America and in their understanding of Latin American societies. North American race prejudice at its most extreme sees color as the primary basis for social ranking, and no individual accomplishment (for instance, in terms of economic or intellectual success) can overshadow the inferior status unalterably bestowed by certain physical traits. Haitians—and generally all Latin Americans—social distinctions do not rest solely on considerations of physical type; a black skin does not "doom" an individual if his attainments make him otherwise the equal of his lighter-skinned fellow citizens. Hence, it might be argued that the term "caste" would be more appropriate when applied to the Negro people of the United States (regardless of phenotype, and including those "Negroes" who are *sociologically identified* with the Negro people even if their physical appearance is dramatically Caucasian) than when applied to the peoples of Latin America.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Nor is it sufficient to label *Duvalierism* "pathological" or "paranoid." The roots of this ideology are to be found in Haiti, not elsewhere; its supporters are the product of Haitian times and ideas; and their social identity, while not entirely clear, would probably pose few enigmas if enough data were available.* In order to make clear these assertions, however, it is necessary to look again at Haitian society, the Haitian society Leyburn has described so well, and to reexamine the terms that have been used by him and by others to describe it.

Though the societies of the Caribbean Sea differ significantly from each other, many of them share certain general historical experiences. Unlike the colonial areas of the Old World, these islands were largely populated from abroad, and in this regard they resemble the Atlantic lowland areas of mainland America. However, the colonial history of the islands meant that they would long remain the instruments of policy formulated in foreign capitals. Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and other islands were, during most of their postconquest history, the outposts of far-flung colonial empires, and the design of their societies was conditioned by this dependence and subjugation. As "plantation islands," their agriculture, demography, mode of settlement, and social structure were attuned to metropolitan needs and objectives. Unlike most of Africa and Asia, the Antilles lost their native populations almost entirely, owing to enslavement, overwork, disease, and war, early in the era of conquest and settlement. There remained the vestiges of native traditions, assimilated into the new, growing cultures of the postconquest period. The Indians themselves, wherever they were able to survive, were also assimilated through interbreeding with Old World migrants.

The newcomers came from Europe, Africa, and Asia, bringing with them what they could of their ancestral traditions, but never able to transfer their social heritages as intact bodies of belief and behavior. Hence the cultures of the new Caribbean societies were built up out of elements originating in many different places, while their social forms took shape under conditions of colonial control. The peoples of the islands were able to maintain some continuities with

* One interpreter of the Haitian political scene (Bastien, 1960:845-48) has suggested that Leyburn's analysis of Haitian society as a "two-caste" system greatly influenced local political thinking by strengthening one idea: "the black intellectual must regain political power for the benefit of the country's majority."

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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new ways. The virtual extirpation of indigenous culture, however, occurred in few areas outside the New World; it was particularly characteristic of the coastal and lowland areas of this hemisphere. Hence, Caribbean culture is almost entirely transplanted and recently synthesized. In the Caribbean area, an additional distinction lay in the persistently colonial character of the islands and in the effects of this colonialism on local life. Wherever the plantation flourished, large populations of African origin grew out of the original importations of slaves. This was true from the southern United States to Brazil, but was especially marked in the islands, where local populations of European extraction were either absent or reduced by the spread of the plantation. Only in Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Santo Domingo, and in some of the smaller islands that developed no plantation system, were substantial proportions of Europeans to be found. In Haiti, the early cultural admixture of Colonial Spanish and Indian was soon swamped by the cultures of Africa, and the European cultural component became predominantly French after 1697, when the western third of Hispaniola—today's Haiti—was ceded to France.

But Haitian society did not come to be purely African, in any sense, nor is that society more than broadly similar to the other societies of the Caribbean. The kind of society in which the French masters and their African slaves met and mixed, and the subtropical, colonial environment in which they lived, imposed their own conditions for culture growth. What the Haitian people could keep as a living part out of the African past was limited by the regimen of slave plantation life; what they could borrow or copy from their masters was affected by the nature of the social relationships between those who held power and those who had to bend to it. Ultimately, independence meant that the Haitian people could employ what they already knew and practiced under slavery, but in a wholly new social setting.

The substantial isolation that followed independence led to slowed change, both social and cultural, and to the gradual spread of the yeoman way of life throughout rural Haiti. From 1804 until the United States occupation, Haiti was probably less affected by external developments than any other country in the hemisphere. In this regard, its social history is noticeably different from that of the other Caribbean islands, some of which, like Puerto Rico and Cuba, were forcibly brought back into the mainstream of world developments in the

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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same century in which Haiti withdrew. The yeomanry of Haiti in the nineteenth century was hence able to develop a traditionalism of unusual firmness and persistence.

This traditionalism, however, has had a high price. The economic productivity of the rural cultivator has not risen; it can be argued convincingly that poor land use, erosion, and population growth have meant lower levels of consumption for the common people in 1966 than obtained a hundred years or more ago. The rural masses, though overwhelmingly consisting of landholders, have been unable to break out of a stagnation that is economic as well as cultural. Such stasis has been based to some extent on the limited responsiveness of the rural folk to outside stimulus. But also important in maintaining the past is the national institutional system that took on its characteristic shape after 1804, and under which the rural masses still live. That system, the origins of which Leyburn has examined and assessed with such care, is controlled, as we have seen, by a numerically small segment of the national population that is markedly distinct from the yeomanry itself.

The nature and internal differentiation of the elite needs much more study, though it seems clear already that it is by no means a single solidary class embracing all but the yeomen. Whatever the structure of the elite, the relationship between the yeomen on the one hand and the real holders of power on the other must be understood if one is to understand Haiti. The yeoman is defined in terms of the elite; he is dependent upon it and subject to it. This is what is meant when it is said that the yeomanry, like the elite, forms only a part-society. Yet without the yeomen, there would be no elite. The elite live by controlling and taxing the rural masses, and find their sustenance and their power in rural productivity. Elite and yeomen, then, are bound together in unequal but interdependent relationships in Haiti as they are in other less developed societies of a similar kind. In such cases, the political role of the yeomanry is usually minor, and few opportunities may arise for the expansion of its political strength. If the yeomanry fails to increase its productivity in ways that enable it to control more of its own surpluses, its role in affecting national political decisions may grow narrower rather than wider, and this ominous possibility has become a worldwide phenomenon. It becomes more intensified wherever industry and trade grow, unaccompanied by parallel growth in yeoman productivity or in new and more widely representative national institutions.

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That the separateness of yeomanry and elite had visible and socio- 565
logically important expression in physical type in Haiti was a clear 563
consequence of the history of that country. But the traditional pre- 664
ponderant light skins at the top of the structure and the preponderant 642
darkness at its base are less important than the domination of the total structure, and of the institutional means for changing it, by a more fraction of the national population. It is the *power* of the elite which has mattered through time; its physical appearance has been only a historically derived expression of that power. Such a balance of politically weak masses against numerically sparse powerholders is common, perhaps particularly in the "less developed world"; but each such case has certain special characteristics. Haiti's special nature is not simply in its being a yeoman country, and one in which a small group dominates the mass. As a rural, agrarian, unindustrialized, politically sovereign, and quasi-capitalistic country, Haiti shares much with other lands; but in each regard its own particularity needs to be assessed. [171]

The rurality of Haiti is extreme, not simply because there are no 361
concentrations of population in excess of 25,000 except for Port-au- 369
Prince and Cap Haïtien but also because towns of intermediate size 489
are few in number, and the urban concentrations in the country's two cities are substantially of relatively recent rural origin. Port-au-Prince dominates the Republic in all of its economic, political, and social activities. Furthermore, the rural towns have been losing to the capital, not gaining from it. Until the United States occupation, the larger towns of the coast, such as Jérémie, Jacmel, and St. Marc, were united economically with each other, and to some extent with the capital, by a lively coastwise shipping system, and the inland towns were tributary to those of the coast. The growth of inland transport during the occupation strengthened the interior towns while coastwise shipping declined, but the capital grew even more important as the sole economic center of the Republic. Since the 1940s, the rapid deterioration of the road system has left both inland and coastal towns enfeebled; only Port-au-Prince has remained strong.

The dominion of Port-au-Prince is firm, and there is no focus of 369
power in the countryside that can counteract it. Those few foreign 473
enterprises in Haiti that base themselves outside the capital city use 504
local port facilities (e.g. Miragoâne for Reynolds Aluminum, Cap 489
Haïtien for the sisal plantations of the north) and do not affect the development of the interior transport.

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369 development of interior transport. The only passable roads in the
497 Republic run from Aux Cayes in the south to the capital, and from
646 Cap Haïtien in the north to the capital. Transport and communications simply symbolize the power that Port-au-Prince wields, since the same circumstances characterize all national institutional arrangements. Thus Haiti is an extreme example of urban domination, even though its urban population is a fraction of the national total. The consequence has been to keep most of the rural folk cut off from the apparatus that effects national decisions and shapes national policy. Haiti's national legislature, never important in limiting presidential power, is less so today than ever; at best, it had only represented the interests of provincial towns as opposed to the capital, and never the interests of the mass of country people.

701 The local military and judiciary officials possess the formal author-
692 ity vested in them by the state, and their power is very considerable.
642 Few local people would dare challenge their decisions, and the de-
369 vices for appeal against arbitrary exercise of authority are few. Admittedly, at the lowest local level the *chef de section*—who is traditionally appointed by the captain of the military in the *commune* center and is himself a yeoman—is subject to some genuine restraint by local inhabitants. Jean Comhaire-Sylvain (1955:620–24) has argued convincingly that the people of a community are capable of insisting on democratic procedure in those matters requiring decision that come to the attention of local authority. But such decisions have little or nothing to do with larger issues. The yeomanry cannot directly make its wishes felt in national politics; and national politics are conducted almost without reference to the aspirations of the rural masses. It is precisely in the separateness of local life from the mainstream of national decision-making that the political impotence of the yeomanry is demonstrated.

311 Haiti's agrarian nature cannot be expressed simply by saying it is a
423 rural and yeoman country. Haiti does not have a "land problem," as
171 that phrase is conventionally applied to Latin America. It does, it is true, suffer from land shortage, inasmuch as too little land is worked at too low a level of productivity and must feed too many mouths. But a very substantial proportion of the rural masses owns land, or has regular access to it. It is true that most land is held in small plots and without clear title. But those persons who own no land or who lack land to work are proportionally fewer than in any other Carib-

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311 been country, and perhaps fewer than in any country in Latin Amer-
423 ica. The agriculture itself, with the exceptions now of those very few
171 large-scale plantations in sisal and sugarcane, is adapted to small plots and is worked with intensive labor and few tools on hilly land. Com-
433 pared with agricultural production, especially of cash crops, in most
178 mainland Latin American countries, productivity is low. The yeomanry is conservative in its agricultural practices, and not ready to change unless the changes entail minimal risk and the gains to be real-
241 ized are clearly demonstrable (Erasmus, 1952:20–26). Yeomen culti-
177 vate with three goals in mind: cash income from world-market
185 commodities (for instance, coffee, sisal, vetiver); cash income from
434 items produced for local sale and consumption; and subsistence. While they are heavily involved in production for sale, their crop choices and land-use patterns rest fundamentally on a subsistence orientation. All grow a substantial part of their own food, especially sorghum, maize, sweet potatoes, taro, manioc, malanga (*Xanthosoma sagittifolium* Schott), plantains and bananas, fruits and vegetables, and
423 rice where possible. The land is invested with considerable affect:
823 gods live in it; it is the ultimate security against privation; family
471 members are buried in it; food and wealth come from it; and it is good in itself, even if not cultivated. While such attitudes are common in yeoman societies, Haiti's history of slavery, and of access to land through revolution, has given a special symbolic significance to landowning. Land is valued above all else and is sometimes held "uneconomically"—that is, even when the capital and labor power to work it are lacking.

114 Leyburn describes better than any other writer the history of land
115 acquisition by the yeoman after 1804. The French plantations lay in
423 ruins, never to recover, while early authoritarian attempts to restore the prerevolutionary economy under native Haitian leadership soon failed. In the course of a century, the Haitian people laid claim to their own soil, while population growth and the adoption of the French tradition of equal inheritance progressively reduced the average size of holdings. In spite of some plantation development after the United States occupation, most agricultural land in Haiti is still employed in small holdings, and "land reform" in the conventional sense—the breaking-up of large estates and the creation of a class of small land-
462 holders—is nearly irrelevant to Haiti's needs.
443 As today's yeomanry cultivates, so its womenfolk market. Nearly

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342 322 178 unchanged from an earlier era. The prevailing quality of Haitian rural and craft industry, then, is one of great stability and conservatism.

493 463 At the same time, of course, major events since the revolution have left their imprint on this part of life. Hardly a roadside village in Haiti today, for instance, lacks an automobile mechanic, even though these men are mostly self-educated and work with hardly any tools. Their skills became part of Haitian culture in this century and are often of a simple order no longer typical of more developed areas. Tire 383 tubes, for instance, are "vulcanized" by the use of an ingenious de- 177 vice made from a board and an old piston, kerosene providing the heat to make the seal; this technique, along with the sewing of damaged truck tires, was almost certainly introduced and diffused by the United States Marines.

47 31 But these quaint additions do not alter the fact that shop and factory industry are nearly absent, and extractive industry virtually non- 178 existent. Haiti's one alumina extraction enterprise, foreign-owned, is now shut down. There is but one flour mill, and that is foreign- [258] owned as well. One or two textile mills and sugar factories, estab- [339] lished with foreign capital, still function, as do a modern cement factory and a few other small plants established in the 1950s. These [464] industries, scanty as they are, were of great importance to Haiti, since they represented substantial investments, held out the promise of reduced dependence on imports in significant categories, and contributed to the beginnings of an industrial proletariat. However, they involved only a tiny fraction of the national labor force, and they have not proved entirely successful. As a result, Haiti lacks any reserve of labor acquainted with modern industry, even though many people, both urban and rural, work at tasks that might be considered more industrial than agricultural.

- 47 433 - 178 171 Most important for the present discussion, the minor developments in Haitian industry have not led to an expanded market and have not resulted in any firm increase in productivity. Industrial growth, in the sense in which it has occurred in countries such as those of Western Europe—or for that matter in Mexico or Argentina—is entirely lacking. The absence of such growth is perhaps especially significant if Haiti be compared with a neighbor such as Jamaica or Puerto Rico. [648] These countries, one now independent, the other a North American dependency—have both gained real increments from the investment activities of outsiders;

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activities of outsiders; Haiti has experienced few such increments, even as a result of the United States occupation. Its citizens cannot readily migrate anywhere; its educational system cannot prepare its people adequately for the modern world; its civil service has proved neither stable nor reliable; its labor force has limited experience with the factory system; and even two decades of active North American intervention did nothing to remake the economic and political structure of the nation. In more recent years, some of the "development projects" foisted on the people of a sovereign Haiti by foreigners working with Haitian officials would not have been tolerated by the colonial representatives of any foreign power obligated to report its activities before the United Nations Trusteeship Council. In view of these things, one is tempted to claim that Haiti has suffered from all the disadvantages of political sovereignty while enjoying none of its advantages.

Unlike those colonial dependencies that were able, over time, to develop internal political ideologies through which to face the pressures imposed by the colonial powers, Haiti was tested by hardly any challenge but its own lack of development. In this sense only can it be said that the freedom Haiti had won in an incredible revolution against powerful enemies came to be a punishment. The struggle brought the Haitian people justified admiration in many quarters, but its price has been isolation and virtual abandonment.

It was the United States occupation that made a lie of Haitian sovereignty, and even of the invincibility of its people. The Haitian "bandits," variously estimated to have numbered from 2,000 to 6,000, who died in what is probably best described as a war of resistance against the North Americans, were barely able to maintain even a brief local conflict against several well-armed companies of United States Marines. Yet that occupation gave Haiti little in return for its denial of the claim of national sovereignty. The public works and reform programs instituted by the United States, designed to give the country roads, schools, hospitals, a disciplined army, a "legitimate" government, and a schooled civil service, hardly endured longer than the occupation itself, since nothing had been done to transform the social and economic base of the society. Within a decade of the North American withdrawal, the gleaming superstructure the occupation created had begun to decay. The major effect of North Amer-

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about Haitian society.* It does not, however, take note of the remarkable failure of foreign experts to make any adequate assessment of the potentialities of that society, or of its most-needed changes. Some of the problems of development, remarked on by Leyburn in 1941, have never even been explored adequately: the advisability of primary education in Creole; the need for an effective agricultural extension; the relationship of nutrition to work habits; and the like. Even basic sociological studies of a sort that could provide data for planned change are lacking—"of the process of socialization . . . of the motivating forces, the dominant wishes, the attitudes and social values of the masses . . . of social mobility" (pp. 308–09). Foreign-inspired development projects have been, for the most part, crash projects, designed to satisfy Haitian political goals, rather than economic or social goals. A productive relationship between foreign development agency representatives and government officials has never been achieved, nor have the failures ever been subjected to analysis or reflection. Emphasis has been put on large-scale schemes, rather than on more modest, long-term programs which would require actual cooperation with the rural masses on the local level (cf. Erasmus, 1952; Friedmann, 1955; De Young, 1958). Many—probably most—foreign planners who have worked in Haiti have never even bothered to learn the national language, let alone the fundamentals of the culture of the Haitian people.

In these terms, it is not enough merely to bemoan the feeble institutional structure of Haiti. Some attention, at least, should be given to the striking incapacity of outsiders to deal with that structure creatively. Leyburn's book exacts our respect precisely because its author, unlike most foreign visitors, makes plain that he takes Haiti, and the needs of the Haitian people, seriously.

* Some observers are less pessimistic than the writer. The sons of the elite, many of them educated abroad, elements of a Social Christian progressive movement, and possibly a few "Castro-left" radicals, may eventually coalesce into a successful opposition, it has been argued. The writer, however, remains unconvinced. Structural changes of the sort wrought by the Castro regime in Cuba were predicated on the existence of *mass* political opposition to Batista-type governments, and on the existence of industrial and rural proletarian sectors organized into large-scale movements. These "preconditions," as I see them, are entirely lacking in Haiti of today.

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[p. xliii]

FOREWORD

The United States, embarked upon a policy of good neighborliness toward the other countries of the Western Hemisphere, is beginning to improve its acquaintance with the republics to the south. Most of its efforts at present are directed toward an understanding of the large and important powers, such as Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina, which, because of their size and resources, are potentially our greatest allies—or, if we fail in our policies, our sources of greatest danger. There are, however, twenty republics to the south of us, many of them small. A truly good neighbor does not ignore near-by families who are lacking in wealth, even those who are known to differ among themselves. 648 171

Of the twenty Latin-American republics, the second smallest is Haiti. The United States was only twenty years old when the people of this little country (which, for all its diminutive size, had been France's wealthiest colony of the eighteenth century) fought their own war of independence, and in 1804 founded the second free state in the hemisphere. Haiti has many claims upon the attention of the United States: its war against France in 1802–3 was at least a contributing factor in Napoleon's willingness to sell Louisiana to this country; it was the first independent Negro state in the modern world; its foreign policy has long been intertwined with our own; finally, the nineteen-year American Occupation of the country has brought us into an even closer relationship with Haiti than independent factors could produce. 721 648 642

When the country was young there was a spate of books trying to answer the question whether a nation ruled by blacks could long endure. In more recent years, works on the Antillean republic have generally dealt with single phases of its life, as for example its political relations with the United States, or its "Voodoo" practices. There is, however, no connected story of the growth of its social institutions out of the backgrounds of slavery and French colonial life, or of the slow shaping of these institutions through the nineteenth century. It is this growth which the present volume undertakes to describe. Political history has been introduced only so far as necessary to provide the convenient pegs upon which most of us are accus- 114 121

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565 Modern usage, having borrowed the word "caste" from India, 171 employs it loosely to mean a rigid class system of which the people are conscious.[4] In India caste was always endogamous and connected with occupation. Kroeber defines it as "an endogamous and hereditary division of an ethnic unit occupying a position of superior or inferior rank or social esteem in comparison with other such subdivisions."[5] Castes, as distinguished from social classes, "have emerged into social consciousness to the point where custom and law attempt their rigid and permanent separation from one another." By each of these criteria Haiti has castes.

565 The élite are endogamous in that they would not consider marriage 582 into the masses. The one exception to the endogamic practice is marriage with a white foreigner. Whereas in India all members of a [463] caste had the same general occupation, in Haiti several occupations [461] are open to caste members; but the distinction between honorable and demeaning work is understood by all, so that no person has free choice as regards the two larger categories. Haitian law does not name the social divisions, nor does it legislate the masses into a subordinate position[6]—for the simple reason that there is no conceivable need to enact what already exists. The laws of Haiti are administered by élite officials; these men make the definitions and interpretations. The judge always knows the custom, so that (as in most countries) the same offense brings different penalties for upper- and lower-class offenders. Custom holds sway, and custom is more tyrannical than any body of law.

Inside the castes may be found social distinctions familiar in democracies and in every other kind of society. Interest in politics, business, literature, or sport draws people of like minds together and makes cliques. There are well-to-do families who outshine their neighbors, just as there are peasant landholders who dominate their rural communities. A high civil official has more prestige than a doctor with a small practice, just as among the masses a house servant for an élite family outranks a beggar.

565 For the majority of Haitians, life is too elemental to be concerned 511 with artificial wants. The peasant talks, unfettered by rules of gram-

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4. See also W. Lloyd Warner, "American Caste and Class," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLII, No. 2 (Sept. 1936), 234–237; and John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (New Haven, 1937), pp. 62 ff.

5. A. L. Kroeber, "Caste," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, III, 254.

6. Such efforts were made, however, in the early days of the republic. See chap. III.

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Northern Haiti flourished magnificently under Christophe's sternly benevolent rule. The King had that daring spirit of initiative which was so generally lacking in later Haitian history; he had, in addition, the power necessary to force through a new adjustment if the old way showed defects.[17] He excited artificial wants among his leaders by making nobles of them, and then compelled them to satisfy these wants without ever slipping back to a lower standard of living. Thirteen years of enforced labor and of order kept by a rigorously effective police force gave northern Haiti the kind of prosperity she had known in colonial days. Christophe encouraged commerce and protected foreign traders. He called in all debased coinage, substituting for it sound gold and silver currency. The revenue he raised was larger than it had been since 1791, amounting to about $3,500,000 annually. Probably the most eloquent testimony to his success is the fact that at his death, when the kingdom of the North was once more united with the republic of the South, more than six million dollars found their way into the republican treasury.

175 643 642 433 [438] [439] [692]

The Black King's economic system worked. It was based on a social division of the people, with the masses doing manual labor, and the aristocrats definitely set apart and recognized as upper class. By 1820 Haiti was well on its way toward the caste system.

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3. *Pétion* (*1807–1818*)

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Almost all Latin-American countries in the nineteenth century exhibited one common feature: an aristocratic landowning class lording it over peons. Haiti did not follow this pattern. She had aristocrats and peasants, but the aristocrats did not own most of the land, and the peasants were not peons. If later rulers had kept the organization of economic life begun by Toussaint and developed by his fellow blacks, Dessalines and Christophe, it is almost certain that Haitian social evolution would have resembled that of the rest of Latin America, for it would not have been a great change from

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17. Duraciné Vaval, "Le Roi d'Haïti Henri Christophe," in *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti*, II, No. 3 (June 1931), p. 14, says that Haiti's periodic civil troubles and social misfortunes, both ending in a diminution of the state's autonomy, have been due to economic maladjustments. "Our weaknesses in political life derive from our immobility in material production." Immobility is an index of stagnation. Few rulers of Haiti have been at once powerful enough to overcome the immobility and wise enough to know what measures had to be taken. [114]

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171 175 631 feudal holdings to absolute ownership of land by the influential. It is strangely paradoxical that an aristocrat, the light-skinned Pétion, representing the cultured group in society, broke the economic power of his own aristocratic class and made the former slaves not serfs but peasants. It is doubtful whether he intended either result.

175 643 159 Alexandre Pétion was the antithesis of Haiti's three eminent blacks in all but military skill. Toussaint's genius as a fighter lay in his surprise moves, Dessalines' in his recklessness, Christophe's in his bulldog determination; but Pétion was a great general because he knew when to retire and so lead his enemy into an exposed position. The three Negroes had been born in slavery; Pétion, coming of a cultured and sophisticated affranchi family, grew up in France. Dessalines was a crude ruffian by comparison, while in the face of Pétion's suavity Christophe's impetuousness seemed rankly uncouth. Where they bludgeoned, Pétion persuaded; where they hacked their way through opposition in the determination to gain an end, he graciously yielded and so won new friends. Tactful at every point, he survived even such contretemps as his refusal of the hand of the Emperor's daughter.

As leader of a young nation, Pétion might almost be said to have had too broad an understanding of human nature. He was a gentle ruler over his people; when they erred he did not punish or upbraid, but excused their misdeeds by assuming the cause to be some fatal compulsion over which they momentarily had no control. He had no wish to drive the nation to "success." Neither did he care to use his position for personal aggrandizement. His mind was supple and practical, disdainful of abstractions, undeluded by resounding slogans, fertile in compromise, not finical as to means, always unsurprised, exquisitely tactful. When crises arose to dismay his ministers, Pétion's philosophic calm was undisturbed.

Cynically tolerant, he gave office to political enemies if they chanced to be able. A representative of the topmost class of society, [648] he managed to moderate antagonisms based on color. He gave [87] sanctuary and financial succor to the Spanish-American liberator, Simón Bolívar; he established the foundations of an educational [423] system; he defended the state against Christophe's power; he ruled constitutionally; and he gave land to his people, even to the humblest of them. When he died, his subjects for miles around came into Port-au-Prince, where they stood weeping about his palace, refusing

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Haiti was in constant financial straits. Money had to be borrowed

abroad; then paid back at the promised time or a foreign warship would appear at some Haitian port. The steady drain of annual indemnity payments to France,[7] the cost of subduing revolutionary movements, and the large sum eaten up even in times of peace by wages to the army made successive presidents continue to yield government land for small sums of ready cash, in spite of Geffrard's announcement that no more state lands would be alienated. Nissage Saget, coming to power by a successful revolution, paid out fifteen acres to each soldier who fought in his campaign in the South.[8] The straits of the government resembled those of the Continental Congress in America during the Revolution.

175 652 [171]

Another impulse to parcel the land came during the administration of President Lysius Salomon (1879–88). The debt to France had finally, after half a century, been paid off; that incubus removed, Salomon instituted numerous reforms, financial, military, educational. On February 26, 1883, he signed a law by which every citizen of Haiti might conceivably become a landowner even if he lacked money to buy land. Upon receipt of a written agreement to cultivate certain tropical crops—specifically, sugar, coffee, cotton, cacao, and tobacco—the government would grant provisional title to a portion of fifteen to twenty-five acres of land taken from the public domain. The grant became final if, after a period of from two to five years, three quarters of the land had been effectively cultivated.

175 643 671 423 [648]

Five hundred requests were made in 1884 for such grants, and twelve hundred in the following year.[9] Thereafter one finds no records of applications for land; the peasants had discovered the hidden trap in this apparent generosity. How could a peasant with a tiny farm lacking implements and tools, not to mention ready cash, be expected to cultivate important crops on fifteen or twenty acres of land? He would have to cut down trees, uproot wild plants, fertilize the ground, purchase equipment and seeds, and then wait several years for a crop. As Thoby says, "And even then he was not a

7. See above, pp. 70–71.

8. Law of July 12, 1870. In August of the same year, Nissage required an inventory to be taken of state lands remaining.

9. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Manuel d'histoire d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1934), p. 317, cites these figures. They are contested by Dr. F. Dalencour, *Le Sauvetage national par le retour à la terre*, p. 31, who maintains that only 800 applications came in altogether. Here, as elsewhere, Haitian records are incomplete.

[114] [423]

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In most countries in which Westerners are familiar, social distinctions take the form of classes, which are to a greater or less degree mutable. In Haiti, as we have repeatedly indicated, the distinctions are so rigid that *caste* is the only properly descriptive term. There is hardly a Haitian who would not be able to state immediately whether he or any person he knew was, or was not, élite. So it has been with steady persistence ever since Dessalines and Christophe gave way to Pétion and Boyer. Élite youth marries élite girl, and the folkways of the group are passed on from parent to children, thus perpetuating the distinctions. In the pages which follow, all the marks of separation of castes will be examined: religion, economic occupation, marriage, language, manners, and the rest. 565 178

Certain aspects of the classic example of the caste system, seen in India, are lacking in Haiti. Religion, for instance, does not require caste endogamy, nor does civil law implicitly acknowledge caste lines by reference to the rights of people of a certain occupation. Custom does more than religion and law could, however, to enforce conformity to the understood rules. Probably the most open efforts to enact caste lines into law were the pronouncements of Dessalines and Christophe that all but a few people should be bound to the soil; and Boyer's Code Rural—a feeble echo of days gone by. The two black rulers were able to enforce the distinctions they made; but when they died their feudal arrangements lapsed, while the separation of classes continued. With the recurrence of revolutions after 1843 it behooved the élite, when occasionally they were in authority, not to lay themselves open to fresh attack upon grounds of aristocratic presumption, for they never knew when they might need the support of the masses. Any black revolutionary leader would have been able to turn an enacted caste law to his own ends, even if a Senate consisting predominantly of light-colored men had had the power to enact such a law. Time and inertia won the battle for the élite. By not joining issue with the masses at any definite point, the aristocrats gained their end of caste distinction, for they were willing to endure the self-discipline necessary to the maintenance of social standards, as the masses were not. [564] [170]

Just as in colonial days the ambition of the well-to-do freedman was to go to France for his education and his holidays, so in free Haiti the lure of France has continued to be strong for the aristocrat. There is not a trace of animosity against the country which enslaved the Negroes, and which in 1802–3 tried by trickery to take away the 565 484 177 186

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175 567 along that river, Dahomey was the name of a powerful kingdom under a political administration which embraced a fair amount of interchange of ideas and similarity of social institutions, including religion.

175 567 178 Discretion made the planters separate slaves who knew each other, in order to minimize opportunities for revolt among them. This policy, although it prevented the rapid growth of "slave" customs, at the same time dispersed Dahomeans all over the colony; beliefs and practices held in common among the slaves were likely to take on a Dahomean cast. Since their work was directed, their freedom of movement limited, and their family life broken up, there was practically no opportunity for the outcropping of *any* African ideas relating to economic life, government, property, education, or 175 marriage. The one sphere in which it was possible for Old World 178 beliefs to continue was the religious. No slave dealer could penetrate 796 the minds of his workers or silence their folk tales and folk songs in 771 the evening when work was done; even the strictest plantation 535 owners allowed dances in the slave quarters on Saturday nights and Sunday. It is the dance, a vital part of Dahomean religion, which seems to have formed the nucleus around which the diverse beliefs of African tribesmen grouped themselves, for it was a form of action which need not involve anything more than amusement or emotional release, if the participant were not religiously inclined. In the beginning, as Goethe observes, was the Act. To this simple Act of dancing, the Word, with thought behind it, could easily be added later. Practically all African tribesmen danced; and the numerous Dahomeans had a dance which was ostensibly for diversion but could be turned to a religious purpose as well.

771 171 174 Here, then, was the skeleton of a slave religion. Although every single African tribe had its own beliefs and ritual, each (so far as we know) had common elements with every other one. For example, all slaves, whether Senegalese or Angolese, believed in a multiplicity of spiritual beings, some of whom controlled the aspects of nature—lightning and storms, the sea, the sky. They thought that disease and other ill fortune came from spirits who must be placated in order to win back health and well-being. All felt that the normal course of events could be altered by magical spells, formulae, or charms; that one could bring misfortune to an enemy, luck to oneself, or ward off otherwise inevitable fate. Most of them had been accustomed to

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learn the properties of plants, both for healing and for poison. Except for the belief in spiritual beings, this folk knowledge would hardly have been classed as religious, for it was useful in every phase of daily life; the classification is that of the anthropologist, not of the simple black.

If Dahomean beliefs prevailed over others of African origin, it was chiefly because of the numerical preponderance of Dahomeans in the colony, together with the popularity of their religious dances. The Dahomean spirits or gods were Vodun; the dance in which the worshiper sought the inspiration of the spirits was a Vodun dance. Like all but the highly organized religions, this one recognized the validity of other beliefs. Its practitioners were not bigots. No hierarchy existed to keep out new accretions. Imperceptibly these were added to the original basic form: here an Arada spirit, there a Congolese prayer, and in many instances a Catholic saint, until the composite Vodun religion began to take shape.

There is no evidence that during colonial times Vodun was ever considered important by the white ruling class—certainly not as a faith. To most planters the word was the name for a vigorous dance. Judging from Moreau de Saint-Méry's description it was held openly enough, at times being witnessed by the whites as a sort of nocturnal diversion. Moreau knew, as did other whites, that there were "superstitious beliefs" connected with it, yet the offhand use of the word "superstition" was indication enough that the beliefs were not regarded as important. We have seen, however, what profitable use the slaves were able to make of the apparent innocence of their dances. When the idea of revolt began to germinate among them, gathering on each plantation at least once a week they had ample opportunity to hatch their plans. It is known that the campaign for revolt was developed partly under the stimulus of the Negro Boukman, a *houngan* or priest of Vodun. By means of drumbeats, which to the whites merely pounded out the rhythm for dancing but had for centuries been a means of communication at long distance in parts of West Africa, that ripening plot was telegraphed from one plantation to another. Even more important, perhaps, was the unity of feeling made possible, despite all incoherence of tradition and language, by the Vodun background.

The revolt of half a million slaves was a success. This fact has been rather too calmly accepted by historians of Saint-Domingue, who

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have explained it chiefly by the surprise element of the uprising. But when else in modern history have slaves successfully revolted against their armed masters and become permanently free? Successful revolutions even of people not in bodily slavery have had acknowledged leadership, whereas in Haiti no real leader appeared for the insurgents. Boukman's influence, indeed, at its widest never reached beyond a part of the northern plain; he had about the same range of power as a ward boss in the United States. On the plantations Hallaou, Hyacinthe, Lafortune, and others whose names are unimportant or unknown, Vodun houngans likewise welded slave opinion within their narrow districts. But no single great leader appeared. As the conflict was developed, without plan or unity under the divided and contradictory action of numerous blacks, what held the people together was, negatively, their hatred of the white masters; positively, their Vodun beliefs. Only later in the decade did a true leader, Toussaint L'Ouverture, emerge to consolidate their victory.

As often happens among unsophisticated people convinced of the rightness of their cause, the local Vodun leaders were sure of their own invulnerability through the protection of one or another of the spirits.[8] They convinced their followers as well, to such a degree that when an invulnerable chief fell there were dozens of reasons to explain the unexpected death rather than any disillusion. Usually, failure to follow the rigorous propitiation requirements of the protecting god offered the key to the misfortune. Various ones of them were known to be exacting and troublesome. The leader at Trou-Coffi, Romaine by name, had absorbed enough of the Roman Catholicism in Vodun to feel that the Virgin Mary was his especial patroness.[9] Beyond this specific belief in invulnerability was the general trust that Vodun spirits would lead their devotees to success, would give them a happy issue out of all their distress.

8. A parallel case of belief in invulnerability because of divine protection was that of the North American Indians both at the time of Tecumseh and later in the Sioux outbreaks at the climax of the Ghost-Dance Religion. See James Mooney, *The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890* (Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, 1892–93 [Washington, 1896]), chap. X.

9. The importance of Vodun beliefs in connection with the slave revolt is stressed by Dr. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Vodou et Névrose* (Port-au-Prince, 1931), pp. 33–34. He says of many of the chiefs: "The belief in their invulnerability was not at all the result of calculation, but was a true state of mind, a sort of autosuggestion which explains very well the chronic heroism of certain leaders of the revolution in Saint-Domingue and of the war of independence of 1802–3."

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796 steadying his attention, he practically hypnotizes him back into full
535 consciousness. As soon as the possessed is normal again, water out of
787 the calabash is poured at the central post and a sign of the cross is made with the candle before it.

796 Contrary to the expectation of thrill-seeking white visitors, the
535 Vodun dance does not merit the name of an orgy. True, the dancers
786 wear their old clothes, for they are going to have violent exercise; true also, those who are possessed give the impression of losing some of their inhibitions. But the dancers do not embrace each other as at a white man's dance; the drinking which occurs is hardly ever excessive; and the climax of a successful dance is a religious experience.
[831] The Haitian is no more obsessed by sex than is the American; indeed, living simply and without many of the artificial restraints of "civilization," he is probably less so. What white visitors sometimes see, under the impression that they are witnessing a Vodun dance, is nothing more than a secular Saturday night social dance. It, too, has drum rhythms instead of an orchestra, musical instruments being rare in Haiti; but the dance has no more religious (or "Voodoo") significance than a barn dance in the United States.

771 Creed and practice go hand in hand in Haiti. The Vodun wor-
776 shiper believes in the loa of his faith and does the things necessary to get in touch with them. These conceptions are the major part of his creed, as the corresponding actions form the bulk of his religious activity.

171 A few articles of the creed remain. "I believe in respect to twins
845 ..." Hundreds of so-called primitive peoples see in twins some special
787 significance, now fortunate, now tragic. Many of the tribes along the Atlantic coast of Afriea thought of twins as an omen, so that the presence of ritual regard for them in Haiti is hardly surprising. It is probably incorrect to speak of the worship, or the cult, of twins, for they are not deified, nor is there a common ritual for them: thousands of persons pay them no homage whatever. One family has a high regard for twins because it has numbered them among its ancestors or recent relatives; another family pays respect to all twins because a priest has advised seeking the good luck which comes from
[782] *marassa* (twins). There seems to be some confusion of thought about this aspect of religion: twins are not gods, but merely omens from the gods; yet sacrifices are made to them. Christmas and harvest are the usual seasons for the offering. Food is prepared in the morning

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and set apart on special plates in a separate room for them; in the afternoon the family eats the food. If the twins to whom homage is being offered are still alive, they must wear special clothes at the sacrifice.

"I believe in the careful cult of the dead . . ." Once more it is necessary to renew one's acquaintance with primitive and folk belief to grasp the Haitian attitude. Life is desirable, death is dreaded; both death and the dead are feared. In the actual world, any excursion from the comfortably familiar countryside of one's home leads to confusion and bewilderment. Except in the company of his fellows (on a religious pilgrimage to the waterfalls at Ville-Bonheur, for example), a Haitian almost never leaves his valley or mountainside and market town. Sophisticated people view the unknown with pleasurable excitement, for they have learned by experience that the unfamiliar is not necessarily frightful; it is quite the contrary with simple folk, whose meagre experience with the unfamiliar has been at least somewhat alarming.

Death is the ultimate unknown. The fearsomeness the imagination conceives to lie beyond death seems to exist in almost direct proportion to people's ignorance of the material world. The fear of ghosts is a commonplace among primitive folk, as among the uneducated in the "civilized" world. Where ghosts are considered powerful, one part of any comprehensive cult will certainly deal with the dead.

In Haitian Vodun the teachings of the Catholic Church have exerted more influence upon the cult of the dead than upon any other part of the religion. The preparation of the corpse for burial shows no traces of African practice; the watch (or wake) and wailing over the deceased is familiar; the funeral itself is conducted by a Catholic priest, with burial in consecrated ground. Thereafter, the continual efforts to secure the tranquil repose of the departed bear the earmarks of faithful Catholic practice; it is at this point, however, that the cult begins to assume distinctive features, for it is firmly believed that the dead exert tremendous power in the world of the living. This power comes from God—the Christian God. The case has been put succinctly by Sumner and Keller: "The relation between man and ghost resolves itself . . . into a relation of rights and duties, with all the rights on one side and all the duties on the other."[30] God gives

30. W. G. Sumner and A. G. Keller, *The Science of Society* (New Haven, 1927), II, 829.

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Everyone believes in it, though few would make nice distinctions between the two. Starting with extremes, the houngan conducting a service with sacrifice is officiating at a purely religious rite, while the bocor (sorcerer) concocting a love charm is dealing wholly in magic. It is perfectly proper, however, for a respectable houngan to brew a mixture, calling on the loa meanwhile for assistance, to cure a sick person: is this magic? Certainly it is private, specific, practical. A respectable houngan will not permit himself to dabble in evil magic, destined to bring misfortune to someone else;[36] but such work is the stock in trade of the bocor, who knows the dangers of his profession yet is willing to run the risk for the sake of high profit. Between the reputable houngan and the awesome bocor may sometimes be found the *caplata*, a sort of jack-of-all-trades, who professes to be able to achieve whatever is demanded of him in magic, whether beneficial or harmful, but whose reputation is not high enough to make men trust him with important magical enterprises. 789 793 791

There exists one continual check to save the gullible from charlatanism on the part of the practitioner: the performer of any kind of magic must make frequent exhibitions of his powers. If the specialist cannot make his magic work, he soon loses his reputation. The career of magic is not one to be entered lightly. Constant search for medicinal plants, constant experimentation, comparison of practice—the requirements of the profession are as strenuous as those for the successful American doctor. Magic is like a live wire: it cannot be handled with impunity. The slightest slip on the part of the bocor might loose divine wrath on the bungler and quack. It is said that almost every bocor dies an evil death, hoist on his own petard. For the houngan the risk is not so great, since in general he relies upon the might of his own special loa, who of old has been familiar with him. True, he may run the risk of purchasing the services of other loa, but it is a risk, since his family loa, quick to feel insult, might punish him. 789 791

Magic runs the gamut from passive to active, simple to complex. The commonest manifestation of magic in Haitian daily life is one familiar to most peoples in the world—the charm. As in Italy and other southern European countries, the Haitian peasant believes in the evil eye. "Maldioque," it is called—a term not far removed from the Italian "*mal occhio*." The common belief is that certain persons, 789 [171]

36. This is commonly called "black" magic.

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VIII

RELIGIOUS BORROWINGS

ROMAN Catholicism in Haiti is, as we have seen, the officially approved, socially proper, and outwardly recognized religion. Vodun, on the contrary, is legislated against and driven into the background by the élite who are ashamed to have foreigners see the power in their country of a folk religion which has its crude side. These two are Haiti's faiths.

No one takes a census in Haiti, for the peasants have their suspicions of officials who pry into personal affairs. There is consequently no way of knowing precisely how many Haitians regard themselves as "belonging" to the Catholic Church. The priests list the whole population of a diocese as Catholic. In so doing they are probably not far wrong, for although not every person gets to confession each year or attends to his other religious duties, certainly nineteen out of twenty Haitians, élite and common folk alike, would claim to be Catholics. On the whole, it may be that the simple people are more sincere in this, for they are not touched with skepticism where things spiritual are concerned.

In the United States censuses of religious bodies, if an individual is listed as a member of one denomination he cannot be listed as a member of another. We are trained to religious exclusiveness: we are *either* Baptists *or* Methodists, Jews *or* Catholics. Not every people, however, has schooled itself to such sharp distinctions. The Japanese Buddhist may regard himself as a worshiper of Shinto as well; the Chinese can be Taoist and Confucian at the same time. By our rigidity we deny ourselves a great deal of inner comfort: I may like the earnest fervor of the Missionary Baptists but like as well the stately ritual of Anglo-Catholicism; I must accept one or the other, however, for if I am a member of the former sect I cannot at the same time be admitted to all the rights and privileges of the latter. There is probably a spiritual compensation resulting from such single-minded allegiance, but we are frequently forced to deny

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validity to forms and ideas which we know, in our hearts, might sustain us.[1]

The Haitian peasant is not interested in making formal distinctions. If he is critical, it is only of results, rarely of the means used to obtain those results. If he cannot gain his ends in one way he is not too proud to try another, and still a third. Nineteen out of twenty Haitians, then, being Roman Catholics in religion, are likewise worshipers of Vodun. There is so much mystery in the world, so much misfortune, beauty, sorrow, and joy that it would be unthinkable to deny God or the gods: mankind has worship enough for them all, and need enough of them all. There is to the peasant no conflict between Vodun and Catholicism; the two are complementary, even if sometimes the Catholic priests make coöperation impossible.

Let us recall for a moment the earlier history of the country. In the days of slavery one may imagine the Church would have found it difficult, even if its priests and planters had been willing, to train all the blacks as thorough Catholics. Some concepts took root, some rites immediately appealed. Below the surface, however, the African ideas of the preponderant Dahomeans were spreading through the plantations. In the crucial early days of independence, when the customs and social institutions of the Haitians (as Haitians, not as expatriate slaves) were in process of formation, the country's rulers were not deeply religious; moreover the State was in open schism from the Church. For fifty-five years no approved churchman was at work with the people. The seventy men whom some historians mention as priests were on the whole venal and self-seeking, even vicious. Their least concern was to wean the people away from their superstitions, for precisely in these folk beliefs lay the greatest source of gain. By the time the breach between State and Church was healed it was too late to make single-minded Catholics of the Haitian peasants. They would accept what the new and active priests taught them, but not to the exclusion of what they had believed for a century.

With the élite the Church has had more success; assiduous teach-

1. This either-or dichotomy is not limited to religion: we divide ourselves similarly in politics, family life, residence, and so on. If I am a Lutheran, a Republican, a married man with a home in New York, I cannot at the same time be an Episcopalian, a Democrat, and a voter in Chicago with a second spouse and family there. What is impossible and ridiculous for Americans, however, is in some ways the normal course of life for the Haitian.

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IX

HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDS

TOLERANT understanding of the ways of alien people is rare in matters relating to sex. Occasionally we may regard marital and sexual practices which differ from our own as amusing or ridiculous; more frequently we find them distasteful and disgusting. A long religious heritage has implanted in us a definite personal morality, familiar in Puritanism and in the codes of the great majority of early American pioneers. Accompanying and dominated by this religious aspect has been the legal idea of sexual morality. A middle-class tradition of private property, hence of orderly marriages legally recognized, has schooled us for centuries to approve certain moral and sexual rules: monogamic marriage, children born in wedlock, a public wedding ceremony by approved authorities, censure of sexual relations which might confuse the passage of property. Although sympathetic tolerance for foreign ways has never been an outstanding American characteristic, it is least evident in connection with divergent sexual practices. We do not remind ourselves of the utilitarian basis of a part of our own sexual codes.

Where people have economic and social backgrounds different from those of Western Europe and the United States, other codes will prevail. Elements which have made American moral standards what they are were lacking or appeared in different form in Haiti. Instead of middle-class European tradition there was African tribal practice; instead of diffused small private properties there was slavery; instead of the Puritan notion that sex relations were in general sinful was the less rigorous view that sexual intercourse was entirely normal; instead of the example of monogamous family life constantly before the minds of children growing up, there was the example of libertinage among lofty whites and laxness among the blacks.

Nothing in the experience of the slave régime could have predisposed toward orderly marriage these people, soon to become Haitians. Certain masters actually prohibited weddings among their slaves, while most others discouraged it, since the development of family ties among the blacks would only have made for complication

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476 241 5-74 [527] day local practice dedicates to work in one's own fields—generally Monday or Tuesday. The prospect of working with one's fellows, of a midday feast with plentiful drink, of singing, talking, and hearing the news, is enough to induce most of the neighbors to come, even though the work will be hard. As with American log-rollings and house-raisings, there is a practical reason for accepting the invitation: by participating in other coumbites a man will be able to invite his neighbors to help him in his own larger tasks. The work is [461] done in rhythm[7] as on Southern road gangs in the United States, with one man specially designated to beat the drum, blow the conch, or sing a topical song, to set the pace. While the men are at work, the women prepare the noonday feast.

114 476 574 174 171 178 241 This typical characteristic of Haitian rural life has been described in detail as it operates near the village of Mirebalais by Prof. Melville J. Herskovits. His contention is that the custom, in general and in detail, derives from Dahomey, West Africa, the home of many of the original slaves.[8] Although his evidence is impressive, there are nevertheless objections to it. Coöperative enterprise for tasks larger than one man can accomplish alone is common in the United States and in parts of Europe and South America, as well as in Africa. It is not an economic device which strikes one as requiring unusual inventiveness, for cases of it are common even where the participants have had no previous experience of it. Further, Dahomean practice could not have been kept up during slave days, nor yet during the régimes of Toussaint, Dessalines, Christophe, and Pétion. (The first three required forced labor under overseers, and landownership by peasants was still rare under Pétion, although a beginning had been made.) In the thirty years from 1790, when the last slaves arrived, until Christophe died in 1820, many old ways were certainly forgotten. Not a single one of the numerous books written by visitors during Boyer's quarter-century, 1818 to 1843, mentions the practice, which certainly must have struck Englishmen, Frenchmen, and Americans if it had been characteristic of the peasant life of the time. If one concludes that the coumbite did not become peasant practice until the mid-nineteenth century, all possibility of contact with 100 Negroes familiar with Dahomean routine has disappeared. What

7. A Haitian poet, Charles F. Fressin, entitles a book of his verses *Les Rythmes du tambour* (Port-au-Prince, 1911).
8. Op. cit., chap. IV.

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was well enough, but all upper-class landlords wanted the privilege 175
of living in leisure on an income derived from the menial labor of 665
black workers. Fraternity was a principle ridiculous to a group whose 565
never-ceasing struggle was to confirm the separation of castes. The term "Liberal," then, was borrowed not from the revolutionary documents of the late eighteenth century, but from the parliamentary parties of the nineteenth—those who saw more opportunity for themselves and their group if the power of tyrants and kings could be curbed by legislatures. The idea was particularly congenial to the Haitian intelligentsia for the simple reason that the powerful rulers of Haiti, past and present, were Negroes who did not share the aims and ideals of the social upper class.[11]

By holding such "liberal" views, the mulatto élite saw their one 175
opportunity not only for curbing the strong men among the Negroes 565
who again and again tried to rule Haiti as if it were a native African 646
state and themselves the supreme chieftains, but also for indulging 665
their own special penchants. A Senate filled with élite politicians 664
suited the talents of the educated aristocrats. They liked constitutions and codes; the law was their favorite profession; they were adepts at drawing neat distinctions between this and that in an academic issue; polished oratory, skilful argument, fluent speech were knacks peculiar to them by temperament, position, education. Boyer had been the beau-ideal of the academic "liberals," with his talkative Senate, his complete set of Codes and national system of courts; the mid-century party members came to realize what they had lost by driving him out.

Every time the Nationalists came to power the colored élite 175
suffered. Under Dessalines they lost greatly in property and position; 661
Christophe had hated and hounded them; Soulouque put many of 565
their leaders to death. The only monarchs Haiti ever had were 643
blacks, and the two most tyrannical presidents in the first seventy-five years after independence were Nationalists (Pierrot, 1845–46, and Domingue, 1874–76).

The experience of the Liberal presidents with parliamentary insti- 175
tutions was not entirely a happy one, however. Pétion and Boyer had 643

11. It must be recalled that no parliaments of England, France, or the United States in the early nineteenth century had true democratic representation. Property qualifications for voting, rotten boroughs, and the persistence of privilege ensured that only the "classes" should have full representation, and so rule the masses. [646] [171]

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exceeding the jurisdiction of the local juges, these juries to be named by the doyen and his colleagues. It was a dubious reform, often a worthless privilege; at times it was definitely harmful, for no matter how explicit the law, mere technicalities in a long, involved trial could be completely befuddling to an illiterate juror. Brown tells the tale of a certain foreman of the jury who asked a juror his opinion of a defendant's innocence; the juror replied that he could not write, whereas "you have written it all down. Let us know what you have done."[3] Innocence might easily be convicted by this system, and guilt escape. The addition of a jury to the court was even useless in many instances, for the language of the lawyers was French, and that of the jurors almost certain to be Créole. Boyer's attempt to graft English court practice upon the French system already functioning in Haiti was certainly not happy; the jury system shortly disappeared.

Complicated forms are not for the peasant. He knew a soldier and a soldier's function in the countryside, but not the relation of the arrondissement to the national government; the juge de paix was understandable, but not the procedure of the civil courts at department capitals. The national government and its structure were remote, although the president's name might be familiar. Haiti was really organized from the top down rather than from the bottom up. The powers of the early presidents were arbitrary: they could not only order changes in the framework of any part of government, but might also shift at will the personnel.

Carl Becker remarks: "In 1791, the French began their spectacular feat in constitution making. Between 1791 and 1875 Taine counts thirteen French constitutions adopted in relatively rapid succession. I can find only twelve, but maybe Taine is right. It doesn't really matter. The point is that for facility, speed, and endurance in constitution making, France holds the record. Yet other nations also ran."[4] Haiti was one of them: in fact the record is properly hers, although Professor Becker does not mention the little Caribbean state. In the nineteenth century Haiti lived under fifteen constitutions, to which she has added at least two more in the twentieth century. It is not always easy to say when a constitution is new: its author may

3. Jonathan Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, II, 271-272.
4. "Afterthoughts on Constitutions," *The Yale Review*, XXVII, No. 3 (Spring, 1938), 453.

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114 consider it novel when it changes little but detail; and some of Haiti's
175 seventeen documents were too short-lived to be significant. Haiti
642 shows her Frenchness in this constitution making, this love of being
171 logical and having the details all written down in proper order.

175 To try to analyze the content of so many documents would be a work of supererogation.[5] A brief comment upon each, however, will improve one's acquaintance with the mind of Haitian statesmen.

175 1801. Toussaint L'Ouverture's constitution, laying the framework
642 of his venture as director of the colony while still acknowledging its
466 relationship to France. In it he announced himself governor-general for life with the right to name his successor, thereby becoming the forerunner of the strong-man principle in politics. The most important part of this constitution was its detailed organization of the forced-labor system.

175 1805. Dessalines' constitution establishing the empire. In many
642 respects it did not differ from Toussaint's previous document, for the
563 same military organization was preserved, and the same system of forced labor; otherwise, there was little structure of government. One article was included which was to appear in every other constitution of Haiti up to 1918: "No white man shall set foot on this territory as master or as landowner."[6] In other respects there were sagacious provisions which did not endure. For example, the generic name of "blacks" was adopted for all Haitians, of whatever color.
175 The Emperor was trying thus to forestall the dissensions which
642 inevitably must result from the growth of social classes based on skin
[463] color. Another important provision was that every citizen who was not an ordinary cultivator must learn and practice some mechanical art. This was not merely a thrust at the aristocratic pretensions of the old affranchis, but also an endeavor to make Haiti industrious and self-sufficient. Except in the North, where Dessalines' deputy Christophe kept the requirement, the article was honored only in the breach. The social situation was touched at one other point: "No one is worthy of being a Haitian who is not a good father, a good son, a good husband, and a good soldier." Parents were forbidden to
[428] disinherit their children. Although, as has been shown, the Emperor

5. Such an analysis was made by Louis-Joseph Janvier, *Les Constitutions d'Haïti, 1801–85* (Paris, 1886).

6. He had made this declaration first on April 28, 1804; at that time the words "No white man" read "No colonist nor European."

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1. *Overpopulation*

161 Two and a half or possibly three million people live within 10,200 square miles. These figures, if they are to convey a reality, must be conceived in more familiar terms. Haiti is just about the size of Vermont, but has six times as many people crowded together among its mountains In a list of countries still independent in 1935 Haiti ranked among the first ten in density of population, yet its economic life was agricultural, while the other nine have a high degree of industrialization.

161 171 As one looks at a full-page map of the Western Hemisphere it is difficult even to find the tiny wisp of color which marks the Caribbean republic of Haiti. Of the twenty-two American countries, including Canada, Haiti is next to last in size (El Salvador is smaller), yet ranks thirteenth in population, and far and away the first in *density* of population, in the whole hemisphere. The figures are revealing:

Country	*Population*	*Area in Square Miles*	*Density*
1. United States	131,669,275	3,026,701	43.5
2. Brazil	43,246,931	3,275,510	13.2
3. Mexico	19,478,791	763,944	25.5
4. Argentina	12,762,000	1,078,278	11.7
5. Canada	11,012,724	3,694,863	2.9
6. Colombia	8,730,000	448,794	19.4
7. Peru	6,600,000	532,184	12.3
8. Chile	4,626,508	296,717	15.6
9. Cuba	4,108,650	41,164	99.8
10. Venezuela	3,451,677	352,051	9.8
11. Bolivia	3,426,296	537,792	6.3
12. Guatemala	3,044,490	45,452	67.0
13. Haiti	3,000,000	10,204	294.9

161 Haiti's density per square mile is therefore greater than that of China or India—two world examples of overpopulation—and even greater than that of New York State, with its enormous city areas. Haiti's largest town has a population of 100,000; there are seven towns ranging from 7,500 to 20,000. The density of distribution through the countryside is therefore evident.

Beside the figures given above must be set those of the government

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To grasp the import of Haiti's problem of population one

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should imagine the number of Vermonters sextupled, working with hand tools and using methods which their great-grandfathers would have considered antiquated; imagine the state with only a hundred miles of paved roads, with no harnessed water power, no substantial fortunes, no middle class; imagine the farms gullied and worn out; ninety-five per cent of the people illiterate and undernourished; the state having no industry and practically no goods imported from New York, Massachusetts, or any other part of the United States. Under such conditions the low standard of living would be readily understandable.

Haiti might also be compared with Mississippi. Less than a quarter the size of that American state, it nevertheless has a larger population. Both Haiti and Mississippi are agricultural, with few towns, although no part of Haiti now has land as richly fertile as that of the Yazoo Delta. The low standard of living of the Mississippi share-cropper, whether Negro or white, is notorious—yet he has access to a few of the perquisites of civilization, whether these be elementary schools or moving pictures; the Haitian peasant lacks even these. In America the undercurrent of feeling is that something should be, probably eventually will be, done to improve the lot of the share-cropper. Certainly there is wealth enough in the country at large to alleviate conditions where they are deemed to be socially unhealthy. Not so in Haiti: the land is poorer, the numbers even greater, the area much smaller; and there is no wealth in the country, nor enough social vision among the upper classes to deal with the relentless increase of numbers.

How conceivably might this problem be dealt with? The first answer which would occur to many Americans, namely, birth control, is out of the question at present. Expense would stand in the way of its use by people who hardly ever see money; the peasants, unable to read, suspicious of new-fangled ways, untouched by all efforts to "uplift" them, and with no educational agencies, could hardly be converted to the use of contraceptives; while the Catholic Church, which until now has not had to raise its voice against birth control in Haiti, would fight any proposal to introduce it as it fought the campaign in Puerto Rico.

Another possible answer is migration. This solution many Haitians have tried without prompting. With little money available for

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Only a beginning has been made of collecting the thousands of "Cric? Crac!" stories current in Haiti.

It is only recently that people have written Créole, so that there is no standard orthography. Every writer spells words phonetically, with consequent irregularities, and with wide differences between two people writing the same thing. Recent etymological studies may lead eventually to a dictionary and a standard spelling. In order that the reader may see the resemblance of Créole to French, yet its differences from that language, we shall quote a part of one of La Fontaine's fables put into Créole verse by Georges Sylvain.[10] His own French retranslation accompanies the fable, turning such phrases as "female pig" into "sow."

Nan temps toutt bett té palé,	*Au temps où toutes les bêtes parlaient,*
Té g'ain (palant pa respé)	*Il y avait (sauf votre respect)*
Té g'ain gnou fémel cochon.	*Il y avait une truie.*
Zott connin gen cochon bon?	*Vous savez comme les truies sont bonnes gens?*
Cila-là té fait zanmi	*Celle-ci avait fait amitié*
Avec gnou fémel chien, qui	*Avec une chienne, qui*
Té prett pou mi bas. Chien-là,	*Était sur le point de mettre bas. La chienne*
Gnou jou, dit cochon con ça:	*Un jour, dit à la truie:*
"Moin pré pou moin accouché,	*"Me voilà près d'accoucher,*
"Ma conmé, t'en pri! souplé,	*"Ma commère, je vous en prie, s'il vous plaît,*
"Pémett moin prété gnou coin	*"Permettez-moi d'emprunter un coin*
"Nan pac ou, pou pititt moin."	*"De votre parc, pour mes enfants."*[11]

The terseness of the language is fascinating, a situation is hit off precisely in a few words: a stuffed shirt has been deflated, and the truth has been told. A Haitian was heard to say, "Nègue riche li mulatte; mulatte pauvre li nègue"—a rich Negro is accounted a mulatto; a poor mulatto is to all intents and purposes no better than a Negro. And there is a profound comment on the whole caste system.

Wherever the French went in the Caribbean region the Créole language spread—in Louisiana, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Guiana. Each region has its own peculiarities, but in general it may be said that these other regions show much more French (as distinct from Norman) influence on Créole, and much less Spanish and English influence. Similarly in Haitian towns, where the élite speak French

10. *Cric? Crac! Fables de La Fontaine racontées par un montagnard haïtien et transcrites en vers créoles* (Port-au-Prince, 1929), p. 21.
11. "Zott" means "vous autres"; "gnou" is "une."

2: Courlander B-5 - (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

fires in their houses at night to keep out the damp cold that sweeps through the passes. And a man on the trail before dawn may wear a blanket over his head and carry a glowing ember with him for warmth.

On the south coast there are sometimes hurricanes and tidal waves, and many a small fishing boat and grass-covered house has been washed away in these storms. But the great mountains of the southern range deflect the winds, so that to the north their full fury is never known.

In the great Bay of Gonaïves the fishing boats sail out at night with the friendly winds that carry them to the fishing grounds of the island of La Gonave, and they return to the shore with their catches in the morning, or in the afternoon with the setting sun. The sailing boats from the tiny fishing village called Ville Matelot each day pass the deserted islet named Isle à Cabrit, where four Indian camps once stood. Today Isle à Cabrit is only a waterless, denuded place, a hunting ground for Carib and Arawak pottery and carved stone images.

In the frontier lakes of the Cul-de-Sac Plain there are wild ducks and alligators. Here the villagers fish with nets from rafts and dugout canoes. Now and then an iguana is seen, but there is little other game, because the edible wildlife of the country was long ago eaten by hungry people.

For the things that grow wild the Haitian is grateful—the avocado, the mango, the cashew, and the cotton which once planted produces again and again each year. He is grateful for the coconut palms, the calabash tree, the gourd vines, and the medicinal herbs that grow on every side. But the gifts of nature are not prolific. Most of the great stands of timber—lignum vitae, mahogany, dyewood and pine—have been cut away. Once fertile garden spots have dried up, and the soil that produces the yams, the pumpkins, the kaffir, and the rice is tired.

But the Haitian himself is not tired. He has suffered from malaria, yaws, and chronic hunger; yet out of the great old mountains of Haiti he has fashioned a way of life and a nation.

The Haitian of today was created out of the fabric of three continents—Africa, America, and Europe. He was shaped out of the plains and hills of Nigeria, Dahomey, and the Congo; the summers and winters of Europe; and the mountains and mountain mists of Haiti itself. He is the synthesis of the folk beliefs of the French and Spanish peasants, the Yoruba and the Arada of West Africa, and perhaps of the Carib Indians with whom he had close contact during his first days in the New World. He has brought into affinity the religious practices of Africa and the beliefs of the Church of Rome. He is outwardly simple and poor, but inwardly he is a complicated and rich man. He is rich in music, in the capacity for spiritual expression, in tradition, in folklore, and in memories. He has been able

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

> migration of souls. Too often it has come about that the *Ibos* of a given plantation have agreed all to hang themselves, in order to return to their country."

So well recognized was this tendency of the Ibo slaves to commit suicide, that they were described in Créole by the formula: "*Ibos pend' cor' a yo* — The Ibos (are those who) hang themselves." None the less, many slaves from this tribe were acquired. Their strong communal and tribal ties made it advantageous for those who owned them to obtain more of them, since newcomers "were accorded help, care, and instruction by those who had preceded them."

According to St. Mery, the Negroes most common in the colony came from the Congo coast and Angola, and were known by the generic term *Congos*. The *Franc-Congos*, who came from the kingdoms of Congo and Angola, were

> "of a docility and gayety that makes them much desired. Loving song, dance, and ornaments, they make excellent domestics, while their intelligence, their facility in speaking a pure Créole, their jovial countenances without markings . . . cause people to prefer them for house-servants; they also make good laborers and good fishermen."

That the large numbers of Congo Negroes imported into Haiti have left no more of the elements of their culture in the island than are found is perhaps due to this very devotion to their masters, for a lively tradition of the present tells how, during the slave revolts, the Congo Negroes most often remained on the side of their masters and most often betrayed their fellows.

Not all the Negroes from the Congo area were as amiable as these just mentioned. The *Mondongos* had "the most execrable excess of eating their fellows." This quotation gains special significance because of the prominence which it has

1; Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

stationed near by did not at first believe in this miracle, until after several appearances of the saint the higher authorities of the Church gave the fête their sanction. Many tales are recounted of skeptics who, though coming to scoff, became filled with awe when they put foot in the holy place and — significantly for the merging of the two religions — were possessed by *loa* for the first time. A church which has since burned and a small chapel were erected at the site which now is the entrance to the enclosure before the present church. This is the old calvary enlarged, and here the statue of the Virgin, saved when the earlier church burned, is found. Next to this church are the uncompleted walls of the structure which is to be a new and larger church. It is said, however, that this edifice has given much trouble, for each time the walls reach a certain height they fall. The people say: "The Virgin does not like this place," and believe that a simpler church should be built where the old one stood.

The vision of the Virgin at En bas Palmes is believed to have occurred several times, most recently as placed by a lively tradition in the days of the American Marine occupation, when a priest is said to have caused both St. John and En bas Palmes to be closed for several years because, as at present, many who prayed at the church also took occasion to worship their *loa*.

During the fête, however, the tale goes, the Virgin appeared on a palm tree. The people, on their knees worshipping, sent to the priest to come and pray. He declared it merely superstition, however, and called an American Marine captain stationed at Mirebalais to help him suppress this worship. The captain ordered a Haitian sergeant to shoot the vision, but the Virgin merely moved to another tree; another shot, and she moved again. They cut down the tree, and those who looked on with terror saw the vision slowly ascend to the sky. As the priest

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

778 turned to leave, word came that his house had burned
796 and nothing in it was saved. Later he suffered a paralytic
193 stroke from which he never recovered. Some say that the
177 American captain became ill and was sent to the States
787 "as a punishment for what he had done." Several days later the sergeant was found mad, wandering in the woods. Since he had fired under orders, however, his punishment was but temporary, and on being cured he returned to Ville-Bonheur to ask pardon of the Virgin. Today he lives in Mirebalais. When they saw the American ill, the priest paralyzed, the sergeant mad, and the presbytery burned, "public clamor" became so strong that both St. John and En bas Palmes were reopened.[11]

778 In 1932 a cyclone at St. John tore down trees and houses and
731 hurt but did not kill the worshippers who had gathered there.
177 An eyewitness insisted he had seen the enormous whirling cloud rise from the sacred place. He had no time to reach his house, for with a noise like a cannon-shot the whirlwind came, and an enormous oak tree fell just behind him — "I saw death staring at me." Today he carries two scapularies to the Virgin to protect him.

778 The third sacred spot is at the falls themselves, where the
796 grandeur and beauty of the scene is such as to induce the re-
787 ligious thrill almost unaided, and where great numbers go in
177 the course of their pilgrimage to Ville-Bonheur. There are
[788] two falls, situated at a distance of several miles from the village, one for Damballa and one for Aida Wedo, and it is believed that those who bathe in the sacred streams become possessed. It is said that the palms near by are sacred to the Virgin, but others hold that they are for Damballa. Many visit the falls on the day preceding the fête, but the largest throng hurries there immediately after the principal mass, when the greatest number of possessions and the most violent seizures by the *loa* occur. The falls, therefore, in association

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

He was the center of all eyes. Most of the time he danced alone, gyrating recklessly. Sometimes he danced with his houngénicon. Those who watched clapped hands and uttered sounds imitating drums, for drums were not being used in this service. The houngan carried the inevitable *clochette*, or tiny hand bell.

When newcomers arrived, Gèdé greeted them by shaking both their hands downward, vigorously, three times. Then he wiped their faces with his kerchief, a ceremony which he repeated from time to time. He danced with each of them a kind of Jenvalo step, simple, restrained, and dignified. One of the visitors fell to his knees to converse with him.

The entire evening was built around the houngan's representation of Gèdé. Properly speaking, the houngan was not in a trance. He was in full possession of all his normal faculties and was conscious of the slightest inconveniences and disturbances. Several times the clay bowl of his pipe fell from the reed stem, scattering hot ashes on the ground, and each time he paused to allow the houngénicon to clear them away. Yet he was carried away by his certainty that he was Gèdé. The obvious conviction of those who watched seemed to fortify him in his role. As the evening wore on, he became more and more detached from his normal personality. His psychic condition was not that of one who had been "mounted" by a loa; it was, rather, a continuously progressive ecstasy.

Gèdé is, in fact, more than a loa of the cemetery; he is a personification of death in all its macabre, humorous, and unpredictable aspects. Death is not merely a thing dying; it is an entity, a positive force in nature. Death is Gèdé Nimbo. I believe that when the houngan became Gèdé, all who had crowded into his hut felt themselves to be in the presence of death itself. Death, a dynamic, aggressive force, danced and pirouetted among them, talking the language of the dead and of old Africa.

Gèdé is often stern, austere, and forbidding, but he has other aspects. Haitians take amused pleasure at the terror he can strike into the hearts of the mighty. An old Gèdé song goes:

Papa Gèdé bel ga'çon!	Papa Gèdé is a handsome fellow!
Papa Gèdé bel ga'çon!	Papa Gèdé is a handsome fellow!
L'habillé tout en noi'!	He is dressed all in black
Pou'l monté au palais!	For he is going up to the palace!
L'habillé tout en blanc	When he's dressed all in white
Li semblé yun deputé!	He looks like a deputy!
L'habillé tout en noi'!	When he's dressed all in black
Li semblé yun senateur!	He resembles a senator!

According to tradition, the song had its origin in a march on the capital by some houngans many years ago. The story is very old and no one remembers many of the details.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

If it should happen that on the appointed day four years later the family is unable to hold the regular feast for Grand Bois, the grand famille goes to the tree sacred to the loa, with a bottle of *siro'* and other token gifts. He explains the difficulties of the family; he tells the loa that it has been a bad year, that the crops have been poor, and that the family has not been able to accumulate enough money to buy sacrificial animals. He asks Grand Bois for a six-month postponement. The loa agrees to the postponement, making his intentions clear through various signs when the grand famille is possessed. "Grand Bois is a good loa," people say, "but if you fail to meet your obligations to him he will be very stern. If you don't keep your promise to him, he may seize you [i.e., kill you]."

When the rites for Mait' Grand Bois are finished, services for Ogoun and the Dahomé deities may be held, beginning on Friday and running through the week end. The Ogoun service is a festive affair. There is much singing and dancing, and early on Saturday morning the sacrificial bull is dressed and decorated with red and blue kerchiefs. Red and blue ribbons are tied to his horns, and he is led on a grand tour to various places, including Ogoun's tree. The drummers walk behind him, and after them members of the family, some dancing, some singing, and some mounted by the loa Ogoun. The procession passes three times around the cemetery, then heads back toward the family *habitation*. When the participants reach the tree sacred to Legba, they sing to this loa, invoking him to "ouvri bayè pou' moin" (open the gate for me). Finally, when the procession reaches the *habitation*, the sacrificial bull is killed. After Ogoun has been served his mangé, the rites are terminated with an *action de grâce*.

Near Anse-à-Veau there is a dried-up spring. It is said that many years ago during a big service for Mait' Grand Bois a man mounted by this loa rushed to the foot of a large tree and began clawing at the ground. He dug a hole there with his hands, and when it was only a few feet deep, water began to flow. The members of the société later enlarged the hole and lined it with stone. It was discovered that a giant crab was living in this water. One year, a service to Mait' Grand Bois was missed. The crab disappeared from the spring, and soon the water stopped flowing. "Grand Bois gives," the people say, "but if he is not remembered he also takes back."

Possession by the Loa Pinga Maza

On the outskirts of Port-au-Prince there is a hounfor dedicated to the loa Pinga Maza, also known by the name Bakulu Baka. He is a ferocious and fearsome spirit of the Pétro family who is known for his propensity

[P. 148]

13. Comments on the Mighty: Political Songs

* 533 538 626 178 The African-style song of social criticism has found no worthier subjects than the historic political figures of Haiti. There is no doubt that the African slaves used this art form to express their feelings toward the white masters as they had used it to comment upon the behavior of their own chiefs and fellow tribesmen. The worthy leaders were praised in song; the unworthy were castigated and their sins, failures, and social misdemeanors publicized in folk songs. By the beginning of the [567] nineteenth century, slavery had come to an end in Haiti. The deep democratic sense of human dignity had outlasted the colonial masters and emerged tempered and sharp. The songs of criticism became not
* 533 538 626 178 666 only comments upon political figures but campaign propaganda as well. They dwelt upon the accomplishments or faults of the candidates for political office. Friendly songs sought out every virtue, and invented others, in the man or woman being praised. Unfriendly songs lashed out and lacerated or poked biting fun at the subject, not even sparing his physical deformities.

* 533 538 [666] Yet the political songs are more than statements of merit or fault. Cumulatively they are a kind of folk history of Haiti. No political aspirant ever went unsung by his peasant army, or unridiculed by his opponent's followers. The songs the people sang about their heroes and
● [173] their enemies recall events and details that formal history has forgotten or ignored. The memory of the folk song is powerful and long. Some of the recollections go back more than a century.

175 642 [643] History books tell us that in December, 1843, Major Charles Hérard aîné Rivière was elected to the office of the presidency, and that a new constitution was drawn up by the Constituent Assembly. The new constitution was an accomplishment of the liberal and democratic forces of the nation. It guaranteed certain civil rights to the people. It provided that judges be elected instead of appointed, abolished life terms for

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti S'3

For some time the President, who was sixty-nine years old, had not been in good health, and disregarding the friendly warning of those who were interested in his welfare he refused to give up his hard work and to take the rest of which he was in sore need. Against the advice of his doctor he decided to undertake a long journey to Jacmel. He started on the 24th of March, 1896, at three o'clock in the morning, but before he even had time to leave Port-au-Prince, he fell from his horse dead in a fit of apoplexy, at a short distance from the executive mansion.[1]

175 643

The legend of Hippolyte's death passed on in song is not nearly so dispassionate. It is told that Hippolyte was going out on a drastic punitive trip to Jacmel, where there were rumblings of political opposition and revolution. Among other things, the President was going to seize the powerful Voloun priest Mérisier, regarded as a powerful force in the opposition. Hippolyte also had sworn to reduce Jacmel to ashes and wipe out the entire population except one male and one female to repopulate the land. As he prepared to leave on his mission, his wife and his son stood by the door to see him off.

533* 539* 173 643

Li lévé Mardi bon matin, Li fai sélé cheval à li. En montant sa cheval li, Panama li sorti tombé.	He arose early on Tuesday morning, He saddled his horse. As he climbed on his horse, His hat came off and fell.
L'Hérison rélé "Papa," Li dit'l, "Papa à moin, Panama ou sorti tombé, Cé déjà youn mauvais signal."	L'Hérison * called out, "Papa!" He said to him, "Father, Your hat has come off and fallen. That is already a bad omen."
Li répond ni, "Pitit à moin, Moin déjà met' l'armée déhors, L'armée moin déjà nan portaille. Y faudra que moin parti."	He replied to him, "My child, I have already sent the army ahead, My army is already at the city gate, I have to go."
Arrivé sou Pont Gentil, Li tombé sani connaisance. Yo voyé rélé Doctor Jules, "Vin sauver Florvil Gélin!"	Arrived at Pont Gentil, He fell unconscious. They sent for Dr. Jules, "Come to save Florvil Gélin."
Doctor Jules tomba à genoux. Li rélé Manman Ste Anne, Li rélé St. Augustin, "Vine sauver Florvil Gélin!"	Dr. Jules fell on his knees. He called Mother St. Anne, He called St. Augustin, "Come to save Florvil Gélin!"
Ste Anne dit, "'i faut mouri." St. Augustin dit, "'i faut mouri." Li rélé St. Jacques Majeur "Vine sauver Florvil Gélin!"	St. Anne said, "He has to die." St. Augustin said, "He has to die." He called St. Jacques Majeur, "Come to save Florvil Gélin."

* Hippolyte's son.

[1] (Léger, Haiti, Her History and Her Detractors. Cf p. 353, Category 116. -- Analyst)

*533 Mérisier rété Jacmel,
*539 Li souqué baksor à li.
●173 Li conné ça qui gainyain.
643 Tout ti trou déjà bouché!

Mérisier waited at Jacmel.
He shook his sacred rattle.
He knew what was going on.
All the small holes were filled.*

Victoire dit con ça,
Quand Florvil ta va mourit
Li tap fai youn belle soirée
Avec tout ti gens la yo.

Victoire said
When Florvil dies
She will hold a beautiful party
With all the young people

CHORUS

En allé Dodo!
En allé Dodo!
En allé ce soir
Caille la belle Victoire!

CHORUS

We are going to dance! †
We are going to dance!
We are going this evening
To the house of beautiful Victoire! ‡

The legend of Hippolyte's falling hat is preserved in another folk song called "Panama'm Tombé":

Panama'm tombé,
Panama'm tombé,
Panama'm tombé; ça qui dèyè
Ramassé li ba moin!

My hat fell down,
My hat fell down,
My hat fell down; whoever is behind,
Pick it up for me!

*533 Mérisier, the Vodoun priest whom Hippolyte regarded as an enemy,
*539 was not pleased with the rumors and talk about him that was going the
173 rounds in the capital. His displeasure is recorded in a protest song with
643 a familiar theme:
793

Mérisier yo vini ga'dé moin pou' y'allé pa'lé, wo wa é!
Mérisier yo vini ga'dé ça pou' y'allé pa'lé ça!
Kénan moin yo wè!
Kénan yo séré nan mal!
Mérisier pas là, sonné ochan wa wa é!

Mérisier [says] they come to see me to go away and talk, *wo wa é!*
Mérisier [says] they come to see it and go away to talk about it!
What is mine you see!
What is yours you evilly hide!
Mérisier isn't there, sound the salute, *wo wa é!*

173 Seven days after Hippolyte's death, General Simon Sam was elected
643 to the presidency. His friends and his enemies had different things to say
*533 about him. One song makes a tart comment on Sam's administration.
*539

* That is, the affair was finished.
† *Allé dodo* literally means "to go to sleep," but there was a dance called Allé Dodo.
‡ Hippolyte's young wife.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1958) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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533*
539*

A la youn président,
C'est Tirésius Augustin Simon Sam.
Si tout té con ça,
Haiti ta fini! [Ex. 111]

There was a president,
He was Tirésius Augustin Simon Sam.
If they were all like him,
Haiti would be finished!

In 1902 General Nord Alexis became the chief executive of Haiti. His abilities and accomplishments are still being debated, but he appears to have been a rather lovable old man whom everyone called by the affectionate term Uncle. His administration was fairly stable and prosperous—as prosperity is known in Haiti—and in large measure peaceful. When his election was confirmed, the people were convinced that the nation was in for a period of law and order, and that the constant threat of cacos and brigandage would come to an end. One of the election-year songs goes:

175
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[533]*
[539]*

Nous crions vive, c'est pou' l'armé du Nord!
Tintin cila ça va fini!
Nous crions vive, c'est pou' soldats du Nord!
Tintin cila ça va fini!
Tintin cila, tintin cila, tintin cila va fini!
Bassin Vodoun, Bassin Vodoun, Bassin Vodoun c'est pou' nous! [Ex. 112]

We cry long live Nord's army!
The chaos will be ended!
We cry long live Nord's soldiers!
The chaos will be ended!
The chaos, the chaos, the chaos will be ended!
Bassin Vodoun,* Bassin Vodoun, Bassin Vodoun is for us!

One of the serious problems confronting Nord Alexis after his election was that of a disappearing national currency. Haitian paper money was circulating elsewhere in the West Indies and in South America and was becoming increasingly scarce in Haiti itself. Nord Alexis called in all the old currency and issued new, with the happy result that large quantities of money were again seen in the Republic. The common people who made the songs seem to have been very grateful:

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643
652
[533]*
[539]*

Alexis Nord Papa ou bon chef oh!
Ou ba nous moné, ou ba nous papier!
Alexis Nord Papa ou bon chef oh!
Ou ba nous moné, ou ba nous papier!

* Probably a place name.

[P.166]

15. Secret-Society Songs

575 171 Secret societies were once common in Haiti, as they were in other parts of the New World where West Africans settled in large numbers. The institution of the secret society was strong in various parts of West Africa from which the slaves came. The tradition was particularly notable among the tribes of Nigeria. In the New World it offered to slaves and to freed Negroes an opportunity for social organization and fraternal relationships which otherwise had been pretty well shattered by the nature of slavery and the profuse admixture of cultures. A number of elderly Haitians have [648] suggested that it was the Haitian secret societies rather than the Vodoun and Congo cults which fomented underground resistance and slave revolts against the French in the last years of the eighteenth century.

174 178 576 [476] At this late date it is difficult to reconstruct much of the secret-society picture. Such groups as may have survived until recently did so in vitiated and changed form. They have been supplanted in large measure by the *société*, a kind of mutual-aid association with both economic and recreational functions. It is exclusive, but not irrevocably so, and it is not secret. The société often corresponds roughly with the membership of a hounfor, or cult temple.

575 178 266 173 Old people still talk about true secret societies, however. There was a Moundongue secret society, separate from the Moundongue cult, whose members were recruited from the survivors of the Moundongue tribe and their descendants. Other secret societies were not based on tribal affiliation but were recruited from the population at large. One such group was the Vinbindingue, also known as the Blinbindingue and the Balbindingue. Its practices were feared. According to tradition, the Vinbindingue was predatory and held cannibalistic rites, as did other groups such as the Moundongue Society, the Cochon Rouge (the Red Pig Society), the Zeaubeaups, the Cochon Gris (the Gray Pig Society), and the Calinda Society. How much of their reputation for cannibalism was deserved is

[Herskovits, Dahomey, I, P. 256. Cf. P. 353, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander 8-6 (1937-1943) 1968 SV3 Hait SV3

How much of their reputation for cannibalism was deserved is a matter of speculation. Bizarre tales told by the colonists, as well as rumors and legends propagated about the societies by nonmembers who feared them, did result in a body of folklore which portrays these groups as malevolent. The societies themselves, no doubt, often supported such beliefs to increase the awe in which they were held. 173 595 266

In modern Haiti, however, there is no secret or fraternal society of the kind that probably existed in prerevolutionary days. Nor is there anything comparable to the Abakwa, or Carabali, an Ibo secret society that has survived in Cuba.[2] 178 595

Curiously enough, the most significant noncult organization in Haiti today is the Masonic order. Yet it has not remained distinct from the cults but has become interwoven with them. Many Vodoun and Congo services have rites or dances that are designated as Mazonne (Masonic). Houngans often feel that affiliation with the Masonic order offers distinction and prestige for the hounfor that the ordinary cult center does not have. 595 794

As for the Calinda, the Cochon Rouge, the Cochon Gris, the Zeaubeaup, the Vinbindingue, and the Moundongue societies, they appear to survive in name rather than in fact. The rumors and tales go on, as they do about zombies, devils and lou-garos. It is mostly at carnival time that their names are heard. A Mardi Gras band, appropriately costumed, may herald itself as a Calinda or a Cochon Rouge group. It will sing songs it regards as appropriate to the kind of effect it is trying to achieve. Such groups are not taken seriously. They are merely part of the carnival fun. But to members of older generations they do recall tales about the secret societies that met under the limbs of the mapou tree by torchlight to conduct their nocturnal affairs. 178 595

The songs that follow are reputed to belong to the Calinda, Vinbindingue, and Zeaubeaup societies; but they are infected with a frivolous quality which suggests they may have been heard for the first time in the carnival celebration rather than in the dark shadows of the mapou. 533* 595

One of the legends concerning the Balbindingue, or Vinbindingue, is that of the dancing drum. The theme is a special one, but it is related to other stories about dancing calabashes in the Calbasse ritual and about dancing hoes. This song describes a gathering at such a dance: 533* 539* 595

Balbindingue!
C'est là n'homme mwé yé!
Cimitière tonnerre!
Balbindingue!
C'est yon seul tambour qui danse!
Pardon mon plou!
Balbindingue!
C'est là n'homme mwé yé! [Ex. 124]

2 [See Courlander "Abakwa Meeting in Guanabacoa," Journal of Negro History, XXIX (1944), 461ff. Cf. Cat. 116, p. 353. -- Analyst]

2: Contander 9-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 HaRi SV3

[The Congo and Pétro Pantheons]

 776

Wanon. (King of Angola). He also appears in other rites.

Yaoundé, or Mayaoundé. This name is a tribal designation, referring to the Mayaombés of the Congo region.

Wanon. Dlaad (Wangol of the Water)

Mouvoumoute. Often considered to be a "hard" loa. Ritual service to him includes, on special occasions, the cutting off of dogs' ears and tails. He is fond of dogs and is benevolent toward them. The name derives from that of a tribe of the upper Congo region. [782]

Ti Mouvoumoute. Said to be a "son" of Moundongue.

Mouvoumoute Mouvaille. A member of Moundongue's family.

Baracou, or Bilaou. A loa identified with the morning star, also called Baiacou. There is also a town in Dahomey by this name.

Ganda, or Baganda, also called Nèg' Gandà. A deity taking the name of the Ganda people of Uganda.

Congo Yamboan. A benevolent loa associated with curing and protecting the sick. Certain curative medicine bundles are called *yamingues*. [755]

Macaya Bumba, sometimes called Caya. He takes his name from the Bumba people of the upper Congo River region. The Bumbas are near neighbors of the Moundongues.

Manyo Bumba. One of the Bumba family.

Mariani Mouvoumoute. One of the Moundongue family.

Roi Loango (King of Loango). Refers to the old African kingdom of that name.

Nanchou. A warrior deity.

Avilékété. Known primarily in northern Haiti. [784]

Don Pétro. A rather malevolent loa, from whom the Pétro cult takes its name. The mangé for Don Pétro is a pig. Early observers speculated that Don Pétro was originally a powerful houngan of prerevolutionary days.[23] [782] [793]

Ayiba Pétro. A Pétro version of the Vodoun Ayida Wèdo.

Bakulu Baka, known in some regions by the name Pinga Maza. He is a malevolent spirit who "eats"—i.e., destroys—people. Some informants are inclined to believe that Bakulu and Pinga are separate loa, both of a variety akin to baka or démons.

Bakulu Barak. Related to Bakulu Baka.

Bambarra Taiba. He is visualized as a sea crab. *Taille bas* in Creole means "low hips" and is used to describe a dance posture. The surname Taiba therefore may describe the movements of this loa as he moves about like a crab. [792]

Balai Bulba

Basé Gèdéal, or Gèdéal Basé. He is enormously large and ferocious in appearance. A special loa of the country people. Although stern, he is fond of children. He is symbolized as an owl; his home is in the chardonn tree. His physical description suggests that he may be a deification of the epic folklore character Boisé Montaigne, or Brook Mountains.

Chamaman

Congo Hèquou (Congo Red Eyes). A malevolent male spirit. Loa with red eyes are always of bad character.

Congo Mayaouala, or Mayaouala. A malevolent spirit.

Congo Savane, or Congo Zanmon (Congo of the Plains). Malevolent, fierce, and

23 [Saint-Méry, De la danse, p. 48. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116.—Ed.]

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

712 the battlements far off across the tortuous mass of mountains and
[713] green valleys, admire the sheer strength of will which made His Majesty's subjects bear four hundred cannon up the steep and rocky path—not to mention thousands of cannon balls now rusting away after a century of disuse, or the powder and shot which once filled
[173] the magazines. It is said that five thousand soldiers could be housed in the fortress at once. If this is hyperbole, one hardly dare challenge
[703] it, for the whole Citadel belittles the individual man. It is likewise said that Christophe once made a battalion of soldiers march off the cliff to their death merely to demonstrate his absolute control over them. Such stories grow up around His Black Majesty. He lies en-
[766] tombed in his useless but still superb fortress—and lives in the memory of the Northerners, one of whom said proudly: "We of the North have a great heritage, and you will find that we are all dominated by *une psychologie citadelienne*."

Dungeons, secret passages, royal apartments, separate rooms for each of the old Dutch, Spanish, French, and English cannon, some of them dating back to the seventeenth century—all the paraphernalia of the storybook fortress is present. From a bastion one gazes, as from an alp, for miles in any direction, and feels that La Ferrière is certainly one of the most impressive, and one of the most futile, edifices in the world. If the silent cannon had ever been fired, their balls would have rumbled harmlessly down the mountainside. The suspicion grows that Christophe achieved his architectural miracle not primarily as a defense against the French, but to make his subjects proud of what a nation of despised ex-slaves could accomplish.

344 Five miles away, at the foot of the mountain, is the village of
644 Milot, with the ruins of the palace of Sans Souci. Of yellow stone, it spreads out spaciously like a French château. Its rooms must have been magnificent. The palace is so situated that one may look out across the northern plains to the sea, or up the valleys to mountain peaks. In Sans Souci Christophe shot himself in 1820 when he knew that only *souci* would remain to him if he lived.

489 Transportation from one part of the country to another is far from
[496] easy. There are no railroads—unless one counts the short line running north a few miles from Port-au-Prince to nowhere in particular, and the equally short line coming west into Cap-Haïtien from the fields
[491] of the northern plain. Roads built by the American Marines make automobile travel between the main towns possible, if one does not

●174
177

[Since the Negro population of Haiti is derived primarily from African stock, data pertinent to the continuation, with modifications, of African cultural traits to fit the Haitian pattern will be found in category 178.]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

both town and district are bisected by the main route between the capitals of the Haitian and the Dominican republics. Yet, once again, this geographical nearness but distorts the psychological distance between Mirebalais and the metropolis. For though the busses, converted from camions, pass to and from the coastal city several times a week, the valley and even the town which is its center drowse in essential isolation. A few hundred yards off the main road find the Haitian peasant following the mode of life of his forebears, oblivious of events outside the valley. Only for a few of the *notables* of the town, the *gros nègres*, who have personal, political, or business contacts with Port-au-Prince, is the comparative proximity to the capital meaningful.

It is not possible to say how long this valley has been inhabited. Certainly the early Indians roamed there; and there, as in other parts of the island of Hispaniola, the tragedy of their extinction under the brutality of early Spanish rule must have taken place. Moreau de St. Mery, to whom all students of Haiti must acknowledge a debt of gratitude for his painstakingly accurate reports of life on the island, gives the derivation of its name.

> "Mirebalais received its name," he says, "because of the enormous numbers of wild animals the first Frenchmen found there, which recalled to them the small district in the region of Poitou [in France], called Mirebalais, where some of them had probably first seen the light of day. These quadrupeds, first introduced by the Spaniards, had no difficulty in multiplying there after the Indians had disappeared from their native land and the Spaniards, reduced in numbers, were obliged to abandon the great plains, so that horses, cattle, etc. came to exercise exclusive domain."[1]

St. Mery's work, which traces the development of Mirebalais as one of the parishes of pre-Revolutionary Haiti, makes it

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

been given through its use to substantiate the many charges of cannibalism in Haiti that have been made. Yet those who, desirous of establishing such cannibalism, quote this passage from St. Mery do not always remember to quote it in its complete context:

> "Some of these butchers of human flesh are also brought to Santo Domingo . . . where, as in Africa, they are the horror of the other Negroes, notably of the Congos, who, because of their nearness to them [in Africa], are most exposed to their cruelties." [4]

These are thus the tribes who were presumably the most important in the Negro ancestry of the Haitians of today. Was there any least common denominator in language which made it possible for slaves fresh from Africa to communicate with one another after their arrival in Haiti? Was there sufficient similarity in their cultures so that this might form the basis for a retention of African beliefs and behavior despite the vicissitudes of slavery? And what were the characteristics of the African civilizations of these people?

The picture of West African life, as it is commonly drawn, emphasizes the great number of small tribal groups following dissimilar modes of life, speaking mutually unintelligible languages, and worshipping different gods. In a very general sense this is not untrue. On the face of it, the number of languages that are spoken in the area from which the slaves were derived would seem to have constituted an effective barrier not alone to any concerted action on the part of slaves, but even to communication between them, especially since in many regions of the New World it was a fixed policy to separate slaves from the same tribe.

Yet behind this semblance of sharp dissimilarities lies a basic unity of language and culture in all of West Africa, so that though languages were and are mutually unintelligible, structurally and idiomatically they are much the same. This

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

is why Créole, not alone in Haiti, but also in Martinique, in Trinidad, and in Louisiana, like Negro English in other portions of the New World, shows such consistency in structure and idiom. The slaves, having mastered a requisite number of words in the language of their masters, merely poured them into this mold of their own linguistic patterns and, approximating the phonetic values of such words in terms of the West African modes of speech, thus established a means of communication between one another, no matter what their tribal derivation.[8]

The region of West Africa which furnished the slaves was an area of great and settled political entities. Here were to be found the Fula and Mandingo empires in the western portion of the area, and the Hausa kingdom in northern Nigeria; the Ashanti and Fanti states in the Gold Coast, and, to the east, the kingdoms of Dahomey, of Yoruba, and of Benin; southward, those of Kongo and Loango. In all this vast territory law and order reigned, and regimentation of behavior under the direction of kings and priests was the rule. With this went a discipline that so deeply stamps African tradition that even the many years of European dominance have not been able to efface it.

The social life in this area, as well as its political organization, is to a very considerable extent a unit. Polygyny, the institution whereby a man may have more than one wife, is found in the entire region. Everywhere descent is counted on one side of the family, either the male or the female, and the larger significant relationship groupings that are composed of those who regard themselves as descended from a single and often mythical totemic ancestor are equally characteristic. Discipline rules within the family as well as outside it and is exacted from the earliest days in the life of a child. Needless to say, it is a far cry from this ordered state of society to the disorganized life which the stereotype of the "savage African" envisages.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

171 Despite the influence of Mohammedanism in the north,
271 there are certain similarities in religion to be found every-
567 where. Even among the Mohammedans, magic is as potent as it ever was, and as St. Mery correctly observed for his time regarding the Mohammedan slaves, the aboriginal gods have by no means been forgotten. On the west coast and in the Congo, however, pagan religions having a degree of complexity which accords with the complexity of the other aspects of these civilizations are found everywhere. Magic constitutes only one aspect of these systems in which pantheons of deities, each pantheon and each member of each pantheon with its special function, are held to control the destinies of the world and of man. The ancestral cult is another important aspect of West African belief, with the spirits of the dead envisaged as living on in another world, yet alert to manifest power for good or evil among their descendants. Not only in cosmology, but in ceremonialism as well are there patterns that characterize all West Africa. The worship of the gods through the dance, and the phenomenon of possession of devotees by their deities; the place of song in worship, and the special character of this music; the use of drums and other percussion instruments such as the rattle and iron gong in religious rites; these again are elements which all slaves in Haiti, no matter what their tribal affiliations, had in common.

171 Nevertheless, as one studies Haitian folk-custom and folk-
174 belief today, recognizable survivals of traits from the cultures of all the tribes that have been named are not to be found in anything approaching a comparable degree. Little of Sene-
[567] galese practice is to be seen at present, while similarly, at least in the valley of Mirebalais, far less Congo derivatives can be discerned than would be expected when the vast number of Congo slaves imported into Haiti are recalled. Practically no traces of Gold Coast or Ivory Coast custom and belief are discoverable; the word "Ibo" appears from time to time; and several Ibo gods are worshipped; Nago deities, as will be seen,

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

manifest themselves in large number. The majority of African traits, however, derive from the geographical center of the slaving area, especially from the region of Dahomey. Even the famous word "voodoo" is Dahomean, as all Haitian writers and some Europeans and Americans have recognized. Whatever its meaning in Haiti at the present time, its derivation is clear. It is the *vodun* of the Fōn-speaking people,—a word which is best translated as "god." Names of gods, and social and economic institutions, point their origin to this same Dahomean source. This being the case, it may be well to give a general description of the civilization of these Dahomeans, as an aid in the interpretation of the various phases of Haitian peasant life which are to be considered in the ensuing pages.[6]

In their basic attitude toward life the people of Dahomey have achieved a blend between co-operation and competition. Living in a society which, from before the time of contact with the Europeans, had a pecuniary base, with its resulting competitive drives, the desire to gain wealth both as an end in itself and for the prestige to be derived from its display is outstanding in native psychology. At the same time, and most particularly in the field of production, co-operative endeavor is to be found throughout the kingdom. As with all West African folk, agriculture is the most important element in Dahomean economy. Other forms of production are iron-working, brass-casting, weaving of cotton and raffia cloth, the making of appliquéd designs on ceremonial cloths, and the manufacture of pottery.

A large part of the heavy labor in Dahomey is done by means of the co-operative groups known by the term *dokpwe*. These associations not only clear the fields, but do the strenuous work of erecting walls for houses and compound enclosures and of thatching. When work is to be done, the one who is in need of the services of a *dokpwe* goes to the chief and arranges for the men to work for him on a given day. If he

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

in descent, so there were "colored" folk who were slaves. As time went on, the lighter-colored slaves were usually employed as house-servants rather than field-hands, bringing about a continuous dilution of the Negro blood that flowed in these strains, and a lightening of their skins. And such was the prestige attached to light color that the mixed-bloods, even though slaves, felt themselves superior to free Negroes of undiluted African stock. This attitude derived from the fact that the lighter slaves were most often manumitted, particularly if they were the children of their owners, and that in other situations, when as slaves they gained the favor of their masters, they were permitted to engage in some remunerative enterprise with the proceeds of which they eventually might purchase their own freedom. These free people of color, or *affranchis*, formed an important part of the Haitian population in pre-Revolutionary times,[13] and played a principal role in the development of Haitian culture. It was through them that European civilization flowed, since because of the closeness of their contacts with the whites they were the instrument by means of which the aboriginal African heritage of the slaves was modified to produce the forms in which it is found in Haiti today.[13]

Yet for all the importance of the freed mixed-bloods in the attainment of Haitian independence and in the fixing of the patterns of Haitian culture, they, like the whites, were but relatively few in number, their strength being but from five to ten per cent of that of slaves.[14] In attempting to analyze the manner in which the present amalgam that is the civilization of Haiti was formed, it is consequently necessary to revert to a consideration of those who were in the majority, the full-blooded Negroes. The tribes from which these Negroes were principally derived have been indicated, together with the outlines of the civilizations of the region of Africa from which they were drawn. To this must be added, as has been for the whites with whom they came in contact, an analysis of the so-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

cial classes to which they belonged, as well as the circumstances of their enslavement, their treatment in Africa before shipment to the New World and during the voyage, their initiation into their new mode of life, and the manner in which they lived as slaves, since all of these facts had considerable bearing on the processes which shaped the behavior of their descendants who now inhabit the island.

The integrated political organization of West Africa has been described, as well as the important fact that the class stratification in that region was almost as fixed and its social implications almost as far-reaching as in France. Even the early writers recognized that not all slaves came from the same ranks of society, just as they understood that there were various ways in which enslavement could be achieved. Père Labat, who lived in the West Indies for many years, listed four classes from which slaves were drawn. First, he says, were those whose punishments against native law had been commuted to perpetual banishment — that is, to slavery " for the private profit of the kings "; second were the prisoners of war; third were those who, already the slaves of native princes or of those persons to whom they had been given by these princes, were sold to meet the need of their masters for money; while fourth, comprising the greatest proportion of the slaves, were those snatched from their homes by the marauding bands of robbers who, with the connivance of native rulers, carried on these raids to satisfy the demands of the European dealers.[14] This classification and others of the period, though generally accepted and repeated by later writers, tells little concerning the ranks of society from which the slaves were drawn, except as this may be inferred. For this one must go to present-day West Africa, where a lively tradition of the slave-trade has survived and offers valuable supplementary information.[15]

In the light of the existing traditions in Dahomey and Nigeria, it is evident that from the point of view of the African, Labat's four classes must be compressed into two — the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

"The Mina Negroes have even been seen to recognize princes of their country . . . prostrating themselves at their feet and rendering them that homage whose contrast to the state of servitude to which these princes have been reduced in the colony offers a striking enough instance of the instability of human greatness." [17]

Yet another group of Africans played a significant role in determining the trends Haitian Negro culture was to take. It is a commonplace among those who have studied New World Negro life that African religion has shown greater resistance to white influence than any other phase of African culture. And to explain this one must again turn to native African tradition. The beginnings of the West African monarchies, whose ruling dynasties eventually came to command great stretches of land, were in tiny principalities that continually "warred" against each other. Tradition has it that the most intransigent of the conquered were the priests of the indigenous local cults, who, because of their activities, were punished with what native idiom still terms "banishment." In the New World these intractable priests continued their rites for their fellow-slaves and instructed the next generation so their knowledge would not be lost to the people. Before their enslavement they had been men of power and influence, and this pattern, carried over in all its strength in the New World, continued them and their descendants as natural leaders. Hence, wherever the opportunity presented itself to strike for liberty, they invoked the spiritual forces to reinforce the power and courage of the military leaders who, like them, had been sold into slavery because their countries had been conquered, or because they had rebelled against the succession in their own lands.

The composition of the slave population as inferred from these traditions is thus seen to be somewhat different from

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

that commonly assumed, since the conclusion is inescapable that, if anything, the slaves formed a group whose aboriginal types showed a weighting on the upper end of the African social scale rather than an overwhelming proportion of the less desirable members of society. Such an assumption goes far in explaining how the "slave psychology" generally attributed to Negroes of the New World was anything but a real part of their inner lives, and makes as well for an understanding of the extent to which the Negroes suffered their slavery with a constantly active discontent that is rarely given proper recognition in the study of the history of the period, and to which the drive toward freedom and the traditions of their native land were kept alive despite the restraints imposed by the masters.

Once in the net of the slavers, however, the status of any individual mattered but little, for to the European dealers each Negro was but an added unit of cargo. All last traces of his dignity as a human being were taken from him;[18] in the grants for earlier slaving operations, and in the manifests of the ships of that time, slaves were not even invoiced as human beings, but as "pieces of the Indies" — fractions of the perfect slave, who was conceived as having a height of seven *quartas* of a little more than ten inches each. Under this practice, the stature of each slave, child or adult, having been recorded, the total length of the members of the cargo was divided by the requisite number, and thus reduced to so many of these "pieces of the Indies," the actual number of human beings in the cargo not figuring.[19]

It is unnecessary to detail the horrors of the passage to the New World, for the story has been too often told. One can but conjecture what its effect on those subjected to it must have been, especially when it is viewed as an introduction to their contact with the Europeans who were to be their masters. That the mortality on the voyage was high is well known, but death encountered while the shackled slaves passed the dan-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

776 769 845 184 correctness of her view, while making an honest avowal of her inability to explain how this came about. On another occasion discussion turned upon the manner in which the powers of these supernatural beings are conceived in various parts of Haiti. Said one *hungan:* " Twins are stronger than the saints (the *loa*). The *marassa* are the mothers of the saints. So it is said at Arcahaie." The reply came: " In Mirebalais they say the saints are stronger."

During a lively discussion of the point by a group of active voduists the suggestion was made by one that the relative power of the *loa,* the dead, and the twins might be determined if the numerical strength of the following of each cult could be roughly ascertained. Since all give sacrifices for the dead — even strict Church members — and all who worship the *loa* give for the *loa* and the dead, while only some of this latter group give for the *loa,* the twins, and the dead, the person who had suggested this line of inquiry concluded that the dead were therefore strongest, because no one dared ignore them. Still another opinion, though in agreement with this, was based rather on the fact that the *loa* always exhibit fear before manifestations of death, as at dances where persons possessed by Damballa or Aida Wedo avoid those possessed by Gede, since he stands so close to the dead. However, it was pointed out by others in Mirebalais that the most costly and elaborate offerings are for the *loa,* that those for the dead are smaller, and those given the twins are least impressive, which was evidence enough for them that the *loa* are the most powerful of these three categories. All agreed, however, in ascribing to the twins the least power of the three, though what the *marassa* do for good or evil they do with intensity and dispatch.

174 776 769 845 There is ample justification, on both theological and historical grounds, for placing twins and the dead in a single general category. For, as one educated Haitian put it in pointing out that both twins and dead are worshipped on the same day, "*Marassa et morts font une chapitre pour nous* — The twins and the dead make a single chapter for us."

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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twins and the dead make a single chapter for us." This point of view is supported by a study of the twin cult as found in that part of West Africa from which so much of Haitian culture came, where a single category of the supernatural world, comprising all ancestors, includes both twins and the dead, as well as all others "who have passed through the womb of a woman." As might be expected, the concept is more elaborated in West Africa than in Haiti; but the important point is that in Haiti, though less explicitly formulated, it has persisted.

To worship twins it is not necessary either for a family to number them among its members of this generation, or to have included them within the memory of those living, for it is sufficient if a tradition exists that twins had once been born to some member of the family. If the twins are alive or lived in recent times, sacrifices are given both at Christmas and at harvest time; otherwise only at Christmas. Some families, indeed, worship twins because a *hungan* has divined that their unknown ancestors in "Guinée" had included them. There are still others who decide to worship the *marassa* without the advice of a diviner, because certain benefits are believed to come to those who worship twins, because of their power for good or evil.[1]

The source of this power is vague; one characteristic answer to a question concerning it was: "Their power comes from God. Do we ourselves know how twins are made?" It is agreed, however, that St. Nicholas is their spiritual father — an opinion based on the tale of this saint, held to have been a sorcerer who, in very early times, killed three *marassa* (the twins themselves and the *dosu*, or child after twins) and salted them away in a barrel. The mother of the children came to him to offer up her prayers, and, touched by her sorrow, he resuscitated them, since when he has been their "father." The power of twins, whatever its source, is very real to the Haitians. They are believed to be able to predict rain, for ex-

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Boulicha Nago, or Boulicha of the Nagos; Èzilie Wèdo and Èzilie Doba, possibly from Wèdo and Doba in Dahomey; Tijean Pied Chêche (Tijean Dry Feet), a loa of bad character, "dry feet" signifying malevolence; and Legba Grand Chimin, or Legba of the Highway. 776 171 552

Identification of loa is often made difficult by the use of the generic or family title only. The term Nago covers all the loa associated with this "nation" (Nago Piment, Amine Nago, Boulicha Nago, etc.), but in a song or service any one of them is as likely as not to be referred to simply as Nago, with no clue to his exact identity. Each listener takes the name to designate the Nago loa with whom he is most familiar, unless possession occurs and the loa is otherwise identified by the behavior of his "horse." 776 552

On the whole, it appears that there was in the beginning a strong awareness of regional origins. There are names among the cult pantheons which indicate Senegal, Dahomey, Nigeria, Congo, and Angola origins. Many loa bear the names of African towns. Among the Ogoun family of loa, for example, are such regional designations as Badagry and Jèkkè, the first being a town in Nigeria and the second in Dahomey. It is clear that a detailed geographical knowledge of certain West African regions would considerably illuminate a study of Haitian loa. 776 174 552

Local shrines, too, doubtless enter into the naming system. Badagry is the name of a town in Nigeria, and it is also a Dahomean word designating the structure in which young men used to be circumcised and initiated into the secrets of warriors. In this particular light, the loa Ogoun Badagry might be regarded as the deity of that particular ritual center. 346 174 776 552

In discussing the complicated relationship of their loa, Haitians sometimes say: "There are seven of everything. There are seven Marassas, seven Ogouns, seven Èzilies. There are seven brothers and sisters in every family of loa." Or they say something such as: "There is only one Legba, but there are seven. There is only one Ogoun, but he has many moods and names. There is only one Èzilie, but she has seven faces." This concept is also held by the Arara (Arada) cult of Cuba. It is interesting to note the extent to which duplications and new generations of loa have been set up into family households in the most literal sense. Those families are still growing. In the Gèdé family I have counted more than thirty seemingly distinct individuals (see Appendix I).[1] Herskovits mentions a number of others, and still more have been cited by other writers on the subject. When I pointed out to some Haitians that the Gèdé family numbered far more than seven individuals, they were unable to account for the situation. Other Haitians took the vast army of Gèdés as a matter of course. The Ogoun family, too, is large and growing. Twenty-seven Ogouns are listed in the compilation in Appendix I. Still more have been recorded elsewhere. 776 801

[1] [See p. 317 ff., Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

764 invoked the loa, the pallbearers brought the body forward as though to go straight ahead, but then they began to lurch and sway as though an invisible force were pushing them around. They veered as though to take the right turn, and again they lurched and staggered. At last they turned toward the left, and in this direction they found the road clear. The houngan thanked the Master of the Crossroads, the widow took her place at the head of the procession, and it proceeded on its way to the cemetery.

793 764 766 In the services for a dead houngan described by Simpson, the body is placed in a coffin, which is carried to all the places sacred to the loa of the hounfor before being taken to the cemetery. First it is taken to the sacred trees where the loa reside, then to the sacred spring "whose waters have cured many sicknesses which physicians had pronounced incurable . . . [823] The bearers of the coffin circle the spring several times. The coffin is swung [toward] each of the four cardinal points." Afterward the procession continues its way to the burial ground.[17]

766 174 761 But the treatment given to the dead may vary according to the manner in which they died. Leyburn notes, for example, that "a person struck by lightning . . . would have no ceremonies at all, for lightning is an act of God."[18] It may well be that the Haitian rationale for not holding ceremonies for an individual killed by lightning is that God has already held the final ceremony. But in the Haitian mind all deaths are, in the last analysis, acts of God, even though magic, poison, or accident may have played an immediate part. Why, then, should the corpse struck by lightning be treated so differently? The answer would appear to lie in a custom of the Yoruba of dispensing with all burial rites for persons killed by lightning, such persons being considered enemies of the lightning deity Chango. In Dahomey, Herskovits reports, the same attitude prevails in regard to persons killed by lightning:

171 766 761 [174]

> If a person is killed by lightning he . . . stands convicted by this fact of some grave crime which has incurred the displeasure of the god of the Thunder Pantheon (Xevioso). A person so killed is never buried by his family, but the body is turned over to the chief priest and cult-members of these deities. It is believed that a man killed in this fashion remains upright until the chief priest questions him and forces him to confess the crimes he had committed to be so punished. No one touches any of the belongings of such a man, not even his money. The house in which he lived is allowed to go to ruin, an *asan* of palm fronds being placed around it to guard against anyone entering it. The moveable property of such a man, his clothes, his stools, and his dishes, are thrown away at the crossroads . . .[19]

[768] [784] [824]

766 The burial of a Haitian who dies of smallpox likewise differs from that of one who dies a "normal" death. The victim of smallpox is buried without a coffin in a segregated part of the cemetery. The reason for this lies

17 [Simpson, Op. Cit., p. 161. Cf. P. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]
18 [Leyburn, The Haitian People, p. 156. Cf. P. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]
19 [Herskovits, Dahomey, I, 398. Cf. P. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

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beyond the obvious fear of contagion. In his study of Dahomey, Herskovits notes: 766 [171]

> . . . Small-pox is believed to be sent as a punishment for grave offenses in the eyes of these [the Sagbata] deities, and it is taken to indicate that either the dead person himself or a member of his family has committed some heinous crime such as the practice of black magic. A person who dies of small-pox may only be buried after permission has been given by the chief priest of the Earth cult.[20]

Thus, in Haiti, though the connections with the past are clouded, it is clear that victims of lightning and smallpox are treated as a special class of criminals or malefactors. 174 753 761 766

Ordinary malefactors such as malevolent criminals and murderers—until recent years, at least—were not buried in the common graveyard. They, too, were segregated at the periphery of the cemetery or buried at the edge of a trail or road where the traffic would not permit them to rest and where their graves would be under constant surveillance. The roadside grave sometimes was also the fate of a person killed by lightning. 766

That these special burials are related to the Dahomean and Yoruban concepts of retribution for crimes against the deities is supported by the similarity of treatment accorded victims of lightning and disease and common criminals. In Haiti, Herskovits observes: "Those who die of small-pox or leprosy, suicides, or persons shot as a punishment for crime are not buried in the communal cemetery, but in special sections of the graveyard," the suicides and criminals being set apart from the others.[21] 761 753 766 [174] [171] [681] [762]

Graves found near the seashore, lake shores, or riverbanks frequently are declared to belong to persons who died of drowning. 766

Approximately nine days after a person's death, the "last prayers" are said, and the soul of the deceased is presumed to have departed from the house. Once more, under the tonnelle outside there are games, storytelling, and singing. On this night, however, there is also drumming and dancing of a special kind. Usually it is the Juba, or Martinique, dance, which is believed to be specially enjoyed by the dead, and it is the older people, rather than the young, who participate. These festivities are believed to give cheer to the deceased and to "encourage" him on his way. On the next night comes the mangé mort, the feast for the family dead, a ritual which continues periodically through the years. 765 53 [775] [524] [769]

Sometimes in Haiti you may come upon an old tomb or grave before which a dish of specially prepared food has been set. This is part of the mangé mort ritual. 764 769

A man may make provision in advance of his death for the rites which follow his burial. He may designate special animals to be killed, leave 763 764

[20] [Ibid., pp. 397–398. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.--Analyst]

[21] [Herskovits, Life in a Haitian Valley, p. 214. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.--Analyst]

[P.166]

15. Secret-Society Songs

575 171 Secret societies were once common in Haiti, as they were in other parts of the New World where West Africans settled in large numbers. The institution of the secret society was strong in various parts of West Africa from which the slaves came. The tradition was particularly notable among the tribes of Nigeria. In the New World it offered to slaves and to freed Negroes an opportunity for social organization and fraternal relationships which otherwise had been pretty well shattered by the nature of slavery and the profuse admixture of cultures. A number of elderly Haitians have [648] suggested that it was the Haitian secret societies rather than the Vodoun and Congo cults which fomented underground resistance and slave revolts against the French in the last years of the eighteenth century.

● 174 178 575 [476] At this late date it is difficult to reconstruct much of the secret-society picture. Such groups as may have survived until recently did so in vitiated and changed form. They have been supplanted in large measure by the *société*, a kind of mutual-aid association with both economic and recreational functions. It is exclusive, but not irrevocably so, and it is not secret. The société often corresponds roughly with the membership of a hounfor, or cult temple.

575 178 266 173 Old people still talk about true secret societies, however. There was a Moundongue secret society, separate from the Moundongue cult, whose members were recruited from the survivors of the Moundongue tribe and their descendants. Other secret societies were not based on tribal affiliation but were recruited from the population at large. One such group was the Vinbindingue, also known as the Blinbindingue and the Balbindingue. Its practices were feared. According to tradition, the Vinbindingue was predatory and held cannibalistic rites, as did other groups such as the Moundongue Society, the Cochon Rouge (the Red Pig Society), the Zeaubeaups, the Cochon Gris (the Gray Pig Society), and the Calinda Society. How much of their reputation for cannibalism was deserved is

[Herskovits, Dahomey, I, P. 256. Cf. P. 353, Category 116. -- Analyst]

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Except for the "aperture for the escape of the sound," the Bongo instrument is identical with the Haitian earth bow. The resemblance of the instrument to a spring snare strongly suggests that it may have been developed from some such device for catching game. This possibility is strengthened by the use of the earth bow among certain of the Bambarra hunters of the French Sudan as a game lure, the music played upon it being thought to have magical properties to attract animals to the region of the hunt.[9] A "portable" type of spring snare used among the Ashanti of Ghana is strikingly similar in form to the Haitian "portable" earth bow (see fig. 80).[a] 534 171 174

This instrument has survived not only in Haiti but in the United States as well. The washtub device that is an important part of American Negro folk music is a clear development of the earth bow. The washtub is inverted and a cord is attached to the tin bottom. The other end of the cord is fastened to a stick which is braced against the lip of the bottom side of the tub. The stick and the cord are manipulated precisely like the Haitian and African instruments. There is implicit evidence that the role of the washtub has been taken over in modern jazz orchestras by the double-bass fiddle. 534 171

Another device of African provenience is the Haitian *marimba* (also called *malimba*, *manimba*, and *marimbula*). It consists of a wooden box upon which a series of metal strips is mounted in such a way that they may be plucked with the fingers. In the face of the box, directly behind the keys, there is an aperture to permit the escape of the sound. The number of keys varies from three to seven or more, though some of them may produce duplicate tones. The instrument is usually about the size of a soap box. The musician sits upon it, facing the same way as the keyboard, and plays with his hands between his knees. The marimba is used for carnival music and for dances of the secular types, frequently in combination with a guitar, claves, and a cha-cha. It is a West Indian development of the small African *m'bila* or *sansa*, or "thumb piano." Several examples of the smaller instruments played with the thumbs have been found elsewhere in the West Indies, notably in Cuba,[10] and large forms of the sansa have been reported in recent years in Africa.[a]

Among the instruments more or less restricted to religious service are whistles and small hand bells, which are used for invoking and saluting the loa and the dead. *Canaries* (large clay water vessels) also enter into ritual use. They are sung into, tapped with sticks, and on some occasions are covered with goatskin heads and played like a drum. 534 916

[a] [Fig 80 appears on p. 112-55. -- Analyst]
[9] [Informant: Sobihas Tore, Bamako. Cf. p. 354, [115]
[10] category 116. -- Analyst]
[a] [See Courlander, op. cit., p. 239. Cf. p. 354, cat. 116. -- Analyst]

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[7.349]

Notes

Chapter 1: *The Making of the Haitian* (pp. 1-7)

[1]The name Gando survives in Haiti as the name of a deity.

[2]Herskovits, in *The Myth of the Negro Past* (p. 47), provides a tabulation of raw data found in the manifests recorded for slaves shipped to Virginia between 1700 and 1769: 20,564 slaves were reported shipped from "Africa," 3,652 from Gambia, 6,777 from "Guinea," 9,224 from Calabar, 3,800 from Angola, and 1,011 from Madagascar. Of those shipped from the island of Madagascar, 473 were listed as coming from Mozambique.

[3]Bartolomé de Las Casas.

Chapter 2: *Man and the Universe: Vodoun* (pp. 8-18)

[1]See Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 3.

[2]Schweinfurth in *The Heart of Africa*, II, 31, says: "In Loango all exercises and amusements are called gangs." Leo Wiener, in *Africa and the Discovery of America* (Philadelphia: Innes and Sons, 1922), III, 32, reports: "Forms of gangs have in Fanti the meaning 'medicine' but also 'magic'—such as Nyika gangs and Kongo [illegible]."

[3]Geary, *Africa Dances*, p. 120; Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 308 ff.

[4]From the Fon *houn-an* or *houn-on*. Among the Arada of Dahomey a *houn-an* was regarded as a spiritual wife of the deity. She was a servant of the cult temple, and in some instances a wife of the cult priest.

[5]Translated from the French of Aubin, *En Haiti*, pp. 57-59.

[6]Deren, in her *Divine Horsemen* (pp. 119 ff.), gives an excellent report of a service for Agwé in a boat at sea. Aubin (op. cit., p. 108) seems to have given the first description of this service at sea for the loa Agwé.

[7]Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. 119.

[8]*Ibid.*, p. 123. Leyburn advances the theory that Vodoun developed during this period as a result of the vacuum left by the Church. Although the Church did in effect leave the field to the African cults, one must assume that the Arada, Congo, and other cults were already organized and possessed of great vitality before the Haitian revolution. Implicit evidence points to a continuity of cult life from the earliest days of the African on Haitian soil. There are no statistics to reveal the extent of cult membership at the end of the eighteenth century, but the content and form of Vodoun today are so overwhelmingly African that it is difficult to think of Haitian cult activity as the product of a renaissance.

Chapter 3: *The Loa: Gods of the Haitian Mountains* (pp. 19-25)

[1]The term *vodoun*, used in this popular sense, conforms to the original Fon (Dahomean) usage. The term *hounsi*, also of Fon origin, signifies "spirit" and belongs to the same root

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Nor is it sufficient to label *Duvalierisme* "pathological" or "paranoid." The roots of this ideology are to be found in Haiti, not elsewhere; its supporters are the product of Haitian times and ideas; and their social identity, while not entirely clear, would probably pose few enigmas if enough data were available.* In order to make clear these assertions, however, it is necessary to look again at Haitian society, the Haitian society Leyburn has described so well, and to reexamine the terms that have been used by him and by others to describe it.

Though the societies of the Caribbean Sea differ significantly from each other, many of them share certain general historical experiences. Unlike the colonial areas of the Old World, these islands were largely populated from abroad, and in this regard they resemble the Atlantic lowland areas of mainland America. However, the colonial history of the islands meant that they would long remain the instruments of policy formulated in foreign capitals. Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and other islands were, during most of their postconquest history, the outposts of far-flung colonial empires, and the design of their societies was conditioned by this dependence and subjugation. As "plantation islands," their agriculture, demography, mode of settlement, and social structure were attuned to metropolitan needs and objectives. Unlike most of Africa and Asia, the Antilles lost their native populations almost entirely, owing to enslavement, overwork, disease, and war, early in the era of conquest and settlement. There remained the vestiges of native traditions, assimilated into the new, growing cultures of the postconquest period. The Indians themselves, wherever they were able to survive, were also assimilated through interbreeding with Old World migrants.

The newcomers came from Europe, Africa, and Asia, bringing with them what they could of their ancestral traditions, but never able to transfer their social heritages as intact bodies of belief and behavior. Hence the cultures of the new Caribbean societies were built up out of elements originating in many different places, while their social forms took shape under conditions of colonial control. The peoples of the islands were able to maintain some continuities with

* One interpreter of the Haitian political scene (Bastien, 1960:843–48) has suggested that Leyburn's analysis of Haitian society as a "two-caste" system greatly influenced local political thinking by strengthening one idea: "the black intellectual must regain political power for the benefit of the country's majority."

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The people of the islands were able to maintain some continuity with
177 the past, even while the new setting and changing conditions led to the development of certain innovations in society and culture. In a few Caribbean societies, Haiti included, freedom brought with it the opportunity to create a yeomanry—an independent, landholding class of agriculturists who produced most of their own consumption needs and also produced commodities for sale. These were "reconstituted yeomen," whose ways of life combined elements from the African and American Indian past, as well as considerable European and Asian influences, in new cultural constellations.

177 Haitian country folk are a particularly good example of such a
231 historical process. The crops Haitian yeomen cultivate include the
241 maize, sweet potatoes, and manioc of the indigenous American Indian
412 (Taino) people, and other cultigens such as papaya and avocado which had been domesticated in mainland aboriginal America; and items like taro and mangoes from Oceania, sesame and sugarcane which originated in the Middle East and India, and vegetables from Europe. Their domestic animals, including cattle, swine, and fowls, are nearly all from the Old World. The chief agricultural tools—hoe, billhook, and dibble, which are well adapted to Haiti's shallow topsoil and hilly terrain—may be European or African in origin; the practice of burning off weeds before planting may be African or American Indian. In the case of each trait—crop, tool, practice—one is confronted by the diverse and entangled culture history of the
177 Haitian people. What is true of agriculture is true of all else. The re-
771 ligion of Haiti is at once two religions rather than one: Catholicism
19 *and* vodoun. Yet these two belief systems form a single ideology for most Haitians, particularly in the rural areas and among those of the urban lower classes. The Creole language is similarly complex in origin. While its lexicon is predominantly derived from French, parts of its syntax are not of Romance origin. For instance, the use of postpositive nominalizing particles and the absence of gender typify Haitian Creole, and are decidedly not Romance in character. Terminology shows much the same; for example, animal names and anatomical terms are mainly French in origin, but some cooked foods carry names of African provenience.

177 The "mixing" of various elements of culture from different tradi-
● 174 tions is, of course, neither uniquely Caribbean nor uniquely Haitian. All cultures are growths out of the past, and change by losing and gaining traits and by combining and recombining their substance in

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new ways. The virtual extirpation of indigenous culture, however, occurred in few areas outside the New World; it was particularly characteristic of the coastal and lowland areas of this hemisphere. Hence, Caribbean culture is almost entirely transplanted and recently synthesized. In the Caribbean area, an additional distinction lay in the persistently colonial character of the islands and in the effects of this colonialism on local life. Wherever the plantation flourished, large populations of African origin grew out of the original importations of slaves. This was true from the southern United States to Brazil, but was especially marked in the islands, where local populations of European extraction were either absent or reduced by the spread of the plantation. Only in Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Santo Domingo, and in some of the smaller islands that developed no plantation system, were substantial proportions of Europeans to be found. In Haiti, the early cultural admixture of Colonial Spanish and Indian was soon swamped by the cultures of Africa, and the European cultural component became predominantly French after 1697, when the western third of Hispaniola—today's Haiti—was ceded to France.

But Haitian society did not come to be purely African, in any sense, nor is that society more than broadly similar to the other societies of the Caribbean. The kind of society in which the French masters and their African slaves met and mixed, and the subtropical, colonial environment in which they lived, imposed their own conditions for culture growth. What the Haitian people could keep as a living part out of the African past was limited by the regimen of slave plantation life; what they could borrow or copy from their masters was affected by the nature of the social relationships between those who held power and those who had to bend to it. Ultimately, independence meant that the Haitian people could employ what they already knew and practiced under slavery, but in a wholly new social setting.

The substantial isolation that followed independence led to slowed change, both social and cultural, and to the gradual spread of the yeoman way of life throughout rural Haiti. From 1804 until the United States occupation, Haiti was probably less affected by external developments than any other country in the hemisphere. In this regard, its social history is noticeably different from that of the other Caribbean islands, some of which, like Puerto Rico and Cuba, were forcibly brought back into the mainstream of world developments in the

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462 three hundred marketplaces serve the towns and countryside, some
443 of them patronized by thousands of buyers and sellers on market days. By participating in active small-scale trade, the wives of the yeomen contribute in a limited way to national economic efficiency and growth. As in all heavily agrarian economies marked by poor storage facilities, inferior transportation, and low consumer incomes there is considerable substitution of labor for capital, and there are high losses through spoilage. Except for the marketing of export commodities, much time is consumed in bargaining, in carrying, and in hand-processing of various sorts. But these activities are the accompaniments of the general low level of development of the Haitian economy, not one of its causes.

443 The economic challenges posed by agriculture on the one hand,
241 and by marketing on the other, differ significantly. Since these ac-
462 tivities are carried out predominantly along the lines of a sexual division of labor, the Haitian countrymen and their marketing wives
114 differ in some regards in their attitudes. Foreign observers of the
462 nineteenth century commented regularly on the industry and energy
174 of Haitian rural women, stressing their predominance in trade. Some
175 writers have attributed this convention to the West African tradition,
443 since women are the marketers, men the farmers, in many African
241 societies. Leyburn, however, notes that the militarism and political
433 unrest that have marked Haiti during so much of its history were serious impediments to peaceful trade. Women came to predominate in marketing, he theorizes, because men did what they could to avoid the towns, since they were often impressed into roving army bands if they traveled far from home. Whatever the historical causes may be, it has been established that the women of Haiti's countryside carry on most of the internal trade, while their husbands do most of the farming. These women, on the whole, know more about the towns, mix more easily with outsiders, and show more intrepidity in trade than the men show in agriculture. Yet it has been demonstrated that, for most of them, the scale of their enterprise is so modest and the economic opportunities open to them so restricted that their energy and daring can do little to increase the level of productive activity (Mintz, 1964:256–86).

47 Haiti's lack of large factories, mechanized production, and a skilled industrial labor force means that the country is unindustrialized by any usual measure.

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Vodun, therefore, show the Catholic influence, exerted in the main unconsciously. 771 171

Unlike the great religions, Vodun lacks a formal theology. As has been said, no seminary exists for the training of priests and priestesses, no congress or college of fathers states or amends the creed; there is no church court to discipline the individual enthusiast, or catechism for the young; no scriptures or sermons are printed or read to strengthen the faith. Vodun is an informal religion of action, not a formal one of reason. It flourishes because it is malleable, adaptive, suited to the needs of a people living close to nature and without education. To give a single lucid description of this Haitian folk religion, created as it is by everybody and by nobody, is about as possible as to give one description of home life, which varies according to the couple. We may, however, outline the common elements of creed and practice. 794 771

2. *Formative Days*

To say casually that Vodun is African in origin is to say little more than that it does not stem from the great world religions. There is no unity in Africa today; there was still less in the eighteenth century when slaves were being imported into Haiti. At that period it was possible to find a new dialect and a different set of folkways every few miles along the western seacoast. Two slaves from one geographical region (the Gold Coast, for example) might not understand each other or have the slightest predisposition to sympathize with each other's customs. 771 174

Colonial planters experimented with slaves from various regions in Africa, just as they might compare breeds of horses; setting tractability off against originality, brute strength against skill, intelligence against health. In this quest for a perfect slave, Negroes were imported from all parts of the Dark Continent, from Senegal in the northwest around the five thousand miles of seacoast to Mozambique and Madagascar in the east. Partly because trading conditions were more favorable in the Dahomey and Congo regions, and partly because the qualities of Dahomean and Congolese were preferred, Negroes from these two sections soon came to predominate over others in the colony. Whereas "Congo" was merely a geographical term, implying no community of feeling among the natives living 175 567

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175 567 along that river, Dahomey was the name of a powerful kingdom under a political administration which embraced a fair amount of interchange of ideas and similarity of social institutions, including religion.

175 567 178 Discretion made the planters separate slaves who knew each other, in order to minimize opportunities for revolt among them. This policy, although it prevented the rapid growth of "slave" customs, at the same time dispersed Dahomeans all over the colony; beliefs and practices held in common among the slaves were likely to take on a Dahomean cast. Since their work was directed, their freedom of movement limited, and their family life broken up, there was practically no opportunity for the outcropping of *any* African ideas relating to economic life, government, property, education, or 175 178 marriage. The one sphere in which it was possible for Old World beliefs to continue was the religious. No slave dealer could penetrate 796 771 535 the minds of his workers or silence their folk tales and folk songs in the evening when work was done; even the strictest plantation owners allowed dances in the slave quarters on Saturday nights and Sunday. It is the dance, a vital part of Dahomean religion, which seems to have formed the nucleus around which the diverse beliefs of African tribesmen grouped themselves, for it was a form of action which need not involve anything more than amusement or emotional release, if the participant were not religiously inclined. In the beginning, as Goethe observes, was the Act. To this simple Act of dancing, the Word, with thought behind it, could easily be added later. Practically all African tribesmen danced; and the numerous Dahomeans had a dance which was ostensibly for diversion but could be turned to a religious purpose as well.

771 171 174 Here, then, was the skeleton of a slave religion. Although every single African tribe had its own beliefs and ritual, each (so far as we know) had common elements with every other one. For example, all slaves, whether Senegalese or Angolese, believed in a multiplicity of spiritual beings, some of whom controlled the aspects of nature—lightning and storms, the sea, the sky. They thought that disease and other ill fortune came from spirits who must be placated in order to win back health and well-being. All felt that the normal course of events could be altered by magical spells, formulae, or charms; that one could bring misfortune to an enemy, luck to oneself, or ward off otherwise inevitable fate. Most of them had been accustomed to

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learn the properties of plants, both for healing and for poison. Except for the belief in spiritual beings, this folk knowledge would hardly have been classed as religious, for it was useful in every phase of daily life; the classification is that of the anthropologist, not of the simple black.

If Dahomean beliefs prevailed over others of African origin, it was chiefly because of the numerical preponderance of Dahomeans in the colony, together with the popularity of their religious dances. The Dahomean spirits or gods were Vodun; the dance in which the worshiper sought the inspiration of the spirits was a Vodun dance. Like all but the highly organized religions, this one recognized the validity of other beliefs. Its practitioners were not bigots. No hierarchy existed to keep out new accretions. Imperceptibly these were added to the original basic form: here an Arada spirit, there a Congolese prayer, and in many instances a Catholic saint, until the composite Vodun religion began to take shape.

There is no evidence that during colonial times Vodun was ever considered important by the white ruling class—certainly not as a faith. To most planters the word was the name for a vigorous dance. Judging from Moreau de Saint-Méry's description it was held openly enough, at times being witnessed by the whites as a sort of nocturnal diversion. Moreau knew, as did other whites, that there were "superstitious beliefs" connected with it, yet the offhand use of the word "superstition" was indication enough that the beliefs were not regarded as important. We have seen, however, what profitable use the slaves were able to make of the apparent innocence of their dances. When the idea of revolt began to germinate among them, gathering on each plantation at least once a week they had ample opportunity to hatch their plans. It is known that the campaign for revolt was developed partly under the stimulus of the Negro Boukman, a *houngan* or priest of Vodun. By means of drumbeats, which to the whites merely pounded out the rhythm for dancing but had for centuries been a means of communication at long distance in parts of West Africa, that ripening plot was telegraphed from one plantation to another. Even more important, perhaps, was the unity of feeling made possible, despite all incoherence of tradition and language, by the Vodun background.

The revolt of half a million slaves was a success. This fact has been rather too calmly accepted by historians of Saint-Domingue, who

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A gentle spirit may cause great harm to a person who neglects his commands, while a spirit whose power makes possible the most malignant magic may bring good fortune to his devotee. By conceiving his spirits as in manner and desires resembling himself, the Haitian can understand his little universe without subjecting himself to the bewilderment which faces a simple Christian trying to reconcile an all-loving Father with the obvious evil He allows on earth. 771 776

One must approach Vodun without the religious preconceptions of Christianity or Judaism. Suspending our notions of orthodoxy, monotheism, sin, heaven, and hell, we may examine more closely the creed suggested above, in an endeavor to round out its real meaning to the Haitian.

"I believe in gods and spirits . . ." The white man would recognize most easily among the Haitian's multiple gods the God of Christianity whom every Vodun worshiper confesses. It is this God who is meant in the homely expression of native acceptance of one's lot: "*Bon Dieu bon*"—the good God is really good, however remote. Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are likewise acknowledged, although it seems probable that they do not touch the hearts of people as much as the Great Master. The Blessed Virgin, on the other hand, is very real and near—so real, in fact, that she is sometimes actually merged with a spirit of African origin who has many of the Virgin's storied characteristics. Certain angels and a select group of Christian saints have made a special appeal and so found their niche in Vodun; others are not denied but merely ignored because the Haitian is not well acquainted with them.

To the spirits (one hesitates to use such misleading words as "gods" or "divinities") not drawn from Christianity the name "loa" is applied. There seem in general to be two classes of these: those who have an African origin, and those with a Haitian background only. The former group is called "Rada," the latter "Pétro." The word Rada is derived from the principality of Allada in Dahomey, and would seem thus to indicate that all the Rada loa were Dahomean; this, however, is definitely not the case. Numerous loa can be traced to the Congo region and others to the smaller West African districts, yet all of these are indiscriminately called Rada. In current usage, accordingly, the word has lost its strict geographical significance. The term Pétro is explained in an illuminating paragraph by the Haitian savant, Dr. Dorsainvil: 776 174 192 [192] 114

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114 The common people of Haiti are continually creating [his phrase is much
196 more revealing: "en gestation de"] *loa*, or new Vodoun "saints." Popular
174 tradition, long before independence, refers to a certain Don Pédro, a being
776 of flesh and blood who from the Spanish end of the island had come at a certain period to live in the mountains of the commune of Petit-Goâve. This Don Pédro was the man who introduced into Haiti that violent dance which, by corruption, the people call "the pétro." Upon his death, Don Pédro came to occupy an honorable place in the Vodoun pantheon, bringing in his train a whole group of progeny, such as Jean-Philippe Pétro, Criminel Pétro, etc.[21]

174 As might be logically deduced, certain powerful ancestors become
776 deified as Pétro loa.

It would require field trips into every district of Haiti to compile a
184 full list of the various loa who receive homage from Haitians; some
776 appear to have only a local following, others are honored over a wide district, and a few are reverenced throughout the country. If Vodun ever reached the stage of founding a seminary of sacred theology—a highly improbable event—one of its most imperative functions would be the collection, classification, and explanation of the attributes of the hundreds of loa, specifying whether they are Haitian or African in origin, Pétro or Rada, powerful or complaisant, inclined prevailingly to benevolence or to malice. Lacking such a proper catalogue, it will suffice to mention only the most commonly accepted figures. In reflecting upon the characteristics of these gods, the well-informed reader will be struck by the numerous parallels to divinities of other faiths so remote that Haitians could not possibly have known of them; similar emotional needs seem to produce similar deities to satisfy them.[22]

776 Legba is the name of the loa most frequently invoked, not because he is the most powerful, but because he is the interlocutor between man and his gods. Before any ceremony may begin, Legba is addressed: "*Papa Legba, ouvrí barrière pour nous.*" If he is not first worshiped, the other deities may not come to possess the people. Legba guards every door and gate, every highway and crossroads. He is still an important god in modern Dahomey, where his attributes are much the same as in Haiti. The people feel no necessity of

21. Dorsainvil, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
22. Classical anthropologists might have called this phenomenon "parallelism"; the word is accurate enough if only similarity, not identity, be understood.

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476 241 574 [527] day local practice dedicates to work in one's own fields—generally Monday or Tuesday. The prospect of working with one's fellows, of a midday feast with plentiful drink, of singing, talking, and hearing the news, is enough to induce most of the neighbors to come, even though the work will be hard. As with American log-rollings and house-raisings, there is a practical reason for accepting the invitation: by participating in other coumbites a man will be able to invite his neighbors to help him in his own larger tasks. The work is [461] done in rhythm[7] as on Southern road gangs in the United States, with one man specially designated to beat the drum, blow the conch, or sing a topical song, to set the pace. While the men are at work, the women prepare the noonday feast.

114 476 574 174 171 178 241 This typical characteristic of Haitian rural life has been described in detail as it operates near the village of Mirebalais by Prof. Melville J. Herskovits. His contention is that the custom, in general and in detail, derives from Dahomey, West Africa, the home of many of the original slaves.[8] Although his evidence is impressive, there are nevertheless objections to it. Coöperative enterprise for tasks larger than one man can accomplish alone is common in the United States and in parts of Europe and South America, as well as in Africa. It is not an economic device which strikes one as requiring unusual inventiveness, for cases of it are common even where the participants have had no previous experience of it. Further, Dahomean practice could not have been kept up during slave days, nor yet during the régimes of Toussaint, Dessalines, Christophe, and Pétion. (The first three required forced labor under overseers, and landownership by peasants was still rare under Pétion, although a beginning had been made.) In the thirty years from 1790, when the last slaves arrived, until Christophe died in 1820, many old ways were certainly forgotten. Not a single one of the numerous books written by visitors during Boyer's quarter-century, 1818 to 1843, mentions the practice, which certainly must have struck Englishmen, Frenchmen, and Americans if it had been characteristic of the peasant life of the time. If one concludes that the coumbite did not become peasant practice until the mid-nineteenth century, all possibility of contact with Negroes familiar with Dahomean routine has disappeared. What

7. A Haitian poet, Charles F. Pressoir, entitles a book of his verses *Au Rythme des coumbites* (Port-au-Prince, 1933).
8. *Op. cit.*, chap. IV.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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remains is the verbal handing down of recollections, one of the most natural things in the world and one congenial to Haitian peasants. Every region, every village, has its accomplished storytellers. The phenomenal resemblances in detail of the coumbite to Dahomean coöperative work may be due therefore to this verbal tradition. 174 241 574 476 538

Once the men have cleared and prepared the field, the care of the crop devolves upon the women. For this there has been a long background of tradition. In African agricultural regions, in the plantations of Saint-Domingue during slave days, under the forced labor régimes of Toussaint and his successors, women had been field workers. They had never known anything else. We have seen that many of the present-day practices of Haiti go back to the times of Pétion and Boyer: during this period women did field work, not by decree of government but by force of circumstance. Their men were constantly taken away from the farms for service in the large army; if crops were to be raised, women must do the work. Sometimes soldiers were stationed near their own homes, and could help in production; but they could be called on to march, at short notice and in peacetime, anywhere in the country. Many of the later presidents made it a definite policy frequently to change the station of regiments, so as to prevent revolutionary projects and guard against the soldiers' being tampered with by the disaffected in any single community. 241 175 462 701

Sir Harry Johnston records his observations on the Haiti of 1910 as follows: 114

The women are the best part of the nation. They are splendid, unremitting toilers. In the face of all discouragements with which a bad Government clouds their existence the women of Haiti remind one of certain patient types of ant or termite, who, as fast as you destroy their labour of months or days, hasten to repair it with unslackening energy. The market-women that descend from the country farms to the Haitian towns know that on their way to the market-place, and in that market-place, they will be robbed by soldiers and officers until the margin of profit on the sale of their wares has practically disappeared. Yet they continue to toil, to raise poultry and cattle, till the fields, see to their gardens, make pottery and mats. They cannot stop to reason, but must go on working from three years old to the end of their lives. Such industry (which is almost equally supplemented by that of the peasant husbands) protected should make Haiti one of the richest countries in the world for its size and population; but so long 114 462 461 [701]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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the men as well as the women work arduously. It seems justifiable to conclude that industry has not always been a characteristic of the Haitian male; and to ask why. 114 461

One valid reason is, of course, political. As we have seen, until the American Occupation Haiti was greatly overmilitarized. Almost every able-bodied male was at one time or another during his prime a soldier in the army. Since the bane of the country from 1804 to 1915 was its revolutions, there was room for a man to serve either in the regular army or, lured by future promises, in the guerrilla forces of a scheming general. To be drawn away from the land at the very moment of physical maturity was to predispose a youth against humdrum field work. As a soldier he traveled, knew excitement, was fed and clothed, and could loaf, except during battle. So schooled, upon retirement from the army a man was hardly disposed to settle down to steady labor. Even if as a young man he remained upon his farm, he might at any moment be called away to service, just when he was most needed for the crop. If Haiti was to be fed, the women, who alone were exempt from army service, provided the only available regular workers. 175 701 461

Tradition offers another explanation for masculine independence of hard work. The African background of female agricultural labor has been cited. In slavery the men had been degraded by being forced to do work of this sort, while the lot of women hardly differed from what it had been in the old country. Under Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, with their large armies, women, already numerically preponderant, formed the vast majority of field workers. Independent small farming hardly changed the picture. African tradition, moreover, made the man master of his property and wives, the rôle of woman being that of man's inferior and useful servant. 174 462 562 567

Disease is another partial explanation. Until recently no one seems to have been aware of the prevalence in Haiti of such diseases as hookworm, malaria, and tuberculosis which, without necessarily affecting a person outwardly, may nevertheless sap his vitality, leaving him listless and worn out by even slight exertion. Obviously much of what was called laziness was due to disease. But the flaw in this reasoning is that illness makes no discrimination between the sexes. If men were disease-ridden, so were women: yet the latter were steadily industrious. 164 461

Any foray into possible psychological reasons is guesswork. It

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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tions to the English language in the southern United States, where they were slaves for seventy years longer than in Haiti.

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Common African economic ways yielded to the plantation system and slavery; the Negroes had no opportunity to govern themselves or settle their own disputes; they mated rather than married; their families might be broken up if the master wished to sell a slave. The one part of life in which they were permitted to follow unhindered their African ways was the intimate one of religion which, since it needed no buildings or organization, did not interfere with work, and could be entirely personal and private, was not suppressed. As has been pointed out, the Dahomean form of religion prevailed over all others and, modified, gained wide adherence among the slaves. It is precisely in Vodun that Créole has taken over its only important African words, such as Vodun, zombi, houngan, marassa, loa, houmfort, bocor, ouanga.

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It would be erroneous to imply that the Negroes had no effect upon the language of which they soon became the predominant users.[6] Their operations were of a subtle sort, however. As with the Negroes of the United States, the letter "r" proved difficult, and often disappeared altogether, leaving many words softly slurred. "Marcher," for example, generally sounds as if it were *ma'ché*. Likewise in the course of years they gave the language their own accent, their own modulation and tone, which make Créole sound different on their lips from a white man's way of speaking it. Some scholars attribute this to a *racial* influence—that is, to the morphology of the Negro throat and tongue. It might be pointed out to the contrary that Americans, white like the English, have given the mother tongue *their* own accent, modulation, and tone. It has certainly not yet been proved that race has anything to do with speech.

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Words in imitation of a sound grow up in every language. Several western African dialects, especially Mandingue, seemed fond of onomatopoeia; in Haiti, consequently, one hears many an expressive additional word. Moreau de Saint-Méry[7] noticed this in colonial Saint-Domingue, citing such cases as the addition of "*bap*" to the verb "*tomber*," if one had fallen down lightly, or "*boum*" if heavily;

6. Suzanne Sylvain, *Le Créole haïtien* (Wetteren, Belgium, 1936), p. 10, says that although the African contribution to Haitian Créole is generally considered to be slight, she has personally found 170 words of undeniable African origin, and feels sure that there are many more. [174]

7. *Description . . . de . . . Saint-Domingue*, II, 36–37.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

both town and district are bisected by the main route between the capitals of the Haitian and the Dominican republics. Yet, once again, this geographical nearness but distorts the psychological distance between Mirebalais and the metropolis. For though the busses, converted from camions, pass to and from the coastal city several times a week, the valley and even the town which is its center drowse in essential isolation. A few hundred yards off the main road find the Haitian peasant following the mode of life of his forebears, oblivious of events outside the valley. Only for a few of the *notables* of the town, the *gros nègres*, who have personal, political, or business contacts with Port-au-Prince, is the comparative proximity to the capital meaningful.

It is not possible to say how long this valley has been inhabited. Certainly the early Indians roamed there; and there, as in other parts of the island of Hispaniola, the tragedy of their extinction under the brutality of early Spanish rule must have taken place. Moreau de St. Mery, to whom all students of Haiti must acknowledge a debt of gratitude for his painstakingly accurate reports of life on the island, gives the derivation of its name.

> "Mirebalais received its name," he says, "because of the enormous numbers of wild animals the first Frenchmen found there, which recalled to them the small district in the region of Poitou [in France], called Mirebalais, where some of them had probably first seen the light of day. These quadrupeds, first introduced by the Spaniards, had no difficulty in multiplying there after the Indians had disappeared from their native land and the Spaniards, reduced in numbers, were obliged to abandon the great plains, so that horses, cattle, etc. came to exercise exclusive domain."[1]

St. Mery's work, which traces the development of Mirebalais as one of the parishes of pre-Revolutionary Haiti, makes it

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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possible to gain a historical perspective of the valley in which our interest centers. As late as 1702, he tells us, only a few individuals were settled there, and these were mainly hunters and herders, since the policy of that day, based on the official belief that the future of the valley lay in using to the full its grazing resources rather than in the development of agriculture, caused all agricultural activity to be prohibited. Two decades later, however, when the cultivation of indigo had been successfully introduced, agricultural development proceeded apace. In 1739, in addition to more than a score of indigo-production centers, the valley boasted of numerous coffee, cotton, and cocoa plantations, and by 1789 was a recognized agricultural region.

But for the fact that the great plantations are no longer there, this aspect of life in Mirebalais has been little changed by revolutions and the abolition of slavery. Indigo, of course, has lost its place as an important product, while maize is now among the most significant crops, as might be looked for in the change from a plantation system to one of small individual ownership which was brought about by Haitian independence. But cotton and sugar-cane are still major crops, and coffee, which grows well on the mountainsides, is largely cultivated.

Moreau de St. Mery, writing in 1789, speaks of the French who peopled the valley as "still showing the traits which marked the early colonials. They are good, frank, brave, and opposed to all coercion." In 1723 "they marched with others from the district of the Artibonite" in an uprising against the arbitrary policies of the French West Indies Company, which Charlevoix, one of the first historians of Haiti, so vividly described.[3] In 1729 and 1736 the folk of Mirebalais defended their eastern frontier against attacks by the neighboring Spaniards; eleven years later one hundred and ten of them helped with the defense of the town of St. Louis, which was menaced by the hostile maneuvers of the British admiral

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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175 648 Davers. In 1768 and 1769 they were " but tranquil spectators of the troubles caused by the re-establishment of the militia," the local military forces numbering at this time 260 whites and 291 *affranchis*, or free men of color.[3]

175 167 This white population was made up chiefly of those who came directly from France or were born in the colony, but also included were the Acadians, one of the most interesting groups who settled in Mirebalais. Fleeing from Newfoundland, they were brought to Haiti before they were sent to Louisiana, and in the course of this migration left some of their number in the valley. It is recorded that on the 26th day of October 1764, in consequence of " a Memorial presented by the Chamber of Agriculture of Port-au-Prince, which stressed the healthfulness of Mirebalais,"[4] each of a number of these Acadian families was allotted a plot of eight hundred square paces, not far from the town. The ending of this episode, however, was not happy, for, transported into a tropical climate that failed to measure up to the claims made for it, the Acadians paid so heavy a toll that soon all trace of them vanished.

175 569 But facts such as these tell little of the fundamental social and economic conditions of pre-Revolutionary Haiti, where Negro slavery constituted the foundation upon which the whole structure of life was erected. That Mirebalais was no exception to the prevailing economic regime is shown by Moreau de St. Mery's figures for the district, yet what stresses existed between the masters, the free persons of color, and the slaves, no record remains to show. Despite the fact that slaves and free men of color were accepted in the armed militia, the

175 567 669 situation was far from tranquil. When, after the French Revolution, there were signs that the decree[5] which accorded to the free men of color political rights equal to those of the whites was in danger of being nullified in practice, it was at Mirebalais that the colored men assembled to insist on the enforcement of this order.[6] Together with some slaves they freed, they formed the nucleus of an army " that under the leader-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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ship of a very intelligent mulatto named Bauvais" gained some successes "over the undisciplined forces in Port-au-Prince" and forced the inhabitants of the capital to recognize the power of this group by entering into a definite treaty with them.[7]

There are other indications that life in the valley did not fail to reflect the discontent of the black slaves. Writing in 1830, Mackenzie, who was the first British Consul-General to the Haitian Republic, remarked:

> "It is said by some of the best informed Haitians, that among the mountains that stretch from the neighbourhood of Mirebalais to the coast on the east of Jacmel, there is an extensive association of the descendants of the Maroon negroes, whose independence had been recognised long before the revolution by the then existing government."[8]

It is thus apparent that the institution of *marronage*, whereby runaway slaves established themselves in the mountains, in many instances living for years beyond the reach of capture and free from attack, was known in Mirebalais as it was elsewhere. Mirebalais was also not without contact with the great heroes of Haitian history. Toussaint L'Ouverture conquered and lost the town several times before it became a strategic point "from which his lieutenants, Dessalines and Christophe, menaced Arcahaie and the plain of the Cul-de-Sac."[9]

If but little has been recorded concerning Mirebalais before Haitian independence, even less is known of its later history. Mackenzie, reporting the population of Haiti district by district, gives that of Mirebalais in 1802 as 53,649; but in 1825 as only 16,037.[10] Whether the region included under the term "Mirebalais" differed at the two periods, or whether the hardships resulting from the internal strife that racked Haiti after independence had been gained took a toll of the size suggested by these figures cannot be said. That Mirebalais was an

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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important point in the warfare between the northern Empire of Christophe and the southern Republic of Pétion is well known, since the boundary between the two, never definitely fixed, might be roughly considered as the Artibonite, control of which, as always, depended on also obtaining control of the strategic hills about the town.[11] It is not possible to discover more than approximate figures for the population of Mirebalais at the present time, since no census of the district has been made, and the most recent figure of 51,000 for the commune is derived from the baptismal records in the parish church.[12]

From the earliest years of settlement of the valley, the town has been the center of its life. The government of the commune is located here; here the courts sit; and here the best schools and the only church of the district are found. Yet it is a small town, numbering less then two hundred and fifty houses, and crossed by but three principal thoroughfares stretching north and south, with ten or twelve cross-lanes. The houses on the principal streets, rectangular and small, are built of wood, plastered over with clay, painted, and roofed with sheet iron. On the outskirts of the town the roofing is of straw, or banana-leaf thatch, while the walls themselves are made of twilled wythes. No house lacks its veranda, however small, where people may be seen sitting late of an afternoon and early in the evening, but the life of the women is lived chiefly in the courtyards behind these houses that line the streets, where the cookhouses are found and the storehouses, and where all work is done. The *place*, or town square, lies at the point where the principal route between Port-au-Prince and the Dominican border turns sharply to the east. Consisting of an acre or two of cleared land, it is overgrown with weeds except when, in preparing for festive occasions, the prisoners from the town jail may be seen spending long hours, machetes in hand, cutting the grass, a few blades at a time. North of the square stands the church, a substan-

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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North of the square stands the church, a substan-
tial structure with rounded arches in the Roman style, roofed over, like most other buildings, with galvanized iron. Other public buildings are the town hall — the Mairie — and the "Hall of Justice"; near by are the stone walls of a public building begun some years ago as a school, but destined apparently to house what is known as the "Bureau of Contributions," a euphemism for the tax-collector's quarters. Despite the fact that Mirebalais was one of the most difficult regions for the American occupation to subdue during the Caco uprising of 1918–20,[10] it was one of the first districts where the Guarde d'Haiti was completely Haitianized, and from which all American Marine officers were withdrawn. Only a small detachment is stationed there at present. Its well-kept barracks are near the church, and the prisons form a part of the same compound, from whence issue daily the striped-suited prisoners, men and women, under guard or alone on parole, who do communal work in the town and the near-by countryside.

The town awakens at dawn to the chattering of domesticated guinea-fowl and the crowing of cocks. Occasionally a camion rumbles through the principal thoroughfare; more rarely an automobile dashes by in great clouds of dust on its way to Las Cahobas, or Hinche, or Santo Domingo City. If it is a market day, the streets are early filled with country folk on their way to dispose of their produce, and the clatter from the market place behind the church is heard everywhere until the heat of the day brings a lull to all commerce, and drowsiness once more settles over everything. By mid-afternoon during the planting season, drums can be heard over the countryside. The sounds are not those of the "throbbing" *vodun* drums — though they have more than once been mistaken for them by travelers — but they set the rhythm for the communal work of the *combites*, which perform cooperative agricultural labor. As the rapid dusk follows the disappearance of the sun behind the mountains, the voices of

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about the square that precedes the principal mass of the day. These processions, however, are as a mere rehearsal for the great procession held during the festival of St. Louis, the patron saint of the town. At that time the statue of the saint, carried by the faithful — among whom can be seen more than one perspiring *vodun* priest and *bocor* — is taken triumphantly through the streets to insure a good year. The nearness of the valley to the village of Ville Bonheur makes the great religious festival of Saut d'Eau, where the "miracle of the Virgin" is believed to have occurred, almost a local matter. And though Saut d'Eau lies well over the mountains, July 15 finds most of the population of Mirebalais away from home celebrating the miraculous revelation with folk from other parts of Haiti. May Day is celebrated as the "Fête de l'Agriculture," and two years ago a new day of rejoicing was added to the calendar of festivals. This is known as the "Festival of the Second Independence," the anniversary of the departure of the American Marines from Haiti, and is marked by the "illumination" of all houses the night before and a solemn discourse from the mayor after a Te Deum has been sung in the church.

Thus life in the valley of Mirebalais continues the course it has followed for the past two hundred years. Though its history, as we can reconstruct it, has been marked by turbulent periods, these have been far from the rule. It is true that because of its position it has always been a point to be defended, and often, both before and after the time of Haitian independence, it has been a region where decisive encounters with those who controlled the Spanish portion of the island have taken place. Not for many years, however, until the Caco uprising against the American Marines, did Mirebalais experience military activities on any considerable scale. After the death of Charlemagne Perrault, when his successor selected the valley as a strategic point to be defended, a large force of Marines was encamped near the confluence of the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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175 648 Artibonite and Tombe rivers just outside the town. Today Cacos who went through this campaign will tell how sniping was carried on from the "English fort" on the heights to the east of the town and will recount how dangerous it was made for Marines to go unguarded even to the river-banks to draw water. Yet after two or three years the overthrow of the Caco forces brought peace once more to Mirebalais. And while the intervention of the United States has caused significant changes in the larger aspects of Haitian economy and in the political life of the Republic as a whole, yet as concerns the inner life of the people of this valley it seems to have passed without any discernible effect.

175 211 Today in the *place* are found three records of its past. The first of these, in the middle of the square, is a tall palm tree, which in Haiti is the emblem of its attainment of freedom and independence, and near it a rostrum symbolizing the authority of the central government. The second is the tomb of an 211 175 764 overlord of Mirebalais when independent Haiti was not a republic. In florid lettering can be read the tribute engraved on its top:

Ici
Dort de l'éternel sommeil
Pierre Cazimir de Vincent
décédé le 13 Août 1856, à l'âge de 71 ans
de son vivant Duc de Mirebalais
et
Commandant de la 4ème Division
Militaire de la Province de
l'Ouest

"Passant, si tu admires les vertus militaires;
Revère les cendres de celui que repose en ce lieu."

De la part de son amie
Delphonnaise Delva.

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The third is a realistic reminder of the most recent occupation of the valley by foreign forces. Cut so deeply into the "tree of liberty" that not even the red and blue paint of the national colors with which its base is repainted annually can conceal it, and contrasting with the ornate inscription on the near-by tomb, is the following legend:

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L. MARLOW
AUG. 15, 1920.
U. S. M. C.
DRUNK
AS
HELL
J. F. BROWN

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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CHAPTER I

THE AFRICAN HERITAGE

For the study of a civilization like that of Haiti, which is the result of close and continued contact between peoples with traditions as dissimilar as those of Europe and Africa, a peculiarly lively sense of time depth is needed. Yet though it has been repeatedly stated that Haiti is the child of Africa and France, even those who proclaim this emphatically fail too often to recognize the need for as detailed a knowledge as is possible of how the strands of history were woven into the fabric of Haitian cultural life. It is for this reason that before any description of the culture of Mirebalais can be attempted, not only must the names of the African tribes from which the Haitians were derived be given, but the broad characteristics of their cultures must be considered and, where possible, the classes of their population from which were derived the Negroes who were brought to Haiti. In addition, the importance of knowing the types of Frenchmen who migrated to the island during its colonial period and of understanding the modes of life they followed and presented to their slaves must be viewed as of the first order, while, finally, the manner in which these two sets of traditions were eventually forged into the structure of Haitian life as seen today must be analyzed if more than a superficial glimpse of this life is to result.

Writing in 1730, a Jesuit priest named Pierre François

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Xavier de Charlevoix[1] designated the following varieties of slaves found on the island: the *Sénégallois*, who are "of all the Negroes the best fashioned, the easiest to discipline, and the most adapted for domestic service"; the *Bambaras*, "tallest of all, but thieves"; the *Aradas*, "those who know agriculture best, but who are the proudest"; the *Congos*, "the smallest and the most apt at fishing," but who were most prone to desert their masters; the *Nagos*, "the most human"; the *Mondongos*, "the most cruel"; the *Mines*, "the most resolute, the most capricious, and the most subject to despair of themselves."

St. Mery, the importance of whose work has already been mentioned, gives a more detailed list than that of Charlevoix.[2] Of slaves who came from tribes living in the northern part of West Africa he names the *Sénégalais*, *Yoloffes*, and *Foules*, the *Bambaras*, *Quiambas*, *Mandingues*, and *Sosos*, as well as Negroes from the Bissagot Islands, though the last two categories are reported as but sparsely represented in the colony of Santo Domingo. Following the coast of Africa round its great bend, he speaks of the *Bouriquis* and the *Mesurades*, or *Cangas*, as deriving from the region between Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast, while he notes the *Aradas*, the *Caplaous*, the *Mines*, the *Agouas*, the *Socos*, and the *Fantins*, as coming from the area between Cape Appolonia and the Volta River, an area whose tribes made substantial contributions to the Haitian slave population. Farther east, from what was known as the "slave coast" and today comprises Togoland, Dahomey, and western Nigeria, were brought the *Cotocolis*, "who inhabit the kingdom of *Coto*," the *Popos*, the *Fidas*, and the *Ardras*; while from the interior of the west coast the *Fonds*, the *Mais*, the *Aoussas*, the *Ibos*, and the *Nagos* are mentioned. Slaves from Benin, in the Niger Delta, as well as the *Mokos* and other tribes of Calabar, were also present in Haiti, though again in small numbers. The basin of the Congo River, how-

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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ever, contributed not only many slaves called by the name of that river, but also the *Mayombés*, the *Mousombés*, and the *Mondongues*, though the "true Congos" — the *Franc-Congos* — are listed as having been derived from Angola. As for the rest of the continent, "One does not see at all in Santo Domingo any Africans who have come from the remainder of the west coast of Africa, which ends at the Cape of Good Hope. . . ."[8]

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No final answer can be given about the extent to which these lists of tribal names may be regarded as valid, but the unanimity with which not only Charlevoix and St. Mery, but such other contemporary observers as Bryan Edwards for Jamaica, the Reverend C. G. A. Oldendorps for the Virgin Islands, John G. Stedman and Jan Jacob Hartsinck for Guiana — to name only four — recorded similar African regions and similar tribal names when writing of the slaves of other parts of the New World, offers strong corroborative testimony. Moreover, the fact that every tribal designation given in the lists of Charlevoix and St. Mery can be found on present-day maps of Africa in the approximate region they had indicated confirms the accuracy of these early lists.

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The characteristics of the various types of Negroes recorded by Charlevoix and St. Mery are not without interest. The Senegalese are described as tall and well made, and of an ebony color, their noses almost as straight as those of whites, their hair less tightly curled than that of other Negroes. They had the reputation of possessing a superior morality and were deemed warrior-like. St. Mery had nothing but the highest praise for the Senegalese slave.

> "He is a farmer, intelligent, good, faithful even in love, understanding, and makes an excellent domestic. Living on millet, maize, and rice, he is very sober, excellent in caring for animals, discreet, and above all taciturn, a quality sufficiently rare among the Africans and

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

which one does not find often enough even among civilized peoples."

Not all of the Mohammedan slaves, however, had the desirable qualities of the Senegalese. The Bambara, for example, were depicted as insolent and not always to be trusted, as the designations "those who steal turkeys" and "those who steal sheep" would seem to indicate.

The people between Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast were known as a hardy group prone to revolt and desertion; they were not held desirable as slaves, and thus it is not strange that few of them were found in the colony. A similar appraisal was made of the Gold Coast Negroes, for while they were described as generally well made and intelligent, they were also assessed as unreliable, deceitful, lazy, given to flattery, great consumers of food, drunkards, and wantons. And as for the Fanti and the Mina, they were spoken of as "extremely proud, waging constant warfare, capricious, and ready at any time to commit suicide."

The Negroes of the Slave Coast were favorites in Santo Domingo. Their characteristic lighter skin-color, to be observed at the present time in their peculiar yellowish or reddish hue, confirms their provenience. They were thought intelligent but avaricious, and were designated as "eaters of dogs." The Ardra women, "continuous talkers," and quarrelsome, were rarely employed as domestics, since the Negroes from the region of Dahomey apparently learned French with the greatest of difficulty, so that to understand their speech was considered to be the greatest test "for those who flatter themselves that they have command of Créole."

The Ibos were found excellent for work in the fields, yet difficult to manage, for the slightest fault-finding or ridicule caused them to commit suicide,

"the idea of which, far from terrifying them, seems to hold an attraction for them, for they believe in the trans-

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

> migration of souls. Too often it has come about that the *Ibos* of a given plantation have agreed all to hang themselves, in order to return to their country."

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So well recognized was this tendency of the Ibo slaves to commit suicide, that they were described in Créole by the formula: "*Ibos pend' cor' a yo* — The Ibos (are those who) hang themselves." None the less, many slaves from this tribe were acquired. Their strong communal and tribal ties made it advantageous for those who owned them to obtain more of them, since newcomers "were accorded help, care, and instruction by those who had preceded them."

According to St. Mery, the Negroes most common in the colony came from the Congo coast and Angola, and were known by the generic term *Congos*. The *Franc-Congos*, who came from the kingdoms of Congo and Angola, were

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> "of a docility and gayety that makes them much desired. Loving song, dance, and ornaments, they make excellent domestics, while their intelligence, their facility in speaking a pure Créole, their jovial countenances without markings . . . cause people to prefer them for house-servants; they also make good laborers and good fishermen."

That the large numbers of Congo Negroes imported into Haiti have left no more of the elements of their culture in the island than are found is perhaps due to this very devotion to their masters, for a lively tradition of the present tells how, during the slave revolts, the Congo Negroes most often remained on the side of their masters and most often betrayed their fellows.

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Not all the Negroes from the Congo area were as amiable as these just mentioned. The *Mondongos* had "the most execrable excess of eating their fellows." This quotation gains special significance because of the prominence which it has

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1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

175 162 266 567 been given through its use to substantiate the many charges of cannibalism in Haiti that have been made. Yet those who, desirous of establishing such cannibalism, quote this passage from St. Mery do not always remember to quote it in its complete context:

> "Some of these butchers of human flesh are also brought to Santo Domingo . . . where, as in Africa, they are the horror of the other Negroes, notably of the Congos, who, because of their nearness to them [in Africa], are most exposed to their cruelties." [4]

194 162 567 These are thus the tribes who were presumably the most important in the Negro ancestry of the Haitians of today. Was there any least common denominator in language which made it possible for slaves fresh from Africa to communicate with one another after their arrival in Haiti? Was there sufficient similarity in their cultures so that this might form the basis for a retention of African beliefs and behavior despite the vicissitudes of slavery? And what were the characteristics of the African civilizations of these people?

191 194 197 567 The picture of West African life, as it is commonly drawn, emphasizes the great number of small tribal groups following dissimilar modes of life, speaking mutually unintelligible languages, and worshipping different gods. In a very general sense this is not untrue. On the face of it, the number of languages that are spoken in the area from which the slaves were derived would seem to have constituted an effective barrier not alone to any concerted action on the part of slaves, but even to communication between them, especially since in many regions of the New World it was a fixed policy to separate slaves from the same tribe.

Yet behind this semblance of sharp dissimilarities lies a basic unity of language and culture in all of West Africa, so that though languages were and are mutually unintelligible, structurally and idiomatically they are much the same. This

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

CHAPTER II

WHAT THE SLAVES FOUND IN HAITI

THOUGH by the time of the French Revolution "the immense 175
army of slavery had increased to such proportions that in the 162
face of it the white world seemed reduced to a mere handful of 567
men,"[1] this was by no means the case in the earliest days of the colony of Santo Domingo. As late as 1681 the whites outnumbered the Negroes almost three to one,[2] and it is not until a hundred years later that, in the words of St. Mery, there were "eleven and three tenths slaves for one white."[3]

Yet in the fashioning of the present-day culture of the 178
Haitian peasants, this "mere handful," exerted an influence 567
out of all proportion to its size. That this should have oc- 563
curred is not strange in view of the relationship between Negroes and whites, which was that between slaves and masters; that it did occur is amply shown in the contemporary accounts of Haitian and West Indian life, which tell us how the Negroes everywhere made conscious efforts to achieve the standards of those who to them represented power, wealth, and position. But while the prestige of the master-class must 177
be acknowledged, care must be taken not to accept uncritically an assumption that has colored many accounts of the lives of primitive peoples who have come into contact with European

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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The Haitian white population]

177 cultures — namely, that the traditions and beliefs of these groups cannot withstand the impact of what is termed "civilization." What invariably seems to follow when peoples having differing customs, beliefs, and cultural heritages come into continuous contact is that both give, and each takes. What aspects of the new culture a given people will take, and what in turn they will give, must vary according to the particular historical situation under which the contact occurs. But both 178 processes do go on, and, as will be shown in the case of Haiti, though the Negroes retained much of their African culture, they also freely took over and adapted the customs and behavior of the Europeans among whom they lived.

563 Certain questions, therefore, must be asked about this white element in the population. To what extent was it a unit in its derivation and in its special customs — did its members come from a single social class of the home country, or were all elements of French society represented? What were the patterns of family life, of religion, of economic organization, of morals, which the whites presented to Negro eyes? These are matters of great significance, for one telling factor in the mingling of cultures is the type of carrier through whom contact between civilizations is effected. If, for example, European missionaries or traders or administrators on short tenure and without their families are introduced into an area, a far different picture of European life will be presented to the native from that were immigrant settlers to come among them with their wives and children; and this result, moreover, to seek finer distinctions, will show additional divergencies according to the social position of these migrants. Therefore it is necessary to consider the types of Frenchmen whose modes of living were to influence the behavior which the descendants of their slaves were to perpetuate when these had attained their freedom as individuals and their independence as a nation.

175 The "Corps of Adventurers" who in 1632 comprised the 563 dominant element in the population of Haiti included four

1; Herskovits E-4,5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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groups: the buccaneers "who were occupied with the hunt," the filibusters "who cruised the seas," the *habitants*, "who cultivated the land," and the bondsmen "who, for the most part, lived with the *habitants* and the buccaneers." [4] Letters of the period permit a somewhat more detailed description of the social groupings of pre-Revolutionary Haiti than that just given — a matter of some importance, since it must have been at this time that the merging of African and European civilizations was at a stage when the basic outlines of its eventual structure were being formed. The early population seems to have been made up in large part of the flotsam and jetsam of Paris; "a sort of obligatory enrollment of colonists, an enforced recruiting of emigrants from those elements of the metropolitan population judged unassimilable" [5] — those who were without means of support or under suspicion of crime, insolvent debtors, "adventurers," and those for whom emigration represented the sole existence open to them.

The *engagés*, or bondsmen, were those who, lacking the funds to pay their passage, pledged themselves to planters for a period of three years. During this time they were treated like the Negro slaves, and at the expiration of their terms were turned into the world with little enough to show for their hard labor.[6] The Protestants who migrated to Haiti were a far different type of settler, but these were few in number, and some, such as the fifty-eight who came to the island in 1687, traveled in the very ships which brought convicts condemned to hard labor for life. Ex-convicts and escaped criminals, discharged soldiers and deserters were also found. In many instances, however, persons of these types seemed by their achievements to have proved themselves not undesirable additions to the population. "I have had 300 of them whom I have placed," wrote one M. de Cussy in 1686; "they are industrious folk, and the planters are very pleased with them." One escaped criminal, who was not discovered as such until many years after he had come to the colony, was permitted to buy

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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175 his freedom for ten thousand *livres*, "which," an official report stated, "will be used to build prisons in the Cul-de-Sac." Another did so well in his new home that, though his past was known, he was never molested and died the owner of twenty-two Negro slaves.[7] Others who came to Haiti were sent there for reasons of waywardness, or because they had been involved in escapades that threatened trouble for them or their families, or because, showing no aptitude for gainful employment, their relations chose to send them to the colony rather than to be burdened with their support. Of these early colonists de Vassière says, with apparent justification: "In truth the morale and the manners of this population were what they might be supposed to have been, execrable."[8]

These categories, however, do not give the full tale of the non-Negro peoples who eventually contributed of their blood to the present-day Haitian population. In the earliest times the Spaniards sold white as well as Negro slaves to the New World, as numerous *assientos* testify. Before the time of French control of the western portion of the island, Haiti must have received her proportion of these unfortunates.[9] French women, many of them women of the streets, some mere girls who had come from convents, were imported in the early days to encourage the buccaneers and the filibusters to lead a more settled life.[10] In 1696, when the French abandoned the island of St. Croix, its inhabitants, both masters and slaves, were transported to Haiti, there to re-establish themselves on land allotted to them by the government.[11] Acadians from Newfoundland were landed at the Mole St. Nicholas in 1764, and, as has been mentioned, some of them were eventually settled in the valley of Mirebalais, there to disappear after a few years.[12] At about the same time, in accordance with a policy of increasing the white population, 2,470 Germans were brought to the island. Unlike the Acadians, these people thrived and developed an extensive cultivation of coffee, and their colony was in a healthy state at the time of the French

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Revolution.[13] St. Mery also records the importation and sale in 1730 of more than five hundred Natchez Indians from New France (Louisiana) "as well as others at a later date, both from Louisiana and Canada."[14] 175 563

A final class of settler must be mentioned, whose coming is reported to have given a better tone to the drab picture of Haitian life. This class was composed of members of the French nobility, who in their new home attempted to maintain the standards which characterized and regulated their lives in France. Unlike many of the earlier inhabitants, to whom the difficult life of the planter did not appeal, the nobles tended to continue their status as country gentlemen in their new environment, and, by establishing plantations, to reproduce in so far as was possible, their situation in France as a group of landed proprietors. As a result, there soon grew up between these planters living on their estates and the population of the cities and towns the same distinctions of caste and the same blind rivalry which, before the Revolution, separated the French country squires and the city dwellers in France itself.[15] 175 563 565 175 563 565 369

The existence of these two classes within the white population of the colony, which is commented upon by many writers of the period, must have presented to the Negro slaves strikingly different views of the life of the whites. In a manuscript of Moreau de St. Mery, at present in the archives of the Ministry of Colonies in Paris, a group of some two hundred of these gentlefolk who in 1763 lived in the region of what today is Cap-Haitien, in northern Haiti, is spoken of as that of a special class, and their existence is contrasted with that of the city folk. Living on their plantations, with the cultivation of which they were exclusively occupied, their mode of life was different from that of the inhabitants of the cities and towns, where were found dealers in wholesale produce, officers of the crown, lawyers, solicitors, and merchants. Some forty years later another writer, writing from the point of view of the

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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175 563 565 369 [463] planters and expressing their contempt for the townspeople, speaks of the towns as existing primarily to serve the needs of these country squires as centers for the storage and disposal of their produce: "There are found merchants, artisans, judges, recorders, solicitors, notaries, bailiffs, doctors. But one finds neither nobles, men of property, nor persons of wit and perception." [16]

175 364 563 The physical aspect of the cities had little to recommend them, especially since the utter lack of sanitation made for extreme uncleanliness in all Haitian centers. This fact is of special interest in the light of the frequent references to this trait of Haitian cities in the writings of those Europeans who described the life of independent Haiti. Invariably in such accounts the littered state of the streets, even in the capital, is stressed, and tendered as evidence of the absence of civilization in this Negro Republic.[17] Even though occasional mention is made that this state of affairs existed before the Revolution, nowhere, whether in St. John or in the later writers who date from the time of the occupation of the country by the United States Marine Corps, is there any realization that this condition antedates the independence of Haiti. The cleanliness of Africans in Africa wherever the natives have ready access to water has been well attested, and is still true in those regions from which the ancestors of the people of Haiti principally derive.

175 597 368 563 Yet some aspects of life in the towns livened the picture of Haitian colonial existence. Outstanding were the opportunities offered by these centers for social intercourse, and even for intellectual and artistic stimulation of a kind, such as was afforded by the famous *Cercle des Philadelphes* of Cap Française, dedicated to literary, philosophical, and, above all, to political discussions.[18] Masonic lodges, later taken over by the Negroes and today of appreciable importance in Haiti, were also instituted by the French, the first having been founded at the Cap in 1740.[19] Purely social meeting-places, such as public

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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baths or public halls, were in operation, while in the towns of Cap Français, Port-au-Prince, Leogane, Saint-Marc, and Cayes, theaters were established which produced "the latest plays from Paris" and attracted large audiences.[30]

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Despite all this, the canker of homesickness constantly gnawed at the colonists even in the towns — the feeling that a stay in the colony was only for the interval needed to allow a man to escape to the mother country with a fortune. On the estates the loneliness and isolation of plantation life are commented upon repeatedly. A letter of the period, without place or date, found in the family papers of the historian de Vassière, discusses this with poignancy:

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> "Have pity for an existence which must be eked out far from the world of our own people. We here number five whites, my father, my mother, my two brothers, and myself, surrounded by more than two hundred slaves, the number of our negroes who are domestics alone coming almost to thirty. From morning to night, wherever we turn, their faces meet our eyes. No matter how early we awaken, they are at our bedsides, and the custom which obtains here not to make the least move without the help of one of these Negro servants brings it about not only that we live in their society the greater portion of the day, but also that they are involved in the least important events of our daily life. Should we go outside our house to the workshops, we are still subject to this strange propinquity. Add to this the fact that our conversation has almost entirely to do with the health of our slaves, their needs which must be cared for, the manner in which they are to be distributed about the estate, or their attempts at revolt, and you will come to understand that our entire life is so closely identified with that of these unfortunates that, in the end, it is the same as theirs. And despite whatever pleasure may come from that almost ab-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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175 181 567 571 563

solute dominance which it is given us to exercise over them, what regrets do not assail us daily because of our inability to have contact and correspondence with others than these unfortunates, so far removed from us in point of view, customs, and education." [21]

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This letter speaks of the presence of five whites. The psychological state of the planter who, unmarried and alone, spent his days without the companionship of a fellow-being who as much as shared a common language with him may well be imagined. Even where there were white overseers, the prevailing sense of caste was so strong that while these ate with the head of the estate, they did not live under the same roof, for they were subordinates and were treated as such. For his most constant companions the owner had his house-servants, unless he maintained a mulatto concubine who cooked his food and looked after his personal wants, shared his confidences, and reported to him any disaffection on the part of the Negro slaves. It is understandable that, having made his fortune, the planter did not delay his return to France, where, once back in Paris, he lived lavishly on the revenues from his estates; and letters in the Ministry of Colonies show the extent to which this phenomenon of absentee ownership characterized pre-Revolutionary Santo Domingo.[22]

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Haiti being thought of as but an interlude in a man's life, the loosening of moral tone so complained of in contemporary works resulted, and with this went the many forms of display in which these colonists indulged and those other aspects of colonial custom which were so often ridiculed by European travelers of the period. The distance of Haiti from Paris, or, in a later period, the time which had elapsed since the French loss of Haiti, has, however, lent an enchantment to "Créole life" which is reflected in an idealized portrayal of this existence, much in the manner of the effusions on the graciousness and glamour of life in what is termed "the old South." [23] One

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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cannot read the extended narrative of the young Comte de C***, reprinted by de Vassière, without questioning this myth of the idyllic life of the Haitian Créole, even though allowing for the disdain with which an exiled Parisian dandy of 1730 would regard the inhabitants of outlying possessions, and allowing also for the savory wit of the man, which undoubtedly led him to underscore the more diverting situations which he encountered.[24]

Mention must be made at this point of the two great divisions of the white population which, as the colonizing period continued, were created by the distinction between those born on the island and those who had migrated there. These divisions cut across the two categories of urban and country dwellers, both of which numbered Haitian-born and native European members. At the time of the French Revolution about three quarters of the whites on the island had been born outside the colony, while of those born in the colony, women comprised the major portion.[25] Haitian-born persons were known by the designation *Créole*, which, according to a definition of the period, included all those " who have first seen the light of day in Santo Domingo " and was, as it is today, a term employed in all the West Indies and in Louisiana.[26] This designation was by no means restricted to the whites, however, for there were Créole Negroes as well as Créole whites; at the present time in Haiti a distinction is even drawn between locally grown " créole " rice and that which is imported!

It is common knowledge that slavery not only affects those who are held in bondage, but deeply influences the master-class as well. In Haiti the role played by the institution of slavery in the formation of the character and personalities of Créole children brought up in a setting of servility, cupidity, brutality, and terror must have been of the utmost importance. The bad temper and domineering nature of Créole youths is commented on again and again by writers of the period. Owing to the unhealthy climate and the failure to

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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maintain adequate hygienic conditions, the health of these children was usually poor, so that from earliest infancy they were spoiled by their parents and servants; their least wishes were gratified, and their least complaints immediately rectified so as to make them petty tyrants in their households. This tyranny was most often exercised over the family slaves. Regardless of the assiduous care these young despots received, and despite the adulation lavished upon their young charges, the Negro servants were seldom sufficiently prompt or adequate in their attentiveness to escape the punishments, often severe, that were meted out to them at the behest of their young masters. This tyranny extended to the play-life of the young Haitian-born white. Surrounded only by the slave children of the plantation, he commanded his contemporaries even more imperiously than his parents commanded the grown slaves.

> " Whatever he saw, he wanted, whatever was shown him he demanded; and if some fatality brought it about that one of his small companions resisted him and he became irritated, they would hurry from all sides in response to his cries and those of the young unfortunate, who, his color having destined him for submission, learned soon enough that he would be forced to give way, perhaps even being meted some punishment to penalize the disobedience of one who had not yet the instinct for servitude." [27]

175 563 567 571 [839]

Grown to manhood, the young Créole continued to act as master of all he surveyed. Imperious, quick-tempered, spoiled, his life lived in large part among slaves, when his sex drive stirred, he took what slave women pleased him. Eventually he married, to be tormented with the thoughts of the possible infidelity of his wife; the more tortured because of his extreme vanity and because, while demanding faithfulness from his spouse, he was continuing his affairs with his Negro women.

[157] Yet he had some excellences of character, as well. " Frank,

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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175 563 569 571 [57]

affable, generous perhaps to the point of ostentation, confident, brave, a sure friend and a good father "[28] — such are his good points as set down by one who was perhaps surer-eyed than others in seeing his deficiencies, though these traits seem to have concerned more his relations with his fellow-whites than those which affected his bearing toward his Negro slaves.

The young Créole women of this same environment were destined for early marriage — too early for their best development, whether physical or mental. Given to exacting the fulfillment of their slightest caprices, they were, like their men, creatures of passion. If they survived their first pregnancies, which as a result of too early marriages often came before they were physically in condition to support the rigors of childbirth, they soon lost their youthful allure and became the unattractive women of the type so maliciously described by the Comte de C***.[29] In such cases they frequently survived not one but several husbands. Their associations were chiefly with their Negro women slaves, who were full confidantes, sleeping in the same chamber with their mistresses and on occasion sharing informal meals with them, though they never ate at the same table. And because, by a fine turn of irony, these Negro women were often at the same time the concubines of the husbands, brothers, or sons of their mistresses, they were as often as not treated alternately with the greatest tenderness and the harshest brutality.[30]

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Whatever the inner life of white Haitians, native-born or Créole, outward ostentation was the rule. In the cities poorly furnished houses were cared for by a numerous retinue of uniformed retainers; "the supreme achievement for a European being to have himself served, he hires slaves while he waits for the time when he can own them."[31] In the country, too, life was lived on as lavish a scale as possible. This is not the place to describe the houses of masters and slaves, or the buildings needed for working sugar-cane or indigo or preparing coffee, or their distribution over the plantation, for nu-

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1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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175 merous contemporary accounts, and most present-day works,
105 give both texts and illustrations which make the economy of
563 the plantation clear.[53] Though many stories of the magnifi-
567 cence of plantation life are found in current works, writers
342 of the period seem to agree that but little attention was paid
175 to convenience. Inventories of the contents of houses show
105 that furnishings were at a minimum; a few chairs and small
563 tables in the sitting- and reception-rooms, beds and minor ac-
352 cessories in the way of furniture in the bedrooms, dining-room tables and chairs and a cabinet for dishes. These pieces were usually built in the colony and made of native hard woods; substantial, they were essentially plain. As Baron Wimpffen remarked, "Taste, Sir, is still Creolian at Saint Domingo; and, unfortunately, the Creolian is not the right taste, — it smells too much of the *Boucan*."[54]

175 The table set was not distinguished. Meat, though the most
105 important dish at the principal meals, was poor, but, on the
567 other hand, fish, game, and wild fowl were excellent, and the
563 best of French wines were available.[55] Whatever the fare, how-
352 ever, it was served in the grand manner, often on plate rather
[262] than chinaware, and by the many liveried house-servants which every great establishment could boast. An account of the mode of service has been preserved in the reminiscences of one who, writing some years later of a repast served him in 1787, says: "There were many more of these domestics of both sexes than there were diners. I could but admire their attention to the smallest details of the service, the whiteness of their clothing, and the beautiful kerchiefs in the Créole manner elegantly arranged about the heads of the women. . . . But
[291] all of them moved about on bare feet; this was the distinctive sign of slavery."[56]

175 As portrayed in contemporary works, Haitian white life is
181 seen to have been lived entirely in terms of material goods and
105 of display. Just as there was little intellectual life, so religion
777 was but a matter of form. One M. de Larnage, writing from
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1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Petit-Goave on 25 June 1745, complains that it is unbelievable "what indifference the people of these districts have toward spiritual matters." [46] So little attention was paid to the rites of the Church that when the baptism of an infant was to be performed, it often proved difficult to find a godfather who had taken the sacrament, and many children were therefore never baptized. As might be expected, the churches were in a bad state, often having no more than earthen walls and floors, roofed with thatch, and being used as threshing-floors as well as places of worship. The description which Père Labat has given us of a church at Cap Français,[47] and of the manner in which the communicants conducted themselves during such services as were held, shows the decadence of the one religion that had any place among the white inhabitants. The clergy, too, reflected this same decadence. For though the early libertines who posed as priests were later replaced by members of such orders as the Jacobins, the Jesuits, and the Capucins, even this did not end the scandals that, from the first days of the establishment of the Catholic Church on the island, marked its ministrations.

What impression must the Negroes have obtained from their opportunities to observe the life of their masters? What patterns of behavior, what moral codes, what concepts of the way in which the Europeans regulated their own lives and, as officials, regulated the lives of others, must have been stamped on the minds of these Africans? That the present emphasis on the importance of wealth, or that a love of and demand for display, should characterize Haitian life of the cities today is not strange. Nor is it difficult to comprehend how certain other aspects of Haitian life that have so been underscored in the last half-century by those who have written of the Haitians should have developed from this initial stimulus — not to the extent to which this emphasis would lead one to believe, to be sure, but enough to give a basis for the exaggerations which have been published.[48]

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

CHAPTER III

WORKING THE AMALGAM

THE FIRST slaves brought to the New World — those Negroes needed, according to the familiar account, to replace the Indians who preferred death to bondage — reached Haiti in 1510.[1] The sanguine hope of the colonists that the labor of one Negro would be worth more than that of four Indians was, however, not borne out by experience, for the work of these slaves was far from satisfactory, and their death-rate was distressingly high.[2] Yet though they were found to be useless in the gold mines, their owners were more than compensated by the discovery that they made excellent laborers in the cultivation of sugar-cane and the making of sugar. So profitable was this, indeed, that Haiti, with the rest of the West Indies, came to be known as the "sugar islands," and it is recounted how "the magnificent palaces erected by Charles V at Madrid and Toledo were built solely from the revenues obtained from the monopoly of the crown on the importation of sugar from the Island of Espagnole."[3]

During these early times the fundamental rule of slavery in Haiti was laid down: "In all that has to do with slavery, custom is everything, the law is nothing."[4] In 1518 one Zuazo, a licentiate, writing to the King, stated that the control of Negro slaves depended entirely upon the treatment accorded them. "Some of those I found on my arrival were thieves,

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

while others had fled to the mountains; the first group I caused to be beaten, and cut off the ears of the others, and since then no complaint has been heard."[4] Charlevoix also tells of the brutal treatment of the early slaves; how the Negroes were given even less consideration than the Indians, since there was not only much greater difference in skin color between them and the whites than between the color of the Indians and the Europeans, but the added reason existed that

> "slavery, as far as the native Indians were concerned, was based solely on the right of the most powerful, whereas in the case of the Negroes, they having been bought and sold by their own people, it seemed that one need have less scruple in making them bear the full weight of their servitude."[5]

The rapidity with which the slave-trade grew, especially in the latter portion of the seventeenth century and the eighteenth, need not be stressed here. With the passage of the western part of the island into the hands of the French following the provisions of the treaty of Ryswick in 1697, and as a result of the picturesque but predatory activities of the buccaneers, who did much to demoralize the Spanish regime, French participation in the trade grew apace,[7] so that slightly more than a half-century later seven "companies" were engaged in carrying Negroes to the French possessions in the New World.[8] Though in the earlier decades of the eighteenth century Martinique was the best market, Haiti, because of her vast resources, came to absorb the greater part of the available slaves.[9]

From the earliest times most of the slaves were destined for work in the fields, but some were employed as house-servants. These latter had the greatest opportunities to learn the ways of the whites and, moreover, since many of the women were mistresses of their owners, not only did a mingling of traditions and modes of life result, but a merging of

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

the blood-streams of the two races as well. And though in the custom of French Santo Domingo, as elsewhere in the New World, even a suspicion of Negro ancestry was sufficient to cut a person off from social intercourse with white society, yet these mixed-bloods were to become an important factor in establishing the patterns of Haitian Negro tradition, just as their descendants were to exert no small influence in the development of Haitian culture after the establishment of independent Haiti.

Numerous terms designated the various degrees of crossing, some of which, surviving in present-day speech, are familiar to us, such as the words "mulatto" and "quadroon." But examining Moreau de St. Mery's painstaking analysis of the various possible amounts of crossing that could be recognized, reading his speculations regarding the smallest proportion of Negro blood that could be regarded as negligible, noting how he traces Negro blood to its last vestige, as in a cross which would give one part Negro as against 8,191 parts white, a telling impression is received of the great significance of race-crossing for the Haitians of that time.[10] Such words as *sacatra*, *griffe*, *marabou*, *métif*, and *mamelouc* not only gave information as to the amount of crossing represented in the persons designated by them, but even indicated which parent, father or mother, was white and which one was wholly or partially Negro. Crossing was by no means restricted to matings between white masters and their slave women, for records show that Negro men did not fail to hold an attraction for their white mistresses. Nor did all the sharpness with which the color-line was drawn prevent actual marriages between whites and persons of color. In such instances, however, the white person was cast out from association with his fellow-Europeans, as the name applied to him, *métallié*, sufficiently shows.[11]

Slavery cut across all these varying degrees of color, so that just as there might be free Negroes who were wholly African

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in descent, so there were "colored" folk who were slaves. As time went on, the lighter-colored slaves were usually employed as house-servants rather than field-hands, bringing about a contiguous dilution of the Negro blood that flowed in these strains, and a lightening of their skins. And such was the prestige attached to light color that the mixed-bloods, even though slaves, felt themselves superior to free Negroes of undiluted African stock. This attitude derived from the fact that the lighter slaves were most often manumitted, particularly if they were the children of their owners, and that in other situations, when as slaves they gained the favor of their masters, they were permitted to engage in some remunerative enterprise with the proceeds of which they eventually might purchase their own freedom. These free people of color, or *affranchis*, formed an important part of the Haitian population in pre-Revolutionary times,[13] and played a principal role in the development of Haitian culture. It was through them that European civilization flowed, since because of the closeness of their contacts with the whites they were the instrument by means of which the aboriginal African heritage of the slaves was modified to produce the forms in which it is found in Haiti today.[14]

Yet for all the importance of the freed mixed-bloods in the attainment of Haitian independence and in the fixing of the patterns of Haitian culture, they, like the whites, were but relatively few in number, their strength being but from five to ten per cent of that of slaves.[14] In attempting to analyze the manner in which the present amalgam that is the civilization of Haiti was formed, it is consequently necessary to revert to a consideration of those who were in the majority, the full-blooded Negroes. The tribes from which these Negroes were principally derived have been indicated, together with the outlines of the civilizations of the region of Africa from which they were drawn. To this must be added, as has been for the whites with whom they came in contact, an analysis of the so-

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that commonly assumed, since the conclusion is inescapable that, if anything, the slaves formed a group whose aboriginal types showed a weighting on the upper end of the African social scale rather than an overwhelming proportion of the less desirable members of society. Such an assumption goes far in explaining how the "slave psychology" generally attributed to Negroes of the New World was anything but a real part of their inner lives, and makes as well for an understanding of the extent to which the Negroes suffered their slavery with a constantly active discontent that is rarely given proper recognition in the study of the history of the period, and to which the drive toward freedom and the traditions of their native land were kept alive despite the restraints imposed by the masters.

Once in the net of the slavers, however, the status of any individual mattered but little, for to the European dealers each Negro was but an added unit of cargo. All last traces of his dignity as a human being were taken from him;[18] in the grants for earlier slaving operations, and in the manifests of the ships of that time, slaves were not even invoiced as human beings, but as "pieces of the Indies" — fractions of the perfect slave, who was conceived as having a height of seven *quartas* of a little more than ten inches each. Under this practice, the stature of each slave, child or adult, having been recorded, the total length of the members of the cargo was divided by the requisite number, and thus reduced to so many of these "pieces of the Indies," the actual number of human beings in the cargo not figuring.[19]

It is unnecessary to detail the horrors of the passage to the New World, for the story has been too often told. One can but conjecture what its effect on those subjected to it must have been, especially when it is viewed as an introduction to their contact with the Europeans who were to be their masters. That the mortality on the voyage was high is well known, but death encountered while the shackled slaves passed the dan-

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gerous bar of the African coast in the native canoes, which often overturned in the surf, is seldom mentioned in the literature of the slave-trade. Yet this was perhaps as great a cause of loss of life as the hardships of the journey to the coast or even the voyage across the Atlantic.

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Arrived at their destination, the slaves were given a period of rest so that they might be in the best of condition when they were placed on the market, to be inspected much as the more costly horses or heads of cattle were appraised. Sometimes the period between the voyage and their purchase was a lengthy one, since they were often held in "warehouses" for extended periods in order to regulate the market. Eventually, however, they were disposed of and, taken to the plantations, branded with the mark of the new master.[20] Induction into plantation life followed a fairly definite pattern: the new slave was first of all "introduced" to the principles of Christianity through an interpreter and then, according to his age, placed in one of the three work-groups which every plantation of any size possessed; the "great" one, composed of the most vigorous men and women; the second, to which the adolescents, the feeble, and the women who were nursing their infants were assigned; and the third, made up of children, who, under the watchful eye of an elderly woman, gathered forage. For the second and third groups the work was not too strenuous, but the members of the "great" work-group labored almost without rest except for the two hours a day allowed for meals and the few hours at night for sleep. And while conditions varied from plantation to plantation, the many contemporary accounts of the unrelenting manner in which the slaves were compelled to work at top speed testify to the harshness of the regime.[21] Small wonder that Charlevoix, contemplating the life of the slaves, wrote the moving paragraphs he composed concerning the hardships of their existence, and the slight compensations their labor afforded them.[22]

Despite the obvious fact that under such conditions the con- [198]

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175 178 567 [177] tinuation of African cultural traditions was not easy, certain things did persist. While the material facts of the life of the slaves was at once subordinated to European patterns — in dress and implements and to a certain extent in housing, for example[23] — yet in other matters they could live as they had lived in Africa. Thus one account of the time, quoted by de Vassière,[24] tells how the slaves carried on communal hoeing, timing their strokes to the rhythms of songs that begged some favor of their visitor, or to songs of praise (and, when the white observer was not present, undoubtedly also singing songs of derision), in the characteristic African fashion that, as will be seen, has survived in Haitian peasant life to this day. Similarly their traditions of cooking, of eating, of fixing the time for their meals (despite St. Mery's comment that "the Negro has no other rule of eating than the demands of his appetite"), of respect for their elders; their attitudes toward death and their rituals of burial, their dances, their songs, and, above all, their non-Christian religious beliefs, all continued to be stamped with the mark of Africa.[25] On the other hand, opportunities to learn and imitate French customs were by no means neglected, for the prestige of the masters filtered through the ranks of the slaves until it reached even the field-hands, for the nearer in service the Negro was to the person of his master, the more Europeanized was his behavior and the prouder he was and the more he exploited his opportunities to follow European patterns of habit.[26] Not only did the house-servants imitate French dances,[27] but we are told how in Martinique, for example, all the slaves were taught these figures.[28] In the field of religion, also, the efforts of the Church to capitalize the royal edicts which made baptism of the slaves compulsory were far from vain, at least in so far as the outward manifestations of their acceptance of the faith were concerned. Writings of the time, however, do not omit comment on the discouragement of the missionizing Fathers who seriously undertook this task, because too often

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the baptism of their converts was followed by serious lapses from the faith, especially under conditions of stress.[30]

One of the most revolting aspects of the institution of slavery, wherever found, is the cruelty with which the suppression of human individuality is prosecuted. In this the French colony of Santo Domingo was no exception, as the list of more ingenious punishments, aside from the more usual ones such as whipping, which were devised to keep the slaves in line, demonstrates.[30] What is more important here are the defenses the Negroes built up against them. Recourse to suicide was especially common, and though the popularly accepted explanations for this range between the desire of the slave to destroy himself because he knew he was valuable property of his master, and the conviction that suicide was one way of achieving his return to the African homeland,[31] there is no reason to assume that, following African tradition, the belief that the ghost of a helpless slave could through suicide become powerful for evil and thus wreak his vengeance did not also figure.[32] But equally widespread in all the New World were the allied weapons of revolt and escape.

Both in the experience of the individual slaves and in the history of New World slavery this tendency to revolt began early. In the former case, many tales are told of how on the march to the African coast, or in the slave barracoons, or on board the slave-ship, the possibility of a desperate dash for freedom had always to be guarded against.[33] Concerning the latter, it is not generally known how early in the history of Negro slaving revolts did occur. The Negro slave-trade began with shipments of slaves to Haiti in 1510; the first slave uprising in Haiti, in 1522, thus took place only twelve years after the commencement of the traffic.[34] In the New World possessions of Spain eleven other rebellions are recorded between the years 1522 and 1553, of which those of 1533, 1537, and 1548 occurred in Santo Domingo.[35] During the following century two revolts took place, one at Port de Paix in 1679

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and another in 1691. The object of this latter rebellion was to massacre all the whites in the district, but it was discovered before the uprising could be effective, and its leaders were executed. Still another incipient revolt in the region of Cap Français was put down in 1704.[26]

In the main, however, there were too few opportunities for united action on the part of the slaves from any considerable area to permit the idea of a general revolt to germinate and grow into action; such rebellions as occurred in the years that followed were local affairs, and were principally the result of specific abuses. Yet the fear of them was always with the planters, and of this fear the *vodun* cult, characterized by St. Mery as being potentially "a terrible weapon" in the hands of the leaders of the cult, was the symbol and crystallizing agent.[27] That there was no lack of realization of the danger to the colonists from slave uprisings is made clear in letters of the period written to France; as early as 1685 M. de Cussy, reporting to the Minister of Colonies in Paris, stated: "In the Negroes we possess a formidable domestic enemy," while a hundred years later an officer of the armies of the King who was also a plantation-owner in Haiti expressed the opinion that "a colony of slaves is a city under constant threat of assault; there one walks on barrels of powder."[28]

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More frequently, however, the expression of protest took the form of *marronage*, of running away to the hills, a phenomenon not restricted to Haiti, since in other regions of the New World, notably Jamaica and Dutch Guiana, the runaways maintained themselves so successfully that they were accorded their independence by formal recognition, as was also done in Haiti in 1784.[29] Figures on the extent to which slaves made off into the mountains tell the measure of their desperation; in 1720 alone, a thousand Negroes gained their freedom in this manner; in 1751, at least 3,500. Some of the leaders of these bands were men of great ability, and the depredations they engaged in caused serious losses to the planters

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in the regions where they operated. The most renowned was Macandal, a "Guinea" Negro, who was finally apprehended and executed in 1758.[40] His name lives today in Haitian peasant tradition, where folkloristic versions of his exploits as one of the earliest of the liberators are still recounted. The pages in St. Mery which tell how the strength of the bands in the mountains behind Croix-des-Bouquets necessitated a constant augmentation of the militia on duty there, is additional evidence of the success of these runaways. The same author's description of a group operating in the parish of Jacmel, found in 1785 to number among its members men more than fifty years of age who had been born in the freedom of the mountains, shows how long the escaped Negroes were able to maintain themselves without capture.[41]

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The very tradition of *marronage* was important. Psychologically, it held out to the slaves a hope, more than ephemeral, of escaping their servitude, and in consequence allowed them to maintain an attitude of mind that kept many of them from becoming a prey to despair. From the point of view of the growth of Haitian culture, moreover, the groups of runaway slaves offered a ready means for the continuation of African traditions and patterns of behavior. Though but few descriptions of the manner of life led by the fugitives in their mountain encampments are to be had, it is apparent that in order to maintain confidence in their own powers of resisting capture and re-enslavement the runaways guarded assiduously all memory of African belief and practice, while even in the material aspects of their existence they tended to revert to aboriginal modes of life. Finally, however, and most important for the future course of Haitian history, was the training of these runaways obtained in the ways of warfare, and the continuation of the warrior tradition among the Negroes. This is one of the reasons why in 1791, when Boukman and his followers stirred the first general slave revolt in the north, the blacks were ready; also when in the course of

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175 the development of European history the French Revolution
569 sharpened the latent antagonisms between the various classes
669 of whites in the colony, between the whites and the free persons of color, and between masters and slaves, the way had been prepared for the operations of the great military geniuses, Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, through whose leadership the freedom of Haiti was finally achieved.

175 It is not necessary here to give, even in outline, the course of Haitian history during this period of rebellion and afterwards, when Haiti was welded into a single Republic, for this has been often recounted.[48] Nor is it of importance here to continue the well-known political history of the Republic, with its many rebellions, and its wars with the Spanish portion of the island that finally resulted in the formation of the Republic of Santo Domingo; with the brief existence of the "empire" of Faustin I; and with the culmination of this history in what has been called a period of anarchy that brought about the occupation, so recently terminated, of Haiti by the American Marines.[49] Other questions, which concern the social history of independent Haiti, have been given less attention, and only tantalizing hints of their answers appear in the writings of those who have treated of the developing country. How were the impulses toward the mingling of Haitian and French aspects of culture, set in motion during the period of slavery, working out during this time? What influences dominated the scene, once the whites had been finally eliminated? What mechanisms permitted the African traditions brought by the slaves to hold their vitality? It is as through a haze that one glimpses the inner development of Haitian culture after independence; and the glimpses are the dimmer when comparison is made with the many clear and detailed descriptions of the earlier life of the island.

175 It is only by a close reading of the works of such travelers
117 and foreign officials as Hanna, Mackenzie, St. John, and Hazard, that any information of this kind can be obtained. The

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

attitudes of these writers were in the main far from sympathetic toward Haiti, and their interests extended but little to the customs of the great masses of Haitians. That the fear of slavery was still alive in the early part of the nineteenth century is apparent from an incident related by Mackenzie;[44] that, some decades later, the sense of racial differences continued to exist is evident from folk-sayings about the characteristics of whites, mulattoes, and Negroes recorded by St. John.[45] The concept of rank seems to have maintained itself in its full flavor, with no lack of social classes in Haitian urban society and no lack of vigor in perpetuating the earlier prejudices of caste.

The majority of the population remained on the land, for by 1830 the great estates had been completely broken up, and were cultivated in the main by small concessionaires. The dress of these country inhabitants seems to have remained much as it had been under French control, and the emphasis on good manners that so marks African social intercourse had been retained to such an extent that St. John, no admirer of the Haitian people, was forced to remark upon it.[46] Markets which were conducted in African fashion had been established, and these were supplemented by itinerant peddlers. The institution of *plaçage*, a reconciliation of African plural marriage with the monogamy of European custom, of which more will be said in a later chapter, was known in the early days of independence. The rites of birth and death were marked with their special ceremonies, and in both instances it can be seen that the African elements of the cultural heritage were not being forgotten. Dancing continued as the principal form of recreation, and to the traditional dances, which still persist, were added European styles.[47]

Above all, African religious customs were being observed. *Vodun* rites continued to flourish and magic was practiced as in the days preceding independence, as is to be seen from the notorious and all too often repeated tale of the "Congo bean

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

175 178 771 [789] 175 178 779 795

stew," which has continued current from the time of its publication by St. John until today.[48] Yet African religious practices were being constantly combated by the Catholic Church, for even in the period of revolt the priests had remained largely unharmed, and when Christophe was elevated to the throne, he appointed two archbishops. After the establishment of the Republic, Catholicism continued as the State religion, so that by the early nineteenth century, as Mackenzie mentions, thirty-eight clergy were active in Haiti, all under the control of the Bishop of Santo Domingo, and all presumably nominated and paid by the President of Haiti.[49] Though for a period there was an attempt to develop a national Church, the missionary work done during the colonial days left too strong a tradition of Catholicism to be overcome, and consequently a Concordat was signed with Rome in 1860, which has remained in effect ever since.[50]

178 Though the story of the cultural history of Haiti between 1804 and the present cannot thus be more than sketched, yet the background is known, and enough can be gathered from accounts of Haitian life during this interval to enable us to see that the varied cultural impulses were shaping the lives of the people throughout these years. With some understanding of the roots of the resulting culture in French and African [121] traditions, then, let us once more turn to the valley of Mirebalais and consider the life of the Haitian peasant as it is lived today.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

585 munity. All others stay under the brush shelter which has been erected at the side of the house, where men are served the common drink of the Haitian peasant, *clairin,* raw rum. The feast, furnished by the bridegroom, includes beef, pork, and many fowls. "We do not eat badly at a wedding!" is the comment of Haitians. At the weddings of more prosperous folk there may be dancing, but no *vodun* dances are danced. "This is not a thing of *vodun,* but of the Church," is the explanation proffered.

The feasting begun, the bridal couple must submit to much speech-making. Long "lessons in morality" are pronounced by grandfathers, godfathers, and elderly male friends; in fact, anyone moved to speak expounds upon "the road to follow" for the good, the worthy life, and many a warning is given with moving examples of the fate of those who disregarded the counsel given them. The food and drinks consumed, the speech-makers silenced, and the dancers tired, the wedding guests begin to take leave, until by sundown many are gone, and soon the young couple find themselves alone.

175 595 567 That plural marriage has existed in Haiti since the time of independence is evident from the available accounts. Little can be learned of slave matings prior to 1804, but it may be assumed that these were in the main temporary and existed at the will of the masters; and while the practice of polygyny among the slaves must have been difficult, if only because of the greater proportion of males, the African pattern seems to have had enough vitality to bring about the re-establishment of the institution as soon as slavery was abolished. Thus, writing in 1830, Makenzie notes a man "not inaptly named 'Taureau'" who "though his means were small, and his cottage still smaller . . . had a harem of no less than six wives."

175 595 St. John, some fifty years later, also remarks on the fact that

> "In the interior, a well-to-do black lives openly with several women as wives, and I have seen the patriarch

1; Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

sitting at the door of the central house, with huts all around in which his younger wives lived, as they could not be made to dwell under the same roof. . . . The French priests attempted to alter this state of things, but they did not succeed, as the wives, surrounding the intruders, asked them what was to be their position if the husband selected one among them and abandoned the rest."[10] 175 595

Elsewhere St. John speaks of the institution of *plaçage* by name, mentioning its prevalence prior to the period of his residence in Haiti.[11] Mackenzie, though not calling it by this term, tells of a rural Negro who, in the course of a long conversation during which the name of an officer of rank in the Republic came up, made the observation "with admirable naiveté and exquisite logic, 'C'est mon beau frère, parceque je vis avec sa sœur.'"[12] [583]

Plural marriage is no less common in the valley of Mirebalais than elsewhere in Haiti. Despite the insistence of the Church on monogamy, many men have two "wives," a few have three or four, while one important priest of the *vodun* cult is said to have eight. The force of the sanctions behind monogamy and Church unions, however, has undoubtedly influenced the psychological "set" of the Haitian toward polygyny, as is especially to be seen in the violent manifestations of jealousy shown by co-wives toward one another. It is primarily because of this that polygynous households, such as are mentioned in earlier writings, are not found in present-day Mirebalais, and this also explains why a man with more than one spouse sees to it that where possible his "wives" live at such distance from one another that they have but little opportunity to meet. Even then, on occasion, a newly taken *placée* will pace in front of the house of her man's other spouse, flaunting the clothes and trinkets she has received from him. Or if women who share the same mate meet in the 184 595 [177] [152]

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Mirebalais

natural and those whose remedies are based principally on an 789
inherited knowledge of the curative powers of herbs and roots, are all to be gathered under the rubric of magic. For the native, however, a difference of the first order exists between a *traitement* to heal an illness, and magic employed to gain an end, protect from harm, or injure another, even though the same gods be called upon to validate the healing remedies employed to effect cures as are used to actuate a *garde* or a *wanga*.

The belief in magic figures importantly even in the early 175●
writings on Haiti. Thus St. Mery says: 789

> "The Negroes believe in magic and that the power of their fetiches has followed them across the sea. . . . Little rude figures of wood or stone, representing men or animals, are for them things of supernatural power, and they call them *garde-corps*. There are a great number of Negroes who acquire absolute power over the others by this means. . . ."[2]

It is reported that in the early days the black and mulatto concubines of white Haitians often had recourse to reputedly potent charms to insure their attraction for these men and to guard themselves against their white mistresses. One Hyacinthe, a leader in the uprising of 1792, "believed that an ox-tail which he always carried in his hand had the power of preserving him from bullets; he was regarded as invulnerable."[3] And numerous citations could be given to show not only that since that day has the use of charms persisted, but that comment on this use has come to be outstanding in all descriptions of Haitian life.

To understand the various types of practitioners of magic, 789
it is necessary to refer again to the concept that any force habitually actuating evil magic may be directed toward less malevolent ends, while any benevolent supernatural power may exert itself to bring harm. Hence those who make *arrêts* to ward off evil from their clients, or *gardes* to protect them

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

to marry work to play, drudgery to singing, and despair to hope. In his complicated world, life and death are simply different aspects of the same thing. Those who die live as long as people remember them. And those who are alive in the physical sense are receptacles for the spiritual forces that exist on all sides—the echoes of the dead, the multitude of spirit beings, good and evil, and dancing and music.

What are the origins of this simple and complicated man?

The beginnings of the Haitian came with the discovery of America and the establishment of slavery in the New World. When the Spanish colonizers first began to organize the economy of the new colony of Hispaniola, as they called it, they attempted to enslave the indigenous Caribs to work the fields. But the Indians of Haiti found no sense and no comfort in the new system. It violated their views of life and destroyed their culture. They were proud, and they were not resilient. They did not care to pan gold for the Spaniards or to grow sugar for them. They died under the conditions of slavery, or fled into the mountains, or took to the sea in their canoes, looking for sanctuary on other islands where the Europeans had not yet settled. They left the rich earth of the Haitian valleys to the conquistadores. In less than eighteen years the new Spanish colony was dying on the vine for lack of laborers. It was then that Spain, like France, England, and Portugal, turned its eyes to Africa. There were old precedents. The Spanish and Portuguese had for many years used the African for labor. They had had intimate contact with Africans during the Moorish invasion of Iberia. And the slave trade had been an old and familiar thing even before the discovery of America.

The first Africans sent to Haiti arrived there in 1510. The precise origins of these first African immigrants to the New World are not known, but they came from somewhere along that long stretch of African coast between Senegal and Angola. It was a great crossroads in world history. As much as any other ethnic group, these Africans and those who came after them built America. They, as much as any other, turned the West Indies into a prize over which the nations of Europe fought for three hundred years. And in Haiti, as in Brazil, the United States, and other American nations, they raised moral and ethical issues for the peoples of European stock which have not been solved to our own day.

The acquisition and transportation of slaves is an old and familiar story. Slavery was an ancient institution in some parts of Africa. Some of the wars between kingdoms were, in part at least, huge slave raids. In other wars, the taking of slaves was only incidental. But the selling of these human chattels to European merchants came as easily to African chieftains as it did to Arab entrepreneurs. Often they were merely selling off

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

175 567 "surplus" stock. The African's motives sometimes were political rather then mercenary—to weaken and disperse unfriendly neighboring tribes. Occasionally, members of a royal family, possible contenders for tribal power and all the prerogatives that went along with it, were "exiled" in this extremely effective and final way. Although Africans were the victims of this monstrous commerce, it is clear that without the participation and coöperation of other Africans the slave trade as it existed in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries would not have been possible. The African, along with the Asian and the European, shares the guilt for the indecencies and degradation that grow out of human barter.

The voyage to the New World was at best horrible and inhuman. Nothing that can be said about the manner in which the captains of the slavers attempted to care for their cargoes can change the picture. The slaves suffered from thirst, disease, hunger, seasickness, and impersonal brutality. The anxiety and dread which these captives must have suffered in anticipation of things to come are difficult to imagine. A strange, unfamiliar world awaited them across an ocean larger than Africa itself. Some slaves killed themselves. Others who had survived long overland marches died of exhaustion or disease aboard the slave vessels. And many a slaver had to report in its log that a number of chained males, taking advantage of a brief spell on the upper decks, had leaped into the sea.

But among those who reached port in the New World there was a fierce determination to survive. The history of African slavery in the Americas is full of accounts of resistance and revolt against the European masters. The shipwrecked slaves who took over the Island of St. Vincent and came to be known as the Black Caribs, the Ashanti who revolted and vanquished the Dutch armed forces in Surinam, the Maroons of Jamaica, and the ex-slaves of Haiti who destroyed Napoleon's armies, all bear witness to the unquenched spirit of those millions of Africans exiled from their own land.

175 162 567 Whereas the Indians of Haiti were not resilient, the Africans were. More and more slaves were poured into Hispaniola. By the eighteenth century the slave population represented countless tribes and kingdoms of West Africa. There were Senegalese, Foulas, Poulards, Sosos, Bambarras, Kiambaras, Mandingos, and Yolofs from northwest Africa. There were Aradas, Mahis, Haoussas, Ibos, Anagos or Yorubas, Bini, Takwas, Fidas, Amines, Fantis, Agouas, Sobos, Limbas, and Adjas from the coast and interior of the great bulge of Africa. From Angola and the Congo basin came the Solongos, the Mayombés, the Mousombés, the Moundongues, the Bumbas, the Kangas, and others. Although there is no official record, Haitians themselves say that there were also those tall

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

people known as the Jangheys, or Dinkas, from the region of the Upper Nile, and Bagandas from Uganda.[1] A few proper names that have survived, such as Ras Médé, suggest that there may have been men from Ethiopia among them. Old slavers' records show that numerous shipments were made from Madagascar and Mozambique on the East African coast.[2]

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These transplanted people came from all classes and stations of life. Some were criminals condemned and sold by their own tribesmen; others were prisoners captured in intertribal raids or by Arab slave hunts. There were men of royal blood among them, as well as artisans and tribal scholars. The slave cargoes included leaf doctors, bards, musicians, wood carvers, metalworkers, drum makers, boatbuilders, hunters, and farmers.

In Haiti they were thrown together into a common mold. Shoulder to shoulder in the plantation fields were Bambarras, Anagos, Takwas, and Bumbas—peoples with different backgrounds, different languages, different legends, and different traditions. There were Moslems and so-called pagans, herdsmen and river-boatmen. Each of them brought something of his past and unwittingly poured it into the new amalgam that was to be the Haitian.

And into this amalgam flowed some of the literature, the traditions, the religious thoughts, and the superstitions of Europe. Under Spanish, French, and English rulers the slaves were constantly subjected to ways and ideas that were new to them. They absorbed and digested, and out of the diverse and even contradictory elements they worked out new patterns of life and thinking. This was the strength and resiliency of the West African in the New World. His capacity for adaptation and for remembering what was valuable to him and forgetting what had ceased to be useful preserved his spirit and his pride.

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Among the things that were lost in this vast process of adaptation were the traditions of wood carving, bronze and brass casting, and weaving. Remembered, however, were music, dancing, games, religious beliefs, concepts of nature and the supernatural, folk tales, and legends. It was the outward, material things that were abandoned, and the inward, nonmaterial things that tended to survive.

The slave system itself was largely responsible for the loss of special arts and skills. Craftsmen with specialized knowledge in metalwork were set to repairing wagons and hoes, or they simply wielded hoes in the fields. Wood carvers found no patrons to encourage them to carve images and stools. The colonial emphasis was on mass production of sugar. Other things were valueless. There was little leisure or incentive for the slave to follow his artistic aptitudes.

[1] [The name Ganda survives in Haiti as the name of a deity. Cf. P. 349 Category 116:--Analyst]

[2] [For footnote, See Category 116, P. 349--Analyst]

[P. 8]

2. Man and the Universe: Vodoun

175 179 791 When the African slaves stepped ashore in the New World they brought with them highly developed religious beliefs and attitudes toward life. But Africa was a continent of many cultures and nations, and its belief systems varied. The Congo African did not have the same view of the natural and supernatural as the Senegalese, for example; and even neighboring peoples such as the Ibos, the Yorubas, and the Mahis did not have common religious traditions. Yet in the strange new land that was Haiti, the common elements in their religious beliefs were accented. In time a new composite religious system emerged. It was called Vodoun.

175 167 179 791 The preponderance of Africans in Haiti came from the region of Dahomey, Togoland, Nigeria, and the Congo River basin. Among them the Dahomeans were the most numerous, and it was they who provided the framework for the Afro-Haitian religious system.

The word Vodoun itself is Dahomean in origin. Among the Fon-speaking people of West Africa it signified "spirit," or "deity." In Haiti the word came to be applied in a general sense to all the activities of cult life, from the ritual of the "temple" to the songs and dances, though in some old songs it still applies specifically to the idea of a supernatural spirit. However, the Congo word *loa* came to be used to designate the deities.[1] 192

791 794 197 In a literal sense, Vodoun in Haiti consists of the rites, beliefs, and practices of the Vodoun cult, built around the similar religious systems of the Dahomeans and the Nagos. In a wider sense it applies to similar but distinct ritual activities of other cults. The Ibo-Kanga rites and dances are in a specific sense "not quite" Vodoun. The rites in the Congo-Guinée cult group—made up of Congo, Bambara, "Guinée," and miscellaneous elements—have separate practices and deities of their own, and are often regarded as not Vodoun at all. Yet the term Vodoun is used in a generic sense to include all these rites, and examination of the beliefs and activities of these cult groups shows that they have drawn in considerable measure upon a common inheritance.

[1] [See Courlander, Haiti Singing, p. 9. Cf. P 349, Category 116.--Analyst]

In Haiti the possession takes many forms, according to the nature of the deity who has entered the body, and depending on whether the possessed person has learned to "control" that deity. The possessing, or "mounting," of the possessed individual is manifest proof of the loa's existence and his constant proximity. Vodoun is built upon the premise of the existence of loa, and the possession is the instrument of direct contact and of constant proof of the loa's imminence.

Although much of Vodoun is cast in the Dahomean mold, it is no longer what it was originally in Dahomey. Many of the original deities of the Dahomean Earth pantheon, the Sky pantheon, and the Thunder pantheon have survived. Others have been forgotten, but in their place there has grown a vast array of loa, recruited partly from the Yoruba deities and perhaps from deities of other West African tribes. By far the largest group has come into existence in Haiti—loa whose names, at least, probably would go unrecognized in West Africa.

There have been prolific intrusions into Vodoun from the rites of the Catholic Church, though they have not affected the general framework of the system. The original Dahomean supreme being, Nanambuluku, is nearly forgotten; in her place the Christian God is named in many a Vodoun service. Yet, though God is the supreme creator, giver, and taker, it is the loa who must be supplicated and mollified. Most important Vodoun rituals are begun under the supervision of the *prêt' savane*, or "bush priest," who leads off with brief prayers from the Catholic rites. While the Catholic Church itself rejects any direct part in Vodoun, the self-trained prêt' savane, unordained and unsponsored by the Church, brings elements of its theology into the boundoe. The origins of the prêt' savane are not clear. But there is little doubt that his place in Haitian life became assured during the years of conflict between postrevolutionary governments and the Church of Rome. After the slave revolts c. 1791, the priests of the French colony fled from the scene or went into hiding along with the other white colonists. From the date of Haitian independence throughout the following half century, Haiti was "in open schism from the Roman Catholic Church."[1] Some Haitian presidents were friendly toward the Catholic Church; others even had the objective of making Catholicism a state religion with the president at its head. Henry Christophe, for example, made the Catholic Church official but stipulated that ecclesiastical decrees must be approved by the president. Alexandre Pétion's constitution for southern Haiti (the country was divided) also established the Church as official but laid upon it strong restrictions.

Leyburn points out that in 1814 there were in Christophe's kingdom only three priests, one of whom Christophe had named archbishop. Dur-

[1] Leyburn, The Haitian People, p. 119. Cf. p. 349, Category 116. -- Analyst

2. Courlander 3-6 (1937-1939) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

175 793 [659]

ing Boyer's administration, 1818–1843, Catholicism was the state religion but the president was its chief. Leyburn notes:

> Every effort of the state failing to provide proper religious leadership, Boyer resigned himself to permitting those who professed to be priests to practice in the republic. There were seventy so-called priests in the country in 1840. Some of them had once been in the holy orders but had been unfrocked; they found in Haiti not only a haven but a fertile field for gain. In addition to these religious renegades came adventurers who knew just enough of ritual and theology to use the priestly garb as a cover for easy profit. . . . They baptized houses, boats, and sharpers, and blessed fetish charms or amulets, all for a fee.[6]

175 659

It was not until 1860, after the death of the "Emperor" Soulouque, that Haiti signed a concordat with the Roman Church.

175 793

The role of the prêt' savane became defined after the slave revolts of 1791. His cue was taken from the activities of freebooting Europeans who apparently needed neither religious orders nor profound Catholic knowledge for their pseudo-clerical work. And the long period without a responsible priesthood gave the "bush priest" an opportunity to flourish.

793 177 [554]

The prêt' savane of today has a respected place in the community, though his prestige is not so great as that of the houngan on the one hand or the Catholic priest on the other. His place is guaranteed by his ability to bring to the Vodoun service elements of a competing system which the houngan, operating within the framework of African tradition, does not provide. Acceptance of these Catholic elements as a peripheral part of Vodoun is characteristic of much West African religious thinking, in which new deities and rituals may be added to the old when circumstances require.

793 78

The prêt' savane opens many Vodoun services with an *action de grâce*, reads prayers when a death has occurred, participates in marriage rites, and "baptizes" the houmfor, the cult drums, and the sacred rattles—not to mention the lua themselves! But it is the houngan's powers that are paramount. The "bush priest" is in a sense performing a service for the Vodoun priest, whose rituals and administrations are regarded as the effective and vital ones. The prêt' savane is a cultural afterthought.

[184]

In certain remote and isolated mountain places the prêt' savane is virtually unknown. But there is no sense of deprivation, for the cult priests —even the poorest and the most rustic—have their own way of dealing with the saints, God, and the forces of nature. An aged houngan of the Morne la Selle region explained it this way:

"In everything that is done, God's permission is asked first. Most houngans in the mountains do not know how to read, and they don't know how to pray. But they know many things. They know where the sun rises,

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

remembers many of the details. But during the administration of President Louis Borno (1922–1930) there was a reenactment of the original march. There suddenly appeared in the streets of Port-au-Prince a crowd of Gèdé *mystères*—houngans "possessed" by Gèdé Nimbo and attired in Gèdé dress: tall black hats, long black tail coats, smoked glasses, black skirts over their black trousers. They carried flags, waved polka-dot kerchiefs, shook their ceremonial rattles, and paused sometimes to wipe the perspiration from one another's faces. They became the nucleus of a huge, noisy crowd moving up the hill toward the palace. Market women followed instead of going home; street gamins screamed and raced among them. Before they had arrived at the palace grounds they had taken on the semblance of a huge Mardi Gras band. They swerved through the gates of the palace grounds and along the drive, right to the steps of the palace itself. The guards, taken by surprise, waited helplessly for their officers to arrive.

At the palace door, the houngans demanded money from the president. Borno was in a dilemma. He was reputed to be sympathetic to Vodoun ritual but was only surreptitiously so. He feared the houngans, and he feared public opinion. What would the upper class of Port-au-Prince think, the Latin-culture Haitians? With Gèdé's worst manners, the Gèdé mystères cavorted on the palace steps. Finally Borno gave in. He sent the money out to them, and then the crowd of Gèdés marched out of the palace grounds, waving their flags and shaking their rattles.

Service for the Hounsi Bossale

This ritual of calling the loa to speak through the mouth of the Vodoun priest took place in the Bolosse section of Port-au-Prince. The hounfor was situated in a congested slum area of the city, but the grounds around it were spacious. The hounfor itself was small and unpretentious, and except for the adjoining tonnelle would easily have been mistaken for another small wooden house. The houngan was a heavy-set man with a black mustache. Quick to laugh and easy in his movements, he nevertheless commanded solemn respect from the hounsi and the other participants. His soft-spoken voice expressed assurance and authority.

There were a number of possessions in the course of the dancing, all more or less routine. Each time a possession occurred, the houngan came forward with his asson and bell, gave a pitcher of water and a candle to the possessed devotee, and conducted her through a ritual at the foot of the center post.

Later, one of the hounsi came and sat at the houngan's feet. She was not possessed but obviously was in a state of high tension. Other servitors brought from the hounfor a wooden washtub and set it on the ground

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

In certain communities there is some continuity over a period of years, the Rara or Chariopé band remaining more or less intact. Normally it has a *malt'* Rara, also called *major* or *président*, who assumes the organizational responsibilities for the group. This means getting new costumes for the participants when required, refurbishing the old costumes and musical instruments, and recruiting special talent—perhaps a new "king." Where the same group continues from year to year, the malt' Rara actually serves as a sort of executive secretary. In some instances, however, the initiative for forming a group is undertaken by the malt' Rara himself. He chooses the costumes and *décor* of the group; he recruits the musicians and the young women and girls who form the singing and dancing chorus; and he chooses the roi Lwalwadi, who will be the group's main feature. He may decide upon the theme around which the group will be built, and may even decide upon the repertoire of songs it will sing. The malt' Rara has specific responsibilities and is obligated to provide his band with refreshments and food.

Expenses of the group are defrayed by collections made in the course of its "exercises." The band will stop before a crowd of spectators, or before a house, and will perform until it receives a gift known as *payé sorti* (pay to go) money. After receiving its payé sorti, the group performs an encore and then moves on. This custom of performing for gifts appears to have been known in colonial days. Eugène Aubin notes that the slaves on the plantations celebrated on New Year's Day with drums and dances.[1] At midnight they appeared before the foreman or owner of the plantation. One of the slaves would recite a speech to him, or perhaps the group would sing a song praising the master's virtues. Then, over the heads of the celebrants, a slave would extend a long bamboo pole with a beribboned basket fastened to the end. The plantation master would place his gift in the basket, after which the group would leave the house.

Some few groups do not have a "king" but are built around musical instruments or other features. However, the "king" is regarded as an old tradition. Aubin reported that the roi Lwalwadi dates from the time of the Emperor Soulouque in the nineteenth century. Soulouque is said to have named the first roi Lwalwadi in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. But there are reasons to suspect that these dancing virtuosi, by whatever name they were called, existed long before Soulouque entered the picture.

The roi Lwalwadi is a dancer of very special talents, and it is said that, though his title is not hereditary, his dances have been handed down within the family from rois of other years. Much care is given to the costume he wears. It is sometimes made of expensive satin or velvet.

[1] [Aubin, En Haïti, p. 42. Cf p. 351, Category 116.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 · (1937-1953) 1960 EV3 Haiti EV3

rather starve than work. An Englishman, James Franklin, wrote in 1828, for example:

> Experiments may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coercion and want will impel the Haytian to labour; and I have my doubts as to the practicability of enforcing labour in Hayti until the people have been better instructed, and their characters become changed.

As Franklin summarized it: "Nature is too generous to the Haytian; he never wants, and so never works for hire, as do free labourers in other countries."

The early nineteenth century saw a flood of such bitter comments about the remains of the once rich and flourishing French colony of St. Domingue. The vast productivity of Haiti under French rule had made that colony one of the richest in the New World. The country was dotted with sugar mills, brick-covered wells, and warehouses; and carefully built brick aqueducts, irrigation canals, locks, and dams assured water for the plantations. In 1790, under the slave system, Haiti had exported 163,000,000 pounds of sugar. In 1826, a quarter of a century after the revolution, it was reported to have exported 33,000 pounds.

This falling off in production and exports doubtless had many causes, but one of the most significant was the Haitian's revolt not only against slavery but also against continuing the same kind of work he had performed as a slave. He saw not too much difference between forced, unpaid labor and working for any large landholder at subsistence wages. To the Haitian slave the inspiring battle cry of the French Revolution did not mean that all men would work together on another's man plantation and receive the same wages. It meant that every man would have his own garden to work for himself as he chose; every man would be a full citizen, with land of his own, free to come and go, to plant what he wished, to sell what he could. Despite long years under a colonial slave system, the Haitian still remembered a different way of life in Africa, where mass production for export was not the primary objective of labor.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the population of Haiti was not much more than half a million—less than one sixth of what it is today. There was plenty of land, and much of it had not yet been wasted by constant tilling and erosion. When the French were driven out, the Haitian peasant re-created an economic world of his own liking. The plantation system which had poured out sugar and coffee and indigo for Europe faded away, and in its place there sprang up an agrarian system which has continued until the present day. In the early

175 178 311 [643] [256] In the early years of independence, Emperor Henry Christophe in the north and President Pétion in the south tried to stem the disintegration of the magnificent plantations. Christophe's measures in the region he controlled were sometimes stern, according to legend; but the plantation system and the plantations themselves gradually fell into decay, along with the aqueducts, the warehouses, and the sugar mills. For the Haitian had returned to a tradition of landholding antedating his enslavement.

175 648 181 Europe's loss of the Pearl of the Antilles aroused bitter words from Frenchmen and Englishmen for the better part of the century. They accused the Negro of laziness and lack of ability, repeating endlessly that only as a colony could Haiti ever be of any use to anybody. The London *Times* deplored the Haitian's unwillingness to work for wages, speculating that he had "no desire for property strong enough to induce him to labor with sustained power." In the United States, antiabolitionist enthusiasts cited the Haitian situation as an example of what would happen to the American economy if the slaves were freed.

464 423 311 The Haitian's reluctance to work for wages did not reflect an aversion to owning property, however, as the London *Times* supposed. On the contrary, it was engendered by his desire for property. The land was there and waiting, only needing a house to be built upon it, and to be cleared and tilled. The typical Haitian wanted not dubious, seasonal wage work but a farm of his own. The more ambitious peasant aspired to two farms, or even three, with a homestead and a family on each.

423 595 198 583 If a man worked hard and made a success of one plot, he could put away money and eventually buy a second. The additional land might be separated by some miles from the original farm. On the new ground the man would build another house and take another wife to take care of it in his absence. Known as *plaçage*, this arrangement had complete community sanction. A man whose energies and good fortune made an extra household possible was expected to make such an arrangement. It was not a new institution bred in the chaos following the [999] Revolution, nor was it, as some missionaries held, an evidence of moral deterioration of the Haitian character. It was simply a persisting concept of West African life.[3] The woman who occupied the second or third household was not a concubine. Like the first wife, she had enhanced prestige in her community. She had authority and responsibility. Her work, her position, and her rewards were not essentially different from those of the first wife.[4] It is true that her marriage was not consecrated by a church or civil ceremony, but, ordinarily, neither was that of the [581] first wife. Contrary to European misconceptions, such unions were true marriages in the sense that they had full sanction of the community.

[3,4] [Footnotes appear in Category 116, pp. 351-352. --Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

For many Haitians, the struggle to obtain a piece of ground and to hold onto it is the very heart of the struggle for existence. On Morne l'Hôpital in 1932 I knew a man who owned ten acres of gardens. He had it planted in bananas and plantains, yams, and cotton. He had two cows and a calf and a grove of mango trees and coconut palms. His house was clean, tidy, and by Haitian standards well furnished. Eighteen years later he had less than an acre of land, no trees, no cotton, and no cattle. His family had become impoverished. He had three grown children and virtually no land to leave to them except that on which the house stood. His troubles began with a lawsuit over his land title. He sold his cattle to raise money to pay his court expenses. He lost half of his land as a result of the lawsuit, most of it the part with the good trees. Later, he sold more land to raise "eating money," and then rented it from the new owner. He could not grow enough cash crops to pay the rent and was finally evicted. Today he has not enough ground left on which to grow food for himself and his wife the year round.

The diminution of adequate landholdings has resulted in the disappearances of many of the *lacours* (hamlets) that were a familiar sight a few decades ago. Young people traditionally built their houses near the family homesteads until there were five, six, or a dozen houses in a group. There was a natural family community which shared a common social life and the work of the fields. But as the population increased and the landholdings shrank, young people and old began to move away in search of new land, or work in the cities. Often where the lacour remains it is only as a settlement of landless house renters who work where they may for wages.

Economic refugees from rural areas seek wage work in the cities, returning to their original homes only on special festive days for family reunions. The men find employment as gardeners, servants, construction laborers, and stevedores. Some find work on the sugar and sisal plantations, others in craft industries making straw hats, baskets, shoes, chairs, and mahogany ware for export. The struggle in the big city of Port-au-Prince is for many of them worse than the poverty they left behind. There are the inevitable slums and the constant threat of hunger. It is in the big city that one hears most often the words *mèsi grand gout* (I am hungry), and least often the words *Bondieu bon* (God is good).

The land hunger increases, and the overflow of the mountain settlements continues to move cityward. In former years there was a trend toward emigration across the eastern border into the Dominican Republic, which has a population density roughly one third or one fourth that of Haiti. This trend was checked, temporarily at least, in 1937 by

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1963) 1960 SV3 Hait SV3

167 a massacre in the western part of the Dominican Republic which took
175 the lives of an estimated five thousand to fifteen thousand Haitians.
[648] The survivors fled homeward, and many were settled in frontier areas by the government. Even so, today there are believed to be some sixty or seventy thousand Haitians still living east of the border. Large numbers of Haitians, particularly men, migrated to Cuba in the years following World War I, in search of better wages in the cane fields. By 1931 there were more than eighty thousand Haitians in that country. But resentment by local Cuban labor and the onset of the depression combined to force the repatriation of great numbers of them. Thirty thousand Haitians came home from Cuba in the years 1936 and 1937 alone.

16 Solution of Haiti's problem of overpopulation does not seem imminent.
[842] The obvious answers would seem to be birth control, emigration, wiser use of natural resources, and industrialization. Since the country is predominantly Catholic, and since much social value is placed on children, birth control seems unlikely. And as health facilities become more widespread and infant mortality drops, the pressure will become more acute. Emigration seems to offer no hope, since neighboring islands and countries
[311] on the mainland give no encouragement. The Haitian may yet learn to conserve his land and to get more out of it, to stock his lakes with fish, and to
[47] bring more fish in from the sea. But this will not suffice. Nothing is left but industrialization, and that seems to be a thing of the far-distant future.

181 Nevertheless, the character of Haitian life remains essentially agrarian.
167 The displaced peasant, whether he is now a hotel "houseboy," a taxi
461 driver, or a cane cutter, dreams of returning to the land some day and growing bananas, coffee, and cotton that will make him independent. In far-off places such as Havana and New York, Haitians work and save money with the expectation that one day they will come home, buy fifteen or twenty acres of ground, build a new house, and live out their lives as decently prosperous *habitants*. The traditions of the agricultural
[178] society, along with Vodoun, continue to play a significant role in the life of the people.

[illegible] One such tradition is the institution of the *coumbite*, a loosely knit
24 cooperative work party of neighbors and friends. The word itself probably comes from the Spanish *convide*, or *convite*, meaning "to invite." A member of the group holds a coumbite by notifying his fellow members that on such-and-such a day his fields will require clearing or hoeing. There are several variants of the work gathering. One, called *cavé* or *cavée*, meets at irregular intervals and only on special invitation. There are no regular reciprocal obligations in the *cavée*; the workers are

*[Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy" Journal of Negro History, October, 1940, p. 615. Cf. p. 352, Category 116. --Analyst)

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

And when the revolution came he produced for the Haitian armies knives, gun parts, and wheels to transport cannon. By the tens of thousands he made ingeniously devised metal objects to be thrown on the roads, before the French cavalry troops—objects so shaped that, no matter how they fell, a single sharp point stood erect to cripple the enemy horses. Yet knowledge of the West African uses of iron did not altogether disappear, and during the first century of independence the Haitian blacksmith created many old-style knives, spears, and ritual objects for the cult temple.

Even today, some of this old-style work is to be found in hounfors in the southwestern peninsula. One may see simple or ornate iron standards, made to support ceremonial offerings or candles, strikingly similar to standards in ancestral shrines in Dahomey. There are iron bells, both single and double, made in pure West African style; ornate ritual swords and sabers which are the crests of certain deities; coiled and uncoiled iron serpents representing the gods Damballa and Ayida; and stylized or semirealistic portraits of the deities. Many of these old pieces are nineteenth-century survivals; others have been forged within the past decade.

An over-all impression of Haitian material culture is that artistic decoration is almost entirely absent and that the prime emphasis is on utility. Wooden cooking spoons are efficient in form, but missing from them is the delicate decorative carving often found in West Africa. The long wooden washing bowl, or *gawelle*, and the wooden mortar in which grain is pulverized are likewise clean-cut but stark and plainly utilitarian. Clay bowls, bottles, and storage jars are usually of simple, uniform design, with only accidental variations; there is little use of glazes, and the clay is often heavy and thick. Should there be a wari gameboard in the peasant hut, the chances are that it is roughly made, without legs or carved designs. Dugout canoes are usually crude in appearance, heavy and thick-walled, and irregular in form.

Yet there are many evidences—though one must seek them out—that esthetic impulses are quite alive. The gay peasant straw knapsack, or *alfor*, without which no mountain man makes a journey, has a charm and grace that is not diminished by familiarity and cheapness. Decorated with sisal braid and tassels, and colored with green and magenta dyes, each *alfor* on close inspection appears to be unique. In some communities in the south and southwest, burlap squares also are painted with these traditional dyes. About forty inches across, and made of sugar bags, these paintings swarm with geometric patterns and sometimes with figures of flowers and animals. They are purely decorative, being

[See plates 42-51, pp. 112-DD—112-FF.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[p. 126]

11. Dancing and Dance Drama

197 178 535 The dances of Haiti, like the loa, are almost beyond counting. Like the loa, too, the dances have personalities of their own, sometimes too subtle for the stranger to detect. If there is one valid generalization, it is that the inspiration for the Haitian dance is primarily African. There have been changes in the course of the more than four hundred years since the first Africans came to the New World. Some of the old dances have disappeared altogether; others have developed new characteristics. New dances came into being with European rather than African form. Some of the most traditional dances have become sparse and lean, stripped of the decorative pageantry of earlier days. There are also the French quadrilles and similar square dances which have survived since colonial days in remote parts of the mountains. But it is the quadrille and not the dance of African origin which is atypical in Haiti's folk culture. Dancing is deeply rooted in almost all the important events of Haitian life. It is one of the few arts that have survived from preslavery days.

535 178 195 Early European travelers in Haiti were greatly taken by the dances they found there. Some observers, like Moreau de Saint-Méry, a Frenchman born in Martinique, have left invaluable documentation of the dances of the late eighteenth century. Saint-Méry described many dances that are still known in modern Haiti, such as the Chica, the Calinda, the Vodoun, and the Pétro. From his accounts one may assume that these dances have not changed much to this day.

114 But many of the foreign authors and journalists of early days were astoundingly lacking in understanding and quick to bare their prejudices and to pronounce their moral judgments. Like the explorers of our own time who delight in "returning alive" from some jungle land and in commenting upon all the strange, bizarre, dangerous, and wicked things they think they have seen, the explorer of the Dark Island often described the Haitian as a depraved branch of the human species. One such ob-

2: Courlander B-6 (1937-1968) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 148]

13. Comments on the Mighty: Political Songs

* 533 538 626 178 The African-style song of social criticism has found no worthier subjects than the historic political figures of Haiti. There is no doubt that the African slaves used this art form to express their feelings toward the white masters as they had used it to comment upon the behavior of their own chiefs and fellow tribesmen. The worthy leaders were praised in song; the unworthy were castigated and their sins, failures, and social misdemeanors publicized in folk songs. By the beginning of the [569] nineteenth century, slavery had come to an end in Haiti. The deep democratic sense of human dignity had outlasted the colonial masters and emerged tempered and sharp. The songs of criticism became not * 533 538 only comments upon political figures but campaign propaganda as well. 626 They dwelt upon the accomplishments or faults of the candidates for 178 political office. Friendly songs sought out every virtue, and invented 666 others, in the man or woman being praised. Unfriendly songs lashed out and lacerated or poked biting fun at the subject, not even sparing his physical deformities.

* 533 538 [666] [173] Yet the political songs are more than statements of merit or fault. Cumulatively they are a kind of folk history of Haiti. No political aspirant ever went unsung by his peasant army, or unridiculed by his opponent's followers. The songs the people sang about their heroes and their enemies recall events and details that formal history has forgotten or ignored. The memory of the folk song is powerful and long. Some of the recollections go back more than a century.

● 175 412 [643] History books tell us that in December, 1843, Major Charles Hérard aîné Rivière was elected to the office of the presidency, and that a new constitution was drawn up by the Constituent Assembly. The new constitution was an accomplishment of the liberal and democratic forces of the nation. It guaranteed certain civil rights to the people. It provided that judges be elected instead of appointed, abolished life terms for

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

presidents, and emphatically declared the army to be within and under the law. 175 642

The new President, finding his office without the prerogatives he had expected it to have, openly complained of the restraints imposed on him by the new constitution. He broke campaign promises he had made to the peasants in the south and stirred up antagonisms on every side. Finally, while he was on a military expedition in the Spanish part of the island, revolution broke out at home. His army was beaten by the Dominicans, too, which completely shattered his morale. He fled by ship to Jamaica, the traditional refuge of outgoing Haitian presidents. In memory of his administration the peasants sang: 175 643 669 [648] 175 643 669 669 533* 539*

Rivière Président gainyain zyeux vairon!
Li dit l'ap piyé l'armé Bélanton!
Piyé lévé trésor!
Piyé lévé trésor!
Piyé lévé trésor!
Yo voyé Lambam depuis Lowinsor!

La Constitution cé trouva Colombe
Quand yo voir pays soufri trop misère!
Li dit yo fait comme Henry!
Li dit yo fait comme Henry!
Li dit yo fait comme Henry!
Pou' fai sang coulé pou' rangé pays!

Colonel Dévo soldat Diplaro
Marché fanfaron comme un grand famin!
Li cré qui li té roi!
Li cré qui li té roi!
Li cré qui li té roi!
Pagnol chasse li, li courri con chien qui prend frai charogne!

President Rivière was cross-eyed!
He said that he was going to pillage Belanton's army!
Loot for treasure!
Loot for treasure!
Loot for treasure!
They sent everyone from Lowinsor to Lambam!

The Constitution was founded by Columbus
When the country suffered too much misery!
He said he would do like Henry [Christophe]!
He said he would do like Henry!
He said he would do like Henry!
Make blood run to poison the countryside!

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1963) 1980 SV3 Hait1 SV3

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From Colonel Déro to Private Diplaro,
They marched with fanfare, a great army of foot soldiers!
He thought that he was king!
He thought that he was king!
He thought that he was king!
The Spaniards chased him, he ran like a dog after fresh carrion!

175 Forty-five years later, in 1888, there was a big political rally in Port-
579 au-Prince. The two presidential candidates were General Séide Télé-
666 maque and Déus Légitime. Their supporters clashed near the palace,
686 and Télémaque was killed in an exchange of gunfire. Légitime naturally was accused of having murdered his rival, though his supporters would not believe that he had committed such a crime. Evidence for a trial was entirely lacking, and Déus Légitime became president. But feeling ran
* [533] high, and the followers of Télémaque began to sing:
* [539]

Écoutez chers amis l'histoire de Légitime!
Assassin de Séide, et lui est président!
Écoutez bien l'histoire, le gens du nord marchaient
Sur Port-au-Prince un fois pou' vengé la mort de Séide!
Allez au diable, bandit Déus!
Échappez vous, ingrat Déus!
Si vous perdez le temps, Déus,
Florvil vous fera fusillé!

Listen my friends to the story of Légitime!
Assassin of Séide, and he is President!
Listen well to the story, the people of the north will march
On Port-au-Prince one day to avenge the death of Séide!
Go to the devil, bandit Déus!
Escape, ingrate Déus!
If you lose time, Déus,
Florvil will have you shot!

Légitime had this possibility clearly in his mind. And the next year,
[669] when Florvil Gélin Hippolyte marched from the north with an army of *cacos* (peasant troops who hired out to political aspirants), Légitime hurriedly boarded a steamer in the harbor and sailed for Jamaica. Séide Télémaque was considered avenged, as the army bugles still bear witness. For now when the bugle plays reveille it is supposed to be saying:

* [539]

Séide Télémaque, Légitime has fled!
Séide Télémaque, Légitime has fled!

175 The new President, Florvil Hippolyte, died in office in 1896. J. N.
643 Leger, a Haitian historian, tells soberly of Hippolyte's end in the following words.

Courlander B-5 (1937-1939) 1960 SV3 HARI SV3

For some time the President, who was sixty-nine years old, had not been in good health, and disregarding the friendly warning of those who were interested in his welfare he refused to give up his hard work and to take the rest of which he was in sore need. Against the advice of his doctor he decided to undertake a long journey to Jacmel. He started on the 24th of March, 1896, at three o'clock in the morning, but before he even had time to leave Port-au-Prince, he fell from his horse dead in a fit of apoplexy, at a short distance from the executive mansion.[1] A

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The legend of Hippolyte's death passed on in song is not nearly so dispassionate. It is told that Hippolyte was going out on a drastic punitive trip to Jacmel, where there were rumblings of political opposition and revolution. Among other things, the President was going to seize the powerful Voloun priest Mérisier, regarded as a powerful force in the opposition. Hippolyte also had sworn to reduce Jacmel to ashes and wipe out the entire population except one male and one female to repopulate the land. As he prepared to leave on his mission, his wife and his son stood by the door to see him off.

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Li lévé Mardi bon matin,
Li fai sélé cheval à li.
En montant sa cheval li,
Panama li sorti tombé.

He arose early on Tuesday morning,
He saddled his horse.
As he climbed on his horse,
His hat came off and fell.

L'Hérisson rélé "Papa,"
Li dit'l, "Papa à matin,
Panama ou sorti tombé,
Cé déjà yonn mauvais signal."

L'Hérisson * called out, "Papa!"
He said to him, "Father,
Your hat has come off and fallen.
That is already a bad omen."

Li répond ni, "Pitit à matin,
Main déjà mett' l'armée débarre,
L'armée main déjà nan portaille.
Y faudra que mein parti."

He replied to him, "My child,
I have already sent the army ahead,
My army is already at the city gate,
I have to go."

Arrivé ave Port Gentil,
Li tombé sans connaissance.
Yo voyé rélé Docteur Jules,
"Vin souver Flavil Gélin!"

Arrived at Port Gentil,
He fell unconscious.
They sent for Dr. Jules,
"Come to save Flavil Gélin."

Docteur Jules tombe à genoux.
Li rélé Maman Ste Anne,
Li rélé St. Augustin,
"Vin souver Flavil Gélin!"

Dr. Jules fell on his knees.
He called Mother St. Anne,
He called St. Augustin,
"Come to save Flavil Gélin!"

Ste Anne dit, "I faut mouri."
St. Augustin dit, "I faut mouri."
Li rélé St. Jacques Majeur
"Vin souver Flavil Gélin!"

St. Anne said, "He has to die."
St. Augustin said, "He has to die."
He called St. Jacques Majeur,
"Come to save Flavil Gélin."

* Hippolyte's son.

[1] [Léger, Haiti, Her History and Her Detractors. Cf p. 353, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1958) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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A la yous président,
C'est Tirésius Augustin Simon Sam.
Si tout té con ça,
Haiti ta finil [Ex. 111]

There was a president,
He was Tirésius Augustin Simon Sam.
If they were all like him,
Haiti would be finished!

In 1902 General Nord Alexis became the chief executive of Haiti. His 175
abilities and accomplishments are still being debated, but he appears to 643
have been a rather lovable old man whom everyone called by the affectionate term Uncle. His administration was fairly stable and prosperous—as prosperity is known in Haiti—and in large measure peaceful. When his election was confirmed, the people were convinced that the nation was in for a period of law and order, and that the constant threat of cacos and brigandage would come to an end. One of the election- [533]*
year songs goes: [539]*

Nous crions vive, c'est pou' l'armé du Nord!
Tinnin cila ça va finil
Nous crions vive, c'est pou' soldats du Nord!
Tinnin cila ça va finil
Tinnin cila, tinnin cila, tinnin cila va finil
Bannin Vodoun, Bannin Vodoun, Bannin Vodoun c'est pou' nous! [Ex. 112]

We cry long live Nord's army!
The chaos will be ended!
We cry long live Nord's soldiers!
The chaos will be ended!
The chaos, the chaos, the chaos will be ended!
Bannin Vodoun,* Bannin Vodoun, Bannin Vodoun is for us!

One of the serious problems confronting Nord Alexis after his elec- 175
tion was that of a disappearing national currency. Haitian paper money 643
was circulating elsewhere in the West Indies and in South America and 652
was becoming increasingly scarce in Haiti itself. Nord Alexis called in all the old currency and issued new, with the happy result that large quantities of money were again seen in the Republic. The common [533]*
people who made the songs seem to have been very grateful: [539]*

Alexis Nord Papa ou bon chef ok!
Ou ba nous monné, ou ba nous papier!
Alexis Nord Papa ou bon chef ok!
Ou ba nous monné, ou ba nous papier!

---

*Probably a place name.

R: Courlander B-5 (1937-1945) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Nous pas mandé ou anyien!
Nous pas mandé l'a'gent enco'!
Papa Nord ça nous ta mandé oh chef,
C'est bandoche nous mandé ou! [Ex. 113]

Alexis Nord, Papa, you are a good chief, oh!
You gave us money, you gave us paper!
Alexis Nord, Papa, you are a good chief, oh!
You gave us money, you gave us paper!
We don't ask you for anything more!
We don't ask you again for money!
Papa Nord, only one thing we are going to ask you, chief,
It is a big celebration we ask for!

The president's wife, Çéçé, seems to have been very proud of him and very sure of his talents. When the army bugles blow a general assembly call, they are supposed to be saying:

Çéçé té dit Alexis Nord grand moune nan tout corps li!
Çéçé té dit Alexis Nord grand moune nan tout corps li!
Çéçé té dit la quitté pour voir l'heure li vié!
Çéçé té dit Tonton Nord grand moune nan tout corps li! [Ex. 114]

Çéçé said Alexis Nord is a thoroughly fine man!
Çéçé said Alexis Nord is a thoroughly fine man!
Çéçé said he will quit his office whenever he sees fit!
Çéçé said Uncle Nord is a thoroughly fine man!

Another bugle call, with words attributed to Nord's wife, contains a note of complaint:

Çéçé said *aouille!*
Çéçé said that, said that!
Çéçé said if you don't have any money you can't have a woman!
Çéçé said *aouille!*
Çéçé said that, said that!
Çéçé said we are working our guts out!
Çéçé said *aouille!*
Çéçé said that, said that!
Çéçé said Alexis Nord is president!

Çéçé was not the only one in Haiti who had confidence in Nord's staying power. One popular song of the period goes:

Alexis Nord Papa,
Bondieu qui mandé ou li!
Commandé li yo
Qui vié la ou trahi!

2: Courlander 2-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 HaRi SV3

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Alexis Nord, c'un bon Papa!
Ou pas metté ou pas manyien!
Pinga ou manyien, pinga ou manyien!
Pinga ou manyien Alexis Nord! [Ex. 115]

Alexis Nord, Papa,
It is God who put you there!
Take care of those
Who wish to make trouble for you!

Alexis Nord is a good papa!
You didn't put him there, you can't take him away!
Don't try to remove him, don't try to remove him!
Don't try to remove Alexis Nord!

Nord Alexis remained as president until 1909. He was then more than eighty years old, and he planned to turn the government over to General Jean-Gilles, who would carry on the policies of the administration. But Antoine Simon, an assembly delegate from the south, had other plans. He marched on Port-au-Prince with an army of three hundred cacos, who sang: 175 643 669 533* 539*

Tonton oh cher, Antoine pas non batiw oh!
L'appriend l'armée du sud, cher,
L'a fai ou marché zigzag!
Dibar dibar dibar!
Nig' Nord mandé fouillé!
Dibar dibar dibar!
Nig' Nord mandé cwigé!

Dear Uncle, Antoine is not joking!
He brings the army of the south, my friend,
He will make you go zigzag.
Dibar dibar dibar! *
Nord's men are asking for gunfire!
Dibar dibar dibar!
Nord's men are asking for a lesson!

After Nord Alexis had vacated the palace and embarked for Jamaica, Antoine Simon became president. Historians often refer to the period that followed as the "Epoch of Ephemeral Presidents." Simon was not in the palace long before a man named Cincinnatus Leconte was successfully stirring up a new caco movement in the north, and people were singing: 533* 539*

* Probably "cwiché."

Z: Courlander B-5 (1937-1958) 1960 SV3 HaRI SV3

Antoine Simon *perd* où peu' allé!
Ou pas tendé l'armée Leconte Gonaïves? [Ex. 106]

Antoine Simon, you'd better leave!
Haven't you heard Leconte's army is at Gonaïves?

In August, 1912, Leconte marched on the capital, and Antoine Simon sailed for Jamaica. General Leconte was duly elected to the presidency; but less than a year after he took office a terrific explosion wrecked the palace, killing Leconte, his son, and a number of militia. It was believed by many that this disaster was an act of vengeance by Antoine Simon:

Chiéon sonnin, m'mandé ça qui gainpain
C'est Chapoutte qui dé'bardé encore.
Marihanan soin li vini encore,
Ça'l vin' chaché, li vin' mandé revanche.

Nan Ouanaminthe fouil pas té tiof,
Qui raison ça pou' pa té fait pillage?
Bourriquet, mulet' jusqu'à feuilles tôle, Chapoutte,
Tout ça pané an prix de trois centimes.

Machetes Leconte pis caide pané jalap,
C'est avec ça Chapoutte bai médicine.
Si ou vé caméd continent bai "vent-main-nez,"
Mandé Ovane avec Antoine Simon.

Antoine Simon té dit avant'l parti,
Li ta va quitté yon bandé nan mitan ya.
Li l'Haïti, li-à la va Kingston,
La maméd rein'l pou'l ti peuple souverain.

Aux Cayes du Fond m'mandé Magnus Simon,
Nan Léogane m'mandé Magnus Dumpiane.
Li nou tiré na wé ça qui gainpain,
Canin couvri cousin, Antoine vini nou dan.

REPRAISE

Honneur à Chapoutte, St. Jean avec Delphin,
Dessaine et Gervaisier, vive Cincinatus.

The bells ring, I ask what is going on?
It is Chapoutte now who has revolted.
But Marihanan he comes again,
What he is looking for is revenge.

In Ouanaminthe the guns are quiet,
What was the reason for this pillage?
They have carried off the donkeys, mules, and even the iron roofing,
Everything that was worth more than three centimes.

2: Cantlander 9-6 (1937-1950) 1960 8V3 HaBl 8V3

Lavaud's soldiers are stronger than a *jalap*.*
It is with them that Chapuzette gives medicine.
If you want to know how to give the "stomach-hand-wave"†
Ask Orestie and Antoine Simon.

Antoine Simon said before he left
That he would leave a bomb in the middle of the palace.
When it went off he was already in Kingston.
He will pay for laughing at a sovereign people.

In Aux Cayes du Fond, I heard of the Mayor Simon,
In Léogane I heard of the Mayor Dompierre
When we arrive there we'll see what will happen.
Bowl covers bowl,‡ Antoine will turn over on his back.

REFRAIN

Honor to Chapuzette, St. Jean and Delphin,
Dupuy and Carvoisier, long live Cincinnatus.

Two more presidents—Tancrède Auguste and Michele Oreste—divided the next eighteen months between them. Two caco movements to remove Oreste started simultaneously, one under the leadership of Dévilmar Théodore, the other under the Zamor brothers, Charles and Oreste. The Zamor cacos first chased Théodore's army into the mountains and then marched on the capital. Oreste Zamor was elected to the presidency on a reform program, which quickly evaporated into thin air. One song describes the arrival of the President's brother Charles and his "Réforme" at the gates of Port-au-Prince, where a crowd of enthusiasts had gathered:

Attention la Réforme c'est pasaro pou Port-au-Prince,
C'est pasaro pou Port-au-Prince, la Réforme vini dou ba pa.
Yo livi blondi bon matin, Thédélé tout en blanc,
L'hobillé tout en blanc pou' y'al ennvi Charles Zamor.
Al ennvi Port-au-Prince la Réforme débouché,
La Réforme débouché, la Réforme vini dou ba pa.

Hail the Reform! It is the young men of Port-au-Prince,
The young men of Port-au-Prince, and the Reform turns its back on them.
They arose early Tuesday morning, dressed all in white,
They dressed all in white to meet Charles Zamor.
At the gates of Port-au-Prince the Reform reversed itself,
The Reform reversed itself and turned its back on them.

The Zamors and the reform administration held the palace less than nine months before Dévilmar Théodore's cacos were marching on the capital singing the song that other presidents had heard.

* A violent purgative.
† That is, open contempt, hand on the nose.
‡ That is, from replies to boasts.

Le Courtesier 8-5 (1957-1958) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Ovesse Zamor, pessé pou' embarkê!
Ovesse Zamor, pessé pou' embarkê!
Ou pas wouldê l'armée Davilmar rentré pou' Gonaïves?

Ovesse Zamor, you'd better embark!
Ovesse Zamor, you'd better embark!
Haven't you heard Davilmar's army has entered Gonaïves?

Gonaïves seems to have been the crucial point for invading armies from the north. Whenever revolutionary troops entered this town, the president holding office prepared to leave. True to the tradition, the Zamors sailed for a foreign shore, and Davilmar Théodore became the new executive. Although his tenure was to last only three months, there was much excitement when he entered the capital:

A la théâtre, à la bambouche!
Pou' djoûlé musique à droit à gauche!
La ville embrouillé ça qui gainyain,
C'est Davilmar kapé rentré!
Davilmar, dur, dur!
Manchette cara pas nen betise!
Papa Do dur, dur!
Manchette Lavente pas nen betise!
Davilmar, dur, dur!

Celebrations and dancing!
Tooting horns to right and left!
The city is in an uproar,
It is Davilmar who is coming in!
Davilmar, hard, hard!
The coups were nothing to laugh at!
Papa Do is hard, hard!
Lavente's army was nothing to laugh at!
Davilmar is hard, hard!

In 1915 came the United States intervention in Haiti, with the prime objective of freezing out German commercial and political interests. A president named Guillaume Sam had assassinated his political enemies in the prison at Port-au-Prince and had, in turn, been dragged out of the French consulate and killed. The benefits of the American occupation of Haiti are hotly debated to this day, though it is about thirty years since the United States military forces were withdrawn. Some Haitians think the occupation was a good lesson in politics, and that Haiti benefited in many ways. Others continue to look upon it as an overt expression of American diplomacy by force. One of the early assignments of the U.S. Marines in Haiti was the destruction of the

running bands of cacos, generally regarded as bandit elements. Caco chiefs were imprisoned or killed as outlaws, though much of their activity was directed against the American occupation rather than the civil government. Many of the injustices of the occupation were the result of inadequate understanding of the Haitian people and their way of life. There was much unspoken bitterness against the occupation forces, and in some popular songs the Marines were referred to by the peaceful peasantry as "cacos in khaki." During President Borno's administration the people in the north were singing:

> Grand Prevost ou pas tendé cacos Boyé Bonville?
> Grand Prevost n'alé wé cacos Boyé Bonville!
> Ala kilé nou dé nations:
> Americains détaye, cacos desaisonné!
>
> Grand Prevost, didn't you hear the cacos are at the Bottle Gate?
> Grand Prevost, we are going to see the cacos at the Bottle Gate!
> Now we have two spanks:
> The Americans are the worst, the cacos come second!

When President Borno's tenure of office came to an end, it was felt in some quarters that Madame Borno was taking the prospective change of residence very hard:

> Madame Borno ça ou gainyain ou apé crié?
> Ou té tou conné pahin a pattí pou' ou!
> Madame Borno ça ou gainyain ou apé crié?
> Ou té tou conné you jour pou' ou laissé!
>
> Madame Borno, what is the matter, why are you crying?
> You always knew one day you would have to leave the palace!
> Madame Borno, what is the matter, why are you crying?
> You always knew one day you'd have to give it up!

In 1930 Sténio Vincent came into office. He was a generally unpopular executive who managed to hold on to the presidency by suppressing the political opposition. When he was elected, the progressives were hopeful, and his supporters were singing: "Sténio Vincent lion gaspin." But public sentiment shifted. Times were hard for the Haitian people during the Vincent administration. The darker citizens felt Vincent was "too light" to have their interests at heart. They were violently aroused, too, by his gingerly handling of the massacre of Haitians in the Dominican Republic in 1937. During his administration there were a number of abortive coup demonstrations and an unsuccessful revolt of high-ranking army officers. But in the early days a Meringue

But in the early sixty-five [illegible]

piece called "Merci Papa Vincent" was very popular. According to the song, the noteworthy achievement of the President was the law he sponsored to drive the "Syrians" out of the retail trades:

> Nous cassé monsieur qui ruiné people li,
> C'est Président Vincent!
> Nous cassé monsieur qui ruiné people li,
> C'est Président Vincent!
> Nous cassé monsieur qui ruiné people li,
> C'est Président Vincent!
> Nous cassé monsieur qui ruiné people,
> C'est Président Vincent!
> A nous sélé, merci Papa Vincent!
> A nous sélé, merci Papa Vincent!
> A nous sélé, merci Papa Vincent!
>
> Qui monsieur qui lui commence en detail li?
> C'est Président Vincent!
> Qui monsieur qui lui commence en detail li?
> C'est Président Vincent!
> Qui monsieur qui lui commence en detail li?
> C'est Président Vincent!
> A nous sélé, merci Papa Vincent!
> A nous sélé, merci Papa Vincent!
>
> We know the man who loves the people,
> He is President Vincent!
> We know the man who loves the people,
> He is President Vincent!
> We know the man who loves the people,
> He is President Vincent!
> We know the man who loves the people,
> He is President Vincent!
> We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!
> We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!
> We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!
>
> Who is the man who gave us the retail business?
> It is President Vincent!
> Who is the man who gave us the retail business?
> It is President Vincent!
> Who is the man who gave us the retail business?
> It is President Vincent!
> We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!
> We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!

This song soon became the "official" musical theme of the President and was heard in the carnival festivities, at salon dances, and at military functions. But as discontent with Vincent grew, less salubrious versions

2: Courlander 3-4 (1937-1938) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

of "Merci Papa Vincent" sprang up in the side streets of Port-au-Prince. One rendition (as translated) went: 175 178 643 533* 539*

> We know the man who loves the people,
> He is Sténio Vincent!
> Who made my wife leave me to go to her family?
> He is Président Vincent!
> Who made my skin show through my worn out pants?
> He is Président Vincent!
> Who is the man who made my house fall down?
> He is Président Vincent!
> Oh, we call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!

So widespread did the burlesques on the original become that the tune itself became suspect. One never knew which versions were running through the minds of the listeners.

In 1930, during the administration of President Estimé, there was a new public works program which provided employment for a good many needy people in the Port-au-Prince area, and a coumbite song of the period went: 175 643 533* 539* [653]

> Président Estimé waille, oh!
> Quemblé pays yà pas lagué oh!
> C'est Bondieu nans ciel là qui ba moin *président*!
> C'est Bondieu nans ciel là qui ba moin *président* cila!
> Quemblé pays yà pas lagué oh!
> Port-au-Prince ah tourné Havane oh! [Ex. 117]

> President Estimé waille, oh!
> Hold on to the country, don't let go, oh!
> It is God in heaven who gave me this president!
> It is God in heaven who gave me this president!
> Hold on to the country, don't let go, oh!
> Port-au-Prince, oh, is turning into a Havana, oh!

When Estimé was overthrown by a military coup, the melody lingered on, but the name of the protagonist was changed. [669]

No president of Haiti has served his term of office, either for good or bad, without providing the raw materials for a folk song. His heroic deeds, his failures, and his foibles are as likely as not to be perpetuated in the music of the people. 643 533*

As for the presidency itself, it is held in the highest esteem. A rousing salute song, reminiscent of the Marseillaise, sends every new president-elect on the way to the palace: [539]*

> Président passé là,
> L'ap monté ou gouvernement!

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[p. 349]

Notes

Chapter 1: *The Making of the Haitian* (pp. 1-7)

[1]The name Ganda survives in Haiti as the name of a deity.

[2]Herskovits, in *The Myth of the Negro Past* (p. 47), provides a tabulation of raw data found in the manifests recorded for slaves shipped to Virginia between 1710 and 1769: 20,564 slaves were reported shipped from "Africa," 3,652 from Gambia, 6,777 from "Guinea," 9,224 from Calabar, 3,860 from Angola, and 1,011 from Madagascar. Of those shipped from the island of Madagascar, 473 were listed as coming from Mozambique.

[3]Karadenal de Las Casas.

Chapter 2: *Man and the Universe: Vodoun* (pp. 8-18)

[1]See Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 7.

[2]Schweinfurth in *The Heart of Africa*, II, 31, says: "In Loango all exorcists and conjurers are called *gangs*." Leo Wiener, in *Africa and the Discovery of America* (Philadelphia: Innes and Sons, 1922), III, 32, reports: "Forms of *ganga* have in Bantu the meaning 'medicine' but also 'magic'—such as Nyika *ganga* and Kongo *nganga*."

[3]Gorer, *Africa Dances*, p. 120; Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 208 ff.

[4]From the Fon *houn-so* or *houn-su*. Among the Arada of Dahomey a *houn-su* was regarded as a spiritual wife of the deity. She was a servant of the cult temple, and in some instances a wife of the cult priest.

[5]Translated from the French of Aubin, *En Haiti*, pp. 57-59.

[6]Deren, in her *Divine Horsemen* (pp. 119 ff.), gives an excellent report of a service for Agwé in a boat at sea. Aubin (*op. cit.*, p. 108) seems to have given the first description of this service at sea for the loa Agwé.

[7]Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. 119.

[8]*Ibid.*, p. 123. Leyburn advances the theory that Vodoun developed during this period as a result of the vacuum left by the Church. Although the Church did in effect leave the field to the African cults, one must assume that the Arada, Congo, and other cults were already organized and possessed of great vitality before the Haitian revolution. Implicit evidence points to a continuity of cult life from the earliest days of the African on Haitian soil. There are no statistics to reveal the extent of cult membership at the end of the eighteenth century, but the content and form of Vodoun today are so overwhelmingly African that it is difficult to think of Haitian cult activity as the product of a renaissance.

Chapter 3: *The Loa: Gods of the Haitian Mountains* (pp. 19-29)

[1]The term vodoun, used in this precise sense, conforms to the original Fon (Dahomean) usage. The term *hounsi*, also of Fon origin, signifies "spirit" and belongs to the same root

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

114 very favorable reception by Haitian scholars and intellectuals. As its author and others have pointed out, few countries in modern times have received as bad a press at the hands of foreign observers as Haiti.
105 A small, rugged nation, born of an exhausting and destructive revolution, its people poor, disease-ridden, illiterate, and erratically led, independent Haiti gives the impression of having drifted aimlessly
100 for more than a century. Observers from "more developed" lands have had a field day—and still have—bemoaning the evil consequences of a mass of African slaves having turned on their French masters to destroy them and their works. It is still fashionable to allude to Haiti in deploring independence movements, racial desegregation, indigenous political leadership, and economic sovereignty.
114 But too little scholarship has since been invested, as Leyburn invested it, in delineating the national and international forces which have operated to keep Haiti poor and backward. Nor has contemporary research led to sufficiently revealing comparisons between the social history of Haiti and that of her more colonial neighbors in the Caribbean area. Leyburn's work enhanced the possibilities for such comparisons and drew some morals which Haiti's detractors often ignore; but in making his case, the author carefully avoids lapsing into romanticism, or into the inaccuracy born of uncritical sympathy.

The book was published as the final steps were being taken to end
● 175 the official United States presence in Haiti. The occupation had be-
648 gun in 1915, ostensibly to restore order in a situation marked by
[652] political chaos. Haitian defaulting on debts to the French and Germans had raised the specter of foreign—that is, European—occupation, which created considerable North American anxiety; and there were large Haitian debts outstanding to United States banks as well. When the United States decided to move militarily, the abstract issue of justice was ignored, to be raised for contemplation only after the occupation itself was a fact. Military occupation continued for nineteen years, and the complete termination of United States controls over the national affairs of Haiti did not come until 1946, long after Leyburn's book had appeared. Twenty-five years have now elapsed since Leyburn wrote, and the events of these years are relevant to any retrospective view of the author's interpretations.

175 Much, indeed, has happened in Haiti since 1941: the United States
105 withdrawal and the fading of the effects, both good and bad, of the occupation; the positive economic consequences for Haiti of World

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War II and its aftermath, and the subsequent dissipation of those gains; the "social revolution" of January 1946, ushering in the Estimé regime; the boom in the arts and tourism, and their later contractions; the rise and subsequent fall of the Magloire government (1950-56), and the uneasy interregnum that followed it; and finally, the growth of the Duvalier monolith. 175 105

Over the span of those years, social science literature on Haiti has increased significantly, and outsiders, as well as the Haitians themselves, can now know much more about the country and its people. But some of the most important questions raised by Leyburn's book remain substantially unanswered. *The Haitian People* is a classic because its author phrased so well the major issues in the growth of Haitian national institutions, and no subsequent work is likely to supplant it in this regard. But its value has been heightened over the years by the lack of any equally penetrating analysis dealing with the period since 1941 or specifying the relative importance of various institutional forces in the contemporary structure of Haitian society. Thus, for instance, much too little is known of the culture and social organization of Haiti's predominantly rural population, in spite of considerable anthropological research since 1941. More detailed studies of the rural economy are particularly necessary, both to assess developmental possibilities and to understand better the relationship of rural sectors to the national economy. Sociological and economic analyses of folk religion—*vodoun*—are wanting, even though psychological and descriptive studies of this religion have appeared in large numbers. The general conceptual problem of community definition, structure, and organization, which has long plagued students in the Caribbean area, has been barely raised in the case of rural Haiti. Finally, our understanding of Haitian class structure, both local and national, and its corollaries in economic, political, and social institutions, is still slight. Here the need for more research seems particularly acute, since no adequate grasp of the nature of Haitian society at large will be possible until the fit of the rural sectors with the national class structure is better known. On this understanding, among others, may hinge the likelihood of success of any future developmental effort in Haiti. 114 121

It was with Haiti as a nation that Leyburn dealt in his book, and his analysis of national institutions and social structure excited more comment and reflection within Haiti itself than any other part of his

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Leyburn noted that the United States occupation affected the nature and rigidity of the barriers separating the yeomanry from the elite. For instance, he calls attention to the fact that the presidents elected during the United States occupation were light-skinned members of the elite. It seemed almost inevitable that, when the North Americans sought men through whom to prosecute their plans for "stabilizing" Haiti, they would settle on educated and worldly politicians, men who were both sufficiently trained and sufficiently pliant for the task. That these men were predominantly light-skinned was a corollary aspect of Haitian social history. In this way Washington played some part in reinforcing and expanding elite power; and herein lies a paradox with which the author of *The Haitian People* has dealt well. While the elite had been able to maintain their wealth and power in Haiti for nearly a century, the presidential succession before the United States occupation had largely been one of military chieftains, principally dark-skinned men from the north of the Republic. Michel Oreste, who had ruled for nine months in 1913–14, was the first civilian to be chosen president in Haiti's entire history up to that time; and Sudre Dartiguenave (1915–22), the North Americans' choice, was the first president since 1879 who was both a southerner and light-skinned. From the last quarter of the nineteenth century until the occupation, in other words, Haiti's presidents were almost entirely dark-skinned northern provincial leaders who literally seized power by invading Port-au-Prince and deposing their predecessors.

Hence, in describing the separation between elite and yeomanry, it is essential to notice the traditional special role of the military, with its particular overtones of color. Here was one institutional feature of Haitian society which was not directly dominated by the elite, and through which nonelite folk were able to attain special power. But in Haiti's case it is significant that the army itself was not firmly institutionalized; regional warlords, rather than a centralized officer corps, made the decisions. Leyburn cites Auguste Magloire, who enumerated *sixty-nine* "important" revolutions between 1806 and 1879; had this enumeration gone forward, it would have been much longer. Of Haiti's twenty-four chief executives between 1807 and 1915, only eight were in office for a period equal to their elected terms, and seventeen were deposed by revolution. Before the United States occupation, then, the continuing power of the elite could be seen as somewhat separate from the succession of nonelite generals who seized office over the years.

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elite and the yeomanry. For instance, he calls attention to one unanticipated (but inevitable) result of the occupation in this connection: the large number of children whose fathers were United States Marines, and whose mothers were members of the Haitian rural masses. In this way the occupation contributed to the growth of the physically intermediate population of Haiti, especially among rural folk, and thus perhaps to some bridging of the gap between yeomen and elite. Much more important, by its contributions to a broadening of the educational system, the occupation enabled talented black-skinned youths to improve themselves and to acquire new aspirations.

Recent economic and political developments in Haiti, through the period 1941–57, have contributed grounds for modification of the Leyburn interpretation. Though Leyburn predicted that "for the present and near future it is safe to say that there will be no more black non-élite presidents" (p. 101), subsequent developments soon proved him wrong. In January 1946, the government of elite member Elie Lescot fell under military pressure. A junta consisting of Franck Lavaud, Antoine Levelt, and Paul Magloire facilitated the installation of Dumarsais Estimé as president. Estimé was a dark-skinned man from the countryside (the village of Verettes, near St. Marc, in west-central Haiti), who had received a good education, served as a minister in the Vincent cabinet and, as a deputy, married a lighter-skinned woman whose family's elite membership was secure. Estimé might well be considered a self-made member of the elite, but he was not born into it, and his accession to power was the political expression of new possibilities in Haitian life.

The changes Estimé's regime symbolized were rooted in the intellectual resistance to the United States occupation and in the search for a Haitian identity in the face of that occupation. The strangely easy domination that the United States wielded over Haitian society for several decades, and the relatively unexploitative but patronizing administration it provided, ended forever a fantasy that had gripped Haitian intellectuals for more than a century. The world of 1804, when a bloodied but defiant Haiti could bar by force of arms Napoleon's dreams of a New World empire (and assist indirectly thereby in the territorial expansion of a still weak United States) had vanished. The time when a Pétion could aid, protect, and politically influence a sick and tired Simón Bolívar was long gone. The world had changed, while Haiti, the Haitians learned under their North

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American masters, had nearly stood still. For almost a century, Haiti's elite had taken justifiable pride in their ancestors' triumph over Napoleonic France, even while they remained enthralled by French culture. This strange ambivalence would no longer do. In effect, the United States occupation compelled Haitian scholars to rediscover what it meant to be Haitian.

As the writing of Jean Price-Mars (1928) expressed that identity culturally, so the regime of Dumarsais Estimé began to express it politically. For the first time, Africa, and not simply France, became an important part of the nationalist dialogue. The Creole language began to be studied in its own right, and a program to end illiteracy through education in Creole was launched. Folkloristic studies, emphasizing the African component in Haitian rural life, especially as expressed in religion, came into vogue. Haitians began to explore their own society as a synthesis that was as much African as it was French—and as a synthesis, rather than as a mechanical alignment of two distinct traditions. The term *authentique* was employed to express what was "truly Haitian," and Haiti herself was viewed as a unique and original blending of two parts. Under Estimé, rural folk of promise—and they were, in the nature of things, predominantly dark-skinned—were given greater opportunities, especially to be educated and to enter government service. Moreover, these developments took place at a time when Haiti's economic situation was relatively good, and Estimé enjoyed a measure of popular support rare in Haiti's entire history.

Furthermore, it was during the Estimé regime that Haitian cultural life reached some sort of climax. In the 1920s young Haitian intellectuals had been deeply shaken by the United States occupation and had begun to formulate their own answers to the questions it raised. Not only did Africa come into view as the wellspring of much that was Haitian but Haiti's status as an occupied though once-sovereign power dramatized the need for a social and political philosophy that fitted with hemispheric and international realities. French intellectual currents figured importantly in Haitian political thinking, both because the intellectuals of the French Antilles of the time were inspired by Haitian history and interested in Haiti, and because those islands and Haiti shared a curious affinity in their "Gallo-African" cultures. Anticolonial and Marxist points of view were espoused by a few Haitians, but these perspectives were complicated by changing

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attitudes toward French culture in all of its expressions, and by a new feeling of kinship for the peoples and cultures of Africa.

The variety of views expressed by Haitian intellectuals was colored by differences no more subtle than those characteristic of the intellectuals of any other country in the Caribbean region—even though North American observers unfortunately persist in treating such differences as politically irrelevant. There were those spokesmen who continued to embrace French culture and to reject "Africanism," only deploring the North American presence in Haiti. Others embodied their views in a staunchly Haitian nationalism and, as they began to view their country in a new light, invested the Haitian folk with an unrealistically romantic picturesqueness. Still others fastened upon the African theme with special intensity, and thereby gave a strong racist tinge to their nationalism.

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Not surprisingly, perhaps, anthropology came to be seen as an important means for giving Haitians an accurate—that is, an "inside"—picture of their own society; a number of young ethnologists, mainly self-trained, began to publish works on Haitian culture. Soon anthropology was pressed into a political mold, anticipating similar developments in other "colonial" countries. The first novels purporting to deal with the common people, though sometimes tinged with idealized preconceptions of rural society, were published; and an impressive number of competent young poets devoted themselves to aesthetic explorations of the Haitian spirit. Haitian cultural and intellectual life, in short, was taken up with the rediscovery of Haiti and its people.

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But the Estimé regime did not produce changes in the economic structure of Haitian society of importance proportionate to the national cultural renascence. Even those modifications in the class structure for which Estimé is sometimes given credit might not have occurred, were it not for educational reforms that had begun in the 1920s and the beneficial effects of Haiti's prosperity of the mid-1940s. What Estimé could do was to open the ranks of an inefficiently large bureaucracy to able, if sometimes inadequately trained, newcomers of poor rural antecedents.

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At the same time, as the Comhaire-Sylvains have suggested (1959: 179–89), a qualitatively different class group was beginning to emerge in Port-au-Prince during Estimé's presidency, and the presence of such a group suggests that new economic forces were feebly stirring.

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175 565 These newcomers in the class structure enjoyed regular urban employment, were mostly literate and legally married, and harbored strong ambitions for the education of their children. Such persons were certainly not elite members, and their behavior (as, for instance, in their preference for speaking Creole rather than French) showed it; yet they were not part of the rural masses, nor merely an example of Marx's *Lumpenproletariat*. Yet significance of this new group for the Leyburn "caste" theory of the elite is considerable. Even today, if such persons lapse into poverty, their ideology will continue to matter politically. Estimé's regime also loosed new political trends, since at first some encouragement was given to labor unions, and the construction of urban low-cost housing was undertaken. We are unable to measure the long-term effects of these changes, but their reality raises some questions about the rigidity that Leyburn's analysis imputed to Haitian social structure.

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175 669 643 159 In May 1950, after an unsuccessful bid to extend his term of office illegally, Estimé's regime was toppled, again by a military junta. To power came Paul Magloire, the first military figure to become chief executive since the start of the United States occupation. Like Estimé before him, Magloire symbolized certain effects of the occupation upon Haiti's social and political structure and the way that structure was continuing to change. Magloire's origins were not within the elite, to judge by the traditional criteria. He was a black man, and from the north; born in Quartier Morin, he associated himself with the elite of the north coast port of Cap Haïtien, Haiti's second largest city. By marriage to a "Capoise," whose family status was much higher than his own, and by a successful career in the military during the occupation, Magloire penetrated elite circles. As commander of the Palace Guard, he had been a member of the junta that ousted Lescot in 1946, replacing him with Estimé. In 1950, when Magloire became president, after the army had forcibly discharged both houses of the legislature, he apparently had the support of the elite and of the business class, if not of the popular forces that had backed Estimé.

175 643 Magloire may be said to have moderated considerably the intensity of Haitian politics, and his administration was not marked by so sharp an ideological concern with the relative roles of elite and countryman. Times were good, and levels of life, both in the countryside and in the capital, were probably as high as they had been at any time in Haitian history. Certain economic gains were made in the tourist

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industry, in the processing of essential oils, in extractive operations (bauxite, copper), and in the manufacture of a few essential commodities. The official attitude toward private investment, even by foreigners, was unusually benign; and coffee, the big export crop, enjoyed a boom. Again, however, little effect could be seen in the basic economic structure. By 1956–57, when the Magloire regime was toppled, the era of apparent prosperity had come to an end.

Magloire's tenure ended as had his predecessor's; after a vain attempt to prolong his regime by forcing through new laws, he was brought down by the army and was succeeded by a series of juntas. The politics of the brief interregnum preceding the accession of François Duvalier was complicated by the rival claims of four presidential aspirants: Clément Jumelle, Daniel Fignolé, Louis Déjoie, and François Duvalier. These four men represented significantly different trends in Haitian thinking and were supported by different social groups. Jumelle, although regarded as the spiritual inheritor of the Magloire administration, won the support of many Haitian intellectuals; his appeal was partly grounded in his experience as finance minister in the Magloire cabinet, but the scandalous graft of the Magloire administration worked against him. Fignolé, too, had been a cabinet minister, but his antecedents and political philosophy differed sharply from Jumelle's. An eloquent, intense man of rural lower-class origins, Fignolé was regarded by many as a dangerous demagogue. His support came largely from the poorer urban classes, and his reputation as a union leader and as a "self-made" former minister of education gave him special strength among urban groups. Déjoie, considered to be the candidate of most of the business community and of the elite, was a highly successful agronomist and businessman who had done much to build rural industry; it is also generally believed that Déjoie was the "unofficial candidate" of the United States. Duvalier, trained as a doctor of medicine and for long an enthusiastic amateur ethnologist, had been a political enemy of the Magloire regime and, as a former minister in the Estimé cabinet, saw himself as the ideological descendant of Estimé. Duvalier appears eventually to have become the army's choice, ostensibly because he was considered "manageable"; at any rate, it was Duvalier who finally emerged as president, ending the uneasy interim which followed Magloire's ejection.*

* Probably the most penetrating analysis of Haitian politics of the time is that provided by Maingot, 1964, to which this interpretation owes much.

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175 643 66 The course of events leading up to Duvalier's election are difficult to assess. Fignolé, whom the army had permitted to serve as president for sixteen days during the interregnum, had been denied official recognition by the United States, suggesting that this country feared the implications of his political philosophy; his attempts at passing a whole new code of far-reaching social legislation apparently frightened the army, which removed him on grounds of "maintaining order." By the time an election decree was promulgated in August 1957, Fignolé was disqualified, and Jumelle had been forced to withdraw from candidacy. By election day, September 1957, only Déjoie and Duvalier were in contention, while Jumelle had gone into hiding. An attempted general strike, probably led by Déjoiciste elements, was stopped by the army, and Dr. François Duvalier was elected to power.

175 642 66 701 643 The Duvalier regime, beyond any doubt, has added something new to the Haitian political scene. To begin with, it must be stressed that Duvalier enjoys some popular support in the countryside as well as in the urban centers. For many Haitians, Duvalier epitomizes the return of the Estimé philosophy to Haiti, and it would be a serious political error to suppose that the present regime is no more than an elite-hating dictatorship backed by machine guns. At the same time, the readiness of the Duvalieristes to use force probably exceeds that of any Haitian government in more than a century. Its excesses, moreover, appear to break certain traditions of political behavior—for instance, the unwillingness to take familial connections into account when political revenge is being carried out, the violence committed against women and adolescents regarded as political enemies, and so on. The most important break with tradition, however, has been the gradual undermining of the army as a political force—a force created in the first instance during the United States occupation.

175 642 648 643 In carrying out its plans, the Duvalier government has played more creatively upon inconsistencies in United States policy than any preceding regime. It used United States military and economic power to consolidate itself, while employing a posture of anti-North American hostility in its search for other internal sources of political support. Most strikingly, it has capitalized on the deterioration of the United States design in the Caribbean region, both to exact concessions and to enhance an international image of itself as a stalwart "democratic"

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regime. That President Duvalier has been able to stay in power in spite of internal dissaffection, sometime hostile United States propaganda, a dire economic situation, personal ill health, and other woes, is a tribute to his political acumen, if not to his principles. None of this means, of course, that such consummate skill will continue to work; Haitian governments have a way of falling suddenly, and the Duvalier regime will probably not prove an exception.

Dr. Duvalier's success indicates that he has made certain correct assessments, not only of Haiti's social and political structure but also of United States policy with regard to Haiti. The occupation was notable for its failure to make any telling alterations in the economic structure or level of development of the country. Many beneficial changes were made, as Leyburn demonstrates, particularly in the areas of health and health services, communications, government administration, education, and transport (though the use of corvée labor on the roads led to serious abuses, and stimulated sanguinary guerilla warfare). But most significantly, the United States institutionalized the army and police forces. The ragged bands of political mercenaries of the past were dissolved; the officer-ridden army was transformed into a small, well-trained, and well-organized force. Eventual firm control by this force of weaponry, communications, and transport ended the era of presidential succession by invasion, turned the army into the major locus of nonelectoral, president-making power, and may have ended forever the possibility of an agrarian revolt against the central authority. Another political effect of the occupation was the importance it imparted to the United States ambassador, whose political opinions thereafter would matter significantly in the transmission of power at the top of the Haitian governmental system. The Duvalier regime has continuously taken full account of the consequences of United States interest; and its leaders have been able to watch the operation of that interest in the political events occurring between the fall of the Lescot government and the present.

In the view of one acute observer, President Duvalier, in order to consolidate his power, had to cope with three other loci of political strength in addition to the army and the United States ambassador. The business community, located for the most part in Port-au-Prince, had strongly supported Déjoie's candidacy during the interregnum; its leaders were mainly members of the elite, and many had strong

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business and personal ties with North Americans and other foreign groups. Among the families of these leaders are Swiss, German, and French nationals, and some Syrians and Lebanese who hold United States citizenship. The business community had played a part in the downfall of the Magloire regime, and business strikes were a typical political instrument for putting pressure on presidential incumbents. In addition, the clergy—particularly the Catholic clergy—exerted political influence. Duvalier, while well aware of this, also attended to the importance of vodoun* in Haiti, and to the influence wielded by its cult leaders, particularly in the countryside and among the urban poor. Finally, the President understood the strength of groups such as the university students, the small but politically aware labor unions, and certain professional associations, whose political strength could be felt particularly in times of crisis. The Duvalier regime has displayed intelligence as well as ruthlessness in dealing with these diverse centers of political strength and potential opposition.

The official request for a United States Marine Corps mission to "train" the Haitian Army was a brilliant political move by Duvalier, apparently designed to serve several objectives simultaneously. It is entirely correct that the renewed presence of the Marines in Haiti created considerable rancor in some circles, but it also strengthened Duvalier's hand in his dealings with all sources of internal opposition. To some extent it apparently reassured the business community; and it turned out to have reduced, rather than to have increased, the maneuverability of the United States in developing a "corrective" or "restraining" policy toward the Duvalier regime. Perhaps most important, it helped Duvalier in his plan to build a praetorian guard to counterbalance the power of the army itself.

The *tonton macoute*—a Creole epithet for the bogeyman—is an extremely interesting variation on the security police theme. Its members wear no official uniform (though blue denim pants and felt hats are affected). Members of the "TTM" carry out acts of terrorism against groups and individuals and have seriously weakened the policing function and prestige of the regular army. Some calculations put the operating costs of the TTM as high as one third of the governmental budget. Though small groups of the TTM are distributed

* Or, as it is more commonly called, "voodoo." Creole words employed in this introduction are transcribed in Laubach orthography (see Hall, 1953). It was not possible to extend this transcription to the original Leyburn text, where a "Gallic" orthography is followed.

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Nor is it sufficient to label *Duvalierism* "pathological" or "paranoid." The roots of this ideology are to be found in Haiti, not elsewhere; its supporters are the product of Haitian times and ideas; and their social identity, while not entirely clear, would probably pose few enigmas if enough data were available.* In order to make clear these assertions, however, it is necessary to look again at Haitian society, the Haitian society Leyburn has described so well, and to reexamine the terms that have been used by him and by others to describe it.

Though the societies of the Caribbean Sea differ significantly from each other, many of them share certain general historical experiences. Unlike the colonial areas of the Old World, these islands were largely populated from abroad, and in this regard they resemble the Atlantic lowland areas of mainland America. However, the colonial history of the islands meant that they would long remain the instruments of policy formulated in foreign capitals. Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and other islands were, during most of their postconquest history, the outposts of far-flung colonial empires, and the design of their societies was conditioned by this dependence and subjugation. As "plantation islands," their agriculture, demography, mode of settlement, and social structure were attuned to metropolitan needs and objectives. Unlike most of Africa and Asia, the Antilles lost their native populations almost entirely, owing to enslavement, overwork, disease, and war, early in the era of conquest and settlement. There remained the vestiges of native traditions, assimilated into the new, growing cultures of the postconquest period. The Indians themselves, wherever they were able to survive, were also assimilated through interbreeding with Old World migrants.

The newcomers came from Europe, Africa, and Asia, bringing with them what they could of their ancestral traditions, but never able to transfer their social heritages as intact bodies of belief and behavior. Hence the cultures of the new Caribbean societies were built up out of elements originating in many different places, while their social forms took shape under conditions of colonial control. The peoples of the islands were able to maintain some continuities with

* One interpreter of the Haitian political scene (Bastien, 1960:145–48) has suggested that Leyburn's analysis of Haitian society as a "two-caste" system greatly influenced local political thinking by strengthening one idea: "the black intellectual must regain political power for the benefit of the country's majority."

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new ways. The virtual extirpation of indigenous culture, however, occurred in few areas outside the New World; it was particularly characteristic of the coastal and lowland areas of this hemisphere. Hence, Caribbean culture is almost entirely transplanted and recently synthesized. In the Caribbean area, an additional distinction lay in the persistently colonial character of the islands and in the effects of this colonialism on local life. Wherever the plantation flourished, large populations of African origin grew out of the original importations of slaves. This was true from the southern United States to Brazil, but was especially marked in the islands, where local populations of European extraction were either absent or reduced by the spread of the plantation. Only in Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Santo Domingo, and in some of the smaller islands that developed no plantation system, were substantial proportions of Europeans to be found. In Haiti, the early cultural admixture of Colonial Spanish and Indian was soon swamped by the cultures of Africa, and the European cultural component became predominantly French after 1697, when the western third of Hispaniola—today's Haiti—was ceded to France.

But Haitian society did not come to be purely African, in any sense, nor is that society more than broadly similar to the other societies of the Caribbean. The kind of society in which the French masters and their African slaves met and mixed, and the subtropical, colonial environment in which they lived, imposed their own conditions for culture growth. What the Haitian people could keep as a living part out of the African past was limited by the regimen of slave plantation life; what they could borrow or copy from their masters was affected by the nature of the social relationships between those who held power and those who had to bend to it. Ultimately, independence meant that the Haitian people could employ what they already knew and practiced under slavery, but in a wholly new social setting.

The substantial isolation that followed independence led to slowed change, both social and cultural, and to the gradual spread of the yeoman way of life throughout rural Haiti. From 1804 until the United States occupation, Haiti was probably less affected by external developments than any other country in the hemisphere. In this regard, its social history is noticeably different from that of the other Caribbean islands, some of which, like Puerto Rico and Cuba, were forcibly brought back into the mainstream of world developments in the

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175 same century in which Haiti withdrew. The yeomanry of Haiti in
177 the nineteenth century was hence able to develop a traditionalism of
178 unusual firmness and persistence.
171 This traditionalism, however, has had a high price. The economic
productivity of the rural cultivator has not risen; it can be argued
433 convincingly that poor land use, erosion, and population growth
311 have meant lower levels of consumption for the common people in
161 1966 than obtained a hundred years or more ago. The rural masses,
565 though overwhelmingly consisting of landholders, have been unable
-178 to break out of a stagnation that is economic as well as cultural. Such
-175 stasis has been based to some extent on the limited responsiveness of
the rural folk to outside stimulus. But also important in maintaining
117 the past is the national institutional system that took on its character-
511 istic shape after 1804, and under which the rural masses still live. That
system, the origins of which Leyburn has examined and assessed with
such care, is controlled, as we have seen, by a numerically small seg-
ment of the national population that is markedly distinct from the
yeomanry itself.

-565 The nature and internal differentiation of the elite needs much
more study, though it seems clear already that it is by no means a
single solidary class embracing all but the yeomen. Whatever the
structure of the elite, the relationship between the yeomen on the one
hand and the real holders of power on the other must be understood
if one is to understand Haiti. The yeoman is defined in terms of the
elite; he is dependent upon it and subject to it. This is what is meant
when it is said that the yeomanry, like the elite, forms only a part-
society. Yet without the yeomen, there would be no elite. The elite
live by controlling and taxing the rural masses, and find their sustu-
nance and their power in rural productivity. Elite and yeomen, then,
are bound together in unequal but interdependent relationships in
Haiti as they are in other less developed societies of a similar kind. In
such cases, the political role of the yeomanry is usually minor, and
few opportunities may arise for the expansion of its political strength.
565 If the yeomanry fails to increase its productivity in ways that enable it
-433 to control more of its own surpluses, its role in affecting national po-
664 litical decisions may grow narrower rather than wider, and this om-
642 nious possibility has become a worldwide phenomenon. It becomes
more intensified wherever industry and trade grow, unaccompanied
by parallel growth in yeoman productivity or in new and more
widely representative national institutions.

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311 been country, and perhaps fewer than in any country in Latin Amer-
423 ica. The agriculture itself, with the exceptions now of those very few
171 large-scale plantations in sisal and sugarcane, is adapted to small plots and is worked with intensive labor and few tools on hilly land. Com-
433 pared with agricultural production, especially of cash crops, in most
178 mainland Latin American countries, productivity is low. The yeomanry is conservative in its agricultural practices, and not ready to change unless the changes entail minimal risk and the gains to be real-
241 ized are clearly demonstrable (Erasmus, 1952:20-26). Yeomen culti-
177 vate with three goals in mind: cash income from world-market
185 commodities (for instance, coffee, sisal, vetiver); cash income from
434 items produced for local sale and consumption; and subsistence. While they are heavily involved in production for sale, their crop choices and land-use patterns rest fundamentally on a subsistence orientation. All grow a substantial part of their own food, especially sorghum, maize, sweet potatoes, taro, manioc, malanga (*Xanthosoma sagittifolium* Schott), plantains and bananas, fruits and vegetables, and
423 rice where possible. The land is invested with considerable affect:
823 gods live in it; it is the ultimate security against privation; family
471 members are buried in it; food and wealth come from it; and it is good in itself, even if not cultivated. While such attitudes are common in yeoman societies, Haiti's history of slavery, and of access to land through revolution, has given a special symbolic significance to landowning. Land is valued above all else and is sometimes held "uneconomically"—that is, even when the capital and labor power to work it are lacking.

114 Leyburn describes better than any other writer the history of land
175 acquisition by the yeoman after 1804. The French plantations lay in
423 ruins, never to recover, while early authoritarian attempts to restore the prerevolutionary economy under native Haitian leadership soon failed. In the course of a century, the Haitian people laid claim to their own soil, while population growth and the adoption of the French tradition of equal inheritance progressively reduced the average size of holdings. In spite of some plantation development after the United States occupation, most agricultural land in Haiti is still employed in small holdings, and "land reform" in the conventional sense—the breaking-up of large estates and the creation of a class of small landholders—is nearly irrelevant to Haiti's needs.

462 As today's yeomanry cultivates, so its womenfolk market. Nearly
443

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442 three hundred marketplaces serve the towns and countryside, some
443 of them patronized by thousands of buyers and sellers on market days. By participating in active small-scale trade, the wives of the yeomen contribute in a limited way to national economic efficiency and growth. As in all heavily agrarian economies marked by poor storage facilities, inferior transportation, and low consumer incomes there is considerable substitution of labor for capital, and there are high losses through spoilage. Except for the marketing of export commodities, much time is consumed in bargaining, in carrying, and in hand-processing of various sorts. But these activities are the accompaniments of the general low level of development of the Haitian economy, not one of its causes.

443 The economic challenges posed by agriculture on the one hand,
281 and by marketing on the other, differ significantly. Since these ac-
442 tivities are carried out predominantly along the lines of a sexual division of labor, the Haitian countrymen and their marketing wives
114 differ in some regards in their attitudes. Foreign observers of the
442 nineteenth century commented regularly on the industry and energy
174 of Haitian rural women, stressing their predominance in trade. Some
175 writers have attributed this convention to the West African tradition,
443 since women are the marketers, men the farmers, in many African
281 societies. Leyburn, however, notes that the militarism and political
433 unrest that have marked Haiti during so much of its history were serious impediments to peaceful trade. Women came to predominate in marketing, he theorizes, because men did what they could to avoid the towns, since they were often impressed into roving army bands if they traveled far from home. Whatever the historical causes may be, it has been established that the women of Haiti's countryside carry on most of the internal trade, while their husbands do most of the farming. These women, on the whole, know more about the towns, mix more easily with outsiders, and show more intrepidity in trade than the men show in agriculture. Yet it has been demonstrated that, for most of them, the scale of their enterprise is so modest and the economic opportunities open to them so restricted that their energy and daring can do little to increase the level of productive activity (Mintz, 1964:256–86).

117 Haiti's lack of large factories, mechanized production, and a skilled industrial labor force means that the country is unindustrialized by any usual measure.

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565 caste is the only word to describe the effective separation of aristocrats from the masses. The caste system is a vivid fact, for it regulates a person's profession, speech, religion, marriage, family life, politics, clothes, social mobility—in short, his whole life from cradle to grave.

175 678 Haiti won its freedom from the France of Napoleon in 1804, becoming thus the second independent state in the Western Hemisphere. It had been during the eighteenth century France's most prosperous colony, its wealth depending upon slavery and the plantation system. With the whites driven out, social distinctions which 565 actually had their roots in colonial times began immediately to 692 develop among the people, all of whom had some proportion of African blood in their veins. During the course of the next century the criteria for aristocracy slowly assumed recognizable form, so that now even the most casual observer is aware that Haiti cannot by any stretch of the imagination be called a democratic country, with an open class system. The two castes are the élite and the masses. They are as different as day from night, as nobleman from peasant; and they are as separate as oil and water. The élite are generally reckoned [162] to compose at the outside not more than three per cent of the population.

565 The élite do not work with their hands. This is the cardinal rule of Haitian society. Upon it rests the whole economic structure of the 463 country, and to this the course of national history has led. All the [161] professions, most governmental and military offices, and the large business enterprises are effectively closed to young men of the masses. Indeed, so completely accepted are caste lines, so practically difficult would it be for peasant youths to acquire the money and education necessary for such careers, that at birth a boy's future place in economic life is, within narrow limits, already predetermined. For the élite, law is the most popular of the professions, partly because it is the quickest avenue of approach to high political office; government, in turn, is the only career which can make a man rich within a few years. Next in popularity to law comes medicine. Teaching is not lucrative enough to attract many promising youths, and the priests of the Roman Catholic Church are almost all white Frenchmen.[2]

793 797 2. An effort was once made by the Catholic Church to train native Haitian priests, but the peasants would have none of them after they were ordained. They drove them out, saying, "Go away! How do you expect God to listen to you? You are not white; you don't know anything." And the Haitian priests had to be transferred as missionaries to Africa.

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133 rains become torrents, washing away crops and soil. Brooks which run most of the year the Haitians dignify by the name of "rivière"; not even the largest, however—the Artibonite, which drains over a fifth of the country—is navigable for anything above a rowboat. The second largest "river," Les Trois Rivières, is only 96 kilometres long. Many of the smaller streams disappear into sinkholes or caves in limestone, veritable lost rivers. Even some of the lakes are ephemeral.

133 Most of the best land of the country lies in its few plains flanking
311 the mountains near the coasts, or extending like wedges into the mountainous regions. In the northeast in the country back of Cap-
● 175 Haïtien is the Plaine du Nord; here in colonial times were the most
[134] flourishing of the French plantations, the palatial residences, and the slaves who in 1791 began the insurrection which ultimately led to Haiti's independence. In the middle region are the Artibonite Plain near the coast, and the Central Plain back of the Black Mountains. Eastward from Port-au-Prince, the capital, is the Cul-de-Sac; and in the southwestern peninsula is the small plain of Les Cayes. All over the country in French days sugar cane grew in abundance, making white men wealthy. The irrigation systems have long since disappeared; fertilizer is far too costly for use; trees have been cut down to make room for hundreds of tiny farms to support the increasing population.

133 Not even all the plains are naturally productive. Many of them, on
134 the contrary, are arid, sterile, and forbidding, covered with cacti and other spiny plants. Indeed, the most arid areas of Haiti, including its salt marshes, are lowlands.

13 Although the country is wholly in the tropics, the usual preconceived notion of the tropics does not apply. There are no impenetrable rain forests or jungles, no wild beasts, and very few snakes.
132 Because of the mountains, there are wide differences in rainfall, soil, and vegetation, within a short distance. Occasional hurricanes do great damage to shipping and the water fronts. Infrequent droughts sometimes last for two or three months. Hailstorms that damage growing crops are fairly common. Taken as a whole, the country has an ample but not heavy rainfall; coming generally from the east and northeast, the trade winds strike the high ridges in the north and there deposit the greater part of their moisture in the Plaine du Nord. By the time they have passed down the western slope and across the Central Plain they are dried and rarefied, so that this region becomes

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increasingly arid as its altitude decreases. Next to the Plaine du Nord, the best-watered part of Haiti is the southwestern peninsula, which projects far beyond the shelter of the mountains in the rest of the island. 132

When one subtracts from the 10,000 square miles all the sterile wastes of cactus, the salt marshes and brackish lakes, and the rock barrens, one realizes the inevitability of a low standard of living for the mass of the people. Other nations buy little from Haiti, local industries never reach even the proportions familiar to small-town Americans, and the total national budget is less than seven million dollars a year. Not even the élite are well-to-do by American small-town standards; it is only by comparison with the masses that they can be said to constitute a favored economic class. They rule the country, however, and what benefits accrue to Haiti rarely get beyond their pockets. 433 [439] [651] [565]

The resident of Haiti can never lose sight of the social distinctions between the two castes, for they permeate every phase of Haitian life. It has been so since the first hours of the republic. Indeed, the origins of the caste system lie in the French colonial days of the eighteenth century. 565 175 178

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[p. 14]

II

FRENCH COLONIAL ORIGINS

175 648 FRANCE'S wealthiest colony in 1791 was, and had been for decades, the small territory of Saint-Domingue, as Haiti was known at that time. It had belonged to France for less than a century. French freebooters and buccaneers of the seventeenth century actually presented the colony to their mother country, for these sea rovers, harrying the Spanish Main, used as a base for their predatory raids the small island of Tortuga (La Tortue, The Turtle) off the northern coast of Haiti. They often came over to the western part of the large Spanish island of Santo Domingo (Haiti), then almost deserted, to shoot wild cattle for food; then they would hasten back to Tortuga for safety. At first Tortuga had been shared by English, Dutch, and French buccaneers, but gradually the French came to outnumber the others, so that when the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697 concluded the War of the Grand Alliance, France claimed and Spain ceded the western third of the island of Santo Domingo. The English and Dutch were meanwhile picking up other Caribbean fragments of the decaying Spanish Empire.

175 563 24 The early years of this new French colony were unimpressive, the majority of its residents being former buccaneers, who could hardly have regarded agricultural life as other than dull, and who certainly did not make successful farmers. Only when new immigrants from France in the seventeen-twenties demonstrated that steady profits could be made by raising indigo, sugar, coffee, and cocoa, all of which flourished in the region, did the era of prosperity begin. [464] [439] Plantations were soon staked out all over Saint-Domingue. The great problem was to find adequate labor for the fields. Whoever had crops to sell was sure of a ready market, but crops would not grow 175 24 567 without cultivation. Since there were no natives in Saint-Domingue for the French planters to exploit, the colonizers chose the other favorite alternative of the eighteenth century: Negro slavery. In the 1730's Saint-Domingue began to compete with England's North American colonies for the cargo of the steady stream of slave ships from Africa. There is no indication that the supply of blacks ever

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175 equaled the demand for them; in 1791 the census listed half a million
24 then living, but no writer seems to have even a vague idea of how
567 many millions were imported during the sixty years of the colony's heyday.

175 Production, particularly of sugar and coffee, steadily increased until the tiny colony ranked among the wealthiest regions of the
245 world. The Spanish Indies were declining, so that Saint-Domingue
249 alone far outranked them all combined between 1766 and 1791.
433 Splendid roads were built, extensive irrigation projects developed,
511 and stately mansions erected. Life moved along with ceremony and
565 display—for the planters; attended by their black lackeys, the white French masters entertained royally or were driven like lords in their coaches to make formal visits to neighbors. Many of these well-to-do colonials spent half their time in Paris, ostentatiously spending their riches. To be "wealthy as a Creole" came to be a common expression in France.[1] Perhaps nowhere in the Americas was existence at once so delightful and so ornamental as it was for the wealthy planters among the 36,000 whites of Saint-Domingue in 1791.

175 For the mother country, too, this small bit of tropical land was profitable during the latter days of Bourbon royalty. Neither Mar-
439 tinique nor Guadeloupe could compare with it in value. In 1789
505 nearly two thirds of the foreign commercial interests of France
648 centred in Saint-Domingue; its combined exports and imports were valued at more than $140,000,000; its sugar, coffee, indigo, and cotton supplied the home market and employed in prosperous years more than 700 ocean-going vessels, with as many as 80,000 seamen.[2]

175 Where wealth exists, social distinctions generally develop. In Saint-Domingue the evolving class system produced such discord
565 that sparks from the French Revolution eventually set off an explo-
669 sion in the colony. Casual surveys of Haitian history generally record that in 1791 the slaves revolted, and that out of this insurrection grew the war of independence. This is true; but it was not the resentment of slaves against their masters which caused the final explosion; the
175 slaves were tinder used by others to keep the conflagration burning.
565 Negro slaves, of course, did not figure in the "class" system; they
[567] were below the classes of colonial society. The class system, properly

[101] 1. The word "creole" means only "colonial born"; there is no connotation of race mixture in the term.

2. Pamphile de Lacroix, *Mémoires*, II, 277.

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175 speaking, consisted of the three groups known as *grands blancs, petits*
565 *blancs*, and *gens de couleur*.[3] Although no precise English term will translate either of the first two categories, the former embraced the important whites—owners of large plantations, wealthy merchants, and high officials of the state; the latter designated all other whites of the colony—shopkeepers, artisans, small planters with only a few slaves, little people busily engaged in social climbing, and shiftless whites lazily slipping downhill. The 28,000 gens de couleur included all free persons who had African blood in their veins.

It is highly probable that without this third group there would have been no violent outbreak in 1791, no achievement of final independence in 1804, and no such caste system as exists in Haiti at the present time.

175 That there were free people of color in the colony was due to a
567 code of laws emanating from Louis XIV, who died in 1715, years
641 before Saint-Domingue had shown any signs of becoming prosper-
648 ous. In 1685 the Grand Monarch had issued a Code Noir to cover all colonial dealings with Negro slaves. Article 59 specified that when a slave secured his liberty, either by cash purchase or by gift of his white master or parent, he was to be regarded as a full French citizen. He might own land, dispose of his wealth as he pleased, bear testimony in legal cases (even against whites), marry as he pleased, vote, bear arms, travel where he wished, embrace any career, own slaves or free them. To Louis and his ministers such provisions probably did not seem particularly magnanimous, for race prejudice was not a characteristic of the French, and it could hardly have been supposed that enough slaves would ever be freed to create much of a problem.

175 In the course of the next hundred years, however, many persons of
563 color in the colony achieved their freedom, and with it French citi-
641 zenship. The greatest number had been granted their liberty because they were the children of white masters by Negro mothers—for race mixture is always a concomitant of white ownership of black slaves.
[595] Concubinage was so regularly practiced in Saint-Domingue that it was considered quite normal. If many of the first freedmen were
563 mulattoes (half-white, half-Negro), by 1791 their descendants might
175 be quadroons, octoroons, or near-whites, for consciousness of skin

3. The gens de couleur were also often called *affranchis*, freedmen, a term which strictly would be inaccurate as applied to a free colored person of the second or third generation.

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color predisposed a freedman to separate himself, by marriage with a 563
person at least as light as himself, as far as possible from his slave 175
ancestors.[4]

Aside from paternity, the chief reasons for freeing a slave were 175
faithful or extraordinary service, and the readiness of a master to free
his concubine. By the time of the Revolution many of the free col- 567
ored people had not known slavery in their families for four generations, while still more had been free for two or three. During the century many had acquired wealth by inheritance from former owners. Their close association with well-to-do white planters had [556]
instilled in them the desire to improve their economic fortunes as well as their culture; friendly relationships with their benefactors afforded them the opportunity. Like the grands blancs, the prosperous gens de couleur sent their children to Paris for an education, and went there themselves for pleasure.

As the free colored people flourished, so also did the jealousy of the 175
petits blancs against them. "Society" in Saint-Domingue was beset, 565
as is any social system which has not yet the sanctity of long tradition, with heartburnings, intrigues, resentment, snobbery. Petit blanc aspired to become grand blanc; small planter longed to be received into the smart set of the wealthy plantation owners; creole resented the toplofty airs of the recent émigré from France. What was more irksome to the petit blanc than his own exclusion from high society was the acceptance into it of many colored people whose parents or grandparents had been African slaves. Since many of the gens de couleur were better educated and more cultured than the lower-class whites, inner consciousness of mental inferiority may have added fuel to the fires of jealousy.

The growing wealth of free colored people was notable in the latter years of the century. One fertile parish in the South (Jérémie) was almost entirely in their hands, while in every other part of the colony they had bought or inherited handsome plantations. They looked upon Saint-Domingue as their fatherland, not hoping (as did many of the whites) to retire to France to spend their fortunes, nor yearning (as did many slaves) to return to Africa. The less ambitious

4. Certain colonial writers diverted themselves by working out all the mathematical 114
combinations of blood mixture, with names for scores of the commoner varieties. 565
Since people with some part of white blood in their veins might mate with others of their own kind, with lighter or with darker persons, with black or with white, it can be imagined how complicated the question of race mixture might become.

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175 565 took their place in the business life of the towns, sending their children to parish schools. Colored youths served in the colonial constabulary and in the militia, acquiring a knowledge of arms and warfare later to be useful to them.

175 565 423 567 162 Estimates of their wealth vary. Some say that in 1791 they owned a third of all the land in the colony and a fourth of all the slaves; others more conservative put the figure at one fifth of each. Even this is impressive enough to account for much of the growing jealousy of their position. And by 1791 the whites outnumbered them only ten to seven.[5]

562 595 563 175 581 White women in general added their support to a movement instigated by the petits blancs for discrimination against all gens de couleur. Many wives felt resentment against the colored people because of the frequency with which their husbands took colored mistresses.[6] Moreover, the wealth of the colony attracted an immigration of Frenchwomen with marriageable but undowered daughters—in the candid French phrase, "*de filles à marier et sans dot*"—who seem to have assumed that young planters would want white French wives, even though impecunious ones. It was a shock to quite a number of them to discover that a colonial youth might prefer a colored girl who brought a dowry with her.[7]

175 565 829 Indiscreet affranchis often gave additional grounds for resentment against their group. Wishing to dissociate themselves altogether from their Negro ancestry and to be assured of social eminence, some accounted for their dark complexions by reference to obscure Indian progenitors. On this ground many secured letters patent from local government officials, of course on payment of a fee, legally estab-

162 5. The census listed 40,000 whites to 28,000 colored. L. E. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description . . . de la partie française . . . de Saint-Domingue* (Philadelphia, 1797), I, 285, gave the following figures for 1790:

	Square Leagues	*Population*	*Whites*	*Affranchis*	*Slaves*
North	480	195,000	16,000	9,000	170,000
West	820	194,000	14,000	12,500	168,000
South	186	130,000	10,000	6,500	114,000
Totals	1,486	519,000	40,000	28,000	452,000

6. One governor reported to Paris that he considered sexual jealousy the greatest cause of unrest in the colony.

7. See Sir Harry H. Johnston, *The Negro in the New World* (New York, 1910), p. 141.

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lishing their freedom from the taint of any black admixture. Having 175
entered white society by such means, and further diluted their 565
Negro blood by judicious marriages, these social climbers frequently 829
became the most pitiless masters of slaves in the colony, the most [556]
rigid sticklers for a color line, ruthless enemies of recent freedmen and of those who acknowledged the dark strain in their blood; and having now "passed over" as whites, they snubbed the petits blancs.

The rising tide of color prejudice became apparent in the passage 175
of discriminatory laws. The first of any importance was enacted by 671
the representative Council of the colony, sitting at the capital, Cap 565
Français, in 1758. It prohibited all colored people, except police and militiamen, from carrying swords, sabres, or other side arms—thus denying them one of the outward marks of gentlemen. Four years later the prohibition was extended to the bearing of all firearms, except in service, while in 1767 the sale of munitions to colored persons was forbidden unless ordered by a white officer. Obviously the instigators of prejudice had by this time won a number of ruling grands blancs to the notion that the presence of numerous people of color might constitute a menace to the physical safety of the whites.

Louis XV, the reigning monarch, took no steps to enforce the 175
liberal provisions of the Code Noir of his grandfather; on the con- 648
trary, he seems to have favored the passage of discriminatory laws. 563
He made it difficult for colored planters to travel freely in France. 671
The colonial perpetrators of indignities to the gens de couleur, seeing the success of their first efforts, began to propose increasingly severe restrictions, and were gratified by Louis XV's official "Instructions to Administrators" (1771), which stressed the necessity of maintaining a line between the two races which colored people and their descendants might never cross.

For the next two decades the affranchi had to face openly avowed 175
discrimination. One by one his rights in the Code were abrogated. 565
He might not fill any responsible office either in the courts or the 563
militia, for that would elevate him above white persons. Certain 671
careers, such as goldsmithing, were closed to him, because they brought wealth; others, notably medicine and the apothecary's art, were forbidden on the ground that whites might be poisoned;[8] law and religion were barred to him because of their public and honorific

8. It was a common belief in slave colonies that all persons with Negro blood had some "instinctive" knowledge of the science and art of poisoning. [829]

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175 nature.[9] Colored women were forbidden in 1768 to marry white
563 men. In 1779 began a series of laws designed to humiliate the colored
565 person in public: his clothes must be of a different material and cut
671 from the white person's; he must be indoors by nine o'clock in the evening; he might not sit in the same section of churches and theatres with whites.[10]

175 Just at the moment when prejudice and hatred seem to have
648 reached their most menacing proportions, when even moderate
829 white planters began to feel that such passions had been aroused
[649] among both white and colored folk that only brutal severity could
[565] hold them in check, the Revolution began in France. Both sides in the colony hoped to make use of it. The whites saw in the mother country's confusion an opportunity to win self-government for the colony—with themselves, of course, as the untrammeled rulers. The gens de couleur, taking to heart the noble Declaration of the Rights of Man, hoped to regain their full rights as French citizens, guaranteed to them in Louis XIV's Code, but now in abeyance.

175 During the fateful years 1788 to 1793 colonial affairs were inter-
646 twined with developments in France. Men and messages went back
648 and forth between Cap Français and Paris, following the startling
671 announcement that after a lapse of 150 years the States-General would be convoked in May, 1789. At a meeting of the colonial assembly in September, 1788, called to nominate delegates, the group of grands blancs who controlled colonial affairs decided on two daring steps, which later proved to be blunders: first, they named thirty-seven deputies to represent Saint-Domingue; second, they drew up a *Cahier des Doléances*—a list of grievances whose sole palliation, it was implied, would be the granting of permission to the white planters to govern the colony without interference from France. These two decisions, be it said, were not unanimously approved in the assembly at Cap Français; cautious minds warned against pretentious demands which might do nothing more than attract concentrated attention to the state of affairs in Saint-Domingue: it might be wiser, they argued, to let sleeping dogs lie, and ignore the convocation of the States-General. The cautious were outvoted.

[565] 9. A colored lawyer might win a case against a white man; a colored priest might
[829] have to hear the confession of a white woman.

[565] 10. When certain mulattoes arrived at church in Cap Français wearing clothes of the same texture as the whites', constables tore the garments from the backs of male and female alike, leaving them "with no other veil than their shame."

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At Paris the following May, therefore, the thirty-seven delegates presented themselves. Only six were admitted as deputies. And the colonial skeptics proved correct in their apprehensions: revolutionary France soon became very much interested in the state of affairs in Saint-Domingue.

There had recently been formed in Paris a humanitarian group, considered at the time to be ultra-radical, whose announced purpose was the complete abolition of Negro slavery in all French possessions. Following the principle of demanding much in order to gain something, these *Amis des Noirs* concentrated their most serious efforts on regaining for colored colonial freedmen their former political rights. The recently promulgated "Rights of Man" made it very difficult for the French National Assembly[11] to deny the proposal of the Amis;[12] moreover, at this juncture the colored landlords of Saint-Domingue sent to Paris an offer to make the new French Republic a free gift of one fifth of their wealth on condition of being no longer subject to the creole tyranny of caste.

The strategical blunder of the self-assertive white planters having now become entirely apparent to their deputies in Paris, these left no stone unturned to thwart the objective of the Amis des Noirs. By indefatigable manoeuvring they at least partially succeeded, for the National Assembly passed an ambiguous resolution which, while apparently granting political rights to colored people, nevertheless left the interpretation of the grant to already existing colonial authorities.

In the colony complete confusion reigned when news of the resolution was received. Colored people everywhere joyfully demanded their rights, only to be indignantly refused. The whites, with no intention of yielding an inch, were nevertheless undecided as to a proper course of action to pursue: one group wished to announce the colony's immediate independence from France, offering the familiar argument that only white planters knew how to manage the colony's peculiar affairs; the other group still cautiously counseled inaction and waiting for the storm to blow over. A young mulatto, Ogé, educated in France and encouraged by the Amis des

11. The National Assembly had succeeded the States-General.

12. The Assembly was finding "liberté, égalité, fraternité" as uncomfortable a motto to live up to as Americans were finding their own declaration, in 1776, of belief in the "self-evident" proposition that all men are created free and equal.

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175 648 642 Noirs, having returned to Saint-Domingue to campaign for the political rights of his group, led with his friend Chavanne a demonstration at Cap Français. The white authorities seized and executed them with notable brutality.

175 648 563 565 This occurred in March, 1791. In May came the news that the National Assembly in France had finally yielded to pressure, and had decreed that men of mixed blood born of free parents should be admitted to representation in colonial assemblies. The chagrin and anger of the whites at this decree was so violent that the governor-general of Saint-Domingue immediately suspended its operation. 175 567 669 The issue was now clearly drawn: free colored men knew that they would never secure their rights except by force. But before they could bring to maturity their plan of action, suddenly the calculations of both parties were completely upset. The Negro slaves revolted.

If ever slaves had reason to rebel, the Negroes of Saint-Domingue did. The same harshness which the whites showed to free colored people marked the treatment of black slaves; and as racial antagonism deepened, white masters seemed to become utterly heartless in their treatment of the inarticulate blacks. Allowing for the exceptions which accompany most generalizations, it is clear from the record that the planters were, in the main, callous, ruthless, some of them even fiendish, in their treatment of slaves. Flogging a man to death was not uncommon; certain slaves were buried alive; pregnant women were forced to work so hard that miscarriage resulted. Some of the punishments meted out were merely brutal; others were torture; and some were sadistic, the masters relishing the pain they were causing. A certain slave in the North was nailed by his hands to a wall, and then, after standing all day in the burning sun, was made to eat his own amputated ears. A woman planter had the tongues of all her slaves cut out; another woman caused the starvation of her maid by having a gag fixed around the child's head.[13] Visitors to the colony in the 1780's often commented on the general want of self-control on the part of the planters—their violent gusts of anger and passionate outbreaks over trifles; and the victims of these outbursts

13. An officer of the court of the Negro king Christophe later wrote in two volumes a gruesome account of the treatment of slaves by French masters in the latter days of the colony. Although certainly exaggerated, it probably contains a measure of truth. See Baron de Vastey, *Réflexions politiques sur les noirs et les blancs* (Sans Souci, 1817); and *Essai sur les causes de la révolution et des guerres civiles d'Hayti* (Sans Souci, 1819).

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were the slaves. Most of the blacks accordingly needed only leadership to arouse them and direct their vengeance. 175 567 669

Very little of the background of the insurrection is known. The certain facts are these: on the night of August 14, 1791, at a pretended Vodun ceremony in the woods of the Turpin plantation, during a violent storm, several wily and powerful slaves laid plans for a general uprising. Their intentions were communicated, apparently by drum signals, to neighboring plantations. Six days later the attack began, the blacks in that section of the North indiscriminately slaughtering every white man, woman, and child on whom they could lay their hands. From this centre the massacre spread, accompanied by general arson, until practically every plantation in the fertile northern plain was a shambles. The whites who had escaped destruction cowered in the capital city.

The insurrection of 1791 returned measure for measure to the planters for their previous cruelties. Whether one reads accounts written by Haitian patriots or by white apologists, the story is the same: the ferocities on both sides were almost incredible. Blacks gutted children and raped women, whites broke captured Negroes on the wheel, poured boiling oil in their ears, and flayed them alive. The Reign of Terror in France was decorous by comparison. The pent-up hatred of decades was working itself out.

Against half a million riotous blacks the handful of whites had no chance. All who could leave the country fled precipitately. The gens de couleur, on the contrary, although at first alarmed, soon discovered that the revolting slaves were inclined to be friendly to them. They accordingly tried to turn the insurrection to their own purpose, to seize the rule of the colony now being depopulated of whites. France, herself in turmoil, sent over various commissioners whose thankless duty it was to try to restore order; but they were incompetent, often worked at odds with each other, and sometimes engaged in actual treachery. Matters were, if anything, complicated by their ministrations. 175 669 [648]

In addition, Spain and England, always ready to harass the French, sent troops into Saint-Domingue on the pretext of trying to put down the slave insurrection lest it spread to their neighboring colonies of Santo Domingo and Jamaica. The French general in the colony, Laveaux, would shortly have been defeated if help had not come from two natives, one a well-to-do mulatto, the other a black [648]

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175 669 ex-slave, each of whom aroused his own group to fight off the invading Spaniards and English.

These two men emerging from the maelstrom were the cultured colored general, Rigaud, and the powerful Negro, Toussaint. United in purpose in 1793, they soon began to oppose each other. Their dissent foreshadowed the rift which was permanently to divide free Haiti.

175 159 669 Rigaud, born at Les Cayes in 1761,[14] had been brought up in Bordeaux, France, where he was taught the trade of a goldsmith. Like many other colored colonial youths, he went briefly to Georgia to fight on the side of the Americans in their revolution against England. Gifted with extraordinary military talent, he rose to prominence in Saint-Domingue following the slave insurrection, and played a major part in expelling the British from the colony. He was fiery, intellectual, and brilliant, but lacking in self-control and political subtlety, which put him at a disadvantage with Toussaint. Rigaud's admirers—almost the whole body of free colored people—included all the influential persons in the colony once the whites had been cowed or driven out; the South was devoted to him body and soul, and he had numerous partisans in the provinces of the North and West. But Toussaint was the idol of the half-million blacks.

Born a slave, Toussaint was fortunate in having a kindly master who permitted him the sort of work which gave him leisure for reading. He studied eagerly, devouring all accounts he could find of the military exploits of Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar. Apparently he took no part in the slave uprising; on the contrary, he helped his master escape to the United States and later regularly provided him with money. Then he himself went to the Spanish part of the island, where he made a military reputation in the Spanish colonial army. When General Laveaux sought his aid against the invaders of harassed Saint-Domingue, the ex-slave accepted his overtures. Detractors of Toussaint call him a "cunning hypocrite" for joining and then deserting the Spaniards, and for accepting high rank under a French general whom he was even then (so it is asserted) planning to supersede. His decision to return to Saint-Domingue was certainly crucial, for it began his meteoric ascent to power.

[648] Accompanied by the black troops he had captained in the Spanish

[632] [364] 14. Les Cayes, the third largest town in modern Haiti, was even in colonial times an important seaport. It is located on the southwestern peninsula.

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colony, he fought engagements with several Spanish detachments on the way back to Saint-Domingue, and soon achieved the return to France of all the territory Spain had recently won from her. Seeing that his ineffectively trained black troops were as yet no match for the disciplined British, he temporarily withdrew from public sight in order to build his army into a coördinated, smoothly functioning machine. Then he not only defeated the British, but forced their complete withdrawal from the island. He freed General Laveaux, whom they had imprisoned in Cap Français, thereby putting his own commanding officer under personal obligation to him. By 1796 Toussaint was the undisputed hero of his soldiers and, through their praise, of the mass of black ex-slaves; moreover, the French commander trusted and respected him; even the whites of the former régime looked to him with hope, for they had grudgingly to concede that, black though he was, he alone had the power to restore peace and order in the colony.

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Only the colored group looked askance at him. They had welcomed the insurrection of the slaves in 1791 as an invaluable, if bloody, aid in their struggle for equality with the whites; but they were not inclined to be ruled by an ex-slave whose eminence was already a threat to the social order they wished to establish. When, in 1793, the French commissioners had abolished slavery in Saint-Domingue,[15] the action had been as distasteful to the free colored people as it was to the whites; both groups wanted to continue to own slaves; the gens de couleur merely wanted their share also in governing the colony. In their opinion, the struggle was getting out of hand. They gave their allegiance, consequently, not to Toussaint, but to their own man, Rigaud.

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The black general now began to show himself as astute a politician as he had been a skilful soldier. He had a romantic streak, which made him assume the prophetic surname Louverture;[16] but beneath the romanticism was a peculiar diplomatic realism. When a newly arrived governor-general tried to stir up dissension between blacks and colored people, on the principle of divide and rule, Toussaint

15. In order to pacify the blacks and to win their support against the invading armies of Spain and England.

16. The name Louverture, now generally written L'Ouverture, is ordinarily conceded to imply Toussaint's conviction that he would provide the opening through which his fellow blacks might achieve freedom. According to another account the name was given him because of his ability to make a breach in the ranks of the enemy; still another explanation refers to his missing front teeth.

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deftly had him promoted out of colonial office. When another group of commissioners came, he agreed in conference with them that the remaining whites should be expelled for the sake of peace; as soon as this was done, however, he effected the nomination of both the chief commissioner and General Laveaux as representatives of the colony in the French Assembly, sitting in Paris. Under guise of bestowing honors, he had got rid of every white person who had the slightest claim to rule. By 1797 Toussaint was the supreme leader in Saint-Domingue, his authority disputed only by Rigaud and the colored group. A civil war was needed to settle the issue between them, and since his forces were much more numerous than Rigaud's, Toussaint emerged victor in the brief conflict. Rigaud fled to France, the power of the mulattoes was broken, and no one was left openly to contest Toussaint's rule.

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"The First of the Blacks," as Toussaint was called, is a bewildering anomaly, and full of contradictions. He had been a slave for fifty years before the insurrection, and was to live only eleven after it. In that short period he became one of the most talked-of men in the world. His Spanish superior officer had said that "God in this terrestrial globe could not commune with a purer spirit"; the Frenchman, Lacroix, remarked, "No one approaches him without fear, and no one leaves him without respect." Even his enemies paid him homage: an English officer, as "a man, a governor, and a general"; a white Frenchman, as "a philosopher, a general, and a good citizen." When he died Wordsworth wrote a moving sonnet to him who had strengthened human faith in "man's unconquerable mind." Yet Toussaint had been a deserter and a schemer, and ruthlessly exploited his power to achieve absolute authority. His own deep conviction of his special mission to lead his people from misery to security has always for his apologists excused the more dubious aspects of his character.

To many Toussaint was a hero with elements of saintliness. In the overheated atmosphere of prejudice and hatred in Saint-Domingue he pursued a calm policy of moderation. Under him, anarchy and massacres came to an end. With an army at his beck and call, he used force only to maintain freedom for his fellow blacks and to defend the colony against foreign invasion. As nominal governor-general after 1799 he revived prosperity, inculcated discipline as an antidote to the intoxication of liberty, respected his contracts, and was a friend of law and order. On the other hand, he had moments

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of inordinate vanity, and would brook no interference. His henchmen had to endure merciless tongue-lashings. His own people's freedom, about which he was publicly so solicitous, was in many respects little better than slavery. 175 642 643

What he did is more easily told than what he was. Emerging, after a long reign of terror, as a leader in a land which had once been a paradise for whites, he checked among his people the passion and fear which had led to violence. With the restoration of peace, labor began once more on the plantations. The Negroes, though no longer slaves, were ordered back to work, and they docilely obeyed. The return of prosperity between 1799 and 1802 was amazing.

But the brilliance of Toussaint's rule was first dimmed and then completely extinguished by the rising star of Napoleon in France.[17] Haitian history between 1802 and 1804, although apparently incidental to the story of the contest between blacks and colored people which here concerns us, is nevertheless significant for an understanding of what was to transpire in Haitian social affairs. Napoleon was irritated beyond measure at the effrontery of Toussaint's seizure of power in the colony. The black leader had shown canny statesmanship in winning the friendly coöperation of the president of the United States, John Adams. The supplies and ships that Adams sent enabled Toussaint not only to defeat Rigaud but to achieve independence from France in all but name. With American assistance, Toussaint negotiated an advantageous treaty with England. Probably even more annoying to the First Consul than these political triumphs was Toussaint's audacious success in aping and even anticipating the spacious actions by which Napoleon was trying to make himself majestic in the world's eyes.[18] 175 648 669

It is possible that Napoleon might not have paid so much attention

17. It seems strange that this black, a veritable genius whatever his faults, should be so mildly honored in modern Haiti. True, he is regarded with respect, and there are a few statues of him; but the homage of the people is paid rather to his successor, General Dessalines, the antithesis of Toussaint in everything but courage. It was Dessalines, of course, who struck the final blow for Haitian freedom, but even this triumph seems to the foreigner small in comparison with the very real achievements of Toussaint. [643]

18. For example: Napoleon had given a new constitution to France after his *coup d'état* of the 18 Brumaire; similarly Toussaint, having effected his own coup in Saint-Domingue by deposing the French civil agent, citizen Roume, immediately thereafter gave his people a new constitution. In it he not only assumed all political power for life, but also ascribed to himself the right of naming his successor. Bonaparte was unable to take so daring a step for another year. There is ample evidence to show that meanwhile he chafed under the idea of being imitated and anticipated by a "gilded African," as he called Toussaint.

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175 648 669 to Toussaint if Saint-Domingue had been merely a colony like Martinique, and not the single centre from which measures for rebuilding the French colonial system could radiate. France was once more taking over Louisiana from Spain; but before Bonaparte could effectively reach Louisiana to establish his New World empire, he must make sure of Saint-Domingue. The very real power of Toussaint had to be crushed, and through the whole of 1801 Napoleon was making preparations for the annihilation of the black governor.[19]

175 648 721 The plans were as follows: to send his brother-in-law, Leclerc, with a formidable French army to "succeed" Toussaint as governor; to try to persuade the blacks that the new régime was entirely benevolent to their race, so that no armed resistance would be offered; if persuasion and diplomacy failed, to fight and conquer the Negroes, subduing them once more to slavery; and, above all, to capture Toussaint with all his black counselors and send them as prisoners to France. Napoleon undertook to prepare the way for Leclerc by writing personally to Toussaint: "Assist the Captain-General [Leclerc] with your counsels, your influence, and your talents. What can you desire?—the liberty of the blacks? You know that in all the countries where we have been, we have given it to the people who had it not." He repeated this assurance in his message a week later to the French legislature (November 22, 1801): "At Saint-Domingue and at Guadeloupe there are no more slaves. All are free there; all will remain free." Still further, the proclamation he drew up for Leclerc to publish upon his arrival, as a reassurance to the blacks, ran: "If you are told that these forces are destined to ravish your liberty, answer: The Republic has given us liberty, the Republic will not suffer it to be taken from us!"

Leclerc with his army arrived at Cap Français late in January, 1802. He hoped to be received at the capital as a friend, but Christophe, the black general in charge of the city, repulsed his advances. Leclerc was obliged to attack; on February 5 Christophe set fire to the city and withdrew to the neighboring hills. The war of independence had begun.

19. The part played by Toussaint for a brief moment in the history of the United States is full of significance. Certain historians are of the opinion that if Napoleon had been successful in the reconquest of Saint-Domingue he would have turned his attention to America rather than to Europe, for he had great colonial schemes. His failure in the colony, according to this theory, made him try to withdraw gracefully from the New World by selling Louisiana to the United States.

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For three months Toussaint's vigorous fighting broke the force of the French attack; one white army was swept away. But Toussaint made two fatal errors of judgment: he relied upon his trained army with its Negro generals, instead of arming his half-million Negroes for guerrilla warfare; and he trusted the pledged word of honor of Leclerc. His army fought bravely enough against the French legions, but the consensus of military experts is that Toussaint's officers, jealous of his domination and feeling that eventually France must win, treacherously gave over their posts and forces to Leclerc. Christophe surrendered on April 26, and Toussaint had no alternative but to put himself in Leclerc's hands. 175 648 726 728

Napoleon's private orders to Leclerc were positive and precise: "Follow your instructions exactly, and the moment you have rid yourself of Toussaint, Christophe, Dessalines, and the principal brigands, and the masses of the blacks have been disarmed, send over to the continent all the blacks and mulattoes who have played a rôle in the civil troubles. . . . Rid us of these gilded Africans, and we shall have nothing more to wish." Leclerc set himself methodically to carry out these instructions; by April, 1802, he had disarmed the blacks and received Christophe's surrender; the next task was to rid himself of Toussaint. By an apparently innocent invitation to dine and discuss the affairs of the colony, he lured Toussaint into his headquarters on June 10.[20] In the course of the meal Toussaint was seized, bound, and hurried on board a waiting ship. Haiti never saw him again; within a year he died of cold and starvation in a dungeon high in the Jura Mountains of southeastern France. 175 648

With Toussaint out of the way, it was now in order to proceed to the second part of Napoleon's plan—the rétablishment of slavery. Leclerc was to use his own discretion as to the precise moment and manner of announcing this. His instructions from the Minister of Marine, Decrès (June 14, 1802), read in part: 175 648 727 567

> As regards the return of the blacks to the old régime, the bloody struggle out of which you have just come victorious with glory commands us to use the utmost caution. Perhaps we should only entangle ourselves in it anew if we wished precipitately to break that idol of liberty in whose name so much blood has already flowed. For some time yet vigilance, order, a discipline at once rural and military, must take the place of the positive and pronounced slavery of the colored people of your colony. Especially the

20. There is evidence to show that Christophe suggested this stratagem to Leclerc.

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175 648 727 567 master's good usage must re-attach them to his rule. When they shall have felt by comparison the difference between a usurping and tyrannical yoke [apparently he means such a yoke as Toussaint's] and that of the legitimate proprietor interested in their preservation, then the moment will have arrived for making them return to their original condition, from which it was so disastrous to draw them.

175 648 727 The plan to reëstablish slavery, however, was never carried out, nor was its scheduled sequel, the occupation of Louisiana. The French soldiers in Saint-Domingue began to succumb to an invisible assailant —yellow fever. The first French army of 17,000 men had been largely consumed in the task of conquering Toussaint's armies; the second was now being swept away by disease. Leclerc's letters to Napoleon pleading for reinforcements soon became frantic in their despair. Fever was weakening the army at the very moment when rumors of impending reënslavement were strengthening the number of active antagonists to the French. The black generals who had deserted Toussaint for Leclerc now swung back again to the opposition. Then Leclerc himself fell ill of the fever. Apparently all-conquering in June, 1802, by November he was dead.

175 727 721 648 This was the turning point in Napoleon's whole American policy. The war had ruined Saint-Domingue economically; it had destroyed plantations, paralyzed labor, and reduced the population to barbarism. To resume the conquest would have cost France heavily; the army dreaded service in a region where death was almost certain; the financial expense had been frightful: one year of war had consumed 50,000 men and several million dollars, yet at least as many men and as much money would still be needed before any return could be expected. Consequently, Napoleon decided to withdraw from his whole American experiment, saving face as far as possible. He appointed the brave but incompetent Rochambeau to succeed Leclerc, promised him reënforcements—and then broke the Peace of Amiens, so that France became embroiled in a European war. Affairs in Saint-Domingue (including the troops promised to Rochambeau) were conveniently forgotten after March, 1803; and the whole Louisiana territory was sold to the United States.

175 648 The end of French control in Saint-Domingue came shortly. Rochambeau, as well as he could, waged desultory warfare, hanging, shooting, drowning, burning all the Negroes he could catch; hunting them with fifteen hundred bloodhounds bought in Jamaica for more

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than a hundred dollars each; wasting money, squandering men. On the other side, Dessalines and Christophe massacred every white within their reach. Rochambeau held on until November, 1803, when he surrendered with his few remaining men to the English in Jamaica. 175 648

On January 1, 1804, Dessalines proclaimed the independence of Haiti, choosing this aboriginal Indian name (meaning "mountainous") rather than the French Saint-Domingue. What the colored people had begun with their petitions to the French Assembly in 1789 had now worked itself out, but along lines entirely different from their hopes or plans. The whites were gone, but the blacks were in control. Now a struggle for precedence was to begin between the ruling blacks and the still aspiring people of color.[31] 175 642 648

31. The historical details rehearsed in this chapter are summarized from the many documented monographs and histories of the period cited in the Bibliography at the end of this volume. It seems unnecessary to quote such entry for each historical statement made in this sketch of background material. [114]

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III

THE FORMATIVE YEARS, 1804–1843

1. *Dessalines (1804–1806)*

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If ever a country had an opportunity to start absolutely fresh in choosing its own social institutions, Haiti had that opportunity in 1804. Free at last, with no traditions to uphold, the first independent Negro state in the world, owing allegiance to no man or nation, the Haitians might (theoretically, at least) have invented an entirely new little world of economic, political, religious, and social life. All paths were open to them. Dessalines,[1] as head of state, had only to lead them. His mental limitations, however, were such that he could only follow where the hated French had led, and soon set the Haitians upon the road to a caste system.

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The first part of the story of independent Haiti is to a certain extent the story of the alternative lines of action laid down by four great men, the black Dessalines and his equally black successor Christophe, the mulatto Pétion and his worshipful mulatto disciple Boyer.

On New Year's Day, 1804, Dessalines made a stirring proclamation of independence. In it were many references to *liberté* but none whatever to *égalité* or *fraternité*. The two years of his rule show clearly that he had no use for such abstractions as equality or fraternity, while liberty to him was synonymous only with freedom from French dominance. He was a tyrant whose very tyranny unwittingly prepared the way for eventual control by the colored group over the blacks.

Accompanying the proclamation of Dessalines was another signed by his generals, naming him governor-general for life, swearing "to obey blindly all laws emanating from his authority," giving him the right to make peace or war, and permitting him to name his successor. Absolutism was the order of the day. In the same paragraph in which he condemned French despotism, Dessalines said to his

1. Jean-Jacques Dessalines had been born a slave on a plantation near Grande-Rivière du Nord in the seventeen-fifties or -sixties. Unlike Toussaint, whose leading general he was, Dessalines was illiterate. The outstanding characteristic of his temperament was his violent passion.

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people: "If ever you refuse, or grumblingly accept, the laws which the genius guarding your destinies dictates to me for your happiness, you will merit the fate of ungrateful people. But perish that hideous idea!" There can be little doubt that he wished Haiti under his direction to become prosperous; but it is likewise clear that he was personally self-centred and inordinately grasping. 175 642 643

Each step Dessalines took to further his ambitions either for Haitian prosperity or for his own fortunes had its bearing upon the development of social classes in the country. Extermination of all remaining whites was one of the first tasks he set himself. On a promise of clemency he lured several hundred gullible French out of hiding, and butchered them in cold blood. His campaign of extirpation was methodical and thorough. To try to penetrate into the psychological background of this violence is to desert fact for speculation: it may have been a desire for revenge on the French, pure and simple; it may have been gloating sadism; he may have wished to warn France against any future attempts to regain possession of the country; or he may have wanted to notify his subjects of his intention to rule with severe discipline. Certainly this last aim was achieved, if any of his people did not already know, after two years of warfare, the extent of his ruthlessness. He ruled by fear and by threats, never by the cultivation of loyalties.

Apparently he was afraid that Napoleon would renew his efforts to subdue the former colony. To forestall such an attempt he ordered each of his governing subalterns to construct one great fort on the most prominent hill in their district—a scheme which led immediately to the institution of forced labor. He likewise devised a plan, not actually put into effect, for destroying all towns and plantations near the coast and moving the capital to an inland village; and so isolating Haitians from all contact with the outside world. 175 643 466 712 361

Turning to domestic policy, he faced a herculean task. The warfare of 1802–3 had left the country in chaos. Plantations and agricultural projects were almost totally ruined. All habits of steady industry had been lost. Dread of a possible new attack by the French made necessary a great army, and this in turn removed most able-bodied men from productive labor in the fields, while the construction of fortresses still further depleted the labor supply. The first census of free Haiti, in 1805 (probably not highly accurate), showed only 380,000 people, with the women outnumbering men by almost three to two. 175 643 433 701 464 712 175 162

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two. Here was a decline of about 150,000 from 1790.[2] It is a commentary on the man's forcefulness that in spite of all difficulties Dessalines established an effective economic organization. Its basis was serfdom.

Every citizen, he announced, must consider himself in one of two categories, laborer or soldier. There were to be no shirkers in the new Haiti; if a man was not in the army, he must do manual labor. Artisans who followed a craft counted as laborers. Women, since they could not join the army, must work shoulder to shoulder with their men. It was understood that direction of Haiti's new order would be carried on by state officials who were neither laborers nor soldiers, but these officials were to be so few that they would not constitute a separate third category.

This step of Dessalines' was a radical one. It proclaimed the mastery of state over individual; and even more significantly it divided the people according to economic task, rather than birth, wealth, color, or social status. At first the more ambitious citizens bore patiently with the arbitrary decree, thinking they might be able to achieve comfortable status under a lenient definition of "soldier" or else by sinecure tasks as officials. Their disillusionment was swift. Even swifter was the chagrin of the lowly folk who had been slaves, for they found themselves now in actual bondage to one of their own color.

All people except soldiers, ran the decree, must be "attached as cultivators to a plantation." This might be translated to read "bound to the soil." The vast majority of the people were forced willy-nilly into agriculture. It was "formally prohibited for a cultivator to desert the plantation to which he was assigned"; conversely, it was a crime to give asylum to a runaway cultivator, male or female.[3] If such conditions differed from slavery, they were at least close to what the mediaeval world knew as serfdom. But under this régime of forced labor the recently ravaged fields once more became productive: cotton plantations again covered the plain of the Artibonite, and sugar refineries were slowly rebuilt all over the country.

To forestall complaint from the people once again driven into

2. See, for an analysis of population figures, Placide Justin, *Histoire politique et statistique de l'île d'Hayti, Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1826), pp. 502–503.

3. A certain Mlle. Chapotin, of respectable family, was accused of having harbored a fugitive female cultivator, and, since she was unable to pay immediately the fine imposed upon her by the police at Port-au-Prince, she was condemned to serve a jail term.

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field labor, the ruler emphasized the clemency of his new régime. Labor the people must, but not under the whip; that arch symbol of slavery was abolished forever. The working day was shortened by a third. It was provided that, if just reason were shown, a man might even secure permission from his district commissioner to move from the plantation to which he was attached. 175 566 466

These were words. Facts were another matter. The overseers had been ordered to exact so much labor from their underlings, yet without whips; knowing no persuading power other than chastisement, they backed up their commands with blows of *lianes*, thick pliable vines which could be gathered anywhere in the island. Thus the laggard was driven, the law kept to the letter, and the overseer praised by his superiors. As for the working day, crops must be tended at the proper moment, so that the boasted shortening of hours generally came to little. Finally, the right to secure permission to move away from a plantation was effectively limited by the refusal of commissioners to grant any such request.

Every public expression of Dessalines showed a solicitude for the welfare of the workers, while his every act indicated that he regarded them as impersonal parts of the machine of state. He knew by his own former experience as a slave what a day's stint should be and the ruses used by laborers to avoid steady work; he was therefore able to order agricultural labor on a realistic basis.

The economic organization created by Dessalines provided the roots for the peasantry which was soon to develop as a characteristic form of Haitian life. Among these fundamental conditions were the existence of agriculture as a prevalent occupation, the immobility of all workers on the land, and a thorough schooling of the people in patient acceptance. Dessalines might theoretically have established some other economic system—a division of estates into small properties, for example, with each farmer a master of his own destiny; a democratic coöperative economy; slavery again; feudalism with a landed gentry. At critical times, one leader's choice may affect the whole future life of the country. The decision of Dessalines to keep the bulk of his people in servitude, without using the terminology of slavery, gave the new freemen no opportunity to become acquainted with work other than tillage. They were sent back to the only tasks they had ever known, their horizons were just as limited as before, their personal freedom just as restricted. The worst punishments of slavery, together with torture and gross overwork, 175 178 463 24 433 566 175 566

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175 566 were abolished; with such concessions the people must be satisfied. Dessalines tacitly confessed his inability to follow any course but the French colonial system, with modifications introduced by Toussaint.

167 175 Many of the blacks, having tasted a moment's freedom, were not inclined to give it up. Before the new order of Dessalines was firmly established, therefore, they ran away with their families into the hills, where they escaped official notice. As squatters they lived out their lives unmolested. By the time they were officially rediscovered, all Haiti had become a land of peasants.

175 463 555 647 565 At the other end of the ladder from the laborers were the officials, who might be great men or small clerks, members of the entourage of the governor-general or merely overseers of a plantation. In order to keep the vast agricultural economy functioning smoothly it was necessary to have hundreds of agents, directors, clerks, and overseers, each of whom must report to a superior. In this official class there was at least a possibility of realizing an ambition for oneself; there was a basis of comparison; more important, there was some possibility of attracting favorable attention of persons in high places and so of gaining promotion. Inevitably something of the colonial state of mind must have carried over into the new era, so that an ex-slave would consider himself as having risen in the world to be now performing a task which only white men used to do—to be spared field labor and to direct the work of others. Out of this group of petty agents rose a few men of ambition who were later to belong to the élite.

175 565 647 [212] Higher officers of state were in a much more favorable position to achieve social eminence. Not only did they perform no manual labor; they were twice removed from that life, since they directed the men who directed the workers. They handled funds. They came into contact with Dessalines himself. Many former gens de couleur filled these important posts, for the number of Haitians who could read and write was woefully limited.

175 701 The army was the great power in the country, for the new state was a military one. Since fear of a return of the French required the maintenance of a large standing army,[4] Dessalines made a virtue of this apparent necessity, using his soldiers to enforce discipline among the cultivators. On whom else could he rely for his local administration

4. Humboldt estimated that the army of Dessalines numbered 37,300, which would be one tenth of the total population. Other estimates run as low as 15,000. Even this figure would be about a tenth of the male population.

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tion? Here again, the decision of a leader fixed the direction of Haitian life for decades to come. It is agreed by commentators that overmilitarization was the bane of nineteenth-century Haiti. One tenth of all able-bodied men were constantly in active army service. Moreover, all the male cultivators on plantations must hold themselves in readiness to obey the government's call to arms; ammunition and arms were stored in every parish. A military mentality was nourished, the people early learning the lesson (apparently unchallenged by any liberal) that the army should rule and the people obey.

Although the common soldiers were ex-slaves who, upon dismissal from service, would return to the ranks of agricultural workers, their officers had a higher status. Noncommissioned officers had a long road to travel to eminence, but like the overseers they had at least a glimpse of the promised land of distinction. Captains and generals had this vision within their grasp: they were already of the élite.

In the subcategory of "artisans" were included all the townspeople who carried on crafts or trades. It must be remembered that Haiti had no cities, and that its two largest towns then numbered probably no more than 10,000 people each, so that artisans were not numerous. Since there was a distinction in the arduousness of various pursuits as well as in their financial return there existed in this category, as in the official and military, some chance for social prestige.

The only persons remaining outside the categories mentioned were colored landowners who had held estates in the colonial period. Dessalines took active steps to gain control of most of the land in the country, but at his death in 1806 there were still many of the old proprietors left who were, in the main, determined to hold their land and preserve their dignity as non-laborers.

Assassination by his political foes ended the career of Dessalines only two years after he assumed power. In 1805 he had had himself crowned emperor in imitation of Napoleon, but unlike Napoleon he permitted no nobility. "*Moi seul, je suis noble!*" he replied to ambitious henchmen who asked for the establishment of a peerage. It was the Emperor's tactless handling of the social situation which caused his murder, for he touched sensitive nerves on the raw in attacking property rights, inherited privilege, color distinctions, and social aspirations. The cultivators grumblingly accepted his decrees; the ambitious upper group did not.

The former affranchis fully intended to keep their lands once the

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The former affranchis fully intended to keep their lands

once the French were driven out. They could not but be alarmed as they saw the steady direction of Dessalines' moves toward a complete monopoly of land ownership by the state. On the very day following independence, a decree proclaimed that all lands owned by France in colonial days now belonged to Haiti. Next (February 7, 1804) Dessalines canceled all sales and donations made to mulattoes and ex-slaves by fleeing French who, in a last despairing effort to salvage something from the wreckage of olden days, had "entrusted" their lands to non-whites. By these two strokes all lands owned by white men before 1803 became state property,[5] but only the second clipped the wings of socially ambitious colored people.

Serious uneasiness was caused by the next measure, an order for a general verification of property titles. This would have been a delicate task at best, considering the disorder of the past thirteen years. It was made more complicated to carry out by the serious lack of men trained in law. A few like Balthasar Inginac, later an important adviser and trusted friend of two presidents, were scrupulously conscientious, but by the same token highly unpopular with those whom they deprived of newly (and shadily) acquired "estates." The majority of officials, according to report, listened to the pleading of many who had managed by hook or crook to secure a tenuous claim to vacant properties, validating their fraudulent titles for them. It has been claimed, without rebuttal, that most of these officials were not above taking bribes. When complaint was made to Dessalines of such actions he took steps to make his appointees do their duty, but each confiscation made new enemies for Dessalines.

Some of the mulattoes, citing their French paternity, claimed land formerly owned by their French fathers, even though these parents had never regarded their sons as more than bastards. Dessalines once broke out in furious answer to such a claimant: "*Et les pauvres nègres dont les pères sont en Afrique, ils n'auront donc rien!*"

The state took over thousands of acres. Those Haitians, colored or black, who aspired to landownership as the foundation of position,

5. The hatred of the Haitians for the French, and because of them, for white people in general, was seen not only in these confiscations but in commitments for the future. A proclamation of April 28, 1804, suppressed to "all foreigners" the right to own property in land. The first Haitian constitution, May 20, 1805, took an even more drastic step in saying that "no white man shall henceforth set foot in this country as a landowner," and that "*all* property formerly belonging to a white Frenchman" was now confiscate to the profit of the state.

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prestige, and the normal fulfillment of dignity, were thus frustrated in their efforts. They began to see that the Emperor intended to withhold from them freedom, room for the exercise of ability or power, fullness of life in whatever form. Not only was there little opportunity for achieving prestige; the repressive and contemptuous attitude of Dessalines denied them even ordinary negative respect, without which dignity of life is impossible.

By confiscation of vacant and falsely claimed estates, Dessalines created a vast public domain. He did not hesitate to secure other lands which he considered valuable, resorting to arbitrary and often cruel means—even, it is said, to forgery and murder—to dispossess those who stood firm in their claims. This attack on private property added other dissidents to his enemies—men who felt themselves clearly in the right legally and morally, men who with clear consciences joined the movement to put down a tyrant. The land thus acquired was leased in parcels at an annual rent to the highest bidders.[6]

The Emperor was blind to the normal human needs of the better elements of the population. He deprived them of property in land, the only basis they knew for wealth and independence; he forbade enterprises undertaken by individual initiative; he continually wounded delicate sensibilities. The Emperor was not a man to spare people's feelings, and he dared use the frank but dangerous words Negro and mulatto. He once shouted to a group of pleaders for position: "*Prenez garde à vous, nègres et mulâtres! Nous avons tous combattu contre les blancs; les biens que nous avons conquis en versant notre sang, appartiennent à nous tous; j'entends qu'ils soient partagés avec équité!*" It was not only Dessalines' idea of "equity" which aroused the *anciens libres* but his use of the descriptive nouns they hated.

The colored people were well aware of the hostility of Dessalines to their group. He was inferior to them in learning, and knew it. He was certainly, by the world's judgment, inferior to them in birth. His very deficiencies by comparison with his colored subjects made him hate them more: for example, he was passionately fond of dancing, preferring compliments on his grace to praise of his statesmanship; yet his awkwardness on the ballroom floor even

6. Although there are no records extant to show the exact amount of land which Dessalines succeeded in bringing into state ownership, it is estimated that more than two thirds of all the productive plantations in Haiti in 1806 were in the hands of the government. Other estimates range as high as ninety per cent.

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175 643 563 661 beside other ex-slaves was too evident to avert ridicule, which Dessalines quickly noted. Few opportunities escaped the Emperor, therefore, of making the light-skinned Haitians quake in their boots. He wrote to Pétion (August 24, 1804), leader of the colored people, that in his slaughter of white Frenchmen he had often been "unable" to distinguish between whites and light-colored Haitians. Pétion and his friends knew that Dessalines did not regret his inability to make the distinction.[7]

175 563 643 Possibly Dessalines was clear-sighted enough to realize that the old distinctions of color, if allowed to continue in the new state as indicative of social prestige, might cause endless strife within the nation. Possibly, on the other hand, he wished to make the lighter-skinned Haitians realize that he, a Negro, was more than their equal. Whatever his underlying motives, he was impatient with the struggle for prestige. The steps he took to eradicate distinctions based upon color were characterized by his usual blunt tactlessness. In 1805 he informed Pétion, the outstanding mulatto general, that a union of black and colored people was essential to the happiness of the Empire; he said he wanted the Haitian people to become *bronzed* by this union, so that there would be no longer any important difference of skin color. All this was preface to a proposal that Pétion, as the ablest of the mulattoes, should marry the Emperor's black daughter, Célimène. Pétion, refined, highly educated, and gently cynical, was considerably perturbed and frankly embarrassed by the suddenness of this radical suggestion. His reply, that he was not inclined to marry at all, offended Dessalines and made him suspect a slight, but he dismissed Pétion with the pointed suggestion that he "think the matter over." Pétion knew, as the Emperor did not, that one of his aides-de-camp, Chancy, was not only in love with Célimène but had already got her with child. It is entirely possible, too, that he was aware of the growing underground opposition to Dessalines and that, as the Emperor's star was beginning to decline, he did not wish

[721] 7. It must be said to the credit of the black masses that they did not relish the systematic slaughter of the whites which so pleased Dessalines. Negro cultivators frequently collected potential victims, hiding them and aiding their escape from the country. The repugnance of the masses for such massacre was so evident that their generals had at times to drive them at bayonet's point. "The blacks of the plain behaved very well," said an exile in a letter (June 1, 1804) written from Jamaica to Moreau de Saint-Méry. Madiou says that after the massacre of the whites some Haitian blacks abandoned their country and went to join former masters in a foreign land.

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to ally himself with the ruling family. When Dessalines shortly discovered his daughter's condition, he burst into maledictions against all mulattoes, saying that they had plotted this disgrace to him and to his family. He went so far as to speak of having them all executed. 175 563 643

The Emperor's determination, and all his measures, could not quench the social ambition of his leading subjects. They bore what must be borne, conspiring meanwhile to get rid of him. They still had the advantage over the masses of a superior education, and they knew the path to eminence, once the obstacle of the Emperor was removed.

Nothing was done during the reign of Dessalines to cultivate the minds of the laboring class. Discipline backed by force was the guiding principle in dealing with them. Instead of trying to educate his people to understand their duties and to take an active part in statecraft, Dessalines—his generals and counselors, mulatto and black alike, thoroughly approving—used only compulsion. There was actually little difference between the attitude of this ruling clique toward the mass of laborers and that of their former white owners. Both looked upon them as cattle. A few of his advisers tried to persuade the Emperor to provide moral and religious education for the people so that they would not be seduced into completely evil ways, but the Emperor replied, "You are wrong: the laborers can be controlled only by fear of punishment and even death; I shall lead them only by these means; my 'morale' shall be the bayonet." 175 643 661 641 [871]

In short, between 1804 and 1806 no prominent figure in Haitian life seems even to have dreamed of "liberal" institutions. Those who had education, knowledge, and culture preserved them carefully for themselves. The wisdom, even the possibility, of enlightening the masses was doubted. Most Haitians remained in complete ignorance of what went on in the outside world. 175 565 641

Dessalines was killed by ambush near Port-au-Prince on October 17, 1806. The mulattoes were generally supposed to have planned the assassination, for it was well known that they had no cause to be fond of him. His callousness had raised up enemies in all walks of life. The cultivators were glad he was gone, because of his harshness. They were virtually slaves again in all but name; it was reported that upon his personal estates he had made unsatisfactory workers run the gauntlet between lines of soldiers armed with thorny switches, and 175 643 661

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175 643 661 such an example of rigor might spread. The moral element of the population had long looked askance at his libertinage; his first act upon entering a town during a visit of state was regularly to have his aides select for him the most attractive females in the vicinity, with whom he would spend more time than at the business of governing. [7037] Not even his army was sorrowful over his death. He had let his loyal troops go for months without pay, and then, reviewing a group of them one day, taunted and railed at them for their ragged uniforms. "You look as naked as a bunch of old bottles!" he cried.

Dessalines had restored order to his country and had founded a state. Both achievements rested upon a display of force which inspired cringing fear and denied normal human aspirations. His entire social and economic order was based upon the subservience of the many to the few.

2. *Christophe* (*1807–1820*)

175 178 Until 1807 all Haitians had the same political background—the French colonial régime, revolution, the governorship of Toussaint, and the stern rule of Dessalines. Now the common path forked. Two avenues were opened up during the next dozen years, one by Christophe, the other by his Southern and mulatto rival, Pétion. The former was the road of discipline, hard work, and feudal control; the latter was one of persuasion, *laissez faire*, and small properties. Haiti ultimately chose the second.

175 643 642 662 The logical successor to Dessalines was his powerful Negro henchman, Christophe.[8] This black general felt so certain of his leadership that he did not even bother to attend the *Assemblée Constituante* which was to choose the new head of state. The mulattoes, however, had agreed among themselves that they had had enough of rule by ignorant ex-slaves. They consequently performed the very skillful manoeuvre of preparing a constitution which should effectively shear a new president of dictatorial power; this done, they dutifully elected Christophe to the presidential office. The wrathful general peremptorily declined to rule by virtue of so anaemic a document, and led his army southward to demand proper respect for his august

8. The name Christophe was taken from the English Caribbean island of St. Christopher, on which this black slave was born. Later in life he took as his first name Henry, spelling it in the English fashion rather than the French, as an indication of his wholehearted admiration of English people and English ways.

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person. To his evident surprise he was met not by meek submission, but by the army of the mulatto Pétion. Christophe was not defeated; neither was he victorious. He was obliged to retire in high dudgeon to his loyal supporters in the North, where he proceeded to set up a state according to his own idea of what a state should be. 175 643 642 662

The Assembly thereupon outlawed Christophe on the ground of rebellion against constituted authority, electing in his stead their great favorite Pétion, whose power as president of the Republic was to be limited by the new constitution. For the next thirteen years, from 1807 to 1820, the tiny country with its 10,000 square miles was divided, Christophe ruling in the North and in the fertile valley of the Artibonite, and Pétion governing until his death in 1818 in the West and South, the main strongholds of the colored element.

Christophe was of the stuff that myths are made of. He was indisputably Haiti's most dynamic, relentlessly effective, and dramatic ruler of the nineteenth century. Like Toussaint and Dessalines, he was a black ex-slave, and like them he had won his spurs as a military leader during the revolution. He was an ardent patriot whose love for his country did not lead to retrogressive chauvinism. Whereas Dessalines through fear and hatred of the French had excluded all white men from Haiti, Christophe had the perspicacity to see that the country could benefit from the contribution of whites. Englishmen he especially welcomed. Like his predecessors Christophe drove his people—with a tyrant's lash, many thought—but only to increase the glory of Haiti. 175 643 663

Christophe had a vaulting imagination which brought glamour even to practical expedients. He built a colossal fortress on a high mountain in the North, partly for defense, but partly to make his contemned Negro people feel that they could achieve one of the architectural and engineering marvels of the age. His exquisite palace, Sans Souci, not only satisfied his own vanity as a ruler but also provided a focal point for the imagination and loyalty of his subjects. In 1811 he had himself crowned king, Henry I, amidst pomp and circumstance—and then created a royal court, partly to reward his leaders, partly to get the fees for patents of nobility, but primarily to bind all important men in the country to himself and to the Haitian state with unbreakable personal bonds. Dramatic in almost every particular of his life and reign, he ruled for thirteen years more through force of personality than by tyranny. Taxes were heavy [712] [644]

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Taxes were heavy

175 651 652 and work strenuous; but there were a sound currency, commercial and agricultural prosperity, and a full treasury.

Like many a great man he was an overweening egotist. His 175 643 159 energy and ambition, for Haiti as well as for himself, neither understood nor tolerated a lesser determination than his own. At times he seemed more intent upon the letter than upon the spirit of his laws. Probably his chief defect, a common failing of strong men, was a disregard for humble individual worth. To write of him invites the most colorful vocabulary. He is Black Majesty and the Emperor Jones. By almost any standards of leadership he would be accounted a great man. He lacked only those few final, subtle qualities which make for sheer genius. In 1820, stricken by paralysis and faced with defections in his army, he died as he had lived, dramatically, ending his life with a specially saved bullet (folklore says a silver one), in his palace of the ironic name, Sans Souci.

175 643 In no significant respect did Christophe change the feudal structure of economic organization begun by Toussaint and carried on by Dessalines. It was in administration, especially as it affected social status, that the thirteen years of Christophe were important for the [641] future of Haiti. Where the Emperor had been an unpredictable tyrant whose heavy hand inspired only terror, Christophe was a sternly just father whose well-disciplined children respected, admired, and even loved him.

175 427 475 655 566 643 The land policy of the two régimes was similar. Government estates were farmed out on five-year leases to the highest bidders among the well-to-do; large plantations belonging to the state were tilled by cultivators who might, without taking the term too harshly, be called serfs; loyal supporters and wealthy individuals were entrusted with responsibility. Like Dessalines, Christophe added wealth to power and rendered all his subjects dependent upon himself rather than on their own resources and influence—but all this with a difference.

175 643 642 565 Where the Emperor had denied the natural vanity of his aides by refusing them nobility, Christophe accepted their ambition as perfectly normal and made use of it for his own purposes. Four years after he had established his state, he changed it from a republic to a kingdom; all his important men he made dukes, barons, counts, knights. He warned them that he would expect them to live up to the dignities conferred upon them. Pomp and regalia are costly;

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therefore plantations must be made to yield the uttermost farthing if the nobleman was to pay for the necessities of strict court etiquette. It was by no means a childish whim which prompted Christophe to call himself a king; rather an intelligent utilization of the human material the leader had to work with. Vanity was to serve an economic and a political purpose. 175 643 642 565

Christophe perceived that the defect of Dessalines' reign had been lack of security, both of person and property. Agriculture is a long-term investment and so must be hedged about by orderly rules. To this end the monarch stated his laws clearly, charged a fixed tax—one fourth of the annual crop—which would enrich the kingdom while allowing the tenant-proprietor a reasonable profit, and then guaranteed that no arbitrary demands would be made. Certainly there was no pampering of the wealthy, but there was ample prosperity resulting from regularity and security. 175 651

The ordinary citizen was, as he had been, bound to the soil as an agricultural laborer. This quasi-serfdom, however, was comparative freedom. It simply meant that the home and work of a man must be at the plantation on which he had been born. Saturday afternoons and Sundays were free, so that the laborers might make the most of their opportunities to visit the nearest market village, to buy and sell small goods, gossip, and enjoy the sociability of being part of a crowd. Being bound to the soil meant simply that they could not move, when the impulse seized them, to another plantation or another part of the country. Those whose mothers or relatives were natives of a plantation must return to that estate, being forbidden to live in towns. No person, military or other, who did not derive his living from a plantation, could marry an agricultural worker—a prohibition designed to prevent workers from leaving estates because of family ties, and particularly to prevent women, as mothers of future cultivators, from deserting agriculture. 175 566 641 466 [582]

Mediaeval serfdom itself went no further in binding people to the soil. Indeed, it did not go so far in regulating the daily life of serfs. Under Christophe the cultivators lived according to a routine as strict as that of a school. Reveille was rung as early as three o'clock to arouse women to prepare breakfasts for their menfolk; by four or four-thirty the bell was sounded for the commencement of work, which began after prayers had been led by the overseer. At nine o'clock there was a pause for luncheon, and then a resumption of 175 566 512 466

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175 work until noon. A two-hour siesta followed, but from two until
566 sunset there was steady work. Only after evening prayers was the
512 worker free. During the day no cultivator might leave his task except
466 for direst need. The lame and the halt were not required to till the fields, but must carry around buckets of drinking water, take care of the children, and do odd jobs about the estate.

175 Christophe made a steady and, in the main, successful effort to
566 explain to the people the necessity of hard work on the plantation.
466 As with the noblemen, the serfs knew precisely what was expected of them, and why. Their regimentation was strict, but understandable. It was clearly stipulated that if a worker shirked his job he was to be put in prison and made to do forced labor there. Laziness in the fields was to be punished by strokes from the overseer's liane. Hard and steady work was demanded during the whole thirteen years of Christophe's rule, but only rarely was there complaint, as there had been constantly under Dessalines, of cruelty on the part of overseers.

175 The quarter part of the total crop of any plantation was to go to
465 the workers as wages, and, since production increased and prices rose, this quarter which they were free to spend as they pleased provided a powerful incentive to further industry. As compared with anything they had known before, the workers were now recipients of an ample income. On the plantations they cultivated
[423] the money crops of sugar and coffee. In addition, each family had
[241] its own garden plot on which to raise the food crops—yams, plantains, beans, and bananas—for personal use.[9]

175 Christophe was so far ahead of his time that he tried to introduce
177 British methods of agriculture into his kingdom. The results were
407 insignificant. The plough, although obviously superior in efficiency
178 to the hoe, eliminated the sociable companionship of working in unison, and demanded horses and mules which the country lacked. The innovations were consequently too radical to be accepted. In the main, the agricultural methods of the kingdom continued to be those familiar in slave days.

175 Thirteen years of careful direction can fix many patterns of social
178 routine. One of Christophe's rules was that no cultivator attached to

[241] 9. The staples of other countries, such as Irish potatoes, wheat, barley, and oats, did not flourish in Haiti. On the large plantations, indigo and cotton, which had been money crops in the French régime, were generally neglected, as they had been in the time of Dessalines.

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One of Christophe's rules was that no cultivator attached to

a plantation—and every ordinary country person was so attached 175
—might leave the estate without permission from a military officer."[10] 566
Two of the common folkways of Haitian peasant life since his time 178
have been immobility and general acceptance of orders from the [484]
military. Both characteristics had been fostered by slavery and by the régimes of Toussaint and Dessalines, and these folkways became fixed under Christophe.

Other rules introduced by the King, however, lapsed shortly after 175
his strong hand was removed. For example, the monarch required of 178
the whole population that whenever they visited the capital on feast 291
days or went to the market towns on Saturdays they be decently clad 527
in clean clothes."[11] Since the time of Christophe, neatness of appear- 183
ance has hardly been a folk characteristic, probably because of poverty rather than lack of desire to dress well. Nor did scrupulous [44]
regularity of work in the fields continue as a folkway later, when the great plantations were broken up.

Like a father the King tried to inculcate moral standards of honesty 175
in his people. To prevent theft he had small valuables, such as watches 577
or jewelry or purses, "planted," and if the finder did not immediately 177
turn them over to the nearest Dahomet, punishment was meted out. Such a policy made honesty contagious. Thefts and depredation were soon almost unknown. The most tempting store of wealth could be left safely unlocked or in the open air. Christophe's achievement in this matter is eloquent testimony to his success as a paternal leader, for it is no small task to initiate moral ideas among people who for a generation have lacked them. Even today it is the proud boast of the Haitians that their people are honest.

As compared with the liberties of farmers in the United States of 175
the same period, the Haitian agricultural workers' freedom was 566
infinitesimally small, but by contrast with the bondage of slavery, their new status was definitely higher.

10. Christophe called his royal police force "Dahomets," after the West African [625]
kingdom, Dahomey, from which most of the men had come. They were not ordinary soldiers but especially imported and carefully selected men whose intelligence made them stand out from their fellows. Each Dahomet was given a course of training in his task as administrator before being sent out. The general consensus of foreign visitors was that these Dahomets were efficient even in small matters.

11. This rule was partly an indication of Christophe's vanity, personal and national, [577]
for he was deeply desirous of the good opinion of white visitors, especially those from England. He wanted Europeans to respect Haiti as they would respect any small [186]
state, and not to praise it merely as an example of "Negro progress."

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their new status was definitely higher. Mild serfdom might be thought of as the first intermediate step toward freedom. Democracy was still far off, there being no real middle class upon which to build it. Only the artisans of the towns and the ex-soldiers or the cultivators who had managed to lease small estates could be considered middle class. Christophe forced every dweller in villages or towns to have a manual skill. The only alternative was field work on a plantation.

The "aristocrats" of the kingdom were prevailingly black rather than colored. It was not to be expected that a vain man would soon forget the trick by which the mulattoes had frustrated him in his expectation of becoming the ruler of all Haiti. To say that the intermittent civil war between Christophe's kingdom of the North and Pétion's republic of the South was a struggle between blacks and colored people would not do great violence to the essential truth. Christophe's suspicion of gens de couleur was so well known that few were surprised at the high death rate of mulatto generals in the North. The murder of General Clervaux was definitely laid at Christophe's door.

The fact remains that among the nobility were men of all degrees of color. The King liked to say that he neither accepted nor yet took exception to the color of a man's epidermis—that in this matter he was *vert* (green), which is to say, neutral and indifferent. When he was angry his wrath fell indiscriminately upon the offender of whatever complexion. Similarly, when he found a light-skinned man who faithfully supervised a leased estate, thus proving his loyalty, the man was rewarded and promoted. Nevertheless, an underlying prejudice remained in his breast, bursting out occasionally at crises, and having ultimately a serious effect upon the loyalty of many of his people. When some of his subjects, enticed by the easy-going régime of the South, ran away to Pétion's republic, Christophe was angry enough to renew the war against Pétion (1811). The South won the encounter, thereby adding fuel to Christophe's rage. Three hundred prisoners he had captured he ordered tortured, and the angry King abused and insulted his own officers and executed several soldiers for having lost the battle. These actions caused more defections, renewed punishments, and a more abiding rancor. As one writer put it, the King "now regarded the mulattoes with a hatred so deep and fiendlike, that nothing would satisfy the direness of his

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vengeance but the utter extermination of that race."[12] He even ordered the execution of a mulatto woman in Gonaives because she had prayed for the success of Pétion.

During the latter years of his reign his personal popularity waned somewhat, owing to his relentless insistence upon efficiency and to his increasing tendency to lose his temper. Defections to the South occurred almost daily. The cultivators, comparing their never-ceasing toil on Northern plantations with the reported liberty and leisure of life in the South, continually drifted away. So alluring was the paradise of ease (and poverty) of the neighboring realm that Christophe found it necessary to keep a cordon of soldiers along the borders of his kingdom to prevent desertions. His administration now embarked on actual persecution of colored people. Inflammatory pamphlets were spread abroad, designed to make the Negroes think that the mulattoes were planning to enslave them once again. Under this campaign of propaganda many light-skinned Northerners had to go into hiding.

Despite all discrimination, the important line was drawn between cultivators who formed nine tenths of the population, and aristocrats who, with the army, made up the remainder. The nobility, the directors of landed estates, and the generals directed the activities of other people, so that the colonial prejudice against manual labor was strengthened. Here lay the basis of a persistent Haitian attitude of mind: to work with one's hands is to show oneself a member of the masses; to direct others is the distinction of the upper class. Education, neglected under Dessalines altogether, was fostered by Christophe. He established a few schools, inviting as schoolmasters certain Englishmen familiar with the then popular methods of the Lancasterian system; but since the cultivators were busy on the plantations, only the children of aristocrats benefited by the limited educational system and the social distance between classes was increased.

A French commentator says that Christophe showed unusual insight in devising for his kingdom "the only organization of which an African society was capable," namely, a combination of military despotism with certain benevolent inclinations, and territorial feudalism based upon a nobility created by the King. Actually, it suited not so much the African background of the people, which lay

12. Dr. Jonathan Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo* (Philadelphia, 1837), II, 197.

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114 642 175 at least a generation behind them, but rather their complete lack of any experience in self-rule. The author continues:

> In addition to the vanity of the black which was flattered by the distribution of principalities and duchies, there was the political thought which wished to fortify things by words. The most important sugar manufactories were distributed, with the property title, to the principal officers and civil agents of the government. Workers were allotted to these very much as were the Indians to the first Spanish conquerors. . . . Moreover, since African blood dominated in the North [that is, since there were few mulattoes and lighter-skinned people], the feudal lords, aided by the color of their skin, could enforce obedience to a yoke which in name only was modified [from slavery].[13]

[471]

175 642 566 631 421 625 692 The social organization of Christophe's kingdom, then, was one of large properties, with all the feudalistic trappings, resting upon a solid base of wage-earning serfdom. In contrast to mediaeval feudalism, the king was here much more than *primus inter pares*. Thanks to the policy of Dessalines, most land had come into state ownership, so that the nobility received their estates by royal favor, and held them as leases only so long as the King pleased. As in the Middle Ages, the noblemen were petty monarchs within the district granted to their jurisdiction. Their freedom of action, however, was even here subject to scrutiny: detachments of Royal Dahomets[14] were stationed in every cantonment or parish, to enforce discipline, keep the King informed, and find their own subsistence without a drain on the royal treasury. In every district was set up a court of *sénéchaussée* to see that justice obtained.[15] The King's law, not the nobleman's private code, prevailed in the whole country.[16]

13. R. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1846), II, 167–168.

14. Organized after the model of the police force existing in France before 1789.

15. These courts were composed of a royally appointed seneschal and his assistant, a king's procurer, and a clerk.

[671]

16. The Code Henry was promulgated on January 30, 1812. It consisted of seven parts: Civil, Commercial, Shipping and Maritime, Civil Process, Criminal and Police Process, Agricultural, and Military. In general the Code followed French precedent, but the section on Agriculture was Christophe's own. Sir James Basket (in his *History of the Island of St. Domingo* [London, 1818], p. 413) calls this part "a thing unexampled among other nations." It reveals not only the King's absorption in the main economic enterprise of his state, but also his skill in devising an integrated functioning of a social order of nobility and serfs with a plantation economy based on money crops. This Agricultural Law regulated such diverse matters as the reciprocal duties of proprietors and cultivators, the policing of plantations, and the culture and preparation of the major crops. It set forth industry as the parent of virtue, and idleness as the source of vice.

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Northern Haiti flourished magnificently under Christophe's 175
sternly benevolent rule. The King had that daring spirit of initiative 643
which was so generally lacking in later Haitian history; he had, in 642
addition, the power necessary to force through a new adjustment if 433
the old way showed defects.[17] He excited artificial wants among his leaders by making nobles of them, and then compelled them to satisfy these wants without ever slipping back to a lower standard of living. Thirteen years of enforced labor and of order kept by a rigorously effective police force gave northern Haiti the kind of prosperity
she had known in colonial days. Christophe encouraged commerce [438]
and protected foreign traders. He called in all debased coinage, sub- [439]
stituting for it sound gold and silver currency. The revenue he raised [692]
was larger than it had been since 1791, amounting to about $3,500,000 annually. Probably the most eloquent testimony to his success is the fact that at his death, when the kingdom of the North was once more united with the republic of the South, more than six million dollars found their way into the republican treasury.

The Black King's economic system worked. It was based on a 175
social division of the people, with the masses doing manual labor, 565
and the aristocrats definitely set apart and recognized as upper class. By 1820 Haiti was well on its way toward the caste system.

3. *Pétion* (*1807–1818*)

171
Almost all Latin-American countries in the nineteenth century 175
exhibited one common feature: an aristocratic landowning class 631
lording it over peons. Haiti did not follow this pattern. She had aristocrats and peasants, but the aristocrats did not own most of the land, and the peasants were not peons. If later rulers had kept the organization of economic life begun by Toussaint and developed by his fellow blacks, Dessalines and Christophe, it is almost certain that Haitian social evolution would have resembled that of the rest of Latin America, for it would not have been a great change from

17. Duraciné Vaval, "Le Roi d'Haïti Henri Christophe," in *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti*, II, No. 3 (June 1931), p. 14, says that Haiti's periodic civil troubles and social misfortunes, both ending in a diminution of the state's autonomy, have been due to economic maladjustments. "Our weaknesses in political life derive from our immobility in material production." Immobility is an index of stagnation. Few rulers of Haiti have been at once powerful enough to overcome the immobility and wise enough to know what measures had to be taken. [114]

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171 feudal holdings to absolute ownership of land by the influential. It is
•175 strangely paradoxical that an aristocrat, the light-skinned Pétion,
631 representing the cultured group in society, broke the economic power of his own aristocratic class and made the former slaves not serfs but peasants. It is doubtful whether he intended either result.

175 Alexandre Pétion was the antithesis of Haiti's three eminent blacks
643 in all but military skill. Toussaint's genius as a fighter lay in his surprise moves, Dessalines' in his recklessness, Christophe's in his
159 bulldog determination; but Pétion was a great general because he knew when to retire and so lead his enemy into an exposed position. The three Negroes had been born in slavery; Pétion, coming of a cultured and sophisticated affranchi family, grew up in France. Dessalines was a crude ruffian by comparison, while in the face of Pétion's suavity Christophe's impetuousness seemed rankly uncouth. Where they bludgeoned, Pétion persuaded; where they hacked their way through opposition in the determination to gain an end, he graciously yielded and so won new friends. Tactful at every point, he survived even such contretemps as his refusal of the hand of the Emperor's daughter.

As leader of a young nation, Pétion might almost be said to have had too broad an understanding of human nature. He was a gentle ruler over his people; when they erred he did not punish or upbraid, but excused their misdeeds by assuming the cause to be some fatal compulsion over which they momentarily had no control. He had no wish to drive the nation to "success." Neither did he care to use his position for personal aggrandizement. His mind was supple and practical, disdainful of abstractions, undeluded by resounding slogans, fertile in compromise, not finical as to means, always unsurprised, exquisitely tactful. When crises arose to dismay his ministers, Pétion's philosophic calm was undisturbed.

Cynically tolerant, he gave office to political enemies if they chanced to be able. A representative of the topmost class of society,
[645] he managed to moderate antagonisms based on color. He gave
[87] sanctuary and financial succor to the Spanish-American liberator, Simón Bolívar; he established the foundations of an educational
[423] system; he defended the state against Christophe's power; he ruled constitutionally; and he gave land to his people, even to the humblest of them. When he died, his subjects for miles around came into Port-au-Prince, where they stood weeping about his palace, refusing

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to be comforted. They had lost their best friend and their "*petit père.*" 175

Dessalines would be emperor and Christophe king, but Pétion was content to remain a simple president. He was an anomaly—as if a Parisian of delicate sensibilities and mellow tolerance had somehow come to power with a darker skin in an alien land. 643 159

He has been highly praised and is worthy of eulogy. The fact remains that his country was rich when he came to power and poor when he died; united in 1806 and divided in 1818. Candor compels his admirers to admit that many of the calamities of the social and economic history of Haiti can be traced back to Pétion's administration.

The crucial act of Pétion was to parcel the land. From that policy flowed the enduring consequences which became the predominant socio-economic characteristics of Haiti. 175 423 421

Until Pétion's time the island had never known small properties. Large estates had been the mark of social distinction in the French colony; Toussaint had kept the plantations large,[18] while Dessalines and Christophe had absorbed more and more land for the state, leasing it out in great blocks. The constitution of 1806[19] gave no indication of impending change, for it specifically declared all land to be the property of the Haitian nation. Within three years, however, the process of dividing and giving away the state's lands was well under way. 178

It would be illuminating to know what mental process in Pétion moved him to make so radical an about-face in land policy. The reasons he gave were, first, that the people had ably defended their country and so deserved a reward; second, that he wanted all the people to have a vital interest in the actual soil itself.[20] These may have been his only reasons. Others suggest themselves: the republic owed wages to its large standing army, which were more easily paid in land, of which the state had much, than in cash, of which it had little and progressively less; it would be much easier to keep peace in a country where men were free than where they were serfs; and the example of free ownership in the South would seem alluring enough

18. He permitted the leasing of plantations as small as fifty acres if the soil were especially rich. [427]

19. December 27. This document was largely the handiwork of Pétion.

20. The former explanation he consistently gave in his various messages to the Senate proposing progressive parcellings of the land; the latter he wrote to a friend, saying that he wished to "*enrichir chez nous l'amour du sol.*"

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to Christophe's serfs in the North to cause defections ultimately sufficient to win the civil war for the republic.[21]

Those who would read into Pétion's democratization of land tenure the liberal convictions of a far-sighted statesman must ignore the evidence of his earliest land acts. For two or three years nothing was so apparent as that Pétion wished to please his friends, the mulatto aristocrats. He not only had the Senate restore to their former owners all lands of which Dessalines had despoiled them, but he also agreed to a law authorizing a cash payment up to the full value of crops planted and then lost during the last year of the Emperor's rule.[22] By these concessions the President immediately wiped out the rancor left behind him by Dessalines, reversed that ruler's whole land policy, gained the support of thousands of aspirants for social position, and bound in personal loyalty to his régime all the colored leaders.

He went further. Insecurity of tenure under Dessalines had worried landlords who were not actually mulcted of their estates, and so the President undertook to guarantee security. Thereafter all sales of land were to be registered by government deed, and so confirmed to the purchaser in perpetuity; government courts would be empowered to settle disputes over payment of rents; proof of the death of the testator must be forthcoming before wills could be probated. Not even the single limitation on ownership—that if the proprietor of an estate should remain away from Haiti the state might lease his property and receive the income from it—disturbed them, for they were patriots enough, and poor enough, to feel that Haitians should live at home.

As if this were not enough to please the landed gentry, the tax

21. Saint-Rémy, *Pétion et Haïti* (Paris, 1854–57), V, 165–166, suggests another reason, namely, that people will always be more ready to defend land they actually own than for an impersonal state. This sounds logical, but certainly the Negroes had fought ardently enough to drive out the French in 1803, landless though they were. Saint-Rémy continues: "And moreover, was it not time to dismember the enormous plantations which still bore the names of those colonists whose mother country might still at any moment descend to reclaim their heritage? And could this dismemberment be achieved otherwise than by giving the people an honorable title to it?"

22. Two successive laws, February 9 and March 16, 1807, achieved these ends. The former specified that all persons who, by purchase or gift or legacy, had acquired land before November 1, 1803 (when Rochambeau surrendered) or since February 7, 1804 (when Dessalines had ordered a confirmation of all titles) should be newly assured of their rights to such holdings. There was a single, possibly unimportant, limitation: the acquisition must have been *by* Haitians *from* Haitians.

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As if this were not enough to please the landed gentry,

of one quarter of the crop was abolished.[23] This tax worked moderately well on great plantations with hundreds of workers and a large annual budget, but it bore heavily, sometimes unfairly, on smaller farms. To give up the government's fourth meant a tremendous drop in state revenues, but this was to be compensated by a new tax of ten *gourdes* (a gourde was then worth about five cents) on every thousand pounds of coffee sold in the country, and by an export tax on coffee. A man might raise sugar or make syrup, tafia (raw rum), and distilled rum, without paying any tax at all. Coffee culture required little careful cultivation, while sugar required a great deal; removing the tax from sugar would, it was hoped, encourage the cultivation of cane. The President was putting into practice the then novel idea of Adam Smith that the more freedom an enterpriser is allowed, the more he will produce, so that by pursuing his own self-interest he unintentionally benefits the state. To know definitely what taxes will be imposed, reasoned Pétion, is more of an inducement to a landlord than to face the double fluctuation of crop prices and the state's quarter. Small proprietors and sugar planters were now, like the larger landholders, attracted to Pétion's régime. 175 651 471

His final boon to proprietors, and one which Adam Smith would not have approved, was that of governmental subsidies in bad years. When prices of coffee and sugar were low, the state bought large quantities of these crops for the purpose of raising their price. The result was to increase the debt and to make the people feel that the state was responsible for individual economic success, rather than their own efforts. 175 652

These first concessions were all made to the important people of the South—to the mulattoes, families of the old régime, persons who desired economic prominence in order to bolster social position. The small folk of the Republic came next. The President recommended to the Senate the abolition of the law dating back to Toussaint's time which prohibited the holding of plantations of less than a minimum acreage. The Senate accordingly[24] reduced the minimum holding to thirty acres.[25] Actually this legislation did not bring 175 423

23. By a law of March 9, 1807. This tax was instituted by Toussaint and continued in effect by Dessalines and Christophe.

24. On April 21, 1807.

25. Or ten *carreaux*. Toussaint's law had allowed properties of fifty acres only in cases of exceptional fertility of land. See Note 18.

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•175 about any radical change, for few of the common people could find
423 money to pay for thirty acres, while the well-to-do all wanted more.

[433] Every concession desired by the landed proprietors had now been granted—with the result that economic prosperity was showing a steady decline. It was only when this fact was abundantly apparent that Pétion took the step for which he has since been so fulsomely praised and so roundly criticized. By permission of the Senate, in a law of December 30, 1809, he began to give away state lands: fifteen acres of cultivable soil to every soldier in the army, to be held in perpetuity, with proportionately larger grants to higher officers.

Opposition immediately arose to this measure, and from expected quarters. The owners of great estates protested that if soldiers had farms, other people would soon want (and receive) them, leaving no workers on the large plantations. Social climbers protested, for when practically anyone can own land there is no particular social distinction in having it. Pétion's minister, Bonnet, opposed the permanent alienation of the chief financial resource of the state, proposing instead the grant of long-term loans to soldiers for the purchase of land. Pétion was not insensible to the logic of some of these objections; he said, however, that a nation which relied upon the willing labor of masses of its citizens was ultimately stronger than one which depended upon forced labor of any kind. As for the socially aspiring, he could ignore their arguments since they were not publicly and openly expressed. To his minister he pointed out that loans, if made, would in all probability never be repaid, so that one might as well face the reality at once and give people the land.

All through the next decade Pétion made new and democratic divisions of the land. Able generals were given large tracts, partly as wages, partly as a stimulus to productive agriculture on their part. By another enactment, military invalids were rewarded with land. Eventually most of the rest of the public domain was either put on sale at such moderate price that thousands of humble Haitians might purchase their bit, or was effectively occupied by people who "squatted" far up in the hills, out of official view.

175 The democratization of land led to new adjustments in the eco-
471 nomic system. People who owned small farms would obviously not
24 continue to raise sugar and coffee, but rather turn to food crops for immediate family consumption. Only the large plantations could carry on the cultivation of money crops. These in turn, no longer able

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to command the forced labor of serfs, had to develop a new technique for securing manual labor. Legislation soon recognized the new state of affairs by enactments which kept distinct *la grande culture* and *la petite culture*. The former had to do with the production of sugar and coffee, from which the republic derived its wealth; the latter with small farming. *La petite culture* was simple cultivation of whatever the small owner wished to raise. Large-scale culture, on the other hand, became rather complicated.

Owners of great estates had to guide them only their experience of slave days and of serfdom under Toussaint and Dessalines. Now that both were gone, few planters were wealthy enough to pay wages for day labor; a new variation was needed. It was forthcoming in the *métayer* system—a crop-sharing arrangement with tenants closely resembling that which prevails today in some parts of the United States. The owner leased his estate in large or small plots to tenants. Half the income went to the landlord and half to the tenant; but the landlord must furnish the sugar mill and other necessary machinery where cane was raised. Laws were passed to give a measure of security to the proprietor. The contract between him and the tenant (*fermier*)[26] must be signed before a civil official; the engagement must extend through the harvesting of one crop; tenants even then might not abandon their contracts except after notice of three months, with a declaration to the local official.

Punishments were stipulated for the breaking of contracts. A tenant who had made an agreement and then abandoned the *habitation*, even for a visit elsewhere, without a certificate attesting his regularity, might be imprisoned for eight days the first time, a month the second, and three months the third, such imprisonment to be spent in hard labor on public works. Any disputes arising between plantation owners and tenants were to be taken before the local justice. If they threatened to develop into serious cases, the justice was to notify the commandant of the nearest important town. A person who fomented disturbance of such agreements (the Haitian equivalent of "labor agitators," style 1810) might be imprisoned for a year, as also his accomplices. Commandants of each arrondissement must put down disorder as soon as requested by landlords, tenant farmers, or overseers. They must likewise make frequent patrols of

26. The word "fermier" must not be translated simply as "farmer"; the idea of a contract and a rental fee is implicit in the French word.

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175 675 692 their districts, principally during the working hours of the day. They were held responsible for all consequences of their own negligence.

175 671 466 This whole flow of legislation was designed primarily for the protection of the great landed proprietors, yet there were other laws which aided the masses. In former days workers had been coerced through corporal punishment. This was by law now abolished. Temporary assignments of garden plots were required for each family of laborers; medical care must be provided at the expense of the planter; the aged and infirm must be guaranteed the right to keep their homes and gardens even though no longer able to work. Expectant mothers in the fourth month of pregnancy must be relieved of field work, with no limitation of their right to share in the estate's income; mothers of nursing children must be permitted to remain at home until the weaning of their infants.

175 647 241 A great concession to the workers was made by abolishing the office of "inspector of cultures." In the days of Toussaint and Dessalines each district of the country had had its inspector, whose duty it was to see that crop cultivation proceeded according to schedule.[27] This man's disapproval of conditions resulted in fines and personal chastisement. By abolishing the office Pétion effected a great saving in salaries, for there had been thousands of these inspectors; on the other hand, the watchfulness of the inspectors had kept agricultural production at a high level. With no officials to dog the footsteps of the workers, crops immediately fell off.

175 466 24 656 Pétion clearly expected la grande culture to be the prevailing mode of agriculture in the republic. He fostered all kinds of legislation regulating it, even aside from that already mentioned. For example, a complete schedule was prepared for the division of income of the estate.[28] But the entire system was too neatly worked out and artificial to be effective, particularly since it was not backed up with force. The threat of punishment removed, most workers began gradually, often deliberately, to sabotage the system. It was much more pleasant

27. Christophe followed his predecessors in keeping the district inspectors.

[466] [465] 28. This could be very complicated. A tenant farmer might hire workers, and so have to share his half of the income with them. In such cases, the division of the money crops was to be made in kind or in money, at current prices, in the presence of the local justice, his assessors, and an officer of the *gendarmerie*. The workers' "fourth" was divided into portions of which three went to the first foreman, two to each of the skilled workers, one and a half to each male or female worker, and one half to each child laborer between ten and fourteen years of age.

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to spend one's time in the allotted garden patch than to cultivate sugar cane steadily in the heat of the day. In a garden there was more variety to the work, and more independent decision; in a cane field all must work in unison to be effective. Moreover, the yield from the garden was a daily thing, while that of the cane fields came but once a year. Less and less were the overseers able to get the tenants away from their gardens and into the fields. 175 466 24 656

Not all the sabotage came from the common folk. Landowners had their normal share of profit motive. The complex system of social security and benevolent stewardship ate away much of the income of the estate.[29] More important, the owners had had no experience of plantation management other than by directing forced labor. Corporal punishment was now abolished, but to the owner it was still unthinkable that there should be no coercion in plantation work. The laws protecting labor therefore left them bewildered, and they did not hold up their part of the system. Finding it expensive to maintain sugar machinery, impossible to engage docile workers, and necessary to finance social security, most of the "aristocrats" simply took the easier path of leasing their estates in small subdivisions, getting out of them what they could. 175 466 471 24

Another unexpected result of Pétion's general policy was to shift the main produce of the republic from sugar to coffee. Sugar had for decades been the staple crop of southern Haiti; but its cultivation requires scrupulous care and expensive machinery. Coffee, on the other hand, grows wild both in the lowlands and at heights of three thousand feet. It is "wild" in the sense that plants spring from seeds dropped by parent trees, without careful planting. When it became obvious that the workers were not to be persuaded to regular work in the cane fields, the landlords broke up the large plantations so necessary to sugar cultivation. Each tenant farmer was almost sure to find coffee trees on his rented plot of land. He would harvest the berries but would do little or nothing to tend and improve the plants, as he did not own them. In French days coffee trees had been pruned, fertilized, grafted; the new Haitian farmer simply let nature take its course. Pétion's careful planning resulted consequently in an entirely unplanned, accidental, and automatic adjustment to new conditions of life. 175 433 245 249

29. That the landlords did not too vigorously protest this system of care for the workers was due to their familiarity with similar care in slave days. [466]

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175 642 178 433 Haitian writers sometimes praise Pétion for his democratic leanings, by implication criticizing Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe for their feudalistic notions. If the blacks were undemocratic, at least they had experience back of the system they selected for administering the land: their methods worked. Pétion's plan, on the contrary, admirable though it seemed to later "liberals," was unexpectedly disappointing. The national income declined; estates were steadily broken up and sub-leased to small farmers; sugar disappeared from the state's balance sheet, while coffee did not supply an equivalent income; discipline of the workers gave way to individualism. Although the whole legislative code favored the landlords, la grande culture crumbled. One is driven to conclude that Pétion simply tried one device after another—always the easiest he could find—to keep state economy functioning.

175 178 565 When Pétion came to power, the common folk of southern Haiti were serfs with a memory of slavery; when he died, they were peasants. At the beginning of his régime the mulattoes and other social aspirants felt they were struggling for very existence against the relentless policies of black rulers; as it closed they were beyond any doubt aristocrats, but by the same token progressively less well-to-do. No one any longer attacked their social pretensions; but the worldly wealth on which these pretensions were based was disappearing along with the country's prosperity, so that new criteria had to be developed.

175 671 As we have said, the keynote of Pétion's rule was persuasion. Where Dessalines ordered, Pétion suggested; where Christophe decreed, Pétion recommended. There is not a single act one could cite during his entire presidency which had the effect of tightening up the organization of the republic. When laws were not properly observed, instead of penalties being made more severe or sure of application, the laws themselves were calmly allowed to lapse. In fact, the period from 1807 to 1818 was one of transition, of experiment, of discovering a congenial way of life. Since it was clear that the mass of citizens were peacefully disposed and unambitious, the President was inclined to let custom rule in each little community. Laws were not repealed, but they were enforced only when general public opinion was clearly in their favor. At many points the upper class would have liked more disciplinary control over the masses and said so to Pétion; yet they realized that in a less than ideal world one

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may not have all the heart desires. Under Dessalines there had been stern discipline of the workers but no recognition of the aristocracy; now under Pétion the people went their own inefficient way, but aristocratic eminence was happily recognized. 175 671

Examples of experimental legislation abound. Some proposals succeeded but more failed. One of the partial successes was the establishment of an agricultural holiday, *la fête de l'Agriculture*, to stimulate interest in good cultivation. Two months before the day set, the commandants of departments, arrondissements, and cantons, together with the justices of these divisions, were to nominate the laborer in each parish who had done the best work of the year. A prize medal was awarded not only for the sake of honoring him but also to stimulate his fellows. Similarly the officials would choose a child between seven and ten years of age, living on the best cultivated *habitation* in the district and belonging to parents most distinguished by their conduct and fondness for work, to be brought up and educated at the expense of the state. The annual feast was celebrated for many years after Pétion's death, but the officials became too lax to make careful selections of prize-winners. The holiday was kept, therefore, but served none of its original purposes. 175 527

As a case of legislation that failed may be cited the highly moral measure encouraging, but not requiring, legitimate marriages among cultivators rather than the customary informal union without ceremony. The preamble of this law pointed out that legal marriages were 175 582 588

> the only means of assuring a person of all the advantages of society; of procuring consolation, care, and help in sorrows and in sickness; of making purity of customs, so necessary for the happiness of men and the conservation of their health, reign among the people; of steadily increasing the population of each habitation; of extending agriculture and of increasing production.[30]

The mass of people, however, had had no experience of legal marriage. In the time of slavery such unions would not have been respected by an owner who wished to sell his slaves, and Dessalines had seemed to care very little whether people married or merely lived together informally. It will shortly be seen in detail how lasting was this inertia of tradition.[31]

30. Cited in Saint-Rémy, *op. cit.*, V, 29.
31. See Part III, "Sex Relations and Home Life."

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175 In his easygoing republic Pétion saw prosperity slowly wane, cultivation decline, profits give way to deficits. He issued a large amount of paper currency, and continually hoped for better times which did not come. The days of large fortunes were over. The economic system affected the aristocrats: although they were still landowners, so also were thousands of common folk. The criterion of rank became increasingly not wealth, but rather pursuit of a career which demanded no manual labor. Distinctions, if they are to be effective, must be made on the basis of conditions not easily achieved by all and sundry. Education and good French met this requirement; even more did a light skin color.

175 Pétion, darling of the mulattoes though he was, never drew a color line. There is no suggestion in any of his actions that he gave preference in his appointments to people of his own color. He suppressed at least one insurrection led by men who would have liked to stir up color prejudice. He often tried by quiet irony to make his people less sensitive to their complexions. It is eloquent testimony to his fairness that the 200,000 blacks in the republic never faltered in their love for him. They had ample reason to mistrust the haughty and ambitious colored people, some of whom had lorded it over them in colonial days; but they knew that the President did not share their pretentious attitude. One look at the North, ruled by a black, was enough to convince any Southerner that his happiness was safer in the hands of a mulatto than in those of a Negro ex-slave. At Pétion's death, therefore, there was no demur at the succession to power of another light-skinned man.

175 Haitians of a later day have discussed at great length the wisdom of Pétion's parceling of state lands. His supporters (and they are numerous) as well as his critics generally keep the controversy on the lofty plane of ideals, intentions, and hypothetical contingencies. Pétion is praised for being generous to humble folk where all other rulers of his country had been severe; for being a realist in accepting and adjusting his measures to the limitations of the average Haitian's character; for building a patriotism upon love of one's own small plot of land; for ruling constitutionally, with his Senate, rather than dictatorially. Most especially, Pétion is the one man among the early rulers who seemed to have any realization of the human values involved. Material gain is desirable but not at the expense of liberty. Freedom means something, even in poverty.

The critics do not challenge Pétion's good intentions or integrity;

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they even comment upon his unselfish generosity, which seems to have been entirely free of any desire for personal gain. They accuse him rather of taking the easiest course—that of trying to pacify every group in the republic: the masses, by giving them land and removing any external compulsion to work on it; the army, by making their enlistment profitable; the aspiring aristocrats, by validating their titles to estates and not challenging their prestige with a demand for responsibility. Strong states, the critics argue, are built on lines of discipline, not of perpetual yielding.

From an economic point of view a more valid criticism would ask the simple question: what was the practical result of his policies? Under the three previous Negro rulers agriculture had prospered, for these men kept state lands intact and forced the population to work; under Pétion, on the contrary, prosperity steadily declined with the division of land and the removal of compulsion. To expect a body of illiterate, inexperienced ex-slaves automatically to develop such economic virtues as industry, foresight, and thrift in a land which never knew any of these is not realistic, but merely quixotic. The Haitian critic Magloire implies that Pétion was either completely and cynically indifferent to common graft or else naïvely confident that men newly free would somehow be preternaturally honest. He goes into detail:

> Lands were distributed free, without order or method, each person taking what came his way and establishing himself as he could; graft and jobbery, under varied guises, governed the granting of concessions. As for properties in the towns, some people established themselves in upstairs apartments and others in ground-floor ones, without bothering to think of the lawsuits which might result from this disorder. In the sales made by the State, 50 and 100 and 200 gourdes were paid for real estate which was worth 10,000 and 20,000 and 40,000 gourdes or more. The administration put up for sale the property of towns, of communes, and of the State. Even buildings occupied in colonial days by officials, buildings whose construction had cost considerable sums, were bestowed on the people. . . .
>
> By a too great fractioning of the national domain, and carried away by the influence of false egalitarian and democratic ideas, Pétion brought about what a modern writer calls "the forcible neglect of agriculture"[32] throughout the Republic.[33]

32. J. N. Léger, *Haiti: son histoire et ses détracteurs* (New York, 1907), p. 162.
33. Auguste Magloire, *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social* (Port-au-Prince, 1909), pp. 260–263.

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175 114 433 Practically every contemporary foreign visitor contrasted the divergent policies of Christophe and Pétion to the overwhelming advantage of the former. One Englishman, intent upon defending the Negro against the charge of "natural indolence," went so far as to say that the majority of the people in the republic, although "possessed of small estates, on which they earned their living," were yet no less diligent than the forced laborers on Christophe's plantations in the North.[34] His only proof of this contention, however, was the greater volume of commerce at Port-au-Prince, capital of the republic, than at Cap-Henry (now Cap-Haïtien), capital of the kingdom.

175 433 652 642 The economic case is strongly against Pétion. The decline of large-scale agriculture, the empty treasury, governmental purchase of surpluses when prices were low, debasing the coinage[35]—by such practical proofs, the republic was vastly less efficient than the stern dictatorship of the kingdom. But Pétion's people had freedom, while Christophe's were serfs. And Pétion's republic endured, to become reunited Haiti. The kingdom perished with Christophe.

4. *The Final Effort toward Plantation Life* (*1818–1826*)

175 643 642 The mantle of Pétion fell in 1818 upon the shoulders of his meticulous secretary and minister, Jean-Pierre Boyer. Two years later, upon the death of Christophe, the kingdom of the North was once again united, without a struggle, to the South.[36] It is conceivable that the refined mulatto Boyer might have infused into his people a spirit of industry and ambition, now that tranquillity reigned after fourteen years of separation and warfare. The people of the North had had a long experience of intense activity, while those of the

34. W. W. Harvey, *Sketches of Hayti; from the Expulsion of the French, to the Death of Christophe* (London, 1827), pp. 361 ff.

[652] 35. Pétion's coins were so easily imitated that the country was inundated with counterfeit money. The government issued only five million dollars worth of this currency, but in 1818 twelve millions were in circulation, the surplus having been fabricated in Europe and the United States.

[175] [643] [642] [648] 36. In 1822–23 Boyer likewise succeeded, with little fighting, in bringing the Spanish two thirds of the island (Santo Domingo) into the republic. For the first time since 1697 the whole island was really unified under one rule. Toussaint had held it in 1801–2 and the Haitians claimed it thereafter, but real unity did not come until Boyer's time, when all the Spanish colonies in the New World were breaking away from their mother country. Santo Domingo regained its independence in 1844 shortly after the abdication of Boyer.

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South in general had the most loyal feeling toward a government which had been benevolently generous to them. A blend of the two might have been fruitful. 175 642 643

It was not any want of patriotism that caused Boyer to miss his great opportunity but rather a defect of ability. Desiring, like Pétion, to lead rather than to drive his people, he nevertheless lacked even more than his former chief the force of personality which might have persuaded them to work hard for the greater glory of Haiti. Despising the brutal compulsion exercised by Dessalines and Christophe, which he regarded as savage and too closely resembling the earlier methods of slave owners; wishing to emulate solely the gentleness of his predecessor, Boyer hoped for a number of years that his people would become industrious of their own accord. His hopes were frustrated. During his twenty-five-year presidency the mass of Haitians became so indifferent to pecuniary inducements that little work could be got from them beyond that required to produce necessary food. As commerce declined, the President was driven to fresh issues of debased currency and to the opening of mines in different parts of the country, though he knew that the richest mine Haiti possessed was its still fertile soil. 175 433 [652] [316]

For the first seven years Boyer pursued a policy based on hopeful expectation, refusing to inaugurate any of the forceful measures of his black predecessors. But by 1823 the treasury, enriched though it had been by the surplus from Christophe's exchequer, was empty; in 1824 disbursements exceeded income. Convinced in 1825 that his *laissez-faire* policy was failing to produce results, he decided to heed the insistent counsel of those (including most of the aristocratic, landholding class) who advised the reëstablishment of a coercive system of agriculture. His officials showed him that nowhere in the country were sugar plantations any longer being cultivated on a great scale—except for a few estates run by government officials who could command the forced labor of convicts. The policy of offering cultivators a fourth of the total crop of a plantation as wages was luring practically no laborers to work.[37] Even the few owners who offered the fourth plus daily wages had no success. Quite simply, the average Haitian preferred to be his own master, working only when he wished, and particularly working only for himself and his family. 175 652 24 433 466

37. This fourth in wages must not be confused with the quarter in taxes abolished by Pétion. See page 46 for a discussion of the quarter-crop wage system.

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175 24 671 643

Convinced at last that the easygoing policy was a failure, Boyer devised by way of remedy a new set of agricultural laws. Where his predecessors in the North had forced action first and then issued simple laws to fix the practice, Boyer, always cerebral rather than active, planned a complete Code which was designed to call forth action. On May 1, 1826, following an address by the President, the Senate issued the Code Rural, an ingenious attempt of Boyer and his secretary-general, Inginac, to reorder the agricultural life of Haiti.

Never again in the history of the country was so detailed a scheme worked out. It was an attempt on a grand scale to order the life of all people for common prosperity. In addition to its own broad scope and elaborate detail, it was fortified by almost unanimous support among the aristocracy, not only the ex-peers of Christophe's defunct kingdom, but also the large landowners of the republic who under Pétion had never known large incomes. In considering the Code, one cannot restrain a certain admiration of Boyer's ingenious mind. Yet it marked the end rather than the beginning of plantation agriculture, for it utterly failed of its purpose. It was the impressive monument over the tomb of state control.

To examine it further, we must desert the world of men for one of pure economic device. The journey is hardly one of discovery, for Boyer and his aides were simply attempting to freshen up for use the methods which had served colonial Saint-Domingue and feudal Haiti. For all the tedium of a voyage through the mazes of an economic plan which came to naught, the Code will be found significant as marking the end of a way of life, even when the way which succeeded it had already begun to take form.

175 671 24 566 693

The dominating principle of the Code was the Haitian's "obligation" to work on the land. To this end, the worker was once more legally attached to the soil. Every individual who was not a public functionary, and who had not private means or a profession—in plain English, every Haitian except the aristocrat, the official, the artisan, and the soldier—was bound to the land, with no right to separate himself from it except in case of imminent danger. An agricultural worker might apply to the local *juge de paix*[38] for permission to quit the countryside to live in a town or village, but the judge was not to give the permission without being assured of the morality of the

38. A functionary who combined the offices of local judge, justice of the peace, and recorder.

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applicant, of his regular conduct, and his ability to maintain himself economically in the town. Land laborers might not send their children to school or have them apprenticed in a town without a certificate from the same judge. Under no pretext might a worker establish a shop or sell his produce in the countryside; certain exceptions were made of necessary articles of food and home manufacture. No laborer might build a home in rural parts except on the plantation to which he was attached. 175 671 24 566 693

An individual, once placed by the government in the category of "cultivator," might never be removed from that class except by official authorization. Even with the consent of the proprietor and the agricultural administrator of the district, he was not to quit the estate to which he was bound for more than eight days.

We may further note in the Code that coöperative enterprise among the workers is forbidden. Anticipating the possible tendency of laborers to set up what in modern times would be called a producers' coöperative, presumably to lapse thereafter into laziness, the Code requires that every worker engage himself individually by authentic contract to the service of a proprietor or lessee. Such engagements for la grande culture are not to be for less than three years, or more than nine. Penalties for infractions of these rules are fines, imprisonment, or forced labor on public works in the chief town of the commune. 175 671 474 686 566

The Code directs the management of agricultural property and grazing establishments,[39] also the making of contracts between the proprietor and his hirelings. Rural police are established, in imitation of Christophe's Dahomets, to act as inspectors of plantations and of the workers on them. 175 671 625 421

The section repressing vagrancy is very full. All persons not proprietors or lessees, yet living in rural parts without having made a contract with some producer, are classed as vagabonds, to be arrested and taken before the magistrate. This official will warn them that by law they are bound to make a contract, and that if they refuse they will be sent to prison. Should a vagabond persist in refusing to sign a contract after eight days of confinement, he is condemned to labor on public works until he agrees. Should the prisoner be a minor, he will be sent to his parents. 175 686 24

39. This latter item was inserted as an adjustment to one of the primary occupations of the Spanish end of the island.

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[1804-1843]

175 566 671 24 A cultivator who loafs on his assigned job shall spend twenty-four hours in jail for his first offense and lose his wages; for a second offense he must work on public projects. Field labor shall be regularly carried on from Monday morning until Friday evening, except for legal holidays; work begins at dawn, continues except for a half-hour at breakfast until noon, stops then for two hours, and is once more resumed until sunset. Pregnant females are to be assigned to light work only, and after the fourth month of pregnancy need do no field work. Four months after delivery, a mother is to return to field work, but with three hours a day less than before, until she has weaned her child. Disobedience and insult to overseers are punishable by imprisonment. Since Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays are free, there is to be no dancing or any other festivity by night or day from Monday through Friday.

[943] [846] [527]

175 671 473 24 On each estate is to be a hierarchy of directors, all of whom the workers shall obey. In ascending order, these men are drivers (or squad foremen),[40] jobbers, sublessees, lessees, proprietors and managers, overseers of districts, and police.

175 465 24 In establishing a system of remuneration Boyer kept the accustomed method of allotting a proportion of the marketed crop to the workers in lieu of hourly or daily wages. In any season from a quarter to a half of the gross receipts of the estates was to go to the laborers, the exact proportion in any year to be determined by the government. It was assumed by Boyer and Inginac that there would be an added inducement to work if the laborers' share were distributed not equally, but rather in proportion to the merit and worth of the individual, these evaluations to be made by the recommendation of overseers.

175 692 24 Enforcement of the Code was placed in the hands of local justices and the army. Soldiers were to be assigned to each plantation, receiving their living from it, in return preserving order and routine. Although the whip was once more prohibited, steady labor might still be enforced by other means; the law definitely stated that soldiers were to discipline the lazy, the lawless, and the vagrant. Local justices were to deal with any civil difficulties arising in the execution

[192] 40. The word "driver" was commonly used in West Indian slave colonies with no other meaning than that attached to the word when one speaks of a man "driving" his horses. It is not necessary to beat a horse to make it go properly; a word of direction may suffice.

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of contracts. It is worthy of note that soldiers assigned to estates were responsible for their actions not to any civil authority but only to their military superiors. 175 692 24

On paper, at least, the Code meant for the worker a return to the serfdom instituted by Toussaint and continued by his black successors.[41] Boyer's new system was richer in detail than Christophe's, but it clearly owed much to that monarch's practical scheme. There is a vital difference, however: serfdom under the Negro rulers worked because discipline was enforced; Boyer's effort to reintroduce it was an abject failure. 175 566 671

Many commentators have praised the Code as able and intelligent. Since the effort to revive familiar practice did not succeed, it is important to understand the reasons for failure of an almost perfect paper plan; one similar to the system which had functioned in all Haiti from 1798 to 1806, and in northern Haiti until 1820.

To begin with—and this was in great measure its final downfall—the workers simply ignored it. When Toussaint had first introduced serfdom, many Negroes quietly moved up into remote hills where they would be out of sight; a good number had remained away from surveillance, raising children who cherished their own independence of action. The influence of this group gradually spread. Moreover, for nineteen years in the South, ever since Pétion had first become president, the masses had had increasing experience of economic freedom. There is no doubt that the majority of the people preferred a low standard of living with liberty to great national prosperity depending on personal compulsion. Northern "cultivators" had known force and efficiency under Christophe, but they, too, preferred their five-year experience of easygoing life in reunited Haiti. Such complete, antagonistic inertia toward the law made its enforcement impossible. Individual cases of sabotage might be dealt with, but not wholesale refusal of the group to sign contracts.

Aside from this, too much land had already been given away throughout at least half the country to make possible a fair and efficient functioning of the Code. Any forced-labor system would have had to depend on large plantations. Since Pétion had divided 175 423

41. R. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, "La République d'Haiti: ses dernières révolutions; sa situation actuelle," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, XV, No. 4 (Nov., 1845), p. 15, called it "*l'infeudation à la glèbe*," which it certainly was. The whole Code was designed to prevent any further parceling of the land and any further lapse into idleness on the part of the workers. [114]

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175 423 up so many of these, there was no way short of a revolution to reconstitute the now parceled estates. Obviously the Code did not envisage the control of serfs by small property owners, yet there were more small owners than large.

175 184 466 In the third place, the Spanish-speaking masses of the eastern part of the island had never experienced the kind of forced labor with which most Haitians had been at one time or another familiar. Their noncoöperation made enforcement difficult.

175 647 Finally, the administration of so detailed a plan called for the establishment, at once and yet in complete order, of a fully trained corps of bureaucrats, perfectly coöperating with each other, most of them educated, and all incorruptibly honest. If every literate person in the state had been drafted for service, Boyer could not have filled all the offices required by the Code.

175 465 434 After brief and piecemeal experience with the law in operation, moreover, even the few remaining large landholders turned against it. While they approved the provisions for forced labor, they discovered that to turn over to the workers a quarter or half of the annual crop, in a falling world market, gave too slim a profit.[42] Without the support even of its original sponsors, failure of the law was inevitable.

175 648 652 These factors alone would have been enough to kill the Code; but its real death blow came from an entirely different quarter. The year before the agricultural laws were passed, Boyer had achieved what he considered to be a political master stroke. He had made a financial settlement with France whereby Haiti, in return for a large sum in cash and regular annual payments for sixty years thereafter, should receive full recognition of independence from France; also the former mother country would renounce all claims to any properties in the country. Boyer had felt that the chief debilitating influence on the political and economic life of his people was the constant dread that France might one day return to claim her lost colony. To rid the nation of that incubus, therefore, seemed to him a high feat of statesmanship, no matter what the financial cost.[43]

[433] [24] 42. Coffee, now the staple crop of Haiti, was meeting competition from the other coffee-producing countries of the world. To put the sugar manufactories into working condition again called for more money than was available.

[643] [648] 43. Boyer's hand was forced to a certain extent by France, which had been running diplomatic pressure upon Haiti; the President, however, seemed to regard the settlement as a distinct coup.

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175 114 703 The result was entirely different from Boyer's expectations. As a French critic graphically puts it, the Haitians

> who had never had more than a borrowed energy—that inspired by fear of French invasion—when they saw themselves freed, by a solemn treaty, from all attack on their coasts, seemed to allow their arms to drop relaxed at their sides, saying, *Let's take a rest.* The soldier who up till now had squeezed his body into a uniform and had subjected himself to European discipline, shouldering his arms, staring straight ahead as if seeing nothing, now began to leave unbuttoned the uniform which choked him, dragged a mattress into his sentry-box so that he might sleep through his watch, and let his cross slip to the earth never to pick it up again.[44]

175 701 703 671 433 In short, the Haitian army as a disciplined force ceased to exist, and with it all authority of its officers. Boyer had counted upon the army to enforce the provisions of the Code Rural, but now a soldier's life was a paid sinecure. By gaining political security Haiti had inadvertently lost its last chance of economic prosperity through a system of forced labor.

175 423 433 435 466 Wherever the Code was put into partial operation, revenue from plantations continued to decline. The price of real estate dropped proportionately. It was a simple matter for workmen who had signed contracts to avoid carrying out their stipulations, and just as simple to evade the law requiring fifteen acres' minimum for a single holding. Practically every Haitian wanted to own a bit of land; once he had acquired his bit, however small, he had (or so he felt) earned an exemption from directed labor.

175 671 625 661 Only on estates near the few big towns, where government officials were concentrated, was there much pretense of trying to enforce the Code. Sentries at the gates of Port-au-Prince were authorized to confiscate plantains, yams, or fruit brought by any worker who, in contravention of the Code, had strayed to market on a forbidden day, but sentries soon acquired the habit of not seeing countryfolk who passed the gates. Reports kept cropping up that rural policemen were robbing poor cultivators of their coffee under pretense of protecting them from the penalties for breach of the law; this suggests that the Code was used rather for graft than for the stimulation of agriculture.

175 671 625 535 517 By and large, however, the Code was merely ignored. Agents could not be found who were willing to stand in any community

44. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, Saint-Domingue, II, 181.

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against almost unanimous public opinion opposing enforcement. In 1828 it was reported that dancing, which the Code had strictly limited to week ends, was a nightly diversion near the capital. One of the principal dancing resorts was the house of a captain of rural police, the very man who was supposed to repress such amusements.[45]

Boyer had done his best, and his best was merely a good piece of office work. When his Code failed to operate, he could think of nothing further to suggest for the economic rehabilitation of Haiti. The last fifteen years of his administration witnessed a gradual lapse into that small-scale farming which was to be characteristic of Haiti for the remainder of the nineteenth century. By comparison with former standards, production and steady industry had both fallen off since Boyer came to the presidency. The testimony of visiting foreigners is unanimous on the decline of industry.

The British consul, Mackenzie, said in 1827 that there was very little field labor then being done, and that only elderly people, principally aged "Guinea Negroes" long accustomed to steady work, carried on the tradition. No measures of the government could induce young people born in Haiti to labor or to change from their "habitual vagrancy."[46] Another Englishman, James Franklin, remarked in 1828 that land values throughout the republic had greatly declined because no one could make a profit within any moderate time. Labor was high, he writes, for ordinary wages did not attract the workers who preferred idleness. (This word is certainly unfair: it was work at their own bidding which they preferred, not idleness.) Government lands lay uncilled, no one evincing the slightest desire to purchase or utilize them. Franklin continues:

> Land also in the possession of individuals is similarly circumstanced; and those who are large proprietors cannot effect a sale of any produce which they may have beyond the quantity which they can consume; consequently a proprietor may have an immense extent of land, and yet be quite unable to derive any benefit from it by cultivation, or to convert it into money, for the want of purchasers. Thus . . . there is no individual wealth in the country, because, although a man may have very large landed possessions, still those possessions are unavailable, for they produce him nothing, as he can seldom find anyone disposed either to occupy or purchase them.

45. Although dancing is spoken of here as an amusement, it is highly probable that at least a part of it had connection with the Voodun religion.

46. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti* (London, 1830), I, 100. Mackenzie is clearly exaggerating, unless by "field labor" he means work on plantations, in contrast to farming on small plots.

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can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them. There are some instances of proprietors leasing their lands to persons who undertake to cultivate them, for which they receive about one-third of the produce; but this is far from being general, and I imagine can only be accomplished by military men who have the command of troops, and who are thereby enabled to till them by working parties daily sent out for that purpose.[47]

An interesting side light is provided by a Quaker visitor, Candler, who in 1842 wrote that he was struck by the entire equality which seemed to exist between servant and master. Every workman was addressed in courteous manner, as "*mon fils*."[48] On inquiry, Candler was told that the profits of planting were good that year, laborers were scarce, and it was therefore "necessary to conciliate all by kindness, or no work would be done."

A particularly grim account of the state of cultivation near the close of Boyer's administration (1842) is given by a Frenchman:

> The fields of Haiti are dead. There where under slavery thousands of tons of sugar were made, now one sees only a few crops and a little syrup to turn into raw rum. Lively growths of cactus cover with thorns the acres of cane, of fields, of pastures deserted by the hand of man; the cactus invades the towns, coming even up to the heart of the cities, flourishing in the midst of ruins, as if to insult the inhabitants. . . . On the one hand, no one cultivates with regularity, because everyone is discouraged by the thefts of cane and fruit by people without any moral discipline, and in a country without police; while on the other hand, people complain of being poor, and of not being able to devote enough money to indispensable improvements. . . . And if the proprietors cannot even make work progress, imagine the condition of the poor![49]

As the people grew individually poorer, the value of the land sank until it was useless for an owner to try to prevent squatting on his estate. Holdings grew smaller and smaller, in spite of the prohibition on sales of real estate in parcels less than fifteen acres. Good land might be had in every part of the island quite cheaply, much of it even from the government which had enacted the restrictive law. Any man not satisfied with his condition as a paid laborer might, if

47. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti* (Saint Domingo), (London, 1828), p. 313.
48. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti* (London, 1842), p. 37.
49. V. Schœlcher, *Colonies étrangères et Haïti: résultats de l'émancipation anglaise* (Paris, 1842), II, 263 ff.

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175 he could save or borrow the money, buy a small patch and become a
425 freeholder in his own right. And in the mountains, if one were willing to endure isolation, one could get much land by squatter's claim.

175 A vivid indication of the declining economic condition of the country will be found in the actual scale of real-estate prices. In the
435 eighteen-twenties the finest land in the republic did not sell for more
423 than $60 an acre, even when contiguous to a port for shipping or extremely fertile. Such a price would have been ridiculous in the days of the French colony. Farms in the plains and mountains, suitable for cocoa and cotton, could be had in Boyer's time for $20 or $30 an acre in any quantity from ten to five hundred acres. In the rich Artibonite Valley small plots for horticultural purposes sold for $40 an acre; indigo and cotton land rarely brought over $30; and a complete cotton plantation which had borne richly in colonial days sold for from $12 to $20 an acre. In the North, despite its fertility and more careful cultivation under Christophe, land seldom brought more than $40 or $45, while pasture lands could scarcely find purchasers at $40. A lot in Port-au-Prince with a frontage of sixty feet and a depth of fifty, well situated for trading purposes, brought only $200.[50] Fifteen years later even these prices were fantastically high, for by then no one was wealthy enough to purchase an estate.

5. *Lapse into Peasantry* (1827–1843)

463 "Peasant" is one of those words whose meaning everyone knows yet whose definition is never precise. It clearly carries the connotation
241 of farming the land by conservative, generally uneducated, persons whose families have for generations lived on the same plot of earth without any great ambition to move away or change their economic lot. It means small ownership. And most particularly it means a comparatively low social status, for we think of peasantry as existing only in those countries which have a clear-cut social class system, with a stratification which would make it difficult for a person to move from one class to another. His land is to the peasant both home and living; his household is dependent almost solely upon the product of its own labor. He is generally conceived to be too complacent, if not too ignorant or too dull, to take advantage of commercial opportunities which might bring him wealth. "It is increasingly

50. These figures for 1824–28 are from Franklin, *op. cit.*, p. 314.

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recognized that the really important characteristics peculiar to the peasant are his sentiments and attitudes, the intense attachment to his native soil and family tradition, which, even in the economic sphere, take precedence over the desire for individual advancement and gain."[51]

Haiti in 1804 was still a country of large estates, and Dessalines and Christophe strove to keep it so. Under the active generosity of Pétion and the passive indifference of Boyer after his Code Rural had failed, few great plantations were left intact. The recorded donations of these two presidents to their generals, civil functionaries, and lesser officers, are as follows:[52]

134 grants of 150 carreaux (about 450 acres).		Total:	59,300 acres.
176	35	105	18,480
639	30	90	57,510
711	25	75	54,325
2,322	20	60	139,320
8,000	5	15	120,000
		Grand total:	448,935 acres.

Haiti followed French law rather than British, so that the rule of primogeniture did not prevail. It requires only a moment's reflection to see that even within a single generation the thousands of small properties noted in the table would be subdivided many times, since a father apportioned his land to all his sons. By 1842 it is probable that not a single plantation of the size common in colonial times was still intact.[53] On the testimony of numerous government officials and commandants of arrondissements, it was estimated in that year that 46,610 small landed properties were under fair cultivation.[54] If the population at that time be estimated at 800,000, seven eighths of whom were engaged in agriculture, there would accordingly be about fifteen people (including children) to each rural property. But

A large number of small estates are left out of this account, which are said to be badly cultivated, or neglected. Taking the number of each separate

51. C. von Dietze, "Peasantry," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, XII, 50.
52. This table is compiled from figures cited in Armand Thoby, *La Question agraire en Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1888), passim, and Dr. F. Dalencour, *Le Sauvetage national par le retour à la terre* (Port-au-Prince, 1923), p. 18.
53. See Raymond Renaud, *Le Régime foncier en Haïti* (Paris, 1934), pp. 42–43.
54. Candler, op. cit., p. 122.

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175 241 family on an average, at 5 persons, husband, wife, and three children, we arrive at the conclusion, that the head of every third family in the state is engaged in cultivating his own freehold; a proportion of independent [311] proprietors, such as perhaps scarcely any other country in the world can [231] exhibit. The number of acres cultivated by these small proprietors, varies from 9 to 30; many of them keep horses, cows, and goats: they raise suffi- [437] cient provisions of the bread kind, such as yams, plantains, and bananas, for the main support of their families; they kill hogs for meat, and they dispose [438] of their coffee, cotton, hemp, castor oil, and fruit, at the public market for money, to purchase clothing, furniture, and other necessaries. The houses [342] they live in, though poorly furnished, are decent habitations; and many of them have gardens attached, neatly fenced in with bamboo, or with log-wood, or aloe hedges.[55]

175 423 427 If these figures are even approximately accurate, the majority of the people of Haiti had not yet become peasants in the sense of being landowners, for in the statement cited only a third of the people owned their land. Another large group, however, possibly a third of the population, were squatters, living on land which technically belonged to someone else but from which they were never ejected. The remaining third, excluding the town and village dwellers, were in the intermediate stage between hirelings and peasants. Some worked for a given rate of wages, but the larger number worked for shares of the produce on the land of large proprietors.

175 473 427 24 The crop-sharing system (Americans of the twentieth century call it share-cropping) of the 'thirties and 'forties was an automatic but temporary adjustment worked out in perfect disregard of the Code Rural. In general, two arrangements prevailed. By one the laborers worked in return for half the total produce of the estate, raising food for themselves in gardens provided by the owner; under the other they worked for a quarter of the produce, the proprietor guaranteeing to keep them in provisions. There was no general concurrence in Haiti at the time as to which plan was the more economical to the laborer and his family. Certainly both schemes were prejudicial to large crops of coffee and sugar, and therefore to the economic prosperity of the proprietors and the state; since this was so, the crop-sharing expedient was short-lived. Workers participating in it lived in the huts and cabins which, under the old régime, had been inhabited by their slave ancestors. As these fell to pieces others, cheaper and less soundly built, were constructed to take their place.

The crop-sharing system, economically debilitating though it was,

55. *Ibid.*

The crop-sharing system, economically debilitating though it was,

had one great advantage to the laborer: he felt himself free and independent, with the right to engage himself to any man or to refrain from working altogether. No longer was he bound to the soil of one plantation, forced to labor under a "driver," forbidden to dance or to sleep when the mood seized him. This new freedom imparted to him a self-consequence which made him, in his own estimation, almost as important as a freeholder. The master could not say to his men, "Go into such a field and dig cane holes. The clouds are gathering and we must get in the young plants"; or, "Weed such a field," or "Prune the coffee trees today." Neither could he send a band of young people at his discretion to pick the coffee berries as they ripened, or to cull the bad berries, when pulped and dried, from the good. Every man was, so to speak, master of his own house and his own hours, considering himself at liberty to work with his family at almost any time and in any manner he pleased.

175 427 461 24 466

Herein lay the fatal defect of the crop-sharing system. There was no way of coming to an agreement among the laborers on an estate as to the amount of labor to be performed by each. One man was weaker than another; one more disposed to drink or to loaf than another. The whole group of, say, twenty families was to share in common the half or the quarter of the gross produce; but who should measure the exact proportion which would fall in justice to each family?

175 427 24 461

These annual disagreements led to a compromise which ultimately broke down even the moderate-sized estates. The proprietor, in order to avoid disputes, divided his fields among his laborers, allowing one family five acres, another ten, a third twenty, according to the nature of the land and the sort of produce which could be raised upon it. True, the proprietor lost by this division all the benefits of concentrating labor in a particular field at a particular season; also, if he wished to have necessary work done in haste which required a large number of laborers, he had to bribe them (generally by a drink of rum or tafia). Obviously, when such difficulties stood in the way of necessary repairs and improvements, the proprietors simply preferred to allow their estates to deteriorate. Like the workers, they acquired an attitude of not worrying about the future; unlike the frame of mind of the workers, their attitude came from resigned acceptance of the inevitable, not from preoccupation with the present.

175 473 427 24 425 461

Certain astute proprietors tried to get as many families together as could act in concert without jarring or jealousy, and to induce them,

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175 by persuasion, to do as much work as possible for his and their own
473 interests. In a few cases the success of such efforts was tolerably good;
427 but one worker disposed to be sullen or idle, or even not physically
24 strong, might throw the whole scheme into disorder. One's own
425 profits would be cut by the misdeeds of others even when one had
461 himself been industrious. This caused a decline of incentive, sometimes among a whole group of potentially good workers, because one or two of the number shirked. Probably the most patent evil of such arrangements was that every laborer realized that he did not suffer as directly for idleness or neglect as when working for himself; his fellow workers shared the consequences of his misconduct in some degree, and his employer in a still greater measure. The driving force of individual responsibility was removed.

[692] Boyer and Inginac, foreseeing just such disorder, had tried to
[686] provide against it in the Code Rural by giving summary powers to local judges to inflict penalties upon lazy or malingering workers. Quite aside, however, from the loss of time and the inconvenience to both parties in going constantly to a judge for his decision, the proprietor was afraid to act on this principle to any extent, since if he did so he might lose his laborers altogether.

175 It was a rare proprietor, then, who could hope to make much of a
473 fortune out of his plantation. More and more the landowners, having
427 subdivided their fields, grew lax in overseeing them. The workers,
24 freed from constant supervision, accustomed by long habit to living
466 in one hut, and unconsciously developing a mentality which made them feel, as did American squatters on frontier lands, that they had
425 a right to the land they tilled, imperceptibly developed into peasants.
178 The state's remaining properties, no longer under cultivation, were invaded by families of small farmers, and the government took no steps to oust them or send them back to privately owned plantations. The estates of individual aristocrats underwent the same fate if not
[625] carefully watched. Theoretically, it was the duty of the army to drive out squatters, to force laborers back into "proper" agricultural work; but the army consisted of peasant youths who would not turn against people of their own group.

671 Legal irregularity was gradually sanctioned by the passage of
178 time, usage being a stronger guarantor of rights than unenforced laws on the statute books.

080 Haitian peasantry, to sum up, began as the unplanned, undesired

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unplanned, undesired

Haitian peasantry, to sum up, began as the 175
result of two policies intended to achieve ends quite different; first, 421
presidential gifts of land, the chief purpose of which had been to pay 24
the soldiers of the republic; and second, the crop-sharing system 463
adopted by landlords after the failure of Boyer's Code. 178

6. *The Drawing of Caste Lines* (*1820–1843*)

Almost every major presidential aim of Boyer came to grief. His 175
tranquil quarter-century rule, the unified island, the financial surplus 178
with which his presidency began, the peace with France after 1825— 565
all these advantages combined with his good intentions did not save his projects from shipwreck. Near the beginning of his régime he announced that, like his revered predecessor Pétion, he felt the safety of Haiti to lie in the abolition of all color distinctions and prejudices. Just as his great Code Rural proved a complete failure, however, so did his efforts to do away with the color line. On the contrary, it was during Boyer's time that class distinctions became fixed, in large part although not wholly, on the basis of color.

Stating that the policy of his government was to put an end, as far 175
as possible, to jealousies of caste, he consistently for a few years 647
promoted a black every time a promotion had been given to a 563
mulatto or other light-skinned person. This procedure soon met an 212
insuperable obstacle. Government posts in general required literacy, 555
and only a very small number of blacks were educated, so that the supply of Negroes was not sufficient to furnish him with candidates. Since one of the few roads to lucrative success lay in official positions, ambitious young colored men sought eagerly for government office, and Boyer soon had no alternative but to advance men of his own complexion. In the army, on the other hand, literacy was not 175
necessary for promotion. Ambitious Negro youths, therefore, fre- 701
quently chose this career which, while not very profitable in mone- 555
tary rewards, at least gave a man a certain social status and economic 563
security.

Because of the state of education in the republic, consequently, an 175
ugly situation developed, with the civil arm of government almost 647
wholly in control of the colored element and the military force 701
dominated by blacks. Fortunately for the country no crisis developed
during the 1820's and 1830's which made an open breach between [563]
army and state.

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175 563 Color prejudice, in so far as a mass of people is concerned, is generally one-sided, directed by the upper group at the lower. The ordinary illiterate worker between 1820 and 1840 was inclined to accept without much question the superiority of the lighter-skinned Haitians. Resentment was often present, and envy, but hardly prejudice. The real contest developed between the colored élite and the blacks of ambition. The latter had reason to feel proud of their rise from slavery; many had shown ability, and felt themselves the mental and moral equals of the mulattoes; the men who had broken the power of the French, ended slavery, and founded the state were Negroes—and now Haiti was being ruled by mulattoes. The contest between the two groups was the obverse side of prejudice. The envied minority, jealously guarding their distinction, were generally conscious of prejudices which they rationalized with pronouncements about superior mentality and innate qualities. They would concede the difference between an educated black and a mere peasant, but would still cling to the feeling that all the culture in the world would not make the educated Negro a peer of the mulatto.

175 563 114 643 671 Government documents of the period can hardly be expected to call attention to color prejudice and its concomitant resentments. To foreign observers, however, it was immediately apparent and noteworthy as a dominant characteristic of the country. Testimony is unanimous as to its existence; more important, the commentators all agreed that it was growing. An acute Frenchman called Boyer "the slow martyr of his color,"[56] being a mulatto in a republic of blacks: his color made Boyer suspect, so that the President had to spend most of his time and energy trying to avoid conflicts on this issue. It is entirely possible that Boyer's dearest schemes, particularly the enforcement of the Code Rural, failed primarily because the army was controlled by Negroes, whom the President dared not drive too hard; while only the army could have enforced faithful performance by the black laborers. An American doctor stated in 1838 that "the mulattoes, to preserve the sceptre of power in the possession of their caste, are driven to compliances which a negro president would feel himself empowered to spurn from him as the basest infringement on his dignity."[57]

56. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, I, 211. This observation is much more to the point than the specious remarks which follow, attributing Boyer's inaction partly to the enervating effects of the tropical climate.

57. Brown, *op. cit.*, II, 259.

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Next to the agricultural system, the state of education in the republic probably had as much to do as anything with fixing the caste system upon Haiti. So long as the mass of people were not only black but illiterate as well, they would have no means of reaching a social status beyond the one in which they existed. Certainly the aspiring Negroes would not wish to enlighten them, for to stir up the whole people would destroy the very possibility of distinction. As W. S. Gilbert puts it, "When everyone is somebody, then no one's anybody." Public education, consequently, hardly advanced a step during Boyer's twenty-five years. It had had a feeble enough beginning under Pétion and remained, as it had been, a prerogative of the well-to-do.[58]

Under the complaisant rule of Boyer, accordingly, the people of color came to regard themselves as the unquestioned élite. Their claim was shared, though not always acknowledged, by a small number of blacks (mostly from the North) who had been anciens libres in colonial Saint-Domingue or noblemen under Christophe; who were literate, or whose wealth and ambition attracted attention. Boyer's boast that "all the feelings and prejudices, either of olden times or of national origin, have been superseded by an intense patriotism" was pure buncombe, as he certainly knew.

If only the best brains of the colored group had been content to serve the government, Haiti might have profited from her situation; but lesser government offices were merely springboards for foreign trade in coffee and mahogany, or for the manipulation of business deals. Not "intense patriotism," as Boyer liked to think, but financial gain was the motivating force of the élite, as it had been from colonial times. The man who could amass a modest fortune, so that his children might be educated and their security assured, had done his duty, and he would have been regarded as quixotic to renounce business opportunities for the dubious honor of minor political office. As a consequence of this natural search for gain, the government during Boyer's administration became less and less efficient. Relatives of élite businessmen were given posts because the President could not afford to offend important families. These minor officials then performed their duties awkwardly, or neglected them, in "the unfailing obliquity of dullness."

Skin color became the obsession of high society. Those who had no other merit of which to boast could still revel in their complex-

58. See chap. XVI.

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175 563 564 [178] ions. Intermarriages between persons of widely different color became extremely rare, being regarded by many lighter Haitians with actual disgust. Everyone with social pretensions wanted to be whiter. Dr. Brown stated it baldly: "The pure negro seeks to ally himself to the griffe,[59] the griffe to the mulatto, the mulatto to the quateroon, the latter to a mustif, and the mustif, having but an untraceable tinge of African blood in his organization, is uproariously indignant if he is accused of having any at all."[60] An educated young black of several generations of free parents was scornfully turned down by a lighter-skinned woman considerably his inferior in breeding and wealth because her children would be darker than herself—"*petits enfants griffes*," as she put it. The prejudices of colored people against blacks was almost as great, if not quite as intense, as the former prejudice of whites against colored people in colonial times. No one forgot that there had been black as well as colored freedmen in the colony; but it was much simpler for people of color to claim their long career as élite than for blacks to do so.

The attitude of upper-class Haitians toward whites in the midst of all this color prejudice was an interesting mixture. On the one hand, all good Haitians professed to dread a return of the whites; on the other, they welcomed white businessmen in the country. In a certain respect the whites were regarded much as were the Jews of Europe [673] in the Middle Ages: they were wealthy—and therefore legitimate [671] objects of pillage, necessary evils for the sake of finance. Theft from a [641] white man by government action was a service to the state. Laws were consequently varied from time to time with the sole purpose of profiting from a foreigner's position. True, the trader might protest [423] to his home government, but if England or the United States took a strong stand, Haiti could always retreat; if those governments did not stand firm, Haiti had gained. In the Haitian courts the whites had little show, for Article 38 of the Constitution forbade them to own real estate or to become citizens; they might not even hold a lease for more than ten years; and they might not marry Haitian women.

Nevertheless, the analogy with mediaeval Jews falls down at one vital point: whites were not viewed with contempt. Quite the con-

[192] 59. A term denoting three parts in four of Negro blood. This term as well as "mustif" goes back to colonial white society; neither was, or is, used by cultivated Haitians.

60. Brown, *op. cit.*, II, 283–284.

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trary; they were grudgingly respected as superior beings, arbiters of the fate of the outside world, potential destroyers of the privileges of the Haitian élite should they return to the country in force. Although white men might not legally marry Haitian women, it was not every woman who could resist the opportunity of having children lighter than herself. One indication of the ambiguous attitude toward the whites was seen in religion. In 1842 out of sixty or seventy Roman Catholic priests in the island, only one was a Haitian. Many people in the country were well educated, and certainly more than equals in point of scholarship and *savoir-faire* of the rude priests imported generally from Corsica. But a feeling was current among the peasants that "colored baptism will not stick." There is no indication that the European priests, since they were well paid for their services, attacked this particular heresy. As for the élite, they derived a certain satisfaction in being served by white priests. Aside from the churchmen, however, the only white man in any place of prominence in the country was the mayor of Saint-Marc, whose father had befriended Boyer in former times.

175 563 564 [193]

Few visitors had kind words to say of social conditions in the Haiti of Boyer. As a Frenchman put it:

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> Democracy was the rule; but what a democracy! A hodge-podge of the most heterogeneous ideas, an alliance of the most contrary principles, of American federalism with military control; the sovereignty of the people replaced by the sovereignty of a ruling clique; and finally, all the intellectual vainglory of a people young, inexperienced, and for a long time denied the legitimate manifestation of their own wishes. Added to all these inconsistencies is the antagonism of races.[61]

This antagonism was, indeed, paramount. The habitual hauteur and assumed pretensions of the lighter Haitians were a perpetual thorn in the flesh of the ambitious blacks, and thus the breach was everywhere widened and made per ıanent. The blacks retaliated against these distinctions by refusing to obey orders from mulattoes in office, or by petty outrages against private citizens among the colored group.

175 563

The vital lack of the country, assuming that stability is desirable, was a middle class of any sort. On the base of hundreds of thousands of peasants, illiterate, unambitious, indifferent to progress, was built

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61. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, "La République d'Haïti; ses dernières révolutions; sa situation actuelle," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, XV, No. 4 (Nov., 1845), pp. 681–682. [113]

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175 563 565 [701] [669] an ineffective government, momentarily in the hands of colored élite. Attempting to dominate politics was a numerically small group of colored people and a still smaller group of Negroes. Although prevailingly black, the army might be, and in the later nineteenth century was continually, used by whichever group offered more. A third power, a middle class, might have balanced these antagonistic factions. Lacking such a moderating influence, Haiti was the victim of recurrent revolutionary movements.

175 178 642 643 At the time of Boyer, actual democracy would have been no safeguard, for it would have meant the supremacy of ignorance. His rule was the beginning of unfortunate days for Haiti. After the auspicious opening years, the President became an impotent onlooker as his country declined. It is instructive to compare the Haiti of Dessalines and Christophe with the Haiti of 1843, only one generation later.[62]

175 178 642 433 466 The Haiti of 1806 had been a beehive of activity. Soldiers, foremen, and policemen then stood over the workers with lianes to force them to labor for the benefit of their state. Production was carefully planned, an ordered hierarchy making every person in the country responsible to another higher than himself until the ruler was reached at the pinnacle. The cardinal fault of any laborer was to shirk at his task. The year 1843, on the contrary, found Haiti in a condition of quiescence which, to those who remembered the old days, resembled torpor. The central government had ceased to drive its citizens, and its half-hearted attempts at persuasion were futile. Overseers, drivers of gangs of workers, soldiers whose duty it was to enforce labor, had disappeared from the scene. Every man was his own master.

175 178 511 The standard of living in 1806 as in 1843 was low; but in the earlier year there had been a promise of great things to come once Haiti had rebuilt what war had destroyed. The succeeding years, however, failed to inculcate into the people a desire for any higher standard of life. Country dwellers were benighted; ignorance deepened the habit

[162] [175] 62. Haiti has never had an accurate census, so that it is impossible even to estimate the total population of the country either in 1806 or in 1843. The figures of 380,000 and 800,000 given by some authors for the two years are mere guesses. Likewise, one can only deduce the proportion of people in the main economic and social categories; probably seventy-five per cent of the Haitians were serfs in 1806 and the same percentage peasants in 1843; the "aristocracy," including all who did not derive a living by manual labor or army service, could hardly have reached five per cent in either year; the army, house servants, day laborers in the towns, and petty businessmen would make up the other twenty per cent.

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of living only for the day by making people content with a low level of physical existence. Haitian peasants were isolated from the rest of the world; and one who has no standard of comparison rarely has the incentive to improve his living conditions.

Production declined between 1806 and 1843 both in quantity and in quality. Sugar, the staple of colonial trade and still an important export under Christophe, disappeared from the market figures altogether under Boyer. Most of the cane which was raised was worked into syrup and then into tafia (raw rum) for local consumption. Careful attention and the well-ordered machinery necessary for sugar manufacture were both lacking in 1843. Sugar cane was almost never newly planted, but simply lasted on from French days; what plants there were had little attention: they were not manured, or ploughed, or stripped of their dead leaves. Everything was left to nature. The production of coffee in actual number of pounds stood up well, although the quality fell off through lack of cultivation; the price in world markets steadily declined, however, so that the crop of 1843 brought in only twelve million francs as compared with twenty million for the smaller crop of 1822.[63]

Practically every acre of the fertile soil of Haiti was cultivated in 1806, the methods steadily improving under Christophe. Irrigation projects were then being developed to replace those destroyed in the wars, and a measure of experimentation went on with new crops and fertilizers. In 1843, however, what was called a coffee "plantation" was actually only a large tract of land on which coffee trees grew wild. There was no laying out of the lands nor any improvement of the soil or pruning of the trees to strengthen the parent stem. Until the berries were ready to be picked the coffee tree was rarely touched, except when pigs scratched their backs on it, or goats and donkeys cropped the grass around it. Cotton likewise received little cultivation. Cocoa raising practically ceased altogether, for it required intelligent management.

Haiti under Dessalines still had many buildings of French con-

63. The state figures for 1843 revealed only four money crops, no one of which was as productive of income as sugar had been. In the comparative tables given below it must be remembered that prices declined between 1822 and 1843.

	5-Year Average, 1822–26	1843
Coffee	34,000,000 pounds	35,000,000 pounds
Cotton	678,000 "	2,000,000 "
Campêche	5,600 "	30,000,000 "
Acajou	2,460,000 feet	6,000,000 feet

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Haiti under Dessalines still had many building

175 178 331 of French construction, both plantation mansions and slave quarters. With forced labor available these had been kept in a measure of repair. Christophe, not content with leftovers from colonial days, had sponsored architectural activity all over his kingdom; if his citadel is the most noteworthy example, there are also to his credit lesser palaces and government warehouses. Almost no building was done by Pétion and Boyer, however, and by the 1840's the constructions of the French [731] had fallen into serious disrepair. Severe earthquakes and fires quickly ruined what time had already weakened. By the middle of the century one saw, instead of trim slave quarters near great mansions, a few straggling towns of one-story houses, the hillsides dotted with ramshackle huts, and the plains with daubed shacks.

175 178 181 433 From great estates to tiny plots; from carefully tilled fields to small gardens in a wilderness; from financial prosperity to debt; from directed enterprise to sloth; from an attitude of hopeful determination to one of tolerance for things as they are—these are the striking contrasts of the two periods. It could hardly have been imagined in Christophe's day that the smart, disciplined Dahomet would be succeeded by casual ragamuffins who dozed on their tilted chairs while on sentry duty. Christophe had liked his subjects to be well dressed, and insisted on it; but the British consul in Boyer's time wrote that "the laborers are, generally speaking, nearly naked; in fact, adults only wearing what is barely necessary to prevent indecent exposure, while the children of both sexes run about without covering of any kind."[64]

175 178 433 [466] [433] [461] [164] It was the parceling of landed estates combined with the disappearance of forced labor which initiated the transition from serfdom to peasantry. Personalities as dynamic as Christophe's or as brutal as Dessalines' would have been required to keep the people in a servile condition in a land of tropical fertility. Contemporary foreign judgment was almost unanimous in placing the blame for declining prosperity upon indolence (the word is continually repeated, generally preceded by the adjective "natural"). It may be noted in passing that no one at the time seems to have realized how widespread were the debilitating diseases of hookworm and malaria, which can make apparently husky men prefer rest to work. Responsibility for economic failure rests as much upon the governing class,

64. Charles Mackenzie, *Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti* (1829), p. 86.

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however, as on the masses. Nothing was done to educate the people and so inculcate in them the desire for a higher standard of living. Where food is easily got, the government gentle, and the people ignorant, one hardly looks for progress. 175 178 433 [511]

Foreigners who knew Haiti were prophesying doom through most of Boyer's administration. The British consul was the most vocal of these prophets. He toured the whole republic in 1828 and found only local variations on a sorry state of affairs. At Jacmel he reported a parceling of the land, a decline of plantations, and a horror of corporal punishment by the people; it seemed to surprise him that every blow given a worker was returned in kind. In the arrondissements of Saint-Marc and Gonaïves cotton continued to be the chief crop as it had been in French days but quantity and quality had declined. At Petite-Rivière relative prosperity prevailed because the lands there were under the control of a former lieutenant of Christophe, who managed to apply that king's stern discipline to his workers. From Gonaïves to Cap Nicolas Môle cultivation was at a low ebb; near Cap-Haïtien everything agricultural was in ruins.[65] 114 175 178 433 466 24

Industry and discipline, the two commonest characteristics of the Haiti of Christophe, were precisely those most notably absent from the Negro masses of 1843. Obedience had given way to independence of behavior. A visitor in 1842 describes the actual condition of a plantation in the arrondissement of Furcy. Where formerly thirty-two families had toiled industriously, under strict overseers who were free to inflict physical punishment upon laggards, now only twelve families remained, the rest having become "freeholders." These twelve had a crop-sharing agreement with the owner of the estate whereby they received the income from half the 10,000 pounds of coffee yielded by the land; but also they 175 178 181 466 464 427

appropriate to themselves almost the whole of the provisions which the land furnishes, sending down only a few of the rarer vegetables, beans, peas, and artichokes, to their master, for his table at Port-au-Prince, and supplying his need when he comes to reside for a few days in the country. This he knows very well, but has no alternative but to bear it quietly.[66]

65. See particularly *ibid.*, pp. 94, 103–105. The consul clearly felt that the only hope of salvation in Haiti was a reintroduction of some sort of coercion such as that used by Dessalines and Christophe.

66. Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

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[p. 88]

IV

CASTE LINES BECOME PERMANENT

175 178 THE contrast between the golden days of forced labor and the stagnating mediocrity of Boyer's Haiti was as vivid to thinking Haitian aristocrats as it was to foreign whites. Particularly the young "intellectuals" of the 'thirties who knew something of the progress taking place in the rest of the Western World felt that the time had come to stem the wave of economic disintegration at home. In a series of pronouncements they pointed out that the advancement of Haiti had "been constantly slowed up for some time. . . . Haiti is stationary, is retrograde: we need no other proof of it than this frightful uncertainty about the future which so deeply disturbs all serious minds and sincere patriots." One may discount the phrase 175 668 about "sincere patriots," for peasants were patriots even though undisturbed by the economic stagnation. The agitation for reform won a wide following among all the élite who cherished a glowing recollection of earlier days.

Leaders of the young men called upon Boyer in 1838 to introduce stronger methods of forced labor; but Boyer, remembering the fate of his Code Rural in which he had tried to do precisely this, could think of no effective way of tinkering again with the economic system. From the young men he received the most contradictory advice as to specific methods. The result of the appeal was therefore merely continued inaction by the government. The agitators, ex- 175 cellent critics if poor reformers, accordingly persisted in their cam- 668 paign, adding new converts to their cause until the movement pro- 669 duced a crisis. Revolution broke out in January 1843 at Torbeck in the South, and rapidly spread toward the capital; within two months 643 Boyer and his faithful secretary-general, Inginac, had departed for exile.[1]

[643] [159] 1. Boyer went first to Jamaica, and then to Paris. In the latter capital King Louis-Philippe gave him an audience and called him "prince." Boyer replied, "Sire, I am no prince. I have merely been the head of a small republic." The King of France thereupon affectionately pressed Boyer's hand, remarking, "When one has governed a million people for twenty-five years, he is raised to the rank of princes." . . . Boyer died in Paris in 1850.

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Political history of the next seventy-two years is a complicated story, of which only enough need be told here to illuminate the evolution of caste and social distinctions. Even a short summary reveals the bewildering confusion. Of the twenty-two heads of state between 1843 and 1915 only one served out his prescribed term of office;[2] three died while serving, one was blown up with his palace, one presumably poisoned, and one hacked to pieces by a mob; one resigned. The other fourteen were deposed by revolution after incumbencies ranging in length from three months to twelve years. 175 643

The Revolution of 1843 brought back into national prominence the whole matter of color and caste. The young revolutionaries, mostly light-skinned, seem to have assumed that their group was permanently in control. With cavalier highhandedness they set about capturing the last stronghold of Negro eminence: the army. They soon found, however, that they had caught a Tartar; their attempt to rule was fatal to them and their clique. 175 669

In the Constitutional Assembly convened to make a new constitution for the country, they professed astonishingly democratic doctrines. Proclaiming that the fault of former governments had been reliance upon military power, they now proposed to make civil power paramount by allowing the common people to vote. Since up to this time the franchise had been strictly limited to army officers and anciens libres, such a radical departure as general suffrage makes no sense unless conceived as an attempt to break the power of the Negro-controlled army, for surely the élite had no confidence in the wisdom of the peasantry. Weight is given to this explanation by the paradoxical action of the revolutionaries in promoting to high army rank some of the strongest mulatto partisans of civil government. 175 668 646 642 641 701

The new constitution was an immediate failure. Most of the colored élite condemned the giving of voting rights to peasants and workers; the army chiefs, generally black and illiterate, some of them aging veterans of 1803, bitterly resented being made subservient to young, inexperienced civil officers; in fact, even the new mulatto president, Rivière-Hérard, had no conception of government other than by military dictatorship. 175 642 641

Not only was the constitution a failure; so was the government of the young revolutionaries. A part of their weakness lay in their 175 643

2. The presidential term varied under different constitutions; some allowed a four-year term with the right of reélection, some six years with no reélection.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 643 choice of a leader. Not gifted with administrative ability, Hérard blundered first by imprisoning one of the most popular Negro leaders in the country, thereby turning much of the population of the South against him. Next, learning of conspiracies in the Spanish [669] end of the island, he tried to stamp out revolt by exile and jail sentences, only to precipitate there a real revolution for independence. In his fight against the Dominican separatists he was roundly defeated, and his prestige sank rapidly to the vanishing point. Within two months after his inauguration, he had only one third of the island left over which to attempt to rule. Within a year he was out of power altogether and with him the colored people.

175 669 The Revolution of 1844, although supported by certain old friends of Boyer, was chiefly a movement of Negroes—followers of the imprisoned black, Salomon; peasants from the South who had been promised much by the previous year's revolutionaries and had got nothing; and particularly the Negro army clique. The significant part of the new revolution was its announced purpose, to lessen the influence of the colored group in government, to have a black president, and to dispossess certain reputedly well-to-do citizens by [643] dividing their estates among the people. Quickly successful, the insurgents promoted to the presidency the illiterate octogenarian black general, Guerrier, who in Christophe's kingdom had been Duke of Marmalade[3] and Duke of Avancé.

175 643 662 For the first time in a quarter-century the Negro element was again in the saddle, where it was to remain for the next fifteen years. Everyone recognized Guerrier's personal courage and admired the common sense which made him prefer conciliation to unnecessary violence as a method of government, but the colored people were shocked at having to live under the rule of another black ex-slave. The idea evoked grim memories. Knowing Guerrier's addiction to drink, the colored faction managed to make him a tool for their own use, so that his brief administration, ending with his death in 1845, was generally known as a "government of understudies." Guerrier was followed in the presidency by another black, likewise an octo- 175 643 genarian: Louis Pierrot, the handsome brother-in-law of King Christophe. But Pierrot was even more ignorant than Guerrier and

[554] 3. This title generally evokes amusement among non-Haitians. Christophe had merely named his peers after districts whose names had been given by French planters in the eighteenth century. Another of his noblemen was a Count of Limonade.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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already showed signs of senile dementia; his tyrannical crotchets speedily raised up a revolt against him, and in 1846 he gave way to still another black, General Riché. Like his two predecessors, Riché was aged and illiterate. Nevertheless, he began his rule auspiciously by putting an end to dictatorship and surrounding himself with wise counselors. In 1847, just when the country was beginning to appreciate his good qualities, he died a victim of drugs taken to increase his vigor.

These four presidents, who had among them ruled less than four years, did not appreciably alter the social situation, for they had all been preoccupied with the suppression of revolutions. But Haiti was still in a position to take some definite step toward economic progress, education of the people, conciliation of the antagonistic colored and black elements. Because of a stupid whim, the country was precipitated down exactly the opposite path. The Senate gathered to select Riché's successor found itself unable to rally a majority vote for any candidate; whereupon one Senator proposed the name of an ignorant, entirely unillustrious, black general, Faustin Soulouque. The chamber immediately gave him a majority, for the supporters of each candidate saw in this complete nonentity a chance for another "government by understudies," in which they themselves would actually rule. When the Senatorial delegation arrived to inform Soulouque of his election, that unimpressive Negro, lying stretched out in his hammock, refused at first to take it seriously. He had more than once been the victim of practical jokes, and this looked like a particularly malicious one.[4] It took persuasion to convince him that he was indeed the new president of Haiti.

Soulouque's accession to power marked the beginning of a twelve-year nightmare for Haiti. During his first year of office the new president walked warily over the unfamiliar terrain. Those who had named him for their own ends felt justified in their scheme, for each opposing group still looked forward to controlling the government with Soulouque as a front. Meanwhile, however, the President had been carefully observing everything that went on around him, arriving at his own judgment of men and measures.

4. Many years before, Boyer had prophesied a period of disorder in Haiti and is reported to have said that in such a time "any man in Haiti might become president, even that stupid Negro over there," indicating Soulouque. It is told that Soulouque mumbled, "Please, Mr. President, don't make a fool of me."

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175 643 Suddenly, without warning, he reversed what had been mistaken for docile inactivity, and assumed complete personal command of the reins of office. By means of a well-organized body of secret police, [625] he inspired his own counselors with fear not only for their positions but for their lives. Although illiterate, Soulouque never signed a bill presented to him by his ministers until he was sure he knew its essential core. The hopeful "understudies" were forcibly awakened to the realization that they were hoist on their own petard.

175 643 563 669 The colored element was particularly apprehensive at Soulouque's amazing activity, for the President was clearly setting himself against their group, both in the cabinet and out. Determining clandestinely to get rid of their puppet before he became a Frankenstein's monster to destroy his creators, they fomented a new revolution. This, however, proved to be a strategic error of the first magnitude, for the President was already much stronger than they imagined. The insurrection was quashed with massacre and attendant frightfulness. In the aftermath, as Bouzon mordantly remarks, "the republic was calm—with all the tranquillity of a tomb!" By their ineptitude, the colored group had now made themselves completely insecure.

175 565 643 642 [555] In the second year of his régime Soulouque decided to imitate Dessalines by turning the state into an empire. His coronation was extremely gaudy, as well as expensive. Calling himself Emperor Faustin I, he created a peerage drawn chiefly from among his black generals—four princes, fifty-nine dukes, and numerous counts, barons, and knights. This was merely outward pomp to gratify their craving for prestige, for they had no functions to perform, nor even the necessity of Christophe's peers to pay for their regalia. As nobles they were given no responsibilities in directing economic activity nor any increased political power over districts of the empire. The Emperor's own vanity was flattered by having a peerage. He ruled as an autocrat with blatant despotism. For ten years following the coronation Haiti had to accustom itself to costly expeditions against the Dominican Republic, nearly all ending in defeat for Haiti. The outcome of these intermittent wars was neither gain nor loss of territory by either side, but only temporary rule of occupied districts. Haiti likewise had to accustom itself to sudden executions, to the shabby grandeur of court display, and to financial trickery which would not have deceived a schoolboy. While the heads of his opponents and even his loyal counselors fell, Soulouque's infantile "empire" tottered to economic ruin.

175 643 721 648 728

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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"empire" tottered to economic ruin. Graft, default on the debt, increasing deficits, and debased currency were the order of the day, and so continued until 1859, when the accumulation of anger over the useless wars and the humiliating defeats made the Emperor so unpopular that a new and more carefully planned revolution accomplished his downfall. 175 643 652 669

Fifteen years of administration by Negro rulers had broken the political power of the colored élite. Only three light-skinned men became president thereafter until the occupation of Haiti by the American Marines in 1915; in the seventy-two years following Boyer's downfall, mulattoes ruled during only eight. The army under a black general was too powerful, a colored president too hampered by suspicion, to make the political game worth the candle. The colored élite, therefore, adapted themselves to existing conditions as best they could, controlling the business life of Haiti, filling the law offices and, because of their literacy, the secretaryships of state, and indulging in honorific cultural pursuits. 175 643 178 564

In the years after Soulouque the basic realities of Haitian life were changed hardly at all by shifting political administrations. Some of the presidents were mildly progressive, many were indifferent; still more were actually harmful; but the lives of the mass of peasants were not often touched by presidential vagaries. Politics was an affair almost wholly of townspeople, of the army, the élite, and the pseudo-élite. Revolutions, counterrevolutions, movements of reform, international tangles, financial woes, and most of the other complications to which unstable states are heir, absorbed the attention of rulers and upper-class folk who were politically inclined. 175 643 66

Constitutions were made by presidents and changed by their successors; the Senate passed contradictory laws in the same session if the chief executive so recommended; the courts were presided over by the president's men. Haitian law in the latter half of the nineteenth century was what the president's immediate strength and wish made it—or else it was folk custom, undisturbed by the rulers. 175 642 671 692

Never once, in the three quarters of a century after Boyer's time, did Haiti approach the high standard of production known in colonial days or in the early years of independence. The pattern of Haitian social and economic life became fixed in this seventy-five years. Haiti became a country of small-scale tillage by a peasant population, with only enough external trade to provide moderate 175 178 433 565 439

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175 178 565 433 439 [423] [428] fortunes, that is, a few thousands of dollars, for a small number of élite, and to make the presidency a position economically rewarding enough to justify revolutionary conspiracies. The growth of a peasantry set in train during the long régime of Boyer continued, unbroken even by the numerous insurrections, until fixed in the mores. Land owned by the countryfolk was divided and redivided among their heirs, so that even holdings of moderate size became smaller.

175 643 566 423 Not one of the twenty-two rulers following Boyer made the slightest effort to return the country to the forced labor system of Dessalines and Christophe. They seemed to recognize the inevitability of a peasant way of life, or at least the impossibility of luring the people back to directed labor after a long experience of freedom. On the contrary, several presidents still further parceled the land.

175 643 423 President Guerrier, for example, the very year after Boyer was deposed, put on sale at moderate prices those state lands in the North not reserved for public use.[5] If the revolutionaries of 1843 had hoped to bring back Christophe's system of forced labor, their hopes were doomed to disappointment because of the state's need of immediate income. Christophe's state land areas were now broken up in the one part of the country where a few large plantations still existed.

175 643 421 423 President Geffrard in 1862 gave his blessing to small ownership, the basis of peasantry. Whereas Pétion's laws had prohibited sales of land in parcels less than fifteen acres, Geffrard's law regularized the leasing and sale of national property in lots of fifteen acres *at most*. Geffrard was the first president openly to admit that many government lands had been lost to citizens by squatting. In an endeavor to give legality to land held by squatters' rights, his law demanded that squatters register their claims, announcing that within a short time there would be no further dismemberment of the national patrimony except by grants and sales.[6] Few registrations were made, however, for the Haitian peasant had already acquired a suspicion of legal documents he could not read or understand, and he could see no reason for legalizing a status in which, with the squatter's tenacity and inertia, he already felt himself secure.

900 Haiti was in constant financial straits. Money had to be borrowed

5. By a law of September 23, 1844.
6. Law of August 14, 1862. The articles cited here are 2 and 4.

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Haiti was in constant financial straits. Money had to be borrowed

abroad; then paid back at the promised time or a foreign warship would appear at some Haitian port. The steady drain of annual indemnity payments to France,[7] the cost of subduing revolutionary movements, and the large sum eaten up even in times of peace by wages to the army made successive presidents continue to yield government land for small sums of ready cash, in spite of Geffrard's announcement that no more state lands would be alienated. Nissage Saget, coming to power by a successful revolution, paid out fifteen acres to each soldier who fought in his campaign in the South.[8] The straits of the government resembled those of the Continental Congress in America during the Revolution. 175 652 [171]

Another impulse to parcel the land came during the administration of President Lysius Salomon (1879–88). The debt to France had finally, after half a century, been paid off; that incubus removed, Salomon instituted numerous reforms, financial, military, educational. On February 26, 1883, he signed a law by which every citizen of Haiti might conceivably become a landowner even if he lacked money to buy land. Upon receipt of a written agreement to cultivate certain tropical crops—specifically, sugar, coffee, cotton, cacao, and tobacco—the government would grant provisional title to a portion of fifteen to twenty-five acres of land taken from the public domain. The grant became final if, after a period of from two to five years, three quarters of the land had been effectively cultivated. 175 643 671 423 [648]

Five hundred requests were made in 1884 for such grants, and twelve hundred in the following year.[9] Thereafter one finds no records of applications for land; the peasants had discovered the hidden trap in this apparent generosity. How could a peasant with a tiny farm lacking implements and tools, not to mention ready cash, be expected to cultivate important crops on fifteen or twenty acres of land? He would have to cut down trees, uproot wild plants, fertilize the ground, purchase equipment and seeds, and then wait several years for a crop. As Thoby says, "And even then he was not a

7. See above, pp. 70–71.

8. Law of July 12, 1870. In August of the same year, Nissage required an inventory to be taken of state lands remaining.

9. J.-C. Dorsinvil, *Manuel d'histoire d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1934), p. 317, cites these figures. They are contested by Dr. F. Dalencour, *Le Souvenir national par le retour à la terre*, p. 31, who maintains that only 800 applications came in altogether. Here, as elsewhere, Haitian records are incomplete. [114] [423]

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proprietor in the true sense of the word, for he might not change his crops and cultivate bananas, potatoes, yams, peas, or other foodstuffs."[10] Critics of Salomon point out that these conditional grants were designed to make of the peasant a simple fiscal workman for the state, to force him once more to labor for the public rather than for himself. The legislators of 1883 were preoccupied not with the welfare of the peasant, but solely with the increase of production and of fiscal revenue.

The law of 1883, then, like the Code Rural of 1826, fell into desuetude. The peasant was canny enough to see that passing a law did not change realities: he might still squat on government land and yet not be thrown off by the government. Both Boyer's Code and Salomon's law, although of entirely different inspiration, tried to regiment the Haitian peasant in agricultural lines beneficial to state finances but uncongenial to himself.

175 423

Up to the time of the American Occupation of 1915, there were no other measures of much influence upon the status of the peasant. The whole impulse of the common people seemed to be toward the acquisition of plots of land for themselves. By the indifference or impotence of the state, they were allowed to install themselves upon government lands, there to found families and pass on the property upon which they had settled. Thus occurred what might be called a "natural"—certainly unplanned and automatic—development of small property. At first it came at the expense of the great domains; next, through allowing state leases to expire and be given cheaply into the hands of small farmers; finally there were the grants and sales at low prices to thousands of soldiers.

Time validated the peasants' claims, but the state has never formally done so. Legally it might be argued that only a small fraction of the population of Haiti has an indisputable right to the land on which it lives. By strict interpretation most of the peasants are still squatters whom the government might dispossess. The American Occupation, in view of this confusion, tried in businesslike fashion to survey the land and establish property rights. The task proved so extremely difficult that it was soon given up. It met with the stubborn refusal of the peasants to state their claims or take any interest in legalizing their rights. No administration has been foolhardy enough

10. Armand Thoby, *La Question agraire en Haïti*, p. 43.

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to attempt to retrace the path of property evolution, which has steadily taken its own course since the time of Pétion."

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With the peasants prevailingly satisfied in their daily round of life, the separation of upper and lower castes in Haitian society has gradually become an accepted fact. At least ninety per cent of the total population now belong to the peasant group, whose members are as much reconciled to their status as in the United States the poorest colored folk to theirs. Vaguely they may often wish they had the privileges and luxuries of those above them; often, likewise, they feel resentment at the way in which they are treated; but in so far as it is permissible to generalize about two million people, it is fair to say that the Haitian peasant rarely complains of his lot.

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Of the remaining ten per cent of the population a small fraction look upon themselves as élite. Some families of this group can be traced back to colonial times when their ancestors were already affranchis; others began to take on aristocracy under Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, and Boyer. Those whose forebears have become élite only since 1843 are less firmly entrenched in the topmost class. However, since no president since Boyer has ever succeeded in weakening caste lines, the élite one or two per cent may be said to constitute a stable social group.

It is significant that although the blacks had the government in their hands for three quarters of a century they were unable to effect any slight change either in caste membership or in caste lines.

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The part of the population which is neither élite nor peasant is not "middle class," as that term is understood in the Western World. It is rather a shifting percentage of Haitians whose one prevailing characteristic is their residence in towns. Some are wage earners, some small tradesmen; some are ex-élite on the way down the

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11. The intimate observer of the Haitian peasant never fails to comment upon his love of the land. Whereas the colonial planter attached a value to his estate because it produced wealth, the peasant loves his little plot because it is his home. Through all the thirteen successive constitutions of Haiti, the one unchangeable article has been the prohibition of sale to foreigners of real estate in the country. Haitian land is for Haitian people—or was so until after the American Occupation. Likewise, the peasant is suspicious of any law which seems likely to reintroduce the system of large properties, for these might condemn him to leave his land and work at wages for the benefit of a master who, whether kindly or pitiless, would still deprive him of his present liberty. Therefore the Haitian countryman defends with all his force this soil to which his liberty attaches him, and which he cultivates after his own manner. "The Haitian loves his land almost as a man loves his woman."

[24]

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[p. 99]

V

CASTES SINCE THE AMERICAN OCCUPATION OF 1915

IN 1915 American Marines entered Haiti. One of the major reasons for their intervention may have been economic; certainly this explanation or accusation has been frequently made by opponents of American dollar diplomacy. Nevertheless, the ground was well prepared by political incompetency in Haiti in the years preceding 1915, and the reason given to the world by American statesmen to justify the Occupation was essentially a political one: Haiti was in a state of anarchy. 175 648 642

As has been abundantly shown, Haiti never had a semblance of democracy. From its beginning the country was governed either by a despot—the president, who might or might not be benevolent—or by an oligarchy. The failure of Haitian politics from 1843 onward was the inability of the titular ruler and the oligarchy to work in harmony; indeed, the oligarchy was continually divided against itself. Only three of Haiti's presidents from 1843 to 1915 were more than mediocre statesmen.[1] It is merely a question of degree, whether such phrases as "political and economic stagnation" and "social inertia" are more accurately descriptive than words like decay and degeneration. 175 642

A brief résumé of politics between 1900 and 1915 will set the stage for a view of the Occupation in relation to the development of caste. 175 643 642

1. With this judgment by a foreigner Haitians may obviously disagree. In the author's opinion the presidents Geffrard (1859–67), Salomon (1879–88), and Hyppolite (1889–96) were relatively distinguished men. To Geffrard may be credited the following: increase of educational facilities; construction of much-needed public works; an attempt to form a true middle class, even by importing Negroes from the United States; reduction of the size of the army by half; healing of a sixty-year breach with the Holy See, so that Haiti might once again have approved priests; the opening of closed ports to commerce; and improvement of agricultural methods. Salomon was an educated man with European experience; his achievements were to create a national bank, establish a sound currency, retire the public debt, lower tariffs, bring in schoolteachers from France, open rural schools, bring Haiti into the International Postal Union. Hyppolite's chief triumphs were in the field of public works—much-needed buildings, bridges, docks, telephone and telegraph lines. 175 643 65

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175 643 642 The twentieth century began inauspiciously with a succession of dull incompetents in the presidency. General Sam's administration (1896–1902) had been distinguished only by lethargic calm. Nord Alexis (1902–8), over eighty when elected, prolonged the peace by doing nothing to disturb it; he solved his financial problems by issuing paper money, while his political "policy" involved nothing more significant than the sponsoring of festivals to celebrate Haiti's hundred years of independence. The mild revolution which displaced him substituted a president more puerile than oppressive, Antoine Simon (1908–11), who is best revealed in a terse comment by a Haitian author: "When he passed by on a street or through a public square, everyone, foreigners as well as Haitians, must stand still, even stop smoking, and respectfully salute the Head of State. At any instant, without reason, the functionaries of the capital might be called to the Palace to endure his interminable and insipid discourses."[2] A revolution cut short his tedious régime.

Within the next four years six presidents rose and fell. Their administrations were worse than ephemeral; indeed, they hardly deserve the name of governments. Not one of the six had a happy time in office; the first was blown up with his palace, the second is generally thought to have been poisoned, the next three were quickly deposed by revolutions, and the last, after massacring his imprisoned political enemies, was horribly cut into small bits by an infuriated mob. Anarchy then ensued.

175 652 648 For years Haitian presidents had staved off financial collapse by heavy borrowing abroad. United States financial interests were involved in the Bank of Haiti and in a railroad company, while the American government, through its Monroe Doctrine, was disturbed by French and German threats to collect their Haitian debts by force. When President Guillaume Sam[3] was hacked to pieces by the mob, the United States landed Marines from gunboats which were conveniently just outside the harbor of Port-au-Prince. Beginning on July 28, 1915, the Occupation lasted for nineteen years.

128 648 With the question of America's justification in the matter of occupying Haiti this book cannot pretend to deal. As with most large matters of policy, convincing arguments can be offered on both sides. The important fact for this study is that the presence of white

2. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Manuel d'histoire d'Haïti*, p. 338.
3. Not to be confused with Simon Sam, who had ruled twenty years earlier.

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American Marines in Haiti during the next two decades had definite effects upon the social life of the country. 128 648

One of the most immediately observable results was the termination of the long political domination by the blacks, and reëstablishment of the colored élite in government control. The four presidents since 1915, Dartiguenave (1915–22), Borno (1922–30), Roy (1930), and Vincent (1930–41), have all been light-skinned. The United States forces had a definite hand in the election of the first two of these men. America's concern was certainly not to return the government to the colored group, but rather to have as titular heads of state men who were educated, temperate of mind, civil in manners—and, of course, mentally "supple" enough to carry out policies agreeable to the State Department at Washington. Since education had for long been a perquisite of the élite only, and since colored élite outnumbered black élite, the chances were good that the choice should fall upon a colored man in 1915 and 1922. Even so, it may have been pure coincidence that the Americans supported mulattoes rather than Negroes; it can hardly be coincidence that the mulatto presidents since 1915 have filled the key offices with colored men. They would assuredly maintain that they had tried to select persons best fitted for office. The fact remains that there are few blacks in the important ministries. 175 648 643 563

This return to political power of the colored element was one of the most sweeping transformations effected by the Marines, for once again, as in the golden days of Pétion and Boyer, political prestige accompanied and fortified social position. Since 1843 one black or almost black general had succeeded another as president of the republic, and the élite class had perforce to endure them. Socially tolerated these parvenu generals had been, but accepted never. When the Marines arranged the election of President Dartiguenave they effectively reversed the tradition of a century. Since 1915 there have been several Negro candidates for the presidency; in coming elections there are sure to be others; for the present and the near future it is safe to say there will be no more black non-élite presidents.

Such a prophecy is made with a certain assurance because of another result of the Occupation: reform of the army. All true friends of Haiti knew, as most Haitian statesmen had understood for a hundred years, that the huge standing army was an unmitigated burden to the economic, political, and social stability of the country. 175 701 648 177

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175 701 648 177 625 652 669 Since it was an entrenched interest, however, no responsible statesman had dared to threaten its hold. The Marines swept it out of existence, undertaking to substitute for it a trained constabulary of only 2,000 men who should combine routine military tasks with police duty in the scattered towns. Results were immediately apparent: the weighty incubus of soldiers' wages was lifted from the treasury; thousands of men were deprived of sinecures and put back into productive economic activities; the constant threat of armed revolution was removed; better order was kept by 2,000 trained men in trim uniform than by twelve times that number of ragged loafers who called themselves soldiers; and since the army was no longer the great steppingstone to political office, the élite felt more secure from assault by ambitious but uneducated army men. From 1843 to 1915 the élite had endured many lower-caste presidents because these were able to control the army; now the army had disappeared.

175 648 [743] [744] [365] [491] [45] The Marines did much that was of indisputable benefit to Haiti. This was acknowledged even by the most vocal patriots who soon began to campaign for an end of the Occupation. Where there had been no real work in public health, Americans now built hospitals, established clinics, cleaned up the sources of many diseases, laid down sewage systems, gave the towns pure water. In 1915 there were only three automobiles in the country, and no roads for them to travel; the Americans built many miles of paved roads. In 1915 there had been only one wharf, two short stretches of railroad, two lighthouses, one electric plant; the Americans undertook electrification, telephone systems, the construction of administration buildings, and other public conveniences. Whether in such visible matters or in the obscurer realms of currency, banking, and budgets hardly a phase of daily life was left untouched. And judged by the standards of civilization the Marines improved what they touched.

175 648 642 But rancor against the Americans began early and continued to the bitter end in 1934. The pride of all Haitians was deeply wounded by the Occupation. For 111 years they had governed themselves and had assumed themselves to be a sovereign nation; the Marines patroling the countryside were vivid reminders that Haiti had never been independent except by sufferance, and that white men were once more overseeing the destinies of colored and Negro men. Nevertheless, the reasons proclaimed for opposing the Occupation were not those of hurt vanity. Some of those given were entirely

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plausible, such as the race prejudice displayed by many individual Marines;[4] the unnecessary slaughter in the suppression of *caco* (guerrilla) rebellions in the North; the continued holding of offices (and salaries) by Americans too impatient to train Haitians, as by the Agreement of 1915 they were supposed to do; the fostering rather than elimination of military psychology among the people by the presence of armed Marines. 175 648 642

The campaign against the Occupation was generally on the highest level of patriotism, for it threw out one variation after another on the same theme: We Haitians are not being allowed to govern ourselves. Some realists knew that their hurt national pride was accompanied by disappointment that certain salaries were not reaching Haitian pockets, certain prestige of office not redounding to the credit of Haitian men. What if the real reason for opposition were not the openly avowed one? The Marines must go! Order had been restored and government reëstablished. It was patent that any administration which could effect the withdrawal would be immensely popular: it was equally patent that if the Americans left the country, the benefits of their efficiency and material improvement would remain as a tangible boon to Haiti. 175 648 642 668

President Sténio Vincent, elected in 1930 after a campaign in which the Americans did not interfere, began the negotiations with Washington. With President Hoover he made headway toward reforms, but President Roosevelt's attitude was more actively cooperative. In 1934 Vincent had a series of conferences with the President of the United States; the latter, in pursuit of his good-neighbor policy, persuaded the American Senate to order the Occupation at an end and turn over without cost to Haiti many buildings, supplies, and equipment used by the Marines. Vincent personally benefited from the withdrawal of 1934. He called himself Haiti's "second Liberator,"[5] and made the anniversary of the American departure a national holiday. Indirectly the élite also benefited for now, entrenched in office, they could govern without white supervision. The material equipment was there to be enjoyed by the whole people at no further expense to them. 175 648 642 [643] [159] [527] [563]

4. The United States government in the early days had sent Marines from the Southern States to Haiti, on the theory that they would, from long acquaintance with Negroes, know how to "handle" them. This stupid blunder was shortly rectified.

5. Dessalines had, of course, been the first.

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•175 648 642 423 563 The Occupation had had other far-reaching consequences. It had removed from the Constitution an article which had endured from the very first—the prohibition against ownership of land by white people. Americans argued that since Haiti's greatest potential source of wealth was agricultural (sugar and coffee in particular), new methods were needed if rehabilitation were to occur. Only foreign whites had both the necessary wealth and the requisite agricultural knowledge: therefore, whites must be attracted into the country by an opportunity to establish plantations. Although the Senate of Haiti protested violently against this reversal of tradition, which struck at the people's long pride in their complete ownership of the land, the Americans yielded only on the point of requiring five years' residence of the white landlord in the country. The influx of foreign whites has not been large, but in the Plaine du Nord and Port-au-Prince the white "colonies" are considerably larger now than in 1914.

175 648 563 Up to the present moment the white element in Haiti has not exerted any noticeable pressure on the government. Its mere presence, however, is bound to be a restraining influence on politicians, for most of the whites are Americans, and the government at Washington may not always follow a good-neighbor policy. With the clannishness so usual in white colonists living among darker people, the Americans in Haiti have their private clubs and their closed social set. For the first time since 1804 the élite are socially not the highest-ranking persons in the country.

175 648 563 144 The physical presence of several hundred white Marines for nineteen years had also one unplanned but inevitable result: an increase in the amount of white blood in the population. For many decades numerous élite had rested comfortably beneath their light skins, knowing that only they, with their greater mobility in the world, had any real chance to sustain a white strain. The Occupation, however, brought white men in contact with black women; there was a steady average of 2,000 white Marines in the country for two decades. The light skin of resulting offspring suggested to many the possibility of a climb up the social ladder now that the most difficult rung had already been achieved. No figures are available on the number of children born in Haiti between 1915 and 1934 of white fathers, but it was a perceptible influx in the lower class. [554]

175 458 Haitian businessmen enjoyed a greater economic prosperity during the Occupation than they had ever known before. It is commonly

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reported in Haiti that although they joined patriotically in the cheering when the Marines embarked in 1934, many of them shed tears to see the departure of 2,000 monthly salaries, most of which had been enriching the local tills. Indeed, the country came much closer to establishing a mercantile middle class during the Occupation than ever before. The only real control left behind by the Americans was an overseer of the national budget, destined to leave as soon as Haiti's external debt was finally paid off. To that end the government saved rather than spent, so that businessmen found no comfort in the state of economic affairs, particularly during a decade of world depression and European disturbance. Nationalist economic theories in Europe have upset Haitian markets, so that the élite thriftily save their pennies against hard times instead of spending them freely on present luxuries. The American overseer of the budget withdrew in 1941.

175 458 [648] [652]

At many points the forces of the Occupation touched unwittingly upon deep-rooted prejudices of the Haitian people. In order to secure laborers for road construction the Marines revived an old corvée law of Christophe's time, requiring forced labor on public works at the need of the government. Many of the ill-nourished peasants were taxed beyond their physical powers by work on the roads, so that an armed revolt by caco guerrillas broke out. Its suppression required months of time and cost many lives, leaving in its train a great deal of ill will.

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The efficient Americans also came to grief when they attempted to make Haitians orderly in the American way. Land titles were in chaos, as we have noted. American experts wished to find a basis for internal taxation, so that economic reform might be effective and permanent. The effort to have people declare their claims so that these might be properly registered had to be given up after a few weeks, for the peasant owners knew without written deeds their local boundaries, and among the squatters those who realized their title might not stand under strict investigation were understandably averse to having questions of property tenure raised by the authorities of an alien and interfering government.

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Wherever Marine barracks were located, there were centres of a cultural dissemination which was bound in the long run to affect Haitian ideas and practices. Automobiles, radios, amusements, even the daily conversation of the Marines, all left their mark upon a people who had been effectively isolated from the world for more than a century.

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However, as regards caste itself we can now see that after a hundred years practically nothing has changed, even through the Occupation. In the essential structure of the Haitian social system there is still a twofold division. In the mind of élite persons the peasant exists only as a very necessary but essentially stupid part of the country's economic life. The casual visitor who, after two weeks in Port-au-Prince and its environs, has met a few distinguished Haitians, has already sensed the barriers of caste which exist between élite and the lower orders. If the sojourner remains longer and is accepted into the drawing rooms of the élite, he will hear exciting and brilliant discussions of such questions as whether Haitian civilization has in it anything of the African,[6] whether it might not be wise for Haiti to throw over both French and Créole and adopt a new language, and whether the people of the North are not superior to those of the South;[7] however, no self-satisfied member of the élite, in an expan-

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6. See, for example, the article by Lorimer Denis and Dr. François Duvalier, "La Civilisation haïtienne: notre mentalité est-elle africaine ou gallo-latine?" in *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti*, VII, No. 23 (May, 1936), pp. 1–31. Anthony Froude, in his *English in the West Indies* (New York, 1888), tells of an American consul asking a Haitian why the island was not cultivated more intensely. "The dusky soldier laid his hand upon his breast and waved his hand. 'Ah!' he said, 'that might do for English or Germans or Franks; we of the Latin race have higher things to occupy us!'"

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7. This last sentiment was noted by Sir Spenser St. John (*Hayti, or the Black Republic* [London, 1889], p. 14), who calls it a popular idea at the time he wrote and for years before, the élite of the North explaining it by the tradition of industry instilled during Christophe's reign. But Moreau de Saint-Méry had already pointed out that in colonial times there was greater fertility, more abundant rain, more intelligence in management of plantations, more slaves, more distinction and polish among the masters, in the North than in the South. Auguste Magloire (in *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social*, p. 263) thinks the North infinitely superior to the South; it did not participate in the violence of political change in the early days, yet when it did intervene it took the lead. He stated however that the North seemed to be losing its social superiority, and certainly its economic superiority, because of its cultural subordination to France: this made French ideas prevail, and one of the chief French ideas is that political power is supremely important; the North consequently came to seek political superiority when it should have preserved cultural and social preëminence. Paulème Sannon, on the other hand (*Essai historique sur la Révolution de 1843* [Aux Cayes, 1905], pp. 5–9), regards the South as considerably more advanced intellectually. It has never, he says, been able to submit to the absolutist yoke of government, not because of the French influence, for the South was least developed under the colonial régime, but because of its geographical situation, with its long broken coast line, its ports, cities, tribunals, customs-houses, schools, and the like. Those who have outside connections are always more open minded and progressive, he says, than inhabitants of the interior. There is no important town in the South which is not on the sea. Nowhere were the affranchis more numerous or richer than in the South, and these men led the revolution. (See Beaubrun Ardouin, *Études sur l'histoire d'Haïti* [Port-au-Prince, 1853–60], I, 97.) All these influences made for a democratic spirit, but also for one of agitation.

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sive mood, will speak of the peasant and his contributions to Haiti; he thinks only in terms of his own caste.[8] Upper-class Haitians dread the sight of tourists taking pictures of native scenes, fearing that the travelers will return to their own country and label these pictures, "Typical Haitian Scenes," when, as anyone should know, typical Haiti is upper-class Haiti.[9]

The American Occupation failed of many of its ends because it did not recognize the social situation and its implications; or, realizing them, did not consider them worthy of attention. Roads, telephones, mail service, and improved agricultural methods seemed patently desirable to progressive Americans; to install them for the Haitians seemed generously wise. Yet many well-meant efforts came to grief, for the mass of people, lacking a tradition of orderly free government, did not always understand what the Americans were about, while the élite saw in the activities of the Marines a threat to their own dominance as rulers of the country.[10]

The antiquated, but prevalent, notion of the superior mentality of the white race also flourishes in certain quarters among the élite. Many of them say that the Negro can never originate a civilization, and that with the best of education he remains an inferior man, utterly unfitted for government, utterly incapable of making progress.

8. Witness Marthe Oulié's paragraph (*Les Antilles, filles de France* [Paris, 1935], p. 254): "My amiable host (a member of the élite) was triumphant at my surprise and enchantment. 'You did not expect to find a civilized country. What have the spiteful wits told you? That the Haitians worshipped serpents and made human sacrifices? True, the peasants on the mountain-sides are still very primitive and ignorant, but in the cities you will find many families like ours, cultivated in letters and music, careful and proud of their French culture, and absolutely set against American de-civilization.'"

9. "Should you like a European to take pictures of the slums of your American cities and of the most degraded of your share-croppers, and then circulate these photographs as typical American scenes?" asked one sensitive Haitian.

10. See the *Report of the Forbes Commission to Haiti*, 1930, pp. 18–19. "Illiteracy keeps the peasant masses politically inarticulate, except in case of mobs or bandit gangs, which formerly infested the countryside and often furnished the forces of revolution. These bandit gangs have been broken up and have disappeared under American rule, but the social forces that created them still remain—poverty, ignorance, and the lack of a tradition or desire for orderly free government. It has been the aim of the American Occupation to try to broaden the base of the articulate proletariat and thus make for a sounder democracy and ultimately provide for a more representative government in Haiti. Hence its work in education, in sanitation, in agencies of communication such as roads, telephones, telegraph lines, and regular mail routes. These things naturally are deemed of secondary importance by the Elite, who see in the rise of a middle class a threat to the continuation of their own leadership."

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[p. 115]

VI

ROMAN CATHOLICISM

1. *French Colonial Backgrounds*

WHEN France was first establishing a foothold in the New World, religion was one of the consuming passions of the French people. Priests accompanied early explorers, missionaries consecrated their lives to conversion of the Indians; monks, nuns, and parish priests were a vital part of the pioneer settlements of New France. Every family in the mother country hoped that at least one of its sons would devote himself to the service of the Church. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were, par excellence, missionary centuries. 175 171

By the time the colony of Saint-Domingue was acquired, however, this religious zeal was on the wane, and just when the colony was becoming prosperous and populous France was entering the phase of her history known as The Enlightenment. Although the growth of the colony is impressive from many points of view, religion is not one of them, for planters intent upon money-making and luxurious living in an exploitative tropical colony gave little energy to spiritual development.[1] The Roman Catholic Church, being the official church of France, was naturally the only important religious organization of the colony; the congregations authorized to send clergy to Saint-Domingue—Carmelites, Capuchins, Dominicans, and Jesuits—divided the territory and work between them. [192]

No doubt the fathers did some assiduous work. Official historians of the Roman Church in Haiti give the definite impression that their task was arduous and not very rewarding.[2] The torrid heat, diseases (especially yellow fever), the long distances and poor means of transportation were discouraging enough; until the middle of the eighteenth century there was the added difficulty of the poor human

1. It is revealing to see what characteristics of the culture of their mother country colonists bring with them to a new region. French Canadians, in contrast to French colonists in Saint-Domingue, kept many more customs of old France. See J. G. Leyburn, *Frontier Folkways* (New Haven, 1935), pp. 54–57. [114] [171] [178]

2. A good account of the inertia of religious life in colonial Saint-Domingue is given in P. A. Cabon, *Notes sur l'histoire religieuse d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1933), chap. I. [114]

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175 material—Frenchmen who lived "in a deplorable state of morals,
171 too often recalling those of the freebooters and buccaneers" who were their ancestors and predecessors. Even when the calibre of the colonists improved, religion was a minor concern, business and pleasure pushing it well into the background.

There was no great antagonism toward the fathers; indeed, not enough attention was paid to the priests and their work to warrant any very strong feeling. It was indifference and insolence the fathers had to face, or, if they showed too great an interest in the welfare of slaves upon a plantation, suspicion and peremptory curbs. By the old
[671] Code Noir under which the colony theoretically operated, masters were obligated to send their slaves to Mass on Sundays and feast days under penalty of heavy fines; the Code likewise prescribed the baptism of all blacks and their instruction in the Catholic faith. But just as the colonists ignored all parts of the Code antagonistic to their own economic interests, so specifically did they disregard the sections dealing with their religious obligations.

175 Some priests were in any case not too zealous. It was much more
793 agreeable to attend only to external forms, and so participate in the charming life of high society, than to stand firm against laxity. If a
662 priest showed enthusiasm for his duties to his African charges he was
567 almost certain to be accused by the planters of stirring up the slaves
[792] and undermining the foundations of colonial society. This was, in fact, the very accusation leveled at the Jesuits to bring about their expulsion from the colony in 1764. The example was not lost upon other priests.

175 "The safety of the whites demands that the Negroes be kept in
771 profound ignorance," said one of the later governors in a message to France. This sentiment, perfectly expressing the conviction of the
563 majority of planters, not only prevented any secular education of the blacks, but actually kept many of them from instruction in catechism, creed, or any part of the Catholic faith. If instruction is forbidden, few of the sacraments can be administered, for how can a person be confirmed, confess, do penance, if he know not even the first principles of the faith? Few masters objected to the baptism of slave children; on the other hand, they roundly disapproved of the sacrament of marriage for their blacks, since this might place an obstacle in the way of slave sales, and even open the way for assimilation of blacks and whites in the colony.

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Granted these obvious difficulties, there is still little to be said for the zeal or integrity of churchmen in Saint-Domingue. Father Cabon cites a report to Rome in 1794, which, he remarks, "was not designed to be made public, and does not bear the earmarks of passion," and which flatly states that "since the expulsion of the Jesuits, the curés have for the most part led lives so indecent . . . that the citizens and Negroes have lost all the sentiments of religion which the Jesuits gave them."[3] There had been distinguished churchmen in Saint-Domingue before 1750, authors, scientists, teachers of some note, but none appeared thereafter. The rich French colony was not a bright star in the Catholic crown. 175 193 192

Undeterred by those who might have been their spiritual guides, the white people followed the easy path of self-indulgence. The universal testimony of visitors is that, with a few notable exceptions, immorality and cruelty were daily commonplaces. To make a fortune was the prime ambition of every white man, since money made possible the luxurious enjoyment of this world's goods. Protest against money-making or soft living would have been futile. Administrative agents turned public office to their own profit; judges sold justice to the highest bidder; planters drove their slaves to death; and priests dispensed religious solace for a tidy sum. 175 556 185 647 661 693 966 193

The freedmen, who in everything patterned their lives after social leaders in the white planter class, had no more concern for religion than their models. They attended Mass occasionally as a social event, where they might see and be seen. When in the latter days of the colony discriminatory legislation required that colored persons sit in separate parts of the church, most of the affranchis simply refrained from attending Mass: their religious zeal was not so great as to make them submit to the public shame of segregation. In their daily lives, likewise, they followed the example of the white planters in pursuing pleasure rather than sobriety, "culture" rather than religious zeal. Like the whites, they were often licentious in their conduct. When it came their turn to direct affairs of state in free Haiti, there was little interest in spiritual matters among them. The intellectuals of the group paid homage to the liberal philosophers of the century rather than to religious thinkers. 175 771 184

If religion was at a low ebb in the prosperous days of the colony, it almost disappeared in the excitement of the years following the revolt of the slaves (1791). 175 771

3. Ibid., p. 23.

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175 771 643 659 revolt of the slaves (1791). Priests fled or went into hiding with the other whites, so that Masses lapsed or were said by religious but unordained mulattoes. Upon his accession to power in Haiti Toussaint L'Ouverture made several attempts to rehabilitate religion in the country, for the Church he felt was a stable institution which might help in giving order to the turbulent land. He tried to accomplish the return of priests to the island parishes and churches. There are indications that Toussaint was not himself deeply religious; his pronouncements are formal, but one cannot say that they appear to be deeply felt. In his proclamation of October 10, 1798, announcing the expulsion of the English, he orders thanks to the God of Hosts, recommends to his chiefs of corps that the soldiers pray morning and evening and faithfully attend Mass on Sundays. In a public address he enjoins upon parents the duty of teaching the catechism to their children.

175 659 795 The use of Catholicism as an aid to statecraft is apparent in his official dealings with the Church. His constitution of May 9, 1801, states that "the Catholic religion, apostolic and Roman, is the sole religion publicly professed." To obtain priests he besought the return of many who had fled the slave insurrection; he likewise turned to France, but France at this time was less than ardent in religion; nor were French priests likely to wish to come to an island ruled by blacks, particularly one which Napoleon was quite obviously planning to subdue. Toussaint addressed himself, therefore, to a schismatic abbé, Grégoire by name, in whom he saw a friend. Whether Grégoire might have helped him to establish the Catholic Church firmly as a part of Haitian life, with only a handful of repatriated colonial priests, we cannot know, for in 1802 the final war of independence began and the island, in convulsion, had no time for spiritual matters.

2. *Catholicism in Independent Haiti*

175 643 659 795 Dessalines, the passionate, violent, and licentious founder of the new state, although not an enemy of the Church was not its active friend. In his slaughter of whites he spared several priests who had come to the country under Toussaint's persuasion, either because these clerics were obviously inoffensive or might later prove useful to him. Just as he controlled every other detail of Haitian life, he was determined to direct church affairs. He reserved to himself the right to fix the limits of jurisdiction of each priest and to nominate, even

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to appoint, curés to the vacant parishes. His independence of action could not fail to give offense to Church authorities. One of his first appointees was a black ex-slave, Félix, who had been a drum major in the native army. Félix was made curé in the important town of Saint-Marc.

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The constitution of his empire (May, 1805) indicates that Dessalines did not intend to make himself head of the Church, but rather planned a complete separation of Church and State. Article 50 reads: "The law admits no dominant religion"; while the next article grants freedom to all cults and refuses state support to any denomination or minister. No attack was made, therefore, upon Catholicism, yet the disestablishment of that Church was a serious blow to its prestige. Not in the specific provisions regarding religion was the Church most weakened, but rather in the "liberality" of articles dealing with actions upon which the Church had taken a firm moral stand. Thus Article 14 declared that "marriage is an act purely civil [582] and authorized by the government," while Article 15 permits [586] divorce by the state. Early laws of the empire still further undermined the position of Church doctrine. Illegitimate children were [848] granted the same legal rights as legitimate ones—a generous provision which removed one of the strong reasons for marriage; separation of husband and wife except by divorce was forbidden, and this prohibition practically encouraged the divorce disapproved by the Church; finally, the grounds upon which divorce might be allowed were broader than those existing anywhere else in the Western World at the time: mutual consent, application from one party to the marriage, or simple allegation of incompatibility of temperament or character.

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From the promulgation of this constitution in 1805 and for the next fifty-five years, Haiti was in open schism from the Roman Catholic Church. The Holy See refused to recognize either the Haitian state or the provisions of its constitution, and it declined to allow priests to enter the country. Certain Haitian presidents were friendly enough to Catholicism, and others were openly desirous of reëstablishing a state religion, but the breach once made was not healed by mere good wishes. The longer the schism endured, the farther the people grew away from the doctrines and practices of a religion in which they had never been firmly grounded. At the moment of independence, when all minds were more open to new

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ideas than in later years, the habits of regular attention to religious duties might have been fixed; by 1860 it was too late. Religion existed during those years, but it was a strange gallimaufry of Catholicism and folk belief.

On the whole, the rulers of young Haiti were tolerant of the Catholic Church even to the point of advancing its interests, in so far as these might benefit the state. Their pronouncements and actions, nevertheless, were not those of ardent personal believers. Pétion's constitution of the republic in 1806 once more established Catholicism as the official Church. What it gave with one hand, however, it took away with the other. Thus:

Art. 35. The Catholic, apostolic, and Roman religion being that of all Haitians, is the religion of the state. It and its ministers will be protected.

Art. 36. The law assigns to each minister of that religion the extent of his spiritual administration. These ministers may not, under any pretext, form a body within the state.

Art. 37. If in the course of time other religions are introduced, no person shall be hindered, so long as he conforms to the laws, in following the cult he has chosen.

The Catholic, then, is the state religion, but only because the Haitians have heretofore been nominal Catholics. It occupies a position of practical fact which it would lose if by the introduction of other cults Haitians should be drawn away from it. Its ministers will be carefully watched to see that they do not, as a group, try to exert political pressure. And what freedom of action is possible to a church whose ecclesiastical parishes can be limited or extended in size by the civil legislature?

Pétion no more fought religion than he fought any other conventional institution approved by civilized people; but he did little to foster it. He received certain Wesleyan missionaries with considerable hospitality, remarking that "education increases the dignity of mankind." He appeased the good Catholics by repealing the law concerning the rights of illegitimate children, substituting for it a more moderate French rule.[4] Likewise, he invited the Catholic Church to participate in the education of Haitian youth.

4. The French practice allowed an illegitimate child recognized before a wedding equal rights of inheritance with legitimate offspring, while giving only quarter rights to a child recognized after marriage.

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Christophe had a great deal more to say about religion than any of the other early Haitian rulers. In a speech following the promulgation of his constitution, after severe censure of the government of Dessalines, he said:

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> It is necessary to raise again the dignity of religion, for weakened morals leave young people open to the licenses of their age. Liberty has been assailed by traitors, enemies of their fellow citizens, and sold to our cruelest enemies. It is assured to you now, have no doubt! Shortly you will see these vicious men and their criminal efforts vanish like clouds.
>
> Public education, after religion and liberty the most precious benefit mankind enjoys, will be reanimated and sustained by morality; it will again be held in honor and reverence amongst us. Divorce, that traitor among customs, is rigorously prohibited and proscribed forever.[5]

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Like Pétion, Christophe made the Catholic Church official, but he indicated the dictatorial path he intended to follow by adding that no ecclesiastical decree or law might become effective without the consent of the President.[6] He completely overturned the law of Dessalines concerning illegitimate children; his decree deprived such offspring of any claims of inheritance whatever.[7] In a country where practically no one had been legally married such a ruling was severe, but Christophe hoped that his severity would force his subjects into wedlock, and this the Catholic Church was bound to approve.

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Making the Church official did not strengthen its hold upon the people. In 1814 (seven years after he had promised "to raise again the dignity of religion") the kingdom was served by only three priests, one of whom Christophe had named archbishop. The King was preoccupied with form, and having created a nobility he needed a church to lend dignity to his realm. Consequently in 1811 he reorganized the clergy in his kingdom, establishing an archiepiscopal see and three bishoprics. The reorganization, except for the archbishop, remained a paper plan because the Pope refused to cooperate by giving the schismatic church his approval.

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All the early rulers seem to have been rather innocent in their dealings with Rome. They felt, apparently, that as heads of state they had but to express a desire in order to have His Holiness ap-

5. This speech, made on February 18, 1807, is cited in Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1848), II, 334–335.
6. See the law of March 18, 1807.
7. Law of March 25, 1807.

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prove. Dessalines had sent a small number of Negro youths to Rome to receive consecration and ordination from the Pope, so that they might return to initiate a black priesthood for the black state. Pius VII (through the interference of Napoleon, it was held by the Haitians) refused to consecrate the aspirants to holy orders, and they had to return as they had come. Christophe thought to avoid such a snub by presenting His Holiness with a *fait accompli*. Having in his kingdom a Spanish Capuchin named Brelle who had formerly anointed Dessalines emperor, Christophe made this friar head of his reorganized church as "archbishop of Haiti and grand almoner to the King," giving him a "palace" and a yearly income derived from the revenues of his "see." This achieved he asked papal approval, but had sorrowfully to announce, "*Le roi d'Haïti eut la douleur de ne pas même recevoir une réponse de Sa Sainteté et passa outre.*"

Pétion's legislators were even more naïve. Their constitution of 1816 (of course, really the President's) granted to the President the right to have a bishop come to Port-au-Prince "to elevate to the priesthood those young Haitians who feel called to embrace the ecclesiastical state."[8] It was apparently assumed that without the approval of the Pope any bishop could come in and forthwith "make" priests. The insertion of this article in the constitution confesses the disadvantages of schism. The last surviving priests of the old régime, those few who had remained in spite of the breach with Rome, were dying off; no new priests were being sent in; therefore, if the Catholic Church was to endure in the republic, it must have Haitian priests. Certain clerics fleeing political revolutions in South America came to Haiti, but since they spoke French badly, did not improve the religious situation. It was impossible to get sympathetic priests from France, in view of the relations of the two countries at the time. The provision of the 1816 constitution, however childish, was at least an effort to perpetuate the church in Haiti.

It is nowhere recorded that either Pétion or Boyer had any opportunity to persuade a bishop to come and consecrate the desired priests. Deprived of support by the Papal See, in open schism, the Haitian republic was forced to make all regulations governing religious affairs. Boyer carried on various negotiations with Rome looking toward rapprochement, but the schism endured. Organized

8. Article 30 of the 1816 constitution.

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religion was never at a lower ebb in Haiti than toward the middle of the nineteenth century, as whole generations of citizens were growing up who had never known the proper forms of ritual, and had no real religious training. The outward shell of the Church covered steadily more "superstition," more homely beliefs and practices, and the long divorce from Rome permitted the growth of a native religion which later could not be eradicated, no matter how assiduous the labors of Catholic priests. 175 795 771

During Boyer's quarter-century the once Roman and Catholic Church remained the official religion of the state, but its head was now the President. Organization simplified as orthodoxy declined. By 1840 there was only one order of priesthood; no archbishop, bishops, canons, curés, or other titled dignitaries, but only "priests." The people were not taxed to maintain the state Church; there were no tithes or forced contributions for the support of public worship or the repair of parish churches, no heavy list of clergy living from levies on the people. However, if the Haitians were not burdened by imposed religious fees, they were still through their own fears subject to steady tolls for services by the degraded men who then called themselves priests. 175 795 771 659 643

Every effort of the state failing to provide proper religious leadership, Boyer resigned himself to permitting those who professed to be priests to practice in the republic. There were seventy so-called priests in the country in 1840. Some of them had once been in holy orders but were now unfrocked: they found in Haiti not only a haven but a fertile field for gain. In addition to these religious renegades came adventurers who knew just enough of ritual and theology to use the priestly garb as a cover for easy graft. Both groups encouraged crude superstition with a view to making money. They baptized houses, boats, and doorposts, and blessed fetish charms or amulets, all for a fee. Immorality was flagrant, and many of the "priests" had mistresses and children. The debauchery of some was so notorious that Secretary-General Inginac had publicly to rebuke them and even to banish a few from the country. A visiting Quaker, benignantly tolerant of most of what he saw in Haiti, was scandalized by the religious situation. He said that the sole aim of most of the clergy was to secure gold and silver "as quickly as they can, to send to Europe for investment." Excepting a very few (notably the priests at Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, and Jacmel), he 175 795 793 [114]

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175 concludes: "With regard to the ecclesiastical institutions of the
793 republic we may safely say . . . that if the standing army be one cause
795 of the degradation of the people, the Church is surely another; and
[114] the sooner it can be reformed, the better for religion, for morals, and for the physical well-being of the community."[9]

175 Eventually the state felt it necessary to protect the people from
793 these predatory priests. True, people paid for what they considered
795 to be services performed, but the legislators could not permit unlimited graft in the name of religion. An act of 1840,[10] therefore, set
659 a fee of half a dollar for each baptism;[11] $8 for a marriage with Mass, $4 for one without a Mass; an ordinary Mass, 37 cents; a High Mass, service, or funeral "of the first class" (that is, with choir, sacristan, acolytes, and churchwarden), $60; funerals of the second class, $20; funerals of the third class, $10. Articles of the act specify what shall constitute the three classes of service, and it is then stated, "Neither rectors nor vicars shall receive anything for offices at which they do not assist in person, except in cases of illness." The Haitians were not receiving true religious instruction, but at least their government tried to prevent their being mulcted by the spurious churchmen.

175 Since Haiti had no schools except the few attended by children of
the élite, religious instruction of youth was almost nonexistent. The
771 average élite man was openly an unbeliever, for it required little
184 acumen to show him that if the priests represented religion there was nothing to commend it. Hunt in 1860 said: "Many of the educated are about where the French were when they left the island. They believe in Voltaire, whom I have not unfrequently heard them
[562] characterize as the greatest man who ever lived."[12] In contrast to the
[114] men, the women made more of a show of being devout and attentive to the formal duties of religion, but according to Franklin they

are not actuated by any religious feeling. Going to church is a mere matter of parade with them, the sabbath being a day of festivities, and not set aside for religious devotion. The female congregations which frequent the churches in Hayti appear better prepared for an opera, or some other public amusement, than for the sacred duties of offering up their prayers in adoration of the Deity.

9. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 98 ff.
10. Chap. IV, articles 28–31.
11. The figures cited in the Act are in gourdes.
12. Benjamin S. Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans* (Philadelphia, 1860), p. 18.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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The men seldom or never go to mass, except on the days particularly set apart by the government as public fêtes. On these occasions the president and all the officers of Hayti go in procession, but the idea of devotion, I believe, never enters their contemplation. Such days are merely set aside for celebrating some particular event, which it is wished should be handed down to posterity. These occasions present only the external symbol of religion, the whole people being either ignorant or careless of its real character. Their manner and appearance during the celebration of the mass shew that they have no inward feelings of piety or devotion.[13]

Catholicism in Haiti, then, had fallen on evil days; Protestantism, on the other hand, was unable to gain any foothold. Boyer, indifferent to all religion, did not even care to tolerate Wesleyan missionaries as Pétion had done, for when certain of them arrived and were met with "persecution and stoning by a mob," it required persuasion to gain his assent to freeing those the police had taken into custody. He forbade any further meetings of Wesleyans, on the ground that they stirred up riots. At the close of Boyer's administration it was estimated that there were only about 1,200 Protestants in the country, mostly Methodists and Baptists, and these primarily Negroes who had come from the United States to settle in the republic.

Although the Haitian government probably derived a certain satisfaction from controlling a state Church, Boyer was impelled both by circumstance and his own temperament to obtain the approval of the Holy See. His own tepid spiritual zeal had nothing to do with the case; Haitian public order would benefit by a superior group of priests, and Haitian prestige would rise, he thought, with recognition by Rome. Having already in 1826 settled the conflict between France and Haiti in the political sphere, Boyer tried assiduously to end the schism from Rome. His propositions were examined with benevolence by the Pope, who conferred upon the primate of the Indies, archbishop of Santo Domingo, the title of archbishop of Haiti. This personage, however, was a Spaniard already established in the comfortable city of Santo Domingo amidst people of his own nationality. He could not be persuaded to move to Port-au-Prince. The failure of Boyer's efforts is due more to this ecclesiastic than to uncoöperativeness on the part of Rome. From 1834 to 1860 the Court of Rome had official representatives in Haiti, but they cannot have been very effective men, for conditions in

13. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 204–205.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 795 648 697 643 [793] religious life were not improved and the schism endured. The archbishop of Haiti seemed to regard his new title as applying vaguely to the island, not the country, of Haiti, and since all his vicars were Spaniards unable to speak either French or the Créole dialect, they did nothing for religion in the Haitian republic.

Ties broken by a single radical action may require endless patience and persistence to knit together their severed threads. The impetuosity of Dessalines caused the rupture; it was prolonged by indifference to religion, absorption in economic and political matters, fear that France might use to her profit any *rapprochement* with Rome, and a certain complacency in subordinating Church to state. Inertia, however, was the real obstacle in the way of healing the breach. It is much less trouble to let conditions remain as they are than to make a change whose results no one can foretell. But the longer the rupture, the less understanding the people had of steps necessary to reëstablish the Church.

175 771 When in 1847 Faustin Soulouque, the ignorant, became president, the horizon had never seemed darker for organized religion. The black general, suddenly impelled by a quirk of fortune into high office, was a man of the people in his religious attitudes. All their belief in magic, in the mystical power of certain rites, in charms and spells—all their "superstition" as the Catholics called it—Soulouque shared. For the first time in Haitian history one is aware that the folk beliefs brought over from Africa had become welded into a recognizable form, under the name of Vodun. To colonial writers "Vaudoux" had been primarily a name for certain dances; to the early Haitian élite it seems to have connoted either occult rites or vulgar claptrap compounded of gibberish, old wives' remedies, and sensual dances. But in the long and deepening twilight of Catholicism, the various elements were fused, until by Soulouque's time the Haitian was familiar with the general beliefs, rites, and "priesthood" of Vodun. As Soulouque had broken with the tradition of presidents who wished Haiti to be recognized as one of the community of civilized Western nations, so he allowed the traditional respect for Catholicism to die. As an emperor he was a transplanted African chief; as a believer he was a follower of Vodun. The rites were practiced and the sacrifices made openly now. Men in high places dared to reveal their belief in native tenets. For twelve years Vodun flourished with official approval.

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The depths to which Haiti descended under Soulouque made the task of his successor relatively simple. It would prove wise and generally popular to reverse the Emperor's action, in whatever respect. President Geffrard was the more successful as an antidote to the Emperor because of his practical intelligence. The best time to strike for the revival of Catholicism would be immediately after the heyday of Vodun. In 1859, the first year of his incumbency, Geffrard consequently undertook negotiations with the Holy See, sending two plenipotentiaries for the discussions. Because the Haitian delegates persuasively depicted the sorry state of religion in their country, because they showed themselves and their President willing to defer to papal wishes, and because the new Pope was filled with missionary zeal to reclaim Haiti for the Faith, all problems were overcome. An early agreement was reached, and the Concordat, signed in Rome on March 28, 1860, was approved by the Haitian Senate on the first of April. A commission was dispatched to Haiti immediately, one which did thoroughly and well its task of delimiting the boundaries of dioceses, allocating bishops and other clergy, and founding a seminary. An archbishop of Port-au-Prince was consecrated, and the Catholic Church, Roman and apostolic, at long last became officially established once more in the republic. The breach of fifty-five years was healed.

In one sense the reform had come too late. All the peasants were by this time thoroughly imbued with the ideas of Vodun, as were the lower orders in the towns. Most of the élite either clandestinely practiced Vodun or ignored religion altogether. On the other hand, practically no Haitian was opposed to Catholicism, not even the most ardent devotee of the obscurer cult. The native faith had grown up quietly enough, making its adjustments to the outward forms of Catholicism which still existed in the country. To every Vodun worshiper there were simply two hierarchies of spiritual beings, each with its own powers; to believe in one was not to deny the other. The new Catholic priests, then, met no hostility; what they had to deal with was an ineradicable folk religion which accepted everything and rejected little in the spiritual realm.

The Archbishop, his band of forty priests, and a small group of Brothers and Sisters set to work with fervor. Nearly everything had to be rebuilt from the ground. Church buildings were in such disrepair that it was considered more economical to erect new ones than

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 795 346 to try to renovate the old. Gradually the work became established, increasing in scope with the years.

175 795 It is not necessary to present a detailed history of the work of Catholicism in Haiti since 1860. The most striking feature of these years is its relationship to Vodun, which will be treated shortly. The progress made by the Church itself can best be seen by a summary of conditions in 1930.

794 795 162 Haiti is divided into dioceses named after its principal towns and cities. The population statistics are based upon figures of births covering more than fifty years, and although estimates, they are probably as accurate as any other population statistics for Haiti:

Archdiocese of Port-au-Prince	942,700
Diocese of Cap-Haïtien	453,000
Diocese of Les Cayes	628,000
Diocese of Gonaïves	475,000
Diocese of Port-de-Paix	153,590
Total	2,652,290

793 To care for this large and predominantly illiterate population there are 205 priests,[14] only 8 of whom are Haitians; 105 Brothers; and 366 Sisters.[15] The assiduous educational work of these *religieux* will be discussed in another connection.

794 162 The country's 10,200 square miles are divided into 112 parishes, which generally correspond to the political communes, although there are several parishes in the larger centres of population. In the rural sections 465 mission chapels are located at strategic points.[16]

550 Any casual attempt to assess the importance of religion in the daily

[794] 14. Of these, 136 are in charge of parishes or missions (the secular priests). The remaining 49 are regular clergy (that is, belonging to a religious or monastic order). All parishes in the diocese of Port-de-Paix and two in Port-au-Prince are in charge of the regular clergy; the other regular monks are doing educational work or other special service connected with the dioceses.

[793] [792] 15. The Brothers are Frères de l'Instruction Chrétienne; of the number 83 are French, 10 French Canadian, 9 Spanish, and 3 Haitian. The Sisters belong to three congregations: 146 to St. Joseph de Cluny, 198 to Les Filles de la Sagesse, and 22 to Les Filles de Marie.

16. All the figures cited above are drawn from the *Report of the Forbes Commission to Haiti*, 1930, pp. 16–17.

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[p. 131]

VII

VODUN

1. *Misconceptions*

THE second religion of Haiti is Vodun. It is not mentioned by 771
officials as one of the spiritual assets of the country; its priests wear no regular habit; it has no town churches. Yet it is the living religion of the masses. Catholicism may have official and social sanction; indeed, most peasants do consider themselves as belonging to that faith, yet it is doubtful whether in any other Western country there is so universal an adherence to a common religion as in Haiti to Vodun.

If there had been a paid campaign of propagandist misinformation, 114
it is unlikely that more untruths and half-truths could have been put 771
into circulation about this faith of the Haitian people. Moreau de Saint-Méry describes something of it in his classic work on colonial matters, although most of what he tells concerns the dances, which he considered primarily a form of recreation. Pious visitors to Haiti in the early years of independence labeled it simply as a form of superstition and did not bother either to understand or misrepresent it. By the time of Soulouque it was known as a rather definite folk religion, but only after 1863 did what was really a simple set of religious beliefs and practices suddenly become notorious, making Haiti the object of macabre curiosity and of reports whose chief characteristic was gruesomeness.

In 1863 occurred the *Affaire de Bizoton*, and it may as well be 175
recounted forthwith as the prime origin of all misunderstanding 771
which has pursued Haitian religion—although to emphasize it is like giving an account of Christianity with all the emphasis on witch burnings, torture of heretics, and excesses of bigotry.

On December 27, 1863, a little girl of Bizoton named Claircine disappeared from home during the absence of her mother. Search for her was futile until after several days it was discovered that she had been killed and used as part of a sinister sacrifice by religious fanatics. An inquest, discreetly managed, resulted in the arrest of fifteen people, of whom eight were longer detained. The trial of

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175 771 [682] these four men and four women began on February 4, 1864, arousing all Port-au-Prince, the local population as well as the foreign legations and consulates. The guilt of the accused was soon evident; following their complete confessions they were declared guilty of sorcery, cruelty, and murder, and all eight were condemned to death. They were executed on February 13, only six weeks after the crime. What these fanatics had done seemed as horrible to the Haitians as a similar crime would seem to Americans.

Much publicity was given the trial by foreign journalists who, with their flair for making the most of a dramatic tale, added whatever they could pick up by hearsay of the beliefs which had prompted the human sacrifice. The reading public, uncritical and uninformed about Haiti itself, if they gave the lurid accounts a second thought seem to have assumed that such actions were "what one might expect of Negroes." The incident would shortly have passed into that oblivion which awaits sensational news from obscure parts of the world, if it had not been kept alive by the British Minister, who was also an author.

114 771 In the 'eighties, after retirement from diplomatic service, Sir Spenser St. John wrote a two-volume work called *Hayti, or The Black Republic*. It was probably no more egregious in its dramatic account than were scores of other books by Englishmen who, in the latter years of the Victorian era, were discovering darkest Africa, holding dominion over palm and pine, and taking up the white man's burden all over the "heathen" world; but it possessed the literary qualities which made people buy it and discuss with avidity its horrendous details. The adjective "black" in its title seemed almost to refer to the moral characteristics of the people rather than to their skin color. Sir Spenser made a great many accurate, if somewhat one-sided, observations on the customs of the people, giving the public the first readable book in decades about the Haitians. The grisly climax of his story, however, is the *Affaire de Bizoton*. He amassed an astonishing collection of tales, practically all at second-hand, to prove that Vodun (Voodooism, he called it) was the real religion of the Haitians (which it was), and that it was compounded of the vilest superstitions and most fiendish practices, of which the most essential was human sacrifice of "the goat without horns" followed by a cannibalistic communion. Which, needless to say, it was not.

This is the sort of dramatic tale uncritical readers seem to like to

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Vodun, therefore, show the Catholic influence, exerted in the main unconsciously. 771 171

Unlike the great religions, Vodun lacks a formal theology. As has been said, no seminary exists for the training of priests and priestesses, no congress or college of fathers states or amends the creed; there is no church court to discipline the individual enthusiast, or catechism for the young; no scriptures or sermons are printed or read to strengthen the faith. Vodun is an informal religion of action, not a formal one of reason. It flourishes because it is malleable, adaptive, suited to the needs of a people living close to nature and without education. To give a single lucid description of this Haitian folk religion, created as it is by everybody and by nobody, is about as possible as to give one description of home life, which varies according to the couple. We may, however, outline the common elements of creed and practice. 794 771

2. *Formative Days*

To say casually that Vodun is African in origin is to say little more than that it does not stem from the great world religions. There is no unity in Africa today; there was still less in the eighteenth century when slaves were being imported into Haiti. At that period it was possible to find a new dialect and a different set of folkways every few miles along the western seacoast. Two slaves from one geographical region (the Gold Coast, for example) might not understand each other or have the slightest predisposition to sympathize with each other's customs. 771 174

Colonial planters experimented with slaves from various regions in Africa, just as they might compare breeds of horses; setting tractability off against originality, brute strength against skill, intelligence against health. In this quest for a perfect slave, Negroes were imported from all parts of the Dark Continent, from Senegal in the northwest around the five thousand miles of seacoast to Mozambique and Madagascar in the east. Partly because trading conditions were more favorable in the Dahomey and Congo regions, and partly because the qualities of Dahomean and Congolese were preferred, Negroes from these two sections soon came to predominate over others in the colony. Whereas "Congo" was merely a geographical term, implying no community of feeling among the natives living 175 567

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175 567 along that river, Dahomey was the name of a powerful kingdom under a political administration which embraced a fair amount of interchange of ideas and similarity of social institutions, including religion.

175 567 178 Discretion made the planters separate slaves who knew each other, in order to minimize opportunities for revolt among them. This policy, although it prevented the rapid growth of "slave" customs, at the same time dispersed Dahomeans all over the colony; beliefs and practices held in common among the slaves were likely to take on a Dahomean cast. Since their work was directed, their freedom of movement limited, and their family life broken up, there was practically no opportunity for the outcropping of *any* African ideas relating to economic life, government, property, education, or 175 178 marriage. The one sphere in which it was possible for Old World beliefs to continue was the religious. No slave dealer could penetrate 796 771 535 the minds of his workers or silence their folk tales and folk songs in the evening when work was done; even the strictest plantation owners allowed dances in the slave quarters on Saturday nights and Sunday. It is the dance, a vital part of Dahomean religion, which seems to have formed the nucleus around which the diverse beliefs of African tribesmen grouped themselves, for it was a form of action which need not involve anything more than amusement or emotional release, if the participant were not religiously inclined. In the beginning, as Goethe observes, was the Act. To this simple Act of dancing, the Word, with thought behind it, could easily be added later. Practically all African tribesmen danced; and the numerous Dahomeans had a dance which was ostensibly for diversion but could be turned to a religious purpose as well.

771 171 174 Here, then, was the skeleton of a slave religion. Although every single African tribe had its own beliefs and ritual, each (so far as we know) had common elements with every other one. For example, all slaves, whether Senegalese or Angolese, believed in a multiplicity of spiritual beings, some of whom controlled the aspects of nature—lightning and storms, the sea, the sky. They thought that disease and other ill fortune came from spirits who must be placated in order to win back health and well-being. All felt that the normal course of events could be altered by magical spells, formulae, or charms; that one could bring misfortune to an enemy, luck to oneself, or ward off otherwise inevitable fate. Most of them had been accustomed to

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learn the properties of plants, both for healing and for poison. Except for the belief in spiritual beings, this folk knowledge would hardly have been classed as religious, for it was useful in every phase of daily life; the classification is that of the anthropologist, not of the simple black.

If Dahomean beliefs prevailed over others of African origin, it was chiefly because of the numerical preponderance of Dahomeans in the colony, together with the popularity of their religious dances. The Dahomean spirits or gods were Vodun; the dance in which the worshiper sought the inspiration of the spirits was a Vodun dance. Like all but the highly organized religions, this one recognized the validity of other beliefs. Its practitioners were not bigots. No hierarchy existed to keep out new accretions. Imperceptibly these were added to the original basic form: here an Arada spirit, there a Congolese prayer, and in many instances a Catholic saint, until the composite Vodun religion began to take shape.

There is no evidence that during colonial times Vodun was ever considered important by the white ruling class—certainly not as a faith. To most planters the word was the name for a vigorous dance. Judging from Moreau de Saint-Méry's description it was held openly enough, at times being witnessed by the whites as a sort of nocturnal diversion. Moreau knew, as did other whites, that there were "superstitious beliefs" connected with it, yet the offhand use of the word "superstition" was indication enough that the beliefs were not regarded as important. We have seen, however, what profitable use the slaves were able to make of the apparent innocence of their dances. When the idea of revolt began to germinate among them, gathering on each plantation at least once a week they had ample opportunity to hatch their plans. It is known that the campaign for revolt was developed partly under the stimulus of the Negro Boukman, a *houngan* or priest of Vodun. By means of drumbeats, which to the whites merely pounded out the rhythm for dancing but had for centuries been a means of communication at long distance in parts of West Africa, that ripening plot was telegraphed from one plantation to another. Even more important, perhaps, was the unity of feeling made possible, despite all incoherence of tradition and language, by the Vodun background.

The revolt of half a million slaves was a success. This fact has been rather too calmly accepted by historians of Saint-Domingue, who

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114 175 669 668 have explained it chiefly by the surprise element of the uprising. But when else in modern history have slaves successfully revolted against their armed masters and become permanently free? Successful revolutions even of people not in bodily slavery have had acknowledged leadership, whereas in Haiti no real leader appeared for the insurgents. Boukman's influence, indeed, at its widest never reached beyond a part of the northern plain; he had about the same range of power as a ward boss in the United States. On the plantations Hallaou, Hyacinthe, Lafortune, and others whose names are unimportant or unknown, Vodun houngans likewise welded slave opinion within their narrow districts. But no single great leader appeared. As the conflict was developed, without plan or unity under the divided and contradictory action of numerous blacks, what held the people together was, negatively, their hatred of the white masters; positively, their Vodun beliefs. Only later in the decade did a true leader, Toussaint L'Ouverture, emerge to consolidate their victory. [793]

776 793 761 782 781 As often happens among unsophisticated people convinced of the rightness of their cause, the local Vodun leaders were sure of their own invulnerability through the protection of one or another of the spirits.[8] They convinced their followers as well, to such a degree that when an invulnerable chief fell there were dozens of reasons to explain the unexpected death rather than any disillusion. Usually, failure to follow the rigorous propitiation requirements of the protecting god offered the key to the misfortune. Various ones of them were known to be exacting and troublesome. The leader at Trou-Coffi, Romaine by name, had absorbed enough of the Roman Catholicism in Vodun to feel that the Virgin Mary was his especial patroness.[9] Beyond this specific belief in invulnerability was the general trust that Vodun spirits would lead their devotees to success, would give them a happy issue out of all their distress. [789]

8. A parallel case of belief in invulnerability because of divine protection was that of the North American Indians both at the time of Tecumseh and later in the Sioux outbreaks at the climax of the Ghost-Dance Religion. See James Mooney, *The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890* (Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, 1892–93 [Washington, 1896]), chap. X. [171] [781]

9. The importance of Vodun beliefs in connection with the slave revolt is stressed by Dr. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Vodou et Névrose* (Port-au-Prince, 1931), pp. 33–34. He says of many of the chiefs: "The belief in their invulnerability was not at all the result of calculation, but was a true state of mind, a sort of autosuggestion which explains very well the chronic heroism of certain leaders of the revolution in Saint-Domingue and of the war of independence of 1802–3." [114] [781]

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Vodun, then, was both widespread and powerful enough to be turned to most effective ends in 1791. Contemporary accounts of it still saw it as a meeting ground of superstitions. The French naturalist, Descourtilz, for example, was primarily struck by the use of the occult in connection with Vodun; he especially describes a woman who, under the seizure of her god, took a live coal in her hand without being burnt; a husband who by the use of magic struck his inconstant wife with a languorous malady, effective for half a year; and the knowledge of poison which was combined with the practice of magic. He mentions but one of the Vodun gods by name but implies the existence of many others.[10]

Madiou, Haiti's first historian, likewise always spoke of Vodun as a savage survival; he says of a native general, "Lamour Dérance, plunged in gross errors, put his faith in *sorcery*, in the prophecy of *papas*, or priests of *African fetishism*."[11] In his scornful distaste for the vulgar he clearly indicated by his own italics some conspicuous elements of the developing religion: magic, the use of fetishes, and a Vodun priesthood. His illustration of Dérance's error was his making soldiers believe that bullets could not wound them:

> When he marched to combat he was preceded by bands of Congos, Aradas, Ibos, Nabos, Mandingues, Haoussas, who threw themselves against the French battalions with a prodigious intrepidity, crying that the bullets were but dust. But this courage which *superstition* fed was shattered against the ramparts of . . . the Europeans' square formations.

It is noteworthy that the first three black rulers set themselves against Vodun because of its potentialities for sedition. The plots to overthrow the old régime had come to fruition at apparently innocent Vodun dances. Although the ingenuous aspect of the dance gathering had deceived the white masters, Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe knew the meaning of the assemblies. All three had to drive their people hard and knew that resentment would be an inevitable consequence; it must not have an opportunity to burgeon at nightly gatherings. Toussaint was the strictest of the three, for he forbade all dances and nocturnal assemblage.[12] The other two singled

10. M. E. Descourtilz, *Voyages d'un naturaliste en Haïti, 1799–1803* (Paris, 1935 ed.), pp. 116–118.
11. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, p. 33.
12. In an order of January 4, 1800.

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The other two singled

175 643 794 796 671 659 798 771 out Vodun dances for their bans, permitting the purely social dances. On the eve of the first anniversary of independence, "as soon as retreat was sounded, African dances of all kinds began in the tents and open fields; the Vaudoux dance alone was proscribed; the noise of the drums did not quiet down until morning."[13] Dessalines was more suspicious of Vodun than the other two for, being a superstitious man himself, he feared that some of his growing number of enemies might use sorcery upon him; consequently whenever his active police reported meetings of Vodun worshipers he had the offenders shot if they could be caught. Practically all Haitians knew how to distinguish the rhythms of Vodun drumbeats from those of other dances, so that it was not particularly difficult to track down the meeting places. What Christophe really believed, no one could say. He paid outward homage to Roman Catholicism, of course, but rumor persisted of his great faith in magic and the power of African fetishes.[14]

175 643 794 659 798 796 771 114 The élite mulatto presidents, Pétion and Boyer, did not deign to dignify Vodun by prohibiting it. No revelation of their attitude toward it survives, but we may note that no law of their thirty-six-year tenure of the presidency mentions it. From their other opinions one concludes that they regarded it as merely another of the people's innocent and harmless aberrations. Not one of the foreigners whose curiosity about the Negro republic led them to report on Haitian life of this period gives an intelligent account of Vodun as it then was. Macaulay, writing in 1831, for example, describes the annual celebration at the source of Grande Rivière de l'Artibonite; he mentions the festive dances (not Vodun) and singing, then says: "Morning ceremonies consisted of a solemn sacrifice at which the blood of victims immolated for the feast were offered, and libations of wine were poured on the spring."[15] This was clearly a Vodun sacrifice. Brown, in 1837, writes as a religious man:

> No race is, more than the African, given to religious feelings, though these being but mere sensations entirely independent of thought and reason, manifest themselves in a display of idle fooleries, or dark and hideous terrors of the imagination. They intermix the legitimate ritual of the Catholic faith with the mysterious adoration paid to their national Fetishes, and the

13. Madiou, *op. cit.*, III, 186.
14. See Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti*, pp. 90–91.
15. Zachary Macaulay, *Haïti* (Paris, 1835), pp. 90–91.

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African obi and the Catholic priest both come in for a share of their respect and homage.[16]

This is the usual tone of the comment on native religion, as when Candler in 1842 speaks of funerals in country places "with the *rites of heathenism*, such as are practised to this day in the heart of Africa."[17] Of these conventional criticisms of Vodun, one of the more thoughtful is Bonneau's:

The shocking phantasmagorias of fetishism paralyzed the intellectual development of the African race for six thousand years; superstition is in some sort inherent in its nature. The [Haitian] people need to break with their past. Catholicism has been prodigiously patient and courageous, but it does not possess the necessary corrective for extirpating the fetishism which immobilizes the black population. The Catholic Church, by fractioning the religious sentiment, by forcing thought to diffuse itself in order to take in a thousand secondary details, by imposing on the people practices without number which tend to materialize the cult, by placing as intermediaries between God and men a multitude of saints and genies, encourages and fortifies the tendencies, even the most deplorable ones, of the black race, whose intellect has been shrouded in mist for centuries precisely because it can grasp only with difficulty the relationships between things and ideas, tending rather to lose itself in details than to rise to general and synthetic conceptions.[18]

If the fixing of periods has any clarifying value, one might set the stages of the development of Vodun as follows:

1730–1790, its Emergence, when the importation of slaves was steadily increasing, with a gradual ascendancy of Dahomean ideas;

1790–1800, its practical Testing in the fires of revolt when, out of apparent innocence and enforced secrecy, Vodun effectively united the slaves in their action for freedom;

1800–1815, its Suppression under the black rulers;

1815–1850, its quiet Diffusion to all the people and assumption of the form it now exhibits.

The middle of the nineteenth century was the turning point. Before then it had been so to speak in gestation; under Soulouque, then ruling, it publicly emerged. Until the mid-century élite people had

16. Dr. J. Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, II, 273.
17. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, p. 166.
18. A. Bonneau, *Haïti: ses progrès—son avenir*, pp. 24–25.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 771 794 ignored when they did not frown upon it. As we have seen, the aristocratic Madiou spoke of Vaudoux as "the sorcerers of our country districts," and President Riché in 1846 whenever he heard a suspect drum, went himself to silence it. Under Soulouque, on the other hand, the élite did not dare to show contempt for practices so dear to His Imperial (if benighted) Highness; indeed, one priestess of Vodun then boasted, "If I were to beat the sacred drums and march through the city, not one from the Emperor downwards but would humbly follow me."

175 771 794 798 For at least a century Vodun had developed with no real obstacles beyond the twenty-year prohibition of the Three Great Blacks. The white planters in the colonial era had been too indifferent and imperceptive to stop it, while the élite of the republic were too proud to concern themselves. The Catholic Church, which might have been its most effective enemy, was too lax and too much hampered in colonial times to curb "slave superstition," while from 1805 until 1860 because of the schism no real Catholic priesthood labored in the country. All this changed after Soulouque: the schism was healed; priests of true missionary spirit came to Haiti; the *Affaire de Bizoton* gave the enemies of Vodun a focal point of attack. Since 1860 the Catholic Church has not ceased its war against the folk religion. Occasionally, as in the days of Toussaint, a ruler has suppressed it. Such executives have probably known, however, that it was much too late to eradicate Vodun. It had decades in which to send down its roots. Efforts against it have about the same effect as the persecution of the early Christians—a strengthening of the faith of believers, an outward submission to restrictive rules but increased devotion to rites now performed secretly, and in the case of Vodun at least, an added attraction to the cult because of this very secrecy. At least one president has been known to be an ardent worshiper. Today, much as the élite turn up their noses at Vodun, there are many who look to it in their hour of need, when the Catholic faith seems to fail or medicine proves helpless.

3. *Vodun Belief*

771 The sincere Vodun worshiper is generally an illiterate peasant or humble laborer who would never bother his mind to formulate a definite statement of his beliefs. Because there is no clearing-house

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789 generally through no wish of their own, have the uncanny ability to cause evil simply by a glance. One look is enough to do the damage. Although theory is a bit vague on this point, it appears that certain irritable spirits use the agency of the human eye to vent their spleen on mortals who are fortunate: good looks and strokes of luck act, consequently, as lodestones to the fateful glance. And where the [175] glance falls ill luck may spread, harming all within reach. In the days [304] of slavery people had such a fear of the evil eye that they did not hesitate to disfigure infants who at birth seemed to be particularly handsome and so likely to attract attention. Nowadays the practice 777 is to avert the glance by making an *arrêt*. This "halt" may be either a 789 special charm worn on the person or else the mark of a half-moon done with a caustic vegetable substance on the cheek. As with Europeans who believe in the evil eye, certain specialists ply a lucrative trade through their reputation for effective charms against the maldioque.

Other charms may be mentioned. There is the *garde* which protects its wearer against evil of any variety—the near relative of the good-luck charm worn by thousands of "civilized" people. There is the *ouanga*, or *wanga*, compounded to achieve a special end, generally an evil one. Faine remarks that ouanga is

> [192] A Créole word of African origin [signifying] a philtre or simple of a special kind, compounded by an *houngan* out of such diverse ingredients as a dead chicken, some grains of indigo and maire, amulets, pieces of money, asafoetida, etc., the whole contained in a half-calabash. . . . The Ouanga, placed in the home of an enemy, is designed to bring him bad luck even to the extent of giving him elephantiasis ("gros pied") when he has inadvertently stepped on the ouanga.[37]

The ouanga is the Haitian equivalent of the hoodoo, for through its influence one may (or so he believes) bring illness, misfortune, or death to an enemy. For every ouanga there is a garde, for every evil a cure. The art lies in finding out the nature of the ouanga causing harm, and then knowing exactly what to do to fend it off.

751 Historically the most interesting garde is that called a *drogue*, 789 which is thought to insulate one against wound by weapons or bullets. Reference has already been made to the utter abandon with which the Negroes, both at the time of the insurrection and later in

[37] Jules Faine, *Philologie Créole* (Port-au-Prince, 1937), p. 319.

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validity to forms and ideas which we know, in our hearts, might sustain us.[1]

The Haitian peasant is not interested in making formal distinctions. If he is critical, it is only of results, rarely of the means used to obtain those results. If he cannot gain his ends in one way he is not too proud to try another, and still a third. Nineteen out of twenty Haitians, then, being Roman Catholics in religion, are likewise worshipers of Vodun. There is so much mystery in the world, so much misfortune, beauty, sorrow, and joy that it would be unthinkable to deny God or the gods: mankind has worship enough for them all, and need enough of them all. There is to the peasant no conflict between Vodun and Catholicism; the two are complementary, even if sometimes the Catholic priests make coöperation impossible.

Let us recall for a moment the earlier history of the country. In the days of slavery one may imagine the Church would have found it difficult, even if its priests and planters had been willing, to train all the blacks as thorough Catholics. Some concepts took root, some rites immediately appealed. Below the surface, however, the African ideas of the preponderant Dahomeans were spreading through the plantations. In the crucial early days of independence, when the customs and social institutions of the Haitians (as Haitians, not as expatriate slaves) were in process of formation, the country's rulers were not deeply religious; moreover the State was in open schism from the Church. For fifty-five years no approved churchman was at work with the people. The seventy men whom some historians mention as priests were on the whole venal and self-seeking, even vicious. Their least concern was to wean the people away from their superstitions, for precisely in these folk beliefs lay the greatest source of gain. By the time the breach between State and Church was healed it was too late to make single-minded Catholics of the Haitian peasants. They would accept what the new and active priests taught them, but not to the exclusion of what they had believed for a century.

With the élite the Church has had more success; assiduous teach-

1. This either-or dichotomy is not limited to religion: we divide ourselves similarly, in politics, family life, residence, and so on. If I am a Lutheran, a Republican, a married man with a home in New York, I cannot at the same time be an Episcopalian, a Democrat, and a voter in Chicago with a second spouse and family there. What is impossible and ridiculous for Americans, however, is in some ways the normal course of life for the Haitian.

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IX

HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDS

TOLERANT understanding of the ways of alien people is rare in matters relating to sex. Occasionally we may regard marital and sexual practices which differ from our own as amusing or ridiculous; more frequently we find them distasteful and disgusting. A long religious heritage has implanted in us a definite personal morality, familiar in Puritanism and in the codes of the great majority of early American pioneers. Accompanying and dominated by this religious aspect has born the legal idea of sexual morality. A middle-class tradition of private property, hence of orderly marriages legally recognized, has schooled us for centuries to approve certain moral and sexual rules: monogamic marriage, children born in wedlock, a public wedding ceremony by approved authorities, censure of sexual relations which might confuse the passage of property. Although sympathetic tolerance for foreign ways has never born an outstanding American characteristic, it is least evident in connection with divergent sexual practices. We do not remind ourselves of the utilitarian basis of a part of our own sexual codes.

Where people have economic and social backgrounds different from those of Western Europe and the United States, other codes will prevail. Elements which have made American moral standards what they are were lacking or appeared in different form in Haiti. Instead of middle-class European tradition there was African tribal practice; instead of diffused small private properties there was slavery; instead of the Puritan notion that sex relations were in general sinful was the less rigorous view that sexual intercourse was entirely normal; instead of the example of monogamous family life constantly before the minds of children growing up, there was the example of libertinage among lofty whites and laxness among the blacks.

Nothing in the experience of the slave régime could have predisposed toward orderly marriage these people, soon to become Haitians. Certain masters actually prohibited weddings among their slaves, while most others discouraged it, since the development of family ties among the blacks would only have made for complication

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175 567 581 [794] when slaves were to be sold. Even when whole families were brought over together from Africa, it was considered discreet in Saint-Domingue to separate the various members at the slave market, so that there would be little chance of combinations and intrigues. Theoretically the Church was in favor of regular marriages between slave men and women, but even if the Africans had understood or desired the "sacrament," the opposition of the white planters would have been enough to curb missionary insistence on this point; the Jesuits had already been expelled from the colony for their too great zeal in plantation reforms.

175 567 588 [843] As a usual thing, then, slaves simply cohabited. It was not against the rules of a plantation for a slave and the woman with whom he consorted to live together in a slave hut with the children born to them; but neither was it against the rules for the overseer to put other slaves into the same hut, or to sell promising slave children as if they were cattle.[1] Little was done to prevent sex relations between slaves, although masters had varying attitudes toward the results of these relations: some planters welcomed births as a stockbreeder welcomes additions to his herd; others resented the pregnancy of slave women as an obstacle to necessary field work. In the former case, a planter's capital was increased; in the latter, abortions resulted when the overseer drove pregnant women to hard work under the tropical sun.

175 567 588 The freedom of the planters with the persons of their attractive female slaves likewise weakened any tendency toward monogamous family life as conceived by bourgeois European society. The relationship between master and slave woman was momentary. Not often was a woman so beguiling that she could be called a concubine; still less often was she a mistress. The latter estate was the height of any female slave's worldly ambition, for not only might she then be freed, but she could live a life of leisure. In rare cases she might hope to persuade her white paramour into marriage. Almost certainly her mulatto children would be free.

175 565 581 In so far as there was any predisposition toward strict observance of European marriage practices, it was most clearly exhibited by the group of affranchis. As freedmen they were intent upon establishing

[567] [581] 1. Under exceptional circumstances slaves found themselves under a benevolent, religious master who allowed them to be married by a priest and thereafter to live together as a family.

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themselves and their families economically and socially. Property was important, so they took pains to insure the legitimacy of their heirs; color was crucial, and so they regulated the marriages of their children to be sure there was no reversion to the black strain. They guarded their fortunes solicitously, provided their daughters with dowries large enough sometimes even to lure a white husband, educated their sons in Paris—behaved, in short, as if they had been pillars of society in provincial France. Like the white planters, the male affranchis often had relations with slave women, but even more rarely than whites were they seduced into marriage with women of the lower orders. 175 565 581

When the slave insurrection and its aftermath freed the half-million blacks in Saint-Domingue it was not to be expected that European middle-class morals and practices should suddenly prevail. Modern usage emerges from the womb of tradition. Neither in Africa nor in the colony had tradition taught the blacks respect for monogamy or for marriage entered into by religious ceremony. If the ex-slaves had reverted to their Dahomean, Congolese, or other African background, they might have introduced the bride price; but to pay a bride price is to assume the existence of wealth, an assumption contrary to fact among the ex-slaves in Saint-Domingue of the 1790's, and Haiti of the 1800's. In neither Dahomey nor the Congo was there much ceremony at the union of a couple; what there was consisted mostly of singing and dancing. If, on the other hand, the people went only by what they had observed in slave days, there was no tradition of binding union or strict codes, as we understand them. A man knew when to stay away from another man's woman; children remained near their mother—these two statements almost cover the situation as of 1796 among the newly freed slaves. 175 581 [583] [585] [837] [855]

Toussaint, apparently a conventional person in what concerned social behavior, wished his people to be "moral." He instituted a time of "holy masses, mystic communions, biblical psalms, and divine ecstasies"[2] for his private edification, and recommended the same for his people. He could not possibly have instilled into them a desire for Christian marriage, however; even if he could, priests would not have been available for the wholesale marrying of scores of thousands of men and women. Local records of weddings at this period are very scanty. 175 643 788 582

2. Saint-Rémy, *Pétion et Haïti*, III, 22.

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The truth is, marriage and moral conditions differ from economic and political conditions in that they are not so immediate and pressing in their effect upon individual lives. If these are not attended to today, tomorrow will find our bellies empty and our state overrun by enemies. But sex relations go on willy-nilly, and children are born into families: there will still be marriage and a moral problem to attend to when order has been brought into practical affairs. Toussaint was involved in a diplomatic battle in which the participants were the best minds of France, England, and the United States. Beside these mighty problems upon which depended the economic and political future of his people, the question of a standard of sex conduct was definitely secondary.

So it must have seemed to Dessalines, the founder of the state and first "law-giver" of Haiti. By his official actions it is evident that the economy of the country was his primary concern, with defense against a return of the French a close second. In his pronouncements he bowed respectfully to religion and then postponed action until some more convenient season. He pronounced likewise some very proper sentiments on marriage and morals, calling attention to the benefits of wedlock, piously deprecating sensuality and voluptuousness. His imperial constitution of 1805 encouraged lawful unions, treating marriage as a socially virtuous state to be cultivated.

This was all words, however, and came strangely from the black general who was, as everyone knew, a notorious libertine. He lectured his people on the danger of yielding to their passions, yet showed no intention of controlling his own impulses or those of his favorites. He was, indeed, the last man in Haiti to make a gesture toward sexual morality among the people, for although he was married his daily life was a complete negation of moral precept. In every town he habitually visited he established mistresses, bestowing large sums of money upon them. He employed every sort of seduction, honor, and gift to conquer the virtue of females who valued their "respectability." Actually, he did not often need to use violence, for the prevailing moral tone was not so high but that most young and attractive women would yield to their Emperor.

The sternly upright Haitian historian, Madiou, has a formidable paragraph on the vices of Dessalines. He tries partially to excuse him on the grounds of his fury at discovering conspiracies against his authority among his colored lieutenants, asserting that his early gen-

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erosity and equity now gave way to malevolence and personal license: 114

Putting no restraint upon his passions, he travelled about, followed by actors, dancers, musicians, and courtesans. An indefatigable dancer, as soon as he arrived in a place he gave a ball. Under Toussaint Louverture, in order to please the Governor-General everyone approached the holy altar; under Dessalines one gained glory by dancing well. The Emperor, giving himself up to scandalous pleasures, forgot that he was head of the state. The greatest immorality reigned about him. With a gaiety sometimes grotesque, he told the ladies who frequented his court how much he admired their beauty, no matter how ugly they actually were. Following his example, his major officers of state kept concubines in every town in the empire. . . . When the emperor entered a town, the honest women were gravely disturbed, for their virtue was menaced not only by him but also by his officers of state. Many mothers kept their daughters shut up to keep them from the notice of those who were powerful enough to take them, with impunity, by violence.[3] 643 159 831

Marriage, then, looked at from the standards of any white Western country, was in a sorry state in Haiti. Continued warfare had broken up many even of the families which, though unrecognized by the white planters, had nevertheless been formed during slavery; and the camp life of soldiers roaming the countryside confirmed the casual attitude of the people toward sex. Every ex-slave was a hero, and liberty was sweet. Under Dessalines it was scarcely wise for a prominent man to marry an attractive wife, the Emperor might so soon set himself to seduce her. Above all, there was no tradition of formal marriage. This was the chief factor to bear upon future marriage and sexual customs of the Haitians; and in appraising them is the paramount fact to keep in mind. 175 831 581

Meanwhile, children were being born. Their mothers were known, but often the fathers were not, for the vast majority of infants were born out of wedlock. Dessalines, a realist except in matters which touched his vanity, saw the necessity of establishing a status for these children, not on grounds of morality but for economic expediency, to avoid future disputes over inheritance. French precedent did not serve his need, for according to French law an illegitimate child may not inherit: a parent in France is not free to leave his property as he will, but must pass it on to his legitimate heirs. 175 848 428

3. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 239.

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175 While the broad problems of marriage, inheritance, and legiti-
512 macy were not to be solved by the official act of any ruler, the efforts made, particularly those by Dessalines and Christophe, had their effect upon the development of the marital institution in Haiti.

671 "Whereas," begins the preamble of Dessalines' law of May 28,
848 1805, "it is necessary to fix in immutable order the status and rights of children born out of wedlock, and whereas it is important to reconcile what nature and society owe them with the political interests of the state," therefore it behooves the government to lay
[581] down the specific rules which follow. Nothing in the law pushes the people toward marriage, but every provision strengthens the family, which they had known both in Africa and in the slave régime of the colony.

175 Henceforth no stigma is to attach to the fact of illegitimacy, nor is
671 there to be discrimination in favor of children born in wedlock. The
848 status of a child will depend upon recognition by its parents. If a
428 child's maternal connection is established, he has rights in her property; if the father likewise recognize his offspring, the child has rights in the paternal property; even if the recognition of a child is so long delayed that the parents die, that child who can prove his descent is to receive the name and his own share of property from the deceased. There is but one single provision in which an illegitimate child has an inferior status: should a couple decide to be legally married, they must recognize the natural offspring of either party before or during the wedding ceremony, if such children are to have full claims of inheritance; delay until after the ceremony cuts their claim to only one fourth that of children born legitimately; refusal to recognize the natural child disinherits him, unless he can prove his descent.

[422] Since the Emperor was already engaged upon his campaign to
[423] acquire lands for the state, the property rights guaranteed would refer chiefly to personal property, and only secondarily to land still owned by individuals. Both men and women owned personal property, however, and must therefore pass on this property, a definite percentage going to each son and daughter.

The law is weak in some of its details. It does not specify, for example, how an unmarried father shall leave his property—whether by name to each child he has recognized as his own, or by name to the mothers of his children. It is strong in that it is simple: property

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must pass to an illegitimate child if recognition is accorded. It is likewise strong in its harmony with actual conditions: in the absence of legal marriage among the people, it would have been manifestly unfair to favor a few fortunate children. Dessalines argued that the revolution had legitimized all Haitians; that it was unjust to prevent a child's inheriting from the person who had given him life; and that since all Haitians had come out of slavery and degradation into freedom, no new inequalities should be instituted.[4]

If this law encouraged family life, it weakened marriage both of the civil and religious kind: where was the sense in the expensive luxury of a wedding when children were just as legitimate without it? By conforming to folk practice the Emperor confirmed it. Only the aristocrats disliked his law, for it seemed to make light of one of the distinctions they cherished—the formal wedding. It irked them to have the State place a casual child upon an equal plane with one born after proper marriage.

At still another point the law accorded with living conditions at the time. During the years of fighting many men had been killed, and always the large standing army kept thousands of others away from settled farm life. Home, then, was for a child the abode of his mother—a fact recognized by the law's insistence upon maternal relationship rather than paternity. Such a word as "matriarchate" has no place here; but from the days of Dessalines to modern times, the lowly Haitian thinks of his home primarily as where his mother lives.

As if the advantages of formal wedding were not already sufficiently weakened by this law, other enactments of the empire struck at other phases of marriage. Divorce was permitted for adultery, for incompatibility of temperament or character, and by mutual consent. Such provisions not only broke away completely from Catholic practice, but made getting out of wedlock a casual matter of taking an oath. The complaint of incompatibility need be made by only one spouse; "mutual consent" as a ground for divorce was probably not allowed in 1805 in any other country of the Western World.

Dessalines did not appear to care one whit for the good opinion of white foreigners. It sufficed for him if Haiti endured, whatever Europeans thought of her. Christophe, on the other hand, was extremely sensitive to foreign disapproval. Many of his official acts can

4. According to the testimony of Madiou, op. cit., III, 226.

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175 643 648

be explained only as efforts to win outside respect for his kingdom of blacks. He was aware of the scorn in which white people held the apparent absence of all sexual morality in Haiti, and so set about introducing reforms. Even as a general he had opposed the dissoluteness of Dessalines.

175 643 582 671 581 [595]

In an early pronouncement Christophe proscribes concubinage (by which he meant the unmarried unions of the people), libertinage, and "all those disorders which weaken the family." To proscribe an evil is not necessarily to put an end to it, however, and so he tried also to persuade and educate his people to the habit of full legal marriage. His steps at persuasion were various. In speeches he urged weddings upon his subjects; yet a man could see little reason for tying himself to one woman for life, assuming *legal* responsibilities at an expense, when already from experience he knew that he could have a woman's loyalty without the ceremony. Although weddings somewhat increased after 1806, Christophe's verbal campaign was a failure. He next tried force. In one town he made all the females assemble in the public square; then, separating the married from the unmarried, commanded his royal guards to advance, each to select an unmarried woman who should become his wife. At other times he selected young men and women by lot and had them married "by their King's authority." No nobleman in the kingdom could long remain unwed: indeed, Queen Victoria might have approved Christophe's solicitude for the moral uprightness of the Haitian court.

175 671 848 428

Another means by which Christophe forced his people into formal marriage was the indirect one of attacking property rights. Realizing that Dessalines' law by guaranteeing inheritance to natural children encouraged people to remain unmarried, he rescinded it by one of the first acts of his rule.[5] This act reestablished French practice, making it all but impossible for illegitimate children to inherit anything. Most persons of property found this law persuasive where words had left them cold. Madiou thought the law "excessively severe in a country where nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of the population were born out of wedlock,"[6] and he spoke of its disharmony with general practice at the time. Actually,

5. Law of March 23, 1807.
6. Madiou, op. cit., III, 422.

it seems not radically to have affected the mores but only the fairly well-to-do.

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it seems not radically to have affected the masses but only the fairly well-to-do.

The *Royal Almanac* for the year 1814 touches proudly upon the moral state of the kingdom. The author of the almanac, the Comte de la Limonade, says: "Great attention is paid to morals and manners. Marriage is honored, protected, and encouraged; no Haitian who is unmarried can fill any place of distinction. Divorce is not permitted." All this was true; yet the mass of Haitians still remained unmarried. Nevertheless, the quotation indicates the extent to which Christophe had gone in his effort to reform marriage and morals among his people; to set them in the European tradition and draw them out of their African and colonial backgrounds.

While Christophe was trying to effect reforms in the North, Pétion was accepting his Southern folk as they were. Hardly a law during his twelve-year administration touches the subject of marriage. The élite colored people continued to make proper legal marriages and so insure the inheritance of their legitimate children. The common folk lived their family lives without weddings, and if property questions arose, custom ruled, backed by public opinion in their little communities.

Such are the backgrounds out of which modern Haitian sex relations have developed. From African tradition came family life, the importance of property to stabilize a union, insignificance of a wedding ceremony, familiarity with matrilineal kinship and descent; from French colonial practice, formal marriage to establish a family with social ambition, casual sex relations for pleasure outside this marriage, the claim of legitimate children to all property (in contrast to folk custom, where few legitimate children were born); from Dessalines, an emphasis upon the African tradition and realism; from Christophe, an insistence upon strict French practice in marriage and in the passage of property.

From among these alternatives Haiti made a choice which is an excellent example of what Keller calls "automatic selection in the mores."[7] There was no congress to select one procedure rather than another. Because Pétion and Boyer followed a *laissez-faire* policy in social matters, the people took the path of least resistance.

7. A. G. Keller, *Societal Evolution* (revised ed., New York, 1931), chaps. IV and V.

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[p. 186]

X

HOME LIFE OF THE ÉLITE

565 581 ONE brief characterization of the élite might be that they are those who carefully observe the proprieties. The proprieties are those of France, and among them is "common sense" in marriage.

175 565 831 581 People of privilege in colonial times, which were the fountainhead of élite tradition, lived at ease and did not concern themselves with manual labor. Nor were they burdened by puritanical codes of sexual morality, but on the contrary enjoyed sex relations with whatever attractive women came their way. But they would have thought it sheer folly to allow momentary delight to interfere with the very practical matter of choosing a wife. Marriage meant increasing one's fortune, strengthening one's social position and connections, establishing one's children. Romance was as irrelevant to all this as to choosing a business partner. This attitude of the French planters, current even in France of the present day, was the standard for freedmen.

175 565 588 581 Even when wealth was most plentiful in colonial society it had not been always easy to find the proper wife for an affranchi youth. For a man to remain single, however, did not mean that he remained celibate. He might, on the contrary, contract a fairly permanent informal union of love, while discreetly refraining from a marriage which would jeopardize his own or his family's status. Such informal unions were not generally regarded as immoral. Good taste, it was felt, was a sufficient guide in all matters of sex outside of marriage.

175 565 581 The unsettled condition of the colony between the slave insurrection of 1791 and the achievement of independence in 1803–4 did not change the affranchi concept of suitable marriage. During the brief two-year rule of Dessalines, the ideal of propriety in marriage remained the same in spite of the Emperor's efforts to undermine the importance of legal weddings and the legitimacy of children. Pétion, upon his accession in 1806, showed himself a true member of the mulatto aristocratic group—indifferent to the morals of the masses so long as custom settled their problems for them, and content with the marriage traditions of the élite. He said publicly what was neces-

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175 565 581 sary for a president to say as to proper respect for moral principles, then left morality to take care of itself.

175 588 565 581 During Pétion's time and that of Boyer there came into common usage the convenient term "*plaçage*" to describe the extramarital unions of respectable people. "Concubinage" was a crude word, with definite overtones of disapprobation; plaçage was more indirect, and carried no connotation of disrepute. Briefly, plaçage was the union of a man and a woman for pleasure, companionship, and a measure of home life, without the assumption by either person of any legal obligations. A man might make as many of these tentative unions as his disposition, his finances, and his tact dictated. Often enough they were with women of his own social class, for Haiti had an excess of women over men; but generally they were contracted with pleasing women of the lower social orders. Young men not yet financially able to marry, younger brothers whose inheritance was too small to support a family, husbands who had married for practical purposes rather than for love, and eagerly lustful men—these were the usual participators in plaçage.

Although for a woman a church wedding might be the height of ambition, and proper parents tried to see that their daughters achieved it, there came to be a feeling that no disgrace attached to being *placée*. Certainly at the beginning a wife outranked a placée, just as in colonial New England a wife outranked an old maid; but to be placée was a far better lot in Haiti than to be a spinster in Massachusetts Bay colony. No one would have thought of calling a placée by so inaccurate a term as "mistress"; still less would anyone have assailed her moral standing. A man who had a mistress might keep his arrangements with her secret; but plaçage unions were, or came to be, quite open. The one great flaw in the arrangement was that near middle age a man might cease to care about his union with the woman. Foresight and adaptability were the only safeguards against this fate.

565 581 588 Nowhere else in the Western World has there been so little actual marriage in proportion to the population as in Haiti. Whether technically it is correct to speak of peasant unions as examples of plaçage is a matter of opinion; certainly the peasants rarely marry. Thousands of Haitian couples in all walks of life could be found at any period since 1804 living quietly together from youth to age, bringing up a family of children with as much order as do others who have had a

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581 wedding to consecrate their state. These unions might be called
565 (after Anglo-Saxon usage) common-law marriages. Many such
588 couples have, late in life, gone through the wedding ceremony at the insistence of children aspiring to social prestige.

175 Haitian writers have frequently felt it necessary to explain and
114 justify to the outside world the practice of plaçage. Thus Saint-Rémy
581 in 1857 wrote: "*Plaçage*, or primitive marriage, is still one of the
588 Haitian customs. It requires no civil or religious formality. I must
565 confess that some of these unions are more respectable than those sanctified by civil and religious law."[1] Dantès Bellegarde in 1934 implied (erroneously) that the practice had always been one limited primarily to peasants. He said:

> Haitians have been accused of immorality because they practice free unions. This reproach is unjust. Concubinage is without doubt the rule among the people [that is, the peasants and workmen]; but it constitutes a sort of *connubium injustum* (unlegal marriage) which, in many cases, has nothing immoral about it, certain "plaçages" having more solidity and seriousness than a large number of regular marriages. In order to understand the existence of this custom and its persistence in the lower classes of Haitian society, one must go back to the colonial epoch: the whites kept numerous concubines, white women being few in Saint-Domingue. (The [162] white population of Saint-Domingue was composed in 1789 of 30,826 souls, of whom 21,166 were men and 9,660 women—not counting soldiers and sailors.) On the other hand, the Negroes did not marry each other, because they did not care at all to have wives whom the master might "abuse," to use the word of Père du Tertre; moreover, masters did not require their slaves to be married: they mated them with a view to obtaining fine "products."
>
> Concubinage tends to disappear among us, or at least to become more discreet. In the cultivated class people generally marry, and the girls in most modest condition—having passed through the primary schools—resign themselves willingly today to the diversion of their unused affections to cats and other domestic animals if no one offers to lead such girls to the altar.[2]

175 Nineteenth-century visitors were generally shocked by plaçage,
581 just as middle-class people are usually shocked by sex ways which
588 seem franker than their own. That the Haitian practice was a practical one, based upon a desire to preserve property intact within the

1. *Pétion et Haïti*, V, 66 note.
2. *Un Haïtien parle* (Port-au-Prince, 1934), pp. 30–31.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 581 588 family and to make only "sensible" marriages, was a fact rarely glimpsed by the critics. A good example of their attitude is the statement of the pious English Quaker, John Candler, in 1842:

[114] But few of the merchants or principal inhabitants are married men: concubinage is common, and unhappily, regarded as not dishonorable. Whenever a ball is given, or a large party invited, the invitation is equally extended to "Monsieur and Madame ——" or to "Monsieur —— and his lady"; and by this compounding of moral distinctions among the upper classes, the evil descends to the lower ranks and becomes perpetuated.[3]

[867] And later Candler accuses Haitian mothers of being "utterly dead to all moral considerations," because they do not take pains to instill (middle-class English) ideals of morality, or teach the young the evils of "wayward passion."

175 114 581 588 563 Not even Haitian authors were willing to accept plaçage as a desirable practice. Beaubrun Ardouin explained that the color prejudice of colonial times was responsible for what he clearly considered an evil.[4] "The aristocracy of skin" made plaçage prevail over "divine law," for whites would not often in colonial times marry colored women. The same prejudice in the republic kept light-colored men from marrying darker women, but not from living with them. Ardouin believed that Haiti would gain infinitely by adopting "*les bonnes mœurs*," not on moral grounds, but for practical reasons. With regular marriage, he says, there would result a greater fixity of the conjugal state and more confidence on the part of the women, "who too often discover that they are only the satisfaction of a whim"; also the men would reflect more upon the consequence of an infidelity which, in dividing families, might separate children from father or mother and so greatly weaken the delicate relations of paternal love and filial piety. Still another consideration was political: the dispersion which resulted in the inheritance of property when many mothers and children compete. Because of plaçage unions, quite a number of estates had been reduced to almost nothing.

175 581 588 643 As the century progressed, the custom of plaçage prevailed from the President down to the humblest peasant. The women of the President were visited publicly by him; sometimes he was accompanied on his visits by a staff or selected officers of state. The critical

3. *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 24, 25.
4. *La Géographie de l'île d'Haïti*, pp. 181, 96 ff.

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175 Englishman, Sir Spenser St. John, said that he had met placées of the
581 President at dinner, and was asked to trace resemblances between
588 children and their reported father. "No one seeks to conceal it, and
643 the conversation of married ladies continually turns on this subject. One excuse for it is that many of the ladies whom you meet in society were only married after the birth of their first children. However, according to French law, that ceremony renders them all legitimate. Some of those admitted into society are not married at all, but their daughters being married, prevents notice being taken of the false position of the mother."[5]

565 In recent years the élite, although many continue to contract
581 placage unions, keep these arrangements quieter than formerly and tend to make them with women lower in the social scale than themselves. Formal and regular marriage is expected and approved among the upper classes of today. Indeed, one modern informant in answer to the question, "What is the primary test of membership among the élite?" replied without hesitation, "Five generations of marriage in the family."[6]

583 Formal marriage is not entered into lightly among the upper
565 classes. It is a serious business watched over by state, family, and church. The interest of the state seems to be to guard against bigamy. The possibility of bigamy is the more likely since one or the other contracting party may have formerly lived in placage. The interest of the family is in the wisdom of the alliance. Before a wedding can be performed both parties must have obtained the formal consent of their parents, besides having their banns published at their respective places of permanent residence. There seems to be some doubt whether the courts would uphold a father in his refusal to consent to the marriage of a son over twenty-one years old; but cases are known in which such a refusal has stopped the wedding. Of course, the daughters must always obtain parental consent to marry.

585 The civil wedding, adopted in Haiti at the beginning of her independence, is usually followed by a religious ceremony. The Church, like the State, takes precautions against clandestine marriages and bigamy. Notice of a projected union must be read from the pulpit

5. *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, I, 177–178.

[114] 6. John Lobb, in "Caste and Class in Haiti" (*American Journal of Sociology*, XLVI,
[581] No. 1 [July, 1940], 29), states that "one informant defined family status as a position
[554] resulting from the recognition that in a family the parents had, for generations, been legally married in the church."

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[p. 193]

XI

DOMESTIC LIFE OF THE PEASANTS

HAITI apparently has more women than men. This is not merely the casual impression of visitors, but a general conviction among local scholars and priests who know the country intimately. There is no census, of course, so that an investigator lacks means of confirming an unusual biological situation in which, it is said, there are five women to four men, in which many more girls than boys are born, and in which the death rate is higher for females than for males. 162 [69] [163] [165]

During slavery, more men than women were imported into the colony, but the slaughters of the insurrection and the revolution more than balanced the two sexes. The colonial census of 1790, probably inaccurate, showed 452,000 blacks and 28,000 affranchis who had some degree of Negro blood; a census of 1805, which certainly could not have been more than an estimate based on reports of plantation overseers and army officers, reported only 380,000 Haitians. This would indicate a staggering loss of 100,000 within fifteen years. Even with a reasonable juggling of the figures, it is obvious that deaths increased during the troubled years, and obviously males rather than females met their death on battlefields. Commentators on Haiti under Dessalines already speak of the preponderance of women. Other writers during the nineteenth century expressed the opinion that women outnumbered men, but the only figures offered were those in one parish for 1821–26—possibly atypical even if the figures are accurate—showing that 1,305 girls were born as compared with 1,209 boys.[1] 175 162

Certain physicians whose practice takes them into country districts and also certain priests have stated their belief that the number of females born exceeds the number of males. Although these men are in a good position to judge, the statement remains an opinion not yet validated by statistics; if it should prove true, it would be an extraordinary biological freak.[2] Another observation must be set 163 [114]

1. These are the figures of Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Haiti*, II, 112.

2. One physician thinks that the rate would be as high as five girls to three boys in a few parishes; and a priest recounts his experiences in baptizing girls named "Assez-fille" (Girls-enough), so called by their parents to indicate to deity that the next child should by rights be a boy. Professional observations such as these merely corroborate the general opinion as to the excess of females in the population. [114] [163] [55]

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remains is the verbal handing down of recollections, one of the most natural things in the world and one congenial to Haitian peasants. Every region, every village, has its accomplished storytellers. The phenomenal resemblances in detail of the coumbite to Dahomean coöperative work may be due therefore to this verbal tradition. 174 241 574 476 535

Once the men have cleared and prepared the field, the care of the crop devolves upon the women. For this there has been a long background of tradition. In African agricultural regions, in the plantations of Saint-Domingue during slave days, under the forced labor régimes of Toussaint and his successors, women had been field workers. They had never known anything else. We have seen that many of the present-day practices of Haiti go back to the times of Pétion and Boyer: during this period women did field work, not by decree of government but by force of circumstance. Their men were constantly taken away from the farms for service in the large army; if crops were to be raised, women must do the work. Sometimes soldiers were stationed near their own homes, and could help in production; but they could be called on to march, at short notice and in peacetime, anywhere in the country. Many of the later presidents made it a definite policy frequently to change the station of regiments, so as to prevent revolutionary projects and guard against the soldiers' being tampered with by the disaffected in any single community. 241 175 462 701

Sir Harry Johnston records his observations on the Haiti of 1910 as follows: 114

The women are the best part of the nation. They are splendid, unremitting toilers. In the face of all discouragements with which a bad Government clouds their existence the women of Haiti remind one of certain patient types of ant or termite, who, as fast as you destroy their labour of months or days, hasten to repair it with unslackening energy. The market-women that descend from the country farms to the Haitian towns know that on their way to the market-place, and in that market-place, they will be robbed by soldiers and officers until the margin of profit on the sale of their wares has practically disappeared. Yet they continue to toil, to raise poultry and cattle, till the fields, see to their gardens, make pottery and mats. They cannot stop to reason, but must go on working from three years old to the end of their lives. Such industry (which is almost equally supplemented by that of the peasant husbands) properly directed should make Haiti one of the richest countries in the world for its size and population; but so long 114 462 461 [701]

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114 461 462 as it is cursed by the present military despotism, the utmost that the women of Haiti can do is to keep their country just above the waters of bankruptcy and their households from complete despair.[9]

701 175 Since 1910 the military has been reformed, and the women are not mulcted by soldiers and officers; Sir Harry's prophecy regarding the material benefits of removing the curse of military despotism was overly optimistic.

441 443 175 Rounding out the economic life of the peasant is the market, which provides an outlet for whatever surplus is produced, a source of needed supplies and a modicum of money, as well as an almost imperative diversion for hard-working women. The origin of Haitian markets may have been either French or West African, for both regions had them. They were certainly in existence by 1803 in Saint-Domingue, for Madiou speaks of the trade of the plainsmen of the Cul-de-Sac with the holders of what then was called Port Républicain (now Port-au-Prince), adding: "Each Sunday at Croix-des-Bouquets a market was held which brought together more than 4,000 cultivators, male and female, with the permission of the overseers or proprietors."[10] That so large a number came to the market is an indication of the social as well as the economic nature of this institution. Similarly, in the North in 1803, "Rochambeau, now master at the Cape, set about attending to the market established at Petit-Anse in July. After having suppressed all the markets which existed around the Cape, he opened a single and general one, 13th August, at Petit-Anse, one league from the city." The French general was making use of a familiar economic device to carry forward the economic life of the colony during the trying period of the wars.

175 441 462 466 702 In independent Haiti it was an almost immediate development that the women generally should do the marketing, the men being either required to work on the land or busy at military duty. It came to be accepted quite simply that going to market was a woman's work. From 1843 on through most of the century there was an additional reason why peasant men would not go to the market towns: recruits were needed, both for the army and whatever revolutionary coup might be brewing; a man who did not relish fighting did better to stay out of sight in the hills. In fact, this has even been called the chief

9. *The Negro in the New World*, pp. 196–197.
10. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 24, 34.

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reason for which women assumed a larger part of the agricultural work than in the early days of the century: to keep their husbands indoors during the hours of daylight.

Haitian markets seemed to fascinate foreign visitors a hundred years ago as they do today. One Englishman, describing the markets at Cap-Haïtien and Gonaïves, said that riding one morning to market in the latter small town he passed 465 persons and all sorts of animals. "The women as usual were decently dressed; and the men were more respectable than any we had seen on our route: they were evidently small cultivators who live on their own freeholds. . . . All were cheerful and happy."[21]

Ever since force was withdrawn from the economic life of the Haitians—that is, since 1820—a steady round of criticism has been leveled at the "laziness" of the average male. Much of this can be discounted as coming from unsympathetic white foreigners who visited Haiti to find proof of Negro inferiority; some of it again is not significant, since it is the product of élite essayists who cherished the preposession that the black was born to menial labor, and that if he did not work he had small reason for existence. The fact remains that not even friendly authors have been able to refrain from comment upon the inertia of the Haitian man, whether of the 1830's or, indeed, the present day. It is worth selecting half a dozen of the earlier criticisms, ranging from 1826 to 1860—two by Haitians, two by Englishmen, and two by Americans. Impressionistic, they nevertheless establish a basis from which to gauge the accuracy or inaccuracy of the charge.

In 1826, Placide Justin, drawing most of his material from the notes of the British agent in the Antilles, wrote: "The Haitian man is characterized by an almost unbelievable inertia. He is practically without ambition in political as well as in private life. No one seems to worry about tomorrow."[22] Two years later the Englishman, James Franklin, compared the régimes of Christophe in the North and of Pétion and Boyer in the South; with the former he was entirely sympathetic, but in 1828

the state of ignorance prevailing among the people in the mountains and the interior parts is almost inconceivable. It appears as if the work of civilization had not commenced, and that the people had not taken one

21. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Haytí*, pp. 25, 26.
22. *Mémoire politique et statistique de l'île d'Haytí*, p. 52.

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114 voluntary step towards improving themselves in any one thing. . . . Ex-
461 periments may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coërcion and want will impel the Haytian to labour; and I have my doubts as to the practicability of enforcing labour in Hayti until the people have been better instructed, and their characters become changed. . . . Nature is too generous to the Haytian; he never wants, and so never works for hire, as do free labourers in other countries.[13]

An American, Dr. Jonathan Brown of Philadelphia, in 1837 published a volume which in most respects seems quite dispassionate. He says:

[462] The females are compelled to perform most of the labor. Those of the country employ themselves in cultivating the soil, while the men spend their time in traversing the country on horseback, in drinking, smoking, and other habits equally unprofitable. The females of the town perform all the retail traffic of the country. . . . They derive a subsistence for themselves and for their families.[14]

175 Boyer's secretary of state, Inginac, tried by means of a pamphlet—
241 which few Haitians could have read—to urge the peasants of 1840
208 to greater activity. He says that although coffee is the chief source of Haitian wealth, although every day small properties have been multi-
178 plied, although times are improving, yet the old routines are still followed in coffee cultivation, as if the men would never work and "as if the Haitians were not susceptible of making any progress in the sciences."[15]

114 In 1842 an English Quaker, John Candler, wrote that without a
461 modicum of labor the peasants could not subsist at all; "but they do not, and they will not, work hard to please anybody, and hence agriculture languishes, and commerce is stationary."[16] Finally, in 1860, Benjamin Hunt, an American, remarked: "If one wants to be lazy, Hayti is the place. It is possible to get through the day with little annoyance from cold, hunger, or the police, and with the least possible amount of work."[17] Similar testimony could be greatly multiplied. It is only in recent years that any author has affirmed that

13. *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 339–342.
14. *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, II, 281.
15. Joseph Balthazar Inginac, "*Culture du caffier et préparation de la fève pour être livrée au commerce*" [a pamphlet], (Port-au-Prince, 1840), p. 1.
16. *Brief Notices of Hayti*, p. 38.
17. *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afro-Americans*, p. 12.

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the men as well as the women work arduously. It seems justifiable to conclude that industry has not always been a characteristic of the Haitian male; and to ask why. 114 461

One valid reason is, of course, political. As we have seen, until the American Occupation Haiti was greatly overmilitarized. Almost every able-bodied male was at one time or another during his prime a soldier in the army. Since the bane of the country from 1804 to 1915 was its revolutions, there was room for a man to serve either in the regular army or, lured by future promises, in the guerrilla forces of a scheming general. To be drawn away from the land at the very moment of physical maturity was to predispose a youth against humdrum field work. As a soldier he traveled, knew excitement, was fed and clothed, and could loaf, except during battle. So schooled, upon retirement from the army a man was hardly disposed to settle down to steady labor. Even if as a young man he remained upon his farm, he might at any moment be called away to service, just when he was most needed for the crop. If Haiti was to be fed, the women, who alone were exempt from army service, provided the only available regular workers. 175 701 461

Tradition offers another explanation for masculine independence of hard work. The African background of female agricultural labor has been cited. In slavery the men had been degraded by being forced to do work of this sort, while the lot of women hardly differed from what it had been in the old country. Under Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, with their large armies, women, already numerically preponderant, formed the vast majority of field workers. Independent small farming hardly changed the picture. African tradition, moreover, made the man master of his property and wives, the rôle of woman being that of man's inferior and useful servant. 174 462 562 567

Disease is another partial explanation. Until recently no one seems to have been aware of the prevalence in Haiti of such diseases as hookworm, malaria, and tuberculosis which, without necessarily affecting a person outwardly, may nevertheless sap his vitality, leaving him listless and worn out by even slight exertion. Obviously much of what was called laziness was due to disease. But the flaw in this reasoning is that illness makes no discrimination between the sexes. If men were disease-ridden, so were women: yet the latter were steadily industrious. 164 461

Any foray into possible psychological reasons is guesswork. It

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Any force into possible psychological reason is guesswork. SY

461 might be hazarded that the men felt they had fought for freedom and so deserved to enjoy its benefits; or that agriculture smacked of the old days of slavery and should be avoided by the superior male; or that since ambition for progress was not a Haitian characteristic, and the work of women produced enough food, there was no reason to change a routine which did very well. One cannot speak with definiteness on these matters. And it was upper-class Haitians and foreigners who adjudged peasant men lazy; slaves and "forced" laborers always appear lazy to their masters.

462 In modern times at least, male peasants toil strenuously, although not so continuously as their females. The preparation of the ground for planting is hard work, and is done entirely by men. Harvesting, housebuilding, marketing the coffee (one form of marketing not beneath a man's dignity)—these are men's major contributions to economic life.

177 People who live in isolation commonly tend to slide back in such
178 externalities as clothes, manners, neatness of person and of dwelling, speech, and social ritual. Almost from the very beginning of Haitian history, most of the people were effectively isolated from the rest of the world, so that the superficial aspects of daily life exhibited to all visitors the spectacle of retrogression.

175 Christophe, who had frequent English visitors in his kingdom,
656 forced his subjects to dress neatly. After his time no ruler made
281 regulations for dress. The men commonly wore a pair of cotton trousers and an abbreviated shirt, while women's dress was a loose-fitting garment which might be called a Mother Hubbard. Children could, and can now, be seen up to the age of four or five without
[349] any clothes at all. The nearer the countrypeople live to towns, where the example of the élite is before them, the better their dress is likely to be.

342 Slave cabins on the former plantations were inhabited by the free Haitians until decay set in and the cabins fell down. They were ordinarily superseded by huts which could be constructed of wishes
[333] and thatch. The British Minister during the eighteen-twenties saw a man near Plaisance building his house, "plastering the wattling, of which the walls were composed, with a mixture of mud and ashes," using his hand as a trowel.[18] Almost never did a hut have more than

18. Mackenzie, op. cit., I, 130.

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[p.211]

XII

POLITICS

TO write of the politics of one country in the language of another is almost certain to foster misconceptions. Political terminology grows out of national and local experience, so that a Liberal party may actually be reactionary, a Radical group conservative, and a Conservative bloc progressive; the names are entirely the product of time and circumstance. And to generalize upon the shades of political opinion in a country is almost surely to do violence to partisan sentiment, as well as to truth itself. If, on the other hand, one attempts to deal justly with each development of political thought, one is immediately caught in the web of tedious detail. 650

All these reflections apply to Haiti. Her political history is endlessly complicated, not only in the sequence of events, but in the intertwining prejudices of color, caste, sectionalism, education, heritage. Haitian writers have concerned themselves more frequently with politics than with any other subject; their diagnoses and remedies are familiar to the thought of élite citizens. Yet it is doubtful whether these authors have ever affected the political reality, except possibly in 1843. Theory and practice have consistently diverged: both form a part of the political complexion of Haiti, yet to treat either in detail would require an overbalanced discussion of political matters in a country nine tenths of whose people are normally unconcerned with politics. Let us then try to discover briefly how rulers have achieved and lost power, and how they have managed their government. 175 114

Of all the social institutions which had to find their own shape in 1804 upon the achievement of independence, the one for which the people as a whole had least preparation was government. Assuming the major institutions of a society to consist of economic life, government, religion, and marriage, one realizes the problems which faced the free Haitians in all of these categories. Satisfactory or partial, we have seen the solutions arrived at in all respects except government —solutions which modified and adapted old French colonial practice or African tradition. Neither French nor African guides would serve in politics, however. People who have just thrown off the yoke of a 175 178 64

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•175 178 64 slave system are not likely to assume it again; and the aristocrats, ever intent upon forgetting their African forebears, would certainly not turn to the Dark Continent for political inspiration.

175 642 701 643 Although the revolution had brought to the fore men of military experience and even genius, it had driven out or killed every single person of experience in civil government. The affranchis of the old régime had been denied political rights long before 1791; by 1804 few could have had any memory of active participation in government.[1] Toussaint was dead. The only authority of any significance was military. Consequently the new state was built upon army control and directed by army officers. Dessalines as commander in chief took the title of governor-general, later of emperor, but was in reality a military ruler. Fearful as he was of a new French invasion, he set his generals over the districts, organized his people as an army ready for immediate mobilization, and ruled as dictator.

175 642 This was all the Haitians had as political background: a military dictatorship. The Founding Fathers of Haiti, if so they might be called, had almost nothing to work with, nothing to build upon: neither a Magna Carta of the Blacks, nor any precedent of an independent Negro state anywhere in this white man's world; neither heritage of local responsibility and political debate to sow the seeds of democracy, nor any example of self-government in the American tropics to offer a pattern[2]—many of the known forms of government were a practical impossibility for the Haitians because of their need of continued defense against foreign enemies, their slave heritage, their inexperience in self-government, their complete lack of a middle class.

175 668 Hardly one tenth of the people in any case was capable of giving detailed thought to the form which government should take. The mass of ex-slaves had been fighting only *against* slavery, against the hated white rulers, not *for* democracy or any other abstraction. Their freedom achieved, they would not be the ones to make decisions. [642] All political choices would be made by the generals, by men of property and position, by the few whose persistent ambition made them stand out from the masses.

1. Such participation in French colonial politics would have been before the restrictive laws of 1771.

2. It must be recalled that Haiti was the second free country to be established in the Western Hemisphere, and that Liberia, in Africa, was still far in the future.

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Immediately a division of political opinion was evident, one which was to persist throughout the century. No one denied the inevitability in 1804 of making Dessalines the head of state: he was the victorious commander, clearly the most powerful man in Haiti. The division of opinion arose over the manner in which he should rule, whether as military dictator, or as a responsible president. Dessalines settled the matter peremptorily—if only for the time being—by asserting his self as a dictator. 175 643

The issue did not die with his decision, however, for it had deep roots. Supporting Dessalines wholeheartedly was the group of generals who were all Negroes, all ex-slaves, all practically illiterate. The three most influential of these blacks were Christophe, later to succeed his general; Charlotte, and Boisrond-Tonnère. Those who preferred a government in which the president shared power with a legislature of important men were, on the contrary, almost all affranchis of the old régime, therefore the most cultured and educated men in the country. Most of them were mulattoes or at least of a lighter complexion than the Negroes, although of course some blacks adhered to their position. The leaders of this group were Pétion, Boyer, Inginac, and Gérin. This division of opinion went back even into the decade preceding independence, when the island, free of slavery, was still technically under the rule of France, and the ex-slave Toussaint had to fight and conquer the mulatto leader Rigaud before he could establish his rule as dictator. 175 642 [643]

For a brief moment after independence, all differences were reconciled, since all had been united in a common cause against the enemy. Dessalines was then commanding in the Artibonite Valley, and Christophe in the North; two of Rigaud's former lieutenants, Pétion and Geffrard, commanded in the West and South. Apparently there was genuine respect among these men for each other. Dessalines, for example, with evident sincerity calls his colleague Pétion "that man of upright heart." The unity was short-lived, however. Not only was it evident that Dessalines meant to rule like an African despot-chief, taking advice only when he liked it; it was even more plain that through his cruelty, impetuosity, and crudeness he was bent on isolating Haiti from all contacts with the culture and polish of the outer world. Pétion and his group looked on with pained disgust as he indulged his violence against the whites who had hopefully remained in the country; the general's bloody procession throughout 175 643 642 66

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175 643 642 66 the land, leaving a trail of misery and death, was an augury of what to expect from a tyrant. They opposed his plan to destroy all coastal towns and move the people inland where, protected by their mountains, they would be immune to foreign attack and foreign ideas. They resented their loss of property by state expropriation, and could not fail to be shocked by the grim exultation of Boisrond-Tonnère: "To draw up the act of independence, we used the skin of a white man for parchment, his skull for an inkstand, his blood for ink, and a bayonet for pen!"[3]

Even without such cogent objections to Dessalines the mulattoes would have opposed his dictatorship, for as intellectuals and as social élite they wanted a real share in the government. For this they had agitated since before 1791, and it would be a grim irony if after fourteen years of intermittent conflict the successful expulsion of whites should be followed by a continued exclusion of mulattoes from the government. It would be a worse irony to throw off the white yoke only to take on a black one. When in 1805 Dessalines made himself emperor they asked for the creation of a nobility, thinking to share the rule with him; but the Emperor's curt "*Moi seul je suis noble*" dashed this hope. Although detailed proof is lacking, it is generally accepted in Haiti that the conspiracies against the Emperor's life began with this intransigent statement.

Here, then, was the issue which in half a dozen varying forms was to split political opinion for decades: rule by a single tyrant vs. rule by the cultured class. It even made two nations of one between the years 1806 and 1820.

175 642 When Dessalines was assassinated, a Constituent Assembly was summoned to draw up a new constitution and select a new ruler. The mulattoes were in control of the Assembly which under Pétion's skilful guidance sat at the mulatto stronghold, Port-au-Prince, and there drew up a constitution assuring the limitation of the president's power by a Senate, and requiring election and reëlection of the [667] president instead of permitting him life tenure. This achieved, the Assembly dutifully elected the black general Christophe president of Haiti. However, belonging as he did to Dessalines' school of thought —unrestricted rule by a strong man—he indignantly refused to be bound by such a constitution; when the Assembly, instead of yielding

3. This statement is cited, with evident distaste, by Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 114.

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to his demands for revision and for his selection as president for life, 175
retained the constitution they had written and chose Pétion president 642
in his stead, the rupture was instant and complete. [687]

Dictator as against restricted president, strong man as against class
or group rule, Negro against mulatto, army against civil govern- 175
ment, executive against legislature, North against South—these are 665
the phases of the subsequent dichotomy in Haitian politics.

A good case can easily be made for the advocates of force in
Haitian government, particularly in its early days. For years the 175
majority of men had lost the habit of steady work on the land; a 642
strong hand was needed to reëstablish in the countryside that eco- 433
nomic order without which liberty shrivels. The people had become
accustomed to taking orders from their military leaders, and these 656
from their commanding officer. Those, moreover, were times of
crisis, when France might suddenly descend again upon her former
colony: few crises can be dealt with by debating societies. Looking
back on the course of Haitian history, one may point out also that
the country prospered under the dictatorships of Toussaint, Des-
salines, and Christophe as it never did under the limited presidencies.[4]

In 1806, therefore, the aristocratic party got its wish, although only 175
at the price of splitting the country in two. They established a 642
government with a president of their own and a Senate filled with 665
their representatives. The earliest legislation naturally enough fav- 646
ored their own landholding group. When prosperity did not result,
Pétion began to recommend to the Senate a division of the land. 643
More and more, although the representative form was preserved,
Pétion ruled as a dictator. He was mild enough not to arouse an-
tagonism; as is always the case when freedom of speech is curbed
and summary legislation required, the plea of crisis was used to
justify extraordinary measures.

The legislative party was firmly in the saddle by 1820 when Boyer 175
reunited North and South, and shared his power with the Senate. 642
643

4. The argument for dictatorship is familiar to the modern world. A defense of "totalitarianism," published in 1816 by authority of Christophe (then King Henry I), is amazingly like certain European utterances of the nineteen-thirties: "The King has the sweet satisfaction of seeing that the cultivators [who were forced to work on the land whether they wanted to or not], being everywhere regularly paid [though the sum might be tiny], are praising the freedom they enjoy." And again: "Hayti chose a kingdom in order to shun forever that chaos, that confusion and perpetual clashing, which result from those monstrous associations known under the name of *popular bodies*." Anon., *Haytian Papers* (1816), pp. 109, 113. [829]

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175 642 643 Since he was president for twenty-five years (normal ones, as things go in Haiti), it is worth while to examine the functioning of the kind of government the upper class favored.

175 642 643 692 President Boyer's education and outlook were wholly French. He had formed his views of government principally upon French models, yet when he became head of state he could not forget his own military career. He said repeatedly that he wished to supersede the military by the civil power, but somehow never got around to it. The country was full of black generals, and it would have been difficult to retire them, primarily because they were black. He established courts to insure the rights of man, but since his newborn judiciary lacked the prestige to command respect, interpretation of the law came from the President—until before long he was himself the law. With a logic characteristic of the French, he tried to make the whole administration of the country orderly and tidy by codifying laws, laying out spheres of governmental departments, and properly ticketing matters in general. He had to be the sole judge of the intention and operation of statutes, however, and if necessary modify the nature of an act to suit his view of the public need. His honest and generally upright character perhaps made his enormous prerogatives conducive to the public good; but Boyer was a dictator in spite of his Senate, since when he found a law working badly he simply turned it from its normal course and gave it a quite contrary effect.

[646] [661] As the years of his long rule proceeded, he took more power to himself. When his Senate would not pass bills as he proposed them, he waited until they adjourned and then either neglected to execute their laws, or instructed the government printing office to change the wording. He clearly regarded the legislature as a necessary nuisance, to be kept as a sop to the élite and to preserve the appearance of republicanism before the world. Representatives from the various communes were recommended by the President, his nomination amounting almost always to election.[5]

600 Boyer was overthrown by the Revolution of 1843, by all odds the

[643] 5. The task of governing the whole island was obviously heavier than governing a fraction of it, so Boyer may have felt justified in his departures from strict constitutionality. He was always an indefatigable worker, whose intentions were uniformly laudable. He tried to rule alone, as had his illustrious predecessors. The hitch came because he was not of their calibre. He was worthy, virtuous—and mediocre. He would probably have made an excellent mayor of a French provincial town.

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Boyer was overthrown by the Revolution of 1843, by all odds the

most important of Haitian upheavals. Since its effects were to be felt for the next seventy years in the extinction of representative government and the eclipse of the élite as political rulers, it is worthy of special attention. Paradoxically, it was a revolution fomented by the élite themselves. Its background and outcome reveal the power in word, and the impotence in deed, of this group by 1843. 175 669

The constitution of 1816, devised by Pétion's henchmen, had granted the president initiative in all laws except those concerning taxation. After the agreement of 1825 with France,[6] however, Boyer, hard pressed by the need of paying the indemnity each year, began to restrict the number of officials, diminish their salaries, and veto all projects favorable to the development of public instruction and improvement which might cause further expenditure. By temperament he was an autocrat.[7] Every valuable measure must come from him alone; whatever another person proposed he would find a thousand reasons to discard. Sarcastic and vain, he did not know how to smooth ruffled feelings or make conflicting groups reconcile their differences. His personal weaknesses of character alienated the sympathies of many once-devoted officials. 175 642 643 652 661

During his long presidency Boyer also systematically ignored the younger generation, men who admired the efforts of Pétion, ardent reformers who wished to devote their energies to the improvement of Haiti. The military career had no attraction for them: the higher ranks, alone bringing sufficient salary for a congenial way of life, were too few and one could achieve them only with difficulty, for since 1825 advancement had been submitted to rigorous rules. On the other hand, the paths of administration were severely guarded by those admirable great functionaries left over from the government of Pétion—men like Inginac and Imbert. But age had slowed their activity, and still Boyer kept them on. The younger generation mocked this "gerontocracy" and supported the parliamentary opposition. 175 643 665

The youth of the élite class continued to go to France for their education, returning to Haiti to take part in the lively political discussions which made one of their chief occupations. During the first decade of Boyer's administration they generally supported him, for 175 665 871 664

6. By which France recognized the independence of Haiti in return for the payment of a large annual indemnity.

7. "In everything, he wishes to dominate," Pétion had said of him.

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175 he seemed to be leading the country to progressive action; about
665 1830, however, a group better educated and more ambitious than
664 their predecessors arose. Nourished on ideas acquired in France, they
871 were shocked on their return by the miseries and governmental inaction which prevailed in Haiti. True, when Boyer pressed them to suggest constructive measures of reform they had little to suggest. Like many other critics they were better at tearing down than at building up.

175 By the constitution of 1816 they had the right of free speech and
642 press, and made use of it to publish journals of criticism—*Le Phare*,
204 *Le Télégraphe*, *La Feuille de Commerce*. Their sustained criticism kept
208 alive the parliamentary opposition and gave it a focus; they were at
665 least partially responsible for the Revolution of 1843. In spite of their diatribes, Boyer did not suppress these newspapers. If he had done so it is possible the Revolution might have come sooner. Not every dictator-president would permit such boldness as the following paragraph which appeared in 1843 in *Le Patriote*, an adversary of Boyer's own journal *Le Temps*:

> Let one look well at the things which are happening among us and then say whether, considering our first steps along the path, our progress has not been constantly slowed up now for some time, and whether this does not lead to a state of things in our country in which the most vital part of our civilization is struck by an immobility, almost a paralysis. Haiti is stationary, is retrograde: we need no other proof of it than this frightful uncertainty about the future which so deeply disturbs all serious minds and sincere patriots.

175 In 1838 Hérard Dumesle, president of the Chamber and a leader of
665 the opposition, drew up and secured the passage of an "Address to
646 the President of the Republic," which expressed certain just ideas of
643 progress and pointed out that failure to achieve it was due to the
664 mistakes of the administration. It was a bitterly critical and sometimes passionate document. Boyer was intensely angry and proceeded to violate the constitution: relying on the majority always at his disposal in the Chamber, he excluded from among the deputies those most hostile to his government.[8] But at the election of 1842 the communes of Les Cayes, Aquin, and Jérémie reëlected the expelled representatives, so confirming their criticism of the President.

8. Hérard Dumesle, Loudun, Lartigue, and David Saint-Preux.

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When the Chamber of 1842 assembled Boyer once more forced the elimination of these men and several of their political friends.[9] The majority in the Chamber was so agitated over this expulsion that only twenty-eight out of seventy-two deputies thereafter appeared at any session. A dozen communes, among them the most important in the country (Port-au-Prince, Les Cayes, Gonaïves, Santo Domingo), had no representation. The deputies of the South avenged themselves by instituting a series of "patriotic banquets." At the plantations of adversaries of the government dinners were given for dozens of guests; the meals were followed by vibrant speeches, full of criticisms of the government. Thanks to the talent of these orators, the opposition likewise gradually filtered its way into the mass of the people, slowly but implacably undermining Boyer's government.

The President also had bad luck to contend with. During his presidency many catastrophies saddened the country. The arsenal blew up in 1827, burning the state warehouses and causing a loss of 5,000,000 piastres. A cyclone in 1831 desolated the South. Fires in 1832 and 1843 practically wiped out Port-au-Prince. An earthquake in 1842 shook the whole island, destroyed Santiago and Port-de-Paix, and transformed Cap-Haïtien into a mass of ruins; the fire which broke out in consequence was accompanied by pillaging which went on for several days. The parliamentary opposition to Boyer made use of these natural calamities to sharpen displeasure at the government.

In August, 1842, a secret association, The Society of the Rights of Man and of Citizen, was formed at Les Cayes to exploit this discontent and prepare the fall of Boyer. It circulated clandestinely throughout the South the ringing Manifesto by Praslin, a résumé of the charges of the opposition which was soon covered with signatures. When adherents of the society were numerous enough, an executive committee was formed with the commandant Rivière Hérard as president. At the end of January, 1843, an uprising occurred on the Praslin plantation.[10] General Borgella, head of the department of the South, proved irresolute; the insurrection, fostered by this indecision, spread rapidly among the troops, even generals joining in. By Febru-

9. The most important of the excluded deputies were Daniel Lespinasse, Covin Aîné, Dominique, Benoît, Pouthieux, Dorsainville Dantant.
10. At Torbeck, in the department of the South.

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•175 669 [643] [159]

ary, 1843, Boyer realized that it was futile to oppose the revolutionaries and departed for exile, going by way of Jamaica to Paris.

Now came the test of the revolutionary leaders.[11] The state was in their hands; their own representative, Rivière Hérard, was the new president. They proceeded to concoct a ridiculously naïve constitution which by granting a popular vote alienated large bodies of their mulatto support; to insult the black army leaders; and to allow the defeat of Haitian forces by Dominican revolutionaries, thus losing two thirds of the island's area. Every act weakened the party favoring representative government. Within a year Rivière was ousted and a black general was ruling Haiti with a rod of iron. The Revolution of 1843 from which so much was expected had by its very success ruined the parliamentarians, for with power in their hands they showed themselves utterly inept.

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A succession of black generals now came to the presidency. When Faustin Soulouque became president in 1847, the fourth Negro within four years, and made himself emperor two years later, Haiti found herself once more back at the strong-man principle. The élite were out of office, relegated to inferiority in all phases of political life.

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In the middle of the nineteenth century the groups upholding the conflicting principles in politics became organized political parties. Those favoring parliamentary rule called themselves Liberals; those believing in the sole rule of a strong dictator were called Nationalists. But by no stretch of the imagination could the Liberal party be considered democratic. The noble principles expressed in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the American Declaration of Independence were uncongenial to Haiti. One of the prime tenets of the Liberals, indeed, was that men were not created equal; rather that certain men (the élite) were clearly the superiors of others. Liberty

[175] [669]

11. The revolution was almost wholly an affair of the élite caste. The mulatto Boyer was deposed, and the mulatto Rivière Hérard took his place. If anyone thought of the peasants, it was only to use them to manipulate and manoeuvre the "outs" into office. Boyer's secretary-general, deposed along with the President, appealed to his countrymen against their accusation of treason against him, saying "My last wishes will be for the prosperity of Haiti and the regeneration of the African caste, to which I have consecrated myself wholeheartedly for forty years, without ever thinking of my own interests." (Joseph Balthazar Inginac, *Message à ses compatriotes, et principalement à ceux qui ont dirigé les affaires populaires de la république depuis la fin de janvier dernier* [Port-au-Prince, March 18, 1843], p. 6). Yet if these are more than hopeful words, they refer only to the distribution of the land which made peasants of the "African caste," and to Inginac's pamphlets on how to raise coffee and other products—which none of the peasants could read.

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was well enough, but all upper-class landlords wanted the privilege of living in leisure on an income derived from the menial labor of black workers. Fraternity was a principle ridiculous to a group whose never-ceasing struggle was to confirm the separation of castes. The term "Liberal," then, was borrowed not from the revolutionary documents of the late eighteenth century, but from the parliamentary parties of the nineteenth—those who saw more opportunity for themselves and their group if the power of tyrants and kings could be curbed by legislatures. The idea was particularly congenial to the Haitian intelligentsia for the simple reason that the powerful rulers of Haiti, past and present, were Negroes who did not share the aims and ideals of the social upper class.[22]

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By holding such "liberal" views, the mulatto élite saw their one opportunity not only for curbing the strong men among the Negroes who again and again tried to rule Haiti as if it were a native African state and themselves the supreme chieftains, but also for indulging their own special penchants. A Senate filled with élite politicians suited the talents of the educated aristocrats. They liked constitutions and codes; the law was their favorite profession; they were adepts at drawing neat distinctions between this and that in an academic issue; polished oratory, skilful argument, fluent speech were knacks peculiar to them by temperament, position, education. Boyer had been the beau-ideal of the academic "liberals," with his talkative Senate, his complete set of Codes and national system of courts; the mid-century party members came to realize what they had lost by driving him out.

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Every time the Nationalists came to power the colored élite suffered. Under Dessalines they lost greatly in property and position; Christophe had hated and hounded them; Soulouque put many of their leaders to death. The only monarchs Haiti ever had were blacks, and the two most tyrannical presidents in the first seventy-five years after independence were Nationalists (Pierrot, 1845–46, and Domingue, 1874–76).

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The experience of the Liberal presidents with parliamentary institutions was not entirely a happy one, however. Pétion and Boyer had

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22. It must be recalled that no parliaments of England, France, or the United States in the early nineteenth century had true democratic representation. Property qualifications for voting, rotten boroughs, and the persistence of privilege assured that only the "classes" should have full representation, and so rule the masses.

[646] [171]

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Petion and Boyer had

175 suavity enough to rule constitutionally with a Senate which, since
643 class interests were being served by the executive, did not curb their
646 virtual dictatorships. Later presidents had more difficulty. Geffrard,
642 for example, elected as a Liberal after the fall of Soulouque's grim empire, had made parliamentary government a battle cry of his campaign. In office, however, he was continually at loggerheads
[669] with his Senate, until he exercised his presidential privilege of dissolving it; in the end a revolution overthrew the Liberal parliamentarian because he had become a dictator. So with his successor Salnave (1867–69), likewise a Liberal, who almost immediately upon inauguration found it impossible to work with such a group of talkers. So once more with Nissage-Saget (1870–74), who followed Salnave: a professed believer in legislative responsibility, he refused to yield to the legislature on any important matter. A black Nationalist succeeded for two years, ruling despotically. Then came the last of the Liberal presidents, Boisrond-Canal (1876–79). This man was apparently determined to allow his legislature its full constitutional rights. As a result Haiti had more talk in the capital, and less action, than in almost any régime up to that time; then, as Montague says, "convinced that the constitutional régime was a failure, Haiti's most scrupulous president resigned in disgust."[13]

175 The Liberal party virtually disappeared from the scene in 1883,
665 after two abortive coups by their leader of the moment, Boyer
669 Bazelais. The first occurred in 1879 when the retiring President,
[666] Boisrond-Canal, gave Haiti one of her very rare honest elections, resulting in the choice of the Nationalist candidate Salomon. Bazelais and his men forsook their professed principles, rising in arms to seize power. They were suppressed. Four years later when the moment again seemed auspicious Bazelais led another revolution, which the President so effectively crushed that the leader himself was killed. The leaderless Liberals were no longer effective competitors in presidential politics. From that time until the American Occupation, the élite were out of power. One president only during those thirty-five years was a mulatto: Tancrède Auguste, one of the weakest rulers in Haitian history. He died, presumably poisoned, after eight months of office.

600 The era from 1883 to 1915 was Haiti's worst, politically. Revo-

13. Ludwell L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938* (Durham, 1940), p. 18.

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The era from 1883 to 1915 was Haiti's worst, politically. Revo-

lution succeeded revolution; the country sank deep into graft and scandal; foreign powers made Haiti debase herself before them. Some of the élite, backed by foreign merchants resident in the country, went so far as to urge annexation by the United States rather than endure continued disorder in economics and degradation in social life. They felt matters had come to such a pass that only so radical a change could clean the Augean stables. This was the period of a succession of political pamphlets[14] written by élite thinkers to set forth the necessary steps of reform. Every president was a black autocrat, holding power by his control over the masses. If an occasional one was more than mediocre (Hyppolite, for example), his good qualities were sure to be more than offset by the ignorant boors (such as Nord Alexis) who followed him.

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True, even the most incompetent of the Negro presidents was obliged to employ a few élite, for literacy was necessary in the foreign office if nowhere else. The aristocrats were impotent, however, for Haitian problems had tremendously increased at the very period when they were losing control of government policy. Reforms were imperative, as every member of the élite knew; but no black president saw the need, or seeing it, had the vaguest idea how to proceed toward effecting them. Beyond the shameful disgrace of Haiti's position in the world of independent nations, the thoughtful could glimpse the anarchy which must inevitably result from continued ineffectiveness.

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Reforms were not forthcoming. Rather, anarchy came, bringing international complications in its wake. The American Marines occupied the country. An era was ended.

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It had been a strange journey in political ideas from the time of Pétion and Christophe to that of the Occupation. The early leaders seemed to envision triumphs for Haiti in a world of great powers, and to see themselves as men with a mission. After Boyer the vision dimmed. We have Soulouque, whose tinsel empire was mere stage setting for the act of a neighborhood bully; the tyrant Domingue; the senile Nord Alexis; the utterly incompetent fly-by-nights in the decade before the Occupation. Even Geffrard the reformer, prob-

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14. Among the most lucid of these were: Démesvar Delorme, *Le Malaise au sein des richesses* (1873); Edmond Paul, *Les Causes de nos malheurs* (1889); Léonidas Lavenaire, *Haïti: le danger de la patrie* (1893); Alcius Chemnant, *Haïti, rêves-réalité* (1905); and Augustin Magloire, *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social* (1909).

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Even Geffrard the reformer,

175 643 661 ably the ablest president in the second half-century, who was pledged to reduce the expenses of government (a promise which, since he was accustomed to a life of penury, should have been easy to fulfill), increased his own salary to $50,000 a year, and allowed himself $20,000 more annually for secret service and a similar sum "for the encouragement of arts and sciences." He bought two estates with government money; the meat bill of his family was charged to the budget of his bodyguard, and the family champagne bill to a hospital. After Geffrard, the presidency was openly regarded as the juiciest financial plum in Haiti which, if one could pluck it, would justify the necessary expenditures for a revolution. It seems from contemporary comment, indeed, that Geffrard's actions aroused not censure but rather envy, as if every ambitious Haitian would have welcomed the opportunity to do likewise. The bitingly critical Englishman, Sir Spenser St. John, railed with some justice, "Every Haitian appears fully persuaded that his countrymen never seek office except for the purpose of improving their private fortunes."[15]

175 643 646 The legislature was never a real check upon the President. It was useful to him at times when he wished to delay action on some embarrassing imbroglio with a foreign power, for by referring a measure to the Senate he could stall it in tedious debate. Almost without exception, however, the legislature consisted of the President's men. Its halls were palaces of idle oratory. One whole session was devoted to a discussion of fitting the hall with cushioned seats; another to the propriety of appointing an interpreter for representatives who understood only Créole and not French. To make a man a Senator was a satisfactory way of paying a political debt. To be a Senator was to have social prominence, a salary of $1,600 (decidedly a competence in nineteenth-century Haiti), an opportunity to speak before an audience—and no real responsibility.

179 One may grant without debate the difficulties facing this small and poor country, a Negro state with great white neighbors who regarded it with something less than deference. Yet Haiti in its early days had real promise. Wherein lay its defects? Haitian thinkers knew the answers, and frequently indicted themselves.

175 871 565 658 The want of education was a basic weakness. Those who believe in democracy need no rehearsal of the benefits of popular enlightenment. Because the great Negro heads of state were themselves im-

15. *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, p. 183.

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perfectly educated, and because other matters seemed infinitely more pressing than the setting up of schools, the early Haitians, united in 1804, fell apart within a single generation. On one hand were the élite and a few other townspeople who knew at least something of the outside world; on the other the masses of toiling countryfolk to whom tiny Haitian valleys were the whole universe. The young men of these two classes coming to power could not understand each other; they could not make concessions to each other; and as they fought for what they held true, each grew suspicious of the other if not permanently hostile. The lack of common understanding might still have been repaired in any one generation, but no single president had the vision to inaugurate universal education. Aside from the expense, certain powerful élite citizens often expressed their doubts as to the educability of the peasants; as property owners they would undoubtedly have objected to the unsettling of the economic order, which was based upon the work of an ignorant mass of blacks.[16]

Without education, the political sphere went unenriched by any flow of new blood from the people. Politics existed in a vacuum. The earthy, candid criticisms of a politically conscious folk never invigorated the discussion of national affairs. Without education, the people had no standards of comparison of Haiti with other nations, and were the easy dupes of whatever insurrectionary agitator could persuade them that their daily woes were caused by the current administration. Without education, high political office became a prerogative of the few, a contest between the Ins and the Outs, a path to personal wealth. Without education, Haiti could never be more than a dictatorship by a man or a clique, her stability endangered with the downfall of each incumbent, for dictatorships rarely provide for continuity in government.

Another great weakness was the notion that national happiness could be achieved by political means primarily. After the germinal ideas of Christophe and Pétion, which had a basis in economic behavior, hardly another important concept came out of a century of presidents. Haitian politicians have been great arrangers: they have given the country eighteen constitutions and innumerable codes, all admirable in their loving solicitude for precise detail. The common feeling of political aspirants has been, "If we are given power, all will

16. This argument is clearly stated in Madiou, op. cit., III, 176 ff.

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prosper." Yet every change of administration saw merely a new embroidery on the old theme of sterility.[17]

The further weakness of social or class consciousness has already been treated at length. It kept the whole nation divided from top to bottom, setting black against colored, North against South, countryside against town. It meant a perennial civil war, latent at times, but constantly breaking out in new insurrections.

Some day a diligent scholar may try to catalogue the revolutions which Haiti has undergone. Magloire discusses sixty-nine "important" ones between 1806 and 1879,[18] but the latter date was merely the threshold of renewed revolutionary activity. There seems to have been very little pattern in these uprisings, except that almost never were they a spontaneous revolt of the masses, as the Slave Insurrection of 1791 had been. The peasants were constantly being impressed into service with the army of a general who had presidential ambitions. From the middle years of the nineteenth century certain peasants found fighting a more profitable trade than any other, and began to hire themselves out as mercenaries. In the North these professional guerilla warriors were known as *cacos*, in the South as *piquets*. Their methods were those of terror and rapine. They were a constant menace to the peace, and their suppression was one of the announced purposes of the American Occupation, for every revolutionary chief felt it necessary to hire their services.

Another recognized procedure of revolution was incendiarism. Haitian politics is almost wholly the affair of townsmen, and more narrowly of the men of the six important towns—Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, Jérémie, Les Cayes, Gonaïves, and Saint-Marc. Except for their principal buildings and villas, these towns are constructed of wood or other inflammable material. Leaders of insurrections therefore have habitually set fire to the poorer sections of the towns, and as frequently as not this threat has won over the populace, who preferred overthrowing the government to having their homes burned. Support of the insurrection becomes a form of fire insurance. Such a state of affairs is eloquent testimony to the cynical attitude of the political leaders toward the masses.

A revolution directed by a general of real ambition was likely to

17. Auguste Magloire, *Histoire d'Haïti d'après un plan nouveau* (Port-au-Prince, 1909), I, 230, 243, 250–251, develops this theme at length.
18. *Ibid.*, Vol. II.

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A revolution directed by a group of real ambitious men likely to involve an appeal to foreign powers. Haiti being almost roadless, ships were important for moving troops and blockading seaports. Many a chieftain has purchased six or eight ships abroad, and with this "navy" won his fight. Financial intrigue was frequent. By borrowing money from France, Germany, or England, with the promise to reshape Haitian financial policy to the benefit of the creditor country, several revolutionaries have secured funds for arms and the necessary soldiers to effect a coup. Sooner or later also one might expect to see the Môle Saint Nicolas, which guards the Windward Passage pathway between Cuba and Haiti, come into the picture. Cession of the Mole has frequently been held out as bait for foreign support, but popular opposition to white ownership of any Haitian land has always stopped actual cession. When Haiti's debt to Germany was due, she borrowed from France to pay it, and then later borrowed from the United States to pay France. All such appeals to foreign powers have merely drawn attention to the defenseless position of the country; many a successful revolutionary chief has lived to regret his appeal for aid.[19]

The one time between 1804 and 1915 when political opinion was vocal and truly significant was in the latter years of Boyer's administration. Then it took pains to attack specific evils with steady persistence, even though the cures suggested were vague. Yet after the successful elimination of Boyer, politicians who had worked so brilliantly in the opposition showed themselves even more incapable. Political thought, at a low ebb for the next forty years, revived only when, after 1883, the Liberals were eliminated from politics. Their complete defeat seems to have given elite thinkers time for sober reflection upon the plight of their country. Before 1843 the critics had been in a position to make their words effective; after 1883 they wrote—soberly, brilliantly, persuasively—but their books and pamphlets were read only by a small group of fellow aristocrats who already thought as they did, or disagreed with them in print. Political homilies made no impression upon the minds of the peasants left uneducated by all the élite presidents of Haiti.

In the crucial days of the American Occupation, once again political debate rose to brilliant heights. The rude shock of seeing foreign

19. See, on this whole subject of Haiti's foreign relations, an excellent chapter in Montague, op. cit., chap. IX.

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175 665 208 648 whites patrolling the streets seems to have given reality to criticism which before then would have been academic. The élite were back again in the political forum. Unreflecting patriotism urged the immediate withdrawal of the Marines, but a considerable number of the legislature saw that it would be years before they left. The problem, then, they saw variously: some wished to be eloquent spokesmen for the patriotic anti-whites and did their best to embarrass the Occupation; some, feeling that the Americans were benefiting the country, tried to make things move smoothly; while others, seeing a fertile field for gain, tried to ingratiate themselves with the American authorities.

175 643 642 648 662 The twenty years between 1915 and 1934 heard many eloquent, impassioned speeches, not all of them coming to the same conclusions. The élite were divided in most issues raised by the Occupation, so that the old neat dichotomy between élite and army no longer prevailed. The President, Dartiguenave (1915–22), was for the first time since 1879 a Southerner and a mulatto; yet in 1922 when he was a candidate for reëlection it was Southern élite votes which defeated him. Executive, legislature, and judiciary all had just enough power under the Occupation to make subtle manoeuvres, and all three branches of the government displayed a real genius for the political game. They often succeeded in putting the onus of an unpopular act upon the Americans, and in taking the credit for popular measures with which they had had little to do. They prodded and pricked all the weaknesses in the logic of the American State Department. They forced numerous concessions. If at times they seem to have been overclever, playing the game of politics merely for an opportunity to display their skill, at other times many of them showed a deep understanding of realities which had to be faced.

175 648 666 642 The Occupation, ordered by that high prophet of democracy, Woodrow Wilson, professed its determination to give Haiti her first opportunity to be democratic. Yet the Marines really dictated the choice both of Dartiguenave in 1915 and of Borno in 1922 and 1926. The constitution of 1918 was prepared in Washington; it was submitted to a plebiscite, but the farcical vote—69,387 for and 335 against—was clearly the result of electioneering by the Marines. The presidents of Haiti ruled with executive councils, subject to Ameri-

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can "advice and approval," rather than with the legislature subject to popular control. Even under such restrictions the politically minded found ways of exerting pressure on the Marine authorities.

Out of the darkest days of military subjection by a foreign power came a changed order of politics in the country. The practically unbroken line of dull incompetents who had come into the presidency ended; instead of ignorant army leaders, educated men were once more in office; instead of Northern Negroes, élites of Port-au-Prince; instead of benighted martinets bewildered by world affairs, men who, if not great statesmen, at least had minds capable of understanding Haiti's relation to international economics and politics.

The élite were back in power. In the mind of every friend of Haiti arose the question whether the events between 1879 and 1915 had taught them lessons which would make their return to responsibility productive of great things for the country. Because of the abnormal situation resulting from the Occupation, the world depression, and the briefness of their new ascendancy, one cannot yet speak with assurance. Nevertheless, there are few encouraging signs. Political office is still regarded by most candidates in terms of their own advancement rather than service to Haiti. Very little has been done to extend the base of voting by developing local responsibility and education among the masses. Élite youths still receive a classical education, still disdain manual labor, still cherish the ideal of a graceful life of ease. The president still rules as an autocrat supported by the gendarmerie—substitute for the army of former days. One can see no decrease in social distinctions or in the disdain of the élite for peasant people; on the contrary, there has even been an increase of this feeling because the Occupation (through its Agricultural Service particularly) seemed to open paths of development to the peasants. Social antagonism, not social responsibility, still underlies political life.[20]

To every one of these strictures there is a plausible reply. It is no light matter to unsettle the minds of nine tenths of a population by education, to cause an economic revolution by improving agricultural techniques, to admit to political life a people unaccustomed to

20. Dr. Jean Price-Mars, in *La Vocation de l'élite* (Port-au-Prince, 1919), *passim*, especially pp. 51 ff., urges the élite to accept their responsibilities rather than rest upon the debilitating assurance of their innate superiority.

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178 it. Moreover, the Haitian budget is in the neighborhood of seven
65 million dollars, for which sum not much in the way of great improvement for three million people can be expected. The task of regenerating Haiti calls for self-sacrificing genius—at present the élite hardly qualify either as self-denying servants of the public or as geniuses.

175 Haitian affairs during the 1930's were under the direction of
643 President Sténio Vincent, an able man to whose credit much can be
642 said. He devoted himself to his task with assiduity, talking face to
648 face with the peasants in Créole, urging them to assist in reforestation
241 and to use wisdom in crop rotation. He settled serious disputes with the neighboring Dominican Republic in amicable fashion. It was he who carried on the delicate and successful negotiations with President Roosevelt to give Haiti control of her own affairs once more. In coffee culture, assistance to trade, financial matters, and other economic details, he often proceeded expertly, particularly in view of the world depression which began as he assumed office. On the other hand, Vincent made the legislature his servant rather than a partner. He was a dictator (fortunately a benevolent one) who changed the constitution by highhanded methods in order to gain his own reelection. His régime rested upon his alliance with the efficient Garde d'Haiti. There were few signs of democracy or of respect for civil liberties, as Americans understand those terms, in Vincent's eleven years.

175 The spectator has a feeling that he has seen all this before, when
643 for example Geffrard was elected to assure parliamentary government, only to become an effectively benevolent dictator as soon as the legislature opposed him. Geffrard was on the whole a good president, as Vincent was; but the former did not succeed in setting Haiti upon the path of economic and social security, and one hardly dared expect it of his modern counterpart.

175 In April, 1941, Élie Lescot, former Haitian Minister to the United
643 States, was elected as the thirtieth president of the republic. Vincent
648 had refused to call a plebiscite to approve an extension of his presidential term for an additional five years, as he had done in 1935 near the end of the six-year term to which he was elected in 1930. Lescot had begun his presidency with many advantages, chiefly the friendly support of his predecessor, his acquaintance with United States officials, and a recent negotiated pact by which American aid will

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be given to Haiti for vast rubber plantings.[11] Opposition to Lescot comes chiefly from those who consider him too friendly with the Dominicans who killed hundreds of Haitian workers in 1937, Lescot having figured prominently in negotiations that led to the Dominican government's agreement to pay indemnities to Haiti for the slaughter.

Reviewing the whole course of Haitian history, the field of politics seems to have marshaled itself behind a few regularities. In every case there have been voices raised to protest, yet the ruling clique, whatever its grouping, has effectively supported these characteristic political customs:

1. Complete dominance of political life by the president. Strong men seem to be necessary to rule ignorant masses. Even the revolutions precipitated by parties campaigning for parliamentarianism have, when successful, become governments by the president. This concentration of power in one man's hands makes the next revolution possible, for it is easier to overthrow one man than to eliminate a party based upon wide suffrage and diffused responsibility.

2. The inferior position of cabinet ministers. These have resembled neither European nor American secretaries of state in their responsibilities, but have been little more than clerks appointed by the president to serve as heads of a bureau. The treasurer-general, for example, during most of Haiti's history has merely received the moneys, while the president disbursed them. The secretary-general has neither originated nor conducted the details of public policy. Often as not, the minister has made a convenient whipping boy when the president has got himself involved in internal or foreign complications: by demanding the minister's resignation the president remained unscathed.

3. The unimportance of the legislature. It has made useful patron-

11. The European War, threatening the supply of rubber coming to the United States from British Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies, has made the American government take new interest. The Department of Agriculture established an experimental station and breeding gardens for rubber plants in Haiti, and the results were so successful that extensive areas were planted with rubber trees. Haiti and the United States in May, 1941, reached a long-term agreement for "the development of agriculture and economy"; the projects embraced under the agreement include not only rubber but the further development of Haiti's banana plantations, the planting of oil crops, drug plants, spices, fiber plants, the stimulation of handicraft industries, and the development of forestry resources peculiar to the tropics. A further extension of an additional $500,000 in credits will be made for use on highways, irrigation projects, and to provide transportation facilities for the areas to be planted to rubber trees.

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[p. 234]

XIII

CONSTITUTIONS AND POLITICAL FORMS

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QUITE aside from its castes and the political separation of 1807-20, Haiti has always consisted of two nations, one living in and near the towns and so within reach of established government, the other rural and yet capable of ordering its own affairs by folk rules without much actual governmental machinery. It is through the former that Haiti has a political history. Indeed, one is tempted to say that more than half the people have continually got along without any government whatever of a formal sort, for being peaceably inclined they have found custom and usage [669] sufficient for their needs. These people have been rarely disturbed by the state's rulers; revolutionary chieftains alone have found it worth their while to stir up the country folk to an active interest in politics.

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The formal subdivisions of Haiti have been, through most of its history, three: the *commune*, roughly corresponding to the American township; the *arrondissement*, a group of communes, just as the American county is a group of townships; and the *département*, comprising several arrondissements. All three terms were borrowed from France, although their significance was altered when applied to the Haitian scene.

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In the days of Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, the government had owned vast plantations which were under the control of the military. Pétion and Boyer instituted the commune by combining numerous estates and farms into a group likewise to be controlled by soldiers. Until the American Occupation the police system of the country was military, with ordinary soldiers keeping order and making arrests when necessary. Since few people are less given to disorder than the Haitian peasants, the task of keeping order was not a serious one; indeed, soldiers were frequently stationed among their friends and relatives, who never thought of them as police. It sometimes [293] happened, however, that soldiers were assigned to other parts of the country, where they swaggered about with their *cocomacaques* (heavy-jointed canes), using these or the flat of their swords to enforce their often arbitrary commands.

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In every commune recognized by the state was an important

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exceeding the jurisdiction of the local juges, these juries to be named by the doyen and his colleagues. It was a dubious reform, often a worthless privilege; at times it was definitely harmful, for no matter how explicit the law, mere technicalities in a long, involved trial could be completely befuddling to an illiterate juror. Brown tells the tale of a certain foreman of the jury who asked a juror his opinion of a defendant's innocence; the juror replied that he could not write, whereas "you have written it all down. Let us know what you have done."[3] Innocence might easily be convicted by this system, and guilt escape. The addition of a jury to the court was even useless in many instances, for the language of the lawyers was French, and that of the jurors almost certain to be Créole. Boyer's attempt to graft English court practice upon the French system already functioning in Haiti was certainly not happy; the jury system shortly disappeared.

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Complicated forms are not for the peasant. He knew a soldier and a soldier's function in the countryside, but not the relation of the arrondissement to the national government; the juge de paix was understandable, but not the procedure of the civil courts at department capitals. The national government and its structure were remote, although the president's name might be familiar. Haiti was really organized from the top down rather than from the bottom up. The powers of the early presidents were arbitrary: they could not only order changes in the framework of any part of government, but might also shift at will the personnel.

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Carl Becker remarks: "In 1791, the French began their spectacular feat in constitution making. Between 1791 and 1875 Taine counts thirteen French constitutions adopted in relatively rapid succession. I can find only twelve, but maybe Taine is right. It doesn't really matter. The point is that for facility, speed, and endurance in constitution making, France holds the record. Yet other nations also ran."[4] Haiti was one of them: in fact the record is properly hers, although Professor Becker does not mention the little Caribbean state. In the nineteenth century Haiti lived under fifteen constitutions, to which she has added at least two more in the twentieth century. It is not always easy to say when a constitution is new: its author may

3. Jonathan Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, II, 271–272.
4. "Afterthoughts on Constitutions," *The Yale Review*, XXVII, No. 3 (Spring, 1938), 453.

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114 consider it novel when it changes little but detail; and some of Haiti's
175 seventeen documents were too short-lived to be significant. Haiti
642 shows her Frenchness in this constitution making, this love of being
171 logical and having the details all written down in proper order.

175 To try to analyze the content of so many documents would be a work of supererogation.[5] A brief comment upon each, however, will improve one's acquaintance with the mind of Haitian statesmen.

175 1801. Toussaint L'Ouverture's constitution, laying the framework
642 of his venture as director of the colony while still acknowledging its
466 relationship to France. In it he announced himself governor-general for life with the right to name his successor, thereby becoming the forerunner of the strong-man principle in politics. The most important part of this constitution was its detailed organization of the forced-labor system.

175 1805. Dessalines' constitution establishing the empire. In many
642 respects it did not differ from Toussaint's previous document, for the
563 same military organization was preserved, and the same system of forced labor; otherwise, there was little structure of government. One article was included which was to appear in every other constitution of Haiti up to 1918: "No white man shall set foot on this territory as master or as landowner."[6] In other respects there were sagacious provisions which did not endure. For example, the generic name of "blacks" was adopted for all Haitians, of whatever color.
175 The Emperor was trying thus to forestall the dissensions which
642 inevitably must result from the growth of social classes based on skin
[463] color. Another important provision was that every citizen who was not an ordinary cultivator must learn and practice some mechanical art. This was not merely a thrust at the aristocratic pretensions of the old affranchis, but also an endeavor to make Haiti industrious and self-sufficient. Except in the North, where Dessalines' deputy Christophe kept the requirement, the article was honored only in the breach. The social situation was touched at one other point: "No one is worthy of being a Haitian who is not a good father, a good
[428] son, a good husband, and a good soldier." Parents were forbidden to disinherit their children. Although, as has been shown, the Emperor

5. Such an analysis was made by Louis-Joseph Janvier, *Les Constitutions d'Haïti, 1801–85* (Paris, 1886).

6. He had made this declaration first on April 28, 1804; at that time the words "No white man" read "No colonist nor European."

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●175 642 put little stress upon strictly legal marriage, he did try to foster family ties and to strengthen family life.

1806. Pétion's first constitution, drawn up with his fellow mulattoes. Taking his model from the United States constitution, he established a republic with a president and a legislature, although the president of Haiti had greater relative powers than the president of the United States. He might be reëlected, but was not to be a dictator.

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1807. Christophe's reply to the mulattoes, establishing the "state" of Haiti which should (he hoped) overwhelm the "republic" of Haiti. His political and social systems were in few respects different from those of Toussaint and Dessalines.

1811. Christophe's second constitution, establishing his kingdom and creating a nobility, but otherwise maintaining the forced-labor system.

1816. Pétion's second constitution, the longest-lived in Haitian history. Having been several times reëlected president he now adopted the principle of a life presidency, with the right of the incumbent to name his successor. The legislature and forms of a representative republic were retained.

1843. The completely unrealistic constitution of the young revolutionaries who succeeded in overthrowing Boyer. The fight of the anti-Boyeristes had been for effective parliamentary government; to that end they provided for the direct election of the president by the people, a democratic vote, the exercise of legislative power by the Chamber of Representatives and the Senate, and the subordination of military to civil authority. Such democracy was too radical for either élite or army to endure, and this constitution was shortly superseded.

1846. Riché's return (in most respects) to the constitution of 1816. He kept the principle that the president should be elected, not appointed for life by his predecessor; but the election was by the combined Senate and Chamber, rather than by democratic vote of the people.

1849. Soulouque's constitution, founding his personal and gaudy Second Empire.

1859. Geffrard's return to the Pétion constitution of 1816, as revised by Riché in 1846, with a few details added to meet changes in social conditions in the last decade.

1867. Salnave's modifications of the constitution of 1859. The parliamentarians were in control once more, and inserted the require-

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175 ment that two thirds of the members of either Chamber must be
642 present before a law could be voted—a stipulation making it possible
[646] for any clique to hold up legislation by absenting itself.

1874. The constitution of Domingue who, having defeated the
[643] Liberals, promulgated a constitution "profoundly modifying" the language of the 1867 document. It legally concentrated power in the hands of the president—where, indeed, it had always been in spite of constitutional declarations.

1879. Salomon's first constitution, which professed to be a re-examination of Haitian institutions, but was actually not different in essentials from the document of 1846. The line from Pétion to Riché to Salomon and his successors was the main one from which deviations, such as those of Soulouque, occurred.

1886. Salomon's second constitution, a mild revision of his first.

1889. Hyppolite, the new president, felt it necessary to have a new
[178] constitution, although like the constitution of 1886 this was little more than a revision of that of 1879. Under the 1889 document Haiti continued to function, more and more haltingly, up to the time of the American Occupation.

[648] 1918. The constitution drawn up in Washington[7] and forced through in Haiti by a farcical plebiscite. Its most debated provision
[423] was the elimination of the prohibition against ownership of land by foreign whites, thus ending the one common point in all previous constitutions since 1805. For the rest, it changed little of the actual
[641] structure of Haitian government, but provided a great number of unaccustomed democratic rights: freedom of assembly, trial by jury in political cases, direct election of senators, submission of amendments to popular vote, freedom of the press.

1927. Although this is considered merely a revision of the 1918
[641] constitution, its changes were actually more noteworthy than many expected by the so-called new constitutions. Thirteen amendments were carried by popular vote, again so overwhelming as to be ridiculous, restricting many of the democratic liberties granted in 1918 which had proved embarrassing both to President Borno and

7. Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his campaign for the vice-presidency of the United States in 1920, claimed that he had written most of this constitution while he was Woodrow Wilson's assistant-secretary of the navy. (See the *New York Times*, August 19, 1920.) The constitution was approved in Haiti by a vote of 69,337 to 335.

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to the Americans who ruled Haiti through his office. This constitution once more increased the power of the president. 642 [641]

1932. Vincent's constitution, professing to be quite different from the two in effect during the Occupation, but actually closely resembling the 1927 revision with its concentration of power in executive hands. In 1935 an important amendment was added, making it possible for the president to be reëlected. [643]

Despite this welter of constitutions, the essential framework of Haitian government has consisted, except for brief interruptions, of a president, a legislature, and courts. The term of the presidency has varied from four to seven years (in the early days, for life) with the privilege of reëlection being now forbidden, now granted. Two presidents who tried to extend their terms, Salnave and Salomon, were deposed by revolutions for their temerity. Their distinction of being among the few to serve out the allotted term was thus marred by an ignominious end. 642 643

Regularly the president was obligated to "maintain internal peace" —a requirement few heads of state have been able to carry out, since internal peace has been most elusive. To aid him in his task he has been given wide powers: he commands the army (always large until 1915; every president except one between 1804 and 1915 was a general) and the navy (never more than a few ill-conditioned vessels, but these important in the general roadless condition of the country); most constitutions also gave him the right to issue necessary proclamations in order to deal with special crises. He "watches over" tribunals by means of appointed commissioners; by this arrangement he may obviously exert pressure for favorable judgments in cases which interest him. 643 [701] [706] [716] [792]

The one body which might conceivably check the president, namely, the legislature, has generally been composed of the president's men, for the Senate has usually been elected by the lower house from a list of candidates proposed by the president, while the representatives would hardly dare defy the man who controlled the army (which presided over such elections) and could dissolve the legislature. By most of the constitutions the president proposed to the legislature all laws except those concerning taxation; even here, since he directed the receipt and issue of public moneys, he was not really limited. Over foreign affairs the executive had effective control by 643 [646] [646]

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692 public, or against any of the secretaries of state or other important officials; but if this court was ever convoked, records of its actions are lacking.[8]

The most important actually functioning court was that of Cassation. In American terminology this would be called the Court of Appeals, reviewing cases coming up from the civil and criminal courts of the important towns. It sat at Port-au-Prince, and consisted of fourteen judges appointed by the president and his cabinet.

[177] Boyer had borrowed most of the forms of important Haitian courts from France, but he could not transfer to his country the spirit and tradition which made those courts function in France. The High Court of Justice remained a mere plan; the national Court of Cassation and the so-called department courts in the four to eight large towns operated under close presidential scrutiny; only the juges de paix, dealing with small and homely cases, had comparative freedom.

175 695 693 175 693 It was generally acknowledged throughout the nineteenth century that Haitian judges, whether of the Court of Cassation or of the department courts, could be influenced by pecuniary and political considerations. The odds were heavy in favor of any suitor who was liberal in his bribes to the judges; "justice" could be bought, and was. By French tradition of justice, the prisoner was assumed to be guilty until he was proved innocent. In Haiti he was bullied, cajoled, and cross-questioned in order to force a confession, and to make him state in open court what he was said to have admitted in his preliminary examination. Confessions were obtained by beatings, and prisoners were occasionally even tortured to death.

175 695 Another characteristic of the nineteenth-century courts—and not in Haiti alone—was the tardiness of their procedure. Consider the civil case in one of the department courts. If a creditor instituted a suit against a debtor in one department and obtained a favorable verdict, the defendant was permitted to appeal from the sentence to the court of an adjoining department, and so on in succession throughout the whole series; if the last court confirmed the judgment of the first, the defendant could then move it into the Court of

[692] 8. This Supreme Court would, according to the constitution, be formed only by proclamation of the Senate (and therefore under the ultimate control of the president), and might not hold its sessions in a spot more than twelve leagues from the seat of the Senate. Consisting of fifteen judges to be chosen by lot from the tribunals of the five Haitian departments, a two-thirds majority would be necessary for conviction, and no appeal might be made from its decisions.

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Cassation at Port-au-Prince. In the event that this court confirmed the judgment of the lower courts, the defendant might still appeal from it to the president, and might apply for a new trial in the lower courts. Thus the contest would proceed ad infinitum, however clear the proof that the debt was just. 175 695

The Court of Cassation exceeded all others in the slowness of its judgments. Its judges were under the surveillance of the president, and must consult with him before deciding a case. If he disagreed, and the state was a party to the case, the judges must reconsider "to see if they have not taken a wrong view of the question at issue." Even so, the grand judge might stay execution as long as he deemed advisable after a judgment was confirmed.

Judges were rarely chosen from among trained lawyers, but were appointed by the government because of political considerations. Consequently, few people had any faith in court decisions, and in general they avoided taking their problems to law. The peasants in particular were bewildered by the whole procedure. White foreigners also often complained that unless they were willing to pay heavily they had no slightest chance of getting justice in the Haitian courts. 693 695 641

It must be emphasized that the majority of cases coming before the courts were civil rather than criminal, for it has been a universal matter of comment that the Haitian people were rarely guilty of serious crimes. Minor thefts of poultry or animals have been the commonest breaches of the peace, while murder, arson, and rape have almost never occurred. Even the bitterest critics of the republic have noted the absence of crime.[9] It is noteworthy that, despite their poverty and the hardness of their life, the Haitians are, contrary to the prevailing white man's notion of Negro unreliability, passion, and lawlessness, a tranquil folk. The absence of crime speaks volumes for the wholesomeness of a people much maligned by the stories of their "Voodoo" practices and bloody revolutions. An élite ex-president spoke to me with pride of the honesty of the country people who welcomed travelers with true hospitality and with no expectation of payment. "You might sleep safely in a country cabin with a thousand dollars on your person," he said.[10] 691 674

9. Mackenzie, British consul during a part of Boyer's régime, and young Haiti's fiercest critic, said that during his whole stay he knew of only one murder, and that in this case the assassin was executed. [114] [682]

10. In times of revolution, brigandage was expected but was not accounted a crime, any more than killing in warfare is called murder. [669] [682]

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674 Soldiers, then, had no great difficulty policing town and country-
369 side, for there was little more crime in the towns than in rural regions. A person arrested would be haled before the nearest juge de
696 paix who would, if necessary, sentence him to jail—which meant
697 sending him to one of the larger towns. This was rather a severe penalty, for the jails were filthy; moreover, only about ten cents a week was ordinarily allotted to each prisoner for food with the result that if a prisoner's family did not supply him, he was likely to be near starvation. Extra work was required for extra fare. Haiti was probably no worse off in respect to its jails than most European and American countries at the time, for this was before the era of prison reform. Inmates of jails were likely to be only petty thieves.

697 During certain régimes the presidents or their generals managed to have numbers of convicts sentenced to hard work, in order to have forced labor on their private estates or projects dear to them. Under any administration there were likely to be a few convicts who performed repair work on streets and roads. It was the usual practice to chain or rope them together by pairs, three yards apart; accompanied by soldiers with loaded muskets, the convicts labored from daylight to sunset, with an hour and a half for a meal at noon. The government pretended to provide for them, but in order to save expense two of the criminals accompanied by two soldiers with fixed bayonets were sent about the neighborhood to beg for the group. The result was that the wretches went ill fed and half naked. They slept in jail on beds which were little more than boards.

701 The final and most persistent branch of government has been the
● 175 army.[11] Owing to the overmilitarization of Haiti, generals were perennially participating in the civil government—or engaged in overthrowing it. It was to be expected that following the revolution the new independent state formed in 1804 should have a military cast. Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, Geffrard, Boyer, Cangé, Yayou, Magloire Ambroise, Férou, François, Capoix, Rigaud—these were the great generals and the only important statesmen. It was as if in America not only Washington had been a military leader, but also Adams, Jefferson, Franklin, Jay, Hamilton, Madison, Pinckney,

[647] 11. In most governments there has been a body which, although connected with the legislature, had functions pertaining to the law. This was the Chamber of Accounts, a body of five men who examined into and reported to the president upon every branch of expenditure and collection of revenues. It might recommend to him certain financial reforms or improvements, but had no power to enforce its suggestions.

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Patrick Henry, Randolph, and Samuel Adams as well. Madiou estimates that there were 52,500 men in the army in 1804, when Haiti's population was less than 400,000.[12] 175 701

Fear of the return of the French kept the army large, and the administration of agricultural affairs under both Dessalines and Christophe was in charge of it. The construction of a fortress in every district put laborers under the direct influence of the military.[13] In addition to the corvée, or forced labor, required to construct these fortifications, the workers of the nation in the time of Dessalines also had to clear the hillsides and the ravines connecting valleys, and plant them with bananas, yams, plantains, and other provisions to supply the garrisons which manned the forts. 175 712 466 [705]

The Emperor left his army to feed and clothe itself. Occasional rations were given as a part of wages, but they were irregularly distributed. In the South particularly the troops began to murmur and desert, stirred up by their mulatto officers who were themselves no better rewarded, and who were already beginning their plot to overthrow the Emperor. The accusation was made that the money which should have gone to the army was being used on Dessalines' mistresses. The soldiers indulged themselves in that most damaging of Haitian weapons, the witty song, full of double meanings but deadly in its thrust at public personages; by these symbolic songs the fall of Dessalines was not only predicted but actually prepared. 175 705 701

Christophe kept a military state, but he had learned many lessons from watching affairs under Dessalines. Realizing that he could not trust the preservation of his régime to the fickleness of an army which had seen his rise to power and had already deserted its first commander in chief, knowing too that there was treason even among his own guards, he made a contract with a company of foreign merchants for the transportation of twenty thousand blacks from Africa. These were to make up a military force independent of the Haitians, 175 643 701 625

12. *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 322.

13. Each general was commanded by Dessalines to build a fort on one of the mountains in his district. The design seems to have been left to the general. A few of the fortifications were truly impressive. Christophe built La Ferrière near Milot in the North; Pétion the fortress of Jean-Jacques at Grand Fond, four leagues from Port-au-Prince; Capoix called his Les Trois Pavillons, in the range of mountains back of Port-de-Paix; Cangé and Ysyou together built Campan near Léogane; Magloire Ambroise constructed a fortress near Cap Rouge and called it by that name; Geffrard built Platon near Les Cayes; Férou built Mafranc near Jérémie; François began but did not finish Le Bonnet Carré near Aquin. [712]

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643 and being the personal property of the monarch and recipients of his
701 royal favor, were to constitute the perpetual support of his throne.
625 Only four thousand of these compulsory immigrants came, but
625 Christophe made them into very effective companies of police, whom he named the Royal Dahomets from the country of their origin. They performed the duties of a gendarmerie in all the districts of the North, drove the cultivators to their labors, watched over property and the security of the proprietors, and maintained industry and a strict subordination among all ranks of people in the kingdom.

175 Christophe's regular troops were well clothed and armed. They
701 were kept under stern discipline, no mercy or relaxation being
[703] shown them; delinquency on their part brought flagellation or a military execution. The troops received only a nominal stipend, and each soldier was required to gain his subsistence by cultivating a few acres of ground allotted to him out of the national domain. The usual quarter of this income had, of course, to be turned over as a tax to the state. Although the King's power was maintained by soldiers, he never coddled them. "The soldiers of the army as well as the laborers of the plantations lived in perpetual dread of the rod of authority," wrote Brown.[14] They seem to have developed a tradition of some special fetish power possessed by Christophe, a sort of *mana*, to use anthropological terminology. Even princes and dukes were chastised by the King's orders, and then made to do menial work by way of further punishment.

Conditions in the republic of Pétion were similar and yet different —similar in that soldiers formed the support of the government, different in that Pétion did not rule by fear. Every individual man between 16 and 60, a few cultivators excepted, was required by law to be a soldier, either in the *corps solde* (regular troops of the line), or in the *corps non solde* (national guard). The former, both under Pétion and in the early days of Boyer, had about 40,000 men distributed in strong detachments in towns and communes all over the
[914] country. Their costume, instead of being neat, uniform, and daily inspected as with Christophe's army, was ragged and mismated; they managed according to popular parlance "to find linen on every
[465] hedge." They were paid from fifty cents to a dollar a month, ac-
[541] cording to the existing solvency or exigency of the state. Each week
[512] end a parade and review was held, and then a small fatigue party was taken to do actual duty, the others being dismissed until the next

14. Op. cit., II, 209.

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175 701 Saturday to use their time cultivating the soil, pursuing some [512] mechanical craft, or acting as day laborers.

692 703 175 It must be once more emphasized that the civil was everywhere subservient to the military power. The administration of justice in tribunals was carried out only at the pleasure of the army chiefs. No person would have dared bring suit against a high officer; the only efficacious way of obtaining justice against petty offenders was through summary decision and corporal chastisement by the commanding officer.

701 625 175 By the close of Boyer's rule, during which he had kept the army up to its full numbers while pursuing a policy of economy, the outward appearance of the troops was almost ludicrous. They appeared at review wearing generally what pleased them or what they could scrape together, for they had to supply their own clothing and arms. The only effectual employment of the soldiery was as armed police, for Haiti never had to fight external powers. The soldiers drummed and fifed, mustered on parade and went through the formations, but otherwise merely stood (or sat) sentry at the doors of public offices, hunted up at the command of the magistrates *les mauvais sujets*, guarded prisons and prisoners on chain-gang duty, loitered at barriers, collected tolls, and examined permits.

175 701 [668] [703] A large army, practically idle, could easily be seduced into the support of revolutionary movements. Principles of discipline and loyalty current in European armies of the day were nonexistent in nineteenth-century Haiti. The numbers in the army varied from twenty to forty or fifty thousand. A strange estimate was made for the year 1867: 6,500 general officers and staff; 7,000 regimental officers; and only 6,500 soldiers.[15] It was said that "*tout Haïtien qui n'était pas général de division était au moins soldat.*" The higher grades became rewards for political service; the lower ranks had to be filled up by recruiting parties—when these were abroad, all men who did not desire a period of enforced leisure away from home remained in hiding.

While the army was not alone responsible for the tragedies of insurrection and mismanagement which consistently befell the country, it was never uninvolved in these misfortunes. Only the [648] radical reforms undertaken by the American Occupation saved modern Haiti from continued military domination.

15. Sir Spencer St. John, *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, p. 310.

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[p. 250]

XIV

COMMERCE

121 439 THIS book is no more fundamentally concerned with the detailed economic history of Haiti than with its intimate political events; our attention is bent here, as elsewhere, on the broad functioning of social institutions. Peasant agricultural life has already been depicted: the products of the peasant's labor, when marketed, have brought whatever prosperity the state and its ruling caste have enjoyed. These marketed products have consisted chiefly of coffee, with a very little sugar and cotton. The present section concerns Haiti's economic relations with the outside world.

• 175 439 It was the commerce of the colony of Saint-Domingue which made that small division of the Antillean island so valuable to its mother country. Exports in the last year before the revolution are estimated at fifty million dollars (461 million livres) in terms of modern money.[1] Although commerce was seriously interrupted by the troubled state of affairs in the 1790's, the upswing of prosperity under Toussaint indicated that the country had still highly profitable enterprises. Merchants in the young United States were particularly intent upon the benefits to be derived from trade in molasses. All foreign trade was violently interrupted once more in 1802–3, when the revolution was in progress; but the interest of larger nations in what would issue from the Haitian declaration of independence in 1804 was out of all apparent proportion to the size of the tiny country. Their interest was partially in the question of whether ex-slaves could rule themselves politically; even more they were interested in the economic future of Haiti.

Three divergent economic policies were pursued by the early rulers, three variations among which future presidents might choose the one in their opinion most profitable. That of Dessalines was progressively to isolate Haiti, tolerating foreign trade only so long as it seemed necessary to establish the country's self-sufficiency. Christophe's, on the other hand, was the traditional monarch's

1. H. P. Davis, *Black Democracy* (2d ed., New York, 1929), p. 25; Anténor Firmin, *M. Roosevelt, président des États-Unis, et la république d'Haïti* (New York, 1905), pp. 435–436.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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policy of encouraging trade with his friends and prohibiting it with his enemies—both arbitrarily. The variation of Pétion was a sort of mercantilism, with set high tariffs.

What Dessalines planned was in terms of Western statecraft so weird that white onlookers felt they were restrained in calling Dessalines a transplanted African tribal chieftain. So passionately intense was the fury of that general against all whites that he took every precaution he could devise to prevent face-to-face dealings between his Haitians and foreigners. By deceit, treachery, and ingenious cruelty he conducted a massacre which deserves comparison with that of Saint Bartholomew: this effectively rid the country of white residents. Since for a time Haiti would have to depend for economic survival upon trade with foreigners, Dessalines next conceived a project whereby the whole population would be gathered in the centre of the island, in the most protected valleys and the gorges of the highest mountains. In these fastnesses the people would never see a white but would work on the land, producing sugar and coffee and cotton for export without ever leaving their local habitations. On the seacoast would be established certain "counters" over which a few incorruptible Haitians, chosen by the Emperor himself, would sell local products and buy the necessary imported goods. Impregnable fortresses were to guard access to the interior,[2] which would be reached by new roads from the seacoast "counters." Every seaport was to be destroyed as soon as new towns could be built in the back country. Already when his death intervened Dessalines had moved his capital from the Cape (that is, Cap-Haïtien, formerly Cap Français) to the inland village of Marchand (in the department of the Artibonite; now renamed Dessalines), and his next plan was to transfer Port-au-Prince eight leagues inland to the plantation Dérance, among the mountains.

Dessalines has been thought absurd, childish, barbaric. But there is something poignant, even tragic, in this fiery determination of the black chieftain, bitter over the cruelties and indignity to which his people had been subject for decades, to use this alien island as best he could and preserve his people at any cost from such another domination.

Despite his scheme for ultimate isolation of the people, Dessalines kept everyone steadily at work by the forced-labor system instituted

2. See p. 247 and note 13. under Toussaint.

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under Toussaint. The ravages of warfare were partially repaired, so that commerce once again appeared at the seaports. English, American, Danish, Swedish, and German vessels now shared what once the French had monopolized. Toussaint's export duties of ten per cent on sugar, coffee, cotton, and cacao were kept by Dessalines, and import duties likewise remained just about the same as formerly: twelve per cent.

A strange stopgap trading scheme was devised. Dessalines named the specific ports at which foreign ships might enter, then established a number of Haitian "consignees" at each of these ports. Numbers were given to each of these men. The first ship which entered the harbor was consigned to the shop of the trader having Number 1, the second to Number 2, and so on until each consignee had dealt with a foreigner, when Number 1 would receive the right to a second ship's cargo.[3] The captain of a vessel sent to Haiti did not know until his arrival in port who would be his consignee. If the probity of the Haitian merchant to whom fate assigned the captain did not inspire confidence, he was not obliged to sell goods to him—but was prohibited from selling them thereafter anywhere else in the country.

In this system there was room for every sort of irregularity and graft. More often than not Dessalines gave the assignments to his favorites, this to a military leader, that to an administrative officer, the other to some simple citizen whom he wished to reward. Often two ships would appear on the horizon at the same time: a consignee would then rush to the officer of the port and promise him half or a quarter of his commission if he would assign the more important of the vessels to his own number; the officer would then order the richer vessel in first.

Violent discontent arose over this system, which meant great profit to the beneficiaries of the monopoly and nothing to those excluded from it. As usual under a rigid system, means were found to evade the monopoly. Foreign ship captains found it well worth their while to sell clandestinely to individuals not high in the favor of the Emperor. This smuggling increased, the captains being both ingenious and adaptable to the needs of their dealers; sometimes the trade was wholesale, sometimes retail. Naturally enough, the Emperor imposed heavy fines on the smuggling operations when detected, but the illicit trade did not cease.

3. This mode of consignment was sanctioned by a decree of Dessalines on September 6, 1805.

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175 433 Haiti under Dessalines seemed to be flourishing, although it was less productive than under the French colonial régime. This was partly because the material damage of the wars had been too great to be quickly repaired; partly it was because many of the free Haitians had discovered ways of disappearing into the remote valleys, there to live the life of independent squatters, safe from the blows of Dessalines' overseers. Tables of exports showed that sugar production was rapidly declining, and that coffee was now becoming the principal crop of the country.[4] Many cane fields, indeed, were turning into rugged thickets, their mills and refineries falling to ruins beside the clogged irrigation ditches.

175 466 439 579 It was a bewildering "system," then, this instituted by Dessalines: intense activity of serfs on government plantations, but an increasing number of deserting squatters; foreign trade encouraged, yet run by principles of local favoritism. Even the old-fashioned practice of piracy was reëstablished, for the Emperor gave letters of marque to some of his subjects who owned ships, allowing them to pursue French and Spanish vessels as the rightful prey of an enemy country. Sometimes these Haitian corsairs even disturbed smaller English merchant ships. Finally, it was Dessalines who said to his favorites, "*Plumez la poule* [that is, the Haitian people], *mais prenez garde qu'elle ne crie pas.*"

175 439 437 Christophe, upon his accession to power in the North, completely abandoned the fantastic schemes of Dessalines for putting an end to all contact between Haitians and foreigners. Among his earliest acts were efforts to undo the economic measures of the Emperor. In his first address he proclaimed certain free ports, announcing that the flags of all nations would be respected and property protected.[5] Next he abolished the consignment system of trading, allowing all foreign traders free access to Haitian merchants. This open system did away with the need of smuggling.

175 439 698 Because Christophe was almost pathetically anxious to make a good impression upon Great Britain, he was scrupulous in living up to his promises of security of property and justice in commercial dealings—to British merchants. The United States fared ill at the King's hands, for it was a young republic which had by refusing

4. See note on this chapter, p. 320, section 4.
5. His constitution of 1807 likewise makes this promise: "The government solemnly guarantees to foreign merchants the security of their persons and property."

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175 recognition to the kingdom specifically failed to pay him proper
439 respect. Moreover he seized the property of American merchants in
648 his kingdom to make good a sum of $123,955.19 he could not recover from a Baltimore firm.[6] Agriculture flourished in the North, but the English were not yet certain whether Haitian credit could be trusted. The demand of the traders for cash was allowed, and so with almost no risk British dealers supplied the steady demand for staple trade goods,[7] taking in return either coffee and sugar or the equivalent in cash.

175 Christophe was chary of publishing any specific figures on the
439 economic life of his kingdom: we have no way, therefore, of estimating either the annual production or the annual income. One of his statesmen, Baron de Vastey, affirmed that in 1817 more than 150 ships were supplied with cargoes of coffee and sugar at the Cape alone.[8] This number is equal to that which sailed from the port during its most peaceful and prosperous periods in colonial times; one suspects the baron of exaggerating. We know, however, that Christophe was the chief merchant in his kingdom, setting his own prices and disposing of his own goods before others could sell; we know, too, that he left a large fortune in his coffers when he died.

175 Like Dessalines, King Henry Christophe had his pirates, and re-
579 doubtable ones. But he warned them to prey only on French ships
439 bound for ports in Pétion's republic in the South; he did not wish his trade interfered with in the North.

The policies of Dessalines and Christophe were personal, based upon their subjective prejudices and preferences; those of Pétion were more in accord with the practice of other civilized nations of the time. They had to be, perforce, in view of the economic and political position of his republic.

175 Southern Haiti had never, even in colonial times, been so intensely
439 cultivated as the North. Foreign traders were accustomed to deal at
648 the Cape, now the capital of Christophe's dominion, while Port-au-Prince was but a secondary market. After the civil war Christophe had practically allied himself with Great Britain. If this coup were to be counterbalanced, Pétion would have to choose for allies among

6. See Ludwell L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938*, p. 48.

7. Christophe did not encourage his people to purchase any of the extravagantly rich manufactures of Europe, but rather to keep their wants simple.

[103] 8. Formerly Cap François, then Cap-Haïtien, but under Christophe renamed in his honor Cap-Henry; it is now Cap-Haïtien.

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the still weak United States, France—the traditional enemy of Haitians, and moribund Spain, who was in fact shortly to lose most of her empire in the New World. Since he did not mean to drive his people to work, he resolved to exploit to the full the benefits of foreign trade in the hope that profits from exports would stimulate production. As for allies, he cultivated the friendship of the United States, but also sought to wean British merchants from the Northern ports. To this end, although he levied duties of twelve per cent on goods of other nations, he reduced duties on English goods to five per cent.[9]

175 439 648 [651]

Pétion, content to govern without an impressive court, gave the greatest encouragement possible to trade; he sheared expenses and managed to balance his budget. In 1818, for example, his revenues were $2,646,000 and his expenses $2,144,000, giving the republic a respectable surplus of $502,000.

175 439 652

Because Boyer was Pétion's disciple he followed in his predecessor's footsteps, thus fixing in his quarter-century administration the pattern of foreign trade under a tariff system. The Haitian élite seem never to have taken to commercial enterprise, nor has the country ever developed an economist even of fifth rank. Haitian thought, so eloquently articulate along political lines, has simply never turned its attention in any solid and serious way to economic problems. Nearly the whole of the foreign commerce of the republic from the earliest days was conducted by foreign merchants resident in Haiti. This was partly because the credit of the Haitians was not so generally established as to inspire confidence, but mostly it was due to lack of interest of the people in foreign trade.

175 439 652 [441] [452]

In the eighteenth century Saint-Domingue had been almost the only colony producing such tropical products as sugar and coffee on a large scale; the absence of effective competition accounted for most of the prosperity of the French colony. In the nineteenth century, however, competition developed rapidly; and at this very time the laws and court decisions of Haiti began to hamper the business of the foreign merchants dealing there. By Article 21 of Boyer's Law of Patents, all persons engaging in any trade or profession except that of cultivation of the soil must be provided with a license or patent; all foreigners admitted as merchants into the republic must first secure the president's permission to acquire a patent; and when

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9 See the Arrêté of October 13, 1814.

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175 finally the license was obtained, it authorized the foreigner to carry
459 on only a wholesale business—not with other foreign traders or with
656 any resident aliens, but with Haitians in the six open ports.[10] The
441 minimum of goods to be sold in any deal was fixed, so that no foreigner could inadvertently enter the retail business. Such licenses cost between $1,600 and $2,000, sums so large that few foreigners were drawn to the island.

Quite obviously the government sought to keep the external trade of Haiti under its control; it is equally obvious that under the licensing system, with its high fees and strict surveillance, only a small number of dealers were attracted, who consequently monopolized what little trade there was. Retail business being prohibited to them, their imports had to be sold by Haitians.

175 Not even this necessity created a middle class in the country, for
565 the purchasing power of the peasants and other lower-caste Haitians
434 was small; also the total sum of imports and exports was not large
443 enough to support a middle class. The retail trade was chiefly in the
441 hands of town women. These *marchandes*, as they were called, employed a number of hucksters—likewise women—to traverse the countryside surrounding the open ports, attend the markets, and report either every evening, or every week or month, depending upon their findings. The white man let his marchande know how much coffee he required, and this information was passed on to the local speculator who, at a very moderate profit, collected the coffee beans from the peasants in his neighborhood. Imports were distributed in like manner over the countryside. In its small way this system worked well enough, for the good faith of respectable marchandes could be counted upon both by the white trader and by the local dealers. A few European and American traders found it profitable to set up as marchandes the women with whom they cohabited, for this arrangement brought them nearer to the retail trade.

175 During Boyer's long administration the staple export was coffee,
439 still cultivated on a few remaining plantations but mostly picked
24 from plants growing wild, and sold by the peasants as their one source of money income. Sugar disappeared almost wholly from the

[504] 10. Namely, Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, Gonaïves, Jacmel, Les Cayes, and Mirébalais; from 1822 to 1844 there were also two open ports in the Spanish part of the island which, during those years, was a part of Haiti.

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list except in raw form, in which it had an annual sale of only a few thousand pounds. Other subordinate exports were cotton, logwood, lignum vitae, mahogany, tortoise shells, hides, cacao, cassia, wax, ginger, bullocks' horns, and tobacco—and many of these came primarily from the Dominican rather than the Haitian part of the island, during the twenty-two year period of union. The imports were mainly clothing and provisions. That an agricultural country should need to bring in flour, butter, cheese, lard, beef, pork, candles, and especially—in the light of former days—refined sugar, is eloquent testimony to the degree to which food production had declined since colonial times. Other imports were more to be expected, since manufacture had never developed: linen, cotton goods of all kinds, some few woolens, cutlery, iron goods, wines and brandies, oil, lumber, coarse iron goods, earthenware, tin plates, and minor articles.[11]

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Gone now were the days of big things in Haiti. Estates of thousands of acres would in Boyer's time have been only a liability. Profits were measured, or rather hoped for, in terms of hundreds rather than thousands of dollars.[12] Saint-Domingue of the 1780's was one of the exciting parts of the world to traders; Haiti of fifty years later was little more than a vague name except to specialists. Any country relying for its economic security upon one crop and its sale in a foreign market must expect vicissitudes in its income. Haiti had these in full measure. And so the prosperity of the country steadily diminished.[13]

11. See the very careful report to Great Britain by her consul, Charles Mackenzie, in 1830: *Notes on Hayti*, II, 173–190. [113]

12. Mackenzie (*Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti*, Document XI) reports in 1825: "Generally speaking, no sugar is manufactured on the estates devoted to the cultivation of the sugar cane; the juice is either inspissated to a coarse sirup, and sold for common use, or distilled into a very inferior rum, called here 'Tafia.'" Then, citing the case of Tor, an estate formerly owned by Pétion but in 1825 by Boyer, he reports: "Formerly 1,700 carreaux were in cane; 1,500 slaves were employed on it; 3 sugar mills were constantly at work, and excellent clayed sugar was made. Now only about 7 carreaux are in cultivation; 50 laborers are employed; the only produce is a little sirup and tafia, which last is retailed in a small shop by the side of the road, in front of the president's residence." [249] [257] [274]

13. These vicissitudes have been frequently noted. Droughts and hurricanes, pests and earthquakes, were causes of constant apprehension. The chief forces at work to diminish Haitian prosperity were two: the division of land into small parcels at home, and the competition of other countries with Haitian coffee abroad. The price of coffee had declined in all the European markets, making the return to the cultivator exceedingly small.

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175 452 453 If contemporary testimony can be credited, the complete indifference of the Haitian élite to business was matched by their ignorance of finance when this was anything more complicated than cash payment tramactions or face-to-face exchange. They seem to have been wholly unfamiliar with the uses of commercial paper, the meaning of overdrafts, or bills of exchange. Individual credit was not understood, nor was a signature enough to start a flow of business. As one person from France put it in 1846, "It takes 10,000 francs of money to do 10,000 francs of business."[14] If a merchant doing a good business found his purse empty and needed only to borrow in order to purchase other goods, that circumstance offered to his mind "a redoubtable extremity enveloped in profound mystery; and it is a rule of loyalty and of honor to which Haitian commerce is never false, that the paper on which a man has placed his signature should remain, until the day the loan is paid back, impenetrably shut up in the portfolio of the lender."

[426] Interest, if money could be borrowed at all, was at the rate of one per cent a day, three per cent a month, and from sixteen per cent to twenty per cent a year. Thus letters of credit and promissory notes never moved the slightest business transaction in the country. To seek credit was to confess one's financial embarrassment.

175 45 The economic ills which harassed Haiti under Boyer were, to a greater or less degree, the same that bedeviled the country for the rest of the century. It seems worth while to list them, for they reveal the mentality of the ruling clique and caste—a mentality which could see no reason for altering of these basic matters, and which during administration after administration devoted itself to superficialities. Haiti's weaknesses were not entirely due to folly and clumsiness, however, but to a perfectly natural ignorance. There was no background for economic thinking: how should ex-slaves with a handful of old freedmen be familiar with credit, banking, overdrafts, and the like? Even education in France would not necessarily offer enlightenment on these matters. "Culture" meant literature, not economics.

These, then, have been the major economic defects of Haiti, 1806 to 1915, due partly to ineptitude, partly to imperfect education:

175 454 648 1. The exclusion of all foreign or white investment, industry, and capital. One article in every constitution was given over to this

14. R. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, Saint-Domingue, II, 187.

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quarantine: "Haiti for the Haitians." At first the prohibition on white ownership of land and financial investment in the country was attributable to a fear of reënslavement; then to a fear that financial commitments (which no Haitian really understood) would somehow lead to political subjection; and always the feeling of pride, combined with a desperate need of self-justification, made the Haitians want to keep their country entirely under control of their own people. It is, of course, possible that if white people had been allowed free access to the country, they might have destroyed the "Black Republic"; excluding white men altogether, however, seriously curtailed economic activity.

2. Overmilitarization. The army, numerous out of all proportion to the population, took the ablest men out of production, drained the treasury, and was a constant source of revolutionary activity.

3. Poor methods of agriculture. Critics often complained that Haiti ought to return to the system of large estates and forced labor; it apparently occurred to no one to suggest that education of the peasants might have made the land productive once more, by teaching the people new methods. Dividing up the land was an inevitable necessity unless every ruler were as willing as Christophe to be a dictator and as capable; but to keep the peasants in ignorance was not a necessity. Peasant landowners in Europe frequently tend their acres with skill, while in Haiti, with neither experience nor instruction in methods of tillage on small farms, the people developed steadily more destructive ways of farming.

4. Inefficient marketing. Assuming Haiti's dependence upon the staple crop of coffee and the handling of this crop by foreign merchants, every government seemed intent upon putting obstacles in the path of efficient marketing procedure.[15] The white trader could deal only with Haitians (who were ignorant in matters of international trade); although the foreigner had to pay a huge license fee in order to deal at all in Haitian products, he got no security in return, for he might not own land or obtain a lien on the real property of a citizen.[16] Banking and exchange facilities were wholly lacking.

15. In 1833 Boyer thought to "encourage" Haitians to commercial effort by gradually expelling foreign traders, refusing to grant them any new licenses to trade. His scheme failed, for the élite were not interested. Indeed, the actual effect of his plan was to disrupt the steady flow of exports and increase discontent with Boyer on the part of the élite plantation owners whose small profits were momentarily interrupted.

16. See James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 374 ff.

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175 441 Justice in the courts was administered by Haitians whose narrow patriotism biased their decisions.

439 648 5. A temperamental tariff policy. Not only were imports subject to a tariff which might be changed at the whim of any president, but exports also were taxed. When an administration was in need of funds it might suddenly, without warning, raise the tax on coffee exports and so disrupt a merchant's business plans. The customs-houses were in charge of Haitians who steadily became more inefficient and grasping as the century progressed, until many foreign merchants felt that the only way of getting business dispatched was by means of bribes. Examinations at customs were long drawn out, often there was open thievery, and erroneous valuations were common.

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175 651 [648] 6. The burden of the indemnity to France. Contracted by Boyer in 1825, this annual payment for sixty years was an incubus to every administration, leaving no surplus in the treasury for public works, education, or any internal development; likewise, it made the threat of foreign interference all the more imminent.

7. A debased currency. Pétion was the first president to devalue money, and his example was frequently followed thereafter. Counterfeiting was general. When a country's monetary system is unstable, its officials accustomed to bribery and graft,[17] and its financial structure almost nonexistent, there is little chance for sound economic development.

175 245 8. Dependence upon a single crop. Haitian economy was tied to the staple coffee, grown with indifferent care, prepared for the market in outmoded fashion, and sold in competition with coffee from more scientifically run plantations in other tropical countries.

175 439 66 9. Political instability. The recurrent revolutions in Haiti made foreigners chary of participating in the country's business, since the government which made a contract might be out of office before the ink was dry.

175 439 565 10. Indifference of the élite to economic pursuits. What profits were obtainable went into the pockets of foreign merchants, not those of Haitian businessmen. In 1842 the comparative exports of the

[643] [159] [661] 17. Sir Spenser St. John, always a bitter critic of Haiti, remarked (*Hayti, or The Black Republic*, p. 88) sardonically that "Boyer had the rare quality of being honest, and left in the treasury, on his departure, the sum of £200,000, the first and last chief who was ever guilty of so unaccountable a weakness."

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United Kingdom, the United States, and Haiti, in proportion to population, were 185, 165, and 125,[18] yet Haiti had no carrying trade while the other two countries had, and so the profits were drained from the land.[19] 175 565 439

In short, as Haiti became accustomed to managing her own affairs, she became content with—or at least, reconciled to—little things. Inertia and tradition worked in their persistent fashion, with no effective stimulation from outside to combat them. From tradition and seclusion springs prejudice, and this became obvious whenever a change was proposed, particularly one which suggested bringing white people back to the country. To the élite it might mean the end of their social supremacy; to the masses, the end of their independence of daily action. The prejudice against sugar making was rooted in the same kind of suspicion. When a large landowner tried to institute a sugar mill on his estate, he met an adamant refusal of his hired workers to labor in it: "*Moué pas esclave!*" (I'm no slave!) The Negroes even disliked a bell to ring them to work on a plantation, for it suggested the slavery of the old régime. 178 433 [461]

Just before the Civil War in the United States a humanitarian gentleman developed a project of conducting numerous free American Negroes to Haiti in a planned migration. He discussed in a pamphlet[20] all the possible trades which might flourish in that country, if the migrants were to assume the position of a middle class; but his list is significantly small—sixteen occupations, on the order of tailoring, coopering, and blacksmithing, were all he could think of.[21] He made three comments which he hoped would attract the Negro Americans, as to a virgin field of opportunity: that in the 175 648 105

18. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 111–113, cites these figures, and says: "[Thus] Hayti, poor, and despised as she is, has a commerce, *in native produce*, nearly three-fourths as large, *in proportion to her population*, as our own United Kingdom, which is the great manufacturing part of the world; and seven-eighths as large as that of the United States, where the staple exports are produced by the labour of 3,000,000 slaves!" [433]

19. Mackenzie (*Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti*, Document V) reports that in 1825 exports were valued at $5,793,758, and imports at $4,660,174; the trading was carried on in 552 *foreign* ships, of which 374 were American, 78 British, and 65 French. No Haitian ship traded abroad.

20. Benjamin S. Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans*. See particularly pp. 3–9.

21. His complete list is: tailor, shoemaker, baker, cabinetmaker, carpenter, mason, lime-burner, distiller, cooper, wheelwright, saddler, blacksmith, tinner, hatter, small-boat maker, potter.

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towns there was a surplus of shopkeepers, but nothing like enough producers of goods; that in the country few Haitians of intelligence and capital paid any attention to agriculture; and that Haiti needed more than anything else people of brains, not afraid of physical activity, and people with capital. The author had observed well. His characterization of the Haiti of 1860 was still true fifty years later.

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[p. 265]

XV

HAITIAN PROBLEMS

FOR a citizen of the United States or a European country, national problems have to do with external as well as internal affairs. Foreign relations, armaments, international trade, treaties and commitments, loom as large as do unemployment, business depression, labor troubles, and social maladjustment. Political parties rise and fall with their promises or failures to deal successfully with matters arising from the country's position relative to world movements. In Haiti such generalizations do not hold. Her international relations have been and are comparatively minor, while her internal problems have been of a different order from those which trouble most of the rest of the Western World. This is not meant to imply that a world depression leaves Haiti unscathed, or that the country does not suffer when its trade in coffee is interrupted, but rather that its persistent problems would continue to exist whatever the state of world politics and economics. 178 66 648

Contacts of the Haitian people with the outside world between 1804 and 1915 were meagre. The slaughter of whites by Dessalines, the economic decline of the country, unwillingness of white nations to treat with a Negro state, the schism in the Catholic Church, restrictive legislation against white foreigners, general illiteracy of the people—all these shut Haiti off from the world. Christophe, it is true, invited in a few English schoolmasters and agricultural experts, but these remained only a short while and had little influence even among the élite. For a century Haiti saw no foreigners except the few traders at seaports, an occasional Wesleyan missionary, a limited number of consuls and ministers, certain travelers interested in odd corners of the earth, and, after 1860, Catholic priests and sisters. For the peasants there ceased to be any knowledge of the world outside of Haiti; for the élite France once more became the centre of the social universe, as it had been for the affranchis in colonial times. From Boyer's time onward élite youths went to Paris for an education, if they could afford it; the "culture" they acquired there had little relationship to Haitian problems. 175 648 [871] [242] [797] [871]

Foreign relations, in the political sense, revolved during most of

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Foreign relations, in the political sense, revolved during most of

175 the nineteenth century about loans and insurrections. Haiti main-
648 tained legations in those countries to which she exported most of her coffee and from which she might obtain credit. Revolutionary leaders sometimes promised as a bait for foreign assistance either tariff preferences or the cession of Môle Saint Nicolas for a naval base; if successful, they might fulfill the first promise but, because of the Monroe Doctrine and the watchful jealousy of the big powers, the Môle was never ceded. The United States had varied dealings with Haiti. Before the Civil War there was more than one movement to transplant freed slaves from this country to Haiti; after the war the United States came very near annexing Haiti; and negotiations over the cession of the Môle did not end until America acquired Guantanamo Bay, across the Windward Passage in Cuba, as a naval base to guard the entrance to the Caribbean.[1]

It was finally the combination of complicated economic affairs and political collapse which produced the Occupation of 1915. In the
175 preceding year both France and Germany threatened to send war-
652 ships to collect loans due them, and were stopped only by the out-
457 break of the World War. An American bank held as its subsidiary the Bank of Haiti, in which the government deposited its funds; when in 1914–15 the presidents followed each other in rapid succession, the bank on instructions from New York refused to allow the government to withdraw its funds. Haiti in retaliation threatened to seize its deposits by force, but the New York bank persuaded the United States government to send a ship to transfer the gold from Port-au-Prince to New York. There were other financial complications, particularly those relating to defaulted payments to a railroad
175 company. What finally precipitated the Occupation, however, was
648 anarchy. When, in July, 1915, President Sam slaughtered 168 politi-
[579] cal prisoners and was himself mobbed and murdered, the American government ordered the landing of its Marines from a warship conveniently anchored in the harbor near Port-au-Prince.[2]

From 1915 to 1934 the foreign affairs of Haiti were under the direction of the United States, whose main concern was to order the economic relations of the country in such fashion that Haiti should

1. The foreign relations of Haiti with the United States have been clearly treated in Ludwell L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States*, 1714–1938.

2. One of the best accounts of the events leading up to the Occupation is that of H. P. Davis, *Black Democracy*.

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not find herself constantly embroiled with European states and American financial interests. The Haitian debt was funded, and a financial adviser remained in the country even after the Occupation came to an end. It is expected that by 1943 the last debt will be paid; the financial adviser, however, withdrew in 1941. Since the Occupation, although the republic has been free to manage her own affairs, she has consulted frequently with the State Department in Washington.

Nineteen years of occupation ended the century of Haitian isolation. The Americans built roads, conducted health campaigns, made their presence felt even in remote hamlets and valleys. American authors, political, romantic, and sensational, discovered the Antillean republic. Steamship companies stopped their cruises for a few hours at Cap-Haïtien to allow tourists to visit the Citadel, and at Port-au-Prince to see the sights of the capital. Every Haitian now realizes that there is a world outside.

Whatever crises have arisen in Haitian affairs, certain problems have persisted. For whom do they constitute a source of worry? Since the government has always been a dictatorship, limited or absolute, subject to no party control, the incumbents of office have never had the experience of being constantly reminded by their opponents of the misery or daily worries of the population. After a hundred years the people have learned that relief is not to be expected from politicians. Occasionally a dramatic revolutionary leader has persuaded some of the people that the officials in power were responsible for their distress, and so worked up a following; yet even when such movements succeeded, the masses never benefited. To most governments of the past century Haiti's problem has been only one: to frustrate insurrection. There is evidence that recent administrations have busied themselves assiduously with the country's internal problems, although none of them has been adequately solved. The élite, at least as a group, do not feel any apparent responsibility for the maladjustments, nor obligation to effect the necessary reforms. A few patriots, and those almost without exception not in office, know what ails the country and say so; a smaller number propose reasonable solutions. The problems remain. Of these the three outstanding are overpopulation with all its accompanying ills, health, and education.

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So it had been with the subject peoples of the island ever since its discovery. The Spaniards introduced a wide variety of European diseases to Española (an epidemic of smallpox in 1500 was estimated to have killed 200,000 Indians in the island) which did not disappear as the Indians gave way to Negroes. Three centuries of the slave trade brought blacks from many parts of Africa, and with them most of the deadliest plagues of that continent. During the flourishing days of French control over Saint-Domingue, Negro slaves were afflicted by a wide variety of diseases, the commonest being yaws, tetanus, intestinal worms, malaria, leprosy, smallpox, and scrofula, although others were certainly not absent. Only to yellow fever, probably brought with them from Africa, did the blacks seem to develop a certain immunity. Most plantations had a doctor in attendance, but medical skill during the eighteenth century was not advanced enough to cope successfully with scourges whose cause was then unknown.

After freedom there were fewer doctors than ever, less sanitation, and a worse diet. When a person was ill, his one alternative to suffering the disease to take its course was to consult the Vodun priest, for the commonly accepted explanation of disease was a spiritual one. If God (that is, the Christian God) had sent the illness, nothing could be done except to bear it, for God's will was unalterable; if it were the result of magic worked by some enemy, the identity of that enemy and the magical means used must be ferreted out so that countermagic might be employed. Vodun practitioners were, indeed, quite as important in their rôle of healing as in performing strictly religious rites. In the course of their efforts to cure disease they often stumbled upon homely but effective cures; no doubt also the mental effect of the patient's faith sometimes helped him to recover, even when the medicines administered had no specific value.

The "triple threat" to Haitian health is the morbid group: malaria, hookworm, and yaws. The first two are familiar enough in parts of the United States, and require only short comment. For centuries malaria has sapped the vitality of people in southern lands, giving them a reputation for indolence which is not wholly deserved. Haitian peasants were during the entire nineteenth century accused of laziness; when a strapping man lay all day in the shade of a tree, it was logical enough for a white visitor to suppose that he was willfully loafing. The critics might have been more temperate if they had known what it was to be perpetually full of malaria, with a body

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871 no longer peasants. What good would a literary education do them? Yet those who have advocated a technical or practical curriculum have been met with a perfect storm of opposition. Such training would, it has been argued, merely augment and perpetuate the social stratification of the country; moreover, since no Haitian élite have been technically trained nor had any desire to be, the teaching of the whole rural mass would have to be in the hands of aliens—white Americans, more than likely. Once again, it is a matter of [875] current attitudes: the rural teacher keen to rise out of the masses into the upper class would, if the curriculum were technical, be required to abandon the gratifying display of his literary knowledge, and devote his talents instead to the manual skills from which he had been trying to escape.

871 875 It is hardly necessary to mention the insuperable problem of training the teachers and persuading them to dedicate their lives to rural education: to live away from the amenities of urban life, at a minute salary, among an ignorant peasantry. Only the devotion of rare patriots would prompt such complete self-sacrifice, even if the government had a tithe of the funds necessary for educating teachers for their jobs and paying them a living wage.

175 871 A glance at Haitian history will also help to explain the sorry state of education. In 1804, of course, there was not a single school in the country, and Dessalines was too much preoccupied with other affairs to give the matter a thought; besides, being illiterate himself, he may well have thought learning unimportant, or at least, embarrassing. Both Christophe and Pétion showed an exemplary zeal for education, although the results accomplished by them seem small enough. They were both impressed by the Lancasterian method then in vogue in England, and modeled the few schools they sponsored upon it. Christophe, always an Anglophile, established five "*grandes écoles nationales*" at Cap-Henry, Port-de-Paix, Sans Souci, Gonaïves, and Saint-Marc, with English masters at the head of each.[22] Pétion established at Port-au-Prince a Lycée Haïtien in 1816, and assigned an "instructeur" in every parish. The curriculum of the Lycée—ancient and modern languages, rhetoric, logic, ethics, elements of mathematics, ancient and modern history, geography, and drawing—is an indication of the limited scope of the program. It was purely

22. Placide Justin, *Histoire politique et statistique de l'île d'Hayti, Saint-Domingue*, pp. 534–535.

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for the élite, and was purely cultural. By 1828 there were lower schools in six towns of the country, but only one higher school in the whole of Haiti.[13] 175 871

A report on the condition of education in 1842 showed that the Lycée still existed, its curriculum now limited to French, English, Spanish, Latin, mathematics, composition, history, and fencing.[14] Only 150 students were enrolled. By 1843 there were eleven secondary schools. The question was even raised whether Boyer's failure to promote education during the twenty-five tranquil years of his rule might not have been deliberate, on the principle that it is easier to govern ignorance than knowledge.[15] Actually, however, there was little pressure for education, and so Boyer did nothing.

Geffrard more than any other president of the nineteenth century encouraged education, with the result that almost 20,000 children received some kind of schooling. The census of 1875 made the following estimates:[16]

4 lyceums	with	543 pupils	[162]
6 girls' high schools		563	
5 girls' secondary schools		350	
165 primary schools		11,784	
200 rural schools		5,939	
1 medical school		25	
1 school of music		46	
Total		19,250 pupils	

To these must be added a few pupils in private schools and in the recently established Catholic schools of the Frères de l'Instruction Chrétienne and the Sisters of Cluny. [797]

Toward the turn of the century, when reformers were writing books while the whole country seemed to be slowly dying under its stupid presidents, many a proposal was made which hit squarely upon the need of education and the necessity of a specifically practical curriculum. Joseph Justin[17] urged technical training by experts, and many others hammered away at the same idea. A small sum

13. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti*, I, 83, 120–122, 158.
14. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 74 ff.
15. Mark B. Bird, *The Black Man* (New York, 1869), p. 140.
16. Cited by Sir Spenser St. John, *Hayti, or The Black Republic*, p. 293.
17. *Étude sur les institutions haïtiennes* (Paris, 1894–95), 2 vols.

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175 871 was put into the national budget to be used for schools, but it seems generally to have been used as a fund for presidential patronage. There were even "school teachers" who could not read, but were nevertheless paid a regular monthly stipend. The principal of the Lycée at Gonaïves could neither read nor write, the music teacher there knew not a note of music, and the medical director could not name the simplest drugs.[18] Dantès Bellegarde, one of Haiti's notable intellectuals, as a minister under Nord Alexis (1902–8) made definite proposals which, had they been carried out, would have gone far toward effecting a radical reform. Minister again under Oreste (1913–14), he succeeded in building up an educational fund, but before he could spend it properly Oreste was deposed and the money used by his successor, Zamor, for military purposes.[19]

175 87 By 1915, before the Occupation began, the country had about 730 public schools. Of these, 6 gave advanced courses in medicine, law, applied science, and commerce; 10 offered a secondary classical education; 8 were special secondary boys' schools; and 15 were special secondary girls' schools. The teachers all got their training in Haiti, and the curricula and methods were almost entirely French.[20] Bellegarde had divided the country into 14 school districts, and by 1919 the official figures showed the following enrollment:[21]

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387 elementary rural schools	with	21,960 pupils
206 elementary urban schools		13,881
105 presbyterial schools		4,836
49 mixed private schools		825
29 Catholic girls' schools		5,141
8 Catholic boys' schools		2,576
10 mixed popular schools		1,009
2 girls' professional schools		133
1 manual training school		555
60 national high schools		2,012
Private elementary schools		5,481
Private high schools		2,904
Total		61,313 pupils

18. See Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 276.
19. Dantès Bellegarde, *Pour une Haïti heureuse* (Port-au-Prince, 1929), pp. 100 ff.
20. Dantès Bellegarde, *Un Haïtien parle*, p. 31.
21. *Livre bleu d'Haïti*, 1919–20 (Port-au-Prince, 1920), pp. 21–22.

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These figures seem moderately impressive by comparison with those of 1875; but a government report of 1931 states[22] that of the 361 rural schools visited by investigators, 89 had no seats for their pupils, and 157 had only from one to three benches; 122 had neither desks nor tables upon which the pupils might work; 341 had no maps. Of the total number of 977 benches found in all the rural schools, 303 were almost unusable, and of the 26 maps in existence, 13 were entirely beyond use. Of the 355 teachers examined, 257 could not read, and 278 could not add, subtract, multiply, or divide. The average monthly salary was 32.07 gourdes, or $6.21. Of the 17,679 pupils enrolled in rural schools, only 4,022 attended. In this same report President Vincent claims to have made a radical reform in all these matters. His rural teachers are trained, many of them at the government agricultural school at Damien; school equipment has been distributed; salaries have been raised to 65 gourdes, or $13.

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The American Occupation showed itself keen to assist education, but unintentionally the measures taken by the whites ran afoul of politics to a serious degree. The excellent agricultural experiment school at Damien was filled with élite students who attended it, in the opinion of many, chiefly in order to receive the scholarships offered; moreover, the class question was raised and bitterly argued: Should peasant students live and study with the élite, and should the curriculum be the same for both? Finally, education was one of the few matters not specifically included in the treaty between Haiti and the United States as under American direction. The result was unhappy: the Occupation was accused of setting up a rival educational "system" to that of the government. Even Bellegarde, most of whose ideas the Americans were trying to carry out, found himself in opposition, chiefly as a result of methods and political implications involved.

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If only the budget of the country could be increased, one feels that the rural educational problem might be dealt with, for more and more people are aware of what education might do for the country. Even so, there are still many élite who betray their fear that with education the masses will desert the land and cease to be subservient.

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That the élite, who in fact control the country, should receive a training which would fit them for technical skills is a proposal often

22. "*L'Oeuvre d'éducation rurale du gouvernement du Président Vincent*" (Imprimerie de l'État, Port-au-Prince, 1936).

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197 a language into their daily speech. What the Americans have done to English, the Haitians in general have done to Créole. It is pertinent briefly to review the early history of Créole in order to comprehend the distinctly Haitian contributions to the language.

175 579 Through most of the seventeenth century Caribbean waters were full of pirates and buccaneers preying upon Spanish shipping. The effective monopoly which lordly Spain held in the preceding century over the trade of Europe with her rich Mexican and South American colonies began, in the early years of the new century, to crumble before the ingenious, speedy, and daring assaults of non-Spanish raiders. French, Dutch, and English sailors were all ready to try their hand at capturing laden Spanish ships. The rich cargoes of gold, silver, and merchandise were alluring enough to make the risk seem worth taking. And indeed the risk was not too great, for Spain's stately galleons were antiquated and cumbersome, generally no match for the flyboats[1] which had speed and much greater manageability. More and more Spanish control over the Caribbean, the Spanish Main, declined as the freebooters increased.

175 579 648 French sailors were among the most numerous and reckless of the gadflies who made life miserable for the Spanish traders. Drawn from the northern and northwestern provinces of France, these men had been seafarers all their lives. Harrying Spanish shipping was the most lucrative career for French sailors, and as the seventeenth century wore on their numbers in the Caribbean increased. By 1660 they had established a raiding base on La Tortue, an island off the northern coast of Haiti, where they developed a characteristic way of life —economic, political, and social—between raids.[2] Their presence near Haiti gave France a claim, in the Treaty of Ryswick (1697), to the western part of the island. For the next hundred years this region was to be known as Saint-Domingue.

175 579 197 Créole was born of buccaneering. In the seventeenth century the French of Île-de-France had not yet supplanted the dialects of the French districts; the buccaneers consequently spoke their native speech, and since Norman sailors far outnumbered the others

[175] [192] 1. Origin of "flibustier," "filibuster," and "freebooter."

2. It was here that they came to be called "buccaneers." They raided the relatively deserted main island of Haiti (then still under Spanish control) for cattle roaming wild. These cattle they cooked over an open fire, with a certain kind of wood; the process was called "boucanning," and they themselves "boucaniers." They imported wives from the seaport towns of Normandy, and families began to be raised on La Tortue.

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Norman French became the dominant tongue of the French buccaneers. Words were naturally added from the patois of the neighboring French provinces of Picardy, Brittany, and Anjou, but Norman remained the matrix.[3] With La Tortue as their home base, the buccaneers roamed the Caribbean, coming into constant contact with other people—contact which left its mark, as meetings generally do, upon the speech of the travelers.

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There were still Indians left in some of the islands, and Indians outnumbered Spaniards on the mainland. From these aborigines Créole borrowed many individual words, these being generally the names of things—flora and fauna, food, objects of daily life more or less common throughout the Caribbean world.[4] The grammatical contributions of the Indians were apparently only an emphasis upon tendencies already present in Norman French, such as that of keeping the verb form constant while making other words in the sentence do the work of indicating past, present, or future, continuous or completed action, and the like.

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Engaged in buccaneering with the French were hundreds of English privateers. Often English and French raided in partnership; for many years both groups shared La Tortue. This contact left a heavy mark upon Créole—a congenial one, indeed, for Norman French had been for more than four centuries the official language of England. Now in the seventeenth century English was giving back to Norman many words in exchange for the ones it had taken.[5] More important than its verbal gift, however, was the influence it exerted toward a simple syntax. As compared with French forms,

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3. An outstanding linguist, Jules Faine, in *Philologie créole*, p. 1, estimates that three out of four words in Créole are Norman.

4. A very few of these Indian words have become familiar in French, and still fewer in English; but one finds most of them, in one form or another, in the whole Caribbean basin. Examples are:

agouti, a small rodent	*hamac*, hammock
atoutou, a dish whose base is corn	*ouragan*, hurricane
caiman, alligator	*bayahonde*, a very hard wood
iguane, a large lizard	*campêche*, another hard wood
avocat, the avocado pear	*mabouya*, small lizard
calebasse, calabash	*barbaco*, barbecue
corossol, a green prickly fruit	*cassava*, a starch plant
gouyave, guava	*lambi*, a mollusk or conch
igname, yam	*tom-tom*, a purée of bananas

5. Henry Moiry, *Glossaire comparatif Anglo-Normand* (Caen, 1888), points out that the modern Norman dialect contains more than 5,000 words common to English and Norman, but not recognized in official French.

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175 Norman ones were less complicated; English, simpler still, reënforced the Norman tendency.

From the Spaniards of the Caribbean region Créole borrowed not only nouns (generally the most assimilable of words), but a large number of adjectives, pronouns, auxiliary verbs, and certain subtler characteristics of speech.

This amalgam, then, three quarters Norman French, was the Créole language as of 1697 when France acquired Saint-Domingue, when buccaneering became unprofitable, and many of the filibusters settled down to begin a respectable life as plantation owners in the new colony. African slaves were soon imported to satisfy the demand for labor. First a few, then thousands a year and increasing thousands, were brought to Saint-Domingue. In all externalities, of which language is one, slaves must yield up their old ways and take on new. The question of interest here is to what extent the Negroes influenced Créole, giving it an "African" character.

The answer, surprising at first, is that the Negro influence was almost negligible.

In the first place, Créole was now already a language with a rich vocabulary, all the grammatical equipment, and the necessary regularities. The slaves came to the colony from all parts of Africa, and so with widely differing languages. Linguistic maps of Africa indicate the presence of hundreds of dialects up and down the west coast; tribes living fifteen miles apart spoke languages which, although belonging to the same stock, were as different as Spanish and Italian from each other. Owing to the habit of dispersing the slaves, the average Negro had no common basis of understanding with his fellow slaves on the same plantation. Practically all white foremen and overseers gave orders in Créole; this within one generation became the *lingua franca* of the plantations, an economic necessity, and socially indispensable.

In the second place, there was in Saint-Domingue no equivalent to the familiar objects of life in Africa. Trees, houses, earth there were, of course, but different kinds of trees, houses, and soil. Economic tasks were performed in a different manner with new techniques and organization. Every outward form of life was foreign to the African background. Even assuming that there had been a common Negro speech, it would have found little to attach itself to in the New World. It should be noted that Negroes likewise made few contribu-

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tions to the English language in the southern United States, where they were slaves for seventy years longer than in Haiti.

Common African economic ways yielded to the plantation system and slavery; the Negroes had no opportunity to govern themselves or settle their own disputes; they mated rather than married; their families might be broken up if the master wished to sell a slave. The one part of life in which they were permitted to follow unhindered their African ways was the intimate one of religion which, since it needed no buildings or organization, did not interfere with work, and could be entirely personal and private, was not suppressed. As has been pointed out, the Dahomean form of religion prevailed over all others and, modified, gained wide adherence among the slaves. It is precisely in Vodun that Créole has taken over its only important African words, such as Vodun, zombi, houngan, marassa, loa, houmfort, bocor, ouanga.

It would be erroneous to imply that the Negroes had no effect upon the language of which they soon became the predominant users.[6] Their operations were of a subtle sort, however. As with the Negroes of the United States, the letter "r" proved difficult, and often disappeared altogether, leaving many words softly slurred. "Marcher," for example, generally sounds as if it were *ma'ché*. Likewise in the course of years they gave the language their own accent, their own modulation and tone, which make Créole sound different on their lips from a white man's way of speaking it. Some scholars attribute this to a *racial* influence—that is, to the morphology of the Negro throat and tongue. It might be pointed out to the contrary that Americans, white like the English, have given the mother tongue *their* own accent, modulation, and tone. It has certainly not yet been proved that race has anything to do with speech.

Words in imitation of a sound grow up in every language. Several western African dialects, especially Mandingue, seemed fond of onomatopoeia; in Haiti, consequently, one hears many an expressive additional word. Moreau de Saint-Méry[7] noticed this in colonial Saint-Domingue, citing such cases as the addition of "*bap*" to the verb "*tomber*," if one had fallen down lightly, or "*boum*" if heavily;

6. Suzanne Sylvain, *Le Créole haïtien* (Wetteren, Belgium, 1936), p. 10, says that although the African contribution to Haitian Créole is generally considered to be slight, she has personally found 170 words of undeniable African origin, and feels sure that there are many more.

7. *Description . . . de . . . Saint-Domingue*, II, 36–37.

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175 192 if a blow were given on the face the word "*pimme*" was added to the verb describing that blow, but if a stick had been used, "*bimme*" was added, and if a whip, then "*v'lap v'lap*."

175 193 One of the Negro contributions which gives a delightful charm to the language is the principle of doubling, whether the word is adjective, adverb, verb, or pronoun. Faine cites the following examples:

ioun bel, bel femme—an extraordinarily beautiful woman.
li té bien, bien malade—he was very gravely ill.
li marcher, l'marcher, l'marcher—he kept on walking and walking.
li-minme, li-minme—it is really he himself.[8]

175 538 Still another and very important Negro contribution is the wealth of proverbs. A person may say practically anything he chooses in proverbs, particularly if he uses to its fullest the significant tones of which his voice is capable. As many as 1,500 of these proverbs have been collected, and there is reason to believe that as many more could be found.[9] In general they say the same things proverbs say in any language:

Fer couper fer. Il faut du fer pour couper le fer; which is to signify, "Great needs demand great remedies."

Tit cochon tit sang. Un petit cochon a peu de sang; that is, "From each according to his means."

Sel pas besoin vanter tête li. Le sel n'a pas besoin de se vanter; or, "Real merit never needs to boast."

Since some of the proverbs make allusions to elephants and tigers, animals not found in the Caribbean region, it is clear that these at least, and maybe others, go far back in the wisdom of the folk.

538 Storytelling is a well-cultivated art in Haiti. The folklore of Créole is rich, some of it bearing close resemblance to the Negro tales current in the southern United States, particularly the Br'er Rabbit tales. When a group gathers and a story is about to begin, the teller says, "Cric?"—as if to say, "Shall I tell you a story?" or, "Are you ready?" To this his listeners reply, "Crac!"—or, "Please do! Certainly!" or, "We are listening." The two words together make a sort of rapport between raconteur and audience, an overture, "Once upon a time."

8. Faine, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

9. J. J. Audain, *Proverbes* (Port-au-Prince, 1877), cites 1,011 Haitian proverbs in Créole, and E. Chenet, *Proverbes créoles* (Port-au-Prince, 1896), records 1,456 proverbs.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Only a beginning has been made of collecting the thousands of "Cric? Crac!" stories current in Haiti.

It is only recently that people have written Créole, so that there is no standard orthography. Every writer spells words phonetically, with consequent irregularities, and with wide differences between two people writing the same thing. Recent etymological studies may lead eventually to a dictionary and a standard spelling. In order that the reader may see the resemblance of Créole to French, yet its differences from that language, we shall quote a part of one of La Fontaine's fables put into Créole verse by Georges Sylvain.[10] His own French retranslation accompanies the fable, turning such phrases as "female pig" into "sow."

Nan temps toutt bett té palé,	*Au temps où toutes les bêtes parlaient,*
Té g'ain (palant pa respé)	*Il y avait (sauf votre respect)*
Té g'ain gnou fémel cochon.	*Il y avait une truie.*
Zott connin gen cochon bon?	*Vous savez comme les truies sont bonnes gens?*
Cila-là té fait zammi	*Celle-ci avait fait amitié*
Avec gnou fémel chien, qui	*Avec une chienne, qui*
Té prett pou mi bas. Chien-là,	*Était sur le point de mettre bas. La chienne*
Gnou jou, dit cochon con ça:	*Un jour, dit à la truie:*
"Moin pré pou moin accouché,	*"Me voilà près d'accoucher,*
"Ma conmé, t'en pri! souplé,	*"Ma commère, je vous en prie, s'il vous plaît,*
"Pémett moin prêté gnou coin	*"Permettez-moi d'emprunter un coin*
"Nan pac ou, pou pititt moin."	*"De votre parc, pour mes enfants."*[11]

The terseness of the language is fascinating, a situation is hit off precisely in a few words: a stuffed shirt has been deflated, and the truth has been told. A Haitian was heard to say, "Nègue riche li mulatte; mulatte pauvre li nègue"—a rich Negro is accounted a mulatto; a poor mulatto is to all intents and purposes no better than a Negro. And there is a profound comment on the whole caste system.

Wherever the French went in the Caribbean region the Créole language spread—in Louisiana, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Guiana. Each region has its own peculiarities, but in general it may be said that these other regions show much more French (as distinct from Norman) influence on Créole, and much less Spanish and English influence. Similarly in Haitian towns, where the élite speak French

10. *Cric? Crac! Fables de La Fontaine racontées par un montagnard haïtien et traduites en vers créoles* (Port-au-Prince, 1929), p. 21.

11. "Zott" means "*vous autres*"; "*gnou*" is "*une*."

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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175 178 This was the situation in Haiti after 1791, and especially after 1804. The boundary walls of a slave economy, carefully built by the French in the eighteenth century and scrupulously guarded by all the whites, were smashed. The constricted limits in which Negro life had moved during slavery now ceased to exist as a channel. For years there was an unceasing effort on the part of Haitian leaders to give a new direction to the life of the blacks, but all those leaders (except Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe) found it more discreet, more congenial, even more logical, to follow the tide rather than to try to stem and direct it.

Between 1791 and 1804, then, the retaining walls of the old economic and political institutions disappeared. The next forty years were ones of experiment in stabilizing a new set of social institutions.[1] Efforts to make the new social structure efficient, orderly, progressive, all failed; by mid-century the undramatic and unconsciously exerted pressure of daily behavior on the part of hundreds of thousands of untutored Negroes gave Haitian institutions their new and recognizable character. The presidents thereafter rarely attempted serious reform in these institutions; on the contrary, they generally tried only to make use of them for their own personal benefit. The Haiti of 1860 was radically different from the Haiti of 1791–1804, while 1915 closely resembled 1860. Only since the Occupation by American Marines has the process of change begun to accelerate again.

Most adjustments arrived at by a whole society occur unconsciously. Great leaders may suggest new ways for a nation to follow which break with the past and are clearly more progressive and rational than the old ways, but it is the people who eventually accept or reject the novelty. They perform, as people always and continuously do, an act of unconscious, automatic selection upon the variations, eliminating this one and adopting that for reasons often apparently irrational or prejudiced. The result of such a steady process of selection is a recognizable group of folkways and mores which make Haitian culture, for instance, distinguishable from the culture of other near-by islands, Cuba or Jamaica, for example.

It is not always a great man who suggests a variation in the folkways and mores, nor yet even an important personage like a cabinet

1. The term "social institution" is here used to mean a consistent pattern of folkways and mores clustering about a fundamental human interest.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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minister or an outstanding intellectual. Variations are frequently (some even say generally) mere casual accidents, surprising inspirations of the moment. The changes which have come over the face of the Vodun religion are examples: in almost no instance can the additions or emendations be traced back to their originators, yet Vodun is clearly different now from what it was in Boyer's time. Just as no one knows who initiates a change in the folkway of language, coining a slang phrase, modifying a pronunciation, so the makers of most variations in folkways and mores are anonymous. 175 178 [771]

Given infinite time and patience, one might compile a list of mores in any country, beginning first with those which require absolute conformity from all persons, and running down to those which express social ideals but which may nevertheless be honored in the breach. In our own country, the mores condemning incest and cannibalism are not only our rules but our unanimous practice; and if a person breaks either we punish him severely. At the other end of our list are those mores requiring truthfulness and honor. In calling these American mores we pay homage to an ideal—and then tell our white lies as a part of the observance of social amenities, or make our "shrewd" business deals in order to get on in the world. For neither of these breaches of the mores is there any concerted social punishment; on the contrary, we have been known to praise those who broke them. In describing the culture of a society, therefore, it is necessary to report both the mores as ideal and the mores as practice.

The larger and more complex a society becomes, the fewer the mores shared in common by all members of that society. In a small colonial American village, isolated from much contact with strangers, the whole population was bound by scores of mores touching all phases of life. In modern America, on the contrary, if one should consider American society as a whole it would probably be difficult to find a dozen mores shared commonly by us all, or if shared, exerting the same force to conformity. We have had to develop a measure of tolerance with our 130 million neighbors, a live-and-let-live principle which has been aptly called "antagonistic coöperation." 184

Each district in Haiti, in the effective isolation of illiteracy and sedentary life, has developed its own characteristic mores, of which a limited number correspond with those of other Haitian districts. It is these general correspondences which have been treated in this book. Within each district, likewise, there is the usual hierarchy of rules

3: Leyburn Z.-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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[p. 315]

NOTES

CHAPTER II

The period between 1789 and 1803 may be summarized as follows: 175

1789–1791. Struggle for precedence between whites and free colored people, with the balance in favor of the whites. [585]

1791–1793. The slave insurrection, with consequent anarchy, and futile attempts of French commissioners to restore order. Both whites and colored people pushed into the background. [669] [563]

1793–1796. Invasion of the colony by English and Spanish; rise of the mulatto general Rigaud and the black general Toussaint. [648]

1796–1799. Consolidation of power by Toussaint; defeat and expulsion of Rigaud; emigration of whites. [643]

1799–1802. Toussaint in full power as governor-general.

1802–1803. Leclerc's expedition, with its initial successes and ultimate failure. Final achievement of Haitian independence under Dessalines and Christophe. [642]

PART III

Various efforts were made by American abolitionists working with Haitian presidents to colonize freed American Negro slaves in Haiti in the period before the Civil War.[1] All these projects came to unfortunate ends, some even to grimly tragic ones. During Boyer's time about 13,000 American Negroes went to Haiti, the government assigning to each family a portion of land upon its arrival. Very shortly most of those who could afford it returned to this country, and within ten years hardly one was still living upon the land. An American writer, Hunt, says that during his seventeen years in Haiti (before 1860) he had known of but 13 Negroes from America who had been moderately successful; of these, 7 were merchants or traders, 4 mechanics, and 2 lawyers; and all were mulattoes. Five others were barely independent, and all the rest were day laborers or worse. In spite of this, Hunt planned another aided migration of American Negroes to Haiti. Warning them not to expect too much in the way of improvements in agriculture, he adds a significant paragraph: "Should the immigrant obtain quiet possession of unoccupied lands, and begin to use the plough instead of the hoe, his new methods of culture would be likely to draw upon him the jealousy and ill-will of his neighbors. For when new ways are too new to be accepted as an example, they are very apt to be felt and resented as a rebuke. More than one of Boyer's old immigrants have told me that they were obliged to give up agriculture and take to trading in towns, on account of annoyances of this sort. They found their fences down, or their water let off, of a morning; or evidences that cattle had been fed on their grounds over night; or the neighboring idlers, of which there are many, had stolen all their plantains and sweet potatoes, for for the market. I do not mean to say that here Haytian cultivators are worse than any other rude people. On the contrary, I

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1. An excellent description of these projects is found in L. L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938* (Durham, 1940), chap. IV.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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believe they are less bad than many others in like circumstances. For not having great strength of character, they have neither great virtues nor great vices. The English farmers, Birkbeck and Flower, encountered similar troubles, and worse, when, forty years ago [that is, between 1820 and 1830], they brought over their English habits, and settled down with them among our farmers in Illinois."[2]

Montague sums up the general fate of American Negroes who migrated to Haiti by saying that some were exploited by the élite (who treated their own blacks in the same fashion), others persecuted by resentful peasant neighbors, and still others, who had expected manna to fall from the Haitian heaven, simply disillusioned at having to work, and so lost heart.[3]

CHAPTER XII

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The following table of the presidents of Haiti summarizes in general the shifting political fortunes of the country. Those presidents who belonged to the élite caste are designated with an asterisk (*). It will be noted that the presidency has generally been in the hands of men from three departments: the North, where Negroes are predominant even among the leaders; the South, always a stronghold of the mulattoes; and the West, where the capital, Port-au-Prince, is located. The Department of the Northwest has never had a president, and the Artibonite only three. The color of the presidents is indicated.

Heads of State	*Color*	*Dates*	*Department*
1. Dessalines	Black	1804–6	North
2. Christophe	Black	1807–20	North
2. *Pétion	Light	1807–18	West
3. *Boyer	Light	1818–43	West
4. *Rivière-Hérard	Light	1843–44	South
5. Guerrier	Black	1844–45	Artibonite
6. Pierrot	Black	1845–46	North
7. Riché	Black	1847–47	North
8. Soulouque	Black	1847–59	West
9. *Geffrard	Dark	1859–67	South
10. *Salnave	Dark	1867–69	North
11. *Nissage-Saget	Light	1870–74	Artibonite
*12. Domingue	Dark	1874–76	South
13. *Boisrond-Canal	Light	1876–79	South
14. Salomon	Black	1879–88	South
15. Légitime	Black	1888–89	South
16. *Hyppolite	Black	1889–96	North
17. Simon Sam	Black	1896–1902	North
18. Nord Alexis	Black	1902–8	North
19. Simon	Black	1908–11	South
20. Leconte	Dark	1911–12	North

2. Benjamin S. Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans*, pp. 14, 11.
3. Op. cit., pp. 71–72.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Heads of State	*Color*	*Dates*	*Department*
21. Auguste	Light	1912–13	North
22. Oreste	Dark	1913–14	West
23. Zamor	Dark	1914	Artibonite
24. Théodore	Black	1914–15	North
25. Guillaume Sam	Black	1915	North
26. *Dartiguenave	Light	1915–22	South
27. *Borno	Light	1922–30	West
28. *Roy	Light	1930	West
29. *Vincent	Light	1930–41	West
30. *Lescot	Light	1941–	North

Summarizing this table, it can be seen that of the 31 heads of state only 13 have definitely belonged to the élite group. A few of the others might, by stretching the category, be regarded as members of this group. These 13, however, have governed for a total of 87 years, as compared with a rule of only 64 years by the representatives of the army clique. (It will be remembered that from 1807 to 1820 Haiti was separated and so had two heads of state.)

There have been 14 Negro rulers, 11 mulatto presidents, and 6 presidents who had at least a slight degree of white blood.

Of the 31, 13 represented the North (Christophe is included in this number, although he was born on the island of St. Christopher, from which he took his name); 8 came from the South; 7 from the West; 3 from the Artibonite; and none from the Northwest. The Northerners were in control of the government for 42 years; Southerners for 32 years; Westerners for 69 years; and the Artibonite presidents for less than 6 years.

CHAPTER XIV

1. *Taxation*

The formative period of Haitian history, it is now evident, was between 1807 and 1820, when the young country was offered two sets of policies, generally opposed, to choose between: Pétion's and Christophe's. It is likewise clear that, since Pétion's required less discipline and self-restraint, and the country became remained under Pétion's adoring secretary, Boyer, the easier path of Pétion was the one generally followed.

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This choice is abundantly clear in the matter of taxation. Although the civil war between the two rulers was draining his treasury, Pétion either did not care or did not dare to tax his people. He relied rather upon heavy duties on trade in his ports, thus embarrassing commerce and taking away much of the profit from coffee. Christophe, on the other hand, without a scruple got millions by a tax on production amounting to one quarter of the annual crops of his kingdom;[4] consequently commerce in the North was free and that part of the island busy with prosperous trade. Christophe also taxed his nobles, charging a heavy fee for a patent of nobility, and also receiving annually a fourth of the crops raised upon their estates.

4. Copied from the practice of Toussaint and Dessalines.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 Boyer carried on Pétion's policy of no taxation. It was not until the American
651 Occupation that Haitians could be said to be taxed. Ninety per cent of the state's
[652] income between 1900 and 1915 regularly came from tariffs, and only ten per cent from internal taxes. Even the efforts of the Americans, resulting in the laws of 1924 and 1928, were on the whole restricted to a few excise taxes. A land tax was hopeless, due to the utter confusion of titles and the stubborn impassivity of peasant squatters.[5]

2. *Monetary Policy of Pétion and Boyer*

175 The monetary situation in Haiti was chaotic in its early days. The gold money
652 of France, Spain, England, and the United States circulated, as did small French coins, and the coins and paper money created by the Haitian rulers, who had complete control over money. For example, Pétion decreed[6] an increase in the value of the *gourde d'Espagne* from 8 livres 5 sols, to 9 livres; of the French *écu* of 6 francs from 9 livres to 9 livres 15 sols; and the 5 franc écu from 7 livres 10 sols to 8 livres 5 sols; this almost doubled the value of money in circulation. He also struck small coins to replace the pieces of 30, 24, 15, 12, and 6 sols of France. His small coins were merely token money.[7] The paper currency created by Pétion and so easily counterfeited has been mentioned.

[433] Boyer was continually in financial perplexities. Production was declining while expenditures had to be radically increased on account of the settlement with France in 1825. Boyer's budget was not a large one judged by modern standards, the average expenditure each year being about $5,000,000. To meet this, customs duties on imports and exports brought in about $2,200,000 annually; territorial duties on produce, houses, patents or licenses, market fees, and the like, a similar
[316] sum; but some half-million dollars had to be borrowed each year. The government hoped to get something from developing mines in the Spanish part of the island,
[425] but this hope failed. It was thought also that the sale of government lands might bring in some revenue, but few people wanted to invest money, when they had it,
[454] in land, with agricultural affairs developing as they were and no way of making
[465] people work: investment in trade was more promising. The national treasury was so empty that both the civil and military officials were poorly paid. It was fre-
[661] quently said that almost all administrators and persons in authority were open to bribery. Meantime the number of civil servants was increasing: there was a swarm
[647] of hirelings and subalterns in every commune, like a host of vampires. By their lack of honesty, conscientiousness, and efficiency, immense sums were lost annually to the treasury.

5. See the *Report of the American High Commissioner* (1929), p. 19.

6. May 4, 1808.

7. *Pétion voyant s'échapper de ses États les gourdes qu'effrayaient ses démêlés avec Christophe, eut pour les retenir l'ingénieuse idée d'y pratiquer une trouée. Ce moyen était trop efficace pour ne pas réussir, et il était trop simple pour que l'emploi n'en fut pas généralisé au moins par un équivalent. Ainsi, lorsqu'il en vint à battre monnaie, le chef de l'état du Sud descendit le titre de sa gourde à peu près au titre de la gourde espagnole tarée par son compatriote. Il lui donne 838 millièmes de fin.*" Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, II, 194.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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3. *Pétion, Boyer, and Inginac as Administrators*

Pétion lived very simply in the South, like a plain republican magistrate. He sat on his piazza, accessible to all his people. He had a quiet way of answering his opponents which did not make enemies of them. He made his secretary answer every letter that arrived, no matter how small; many were simply inquiries about the President's health. Yet the wars between Pétion and Christophe dragged on from 1807 to 1812,[8] draining the finances of the republic. Not only the crops declined: so also did most of the public improvements instituted by the colonial planters; so did trade; so did habits of industry. Everything seemed to conspire against hard work. The rich plains of the Cul-de-Sac and the Artibonite Valley were ravaged by fire and warfare; necessary equipment for sugar making was destroyed, the money for new machines and buildings was unavailable; and the men were drawn away from their land by military duties.

Inginac, Boyer's secretary of state, after the Revolution of 1843 had got rid of both the President and his secretary, wrote his memoirs. There are some revealing passages. Inginac reports that Pétion told him only forty days before his death that Boyer was a man of probity and delicacy, "but unhappily he is petulant; he is too set in his ways to conciliate those who might assist him. In everything *he* wants to dominate, and he will bring unhappiness to the country if he does not change." Inginac cites cases to show that Pétion's prophecy was correct. Boyer in 1820 repealed the most unpopular laws, particularly those requiring personal corvée and the repair of public roads; but instead of taking advice from his cabinet on important economic matters, he frequently announced that he was president and would not be run by anybody. Consequently, according to Inginac, he made mistakes which might have been avoided.[9] Defending himself, the former secretary offers a clue to the failure of the régime—possibly unavoidable—by showing that the administration merely suggested, did not require, action:

"Have I not constantly, not only preached and corresponded about the necessity of making agriculture prosperous, but also given work at as high wages as the treasury could afford? Have I not created habitations on lands formerly totally uncultivated, putting formerly idle men to work? Have I not published at my own expense, although I directed the National Printery, methods for cultivating tobacco and coffee plants, of which I distributed gratis several thousand copies?"[10]

In spite of all encouragement which the administration could offer, agricultural production continued to decline, while expenses increased, and external trade fell off from a third to a half. The government had to borrow from the banking firm of Lafitte in Paris to find even the interest for

8. Hostilities between the two parts of Haiti ceased about 1812 because of the mutual fear on the part of Christophe and Pétion of Napoleon's ascendancy, and the threat which this constituted to the whole former colony. Their war had ravaged the plantations and removed laborers from the soil. Then came the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain, cutting off many of the supplies which Haiti drew from both countries. There was accordingly an unwritten truce, with no further hostilities. A neutral territory of ten leagues between the boundaries of the two states was tacitly agreed upon: neither army was to enter it. This was the rich plain of Beaucasin, once the garden of the island, now a wilderness.

9. Joseph Balthazar Inginac, *Mémoires* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1843), pp. 32, 34, 38.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

payments due to the French government.

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[For the cultural influences on the slave population of Haiti by the white settlers (who are also Haitian), see categories 178 and 563.]

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[Since the Negro population of Haiti is derived primarily from African stock, data pertinent to the continuation, with modifications, of African cultural traits to fit the Haitian pattern will be found in category 178.]

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

possible to gain a historical perspective of the valley in which 175
our interest centers. As late as 1702, he tells us, only a few individuals were settled there, and these were mainly hunters and herders, since the policy of that day, based on the official belief that the future of the valley lay in using to the full its grazing resources rather than in the development of agriculture, caused all agricultural activity to be prohibited. Two [177] ●
decades later, however, when the cultivation of indigo had been successfully introduced, agricultural development proceeded apace. In 1739, in addition to more than a score of indigo-production centers, the valley boasted of numerous coffee, cotton, and cocoa plantations, and by 1789 was a recognized agricultural region.

But for the fact that the great plantations are no longer 241
there, this aspect of life in Mirebalais has been little changed 178
by revolutions and the abolition of slavery. Indigo, of course, has lost its place as an important product, while maize is now among the most significant crops, as might be looked for in the change from a plantation system to one of small individual ownership which was brought about by Haitian independence. But cotton and sugar-cane are still major crops, and coffee, which grows well on the mountainsides, is largely cultivated.

Moreau de St. Mery, writing in 1789, speaks of the French 175
who peopled the valley as "still showing the traits which 648
marked the early colonials. They are good, frank, brave, and opposed to all coercion." In 1723 "they marched with others from the district of the Artibonite" in an uprising against the arbitrary policies of the French West Indies Company, which Charlevoix, one of the first historians of Haiti, so vividly described.[2] In 1729 and 1736 the folk of Mirebalais defended their eastern frontier against attacks by the neighboring Spaniards; eleven years later one hundred and ten of them helped with the defense of the town of St. Louis, which was menaced by the hostile maneuvers of the British admiral

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

CHAPTER II

WHAT THE SLAVES FOUND IN HAITI

THOUGH by the time of the French Revolution "the immense army of slavery had increased to such proportions that in the face of it the white world seemed reduced to a mere handful of men,"[1] this was by no means the case in the earliest days of the colony of Santo Domingo. As late as 1681 the whites outnumbered the Negroes almost three to one,[2] and it is not until a hundred years later that, in the words of St. Mery, there were "eleven and three tenths slaves for one white."[3]

Yet in the fashioning of the present-day culture of the Haitian peasants, this "mere handful," exerted an influence out of all proportion to its size. That this should have occurred is not strange in view of the relationship between Negroes and whites, which was that between slaves and masters; that it did occur is amply shown in the contemporary accounts of Haitian and West Indian life, which tell us how the Negroes everywhere made conscious efforts to achieve the standards of those who to them represented power, wealth, and position. But while the prestige of the master-class must be acknowledged, care must be taken not to accept uncritically an assumption that has colored many accounts of the lives of primitive peoples who have come into contact with European

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

[History of Haiti in 17th-18th Century
The Haitian white population]

177 cultures — namely, that the traditions and beliefs of these groups cannot withstand the impact of what is termed "civilization." What invariably seems to follow when peoples having differing customs, beliefs, and cultural heritages come into continuous contact is that both give, and each takes. What aspects of the new culture a given people will take, and what in turn they will give, must vary according to the particular historical situation under which the contact occurs. But both 178 processes do go on, and, as will be shown in the case of Haiti, though the Negroes retained much of their African culture, they also freely took over and adapted the customs and behavior of the Europeans among whom they lived.

563 Certain questions, therefore, must be asked about this white element in the population. To what extent was it a unit in its derivation and in its special customs — did its members come from a single social class of the home country, or were all elements of French society represented? What were the patterns of family life, of religion, of economic organization, of morals, which the whites presented to Negro eyes? These are matters of great significance, for one telling factor in the mingling of cultures is the type of carrier through whom contact between civilizations is effected. If, for example, European missionaries or traders or administrators on short tenure and without their families are introduced into an area, a far different picture of European life will be presented to the native from that were immigrant settlers to come among them with their wives and children; and this result, moreover, to seek finer distinctions, will show additional divergencies according to the social position of these migrants. Therefore it is necessary to consider the types of Frenchmen whose modes of living were to influence the behavior which the descendants of their slaves were to perpetuate when these had attained their freedom as individuals and their independence as a nation.

175 The "Corps of Adventurers" who in 1632 comprised the 563 dominant element in the population of Haiti included four

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

tinuation of African cultural traditions was not easy, certain things did persist. While the material facts of the life of the slaves was at once subordinated to European patterns — in dress and implements and to a certain extent in housing, for example[25] — yet in other matters they could live as they had lived in Africa. Thus one account of the time, quoted by de Vassière,[26] tells how the slaves carried on communal hoeing, timing their strokes to the rhythms of songs that begged some favor of their visitor, or to songs of praise (and, when the white observer was not present, undoubtedly also singing songs of derision), in the characteristic African fashion that, as will be seen, has survived in Haitian peasant life to this day. Similarly their traditions of cooking, of eating, of fixing the time for their meals (despite St. Mery's comment that "the Negro has no other rule of eating than the demands of his appetite"), of respect for their elders; their attitudes toward death and their rituals of burial, their dances, their songs, and, above all, their non-Christian religious beliefs, all continued to be stamped with the mark of Africa.[28] On the other hand, opportunities to learn and imitate French customs were by no means neglected, for the prestige of the masters filtered through the ranks of the slaves until it reached even the field-hands, for the nearer in service the Negro was to the person of his master, the more Europeanized was his behavior and the prouder he was and the more he exploited his opportunities to follow European patterns of habit.[29] Not only did the house-servants imitate French dances,[27] but we are told how in Martinique, for example, all the slaves were taught these figures.[30] In the field of religion, also, the efforts of the Church to capitalize the royal edicts which made baptism of the slaves compulsory were far from vain, at least in so far as the outward manifestations of their acceptance of the faith were concerned. Writings of the time, however, do not omit comment on the discouragement of the missionizing Fathers who seriously undertook this task, because too often

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

attitudes of these writers were in the main far from sympathetic toward Haiti, and their interests extended but little to the customs of the great masses of Haitians. That the fear of slavery was still alive in the early part of the nineteenth century is apparent from an incident related by Mackenzie;[44] that, some decades later, the sense of racial differences continued to exist is evident from folk-sayings about the characteristics of whites, mulattoes, and Negroes recorded by St. John.[45] The concept of rank seems to have maintained itself in its full flavor, with no lack of social classes in Haitian urban society and no lack of vigor in perpetuating the earlier prejudices of caste.

The majority of the population remained on the land, for by 1830 the great estates had been completely broken up, and were cultivated in the main by small concessionaires. The dress of these country inhabitants seems to have remained much as it had been under French control, and the emphasis on good manners that so marks African social intercourse had been retained to such an extent that St. John, no admirer of the Haitian people, was forced to remark upon it.[46] Markets which were conducted in African fashion had been established, and these were supplemented by itinerant peddlers. The institution of *plaçage*, a reconciliation of African plural marriage with the monogamy of European custom, of which more will be said in a later chapter, was known in the early days of independence. The rites of birth and death were marked with their special ceremonies, and in both instances it can be seen that the African elements of the cultural heritage were not being forgotten. Dancing continued as the principal form of recreation, and to the traditional dances, which still persist, were added European styles.[47]

Above all, African religious customs were being observed. *Vodun* rites continued to flourish and magic was practiced as in the days preceding independence, as is to be seen from the notorious and all too often repeated tale of the "Congo bean

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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made of key-men in the district informally called *chefs d'esquade*. They have the reputation of being those to whose call a number of men, perhaps a dozen, perhaps two or three times that many, will respond and come to give the aid that is desired. Such a person is given a "bouquet"—a bottle of *clairin*—which insures the appearance of himself and his group on the date set. A *combite* may be held at any time during the week except Sundays, which are dedicated to rest, and Tuesdays (in earlier times Mondays), when tradition holds a person must be free to work his own fields and care for tasks needed to be done at his own house. There is no requirement in either law or custom to respond to the call for communal work, and the larger landowners, who usually reside in the towns, rarely participate in a *combite*. So great is the pleasure derived from work of this sort, however, and so living is the realization among the peasantry of its potential benefits, that a man hesitates before he refuses to take part in a *combite* to which he has been summoned. Sometimes a man who has been faithful in his attendance at *combites* and has worked well at them falls ill during the time for planting or for clearing his ground of underbrush or for hoeing. In such case a *combite* is summoned, and even though this man is unable to offer the usual feast, his services are remembered and the men work with a will to insure the proper preparation of his ground.

The scene in a field where a large *combite* is at work is an arresting one. The men form a line, with a drummer in front of their hoes. The *simidor*, who leads the singing as he works with the others, adds the rhythm of his song to the regular beats of the drum, thus setting the time for the strokes of the implements wielded by the workers. This drum, slung about the neck of the drummer, is of the European form, never the hollowed-out African type that figures in religious rites. Its sound can carry far, however, and thus it not only beats the time for the hoes, but notifies all concerned that the *combite*

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sitting at the door of the central house, with huts all 175
around in which his younger wives lived, as they could 595
not be made to dwell under the same roof. . . . The French priests attempted to alter this state of things, but they did not succeed, as the wives, surrounding the intruders, asked them what was to be their position if the husband selected one among them and abandoned the rest." [10]

Elsewhere St. John speaks of the institution of *plaçage* by [583]
name, mentioning its prevalence prior to the period of his residence in Haiti.[11] Mackenzie, though not calling it by this term, tells of a rural Negro who, in the course of a long conversation during which the name of an officer of rank in the Republic came up, made the observation "with admirable naiveté and exquisite logic, 'C'est mon beau frère, parceque je vis avec sa sœur.'" [12]

Plural marriage is no less common in the valley of Mire- 184
balais than elsewhere in Haiti. Despite the insistence of the 595
Church on monogamy, many men have two "wives," a few have three or four, while one important priest of the *vodun* cult is said to have eight. The force of the sanctions behind [177]
monogamy and Church unions, however, has undoubtedly [152]
influenced the psychological "set" of the Haitian toward polygyny, as is especially to be seen in the violent manifestations of jealousy shown by co-wives toward one another. It is primarily because of this that polygynous households, such as are mentioned in earlier writings, are not found in present-day Mirebalais, and this also explains why a man with more than one spouse sees to it that where possible his "wives" live at such distance from one another that they have but little opportunity to meet. Even then, on occasion, a newly taken *placée* will pace in front of the house of her man's other spouse, flaunting the clothes and trinkets she has received from him. Or if women who share the same mate meet in the

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CHAPTER VII

PROPERTY, WEALTH, AND THE FAMILY

596 THE WORD "family" as employed in Haiti can be understood only in terms of a broader meaning than is given it in Europe and America, where it describes only the most immediate relationship group. Though in Haiti this type of organization, consisting of mother, father, and children, lies at the base of its social structure, the Haitian "family" includes a wide range of relatives, direct and collateral, on the sides of both parents. The immediate family is thus but a part of a larger group, to which it is in many instances subordinate.

611 198 197 It becomes apparent, from even so brief a statement, that Haitian society has not retained that exclusive emphasis on descent in the maternal or the paternal line that characterizes most of the civilizations of Africa. And while a more detailed discussion of the manner in which African and European traditions are combined in Haitian culture must be reserved for later pages, this much may at the moment be made clear: The Africans who peopled Haiti, coming from cultures where descent is counted solely on the side of the mother or the father, and coming into contact with the French, whose custom binds children with equal strength to the families of both parents, molded both traditions into the social forms found

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today not only in Mirebalais, but, in their essential outlines, throughout the Republic.

The larger relationship grouping originates in the immediate family, and the formation of new extended families is a continuing arc. Characteristically, the process begins when a man leaves the habitation of his father and, with his wife, settles on land somewhat remote from the dwellings of either his people or those of his wife. As the sons of this couple grow up and marry, they make their homes near that of their father, so that in time a group of immediate families related in the paternal line clusters about the dwelling of this original settler, forming a habitation. The continuation of the process depends upon the amount of land available to the group; in any event, given enough time, land to permit all the male descendants of the founder to support themselves and their families will be lacking, so that the younger men will repeat the process that has been described, and themselves become the founders of new habitations whose members, with the passing of generations, will eventually be lost to the original group. While land is available, a young man is given several hectares by his father when he marries, and here he establishes his household. If the family have prospered, additional land is bought as more young men grow up, so that the relationship group may become a community of considerable size.

In accordance with this rule of residence, only rarely will a man settle on the property of his wife's parents, since to do so reflects unfavorably on his personal status. When this does occur, it is probably because of a serious quarrel with his own people. In such a case, if his marriage endures, he becomes a quasi-member of his wife's family, but unless he has committed some extremely grave offense, such as publicly insulting or striking a parent or grandparent, he does not forfeit membership in his own group.[1] Similarly, the fact of his having settled away from the habitation of his family does not disinherit him, for, as will be seen, this occurs in but the

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may perhaps be said to have come to this: Adherents of the African cults refrain from killing the snake, and should they do so by accident, the African custom of giving ceremonial burial to any creature having supernatural importance is followed as an atonement. Where this is omitted, difficulties of so serious a nature are felt to threaten that to prevent them a priest of the cult is called upon to offer up a sacrifice and to beg forgiveness even after the little ceremony of burial has been performed.[7]

Inasmuch as *vodun* flourishes in Mirebalais despite the minor role of serpent-worship, it is evident that in seeking to understand its nature and its philosophy other aspects must be considered. Two historical facts must be kept constantly in mind in making this analysis, for without them, what follows would be meaningless. The first is that *vodun* derives from a background of African theology and ceremonialism. The second is that the Negroes have continuously been subjected to the influence of Catholicism during the centuries that have passed since their introduction into the island.

Yet another point may prove suggestive in providing a useful point of view for an analysis of the *vodun* cult. This bears upon a difficulty impossible and happily unnecessary to resolve in the field study of religion, which arises out of the degree of variation in answers to questions dealing with the same point. These answers differ not only according to the status of the individual in the cult, since layman and priest have understandably different concepts of the functions of deities based on unequal degrees of expert knowledge, but the extent to which an individual has religious interests or is indifferent to them influences the nature of his responses. A fundamental fallacy results from the fact that except where there is an officially sanctioned theology — which makes for dogma, and often for perfunctory worship, in contrast with the living dynamic nature of Haitian peasant belief and ritual — there are no "real" answers to questions in the field of religion. The

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based on the rituals that were observed. In every case at least two major officiants are necessary, the *prêt' savanne* and the *hungan*, though the role of the latter is the all-important one. Last-minute preparations are made during the final morning, but what is needed will have been accumulated over a period of many months. Tables to hold offerings — sometimes two, sometimes more — are arranged at the sacred places on the family habitation, usually near streams or great trees where the gods reside. Eggs, cereals, drinks, and cornmeal — the food of the gods — are brought, and the animals to be sacrificed are tethered near by. Early in the afternoon the family, dressed in white, assemble, while the *vodun* priest with cornmeal describes on the ground the cabalistic designs called *verver*, and he sees to it that all has its proper place on the altar, whether it be the ever-present crucifix, or the chromolithographs of the saints, or the bottles of "drink" — usually non-alcoholic — or cereals and flour of various kinds. Consecrated water must be on hand, particularly at the big "altar," as the table covered by a canopy to protect the sacred objects is called.

The first part of the ceremony is an *action de grâce*, which in Mirebalais requires an hour or more, but which is said to last two or three hours in southern Haiti. This ritual, entirely derived from the litany of the Church, must always precede any *vodun* ceremony of the kind being considered here. Its purpose is said "to set the *loa* in movement" and to notify them of the rites that are to come, but psychologically it also serves to assure the participants that they are not proceeding to the worship of African gods without having paid friendly homage to God, the ruler of the universe, and the saints. The songs and prayers are brought to a close by an *adoration*, when offerings of money are made by members of the family to pay the officiant. At this point the songs change to a more African rhythm, and the *vodun* priest takes active charge.

As darkness falls, on the first day of the rite, he summons the

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ABOVE, *A vodun altar: both Catholic and African religious symbols are to be seen.*
BELOW, *Mystical designs traced in cornmeal on the ground about a shrine.*

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[facing p. 192]

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The cult of the dead[2] is to be differentiated from the worship of the *loa* and from the twin cult in that its African form has been modified to a far greater extent than these others by the influence of the Catholic Church. Yet, though the modes in which respect is shown the dead are principally those of the Church, the attitudes and beliefs which underlie the cult —the meticulousness with which the tranquillity of the dead is insured, the fear in which they are held, and, above all, their close association with magic as an important sanction behind this force—all these take on a distinctly African tinge. Perhaps the point of view taken toward the dead, and the manner in which the living cope with their power, can best be set forth at the outset by giving a sketch of the pattern of funerary and post-funeral rites, since these form the basis of the entire cult. 769 177

Wailing by all present begins with the approach of death. There are cries such as: "*Adieù, bon Dieu, Manman ma-o, wai, wai! Jodi-a tel-ei-tel quitté mouwi! Côté m'ap wé li enco'?* —Good-by, O good God, O my mother, *wai, wai!* Today such-and-such a one has died! Where will I see him again?" The members of the family tie white or black kerchiefs about their waists, while others present use kerchiefs of any color at hand. The doors of any *humfort* or *maison de servitude* in the habitation are closed, and thorny acacia branches are placed in front of them, so that the dead, who are believed to go about everywhere, cannot "spoil" the sacred place by entering it. 763 764 [346]

The body is laid in a shallow trench dug in the floor of the room, and there washed and prepared for the funeral by a professional *baigneur des morts*—man or woman according to the sex of the dead—and his assistants. Some member of the family watches them to see that the "three drops" of moisture believed to be in every dead person's mouth are not caught on a cloth when the body is turned over, for they are held to have great potency for the working of black magic, and a sorcerer would give a great deal for them. Cold water, 764 [154]

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the crossroads, where he alone would have to conduct the brief rite that was necessary to complete the making of this *garde*. As he arrived at his destination — this portion of the description is his — the plate was put down with the *kola* beside it, and *clairin* was poured on the ground. The lighted candles were placed near by, and with arms outstretched, he spoke the following formula:

Au nom de Mait' Carrefour,	In the name of the Master of the Crossroads,
Voici un couvert sec deposé jodi-a, Lundi.	Here is an offering placed today, Monday.
Au nom de Mait' Gran' Bra,	In the name of the Master of the Great Forest,
Ce couvert est pou' vous.	This offering is for you.
Mait' Carrefou', pour garde moin, sorti pou' 'ou.	Master of the Crossroads, for [the sake of] my charm, which comes from you.
Moin mandé pou' gardé	I ask that you protect me
Nan tout ces moin capab' trouvé moin	In all I may encounter
Pou' bien, nan pou' mal.	Of good, and of evil.

Before leaving the crossroads, the maker of the *garde* touched the plate and bottles three times to earth, calling the names of Master of the Crossroads, Master of the Great Forest, and Master of the Cemetery.

While the nature and forms of good magic that have been thus far discussed show a characteristic African pattern, the presence of the factor of medieval European magic is evident, though this is not as sharply identifiable here as in the functioning of the less pleasant aspects of these supernatural powers. That this merging of two traditions is fundamental in all Haitian magical practice must nevertheless be patent to all who have had experience with it, unless in their intentness on

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789 177 esoteric African survivals they have been blinded to the European elements.[5] It was, as a matter of fact, well-nigh impossible to discuss magic, whether good or evil, with a native for any length of time without hearing the names of three pamphlets published in Paris, *Le Grand Albert*, *Le Petit Albert*, and *La Poule Noire*. So portentous do the folk of Mirebalais hold the information contained in these works — though actually, when read, their contents are found to include nothing more dangerous than names of the proper roots and herbs with which to concoct a love-potion, or, far more frequently, magic for preventing wine from turning to vinegar, or for enabling one to gentle a wild colt — that their importation into Haiti is said to be prohibited by law, a statement which was not checked except in so far as inquiries for the pamphlets in Port-au-Prince bookstores proved in vain. The contents of these works on magic differ but little from those of a document written in Créole, said by Seabrook, who reprinted it, to have come from the files of the Marine Corps, where it was deposited after having been taken during the rebellion of 1918–20 from the body of a fallen Caco chief known to have been a *bocor*.[6] The source of inspiration of a large number of these formulas and of many of their objectives is obviously in such European pamphlets.[7]

789 754 Turning now from the more passive, protective, and socially desirable forms of magic, a similar analysis may be made of its aggressive, destructive, and antisocial manifestations. That magic of this latter sort is much feared is a truism; yet that the fear of it goes as far or is as constant as most accounts of its workings state may be marked as gross exaggeration. For just as the practitioner of good magic knows how to bring about evil, so for every force that harms there is a cure, and for every *wanga* there is a *garde*.

754 177 177 The malignant powers in the world of the Haitian are, like other phases of his life, of both European and African derivation. From Europe he has taken the *démon* and the associated

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term *loup-garou*, or werewolf. From Africa has come the concept of the *baka*, though this he has merged with that of the *démon*, and all operate through the power of Lucifer and the Devil, conceived as two separate beings. In addition, as will be seen, the cult of the dead also contributes to this system, since the *loa* who rule the cemeteries are indispensable for the practice of magic, as it bears especially on the concept of *zombi*, concerning which so much has been made in recent years.

The evil *loups-garous* are women whose real nature is revealed by their red eyes, though some hold that they have a black spot in the corner of the eye. Another word less frequently heard to designate the *loup-garou* is the Dahomean term *azeto*, employed in Africa for witches and vampires, a concept which in Haiti has become merged with that of the werewolf.[8] The *loup-garou*, with her male counterpart, the *démon*, is empowered by the *bocor*. As might be expected, she is greatly feared, and should an old woman suspected of being one of them come to a house, someone will see to it that in an adjoining room two brooms are crossed as the woman's name is pronounced three times, so that if she is actually a *loup-garou*, she cannot escape.[9] Children in particular carry counter-charms both against these women and against demons; one such, for a woman with child, has been mentioned in an earlier chapter,[10] and the making of another *garde* of this type has just been described. With a charm of this kind "you can leave at midnight for Port-au-Prince [instead of waiting for dawn] and fear nothing. You may meet a band of horned demons carrying candles in their hands, but they will stand aside and let you pass."

In Mirebalais, *baka* are usually mentioned when these evil beings are discussed, particularly since it is in connection with them that the term *engagement* is most often heard. An *engagement*, which is more feared than a *wanga*, the word usually encountered in the literature when evil magic is under discussion, designates a pledge made by a person, usually to

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CHAPTER XIII

AFRICA AND EUROPE IN HAITIAN LIFE

With the historical background of Haitian culture and its present-day organization in mind, we may now seek to disentangle the varied sources from which the institutions described in the preceding pages have been derived. The formalized expressions of religion will be treated in the chapter which follows; here the manner in which Europe and Africa have determined the forms of other phases of Haitian peasant life will be analyzed. 121

Even such a simple aspect of peasant life as the house, or *caille*, as it is termed, furnishes an illustration of this intermingling of cultures. In the countryside the typical dwelling is a rectangular structure of two rooms with a thatched gabled roof and walls of woven withes daubed with mud.[1] The rectangular floor plan and the roof are of West African type, but since both of these are also familiar in Europe, the house thus probably represents the coalescence of two dwelling forms which were originally not strikingly unlike each other. The type of thatching is purely African, as is the wall construction, for walls of twilled withes can be seen in West Africa today. On the other hand, what there is of furniture is entirely European. The African stool has given way to the 342 171 352 177

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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352 177 European straight chair, and if peasants often sleep on mats laid on the ground in African fashion, this is only because their resources do not permit them the luxury of beds. The 342 accessory field-house is called an *ajupa*, a designation which represents one of the few recognizable contributions of the aboriginal inhabitants of the island to its present-day culture, since, according to Charlevoix,[2] it was first applied to the huts of the buccaneers, called by them *aioupas*, a name taken over from the Spaniards, who themselves had adapted it from the native Indian term.

291 177 Clothing is also of European style. The men, who wear shirt and trousers, long ago discarded the West African loincloth and the covering great-cloth worn toga-fashion, while the hats they wear are of course equally of European type. The absence of shoes, though characteristic of Africa, is not necessarily of significance, for shoes are not only an accepted article of dress, but are symbols of worldliness, and when lacking from the costume, indicate only an inability to purchase them. The dress of women is no less European, though only the old women continue the fashions of the days of St. John, who reported that "the females generally keep to a long white chemise, covered over with a blue cotton dress that reaches to their bare feet, and is drawn in around the waist."[3] As in his time, white is favored for days of festivity, and the head-kerchief is also seen, even if it is less omnipresent than in his day. The younger women who count themselves sophisticated scorn the kerchiefs and wear hats, but elderly women wind white kerchiefs about their heads in the West [193] African manner. The invariable mark of the *mambu*, in addition to her jeweled fingers, is the white kerchief with a very large straw hat worn over it.

292 177 One special form of dress that represents a complex merging of European and African secular and religious customs is the 196 *rade de pénitence*. For men this takes the form of a multicolored shirt, for women a dress whose colors are dictated by

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the *loa*. In one instance a man wore a red shirt with black crosses appliquéd on it; dresses of this type worn by women or children are made of cotton cloth, pieced together patchwork-quilt fashion, of either three, seven, seventeen, or twenty-one different colors or patterns, with reds, blues, and white predominating. These garments are worn for a specified time, also named by the *loa*. The term *pénitence* has been taken from Church terminology, and the motivating sanction derives equally from African and Christian concepts;[4] for example, the wearing of the garment is a compliment to the African deities represented by the colors, while the various rules about abstinence during its term of wearing is the European pattern of "penitence."

The elaborate cicatrizations, or raised designs made by scarifying the body, which marked the slaves newly arrived from Africa have quite disappeared, but a few scars can be discerned on the body or arms of a man by a practiced eye. These represent an African carry-over in the form of a *garde* applied by the injection of some magically endowed substance into a cut which thereafter gives what may be thought of as a kind of spiritual inoculation. African fashions of hair-tying have been retained by the women almost unchanged, and, as in Africa, hair-braiding is a highly developed art, so that the styles in which hair can be braided seem innumerable. This is particularly true of dressing the hair of small girls, whose heads are decorated with braids going the length of the skull, or dividing the scalp into small squares, each with its tuft of hair, or by a part in the middle with lines going at right angles from it across the head. These styles of braiding are not named as in other parts of the New World and in Africa, but the tradition of intricate braiding has lost none of its vigor.

The implements of the Haitian are both of European and African derivation. The ubiquitous machete, a saber-like tool employed in all manner of ways, from chopping down trees

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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to cutting fruit, though seen in Africa, was probably introduced there by the early traders, and all machetes found today in Haiti are imported from Europe or America. The same is true of the hoe, for the short-handled, broad-bladed West African hoe has given way to the European long-handled type, though the blade of the Haitian hoe is somewhat broader than that used in America and Europe. Despite the presence of domesticated animals to draw the plow, this implement has never gained favor in Haiti, nor have recent efforts to teach the Haitian peasant the use of the plow achieved any degree of success. He prefers his African mode of cultivation, to say which implies more than just the employment of a certain implement, since even such matters as the manner in which he employs his hands and feet in the process of planting are included. When the Dahomean plants, for example, he holds a calabash of seed under his left arm, from which he takes the grains with his right hand. As he moves down the rows of newly turned earth, he makes a depression with the heel of his right foot, drops a few grains into this depression and, replacing the earth with his toes, takes a step so that he can repeat the process with his left foot. This is exactly the manner in which Haitians were observed planting in the valley of Mirebalais.[8] Unlike the usage in Africa, however — where the men clear the ground, the men and women plant, and the women tend the growing crops — the European pattern, which places agriculture in all its essential phases in the hands of men, has been taken over almost in its entirety.

The women have retained almost without change the African modes of preparing food. Grain is first pounded in an African-like mortar, with an aboriginal type of pestle, while the shelled kernels are winnowed in a large round basketry tray. The cooking is either done on a raised mud platform in the cooking shelter, as in West Africa, or on three stones, employed as rests for the pots, a method equally characteristic of Africa. In the Haitian cuisine the prevalence of stews, of

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In the Haitian cuisine the prevalence of dishes fried in deep fat, of the generous use of pepper in seasoning, are all African, as are even the names of certain dishes, such as *acansan*, a Nigerian-Dahomean term which designates the cooked balls of cornmeal. One of the few European intrusions is white bread, while the cassava cakes, also important in native diet, derive from the aboriginal Indian inhabitants.

In its outward forms the economic system under which the Haitian peasant lives seems entirely based upon European pecuniary patterns. Money follows the French system, even to the official use of the French designation, *centimes*, for the smallest parts of the principal unit of currency, the *gourde*. Both paper money and coins are used, and as the result of the Marine occupation American money is as well known as the currency of the country itself. Buying and selling goes on in the accepted European manner, the price of such export crops as cotton, sugar-cane, and coffee responding to the fluctuations of the world market. In many of its inner aspects also, the values of the Haitian are influenced by the money economy taken over from Europe and America.

The conclusion that the economy of Africa has been swept aside by that of Europe needs, nevertheless, to be qualified if certain historical and psychological factors are not to be ignored. It must not be forgotten that in West Africa, long before the period of European contact, a monetary system based on the cowrie shell had been fully developed. The prestige of wealth, the resulting drive to obtain property, the pursuits of buying and selling, and other aspects of a pecuniary civilization were as current in West Africa at the time of slaving, and continue today, as in Europe or in Haiti. When some of the attitudes associated with the economic life are analyzed, it is no simple matter, therefore, to state whether they stem from African or European sources, or both.

One pattern common to both economies, the validation of position through the conspicuous display of resources, has

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been largely lost in the peasant culture, possibly because of a prudence dictated by conditions of life wherein evidences of the possession of wealth — certainly in the case of a peasant — were an invitation to those who would despoil him. Only when a family of position gives a ceremony, or when one of its members is married or dies, is the lavishness of its preparations such as to suggest the importance of its place in the community. This does not hold for the individual. Personal ostentation is the more strongly inhibited by the belief that another's envy may bring ill fortune to the one against whom it is directed. In Mirebalais it has almost become a byword that the really substantial citizens look as though they were the poorest. This tradition in no way interferes with the preoccupation with adding to one's possessions, or with the desire to exert the power and enjoy the position that go with a command of large resources, or the will to pass on as large an inheritance as possible to children. In their origin, such drives can be ascribed neither to Europe nor to Africa, nor, for that matter, to the experiences of slavery, but rather to the interplay of two homologous patterns of culture that has produced the economic system and the economic motivations found in Haiti today.

In the matter of land tenure, and in attitudes toward private property, African tradition has disintegrated almost completely. Under the characteristic West African form of land tenure, land of a tribe is vested in the tribal head, who allots it to families for use. Trespass upon it is not permitted while it is under active cultivation, and the produce of the land is the property of the one who has worked it. Only palm trees are privately owned by those who have planted them; otherwise land that goes uncultivated for a longer period than is necessary to restore its fertility may be re-allotted. In some regions land worked by an individual is his because of his membership in a large relationship group, whose ownership derives from the power of its ancestors who had lived on this

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443 171 178 case certain aspects of the historical development of Haiti have doubtless tended to reinforce African custom. Reference has been made to the fact that the great proportion of traders are women, a truism in Africa as in Haiti, where by general rule men are the producers and women the distributors of goods. In Haiti, however, the fact that for many decades men [102] were likely to be arbitrarily impressed into military service by local chieftains when they came to town — particularly in Mirebalais, which had always been one of the centers of Caco activity — discouraged them from attending the markets. Thus African usage has here been reinforced by the historical fact of Haitian political instability. The fact that the proceeds 443 434 562 178 171 from trading belong to the woman who does the trading, and that in consequence women are encountered who, though married, command independent means and exercise full control over their resources, is a carry-over of African tradition and, as in Africa, this gives to women a position in the economic world quite foreign to conventional European practice.

59 61 178 The form of the family as found in Mirebalais demonstrates that the African social grouping which comprises all those descended on one side of the family has largely disappeared there, though it is possible that at least the vestiges of it may [171] have survived in other regions of Haiti. Yet in West Africa, though descent is legally counted on but one side of the family, psychological adherence to the families of both parents is everywhere important. Therefore it is logical to assume [177] that this concept, reinforced by the pattern of dual descent and double familial affiliation of the French, has been retained in Haiti to the neglect of the aboriginal larger groupings, where, as has been seen, not only is relationship counted on both sides of the family, but, more significantly, the right to reprimand and punish is held and exerted by elders in both the maternal and the paternal lines. On the other hand, it is apparent that the feeling for larger relationship groups has not been entirely lost, particularly in the paternal line, when

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769 a *mangé* is given, and that evening, when the feast ends, dances
17 are held. Two or three *tonnelles* are provided, the most important of these being the one where the Martinique cycle, the social dances most beloved by the ancestors, is danced. In one of the remaining two a European *bal* is held, and in the other are the *vodun* dancers. Thus even in connection with a commemorative Church mass for the dead the *mangé morts* and the dancing of African dances are included.

595 The institution of plural marriage, which is socially recog-
177 nized though not legally sanctioned, is obviously African.
178 Though the *placée* is held in respect and her place in society
[554] carries no reproach for herself or her children because of any connotation of immorality, it is of significance for an understanding of the manner of cultural change that prestige in marriage goes with the monogamic union blessed by the Church, and that the "wife"—the woman who is addressed as "Madame"—holds definitely higher social position than the *placée*. Officially the Haitian State is in accord with the position of the Church and recognizes only the European monogamic marriage. Socially, however, African plural marriage is not only tolerated but accepted as a matter of course, and in those instances where plural marriage takes on its most exuberant form, as when men of position have as many as six or seven *placées* in addition to a legal wife, its very size tends to give such a family group, or at least its head, the enviable esteem of his fellow-citizens.

17 Within the family, the deference toward older members
[593] and the duties and attitudes toward parents-in-law are Afri-
[606] can both in form and in spirit. The exaction of guarantees
[583] from a young man before marriage, and the necessity of his proving to the family of his fiancée that he can support her, are perhaps in their generalized form universals, but as found in Haiti show once more a retention of specific aboriginal
[584] traditions. On the other hand, such aspects of marriage as the formal *lettre de demand* sent when a match is arranged, or the

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especially by the drummers. Experience among other Caribbean Negro cultures and in Africa itself has failed to reveal greater skill in calling forth intricate rhythms from batteries of drums than can be found at any Haitian religious gathering. The enthusiasm with which a man takes his place at a drum, the manner in which he loses himself in his drumming, the skill with which he maintains the time of his complex beats in common with two other drummers and those who manipulate the rattles and the iron, bespeak long training and a passionate devotion to the art. The same is true of dancing. The best drummer, the finest dancer, hold positions of esteem in the community, and on occasion their fame will go beyond the valley, an occurrence as unusual as it is valued. The excellence of the drumming and dancing and the concomitant artistry in song can be understood when one considers the age at which training is begun in these arts. At Mirebalais an infant of no more than two years has been seen to dance creditably, while a young boy of six gave a demonstration of drumming that spoke eloquently of his promise as a drummer of talent. Before every *vodun* dance the boys take over the drums while the younger girls dance to their rhythms. They are watched with a critical eye by their elders, who from time to time correct them or praise those who do well.

The accompanying musical forms are almost entirely African in their rhythmic structure, but European influence is traceable in their melodic line, which varies from unchanged European folk-melodies to purely African songs. In the use of the falsetto, however, in the statement of a theme by a leader and its repetition by a chorus, and in the countless modulations introduced into the song, the singing is entirely African, as are the postures struck by those singing.

The importance of the dance is apparent from the large range of dances. Of *vodun* dances there are the *avalou*, or *yanvalou*, a word meaning supplication in the speech of Whydah; the specialized steps for the various Rada and Pétro gods; for

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535 *magic* and for the Congo, Ibo, and Nago *loa;* the *mazon,* as an
177 interlude dance between possessions; and steps of the *asagwe,*
178 or salute to the gods. There is also the Martinique cycle of sec-
[196] ular dances, including the *zesse, callebasse,* and *banda;* the *rara* dances found only at Easter time, and the social Congo dances. Finally European dancing, called *bal,* is performed to the sound of a drum, a phonograph record, or a small orchestra. With a qualified exception of the last, the type of dancing in all these is African. The essence of style in these dances lies in the manipulation of feet and the muscles of the body, particularly those of shoulders, hips, and buttocks, the patterns of which have been carried over in their entirety from the aboriginal homeland. For men and women to dance with arms about each other, as do Europeans, is still regarded in Mirebalais as immoral.

538 The trait of African culture that has survived most tena-
178 ciously in all the New World, even where European influence has been strongest, is that of folk-literature — of tales, proverbs, and riddles.[7] Though these have flourished in Haiti as elsewhere, prolonged story-telling sessions, so characteristic of other Negro groups, were not encountered in Mirebalais. It is likely that this is principally a seasonal phenomenon, and the failure to find long evenings of story-telling during the summer months, when the rains are at their height and work in the fields is hardest, may properly be an expression of this seasonal variation. As elsewhere in Negro societies, tales and riddles are told at wakes, though their enjoyment by children and their function as a part of the education of the child are as important as in Africa itself. The familiar types of African animal stories and the tales of human tricksters and magicians are well known, and well told. The figure who corresponds to Br'er Rabbit, or to the spider Anansi, is the little 'Ti Malice, while the foil for his pranks is the great awkward Bouki.[8]

One folkloristic element that gives Haitian life a strong African flavor is the proverb, which, as elsewhere in Negro

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cultures, is used not only to point morals for the young but as an expression of the characteristically oblique forms of Negro expression in a quarrel, or in sounding a warning, or in commenting acidly on some social situation. A famous proverb, quoted from the earliest days, is today heard often in Mirebalais: "*Zafai' mouton pas zafai' cabrit*—The affairs of the sheep are not the affairs of the goat"—an injunction against gossip. When a person boasts that no one can harm him, the reply may come: "It is on a narrow path that one has to deal with a difficult horse." Should a man dismiss an experience as of but little consequence to him, he may hear the comment: "Often one pays an ox for a goat." When one person does harm to another, his victim may warn him with the phrase: "Behind the mountains are other mountains." If a man whose fortunes are flourishing attempts to console another who has suffered misfortune, or a rich man jibes at a poor one, the retort may be: "The rock under the water doesn't know how the rock in the sun suffers." To such an extent do proverbs comment on all aspects of life that almost no extended conversation occurs without them. Some of these are of European origin, but both numerically and in their use their character is preponderantly African, as is shown by their specific correspondence to proverbs used today in the regions from which the Negroes of Haiti were derived.[9]

In the practice of magic, and more especially of black magic, it has been noted that African and European traditions have combined into an integrated cultural unit. The outward expression of magic in the charm or "fetish" as an aspect of African life is so obvious that it has been commented on by all observers. In Haiti, though the charms are not prominently displayed and personal charms especially are worn beneath the clothing, this concept of their importance in coping with life has been retained. Yet, as has been seen, Haitian magic is not African alone. For while the forces behind protective magic are primarily the *loa*, and those behind black magic are

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789 754 177 178 the powers that control the souls of the dead and those creatures of evil whose powers come from Satan — all this being African enough, in the sense that evil magic exists in Africa as elsewhere — the point, which bears repetition, is that the primary sanctions for evil magic have been reinforced by the books of magic handed down from medieval Europe.

789 177 178 In this system, however, not only do European books of magic figure, but the Church also has its place. "The things of the Church are always affairs of magic," remarked one Haitian, meaning that they are best adapted to this purpose and are used when the opportunity is had. It is for this reason that great care is taken to keep all sacred objects in churches from the hands of unauthorized persons. To have something that has come from a church, such as a bit of a priest's robe or a few splinters from the statue of a saint, enlists the power of these on behalf of any objective that the maker of magic has in view, and invests any *garde* made with these with the power of God Himself. Thus the twofold meaning of the proverb: [539] "*Vrai maré corde, vrai wanga, c'est l'Eglise* — The real tying of the cord, the true *wanga*, is the Church," or, similarly: "*Vrai hungan c'est l'Église* — The true *hungan* is the [754] Church." However, whether it be through such African-like practices as the use of colored cloth, or caolin, or the tying of knots, or whether objects filched from the sanctuary of the church be employed, evil magic, derived alike from African and European sources, continues as a potent force of Haitian peasant life. For perhaps in magic more than in any other aspect of his culture has the peasant achieved a synthesis of the two currents that have contributed to his civilization. He has taken from both, and inasmuch as both adhere to a more general pattern which marks all the Old World, neither tradition has had to give way to the other.

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nected with them, much of African tradition which has carried over into Haitian religious life has been retained in pure form. Yet the intrusion of Catholic custom into these African patterns — often noted, though generally in passing — also must be studied if the significance of the forms of Haitian folk-religion is to be grasped. That this aspect of *vodun* has received the scant attention it has had is probably to be ascribed to two causes.[2] The first takes the Catholic element for granted, so that even where a particularly dramatic element of Catholic practice is seen in an African setting, such as a crucifix or the portraits of the saints on a *vodun* altar, specific mention is made of this without attempting to dissect its historic or psychological role. The second reason for the comparative disregard of Catholic influence is that for Europeans it is a commonplace. Spirit possession and sacrifices, African song and drum rhythms are more "exciting" than prayers or hymns of the Church. Underlying both these causes is the deep-rooted and unquestioned assumption that, in contact with any non-European culture, the patterns that govern European behavior must prevail. Consequently, is it not in the nature of things that Catholicism should have taken root in the *vodun* cult? Is not rather the matter to be stressed that African traditions should have been retained at all? That the process should actually have been one of amalgamation rather than of dominance is rarely taken into account. Yet to go deeper into the significance of this process in Haitian life is to open far-reaching vistas.

An outstanding sanction taken by the *vodun* cult from Catholicism is that of the baptismal rites. Though ceremonies of consecration are a commonplace in Africa, and the African ritual of washing the head — *lavé tête*, as it is termed — has not been forgotten, in Mirebalais the importance of baptism as a means whereby human beings obtain their place in this world and in the next has been carried over and applied to all matters of ceremonial significance. Thus just as in the lives of

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the saints of the Church the sacrament of baptism was a crucial rite, so the *loa* must be baptized before they become forces which act in a recognized and predictable manner. Just as the objects used in the rituals of the Church must be sanctified by being blessed and sprinkled with holy water, so in the *vodun* cult a *humfort*, the drums, the iron, and the rattle must all undergo a similar sanctification, not only that they may possess proper supernatural power, but more importantly that they may perform their functions in the very serious and African matter of calling the *loa* and placating the supernatural beings of the *vodun* cult.

Herein lies the importance of the *prêt' savanne*. Since the official representatives of the Church not only have nothing to do with the *vodun* cult, but excoriate it on all occasions, the *prêt' savanne*, as a man who can read the prayers of the Church, plays an indispensable role and to that extent is to be regarded as a functioning member of the *vodun* cult, despite the fact that he has no control over the *loa* and, as far as was observed, does not participate actively in their worship. At the same time, it must not be inferred that in borrowing "baptism" from the Church this rite has been elevated to the most important place in the ritual of the *vodun* cult, for though the *prêt' savanne* must read prayers "from the book" and sprinkle his holy water, the actual "baptizing" is carried out by the *hungan*. In sanctifying a *humfort*, the end in view is to induce the *loa* to come after the baptism and to insure that no unaccountable or untoward deeds may come to pass within it. Similarly, though drums must be baptized with Church prayers and holy water that they may perform their allotted tasks, without the concomitant ritual of the *hungan* they would be no more empowered to call the gods than they were before the prayers of the Church were read over them. An analogous comparison can be made between the role of the *prêt' savanne* and that of the *hungan* in the *service*. Since the world

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is ruled by God, it is necessary to invoke God with the ritual of His Church before the rites to placate the *loa* may begin. But the important business of the occasion is to placate the *loa*, and it is only when the *hungan* takes over from the *prêt' savanne* that the series of rituals commence which, for the Haitian, hold emotional force and psychological value.

In the description of the baptism of a *loa* given in a preceding chapter, the use of Church ritual in bringing the African spirits under control will be remembered. No clearer illustration can be given of this merging of traditions than in a detailed account of the manner of making and validating *vodun* drums. These drums are of the characteristic African hollow-log type, with skin heads held in place and tuned by means of pegs, which are tied fast about the drumhead with cord. Before the tree which furnished the bodies was cut, an invocation was pronounced by their maker and an offering — a *mangé sec* — was made, that all the gods might come when called by the finished drums. A candle was lighted and *verver* described about the base of the tree. Eggs, broken against the trunk, were rubbed on the bark; while both soft and alcoholic drinks were given as libations, since not all the gods desire the same refreshment. After the tree had been felled and that part of the trunk that was needed for the drums was cut off, the maker was free to proceed with shaping the bodies of the drums by first gouging out the inside of the trunk, then stripping the bark, and finally carving the characteristic foot at the base. Before the next step of boring the holes for the pegs was taken, *clairin* was poured inside each drum, at the entrance to the habitation of the maker, and toward the man's cornfield. The first hole bored in each drum was carefully marked, for this was the significant *manman*. Here the first peg is inserted; the skin head is first attached here; and here the cord about the head is first knotted; while it is the peg in this hole that must always be first struck when the completed drum is tuned.

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for all uses to which those of their type are put. During their making and after their completion they had been sanctified by rites that vividly illustrate the merging of traditions in Haitian religion: by means of offerings to the African gods, and through baptism by the rites of the Church.*

The *action de grâce* is another integral part of *vodun* ceremonialism that is essentially Catholic, since its lengthy service is composed entirely of prayers and hymns of the Church. As has been shown, the *action de grâce*, which precedes a *vodun service*, takes place before an "altar" which, important both then and at the later, more African rites, in itself documents in no small measure the combining of Catholicism and *vodun*. One, employed at a *service* not described in the earlier chapters, was covered with a red and white checked table-cloth, on top of which a smaller white cloth was spread.* Pinned to the canopy and to the front of the table-cloth were various chromolithographs of the saints; St. Michael attacking the Devil, Mater Dolorosa, St. James, the Virgin Mary and Jesus (the Assumption), and St. Expeditius. In front of the representation of St. James stood a crucifix with the figure of Jesus, in accordance with the custom of never omitting to have one of these at any *vodun* ceremonial. The table bore many offerings; at the back were four bottles of soft drinks, with cups; while also to be seen were several hard rolls, an ear of corn, a dish containing eggs, and another holding, among other things, rice. One of the containers on the table held holy water, while candles for use both in the *action de grâce* and in the later *vodun* rituals lay beside this. Thus crucifix, candles, pictures of the saints, and holy water were combined in this ceremony with offerings of food and drink to be given the gods that the ancestors had brought from Africa.* The songs sung at the voduistic portions of these *services* also reflect the psychological unity of Catholic and African elements in *vodun* worship. One of these declares:

* This altar is shown in the illustration facing p. 190.

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Je crois en Dieu,	I believe in God,
Oui, Santa Maria.	Yes, St. Mary.
Santa Maria,	St. Mary,
Qui sorte nan Guinée.	Who came from Guinea.
Je crois en Dieu,	I believe in God,
Oui, Santa Maria.	Yes, St. Mary.

Another for the Virgin of Allada, sung in Leogane, is as follows:

Santa Maria la Madaleine,	St. Mary Magdalene
Prié pou' loa yo.	Pray for their *loa.*
O Allada-e,	O Allada-e,
Sonné une sonne pou' moin,	Ring a bell for me,
Pour m'allé.	So I may go.
M'dit, Allada-o,	I say, Allada-o,
Sonné une sonne	Ring a bell
Pou' les pitites nagé.	For the drowned children.

Of these elements, the portraits of the saints, or *images,* offer one of the most vivid instances of the mingling of African and European elements in Haitian belief, for they are the outward symbol of the psychological reconciliation that has been effected between the saints of the Church and the African deities. This is nothing peculiar to Haiti alone. In West Africa, wherever Catholicism has obtained something of a foothold, certain pagan deities are regularly identified with saints of the Church, and the same phenomenon is found in Cuba[a] and Brazil.[a] This identification of saints with the *loa,* whether initiated as a ruse against the detection of African worship or emanating from a reasoned analogy, would seem in Haiti, at least, to act as a device to achieve an adjustment between two conflicting systems by emphasizing the resemblance between Catholic saints and African nature deities. The importance of the *images* as symbolizing the reconcilia-

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tion is consequently of the first order, while the presence of these chromolithographs in every Haitian hut and on the altars of *vodun* ceremonies indicates how deeply the acceptance of this identification has gone. In the house occupied in Mirebalais during this investigation, the following *images* were found on the wall:

Moses	St. Augustine	Our Lady of Mount Carmel
St. Peter the Apostle	St. Michael	St. Clara
Baptism of Christ	Peter and Paul	

It is perhaps worth mentioning that the owner of the house, when renting it, stipulated that these *images* were to remain in place, for their power kept the house, its contents and occupants from harm.

No greater concurrence of opinion is had in the designations of saints given to corresponding *loa* than in any other facet of Haitian belief. Those here listed were obtained in two ways: either the equivalents of *loa* were named in the course of discussions with priests and other members of the *vodun* cult, or the *images* themselves were shown to members of the cult, and the names of the corresponding *loa* were recorded. Mater Dolorosa is held by most persons to be Gran' Erzilie, but in one instance this figure was equated with Erzilie Freda Dahomey with the insistent qualification that the two were not the same *loa*. The saint is represented as richly clothed, wearing many rings and necklaces and surrounded by other evidences of great wealth, so that the correspondence arises from the fact that Erzilie is held to be the richest of the *loa*. Notre Dame d'Alta Gracia is related to the *loa* Kpanyol, or the Spanish *loa*, while Notre Dame de Grâce is the water-goddess

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known as La Sirène. St. Anne and St. Philomena are also regarded as water-deities, the first being Adamisil Wedo, the second the *loa* Christalline, a strong evil spirit dwelling in the sea. With one exception, Legba was held the equivalent of St. Anthony; in this other instance his similarity to St. Peter was stressed. St. Peter is held by most persons to be the *loa* St. Pierre, though this again is disputed, *loa* St. Pierre being believed by some to be the spirit who validates the sacred polished stone axes which in Haiti, as in Africa, are called "thunder stones." The identity of St. Andrew was also disputed, some saying he is Simbi, others that he is Azaka Mede, a river god whose name is clearly derived from that of the stream across which, it is believed in Dahomey, all dead must pass. One person identified Aizan with Christ, but this would seem to be a conclusion personal to him.

Of the Ogun *loa*, St. James is conceived as Ogun Ferraille. St. Joseph is identified with Ogun Balandjo, because this *loa* is a healer, and St. Joseph is shown holding a child, his hand upraised in blessing. St. Patrick, on whose *image* serpents appear, is correlated with Damballa Wedo Tokan, or simply the rainbow serpent Damballa Wedo, while Moses, because of the miracle he performed before Pharaoh, is held to be the father of Damballa. St. Expeditius is Agwe, and St. Anthony the Hermit either Ti Jean Pétro or Simbi en Deux Eaux. St. Louis, the patron saint of Mirebalais, is a *loa* Wangol, as are two of the kings who figure in the adoration of the Christ-child, Balthazar and Gaspar. The *marasa*, logically enough, are believed the same as the twin saints, Cosmas and Damien, while the "protector of the *marasa*" is St. Nicholas, because the several children on his *image* are interpreted as *marasa*, *dosu*, and their succeeding siblings.[1]

The Haitian often carries this matter further, either conceiving saints as themselves powerful *loa*, or creating "saints" for himself out of the forces of nature or other powers in the universe. The most outstanding example in the former cate-

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gory is St. John the Baptist, worshipped as *loa* St. Jean Baptiste, who sends the thunder and lightning. The power and irresponsibility which characterize him contrast strangely with the gentle child holding a lamb, shown on the *image*. The connection becomes apparent in the light of African mythology, however, where the ram is the emblem of the god of thunder, while following this same belief lambs are sacrificed to St. Jean Baptiste in Haiti. The following myth is told of him: [539]

> On a given day of the year God permits each saint to have control over the universe. St. John the Baptist, however, is so irresponsible, and his rage so violent, that God fears the consequences if he were allowed to exert his power on his day. By plying him with drink the day before, he is therefore made so drunk that when he falls asleep he does not awaken for five days. When he is told his day has already passed, his rage is so terrible that great storms flay the earth, and it is a commonplace in Mirebalais that this day is marked by thunder and lightning storms of almost hurricane proportions. Though he can do some damage, his power is now limited, however, to his own sphere.

In the second category are the forces of nature personified and worshipped as saints. Among those specifically named were St. Soleil (St. Sun), St. la Lune (St. Moon), Sts. Étoiles (St. Stars), and St. la Terre (St. Earth). Even more striking is the concept that the power capable of bringing reverses is to be worshipped, as a copy of an *oration* to St. Bouleversé which was obtained clearly shows: [821] 539

> St. Bouleversé, you who have the power to overturn the earth, you are a saint and I am a sinner. I invoke you, and I take you for my patron from today onward. I send you to seek out such-and-such a one; overturn his head,

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overturn his memory, overturn his thought, overturn his house, overturn for me my enemies visible and invisible; cause the thunder and the tempest to break them into pieces. And in honor of St. Bouleversé, three Paters and three Ave Marias. . . .[8]

Thus it is seen how Catholicism invades the beliefs and rites of the *vodun* cult. In an analogous fashion *vodun* has not failed to make itself felt in certain festivals of the Church,[9] for while elements of *vodun*, rigidly suppressed inside the Catholic churches, are absent except in so far as they can be carried on surreptitiously, they are nevertheless integral parts of these fêtes in the minds of the folk who make pilgrimages to them. So arresting is the resulting mingling of practices, and so significant for the amalgamation of cultures that has taken place in Haiti, that a detailed discussion will be given of the most prominent instance of this type, the festival in honor of the Virgin of the Palms, which takes place each year on July fifteenth at Ville-Bonheur, or, as it is better known, at Saut d'Eau. The festival of 1926 has been described by Price-Mars;[10] here certain observations made during the fête of 1934 may be given, especially as they have to do with those aspects of the mythology which validate the festival, and as they illustrate the non-Catholic, voduistic phases of the celebration, of importance for the points being considered in this chapter.

Beside the church, Ville-Bonheur has three especially sacred spots, St. John, En bas Palmes, and Saut d'Eau — the falls themselves. At St. John is a large *campêche* tree surrounded by many palms, from beneath which flow streams of water. St. John is said to have appeared here, carrying his scepter as in the chromolithographs, and at that time water began to flow in the sacred springs, and except for one short period has continued ever since as holy water, being used for drinking and bathing, but never for purposes of cooking. The priests

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stationed near by did not at first believe in this miracle, until after several appearances of the saint the higher authorities of the Church gave the fête their sanction. Many tales are recounted of skeptics who, though coming to scoff, became filled with awe when they put foot in the holy place and — significantly for the merging of the two religions — were possessed by *loa* for the first time. A church which has since burned and a small chapel were erected at the site which now is the entrance to the enclosure before the present church. This is the old calvary enlarged, and here the statue of the Virgin, saved when the earlier church burned, is found. Next to this church are the uncompleted walls of the structure which is to be a new and larger church. It is said, however, that this edifice has given much trouble, for each time the walls reach a certain height they fall. The people say: "The Virgin does not like this place," and believe that a simpler church should be built where the old one stood.

The vision of the Virgin at En bas Palmes is believed to have occurred several times, most recently as placed by a lively tradition in the days of the American Marine occupation, when a priest is said to have caused both St. John and En bas Palmes to be closed for several years because, as at present, many who prayed at the church also took occasion to worship their *loa*.

During the fête, however, the tale goes, the Virgin appeared on a palm tree. The people, on their knees worshipping, sent to the priest to come and pray. He declared it merely superstition, however, and called an American Marine captain stationed at Mirebalais to help him suppress this worship. The captain ordered a Haitian sergeant to shoot the vision, but the Virgin merely moved to another tree; another shot, and she moved again. They cut down the tree, and those who looked on with terror saw the vision slowly ascend to the sky. As the priest

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turned to leave, word came that his house had burned and nothing in it was saved. Later he suffered a paralytic stroke from which he never recovered. Some say that the American captain became ill and was sent to the States "as a punishment for what he had done." Several days later the sergeant was found mad, wandering in the woods. Since he had fired under orders, however, his punishment was but temporary, and on being cured he returned to Ville-Bonheur to ask pardon of the Virgin. Today he lives in Mirebalais. When they saw the American ill, the priest paralyzed, the sergeant mad, and the presbytery burned, "public clamor" became so strong that both St. John and En bas Palmes were reopened.[11]

In 1932 a cyclone at St. John tore down trees and houses and hurt but did not kill the worshippers who had gathered there. An eyewitness insisted he had seen the enormous whirling cloud rise from the sacred place. He had no time to reach his house, for with a noise like a cannon-shot the whirlwind came, and an enormous oak tree fell just behind him — "I saw death staring at me." Today he carries two scapularies to the Virgin to protect him.

The third sacred spot is at the falls themselves, where the grandeur and beauty of the scene is such as to induce the religious thrill almost unaided, and where great numbers go in the course of their pilgrimage to Ville-Bonheur. There are two falls, situated at a distance of several miles from the village, one for Damballa and one for Aida Wedo, and it is believed that those who bathe in the sacred streams become possessed. It is said that the palms near by are sacred to the Virgin, but others hold that they are for Damballa. Many visit the falls on the day preceding the fête, but the largest throng hurries there immediately after the principal mass, when the greatest number of possessions and the most violent seizures by the *loa* occur. The falls, therefore, in association

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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The falls, therefore, in association with the purely Catholic rituals carried on at the village church, are seen to hold an important if unofficial place in the complex of rites known in the Haitian Church calendar as the Fête of Saut d'Eau.

During the two or three days preceding the fête and on the fifteenth of July itself, an air of great gayety not unlike the carnival spirit accompanying European Church festivals pervades the surrounding country. Camions traverse the almost impassable side road, bringing crowds of people from Port-au-Prince, from the Dominican border, and even from the north, who throng the streets and the shrines and tramp the miles from the village to the waterfalls or visit the nearer sacred sites of St. John's Wood and En bas Palmes, to light candles and ask the satisfaction of their needs. Like the falls themselves, these spots by their very beauty awaken a sense of emotional awareness, and it is not strange that here, as at the falls, many possessions occur. At night, in particular, the great trees with their interlacing serpent-like roots, the gaping earth which at En bas Palmes is witness to the uprooting of the palm trees where the miracle occurred, and the stream of sacred water, all make a scene of indescribable eeriness, heightened by the flickering candles given as offerings, and the open lamps of those who stay the night here to fulfill their vows.

In the town itself gambling and other games go on, and dances of all kinds are held at night, among them *vodun* and *bal*, though at these public dances no possessions are countenanced. One of the most colorful aspects of the scene is the *penitants*, wearing clothing of varied colors in fulfillment of a request by the *loa* they worship or an obligation to them. Such folk are not permitted in church unless the clothing which marks them is covered by ordinary dress, but they walk the streets, often possessed and often using their power to heal those whom they encounter. Possessions by Ogun, by Gede, by Baron Samedi, by Damballa, by Erzilie and other *vodun* deities were observed, particularly at the shrines, where their devotees prophesied and healed the sick.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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devotees prophesied and healed the sick. Even at the church, however, where all go to offer the prayers that are the central observance of the fête, the many candles placed on the rocks at the entrance are usually for St. Anthony; that same St. Anthony who, it will be recalled, is the *loa* named Legba, the guardian of all entrances.

It is obvious, from the examples given, that the world view held by the Haitian and the motivations which underlie Haitian life cannot be understood unless both the Catholic and the *vodun* contributions to them are held in mind. But certain further questions bearing upon the effect of these two influences present themselves. What proportion of Haitians hold membership in the Church, and how many are affiliated with the *vodun* sect? What attitudes are manifested toward the Church and its priests as contrasted with their attitude toward the *loa* and their ministrants? How does the Church meet the challenge of *vodun*? And how does the Haitian peasant, in his inner life, reconcile these two conflicting forces?

The impression gained from reading available works on Haiti is that voduists and Catholics constitute two distinct groups. While this may obtain in some parts of the Republic, it is not true either in Mirebalais or in those other portions of Haiti which came under direct though brief observation in the course of this study. All discussions with natives that began with the assumption of the existence of two such separate groups led to confusion, and statements which had seemed evasions were not clarified until the incorrectness of such an assumption became apparent. Thus when it was stated that in all Haiti the Pater Noster was one of the first things taught every child, the question: " Is this not true for Catholic families only? " was met with a vigorous denial that was slowly justified as the realization grew that, if not true for all Haitians, such an assertion was certainly valid for the vast majority of them in Mirebalais and probably elsewhere.[18] The identity of membership in the two groups became apparent from ob-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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servation when, for example, the baptismal rites which received into the Church the children of known active participants in *vodun* ceremonies were witnessed. It became even more convincing when experience taught that the best place to encounter an elusive *hungan* or *mambu* was at early Sunday-morning mass. Only when it was realized that no dichotomy exists in Mirebalais between Catholicism and *vodun*, but that both are necessary if all the supernatural beings that control man and man's destiny are properly to be worshipped, was a true perspective obtained.[13]

There are certain Protestant sects which have been increasingly successful in making converts among the Haitian people, particularly in the north, whose adherents stand in strong hostility to *vodun*. A type of Protestantism that has had the best reception is one comparable to the "shouting" sects of the United States and the British West Indies, where the appeal through patterns of possession, dancing, and other aspects of ritual close to the familiar African forms of behavior is evident and relatively little psychological shift is needed to make membership in such a church acceptable.[14] The Protestant church in Mirebalais, however, is more sober. It commands only a very small proportion of the townspeople, and draws even fewer from the surrounding countryside, while the Catholic voduists look upon it with a scorn that is exemplified in the answer to a question about the ritual of Protestant funerals: "*Moun chita, chanté zhymnes*—People sit, and sing hymns!" Two or three well-substantiated cases of conversion to Protestantism came about because, despite the sacrifices made to the inherited *loa* and the prayers to the saints, these individuals continued to experience ill fortune, until in desperation the Protestant minister had been called to banish the family *loa*, to cut down the sacred trees on the family habitation, and to destroy the house of worship, with the objects in it. These deeds of "desecration" were, however, followed by no renewed disasters, and while from the point of view of

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the voduists this is not regarded as decisive proof of the power of Protestantism, for those immediately concerned it is held sufficient.[15]

What, then, of the attitudes held by voduists toward the Catholic Church? The correlation of Catholic ritual with *vodun* practice made by Haitians is of utmost significance in this connection. In discussing the Church service, it was pointed out that church bells announce mass or any other rite, and this, it was explained, is for Legba — "*Toute cloche c'est pou' Legba, même l'église, oui* — All sounding of bells is for Legba, even in church," for he must be notified so that he can "open the gate" for God, Jesus Christ, and the saints. "*Nou' même nou' connai' ça. C'est Bon Dieu crée tout* — You yourself know that. It is God who created everything." It was also recounted how when the priest preaches, he is possessed by the *mystères* of the sacred Trinity, for does he not gesticulate and become excited like any other possessed person?

Furthermore, it is believed that Gede, Ogun, and Damballa "are always at the church," often insisting that their worshippers take communion. Indeed, occasionally the *loa* of a woman may demand a Church marriage from a man to whom she is a *placée*. The sacraments of baptism, first communion, marriage, confession, and extreme unction are received by members of the *vodun* cult, though, as will be seen, when voduists confess, they say nothing of their *loa*. The *hungans* themselves "are most often at the sacred table to take communion," and one particular *hungan* not only attended mass, but was seen continually employing his rosary in the *vodun* ceremonies at which he officiated. While Haitians from the southern peninsula stated that the *hungans* there do not go to church, it was pointed out at the same time that all other voduists attend regularly.

The principal resentment held by Mirebalais voduists against the Church is for the cost of Church rites, and for the

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797 Today the church takes full advantage
798 of its status as the only recognized religious organization in Haiti to dictate the official position of government toward *vodun*. Permission for *vodun* dances and for *services* must be obtained from the officer commanding the local detachment of the Garde d'Haiti, and this is not always granted. Penalties [688] for illicit dances and ceremonies are severe, and because gossip is ubiquitous and no man lacks enemies, apprehension is prompt. Thus in the instance of one *service*, a misunderstanding regarding the permit was sufficient to cause the detention for some hours of the one responsible for the rite.

771 Is it possible, then, for a person to be a communicant of the
778 Church and partake of the sacrament without feeling this
779 weight of spiritual and official disapprobation? More particularly, is it possible for him to omit from his confession all allusion to his worship of "false" gods? It is here that one encounters a singularly tenacious survival of African traditional belief. In Africa the conquest of one people by another meant the mutual interchange and acceptance of the respective deities. The conquerors added to their own pantheons the gods of those whom they had overcome so that these forces might not wreak a supernatural vengeance upon them; while to the conquered the power of the gods of those who had defeated them was self-evident. If the worship of the Christian God and of the saints of the Church intruded on the aboriginal religious patterns of the Negroes brought to Haiti, the acceptance of such worship did not imply rejection of the old gods. Nor does membership in the Church today mean such complete acquiescence in its doctrines and pronouncements that the worshipper of the *loa* will offer himself for the malediction of the priest by confessing his adherence to their cult. The situation somewhat parallels that in Africa itself, where the first effort of Protestant missionaries is directed toward inducing their converts to abjure polygyny. This dictum is complied with readily enough on the surface, so that a man will have but one wife — in one village! In Haiti the

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problem of confession is met in the manner explained by a woman who is a devotee of the *loa:* "The *loa* are not the things of the priest. Why should I tell him about them? If I come and take this book of yours, it isn't mine, and I am a thief. If the priest tells me I must not worship my *loa*, they are not his *loa*, and he cannot take them from me. Does anyone expect me to come and tell him that my father, my mother, my sisters and brothers, and all my family serve the *loa*?"

For the Haitian, therefore, the forces of the universe are under dual control. And though, as has been stated when the cosmology of the system of *vodun* worship was discussed, he may reconcile this duality, yet in practice he must observe the rites of his *loa* separately; he must pray to God and the saints apart. His reconciliations he keeps to himself, and in his everyday life both the African beliefs and those of the Church have their place. No better illustration of this could be had than in the incident of the white cock named for the serpent-god Damballa, that had been spared until the final day of this field-work when, as the last of a large brood, his time had come to be killed for the table of his owner. On this afternoon, when he was "to meet his destiny," the cook took him up quietly. A number of feathers were plucked from him, and then, as the sharp knife, describing a cross, ended his life, the whispered phrase could just be heard: "*Damballa, je crois en Dieu* — Damballa, I believe in God."

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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154 rites for him, despite his strict Catholic upbringing. His vacillation between the desire to understand and worship the gods of his ancestors and his utter remorse after he had done this illustrates one way in which conflicts in a cultural setting can affect the outward responses and unsettle the inner adjustment of the individual who is exposed to such a situation. From a broader point of view, such an analysis of Haitian psychology suggests a more realistic understanding of the individuals in other cultures who have likewise fallen heir to conflicting traditions.

154 182 However revealing this type of analysis of the springs of Haitian behavior may prove, it will be adding only a fragment of esoteric information unless it, like all other aspects of the investigation of this single society and its mode of life, is pointed toward an understanding of the larger problems of the relation between man and his culture. For just as a study of the effect of the dual character of Haitian behavior upon the personality of the Haitians is important in throwing light on the study of the relationship between culture and personality in general, so the study of Haitian institutions may hold equal significance when questions are raised about the less subjective aspects of human civilization — that is, when attempts are made to understand what may be termed the dynamics of culture.

197 Most important in this connection is the demonstration made in this book how cultures in contact influence each other. This would seem self-evident but for the fact that very generally when such a proposition has been stated, it rarely enters into the actual studies of primitive cultures in contact with European civilizations without being neutralized by a counter-assumption that the force of European achievement overwhelms peoples with a differing cultural heritage. As will be seen, the failure to recognize this fact of the reciprocal effects of cultural contacts has entered to a very significant degree into the determination of basic atti-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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tudes governing Negro-white relationships in this country at the present time.

Haiti has experienced as long and perhaps as intensive a degree of exposure to European influences as any area where non-Europeans have lived in contact with European patterns of life. It has, in addition, completely passed through initial and secondary periods of contact into a state where the social milieu represents more than a century of consolidation of the original influences. Yet the Haitian Negro has by no means been overwhelmed by European tradition, just as he has not retained his aboriginal African heritage without any change. The process is seen to be one of selection, of working over, of revamping and recombining the elements of the contributing cultures, with the result that the ensuing combinations, though of recognizable derivation, differ from their aboriginal forms.

More problems of general interest are also pointed and illustrated by the material from Haiti. One assumption often made in viewing the course of cultural change is that the intangible aspects of a culture are less prone to give way before foreign influences than are its technological and economic aspects. The "natural" conservatism of religion and social organization is often particularly stressed in contrast with the relatively greater tendency to change shown by tools and weapons, clothing, housing, and utensils of various sorts. And though such assertions have some basis in fact, as both our own culture and the cultures of numerous other folk show, yet in the material on Haiti it is clear that neither in technology nor in economic organization have the traditions of Europe entirely prevailed over those of Africa, nor are they in any sense absent in the fields of social organization, religion, music, and dancing. It would seem that while a certain hospitality to European concepts and customs is apparent, there has at the same time been a retention of African modes of life in all sectors of Haitian culture to a degree which

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177 178 suggests that generalizations as to the relative pliability of any specific phases of a culture under exposure to another are premature.

562 178 Are women more conservative than men in respect to cultural change? The appropriateness of the affirmative answer often given can be tested to advantage in studies such as this. The answer, in Haiti, would seem to be that where work at home shields women from the influences of the outer world, this conservatism is found, but where they have an opportunity to come into contact with new trends, no less change enters into their activities than into that of the men. Thus in such matters as the organization of the Haitian household, the cuisine, or the time of meals, the logic of the situation has caused women to preserve Africanisms in full vigor, while historical causes have also similarly aided them in such things as retaining their African role as traders in the markets. In other phases of their lives, however, women, like men, have accepted European patterns, as is evidenced in the field of religion, where no greater resistance has been shown by women toward new forms than by men.

182 Other examples might be cited, but these indicate how a culture such as that of Haiti, as regards both its inner values and the psychological responses made to them, and its outer form and the manner in which its present-day character was attained, aids in sharpening and clarifying the questions that must be asked and answered if a better grasp of the dynamics of custom and the way in which tradition plays upon the inner being of those who are its carriers is to be had. However, it is not alone in general considerations such as these that the study of Haitian life can be of use. Much that is perplexing in that particular facet of the problem of race which in America is termed the "Negro problem" has both analogy and contrast in Haitian life. It must not be forgotten that the slaves who were brought to continental America were of the same types and of the same background as those imported

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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Africa remains? That this has the widest currency needs no explanation, nor, again, that it is held as true by Negroes as by whites. Indeed, any demonstration to the contrary invariably meets with remonstrance, while indications that Africanisms have even invaded white patterns of behavior are received with incredulity. This reaction is understandable enough if it is referred to the other belief already mentioned concerning the "savage" nature of aboriginal Negro background. Yet despite popular acceptance, despite "scientific" pronouncements that Negro music, Negro speech, Negro games, and Negro folk-beliefs stem from European sources, the student who is equipped with a background of African custom and West Indian practice can see the essential unsoundness of such claims. Cultures do not entirely give way one before another, even where the one was carried by slaves and the other by masters; even though the one is separated from its source by thousands of miles and hundreds of years, and the other derives a continuous renewal of vitality from constant contact with its original home. Once again reference to Haiti is to be made: to the fact that in economic life, in social organization, in religion, in music and dance, Africa has not disappeared, nor, at the same time, have the influences from France failed to stamp themselves on present-day behavior. Cannot the same be said of all areas of the New World where Negroes are gathered in great numbers?[3]

These questions can only be raised here; their answer is the matter of long years of patient investigation yet ahead. But may it not be true that the Negro in the United States has preserved some vestiges of his aboriginal heritage even in outward institutionalized forms; that in his attitudes, points of view, and characteristic responses to social situations the factors of his dual heritage have not been entirely lost; and, as would follow elsewhere as it has followed in Haiti, that this may be reflected in his resulting personality types? Even the possibility of affirmative answers strongly suggests that further in-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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CHAPTER XI

[1] Compare Parsons (I), 173–4, where the cult of twins is discussed and some of its rites described.

[2] Price-Mars (I), 35, mentions this as a power believed to be held by twins.

[3] The phrase "cult of the dead" as employed here must be sharply differentiated from its misuse by Seabrook (82 ff.).

[4] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 34.

[5] Price-Mars (I), 34, speaks of the custom of always burying charms with the dead.

[6] Wakes have been described by Seabrook, 89–91, and others, but in such a manner that it is difficult to dissect out the reality of what was witnessed from the imaginative elements.

[7] Cf. Wirkus, 221–3. The custom of giving the dead food at the grave, which he describes, is not followed when burial occurs in the Mirebalais town cemetery, nor, seemingly, elsewhere in the valley.

[8] See the description of a commemorative rite for the dead in Price-Mars (I) 148–50.

[9] This is a rule followed in West African practice.

CHAPTER XII

[1] An interesting attempt to account for this is found in St. John, 230–1, where he speaks of the "two Vaudoux sects," one good and one evil.

[2] St. Mery, i, 36. The term *garde* is almost entirely absent in later writings, the more sensational *wanga* (*ouanga*) being preferred.

[3] Léger, 55, note 34.

[4] Cf. Dorsainvil (I), 171.

[5] No better summary of this could be had than that in Parsons (I), 179, written after a single séance with a *gongan*.

[6] Pp. 324–31.

[7] Mr. J. C. Trevor informs me that during a recent field-trip to the Virgin Islands he discovered books of magic in common use, obtained from a Chicago dealer.

[8] It is not without interest to note that in the case reported in a Port-au-Prince newspaper and reproduced in facsimile by Seabrook, 334, concerning a woman from the commune of Mirebalais accused of sorcery, the name of the woman was *Azéman*.

[9] Cf. Parsons (II), 596.

[10] See above, pp. 94–5.

[11] The closest correspondence

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1968) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 8]

2. Man and the Universe: Vodoun

175 When the African slaves stepped ashore in the New World they brought
179 with them highly developed religious beliefs and attitudes toward life.
771 But Africa was a continent of many cultures and nations, and its belief systems varied. The Congo African did not have the same view of the natural and supernatural as the Senegalese, for example; and even neighboring peoples such as the Ibos, the Yorubas, and the Mahis did not have common religious traditions. Yet in the strange new land that was Haiti, the common elements in their religious beliefs were accented. In time a new composite religious system emerged. It was called Vodoun.

175 The preponderance of Africans in Haiti came from the region of Da-
167 homey, Togoland, Nigeria, and the Congo River basin. Among them the
179 Dahomeans were the most numerous, and it was they who provided the
771 framework for the Afro-Haitian religious system.

The word Vodoun itself is Dahomean in origin. Among the Fon-speak-
192 ing people of West Africa it signified "spirit," or "deity." In Haiti the word came to be applied in a general sense to all the activities of cult life, from the ritual of the "temple" to the songs and dances, though in some old songs it still applies specifically to the idea of a supernatural spirit. However, the Congo word *loa* came to be used to designate the deities.

771 In a literal sense, Vodoun in Haiti consists of the rites, beliefs, and prac-
794 tices of the Vodoun cult, built around the similar religious systems of the
177 Dahomeans and the Nagos. In a wider sense it applies to similar but distinct ritual activities of other cults. The Ibo-Kanga rites and dances are in a specific sense "not quite" Vodoun. The rites in the Congo-Guinée cult group—made up of Congo, Bambarra, "Guinée," and miscellaneous elements—have separate practices and deities of their own, and are often regarded as not Vodoun at all. Yet the term Vodoun is used in a generic sense to include all these rites, and examination of the beliefs and activities of these cult groups shows that they have drawn in considerable measure upon a common inheritance.

[See Courlander, Haiti Singing, p. 7. Cf. P349, Category 116.-- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

In Haiti the possession takes many forms, according to the nature of the deity who has entered the body, and depending on whether the possessed person has learned to "control" that deity. The possessing, or "mounting," of the possessed individual is manifest proof of the loa's existence and his constant proximity. Vodoun is built upon the premise of the existence of loa, and the possession is the instrument of direct contact and of constant proof of the loa's imminence.

Although much of Vodoun is cast in the Dahomean mold, it is no longer what it was originally in Dahomey. Many of the original deities of the Dahomean Earth pantheon, the Sky pantheon, and the Thunder pantheon have survived. Others have been forgotten, but in their place there has grown a vast array of loa, recruited partly from the Yoruba deities and perhaps from deities of other West African tribes. By far the largest group has come into existence in Haiti—loa whose names, at least, probably would go unrecognized in West Africa.

There have been prolific intrusions into Vodoun from the rites of the Catholic Church, though they have not affected the general framework of the system. The original Dahomean supreme being, Nananbuluku, is nearly forgotten; in her place the Christian God is named in many a Vodoun service. Yet, though God is the supreme creator, giver, and taker, it is the loa who must be supplicated and mollified. Most important Vodoun rituals are begun under the supervision of the *prêt' savane*, or "bush priest," who leads off with brief prayers from the Catholic rites. While the Catholic Church itself rejects any direct part in Vodoun, the self-tutored prêt' savane, unordained and unsponsored by the Church, brings elements of its theology into the hounfor. The origins of the prêt' savane are not clear. But there is little doubt that his place in Haitian life became assured during the years of conflict between postrevolutionary governments and the Church of Rome. After the slave revolts of 1791, the priests of the French colony fled from the scene or went into hiding along with the other white colonists. From the date of Haitian independence throughout the following half century, Haiti was "in open schism from the Roman Catholic Church."[1] Some Haitian presidents were friendly toward the Catholic Church; others even had the objective of making Catholicism a state religion with the president at its head. Henry Christophe, for example, made the Catholic Church official but stipulated that ecclesiastical decrees must be approved by the president. Alexandre Pétion's constitution for southern Haiti (the country was divided) also established the Church as official but laid upon it strong restrictions.

Leyburn points out that in 1814 there were in Christophe's kingdom only three priests, one of whom Christophe had named archbishop. Dur-

[1] Leyburn, The Haitian People, p. 119. Cf. p. 349, Category 116. -- Analyst

2: Courlander 9-5 (1937-1950) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

ing Boyer's administration, 1818-1843, Catholicism was the state religion but the president was its chief. Leyburn notes:

> Every effort of the state failing to provide proper religious leadership, Boyer resigned himself to permitting those who professed to be priests to practice in the republic. There were seventy so-called priests in the country in 1840. Some of them had once been in the holy orders but had been unfrocked: they found in Haiti not only a haven but a fertile field for gain. In addition to these religious renegades came adventurers who knew just enough of ritual and theology to use the priestly garb as a cover for easy graft. . . . They baptized houses, boats, and doorposts, and blessed fetish charms or amulets, all for a fee.[8]

It was not until 1860, after the death of the "Emperor" Soulouque, that Haiti signed a concordat with the Roman Church.

The role of the prêt' savane became defined after the slave revolts of 1791. His cue was taken from the activities of freebooting Europeans who apparently needed neither religious orders nor profound Catholic knowledge for their pseudo-clerical work. And the long period without a responsible priesthood gave the "bush priest" an opportunity to flourish.

The prêt' savane of today has a respected place in the community, though his prestige is not so great as that of the houngan on the one hand or the Catholic priest on the other. His place is guaranteed by his ability to bring to the Vodoun service elements of a competing system which the houngan, operating within the framework of African tradition, does not provide. Acceptance of these Catholic elements as a peripheral part of Vodoun is characteristic of much West African religious thinking, in which new deities and rituals may be added to the old when circumstances require.

The prêt' savane opens many Vodoun services with an *action de grâce*, reads prayers when a death has occurred, participates in marriage rites, and "baptizes" the hounfor, the cult drums, and the sacred rattles—not to mention the lua themselves! But it is the houngan's powers that are paramount. The "bush priest" is in a sense performing a service for the Vodoun priest, whose rituals and administrations are regarded as the effective and vital ones. The prêt' savane is a cultural afterthought.

In certain remote and isolated mountain places the prêt' savane is virtually unknown. But there is no sense of deprivation, for the cult priests —even the poorest and the most rustic—have their own way of dealing with the saints, God, and the forces of nature. An aged houngan of the Morne la Selle region explained it this way:

"In everything that is done, God's permission is asked first. Most houngans in the mountains do not know how to read, and they don't know how to pray. But they know many things. They know where the sun rises,

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1958) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

They know where the sun rises,

and they address St. Nicholas, who opens the day, and they know the wish of God. In the name of St. Nicholas they raise a glass of water and ask God for the power to do."

In ordinary usage the Haitian refers to the various cults or "nations" as though they were quite separate and mutually exclusive. He speaks of the *service* Pétro, or *rite* Nago, or the *nanchon* Ibo. Yet in practice the cults are usually bound together into two or three major groups.

The "nations" belonging to the Vodoun (or Dahomey) group include the Arada or Dahomé, the Anago, the Mahi, the Aminc, and the Ibo. There is ample evidence that the cults of these "nations" were once separate and apart. Even today in isolated regions of Haiti there are cult centers devoted exclusively to Nago deities. Elsewhere, Mahi or Ibo services are held without the intrusion of "foreign" rites and deities. Some cult centers have several *hounfors*—one for Dahomé, one for Nago, one for Ibo, and so on, with a separate building for the "dead" spirit Gèdé. More often, however, one finds a single *hounfor* containing separate altars. Of all the "nations" within the Vodoun group, the Ibo perhaps has the most independent status, and in some regions it is tied in with Pétro rather than Vodoun rites.

The Pétro group also includes numerous "nations," some completely absorbed, others more loosely affiliated. Within this group, which for convenience may be called the Congo-Guinée family, are the Pétro, Bumba, Moundongue, Bamburra, Congo Loangue (Loango), and other "nations." In certain regions the Congo cult, like the Ibo, is regarded as separate and apart. Sometimes the Pétro service is kept distinct from the others, though it has drawn so heavily on them for its roster of deities that the distinction is not easily seen. In places such as Port-au-Prince where the cults have deeply infiltrated one another, major differences between the Vodoun and Congo-Guinée rites have disappeared, and altars to both Pétro and Dahomé deities may be found within the same *hounfor*.

It is not difficult to detect a certain pattern of regional grouping within the Vodoun and Congo-Guinée families. Within the Vodoun family are gathered "nations" from Dahomey, Togoland, and Nigeria, while in the Congo-Guinée cycle are "nations" from Central Africa, miscellaneous "nations" such as the Bamburra, and the Pétro cult which is regarded as "Haitian" rather than "African," but whose rites and loa have been recruited in large measure from other services.

One often hears of Kitta services, or Changó services, or Legba rites. These are not separate cults but simply rituals for specific loa.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1948) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

one. Sometimes a loa who is making life too hard for a devotee will be retired without a replacement. The "washing of the head" must be accompanied by ritual safeguards, and all possible circumstances must be taken into account by the officiating cult priest. There are many stories of people who became mentally deranged as a result of the removal of their loa from their heads.

The malt' tête must also be removed from the head of a person who dies. Should this not be done, the spirit of the deceased will go to reside "below the water" and may cause trouble for the family. This loa is usually transferred to a special jar as a temporary resting place, and later perhaps into the head of another member of the family.

Though the loa is a powerful ruling force in the life of the individual, the human "horse" has controls over his deity too. He may reproach or admonish his loa for bad behavior or for failing to protect him. He may expose the loa's irresponsibility in public through the use of songs in religious rites. And though the loa is frequently encouraged to "enter," steps may be taken to restrain him from possession. This is called *marré loa* —"tying the loa." A woman may "tie" her loa by fixing a hairpin in her hair in a special way. A man may do it by placing his hands in cold water.[8]

Nevertheless, the loa are always lurking in the background. They are a constant and dramatic element in the religious life of the people. They may sometimes be controlled by the houngan, but they are an authority stronger than the priesthood. They give advice, courage, consolation, and status to their followers. They add much to an otherwise hard and ungenerous environment and evoke remembrances of Africa from which the Haitians' ancestors were uprooted. They can also cause concern and anxiety; for the loa are not always benevolent, and they are frequently unpredictable.

Many of the loa are ancient deities, sib-founders and ancestors who loom out of a misty, half-forgotten past. Nananbouclou, Legba, and Ayida Wèdo have been known for many lifetimes in Dahomey. Chango, Ogoun, and Loko were old spirits in Nigeria before the first slave ships sailed from Africa to the New World. Their names and many others in present-day Haiti come from an ancient lore. They recall places, tribes, and old kingdoms from Senegal in northwestern Africa to the heart of the Congo. They are a bond which holds the people of Haiti to Africa. In the mountains people sometimes say, "Haiti is the child of Dahomey," or "Haiti is the child of Guinée." The gods divide their time between their Haitian and their African children.

Yet in some respects the Haitians' concept of their loa is no longer purely African. The African religious patterns have been infiltrated by the love

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1964) 1960 8V3 11681 8V3

of the Catholic Church and fused with old folk beliefs of Europe. In Dahomey, which was the wellspring for much of Haiti's culture, there was no supreme deity quite like the one introduced to the slaves by the missionaries. There was a pantheon of gods with Mawu and Lisa at the top. They were children of a common parent, Nanambuluku. None of these deities was strictly comparable to our idea of a supreme being. Nanambuluku survives in Haiti as Nanamboucklou or Nanamblélécou, one of many loa. Among the neighboring Yoruba the high god was Olorun. Like the Dahomean Mawu and Lisa, Olorun was quite remote from the lives of men. The gods who were invoked and placated were the several hundred *orisha* created by Olorun. The nearby Ashanti people had a simpler pantheon, with the sky god Nyame supreme among them.

In the present Haitian concept of the supernatural, God is at the very apex of the pantheon, though he is distinctly of another order. His power as the supreme source of all things is fully recognized. A Haitian song, associated with Vodoun ritual but of probable recent origin, goes:

> C'est Bondieu qui voyé moin, quand li vlé moin l'appremd. [Ex. 37]
>
> It is God who sent me, when he wants me he'll take me.

Another song, from the Guinée service, goes:

> Oh, Kitta, ah m'li nan dlaou, li tout mouillé!
> Oh, nan point houngan pasé Bondieu nan pays-ya! [Ex. 36]
>
> Oh, Kitta comes out of the water, he is dripping wet!
> Oh, there is no houngan in this country greater than God!

Although it is recognized, or at least stated, that God is a supreme force, God is not regarded as the entire supernatural force of the world. In many Vodoun services the houngan may invoke, as separate categories of the unseen, the loa, the dead, the *mawasse* (twin spirits), and God. Haitians do not have a consistent schematized picture of the supernatural world. God comes first, but (as in West Africa) he is less immediate than the loa. He is identified with destiny; yet within the framework of that destiny man's lot can be bettered or worsened through dealings with the dead, the baka and loa-garou (demons and vampires), and the cult priests.

In many of the folk tales of Haiti, God appears as another character in a cast which may include as protagonists animals, loa, Christian saints, and ordinary men and women. One such tale is about a visit which all the dogs decided to pay to God. They started off through the woods together, but one of them was distracted by the smell of carrion. He left his friends for a brief time, found the carrion, and ate some of it. Then he hurriedly joined his companions again. Together they came to God's house and were admitted to the parlor, where they sat around making polite conver-

S: Courlander B-4 (1937-1938) 1960 SV3 HARI SV3

called St. Patrick and sent him down to stop the ceremony. St. Patrick approached the hounfor and sang: 776 534

> Factionnaire ouv'é bayè pou' moin passé!

And again Bocor Zandolite came to the gate and sang:

> Wa wa lé londja londja!
> Bocor Zandolite wa wa lé londja londja!

He took St. Patrick by the hands, pirouetted him around, and a loa came into St. Patrick's head, too.

Another week went by, and when St. Patrick didn't return, God sent St. Michael. The same thing happened to St. Michael. God then sent St. Anthony, and later he sent St. Peter. But when St. Peter didn't return, God became very angry indeed. He hadn't slept for weeks. So he decided to go down himself and put an end to the affair. He approached the hounfor singing "Factionnaire ouv'é bayè pou' moin passé!" And Bocor Zandolite replied as he had before. He took God by the hands to greet him. He shook hands downward three times, then he pirouetted God to the right and to the left. God suddenly staggered and reeled from one end of the habitation to the other. The drummers beat a special salute, and the singers sang loudly and clapped their hands, for God had a loa in his head.

This tale appears to relish the superiority of the loa over God. Yet there is no sense of sacrilege. Although the Haitian concept of God is that of a supreme force, and a source of good, the Christian deity also has some of the attributes of paramount gods in certain West African religious systems which make him less remote and even, on occasion, somewhat fallible. He figures in Haitian lore very much like the Ashanti sky god, Nyankonpon, who has dealings with animals and human beings and is sometimes outwitted by them. Although Nyankonpon has the power to dispense favors, justice, and punishment to mortals, he himself lives within, rather than superior to, a well-established physical system. His marvelous deeds are only slightly superior to those of other, lesser gods, or of sorcerers, or of the trickster Anansi. In fact, in one Ashanti tale Nyankonpon finds himself very much in the same situation as God in the Haitian tale, being forced to dance to the music of the trickster's drum. 776 539 191 177

The Christian saints, too, have been incorporated into the Haitian system, and they also have been syncretized with Vodoun elements. They have become identified with various loa according to their most obvious characteristics. St. Patrick, because he is always pictured with snakes, has become one with Dumballa and Ayida, who are also symbolized by snakes. Ralle Préda, the female loa characterized by purity, has become 776 177

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

776 177 one with the Holy Virgin. St. Jacques has become one with Ogoun, St. George with Linglessou, St. Anthony and St. Christopher with Legba, guardian of the highway, and St. Nicholas with Marassa Trois. In northern Haiti the word *zange* (from the French, *les anges*—the angels) sometimes is used synonymously with loa or mystère. As for the saints, they are sometimes identified with one loa, sometimes with another.

776 177 178 No one in Haiti knows all the loa. Some of them are so ancient as to be nearly forgotten. Others are spontaneous creations or revelations on the part of a possessed person. Some loa names may be the result of a devotee's seizing upon a word or phrase in a religious song and imparting to it the concept of a loa. Sometimes a word in a phrase of *langage* is taken to be a loa's name, and sometimes agglutinated Creole words become the name of a loa.

776 178 178 177 [193] The possibility of frequent additions to the list of loa is heightened still further by the general illiteracy of the Haitian people and the lack of a stabilizing influence in the written word. The Creole language has marked regional differences. Furthermore, change of consonants or vowels is a commonplace occurrence, so that a single loa's name may have several forms. One may well wonder whether Aza, Adja, and Akadja were not originally a single individual. Nevertheless, in the Haitian scheme they are now different personalities.

776 171 552 There is one more complicating factor in identifying loa or compiling a comprehensive roster—the use of multiple names. In addition to the names by which they are generally known, many of the deities have a variety of nicknames. Some of these nicknames are in Creole, some appear to be of West African provenience. The deity Agwé, for example, is frequently called Coqui-nan-Mer—Coqui-in-the-Sea. A loa may have four, five, or even more such nicknames. Sometimes short forms are used. Damballa may be called Da, Sobo may be called So, Azaka may be called Za. In addition, some deities have "secret" names, which theoretically are known only to the priesthood and the inner circle of servitors. Multiple naming and the reservation of certain names for special occasions appear to have West African precedents.

In the naming of the loa no neat and methodical system is apparent at any point. The "surname," or what may be in some cases a generic designation, may appear first or last. One may hear Ogoun Chango or Chango Ogoun, Général Brisé or Brisé Général, Congo Savane or Savane Congo. (This is characteristic of everyday speech. A former president of [551] Haiti, Nord Alexis, is often called Alexis Nord.) The "surname" can be a description of "tribal" or "national" affiliation, regional provenience, character and temperament, or an indication of function. Thus we find

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

The loa, like the rites, vary somewhat according to region and to the practices of the individual cult priests. New concepts spring up, and they thrive in one locality while remaining unheard of in another. Yet many new concepts travel from hounfor to hounfor. As in the old days in Dahomey, the Vodoun priests sometimes make journeys to visit other cult centers. At one service near Jacmel, on the south coast, I met a houngan from Dondon in the far north and heard him discuss with the local cult chief the appropriate behavior of a loa who had mounted a servitor. The Dondon houngan declared that in the north the loa conducted himself differently. The Jacmel houngan parried with the remark that a loa's behavior is consistent. He said there were only two possibilities concerning the possession as described by the cult chief from Dondon: either the loa had been mistakenly identified, or another deity had attempted to impersonate him. Such exchanges hasten the spread of developing theology from one area to another. They also raise contradictions which remain forever insoluble.

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That confusions and contradictions are not merely of Haitian making is made clear by Herskovits' voluminous study of the pantheons of Dahomey.[3] Each of the great cults—the sky cult, the earth cult, and the thunder cult—has its own explanations of the origins and functions of the deities; and even within one cult there are contradicting explanations. The Haitians have taken over, built upon, and diverged from a Dahomean system that contained its own contradictions. In adding to it the system of the Yoruba, with its parallelisms and similarities, they have made the whole picture more complex than ever.

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[3] [Herskovits, Dahomey]. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

The importance of water in Vodoun has a fundamentally West African character. Among the Yoruba and the Ashanti and in Dahomey, for example, water rites are a significant aspect of religious ritual. Herskovits notes the frequency of religious pilgrimages to streams in West Africa.

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In one instance, at Abeokuta, a bedecked procession of worshipers left a shrine atop a high hill, followed a long path to the riverside over two miles away, and returned before the ceremonies could be carried out at the shrine of the god. On one occasion, in Dahomey, the bed of the sacred stream run dry was "filled" from nearby wells so that this water could be ritually redrawn for use in an especially important ceremony. Among the Ashanti, pilgrimages to Lake Bosumtwe and other sacred bodies of water regularly occur. And it is on such occasions that the spirit of the river or lake or sea manifests itself, by "entering the head" of the devotee and causing him to fling himself, possibly possessed, into the water.[8]

So it is also in Haiti, where possession at the river's edge may cause the devotee to leap into the river. At Saut d'Eau, possessed persons plunge into the waterfall without regard for their safety, being in the care of the loa who have mounted them.

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Into this water complex the Christian rite of baptism has been easily absorbed, providing merely a new act of veneration for water and its properties. In the Haitian mind baptism is not far removed from the *lavé tête* ritual, the washing of the head, or the *rafraîchi tête*, the "refreshing" of the head, both of which are acts in propitiation of the loa.[9] So related is the baptismal concept in the Haitian mind, that the term "baptize" is used to describe the lavé tête; it is said that the loa is being "baptized." So also are drums "baptized," not to menton yams, and even the *hounfor* itself.

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Marriage to a Loa

Although the term *hounsi* (spirit wife, or wife of the spirit) is applied to a large class of servitors of the Vodoun temple, only a small number of servitors ever pass through rites which give them a husband-wife or wife-husband relationship with a loa. Reasons for these mystic marriages vary, but usually the rituals take place upon the prescription of a cult priest who interprets the will of the deities concerned. Most of the mystic marriages of which I have heard have taken place in the general area of Port-au-Prince and the Cul-de-Sac Plain. In some other areas of Haiti it appears that no such rites have taken place locally within the memory of the elder inhabitants. One aged man living near Belladère declared: "It [marriage to a loa] is impossible. People serve loa, they do not marry them. A man does not marry his burro. A loa

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[8] [Herskovits, The Myth of the Negro Past, p. 233. Cf. p. 351, category 116. -- Analyst]

[9] [It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form. Cf. p. 351, category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1954) 1950 SV3 Haiti SV3

house, which is on fire. But there is no grief, because Ogoun is the master of fire:

Pierre, Pierre Narcisse oh!	Pierre, Pierre Narcisse, oh!
Yago moula-è!	*Yago moula-è!*
Caille Ogoun boulé!	Ogoun's house is burning!
Gilslive Ogoun bel Di	Ogoun's distillery is beautiful!
Na consolé! [Ex. 88]	We console ourselves!

Some of the ritual songs that have persisted through the years have lost their explicit meaning but continue to survive because of beautiful melodies and perhaps the strange images they evoke. Such a song is this one to the loa Atti Daï, from the Dahomey service:

Atti Daï oh!	Atti Daï, oh!
Yo voyé dit moin	They sent to tell me
Min soleil malade! *	The sun was sick!
Quan'm té rivé	When I arrived
Moin joind soleil mouri!	I found the sun had died!
Quan'm té rivé	When I arrived
Moin joind soleil mouri!	I found the sun had died!
C'est regrettant ça	What grief it was
Pou'm enterré soleil! [Ex.89]	For me to bury the sun!

One of the truly lovely songs of the Dahomey rites, both in melody and in lyrics, is the following one to the deity Èzilie. It shows clear evidence of Catholic ritual influence in both its text and its music. Èzilie Fréda, who seems to be speaking most of the lines, is identified with the Virgin Mary, and the tone of this piece casts her more in her Catholic role than her African. The deity is speaking from Yagaza, a place described as being "on the other side of the water." In form the song is atypical in that it has more than one movement and progresses from one idea to another.

Èzilie Nainain oh!
Èzilie Nainain oh!
Èzilie oh, c'est moin Yagaza!

Èzilie n'ap marché n'ap couté n'ap parlé pou' temps y'ap parlé parole moin!
Èzilie n'ap marché n'ap couté pou' temps y'ap parlé parole mwé!
Èzilie Nainain oh!
Èzilie Fréda oh Nainain oh!
Èzilie Fréda oh, c'est moin Yagaza!

Moudanse nè yo chiu non caille li yo vlé djaillé oh tout temps soleil pas lévé!
Moudanse yo passé yo tombé té à gémous y'apé plainnint le mort yo!

* Some Haitian informants vouched that *soleil* meant "sun." Others felt that the word in the song was really *Solé*, a diminutive of *Solèil*, another name for Atti Daï.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

with one of his children as he had agreed. That night his oldest child died. The next year to the day, his second child died. And the third year, the third child died. On the fourth anniversary, the man's wife died. On the fifth, he himself died. The djab of Trou Fourban had collected his debt.

Another great djab lives on the northern mountain called Morne Ronde. A man of Cap Haitien was said to have made a compact with him for wealth. One day there was a great hubbub in front of the man's house. A crowd gathered and stood peering inside his door. What they saw was a rain of money falling down from the rafters. The floor was covered with ten-gourde bills. When the *gendarmerie* came to investigate, they stood at the doorway in awe, watching the money float to the floor. The man finally closed the door. That night he moved away, and no one in Cap Haitien ever saw him again.

The djab are insatiable. For their favors—which range from providing wealth and political position to destroying one's enemies—they always demand more in return than the recipient has counted on. Catholic ritual is called upon in some instances to break the djab's chain of demands.

Some tales are told in which human beings outwit the djab, particularly the lesser ones; but more often than not, the djab have the last laugh. During the big hurricane which hit Haiti in 1954, a huge landslide occurred near the place called Bayè Roche in the La Selle Mountains. An entire village was wiped out, covered by the falling rocks. Throughout this region the disaster was attributed to the action of a djab reputed to live in one of the nearby caves. Many lost cattle were found wandering near Bayè Roche, and they were believed to be people whom the malevolent djab had transformed into animals.

The height of bravado is to demand to be confronted with a big djab face to face. There is a song which goes:

> Conduit'm allé oh!
> Conduit'm allé djab nan Trou Fourban!
> Conduit'm allé! [Ex. 91]
>
> Take me, oh!
> Take me to the djab in Trou Fourban!
> Take me!

There are still other supernatural creatures in Haitian lore who must be guarded against, such as the *djablesse*, the *revenant*, and the *lutin*. The *djablesse* is a female ghost who must live in the woods for a number of years before she can enter heaven, as a punishment for the crime of

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

mâché carriage or on papier-mâché horses, make their appearance during Rara as well as on the Day of the Kings (*Les Rois*). 541 536

Among the traditional paraphernalia carried by Rara groups are cocomacaque sticks, cha-cha rattles, metal rattles called *tchancy*, a set of rattles on a tall thin pole (called *jouconjou*), candelabra bearing candles or oil lamps (*lampions*), banners and flags, and such miscellaneous musical instruments as the *grage* scraper, bamboo scraping devices, the *basse* finger drum, *assots* (beating boards), and various kinds of secular drums. 541 575 534

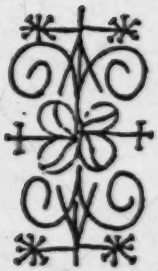
The general tone of Rara is nonreligious. The dancing is free from the decorous restraints which characterize most religious ritual, and some early observers of the festival were shocked by what they saw. Some of them went so far as to attribute Haiti's dense population to the "licentious activities" and reckless abandon of the spring carnival. The Catholic Church and some political administrators have sporadically sought to suppress Rara, along with Vodoun ritual. And even today in Port-au-Prince the foreign visitor often is urged to watch the elite Mardi Gras with its floats and mulatto queens as a substitute. 541 [535] [795] [656]

Although Rara has an over-all tone of secular abandon, it has links with both Catholic and Vodoun ritual. Good Friday is given over in good measure to miming the story of Jesus and Judas. A perambulating band may carry an effigy of Judas hanging from a pole. Another will burn the Judas effigy, or drag it in the dust as the crowd moves along the road. In another group a man playing the part of Judas may crawl on his hands and knees along the trail, while Jesus' avengers pursue him with long, cracking whips. 541 177 536

Tying in with Vodoun ritual, virtually all Rara drums and other paraphernalia are "dedicated" or "rededicated" before Lent in special hounfor services. And on the last day of Rara, usually late in the night, prayers are said, the loa are called upon, and some of the festive paraphernalia is thrown into a fire to be consumed. 541 536 534 [178]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 122]



10. The Arts– Flour, Wood, and Iron

177 178 53 567 It is the nonmaterial arts and traditions that have thrived best in Haiti through the years of slavery, political unrest, and poverty. Religious concepts, music, dancing, folk tales, proverbs, and games are found everywhere in profusion. Material arts of the past have fared less well. Today, nothing is left of the old African knowledge of wood carving, metal casting, appliqué work, and weaving. Why such major African arts have died out in Haiti is no mystery. They disappeared simply because there was no place for them under the slave system or in the new Haitian society which followed it.

177 178 567 532 Under the colonial masters, the demands made on the New World African were for coffee, cotton, and indigo. His creative talents were channeled into carpentry, masonry, and the building of facilities for production. There were no traditional artistic outlets or patrons for the wood carver, and no need for the weaver. Nor, during the years of slavery, was there much leisure for the craftsman to do his work even for the fun of it, should he be so inclined; indeed, this approach to wood carving or any other art would have been little understood or appreciated by most West Africans. A man who made an art object purely and simply to express a creative urge rather than to fill an express need would have been regarded as slightly eccentric. The old West African wood carvings with which we are now familiar were made because they were *required* for some purpose. A figure of a deity was needed in a shrine, a carved protective guard was needed for the household, a grave marker or a ceremonial mask was obligatory.

177 178 567 326 In Haiti the needs of those who ruled were different. The slave with knowledge of the forge was not put to work making spears, ceremonial axes, and the like; he was assigned the task of making grillwork for houses, hinges and bolts, iron tires for coach wheels, and metal parts for the sugar mills. The anonymous African ironworker did his job well.

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[p. 126]

11. Dancing and Dance Drama

197 178 535 The dances of Haiti, like the loa, are almost beyond counting. Like the loa, too, the dances have personalities of their own, sometimes too subtle for the stranger to detect. If there is one valid generalization, it is that the inspiration for the Haitian dance is primarily African. There have been changes in the course of the more than four hundred years since the first Africans came to the New World. Some of the old dances have disappeared altogether; others have developed new characteristics. New dances came into being with European rather than African form. Some of the most traditional dances have become sparse and lean, stripped of the decorative pageantry of earlier days. There are also the French quadrilles and similar square dances which have survived since colonial days in remote parts of the mountains. But it is the quadrille and not the dance of African origin which is atypical in Haiti's folk culture. Dancing is deeply rooted in almost all the important events of Haitian life. It is one of the few arts that have survived from preslavery days.

535 178 175 Early European travelers in Haiti were greatly taken by the dances they found there. Some observers, like Moreau de Saint-Méry, a Frenchman born in Martinique, have left invaluable documentation of the dances of the late eighteenth century. Saint-Méry described many dances that are still known in modern Haiti, such as the Chica, the Calinda, the Vodoun, and the Pétro. From his accounts one may assume that these dances have not changed much to this day.

114 But many of the foreign authors and journalists of early days were astoundingly lacking in understanding and quick to bare their prejudices and to pronounce their moral judgments. Like the explorers of our own time who delight in "returning alive" from some jungle land and in commenting upon all the strange, bizarre, dangerous, and wicked things they think they have seen, the explorer of the Dark Island often described the Haitian as a depraved branch of the human species. One such ob-

114 tion helped to perpetuate some prevailing misunderstandings and errors.
535 This distinguished observer wrote:

> The Negroes of the Gold Coast, warlike, bloody, accustomed to human sacrifice, know only dances as ferocious as themselves, while those from the Congo, Senegalese and other African shepherds or agricultural tribes, love dancing as a relaxation, as a source of sensual pleasure. Brought from all parts of Africa to our Colonies . . . , the Negroes brought here and preserved their taste for the dance, a taste so strong that, however tired out from work the Negro may be, he always finds strength to dance and even to travel a long distance to satisfy this desire.
>
> 114 When the Negroes want to dance, they take two drums, that is, two hollow
> 533 logs, of unequal length, with one end open, while the other is covered with
> 535 sheepskin. These drums . . . resound under blows of the wrist and movements of the fingers of a Negro who sits astride of each drum. The larger drum is beaten slowly, the other more rapidly. This monotonous and hollow sound is accompanied by the noise of a certain number of calabashes which have been filled with
> [534] pebbles . . . Several *kanzas*, a sort of large guitar with four strings,[2] join the concert, the tempo of which is regulated by the clapping hands of the Negro women, who form a large circle. They form a sort of chorus, which responds to one or two strident solo voices, which repeat or improvise a song.[3]

535 As for the dance movements themselves, Saint-Méry wrote:

> A male and [a] female dancer, or several dancers divided into equal numbers of each sex, jump into the center of the circle and begin to dance, always two by two. This dance, which varies little, consists of a very simple step in which one foot is put forward after the other, and then drawn back quickly, while striking the toe and the heel on the ground . . . Some turn in place, or around the woman, who turns also and changes places with her partner; that is all which one sees, except for the movement of the arms which the man raises and lowers with the elbows quite close to the body and the hands almost closed. The woman holds two ends of a handkerchief, which she waves . . . One would hardly believe how lively and animated it is, and how much grace it derives from the strictness with which the musical rhythm is followed. The dancers replace one another without respite, and the Negroes are so intoxicated with pleasure that it is necessary to force them to conclude dances of this sort, called *kalendas*.[4]

[114] Saint-Méry then brings forth one of his conclusions, that this dance
[171] is obviously the development of a "comparatively uncivilized people," and that it comes from Africa, "where its characteristic features exist everywhere, even among the Hottentots."

114 Here he missed the point altogether. Although many of the char-
535 acteristics of this *kalenda* (or Calinda) were African, it had already been
179 intensively hybridized with European dance concepts, such as the pairing
[171] off of males and females, who danced as couples. Then, as today, the dances which amazed and shocked the European observer were precisely the ones that had taken over certain European traditions.

? [Actually a banjo-like instrument of African provenience. The similarity of the word banza to banjo appears to be more than a coincidence. Cf. P. 352, Category 116. -- Analyst]
? [Saint-Méry, De la danse, as translated by Lillian Moore in Moreau de Saint-Méry and "Danse," Dance Index, October, 1946, P. 238. Cf. P. 352, Category 116. -- Analyst]
? Moore, op. cit., P. 238. Cf. P. 352, Category 116. -- Analyst]

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Saint-Méry also wrote about some of the religious dances, which he identified by name: 171 535

> In Santo Domingo, and especially in the western, French section, there has existed for a long time a kind of dance called the Vaudoux [Vodoun] . . . which is characterized by movements where the upper part of the body, the shoulders and the head seem to move convulsively. This dance is accompanied by the drums, the clapping of hands, and group singing . . .
>
> The Vaudoux is nothing compared to the Don Pedro . . . , another Negro dance, also known in the western part of Santo Domingo since 1768. Don Pedro was the name of a Negro of the Petit-Goave section, of Spanish origin, who by his daring character and certain superstitious practices, had acquired among the Negroes enough influence to be denounced by the government as the instigator of some alarming plots. The dance which bears his name consists, like the Vaudoux, in the shaking of the shoulders and the head, but this shaking is extremely violent, and to increase it still further the Negroes drink, while dancing, brandy in which they have mixed finely ground gunpowder . . . They dance with the most horrible contortions, until finally they fall into a sort of epilepsy . . .

Making allowances for Saint-Méry's imaginative interpretation of many of the things he saw, the Haitian dance of today is not far different from that of the eighteenth century. It is cast in the West African mold, with Dahomean and Yoruban motifs predominating over European and other Western infiltrations. As in Saint-Méry's day, the drummers sit at the edge of the dance court, a leader wielding a gourd rattle leads the singing, and the dancers and spectators constitute the chorus. The dancers usually move around the center of the court in a counterclockwise direction. Their steps and postures vary according to the type of dance being performed. The Jenvalo, for example, is danced with a bent back, hands touching the knees. In the Zépaule dance the dancers are erect, and most of the movements are made with the shoulders. In the Pétro (the Don Pedro described by Saint-Méry) there is a constant, almost agitated movement of the feet. The songs accompanying these cult dances, while presented in African style, may have hybrid or even French melodies, though in the main they are more African than European. The over-all context of the cult dances, as well as most of the secular ones, is West African, with constant interplay between the singers, dancers, and drummers. Sometime the dancers "drive" the drummers, sometimes the drummers "drive" the dancers. Certain beats of the drum are signals for special movements and postures. On hearing special beats or rolls, the dancers may leap vertically into the air, or perform a *laillé* (a swirling motion that causes the skirts to flare out), or a *djaillé* (excitement motions). Increased tension among the dancers may cause the drummers to shift the beat, or to increase

177 178 533 535 [114]

[Brandy or rum with gunpowder is sometimes drunk by persons possessed by the loa Ogoun, deity of war. Cf. P. 352, Cat. 116. --Analyst]

[Moore, op. cit., P. 238. Cf. P. 352, Cat. 116. --Analyst]

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tempo. The chorus and leader sing responsively, their parts overlapping in traditional African style. The shoulder movements, foot movements, the way the arms are carried, and the typical posture of feet flat on the ground, bent knees, and swayed back—all are of African derivation. These postures and movements are broad and direct. There are few of the decorative and "fine" movements that one sees in the dances of Indonesia, Cambodia, and India. Where the Javanese lays stress on the pose of the hands and the delicate movements of the fingers, the Haitian dancer is concerned with the position of the arms and the motions of the shoulders. The Indonesian sense of poised balance or suspended movement is absent. In its place there is an attitude of strong frontal assault against natural forces such as gravity, or direct submission to those forces. There is almost always a feeling of solidity and stability in Haitian posture, and of a proximity between the body and the earth, but the total effect is dynamic. Indonesian dancing seems to express a comprehension of the unseen and the supernatural; Haitian dancing seems to express an intimate understanding of nature.

Dancing touches on virtually every aspect of life in Haiti. It plays a part in the supplication of loa, the placation of the dead, and the making of magic; in the consecration of a hounfor, the installation of a houngan, and the initiation of cult members; in planting, harvesting, and house-building. Catholic Church holidays, Nine Nights, baptisms, the election of a new president, and ordinary social gatherings—all are celebrated, in part, at least, by dancing.

Haitian dancing is participative rather than exhibitionistic. It is to join rather than to watch. There are some dances, however, which require special skills, and a few which are highly individualistic. Several types of dances are described elsewhere in this book. Verbal description cannot do justice to an art such as dancing, of course; but some brief sketches may help to suggest the differences between one Haitian dance and another.

In the Congo Mazonne, for example, men and women pair off and dance face to face, making contact occasionally but only briefly. The arms are stretched forward as though to embrace the partner around the waist, but the actual embrace never materializes. The partners dance sometimes as though they are unaware of each other and are simply part of a larger group; then they approach, move as mirrored reproductions, and separate. Loin movement is free, and there is a restrained sexual intensity, though direct sexual implications are not necessarily present. Sometimes the woman holds the hem of her skirt in her hands, while the man holds his jacket open toward his partner.

The last

535 form is heard most often during carnival days. In all variations of the Meringue, the dance is performed by couples in ballroom style. Among
[831] the elite, it is restrained. Elsewhere it is much more animated, with free and uninhibited pelvic motions similar to those seen at the Saturday night *bamboche*. Although the Haitian regards his Meringue as a national
171 popular dance, Spanish-type music has infiltrated heavily from the Do-
●179 minican Republic, Cuba, and other islands of the West Indies. Thousands
53 of Haitians returning from contract labor in Cuba have brought with them not only Cuban songs and rhythms but Cuban instruments as well. It has not been a one-way affair, however, for the Arada cults of eastern Cuba have been built substantially around immigrants from Haiti, and in the Cuban mountains you may hear music and see dances of Afro-Haitian origin.

Still other kinds of dances are to be found in remote villages of Haiti—the old folk dances of Europe. The villagers still know and perform the waltz, the polka, the mazurka and the quadrille, usually to the accompaniment of violins or guitars, or possibly an accordion.

But the influences are not all ancient ones. Jazz has infiltrated the Meringue. And some years ago a small boy asked me with some concern whether I had taken proper account of a very important dance called *le black bottom*.

535 Following is a list of dances known to Haitians today. Some of them
[178] are found throughout Haiti, some are known only regionally, and a few are on the verge of extinction.

Dances Connected with Vodoun Ritual

Arada, or Rada: One of the main dances of the Vodoun service, named after the Dahomean city and cult center, Allada.

Anago, or Nago: Named after the Nagos, a branch of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria. For deities of Nago origin.

Mahi: Named after the Mahi people of Dahomey.

Dérétal: A Mahi dance of northern Haiti.

Parigale: Another Mahi type of dance. Possibly from *pas régal* (*royal step*).

Jenvalo, or Yenvalo: A supplication dance, variously called Jenvalo Doba (*dos bas*, low back), Jenvalo Jénon (*genoux*, knees), and Dobado.

Zépaule: A supplication dance in which the movements are made primarily by the shoulders (*les épaules*). It is sometimes called Jenvalo Zépaule or Jenvalo Débout (standing Jenvalo).

Flaverodoun: Another type of shoulder dance known in the north.

Banda, or Chice: A gay and sometimes ribald dance, said to be much favored by the loa Cousin Zaka and the loa Gédé.

Maconne Rada: The "Masonic" Rada dance; often danced for the loa Gédé.

Carabinne or Crabinne: A rest dance, interspersed into long-drawn-out Arada

[i.e., the "Meringue Coundjaille" in which the rhythm is very fast. -- Analyst]

535 ***Baboule*, or *Bamboula*:** Danced on the occasion of building a new house.

535 ***Mascort*:** Danced by a société after communal work on the land of one of its members.

476 ***Ti Coumba*:** Another société work dance, sometimes closely related to Vodoun ritual. Known in Brazil as Macumba.

***Kounc*, or *Coundjaille*:** A dance connected with communal work celebrations.[8]

Rara and Carnival Dances

535 541 ***Rara*, also called *Chariopié*, *Lavalavali*, and *Vaccine*:** The perambulating dances of the Rara festival.

***Mascaron*, or *Covoyé*:** Danced for the Mardi Gras.

***Paillette*:** Any carnival dance in costume.

***Batonnic*:** A carnival stick dance with West African precedents.

***Trèsé Ribon*:** The carnival Maypole dance.

***Congo Paillette*:** The "Straw Congo," or "Costume Congo," the carnival dance of the *société* Congo. It is also known as Ciyé and Congo Mardi Gras.

***Rabordage*:** A Mardi Gras perambulating dance.

***Chaluska*:** A Mardi Gras dance in which the participants are dressed as nineteenth-century generals. Comic mimicry. Also referred to as Charles Oscar.

Zizipan

Roboto

Mayouse

Other Secular and Miscellaneous Dances

535

***Zesse*:** A *gage* dance of northern Haiti.

***Calinda*:** A mock battle dance. Also a dance of the Calinda "secret society."

***Ka*:** A dance which takes its name from the *ka*, a secular drum.

Bèlè*, or *Belair

Mangouline

***Ti Crip*:** This is regarded by some informants as one of the Pétro dances.

***Malfini*:** "The Hawk," a dance of northern Haiti.

***Pinyique*:** A simple "good time" dance.

***Bambilé*:** A simple "good time" dance.

***Bambocho*:** A "good time" dance. The term is often used to designate any social dance. As a verb, *bambocké* means "to dance" or "to have a good time."

Secular Dances of European Type

535 177 ***Meringue*:** There are three main types of Meringue—the drawing-room Meringue, the ordinary "ballroom" Meringue, and the Meringue Coundjaille (which is fast and agitated). A development of the last decade or so is the jazz Meringue.

***Ti Bobine*:** This is a sort of square dance, though it is sometimes danced in Meringue style.

***Menuet*, or *Menuet*:** The minuet.

Polka

Waltz

Quadrille

Mazurka

Contredanse

[8] [Footnote appears on p: 352, Category 116.--Analyst]

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[P. 170]

16. Folk Tales: Bouki, Malice, and Jean Saute

538 In the folk tales and legends of Haiti there has been a powerful assimilation from many cultures. There are stories of European and African derivation, and countless others that are to be found in one form or another in the Middle East, Asia, and throughout the Americas. The precise origins of many of these stories probably will never be known. Some of them are as ancient as the Panchatantra and have variants in India, Indonesia, Korea, Egypt, West Africa, and northern Europe. It is likely that many tales with this broad distribution came into Haiti by way of Europe, along with the French, Spanish, and English settlers. But numerous stories told in Europe are well known in West and Central Africa too. The folk tales of the world have an astonishing universality. The adventures of the West African hare and spider are closely paralleled in the tales of the American Negro Br'er Rabbit, the hare of Thailand, and the mouse deer of Indonesia.

538 In Haiti today, as in other islands of the West Indies, there is an endless repertoire of folk stories of many kinds—animal tales; trickster tales; stories about magicians, kings, and princesses; *contes* fables; and stories that account for the beginnings of things, the behavior of certain animals, and their physical appearance. There are European dragons and devils, and beasts of the African forests. Some of the stories are long and episodic, some are so brief—even curt—that they have lost their original core. They may point out moral or ethical values or, more commonly, strike completely amoral levels in which the humor depends upon acts that in real life would be regarded as cruel. Like the folk songs, the tales are often used to express the democratic equality of the small person with the great. In many instances it is the small man who triumphs over the powerful and rich. In the Bouki-Malice cycle it is usually the little wily trickster who wins over the larger and physically stronger opponents.

None of the Haitian tales are meant to be read, for storytelling is a

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171 538 and Ile'er Fox are the protagonists. Many of these tales, like the characters themselves, have West African prototypes, though others seem to have been created out of the workaday substance of Haitian life. They are not, however, essentially children's tales. Some of them involve risqué or ribald escapades.

Among the Haitian tales are numerous themes which stem directly from African lore, such as the hoe that worked by itself in the fields; the single grain of seed corn which, when drawn across the ground, grew an entire field of maize; and the pot that boiled without fire. There are many remnants also of the African tale in which a "tail feather" of an elephant is required for some magic purpose. There is a pursuit which follows the acquisition of the elephant hairs, and the pursued person saves himself with three magical eggs. When he throws one on the ground, a huge river springs up behind him. When he throws down another, a forest appears behind him, and so on. The elephant's tail feather is regarded as a very powerful protective charm in many regions of West Africa. That the memory of it should continue in Haiti so precisely, although there are no elephants, is striking.

● 179 538 Although Haitian folk tales are abundant and are well loved, over the years they have tended to become more and more simple. The episodic European tales of kings and princesses and monsters that have been taken over are, generally, of a naïve kind without moral or intellectual significance. They are interesting for the twists and turns of fate and for momentary laughs.

The tale of Grandmother's Bath is a case in point. In this story, Jean Saute (Stupid John) is left at home to care for Grandmother while Jean L'Esprit (Smart John) goes to market. Jean Saute puts Grandmother in a tub and pours boiling water over her, killing her instantly. He looks at the grimace on her face and concludes that she is enjoying it immensely; so he sticks her pipe in her mouth and pours more water over her. When Jean L'Esprit returns, Jean Saute is very proud of himself. But Jean L'Esprit discovers that Grandmother is dead. The brothers then pack their belongings to go to the city. There follows a series of strange and bizarre adventures. Jean L'Esprit sends his dull-witted brother back for something he has forgotten; Jean Saute misunderstands and brings the door off the house. Throughout their adventures Jean Saute carries the door with him. When they get to the forest they climb into a tree to sleep for the night, Jean Saute carrying his door along. While they are there, a convocation of devils (*djab*) takes place under the tree. Jean Saute has to urinate, and he does so into the middle of the convocation. The devils shout gleefully that it is wine from heaven and try to catch the water. Eventually the door

[Footnote appear on P. 353, Category 116. --Analist]

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falls from the tree and frightens them away. The two brothers continue on their way and come to a country where it is always night—a great dragon with seven heads has swallowed the sun.[3] The two brothers kill the dragon, with the help of Jean Saute's stupidity. They cut into the monster and find a silver box, which they open, releasing the sun from captivity. The news goes on ahead. When they arrive at the city, the king, in appreciation, offers them the choice of his daughters. Jean L'Esprit, as might be expected, chooses the youngest and most beautiful. Jean Saute turns them all down and asks to marry the king's cook. 172 538

This story seems to be one of the most extended tales in Haitian lore, unless one groups all the Bouki-Malice stories together in a single cycle. However, most European-style tales (Beauty and the Beast and Jack and the Beanstalk, for instance) have suffered considerable deterioration. In the process of adaptation, such tales lost much of the original detail and decorative motif that made them interesting to the European. They became stark and brief, fragmentary anecdotes about kings, devils, and snakes.

With some few exceptions, the African stories have undergone less change: the Singing Tortoise (found later in this chapter) and Anansi's Tug of War, for example. But even in the tales of African origin there has been simplification to the extent that many of them are mere fragments; in some even the central point itself has been lost. The Bouki-Malice tales, counterparts of the Anansi stories of West Africa, have lost the contemplative tone found in the African originals. Moral points of the kind commonly made in African tales have almost entirely disappeared and are to be found only in proverbs. If the good wins over the bad, that is simply an accident of fate; for the bad wins over the good just as frequently. Death and sadism are constant themes. But the prime conflict remains the smart against the stupid, and the small and weak against the large and powerful. 171 538

Like kindred tales elsewhere in the West Indies and in the United States, many of the stories have standard beginnings and endings. The storyteller begins by saying "Cric," and his audience replies, "Crac." When he comes to the end he usually uses a variant of: 538

"I was there and saw it. And Malice gave me a kick and sent me all the way here to tell you about it." Or: "So I have run all the way here to tell it to you." Or: "That's the story, and if you don't believe me, tafa will never kill you." Or: "They gave me a blow, and I have just come to my senses." Or again: "So he kicked me over the house and here I am." These formula endings often provide a dramatic punch for the children who are listening.

[3] [Footnote appears on p. 353, Category IIK—Analysis]

[P. 189]

18. Musical Instruments

The Haitian people have drawn heavily on both Europe and Africa for their musical inspiration. In music, as in other traditions, the country is bicultural. There is, on the one hand, the music of the so-called *élite*—the literate and educated class which is concentrated in the cities—and on the other hand, the music of the peasants, the plantation laborers, and the lower economic groups of the town. The *élite* music is in the European or Western tradition, while the true folk music of Haiti follows, in the main, in the wake of West African musical culture. The instruments of *élite* music are primarily those of Western Europe. The instruments of the folk music of the country are those which can best interpret the mainstream currents of the West African heritage—instruments of African design and function. European-style instruments have infiltrated into the folk music too, but the over-all picture is that of a survival of African musical devices to interpret music cast in an African mold. It is the folk-music instruments which call for examination—the instruments that are made in the villages and tiny huts in the mountains, the instruments on which the significant music of Haiti depends.

The materials from which these instruments are made are usually those found upon the land. If a man wishes to make a drum, he cuts down a tree for the purpose. For material for a bamboo trumpet he goes to the bamboo grove. For a flute, he cuts a reed. Metal is used for making African-style bells, rattles, singing horns, and substitutes for bamboo trumpets.

The drum in its many forms is the most common instrument of all. It is used for dances of all kinds, for cult rites, for work music on the road and in the field, and for assembly calls and signals. Not very many years ago the older people in the south of Haiti still spoke of the "talking drums" they had seen as children.

The craft of drum making is a very skilled one, but the tools are

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534 the Haitian word for "twins." They are used primarily for secular
[177] music of the Cuban type, and may in fact be an importation from Cuba. The maraca is one of the few drums on which a finger technique is used; that is, striking with individual fingers rather than with grouped fingers. Maracas are often played in concert with guitars and marimbas.

The *hase* is the shallow finger drum resembling what in the United States is called the tambourine. Constructed in the pattern of an African prototype, its head is usually fifteen or eighteen inches in diameter and made of goatskin. Small metal disks sometimes are inserted in the frame
534 to act as rattles. The head is kept well coated with resin or beeswax and
[139] is tapped and rubbed with the fingers. The *hase* is used only for secular music, except in the rare instances when it is used in Congo services. Some Haitians believe that the name of the instrument comes from the word *Rasque*.

534 It is reported that signal drums were still in use a decade ago in
202 remote sections of the southwestern peninsula. One of these instruments, according to description, is distinguished mainly by its large belly and small mouth; like the Juba drum, it is played on its side. Another style of signal drum has a slit in the side and is played erect, much like an African slit-log drum standing on end.

534 Another percussion instrument is the bamboo stamping tube, called
[171] the *ganbo* or *ti kawabo*. It is African in origin and probably takes its name from the Loango term for the same device, *dikwambo*.[2] The stamping tube is simply a length of bamboo, open at one end and closed at the other by a natural joint membrane. The closed end is struck sharply upon the ground, and the tone comes from the open top. The device works like an inverted drum, the closed end functioning like a drumhead. A battery of four or five ganbos may provide the percussion music otherwise played by drums. The musician corresponding to the *hulatier* of the drum orchestra plays two small stamping tubes, one in each hand. The other musicians have one each, thicker and longer than the hulatier's and producing deeper tones. Cupped hands are manipulated over the open ends for varying the sounds. This instrument
[171] has survived in various parts of the New World where Africans were settled, particularly other West Indian islands, Brazil, and Venezuela. In Venezuela the stamping tubes are called *quitiplas*.[3] They have recently been reported from various areas of West Africa, including French Equatorial Africa.[4]

534 The ganbos had a singular burst of popularity in Haiti during the
548 United States military occupation of the country after the first World
998 War, when drums were often seized and destroyed. Drums could not

[115] [1 [Informant: Joseph Lengo, Brazzaville. Cf. P 354, Category 116. --Analyst]
[2 [Library of Congress album, Folk Music of Venezuela. Cf P 354 Category 116. --Analyst]
[3 [Pamphlet accompanying recording, Music of Equatorial Africa (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1950). Cf P 354, Cat. 116. --Analyst]

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easily be hidden, but the ganbos were simply slipped into the straw roofs and thus put out of sight. Moreover, by some strange process of reasoning, military authorities regarded the bamboos as "harmless," though they were used for the same purposes as the contraband drums. 534 648 798

There are numerous other kinds of simple percussion devices. One such instrument, now less commonly seen than previously, is a length of open bamboo laid in the crotches of two Y-shaped sticks set in the ground. Like other *catas*, the bamboo is beaten with two sticks. Some Haitians believe that in former days such bamboos were played in batteries like a xylophone. 534

Sometimes a light-weight wooden cylinder, or perhaps a drum denuded of its playing head, is carried by the timekeeper of a coumbite. It, also, is played on the side with sticks. [461] [476]

Wooden mortars for pulverizing grain take on the character of musical instruments when used in combination with voices. When two or more mortars are used, with two men or women wielding the long polelike pestles in each mortar, the rhythmic effects can become fairly complicated. 534 533 412

The *claves* or *palos* (small hardwood sticks) are used primarily in connection with secular dances of a Cuban type, or to accompany such instruments as the guitar and the marimba. One stick is held loosely in the natural fold of the hand, so that it is free to vibrate, and is struck sharply with the second stick. The tone is almost metallic because of the hardness of the wood, usually lignum vitae. The name of the instrument is recognizable as a form of *clavar*, or *clavo*, Spanish for "peg" or "nail." It is thought that wooden shipbuilding pegs provided the name for this device, which has equivalents in West Africa. 534 535 [177] [824] [171]

Among the folk instruments there are various kinds of horns and trumpets. Cows' horns are played musically in some parts of the southern peninsula, though usually they are used as ritual instruments and signaling devices. Wooden trumpets called *pistons* are carved from the stems of the papaya tree. Conch-shell trumpets, known as *lambis*, are commonly used as signaling devices by fishermen. They are also to be found among the coumbites, in Rara festivities, and occasionally in rituals, where they are usually identified with sea deities. In carnival times the old fashioned phonograph horn makes its appearance as a combined trumpet and voice amplifier. 534 184 [824] [202] [541] [216]

Probably the most important of the trumpets is the one made of bamboo. It is called a *surcine* or *bois bourrique*. Both names have interesting origins. The cow's horn was at one time used for magico-medical purposes. The leaf doctor used it as an "applicator" of powders and potions. A small opening was made in the point of the horn, and 534 755 [237]

[See plate 8, P. 112-F. -- Analyst]

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534 the horn itself was filled with the magico-medical preparation, which
155 was called *vaccine*. The point of the horn was applied to parts of the body which needed treatment, and the powers of the potion were thus transmitted to the affected areas. In time, the cow's horn itself came to be known as a *vaccine*. Eventually the horn used for musical purposes took over the name, which was then transferred to the bamboo trumpet. The other name by which the bamboo trumpet is known, *bois bourrique*, means burro wood. But it probably is a corruption of *voix bourrique*, meaning "donkey's voice," an accurate description of the sound it makes.

534 The vaccine consists of a length of bamboo, with a joint membrane at
535 one end cut into a mouthpiece. Trumpets of different sizes give different tones, and three to five of them together constitute a vaccine orchestra. Vaccines are employed by the coumbites in the fields, and they are heard in the towns and cities primarily during the pre-Easter festivities. In the Rara festivals the vaccine players march together, blowing and tapping their trumpets with sticks, followed by a crowd of dancers. Traditionally, the bamboo trumpet is not employed in religious music, although in recent years it has made its appearance occasionally in Congo-Guinée rites.

534 There are two kinds of musical scrapers. The one more often seen is the *grage*, a piece of sheet metal perforated in the fashion of our common kitchen grater. It is "played" by scraping a piece of wire or a nail across its rough surface. Found in secular rather than religious settings, the grage is likely to be used in combination with such instruments as the *tambourine*, marimba, claves, and hoe. The second form of scraper is the *dentti*, or *dentti*, a notched stick played with a bamboo scraping blade. The free end of the stick is sometimes braced against a bench or a plank, which acts as a sounding board. Some Haitians reported that in the old days gourds were used as sounding chambers.

534 The scraper in one form or another appears to have both Indian and
171 West African precedents. Its relationship to the washboard as used in Negro folk music in the United States is obvious. The notched gourd
● [172] called the *guira*, found in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and other West Indian islands, appears to be present in Haiti only as an imported instrument.

534 Rattles of various types are used in religious and secular dances, in
535 the invocation of deities, and as accompaniment for solo singing. The most common of the rattles is the simple cha-cha, or *kwa-kwa*. It is a small gourd with a wooden handle, with seeds inside. It is usually played by the singing leader as a device to keep time. Sometimes the long dry seed pods of the cha-cha tree are used as a substitute.

535 In the Rara season two special rattles are used. One of them is made

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534 [541] Among the noisemakers heard mostly at the time of the Rara festival (usually on Good Friday) are the *oon-oon*, or bull-roarer—a thin flat piece of wood whirled on the end of a cord—and the *rara*, the common wooden ratchet. Various types of wooden flutes, usually of bamboo, are also used.

[184] In the remoter parts of the mountains you may now and then hear of an instrument known as the *banza*. A century ago, it would appear, the *banza* was a stringed instrument resembling a banjo. The similarity of names is striking, in view of the instrument's early form. Today, [179] however, the word *banza* is applied to the homemade fiddle which is used to accompany the minuet and other old dances of European origin.

534 524 178 A children's instrument seen sometimes in the mountains is constructed of half of a calabash shell, across the opening of which have been stretched a number of cords. This plucked device appears to be a decadent form of the African trough zither.

[pp 203-313 not processed]

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a "nation" in the Dahomé rites; and the Ibo group, though still distinct, is frequently allied with the Dahomé rites or the Guinée rites.

The following list does not pretend to include all the loa known in Haiti. It is doubtful that a complete list could ever be compiled, in view of the continual generation of new deities and the constant cross-fertilization between "nations." The loa are grouped here according to most widespread usage. There are contradictions from which there is no possible escape, and these general groupings will not necessarily correspond to the concepts and practices of any specific locality. It is intended here to give a broad and generalized view.

Under "The Vodoun Pantheon" I have placed constellations of deities of Dahomean and Yoruban origin, along with others that are clearly identified with Vodoun rites. Under "The Congo and Pétro Pantheons" I have listed the Congo-Guinée loa—consisting mainly of deities associated with Central Africa and deities affiliated with the Pétro rites. Ibo and Kanga loa are grouped together, because in many regions of Haiti the two pantheons appear to be interlocked. A separate listing is given for the Simbi family of water deities in view of their ambivalence; they are sometimes found in the Pétro group and sometimes in the Dahomé, according to local practice.

THE VODOUN PANTHEON

Damballa Wedo, or Dan Wedo. One of the most venerable of Haitian loa. He is generally recognized as the husband of Ayida Wédo, though occasionally the two deities are merged in a personality called Damballo-Ayida. The concept of a single identity for Damballa and Ayida conforms to Dahomean belief. In both Haiti and West Africa, Damballa is identified with the rainbow and is symbolized as a snake.[1] In Haiti he is associated also with rainfall, springs, and fertility. He is sometimes described as "white," and the proper food offering to him is a white chicken. Persons possessed by Damballa usually take on stylized characteristics of snakes. Along with many other important loa, he has become identified with characters in Christian religious belief. There are, in fact, "two" Damballa Wédos. One, identified with Moses, comes in talking; the other, identified with St. Patrick, never talks. Food offerings for the St. Patrick version of Damballa consist of eggs, flour, sugar, and almond syrup. Damballa remains one of the chief gods of the Dahomey cult in Cuba, and he survived into the last century in New Orleans under the name Dimoy.

Ayida Wédo. Generally regarded in Haiti as the wife of Damballa, Ayida is also symbolized by snake and rainbow, and her color, like Damballa's, is "white." In Dahomey and Nigeria, Ayida is known as a male rather than a female spirit and is regarded there as the same divinity as Damballa, or Dji. In Dahomey, Ayida Wédo was the great serpent who held up the world. According to one myth, the Creator of the World assigned to Ayida the task of holding up the earth to keep it from falling into the sea. The great serpent coiled himself, tail in mouth, and lay below

1. [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 345 ff. Cf. p. 354, Calleyey 46. --Analyst]

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[The Vodoun Pantheon]

the earth like the carrying pad that women wear to support bundles on their heads. Whenever Ayida Wèdo shifted his position there were earthquakes.[1] When the rainbow appeared after a rain it was said that Ayida had come out from under the earth to drink of the fresh water. [776] [171] [821]

Damballa Grand Chemin (Damballa of the Highway). Another manifestation of Damballa as a protector of those on long journeys. [484]

Damballa Verde. Another manifestation of Damballa.

Dereze Wèdo. Considered to be the daughter of Damballa. The ending of her name (-o) suggests that at one time she may have been considered a wife rather than a daughter.

Dèsi Wèdo. A member of Damballa's family.

Anlin Wèdo. A member of Damballa's family. Said to be a "work loa" who aids men with their gardens, especially in time of illness. [241]

Erzulie Dèsa, or Dèsa, sometimes spelled Ezèsa. One of the "big" loa of the Dahomè pantheon, a symbol of purity, and sometimes identified with the Virgin Mary. Her color is white, and services to her include a ritual sweeping and sprinkling of the earth and a perfuming of the air. Food offerings to her include corn meal and eggs. Male "horses" of Erzulie are sometimes bound to her by mystic marriages, and they are obligated to refrain from sexual intercourse on certain days which belong to her. There are a number of Erzulies, regarded as members of the same family or, in some cult centers, as different manifestations of the same deity. Some Haitians regard Erzulie Dèsa as the ancestor of the Erzulie family and refer to her as Grand Erzulie. Note that there is a Dahomean town named Dèsa at approximately 0° 6' E., 6° 50' N. [177] [822] [782] [987] [834] [588]

Erzulie Fèda, or Erzulie Dantòsòw (Dahomè), or Erzulie Fèda Dantòsòw. Like Erzulie Dèsa, she is a symbol of purity and is identified with the Virgin Mary. Mystic marriages are performed with her, and her "horses" are obligated to refrain from sexual intercourse on certain days. She is also a giver of wealth. [177] [588] [987] [834]

Erzulie Wèdo. A sister or daughter of Erzulie Dèsa and also related to Damballa.

Erzulie Mazòm. A sister of Erzulie Fèda.

Erzulie Bawa. A manifestation of Erzulie who is especially fond of the Bawda dance.

Erzulie Jòmòrèd (Red Eyes). A mean and hard Erzulie who is often identified with Pèrèz rather than Dahomè rites.

Alòsu Fèfès. A member of the Erzulie category, regarded as a market-place protector. In Dahomey, Alòsu was a protector of all public gathering places.[2] [443] [971]

Alòsu Badadri

Alòsu Dèzèr Bòlè Bòsu

Mèlèzòsu Mazòm. A special form of Erzulie as princess.

Mèlèzòsu Ezòsòmèla, or Tèzòsòmèla. A person possessed by this Erzulie talks only Spanish. [987] [971]

Sèwo, or Sèwòn. A thunder deity who hurls stones to the earth when angered. Some of the stones thrown by Sèwo are regarded as the sacred residence of various loa. Sèwo (or Sègbo) is a member of the original Thunder pantheon of Dahomey. [776] [171]

Sèwo Badè, or Sèwo Bazè, or simply Badè. A close relative of Sèwo, regarded as the protector of the hounfòr (*badè*). In Dahomey, Badè is sometimes referred to as the son of the deity Sèwo.[3]

[1] [See Ellis, The Ewe-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, pp 41-44; and Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 245ff. Cf. p 354 Category 116. -- Analyst]

[2] [Ellis, op. cit., p. 52. Cf. p 354, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[3] [Herskovits, op. cit., pp. 152ff. Cf. p 354, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]

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Maly' Gbaso Cinsoe (Master of the Highway). Probably Legba. 176

Makanda. Believed to be the spirit of the famous houngan Makandal, who lived during the revolutionary period. He is symbolized as a snake which lives in the ground. Some informants think he is a Petro rather than a Dahomé loa. [175]

Mamo Caça

Tiylan Dawsa (Ancient Tiyan)

Wheydah Wala. Whydah is the name of a seacoast town in Dahomey.

Zo. A fire deity of clear Dahomean origin.

Olcisa

Oua, or Ouanga. Known also among the Lucumí cults of Cuba. May be any one of the Ouangos mentioned by Herskovits. [171]

Ouanga Lilé

Ouanjaré

Papa Dambalé

Pierre Barrico. This loa is sometimes identified with St. Peter. [177]

Pierre Damballa, Dambarra, or Dambara. Sometimes identified with St. Peter.

Pierre Wala. Related to Whydah Wala.

Poula, or Fouila. This name is probably a tribal designation.

Saheta. Described as a loa of ancient times. Sahata or Saghata is the so-called smallpox group of deities of Dahomey.

Silla. A female deity, thought by some to belong to the Exilie Fréda family.

Silibo Gwlvo. In Dahomey, according to Herskovits, Silibo is an ancient city-founder. [171]

Solonja

Tauvaso

Ti Cana. This is a "false name"; this loa keeps his real name a secret.

THE AMBIVALENT SIMBI FAMILY

This group of loa in certain regions has attached itself to the Vodoun pantheon, elsewhere to the Congo-Guinée pantheon; but it has not maintained any kind of independent or semi-independent status. The deity Simbi and his family are of Congo origin. [171]

Simbi. A snake deity, patron of rain and drinking water. Said to be the father of the Simbi brothers.

Simbi Dlaze. The best known of the Simbi family. Like his father, he is the patron of fresh water, is associated with the spring, and usually is symbolized as a snake. The color sacred to him is white. Altars to Simbi Dlaze usually are found at the spring or the well. Sometimes ponds are constructed for him within the houmfor. [823] [822] [798]

Simbi Kitra

Simbi Yanvalou, or Simbi Nan Dé Eaux (Simbi in Two Waters). Symbolized as a water snake who lives in the "upper" waters and the "lower" waters.

Grand Simbi. The patron of Simbis, and ancestor of the entire family of water loa.

Simbi Tous Zéd (Simbi of Three Islands)

Simbi Magasin

Simbi Gnano Bon (Simbi of the Forest)

[Elder, The Ewe-Speaking Peoples, pp. 91-94. Cf. p. 354, Cosmology 116.--Analyst]

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CHAPTER 12: *Songs of Complaint, Recrimination, and Gossip* (*pp. 137–147*)

[1]See Herskovits and Herskovits, *Suriname Folk-Lore*, pp. 23–32.

CHAPTER 13: *Comments on the Mighty: Political Songs* (*pp. 148–162*)

[1]*Léger, Haiti, Her History and Her Detractors.*

CHAPTER 15: *Secret-Society Songs* (*pp. 166–169*)

[1]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, p. 256.
[2]See Courlander, "Abakwa Meeting in Guanabacoa," *Journal of Negro History*, XXIX (1944), 461 ff.

CHAPTER 16: *Folk Tales: Bouki, Malice, and Jean Sante* (*pp. 170–184*)

[1]The theme of throwing magic objects upon the ground to ward off a pursuer is widely known, but the story as told in Africa has special characteristics of its own, such as the elephant hair. In Ashanti tales, the prize is the tail of the queen elephant, which is needed to serve as a coffin.

[2]This part of the tale, at least, dealing with the dragon that swallowed the sun, seems to be known in western Europe. Some reports of the tale of Grandmother's Bath have come from France.

[3]Variants of "The President Wants No More of Anansi" are widely known around the world. The story is told among the Somali of East Africa, with the legendary character Abasuwan, a Persian trickster hero, playing the title role. Anansi plays the same part in West Africa, and other trickster heroes are identified with the same adventure in India and Southeast Asia. The tale has been reported also from the West Indian island of St. Martin ("He Meets the King's Conditions," in Parsons, *Folk-Lore of the Antilles, French and English*, Part II).

[4]The fishing story narrated here, except for the chase, is found in many versions in West Africa. The second part of the tale, the pursuit, has a special Haitian flavor. Bouki chasing Malice through the cult chief's ritual grounds and the church, with Malice trying to make appropriate use of the situation, is a special delight to Haitians. The dialogue between Bouki and Malice's behind is also regarded as very humorous.

[5]Known in virtually all Negro communities in the Americas, the tale of eating the honey (or butter, pork, or lard) seems to have come to the New World by way of Africa, although it is also known in Europe.

[6]The theme of the singing tortoise (or other animal, or an object such as a shell) has appeared in folk tales ranging from West Africa through the Americas to the Far East. This Haitian variant bears a striking resemblance to a tortoise story from the Gold Coast (Ghana). In the Gold Coast variant the tortoise asks the hunter who finds him to keep his singing ability a secret, but the hunter has to tell about his discovery. When the village headman hears about it, he calls for a test. The tortoise refuses to sing, and the hunter is punished. Then the tortoise sings his song, which emphasizes the hunter's bad faith. The philosophical tone of the Haitian tortoise's songs, particularly the last one, is quite similar. The last line of the song is from a Haitian proverb.

CHAPTER 17: *Children's World: Game Songs and Games* (*pp. 183–188*)

[1]The description of this game is from Paul, "Les jeux à gage," *Bulletin de Bureau d'Ethnologie*, July, 1928, p. 50.

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Nor is it sufficient to label *Duvalierisme* "pathological" or "paranoid." The roots of this ideology are to be found in Haiti, not elsewhere; its supporters are the product of Haitian times and ideas; and their social identity, while not entirely clear, would probably pose few enigmas if enough data were available.* In order to make clear these assertions, however, it is necessary to look again at Haitian society, the Haitian society Leyburn has described so well, and to reexamine the terms that have been used by him and by others to describe it.

Though the societies of the Caribbean Sea differ significantly from each other, many of them share certain general historical experiences. Unlike the colonial areas of the Old World, these islands were largely populated from abroad, and in this regard they resemble the Atlantic lowland areas of mainland America. However, the colonial history of the islands meant that they would long remain the instruments of policy formulated in foreign capitals. Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and other islands were, during most of their postconquest history, the outposts of far-flung colonial empires, and the design of their societies was conditioned by this dependence and subjugation. As "plantation islands," their agriculture, demography, mode of settlement, and social structure were attuned to metropolitan needs and objectives. Unlike most of Africa and Asia, the Antilles lost their native populations almost entirely, owing to enslavement, overwork, disease, and war, early in the era of conquest and settlement. There remained the vestiges of native traditions, assimilated into the new, growing cultures of the postconquest period. The Indians themselves, wherever they were able to survive, were also assimilated through interbreeding with Old World migrants.

The newcomers came from Europe, Africa, and Asia, bringing with them what they could of their ancestral traditions, but never able to transfer their social heritages as intact bodies of belief and behavior. Hence the cultures of the new Caribbean societies were built up out of elements originating in many different places, while their social forms took shape under conditions of colonial control. The peoples of the islands were able to maintain some continuities with

* One interpreter of the Haitian political scene (Trouillot, 1964:243–48) has suggested that Leyburn's analysis of Haitian society as a "two-caste" system greatly influenced local political thinking by strengthening one idea: "the black intellectual must regain political power for the benefit of the country's majority."

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The people of the islands were able to maintain some continuity with
177 the past, even while the new setting and changing conditions led to the development of certain innovations in society and culture. In a few Caribbean societies, Haiti included, freedom brought with it the opportunity to create a yeomanry—an independent, landholding class of agriculturists who produced most of their own consumption needs and also produced commodities for sale. These were "reconstituted yeomen," whose ways of life combined elements from the African and American Indian past, as well as considerable European and Asian influences, in new cultural constellations.

177 Haitian country folk are a particularly good example of such a
231 historical process. The crops Haitian yeomen cultivate include the
241 maize, sweet potatoes, and manioc of the indigenous American Indian
412 (Taino) people, and other cultigens such as papaya and avocado which had been domesticated in mainland aboriginal America; and items like taro and mangoes from Oceania, sesame and sugarcane which originated in the Middle East and India, and vegetables from Europe. Their domestic animals, including cattle, swine, and fowls, are nearly all from the Old World. The chief agricultural tools—hoe, billhook, and dibble, which are well adapted to Haiti's shallow topsoil and hilly terrain—may be European or African in origin; the practice of burning off weeds before planting may be African or American Indian. In the case of each trait—crop, tool, practice—one is confronted by the diverse and entangled culture history of the
177 Haitian people. What is true of agriculture is true of all else. The re-
771 ligion of Haiti is at once two religions rather than one: Catholicism
19 *and* vodoun. Yet these two belief systems form a single ideology for most Haitians, particularly in the rural areas and among those of the urban lower classes. The Creole language is similarly complex in origin. While its lexicon is predominantly derived from French, parts of its syntax are not of Romance origin. For instance, the use of postpositive nominalizing particles and the absence of gender typify Haitian Creole, and are decidedly not Romance in character. Terminology shows much the same; for example, animal names and anatomical terms are mainly French in origin, but some cooked foods carry names of African provenience.

177 The "mixing" of various elements of culture from different tradi-
194 tions is, of course, neither uniquely Caribbean nor uniquely Haitian. All cultures are growths out of the past, and change by losing and gaining traits and by combining and recombining their substance in

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new ways. The virtual extirpation of indigenous culture, however, occurred in few areas outside the New World; it was particularly characteristic of the coastal and lowland areas of this hemisphere. Hence, Caribbean culture is almost entirely transplanted and recently synthesized. In the Caribbean area, an additional distinction lay in the persistently colonial character of the islands and in the effects of this colonialism on local life. Wherever the plantation flourished, large populations of African origin grew out of the original importations of slaves. This was true from the southern United States to Brazil, but was especially marked in the islands, where local populations of European extraction were either absent or reduced by the spread of the plantation. Only in Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Santo Domingo, and in some of the smaller islands that developed no plantation system, were substantial proportions of Europeans to be found. In Haiti, the early cultural admixture of Colonial Spanish and Indian was soon swamped by the cultures of Africa, and the European cultural component became predominantly French after 1697, when the western third of Hispaniola—today's Haiti—was ceded to France.

But Haitian society did not come to be purely African, in any sense, nor is that society more than broadly similar to the other societies of the Caribbean. The kind of society in which the French masters and their African slaves met and mixed, and the subtropical, colonial environment in which they lived, imposed their own conditions for culture growth. What the Haitian people could keep as a living part out of the African past was limited by the regimen of slave plantation life; what they could borrow or copy from their masters was affected by the nature of the social relationships between those who held power and those who had to bend to it. Ultimately, independence meant that the Haitian people could employ what they already knew and practiced under slavery, but in a wholly new social setting.

The substantial isolation that followed independence led to slowed change, both social and cultural, and to the gradual spread of the yeoman way of life throughout rural Haiti. From 1804 until the United States occupation, Haiti was probably less affected by external developments than any other country in the hemisphere. In this regard, its social history is noticeably different from that of the other Caribbean islands, some of which, like Puerto Rico and Cuba, were forcibly brought back into the mainstream of world developments in the

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same century in which Haiti withdrew. The yeomanry of Haiti in the nineteenth century was hence able to develop a traditionalism of unusual firmness and persistence.

This traditionalism, however, has had a high price. The economic productivity of the rural cultivator has not risen; it can be argued convincingly that poor land use, erosion, and population growth have meant lower levels of consumption for the common people in 1966 than obtained a hundred years or more ago. The rural masses, though overwhelmingly consisting of landholders, have been unable to break out of a stagnation that is economic as well as cultural. Such stasis has been based to some extent on the limited responsiveness of the rural folk to outside stimulus. But also important in maintaining the past is the national institutional system that took on its characteristic shape after 1804, and under which the rural masses still live. That system, the origins of which Leyburn has examined and assessed with such care, is controlled, as we have seen, by a numerically small segment of the national population that is markedly distinct from the yeomanry itself.

The nature and internal differentiation of the elite needs much more study, though it seems clear already that it is by no means a single solidary class embracing all but the yeomen. Whatever the structure of the elite, the relationship between the yeomen on the one hand and the real holders of power on the other must be understood if one is to understand Haiti. The yeoman is defined in terms of the elite; he is dependent upon it and subject to it. This is what is meant when it is said that the yeomanry, like the elite, forms only a part-society. Yet without the yeomen, there would be no elite. The elite live by controlling and taxing the rural masses, and find their sustenance and their power in rural productivity. Elite and yeomen, then, are bound together in unequal but interdependent relationships in Haiti as they are in other less developed societies of a similar kind. In such cases, the political role of the yeomanry is usually minor, and few opportunities may arise for the expansion of its political strength. If the yeomanry fails to increase its productivity in ways that enable it to control more of its own surpluses, its role in affecting national political decisions may grow narrower rather than wider, and this ominous possibility has become a worldwide phenomenon. It becomes more intensified wherever industry and trade grow, unaccompanied by parallel growth in yeoman productivity or in new and more widely representative national institutions.

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311 bean country, and perhaps fewer than in any country in Latin Amer-
423 ica. The agriculture itself, with the exceptions now of those very few
171 large-scale plantations in sisal and sugarcane, is adapted to small plots and is worked with intensive labor and few tools on hilly land. Com-
433 pared with agricultural production, especially of cash crops, in most
178 mainland Latin American countries, productivity is low. The yeomanry is conservative in its agricultural practices, and not ready to change unless the changes entail minimal risk and the gains to be real-
241 ized are clearly demonstrable (Erasmus, 1952:20–26). Yeomen culti-
177 vate with three goals in mind: cash income from world-market
185 commodities (for instance, coffee, sisal, vetiver); cash income from
434 items produced for local sale and consumption; and subsistence. While they are heavily involved in production for sale, their crop choices and land-use patterns rest fundamentally on a subsistence orientation. All grow a substantial part of their own food, especially sorghum, maize, sweet potatoes, taro, manioc, malanga (*Xanthosoma sagittifolium* Schott), plantains and bananas, fruits and vegetables, and
423 rice where possible. The land is invested with considerable affect:
823 gods live in it; it is the ultimate security against privation; family
471 members are buried in it; food and wealth come from it; and it is good in itself, even if not cultivated. While such attitudes are common in yeoman societies, Haiti's history of slavery, and of access to land through revolution, has given a special symbolic significance to landowning. Land is valued above all else and is sometimes held "uneconomically"—that is, even when the capital and labor power to work it are lacking.

114 Leyburn describes better than any other writer the history of land
175 acquisition by the yeoman after 1804. The French plantations lay in
423 ruins, never to recover, while early authoritarian attempts to restore the prerevolutionary economy under native Haitian leadership soon failed. In the course of a century, the Haitian people laid claim to their own soil, while population growth and the adoption of the French tradition of equal inheritance progressively reduced the average size of holdings. In spite of some plantation development after the United States occupation, most agricultural land in Haiti is still employed in small holdings, and "land reform" in the conventional sense—the breaking-up of large estates and the creation of a class of small land-
462 holders—is nearly irrelevant to Haiti's needs.
493 As today's yeomanry cultivates, so its womenfolk market. Nearly

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any usual measure. But Haitians do produce by traditional craft methods a surprisingly large number of the articles they need for daily life. In the countryside it is possible to see many persons engaged, mostly on a part-time basis, in craft activities and home industry that have their roots in the prerevolutionary era. Leatherworkers operating small, crude tanneries still flourish. Charcoal-burners, and operators of small lime kilns that produce building material, are found in every village. Smiths make and repair simple tools, working with forges of archaic design. Combs are made from cows' horns and tortoiseshell, buttons from bone; carrying-bags, fish traps, and a wide variety of baskets from withes, bamboo strips, and grasses; wooden bowls, mortars and pestles, tool handles and spoons from local woods; dippers, pots, and candelabra from tin cans; and sandals from tires and inner tubes. Sawyers cut and dress timber; cabinetmakers still manufacture simple furniture of traditional design from the fast-disappearing tropical woods; many women, working either with the simplest sorts of sewing machines or by hand, make clothing for use and for sale. Along the coasts there are dugout-makers, shipbuilders, and sail- and seine-makers. Simple mattresses, fabricated from local grasses, are sold in every large marketplace, as are crude ceramic wares made by local potters. At the start of the twentieth century, Italian immigrants brought a sturdy tradition of cobbling to Haiti, which has been destroyed only recently by the flood of American imported shoes with their attached prestige, until recently, *vitiblo* was a colloquial term for shoe, coming from the name of the most famous of those Italian cobblers.

One of the striking features of Haiti's craft traditions is its relative stability since the revolution. It was under slavery that Haitians first became "westernized," learning what were then standard French craft practices, adjusted to local colonial conditions, probably with some modifying features coming from the African past. It was before the revolution that the Haitian people learned and stabilized their consumer tastes, agricultural and craft standards, and work procedures. Such preferences and standards were worked out primarily in terms of the demands of the plantation regime itself; but even the most repressive social system leaves some opportunity for acculturation. Today's sugar-making shops and rural rum distilleries employ techniques centuries old and little modified over time. Housebuilding and woodworking techniques in the countryside are substantially

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342 322 178 unchanged from an earlier era. The prevailing quality of Haitian rural and craft industry, then, is one of great stability and conservatism.

493 463 At the same time, of course, major events since the revolution have left their imprint on this part of life. Hardly a roadside village in Haiti today, for instance, lacks an automobile mechanic, even though these men are mostly self-educated and work with hardly any tools. Their skills became part of Haitian culture in this century and are often of a simple order no longer typical of more developed areas. Tire 383 tubes, for instance, are "vulcanized" by the use of an ingenious de- 177 vice made from a board and an old piston, kerosene providing the heat to make the seal; this technique, along with the sewing of damaged truck tires, was almost certainly introduced and diffused by the United States Marines.

47 But these quaint additions do not alter the fact that shop and fac- 31 tory industry are nearly absent, and extractive industry virtually non- 178 existent. Haiti's one alumina extraction enterprise, foreign-owned, is now shut down. There is but one flour mill, and that is foreign- [258] owned as well. One or two textile mills and sugar factories, estab- [339] lished with foreign capital, still function, as do a modern cement factory and a few other small plants established in the 1950s. These [464] industries, scanty as they are, were of great importance to Haiti, since they represented substantial investments, held out the promise of reduced dependence on imports in significant categories, and contributed to the beginnings of an industrial proletariat. However, they involved only a tiny fraction of the national labor force, and they have not proved entirely successful. As a result, Haiti lacks any reserve of labor acquainted with modern industry, even though many people, both urban and rural, work at tasks that might be considered more industrial than agricultural.

47 Most important for the present discussion, the minor developments 433 in Haitian industry have not led to an expanded market and have not 178 resulted in any firm increase in productivity. Industrial growth, in 171 the sense in which it has occurred in countries such as those of Western Europe—or for that matter in Mexico or Argentina—is entirely lacking. The absence of such growth is perhaps especially significant if Haiti be compared with a neighbor such as Jamaica or Puerto Rico. [648] These countries, one now independent, the other a North American dependency—have both gained real increments from the investment activities of outsiders;

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175 work until noon. A two-hour siesta followed, but from two until
566 sunset there was steady work. Only after evening prayers was the
512 worker free. During the day no cultivator might leave his task except
466 for direst need. The lame and the halt were not required to till the fields, but must carry around buckets of drinking water, take care of the children, and do odd jobs about the estate.

175 Christophe made a steady and, in the main, successful effort to
566 explain to the people the necessity of hard work on the plantation.
466 As with the noblemen, the serfs knew precisely what was expected of them, and why. Their regimentation was strict, but understandable. It was clearly stipulated that if a worker shirked his job he was to be put in prison and made to do forced labor there. Laziness in the fields was to be punished by strokes from the overseer's liane. Hard and steady work was demanded during the whole thirteen years of Christophe's rule, but only rarely was there complaint, as there had been constantly under Dessalines, of cruelty on the part of overseers.

175 The quarter part of the total crop of any plantation was to go to
465 the workers as wages, and, since production increased and prices rose, this quarter which they were free to spend as they pleased provided a powerful incentive to further industry. As compared with anything they had known before, the workers were now recipients of an ample income. On the plantations they cultivated
[423] the money crops of sugar and coffee. In addition, each family had
[241] its own garden plot on which to raise the food crops—yams, plantains, beans, and bananas—for personal use.[9]

175 Christophe was so far ahead of his time that he tried to introduce
177 British methods of agriculture into his kingdom. The results were
407 insignificant. The plough, although obviously superior in efficiency to the hoe, eliminated the sociable companionship of working in
178 unison, and demanded horses and mules which the country lacked. The innovations were consequently too radical to be accepted. In the main, the agricultural methods of the kingdom continued to be those familiar in slave days.

175 Thirteen years of careful direction can fix many patterns of social
178 routine. One of Christophe's rules was that no cultivator attached to

[241] 9. The staples of other countries, such as Irish potatoes, wheat, barley, and oats, did not flourish in Haiti. On the large plantations, indigo and cotton, which had been money crops in the French régime, were generally neglected, as they had been in the time of Dessalines.

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One of Christophe's rules was that no cultivator attached to

a plantation—and every ordinary country person was so attached —might leave the estate without permission from a military officer.[10] Two of the common folkways of Haitian peasant life since his time have been immobility and general acceptance of orders from the military. Both characteristics had been fostered by slavery and by the régimes of Toussaint and Dessalines, and these folkways became fixed under Christophe. 175 566 178 [484]

Other rules introduced by the King, however, lapsed shortly after his strong hand was removed. For example, the monarch required of the whole population that whenever they visited the capital on feast days or went to the market towns on Saturdays they be decently clad in clean clothes.[11] Since the time of Christophe, neatness of appearance has hardly been a folk characteristic, probably because of poverty rather than lack of desire to dress well. Nor did scrupulous regularity of work in the fields continue as a folkway later, when the great plantations were broken up. 175 178 291 527 183 [44]

Like a father the King tried to inculcate moral standards of honesty in his people. To prevent theft he had small valuables, such as watches or jewelry or purses, "planted," and if the finder did not immediately turn them over to the nearest Dahomet, punishments was meted out. Such a policy made honesty contagious. Thefts and depredation were soon almost unknown. The most tempting store of wealth could be left safely unlocked or in the open air. Christophe's achievement in this matter is eloquent testimony to his success as a paternal leader, for it is no small task to initiate moral ideas among people who for a generation have lacked them. Even today it is the proud boast of the Haitians that their people are honest. 175 577 177

As compared with the liberties of farmers in the United States of the same period, the Haitian agricultural workers' freedom was infinitesimally small, but by contrast with the bondage of slavery, their new status was definitely higher. 175 566

10. Christophe called his royal police force "Dahomets," after the West African kingdom, Dahomey, from which most of the men had come. They were not ordinary soldiers but especially imported and carefully selected men whose intelligence made them stand out from their fellows. Each Dahomet was given a course of training in his task as administrator before being sent out. The general consensus of foreign visitors was that these Dahomets were efficient even in small numbers. [425]

11. This rule was partly an indication of Christophe's vanity, personal and national, for he was deeply desirous of the good opinion of white visitors, especially those from England. He wanted Europeans to respect Haiti as they would respect any small state, and not to praise it merely as an example of "Negro progress." [577] [186]

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American Marines in Haiti during the next two decades had definite effects upon the social life of the country.

One of the most immediately observable results was the termination of the long political domination by the blacks, and reëstablishment of the colored élite in government control. The four presidents since 1915, Dartiguenave (1915–22), Borno (1922–30), Roy (1930), and Vincent (1930–41), have all been light-skinned. The United States forces had a definite hand in the election of the first two of these men. America's concern was certainly not to return the government to the colored group, but rather to have as titular heads of state men who were educated, temperate of mind, civil in manners—and, of course, mentally "supple" enough to carry out policies agreeable to the State Department at Washington. Since education had for long been a perquisite of the élite only, and since colored élite outnumbered black élite, the chances were good that the choice should fall upon a colored man in 1915 and 1922. Even so, it may have been pure coincidence that the Americans supported mulattoes rather than Negroes; it can hardly be coincidence that the mulatto presidents since 1915 have filled the key offices with colored men. They would assuredly maintain that they had tried to select persons best fitted for office. The fact remains that there are few blacks in the important ministries.

This return to political power of the colored element was one of the most sweeping transformations effected by the Marines, for once again, as in the golden days of Pétion and Boyer, political prestige accompanied and fortified social position. Since 1843 one black or almost black general had succeeded another as president of the republic, and the élite class had perforce to endure them. Socially tolerated these parvenu generals had been, but accepted never. When the Marines arranged the election of President Dartiguenave they effectively reversed the tradition of a century. Since 1915 there have been several Negro candidates for the presidency; in coming elections there are sure to be others; for the present and the near future it is safe to say there will be no more black non-élite presidents.

Such a prophecy is made with a certain assurance because of another result of the Occupation: reform of the army. All true friends of Haiti knew, as most Haitian statesmen had understood for a hundred years, that the huge standing army was an unmitigated burden to the economic, political, and social stability of the country.

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Since it was an entrenched interest, however, no responsible statesman had dared to threaten its hold. The Marines swept it out of existence, undertaking to substitute for it a trained constabulary of only 2,000 men who should combine routine military tasks with police duty in the scattered towns. Results were immediately apparent: the weighty incubus of soldiers' wages was lifted from the treasury; thousands of men were deprived of sinecures and put back into productive economic activities; the constant threat of armed revolution was removed; better order was kept by 2,000 trained men in trim uniform than by twelve times that number of ragged loafers who called themselves soldiers; and since the army was no longer the great steppingstone to political office, the élite felt more secure from assault by ambitious but uneducated army men. From 1843 to 1915 the élite had endured many lower-caste presidents because these were able to control the army; now the army had disappeared.

175 648 [743] [744] [365] [491] [45]

The Marines did much that was of indisputable benefit to Haiti. This was acknowledged even by the most vocal patriots who soon began to campaign for an end of the Occupation. Where there had been no real work in public health, Americans now built hospitals, established clinics, cleaned up the sources of many diseases, laid down sewage systems, gave the towns pure water. In 1915 there were only three automobiles in the country, and no roads for them to travel; the Americans built many miles of paved roads. In 1915 there had been only one wharf, two short stretches of railroad, two lighthouses, one electric plant; the Americans undertook electrification, telephone systems, the construction of administration buildings, and other public conveniences. Whether in such visible matters or in the obscurer realms of currency, banking, and budgets hardly a phase of daily life was left untouched. And judged by the standards of civilization the Marines improved what they touched.

175 648 642

But rancor against the Americans began early and continued to the bitter end in 1934. The pride of all Haitians was deeply wounded by the Occupation. For 111 years they had governed themselves and had assumed themselves to be a sovereign nation; the Marines patrolling the countryside were vivid reminders that Haiti had never been independent except by sufferance, and that white men were once more overrunning the dominion of colored and Negro men. Nevertheless, the reasons proclaimed for opposing the Occupation were not those of hurt vanity. Some of those given were entirely

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reported in Haiti that although they joined patriotically in the cheering when the Marines embarked in 1934, many of them shed tears to see the departure of 2,000 monthly salaries, most of which had been enriching the local tills. Indeed, the country came much closer to establishing a mercantile middle class during the Occupation than ever before. The only real control left behind by the Americans was an overseer of the national budget, destined to leave as soon as Haiti's external debt was finally paid off. To that end the government saved rather than spent, so that businessmen found no comfort in the state of economic affairs, particularly during a decade of world depression and European disturbance. Nationalist economic theories in Europe have upset Haitian markets, so that the élite thriftily save their pennies against hard times instead of spending them freely on present luxuries. The American overseer of the budget withdrew in 1941.

175 458 [648] [653]

At many points the forces of the Occupation touched unwittingly upon deep-rooted prejudices of the Haitian people. In order to secure laborers for road construction the Marines revived an old corvée law of Christophe's time, requiring forced labor on public works at the need of the government. Many of the ill-nourished peasants were taxed beyond their physical powers by work on the roads, so that an armed revolt by caco guerrillas broke out. Its suppression required months of time and cost many lives, leaving in its train a great deal of ill will.

175 648 466 669 653

The efficient Americans also came to grief when they attempted to make Haitians orderly in the American way. Land titles were in chaos, as we have noted. American experts wished to find a basis for internal taxation, so that economic reform might be effective and permanent. The effort to have people declare their claims so that these might be properly registered had to be given up after a few weeks, for the peasant owners knew without written deeds their local boundaries, and among the squatters those who realized their title might not stand under strict investigation were understandably averse to having questions of property tenure raised by the authorities of an alien and interfering government.

175 648 423

Wherever Marine barracks were located, there were centers of a cultural discontinuity which was bound in the long run to affect Haitian ideas and practices. Automobiles, radios, amusements, even the daily conversation of the Marines, all left their mark upon a people who had been effectively isolated from the world for more than a century.

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give mood, will speak of the peasant and his contributions to Haiti; he thinks only in terms of his own caste.[8] Upper-class Haitians dread the sight of tourists taking pictures of native scenes, fearing that the travelers will return to their own country and label these pictures, "Typical Haitian Scenes," when, as anyone should know, typical Haiti is upper-class Haiti.[9]

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The American Occupation failed of many of its ends because it did not recognize the social situation and its implications; or, realizing them, did not consider them worthy of attention. Roads, telephones, mail service, and improved agricultural methods seemed patently desirable to progressive Americans; to install them for the Haitians seemed generously wise. Yet many well-meant efforts came to grief, for the mass of people, lacking a tradition of orderly free government, did not always understand what the Americans were about, while the élite saw in the activities of the Marines a threat to their own dominance as rulers of the country.[10]

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The antiquated, but prevalent, notion of the superior mentality of the white race also flourishes in certain quarters among the élite. Many of them say that the Negro can never originate a civilization, and that with the best of education he remains an inferior man, utterly unfitted for government, utterly incapable of making prog-

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8. Witness Maurice Ouldé's paragraph (*Les Antilles, Allez de France* [Paris, 1931], p. 234): "My outside here (a member of the élite) was triumphant at my surprise and enchantment. 'You did not expect to find a civilized country. What have the spiteful who told you? That the Haitians worshipped serpents and made human sacrifices? True, the peasants on the mountain-sides are still very primitive and ignorant, but in the cities you will find many families like ours, cultivated in letters and music, cerebral and proud of their French culture, and absolutely set against American de-civilization.'"

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9. "Should you like a European to take pictures of the dens of your American slum and of the most degraded of your slum-creepers, and then circulate these photographs as typical American scenes?" asked one sensitive Haitian.

10. See the *Report of the Forbes Commission to Haiti*, 1930, pp. 18–19. "Illiteracy keeps the peasants remote politically institutions, except in case of raids or bandit gangs, which formerly infested the countryside and often furnished the forces of revolution. These bandit gangs have been hidden up and have disappeared under American rule, but the social forces that created them still remain—poverty, ignorance, and the lack of a tradition or desire for orderly free government. It has been the aim of the American Occupation to try to broaden the base of the population politically and thus make for a secular democracy and ultimately provide for a more representative government in Haiti. Means to work in education, in sanitation, in agriculture of communication such as roads, telephones, telegraph lines, and regular mail routes. These things naturally are deemed of secondary importance by the élite, who see in the rise of a middle class a threat to the continuation of their own leadership."

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In most countries in which Westerners are familiar, social distinctions take the form of classes, which are to a greater or less degree mutable. In Haiti, as we have repeatedly indicated, the distinctions are so rigid that *caste* is the only properly descriptive term. There is hardly a Haitian who would not be able to state immediately whether he or any person he knew was, or was not, élite. So it has been with steady persistence ever since Dessalines and Christophe gave way to Pétion and Boyer. Élite youth marries élite girl, and the folkways of the group are passed on from parent to children, thus perpetuating the distinctions. In the pages which follow, all the marks of separation of castes will be examined: religion, economic occupation, marriage, language, manners, and the rest. 565 178

Certain aspects of the classic example of the caste system, seen in India, are lacking in Haiti. Religion, for instance, does not require caste endogamy, nor does civil law implicitly acknowledge caste lines by reference to the rights of people of a certain occupation. Custom does more than religion and law could, however, to enforce conformity to the understood rules. Probably the most open efforts to enact caste lines into law were the pronouncements of Dessalines and Christophe that all but a few people should be bound to the soil; and Boyer's Code Rural—a feeble echo of days gone by. The two black rulers were able to enforce the distinctions they made; but when they died their feudal arrangements lapsed, while the separation of classes continued. With the recurrence of revolutions after 1843 it behooved the élite, when occasionally they were in authority, not to lay themselves open to fresh attack upon grounds of aristocratic presumption, for they never knew when they might need the support of the masses. Any black revolutionary leader would have been able to turn an enacted caste law to his own ends, even if a Senate consisting predominantly of light-colored men had had the power to enact such a law. Time and inertia won the battle for the élite. By not joining issue with the masses at any definite point, the aristocrats gained their end of caste distinction, for they were willing to endure the self-discipline necessary to the maintenance of social standards, as the masses were not. [564] [170]

Just as in colonial days the ambition of the well-to-do freedman was to go to France for his education and his holidays, so in free Haiti the lure of France has continued to be strong for the aristocrat. There is not a trace of animosity against the country which enslaved the Negroes, and which in 1802–3 tried by trickery to take away the 565 484 177 186

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565 rights of people of Negro blood. As a distinguished Haitian re-
484 marked, "It is from France that we draw our culture, our language,
our literature, our attitudes of mind: why should we not love her?"
• 177 The more time the élite spend in France, the less kinship they feel
186 with the masses. There is not necessarily any conscious snobbery in this increasing discrepancy; it simply results from a life spent in entirely different environments. The Boston Brahmin, for example, may be kindhearted and yet feel little kinship with a Mississippi share-cropper.

564 Inside the castes one may find social distinctions familiar in democracies. There are well-to-do élite who set the standards of manners and entertainment, and there are peasant landholders who through force of personality dominate their rural neighborhoods. The intellectual man of the upper classes stands somewhat apart from the social whirl of "high society." An important government official has more prestige among the leisured classes than a small businessman, just as a powerful religious adept is more honored among the peasants than a happy-go-lucky ragamuffin. It is obvious, however, that within the élite caste social discrimination occurs more frequently and is more accurately observed than among the country people.

[184] Such phrases as "Haitian religion" or "Haitian public opinion"
[77] are accurate only in so far as the person who uses them defines the
[208] adjective "Haitian." One might describe truly a phenomenon characteristic of ninety-five out of a hundred Haitians and yet, in the opinion of those who dominate the economic, political, and social life, do injustice to Haiti.

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114 771 This was recognized in colonial times by Moreau de Saint-Méry, who wrote: "According to the Arada Negroes, the real followers of *Vaudoux* in the colony, . . . *Vaudoux* signifies an all-powerful and supernatural being on whom depend all the events which come to pass on this earth."[5]

771 Vodun is a true religion, in the same sense that Mohammedanism, Buddhism, or Christianity are all true religions. That is to say, it is a set of beliefs and practices which claim to deal with the spiritual forces of the universe, and attempt to keep the individual in harmonious relation with them as they affect his life. The word "superstition" is relative. It is a subjective term, being generally applied to beliefs which we consider ourselves too wise, too advanced, to cling to. The sophisticated skeptic calls the belief in miracles superstition; the Christian regards the reverence for certain animals in India superstition: it is all a matter of view. Using the greatest number of criteria available for the definition of religion as distinct from vague superstition, religion may be said to be a set of beliefs about spirits or gods and their nature, about the origin of the world, about good and evil, about man's relation to the universe he knows; it includes a set of practices of worship; it is an attempt to ward off misfortune and to get good; it treats of what happens after death; it is a system of seeking security, solace, and support in the face of a supposed supernatural.[6]

Vodun is all of these.

771 • 177 Like any other vital religion which has spread from its original centre, endured through the years, and come into contact with other faiths, Vodun is not at the present what it was in its early days. Like others it has unconsciously borrowed—and in borrowing, transformed—ideas, concepts, practices, rites.[7] The greatest single influence exerted upon it has been that of the Roman Catholic Church with which the people have had continuous dealings, increasing in recent years, for more than a century and a half. Many aspects of

5. In his *Description . . . de la partie française de . . . Saint-Domingue*, I, 46.

6. This alliterative phrase was suggested as a partial definition of religion by Prof. Raymond Kennedy.

7. It need hardly be pointed out that Christianity is no longer the simple faith taught by Jesus, but a composite of that faith with scholarly theology, absorbed local practices, mysteries which flourished in the Roman Empire, secular philosophy—and, to put it briefly, the accretions of changing time. Similarly, Buddhism is more than the doctrines of Gautama, and Mohammedanism more (and less) than Mohammed taught.

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Vodun, therefore, show the Catholic influence, exerted in the main unconsciously. 771 111

Unlike the great religions, Vodun lacks a formal theology. As has been said, no seminary exists for the training of priests and priestesses, no congress or college of fathers states or amends the creed; there is no church court to discipline the individual enthusiast, or catechism for the young; no scriptures or sermons are printed or read to strengthen the faith. Vodun is an informal religion of action, not a formal one of reason. It flourishes because it is malleable, adaptive, suited to the needs of a people living close to nature and without education. To give a single lucid description of this Haitian folk religion, created as it is by everybody and by nobody, is about as possible as to give one description of home life, which varies according to the couple. We may, however, outline the common elements of creed and practice. 794 771

2. *Formative Days*

To say casually that Vodun is African in origin is to say little more than that it does not stem from the great world religions. There is no unity in Africa today; there was still less in the eighteenth century when slaves were being imported into Haiti. At that period it was possible to find a new dialect and a different set of folkways every few miles along the western seacoast. Two slaves from one geographical region (the Gold Coast, for example) might not understand each other or have the slightest predisposition to sympathize with each other's customs. 771 174

Colonial planters experimented with slaves from various regions in Africa, just as they might compare breeds of horses; setting tractability off against originality, brute strength against skill, intelligence against health. In this quest for a perfect slave, Negroes were imported from all parts of the Dark Continent, from Senegal in the northwest around the five thousand miles of seacoast to Mozambique and Madagascar in the east. Partly because trading conditions were more favorable in the Dahomey and Congo regions, and partly because the qualities of Dahomean and Congolese were preferred, Negroes from these two sections soon came to predominate over others in the colony. Whereas "Congo" was merely a geographical term, implying no community of feeling among the natives living 175 567

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for Vodun theology, nor any established order for the service, 771
variety is one of its chief characteristics. Impossible as it is to cite a definitive list of Vodun beliefs, those most generally held might be combined into a Creed, which would run about as follows:

I believe in scores of gods and spirits, guardians of earth and sky, and of all things visible and invisible;

I believe that all these vodun (who are called "loa" or "mystères") are potent, although less majestic than *le bon Dieu* of the Christians; that some of them came with our ancestors from our former home in Africa, while others we have learned about in our Haitian fatherland; that these loa have power to possess us, their worshipers, informing us by inspiration of their needs and desires, which we must faithfully satisfy; that these loa, like us, are capable of good and evil, gentleness and anger, mercy and revenge;

I believe in the efficacy of sacrifice; in the pleasures of living; in respect due to twins; in the careful cult of the dead, who may return to our abodes; in the spiritual causation of diseases and misfortune; in the dance through which we may be "mounted" by our loa; in the possibility of interfering with the normal flow of events by means of magic; in the efficacy of charms and spells; and in the Holy Catholic Church.

Those who conceive of religion in terms of a rigid orthodoxy, 771
monotheism, sin, a moral law, eternal rewards or punishments, will 177
not understand Haitian Vodun. It is as hospitable to new spiritual 776
conceptions as any faith could be, requiring only that the additions be applicable to life as it is lived in the Haitian hills and valleys, and that they adapt their shape and terminology to the native penchant. Monotheism is rarely the practical belief of simple people, but rather of prophets and scholars. It is easy enough to believe in an all-powerful god but much more difficult to arrive at a conception of a unique God. In Dahomey the people had reached some such stage of belief in omnipotence but not of uniqueness. When later, in slavery, transplanted Africans heard the Catholic doctrine of a god who ruled creation by the fiat of his conquering will, they assimilated the idea with a significant change: the Christian God became the Great Master of the other gods. The slaves very simply placed Him at the head of their pantheon. Even today, the first words of a Vodun [796]
service are the request for permission from the Great Master to go on 114
with the service. As Dorsainvil says: 178

This term chosen to designate the supreme God was imposed on them by 776
their environment. The colonist, the master, incarnated for the slave the

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787 proper control, as they should be. If an unwanted god persists in
114 mounting an individual, the pertinacious one is commanded to go away or the victim himself is sent home until he can recover his own personality. Many people strongly resist possession when it is imminent. Judged by our own standards, possession of the Vodun variety could certainly not be called normal; judged by Haitian standards, however, it would be absurd to call abnormal an experience known and approved by the majority of the community.[29]

796 Possession occurs either at the service or at the dance. Here again
535 the white man has nothing in his religious experience to enable him
787 to comprehend the pattern of Haitian religion. The service corresponds nearly enough to the Catholic Mass or to more realistic sacrifices in ancient Jewish rites, but neither of these faiths nor any other the white man knows well has dancing for religion's sake. In Vodun, however, the dance is of equal importance with the service.

778 In the tiny *hounfort* (also spelled *houmfort*) of the priest, which is
346 little more than a hut with earthen floor, the service begins. To call
796 this structure a temple is at once to make it too imposing and to confuse the white man in his attempt to understand the scene; it is no more of a temple than was a tiny primitive early Christian church. Most houmforts in Haiti would be crowded if twenty people were present. At one end is an altar, more or less resembling the high altar in a Catholic chapel; on it are placed a crucifix, flowers, candles, fruit and food, wine, lithographs of Catholic saints, and whatever other objects, Catholic or Vodun, local practice may dictate and individual taste prefer. Upon the floor are traced formal cabalistic patterns, generally in corn meal, both to fend off evil influences and as required by the particular loa. The officiants may be male or female or both. To the service ordinarily come only the members of the family and their specifically invited guests; neighbors and friends will attend the subsequent dance.

796 A student of Catholicism would find in the first part of the service
788 a great deal of ritual borrowed from the Church. The blessing,
177 genuflections, making the sign of the cross, responses, and the like,
782 all clearly show a Catholic background which accords well with
787 certain objects upon the altar. Imperceptibly the strictly Vodun element obtrudes itself. The loa are asked whether they will accept

29. The statement of the two sides of this controversy may be found in Dorsinvil, *op. cit.*, throughout; and in Herskovits, *op. cit.*, particularly pp. 146–147.

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the sacrifices; food is set before the sacrificial animal, and if this food is eaten by the creature or creatures, it is known that the loa is satisfied. Then comes the actual sacrifice of the animal, a slaying neither ostentatious nor dramatic, since often it does not occur in the hounfort itself. It is at this juncture that possession is looked for. The loa, by seizing one or more of his devotees—or, if possession fails, by the divination of the priest—makes known his desires. The demands of the loa are likely to be modest: a candle, a special article of food, certain specific attentions. Occasionally he insists upon an impressive sacrifice. Whatever his desires, they must be gratified or else the loa will mildly harass the family; long refusal will produce anger and full vengeance. If the god is Rada, his sacrifice will be white, red, or vari-colored; if he is Pétro, he will wish black or gray animals—chickens, turkeys, goats, bullocks.

The service itself, then, is entirely religious in nature, consisting wholly of ceremonies and rituals conducted by officiating priests, with the purpose of restraining or pacifying gods who may have been pursuing a family with misfortune, or gratifying those who have made it happy. The dance following the service apparently expresses the joy of the family at dangers averted and gratitude for blessings bestowed.

In contrast to the private character of the service, the dance has all the appearance of a social event. Invitations to it are sent all over the countryside. People attend for good fellowship, gossip, and the sheer delight of dancing, but in the background one is always aware of a religious element as well. The dance is held in a specially constructed *tonnelle*, a roof of boughs and leaves supported by uprights. Drums are not always used at the earlier service, but no dance could be held without them. The crowd drifts in slowly, so that the dance may be long in getting under way. The best drummers in the community may not arrive until after two or three hours. Three drums of different sizes, all properly baptized, set the rhythms, and sometimes gourd rattles embroider a commentary upon the beat. Whereas at the service possession comes as a result of the priest's invocations, at the dance it is inspired by the drumming. Each loa has his own particular rhythm, so that as soon as it is determined what god has seized upon a dancer the drummers take up the rhythm of that god. The officiant immediately rushes to the mounted person with a calabash of water and a candle; by following the "horse" around and

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and set apart on special plates in a separate room for them; in the afternoon the family eats the food. If the twins to whom homage is being offered are still alive, they must wear special clothes at the sacrifice.

"I believe in the careful cult of the dead . . ." Once more it is necessary to renew one's acquaintance with primitive and folk belief to grasp the Haitian attitude. Life is desirable, death is dreaded; both death and the dead are feared. In the actual world, any excursion from the comfortably familiar countryside of one's home leads to confusion and bewilderment. Except in the company of his fellows (on a religious pilgrimage to the waterfalls at Ville-Bonheur, for example), a Haitian almost never leaves his valley or mountainside and market town. Sophisticated people view the unknown with pleasurable excitement, for they have learned by experience that the unfamiliar is not necessarily frightful; it is quite the contrary with simple folk, whose meagre experience with the unfamiliar has been at least somewhat alarming.

Death is the ultimate unknown. The fearsomeness the imagination conceives to lie beyond death seems to exist in almost direct proportion to people's ignorance of the material world. The fear of ghosts is a commonplace among primitive folk, as among the uneducated in the "civilized" world. Where ghosts are considered powerful, one part of any comprehensive cult will certainly deal with the dead.

In Haitian Vodun the teachings of the Catholic Church have exerted more influence upon the cult of the dead than upon any other part of the religion. The preparation of the corpse for burial shows no traces of African practice; the watch (or wake) and wailing over the deceased is familiar; the funeral itself is conducted by a Catholic priest, with burial in consecrated ground. Thereafter, the continual efforts to secure the tranquil repose of the departed bear the earmarks of faithful Catholic practice; it is at this point, however, that the cult begins to assume distinctive features, for it is firmly believed that the dead exert tremendous power in the world of the living. This power comes from God—the Christian God. The case has been put succinctly by Sumner and Keller: "The relation between man and ghost resolves itself . . . into a relation of rights and duties, with all the rights on one side and all the duties on the other."[30] God gives

30. W. G. Sumner and A. G. Keller, *The Science of Society* (New Haven, 1927), II, 845.

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validity to forms and ideas which we know, in our hearts, might sustain us.[1]

The Haitian peasant is not interested in making formal distinctions. If he is critical, it is only of results, rarely of the means used to obtain those results. If he cannot gain his ends in one way he is not too proud to try another, and still a third. Nineteen out of twenty Haitians, then, being Roman Catholics in religion, are likewise worshipers of Vodun. There is so much mystery in the world, so much misfortune, beauty, sorrow, and joy that it would be unthinkable to deny God or the gods: mankind has worship enough for them all, and need enough of them all. There is to the peasant no conflict between Vodun and Catholicism; the two are complementary, even if sometimes the Catholic priests make coöperation impossible.

Let us recall for a moment the earlier history of the country. In the days of slavery one may imagine the Church would have found it difficult, even if its priests and planters had been willing, to train all the blacks as thorough Catholics. Some concepts took root, some rites immediately appealed. Below the surface, however, the African ideas of the preponderant Dahomeans were spreading through the plantations. In the crucial early days of independence, when the customs and social institutions of the Haitians (as Haitians, not as expatriate slaves) were in process of formation, the country's rulers were not deeply religious; moreover the State was in open schism from the Church. For fifty-five years no approved churchman was at work with the people. The seventy men whom some historians mention as priests were on the whole venal and self-seeking, even vicious. Their least concern was to wean the people away from their superstitions, for precisely in these folk beliefs lay the greatest source of gain. By the time the breach between State and Church was healed it was too late to make single-minded Catholics of the Haitian peasants. They would accept what the new and active priests taught them, but not to the exclusion of what they had believed for a century.

With the élite the Church has had more success; assiduous teach-

1. This either-or dichotomy is not limited to religion: we divide ourselves similarly in politics, family life, residence, and so on. If I am a Lutheran, a Republican, a married man with a home in New York, I cannot at the same time be an Episcopalian, a Democrat, and a voter in Chicago with a second spouse and family there. What is impossible and ridiculous for Americans, however, is in some ways the normal course of life for the Haitian.

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565 711 ing since 1860 has had in effect upon the children of the upper classes. Two hundred churchmen working with a population of more than two million cannot distribute their benefits equally. Teachers must devote themselves to those whose minds are educable, who have access to schools, and who can afford time for daily classes. An element of social snobbishness entered as well. Catholicism was socially accepted in the Western World whose approval the élite coveted, where Vodun if known at all was regarded as a mere superstition. To prove his separation from the peasant black, the élite person was therefore Catholic or nothing.

[741] It would have required many times two hundred teaching brothers and sisters, all with the zeal of fanatics and the energy of dynamos, to convert the masses away from Vodun. In acquainting the peasants with Church forms and certain beliefs the priests have been entirely successful; in making exclusive Catholics of them they have had no success at all.

711 Every vital social institution is continually in a process of change. 177 Vodun, a very living faith, has steadily borrowed more and more from Catholicism, the only other religion with which the people come in close contact. When one can go from a Saturday night Vodun sacrifice and dance to a Sunday morning Catholic Mass with no feeling of incongruity, it is obvious that the minds of the worshipers are actively predisposed to assimilation of creed and ritual.

746 We have suggested in a previous chapter some traces of the Catholic Mass in Vodun ceremony. The Vodun service regularly begins with a long ritual which the observer who knows both the Créole language and the Catholic liturgy recognizes as being almost entirely Roman. While the Vodun houngan sits quietly by, a special officiant known as the *prêt' savanne* (bush priest) reads or pretends to read from the Catholic prayer book. For the Pater Noster, the creed, the Ave Maria, the Salve Regina, and the prayers, the worshipers kneel or stand as they would in church. Candles burn, water is sprinkled, the sign of the cross is made, the chants are sung. When the benediction completes this part of the service, the houngan takes over to conduct the purely African rites; yet his first words are, "*Grâce saint'-cœur*," and many Catholic interpolations appear even in this second part of the service.

[778] [192] The Vodun ritual is conducted before an altar, in Haitian Créole called a "trône," which is a perfect marriage between Vodun and

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Catholicism. I have seen such an altar, with its adjacent table, bearing a crucifix, candles, (holy) water, lithographs of the "Assumption of the Virgin," "St. George and the Dragon," the "Adoration of the Kings," and certain unrecognized but distinctly European saints; in addition to these objects, however, were such unecclesiastical articles as bananas, rice, beans, squash, various bottles of drinks, and plates of food. Near by were the sacrificial animals. 176 [176] [192]

Vodun makes use frequently of one sacrament of the Church—baptism. Needless to say, this rite is not a monopoly of Christianity, and its use in the folk religion may very well have come from Africa. Constant witnessing of the rite in church must nevertheless have influenced its adoption for all important Vodun ceremonials. The drums used in the dance are baptized; so also is the first loa to possess a devotee; at many other special times the rite is likewise performed, generally with a set of prayers which invoke Catholic saints and Vodun loa alike. [177]

Mention has already been made of the identification of Rada and Nèro loa with certain saints and martyrs of the Church. Such identifications are not uniform, but vary in different parts of the country. Legba is generally associated with Saint Anthony, but often (and to the Christian, more understandably) with Saint Peter who traditionally guards the gates of heaven; the Virgin Mary quite obviously is related, whether as Queen of Heaven, as the Sorrowing Mother, or as the innocent Virgin, with numerous manifestations of Maîtresse Ersulie; Dumballa, whose symbol is the serpent, is sometimes Moses (whose brother's rod became a serpent consuming other serpents, and who by lifting up a serpent in the wilderness cured the people of their snake bites) and sometimes Saint Patrick (whose association with snakes is well known). Other identifications are numerous, showing the penchant of the people for combining what they know of both religions.[2] 176 177 [184]

Many of the loa have, like the Catholic saints, their symbols, their special days, colors, and other associations. Some like white, some red; the serpent, the rainbow, the crossroads are among the symbols; sacred days occur weekly, Tuesday being Legba's, Wednesday Ogun's, Friday Ersulie's, and Saturday Baron Samedi's. It may be

2. The distinguished Haitian ethnographer, sociologist, and historian, Dr. Jean Price-Mars, has made a list of some of these identifications in his *Ainsi parla l'oncle*, pp. 180–181.

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that Catholic practice in these matters did no more than to fortify an African tendency already in evidence; indeed, it is a common tendency of folk religions anywhere to associate days and colors with their honored spirits. The very similarity of conventions indicates the ease with which borrowing of religious ideas might occur.

Every Catholic priest is well aware of the hold Vodun has upon the people, just as all desire to see the ultimate triumph of the Church. The battle is unending, but the method of attack varies. Open firmness is the approach favored by some priests, subtle indirection by others. Sermons against Vodun do little good apparently, for the faith of the worshipers is sufficient to maintain in their own minds the validity of what the preachers inveigh against. When zealous clerics cut down trees sacred to Dumballa or try otherwise to eradicate signs and symbols of the loa, the people have rarely tried to stop them; but when the slightest bad luck comes to the iconoclasts—and misfortune comes to every man sooner or later—the people are quick to interpret the stroke as the loa's punishment for the desecration of holy things. On one occasion a shrine was destroyed, the priest calling in an American officer to shoot at a supposed apparition of the Virgin: shortly thereafter the priest's house was burned to the ground, the priest himself suffered a paralytic stroke from which he never recovered, and the captain was ordered back to the United States, "as a punishment for what he had done," said the people. *Post hoc ergo propter hoc*—what followed was a direct consequence of what had gone before; this has been the basis of belief from time immemorial. Who shall say it was not cause and effect? Similar cases have been numerous. One concludes that the method of direct assault will never achieve its purpose.

Subtlety of attack, on the other hand, requires infinite patience, infinite willingness to compromise for the present. Both are qualities which the Catholic Church has amply demonstrated in times past. Certain of the priests whose parishes include country districts are masters in the art of patient indirection, willing to accept apparent failure in their lifetime in the hope of ultimate victory for the Church. Their method is to discover which Vodun practices are of prime importance and, ignoring minor beliefs and practices, slowly lure—not intellectually persuade—the people away from them. This process may be clearly illustrated by a service in the hills in 1937.

A Catholic chapel had been erected in recent years upon a hilltop

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A Catholic chapel had been erected in recent years upon a hilltop

long respected as a favorite haunt of the loa Damballa. Apparently this was no slight, for Vodun gods are not monopolistic. On the hill, however, once stood a tree in which a snake made his home, symbol of Damballa. Many years earlier a forthright Catholic priest had ordered his parishioners to fell the tree, an insult direct to the loa which none of the faithful dared give. The determined cleric therefore performed the task himself, but left a sizable stump on which has now been placed a small statue of the popular Catholic Saint Anthony.

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The feast day was well attended, and while the Mass and sermon were proceeding in the crowded chapel dozens of men and women who could not get into the building, or who preferred not to try, remained outside. Many were simply standing about in groups, chatting; others were more significantly engaged. Some knelt before the tree stump at whose foot many candles were burning; there, as at a shrine, they prayed. Were their prayers Catholic petitions to Saint Anthony or Vodun prayers to Damballa? At another corner of the church under the shade of a tree sat a venerable woman dispensing a liquid concoction, which seemed particularly popular with the women and children. Holding out their hands they received a palmful each of the syrupy substance, which they then smeared upon their bodies; on the eyes or face, on their legs, or on more private parts. The Catholic priest later explained the liquid as a "Voodoo brew," and again as a charm; more accurately, it was a gazde to turn away illness from the parts of the body rubbed with it.

The officiating priest knew perfectly well that not all the candles burning at the tree stump were for Saint Anthony; he was also aware of the woman dispensing her liquid, yet took no steps to stop her. He assumed that with the small statue of Saint Anthony on the stump, there were already children growing up unaware of Damballa's connection with the place. He hoped to find money for a larger, more imposing statue so that as generations passed the memory of the loa, as related to worship on this hill, would be supplanted. As for the woman, why bother to drive her away? It would merely cause antagonism, and would certainly not stop the practice. Her being there might draw a few more peasants to the feast, where they would have an opportunity to learn the true Word.

As soon as the Mass in the chapel was finished, the people poured out and began to form a line of march. Headed by the priest the whole congregation, including many who had not penetrated to the

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799 chapel, wended their way down the hill and across to a clearing
796 among the trees. On the way many of the women stopped beside
the path to pluck a handful of long grass or reached up to break
• 177 twigs from the smaller trees. At the clearing, primitively decorated with colored cloth, the priest made a short discourse; then he intoned three times, "Notre Dame d'Alta Gracia," and the worshipers, raising their wisps of greenery above their heads, rustled the twigs until the air was filled with a sound like the hissing of many serpents. "*Priez pour nous!*" they responded each time to the rustling accompaniment. The Virgin of Alta Gracia is the miraculous saint of Higuey, as much renowned among Haitians as among the Spanish-speaking Dominicans farther east. The supplication to the Virgin is proper enough to a Catholic feast, but the hissing, reminiscent of Damballa, is an intimation that the Vodun loa is not yet forgotten on his holy hill.

This festival of Notre Dame d'Alta Gracia shows not only the adaptability of Catholicism to Vodun, but likewise that of Vodun to Catholicism. Not even with the will to preserve their faith and practice pure can most men resist the infiltration of surrounding beliefs; in Haiti, the will to resist is itself lacking. This the Church knows, and counts upon for ultimate victory. In other words, there is to be not precisely a conversion of worshipers away from Vodun, but a slow transformation of Vodun itself into a true Catholic faith within the hearts of the people.

In its long experience in adaptability, the Church has in many a country learned to establish a ground of common understanding with lowly folk, while keeping its touch with aristocrats. Following the principle that where a belief or rite is apparently ineradicable it is advisable to turn it to Catholic uses, the Church in Haiti has often made this kind of adjustment, just as in earlier times with the Aztecs, Mayans, and other continental American Indians. An example of it may be observed at Saut d'Eau, near Ville-Bonheur.

797 Here, near the centre of Haiti, in 1884 there appeared in a palm
778 tree the vision of a beautiful Virgin blessing the people. She re-
798 mained so long that according to tradition the whole countryside saw her. The parish priest, unwilling to permit this obsession of the people to continue, came to drive away the apparition. The Virgin departed, apparently of her own will. People saw her no more, but many came to the palm tree and were miraculously cured and

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marvelously aided in distress. The priest, not willing to allow even this "delusion," tried to cut down the tree but was wounded by his own machete. Eventually, however, the tree was destroyed by natural causes, and a church erected on the site. Fire destroyed the church. Each successive church building has likewise been destroyed, by fire or by lightning. No longer now does the Catholic Church combat the sanctity of Saut d'Eau: after all, it was the Virgin who appeared, not a loa. The great celebrations on every fifteenth of July draw pilgrims from all over Haiti. Although the Church now grudgingly appropriates the feast it is still recognizably Vodun in character, for devout souls who bathe in the water are "mounted" by loa. The Church has a hard battle ahead of it to win this festival for Catholicism.

Three factors work in favor of the Catholic struggle to win Haitians completely away from Vodun: the world-wide organization of the Church, which can always throw trained reserves into the battle; the superior intellectual equipment of the priests, enabling them to plan their campaign and use psychological weapons; and the plasticity of Vodun itself, which is a conglomeration of human feelings, ideas, and traditions rather than a rigid sect with an inflexible ritual.[3] Even with these advantages, it is still the battle of a few dozen men on one side with the Haitian masses (more than two million) on the other. So far as one is ever justified in prophecy, it seems safe to assume that Vodun will continue to assimilate more and more fragments of Catholicism; that its appeal will remain so long as education and medicine are not extended to the whole countryside; that eventually—it may be centuries hence—Vodun rites may sink back into the status of living folklore, to which the simple turn in their deepest need.

One of the strongest missionary advantages of the Roman Catholic Church has been the breadth given it by two thousand years of experience. In so long a life it has had to be all things to all men; out of necessity it has developed around the central core so wide a variety of belief, doctrine, form, and traditional practice, that there is something for every believer, whether scholarly or untutored, powerfully important or humbly obscure. What the cultivated

3. The absence of any written formulation of Vodun must certainly be a factor in its lastibility. Recorded tradition and written history tend to create definiteness of pattern.

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WHAT THE CIVILIZATED

177 member of the Haitian élite takes from Catholicism is quite different
•177 probably from what the peasant absorbs: the point is that the peasant
[184] does not find the faith either incomprehensible, or uncongenial to his own tradition and penchants—as he might find the tenets of, say, Unitarianism or Presbyterianism. It is easy to fit the Trinity, the Virgin, the saints, the Mass, holy water, Lent, and practically every other external aspect of belief and ritual into his mental set. He makes his own selection and his own reconciliations. It seems the most natural thing in the world to him to light a candle and make the sign of the cross as he baptizes a new drum for use in the Vodun dance. The Haitian peasant, in fact, makes a tranquil unity of his two religions, so much the obvious oneness of his universe.

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Any force who possible psychological reason is patriotic. SY

461 might be hazarded that the men felt they had fought for freedom and so deserved to enjoy its benefits; or that agriculture smacked of the old days of slavery and should be avoided by the superior male; or that since ambition for progress was not a Haitian characteristic, and the work of women produced enough food, there was no reason to change a routine which did very well. One cannot speak with definiteness on these matters. And it was upper-class Haitians and foreigners who adjudged peasant men lazy; slaves and "forced" laborers always appear lazy to their masters.

462 In modern times at least, male peasants toil strenuously, although not so continuously as their females. The preparation of the ground for planting is hard work, and is done entirely by men. Harvesting, housebuilding, marketing the coffee (one form of marketing not beneath a man's dignity)—these are men's major contributions to economic life.

177 178 People who live in isolation commonly tend to slide back in such externalities as clothes, manners, neatness of person and of dwelling, speech, and social ritual. Almost from the very beginning of Haitian history, most of the people were effectively isolated from the rest of the world, so that the superficial aspects of daily life exhibited to all visitors the spectacle of retrogression.

175 656 291 Christophe, who had frequent English visitors in his kingdom, forced his subjects to dress neatly. After his time no ruler made regulations for dress. The men commonly wore a pair of cotton trousers and an abbreviated shirt, while women's dress was a loose-fitting garment which might be called a Mother Hubbard. Children could, and can now, be seen up to the age of four or five without [349] any clothes at all. The nearer the countrypeople live to towns, where the example of the élite is before them, the better their dress is likely to be.

342 Slave cabins on the former plantations were inhabited by the free Haitians until decay set in and the cabins fell down. They were ordinarily superseded by huts which could be constructed of withes [333] and thatch. The British Minister during the eighteen-twenties saw a man near Plaisance building his house, "plastering the wattling, of which the walls were composed, with a mixture of mud and ashes," using his hand as a trowel.[18] Almost never did a hut have more than

18. Mackenzie, op. cit., I, 150.

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two rooms to house the whole family. "In these huts, filth and every species of uncleanliness prevail, for the people give themselves up to their indolent and lazy habits. It is common to see the pigs and poultry herding with the family."[19]

The furnishings in the huts were as simple as the construction. Rarely was there more than one bed, if that; the children of the family used mats for sleeping. A table, a stool, a couple of patched chairs, calabash bowls, an iron pot or two (and in later days, discarded gasoline tins), comprise the household equipment.

The fine roads of the French régime became rutted and washed, were overgrown with weeds, and soon reverted to wasteland or became nothing more than paths. Carriages ceased to be of any use, and there were few wagons; donkeys and horses became the regular means of transportation, and this was true until the Americans began to build roads again in 1916. The colonial régime had left a legacy of bridges, public buildings, parks, irrigation ditches; practically every improvement of this nature crumbled in slow decay and was not replaced. The temperate Dr. Brown closed his account of the Haiti of 1836 with the following paragraph:

> To sum up all that might be said upon the actual condition of Hayti, poverty and degradation stare one in the face wherever he goes—and the state of the whole island will be fully understood in the United States when it is bluntly asserted, that the country is one continuous negro village, built of mud cabins, and unfurnished with the usual comforts of life. The population is, with small exceptions, an indolent, naked multitude, without sustenance or a disposition to make exertions to obtain it; without enormous vices, but petty and insignificant in every thing relating to human character, and not many removes from the tribes upon the Niger in point of civilization. The fact is indisputable, that as a nation the blacks of Saint Domingo are in a retrograde movement as regards intellectual improvement, and no obstacle seems to exist to prevent this descent to barbarism. The government and institutions of the country must for the present remain unstable, and it is difficult to pronounce what the changes involved in the future will produce.[20]

Progress, as Westerners understand it, comes through contacts and competition, both of which were lacking to Haiti in large measure throughout the whole of the nineteenth century. While externally

19. Franklin, op. cit., p. 106.
20. Op. cit., II, 288–289.

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177 the country slowly became dilapidated, its economic and social insti-
178 tutions were taking on the unplanned characteristics already described. The only disturbing element in Haitian life was that of political machinations by ambitious military men. When these reached a peak in 1915 the United States intervened. For the first time in a century, really, the Haitian came into contact with the outside world.

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[p. 234]

XIII

CONSTITUTIONS AND POLITICAL FORMS

369 64 QUITE aside from its castes and the political separation of 1807–20, Haiti has always consisted of two nations, one living in and near the towns and so within reach of established government, the other rural and yet capable of ordering its own affairs by folk rules without much actual governmental machinery. It is through the former that Haiti has a political history. Indeed, one is tempted to say that more than half the people have continually got along without any government whatever of a formal sort, for being peaceably inclined they have found custom and usage [669] sufficient for their needs. These people have been rarely disturbed by the state's rulers; revolutionary chieftains alone have found it worth their while to stir up the country folk to an active interest in politics.

631 The formal subdivisions of Haiti have been, through most of its history, three: the *commune*, roughly corresponding to the American •177 township; the *arrondissement*, a group of communes, just as the American county is a group of townships; and the *département*, comprising several arrondissements. All three terms were borrowed from France, although their significance was altered when applied to the Haitian scene.

175 24 475 701 632 In the days of Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, the government had owned vast plantations which were under the control of the military. Pétion and Boyer instituted the commune by combining numerous estates and farms into a group likewise to be controlled by soldiers. Until the American Occupation the police system of the country was military, with ordinary soldiers keeping order and making arrests when necessary. Since few people are less given to disorder than the Haitian peasants, the task of keeping order was not a serious one; indeed, soldiers were frequently stationed among their friends and relatives, who never thought of them as police. It some- [293] times happened, however, that soldiers were assigned to other parts of the country, where they swaggered about with their *cocomacaques* (heavy-jointed canes), using these or the flat of their swords to enforce their often arbitrary commands.

In every commune recognized by the state was an important

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692 public, or against any of the secretaries of state or other important officials; but if this court was ever convoked, records of its actions are lacking.[8]

The most important actually functioning court was that of Cassation. In American terminology this would be called the Court of Appeals, reviewing cases coming up from the civil and criminal courts of the important towns. It sat at Port-au-Prince, and consisted of fourteen judges appointed by the president and his cabinet.

[177] Boyer had borrowed most of the forms of important Haitian courts from France, but he could not transfer to his country the spirit and tradition which made those courts function in France. The High Court of Justice remained a mere plan; the national Court of Cassation and the so-called department courts in the four to eight large towns operated under close presidential scrutiny; only the juges de paix, dealing with small and homely cases, had comparative freedom.

175 It was generally acknowledged throughout the nineteenth century
695 that Haitian judges, whether of the Court of Cassation or of the department courts, could be influenced by pecuniary and political
693 considerations. The odds were heavy in favor of any suitor who was liberal in his bribes to the judges; "justice" could be bought, and
175 was. By French tradition of justice, the prisoner was assumed to be
693 guilty until he was proved innocent. In Haiti he was bullied, cajoled, and cross-questioned in order to force a confession, and to make him state in open court what he was said to have admitted in his preliminary examination. Confessions were obtained by beatings, and prisoners were occasionally even tortured to death.

175 Another characteristic of the nineteenth-century courts—and not
695 in Haiti alone—was the tardiness of their procedure. Consider the civil case in one of the department courts. If a creditor instituted a suit against a debtor in one department and obtained a favorable verdict, the defendant was permitted to appeal from the sentence to the court of an adjoining department, and so on in succession throughout the whole series; if the last court confirmed the judgment of the first, the defendant could then move it into the Court of

[692] 8. This Supreme Court would, according to the constitution, be formed only by proclamation of the Senate (and therefore under the ultimate control of the president), and might not hold its sessions in a spot more than twelve leagues from the seat of the Senate. Consisting of *fifteen* judges to be chosen by lot from the tribunals of the five Haitian departments, a two-thirds majority would be necessary for conviction, and no appeal might be made from its decisions.

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policy of encouraging trade with his friends and prohibiting it with his enemies—both arbitrarily. The variation of Pétion was a sort of mercantilism, with set high tariffs.

What Dessalines planned was in terms of Western statecraft so weird that white onlookers felt they were restrained in calling Dessalines a transplanted African tribal chieftain. So passionately intense was the fury of that general against all whites that he took every precaution he could devise to prevent face-to-face dealings between his Haitians and foreigners. By deceit, treachery, and ingenious cruelty he conducted a massacre which deserves comparison with that of Saint Bartholomew: this effectively rid the country of white residents. Since for a time Haiti would have to depend for economic survival upon trade with foreigners, Dessalines next conceived a project whereby the whole population would be gathered in the centre of the island, in the most protected valleys and the gorges of the highest mountains. In these fastnesses the people would never see a white but would work on the land, producing sugar and coffee and cotton for export without ever leaving their local habitations. On the seacoast would be established certain "counters" over which a few incorruptible Haitians, chosen by the Emperor himself, would sell local products and buy the necessary imported goods. Impregnable fortresses were to guard access to the interior,[2] which would be reached by new roads from the seacoast "counters." Every seaport was to be destroyed as soon as new towns could be built in the back country. Already when his death intervened Dessalines had moved his capital from the Cape (that is, Cap-Haïtien, formerly Cap Français) to the inland village of Marchand (in the department of the Artibonite; now renamed Dessalines), and his next plan was to transfer Port-au-Prince eight leagues inland to the plantation Dérance, among the mountains.

Dessalines has been thought absurd, childish, barbaric. But there is something poignant, even tragic, in this fiery determination of the black chieftain, bitter over the cruelties and indignity to which his people had been subject for decades, to use this alien island as best he could and preserve his people at any cost from such another domination.

Despite his scheme for ultimate isolation of the people, Dessalines kept everyone steadily at work by the forced-labor system instituted

2. See p. 247 and note 13. under Toussaint.

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175 Norman ones were less complicated; English, simpler still, reen-
192 forced the Norman tendency.
197 From the Spaniards of the Caribbean region Créole borrowed not only nouns (generally the most assimilable of words), but a large number of adjectives, pronouns, auxiliary verbs, and certain subtler characteristics of speech.

This amalgam, then, three quarters Norman French, was the Créole language as of 1697 when France acquired Saint-Domingue, when buccaneering became unprofitable, and many of the filibusters settled down to begin a respectable life as plantation owners in the
56[7] new colony. African slaves were soon imported to satisfy the demand
197 for labor. First a few, then thousands a year and increasing thousands,
192 were brought to Saint-Domingue. In all externalities, of which
175 language is one, slaves must yield up their old ways and take on new. The question of interest here is to what extent the Negroes influenced Créole, giving it an "African" character.

The answer, surprising at first, is that the Negro influence was almost negligible.

175 In the first place, Créole was now already a language with a rich vocabulary, all the grammatical equipment, and the necessary regu-
● 177 larities. The slaves came to the colony from all parts of Africa, and
197 so with widely differing languages. Linguistic maps of Africa indicate the presence of hundreds of dialects up and down the west coast; tribes living fifteen miles apart spoke languages which, although belonging to the same stock, were as different as Spanish and Italian from each other. Owing to the habit of dispersing the slaves, the
[191] average Negro had no common basis of understanding with his fellow slaves on the same plantation. Practically all white foremen and overseers gave orders in Créole; this within one generation became the *lingua franca* of the plantations, an economic necessity, and socially indispensable.

In the second place, there was in Saint-Domingue no equivalent to the familiar objects of life in Africa. Trees, houses, earth there were, of course, but different kinds of trees, houses, and soil. Economic tasks were performed in a different manner with new techniques and organization. Every outward form of life was foreign to the African background. Even assuming that there had been a common Negro speech, it would have found little to attach itself to in the New World. It should be noted that Negroes likewise made few contribu-

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tions to the English language in the southern United States, where they were slaves for seventy years longer than in Haiti.

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Common African economic ways yielded to the plantation system and slavery; the Negroes had no opportunity to govern themselves or settle their own disputes; they mated rather than married; their families might be broken up if the master wished to sell a slave. The one part of life in which they were permitted to follow unhindered their African ways was the intimate one of religion which, since it needed no buildings or organization, did not interfere with work, and could be entirely personal and private, was not suppressed. As has been pointed out, the Dahomean form of religion prevailed over all others and, modified, gained wide adherence among the slaves. It is precisely in Vodun that Créole has taken over its only important African words, such as Vodun, zombi, houngan, maraisa, loa, houmfort, bocor, ouanga.

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It would be erroneous to imply that the Negroes had no effect upon the language of which they soon became the predominant users.[6] Their operations were of a subtle sort, however. As with the Negroes of the United States, the letter "r" proved difficult, and often disappeared altogether, leaving many words softly slurred. "Marcher," for example, generally sounds as if it were *ma'ché*. Likewise in the course of years they gave the language their own accent, their own modulation and tone, which make Créole sound different on their lips from a white man's way of speaking it. Some scholars attribute this to a *racial* influence—that is, to the morphology of the Negro throat and tongue. It might be pointed out to the contrary that Americans, white like the English, have given the mother tongue *their* own accent, modulation, and tone. It has certainly not yet been proved that race has anything to do with speech.

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Words in imitation of a sound grow up in every language. Several western African dialects, especially Mandingue, seemed fond of onomatopoeia; in Haiti, consequently, one hears many an expressive additional word. Moreau de Saint-Méry[7] noticed this in colonial Saint-Domingue, citing such cases as the addition of "*bep*" to the verb "*tomber*," if one had fallen down lightly, or "*boum*" if heavily;

6. Suzanne Sylvain, *Le Créole haïtien* (Wetteren, Belgium, 1936), p. 10, says that although the African contribution to Haitian Créole is generally considered to be slight, she has personally found 170 words of undeniable African origin, and feels sure that there are many more.

7. *Description . . . de . . . Saint-Domingue*, II, 36–37.

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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114 the culture of their group, but also none of the broader aspects of the motivating forces, the dominant wishes, the attitudes and social values of the masses. Since the élite have often expressed in books their desires and frustrations, one feels that it would be readily possible for a trained social psychologist to learn much from upper-class informants who are anxious to be understood. To penetrate the inner life of the masses would be easier for an American than for a Haitian scholar, who would be enmeshed in the attitudes of class and caste in his own society.

565 Little has been said in this book of the small group of people, generally living in towns, who belong neither to the élite nor to the masses. How much actual social mobility occurs? Of the horizontal variety, that is, movement from place to place within the same social class, very little; of the vertical, or transition from one social class to another, there is likewise little, as has been shown at length in this book; yet there is enough to make a study of social mobility useful. Allied with such an investigation might be one of social distance. The degree of sympathy existing between élite and masses is small; on the other hand, one longs to know the degree of social distance of the individuals who are not yet élite but who regard themselves as definitely superior to the masses: what is their attitude toward the class they have left? And what is the attitude of the élite toward their aspirations?

114 Certain studies have already been made of the effect of the Vodun religion upon the personalities of its practitioners.[6] Even here the surface has been merely skimmed.

177 Haiti, because she is a colored nation in a white Western World, has been even more isolated than she would otherwise have been, even with her island position and her economic poverty. Except for the presence of American Marines for nineteen years there has been little cultural contact with outsiders, and hence little cultural conflict. [563] It is generally estimated that there are not more than three thousand white people living in Haiti, and these mostly in the capital city. Throughout the nineteenth century it is likely that there were fewer. Haiti shares the island with the Dominican Republic, yet since the independence of the Dominicans in 1844 there has been little warfare, travel, or contact between the two peoples. Haitian workers have crossed the border, it is true, and have returned home (or have

6. See particularly Price-Mars, *Ainsi parla l'oncle*, and Dorsainvil, *Vodou et névrose*.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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been murdered, as in 1937); and the Dominican influence can be seen in northeastern Haiti. The country as a whole, however, remains largely free from non-Haitian influence. This isolation may not continue for many more years, for successive administrations expand their health activities, try to improve economic methods, extend transportation facilities, and pursue policies of "enlightenment." Under such a regimen there will be an inevitable contact either with the experts from foreign countries or with the products of the civilization of those countries. And if Haiti should acquire foreign machines in large numbers, she would inevitably open herself to the dynamic influences which accompany a changing economy.

Such a possibility is in the near future, so that social scientists will shortly have the chance to observe cultural contact and diffusion at work. What is more immediately to the point is the query as to how much diffusion of cultural traits occurred at the beginning of Haitian national life. How much of the African tribal culture persisted through slavery and the period of forced labor into the Haiti of small properties and peasantry? How much, on the other hand, is a borrowing from the French ways of colonial times? These questions have been treated in earlier chapters, but may be here summarized. The external structure of social institutions, particularly those which characterize the life of the élite, is clearly French. Haitian government and law, upper-class marriage, the Catholic religion—all these have a French provenance. Conversely, among the masses, the Vodun religion and possibly certain economic devices (such as the coumbite) stem from Africa. Yet the round of daily life among the people is quite obviously unlike that of any single African group from which slaves were drawn, nor is it a composite of African folkways.[7] Similarly, although the bulk of the population is peasantry, the Haitian peasant is not at all a transplanted French peasant. The folkways and mores of rural Haiti are, to a degree unusual in most countries, products of local experience, uncolored by outside influence.[8]

Students of race find in writings about Haiti the usual sum of generalizations about the temperament and mental characteristics of

7. It must be emphasized that the Haitian slaves were drawn from at least thirty-eight African groups. See J. G. Leyburn, "The Making of a Black Nation," in G. P. Murdock, ed., *Essays in the Science of Society* (New Haven, 1937), pp. 377–394.

8. Herskovits' theory of the African origin of certain Haitian traits has been discussed above, pp. 199–201.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

possible to gain a historical perspective of the valley in which 175
our interest centers. As late as 1702, he tells us, only a few individuals were settled there, and these were mainly hunters and herders, since the policy of that day, based on the official belief that the future of the valley lay in using to the full its grazing resources rather than in the development of agriculture, caused all agricultural activity to be prohibited. Two [177]
decades later, however, when the cultivation of indigo had been successfully introduced, agricultural development proceeded apace. In 1739, in addition to more than a score of indigo-production centers, the valley boasted of numerous coffee, cotton and cocoa plantations, and by 1789 was a recognized agricultural region.

But for the fact that the great plantations are no longer 241
there, this aspect of life in Mirebalais has been little changed 178
by revolutions and the abolition of slavery. Indigo, of course, has lost its place as an important product, while maize is now among the most significant crops, as might be looked for in the change from a plantation system to one of small individual ownership which was brought about by Haitian independence. But cotton and sugar-cane are still major crops, and coffee, which grows well on the mountainsides, is largely cultivated.

Moreau de St. Mery, writing in 1789, speaks of the French 175
who peopled the valley as "still showing the traits which 648
marked the early colonials. They are good, frank, brave, and opposed to all coercion." In 1723 "they marched with others from the district of the Artibonite" in an uprising against the arbitrary policies of the French West Indies Company, which Charlevoix, one of the first historians of Haiti, so vividly described.[2] In 1729 and 1736 the folk of Mirebalais defended their eastern frontier against attacks by the neighboring Spaniards; eleven years later one hundred and ten of them helped with the defense of the town of St. Louis, which was menaced by the hostile maneuvers of the British admiral

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

about the square that precedes the principal mass of the day. 796 188
These processions, however, are as a mere rehearsal for the great procession held during the festival of St. Louis, the patron saint of the town. At that time the statue of the saint, carried by the faithful — among whom can be seen more than one perspiring *vodun* priest and *bocor* — is taken triumphantly through the streets to insure a good year. The nearness of the valley to the village of Ville Bonheur makes the 796 [184]
great religious festival of Saut d'Eau, where the "miracle of the Virgin" is believed to have occurred, almost a local matter. And though Saut d'Eau lies well over the mountains, July 15 finds most of the population of Mirebalais away from home celebrating the miraculous revelation with folk from other parts of Haiti. May Day is celebrated as the "Fête de 527
l'Agriculture," and two years ago a new day of rejoicing was added to the calendar of festivals. This is known as the "Festival of the Second Independence," the anniversary of the departure of the American Marines from Haiti, and is marked by the "illumination" of all houses the night before and a solemn discourse from the mayor after a Te Deum has been sung in the church.

Thus life in the valley of Mirebalais continues the course 175
it has followed for the past two hundred years. Though its [178]
history, as we can reconstruct it, has been marked by turbulent periods, these have been far from the rule. It is true that because of its position it has always been a point to be defended, and often, both before and after the time of Haitian independence, it has been a region where decisive encounters with those who controlled the Spanish portion of the island have taken place. Not for many years, however, until the Caco 175
uprising against the American Marines, did Mirebalais ex- 648
perience military activities on any considerable scale. After the death of Charlemagne Perrault, when his successor selected the valley as a strategic point to be defended, a large force of Marines was encamped near the confluence of the

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

powers which actuate their charms are variously ascribed to Legba, the Earth gods, and, most importantly, the "little folk" of the forest. Acceptance of the power of magic, however, is by no means confined to Africa, for it is characteristic of all the Old World, if not universal. Hence, as will be seen, the belief in magic held by the Africans who were imported into Haiti met with the corresponding beliefs of the Europeans who were their masters, so that today Haitian magic represents almost a complete merging of these two.

This, then, in briefest survey constitutes the culture which predominantly gave the Haitian people the African elements found in Haiti today. But the types of Europeans and of European behavior with which the slaves came into contact are also important and must next be examined, for it was these European patterns that, under contact, impinged upon the African habits of thought and action in such a way that, merging with the aboriginal customs, the Haitian culture found today was eventually shaped.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

CHAPTER II

WHAT THE SLAVES FOUND IN HAITI

THOUGH by the time of the French Revolution "the immense army of slavery had increased to such proportions that in the face of it the white world seemed reduced to a mere handful of men,"[1] this was by no means the case in the earliest days of the colony of Santo Domingo. As late as 1681 the whites outnumbered the Negroes almost three to one,[2] and it is not until a hundred years later that, in the words of St. Mery, there were "eleven and three tenths slaves for one white."[3]

Yet in the fashioning of the present-day culture of the Haitian peasants, this "mere handful" exerted an influence out of all proportion to its size. That this should have occurred is not strange in view of the relationship between Negroes and whites, which was that between slaves and masters; that it did occur is amply shown in the contemporary accounts of Haitian and West Indian life, which tell us how the Negroes everywhere made conscious efforts to achieve the standards of those who to them represented power, wealth, and position. But while the prestige of the master-class must be acknowledged, care must be taken not to accept uncritically an assumption that has colored many accounts of the lives of primitive peoples who have come into contact with European

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

[History of Haiti in 17th + 18th Century
The Haitian white population]

177 cultures — namely, that the traditions and beliefs of these groups cannot withstand the impact of what is termed "civilization." What invariably seems to follow when peoples having differing customs, beliefs, and cultural heritages come into continuous contact is that both give, and each takes. What aspects of the new culture a given people will take, and what in turn they will give, must vary according to the particular historical situation under which the contact occurs. But both 178 processes do go on, and, as will be shown in the case of Haiti, though the Negroes retained much of their African culture, they also freely took over and adapted the customs and behavior of the Europeans among whom they lived.

563 Certain questions, therefore, must be asked about this white element in the population. To what extent was it a unit in its derivation and in its special customs — did its members come from a single social class of the home country, or were all elements of French society represented? What were the patterns of family life, of religion, of economic organization, of morals, which the whites presented to Negro eyes? These are matters of great significance, for one telling factor in the mingling of cultures is the type of carrier through whom contact between civilizations is effected. If, for example, European missionaries or traders or administrators on short tenure and without their families are introduced into an area, a far different picture of European life will be presented to the native from that were immigrant settlers to come among them with their wives and children; and this result, moreover, to seek finer distinctions, will show additional divergencies according to the social position of these migrants. Therefore it is necessary to consider the types of Frenchmen whose modes of living were to influence the behavior which the descendants of their slaves were to perpetuate when these had attained their freedom as individuals and their independence as a nation.

175 The "Corps of Adventurers" who in 1632 comprised the 563 dominant element in the population of Haiti included four

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

[History of Haiti in 17th-18th Centuries]

Negro peasant of today presents aspects of harshness or instability, it would seem proper to ask how much of this might be ascribed to the examples which these Negroes were set by their masters, rather than unequivocally to assume inherent racial tendencies to account for them, as is so often done. 17 66 105

This, of course, is far from the whole story. For just as there were large numbers of colonists who were men of integrity and lived in accordance with the best traditions of their French heritage, so among the Negroes were many who sensed these deficiencies in the regime to which they had been enslaved, and held tenaciously to their African traditions, not only in religion, but in social, economic, and political phases, so that, when the time was ripe, these might in some measure be re-established. To approach the matter realistically, it must be recognized that just as the Africans in the islands represented numerous tribes having varying customs, and individual members of these groups possessed varying degrees of integrity and worth, so the French who came to live there and whose slaves learned of French culture from them represented not necessarily the flower of that culture, but were in the main derived from the extremes of French society, the unadjusted and maladjusted lower classes and the aristocrats. What was bequeathed by them to the Haitians, therefore, were those aspects of French civilization which, to the extent that they were accepted by the Negroes, are partially responsible not only for the graciousness, the hospitality, and the generosity of the Haitian of today, but also for the less pleasant aspects of the culture that have resulted from his historical development since independence. 178 105

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

in descent, so there were "colored" folk who were slaves. As time went on, the lighter-colored slaves were usually employed as house-servants rather than field-hands, bringing about a continuous dilution of the Negro blood that flowed in these strains, and a lightening of their skins. And such was the prestige attached to light color that the mixed-bloods, even though slaves, felt themselves superior to free Negroes of undiluted African stock. This attitude derived from the fact that the lighter slaves were most often manumitted, particularly if they were the children of their owners, and that in other situations, when as slaves they gained the favor of their masters, they were permitted to engage in some remunerative enterprise with the proceeds of which they eventually might purchase their own freedom. These free people of color, or *affranchis*, formed an important part of the Haitian population in pre-Revolutionary times,[18] and played a principal role in the development of Haitian culture. It was through them that European civilization flowed, since because of the closeness of their contacts with the whites they were the instrument by means of which the aboriginal African heritage of the slaves was modified to produce the forms in which it is found in Haiti today.[19]

Yet for all the importance of the freed mixed-bloods in the attainment of Haitian independence and in the fixing of the patterns of Haitian culture, they, like the whites, were but relatively few in number, their strength being but from five to ten per cent of that of slaves.[20] In attempting to analyze the manner in which the present amalgam that is the civilization of Haiti was formed, it is consequently necessary to revert to a consideration of those who were in the majority, the full-blooded Negroes. The tribes from which these Negroes were principally derived have been indicated, together with the outlines of the civilizations of the region of Africa from which they were drawn. To this must be added, as has been for the whites with whom they came in contact, an analysis of the so-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

"The Mina Negroes have even been seen to recognize princes of their country . . . prostrating themselves at their feet and rendering them that homage whose contrast to the state of servitude to which these princes have been reduced in the colony offers a striking enough instance of the instability of human greatness."[17]

Yet another group of Africans played a significant role in determining the trends Haitian Negro culture was to take. It is a commonplace among those who have studied New World Negro life that African religion has shown greater resistance to white influence than any other phase of African culture. And to explain this one must again turn to native African tradition. The beginnings of the West African monarchies, whose ruling dynasties eventually came to command great stretches of land, were in tiny principalities that continually "warred" against each other. Tradition has it that the most intransigent of the conquered were the priests of the indigenous local cults, who, because of their activities, were punished with what native idiom still terms "banishment." In the New World these intractable priests continued their rites for their fellow-slaves and instructed the next generation so their knowledge would not be lost to the people. Before their enslavement they had been men of power and influence, and this pattern, carried over in all its strength in the New World, continued them and their descendants as natural leaders. Hence, wherever the opportunity presented itself to strike for liberty, they invoked the spiritual forces to reinforce the power and courage of the military leaders who, like them, had been sold into slavery because their countries had been conquered, or because they had rebelled against the succession in their own lands.

The composition of the slave population as inferred from these traditions is thus seen to be somewhat different from

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

that commonly assumed, since the conclusion is inescapable that, if anything, the slaves formed a group whose aboriginal types showed a weighting on the upper end of the African social scale rather than an overwhelming proportion of the less desirable members of society. Such an assumption goes far in explaining how the "slave psychology" generally attributed to Negroes of the New World was anything but a real part of their inner lives, and makes as well for an understanding of the extent to which the Negroes suffered their slavery with a constantly active discontent that is rarely given proper recognition in the study of the history of the period, and to which the drive toward freedom and the traditions of their native land were kept alive despite the restraints imposed by the masters.

Once in the net of the slavers, however, the status of any individual mattered but little, for to the European dealers each Negro was but an added unit of cargo. All last traces of his dignity as a human being were taken from him;[10] in the grants for earlier slaving operations, and in the manifests of the ships of that time, slaves were not even invoiced as human beings, but as "pieces of the Indies" — fractions of the perfect slave, who was conceived as having a height of seven quartas of a little more than ten inches each. Under this practice, the stature of each slave, child or adult, having been recorded, the total length of the members of the cargo was divided by the requisite number, and thus reduced to so many of these "pieces of the Indies," the actual number of human beings in the cargo not figuring.[10]

It is unnecessary to detail the horrors of the passage to the New World, for the story has been too often told. One can but conjecture what its effect on those subjected to it must have been, especially when it is viewed as an introduction to their contact with the Europeans who were to be their masters. That the mortality on the voyage was high is well known, but death encountered while the shackled slaves passed the dan-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

gerous bar of the African coast in the native canoes, which often overturned in the surf, is seldom mentioned in the literature of the slave-trade. Yet this was perhaps as great a cause of loss of life as the hardships of the journey to the coast or even the voyage across the Atlantic.

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Arrived at their destination, the slaves were given a period of rest so that they might be in the best of condition when they were placed on the market, to be inspected much as the more costly horses or heads of cattle were appraised. Sometimes the period between the voyage and their purchase was a lengthy one, since they were often held in "warehouses" for extended periods in order to regulate the market. Eventually, however, they were disposed of and, taken to the plantations, branded with the mark of the new master.[20] Induction into plantation life followed a fairly definite pattern: the new slave was first of all "introduced" to the principles of Christianity through an interpreter and then, according to his age, placed in one of the three work-groups which every plantation of any size possessed; the "great" one, composed of the most vigorous men and women; the second, to which the adolescents, the feeble, and the women who were nursing their infants were assigned; and the third, made up of children, who, under the watchful eye of an elderly woman, gathered forage. For the second and third groups the work was not too strenuous, but the members of the "great" work-group labored almost without rest except for the two hours a day allowed for meals and the few hours at night for sleep. And while conditions varied from plantation to plantation, the many contemporary accounts of the unrelenting manner in which the slaves were compelled to work at top speed testify to the harshness of the regime.[21] Small wonder that Charlevoix, contemplating the life of the slaves, wrote the moving paragraphs he composed concerning the hardships of their existence, and the slight compensations their labor afforded them.[22]

Despite the obvious fact that under such conditions the con-

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1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

tinuation of African cultural traditions was not easy, certain things did persist. While the material facts of the life of the slaves was at once subordinated to European patterns — in dress and implements and to a certain extent in housing, for example[55] — yet in other matters they could live as they had lived in Africa. Thus one account of the time, quoted by de Vaublère,[56] tells how the slaves carried on communal hoeing, timing their strokes to the rhythms of songs that begged some favor of their visitor, or to songs of praise (and, when the white observer was not present, undoubtedly also singing songs of derision), in the characteristic African fashion that, as will be seen, has survived in Haitian peasant life to this day. Similarly their traditions of cooking, of eating, of fixing the time for their meals (despite St. Mery's comment that "the Negro has no other rule of eating than the demands of his appetite"), of respect for their elders; their attitudes toward death and their rituals of burial, their dances, their songs, and, above all, their non-Christian religious beliefs, all continued to be stamped with the mark of Africa.[57] On the other hand, opportunities to learn and imitate French customs were by no means neglected, for the prestige of the masters filtered through the ranks of the slaves until it reached even the field-hands, for the nearer in service the Negro was to the person of his master, the more Europeanized was his behavior and the prouder he was and the more he exploited his opportunities to follow European patterns of habit.[58] Not only did the house-servants imitate French dances,[59] but we are told how in Martinique, for example, all the slaves were taught these figures.[60] In the field of religion, also, the efforts of the Church to capitalize the royal edicts which made baptism of the slaves compulsory were far from vain, at least in so far as the outward manifestations of their acceptance of the faith were concerned. Writings of the time, however, do not omit comment on the discouragement of the missionizing Fathers who seriously undertook this task, because too often

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

in the regions where they operated. The most renowned was Macandal, a "Guinea" Negro, who was finally apprehended and executed in 1758.[60] His name lives today in Haitian peasant tradition, where folkloristic versions of his exploits as one of the earliest of the liberators are still recounted. The pages in St. Mery which tell how the strength of the bands in the mountains behind Croix-des-Bouquets necessitated a constant augmentation of the militia on duty there, is additional evidence of the success of these runaways. The same author's description of a group operating in the parish of Jacmel, found in 1783 to number among its members men more than fifty years of age who had been born in the freedom of the mountains, shows how long the escaped Negroes were able to maintain themselves without capture.[61]

175 569

The very tradition of *marronage* was important. Psychologically, it held out to the slaves a hope, more than ephemeral, of escaping their servitude, and in consequence allowed them to maintain an attitude of mind that kept many of them from becoming a prey to despair. From the point of view of the growth of Haitian culture, moreover, the groups of runaway slaves offered a ready means for the continuation of African traditions and patterns of behavior. Though but few descriptions of the manner of life led by the fugitives in their mountain encampments are to be had, it is apparent that in order to maintain confidence in their own powers of resisting capture and re-enslavement the runaways guarded assiduously all memory of African belief and practice, while even in the material aspects of their existence they tended to revert to aboriginal modes of life. Finally, however, and most important for the future course of Haitian history, was the training of these runaways obtained in the ways of warfare, and the continuation of the warrior tradition among the Negroes. This is one of the reasons why in 1791, when Boukman and his followers stirred the first general slave revolt in the north, the blacks were ready; also when in the course of

175 569 [178]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

attitudes of these writers were in the main far from sympathetic toward Haiti, and their interests extended but little to the customs of the great masses of Haitians. That the fear of slavery was still alive in the early part of the nineteenth century is apparent from an incident related by Mackenzie;[44] that, some decades later, the sense of racial differences continued to exist is evident from folk-sayings about the characteristics of whites, mulattoes, and Negroes recorded by St. John.[45] The concept of rank seems to have maintained itself in its full flavor, with no lack of social classes in Haitian urban society and no lack of vigor in perpetuating the earlier prejudices of caste.

The majority of the population remained on the land, for by 1830 the great estates had been completely broken up, and were cultivated in the main by small concessionaires. The dress of these country inhabitants seems to have remained much as it had been under French control, and the emphasis on good manners that so marks African social intercourse had been retained to such an extent that St. John, no admirer of the Haitian people, was forced to remark upon it.[46] Markets which were conducted in African fashion had been established, and these were supplemented by itinerant peddlers. The institution of *plaçage*, a reconciliation of African plural marriage with the monogamy of European custom, of which more will be said in a later chapter, was known in the early days of independence. The rites of birth and death were marked with their special ceremonies, and in both instances it can be seen that the African elements of the cultural heritage were not being forgotten. Dancing continued as the principal form of recreation, and to the traditional dances, which still persist, were added European styles.[47]

Above all, African religious customs were being observed. Vodun rites continued to flourish and magic was practiced as in the days preceding independence, as is to be seen from the notorious and all too often repeated tale of the "Congo bean

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

175 178 771 [789] 175 178 779 795

stew," which has continued current from the time of its publication by St. John until today.[48] Yet African religious practices were being constantly combated by the Catholic Church, for even in the period of revolt the priests had remained largely unharmed, and when Christophe was elevated to the throne, he appointed two archbishops. After the establishment of the Republic, Catholicism continued as the State religion, so that by the early nineteenth century, as Mackenzie mentions, thirty-eight clergy were active in Haiti, all under the control of the Bishop of Santo Domingo, and all presumably nominated and paid by the President of Haiti.[49] Though for a period there was an attempt to develop a national Church, the missionary work done during the colonial days left too strong a tradition of Catholicism to be overcome, and consequently a Concordat was signed with Rome in 1860, which has remained in effect ever since.[50]

178 Though the story of the cultural history of Haiti between 1804 and the present cannot thus be more than sketched, yet the background is known, and enough can be gathered from accounts of Haitian life during this interval to enable us to see that the varied cultural impulses were shaping the lives of the people throughout these years. With some understanding of the roots of the resulting culture in French and African [121] traditions, then, let us once more turn to the valley of Mirebalais and consider the life of the Haitian peasant as it is lived today.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3,
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584 in the same district, the background of the young man is well enough known so that no investigation is necessary, though unfailingly a long and formal discussion of the suitor, his qualities, and his prospects ensues. If his home is some distance away, however, meticulous inquiries are made not only concerning the young man and his immediate family, but of his ancestry as well. Should the suitor live near the home of the young woman, as usually happens, his own parents come with a *lettre de demand*. In earlier days the "letter" was written on flowered paper with a lacy border, but today plain colored paper does very well. When presented, it is wrapped in a green silk handkerchief, "for hope" — the handkerchief costs about five gourdes, and a similar amount is given the scribe — and is usually carried by the oldest man of the family; that is to say, the paternal grandfather if living, or if he is dead, the father, accompanied by the mother and perhaps the other grandparents. Today it is said that in the valley of Mirebalais the custom of presenting these letters of request is often disregarded, but is by no means extinct.[7]

584 212 [603] [822] [178]

The family of the girl is always apprised of the exact time of the visit, and refreshments are on hand. No reply is given at the time of the delivery of the "letter," since the families of both the father and the mother of the girl must consent to the match before it can be finally approved. However, at the stage of the courtship which the presentation of a "letter" implies, this delayed answer is a matter of form, for if the proposal had not been acceptable, the girl would not have been allowed to see the suitor. The refusal of a "letter" has been known to occur, but this is regarded as a deadly insult, and deep enmity between the families follows. Should the family of the girl, not wishing to be abrupt, accept the "letter" and proffer refreshments to its bearers, but later return the same "letter" as a sign of rejection, even this would be bitterly resented. Under such circumstances the young man takes steps to obtain revenge by providing himself with a

[578] 584 832 578

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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CHAPTER VII

PROPERTY, WEALTH, AND THE FAMILY

596 THE WORD "family" as employed in Haiti can be understood only in terms of a broader meaning than is given it in Europe and America, where it describes only the most immediate relationship group. Though in Haiti this type of organization, consisting of mother, father, and children, lies at the base of its social structure, the Haitian "family" includes a wide range of relatives, direct and collateral, on the sides of both parents. The immediate family is thus but a part of a larger group, to which it is in many instances subordinate.

611 It becomes apparent, from even so brief a statement, that
198 Haitian society has not retained that exclusive emphasis on
197 descent in the maternal or the paternal line that characterizes most of the civilizations of Africa. And while a more detailed discussion of the manner in which African and European traditions are combined in Haitian culture must be reserved for later pages, this much may at the moment be made clear: The Africans who peopled Haiti, coming from cultures where descent is counted solely on the side of the mother or the father, and coming into contact with the French, whose custom binds children with equal strength to the families of both parents, molded both traditions into the social forms found

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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today not only in Mirebalais, but, in their essential outlines, throughout the Republic.

The larger relationship grouping originates in the immediate family, and the formation of new extended families is a continuing arc. Characteristically, the process begins when a man leaves the habitation of his father and, with his wife, settles on land somewhat remote from the dwellings of either his people or those of his wife. As the sons of this couple grow up and marry, they make their homes near that of their father, so that in time a group of immediate families related in the paternal line clusters about the dwelling of this original settler, forming a habitation. The continuation of the process depends upon the amount of land available to the group; in any event, given enough time, land to permit all the male descendants of the founder to support themselves and their families will be lacking, so that the younger men will repeat the process that has been described, and themselves become the founders of new habitations whose members, with the passing of generations, will eventually be lost to the original group. While land is available, a young man is given several hectares by his father when he marries, and here he establishes his household. If the family have prospered, additional land is bought as more young men grow up, so that the relationship group may become a community of considerable size.

In accordance with this rule of residence, only rarely will a man settle on the property of his wife's parents, since to do so reflects unfavorably on his personal status. When this does occur, it is probably because of a serious quarrel with his own people. In such a case, if his marriage endures, he becomes a quasi-member of his wife's family, but unless he has committed some extremely grave offense, such as publicly insulting or striking a parent or grandparent, he does not forfeit membership in his own group.[4] Similarly, the fact of his having settled away from the habitation of his family does not disinherit him, for, as will be seen, this occurs in but the

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other one which has been known there for many years, principally in the west, which bears the name of *Vaudoux*. . . . But it is not only as a dance that the *Vaudoux* merits consideration, for it occurs under circumstances which assign to it a place among the institutions where superstition and bizarre practices play a considerable part." [2]

In Dahomey, whence the term has come, *vodun*, as has already been stated, signifies "god" and is a general name for all deities. This source of the word has likewise long been known, as a reading of St. Mery shows:

> "According to the Arada Negroes, the real followers of *Vaudoux* in the colony . . . *Vaudoux* signifies an all-powerful and supernatural being on which depend all the events that come to pass on this globe." [3]

Similarly, de Vassière [4] quotes with approval a parallel definition from Peytraud, while modern Haitian writers also emphasize its Dahomean origin.[5] This meaning of the word had, however, undergone a change in its new home even during pre-Revolutionary times, for, according to St. Mery, the "all-powerful and supernatural being" had come to be a non-venomous serpent that stood as a symbol "for all those who professed this same doctrine." Today in Mirebalais even this identification is a thing of the past, though the prominence given serpent-worship in Haiti by most writers [6] would make it reasonable to suppose that elsewhere in the island serpents are maintained by priests of the *vodun* cult and play an important role in the rites at which the gods are worshipped. Indeed, one priest from Arcahaie encountered in Mirebalais mentioned the fact that in his own temple he kept such a snake. Yet in our valley no worship of serpents as such was encountered, and there were even those who declared that they had no hesitation in killing any snake, though these brave assertions could not be tested. Serpent-worship in Mirebalais

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184 771 student pursuing the "correct" statement will find that no matter how painstaking his method and how extensive his precautions, the versions of different persons can never be entirely reconciled, unless a false appearance of truth is given to his findings.[8]

178 771 776 If the underlying philosophy of the universe held by the Haitian is summarized, as it can be abstracted from his expressions of belief and from his observed behavior, this philosophy might be phrased somewhat as follows: The ruler of the universe is God, its Creator, who shares this task with His son Jesus, the saints of the Church, and the Holy Ghost. Man has been endowed with a soul, and the soul, which has come from God, returns to God for judgment and, if necessary, for punishment at the end of its sojourn on earth. From Africa — *Guinée* — the Negroes brought other deities, termed variously *loa, mystères,* or *saints,*[9] and these deities have been inherited through succeeding generations by the descendants of those who brought them to Haiti. The specific function of the African spirits in the Haitian system was given in the following terms by one of their devotees: "The *loa* are occupied with men, their task is to cure. They can make a person work better than he otherwise would. When the *loa* possess people, they give helpful advice. But they cannot do the things that God does. They can protect a garden, but they cannot make a garden grow, for streams, rain, and thunder come from God." Another statement clearly shows the same concept: "God made the *loa,* but did not make them so they might do evil. [424] [425] When a man purchases a *loa* for money, that spirit will do evil as well as good, but God becomes angry and will not accept these bad spirits into the sky, and He drives them away."

776 In the ordering of his daily life, however, the forces which are foremost in the consciousness of the Haitian make up the triad expressed in the phrase "*les mystères, les morts, et les marassa* — the *loa,* the dead, and the twins." Because of their special character, an examination of the twin cult and the cult

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steps to "feed" his *loa* in order to satisfy it, for it is more important to give offerings to the spirits than to dance for them. He therefore either quietly prepares a sacrifice of cereals and liquor in his own room or sends money home so that his *loa* may be "fed" at the family habitation, and his absence explained to it.[21]

When *vodun* deities are discussed in Mirebalais, most often two "companies" of them are mentioned, the Rada and the Pétro "squads." In one list of gods that was obtained, the word *Rada,* derived from the name of the ancient principality of Allada in Dahomey, called forth the explanation "*qui veut dire Dahomey* — which is to say, Dahomey," though it should be made clear that neither the words *Rada* nor *Dahomey* are any longer recognized in Haiti as place-names, being today simply qualifying designations of *loa.* There are regional differences in the number and ranking of other categories of gods that hold no important place in Mirebalais. The existence of these other categories is, of course, well known, and one person referred to "the seventeen and twenty-one classes of *loa,*" of which, however, only the following were named: Rada, Pétro, Dahomey, Guinée, Congo, Nago, Ibo, and Wangol. Of these the Congo and the Ibo gods are well known, though their worship is chiefly restricted to individual families, while the Nago and Dahomey categories, though significant from the point of view of indicating African origins, are most commonly grouped under the term *Rada.* Guinée also occasionally figures in worship as carried on in individual families, but this term is more often understood as a general designation for all *loa* outside the Rada, Nago, Congo, and Ibo groupings and for certain Pétro gods. Wangol derives from the geographical entity Angola.

From comparatively early times the impression has been given that certain of these classes of gods perform only good, and others evil. Nothing could be further from the truth than this attempt to read European concept into Haitian ideology.

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764 to which orange leaves and alcohol have been added, and soap are used to bathe the corpse, though limes are substituted for orange leaves if the dead was tubercular.[4] In earlier days cao-
[198] lin (white lime) — sacred in Africa — was mixed with the water, but this is no longer done. The corpse is turned on its face to permit the washing of side and back, and the body is dried with a towel, while the soiled water is either thrown into a small ravine or into a hole dug for the purpose.

764 The corpse is next dressed in new clothing, unless the one
775 who died owned a wardrobe which included black garments. No buttons or pins are used on new clothes, which are sewn into place, and if the body is dressed in clothing he wore while alive, the pockets are torn so that nothing can be
[198] carried away in them. Shoes were at one time put into the coffin — or sandals in the country — beside the dead, rather than on his feet, so that he would not be tempted to walk, but today in Mirebalais and the surrounding country the dead are buried barefoot or in stocking feet, since, as it was explained, "otherwise they make too much noise as they go about." Black stockings are always used. In the coffin are placed a rosary, a scapulary, soap, a comb, a handkerchief, a pipe (if the dead had been a smoker), and face powder; but no strong drink is included because, were the spirit of the dead person to become drunk, this would be dangerous; and no money, for if so much as a single sou were given the dead, he would return and take the rest of the family wealth. Similarly no food is put in the coffin, for otherwise it is believed that the ghost would be so busy eating he would never find the route to the sky. Pins are carefully excluded, because if the dead were given sharp objects, he would return to prick
764 the family. If it is suspected that death had been caused by
775 sorcery, and the soul of the dead may later be taken to aid in
754 working black magic, some plants of the type called *hoholi*
824 are placed in the coffin with the body. These plants are said to contain so many seeds that since one who comes to take the

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the *loa*. In one instance a man wore a red shirt with black crosses appliquéd on it; dresses of this type worn by women or children are made of cotton cloth, pieced together patchwork-quilt fashion, of either three, seven, seventeen, or twenty-one different colors or patterns, with reds, blues, and white predominating. These garments are worn for a specified time, also named by the *loa*. The term *pénitence* has been taken from Church terminology, and the motivating sanction derives equally from African and Christian concepts;[4] for example, the wearing of the garment is a compliment to the African deities represented by the colors, while the various rules about abstinence during its term of wearing is the European pattern of "penitence."

The elaborate cicatrizations, or raised designs made by scarifying the body, which marked the slaves newly arrived from Africa have quite disappeared, but a few scars can be discerned on the body or arms of a man by a practiced eye. These represent an African carry-over in the form of a *garde* applied by the injection of some magically endowed substance into a cut which thereafter gives what may be thought of as a kind of spiritual inoculation. African fashions of hair-tying have been retained by the women almost unchanged, and, as in Africa, hair-braiding is a highly developed art, so that the styles in which hair can be braided seem innumerable. This is particularly true of dressing the hair of small girls, whose heads are decorated with braids going the length of the skull, or dividing the scalp into small squares, each with its tuft of hair, or by a part in the middle with lines going at right angles from it across the head. These styles of braiding are not named as in other parts of the New World and in Africa, but the tradition of intricate braiding has lost none of its vigor.

The implements of the Haitian are both of European and African derivation. The ubiquitous machete, a saber-like tool employed in all manner of ways, from chopping down trees

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to cutting fruit, though seen in Africa, was probably introduced there by the early traders, and all machetes found today in Haiti are imported from Europe or America. The same is true of the hoe, for the short-handled, broad-bladed West African hoe has given way to the European long-handled type, though the blade of the Haitian hoe is somewhat broader than that used in America and Europe. Despite the presence of domesticated animals to draw the plow, this implement has never gained favor in Haiti, nor have recent efforts to teach the Haitian peasant the use of the plow achieved any degree of success. He prefers his African mode of cultivation, to say which implies more than just the employment of a certain implement, since even such matters as the manner in which he employs his hands and feet in the process of planting are included. When the Dahomean plants, for example, he holds a calabash of seed under his left arm, from which he takes the grains with his right hand. As he moves down the rows of newly turned earth, he makes a depression with the heel of his right foot, drops a few grains into this depression and, replacing the earth with his toes, takes a step so that he can repeat the process with his left foot. This is exactly the manner in which Haitians were observed planting in the valley of Mirebalais.[8] Unlike the usage in Africa, however — where the men clear the ground, the men and women plant, and the women tend the growing crops — the European pattern, which places agriculture in all its essential phases in the hands of men, has been taken over almost in its entirety.

The women have retained almost without change the African modes of preparing food. Grain is first pounded in an African-like mortar, with an aboriginal type of pestle, while the shelled kernels are winnowed in a large round basketry tray. The cooking is either done on a raised mud platform in the cooking shelter, as in West Africa, or on three stones, employed as rests for the pots, a method equally characteristic of Africa. In the Haitian cuisine the prevalence of stews, of

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been largely lost in the peasant culture, possibly because of a prudence dictated by conditions of life wherein evidences of the possession of wealth — certainly in the case of a peasant — were an invitation to those who would despoil him. Only when a family of position gives a ceremony, or when one of its members is married or dies, is the lavishness of its preparations such as to suggest the importance of its place in the community. This does not hold for the individual. Personal ostentation is the more strongly inhibited by the belief that another's envy may bring ill fortune to the one against whom it is directed. In Mirebalais it has almost become a byword that the really substantial citizens look as though they were the poorest. This tradition in no way interferes with the preoccupation with adding to one's possessions, or with the desire to exert the power and enjoy the position that go with a command of large resources, or the will to pass on as large an inheritance as possible to children. In their origin, such drives can be ascribed neither to Europe nor to Africa, nor, for that matter, to the experiences of slavery, but rather to the interplay of two homologous patterns of culture that has produced the economic system and the economic motivations found in Haiti today.

In the matter of land tenure, and in attitudes toward private property, African tradition has disintegrated almost completely. Under the characteristic West African form of land tenure, land of a tribe is vested in the tribal head, who allots it to families for use. Trespass upon it is not permitted while it is under active cultivation, and the produce of the land is the property of the one who has worked it. Only palm trees are privately owned by those who have planted them; otherwise land that goes uncultivated for a longer period than is necessary to restore its fertility may be re-allotted. In some regions land worked by an individual is his because of his membership in a large relationship group, whose ownership derives from the power of its ancestors who had lived on this

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land, whose bodies are buried in it, and whose spirits watch over it. As has been shown in the discussion of property, land in Haiti is owned privately, and, once title has passed, is subject to no alienation, except at the will of the owner — an attitude also held toward property of other categories, as is evidenced by the fact that most of the possessions of a man, particularly his livestock, are marked for identification, and theft is severely punished. Even the disposal of stray animals whose owners cannot be identified must follow well-defined legal procedure, in accordance with which they are held by the officers of the commune for a stated period of time before being sold at public auction. All marks on these animals are carefully noted in the records, so that title to them may be duly established.

In the organization of production and distribution an African mold, if not full content, predominates. The co-operative work-system, which is so important in maintaining agricultural production, is directly related to comparable groupings of West Africa, of which a distinctive form is the *dokpwe* of Dahomey, described when the African origins of Haitian culture were examined. The *combite,* as an instrument of co-operative labor and mutual self-help, with its tradition of giving no pecuniary reward for work done, but of making the feast which comes at the end of the day's labor adequate return — all these represent pure retentions of African practice. Even more striking is the carry-over in the attitudes which go with these outer forms — the manner in which the participants look forward with pleasant anticipation to taking part in *combites,* the enjoyment which they derive from their group work, and the verve with which the work is done are clear expressions of these attitudes. The role of the *combite*-song in exercising social control and enforcing conformity to local custom is entirely African, as is its function in stimulating work by setting a rhythm for it.

African, too, is the institution of the market, though in this

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443 171 178 case certain aspects of the historical development of Haiti have doubtless tended to reinforce African custom. Reference has been made to the fact that the great proportion of traders are women, a truism in Africa as in Haiti, where by general rule men are the producers and women the distributors of goods. In Haiti, however, the fact that for many decades men [102] were likely to be arbitrarily impressed into military service by local chieftains when they came to town — particularly in Mirebalais, which had always been one of the centers of Caco activity — discouraged them from attending the markets. Thus African usage has here been reinforced by the historical fact of Haitian political instability. The fact that the proceeds 443 434 562 178 171 from trading belong to the woman who does the trading, and that in consequence women are encountered who, though married, command independent means and exercise full control over their resources, is a carry-over of African tradition and, as in Africa, this gives to women a position in the economic world quite foreign to conventional European practice.

59 611 178 The form of the family as found in Mirebalais demonstrates that the African social grouping which comprises all those descended on one side of the family has largely disappeared there, though it is possible that at least the vestiges of it may [171] have survived in other regions of Haiti. Yet in West Africa, though descent is legally counted on but one side of the family, psychological adherence to the families of both parents is everywhere important. Therefore it is logical to assume [177] that this concept, reinforced by the pattern of dual descent and double familial affiliation of the French, has been retained in Haiti to the neglect of the aboriginal larger groupings, where, as has been seen, not only is relationship counted on both sides of the family, but, more significantly, the right to reprimand and punish is held and exerted by elders in both the maternal and the paternal lines. On the other hand, it is apparent that the feeling for larger relationship groups has not been entirely lost, particularly in the paternal line, when

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such matters as the passing on of the *loa* in families, the duties toward family dead, and the possible inheritance of food taboos are recalled. Like all these survivals, that of food taboos is not as clear in its expression in Haiti as in its aboriginal setting. Its determination is largely by trial and error, so that a mother, before the birth of her child, not only abstains from eating the foods harmful to her, but later carefully tries these on the child to ascertain their effect. Yet the custom, at best, is a tenuous one. Sometimes, if food uncongenial to a parent has ill effects on a person, "he goes on eating it until he becomes accustomed to it" — though this statement brought forth an emphatic dissent from another Haitian: "Not I! If a food harms me once, I am through with it."

Africanisms are particularly marked in the organization of and attitudes toward the ancestral cult. Today the fear of the power of the dead is as living in Haiti as in West Africa, despite the influence of the Catholic Church in changing concepts of the heavenly world of the dead and the role of ghosts on earth. It is quite true that the outer forms of ceremonialism taken by ancestor-worship in West Africa have disappeared; but when the meticulousness with which the rites of death are carried out, and the institution of *mangé morts* are remembered, it is seen that the spirit of African ritual observances has by no means been lost. African elements have survived even in the services for the dead, now largely taken over by the Church. On the anniversary of death a special commemorative mass is sung in the church, which the family of the dead attend in a body. Before they leave the habitation for the mass, however, animals are killed to provide meat for the feast which follows the Church service, and for the *mangé morts*, which also takes place at the same time. Immediately after the mass a reception takes place at the house of some member of the family who lives in town, or at the home of a friend, where cakes and liquors are served. At about noon, however, family and friends proceed to the habitation, where

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769 17 a *mangé* is given, and that evening, when the feast ends, dances are held. Two or three *tonnelles* are provided, the most important of these being the one where the Martinique cycle, the social dances most beloved by the ancestors, is danced. In one of the remaining two a European *bal* is held, and in the other are the *vodun* dancers. Thus even in connection with a commemorative Church mass for the dead the *mangé morts* and the dancing of African dances are included.

595 177 178 [554] The institution of plural marriage, which is socially recognized though not legally sanctioned, is obviously African. Though the *placée* is held in respect and her place in society carries no reproach for herself or her children because of any connotation of immorality, it is of significance for an understanding of the manner of cultural change that prestige in marriage goes with the monogamic union blessed by the Church, and that the "wife"—the woman who is addressed as "Madame"—holds definitely higher social position than the *placée*. Officially the Haitian State is in accord with the position of the Church and recognizes only the European monogamic marriage. Socially, however, African plural marriage is not only tolerated but accepted as a matter of course, and in those instances where plural marriage takes on its most exuberant form, as when men of position have as many as six or seven *placées* in addition to a legal wife, its very size tends to give such a family group, or at least its head, the enviable esteem of his fellow-citizens.

17 [593] [606] [583] Within the family, the deference toward older members and the duties and attitudes toward parents-in-law are African both in form and in spirit. The exaction of guarantees from a young man before marriage, and the necessity of his proving to the family of his fiancée that he can support her, are perhaps in their generalized form universals, but as found in Haiti show once more a retention of specific aboriginal traditions. On the other hand, such aspects of marriage as the [584] formal *lettre de demand* sent when a match is arranged, or the

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178 [illegible] in Africa, also allow play for the æsthetic impulse, have been lost as well. Ironworking is absent not only because the necessary deposits of iron ore are lacking, but because the technique of shaping the metal into various forms, which in Africa is in the hands of specialists, was apparently suppressed in the time of slavery. No native cloth is woven. Basketry has survived, but whereas in Africa designs of no small artistic merit are achieved in this medium, it is markedly utilitarian in Haiti. Even from a technical point of view, the basketry forms are of the simplest, the panniers used for transportation of products on mule-back being merely an in-and-out weave, and the plaited strips of which hats and the *macoute*, or carrying basket, are made are of a parallel simplicity.

Few African recreational forms have survived. *Wari*, the draughts-like West African game found today in many parts of the West Indies, is unknown in the interior of Haiti, though it has been introduced into Port-au-Prince, where it is played by longshoremen who have learned it from the sailors of near-by islands. String figures, important in West Africa, are not encountered, and no children's pursuits comparable to the play of young Africans were seen in Mirebalais, if the minor ceremony of marking the loss of childhood teeth be excepted. African types of recreation have in the main given way to cock-fights and card-games, both of which derive their interest from the opportunities they offer for gambling—a fact important in itself, since gambling is not one of the widespread African vices. The most important card-games are *trois-sept*, *marriage*, and *bezique*, and both men and women know them and play them for stakes. Similarly cock-fighting, particularly during the dry season, is a passionate avocation of the men. Large sums are wagered on the results of an encounter, and feeling often runs high.[6]

The Haitian genius for art and recreation is best embodied in the dance and its accompanying songs and drum rhythms. Virtuosity is attained not only by the dancers, but even more

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especially by the drummers. Experience among other Caribbean Negro cultures and in Africa itself has failed to reveal greater skill in calling forth intricate rhythms from batteries of drums than can be found at any Haitian religious gathering. The enthusiasm with which a man takes his place at a drum, the manner in which he loses himself in his drumming, the skill with which he maintains the time of his complex beats in common with two other drummers and those who manipulate the rattles and the iron, bespeak long training and a passionate devotion to the art. The same is true of dancing. The best drummer, the finest dancer, hold positions of esteem in the community, and on occasion their fame will go beyond the valley, an occurrence as unusual as it is valued. The excellence of the drumming and dancing and the concomitant artistry in song can be understood when one considers the age at which training is begun in these arts. At Mirebalais an infant of no more than two years has been seen to dance creditably, while a young boy of six gave a demonstration of drumming that spoke eloquently of his promise as a drummer of talent. Before every *vodun* dance the boys take over the drums while the younger girls dance to their rhythms. They are watched with a critical eye by their elders, who from time to time correct them or praise those who do well.

The accompanying musical forms are almost entirely African in their rhythmic structure, but European influence is traceable in their melodic line, which varies from unchanged European folk-melodies to purely African songs. In the use of the falsetto, however, in the statement of a theme by a leader and its repetition by a chorus, and in the countless modulations introduced into the song, the singing is entirely African, as are the postures struck by those singing.

The importance of the dance is apparent from the large range of dances. Of *vodun* dances there are the *avalou*, or *yanvalou*, a word meaning supplication in the speech of Whydah; the specialized steps for the various Rada and Pétro gods; for

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magie and for the Congo, Ibo, and Nago *loa;* the *mazon,* as an interlude dance between possenions; and steps of the *saugue,* or salute to the gods. There is also the Martinique cycle of secular dances, including the *zouse, calleboase,* and *banda;* the *vara* dances found only at Easter time, and the social Congo dances. Finally European dancing, called *bal,* is performed to the sound of a drum, a phonograph record, or a small orchestra. With a qualified exception of the last, the type of dancing in all these is African. The essence of style in these dances lies in the manipulation of feet and the muscles of the body, particularly those of shoulders, hips, and buttocks, the patterns of which have been carried over in their entirety from the aboriginal homeland. For men and women to dance with arms about each other, as do Europeans, is still regarded in Mirebalais as immoral.

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The trait of African culture that has survived most tenaciously in all the New World, even where European influence has been strongest, is that of folk-literature — of tales, proverbs, and riddles.[7] Though these have flourished in Haiti as elsewhere, prolonged story-telling sessions, so characteristic of other Negro groups, were not encountered in Mirebalais. It is likely that this is principally a seasonal phenomenon, and the failure to find long evenings of story-telling during the summer months, when the rains are at their height and work in the fields is hardest, may properly be an expression of this seasonal variation. As elsewhere in Negro societies, tales and riddles are told at wakes, though their enjoyment by children and their function as a part of the education of the child are as important as in Africa itself. The familiar types of African animal stories and the tales of human tricksters and magicians are well known, and well told. The figure who corresponds to Br'er Rabbit, or to the spider Anansi, is the little 'Ti Malice, while the foil for his pranks is the great awkward Bouki.[8]

One folkloristic element that gives Haitian life a strong African flavor is the proverb, which, as elsewhere in Negro

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cultures, is used not only to point morals for the young but as an expression of the characteristically oblique forms of Negro expression in a quarrel, or in sounding a warning, or in commenting acidly on some social situation. A famous proverb, quoted from the earliest days, is today heard often in Mirebalais: "*Zafai' mouton pas zafai' cabrit*—The affairs of the sheep are not the affairs of the goat"—an injunction against gossip. When a person boasts that no one can harm him, the reply may come: "It is on a narrow path that one has to deal with a difficult horse." Should a man dismiss an experience as of but little consequence to him, he may hear the comment: "Often one pays an ox for a goat." When one person does harm to another, his victim may warn him with the phrase: "Behind the mountains are other mountains." If a man whose fortunes are flourishing attempts to console another who has suffered misfortune, or a rich man jibes at a poor one, the retort may be: "The rock under the water doesn't know how the rock in the sun suffers." To such an extent do proverbs comment on all aspects of life that almost no extended conversation occurs without them. Some of these are of European origin, but both numerically and in their use their character is preponderantly African, as is shown by their specific correspondence to proverbs used today in the regions from which the Negroes of Haiti were derived.[9]

In the practice of magic, and more especially of black magic, it has been noted that African and European traditions have combined into an integrated cultural unit. The outward expression of magic in the charm or "fetish" as an aspect of African life is so obvious that it has been commented on by all observers. In Haiti, though the charms are not prominently displayed and personal charms especially are worn beneath the clothing, this concept of their importance in coping with life has been retained. Yet, as has been seen, Haitian magic is not African alone. For while the forces behind protective magic are primarily the *loa*, and those behind black magic are

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789 764 197 178 the powers that control the souls of the dead and those creatures of evil whose powers come from Satan — all this being African enough, in the sense that evil magic exists in Africa as elsewhere — the point, which bears repetition, is that the primary sanctions for evil magic have been reinforced by the books of magic handed down from medieval Europe.

789 197 178 In this system, however, not only do European books of magic figure, but the Church also has its place. "The things of the Church are always affairs of magic," remarked one Haitian, meaning that they are best adapted to this purpose and are used when the opportunity is had. It is for this reason that great care is taken to keep all sacred objects in churches from the hands of unauthorized persons. To have something that has come from a church, such as a bit of a priest's robe or a few splinters from the statue of a saint, enlists the power of these on behalf of any objective that the maker of magic has in view, and invests any *garde* made with these with the power of God Himself. Thus the twofold meaning of the proverb: [539] "*Vrai waré corde, vrai wanga, c'est l'Eglise* — The real tying of the cord, the true *wanga*, is the Church," or, similarly: "*Vrai hungan c'est l'Église* — The true *hungan* is the [154] Church." However, whether it be through such African-like practices as the use of colored cloth, or caolin, or the tying of knots, or whether objects filched from the sanctuary of the church be employed, evil magic, derived alike from African and European sources, continues as a potent force of Haitian peasant life. For perhaps in magic more than in any other aspect of his culture has the peasant achieved a synthesis of the two currents that have contributed to his civilization. He has taken from both, and inasmuch as both adhere to a more general pattern which marks all the Old World, neither tradition has had to give way to the other.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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d'Angole) is obviously Angola, while the designations Ibo and Congo speak for themselves. Simbi is a Congo deity, as are Bumba and Lemba. Finally, in the categories of gods important in the regions of Haiti other than Mirebalais are the Loa Sénégal, and the Loa Mondong, both of which are names of African tribes mentioned in the early literature as contributing to the Haitian slave population. But all recognition of geographical names as such has disappeared, and they have been transmuted into designations of gods.

Outstanding here is the word *vodun* itself, already indicated as Dahomean, where it is a general term for "deity," though in Haiti its use has become more restricted and the symbol for deity has become the word *loa*, or *mystère*. The origin of the designation *loa*, which has been claimed to be a corruption of the French *roi*, is debatable. It is true that in West Africa certain deities are regarded as kings, yet this derivation is not convincing in view of the fact that in the *vodun* cult as found in Haiti at present or as described in earlier sources the *loa* are never generally referred to as kings, something that tends to strengthen statements that have been made to the effect that the word comes from the language of a Congo tribe.[1] The source of the root *hun-*, which figures in the terms *hungan*, *hunsi*, and *humfort*, is clear, for in Dahomey it is a synonym for the word *vodun*. *Hungan* and *hunsi* are even more definitely traceable than *humfort*, since the ending *-gan*, the Dahomean word for chief, designates the priest as the chief of the spirits, and *-si*, "wife," is employed in the sense of "wife of the god" or his devotee, in Africa as in Haiti. The female counterpart of *hungan*, *mambu*, cannot be definitely assigned, but may be of Bantu derivation, and is certainly an African word.

Other uncontaminated Africanisms can be discerned in the attitude of the Haitians toward the *loa* and in the ceremonies for them. One of the most characteristic is the inheritance of *loa* in families, a direct survival of the belief which not only

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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makes for deification of the family dead, but constitutes the oldest ancestor of a relationship group one of the great gods and thus causes families to give primary allegiance to a restricted number of deities. The most striking aspect of this tradition preserved in Haiti is that all ceremonies must be given by family groups, and at them only members of the family may with propriety become possessed. Possession itself, and the elements which constitute the possession complex — the use of the drums, the rhythms associated with particular gods, the importance of songs in calling the spirits, the mode of worship through specific dances for specific deities — these make up another series of Africanisms. In the dance itself the use of iron to sound basic rhythms for the drums, the outer form and function of the rattle, and the fact that the circle of participants always rotates in a counter-clockwise direction, are equally African. The modes of behavior to be observed as possesion comes on and the psychological release that follows it both derive from the same source, as do the beliefs that rituals must be held on the days sacred to the particular god being worshipped.

Another retention of African tradition is a belief in the importance of sacrifice. It will be remembered that it is held to be more essential to "feed" the gods than to dance for them. This is also the tradition of all peoples of the region from which the slaves were derived, and in a sense reflects the very immediate relationship that obtains between Africans, or Haitians, and their gods. Since in both regions each deity performs the double role of doing good for those who worship it properly and harassing those who neglect it, the importance of giving adequate sacrifices to avert evil is evident. In both Haiti and Africa, however, these may differ with the wealth of the individual giving the offering, with the number of persons who contribute toward the ceremony where offerings are given, or with the seriousness of the situation which the deity is being asked to remedy. That the gods permit such varia-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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171 178 782 tion is a further comment both upon the human traits ascribed to them, and upon the realism with which they take cognizance — as only African gods can — of the financial position of their devotees!

171 178 776 78 It is not only in the immediacy of the Haitian gods to their worshippers and in their human qualities, however, that these beings have retained African traits, for in the full reciprocity that must prevail in the relationship between deities and their followers is to be seen a point of view that is entirely non-European. Between man and the gods the rule of *quid pro quo* must always be in operation; and this rule may only be regarded as but another contribution of Africa toward Haitian religious ideology. While this reciprocal giving flavors all aspects of worship whether it be of the *loa*, the dead, or the twins, it takes a yet more prominent, and more familiar place in the field of magic, since here the *engagement* owes much to European belief, though the element of reciprocity is much more emphasized than was ever the case in medieval European diabolism.

178 776 794 The psychological values of the *vodun* cult, especially the general tone found in the feeling toward the terms *Guinée* or *Rada*, perhaps most convincingly show the attitudes that aided in the retention of things recognizably African. For while the [184] Pétro gods are by no means viewed as altogether bad, or are always held unwelcome, the fact that in Mirebalais, as in Haiti generally, the Rada gods are those least feared, most desired, and in connection with whose cult wrongdoing is most rarely present, is of the greatest significance, especially when the related fact is recalled that the Pétro gods are the more powerful in the matter of evil magic, while the Rada deities are said to exert their power to protect their devotees from the dark forces that may be set in motion against them.

178 776 776 In attitudes toward the gods, then, in the names of the gods themselves, in the manner in which they function in the lives of Haitians, and in the importance of the ceremonial con-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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nected with them, much of African tradition which has carried over into Haitian religious life has been retained in pure form. Yet the intrusion of Catholic custom into these African patterns — often noted, though generally in passing — also must be studied if the significance of the forms of Haitian folk-religion is to be grasped. That this aspect of *vodun* has received the scant attention it has had is probably to be ascribed to two causes.[2] The first takes the Catholic element for granted, so that even where a particularly dramatic element of Catholic practice is seen in an African setting, such as a crucifix or the portraits of the saints on a *vodun* altar, specific mention is made of this without attempting to dissect its historic or psychological role. The second reason for the comparative disregard of Catholic influence is that for Europeans it is a commonplace. Spirit possession and sacrifices, African song and drum rhythms are more "exciting" than prayers or hymns of the Church. Underlying both these causes is the deep-rooted and unquestioned assumption that, in contact with any non-European culture, the patterns that govern European behavior must prevail. Consequently, is it not in the nature of things that Catholicism should have taken root in the *vodun* cult? Is not rather the matter to be stressed that African traditions should have been retained at all? That the process should actually have been one of amalgamation rather than of dominance is rarely taken into account. Yet to go deeper into the significance of this process in Haitian life is to open far-reaching vistas.

An outstanding sanction taken by the *vodun* cult from Catholicism is that of the baptismal rites. Though ceremonies of consecration are a commonplace in Africa, and the African ritual of washing the head — *lavé tête*, as it is termed — has not been forgotten, in Mirebalais the importance of baptism as a means whereby human beings obtain their place in this world and in the next has been carried over and applied to all matters of ceremonial significance. Thus just as in the lives of

799 today the church takes full advantage
798 of its status as the only recognized religious organization in Haiti to dictate the official position of government toward *vodun*. Permission for *vodun* dances and for *services* must be obtained from the officer commanding the local detachment of the Garde d'Haiti, and this is not always granted. Penalties
[688] for illicit dances and ceremonies are severe, and because gossip is ubiquitous and no man lacks enemies, apprehension is prompt. Thus in the instance of one *service*, a misunderstanding regarding the permit was sufficient to cause the detention for some hours of the one responsible for the rite.

797 Is it possible, then, for a person to be a communicant of the
•178 Church and partake of the sacrament without feeling this
177 weight of spiritual and official disapprobation? More particularly, is it possible for him to omit from his confession all allusion to his worship of "false" gods? It is here that one encounters a singularly tenacious survival of African traditional belief. In Africa the conquest of one people by another meant the mutual interchange and acceptance of the respective deities. The conquerors added to their own pantheons the gods of those whom they had overcome so that these forces might not wreak a supernatural vengeance upon them; while to the conquered the power of the gods of those who had defeated them was self-evident. If the worship of the Christian God and of the saints of the Church intruded on the aboriginal religious patterns of the Negroes brought to Haiti, the acceptance of such worship did not imply rejection of the old gods. Nor does membership in the Church today mean such complete acquiescence in its doctrines and pronouncements that the worshipper of the *loa* will offer himself for the malediction of the priest by confessing his adherence to their cult. The situation somewhat parallels that in Africa itself, where the first effort of Protestant missionaries is directed toward inducing their converts to abjure polygyny. This dictum is complied with readily enough on the surface, so that a man will have but one wife — in one village! In Haiti the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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problem of confession is met in the manner explained by a woman who is a devotee of the *loa:* "The *loa* are not the things of the priest. Why should I tell him about them? If I come and take this book of yours, it isn't mine, and I am a thief. If the priest tells me I must not worship my *loa*, they are not his *loa*, and he cannot take them from me. Does anyone expect me to come and tell him that my father, my mother, my sisters and brothers, and all my family serve the *loa*?"

For the Haitian, therefore, the forces of the universe are under dual control. And though, as has been stated when the cosmology of the system of *vodun* worship was discussed, he may reconcile this duality, yet in practice he must observe the rites of his *loa* separately; he must pray to God and the saints apart. His reconciliations he keeps to himself, and in his everyday life both the African beliefs and those of the Church have their place. No better illustration of this could be had than in the incident of the white cock named for the serpent-god Damballa, that had been spared until the final day of this field-work when, as the last of a large brood, his time had come to be killed for the table of his owner. On this afternoon, when he was "to meet his destiny," the cook took him up quietly. A number of feathers were plucked from him, and then, as the sharp knife, describing a cross, ended his life, the whispered phrase could just be heard: "*Damballa, je crois en Dieu* — Damballa, I believe in God."

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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CHAPTER XV

SOME WIDER IMPLICATIONS

158 No student of Haitian institutions can elude a progressively
182 sharpened awareness of the psychological conflict that is being waged within the frame of Haitian society. And though examples of the divergent forces which lie at the root of this conflict have been set forth in the preceding chapters, some of the more important of these may be recalled here.

178 In his social relationships the Haitian is constantly exposed
182 to the demands of a code of morality which requires marriage
595 to be monogamic. Yet the African tradition of polygyny, and
158 the undoubtedly satisfactory arrangements of both an economic and a social nature that can be made under the terms
178 of plural marriage, pull him toward this form. The case is even
182 stronger in the field of religion, which in Haiti is not a thing
771 remote from life, but an intimate part of existence. On the one
158 hand, because of his inheritance of the *loa*, he must meet his obligations toward these ancestral gods of Africa who punish harshly those who fail them, so that he must either continue their traditional worship or learn to know the consequences
[191] of their anger. Yet on the other hand, the priest thunders his maledictions and threats of eternal damnation — in Mirebalais, at least, often in Créole, a language which the peasant can understand — against those of his flock, the vast majority

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

of whom are sincere practicing voduists as they are sincere practicing Catholics, who do not put an end to the worship of false gods.

The absence of graphic and plastic arts in Haitian culture, commented upon in a preceding chapter, must also be regarded as a case in point in laying bare the anatomy of this inner conflict of tradition, since it is important to recognize that the suppression of these forms of the prevalent African tradition would seem to have lost to the Haitian an important outlet for the resolution of inner tensions caused by pent-up drives. Even more revealing is the substitution of games of chance for those games of skill which in most African and New World Negro societies are played for their own sake alone—that is, for the prestige accruing to the skillful player. The strain that accompanies this play for stakes, often of no inconsiderable value in terms of the resources of the players, is patent to the most casual observer. The question here arises whether or not the craving for excitement of this kind may not in Haiti be traceable to the inhibition, under slavery, of some of the more gracious forms of African life which there make for social equilibrium. Might it not represent a kind of compensation for the thwarted psychic ease with which a culturally undisturbed people approach their own existence—a state of being which, in contrast, is quite lacking in Haiti?

A singularly illuminating comment upon these manifestations of instability in Haitian life has been made by Dr. J. C. Dorsainvil, who in drawing his conclusion called both upon his own medical training and on his experience of many years as a profound student of his own people. "It has perhaps been insufficiently remarked to what an astonishing degree the Haitian people live on their nerves."[1] As might be expected, he advances a number of possible explanations of the causes that underlie this state of "living on nerves." The wear and tear of life in the tropics is given as one reason; another is the excitement of the *vodun* dances with their frenzy of possession;

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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tudes governing Negro-white relationships in this country at the present time.

Haiti has experienced as long and perhaps as intensive a degree of exposure to European influences as any area where non-Europeans have lived in contact with European patterns of life. It has, in addition, completely passed through initial and secondary periods of contact into a state where the social milieu represents more than a century of consolidation of the original influences. Yet the Haitian Negro has by no means been overwhelmed by European tradition, just as he has not retained his aboriginal African heritage without any change. The process is seen to be one of selection, of working over, of revamping and recombining the elements of the contributing cultures, with the result that the ensuing combinations, though of recognizable derivation, differ from their aboriginal forms.

More problems of general interest are also pointed and illustrated by the material from Haiti. One assumption often made in viewing the course of cultural change is that the intangible aspects of a culture are less prone to give way before foreign influences than are its technological and economic aspects. The "natural" conservatism of religion and social organization is often particularly stressed in contrast with the relatively greater tendency to change shown by tools and weapons, clothing, housing, and utensils of various sorts. And though such assertions have some basis in fact, as both our own culture and the cultures of numerous other folk show, yet in the material on Haiti it is clear that neither in technology nor in economic organization have the traditions of Europe entirely prevailed over those of Africa, nor are they in any sense absent in the fields of social organization, religion, music, and dancing. It would seem that while a certain hospitality to European concepts and customs is apparent, there has at the same time been a retention of African modes of life in all sectors of Haitian culture to a degree which

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

177 suggests that generalizations as to the relative pliability of
178 any specific phases of a culture under exposure to another are premature.

562 Are women more conservative than men in respect to
178 cultural change? The appropriateness of the affirmative answer often given can be tested to advantage in studies such as this. The answer, in Haiti, would seem to be that where work at home shields women from the influences of the outer world, this conservatism is found, but where they have an opportunity to come into contact with new trends, no less change enters into their activities than into that of the men. Thus in such matters as the organization of the Haitian household, the cuisine, or the time of meals, the logic of the situation has caused women to preserve Africanisms in full vigor, while historical causes have also similarly aided them in such things as retaining their African role as traders in the markets. In other phases of their lives, however, women, like men, have accepted European patterns, as is evidenced in the field of religion, where no greater resistance has been shown by women toward new forms than by men.

182 Other examples might be cited, but these indicate how a culture such as that of Haiti, as regards both its inner values and the psychological responses made to them, and its outer form and the manner in which its present-day character was attained, aids in sharpening and clarifying the questions that must be asked and answered if a better grasp of the dynamics of custom and the way in which tradition plays upon the inner being of those who are its carriers is to be had. However, it is not alone in general considerations such as these that the study of Haitian life can be of use. Much that is perplexing in that particular facet of the problem of race which in America is termed the "Negro problem" has both analogy and contrast in Haitian life. It must not be forgotten that the slaves who were brought to continental America were of the same types and of the same background as those imported

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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Africa remains? That this has the widest currency needs no explanation, nor, again, that it is held as true by Negroes as by whites. Indeed, any demonstration to the contrary invariably meets with remonstrance, while indications that Africanisms have even invaded white patterns of behavior are received with incredulity. This reaction is understandable enough if it is referred to the other belief already mentioned concerning the "savage" nature of aboriginal Negro background. Yet despite popular acceptance, despite "scientific" pronouncements that Negro music, Negro speech, Negro games, and Negro folk-beliefs stem from European sources, the student who is equipped with a background of African custom and West Indian practice can see the essential unsoundness of such claims. Cultures do not entirely give way one before another, even where the one was carried by slaves and the other by masters; even though the one is separated from its source by thousands of miles and hundreds of years, and the other derives a continuous renewal of vitality from constant contact with its original home. Once again reference to Haiti is to be made: to the fact that in economic life, in social organization, in religion, in music and dance, Africa has not disappeared, nor, at the same time, have the influences from France failed to stamp themselves on present-day behavior. Cannot the same be said of all areas of the New World where Negroes are gathered in great numbers?[3]

These questions can only be raised here; their answer is the matter of long years of patient investigation yet ahead. But may it not be true that the Negro in the United States has preserved some vestiges of his aboriginal heritage even in outward institutionalized forms; that in his attitudes, points of view, and characteristic responses to social situations the factors of his dual heritage have not been entirely lost; and, as would follow elsewhere as it has followed in Haiti, that this may be reflected in his resulting personality types? Even the possibility of affirmative answers strongly suggests that further in-

776 one with the Holy Virgin. St. Jacques has become one with Ogoun, St.
177 George with Linglessou, St. Anthony and St. Christopher with Legba, guardian of the highway, and St. Nicholas with Marassa Trois. In northern Haiti the word *zange* (from the French, *les anges*—the angels) sometimes is used synonymously with loa or mystère. As for the saints, they are sometimes identified with one loa, sometimes with another.

776 No one in Haiti knows all the loa. Some of them are so ancient as to be
177 nearly forgotten. Others are spontaneous creations or revelations on the
178 part of a possessed person. Some loa names may be the result of a devotee's seizing upon a word or phrase in a religious song and imparting to it the concept of a loa. Sometimes a word in a phrase of *langage* is taken to be a loa's name, and sometimes agglutinated Creole words become the name of a loa.

776 The possibility of frequent additions to the list of loa is heightened still
178 further by the general illiteracy of the Haitian people and the lack of a
197 stabilizing influence in the written word. The Creole language has
[193] marked regional differences. Furthermore, change of consonants or vowels is a commonplace occurrence, so that a single loa's name may have several forms. One may well wonder whether Aza, Adja, and Akadja were not originally a single individual. Nevertheless, in the Haitian scheme they are now different personalities.

776 There is one more complicating factor in identifying loa or compiling
171 a comprehensive roster—the use of multiple names. In addition to the
552 names by which they are generally known, many of the deities have a variety of nicknames. Some of these nicknames are in Creole, some appear to be of West African provenience. The deity Agwé, for example, is frequently called Coqui-nan-Mer—Coqui-in-the-Sea. A loa may have four, five, or even more such nicknames. Sometimes short forms are used. Damballa may be called Da, Sobo may be called So, Azaka may be called Za. In addition, some deities have "secret" names, which theoretically are known only to the priesthood and the inner circle of servitors. Multiple naming and the reservation of certain names for special occasions appear to have West African precedents.

In the naming of the loa no neat and methodical system is apparent at any point. The "surname," or what may be in some cases a generic designation, may appear first or last. One may hear Ogoun Chango or Chango Ogoun, Général Brisé or Brisé Général, Congo Savane or Savane
[551] Congo. (This is characteristic of everyday speech. A former president of Haiti, Nord Alexis, is often called Alexis Nord.) The "surname" can be a description of "tribal" or "national" affiliation, regional provenience, character and temperament, or an indication of function. Thus we find

2: Courlander 5-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

house, which is on fire. But there is no grief, because Ogoun is the master of fire:

Pierre, Pierre Narcisse oh!	Pierre, Pierre Narcisse, oh!
Yago moula-é!	*Yago moula-é!*
Caille Ogoun boulé!	Ogoun's house is burning!
Gilblive Ogoun bel Di	Ogoun's distillery is beautiful!
Na consolé! [Ex. 88]	We console ourselves!

Some of the ritual songs that have persisted through the years have lost their explicit meaning but continue to survive because of beautiful melodies and perhaps the strange images they evoke. Such a song is this one to the loa Atti Daï, from the Dahomey service:

Atti Daï oh!	Atti Daï, oh!
Yo voyé dit moin	They sent to tell me
Min soleil malade! *	The sun was sick!
Quan'm té rivé	When I arrived
Moin joind soleil mouri!	I found the sun had died!
Quan'm té rivé	When I arrived
Moin joind soleil mouri!	I found the sun had died!
C'est regrettant ça	What grief it was
Pou'm enterré soleil! [Ex.89]	For me to bury the sun!

One of the truly lovely songs of the Dahomey rites, both in melody and in lyrics, is the following one to the deity Êzilie. It shows clear evidence of Catholic ritual influence in both its text and its music. Êzilie Fréda, who seems to be speaking most of the lines, is identified with the Virgin Mary, and the tone of this piece casts her more in her Catholic role than her African. The deity is speaking from Yagaza, a place described as being "on the other side of the water." In form the song is atypical in that it has more than one movement and progresses from one idea to another.

Êzilie Nainain oh!
Êzilie Nainain oh!
Êzilie oh, c'est moin Yagaza!

Êzilie n'ap marché n'ap couté n'ap parlé pou' temps y'ap parlé parole moin!
Êzilie n'ap marché n'ap couté pou' temps y'ap parlé parole mwé!
Êzilie Nainain oh!
Êzilie Fréda oh Nainain oh!
Êzilie Fréda oh, c'est moin Yagaza!

Mesdames nà yo chits nan caille là yo vlé djaillé oh tout temps soleil pas lévé!
Mesdames yo pasé ya tombé tè à génoux y'apé plainnint le soit yo!

* Some Haitian informants vouched that *soleil* meant "sun." Others felt that the word in the song was really Solé, a diminutive of Atisolé, another name for Atti Daï.

rather starve than work. An Englishman, James Franklin, wrote in 1828, for example:

> Experiments may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coercion and want will impel the Haytian to labour; and I have my doubts as to the practicability of enforcing labour in Hayti until the people have been better instructed, and their characters become changed.

As Franklin summarized it: "Nature is too generous to the Haytian; he never wants, and so never works for hire, as do free labourers in other countries."

The early nineteenth century saw a flood of such bitter comments about the remains of the once rich and flourishing French colony of St. Domingue. The vast productivity of Haiti under French rule had made that colony one of the richest in the New World. The country was dotted with sugar mills, brick-covered wells, and warehouses; and carefully built brick aqueducts, irrigation canals, locks, and dams assured water for the plantations. In 1790, under the slave system, Haiti had exported 163,000,000 pounds of sugar. In 1826, a quarter of a century after the revolution, it was reported to have exported 33,000 pounds.

This falling off in production and exports doubtless had many causes, but one of the most significant was the Haitian's revolt not only against slavery but also against continuing the same kind of work he had performed as a slave. He saw not too much difference between forced, unpaid labor and working for any large landholder at subsistence wages. To the Haitian slave the inspiring battle cry of the French Revolution did not mean that all men would work together on another's man plantation and receive the same wages. It meant that every man would have his own garden to work for himself as he chose; every man would be a full citizen, with land of his own, free to come and go, to plant what he wished, to sell what he could. Despite long years under a colonial slave system, the Haitian still remembered a different way of life in Africa, where mass production for export was not the primary objective of labor.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the population of Haiti was not much more than half a million—less than one sixth of what it is today. There was plenty of land, and much of it had not yet been wasted by constant tilling and erosion. When the French were driven out, the Haitian peasant re-created an economic world of his own liking. The plantation system which had poured out sugar and coffee and indigo for Europe faded away, and in its place there sprang up an agrarian system which has continued until the present day. In the early

[Franklin, The Present State of Hayti, p. 362. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

175 178 311 643 656 In the early years of independence, Emperor Henry Christophe in the north and President Pétion in the south tried to stem the disintegration of the magnificent plantations. Christophe's measures in the region he controlled were sometimes stern, according to legend; but the plantation system and the plantations themselves gradually fell into decay, along with the aqueducts, the warehouses, and the sugar mills. For the Haitian had returned to a tradition of landholding antedating his enslavement.

175 648 181 Europe's loss of the Pearl of the Antilles aroused bitter words from Frenchmen and Englishmen for the better part of the century. They accused the Negro of laziness and lack of ability, repeating endlessly that only as a colony could Haiti ever be of any use to anybody. The London *Times* deplored the Haitian's unwillingness to work for wages, speculating that he had "no desire for property strong enough to induce him to labor with sustained power." In the United States, antiabolitionist enthusiasts cited the Haitian situation as an example of what would happen to the American economy if the slaves were freed.

464 423 311 The Haitian's reluctance to work for wages did not reflect an aversion to owning property, however, as the London *Times* supposed. On the contrary, it was engendered by his desire for property. The land was there and waiting, only needing a house to be built upon it, and to be cleared and tilled. The typical Haitian wanted not dubious, seasonal wage work but a farm of his own. The more ambitious peasant aspired to two farms, or even three, with a homestead and a family on each.

423 595 178 583 If a man worked hard and made a success of one plot, he could put away money and eventually buy a second. The additional land might be separated by some miles from the original farm. On the new ground the man would build another house and take another wife to take care of it in his absence. Known as *plaçage*, this arrangement had complete community sanction. A man whose energies and good fortune made an extra household possible was expected to make such an arrangement. It was not a new institution bred in the chaos following the [997] Revolution, nor was it, as some missionaries held, an evidence of moral deterioration of the Haitian character. It was simply a persisting concept of West African life.[2] The woman who occupied the second or third household was not a concubine. Like the first wife, she had enhanced prestige in her community. She had authority and responsibility. Her work, her position, and her rewards were not essentially different from those of the first wife.[3] It is true that her marriage was not consecrated by a church or civil ceremony, but, ordinarily, neither was that of the [581] first wife. Contrary to European misconceptions, such unions were true marriages in the sense that they had full sanction of the community.

[2,3] [Footnotes appear in Category 116, pp. 351-352. -- Analyst]

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60. *A carved cane head from the southwestern mountains.*

61. *Detail of a wood carving made about 1930 in the region of Port-au-Prince, representing the loa Loko. Work of this kind in mahogany has in the past thirty years deteriorated into neo-"African" carvings made for the tourist trade.*

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62. *A cayambouque. Cut from a single calabash, the two parts fit together tightly to form a single container. Some cayambouques are a foot or more tall. Height, 8 inches.*

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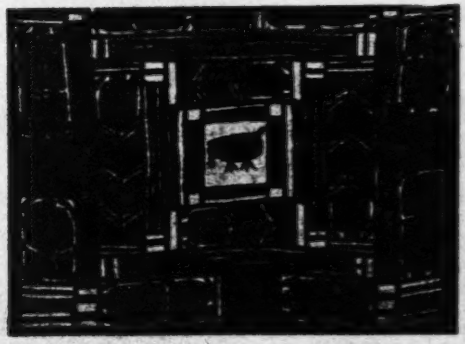
→

63. *Terra-cotta figurines from the Cap Haitien region.*



64. *Detail of a dye-painted burlap cloth. Animal and flower figures and geometric designs are used interchangeably.*

857 868 handle it; lighter work first, heavier work later. Small boys tend cattle and help the men in the fields.

178 511 The Haitian *habitant* (the peasant) is poorer and hungrier today than he was fifty years ago, or even twenty years ago. In 1955 I visited a number of peasant families I had known since 1932, and with hardly an exception I found them worse off than they had been before. Their tiny landholdings had shrunk. Some land that had been lush had dried [134] up and eroded. Little groves of trees had disappeared. Clothes had become shabby, and many of the men could no longer afford to wear the inexpensive traditional blue denim costume that was once so common. In the cities there is evidence that some of the elite have improved their life. But in a large part of the countryside the peasants are finding that the old system that served them for a hundred and fifty years can no longer feed them adequately.

423 178 One of the adverse forces is the shrinking of landholdings. Once a peasant family may have owned and worked fifty or seventy acres of ground. But it is traditional that on a man's death his land is divided [428] among the heirs. If a man with fifty acres of land has two sons, each son inherits approximately twenty-five acres. On their deaths, the land 423 is again subdivided. But even this is not the whole story. A UNESCO 427 survey of the Marbial Valley region in south Haiti in 1948–1949 reported:

> At the turn of the century there were numerous peasant families who lived in relatively easy circumstances, and who possessed as much as thirty to forty *carreaux* * [425] of land planted with coffee and subsistence crops. The heirs of these lands, when they found themselves in straitened circumstances, would sell some parcels of it in the hope of being able to increase their holdings again later on. In the worst cases they became the tenants of absentee landlords who lived in the cities. Nowadays, not only is the size of holdings very small, sometimes only one-eighth of a *carreau*, but they are also scattered, and most peasants are obliged to go from one place to another to cultivate their various owned, rented, or share-cropped fields.[5]

671 595 Haitian law—the civil code—does not recognize the rights of illegitimate children born after a legal marriage. But Haitian custom does. 423 As a result, a Haitian who has a *placée* wife in addition to his "legal" 848 wife may circumvent the law by deeding to her a portion of his gardens during his lifetime, thereby diminishing his holdings.

423 691 Furthermore, many landholdings are not clearly defined. There are few accurate surveys, and often the boundaries are vague. Titles to many of the holdings cannot be clearly established, and as a result there are constant lawsuits. To pay the expenses of defending his interests in court, a Haitian may have to sell a strip of his land.

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* A *carreau* is about three and a third acres.

5 [UNESCO, The Haiti Pilot Project, p. 18. Cf. P.352, category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

For many Haitians, the struggle to obtain a piece of ground and to hold onto it is the very heart of the struggle for existence. On Morne l'Hôpital in 1932 I knew a man who owned ten acres of gardens. He had it planted in bananas and plantains, yams, and cotton. He had two cows and a calf and a grove of mango trees and coconut palms. His house was clean, tidy, and by Haitian standards well furnished. Eighteen years later he had less than an acre of land, no trees, no cotton, and no cattle. His family had become impoverished. He had three grown children and virtually no land to leave to them except that on which the house stood. His troubles began with a lawsuit over his land title. He sold his cattle to raise money to pay his court expenses. He lost half of his land as a result of the lawsuit, most of it the part with the good trees. Later, he sold more land to raise "eating money," and then rented it from the new owner. He could not grow enough cash crops to pay the rent and was finally evicted. Today he has not enough ground left on which to grow food for himself and his wife the year round.

The diminution of adequate landholdings has resulted in the disappearances of many of the *lacours* (hamlets) that were a familiar sight a few decades ago. Young people traditionally built their houses near the family homesteads until there were five, six, or a dozen houses in a group. There was a natural family community which shared a common social life and the work of the fields. But as the population increased and the landholdings shrank, young people and old began to move away in search of new land, or work in the cities. Often where the lacour remains it is only as a settlement of landless house renters who work where they may for wages.

Economic refugees from rural areas seek wage work in the cities, returning to their original homes only on special festive days for family reunions. The men find employment as gardeners, servants, construction laborers, and stevedores. Some find work on the sugar and sisal plantations, others in craft industries making straw hats, baskets, shoes, chairs, and mahogany ware for export. The struggle in the big city of Port-au-Prince is for many of them worse than the poverty they left behind. There are the inevitable slums and the constant threat of hunger. It is in the big city that one hears most often the words *moin grand gout* (I am hungry), and least often the words *Bondieu bon* (God is good).

The land hunger increases, and the overflow of the mountain settlements continues to move cityward. In former years there was a trend toward emigration across the eastern border into the Dominican Republic, which has a population density roughly one third or one fourth that of Haiti. This trend was checked, temporarily at least, in 1937 by

167 175 [648] a massacre in the western part of the Dominican Republic which took the lives of an estimated five thousand to fifteen thousand Haitians. The survivors fled homeward, and many were settled in frontier areas by the government. Even so, today there are believed to be some sixty or seventy thousand Haitians still living east of the border. Large numbers of Haitians, particularly men, migrated to Cuba in the years following World War I, in search of better wages in the cane fields. By 1931 there were more than eighty thousand Haitians in that country. But resentment by local Cuban labor and the onset of the depression combined to force the repatriation of great numbers of them. Thirty thousand Haitians came home from Cuba in the years 1936 and 1937 alone.

16 [842] Solution of Haiti's problem of overpopulation does not seem imminent. The obvious answers would seem to be birth control, emigration, wiser use of natural resources, and industrialization. Since the country is predominantly Catholic, and since much social value is placed on children, birth control seems unlikely. And as health facilities become more widespread and infant mortality drops, the pressure will become more acute. Emigration seems to offer no hope, since neighboring islands and countries [311] on the mainland give no encouragement. The Haitian may yet learn to conserve his land and to get more out of it, to stock his lakes with fish, and to [47] bring more fish in from the sea. But this will not suffice. Nothing is left but industrialization, and that seems to be a thing of the far-distant future.

181 167 461 Nevertheless, the character of Haitian life remains essentially agrarian. The displaced peasant, whether he is now a hotel "houseboy," a taxi driver, or a cane cutter, dreams of returning to the land some day and growing bananas, coffee, and cotton that will make him independent. In far-off places such as Havana and New York, Haitians work and save money with the expectation that one day they will come home, buy fifteen or twenty acres of ground, build a new house, and live out their lives as decently prosperous *habitants*. The traditions of the agricultural [128] society, along with Vodoun, continue to play a significant role in the life of the people.

476 241 One such tradition is the institution of the *coumbite*, a loosely knit coöperative work party of neighbors and friends. The word itself probably comes from the Spanish *conride*, or *convite*, meaning "to invite." A member of the group holds a coumbite by notifying his fellow members that on such-and-such a day his fields will require clearing or hoeing. There are several variants of the work gathering. One, called *carré* or *corvée*, meets at irregular intervals and only on special invitation. There are no regular reciprocal obligations in the *corvée*; the workers are

[Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," Journal of Negro History, October, 1940, p. 515. Cf. p. 352, Category 116. --Analyst)

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many non-European characteristics. The manner of work, even down to specific motor activity, has direct and hardly disputable West African connections. Instead of the short-handled West African hoe, the Haitians use a long-handled one, and they work more erect than stooped. But the rhythmic, synchronized use of the hoe, the singing leader and the musicians who stand to one side to "encourage" the workers, the calling of the workers by drum *rappels*, the special consideration for the sick, and the concept of long-term community endeavor are all of West African beginnings. The coumbite is the legitimate descendant of the Dahomean *dokpaw*, the *kwam* of the Mambila (Cameroons), the *ks* of the Kpelle (Liberia), and other West African coöperative systems.

Although the *dokpaw* of Dahomey is a more formal and intricate institution, permeated with certain abstract and ritual concepts, its social and functional characteristics are not greatly different from those of the Haitian coumbite, in which coöperation is marked. Herskovits notes that working with the Dahomean *dokpaw*

> represents recreation rather than labor to the individual member. There is song and dance to drumming and the sound of gongs, on the way and after arrival, and there is feasting and an exhibition of skill. It is an impressive sight to see from forty to a hundred men kneading earth for walls, or laying thatch, or hoeing the earth with unison movements to the accompaniment of conversation and laughter, and the songs of each of their fellows, who, for the moment at rest, have constituted themselves the chorus.

When more than one *dokpaw* is summoned for work on the same project, Herskovits notes,

> there is great rivalry among the organizations to see which one will first complete its allotted task. If only one *dokpaw* is present, there is either individual rivalry, or the *dokpaw* may be divided into two groups which compete one against the other. The food which is provided at these times of collective labor is as rich fare as the owner can afford . . .[8]

An underlying factor in the Dahomean *dokpaw* is awareness of itself as "the manpower of Dahomey," and the members regard themselves as exercising their fundamental privilege as Dahomeans. This attitude toward the coumbite continues to prevail in Haiti. Like the houngfor—but even more significantly in terms of routine, workaday life—the coumbite and the société are an expression of social ties and of the pervading interest in the common welfare.

Certain patterns of the coumbite have been carried over into non-agrarian labor in the towns and cities, wherever group work is required. The carrying of coffee and sugar bags in the warehouses, the loading of ships, and the repairing of roads—all are traditionally performed

[(Herskovits, "Some Aspects of Dahomean Ethnology," Africa, Vol. V (July, 1932), pp. 266-296. Cf. p. 352, Category 116. -- Analyst]

533 427 128 461 rhythmically, to the accompaniment of drums, *catas*, or horns, while a singing leader composes topical songs in which the laborers join.

The tools which a rural Haitian chooses, and the way he uses them, 171 412 often are in a West African tradition. He performs a multitude of tasks with his machete, or bush knife: weeding a garden, peeling an orange, cutting down a tree, making a drum or mortar, opening a coconut. It is an all-purpose tool, as it is in Africa. Until a few years ago it was supplemented by the extra-long, heavier, "double machete." The axe and the chisel are known and used too, but the machete is supreme. The hoe is the tool for tilling the soil, even in the flat country, and even 492 [241] [412] though the Haitian has horses and cattle which could pull a plow. Horses are for riding and not for pulling. In carrying loads, the Haitian peasant still prefers the head to the shoulders. If he has a donkey, the [538] donkey will carry for him. An old Haitian proverb goes: "Meçi Bondieu pou' bourrique lâ, si nous pas gainyain bourrique lâ faut Haitien po'té tout bagaille" (Thank God for the donkey, if we didn't have the donkey 489 the Haitian would have to carry everything)." Generally speaking, the 481 rough and rocky terrain of Haiti and inadequate secondary roads have 493 done nothing to encourage the use of carts or wagons.

Corn is stored in the trees, as in West Africa, or in granaries built 171 [251] upon stilts, also as in West Africa. The Haitian makes his fire in the African fashion, with several long sticks or poles meeting point-to-point [392] in the heart of the fire. As the ends are consumed, the sticks are pushed [252] toward the center. Grain is pulverized in large wooden mortars, as [229] in West Africa, and winnowed in a woven tray. Fish traps are some- [232] times woven in the traditional West African manner, and fishermen often set their nets in converging spirals and beat the water with sticks to [501] drive the fish to the center. And on the rivers and lakes are to be seen dugout canoes of a kind familiar on the inland waters of West Africa.

The folklore of the fields contains many themes known to the West 171 241 African. One old Haitian farmer, discussing the spiritual relationship of the planter to the earth, declared that a man must be strong and potent when he plants, else the crops will be vitiated and sickly. For [834] this reason, he said, a man must not plant seeds the day after he has had sexual intercourse, because he has been temporarily drained of his life-giving powers.[9]

171 538 The tale of the hoe that worked by itself in the fields is also widespread. It enters many animal and Bouki stories, and also is known in a form that is familiar in West Africa. In this story, there was once a man who owned a hoe which worked by itself whenever a magical formula was pronounced. It would stop working whenever the magical

9 [For footnote, see Category 116, P 352.-- Analyst]

[P. 122]

10. The Arts– Flour, Wood, and Iron

177 178 53 567 It is the nonmaterial arts and traditions that have thrived best in Haiti through the years of slavery, political unrest, and poverty. Religious concepts, music, dancing, folk tales, proverbs, and games are found everywhere in profusion. Material arts of the past have fared less well. Today, nothing is left of the old African knowledge of wood carving, metal casting, appliqué work, and weaving. Why such major African arts have died out in Haiti is no mystery. They disappeared simply because there was no place for them under the slave system or in the new Haitian society which followed it.

177 178 567 532 Under the colonial masters, the demands made on the New World African were for coffee, cotton, and indigo. His creative talents were channeled into carpentry, masonry, and the building of facilities for production. There were no traditional artistic outlets or patrons for the wood carver, and no need for the weaver. Nor, during the years of slavery, was there much leisure for the craftsman to do his work even for the fun of it, should he be so inclined; indeed, this approach to wood carving or any other art would have been little understood or appreciated by most West Africans. A man who made an art object purely and simply to express a creative urge rather than to fill an express need would have been regarded as slightly eccentric. The old West African wood carvings with which we are now familiar were made because they were *required* for some purpose. A figure of a deity was needed in a shrine, a carved protective guard was needed for the household, a grave marker or a ceremonial mask was obligatory.

177 178 567 326 In Haiti the needs of those who ruled were different. The slave with knowledge of the forge was not put to work making spears, ceremonial axes, and the like; he was assigned the task of making grillwork for houses, hinges and bolts, iron tires for coach wheels, and metal parts for the sugar mills. The anonymous African ironworker did his job well.

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And when the revolution came he produced for the Haitian armies knives, gun parts, and wheels to transport cannon. By the tens of thousands he made ingeniously devised metal objects to be thrown on the roads, before the French cavalry troops—objects so shaped that, no matter how they fell, a single sharp point stood erect to cripple the enemy horses. Yet knowledge of the West African uses of iron did not altogether disappear, and during the first century of independence the Haitian blacksmith created many old-style knives, spears, and ritual objects for the cult temple.

Even today, some of this old-style work is to be found in hounfors in the southwestern peninsula. One may see simple or ornate iron standards, made to support ceremonial offerings or candles, strikingly similar to standards in ancestral shrines in Dahomey. There are iron bells, both single and double, made in pure West African style; ornate ritual swords and sabers which are the crests of certain deities; coiled and uncoiled iron serpents representing the gods Damballa and Ayida; and stylized or semirealistic portraits of the deities. Many of these old pieces are nineteenth-century survivals; others have been forged within the past decade. ⁷⁄₈

An over-all impression of Haitian material culture is that artistic decoration is almost entirely absent and that the prime emphasis is on utility. Wooden cooking spoons are efficient in form, but missing from them is the delicate decorative carving often found in West Africa. The long wooden washing bowl, or *gamelle*, and the wooden mortar in which grain is pulverized are likewise clean-cut but stark and plainly utilitarian. Clay bowls, bottles, and storage jars are usually of simple, uniform design, with only accidental variations; there is little use of glazes, and the clay is often heavy and thick. Should there be a wari gameboard in the peasant hut, the chances are that it is roughly made, without legs or carved designs. Dugout canoes are usually crude in appearance, heavy and thick-walled, and irregular in form.

Yet there are many evidences—though one must seek them out—that esthetic impulses are quite alive. The gay peasant straw knapsack, or *alfor*, without which no mountain man makes a journey, has a charm and grace that is not diminished by familiarity and cheapness. Decorated with sisal braid and tassels, and colored with green and magenta dyes, each *alfor* on close inspection appears to be unique. In some communities in the south and southwest, burlap squares also are painted with these traditional dyes. About forty inches across, and made of sugar bags, these paintings swarm with geometric patterns and sometimes with figures of flowers and animals. They are purely decorative, being

⁷⁄₈ [See plates 42-51, pp. 112-DD—112-FF.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

machetes, circles, mortar shapes, and so on—each with its own specific meaning. Sometimes the vèvè becomes openly pictorial, and there emerges a ship for the loa Agwé, snakes for Damballa and Ayida, a bull for the loa Taureau, a knapsack for the loa Azaka, or even a portrait of a deity, perhaps smoking a pipe or holding a sword. 788 532

The vèvè is not a permanent record. It is made as an act of supplication or veneration, and once it is finished it has no further value. In the ensuing ritual and dance, the vèvè is obliterated by the feet that pass across it. At the hands of one houngan, this invocational act results in a crude, even childlike, design. At the hands of another, it produces a drawing of beauty, integration, and highly developed form.

The drum-making craft, too, has offered an unbroken sequence of opportunity for satisfying artistic urges. The drum has a traditional form that cannot be tampered with; its shape is predetermined by its function, by the log from which it is hewn, and by existing standards. And yet, the drum maker has found it an object on which he can devise new decorative motifs, and he may even give it personal uniqueness. Some drums have styles that may be associated with specific regions of the country, others bear the stamp of the individual artist. Paint has been used on Haitian drums for a hundred years or more as a complement to carving. One assotor drum dating from the earliest days of the Republic, and now preserved in a collection owned by the Bureau of Ethnology in Port-au-Prince, is decorated with a medallion showing the Haitian coat of arms, grenadiers, red and yellow snakes, and a sun with a face. This magnificent instrument, apparently the only one of its age and kind to have survived the years, is one of Haiti's art treasures. 178 534 531

The *couis*, or calabash bowl, of the hounfor rites is another object which is decorated with motifs. Abstract designs, ritual symbols, and sometimes human and animal figures are painted on the inner or concave surface of the bowl. 322 531 [532]

The rural traditional arts of Haiti have had a belated impact on the arts of the city. Within the past fifteen years there have appeared a number of painters, sculptors in wood and ceramics, and ironworkers who constitute an art movement sometimes referred to as the Haitian "renaissance." Many of these artists draw heavily on national lore and legend for inspiration and subject matter. Some of them are men who came only recently from villages or distant farms. Their work adorns many public buildings in Port-au-Prince and is eagerly sought by art collectors. Members of the elite class who once looked with embarrassment on the "primitive" countryside are finding increasing respect for the potentialities of their country cousins. 184 531 532 32 [571]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[p. 126]

11. Dancing and Dance Drama

177 The dances of Haiti, like the loa, are almost beyond counting. Like the
178 loa, too, the dances have personalities of their own, sometimes too subtle
535 for the stranger to detect. If there is one valid generalization, it is that the inspiration for the Haitian dance is primarily African. There have been changes in the course of the more than four hundred years since the first Africans came to the New World. Some of the old dances have disappeared altogether; others have developed new characteristics. New dances came into being with European rather than African form. Some of the most traditional dances have become sparse and lean, stripped of the decorative pageantry of earlier days. There are also the French quadrilles and similar square dances which have survived since colonial days in remote parts of the mountains. But it is the quadrille and not the dance of African origin which is atypical in Haiti's folk culture. Dancing is deeply rooted in almost all the important events of Haitian life. It is one of the few arts that have survived from preslavery days.

535 Early European travelers in Haiti were greatly taken by the dances
178 they found there. Some observers, like Moreau de Saint-Méry, a French-
175 man born in Martinique, have left invaluable documentation of the dances of the late eighteenth century. Saint-Méry described many dances that are still known in modern Haiti, such as the Chica, the Calinda, the Vodoun, and the Pétro. From his accounts one may assume that these dances have not changed much to this day.

114 But many of the foreign authors and journalists of early days were astoundingly lacking in understanding and quick to bare their prejudices and to pronounce their moral judgments. Like the explorers of our own time who delight in "returning alive" from some jungle land and in commenting upon all the strange, bizarre, dangerous, and wicked things they think they have seen, the explorer of the Dark Island often described the Haitian as a depraved branch of the human species. One such ob-

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Saint-Méry also wrote about some of the religious dances, which he identified by name: 171 535

> In Santo Domingo, and especially in the western, French section, there has existed for a long time a kind of dance called the Vaudoux [Vodoun] . . . which is characterized by movements where the upper part of the body, the shoulders and the head seem to move convulsively. This dance is accompanied by the drums, the clapping of hands, and group singing . . .
>
> The Vaudoux is nothing compared to the Don Pedro . . . , another Negro dance, also known in the western part of Santo Domingo since 1768. Don Pedro was the name of a Negro of the Petit-Goave section, of Spanish origin, who by his daring character and certain superstitious practices, had acquired among the Negroes enough influence to be denounced by the government as the instigator of some alarming plots. The dance which bears his name consists, like the Vaudoux, in the shaking of the shoulders and the head, but this shaking is extremely violent, and to increase it still further the Negroes drink, while dancing, brandy in which they have mixed finely ground gunpowder . . .[5] They dance with the most horrible contortions, until finally they fall into a sort of epilepsy . . .[6]

Making allowances for Saint-Méry's imaginative interpretation of many of the things he saw, the Haitian dance of today is not far different from that of the eighteenth century. It is cast in the West African mold, with Dahomean and Yoruban motifs predominating over European and other Western infiltrations. As in Saint-Méry's day, the drummers sit at the edge of the dance court, a leader wiekling a gourd rattle leads the singing, and the dancers and spectators constitute the chorus. The dancers usually move around the center of the court in a counterclockwise direction. Their steps and postures vary according to the type of dance being performed. The Jenvalo, for example, is danced with a bent back, hands touching the knees. In the Zépaule dance the dancers are erect, and most of the movements are made with the shoulders. In the Pétro (the Don Pedro described by Saint-Méry) there is a constant, almost agitated movement of the feet. The songs accompanying these cult dances, while presented in African style, may have hybrid or even French melodies, though in the main they are more African than European. The over-all context of the cult dances, as well as most of the secular ones, is West African, with constant interplay between the singers, dancers, and drummers. Sometime the dancers "drive" the drummers, sometimes the drummers "drive" the dancers. Certain beats of the drum are signals for special movements and postures. On hearing special beats or rolls, the dancers may leap vertically into the air, or perform a *laillé* (a swirling motion that causes the skirts to flare out), or a *djaillé* (excitement motions). Increased tension among the dancers may cause the drummers to shift the beat, or to increase

177 178 533 535 (114)

[5] [Brandy or rum with gunpowder is sometimes drunk by persons possessed by the loa Ogoun, deity of war. Cf. P. 352, Cat. 116. --Analyst]

[6] Moore, Op. Cit., P. 238. Cf. P. 352, Cat. 116. --Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

tempo. The chorus and leader sing responsively, their parts overlapping in traditional African style. The shoulder movements, foot movements, the way the arms are carried, and the typical posture of feet flat on the ground, bent knees, and swayed back—all are of African derivation.

These postures and movements are broad and direct. There are few of the decorative and "fine" movements that one sees in the dances of Indonesia, Cambodia, and India. Where the Javanese lays stress on the pose of the hands and the delicate movements of the fingers, the Haitian dancer is concerned with the position of the arms and the motions of the shoulders. The Indonesian sense of poised balance or suspended movement is absent. In its place there is an attitude of strong frontal assault against natural forces such as gravity, or direct submission to those forces. There is almost always a feeling of solidity and stability in Haitian posture, and of a proximity between the body and the earth, but the total effect is dynamic. Indonesian dancing seems to express a comprehension of the unseen and the supernatural; Haitian dancing seems to express an intimate understanding of nature.

Dancing touches on virtually every aspect of life in Haiti. It plays a part in the supplication of loa, the placation of the dead, and the making of magic; in the consecration of a hounfor, the installation of a houngan, and the initiation of cult members; in planting, harvesting, and house-building. Catholic Church holidays, Nine Nights, baptisms, the election of a new president, and ordinary social gatherings—all are celebrated, in part, at least, by dancing.

Haitian dancing is participative rather than exhibitionistic. It is to join rather than to watch. There are some dances, however, which require special skills, and a few which are highly individualistic. Several types of dances are described elsewhere in this book. Verbal description cannot do justice to an art such as dancing, of course; but some brief sketches may help to suggest the differences between one Haitian dance and another.

In the Congo Mazonne, for example, men and women pair off and dance face to face, making contact occasionally but only briefly. The arms are stretched forward as though to embrace the partner around the waist, but the actual embrace never materializes. The partners dance sometimes as though they are unaware of each other and are simply part of a larger group; then they approach, move as mirrored reproductions, and separate. Loin movement is free, and there is a restrained sexual intensity, though direct sexual implications are not necessarily present. Sometimes the woman holds the hem of her skirt in her hands, while the man holds his jacket open toward his partner.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Mousondi. In present-day Trinidad there is a Calinda dance which closely resembles the Mousondi; Puerto Rico has its Bomba Calindán; and under another name the "battle dance" survives among Negro communities in Surinam. The counterpart of the Calinda in Brazil is the Capoeira, for which musical accompaniment is provided by African-style "belly harps" (musical bows with gourd resonators) called *berimbau*. The tradition lingers on in Haiti in modern mock prize-fighting dances sometimes performed in Rara season.

The stick dance (*Battonie*) of the Haitian carnival season, mentioned in chapter 8, is of more than passing interest for the reason that almost identical dances have been reported from some areas of West Africa. In the Haitian dance (see fig. 73) the baton wielders, all males, for unexplained reasons are attired in women's clothing. A photograph made in 1958 of a baton dance among the Ewe people of Togoland depicts a scene scarcely distinguishable from a Haitian Rara performance, and it is noteworthy that its all-male cast is in women's dress.[7]

In addition, there remain a number of fragments of dances of the past. In religious ritual, on rare occasions, one may see animal dances in which the performers mimic animal movements, holding in their hands long sticks to simulate front legs. This type of dance has been reported frequently in West Africa, particularly in connection with totemic rituals.

There is a dance in the Arada ritual in which the loa Legba is invoked. A hounsi—usually a man—comes onto the dance court wearing a kind of cane-crutch called the *baton* Legba, or Legba stick. The baton is about the length of a cane, with a long, grotesquely twisted "handle" that fits under the crotch of the legs. The dancer wraps one leg around the stick and walks as though he has only one foot. In the dance, he spins around on the stick, leaps, and pirouettes. Identification of the stick as well as the dance with Legba, and its position between the legs, seem clearly to relate it to the phallic sticks used in dances for Legba in Dahomey.

Among the secular exhibitionistic dances of Haiti, there is one in which a man stands on his head and goes through erotic motions to the accompaniment of drums.

In addition to the almost countless dances of African origin or inspiration, there is the ever-popular Meringue, a European-type social dance which is known in many forms. Haitian connoisseurs of this dance believe there are three main forms of the Meringue: the "Meringue de Concert," in which the rhythm is slow and "caressing"; the "dance Meringue," in which the rhythm is quasi-fast and very gay; and the "Meringue Coundjaille," in which the rhythm is very fast. The last

7 [United Nations Photograph no. 67065. Cf P. 352, category 116. -- Analyst]

The last

535 form is heard most often during carnival days. In all variations of the Meringue, the dance is performed by couples in ballroom style. Among
[831] the elite, it is restrained. Elsewhere it is much more animated, with free and uninhibited pelvic motions similar to those seen at the Saturday
171 night *bamboche*. Although the Haitian regards his Meringue as a national
170 popular dance, Spanish-type music has infiltrated heavily from the Do-
53 minican Republic, Cuba, and other islands of the West Indies. Thousands of Haitians returning from contract labor in Cuba have brought with them not only Cuban songs and rhythms but Cuban instruments as well. It has not been a one-way affair, however, for the Arada cults of eastern Cuba have been built substantially around immigrants from Haiti, and in the Cuban mountains you may hear music and see dances of Afro-Haitian origin.

Still other kinds of dances are to be found in remote villages of Haiti—the old folk dances of Europe. The villagers still know and perform the waltz, the polka, the mazurka and the quadrille, usually to the accompaniment of violins or guitars, or possibly an accordion.

But the influences are not all ancient ones. Jazz has infiltrated the Meringue. And some years ago a small boy asked me with some concern whether I had taken proper account of a very important dance called *le black bottom*.

535 Following is a list of dances known to Haitians today. Some of them
[178] are found throughout Haiti, some are known only regionally, and a few are on the verge of extinction.

Dances Connected with Vodoun Ritual

Arada, or *Rada:* One of the main dances of the Vodoun service, named after the Dahomean city and cult center, Allada.

Anago, or *Nago:* Named after the Nagos, a branch of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria. For deities of Nago origin.

Mahi: Named after the Mahi people of Dahomey.

Dérétal: A Mahi dance of northern Haiti.

Purigale: Another Mahi type of dance. Possibly from *pas régal* (royal step).

Jenvalo, or *Yenvalo:* A supplication dance, variously called Jenvalo Doba (*dos bas*, low back), Jenvalo Jénon (*genoux*, knees), and Dobado.

Zépaule: A supplication dance in which the movements are made primarily by the shoulders (*les épaules*). It is sometimes called Jenvalo Zépaule or Jenvalo Débout (standing Jenvalo).

Flaverodoun: Another type of shoulder dance known in the north.

Banda, or *Chica:* A gay and sometimes ribald dance, said to be much favored by the loa Cousin Zaka and the loa Gèdé.

Maconne Rada: The "Masonic" Rada dance; often danced for the loa Gèdé.

Carabienne or *Crabienne:* A rest dance, interspersed into long-drawn-out Arada

[i.e., the "Meringue Coundjaille" in which the rhythm is very fast. -- Analyst]

[P. 148]

13. Comments on the Mighty: Political Songs

* 533 538 626 178 The African-style song of social criticism has found no worthier subjects than the historic political figures of Haiti. There is no doubt that the African slaves used this art form to express their feelings toward the white masters as they had used it to comment upon the behavior of their own chiefs and fellow tribesmen. The worthy leaders were praised in song; the unworthy were castigated and their sins, failures, and social misdemeanors publicized in folk songs. By the beginning of the [567] nineteenth century, slavery had come to an end in Haiti. The deep democratic sense of human dignity had outlasted the colonial masters and emerged tempered and sharp. The songs of criticism became not only comments upon political figures but campaign propaganda as well. They dwelt upon the accomplishments or faults of the candidates for political office. Friendly songs sought out every virtue, and invented others, in the man or woman being praised. Unfriendly songs lashed out and lacerated or poked biting fun at the subject, not even sparing his physical deformities.

* 533 538 626 178 666

* 533 538 Yet the political songs are more than statements of merit or fault. Cumulatively they are a kind of folk history of Haiti. No political [666] aspirant ever went unsung by his peasant army, or unridiculed by his opponent's followers. The songs the people sang about their heroes and [173] their enemies recall events and details that formal history has forgotten or ignored. The memory of the folk song is powerful and long. Some of the recollections go back more than a century.

175 History books tell us that in December, 1843, Major Charles Hérard 642 aîné Rivière was elected to the office of the presidency, and that a new [643] constitution was drawn up by the Constituent Assembly. The new constitution was an accomplishment of the liberal and democratic forces of the nation. It guaranteed certain civil rights to the people. It provided that judges be elected instead of appointed, abolished life terms for

But in the early days Meringe

175 643 * 533 * 539 563 444 piece called "Merci Papa Vincent" was very popular. According to the song, the noteworthy achievement of the President was the law he sponsored to drive the "Syrians" out of the retail trades:

Nous conné moune qui raimé peuple là,
C'est Président Vincent!
Nous conné moune qui raimé peuple li,
C'est Président Vincent!
Nous conné moune qui raimé peuple li,
C'est Président Vincent!
Nous conné moune qui raimé peuple,
C'est Président Vincent!
A nous rélé, merci Papa Vincent!
A nous rélé, merci Papa Vincent!
A nous crié, merci Papa Vincent!

Qui moune qui bai commerce en detail là?
C'est Président Vincent!
Qui moune qui bai commerce en detail là?
C'est Président Vincent!
Qui moune qui bai commerce en detail là?
C'est Président Vincent!
A nous rélé, merci Papa Vincent!
A nous rélé, merci Papa Vincent!

We know the man who loves the people,
He is President Vincent!
We know the man who loves the people,
He is President Vincent!
We know the man who loves the people,
He is President Vincent!
We know the man who loves the people,
He is President Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!

Who is the man who gave us the retail business?
It is President Vincent!
Who is the man who gave us the retail business?
It is President Vincent!
Who is the man who gave us the retail business?
It is President Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!

175 178 643 * 533 * 539 This song soon became the "official" musical theme of the President and was heard in the carnival festivities, at salon dances, and at military functions. But as discontent with Vincent grew, less adulatory versions

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

of "Merci Papa Vincent" sprang up in the side streets of Port-au-Prince. One rendition (as translated) went: 175 178 643 533* 539*

> We know the man who loves the people,
> He is Sténio Vincent!
> Who made my wife leave me to go to her family?
> He is Président Vincent!
> Who made my skin show through my worn out pants?
> He is Président Vincent!
> Who is the man who made my house fall down?
> He is Président Vincent!
> Oh, we call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!

So widespread did the burlesques on the original become that the tune itself became suspect. One never knew which versions were running through the minds of the listeners.

In 1950, during the administration of President Estimé, there was a new public works program which provided employment for a good many needy people in the Port-au-Prince area, and a coumbite song of the period went: 175 643 533* 539* [653]

> Président Estimé waille, oh!
> Quembé pays yà pas lagué oh!
> C'est Bondieu nans ciel là qui ba moin président!
> C'est Bondieu nans ciel là qui ba moin président cila!
> Quembé pays yà pas lagué oh!
> Port-au-Prince oh tourné Havane oh! [Ex. 117]

> President Estimé *waille*, oh!
> Hold on to the country, don't let go, oh!
> It is God in heaven who gave me this president!
> It is God in heaven who gave me this president!
> Hold on to the country, don't let go, oh!
> Port-au-Prince, oh, is turning into a Havana, oh!

When Estimé was overthrown by a military coup, the melody lingered on, but the name of the protagonist was changed. [669]

No president of Haiti has served his term of office, either for good or bad, without providing the raw materials for a folk song. His heroic deeds, his failures, and his foibles are as likely as not to be perpetuated in the music of the people. 643 533*

As for the presidency itself, it is held in the highest esteem. A rousing salute song, reminiscent of the Marseillaise, sends every new president-elect on the way to the palace: [539]*

> Président passé là,
> L'ap monté ou gouvernement!

[P.166]

15. Secret-Society Songs

575 171 Secret societies were once common in Haiti, as they were in other parts of the New World where West Africans settled in large numbers. The institution of the secret society was strong in various parts of West Africa from which the slaves came. The tradition was particularly notable among the tribes of Nigeria. In the New World it offered to slaves and to freed Negroes an opportunity for social organization and fraternal relationships which otherwise had been pretty well shattered by the nature of slavery and the profuse admixture of cultures. A number of elderly Haitians have [648] suggested that it was the Haitian secret societies rather than the Vodoun and Congo cults which fomented underground resistance and slave revolts against the French in the last years of the eighteenth century.

174 178 575 [476] At this late date it is difficult to reconstruct much of the secret-society picture. Such groups as may have survived until recently did so in vitiated and changed form. They have been supplanted in large measure by the *société*, a kind of mutual-aid association with both economic and recreational functions. It is exclusive, but not irrevocably so, and it is not secret. The société often corresponds roughly with the membership of a hounfor, or cult temple.

575 178 266 173 Old people still talk about true secret societies, however. There was a Moundongue secret society, separate from the Moundongue cult, whose members were recruited from the survivors of the Moundongue tribe and their descendants. Other secret societies were not based on tribal affiliation but were recruited from the population at large. One such group was the Vinbindingue, also known as the Blinbindingue and the Balbindingue. Its practices were feared. According to tradition, the Vinbindingue was predatory and held cannibalistic rites, as did other groups such as the Moundongue Society, the Cochon Rouge (the Red Pig Society), the Zeaubeaups, the Cochon Gris (the Gray Pig Society), and the Calinda 000 Society. How much of their reputation for cannibalism was deserved is

[Herskovits, Dahomey, I, P.256. Cf. P.353, Category 116. -- Analyst]

How much of their reputation for cannibalism was deserved is a matter of speculation. Bizarre tales told by the colonists, as well as rumors and legends propagated about the societies by nonmembers who feared them, did result in a body of folklore which portrays these groups as malevolent. The societies themselves, no doubt, often supported such beliefs to increase the awe in which they were held. 173 575 266

In modern Haiti, however, there is no secret or fraternal society of the kind that probably existed in prerevolutionary days. Nor is there anything comparable to the Abakwa, or Carabali, an Ibo secret society that has survived in Cuba.[2] 178 575

Curiously enough, the most significant noncult organization in Haiti today is the Masonic order. Yet it has not remained distinct from the cults but has become interwoven with them. Many Vodoun and Congo services have rites or dances that are designated as Mazonne (Masonic). Houngans often feel that affiliation with the Masonic order offers distinction and prestige for the hounfor that the ordinary cult center does not have. 575 794

As for the Calinda, the Cochon Rouge, the Cochon Gris, the Zeaubeaup, the Vinbindingue, and the Moundongue societies, they appear to survive in name rather than in fact. The rumors and tales go on, as they do about zombies, devils and lou-garos. It is mostly at carnival time that their names are heard. A Mardi Gras band, appropriately costumed, may herald itself as a Calinda or a Cochon Rouge group. It will sing songs it regards as appropriate to the kind of effect it is trying to achieve. Such groups are not taken seriously. They are merely part of the carnival fun. But to members of older generations they do recall tales about the secret societies that met under the limbs of the mapou tree by torchlight to conduct their nocturnal affairs. 178 575

The songs that follow are reputed to belong to the Calinda, Vinbindingue, and Zeaubeaup societies; but they are infected with a frivolous quality which suggests they may have been heard for the first time in the carnival celebration rather than in the dark shadows of the mapou. 533* 575

One of the legends concerning the Balbindingue, or Vinbindingue, is that of the dancing drum. The theme is a special one, but it is related to other stories about dancing calabashes in the Calbasse ritual and about dancing hoes. This song describes a gathering at such a dance: 533* 539* 575

> Balbindingue!
> C'est là n'homme mwé yé!
> Cimitière tonnerre!
> Balbindingue!
> C'est yun seul tambour qui dansé!
> Pardon mon père!
> Balbindingue!
> C'est là n'homme mwé yé! [Ex. 124]

2 [See Courlander "Abakwa Meeting in Guanabacoa", Journal of Negro History, XXIX (1944), 461ff. Cf. Cat. 116, P. 353. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

dramatic art. The narrator interprets his characters as he goes along, 538
providing different voices, singing, giving humorous or tragic emphasis, and changing his facial expressions to convey the temper and mood of the protagonists. He imitates the movements and actions of the animals. In print, his broad gestures and sly intimations are all lost. The Haitian tale is a vehicle for the actor, who plays his theme according to circumstances and the responsiveness of his audience. The storyteller, like the musician, is likely to be found almost anywhere. But there are storytellers of special renown, known as *mait' contes*—who may be called upon to entertain young people at a party or Nine Night gathering. They have seemingly endless repertoires and can go on indefinitely telling tales about Bouki and Malice, or Jean Saute and Jean L'Esprit. In former times, [128] the mait' conte used an instrument such as the *banza* to intersperse his [533] narration with music. Old people recall that trough zithers and other in- [534] struments of African design were once employed for this purpose.

Anansi, the spider trickster-hero and buffoon of West Africa, has survived 171
in Haiti as well as elsewhere in the Antilles. In Jamaica and other British 538
islands, Anansi has become Brother Anansi, Sister Nancy, or just plain Nancy. Although he usually figures in tales dealing with other animals, he has more and more come to assume a human form, as he has in Haitian tales. But in Haiti the name Anansi is only rarely heard. Anansi's cleverness and stupidity are now attributed to two characters named Ti Malice and Nonc' Bouki, both of whom are regarded as human beings.

In West Africa the spider hero directed his mischief against the great and strong creatures of the forest, now one, now another. In Haiti, Ti Malice, who has inherited Anansi's wit and guile, pits himself mostly against Bouki, who has inherited Anansi's stubborn nature and his pompous stupidities. Ti Malice (whose first name probably comes from the Spanish *tio*, uncle) has become the slick sharpy of the city, the clever and predatory "operator," the practical joker. Like his spider prototype, Ti Malice has humor as well as cunning, though he is often remorseless. Bouki is full of self-confidence but is slow-witted and an easy prey for Ti Malice. He is thought of as a clumsy peasant of the mountains. He has a constant desire to pit himself against Ti Malice, and a capacity for involving himself in utterly fantastic situations which appeal to the Haitian sense of the ridiculous.

In many respects this team of comedians resembles another pair known in South and Central America—Tío Conejo (Uncle Rabbit) and Tío Coyote; both are pranksters, but the rabbit usually manages to outwit the coyote. Ti Malice and Bouki also figure in the universal tar-baby story, and in many other tales known in the United States in which Br'er Rabbit

534 322 [412] The craft of drum making is a very skilled one, but the tools are simple: chisels, machetes, and fire. The core of the log is removed by burning and gouging, and the outside is shaped with a machete, or sometimes a hachet. The wood is selected and processed carefully. Firing of the core of the log depends a good deal on how dry the wood is, for the wood must burn slowly. It is believed that wood cut at the right stage of growth and at the right phase of the moon is resistant to the [824] ever-present powder-post beetles. Mahogany was once favored because it was durable and beetle resistant, even though it was heavy. But in recent decades mahogany has become scarce, and modern drums are made of lighter woods.

534 798 [531] 071 Drums made in the nineteenth century not only conformed to the patterns of certain West African prototypes but were also carved and decorated. Some of these old drums are still to be seen, but there are not many left. An ancient carved assotor drum (previously cited) has fortunately been preserved by the Bureau d'Ethnologie. But between the ravages of the powder-post beetles, age, and the periodic orgies of drum burning by the church and misguided public officials, most of these [648] ancient works of art have long since disappeared. During the American occupation of Haiti—from World War I to 1932—American military personnel also contributed to the mania for drum burning. And as late as 1941 there was a massive, cleric-inspired drive to wipe out these instruments as remnants of *sauvage* elements in Haitian life.

534 178 531 The effect of this war against the drum was only to improve the business of the professional drum maker. Drums had become expendable, hence they were made simpler. The carved decorations disappeared. Paint was substituted, and less attention was given to detail. The important thing was to produce a good functional instrument. But the creative instincts of the drum makers sometimes still take over, and many of the modern drums are beautifully proportioned, with delicate geometric patterns carved around the base, or foot. Among certain categories of drums the painted decorations consist solely of the name of the loa to whom the instruments have been dedicated—St. Jacques perhaps, or Papa Pierre, or Ezilie.

534 171 794 796 534 Drums differ in design according to the use for which they are intended. The Arada or Vodoun drums are used primarily in connection with the dances and rituals of the Vodoun cult—the cult built around the gods and rites of Arada and Yoruba theology. They resemble closely drums which are used today in Dahomey, Nigeria, and Togoland. They usually come in sets of three. The largest, the *manman* (also called *hounfor* or *hountogri*), may be three to four feet high. The middle-sized drum, or *second* (also called *grondé* or *moyen*), is about two feet

[Text continues on p. 193]

high. The smallest—the *bula*, or *bébé* (sometimes called *dundun*)—is 534
about eighteen or twenty inches high. They are all called sometimes by the Yoruba name *bata*, originally applied to a two-headed instrument.

Arada drumheads are of cowhide, held in place by hardwood pegs set into the bodies of the drums at an angle. The drums are tuned by [171]
driving in or loosening the pegs. Even the slitting of the skins where the pegs pass through them is African in pattern. In Cuba the drums of the Arada (there called Arara) cult are made in precisely the same way, though they are used in batteries of four rather than three.

In a variation of the peg type of fastening, the skin is attached to a 184
hoop, which, in turn, is held in place by ropes laced to the pegs. Each 534
drum maker has his own preference as to the angle and size of the pegs, the proportions of the drums, and the wood from which they are made. One drum maker near Léogane claimed to be able to identify the region from which a drum came by examination of the pegs and the carvings around the base.

The small Arada drum, the *bula*, is usually "whipped" with two long 534
thin sticks to provide a sharp and penetrating sound. The middle-sized 171
drum is played with one bare hand and a stick. The stick may be straight or bowed. The bowed drumstick is known as an *agida*, the name used for the same type of stick in Dahomey.[1] On infrequent occasions the *moyen* drum is played with two sticks—one straight and one bowed. The large drum, the *manman*, is played by the most accomplished of the drummers in the orchestra. He plays with one bare hand and one stick, which may be of various forms. It may be straight, have a hook-shaped head, or be mallet-shaped; or it may be the grotesquely twisted stick known as a *baguette Guinée*. All these forms are known in Dahomey and elsewhere in West Africa.

The three Haitian Arada drums, supplemented by an African-style 171
bell known as an *ogan* and small gourd rattles (cha-chas), form the 178
standard orchestra for most dances of the Vodoun cult. The *ogan*—the 534
forged iron bell with an external striker—has all but disappeared in 796
recent years, along with the institution of the village forge. In its place one may see any kind of metallic object, such as a hoe blade, a link of chain, or a length of pipe, all of which are referred to by the old name *ogan*. In Cuba the Arada cult preserves the bell, both in single and double form, under the same name. The word *ogan* probably derives from the Yoruba term for this instrument, *eganran*.

Playing in concert, the three Arada drums produce a range of tones, 533
and the player of the *manman*—the chief of orchestra—adds to the 534
effect by frequently striking his stick against the side of the drum above

[1] [Herskovits and Herskovits, Suriname Folk-Lore, p. 89. The stick is also known in Suriname. Cf. p. 353, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

534 [541] Among the noisemakers heard mostly at the time of the Rara festival (usually on Good Friday) are the *von-von*, or bull-roarer—a thin flat piece of wood whirled on the end of a cord—and the *rara*, the common wooden ratchet. Various types of wooden flutes, usually of bamboo, are also used.

[184] In the remoter parts of the mountains you may now and then hear of an instrument known as the *banza*. A century ago, it would appear, the *banza* was a stringed instrument resembling a banjo. The similarity of names is striking, in view of the instrument's early form. Today, [177] however, the word *banza* is applied to the homemade fiddle which is used to accompany the minuet and other old dances of European origin.

534 524 178 A children's instrument seen sometimes in the mountains is constructed of half of a calabash shell, across the opening of which have been stretched a number of cords. This plucked device appears to be a decadent form of the African trough zither.

[pp. 203-313 not processed]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Chapter 5: *Services for the Loa and the Family Ancestors* (pp. 41–74)

[1]Note that the houngan and the laplace are performing services normally performed by the *petit savane*.

[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 165.

[3]Parsons, *Spirit Cult in Hayti*.

[4]Account given by Jean Ravel Pintro.

[5]Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana.

[6]Account given by Voluska Saintvil. A. W. Cardinall notes in his book *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 69): "Trees are in most cases treated with respect. Before a man dare fell one for a canoe he must and invariably does sacrifice to its spirit and apologizes for the harm he is about to do it."

[7]The rite of *rafraichi tête* is conducted periodically for a *maît' tête* after the original *lavé tête* ceremony. The purpose is to "refresh" the loa and make him content with his residence in the head of the devotee.

[8]Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, p. 233.

[9]It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain Negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form.

[10]Odette Menneson Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Voudoun Loa," in Appendix A of Deren, *Divine Horsemen*, p. 264.

Chapter 6: *Songs of the Peristyle* (pp. 75–94)

[1]This theme is further commented on in chap. 13. Compare with the following excerpt from a Surinam song reported by Herskovits in *Suriname Folk-Lore* (p. 689):

> I have no mother there,
> I have no father there,
> I have no sister there,
> I haven't got anybody there.

Chapter 7: *In the Mapou Tree: Magic, Demons, and Compacts* (pp. 95–104)

[1]Simpson, "Haitian Magic," *Social Forces*, October, 1940, p. 97.

[2]Note the coincidence of the term *gris-gris* or *grigri* as used in the United States, where it has the same meaning as *mojo*, or "voodoo" charm.

[3]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 503.

[4]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, p. 243.

Chapter 8: *Mardi Gras and Rara: Jugglers, Maypoles, and Kings* (pp. 105–109)

[1]Aubin, *En Haïti*, p. 42.

[2]Marionettes of this kind have been observed in both East and West Africa and are well known in the region of Senegal. I saw a phallic marionette, virtually identical with the Haitian version, in the neighborhood of Khartoum, Sudan.

Chapter 9: *Land and Work* (pp. 110–121)

[1]Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, p. 362.

[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 300 ff., describes Dahomean polygamous marriage in its various forms. Although Dahomean plural marriage is complex in terms of gifts, obligations, and

2: Courlander 8-4 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

relations between the husband and the wife's family, it is nevertheless commonplace for men who can afford it to have more than one wife.

[2]Simpson, in "Sexual and Familial Institutions in Northern Haiti," *American Anthropologist*, October-December, 1942, p. 656, observes that in northern Haiti there are three distinct types of plaçage. "A *femme-caille* shares her mate's house, while a *maman pitite* is a woman who has born children for a man without living in his house. A *femme plaçée* does not live in her consort's house, and she has given him no children." Although none of these women has any legal rights of inheritance, Simpson notes, "moral claims to a man's property stand in descending order for these three classes of plaçées."

[3]Johnson, *The Negro in the New World*.

[4]UNESCO, *The Haiti Pilot Project*, p. 18.

[5]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 515.

[6]The group work patterns of Haiti show a common ancestry with Negro gang work patterns in the United States. While nothing as formalized as the coumbite persists among American Negroes, similarities are striking. The emphasis on rhythm, the swinging of hammers or picks in unison, the need for a singing leader, the responsive chorus, and the frequent use of some kind of percussion to keep time, all derive from a common concept of the nature of group work.

[7]Herskovits, "Some Aspects of Dahomean Ethnology," *Africa*, Vol. V (July, 1932), pp. 266–276.

[8]Cardinall, *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 109), observes that among the Krachi people of Togoland "no man may have sexual intercourse with a woman for seven days before he goes hunting."

[10]An Ashanti story told by Rattray in *Akan-Ashanti Folk-Tales* credits the hedgehog with owning the original hoe; according to this version, the hoe escaped across the sea to the country of the white men, who then possessed the secret. Afterward, the white men brought many hoes to Ashanti.

Chapter 11: *Dancing and Dance Drama* (pp. 126–136)

[1]Quoted in Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 73.

[2]Actually a banjo-like instrument of African provenience. The similarity of the word *banza* to *banjo* appears to be more than a coincidence.

[3]Saint-Méry, *De la danse*, as translated by Lillian Moore in "Moreau de Saint-Méry and 'Danse,'" *Dance Index*, October, 1946, p. 238.

[4]Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[5]Brandy or rum with gunpowder is sometimes drunk by persons possessed by the loa Ogoun, deity of war.

[6]Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[7]United Nations photograph no. 62065.

[8]Students of United States Negro life will recognize the word *coundjaille* as a variant of *coonjine*, a dance known on the lower Mississippi. According to one observer, Dr. Willis James of Spelman College, Atlanta, small Negro boys on the docks used to call to the boat passengers:

> "Throw me a nickel
> Throw me a dime
> If you want to see me
> Do the coonjine."

The term *coonjine* is still used to mean hand-loading of cotton bales on river boats. When this loading was done mainly by hand some years ago, the stevedores worked rhythmically in a line and sang. An old man from Louisiana testified that within his own memory the dockside *coonjine* was accompanied by makeshift drums and other percussion.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

114 treatment. In the absence of sufficient analytic material on the inter-
121 vening years since his book was written, a prefatory note such as this can do little more than comment on Haitian society, either in terms of its present design or in terms of the recent events that may have modified it.

121
114 The central thesis of Leyburn's book is that Haitian society is sharply
565 divided into two segments, and that the national institutional structure is such that no significant alteration in that division has occurred
[178] in the entire course of Haiti's history as a sovereign nation. At the base of the society is the rural agricultural sector, making up perhaps as much as 95 per cent of the population; at the top the elite, which dominates the governmental apparatus and all national institutions. These two segments of the society differ, in Leyburn's view, in all important regards: level of income, source of income, education, language, religion, social forms, values and attitudes, and all else. By carefully describing the history of Haitian society from the eve of the revolution until the midst of the United States occupation, he reveals both the origin of this vast social cleavage and the various means employed for its perpetuation. Leyburn was so impressed by the gap which separated yeomanry and elite that he chose to label these social segments castes rather than classes. Members of the elite earn their livings as rentiers, merchants, professionals, and in government, and never engage in manual labor of any sort. They are predominantly urban in residence; their sons attend private lower schools, and then
[191] go on to higher education, usually abroad. They are French-speaking,
[197] although they also speak Creole, Haiti's national language. Elite re-
[58] ligion is Catholicism, elite forms of marriage and domestic organiza-
[59] tion are "legitimate" and "western." Elite members view themselves
[529] as a kind of aristocracy, and feel little commonality in their sharing of Haiti and of Haitian history with the yeomen.

114 In sharp contrast, the yeomanry is rural, poor, works the land, is
565 illiterate and Creole-speaking only, believes in *vodous* rather than in orthodox Catholicism, usually marries by common law and is some-
191 times polygynous, and remains substantially isolated from the outer
771 world. Finally and importantly—though its particular significance is
583 changing—the elite differs from the rural sector in that the country-
595 man is predominantly negroid in phenotype, while members of the
144 elite are prevailingly lighter-skinned.

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throughout the country, the central administration remains in the capital; urban units are dispatched to the countryside at times, if any show of internal political resistance is sensed. TTM members also sometimes engage in struggles with each other over political spoils; but too little is known to analyze internal strains within this paramilitary, secret-police organization. The TTM has proved particularly useful for carrying out the murders of outspoken individual political opponents and for crushing draconically any threat of strikes in the Port-au-Prince business community. 625

Little is known of the antecedents of TTM members. While it is customary among the elite to describe these myrmidons as "trash," some of them are literate, have some education, vaunt a political ideology—a kind of nationalist-*négritude* mystique, with strong Fascist elements—and differ dramatically from the ragged, illiterate followers of the warlords of pre-1915 Haiti. In fact, the TTM lieutenants are a direct, if somewhat deformed, product of the Estimé regime, a decade of structurally unsound prosperity, a culturally nationalistic ideology, and, more remotely, of the United States occupation itself. 178 625

With regard to the army, Duvalier has followed a policy of careful attrition. While the United States Marine Corps "mission" was (probably unknowingly) serving to immobilize opposition, Duvalier began to change the character of the army general staff. In the course of less than seven years he completely revamped the leadership of the army five times; this process not only kept the colonels off balance but allowed the President to reward loyal younger followers—principally those with dark skins, it is said—with rapid promotions. 643 701

The relationship between the Duvalier regime and the Catholic clergy has been one of increasing alienation. At times members of the clergy stood high in the regime, two having even served as members of the cabinet; but not the slightest Church resistance has been tolerated. The low point in Duvalier–Church relations was the interruption of a mass by an armed TTM unit in downtown Port-au-Prince; leading members of the hierarchy later were summarily ejected from the country, and the Jesuit order was banned. Church power has waned significantly, both in the capital and in the countryside, as the regime has consolidated itself. Some observers believe that Duvalier is not so unwise as to aim at the complete elimination of the Church, but that he hopes instead to "nationalize" the clergy on some mutually agreeable basis. 642 795 661

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new ways. The virtual extirpation of indigenous culture, however, occurred in few areas outside the New World; it was particularly characteristic of the coastal and lowland areas of this hemisphere. Hence, Caribbean culture is almost entirely transplanted and recently synthesized. In the Caribbean area, an additional distinction lay in the persistently colonial character of the islands and in the effects of this colonialism on local life. Wherever the plantation flourished, large populations of African origin grew out of the original importations of slaves. This was true from the southern United States to Brazil, but was especially marked in the islands, where local populations of European extraction were either absent or reduced by the spread of the plantation. Only in Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Santo Domingo, and in some of the smaller islands that developed no plantation system, were substantial proportions of Europeans to be found. In Haiti, the early cultural admixture of Colonial Spanish and Indian was soon swamped by the cultures of Africa, and the European cultural component became predominantly French after 1697, when the western third of Hispaniola—today's Haiti—was ceded to France.

But Haitian society did not come to be purely African, in any sense, nor is that society more than broadly similar to the other societies of the Caribbean. The kind of society in which the French masters and their African slaves met and mixed, and the subtropical, colonial environment in which they lived, imposed their own conditions for culture growth. What the Haitian people could keep as a living part out of the African past was limited by the regimen of slave plantation life; what they could borrow or copy from their masters was affected by the nature of the social relationships between those who held power and those who had to bend to it. Ultimately, independence meant that the Haitian people could employ what they already knew and practiced under slavery, but in a wholly new social setting.

The substantial isolation that followed independence led to slowed change, both social and cultural, and to the gradual spread of the yeoman way of life throughout rural Haiti. From 1804 until the United States occupation, Haiti was probably less affected by external developments than any other country in the hemisphere. In this regard, its social history is noticeably different from that of the other Caribbean islands, some of which, like Puerto Rico and Cuba, were forcibly brought back into the mainstream of world developments in the

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same century in which Haiti withdrew. The yeomanry of Haiti in the nineteenth century was hence able to develop a traditionalism of unusual firmness and persistence.

This traditionalism, however, has had a high price. The economic productivity of the rural cultivator has not risen; it can be argued convincingly that poor land use, erosion, and population growth have meant lower levels of consumption for the common people in 1966 than obtained a hundred years or more ago. The rural masses, though overwhelmingly consisting of landholders, have been unable to break out of a stagnation that is economic as well as cultural. Such stasis has been based to some extent on the limited responsiveness of the rural folk to outside stimulus. But also important in maintaining the past is the national institutional system that took on its characteristic shape after 1804, and under which the rural masses still live. That system, the origins of which Leyburn has examined and assessed with such care, is controlled, as we have seen, by a numerically small segment of the national population that is markedly distinct from the yeomanry itself.

The nature and internal differentiation of the elite needs much more study, though it seems clear already that it is by no means a single solidary class embracing all but the yeomen. Whatever the structure of the elite, the relationship between the yeomen on the one hand and the real holders of power on the other must be understood if one is to understand Haiti. The yeoman is defined in terms of the elite; he is dependent upon it and subject to it. This is what is meant when it is said that the yeomanry, like the elite, forms only a part-society. Yet without the yeomen, there would be no elite. The elite live by controlling and taxing the rural masses, and find their sustenance and their power in rural productivity. Elite and yeomen, then, are bound together in unequal but interdependent relationships in Haiti as they are in other less developed societies of a similar kind. In such cases, the political role of the yeomanry is usually minor, and few opportunities may arise for the expansion of its political strength. If the yeomanry fails to increase its productivity in ways that enable it to control more of its own surpluses, its role in affecting national political decisions may grow narrower rather than wider, and this ominous possibility has become a worldwide phenomenon. It becomes more intensified wherever industry and trade grow, unaccompanied by parallel growth in yeoman productivity or in new and more widely representative national institutions.

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bean country, and perhaps fewer than in any country in Latin America. The agriculture itself, with the exceptions now of those very few large-scale plantations in sisal and sugarcane, is adapted to small plots and is worked with intensive labor and few tools on hilly land. Compared with agricultural production, especially of cash crops, in most mainland Latin American countries, productivity is low. The yeomanry is conservative in its agricultural practices, and not ready to change unless the changes entail minimal risk and the gains to be realized are clearly demonstrable (Erasmus, 1952:20–26). Yeomen cultivate with three goals in mind: cash income from world-market commodities (for instance, coffee, sisal, vetiver); cash income from items produced for local sale and consumption; and subsistence. While they are heavily involved in production for sale, their crop choices and land-use patterns rest fundamentally on a subsistence orientation. All grow a substantial part of their own food, especially sorghum, maize, sweet potatoes, taro, manioc, malanga (*Xanthosoma sagittifolium* Schott), plantains and bananas, fruits and vegetables, and rice where possible. The land is invested with considerable affect: gods live in it; it is the ultimate security against privation; family members are buried in it; food and wealth come from it; and it is good in itself, even if not cultivated. While such attitudes are common in yeoman societies, Haiti's history of slavery, and of access to land through revolution, has given a special symbolic significance to landowning. Land is valued above all else and is sometimes held "uneconomically"—that is, even when the capital and labor power to work it are lacking.

Leyburn describes better than any other writer the history of land acquisition by the yeoman after 1804. The French plantations lay in ruins, never to recover, while early authoritarian attempts to restore the prerevolutionary economy under native Haitian leadership soon failed. In the course of a century, the Haitian people laid claim to their own soil, while population growth and the adoption of the French tradition of equal inheritance progressively reduced the average size of holdings. In spite of some plantation development after the United States occupation, most agricultural land in Haiti is still employed in small holdings, and "land reform" in the conventional sense—the breaking-up of large estates and the creation of a class of small landholders—is nearly irrelevant to Haiti's needs.

As today's yeomanry cultivates, so its womenfolk market. Nearly

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any usual measure. But Haitians do produce by traditional craft methods a surprisingly large number of the articles they need for daily life. In the countryside it is possible to see many persons engaged, mostly on a part-time basis, in craft activities and home industry that have their roots in the prerevolutionary era. Leatherworkers operating small, crude tanneries still flourish. Charcoal-burners, and operators of small lime kilns that produce building material, are found in every village. Smiths make and repair simple tools, working with forges of archaic design. Combs are made from cows' horns and tortoiseshell, buttons from bone; carrying-bags, fish traps, and a wide variety of baskets from withes, bamboo strips, and grasses; wooden bowls, mortars and pestles, tool handles and spoons from local woods; dippers, pots, and candelabra from tin cans; and sandals from tires and inner tubes. Sawyers cut and dress timber; cabinetmakers still manufacture simple furniture of traditional design from the fast-disappearing tropical woods; many women, working either with the simplest sorts of sewing machines or by hand, make clothing for use and for sale. Along the coasts there are dugout-makers, shipbuilders, and sail- and seine-makers. Simple mattresses, fabricated from local grasses, are sold in every large marketplace, as are crude ceramic wares made by local potters. At the start of the twentieth century, Italian immigrants brought a sturdy tradition of cobbling to Haiti, which has been destroyed only recently by the flood of American imported shoes with their attached prestige, until recently, *vitièlo* was a colloquial term for shoe, coming from the name of the most famous of those Italian cobblers.

One of the striking features of Haiti's craft traditions is its relative stability since the revolution. It was under slavery that Haitians first became "westernized," learning what were then standard French craft practices, adjusted to local colonial conditions, probably with some modifying features coming from the African past. It was before the revolution that the Haitian people learned and stabilized their consumer tastes, agricultural and craft standards, and work procedures. Such preferences and standards were worked out primarily in terms of the demands of the plantation regime itself; but even the most repressive social system leaves some opportunity for acculturation. Today's sugar-making shops and rural rum distilleries employ techniques centuries old and little modified over time. Housebuilding and woodworking techniques in the countryside are substantially

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342 322 178 unchanged from an earlier era. The prevailing quality of Haitian rural and craft industry, then, is one of great stability and conservatism.

493 463 At the same time, of course, major events since the revolution have left their imprint on this part of life. Hardly a roadside village in Haiti today, for instance, lacks an automobile mechanic, even though these men are mostly self-educated and work with hardly any tools. Their skills became part of Haitian culture in this century and are often of a simple order no longer typical of more developed areas. 383 Tire tubes, for instance, are "vulcanized" by the use of an ingenious device made from a board and an old piston, kerosene providing the heat to make the seal; 177 this technique, along with the sewing of damaged truck tires, was almost certainly introduced and diffused by the United States Marines.

47 31 178 But these quaint additions do not alter the fact that shop and factory industry are nearly absent, and extractive industry virtually nonexistent. Haiti's one alumina extraction enterprise, foreign-owned, is now shut down. [258] There is but one flour mill, and that is foreign-owned as well. [339] One or two textile mills and sugar factories, established with foreign capital, still function, as do a modern cement factory and a few other small plants established in the 1950s. [464] These industries, scanty as they are, were of great importance to Haiti, since they represented substantial investments, held out the promise of reduced dependence on imports in significant categories, and contributed to the beginnings of an industrial proletariat. However, they involved only a tiny fraction of the national labor force, and they have not proved entirely successful. As a result, Haiti lacks any reserve of labor acquainted with modern industry, even though many people, both urban and rural, work at tasks that might be considered more industrial than agricultural.

47 433 178 171 Most important for the present discussion, the minor developments in Haitian industry have not led to an expanded market and have not resulted in any firm increase in productivity. Industrial growth, in the sense in which it has occurred in countries such as those of Western Europe—or for that matter in Mexico or Argentina—is entirely lacking. The absence of such growth is perhaps especially significant if Haiti be compared with a neighbor such as Jamaica or Puerto Rico. [648] These countries, one now independent, the other a North American dependency—have both gained real increments from the investment activities of outsiders;

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activities of outsiders; Haiti has experienced few such increments, even as a result of the United States occupation. Its citizens cannot readily migrate anywhere; its educational system cannot prepare its people adequately for the modern world; its civil service has proved neither stable nor reliable; its labor force has limited experience with the factory system; and even two decades of active North American intervention did nothing to remake the economic and political structure of the nation. In more recent years, some of the "development projects" foisted on the people of a sovereign Haiti by foreigners working with Haitian officials would not have been tolerated by the colonial representatives of any foreign power obligated to report its activities before the United Nations Trusteeship Council. In view of these things, one is tempted to claim that Haiti has suffered from all the disadvantages of political sovereignty while enjoying none of its advantages.

Unlike those colonial dependencies that were able, over time, to develop internal political ideologies through which to face the pressures imposed by the colonial powers, Haiti was tested by hardly any challenge but its own lack of development. In this sense only can it be said that the freedom Haiti had won in an incredible revolution against powerful enemies came to be a punishment. The struggle brought the Haitian people justified admiration in many quarters, but its price has been isolation and virtual abandonment.

It was the United States occupation that made a lie of Haitian sovereignty, and even of the invincibility of its people. The Haitian "bandits," variously estimated to have numbered from 2,000 to 6,000, who died in what is probably best described as a war of resistance against the North Americans, were barely able to maintain even a brief local conflict against several well-armed companies of United States Marines. Yet that occupation gave Haiti little in return for its denial of the claim of national sovereignty. The public works and reform programs instituted by the United States, designed to give the country roads, schools, hospitals, a disciplined army, a "legitimate" government, and a schooled civil service, hardly endured longer than the occupation itself, since nothing had been done to transform the social and economic base of the society. Within a decade of the North American withdrawal, the gleaming superstructure the occupation created had begun to decay. The major effect of North Amer-

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The major effect of the North

Amer-
648 ican tenure seems to have been to make possible a much more telling
642 centralism in political control than had been operative in Haiti at any time since the fall of the Christophe regime; and the consequences of this change are still being felt.

241 Small-scale rural cultivators are famous for their tendency to con-
565 fine their consumption to culturally conventionalized levels—that is,
433 to live as their predecessors lived before them. Though they are in-
178 volved in commercial spheres larger than the communities in which
185 they live, they seek to limit that involvement and to maintain their
511 cash expenditures at a low level. It is in this sense that Haiti might be
472 called a "quasi-capitalistic" society. To put it another way, yeomen of this sort do not seek to change or to expand their production—rather, they aim to conserve a way of life set by tradition. The ideology of resistance to social and cultural change is one of the major obstacles to development; but it would be rash to damn such an ideology without reflection. In Haiti, for instance, there has long been pressure upon the rural masses to expand their production of coffee, the major export crop. However, this pressure has not been accompanied by any serious grass-roots attempt to improve coffee production or to offer genuine incentives to the cultivators. The yeomanry has no assurance at all that any expansion of effort will lead to gains *for them*; and they are little prepared to invest such effort merely because they are told that it will be good for Haiti. In fact, it is likely
[439] that the production of subsistence crops has expanded in recent years at the cost of coffee production, for the yeoman knows that he can at least be sure of eating and of selling locally such crops as maize, sorghum, and yams, regardless of what may happen in Port-au-Prince or to the world coffee market. This view, combined with the yeoman's painfully acquired distrust of those who prate at length concerning his welfare, has meant a virtual stagnation of agricultural export production, even though the whole land quite literally depends on this production in order to progress.

241 The effect of this rural resistance is to create an apparent very sharp
565 difference in goals between countryman and bureaucrat. It is per-
433 fectly understandable that the countryman should fail to see the con-
185 nection between heightened coffee production and a higher level of public welfare and social services. His experiences hardly persuade him that it is his surplus-producing capacity that underlies the kind and quality of public institutions with which the state provides him.

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241 565 185 433 Nor does his effort in producing more and better cash crops translate itself directly into higher consumption, since he has no say in setting the price for his coffee. Under the circumstances, it is naïve to suppose that "education" alone can make the yeoman's role in economic or political development a more active one. The disposition to maintain a habitual level of consumption, rather than to believe that an increase in productivity will result in expanding services or improved consumption, is difficult to change; and the quasi-capitalistic quality of Haitian agricultural production is merely one way of saying as much. Economic change, in this sense, has to depend partly on changes in attitudes toward production. Until an agricultural extension service worthy of the name is able to make a massive attack on the shortcomings of yeoman cultivation in Haiti, this conservatism will perpetuate itself. And agricultural extension will not be able to wage this battle for change—even when its services become adequate in quality and quantity—unless the promises of greater economic rewards or of improved social services for the rural masses are occasionally honored.

47 433 565 178 The term "quasi-capitalistic" has much less force, of course, when applied to urban enterprise. But there, too, economic activity has a curiously static quality when compared to enterprise in more developed countries. The Port-au-Prince capitalist is famous for "playing it safe." Import-export trade, tourist hotels, guided tours, gas stations, and urban slum real estate are more rewarding spheres of investment than shops or commercial farms. A small but economically important Syrian-Lebanese-Italian group limits its local investment accordingly, as do most of those "native" Haitians who carry on their businesses in the towns and cities. Elite families consist largely of siblings who interlock their economic activities with government, the military, agricultural processing and exporting, consumer-goods importing, tourist-connected services, and the professions. A slum block, a post in the ministry of tourism, a colonelcy, or a tour agency, can be a lucrative investment; few indeed are the Haitians prepared to take the risks needed to develop highly productive farms, to produce improved strains of poultry, or to introduce industrial skills through a modern machine shop. And the reasons for this lack of verve and daring are easy to find. Governmental instability, excessive taxation, lack of access to markets, and the absence of roads, communication, small-scale credit facilities, and the like mean that special [648]

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intrepidity in enterprise is required. It is striking that those foreign captains of industry—mainly from the United States—who invest in Haiti, expect (and often get) governmental guarantees of a sort they could not dream of in their own countries; in this regard, they merely conform to Haitian expectations.

Haiti's problems, then, are not simply those that face any less developed country, vast though such problems may be. Nor is it intelligent to lay Haiti's problems at the feet of the nation's present rulers. The structure of the national economy has not changed significantly during the past twenty-five years—except that boom years could provide a temporary aura of prosperity—regardless of the philosophy or popularity of the regime in power. If nothing else, the present nadir of Haiti's fortunes demonstrates that United States aid averaging twelve and a half million dollars yearly over more than a decade has produced no enduring improvements of any kind. It may further demonstrate that, shockingly poor as the country is, it emphatically does not depend on such aid. As of 1964, the regime in power was operating on a monthly budget of $1,800,000, only $400,000 of which went for purposes other than salaries. In other words, the ministries do little more than perpetuate themselves unchanged. The yeomanry, living near subsistence level, continues to produce most of what it needs, while restricting its cash expenditures even more severely than in the past. The risks—in terms, say, of public health—of running a society under these circumstances are great; but there is no reason to suppose that regimes of the Haitian sort will be destroyed or improved by a show of popular unrest originating in the countryside. Difficult as life is for the Haitian countryman, and no people in Latin America lives more poorly, the real pinch is probably being experienced more acutely among the city folk than among their rural fellow citizens. It matters politically, therefore, who these city folk are and what they do.

To begin with, there has been a significant loss of professional people, almost all of whom were urban, through migration and exile, especially since 1958. Haitian doctors, dentists, and other professionals are widely scattered today, both in the developed and the less developed countries of the world. Former army officers, journalists, diplomats, businessmen, and academicians have fled political repression, perhaps with the hope of eventually returning to their own country.

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country. The complete enfeeblement of tourism has also led to some migration and to an accompanying decline of services and service "industries" in the capital. These losses have surely hurt Haiti and have damaged its chances for growth as well as its capacity to maintain the health, education, and morale of its people. It is not clear, however, to what extent such changes may have produced a negative political reaction to the Duvalier regime. Urban support for Dr. Duvalier appears to have come from some intellectuals, from some army officers, and from portions of the urban lower classes; but numerically most important were those low-paid but literate and aspiring wage-earners whom the Comhaire-Sylvains (1959) refer to as "Class III" members. These observers have stressed that the Class III group consisted mainly of industrial employees, those engaged in food-processing, hotel services, workshops, and the like. It was this group that the Comhaire-Sylvains credited with the Duvalier victory in 1957, pointing out in addition that "in the small country towns almost all officials, both civil and military, and traders, seemed to belong to this class" (p. 185). If the economic crisis that has gripped Haiti in recent years severely affects the position of this class, the political situation will reflect as much. But the ideology of Class III members—so far as it can be inferred at all—would suggest that one Duvalier may merely be replaced by another. At the same time, the depopulation of those groupings whose members might have led a qualitatively different kind of opposition, during the period of tenure of the United States Marine Corps Mission to Duvalier, may have indefinitely postponed the opportunity for creating a genuinely new political direction.

To state it another way, there are no signs at this time that the regime in power will be pulled down by any organized Haitian opposition. More important, since regimes resting on a narrow popular base have a way of falling without change, there is no indication that within Haiti's present national institutional structure, a genuine opposition to Duvalier-type governments can take shape. This means that even if regime should follow regime in rapid succession, there is little reason to expect that any of them could effect fundamental changes in Haitian society. If such an interpretation is correct, it presupposes an internal equilibrium or stasis so strong that no force for change in half a century has been able to make a politically significant difference.

This pessimistic view is supported by what is known at this time

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121 tomed to hang our knowledge of the growth, development, and decay of social institutions. Whether the book be classified as social history or as sociology is largely a matter of indifference, for the line between those subjects can hardly be drawn without doing violence to comprehensive insight. To view a people with understanding in the characteristic setting of their institutions—marriage, religion, property arrangements, and the rest—one needs not only a description of their ways, but also a knowledge of how they came to be what they are.

167 Two centuries ago nine tenths of the Negro ancestors of the modern
178 Haitians were still in Africa, living under the mores of their own localities,
563 and for the most part entirely unacquainted with the mores of the Western World (or, as we ethnocentrically call it, the "civilized" world). First transplanted as slaves to the Caribbean island, then gaining their freedom after some mixture of blood with the white French, the Haitians have built up not only a state but a Haitian culture. The problems to be discussed in this book are as follows:

114 What social structure was set up after the independence in 1804, and by what methods? This question calls for a description of the economic, political, religious, marital, and class organization of the Haitians.

How did this structure function during the next century? There is often a difference between a people's expressed intentions and their ability to carry them out: a state sometimes borrows from some other power a type of constitution which, though logically admirable, does not work effectively under local conditions.

Which structural and functional elements of Haitian life were social heritages from the African past; which were taken over from French models; which were mergings of the two, and which seem to be variations newly produced on Haitian soil?

178 The great leaders of early days, Toussaint L'Ouverture, Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, and Boyer, made an effort to direct Haitian economic and political life along definite lines; however, the pressure of daily life, the necessity of feeding half a million people, most of whom had had no experience in solving complicated problems of any sort, soon made it obvious that logical social structures would not long remain logical. The ways evolved were characteristically Haitian; ways in general unplanned, grow-

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ing out of daily needs to make an adjustment to conditions as they were. A century later we can describe, with the wisdom coming from perspective, what people of the time could hardly perceive to be happening. 178

The people of Haiti have had to endure so much criticism from foreigners in past decades that it would be small wonder if they should dread the appearance of another book about their country. Herskovits, Parsons, Montague, Courlander, and other recent American authors, however, have abundantly proved that it is possible to treat the subject in scholarly fashion without wounding sensibilities. Every nation has unsavory items in its history and defects in its present state; this book has no intention of overdramatizing either the past or the present condition of Haiti. 114

All students who go from the United States to Haiti must sooner or later seek out Dr. Price-Mars, a true gentleman and scholar. He is not only one of the country's foremost intellectuals, but also a man of profound understanding and kindliness. I owe much to his illuminating suggestions, his practical assistance in my enterprise, and his patient answers to my questions. His works, whether historical, sociological, critical, or literary, are indispensable to an understanding of Haiti.

I am grateful likewise to Père Monteil, who during several weeks gave me the benefit of his years of experience among the people of his large parish, and who opened many avenues of research to me. The custodian of the excellent library of the Frères de l'Instruction Chrétienne constantly aided my investigation. Père Demers allowed me on occasion to accompany him in his parish work. To all these men, and to the numerous other priests who showed me hospitality, I express my thanks.

It would be impossible to name all the persons who gave me help; yet I cannot forbear to mention former President Eugène Roy; Dr. Camille Lhérisson, a brilliant physician; Dr. J.-C. Dorsainvil, the historian; the directors of the agricultural school at Damien, and of the École Professionelle, École Centrale, and École Normale; M. Jean Fouchard, chef du Cabinet particulier du Président Vincent; M. Jacques Antoine, of the Haitian Legation in Washington; M. Édouard Estève, president of the Chambre du Commerce; Mme. Andrée Marini; M. Victor Montasse; and M. Émile Roy. All of these gave me valuable information, as did many other Haitians of high rank and low. I count it a particular privilege to number

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increasingly arid as its altitude decreases. Next to the Plaine du Nord, the best-watered part of Haiti is the southwestern peninsula, which projects far beyond the shelter of the mountains in the rest of the island. 132

When one subtracts from the 10,000 square miles all the sterile wastes of cactus, the salt marshes and brackish lakes, and the rock barrens, one realizes the inevitability of a low standard of living for the mass of the people. Other nations buy little from Haiti, local industries never reach even the proportions familiar to small-town Americans, and the total national budget is less than seven million dollars a year. Not even the élite are well-to-do by American small-town standards; it is only by comparison with the masses that they can be said to constitute a favored economic class. They rule the country, however, and what benefits accrue to Haiti rarely get beyond their pockets. 433 [439] [65] [565]

The resident of Haiti can never lose sight of the social distinctions between the two castes, for they permeate every phase of Haitian life. It has been so since the first hours of the republic. Indeed, the origins of the caste system lie in the French colonial days of the eighteenth century. 565 175 178

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field labor, the ruler emphasized the clemency of his new régime. Labor the people must, but not under the whip; that arch symbol of slavery was abolished forever. The working day was shortened by a third. It was provided that, if just reason were shown, a man might even secure permission from his district commissioner to move from the plantation to which he was attached. 175 566 466

These were words. Facts were another matter. The overseers had been ordered to exact so much labor from their underlings, yet without whips; knowing no persuading power other than chastisement, they backed up their commands with blows of *lianes*, thick pliable vines which could be gathered anywhere in the island. Thus the laggard was driven, the law kept to the letter, and the overseer praised by his superiors. As for the working day, crops must be tended at the proper moment, so that the boasted shortening of hours generally came to little. Finally, the right to secure permission to move away from a plantation was effectively limited by the refusal of commissioners to grant any such request.

Every public expression of Dessalines showed a solicitude for the welfare of the workers, while his every act indicated that he regarded them as impersonal parts of the machine of state. He knew by his own former experience as a slave what a day's stint should be and the ruses used by laborers to avoid steady work; he was therefore able to order agricultural labor on a realistic basis.

The economic organization created by Dessalines provided the roots for the peasantry which was soon to develop as a characteristic form of Haitian life. Among these fundamental conditions were the existence of agriculture as a prevalent occupation, the immobility of all workers on the land, and a thorough schooling of the people in patient acceptance. Dessalines might theoretically have established some other economic system—a division of estates into small properties, for example, with each farmer a master of his own destiny; a democratic coöperative economy; slavery again; feudalism with a landed gentry. At critical times, one leader's choice may affect the whole future life of the country. The decision of Dessalines to keep the bulk of his people in servitude, without using the terminology of slavery, gave the new freemen no opportunity to become acquainted with work other than tillage. They were sent back to the only tasks they had ever known, their horizons were just as limited as before, their personal freedom just as restricted. The worst punishments of slavery, together with torture and gross overwork, 175 178 463 24 433 566 175 566

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175 such an example of rigor might spread. The moral element of the
643 population had long looked askance at his libertinage; his first act
661 upon entering a town during a visit of state was regularly to have his aides select for him the most attractive females in the vicinity, with whom he would spend more time than at the business of governing.
[703] Not even his army was sorrowful over his death. He had let his loyal troops go for months without pay, and then, reviewing a group of them one day, taunted and railed at them for their ragged uniforms. "You look as naked as a bunch of old bottles!" he cried.

Dessalines had restored order to his country and had founded a state. Both achievements rested upon a display of force which inspired cringing fear and denied normal human aspirations. His entire social and economic order was based upon the subservience of the many to the few.

2. *Christophe* (*1807–1820*)

175 Until 1807 all Haitians had the same political background—the French colonial régime, revolution, the governorship of Toussaint,
178 and the stern rule of Dessalines. Now the common path forked. Two avenues were opened up during the next dozen years, one by Christophe, the other by his Southern and mulatto rival, Pétion. The former was the road of discipline, hard work, and feudal control; the latter was one of persuasion, *laissez faire*, and small properties. Haiti ultimately chose the second.

175 The logical successor to Dessalines was his powerful Negro hench-
643 man, Christophe.[8] This black general felt so certain of his leadership that he did not even bother to attend the *Assemblée Constituante*
642 which was to choose the new head of state. The mulattoes, however, had agreed among themselves that they had had enough of rule by
662 ignorant ex-slaves. They consequently performed the very skillful manoeuvre of preparing a constitution which should effectively shear a new president of dictatorial power; this done, they dutifully elected Christophe to the presidential office. The wrathful general peremptorily declined to rule by virtue of so anaemic a document, and led his army southward to demand proper respect for his august

8. The name Christophe was taken from the English Caribbean island of St. Christopher, on which this black slave was born. Later in life he took as his first name Henry, spelling it in the English fashion rather than the French, as an indication of his wholehearted admiration of English people and English ways.

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175 work until noon. A two-hour siesta followed, but from two until
566 sunset there was steady work. Only after evening prayers was the
512 worker free. During the day no cultivator might leave his task except
466 for direst need. The lame and the halt were not required to till the fields, but must carry around buckets of drinking water, take care of the children, and do odd jobs about the estate.

175 Christophe made a steady and, in the main, successful effort to
566 explain to the people the necessity of hard work on the plantation.
466 As with the noblemen, the serfs knew precisely what was expected of them, and why. Their regimentation was strict, but understandable. It was clearly stipulated that if a worker shirked his job he was to be put in prison and made to do forced labor there. Laziness in the fields was to be punished by strokes from the overseer's liane. Hard and steady work was demanded during the whole thirteen years of Christophe's rule, but only rarely was there complaint, as there had been constantly under Dessalines, of cruelty on the part of overseers.

175 The quarter part of the total crop of any plantation was to go to
465 the workers as wages, and, since production increased and prices rose, this quarter which they were free to spend as they pleased provided a powerful incentive to further industry. As compared with anything they had known before, the workers were now recipients of an ample income. On the plantations they cultivated
[423] the money crops of sugar and coffee. In addition, each family had
[241] its own garden plot on which to raise the food crops—yams, plantains, beans, and bananas—for personal use.[9]

175 Christophe was so far ahead of his time that he tried to introduce
177 British methods of agriculture into his kingdom. The results were
407 insignificant. The plough, although obviously superior in efficiency to the hoe, eliminated the sociable companionship of working in
● 178 unison, and demanded horses and mules which the country lacked. The innovations were consequently too radical to be accepted. In the main, the agricultural methods of the kingdom continued to be those familiar in slave days.

175 Thirteen years of careful direction can fix many patterns of social
178 routine. One of Christophe's rules was that no cultivator attached to

[241] 9. The staples of other countries, such as Irish potatoes, wheat, barley, and oats, did not flourish in Haiti. On the large plantations, indigo and cotton, which had been money crops in the French régime, were generally neglected, as they had been in the time of Dessalines.

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One of Christophe's rules was that no cultivator attached to

a plantation—and every ordinary country person was so attached —might leave the estate without permission from a military officer.[10] Two of the common folkways of Haitian peasant life since his time have been immobility and general acceptance of orders from the military. Both characteristics had been fostered by slavery and by the régimes of Toussaint and Dessalines, and these folkways became fixed under Christophe. 175 566 178 [484]

Other rules introduced by the King, however, lapsed shortly after his strong hand was removed. For example, the monarch required of the whole population that whenever they visited the capital on feast days or went to the market towns on Saturdays they be decently clad in clean clothes.[11] Since the time of Christophe, neatness of appearance has hardly been a folk characteristic, probably because of poverty rather than lack of desire to dress well. Nor did scrupulous regularity of work in the fields continue as a folkway later, when the great plantations were broken up. 175 178 291 527 183 [461]

Like a father the King tried to inculcate moral standards of honesty in his people. To prevent theft he had small valuables, such as watches or jewelry or purses, "planted," and if the finder did not immediately turn them over to the nearest Dahomet, punishment was meted out. Such a policy made honesty contagious. Thefts and depredation were soon almost unknown. The most tempting store of wealth could be left safely unlocked or in the open air. Christophe's achievement in this matter is eloquent testimony to his success as a paternal leader, for it is no small task to initiate moral ideas among people who for a generation have lacked them. Even today it is the proud boast of the Haitians that their people are honest. 175 577 177

As compared with the liberties of farmers in the United States of the same period, the Haitian agricultural workers' freedom was infinitesimally small, but by contrast with the bondage of slavery, their new status was definitely higher. 175 566

10. Christophe called his royal police force "Dahomets," after the West African kingdom, Dahomey, from which most of the men had come. They were not ordinary soldiers but especially imported and carefully selected men whose intelligence made them stand out from their fellows. Each Dahomet was given a course of training in his task as administrator before being sent out. The general consensus of foreign visitors was that these Dahomets were efficient even in small matters. [625]

11. This rule was partly an indication of Christophe's vanity, personal and national, for he was deeply desirous of the good opinion of white visitors, especially those from England. He wanted Europeans to respect Haiti as they would respect any small state, and not to praise it merely as an example of "Negro progress." [577] [186]

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to be comforted. They had lost their best friend and their "*petit père.*" 175

Dessalines would be emperor and Christophe king, but Pétion was content to remain a simple president. He was an anomaly—as if a Parisian of delicate sensibilities and mellow tolerance had somehow come to power with a darker skin in an alien land. 643 159

He has been highly praised and is worthy of eulogy. The fact remains that his country was rich when he came to power and poor when he died; united in 1806 and divided in 1818. Candor compels his admirers to admit that many of the calamities of the social and economic history of Haiti can be traced back to Pétion's administration.

The crucial act of Pétion was to parcel the land. From that policy flowed the enduring consequences which became the predominant socio-economic characteristics of Haiti. 175 423 421

Until Pétion's time the island had never known small properties. Large estates had been the mark of social distinction in the French colony; Toussaint had kept the plantations large,[18] while Dessalines and Christophe had absorbed more and more land for the state, leasing it out in great blocks. The constitution of 1806[19] gave no indication of impending change, for it specifically declared all land to be the property of the Haitian nation. Within three years, however, the process of dividing and giving away the state's lands was well under way. 178

It would be illuminating to know what mental process in Pétion moved him to make so radical an about-face in land policy. The reasons he gave were, first, that the people had ably defended their country and so deserved a reward; second, that he wanted all the people to have a vital interest in the actual soil itself.[20] These may have been his only reasons. Others suggest themselves: the republic owed wages to its large standing army, which were more easily paid in land, of which the state had much, than in cash, of which it had little and progressively less; it would be much easier to keep peace in a country where men were free than where they were serfs; and the example of free ownership in the South would seem alluring enough

18. He permitted the leasing of plantations as small as fifty acres if the soil were especially rich. [427]

19. December 27. This document was largely the handiwork of Pétion.

20. The former explanation he consistently gave in his various messages to the Senate proposing progressive parcelings of the land; the latter he wrote to a friend, saying that he wished to "*enrailner chez tous l'amour du sol.*"

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to Christophe's serfs in the North to cause defections ultimately sufficient to win the civil war for the republic.[21]

Those who would read into Pétion's democratization of land tenure the liberal convictions of a far-sighted statesman must ignore the evidence of his earliest land acts. For two or three years nothing was so apparent as that Pétion wished to please his friends, the mulatto aristocrats. He not only had the Senate restore to their former owners all lands of which Dessalines had despoiled them, but he also agreed to a law authorizing a cash payment up to the full value of crops planted and then lost during the last year of the Emperor's rule.[22] By these concessions the President immediately wiped out the rancor left behind him by Dessalines, reversed that ruler's whole land policy, gained the support of thousands of aspirants for social position, and bound in personal loyalty to his régime all the colored leaders.

He went further. Insecurity of tenure under Dessalines had worried landlords who were not actually mulcted of their estates, and so the President undertook to guarantee security. Thereafter all sales of land were to be registered by government deed, and so confirmed to the purchaser in perpetuity; government courts would be empowered to settle disputes over payment of rents; proof of the death of the testator must be forthcoming before wills could be probated. Not even the single limitation on ownership—that if the proprietor of an estate should remain away from Haiti the state might lease his property and receive the income from it—disturbed them, for they were patriots enough, and poor enough, to feel that Haitians should live at home.

As if this were not enough to please the landed gentry, the tax

21. Saint-Rémy, *Pétion et Haïti* (Paris, 1854–57), V, 165–166, suggests another reason, namely, that people will always be more ready to defend land they actually own than for an impersonal state. This sounds logical, but certainly the Negroes had fought ardently enough to drive out the French in 1803, landless though they were. Saint-Rémy continues: "And moreover, was it not time to dismember the enormous plantations which still bore the names of those colonists whose mother country might still at any moment descend to reclaim their heritage? And could this dismemberment be achieved otherwise than by giving the people an honorable title to it?"

22. Two successive laws, February 9 and March 16, 1807, achieved these ends. The former specified that all persons who, by purchase or gift or legacy, had acquired land before November 1, 1803 (when Rochambeau surrendered) or since February 7, 1804 (when Dessalines had ordered a confirmation of all titles) should be newly assured of their rights to such holdings. There was a single, possibly unimportant, limitation: the acquisition must have been by Haitians *from* Haitians.

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175 Haitian writers sometimes praise Pétion for his democratic leanings, by implication criticizing Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe for their feudalistic notions. If the blacks were undemocratic, at least they had experience back of the system they selected for administering the land: their methods worked. Pétion's plan, on the contrary, admirable though it seemed to later "liberals," was unexpectedly disappointing. The national income declined; estates were steadily broken up and sub-leased to small farmers; sugar disappeared from the state's balance sheet, while coffee did not supply an equivalent income; discipline of the workers gave way to individualism. Although the whole legislative code favored the landlords, la grande culture crumbled. One is driven to conclude that Pétion simply tried one device after another—always the easiest he could find—to keep state economy functioning.

175 When Pétion came to power, the common folk of southern Haiti were serfs with a memory of slavery; when he died, they were peasants. At the beginning of his régime the mulattoes and other social aspirants felt they were struggling for very existence against the relentless policies of black rulers; as it closed they were beyond any doubt aristocrats, but by the same token progressively less well-to-do. No one any longer attacked their social pretensions; but the worldly wealth on which these pretensions were based was disappearing along with the country's prosperity, so that new criteria had to be developed.

175 As we have said, the keynote of Pétion's rule was persuasion. Where Dessalines ordered, Pétion suggested; where Christophe decreed, Pétion recommended. There is not a single act one could cite during his entire presidency which had the effect of tightening up the organization of the republic. When laws were not properly observed, instead of penalties being made more severe or sure of application, the laws themselves were calmly allowed to lapse. In fact, the period from 1807 to 1818 was one of transition, of experiment, of discovering a congenial way of life. Since it was clear that the mass of citizens were peacefully disposed and unambitious, the President was inclined to let custom rule in each little community. Laws were not repealed, but they were enforced only when general public opinion was clearly in their favor. At many points the upper class would have liked more disciplinary control over the masses and said so to Pétion; yet they realized that in a less than ideal world one

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against almost unanimous public opinion opposing enforcement. In 1828 it was reported that dancing, which the Code had strictly limited to week ends, was a nightly diversion near the capital. One of the principal dancing resorts was the house of a captain of rural police, the very man who was supposed to repress such amusements.[45]

Boyer had done his best, and his best was merely a good piece of office work. When his Code failed to operate, he could think of nothing further to suggest for the economic rehabilitation of Haiti. The last fifteen years of his administration witnessed a gradual lapse into that small-scale farming which was to be characteristic of Haiti for the remainder of the nineteenth century. By comparison with former standards, production and steady industry had both fallen off since Boyer came to the presidency. The testimony of visiting foreigners is unanimous on the decline of industry.

The British consul, Mackenzie, said in 1827 that there was very little field labor then being done, and that only elderly people, principally aged "Guinea Negroes" long accustomed to steady work, carried on the tradition. No measures of the government could induce young people born in Haiti to labor or to change from their "habitual vagrancy."[46] Another Englishman, James Franklin, remarked in 1828 that land values throughout the republic had greatly declined because no one could make a profit within any moderate time. Labor was high, he writes, for ordinary wages did not attract the workers who preferred idleness. (This word is certainly unfair: it was work at their own bidding which they preferred, not idleness.) Government lands lay untilled, no one evincing the slightest desire to purchase or utilize them. Franklin continues:

> Land also in the possession of individuals is similarly circumstanced; and those who are large proprietors cannot effect a sale of any produce which they may have beyond the quantity which they can consume; consequently a proprietor may have an immense extent of land, and yet be quite unable to derive any benefit from it by cultivation, or to convert it into money, for the want of purchasers. Thus . . . there is no individual wealth in the country, because, although a man may have very large landed possessions, still those possessions are unavailable, for they produce him nothing, as he can seldom find persons disposed to hire to occupy or purchase them.

45. Although dancing is spoken of here as an amusement, it is highly probable that at least a part of it had connection with the Voduu religion.

46. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti* (London, 1830), I, 100. Mackenzie is clearly exaggerating, unless by "field labor" he means work on plantations, in contrast to farming on small plots.

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recognized that the really important characteristics peculiar to the peasant are his sentiments and attitudes, the intense attachment to his native soil and family tradition, which, even in the economic sphere, take precedence over the desire for individual advancement and gain."[51] 463 241

Haiti in 1804 was still a country of large estates, and Dessalines and Christophe strove to keep it so. Under the active generosity of Pétion and the passive indifference of Boyer after his Code Rural had failed, few great plantations were left intact. The recorded donations of these two presidents to their generals, civil functionaries, and lesser officers, are as follows:[52] 175 24 423 671 425

134 grants of 150 carreaux (about 450 acres).			Total: 59,300 acres.
176	35	105	18,480
639	30	90	57,510
711	25	75	54,325
2,322	20	60	139,320
8,000	5	15	120,000
			Grand total: 448,935 acres.

Haiti followed French law rather than British, so that the rule of primogeniture did not prevail. It requires only a moment's reflection to see that even within a single generation the thousands of small properties noted in the table would be subdivided many times, since a father apportioned his land to all his sons. By 1842 it is probable that not a single plantation of the size common in colonial times was still intact.[53] On the testimony of numerous government officials and commandants of arrondissements, it was estimated in that year that 46,610 small landed properties were under fair cultivation.[54] If the population at that time be estimated at 800,000, seven eighths of whom were engaged in agriculture, there would accordingly be about fifteen people (including children) to each rural property. But 175 428 178 423 [311] [162]

A large number of small estates are left out of this account, which are said to be *badly* cultivated, or neglected. Taking the number of each separate 175 241

51. C. von Dietze, "Peasantry," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, XII, 50.
52. This table is compiled from figures cited in Armand Thoby, *La Question agraire en Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1888), *passim*, and Dr. F. Dalencour, *Le Sauvetage national par le retour à la terre* (Port-au-Prince, 1923), p. 18.
53. See Raymond Renaud, *Le Régime foncier en Haïti* (Paris, 1934), pp. 42–43.
54. Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

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175 by persuasion, to do as much work as possible for his and their own
473 interests. In a few cases the success of such efforts was tolerably good;
427 but one worker disposed to be sullen or idle, or even not physically
24 strong, might throw the whole scheme into disorder. One's own
425 profits would be cut by the misdeeds of others even when one had
461 himself been industrious. This caused a decline of incentive, sometimes among a whole group of potentially good workers, because one or two of the number shirked. Probably the most patent evil of such arrangements was that every laborer realized that he did not suffer as directly for idleness or neglect as when working for himself; his fellow workers shared the consequences of his misconduct in some degree, and his employer in a still greater measure. The driving force of individual responsibility was removed.

[692] Boyer and Inginac, foresseeing just such disorder, had tried to
[688] provide against it in the Code Rural by giving summary powers to local judges to inflict penalties upon lazy or malingering workers. Quite aside, however, from the loss of time and the inconvenience to both parties in going constantly to a judge for his decision, the proprietor was afraid to act on this principle to any extent, since if he did so he might lose his laborers altogether.

175 It was a rare proprietor, then, who could hope to make much of a
473 fortune out of his plantation. More and more the landowners, having
427 subdivided their fields, grew lax in overseeing them. The workers,
24 freed from constant supervision, accustomed by long habit to living
466 in one hut, and unconsciously developing a mentality which made
425 them feel, as did American squatters on frontier lands, that they had a right to the land they tilled, imperceptibly developed into peasants.
178 The state's remaining properties, no longer under cultivation, were invaded by families of small farmers, and the government took no steps to oust them or send them back to privately owned plantations. The estates of individual aristocrats underwent the same fate if not
[625] carefully watched. Theoretically, it was the duty of the army to drive out squatters, to force laborers back into "proper" agricultural work; but the army consisted of peasant youths who would not turn against people of their own group.

671 Legal irregularity was gradually sanctioned by the passage of
178 time, usage being a stronger guarantor of rights than unenforced laws on the statute books.

880 Haitian peasantry, to sum up, began as the unplanned, undesired

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unplanned, unobserved

Haitian peasantry, to sum up, began as the result of two policies intended to achieve ends quite different; first, presidential gifts of land, the chief purpose of which had been to pay the soldiers of the republic; and second, the crop-sharing system adopted by landlords after the failure of Boyer's Code. 175 421 24 463 175

6. *The Drawing of Caste Lines* (1820–1843)

Almost every major presidential aim of Boyer came to grief. His tranquil quarter-century rule, the unified island, the financial surplus with which his presidency began, the peace with France after 1825—all these advantages combined with his good intentions did not save his projects from shipwreck. Near the beginning of his régime he announced that, like his revered predecessor Pétion, he felt the safety of Haiti to lie in the abolition of all color distinctions and prejudices. Just as his great Code Rural proved a complete failure, however, so did his efforts to do away with the color line. On the contrary, it was during Boyer's time that class distinctions became fixed, in large part although not wholly, on the basis of color. 175 171 565

Stating that the policy of his government was to put an end, as far as possible, to jealousies of caste, he consistently for a few years promoted a black every time a promotion had been given to a mulatto or other light-skinned person. This procedure soon met an insuperable obstacle. Government posts in general required literacy, and only a very small number of blacks were educated, so that the supply of Negroes was not sufficient to furnish him with candidates. Since one of the few roads to lucrative success lay in official positions, ambitious young colored men sought eagerly for government office, and Boyer soon had no alternative but to advance men of his own complexion. In the army, on the other hand, literacy was not necessary for promotion. Ambitious Negro youths, therefore, frequently chose this career which, while not very profitable in monetary rewards, at least gave a man a certain social status and economic security. 175 647 563 212 555 175 701 555 563

Because of the state of education in the republic, consequently, an ugly situation developed, with the civil arm of government almost wholly in control of the colored element and the military force dominated by blacks. Fortunately for the country no crisis developed during the 1820's and 1830's which made an open breach between army and state. 175 647 701 [563]

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Next to the agricultural system, the state of education in the republic probably had as much to do as anything with fixing the caste system upon Haiti. So long as the mass of people were not only black but illiterate as well, they would have no means of reaching a social status beyond the one in which they existed. Certainly the aspiring Negroes would not wish to enlighten them, for to stir up the whole people would destroy the very possibility of distinction. As W. S. Gilbert puts it, "When everyone is somebody, then no one's anybody." Public education, consequently, hardly advanced a step during Boyer's twenty-five years. It had had a feeble enough beginning under Pétion and remained, as it had been, a prerogative of the well-to-do.[58] 175 871 563 564 178

Under the complaisant rule of Boyer, accordingly, the people of color came to regard themselves as the unquestioned élite. Their claim was shared, though not always acknowledged, by a small number of blacks (mostly from the North) who had been anciens libres in colonial Saint-Domingue or noblemen under Christophe; who were literate, or whose wealth and ambition attracted attention. Boyer's boast that "all the feelings and prejudices, either of olden times or of national origin, have been superseded by an intense patriotism" was pure buncombe, as he certainly knew.

If only the best brains of the colored group had been content to serve the government, Haiti might have profited from her situation; but lesser government offices were merely springboards for foreign trade in coffee and mahogany, or for the manipulation of business deals. Not "intense patriotism," as Boyer liked to think, but financial gain was the motivating force of the élite, as it had been from colonial times. The man who could amass a modest fortune, so that his children might be educated and their security assured, had done his duty, and he would have been regarded as quixotic to renounce business opportunities for the dubious honor of minor political office. As a consequence of this natural search for gain, the government during Boyer's administration became less and less efficient. Relatives of élite businessmen were given posts because the President could not afford to offend important families. These minor officials then performed their duties awkwardly, or neglected them, in "the unfailing obliquity of dullness." 175 555 662 661 178 [647]

Skin color became the obsession of high society. Those who had no other merit of which to boast could still revel in their complex- 175 563 564

58. See chap. XVI.

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175 ions. Intermarriages between persons of widely different color
563 became extremely rare, being regarded by many lighter Haitians
564 with actual disgust. Everyone with social pretensions wanted to be
whiter. Dr. Brown stated it baldly: "The pure negro seeks to ally
[19] himself to the griffe,[59] the griffe to the mulatto, the mulatto to the quateroon, the latter to a mustif, and the mustif, having but an untraceable tinge of African blood in his organization, is uproariously indignant if he is accused of having any at all."[60] An educated young black of several generations of free parents was scornfully turned down by a lighter-skinned woman considerably his inferior in breeding and wealth because her children would be darker than herself—"*petits enfants griffes*," as she put it. The prejudices of colored people against blacks was almost as great, if not quite as intense, as the former prejudice of whites against colored people in colonial times. No one forgot that there had been black as well as colored freedmen in the colony; but it was much simpler for people of color to claim their long career as élite than for blacks to do so.

The attitude of upper-class Haitians toward whites in the midst of all this color prejudice was an interesting mixture. On the one hand, all good Haitians professed to dread a return of the whites; on the other, they welcomed white businessmen in the country. In a certain respect the whites were regarded much as were the Jews of Europe
[673] in the Middle Ages: they were wealthy—and therefore legitimate
objects of pillage, necessary evils for the sake of finance. Theft from a
[671] white man by government action was a service to the state. Laws
[641] were consequently varied from time to time with the sole purpose of profiting from a foreigner's position. True, the trader might protest
[423] to his home government, but if England or the United States took a strong stand, Haiti could always retreat; if those governments did not stand firm, Haiti had gained. In the Haitian courts the whites had little show, for Article 38 of the Constitution forbade them to own real estate or to become citizens; they might not even hold a lease for more than ten years; and they might not marry Haitian women.

Nevertheless, the analogy with mediaeval Jews falls down at one vital point: whites were not viewed with contempt. Quite the con-

[192] 59. A term denoting three parts in four of Negro blood. This term as well as "mustif" goes back to colonial white society; neither was, or is, used by cultivated Haitians.

60. Brown, *op. cit.*, II, 283–284.

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175 563 565 [701] [669] an ineffective government, momentarily in the hands of colored élite. Attempting to dominate politics was a numerically small group of colored people and a still smaller group of Negroes. Although prevailingly black, the army might be, and in the later nineteenth century was continually, used by whichever group offered more. A third power, a middle class, might have balanced these antagonistic factions. Lacking such a moderating influence, Haiti was the victim of recurrent revolutionary movements.

175 178 642 643 At the time of Boyer, actual democracy would have been no safeguard, for it would have meant the supremacy of ignorance. His rule was the beginning of unfortunate days for Haiti. After the auspicious opening years, the President became an impotent onlooker as his country declined. It is instructive to compare the Haiti of Dessalines and Christophe with the Haiti of 1843, only one generation later.[60]

175 178 642 433 466 The Haiti of 1806 had been a beehive of activity. Soldiers, foremen, and policemen then stood over the workers with lianes to force them to labor for the benefit of their state. Production was carefully planned, an ordered hierarchy making every person in the country responsible to another higher than himself until the ruler was reached at the pinnacle. The cardinal fault of any laborer was to shirk at his task. The year 1843, on the contrary, found Haiti in a condition of quiescence which, to those who remembered the old days, resembled torpor. The central government had ceased to drive its citizens, and its half-hearted attempts at persuasion were futile. Overseers, drivers of gangs of workers, soldiers whose duty it was to enforce labor, had disappeared from the scene. Every man was his own master.

175 178 511 The standard of living in 1806 as in 1843 was low; but in the earlier year there had been a promise of great things to come once Haiti had rebuilt what war had destroyed. The succeeding years, however, failed to inculcate into the people a desire for any higher standard of life. Country dwellers were benighted; ignorance deepened the habit

[162] [175] 60. Haiti has never had an accurate census, so that it is impossible even to estimate the total population of the country either in 1806 or in 1843. The figures of 380,000 and 800,000 given by some authors for the two years are mere guesses. Likewise, one can only deduce the proportion of people in the main economic and social categories; probably seventy-five per cent of the Haitians were serfs in 1806 and the same percentage peasants in 1843; the "aristocracy," including all who did not derive a living by manual labor or army service, could hardly have reached five per cent in either year; the army, house servants, day laborers in the towns, and petty businessmen would make up the other twenty per cent.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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of living only for the day by making people content with a low level of physical existence. Haitian peasants were isolated from the rest of the world; and one who has no standard of comparison rarely has the incentive to improve his living conditions. 175 178 511

Production declined between 1806 and 1843 both in quantity and in quality. Sugar, the staple of colonial trade and still an important export under Christophe, disappeared from the market figures altogether under Boyer. Most of the cane which was raised was worked into syrup and then into tafia (raw rum) for local consumption. Careful attention and the well-ordered machinery necessary for sugar manufacture were both lacking in 1843. Sugar cane was almost never newly planted, but simply lasted on from French days; what plants there were had little attention: they were not manured, or ploughed, or stripped of their dead leaves. Everything was left to nature. The production of coffee in actual number of pounds stood up well, although the quality fell off through lack of cultivation; the price in world markets steadily declined, however, so that the crop of 1843 brought in only twelve million francs as compared with twenty million for the smaller crop of 1822.[63] 175 178 433 257 249 245 439

Practically every acre of the fertile soil of Haiti was cultivated in 1806, the methods steadily improving under Christophe. Irrigation projects were then being developed to replace those destroyed in the wars, and a measure of experimentation went on with new crops and fertilizers. In 1843, however, what was called a coffee "plantation" was actually only a large tract of land on which coffee trees grew wild. There was no laying out of the lands nor any improvement of the soil or pruning of the trees to strengthen the parent stem. Until the berries were ready to be picked the coffee tree was rarely touched, except when pigs scratched their backs on it, or goats and donkeys cropped the grass around it. Cotton likewise received little cultivation. Cocoa raising practically ceased altogether, for it required intelligent management. 175 178 24 433

Haiti under Dessalines still had many buildings of French con- 250

63. The state figures for 1843 revealed only four money crops, no one of which was so productive of income as sugar had been. In the comparative tables given below it must be remembered that prices declined between 1822 and 1843. [433]

	5-Year Average, 1822–26	1843
Coffee	34,000,000 pounds	35,000,000 pounds
Cotton	678,000 "	2,000,000 "
Campêche	5,600 "	30,000,000 "
Acajou	2,460,000 feet	6,000,000 feet

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Haiti under Dessalines still had many building of French con-

175 struction, both plantation mansions and slave quarters. With forced
178 labor available these had been kept in a measure of repair. Christophe,
331 not content with leftovers from colonial days, had sponsored architectural activity all over his kingdom; if his citadel is the most noteworthy example, there are also to his credit lesser palaces and government warehouses. Almost no building was done by Pétion and Boyer, however, and by the 1840's the constructions of the French
[731] had fallen into serious disrepair. Severe earthquakes and fires quickly ruined what time had already weakened. By the middle of the century one saw, instead of trim slave quarters near great mansions, a few straggling towns of one-story houses, the hillsides dotted with ramshackle huts, and the plains with daubed shacks.

175 From great estates to tiny plots; from carefully tilled fields to
178 small gardens in a wilderness; from financial prosperity to debt;
181 from directed enterprise to sloth; from an attitude of hopeful de-
433 termination to one of tolerance for things as they are—these are the striking contrasts of the two periods. It could hardly have been imagined in Christophe's day that the smart, disciplined Dahomet would be succeeded by casual ragamuffins who dozed on their tilted chairs while on sentry duty. Christophe had liked his subjects to be well dressed, and insisted on it; but the British consul in Boyer's time wrote that "the laborers are, generally speaking, nearly naked; in fact, adults only wearing what is barely necessary to prevent indecent exposure, while the children of both sexes run about without covering of any kind."[64]

175 It was the parceling of landed estates combined with the disap-
178 pearance of forced labor which initiated the transition from serfdom
433 to peasantry. Personalities as dynamic as Christophe's or as brutal as
[460] Dessalines' would have been required to keep the people in a servile
[483] condition in a land of tropical fertility. Contemporary foreign judg-
[461] ment was almost unanimous in placing the blame for declining
[164] prosperity upon indolence (the word is continually repeated, generally preceded by the adjective "natural"). It may be noted in passing that no one at the time seems to have realized how widespread were the debilitating diseases of hookworm and malaria, which can make apparently husky men prefer rest to work. Responsibility for economic failure rests as much upon the governing class,

64. Charles Mackenzie, *Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti* (1829), p. 86.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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however, as on the masses. Nothing was done to educate the people and so inculcate in them the desire for a higher standard of living. Where food is easily got, the government gentle, and the people ignorant, one hardly looks for progress.

Foreigners who knew Haiti were prophesying doom through most of Boyer's administration. The British consul was the most vocal of these prophets. He toured the whole republic in 1828 and found only local variations on a sorry state of affairs. At Jacmel he reported a parceling of the land, a decline of plantations, and a horror of corporal punishment by the people; it seemed to surprise him that every blow given a worker was returned in kind. In the arrondissements of Saint-Marc and Gonaïves cotton continued to be the chief crop as it had been in French days but quantity and quality had declined. At Petite-Rivière relative prosperity prevailed because the lands there were under the control of a former lieutenant of Christophe, who managed to apply that king's stern discipline to his workers. From Gonaïves to Cap Nicolas Môle cultivation was at a low ebb; near Cap-Haïtien everything agricultural was in ruins.[65]

Industry and discipline, the two commonest characteristics of the Haiti of Christophe, were precisely those most notably absent from the Negro masses of 1843. Obedience had given way to independence of behavior. A visitor in 1842 describes the actual condition of a plantation in the arrondissement of Furcy. Where formerly thirty-two families had toiled industriously, under strict overseers who were free to inflict physical punishment upon laggards, now only twelve families remained, the rest having become "freeholders." These twelve had a crop-sharing agreement with the owner of the estate whereby they received the income from half the 10,000 pounds of coffee yielded by the land; but also they

> appropriate to themselves almost the whole of the provisions which the land furnishes, sending down only a few of the rarer vegetables, beans, peas, and artichokes, to their master, for his table at Port-au-Prince, and supplying his need when he comes to reside for a few days in the country. This he knows very well, but has no alternative but to bear it quietly.[66]

65. See particularly *ibid.*, pp. 94, 103–105. The consul clearly felt that the only hope of salvation in Haiti was a reintroduction of some sort of coercion such as that used by Dessalines and Christophe.

66. Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

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[p. 88]

IV

CASTE LINES BECOME PERMANENT

175 178 THE contrast between the golden days of forced labor and the stagnating mediocrity of Boyer's Haiti was as vivid to thinking Haitian aristocrats as it was to foreign whites. Particularly the young "intellectuals" of the 'thirties who knew something of the progress taking place in the rest of the Western World felt that the time had come to stem the wave of economic disintegration at home. In a series of pronouncements they pointed out that the advancement of Haiti had "been constantly slowed up for some time. . . . Haiti is stationary, is retrograde: we need no other proof of it than this frightful uncertainty about the future which so deeply disturbs all serious minds and sincere patriots." One may discount the phrase 175 668 about "sincere patriots," for peasants were patriots even though undisturbed by the economic stagnation. The agitation for reform won a wide following among all the élite who cherished a glowing recollection of earlier days.

Leaders of the young men called upon Boyer in 1838 to introduce stronger methods of forced labor; but Boyer, remembering the fate of his Code Rural in which he had tried to do precisely this, could think of no effective way of tinkering again with the economic system. From the young men he received the most contradictory advice as to specific methods. The result of the appeal was therefore merely continued inaction by the government. The agitators, ex- 175 cellent critics if poor reformers, accordingly persisted in their cam- 668 paign, adding new converts to their cause until the movement pro- 669 duced a crisis. Revolution broke out in January 1843 at Torbeck in the South, and rapidly spread toward the capital; within two months 643 Boyer and his faithful secretary-general, Inginac, had departed for exile.[1]

[643] [159] 1. Boyer went first to Jamaica, and then to Paris. In the latter capital King Louis-Philippe gave him an audience and called him "prince." Boyer replied, "Sire, I am no prince. I have merely been the head of a small republic." The King of France thereupon affectionately pressed Boyer's hand, remarking, "When one has governed a million people for twenty-five years, he is raised to the rank of princes." . . . Boyer died in Paris in 1850.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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"empire" tottered to economic ruin. Graft, default on the debt, 175
increasing deficits, and debased currency were the order of the day, 643
and so continued until 1859, when the accumulation of anger over 652
the useless wars and the humiliating defeats made the Emperor so 669
unpopular that a new and more carefully planned revolution accomplished his downfall.

Fifteen years of administration by Negro rulers had broken the 175
political power of the cobred élite. Only three light-skinned men 643
became president thereafer until the occupation of Haiti by the 178
American Marines in 1915; in the seventy-two years following 564
Boyer's downfall, mulatoes ruled during only eight. The army under a black general ws too powerful, a colored president too hampered by suspicion, tomake the political game worth the candle. The colored élite, therefore, adapted themselves to existing conditions as best they could, ontrolling the business life of Haiti, filling the law offices and, because of their literacy, the secretaryships of state, and indulging in honorific cultural pursuits.

In the years after Souloque the basic realities of Haitian life were 175
changed hardly at all by shifting political administrations. Some of the 643
presidents were mildly progressive, many were indifferent; still more 66
were actually harmful; bu the lives of the mass of peasants were not often touched by presiderial vagaries. Politics was an affair almost wholly of townspeople, of the army, the élite, and the pseudo-élite. Revolutions, counterrevolutions, movements of reform, international tangles, financial woes, and most of the other complications to which unstable states are heir, absorbed the attention of rulers and upper-class folk who were politically inclined.

Constitutions were made by presidents and changed by their suc- 175
cessors; the Senate passed contradictory laws in the same session if 642
the chief executive so recommended; the courts were presided over 671
by the president's men. Haitian law in the latter half of the nineteenth 692
century was what the president's immediate strength and wish made it—or else it was folk custom, undisturbed by the rulers.

Never once, in the three quarters of a century after Boyer's time, 175
did Haiti approach the high standard of production known in 178
colonial days or in the early years of independence. The pattern of 433
Haitian social and economic life became fixed in this seventy-five 565
years. Haiti became a country of small-scale tillage by a peasant 439
population, with only enough external trade to provide moderate

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fortunes, that is, a few thousands of dollars, for a small number of élite, and to make the presidency a position economically rewarding enough to justify revolutionary conspiracies. The growth of a peasantry set in train during the long régime of Boyer continued, unbroken even by the numerous insurrections, until fixed in the mores. Land owned by the countryfolk was divided and redivided among their heirs, so that even holdings of moderate size became smaller.

Not one of the twenty-two rulers following Boyer made the slightest effort to return the country to the forced labor system of Dessalines and Christophe. They seemed to recognize the inevitability of a peasant way of life, or at least the impossibility of luring the people back to directed labor after a long experience of freedom. On the contrary, several presidents still further parceled the land.

President Guerrier, for example, the very year after Boyer was deposed, put on sale at moderate prices those state lands in the North not reserved for public use.[5] If the revolutionaries of 1843 had hoped to bring back Christophe's system of forced labor, their hopes were doomed to disappointment because of the state's need of immediate income. Christophe's state land areas were now broken up in the one part of the country where a few large plantations still existed.

President Geffrard in 1862 gave his blessing to small ownership, the basis of peasantry. Whereas Pétion's laws had prohibited sales of land in parcels less than fifteen acres, Geffrard's law regularized the leasing and sale of national property in lots of fifteen acres *at most*. Geffrard was the first president openly to admit that many government lands had been lost to citizens by squatting. In an endeavor to give legality to land held by squatters' rights, his law demanded that squatters register their claims, announcing that within a short time there would be no further dismemberment of the national patrimony except by grants and sales.[6] Few registrations were made, however, for the Haitian peasant had already acquired a suspicion of legal documents he could not read or understand, and he could see no reason for legalizing a status in which, with the squatter's tenacity and inertia, he already felt himself secure.

Haiti was in constant financial straits. Money had to be borrowed

5. By a law of September 23, 1844.
6. Law of August 14, 1862. The articles cited here are 2 and 4.

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to attempt to retrace the path of property evolution, which has steadily taken its own course since the time of Pétion.[11] 175 423

With the peasants prevailingly satisfied in their daily round of life, the separation of upper and lower castes in Haitian society has gradually become an accepted fact. At least ninety per cent of the total population now belong to the peasant group, whose members are as much reconciled to their status as in the United States the poorest colored folk to theirs. Vaguely they may often wish they had the privileges and luxuries of those above them; often, likewise, they feel resentment at the way in which they are treated; but in so far as it is permissible to generalize about two million people, it is fair to say that the Haitian peasant rarely complains of his lot. 565 [162]

Of the remaining ten per cent of the population a small fraction look upon themselves as élite. Some families of this group can be traced back to colonial times when their ancestors were already affranchis; others began to take on aristocracy under Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, and Boyer. Those whose forebears have become élite only since 1843 are less firmly entrenched in the topmost class. However, since no president since Boyer has ever succeeded in weakening caste lines, the élite one or two per cent may be said to constitute a stable social group. [178]

It is significant that although the blacks had the government in their hands for three quarters of a century they were unable to effect any slight change either in caste membership or in caste lines.

The part of the population which is neither élite nor peasant is not "middle class," as that term is understood in the Western World. It is rather a shifting percentage of Haitians whose one prevailing characteristic is their residence in towns. Some are wage earners, some small tradesmen; some are ex-élite on the way down the 565 368

11. The intimate observer of the Haitian peasant never fails to comment upon his love of the land. Whereas the colonial planter attached a value to his estate because it produced wealth, the peasant loves his little plot because it is his home. Through all the sixteen successive constitutions of Haiti, the one unchangeable article has been the prohibition of sale to foreigners of real estate in the country. Haitian land is for Haitian people—or was so until after the American Occupation. Likewise, the peasant is suspicious of any law which seems likely to reintroduce the system of large properties, for these might condemn him to leave his land and work at wages for the benefit of a master who, whether kindly or pitiless, would still deprive him of his present liberty. Therefore the Haitian countryman defends with all his force this soil to which his liberty attaches him, and which he cultivates after his own manner. "The Haitian loves his land almost as a man loves his woman." [181] [421] [425] [423] [24]

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However, as regards caste itself we can now see that after a hundred years practically nothing has changed, even through the Occupation. In the essential structure of the Haitian social system there is still a twofold division. In the mind of élite persons the peasant exists only as a very necessary but essentially stupid part of the country's economic life. The casual visitor who, after two weeks in Port-au-Prince and its environs, has met a few distinguished Haitians, has already sensed the barriers of caste which exist between élite and the lower orders. If the sojourner remains longer and is accepted into the drawing rooms of the élite, he will hear exciting and brilliant discussions of such questions as whether Haitian civilization has in it anything of the African,[6] whether it might not be wise for Haiti to throw over both French and Créole and adopt a new language, and whether the people of the North are not superior to those of the South;[7] however, no self-satisfied member of the élite, in an expan-

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6. See, for example, the article by Lorimer Denis and Dr. François Duvalier, "La Civilisation haïtienne: notre mentalité est-elle africaine ou gallo-latine?" in *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti*, VII, No. 23 (May, 1936), pp. 1–31. Anthony Froude, in his *English in the West Indies* (New York, 1888), tells of an American consul asking a Haitian why the island was not cultivated more intensely. "The dusky soldier laid his hand upon his breast and waved his hand. 'Ah!' he said, 'that might do for English or Germans or Franks; we of the Latin race have higher things to occupy us!'"

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7. This last sentiment was noted by Sir Spenser St. John (*Hayti, or the Black Republic* [London, 1889], p. 14), who calls it a popular idea at the time he wrote and for years before, the élite of the North explaining it by the tradition of industry instilled during Christophe's reign. But Moreau de Saint-Méry had already pointed out that in colonial times there was greater fertility, more abundant rain, more intelligence in management of plantations, more slaves, more distinction and polish among the masters, in the North than in the South. Auguste Magloire (in *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social*, p. 263) thinks the North infinitely superior to the South; it did not participate in the violence of political change in the early days, yet when it did intervene it took the lead. He stated however that the North seemed to be losing its social superiority, and certainly its economic superiority, because of its cultural subordination to France: this made French ideas prevail, and one of the chief French ideas is that political power is supremely important; the North consequently came to seek political superiority when it should have preserved cultural and social preëminence. Paulème Sannon, on the other hand (*Essai historique sur la Révolution de 1843* [Aux Cayes, 1905], pp. 5–9), regards the South as considerably more advanced intellectually. It has never, he says, been able to submit to the absolutist yoke of government, not because of the French influence, for the South was least developed under the colonial régime, but because of its geographical situation, with its long broken coast line, its ports, cities, tribunals, customs-houses, schools, and the like. Those who have outside connections are always more open minded and progressive, he says, than inhabitants of the interior. There is no important town in the South which is not on the sea. Nowhere were the affranchis more numerous or richer than in the South, and these men led the revolution. (See Beauvais Ardouin, *Études sur l'histoire d'Haïti* [Port-au-Prince, 1853–60], I, 97.) All these influences made for a democratic spirit, but also for one of agitation.

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sive mood, will speak of the peasant and his contributions to Haiti; he thinks only in terms of his own caste.[8] Upper-class Haitians dread the sight of tourists taking pictures of native scenes, fearing that the travelers will return to their own country and label these pictures, "Typical Haitian Scenes," when, as anyone should know, typical Haiti is upper-class Haiti.[9]

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The American Occupation failed of many of its ends because it did not recognize the social situation and its implications; or, realizing them, did not consider them worthy of attention. Roads, telephones, mail service, and improved agricultural methods seemed patently desirable to progressive Americans; to install them for the Haitians seemed generously wise. Yet many well-meant efforts came to grief, for the mass of people, lacking a tradition of orderly free government, did not always understand what the Americans were about, while the élite saw in the activities of the Marines a threat to their own dominance as rulers of the country.[10]

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The antiquated, but prevalent, notion of the superior mentality of the white race also flourishes in certain quarters among the élite. Many of them say that the Negro can never originate a civilization, and that with the best of education he remains an inferior man, utterly unfitted for government, utterly incapable of making progress.

8. Witness Marthe Oulié's paragraph (*Les Antilles, filles de France* [Paris, 1935], p. 254): "My amiable host (a member of the élite) was triumphant at my surprise and enchantment. 'You did not expect to find a civilized country. What have the spiteful wits told you? That the Haitians worshipped serpents and made human sacrifices? [illegible] the cities you will find many families like ours, cultivated in letters and music, careful and proud of their French culture, and absolutely set against American de-civilization.'"

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9. "Should you like a European to take pictures of the slums of your American cities and of the most degraded of your share-croppers, and then circulate these photographs as typical American scenes?" asked one sensitive Haitian.

10. See the *Report of the Forbes Commission to Haiti*, 1930, pp. 18–19. "Illiteracy keeps the peasant masses politically inarticulate, except in case of mobs or bandit gangs, which formerly infested the countryside and often furnished the forces of revolution. These bandit gangs have been broken up and have disappeared under American rule, but the social forces that created them still remain—poverty, ignorance, and the lack of a tradition or desire for orderly free government. It has been the aim of the American Occupation to try to broaden the base of the articulate proletariat and thus make for a sounder democracy and ultimately provide for a more representative government in Haiti. Hence its work in education, in sanitation, in agencies of communication such as roads, telephones, telegraph lines, and regular mail routes. These things naturally are deemed of secondary importance by the Elite, who see in the rise of a middle class a threat to the continuation of their own leadership."

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In most countries in which Westerners are familiar, social distinctions take the form of classes, which are to a greater or less degree mutable. In Haiti, as we have repeatedly indicated, the distinctions are so rigid that *caste* is the only properly descriptive term. There is hardly a Haitian who would not be able to state immediately whether he or any person he knew was, or was not, élite. So it has been with steady persistence ever since Dessalines and Christophe gave way to Pétion and Boyer. Élite youth marries élite girl, and the folkways of the group are passed on from parent to children, thus perpetuating the distinctions. In the pages which follow, all the marks of separation of castes will be examined: religion, economic occupation, marriage, language, manners, and the rest. 565 178

Certain aspects of the classic example of the caste system, seen in India, are lacking in Haiti. Religion, for instance, does not require caste endogamy, nor does civil law implicitly acknowledge caste lines by reference to the rights of people of a certain occupation. Custom does more than religion and law could, however, to enforce conformity to the understood rules. Probably the most open efforts to enact caste lines into law were the pronouncements of Dessalines and Christophe that all but a few people should be bound to the soil; and Boyer's Code Rural—a feeble echo of days gone by. The two black rulers were able to enforce the distinctions they made; but when they died their feudal arrangements lapsed, while the separation of classes continued. With the recurrence of revolutions after 1843 it behooved the élite, when occasionally they were in authority, not to lay themselves open to fresh attack upon grounds of aristocratic presumption, for they never knew when they might need the support of the masses. Any black revolutionary leader would have been able to turn an enacted caste law to his own ends, even if a Senate consisting predominantly of light-colored men had had the power to enact such a law. Time and inertia won the battle for the élite. By not joining issue with the masses at any definite point, the aristocrats gained their end of caste distinction, for they were willing to endure the self-discipline necessary to the maintenance of social standards, as the masses were not. [564] [170]

Just as in colonial days the ambition of the well-to-do freedman was to go to France for his education and his holidays, so in free Haiti the lure of France has continued to be strong for the aristocrat. There is not a trace of animosity against the country which enslaved the Negroes, and which in 1802–3 tried by trickery to take away the 565 484 177 186

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VI

ROMAN CATHOLICISM

1. *French Colonial Backgrounds*

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WHEN France was first establishing a foothold in the New World, religion was one of the consuming passions of the French people. Priests accompanied early explorers, missionaries consecrated their lives to conversion of the Indians; monks, nuns, and parish priests were a vital part of the pioneer settlements of New France. Every family in the mother country hoped that at least one of its sons would devote himself to the service of the Church. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were, par excellence, missionary centuries.

By the time the colony of Saint-Domingue was acquired, however, this religious zeal was on the wane, and just when the colony was becoming prosperous and populous France was entering the phase of her history known as The Enlightenment. Although the growth of the colony is impressive from many points of view, religion is not one of them, for planters intent upon money-making and luxurious living in an exploitative tropical colony gave little energy to spiritual development.[1] The Roman Catholic Church, being the official church of France, was naturally the only important religious organization of the colony; the congregations authorized to send clergy to Saint-Domingue—Carmelites, Capuchins, Dominicans, and Jesuits—divided the territory and work between them. [792]

No doubt the fathers did some assiduous work. Official historians of the Roman Church in Haiti give the definite impression that their task was arduous and not very rewarding.[2] The torrid heat, diseases (especially yellow fever), the long distances and poor means of transportation were discouraging enough; until the middle of the eighteenth century there was the added difficulty of the poor human

1. It is revealing to see what characteristics of the culture of their mother country colonists bring with them to a new region. French Canadians, in contrast to French colonists in Saint-Domingue, kept many more customs of old France. See J. G. Leyburn, *Frontier Folkways* (New Haven, 1935), pp. 54–57. [114] [111] [176]

2. A good account of the inertia of religious life in colonial Saint-Domingue is given in P. A. Cabon, *Notes sur l'histoire religieuse d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1933), chap. I. [114]

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to appoint, curés to the vacant parishes. His independence of action could not fail to give offense to Church authorities. One of his first appointees was a black ex-slave, Félix, who had been a drum major in the native army. Félix was made curé in the important town of Saint-Marc.

The constitution of his empire (May, 1805) indicates that Dessalines did not intend to make himself head of the Church, but rather planned a complete separation of Church and State. Article 50 reads: "The law admits no dominant religion"; while the next article grants freedom to all cults and refuses state support to any denomination or minister. No attack was made, therefore, upon Catholicism, yet the disestablishment of that Church was a serious blow to its prestige. Not in the specific provisions regarding religion was the Church most weakened, but rather in the "liberality" of articles dealing with actions upon which the Church had taken a firm moral stand. Thus Article 14 declared that "marriage is an act purely civil and authorized by the government," while Article 15 permits divorce by the state. Early laws of the empire still further undermined the position of Church doctrine. Illegitimate children were granted the same legal rights as legitimate ones—a generous provision which removed one of the strong reasons for marriage; separation of husband and wife except by divorce was forbidden, and this prohibition practically encouraged the divorce disapproved by the Church; finally, the grounds upon which divorce might be allowed were broader than those existing anywhere else in the Western World at the time: mutual consent, application from one party to the marriage, or simple allegation of incompatibility of temperament or character.

From the promulgation of this constitution in 1805 and for the next fifty-five years, Haiti was in open schism from the Roman Catholic Church. The Holy See refused to recognize either the Haitian state or the provisions of its constitution, and it declined to allow priests to enter the country. Certain Haitian presidents were friendly enough to Catholicism, and others were openly desirous of reestablishing a state religion, but the breach once made was not healed by mere good wishes. The longer the schism endured, the farther the people grew away from the doctrines and practices of a religion in which they had never been firmly grounded. At the moment of independence, when all minds were more open to new

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ideas than in later years, the habits of regular attention to religious duties might have been fixed; by 1860 it was too late. Religion existed during those years, but it was a strange gallimaufry of Catholicism and folk belief.

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On the whole, the rulers of young Haiti were tolerant of the Catholic Church even to the point of advancing its interests, in so far as these might benefit the state. Their pronouncements and actions, nevertheless, were not those of ardent personal believers. Pétion's constitution of the republic in 1806 once more established Catholicism as the official Church. What it gave with one hand, however, it took away with the other. Thus:

> *Art.* 35. The Catholic, apostolic, and Roman religion being that of all Haitians, is the religion of the state. It and its ministers will be protected.
>
> *Art.* 36. The law assigns to each minister of that religion the extent of his spiritual administration. These ministers may not, under any pretext, form a body within the state.
>
> *Art.* 37. If in the course of time other religions are introduced, no person shall be hindered, so long as he conforms to the laws, in following the cult he has chosen.

The Catholic, then, is the state religion, but only because the Haitians have heretofore been nominal Catholics. It occupies a position of practical fact which it would lose if by the introduction of other cults Haitians should be drawn away from it. Its ministers will be carefully watched to see that they do not, as a group, try to exert political pressure. And what freedom of action is possible to a church whose ecclesiastical parishes can be limited or extended in size by the civil legislature?

Pétion no more fought religion than he fought any other conventional institution approved by civilized people; but he did little to foster it. He received certain Wesleyan missionaries with considerable hospitality, remarking that "education increases the dignity of mankind." He appeased the good Catholics by repealing the law concerning the rights of illegitimate children, substituting for it a more moderate French rule.[4] Likewise, he invited the Catholic Church to participate in the education of Haitian youth.

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4. The French practice allowed an illegitimate child recognized before a wedding equal rights of inheritance with legitimate offspring, while giving only quarter rights to a child recognized after marriage.

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175 567 along that river, Dahomey was the name of a powerful kingdom under a political administration which embraced a fair amount of interchange of ideas and similarity of social institutions, including religion.

175 567 178 Discretion made the planters separate slaves who knew each other, in order to minimize opportunities for revolt among them. This policy, although it prevented the rapid growth of "slave" customs, at the same time dispersed Dahomeans all over the colony; beliefs and practices held in common among the slaves were likely to take on a Dahomean cast. Since their work was directed, their freedom of movement limited, and their family life broken up, there was practically no opportunity for the outcropping of *any* African ideas relating to economic life, government, property, education, or 175 marriage. The one sphere in which it was possible for Old World 178 beliefs to continue was the religious. No slave dealer could penetrate 796 the minds of his workers or silence their folk tales and folk songs in 771 the evening when work was done; even the strictest plantation 535 owners allowed dances in the slave quarters on Saturday nights and Sunday. It is the dance, a vital part of Dahomean religion, which seems to have formed the nucleus around which the diverse beliefs of African tribesmen grouped themselves, for it was a form of action which need not involve anything more than amusement or emotional release, if the participant were not religiously inclined. In the beginning, as Goethe observes, was the Act. To this simple Act of dancing, the Word, with thought behind it, could easily be added later. Practically all African tribesmen danced; and the numerous Dahomeans had a dance which was essentially for diversion but could be turned to a religious purpose as well.

771 171 174 *Here, then, was the skeleton of a slave religion.* Although every single African tribe had its own beliefs and ritual, each (so far as we know) had common elements with every other one. For example, all slaves, whether Senegalese or Angolese, believed in a multiplicity of spiritual beings, some of whom controlled the aspects of nature—lightning and storms, the sea, the sky. They thought that disease and other ill fortune came from spirits who must be placated in order to win back health and well-being. All felt that the normal course of events could be altered by magical spells, formulas, or charms; that one could bring misfortune to an enemy, luck to oneself, or ward off otherwise inevitable fate. Most of them had been accustomed to

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for Vodun theology, nor any established order for the service, 771
variety is one of its chief characteristics. Impossible as it is to cite a definitive list of Vodun beliefs, those most generally held might be combined into a Creed, which would run about as follows:

I believe in scores of gods and spirits, guardians of earth and sky, and of all things visible and invisible;

I believe that all these vodun (who are called "loa" or "mystères") are potent, although less majestic than *le bon Dieu* of the Christians; that some of them came with our ancestors from our former home in Africa, while others we have learned about in our Haitian fatherland; that these loa have power to possess us, their worshipers, informing us by inspiration of their needs and desires, which we must faithfully satisfy; that these loa, like us, are capable of good and evil, gentleness and anger, mercy and revenge;

I believe in the efficacy of sacrifice; in the pleasures of living; in respect due to twins; in the careful cult of the dead, who may return to our abodes; in the spiritual causation of diseases and misfortune; in the dance through which we may be "mounted" by our loa; in the possibility of interfering with the normal flow of events by means of magic; in the efficacy of charms and spells; and in the Holy Catholic Church.

Those who conceive of religion in terms of a rigid orthodoxy, 771
monotheism, sin, a moral law, eternal rewards or punishments, will 177
not understand Haitian Vodun. It is as hospitable to new spiritual 776
conceptions as any faith could be, requiring only that the additions be applicable to life as it is lived in the Haitian hills and valleys, and that they adapt their shape and terminology to the native penchant. Monotheism is rarely the practical belief of simple people, but rather of prophets and scholars. It is easy enough to believe in an all-powerful god but much more difficult to arrive at a conception of a unique God. In Dahomey the people had reached some such stage of belief in omnipotence but not of uniqueness. When later, in slavery, transplanted Africans heard the Catholic doctrine of a god who ruled creation by the fiat of his conquering will, they assimilated the idea with a significant change: the Christian God became the Great Master of the other gods. The slaves very simply placed Him at the head of their pantheon. Even today, the first words of a Vodun [796]
service are the request for permission from the Great Master to go on 114
with the service. As Dorsainvil says: 178

This term chosen to designate the supreme God was imposed on them by 776
their environment. The colonist, the master, incarnated for the slave the

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highest idea of power and action. Logically, he could not conceive of the unique God of the Christians, by analogy and by inspiration, except in terms of the sentiment of fear mingled with the awe which the colonist inspired in him. Once this first step was taken, the rest was only the work of time. In the degree that the holy beings of Catholicism were unfolded to them, the creole Negroes everywhere identified these with the *vodun* (spirits) of the Dahomean cult.[19]

The Christian God could not stop the "deifying" process, for Vodun must have simple spiritual explanations for daily occurrences. How could a god who ruled the earth clutter his mind with such small details as the mango crop or one's private aches? There was room of necessity for more, and lesser, gods.

Orthodoxy and monotheism, then, are alien to Vodun; so likewise are the notions of sin and a moral law. These also are refined ideas. The Catholic priests do their best to instill into the minds of the people the Church doctrine on these points, but gluttony, envy, sloth, and other deadly sins are not easy to explain to a people whose worldly goods are pitifully few, whose bellies are never full, and who must work hard to live at all. Just how the simple Haitian interprets the fulminations of the fathers against sin a foreigner can hardly tell, and the priests are not at liberty to reveal the secrets of the confessional.[20] A peasant loves life. His pleasures are simple enough, partly because he lacks money for expensive ones. Puritanical self-searching is alien to the normal Haitian. The touchstone is infallible: so long as life moves along smoothly one need not worry; if misfortune comes, one of the spirits is angry or out of sorts and his worshipers must propitiate him. What spirit could mind a man's dancing, drinking clairin, watching a cockfight, or otherwise indulging himself?

Vodun does not conceive life to be a struggle between good and evil. Its conception of spirits is anthropomorphic. No man is wholly good or wholly evil, nor is any god; human beings can generally be persuaded into any mood, and so can the gods; as there is variety in human personality, so likewise the gods are not immutable. Some are more to be feared than others, some may be regarded with tender affection, but all are capable of working both weal and woe.

19. Dorsainvil, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

20. A priest once told me that a young Haitian girl in sorrow confessed, as her most heinous sin, that she had given food to a dog. Apparently her idea was that food was too precious to be given away to animals; hence she had sinned.

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it seems not radically to have affected the masses but only the fairly well-to-do.

The *Royal Almanac* for the year 1814 touches proudly upon the moral state of the kingdom. The author of the almanac, the Comte de la Limonade, says: "Great attention is paid to morals and manners. Marriage is honored, protected, and encouraged; no Haitian who is unmarried can fill any place of distinction. Divorce is not permitted." All this was true; yet the mass of Haitians still remained unmarried. Nevertheless, the quotation indicates the extent to which Christophe had gone in his effort to reform marriage and morals among his people; to set them in the European tradition and draw them out of their African and colonial backgrounds.

While Christophe was trying to effect reforms in the North, Pétion was accepting his Southern folk as they were. Hardly a law during his twelve-year administration touches the subject of marriage. The élite colored people continued to make proper legal marriages and so insure the inheritance of their legitimate children. The common folk lived their family lives without weddings, and if property questions arose, custom ruled, backed by public opinion in their little communities.

Such are the backgrounds out of which modern Haitian sex relations have developed. From African tradition came family life, the importance of property to stabilize a union, insignificance of a wedding ceremony, familiarity with matrilineal kinship and descent; from French colonial practice, formal marriage to establish a family with social ambition, casual sex relations for pleasure outside this marriage, the claim of legitimate children to all property (in contrast to folk custom, where few legitimate children were born); from Dessalines, an emphasis upon the African tradition and realism; from Christophe, an insistence upon strict French practice in marriage and in the passage of property.

From among these alternatives Haiti made a choice which is an excellent example of what Keller calls "automatic selection in the mores."[7] There was no congress to select one procedure rather than another. Because Pétion and Boyer followed a *laissez-faire* policy in social matters, the people took the path of least resistance.

7. A. G. Keller, *Societal Evolution* (revised ed., New York, 1931), chaps. IV and V.

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595 spouses. In the hills more than one peasant house was surrounded, as it would have been in Dahomey, by huts in each of which lived a "wife" of the farmer. Matters are not very different nowadays, except that men have learned the wisdom of not having their women live too close to each other.

162 From the guesses of experienced observers, it is probably not far
582 wide of the mark to estimate that only one couple out of a hundred is married according to the approved mode of the Western World.

The State apparently does not care; or, to put it another way, government officials know how impossible it would be to alter a custom confirmed by long usage; one which, moreover, works well enough, since it causes practically no violence or legal cases for the
795 State to attend to. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, is eager
582 to persuade the people to observe the sacrament of holy matrimony. The priests have assiduously endeavored to explore the peasant mind in order to learn what deters the average person from formal marriage. The reasons for the indifference to weddings might be listed as follows:

581 1. Inertia. There is no convincing reason to vary time-honored
178 practice which works well enough, particularly since a wedding is likely to cause a great disturbance of daily routine and even a measure of jealousy on the part of those who have not made the display.

581 2. Suspicion of legal documents and civil officials. People who put
829 their names (or marks) on documents and who call the attention of governmental officials to themselves are almost sure to rue the day. A man knows what can be demanded of him by custom in his informal unions; but who can say what the law would hold him responsible for?

581 3. Expense. The civil license costs; the priest and his assistants
585 must be paid; to be married in church, one should wear shoes; if one wears shoes, one should dress up to them; a church wedding calls for a feast. At least two days must be spent away from work if the proper formalities are carried out.

581 4. Common sense in an inevitable situation. Both State and
595 Church would try to limit a man to one wife; prosperity might demand two or more. Is it sensible to discriminate against a second woman, who might be just as much help to a man as his legal wife?

581 The Church through its priests works unceasingly to answer these
794 arguments, but without notable success. Inertia is hard to overcome;

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476 241 574 [527] day local practice dedicates to work in one's own fields—generally Monday or Tuesday. The prospect of working with one's fellows, of a midday feast with plentiful drink, of singing, talking, and hearing the news, is enough to induce most of the neighbors to come, even though the work will be hard. As with American log-rollings and house-raisings, there is a practical reason for accepting the invitation: by participating in other coumbites a man will be able to invite his neighbors to help him in his own larger tasks. The work is [461] done in rhythm[7] as on Southern road gangs in the United States, with one man specially designated to beat the drum, blow the conch, or sing a topical song, to set the pace. While the men are at work, the women prepare the noonday feast.

114 476 574 174 171 178 241 This typical characteristic of Haitian rural life has been described in detail as it operates near the village of Mirebalais by Prof. Melville J. Herskovits. His contention is that the custom, in general and in detail, derives from Dahomey, West Africa, the home of many of the original slaves.[8] Although his evidence is impressive, there are nevertheless objections to it. Coöperative enterprise for tasks larger than one man can accomplish alone is common in the United States and in parts of Europe and South America, as well as in Africa. It is not an economic device which strikes one as requiring unusual inventiveness, for cases of it are common even where the participants have had no previous experience of it. Further, Dahomean practice could not have been kept up during slave days, nor yet during the régimes of Toussaint, Dessalines, Christophe, and Pétion. (The first three required forced labor under overseers, and landownership by peasants was still rare under Pétion, although a beginning had been made.) In the thirty years from 1790, when the last slaves arrived, until Christophe died in 1820, many old ways were certainly forgotten. Not a single one of the numerous books written by visitors during Boyer's quarter-century, 1818 to 1843, mentions the practice, which certainly must have struck Englishmen, Frenchmen, and Americans if it had been characteristic of the peasant life of the time. If one concludes that the coumbite did not become peasant practice until the mid-nineteenth century, all possibility of contact with Negroes familiar with Dahomean routine has disappeared. What

7. A Haitian poet, Charles F. Fumont, entitles a book of his verses *Au Rythme des coumbites* (Port-au-Prince, 1922).
8. Op. cit., chap. IV.

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114 461 voluntary step towards improving themselves in any one thing. . . . Experiments may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coercion and want will impel the Haytian to labour; and I have my doubts as to the practicability of enforcing labour in Hayti until the people have been better instructed, and their characters become changed. . . . Nature is too generous to the Haytian; he never wants, and so never works for hire, as do free labourers in other countries.[13]

An American, Dr. Jonathan Brown of Philadelphia, in 1837 published a volume which in most respects seems quite dispassionate. He says:

[462] The females are compelled to perform most of the labor. Those of the country employ themselves in cultivating the soil, while the men spend their time in traversing the country on horseback, in drinking, smoking, and other habits equally unprofitable. The females of the town perform all the retail traffic of the country. . . . They derive a subsistence for themselves and for their families.[14]

175 241 208 178 Boyer's secretary of state, Inginac, tried by means of a pamphlet—which few Haitians could have read—to urge the peasants of 1840 to greater activity. He says that although coffee is the chief source of Haitian wealth, although every day small properties have been multiplied, although times are improving, yet the old routines are still followed in coffee cultivation, as if the men would never work and "as if the Haitians were not susceptible of making any progress in the sciences."[15]

114 461 In 1842 an English Quaker, John Candler, wrote that without a modicum of labor the peasants could not subsist at all; "but they do not, and they will not, work hard to please anybody, and hence agriculture languishes, and commerce is stationary."[16] Finally, in 1860, Benjamin Hunt, an American, remarked: "If one wants to be lazy, Hayti is the place. It is possible to get through the day with little annoyance from cold, hunger, or the police, and with the least possible amount of work."[17] Similar testimony could be greatly multiplied. It is only in recent years that any author has affirmed that

13. *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 229–362.
14. *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, II, 281.
15. Joseph Balthazar Inginac, "*Culture du caffier et préparation de la fève pour être livrée au commerce*" [a pamphlet], (Port-au-Prince, 1840), p. 1.
16. *Brief Notices of Hayti*, p. 38.
17. *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afro-Americans*, p. 12.

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Any force into possible psychological reason is guesswork. St

461 might be hazarded that the men felt they had fought for freedom and so deserved to enjoy its benefits; or that agriculture smacked of the old days of slavery and should be avoided by the superior male; or that since ambition for progress was not a Haitian characteristic, and the work of women produced enough food, there was no reason to change a routine which did very well. One cannot speak with definiteness on these matters. And it was upper-class Haitians and foreigners who adjudged peasant men lazy; slaves and "forced" laborers always appear lazy to their masters.

462 In modern times at least, male peasants toil strenuously, although not so continuously as their females. The preparation of the ground for planting is hard work, and is done entirely by men. Harvesting, housebuilding, marketing the coffee (one form of marketing not beneath a man's dignity)—these are men's major contributions to economic life.

177 People who live in isolation commonly tend to slide back in such
● 178 externalities as clothes, manners, neatness of person and of dwelling, speech, and social ritual. Almost from the very beginning of Haitian history, most of the people were effectively isolated from the rest of the world, so that the superficial aspects of daily life exhibited to all visitors the spectacle of retrogression.

175 Christophe, who had frequent English visitors in his kingdom,
656 forced his subjects to dress neatly. After his time no ruler made
281 regulations for dress. The men commonly wore a pair of cotton trousers and an abbreviated shirt, while women's dress was a loose-fitting garment which might be called a Mother Hubbard. Children could, and can now, be seen up to the age of four or five without
[349] any clothes at all. The nearer the countrypeople live to towns, where the example of the élite is before them, the better their dress is likely to be.

342 Slave cabins on the former plantations were inhabited by the free Haitians until decay set in and the cabins fell down. They were ordinarily superseded by huts which could be constructed of wicker
[333] and thatch. The British Minister during the eighteen-twenties saw a man near Plaisance building his house, "plastering the wattling, of which the walls were composed, with a mixture of mud and ashes," using his hand as a trowel.[18] Almost never did a hut have more than

18. Mackenzie, op. cit., I, 150.

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two rooms to house the whole family. "In these huts, filth and every species of uncleanliness prevail, for the people give themselves up to their indolent and lazy habits. It is common to see the pigs and poultry herding with the family."[19]

The furnishings in the huts were as simple as the construction. Rarely was there more than one bed, if that; the children of the family used mats for sleeping. A table, a stool, a couple of patched chairs, calabash bowls, an iron pot or two (and in later days, discarded gasoline tins), comprise the household equipment.

The fine roads of the French régime became rutted and washed, were overgrown with woods, and soon reverted to wasteland or became nothing more than paths. Carriages ceased to be of any use, and there were few wagons; donkeys and horses became the regular means of transportation, and this was true until the Americans began to build roads again in 1916. The colonial régime had left a legacy of bridges, public buildings, parks, irrigation ditches; practically every improvement of this nature crumbled in slow decay and was not replaced. The temperate Dr. Brown closed his account of the Haiti of 1836 with the following paragraph:

> To sum up all that might be said upon the actual condition of Hayti, poverty and degradation stare one in the face wherever he goes—and the state of the whole island will be fully understood in the United States when it is bluntly asserted, that the country is one continuous negro village, built of mud cabins, and unfurnished with the usual comforts of life. The population is, with small exceptions, an indolent, naked multitude, without sustenance or a disposition to make exertions to obtain it; without enormous vices, but petty and insignificant in every thing relating to human character, and not many removes from the tribes upon the Niger in point of civilization. The fact is indisputable, that as a nation the blacks of Saint Domingo are in a retrograde movement as regards intellectual improvement, and no obstacle seems to exist to prevent this descent to barbarism. The government and institutions of the country must for the present remain unstable, and it is difficult to pronounce what the changes involved in the future will produce.[20]

Progress, as Westerners understand it, comes through contacts and competition, both of which were lacking to Haiti in large measure throughout the whole of the nineteenth century. While generally

19. Franklin, op. cit., p. 101.
20. Op. cit., II, 288–289.

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177 the country slowly became dilapidated, its economic and social insti-
178 tutions were taking on the unplanned characteristics already described. The only disturbing element in Haitian life was that of political machinations by ambitious military men. When these reached a peak in 1915 the United States intervened. For the first time in a century, really, the Haitian came into contact with the outside world.

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[p. 211]

XII
POLITICS

TO write of the politics of one country in the language of another is almost certain to foster misconceptions. Political terminology grows out of national and local experience, so that a Liberal party may actually be reactionary, a Radical group conservative, and a Conservative bloc progressive; the names are entirely the product of time and circumstance. And to generalize upon the shades of political opinion in a country is almost surely to do violence to partisan sentiment, as well as to truth itself. If, on the other hand, one attempts to deal justly with each development of political thought, one is immediately caught in the web of tedious detail.

All these reflections apply to Haiti. Her political history is endlessly complicated, not only in the sequence of events, but in the intertwining prejudices of color, caste, sectionalism, education, heritage. Haitian writers have concerned themselves more frequently with politics than with any other subject; their diagnoses and remedies are familiar to the thought of élite citizens. Yet it is doubtful whether these authors have ever affected the political reality, except possibly in 1843. Theory and practice have consistently diverged: both form a part of the political complexion of Haiti, yet to treat either in detail would require an overbalanced discussion of political matters in a country nine tenths of whose people are normally unconcerned with politics. Let us then try to discover briefly how rulers have achieved and lost power, and how they have managed their government.

Of all the social institutions which had to find their own shape in 1804 upon the achievement of independence, the one for which the people as a whole had least preparation was government. Assuming the major institutions of a society to consist of economic life, government, religion, and marriage, one realizes the problems which faced the free Haitians in all of these categories. Satisfactory or partial, we have seen the solutions arrived at in all respects except government—solutions which modified and adapted old French colonial practice or African traditions. Neither French nor African guides would serve in politics, however. People who have just thrown off the yoke of a

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175 178 64 slave system are not likely to assume it again; and the aristocrats, ever intent upon forgetting their African forebears, would certainly not turn to the Dark Continent for political inspiration.

175 642 701 643 Although the revolution had brought to the fore men of military experience and even genius, it had driven out or killed every single person of experience in civil government. The affranchis of the old régime had been denied political rights long before 1791; by 1804 few could have had any memory of active participation in government.[1] Toussaint was dead. The only authority of any significance was military. Consequently the new state was built upon army control and directed by army officers. Dessalines as commander in chief took the title of governor-general, later of emperor, but was in reality a military ruler. Fearful as he was of a new French invasion, he set his generals over the districts, organized his people as an army ready for immediate mobilization, and ruled as dictator.

175 642 This was all the Haitians had as political background: a military dictatorship. The Founding Fathers of Haiti, if so they might be called, had almost nothing to work with, nothing to build upon: neither a Magna Carta of the Blacks, nor any precedent of an independent Negro state anywhere in this white man's world; neither heritage of local responsibility and political debate to sow the seeds of democracy, nor any example of self-government in the American tropics to offer a pattern[2]—many of the known forms of government were a practical impossibility for the Haitians because of their need of continued defense against foreign enemies, their slave heritage, their inexperience in self-government, their complete lack of a middle class.

175 668 Hardly one tenth of the people in any case was capable of giving detailed thought to the form which government should take. The mass of ex-slaves had been fighting only *against* slavery, against the hated white rulers, not *for* democracy or any other abstraction. Their freedom achieved, they would not be the ones to make decisions. [642] All political choices would be made by the generals, by men of property and position, by the few whose persistent ambition made them stand out from the masses.

1. Such participation in French colonial politics would have been before the restrictive laws of 1771.

2. It must be recalled that Haiti was the second free country to be established in the Western Hemisphere, and that Liberia, in Africa, was still far in the future.

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Even Geffrard the reformer,

175 643 661 ably the ablest president in the second half-century, who was pledged to reduce the expenses of government (a promise which, since he was accustomed to a life of penury, should have been easy to fulfill), increased his own salary to $50,000 a year, and allowed himself $20,000 more annually for secret service and a similar sum "for the encouragement of arts and sciences." He bought two estates with government money; the meat bill of his family was charged to the budget of his bodyguard, and the family champagne bill to a hospital. After Geffrard, the presidency was openly regarded as the juicier financial plum in Haiti which, if one could pluck it, would justify the necessary expenditures for a revolution. It seems from contemporary comment, indeed, that Geffrard's actions aroused not censure but rather envy, as if every ambitious Haitian would have welcomed the opportunity to do likewise. The bitingly critical Englishman, Sir Spenser St. John, railed with some justice, "Every Haitian appears fully persuaded that his countrymen never seek office except for the purpose of improving their private fortunes."[15]

175 643 646 The legislature was never a real check upon the President. It was useful to him at times when he wished to delay action on some embarrassing imbroglio with a foreign power, for by referring a measure to the Senate he could stall it in tedious debate. Almost without exception, however, the legislature consisted of the President's men. Its halls were palaces of idle oratory. One whole session was devoted to a discussion of fitting the hall with cushioned seats; another to the propriety of appointing an interpreter for representatives who understood only Créole and not French. To make a man a Senator was a satisfactory way of paying a political debt. To be a Senator was to have social prominence, a salary of $1,600 (decidedly a competence in nineteenth-century Haiti), an opportunity to speak before an audience—and no real responsibility.

• 177 One may grant without debate the difficulties facing this small and poor country, a Negro state with great white neighbors who regarded it with something less than deference. Yet Haiti in its early days had real promise. Wherein lay its defects? Haitian thinkers knew the answers, and frequently indicted themselves.

175 871 565 658 The want of education was a basic weakness. Those who believe in democracy need no rehearsal of the benefits of popular enlightenment. Because the great Negro heads of state were themselves im-

15. *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, p. 183.

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perfectly educated, and because other matters seemed infinitely more pressing than the setting up of schools, the early Haitians, united in 1804, fell apart within a single generation. On one hand were the élite and a few other townspeople who knew at least something of the outside world; on the other the masses of toiling countryfolk to whom tiny Haitian valleys were the whole universe. The young men of these two classes coming to power could not understand each other; they could not make concessions to each other; and as they fought for what they held true, each grew suspicious of the other if not permanently hostile. The lack of common understanding might still have been repaired in any one generation, but no single president had the vision to inaugurate universal education. Aside from the expense, certain powerful élite citizens often expressed their doubts as to the educability of the peasants; as property owners they would undoubtedly have objected to the unsettling of the economic order, which was based upon the work of an ignorant mass of blacks.[18]

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Without education, the political sphere went unenriched by any flow of new blood from the people. Politics existed in a vacuum. The earthy, candid criticisms of a politically conscious folk never invigorated the discussion of national affairs. Without education, the people had no standards of comparison of Haiti with other nations, and were the easy dupes of whatever insurrectionary agitator could persuade them that their daily woes were caused by the current administration. Without education, high political office became a prerogative of the few, a contest between the Ins and the Outs, a path to personal wealth. Without education, Haiti could never be more than a dictatorship by a man or a clique, her stability endangered with the downfall of each incumbent, for dictatorships rarely provide for continuity in government.

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Another great weakness was the notion that national happiness could be achieved by political means primarily. After the germinal ideas of Christophe and Pétion, which had a basis in economic behavior, hardly another important concept came out of a century of presidents. Haitian politicians have been great strangers: they have given the country eighteen constitutions and innumerable codes, all admirable in their loving solicitude for precise detail. The common feeling of political aspirants has been, "If we are given power, all will

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18. This argument is clearly stated in Madiou, op. cit., III, 178 ff.

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175 178 181 prosper." Yet every change of administration saw merely a new embroidery on the old theme of sterility."

175 565 The further weakness of social or class consciousness has already been treated at length. It kept the whole nation divided from top to bottom, setting black against colored, North against South, countryside against town. It meant a perennial civil war, latent at times, but constantly breaking out in new insurrections.

175 669 701 Some day a diligent scholar may try to catalogue the revolutions which Haiti has undergone. Magloire discusses sixty-nine "important" ones between 1806 and 1879;[17] but the latter date was merely the threshold of renewed revolutionary activity. There seems to have been very little pattern in these uprisings, except that almost never were they a spontaneous revolt of the masses, as the Slave Insurrection of 1791 had been. The peasants were constantly being impressed into service with the army of a general who had presidential ambitions. From the middle years of the nineteenth century certain peasants found fighting a more profitable trade than any other, and began to hire themselves out as mercenaries. In the North these professional guerrilla warriors were known as *cacos*, in the South as *piquets*. Their methods were those of terror and rapine. They were a constant menace to the peace, and their suppression was one of the announced purposes of the American Occupation, for every revolutionary chief felt it necessary to hire their services.

175 369 669 Another recognized procedure of revolution was incendiarism. Haitian politics is almost wholly the affair of townsmen, and more narrowly of the men of the six important towns—Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, Jérémie, Les Cayes, Gonaïves, and Saint-Marc. Except for their principal buildings and villas, these towns are constructed of wood or other inflammable material. Leaders of insurrections therefore have habitually set fire to the poorer sections of the towns, and as frequently as not this threat has won over the populace, who preferred overthrowing the government to having their homes burned. Support of the insurrection becomes a form of fire insurance. Such a state of affairs is eloquent testimony to the cynical attitude of the political leaders toward the masses.

600 A revolution directed by a general of real ambition was likely to

17. Auguste Magloire, *Histoire d'Haïti. Epoque sans gloire* [illegible] (Port-au-Prince, [illegible]), I, 230, 243, 250–251, develops this theme at length.
18. *Ibid.*, Vol. II.

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can "advice and approval," rather than with the legislature subject to popular control. Even under such restrictions the politically minded found ways of exerting pressure on the Marine authorities. 175 648 666

Out of the darkest days of military subjection by a foreign power came a changed order of politics in the country. The practically unbroken line of dull incompetents who had come into the presidency ended; instead of ignorant army leaders, educated men were once more in office; instead of Northern Negroes, élites of Port-au-Prince; instead of benighted marinces bewildered by world affairs, men who, if not great statesmen, at least had minds capable of understanding Haiti's relation to international economics and politics. 642 175 643

The élite were back in power. In the mind of every friend of Haiti arose the question whether the events between 1879 and 1915 had taught them lessons which would make their return to responsibility productive of great things for the country. Because of the abnormal situation resulting from the Occupation, the world depression, and the briefness of their new ascendancy, one cannot yet speak with assurance. Nevertheless, there are few encouraging signs. Political office is still regarded by most candidates in terms of their own advancement rather than service to Haiti. Very little has been done to extend the base of voting by developing local responsibility and education among the masses. Élite youths still receive a classical education, still disdain manual labor, still cherish the ideal of a graceful life of ease. The president still rules as an autocrat supported by the gendarmerie—substitute for the army of former days. One can see no decrease in social distinctions or in the disdain of the élite for peasant people; on the contrary, there has even been an increase of this feeling because the Occupation (through its Agricultural Service particularly) seemed to open paths of development to the peasants. Social antagonism, not social responsibility, still underlies political life.[20] 175 642 [661] [666] [565] [643] [565]

To every one of these strictures there is a plausible reply. It is no light matter to unsettle the minds of nine tenths of a population by education, to cause an economic revolution by improving agricultural techniques, to admit to political life a people unaccustomed to 178 65

20. Dr. Jean Price-Mars, in *La Vocation de l'élite* (Port-au-Prince, 1919), passim, especially pp. 31 ff., urges the élite to accept their responsibilities rather than rest upon the debilitating assurance of their innate superiority. [114] [565]

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178 65 it. Moreover, the Haitian budget is in the neighborhood of seven million dollars, for which sum not much in the way of great improvement for three million people can be expected. The task of regenerating Haiti calls for self-sacrificing genius—at present the élite hardly qualify either as self-denying servants of the public or as geniuses.

175 693 642 648 241 Haitian affairs during the 1930's were under the direction of President Sénio Vincent, an able man to whose credit much can be said. He devoted himself to his task with assiduity, talking face to face with the peasants in Créole, urging them to assist in reforestation and to use wisdom in crop rotation. He settled serious disputes with the neighboring Dominican Republic in amicable fashion. It was he who carried on the delicate and successful negotiations with President Roosevelt to give Haiti control of her own affairs once more. In coffee culture, assistance to trade, financial matters, and other economic details, he often proceeded expertly, particularly in view of the world depression which began as he assumed office. On the other hand, Vincent made the legislature his servant rather than a partner. He was a dictator (fortunately a benevolent one) who changed the constitution by highhanded methods in order to gain his own reélection. His régime rested upon his alliance with the efficient Garde d'Haiti. There were few signs of democracy or of respect for civil liberties, as Americans understand those terms, in Vincent's eleven years.

175 643 The spectator has a feeling that he has seen all this before, when for example Geffrard was elected to assure parliamentary government, only to become an effectively benevolent dictator as soon as the legislature opposed him. Geffrard was on the whole a good president, as Vincent was; but the former did not succeed in setting Haiti upon the path of economic and social security, and one hardly dared expect it of his modern counterpart.

175 643 648 In April, 1941, Élie Lescot, former Haitian Minister to the United States, was elected as the thirtieth president of the republic. Vincent had refused to call a plebiscite to approve an extension of his presidential term for an additional five years, as he had done in 1935 near the end of the six-year term to which he was elected in 1930. Lescot had begun his presidency with many advantages, chiefly the friendly support of his predecessor, his acquaintance with United States officials, and a recent negotiated pact by which American aid will

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3. The unimportance of the legislature. It has made useful patron

646 age for the president to dispense, and has preserved the semblance of
642 republican government; but hardly half a dozen legislative sessions in all Haitian history have contributed seminal ideas in politics or initiated true reforms. How could they, indeed, when the president was consistently a dictator of policy?

666 4. The undemocratic nature of the vote. Senators are chosen by the representatives, and the two groups together have generally
642 elected the president, when he did not come to power by revolution. The only chance people have had to vote has been for local officials and representatives. In these cases, the vote has been limited to the élite and the army, with the president's henchmen counting the ballots. Since the Occupation there have been plebiscites on constitutional changes, the people having the right to vote Yes or No.

692 5. The subservience of the courts to the president. They have been filled with president's men, generally astute enough to consult presi-
643 dential wishes before handing down a decision. Foreign merchants
642 soon learned that they could expect little "justice" from the courts if their own cause conflicted with special Haitian interests. Foreign diplomats likewise learned that in crises the courts could involve the simplest issue in such verbal complexity that months of patience would be necessary to unwind the red tape.

644 6. The pliability of "constitutional rights." Freedom of speech and
661 of the press has been notably lacking, although scurrilous attacks on the administration's enemies have often been permitted. Legislators
642 have been expelled. Graft has flourished. In 1833, for example, two representatives were expelled from the House "for systematically opposing the measures of the executive, and persisting in a demand for a statement of public expenditures." A century later a senator was expelled for almost the same reasons.

701 7. Militarism. Only in this respect is any real change apparent since
178 the American Occupation. The army was always large up to 1915, and so constituted an economic drain as well as a political menace.
642 Generals had great power: they ruled each department and each
669 arrondissement, were subject only to the president, and were at the bottom of every revolutionary movement.[22] Since the Occupation

[162] [701]

22. In 1842, when the population was still less than 1 million, there were in the civil government 9 generals, 63 colonels, 48 lieutenant colonels, 9 captains, 1 lieutenant, and 26 medical officers; and in the standing army 33 colonels, 83 lieutenant colonels, 123 captains, 634 lieutenants, 377 sublieutenants and ensigns, 6,813 noncommissioned officers, and 25 medical officers. The army had 18,000 soldiers and cost about $600,000 a year. See John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 60 ff.

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numbers in the army have been radically reduced; yet in that very fact there is the possibility for the only armed persons in Haiti, the present Garde d'Haiti, to effect political coups. But at least the budget is not strained by the salaries of thousands of unnecessary soldiers, as was true in pre-Occupation days.

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8. The separation of the masses from government. By providing a minimum of local government, but that fairly effective, the national government has been able to keep the peasants out of all but revolutionary politics. Rural communities have ordinarily got along well enough without formal government, so that the history of Haitian political thought and the analysis of Haitian political forms would treat of affairs interesting to only a fraction of the population.

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It need hardly be repeated, after a reflection upon these apparent permanencies of political life, that Haiti is not a democracy.

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175 ment that two thirds of the members of either Chamber must be
642 present before a law could be voted—a stipulation making it possible
[647] for any clique to hold up legislation by absenting itself.

1874. The constitution of Domingue who, having defeated the
[643] Liberals, promulgated a constitution "profoundly modifying" the language of the 1867 document. It legally concentrated power in the hands of the president—where, indeed, it had always been in spite of constitutional declarations.

1879. Salomon's first constitution, which professed to be a reexamination of Haitian institutions, but was actually not different in essentials from the document of 1846. The line from Pétion to Riché to Salomon and his successors was the main one from which deviations, such as those of Soulouque, occurred.

1886. Salomon's second constitution, a mild revision of his first.

[178] 1889. Hyppolite, the new president, felt it necessary to have a new constitution, although like the constitution of 1886 this was little more than a revision of that of 1879. Under the 1889 document Haiti continued to function, more and more haltingly, up to the time of the American Occupation.

[648] 1918. The constitution drawn up in Washington[9] and forced
[423] through in Haiti by a farcical plebiscite. Its most debated provision was the elimination of the prohibition against ownership of land by foreign whites, thus ending the one common point in all previous constitutions since 1805. For the rest, it changed little of the actual
[641] structure of Haitian government, but provided a great number of unaccustomed democratic rights: freedom of assembly, trial by jury in political cases, direct election of senators, submission of amendments to popular vote, freedom of the press.

[644] 1927. Although this is considered merely a revision of the 1918 constitution, its changes were actually more noteworthy than many expected by the so-called new constitutions. Thirteen amendments were carried by popular vote, again so overwhelming as to be ridiculous, restoring many of the democratic liberties granted in 1918 which had proved embarrassing both to President Borno and

9. Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his campaign for the vice-presidency of the United States in 1920, claimed that he had written most of this constitution while he was Woodrow Wilson's assistant-secretary of the navy. (See the *New York Times*, August 19, 1920.) The constitution was approved in Haiti by a vote of 60,237 to 215.

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lar except in raw form, in which it had an annual sale of only a few thousand pounds. Other subordinate exports were cotton, logwood, lignum vitae, mahogany, tortoise shells, hides, cacao, cassia, wax, ginger, bullocks' horns, and tobacco—and many of these came primarily from the Dominican rather than the Haitian part of the island, during the twenty-two year period of union. The imports were mainly clothing and provisions. That an agricultural country should need to bring in flour, butter, cheese, lard, beef, pork, candles, and especially—in the light of former days—refined sugar, is eloquent testimony to the degree to which food production had declined since colonial times. Other imports were more to be expected, since manufacture had never developed: linen, cotton goods of all kinds, some few woolens, cutlery, iron goods, wines and brandies, oil, lumber, coarse iron goods, earthenware, tin plates, and minor articles.[11]

Gone now were the days of big things in Haiti. Estates of thousands of acres would in Boyer's time have been only a liability. Profits were measured, or rather hoped for, in terms of hundreds rather than thousands of dollars.[12] Saint-Domingue of the 1780's was one of the exciting parts of the world to traders; Haiti of fifty years later was little more than a vague name except to specialists. Any country relying for its economic security upon one crop and its sale in a foreign market must expect vicissitudes in its income. Haiti had these in full measure. And so the prosperity of the country steadily diminished.[13]

11. See the very candid report to Great Britain by her consul, Charles Mackenzie, in 1830: *Notes on Haiti*, II, 173–190.

12. Mackenzie (*Correspondence Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Haiti*, Document XI) reports in 1825: "Generally speaking, no sugar is manufactured on the estates devoted to the cultivation of the sugar cane; the juice is either implanted in a coarse sirup, and sold for common use, or distilled into a very inferior rum, called here 'Tafia.'" Then, citing the case of Tor, an estate formerly owned by Pétion but in 1825 by Boyer, he reports: "Formerly 1,700 carreaux were in cane; 1,400 slaves were employed on it; 3 sugar mills were constantly at work, and excellent clayed sugar was made. Now only about 7 carreaux are in cultivation; 30 laborers are employed; the only produce is a little sirup and tafia, which last is retailed in a small shop by the side of the road, in front of the president's residence."

13. These vicissitudes have been frequently noted. Draughts and hurricanes, pests and earthquakes, were causes of common apprehension. The chief factors at work to diminish Haitian prosperity were two: the division of land into small parcels at home, and the competition of other countries with Haitian coffee abroad. The price of coffee had declined in all the European markets, making the return to the cultivator exceedingly small.

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United Kingdom, the United States, and Haiti, in proportion to population, were 185, 165, and 125,[18] yet Haiti had no carrying trade while the other two countries had, and so the profits were drained from the land.[19]

In short, as Haiti became accustomed to managing her own affairs, she became content with—or at least, reconciled to—little things. Inertia and tradition worked in their persistent fashion, with no effective stimulation from outside to combat them. From tradition and seclusion springs prejudice, and this became obvious whenever a change was proposed, particularly one which suggested bringing white people back to the country. To the élite it might mean the end of their social supremacy; to the masses, the end of their independence of daily action. The prejudice against sugar making was rooted in the same kind of suspicion. When a large landowner tried to institute a sugar mill on his estate, he met an adamant refusal of his hired workers to labor in it: "*Mond pas esclave!*" (I'm no slave!) The Negroes even disliked a bell to ring them to work on a plantation, for it suggested the slavery of the old régime.

Just before the Civil War in the United States a humanitarian gentleman developed a project of conducting numerous free American Negroes to Haiti in a planned migration. He discussed in a pamphlet[20] all the possible trades which might flourish in that country, if the migrants were to assume the position of a middle class; but his list is significantly small—sixteen occupations, on the order of tailoring, coopering, and blacksmithing, were all he could think of.[21] He made three comments which he hoped would attract the Negro Americans, as to a virgin field of opportunity: that in the

18. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 112–113, cites these figures, and says: "[Thus] Hayti, poor, and despised as she is, has a commerce, in native produce, nearly three-fourths as large, in proportion to her population, as our own United Kingdom, which is the great manufacturing part of the world; and seven-eighths as large as that of the United States, where the staple exports are produced by the labour of 3,000,000 slaves!"

19. Mackenzie (*Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti*, Document V) reports that in 1825 exports were valued at $5,793,758, and imports at $4,660,174; the trading was carried on in 332 foreign ships, of which 172 were American, 78 British, and 63 French. No Haitian ship traded abroad.

20. Benjamin S. Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afro-Americans*. See particularly pp. 7–8.

21. His complete list is: miner, shoemaker, baker, cabinetmaker, carpenter, mason, lime-burner, distiller, cooper, wheelwright, wheeler, blacksmith, sawyer, hatter, small-bore rifleman, gunner.

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[p.265]

XV

HAITIAN PROBLEMS

FOR a citizen of the United States or a European country, national problems have to do with external as well as internal affairs. Foreign relations, armaments, international trade, treaties and commitments, loom as large as do unemployment, business depression, labor troubles, and social maladjustment. Political parties rise and fall with their promises or failures to deal successfully with matters arising from the country's position relative to world movements. In Haiti such generalizations do not hold. Her international relations have been and are comparatively minor, while her internal problems have been of a different order from those which trouble most of the rest of the Western World. This is not meant to imply that a world depression leaves Haiti unscathed, or that the country does not suffer when its trade in coffee is interrupted, but rather that its persistent problems would continue to exist whatever the state of world politics and economics. 178 66 648

Contacts of the Haitian people with the outside world between 1804 and 1915 were meagre. The slaughter of whites by Dessalines, the economic decline of the country, unwillingness of white nations to treat with a Negro state, the schism in the Catholic Church, restrictive legislation against white foreigners, general illiteracy of the people—all these shut Haiti off from the world. Christophe, it is true, invited in a few English schoolmasters and agricultural experts, but these remained only a short while and had little influence even among the élite. For a century Haiti saw no foreigners except the few traders at seaports, an occasional Wesleyan missionary, a limited number of consuls and ministers, certain travelers interested in odd corners of the earth, and, after 1860, Catholic priests and sisters. For the peasants there ceased to be any knowledge of the world outside of Haiti; for the élite France once more became the centre of the social universe, as it had been for the affranchis in colonial times. From Boyer's time onward élite youths went to Paris for an education, if they could afford it; the "culture" they acquired there had little relationship to Haitian problems. 175 648 [871] [242] [797] [871]

Foreign relations, in the political sense, revolved during most of

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Besides the figures given above must be set there of the government

budget, which is annually in the neighborhood of $7,000,000, and of its annual imports and exports, neither of which generally exceeds $10,000,000 a year. Chicago, with its population of three million, has an annual budget of about $275,000,000, aside from state and federal services. 652 [439]

To care for all the needs of three million people in Haiti there is a sum of money less than that available annually to several of our American universities. Out of the seven million dollars must come all salaries of officials, legislators, judges, policemen, schoolteachers; the wages of all janitors and day laborers employed by the government; the upkeep of all schools, roads, lighthouses, experiment stations; the maintenance of such important public services as health, sanitation, education, soil development, reforestation. Since there are few towns, practically every improvement which takes place must be paid for by the central government. [369]

Haiti's growth in population is not a new thing. It has been increasing steadily since 1804 while the soil of the country was being worn out and foreign trade grew stagnant. The country is entirely agricultural, there being absolutely no manufacturing industry worth the name. The people consequently live upon a subsistence economy. The soil is still fertile enough to preserve life in the teeming population, though undernourishment is general. Most of the people have no "artificial" wants and could not satisfy them under present conditions even if they had. 161 [134] [439] 433 164 [134] [511]

Assuming the census of Dessalines in 1805 to be even approximately accurate, the population is now eight times what it was then. The working of the Law of Population[3] is implacable: if population increases while economic efficiency remains static or declines, either there will be an increasing death rate or the standard of living must sink—or both. In the case of Haiti, economic efficiency is certainly not what it was under the forced-labor system of Dessalines: the death rate has been continuously high; it is the standard of living which has suffered. 161 433 178 [165] [511]

To grasp the import of Haiti's problem of overpopulation one

3. "Population tends to increase up to the limit of the supporting power of the land, relative to the economic efficiency and to the standard of living of the people at the time." (For an amplification of this discussion on overpopulation, see the note on p. 320.) The law of population as stated here is a modification of that given by Sumner and Keller, *The Science of Society*, I, 46; their statement, in turn, is that of Malthus with the added cultural items of economic efficiency and the standard of living. [114]

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2. *Health*

Historians who seek to explain the rise and fall of nations in terms of a single cause might do worse than hit upon health and disease as the all-important explanation. Unless spectacular epidemics have appeared in a country's history, the average person is rarely aware of how diet may affect a people, or of how backwardness in achievement is often directly related to disease. It may well be that the development of *medical* history will yet cause a radical revision of certain philosophies of history.

146 "The diet of the Haitian peasants has not improved since the slavery period," says Dr. Camille Lhérisson.[5] When people are 164 hungry in Haiti, they eat (if they can find food) until their hunger has been appeased; but what they eat, though it may fill their stomachs, is often decidedly deficient in the proper nourishment. Mangoes, yams, and beans are common enough so that few people actually go hungry; eggs, milk, meat, and many other essentials of a balanced diet, on the contrary, are scarce. People do not die of hunger, but rather of the diseases which accompany malnutrition. It is said that many peasants allow the fires in their homes to die out when the mangoes begin to ripen, subsisting almost wholly upon this fruit for weeks. One sees nearly naked children whose distended [261] bellies are testimony to faulty diet. There are frequent cases of geophagy (eating of dirt) both by children and by adults in their unreasoned craving for certain dietetic elements; one result of the practice is the swallowing of eggs and larvae of intestinal parasites.

178 Scientific progress in medicine during the nineteenth century and 743 the first years of the twentieth passed Haiti by completely. There 759 were during the whole history of the country until 1915 hardly a score of reputable physicians; even had there been doctors, hospital facilities and equipment were lacking. Dr. Robert P. Parsons de- 114 scribes Haiti in 1915 as "an unspeakable hotbed of diseases, ranking 164 second to none in the world in downright rottenness." He further described the "mass of three million people, sick, suffering beyond all power of words to describe, crippled, and weakened from the ravages of a host of diseases (for the most part preventable and curable), pitifully helpless and hopelessly resigned to their lot."[6]

5. "Diseases of the Peasants of Haiti," *American Journal of Public Health*, XXV, No. 8 (August, 1935), 924.

6. *History of Haitian Medicine* (New York, 1930), pp. 4–5.

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3. *Education*

871 To a people like the Americans who accept democracy as desirable, and regard universal education as a necessary basis for democracy, it would seem a simple matter for the Haitians to build schools all over the countryside, pass laws requiring attendance, and so within a decade, or at the outside a generation, reform the whole country. To the American, education is the fount from which all democratic blessings flow. For the Haitian the problem is neither so clearly defined nor so simply solved.

565 The élite, who are solidly in control of the government, are
871 aristocrats partly (largely, one might even say) because they are educated. Because of the maxim of Haitian life since the beginning that a literate man should not do manual labor, any program which proposed universal education would cut the ground from under the present social structure by giving the masses equal opportunities with the élite, and at the same time ruin the economic organization by making peasants want to desert field labor for professions and business. An ordinary degree of self-interest is quite sufficient to explain the lack of enthusiasm of the ruling class when the subject of general education is broached.

871 Good reasons are often given by people in lieu of real reasons for their actions. One of the good reasons advanced by Haitian ministries for the failure of the government to promote universal education is its cost. Those American states whose population is provailingly rural know the validity of this reasoning. With children
[369] scattered over the rural regions—and nine out of ten Haitians do not live in towns or large villages—it would require thousands of new school buildings to reach the prospective students. Salaries of teachers, purchase of supplies, and general upkeep would have to be added annually to the national budget in addition to the initial outlay for the erection of school buildings. Here one comes up immediately against the unyielding fact of the puny national income. Its $7,000,000 could under no circumstances be stretched to cover an architectural program commensurate with Haiti's educational needs.

871 Another good reason for the failure of democratic education is the
178 demonstrated apathy of the masses. In the zeal for improvement during the early days of the Occupation, rural schools were estab-

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lished in many parts of the country. Attendance was fair for a few days, then rapidly declined. It is obviously a task requiring patience, persistence, originality, and tact on the part of the teacher to keep the students interested enough in school to make them attend regularly, for certainly the parents, who themselves have had no education, will not force their children to attend. On the contrary, the average peasant parent feels it much more important for his children to be at work in the fields, doing something useful, than to waste time learning to read and write—accomplishments which peasants have done without from time immemorial. Forced attendance is clearly out of the question. Obviously, too, at the small wages paid to country teachers the necessary qualities of personality are uncommon, to say the least. Five thousand men and women with the consecration of missionaries would be required even to begin the work of general education.

A practically insoluble problem, given current attitudes, is that of the language to be used in rural schools, assuming that these are built. The only official language of Haiti is French; the only language understood by the masses is Créole, which in spite of its French origin is as different from that tongue as Dutch from German. Now every Haitian, high and low, knows Créole, so that the question immediately arising is: Why should not the rural teachers teach in Créole? The answer involves every sort of inward prejudice, yearning, and instilled doctrine. The teacher is almost sure to be struggling up to the élite class, and to require him to deny himself the luxury of speaking French (to him almost a patent of nobility) would be heart-rending. Likewise, he would have his "good" reason for teaching school in French: the unity of the country demands a single language; all schoolbooks are in French, none in Créole; and Créole has no literature, not even an accepted spelling. The fact remains that except in rare instances all schoolteachers use French to their pupils, and not one peasant out of a hundred can even guess what is being said in that language.

Assuming that schools were available, as well as trained teachers willing to speak the folk language, the next problem would be the curriculum. The whole tradition of élite education is literary, not practical. Teachers trained in this tradition might teach Racine and Montaigne, but not soil conservation and new methods of planting. Peasants with a knowledge of French literature would, of course, be

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175 This was the situation in Haiti after 1791, and especially after
178 1804. The boundary walls of a slave economy, carefully built by the French in the eighteenth century and scrupulously guarded by all the whites, were smashed. The constricted limits in which Negro life had moved during slavery now ceased to exist as a channel. For years there was an unceasing effort on the part of Haitian leaders to give a new direction to the life of the blacks, but all those leaders (except Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe) found it more discreet, more congenial, even more logical, to follow the tide rather than to try to stem and direct it.

Between 1791 and 1804, then, the retaining walls of the old economic and political institutions disappeared. The next forty years were ones of experiment in stabilizing a new set of social institutions.[1] Efforts to make the new social structure efficient, orderly, progressive, all failed; by mid-century the undramatic and unconsciously exerted pressure of daily behavior on the part of hundreds of thousands of untutored Negroes gave Haitian institutions their new and recognizable character. The presidents thereafter rarely attempted serious reform in these institutions; on the contrary, they generally tried only to make use of them for their own personal benefit. The Haiti of 1860 was radically different from the Haiti of 1791–1804, while 1915 closely resembled 1860. Only since the Occupation by American Marines has the process of change begun to accelerate again.

Most adjustments arrived at by a whole society occur unconsciously. Great leaders may suggest new ways for a nation to follow which break with the past and are clearly more progressive and rational than the old ways, but it is the people who eventually accept or reject the novelty. They perform, as people always and continuously do, an act of unconscious, automatic selection upon the variations, eliminating this one and adopting that for reasons often apparently irrational or prejudiced. The result of such a steady process of selection is a recognizable group of folkways and mores which make Haitian culture, for instance, distinguishable from the culture of other near-by islands, Cuba or Jamaica, for example.

It is not always a great man who suggests a variation in the folkways and mores, nor yet even an important personage like a cabinet

1. The term "social institution" is here used to mean a consistent pattern of folkways and mores clustering about a fundamental human interest.

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minister or an outstanding intellectual. Variations are frequently (some even say generally) mere casual accidents, surprising inspirations of the moment. The changes which have come over the face of the Vodun religion are examples: in almost no instance can the additions or emendations be traced back to their originators, yet Vodun is clearly different now from what it was in Boyer's time. Just as no one knows who initiates a change in the folkway of language, coining a slang phrase, modifying a pronunciation, so the makers of most variations in folkways and mores are anonymous. 175 178 [77]

Given infinite time and patience, one might compile a list of mores in any country, beginning first with those which require absolute conformity from all persons, and running down to those which express social ideals but which may nevertheless be honored in the breach. In our own country, the mores condemning incest and cannibalism are not only our rules but our unanimous practice; and if a person breaks either we punish him severely. At the other end of our list are those mores requiring truthfulness and honor. In calling these American mores we pay homage to an ideal—and then tell our white lies as a part of the observance of social amenities, or make our "shrewd" business deals in order to get on in the world. For neither of these breaches of the mores is there any concerted social punishment; on the contrary, we have been known to praise those who broke them. In describing the culture of a society, therefore, it is necessary to report both the mores as ideal and the mores as practice.

The larger and more complex a society becomes, the fewer the mores shared in common by all members of that society. In a small colonial American village, isolated from much contact with strangers, the whole population was bound by scores of mores touching all phases of life. In modern America, on the contrary, if one should consider American society as a whole it would probably be difficult to find a dozen mores shared commonly by us all, or if shared, exerting the same force to conformity. We have had to develop a measure of tolerance with our 150 million neighbors, a live-and-let-live principle which has been aptly called "antagonistic coöperation." 184

Each district in Haiti, in the effective isolation of illiteracy and sedentary life, has developed its own characteristic mores, of which a limited number correspond with those of other Haitian districts. It is these general correspondences which have been treated in this book. Within each district, likewise, there is the usual hierarchy of rules

L: Hawkwin E-4,1- (1934) 1997 EV2 HAIR SV2

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baths or public halls, were in operation, while in the towns of Cap Français, Port-au-Prince, Leogane, Saint-Marc, and Cayes, theaters were established which produced "the latest plays from Paris" and attracted large audiences.[38]

Despite all this, the canker of homesickness constantly gnawed at the colonists even in the towns — the feeling that a stay in the colony was only for the interval needed to allow a man to escape to the mother country with a fortune. On the estates the loneliness and isolation of plantation life are commented upon repeatedly. A letter of the period, without place or date, found in the family papers of the historian de Vaublère, discusses this with poignancy:

> "Have pity for an existence which must be eked out far from the world of our own people. We here number five whites, my father, my mother, my two brothers, and myself, surrounded by more than two hundred slaves, the number of our negroes who are domestics alone coming almost to thirty. From morning to night, wherever we turn, their faces meet our eyes. No matter how early we awaken, they are at our bedsides, and the custom which obtains here not to make the least move without the help of one of these Negro servants brings it about not only that we live in their society the greater portion of the day, but also that they are involved in the least important events of our daily life. Should we go outside our house to the workshops, we are still subject to this strange propinquity. Add to this the fact that our conversation has almost entirely to do with the health of our slaves, their needs which must be cared for, the manner in which they are to be distributed about the estate, or their attempts at revolt, and you will come to understand that our entire life is so closely identified with that of these unfortunates that, in the end, it is the same as theirs. And despite whatever pleasure may come from that almost ab-

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195 181 567 591 563 solute dominance which it is given us to exercise over them, what regrets do not assail us daily because of our inability to have contact and correspondence with others than these unfortunates, so far removed from us in point of view, customs, and education."[18]

195 567 591 423 563 This letter speaks of the presence of five whites. The psychological state of the planter who, unmarried and alone, spent his days without the companionship of a fellow-being who as much as shared a common language with him may well be imagined. Even where there were white overseers, the prevailing sense of caste was so strong that while these are with the head of the estate, they did not live under the same roof, for they were subordinates and were treated as such. For his most constant companions the owner had his house-servants, unless he maintained a mulatto concubine who cooked his food and looked after his personal wants, shared his confidences, and reported to him any disaffection on the part of the Negro slaves. It is understandable that, having made his fortune, the planter did not delay his return to France, where, once back in Paris, he lived lavishly on the revenues from his estates; and letters in the Ministry of Colonies show the extent to which this phenomenon of absentee ownership characterized pre-Revolutionary Santo Domingo.[19]

195 181 563 Haiti being thought of as but an interlude in a man's life, the loosening of moral tone so complained of in contemporary works resulted, and with this went the many forms of display in which these colonists indulged and those other aspects of colonial custom which were so often ridiculed by European travelers of the period. The distance of Haiti from Paris, or, in a later period, the time which had elapsed since the French loss of Haiti, has, however, lent an enchantment to "Créole life" which is reflected in an idealized portrayal of this existence, much in the manner of the effusions on the graciousness and glamour of life in what is termed "the old South."[20] One

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cannot read the extended narrative of the young Comte de C***, reprinted by de Vaissière, without questioning this myth of the idyllic life of the Haitian Créole, even though allowing for the disdain with which an exiled Parisian dandy of 1790 would regard the inhabitants of outlying possessions, and allowing also for the savory wit of the man, which undoubtedly led him to underscore the more diverting situations which he encountered.[20]

Mention must be made at this point of the two great divisions of the white population which, as the colonizing period continued, were created by the distinction between those born on the island and those who had migrated there. These divisions cut across the two categories of urban and country dwellers, both of which numbered Haitian-born and native European members. At the time of the French Revolution about three quarters of the whites on the island had been born outside the colony, while of those born in the colony, women comprised the major portion.[21] Haitian-born persons were known by the designation *Créole*, which, according to a definition of the period, included all those "who have first seen the light of day in Santo Domingo" and was, as it is today, a term employed in all the West Indies and in Louisiana.[22] This designation was by no means restricted to the whites, however, for there were Créole Negroes as well as Créole whites; at the present time in Haiti a distinction is even drawn between locally grown "créole" rice and that which is imported!

It is common knowledge that slavery not only affects those who are held in bondage, but deeply influences the master-class as well. In Haiti the role played by the institution of slavery in the formation of the character and personalities of Créole children brought up in a setting of servility, cupidity, brutality, and terror must have been of the utmost importance. The bad temper and domineering nature of Créole youths is commented on again and again by writers of the period. Owing to the unhealthy climate and the failure to

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175 mous contemporary accounts, and most present-day works,
105 give both texts and illustrations which make the economy of
563 the plantation clear.[illegible] Though many stories of the magnifi-
563 cence of plantation life are found in current works, writers
342 of the period seem to agree that but little attention was paid
to convenience. Inventories of the contents of houses show
175 that furnishings were at a minimum: a few chairs and small
105 tables in the sitting- and reception-rooms, beds and minor ac-
563 cessories in the way of furniture in the bedrooms, dining-room
352 tables and chairs and a cabinet for dishes. These pieces were
usually built in the colony and made of native hard woods;
substantial, they were essentially plain. As Baron Wimpffen
remarked, "Taste, Sir, is still Creolian at Saint Domingo; and,
unfortunately, the Creolian is not the right taste, — it smells
too much of the *Bouzouc*."[illegible]

175 The table set was not distinguished. Meat, though the most
105 important dish at the principal meals, was poor, but, on the
563 other hand, fish, game, and wild fowl were excellent, and the
563 best of French wines were available.[illegible] Whatever the fare, how-
352 ever, it was served in the grand manner, often on plate rather
than chinaware, and by the many liveried house-servants
which every great establishment could boast. An account of
the mode of service has been preserved in the reminiscences
of one who, writing some years later of a repast served him in
1797, says: "There were many more of these domestics of both
sexes than there were diners. I could but admire their atten-
tion to the smallest details of the service, the whiteness of their
clothing, and the beautiful kerchiefs in the Créole manner
elegantly arranged about the heads of the women. . . . But
[291] all of them moved about on bare feet; this was the distinctive
sign of slavery."[illegible]

175 As portrayed in contemporary works, Haitian white life is
181 seen to have been lived entirely in terms of material goods and
105 of display. Just as there was little intellectual life, so religion
771 was but a matter of form. One M. de Larnage, writing from
563

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Petit-Goave on 25 June 1753, complains that it is unbelievable "what indifference the people of these districts have toward spiritual matters."[18] So little attention was paid to the rites of the Church that when the baptism of an infant was to be performed, it often proved difficult to find a godfather who had taken the sacrament, and many children were therefore never baptized. As might be expected, the churches were in a bad state, often having no more than earthen walls and floors, roofed with thatch, and being used as threshing-floors as well as places of worship. The description which Père Labat has given us of a church at Cap François,[19] and of the manner in which the communicants conducted themselves during such services as were held, shows the decadence of the one religion that had any place among the white inhabitants. The clergy, too, reflected this same decadence. For though the early liberties who posed as priests were later replaced by members of such orders as the Jacobins, the Jesuits, and the Capucins, even this did not end the scandals that, from the first days of the establishment of the Catholic Church on the island, marked its ministrations.

What impression must the Negroes have obtained from their opportunities to observe the life of their masters? What patterns of behavior, what moral codes, what concepts of the way in which the Europeans regulated their own lives and, as officials, regulated the lives of others, must have been stamped on the minds of these Africans? That the present emphasis on the importance of wealth, or that a love of and demand for display, should characterize Haitian life of the cities today is not strange. Nor is it difficult to comprehend how certain other aspects of Haitian life that have so been underscored in the last half-century by those who have written of the Haitians should have developed from this initial stimulus — not to the extent to which this emphasis would lead one to believe, to be sure, but enough to give a basis for the exaggerations which have been published.[20]

fires in their houses at night to keep out the damp cold that creeps through the passes. And a man on the trail before dawn may wear a blanket over his head and carry a glowing ember with him for warmth.

On the south coast there are sometimes hurricanes and tidal waves, and many a small fishing boat and grass-covered house has been washed away in these storms. But the great mountains of the southern range deflect the winds, so that to the north their full fury is never known.

In the great Bay of Gonaïves the fishing boats sail out at night with the friendly winds that carry them to the fishing grounds of the island of La Gonave, and they return to the shore with their catches in the morning, or in the afternoon with the setting sun. The sailing boats from the tiny fishing village called Ville Matelot each day pass the deserted islet named Isle à Cabrit, where four Indian camps once stood. Today Isle à Cabrit is only a waterless, deserted place, a hunting ground for Carib and Arawak pottery and carved stone images.

In the frontier lakes of the Cul-de-Sac Plain there are wild ducks and alligators. Here the villagers fish with nets from rafts and dugout canoes. Now and then an iguana is seen, but there is little other game, because the edible wildlife of the country was long ago eaten by hungry people.

For the things that grow wild the Haitian is grateful—the avocado, the mango, the cashew, and the cotton which once planted produces again and again each year. He is grateful for the coconut palms, the calabash tree, the guard vines, and the medicinal herbs that grow on every side. But the gifts of nature are not prolific. Most of the great stands of timber—lignum vitae, mahogany, dyewood and pine—have been cut away. Once fertile garden spots have dried up, and the soil that produces the yams, the pumpkins, the kaffir, and the rice is tired.

But the Haitian himself is not tired. He has suffered from malaria, yaws, and chronic hunger; yet out of the great old mountains of Haiti he has fashioned a way of life and a nation.

The Haitian of today was created out of the fabric of three continents—Africa, America, and Europe. He was shaped out of the plains and hills of Nigeria, Dahomey, and the Congo; the summers and winters of Europe; and the mountains and mountain mists of Haiti itself. He is the synthesis of the folk beliefs of the French and Spanish peasants, the Yoruba and the Arada of West Africa, and perhaps of the Carib Indians with whom he had close contact during his first days in the New World. He has brought into affinity the religious practices of Africa and the beliefs of the Church of Rome. He is outwardly simple and poor, but inwardly he is a complicated and rich man. He is rich in music, in the capacity for spiritual expression, in tradition, in folklore, and in memories. He has been able

to marry work to play, drudgery to singing, and despair to hope. In his complicated world, life and death are simply different aspects of the same thing. Those who die live as long as people remember them. And those who are alive in the physical sense are receptacles for the spiritual forces that exist on all sides—the echoes of the dead, the multitude of spirit beings, good and evil, and dancing and music.

What are the origins of this simple and complicated man?

The beginnings of the Haitian came with the discovery of America and the establishment of slavery in the New World. When the Spanish colonizers first began to organize the economy of the new colony of Hispaniola, as they called it, they attempted to enslave the indigenous Caribs to work the fields. But the Indians of Haiti found no scope and no comfort in the new system. It violated their views of life and destroyed their culture. They were proud, and they were not resilient. They did not care to pan gold for the Spaniards or to grow sugar for them. They died under the conditions of slavery, or fled into the mountains, or took to the sea in their canoes, looking for sanctuary on other islands where the Europeans had not yet settled. They left the rich earth of the Haitian valleys to the conquistadores. In less than eighteen years the new Spanish colony was dying on the vine for lack of laborers. It was then that Spain, like France, England, and Portugal, turned its eyes to Africa. There were old precedents. The Spanish and Portuguese had for many years used the African for labor. They had had intimate contact with Africans during the Moorish invasion of Iberia. And the slave trade had been an old and familiar thing even before the discovery of America.

The first Africans sent to Haiti arrived there in 1510. The precise origins of these first African immigrants to the New World are not known, but they came from somewhere along that long stretch of African coast between Senegal and Angola. It was a great crossroads in world history. As much as any other ethnic group, these Africans and those who came after them built America. They, as much as any other, turned the West Indies into a prize over which the nations of Europe fought for three hundred years. And in Haiti, as in Brazil, the United States, and other American nations, they raised moral and ethical issues for the peoples of European stock which have not been solved to our own day.

The acquisition and transportation of slaves is an old and familiar story. Slavery was an ancient institution in some parts of Africa. Some of the wars between kingdoms were, in part at least, huge slave raids. In other wars, the taking of slaves was only incidental. But the selling of these human chattels to European merchants came as easily to African chieftains as it did to Arab entrepreneurs. Often they were merely selling off

And yet the things that survived were able to do so, in certain respects, because of the particular brand of thinking of the colonial masters. Why has so much of the African past survived in Haiti when it has been all but obliterated in the United States? The answer lies primarily in the Catholic background of the Europeans who controlled the colony—first the Spanish, and then the French. The Catholic Church regarded every slave as a soul to be saved, as a complete and finished man except for salvation. And though it was an official of the Church who is alleged to have suggested African slavery in the New World,[3] the Church itself took the view that the differences between the slave owner and the slave were only worldly and transient things. The Church did not insist on washing out of the African mind everything that was there. It regarded its mission as that of supplying the single quality that was lacking—salvation. Its attitudes during the past four hundred years in Haiti have been vacillating and erratic; it has often pressed for destruction of the African cults; but on the whole it has been satisfied with conversion.

The Protestant churches in Haiti, on the contrary, have demanded that their converts become new people. They have forbidden their adherents to take any part in non-Christian rituals or other activities—including even the dance. They have presented them with a simple and painful choice.

These were the essential attitudes that prevailed during slavery days in the United States. In the beginning, while plantation owners fought against church activities among the Negroes, the church and the plantation owners were largely united in their war against "heathen" practices. Africanisms which might have either died in due course or persisted were stamped out with Puritan fervor. Significantly, it was in French-Catholic Louisiana that African-style drumming, singing, and dancing survived in the United States to the beginning of this present century.

The Catholic attitude of tolerance-by-necessity in Haiti won for it most of the country's four million souls. Today, many a Haitian who participates in the rites of Voodoun on Saturday worships in a Catholic chapel on Sunday.

Such sporadic efforts as were made to wipe out African memories in Haiti were unsuccessful. Slowly the uprooted slaves found a common denominator. The peoples of different origins developed a common language based on the French spoken by the masters. Their different religious systems merged one into another.

The necessity for adaptation and amalgamation produced a cultural hybrid of an energetic and vital kind. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the people of African descent in Haiti were a cultural alloy, fired

[3] [Bartolomé de Las Casas. Cf. p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]

and hardened and ready to deal with the French, the Spanish, and the English in battle or in politics. They were no longer slaves struggling to cope with a new and strange system. Little by little, imperceptibly they had become true Haitians.

[P110]

9. Land and Work

There is a common Haitian saying which goes: "Piti manjé, travaille yonn pike" (A little food, but tremendous work). This is the way the Haitian peasant sees it. There is endless labor in the fields or in the perpetually eroding mountain gardens, on landholdings that are too small to give any promise of a better life. The rains that give life to the crops take away, year by year, the nourishment of the soil. Where forests or lush grasses once grew on the hillsides, there are now deep, dry gullies. Where coffee plants, cotton, and yams once grew abundantly, there are now fields of stones. This is the heritage of the peasant farmer of today. Small holdings on the hillsides and in the valleys have become smaller through the years as the population has swelled and the land been subdivided. There and a half million people must take their sustenance from that land. More than three hundred persons must share each square mile of soil. But most of Haiti is mountainous and formidable to agriculture. Two-thirds of the land area is uncultivable by modern standards. There is less than one acre of useful land per person. The best of the land in the alluvial valleys is held by large corporations producing sugar and sisal. Flat, arid stretches elsewhere are semi-desert.

In the small gardens the peasants grow maize, *si mis* (millet), coffee, bananas and plantains, cotton, beans of various kinds, yams, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, and manioc. In the delta areas they grow rice, and along the long coastline thousands of fishermen sail out in crude but sturdy boats to bring back fish from the sea. Citrus trees, mango trees, and avocado trees grow wild; but they are fewer than in the old days. The Haitian works the soil and manages to subsist, but nature and history have not been kind to him.

Even less kind have been some of the chroniclers of the past, who have sought to disparage the Haitian as a lazy and careless creature who would

rather starve than work. An Englishman, James Franklin, wrote in 1828, for example:

> Experiments may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coercion and want will impel the Haytian to labour, and I have my doubts as to the practicability of enforcing labour in Hayti until the people have been better instructed, and their characters become changed.

As Franklin summarized it: "Nature is too generous to the Haytian; he never wants, and so never works for hire, as do free labourers in other countries."[3]

The early nineteenth century saw a flood of such bitter comments about the remains of the once rich and flourishing French colony of St. Domingue. The vast productivity of Haiti under French rule had made that colony one of the richest in the New World. The country was dotted with sugar mills, brick-covered wells, and warehouses; and carefully built brick aqueducts, irrigation canals, locks, and dams assured water for the plantations. In 1791, under the slave system, Haiti had exported 163,000,000 pounds of sugar. In 1826, a quarter of a century after the revolution, it was reported to have exported 33,000 pounds.

This falling off in production and exports doubtless had many causes, but one of the most significant was the Haitian's revolt not only against slavery but also against continuing the same kind of work he had performed as a slave. He saw not too much difference between forced, unpaid labor and working for any large landholder at subsistence wages. To the Haitian slave the inspiring battle cry of the French Revolution did not mean that all men would work together on another's man plantation and receive the same wages. It meant that every man would have his own garden to work for himself as he chose; every man would be a full citizen, with land of his own, free to come and go, to plant what he wished, to sell what he could. Despite long years under a colonial slave system, the Haitian still remembered a different way of life in Africa, where mass production for export was not the primary objective of labor.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the population of Haiti was not much more than half a million—less than one sixth of what it is today. There was plenty of land, and much of it had not yet been wasted by constant tilling and erosion. When the French were driven out, the Haitian peasant re-created an economic world of his own liking. The plantation system which had poured out sugar and coffee and indigo for Europe faded away, and in its place there sprang up an agrarian system which has continued until the present day. In the early

[3] [Franklin, The Present State of Hayti, p. 362. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1968) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

175 In the early
178 years of independence, Emperor Henry Christophe in the north and
311 President Pétion in the south tried to stem the disintegration of the
[643] magnificent plantations. Christophe's measures in the region he con-
[656] trolled were sometimes stern, according to legend; but the plantation system and the plantations themselves gradually fell into decay, along with the aqueducts, the warehouses, and the sugar mills. For the Haitian had returned to a tradition of landholding antedating his enslavement.

175 Europe's loss of the Pearl of the Antilles aroused bitter words from
648 Frenchmen and Englishmen for the better part of the century. They
181 accused the Negro of laziness and lack of ability, repeating endlessly that only as a colony could Haiti ever be of any use to anybody. The London *Times* deplored the Haitian's unwillingness to work for wages, speculating that he had "no desire for property strong enough to induce him to labor with sustained power." In the United States, antiabolitionist enthusiasts cited the Haitian situation as an example of what would happen to the American economy if the slaves were freed.

464 The Haitian's reluctance to work for wages did not reflect an aversion
423 to owning property, however, as the London *Times* supposed. On the
311 contrary, it was engendered by his desire for property. The land was there and waiting, only needing a house to be built upon it, and to be cleared and tilled. The typical Haitian wanted not dubious, seasonal wage work but a farm of his own. The more ambitious peasant aspired to two farms, or even three, with a homestead and a family on each.

423 If a man worked hard and made a success of one plot, he could put
595 away money and eventually buy a second. The additional land might be
198 separated by some miles from the original farm. On the new ground
583 the man would build another house and take another wife to take care of it in his absence. Known as *plaçage*, this arrangement had complete community sanction. A man whose energies and good fortune made an extra household possible was expected to make such an arrangement. It was not a new institution bred in the chaos following the
[997] Revolution, nor was it, as some missionaries held, an evidence of moral deterioration of the Haitian character. It was simply a persisting concept of West African life.[2] The woman who occupied the second or third household was not a concubine. Like the first wife, she had enhanced prestige in her community. She had authority and responsibility. Her work, her position, and her rewards were not essentially different from those of the first wife.[3] It is true that her marriage was not consecrated by a church or civil ceremony, but, ordinarily, neither was that of the
[581] first wife. Contrary to European misconceptions, such unions were true marriages in the sense that they had full sanction of the community.

[2,3] [Footnotes appear in Category 116, pp. 351-352. --Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1958) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

167 a massacre in the western part of the Dominican Republic which took
175 the lives of an estimated five thousand to fifteen thousand Haitians.
[648] The survivors fled homeward, and many were settled in frontier areas by the government. Even so, today there are believed to be some sixty or seventy thousand Haitians still living east of the border. Large numbers of Haitians, particularly men, migrated to Cuba in the years following World War I, in search of better wages in the cane fields. By 1931 there were more than eighty thousand Haitians in that country. But resentment by local Cuban labor and the onset of the depression combined to force the repatriation of great numbers of them. Thirty thousand Haitians came home from Cuba in the years 1936 and 1937 alone.

16 Solution of Haiti's problem of overpopulation does not seem imminent.
[842] The obvious answers would seem to be birth control, emigration, wiser use of natural resources, and industrialization. Since the country is predominantly Catholic, and since much social value is placed on children, birth control seems unlikely. And as health facilities become more widespread and infant mortality drops, the pressure will become more acute. Emigration seems to offer no hope, since neighboring islands and countries
[311] on the mainland give no encouragement. The Haitian may yet learn to con-
[47] serve his land and to get more out of it, to stock his lakes with fish, and to bring more fish in from the sea. But this will not suffice. Nothing is left but industrialization, and that seems to be a thing of the far-distant future.

181 Nevertheless, the character of Haitian life remains essentially agrarian.
167 The displaced peasant, whether he is now a hotel "houseboy," a taxi
461 driver, or a cane cutter, dreams of returning to the land some day and growing bananas, coffee, and cotton that will make him independent. In far-off places such as Havana and New York, Haitians work and save money with the expectation that one day they will come home, buy fifteen or twenty acres of ground, build a new house, and live out their lives as decently prosperous *habitants*. The traditions of the agricultural
[78] society, along with Vodoun, continue to play a significant role in the life of the people.

426 One such tradition is the institution of the *coumbite*, a loosely knit
241 coöperative work party of neighbors and friends. The word itself probably comes from the Spanish *convide*, or *convite*, meaning "to invite." A member of the group holds a coumbite by notifying his fellow members that on such-and-such a day his fields will require clearing or hoeing. There are several variants of the work gathering. One, called *coré* or *corvée*, meets at irregular intervals and only on special invitation. There are no regular reciprocal obligations in the *corvée*; the workers are

[Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," Journal of Negro History, October, 1940, p. 515. Cf. p. 352, Category 116. --Analyst)

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

That the separateness of yeomanry and elite had visible and socio- 565
logically important expression in physical type in Haiti was a clear 563
consequence of the history of that country. But the traditional pre- 664
ponderant light skins at the top of the structure and the preponderant 642
darkness at its base are less important than the domination of the total structure, and of the institutional means for changing it, by a mere fraction of the national population. It is the *power* of the elite which has mattered through time; its physical appearance has been only a historically derived expression of that power. Such a balance of politically weak masses against numerically sparse power holders is common, perhaps particularly in the "less developed world"; but each such case has certain special characteristics. Haiti's special nature is not simply in its being a yeoman country, and one in which a small [181]
group dominates the mass. As a rural, agrarian, unindustrialized, po- [171]
litically sovereign, and quasi-capitalistic country, Haiti shares much with other lands; but in each regard its own particularity needs to be assessed.

The rurality of Haiti is extreme, not simply because there are no 361
concentrations of population in excess of 25,000 except for Port-au- 369
Prince and Cap Haïtien but also because towns of intermediate size 489
are few in number, and the urban concentrations in the country's two cities are substantially of relatively recent rural origin. Port-au-Prince dominates the Republic in all of its economic, political, and social activities. Furthermore, the rural towns have been losing to the capital, not gaining from it. Until the United States occupation, the larger towns of the coast, such as Jérémie, Jacmel, and St. Marc, were united economically with each other, and to some extent with the capital, by a lively coastwise shipping system, and the inland towns were tributary to those of the coast. The growth of inland transport during the occupation strengthened the interior towns while coastwise shipping declined, but the capital grew even more important as the sole economic center of the Republic. Since the 1940s, the rapid deterioration of the road system has left both inland and coastal towns enfeebled; only Port-au-Prince has remained strong.

The dominion of Port-au-Prince is firm, and there is no focus of 369
power in the countryside that can counteract it. Those few foreign 473
enterprises in Haiti that base themselves outside the capital city use 504
local port facilities (e.g. Miragoâne for Reynolds Aluminum, Cap 489
Haïtien for the sisal plantations of the north) and do not affect the development of the interior transport.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

[p. 3]

I

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR COUNTRY

IN the ten thousand square miles of Haiti's mountains and valleys more than two and a half million people—some say more than three million—are crowded together. Some are black, some light-skinned, but less than five thousand are white, and these are almost all recent immigrants to the country. Modern Haiti has its racial roots primarily in Africa, but its social roots lie as much in Europe as in Africa; if it is "American" at all, geography and a few fairly superficial characteristics are the only American qualities it displays. 161 162 144 181

Carrying our own cultural interpretations with us when we visit our Caribbean neighbor, we are likely to misunderstand what we see in Haiti, for it is very easy to think of all colored people in terms of our own. To do so is to remain completely ignorant of Haiti. Whereas in the United States we use "Negro" and "colored" indiscriminately as synonyms, making a real distinction only between "black" and "mulatto," all four terms are taboo in polite society in Haiti. A new descriptive vocabulary, an entirely new frame of reference, must be acquired by the friendly foreign visitor to this West Indian republic.[1] 829 576

Probably the most striking phenomenon in the country is its division into two social groups. So rigidly are the class lines set that 565

1. No greater error of tact can be made by visitors to Haiti than to use such commonly accepted American terms as Negro, colored, mulatto, blacks, Africans. Whereas in the United States such words are employed to describe people with a greater or less degree of Negro blood, in Haiti they are generally regarded as opprobrious epithets, emphasizing the color of the epidermis as all important, while ignoring the essential matters of culture, standard of living, and social background. Not many Haitians would have the grace to reply, as President Pétion suggested to a subaltern who was incensed at a white man for calling him "un nègre," "Why, then, did you not call him 'un blanc'?" Probably the most offensive of all the terms is *mulâtre*, for it calls attention to miscegenation in the family. The educated people in general regard themselves as darker Frenchmen, not as transplanted Africans. Books about Haiti which refer to the "black republic" seem to them to ignore the important fact that the blacks, though numerically preponderant, do not rule. The visitor must accordingly acquire a new vocabulary of color. It is safer not to make any allusion at all to the matter; but if occasion demands, one speaks of "jaune" and "brun," not white and black. 829 576 186

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565 511 paring to try to move one step up the social ladder. Shoes are a symbol: wearing these, one must also wear a suit instead of a faded shirt and patched trousers; the suit demands personal cleanliness and a better home; all these lead the country man to town life with its additional expenses. So arduous a climb does not allure many of the Haitian common folk.

565 181 Because the standard of living, with its tangibles and intangibles, clearly separates the castes, the élite observe all the rules with rigor. Their etiquette is formal. Culture (in the popular, not the anthropological meaning) is respected with almost religious devotion.

565 511 434 Since the maintenance of a high standard of living is costly, it is obvious that another source of caste distinction lies in the inequalities of wealth and property. Wealth is a relative term, however, and the Haitian peasant is so poor that by contrast a few hundred dollars' income a year will seem like riches. The élite live economically by American standards, yet even parsimonious spending of money may, when governed by a consciousness of social distinctions, make the peak of aristocracy unassailable.

565 369 The élite live in towns. Many of them own country estates, but regard these as secondary to their residences in Port-au-Prince, Pétionville, Cap-Haïtien, Jérémie, and the other few towns. To live a rural life is to be isolated, out of the stream of fashion, news, social activity. What profession can one follow in a rustic valley? One who is class-conscious must see and be seen by others of his class, otherwise he would be forgotten by "those who count." In the towns are the schools; there French is spoken; there, and there only, financial and social opportunities exist. True, plebeians form the majority of the population even in the towns, so that urbanization alone is not a mark of caste; it must be taken in conjunction with the others.

565 581 Formal marriage is another requisite for membership in the élite. As will shortly be apparent, sex relations in Haiti are quite casual, as judged by American standards. The majority of Haitian families are established by parents who have gone through neither a civil nor a religious ceremony. This is not to imply that spouses are unfaithful to each other, or that there is not mutual respect within the family circle; it merely means that most people regard formal marriage as a luxury which they cannot afford, or in any case as a ceremony which custom has made superfluous. Once again, however, the aristocrat holds to the form. If a family can point to legal marriages among

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tion? Here again, the decision of a leader fixed the direction of Haitian life for decades to come. It is agreed by commentators that overmilitarization was the bane of nineteenth-century Haiti. One tenth of all able-bodied men were constantly in active army service. Moreover, all the male cultivators on plantations must hold themselves in readiness to obey the government's call to arms; ammunition and arms were stored in every parish. A military mentality was nourished, the people early learning the lesson (apparently unchallenged by any liberal) that the army should rule and the people obey.

Although the common soldiers were ex-slaves who, upon dismissal from service, would return to the ranks of agricultural workers, their officers had a higher status. Noncommissioned officers had a long road to travel to eminence, but like the overseers they had at least a glimpse of the promised land of distinction. Captains and generals had this vision within their grasp: they were already of the élite.

In the subcategory of "artisans" were included all the townspeople who carried on crafts or trades. It must be remembered that Haiti had no cities, and that its two largest towns then numbered probably no more than 10,000 people each, so that artisans were not numerous. Since there was a distinction in the arduousness of various pursuits as well as in their financial return there existed in this category, as in the official and military, some chance for social prestige.

The only persons remaining outside the categories mentioned were colored landowners who had held estates in the colonial period. Dessalines took active steps to gain control of most of the land in the country, but at his death in 1806 there were still many of the old proprietors left who were, in the main, determined to hold their land and preserve their dignity as non-laborers.

Assassination by his political foes ended the career of Dessalines only two years after he assumed power. In 1805 he had had himself crowned emperor in imitation of Napoleon, but unlike Napoleon he permitted no nobility. "*Moi seul, je suis noble!*" he replied to ambitious henchmen who asked for the establishment of a peerage. It was the Emperor's tactless handling of the social situation which caused his murder, for he touched sensitive nerves on the raw in attacking property rights, inherited privilege, color distinctions, and social aspirations. The cultivators grumblingly accepted his decrees; the ambitious upper group did not.

The former affranchis fully intended to keep their lands once the

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Haiti under Dessalines still had many building

175 of French con-
178 struction, both plantation mansions and slave quarters. With forced
331 labor available these had been kept in a measure of repair. Christophe, not content with leftovers from colonial days, had sponsored architectural activity all over his kingdom; if his citadel is the most noteworthy example, there are also to his credit lesser palaces and government warehouses. Almost no building was done by Pétion and Boyer, however, and by the 1840's the constructions of the French [731] had fallen into serious disrepair. Severe earthquakes and fires quickly ruined what time had already weakened. By the middle of the century one saw, instead of trim slave quarters near great mansions, a few straggling towns of one-story houses, the hillsides dotted with ramshackle huts, and the plains with daubed shacks.

175 From great estates to tiny plots; from carefully tilled fields to
178 small gardens in a wilderness; from financial prosperity to debt;
181 from directed enterprise to sloth; from an attitude of hopeful de-
433 termination to one of tolerance for things as they are—these are the striking contrasts of the two periods. It could hardly have been imagined in Christophe's day that the smart, disciplined Dahomet would be succeeded by casual ragamuffins who dozed on their tilted chairs while on sentry duty. Christophe had liked his subjects to be well dressed, and insisted on it; but the British consul in Boyer's time wrote that "the laborers are, generally speaking, nearly naked; in fact, adults only wearing what is barely necessary to prevent indecent exposure, while the children of both sexes run about without covering of any kind."[64]

175 It was the parceling of landed estates combined with the disap-
178 pearance of forced labor which initiated the transition from serfdom
433 to peasantry. Personalities as dynamic as Christophe's or as brutal as
[466] Dessalines' would have been required to keep the people in a servile
[433] condition in a land of tropical fertility. Contemporary foreign judg-
[461] ment was almost unanimous in placing the blame for declining
[164] prosperity upon indolence (the word is continually repeated, generally preceded by the adjective "natural"). It may be noted in passing that no one at the time seems to have realized how widespread were the debilitating diseases of hookworm and malaria, which can make apparently husky men prefer rest to work. Responsibility for economic failure rests as much upon the governing class,

64. Charles Mackenzie, *Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti* (1829), p. 86.

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however, as on the masses. Nothing was done to educate the people and so inculcate in them the desire for a higher standard of living. Where food is easily got, the government gentle, and the people ignorant, one hardly looks for progress.

Foreigners who knew Haiti were prophesying doom through most of Boyer's administration. The British consul was the most vocal of these prophets. He toured the whole republic in 1828 and found only local variations on a sorry state of affairs. At Jacmel he reported a parceling of the land, a decline of plantations, and a horror of corporal punishment by the people; it seemed to surprise him that every blow given a worker was returned in kind. In the arrondissements of Saint-Marc and Gonaïves cotton continued to be the chief crop as it had been in French days but quantity and quality had declined. At Petite-Rivière relative prosperity prevailed because the lands there were under the control of a former lieutenant of Christophe, who managed to apply that king's stern discipline to his workers. From Gonaïves to Cap Nicolas Môle cultivation was at a low ebb; near Cap-Haïtien everything agricultural was in ruins.[65]

Industry and discipline, the two commonest characteristics of the Haiti of Christophe, were precisely those most notably absent from the Negro masses of 1843. Obedience had given way to independence of behavior. A visitor in 1842 describes the actual condition of a plantation in the arrondissement of Furcy. Where formerly thirty-two families had toiled industriously, under strict overseers who were free to inflict physical punishment upon laggards, now only twelve families remained, the rest having become "freeholders." These twelve had a crop-sharing agreement with the owner of the estate whereby they received the income from half the 10,000 pounds of coffee yielded by the land; but also they

appropriate to themselves almost the whole of the provisions which the land furnishes, sending down only a few of the rarer vegetables, beans, peas, and artichokes, to their master, for his table at Port-au-Prince, and supplying his need when he comes to reside for a few days in the country. This he knows very well, but has no alternative but to bear it quietly.[66]

65. See particularly *ibid.*, pp. 94, 103–105. The consul clearly felt that the only hope of salvation in Haiti was a reintroduction of some sort of coercion such as that used by Dessalines and Christophe.

66. Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

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to attempt to retrace the path of property evolution, which has steadily taken its own course since the time of Pétion."

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With the peasants prevailingly satisfied in their daily round of life, the separation of upper and lower castes in Haitian society has gradually become an accepted fact. At least ninety per cent of the total population now belong to the peasant group, whose members are as much reconciled to their status as in the United States the poorest colored folk to theirs. Vaguely they may often wish they had the privileges and luxuries of those above them; often, likewise, they feel resentment at the way in which they are treated; but in so far as it is permissible to generalize about two million people, it is fair to say that the Haitian peasant rarely complains of his lot.

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Of the remaining ten per cent of the population a small fraction look upon themselves as élite. Some families of this group can be traced back to colonial times when their ancestors were already affranchis; others began to take on aristocracy under Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, and Boyer. Those whose forebears have become élite only since 1843 are less firmly entrenched in the topmost class. However, since no president since Boyer has ever succeeded in weakening caste lines, the élite one or two per cent may be said to constitute a stable social group.

It is significant that although the blacks had the government in their hands for three quarters of a century they were unable to effect any slight change either in caste membership or in caste lines.

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The part of the population which is neither élite nor peasant is not "middle class," as that term is understood in the Western World. It is rather a shifting percentage of Haitians whose one prevailing characteristic is their residence in towns. Some are wage earners, some small tradesmen; some are ex-élite on the way down the

11. The intimate observer of the Haitian peasant never fails to comment upon his [81] love of the land. Whereas the colonial planter attached a value to his estate because it [421] produced wealth, the peasant loves his little plot because it is his home. Through all the [425] sixteen successive constitutions of Haiti, the one unchangeable article has been the [423] prohibition of sale to foreigners of real estate in the country. Haitian land is for Haitian people—or was so until after the American Occupation. Likewise, the peasant is suspicious of any law which seems likely to reintroduce the system of large properties, for these might condemn him to leave his land and work at wages for the benefit of a master who, whether kindly or pitiless, would still deprive him of his present liberty. Therefore the Haitian countryman defends with all his force this soil to which his [24] liberty attaches him, and which he cultivates after his own manner. "The Haitian loves his land almost as a man loves his woman."

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ress. Others point out the difference between the lower-class Negro of the large commercial towns and the black peasants who live in the plains and mountains. The former, in contact with the roughest of white sailors, are a disgrace to any people, while the countryfolk, seeing only a select few of the whites, appear "to have an innate idea of the white man's superiority," and so treat him with respect. The peasants, according to these speakers, have all the virtues and vices of "wild races": they may acquire a kind of French varnish, but they are "essentially an African people removed from their parent country."[11]

There are among the élite broad-minded, tolerant, and cultured persons. The average member of the caste, however, like the average American, is full of prejudices of all kinds. Travel produces a superficial polish; their patriotism consists of antagonism toward the outside world and an effort to secure position for themselves; they are sure that Haiti's laws are sounder, her culture superior, her schools more advanced, her civilization in general higher, than those of most other nations (France generally excepted).

There are evidences also of certain psychological twists. It used to be said that mulatto Haitians "hate their fathers and despise their mothers," meaning that in colonial times and for a short time after the élite did not like to remember that they derived from a master-slave union. They realize nowadays that they would be accepted as social equals in few countries, and this makes them protest by self-assertion. Certainly a majority of the élite would be completely unwilling to admit that things are anywhere better done than in Haiti.

One generation after the wars which led to independence, the greater number of Haitians had practically forgotten that there was an outside world. Haiti was all they knew. With no standard of comparison for their lot in life the peasants ate, slept, raised their families, fell ill, and died without bothering their heads about such academic abstractions as equality. This uncomplaining acceptance of life, routine, and fate seems to be the essence of peasant existence. The Haitian peasant has been bound to the soil by mental inertia and by tradition more effectively than ever by law. When he has revolted it has been through conviction that someone was trying to change the old familiar ways, or because of physical maltreatment. Peasants have been bribed and paid to revolt, but as mercenaries they have entered only half-heartedly into warfare.

11. The phrases quoted here are fragments of statements made by Haitian élite to the author.

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and set apart on special plates in a separate room for them; in the afternoon the family eats the food. If the twins to whom homage is being offered are still alive, they must wear special clothes at the sacrifice.

"I believe in the careful cult of the dead . . ." Once more it is necessary to renew one's acquaintance with primitive and folk belief to grasp the Haitian attitude. Life is desirable, death is dreaded; both death and the dead are feared. In the actual world, any excursion from the comfortably familiar countryside of one's home leads to confusion and bewilderment. Except in the company of his fellows (on a religious pilgrimage to the waterfalls at Ville-Bonheur, for example), a Haitian almost never leaves his valley or mountainside and market town. Sophisticated people view the unknown with pleasurable excitement, for they have learned by experience that the unfamiliar is not necessarily frightful; it is quite the contrary with simple folk, whose meagre experience with the unfamiliar has been at least somewhat alarming.

Death is the ultimate unknown. The fearsomeness the imagination conceives to lie beyond death seems to exist in almost direct proportion to people's ignorance of the material world. The fear of ghosts is a commonplace among primitive folk, as among the uneducated in the "civilized" world. Where ghosts are considered powerful, one part of any comprehensive cult will certainly deal with the dead.

In Haitian Vodun the teachings of the Catholic Church have exerted more influence upon the cult of the dead than upon any other part of the religion. The preparation of the corpse for burial shows no traces of African practice; the watch (or wake) and wailing over the deceased is familiar; the funeral itself is conducted by a Catholic priest, with burial in consecrated ground. Thereafter, the continual efforts to secure the tranquil repose of the departed bear the earmarks of faithful Catholic practice; it is at this point, however, that the cult begins to assume distinctive features, for it is firmly believed that the dead exert tremendous power in the world of the living. This power comes from God—the Christian God. The case has been put succinctly by Sumner and Keller: "The relation between man and ghost resolves itself . . . into a relation of rights and duties, with all the rights on one side and all the duties on the other."[30] God gives

30. W. G. Sumner and A. G. Keller, *The Science of Society* (New Haven, 1927), II, 129.

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perfectly educated, and because other matters seemed infinitely more pressing than the setting up of schools, the early Haitians, united in 1804, fell apart within a single generation. On one hand were the élite and a few other townspeople who knew at least something of the outside world; on the other the masses of toiling countryfolk to whom tiny Haitian valleys were the whole universe. The young men of these two classes coming to power could not understand each other; they could not make concessions to each other; and as they fought for what they held true, each grew suspicious of the other if not permanently hostile. The lack of common understanding might still have been repaired in any one generation, but no single president had the vision to inaugurate universal education. Aside from the expense, certain powerful élite citizens often expressed their doubts as to the educability of the peasants; as property owners they would undoubtedly have objected to the unsettling of the economic order, which was based upon the work of an ignorant mass of blacks.[16]

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Without education, the political sphere went unenriched by any flow of new blood from the people. Politics existed in a vacuum. The earthy, candid criticisms of a politically conscious folk never invigorated the discussion of national affairs. Without education, the people had no standards of comparison of Haiti with other nations, and were the easy dupes of whatever insurrectionary agitator could persuade them that their daily woes were caused by the current administration. Without education, high political office became a prerogative of the few, a contest between the Ins and the Outs, a path to personal wealth. Without education, Haiti could never be more than a dictatorship by a man or a clique, her stability endangered with the downfall of each incumbent, for dictatorships rarely provide for continuity in government.

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Another great weakness was the notion that national happiness could be achieved by political means primarily. After the germinal ideas of Christophe and Pétion, which had a basis in economic behavior, hardly another important concept came out of a century of presidents. Haitian politicians have been great arrangers: they have given the country eighteen constitutions and innumerable codes, all admirable in their loving solicitude for precise detail. The common feeling of political aspirants has been, "If we are given power, all will

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16. This argument is clearly stated in Madiou, op. cit., III, 176 ff.

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prosper." Yet every change of administration saw merely a new embroidery on the old theme of sterility."[17]

The further weakness of social or class consciousness has already been treated at length. It kept the whole nation divided from top to bottom, setting black against colored, North against South, countryside against town. It meant a perennial civil war, latent at times, but constantly breaking out in new insurrections.

Some day a diligent scholar may try to catalogue the revolutions which Haiti has undergone. Magloire discusses sixty-nine "important" ones between 1806 and 1879;[18] but the latter date was merely the threshold of renewed revolutionary activity. There seems to have been very little pattern in these uprisings, except that almost never were they a spontaneous revolt of the masses, as the Slave Insurrection of 1791 had been. The peasants were constantly being impressed into service with the army of a general who had presidential ambitions. From the middle years of the nineteenth century certain peasants found fighting a more profitable trade than any other, and began to hire themselves out as mercenaries. In the North these professional guerrilla warriors were known as *cacos*, in the South as *piquets*. Their methods were those of terror and rapine. They were a constant menace to the peace, and their suppression was one of the announced purposes of the American Occupation, for every revolutionary chief felt it necessary to hire their services.

Another recognized procedure of revolution was incendiarism. Haitian politics is almost wholly the affair of townsmen, and more narrowly of the men of the six important towns—Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, Jérémie, Les Cayes, Gonaïves, and Saint-Marc. Except for their principal buildings and villas, these towns are constructed of wood or other inflammable material. Leaders of insurrections therefore have habitually set fire to the poorer sections of the towns, and as frequently as not this threat has won over the populace, who preferred overthrowing the government to having their homes burned. Support of the insurrection becomes a form of fire insurance. Such a state of affairs is eloquent testimony to the cynical attitude of the political leaders toward the masses.

A revolution directed by a general of real ambition was likely to

17. Auguste Magloire, *Histoire d'Haïti d'après un plan nouveau* (Port-au-Prince, 1909), I, 236, 243, 250–251, develops this theme at length.
18. *Ibid.*, Vol. II.

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114. It is interesting to speculate just why the life of the Haitian peasant, and, indeed, within the last decade, of the educated city dwellers, thus became a subject for lurid decription. In its most honest manifestation actual misunderstanding or naïveté has undoubtedly been the cause; or it may be inferred that certain of the pictures drawn have been dictated by prejudice or by international political considerations. Finally, and within recent times most frequently, writers have seemed deliberately to distort and sensationalize their materials in order to attract to their work a desired notoriety.

The effect of this constant stress laid on the African cults in describing Haitian life has been not only to throw the entire picture badly out of focus, but to distract attention from the equally interesting phases of Haitian society which concern the everyday life of the people. Almost nowhere, aside from pre-Revolutionary eighteenth-century writings, can information be had about the workaday world. The rituals that accompany birth and death, the social and economic values that prevail, characteristic institutions such as the market or co-operative work-groups — one searches in vain for other than cursory mention of these in the later accounts. Even where a writer has included a discussion of such co-operative organization as the Société Congo on the Isle à Gonave, emphasis is almost exclusively laid on its picturesque ceremonialism. Mention, it is true, is at times made of happy, "child-like" (the favored adjective), normal Haitians in the few pages that recent books have devoted to daytime activities. But with the dusk the "booming drums" are made to sound and the mysteries are again called upon to divert the reader.

114 105 182 Yet how are these descriptions of a hysterical, paranoid folk, ridden with fear of the dark forces of magic and the anger of vindictive gods, to be reconciled with the picture of the Haitian as he is shown in the second section of this book — of a man going about his affairs in matter-of-fact fashion, tending his crops, buying and selling, carrying on his amorous

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conquests, establishing and providing for his family? The answer is that such a reconciliation is unnecessary where religion takes its place beside other interests and activities and where, psychologically, the supernatural world is on the same plane as the natural one, having its dangers as nature presents dangers, but also offering its compensations as do other phases of existence. 114 105 182

Investigations of native life such as this one not only require generous financial support, but have need of the sympathetic understanding of those in a position to extend helpful practical aid and advice in the field. To the many persons and institutions whose co-operation made this study possible, it is a privilege to record here my appreciation. Initial support of the work and later appropriations for preparing the material for publication were had from the Social Science Research Councils of Columbia and Northwestern Universities; while a grant-in-aid from the American Council of Learned Societies permitted the recording of songs in the field; and another from the National Research Council allowed motion pictures of motor behavior to be taken — films from which a number of the accompanying illustrations have been derived. Concepts relating to the problem of the results of contact between peoples possessing different customs, habits, and beliefs — a principle objective in the long-term program of research on Negro cultures of which this work in Haiti constitutes but a part — were sharpened through the discussions I have been privileged to have with my associates on the Committee of Acculturation of the Social Science Research Council, Professors Ralph Linton, Robert Redfield, and Donald Young. 122

Official aid in Haiti could not have been more generously accorded. The sympathy of His Excellency President Stenio Vincent, and M. Jacques C. Antoine, chief of the presidential secretariat in 1934 and at present Secretary to the Legation

1: Herskovits E-4, 6 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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CHAPTER XV

SOME WIDER IMPLICATIONS

158 No student of Haitian institutions can elude a progressively
182 sharpened awareness of the psychological conflict that is being waged within the frame of Haitian society. And though examples of the divergent forces which lie at the root of this conflict have been set forth in the preceding chapters, some of the more important of these may be recalled here.

178 In his social relationships the Haitian is constantly exposed
182 to the demands of a code of morality which requires marriage
595 to be monogamic. Yet the African tradition of polygyny, and
158 the undoubtedly satisfactory arrangements of both an economic and a social nature that can be made under the terms of plural marriage, pull him toward this form. The case is even
178 stronger in the field of religion, which in Haiti is not a thing
182 remote from life, but an intimate part of existence. On the one
771 hand, because of his inheritance of the *loa*, he must meet his
158 obligations toward these ancestral gods of Africa who punish harshly those who fail them, so that he must either continue their traditional worship or learn to know the consequences of their anger. Yet on the other hand, the priest thunders his
[191] maledictions and threats of eternal damnation—in Mirebalais, at least, often in Créole, a language which the peasant can understand—against those of his flock, the vast majority

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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of whom are sincere practicing voluists as they are sincere practicing Catholics, who do not put an end to the worship of false gods.

The absence of graphic and plastic arts in Haitian culture, commented upon in a preceding chapter, must also be regarded as a case in point in laying bare the anatomy of this inner conflict of tradition, since it is important to recognize that the suppression of these forms of the prevalent African tradition would seem to have lost to the Haitian an important outlet for the resolution of inner tensions caused by pent-up drives. Even more revealing is the substitution of games of chance for those games of skill which in most African and New World Negro societies are played for their own sake alone—that is, for the prestige accruing to the skillful player. The strain that accompanies this play for stakes, often of no inconsiderable value in terms of the resources of the players, is patent to the most casual observer. The question here arises whether or not the craving for excitement of this kind may not in Haiti be traceable to the inhibition, under slavery, of some of the more gracious forms of African life which there make for social equilibrium. Might it not represent a kind of compensation for the thwarted psychic ease with which a culturally undisturbed people approach their own existence—a state of being which, in contrast, is quite lacking in Haiti?

A singularly illuminating comment upon these manifestations of instability in Haitian life has been made by Dr. J. C. Dorsainvil, who in drawing his conclusion called both upon his own medical training and on his experience of many years as a profound student of his own people. "It has perhaps been insufficiently remarked to what an astonishing degree the Haitian people live on their nerves."[1] As might be expected, he advances a number of possible explanations of the causes that underlie this state of "living on nerves." The wear and tear of life in the tropics is given as one reason; another is the excitement of the vodun dances with their frenzy of possession;

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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154 rites for him, despite his strict Catholic upbringing. His vacillation between the desire to understand and worship the gods of his ancestors and his utter remorse after he had done this illustrates one way in which conflicts in a cultural setting can affect the outward responses and unsettle the inner adjustment of the individual who is exposed to such a situation. From a broader point of view, such an analysis of Haitian psychology suggests a more realistic understanding of the individuals in other cultures who have likewise fallen heir to conflicting traditions.

154 However revealing this type of analysis of the springs of
182 Haitian behavior may prove, it will be adding only a fragment of esoteric information unless it, like all other aspects of the investigation of this single society and its mode of life, is pointed toward an understanding of the larger problems of the relation between man and his culture. For just as a study of the effect of the dual character of Haitian behavior upon the personality of the Haitians is important in throwing light on the study of the relationship between culture and personality in general, so the study of Haitian institutions may hold equal significance when questions are raised about the less subjective aspects of human civilization — that is, when attempts are made to understand what may be termed the dynamics of culture.

197 Most important in this connection is the demonstration made in this book how cultures in contact influence each other. This would seem self-evident but for the fact that very generally when such a proposition has been stated, it rarely enters into the actual studies of primitive cultures in contact with European civilizations without being neutralized by a counter-assumption that the force of European achievement overwhelms peoples with a differing cultural heritage. As will be seen, the failure to recognize this fact of the reciprocal effects of cultural contacts has entered to a very significant degree into the determination of basic atti-

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179 178 suggests that generalizations as to the relative pliability of any specific phases of a culture under exposure to another are premature.

562 178 Are women more conservative than men in respect to cultural change? The appropriateness of the affirmative answer often given can be tested to advantage in studies such as this. The answer, in Haiti, would seem to be that where work at home shields women from the influences of the outer world, this conservatism is found, but where they have an opportunity to come into contact with new trends, no less change enters into their activities than into that of the men. Thus in such matters as the organization of the Haitian household, the cuisine, or the time of meals, the logic of the situation has caused women to preserve Africanisms in full vigor, while historical causes have also similarly aided them in such things as retaining their African role as traders in the markets. In other phases of their lives, however, women, like men, have accepted European patterns, as is evidenced in the field of religion, where no greater resistance has been shown by women toward new forms than by men.

●182 Other examples might be cited, but these indicate how a culture such as that of Haiti, as regards both its inner values and the psychological responses made to them, and its outer form and the manner in which its present-day character was attained, aids in sharpening and clarifying the questions that must be asked and answered if a better grasp of the dynamics of custom and the way in which tradition plays upon the inner being of those who are its carriers is to be had. However, it is not alone in general considerations such as these that the study of Haitian life can be of use. Much that is perplexing in that particular facet of the problem of race which in America is termed the "Negro problem" has both analogy and contrast in Haitian life. It must not be forgotten that the slaves who were brought to continental America were of the same types and of the same background as those imported

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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into other parts of the New World. Consequently a knowledge of the strains which came to Haiti, of the manner in which they met the situation they found there, and of how the cultural influences that played upon them have worked out in terms of patterns of behavior, should throw light on the way in which American Negroes have met, and are meeting, their own social situation. 182

Thus the study of Haiti offers contributions of particular value in examining the nature and accuracy of underlying attitudes held toward Negroes by non-Negroes, and the attitudes of Negroes toward themselves. One example is the widespread belief about the quality of the cultures from which the slaves were drawn. This holds that the African peoples who contributed the slave populations to the New World were "savages" whose civilizations were of a lower order than that to which the slaves were introduced. Obviously this view is a natural by-product of European ethnocentrism, but its many repetitions have persuaded the Negroes to accept it completely. Nevertheless, the material in the preceding chapters shows that this concept is anything but valid; that the regions of Africa from which slaves were derived comprise the area where the high cultures of the continent existed, where complex social and political organizations and high forms of religion and art were and are to be found; that their rank, if cultures can be ranked, would rather be with Europe of the Middle Ages than with the most simple societies of nonliterate folk. In addition, investigation into Haitian history has pointed out that of these populations it was not necessarily the deficient who made up the slave cargoes. Despite the widespread acceptance of this notion — among Negroes, again, no less than among whites — it has been seen that a considerable proportion of the slaves were upper-class Africans; that at the very least the slave population represented an adequate cross-section of the societies from which its members were derived.[8] 17 182

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Vodoun is clearly more than ritual of the cult temple. It is an integrated system of concepts concerning human behavior, the relation of mankind to those who have lived before, and to the natural and supernatural forces of the universe. It relates the living to the dead and to those not yet born. It "explains" unpredictable events by showing them to be consistent with established principles. In short, it is a true religion which attempts to tie the unknown to the known and thus create order where chaos existed before. 771

As in Dahomey, it is not a system imposed from above but one which pushes out from below. It is bred and nurtured in the family, in the towns, and in the fields. It is common law, with deep roots in an unbroken and continuous past. The priests of Vodoun do not control it and direct its course. They, like the least fortunate peasant, simply move about within it and make use of its resources. They are its servants and its interpreters. In their cult centers, the principles of Vodoun are brought into sharp focus and dramatized. Vodoun is democratic in concept. Any man or woman may have direct contact with the deities or dead ancestors without the intervention of the cult priest. There is no place or situation beyond the influence of the loa or beyond the limits of Vodoun. At every crossroads is the spirit of the crossroads guardian, Legba, and on every long trail is the spirit of the Master of the Highway. 771 793 794 776

The cult priest nevertheless plays a significant and essential role. He translates beliefs that otherwise might tend to become amorphous into formalized action. He is a teacher, a repository of cult learning, and a vital catalyst. He gives form to abstraction, and practical meaning to symbols. He is the intellectualizing agency of a tremendous emotional force. Through his knowledge of the substance and forms of Vodoun, his experience in dealing with the loa, and in some instances his capacity to set magical forces into action, the cult priest is a dynamic power within his community. 793 182

Though the making of *pouins* and *magie* (ritual magic) and *ouangas* (aggressive magic directed against individuals) is within the realm of the cult priest's activities, these things are part of Vodoun only in a subsidiary sense. Magic lurks on the periphery of Vodoun. It has little or no place in the placating of the deities or the dead. It concerns the relationship of the living with each other and with *lou-garos* (*loups-garous*) and *baka* (demons). Although cult rituals include various pouin and magie ceremonies, the cult priest draws upon magic as he draws upon other mystic arts and fields of learning—leaf doctoring, divination, Catholic ritual, and Masonic symbolism. He attempts to bring together all thinking that widens the scope of Vodoun, in order to strengthen his hand to deal with 793 789 754 771

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

one. Sometimes a loa who is making life too hard for a devotee will be retired without a replacement. The "washing of the head" must be accompanied by ritual safeguards, and all possible circumstances must be taken into account by the officiating cult priest. There are many stories of people who became mentally deranged as a result of the removal of their loa from their heads.

The mait' tête must also be removed from the head of a person who dies. Should this not be done, the spirit of the deceased will go to reside "below the water" and may cause trouble for the family. This loa is usually transferred to a special jar as a temporary resting place, and later perhaps into the head of another member of the family.

Though the loa is a powerful ruling force in the life of the individual, the human "horse" has controls over his deity too. He may reproach or admonish his loa for bad behavior or for failing to protect him. He may expose the loa's irresponsibility in public through the use of songs in religious rites. And though the loa is frequently encouraged to "enter," steps may be taken to restrain him from possession. This is called *marré loa* —"tying the loa." A woman may "tie" her loa by fixing a hairpin in her hair in a special way. A man may do it by placing his hands in cold water.[3]

Nevertheless, the loa are always lurking in the background. They are a constant and dramatic element in the religious life of the people. They may sometimes be controlled by the houngan, but they are an authority stronger than the priesthood. They give advice, courage, consolation, and status to their followers. They add much to an otherwise hard and ungenerous environment and evoke remembrances of Africa from which the Haitians' ancestors were uprooted. They can also cause concern and anxiety; for the loa are not always benevolent, and they are frequently unpredictable.

Many of the loa are ancient deities, sib-founders and ancestors who loom out of a misty, half-forgotten past. Nananbouclou, Legba, and Ayida Wèdo have been known for many lifetimes in Dahomey. Chango, Ogoun, and Loko were old spirits in Nigeria before the first slave ships sailed from Africa to the New World. Their names and many others in present-day Haiti come from an ancient lore. They recall places, tribes, and old kingdoms from Senegal in northwestern Africa to the heart of the Congo. They are a bond which holds the people of Haiti to Africa. In the mountains people sometimes say, "Haiti is the child of Dahomey," or "Haiti is the child of Guinée." The gods divide their time between their Haitian and their African children.

Yet in some respects the Haitians' concept of their loa is no longer purely African. The African religious patterns have been infiltrated by the lore

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

The yam 244 121 192

itself was transplanted from Africa, where in old times as well as in modern it was a staff of life among those who lived by agriculture. The word "yam" is known throughout large parts of Africa, crossing language lines and forests. It signifies the big root on which the African is so dependent, and it also has the general meaning of "eat." In Senegal it is called *nyami*, while across the width of Africa and in the upper Nile region it is called *nyam*.

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In Haiti the yam is a tie with the past and a symbol of fertility. When the yams are plentiful, there is food for the winter months and a sense of well-being. When the yam crop is poor, there is insecurity and even hunger. Whatever occurs, lurking in the background is the shadow of the family ancestors, for it is they who have the power to enhance the crops or blight them. This is the concept around which the mangé yam is built.

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The annual harvest feast, on the twenty-fifth of November, is rooted in the need for placating the ancestors, so that the dead will insure the fertility of the fields. Before the feast, no yams may be eaten, for the crop must be "baptized" first. Should this rule be violated the yams will spoil and those who eat them will become sick. The precise form of the mangé yam varies from region to region. Sometimes it is held on the premises of the cult chief for the community at large. More traditionally it is held on the family *habitation*, with a houngan in attendance. It is felt that an important obligation rests upon those who have wandered away from the homestead to return for the occasion. For the fate of the family depends to a large degree upon the successful appeal to the vast host of the ancestral dead, and the solidarity of the living in this effort is regarded as vital. Even if one belongs to a Christian sect which proscribes Vodoun, he is obligated and ready to come, for the welfare of the family is paramount. Catholics, Adventists, and Protestants alike participate. As the Haitians say, it is an affair for all who eat yams, and that means all Haitians.

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Yams are washed and prepared for eating during the service. They are cut in small portions, placed in dishes or calabash bowls, and offered to the dead, who have prime rights. All categories of the dead are fed—those who are remembered, those who can be recalled only by name, and those whose names are forgotten. The dead of Haiti are invoked, then the dead of Africa. The marassa dead are fed from separate gourds or bowls, and a special table is set for the ancient dead who move slowly because of their age or infirmities, and who may take a long while to arrive at the mangé. A share of the yams is offered to the family loa. Then the members of the family receive symbolic portions. There is singing, drumming, and dancing, and sometimes ritual baths are taken. Afterward, when the yam feast is ended, the crops may be gathered, stored, and eaten.

many non-European characteristics. The manner of work, even down to specific motor activity, has direct and hardly disputable West African connections. Instead of the short-handled West African hoe, the Haitians use a long-handled one, and they work more erect than stooped. But the rhythmic, synchronized use of the hoe, the singing leader and the musicians who stand to one side to "encourage" the workers, the calling of the workers by drum *rappels*, the special consideration for the sick, and the concept of long-term community endeavor are all of West African beginnings. The coumbite is the legitimate descendant of the Dahomean *dokpwe*, the *kurum* of the Mambila (Cameroons), the *ku* of the Kpelle (Liberia), and other West African coöperative systems. 476 171 [461]

Although the *dokpwe* of Dahomey is a more formal and intricate institution, permeated with certain abstract and ritual concepts, its social and functional characteristics are not greatly different from those of the Haitian coumbite, in which coöperation is marked. Herskovits notes that working with the Dahomean *dokpwe* 171 476 461

> represents recreation rather than labor to the individual member. There is song and dance to drumming and the sound of gongs, on the way and after arrival, and there is feasting and an exhibition of skill. It is an impressive sight to see from forty to a hundred men kneading earth for walls, or laying thatch, or hoeing the earth with unison movements to the accompaniment of conversation and laughter, and the songs of such of their fellows, who, for the moment at rest, have constituted themselves the chorus.

When more than one *dokpwe* is summoned for work on the same project, Herskovits notes, 476 171

> there is great rivalry among the organizations to see which one will first complete its allotted task. If only one *dokpwe* is present, there is either individual rivalry, or the *dokpwe* may be divided into two groups which compete one against the other. The food which is provided at these times of collective labor is as rich fare as the owner can afford . . .[8]

An underlying factor in the Dahomean *dokpwe* is awareness of itself as "the manpower of Dahomey," and the members regard themselves as exercising their fundamental privilege as Dahomeans. This attitude toward the coumbite continues to prevail in Haiti. Like the hounfor—but even more significantly in terms of routine, workaday life—the coumbite and the société are an expression of social ties and of the pervading interest in the common welfare. [182]

Certain patterns of the coumbite have been carried over into non-agrarian labor in the towns and cities, wherever group work is required. The carrying of coffee and sugar bags in the warehouses, the loading of ships, and the repairing of roads—all are traditionally performed 476 178 461 533

[8] [Herskovits, "Some Aspects of Dahomean Ethnology", Africa, Vol. V (July, 1932), pp. 266-296. Cf. p. 352, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

tempo. The chorus and leader sing responsively, their parts overlapping in traditional African style. The shoulder movements, foot movements, the way the arms are carried, and the typical posture of feet flat on the ground, bent knees, and swayed back—all are of African derivation. These postures and movements are broad and direct. There are few of the decorative and "fine" movements that one sees in the dances of Indonesia, Cambodia, and India. Where the Javanese lays stress on the pose of the hands and the delicate movements of the fingers, the Haitian dancer is concerned with the position of the arms and the motions of the shoulders. The Indonesian sense of poised balance or suspended movement is absent. In its place there is an attitude of strong frontal assault against natural forces such as gravity, or direct submission to those forces. There is almost always a feeling of solidity and stability in Haitian posture, and of a proximity between the body and the earth, but the total effect is dynamic. Indonesian dancing seems to express a comprehension of the unseen and the supernatural; Haitian dancing seems to express an intimate understanding of nature.

Dancing touches on virtually every aspect of life in Haiti. It plays a part in the supplication of loa, the placation of the dead, and the making of magic; in the consecration of a hounfor, the installation of a houngan, and the initiation of cult members; in planting, harvesting, and house-building. Catholic Church holidays, Nine Nights, baptisms, the election of a new president, and ordinary social gatherings—all are celebrated, in part, at least, by dancing.

Haitian dancing is participative rather than exhibitionistic. It is to join rather than to watch. There are some dances, however, which require special skills, and a few which are highly individualistic. Several types of dances are described elsewhere in this book. Verbal description cannot do justice to an art such as dancing, of course; but some brief sketches may help to suggest the differences between one Haitian dance and another.

In the Congo Mazonne, for example, men and women pair off and dance face to face, making contact occasionally but only briefly. The arms are stretched forward as though to embrace the partner around the waist, but the actual embrace never materializes. The partners dance sometimes as though they are unaware of each other and are simply part of a larger group; then they approach, move as mirrored reproductions, and separate. Loin movement is free, and there is a restrained sexual intensity, though direct sexual implications are not necessarily present. Sometimes the woman holds the hem of her skirt in her hands, while the man holds his jacket open toward his partner.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

they even comment upon his unselfish generosity, which seems to have been entirely free of any desire for personal gain. They accuse him rather of taking the easiest course—that of trying to pacify every group in the republic: the masses, by giving them land and removing any external compulsion to work on it; the army, by making their enlistment profitable; the aspiring aristocrats, by validating their titles to estates and not challenging their prestige with a demand for responsibility. Strong states, the critics argue, are built on lines of discipline, not of perpetual yielding.

From an economic point of view a more valid criticism would ask the simple question: what was the practical result of his policies? Under the three previous Negro rulers agriculture had prospered, for these men kept state lands intact and forced the population to work; under Pétion, on the contrary, prosperity steadily declined with the division of land and the removal of compulsion. To expect a body of illiterate, inexperienced ex-slaves automatically to develop such economic virtues as industry, foresight, and thrift in a land which never knew any of these is not realistic, but merely quixotic. The Haitian critic Magloire implies that Pétion was either completely and cynically indifferent to common graft or else naïvely confident that men newly free would somehow be preternaturally honest. He goes into detail:

> Lands were distributed free, without order or method, each person taking what came his way and establishing himself as he could; graft and jobbery, under varied guises, governed the granting of concessions. As for properties in the towns, some people established themselves in upstairs apartments and others in ground-floor ones, without bothering to think of the lawsuits which might result from this disorder. In the sales made by the State, 50 and 100 and 200 gourdes were paid for real estate which was worth 10,000 and 20,000 and 40,000 gourdes or more. The administration put up for sale the property of towns, of communes, and of the State. Even buildings occupied in colonial days by officials, buildings whose construction had cost considerable sums, were bestowed on the people. . . .
>
> By a too great fractioning of the national domain, and carried away by the influence of false egalitarian and democratic ideas, Pétion brought about what a modern writer calls "the forcible neglect of agriculture"[32] throughout the Republic.[33]

32. J. N. Léger, *Haïti: son histoire et ses détracteurs* (New York, 1907), p. 162.
33. Auguste Magloire, *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social* (Port-au-Prince, 1909), pp. 260–263.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

One such ob- 114
server, commenting upon the dances of the elite and of the peasant 535
declared:

> All the more undisguised is the crude sensuality among the lower classes of the Haitian population. Here every motion is obscene; and I am not at all considering the popular merrymakings or dance festivals secretly held partly in open, partly in forests, which are more like orgies, in which the African savagery, which has outlived centuries, has unbridled expression.[1]

Whatever the Haitian dance is, it is none of these things. The Haitian 535
himself is neither obscene nor unbridled. His dancing, like his everyday 831
life, is governed by social controls. He would be as surprised and offended by a sexual orgy as most Europeans. But he is not burdened with abstract concepts of chastity. Sex impulses are as fundamental and as taken [183] ●
for granted as rain, drought, and sunlight. The Haitian finds no virtue in living according to standards that have no relation to his realities.

The Haitian, like the West African, is undoubtedly a less tormented creature, so far as sex is concerned, than his European and American cousins. Since he is less tormented he can be more frank. And it was an expression of this frankness in certain of the Haitian secular dances that once aroused dismay among foreign chroniclers, and that still stirs the curiosity of tourists.

Yet if you were to witness fifty Haitian dances in their natural setting, you still might not see any direct sex expression. You might see more sex play and display in a dance hall or night club in New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, or Los Angeles. That is not to say that there are no sexual allusions in Haitian dancing. In the ordinary Saturday night *bamboche,* or social dance, there may be a good deal of loin movement and suggestion. In Haitian context, however, it is no more significant than two persons of opposite sexes pressing close together to the music of a dreamy orchestra at the "Roseland." In Haitian religious dancing, sexual motifs may occasionally emerge, but they are integral parts of ritualistic symbolism.

One of the deficiencies of early literature on the dances of Haiti is 114
that it did not differentiate between religious and secular dances. Further- 535
more, it is evident that writers tended to use a single name, such as Chica or Bamboula, to cover virtually any kind of dance festivity, much as many white Cubans refer today to all sorts of Afro-Cuban cult dances as Bembé. Because the terminology of ill-informed planters was adopted by the chroniclers, we are now able to form only some very general notions of Haitian dancing of the eighteenth century and before. Of all the reporters on the dance, Moreau de Saint-Méry seems to have been aware of differences, though his frequent departures into specula-

[1] [Quoted in Courlander, Haiti Singing, p. 73. Cf. P. 352, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

named in the song has been dead for years does not seem to matter very much:

Mènè'm allé oh parleur!	Take me to the parlor!
Mènè'm allé!	Take me!
Mènè'm allé!	Take me!
Mènè'm allé oh parleur Borno!	Take me to Borno's parlor!
Mènè'm allé oh! [Ex. 120]	Take me, oh!

Sometimes the challenge is directed to a more lowly level of authority, such as the gendarme:

Gendarme, mènè'm nan bureau!
Rwo, gendarme oh! [Ex. 121]

Gendarme, take me to the police station!
Rwo, gendarme, oh!

Haitians are notable for their restraint from physical violence. During holiday celebrations it is not uncommon to see men who have drunk enough tafia to make them act up. Some of them may even be morose and bellicose. But the disturbances of the peace more often than not are verbal. So long as the first blow is not struck, the social pressures against violence operate effectively. But physical assault against an individual—a push, a blow, a slap—is an affront to personal dignity which relieves the victim of the social restraints and gives him the right to bodily revenge. I have seen waterfront rows, fierce and vocal, in which no one but the participants showed much interest. But should one man shove or strike another, the spectators would immediately interfere, for that single physical contact would have removed the barriers to the worst violence. Sometimes at carnival time a man assumes the guise of belligerence. Such a bully may roll up one trouser leg to indicate he is challenging all and sundry to a fight. Usually, passers-by move aside good-naturedly when he approaches. He is not taken seriously; but neither is he challenged, except by another man in the same frame of mind. When two men with rolled trouser legs meet, there may be a verbal encounter, possibly from opposite sides of the street, to the general entertainment of the bystanders. It is usually a serio-comic affair. Some of the folk songs memorialize occasions on which a man has publicly spoiled for a fight, real or imaginary. This song comments briefly on a man named Çalira, who looked for trouble:

Woy woy woy!
Woy woy woy!
Woy woy woy!
Çac bien arrangé corps yo!
Mène en bataille là!

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no cate) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

One of Christophe's rules was that no cultivator attached to

a plantation—and every ordinary country person was so attached —might leave the estate without permission from a military officer.[10] Two of the common folkways of Haitian peasant life since his time have been immobility and general acceptance of orders from the military. Both characteristics had been fostered by slavery and by the régimes of Toussaint and Dessalnes, and these folkways became fixed under Christophe. 175 566 178 [484]

Other rules introduced by the King, however, lapsed shortly after his strong hand was removed. For example, the monarch required of the whole population that whenever they visited the capital on feast days or went to the market towns on Saturdays they be decently clad in clean clothes.[11] Since the time of Christophe, neatness of appearance has hardly been a folk characteristic, probably because of poverty rather than lack of desire to dress well. Nor did scrupulous regularity of work in the fields continue as a folkway later, when the great plantations were broken up. 175 178 291 527 183 [46]

Like a father the King tried to inculcate moral standards of honesty in his people. To prevent theft he had small valuables, such as watches or jewelry or purses, "planted," and if the finder did not immediately turn them over to the nearest Dahomet, punishment was meted out. Such a policy made honesty contagious. Thefts and depredation were soon almost unknown. The most tempting store of wealth could be left safely unlocked or in the open air. Christophe's achievement in this matter is eloquent testimony to his success as a paternal leader, for it is no small task to initiate moral ideas among people who for a generation have lacked them. Even today it is the proud boast of the Haitians that their people are honest. 175 577 177

As compared with the liberties of farmers in the United States of the same period, the Haitian agricultural workers' freedom was infinitesimally small, but by contrast with the bondage of slavery, their new status was definitely higher. 175 566

10. Christophe called his royal police force "Dahomets," after the West African kingdom, Dahomey, from which most of the men had come. They were not ordinary soldiers but especially imported and carefully selected men whose intelligence made them stand out from their fellows. Each Dahomet was given a course of training in his task as administrator before being sent out. The general consensus of foreign visitors was that these Dahomets were efficient even in small matters. [625]

11. This rule was partly an indication of Christophe's vanity, personal and national, for he was deeply desirous of the good opinion of white visitors, especially those from England. He wanted Europeans to respect Haiti as they would respect any small state, and not to praise it merely as an example of "Negro progress." [577] [186]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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about the square that precedes the principal mass of the day. 796 788
These processions, however, are as a mere rehearsal for the great procession held during the festival of St. Louis, the patron saint of the town. At that time the statue of the saint, carried by the faithful — among whom can be seen more than one perspiring *vodun* priest and *bocor* — is taken triumphantly through the streets to insure a good year. The nearness of the valley to the village of Ville Bonheur makes the 796 [184] great religious festival of Saut d'Eau, where the "miracle of the Virgin" is believed to have occurred, almost a local matter. And though Saut d'Eau lies well over the mountains, July 15 finds most of the population of Mirebalais away from home celebrating the miraculous revelation with folk from other parts of Haiti. May Day is celebrated as the "Fête de 527 l'Agriculture," and two years ago a new day of rejoicing was added to the calendar of festivals. This is known as the "Festival of the Second Independence," the anniversary of the departure of the American Marines from Haiti, and is marked by the "illumination" of all houses the night before and a solemn discourse from the mayor after a Te Deum has been sung in the church.

Thus life in the valley of Mirebalais continues the course 175 it has followed for the past two hundred years. Though its [178] history, as we can reconstruct it, has been marked by turbulent periods, these have been far from the rule. It is true that because of its position it has always been a point to be defended, and often, both before and after the time of Haitian independence, it has been a region where decisive encounters with those who controlled the Spanish portion of the island have taken place. Not for many years, however, until the Caco 175 uprising against the American Marines, did Mirebalais ex- 648 perience military activities on any considerable scale. After the death of Charlemagne Perrault, when his successor selected the valley as a strategic point to be defended, a large force of Marines was encamped near the confluence of the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

000 to speak the special "languages" of their particular cults. [184] [189] [194] One aspect of this initiation,[2] which has been carried over almost unchanged into some parts of Haiti (though not into Mirebalais) is the ordeal by fire, in which the novitiate must plunge his hand into a pot of boiling cornmeal and rest his foot on the red-hot stones which support the pot.

The role of the family deities has already been given; of the third category, that of the personal forces, one finds first of all the soul, of which each individual is conceived as having three. More important is the cult of Fa, or Destiny, which came to Dahomey from the Yoruba, and is a part of a widely spread system of discovering the destiny of a man that characterizes not only West Africa and the remainder of the continent, but most of the Old World. In Dahomey today this end is carried out by assessing the significance of the various permutations and combinations of sixteen palm kernels "thrown" by the diviner. In addition there exist traditionally earlier and less "official" methods of divining, which in the main are those which have survived in the New World. [176] [171] Intimately associated with both the soul and the destiny of man is the deity who is at once a member of the great pantheons and one of the most personal of all the gods, Legba, whose African importance is attested by the extent to which he is today worshipped in many parts of the New World, and by his universality in Haiti. From the point of view of Dahomean philosophy Legba may be regarded as the god of accident, who gives to man a "way out" in a world ruled by an otherwise inexorable fate. Gross in his appetites and capricious, he is, nevertheless, beloved by the Dahomeans, and though his name is usually erroneously translated by the European term "devil," no appellation could be farther from reality. Of particular significance for his role in Haitan life as guardian of the crossroads and of the *barrière* is his place in Dahomean theology, since it is said: "Before the gods can

[2] [i.e., The initiation of devotees by priests into the religious cults of Dahomey-Analyst]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

Children usually share their parents' bed until they are six or eight years old, and the same room until they are ten or twelve. They are counted on to sleep soundly enough, but it happens that a child sometimes awakens and, unknown to his parents, observes them. Though brothers and sisters sometimes continue to sleep together until the age of puberty, it is said that attempts at intercourse between them rarely occur, for, according to Haitians, the children gradually sense that this is regarded as bad, and a boy approaching puberty who wishes to satisfy his desire for sex play goes to find a "little neighbor." Later, when the nubile girls are withdrawn from the company of the boys, the latter play with younger girls who have not yet reached puberty, or carry on "affairs" with those older than themselves; indeed, it is from these latter that they obtain full knowledge of sexual procedure.

What has been said concerning the growth and training of children applies mainly to those who live with their parents. No discussion of the development of the child, however, can neglect to mention the widespread institution of a form of quasi-adoption, found not only in Mirebalais, but in all other parts of Haiti. By this is not meant legal adoption, though that, too, is known and at times occurs. Quasi-adoption involves children who are called "*'ti moun qui 'reté à caille 'oun*—small folk who stay at your house," or, more briefly, *'ti moun*. They are the children, often of peasants, "given" to friends who live in a town or, as is the case with some families of Mirebalais, "given" to friends or acquaintances living in the capital. To what extent this relationship offers a means for the exploitation of children in other parts of Haiti cannot be said, though tales of abuses of it, especially in Port-au-Prince, are heard. To give a person a child in this manner is in Mirebalais regarded as a token of friendship, and such children as were observed, though poorly clothed, were fed not much differently from the children of the families with which they were sent to live. When the *'ti moun* grows older, he leaves and returns to his own home, though the relationship between

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti S13
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CHAPTER VI

MATING AND MARRIAGE

THERE are two ways in which a Haitian family may be formed. 583
The first of these is through a marriage having the sanction of the Church, in token of which a ring is thereafter worn by the wife. The second mode of establishing a family is by means of the institution known as *plaçage*, wherein a man and a woman who desire to live together fulfill certain obligations and perform certain ceremonies at the home of the girl's parents, after which the new household is established.[1] The distinction between the two forms has been mentioned, though not analyzed, by several of those who traveled in the island after the period of slavery. Thus, according to Mac- 184
kenzie: 583
585

> "Marriage formally solemnised is not so common as unions of another kind. . . . In the North the practice of solemnising marriages is said to be more common than in the South, owing to the preceding practice under Christophe, and the exertions of the priesthood at the Cape."[2]

Similarly, St. John speaks of not noticing "any particular ceremonies" at marriages:

> ". . . some are striving to imitate the upper classes, and have the ceremony performed in church, but the mass of the people are still not regularly married."[3]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

sitting at the door of the central house, with huts all around in which his younger wives lived, as they could not be made to dwell under the same roof. . . . The French priests attempted to alter this state of things, but they did not succeed, as the wives, surrounding the intruders, asked them what was to be their position if the husband selected one among them and abandoned the rest."[10] 175 595

Elsewhere St. John speaks of the institution of *plaçage* by name, mentioning its prevalence prior to the period of his residence in Haiti.[11] Mackenzie, though not calling it by this term, tells of a rural Negro who, in the course of a long conversation during which the name of an officer of rank in the Republic came up, made the observation "with admirable naiveté and exquisite logic, 'C'est mon beau frère, parceque je vis avec sa sœur.'"[12] [583]

Plural marriage is no less common in the valley of Mirebalais than elsewhere in Haiti. Despite the insistence of the Church on monogamy, many men have two "wives," a few have three or four, while one important priest of the *vodun* cult is said to have eight. The force of the sanctions behind monogamy and Church unions, however, has undoubtedly influenced the psychological "set" of the Haitian toward polygyny, as is especially to be seen in the violent manifestations of jealousy shown by co-wives toward one another. It is primarily because of this that polygynous households, such as are mentioned in earlier writings, are not found in present-day Mirebalais, and this also explains why a man with more than one spouse sees to it that where possible his "wives" live at such distance from one another that they have but little opportunity to meet. Even then, on occasion, a newly taken *placée* will pace in front of the house of her man's other spouse, flaunting the clothes and trinkets she has received from him. Or if women who share the same mate meet in the 184 595 [177] [152]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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CHAPTER VIII

WHAT IS "VOODOO"?

MORE than any other single term, the word "voodoo" is called to mind whenever mention is made of Haiti. Conceived as a grim system of African practices, it has come to be identified with fantastic and cruel rites and to serve as a symbol of daring excursions into the esoteric. Not only has emphasis been placed on its frenzied rites and the cannibalism supposed on occasion to accompany them, but its dark mysteries of magic and "zombis" have been so stressed that it has become customary to think of the Haitians as living in a universe of psychological terror,

What, then, is "voodoo"? "Voodoo," or *vodun*, as it will be termed here, following native pronunciation, is a complex of African belief and ritual governing in large measure the religious life of the Haitian peasantry.[1] It also has an even more restricted meaning in Mirebalais, where the word often simply denotes a form of sacred dance accompanied by spirit-possession or merely a dance which on occasion may take its place along with the *calenda*, the *martinique*, the *zesse*, and other social dances at public celebrations, where an occurrence of possession would be rare and in questionable taste. This latter meaning was recognized by St. Mery:

> "The Calenda and the Chica are not the only dances in the colony which have come from Africa. There is an-

171 other one which has been known there for many years,
771 principally in the west, which bears the name of *Vau-*
535 *doux*. . . . But it is not only as a dance that the *Vaudoux* merits consideration, for it occurs under circumstances which assign to it a place among the institutions where superstition and bizarre practices play a considerable part."[3]

171 In Dahomey, whence the term has come, *vodun*, as has al-
771 ready been stated, signifies "god" and is a general name for
776 all deities. This source of the word has likewise long been
[142] known, as a reading of St. Mery shows:

> "According to the Arada Negroes, the real followers of *Vaudoux* in the colony . . . *Vaudoux* signifies an all-powerful and supernatural being on which depend all the events that come to pass on this globe."[4]

171 Similarly, de Vassière[5] quotes with approval a parallel defini-
771 tion from Peytraud, while modern Haitian writers also em-
776 phasize its Dahomean origin.[6] This meaning of the word had,
192 however, undergone a change in its new home even during
178 pre-Revolutionary times, for, according to St. Mery, the "all-
825 powerful and supernatural being" had come to be a non-venomous serpent that stood as a symbol "for all those who
184 professed this same doctrine." Today in Mirebalais even this
771 identification is a thing of the past, though the prominence
776 given serpent-worship in Haiti by most writers[7] would make
825 it reasonable to suppose that elsewhere in the island serpents are maintained by priests of the *vodun* cult and play an important role in the rites at which the gods are worshipped. Indeed, one priest from Arcahaie encountered in Mirebalais mentioned the fact that in his own temple he kept such a snake. Yet in our valley no worship of serpents as such was encountered, and there were even those who declared that they had no hesitation in killing any snake, though these brave assertions could not be tested. Serpent-worship in Mirebalais

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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may perhaps be said to have come to this: Adherents of the African cults refrain from killing the snake, and should they do so by accident, the African custom of giving ceremonial burial to any creature having supernatural importance is followed as an atonement. Where this is omitted, difficulties of so serious a nature are felt to threaten that to prevent them a priest of the cult is called upon to offer up a sacrifice and to beg forgiveness even after the little ceremony of burial has been performed.[7]

Inasmuch as *vodun* flourishes in Mirebalais despite the minor role of serpent-worship, it is evident that in seeking to understand its nature and its philosophy other aspects must be considered. Two historical facts must be kept constantly in mind in making this analysis, for without them, what follows would be meaningless. The first is that *vodun* derives from a background of African theology and ceremonialism. The second is that the Negroes have continuously been subjected to the influence of Catholicism during the centuries that have passed since their introduction into the island.

Yet another point may prove suggestive in providing a useful point of view for an analysis of the *vodun* cult. This bears upon a difficulty impossible and happily unnecessary to resolve in the field study of religion, which arises out of the degree of variation in answers to questions dealing with the same point. These answers differ not only according to the status of the individual in the cult, since layman and priest have understandably different concepts of the functions of deities based on unequal degrees of expert knowledge, but the extent to which an individual has religious interests or is indifferent to them influences the nature of his responses. A fundamental fallacy results from the fact that except where there is an officially sanctioned theology — which makes for dogma, and often for perfunctory worship, in contrast with the living dynamic nature of Haitian peasant belief and ritual — there are no "real" answers to questions in the field of religion. The

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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184 771 student pursuing the "correct" statement will find that no matter how painstaking his method and how extensive his precautions, the versions of different persons can never be entirely reconciled, unless a false appearance of truth is given to his findings.[8]

178 771 772 If the underlying philosophy of the universe held by the Haitian is summarized, as it can be abstracted from his expressions of belief and from his observed behavior, this philosophy might be phrased somewhat as follows: The ruler of the universe is God, its Creator, who shares this task with His son Jesus, the saints of the Church, and the Holy Ghost. Man has been endowed with a soul, and the soul, which has come from God, returns to God for judgment and, if necessary, for punishment at the end of its sojourn on earth. From Africa — *Guinée* — the Negroes brought other deities, termed variously *loa, mystères,* or *saints,*[9] and these deities have been inherited through succeeding generations by the descendants of those who brought them to Haiti. The specific function of the African spirits in the Haitian system was given in the following terms by one of their devotees: "The *loa* are occupied with men, their task is to cure. They can make a person work better than he otherwise would. When the *loa* possess people, they give helpful advice. But they cannot do the things that God does. They can protect a garden, but they cannot make a garden grow, for streams, rain, and thunder come from God." Another statement clearly shows the same concept: "God made the *loa,* but did not make them so they might do evil. [424] [425] When a man purchases a *loa* for money, that spirit will do evil as well as good, but God becomes angry and will not accept these bad spirits into the sky, and He drives them away."

776 In the ordering of his daily life, however, the forces which are foremost in the consciousness of the Haitian make up the triad expressed in the phrase "*les mystères, les morts, et les marasa* — the *loa,* the dead, and the twins." Because of their special character, an examination of the twin cult and the cult

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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steps to "feed" his *loa* in order to satisfy it, for it is more important to give offerings to the spirits than to dance for them. He therefore either quietly prepares a sacrifice of cereals and liquor in his own room or sends money home so that his *loa* may be "fed" at the family habitation, and his absence explained to it.[21]

When *vodun* deities are discussed in Mirebalais, most often two "companies" of them are mentioned, the Rada and the Pétro "squads." In one list of gods that was obtained, the word *Rada*, derived from the name of the ancient principality of Allada in Dahomey, called forth the explanation "*qui veut dire Dahomey* — which is to say, Dahomey," though it should be made clear that neither the words *Rada* nor *Dahomey* are any longer recognized in Haiti as place-names, being today simply qualifying designations of *loa*. There are regional differences in the number and ranking of other categories of gods that hold no important place in Mirebalais. The existence of these other categories is, of course, well known, and one person referred to "the seventeen and twenty-one classes of *loa*," of which, however, only the following were named: Rada, Pétro, Dahomey, Guinée, Congo, Nago, Ibo, and Wangol. Of these the Congo and the Ibo gods are well known, though their worship is chiefly restricted to individual families, while the Nago and Dahomey categories, though significant from the point of view of indicating African origins, are most commonly grouped under the term *Rada*. Guinée also occasionally figures in worship as carried on in individual families, but this term is more often understood as a general designation for all *loa* outside the Rada, Nago, Congo, and Ibo groupings and for certain Pétro gods. Wangol derives from the geographical entity Angola.

From comparatively early times the impression has been given that certain of these classes of gods perform only good, and others evil. Nothing could be further from the truth than this attempt to read European concept into Haitian ideology,

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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a stream, there to remain until, becoming impatient, it demands to be taken out. A ceremony then brings back the tortured soul and makes of it a "*loa nan canarie*—a *loa* in a jar"—which thereafter acts as a guard for its family.

There is little agreement as to the place of residence of the *loa*. In general, it is believed that they come from Guinée each time they are called, returning when they have, in the native idiom, "descended from the heads of their horses"—that is, when the possession of their devotees has ceased. Those "under the water," however, being Haitians, remain in Haiti for seven years until the ceremony just mentioned, of putting them *nan canarie*, has been performed, when they, like the other *loa*, return to Guinée. At the same time, all recognize the African character of the *loa*, whether they be gods brought from Africa or the Créole *loa* from Haiti itself.

Worship of the *loa* is directed by priests of the cult. The terms *papaloi* and *mamaloi* as designations for male and female priests, almost universally employed by non-Haitian writers, are practically unknown in Mirebalais, where, as in most regions of Haiti, a priest is called a *hungan*, a priestess a *mambu*.[24] Besides the *hungan* (or *mambu*), and the *gangan*, a term applied to a *hungan* of renown, is the *bocor*, a practitioner of magic, not a member of any *vodun* priesthood, but a man who has acquired his power by the purchase of spirits. He is particularly differentiated from the *hungan* and *mambu* by the fact that the *loa* of their own accord are believed to have given "*connaissance*"—the knowledge of healing and helping, to these latter.[25] Not all gods can endow their devotees with this *connaissance*. Some of the Rada deities, in addition to those of the Ogun group who give it, are Legba, Damballa, Aizan, Bosu, St. Jean, and Agwe Woyo; among the Pétro gods it is conferred by Bosu Trois Cornes, Simbi d'leau, Gede, Ossange, Malt' Gran' Bois, and Malt' Calfou (Carrefour). Simbi en Deux Eaux and Simbi Proméné both give magic power, the former conferring knowledge of excellent protectives against

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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793 776 755 werewolves as well as of the ingredients to concoct healing baths. Certain priests worship and control a large number of deities, as is shown by those which comprise the personal pantheon of a *gangan* from the valley of Mirebalais: Gedenibo, Erzilie Gé Rouge; 'Ti Kita Demembré; Simbi en Deux Eaux; Bumba Trois Îlé; Legba; St. Jacques; Ogun Ferraille, Ogun Balandjo, Ogun Ashade; Lemba; Aizan Keleké, Aizan Wedo, Aida Wedo, Damballa Wedo; Baron Samedi, Bosu Trois Cornes; Congo Wangol, Maît' Mapou; Agasu; Agwe, Agweto Woyo; Kadia-Bosu; Sobo Gran'; l'Afrique Guinée. Whatever his ability, the *hungan* can cure only diseases "sent by man" — that is, those caused by magic — and by the *loa*, since against illness sent by God he can do nothing. Gossip [521] disapprovingly whispers how in more than one instance a *hungan* took advantage of his position and the trust of his clients, falsely to represent himself as able to cure an illness "sent by God" through stating it was due to magic.

793 787 An important function of the *hungan* or *mambu* is to foretell the future, and it is as a diviner that the *vodun* priest or priestess is most often employed. No major rite would be considered by a family unless divination were resorted to, but consultation is made for a far wider range of affairs than those of a purely religious nature, and no proposed undertaking of any importance in the secular field is begun without visiting a diviner to discover whether or not the fates are propitious. When divining, the priest is usually under possession by his gods, but other methods, such as gazing into a crystal or basin of water, may also be employed. Several divining séances were visited, but no description of them need be given here, since a number of accounts, including an especially full one by Parsons, are available.[26]

793 184 [755] [787] Though a certain hierarchy seems to exist among the *vodun* priests in other districts of Haiti, in Mirebalais the organization of the cult is informal to an extreme degree.[27] In the minds of the cult members, various priests in the same region

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are differentiated according to the types of healing in which they have had the greatest success, and the "miracles" to their credit, such as a *hungan* who had achieved a wide reputation for being able to resuscitate dead children. One *hungan* of the valley is spoken of as having powers which rank him with the greatest in the land, but now that he is old, a nephew of his is being called upon to act in his place. In a relatively short time, say his friendly clients, he will take his place even among great *hungans* elsewhere.

Under the *hungan* and *mambu* are assistants called *hunsi*, or sometimes, in the case of men, termed *adjanikon*. In some parts of Haiti, particularly in the plain of the Cul-de-Sac and the southern peninsula, there are degrees of initiation for the *hunsi*, which include the ordeal by fire that makes them *hunsi kanzo*.[28] In Mirebalais, however, the *kanzo* rite, though known by name, is neither required nor performed. The *hunsi* and *adjanikon* know the rituals in a general way, hold and wave the banners used to salute the gods, sing the songs for the *loa*, aid in bringing the possessed dancers out of their possessions, and perform such other ritual tasks as helping the officiating *hungan*. Some members of the cult group have special ability to sing large numbers of the ritual songs for any *loa* which may be called, while others perform the animal sacrifices. It is among these male assistants that the most expert drummers are found.

This, then, constitutes an outline of that system of belief included under the term *vodun*. Once more, in summary, it may be emphasized that *vodun* is neither the practice of black magic, nor the unorganized pathological hysteria it is so often represented to be. The gods are known to their worshippers, and the duties owed them are equally well understood. The reward for the performance of these duties is good health, good harvests, and the goodwill of fellow-men; the punishment for neglect is corresponding ill fortune. On this basis of belief is erected the ceremonial of worship.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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78 79 776 *loa* troubling the family, or, if it is the second, those which have helped them, to tell whether or not they are willing to receive the sacrificial animals. The omen which indicates their acceptability to the gods is their nibbling at leaves or pecking at grains of corn and other cereals offered them, after which the gods themselves come, possessing their servitors. At midnight or later, as the violence of the possession recedes, the sac- [84] rifices are offered. In Mirebalais, at least, the hysteria said to mark the moment "when the blood flows" is not present. The actual killing of the animals, witnessed in numerous instances, is one of the more routine aspects of the ritual.[4]

After the animals have been killed, a long period of quiet ensues while the work of dressing and cooking them takes place, the ceremony beginning anew when this is done. If evil deities are to be banished or "restrained," they are called once more, and the priest may have to battle with those possessed by them, for these gods have no desire to be driven away, or incarcerated where they cannot escape. Most of the food given such gods is placed in large pots and buried in the earth with them, but, with characteristic human perversity, if the sacrifices have been for good *loa*, these are only allowed to have small portions. The ceremony closes with the coming of day.[5]

78 This pattern varies in details, and to the Haitian these dif- 79 ferences are important. This is shown by the response of a per- 794 son in whose company two similar rites were observed, to the 776 question whether the second would resemble the first. The an- 184 swer was decisive. "No, the ceremony will not be the same. In the first one the most important spirit lived in a mango tree; in the second, it is in a bamboo." The Pétro gods receive black or gray-colored animal offerings, the Rada deities white, red, 78 and vari-colored ones. Only Bosu Trois Cornes, Pelicon, and 796 Pelib are given bullocks, the first because he, like this animal, 799 is horned; the second because he is even more dangerous than 776 Bosu; and Pelib because as a water-god he will otherwise take

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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CHAPTER XI

THE CULT OF TWINS AND OF THE DEAD

SHARING powers and prerogatives with the *loa* in the supernatural world are the souls of the dead, the spirits of twins, and, in a specialized sense, magic, all working parts of a universe the ultimate force in which is God, who is sometimes spoken of as its Gran' Mait'. Their relative importance, however, is not easy to determine; and much less the manner in which the supernatural personalities in these divisions are linked with one another. Therefore, when such problems are presented to a group of Haitians, as whether or not the dead become *loa*, or the spirits of twins are related to those of the dead, or whether twins are the equivalent of the *loa*, or what the role of all these in magic may be, different opinions will always be heard.

One of these matters was explained by an elderly *hunsi* as follows: "*Marassa gagné morts longtemps, li deviennent loa* — Twins who have been dead a long time become *loa*," and "*Gagné gran' moun morts longtemps, deviennent loa* — There are those long dead who become *loa*," and she added: "But how this happens, I do not know." Despite a flat contradiction of this opinion by a man who was present, and a heated discussion between them, she persisted in maintaining the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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correctness of her view, while making an honest avowal of her inability to explain how this came about. On another occasion discussion turned upon the manner in which the powers of these supernatural beings are conceived in various parts of Haiti. Said one *hungan:* "Twins are stronger than the saints (the *loa*). The *marassa* are the mothers of the saints. So it is said at Arcahaie." The reply came: "In Mirebalais they say the saints are stronger."

During a lively discussion of the point by a group of active voduists the suggestion was made by one that the relative power of the *loa,* the dead, and the twins might be determined if the numerical strength of the following of each cult could be roughly ascertained. Since all give sacrifices for the dead — even strict Church members — and all who worship the *loa* give for the *loa* and the dead, while only some of this latter group give for the *loa,* the twins, and the dead, the person who had suggested this line of inquiry concluded that the dead were therefore strongest, because no one dared ignore them. Still another opinion, though in agreement with this, was based rather on the fact that the *loa* always exhibit fear before manifestations of death, as at dances where persons possessed by Damballa or Aida Wedo avoid those possessed by Gede, since he stands so close to the dead. However, it was pointed out by others in Mirebalais that the most costly and elaborate offerings are for the *loa,* that those for the dead are smaller, and those given the twins are least impressive, which was evidence enough for them that the *loa* are the most powerful of these three categories. All agreed, however, in ascribing to the twins the least power of the three, though what the *marassa* do for good or evil they do with intensity and dispatch.

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There is ample justification, on both theological and historical grounds, for placing twins and the dead in a single general category. For, as one educated Haitian put it in pointing out that both twins and dead are worshipped on the same day, "*Marassa et morts font une chapitre pour nous* — The twins and the dead make a single chapter for us."

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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M'a pé mandé,	I ask,
Ça wé la si 'ou content?	Are you content with what you see there?

The food is eaten the same afternoon. If the twins are actually alive, everything they wear must be new and they must have identical clothes. At the sacrifice of the January harvest, native rice, cakes, okra, bananas, and one, two, or three chickens, designated by the twins themselves, are offered. The food is put in place, and as songs are sung it is left until the following day, when it is eaten. The worship of twins differs markedly in various parts of Haiti. In Leogane, for example, some have such a ceremony only at harvest time, and have a greater *mangé marassa* every five years, when a goat and a chicken are killed and offered with the usual non-animal foods.

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Twins stand in a peculiarly intimate relation to each other, as might be expected from the traditional African belief that twins share a single soul, which, as far as could be determined, only survives in attitude in Mirebalais. Should one die, the living twin must put aside a bit of all food he eats, or a small part of any gift given him, for the other. If the twins are both girls, the attempt is usually made to have them betrothed and married at about the same time. If the female twin of a pair is married, she must give a present to her twin brother, and similarly her husband sees to it that his wife's male twin also receives a substantial gift from him as a peace offering, for it is dangerous to wait until the other decides on some overt mischief. The perplexing factor in dealing with twins is that they themselves often do not consciously will the trouble they bring. For example, should the twin of a married woman not feel friendly toward his sister's husband, though he might make a conscious effort to overcome this dislike, his spirit might proceed to use its full power to harass the man in such a way as to trouble the relationship of the couple.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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171 178 782 tion is a further comment both upon the human traits ascribed to them, and upon the realism with which they take cognizance — as only African gods can — of the financial position of their devotees!

171 178 776 78 It is not only in the immediacy of the Haitian gods to their worshippers and in their human qualities, however, that these beings have retained African traits, for in the full reciprocity that must prevail in the relationship between deities and their followers is to be seen a point of view that is entirely non-European. Between man and the gods the rule of *quid pro quo* must always be in operation; and this rule may only be regarded as but another contribution of Africa toward Haitian religious ideology. While this reciprocal giving flavors all aspects of worship whether it be of the *loa*, the dead, or the twins, it takes a yet more prominent, and more familiar place in the field of magic, since here the *engagement* owes much to European belief, though the element of reciprocity is much more emphasized than was ever the case in medieval European diabolism.

178 776 794 The psychological values of the *vodun* cult, especially the general tone found in the feeling toward the terms *Guinée* or *Rada*, perhaps most convincingly show the attitudes that aided in the retention of things recognizably African. For while the [184] Pétro gods are by no means viewed as altogether bad, or are always held unwelcome, the fact that in Mirebalais, as in Haiti generally, the Rada gods are those least feared, most desired, and in connection with whose cult wrongdoing is most rarely present, is of the greatest significance, especially when the related fact is recalled that the Pétro gods are the more powerful in the matter of evil magic, while the Rada deities are said to exert their power to protect their devotees from the dark forces that may be set in motion against them.

178 776 776 In attitudes toward the gods, then, in the names of the gods themselves, in the manner in which they function in the lives of Haitians, and in the importance of the ceremonial con-

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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devotees prophesied and healed the sick. Even at the church, however, where all go to offer the prayers that are the central observance of the fête, the many candles placed on the rocks at the entrance are usually for St. Anthony; that same St. Anthony who, it will be recalled, is the *loa* named Legba, the guardian of all entrances.

It is obvious, from the examples given, that the world view held by the Haitian and the motivations which underlie Haitian life cannot be understood unless both the Catholic and the *vodun* contributions to them are held in mind. But certain further questions bearing upon the effect of these two influences present themselves. What proportion of Haitians hold membership in the Church, and how many are affiliated with the *vodun* sect? What attitudes are manifested toward the Church and its priests as contrasted with their attitude toward the *loa* and their ministrants? How does the Church meet the challenge of *vodun*? And how does the Haitian peasant, in his inner life, reconcile these two conflicting forces?

The impression gained from reading available works on Haiti is that voduists and Catholics constitute two distinct groups. While this may obtain in some parts of the Republic, it is not true either in Mirebalais or in those other portions of Haiti which came under direct though brief observation in the course of this study. All discussions with natives that began with the assumption of the existence of two such separate groups led to confusion, and statements which had seemed evasions were not clarified until the incorrectness of such an assumption became apparent. Thus when it was stated that in all Haiti the Pater Noster was one of the first things taught every child, the question: " Is this not true for Catholic families only? " was met with a vigorous denial that was slowly justified as the realization grew that, if not true for all Haitians, such an assertion was certainly valid for the vast majority of them in Mirebalais and probably elsewhere.[18] The identity of membership in the two groups became apparent from ob-

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797 798 the voduists this is not regarded as decisive proof of the power of Protestantism, for those immediately concerned it is held sufficient.[15]

771 177 What, then, of the attitudes held by voduists toward the Catholic Church? The correlation of Catholic ritual with *vodun* practice made by Haitians is of utmost significance in this connection. In discussing the Church service, it was pointed out that church bells announce mass or any other rite, and this, it was explained, is for Legba — "*Toute cloche c'est pou' Legba, même l'église, oui* — All sounding of bells is for Legba, even in church," for he must be notified so that he can "open the gate" for God, Jesus Christ, and the saints. "*Nou' même nou' connai' ça. C'est Bon Dieu crée tout* — You yourself know that. It is God who created everything." It was also recounted how when the priest preaches, he is possessed by the *mystères* of the sacred Trinity, for does he not gesticulate and become excited like any other possessed person?

Furthermore, it is believed that Gede, Ogun, and Damballa "are always at the church," often insisting that their worshippers take communion. Indeed, occasionally the *loa* of a woman may demand a Church marriage from a man to whom she is a *placée*. The sacraments of baptism, first communion, marriage, confession, and extreme unction are received by members of the *vodun* cult, though, as will be seen, when voduists [793] confess, they say nothing of their *loa*. The *hungans* themselves "are most often at the sacred table to take communion," [788] and one particular *hungan* not only attended mass, but was seen continually employing his rosary in the *vodun* ceremonies at which he officiated. While Haitians from the south- [184] [193] ern peninsula stated that the *hungans* there do not go to church, it was pointed out at the same time that all other voduists attend regularly.

779 798 The principal resentment held by Mirebalais voduists against the Church is for the cost of Church rites, and for the

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APPENDIX I

THE GODS OF THE VODUN PANTHEON

ONE of the most impressive facts about studies of Haitian peasant belief is the absence of any attempt at systematic treatment of the deities of the *vodun* cult, as concerns either their attributes, their functions, or their relationship to one another. Indeed, there are but two exceptions to this statement; Dorsainvil (I, pp. 174–5) has published a list of the names of gods, placing them in categories according to their African derivations, and Parsons (I, *passim*) has made available her notes on the characteristics of the deities of which she was told while working in the island. Otherwise, one reads merely of "the serpent-god Damballa," or of "Papa Ogun," or some other isolated designation. It therefore seemed of capital importance in making this study to obtain both names of deities and as much information concerning these gods as possible, and the resulting data are presented here.

One reason why perhaps not more of such "systematic theology" of *vodun* as exists has been made available is the great degree of individual variation which confronts the student seeking this kind of information, since differences of opinion are invariably encountered. Even priests do not by any means agree, for these men and women are supreme individualists, each being the worshipper of particular deities and exploiting special skills, with the result that the frame of reference within

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which a given priest operates differs from that of his colleagues — though, of course, always within the limitations set by the general pattern of the cult.

This range of opinion cannot be better illustrated than by giving, at the outset, three of the lists of *vodun* deities that were obtained, since here only so simple a matter is involved as names of gods. These lists, it must be remarked, were given by people living in the same valley; were they to be compared with lists collected from other parts of the island even greater disparities would appear, as will be evident if the collection of names of *loa* given by Dorsainvil is consulted. Certain deities, whose names recur below and are also to be found in Dorsainvil's list and in Parsons' notes would be included in any enumeration of gods of the cult, since their worship prevails throughout Haiti. Such would be Legba, Damballa, Aida Wedo, Aizan, Ogun, Agwe, Loko, Shango, Ossange, Bosu, Simbi, Wangol, Baron Samedi, Gede, and Erzilie. Others, though not enjoying as widespread a following, are worshipped over large areas. A number, however, either are gods that have resulted from the process of deifying the souls of those who, in a given locality, were renowned for their spiritual power, or represent survivals of regional African deities that have been preserved in certain large family groups.

Turning now to the lists themselves, the first of these was obtained from a woman functionary of the cult. A single asterisk after a name indicates that its exact counterpart is found in the second list presented here, while two asterisks show the precise name was included in the third listing.

Rada	*Pétro*
Damballa Wedo**	Pétro
Aizan Damballa**	Bosu Trois Cornes*
Aida Wedo	Bosu Djo
Ogun Galloné	Gedeonsu*
Ogun Ferraille* **	'Ti Kita Demembré*
Ogun Balandjo* **	'Ti Jean pié sèche*

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Ogun Sabaho
Legba Avardra
Mon Loa
Solugui
Azao Comble (*or* Coumbe)
Azao Pemba*
Ashade Bokor
Agasu Wedo
Agasu Djeme
Shango
Nago Shango
Acque Fer
Golimé
Agwe Woyo*
Agwesi (*his son*)
Agweta (*his daughter*)
Kadia Bosu
Sobo
Taureau

Congo Zandor* **
Congo Savanne
Congo Wangol
Congo Guinée
Erzilie Mapiangle*
Erzilie Gé rouge* **
Simbi Proméné*
Simbi troi' zilé*
Simbi Wangol
Simbi en Deux Eaux* **
Simbi Galloné
Bakala Baka (*or* Babako Baka)
Lemba Zahou
Bumba*
Gran' Alouba
Gran' Agersi
Gran' Siligbo**
Mait' d'habitation
Mait' Carrefour** (*called* Louis di' fils)
Mari boben
Nangovi
Nangozên
Pélécon*
Ossange Batagri
Ossange Batala
Mait' Mapou (*called* Garçon Mgampé)
Mait' des Eaux
Clairmé
Mme. Clairmé
Clairmézine
Mait' Baleine (Cong' la Mè')

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The second list was given by a woman prominent in the worship of the *loa;* the deities in the preceding list whose names were also included in this (that is, those that were marked with a single asterisk) are not given here, but a double asterisk indicates, as before, that they are also found in the third list.

Rada	*Pétro*
Damballa-Aida-Wedo**	Jean Pétro
Maît' Damballa	Bosu d'l'eaux
Maît' Aizan	Maît' Bosu
Ogun Batagri**	Gedenibo**
Général Ogun	Gedeou
Legba grand-chemin	Maît' Clairmé
Legba nan barrière	Fille Clairmé
Legba Maît' 'bitation	Lemba**
Maît' Azaou	Seli-ho
Maît Ashade	
Maît' Bokor	
Maît' Agasu	
Agweta Woyo	
Sobo-Bade	
Papa Pierre	
Gran' Alouba	
Gran' Aguera	
Gran' nan Canari (*or* Gosen)	
Général Malugué	
Lt. Général Jean Baptiste	
Gran' Erzilie	
Erzilie Freda Dahomey	
Maît' Ossange**	
Maît' Batala	

The third list is that given by a minor functionary of the *vodun* cult, known for his ability as a leader of songs. In ad-

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dition to the *loa* marked with doubled asterisks above, the deities he named were:

Rada	*Pétro*
Aizan	Kita
Aizan Marché	Erzilie
Aizan Marché loko	Papa Simbi
Ogun d'l'eaux	Simbi Gran' Bois
Ogun Batala	Simbi Cimitière
Ogun Ashade	Simbi caille moin
Papa Ogun	Simbi Carrefour
Papa Agasu	Simbi Kita
Agasu Tèmèré	Simbi Magie
Siligbo en bas d'l'eaux	Simbi Pétro
Siligbo Vavou	Simbi Macaya
Loko Kisigwé	Gran' Bois
Loko Yai	Baron Samedi
Pa Loko	Gran' Siligbo
Marassa Nundé	
Loa Créole	
Dahomey Freda	

Some of the inconsistencies and individual variations in the naming of the gods as demonstrated in these lists may be specified. Outstanding are the differences found in the manner of naming a single god, as when Général Ogun is called Ogun Galloné or Papa Ogun, or when Aizan Damballa is listed as two *loa*, Maît' Damballa and Maît' Aizan. Lack of agreement, however, is manifested in other ways. Though Taureau is given as a Rada god, during one *vodun* dance for the Rada deities, when a man was possessed by this *loa*, he was quickly led away and brought out of his possession, since Taureau, regarded by the group giving the dance as a Pétro deity, could not properly come to a rite for gods of another "company." Or again, whereas the second list names Maît' Ossange and Maît' Batala as Rada *loa*, the first list places them

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776 in the Pétro group. The Erzilie gods are put in both cate-
794 gories, while Gran' Siligbo, designated in the first list as Pétro,
● 184 was assigned to both "companies" by the person who gave the third list, and named as a Rada deity by the one who gave the second. Furthermore, the third list, that of the singer, comprises *loa* whose "names" are undoubtedly the result of the acceptance by this man of certain phrases from his songs as valid designations of gods, especially such names as "Aizan Marché Loko" or "Loko Kisigwé." It is not without interest to speculate on this as a possible mechanism by means of which new names are added to the *vodun* pantheon.

Only one of the lists specifically assigned gods to other than the Rada and Pétro categories. One of these was termed *Guinée* and included the following names of deities:

Kaplaou	Congo
Enwizo	Loa Sinegal
Wangol	Cangaron

The other was the Ibo group, accorded two names, the Loa Mondongue and a *loa* named Ibo Lélé.

776 More variable, however, than classifications of the *loa* are accounts of attributes and interrelationships, and details of their worship. Yet certain traits and functions of the gods and aspects of their ritual can be set forth. One way in which
[533] the Haitians determine such matters is by reference to the songs sung in honor of the gods. Again and again the texts of such songs were cited as authority, suggesting that they are the "holy word" of *vodun* theology and an important device in stabilizing the details of belief. The attributes of the gods which follow are the result of extended discussions with folk who possessed all degrees of knowledge of the details of the cult and who were all active participants in it.

Legba, guardian of the crossroads, the highway, and the *barrière*, the entrance to every house, yard, or garden, is one of the most important *vodun* deities. He is generally conceived

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as a limping old man, clad in tatters, but in his several manifestations has more specific characteristics. Thus Legba Pié Cassé is described as having paralyzed legs, with arms held stiff and crooked before him, and Legba Avardra is spoken of as a *vagabond* who continually wanders the principal highways. Legba must first be summoned before any ceremony may begin, and when it was asked how Legba could be expected to come when called simultaneously to three or four or twenty or fifty places, the parallel given was that of the multiple manifestations of which God or Christ or a saint is capable. Legba, identified with St. Anthony, has Tuesday as his sacred day, and the plum tree is reserved for him. He "eats" a varicolored type of cock known as *poule zinga*, marked like a guinea-fowl, and in this differs from other gods who must indicate through a possessed devotee or a diviner what specific offering among the things they favor is wanted on the occasion of each sacrifice. Though in southern Haiti the smallest chick from each hatching is reserved for Legba, and at least once during his lifetime a man puts aside a bullock or a male goat as a sacrifice for this god, these customs do not prevail in Mirebalais. Here, when an offering to the gods is in prospect, Legba is included among the *los* to whom a certain animal is promised, and, as in the case of other deities, this animal is thereafter under his protection. But this is the nearest approach to any special offerings for this god.

Damballa, an important Rada god whose symbol is the serpent, is said to bring rain because they sing "*Damballa nan l'eau*—Damballa in the water." The sacred color of this deity, worn by devotees under possession, is white, and the full initiates wear white necklaces as well as white clothing. This god, identified with St. Patrick, is especially worshipped on Thursdays, and shares the white fig tree with Ezilie and Gran' Siligbo. Damballa "eats" sacrifices of white chickens and pigeons, rice, milk, eggs, pineapples, and fig-bananas; and "drinks" *kola* and sweetened coffee. Damballa forms the

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combines an explanation having an element of correctness — "a charm against harm" — with entire misunderstanding when he speaks of the color as symbolizing a "declaration of a holy war against wrong and oppression." Some, but not all of the Ogun *loa* drink Haitian rum. Ogun himself is identified with St. James the Elder, and his sacred day is Wednesday. This *loa* is a *Nèg' défence* and protects his worshippers from bullets or wounds inflicted by weapons. Ogun Balandjo guards travelers, though he is not as strong as such others of the Ogun group as Ogun Badagri and Ogun Batala, with whom he shares the bamboo tree as a habitation. The former gives *connaissance* — knowledge — which permits those he possesses to prophesy; the latter endows with the ability to prepare healing baths. The Ogun *loa* Erzilie and Damballa are jealous gods. On the day sacred to each, a devotee puts fresh linen on his bed, places powder, soap, and a comb near by, and sleeps alone. If the devotee is a woman, her husband sleeps elsewhere; if a man, his wife must seek another place; otherwise the transgressor would die.

Agwe Woyo is god of the sea, but, as might be expected, neither he nor his son and daughter, Agweto and Agweta Woyo, figures as importantly in Mirebalais as in coastal areas. For the folk of Mirebalais the river-gods, particularly the spirit of the Artibonite River, are of much greater importance. This last-mentioned *loa*, named Clairmé, a Pétro deity like his wife and daughter, Mme. Clairmé and Clairmézine, lives in the deepest part of the stream with the other members of his "family." Similarly, the deepest parts, or *bassins*, of tributary streams hold the spirits of those waters. And since all these tributaries flow into the Artibonite, and the Artibonite empties into the ocean, it is said that when the river is in flood, Clairmé is engaged in inspecting his domain, being greeted by the spirits of all the smaller rivers as he passes their mouths. At this time the flow of the water in each tributary is arrested until he has gone by, when, in a great swirl,

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776 823 it joins the flooded Artibonite as its master accompanies Clairmé on his way to consult with the great ruler of the sea, Agwe. Actually, at the height of the rainy season the force of the light colored muddy water of the major stream holds back the darker colored flow of its tributaries in a manner which accords with the legend, so that, observing the Tombe River at one such time, the Haitians who were present said: "The Tombe is waiting for its master to pass."

776 [784] [794] Gede, a deity who figures in both the Rada and the Pétro groups as chief functionary under Baron Samedi, ruler of cemeteries, is tolerated rather than favored, though his rewards to his devotees include the refusal to dig a premature grave for them. When Gede possesses a devotee at a dance, [787] Damballa, Ogun, and the other Rada gods "leave" at once, and those who are possessed by them come out of their possessions. For though Gede is no less a *loa* than other gods, "He is a *zombi* and is fed apart"; as the Haitians say: "The *loa* are like human beings. They will not mingle with the dead, [822] and Gede is of the dead." His color is black, and Saturday is his sacred day. He "eats" salt herring, hot peppers, cassava, [782] roasted corn, roasted bananas, and other roasted foods. He drinks *clairin* — much of it — and at great ceremonies a [825] black goat and chickens are killed for him, as well as those chickens with ruffled feathers called *djakati*, which in all the New World, as in Africa, are believed to discover and dig up magic charms set against their owners. He lives in the cemetery, "behind the cross." There are a number of deities whose names are compounded with the name of Gede — Gedenibo, Gedeonsu, Gedehun — and hence the question whether or not this is a generic term or a specific designation is pertinent. There is no agreement on this point, and it could only be established that those *loa* who bear the same name, such as all Ogun or Bosu or Simbi deities, are brothers; but who the parents of these groups may have been is not known.

Associated with Simbi and Gede in the Pétro "squad" are

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[7] Mackenzie, ii, 124.
[8] St. John, 162.
[9] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 201–2.
[10] Price-Mars (I), 205, gives this as the proper age for a man of the region of Kenskoff, near Port-au-Prince, to marry.
[11] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 216.
[12] Ibid., 211–12. A facsimile of this letter is given on pp. 213–15.
[13] Ibid., 216–17.
[14] Mackenzie, i, 38.
[15] St. John, 145–6.
[16] St. John, 145.
[17] Mackenzie, i, 57. Wirkus, 222, mentions a case of polygyny on the Isle à Gonave where the wives apparently inhabited one compound with their mutual husband.

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CHAPTER VII

[1] This seems to differ in various parts of Haiti; thus, near Port-au-Prince, the father of the girl "designates to his future son-in-law the land where his house is to be built," according to Price-Mars (I), 216.
[2] Cf. Parsons (I), 165.
[3] Among the obligations of the peasant mentioned by Price-Mars (I), 34, is "the respect due to the elders who are the repositories of tradition."

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CHAPTER VIII

[1] Whether or not vodun is a religion, a problem which Haitian writers (e.g., Price-Mars (I), 32 ff.) are prone to debate at length, need not be considered here, since to an ethnologist the answer is too patently affirmative to require discussion.
[2] St. Mery, i, 45–6.
[3] Ibid., i, 46.
[4] De Vassière, 178–9.
[5] Dorsainvil (I), 158 ff.; Price-Mars (I), 39.
[6] For a useful resumé of statements concerning Haitian serpent-worship, the grievous misunderstanding of which is an outstanding characteristic of this honest but ill-conceived work, see Williams, *passim*.
[7] Price-Mars (I), 118 ff., also records his belief that serpent-worship is far less important than it has been represented, saying: "We believe it to be well-nigh abolished." Seabrook, 310–12, also holds to this view.
[8] Parsons (I), 157, states: "There is little or no philosophic or religious expression of the theory to be

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contents, is given by Wirkus, 178–9. Compare this description with the *humfort* pictured in Johnston, p. 194.

[8] It is to be emphasized that in the course of the *vodun* rituals witnessed during this field-work, none of the "frenzy of the blood lust" that is so favorite an aspect of these ceremonies with writers of books on Haiti was encountered. As an extreme example of this heightening of the tone with which a ceremony is described, the work of Seabrook may be cited, for phrases such as "blood-maddened, sex-maddened, god-maddened" used by him mark perhaps an all-time record for distortion of the inner disciplines of the vodun cult.

[9] Cf. Parsons's brief sketch, (I), 172–3, of a *mangé loi*, though the "bloody anointing" of which she speaks was not seen to occur in Mirebalais *services*. Detailed descriptions of what apparently were *services* are given by Wirkus, 168 ff., who, though honest in recounting what he saw, realized nothing of its significance; and Seabrook (pp. 54–70), who reads so much into what he purports to have witnessed that the entire account is rendered useless.

CHAPTER X

[1] Compare Parsons (I), 167–72.

[2] The drunkenness at serious dances reported by Parsons (I), 172, and others, would not be tolerated in Mirebalais.

[3] Price-Mars (I), 208, gives the name of *assotôr* for the great drum.

[4] Much nonsense has been written concerning these drums. Many writers—all non-Haitians—stress the existence of a drum language, which seems to be an assertion of dubious truth.

[5] This is a striking example of what Dorsainvil (I), 73–4 and 131 ff., calls the *masque vôduique* in detailing the effects of possession on the features of the possessed. See also the discussion of possession in Price-Mars (I), 122–3. The Gede possession described by Craige, 73–4, must, on the basis of customary Haitian behavior under possession, be subject to reinterpretation.

[6] Cf. Parsons (I), 170.

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CHAPTER XI

[1] Compare Parsons (I), 173–4, where the cult of twins is discussed and some of its rites described.

[2] Price-Mars (I), 35, mentions this as a power believed to be held by twins.

[3] The phrase "cult of the dead" as employed here must be sharply differentiated from its misuse by Seabrook (82 ff.).

[4] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 34.

[5] Price-Mars (I), 34, speaks of the custom of always burying charms with the dead.

[6] Wakes have been described by Seabrook, 89–91, and others, but in such a manner that it is difficult to dissect out the reality of what was witnessed from the imaginative elements.

[7] Cf. Wirkus, 221–3. The custom of giving the dead food at the grave, which he describes, is not followed when burial occurs in the Mirebalais town cemetery, nor, seemingly, elsewhere in the valley.

[8] See the description of a commemorative rite for the dead in Price-Mars (I) 148–50.

[9] This is a rule followed in West African practice.

CHAPTER XII

[1] An interesting attempt to account for this is found in St. John, 230–1, where he speaks of the "two Vaudoux sects," one good and one evil.

[2] St. Mery, i, 36. The term *garde* is almost entirely absent in later writings, the more sensational *wanga* (*ouanga*) being preferred.

[3] Léger, 55, note 34.

[4] Cf. Dorsainvil (I), 171.

[5] No better summary of this could be had than that in Parsons (I), 179, written after a single séance with a *gangan*.

[6] Pp. 324–31.

[7] Mr. J. C. Trevor informs me that during a recent field-trip to the Virgin Islands he discovered books of magic in common use, obtained from a Chicago dealer.

[8] It is not without interest to note that in the case reported in a Port-au-Prince newspaper and reproduced in facsimile by Seabrook, 334, concerning a woman from the commune of Mirebalais accused of sorcery, the name of the woman was *Azéman*.

[9] Cf. Parsons (II), 596.

[10] See above, pp. 94–5.

[11] The closest correspondence

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to the Haitian *baka* found in the New World are the *bakru* of Dutch Guiana, who in turn derive from the "little folk" of West African belief, beings that are always important in making magic. See Herskovits, M. and F. (IV), 105–7.

[12] Dorsainvil (I), 130, mentions this rite.

[13] Notably by Seabrook, 92 ff., who made great capital of the concept and purported actually to have seen these beings! Parsons (II), ii, 592, Tale 77, I, reproduces a Haitian's account in Créole of how a Sorcerer goes about ensnaring a victim to make of him a *zombi*.

[14] Parsons (I), 178–9.

CHAPTER XIII

[1] Price-Mars (II), 96 ff., gives a detailed description of the peasant house. The beehive-shaped hut mentioned by Craige, 36, is not found in Mirebalais, though the valley is but a short distance from Hinche, of which he was writing. Seabrook, 18, also describes the interior of a peasant house.

[2] Charlevoix, ii, 42.

[3] St. John, 153.

[4] Seabrook, 104 ff., devotes some space to a discussion of *pénitence*, but so changes its meaning to the Haitians that it is quite useless in making a serious comparison of data.

[5] See the discussion in Dorsainvil (I), 150, concerning other retentions of African motor behavior in Haiti.

[6] Craige, Seabrook, and Wirkus, all give lively accounts of cock-fights.

[7] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 1–15, for accounts of the manner in which stories are told in Haiti. It is to be noted that the African belief that a tale must not be told during the daytime persists there.

[8] A large collection of Haitian folk-tales has been published recently by Parsons (II), ii, 470–596.

[9] Audain has published what is perhaps the largest collection of Créole proverbs; his work, however, is unfortunately out of print.

CHAPTER XIV

[1] Dorsainvil (I), 158.

[2] Exceptions to this statement must be made in the case of the careful study of the relationship between Catholicism and *vodun* by Price-

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Preface

Every student of Haitian life is soon impressed by the richness of the materials spread out before him and the necessity of limiting his field of investigation. A study of Haitian religious practices, for example, draws one deeper and deeper into profusion, variation, and contradiction. One finds little difficulty in drawing a generalized picture with swift, bold lines; but when he descends into detail he discovers that the broad generalizations of the religious system contain within them many shifting and even warring motifs, and that what in one region is held to be true is not so regarded in another. The gods of *Vodoun* that are revered in one village are given only perfunctory treatment in another. Rites for the dead have a common denominator everywhere in the country, but each community brings to them something of its own or emphasizes traditions that elsewhere are forgotten. So it is also with music and dancing. A traditional drum rhythm may have one name in the north and another in the south, or a certain rhythm may be called by different names. There are diverse opinions about which dances are preferred by certain deities. The meaning of a song can be interpreted differently by different people. It is therefore no wonder that competent works on Haiti do not completely agree with one another in many respects, or that they seem, now and then, to be saying different or even contradictory things. Yet in many instances the seeming inconsistencies are in reality only minor variants within an overall scheme.

The purpose of this book is to present a broad view of certain aspects of Haitian culture and wherever possible to extract some of the flavor of Haitian thinking as well as its sense. It is easy to be fooled in regard to both. I remember seeing an old bearded man in the mountains beyond Furcy walking around his freshly hoed garden breaking a ripe tomato into small juicy bits which he scattered on the ground. It was about as primitive a method of planting as I had ever seen, and I wondered if even

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one seed from that tomato would ever take root under the hot sun. Some time later, when I knew this man well, I talked to him about the care with which seeds must be planted if they are to grow properly. I told him how *we* grew *our* tomatoes. He listened carefully, nodding his head. When I had finished he said: "Yes, that must be a good way to do things in your country. But here in this valley God is good. He does not forget his children. From the broken tomato many plants will sprout. When God is good to you, you do not have to count the seeds." I suggested that perhaps one should not waste any of the precious seeds that God had provided; and to this he replied: "How is there waste? My garden is made to flourish by Zaka [the country man's special deity]. Some people give Zaka a feast every year, but between times they forget. Zaka helps me in my work, and I don't forget him. When I break the tomato and put it on the ground that way, it is a little taste for Zaka. Whatever I plant, I give him some. He is good to me, I am good to him."

What I learned from many incidents like this one was that the eye does not always see correctly. The old man was not just planting tomatoes, nor was he performing a conventionalized ritual act. It was a highly personalized act of faith in nature and confidence in the deity who shared his work.

A large part of this book deals with Vodoun, the religious practices based on West African traditions. One soon discovers that the songs and dances of Vodoun ritual are not merely music and motion supplementing and decorating more serious affairs. Virtually every aspect of Vodoun ritual is placative or invocational. The songs that are sung and the dances that are danced are direct supplication of various supernatural forces.

Undoubtedly, a number of principles which are put forward in this study do not apply equally to every region of Haiti; but they are, I think, true in general terms. Not until one has accepted the fact that different explanations exist for given phenomena, that the same rites are performed in different fashion in different places, and that the cult priests themselves do not agree on many details, may one begin to work toward a general view of the Haitian scene.

All of Haitian life is not Vodoun. And there are of course some Haitians who are relatively outside the central circle of its influence. But the inner meanings of Vodoun and its relationship to the total view of life permeate the entire scene. Music, too, binds together practically the entire fabric of Haitian existence. It is essential not only to the cult temple but to countless workaday activities. Agrarian work groups often perform their tasks to the accompaniment of a drum. And in the cult temple, the iron hoe of the fields often serves as a percussion instrument.

The Drum and the Hoe is the result of studies made over a period of

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ing Boyer's administration, 1818–1843, Catholicism was the state religion but the president was its chief. Leyburn notes:

> Every effort of the state failing to provide proper religious leadership, Boyer resigned himself to permitting those who professed to be priests to practice in the republic. There were seventy so-called priests in the country in 1840. Some of them had once been in the holy orders but had been unfrocked: they found in Haiti not only a haven but a fertile field for gain. In addition to these religious renegades came adventurers who knew just enough of ritual and theology to use the priestly garb as a cover for easy graft. . . . They baptized houses, boats, and doorposts, and blessed fetish charms or amulets, all for a fee.[8]

It was not until 1860, after the death of the "Emperor" Soulouque, that Haiti signed a concordat with the Roman Church.

The role of the prêt' savane became defined after the slave revolts of 1791. His cue was taken from the activities of freebooting Europeans who apparently needed neither religious orders nor profound Catholic knowledge for their pseudo-clerical work. And the long period without a responsible priesthood gave the "bush priest" an opportunity to flourish.

The prêt' savane of today has a respected place in the community, though his prestige is not so great as that of the houngan on the one hand or the Catholic priest on the other. His place is guaranteed by his ability to bring to the Vodoun service elements of a competing system which the houngan, operating within the framework of African tradition, does not provide. Acceptance of these Catholic elements as a peripheral part of Vodoun is characteristic of much West African religious thinking, in which new deities and rituals may be added to the old when circumstances require.

The prêt' savane opens many Vodoun services with an *action de grâce*, reads prayers when a death has occurred, participates in marriage rites, and "baptizes" the hounfor, the cult drums, and the sacred rattles—not to mention the loa themselves! But it is the houngan's powers that are paramount. The "bush priest" is in a sense performing a service for the Vodoun priest, whose rituals and administrations are regarded as the effective and vital ones. The prêt' savane is a cultural afterthought.

In certain remote and isolated mountain places the prêt' savane is virtually unknown. But there is no sense of deprivation, for the cult priests —even the poorest and the most rustic—have their own way of dealing with the saints, God, and the forces of nature. An aged houngan of the Morne la Selle region explained it this way:

"In everything that is done, God's permission is asked first. Most houngans in the mountains do not know how to read, and they don't know how to pray. But they know many things. They know where the sun rises,

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They know where the sun rises,

and they address St. Nicholas, who opens the day, and they know the wish of God. In the name of St. Nicholas they raise a glass of water and ask God for the power to do."

In ordinary usage the Haitian refers to the various cults or "nations" as though they were quite separate and mutually exclusive. He speaks of the *service* Pétro, or *rite* Nago, or the *nanchon* Ibo. Yet in practice the cults are usually bound together into two or three major groups.

The "nations" belonging to the Vodoun (or Dahomey) group include the Arada or Dahomé, the Anago, the Mahi, the Amine, and the Ibo. There is ample evidence that the cults of these "nations" were once separate and apart. Even today in isolated regions of Haiti there are cult centers devoted exclusively to Nago deities. Elsewhere, Mahi or Ibo services are held without the intrusion of "foreign" rites and deities. Some cult centers have several hounfors—one for Dahomé, one for Nago, one for Ibo, and so on, with a separate building for the "dead" spirit Gèdé. More often, however, one finds a single hounfor containing separate altars. Of all the "nations" within the Vodoun group, the Ibo perhaps has the most independent status, and in some regions it is tied in with Pétro rather than Vodoun rites.

The Pétro group also includes numerous "nations," some completely absorbed, others more loosely affiliated. Within this group, which for convenience may be called the Congo-Guinée family, are the Pétro, Bumba, Moundongue, Bambarra, Congo Loangue (Loango), and other "nations." In certain regions the Congo cult, like the Ibo, is regarded as separate and apart. Sometimes the Pétro service is kept distinct from the others, though it has drawn so heavily on them for its roster of deities that the distinction is not easily seen. In places such as Port-au-Prince where the cults have deeply infiltrated one another, major differences between the Vodoun and Congo-Guinée rites have disappeared, and altars to both Pétro and Dahomé deities may be found within the same hounfor.

It is not difficult to detect a certain pattern of regional grouping within the Vodoun and Congo-Guinée families. Within the Vodoun family are gathered "nations" from Dahomey, Togoland, and Nigeria, while in the Congo-Guinée cycle are "nations" from Central Africa, miscellaneous "nations" such as the Bambarra, and the Pétro cult which is regarded as "Haitian" rather than "African," but whose rites and loa have been recruited in large measure from other services.

One often hears of Kitta services, or Chango services, or Legba rites. These are not separate cults but simply rituals for specific loa.

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The loa, like the rites, vary somewhat according to region and to the practices of the individual cult priests. New concepts spring up, and they thrive in one locality while remaining unheard of in another. Yet many new concepts travel from hounfor to hounfor. As in the old days in Dahomey, the Vodoun priests sometimes make journeys to visit other cult centers. At one service near Jacmel, on the south coast, I met a houngan from Dondon in the far north and heard him discuss with the local cult chief the appropriate behavior of a loa who had mounted a servitor. The Dondon houngan declared that in the north the loa conducted himself differently. The Jacmel houngan parried with the remark that a loa's behavior is consistent. He said there were only two possibilities concerning the possession as described by the cult chief from Dondon: either the loa had been mistakenly identified, or another deity had attempted to impersonate him. Such exchanges hasten the spread of developing theology from one area to another. They also raise contradictions which remain forever insoluble.

That confusions and contradictions are not merely of Haitian making is made clear by Herskovits' voluminous study of the pantheons of Dahomey.[3] Each of the great cults—the sky cult, the earth cult, and the thunder cult—has its own explanations of the origins and functions of the deities; and even within one cult there are contradicting explanations. The Haitians have taken over, built upon, and diverged from a Dahomean system that contained its own contradictions. In adding to it the system of the Yoruba, with its parallelisms and similarities, they have made the whole picture more complex than ever.

3 [Herskovits, Dahomey. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

769 845 The dead twins are offered food in special earthen or gourd bowls. In any market place where pottery is sold you will find the joined marassa double or triple bowls. The annual rites for the marassas are routine, but once every five years there is a *grande service* for them.

It is not merely the twins of one's immediate family that are served, but twins—that is, the spirit of twins—in general. They are supplicated even when a family knows of no incidence of twins. In part, this precaution is a recognition that there may have been twins among ancestors long dead and forgotten. It is also recognition of a twin spirit as a separate force affecting all people. The twin spirit has been personified in the loa named Marassa. The child born after twins is believed by many Haitians to be even "stronger" and more to be placated than twins themselves. He is known as a *doçu* if a boy, *doça* if a girl. Their patron loa are known as [776] Marassa Doçu and Marassa Doça. The patron loa of triplets is Marassa Trois. Triplets are regarded as a special category of twins. Some Haitians, in fact, believe that the twins are merely a partial manifestation of the group of three, which is completed on the birth of the doçu or doça. In the marassa feast, triplets are served in the triple clover-leaf bowl, as are twins in combination with their doçu or doça. It is also believed by some that the child born before twins is "weak" both in physical vitality and psychic powers, because his strength has been sapped by the marassas who have followed him.

776 768 769 [184] For some Haitians the loa Marassa is the most potent of forces to be placated at the time of death. They hold that he is only incidentally the patron of twins and triplets. His significance is said to lie in the fact that he is the spirit of the first of all human children who died. And as the child precedes the man, Marassa is the first and foremost of all loa. When a service is held for Marassa, he is given foods and beverages that all children love.

769 Rites for the dead continue endlessly for the living. Before a child is witness to a death in his own family he may observe many rituals for the family ancestors, twins, and the unknown dead. For those who are a part of Vodoun, the cycle is a perpetual one in an endless system of integration and continuity.

775 776 764 Special rites are held to remove the loa from the head of a deceased person. It is believed that the spirit of a person who has not had his loa removed will be restive and perhaps will even cause difficulties for his family and his descendants. And there is also the matter of the loa's welfare. The *malt' tête* is, in a sense, a captive in the head of the person who has died. The head is his home. But should the corpse be taken to the graveyard without the loa's having been removed, the loa would refuse to be buried

764 father when you were living. Continue to protect your family after death. If you
766 need other services give abundantly to your heirs in order to obtain satisfaction. Oh,
793 good father, good servant, good parent, good friend! Good-bye! Do not forget us as
776 we shall not forget you."[11]
[539]

Then the houngan goes to the canarie, strikes it three times with a piece of palm bark, and chants an invocation to the loa and to God, while members of the family dance where they stand, shaking the green branches they hold. There follows an invocation to twins. After a number of loa [787] have "entered" the service, as manifested by possessions, the houngan undertakes to find out how death came to the deceased man. An assistant brings the sacred divining shells[12] of the dead man, and the officiating houngan throws them on the floor, pours tafia three times, and lights a candle. The shells are then consulted. Three times he goes through the procedure of casting the shells and consulting them. Later he announces that "the death of Boss Marius is not the death of an ordinary man, that [775] he is now resting in La Ville-au-Camp (capital of the loas which is 'under the water'), and that the loas will continue to protect his descendants provided that they show themselves worthy of protection."[13] There is more singing and ritual, and then the canarie is covered. The loa from the head of Marius has found a temporary resting place. A little later in the service "the houngan raises the canari as high as possible, almost as high as his face, as he repeats the last line: 'Where may I find refuge?' With a quick movement the canari is shattered. The food is scattered, the loas are satisfied, and the crowd breaks into disorderly flight. . . ."[14] A few hours later the body of the deceased is buried.

764 It is obvious that these rituals vary a good deal according to regional
184 practices and according to the importance of the persons for whom they
776 are conducted. Furthermore, there is a good deal of difference of opinion among Haitians as to what actually takes place when the maît' tête is taken from the head of the deceased man.

793 Although the prêt' savane (bush priest) is subsidiary to the houngan at
764 death rites, his is nevertheless a conspicuous presence. He may begin the
184 services with prayers for the dead, in which the family joins, while the houngan remains in the background. Later, the houngan takes over. In certain regions, however, the prêt' savane is dispensed with altogther, his function being absorbed by the houngan.

764 As reported by Herskovits, the wake for the dead is one of the most important ceremonies in the death rites. He says:

[766] Wakes are held for all dead, even for very young children if they have been baptized, though if a baby dies before baptism, it is buried without ceremony in a little box in the courtyard of the habitation. . . . The wife and the children either stay

11 [This and the preceding paragraph are from Simpson, Op. Cit., p. 156. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]
12 [For footnote, see Category 116, p. 350. --Analyst]
13 [Simpson, Op. Cit., p. 159. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]
14 [Ibid., p. 161. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]

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with the corpse or are nearby with friends. The one who bathed the corpse remains constantly at its side as members of the family come and go, since the body must never be alone.[15] 764

But outside the house another kind of activity goes on. There the young people usually gather to sing gay songs, to play games, and to listen to stories. A professional storyteller, or a nonprofessional of repute, is called upon to entertain the children. He may give an entire night to Bouki and Malice stories, or to *contes* with interspersed songs in which the audience participates. Special singing games, stick games, and card games are played. But the drums are silent, both in the dead person's house and in the countryside at large. Rhythms for the game songs are provided by hand-clapping, or by vocal sounds which simulate percussion instruments. 764 525 53

Burial ceremonies vary according to local tradition and the status of the deceased person. Near the little fishing village of Petit Goave in southwestern Haiti, I witnessed a funeral cortege which might have been seen almost anywhere in the country. It was led by the widow of the dead man. She rode on a white horse, followed by four men carrying the dead body on a litter made of plain planks. There was no coffin, the body being covered only by its white shroud.[16] Behind the corpse plodded a group of twelve or fifteen peasants, friends and relatives of the dead man. Some of them had just come in from the fields and still carried their machetes in their hands. Others carried short *cocomacaque* sticks, which are believed useful for warding off baka and other demons who lurk along the path of the traveler. 764 [184]

The woman on the horse lamented loudly. When she came to where other peasants stood respectfully at the road's edge, she stopped her horse and faced them, raising her voice to an anguished pitch, calling on them to take note of her bereavement and of the fine virtues of the dead man. Some of the spectators whom she addressed, standing with their hats in hand, nodded and tried to say consoling words, such as "Oui Manman, li grand moune" (Yes, Mama, he was a fine man), or "Quand Bondieu vlé ou li prend" (When God wants you he takes you). A market woman with a load on her head suddenly became possessed by a loa as the cortege passed her. This seemed to increase the anguish of the widow, who lamented with increased vigor.

The four men carrying the corpse sometimes moved in a zigzag course, first to one side of the road, then to the other. When the procession came to a crossroad it stopped momentarily. The houngan, scarcely distinguishable from the other peasants in blue denim, came forward and stood in the center of the crossroads shaking his tiny hand bell and calling upon Malt' Kalfu (Master of the Crossroads) to grant safe passage. While he [793] [776]

15 [Herskovits, op. cit., p. 208. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.--Analyst]
16 [For footnote, see Category 116, p. 350.--Analyst]

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The yam 244 17 192

itself was transplanted from Africa, where in old times as well as in modern it was a staff of life among those who lived by agriculture. The word "yam" is known throughout large parts of Africa, crossing language lines and forests. It signifies the big root on which the African is so dependent, and it also has the general meaning of "eat." In Senegal it is called *nyami*, while across the width of Africa and in the upper Nile region it is called *nyam*.

In Haiti the yam is a tie with the past and a symbol of fertility. When the yams are plentiful, there is food for the winter months and a sense of well-being. When the yam crop is poor, there is insecurity and even hunger. Whatever occurs, lurking in the background is the shadow of the family ancestors, for it is they who have the power to enhance the crops or blight them. This is the concept around which the mangé yam is built. 244 769 182

The annual harvest feast, on the twenty-fifth of November, is rooted in the need for placating the ancestors, so that the dead will insure the fertility of the fields. Before the feast, no yams may be eaten, for the crop must be "baptized" first. Should this rule be violated the yams will spoil and those who eat them will become sick. The precise form of the mangé yam varies from region to region. Sometimes it is held on the premises of the cult chief for the community at large. More traditionally it is held on the family *habitation*, with a houngan in attendance. It is felt that an important obligation rests upon those who have wandered away from the homestead to return for the occasion. For the fate of the family depends to a large degree upon the successful appeal to the vast host of the ancestral dead, and the solidarity of the living in this effort is regarded as vital. Even if one belongs to a Christian sect which proscribes Vodoun, he is obligated and ready to come, for the welfare of the family is paramount. Catholics, Adventists, and Protestants alike participate. As the Haitians say, it is an affair for all who eat yams, and that means all Haitians. 244 796 769 184

Yams are washed and prepared for eating during the service. They are cut in small portions, placed in dishes or calabash bowls, and offered to the dead, who have prime rights. All categories of the dead are fed—those who are remembered, those who can be recalled only by name, and those whose names are forgotten. The dead of Haiti are invoked, then the dead of Africa. The marassa dead are fed from separate gourds or bowls, and a special table is set for the ancient dead who move slowly because of their age or infirmities, and who may take a long while to arrive at the mangé. A share of the yams is offered to the family loa. Then the members of the family receive symbolic portions. There is singing, drumming, and dancing, and sometimes ritual baths are taken. Afterward, when the yam feast is ended, the crops may be gathered, stored, and eaten. 244 796 769

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celebrated with elaborate rituals for the dead. As in Haiti, great importance is laid on the presence of all living descendants, whose numbers are calculated to influence the ancestors' behavior. And as in Haiti, the first yams and the first rice are offered to the dead, and only after the family ritual does the family divide the crop.[5] 243 244 796 769 171

Service for the Assotor Drum

The *assotor* drum is the largest and most sacred of all Haitian drums. Around it is built an impressive and elaborate service known as the *mangé assotor*, which, according to local traditions and circumstances, may be held as often as every three years or as infrequently as every twenty-one years. The period between mangés always consists of an odd number of years. A houngan from Jérémie declared the service ~~might~~ properly be held every three, five, or seven years. Another cult priest in the Cul-de-Sac Plain said it could be held every seven, seventeen, or twenty-one years. The assotor is known as the *plus grand moune* (the most venerable "man") of the hounfor. However, few cult centers possess an assotor. "Assotor c'est fort bagaille, c'est pas zaffai tout moune" (The assotor is powerful, it isn't everybody's affair), Haitians say. This is what a man from Jérémie tells about it: 534 796 778

"The assotor is the greatest of all things in the hounfor. The Rada drums are only for the Dahomey nation. The Congo drums are for the Congo nation. The assotor is a man of Dahomey, but he is for all nations. It is for all loa—Pétro, Congo, Bumba, Dahomey. The assotor belongs to Dahomey, but when there is a great service the assotor is the host to the loa of every rite, the loa of Haiti and of Africa. When the assotor is played, the loa are awakened everywhere. Loa who have been forgotten by the Creoles (Haitians) will come to the service and mount people, and when the loa have gone, many people don't know what loa has been riding them. Some ancient spirits from far away come only to the assotor service, and when it is over they aren't heard of again. 534 796 778 184 787 [176]

"The assotor drum is not for small things, it is for great occasions. For some people there are no occasions in their whole lives great enough for an assotor service. When all other things have failed, it is only then that the assotor is called upon. 534 796 778 787

"If a big houngan should have an assotor drum, he can have only one, and it is the chief of the hounfor. All other drums are its servants. You can make an assotor, but it is not necessarily an assotor. It may look like an assotor and not be an assotor. To be an assotor it must not only have the shape of an assotor but it must be accepted by the loa. There was a houngan near Jérémie who made an assotor and held a great service with it,

[5] [Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana. Cf. p. 351, category 116. -- Analyst] [115]

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comes quietly. Pié Cassé comes crawling because of his broken feet. Each loa comes in his own way. 534 796

"First there is dancing for the Congo and Pétro loa. There is dancing for the Kanga and Ibo nation. Last of all is Dahomé, for the assotor belongs to the Dahomé nation, and Dahomé is the host. 778 776 [184]

"The assotor service is the biggest of all services. It last fifteen days. Old people say that once there were services lasting more than twenty days. Every day, animals are killed—bulls, goats, pigs, chickens, turkeys—all according to the loa who are there to be fed. When Moundongue is fed, a dog's ears are clipped in his honor, because Moundongue is fond of dogs. More happens in the assotor mangé than all the rest of the year. Dahomé is host to the other nations, so the Rada service comes last. But the assotor drum is the host even to Dahomé, and it is fed last of all. [782]

"The assotor drum is dressed in the finest of clothing and kerchiefs during the mangé. It is the king of everything.

"When the mangé assotor is ended, when the drum has been fed, there is an immediate Mass held in church for the souls in purgatory. You don't need to have any special reason, but you must hold the Mass for all the dead. You serve coffee, sandwiches, cake, and other refreshments for all the people. 534 796 769.

"When there is no mangé going on, the assotor is kept in a special place in the hounfor. Every seven or nine months the houngan has a special *rappel* beaten for it on the Rada drums, and rum is spilled on the ground for it. It is a great responsibility to own an assotor. But it does great things for the houngan who owns it."[6] 534 778 796

Service for Maît' Grand Bois at Anse-à-Veau

Orthodox tradition in the region of Anse-à-Veau places the loa Maît' Grand Bois as the most potent and venerable of deities. He is the supreme mystère, whose good will or eccentric whim determines the fortunes of all men. Somewhat subsidiary to Grand Bois, but served within the same rites, are two other non-Dahomé loa—Moundongue (of Congo origin) and Ibo. Older people of Anse-à-Veau regard this trilogy, along with Femme Grand Bois (the wife of Maît' Grand Bois), as the core of "Guinée" ritual. There is also a second group of deities, consisting primarily of Ogoun Feraille, Êzilie, and Fréda Dahomé; these loa are of the Dahomey family and are regarded as somewhat less important. Should services for any of them be held, they follow rites for the Grand Bois constellation. People in this region hold that there is only one Ibo loa, one Moundongue, one Ogoun, and one Êzilie, each of them with many names or manifestations. Legba, the Dahomean spirit of procreation, 184 776

[6] [For footnote, see Category 116, p. 351. --Analyst]

184 the gate, and the crossroads, is not regarded in the same light as the other loa but as a messenger and interceder, and as the crossroads protector. He it is who helps in the placation of the major gods, and who guards people against accident, chance, and evil spirits on the highway.

In traditional form, services for Maît' Grand Bois and Femme Grand Bois are conducted by the family without the aid of a houngan, under the direction of the oldest male member of the family. The rites begin on a Thursday. With a tiny bell in his hand, the elder who directs the service (he is called *grand famille*) calls upon Maît' Grand Bois to come and receive his feast. The procedures are solemn. The grand [787] famille and the family sing. At last Grand Bois enters the head of the old man who is conducting the rites. Then the sacrificial animals are brought forward and killed, and the women take the meat and begin the cooking of the mangé. While the food is cooking, the family sits and waits. Sometimes the grand famille begins a song, in which others join. The cooking takes a long while. Sometime during the night, when the food is ready, it is placed in two baskets—one for Maît' Grand Bois and one for his wife, Femme Grand Bois. Into each basket goes meat, corn meal, rice, bread, cookies, peanut cakes, cassava, and other delicacies. The two baskets are hung by ropes from the roof of the tonnelle, or from the branch of a tree. During the entire night, none of the family eats. Maît' Grand Bois and his wife partake of the feast as they please. At six o'clock in the morning, the baskets are taken down, and the family is free to eat what the loa have left for them.

When the food is gone, the bones that are left are carried to a nearby stream and washed until they are white and shining. The bones are then placed in a large calabash bowl. Sweet-scented leaves from special trees are placed in the bowl with the bones, and water is added. The [783] mixture becomes a ritual lotion, or "bath." The entire family kneels before the liquid, which they rub on their faces, heads, arms, hands, legs, and feet. When the ritual bathing is over, they sing:

[539]

La famille vin' payé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
La famille vin' payé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
Cérémonie là c'est finil [Ex. 41]	The ceremony is finished!

Afterward, each member of the family places a small coin in the calabash dish with the bones and leaves, and the residue is then buried in a deep hole at a crossroads. A heavy post (*borne*) is erected at the site, with [211] markings to indicate the date of the service, and the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, each representing a year. Every year one of the numbers is checked off, and at the end of four years another service for Maît' Grand Bois and Femme Grand Bois is held.

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588 does not marry his horse. People marry people. Loa marry loa. A man
588 may have a compact with a loa. That is not a marriage. Some of the
184 things that are going on down there in the Plain are not right. They are not the old way. In the old days we did things differently. We did not always run to the houngan. The grand famille knew how to talk to the loa. Up here we don't do things the way they do them down below in the city. People marry people. Loa marry loa."

588 Nevertheless, the practice in the neighborhood of Port-au-Prince and
776 the Cul-de-Sac Plain is for mystic marriages to take place when deemed
[184] useful, essential, or unavoidable. Foremost among the loa involved in these rites is Ezilie Wèdo, the "pure" one, the deity of love, sometimes identified with the Virgin Mary. Other loa known to have taken part in mystic marriages are Damballa, Ogoun, Ayida, Agwé, Gèdé Nimbo or one of his brothers, Cousin Zaka, and Général Clermeil. All these loa—significantly, I think—have clearly defined personalities; much is known about their character and behavior, their likes and dislikes.

588 A man married to Ezilie has special obligations to her for the dura-
[834] tion of his life. On certain days (especially Thursday, which is sacred to this deity), the mortal "husband" may not have sexual intercourse, even though he has a human wife.

588 Circumstances leading to a mystic marriage vary widely, but in each
755 case it is a cult priest who determines whether the rites should be
793 held. Perhaps a person has been afflicted with a series of illnesses or mis-
776 fortunes. He goes to his houngan, who begins a series of communications with the client's loa or with his own. Sometimes many loa are consulted before the desired information is available. Eventually it is determined that a certain deity, for reasons which may or may not
[753] be clear, wishes to have nuptial ties with the client. The illnesses or mis-
[777] fortunes that have been sent are a means of informing or warning the person concerned.

Sometimes the houngan relies on well-established divining methods to ascertain the cause of the difficulties. He may employ the *gembo* (a shell that slides on a string), ashes, or small shells that are thrown on
[787] the ground. Or he may rely on possession by a loa to provide the information.

If it is found that a loa is demanding marriage, arrangements are then made. The rites that follow may take place in a hounfor or at the house of the human bride or groom. Both a prêt' savane and a houngan officiate.

588 The person directly involved, like the loa, usually has something to
554 gain from a mystic marriage. For one thing, he can reasonably expect

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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[182]

Ibo nation, I am going to eat a large cock, oh, Ibo nation!
Ibo nation, I am going to eat a large cock!
Ibo nation, I am going to eat a large cock, oh, Ibo nation!
Waille waille waille!

The Ibo service is often a strictly family affair rather than a broad community ritual. The family replies to the Ibo loa in the following song. [184]

La famille vin' payé sang,
Vin' payé sang!
La famille vin' payé sang,
Ibo Lazile volonté! [Ex. 41]

The family comes to pay blood,
Comes to pay blood!
The family comes to pay blood,
It is Ibo Lazile's wish!

The loa Nago frankly tells the people that if they want to come to his house (his shrine, or the hounfor) they will have to pay something for the privilege:

Si nou wè coté'm demeuré,
Si nou wè coté'm demeuré,
Fau'm payé bonbon pou' ça!
Anago Nago!
Vin' wè coté'm demeuré! [Ex. 67]

If you see where I live,
If you see where I live,
You have to give cookies for that!
Anago Nago!
Come see where I live!

The "dead" spirit Gèdé Nimbo, the guardian or master of the cemetery, who often engages in bizarre activities which poke fun at the codes of social behavior, is sometimes regarded as a special protector of children. Precisely because he is overlord of all that has to do with the grave, his good will is sought, particularly in behalf of the young; and in many services of the Nago rites his protection is bought by money gifts:

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Gèdé main la'gent,
M'apé ba ou la'gent la'gent,
M'apé ba ou la'gent pou' ga'dé zenfants la yo!
M'apé ba ou la'gent pou' ga'dé zenfants la yo!

Gèdé, take the money,
I will give you money, money,
I will give you money to guard the children!
I will give you money to guard the children!

In the course of the ceremonies when, from time to time, the honored loa of the occasion enters into the head of one of the servitors, the houngan will place in the hands of the mounted person a lighted candle and a pitcher of water. The possessed servitor approaches the sacred center post and spills a little water on the ground for the deity. After certain other rituals, the houngan, or one of his assistants, conducts the mounted "horse" into the hounfor to the altar. In the following song, as the possession comes on, there is a call for a lighted candle.

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2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

The cow was

never seen again, and after a prêt' savane had read prayers over the spring the people again drew water from it.

Baka more often change themselves into gray or red pigs, but one ingenious baka was said to have transformed himself into a bicycle, which was seen traveling alone at night on the road from Port-au-Prince to Léogane.

Some people wear charms against the baka's malevolence; but the most effective weapon is the cocomacaque stick. The cocomacaque, or monkey palm, is a palm tree that grows only a few feet high. It has magical powers to drive off not only baka but other evil beings as well. When the tree is growing in its natural state, it is said, you must never mention its name in its own presence. Should you say within its hearing, for example, "Look at the cocomacaque," it will wilt and fall over, losing all its vital powers. The trunk of this midget palm is a favorite material for fashioning a walking stick or a short baton. A man going on a long journey into strange country may carry a cococmacaque stick with him to brandish at the crossroads where baka lurk, or to drive off strange animals that may be baka in disguise.

In their relationships with human beings, the baka are not always random. Sometimes, for a terrible price, they will undertake to make a man rich or to "eat" his enemies for him.

In some parts of Haiti, baka seemingly have found their way into the ranks of the loa. In the Congo-Guinée pantheon there is a deity called Bakulu Baka, or Babaku Baka. He is a malevolent spirit who "eats" people in the best baka tradition, and he lives, significantly, in the mapou tree, which is shunned by all good loa.

The *engagements*, or compacts, in which baka sometimes figure are usually made with another sort of creature, the *djab*, or devil. A djab is a manlike being but is superhuman, ferocious, and terrible. Some djab are small, some large, some innocent in appearance, some grotesque. They are supernatural sorcerers who deal out riches in exchange for human beings. A frustrated or desperate man may go to a djab and ask for a favor, which will usually be granted for a heart-rending price. Persons who appear to gain wealth suddenly may be suspected of having entered into an *engagement* with a powerful djab.

One story is about a man of Port-au-Prince who, needing a large sum of money, went to a famous djab who lives in a cave known as Trou Fourban. This powerful djab agreed to provide all the money required, but only on condition that the man deliver to him each year one of his children. The man suddenly came into a large fortune. But when the anniversary of his compact arrived, he did not go to Trou Fourban

R: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Hadi SV3

many of his potions are of a mystical and 759
semiritual nature; yet from roots and leaves he brews specific medicines 755
for specific illnesses, such as rheumatism, fevers, malaria, worms, and 757
yaws. Sometimes his cures are effective, sometimes they fail. The leaf doctor is consulted for poisons and their antidotes, though many poisons, such as that in the wari bean, may be gathered and dispensed by anyone.

One of the macabre figures in Haitian folk belief is the *zombie*. In 775
the most general sense, the name designates the bland soul of a person who died without the distinction of having a loa in his head. The soul or spirit has no special will. It cannot affect the living in any way, unlike the lutin, the djablesse, and those who were buried possessed of mystéres. It does not harass enemies or importune its descendants. It is an undynamic, simple, otherworldly spirit, a sort of negative afterimage. It does not need to be placated or feared.

But the word *zombie* has another, more popular meaning, signifying 775
a human being who has "died" and been resurrected from the graveyard 789
by members of the Zeaubeaup Society, by a wicked sorcerer, or by some 754
other person who has realized the "power" to perform this act.

The Haitian countryside is full of tales about fresh graves that have been robbed of their bodies by practitioners of this special form of black magic. By a secret formula these soulless "dead" are revived and given a semblance of life. They lack only the power of will. Without that, they are at the complete command of the sorcerer who has disinterred them. They are presumed to be spirited away and put to work at drudgery in some remote place. Stories are told of plantations in the mountains whose entire labor force is made up of zombies, the animated dead. You can tell a zombie when you see him. His eyes are dull and glazed, he gives no sign of recognition to people he once knew, he moves slowly and plodding at his tasks, and he takes orders only from his master. He neither sings nor dances, and he eats and drinks without interest. His facial expression never changes. He is emotionally and mentally dead. Neither the rites of the Church nor those of Vodoun can help him. There is only one formula for breaking the spell. If he eats [183] salt he will either regain full life or die a merciful death. The master therefore takes great care that his zombies never have salt.

Haitians have many explanations of this mystical phenomenon. Some [184] hold that the sorcerer has the unique power to revive the dead. Others believe that the victim is not really dead but has succumbed to a virulent poison which numbs all the senses and stops bodily functions but does not truly kill. Upon disinterment, the victim is given an antidote which restores most physical processes but leaves the mind in an inert state, without will or the power to resist.

171 The connection between the Haitian zombie and certain soulless beings
715 of West Africa is quite apparent. Herskovits has observed that in
754 Dahomey there are tales of persons thought to be dead who were found wandering in far-off places. These individuals had no memories of their former lives. "They were soulless beings, whose death was not real, but resulted from the machinations of sorcerers who made them appear as dead, and then, when buried, removed them from their graves and sold them into servitude in some far-away land."*

764 According to stories told by some Haitians, in ceremonies for the
765 dead where there is suspicion that the deceased was the victim of this
715 particular kind of poisoning a close relative stabs the body with a knife before burial to assure that it will not become a zombie. In other instances, close around is kept over the grave for a number of days and nights, so that the body cannot be stolen.

715 Some members of the elite publicly dismiss the whole business as
789 savage fantasy but privately say something like: "I don't believe in this
184 sort of thing, but how can you explain the case of Marie Zamhom in Cap Haitien?" And then they will tell of curious events of which they have firsthand knowledge.

538 There are numerous legends of persons who died and were buried,
715 only to reappear perhaps years later in some mountain village, or in the
789 big city of Port-au-Prince. An educated man in Port-au-Prince declared
754 that a dead cousin of his reappeared one day in the city ten years after her burial. He tried to speak with her, but she answered only haltingly and gave no sign of recognition. After this one appearance, he said, she was never seen again. Another Haitian from the north told of a graveyard watch in his village to prevent disinterment of the grave of a young girl who had just died. The two watchers dozed fitfully, and suddenly awoke to see a man removing the girl's body. When they jumped to their feet and went after him he escaped into the shadows. But the girl staggered about, fell to the ground, and gave birth to a baby. Both the girl and her newborn child were taken to the village and given salt to eat. Both of them recovered.

One villager from the southern mountains reported that in his travels he came upon a coffee plantation on the sparsely populated mountain called Morne la Selle, and found all the laborers to be zombies. They did not sing as they worked, their movements were slow and cumbersome, and they did not sweat in the hot sun. When he asked for a drink of water, no one replied. While he stood trying to converse, the master of the plantation came with a hard leather whip and angrily ordered him to leave.

* [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, p. 243. Cf p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

Ib Courlander 2-6 (1937-1950) 1960 8V3 H481 8V3

When they are not working, it is said, zombies are tied with special ropes made from the leaves of the banana tree. One popular song goes: 775 789 824

Nuss Lougane
Yo mazé zombie nuss paille fig-banane!
Ahaha wye-oh!

do Lougane
They tie the zombie with banana straw!
That is all, *wye-oh!* [539]

Some Haitians tell you they know there are zombies because they have seen them. Not too many years ago a visiting writer stoutly declared that she, too, knew there were zombies because she had seen one—in the [illegible] airtight, the possibility that mental defectives are sometimes mistaken for zombies is worth considering.

Houngans who "work with two hands" are reputed to be able to gain permanent control over persons by means of a formula known as *tuyé-lévé* (kill and raise). Either for himself or a client, the houngan gains power over the victim by "killing" him through special magic and then "removing the soul" (*retiré n'âme*). The victim, presumed to be normally dead, is buried by his family; the houngan then retrieves the body and "restores the soul" (*metté n'âme*). With his soul restored, the victim has, in effect, become a slave of the houngan, who can do with him as he wishes. He differs from a zombie in that he has a soul, whereas the zombie has none. 775 793 754 774

Some Haitians believe that even one who has died a nonmagic death may be raised from the dead. To accomplish this, the houngan or bocor stands over the body, goes through a specified ritual, and calls out the dead person's name: "Albert Moreau! Albert Moreau! Albert Moreau! Lèvé non! Lèvé non! Lèvé non!" ("Get up! Get up! Get up!") Then, it is said, the dead man may awaken. 775 793 789 754 791

It is believed that a houngan may also command the souls of dead persons to perform services for him against an enemy. The souls at his disposal for this work are those which he keeps in earthern jars in his hounfor. Should he wish to plague an enemy, he will send one of these souls to the man's house to make him sick, or lazy, or insane. Usually, the man does not know what is happening to him; but if he becomes aware that a dead soul is working on him, he attempts to find out which houngan has sent it. Perhaps the houngan can be bought off. If not, another houngan may provide relief. 775 754 792

While some believe in the reality of the various demons and specters, 184 775 792

others only half believe, and many look upon these creatures as imaginary but exciting to talk about.

The zombie finds a favored place in the tales children make up to tell one another, and the traditional song played by children on the earth bow or mosquito drum goes:

Maringouin pinga zombie oh, Bobo Maria!
Maringouin pinga zombie!
Maringouin pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie!
Maringouin pinga zombie! [Ex. 92]

Mosquito beware the zombie, oh, Bobo Maria!
Mosquito beware the zombie!
Mosquito beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie!
Mosquito beware the zombie!

Or they may sing with great bravado, to the clapping of hands.

Chaingadaing, nou pral mangé zombie!
Chaingadaing, trau trau!
Chaingadaing, nou pral mangé zombie!
Chaingadaing, colocoto!
Chaingadaing, nou pral mangé zombie!
Chaingadaing, kalainkaintaing! [Ex. 93]

Chaingadaing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingadaing, trau trau!
Chaingadaing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingadaing, colocoto!
Chaingadaing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingadaing, kalainkaintaing!

[P 105]

8. Mardi Gras and Rara: Jugglers, Maypoles, and Kings

From early in January until Easter, each year, the Haitian countryside 541
is infected with a riotous carnival spirit that puts all else in the background. First comes Mardi Gras, beginning early in January and building to a great climax at Shrovetide. And then on Ash Wednesday begins the seven-week festival known as Rara, Lwalwadi, or Chariopié.

Every week end in the Mardi Gras season the country roads and 541
villages are alive with special music, dancing bands, and traditional 533
kinds of masquerading. The little crossroads in the mountains where the *habitants* usually hold their markets are suddenly swarming with drummers, trumpeters, magicians, jugglers, masked dancers, and acrobats. Each band has its own name, its banners and paraphernalia, new topical songs composed for the occasion, and sometimes a dance virtuoso. Each [535]
rowing band competes for the attention and admiration of the spectators, and its ranks are often swelled by passers-by moving in the same direction who choose to dance their way along the roads rather than walk. Often women and girls on distant market errands will join in [182]
the celebration, seemingly unencumbered by the heavy loads they carry on their heads.

The Mardi Gras of the mountains and the plains is a dynamic spring 184
rite of which the urban elite version is only a pale and feeble imitation. 541
There are no pretty floats, no exhibits of female beauty, and no Coca-Cola advertisements. Sometimes the country bands move into Port-au-Prince and join the urban activities.

One by one the spectacles pass by on their uncertain way—to north 541
or south, into the town or out of the town, wherever chance leads them. In addition to the musicians, acrobats, jugglers, and masked dancers, there are baton twirlers, comedians on stilts, and mimes. Each group has its own theme. One may call itself the Zombeaups, another the Cochons Gris, another Cochons Rouges—names designating legendary

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

and covered with tiny mirrors or bits of colored glass. The towering headdress of antlers or papier-mâché sculpture unavoidably recalls similar headdresses in West Africa. Each roi has his own style of dance, which is usually accompanied by drums. It may be a belly dance, a dance of delicate balance, or one of complicated footwork and semiacrobatics such as the imitation of a pair of scissors at work. Throughout the dancing the headdress remains majestically erect.

In addition to the roi Lwalwali and the mâit' Rara (who is constantly in the midst of things, blowing his whistle), there are other traditional Rara personalities: the *major jonc*, who juggles with a metal baton (sometimes two or three of these jugglers work together), and the *jongleur*, a juggler or strong man who performs such feats as dancing while holding a fully set table off the ground with his teeth.

On the southwest peninsula, in the region around Jérémie, there is a splurge of wrestling exhibitions during Rara days. Known as *pingé*, this festival wrestling is done with a background of excited drumming and has a striking resemblance to wrestling traditions in West Africa. Local "champions" will invade a neighboring community, sometimes traveling considerable distances to make a challenge. As in West Africa, some of these wrestlers take their own musicians with them. The musicians often are provided by the village in which the events take place. If a challenge is accepted, the spectators form a large circle, with the wrestlers in the center and the musicians to one side. There may be drums and bamboo flutes, occasionally supplemented by large earthern jars and lengths of bamboo beaten with sticks. The wrestlers are dressed only in shorts. When a man is thrown, the event is over, and another pair of wrestlers takes over. Sometimes a "champion" will take on a series of opponents until he is tired. Afterward he may move on to another community to find new competition, perhaps accompanied by a large group of friends and supporters from his own village. When the Rara season comes to an end, pingé is over for the year. It is one of the few athletic sport activities of the Haitian peasant.

And now and then during Rara a *debois* is seen. The *debois* is a carved wooden marionette with a short handle below. Its arms and legs are moved by pulling a string. It is usually painted, and sometimes it is dressed. One debois observed was provided with a loose dresslike costume; when the string was pulled, a large phallus hinged into view in an erect position. This marionette was an object of endless funmaking among spectators.*

Another type of marionette is the "Two Kings," made of papier-mâché and operated with strings. The "Two Kings," sitting in a papier-

* [Footnote appears in category 16, p. 351. --Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-QQ]
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[184] [171] 76. *A Rara group near Plaisance. The costumes differ from those in the south. Note the Madras waistcloths, reminiscent of West African dress.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

And when the revolution came he produced for the Haitian armies knives, gun parts, and wheels to transport cannon. By the tens of thousands he made ingeniously devised metal objects to be thrown on the roads, before the French cavalry troops—objects so shaped that, no matter how they fell, a single sharp point stood erect to cripple the enemy horses. Yet knowledge of the West African uses of iron did not altogether disappear, and during the first century of independence the Haitian blacksmith created many old-style knives, spears, and ritual objects for the cult temple.

Even today, some of this old-style work is to be found in hounfors in the southwestern peninsula. One may see simple or ornate iron standards, made to support ceremonial offerings or candles, strikingly similar to standards in ancestral shrines in Dahomey. There are iron bells, both single and double, made in pure West African style; ornate ritual swords and sabers which are the crests of certain deities; coiled and uncoiled iron serpents representing the gods Damballa and Ayida; and stylized or semirealistic portraits of the deities. Many of these old pieces are nineteenth-century survivals; others have been forged within the past decade.

An over-all impression of Haitian material culture is that artistic decoration is almost entirely absent and that the prime emphasis is on utility. Wooden cooking spoons are efficient in form, but missing from them is the delicate decorative carving often found in West Africa. The long wooden washing bowl, or *gamelle,* and the wooden mortar in which grain is pulverized are likewise clean-cut but stark and plainly utilitarian. Clay bowls, bottles, and storage jars are usually of simple, uniform design, with only accidental variations; there is little use of glazes, and the clay is often heavy and thick. Should there be a wari gameboard in the peasant hut, the chances are that it is roughly made, without legs or carved designs. Dugout canoes are usually crude in appearance, heavy and thick-walled, and irregular in form.

Yet there are many evidences—though one must seek them out—that esthetic impulses are quite alive. The gay peasant straw knapsack, or *alfor,* without which no mountain man makes a journey, has a charm and grace that is not diminished by familiarity and cheapness. Decorated with sisal braid and tassels, and colored with green and magenta dyes, each *alfor* on close inspection appears to be unique. In some communities in the south and southwest, burlap squares also are painted with these traditional dyes. About forty inches across, and made of sugar bags, these paintings swarm with geometric patterns and sometimes with figures of flowers and animals. They are purely decorative, being

[See plates 42-51, pp. 112-DD—112-FF.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

used for wall hangings much as appliquéd cloths are used in Dahomey. Near Cap Haitien, in the north, ceramic workers make crude clay figurines of roosters, pigs, dogs, cows, and people. The "purpose" of these figurines is obscure, but it is likely that they are intended for use in Vodoun ritual, a number of them having been observed in hounfors in the vicinity of the town of Grande Rivière du Nord. In some mountain villages, canes carved with animal and human heads are commonly seen. Nor is the tradition of carving gourds and calabashes, popular in various regions of West Africa, altogether forgotten. The *cayambouque*, a divided calabash with the top ingeniously cut to fit into the lower part so as to form a sealed container, is sometimes covered with carved geometric designs, usually crude and haphazard but on occasion meticulous. Until recent years the common *cha-cha*, or gourd rattle, was similarly carved.

Most of the visible traditional art is to be found in the environs of the cult temple. The inner walls of many hounfors are covered with ritual designs and symbols and portraits of the deities. On the altar, sometimes, crude wood carvings of deities are seen, along with forged iron objects, carved marassa bowls, and grotesquely shaped drumsticks known as *baguettes guinée*. All the wooden objects are characterized by a plainness that relegates them to the category of purely functional and expendable things. The wood carving of a deity is not an image, it is a representation; it can be sold or otherwise disposed of, even thrown away if infested with beetles, and another object can be used to replace it. The only concern of the cult priest in this matter is that the deity concerned should understand the situation properly and not take offense. Thus there is no strong feeling that the wood carving should be a realistic representation or that it should be "beautiful." One relatively antique wood carving, completely West African in style, was found some years ago in a hounfor near Léogane and is now in the collection of the Musée du Peuple Haitien in Port-au-Prince (see fig. 57).

One of the most flourishing arts of the hounfor is the *vèvè*, or ritual drawing made on the earth in the course of a service. Most commonly these beautiful and ornate designs are made with white meal or flour, and in a few of the cults, primarily the Pétro, lampblack and red brick dust are also used. The vèvè is made by the houngan or the mambo. With sure, practiced movements, the cult priest allows the meal to trickle through his fingertips onto the ground where the rites are taking place, usually in the peristyle of the hounfor itself. The drawings he makes are composed of a multiplicity of cabalistic symbols—heart shapes, stars, interlocked V's, flags, abstract phallic forms, crosses, swords,

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

machetes, circles, mortar shapes, and so on—each with its own specific meaning. Sometimes the vèvè becomes openly pictorial, and there emerges a ship for the loa Agwé, snakes for Damballa and Ayida, a bull for the loa Taureau, a knapsack for the loa Azaka, or even a portrait of a deity, perhaps smoking a pipe or holding a sword. 788 532

The vèvè is not a permanent record. It is made as an act of supplication or veneration, and once it is finished it has no further value. In the ensuing ritual and dance, the vèvè is obliterated by the feet that pass across it. At the hands of one houngan, this invocational act results in a crude, even childlike, design. At the hands of another, it produces a drawing of beauty, integration, and highly developed form.

The drum-making craft, too, has offered an unbroken sequence of opportunity for satisfying artistic urges. The drum has a traditional form that cannot be tampered with; its shape is predetermined by its function, by the log from which it is hewn, and by existing standards. And yet, the drum maker has found it an object on which he can devise new decorative motifs, and he may even give it personal uniqueness. Some drums have styles that may be associated with specific regions of the country, others bear the stamp of the individual artist. Paint has been used on Haitian drums for a hundred years or more as a complement to carving. One assotor drum dating from the earliest days of the Republic, and now preserved in a collection owned by the Bureau of Ethnology in Port-au-Prince, is decorated with a medallion showing the Haitian coat of arms, grenadiers, red and yellow snakes, and a sun with a face. This magnificent instrument, apparently the only one of its age and kind to have survived the years, is one of Haiti's art treasures. 198 534 531

The *conis*, or calabash bowl, of the hounfor rites is another object which is decorated with motifs. Abstract designs, ritual symbols, and sometimes human and animal figures are painted on the inner or concave surface of the bowl. 322 531 [532]

The rural traditional arts of Haiti have had a belated impact on the arts of the city. Within the past fifteen years there have appeared a number of painters, sculptors in wood and ceramics, and ironworkers who constitute an art movement sometimes referred to as the Haitian "renaissance." Many of these artists draw heavily on national lore and legend for inspiration and subject matter. Some of them are men who came only recently from villages or distant farms. Their work adorns many public buildings in Port-au-Prince and is eagerly sought by art collectors. Members of the elite class who once looked with embarrassment on the "primitive" countryside are finding increasing respect for the potentialities of their country cousins. 184 531 532 32 [571]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

535 older man, they leaped into the air and came together in mock combat. First one would strike and the other would parry, then the second would strike and the first would parry, always in time to the beating Congo drums. On another signal all six dancers leaped into the air vertically, twisting into a full turn each time, landing in position to strike and parry.

Spectators standing around the dancers clapped their hands and sang:

[539]

Mousondi na fai la guè!
Éya éya éya!
Nous c'est nanchon la guè!
Ou pas tendé canon'm tiré?

Mousondi, we will make war!
Éya éya éya!
We are a nation of war!
Don't you hear my cannon shooting?

[293] When the dancers and drummers seemed fatigued, they were offered rum to drink. The dancers drank without breaking step or interrupting the battle. The bearded man held the lip of his glass between his teeth, and without using his hands to steady it, tipped his head back and let the rum run into his mouth, all the while stamping his feet and leaping with the others.

[184] I was told later that the Mousondi was from the north, and that the dancers were recent arrivals from Port-de-Paix. But some of the older people declared that in former times the dance was known in the south by the name Calinda.

114 535 The Calinda dance, like the Vodoun, the Pétro, and several others, is mentioned frequently in the old literature on Haiti, Trinidad, Martinique, and Guadaloupe. It has been described variously as a funeral dance, an exhibitionistic sexual display, and a stick dance. It was reported by Saint-Méry as a dance in which men and women paired off. Early in the eighteenth century, Père Labat described it as a line dance, with the women on one side and the men on the other. Lafcadio Hearn saw it as a stick dance. And the word Calinda appears sometimes in songs of the Vodoun cult. The name may have lost specific meaning early in the life of the colonies; but it is more likely that early chroniclers used the term inexactly to refer to a multitude of different dances. In Haiti, [595] identification of the Calinda has been further confused by the existence of the Calinda secret society, which had special dances of its own, all called Calinda.

Although confusions and contradictions exist, the testimony of older Haitians is that the Calinda was a stick dance, known also by the name Mousondi.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 185]

17. Children's World: Gage Songs and Games

On the night of last prayers for a deceased person, and on other party occasions, children while away the hours until bedtime with special songs and games. Sometimes the games are led by an older member of the family. More often, left to their own devices, the children play unsupervised. It is regarded as fitting that the youngest members of the community should be enjoying themselves while the last rites are being held for one who has recently died. This view is held not merely in regard to children; older people, too, engage in gay activities, such as dancing the Juba. 533 524 764 [535]

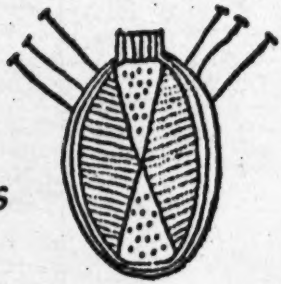
Many children's games are known throughout the country, others have only a regional popularity. The games mentioned here are among those played in southern Haiti, mainly in the neighborhood of the capital, Port-au-Prince. 184 524

One favorite is known as Balancé Yaya. The children—as few as four or as many as ten or twelve—crouch on the ground in a circle. Each of them has a stone in his hand, which he strikes rhythmically on the earth as they sing together: 524 [533] [539]

Jésus, Marie, Joseph oh,
Rat là mangé pigeon moin.
Jésus, Marie, Joseph oh,
Rat là mangé pigeon moin.
Rat passé, Robinette passé,
Fai' ti Marie marché, allé là. . . . [Ex. 129]

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, oh,
The rat has eaten my pigeon.
Jesus, Mary, Joseph, oh,
The rat has eaten my pigeon.
The rat goes by, Robinette goes by,
Make little Mary walk, go there. . . .

[P. 189]



18. Musical Instruments

The Haitian people have drawn heavily on both Europe and Africa for their musical inspiration. In music, as in other traditions, the country is bicultural. There is, on the one hand, the music of the so-called *élite*—the literate and educated class which is concentrated in the cities—and on the other hand, the music of the peasants, the plantation laborers, and the lower economic groups of the town. The *élite* music is in the European or Western tradition, while the true folk music of Haiti follows, in the main, in the wake of West African musical culture. The instruments of *élite* music are primarily those of Western Europe. The instruments of the folk music of the country are those which can best interpret the mainstream currents of the West African heritage—instruments of African design and function. European-style instruments have infiltrated into the folk music too, but the over-all pictures is that of a survival of African musical devices to interpret music cast in an African mold. It is the folk-music instruments which call for examination—the instruments that are made in the villages and tiny huts in the mountains, the instruments on which the significant music of Haiti depends.

The materials from which these instruments are made are usually those found upon the land. If a man wishes to make a drum, he cuts down a tree for the purpose. For material for a bamboo trumpet he goes to the bamboo grove. For a flute, he cuts a reed. Metal is used for making African-style bells, rattles, singing horns, and substitutes for bamboo trumpets.

The drum in its many forms is the most common instrument of all. It is used for dances of all kinds, for cult rites, for work music on the road and in the field, and for assembly calls and signals. Not very many years ago the older people in the south of Haiti still spoke of the "talking drums" they had seen as children.

The craft of drum making is a very skilled one, but the tools are

[P. 191]

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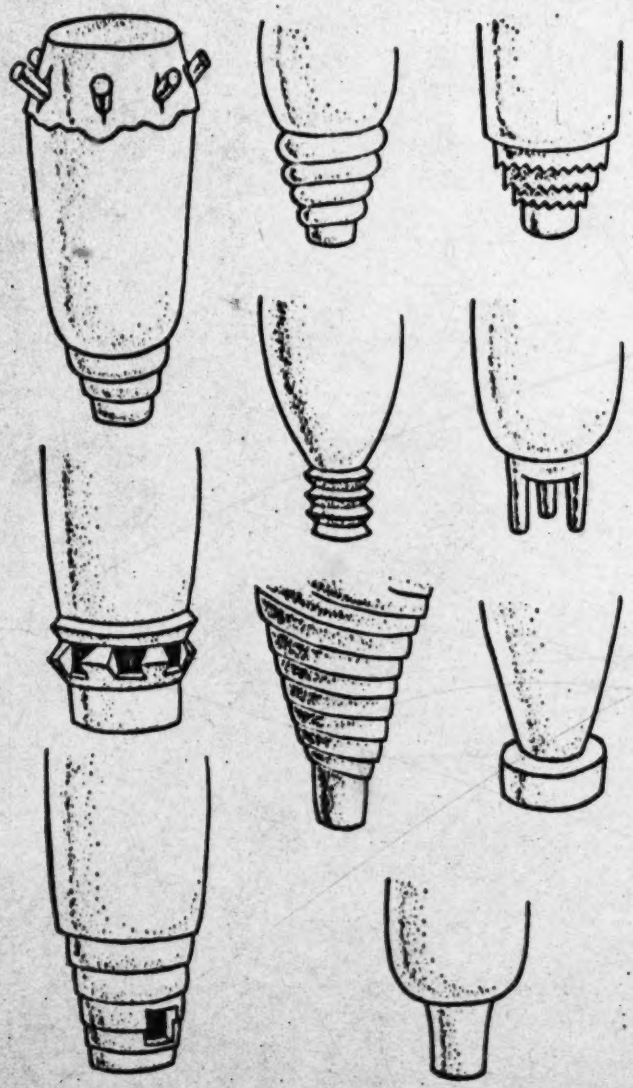

INDIVIDUALITY IN DRUM DESIGNING: Although the Arada or Dahomey-style drum is distinct from those of other "nations" or cults, there is a noteworthy variety of artistic decoration in the carving of the base. Some patterns are found only in certain regions or villages.

high. The smallest—the *bula*, or *bébé* (sometimes called *dundun*)—is 534
about eighteen or twenty inches high. They are all called sometimes by the Yoruba name *bata*, originally applied to a two-headed instrument.

Arada drumheads are of cowhide, held in place by hardwood pegs set into the bodies of the drums at an angle. The drums are tuned by [171]
driving in or loosening the pegs. Even the slitting of the skins where the pegs pass through them is African in pattern. In Cuba the drums of the Arada (there called Arara) cult are made in precisely the same way, though they are used in batteries of four rather than three.

In a variation of the peg type of fastening, the skin is attached to a 184
hoop, which, in turn, is held in place by ropes laced to the pegs. Each 534
drum maker has his own preference as to the angle and size of the pegs, the proportions of the drums, and the wood from which they are made. One drum maker near Léogane claimed to be able to identify the region from which a drum came by examination of the pegs and the carvings around the base.

The small Arada drum, the *bula*, is usually "whipped" with two long 534
thin sticks to provide a sharp and penetrating sound. The middle-sized 171
drum is played with one bare hand and a stick. The stick may be straight or bowed. The bowed drumstick is known as an *agida*, the name used for the same type of stick in Dahomey.[1] On infrequent occasions the *moyen* drum is played with two sticks—one straight and one bowed. The large drum, the *manman*, is played by the most accomplished of the drummers in the orchestra. He plays with one bare hand and one stick, which may be of various forms. It may be straight, have a hook-shaped head, or be mallet-shaped; or it may be the grotesquely twisted stick known as a *baguette Guinée*. All these forms are known in Dahomey and elsewhere in West Africa.

The three Haitian Arada drums, supplemented by an African-style 171
bell known as an *ogan* and small gourd rattles (cha-chas), form the 178
standard orchestra for most dances of the Vodoun cult. The *ogan*—the 534
forged iron bell with an external striker—has all but disappeared in 796
recent years, along with the institution of the village forge. In its place one may see any kind of metallic object, such as a hoe blade, a link of chain, or a length of pipe, all of which are referred to by the old name *ogan*. In Cuba the Arada cult preserves the bell, both in single and double form, under the same name. The word *ogan* probably derives from the Yoruba term for this instrument, *eganran*.

Playing in concert, the three Arada drums produce a range of tones, 533
and the player of the *manman*—the chief of orchestra—adds to the 534
effect by frequently striking his stick against the side of the drum above

[1] [Herskovits and Herskovits, Suriname Folk-Lore, P. 89. The stick is also known in Suriname. Cf. P. 353, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

in construction but stands a little shorter. Two Pétro drums of slightly 534
different sizes and tones, called *baka* and *ti baka*, in combination with one or more rattles, an iron percussion device, and sometimes an assot, make up an orchestra.

The *assot* is a small board which is beaten with sticks. Often these sticks are flat, and sometimes a small woolen bench is substituted for the board.

Dances for which the Congo or Pétro drums are used include Pétro, 534
Kitta, Bumba, Salongo, Bambarra, Moundongue, Congo Loangue, Pas- 535
torel, Mousondi, and Moutchétché. The drum for the Congo Loangue dance formerly was somewhat taller and narrower than the present Pétro drum, but the distinction is no longer maintained.

The Juba, or Martinique, drum is similar to the Pétro or Congo but wider and squatter. It is laid on its side for playing, the drummer sitting astride and pressing his heel against the drumhead to mute it or change the pitch. For Juba or related music, a second man, called the *catalier* (the one who *catas*), beats sticks against the body of the instrument behind the drummer.

In the northern part of Haiti one also finds the Zesse drum, used 184 ●
exclusively for the Zesse dance. It is cylindrical, about thirty inches 534
high, and is played in an upright position. A wire is stretched across the goatskin head in the manner of a snare drum. Like all drums with goatskin heads, it is beaten with the naked hands.

A large two-headed drum called the *tymbale* is used as a work drum 534
for labor societies and for processions, and in combination with other [461]
drums it sometimes appears in the Juba and secular Congo dances. The [535]
heads are mounted on hoops, which are held fast by lacing. The drum [482]
is carried by a rope slung over the shoulder or around the neck. Sometimes an assot striking board is affixed to the body of the drum.

A miniature copy of the tymbale is called a *tambourine*. It is used in carnival dances, notably the Mascaron. Carried by a cord which hangs around the neck, it is played with two diminutive sticks. Drumming [462]
is primarily a man's prerogative, but during carnival days women or girls may be seen playing the *tambourine*.

In southwestern Haiti, and possibly elsewhere, special drums are used 184
for the Manuba dance. The Manuba drum is about a foot long, cylindrical, 534
and about five inches in diameter, with two drumheads held together 535
with cords. A pair of these drums is joined by a rope about two feet long, which is hung around the neck so that the two drums are in convenient playing position on the chest.

Twin drums which are hung over the knee are known as *marassas*— 534
The Haitian word for "twins." [192]

easily be hidden, but the ganbos were simply slipped into the straw roofs and thus put out of sight. Moreover, by some strange process of reasoning, military authorities regarded the bamboos as "harmless," though they were used for the same purposes as the contraband drums. 534 648 798

There are numerous other kinds of simple percussion devices. One such instrument, now less commonly seen than previously, is a length of open bamboo laid in the crotches of two Y-shaped sticks set in the ground. Like other *catas*, the bamboo is beaten with two sticks. Some Haitians believe that in former days such bamboos were played in batteries like a xylophone. 534

Sometimes a light-weight wooden cylinder, or perhaps a drum denuded of its playing head, is carried by the timekeeper of a coumbite. It, also, is played on the side with sticks. [461] [476]

Wooden mortars for pulverizing grain take on the character of musical instruments when used in combination with voices. When two or more mortars are used, with two men or women wielding the long polelike pestles in each mortar, the rhythmic effects can become fairly complicated. 534 533 412

The *claves* or *palos* (small hardwood sticks) are used primarily in connection with secular dances of a Cuban type, or to accompany such instruments as the guitar and the marimba. One stick is held loosely in the natural fold of the hand, so that it is free to vibrate, and is struck sharply with the second stick. The tone is almost metallic because of the hardness of the wood, usually lignum vitae. The name of the instrument is recognizable as a form of *clavar*, or *clavo*, Spanish for "peg" or "nail." It is thought that wooden shipbuilding pegs provided the name for this device, which has equivalents in West Africa. 534 535 [177] [824] [171]

Among the folk instruments there are various kinds of horns and trumpets. Cows' horns are played musically in some parts of the southern peninsula, though usually they are used as ritual instruments and signaling devices. Wooden trumpets called *pistons* are carved from the stems of the papaya tree. Conch-shell trumpets, known as *lambis*, are commonly used as signaling devices by fishermen. They are also to be found among the coumbites, in Rara festivities, and occasionally in rituals, where they are usually identified with sea deities. In carnival times the old fashioned phonograph horn makes its appearance as a combined trumpet and voice amplifier. 534 184 [824] [202] [541] [216]

Probably the most important of the trumpets is the one made of bamboo. It is called a *vaccine* or *bois bourrique*. Both names have interesting origins. The cow's horn was at one time used for magico-medical purposes. The leaf doctor used it as an "applicator" of powders and potions. A small opening was made in the point of the horn, and 534 755 [237]

7/1 [See plate 8, P. 112-F. -- Analyst]

Rara season two special rattles are used. One of them is made of metal and resembles a tin can with a wooden handle. The metal sometimes is perforated with numerous small holes, and inside are *hoholi* seeds, which act as rattlers. This instrument, known as a *tchancy*, is usually decorated with colorful ribbons when in use. (In northern Haiti the term *tchancy* is used to designate metal wrist rattles worn by drummers.) The other Rara rattle, called *jouconjou* or *joucjou*, is made of three gourds carried on a long pole. One of the gourds is affixed to the end of the pole, and the others are fastened to the terminals of a short crossbar, giving the effect of a cross with bulbous ends. Since many of the Rara processions are dramatizations of the Christ epic, the instrument could be interpreted as a Christian symbol, though its conversion into a noisemaker appears to be an African conception. The *jouconjou* may be a variant of the small rattle-cross which is used by the Abakwa secret society in Cuba.[8]

534 [824] [531] [171]

The sacred gourd rattle of the cult priest is called *asson* or *baksor*. It is pear-shaped and covered with a network of beads which act as external strikers. It is used by the houngan to summon the spirits of the dead, to praise or call upon the deities, and to accompany the performance of magic. The asson is of West African derivation, and its counterparts are to be found among the cults of Martinique, Trinidad, Cuba, Brazil, Venezuela, and elsewhere where African traditions have left their mark. The gourds from which the assons are made are grown in a special grove sacred to the loa.

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A large calabash rattle has been reported from several isolated regions of Haiti, primarily from the north. Some rattles of this kind have been described as more than twenty inches in height and covered by a network of external strikers, usually wari beans. The calabash rattles are used in groups of three. They are shaken and thumped against the palm of the hand, producing both deep and high-pitched sounds. These oversize rattles are employed without drums and are said to be associated with Arada-Nago rites. They appear to be a survival of the instrument known among the Yoruba as the *shèkèrè* and are found in Cuba in both Dahomey and Lucumí (Yoruba) cult centers.

534 [184] [171]

Probably one of the oldest of Haitian folk instruments is the earth bow, known as the *tambour maringouin*, or mosquito drum. Traditionally the mosquito drum is made in the following way:

A hole is dug in the earth, perhaps a foot or more deep. It is covered with palm or banana bark, which is pegged firmly all around. A cord is attached to the center of the bark membrane and drawn taut to a bent green sapling, one end of which is buried in the ground at a slight angle. The cord is plucked and snapped with the fingers of one hand, while

8 [See Courlander, "Musical Instruments of Cuba," Musical Quarterly, April, 1942, pp. 233-234. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst)

534 [541] Among the noisemakers heard mostly at the time of the Rara festival (usually on Good Friday) are the *von-von*, or bull-roarer—a thin flat piece of wood whirled on the end of a cord—and the *rara*, the common wooden ratchet. Various types of wooden flutes, usually of bamboo, are also used.

[184] In the remoter parts of the mountains you may now and then hear of an instrument known as the *banza*. A century ago, it would appear, the *banza* was a stringed instrument resembling a banjo. The similarity of names is striking, in view of the instrument's early form. Today, [177] however, the word *banza* is applied to the homemade fiddle which is used to accompany the minuet and other old dances of European origin.

534 524 178 A children's instrument seen sometimes in the mountains is constructed of half of a calabash shell, across the opening of which have been stretched a number of cords. This plucked device appears to be a decadent form of the African trough zither.

[pp. 203-313 not processed]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 317]
[P. 316 is blank]

1. The Pantheons

Most of the loa of Haiti appear to belong to two major cult groupings: the Vodoun (dominated by Dahomé rites and traditions) and the Congo-Guinée (dominated mainly by the Pétro deities). In the Vodoun pantheon one finds deities of Dahomean and Yoruban origin, and others whose names seem to identify them with West African peoples such as the Mahis, the Amines, the Adjas, the Foulas, the Sousous, and the Haoussas. The so-called Congo-Guinée group, in addition to the Pétro escorte, appears to have absorbed many loa from Central Africa. Among the Congo-Guinée loa are such names as Mayombé, Loango, Bumba, Moundongue, Mousondi, Angole, Congo, Baganda, and Solongo, all of them designations of regions or tribes of the Congo area. Also in this pantheon are loa bearing the names Bambarra and Siningal (Senegal), from northwestern Africa. 776 794 184

It is not possible to group the loa in such a way that the system will reflect accurately the tradition and usage in all parts of the country. Had all the old cults or "nations" survived intact, the pantheons might have resembled the following:

Arada or Dahomey loa
Anago or Yoruba loa
Mahi loa
Congo loa (including the Moundongue, the Solongo, the Bumba, etc.)
Ibo loa
Kanga loa
Pétro loa
Etc.

In certain parts of Haiti, in scattered and isolated places, one finds Congo, Ibo, and Nago cults that have resisted absorption; but this pattern does not hold for most of the country. In general, Congo and Pétro tend to "march" together; Anago has become a "nation" within

a "nation" in the Dahomé rites; and the Ibo group, though still distinct, is frequently allied with the Dahomé rites or the Guinée rites.

The following list does not pretend to include all the loa known in Haiti. It is doubtful that a complete list could ever be compiled, in view of the continual generation of new deities and the constant cross-fertilization between "nations." The loa are grouped here according to most widespread usage. There are contradictions from which there is no possible escape, and these general groupings will not necessarily correspond to the concepts and practices of any specific locality. It is intended here to give a broad and generalized view.

Under "The Vodoun Pantheon" I have placed constellations of deities of Dahomean and Yoruban origin, along with others that are clearly identified with Vodoun rites. Under "The Congo and Pétro Pantheons" I have listed the Congo-Guinée loa—consisting mainly of deities associated with Central Africa and deities affiliated with the Pétro rites. Ibo and Kanga loa are grouped together, because in many regions of Haiti the two pantheons appear to be interlocked. A separate listing is given for the Simbi family of water deities in view of their ambivalence; they are sometimes found in the Pétro group and sometimes in the Dahomé, according to local practice.

THE VODOUN PANTHEON

Damballa Wèdo, or Dan Wèdo. One of the most venerable of Haitian loa. He is generally recognized as the husband of Ayida Wèdo, though occasionally the two deities are merged in a personality called Damballa-Ayida. The concept of a single identity for Damballa and Ayida conforms to Dahomean belief. In both Haiti and West Africa, Damballa is identified with the rainbow and is symbolized as a snake. In Haiti he is associated also with rainfall, springs, and fertility. He is sometimes described as "white," and the proper food offering to him is a white chicken. Persons possessed by Damballa usually take on stylized characteristics of snakes. Along with many other important loa, he has become identified with characters in Christian religious belief. There are, in fact, "two" Damballa Wèdos. One, identified with Moses, comes in talking; the other, identified with St. Patrick, never talks. Food offerings for the St. Patrick version of Damballa consist of eggs, flour, sugar, and almond syrup. Damballa remains one of the chief gods of the Dahomey cult in Cuba, and he survived into the last century in New Orleans under the name Danny.

Ayida Wèdo. Generally regarded in Haiti as the wife of Damballa, Ayida is also symbolized by snake and rainbow, and her color, like Damballa's, is "white." In Dahomey and Nigeria, Ayida is known as a male rather than a female spirit and is regarded there as the same divinity as Damballa, or Dji. In Dahomey, Ayida Wèdo was the great serpent who held up the world. According to one myth, the Creator of the World assigned to Ayida the task of holding up the earth to keep it from falling into the sea. The great serpent coiled himself, tail in mouth, and lay below

[Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 245 ff. Cf. p. 354, category 16. --Analyst]

[The Vodoun Pantheon]

776 171 any iron object, such as a sugar vat. In West Africa, Chango (or Shango) and Ogoun were considered separate deities. In Nigeria, according to Ellis, they were brothers, closely associated with each other. Among the Yoruba, Chango was a thunder-and-lightning god and he is believed to have been one of the early kings of Oyo. The African Chango, like the Haitian, is identified with fire, a corollary of lightning, and persons possessed by him may carry pots of fire on their heads and perform other fire tests.[11]

Chango Gold. Another manifestation of Ogoun Chango.

Ogoun Bachango. Possibly the same as Ogoun Chango, or he may be named after the Bachangos, a Congo tribe. A warrior and ironworker.

Ogoun Balizal. One of the Ogoun family.

Nimbo Nimbo. One of the Ogoun family.

Archardé, Achardé, Chardé, or Chard. One of the Ogoun escorte, sometimes called Ogoun Chardé, or Chardé Bocor.

Ogoun Yerhyn. One of the Ogoun brothers.

Obatala, or Batala. A loa of war. Among the Yoruba people of Nigeria, Obatala was a sky deity and protector of the town gates. He was thought to form children in the womb and was therefore believed responsible for albinism and congenital deformities.[12] Obatala and Chango are among the main Lucumí (Yoruba) deities in Cuba.

Ogoun Bayé. An aspect of Ogoun who functions as a gateway guardian.

Ogoun Blanc (White Ogoun). He does not drink rum, which is a favorite beverage of his brothers.

Ogoun Jebba

Ogoun Jikka, Jikkì, or Yikkì. A warrior and ironworker. Jikkì may have been a shrine or regional designation.

Ogoun Klèk

Ogoun Kénsoh

Yalodé, or Ogoun Lodé. Brother of Ogoun Badagry and the other Ogouns. Yalodé is clearly of Dahomean origin.[13]

Ogoun Panama, or Ogoun Palama. Guardian against sunstroke, or spirit responsible for sunstroke. A brother of Ogoun Badagry. He is usually seen wearing a Panama hat.

Ogoun Pierre Nagrisse

Ogoun Jénéca (Ogoun Red Eyes). A malevolent Ogoun brother, red eyes being a mark of bad behavior. Some people feel that he is a member of the Pitro rather than the Vodoun pantheon.

Nago Piment. A member of the Ogoun escorte. He eats hot peppers.

Boclacha Nago

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776 346 [184] [198] 776 Gédé Nimbo, or Nimo, also called Baron Gédé. One of the powerful deities of the Vodoun pantheon, particularly in the region of Port-au-Prince, where many houngfors cater extensively to him. Gédé Nimbo, along with his numerous brothers and his vast escorte, is a "dead" loa, a spirit of the graveyard, a sexual rascal, and a violator of propriety. He is served apart from the other loa, and usually he has a separate altar or shrine outside the central houngfor. Cult centers for Gédé are often near graveyards, though not necessarily so. Gédé services abound around the main cemetery of Port-au-Prince. Gédé Nimbo has various manifestations, but he is usually

[11] Ellis, The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples, p. 47; W. R. Bascom, in Introduction to record album Drums of the Yoruba of Nigeria (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1960) Cf. p. 359, Category 116. — Analysis)

[12] Ellis, The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples p. 38 ff. Cf. p. 359 (cat. 116. — Analysis)

[13] Ellis, The Ewe-Speaking Peoples, 1891-94; Herskovits, op. cit. I, 39. Cf. p. 359, Cat. 116. — Analysis)

[The Vodoun Pantheon]

996 Aziz. A snake deity.

Bamoula. A loa who likes the Rabouie dance.

Calabash. Loa of the calabash tree.

Gidao Pouvelo. An ancient male deity. Herskovits suggests that he may represent the leopard, *ado* being the Fon word for that animal. The wildness of the attack on the sacrificial animal by persons possessed by Chiko supports this conjecture. A deity called Dada Sogbo is prominent in the Rada Cult of Trinidad.

[114] [191]

Simbin. A male loa who is believed responsible for fine physical proportions and bodily strength in men.

Coqui-Nan-Dlaay. Probably the same as Coqui-Nan-Mer (Agwé).

[191] Aradja. This loa may well be the King Agadja of Dahomey who was said to be responsible for the coming of *vodu* (loa) into that country. Herskovits tells a legend about a woman named Hwandjile who prevailed upon the king to bring the *vodu* from the kingdom of Adja. Hwandjile herself survives in Haiti under the name

Wanzil, or Hwanzil

[82] [87] Lingeaume. A rainbow loa. Persons mounted in sight of a rainbow are thought to be possessed by this deity.

Bamoume. "Marcher" with Lingeaume.

Wanzou, also called Aziez Wanzou (King of Angola). This loa appears to be an interpolation from the Congo rites.

Alizé, or Gamaume. A masculine, dwarflike spirit who likes to discourage things and play practical jokes. Persons possessed by Alizé may break up gatherings, discommode spectators and dancers, and generally make a nuisance of themselves. Some Haitians regard this loa as belonging more to the Petro pantheon than to the Dahomé.

[199]

Maît' Bois (Master of the Woods). May be an interpolation of Maît' Grand Bois of the Congo-Guinée pantheon.

Maît' Dlaay (Master of the Water). May refer to the loa Simbi.

Dan Wim, or Wim. A loa known in the Artibonite region. The name is possibly a corruption of Dan White.

Dja Kfal

Ion, or Nin' Ion. The name is that of a tribe on the Calabar coast of West Africa.

Fond Pierre. Said to be the son of Pierre Boisin.

Gédéon. Yanvalou, or Jean Barrière. Probably the Christian name of some Dahomé loa.

Grand Lamarre. An aged, dwarflike loa, guardian and protector of children.

Grand Alaro, or Aloudo.

Grand Alouvanda, or Manzou Alouvanda. Believed to be a loa who was maît' tête of the Emperor Dessalines. Some informants consider this spirit to be a dîmon or loup-garou rather than a loa.

Houngon. The spirit of the Arada drums. There is a difference of opinion on whether Houngon is a loa in the proper sense or merely a drum spirit. The term is sometimes used to designate the largest drum of the Arada trio.

[114] [187] Jean Petro. A loa well known in the region of Léogane. When he "comes," the possessed persons talk *langage* into a *canari* (clay water vessel).

Maît' Dlaya. This loa always talks immaculate French, and persons possessed by him read cards and tell fortunes.

[Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 104. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116.—Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[The Congo and Pétro Pantheons]

 776

Wanou. (King of Angola). He also appears in other rites.

Yoncal, or Mayombé. This name is a tribal designation, referring to the Mayombés of the Congo region.

Wanou Dlaay (Wangol of the Water)

Mouvoungue. Often considered to be a "hard" loa. Ritual service to him includes, on special occasions, the cutting off of dogs' ears and tails. He is fond of dogs and is benevolent toward them. The name derives from that of a tribe of the upper Congo region. [782]

Ti Mouvoungue. Said to be a "son" of Moundongue.

Mouvoungue Mouvaille. A member of Moundongue's family.

Balaou, or Bilaou. A loa identified with the morning star, also called Baiacou. There is also a twin in Dahomey by this name.

Gouda, or Bagaou, also called Nig' Gauda. A deity taking the name of the Gauda people of Uganda.

Congo Yamboar. A benevolent loa associated with curing and protecting the sick. Certain curative medicine bundles are called yawingaou. [755]

Macaya Bumba, sometimes called Caya. He takes his name from the Bumba people of the upper Congo River region. The Bumbas are near neighbors of the Moundongues.

Marvo Bumba. One of the Bumba family.

Mamaou Mouvoungue. One of the Moundongue family.

Roi Loangue (King of Loango). Refers to the old African kingdom of that name.

Nancomé. A warrior deity.

Ardadard. Known primarily in northern Haiti. [184]

Don Pétro. A rather malevolent loa, from whom the Pétro cult takes its name. The mangé for Don Pétro is a pig. Early observers speculated that Don Pétro was originally a powerful houngan of prerevolutionary days.[33] [182] [173]

Ayida Pétro. A Pétro version of the Vodoun Ayida Wédo.

Bakulu Bora, known in some regions by the name Pinga Maza. He is a malevolent spirit who "eats"—i.e., destroys—people. Some informants are inclined to believe that Bakulu and Pinga are separate loa, both of a variety akin to baka or démons.

Bakulu Bonne. Related to Bakulu Baka.

Bagaada Tabu. He is visualized as a sea crab. *Taille dos* in Creole means "low hips" and is used to describe a dance posture. The surname Tabu therefore may describe the movements of this loa as he moves about like a crab. [192]

Bolas Bolas.

Bond Gérdaou, or Gérdaou Bond. He is enormously large and ferocious in appearance. A special loa of the country people. Although stern, he is fond of children. He is symbolized as an owl; his home is in the chardonn tree. His physical description suggests that he may be a deification of the epic folklore character Brise Montagne, or Break Mountain.

Chassagne

Congo Jiouvou (Congo Red Eyes). A malevolent male spirit. Loa with red eyes are always of bad character.

Congo Mouvoungue, or Mouvoungue. A malevolent spirit.

Congo Savane, or Congo Zamon (Congo of the Plains). Malevolent, fierce, and

33 [Saint-Mary, Dr la dance, p. 48. Cf p. 354, Cat. 116. — Author]

2. Games

THE GAME OF CAILLE, OR WARI

524 171 [184] The African counting game played with beans or stones in a carved wooden tray (known in various parts of Africa as *wari, mungala, oli,* etc.) is still known and played in the southwestern mountains of Haiti, particularly in the region south of the Léogane Plain. In Africa the game has innumerable variants. Most often the carved playing board or tray has two rows of six, seven, or eight holes, or pockets, sometimes with a large pocket at each end for winnings. In Ethiopia the playing board consists of three rows of six pockets each. In the upper Congo region a form of the game uses a board of twenty-eight pockets in four rows. Among wandering herding peoples in East Africa the holes are simply dug in the earth, and for playing pieces stones or dried camel droppings are used. The game not only is widespread throughout Africa but has an ancient tradition in Indonesia, the Philippines, southern and southeastern Asia, and the Arabic Middle East.

In Haiti the game is usually called *caille*, or "house." It is played on a long, sixteen-hole board of the kind used in West Africa. The playing pieces are usually maize kernels, dried peas, or wari beans. Where wari beans are used, the game is sometimes called by that name. This is a curious syncretism. The wari bean itself is so named because of a black marking which looks like a smile, in Creole *wa ri* ("going to laugh"). There are several ways of playing wari in Haiti; all have the common objective of capturing pieces on the opponent's side of the board. This is referred to as entering his "house" and "eating" the occupants, a terminology that is employed elsewhere where the game is known.

524 One method of playing is as follows. Starting with four pieces in every hole, a player takes up all the pieces from any hole on his own side of the board and redistributes them in a counterclockwise direction, dropping one into each hole as far as they will go. When his last piece is

[p. 332]

2: Courlander 8-6 (1937-1950) 1960 8V3 Haiti 8V3

dropped, he picks up the contents of the next hole and continues the re- [524]
distribution. Should his last piece eventually fall into an empty pocket, his turn is ended and his opponent begins. However, if his last piece falls into a hole containing one or two pieces, he "eats" those pieces along with the piece which he places there. He continues the play as before, starting with the following hole, monopolizing the play until he ends in an empty hole. The one who takes the most pieces wins. In some [184] Haitian variants of the game, each person's play is limited to the distribution of the contents of a single hole.

THE GAME OF MAYAMBA

This game, like *caille*, appears to be of African origin. It is played with [191] four chips made of shell, baked clay, or broken chinaware. One side of each chip is white, the other usually blue. Any number of players may participate, and, as in dice, all compete against the thrower. *Mayamba* [525] has a strictly gambling incentive. If a player throws two whites and two blues, or four whites, or four blues, he wins. If he throws any odd combination he loses.

2: Courlander 8-4 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 HaHi SV3

relations between the husband and the wife's family, it is nevertheless commonplace for men who can afford it to have more than one wife.

[8]Simpson, in "Sexual and Familial Institutions in Northern Haiti," *American Anthropologist*, October-December, 1942, p. 696, observes that in northern Haiti there are three distinct types of plaçage. "A *femme-caille* shares her mate's house, while a *femme pièce* is a woman who has born children for a man without living in his house. A *femme placée* does not live in her consort's house, and she has given him no children." Although none of these women has any legal rights of inheritance, Simpson notes, "moral claims to a man's property stand in descending order for these three classes of plaçées."

[9]Johnston, *The Negro in the New World*.

[10]UNESCO, *The Haiti Pilot Project*, p. 18.

[11]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 515.

[12]The group work patterns of Haiti show a common ancestry with Negro gang work patterns in the United States. While nothing as formalized as the coumbite persists among American Negroes, similarities are striking. The emphasis on rhythm, the swinging of hammers or picks in unison, the need for a singing leader, the responsive chorus, and the frequent use of some kind of percussion to keep time, all derive from a common concept of the nature of group work.

[13]Herskovits, "Some Aspects of Dahomean Ethnology," *Africa*, Vol. V (July, 1932), pp. 266-296.

[14]Cardinall, *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 109), observes that among the Krachi people of Togoland "no man may have sexual intercourse with a woman for seven days before he goes hunting."

[15]An Ashanti story told by Rattray in *Akan-Ashanti Folk-Tales* credits the hedgehog with owning the original hoe; according to this version, the hoe escaped across the sea to the country of the white men, who then possessed the secret. Afterward, the white men brought many hoes to Ashanti.

Chapter III: *Dancing and Dance Drama* (*pp. 126-156*)

[1]Quoted in Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 73.

[2]Actually a banjo-like instrument of African provenience. The similarity of the word *banza* to *banjo* appears to be more than a coincidence.

[3]Saint-Méry, *De la danse*, as translated by Lillian Moore in "Moreau de Saint-Méry and 'Dance,'" *Dance Index*, October, 1946, p. 238.

[4]Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[5]Brandy or rum with gunpowder is sometimes drunk by persons possessed by the loa Ogoun, deity of war.

[6]Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[7]United Nations photograph no. 62069.

[8]Students of United States Negro life will recognize the word *counjaille* as a variant of *counjaire*, a dance known on the lower Mississippi. According to one observer, Dr. Willis James of Spelman College, Atlanta, small Negro boys on the docks used to call to the boat passengers:

"Throw me a nickel
Throw me a dime
If you want to see me
Do the counjaire."

The term *counjaire* is still used to mean hand-loading of cotton bales on river boats. When this loading was done mainly by hand some years ago, the stevedores worked rhythmically in a line and sang. An old man from Louisiana testified that within his own memory the dockside *counjaire* was accompanied by makeshift drums and other percussion.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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162 citizen would admit. The few cities and towns of Haiti do not con-
565 tain more than 250,000 people in a total population which the atlases
369 generally put around 2,500,000. Since to live in the city is one necessary mark of aristocracy, and since obviously not every town- or city-dweller is an aristocrat, it is probably nearer the mark to infer that not more than two or three per cent of the people are of the élite.

565 A slightly larger group would fit neither category. This inter-
554 mediate section would consist chiefly of those who have taken a few steps toward the upper stratum; they may wear shoes and keep a small shop and speak a few words of French, but not yet be accepted in "respectable" society; aristocrats will look down on them while the masses will regard them with curious interest. Yet these are not what Europeans would call a middle class. In their own generation, they are rootless and insecure. Their children will have as many advantages as the parents can afford, so that the next generation may increase the distance between itself and the common folk. Included in this intermediate group are also a few who, having once been up, are now on the way down.

433 If the terms "masses" and "peasants" are used interchangeably in
162 these pages, it is because the vast majority of the people get their living from the soil. Haiti is, as it has always been, an agricultural country. The end-paper map lists all towns which claim as many as 7,500 people; only one, the capital, Port-au-Prince, has more than 100,000.[7]

162 At least nine out of ten Haitians, therefore, lead rural lives, and
184 easily fit the designation of peasant. They live in little communities,
105 generally of less than a hundred persons, rather than in scattered houses. A detailed map would be dotted with place names of these

[162] 7. The estimates made by Woodring, in his *Geology of the Republic of Haiti*, p. 67,
[114] are as follows:

Port-au-Prince	125,000	Saint-Marc	10,000
Cap-Haïtien	20,000	Jacmel	10,000
Les Cayes	15,000	Port-de-Paix	7,500
Gonaïves	12,000	Jérémie	7,500

It should be noted that all eight of these towns, which by Woodring's estimate have a total of 207,000, are seaports. The country is so mountainous that no cities have grown up in the interior. The map also includes a number of towns smaller than 7,500: these are capitals of *arrondissements* or seats of courts. Woodring remarks that if the people who live in towns having a population of more than a thousand were added to the list above, the total "urban" population then would be between 225,000 and 250,000, which is barely ten per cent of the total in the country.

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tiny communities, some of them designating "villages" of only four or five houses. For numbers of peasants hidden away in the valleys or on mountain farms, the only contact with the larger world comes through visits to the nearest market town—which itself may count only a thousand souls. The peasant is thus effectively isolated. The American Financial Adviser to the Government has estimated the average *annual* income of the Haitian at $20 a head.[8] The smallness of the sum limits the material contacts of the peasant with the outside world. Rural schools are few,[9] consequently all but a small percentage of the rising generation is growing up illiterate. Lack of mental stimulus completes the isolation. Bound to the soil by the need of wresting a livelihood from rocky, gullied, and increasingly unproductive land, harassed by ill-health, and governed by a group whose own security would be threatened by improving his lot, it is little wonder that the peasant is unprogressive, or that he struggles along at a bare subsistence level.[10]

Haiti is rural and agricultural, then, with a population density of about 250 per square mile. The people, living without machine industry and with very little foreign trade, must get their living from 10,000 square miles, not of lush tropical soil but of rocky, mountainous country which, after a century and a half of poor farming, has been stripped of most of its forests and much of its topsoil.

A glance at a relief map of the West Indies would show clearly that the islands are the tops of a mountain range, whose lowlands were long since submerged by the Caribbean Sea. Looked at from above, Haiti seems a jumbled mass of mountains running in all directions.[11] Down their slopes flow many small streams which after

8. Dr. W. W. Cumberland, cited by Paul H. Douglas, "The American Occupation of Haiti," *Political Science Quarterly*, XLII (1927), 258.

9. The average monthly salary of $13 (until recently only $6) for rural schoolteachers would not draw many wide-awake young men, even if schoolhouses existed for classes. The salary, indeed, is so small that only inferior persons are attracted, often men who know little more than their pupils. See chap. XV, 3.

10. Mrs. Blair Niles, in *Black Haiti* (New York, 1926), pp. 185–186, tells of a prisoner who preferred to remain in jail rather than be freed. "When he gets out," she quotes the officer as saying, "he'll be in again. You'll see. Here he gets nine cents a day for food, an' that's more than the average Haitian ever has."

11. One can well believe the story (told by Ebenezer D. Bassett, *Haiti* [Washington, 1893], p. 3) of the English admiral who, asked by George III for a description of the island, crumpled a sheet of paper, threw it on the table, and said: "Sire, Haiti looks like that." The same tale is told of Puerto Rico, with a Spanish admiral speaking to Queen Isabella.

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175 423 up so many of these, there was no way short of a revolution to reconstitute the now parceled estates. Obviously the Code did not envisage the control of serfs by small property owners, yet there were more small owners than large.

175 184 466 In the third place, the Spanish-speaking masses of the eastern part of the island had never experienced the kind of forced labor with which most Haitians had been at one time or another familiar. Their noncoöperation made enforcement difficult.

175 647 Finally, the administration of so detailed a plan called for the establishment, at once and yet in complete order, of a fully trained corps of bureaucrats, perfectly coöperating with each other, most of them educated, and all incorruptibly honest. If every literate person in the state had been drafted for service, Boyer could not have filled all the offices required by the Code.

175 465 434 After brief and piecemeal experience with the law in operation, moreover, even the few remaining large landholders turned against it. While they approved the provisions for forced labor, they discovered that to turn over to the workers a quarter or half of the annual crop, in a falling world market, gave too slim a profit.[42] Without the support even of its original sponsors, failure of the law was inevitable.

175 648 652 These factors alone would have been enough to kill the Code; but its real death blow came from an entirely different quarter. The year before the agricultural laws were passed, Boyer had achieved what he considered to be a political master stroke. He had made a financial settlement with France whereby Haiti, in return for a large sum in cash and regular annual payments for sixty years thereafter, should receive full recognition of independence from France; also the former mother country would renounce all claims to any properties in the country. Boyer had felt that the chief debilitating influence on the political and economic life of his people was the constant dread that France might one day return to claim her lost colony. To rid the nation of that incubus, therefore, seemed to him a high feat of statesmanship, no matter what the financial cost.[43]

[433] [24] 42. Coffee, now the staple crop of Haiti, was meeting competition from the other coffee-producing countries of the world. To put the sugar manufactories into working condition again called for more money than was available.

[643] [644] 43. Boyer's hand was forced to a certain extent by France, which had been exerting diplomatic pressure upon Haiti; the President, however, seemed to regard the settlement as a distinct coup.

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against almost unanimous public opinion opposing enforcement. In 1828 it was reported that dancing, which the Code had strictly limited to week ends, was a nightly diversion near the capital. One of the principal dancing resorts was the house of a captain of rural police, the very man who was supposed to repress such amusements.[45]

Boyer had done his best, and his best was merely a good piece of office work. When his Code failed to operate, he could think of nothing further to suggest for the economic rehabilitation of Haiti. The last fifteen years of his administration witnessed a gradual lapse into that small-scale farming which was to be characteristic of Haiti for the remainder of the nineteenth century. By comparison with former standards, production and steady industry had both fallen off since Boyer came to the presidency. The testimony of visiting foreigners is unanimous on the decline of industry.

The British consul, Mackenzie, said in 1827 that there was very little field labor then being done, and that only elderly people, principally aged "Guinea Negroes" long accustomed to steady work, carried on the tradition. No measures of the government could induce young people born in Haiti to labor or to change from their "habitual vagrancy."[46] Another Englishman, James Franklin, remarked in 1828 that land values throughout the republic had greatly declined because no one could make a profit within any moderate time. Labor was high, he writes, for ordinary wages did not attract the workers who preferred idleness. (This word is certainly unfair: it was work at their own bidding which they preferred, not idleness.) Government lands lay untilled, no one evincing the slightest desire to purchase or utilize them. Franklin continues:

> Land also in the possession of individuals is similarly circumstanced; and those who are large proprietors cannot effect a sale of any produce which they may have beyond the quantity which they can consume; consequently a proprietor may have an immense extent of land, and yet be quite unable to derive any benefit from it by cultivation, or to convert it into money, for the want of purchasers. Thus . . . there is no individual wealth in the country, because, although a man may have very large landed possessions, still those possessions are unavailable, for they produce him nothing, as he

45. Although dancing is spoken of here as an amusement, it is highly probable that at least a part of it had connection with the Vodun religion.

46. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti* (London, 1830), I, 100. Mackenzie is clearly exaggerating, unless by "field labor" he means work on plantations, in contrast to farming on small plots.

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ress. Others point out the difference between the lower-class Negro of the large commercial towns and the black peasants who live in the plains and mountains. The former, in contact with the roughest of white sailors, are a disgrace to any people, while the countryfolk, seeing only a select few of the whites, appear "to have an innate idea of the white man's superiority," and so treat him with respect. The peasants, according to these speakers, have all the virtues and vices of "wild races": they may acquire a kind of French varnish, but they are "essentially an African people removed from their parent country."[11]

There are among the élite broad-minded, tolerant, and cultured persons. The average member of the caste, however, like the average American, is full of prejudices of all kinds. Travel produces a superficial polish; their patriotism consists of antagonism toward the outside world and an effort to secure position for themselves; they are sure that Haiti's laws are sounder, her culture superior, her schools more advanced, her civilization in general higher, than those of most other nations (France generally excepted).

There are evidences also of certain psychological twists. It used to be said that mulatto Haitians "hate their fathers and despise their mothers," meaning that in colonial times and for a short time after the élite did not like to remember that they derived from a master-slave union. They realize nowadays that they would be accepted as social equals in few countries, and this makes them protest by self-assertion. Certainly a majority of the élite would be completely unwilling to admit that things are anywhere better done than in Haiti.

One generation after the wars which led to independence, the greater number of Haitians had practically forgotten that there was an outside world. Haiti was all they knew. With no standard of comparison for their lot in life the peasants ate, slept, raised their families, fell ill, and died without bothering their heads about such academic abstractions as equality. This uncomplaining acceptance of life, routine, and fate seems to be the essence of peasant existence. The Haitian peasant has been bound to the soil by mental inertia and by tradition more effectively than ever by law. When he has revolted it has been through conviction that someone was trying to change the old familiar ways, or because of physical maltreatment. Peasants have been bribed and paid to revolt, but as mercenaries they have entered only half-heartedly into warfare.

11. The phrases quoted here are fragments of statements made by Haitian élite to the author.

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565 484 177 186 rights of people of Negro blood. As a distinguished Haitian remarked, "It is from France that we draw our culture, our language, our literature, our attitudes of mind: why should we not love her?" The more time the élite spend in France, the less kinship they feel with the masses. There is not necessarily any conscious snobbery in this increasing discrepancy; it simply results from a life spent in entirely different environments. The Boston Brahmin, for example, may be kindhearted and yet feel little kinship with a Mississippi share-cropper.

564 Inside the castes one may find social distinctions familiar in democracies. There are well-to-do élite who set the standards of manners and entertainment, and there are peasant landholders who through force of personality dominate their rural neighborhoods. The intellectual man of the upper classes stands somewhat apart from the social whirl of "high society." An important government official has more prestige among the leisured classes than a small businessman, just as a powerful religious adept is more honored among the peasants than a happy-go-lucky ragamuffin. It is obvious, however, that within the élite caste social discrimination occurs more frequently and is more accurately observed than among the country people.

[184] [177] [208] Such phrases as "Haitian religion" or "Haitian public opinion" are accurate only in so far as the person who uses them defines the adjective "Haitian." One might describe truly a phenomenon characteristic of ninety-five out of a hundred Haitians and yet, in the opinion of those who dominate the economic, political, and social life, do injustice to Haiti.

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[p. 113]

INTRODUCTION

If the visitor to Haiti is first struck by the wide separation between the élite and the peasant masses, the person who knows Haiti only through books is sure to think of it as a country of Voodoo. There is no error of fact here, for Voodoo is characteristic of Haiti. Nevertheless, what the American conjures up in his mind when he uses the word is almost certain to be misleading. In spite of detailed reports of anthropologists the average American clings firmly to his notion that Voodoo is Negro superstition chiefly concerned with charms or spells to "hoodoo" (a variation of the same word) an enemy. Scientists rarely succeed in correcting long-held but incorrect or one-sided impressions of the meaning of terms; they end rather by inventing a new word, or else continue the generally losing fight for precise usage, and so preserve the confusion.[1] 771

Since there is small likelihood of eradicating the inexact connotations of "Voodoo," many recent anthropologists have adopted such spellings as Vodun, Vodou, Vodoun, Vaudou, and Vodûn, all renditions of local pronunciation of the same term. *Vodun* (pronounced Vo-doon) has been chosen for use in this work, in the hope that readers will bear in mind that the folk religion is not mere idle superstition. A grasp of the real and distinctive religious beliefs and cult practices of the Haitian is very necessary to an understanding of the social picture. [104]

Like its caste system, the religious life of Haiti presents far-reaching contrasts. The only approved religion of the country is Roman Catholicism. To this faith all the élite who are religiously inclined, or wish to pay formal homage to the institution of religion, belong. No Protestant sect has ever gained a real foothold in Haiti. Catholic churches are among the imposing edifices in every town; Catholic priests are an everyday sight as they go about their parishes; Catholic brothers and sisters, with state support and approval, direct much of the higher education in the country. 771 195 184 [346] [793] [871]

1. Witness in anthropology the contrast between the popular and the scholarly meaning of *culture*, *race*, *taboo*, and *fetish*; in chemistry of *reaction* (as when a man is asked his "reaction" to an opinion); in psychology of *instinct*, *innate*, and *inherent*; and in sociology of *caste*, *institution*, and *social*.

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Paralleling the accepted form and existing at the same time, is the Vodun religion. To this faith practically every member of the lower caste adheres; but no casual visitor ever sees a Vodun "temple," or would recognize one if he saw it. Vodun "priests" likewise have no characteristic dress to set them apart from their barefoot country neighbors. The state gives absolutely no support to this folk religion, which has no seminaries, no orders, no publishing house, nor even any orthodoxy. One is not a member of the Vodun religion or church; rather one believes and practices Vodun.

The paradox of the religious situation in Haiti lies in the fact that although the masses are Vodun worshipers, most of them are likewise Catholics; that although the élite formally disapprove of Vodun, many of them are profoundly interested in it; that although the state supports the Catholic Church and officially frowns on Vodun, it does not, cannot, and apparently would not if it could, suppress it altogether. The result of these contradictions is a strange intermixture of creed and ritual, mental struggles among certain of the élite, supersensitiveness to foreign opinion in connection with "Voodoo," and a clandestine air which adds to the mystery most strangers are determined to find in Vodun.

An understanding of these religious ambiguities must depend to some degree upon a knowledge of Haitian history, for both Catholicism and Vodun have colonial origins, together with local peculiarities and historical developments, which make them characteristically Haitian.

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Granted these obvious difficulties, there is still little to be said for the zeal or integrity of churchmen in Saint-Domingue. Father Cabon cites a report to Rome in 1794, which, he remarks, "was not designed to be made public, and does not bear the earmarks of passion," and which flatly states that "since the expulsion of the Jesuits, the curés have for the most part led lives so indecent . . . that the citizens and Negroes have lost all the sentiments of religion which the Jesuits gave them."[3] There had been distinguished churchmen in Saint-Domingue before 1750, authors, scientists, teachers of some note, but none appeared thereafter. The rich French colony was not a bright star in the Catholic crown.

Undeterred by those who might have been their spiritual guides, the white people followed the easy path of self-indulgence. The universal testimony of visitors is that, with a few notable exceptions, immorality and cruelty were daily commonplaces. To make a fortune was the prime ambition of every white man, since money made possible the luxurious enjoyment of this world's goods. Protest against money-making or soft living would have been futile. Administrative agents turned public office to their own profit; judges sold justice to the highest bidder; planters drove their slaves to death; and priests dispensed religious solace for a tidy sum.

The freedmen, who in everything patterned their lives after social leaders in the white planter class, had no more concern for religion than their models. They attended Mass occasionally as a social event, where they might see and be seen. When in the latter days of the colony discriminatory legislation required that colored persons sit in separate parts of the church, most of the affranchis simply refrained from attending Mass: their religious zeal was not so great as to make them submit to the public shame of segregation. In their daily lives, likewise, they followed the example of the white planters in pursuing pleasure rather than sobriety, "culture" rather than religious zeal. Like the whites, they were often licentious in their conduct. When it came their turn to direct affairs of state in free Haiti, there was little interest in spiritual matters among them. The intellectuals of the group paid homage to the liberal philosophers of the century rather than to religious thinkers.

If religion was at a low ebb in the prosperous days of the colony, it almost disappeared in the excitement of the years following the revolt of the slaves (1791).

3. Ibid., p. 33.

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175 concludes: "With regard to the ecclesiastical institutions of the
793 republic we may safely say . . . that if the standing army be one cause
795 of the degradation of the people, the Church is surely another; and
[114] the sooner it can be reformed, the better for religion, for morals, and for the physical well-being of the community."[9]

175 Eventually the state felt it necessary to protect the people from
793 these predatory priests. True, people paid for what they considered
795 to be services performed, but the legislators could not permit unlimited graft in the name of religion. An act of 1840,[10] therefore, set
659 a fee of half a dollar for each baptism;[11] $8 for a marriage with Mass, $4 for one without a Mass; an ordinary Mass, 37 cents; a High Mass, service, or funeral "of the first class" (that is, with choir, sacristan, acolytes, and churchwarden), $60; funerals of the second class, $20; funerals of the third class, $10. Articles of the act specify what shall constitute the three classes of service, and it is then stated, "Neither rectors nor vicars shall receive anything for offices at which they do not assist in person, except in cases of illness." The Haitians were not receiving true religious instruction, but at least their government tried to prevent their being mulcted by the spurious churchmen.

175 Since Haiti had no schools except the few attended by children of
771 the élite, religious instruction of youth was almost nonexistent. The
184 average élite man was openly an unbeliever, for it required little acumen to show him that if the priests represented religion there was nothing to commend it. Hunt in 1860 said: "Many of the educated are about where the French were when they left the island. They believe in Voltaire, whom I have not unfrequently heard them
[562] characterize as the greatest man who ever lived."[12] In contrast to the
[114] men, the women made more of a show of being devout and attentive to the formal duties of religion, but according to Franklin they

are not actuated by any religious feeling. Going to church is a mere matter of parade with them, the sabbath being a day of festivities, and not set aside for religious devotion. The female congregations which frequent the churches in Hayti appear better prepared for an opera, or some other public amusement, than for the sacred duties of offering up their prayers in adoration of the Deity.

9. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 98 ff.
10. Chap. IV, articles 28–31.
11. The figures cited in the Act are in gourdes.
12. Benjamin S. Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans* (Philadelphia, 1860), p. 18.

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The men seldom or never go to mass, except on the days particularly set apart by the government as public fêtes. On these occasions the president and all the officers of Hayti go in procession, but the idea of devotion, I believe, never enters their contemplation. Such days are merely set aside for celebrating some particular event, which it is wished should be handed down to posterity. These occasions present only the external symbol of religion, the whole people being either ignorant or careless of its real character. Their manner and appearance during the celebration of the mass shew that they have no inward feelings of piety or devotion.[13]

Catholicism in Haiti, then, had fallen on evil days; Protestantism, on the other hand, was unable to gain any foothold. Boyer, indifferent to all religion, did not even care to tolerate Wesleyan missionaries as Pétion had done, for when certain of them arrived and were met with "persecution and stoning by a mob," it required persuasion to gain his assent to freeing those the police had taken into custody. He forbade any further meetings of Wesleyans, on the ground that they stirred up riots. At the close of Boyer's administration it was estimated that there were only about 1,200 Protestants in the country, mostly Methodists and Baptists, and these primarily Negroes who had come from the United States to settle in the republic.

Although the Haitian government probably derived a certain satisfaction from controlling a state Church, Boyer was impelled both by circumstance and his own temperament to obtain the approval of the *Holy See*. His own tepid spiritual zeal had nothing to do with the case; Haitian public order would benefit by a superior group of priests, and Haitian prestige would rise, he thought, with recognition by Rome. Having already in 1826 settled the conflict between France and Haiti in the political sphere, Boyer tried assiduously to end the schism from Rome. His propositions were examined with benevolence by the Pope, who conferred upon the primate of the Indies, archbishop of Santo Domingo, the title of archbishop of Haiti. This personage, however, was a Spaniard already established in the comfortable city of Santo Domingo amidst people of his own nationality. He could not be persuaded to move to Port-au-Prince. The failure of Boyer's efforts is due more to this ecclesiastic than to uncoöperativeness on the part of Rome. From 1834 to 1860 the Court of Rome had official representatives in Haiti, but they cannot have been very effective men, for conditions in

13. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 394–395.

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Any casual attempt to assess the importance of religion in the daily

lives of the people is sure to prove erroneous, for in no phase of life are outward appearances so deceptive. What the unsophisticated peasant believes can be ascertained on the whole more accurately than the beliefs of the intelligent élite. To the foreign observer, Roman Catholicism seems to play as large and as small a part in the thinking of the Haitian upper classes as among members of upper-class French society. Outwardly, the élite are professing Catholics or not religious at all. It is considered proper to attend Mass and otherwise to pay respect to religious forms; actually one loses nothing in prestige if he is not a practicing Christian. Society seems to exert no pressure in the matter. Only if a member of the upper class fears for the security of his social position, or knows that rumors are afloat of his addiction to Vodun, does he feel impelled to become assiduous in his open attentions to the Church.

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The national sensitiveness to skin color is apparent in the priestly complexions. Since the old tradition lingers that "baptism by a black will not stick," not even the peasants welcome native Catholic priests. The God and saints of Christianity need the intercession of white men, just as the Vodun spirits need that of natives. In the early days peasants stoned Negro priests who tried to administer the Catholic sacraments. Such an attitude toward a black clergy falls in well with the preferences of the élite. If there were Haitian priests, they would probably be drawn from the élite class since this is the educated group; but it might happen that some devout peasant would rise to the priesthood and so have the care of a parish including élite—a contingency unthinkable to the aristocrat. Snobbishness, indeed, affects the usefulness of the town priests, for the élite members of the congregation insist on having sermons in French, a language which only the small minority understand, rather than in the Créole which is the speech of everyone, intelligible to gentry and humble alike. The Mass is consequently celebrated for the people at large in unknown tongues, Latin for the ritual, French for the sermon; the benefit they derive from it must be wholly from their inner communion stimulated by the actions of the service. The town priests are often willing enough to accede to élite pressure in the matter of language, for they know French as their mother tongue and would have to learn Créole; although some of the more devoted priests become adept in native speech, using it in their personal

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114 The common people of Haiti are continually creating [his phrase is much
196 more revealing: "en gestation de"] *loa*, or new Vodoun "saints." Popular
174 tradition, long before independence, refers to a certain Don Pédro, a being
776 of flesh and blood who from the Spanish end of the island had come at a certain period to live in the mountains of the commune of Petit-Goâve. This Don Pédro was the man who introduced into Haiti that violent dance which, by corruption, the people call "the pétro." Upon his death, Don Pédro came to occupy an honorable place in the Vodoun pantheon, bringing in his train a whole group of progeny, such as Jean-Philippe Pétro, Criminel Pétro, etc.[21]

174 As might be logically deduced, certain powerful ancestors become
776 deified as Pétro loa.

It would require field trips into every district of Haiti to compile a
● 184 full list of the various loa who receive homage from Haitians; some
776 appear to have only a local following, others are honored over a wide district, and a few are reverenced throughout the country. If Vodun ever reached the stage of founding a seminary of sacred theology—a highly improbable event—one of its most imperative functions would be the collection, classification, and explanation of the attributes of the hundreds of loa, specifying whether they are Haitian or African in origin, Pétro or Rada, powerful or complaisant, inclined prevailingly to benevolence or to malice. Lacking such a proper catalogue, it will suffice to mention only the most commonly accepted figures. In reflecting upon the characteristics of these gods, the well-informed reader will be struck by the numerous parallels to divinities of other faiths so remote that Haitians could not possibly have known of them; similar emotional needs seem to produce similar deities to satisfy them.[22]

776 Legba is the name of the loa most frequently invoked, not because he is the most powerful, but because he is the interlocutor between man and his gods. Before any ceremony may begin, Legba is addressed: "*Papa Legba, ouvrí barrière pour nous.*" If he is not first worshiped, the other deities may not come to possess the people. Legba guards every door and gate, every highway and crossroads. He is still an important god in modern Dahomey, where his attributes are much the same as in Haiti. The people feel no necessity of

21. Dorsainvil, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
22. Classical anthropologists might have called this phenomenon "parallelism"; the word is accurate enough if only similarity, not identity, be understood.

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Catholicism. I have seen such an altar, with its adjacent table, bearing a crucifix, candles, (holy) water, lithographs of the "Assumption of the Virgin," "St. George and the Dragon," the "Adoration of the Kings," and certain unrecognized but distinctly European saints; in addition to these objects, however, were such unecclesiastical articles as bananas, rice, beans, squash, various bottles of drinks, and plates of food. Near by were the sacrificial animals. 796 [178] [192]

Vodun makes use frequently of one sacrament of the Church—baptism. Needless to say, this rite is not a monopoly of Christianity, and its use in the folk religion may very well have come from Africa. Constant witnessing of the rite in church must nevertheless have influenced its adoption for all important Vodun ceremonials. The drums used in the dance are baptized; so also is the first loa to possess a devotee; at many other special times the rite is likewise performed, generally with a set of prayers which invoke Catholic saints and Vodun loa alike. [177]

Mention has already been made of the identification of Rada and Pétro loa with certain saints and martyrs of the Church. Such identifications are not uniform, but vary in different parts of the country. Legba is generally associated with Saint Anthony, but often (and to the Christian, more understandably) with Saint Peter who traditionally guards the gates of heaven; the Virgin Mary quite obviously is related, whether as Queen of Heaven, as the Sorrowing Mother, or as the Innocent Virgin, with numerous manifestations of Maîtresse Ermilie; Damballa, whose symbol is the serpent, is sometimes Moses (whose brother's rod became a serpent consuming other serpents, and who by lifting up a serpent in the wilderness cured the people of their snake bites) and sometimes Saint Patrick (whose association with snakes is well known). Other identifications are numerous, showing the penchant of the people for combining what they know of both religions.[2] 776 177 [184]

Many of the loa have, like the Catholic saints, their symbols, their special days, colors, and other associations. Some like white, some red; the serpent, the rainbow, the crossroads are among the symbols; sacred days occur weekly, Tuesday being Legba's, Wednesday Ogun's, Friday Ermilie's, and Saturday Baron Samedi's. It may be

2. The distinguished Haitian ethnographer, sociologist, and historian, Dr. Jean Price-Mars, has made a list of some of these identifications in his *Ainsi parle l'oncle*, pp. 180–182.

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WHAT THE CULTIVATED

177/ 177 [184] member of the Haitian élite takes from Catholicism is quite different probably from what the peasant absorbs: the point is that the peasant does not find the faith either incomprehensible, or uncongenial to his own tradition and penchants—as he might find the tenets of, say, Unitarianism or Presbyterianism. It is easy to fit the Trinity, the Virgin, the saints, the Mass, holy water, Lent, and practically every other external aspect of belief and ritual into his mental set. He makes his own selection and his own reconciliations. It seems the most natural thing in the world to him to light a candle and make the sign of the cross as he baptizes a new drum for use in the Vodun dance. The Haitian peasant, in fact, makes a tranquil unity of his two religions, to match the obvious oneness of his universe.

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it seems not radically to have affected the masses but only the fairly well-to-do.

The *Royal Almanac* for the year 1814 touches proudly upon the moral state of the kingdom. The author of the almanac, the Comte de la Limonade, says: "Great attention is paid to morals and manners. Marriage is honored, protected, and encouraged; no Haitian who is unmarried can fill any place of distinction. Divorce is not permitted." All this was true; yet the mass of Haitians still remained unmarried. Nevertheless, the quotation indicates the extent to which Christophe had gone in his effort to reform marriage and morals among his people; to set them in the European tradition and draw them out of their African and colonial backgrounds.

While Christophe was trying to effect reforms in the North, Pétion was accepting his Southern folk as they were. Hardly a law during his twelve-year administration touches the subject of marriage. The élite colored people continued to make proper legal marriages and so insure the inheritance of their legitimate children. The common folk lived their family lives without weddings, and if property questions arose, custom ruled, backed by public opinion in their little communities.

Such are the backgrounds out of which modern Haitian sex relations have developed. From African tradition came family life, the importance of property to stabilize a union, insignificance of a wedding ceremony, familiarity with matrilineal kinship and descent; from French colonial practice, formal marriage to establish a family with social ambition, casual sex relations for pleasure outside this marriage, the claim of legitimate children to all property (in contrast to folk custom, where few legitimate children were born); from Dessalines, an emphasis upon the African tradition and realism; from Christophe, an insistence upon strict French practice in marriage and in the passage of property.

From among these alternatives Haiti made a choice which is an excellent example of what Keller calls "automatic selection in the mores."[7] There was no congress to select one procedure rather than another. Because Pétion and Boyer followed a *laissez-faire* policy in social matters, the people took the path of least resistance.

7. A. G. Keller, *Societal Evolution* (revised ed., New York, 1931), chaps. IV and V.

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numbers in the army have been radically reduced; yet in that very fact there is the possibility for the only armed persons in Haiti, the present Garde d'Haiti, to effect political coups. But at least the budget is not strained by the salaries of thousands of unnecessary soldiers, as was true in pre-Occupation days.

2. The separation of the masses from government. By providing a minimum of local government, but that fairly effective, the national government has been able to keep the peasants out of all but revolutionary politics. Rural communities have ordinarily got along well enough without formal government, so that the history of Haitian political thought and the analysis of Haitian political forms would seem of affairs interesting to only a fraction of the population.

It need hardly be repeated, after a reflection upon these apparent permanencies of political life, that Haiti is not a democracy.

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baby: when she does she substitutes a mode of feeding on fruits and 853
solids which favors digestive disturbance and nutritive diseases in the infant.

At the age when children of the élite would be starting to school, 857
peasant children are beginning work in the fields, hoeing, weeding, 752
and carrying, always under the tropical sun. Cuts and bruises, some- 184
times serious, are improperly treated when they occur and so lead 164
to tetanus or to enormous ulcers.

Hard work and a simple mode of outdoor life prove, in Haiti at 164
least, not to be the keys to good health which a romantic might fancy them. Haiti has been one of the unhealthiest places in the world. One feels that it has been lucky to escape such scourges as typhus, cholera, and bubonic plague; that smallpox has not been violent in its epidemics, and that the people developed an immunity to yellow fever. It has, indeed, been luck rather than cleanliness and proper medical care which has protected the people in these instances.

In 1838 Boyer founded a hospital school at Port-au-Prince, giving 874
it the name of The National School of Medicine. It did not function as a school, however, until 1860 when Geffrard reorganized it and gave it life. Geffrard also sent young men to Europe to study, installed laboratories of physics and chemistry in the upper schools of the capital, and made possible the appearance of an intellectual élite."[11]
The next burst of energy in matters of hygiene came around 1890 744
when, under the influence of Dr. Léon Audain, the first health 742
records were kept, and the spirit of scientific research reached Haitian medicine.

From 1804 to 1860, then, there was practically no proper care for 744
sick people. In the latter years of the century a few trained physi- 759
cians, with sadly deficient equipment, practiced in the towns. Not until after the Occupation was the rural mass of the population even touched by the medical knowledge which had been developing all over the civilized world for decades. Clinics, wholesale vaccinations and inoculations, and campaigns of enlightenment have in the past twenty years worked wonders. The Vodun practitioner, however, 756
still is the "expert" who treats most illnesses, and healing remains one of his major functions.

11. Geffrard established schools of law, music, painting, and navigation. The latter two collapsed. The same president founded the high schools of Port-au-Prince, Jeremie, and Gonaives. [873]

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lished in many parts of the country. Attendance was fair for a few days, then rapidly declined. It is obviously a task requiring patience, persistence, originality, and tact on the part of the teacher to keep the students interested enough in school to make them attend regularly, for certainly the parents, who themselves have had no education, will not force their children to attend. On the contrary, the average peasant parent feels it much more important for his children to be at work in the fields, doing something useful, than to waste time learning to read and write—accomplishments which peasants have done without from time immemorial. Forced attendance is clearly out of the question. Obviously, too, at the small wages paid to country teachers the necessary qualities of personality are uncommon, to say the least. Five thousand men and women with the consecration of missionaries would be required even to begin the work of general education.

A practically insoluble problem, given current attitudes, is that of the language to be used in rural schools, assuming that these are built. The only official language of Haiti is French; the only language understood by the masses is Créole, which in spite of its French origin is as different from that tongue as Dutch from German. Now every Haitian, high and low, knows Créole, so that the question immediately arising is: Why should not the rural teachers teach in Créole? The answer involves every sort of inward prejudice, yearning, and instilled doctrine. The teacher is almost sure to be struggling up to the élite class, and to require him to deny himself the luxury of speaking French (to him almost a patent of nobility) would be heart-rending. Likewise, he would have his "good" reason for teaching school in French: the unity of the country demands a single language; all schoolbooks are in French, none in Créole; and Créole has no literature, nor even an accepted spelling. The fact remains that except in rare instances all schoolteachers use French to their pupils, and not one peasant out of a hundred can even guess what is being said in that language.

Assuming that schools were available, as well as trained teachers willing to speak the folk language, the next problem would be the curriculum. The whole tradition of élite education is literary, not practical. Teachers trained in this tradition might teach Racine and Montaigne, but not soil conservation and new methods of planting. Peasants with a knowledge of French literature would, of course, be

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minister or an outstanding intellectual. Variations are frequently (some even say generally) mere casual accidents, surprising inspirations of the moment. The changes which have come over the face of the Vodun religion are examples: in almost no instance can the additions or emendations be traced back to their originators, yet Vodun is clearly different now from what it was in Boyer's time. Just as no one knows who initiates a change in the folkway of language, coining a slang phrase, modifying a pronunciation, so the makers of most variations in folkways and mores are anonymous.

Given infinite time and patience, one might compile a list of mores in any country, beginning first with those which require absolute conformity from all persons, and running down to those which express social ideals but which may nevertheless be honored in the breach. In our own country, the mores condemning incest and cannibalism are not only our rules but our unanimous practice; and if a person breaks either we punish him severely. At the other end of our list are those mores requiring truthfulness and honor. In calling these American mores we pay homage to an ideal—and then tell our white lies as a part of the observance of social amenities, or make our "shrewd" business deals in order to get on in the world. For neither of these breaches of the mores is there any concerted social punishment; on the contrary, we have been known to praise those who broke them. In describing the culture of a society, therefore, it is necessary to report both the mores as ideal and the mores as practice.

The larger and more complex a society becomes, the fewer the mores shared in common by all members of that society. In a small colonial American village, isolated from much contact with strangers, the whole population was bound by scores of mores touching all phases of life. In modern America, on the contrary, if one should consider American society as a whole it would probably be difficult to find a dozen mores shared commonly by us all, or if shared, exerting the same force to conformity. We have had to develop a measure of tolerance with our 130 million neighbors, a live-and-let-live principle which has been aptly called "antagonistic coöperation."

Each district in Haiti, in the effective isolation of illiteracy and sedentary life, has developed its own characteristic mores, of which a limited number correspond with those of other Haitian districts. It is these general correspondences which have been treated in this book. Within each district, likewise, there is the usual hierarchy of rules

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184 ranging from those requiring strict observance down to those permitting latitude of behavior.

114 [121] It has, then, been the primary purpose of this book to show the gradual development (the word is used with no connotation of progress toward a conscious goal) of a consistent group of mores and social institutions in Haiti since the moment of her independence. The course of Haitian social history provides an almost unlimited opportunity for further study along the lines of contemporary American sociological research. Certain skeptics have pertinently criticized this sociology as narrowly provincial, calling it a social science limited only to the American scene, and valid consequently only for American society. Such a charge is precisely the reverse of that directed at European sociology, which finds congenial the development of philosophies of history independent of research in any specific field.

If the active American sociologist should extend his field of investigation he would, whatever his dominant interest, find much to reward his research in Haiti. For example, some of the most productive work in the United States has been in studies of neighborhoods,[2] communities,[3] and regions.[4] No neighborhood study has ever been made in Haiti, nor any regional study. Herskovits[5] has pointed the way to all future students of Haitian communities. Most research done by scholars in Haiti, however, has concerned itself with one or another of the social institutions (religion has been the most popular) rather than with thorough studies of individual communities.

For the social psychologist Haiti presents a rich and untouched field. It has the advantages of a limited geography and population, and so is less complex than the United States; yet Haitian problems are familiar enough to make comparison with American problems valid. Not only has there as yet been no investigation of the process of socialization, that is, of what happens to children as they take on

2. The neighborhood is generally defined as a primary group in society in which face-to-face contacts are frequent and intimate.

3. The community is a group of people living in comparative proximity, sharing basic interests and activities, having relatively common usages and traditions, and acknowledging common rule.

4. The region is a functional part of a larger area of economic, cultural, and geographical homogeneity. The Southeastern States of the United States are conceived as a region; in Haiti, the five departments are regions.

5. In his *Life in a Haitian Valley*. This is a study of the community in and around Mirebalais.

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bean country, and perhaps fewer than in any country in Latin America. The agriculture itself, with the exceptions now of those very few large-scale plantations in sisal and sugarcane, is adapted to small plots and is worked with intensive labor and few tools on hilly land. Compared with agricultural production, especially of cash crops, in most mainland Latin American countries, productivity is low. The yeomanry is conservative in its agricultural practices, and not ready to change unless the changes entail minimal risk and the gains to be realized are clearly demonstrable (Erasmus, 1952:20–26). Yeomen cultivate with three goals in mind: cash income from world-market commodities (for instance, coffee, sisal, vetiver); cash income from items produced for local sale and consumption; and subsistence. While they are heavily involved in production for sale, their crop choices and land-use patterns rest fundamentally on a subsistence orientation. All grow a substantial part of their own food, especially sorghum, maize, sweet potatoes, taro, manioc, malanga (*Xanthosoma sagittifolium* Schott), plantains and bananas, fruits and vegetables, and rice where possible. The land is invested with considerable affect: gods live in it; it is the ultimate security against privation; family members are buried in it; food and wealth come from it; and it is good in itself, even if not cultivated. While such attitudes are common in yeoman societies, Haiti's history of slavery, and of access to land through revolution, has given a special symbolic significance to landowning. Land is valued above all else and is sometimes held "uneconomically"—that is, even when the capital and labor power to work it are lacking.

Leyburn describes better than any other writer the history of land acquisition by the yeoman after 1804. The French plantations lay in ruins, never to recover, while early authoritarian attempts to restore the prerevolutionary economy under native Haitian leadership soon failed. In the course of a century, the Haitian people laid claim to their own soil, while population growth and the adoption of the French tradition of equal inheritance progressively reduced the average size of holdings. In spite of some plantation development after the United States occupation, most agricultural land in Haiti is still employed in small holdings, and "land reform" in the conventional sense—the breaking-up of large estates and the creation of a class of small landholders—is nearly irrelevant to Haiti's needs.

As today's yeomanry cultivates, so its womenfolk market. Nearly

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The major effect of the North

American tenure seems to have been to make possible a much more telling centralism in political control than had been operative in Haiti at any time since the fall of the Christophe regime; and the consequences of this change are still being felt.

Small-scale rural cultivators are famous for their tendency to confine their consumption to culturally conventionalized levels—that is, to live as their predecessors lived before them. Though they are involved in commercial spheres larger than the communities in which they live, they seek to limit that involvement and to maintain their cash expenditures at a low level. It is in this sense that Haiti might be called a "quasi-capitalistic" society. To put it another way, yeomen of this sort do not seek to change or to expand their production—rather, they aim to conserve a way of life set by tradition. The ideology of resistance to social and cultural change is one of the major obstacles to development; but it would be rash to damn such an ideology without reflection. In Haiti, for instance, there has long been pressure upon the rural masses to expand their production of coffee, the major export crop. However, this pressure has not been accompanied by any serious grass-roots attempt to improve coffee production or to offer genuine incentives to the cultivators. The yeomanry has no assurance at all that any expansion of effort will lead to gains *for them*; and they are little prepared to invest such effort merely because they are told that it will be good for Haiti. In fact, it is likely that the production of subsistence crops has expanded in recent years at the cost of coffee production, for the yeoman knows that he can at least be sure of eating and of selling locally such crops as maize, sorghum, and yams, regardless of what may happen in Port-au-Prince or to the world coffee market. This view, combined with the yeoman's painfully acquired distrust of those who prate at length concerning his welfare, has meant a virtual stagnation of agricultural export production, even though the whole land quite literally depends on this production in order to progress.

The effect of this rural resistance is to create an apparent very sharp difference in goals between countryman and bureaucrat. It is perfectly understandable that the countryman should fail to see the connection between heightened coffee production and a higher level of public welfare and social services. His experiences hardly persuade him that it is his surplus-producing capacity that underlies the kind and quality of public institutions with which the state provides him.

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241 Nor does his effort in producing more and better cash crops translate
565 itself directly into higher consumption, since he has no say in setting
185 the price for his coffee. Under the circumstances, it is naïve to sup-
433 pose that "education" alone can make the yeoman's role in economic or political development a more active one. The disposition to maintain a habitual level of consumption, rather than to believe that an increase in productivity will result in expanding services or improved consumption, is difficult to change; and the quasi-capitalistic quality of Haitian agricultural production is merely one way of saying as much. Economic change, in this sense, has to depend partly on changes in attitudes toward production. Until an agricultural extension service worthy of the name is able to make a massive attack on the shortcomings of yeoman cultivation in Haiti, this conservatism will perpetuate itself. And agricultural extension will not be able to wage this battle for change—even when its services become adequate in quality and quantity—unless the promises of greater economic rewards or of improved social services for the rural masses are occasionally honored.

47 The term "quasi-capitalistic" has much less force, of course, when
433 applied to urban enterprise. But there, too, economic activity has a
565 curiously static quality when compared to enterprise in more devel-
178 oped countries. The Port-au-Prince capitalist is famous for "playing it safe." Import-export trade, tourist hotels, guided tours, gas stations, and urban slum real estate are more rewarding spheres of investment than shops or commercial farms. A small but economically important Syrian–Lebanese–Italian group limits its local investment accordingly, as do most of those "native" Haitians who carry on their businesses in the towns and cities. Elite families consist largely of siblings who interlock their economic activities with government, the military, agricultural processing and exporting, consumer-goods importing, tourist-connected services, and the professions. A slum block, a post in the ministry of tourism, a colonelcy, or a tour agency, can be a lucrative investment; few indeed are the Haitians prepared to take the risks needed to develop highly productive farms, to produce improved strains of poultry, or to introduce industrial skills through a modern machine shop. And the reasons for this lack of verve and daring are easy to find. Governmental instability, excessive
[648] taxation, lack of access to markets, and the absence of roads, communication, small-scale credit facilities, and the like mean that special

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565 171 Modern usage, having borrowed the word "caste" from India, employs it loosely to mean a rigid class system of which the people are conscious.[4] In India caste was always endogamous and connected with occupation. Kroeber defines it as "an endogamous and hereditary division of an ethnic unit occupying a position of superior or inferior rank or social esteem in comparison with other such subdivisions."[5] Castes, as distinguished from social classes, "have emerged into social consciousness to the point where custom and law attempt their rigid and permanent separation from one another." By each of these criteria Haiti has castes.

565 582 [463] [461] The élite are endogamous in that they would not consider marriage into the masses. The one exception to the endogamic practice is marriage with a white foreigner. Whereas in India all members of a caste had the same general occupation, in Haiti several occupations are open to caste members; but the distinction between honorable and demeaning work is understood by all, so that no person has free choice as regards the two larger categories. Haitian law does not name the social divisions, nor does it legislate the masses into a subordinate position[6]—for the simple reason that there is no conceivable need to enact what already exists. The laws of Haiti are administered by élite officials; these men make the definitions and interpretations. The judge always knows the custom, so that (as in most countries) the same offense brings different penalties for upper- and lower-class offenders. Custom holds sway, and custom is more tyrannical than any body of law.

Inside the castes may be found social distinctions familiar in democracies and in every other kind of society. Interest in politics, business, literature, or sport draws people of like minds together and makes cliques. There are well-to-do families who outshine their neighbors, just as there are peasant landholders who dominate their rural communities. A high civil official has more prestige than a doctor with a small practice, just as among the masses a house servant for an élite family outranks a beggar.

565 511 105 195 For the majority of Haitians, life is too elemental to be concerned with artificial wants. The peasant talks, unfettered by rules of gram-

4. See also W. Lloyd Warner, "American Caste and Class," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLII, No. 2 (Sept. 1936), 234-237; and John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (New Haven, 1937), pp. 60 ff.

5. A. L. Kroeber, "Caste," in *Encyclopædia of the Social Sciences*, III, 234.

6. Such efforts were made, however, in the early days of the republic. See chap. III.

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mar or any schoolmaster's correction; he behaves like his fellows; he learns by trial and error, by imitation, by the praise and ridicule of his elders, what to do and what not to do. What really matters in life is having food to eat, avoiding bad luck in health and crops, having a wife and family, keeping on the right side of the spirits, and being able at night to dance, sing, and tell tales with his friends. He wears no tight-fitting clothes, never bothers about fashions, certainly never puzzles his brain to reconcile his theological and philosophical views with each other. This is by no means a poetic or idyllic existence for him, however. The peasant is so poor that misfortune may be catastrophic; the soil he has to farm is worn out by decades of erosion and crude tillage; disease is so widespread that most people know misery. A man cannot, even if he would, save up for a rainy day; he lacks the necessary implements to plough deep while sluggards sleep. One is safe so long as he does what everyone else does, and if this rule breaks down, at least misery will have company. Keep out of harm's way if possible, but bear it stoically when it comes. Avoid what is strange—particularly all legal documents, courts, politics, city ways, and people who shout orders. The peasant is conservative because radical changes, such as come from revolutions, for example, dislocate his life, leaving him worse off than before. Progress and improvement are to him only vague abstractions, much less real than the struggle for mere existence.

For the élite, on the other hand, life is rather a struggle to maintain and improve the standard of living. It is always easier to predict what a person will not do than what he will. It would be hard to define, therefore, a typical aristocrat. In one basic matter, however, the high-class Haitian is poles removed from the peasant: instead of accepting things as they are ("*Bon Dieu bon*," runs the peasant saying: God is good—and the inflection of the voice implies that the second "bon" may also mean "inscrutable"), the élite person is restlessly dissatisfied with the conditions of life: economic, social, political. His unexpressed ideal is to be accepted as an equal in the cultured circles of Western society, to have the same entrée to courts, clubs, and parties abroad as cultivated white Europeans and Americans.

Since the country has never had an accurate census, it is not possible to say precisely how many persons belong to each caste. By the most generous estimates not one out of twenty-five Haitians is élite—and such a figure stretches the category to a point which no literate

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Granted these obvious difficulties, there is still little to be said for the zeal or integrity of churchmen in Saint-Domingue. Father Cabon cites a report to Rome in 1794, which, he remarks, "was not designed to be made public, and does not bear the earmarks of passion," and which flatly states that "since the expulsion of the Jesuits, the curés have for the most part led lives so indecent . . . that the citizens and Negroes have lost all the sentiments of religion which the Jesuits gave them."[1] There had been distinguished churchmen in Saint-Domingue before 1750, authors, scientists, teachers of some note, but none appeared thereafter. The rich French colony was not a bright star in the Catholic crown. 175 193 192

Undeterred by those who might have been their spiritual guides, the white people followed the easy path of self-indulgence. The universal testimony of visitors is that, with a few notable exceptions, immorality and cruelty were daily commonplaces. To make a fortune was the prime ambition of every white man, since money made possible the luxurious enjoyment of this world's goods. Protest against money-making or soft living would have been futile. Administrative agents turned public office to their own profit; judges sold justice to the highest bidder; planters drove their slaves to death; and priests dispensed religious solace for a tidy sum. 175 556 185 647 661 693 946 193

The freedmen, who in everything patterned their lives after social leaders in the white planter class, had no more concern for religion than their models. They attended Mass occasionally as a social event, where they might see and be seen. When in the latter days of the colony discriminatory legislation required that colored persons sit in separate parts of the church, most of the affranchis simply refrained from attending Mass: their religious zeal was not so great as to make them submit to the public shame of segregation. In their daily lives, likewise, they followed the example of the white planters in pursuing pleasure rather than sobriety, "culture" rather than religious zeal. Like the whites, they were often licentious in their conduct. When it came their turn to direct affairs of state in free Haiti, there was little interest in spiritual matters among them. The intellectuals of the group paid homage to the liberal philosophers of the century rather than to religious thinkers. 175 771 184

If religion was at a low ebb in the prosperous days of the colony, it almost disappeared in the excitement of the years following the revolt of the slaves (1791). 175 771

1. Ibid., p. 18.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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elite and the yeomanry. For instance, he calls attention to one unanticipated (but inevitable) result of the occupation in this connection: the large number of children whose fathers were United States Marines, and whose mothers were members of the Haitian rural masses. In this way the occupation contributed to the growth of the physically intermediate population of Haiti, especially among rural folk, and thus perhaps to some bridging of the gap between yeomen and elite. Much more important, by its contributions to a broadening of the educational system, the occupation enabled talented black-skinned youths to improve themselves and to acquire new aspirations.

Recent economic and political developments in Haiti, through the period 1941–57, have contributed grounds for modification of the Leyburn interpretation. Though Leyburn predicted that "for the present and near future it is safe to say that there will be no more black non-élite presidents" (p. 101), subsequent developments soon proved him wrong. In January 1946, the government of elite member Elie Lescot fell under military pressure. A junta consisting of Franck Lavaud, Antoine Levelt, and Paul Magloire facilitated the installation of Dumarsais Estimé as president. Estimé was a dark-skinned man from the countryside (the village of Verettes, near St. Marc, in west-central Haiti), who had received a good education, served as a minister in the Vincent cabinet and, as a deputy, married a lighter-skinned woman whose family's elite membership was secure. Estimé might well be considered a self-made member of the elite, but he was not born into it, and his accession to power was the political expression of new possibilities in Haitian life.

The changes Estimé's regime symbolized were rooted in the intellectual resistance to the United States occupation and in the search for a Haitian identity in the face of that occupation. The strangely easy domination that the United States wielded over Haitian society for several decades, and the relatively unexploitative but patronizing administration it provided, ended forever a fantasy that had gripped Haitian intellectuals for more than a century. The world of 1804, when a bloodied but defiant Haiti could bar by force of arms Napoleon's dreams of a New World empire (and assist indirectly thereby in the territorial expansion of a still weak United States) had vanished. The time when a Pétion could aid, protect, and politically influence a sick and tired Simón Bolívar was long gone. The world had changed, while Haiti, the Haitians learned under their North

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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American masters, had nearly stood still. For almost a century, Haiti's elite had taken justifiable pride in their ancestors' triumph over Napoleonic France, even while they remained enthralled by French culture. This strange ambivalence would no longer do. In effect, the United States occupation compelled Haitian scholars to rediscover what it meant to be Haitian.

As the writing of Jean Price-Mars (1928) expressed that identity culturally, so the regime of Dumarsais Estimé began to express it politically. For the first time, Africa, and not simply France, became an important part of the nationalist dialogue. The Creole language began to be studied in its own right, and a program to end illiteracy through education in Creole was launched. Folkloristic studies, emphasizing the African component in Haitian rural life, especially as expressed in religion, came into vogue. Haitians began to explore their own society as a synthesis that was as much African as it was French—and as a synthesis, rather than as a mechanical alignment of two distinct traditions. The term *authentique* was employed to express what was "truly Haitian," and Haiti herself was viewed as a unique and original blending of two pasts. Under Estimé, rural folk of promise—and they were, in the nature of things, predominantly dark-skinned—were given greater opportunities, especially to be educated and to enter government service. Moreover, these developments took place at a time when Haiti's economic situation was relatively good, and Estimé enjoyed a measure of popular support rare in Haiti's entire history.

Furthermore, it was during the Estimé regime that Haitian cultural life reached some sort of climax. In the 1920s young Haitian intellectuals had been deeply shaken by the United States occupation and had begun to formulate their own answers to the questions it raised. Not only did Africa come into view as the wellspring of much that was Haitian but Haiti's status as an occupied though once-sovereign power dramatized the need for a social and political philosophy that fitted with hemispheric and international realities. French intellectual currents figured importantly in Haitian political thinking, both because the intellectuals of the French Antilles of the time were inspired by Haitian history and interested in Haiti, and because those islands and Haiti shared a curious affinity in their "Gallo-African" cultures. Anticolonial and Marxist points of view were espoused by a few Haitians, but these perspectives were complicated by changing

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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attitudes toward French culture in all of its expressions, and by a new feeling of kinship for the peoples and cultures of Africa.

The variety of views expressed by Haitian intellectuals was colored by differences no more subtle than those characteristic of the intellectuals of any other country in the Caribbean region—even though North American observers unfortunately persist in treating such differences as politically irrelevant. There were those spokesmen who continued to embrace French culture and to reject "Africanism," only deploring the North American presence in Haiti. Others embodied their views in a staunchly Haitian nationalism and, as they began to view their country in a new light, invested the Haitian folk with an unrealistically romantic picturesqueness. Still others fastened upon the African theme with special intensity, and thereby gave a strong racist tinge to their nationalism.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, anthropology came to be seen as an important means for giving Haitians an accurate—that is, an "inside"—picture of their own society; a number of young ethnologists, mainly self-trained, began to publish works on Haitian culture. Soon anthropology was pressed into a political mold, anticipating similar developments in other "colonial" countries. The first novels purporting to deal with the common people, though sometimes tinged with idealized preconceptions of rural society, were published; and an impressive number of competent young poets devoted themselves to aesthetic explorations of the Haitian spirit. Haitian cultural and intellectual life, in short, was taken up with the rediscovery of Haiti and its people.

But the Estimé regime did not produce changes in the economic structure of Haitian society of importance proportionate to the national cultural renascence. Even those modifications in the class structure for which Estimé is sometimes given credit might not have occurred, were it not for educational reforms that had begun in the 1920s and the beneficial effects of Haiti's prosperity of the mid-1940s. What Estimé could do was to open the ranks of an insufficiently large bureaucracy to able, if sometimes inadequately trained, newcomers of poor rural antecedents.

At the same time, as the Combaire-Sylvains have suggested (1959: 179–89), a qualitatively different class group was beginning to emerge in Port-au-Prince during Estimé's presidency, and the presence of such a group suggests that new economic forces were faintly stirring.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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[p. 3]

I

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR COUNTRY

IN the ten thousand square miles of Haiti's mountains and valleys more than two and a half million people—some say more than three million—are crowded together. Some are black, some light-skinned, but less than five thousand are white, and these are almost all recent immigrants to the country. Modern Haiti has its racial roots primarily in Africa, but its social roots lie as much in Europe as in Africa; if it is "American" at all, geography and a few fairly superficial characteristics are the only American qualities it displays.

Carrying our own cultural interpretations with us when we visit our Caribbean neighbor, we are likely to misunderstand what we see in Haiti, for it is very easy to think of all colored people in terms of our own. To do so is to remain completely ignorant of Haiti. Whereas in the United States we use "Negro" and "colored" indiscriminately as synonyms, making a real distinction only between "black" and "mulatto," all four terms are taboo in polite society in Haiti. A new descriptive vocabulary, an entirely new frame of reference, must be acquired by the friendly foreign visitor to this West Indian republic.[1]

Probably the most striking phenomenon in the country is its division into two social groups. So rigidly are the class lines set that

1. No greater error of tact can be made by visitors to Haiti than to use such commonly accepted American terms as Negro, colored, mulatto, blacks, Africans. Whereas in the United States such words are employed to describe people with a greater or less degree of Negro blood, in Haiti they are generally regarded as opprobrious epithets, emphasizing the color of the epidermis as all important, while ignoring the essential matters of culture, standard of living, and social background. Not many Haitians would have the grace to reply, as President Pétion suggested to a subaltern who was incensed at a white man for calling him "un nègre," "Why, then, did you not call him 'un blanc'?" Probably the most offensive of all the terms is mulâtre, for it calls attention to miscegenation in the family. The educated people in general regard themselves as darker Frenchmen, not as transplanted Africans. Books about Haiti which refer to the "black republic" seem to them to ignore the important fact that the blacks, though numerically preponderant, do not rule. The visitor must accordingly acquire a new vocabulary of color. It is safer not to make any allusion at all to the matter; but if occasion demands, one speaks of "jaune" and "brun," not white and black.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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One of Christophe's rules was that no cultivator attached to

a plantation—and every ordinary country person was so attached —might leave the estate without permission from a military officer.[11] Two of the common folkways of Haitian peasant life since his time have been immobility and general acceptance of orders from the military. Both characteristics had been fostered by slavery and by the régimes of Toussaint and Dessalines, and these folkways became fixed under Christophe. 175 566 178 [484]

Other rules introduced by the King, however, lapsed shortly after his strong hand was removed. For example, the monarch required of the whole population that whenever they visited the capital on feast days or went to the market towns on Saturdays they be decently clad in clean clothes.[12] Since the time of Christophe, neatness of appearance has hardly been a folk characteristic, probably because of poverty rather than lack of desire to dress well. Nor did scrupulous regularity of work in the fields continue as a folkway later, when the great plantations were broken up. 175 178 291 527 183 [44]

Like a father the King tried to inculcate moral standards of honesty in his people. To prevent theft he had small valuables, such as watches or jewelry or purses, "planted," and if the finder did not immediately turn them over to the nearest Dahomet, punishment was meted out. Such a policy made honesty contagious. Thefts and depredation were soon almost unknown. The most tempting store of wealth could be left safely unlocked or in the open air. Christophe's achievement in this matter is eloquent testimony to his success as a paternal leader, for it is no small task to initiate moral ideas among people who for a generation have lacked them. Even today it is the proud boast of the Haitians that their people are honest. 175 577 177

As compared with the liberties of farmers in the United States of the same period, the Haitian agricultural workers' freedom was infinitesimally small, but by contrast with the bondage of slavery, their new status was definitely higher. 175 566

10. Christophe called his royal police force "Dahomet," after the West African kingdom, Dahomey, from which most of the men had come. They were not ordinary soldiers but especially imported and carefully selected men whose intelligence made them stand out from their fellows. Each Dahomet was given a course of training in his task as administrator before being sent out. The general consensus of foreign visitors was that these Dahomets were efficient even in small matters. [425]

11. This rule was partly an indication of Christophe's vanity, personal and national, for he was deeply desirous of the good opinion of white visitors, especially those from England. He wanted Europeans to respect Haiti as they would respect any small state, and not to praise it merely as an example of "Negro progress." [577] [84]

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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ress. Others point out the difference between the lower-class Negro of the large commercial towns and the black peasants who live in the plains and mountains. The former, in contact with the roughest of white sailors, are a disgrace to any people, while the countryfolk, seeing only a select few of the whites, appear "to have an innate idea of the white man's superiority," and so treat him with respect. The peasants, according to these speakers, have all the virtues and vices of "wild races": they may acquire a kind of French varnish, but they are "essentially an African people removed from their parent country."[11]

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There are among the élite broad-minded, tolerant, and cultured persons. The average member of the caste, however, like the average American, is full of prejudices of all kinds. Travel produces a superficial polish; their patriotism consists of antagonism toward the outside world and an effort to secure position for themselves; they are sure that Haiti's laws are sounder, her culture superior, her schools more advanced, her civilization in general higher, than those of most other nations (France generally excepted).

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There are evidences also of certain psychological twists. It used to be said that mulatto Haitians "hate their fathers and despise their mothers," meaning that in colonial times and for a short time after the élite did not like to remember that they derived from a master-slave union. They realize nowadays that they would be accepted as social equals in few countries, and this makes them protest by self-assertion. Certainly a majority of the élite would be completely unwilling to admit that things are anywhere better done than in Haiti.

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One generation after the wars which led to independence, the greater number of Haitians had practically forgotten that there was an outside world. Haiti was all they knew. With no standard of comparison for their lot in life the peasants ate, slept, raised their families, fell ill, and died without bothering their heads about such academic abstractions as equality. This uncomplaining acceptance of life, routine, and fate seems to be the essence of peasant existence. The Haitian peasant has been bound to the soil by mental inertia and by tradition more effectively than ever by law. When he has revolted it has been through conviction that someone was trying to change the old familiar ways, or because of physical maltreatment. Peasants have been bribed and paid to revolt, but as mercenaries they have entered only half-heartedly into warfare.

11. The phrases quoted here are fragments of conversations made by Haitian élite to the author.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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In most countries in which Westerners are familiar, social distinctions take the form of classes, which are to a greater or less degree mutable. In Haiti, as we have repeatedly indicated, the distinctions are so rigid that caste is the only properly descriptive term. There is hardly a Haitian who would not be able to state immediately whether he or any person he knew was, or was not, élite. So it has been with steady persistence ever since Dessalines and Christophe gave way to Pétion and Boyer. Élite youth marries élite girl, and the folkways of the group are passed on from parent to children, thus perpetuating the distinctions. In the pages which follow, all the marks of separation of castes will be examined: religion, economic occupation, marriage, language, manners, and the rest. 565 178

Certain aspects of the classic example of the caste system, seen in India, are lacking in Haiti. Religion, for instance, does not require caste endogamy, nor does civil law implicitly acknowledge caste lines by reference to the rights of people of a certain occupation. Custom does more than religion and law could, however, to enforce conformity to the understood rules. Probably the most open efforts to enact caste lines into law were the pronouncements of Dessalines and Christophe that all but a few people should be bound to the soil; and Boyer's Code Rural—a feeble echo of days gone by. The two black rulers were able to enforce the distinctions they made; but when they died their feudal arrangements lapsed, while the separation of classes continued. With the recurrence of revolutions after 1843 it behooved the élite, when occasionally they were in authority, not to lay themselves open to fresh attack upon grounds of aristocratic presumption, for they never knew when they might need the support of the masses. Any black revolutionary leader would have been able to turn an enacted caste law to his own ends, even if a Senate consisting predominantly of light-colored men had had the power to enact such a law. Time and inertia won the battle for the élite. By not joining issue with the masses at any definite point, the aristocrats gained their end of caste distinction, for they were willing to endure the self-discipline necessary to the maintenance of social standards, as the masses were not. [544] [170]

Just as in colonial days the ambition of the well-to-do freedman was to go to France for his education and his holidays, so in free Haiti the lure of France has continued to be strong for the aristocrat. There is not a trace of animosity against the country which enslaved the Negroes, and which in 1802–3 tried by trickery to take away the 565 484 177 186

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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565 rights of people of Negro blood. As a distinguished Haitian re-
494 marked, "It is from France that we draw our culture, our language,
177 our literature, our attitudes of mind: why should we not love her?"
186 The more time the élite spend in France, the less kinship they feel with the masses. There is not necessarily any conscious snobbery in this increasing discrepancy; it simply results from a life spent in entirely different environments. The Boston Brahmin, for example, may be kindhearted and yet feel little kinship with a Mississippi share-cropper.

544 Inside the castes one may find social distinctions familiar in democracies. There are well-to-do élite who set the standards of manners and entertainment, and there are peasant landholders who through force of personality dominate their rural neighborhoods. The intellectual man of the upper classes stands somewhat apart from the social whirl of "high society." An important government official has more prestige among the leisured classes than a small businessman, just as a powerful religious adept is more honored among the peasants than a happy-go-lucky ragamuffin. It is obvious, however, that within the élite caste social discrimination occurs more frequently and is more accurately observed than among the country people.

[184] Such phrases as "Haitian religion" or "Haitian public opinion"
[177] are accurate only in so far as the person who uses them defines the
[208] adjective "Haitian." One might describe truly a phenomenon characteristic of ninety-five out of a hundred Haitians and yet, in the opinion of those who dominate the economic, political, and social life, do injustice to Haiti.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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The people of the islands were able to maintain some continuity with the past, even while the new setting and changing conditions led to the development of certain innovations in society and culture. In a few Caribbean societies, Haiti included, freedom brought with it the opportunity to create a yeomanry—an independent, landholding class of agriculturists who produced most of their own consumption needs and also produced commodities for sale. These were "reconstituted yeomen," whose ways of life combined elements from the African and American Indian past, as well as considerable European and Asian influences, in new cultural constellations.

Haitian country folk are a particularly good example of such a historical process. The crops Haitian yeomen cultivate include the maize, sweet potatoes, and manioc of the indigenous American Indian (Taino) people, and other cultigens such as papaya and avocado which had been domesticated in mainland aboriginal America; and items like taro and mangoes from Oceania, sesame and sugarcane which originated in the Middle East and India, and vegetables from Europe. Their domestic animals, including cattle, swine, and fowls, are nearly all from the Old World. The chief agricultural tools—hoe, billhook, and dibble, which are well adapted to Haiti's shallow topsoil and hilly terrain—may be European or African in origin; the practice of burning off weeds before planting may be African or American Indian. In the case of each trait—crop, tool, practice—one is confronted by the diverse and entangled culture history of the Haitian people. What is true of agriculture is true of all else. The religion of Haiti is at once two religions rather than one: Catholicism *and* vodoun. Yet these two belief systems form a single ideology for most Haitians, particularly in the rural areas and among those of the urban lower classes. The Creole language is similarly complex in origin. While its lexicon is predominantly derived from French, parts of its syntax are not of Romance origin. For instance, the use of postpositive nominalizing particles and the absence of gender typify Haitian Creole, and are decidedly not Romance in character. Terminology shows much the same; for example, animal names and anatomical terms are mainly French in origin, but some cooked foods carry names of African provenience.

The "mixing" of various elements of culture from different traditions is, of course, neither uniquely Caribbean nor uniquely Haitian. All cultures are growths out of the past, and change by losing and gaining traits and by combining and recombining their substance in

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1952) 1960 BV3 Hall BV3

[The Vodoun Pantheon]

the earth like the carrying pad that women wear to support bundles on their heads. Wherever Ayido Wédo shifted his position there were earthquakes.[1] When the rainbow appeared after a rain it was said that Ayido had come out from under the earth to drink of the fresh water. 776 171 821

Damballa Grand Chemin (Damballa of the Highway). Another manifestation of Damballa as a protector of those on long journeys. 484

Damballa Wèdo. Another manifestation of Damballa.

Dossu Wèdo. Considered to be the daughter of Damballa. The ending of her name (-ó) suggests that at one time she may have been considered a wife rather than a daughter.

Doki Wèdo. A member of Damballa's family.

Aclo Wèdo. A member of Damballa's family. Said to be a "work loa" who aids men with their gardens, especially in time of illness. 241

Èzèlie Dèda, or Dèda, sometimes spelled Ezèlie. One of the "big" loa of the Dahomé pantheon, a symbol of purity, and sometimes identified with the Virgin Mary. Her color is white, and services to her include a ritual sweeping and sprinkling of the earth and a perfuming of the air. Food offerings to her include corn meal and eggs. Male "horses" of Èzèlie are sometimes bound to her by mystic marriages, and they are obligated to refrain from sexual intercourse on certain days which belong to her. There are a number of Èzèlies, regarded as members of the same family or, in some cult centers, as different manifestations of the same deity. Some Haitians regard Èzèlie Dèda as the ancestor of the Èzèlie family and refer to her as Grand Èzèlie. Note that there is a Dahomean town named Dèdja at approximately 0° 6′ E., 6° 51′ N. 177 822 782 787 834 588

Èzèlie Fréda, or Èzèlie Dahomèsse (Dahomé), or Èzèlie Fréda Dahomèsse. Like Èzèlie Dèda, she is a symbol of purity and is identified with the Virgin Mary. Mystic marriages are performed with her, and her "horses" are obligated to refrain from sexual intercourse on certain days. She is also a giver of wealth. 177 588 787 834

Èzèlie Wèdo. A sister or daughter of Èzèlie Dèda and also related to Damballa.

Èzèlie Madòn. A sister of Èzèlie Fréda.

Èzèlie Bandè. A manifestation of Èzèlie who is especially fond of the Bandè dance.

Èzèlie Jòndòm (Red Eyes). A stern and hard Èzèlie who is often identified with Pétro rather than Dahomé rites.

Alòm Fréda. A member of the Èzèlie cycle, regarded as a market-place protector. In Dahomey, Alòm was a protector of all public gathering places.[2] 483 171

Alòm Balèkété

Alòm Dèkàn Bolo Bòsu

Maîtresse Massò. A special form of Èzèlie as priestess.

Maîtresse Espagnòle, or 'Pagnòla. A person mounted by this Èzèlie talks only Spanish. 787 171

Sòsò, or Sòsòò. A thunder deity who hurls stones to the earth when angered. Some of the stones thrown by Sòsò are regarded as the sacred residence of various loa. Sòsò (or Sogbo) is a member of the original Thunder pantheon of Dahomey. 776 171

Sòsò Badé, or Sòsò Badò, or simply Badé. A close relative of Sòsò, regarded as the protector of the hounfòr (*badé*). In Dahomey, Badé is sometimes referred to as the son of the deity Sòsò.[3]

[1] [See Ellis, The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, pp. 47-49; and Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 245ff. Cf. p. 354 Category 116. -- Analyst]

[2] [Ellis, op. cit., p. 52. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[3] [Herskovits, op. cit., pp. 152ff. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander 8-4 (1937-1950) 1950 BV3 Haiti BV3

[The Congo and Petro Pantheons]

Tijean Pied Cofrous (Tijean Dry Feet). One of the malevolent Tijean brothers. 996
Tirotte Démarrané, or Kitta Démarrané. Thought to be the son of Kitta Bayh.
Yanoé Lonan. A deity of Congo origin.
Zio Pierre
Zara Tonnerre (Zaka Thunder)
Zara Gonzi
Zara L'Orage (Zaka Storm)
Yari Bonnet
Gourmette
Marédonna
Sonnan. (Senegal). When this lwa comes, the mounted person talks "Arabic." [997 / 91]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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114 121 treatment. In the absence of sufficient analytic material on the intervening years since his book was written, a prefatory note such as this can do little more than comment on Haitian society, either in terms of its present design or in terms of the recent events that may have modified it.

121 114 565 [178] The central thesis of Leyburn's book is that Haitian society is sharply divided into two segments, and that the national institutional structure is such that no significant alteration in that division has occurred in the entire course of Haiti's history as a sovereign nation. At the base of the society is the rural agricultural sector, making up perhaps as much as 95 per cent of the population; at the top the elite, which dominates the governmental apparatus and all national institutions. These two segments of the society differ, in Leyburn's view, in all important regards: level of income, source of income, education, language, religion, social forms, values and attitudes, and all else. By carefully describing the history of Haitian society from the eve of the revolution until the midst of the United States occupation, he reveals both the origin of this vast social cleavage and the various means employed for its perpetuation. Leyburn was so impressed by the gap which separated yeomanry and elite that he chose to label these social segments castes rather than classes. Members of the elite earn their livings as rentiers, merchants, professionals, and in government, and never engage in manual labor of any sort. They are predominantly urban in residence; their sons attend private lower schools, and then [191] go on to higher education, usually abroad. They are French-speaking, [197] although they also speak Creole, Haiti's national language. Elite religion is Catholicism, elite forms of marriage and domestic organization are "legitimate" and "western." Elite members view themselves as a kind of aristocracy, and feel little commonality in their sharing of Haiti and of Haitian history with the yeomen.

114 565 191 771 583 595 144 In sharp contrast, the yeomanry is rural, poor, works the land, is illiterate and Creole-speaking only, believes in *vodoun* rather than in orthodox Catholicism, usually marries by common law and is sometimes polygynous, and remains substantially isolated from the outer world. Finally and importantly—though its particular significance is changing—the elite differs from the rural sector in that the countryman is predominantly negroid in phenotype, while members of the elite are prevailingly lighter-skinned.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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American masters, had nearly stood still. For almost a century, Haiti's elite had taken justifiable pride in their ancestors' triumph over Napoleonic France, even while they remained enthralled by French culture. This strange ambivalence would no longer do. In effect, the United States occupation compelled Haitian scholars to rediscover what it meant to be Haitian.

As the writing of Jean Price-Mars (1928) expressed that identity culturally, so the regime of Dumarsais Estimé began to express it politically. For the first time, Africa, and not simply France, became an important part of the nationalist dialogue. The Creole language began to be studied in its own right, and a program to end illiteracy through education in Creole was launched. Folkloristic studies, emphasizing the African component in Haitian rural life, especially as expressed in religion, came into vogue. Haitians began to explore their own society as a synthesis that was as much African as it was French—and as a synthesis, rather than as a mechanical alignment of two distinct traditions. The term *authentique* was employed to express what was "truly Haitian," and Haiti herself was viewed as a unique and original blending of two pasts. Under Estimé, rural folk of promise—and they were, in the nature of things, predominantly dark-skinned—were given greater opportunities, especially to be educated and to enter government service. Moreover, these developments took place at a time when Haiti's economic situation was relatively good, and Estimé enjoyed a measure of popular support rare in Haiti's entire history.

Furthermore, it was during the Estimé regime that Haitian cultural life reached some sort of climax. In the 1920s young Haitian intellectuals had been deeply shaken by the United States occupation and had begun to formulate their own answers to the questions it raised. Not only did Africa come into view as the wellspring of much that was Haitian but Haiti's status as an occupied though once-sovereign power dramatized the need for a social and political philosophy that fitted with hemispheric and international realities. French intellectual currents figured importantly in Haitian political thinking, both because the intellectuals of the French Antilles of the time were inspired by Haitian history and interested in Haiti, and because those islands and Haiti shared a curious affinity in their "Gallo-African" cultures. Anticolonial and Marxist points of view were espoused by a few Haitians, but these perspectives were complicated by changing

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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Any casual attempt to assess the importance of religion

lives of the people is sure to prove erroneous, for in no phase of life are outward appearances so deceptive. What the unsophisticated peasant believes can be ascertained on the whole more accurately than the beliefs of the intelligent élite. To the foreign observer, Roman Catholicism seems to play as large and as small a part in the thinking of the Haitian upper classes as among members of upper-class French society. Outwardly, the élite are professing Catholics or not religious at all. It is considered proper to attend Mass and otherwise to pay respect to religious forms; actually one loses nothing in prestige if he is not a practicing Christian. Society seems to exert no pressure in the matter. Only if a member of the upper class fears for the security of his social position, or knows that rumors are afloat of his addiction to Vodun, does he feel impelled to become assiduous in his open attentions to the Church.

The national sensitiveness to skin color is apparent in the priestly complexions. Since the old tradition lingers that "baptism by a black will not stick," not even the peasants welcome native Catholic priests. The God and saints of Christianity need the intercession of white men, just as the Vodun spirits need that of natives. In the early days peasants stoned Negro priests who tried to administer the Catholic sacraments. Such an attitude toward a black clergy falls in well with the preferences of the élite. If there were Haitian priests, they would probably be drawn from the élite class since this is the educated group; but it might happen that some devout peasant would rise to the priesthood and so have the care of a parish including élite—a contingency unthinkable to the aristocrat. Snobbishness, indeed, affects the usefulness of the town priests, for the élite members of the congregation insist on having sermons in French, a language which only the small minority understand, rather than in the Créole which is the speech of everyone, intelligible to gentry and humble alike. The Mass is consequently celebrated for the people at large: in unknown tongues, Latin for the ritual, French for the sermon;; the benefit they derive from it must be wholly from their inner communion stimulated by the actions of the service. The town priests are often willing enough to accede to élite pressure in the matter of language, for they know French as their mother tongue and would have to learn Créole; although some of the more devoted priests become adept in native speech, using it in their personal

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ministry and in sermons in country chapels." For the *élite*, well groomed, sitting with his missal in a seat bearing his name plate, the psychic elation to be derived from hearing a sermon preached in a language which the rabble seated around him does not know must be very great—and very Christian.

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17. I have heard a sermon in the chapel at fashionable Kenscoff preached in Créole, with the President of the republic, himself a mulatto—and a politically astute one—of Créole in the congregation. Likewise, I have met priests who, although they have lived in the country for a generation, have never learned the tongue used by ninety-five out of a hundred of their parishioners all the time, and by a hundred per cent of them some of the time.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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lished in many parts of the country. Attendance was fair for a few days, then rapidly declined. It is obviously a task requiring patience, persistence, originality, and tact on the part of the teacher to keep the students interested enough in school to make them attend regularly, for certainly the parents, who themselves have had no education, will not force their children to attend. On the contrary, the average peasant parent feels it much more important for his children to be at work in the fields, doing something useful, than to waste time learning to read and write—accomplishments which peasants have done without from time immemorial. Forced attendance is clearly out of the question. Obviously, too, at the small wages paid to country teachers the necessary qualities of personality are uncommon, to say the least. Five thousand men and women with the consecration of missionaries would be required even to begin the work of general education.

A practically insoluble problem, given current attitudes, is that of the language to be used in rural schools, assuming that these are built. The only official language of Haiti is French; the only language understood by the masses is Créole, which in spite of its French origin is as different from that tongue as Dutch from German. Now every Haitian, high and low, knows Créole, so that the question immediately arising is: Why should not the rural teachers teach in Créole? The answer involves every sort of inward prejudice, yearning, and instilled doctrine. The teacher is almost sure to be struggling up to the élite class, and to require him to deny himself the luxury of speaking French (to him almost a patent of nobility) would be heart-rending. Likewise, he would have his "good" reason for teaching school in French: the unity of the country demands a single language; all schoolbooks are in French, none in Créole; and Créole has no literature, nor even an accepted spelling. The fact remains that except in rare instances all schoolteachers use French to their pupils, and not one peasant out of a hundred can even guess what is being said in that language.

Assuming that schools were available, as well as trained teachers willing to speak the folk language, the next problem would be the curriculum. The whole tradition of élite education is literary, not practical. Teachers trained in this tradition might teach Racine and Montaigne, but not soil conservation and new methods of planting. Peasants with a knowledge of French literature would, of course, be

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XVIII

THE CRÉOLE LANGUAGE

JUST as Haiti is a country of two distinct social strata, so it possesses two distinct languages, French and Créole. Only the élite speak French, but everyone in the country, from the president to the humblest dullard, speaks Créole. Aristocrats call the latter language disparagingly a *patois*. But is it? When does a patois or a dialect become a true language? When it has definite rules of grammar, declension, rhetoric? Créole has them all, even though the users are unaware of the rules. When it acquires the dignity of a literature? Increasingly the most original Haitian authors write their novels and poems in Créole or with large passages in that tongue—and did English suddenly cease to be a patois and become a language only when Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* appeared? When it is the language of passion, of sorrow, of delicate nuance? Here more than anywhere Créole meets the requirements, as any honest Haitian would confess by his lapse into Créole at moments of emotion. When it gains wide concurrence? No Haitian is ignorant of Créole.

Two centuries have witnessed the birth of this new tongue, but because it has been the speech of the lower orders this has not been accounted a noteworthy phenomenon, has not been praised as a philological achievement, has only recently been studied by linguists. Most people have been content to regard it as a debasement of French—and poor French at that. Yet were not Italian and French likewise debasements of Latin by the common folk, and English even more of a debasement and a hodgepodge? In 1700 Créole existed only in germ; by 1800 it was already formed—a kind of social cement which held together all that diffuse humanity which was shortly to become an independent nation.

Créole is not, as most people (even cultured Haitians) assume, the degeneration of French which occurred when benighted African slaves tried to learn and speak a new language. On the contrary, it was already a language when the slaves were brought into Saint-Domingue. They learned it quickly, and in the course of two hundred years they and their descendants, who have known no other tongue, have modified it only as any people slowly transform

B: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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175 Norman ones were less complicated; English, simpler still, rein-
192 forced the Norman tendency.
197 From the Spaniards of the Caribbean region Créole borrowed not only nouns (generally the most assimilable of words), but a large number of adjectives, pronouns, auxiliary verbs, and certain subtler characteristics of speech.

This amalgam, then, three quarters Norman French, was the Créole language as of 1697 when France acquired Saint-Domingue, when buccaneering became unprofitable, and many of the filibusters settled down to begin a respectable life as plantation owners in the
567 new colony. African slaves were soon imported to satisfy the demand
197 for labor. First a few, then thousands a year and increasing thousands,
192 were brought to Saint-Domingue. In all externalities, of which
175 language is one, slaves must yield up their old ways and take on new. The question of interest here is to what extent the Negroes influenced Créole, giving it an "African" character.

The answer, surprising at first, is that the Negro influence was almost negligible.

175 In the first place, Créole was now already a language with a rich
177 vocabulary, all the grammatical equipment, and the necessary regu-
197 larities. The slaves came to the colony from all parts of Africa, and so with widely differing languages. Linguistic maps of Africa indicate the presence of hundreds of dialects up and down the west coast; tribes living fifteen miles apart spoke languages which, although belonging to the same stock, were as different as Spanish and Italian from each other. Owing to the habit of dispersing the slaves, the
• [191] average Negro had no common basis of understanding with his fellow slaves on the same plantation. Practically all white foremen and overseers gave orders in Créole; this within one generation became the *lingua franca* of the plantations, an economic necessity, and socially indispensable.

In the second place, there was in Saint-Domingue no equivalent to the familiar objects of life in Africa. Trees, houses, earth there were, of course, but different kinds of trees, houses, and soil. Economic tasks were performed in a different manner with new techniques and organization. Every outward form of life was foreign to the African background. Even assuming that there had been a common Negro speech, it would have found little to attach itself to in the New World. It should be noted that Negroes likewise made few contribu-

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Similarly in Haitian towns, where the élite

 speak French

197 and where French is taught in the schools, the Créole is less "pure"
• 191 than in the untouched countryside. Even there the language is chang-
193 ing, for there is steadily operating that "law of simplification" which reduces the complications of language when it has only an oral tradition.[13] Abridgment occurs more and more frequently, agglutination is more apparent, and words tend toward the monosyllabic.

191 Everyone in Haiti speaks and understands Créole. Nursemaids
197 teach it to their élite charges, so that children know it from infancy; élite lovers lapse into its expressive phrases in order to say something particularly intimate which might sound sentimental in French; priests must use it in their parish work if they are to be understood at all. Even the élite presidents have found it wise to speak often to the countrypeople in their own tongue. The gendarmes would be helpless in their police work without it, as would the agricultural, health, and other governmental services. It is the language in which all the small business of Haiti is conducted.[14] Ernest Douyon has written brilliantly and revealingly about it:

> If, on the one hand, we have a business language, an official tongue, which is French, our true maternal language, on the other hand, that one which we first lisp, that of the country as a whole (I had almost said "of the true country," for such is the case), that of the city people as well as of countryfolk, that of all families whatever their differences in education, the language one hears not only in humble huts but in luxurious villas, not only in offices or among the masses but also in private apartments and salons, that which for the crudest as for the most finely cultivated minds (even when these latter through snobbery try to deny the fact) is at all times the most naturally expressive, that which perfectly translates our deepest sentiments (jubilation, anger, love, or whatever) precisely when these are most strongly felt, that which all of us, all (with the rarest exceptions) use spontaneously—is Créole! I know that it is not considered proper in polite society, that it sometimes lends a certain impression of vulgarity, that it is not the correct language for distinguished people—when they are in public! But who is the man of propriety, who the society woman, who in private does not continually use Créole?[14]

12. See P. Crouzaud, *Les Poètes créoles* (Toulouse, 1909), p. 18.

[196] 13. It must be noted that in the Vodun service the houngan sometimes speaks in
[193] langge, which is not Créole. It purports to be pure African, but is more likely to be mere gibberish.

14. In his Preface to Price, *op. cit.*, p. v.

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1936) 1937 HV3 Haiti HV3

manifest themselves in large number. The majority of African traits, however, derive from the geographical center of the slaving area, especially from the region of Dahomey. Even the famous word "voodoo" is Dahomean, as all Haitian writers and some Europeans and Americans have recognized. Whatever its meaning in Haiti at the present time, its derivation is clear. It is the *vodun* of the Fón-speaking people,—a word which is best translated as "god." Names of gods, and social and economic institutions, point their origin to this same Dahomean source. This being the case, it may be well to give a general description of the civilization of these Dahomeans, as an aid in the interpretation of the various phases of Haitian peasant life which are to be considered in the ensuing pages.*

In their basic attitude toward life the people of Dahomey have achieved a blend between co-operation and competition. Living in a society which, from before the time of contact with the Europeans, had a pecuniary base, with its resulting competitive drives, the desire to gain wealth both as an end in itself and for the prestige to be derived from its display is outstanding in native psychology. At the same time, and most particularly in the field of production, co-operative endeavor is to be found throughout the kingdom. As with all West African folk, agriculture is the most important element in Dahomean economy. Other forms of production are iron-working, brass-casting, weaving of cotton and raffia cloth, the making of appliquéd designs on ceremonial cloths, and the manufacture of pottery.

A large part of the heavy labor in Dahomey is done by means of the co-operative groups known by the term *dokpwe*. These associations not only clear the fields, but do the strenuous work of erecting walls for houses and compound enclosures and of thatching. When work is to be done, the one who is in need of the services of a *dokpwe* goes to the chief and arranges for the men to work for him on a given day. If he

other one which has been known there for many years, principally in the west, which bears the name of *Vaudoux*. . . . But it is not only as a dance that the *Vaudoux* merits consideration, for it occurs under circumstances which assign to it a place among the institutions where superstition and bizarre practices play a considerable part."[5]

In Dahomey, whence the term has come, *vodun*, as has already been stated, signifies "god" and is a general name for all deities. This source of the word has likewise long been known, as a reading of St. Mery shows:

> "According to the Arada Negroes, the real followers of *Vaudoux* in the colony . . . *Vaudoux* signifies an all-powerful and supernatural being on which depend all the events that come to pass on this globe."[6]

Similarly, de Vaissière[7] quotes with approval a parallel definition from Feytraud, while modern Haitian writers also emphasize its Dahomean origin.[8] This meaning of the word had, however, undergone a change in its new home even during pre-Revolutionary times, for, according to St. Mery, the "all-powerful and supernatural being" had come to be a non-venomous serpent that stood as a symbol "for all those who professed this same doctrine." Today in Mirebalais even this identification is a thing of the past, though the prominence given serpent-worship in Haiti by most writers[9] would make it reasonable to suppose that elsewhere in the island serpents are maintained by priests of the *vodun* cult and play an important role in the rites at which the gods are worshipped. Indeed, one priest from Arcahaie encountered in Mirebalais mentioned the fact that in his own temple he kept such a snake. Yet in our valley no worship of serpents as such was encountered, and there were even those who declared that they had no hesitation in killing any snake, though these brave assertions could not be tested. Serpent-worship in Mirebalais

of the dead must be deferred for a later chapter. Similarly, the discussion of the final element in Haitian religion, the belief in magic, must also be reserved for later pages, assuming here only its separate identity from the worship of the *loa*, with which it has been too often confused.[10]

The most striking element in the *vodou* cult is the manner in which the gods possess their devotees. Despite the fact that this is the aspect of Haitian religion that seems to the casual observer its least restrained and least disciplined, possession occurs according to well-defined rules and under specifically defined circumstances. And since it is through an analysis of possession that the clearest understanding can be reached of the meaning of the *loa* to those who worship them, the manner in which they influence the lives of their devotees and exert their powers for good or evil, possession may be treated at some length.[11]

When a person is possessed for the first time, the spirit which is said to animate him is known as a *loa bossal*, an "untamed" god. The word *bossal*, which in the early days was applied to newly arrived Africans,[12] has always been a term of contumely, and today the same feeling-tone is continued through the belief that since all things in the universe are subject to observable regulation, and animals and plants and human beings must all live according to these rules, the *loa*, as members of society, may not manifest the unrestrained and often dangerous traits of unpredictable behavior which characterize them before they have been "baptized" and thus brought under proper control.

Baptism of a deity most often occurs when a boy or girl is possessed by a family *loa*, especially if it is one which gives that knowledge of healing and divination meant by the word *connaissance*. Sometimes, though not always, this possession is violent, and the prospective devotee rages about the house, destroying whatever comes to hand. On occasion, since custom frowns on possession at a ceremony not given by the family of

L: Handwritten 3-4, 6 (1936) 1937 SV3 HAI SV3
Mirebalais

serpe to "feed" his *loa* in order to satisfy it, for it is more important to give offerings to the spirits than to dance for them. He therefore either quietly prepares a sacrifice of cereals and liquor in his own room or sends money home to that his *loa* may be "fed" at the family habitation, and his absence explained to it.[24]

When voodoo deities are discussed in Mirebalais, most often two "companies" of them are mentioned, the Rada and the Pétro "squads." In one list of gods that was obtained, the word *Rada*, derived from the name of the ancient principality of Allada in Dahomey, called forth the explanation "qui vent *dire Dahomey* — which is to say, Dahomey," though it should be made clear that neither the words *Rada* nor *Dahomey* are any longer recognized in Haiti as place-names, being today simply qualifying designations of *loa*. There are regional differences in the number and ranking of other categories of gods that hold no important place in Mirebalais. The existence of these other categories is, of course, well known, and one person referred to "the seventeen and twenty-one classes of *loa*," of which, however, only the following were named: Rada, Pétro, Dahomey, Guinée, Congo, Nago, Ibo, and Wangol. Of these the Congo and the Ibo gods are well known, though their worship is chiefly restricted to individual families, while the Nago and Dahomey categories, though significant from the point of view of indicating African origins, are most commonly grouped under the term *Rada*. Guinée also occasionally figures in worship as carried on in individual families, but this term is more often understood as a general designation for all *loa* outside the Rada, Nago, Congo, and Ibo groupings and for certain Pétro gods. Wangol derives from the geographical entity Angola.

From comparatively early times the impression has been given that certain of these classes of gods perform only good, and others evil. Nothing could be further from the truth than this attempt to read European concept into Haitian ideology.

d'Angole) is obviously Angola, while the designations Ibo and Congo speak for themselves. Simbi is a Congo deity, as are Bumba and Bamba. Finally, in the categories of gods important in the regions of Haiti other than Mirebalais are the Lou Sindgal, and the Lou Mondong, both of which are names of African tribes mentioned in the early literature as contributing to the Haitian slave population. But all recognition of geographical names as such has disappeared, and they have been transmuted into designations of gods.

Outstanding here is the word *vodou* itself, already indicated as Dahomean, where it is a general term for "deity," though in Haiti its use has become more restricted and the symbol for deity has become the word *loa*, or *mystère*. The origin of the designation *loa*, which has been claimed to be a corruption of the French *roi*, is debatable. It is true that in West Africa certain deities are regarded as kings, yet this derivation is not convincing in view of the fact that in the *vodou* cult as found in Haiti at present or as described in earlier sources the *loa* are never generally referred to as kings, something that tends to strengthen statements that have been made to the effect that the word comes from the language of a Congo tribe.[1] The source of the root *hun-*, which figures in the terms *hungan*, *hunsi*, and *humfort*, is clear, for in Dahomey it is a synonym for the word *vodun*. *Hungan* and *hunsi* are even more definitely traceable than *humfort*, since the ending *-gan*, the Dahomean word for chief, designates the priest as the chief of the spirits, and *-si*, "wife," is employed in the sense of "wife of the god" or his devotee, in Africa as in Haiti. The female counterpart of *hungan*, *mambo*, cannot be definitely assigned, but may be of Bantu derivation, and is certainly an African word.

Other uncontaminated Africanisms can be discerned in the attitude of the Haitians toward the *loa* and in the ceremonies for them. One of the most characteristic is the inheritance of *loa* in families, a direct survival of the belief which not only

[P 9]

2. Man and the Universe: Vodoun

175 179 191 When the African slaves stepped ashore in the New World they brought with them highly developed religious beliefs and attitudes toward life. But Africa was a continent of many cultures and nations, and its belief systems varied. The Congo African did not have the same view of the natural and supernatural as the Senegalese, for example; and even neighboring peoples such as the Ibos, the Yorubas, and the Mahis did not have common religious traditions. Yet in the strange new land that was Haiti, the common elements in their religious beliefs were accented. In time a new composite religious system emerged. It was called Vodoun.

175 179 191 The preponderance of Africans in Haiti came from the region of Dahomey, Togoland, Nigeria, and the Congo River basin. Among them the Dahomeans were the most numerous, and it was they who provided the framework for the Afro-Haitian religious system.

192 The word Vodoun itself is Dahomean in origin. Among the Fon-speaking people of West Africa it signified "spirit," or "deity." In Haiti the word came to be applied in a general sense to all the activities of cult life, from the ritual of the "temple" to the songs and dances, though in some old songs it still applies specifically to the idea of a supernatural spirit. However, the Congo word *loa* came to be used to designate the deities.

191 194 197 In a literal sense, Vodoun in Haiti consists of the rites, beliefs, and practices of the Vodoun cult, built around the similar religious systems of the Dahomeans and the Nagos. In a wider sense it applies to similar but distinct ritual activities of other cults. The Ibo-Kanga rites and dances are in a specific sense "not quite" Vodoun. The rites in the Congo-Guinée cult group—made up of Congo, Bambara, "Guinée," and miscellaneous elements—have separate practices and deities of their own, and are often regarded as not Vodoun at all. Yet the term Vodoun is used in a generic sense to include all these rites, and examination of the beliefs and activities of these cult groups shows that they have drawn in considerable measure upon a common inheritance.

[See Courlander, Haiti Singing, p. 7. Cf. P349, Category 116.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

The yam 244 171 192

itself was transplanted from Africa, where in old times as well as in modern it was a staff of life among those who lived by agriculture. The word "yam" is known throughout large parts of Africa, crossing language lines and forests. It signifies the big root on which the African is so dependent, and it also has the general meaning of "eat." In Senegal it is called *nyami*, while across the width of Africa and in the upper Nile region it is called *nyam*.

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In Haiti the yam is a tie with the past and a symbol of fertility. When the yams are plentiful, there is food for the winter months and a sense of well-being. When the yam crop is poor, there is insecurity and even hunger. Whatever occurs, lurking in the background is the shadow of the family ancestors, for it is they who have the power to enhance the crops or blight them. This is the concept around which the mangé yam is built.

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The annual harvest feast, on the twenty-fifth of November, is rooted in the need for placating the ancestors, so that the dead will insure the fertility of the fields. Before the feast, no yams may be eaten, for the crop must be "baptized" first. Should this rule be violated the yams will spoil and those who eat them will become sick. The precise form of the mangé yam varies from region to region. Sometimes it is held on the premises of the cult chief for the community at large. More traditionally it is held on the family *habitation*, with a houngan in attendance. It is felt that an important obligation rests upon those who have wandered away from the homestead to return for the occasion. For the fate of the family depends to a large degree upon the successful appeal to the vast host of the ancestral dead, and the solidarity of the living in this effort is regarded as vital. Even if one belongs to a Christian sect which proscribes Vodoun, he is obligated and ready to come, for the welfare of the family is paramount. Catholics, Adventists, and Protestants alike participate. As the Haitians say, it is an affair for all who eat yams, and that means all Haitians.

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Yams are washed and prepared for eating during the service. They are cut in small portions, placed in dishes or calabash bowls, and offered to the dead, who have prime rights. All categories of the dead are fed—those who are remembered, those who can be recalled only by name, and those whose names are forgotten. The dead of Haiti are invoked, then the dead of Africa. The maraja dead are fed from separate gourds or bowls, and a special table is set for the ancient dead who move slowly because of their age or infirmities, and who may take a long while to arrive at the mangé. A share of the yams is offered to the family loa. Then the members of the family receive symbolic portions. There is singing, drumming, and dancing, and sometimes ritual baths are taken. Afterward, when the yam feast is ended, the crops may be gathered, stored, and eaten.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

in construction but stands a little shorter. Two Pétro drums of slightly different sizes and tones, called *baka* and *ti baka*, in combination with one or more rattles, an iron percussion device, and sometimes an assot, make up an orchestra. 534

The *assot* is a small board which is beaten with sticks. Often these sticks are flat, and sometimes a small wooden bench is substituted for the board.

Dances for which the Congo or Pétro drums are used include Pétro, Kitta, Bumba, Salongo, Bambarra, Moundongue, Congo Lnangue, Pastorel, Mousondi, and Moutchétché. The drum for the Congo Lnangue dance formerly was somewhat taller and narrower than the present Pétro drum, but the distinction is no longer maintained. 534 535

The Juba, or Martinique, drum is similar to the Pétro or Congo but wider and squatter. It is laid on its side for playing, the drummer sitting astride and pressing his heel against the drumhead to mute it or change the pitch. For Juba or related music, a second man, called the *catalier* (the one who *catas*), beats sticks against the body of the instrument behind the drummer.

In the northern part of Haiti one also finds the Zesse drum, used exclusively for the Zesse dance. It is cylindrical, about thirty inches high, and is played in an upright position. A wire is stretched across the goatskin head in the manner of a snare drum. Like all drums with goatskin heads, it is beaten with the naked hands. 184 534

A large two-headed drum called the *tymbale* is used as a work drum for labor societies and for processions, and in combination with other drums it sometimes appears in the Juba and secular Congo dances. The heads are mounted on hoops, which are held fast by lacing. The drum is carried by a rope slung over the shoulder or around the neck. Sometimes an assot striking board is affixed to the body of the drum. 534 [461] [535] [482]

A miniature copy of the tymbale is called a *tambourine*. It is used in carnival dances, notably the Mascaron. Carried by a cord which hangs around the neck, it is played with two diminutive sticks. Drumming is primarily a man's prerogative, but during carnival days women or girls may be seen playing the *tambourine*. [462]

In southwestern Haiti, and possibly elsewhere, special drums are used for the Manuba dance. The Manuba drum is about a foot long, cylindrical, and about five inches in diameter, with two drumheads held together with cords. A pair of these drums is joined by a rope about two feet long, which is hung around the neck so that the two drums are in convenient playing position on the chest. 184 534 535

Twin drums which are hung over the knee are known as *marasas*— 534 [192]
The Haitian word for "twins."

[The Congo and Pétro Pantheons]

 776

WANGOL (King of Angola). He also appears in other rites.

YAOMBÉ, or MAYAOMBÉ. This name is a tribal designation, referring to the Mayaombés of the Congo region.

WANGOL DLEAU (Wangol of the Water)

MOUNDONGUE. Often considered to be a "hard" loa. Ritual service to him includes, on special occasions, the cutting off of dogs' ears and tails. He is fond of dogs and is benevolent toward them. The name derives from that of a tribe of the upper Congo region. [782]

TI MOUNDONGUE. Said to be a "son" of Moundongue.

MOUNDONGUE MOUSAILLE. A member of Moundongue's family.

BAIACOU, or BÈLÈCOU. A loa identified with the morning star, also called Baiacou. There is also a town in Dahomey by this name.

GANDA, or BAGANDA, also called Nèg' Ganda. A deity taking the name of the Ganda people of Uganda.

CONGO YAMINGAN. A benevolent loa associated with curing and protecting the sick. Certain curative medicine bundles are called *yamingans*. [755]

MACAYA BUMBA, sometimes called Caya. He takes his name from the Bumba people of the upper Congo River region. The Bumbas are near neighbors of the Moundongues.

MANYO BUMBA. One of the Bumba family.

MARIANI MOUNDONGUE. One of the Moundongue family.

ROI LOANGUE (King of Loango). Refers to the old African kingdom of that name.

NANCHOU. A warrior deity.

AVÉLÉKÉTÉ. Known primarily in northern Haiti. [784]

DAN PÉTRO. A rather malevolent loa, from whom the Pétro cult takes its name. The mangé for Dan Pétro is a pig. Early observers speculated that Dan Pétro was originally a powerful houngan of prerevolutionary days.[23] [782] [783]

AVIDA PÉTRO. A Pétro version of the Vodoun Ayida Wèdo.

BAKULU BAKA, known in some regions by the name Pinga Maza. He is a malevolent spirit who "eats"—*i.e.*, destroys—people. Some informants are inclined to believe that Bakulu and Pinga are separate loa, both of a variety akin to baka or démons.

BAKULU BARAK. Related to Bakulu Baka.

BAMBARRA TAIBA. He is visualized as a sea crab. *Taille bas* in Creole means "low hips" and is used to describe a dance posture. The surname Taiba therefore may describe the movements of this loa as he moves about like a crab. [92]

BOLISI BOLISA

BRÈD GÉNÉRAL, or GÉNÉRAL BRÈD. He is enormously large and ferocious in appearance. A special loa of the country people. Although stern, he is fond of children. He is symbolized as an owl; his home is in the chardene tree. His physical description suggests that he may be a deification of the epic folklore character Brise Montaigne, or Brèsk Mountèèn.

CHAMBRAGAN

CONGO JÈGOUX (Congo Red Eyes). A malevolent male spirit. Loa with red eyes are always of bad character.

CONGO MAYOMBE, or MAYOMBE. A malevolent spirit.

CONGO ZÈRBÈ, or CONGO ZÈRBÈ (Congo of the Plains). Malevolent, fierce, and

23 [Saint-Méry, De la danse, p. 48. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 16. —Analyst]

[P. 340]

5. Translations of Songs in Chapter 19

533 539 Many of the Creole song texts included with the music in chapter 19 are translated and explained in earlier chapters. The following examples are translations of song texts in chapter 19 to which there is no reference elsewhere in the book.

EXAMPLE 133

Èzilie Wèdo, *ago*, oh!
The Creoles say like this,
I am not in Africa any more,
I shall do as I please!
The Creoles say like this,
I am not in Africa any more,
I shall do as I please, oh!
I being myself,
I take myself away,
I do what I please, oh!

[176] [192] (Èzilie Wèdo is the name of a loa. She boasts that she comes to Haiti and returns to Africa whenever she wishes. The word *ago* is exclamatory and means something like "I am here.")

EXAMPLE 134

The Forty Days [Lent], three women, three virgins,
Prayers for the saints, prayers for the walking saints!
Prayers for the loa Saint Antoine, oh, we ask your pardon!

EXAMPLE 135

In Africa are loa, oh!
Èvo èvo, hounsi kanzo!
Èvo èvo, hounsi kanzo!
In Africa are loa, *ababa!*

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Cousin, oh, cousin, oh,
Cousin, don't take cousin, oh, cousin!

[436] (A *gourdain* is one-quarter of a gourde, or the equivalent of five cents in United States money. *Dé gourdain* is ten cents.)

[198] EXAMPLE 141 consists entirely of ritual language.

EXAMPLE 142

Call Damballa, call Domici, call Damballa Wèdo,
Damballa, call Damballa Wèdo, Damballa.

[196] (Damballa and Domici are the names of loa.)

EXAMPLE 143

Ibo, I am a big man, oh!
Ibo, I am a big man, oh!
Ibo, I am the patriarch, oh, I am the patriarch, oh,
I am the chief of my house!

[196] (Ibo is the name of a loa, from whose point of view the song is being sung. Ibo is stating his seniority in his house, or family, for there are other loa related to him. The word *grand* in Creole, as used here, is [192] difficult to translate. It means good or elder, or both. A *grand famille* is the oldest in the extended family, and usually carries the connotation of head or chief.)

EXAMPLE 144

Ibo Ibo é, Samardi Kama!
Etc.

[196] (Samardi Kama is the name of a loa of the Ibo family. The song consists of a repetition of his name, with variations.)

EXAMPLE 145

Ibo Ibo é, Marianni é!
Etc., with variations.

[196] (This is a song to the loa Marianni, of the Ibo family. Except for his name, in various combinations, there are no words.)

[198] [189] EXAMPLE 146 is a song for the making of magic. It is entirely in ritual language.

EXAMPLE 147

Call Osange, call Labosan in the water!
Osange, oh, call Osange in the water!
Osange, oh, call Osange in the water!

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(A song for the loa Osange. Literally, the song specifies Osange "in the water," but the sense is "under the water," where the loa reside. 533 539 [192]

EXAMPLE 148

Yabofé my dear, they don't need me!
I will see [enter through] the center post if they *djaguél*
Yabofé my dear, they don't need me!
I will see the center post if they *djaguél*
Ferei doesn't see me any more!
I will see the center post if they *djaguél*

(Yabofé and Ferei are the names of loa. Even though addressed as "Yabofé my dear," it is Yabofé who is speaking. If one thinks of it as "Dear Yabofé says," the shifting point of view becomes less confusing. The term *djagué* indicates a kind of tension and excitement which builds up before possessions take place. Yabofé says that if the people *djagué* he is prepared to enter through the center post.) [176]

EXAMPLE 149

Take me (to go), oh!
To the house, oh!

EXAMPLE 150

Damballa! Damballa!
Damballa Wèdo Damballa!
Damballa, *enhé!*
Sacred Damballa! Damballa!

(The song is an invocation to the loa Damballa. The word *enhé* is exclamatory.) [182] [192]

EXAMPLE 151

Ibo Lélé, oh!

(Ibo Lélé is the name of a loa.)

EXAMPLE 152

We thread our way [like a snake],
Damballa Wèdo is a snake, oh!

(The "threading" is a description of conventionalized dance movements suggesting the crawling of a snake. The loa Damballa is identified as a snake.) [535] [176]

EXAMPLE 153

Lobo Sindé asks for wind, é!

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Your share, *mayouse*!
Find your woman, *mayouse*!
Mayou-*youse*!

(*Paillette* means "all decorated up," "fancy," "in carnival regalia." It is also the name of a dance, as is *mayouse*, used here as an exclamation.) [192] [535]

EXAMPLE 168 was said to be in "Spanish."

EXAMPLE 169

Go to your mother's house,
Go to your mother's house,
Go to your mother's house, my dear,
Do not come and give me an argument!
Go to your mother's house, my dear,
Go to your mother's house, my dear,
Go to your mother's house, my dear,
And do not give me an argument!
Little girl who doesn't know how to wash and iron,
Go home to your mother,
Little girl who doesn't know how to wash and iron,
Go home to your mother!
Angelico, Angelico, go to your mother's house!
Angelico, Angelico, go to your mother's house!

EXAMPLE 172

Oh I'm not a mule,
Oh I'm not a mule, oh!
The farmer takes me to carry his coffee!

(A good-natured protest song of the kind often sung by coumbites.) [496]

EXAMPLE 173 has no text. It is exclamatory throughout.

EXAMPLE 174

É Laiza, where should I go, Laiza é!
Laiza, the children are hypocrites, oh!
Etc.

EXAMPLE 175

Ewa Mambo Susan, I am cutting trees
To take away the honey!

EXAMPLE 176

Adieu kining kining kining,
Oh I say my prayer to God to send rain!

(The first line is ritual language, but it appears to have been originally a phrase recited by the petit' savane.) [198]

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539 EXAMPLE 178

Osan, oh, Lèlè, oh!
Osan, ah, Lèlè, oh!
They take the asson of the loa and serve evil, oh!
Let it sink!

[626] (The song criticizes someone who has become a houngan and has used his
[976] powers wrongly. Osan Lèlè is the loa to whom the complaint is being addressed, or he may be the one lodging the complaint.)

EXAMPLE 179

Farmer, call the loa for me, *ago-é!*
Farmer, call the loa for me now,
Call the loa for me now,
Gèdé has engaged me!

[976] (Gèdé is a loa. *Habitant* signifies "farmer" or "peasant" but could be trans-
[192] lated as "countryman.")

EXAMPLE 180

Boulicha, I arrive,
See my misfortune!
I will cut them, I have no knife!
Boulicha Nago, I will cut them, *malovié!*

[976] (The loa Boulicha Nago announces his arrival and complains that people have mistreated him. He says he will avenge himself without a knife.
[198] *Malovié* is ritual language.)

EXAMPLE 181

I am going to see the hounsi bossale, oh,
I am going to see if they are in accord with me.
Etc.

EXAMPLE 182

I cry honor before my loa's altar,
Cry honor, and no one replies!
I cry honor before my loa's altar,
Cry honor, and no one replies!
All who speak well [of me], I am here, I will listen, oh!
All who speak evil [of me], I am here, I will listen to them!
They sign my name, Allala, but they do not sign my feet,
I ask where will they see me!

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Notes

Chapter 1: *The Making of the Haitian* (*pp. 1–7*)

[1]The name Ganda survives in Haiti as the name of a deity.

[2]Herskovits, in *The Myth of the Negro Past* (p. 47), provides a tabulation of raw data found in the manifests recorded for slaves shipped to Virginia between 1710 and 1769: 20,564 slaves were reported shipped from "Africa," 3,652 from Gambia, 6,777 from "Guinea," 9,224 from Calabar, 3,860 from Angola, and 1,011 from Madagascar. Of those shipped from the island of Madagascar, 473 were listed as coming from Mozambique.

[3]Bartolomé de Las Casas.

Chapter 2: *Man and the Universe: Vodoun* (*pp. 8–18*)

[1]See Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 7.

[2]Schweinfurth in *The Heart of Africa*, II, 31, says: "In Loango all exorcists and conjurors are called *ganga*." Leo Wiener, in *Africa and the Discovery of America* (Philadelphia: Innes and Sons, 1922), III, 32, reports: "Forms of *ganga* have in Bantu the meaning 'medicine' but also 'magic'—such as Nyika *ganga* and Kongo *nganga*."

[3]Gorer, *Africa Dances*, p. 129; Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 208 ff.

[4]From the Fon *houn-so* or *houn-su*. Among the Arada of Dahomey a *houn-su* was regarded as a spiritual wife of the deity. She was a servant of the cult temple, and in some instances a wife of the cult priest.

[5]Translated from the French of Aubin, *En Haiti*, pp. 57–59.

[6]Deren, in her *Divine Horsemen* (pp. 119 ff.), gives an excellent report of a service for Agwé in a boat at sea. Aubin (*op. cit.*, p. 108) seems to have given the first description of this service at sea for the loa Agwé.

[7]Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. 119.

[8]*Ibid.*, p. 123. Leyburn advances the theory that Vodoun developed during this period as a result of the vacuum left by the Church. Although the Church did in effect leave the field to the African cults, one must assume that the Arada, Congo, and other cults were already organized and possessed of great vitality before the Haitian revolution. Implicit evidence points to a continuity of cult-life from the earliest days of the African on Haitian soil. There are no statistics to reveal the extent of cult membership at the end of the eighteenth century, but the content and form of Vodoun today are so overwhelmingly African that it is difficult to think of Haitian cult activity as the product of a renaissance.

Chapter 3: *The Loa: Gods of the Haitian Mountains* (*pp. 19–39*)

[1]The term *vodoun*, used in this precise sense, conforms to the original Fon (Dahomean) usage. The term *hounsi*, also of Fon origin, signifies "spirit" and belongs to the same root

as *houngfor*, *houngi*, *houngfuicon*, *houngto*, etc. *Mystère* is of obvious French origin. *Loa* is probably from the Bantu, but it could be from the Yoruba.

[3]Various methods and formulas are employed in "tying" a loa. Sometimes making the sign of the cross is regarded as adequate, or the saying of a prayer. In "The Vodun Service in Northern Haiti" (*American Anthropologist*, XLII, 242-243), George Eaton Simpson reports that the "tying" of a loa sometimes results in a contest between the individual concerned and his houngan. If the houngan wants the *mait' tête* to come in, he must neutralize the ritual barriers the "horse" has put in the way. "One procedure for bringing on possession in a servant who has tried to 'tie' his chief god is for the priest to stand in front of the person whom he suspects, make the sign of the cross, and strike him on the forehead three times with a sacrificial stone. Usually these blows are hard enough to make blood spurt. The servant then begs the pardon of the angry god, and as soon as possible he unties the knots in his handkerchief [the method he has used for 'tying' his loa]."

[4]Herskovits, *Dahomey*.

CHAPTER 4: *Death Rites* (*pp. 30-40*)

[1]Maurice Delafosse, *L'Ame nègre*. Translation from *Free France*, special issue No. 4. French Press and Information Service, New York, June, 1945.

[2]Leo A. Verwilghen, in booklet describing peoples of the Kwango region, accompanying *Music of the Western Congo*, recordings issued by the Ethnic Folkways Library.

[3]Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu*, pp. 88-89.

[4]W. M. Eiselen and I. Schapera, "Religious Beliefs and Practices," in Schapera, *The Bantu-speaking Tribes of South Africa*, p. 250.

[5]Translated from the French of Aubin, *En Haïti*, p. 212.

[6]Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, pp. 213-214.

[7]Hall and others, *Haitian Creole*, American Anthropological Association, Memoir No. 54, pp. 188-189.

[8]Simpson, "Four Vodun Ceremonies," *Journal of American Folklore*, April-June, 1946, pp. 155-162.

[9]As translated by Courlander from Simpson's Creole text, *ibid.*, p. 156. The preceding paragraph is from p. 155.

[10]Translated by Courlander from the Creole of Simpson's text.

[11]This and the preceding paragraph are from Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

[12]These shells, as indicated elsewhere, are part of the paraphernalia of the Vodoun priest and appear to be an inheritance from the priests of the Fa cult of Dahomey. The divining shells are usually thrown on the ground in fours, and the readings depend upon combinations of "heads and tails." The manner of throwing the shells, as well as the number used, corresponds closely with the Haitian secular gambling game *mayemba* (see Appendix 2), though the purpose is obviously different. In some priestly rites in Haiti, ashes rather than the customary shells are used for divining.

[13]Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

[14]*Ibid.*, p. 161.

[15]Herskovits, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

[16]Herskovits (*ibid.*) notes that persons who die of smallpox, lightning, and certain other phenomena are not buried in coffins. Some of my informants indicated this to be their understanding also, but they said that the dead are buried without coffins for strictly economic reasons as well.

[17]Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

[18]Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. 156.

[19]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 398.

[20]*Ibid.*, pp. 397-398.

[21]Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, p. 214.

[22]Hall and others, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

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to command the forced labor of serfs, had to develop a new technique for securing manual labor. Legislation soon recognized the new state of affairs by enactments which kept distinct *la grande culture* and *la petite culture*. The former had to do with the production of sugar and coffee, from which the republic derived its wealth; the latter with small farming. *La petite culture* was simple cultivation of whatever the small owner wished to raise. Large-scale culture, on the other hand, became rather complicated. 175 471 24

Owners of great estates had to guide them only their experience of slave days and of serfdom under Toussaint and Dessalines. Now that both were gone, few planters were wealthy enough to pay wages for day labor; a new variation was needed. It was forthcoming in the *métayer* system—a crop-sharing arrangement with tenants closely resembling that which prevails today in some parts of the United States. The owner leased his estate in large or small plots to tenants. Half the income went to the landlord and half to the tenant; but the landlord must furnish the sugar mill and other necessary machinery where cane was raised. Laws were passed to give a measure of security to the proprietor. The contract between him and the tenant (*fermier*)[26] must be signed before a civil official; the engagement must extend through the harvesting of one crop; tenants even then might not abandon their contracts except after notice of three months, with a declaration to the local official. 175 427 471 [675]

Punishments were stipulated for the breaking of contracts. A tenant who had made an agreement and then abandoned the *habitation*, even for a visit elsewhere, without a certificate attesting his regularity, might be imprisoned for eight days the first time, a month the second, and three months the third, such imprisonment to be spent in hard labor on public works. Any disputes arising between plantation owners and tenants were to be taken before the local justice. If they threatened to develop into serious cases, the justice was to notify the commandant of the nearest important town. A person who fomented disturbance of such agreements (the Haitian equivalent of "labor agitators," style 1810) might be imprisoned for a year, as also his accomplices. Commandants of each arrondissement must put down disorder as soon as requested by landlords, tenant farmers, or overseers. They must likewise make frequent patrols of 175 675 686 692

26. The word "fermier" must not be translated simply as "farmer"; the idea of a contract and a rental fee is implicit in the French word. [192]

175 A cultivator who loafs on his assigned job shall spend twenty-four
566 hours in jail for his first offense and lose his wages; for a second
671 offense he must work on public projects. Field labor shall be regu-
24 larly carried on from Monday morning until Friday evening, except for legal holidays; work begins at dawn, continues except for a half-hour at breakfast until noon, stops then for two hours, and is
[943] once more resumed until sunset. Pregnant females are to be assigned to light work only, and after the fourth month of pregnancy need
[846] do no field work. Four months after delivery, a mother is to return to field work, but with three hours a day less than before, until she has weaned her child. Disobedience and insult to overseers are punishable by imprisonment. Since Saturdays, Sundays, and holi-
[527] days are free, there is to be no dancing or any other festivity by night or day from Monday through Friday.

175 On each estate is to be a hierarchy of directors, all of whom the
671 workers shall obey. In ascending order, these men are drivers (or
473 squad foremen),[40] jobbers, sublessees, lessees, proprietors and man-
24 agers, overseers of districts, and police.

In establishing a system of remuneration Boyer kept the accus-
175 tomed method of allotting a proportion of the marketed crop to the
465 workers in lieu of hourly or daily wages. In any season from a
24 quarter to a half of the gross receipts of the estates was to go to the laborers, the exact proportion in any year to be determined by the government. It was assumed by Boyer and Inginac that there would be an added inducement to work if the laborers' share were distributed not equally, but rather in proportion to the merit and worth of the individual, these evaluations to be made by the recommendation of overseers.

175 Enforcement of the Code was placed in the hands of local justices
692 and the army. Soldiers were to be assigned to each plantation, re-
24 ceiving their living from it, in return preserving order and routine. Although the whip was once more prohibited, steady labor might still be enforced by other means; the law definitely stated that soldiers were to discipline the lazy, the lawless, and the vagrant. Local justices were to deal with any civil difficulties arising in the execution

[192] 40. The word "driver" was commonly used in West Indian slave colonies with no other meaning than that attached to the word when one speaks of a man "driving" his horses. It is not necessary to beat a horse to make it go properly; a word of direction may suffice.

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175 563 564 [19] ions. Intermarriages between persons of widely different color became extremely rare, being regarded by many lighter Haitians with actual disgust. Everyone with social pretensions wanted to be whiter. Dr. Brown stated it baldly: "The pure negro seeks to ally himself to the griffe,[59] the griffe to the mulatto, the mulatto to the quateroon, the latter to a mustif, and the mustif, having but an untraceable tinge of African blood in his organization, is uproariously indignant if he is accused of having any at all."[60] An educated young black of several generations of free parents was scornfully turned down by a lighter-skinned woman considerably his inferior in breeding and wealth because her children would be darker than herself—"*petits enfants griffes,*" as she put it. The prejudices of colored people against blacks was almost as great, if not quite as intense, as the former prejudice of whites against colored people in colonial times. No one forgot that there had been black as well as colored freedmen in the colony; but it was much simpler for people of color to claim their long career as élite than for blacks to do so.

The attitude of upper-class Haitians toward whites in the midst of all this color prejudice was an interesting mixture. On the one hand, all good Haitians professed to dread a return of the whites; on the other, they welcomed white businessmen in the country. In a certain respect the whites were regarded much as were the Jews of Europe [673] in the Middle Ages: they were wealthy—and therefore legitimate [671] objects of pillage, necessary evils for the sake of finance. Theft from a [641] white man by government action was a service to the state. Laws were consequently varied from time to time with the sole purpose of profiting from a foreigner's position. True, the trader might protest [423] to his home government, but if England or the United States took a strong stand, Haiti could always retreat; if those governments did not stand firm, Haiti had gained. In the Haitian courts the whites had little show, for Article 38 of the Constitution forbade them to own real estate or to become citizens; they might not even hold a lease for more than ten years; and they might not marry Haitian women.

Nevertheless, the analogy with mediaeval Jews falls down at one vital point: whites were not viewed with contempt. Quite the con-

[192] 59. A term denoting three parts in four of Negro blood. This term as well as "mustif" goes back to colonial white society; neither was, or is, used by cultivated Haitians.

60. Brown, *op. cit.*, II, 283–284.

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believe. It stuck in people's minds. Since Sir Spenser's time tourists to Haiti have habitually spent a few hours ashore, heard drumbeats from the hills, and shuddered deliciously as they conjured up images of weird goings-on—black magic, licentious dances, and frenetic orgies. Novelists during the past half-century have spun their tales full of local color, while "serious" authors have made small fortunes out of pseudo-scientific books with just enough fact mingled with their lush imaginings to give "an air of similitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative." Their language runs into such purple phrases as "blood-maddened, sex-maddened, god-maddened,"[1] to describe the religious exaltation of the people at a Vodun service. Under this constant rain of misrepresentation, Haitians who care for the good opinion of other nations have become extremely sensitive on the subject of the folk religion. Many of them deny its existence; others speak of it as something beneath their attention. The more they try to cover it over, however, with silence and professed contempt, the more mysteriously fascinating it becomes to the foreign visitor. The tourist who goes to Paris expects to see the Eiffel Tower, whatever its aesthetic faults; the tourist in Haiti wishes to see, without quite knowing what he means by the term, "a Voodoo dance." No amount of scientific writing about the real character of Vodun will change the popular misconception. For every reader of accurate ethnographical or anthropological treatises on Vodun[2] there are hundreds who feast morbidly on sensational books.

Haitian Vodun is not the same as the hoodoo of American Negroes.[3] The word is etymologically the same, whether American Voodoo, Haitian Vodun, French Vaudoux, or Spanish judu (whence our "hoodoo"): all derive from a Dahomean (West African) word signifying "god" or "spirit."[4] It is the generic term for all deities.

1. This phrase is taken from W. B. Seabrook, *The Magic Island* (New York, 1929), p. 42, but might easily have come from half a dozen other journalistic descriptions.

2. Particularly recommended are Melville J. Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley* (New York, 1937), and Dr. Jean Price-Mars, *Ainsi parle l'oncle* (Port-au-Prince, 1928).

3. See Herskovits, *op. cit.*, pp. 139 ff.

4. The *Encyclopædia Britannica*, in a surprisingly superficial and brief article, gives a singular etymology to "Voodoo," tracing it to the Swiss canton of Vaud, where in the Middle Ages a heterodox faith sprang up which had to be practiced in secret. The implication is that any secret religion might be called "Vaud-oia," or "Voodoo." Evidently the author of the encyclopædia article had made no serious investigation of the subject; most modern dictionaries, on the other hand, indicate the Dahomean etymology.

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learn the properties of plants, both for healing and for poison. Except for the belief in spiritual beings, this folk knowledge would hardly have been classed as religious, for it was useful in every phase of daily life; the classification is that of the anthropologist, not of the simple black. 171 174

If Dahomean beliefs prevailed over others of African origin, it was chiefly because of the numerical preponderance of Dahomeans in the colony, together with the popularity of their religious dances. The Dahomean spirits or gods were Vodun; the dance in which the worshiper sought the inspiration of the spirits was a Vodun dance. Like all but the highly organized religions, this one recognized the validity of other beliefs. Its practitioners were not bigots. No hierarchy existed to keep out new accretions. Imperceptibly these were added to the original basic form: here an Arada spirit, there a Congolese prayer, and in many instances a Catholic saint, until the composite Vodun religion began to take shape. [116] [196] [535]

There is no evidence that during colonial times Vodun was ever considered important by the white ruling class—certainly not as a faith. To most planters the word was the name for a vigorous dance. Judging from Moreau de Saint-Méry's description it was held openly enough, at times being witnessed by the whites as a sort of nocturnal diversion. Moreau knew, as did other whites, that there were "superstitious beliefs" connected with it, yet the offhand use of the word "superstition" was indication enough that the beliefs were not regarded as important. We have seen, however, what profitable use the slaves were able to make of the apparent innocence of their dances. When the idea of revolt began to germinate among them, gathering on each plantation at least once a week they had ample opportunity to hatch their plans. It is known that the campaign for revolt was developed partly under the stimulus of the Negro Boukman, a *houngan* or priest of Vodun. By means of drumbeats, which to the whites merely pounded out the rhythm for dancing but had for centuries been a means of communication at long distance in parts of West Africa, that ripening plot was telegraphed from one plantation to another. Even more important, perhaps, was the unity of feeling made possible, despite all incoherence of tradition and language, by the Vodun background. 174 535 196 [192] [114] 175 669 567 202 793 771 114

The revolt of half a million slaves was a success. This fact has been rather too calmly accepted by historians of Saint-Domingue, who 175 669 668

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A gentle spirit may cause great harm to a person who neglects his commands, while a spirit whose power makes possible the most malignant magic may bring good fortune to his devotee. By conceiving his spirits as in manner and desires resembling himself, the Haitian can understand his little universe without subjecting himself to the bewilderment which faces a simple Christian trying to reconcile an all-loving Father with the obvious evil He allows on earth. 771 776

One must approach Vodun without the religious preconceptions of Christianity or Judaism. Suspending our notions of orthodoxy, monotheism, sin, heaven, and hell, we may examine more closely the creed suggested above, in an endeavor to round out its real meaning to the Haitian.

"I believe in gods and spirits . . ." The white man would recognize most easily among the Haitian's multiple gods the God of Christianity whom every Vodun worshiper confesses. It is this God who is meant in the homely expression of native acceptance of one's lot: "*Bon Dieu bon*"—the good God is really good, however remote. Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are likewise acknowledged, although it seems probable that they do not touch the hearts of people as much as the Great Master. The Blessed Virgin, on the other hand, is very real and near—so real, in fact, that she is sometimes actually merged with a spirit of African origin who has many of the Virgin's storied characteristics. Certain angels and a select group of Christian saints have made a special appeal and so found their niche in Vodun; others are not denied but merely ignored because the Haitian is not well acquainted with them.

To the spirits (one hesitates to use such misleading words as "gods" or "divinities") not drawn from Christianity the name "loa" is applied. There seem in general to be two classes of these: those who have an African origin, and those with a Haitian background only. The former group is called "Rada," the latter "Pétro." The word Rada is derived from the principality of Allada in Dahomey, and would seem thus to indicate that all the Rada loa were Dahomean; this, however, is definitely not the case. Numerous loa can be traced to the Congo region and others to the smaller West African districts, yet all of these are indiscriminately called Rada. In current usage, accordingly, the word has lost its strict geographical significance. The term Pétro is explained in an illuminating paragraph by the Haitian savant, Dr. Dorsainvil: 776 174 192 [192 114]

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The language of possession is descriptive. When a god seizes a man, he "mounts" him; the possessed person forthwith becomes the god's "horse." The words are accurate, for the god seems to have as much control over his mount as a human rider would have over a horse whose will he dominates. The person mounted does nothing of his own accord while he is possessed. Under the invisible whip of the spirit-rider the "horse" does a great many things, and says even more, that would be unnatural or even impossible to him, unridden.[26]

Possession is more than the affair of a moment. In this respect it differs again from kindred seizures known to whites. A person may have to wait for many years before he is finally mounted, but the first loa who descends upon him is the chief of his deities, taking precedence over any other who might subsequently possess him. The initial seizure is a vitally important experience, corresponding roughly to the conversion or confirmation of persons in other religions. The subject is carefully observed by experts, so that no mistake will be made in the deductions from actions and speech as to the identity of the god. This loa is baptized by sprinkling water on the head of the possessed person. Thereafter the loa is called "*maît' tête*," as a recognition of the subservience of his mount: any agreement the devotee might make with another loa under a particular possession would have to conform to the initial agreement with the maît' tête. At a man's death the loa, which has, like more than a guardian angel, accompanied him through life, is taken from his head so that the man's soul may go to God—the Christian God.[27]

The possessing god may be either male or female. It frequently happens that a male loa mounts a female devotee, in which case she is addressed by a male name, wears male clothes, eats and drinks the things her loa prefers (no matter how distasteful to her ordinarily), and otherwise manifests his characteristics. This extraordinary change of personality is accepted naturally enough by the other participants in the rites, although the transformation is to foreigners a psychological phenomenon of prime interest. Dr. Dorsainvil devotes a book to the neuroses connected with possession; as he says: "One of the first consequences of the Vodoun crisis is the substitution for the

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26. Zora Neale Hurston, in her gaily written *Tell My Horse* (Philadelphia, 1938), has a vivid chapter on the possession effected by the distinctly Haitian loa, Guédé. She entitles this chapter in Creole: "*Parley cheval ou*" (Tell my horse)—the words with which the loa begins to dictate through the mouth of his mount. See pp. 232–250.

27. See Herskovits, *op. cit.*, pp. 146–151.

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Worship of the loa is directed by priests and priestesses. They grow into their positions by a kind of tolerant apprenticeship. Young men and women discover their abilities in dealing with loa or their desire to participate actively in serving them; they assist the officiating priests; they listen carefully to the lore of their elders, keeping their eyes open meanwhile. The priest is generally called a houngan, or sometimes a *papaloi;* the priestess a *mambo* or a *mamaloi.*[33] No ceremony marks the progression of a novice through any set stages to final priesthood; rather, the people in the community simply recognize growing expertness. The more effective and capable a houngan, the greater his prestige and the wider his reputation. There is nothing even vaguely resembling the ordered hierarchy of priests in the Catholic Church, nor is there any control of one houngan over another. No holy robes adorn the officiants, although they occasionally wear certain colors or ornaments to please the loa. Most of the Vodun priests and priestesses are simple peasants, working in the fields and going about the daily round of life. When they are called to perform a ritual, an offering is taken up in the early part of the service to recompense them for their offices.

Actually, the Vodun houngan and mambo correspond much more closely to the primitive medicine man or shaman than to the Catholic priest. They are thought to have power, through certain Rada and Pétro loa, to cure illnesses caused either by adverse magic of one's enemies or by a loa; they are not able, however, to cure sickness sent by the Christian God. Likewise they can remedy or avert misfortune whose origin is magic or the loa. One of their highly important functions is foretelling the future: no important service would be contemplated by a family without previous resort to divination to determine the propitiousness of the time, nor would it be sensible to undertake a secular business of importance without preliminary reassurance by this means. To see into the future effectively, the priest must be possessed by the loa.[34]

33. The second of these names in each case derives from "papa" and "mama," or master and mistress; and from the familiar loa or god. It is not implied that the officiants dominate the loa but only that they deal expertly with them.

34. In addition to the houngans and mambos, there are also bokors who specialize in magic without conducting regular religious rites. These bokors probably deserve the name of sorcerers.

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789 generally through no wish of their own, have the uncanny ability to cause evil simply by a glance. One look is enough to do the damage. Although theory is a bit vague on this point, it appears that certain irritable spirits use the agency of the human eye to vent their spleen on mortals who are fortunate: good looks and strokes of luck act, consequently, as lodestones to the fateful glance. And where the [175] glance falls ill luck may spread, harming all within reach. In the days [304] of slavery people had such a fear of the evil eye that they did not hesitate to disfigure infants who at birth seemed to be particularly handsome and so likely to attract attention. Nowadays the practice 777 is to avert the glance by making an *arrêt*. This "halt" may be either a 789 special charm worn on the person or else the mark of a half-moon done with a caustic vegetable substance on the cheek. As with Europeans who believe in the evil eye, certain specialists ply a lucrative trade through their reputation for effective charms against the maldioque.

Other charms may be mentioned. There is the *garde* which protects its wearer against evil of any variety—the near relative of the good-luck charm worn by thousands of "civilized" people. There is the *ouanga*, or *wanga*, compounded to achieve a special end, generally an evil one. Faine remarks that ouanga is

[92] A Créole word of African origin [signifying] a philtre or simple of a special kind, compounded by an *houngan* out of such diverse ingredients as a dead chicken, some grains of indigo and maize, amulets, pieces of money, asafoetida, etc., the whole contained in a half-calabash. . . . The Ouanga, placed in the home of an enemy, is designed to bring him bad luck even to the extent of giving him elephantiasis ("gros pied") when he has inadvertently stepped on the ouanga.[37]

The ouanga is the Haitian equivalent of the hoodoo, for through its influence one may (or so he believes) bring illness, misfortune, or death to an enemy. For every ouanga there is a garde, for every evil a cure. The art lies in finding out the nature of the ouanga causing harm, and then knowing exactly what to do to fend it off.

751 Historically the most interesting garde is that called a *drogue*, 789 which is thought to insulate one against wound by weapons or bullets. Reference has already been made to the utter abandon with which the Negroes, both at the time of the insurrection and later in

[37] Jules Faine, *Philologie Créole* (Port-au-Prince, 1937), p. 329.

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generally believed that the compact always results fatally for the man who makes it, why anyone should enter into such an engagement. Craving for money or some other immediate form of power, however, bedims the reason; in the face of all-consuming desire, more than one man has been willing to ignore future pain for present reward. 754 776

It would be possible to conjure up a whole phantasmagoria of weird belief in connection with magic, although this would be unjust to the character of the Haitians. These people have their share of dire concepts, but no more than might be expected of a simple folk. One final magical belief must be treated, however, for it has reached the ears of the outside world in grim detail. This is the belief in the *zombi*. The word, as Faine explains, comes from the Bonda language of Africa (*zombi* there), and was probably transmitted to Haiti by Portuguese slave traders. Faine continues: 789 [114] [192]

Zombi . . . designates in general a revenant, a phantom, an otherworldly spirit. In popular belief, certain sorcerers have the power, by means of charms and spells, to cause apparent death to individuals and then to bring them back to life again, even after they have been buried. These resuscitated persons, only half-conscious, are then, isolated in distant parts of the country, utilized for field work. Nourished on food from which salt is rigorously excluded, they are thought to be able to regain their natural senses and all their mental faculties if they taste the least grain of this substance. Such legends, circumstantially garbed and presented as actual facts by certain unscrupulous authors, have served as the theme of books which have made a great commotion in foreign countries. Taking advantage of the credulity of a public avid for exotic matters, for mysteries, for the supernatural, these writers have gained, in certain cases, the greatest success of publicity.[58] 114 754

Three attitudes are taken in regard to the zombi. There are skeptics who deny the existence of zombis altogether, setting down as fable most of the ideas current about them, and as mistaken diagnosis all the remainder. There are the credulous (including practically every peasant) who believe in and quite directly fear this potential fate. And there are those who believe that certain bocors know how to administer a subtle poison to intended victims which will cause suspended animation and give the appearance of death. Men in the prime of life suddenly sicken and die for no apparent reason. Once these pseudo-corpses are safely buried, the sinister person who has 754

58. *Ibid.*, p. 305.

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565 ing since 1860 has had its effect upon the children of the upper classes.
771 Two hundred churchmen working with a population of more than two million cannot distribute their benefits equally. Teachers must devote themselves to those whose minds are educable, who have access to schools, and who can afford time for daily classes. An element of social snobbishness entered as well. Catholicism was socially accepted in the Western World whose approval the élite coveted, where Vodun if known at all was regarded as a mere superstition. To prove his separation from the peasant black, the élite person was therefore Catholic or nothing.

[797] It would have required many times two hundred teaching brothers and sisters, all with the zeal of fanatics and the energy of dynamos, to convert the masses away from Vodun. In acquainting the peasants with Church forms and certain beliefs the priests have been entirely successful; in making exclusive Catholics of them they have had no success at all.

771 Every vital social institution is continually in a process of change.
177 Vodun, a very living faith, has steadily borrowed more and more from Catholicism, the only other religion with which the people come in close contact. When one can go from a Saturday night Vodun sacrifice and dance to a Sunday morning Catholic Mass with no feeling of incongruity, it is obvious that the minds of the worshipers are actively predisposed to assimilation of creed and ritual.

796 We have suggested in a previous chapter some traces of the Catholic Mass in Vodun ceremony. The Vodun service regularly begins with a long ritual which the observer who knows both the Créole language and the Catholic liturgy recognizes as being almost entirely Roman. While the Vodun houngan sits quietly by, a special officiant known as the *prêt' savanne* (bush priest) reads or pretends to read from the Catholic prayer book. For the Pater Noster, the creed, the Ave Maria, the Salve Regina, and the prayers, the worshipers kneel or stand as they would in church. Candles burn, water is sprinkled, the sign of the cross is made, the chants are sung. When the benediction completes this part of the service, the houngan takes over to conduct the purely African rites; yet his first words are, "*Grâce mise'-corde,*" and many Catholic interpolations appear even in this second part of the service.

[778] The Vodun ritual is conducted before an altar, in Haitian Créole
[192] called a "trône," which is a perfect marriage between Vodun and

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Catholicism. I have seen such an altar, with its adjacent table, bearing a crucifix, candles, (holy) water, lithographs of the "Assumption of the Virgin," "St. George and the Dragon," the "Adoration of the Kings," and certain unrecognized but distinctly European saints; in addition to these objects, however, were such unecclesiastical articles as bananas, rice, beans, squash, various bottles of drinks, and plates of food. Near by were the sacrificial animals. 176 [178] [192]

Vodun makes use frequently of one sacrament of the Church—baptism. Needless to say, this rite is not a monopoly of Christianity, and its use in the folk religion may very well have come from Africa. Constant witnessing of the rite in church must nevertheless have influenced its adoption for all important Vodun ceremonials. The drums used in the dance are baptized; so also is the first loa to possess a devotee; at many other special times the rite is likewise performed, generally with a set of prayers which invoke Catholic saints and Vodun loa alike. [177]

Mention has already been made of the identification of Rada and Pétro loa with certain saints and martyrs of the Church. Such identifications are not uniform, but vary in different parts of the country. Legba is generally associated with Saint Anthony, but often (and to the Christian, more understandably) with Saint Peter who traditionally guards the gates of heaven; the Virgin Mary quite obviously is related, whether as Queen of Heaven, as the Sorrowing Mother, or as the innocent Virgin, with numerous manifestations of Maîtresse Ezulie; Damballa, whose symbol is the serpent, is sometimes Moses (whose brother's rod became a serpent consuming other serpents, and who by lifting up a serpent in the wilderness cured the people of their snake bites) and sometimes Saint Patrick (whose association with snakes is well known). Other identifications are numerous, showing the penchant of the people for combining what they know of both religions.[2] 176 177 [184]

Many of the loa have, like the Catholic saints, their symbols, their special days, colors, and other associations. Some like white, some red; the serpent, the rainbow, the crossroads are among the symbols; sacred days occur weekly, Tuesday being Legba's, Wednesday Ogun's, Friday Ezulie's, and Saturday Baron Samedi's. It may be

2. The distinguished Haitian ethnographer, sociologist, and historian, Dr. Jean Price-Mars, has made a list of some of these identifications in his *Ainsi parle l'oncle*, pp. 180–182.

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have been gathered from trees which grew wild. Both men and women labor, with the work divided according to regular custom between the sexes, the men dominating the scene only in the marketing of coffee.

Nature was opulent enough at the beginning of Haitian independence. The wars had ruined irrigation ditches, sugar refineries, and mechanical equipment, but the soil was still abundantly fertile. But generations of farming by people without knowledge of fertilization or soil conservation have worn out much of the land. Trees have been cut to provide lumber and clearings for more farms; in the rainy seasons torrents have coursed down the mountainsides, washing away soil and exposing the earth to the rays of a tropical sun. Because the country is overpopulated every available acre is put to use, and to overuse, thus still more depleting the land. It is a vicious circle, for the next generation must extract yet more from the earth and so weaken it further. Hard work is the lot of the peasant, therefore, during every month of the year except the dry season. There has never been a formal rotation of crops: a farmer continues to plant the same crop in the same field until the harvest is perceptibly smaller than before. Then he changes to another type of produce. Sooner or later he will allow the land to lie fallow for several years until, by the action of nature or the grazing over it of cattle, it has regained a measure of its fertility.

The strenuous work of clearing fields and preparing them for cultivation is man's job. Since the peasants owned their plots it has almost always been done in coöperation by the men of the neighborhood. What on the American frontier would have been called a "bee" is known in Haiti as a *coumbite*, or *combite*, often carried on as an enterprise of the local *Société Congo*, the informal neighborhood group for mutual aid and fellowship.[6]

A man who has a large job on hand announces a coumbite for any day except Sunday, always a day of rest, and whatever other week-

6. The word "coumbite" was apparently borrowed from the Spanish part of the island, and from the Spanish word *convidar*, convey. In Colombia "convite" means exactly what "coumbite" means in Haiti: a gathering of peasants to work in common, or else a coöperative society for mutual agricultural self-help.

Professor Herskovits (*Life in a Haitian Valley*, chap. IV) describes the Société Congo in detail. The use of the name "Congo" indicates the African tradition, and is particularly noteworthy in connection with a kind of coöperative work which Herskovits finds particularly Dahomean.

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197 a language into their daily speech. What the Americans have done to English, the Haitians in general have done to Créole. It is pertinent briefly to review the early history of Créole in order to comprehend the distinctly Haitian contributions to the language.

175 579 Through most of the seventeenth century Caribbean waters were full of pirates and buccaneers preying upon Spanish shipping. The effective monopoly which lordly Spain held in the preceding century over the trade of Europe with her rich Mexican and South American colonies began, in the early years of the new century, to crumble before the ingenious, speedy, and daring assaults of non-Spanish raiders. French, Dutch, and English sailors were all ready to try their hand at capturing laden Spanish ships. The rich cargoes of gold, silver, and merchandise were alluring enough to make the risk seem worth taking. And indeed the risk was not too great, for Spain's stately galleons were antiquated and cumbersome, generally no match for the flyboats[1] which had speed and much greater manageability. More and more Spanish control over the Caribbean, the Spanish Main, declined as the freebooters increased.

175 579 648 French sailors were among the most numerous and reckless of the gadflies who made life miserable for the Spanish traders. Drawn from the northern and northwestern provinces of France, these men had been seafarers all their lives. Harrying Spanish shipping was the most lucrative career for French sailors, and as the seventeenth century wore on their numbers in the Caribbean increased. By 1660 they had established a raiding base on La Tortue, an island off the northern coast of Haiti, where they developed a characteristic way of life —economic, political, and social—between raids.[2] Their presence near Haiti gave France a claim, in the Treaty of Ryswick (1697), to the western part of the island. For the next hundred years this region was to be known as Saint-Domingue.

175 579 197 Créole was born of buccaneering. In the seventeenth century the French of Île-de-France had not yet supplanted the dialects of the French districts; the buccaneers consequently spoke their native speech, and since Norman sailors far outnumbered the others

[175] [192] 1. Origin of "flibustier," "filibuster," and "freebooter."

2. It was here that they came to be called "buccaneers." They raided the relatively deserted main island of Haiti (then still under Spanish control) for cattle roaming wild. These cattle they cooked over an open fire, with a certain kind of wood; the process was called "boucanning," and they themselves "boucaniers." They imported wives from the seaport towns of Normandy, and families began to be raised on La Tortue.

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Norman French became the dominant tongue of the French buccaneers. Words were naturally added from the patois of the neighboring French provinces of Picardy, Brittany, and Anjou, but Norman remained the matrix.[3] With La Tortue as their home base, the buccaneers roamed the Caribbean, coming into constant contact with other people—contact which left its mark, as meetings generally do, upon the speech of the travelers.

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There were still Indians left in some of the islands, and Indians outnumbered Spaniards on the mainland. From these aborigines Créole borrowed many individual words, these being generally the names of things—flora and fauna, food, objects of daily life more or less common throughout the Caribbean world.[4] The grammatical contributions of the Indians were apparently only an emphasis upon tendencies already present in Norman French, such as that of keeping the verb form constant while making other words in the sentence do the work of indicating past, present, or future, continuous or completed action, and the like.

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Engaged in buccaneering with the French were hundreds of English privateers. Often English and French raided in partnership; for many years both groups shared La Tortue. This contact left a heavy mark upon Créole—a congenial one, indeed, for Norman French had been for more than four centuries the official language of England. Now in the seventeenth century English was giving back to Norman many words in exchange for the ones it had taken.[5] More important than its verbal gift, however, was the influence it exerted toward a simple syntax. As compared with French forms,

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3. An outstanding linguist, Jules Faine, in *Philologie créole*, p. 1, estimates that three out of four words in Créole are Norman.

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4. A very few of these Indian words have become familiar in French, and still fewer in English; but one finds most of them, in one form or another, in the whole Caribbean basin. Examples are:

agouti, a small rodent	*hamac*, hammock
atoutou, a dish whose base is corn	*ouragan*, hurricane
caiman, alligator	*bayahonde*, a very hard wood
iguane, a large lizard	*campêche*, another hard wood
avocat, the avocado pear	*mabouya*, small lizard
calebasse, calabash	*barbaco*, barbecue
corossol, a green prickly fruit	*cassava*, a starch plant
goayave, guava	*lambi*, a mollusk or conch
igname, yam	*tom-tom*, a purée of bananas

5. Henry Moiry, *Glossaire comparatif Anglo-Normand* (Caen, 1888), points out that the modern Norman dialect contains more than 5,000 words common to English and Norman, but not recognized in official French.

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175 Norman ones were less complicated; English, simpler still, reen-
192 forced the Norman tendency.
197 From the Spaniards of the Caribbean region Créole borrowed not only nouns (generally the most assimilable of words), but a large number of adjectives, pronouns, auxiliary verbs, and certain subtler characteristics of speech.

This amalgam, then, three quarters Norman French, was the Créole language as of 1697 when France acquired Saint-Domingue, when buccaneering became unprofitable, and many of the filibusters settled down to begin a respectable life as plantation owners in the
567 new colony. African slaves were soon imported to satisfy the demand
197 for labor. First a few, then thousands a year and increasing thousands,
192 were brought to Saint-Domingue. In all externalities, of which
175 language is one, slaves must yield up their old ways and take on new. The question of interest here is to what extent the Negroes influenced Créole, giving it an "African" character.

The answer, surprising at first, is that the Negro influence was almost negligible.

175 In the first place, Créole was now already a language with a rich
177 vocabulary, all the grammatical equipment, and the necessary regu-
197 larities. The slaves came to the colony from all parts of Africa, and so with widely differing languages. Linguistic maps of Africa indicate the presence of hundreds of dialects up and down the west coast; tribes living fifteen miles apart spoke languages which, although belonging to the same stock, were as different as Spanish and Italian from each other. Owing to the habit of dispersing the slaves, the
[191] average Negro had no common basis of understanding with his fellow slaves on the same plantation. Practically all white foremen and overseers gave orders in Créole; this within one generation became the *lingua franca* of the plantations, an economic necessity, and socially indispensable.

In the second place, there was in Saint-Domingue no equivalent to the familiar objects of life in Africa. Trees, houses, earth there were, of course, but different kinds of trees, houses, and soil. Economic tasks were performed in a different manner with new techniques and organization. Every outward form of life was foreign to the African background. Even assuming that there had been a common Negro speech, it would have found little to attach itself to in the New World. It should be noted that Negroes likewise made few contribu-

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tions to the English language in the southern United States, where 177
they were slaves for seventy years longer than in Haiti. 197

Common African economic ways yielded to the plantation system 175
and slavery; the Negroes had no opportunity to govern themselves 567
or settle their own disputes; they mated rather than married; their families might be broken up if the master wished to sell a slave. The one part of life in which they were permitted to follow unhindered their African ways was the intimate one of religion which, since it needed no buildings or organization, did not interfere with work, and could be entirely personal and private, was not suppressed. As has been pointed out, the Dahomean form of religion prevailed over all others and, modified, gained wide adherence among the slaves. It is precisely in Vodun that Créole has taken over its only important African words, such as Vodun, zombi, houngan, marassa, loa, houmfort, bocor, ouanga.

It would be erroneous to imply that the Negroes had no effect 175
upon the language of which they soon became the predominant 197
users.[6] Their operations were of a subtle sort, however. As with the 194
Negroes of the United States, the letter "r" proved difficult, and often disappeared altogether, leaving many words softly slurred. "Marcher," for example, generally sounds as if it were *ma'ché*. Likewise in the course of years they gave the language their own accent, their own modulation and tone, which make Créole sound different on their lips from a white man's way of speaking it. Some scholars attribute this to a *racial* influence—that is, to the morphology of the Negro throat and tongue. It might be pointed out to the contrary that Americans, white like the English, have given the mother tongue *their* own accent, modulation, and tone. It has certainly not yet been proved that race has anything to do with speech.

Words in imitation of a sound grow up in every language. Several 175
western African dialects, especially Mandingue, seemed fond of 192
onomatopoeia; in Haiti, consequently, one hears many an expressive additional word. Moreau de Saint-Méry[7] noticed this in colonial Saint-Domingue, citing such cases as the addition of "*bap*" to the verb "*tomber*," if one had fallen down lightly, or "*boum*" if heavily;

6. Suzanne Sylvain, *Le Créole haïtien* (Wetteren, Belgium, 1936), p. 10, says that although the African contribution to Haitian Créole is generally considered to be slight, she has personally found 170 words of undeniable African origin, and feels sure that there are many more. [174]

7. *Description . . . de . . . Saint-Domingue*, II, 36–37.

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175 192 if a blow were given on the face the word "*pimme*" was added to the verb describing that blow, but if a stick had been used, "*bimme*" was added, and if a whip, then "*v'lap v'lap*."

175 193 One of the Negro contributions which gives a delightful charm to the language is the principle of doubling, whether the word is adjective, adverb, verb, or pronoun. Faine cites the following examples:

ioun bel, bel femme—an extraordinarily beautiful woman.
li té bien, bien malade—he was very gravely ill.
li marcher, l'marcher, l'marcher—he kept on walking and walking.
li-minme, li-minme—it is really he himself.[8]

175 538 Still another and very important Negro contribution is the wealth of proverbs. A person may say practically anything he chooses in proverbs, particularly if he uses to its fullest the significant tones of which his voice is capable. As many as 1,500 of these proverbs have been collected, and there is reason to believe that as many more could be found.[9] In general they say the same things proverbs say in any language:

Fer couper fer. Il faut du fer pour couper le fer; which is to signify, "Great needs demand great remedies."

Tit cochon tit sang. Un petit cochon a peu de sang; that is, "From each according to his means."

Sel pas besoin vanter tête li. Le sel n'a pas besoin de se vanter; or, "Real merit never needs to boast."

Since some of the proverbs make allusions to elephants and tigers, animals not found in the Caribbean region, it is clear that these at least, and maybe others, go far back in the wisdom of the folk.

538 Storytelling is a well-cultivated art in Haiti. The folklore of Créole is rich, some of it bearing close resemblance to the Negro tales current in the southern United States, particularly the Br'er Rabbit tales. When a group gathers and a story is about to begin, the teller says, "Cric?"—as if to say, "Shall I tell you a story?" or, "Are you ready?" To this his listeners reply, "Crac!"—or, "Please do! Certainly!" or, "We are listening." The two words together make a sort of rapport between raconteur and audience, an overture, "Once upon a time."

8. Faine, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

9. J. J. Audain, *Proverbes* (Port-au-Prince, 1877), cites 1,011 Haitian proverbs in Créole, and E. Chenet, *Proverbes créoles* (Port-au-Prince, 1896), records 1,456 proverbs.

776 one with the Holy Virgin. St. Jacques has become one with Ogoun, St.
177 George with Linglessou, St. Anthony and St. Christopher with Legba, guardian of the highway, and St. Nicholas with Marassa Trois. In northern Haiti the word *zange* (from the French, *les anges*—the angels) sometimes is used synonymously with loa or mystère. As for the saints, they are sometimes identified with one loa, sometimes with another.

776 No one in Haiti knows all the loa. Some of them are so ancient as to be
177 nearly forgotten. Others are spontaneous creations or revelations on the
178 part of a possessed person. Some loa names may be the result of a devotee's seizing upon a word or phrase in a religious song and imparting to it the concept of a loa. Sometimes a word in a phrase of *langage* is taken to be a loa's name, and sometimes agglutinated Creole words become the name of a loa.

776 The possibility of frequent additions to the list of loa is heightened still
178 further by the general illiteracy of the Haitian people and the lack of a
179 stabilizing influence in the written word. The Creole language has marked regional differences. Furthermore, change of consonants or vowels
[193] is a commonplace occurrence, so that a single loa's name may have several forms. One may well wonder whether Aza, Adja, and Akadja were not originally a single individual. Nevertheless, in the Haitian scheme they are now different personalities.

776 There is one more complicating factor in identifying loa or compiling
171 a comprehensive roster—the use of multiple names. In addition to the names by which they are generally known, many of the deities have a
552 variety of nicknames. Some of these nicknames are in Creole, some appear to be of West African provenience. The deity Agwé, for example, is frequently called Coqui-nan-Mer—Coqui-in-the-Sea. A loa may have four, five, or even more such nicknames. Sometimes short forms are used. Damballa may be called Da, Sobo may be called So, Azaka may be called Za. In addition, some deities have "secret" names, which theoretically are known only to the priesthood and the inner circle of servitors. Multiple naming and the reservation of certain names for special occasions appear to have West African precedents.

In the naming of the loa no neat and methodical system is apparent at any point. The "surname," or what may be in some cases a generic designation, may appear first or last. One may hear Ogoun Chango or Chango Ogoun, Général Brisé or Brisé Général, Congo Savane or Savane
[551] Congo. (This is characteristic of everyday speech. A former president of Haiti, Nord Alexis, is often called Alexis Nord.) The "surname" can be a description of "tribal" or "national" affiliation, regional provenience, character and temperament, or an indication of function. Thus we find

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Norman French became the dominant tongue of the French buccaneers. Words were naturally added from the patois of the neighboring French provinces of Picardy, Brittany, and Anjou, but Norman remained the matrix.[3] With La Tortue as their home base, the buccaneers roamed the Caribbean, coming into constant contact with other people—contact which left its mark, as meetings generally do, upon the speech of the travelers.

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There were still Indians left in some of the islands, and Indians outnumbered Spaniards on the mainland. From these aborigines Créole borrowed many individual words, these being generally the names of things—flora and fauna, food, objects of daily life more or less common throughout the Caribbean world.[4] The grammatical contributions of the Indians were apparently only an emphasis upon tendencies already present in Norman French, such as that of keeping the verb form constant while making other words in the sentence do the work of indicating past, present, or future, continuous or completed action, and the like.

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Engaged in buccaneering with the French were hundreds of English privateers. Often English and French raided in partnership; for many years both groups shared La Tortue. This contact left a heavy mark upon Créole—a congenial one, indeed, for Norman French had been for more than four centuries the official language of England. Now in the seventeenth century English was giving back to Norman many words in exchange for the ones it had taken.[5] More important than its verbal gift, however, was the influence it exerted toward a simple syntax. As compared with French forms,

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3. An outstanding linguist, Jules Faine, in *Philologie créole*, p. 1, estimates that three out of four words in Créole are Norman.

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4. A very few of these Indian words have become familiar in French, and still fewer in English; but one finds most of them, in one form or another, in the whole Caribbean basin. Examples are:

agouti, a small rodent	*hamac*, hammock
atoutou, a dish whose base is corn	*ouragan*, hurricane
caiman, alligator	*bayahonde*, a very hard wood
iguane, a large lizard	*campêche*, another hard wood
avocat, the avocado pear	*mabouya*, small lizard
calebasse, calabash	*barbacoa*, barbecue
corossol, a green prickly fruit	*cassava*, a starch plant
gouyave, guava	*lambi*, a mollusk or conch
igname, yam	*tom-tom*, a purée of bananas

5. Henry Moisy, *Glossaire comparatif Anglo-Normand* (Caen, 1888), points out that the modern Norman dialect contains more than 5,000 words common to English and Norman, but not recognized in official French.

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175 192 if a blow were given on the face the word "*pimme*" was added to the verb describing that blow, but if a stick had been used, "*bimme*" was added, and if a whip, then "*v'lap v'lap*."

175 193 One of the Negro contributions which gives a delightful charm to the language is the principle of doubling, whether the word is adjective, adverb, verb, or pronoun. Faine cites the following examples:

ioun bel, bel femme—an extraordinarily beautiful woman.
li té bien, bien malade—he was very gravely ill.
li marcher, l'marcher, l'marcher—he kept on walking and walking.
li-minme, li-minme—it is really he himself.[8]

175 538 Still another and very important Negro contribution is the wealth of proverbs. A person may say practically anything he chooses in proverbs, particularly if he uses to its fullest the significant tones of which his voice is capable. As many as 1,500 of these proverbs have been collected, and there is reason to believe that as many more could be found.[9] In general they say the same things proverbs say in any language:

Fer couper fer. Il faut du fer pour couper le fer; which is to signify, "Great needs demand great remedies."

Tit cochon tit sang. Un petit cochon a peu de sang; that is, "From each according to his means."

Sel pas besoin vanter tête li. Le sel n'a pas besoin de se vanter; or, "Real merit never needs to boast."

Since some of the proverbs make allusions to elephants and tigers, animals not found in the Caribbean region, it is clear that these at least, and maybe others, go far back in the wisdom of the folk.

538 Storytelling is a well-cultivated art in Haiti. The folklore of Créole is rich, some of it bearing close resemblance to the Negro tales current in the southern United States, particularly the Br'er Rabbit tales. When a group gathers and a story is about to begin, the teller says, "Cric?"—as if to say, "Shall I tell you a story?" or, "Are you ready?" To this his listeners reply, "Crac!"—or, "Please do! Certainly!" or, "We are listening." The two words together make a sort of rapport between raconteur and audience, an overture, "Once upon a time."

8. Faine, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
9. J. J. Audain, *Proverbes* (Port-au-Prince, 1877), cites 1,011 Haitian proverbs in Créole, and E. Chenet, *Proverbes créoles* (Port-au-Prince, 1896), records 1,456 proverbs.

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Similarly in Haitian towns, where the élite speak French

197 and where French is taught in the schools, the Créole is less "pure"
191 than in the untutored countryside. Even there the language is chang-
193 ing, for there is steadily operating that "law of simplification" which reduces the complications of language when it has only an oral tradition.[12] Abridgment occurs more and more frequently, agglutination is more apparent, and words tend toward the monosyllabic.

191 Everyone in Haiti speaks and understands Créole. Nursemaids
197 teach it to their élite charges, so that children know it from infancy; élite lovers lapse into its expressive phrases in order to say something particularly intimate which might sound sentimental in French; priests must use it in their parish work if they are to be understood at all. Even the élite presidents have found it wise to speak often to the countrypeople in their own tongue. The gendarmes would be helpless in their police work without it, as would the agricultural, health, and other governmental services. It is the language in which all the small business of Haiti is conducted.[13] Ernest Douyon has written brilliantly and revealingly about it:

> If, on the one hand, we have a business language, an official tongue, which is French, our true maternal language, on the other hand, that one which we first lisp, that of the country as a whole (I had almost said "of the true country," for such is the case), that of the city people as well as of countryfolk, that of all families whatever their differences in education, the language one hears not only in humble huts but in luxurious villas, not only in offices or among the masses but also in private apartments and salons, that which for the crudest as for the most finely cultivated minds (even when these latter through snobbery try to deny the fact) is at all times the most naturally expressive, that which perfectly translates our deepest sentiments (jubilation, anger, love, or whatever) precisely when these are most strongly felt, that which all of us, all (with the rarest exceptions) use spontaneously—is Créole! I know that it is not considered proper in polite society, that it sometimes lends a certain impression of vulgarity, that it is not the correct language for distinguished people—when they are in public! But who is the man of propriety, who the society woman, who in private does not continually use Créole![14]

12. See P. Crouzet, *Les Ponts romains* (Toulouse, 1929), p. 18.

[196] [193] 13. It must be noted that in the Vodun service the houngan sometimes speaks in *langage*, which is not Créole. It purports to be pure African, but is more likely to be mere gibberish.

14. In his Preface to Faine, *op. cit.*, p. v.

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tions to the English language in the southern United States, where they were slaves for seventy years longer than in Haiti.

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Common African economic ways yielded to the plantation system and slavery; the Negroes had no opportunity to govern themselves or settle their own disputes; they mated rather than married; their families might be broken up if the master wished to sell a slave. The one part of life in which they were permitted to follow unhindered their African ways was the intimate one of religion which, since it needed no buildings or organization, did not interfere with work, and could be entirely personal and private, was not suppressed. As has been pointed out, the Dahomean form of religion prevailed over all others and, modified, gained wide adherence among the slaves. It is precisely in Vodun that Créole has taken over its only important African words, such as Vodun, zombi, houngan, marassa, loa, houmfort, bocor, ouanga.

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It would be erroneous to imply that the Negroes had no effect upon the language of which they soon became the predominant users.[6] Their operations were of a subtle sort, however. As with the Negroes of the United States, the letter "r" proved difficult, and often disappeared altogether, leaving many words softly slurred. "Marcher," for example, generally sounds as if it were *ma'ché*. Likewise in the course of years they gave the language their own accent, their own modulation and tone, which make Créole sound different on their lips from a white man's way of speaking it. Some scholars attribute this to a *racial* influence—that is, to the morphology of the Negro throat and tongue. It might be pointed out to the contrary that Americans, white like the English, have given the mother tongue *their* own accent, modulation, and tone. It has certainly not yet been proved that race has anything to do with speech.

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Words in imitation of a sound grow up in every language. Several western African dialects, especially Mandingue, seemed fond of onomatopoeia; in Haiti, consequently, one hears many an expressive additional word. Moreau de Saint-Méry[7] noticed this in colonial Saint-Domingue, citing such cases as the addition of "*bap*" to the verb "*tomber*," if one had fallen down lightly, or "*boum*" if heavily;

6. Suzanne Sylvain, *Le Créole haïtien* (Wetteren, Belgium, 1936), p. 10, says that although the African contribution to Haitian Créole is generally considered to be slight, she has personally found 170 words of undeniable African origin, and feels sure that there are many more. [174]

7. *Description . . . de . . . Saint-Domingue*, II, 36–37.

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Compère répond':	My friend replies:
"C'e' moin qui avec cousine moin."	"It is I who am with my cousin."
Assé-é!	Enough!
Moin en dedans déjà.	I am already inside.
En é-é-o!	Up, o!
Nan point taureau	No bull
Passé taureau.	Is better than [this] bull.
En é-o!	Up, o!

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Finally, there may be cited a composition which complains against a shirker who comes and eats, but does little work:

Samba, é-é,	Samba, *é-é,*
Moin vé ou malhonnet,	I see that you are a dishonest man,
Tonnèrre!	*Tonnèrre!* *
Moin planté maïs moin,	I plant my maize,
L'année rive,	The year rolls round,
Moin planté mangé,	I plant food,
Ou apè managé li.	You eat it.
En é-é-o!	In the air!
Moin planté zaboca,	I plant avocados,
Ça pou' ou mangé,	They are for you to eat,
Ou malhonnet-o.	You are a dishonest man-o.
Tonnèrre!	*Tonnèrre!*

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The field cleared and hoed, the work of planting begins. This is carried on in accordance with a well-defined calendar of agriculture, which takes as its starting-point the beginning of the rains. Maize, which matures quickly, is the first crop, and is planted during the latter part of March or early in April, unless the rains are delayed, when it is planted later that month. Congo peas, which mature less rapidly, are put

[195]

* *Tonnèrre,* "thunder," is a Haitian-French oath; the original is retained because in translation its force is lost.

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Only a beginning has been made of collecting the thousands of "Cric? Crac!" stories current in Haiti.

It is only recently that people have written Créole, so that there is no standard orthography. Every writer spells words phonetically, with consequent irregularities, and with wide differences between two people writing the same thing. Recent etymological studies may lead eventually to a dictionary and a standard spelling. In order that the reader may see the resemblance of Créole to French, yet its differences from that language, we shall quote a part of one of La Fontaine's fables put into Créole verse by Georges Sylvain.[10] His own French retranslation accompanies the fable, turning such phrases as "female pig" into "sow."

Nan temps toutt bett té palé,	*Au temps où toutes les bêtes parlaient,*
Té g'ain (palant pa respé)	*Il y avait (sauf votre respect)*
Té g'ain gnou fémel cochon.	*Il y avait une truie.*
Zott connin gen cochon bon?	*Vous savez comme les truies sont bonnes gens?*
Cila-là té fait zanmi	*Celle-ci avait fait amitié*
Avec gnou fémel chien, qui	*Avec une chienne, qui*
Té prett pou mi bas. Chien-là,	*Était sur le point de mettre bas. La chienne*
Gnou jou, dit cochon con ça:	*Un jour, dit à la truie:*
"Moin pré pou moin accouché,	*"Me voilà près d'accoucher,*
"Ma conmé, t'en pri! souplé,	*"Ma commère, je vous en prie, s'il vous plaît,*
"Pémett moin prété gnou coin	*"Permettez-moi d'emprunter un coin*
"Nan pac ou, pou pititt moin."	*"De votre parc, pour mes enfants."*[11]

The terseness of the language is fascinating, a situation is hit off precisely in a few words: a stuffed shirt has been deflated, and the truth has been told. A Haitian was heard to say, "Nègue riche li mulatte; mulatte pauvre li nègue"—a rich Negro is accounted a mulatto; a poor mulatto is to all intents and purposes no better than a Negro. And there is a profound comment on the whole caste system.

Wherever the French went in the Caribbean region the Créole language spread—in Louisiana, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Guiana. Each region has its own peculiarities, but in general it may be said that these other regions show much more French (as distinct from Norman) influence on Créole, and much less Spanish and English influence. Similarly in Haitian towns, where the élite speak French

10. *Cric? Crac! Fables de La Fontaine racontées par un montagnard haïtien et transcrites en vers créoles* (Port-au-Prince, 1929), p. 21.

11. "Zott" means "vous autres"; "gnou" is "une."

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114 The common people of Haiti are continually creating [his phrase is much
196 more revealing: "en gestation de"] *loa*, or new Vodoun "saints." Popular
174 tradition, long before independence, refers to a certain Don Pédro, a being
776 of flesh and blood who from the Spanish end of the island had come at a certain period to live in the mountains of the commune of Petit-Goâve. This Don Pédro was the man who introduced into Haiti that violent dance which, by corruption, the people call "the pétro." Upon his death, Don Pédro came to occupy an honorable place in the Vodoun pantheon, bringing in his train a whole group of progeny, such as Jean-Philippe Pétro, Criminel Pétro, etc.[21]

174 As might be logically deduced, certain powerful ancestors become
776 deified as Pétro loa.

It would require field trips into every district of Haiti to compile a
184 full list of the various loa who receive homage from Haitians; some
776 appear to have only a local following, others are honored over a wide district, and a few are reverenced throughout the country. If Vodun ever reached the stage of founding a seminary of sacred theology—a highly improbable event—one of its most imperative functions would be the collection, classification, and explanation of the attributes of the hundreds of loa, specifying whether they are Haitian or African in origin, Pétro or Rada, powerful or complaisant, inclined prevailingly to benevolence or to malice. Lacking such a proper catalogue, it will suffice to mention only the most commonly accepted figures. In reflecting upon the characteristics of these gods, the well-informed reader will be struck by the numerous parallels to divinities of other faiths so remote that Haitians could not possibly have known of them; similar emotional needs seem to produce similar deities to satisfy them.[22]

776 Legba is the name of the loa most frequently invoked, not because he is the most powerful, but because he is the interlocutor between man and his gods. Before any ceremony may begin, Legba is addressed: "*Papa Legba, ouvri barrière pour nous.*" If he is not first worshiped, the other deities may not come to possess the people. Legba guards every door and gate, every highway and crossroads. He is still an important god in modern Dahomey, where his attributes are much the same as in Haiti. The people feel no necessity of

21. Dorsainvil, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
22. Classical anthropologists might have called this phenomenon "parallelism"; the word is accurate enough if only similarity, not identity, be understood.

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been given through its use to substantiate the many charges of cannibalism in Haiti that have been made. Yet those who, desirous of establishing such cannibalism, quote this passage from St. Mery do not always remember to quote it in its complete context:

> "Some of these butchers of human flesh are also brought to Santo Domingo . . . where, as in Africa, they are the horror of the other Negroes, notably of the Congos, who, because of their nearness to them [in Africa], are most exposed to their cruelties." [4]

These are thus the tribes who were presumably the most important in the Negro ancestry of the Haitians of today. Was there any least common denominator in language which made it possible for slaves fresh from Africa to communicate with one another after their arrival in Haiti? Was there sufficient similarity in their cultures so that this might form the basis for a retention of African beliefs and behavior despite the vicissitudes of slavery? And what were the characteristics of the African civilizations of these people?

The picture of West African life, as it is commonly drawn, emphasizes the great number of small tribal groups following dissimilar modes of life, speaking mutually unintelligible languages, and worshipping different gods. In a very general sense this is not untrue. On the face of it, the number of languages that are spoken in the area from which the slaves were derived would seem to have constituted an effective barrier not alone to any concerted action on the part of slaves, but even to communication between them, especially since in many regions of the New World it was a fixed policy to separate slaves from the same tribe.

Yet behind this semblance of sharp dissimilarities lies a basic unity of language and culture in all of West Africa, so that though languages were and are mutually unintelligible, structurally and idiomatically they are much the same. This

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is why Créole, not alone in Haiti, but also in Martinique, in Trinidad, and in Louisiana, like Negro English in other portions of the New World, shows such consistency in structure and idiom. The slaves, having mastered a requisite number of words in the language of their masters, merely poured them into this mold of their own linguistic patterns and, approximating the phonetic values of such words in terms of the West African modes of speech, thus established a means of communication between one another, no matter what their tribal derivation.[8]

The region of West Africa which furnished the slaves was an area of great and settled political entities. Here were to be found the Fula and Mandingo empires in the western portion of the area, and the Hausa kingdom in northern Nigeria; the Ashanti and Fanti states in the Gold Coast, and, to the east, the kingdoms of Dahomey, of Yoruba, and of Benin; southward, those of Kongo and Loango. In all this vast territory law and order reigned, and regimentation of behavior under the direction of kings and priests was the rule. With this went a discipline that so deeply stamps African tradition that even the many years of European dominance have not been able to efface it.

The social life in this area, as well as its political organization, is to a very considerable extent a unit. Polygyny, the institution whereby a man may have more than one wife, is found in the entire region. Everywhere descent is counted on one side of the family, either the male or the female, and the larger significant relationship groupings that are composed of those who regard themselves as descended from a single and often mythical totemic ancestor are equally characteristic. Discipline rules within the family as well as outside it and is exacted from the earliest days in the life of a child. Needless to say, it is a far cry from this ordered state of society to the disorganized life which the stereotype of the "savage African" envisages.

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776 d'Angole) is obviously Angola, while the designations Ibo
171 and Congo speak for themselves. Simbi is a Congo deity, as
are Bumba and Lemba. Finally, in the categories of gods im-
[162] portant in the regions of Haiti other than Mirebalais are the
Loa Sénégal, and the Loa Mondong, both of which are names
of African tribes mentioned in the early literature as contributing to the Haitian slave population. But all recognition of geographical names as such has disappeared, and they have been transmuted into designations of gods.

192 Outstanding here is the word *vodun* itself, already indicated
as Dahomean, where it is a general term for "deity," though in
●199 Haiti its use has become more restricted and the symbol for deity has become the word *loa*, or *mystère*. The origin of the designation *loa*, which has been claimed to be a corruption of the French *roi*, is debatable. It is true that in West Africa certain deities are regarded as kings, yet this derivation is not convincing in view of the fact that in the *vodun* cult as found in Haiti at present or as described in earlier sources the *loa* are never generally referred to as kings, something that tends to strengthen statements that have been made to the effect that the word comes from the language of a Congo tribe.[1] The source of the root *hun-*, which figures in the terms *hungan*, *hunsi*, and *humfort*, is clear, for in Dahomey it is a synonym for the word *vodun*. *Hungan* and *hunsi* are even more definitely traceable than *humfort*, since the ending *-gan*, the Dahomean word for chief, designates the priest as the chief of the spirits, and *-si*, "wife," is employed in the sense of "wife of the god" or his devotee, in Africa as in Haiti. The female counterpart of *hungan*, *mambu*, cannot be definitely assigned, but may be of Bantu derivation, and is certainly an African word.

776 Other uncontaminated Africanisms can be discerned in the
171 attitude of the Haitians toward the *loa* and in the ceremonies
178 for them. One of the most characteristic is the inheritance of
424 *loa* in families, a direct survival of the belief which not only
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CHAPTER XV

SOME WIDER IMPLICATIONS

158 No student of Haitian institutions can elude a progressively
182 sharpened awareness of the psychological conflict that is being waged within the frame of Haitian society. And though examples of the divergent forces which lie at the root of this conflict have been set forth in the preceding chapters, some of the more important of these may be recalled here.

178 In his social relationships the Haitian is constantly exposed
182 to the demands of a code of morality which requires marriage
595 to be monogamic. Yet the African tradition of polygyny, and
158 the undoubtedly satisfactory arrangements of both an economic and a social nature that can be made under the terms
178 of plural marriage, pull him toward this form. The case is even
182 stronger in the field of religion, which in Haiti is not a thing
771 remote from life, but an intimate part of existence. On the one
158 hand, because of his inheritance of the *loa*, he must meet his obligations toward these ancestral gods of Africa who punish harshly those who fail them, so that he must either continue their traditional worship or learn to know the consequences of their anger. Yet on the other hand, the priest thunders his
[191] maledictions and threats of eternal damnation — in Mirebalais, at least, often in Créole, a language which the peasant can understand — against those of his flock, the vast majority

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of whom are sincere practicing voduists as they are sincere practicing Catholics, who do not put an end to the worship of false gods.

The absence of graphic and plastic arts in Haitian culture, commented upon in a preceding chapter, must also be regarded as a case in point in laying bare the anatomy of this inner conflict of tradition, since it is important to recognize that the suppression of these forms of the prevalent African tradition would seem to have lost to the Haitian an important outlet for the resolution of inner tensions caused by pent-up drives. Even more revealing is the substitution of games of chance for those games of skill which in most African and New World Negro societies are played for their own sake alone—that is, for the prestige accruing to the skillful player. The strain that accompanies this play for stakes, often of no inconsiderable value in terms of the resources of the players, is patent to the most casual observer. The question here arises whether or not the craving for excitement of this kind may not in Haiti be traceable to the inhibition, under slavery, of some of the more gracious forms of African life which there make for social equilibrium. Might it not represent a kind of compensation for the thwarted psychic ease with which a culturally undisturbed people approach their own existence—a state of being which, in contrast, is quite lacking in Haiti?

A singularly illuminating comment upon these manifestations of instability in Haitian life has been made by Dr. J. C. Dorsainvil, who in drawing his conclusion called both upon his own medical training and on his experience of many years as a profound student of his own people. "It has perhaps been insufficiently remarked to what an astonishing degree the Haitian people live on their nerves."[1] As might be expected, he advances a number of possible explanations of the causes that underlie this state of "living on nerves." The wear and tear of life in the tropics is given as one reason; another is the excitement of the *vodun* dances with their frenzy of possession;

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177 George with Linglessou, St. Anthony and St. Christopher with Legba, guardian of the highway, and St. Nicholas with Marassa Trois. In northern Haiti the word *zange* (from the French, *les anges*—the angels) sometimes is used synonymously with loa or mystère. As for the saints, they are sometimes identified with one loa, sometimes with another.

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776 There is one more complicating factor in identifying loa or compiling
171 a comprehensive roster—the use of multiple names. In addition to the
552 names by which they are generally known, many of the deities have a variety of nicknames. Some of these nicknames are in Creole, some appear to be of West African provenience. The deity Agwé, for example, is frequently called Coqui-nan-Mer—Coqui-in-the-Sea. A loa may have four, five, or even more such nicknames. Sometimes short forms are used. Damballa may be called Da, Sobo may be called So, Azaka may be called Za. In addition, some deities have "secret" names, which theoretically are known only to the priesthood and the inner circle of servitors. Multiple naming and the reservation of certain names for special occasions appear to have West African precedents.

In the naming of the loa no neat and methodical system is apparent at any point. The "surname," or what may be in some cases a generic designation, may appear first or last. One may hear Ogoun Chango or Chango Ogoun, Général Brisé or Brisé Général, Congo Savane or Savane
[551] Congo. (This is characteristic of everyday speech. A former president of Haiti, Nord Alexis, is often called Alexis Nord.) The "surname" can be a description of "tribal" or "national" affiliation, regional provenience, character and temperament, or an indication of function. Thus we find

[P. 338]

4. Notes on Orthography

104 The problem of putting the Creole language into writing has confronted
● 197 Haitian and non-Haitian scholars and writers for some time. During
87 the past decade the problem has been an acute one for education au-
114 thorities in Haiti. While there developed a consensus that teaching the
[212] largely illiterate population would have to be done in Creole and not in French, there remained a controversy about the system of orthography that should be used. One of the first attempts to teach Haitian children in their own language was made by Christian Beaulieu, a Haitian educator who worked out a written method based on traditional French orthography.[1] Subsequently, a simpler system was devised by a clergyman, the Reverend H. Ormond McConnell. Although it had numerous detractors among those who favored French orthography, it was found to be far more suitable for educational purposes. The American linguist Robert A. Hall, Jr., carried out a study, the findings of which supported the McConnell method as "perfectly phonemic and at the same time wholly practicable in that it uses only characters already available in print shops and on typewriters."[2]

104 Some Creole texts from Haiti and other West Indian islands, taken down by researchers and scholars, have been transcribed in the McConnell orthography, or in a modified one known as the McConnell-
[114] Laubach system. It is my opinion that although the system is admirable for teaching purposes, and adequate for recording texts for scholarly needs, it is a disadvantage to a reader who has a French vocabulary at his command but who is not familiar with the McConnell orthography. The extent to which this system can disguise a language is easily seen if it is used, for example, to transcribe Jamaican speech. The effect is identical on French words or words of French origin. The Haitian proverb "Run from the rain, fall into the big river" is written by Hall in the McConnell-Laubach orthography: *Kouri pou-lapli, tòbé nè-grd*

1 [UNESCO, The Haiti Pilot Project, P. 39. Cf. P. 355, Category 116. -- Analyst]
2 [Ibid. Cf. P. 355, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

vivè.[3] A system which permits recognition of the original French words would transcribe the proverb: ***Couri pou' lapluit, tombé nan grand rivè.***

In this book, I have in the main used the semi-French forms. Regardless of the status of Creole as a separate language, a great part of its vocabulary is drawn from French, old or modern, and it has seemed unnecessary to disguise the connections of Creole with its antecedents. Nevertheless, I am aware that some of my orthographic choices coincide more with the McConnell-Laubach system than with the Gallic, and some may appear to belong to neither. I hope, however, that my transcribed texts will be easily read.

In most sociological and anthropological reports on Haiti which include texts the transcriptions are based on modified French orthography. Nevertheless, there have been many inconsistencies and contradictions, as there well may be within the covers of this book. One reason may be an inadequate understanding of the Creole language. A second reason can be, and often is, differences of pronunciation in various regions.

But the most significant differences occur in setting down words of non-French or probably non-French origin. One of the more noteworthy of these is ***Vodoun***—a very important word without which it would be very difficult to write of Haitian life. Writers and anthropologists have spelled it in the following ways: Melville J. Herskovits—***Vodu*** and ***Vodun;*** George Eaton Simpson—***Vodun*** (after an earlier trial of ***Vôdoun***); Odette Mennesson Rigaud—***Vodou;*** Milo Rigaud—***Voudoo;*** Robert A. Hall, Jr.—***Vaudoun;*** Selden Rodman—***Vaudou;*** Maya Deren—***Voudoun;*** Eugène Aubin—***Vaudoux.***

Still other variations are to be found, particularly in the early literature on Haiti. In view of the general lack of agreement on this matter, it is not difficult to defend my own choice of ***Vodoun*** (French phonetics), which I used in previous writings.

Other important words which have numerous spellings are ***hounfor*** (***hunfor, humfor, hunfort, humfort, houmphor,*** etc.), ***hounsi*** (***hunsi, hounçi,*** etc.), and the names of various loa.

[3] [Hall and others, Haitian Creole, p. 199. Cf. p. 355, Category 116. -- Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

114 treatment. In the absence of sufficient analytic material on the inter-
121 vening years since his book was written, a prefatory note such as this can do little more than comment on Haitian society, either in terms of its present design or in terms of the recent events that may have modified it.

121
114 The central thesis of Leyburn's book is that Haitian society is sharply
565 divided into two segments, and that the national institutional struc-
[178] ture is such that no significant alteration in that division has occurred in the entire course of Haiti's history as a sovereign nation. At the base of the society is the rural agricultural sector, making up perhaps as much as 95 per cent of the population; at the top the elite, which dominates the governmental apparatus and all national institutions. These two segments of the society differ, in Leyburn's view, in all important regards: level of income, source of income, education, language, religion, social forms, values and attitudes, and all else. By carefully describing the history of Haitian society from the eve of the revolution until the midst of the United States occupation, he reveals both the origin of this vast social cleavage and the various means employed for its perpetuation. Leyburn was so impressed by the gap which separated yeomanry and elite that he chose to label these social segments castes rather than classes. Members of the elite earn their livings as rentiers, merchants, professionals, and in government, and never engage in manual labor of any sort. They are predominantly urban in residence; their sons attend private lower schools, and then
[191] go on to higher education, usually abroad. They are French-speaking,
[197] although they also speak Creole, Haiti's national language. Elite re-
[58] ligion is Catholicism, elite forms of marriage and domestic organiza-
[59] tion are "legitimate" and "western." Elite members view themselves
[829] as a kind of aristocracy, and feel little commonality in their sharing of Haiti and of Haitian history with the yeomen.

114 In sharp contrast, the yeomanry is rural, poor, works the land, is
565 illiterate and Creole-speaking only, believes in *vodoun* rather than in
191 orthodox Catholicism, usually marries by common law and is some-
771 times polygynous, and remains substantially isolated from the outer
583 world. Finally and importantly—though its particular significance is
595 changing—the elite differs from the rural sector in that the country-
144 man is predominantly negroid in phenotype, while members of the elite are prevailingly lighter-skinned.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

The distinction between castes on the basis of occupation is nowhere more clearly seen than in the feminine sphere. The peasant woman, from childhood onward, is an indefatigable laborer, absolutely indispensable to the economic life of the country. She not only performs the usual domestic functions but works in the fields as well. She carries marketable goods, sometimes for miles, to the town for sale. The aristocratic woman, on the other hand, is rarely active in business. Indeed, until very recent years no career was open to her outside the home, nor would custom have allowed her to follow one; even now, teaching and a few clerical positions in government service are her only business opportunities. She directs the household economy but has servants if she can possibly afford them. Her place is definitely in the home. 565 562

The second infallible test of membership in the élite caste is education and an ability to speak French. When Haiti was a slave colony belonging to France, the hundreds of thousands of blacks imported from Africa had no common tongue, coming as they did from wide stretches of the continent; the French spoken by their overseers, a development of the Norman dialect,[3] became their one language, known as Créole. Every Haitian, high and low, knows and uses this language, for nursemaids speak it to the upper-class children in their charge, and all servants speak it. The élite consequently learn it at a tender age, and must use it in all their dealings with the lower orders. Among themselves, however, they speak French. The official language of the country is French. To speak correct French is an immediate announcement that one has had the advantage of schooling and has been in contact with the aristocracy. Theoretically, Haitian education is free and democratic; actually, no peasant child could be spared from labor long enough for schooling, or find money for proper clothes to go to school in. 565 197 [87]

Inevitably the standard of living is a reflection of caste membership. "The élite wear shoes," explained General Butler laconically to the United States Senate investigating committee, when asked what characterized the classes of Haiti. His elliptical remark is true. Peasants, indeed, could not afford to purchase shoes, but more particularly they could not afford to dress up to the standard set by the shoes. When a man of the masses dons the castoff shoes of some aristocrat, the logical assumption by everyone is that this man is pre- 565 511

3. See chap. XVIII.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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[p. 297]

XVIII

THE CRÉOLE LANGUAGE

JUST as Haiti is a country of two distinct social strata, so it possesses two distinct languages, French and Créole. Only the élite speak French, but everyone in the country, from the president to the humblest dullard, speaks Créole. Aristocrats call the latter language disparagingly a *patois*. But is it? When does a patois or a dialect become a true language? When it has definite rules of grammar, declension, rhetoric? Créole has them all, even though the users are unaware of the rules. When it acquires the dignity of a literature? Increasingly the most original Haitian authors write their novels and poems in Créole or with large passages in that tongue—and did English suddenly cease to be a patois and become a language only when Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* appeared? When it is the language of passion, of sorrow, of delicate nuance? Here more than anywhere Créole meets the requirements, as any honest Haitian would confess by his lapse into Créole at moments of emotion. When it gains wide concurrence? No Haitian is ignorant of Créole.

Two centuries have witnessed the birth of this new tongue, but because it has been the speech of the lower orders this has not been accounted a noteworthy phenomenon, has not been praised as a philological achievement, has only recently been studied by linguists. Most people have been content to regard it as a debasement of French—and poor French at that. Yet were not Italian and French likewise debasements of Latin by the common folk, and English even more of a debasement and a hodgepodge? In 1700 Créole existed only in germ; by 1800 it was already formed—a kind of social cement which held together all that diffuse humanity which was shortly to become an independent nation.

Créole is not, as most people (even cultured Haitians) assume, the degeneration of French which occurred when benighted African slaves tried to learn and speak a new language. On the contrary, it was already a language when the slaves were brought into Saint-Domingue. They learned it quickly, and in the course of two hundred years they and their descendants, who have known no other tongue, have modified it only as any people slowly transform

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

197 a language into their daily speech. What the Americans have done to English, the Haitians in general have done to Créole. It is pertinent briefly to review the early history of Créole in order to comprehend the distinctly Haitian contributions to the language.

175 579 Through most of the seventeenth century Caribbean waters were full of pirates and buccaneers preying upon Spanish shipping. The effective monopoly which lordly Spain held in the preceding century over the trade of Europe with her rich Mexican and South American colonies began, in the early years of the new century, to crumble before the ingenious, speedy, and daring assaults of non-Spanish raiders. French, Dutch, and English sailors were all ready to try their hand at capturing laden Spanish ships. The rich cargoes of gold, silver, and merchandise were alluring enough to make the risk seem worth taking. And indeed the risk was not too great, for Spain's stately galleons were antiquated and cumbersome, generally no match for the flyboats[1] which had speed and much greater manageability. More and more Spanish control over the Caribbean, the Spanish Main, declined as the freebooters increased.

175 579 648 French sailors were among the most numerous and reckless of the gadflies who made life miserable for the Spanish traders. Drawn from the northern and northwestern provinces of France, these men had been seafarers all their lives. Harrying Spanish shipping was the most lucrative career for French sailors, and as the seventeenth century wore on their numbers in the Caribbean increased. By 1660 they had established a raiding base on La Tortue, an island off the northern coast of Haiti, where they developed a characteristic way of life —economic, political, and social—between raids.[2] Their presence near Haiti gave France a claim, in the Treaty of Ryswick (1697), to the western part of the island. For the next hundred years this region was to be known as Saint-Domingue.

175 579 197 Créole was born of buccaneering. In the seventeenth century the French of Île-de-France had not yet supplanted the dialects of the French districts; the buccaneers consequently spoke their native speech, and since Norman sailors far outnumbered the others

[175] [192] 1. Origin of "flibustier," "filibuster," and "freebooter."

2. It was here that they came to be called "buccaneers." They raided the relatively deserted main island of Haiti (then still under Spanish control) for cattle roaming wild. These cattle they cooked over an open fire, with a certain kind of wood; the process was called "boucanning," and they themselves "boucaniers." They imported wives from the seaport towns of Normandy, and families began to be raised on La Tortue.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Norman French became the dominant tongue of the French buccaneers. Words were naturally added from the patois of the neighboring French provinces of Picardy, Brittany, and Anjou, but Norman remained the matrix.[3] With La Tortue as their home base, the buccaneers roamed the Caribbean, coming into constant contact with other people—contact which left its mark, as meetings generally do, upon the speech of the travelers.

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There were still Indians left in some of the islands, and Indians outnumbered Spaniards on the mainland. From these aborigines Créole borrowed many individual words, these being generally the names of things—flora and fauna, food, objects of daily life more or less common throughout the Caribbean world.[4] The grammatical contributions of the Indians were apparently only an emphasis upon tendencies already present in Norman French, such as that of keeping the verb form constant while making other words in the sentence do the work of indicating past, present, or future, continuous or completed action, and the like.

175 197 192

Engaged in buccaneering with the French were hundreds of English privateers. Often English and French raided in partnership; for many years both groups shared La Tortue. This contact left a heavy mark upon Créole—a congenial one, indeed, for Norman French had been for more than four centuries the official language of England. Now in the seventeenth century English was giving back to Norman many words in exchange for the ones it had taken.[5] More important than its verbal gift, however, was the influence it exerted toward a simple syntax. As compared with French forms,

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3. An outstanding linguist, Jules Faine, in *Philologie créole*, p. 1, estimates that three out of four words in Créole are Norman.

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4. A very few of these Indian words have become familiar in French, and still fewer in English; but one finds most of them, in one form or another, in the whole Caribbean basin. Examples are:

agouti, a small rodent	*hamac*, hammock
atoutou, a dish whose base is corn	*ouragan*, hurricane
caiman, alligator	*bayahonde*, a very hard wood
iguane, a large lizard	*campêche*, another hard wood
avocat, the avocado pear	*mabouya*, small lizard
calebasse, calabash	*barbaco*, barbecue
corossol, a green prickly fruit	*cassava*, a starch plant
gouyave, guava	*lambi*, a mollusk or conch
igname, yam	*tom-tom*, a purée of bananas

5. Henry Moisy, *Glossaire comparatif Anglo-Normand* (Caen, 1888), points out that the modern Norman dialect contains more than 5,000 words common to English and Norman, but not recognized in official French.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 Norman ones were less complicated; English, simpler still, reën-
192 forced the Norman tendency.

●197 From the Spaniards of the Caribbean region Créole borrowed not only nouns (generally the most assimilable of words), but a large number of adjectives, pronouns, auxiliary verbs, and certain subtler characteristics of speech.

This amalgam, then, three quarters Norman French, was the Créole language as of 1697 when France acquired Saint-Domingue, when buccaneering became unprofitable, and many of the filibusters settled down to begin a respectable life as plantation owners in the
567 new colony. African slaves were soon imported to satisfy the demand
197 for labor. First a few, then thousands a year and increasing thousands,
192 were brought to Saint-Domingue. In all externalities, of which
175 language is one, slaves must yield up their old ways and take on new. The question of interest here is to what extent the Negroes influenced Créole, giving it an "African" character.

The answer, surprising at first, is that the Negro influence was almost negligible.

175 In the first place, Créole was now already a language with a rich
177 vocabulary, all the grammatical equipment, and the necessary regu-
197 larities. The slaves came to the colony from all parts of Africa, and so with widely differing languages. Linguistic maps of Africa indicate the presence of hundreds of dialects up and down the west coast; tribes living fifteen miles apart spoke languages which, although belonging to the same stock, were as different as Spanish and Italian from each other. Owing to the habit of dispersing the slaves, the
[191] average Negro had no common basis of understanding with his fellow slaves on the same plantation. Practically all white foremen and overseers gave orders in Créole; this within one generation became the *lingua franca* of the plantations, an economic necessity, and socially indispensable.

In the second place, there was in Saint-Domingue no equivalent to the familiar objects of life in Africa. Trees, houses, earth there were, of course, but different kinds of trees, houses, and soil. Economic tasks were performed in a different manner with new techniques and organization. Every outward form of life was foreign to the African background. Even assuming that there had been a common Negro speech, it would have found little to attach itself to in the New World. It should be noted that Negroes likewise made few contribu-

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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tions to the English language in the southern United States, where they were slaves for seventy years longer than in Haiti.

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Common African economic ways yielded to the plantation system and slavery; the Negroes had no opportunity to govern themselves or settle their own disputes; they mated rather than married; their families might be broken up if the master wished to sell a slave. The one part of life in which they were permitted to follow unhindered their African ways was the intimate one of religion which, since it needed no buildings or organization, did not interfere with work, and could be entirely personal and private, was not suppressed. As has been pointed out, the Dahomean form of religion prevailed over all others and, modified, gained wide adherence among the slaves. It is precisely in Vodun that Créole has taken over its only important African words, such as Vodun, zombi, houngan, marassa, loa, houmfort, bocor, ouanga.

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It would be erroneous to imply that the Negroes had no effect upon the language of which they soon became the predominant users.[6] Their operations were of a subtle sort, however. As with the Negroes of the United States, the letter "r" proved difficult, and often disappeared altogether, leaving many words softly slurred. "Marcher," for example, generally sounds as if it were *ma'ché*. Likewise in the course of years they gave the language their own accent, their own modulation and tone, which make Créole sound different on their lips from a white man's way of speaking it. Some scholars attribute this to a *racial* influence—that is, to the morphology of the Negro throat and tongue. It might be pointed out to the contrary that Americans, white like the English, have given the mother tongue *their* own accent, modulation, and tone. It has certainly not yet been proved that race has anything to do with speech.

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Words in imitation of a sound grow up in every language. Several western African dialects, especially Mandingue, seemed fond of onomatopoeia; in Haiti, consequently, one hears many an expressive additional word. Moreau de Saint-Méry[7] noticed this in colonial Saint-Domingue, citing such cases as the addition of "*bap*" to the verb "*tomber*," if one had fallen down lightly, or "*boum*" if heavily;

6. Suzanne Sylvain, *Le Créole haïtien* (Wetteren, Belgium, 1936), p. 10, says that although the African contribution to Haitian Créole is generally considered to be slight, she has personally found 170 words of undeniable African origin, and feels sure that there are many more.

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7. *Description . . . de . . . Saint-Domingue*, II, 36–37.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Only a beginning has been made of collecting the thousands of "Cric? Crac!" stories current in Haiti.

It is only recently that people have written Créole, so that there is no standard orthography. Every writer spells words phonetically, with consequent irregularities, and with wide differences between two people writing the same thing. Recent etymological studies may lead eventually to a dictionary and a standard spelling. In order that the reader may see the resemblance of Créole to French, yet its differences from that language, we shall quote a part of one of La Fontaine's fables put into Créole verse by Georges Sylvain.[10] His own French retranslation accompanies the fable, turning such phrases as "female pig" into "sow."

Nan temps toutt bett té palé,	*Au temps où toutes les bêtes parlaient,*
Té g'ain (palant pa respé)	*Il y avait (sauf votre respect)*
Té g'ain gnou fémel cochon.	*Il y avait une truie.*
Zott connin gen cochon bon?	*Vous savez comme les truies sont bonnes gens?*
Cila-là té fait zanmi	*Celle-ci avait fait amitié*
Avec gnou fémel chien, qui	*Avec une chienne, qui*
Té prett pou mi bas. Chien-là,	*Était sur le point de mettre bas. La chienne*
Gnou jou, dit cochon con ça:	*Un jour, dit à la truie:*
"Moin pré pou moin accouché,	*"Me voilà près d'accoucher,*
"Ma conmé, t'en pri! souplé,	*"Ma commère, je vous en prie, s'il vous plaît,*
"Pémett moin prété gnou coin	*"Permettez-moi d'emprunter un coin*
"Nan pac ou, pou pititt moin."	*"De votre parc, pour mes enfants."*[11]

The terseness of the language is fascinating, a situation is hit off precisely in a few words: a stuffed shirt has been deflated, and the truth has been told. A Haitian was heard to say, "Nègue riche li mulatte; mulatte pauvre li nègue"—a rich Negro is accounted a mulatto; a poor mulatto is to all intents and purposes no better than a Negro. And there is a profound comment on the whole caste system.

Wherever the French went in the Caribbean region the Créole language spread—in Louisiana, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Guiana. Each region has its own peculiarities, but in general it may be said that these other regions show much more French (as distinct from Norman) influence on Créole, and much less Spanish and English influence. Similarly in Haitian towns, where the élite speak French

10. *Cric? Crac! Fables de La Fontaine racontées par un montagnard haïtien et transcrites en vers créoles* (Port-au-Prince, 1929), p. 21.

11. "*Zott*" means "*vous autres*"; "*gnou*" is "*une*."

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Similarly in Haitian towns, where the élite

 speak French

197 and where French is taught in the schools, the Créole is less "pure" than in the untutored countryside. Even there the language is changing, for there is steadily operating that "law of simplification" which reduces the complications of language when it has only an oral tradition.[12] Abridgment occurs more and more frequently, agglutination is more apparent, and words tend toward the monosyllabic.

191 Everyone in Haiti speaks and understands Créole. Nursemaids teach it to their élite charges, so that children know it from infancy; élite lovers lapse into its expressive phrases in order to say something particularly intimate which might sound sentimental in French; priests must use it in their parish work if they are to be understood at all. Even the élite presidents have found it wise to speak often to the countrypeople in their own tongue. The gendarmes would be helpless in their police work without it, as would the agricultural, health, and other governmental services. It is the language in which all the small business of Haiti is conducted.[13] Ernest Douyon has written brilliantly and revealingly about it:

> If, on the one hand, we have a business language, an official tongue, which is French, our true maternal language, on the other hand, that one which we first lisp, that of the country as a whole (I had almost said "of the true country," for such is the case), that of the city people as well as of countryfolk, that of all families whatever their differences in education, the language one hears not only in humble huts but in luxurious villas, not only in offices or among the masses but also in private apartments and salons, that which for the crudest as for the most finely cultivated minds (even when these latter through snobbery try to deny the fact) is at all times the most naturally expressive, that which perfectly translates our deepest sentiments (jubilation, anger, love, or whatever) precisely when these are most strongly felt, that which all of us, all (with the rarest exceptions) use spontaneously—is Créole! I know that it is not considered proper in polite society, that it sometimes lends a certain impression of vulgarity, that it is not the correct language for distinguished people—when they are in public! But who is the man of propriety, who the society woman, who in private does not continually use Créole?[14]

12. See P. Crouzet, *Les Ponts romains* (Toulouse, 1929), p. 18.

[196] [193] 13. It must be noted that in the Vodun service the houngan sometimes speaks in *langage*, which is not Créole. It purports to be pure African, but is more likely to be mere gibberish.

14. In his Preface to Faine, *op. cit.*, p. v.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

(*Evo évo* is ritual language. Hounsi kanzo are the servitors of the hounfor being addressed by an unidentified loa.) 533 539 [198] [194]

EXAMPLE 136

Achadé, oh, oh!
Achadé, I have no mother here to speak for me!
Achadé, oh!
Achadé, I have no mother here to speak for me!
Oh Achadé, oh!
Ogoun is bad, oh!
Achadé Papa!
Ogoun is bad, oh!
Etc.

(The song is addressed to the loa Achadé; it complains of the behavior of another loa, Ogoun.) [182]

EXAMPLE 137

Beat the drum for me!
I shall . . . , beat the drum for me!
Etc.
Three times after the Angelus, oh!
Three times after the Angelus, oh!

(This appears to be a children's game song. Three "times" after the Angelus would be three hours after six o'clock in the evening.) [524]

EXAMPLE 138

Liberist fell down!
Liberist fell down! *Adiél*
I am sending a whip for his back!
Etc.

(A children's game song.)

EXAMPLE 139

Adaïzo!
Miyensalo Aloko, my Loko, Adaïzo!
Miyensalo Aloko, my Loko, Adaïzo!
Miyensalo my Loko, Adaïzo!
Etc.

(This is a song of supplication to the loa Loko. The word *miyensalo* signifies supplication.) [182]

EXAMPLE 140

Ten cents is not a dollar,
Cousin, don't take cousin, oh, cousin!

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Cousin, oh, cousin, oh,
Cousin, don't take cousin, oh, cousin!

(A *gourdain* is one-quarter of a gourde, or the equivalent of five cents in United States money. *Dé gourdain* is ten cents.)

EXAMPLE 141 consists entirely of ritual language.

EXAMPLE 142

Call Damballa, call Donici, call Damballa Wèdo,
Damballa, call Damballa Wèdo, Damballa.

(Damballa and Donici are the names of loa.)

EXAMPLE 143

Ibo, I am a big man, oh!
Ibo, I am a big man, oh!
Ibo, I am the patriarch, oh, I am the patriarch, oh,
I am the chief of my house!

(Ibo is the name of a loa, from whose point of view the song is being sung. Ibo is stating his seniority in his house, or family, for there are other loa related to him. The word *grand* in Creole, as used here, is difficult to translate. It means good or elder, or both. A *grand famille* is the oldest in the extended family, and usually carries the connotation of head or chief.)

EXAMPLE 144

Ibo Ibo é, Samardi Kama!
Etc.

(Samardi Kama is the name of a loa of the Ibo family. The song consists of a repetition of his name, with variations.)

EXAMPLE 145

Ibo Ibo é, Marianni é!
Etc., with variations.

(This is a song to the loa Marianni, of the Ibo family. Except for his name, in various combinations, there are no words.)

EXAMPLE 146 is a song for the making of magic. It is entirely in ritual language.

EXAMPLE 147

Call Ouange, call Lobouan in the water!
Ouange, oh, call Ouange in the water!
Ouange, oh, call Ouange in the water!

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 HARI SV3

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Your share, *mayouse*!
Find your woman, *mayouse*!
Mayou-*youse*!

(*Paillette* means "all decorated up," "fancy," "in carnival regalia." It is also the name of a dance, as is *mayouse*, used here as an exclamation.) [192] [535]

EXAMPLE 168 was said to be in "Spanish."

EXAMPLE 169

Go to your mother's house,
Go to your mother's house,
Go to your mother's house, my dear,
Do not come and give me an argument!
Go to your mother's house, my dear,
Go to your mother's house, my dear,
Go to your mother's house, my dear,
And do not give me an argument!
Little girl who doesn't know how to wash and iron,
Go home to your mother,
Little girl who doesn't know how to wash and iron,
Go home to your mother!
Angelico, Angelico, go to your mother's house!
Angelico, Angelico, go to your mother's house!

EXAMPLE 172

Oh I'm not a mule,
Oh I'm not a mule, oh!
The farmer takes me to carry his coffee!

(A good-natured protest song of the kind often sung by coumbites.) [196]

EXAMPLE 173 has no text. It is exclamatory throughout.

EXAMPLE 174

E Laiza, where should I go, Laiza *ô*!
Laiza, the children are hypocrites, oh!
Etc.

EXAMPLE 175

Eve Mambo Susan, I am cutting trees
To take away the honey!

EXAMPLE 176

Adieu kining kining kining.
Oh I say my prayer to God to send rain!

(The first line is ritual language, but it appears to have been originally a phrase recited by the petit' savant.) [198]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1953) 1960 SV3 Haki SV3

533
539 EXAMPLE 178

Osan, oh, Lèlè, oh!
Osan, oh, Lèlè, oh!
They take the asson of the loa and serve evil, oh!
Let it sleep!

[626] [176] (The song criticizes someone who has become a houngan and has used his powers wrongly. Osan Lèlè is the loa to whom the complaint is being addressed, or he may be the one lodging the complaint.)

EXAMPLE 179

Farmer, call the loa for me, *ago-é!*
Farmer, call the loa for me now,
Call the loa for me now,
Gèdé has engaged me!

[176] [192] (Gèdé is a loa. *Habitant* signifies "farmer" or "peasant" but could be translated as "countryman.")

EXAMPLE 180

Boulicha, I arrive,
See my misfortune!
I will cut them, I have no knife!
Boulicha Nago, I will cut them, *malovié!*

[176] [198] (The loa Boulicha Nago announces his arrival and complains that people have mistreated him. He says he will avenge himself without a knife. *Malovié* is ritual language.)

EXAMPLE 181

I am going to see the hounsi bossale, oh,
I am going to see if they are in accord with me.
Etc.

EXAMPLE 182

I cry honor before my loa's altar,
Cry honor, and no one replies!
I cry honor before my loa's altar,
Cry honor, and no one replies!
All who speak well [of me], I am here, I will listen, oh!
All who speak evil [of me], I am here, I will listen to them!
They sign my name, Allada, but they do not sign my feet,
I ask where will they see me!

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

regime. That President Duvalier has been able to stay in power in spite of internal dissaffection, sometime hostile United States propaganda, a dire economic situation, personal ill health, and other woes, is a tribute to his political acumen, if not to his principles. None of this means, of course, that such consummate skill will continue to work; Haitian governments have a way of falling suddenly, and the Duvalier regime will probably not prove an exception.

Dr. Duvalier's success indicates that he has made certain correct assessments, not only of Haiti's social and political structure but also of United States policy with regard to Haiti. The occupation was notable for its failure to make any telling alterations in the economic structure or level of development of the country. Many beneficial changes were made, as Leyburn demonstrates, particularly in the areas of health and health services, communications, government administration, education, and transport (though the use of corvée labor on the roads led to serious abuses, and stimulated sanguinary guerilla warfare). But most significantly, the United States institutionalized the army and police forces. The ragged bands of political mercenaries of the past were dissolved; the officer-ridden army was transformed into a small, well-trained, and well-organized force. Eventual firm control by this force of weaponry, communications, and transport ended the era of presidential succession by invasion, turned the army into the major locus of nonelectoral, president-making power, and may have ended forever the possibility of an agrarian revolt against the central authority. Another political effect of the occupation was the importance it imparted to the United States ambassador, whose political opinions thereafter would matter significantly in the transmission of power at the top of the Haitian governmental system. The Duvalier regime has continuously taken full account of the consequences of United States interest; and its leaders have been able to watch the operation of that interest in the political events occurring between the fall of the Lescot government and the present.

In the view of one acute observer, President Duvalier, in order to consolidate his power, had to cope with three other loci of political strength in addition to the army and the United States ambassador. The business community, located for the most part in Port-au-Prince, had strongly supported Déjoie's candidacy during the interregnum; its leaders were mainly members of the elite, and many had strong

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

fact that a family will often strike out for itself, deserting the parental home, show a European independence foreign to native African thought. Yet the arrangement of meal-times, and the fact that a wife rarely eats with her husband, are African, as are the modes of correction, especially the feeling that flogging with a stick is the best disciplinary method. Indeed, the characteristic snap of the fingers employed by the Haitian to indicate a beating is exactly that which is used in Dahomey to signify beheading! In the attitude toward children African traditions have been warped by European custom, which has introduced a certain hardness of feeling that, whatever the cost, children must be brought in line with social convention, together with a resulting harshness of treatment that is anything but African.

Another important facet of Haitian life in which the effect of contact is telling includes art and recreational activities. Perhaps because of the conditions of slavery, or the difficulties of life after independence had been attained, much of these forms of African tradition has been lost, not to be replaced by corresponding borrowings from European sources. Wood-carving, an outstanding element in the æsthetic life of West Africa, is almost entirely absent. Near Mirebalais lives a man who can carve a pipe in the likeness of a human face, but there is no similarity between the products of his craft and West African figurines or masks, and he is thought of as an unusual person whose carving is an interesting but not socially significant avocation. It was stated, though without adequate corroboration, that before the Marine occupation Mirebalais boasted *vodun* drums on which heads " like the ones on these pipes " had been carved. Today the only form of decorative work in wood to be seen is the scroll-work designs which act as ventilating devices over doorways. They are done with the jigsaws of the carpenters, and no fertility of conception or felicity in composition marks these artistically crude efforts.

Other African crafts, which, though essentially utilitarian

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

trance of the house — three times if there is one door (for the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost), three times before each door if there are two entrances, and once before each door if there are three. The wedding procession goes to church on foot. The men, if they are from the countryside, are stiff, uncomfortable, and hot in their unaccustomed "best" clothing and their often painful shoes, while the women are also self-conscious in their new dresses. The elaborateness of the ceremony varies with the fee paid the priest, but at all events the clanging church bell is heard notifying the town and its environs that a marriage is being consecrated.

If the family of the bride or groom are well known in Mirebalais, a wedding reception may be given at their house for friends of the couple and of their parents, but the real festivities are held after the return to the new family home. As the procession approaches it, the "bush-priest," a functionary who, because of his knowledge of French, can read the prayers of the Church, waits at the gate with two aides, small boys or girls, each with a flag, one red and one white. He has sacred water in one hand and a lighted candle in the other, and as he pours this water on the ground three times he intones the Pater Noster, the Ave Maria, the Credo, and other prayers. These concluded, hymns are sung by all the participants, and singing, a procession is formed with the "bush-priest" in the lead, followed by the flag-bearers, the couple who have just been married, arm in arm, the "godfather" and "godmother" of the marriage, as the witnesses are called, the parents of the bride and groom, and other close relatives. As the procession reaches the door of the house, it pauses and water is thrown on the ground three times; the circuit of the house is made twice again, and each time, as the door is reached, water is thrown, until, the third tour completed, the participants solemnly enter.

There coffee, liqueurs, wine, *kola*, and cakes are served to the principals and the more important members of the com-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

slave, as a "sold *baka*," remained to wreak vengeance upon anyone who dared disturb his charge. 776 454

The reality of the *baka* to the Haitian was made dramatically vivid by an incident involving an old blind and deaf horse. It occurred one night on the principal streets of the town of Mirebalais itself. The horse was first noticed as the sun set, groping his way along, and finally circling the turn of the road. Though people shouted at the animal, he would not give way. As darkness came and doors and windows were barred, the horse blundered into the small veranda of a house inhabited by an elderly woman, her daughter, and her grandchildren. The younger woman cried out with fright when, timidly peering about the side of the house, she saw their visitor, but the older woman, whose age made her fearless in the face of this supernatural danger, opened a window and vigorously attacked the animal with a heavy stick, while he unhurriedly tried to get clear of the blows and finally moved on to the next veranda, and so from house to house down the street. On this night the habitual tranquillity did not settle over the town, and all of the next day and many days thereafter there was quiet talk of the danger that had been abroad, and much speculation of its intended destination. 776 825

The *baka* are sometimes confused with the *démons*, as is seen in the fragmentary information that was obtained about the existence of secret societies, so feared by Mirebalais folk because of their reputation for working all kinds of evil that it was with difficulty that even the names of two of them could be learned — the "Bissago," whose members appear at night wearing horns and holding candles, and "Les Cochons sans Poils." The former, termed *démons*, are believed to be able to change into animals when they do their evil work, a feat which would seem to make them *baka*. The societies all meet in the open country at night, and each has a small drum. They are called together by the beating of one rock against another in a manner reminiscent of the Zangbeto society of Porto Novo, Dahomey. 754 776 575 [202] [171]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

contents, is given by Wirkus, 178–9.

[3] Compare this description with the *humfort* pictured in Johnston, p. 194.

[4] It is to be emphasized that in the course of the *vodun* rituals witnessed during this field-work, none of the "frenzy of the blood lust" that is so favorite an aspect of these ceremonies with writers of books on Haiti was encountered. As an extreme example of this heightening of the tone with which a ceremony is described, the work of Seabrook may be cited, for phrases such as "blood-maddened, sex-maddened, god-maddened" used by him mark perhaps an all-time record for distortion of the inner discipline of the *vodun* cult.

[5] Cf. Parsons's brief sketch, (I), 172–3, of a *mangé loi*, though the "bloody anointing" of which she speaks was not seen to occur in Mirebalais *services*. Detailed descriptions of what apparently were *services* are given by Wirkus, 168 ff., who, though honest in recounting what he saw, realized nothing of its significance; and Seabrook (pp. 54–70), who reads so much into what he purports to have witnessed that the entire account is rendered useless.

CHAPTER X

[1] Compare Parsons (I), 167–72.

[2] The drunkenness at serious dances reported by Parsons (I), 172, and others, would not be tolerated in Mirebalais.

[3] Price-Mars (I), 208, gives the name of *assotôr* for the great drum.

[4] Much nonsense has been written concerning these drums. Many writers — all non-Haitians — stress the existence of a drum language, which seems to be an assertion of dubious truth.

[5] This is a striking example of what Dorsainvil (I), 73–4 and 131 ff., calls the *masque vôduique* in detailing the effects of possession on the features of the possessed. See also the discussion of possession in Price-Mars (I), 122–3. The Gede possession described by Craige, 73–4, must, on the basis of customary Haitian behavior under possession, be subject to reinterpretation.

[6] Cf. Parsons (I), 170.

796 Then a well-dressed young man entered, and the drummers swiftly
793 changed to the salute reserved for guests of distinction. The hounsi sang,
[554] "Président passe là, l'ap monté au gouvernment!" and waved paper flags
[702] and kerchiefs. The young man was a distant relative of Stephan's; he also was a houngan.

After a while Stephan brought from his hounfor a second asson, or ritual rattle, and another small hand bell, both of which he handed to the
[516] young man. He was extending the courtesy of his hounfor, sharing his instruments of authority and religious power with his fellow houngan. Then followed an exhibition between the two houngans that was half duel and half ballet. They stood face to face, each of them holding the asson in one hand and the tiny bell in the other. Stephan was "testing" the young houngan for the edification of all present. Each tiny move made by Stephan was duplicated simultaneously by his guest, as though he were a mirrored reflection.

Every posture Stephan made was duplicated instantly by his guest. The assons and the bells were agitated constantly. The rattle in the young man's hand did precisely what Stephan's did. The two men looked into each other's eyes with intensity, as though this bound their movements together and unified them. When Stephan twisted to the left, the other houngan twisted to the right. Every contortion of the young man was an exact replica of Stephan's movements. The two assons rattled out the same rhythms and the same signals; so did the bells. The backdrop for this "test" was provided by the drummers. The faces of the two men broke into a sweat from the intense nervous effort. At last it came to an end. A woman came forward and wiped their faces with a colored kerchief. The "testing" ceremony was over. The visiting houngan had been proved.

796 Stephan then made a ritual vèvè, or maize-flour ritual drawing on the
793 ground. Afterward there was more singing and dancing by the hounsi.
787 They sang several songs for Ezilie Fréda, the "pure" loa. And Alexis
[532] Stephan went into a trance. It was unexpected. The servitors had not
[794] prepared for it. In this emergency the visiting houngan took over. He
[776] seemed a little anxious. He was unfamiliar with the particular psychological factors at play in this particular hounfor. He was not certain of the character of Stephan's possession. But he took over grimly. The houngénicon, an older woman, stepped forward to help. While the young houngan wielded the asson and bell, the woman issued instructions. Stephan, his head hanging back, his eyes closed, was supported by two of the hounsi. Other servitors hurriedly brought out a white sheet and spread it on the ground. A chair and a table were set upon the sheet, and Stephan was placed in the chair, where he now sat with his head hanging limply on his chest.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 112-G]

142
302
534
202
476

9. *Calling the coumbite: signaling on a conch-shell trumpet.*

243
291
476
516

10. *A women's coumbite weeding a cornfield near the town of Plaisance.*

534 the Haitian word for "twins." They are used primarily for secular
[177] music of the Cuban type, and may in fact be an importation from Cuba. The marassa is one of the few drums on which a finger technique is used; that is, striking with individual fingers rather than with grouped fingers. Marassas are often played in concert with guitars and marimbas.

The *basse* is the shallow finger drum resembling what in the United States is called the tambourine. Constructed in the pattern of an African prototype, its head is usually fifteen or eighteen inches in diameter and made of goatskin. Small metal disks sometimes are inserted in the frame
[314] to act as rattles. The head is kept well coated with resin or beeswax and
[237] is tapped and rubbed with the fingers. The *basse* is used only for secular music, except in the rare instances when it is used in Congo services. Some Haitians believe that the name of the instrument comes from the word *Basque*.

534 It is reported that signal drums were still in use a decade ago in
202 remote sections of the southwestern peninsula. One of these instruments, according to description, is distinguished mainly by its large belly and small mouth; like the Juba drum, it is played on its side. Another style of signal drum has a slit in the side and is played erect, much like an African slit-log drum standing on end.

534 Another percussion instrument is the bamboo stamping tube, called
the *ganbo* or *ti kanmbo*. It is African in origin and probably takes its
[171] name from the Loango term for the same device, *dikanmbo*.[2] The stamping tube is simply a length of bamboo, open at one end and closed at the other by a natural joint membrane. The closed end is struck sharply upon the ground, and the tone comes from the open top. The device works like an inverted drum, the closed end functioning like a drumhead. A battery of four or five ganbos may provide the percussion music otherwise played by drums. The musician corresponding to the *bulatier* of the drum orchestra plays two small stamping tubes, one in each hand. The other musicians have one each, thicker and longer than the bulatier's and producing deeper tones. Cupped hands are manipulated over the open ends for varying the sounds. This instrument
[171] has survived in various parts of the New World where Africans were settled, particularly other West Indian islands, Brazil, and Venezuela. In Venezuela the stamping tubes are called *quitiplas*.[3] They have recently been reported from various areas of West Africa, including French Equatorial Africa.[4]

534 The ganbos had a singular burst of popularity in Haiti during the
648 United States military occupation of the country after the first World
798 War, when drums were often seized and destroyed. Drums could not
[115]

[2] [Informant: Joseph Lengo, Brazzaville. Cf. P.354, Category 116. --Analyst]
[3] [Library of Congress album, Folk Music of Venezuela. Cf. P. 354 Category 116. --Analyst]
[4] [Pamphlet accompanying recording Music of Equatorial Africa (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1950). Cf. P. 354, cat. 116. --Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

easily be hidden, but the ganbos were simply slipped into the straw 534
roofs and thus put out of sight. Moreover, by some strange process of 648
reasoning, military authorities regarded the bamboos as "harmless," 798
though they were used for the same purposes as the contraband drums.

There are numerous other kinds of simple percussion devices. One 534
such instrument, now less commonly seen than previously, is a length of open bamboo laid in the crotches of two Y-shaped sticks set in the ground. Like other *catas*, the bamboo is beaten with two sticks. Some Haitians believe that in former days such bamboos were played in batteries like a xylophone.

Sometimes a light-weight wooden cylinder, or perhaps a drum de- [461]
nuded of its playing head, is carried by the timekeeper of a coumbite. [476]
It, also, is played on the side with sticks.

Wooden mortars for pulverizing grain take on the character of musical 534
instruments when used in combination with voices. When two or more 533
mortars are used, with two men or women wielding the long polelike 412
pestles in each mortar, the rhythmic effects can become fairly complicated.

The *claves* or *palos* (small hardwood sticks) are used primarily in 534
connection with secular dances of a Cuban type, or to accompany such 535
instruments as the guitar and the marimba. One stick is held loosely in [177]
the natural fold of the hand, so that it is free to vibrate, and is struck
sharply with the second stick. The tone is almost metallic because of [824]
the hardness of the wood, usually lignum vitae. The name of the instrument is recognizable as a form of *clavar*, or *clavo*, Spanish for "peg" or "nail." It is thought that wooden shipbuilding pegs provided the [171]
name for this device, which has equivalents in West Africa.

Among the folk instruments there are various kinds of horns and 534
trumpets. Cows' horns are played musically in some parts of the southern 184
peninsula, though usually they are used as ritual instruments and signaling devices. Wooden trumpets called *pistons* are carved from the stems [824]
of the papaya tree. Conch-shell trumpets, known as *lambis*, are com- [202]
monly used as signaling devices by fishermen. They are also to be found among the coumbites, in Rara festivities, and occasionally in rituals, where they are usually identified with sea deities. In carnival [541]
times the old fashioned phonograph horn makes its appearance as a com- [216]
bined trumpet and voice amplifier.

Probably the most important of the trumpets is the one made of 534
bamboo. It is called a *vaccine*, or *bois bourrique*. Both names have in- 755
teresting origins. The cow's horn was at one time used for magico- [237]
medical purposes. The leaf doctor used it as an "applicator" of powders and potions. A small opening was made in the point of the horn, and

[See plate 8, P. 112-F. -- Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

learn the properties of plants, both for healing and for poison. Except for the belief in spiritual beings, this folk knowledge would hardly have been classed as religious, for it was useful in every phase of daily life; the classification is that of the anthropologist, not of the simple black.

If Dahomean beliefs prevailed over others of African origin, it was chiefly because of the numerical preponderance of Dahomeans in the colony, together with the popularity of their religious dances. The Dahomean spirits or gods were Vodun; the dance in which the worshiper sought the inspiration of the spirits was a Vodun dance. Like all but the highly organized religions, this one recognized the validity of other beliefs. Its practitioners were not bigots. No hierarchy existed to keep out new accretions. Imperceptibly these were added to the original basic form: here an Arada spirit, there a Congolese prayer, and in many instances a Catholic saint, until the composite Vodun religion began to take shape.

There is no evidence that during colonial times Vodun was ever considered important by the white ruling class—certainly not as a faith. To most planters the word was the name for a vigorous dance. Judging from Moreau de Saint-Méry's description it was held openly enough, at times being witnessed by the whites as a sort of nocturnal diversion. Moreau knew, as did other whites, that there were "superstitious beliefs" connected with it, yet the offhand use of the word "superstition" was indication enough that the beliefs were not regarded as important. We have seen, however, what profitable use the slaves were able to make of the apparent innocence of their dances. When the idea of revolt began to germinate among them, gathering on each plantation at least once a week they had ample opportunity to hatch their plans. It is known that the campaign for revolt was developed partly under the stimulus of the Negro Boukman, a *houngan* or priest of Vodun. By means of drumbeats, which to the whites merely pounded out the rhythm for dancing but had for centuries been a means of communication at long distance in parts of West Africa, that ripening plot was telegraphed from one plantation to another. Even more important, perhaps, was the unity of feeling made possible, despite all incoherence of tradition and language, by the Vodun background.

The revolt of half a million slaves was a success. This fact has been rather too calmly accepted by historians of Saint-Domingue, who

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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461 The *combite* songs are distinctive in Haitian music for
476 their melodic quality. Sung in unison, as is characteristic of
533 most forms of Negro music, they contain the statement of a theme by the leader and a response from a chorus, so that the contrast between this great volume of sound from the chorus and the solo voice of the *simidor* is singularly effective. It is not the melodic qualities alone that make these songs so
476 appealing to the Haitians, however. At the *combite* a man
533 not only learns all the gossip of the day, but enjoys learning
461 and singing the songs which caustically comment on the
626 shortcomings of neighbors, or evaluate the hospitality of those
203 who have called *combites,* or detail scandal, phrased with sufficient directness to allow the reference of the song to remain clear, but warily, so as not to give the individual pilloried ground for direct recrimination. The *simidor* is thus a person to be feared, since in addition to his ability as a singer and a leader of song, he is also an outstanding improviser. As one Haitian expressed it, "The *simidor* is a journalist, and every *simidor* is a Judas!"

476 One or two examples of these songs will make clear their
533 favor among a people to whose natural love of gossip is added
539 a patterned relish for oblique public statement of individual
461 shortcomings. The first comments on a miserly *combite* host:
626

À tè!	Down!
Moin dit, messieurs,	I say, messieurs,
Moin p'ralé nan combite ça-é	I went to that *combite*
Moin pas mangé.	[But] I did not eat.
Moin allé, moin pas joinne un grogue	I went, but I found no drink
Pour moin bwè.	To drink.
Assé-a! En é!	Enough! Up!
Moin dit, messieurs,	I say, messieurs,
M'allé nan combite ça-é	I went to that *combite*

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

CHAPTER X

VODUN WORSHIP: THE DANCE

THE *vodun* dance, the most public aspect of Haitian peasant ritual, has been more frequently observed and reported on than any other rites of the cult. The worship of the *loa* by an individual, the baptism of his *loa*, and the minor periodic sacrifices he makes to it that it may protect him are entirely private in nature, while presence at the *service* for the *loa* is essentially restricted to members of the family. The *vodun* dance, however, is viewed quite differently, for news of it is widely spread by word of mouth, so that, in contrast to the private character of all other rituals, *vodun* dances are important social occasions, and their success is measured by the numbers in attendance and the enthusiasm of the participants which makes a dance *chaud'* — " hot "!

The *vodun* dance may be said to function in several ways. Above all, it is an integral part of the worship of the *loa*, and as such is marked by repeated possessions which indicate the presence of the gods. Yet it also offers an important opportunity for recreation, as is indicated by the fact that in Mirebalais the term *bamboche*, which means a dance at which one merely enjoys oneself, is often applied to it. By no means do all who go to a dance become possessed, for of one hundred to one hundred and fifty persons present, no more than twenty or twenty-five will come under the power of their gods. The old

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

643 At the same time, the President has expressed his favorable interest
771 in vodoun and is said to practice it; this statement, however, has
795 overtones of malevolence that are not appropriate. Vodoun is a religion, though it lacks a centralized priestly hierarchy or administrative organization. Outside the elite, Catholicism in Haiti has always been colored by vodoun elements. The Haitian people as a whole invest no effort in distinguishing what is "really Catholic" from what is not, in their religious practices; in this regard Haitian countrymen do not really differ from folk practitioners of Catholicism anywhere. By its misreading of the piety of the Haitian masses, and its unceasing hostility to vodoun—quite different from the church policy in the so-called "Indian countries" of Latin America—the Church had failed to secure its influence over the Haitian people. In contrast, Duvalier's understanding of Haitian religious sociology has proved superior, and is consistent with the *authentique* ideology of the 1940s, though doubtless much more extreme in its implications.

642 Finally, the Duvalier regime has invaded such institutions as the
871 National University and the trade unions, and maintains close sur-
467 veillance over any individuals it regards as politically suspicious. Loy-
204 alty oaths are required at the university; a public press no longer ex-
661 ists; the unions, never strong, are now entirely powerless. But it should be clear from this description of the Duvalier regime that repression is not the key to Duvalier power so much as the means for perpetuating that power under Haitian conditions. The key to Du-
642 valier power is to be found instead in the structure of Haitian society,
648 in the social history of the past two decades, and in the policy of the United States, weakened by its inescapable preference for "stability" over "radicalism." In his own way, President Duvalier is as radical as he can be; but he is no Castro. It is now an open secret that Haiti's support for sanctions against Cuba approved at Punta del Este was matched by economic concessions from the United States; that the Marines, knowingly or not, immobilized anti-Duvalier opposition in a period when its supporters could be picked off, driven into exile, or jailed; that the official Duvalier offer of Môle St. Nicholas to the United States as a substitute for Guantánamo, though irrelevant, was warmly reassuring to some North American political thinkers; and that Duvalier, while he employs considerable "blackmail diplomacy" in his dealings with the United States and is now out of favor, is still considered "reliable" in that most important respect.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 he seemed to be leading the country to progressive action; about
665 1830, however, a group better educated and more ambitious than
664 their predecessors arose. Nourished on ideas acquired in France, they
871 were shocked on their return by the miseries and governmental inaction which prevailed in Haiti. True, when Boyer pressed them to suggest constructive measures of reform they had little to suggest. Like many other critics they were better at tearing down than at building up.

175 By the constitution of 1816 they had the right of free speech and
642 press, and made use of it to publish journals of criticism—*Le Phare*,
204 *Le Télégraphe*, *La Feuille de Commerce*. Their sustained criticism kept
208 alive the parliamentary opposition and gave it a focus; they were at
665 least partially responsible for the Revolution of 1843. In spite of their diatribes, Boyer did not suppress these newspapers. If he had done so it is possible the Revolution might have come sooner. Not every dictator-president would permit such boldness as the following paragraph which appeared in 1843 in *Le Patriote*, an adversary of Boyer's own journal *Le Temps:*

> Let one look well at the things which are happening among us and then say whether, considering our first steps along the path, our progress has not been constantly slowed up now for some time, and whether this does not lead to a state of things in our country in which the most vital part of our civilization is struck by an immobility, almost a paralysis. Haiti is stationary, is retrograde: we need no other proof of it than this frightful uncertainty about the future which so deeply disturbs all serious minds and sincere patriots.

175 In 1838 Hérard Dumesle, president of the Chamber and a leader of
665 the opposition, drew up and secured the passage of an "Address to
646 the President of the Republic," which expressed certain just ideas of
643 progress and pointed out that failure to achieve it was due to the
664 mistakes of the administration. It was a bitterly critical and sometimes passionate document. Boyer was intensely angry and proceeded to violate the constitution: relying on the majority always at his disposal in the Chamber, he excluded from among the deputies those most hostile to his government.[8] But at the election of 1842 the communes of Les Cayes, Aquin, and Jérémie reëlected the expelled representatives, so confirming their criticism of the President.

8. Hérard Dumesle, Landon, Lartigue, and David Saint-Preux.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

565 rights of people of Negro blood. As a distinguished Haitian re-
484 marked, "It is from France that we draw our culture, our language,
our literature, our attitudes of mind: why should we not love her?"
177 The more time the élite spend in France, the less kinship they feel
186 with the masses. There is not necessarily any conscious snobbery in this increasing discrepancy; it simply results from a life spent in entirely different environments. The Boston Brahmin, for example, may be kindhearted and yet feel little kinship with a Mississippi share-cropper.

564 Inside the castes one may find social distinctions familiar in democracies. There are well-to-do élite who set the standards of manners and entertainment, and there are peasant landholders who through force of personality dominate their rural neighborhoods. The intellectual man of the upper classes stands somewhat apart from the social whirl of "high society." An important government official has more prestige among the leisured classes than a small businessman, just as a powerful religious adept is more honored among the peasants than a happy-go-lucky ragamuffin. It is obvious, however, that within the élite caste social discrimination occurs more frequently and is more accurately observed than among the country people.

[184] Such phrases as "Haitian religion" or "Haitian public opinion"
[77] are accurate only in so far as the person who uses them defines the
[208] adjective "Haitian." One might describe truly a phenomenon characteristic of ninety-five out of a hundred Haitians and yet, in the opinion of those who dominate the economic, political, and social life, do injustice to Haiti.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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114 461 voluntary step towards improving themselves in any one thing. . . . Experiments may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coercion and want will impel the Haytian to labour; and I have my doubts as to the practicability of enforcing labour in Hayti until the people have been better instructed, and their characters become changed. . . . Nature is too generous to the Haytian; he never wants, and so never works for hire, as do free labourers in other countries.[13]

An American, Dr. Jonathan Brown of Philadelphia, in 1837 published a volume which in most respects seems quite dispassionate. He says:

[462] The females are compelled to perform most of the labor. Those of the country employ themselves in cultivating the soil, while the men spend their time in traversing the country on horseback, in drinking, smoking, and other habits equally unprofitable. The females of the town perform all the retail traffic of the country. . . . They derive a subsistence for themselves and for their families.[14]

175 241 208 178 Boyer's secretary of state, Inginac, tried by means of a pamphlet—which few Haitians could have read—to urge the peasants of 1840 to greater activity. He says that although coffee is the chief source of Haitian wealth, although every day small properties have been multiplied, although times are improving, yet the old routines are still followed in coffee cultivation, as if the men would never work and "as if the Haitians were not susceptible of making any progress in the sciences."[15]

114 461 In 1842 an English Quaker, John Candler, wrote that without a modicum of labor the peasants could not subsist at all; "but they do not, and they will not, work hard to please anybody, and hence agriculture languishes, and commerce is stationary."[16] Finally, in 1860, Benjamin Hunt, an American, remarked: "If one wants to be lazy, Hayti is the place. It is possible to get through the day with little annoyance from cold, hunger, or the police, and with the least possible amount of work."[17] Similar testimony could be greatly multiplied. It is only in recent years that any author has affirmed that

13. *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 359–362.
14. *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, II, 281.
15. Joseph Balthazar Inginac, "*Culture du caféier et préparation de la fève pour être livrée au commerce*" [a pamphlet], (Port-au-Prince, 1840), p. 1.
16. *Brief Notices of Hayti*, p. 38.
17. *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afro-Americans*, p. 22.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 he seemed to be leading the country to progressive action; about
665 1830, however, a group better educated and more ambitious than
664 their predecessors arose. Nourished on ideas acquired in France, they
871 were shocked on their return by the miseries and governmental inaction which prevailed in Haiti. True, when Boyer pressed them to suggest constructive measures of reform they had little to suggest. Like many other critics they were better at tearing down than at building up.

175 By the constitution of 1816 they had the right of free speech and
642 press, and made use of it to publish journals of criticism—*Le Phare*,
204 *Le Télégraphe*, *La Feuille de Commerce*. Their sustained criticism kept
•208 alive the parliamentary opposition and gave it a focus; they were at
665 least partially responsible for the Revolution of 1843. In spite of their diatribes, Boyer did not suppress these newspapers. If he had done so it is possible the Revolution might have come sooner. Not every dictator-president would permit such boldness as the following paragraph which appeared in 1843 in *Le Patriote*, an adversary of Boyer's own journal *Le Temps*:

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

A revolution directed by a general of real ambition was likely to
involve an appeal to foreign powers. Haiti being almost roadless, 175
ships were important for moving troops and blockading seaports. 669
Many a chieftain has purchased six or eight ships abroad, and with 648
this "navy" won his fight. Financial intrigue was frequent. By bor- 457
rowing money from France, Germany, or England, with the promise [491]
to reshape Haitian financial policy to the benefit of the creditor [505]
country, several revolutionaries have secured funds for arms and the necessary soldiers to effect a coup. Sooner or later also one might expect to see the Môle Saint Nicolas, which guards the Windward Passage pathway between Cuba and Haiti, come into the picture. Cession of the Mole has frequently been held out as bait for foreign support, but popular opposition to white ownership of any Haitian land has always stopped actual cession. When Haiti's debt to Germany was due, she borrowed from France to pay it, and then later borrowed from the United States to pay France. All such appeals to foreign powers have merely drawn attention to the defenseless position of the country; many a successful revolutionary chief has lived to regret his appeal for aid.[19]

The one time between 1804 and 1915 when political opinion was 175
vocal and truly significant was in the latter years of Boyer's administration. Then it took pains to attack specific evils with steady per- 665
sistence, even though the cures suggested were vague. Yet after the 208 ●
successful elimination of Boyer, politicians who had worked so brilliantly in the opposition showed themselves even more incapable. Political thought, at a low ebb for the next forty years, revived only when, after 1883, the Liberals were eliminated from politics. Their complete defeat seems to have given élite thinkers time for sober reflection upon the plight of their country. Before 1843 the critics had been in a position to make their words effective; after 1883 they wrote—soberly, brilliantly, persuasively—but their books and pamphlets were read only by a small group of fellow aristocrats who already thought as they did, or disagreed with them in print. Political homilies made no impression upon the minds of the peasants left uneducated by all the élite presidents of Haiti.

In the crucial days of the American Occupation, once again political [648]
debate rose to brilliant heights. The rude shock of seeing foreign

19. See, on this whole subject of Haiti's foreign relations, an excellent chapter in Montague, op. cit., chap. IX.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 whites patrolling the streets seems to have given reality to criticism
665 which before then would have been academic. The élite were back
208 again in the political forum. Unreflecting patriotism urged the
648 immediate withdrawal of the Marines, but a considerable number of the legislature saw that it would be years before they left. The problem, then, they saw variously: some wished to be eloquent spokesmen for the patriotic anti-whites and did their best to embarrass the Occupation; some, feeling that the Americans were benefiting the country, tried to make things move smoothly; while others, seeing a fertile field for gain, tried to ingratiate themselves with the American authorities.

175 The twenty years between 1915 and 1934 heard many eloquent,
643 impassioned speeches, not all of them coming to the same conclu-
642 sions. The élite were divided in most issues raised by the Occupation,
648 so that the old neat dichotomy between élite and army no longer
662 prevailed. The President, Dartiguenave (1915–22), was for the first time since 1879 a Southerner and a mulatto; yet in 1922 when he was a candidate for reëlection it was Southern élite votes which defeated him. Executive, legislature, and judiciary all had just enough power under the Occupation to make subtle manoeuvres, and all three branches of the government displayed a real genius for the political game. They often succeeded in putting the onus of an unpopular act upon the Americans, and in taking the credit for popular measures with which they had had little to do. They prodded and pricked all the weaknesses in the logic of the American State Department. They forced numerous concessions. If at times they seem to have been overclever, playing the game of politics merely for an opportunity to display their skill, at other times many of them showed a deep understanding of realities which had to be faced.

175 The Occupation, ordered by that high prophet of democracy,
648 Woodrow Wilson, professed its determination to give Haiti her
666 first opportunity to be democratic. Yet the Marines really dictated
642 the choice both of Dartiguenave in 1915 and of Borno in 1922 and 1926. The constitution of 1918 was prepared in Washington; it was submitted to a plebiscite, but the farcical vote—69,337 for and 335 against—was clearly the result of electioneering by the Marines. The presidents of Haiti ruled with executive councils, subject to Ameri-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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Artibonite and Tombe rivers just outside the town. Today Cacos who went through this campaign will tell how sniping was carried on from the "English fort" on the heights to the east of the town and will recount how dangerous it was made for Marines to go unguarded even to the river-banks to draw water. Yet after two or three years the overthrow of the Caco forces brought peace once more to Mirebalais. And while the intervention of the United States has caused significant changes in the larger aspects of Haitian economy and in the political life of the Republic as a whole, yet as concerns the inner life of the people of this valley it seems to have passed without any discernible effect.

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Today in the *place* are found three records of its past. The first of these, in the middle of the square, is a tall palm tree, which in Haiti is the emblem of its attainment of freedom and independence, and near it a rostrum symbolizing the authority of the central government. The second is the tomb of an overlord of Mirebalais when independent Haiti was not a republic. In florid lettering can be read the tribute engraved on its top:

211
175
764

Ici
Dort de l'éternel sommeil
Pierre Cazimir de Vincent
décédé le 13 Août 1856, à l'âge de 71 ans
de son vivant Duc de Mirebalais
et
Commandant de la 4ème Division
Militaire de la Province de
l'Ouest

"Passant, si tu admires les vertus militaires;
Revère les cendres de celui que repose en ce lieu."

De la part de son amie
Delphonnaise Delva.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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The third is a realistic reminder of the most recent occupation of the valley by foreign forces. Cut so deeply into the "tree of liberty" that not even the red and blue paint of the national colors with which its base is repainted annually can conceal it, and contrasting with the ornate inscription on the near-by tomb, is the following legend:

L. MARLOW
AUG. 1ȼ, 1920.
U. S. M. C.
DRUNK
AS
HELL
J. F. BROWN

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

184 the gate, and the crossroads, is not regarded in the same light as the other
776 loa but as a messenger and interceder, and as the crossroads protector. He it is who helps in the placation of the major gods, and who guards people against accident, chance, and evil spirits on the highway.

796 In traditional form, services for Maît' Grand Bois and Femme Grand
782 Bois are conducted by the family without the aid of a houngan, under
776 the direction of the oldest male member of the family. The rites begin on a Thursday. With a tiny bell in his hand, the elder who directs the service (he is called *grand famille*) calls upon Maît' Grand Bois to
[787] come and receive his feast. The procedures are solemn. The grand famille and the family sing. At last Grand Bois enters the head of the old man who is conducting the rites. Then the sacrificial animals are brought forward and killed, and the women take the meat and begin the cooking of the mangé. While the food is cooking, the family sits and waits. Sometimes the grand famille begins a song, in which others join. The cooking takes a long while. Sometime during the night, when the food is ready, it is placed in two baskets—one for Maît' Grand Bois and one for his wife, Femme Grand Bois. Into each basket goes meat, corn meal, rice, bread, cookies, peanut cakes, cassava, and other delicacies. The two baskets are hung by ropes from the roof of the tonnelle, or from the branch of a tree. During the entire night, none of the family eats. Mâit' Grand Bois and his wife partake of the feast as they please. At six o'clock in the morning, the baskets are taken down, and the family is free to eat what the loa have left for them.

When the food is gone, the bones that are left are carried to a nearby stream and washed until they are white and shining. The bones are then placed in a large calabash bowl. Sweet-scented leaves from special trees are placed in the bowl with the bones, and water is added. The
[783] mixture becomes a ritual lotion, or "bath." The entire family kneels before the liquid, which they rub on their faces, heads, arms, hands, legs, and feet. When the ritual bathing is over, they sing:

[539]

La famille vin' payé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
La famille vin' payé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
Cérémonie là c'est finil [Ex. 41]	The ceremony is finished!

Afterward, each member of the family places a small coin in the calabash dish with the bones and leaves, and the residue is then buried in a deep hole at a crossroads. A heavy post (*borne*) is erected at the site, with
[211] markings to indicate the date of the service, and the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, each representing a year. Every year one of the numbers is checked off, and at the end of four years another service for Maît' Grand Bois and Femme Grand Bois is held.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

584 in the same district, the background of the young man is well enough known so that no investigation is necessary, though unfailingly a long and formal discussion of the suitor, his qualities, and his prospects ensues. If his home is some distance away, however, meticulous inquiries are made not only concerning the young man and his immediate family, but of
584 his ancestry as well. Should the suitor live near the home of
212 the young woman, as usually happens, his own parents come with a *lettre de demand*. In earlier days the "letter" was written on flowered paper with a lacy border, but today plain colored paper does very well. When presented, it is wrapped
[603] in a green silk handkerchief, "for hope" — the handkerchief
[822] costs about five gourdes, and a similar amount is given the scribe — and is usually carried by the oldest man of the family; that is to say, the paternal grandfather if living, or if he is dead, the father, accompanied by the mother and perhaps the other grandparents. Today it is said that in the
[178] valley of Mirebalais the custom of presenting these letters of request is often disregarded, but is by no means extinct.[1]

The family of the girl is always apprised of the exact time of the visit, and refreshments are on hand. No reply is given at the time of the delivery of the "letter," since the families of both the father and the mother of the girl must consent to the match before it can be finally approved. However, at the stage of the courtship which the presentation of a "letter" implies, this delayed answer is a matter of form, for if the proposal had not been acceptable, the girl would not have been allowed to see the suitor. The refusal of a "letter" has
[578] been known to occur, but this is regarded as a deadly insult, and deep enmity between the families follows. Should the family of the girl, not wishing to be abrupt, accept the "letter" and proffer refreshments to its bearers, but later return the same "letter" as a sign of rejection, even this would be
584 bitterly resented. Under such circumstances the young man
832 takes steps to obtain revenge by providing himself with a
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1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

love-charm designed to insure the young girl's coming to him. He then uses all persuasion to give her a child and, this achieved, abandons her to show his contempt for the family that has formally refused to accept him as a son-in-law. 584 [832] [578]

Usually, however, the visit is returned by the family of the girl, bearing a "response" of acceptance wrapped in a red silk handkerchief, "for victory." And just as the family of the young woman had known in advance of the coming of her suitor's relatives, word of the favorable verdict is now sent through indirect channels, so that the family of the young man may also be prepared to receive the emissaries who come on behalf of the girl. [212] [822]

With this formal acceptance of the young man's suit, the wedding waits until he has accumulated the requisites for a household. Custom dictates that even should he be prepared, the ceremony must be delayed for several months while he remains in a probationary state, to assure the family of his fiancée of his worthiness. The young woman is also under surveillance during this time, when she may be asked to help her future mother-in-law with the housework, and particularly with the washing and ironing of linens. Generally a period of from two to three years elapses before the bridegroom accumulates enough to fulfill his obligations in marriage. During this time the family of the young woman is acquiring the things she is expected to bring to her husband: linens and dishes — though in the poorer peasant families these items would not be provided her — cooking utensils, water-containers, knives, forks, and other things needed for the household. Her father also presents her with a horse, a donkey, six or seven pigs, the same number of goats, as well as chickens, guinea-hens, and turkeys. 583 584

Tokens of virginity are not demanded before the match, since Mirebalais custom requires that the girl tell before her marriage whether she has had relations with other men. She may be sent away if it is discovered that she has told an un- 584 836

[P. 338]

4. Notes on Orthography

104 The problem of putting the Creole language into writing has confronted
191 Haitian and non-Haitian scholars and writers for some time. During
87 the past decade the problem has been an acute one for education au-
114 thorities in Haiti. While there developed a consensus that teaching the
[212] largely illiterate population would have to be done in Creole and not in French, there remained a controversy about the system of orthography that should be used. One of the first attempts to teach Haitian children in their own language was made by Christian Beaulieu, a Haitian educator who worked out a written method based on traditional French orthography.[1] Subsequently, a simpler system was devised by a clergyman, the Reverend H. Ormond McConnell. Although it had numerous detractors among those who favored French orthography, it was found to be far more suitable for educational purposes. The American linguist Robert A. Hall, Jr., carried out a study, the findings of which supported the McConnell method as "perfectly phonemic and at the same time wholly practicable in that it uses only characters already available in print shops and on typewriters."[2]

104 Some Creole texts from Haiti and other West Indian islands, taken down by researchers and scholars, have been transcribed in the McConnell orthography, or in a modified one known as the McConnell-
[114] Laubach system. It is my opinion that although the system is admirable for teaching purposes, and adequate for recording texts for scholarly needs, it is a disadvantage to a reader who has a French vocabulary at his command but who is not familiar with the McConnell orthography. The extent to which this system can disguise a language is easily seen if it is used, for example, to transcribe Jamaican speech. The effect is identical on French words or words of French origin. The Haitian proverb "Run from the rain, fall into the big river" is written by Hall in the McConnell-Laubach orthography: *Kouri pou-lapli, tôbé nâ-grâ*

[1] [UNESCO, The Haiti Pilot Project, P. 39. Cf. P. 355, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[2] [Ibid. Cf. P. 355, Category 116. — Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

American masters, had nearly stood still. For almost a century, Haiti's elite had taken justifiable pride in their ancestors' triumph over Napoleonic France, even while they remained enthralled by French culture. This strange ambivalence would no longer do. In effect, the United States occupation compelled Haitian scholars to rediscover what it meant to be Haitian.

As the writing of Jean Price-Mars (1928) expressed that identity culturally, so the regime of Dumarsais Estimé began to express it politically. For the first time, Africa, and not simply France, became an important part of the nationalist dialogue. The Creole language began to be studied in its own right, and a program to end illiteracy through education in Creole was launched. Folkloristic studies, emphasizing the African component in Haitian rural life, especially as expressed in religion, came into vogue. Haitians began to explore their own society as a synthesis that was as much African as it was French—and as a synthesis, rather than as a mechanical alignment of two distinct traditions. The term *authentique* was employed to express what was "truly Haitian," and Haiti herself was viewed as a unique and original blending of two pasts. Under Estimé, rural folk of promise—and they were, in the nature of things, predominantly dark-skinned—were given greater opportunities, especially to be educated and to enter government service. Moreover, these developments took place at a time when Haiti's economic situation was relatively good, and Estimé enjoyed a measure of popular support rare in Haiti's entire history.

Furthermore, it was during the Estimé regime that Haitian cultural life reached some sort of climax. In the 1920s young Haitian intellectuals had been deeply shaken by the United States occupation and had begun to formulate their own answers to the questions it raised. Not only did Africa come into view as the wellspring of much that was Haitian but Haiti's status as an occupied though once-sovereign power dramatized the need for a social and political philosophy that fitted with hemispheric and international realities. French intellectual currents figured importantly in Haitian political thinking, both because the intellectuals of the French Antilles of the time were inspired by Haitian history and interested in Haiti, and because those islands and Haiti shared a curious affinity in their "Gallo-African" cultures. Anticolonial and Marxist points of view were espoused by a few Haitians, but these perspectives were complicated by changing

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 were abolished; with such concessions the people must be satisfied.
566 Dessalines tacitly confessed his inability to follow any course but the French colonial system, with modifications introduced by Toussaint.

167 Many of the blacks, having tasted a moment's freedom, were not
175 inclined to give it up. Before the new order of Dessalines was firmly established, therefore, they ran away with their families into the hills, where they escaped official notice. As squatters they lived out their lives unmolested. By the time they were officially rediscovered, all Haiti had become a land of peasants.

175 At the other end of the ladder from the laborers were the officials,
463 who might be great men or small clerks, members of the entourage of the governor-general or merely overseers of a plantation. In order
555 to keep the vast agricultural economy functioning smoothly it was
647 necessary to have hundreds of agents, directors, clerks, and overseers,
565 each of whom must report to a superior. In this official class there was at least a possibility of realizing an ambition for oneself; there was a basis of comparison; more important, there was some possibility of attracting favorable attention of persons in high places and so of gaining promotion. Inevitably something of the colonial state of mind must have carried over into the new era, so that an ex-slave would consider himself as having risen in the world to be now performing a task which only white men used to do—to be spared field labor and to direct the work of others. Out of this group of petty agents rose a few men of ambition who were later to belong to the élite.

175 Higher officers of state were in a much more favorable position to
565 achieve social eminence. Not only did they perform no manual
647 labor; they were twice removed from that life, since they directed the men who directed the workers. They handled funds. They came
[212] into contact with Dessalines himself. Many former gens de couleur filled these important posts, for the number of Haitians who could read and write was woefully limited.

175 The army was the great power in the country, for the new state
701 was a military one. Since fear of a return of the French required the maintenance of a large standing army,[4] Dessalines made a virtue of this apparent necessity, using his soldiers to enforce discipline among the cultivators. On whom else could he rely for his local administra-

4. Humboldt estimated that the army of Dessalines numbered 37,300, which would be one tenth of the total population. Other estimates run as low as 15,000. Even this figure would be about a tenth of the male population.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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unplanned, undesired

Haitian peasantry, to sum up, began as the result of two policies intended to achieve ends quite different; first, presidential gifts of land, the chief purpose of which had been to pay the soldiers of the republic; and second, the crop-sharing system adopted by landlords after the failure of Boyer's Code. 175 421 24 463 178

6. *The Drawing of Caste Lines (1820–1843)*

Almost every major presidential aim of Boyer came to grief. His tranquil quarter-century rule, the unified island, the financial surplus with which his presidency began, the peace with France after 1825—all these advantages combined with his good intentions did not save his projects from shipwreck. Near the beginning of his régime he announced that, like his revered predecessor Pétion, he felt the safety of Haiti to lie in the abolition of all color distinctions and prejudices. Just as his great Code Rural proved a complete failure, however, so did his efforts to do away with the color line. On the contrary, it was during Boyer's time that class distinctions became fixed, in large part although not wholly, on the basis of color. 175 178 565

Stating that the policy of his government was to put an end, as far as possible, to jealousies of caste, he consistently for a few years promoted a black every time a promotion had been given to a mulatto or other light-skinned person. This procedure soon met an insuperable obstacle. Government posts in general required literacy, and only a very small number of blacks were educated, so that the supply of Negroes was not sufficient to furnish him with candidates. Since one of the few roads to lucrative success lay in official positions, ambitious young colored men sought eagerly for government office, and Boyer soon had no alternative but to advance men of his own complexion. In the army, on the other hand, literacy was not necessary for promotion. Ambitious Negro youths, therefore, frequently chose this career which, while not very profitable in monetary rewards, at least gave a man a certain social status and economic security. 175 647 563 212 555 175 701 555 563

Because of the state of education in the republic, consequently, an ugly situation developed, with the civil arm of government almost wholly in control of the colored element and the military force dominated by blacks. Fortunately for the country no crisis developed during the 1820's and 1830's which made an open breach between army and state. 175 647 701 [563]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Only a beginning has been made of collecting the thousands of "Cric? Crac!" stories current in Haiti.

It is only recently that people have written Créole, so that there is no standard orthography. Every writer spells words phonetically, with consequent irregularities, and with wide differences between two people writing the same thing. Recent etymological studies may lead eventually to a dictionary and a standard spelling. In order that the reader may see the resemblance of Créole to French, yet its differences from that language, we shall quote a part of one of La Fontaine's fables put into Créole verse by Georges Sylvain.[10] His own French retranslation accompanies the fable, turning such phrases as "female pig" into "sow."

Nan temps toutt bett té palé,	*Au temps où toutes les bêtes parlaient,*
Té g'ain (palant pa respé)	*Il y avait (sauf votre respect)*
Té g'ain gnou fémel cochon.	*Il y avait une truie.*
Zott connin gen cochon bon?	*Vous savez comme les truies sont bonnes gens?*
Cila-là té fait zanmi	*Celle-ci avait fait amitié*
Avec gnou fémel chien, qui	*Avec une chienne, qui*
Té prett pou mi bas. Chien-là,	*Était sur le point de mettre bas. La chienne*
Gnou jou, dit cochon con ça:	*Un jour, dit à la truie:*
"Moin pré pou moin accouché,	*"Me voilà près d'accoucher,*
"Ma conmé, t'en pri! souplé,	*"Ma commère, je vous en prie, s'il vous plaît,*
"Pémett moin prété gnou coin	*"Permettez-moi d'emprunter un coin*
"Nan pac ou, pou pititt moin."	*"De votre parc, pour mes enfants."*[11]

The terseness of the language is fascinating, a situation is hit off precisely in a few words: a stuffed shirt has been deflated, and the truth has been told. A Haitian was heard to say, "Nègue riche li mulatte; mulatte pauvre li nègue"—a rich Negro is accounted a mulatto; a poor mulatto is to all intents and purposes no better than a Negro. And there is a profound comment on the whole caste system.

Wherever the French went in the Caribbean region the Créole language spread—in Louisiana, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Guiana. Each region has its own peculiarities, but in general it may be said that these other regions show much more French (as distinct from Norman) influence on Créole, and much less Spanish and English influence. Similarly in Haitian towns, where the élite speak French

10. *Cric? Crac! Fables de La Fontaine racontées par un montagnard haïtien et traduites en vers créoles* (Port-au-Prince, 1929), p. 21.

11. "Zott" means "vous autres"; "gnou" is "une."

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

3. *Pétion, Boyer, and Inginac as Administrators*

Pétion lived very simply in the South, like a plain republican magistrate. He sat on his piazza, accessible to all his people. He had a quiet way of answering his opponents which did not make enemies of them. He made his secretary answer every letter that arrived, no matter how small; many were simply inquiries about the President's health. Yet the wars between Pétion and Christophe dragged on from 1807 to 1812,[8] draining the finances of the republic. Not only the crops declined: so also did most of the public improvements instituted by the colonial planters; so did trade; so did habits of industry. Everything seemed to conspire against hard work. The rich plains of the Cul-de-Sac and the Artibonite Valley were ravaged by fire and warfare; necessary equipment for sugar making was destroyed, the money for new machines and buildings was unavailable; and the men were drawn away from their land by military duties.

Inginac, Boyer's secretary of state, after the Revolution of 1843 had got rid of both the President and his secretary, wrote his memoirs. There are some revealing passages. Inginac reports that Pétion told him only forty days before his death that Boyer was a man of probity and delicacy, "but unhappily he is petulant; he is too set in his ways to conciliate those who might assist him. In everything *he* wants to dominate, and he will bring unhappiness to the country if he does not change." Inginac cites cases to show that Pétion's prophecy was correct. Boyer in 1820 repealed the most unpopular laws, particularly those requiring personal corvée and the repair of public roads; but instead of taking advice from his cabinet on important economic matters, he frequently announced that he was president and would not be run by anybody. Consequently, according to Inginac, he made mistakes which might have been avoided.[9] Defending himself, the former secretary offers a clue to the failure of the régime—possibly unavoidable—by showing that the administration merely suggested, did not require, action:

"Have I not constantly, not only preached and corresponded about the necessity of making agriculture prosperous, but also given work at as high wages as the treasury could afford? Have I not created habitations on lands formerly totally uncultivated, putting formerly idle men to work? Have I not published at my own expense, although I directed the National Printery, methods for cultivating tobacco and coffee plants, of which I distributed gratis several thousand copies?"[10]

In spite of all encouragement which the administration could offer, agricultural production continued to decline, while expenses increased, and external trade fell off from a third to a half. The government had to borrow from the banking firm of Lafitte in Paris to find even the interest for

8. Hostilities between the two parts of Haiti ceased about 1812 because of the mutual fear on the part of Christophe and Pétion of Napoleon's ascendancy, and the threat which this constituted to the whole former colony. Their war had ravaged the plantations and removed laborers from the soil. Then came the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain, cutting off many of the supplies which Haiti drew from both countries. There was accordingly an unwritten truce, with no further hostilities. A neutral territory of ten leagues between the boundaries of the two states was tacitly agreed upon: neither army was to enter it. This was the rich plain of Boucassin, once the garden of the island, now a wilderness.

9. Joseph Balthazar Inginac, *Memoirs* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1843), pp. 32, 34, 38.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

payments due to the French government.

easily be hidden, but the ganbos were simply slipped into the straw 534
roofs and thus put out of sight. Moreover, by some strange process of 648
reasoning, military authorities regarded the bamboos as "harmless," 798
though they were used for the same purposes as the contraband drums.

There are numerous other kinds of simple percussion devices. One 534
such instrument, now less commonly seen than previously, is a length of open bamboo laid in the crotches of two Y-shaped sticks set in the ground. Like other *catas*, the bamboo is beaten with two sticks. Some Haitians believe that in former days such bamboos were played in batteries like a xylophone.

Sometimes a light-weight wooden cylinder, or perhaps a drum de- [461]
muled of its playing head, is carried by the timekeeper of a coumbite. [476]
It, also, is played on the side with sticks.

Wooden mortars for pulverizing grain take on the character of musical 534
instruments when used in combination with voices. When two or more 533
mortars are used, with two men or women wielding the long polelike 412
pestles in each mortar, the rhythmic effects can become fairly complicated.

The *claves* or *palos* (small hardwood sticks) are used primarily in 534
connection with secular dances of a Cuban type, or to accompany such 535
instruments as the guitar and the marimba. One stick is held loosely in [177]
the natural fold of the hand, so that it is free to vibrate, and is struck sharply with the second stick. The tone is almost metallic because of [824]
the hardness of the wood, usually lignum vitae. The name of the instrument is recognizable as a form of *clavar*, or *clavo*, Spanish for "peg" or "nail." It is thought that wooden shipbuilding pegs provided the [171]
name for this device, which has equivalents in West Africa.

Among the folk instruments there are various kinds of horns and 534
trumpets. Cows' horns are played musically in some parts of the southern 184
peninsula, though usually they are used as ritual instruments and signaling devices. Wooden trumpets called *pistons* are carved from the stems [824]
of the papaya tree. Conch-shell trumpets, known as *lambis*, are com- [802]
monly used as signaling devices by fishermen. They are also to be found among the coumbites, in Rara festivities, and occasionally in rituals, where they are usually identified with sea deities. In carnival [541]
times the old fashioned phonograph horn makes its appearance as a com- [216]
bined trumpet and voice amplifier.

Probably the most important of the trumpets is the one made of 534
bamboo. It is called a *corne* or *bois bouvique*. Both names have in- 755
teresting origins. The cow's horn was at one time used for magico- [837]
medical purposes. The leaf doctor used it as an "applicator" of powders and potions. A small opening was made in the point of the horn, and

* [See plate 8, p. 112-F. -- Analyst]

L: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

The hard work of cultivating the fields is abated only during the dry season — the winter months of December to February — though even during these months there is no dearth of tasks about the house which must be cared for, such as repairs of various sorts and, above all, rethatching. There is, however, also more time for recreation than at other seasons, so that throughout the countryside there are dances and cock-fights. With February, however, work in the fields must be resumed.

The Haitian farmer does not practice any formal rotation of crops, but continues to plant a given crop in the same field until the harvest becomes perceptibly smaller than in former years, when a change is made to another type of produce. Later, when the same phenomenon is again observed, a third crop may be planted, but sooner or later the land is "put to rest," in which case it either is allowed to lie fallow or is planted with cotton, which is not thought of in the same category as other crops, but is held to be a tree, and, like other trees that of themselves spring up in a fallow field, is believed to give strength to the exhausted earth. A field of this kind remains outside cultivation as a "fallen garden" for four or five years, and the animals are allowed to enter freely and graze in it until it has become a "new garden" again.

If a field is to be made out of hitherto unworked land, or ground which has lain fallow for several years is to be cultivated once again, the work is begun by cutting down the trees. The twigs are heaped preparatory to burning them, and the larger branches and the tree-trunks are used to make fences. After the dried leaves and branches have been burned, the field is cleared of small brush, and is then ready for its initial hoeing, which, according to the crops to be planted, is sometimes delayed until some months later. Usually, however, after two or three rains have cooled and softened land that has been burned over, work continues on it. The hoeing is

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1958) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

132 fires in their houses at night to keep out the damp cold that sweeps
[324] through the passes. And a man on the trail before dawn may wear a
[291] blanket over his head and carry a glowing ember with him for warmth.

132 On the south coast there are sometimes hurricanes and tidal waves, and
133 many a small fishing boat and grass-covered house has been washed away
[131] in these storms. But the great mountains of the southern range deflect the winds, so that to the north their full fury is never known.

226 In the great Bay of Gonaïves the fishing boats sail out at night with the
133 friendly winds that carry them to the fishing grounds of the island of La
172 Gonave, and they return to the shore with their catches in the morning, or in the afternoon with the setting sun. The sailing boats from the tiny fishing village called Ville Matelot each day pass the deserted islet named Isle à Cabrit, where four Indian camps once stood. Today Isle à Cabrit is only a waterless, denuded place, a hunting ground for Carib and Arawak pottery and carved stone images.

136 In the frontier lakes of the Cul-de-Sac Plain there are wild ducks and
[224] alligators. Here the villagers fish with nets from rafts and dugout canoes.
[501] Now and then an iguana is seen, but there is little other game, because the edible wildlife of the country was long ago eaten by hungry people.

137 For the things that grow wild the Haitian is grateful—the avocado,
[241] the mango, the cashew, and the cotton which once planted produces again and again each year. He is grateful for the coconut palms, the calabash tree, the gourd vines, and the medicinal herbs that grow on every side. But
[313] the gifts of nature are not prolific. Most of the great stands of timber—lignum vitae, mahogany, dyewood and pine—have been cut away. Once
[154] fertile garden spots have dried up, and the soil that produces the yams, the pumpkins, the kaffir, and the rice is tired.

181 But the Haitian himself is not tired. He has suffered from malaria,
164 yaws, and chronic hunger; yet out of the great old mountains of Haiti he has fashioned a way of life and a nation.

105 The Haitian of today was created out of the fabric of three continents—
181 Africa, America, and Europe. He was shaped out of the plains and hills of Nigeria, Dahomey, and the Congo; the summers and winters of Europe; and the mountains and mountain mists of Haiti itself. He is the synthesis of the folk beliefs of the French and Spanish peasants, the Yoruba and the Arada of West Africa, and perhaps of the Carib Indians with whom he had close contact during his first days in the New World. He has brought into affinity the religious practices of Africa and the beliefs of the Church of Rome. He is outwardly simple and poor, but inwardly he is a complicated and rich man. He is rich in music, in the capacity for spiritual expression, in tradition, in folklore, and in memories. He has been able

[P.110]

9. Land and Work

311 There is a common Haitian saying which goes: "Pitit mangé, travaille
16 youn pile" (A little food, but tremendous work). This is the way the
[461] Haitian peasant sees it. There is endless labor in the fields or in the perpetually eroding mountain gardens, on landholdings that are too small to give any promise of a better life. The rains that give life to the crops take away, year by year, the nourishment of the soil. Where forests or lush groves once grew on the hillsides, there are now deep, dry gullies. Where coffee plants, cotton, and yams once grew abundantly, there are now fields of stones. This is the heritage of the peasant farmer of today. Small holdings on the hillsides and in the valleys have become smaller through the years as the population has swelled and the land been subdivided. Three and a half million people must take their sustenance from that land. More than three hundred persons must share each square mile of soil. But most of Haiti is mountainous and formidable to agriculture. Two-thirds of the land area is untillable by modern standards. There is less than one acre of useful land per person. The best of the land in the alluvial valleys is held by large corporations producing sugar and sisal. Flat, arid stretches elsewhere are semi-desert.

241 In the small gardens the peasants grow maize, *ti mis* (millet), coffee,
433 bananas and plantains, cotton, beans of various kinds, yams, pumpkins,
sweet potatoes, and manioc. In the delta areas they grow rice, and along
[P26] the long coastline thousands of fishermen sail out in crude but sturdy boats to bring back fish from the sea. Citrus trees, mango trees, and avocado trees grow wild; but they are fewer than in the old days. The Haitian works the soil and manages to subsist, but nature and history have not been kind to him.

181 Even less kind have been some of the chroniclers of the past, who have
46 sought to disparage the Haitian as a lazy and careless creature who would

533 476 178 461 rhythmically, to the accompaniment of drums, *catas*, or horns, while a singing leader composes topical songs in which the laborers join.

171 412 The tools which a rural Haitian chooses, and the way he uses them, often are in a West African tradition. He performs a multitude of tasks with his machete, or bush knife: weeding a garden, peeling an orange, cutting down a tree, making a drum or mortar, opening a coconut. It is an all-purpose tool, as it is in Africa. Until a few years ago it was supplemented by the extra-long, heavier, "double machete." The axe and the chisel are known and used too, but the machete is supreme. 492 The hoe is the tool for tilling the soil, even in the flat country, and even [241] though the Haitian has horses and cattle which could pull a plow. [412] Horses are for riding and not for pulling. In carrying loads, the Haitian peasant still prefers the head to the shoulders. If he has a donkey, the [538] donkey will carry for him. An old Haitian proverb goes: "Meçi Bondieu pou' bourrique là, si nous pas gainyain bourrique là faut Haitien po'té tout bagaille" (Thank God for the donkey, if we didn't have the donkey the Haitian would have to carry everything)." Generally speaking, the 489 491 493 rough and rocky terrain of Haiti and inadequate secondary roads have done nothing to encourage the use of carts or wagons.

171 [25] [392] Corn is stored in the trees, as in West Africa, or in granaries built upon stilts, also as in West Africa. The Haitian makes his fire in the African fashion, with several long sticks or poles meeting point-to-point in the heart of the fire. As the ends are consumed, the sticks are pushed [252] toward the center. Grain is pulverized in large wooden mortars, as [227] in West Africa, and winnowed in a woven tray. Fish traps are sometimes woven in the traditional West African manner, and fishermen often [226] set their nets in converging spirals and beat the water with sticks to [501] drive the fish to the center. And on the rivers and lakes are to be seen dugout canoes of a kind familiar on the inland waters of West Africa.

171 241 The folklore of the fields contains many themes known to the West African. One old Haitian farmer, discussing the spiritual relationship of the planter to the earth, declared that a man must be strong and potent when he plants, else the crops will be vitiated and sickly. For [834] this reason, he said, a man must not plant seeds the day after he has had sexual intercourse, because he has been temporarily drained of his life-giving powers.[9]

171 538 The tale of the hoe that worked by itself in the fields is also widespread. It enters many animal and Bouki stories, and also is known in a form that is familiar in West Africa. In this story, there was once a man who owned a hoe which worked by itself whenever a magical formula was pronounced. It would stop working whenever the magical

9 [For footnote, see Category 116, P 352.-- Analyst]

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[538] 489 491 493

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9 [For footnote, see Category 116, P 352.-- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh Ogoun oh!
C'est pas mangé rangé
Pral tuyé chwal moin! [Ex. 44]

Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh, Ogoun, oh!
There is no poisoned food
That will kill my horse!

Ogoun Fai, known also by the Christian name St. Jacques, is the deity of war, and this song describes his courage and valor:

St. Jacques Majeur a voyé dit'm ga'çon déjà!
St. Jacques oh voyé dit'm ga'çon déjà!
St. Jacques Majeur a voyé dit'm ga'çon la-guè!
St. Jacques oh voyé dit'm ga'çon la-guè! [Ex. 45]

Major St. Jacques sent to tell me he is already a man!
St. Jacques, oh, sent to tell me he is already a man!
Major St. Jacques sent to tell me he is a man of war!
St. Jacques, oh, sent to tell me he is a man of war!

Should the service be to the loa Damballa Wèdo, symbolized as a rainbow and a great serpent, this song might be sung, commenting that he cannot be drowned in the water:

Papa Damballa ou c'est coulève oh!
Pouq'ou pas néyé?
Pouq'ou pas néyé?
Damballa pouq'ou pas néyé nan dleau? [Ex. 46]

Papa Damballa you are a snake, oh!
Why don't you drown?
Why don't you drown?
Damballa, why don't you drown in the water?

[778] [823] Damballa, the rainbow, is in fact the source of the water that bubbles from the earth in springs. He is a patron of the spring, and there he often lives in the form of a water snake. In many a hounfor where Damballa is specially revered there is a *bassin,* or pool, dedicated to him. [532] On the wall behind the pool there is usually a painting of Damballa and Ayida, depicted as great serpents, sometimes with a feathered headdress. The pool is kept filled with fresh water from the spring, and [231] here one or more small snakes—symbols of Damballa and Ayida—reside:

Ala loa marché nan dleau
C'est Damballa!
Ala loa marché nan dleau
C'est Damballa!
Papa Damballa c'est tête à dleau!
Papa Damballa c'est tête à dleau!

There is a loa who lives in the water,
It is Damballa!

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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[P. 112-E]

5 and 6. *Cane workers near Croix-des-Bouquets. Only on the large company plantations are oxen and carts used.*

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2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-J]

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35. Pulverizing grain into meal. The mortar and pestle are standard kitchen fixtures.

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14. Fishermen of Ville des Matelots, on the Bay of Gonaives.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

The people of the islands were able to maintain some continuities with
177 the past, even while the new setting and changing conditions led to the development of certain innovations in society and culture. In a few Caribbean societies, Haiti included, freedom brought with it the opportunity to create a yeomanry—an independent, landholding class of agriculturists who produced most of their own consumption needs and also produced commodities for sale. These were "reconstituted yeomen," whose ways of life combined elements from the African and American Indian past, as well as considerable European and Asian influences, in new cultural constellations.

197 Haitian country folk are a particularly good example of such a
● 231 historical process. The crops Haitian yeomen cultivate include the
241 maize, sweet potatoes, and manioc of the indigenous American Indian
412 (Taino) people, and other cultigens such as papaya and avocado which had been domesticated in mainland aboriginal America; and items like taro and mangoes from Oceania, sesame and sugarcane which originated in the Middle East and India, and vegetables from Europe. Their domestic animals, including cattle, swine, and fowls, are nearly all from the Old World. The chief agricultural tools—hoe, billhook, and dibble, which are well adapted to Haiti's shallow topsoil and hilly terrain—may be European or African in origin; the practice of burning off weeds before planting may be African or American Indian. In the case of each trait—crop, tool, practice—one is confronted by the diverse and entangled culture history of the
177 Haitian people. What is true of agriculture is true of all else. The re-
771 ligion of Haiti is at once two religions rather than one: Catholicism
19 *and* vodoun. Yet these two belief systems form a single ideology for most Haitians, particularly in the rural areas and among those of the urban lower classes. The Creole language is similarly complex in origin. While its lexicon is predominantly derived from French, parts of its syntax are not of Romance origin. For instance, the use of postpositive nominalizing particles and the absence of gender typify Haitian Creole, and are decidedly not Romance in character. Terminology shows much the same; for example, animal names and anatomical terms are mainly French in origin, but some cooked foods carry names of African provenience.

177 The "mixing" of various elements of culture from different tradi-
174 tions is, of course, neither uniquely Caribbean nor uniquely Haitian. All cultures are growths out of the past, and change by losing and gaining traits and by combining and recombining their substance in

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 family on an average, at 5 persons, husband, wife, and three children, we
241 arrive at the conclusion, that the head of every third family in the state is engaged in cultivating his own freehold; a proportion of independent [311] proprietors, such as perhaps scarcely any other country in the world can exhibit. The number of acres cultivated by these small proprietors, varies [231] from 9 to 30; many of them keep horses, cows, and goats: they raise suffi- [437] cient provisions of the bread kind, such as yams, plantains, and bananas, for the main support of their families; they kill hogs for meat, and they dispose [438] of their coffee, cotton, hemp, castor oil, and fruit, at the public market for money, to purchase clothing, furniture, and other necessaries. The houses [342] they live in, though poorly furnished, are decent habitations; and many of them have gardens attached, neatly fenced in with bamboo, or with log-wood, or aloe hedges.[55]

175 If these figures are even approximately accurate, the majority of
423 the people of Haiti had not yet become peasants in the sense of being landowners, for in the statement cited only a third of the people
427 owned their land. Another large group, however, possibly a third of the population, were squatters, living on land which technically belonged to someone else but from which they were never ejected. The remaining third, excluding the town and village dwellers, were in the intermediate stage between hirelings and peasants. Some worked for a given rate of wages, but the larger number worked for shares of the produce on the land of large proprietors.

175 The crop-sharing system (Americans of the twentieth century call
473 it share-cropping) of the 'thirties and 'forties was an automatic but temporary adjustment worked out in perfect disregard of the Code
427 Rural. In general, two arrangements prevailed. By one the laborers
24 worked in return for half the total produce of the estate, raising food for themselves in gardens provided by the owner; under the other they worked for a quarter of the produce, the proprietor guaranteeing to keep them in provisions. There was no general concurrence in Haiti at the time as to which plan was the more economical to the laborer and his family. Certainly both schemes were prejudicial to large crops of coffee and sugar, and therefore to the economic prosperity of the proprietors and the state; since this was so, the crop-sharing expedient was short-lived. Workers participating in it lived in the huts and cabins which, under the old régime, had been inhabited by their slave ancestors. As these fell to pieces others, cheaper and less soundly built, were constructed to take their place.

The crop-sharing system, economically debilitating though it was,

55. *Ibid.*

534 the Haitian word for "twins." They are used primarily for secular
[177] music of the Cuban type, and may in fact be an importation from Cuba. The marassa is one of the few drums on which a finger technique is used; that is, striking with individual fingers rather than with grouped fingers. Marassas are often played in concert with guitars and marimbas.

The *basse* is the shallow finger drum resembling what in the United States is called the tambourine. Constructed in the pattern of an African prototype, its head is usually fifteen or eighteen inches in diameter and made of goatskin. Small metal disks sometimes are inserted in the frame
[314] to act as rattles. The head is kept well coated with resin or beeswax and
[237] is tapped and rubbed with the fingers. The *basse* is used only for secular music, except in the rare instances when it is used in Congo services. Some Haitians believe that the name of the instrument comes from the word *Basque*.

534 It is reported that signal drums were still in use a decade ago in
202 remote sections of the southwestern peninsula. One of these instruments, according to description, is distinguished mainly by is large belly and small mouth; like the Juba drum, it is played on its side. Another style of signal drum has a slit in the side and is phyed erect, much like an African slit-log drum standing on end.

534 Another percussion instrument is the bamboo stanping tube, called
[171] the *ganbo* or *ti kanmbo*. It is African in origin and probably takes its name from the Loango term for the same device, *dikanmbo*.[2] The stamping tube is simply a length of bamboo, open at one end and closed at the other by a natural joint membrane. The closed end is struck sharply upon the ground, and the tone comes from the open top. The device works like an inverted drum, the closed end functioning like a drumhead. A battery of four or five ganbos may provide the percussion music otherwise played by drums. The musicin corresponding to the *bulatier* of the drum orchestra plays two small stamping tubes, one in each hand. The other musicians have one each, thicker and longer than the bulatier's and producing deeper tones. Cupped hands are manipulated over the open ends for varying the sounds. This instrument
[171] has survived in various parts of the New World where Africans were settled, particularly other West Indian islands, Brazil, and Venezuela. In Venezuela the stamping tubes are called *quitiplas*.[3] They have recently been reported from various areas of West Africa, including French Equatorial Africa.[4]

534 The ganbos had a singular burst of popularity in Haiti during the
648 United States military occupation of the country after the first World
798 War, when drums were often seized and destroyed. Drums could not

[115] [2] [Informant: Joseph Lengo, Brazzaville. Cf P 354, Category 116. --Analyst]
[3] [Library of Congress album, Folk Music of Venezuela. Cf P 354 Category 116. --Analyst]
[4] [Pamphlet accompanying recording Music of Equatorial Africa (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1950). Cf P 354, cat. 116. --Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

easily be hidden, but the ganbos were simply slipped into the straw 534
roofs and thus put out of sight. Moreover, by some strange process of 648
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though they were used for the same purposes as the contraband drums.

There are numerous other kinds of simple percussion devices. One 534
such instrument, now less commonly seen than previously, is a length of open bamboo laid in the crotches of two Y-shaped sticks set in the ground. Like other *catas*, the bamboo is beaten with two sticks. Some Haitians believe that in former days such bamboos were played in batteries like a xylophone.

Sometimes a light-weight wooden cylinder, or perhaps a drum de- [461]
nuded of its playing head, is carried by the timekeeper of a coumbite. [476]
It, also, is played on the side with sticks.

Wooden mortars for pulverizing grain take on the character of musical 534
instruments when used in combination with voices. When two or more 533
mortars are used, with two men or women wielding the long polelike 412
pestles in each mortar, the rhythmic effects can become fairly complicated.

The *claves* or *palos* (small hardwood sticks) are used primarily in 534
connection with secular dances of a Cuban type, or to accompany such 535
instruments as the guitar and the marimba. One stick is held loosely in [177]
the natural fold of the hand, so that it is free to vibrate, and is struck
sharply with the second stick. The tone is almost metallic because of [824]
the hardness of the wood, usually lignum vitae. The name of the instrument is recognizable as a form of *clavar*, or *clavo*, Spanish for "peg"
or "nail." It is thought that wooden shipbuilding pegs provided the [171]
name for this device, which has equivalents in West Africa.

Among the folk instruments there are various kinds of horns and 534
trumpets. Cows' horns are played musically in some parts of the southern 184
peninsula, though usually they are used as ritual instruments and signaling devices. Wooden trumpets called *pistons* are carved from the stems [824]
of the papaya tree. Conch-shell trumpets, known as *lambis*, are com- [202]
monly used as signaling devices by fishermen. They are also to be found among the coumbites, in Rara festivities, and occasionally in rituals, where they are usually identified with sea deities. In carnival [541]
times the old fashioned phonograph horn makes its appearance as a com- [216]
bined trumpet and voice amplifier.

Probably the most important of the trumpets is the one made of 534
bamboo. It is called a *vaccine* or *bois bourrique*. Both names have in- 755
teresting origins. The cow's horn was at one time used for magico- [237]
medical purposes. The leaf doctor used it as an "applicator" of powders and potions. A small opening was made in the point of the horn, and

[See plate 8, P. 112-F. -- Analyst]

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[p. 14]

II

FRENCH COLONIAL ORIGINS

175 648 FRANCE'S wealthiest colony in 1791 was, and had been for decades, the small territory of Saint-Domingue, as Haiti was known at that time. It had belonged to France for less than a century. French freebooters and buccaneers of the seventeenth century actually presented the colony to their mother country, for these sea rovers, harrying the Spanish Main, used as a base for their predatory raids the small island of Tortuga (La Tortue, The Turtle) off the northern coast of Haiti. They often came over to the western part of the large Spanish island of Santo Domingo (Haiti), then almost deserted, to shoot wild cattle for food; then they would hasten back to Tortuga for safety. At first Tortuga had been shared by English, Dutch, and French buccaneers, but gradually the French came to outnumber the others, so that when the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697 concluded the War of the Grand Alliance, France claimed and Spain ceded the western third of the island of Santo Domingo. The English and Dutch were meanwhile picking up other Caribbean fragments of the decaying Spanish Empire.

175 563 24 The early years of this new French colony were unimpressive, the majority of its residents being former buccaneers, who could hardly have regarded agricultural life as other than dull, and who certainly did not make successful farmers. Only when new immigrants from France in the seventeen-twenties demonstrated that steady profits could be made by raising indigo, sugar, coffee, and cocoa, all of which flourished in the region, did the era of prosperity begin. [461] [439] Plantations were soon staked out all over Saint-Domingue. The great problem was to find adequate labor for the fields. Whoever had crops to sell was sure of a ready market, but crops would not grow 175 24 567 without cultivation. Since there were no natives in Saint-Domingue for the French planters to exploit, the colonizers chose the other favorite alternative of the eighteenth century: Negro slavery. In the 1730's Saint-Domingue began to compete with England's North American colonies for the cargo of the steady stream of slave ships from Africa. There is no indication that the supply of blacks ever

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175 equaled the demand for them; in 1791 the census listed half a million
24 them living, but no writer seems to have even a vague idea of how
567 many millions were imported during the sixty years of the colony's heyday.

Production, particularly of sugar and coffee, steadily increased
175 until the tiny colony ranked among the wealthiest regions of the
245 world. The Spanish Indies were declining, so that Saint-Domingue
249 alone far outranked them all combined between 1766 and 1791.
433 Splendid roads were built, extensive irrigation projects developed,
511 and stately mansions erected. Life moved along with ceremony and
565 display—for the planters; attended by their black lackeys, the white French masters entertained royally or were driven like lords in their coaches to make formal visits to neighbors. Many of these well-to-do colonials spent half their time in Paris, ostentatiously spending their riches. To be "wealthy as a Creole" came to be a common expression in France.[1] Perhaps nowhere in the Americas was existence at once so delightful and so ornamental as it was for the wealthy planters among the 36,000 whites of Saint-Domingue in 1791.

For the mother country, too, this small bit of tropical land was
175 profitable during the latter days of Bourbon royalty. Neither Mar-
439 tinique nor Guadeloupe could compare with it in value. In 1789
506 nearly two thirds of the foreign commercial interests of France
648 centred in Saint-Domingue; its combined exports and imports were valued at more than $140,000,000; its sugar, coffee, indigo, and cotton supplied the home market and employed in prosperous years more than 700 ocean-going vessels, with as many as 80,000 seamen.[2]

Where wealth exists, social distinctions generally develop. In
175 Saint-Domingue the evolving class system produced such discord
565 that sparks from the French Revolution eventually set off an explo-
669 sion in the colony. Casual surveys of Haitian history generally record that in 1791 the slaves revolted, and that out of this insurrection grew the war of independence. This is true; but it was not the resentment of slaves against their masters which caused the final explosion; the
175 slaves were tinder used by others to keep the conflagration burning.
565 Negro slaves, of course, did not figure in the "class" system; they
[567] were below the classes of colonial society. The class system, properly

[101] 1. The word "creole" means only "colonial born"; there is no connotation of race mixture in the term.

2. Pamphile de Lacroix, *Mémoires*, II, 177.

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field labor, the ruler emphasized the clemency of his new régime. 175
Labor the people must, but not under the whip; that arch symbol of 566
slavery was abolished forever. The working day was shortened by a 466
third. It was provided that, if just reason were shown, a man might even secure permission from his district commissioner to move from the plantation to which he was attached.

These were words. Facts were another matter. The overseers had been ordered to exact so much labor from their underlings, yet without whips; knowing no persuading power other than chastisement, they backed up their commands with blows of *lianes*, thick pliable vines which could be gathered anywhere in the island. Thus the laggard was driven, the law kept to the letter, and the overseer praised by his superiors. As for the working day, crops must be tended at the proper moment, so that the boasted shortening of hours generally came to little. Finally, the right to secure permission to move away from a plantation was effectively limited by the refusal of commissioners to grant any such request.

Every public expression of Dessalines showed a solicitude for the welfare of the workers, while his every act indicated that he regarded them as impersonal parts of the machine of state. He knew by his own former experience as a slave what a day's stint should be and the ruses used by laborers to avoid steady work; he was therefore able to order agricultural labor on a realistic basis.

The economic organization created by Dessalines provided the 175
room for the peasantry which was soon to develop as a characteristic 178
form of Haitian life. Among these fundamental conditions were the 463
existence of agriculture as a prevalent occupation, the immobility of 24
all workers on the land, and a thorough schooling of the people in 433
patient acceptance. Dessalines might theoretically have established 566
some other economic system—a division of estates into small properties, for example, with each farmer a master of his own destiny; a democratic coöperative economy; slavery again; feudalism with a landed gentry. At critical times, one leader's choice may affect the whole future life of the country. The decision of Dessalines to 175
keep the bulk of his people in servitude, without using the termi- 566
nology of slavery, gave the new freemen no opportunity to become acquainted with work other than tillage. They were sent back to the only tasks they had ever known, their horizons were just as limited as before, their personal freedom just as restricted. The worst punishments of slavery, together with torture and gross overwork,

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175 about any radical change, for few of the common people could find
423 money to pay for thirty acres, while the well-to-do all wanted more.

[433] Every concession desired by the landed proprietors had now been granted—with the result that economic prosperity was showing a steady decline. It was only when this fact was abundantly apparent that Pétion took the step for which he has since been so fulsomely praised and so roundly criticized. By permission of the Senate, in a law of December 30, 1809, he began to give away state lands: fifteen acres of cultivable soil to every soldier in the army, to be held in perpetuity, with proportionately larger grants to higher officers.

Opposition immediately arose to this measure, and from expected quarters. The owners of great estates protested that if soldiers had farms, other people would soon want (and receive) them, leaving no workers on the large plantations. Social climbers protested, for when practically anyone can own land there is no particular social distinction in having it. Pétion's minister, Bonnet, opposed the permanent alienation of the chief financial resource of the state, proposing instead the grant of long-term loans to soldiers for the purchase of land. Pétion was not insensible to the logic of some of these objections; he said, however, that a nation which relied upon the willing labor of masses of its citizens was ultimately stronger than one which depended upon forced labor of any kind. As for the socially aspiring, he could ignore their arguments since they were not publicly and openly expressed. To his minister he pointed out that loans, if made, would in all probability never be repaid, so that one might as well face the reality at once and give people the land.

All through the next decade Pétion made new and democratic divisions of the land. Able generals were given large tracts, partly as wages, partly as a stimulus to productive agriculture on their part. By another enactment, military invalids were rewarded with land. Eventually most of the rest of the public domain was either put on sale at such moderate price that thousands of humble Haitians might purchase their bit, or was effectively occupied by people who "squatted" far up in the hills, out of official view.

175 The democratization of land led to new adjustments in the eco-
471 nomic system. People who owned small farms would obviously not
● 24 continue to raise sugar and coffee, but rather turn to food crops for immediate family consumption. Only the large plantations could carry on the cultivation of money crops. These in turn, no longer able

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to command the forced labor of serfs, had to develop a new technique for securing manual labor. Legislation soon recognized the new state of affairs by enactments which kept distinct *la grande culture* and *la petite culture*. The former had to do with the production of sugar and coffee, from which the republic derived its wealth; the latter with small farming. *La petite culture* was simple cultivation of whatever the small owner wished to raise. Large-scale culture, on the other hand, became rather complicated.

Owners of great estates had to guide them only their experience of slave days and of serfdom under Toussaint and Dessalines. Now that both were gone, few planters were wealthy enough to pay wages for day labor; a new variation was needed. It was forthcoming in the *métayer* system—a crop-sharing arrangement with tenants closely resembling that which prevails today in some parts of the United States. The owner leased his estate in large or small plots to tenants. Half the income went to the landlord and half to the tenant; but the landlord must furnish the sugar mill and other necessary machinery where cane was raised. Laws were passed to give a measure of security to the proprietor. The contract between him and the tenant (*fermier*)[26] must be signed before a civil official; the engagement must extend through the harvesting of one crop; tenants even then might not abandon their contracts except after notice of three months, with a declaration to the local official.

Punishments were stipulated for the breaking of contracts. A tenant who had made an agreement and then abandoned the *habitation*, even for a visit elsewhere, without a certificate attesting his regularity, might be imprisoned for eight days the first time, a month the second, and three months the third, such imprisonment to be spent in hard labor on public works. Any disputes arising between plantation owners and tenants were to be taken before the local justice. If they threatened to develop into serious cases, the justice was to notify the commandant of the nearest important town. A person who fomented disturbance of such agreements (the Haitian equivalent of "labor agitators," style 1810) might be imprisoned for a year, as also his accomplices. Commandants of each arrondissement must put down disorder as soon as requested by landlords, tenant farmers, or overseers. They must likewise make frequent patrols of

26. The word "fermier" must not be translated simply as "farmer"; the idea of a contract and a rental fee is implicit in the French word.

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175 their districts, principally during the working hours of the day. They
675 were held responsible for all consequences of their own negligence.
692

This whole flow of legislation was designed primarily for the
175 protection of the great landed proprietors, yet there were other laws
671 which aided the masses. In former days workers had been coerced
466 through corporal punishment. This was by law now abolished. Temporary assignments of garden plots were required for each family of laborers; medical care must be provided at the expense of the planter; the aged and infirm must be guaranteed the right to keep their homes and gardens even though no longer able to work. Expectant mothers in the fourth month of pregnancy must be relieved of field work, with no limitation of their right to share in the estate's income; mothers of nursing children must be permitted to remain at home until the weaning of their infants.

175 A great concession to the workers was made by abolishing the
647 office of "inspector of cultures." In the days of Toussaint and Des-
241 salines each district of the country had had its inspector, whose duty it was to see that crop cultivation proceeded according to schedule.[27] This man's disapproval of conditions resulted in fines and personal chastisement. By abolishing the office Pétion effected a great saving in salaries, for there had been thousands of these inspectors; on the other hand, the watchfulness of the inspectors had kept agricultural production at a high level. With no officials to dog the footsteps of the workers, crops immediately fell off.

175 Pétion clearly expected la grande culture to be the prevailing mode
466 of agriculture in the republic. He fostered all kinds of legislation
●24 regulating it, even aside from that already mentioned. For example,
656 a complete schedule was prepared for the division of income of the estate.[28] But the entire system was too neatly worked out and artificial to be effective, particularly since it was not backed up with force. The threat of punishment removed, most workers began gradually, often deliberately, to sabotage the system. It was much more pleasant

27. Christophe followed his predecessors in keeping the district inspectors.

[466] [465] 28. This could be very complicated. A tenant farmer might hire workers, and so have to share his half of the income with them. In such cases, the division of the money crops was to be made in kind or in money, at current prices, in the presence of the local justice, his assessors, and an officer of the gendarmerie. The workers' "fourth" was divided into portions of which three went to the first foreman, two to each of the skilled workers, one and a half to each male or female worker, and one half to each child laborer between ten and fourteen years of age.

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to spend one's time in the allotted garden patch than to cultivate sugar cane steadily in the heat of the day. In a garden there was more variety to the work, and more independent decision; in a cane field all must work in unison to be effective. Moreover, the yield from the garden was a daily thing, while that of the cane fields came but once a year. Less and less were the overseers able to get the tenants away from their gardens and into the fields.

175 466 24 656

Not all the sabotage came from the common folk. Landowners had their normal share of profit motive. The complex system of social security and benevolent stewardship ate away much of the income of the estate.[19] More important, the owners had had no experience of plantation management other than by directing forced labor. Corporal punishment was now abolished, but to the owner it was still unthinkable that there should be no coercion in plantation work. The laws protecting labor therefore left them bewildered, and they did not hold up their part of the system. Finding it expensive to maintain sugar machinery, impossible to engage docile workers, and necessary to finance social security, most of the "aristocrats" simply took the easier path of leasing their estates in small subdivisions, getting out of them what they could.

175 466 471 24

Another unexpected result of Pétion's general policy was to shift the main produce of the republic from sugar to coffee. Sugar had for decades been the staple crop of southern Haiti; but its cultivation requires scrupulous care and expensive machinery. Coffee, on the other hand, grows wild both in the lowlands and at heights of three thousand feet. It is "wild" in the sense that plants spring from seeds dropped by parent trees, without careful planting. When it became obvious that the workers were not to be persuaded to regular work in the cane fields, the landlords broke up the large plantations so necessary to sugar cultivation. Each tenant farmer was almost sure to find coffee trees on his rented plot of land. He would harvest the berries but would do little or nothing to tend and improve the plants, as he did not own them. In French days coffee trees had been pruned, fertilized, grafted; the new Haitian farmer simply let nature take its course. Pétion's careful planning resulted consequently in an entirely unplanned, accidental, and automatic adjustment to new conditions of life.

175 433 245 249

19. That the landlords did not too vigorously protest this system of care for the workers was due to their familiarity with similar care in slave days. [466]

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they even comment upon his unselfish generosity, which seems to have been entirely free of any desire for personal gain. They accuse him rather of taking the easiest course—that of trying to pacify every group in the republic: the masses, by giving them land and removing any external compulsion to work on it; the army, by making their enlistment profitable; the aspiring aristocrats, by validating their titles to estates and not challenging their prestige with a demand for responsibility. Strong states, the critics argue, are built on lines of discipline, not of perpetual yielding.

From an economic point of view a more valid criticism would ask the simple question: what was the practical result of his policies? Under the three previous Negro rulers agriculture had prospered, for these men kept state lands intact and forced the population to work; under Pétion, on the contrary, prosperity steadily declined with the division of land and the removal of compulsion. To expect a body of illiterate, inexperienced ex-slaves automatically to develop such economic virtues as industry, foresight, and thrift in a land which never knew any of these is not realistic, but merely quixotic. The Haitian critic Magloire implies that Pétion was either completely and cynically indifferent to common graft or else naively confident that men newly free would somehow be preternaturally honest. He goes into detail:

> Lands were distributed free, without order or method, each person taking what came his way and establishing himself as he could; graft and jobbery, under varied guises, governed the granting of concessions. As for properties in the towns, some people established themselves in upstairs apartments and others in ground-floor ones, without bothering to think of the lawsuits which might result from this disorder. In the sales made by the State, 50 and 100 and 200 gourdes were paid for real estate which was worth 10,000 and 20,000 and 40,000 gourdes or more. The administration put up for sale the property of towns, of communes, and of the State. Even buildings occupied in colonial days by officials, buildings whose construction had cost considerable sums, were bestowed on the people. . . .
>
> By a too great fractioning of the national domain, and carried away by the influence of false egalitarian and democratic ideas, Pétion brought about what a modern writer calls "the forcible neglect of agriculture" throughout the Republic.[32]

32. J. N. Léger, *Haïti: son histoire et ses détracteurs* (New York, 1907), p. 162.
33. Auguste Magloire, *L'Heure révolutionnaire et notre destinée sociale* (Port-au-Prince, 1934), pp. 260–261.

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South in general had the most loyal feeling toward a government which had been benevolently generous to them. A blend of the two might have been fruitful.

It was not any want of patriotism that caused Boyer to miss his great opportunity but rather a defect of ability. Desiring, like Pétion, to lead rather than to drive his people, he nevertheless lacked even more than his former chief the force of personality which might have persuaded them to work hard for the greater glory of Haiti. Despising the brutal compulsion exercised by Dessalines and Christophe, which he regarded as savage and too closely resembling the earlier methods of slave owners; wishing to emulate solely the gentleness of his predecessor, Boyer hoped for a number of years that his people would become industrious of their own accord. His hopes were frustrated. During his twenty-five-year presidency the mass of Haitians became so indifferent to pecuniary inducements that little work could be got from them beyond that required to produce necessary food. As commerce declined, the President was driven to fresh issues of debased currency and to the opening of mines in different parts of the country, though he knew that the richest mine Haiti possessed was its still fertile soil.

For the first seven years Boyer pursued a policy based on hopeful expectation, refusing to inaugurate any of the forceful measures of his black predecessors. But by 1823 the treasury, enriched though it had been by the surplus from Christophe's exchequer, was empty; in 1824 disbursements exceeded income. Convinced in 1825 that his *laissez-faire* policy was failing to produce results, he decided to heed the insistent counsel of those (including most of the aristocratic, landholding class) who advised the reestablishment of a coercive system of agriculture. His officials showed him that nowhere in the country were sugar plantations any longer being cultivated on a great scale—except for a few estates run by government officials who could command the forced labor of convicts. The policy of offering cultivators a fourth of the total crop of a plantation as wages was luring practically no laborers to work.[37] Even the few owners who offered the fourth plus daily wages had no success. Quite simply, the average Haitian preferred to be his own master, working only when he wished, and particularly working only for himself and his family.

37. This fourth in wages must not be confused with the quarter in rents abolished by Pétion. See page 46 for a discussion of the quarter-crop wage system.

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175 •24 671 643

Convinced at last that the easygoing policy was a failure, Boyer devised by way of remedy a new set of agricultural laws. Where his predecessors in the North had forced action first and then issued simple laws to fix the practice, Boyer, always cerebral rather than active, planned a complete Code which was designed to call forth action. On May 1, 1826, following an address by the President, the Senate issued the Code Rural, an ingenious attempt of Boyer and his secretary-general, Inginac, to reorder the agricultural life of Haiti.

Never again in the history of the country was so detailed a scheme worked out. It was an attempt on a grand scale to order the life of all people for common prosperity. In addition to its own broad scope and elaborate detail, it was fortified by almost unanimous support among the aristocracy, not only the ex-peers of Christophe's defunct kingdom, but also the large landowners of the republic who under Pétion had never known large incomes. In considering the Code, one cannot restrain a certain admiration of Boyer's ingenious mind. Yet it marked the end rather than the beginning of plantation agriculture, for it utterly failed of its purpose. It was the impressive monument over the tomb of state control.

To examine it further, we must desert the world of men for one of pure economic device. The journey is hardly one of discovery, for Boyer and his aides were simply attempting to freshen up for use the methods which had served colonial Saint-Domingue and feudal Haiti. For all the tedium of a voyage through the mazes of an economic plan which came to naught, the Code will be found significant as marking the end of a way of life, even when the way which succeeded it had already begun to take form.

175 671 24 566 693

The dominating principle of the Code was the Haitian's "obligation" to work on the land. To this end, the worker was once more legally attached to the soil. Every individual who was not a public functionary, and who had not private means or a profession—in plain English, every Haitian except the aristocrat, the official, the artisan, and the soldier—was bound to the land, with no right to separate himself from it except in case of imminent danger. An agricultural worker might apply to the local *juge de paix*[38] for permission to quit the countryside to live in a town or village, but the judge was not to give the permission without being assured of the morality of the

38. A functionary who combined the offices of local judge, justice of the peace, and notaries.

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applicant, of his regular conduct, and his ability to maintain himself economically in the town. Land laborers might not send their children to school or have them apprenticed in a town without a certificate from the same judge. Under no pretext might a worker establish a shop or sell his produce in the countryside; certain exceptions were made of necessary articles of food and home manufacture. No laborer might build a home in rural parts except on the plantation to which he was attached. 175 671 24 566 693

An individual, once placed by the government in the category of "cultivator," might never be removed from that class except by official authorization. Even with the consent of the proprietor and the agricultural administrator of the district, he was not to quit the estate to which he was bound for more than eight days.

We may further note in the Code that coöperative enterprise among the workers is forbidden. Anticipating the possible tendency of laborers to set up what in modern times would be called a producers' coöperative, presumably to lapse thereafter into laziness, the Code requires that every worker engage himself individually by authentic contract to the service of a proprietor or lessee. Such engagements for la grande culture are not to be for less than three years, or more than nine. Penalties for infractions of these rules are fines, imprisonment, or forced labor on public works in the chief town of the commune. 175 671 474 686 566

The Code directs the management of agricultural property and grazing establishments,[10] also the making of contracts between the proprietor and his hirelings. Rural police are established, in imitation of Christophe's Dahomets, to act as inspectors of plantations and of the workers on them. 175 671 625 421

The section repressing vagrancy is very full. All persons not proprietors or lessees, yet living in rural parts without having made a contract with some producer, are classed as vagabonds, to be arrested and taken before the magistrate. This official will warn them that by law they are bound to make a contract, and that if they refuse they will be sent to prison. Should a vagabond persist in refusing to sign a contract after eight days of confinement, he is condemned to labor on public works until he agrees. Should the prisoner be a minor, he will be sent to his parents. 175 686 24

10. This latter item was inserted as an adjustment to one of the primary occupations of the Spanish end of the island.

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[1804-1843]

175 A cultivator who loafs on his assigned job shall spend twenty-four
566 hours in jail for his first offense and lose his wages; for a second
671 offense he must work on public projects. Field labor shall be regu-
24 larly carried on from Monday morning until Friday evening, except
for legal holidays; work begins at dawn, continues except for a
half-hour at breakfast until noon, stops then for two hours, and is
[843] once more resumed until sunset. Pregnant females are to be assigned
to light work only, and after the fourth month of pregnancy need
[846] do no field work. Four months after delivery, a mother is to return
to field work, but with three hours a day less than before, until she
has weaned her child. Disobedience and insult to overseers are
punishable by imprisonment. Since Saturdays, Sundays, and holi-
[527] days are free, there is to be no dancing or any other festivity by
night or day from Monday through Friday.

175 On each estate is to be a hierarchy of directors, all of whom the
671 workers shall obey. In ascending order, these men are drivers (or
913 squad foremen),[a] jobbers, sublessees, lessees, proprietors and man-
24 agers, overseers of districts, and police.

In establishing a system of remuneration Boyer kept the accus-
175 tomed method of allotting a proportion of the marketed crop to the
45 workers in lieu of hourly or daily wages. In any season from a
24 quarter to a half of the gross receipts of the estates was to go to the
laborers, the exact proportion in any year to be determined by the
government. It was assumed by Boyer and Inginac that there would
be an added inducement to work if the laborers' share were dis-
tributed not equally, but rather in proportion to the merit and worth
of the individual, these evaluations to be made by the recommenda-
tion of overseers.

175 Enforcement of the Code was placed in the hands of local justices
692 and the army. Soldiers were to be assigned to each plantation, re-
24 ceiving their living from it, in return preserving order and routine.
Although the whip was once more prohibited, steady labor might
still be enforced by other means; the law definitely stated that soldiers
were to discipline the lazy, the lawless, and the vagrant. Local
justices were to deal with any civil difficulties arising in the execution

[192] a. The word "driver" was commonly used in West Indian slave colonies with no other meaning than that attached to the word when one speaks of a man "driving" his horses. It is not necessary to beat a horse to make it go properly; a word of direction may suffice.

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of contracts. It is worthy of note that soldiers assigned to estates were responsible for their actions not to any civil authority but only to their military superiors. 175 692 24

On paper, at least, the Code meant for the worker a return to the serfdom instituted by Toussaint and continued by his black successors.[41] Boyer's new system was richer in detail than Christophe's, but it clearly owed much to that monarch's practical scheme. There is a vital difference, however: serfdom under the Negro rulers worked because discipline was enforced; Boyer's effort to reintroduce it was an abject failure. 175 566 671

Many commentators have praised the Code as able and intelligent. Since the effort to revive familiar practice did not succeed, it is important to understand the reasons for failure of an almost perfect paper plan; one similar to the system which had functioned in all Haiti from 1798 to 1806, and in northern Haiti until 1820.

To begin with—and this was in great measure its final downfall—the workers simply ignored it. When Toussaint had first introduced serfdom, many Negroes quietly moved up into remote hills where they would be out of sight; a good number had remained away from surveillance, raising children who cherished their own independence of action. The influence of this group gradually spread. Moreover, for nineteen years in the South, ever since Pétion had first become president, the masses had had increasing experience of economic freedom. There is no doubt that the majority of the people preferred a low standard of living with liberty to great national prosperity depending on personal compulsion. Northern "cultivators" had known force and efficiency under Christophe, but they, too, preferred their five-year experience of easygoing life in reunited Haiti. Such complete, antagonistic inertia toward the law made its enforcement impossible. Individual cases of sabotage might be dealt with, but not wholesale refusal of the group to sign contracts.

Aside from this, too much land had already been given away throughout at least half the country to make possible a fair and efficient functioning of the Code. Any forced-labor system would have had to depend on large plantations. Since Pétion had divided 175 423

41. R. Lepelletier de Saint-Rémy, "La République d'Haïti: ses dernières révolutions; sa situation actuelle," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, XV, No. 4 (Nov., 1843), p. 15, called it "l'esclavage à la glèbe," which it certainly was. The whole Code was designed to prevent any further parcelling of the land and any further lapse into idleness on the part of the workers. [114]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 423 up so many of these, there was no way short of a revolution to reconstitute the now parceled estates. Obviously the Code did not envisage the control of serfs by small property owners, yet there were more small owners than large.

175 184 466 In the third place, the Spanish-speaking masses of the eastern part of the island had never experienced the kind of forced labor with which most Haitians had been at one time or another familiar. Their noncoöperation made enforcement difficult.

175 647 Finally, the administration of so detailed a plan called for the establishment, at once and yet in complete order, of a fully trained corps of bureaucrats, perfectly coöperating with each other, most of them educated, and all incorruptibly honest. If every literate person in the state had been drafted for service, Boyer could not have filled all the offices required by the Code.

175 465 434 After brief and piecemeal experience with the law in operation, moreover, even the few remaining large landholders turned against it. While they approved the provisions for forced labor, they discovered that to turn over to the workers a quarter or half of the annual crop, in a falling world market, gave too slim a profit.[42] Without the support even of its original sponsors, failure of the law was inevitable.

175 648 652 These factors alone would have been enough to kill the Code; but its real death blow came from an entirely different quarter. The year before the agricultural laws were passed, Boyer had achieved what he considered to be a political master stroke. He had made a financial settlement with France whereby Haiti, in return for a large sum in cash and regular annual payments for sixty years thereafter, should receive full recognition of independence from France; also the former mother country would renounce all claims to any properties in the country. Boyer had felt that the chief debilitating influence on the political and economic life of his people was the constant dread that France might one day return to claim her lost colony. To rid the nation of that incubus, therefore, seemed to him a high feat of statesmanship, no matter what the financial cost.[43]

[433] [24] 42. Coffee, now the staple crop of Haiti, was meeting competition from the other coffee-producing countries of the world. To put the sugar manufacturies into working condition again called for more money than was available.

[643] [644] 43. Boyer's hand was forced to a certain extent by France, which had been exerting diplomatic pressure upon Haiti; the President, however, seemed to regard the settlement as a distinct coup.

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against almost unanimous public opinion opposing enforcement. In 1828 it was reported that dancing, which the Code had strictly limited to week ends, was a nightly diversion near the capital. One of the principal dancing resorts was the house of a captain of rural police, the very man who was supposed to repress such amusements.[45]

Boyer had done his best, and his best was merely a good piece of office work. When his Code failed to operate, he could think of nothing further to suggest for the economic rehabilitation of Haiti. The last fifteen years of his administration witnessed a gradual lapse into that small-scale farming which was to be characteristic of Haiti for the remainder of the nineteenth century. By comparison with former standards, production and steady industry had both fallen off since Boyer came to the presidency. The testimony of visiting foreigners is unanimous on the decline of industry.

The British consul, Mackenzie, said in 1827 that there was very little field labor then being done, and that only elderly people, principally aged "Guinea Negroes" long accustomed to steady work, carried on the tradition. No measures of the government could induce young people born in Haiti to labor or to change from their "habitual vagrancy."[46] Another Englishman, James Franklin, remarked in 1828 that land values throughout the republic had greatly declined because no one could make a profit within any moderate time. Labor was high, he writes, for ordinary wages did not attract the workers who preferred idleness. (This word is certainly unfair: it was work at their own bidding which they preferred, not idleness.) Government lands lay untilled, no one evincing the slightest desire to purchase or utilize them. Franklin continues:

> Land also in the possession of individuals is similarly circumstanced; and those who are large proprietors cannot effect a sale of any produce which they may have beyond the quantity which they can consume; consequently a proprietor may have an immense extent of land, and yet be quite unable to derive any benefit from it by cultivation, or to convert it into money, for the want of purchasers. Thus . . . there is no individual wealth in the country, because, although a man may have very large landed possessions, still those possessions are unavailable, for they produce him nothing, as he can [illegible] purchase, disposed to hire, or occupy or purchase [illegible]

45. Although dancing is spoken of here as an amusement, it is highly probable that at least a part of it had connections with the Voduu religion.

46. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti* (London, 1830), I, 220. Mackenzie is clearly exaggerating, unless by "field labor" he means work on plantations, in contrast to farming on small plots.

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recognized that the really important characteristics peculiar to the peasant are his sentiments and attitudes, the intense attachment to his native soil and family tradition, which, even in the economic sphere, take precedence over the desire for individual advancement and gain."[32] 463 241

Haiti in 1804 was still a country of large estates, and Dessalines and Christophe strove to keep it so. Under the active generosity of Pétion and the passive indifference of Boyer after his Code Rural had failed, few great plantations were left intact. The recorded donations of these two presidents to their generals, civil functionaries, and lesser officers, are as follows:[33] 175 24 423 671 425

134 grants of 150 carreaux (about 450 acres).			Total: 59,300 acres.
176	35	105	18,480
639	30	90	57,510
721	25	75	54,325
2,322	20	60	139,320
8,000	5	15	120,000
		Grand total:	448,935 acres.

Haiti followed French law rather than British, so that the rule of primogeniture did not prevail. It requires only a moment's reflection to see that even within a single generation the thousands of small properties noted in the table would be subdivided many times, since a father apportioned his land to all his sons. By 1842 it is probable that not a single plantation of the size common in colonial times was still intact.[34] On the testimony of numerous government officials and commandants of arrondissements, it was estimated in that year that 46,610 small landed properties were under fair cultivation.[34] If the population at that time be estimated at 800,000, seven eighths of whom were engaged in agriculture, there would accordingly be about fifteen people (including children) to each rural property. But A large number of small estates are left out of this account, which are said to be *badly* cultivated, or neglected. Taking the number of each separate 175 428 178 423 (311) [162] 175 241

32. C. von Dietze, "Peasantry," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, XII, 30.

33. This table is compiled from figures cited in Armand Thoby, *La Question agraire en Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1888), passim, and Dr. P. Dubourcat, *Le Sauvage national par le métier à la mer* (Port-au-Prince, 1902), p. 18.

34. Jean Raymond Roumel, *Le Régime foncier en Haïti* (Paris, 1934), pp. 42–43.

34. Candler, op. cit., p. 122.

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175 family on an average, at 5 persons, husband, wife, and three children, we
241 arrive at the conclusion, that the head of every third family in the state is engaged in cultivating his own freehold; a proportion of independent
[311] proprietors, such as perhaps scarcely any other country in the world can exhibit. The number of acres cultivated by these small proprietors, varies
[231] from 9 to 30; many of them keep horses, cows, and goats: they raise suffi-
[437] cient provisions of the bread kind, such as yams, plantains, and bananas, for the main support of their families; they kill hogs for meat, and they dispose
[431] of their coffee, cotton, hemp, castor oil, and fruit, at the public market for money, to purchase clothing, furniture, and other necessaries. The houses
[342] they live in, though poorly furnished, are decent habitations; and many of them have gardens attached, neatly fenced in with bamboo, or with logwood, or aloe hedges.[33]

175 If these figures are even approximately accurate, the majority of
423 the people of Haiti had not yet become peasants in the sense of being
427 landowners, for in the statement cited only a third of the people owned their land. Another large group, however, possibly a third of the population, were squatters, living on land which technically belonged to someone else but from which they were never ejected. The remaining third, excluding the town and village dwellers, were in the intermediate stage between hirelings and peasants. Some worked for a given rate of wages, but the larger number worked for shares of the produce on the land of large proprietors.

175 The crop-sharing system (Americans of the twentieth century call
473 it share-cropping) of the 'thirties and 'forties was an automatic but
427 temporary adjustment worked out in perfect disregard of the Code
● 24 Rural. In general, two arrangements prevailed. By one the laborers worked in return for half the total produce of the estate, raising food for themselves in gardens provided by the owner; under the other they worked for a quarter of the produce, the proprietor guaranteeing to keep them in provisions. There was no general concurrence in Haiti at the time as to which plan was the more economical to the laborer and his family. Certainly both schemes were prejudicial to large crops of coffee and sugar, and therefore to the economic prosperity of the proprietors and the state; since this was so, the crop-sharing expedient was short-lived. Workers participating in it lived in the huts and cabins which, under the old régime, had been inhabited by their slave ancestors. As these fell to pieces others, cheaper and less soundly built, were constructed to take their place.

The crop-sharing system, economically debilitating though it was,

33. Ibid.

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The crop-sharing system, economically debilitating it was, though

had one great advantage to the laborer: he felt himself free and independent, with the right to engage himself to any man or to refrain from working altogether. No longer was he bound to the soil of one plantation, forced to labor under a "driver," forbidden to dance or to sleep when the mood seized him. This new freedom imparted to him a self-consequence which made him, in his own estimation, almost as important as a freeholder. The master could not say to his men, "Go into such a field and dig cane holes. The clouds are gathering and we must get in the young plants"; or, "Weed such a field," or "Prune the coffee trees today." Neither could he send a band of young people at his discretion to pick the coffee berries as they ripened, or to cull the bad berries, when pulped and dried, from the good. Every man was, so to speak, master of his own house and his own hours, considering himself at liberty to work with his family at almost any time and in any manner he pleased.

175 427 461 24 466

Herein lay the fatal defect of the crop-sharing system. There was no way of coming to an agreement among the laborers on an estate as to the amount of labor to be performed by each. One man was weaker than another; one more disposed to drink or to loaf than another. The whole group of, say, twenty families was to share in common the half or the quarter of the gross produce; but who should measure the exact proportion which would fall in justice to each family?

175 427 24 461

These annual disagreements led to a compromise which ultimately broke down even the moderate-sized estates. The proprietor, in order to avoid disputes, divided his fields among his laborers, allowing one family five acres, another ten, a third twenty, according to the nature of the land and the sort of produce which could be raised upon it. True, the proprietor lost by this division all the benefits of concentrating labor in a particular field at a particular season; also, if he wished to have necessary work done in haste which required a large number of laborers, he had to bribe them (generally by a drink of rum or tafia). Obviously, when such difficulties stood in the way of necessary repairs and improvements, the proprietors simply preferred to allow their estates to deteriorate. Like the workers, they acquired an attitude of not worrying about the future; unlike the frame of mind of the workers, their attitude came from resigned acceptance of the inevitable, not from preoccupation with the present.

175 473 427 24 425 461

Certain astute proprietors tried to get as many families together as could act in concert without jarring or jealousy, and to induce them,

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175 by persuasion, to do as much work as possible for his and their own
473 interests. In a few cases the success of such efforts was tolerably good;
427 but one worker disposed to be sullen or idle, or even not physically
● 24 strong, might throw the whole scheme into disorder. One's own
425 profits would be cut by the misdeeds of others even when one had
461 himself been industrious. This caused a decline of incentive, sometimes among a whole group of potentially good workers, because one or two of the number shirked. Probably the most patent evil of such arrangements was that every laborer realized that he did not suffer as directly for idleness or neglect as when working for himself; his fellow workers shared the consequences of his misconduct in some degree, and his employer in a still greater measure. The driving force of individual responsibility was removed.

[692] Boyer and Inginac, foreseeing just such disorder, had tried to
[684] provide against it in the Code Rural by giving summary powers to local judges to inflict penalties upon lazy or malingering workers. Quite aside, however, from the loss of time and the inconvenience to both parties in going constantly to a judge for his decision, the proprietor was afraid to act on this principle to any extent, since if he did so he might lose his laborers altogether.

175 It was a rare proprietor, then, who could hope to make much of a
473 fortune out of his plantation. More and more the landowners, having
427 subdivided their fields, grew lax in overseeing them. The workers,
24 freed from constant supervision, accustomed by long habit to living
466 in one hut, and unconsciously developing a mentality which made
425 them feel, as did American squatters on frontier lands, that they had a right to the land they tilled, imperceptibly developed into peasants.
178 The state's remaining properties, no longer under cultivation, were invaded by families of small farmers, and the government took no steps to oust them or send them back to privately owned plantations. The estates of individual aristocrats underwent the same fate if not
[625] carefully watched. Theoretically, it was the duty of the army to drive out squatters, to force laborers back into "proper" agricultural work; but the army consisted of peasant youths who would not turn against people of their own group.

671 Legal irregularity was gradually sanctioned by the passage of
178 time, usage being a stronger guarantor of rights than unenforced laws on the statute books.

180 Haitian peasantry, to sum up, began as the unplanned, undesired

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unplanned, undesired

Haitian peasantry, to sum up, began as the result of two policies intended to achieve ends quite different; first, presidential gifts of land, the chief purpose of which had been to pay the soldiers of the republic; and second, the crop-sharing system adopted by landlords after the failure of Boyer's Code. 175 421 24 463 175

6. *The Drawing of Caste Lines (1820–1843)*

Almost every major presidential aim of Boyer came to grief. His tranquil quarter-century rule, the unified island, the financial surplus with which his presidency began, the peace with France after 1825—all these advantages combined with his good intentions did not save his projects from shipwreck. Near the beginning of his régime he announced that, like his revered predecessor Pétion, he felt the safety of Haiti to lie in the abolition of all color distinctions and prejudices. Just as his great Code Rural proved a complete failure, however, so did his efforts to do away with the color line. On the contrary, it was during Boyer's time that class distinctions became fixed, in large part although not wholly, on the basis of color. 175 179 565

Stating that the policy of his government was to put an end, as far as possible, to jealousies of caste, he consistently for a few years promoted a black every time a promotion had been given to a mulatto or other light-skinned person. This procedure soon met an insuperable obstacle. Government posts in general required literacy, and only a very small number of blacks were educated, so that the supply of Negroes was not sufficient to furnish him with candidates. Since one of the few roads to lucrative success lay in official positions, ambitious young colored men sought eagerly for government office, and Boyer soon had no alternative but to advance men of his own complexion. In the army, on the other hand, literacy was not necessary for promotion. Ambitious Negro youths, therefore, frequently chose this career which, while not very profitable in monetary rewards, at least gave a man a certain social status and economic security. 175 647 563 212 555 175 701 555 563

Because of the state of education in the republic, consequently, an ugly situation developed, with the civil arm of government almost wholly in control of the colored element and the military force dominated by blacks. Fortunately for the country no crisis developed during the 1820's and 1830's which made an open breach between army and state. 175 647 701 [563]

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of living only for the day by making people content with a low level of physical existence. Haitian peasants were isolated from the rest of the world; and one who has no standard of comparison rarely has the incentive to improve his living conditions. 175 178 511

Production declined between 1806 and 1843 both in quantity and in quality. Sugar, the staple of colonial trade and still an important export under Christophe, disappeared from the market figures altogether under Boyer. Most of the cane which was raised was worked into syrup and then into tafia (raw rum) for local consumption. Careful attention and the well-ordered machinery necessary for sugar manufacture were both lacking in 1843. Sugar cane was almost never newly planted, but simply lasted on from French days; what plants there were had little attention: they were not manured, or ploughed, or stripped of their dead leaves. Everything was left to nature. The production of coffee in actual number of pounds stood up well, although the quality fell off through lack of cultivation; the price in world markets steadily declined, however, so that the crop of 1843 brought in only twelve million francs as compared with twenty million for the smaller crop of 1822.[43] 175 178 433 257 249 245 439

Practically every acre of the fertile soil of Haiti was cultivated in 1806, the methods steadily improving under Christophe. Irrigation projects were then being developed to replace those destroyed in the wars, and a measure of experimentation went on with new crops and fertilizers. In 1843, however, what was called a coffee "plantation" was actually only a large tract of land on which coffee trees grew wild. There was no laying out of the lands nor any improvement of the soil or pruning of the trees to strengthen the parent stem. Until the berries were ready to be picked the coffee tree was rarely touched, except when pigs scratched their backs on it, or goats and donkeys cropped the grass around it. Cotton likewise received little cultivation. Cocoa raising practically ceased altogether, for it required intelligent management. 175 178 24 433

Haiti under Dessalines still had many buildings of French con- 220 [433]

43. The state figures for 1843 revealed only four money crops, no one of which was as productive of income as sugar had been. In the comparative tables given below it must be remembered that prices declined between 1822 and 1843.

	5-Year Average, 1822–26	1843
Coffee	24,000,000 pounds	23,000,000 pounds
Cotton	676,000 "	2,000,000 "
Campêche	5,600 "	30,000,000 "
Acajou	2,480,000 feet	6,000,000 feet

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however, as on the masses. Nothing was done to educate the people and so inculcate in them the desire for a higher standard of living. Where food is easily got, the government gentle, and the people ignorant, one hardly looks for progress.

Foreigners who knew Haiti were prophesying doom through most of Boyer's administration. The British consul was the most vocal of these prophets. He toured the whole republic in 1828 and found only local variations on a sorry state of affairs. At Jacmel he reported a parceling of the land, a decline of plantations, and a horror of corporal punishment by the people; it seemed to surprise him that every blow given a worker was returned in kind. In the arrondissements of Saint-Marc and Gonaïves cotton continued to be the chief crop as it had been in French days but quantity and quality had declined. At Petite-Rivière relative prosperity prevailed because the lands there were under the control of a former lieutenant of Christophe, who managed to apply that king's stern discipline to his workers. From Gonaïves to Cap Nicolas Môle cultivation was at a low ebb; near Cap-Haïtien everything agricultural was in ruins.[65]

Industry and discipline, the two commonest characteristics of the Haiti of Christophe, were precisely those most notably absent from the Negro masses of 1843. Obedience had given way to independence of behavior. A visitor in 1842 describes the actual condition of a plantation in the arrondissement of Fercy. Where formerly thirty-two families had toiled industriously, under strict overseers who were free to inflict physical punishment upon laggards, now only twelve families remained, the rest having become "freeholders." These twelve had a crop-sharing agreement with the owner of the estate whereby they received the income from half the 20,000 pounds of coffee yielded by the land; but also they

appropriate to themselves almost the whole of the provisions which the land furnishes, sending down only a few of the rarer vegetables, beans, peas, and artichokes, to their master, for his table at Port-au-Prince, and supplying his need when he comes to reside for a few days in the country. This he knows very well, but has no alternative but to bear it quietly.[66]

65. See particularly *Ibid.*, pp. 94, 103–105. The consul clearly felt that the only hope of salvation in Haiti was a reintroduction of some sort of exertion such as that used by Dessalines and Christophe.

66. Candler, op. cit., p. 140.

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to attempt to retrace the path of property evolution, which has steadily taken its own course since the time of Pétion." 175 423

With the peasants prevailingly satisfied in their daily round of life, the separation of upper and lower castes in Haitian society has gradually become an accepted fact. At least ninety per cent of the total population now belong to the peasant group, whose members are as much reconciled to their status as in the United States the poorest colored folk to theirs. Vaguely they may often wish they had the privileges and luxuries of those above them; often, likewise, they feel resentment at the way in which they are treated; but in so far as it is permissible to generalize about two million people, it is fair to say that the Haitian peasant rarely complains of his lot. 565 [162]

Of the remaining ten per cent of the population a small fraction look upon themselves as élite. Some families of this group can be traced back to colonial times when their ancestors were already affranchis; others began to take on aristocracy under Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, and Boyer. Those whose forebears have become élite only since 1843 are less firmly entrenched in the topmost class. However, since no president since Boyer has ever succeeded in weakening caste lines, the élite one or two per cent may be said to constitute a stable social group. [171]

It is significant that although the blacks had the government in their hands for three quarters of a century they were unable to effect any slight change either in caste membership or in caste lines.

The part of the population which is neither élite nor peasant is not "middle class," as that term is understood in the Western World. It is rather a shifting percentage of Haitiens whose one prevailing characteristic is their residence in towns. Some are wage earners, some small tradesmen; some are ex-élite on the way down the 565 369

11. The intimate observer of the Haitian peasant never fails to comment upon his love of the land. Whereas the colonial planter attached a value to his estate because it produced wealth, the peasant loves his little plot because it is his home. Through all the [181] [42] [428] [423] [24]

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[p. 234]

XIII

CONSTITUTIONS AND POLITICAL FORMS

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QUITE aside from its castes and the political separation of 1807–20, Haiti has always consisted of two nations, one living in and near the towns and so within reach of established government, the other rural and yet capable of ordering its own affairs by folk rules without much actual governmental machinery. It is through the former that Haiti has a political history. Indeed, one is tempted to say that more than half the people have continually got along without any government whatever of a formal sort, for being peacably inclined they have found custom and usage [669] sufficient for their needs. These people have been rarely disturbed by the state's rulers; revolutionary chieftains alone have found it worth their while to stir up the country folk to an active interest in politics.

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The formal subdivisions of Haiti have been, through most of its history, three: the *commune*, roughly corresponding to the American township; the *arrondissement*, a group of communes, just as the American county is a group of townships; and the *département*, comprising several arrondissements. All three terms were borrowed from France, although their significance was altered when applied to the Haitian scene.

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In the days of Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, the government had owned vast plantations which were under the control of the military. Pétion and Boyer instituted the commune by combining numerous estates and farms into a group likewise to be controlled by soldiers. Until the American Occupation the police system of the country was military, with ordinary soldiers keeping order and making arrests when necessary. Since few people are less given to disorder than the Haitian peasants, the task of keeping order was not a serious one; indeed, soldiers were frequently stationed among their friends and relatives, who never thought of them as police. It some- [283] times happened, however, that soldiers were assigned to other parts of the country, where they swaggered about with their *cocomacaques* (heavy-jointed canes), using these or the flat of their swords to enforce their often arbitrary commands.

In every commune recognized by the state was an important

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policy of encouraging trade with his friends and prohibiting it with his enemies—both arbitrarily. The variation of Pétion was a sort of mercantilism, with set high tariffs.

What Dessalines planned was in terms of Western statecraft so weird that white onlookers felt they were restrained in calling Dessalines a transplanted African tribal chieftain. So passionately intense was the fury of that general against all whites that he took every precaution he could devise to prevent face-to-face dealings between his Haitians and foreigners. By deceit, treachery, and ingenious cruelty he conducted a massacre which deserves comparison with that of Saint Bartholomew: this effectively rid the country of white residents. Since for a time Haiti would have to depend for economic survival upon trade with foreigners, Dessalines next conceived a project whereby the whole population would be gathered in the centre of the island, in the most protected valleys and the gorges of the highest mountains. In these fastnesses the people would never see a white but would work on the land, producing sugar and coffee and cotton for export without ever leaving their local habitations. On the seacoast would be established certain "counters" over which a few incorruptible Haitians, chosen by the Emperor himself, would sell local products and buy the necessary imported goods. Impregnable fortresses were to guard access to the interior,[2] which would be reached by new roads from the seacoast "counters." Every seaport was to be destroyed as soon as new towns could be built in the back country. Already when his death intervened Dessalines had moved his capital from the Cape (that is, Cap-Haïtien, formerly Cap Français) to the inland village of Marchand (in the department of the Artibonite; now renamed Dessalines), and his next plan was to transfer Port-au-Prince eight leagues inland to the plantation Dérance, among the mountains.

Dessalines has been thought absurd, childish, barbaric. But there is something poignant, even tragic, in this fiery determination of the black chieftain, bitter over the cruelties and indignity to which his people had been subject for decades, to use this alien island as best he could and preserve his people at any cost from such another domination.

Despite his scheme for ultimate isolation of the people, Dessalines kept everyone steadily at work by the forced-labor system instituted

2. See p. 247 and note 13. under Toussaint.

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175 finally the license was obtained, it authorized the foreigner to carry
459 on only a wholesale business—not with other foreign traders or with
656 any resident aliens, but with Haitians in the six open ports.[10] The
444 minimum of goods to be sold in any deal was fixed, so that no foreigner could inadvertently enter the retail business. Such licenses cost between $1,600 and $2,000, sums so large that few foreigners were drawn to the island.

Quite obviously the government sought to keep the external trade of Haiti under its control; it is equally obvious that under the licensing system, with its high fees and strict surveillance, only a small number of dealers were attracted, who consequently monopolized what little trade there was. Retail business being prohibited to them, their imports had to be sold by Haitians.

175 Not even this necessity created a middle class in the country, for
565 the purchasing power of the peasants and other lower-caste Haitians
434 was small; also the total sum of imports and exports was not large enough to support a middle class. The retail trade was chiefly in the
443 hands of town women. These *marchandes*, as they were called, em-
444 ployed a number of hucksters—likewise women—to traverse the countryside surrounding the open ports, attend the markets, and report either every evening, or every week or month, depending upon their findings. The white man let his marchande know how much coffee he required, and this information was passed on to the local speculator who, at a very moderate profit, collected the coffee beans from the peasants in his neighborhood. Imports were distributed in like manner over the countryside. In its small way this system worked well enough, for the good faith of respectable marchandes could be counted upon both by the white trader and by the local dealers. A few European and American traders found it profitable to set up as marchandes the women with whom they cohabited, for this arrangement brought them nearer to the retail trade.

175 During Boyer's long administration the staple export was coffee,
439 still cultivated on a few remaining plantations but mostly picked
24 from plants growing wild, and sold by the peasants as their one source of money income. Sugar disappeared almost wholly from the

[504] 10. Namely, Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, Gonaïves, Jacmel, Les Cayes, and Jérémie; from 1822 to 1844 there were also two open ports in the Spanish part of the island which, during those years, was a part of Haiti.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

list except in raw form, in which it had an annual sale of only a few thousand pounds. Other subordinate exports were cotton, logwood, lignum vitae, mahogany, tortoise shells, hides, cacao, cassia, wax, ginger, bullocks' horns, and tobacco—and many of these came primarily from the Dominican rather than the Haitian part of the island, during the twenty-two year period of union. The imports were mainly clothing and provisions. That an agricultural country should need to bring in flour, butter, cheese, lard, beef, pork, candles, and especially—in the light of former days—refined sugar, is eloquent testimony to the degree to which food production had declined since colonial times. Other imports were more to be expected, since manufacture had never developed: linen, cotton goods of all kinds, some few woolens, cutlery, iron goods, wines and brandies, oil, lumber, coarse iron goods, earthenware, tin plates, and minor articles.[11]

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Gone now were the days of big things in Haiti. Estates of thousands of acres would in Boyer's time have been only a liability. Profits were measured, or rather hoped for, in terms of hundreds rather than thousands of dollars.[12] Saint-Domingue of the 1780's was one of the exciting parts of the world to traders; Haiti of fifty years later was little more than a vague name except to specialists. Any country relying for its economic security upon one crop and its sale in a foreign market must expect vicissitudes in its income. Haiti had these in full measure. And so the prosperity of the country steadily diminished.[13]

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11. See the very careful report to Great Britain by her consul, Charles Mackenzie, in 1830: *Notes on Hayti*, II, 175–190. [113]

12. Mackenzie (*Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti*, Document XI) reports in 1825: "Generally speaking, no sugar is manufactured on the estates devoted to the cultivation of the sugar cane; the juice is either inspissated to a coarse sirup, and sold for common use, or distilled into a very inferior rum, called here 'Tafia.'" Then, citing the case of Tor, an estate formerly owned by Pétion but in 1825 by Boyer, he reports: "Formerly 1,700 carreaux were in cane; 1,500 slaves were employed on it; 3 sugar mills were constantly at work, and excellent clayed sugar was made. Now only about 7 carreaux are in cultivation; 50 laborers are employed; the only produce is a little sirup and tafia, which last is retailed in a small shop by the side of the road, in front of the president's residence."

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13. These vicissitudes have been frequently noted. Droughts and hurricanes, pests and earthquakes, were causes of constant apprehension. The chief forces at work to diminish Haitian prosperity were two: the division of land into small parcels at home, and the competition of other countries with Haitian coffee abroad. The price of coffee had declined in all the European markets, making the return to the cultivator exceedingly small.

B: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

quarantine: "Haiti for the Haitians." At first the prohibition on white ownership of land and financial investment in the country was attributable to a fear of reënslavement; then to a fear that financial commitments (which no Haitian really understood) would somehow lead to political subjection; and always the feeling of pride, combined with a desperate need of self-justification, made the Haitians want to keep their country entirely under control of their own people. It is, of course, possible that if white people had been allowed free access to the country, they might have destroyed the "Black Republic"; excluding white men altogether, however, seriously curtailed economic activity.

2. Overmilitarization. The army, numerous out of all proportion to the population, took the ablest men out of production, drained the treasury, and was a constant source of revolutionary activity.

3. Poor methods of agriculture. Critics often complained that Haiti ought to return to the system of large estates and forced labor; it apparently occurred to no one to suggest that education of the peasants might have made the land productive once more, by teaching the people new methods. Dividing up the land was an inevitable necessity unless every ruler were as willing as Christophe to be a dictator and as capable; but to keep the peasants in ignorance was not a necessity. Peasant landowners in Europe frequently tend their acres with skill, while in Haiti, with neither experience nor instruction in methods of tillage on small farms, the people developed steadily more destructive ways of farming.

4. Inefficient marketing. Assuming Haiti's dependence upon the staple crop of coffee and the handling of this crop by foreign merchants, every government seemed intent upon putting obstacles in the path of efficient marketing procedure.[15] The white trader could deal only with Haitians (who were ignorant in matters of international trade); although the foreigner had to pay a huge license fee in order to deal at all in Haitian products, he got no security in return, for he might not own land or obtain a lien on the real property of a citizen.[16] Banking and exchange facilities were wholly lacking.

15. In 1833 Boyer thought to "encourage" Haitians to commercial effort by gradually expelling foreign traders, refusing to grant them any new licenses to trade. His scheme failed, for the élite were not interested. Indeed, the actual effect of his plan was to disrupt the steady flow of exports and increase discontent with Boyer on the part of the élite plantation owners whose small profits were momentarily interrupted.

16. See James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 374 ff.

1: Hawkins E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV2 Haiti SV2
Mirebalais

possible to gain a historical perspective of the valley in which our interest centers. As late as 1702, he tells us, only a few individuals were settled there, and these were mainly hunters and herders, since the policy of that day, based on the official belief that the future of the valley lay in using to the full its grazing resources rather than in the development of agriculture, caused all agricultural activity to be prohibited. Two decades later, however, when the cultivation of indigo had been successfully introduced, agricultural development proceeded apace. In 1739, in addition to more than a score of indigo-production centers, the valley boasted of numerous coffee, cotton, and cocoa plantations, and by 1789 was a recognized agricultural region.

But for the fact that the great plantations are no longer there, this aspect of life in Mirebalais has been little changed by revolutions and the abolition of slavery. Indigo, of course, has lost its place as an important product, while maize is now among the most significant crops, as might be looked for in the change from a plantation system to one of small individual ownership which was brought about by Haitian independence. But cotton and sugar-cane are still major crops, and coffee, which grows well on the mountainsides, is largely cultivated.

Moreau de St. Mery, writing in 1789, speaks of the French who peopled the valley as "still showing the traits which marked the early colonials. They are good, frank, brave, and opposed to all coercion." In 1723 "they marched with others from the district of the Artibonite" in an uprising against the arbitrary policies of the French West Indies Company, which Charlevoix, one of the first historians of Haiti, so vividly described.[3] In 1729 and 1736 the folk of Mirebalais defended their eastern frontier against attacks by the neighboring Spaniards; eleven years later one hundred and ten of them helped with the defense of the town of St. Louis, which was menaced by the hostile maneuvers of the British admiral

Z: Handwerke E-4, 5 (1506) 1997 DV3 Haiti DV3
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ABOVE, *A country dwelling.*
BELOW, *A combine at work.*

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[facing P. 11]

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Mirebalais

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CHAPTER IV

THE SETTING OF HAITIAN LIFE

Since the discovery by the Spaniards that the wealth of Haiti lay rather in cultivating sugar than in the exploitation of gold mines, its dominant economy has been agricultural. In the valley of Mirebalais, as elsewhere in the island, the small cultivator holds the center of the economic stage. In the main he works his own land, inherited from his father or acquired through purchase. He may also cultivate additional plots of ground which he rents, since much of the land expropriated when independence was gained was retained by the State and today is leased for nominal fees.[1]

The life of the Haitian farmer, though hard, is simple and self-contained. With but few exceptions, he supplies all his necessities, for he commands almost the entire range of techniques known to his culture; hence Haitian economy shows a lack of specialization that in the main is only relieved by the sex division of labor. The day's work begins at dawn, the women rising before the men to prepare coffee, the invariable drink of early morning. When finished with his breakfast, the farmer goes to his field, where, except for the hottest hours, he works until sundown, his one meal being brought to him at about nine or ten o'clock in the morning. His wife meanwhile occupies herself with her household tasks, pounding grain in her mortar or working in her garden near by.

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512 grain in her mortar or working in her garden near by. On
[413] market days she takes the produce of the family's fields to the
[338] town to sell. If she has young children, she cares for them
while she does her other work, but when they are old enough,
[355] they help her about the house if they are girls, or, if boys, go
[391] with their father to the garden. From time to time, when
[356] house repairs are needed or there are implements to be
[241] mended, the man spends a day at home getting these odd
jobs done; otherwise only serious illness in the family keeps
him from his fields.

512 The times for meals have not varied since the days when
[24] Moreau de St. Mery described the eating-habits of the slaves.[1]
In addition to the mid-morning repast, the only other meal
is that eaten after the man returns from his field, this being
the largest of the day. A wife does not sit down with her
[542] husband, but usually eats earlier with her small children and
[343] holds herself ready to serve him upon his return, when, if he
is alone, she remains to tell him the day's gossip. Visitors are
[974] often present, for peasant etiquette demands that all comers
[976] be offered food, and, as one Haitian expressed it, "The peasant would kill you for the insult if you did not share your meal with him." Bedtime, as might be expected, is early.

512 On Sundays and on the days of festivals this routine is in-
[52] terrupted, when, if the occasion is of sufficient importance
[796] and the habitation is not too far from town, the peasant and
his family attend mass. On Saturday nights there is usually a *vodun* dance, when the early hour for retirement is forgotten and all-night festivities precede Sunday's rest. On such days
[264] the principal meal is eaten at three or four o'clock in the afternoon, and all the adults share it together, while at one side the children are fed from the dishes of their parents in response to the insistent repetition of the demand "*Ba'm pa'm* — give me my portion." *

* This is an example of the elision characteristic of Haitian Creole, it being abbreviated from *Ba mais part mais* or, in French, *Donnez-moi ma part.*

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Mirebalais

The hard work of cultivating the fields is abated only during the dry season — the winter months of December to February — though even during these months there is no dearth of tasks about the house which must be cared for, such as repairs of various sorts and, above all, rethatching. There is, however, also more time for recreation than at other seasons, so that throughout the countryside there are dances and cock-fights. With February, however, work in the fields must be resumed.

The Haitian farmer does not practice any formal rotation of crops, but continues to plant a given crop in the same field until the harvest becomes perceptibly smaller than in former years, when a change is made to another type of produce. Later, when the same phenomenon is again observed, a third crop may be planted, but sooner or later the land is "put to rest," in which case it either is allowed to lie fallow or is planted with cotton, which is not thought of in the same category as other crops, but is held to be a tree, and, like other trees that of themselves spring up in a fallow field, is believed to give strength to the exhausted earth. A field of this kind remains outside cultivation as a "fallen garden" for four or five years, and the animals are allowed to enter freely and graze in it until it has become a "new garden" again.

If a field is to be made out of hitherto unworked land, or ground which has lain fallow for several years is to be cultivated once again, the work is begun by cutting down the trees. The twigs are heaped preparatory to burning them, and the larger branches and the tree-trunks are used to make fences. After the dried leaves and branches have been burned, the field is cleared of small brush, and is then ready for its initial hoeing, which, according to the crops to be planted, is sometimes delayed until some months later. Usually, however, after two or three rains have cooled and softened land that has been burned over, work continues on it. The hoeing is

done by the owner himself only if the field is very small; otherwise one of the co-operative work-groups that form such an important element in Haitian rural economy must be called.

The regulation of communal labor in Mirebalais, though extremely informal, is none the less effective. There are three or four types of such organizations, none of which requires a large outlay of funds on the part of the one whose land is being worked, and only one of which, the "mutual association," has any restriction as to membership. In this last case, three or four or five men agree to work for each other a given number of hours, rotating their working period of three hours or half a day in the fields of each of the parties to the agreement. The other co-operative groups vary principally as to their size and the time of day when their work is carried on. The smallest is the *mire*, which consists of perhaps half a dozen or ten men who come to help a neighbor in his work, and labor from early morning until about the middle of the morning. A somewhat larger group, who work from about this time until midday, is known as a *coup de main*. Finally, there is the *combite*, the Mirebalais form of the characteristic organization for mutual self-help known elsewhere in Haiti as the *Société Cassaga*.[5]

Though strenuous physical labor is involved in the work of the *combite*, for the Haitian it symbolizes recreation and enjoyment — the stimulus of working with one's fellows, the pleasure of gossiping with friends, and the partaking of the feast which marks the climax of the day. All this makes the occasion one to be anticipated and enjoyed, and no one witnessing ten or fifteen men on horseback, each with a hoe over his shoulder, shouting and laughing as they clatter by at full gallop, can fail too sense their eager desire to arrive at their destination, a near-by *combite*.[6]

When a man or a woman needs help in preparing a field — for women, particularly those who sell in the market, may often become wealthy and large cultivators — a request is

made of key-men in the district informally called *chefs d'escouade*. They have the reputation of being those to whose call a number of men, perhaps a dozen, perhaps two or three times that many, will respond and come to give the aid that is desired. Such a person is given a "bouquet"—a bottle of *clairin*—which insures the appearance of himself and his group on the date set. A *combite* may be held at any time during the week except Sundays, which are dedicated to rest, and Tuesdays (in earlier times Mondays), when tradition holds a person must be free to work his own fields and care for tasks needed to be done at his own house. There is no requirement in either law or custom to respond to the call for communal work, and the larger landowners, who usually reside in the towns, rarely participate in a *combite*. So great is the pleasure derived from work of this sort, however, and so living is the realization among the peasantry of its potential benefits, that a man hesitates before he refuses to take part in a *combite* to which he has been summoned. Sometimes a man who has been faithful in his attendance at *combites* and has worked well at them falls ill during the time for planting or for clearing his ground of underbrush or for hoeing. In such case a *combite* is summoned, and even though this man is unable to offer the usual feast, his services are remembered and the men work with a will to insure the proper preparation of his ground.

The scene in a field where a large *combite* is at work is an arresting one. The men form a line, with a drummer in front of their hoes. The *simidor*, who leads the singing as he works with the others, adds the rhythm of his song to the regular beats of the drum, thus setting the time for the strokes of the implements wielded by the workers. This drum, slung about the neck of the drummer, is of the European form, never the hollowed-out African type that figures in religious rites. Its sound can carry far, however, and thus it not only beats the time for the hoes, but notifies all concerned that the *combite*

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is under way. The size of the *combite* is judged by the number of drums and *lambi*, or conch-shell horns used, for where two or three of either are required, an especially large group of workers is usually assembled. It may be observed in passing that it is undoubtedly the sound of this *combite* drum, heard in the mountains or through the brush by travelers, that has so often been mistaken for the "mysterious booming" of the *vodun* drums.[8]

The preparation of the food is the work of the women of the household giving the *combite*, aided by their female relations and the wives of friends and neighbors. This is no small task, for goats and even a bullock may be killed to feed a large *combite*, while in addition other dishes to go with the meat must be cooked. Each woman is given charge of a great pot and does her best to see to it that an appetizing dish is ready for the men when their work is done. While the food is being cooked, the real object of the *combite*, the clearing of the field, is being pursued. A *chef d'esquade*, usually with a small group, begins the afternoon's labor, and, being a fast worker, he himself sets the pace. As more men arrive, he walks about, encouraging the constantly increasing number of men in their efforts, seeing to it that the tempo originally set is continued, and when necessary picking up a hoe to restore a lagging rhythm. Occasionally the *chef d'esquade* will stand in front of the men to make sure that all keep together, and if the lazy cannot be roused to work by direct order or through ridicule, he will drive them away.

The work progresses with incredible speed as the line moves down the field. In one case a *combite* of between fifty and seventy-five men completely cleared a field of several acres in a single afternoon, and this without undue effort or what appeared to be the expenditure of much energy. The flashing of the hoes in the brilliant sunlight accentuates the color of the scene; each implement is raised high above the head of the one who wields it, to be brought down at the proper in-

sant and in almost perfect accord with the hoes of all the other men in line. Pauses are frequent, and men often drop out of the line for a longer period of rest — even those not of the type laughingly called *majeurs*, who shirk their task and come to a *combite* principally to share in the feasting — and these, for the time being, join the singing with added verve. During the periods of rest, re-alignments are made and, if necessary, the direction of the line is changed; after a short time, however, the cry of the *simidor* rings out, the initial statement of a song is sounded, and as the chorus swings into the melody, the hoes rise again, the beat of the drum is begun, the plaintive notes of the *lambi* are heard, and the workers once more move down the field.*

Acting as the representative of the owner of the field to be cleared is a man who is called the *directeur*. If a large number of workers, a hundred or more, are assembled, he may divide them into two groups, assigning each half of the field, and then there is competition to see which group will first complete its allotted task. On such an occasion there would not only be more than one drum, but also more than one principal singer, or *simidor*, and the songs would thereupon have improvised words boasting of the prowess of the winning side, and ridiculing its opponents. The "director" also apportions the food, for it is customary to follow the rule which holds that since not all workers are equally eager or competent, so the rewards should not be the same for all. The shirkers are well known. They come but a little before sunset, or, arriving earlier, dawdle, walking about with their hoes and accomplishing but little during the afternoon. The lack of enthusiasm of these *majeurs* for work does not escape the "director," for though all who come to the *combite* must be fed, such men receive relatively little; while those who have worked the hardest not only are rewarded with dishes heaped with especially choice morsels of meat, but often find several sous when they reach the bottom of the dish.

Compère répond':	My friend replies:
"C'é' moin qui avec cousine moin."	"It is I who am with my cousin."
Assé-é!	Enough!
Moin en dedans déjà.	I am already inside.
En é-é-o!	Up, o!
Nan point taureau	No bull
Passé taureau.	Is better than [this] bull.
En é-o!	Up, o!

Finally, there may be cited a composition which complains against a shirker who comes and eats, but does little work:

Samba, é-é,	Samba, é-é,
Moin vé ou malhonnêt,	I see that you are a dishonest man,
Tonnèrre!	*Tonnèrre!* *
Moin planté maïs moin,	I plant my maize,
L'année rive,	The year rolls round,
Moin planté mangé,	I plant food,
Ou apè managé li.	You eat it.
En é-é-o!	In the air!
Moin planté aboca,	I plant avocados,
Ça pou' ou mangé,	They are for you to eat,
Ou malhonnet-o.	You are a dishonest man-o.
Tonnèrre!	*Tonnèrre!*

241 The field cleared and hoed, the work of planting begins. This is carried on in accordance with a well-defined calendar of agriculture, which takes as its starting-point the beginning of the rains. Maize, which matures quickly, is the first crop, and is planted during the latter part of March or early in April, unless the rains are delayed, when it is planted later that month. Congo peas, which mature less rapidly, are put

[195] * *Tonnèrre*, "thunder," is a Haitian-French oath; the original is retained because in translation its force is lost.

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in at the same time, while calabashes and melon vines are planted where the ash of the fires that consumed the cleared brush can fertilize them. Rice, which grows somefour months before it matures, is planted between May and August in special patches reserved for this crop. Millet, planted in July, August, and September, can be harvested in January. Potatoes and manioc are put in the earth the latter quarter of the year and are harvested during the next dry season. Bananas, according to their species, are planted between April and September. Red beans, which mature twice a year and are cultivated high on the mountains surrounding the valleys, where it is cool, are planted in January and February and in August and September; they are harvested in June and January. 241

Sugar-cane is almost as important today as it was in the earliest days of Haitian agriculture. It is planted from May to July and gathered a year later, two fields being necessary if an annual crop is to be harvested. Once the cane is in the ground, however, it gives crop after crop without the need of preparing the fields or planting new shoots each year. Yams and *malangas* are cultivated on the mountainsides, the land often being worked by a system of share-cropping whereby a farmer who lives in the valley but owns mountain land employs a near-by peasant to work for him, providing him with the necessary supplies and entering into an agreement that the crop will be divided equally between them. This system, however, is said by the landowning Haitians to be unsatisfactory, since there is no way to verify the yield without spending an excessive amount of time. The Haitian farmer grows other produce: cabbage, squash, onions, garlic, peanuts, peppers, papaya, and spices, while the trees near the houses give coconuts, oranges, avocados, mangos, guavas, and other fruits. [429]

Crops are not planted during the first quarter of the moon, the preferred time in Mirebalais being from eight days after the new moon until the full moon. It is held that anything 241 821

planted at other times will spoil. Similarly, millet and maize must not be harvested during these periods, or small insects will eat the grain. "No crop whose root is used for food may be planted during the forbidden phases of the moon," say the educated cultivators also, citing experiences of their own or of their neighbors who, being skeptical, planted their potatoes or other tubers during the wrong phase of the moon, only to have them completely spoil. In some instances not only the phases of the moon, but entire months are held unpropitious for planting. Thus July is regarded as a "weak" month for planting potatoes and plantains, while April, May, June, and August are preferred ones.

As in all Negro cultures, the Haitians dare not ignore the supernatural powers that rule the universe, where the question of getting a living is concerned. In the valley of Mirebalais, if the land where a field is to be made has a stream, a cock must be sacrificed to the spirit that resides in it, together with oil, peas, and some non-intoxicating drink. In making the offering, protection is asked against those who might steal from the field or injure it:

> "*Maître Source, moin mandé pou' ou gadé jardin moin vini fait ici. Cé pas pou' ou laissé méchant, malfaiteur contrarié tout ça moin métié man terr'a. Si moin bien récolté, moin va ba ou un pile mangé.* — Master of the Stream, I pray you to protect the garden I have just made here. Do not permit any evil designing person to harm all that I have put into the ground. If I harvest well, I will give you much food."

An invocation such as the following might also be pronounced on this occasion:

> "*Jesu Christ, les Saints, Marasa, les Morts: M'ap' travaillé; m'ap' planté graines-là. Pou' fai'l donné pou' moin, pou' m' join, pou' m' bai' Mystères, les Saintes, les Marasa, les Morts.* — Jesus Christ, Saints, Twins, the

Dead: I have worked; I have planted this seed. Make it yield for me, that I may make offerings to the Mysteries, the Saints, the Twins, the Dead."

At the entrance to the field the cranium of a horse, a mule, or a burro may be erected on a pole as magic against evil, and a wooden cross to which limes are attached may also be raised to protect against any expression of envy that might place a spell upon the growing plants. Finally, if there is any reason to believe that evil magic may have been invoked against the owner, a *hungan*, or voodoo priest is summoned to make a charm to ward it off, and, with a little ceremony, he inters this charm in the middle of the garden or at its entrance.

In addition to this, first fruits must be given as an offering to the supernatural forces whose goodwill has permitted a bountiful yield, particularly in the case of staple crops such as maize and rice. As the first heads of maize are brought in, they are roasted, and the kernels are cut from the cobs. The head of the household then throws them to the four cardinal points either in the garden or before his house, and as he does this, he pronounces an invocation such as the following:

> "*Jesu Christ, les Saints, les Marassa, les Morts: M' jet' mal' bai' ou, c'est pou' toujou' m' gagne bai' ou, et pou' m' gagne courai' pou' travai' a'c p'tit' moin, a'c femme moin, a'c parent' moin, a'c toute famille-a. Conserve m' pou' m' pas malade, pou' m' toujours join pou, m' bai' ou.* — Jesus Christ, the Saints, the Twins, the Dead: I throw maize for you, that I may always have some to give, that I may gain courage [strength] to work, and also my children, my wife, my relations, and all my family. Care for me that I do not fall ill, so that I may always have [something] to give you."

After this ritual the new crop is available to its owner for whatever use he may care to make of it.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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241 782 The first of the rice-harvest is pounded in a mortar. A chicken is killed, or, if the farmer is a man of some means, he may offer two chickens, which are stewed together with red beans. The rice, cooked separately, is put on one platter or in a calabash and the stew in another, and these are taken to the field, where they are cast to the four quarters of the earth. Some of this is also given to the spirit residing in any stream which may be on the property. In addition, sacred trees are rewarded for their care over the field with some of this food placed at the foot of each, but only after they have demonstrated their merit by a successful yield. A prayer of thanks, couched in terms such as these, is next pronounced:

[478] [829] [539]

> *"Tout ça quitté. Aidé moin à travailler durant l'année, quitté ba moin force, courage. Moin bien content jodi-a, main ça moin porté ba-ou, c'e pou' ca toujou' bon. Ba moin force l'année pou' moin travaille plus l'année prochain. Merci.* — All this remains [here for you]. Help me to work during the year, give me strength and courage. Today I am well satisfied; here is what I bring you that all may always be well with me. Give me strength this year that I may work more next year. Thank you."

The family and their friends who may be present then return to the house and eat the remaining food.

241 782 262 It is also held dangerous to eat yams until the spirits are given the first of the new crop that comes to hand.[7] This is true even though a person may not himself be a farmer, but purchases his yams in the market. Unless this is done: "*Cap' malade, cap' tué même. Marassa hèmbé 'ou, morts, too, et mystères.* — You can become ill, you can even die. Twins will seize (molest) you; the dead, too, and the *mystères*." The ceremony occurs during November or December, and in addition to the "Guinea" yams — for this ceremony is not performed for the great coarse yams — it is necessary to have imported dried salt fish, fish from Haitian waters which are dried

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

in Port-au-Prince, native or "créole" rice, red beans, and olive oil. The rice and beans are cooked separately, as are the yams and the two kinds of salt fish, each being seasoned with oil, salt, and pepper. The ordinary plates or calabashes on which food is offered the *loa*, or African deities, and the characteristic special double plates used in the twin cult, are prepared by rubbing them with olive oil. When the food is ready, it is placed in the proper containers in a closed room, and the family gather and say prayers of the Church — the Pater Noster, the Ave Maria, and the Credo — after which the *loa*, the twins, and the dead are called to come and eat. From midday until after sunset the room remains unopened, so that these beings may partake of the offerings placed there for them. Finally, when darkness has fallen, the family enter, and the food, whose essence is believed to have been consumed by the spirits, is eaten.

At times when a garden yields but little, the owner may suspect that black magic is the cause. He thereupon tries to recall any of his neighbors who might have occasion to feel envious of him, or those with whom he may have quarreled. He does nothing overt at this time except to watch for signs of hostility on the part of the suspect, but when the time for the next planting arrives, he not only obtains a strong charm to protect his own garden, but if he is particularly exercised and thinks his suspicions are well justified, he may set a counter-charm in the field of his neighbor who he believes has harmed him. This would only be done in exceptional cases, where, for instance, the crops of one cultivator had failed when the fields about his had yielded well; for, in the main, garden magic is directed toward protective rather than toward malevolent ends.

A certain proportion of the harvest is reserved for use at home and the remainder is sold in the markets. Since these markets, which as the primary channel of distribution rank with farming in their importance in Haitian economy, they

1; Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

to cutting fruit, though seen in Africa, was probably introduced there by the early traders, and all machetes found today in Haiti are imported from Europe or America. The same is true of the hoe, for the short-handled, broad-bladed West African hoe has given way to the European long-handled type, though the blade of the Haitian hoe is somewhat broader than that used in America and Europe. Despite the presence of domesticated animals to draw the plow, this implement has never gained favor in Haiti, nor have recent efforts to teach the Haitian peasant the use of the plow achieved any degree of success. He prefers his African mode of cultivation, to say which implies more than just the employment of a certain implement, since even such matters as the manner in which he employs his hands and feet in the process of planting are included. When the Dahomean plants, for example, he holds a calabash of seed under his left arm, from which he takes the grains with his right hand. As he moves down the rows of newly turned earth, he makes a depression with the heel of his right foot, drops a few grains into this depression and, replacing the earth with his toes, takes a step so that he can repeat the process with his left foot. This is exactly the manner in which Haitians were observed planting in the valley of Mirebalais.[8] Unlike the usage in Africa, however—where the men clear the ground, the men and women plant, and the women tend the growing crops—the European pattern, which places agriculture in all its essential phases in the hands of men, has been taken over almost in its entirety.

The women have retained almost without change the African modes of preparing food. Grain is first pounded in an African-like mortar, with an aboriginal type of pestle, while the shelled kernels are winnowed in a large round basketry tray. The cooking is either done on a raised mud platform in the cooking shelter, as in West Africa, or on three stones, employed as rests for the pots, a method equally characteristic of Africa. In the Haitian cuisine the prevalence of stews, of

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Preface

Every student of Haitian life is soon impressed by the richness of the materials spread out before him and the necessity of limiting his field of investigation. A study of Haitian religious practices, for example, draws one deeper and deeper into profusion, variation, and contradiction. One finds little difficulty in drawing a generalized picture with swift, bold lines; but when he descends into detail he discovers that the broad generalizations of the religious system contain within them many shifting and even warring motifs, and that what in one region is held to be true is not so regarded in another. The gods of *Vodoun* that are revered in one village are given only perfunctory treatment in another. Rites for the dead have a common denominator everywhere in the country, but each community brings to them something of its own or emphasizes traditions that elsewhere are forgotten. So it is also with music and dancing. A traditional drum rhythm may have one name in the north and another in the south, or a certain rhythm may be called by different names. There are diverse opinions about which dances are preferred by certain deities. The meaning of a song can be interpreted differently by different people. It is therefore no wonder that competent works on Haiti do not completely agree with one another in many respects, or that they seem, now and then, to be saying different or even contradictory things. Yet in many instances the seeming inconsistencies are in reality only minor variants within an overall scheme.

The purpose of this book is to present a broad view of certain aspects of Haitian culture and wherever possible to extract some of the flavor of Haitian thinking as well as its sense. It is easy to be fooled in regard to both. I remember seeing an old bearded man in the mountains beyond Furcy walking around his freshly hoed garden breaking a ripe tomato into small juicy bits which he scattered on the ground. It was about as primitive a method of planting as I had ever seen, and I wondered if even

2; Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

one seed from that tomato would ever take root under the hot sun. Some time later, when I knew this man well, I talked to him about the care with which seeds must be planted if they are to grow properly. I told him how *we grew our* tomatoes. He listened carefully, nodding his head. When I had finished he said: "Yes, that must be a good way to do things in your country. But here in this valley God is good. He does not forget his children. From the broken tomato many plants will sprout. When God is good to you, you do not have to count the seeds." I suggested that perhaps one should not waste any of the precious seeds that God had provided; and to this he replied: "How is there waste? My garden is made to flourish by Zaka [the country man's special deity]. Some people give Zaka a feast every year, but between times they forget. Zaka helps me in my work, and I don't forget him. When I break the tomato and put it on the ground that way, it is a little taste for Zaka. Whatever I plant, I give him some. He is good to me, I am good to him."

What I learned from many incidents like this one was that the eye does not always see correctly. The old man was not just planting tomatoes, nor was he performing a conventionalized ritual act. It was a highly personalized act of faith in nature and confidence in the deity who shared his work.

A large part of this book deals with Vodoun, the religious practices based on West African traditions. One soon discovers that the songs and dances of Vodoun ritual are not merely music and motion supplementing and decorating more serious affairs. Virtually every aspect of Vodoun ritual is placative or invocational. The songs that are sung and the dances that are danced are direct supplication of various supernatural forces.

Undoubtedly, a number of principles which are put forward in this study do not apply equally to every region of Haiti; but they are, I think, true in general terms. Not until one has accepted the fact that different explanations exist for given phenomena, that the same rites are performed in different fashion in different places, and that the cult priests themselves do not agree on many details, may one begin to work toward a general view of the Haitian scene.

All of Haitian life is not Vodoun. And there are of course some Haitians who are relatively outside the central circle of its influence. But the inner meanings of Vodoun and its relationship to the total view of life permeate the entire scene. Music, too, binds together practically the entire fabric of Haitian existence. It is essential not only to the cult temple but to countless workaday activities. Agrarian work groups often perform their tasks to the accompaniment of a drum. And in the cult temple, the iron hoe of the fields often serves as a percussion instrument.

The Drum and the Hoe is the result of studies made over a period of

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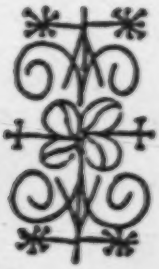

1. The Making of the Haitian

If you come to Haiti by sea, a way that is old-fashioned but full of magic, 133
you are first aware of the island as a range of hills rising out of the water, and then, as you sail closer, new ranges come into view behind the first, and eventually you see that everything is mountains. The ranges pile up in the distance and finally lose themselves in the white morning mists that the country people call "snow." A Haitian proverb says, "Behind the mountains are mountains," and that is a true picture of the island.

In the summer after the rains have come, the hills and mountain slopes 134
are green; but later they turn brown, and it is then that one notices the 132
deep gashes where the earth has eroded and washed away into the valleys below and into the sea.

From the top of the range called La Selle ("The Saddle"), when the 132
heavy mists form and settle across the highland valleys one sees nothing 133
but the great rounded sugar-loaf peaks, which appear as floating islands in a vast sea of white.

From a distant ship in the Caribbean in the full glare of daylight it is 361
hard to imagine that millions of people have made a home of these mountains. But at night it is different. The mountains are alive then with twinkling spots of light made by cooking fires, torches, and electric bulbs. For 361
the hillsides as well as the coastal lowlands are dotted with tiny huts and 487
homesteads, and the trails from one village to another crisscross and lie on the land like a woven net. They lead from the high-up places down to the seacoast towns, through the waterless mesa of the frontier, through the pine forests of the southern range, through dense blankets of wild strawberries, wild-bamboo groves, and plantations of coffee. They find their way to the salt marches, the rice fields of the Artibonite Valley, and the cities.

In the lowlands the days are hot and tropical. It is there the sugar cane, 132
bananas, and plantains grow so lushly. In the mountains the people have [241]

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fires in their houses at night to keep out the damp cold that sweeps through the passes. And a man on the trail before dawn may wear a blanket over his head and carry a glowing ember with him for warmth.

On the south coast there are sometimes hurricanes and tidal waves, and many a small fishing boat and grass-covered house has been washed away in these storms. But the great mountains of the southern range deflect the winds, so that to the north their full fury is never known.

In the great Bay of Gonaïves the fishing boats sail out at night with the friendly winds that carry them to the fishing grounds of the island of La Gonave, and they return to the shore with their catches in the morning, or in the afternoon with the setting sun. The sailing boats from the tiny fishing village called Ville Matelot each day pass the deserted islet named Isle à Cabrit, where four Indian camps once stood. Today Isle à Cabrit is only a waterless, denuded place, a hunting ground for Carib and Arawak pottery and carved stone images.

In the frontier lakes of the Cul-de-Sac Plain there are wild ducks and alligators. Here the villagers fish with nets from rafts and dugout canoes. Now and then an iguana is seen, but there is little other game, because the edible wildlife of the country was long ago eaten by hungry people.

For the things that grow wild the Haitian is grateful—the avocado, the mango, the cashew, and the cotton which once planted produces again and again each year. He is grateful for the coconut palms, the calabash tree, the gourd vines, and the medicinal herbs that grow on every side. But the gifts of nature are not prolific. Most of the great stands of timber—lignum vitae, mahogany, dyewood and pine—have been cut away. Once fertile garden spots have dried up, and the soil that produces the yams, the pumpkins, the kaffir, and the rice is tired.

But the Haitian himself is not tired. He has suffered from malaria, yaws, and chronic hunger; yet out of the great old mountains of Haiti he has fashioned a way of life and a nation.

The Haitian of today was created out of the fabric of three continents—Africa, America, and Europe. He was shaped out of the plains and hills of Nigeria, Dahomey, and the Congo; the summers and winters of Europe; and the mountains and mountain mists of Haiti itself. He is the synthesis of the folk beliefs of the French and Spanish peasants, the Yoruba and the Arada of West Africa, and perhaps of the Carib Indians with whom he had close contact during his first days in the New World. He has brought into affinity the religious practices of Africa and the beliefs of the Church of Rome. He is outwardly simple and poor, but inwardly he is a complicated and rich man. He is rich in music, in the capacity for spiritual expression, in tradition, in folklore, and in memories. He has been able

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9. Land and Work

There is a common Haitian saying which goes: "Pitit mangé, travaille youn pile" (A little food, but tremendous work). This is the way the Haitian peasant sees it. There is endless labor in the fields or in the perpetually eroding mountain gardens, on landholdings that are too small to give any promise of a better life. The rains that give life to the crops take away, year by year, the nourishment of the soil. Where forests or lush groves once grew on the hillsides, there are now deep, dry gullies. Where coffee plants, cotton, and yams once grew abundantly, there are now fields of stones. This is the heritage of the peasant farmer of today. Small holdings on the hillsides and in the valleys have become smaller through the years as the population has swelled and the land been subdivided. Three and a half million people must take their sustenance from that land. More than three hundred persons must share each square mile of soil. But most of Haiti is mountainous and formidable to agriculture. Two-thirds of the land area is untillable by modern standards. There is less than one acre of useful land per person. The best of the land in the alluvial valleys is held by large corporations producing sugar and sisal. Flat, arid stretches elsewhere are semi-desert.

In the small gardens the peasants grow maize, *ti mis* (millet), coffee, bananas and plantains, cotton, beans of various kinds, yams, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, and manioc. In the delta areas they grow rice, and along the long coastline thousands of fishermen sail out in crude but sturdy boats to bring back fish fom the sea. Citrus trees, mango trees, and avocado trees grow wild; but they are fewer than in the old days. The Haitian works the soil and manages to subsist, but nature and history have not been kind to him.

Even less kind have been some of the chroniclers of the past, who have sought to disparage the Haitian as a lazy and careless creature who would

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7. *A small coumbite, southern Haiti.*

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8. *Coumbite, southern Haiti. Vaccine players at the right; flag of the cacique at the left.*

167 175 [648] a massacre in the western part of the Dominican Republic which took the lives of an estimated five thousand to fifteen thousand Haitians. The survivors fled homeward, and many were settled in frontier areas by the government. Even so, today there are believed to be some sixty or seventy thousand Haitians still living east of the border. Large numbers of Haitians, particularly men, migrated to Cuba in the years following World War I, in search of better wages in the cane fields. By 1931 there were more than eighty thousand Haitians in that country.[3] But resentment by local Cuban labor and the onset of the depression combined to force the repatriation of great numbers of them. Thirty thousand Haitians came home from Cuba in the years 1936 and 1937 alone.

16 [842] Solution of Haiti's problem of overpopulation does not seem imminent. The obvious answers would seem to be birth control, emigration, wiser use of natural resources, and industrialization. Since the country is predominantly Catholic, and since much social value is placed on children, birth control seems unlikely. And as health facilities become more widespread and infant mortality drops, the pressure will become more acute. Emigration seems to offer no hope, since neighboring islands and countries [311] on the mainland give no encouragement. The Haitian may yet learn to conserve his land and to get more out of it, to stock his lakes with fish, and to [47] bring more fish in from the sea. But this will not suffice. Nothing is left but industrialization, and that seems to be a thing of the far-distant future.

181 167 461 Nevertheless, the character of Haitian life remains essentially agrarian. The displaced peasant, whether he is now a hotel "houseboy," a taxi driver, or a cane cutter, dreams of returning to the land some day and growing bananas, coffee, and cotton that will make him independent. In far-off places such as Havana and New York, Haitians work and save money with the expectation that one day they will come home, buy fifteen or twenty acres of ground, build a new house, and live out their lives as decently prosperous *habitants*. The traditions of the agricultural [178] society, along with Vodoun, continue to play a significant role in the life of the people.

406 24 One such tradition is the institution of the *coumbite*, a loosely knit coöperative work party of neighbors and friends. The word itself probably comes from the Spanish *convide*, or *convite*, meaning "to invite." A member of the group holds a coumbite by notifying his fellow members that on such-and-such a day his fields will require clearing or hoeing. There are several variants of the work gathering. One, called *carré* or *corvée*, meets at irregular intervals and only on special invitation. There are no regular reciprocal obligations in the *corvée;* the workers are

[3] [Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," Journal of Negro History, October, 1940, p. 515. Cf. p. 352, Category 116. --Analyst)

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compensated by a "feast" and party given at the end of the day by the host. More usual than the *corvée* is the regular sharing of work on one another's fields—the *ronde*, or "taking turns." 476 241

An early morning work gathering is known as a *dourant jou'*. It meets early in the day, sometimes before dawn, continues until ten or eleven in the morning, when the sun becomes hot, and then disperses. An afternoon coumbite is called a *diné-machete* (dinner machete) and lasts from about two in the afternoon until early evening. When the work is finished, the men go to the house of the host, where they have dinner, much in the manner of the American threshing party. An all-day affair is called a grand coumbite.

Essential to all coumbites are musicians and singing leaders. The instruments used are various, according to local custom. In the south they are usually drums, *tymbales*, and bamboo trumpets. In some areas of the north, the *lambi*, or conch-shell trumpet, is favored. 476 241 533 [534]

According to the custom in the south, on the day of the coumbite the drummers arise in the false dawn before sunrise and begin a roundabout march to the home of the host. They pass before the huts of all the neighbors who are going to join the party, playing a *rappel* on the drums. By one's and two's the workers come down the trails to join the procession, bringing hoes, machetes, or sickles as required. As the marching group grows larger, there is talking, laughter, and perhaps singing. Most of the men who join the procession are from close by. Others who may have to travel from a distance, perhaps from the next valley, go directly to the house of the host. When the workers arrive there, the women of the house serve coffee. This is the usual breakfast of the Haitian peasant. [272] [264]

Then the drummers play another *rappel*, and the men go down to the field that is to be tilled. There may be ten, twenty, or fifty of them. Some coumbites are even larger. If the group is a small one, the men line up together. The singing leader, called a *samba* or *simidor*, begins a song, the drummers play, the hoes begin to rise and fall in unison, and the workers join in the singing. If the group is large it will divide into two or three squads, each trying to outdo the other. The men stand shoulder to shoulder, moving the hoes up and down together, syncopating their movements by pauses as they sing their responsive parts. Sometimes tafia or rum is portioned out. The squads move forward slowly, inching their way across the field. The samba beats on his hoe blade with a stone to keep time for his song. His job is to "encourage" the men. He may sing old familiar songs or compose new ones, songs with humor and bite in them, ribald songs, and songs of ridicule. They may criticize 476 241 533 461

476 241 533 461 men who have failed to join the coumbite, or praise the host, or single out various individuals for comment. The songs of the coumbite are a newspaper of the affairs of the people. The news is personalized, editorialized, and replete with comic vignettes.[1]

476 241 561 594 At noon the drummers signal a halt, and the workers shoulder their hoes, wipe off their machetes, and adjourn to the house for food. If it is a grand coumbite, the men rest for several hours, talking, catching up on sleep, or playing cards or *mayomba*. About three o'clock they go back to the fields to work until evening. Then comes the feast, under the canopy adjoining the house. The host and his wife have killed and cooked one or more goats, depending on the size of the group. The men are served meat, rice, beans, and whatever else has been prepared. [273] Afterward, women join the party, and there is more tafia or rum. Some of the men then drift homeward, but most stay on for dancing. Zesse, Congo, or Juba drums are brought out, and the festivities begin. If another coumbite is not scheduled for the next day, the music and dancing may last well into the night.

476 562 Women, too, have coumbites to perform various kinds of large tasks, from field work to winnowing and coffee sorting, though in general the women's work groups lack the festive character of the men's gatherings.

476 241 595 There is a more tightly knit form of coumbite, known as a *société*. In southern Haiti there are the société Congo and the société Martinique; in northern Haiti there is the société Ciyé. These sociétés are clubs built around mutual work needs and recreational activities. The société Congo that appears in the town or city streets during Rara days, with bamboo or conch-shell trumpets, drums, flags, and masks, is usually composed of the men who have joined forces to till the fields. In some instances, it may also conform roughly to membership in a particular hounfor, or cult center. Unlike the ordinary coumbite, the société is not a group which meets only at ground-breaking or harvesting time; it is a permanent organization with regular, sometimes day-to-day, obligations. Week after week it moves from one man's land to another, doing the tasks that have to be done. There is no question of "Can you come?" The group goes first to one man's land, then to another's until all the work has been done. If a member of the société falls sick, so that he cannot work his own field, the société takes over his tasks for him.

476 Coumbites are held not only for agricultural work but for house-building, and sometimes for the building of a hounfor.

[191] The Haitian coöperative work group has much in common with European and American husking and barn-building parties; but it has

[1] [For footnote See Category 116, P. 352. -- Analyst]

533 476 128 461 rhythmically, to the accompaniment of drums, *catas*, or horns, while a singing leader composes topical songs in which the laborers join.

171 412 The tools which a rural Haitian chooses, and the way he uses them, often are in a West African tradition. He performs a multitude of tasks with his machete, or bush knife: weeding a garden, peeling an orange, cutting down a tree, making a drum or mortar, opening a coconut. It is an all-purpose tool, as it is in Africa. Until a few years ago it was supplemented by the extra-long, heavier, "double machete." The axe and the chisel are known and used too, but the machete is supreme.

492 [241] [412] The hoe is the tool for tilling the soil, even in the flat country, and even though the Haitian has horses and cattle which could pull a plow. Horses are for riding and not for pulling. In carrying loads, the Haitian peasant still prefers the head to the shoulders. If he has a donkey, the [538] donkey will carry for him. An old Haitian proverb goes: "Meçi Bondieu pou' bourrique là, si nous pas gainyain bourrique là faut Haitien po'té tout bagaille" (Thank God for the donkey, if we didn't have the donkey the Haitian would have to carry everything)." Generally speaking, the 489 491 493 rough and rocky terrain of Haiti and inadequate secondary roads have done nothing to encourage the use of carts or wagons.

171 [25] [372] [252] [329] [22] [501] Corn is stored in the trees, as in West Africa, or in granaries built upon stilts, also as in West Africa. The Haitian makes his fire in the African fashion, with several long sticks or poles meeting point-to-point in the heart of the fire. As the ends are consumed, the sticks are pushed toward the center. Grain is pulverized in large wooden mortars, as in West Africa, and winnowed in a woven tray. Fish traps are sometimes woven in the traditional West African manner, and fishermen often set their nets in converging spirals and beat the water with sticks to drive the fish to the center. And on the rivers and lakes are to be seen dugout canoes of a kind familiar on the inland waters of West Africa.

171 241 The folklore of the fields contains many themes known to the West African. One old Haitian farmer, discussing the spiritual relationship of the planter to the earth, declared that a man must be strong and potent when he plants, else the crops will be vitiated and sickly. For [634] this reason, he said, a man must not plant seeds the day after he has had sexual intercourse, because he has been temporarily drained of his life-giving powers.[9]

171 538 The tale of the hoe that worked by itself in the fields is also widespread. It enters many animal and Bouki stories, and also is known in a form that is familiar in West Africa. In this story, there was once a man who owned a hoe which worked by itself whenever a magical formula was pronounced. It would stop working whenever the magical

[9] [For footnote, see Category 116, P 352.-- Analyst]

[The Vodoun Pantheon]

the earth like the carrying pad that women wear to support bundles on their heads. [776] Whenever Ayida Wèdo shifted his position there were earthquakes.[2] When the rainbow appeared after a rain it was said that Ayida had come out from under the earth to drink of the fresh water. [171] [821]

Damballa Grand Chemin (Damballa of the Highway). Another manifestation of Damballa as a protector of those on long journeys. [484]

Damballa Verre. Another manifestation of Damballa.

Dereice Wedo. Considered to be the daughter of Damballa. The ending of her name (-ci) suggests that at one time she may have been considered a wife rather than a daughter.

Doki Wedo. A member of Damballa's family.

Anlo Wedo. A member of Damballa's family. Said to be a "work loa" who aids men with their gardens, especially in time of illness. [241] ●

Erzilie Dèba, or Dòcha, sometimes spelled Ertulie. One of the "big" loa of the Dahomé pantheon, a symbol of purity, and sometimes identified with the Virgin Mary. Her color is white, and services to her include a ritual sweeping and sprinkling of the earth and a perfuming of the air. Food offerings to her include corn meal and eggs. Male "horses" of Erzilie are sometimes bound to her by mystic marriages, and they are obligated to refrain from sexual intercourse on certain days which belong to her. There are a number of Erzilies, regarded as members of the same family or, in some cult centers, as different manifestations of the same deity. Some Haitians regard Erzilie Dèba as the ancestor of the Erzilie family and refer to her as Grand Erzilie. Note that there is a Dahomean town named Dogba at approximately 0° 6' E., 6° 50' N. [177] [822] [782] [787] [834] [588]

Erzilie Fréda, or Erzilie Dahomain (Dahomé), or Erzilie Fréda Dahomain. Like Erzilie Dèba, she is a symbol of purity and is identified with the Virgin Mary. Mystic marriages are performed with her, and her "horses" are obligated to refrain from sexual intercourse on certain days. She is also a giver of wealth. [177] [588] [787] [834]

Erzilie Wedo. A sister or daughter of Erzilie Dèba and also related to Damballa.

Erzilie Manon. A sister of Erzilie Fréda.

Erzilie Banda. A manifestation of Erzilie who is especially fond of the Banda dance.

Erzilie Jèdouze (Red Eyes). A stern and hard Erzilie who is often identified with Nèro rather than Dahomé rites.

Aizan Fréda. A member of the Erzilie escorte, regarded as a market-place protector. In Dahomey, Aizan was a protector of all public gathering places.[3] [443] [171]

Aizan Balèkété

Aizan Dlèau Bolo Bosu

Maîtresse Maîtro. A special form of Erzilie as priestess.

Maîtresse Espagnole, or 'Pagnole. A person mounted by this Erzilie talks only Spanish. [787] [191]

Sòbo, or Sogbo. A thunder deity who hurls stones to the earth when angered. Some of the stones thrown by Sobo are regarded as the sacred residence of various loa. Sobo (or Sogbo) is a member of the original Thunder pantheon of Dahomey. 776 171

Sobo Badé, or Sogbo Badé, or simply Badé. A close relative of Sobo, regarded as the protector of the houndor (*hodó*). In Dahomey, Badé is sometimes referred to as the son of the deity Sobo.[4]

[2] [See Ellis, The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, pp. 47-49; and Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 245ff. Cf. p. 354 Category 116. -- Analyst]

[3] [Ellis, op. cit., p. 57. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[4] [Herskovits, op. cit., pp. 162ff. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]

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relations between the husband and the wife's family, it is nevertheless commonplace for men who can afford it to have more than one wife.

[184] [3]Simpson, in "Sexual and Familial Institutions in Northern Haiti," *American Anthropologist*, October-December, 1941, p. 696, observes that in northern Haiti there are three distinct types of plaçage. "A *femme-caille* shares her mate's house, while a *maman pitite* is a woman who has born children for a man without living in his house. A *femme placée* does not live in her consort's house, and she has given him no children." Although none of these women has any legal rights of inheritance, Simpson notes, "moral claims to a man's property stand in descending order for these three classes of plaçées."

[4]Johnston, *The Negro in the New World*.

[5]UNESCO, *The Haiti Pilot Project*, p. 18.

[6]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 515.

[7]The group work patterns of Haiti show a common ancestry with Negro gang work patterns in the United States. While nothing so formalized as the coumbite persists among American Negroes, similarities are striking. The emphasis on rhythm, the swinging of hammers or picks in unison, the need for a singing leader, the responsive chorus, and the frequent use of some kind of percussion to keep time, all derive from a common concept of the nature of group work.

[8]Herskovits, "Some Aspects of Dahomean Ethnology," *Africa*, Vol. V (July, 1932), pp. 266-276.

[9]Cardinall, *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 109), observes that among the Krachi people of Togoland "no man may have sexual intercourse with a woman for seven days before he goes hunting."

[10]An Ashanti story told by Rattray in *Akan-Ashanti Folk-Tales* credits the hedgehog with owning the original hoe; according to this version, the hoe escaped across the sea to the country of the white men, who then possessed the secret. Afterward, the white man brought many hoes to Ashanti.

Chapter 11: *Dancing and Dance Drama* (*pp. 126-136*)

[1]Quoted in Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 73.

[2]Actually a banjo-like instrument of African provenience. The similarity of the word *kanzo* to *banjo* appears to be more than a coincidence.

[3]Saint-Méry, *De la danse*, as translated by Lillian Moore in "Moreau de Saint-Méry and 'Dance,'" *Dance Index*, October, 1946, p. 238.

[4]Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[5]Brandy or rum with gunpowder is sometimes drunk by persons possessed by the loa Ogoun, deity of war.

[6]Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[7]United Nations photograph no. 62165.

[8]Students of United States Negro life will recognize the word *coundjaile* as a variant of *coonjine*, a dance known on the lower Mississippi. According to one observer, Dr. Willis James of Spelman College, Atlanta, small Negro boys on the docks used to call to the boat passengers:

> "Throw me a nickel
> Throw me a dime
> If you want to see me
> Do the coonjine."

The term *coonjine* is still used to mean hand-loading of cotton bales on river boats. When this loading was done mainly by hand some years ago, the stevedores worked rhythmically in a line and sang. An old man from Louisiana testified that within his own memory the dockside *coonjine* was accompanied by makeshift drums and other percussion.

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The people of the islands were able to maintain some continuity with
177 the past, even while the new setting and changing conditions led to the development of certain innovations in society and culture. In a few Caribbean societies, Haiti included, freedom brought with it the opportunity to create a yeomanry—an independent, landholding class of agriculturists who produced most of their own consumption needs and also produced commodities for sale. These were "reconstituted yeomen," whose ways of life combined elements from the African and American Indian past, as well as considerable European and Asian influences, in new cultural constellations.

177 Haitian country folk are a particularly good example of such a
231 historical process. The crops Haitian yeomen cultivate include the
● 241 maize, sweet potatoes, and manioc of the indigenous American Indian
412 (Taino) people, and other cultigens such as papaya and avocado which had been domesticated in mainland aboriginal America; and items like taro and mangoes from Oceania, sesame and sugarcane which originated in the Middle East and India, and vegetables from Europe. Their domestic animals, including cattle, swine, and fowls, are nearly all from the Old World. The chief agricultural tools—hoe, billhook, and dibble, which are well adapted to Haiti's shallow topsoil and hilly terrain—may be European or African in origin; the practice of burning off weeds before planting may be African or American Indian. In the case of each trait—crop, tool, practice—one is confronted by the diverse and entangled culture history of the
177 Haitian people. What is true of agriculture is true of all else. The re-
771 ligion of Haiti is at once two religions rather than one: Catholicism
19 *and* vodoun. Yet these two belief systems form a single ideology for most Haitians, particularly in the rural areas and among those of the urban lower classes. The Creole language is similarly complex in origin. While its lexicon is predominantly derived from French, parts of its syntax are not of Romance origin. For instance, the use of postpositive nominalizing particles and the absence of gender typify Haitian Creole, and are decidedly not Romance in character. Terminology shows much the same; for example, animal names and anatomical terms are mainly French in origin, but some cooked foods carry names of African provenience.

177 The "mixing" of various elements of culture from different tradi-
174 tions is, of course, neither uniquely Caribbean nor uniquely Haitian. All cultures are growths out of the past, and change by losing and gaining traits and by combining and recombining their substance in

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311 bean country, and perhaps fewer than in any country in Latin Amer-
423 ica. The agriculture itself, with the exceptions now of those very few
171 large-scale plantations in sisal and sugarcane, is adapted to small plots and is worked with intensive labor and few tools on hilly land. Com-
433 pared with agricultural production, especially of cash crops, in most
178 mainland Latin American countries, productivity is low. The yeomanry is conservative in its agricultural practices, and not ready to change unless the changes entail minimal risk and the gains to be real-
241 ized are clearly demonstrable (Erasmus, 1952:20–26). Yeomen culti-
177 vate with three goals in mind: cash income from world-market
185 commodities (for instance, coffee, sisal, vetiver); cash income from
434 items produced for local sale and consumption; and subsistence. While they are heavily involved in production for sale, their crop choices and land-use patterns rest fundamentally on a subsistence orientation. All grow a substantial part of their own food, especially sorghum, maize, sweet potatoes, taro, manioc, malanga (*Xanthosoma sagittifolium* Schott), plantains and bananas, fruits and vegetables, and
423 rice where possible. The land is invested with considerable affect:
823 gods live in it; it is the ultimate security against privation; family
471 members are buried in it; food and wealth come from it; and it is good in itself, even if not cultivated. While such attitudes are common in yeoman societies, Haiti's history of slavery, and of access to land through revolution, has given a special symbolic significance to landowning. Land is valued above all else and is sometimes held "uneconomically"—that is, even when the capital and labor power to work it are lacking.

114 Leyburn describes better than any other writer the history of land
175 acquisition by the yeoman after 1804. The French plantations lay in
423 ruins, never to recover, while early authoritarian attempts to restore the prerevolutionary economy under native Haitian leadership soon failed. In the course of a century, the Haitian people laid claim to their own soil, while population growth and the adoption of the French tradition of equal inheritance progressively reduced the average size of holdings. In spite of some plantation development after the United States occupation, most agricultural land in Haiti is still employed in small holdings, and "land reform" in the conventional sense—the breaking-up of large estates and the creation of a class of small land-
462 holders—is nearly irrelevant to Haiti's needs.
443 As today's yeomanry cultivates, so its womenfolk market. Nearly

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462 three hundred marketplaces serve the towns and countryside, some
443 of them patronized by thousands of buyers and sellers on market days. By participating in active small-scale trade, the wives of the yeomen contribute in a limited way to national economic efficiency and growth. As in all heavily agrarian economies marked by poor storage facilities, inferior transportation, and low consumer incomes there is considerable substitution of labor for capital, and there are high losses through spoilage. Except for the marketing of export commodities, much time is consumed in bargaining, in carrying, and in hand-processing of various sorts. But these activities are the accompaniments of the general low level of development of the Haitian economy, not one of its causes.

443 The economic challenges posed by agriculture on the one hand,
281 and by marketing on the other, differ significantly. Since these ac-
462 tivities are carried out predominantly along the lines of a sexual division of labor, the Haitian countrymen and their marketing wives
114 differ in some regards in their attitudes. Foreign observers of the nineteenth century commented regularly on the industry and energy
462 of Haitian rural women, stressing their predominance in trade. Some
174 writers have attributed this convention to the West African tradition,
175 since women are the marketers, men the farmers, in many African
443 societies. Leyburn, however, notes that the militarism and political
281 unrest that have marked Haiti during so much of its history were
433 serious impediments to peaceful trade. Women came to predominate in marketing, he theorizes, because men did what they could to avoid the towns, since they were often impressed into roving army bands if they traveled far from home. Whatever the historical causes may be, it has been established that the women of Haiti's countryside carry on most of the internal trade, while their husbands do most of the farming. These women, on the whole, know more about the towns, mix more easily with outsiders, and show more intrepidity in trade than the men show in agriculture. Yet it has been demonstrated that, for most of them, the scale of their enterprise is so modest and the economic opportunities open to them so restricted that their energy and daring can do little to increase the level of productive activity (Mintz, 1964:256–86).

47 Haiti's lack of large factories, mechanized production, and a skilled industrial labor force means that the country is unindustrialized by any usual measure.

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The major effect of the North

Amer-
648 ican tenure seems to have been to make possible a much more telling
642 centralism in political control than had been operative in Haiti at any time since the fall of the Christophe regime; and the consequences of this change are still being felt.

241 Small-scale rural cultivators are famous for their tendency to con-
565 fine their consumption to culturally conventionalized levels—that is,
433 to live as their predecessors lived before them. Though they are in-
178 volved in commercial spheres larger than the communities in which
185 they live, they seek to limit that involvement and to maintain their
511 cash expenditures at a low level. It is in this sense that Haiti might be
472 called a "quasi-capitalistic" society. To put it another way, yeomen of this sort do not seek to change or to expand their production—rather, they aim to conserve a way of life set by tradition. The ideology of resistance to social and cultural change is one of the major obstacles to development; but it would be rash to damn such an ideology without reflection. In Haiti, for instance, there has long been pressure upon the rural masses to expand their production of coffee, the major export crop. However, this pressure has not been accompanied by any serious grass-roots attempt to improve coffee production or to offer genuine incentives to the cultivators. The yeomanry has no assurance at all that any expansion of effort will lead to gains *for them*; and they are little prepared to invest such effort merely be-
[439] cause they are told that it will be good for Haiti. In fact, it is likely that the production of subsistence crops has expanded in recent years at the cost of coffee production, for the yeoman knows that he can at least be sure of eating and of selling locally such crops as maize, sorghum, and yams, regardless of what may happen in Port-au-Prince or to the world coffee market. This view, combined with the yeoman's painfully acquired distrust of those who prate at length concerning his welfare, has meant a virtual stagnation of agricultural export production, even though the whole land quite literally depends on this production in order to progress.

241 The effect of this rural resistance is to create an apparent very sharp
565 difference in goals between countryman and bureaucrat. It is per-
433 fectly understandable that the countryman should fail to see the con-
185 nection between heightened coffee production and a higher level of public welfare and social services. His experiences hardly persuade him that it is his surplus-producing capacity that underlies the kind and quality of public institutions with which the state provides him.

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241 565 185 433 Nor does his effort in producing more and better cash crops translate itself directly into higher consumption, since he has no say in setting the price for his coffee. Under the circumstances, it is naïve to suppose that "education" alone can make the yeoman's role in economic or political development a more active one. The disposition to maintain a habitual level of consumption, rather than to believe that an increase in productivity will result in expanding services or improved consumption, is difficult to change; and the quasi-capitalistic quality of Haitian agricultural production is merely one way of saying as much. Economic change, in this sense, has to depend partly on changes in attitudes toward production. Until an agricultural extension service worthy of the name is able to make a massive attack on the shortcomings of yeoman cultivation in Haiti, this conservatism will perpetuate itself. And agricultural extension will not be able to wage this battle for change—even when its services become adequate in quality and quantity—unless the promises of greater economic rewards or of improved social services for the rural masses are occasionally honored.

47 433 565 178 The term "quasi-capitalistic" has much less force, of course, when applied to urban enterprise. But there, too, economic activity has a curiously static quality when compared to enterprise in more developed countries. The Port-au-Prince capitalist is famous for "playing it safe." Import-export trade, tourist hotels, guided tours, gas stations, and urban slum real estate are more rewarding spheres of investment than shops or commercial farms. A small but economically important Syrian-Lebanese-Italian group limits its local investment accordingly, as do most of those "native" Haitians who carry on their businesses in the towns and cities. Elite families consist largely of siblings who interlock their economic activities with government, the military, agricultural processing and exporting, consumer-goods importing, tourist-connected services, and the professions. A slum block, a post in the ministry of tourism, a consulcy, or a tour agency, can be a lucrative investment; few indeed are the Haitians prepared to take the risks needed to develop highly productive farms, to produce improved strains of poultry, or to introduce industrial skills through a modern machine shop. And the reasons for this lack of verve and daring are easy to find. Governmental instability, excessive taxation, lack of access to markets, and the absence of roads, communication, small-scale credit facilities, and the like mean that special [648]

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work until noon. A two-hour siesta followed, but from two until sunset there was steady work. Only after evening prayers was the worker free. During the day no cultivator might leave his task except for direst need. The lame and the halt were not required to till the fields, but must carry around buckets of drinking water, take care of the children, and do odd jobs about the estate.

Christophe made a steady and, in the main, successful effort to explain to the people the necessity of hard work on the plantation. As with the noblemen, the serfs knew precisely what was expected of them, and why. Their regimentation was strict, but understandable. It was clearly stipulated that if a worker shirked his job he was to be put in prison and made to do forced labor there. Laziness in the fields was to be punished by strokes from the overseer's liane. Hard and steady work was demanded during the whole thirteen years of Christophe's rule, but only rarely was there complaint, as there had been constantly under Dessalines, of cruelty on the part of overseers.

The quarter part of the total crop of any plantation was to go to the workers as wages, and, since production increased and prices rose, this quarter which they were free to spend as they pleased provided a powerful incentive to further industry. As compared with anything they had known before, the workers were now recipients of an ample income. On the plantations they cultivated the money crops of sugar and coffee. In addition, each family had its own garden plot on which to raise the food crops—yams, plantains, beans, and bananas—for personal use.[9]

Christophe was so far ahead of his time that he tried to introduce British methods of agriculture into his kingdom. The results were insignificant. The plough, although obviously superior in efficiency to the hoe, eliminated the sociable companionship of working in unison, and demanded horses and mules which the country lacked. The innovations were consequently too radical to be accepted. In the main, the agricultural methods of the kingdom continued to be those familiar in slave days.

Thirteen years of careful direction can fix many patterns of social routine. One of Christophe's rules was that no cultivator attached to

9. The staples of other countries, such as Irish potatoes, wheat, barley, and corn, did not flourish in Haiti. On the large plantations, indigo and cotton, which had been money crops in the French régime, were generally neglected, as they had been in the time of Dessalines.

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175 their districts, principally during the working hours of the day. They
675 were held responsible for all consequences of their own negligence.
692

This whole flow of legislation was designed primarily for the
175 protection of the great landed proprietors, yet there were other laws
671 which aided the masses. In former days workers had been coerced
466 through corporal punishment. This was by law now abolished. Temporary assignments of garden plots were required for each family of laborers; medical care must be provided at the expense of the planter; the aged and infirm must be guaranteed the right to keep their homes and gardens even though no longer able to work. Expectant mothers in the fourth month of pregnancy must be relieved of field work, with no limitation of their right to share in the estate's income; mothers of nursing children must be permitted to remain at home until the weaning of their infants.

175 A great concession to the workers was made by abolishing the
647 office of "inspector of cultures." In the days of Toussaint and Des-
salines each district of the country had had its inspector, whose duty
● 241 it was to see that crop cultivation proceeded according to schedule.[27] This man's disapproval of conditions resulted in fines and personal chastisement. By abolishing the office Pétion effected a great saving in salaries, for there had been thousands of these inspectors; on the other hand, the watchfulness of the inspectors had kept agricultural production at a high level. With no officials to dog the footsteps of the workers, crops immediately fell off.

175 Pétion clearly expected la grande culture to be the prevailing mode
466 of agriculture in the republic. He fostered all kinds of legislation
24 regulating it, even aside from that already mentioned. For example,
a complete schedule was prepared for the division of income of the
656 estate.[28] But the entire system was too neatly worked out and artificial to be effective, particularly since it was not backed up with force. The threat of punishment removed, most workers began gradually, often deliberately, to sabotage the system. It was much more pleasant

27. Christophe followed his predecessors in keeping the district inspectors.

[466] [465] 28. This could be very complicated. A tenant farmer might hire workers, and so have to share his half of the income with them. In such cases, the division of the money crops was to be made in kind or in money, at current prices, in the presence of the local justice, his assessors, and an officer of the *gendarmerie*. The workers' "fourth" was divided into portions of which three went to the first foreman, two to each of the skilled workers, one and a half to each male or female worker, and one half to each child laborer between ten and fourteen years of age.

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175 against almost unanimous public opinion opposing enforcement. In
671 1828 it was reported that dancing, which the Code had strictly
625 limited to week ends, was a nightly diversion near the capital. One
535 of the principal dancing resorts was the house of a captain of rural
517 police, the very man who was supposed to repress such amusements.[45]

Boyer had done his best, and his best was merely a good piece of
175 office work. When his Code failed to operate, he could think of
178 nothing further to suggest for the economic rehabilitation of Haiti.
24 The last fifteen years of his administration witnessed a gradual lapse
433 into that small-scale farming which was to be characteristic of Haiti for the remainder of the nineteenth century. By comparison with former standards, production and steady industry had both fallen off since Boyer came to the presidency. The testimony of visiting foreigners is unanimous on the decline of industry.

175 The British consul, Mackenzie, said in 1827 that there was very
114 little field labor then being done, and that only elderly people,
435 principally aged "Guinea Negroes" long accustomed to steady work,
461 carried on the tradition. No measures of the government could
464 induce young people born in Haiti to labor or to change from their
184 "habitual vagrancy."[46] Another Englishman, James Franklin, remarked in 1828 that land values throughout the republic had greatly declined because no one could make a profit within any moderate time. Labor was high, he writes, for ordinary wages did not attract the workers who preferred idleness. (This word is certainly unfair: it was work at their own bidding which they preferred, not idleness.) Government lands lay untilled, no one evincing the slightest desire to purchase or utilize them. Franklin continues:

114 Land also in the possession of individuals is similarly circumstanced; and
175 those who are large proprietors cannot effect a sale of any produce which
433 they may have beyond the quantity which they can consume; consequently
423 a proprietor may have an immense extent of land, and yet be quite unable
425 to derive any benefit from it by cultivation, or to convert it into money, for the want of purchasers. Thus . . . there is no individual wealth in the country, because, although a man may have very large landed possessions, still those possessions are unavailable, for they produce him nothing, as he can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them.

[534] 45. Although dancing is spoken of here as an amusement, it is highly probable that at least a part of it had connection with the Vodun religion.

[241] 46. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti* (London, 1830), I, 100. Mackenzie is clearly exaggerating, unless by "field labor" he means work on plantations, in contrast to farming on small plots.

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175 he could save or borrow the money, buy a small patch and become a
425 freeholder in his own right. And in the mountains, if one were willing to endure isolation, one could get much land by squatter's claim.

175 A vivid indication of the declining economic condition of the country will be found in the actual scale of real-estate prices. In the
435 eighteen-twenties the finest land in the republic did not sell for more
423 than $60 an acre, even when contiguous to a port for shipping or extremely fertile. Such a price would have been ridiculous in the days of the French colony. Farms in the plains and mountains, suitable for cocoa and cotton, could be had in Boyer's time for $20 or $30 an acre in any quantity from ten to five hundred acres. In the rich Artibonite Valley small plots for horticultural purposes sold for $40 an acre; indigo and cotton land rarely brought over $30; and a complete cotton plantation which had borne richly in colonial days sold for from $12 to $20 an acre. In the North, despite its fertility and more careful cultivation under Christophe, land seldom brought more than $40 or $45, while pasture lands could scarcely find purchasers at $40. A lot in Port-au-Prince with a frontage of sixty feet and a depth of fifty, well situated for trading purposes, brought only $200.[50] Fifteen years later even these prices were fantastically high, for by then no one was wealthy enough to purchase an estate.

5. *Lapse into Peasantry* (*1827–1843*)

463 "Peasant" is one of those words whose meaning everyone knows yet whose definition is never precise. It clearly carries the connotation
● 241 of farming the land by conservative, generally uneducated, persons whose families have for generations lived on the same plot of earth without any great ambition to move away or change their economic lot. It means small ownership. And most particularly it means a comparatively low social status, for we think of peasantry as existing only in those countries which have a clear-cut social class system, with a stratification which would make it difficult for a person to move from one class to another. His land is to the peasant both home and living; his household is dependent almost solely upon the product of its own labor. He is generally conceived to be too complacent, if not too ignorant or too dull, to take advantage of commercial opportunities which might bring him wealth. "It is increasingly

50. These figures for 1824–28 are from Franklin, *op. cit.*, p. 314.

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recognized that the really important characteristics peculiar to the peasant are his sentiments and attitudes, the intense attachment to his native soil and family tradition, which, even in the economic sphere, take precedence over the desire for individual advancement and gain."[51]

Haiti in 1804 was still a country of large estates, and Dessalines and Christophe strove to keep it so. Under the active generosity of Pétion and the passive indifference of Boyer after his Code Rural had failed, few great plantations were left intact. The recorded donations of these two presidents to their generals, civil functionaries, and lesser officers, are as follows:[52]

134 grants of 150 carreaux (about 450 acres). Total:			59,300 acres.
176	35	105	18,480
639	30	90	57,510
711	25	75	54,325
2,322	20	60	139,320
8,000	5	15	120,000
		Grand total:	448,935 acres.

Haiti followed French law rather than British, so that the rule of primogeniture did not prevail. It requires only a moment's reflection to see that even within a single generation the thousands of small properties noted in the table would be subdivided many times, since a father apportioned his land to all his sons. By 1842 it is probable that not a single plantation of the size common in colonial times was still intact.[53] On the testimony of numerous government officials and commandants of arrondissements, it was estimated in that year that 46,610 small landed properties were under fair cultivation.[54] If the population at that time be estimated at 800,000, seven eighths of whom were engaged in agriculture, there would accordingly be about fifteen people (including children) to each rural property. But

A large number of small estates are left out of this account, which are said to be *badly* cultivated, or neglected. Taking the number of each separate

51. C. von Dietze, "Peasantry," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, XII, 50.
52. This table is compiled from figures cited in Armand Thoby, *La Question agraire en Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1888), *passim*, and Dr. F. Dalencour, *Le Sauvetage national par le retour à la terre* (Port-au-Prince, 1923), p. 18.
53. See Raymond Renaud, *Le Régime foncier en Haïti* (Paris, 1934), pp. 42–45.
54. Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

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175 241 family on an average, at 5 persons, husband, wife, and three children, we arrive at the conclusion, that the head of every third family in the state is engaged in cultivating his own freehold; a proportion of independent [311] proprietors, such as perhaps scarcely any other country in the world can exhibit. The number of acres cultivated by these small proprietors, varies [231] from 9 to 30; many of them keep horses, cows, and goats: they raise suffi- [437] cient provisions of the bread kind, such as yams, plantains, and bananas, for the main support of their families; they kill hogs for meat, and they dispose [438] of their coffee, cotton, hemp, castor oil, and fruit, at the public market for money, to purchase clothing, furniture, and other necessaries. The houses [342] they live in, though poorly furnished, are decent habitations; and many of them have gardens attached, neatly fenced in with bamboo, or with log-wood, or aloe hedges.[55]

175 423 427 If these figures are even approximately accurate, the majority of the people of Haiti had not yet become peasants in the sense of being landowners, for in the statement cited only a third of the people owned their land. Another large group, however, possibly a third of the population, were squatters, living on land which technically belonged to someone else but from which they were never ejected. The remaining third, excluding the town and village dwellers, were in the intermediate stage between hirelings and peasants. Some worked for a given rate of wages, but the larger number worked for shares of the produce on the land of large proprietors.

175 473 427 24 The crop-sharing system (Americans of the twentieth century call it share-cropping) of the 'thirties and 'forties was an automatic but temporary adjustment worked out in perfect disregard of the Code Rural. In general, two arrangements prevailed. By one the laborers worked in return for half the total produce of the estate, raising food for themselves in gardens provided by the owner; under the other they worked for a quarter of the produce, the proprietor guaranteeing to keep them in provisions. There was no general concurrence in Haiti at the time as to which plan was the more economical to the laborer and his family. Certainly both schemes were prejudicial to large crops of coffee and sugar, and therefore to the economic prosperity of the proprietors and the state; since this was so, the crop-sharing expedient was short-lived. Workers participating in it lived in the huts and cabins which, under the old régime, had been inhabited by their slave ancestors. As these fell to pieces others, cheaper and less soundly built, were constructed to take their place.

The crop-sharing system, economically debilitating though it was,

55. *Ibid.*

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Parents are generally kind to their children, so far as physical
855 punishment is concerned. The average peasant child can hardly
861 properly be said to be "brought up": he merely grows, eats whatever
his family eats or whatever fruits he can pick up, and learns his place
152 in the community as he matures. In anger, parents are likely to use in correction the first thing that comes to hand. There is a surprising callousness to pain among these generally kindly people: they beat their donkeys unmercifully, and strap harness over open sores; they carry chickens, head down and feet tied together and mouths gaping, for miles in the sun; they revel in gory cockfights. If, therefore, a parent is minded to beat his child, he will probably do a thorough
[578] job of it. A peasant woman, pommeling her son with a broomstick, replied to the protests of a white passer-by, "*Li nègue; li pas fait li mal.*" ("He's a Negro; it won't hurt him.") The interference of a stranger in the beating of a wife by her man, armed with a club, was resented by both man and woman as an interference with a purely family quarrel.

831 The concept of sexual continence is lacking among the peasants.
834 Sex, indeed, hardly enters the realm of morality except in connection
864 with adulterous dalliance of one man with another's woman. There is no virtue in abstaining from sex relations when the sexual urge is strong. Mothers tell love stories in all their frank details to their young daughters, and some who care about such matters are adept in all lore connected with stimulating and satisfying a man's desire.[5]
[342] Since huts are small and the whole family sleeps in the same room, children have ample opportunity to observe the sexual life of their parents. If a girl, as a result of her own experiments, has a child born to her, there is no disgrace. Practically every peasant is "illegitimate," so that the term means nothing; a baby will soon be old enough to assist in the work of the home, thus becoming an asset. It is expected that as soon as a youth grows up he will find a mate and begin a family of his own.

● 241 The family is as important an element of peasant life as formal
439 marriage is unimportant. It is the economic unit. Ever since the days
593 of Pétion Haitian economy has been one of small things: even the crops are small subsistence crops of maize, millet, beans, rice, yams, and frequently trees of bananas, plantains, and coffee, which require no particular cultivation. Enough coffee has been produced in Haiti for annual export ever since 1804, but until recent years the beans

5. See Zora Neale Hurston, *Tell My Horse*, pp. 22 ff.

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have been gathered from trees which grew wild. Both men and women labor, with the work divided according to regular custom between the sexes, the men dominating the scene only in the marketing of coffee.

Nature was opulent enough at the beginning of Haitian independence. The wars had ruined irrigation ditches, sugar refineries, and mechanical equipment, but the soil was still abundantly fertile. But generations of farming by people without knowledge of fertilization or soil conservation have worn out much of the land. Trees have been cut to provide lumber and clearings for more farms; in the rainy seasons torrents have coursed down the mountainsides, washing away soil and exposing the earth to the rays of a tropical sun. Because the country is overpopulated every available acre is put to use, and to overuse, thus still more depleting the land. It is a vicious circle, for the next generation must extract yet more from the earth and so weaken it further. Hard work is the lot of the peasant, therefore, during every month of the year except the dry season. There has never been a formal rotation of crops: a farmer continues to plant the same crop in the same field until the harvest is perceptibly smaller than before. Then he changes to another type of produce. Sooner or later he will allow the land to lie fallow for several years until, by the action of nature or the grazing over it of cattle, it has regained a measure of its fertility.

The strenuous work of clearing fields and preparing them for cultivation is man's job. Since the peasants owned their plots it has almost always been done in coöperation by the men of the neighborhood. What on the American frontier would have been called a "bee" is known in Haiti as a *coumbite*, or *combite*, often carried on as an enterprise of the local *Société Congo*, the informal neighborhood group for mutual aid and fellowship.[6]

A man who has a large job on hand announces a coumbite for any day except Sunday, always a day of rest, and whatever other week-

6. The word "coumbite" was apparently borrowed from the Spanish part of the island, and from the Spanish word *convidar*, convey. In Colombia "convite" means exactly what "coumbite" means in Haiti: a gathering of peasants to work in common, or else a coöperative society for mutual agricultural self-help.

Professor Herskovits (*Life in a Haitian Valley*, chap. IV) describes the Société Congo in detail. The use of the name "Congo" indicates the African tradition, and is particularly noteworthy in connection with a kind of coöperative work which Herskovits finds particularly Dahomean.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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476 241 574 [527]

day local practice dedicates to work in one's own fields—generally Monday or Tuesday. The prospect of working with one's fellows, of a midday feast with plentiful drink, of singing, talking, and hearing the news, is enough to induce most of the neighbors to come, even though the work will be hard. As with American log-rollings and house-raisings, there is a practical reason for accepting the invitation: by participating in other coumbites a man will be able to invite his neighbors to help him in his own larger tasks. The work is done in rhythm[7] as on Southern road gangs in the United States, with one man specially designated to beat the drum, blow the conch, or sing a topical song, to set the pace. While the men are at work, the women prepare the noonday feast.

[461]

114 476 574 174 171 178 241

This typical characteristic of Haitian rural life has been described in detail as it operates near the village of Mirebalais by Prof. Melville J. Herskovits. His contention is that the custom, in general and in detail, derives from Dahomey, West Africa, the home of many of the original slaves.[8] Although his evidence is impressive, there are nevertheless objections to it. Coöperative enterprise for tasks larger than one man can accomplish alone is common in the United States and in parts of Europe and South America, as well as in Africa. It is not an economic device which strikes one as requiring unusual inventiveness, for cases of it are common even where the participants have had no previous experience of it. Further, Dahomean practice could not have been kept up during slave days, nor yet during the régimes of Toussaint, Dessalines, Christophe, and Pétion. (The first three required forced labor under overseers, and landownership by peasants was still rare under Pétion, although a beginning had been made.) In the thirty years from 1790, when the last slaves arrived, until Christophe died in 1820, many old ways were certainly forgotten. Not a single one of the numerous books written by visitors during Boyer's quarter-century, 1818 to 1843, mentions the practice, which certainly must have struck Englishmen, Frenchmen, and Americans if it had been characteristic of the peasant life of the time. If one concludes that the coumbite did not become peasant practice until the mid-nineteenth century, all possibility of contact with Negroes familiar with Dahomean routine has disappeared. What

7. A Haitian poet, Charles F. Pressoir, entitles a book of his verses *Au Rythme des coumbites* (Port-au-Prince, 1933).

8. *Op. cit.*, chap. IV.

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remains is the verbal handing down of recollections, one of the most natural things in the world and one congenial to Haitian peasants. Every region, every village, has its accomplished storytellers. The phenomenal resemblances in detail of the coumbite to Dahomean coöperative work may be due therefore to this verbal tradition. 174 241 574 476 535

Once the men have cleared and prepared the field, the care of the crop devolves upon the women. For this there has been a long background of tradition. In African agricultural regions, in the plantations of Saint-Domingue during slave days, under the forced labor régimes of Toussaint and his successors, women had been field workers. They had never known anything else. We have seen that many of the present-day practices of Haiti go back to the times of Pétion and Boyer: during this period women did field work, not by decree of government but by force of circumstance. Their men were constantly taken away from the farms for service in the large army; if crops were to be raised, women must do the work. Sometimes soldiers were stationed near their own homes, and could help in production; but they could be called on to march, at short notice and in peacetime, anywhere in the country. Many of the later presidents made it a definite policy frequently to change the station of regiments, so as to prevent revolutionary projects and guard against the soldiers' being tampered with by the disaffected in any single community. 241 175 462 701

Sir Harry Johnston records his observations on the Haiti of 1910 as follows: 114

The women are the best part of the nation. They are splendid, unremitting toilers. In the face of all discouragements with which a bad Government clouds their existence the women of Haiti remind one of certain patient types of ant or termite, who, as fast as you destroy their labour of months or days, hasten to repair it with unslackening energy. The market-women that descend from the country farms to the Haitian towns know that on their way to the market-place, and in that market-place, they will be robbed by soldiers and officers until the margin of profit on the sale of their wares has practically disappeared. Yet they continue to toil, to raise poultry and cattle, till the fields, see to their gardens, make pottery and mats. They cannot stop to reason, but must go on working from three years old to the end of their lives. Such industry (which is almost equally supplemented by that of the peasant husbands) protected should make Haiti one of the richest countries in the world for its size and population; but so long 114 462 461 [701]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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114 voluntary step towards improving themselves in any one thing. . . . Ex-
461 periments may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coercion and want will impel the Haytian to labour; and I have my doubts as to the practicability of enforcing labour in Hayti until the people have been better instructed, and their characters become changed. . . . Nature is too generous to the Haytian; he never wants, and so never works for hire, as do free labourers in other countries.[13]

An American, Dr. Jonathan Brown of Philadelphia, in 1837 published a volume which in most respects seems quite dispassionate. He says:

[462] The females are compelled to perform most of the labor. Those of the country employ themselves in cultivating the soil, while the men spend their time in traversing the country on horseback, in drinking, smoking, and other habits equally unprofitable. The females of the town perform all the retail traffic of the country. . . . They derive a subsistence for themselves and for their families.[14]

175 Boyer's secretary of state, Inginac, tried by means of a pamphlet—
241 which few Haitians could have read—to urge the peasants of 1840
208 to greater activity. He says that although coffee is the chief source of
178 Haitian wealth, although every day small properties have been multiplied, although times are improving, yet the old routines are still followed in coffee cultivation, as if the men would never work and "as if the Haitians were not susceptible of making any progress in the sciences."[15]

114 In 1842 an English Quaker, John Candler, wrote that without a
461 modicum of labor the peasants could not subsist at all; "but they do not, and they will not, work hard to please anybody, and hence agriculture languishes, and commerce is stationary."[16] Finally, in 1860, Benjamin Hunt, an American, remarked: "If one wants to be lazy, Hayti is the place. It is possible to get through the day with little annoyance from cold, hunger, or the police, and with the least possible amount of work."[17] Similar testimony could be greatly multiplied. It is only in recent years that any author has affirmed that

13. *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 359–362.
14. *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, II, 281.
15. Joseph Balthasar Inginac, "*Culture du caffier et préparation de la fève pour être livrée au commerce*" [a pamphlet], (Port-au-Prince, 1840), p. 1.
16. *Brief Notices of Hayti*, p. 38.
17. *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans*, p. 12.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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178 it. Moreover, the Haitian budget is in the neighborhood of seven
65 million dollars, for which sum not much in the way of great improvement for three million people can be expected. The task of regenerating Haiti calls for self-sacrificing genius—at present the élite hardly qualify either as self-denying servants of the public or as geniuses.

175 Haitian affairs during the 1930's were under the direction of
643 President Sténio Vincent, an able man to whose credit much can be
642 said. He devoted himself to his task with assiduity, talking face to
648 face with the peasants in Créole, urging them to assist in reforestation
●241 and to use wisdom in crop rotation. He settled serious disputes with the neighboring Dominican Republic in amicable fashion. It was he who carried on the delicate and successful negotiations with President Roosevelt to give Haiti control of her own affairs once more. In coffee culture, assistance to trade, financial matters, and other economic details, he often proceeded expertly, particularly in view of the world depression which began as he assumed office. On the other hand, Vincent made the legislature his servant rather than a partner. He was a dictator (fortunately a benevolent one) who changed the constitution by highhanded methods in order to gain his own reëlection. His régime rested upon his alliance with the efficient Garde d'Haïti. There were few signs of democracy or of respect for civil liberties, as Americans understand those terms, in Vincent's eleven years.

175 The spectator has a feeling that he has seen all this before, when
643 for example Geffrard was elected to assure parliamentary government, only to become an effectively benevolent dictator as soon as the legislature opposed him. Geffrard was on the whole a good president, as Vincent was; but the former did not succeed in setting Haiti upon the path of economic and social security, and one hardly dared expect it of his modern counterpart.

175 In April, 1941, Élie Lescot, former Haitian Minister to the United
643 States, was elected as the thirtieth president of the republic. Vincent
648 had refused to call a plebiscite to approve an extension of his presidential term for an additional five years, as he had done in 1935 near the end of the six-year term to which he was elected in 1930. Lescot had begun his presidency with many advantages, chiefly the friendly support of his predecessor, his acquaintance with United States officials, and a recent negotiated pact by which American aid will

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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[p.265]

XV

HAITIAN PROBLEMS

FOR a citizen of the United States or a European country, national problems have to do with external as well as internal affairs. Foreign relations, armaments, international trade, treaties and commitments, loom as large as do unemployment, business depression, labor troubles, and social maladjustment. Political parties rise and fall with their promises or failures to deal successfully with matters arising from the country's position relative to world movements. In Haiti such generalizations do not hold. Her international relations have been and are comparatively minor, while her internal problems have been of a different order from those which trouble most of the rest of the Western World. This is not meant to imply that a world depression leaves Haiti unscathed, or that the country does not suffer when its trade in coffee is interrupted, but rather that its persistent problems would continue to exist whatever the state of world politics and economics. 178 66 648

Contacts of the Haitian people with the outside world between 1804 and 1915 were meagre. The slaughter of whites by Dessalines, the economic decline of the country, unwillingness of white nations to treat with a Negro state, the schism in the Catholic Church, restrictive legislation against white foreigners, general illiteracy of the people—all these shut Haiti off from the world. Christophe, it is true, invited in a few English schoolmasters and agricultural experts, but these remained only a short while and had little influence even among the élite. For a century Haiti saw no foreigners except the few traders at seaports, an occasional Wesleyan missionary, a limited number of consuls and ministers, certain travelers interested in odd corners of the earth, and, after 1860, Catholic priests and sisters. For the peasants there ceased to be any knowledge of the world outside of Haiti; for the élite France once more became the centre of the social universe, as it had been for the affranchis in colonial times. From Boyer's time onward élite youths went to Paris for an education, if they could afford it; the "culture" they acquired there had little relationship to Haitian problems. 175 648 [871] [242] [797] [871]

Foreign relations, in the political sense, revolved during most of

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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ABOVE, *One of the workers at a combite.*
BELOW, *A Haitian cornfield.*

●243

[facing p. 73]

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1953) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

243 796 769 In the Artibonite Valley, where much rice is grown, a similar ceremony takes place before the rice is gathered from the fields. In this ceremony it is rice that is shared with the family ancestors, who have first rights, and with close friends who have aided with the planting. This feast is called [252] *mangé diri*, or sometimes *goutè diri*, the tasting of the rice. Small amounts of rice are taken from the fields, cooked with red beans or Congo beans, [524] or perhaps made into dumplings. The farmer's friends and relatives gather while the food is still cooking, and play games such as *wari* and *trois-sept*. [538] The children play *gage* games and sing songs, and sometimes a *malè conte*—a storyteller—comes to entertain them.

When the food is finally ready, the family ancestors are given their share. The farmer takes a calabash bowl of the rice and walks around the house grounds calling upon his immediate ancestors to accept their share. He drops a little food on the ground for the remembered dead, for the unknown dead who preceded them, for the Haitian dead, and for the dead of Africa. He also drops small portions for the dead twins, the dead albinos, the deformed dead, and the dead who have lost limbs, and for the distressed dead who have been improperly buried, or who may not have received the feasts that were due them. Afterward, he offers food to those who died of drowning, or who were lost at sea and never heard of again.

Each course is shared with the ancestors. The farmer takes a pitcher of water, spilling a little here and a little there until the dead have quenched their thirst. He also gives a little of everything to the family loa. Then the calabashes are set out on a bench or table reserved for the dead, and this food is not disturbed. Food for the marassas is set out separately on the ground in three small *conis*, or gourd dishes.

The family ancestors whose good will has made the harvest possible having been taken care of, the food is now shared among the extended family and the friends who helped in the fields. Later there are prayers [782] to the loa, the saints, and God, led by the houngan or a prêt' savane. To [796] finish the affair, there may be Juba-type dances for the older people, while [535] the children watch or play *gage* games.
[524] Only after this service are the farmer and his family and his *coumbite* (mutual labor group), if he belongs to one, free to go out and harvest the rice.[4]

243 These feasts of the rice and yam harvests are not of New World origin. 243 Similar harvest festivals for yams or rice are held over a wide area of West 796 Africa. There, as in Haiti, the fundamental concern is with the family 769 ancestors, whose good will must be constantly nourished so that the rains 171 continue to fall, the crops flourish, and human beings remain fertile. Among the Ashanti of Ghana, for example, the yam and rice harvests are

4 [Account given by Jean Ravel Pintro. Cf. P. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

celebrated with elaborate rituals for the dead. As in Haiti, great importance is laid on the presence of all living descendants, whose numbers are calculated to influence the ancestors' behavior. And as in Haiti, the first yams and the first rice are offered to the dead, and only after the family ritual does the family divide the crop.[5]

Service for the Assotor Drum

The *assotor* drum is the largest and most sacred of all Haitian drums. Around it is built an impressive and elaborate service known as the *mangé assotor,* which, according to local traditions and circumstances, may be held as often as every three years or as infrequently as every twenty-one years. The period between mangés always consists of an odd number of years. A houngan from Jérémie declared the service might properly be held every three, five, or seven years. Another cult priest in the Cul-de-Sac Plain said it could be held every seven, seventeen, or twenty-one years. The assotor is known as the *plus grand moune* (the most venerable "man") of the hounfor. However, few cult centers possess an assotor. "Assotor c'est fort bagaille, c'est pas zaffai tout moune" (The assotor is powerful, it isn't everybody's affair), Haitians say. This is what a man from Jérémie tells about it:

"The assotor is the greatest of all things in the hounfor. The Rada drums are only for the Dahomey nation. The Congo drums are for the Congo nation. The assotor is a man of Dahomey, but he is for all nations. It is for all loa—Pétro, Congo, Bumba, Dahomey. The assotor belongs to Dahomey, but when there is a great service the assotor is the host to the loa of every rite, the loa of Haiti and of Africa. When the assotor is played, the loa are awakened everywhere. Loa who have been forgotten by the Creoles (Haitians) will come to the service and mount people, and when the loa have gone, many people don't know what loa has been riding them. Some ancient spirits from far away come only to the assotor service, and when it is over they aren't heard of again.

"The assotor drum is not for small things, it is for great occasions. For some people there are no occasions in their whole lives great enough for an assotor service. When all other things have failed, it is only then that the assotor is called upon.

"If a big houngan should have an assotor drum, he can have only one, and it is the chief of the hounfor. All other drums are its servants. You can make an assotor, but it is not necessarily an assotor. It may look like an assotor and not be an assotor. To be an assotor it must not only have the shape of an assotor but it must be accepted by the loa. There was a houngan near Jérémie who made an assotor and held a great service with it,

[5] [Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana. Cf. p. 351, category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[p. 112-G]

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9. *Calling the coumbite: signaling on a conch-shell trumpet.*

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10. *A women's coumbite weeding a cornfield near the town of Plaisance.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-K]

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16. *Man with a machete making a wari board. The machete is used for cutting trees, trimming brush, weeding gardens, fashioning wooden objects such as drums and mortars, and many other purposes.*

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17. *Winnowing grain with a winnow tray.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1958) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

793 before the houngan. Staring into the tub, he shook his asson and called
794 upon a certain loa to enter. Then he placed a lighted candle upright in the
796 tub and watched it for a moment. The flame was suddenly snuffed out.
787 The houngan looked concerned. He removed the candle and called for another one. When he placed the new candle in the tub it remained burning. The houngan smiled. The loa had agreed to enter. The houngan and his chief assistant placed the tub upon the head of the waiting hounsi. She trembled violently as though she had received a shock, then leaped to her feet. The loa had mounted her and presumably was sitting in the tub on her head. She began to stagger back and forth across the dance court, while the drums beat a salute. The tub tottered dangerously but did not fall. The possessed hounsi then began to whirl. She stopped, and the tub continued to spin for a few seconds on her head. She twirled again in the opposite direction. Each time she stopped she waited for the tub to stop spinning. The twirling motion was accompanied by a constant jerking and lurching, as though she were about to lose her balance, but she never stumbled or fell. After perhaps five minutes of this violent "riding" by the loa, the houngan approached her with his asson and conducted her into the hounfor, the tub still on her head. Inside the hounfor he removed the tub, sent the loa away, and left the hounsi to rest.

[346] There was more dancing, and after a while the service was transferred to a small temporary cloth-covered structure resembling an American Indian hogan. The hounsi bossale—the servitors whose loa had not been "tamed" or conditioned—lay before the structure on their faces, side by side. There were twelve of them. The other hounsi covered them completely with white sheets. The houngan entered the hogan-like structure (the *caré*) with a candle and a bell. He tinkled his bell and began to call upon the loa to speak to the hounsi bossale. Through his mouth, first one spirit and then another made comments. The hounsi under the sheets were tensely quiet, until one of them began to jerk and scream. Several others, as though responding to a trigger, joined in the screaming. Older women came to quiet them. The hysterical reaction of the hounsi bossale was regarded as simply a reflection of their beginners' status. Their loa had not yet been controlled. The ritual continued until the early hours of the morning, the loa and ancient ancestors coming in to speak, one after another.

The First Yams and the First Rice

244 [196] Each year, when the yams are harvested there is a great festival known as
the *manjé yam*. Of all things grown in Haiti, the yam is perhaps the most
[262] significant. It is the most vital of all staples, and it is traditional. The yam

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

The yam 244 171 192

itself was transplanted from Africa, where in old times as well as in modern it was a staff of life among those who lived by agriculture. The word "yam" is known throughout large parts of Africa, crossing language lines and forests. It signifies the big root on which the African is so dependent, and it also has the general meaning of "eat." In Senegal it is called *nyami*, while across the width of Africa and in the upper Nile region it is called *nyam*.

In Haiti the yam is a tie with the past and a symbol of fertility. When the yams are plentiful, there is food for the winter months and a sense of well-being. When the yam crop is poor, there is insecurity and even hunger. Whatever occurs, lurking in the background is the shadow of the family ancestors, for it is they who have the power to enhance the crops or blight them. This is the concept around which the mangé yam is built. 244 769 182

The annual harvest feast, on the twenty-fifth of November, is rooted in the need for placating the ancestors, so that the dead will insure the fertility of the fields. Before the feast, no yams may be eaten, for the crop must be "baptized" first. Should this rule be violated the yams will spoil and those who eat them will become sick. The precise form of the mangé yam varies from region to region. Sometimes it is held on the premises of the cult chief for the community at large. More traditionally it is held on the family *habitation*, with a houngan in attendance. It is felt that an important obligation rests upon those who have wandered away from the homestead to return for the occasion. For the fate of the family depends to a large degree upon the successful appeal to the vast host of the ancestral dead, and the solidarity of the living in this effort is regarded as vital. Even if one belongs to a Christian sect which proscribes Vodoun, he is obligated and ready to come, for the welfare of the family is paramount. Catholics, Adventists, and Protestants alike participate. As the Haitians say, it is an affair for all who eat yams, and that means all Haitians. 244 796 769 184

Yams are washed and prepared for eating during the service. They are cut in small portions, placed in dishes or calabash bowls, and offered to the dead, who have prime rights. All categories of the dead are fed—those who are remembered, those who can be recalled only by name, and those whose names are forgotten. The dead of Haiti are invoked, then the dead of Africa. The marassa dead are fed from separate gourds or bowls, and a special table is set for the ancient dead who move slowly because of their age or infirmities, and who may take a long while to arrive at the mangé. A share of the yams is offered to the family loa. Then the members of the family receive symbolic portions. There is singing, drumming, and dancing, and sometimes ritual baths are taken. Afterward, when the yam feast is ended, the crops may be gathered, stored, and eaten. 244 796 769

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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[5 [Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana. Cf. p. 351, category 116. -- Analyst] [115]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 112-5]

58. *A yam harvest festival. The men are carrying the yams into the peristyle of the hounfor to be cut up and shared with the family ancestors and the loa.*

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 equaled the demand for them; in 1791 the census listed half a million
24 then living, but no writer seems to have even a vague idea of how
567 many millions were imported during the sixty years of the colony's heyday.

175 Production, particularly of sugar and coffee, steadily increased until the tiny colony ranked among the wealthiest regions of the
● 245 world. The Spanish Indies were declining, so that Saint-Domingue
249 alone far outranked them all combined between 1766 and 1791.
433 Splendid roads were built, extensive irrigation projects developed,
511 and stately mansions erected. Life moved along with ceremony and
565 display—for the planters; attended by their black lackeys, the white French masters entertained royally or were driven like lords in their coaches to make formal visits to neighbors. Many of these well-to-do colonials spent half their time in Paris, ostentatiously spending their riches. To be "wealthy as a Creole" came to be a common expression in France.[1] Perhaps nowhere in the Americas was existence at once so delightful and so ornamental as it was for the wealthy planters among the 36,000 whites of Saint-Domingue in 1791.

175 For the mother country, too, this small bit of tropical land was profitable during the latter days of Bourbon royalty. Neither Mar-
439 tinique nor Guadeloupe could compare with it in value. In 1789
505 nearly two thirds of the foreign commercial interests of France
648 centred in Saint-Domingue; its combined exports and imports were valued at more than $140,000,000; its sugar, coffee, indigo, and cotton supplied the home market and employed in prosperous years more than 700 ocean-going vessels, with as many as 80,000 seamen.[2]

175 Where wealth exists, social distinctions generally develop. In Saint-Domingue the evolving class system produced such discord
565 that sparks from the French Revolution eventually set off an explo-
669 sion in the colony. Casual surveys of Haitian history generally record that in 1791 the slaves revolted, and that out of this insurrection grew the war of independence. This is true; but it was not the resentment of slaves against their masters which caused the final explosion; the
175 slaves were tinder used by others to keep the conflagration burning.
565 Negro slaves, of course, did not figure in the "class" system; they
[567] were below the classes of colonial society. The class system, properly

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2. Pamphile de Lacroix, *Memoires*, II, 277.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

to spend one's time in the allotted garden patch than to cultivate sugar cane steadily in the heat of the day. In a garden there was more variety to the work, and more independent decision; in a cane field all must work in unison to be effective. Moreover, the yield from the garden was a daily thing, while that of the cane fields came but once a year. Less and less were the overseers able to get the tenants away from their gardens and into the fields.

Not all the sabotage came from the common folk. Landowners had their normal share of profit motive. The complex system of social security and benevolent stewardship ate away much of the income of the estate.[29] More important, the owners had had no experience of plantation management other than by directing forced labor. Corporal punishment was now abolished, but to the owner it was still unthinkable that there should be no coercion in plantation work. The laws protecting labor therefore left them bewildered, and they did not hold up their part of the system. Finding it expensive to maintain sugar machinery, impossible to engage docile workers, and necessary to finance social security, most of the "aristocrats" simply took the easier path of leasing their estates in small subdivisions, getting out of them what they could.

Another unexpected result of Pétion's general policy was to shift the main produce of the republic from sugar to coffee. Sugar had for decades been the staple crop of southern Haiti; but its cultivation requires scrupulous care and expensive machinery. Coffee, on the other hand, grows wild both in the lowlands and at heights of three thousand feet. It is "wild" in the sense that plants spring from seeds dropped by parent trees, without careful planting. When it became obvious that the workers were not to be persuaded to regular work in the cane fields, the landlords broke up the large plantations so necessary to sugar cultivation. Each tenant farmer was almost sure to find coffee trees on his rented plot of land. He would harvest the berries but would do little or nothing to tend and improve the plants, as he did not own them. In French days coffee trees had been pruned, fertilized, grafted; the new Haitian farmer simply let nature take its course. Pétion's careful planning resulted consequently in an entirely unplanned, accidental, and automatic adjustment to new conditions of life.

29. That the landlords did not too vigorously protest this system of care for the workers was due to their familiarity with similar care in slave days.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

of living only for the day by making people content with a low level of physical existence. Haitian peasants were isolated from the rest of the world; and one who has no standard of comparison rarely has the incentive to improve his living conditions. 175 178 511

Production declined between 1806 and 1843 both in quantity and in quality. Sugar, the staple of colonial trade and still an important export under Christophe, disappeared from the market figures altogether under Boyer. Most of the cane which was raised was worked into syrup and then into tafia (raw rum) for local consumption. Careful attention and the well-ordered machinery necessary for sugar manufacture were both lacking in 1843. Sugar cane was almost never newly planted, but simply lasted on from French days; what plants there were had little attention: they were not manured, or ploughed, or stripped of their dead leaves. Everything was left to nature. The production of coffee in actual number of pounds stood up well, although the quality fell off through lack of cultivation; the price in world markets steadily declined, however, so that the crop of 1843 brought in only twelve million francs as compared with twenty million for the smaller crop of 1822.[63] 175 178 433 257 249 245 439

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63. The state figures for 1843 revealed only four money crops, no one of which was as productive of income as sugar had been. In the comparative tables given below it must be remembered that prices declined between 1822 and 1843. [433]

	5-Year Average, 1822–26	1843
Coffee	34,000,000 pounds	35,000,000 pounds
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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 441 Justice in the courts was administered by Haitians whose narrow
439 648 patriotism biased their decisions.

5. A temperamental tariff policy. Not only were imports subject
175 to a tariff which might be changed at the whim of any president, but
651 exports also were taxed. When an administration was in need of
489 funds it might suddenly, without warning, raise the tax on coffee exports and so disrupt a merchant's business plans. The customs-houses were in charge of Haitians who steadily became more inefficient and grasping as the century progressed, until many foreign merchants felt that the only way of getting business dispatched was by means of bribes. Examinations at customs were long drawn out, often there was open thievery, and erroneous valuations were common.

175 6. The burden of the indemnity to France. Contracted by Boyer
651 in 1825, this annual payment for sixty years was an incubus to every
[648] administration, leaving no surplus in the treasury for public works, education, or any internal development; likewise, it made the threat of foreign interference all the more imminent.

7. A debased currency. Pétion was the first president to devalue money, and his example was frequently followed thereafter. Counterfeiting was general. When a country's monetary system is unstable, its officials accustomed to bribery and graft,[17] and its financial structure almost nonexistent, there is little chance for sound economic development.

175 8. Dependence upon a single crop. Haitian economy was tied to
245 the staple coffee, grown with indifferent care, prepared for the market in outmoded fashion, and sold in competition with coffee from more scientifically run plantations in other tropical countries.

175 9. Political instability. The recurrent revolutions in Haiti made
439 foreigners chary of participating in the country's business, since the
66 government which made a contract might be out of office before the ink was dry.

175 10. Indifference of the élite to economic pursuits. What profits
439 were obtainable went into the pockets of foreign merchants, not
565 those of Haitian businessmen. In 1842 the comparative exports of the

[643] 17. Sir Spenser St. John, always a bitter critic of Haiti, remarked (*Hayti, or The*
[159] *Black Republic*, p. 88) sardonically that "Boyer had the rare quality of being honest,
[661] and left in the treasury, on his departure, the sum of £200,000, the first and last chief who was ever guilty of so unaccountable a weakness."

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

of Lafitte in Paris to find even the interest for payments due to the French government.

4. *Exports from Haiti*

Sugar was the great crop of French colonial days in Saint-Domingue, with coffee, indigo, and cotton lucrative secondary crops. The first table shows the rapid decline of sugar, indigo, and cotton between 1791 and 1839, near the end of Boyer's administration.

CROPS

	Sugar	*Indigo*	*Cotton*
1791 (colony)	163,405,220 lbs.	930,016 lbs.	6,286,126 lbs.
1802 (Toussaint)	53,400,000	37,600	4,050,000
1804 (Dessalines)	47,600,000	35,400	3,000,000
1818 (Pétion)	1,896,449	0	384,001
1825 (Boyer)	2,020	0	815,697
1839 (Boyer)	6,000	0	1,402,792

By contrast coffee production, although it declined, remained large enough to provide the state with some income. After 1810 it was the principal crop of the country.

Coffee Production

1791	68,151,180 lbs.	1818	20,280,589 lbs.
1802	34,370,000	1825	36,034,300
1804	31,000,000	1839	43,854,666

In 1935–36 the Vincent government reported the export of 76,600,000 pounds of sugar, 79,400,000 pounds of coffee, and 12,700,000 pounds of cotton.[11]

CHAPTER XV

What Haiti faces, economically and socially, can be seen in terms of the law of population: "Population tends to increase up to the limit of the supporting power of the land, relative to the economic efficiency and to the standard of living of the people at the time." This law may be better visualized by stating it in forms of an equation:

$$\frac{\text{Population}}{\text{Productivity of land}} = \frac{\text{Economic Efficiency}}{\text{Standard of Living}}$$

Another way of stating the law is this:

Population + Standard of Living = Productivity of Land + Economic Effi-

11. These tables are compiled from material in Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description . . . de . . . Saint-Domingue, passim;* Great Britain Foreign Office, *Communications Relative to Hayti* (London, 1825), p. 159; Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti*, II, 172 ff.; Alexandre Bonneau, *Haïti: ses progrès, son avenir* (Paris, 1862), pp. 35, 36; John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, p. 105; L.-J. Marcelin, *Haïti: ses guerres civiles* (Paris, 1892), p. 32; Charles F. Pressoir, "Pages de géographie économique," *Revue de la Société d'Histoire*, III, vi, 18; James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 318 ff.; *Rapport annuel du représentant fiscal d'Haïti*, October, 1935–September, 1936, pp. 189–195.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

CHAPTER III

WORKING THE AMALGAM

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THE FIRST slaves brought to the New World — those Negroes needed, according to the familiar account, to replace the Indians who preferred death to bondage — reached Haiti in 1510.[1] The sanguine hope of the colonists that the labor of one Negro would be worth more than that of four Indians was, however, not borne out by experience, for the work of these slaves was far from satisfactory, and their death-rate was distressingly high.[2] Yet though they were found to be useless in the gold mines, their owners were more than compensated by the discovery that they made excellent laborers in the cultivation of sugar-cane and the making of sugar. So profitable was this, indeed, that Haiti, with the rest of the West Indies, came to be known as the "sugar islands," and it is recounted how "the magnificent palaces erected by Charles V at Madrid and Toledo were built solely from the revenues obtained from the monopoly of the crown on the importation of sugar from the Island of Espagnole."[3]

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During these early times the fundamental rule of slavery in Haiti was laid down: "In all that has to do with slavery, custom is everything, the law is nothing."[4] In 1518 one Zuazo, a licentiate, writing to the King, stated that the control of Negro slaves depended entirely upon the treatment accorded them. "Some of those I found on my arrival were thieves,

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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[P. 112-E]

5 and 6. *Cane workers near Croix-des-Bouquets. Only on the large company plantations are oxen and carts used.*

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

equaled the demand for them; in 1791 the census listed half a million then living, but no writer seems to have even a vague idea of how many millions were imported during the sixty years of the colony's heyday.

Production, particularly of sugar and coffee, steadily increased until the tiny colony ranked among the wealthiest regions of the world. The Spanish Indies were declining, so that Saint-Domingue alone far outranked them all combined between 1766 and 1791. Splendid roads were built, extensive irrigation projects developed, and stately mansions erected. Life moved along with ceremony and display—for the planters; attended by their black lackeys, the white French masters entertained royally or were driven like lords in their coaches to make formal visits to neighbors. Many of these well-to-do colonials spent half their time in Paris, ostentatiously spending their riches. To be "wealthy as a Creole" came to be a common expression in France.[1] Perhaps nowhere in the Americas was existence at once so delightful and so ornamental as it was for the wealthy planters among the 36,000 whites of Saint-Domingue in 1791.

For the mother country, too, this small bit of tropical land was profitable during the latter days of Bourbon royalty. Neither Martinique nor Guadeloupe could compare with it in value. In 1789 nearly two thirds of the foreign commercial interests of France centred in Saint-Domingue; its combined exports and imports were valued at more than $140,000,000; its sugar, coffee, indigo, and cotton supplied the home market and employed in prosperous years more than 700 ocean-going vessels, with as many as 80,000 seamen.[2]

Where wealth exists, social distinctions generally develop. In Saint-Domingue the evolving class system produced such discord that sparks from the French Revolution eventually set off an explosion in the colony. Casual surveys of Haitian history generally record that in 1791 the slaves revolted, and that out of this insurrection grew the war of independence. This is true; but it was not the resentment of slaves against their masters which caused the final explosion; the slaves were tinder used by others to keep the conflagration burning. Negro slaves, of course, did not figure in the "class" system; they were below the classes of colonial society. The class system, properly

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

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Not all the sabotage came from the common folk. Landowners had their normal share of profit motive. The complex system of social security and benevolent stewardship ate away much of the income of the estate.[29] More important, the owners had had no experience of plantation management other than by directing forced labor. Corporal punishment was now abolished, but to the owner it was still unthinkable that there should be no coercion in plantation work. The laws protecting labor therefore left them bewildered, and they did not hold up their part of the system. Finding it expensive to maintain sugar machinery, impossible to engage docile workers, and necessary to finance social security, most of the "aristocrats" simply took the easier path of leasing their estates in small subdivisions, getting out of them what they could.

175 466 471 24

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29. That the landlords did not too vigorously protest this system of care for the workers was due to their familiarity with similar care in slave days. [466]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them. There are some instances of proprietors leasing their lands to persons who undertake to cultivate them, for which they receive about one-third of the produce; but this is far from being general, and I imagine can only be accomplished by military men who have the command of troops, and who are thereby enabled to till them by working parties daily sent out for that purpose.[47]

An interesting side light is provided by a Quaker visitor, Candler, who in 1842 wrote that he was struck by the entire equality which seemed to exist between servant and master. Every workman was addressed in courteous manner, as "*mon fils*."[48] On inquiry, Candler was told that the profits of planting were good that year, laborers were scarce, and it was therefore "necessary to conciliate all by kindness, or no work would be done."

A particularly grim account of the state of cultivation near the close of Boyer's administration (1842) is given by a Frenchman:

> The fields of Haiti are dead. There where under slavery thousands of tons of sugar were made, now one sees only a few crops and a little syrup to turn into raw rum. Lively growths of cactus cover with thorns the acres of cane, of fields, of pastures deserted by the hand of man; the cactus invades the towns, coming even up to the heart of the cities, flourishing in the midst of ruins, as if to insult the inhabitants. . . . On the one hand, no one cultivates with regularity, because everyone is discouraged by the thefts of cane and fruit by people without any moral discipline, and in a country without police; while on the other hand, people complain of being poor, and of not being able to devote enough money to indispensable improvements. . . . And if the proprietors cannot even make work progress, imagine the condition of the poor![49]

As the people grew individually poorer, the value of the land sank until it was useless for an owner to try to prevent squatting on his estate. Holdings grew smaller and smaller, in spite of the prohibition on sales of real estate in parcels less than fifteen acres. Good land might be had in every part of the island quite cheaply, much of it even from the government which had enacted the restrictive law. Any man not satisfied with his condition as a paid laborer might, if

47. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti* (*Saint Domingo*), (London, 1828), p. 313.
48. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti* (London, 1842), p. 37.
49. V. Schoelcher, *Colonies étrangères et Haïti: résultats de l'émancipation anglaise* (Paris, 1842), II, 263 ff.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

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SV3 Haiti SV3

be given to Haiti for vast rubber plantings.[11] Opposition to Lescot comes chiefly from those who consider him too friendly with the Dominicans who killed hundreds of Haitian workers in 1937, Lescot having figured prominently in negotiations that led to the Dominican government's agreement to pay indemnities to Haiti for the slaughter.

Reviewing the whole course of Haitian history, the field of politics seems to have marshaled itself behind a few regularities. In every case there have been voices raised to protest, yet the ruling clique, whatever its grouping, has effectively supported these characteristic political customs:

1. Complete dominance of political life by the president. Strong men seem to be necessary to rule ignorant masses. Even the revolutions precipitated by parties campaigning for parliamentarianism have, when successful, become governments by the president. This concentration of power in one man's hands makes the next revolution possible, for it is easier to overthrow one man than to eliminate a party based upon wide suffrage and diffused responsibility.

2. The inferior position of cabinet ministers. These have resembled neither European nor American secretaries of state in their responsibilities, but have been little more than clerks appointed by the president to serve as heads of a bureau. The treasurer-general, for example, during most of Haiti's history has merely received the moneys, while the president disbursed them. The secretary-general has neither originated nor conducted the details of public policy. Often as not, the minister has made a convenient whipping boy when the president has got himself involved in internal or foreign complications: by demanding the minister's resignation the president remained unscathed.

3. The unimportance of the legislature. It has made useful patron-

11. The European War, threatening the supply of rubber coming to the United States from British Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies, has made the American government seek new sources. The Department of Agriculture established an experimental station and breeding gardens for rubber plants in Haiti, and the results were so successful that extensive areas were planted with rubber trees. Haiti and the United States in May, 1941, reached a long-term agreement for "the development of agriculture and economy"; the projects embraced under the agreement include not only rubber but the further development of Haiti's banana plantations, the planting of oil crops, drug plants, spices, fiber plants, the stimulation of handicraft industries, and the development of forestry resources peculiar to the tropics. A further extension of an additional $500,000 in credits will be made for use on highways, irrigation projects, and to provide transportation facilities for the areas to be planted to rubber trees.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

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list except in raw form, in which it had an annual sale of only a few thousand pounds. Other subordinate exports were cotton, logwood, lignum vitae, mahogany, tortoise shells, hides, cacao, cassia, wax, ginger, bullocks' horns, and tobacco—and many of these came primarily from the Dominican rather than the Haitian part of the island, during the twenty-two year period of union. The imports were mainly clothing and provisions. That an agricultural country should need to bring in flour, butter, cheese, lard, beef, pork, candles, and especially—in the light of former days—refined sugar, is eloquent testimony to the degree to which food production had declined since colonial times. Other imports were more to be expected, since manufacture had never developed: linen, cotton goods of all kinds, some few woolens, cutlery, iron goods, wines and brandies, oil, lumber, coarse iron goods, earthenware, tin plates, and minor articles.[11]

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Gone now were the days of big things in Haiti. Estates of thousands of acres would in Boyer's time have been only a liability. Profits were measured, or rather hoped for, in terms of hundreds rather than thousands of dollars.[12] Saint-Domingue of the 1780's was one of the exciting parts of the world to traders; Haiti of fifty years later was little more than a vague name except to specialists. Any country relying for its economic security upon one crop and its sale in a foreign market must expect vicissitudes in its income. Haiti had these in full measure. And so the prosperity of the country steadily diminished.[13]

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11. See the very careful report to Great Britain by her consul, Charles Mackenzie, in 1830: *Notes on Hayti*, II, 175–190.

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12. Mackenzie (*Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti*, Document XII) reports in 1825: "Generally speaking, no sugar is manufactured on the estates devoted to the cultivation of the sugar cane; the juice is either inspissated to a coarse sirup, and sold for common use, or distilled into a very inferior rum, called here 'Tafia.'" Then, citing the case of Tor, an estate formerly owned by Pétion but in 1825 by Boyer, he reports: "Formerly 1,700 carreaux were in cane; 1,500 slaves were employed on it; 3 sugar mills were constantly at work, and excellent clayed sugar was made. Now only about 7 carreaux are in cultivation; 50 laborers are employed; the only produce is a little sirup and tafia, which last is retailed in a small shop by the side of the road, in front of the president's residence."

13. These vicissitudes have been frequently noted. Drought and hurricanes, pests and earthquakes, were causes of constant apprehension. The chief forces at work to diminish Haitian prosperity were two: the division of land into small parcels at home, and the competition of other countries with Haitian coffee abroad. The price of coffee had declined in all the European markets, making the return to the cultivator exceedingly small.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

3. *Pétion, Boyer, and Inginac as Administrators*

Pétion lived very simply in the South, like a plain republican magistrate. He sat on his piazza, accessible to all his people. He had a quiet way of answering his opponents which did not make enemies of them. He made his secretary answer every letter that arrived, no matter how small; many were simply inquiries about the President's health. Yet the wars between Pétion and Christophe dragged on from 1807 to 1812,[8] draining the finances of the republic. Not only the crops declined: so also did most of the public improvements instituted by the colonial planters; so did trade; so did habits of industry. Everything seemed to conspire against hard work. The rich plains of the Cul-de-Sac and the Artibonite Valley were ravaged by fire and warfare; necessary equipment for sugar making was destroyed, the money for new machines and buildings was unavailable; and the men were drawn away from their land by military duties.

Inginac, Boyer's secretary of state, after the Revolution of 1843 had got rid of both the President and his secretary, wrote his memoirs. There are some revealing passages. Inginac reports that Pétion told him only forty days before his death that Boyer was a man of probity and delicacy, "but unhappily he is petulant; he is too set in his ways to conciliate those who might assist him. In everything *he* wants to dominate, and he will bring unhappiness to the country if he does not change." Inginac cites cases to show that Pétion's prophecy was correct. Boyer in 1820 repealed the most unpopular laws, particularly those requiring personal corvée and the repair of public roads; but instead of taking advice from his cabinet on important economic matters, he frequently announced that he was president and would not be run by anybody. Consequently, according to Inginac, he made mistakes which might have been avoided.[9] Defending himself, the former secretary offers a clue to the failure of the régime—possibly unavoidable—by showing that the administration merely suggested, did not require, action:

"Have I not constantly, not only preached and corresponded about the necessity of making agriculture prosperous, but also given work at as high wages as the treasury could afford? Have I not created habitations on lands formerly totally uncultivated, putting formerly idle men to work? Have I not published at my own expense, although I directed the National Printery, methods for cultivating tobacco and coffee plants, of which I distributed gratis several thousand copies?"[10]

In spite of all encouragement which the administration could offer, agricultural production continued to decline, while expenses increased, and external trade fell off from a third to a half. The government had to borrow from the banking firm of Lafitte in Paris to find even the interest for

8. Hostilities between the two parts of Haiti ceased about 1812 because of the mutual fear on the part of Christophe and Pétion of Napoleon's ascendancy, and the threat which this continued to the whole former colony. Their war had ravaged the plantations and removed laborers from the soil. Then came the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain, cutting off many of the supplies which Haiti drew from both countries. There was accordingly an unwritten truce, with no further hostilities. A neutral territory of ten leagues between the boundaries of the two states was tacitly agreed upon: neither army was to enter it. This was the rich plain of Boucassin, once the garden of the island, now a wilderness.

9. Joseph Balthazar Inginac, *Mémoires* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1843), pp. 32, 34, 38.

10. Ibid., p. 98.

payments due to the French government.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

of Lafitte in Paris to find even the interest for payments due to the French government.

4. *Exports from Haiti*

Sugar was the great crop of French colonial days in Saint-Domingue, with coffee, indigo, and cotton lucrative secondary crops. The first table shows the rapid decline of sugar, indigo, and cotton between 1791 and 1839, near the end of Boyer's administration.

CROPS

	Sugar	*Indigo*	*Cotton*
1791 (colony)	163,405,220 lbs.	930,016 lbs.	6,286,126 lbs.
1802 (Toussaint)	53,400,000	37,600	4,050,000
1804 (Dessalines)	47,600,000	35,400	3,000,000
1818 (Pétion)	1,896,449	0	384,001
1825 (Boyer)	2,020	0	815,697
1839 (Boyer)	6,000	0	1,402,792

By contrast coffee production, although it declined, remained large enough to provide the state with some income. After 1810 it was the principal crop of the country.

Coffee Production

1791	68,151,180 lbs.	1818	20,280,589 lbs.
1802	34,370,000	1825	36,034,300
1804	31,000,000	1839	43,854,666

In 1935–36 the Vincent government reported the export of 76,600,000 pounds of sugar, 79,400,000 pounds of coffee, and 12,700,000 pounds of cotton.[11]

CHAPTER XV

What Haiti faces, economically and socially, can be seen in terms of the law of population: "Population tends to increase up to the limit of the supporting power of the land, relative to the economic efficiency and to the standard of living of the people at the time." This law may be better visualized by stating it in forms of an equation:

$$\frac{\text{Population}}{\text{Productivity of land}} = \frac{\text{Economic Efficiency}}{\text{Standard of Living}}$$

Another way of stating the law is this:

Population + Standard of Living = Productivity of Land + Economic Effi-

11. These tables are compiled from material in Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description . . . de . . . Saint-Domingue, passim*; Great Britain Foreign Office, *Communications Relative to Hayti* (London, 1825), p. 139; Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti*, II, 172 ff.; Alexandre Bonneau, *Haïti: son progrès, son avenir* (Paris, 1862), pp. 35, 36; John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, p. 105; L.-J. Marcellin, *Haïti: ses guerres civiles* (Paris, 1892), p. 32; Charles F. Pressoir, "Pages de géographie économique," *Revue de la Société d'Histoire*, III, vi, 18; James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 318 ff.; *Rapport annuel du représentant fiscal d'Haïti*, October, 1935–September, 1936, pp. 189–195.

533 476 178 461 rhythmically, to the accompaniment of drums, *catas*, or horns, while a singing leader composes topical songs in which the laborers join.

171 412 The tools which a rural Haitian chooses, and the way he uses them, often are in a West African tradition. He performs a multitude of tasks with his machete, or bush knife: weeding a garden, peeling an orange, cutting down a tree, making a drum or mortar, opening a coconut. It is an all-purpose tool, as it is in Africa. Until a few years ago it was supplemented by the extra-long, heavier, "double machete." The axe and the chisel are known and used too, but the machete is supreme. 492 The hoe is the tool for tilling the soil, even in the flat country, and even [241] though the Haitian has horses and cattle which could pull a plow. [412] Horses are for riding and not for pulling. In carrying loads, the Haitian peasant still prefers the head to the shoulders. If he has a donkey, the [538] donkey will carry for him. An old Haitian proverb goes: "Meçi Bondieu pou' bourrique là, si nous pas gainyain bourrique là faut Haitien po'té tout bagaille" (Thank God for the donkey, if we didn't have the donkey the Haitian would have to carry everything)." Generally speaking, the 489 491 493 rough and rocky terrain of Haiti and inadequate secondary roads have done nothing to encourage the use of carts or wagons.

171 [25] [372] Corn is stored in the trees, as in West Africa, or in granaries built upon stilts, also as in West Africa. The Haitian makes his fire in the African fashion, with several long sticks or poles meeting point-to-point in the heart of the fire. As the ends are consumed, the sticks are pushed [252] toward the center. Grain is pulverized in large wooden mortars, as [227] in West Africa, and winnowed in a woven tray. Fish traps are some- [226] times woven in the traditional West African manner, and fishermen often set their nets in converging spirals and beat the water with sticks to [501] drive the fish to the center. And on the rivers and lakes are to be seen dugout canoes of a kind familiar on the inland waters of West Africa.

171 241 The folklore of the fields contains many themes known to the West African. One old Haitian farmer, discussing the spiritual relationship of the planter to the earth, declared that a man must be strong and potent when he plants, else the crops will be vitiated and sickly. For [834] this reason, he said, a man must not plant seeds the day after he has had sexual intercourse, because he has been temporarily drained of his life-giving powers.[9]

171 538 The tale of the hoe that worked by itself in the fields is also widespread. It enters many animal and Bouki stories, and also is known in a form that is familiar in West Africa. In this story, there was once a man who owned a hoe which worked by itself whenever a magical formula was pronounced. It would stop working whenever the magical

9 [For footnote, see Category 116, P. 352.-- Analyst]

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CHAPTER IV

THE SETTING OF HAITIAN LIFE

SINCE the discovery by the Spaniards that the wealth of Haiti lay rather in cultivating sugar than in the exploitation of gold mines, its dominant economy has been agricultural. In the valley of Mirebalais, as elsewhere in the island, the small cultivator holds the center of the economic stage. In the main he works his own land, inherited from his father or acquired through purchase. He may also cultivate additional plots of ground which he rents, since much of the land expropriated when independence was gained was retained by the State and today is leased for nominal fees.[1]

The life of the Haitian farmer, though hard, is simple and self-contained. With but few exceptions, he supplies all his necessities, for he commands almost the entire range of techniques known to his culture; hence Haitian economy shows a lack of specialization that in the main is only relieved by the sex division of labor. The day's work begins at dawn, the women rising before the men to prepare coffee, the invariable drink of early morning. When finished with his breakfast, the farmer goes to his field, where, except for the hottest hours, he works until sundown, his one meal being brought to him at about nine or ten o'clock in the morning. His wife meanwhile occupies herself with her household tasks, pounding grain in her mortar or working in her garden near by.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

is under way. The size of the *combite* is judged by the number of drums and *lambi*, or conch-shell horns used, for where two or three of either are required, an especially large group of workers is usually assembled. It may be observed in passing that it is undoubtedly the sound of this *combite* drum, heard in the mountains or through the brush by travelers, that has so often been mistaken for the "mysterious booming" of the *vodun* drums.[8]

The preparation of the food is the work of the women of the household giving the *combite*, aided by their female relations and the wives of friends and neighbors. This is no small task, for goats and even a bullock may be killed to feed a large *combite*, while in addition other dishes to go with the meat must be cooked. Each woman is given charge of a great pot and does her best to see to it that an appetizing dish is ready for the men when their work is done. While the food is being cooked, the real object of the *combite*, the clearing of the field, is being pursued. A *chef d'esquade*, usually with a small group, begins the afternoon's labor, and, being a fast worker, he himself sets the pace. As more men arrive, he walks about, encouraging the constantly increasing number of men in their efforts, seeing to it that the tempo originally set is continued, and when necessary picking up a hoe to restore a lagging rhythm. Occasionally the *chef d'esquade* will stand in front of the men to make sure that all keep together, and if the lazy cannot be roused to work by direct order or through ridicule, he will drive them away.

The work progresses with incredible speed as the line moves down the field. In one case a *combite* of between fifty and seventy-five men completely cleared a field of several acres in a single afternoon, and this without undue effort or what appeared to be the expenditure of much energy. The flashing of the hoes in the brilliant sunlight accentuates the color of the scene; each implement is raised high above the head of the one who wields it, to be brought down at the proper in-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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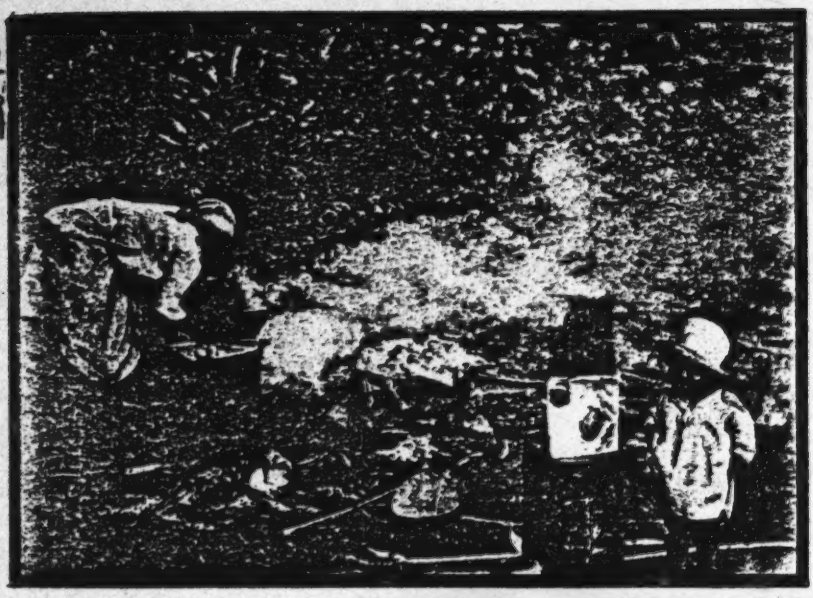

ABOVE, *Preparing the food for a combite feast.*
BELOW, *Drums marking the beat for the hoes.*

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496

[facing P. 72]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

to cutting fruit, though seen in Africa, was probably introduced there by the early traders, and all machetes found today in Haiti are imported from Europe or America. The same is true of the hoe, for the short-handled, broad-bladed West African hoe has given way to the European long-handled type, though the blade of the Haitian hoe is somewhat broader than that used in America and Europe. Despite the presence of domesticated animals to draw the plow, this implement has never gained favor in Haiti, nor have recent efforts to teach the Haitian peasant the use of the plow achieved any degree of success. He prefers his African mode of cultivation, to say which implies more than just the employment of a certain implement, since even such matters as the manner in which he employs his hands and feet in the process of planting are included. When the Dahomean plants, for example, he holds a calabash of seed under his left arm, from which he takes the grains with his right hand. As he moves down the rows of newly turned earth, he makes a depression with the heel of his right foot, drops a few grains into this depression and, replacing the earth with his toes, takes a step so that he can repeat the process with his left foot. This is exactly the manner in which Haitians were observed planting in the valley of Mirebalais.[8] Unlike the usage in Africa, however—where the men clear the ground, the men and women plant, and the women tend the growing crops—the European pattern, which places agriculture in all its essential phases in the hands of men, has been taken over almost in its entirety.

The women have retained almost without change the African modes of preparing food. Grain is first pounded in an African-like mortar, with an aboriginal type of pestle, while the shelled kernels are winnowed in a large round basketry tray. The cooking is either done on a raised mud platform in the cooking shelter, as in West Africa, or on three stones, employed as rests for the pots, a method equally characteristic of Africa. In the Haitian cuisine the prevalence of stews, of

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

In the Haitian cuisine the prevalence of stews, of dishes fried in deep fat, of the generous use of pepper in seasoning, are all African, as are even the names of certain dishes, such as *acansan*, a Nigerian-Dahomean term which designates the cooked balls of cornmeal. One of the few European intrusions is white bread, while the cassava cakes, also important in native diet, derive from the aboriginal Indian inhabitants.

In its outward forms the economic system under which the Haitian peasant lives seems entirely based upon European pecuniary patterns. Money follows the French system, even to the official use of the French designation, *centimes*, for the smallest parts of the principal unit of currency, the *gourde*. Both paper money and coins are used, and as the result of the Marine occupation American money is as well known as the currency of the country itself. Buying and selling goes on in the accepted European manner, the price of such export crops as cotton, sugar-cane, and coffee responding to the fluctuations of the world market. In many of its inner aspects also, the values of the Haitian are influenced by the money economy taken over from Europe and America.

The conclusion that the economy of Africa has been swept aside by that of Europe needs, nevertheless, to be qualified if certain historical and psychological factors are not to be ignored. It must not be forgotten that in West Africa, long before the period of European contact, a monetary system based on the cowrie shell had been fully developed. The prestige of wealth, the resulting drive to obtain property, the pursuits of buying and selling, and other aspects of a pecuniary civilization were as current in West Africa at the time of slaving, and continue today, as in Europe or in Haiti. When some of the attitudes associated with the economic life are analyzed, it is no simple matter, therefore, to state whether they stem from African or European sources, or both.

One pattern common to both economies, the validation of position through the conspicuous display of resources, has

243 796 768 769 In the Artibonite Valley, where much rice is grown, a similar ceremony takes place before the rice is gathered from the fields. In this ceremony it is rice that is shared with the family ancestors, who have first rights, and with close friends who have aided with the planting. This feast is called [252] *mangé diri*, or sometimes *gouté diri*, the tasting of the rice. Small amounts of rice are taken from the fields, cooked with red beans or Congo beans, or perhaps made into dumplings. The farmer's friends and relatives gather [524] while the food is still cooking, and play games such as *wari* and *trois-sept*. [538] The children play *gage* games and sing songs, and sometimes a *malt' conte*—a storyteller—comes to entertain them.

When the food is finally ready, the family ancestors are given their share. The farmer takes a calabash bowl of the rice and walks around the house grounds calling upon his immediate ancestors to accept their share. He drops a little food on the ground for the remembered dead, for the unknown dead who preceded them, for the Haitian dead, and for the dead of Africa. He also drops small portions for the dead twins, the dead albinos, the deformed dead, and the dead who have lost limbs, and for the distressed dead who have been improperly buried, or who may not have received the feasts that were due them. Afterward, he offers food to those who died of drowning, or who were lost at sea and never heard of again.

Each course is shared with the ancestors. The farmer takes a pitcher of water, spilling a little here and a little there until the dead have quenched their thirst. He also gives a little of everything to the family loa. Then the calabashes are set out on a bench or table reserved for the dead, and this food is not disturbed. Food for the marassas is set out separately on the ground in three small *conis*, or gourd dishes.

The family ancestors whose good will has made the harvest possible having been taken care of, the food is now shared among the extended family and the friends who helped in the fields. Later there are prayers [782] to the loa, the saints, and God, led by the houngan or a prêt' savane. To [776] finish the affair, there may be Juba-type dances for the older people, while [535] the children watch or play *gage* games. [524]

Only after this service are the farmer and his family and his *coumbite* (mutual labor group), if he belongs to one, free to go out and harvest the rice.[4]

243 243 796 768 171 These feasts of the rice and yam harvests are not of New World origin. Similar harvest festivals for yams or rice are held over a wide area of West Africa. There, as in Haiti, the fundamental concern is with the family ancestors, whose good will must be constantly nourished so that the rains continue to fall, the crops flourish, and human beings remain fertile. Among the Ashanti of Ghana, for example, the yam and rice harvests are

4 [Account given by Jean Ravel Pintro. Cf. P. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-J]

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412

15. *Pulverizing grain into meal. The mortar and pestle are standard kitchen fixtures.*

142
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501

14. *Fishermen of Ville des Matelots, on the Bay of Gonaives.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-K]

142
291
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16. *Man with a machete making a wari board. The machete is used for cutting trees, trimming brush, weeding gardens, fashioning wooden objects such as drums and mortars, and many other purposes.*

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17. *Winnowing grain with a woven tray.*

533 476 178 461 rhythmically, to the accompaniment of drums, *catas*, or horns, while a singing leader composes topical songs in which the laborers join.

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9 [For footnote, see Category 116, P 352.-- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

rather starve than work. An Englishman, James Franklin, wrote in 1828, for example:

> Experiments may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coercion and want will impel the Haytian to labour; and I have my doubts as to the practicability of enforcing labour in Hayti until the people have been better instructed, and their characters become changed.

As Franklin summarized it: "Nature is too generous to the Haytian; he never wants, and so never works for hire, as do free labourers in other countries."[1]

The early nineteenth century saw a flood of such bitter comments about the remains of the once rich and flourishing French colony of St. Domingue. The vast productivity of Haiti under French rule had made that colony one of the richest in the New World. The country was dotted with sugar mills, brick-covered wells, and warehouses; and carefully built brick aqueducts, irrigation canals, locks, and dams assured water for the plantations. In 1790, under the slave system, Haiti had exported 163,000,000 pounds of sugar. In 1826, a quarter of a century after the revolution, it was reported to have exported 33,000 pounds.

This falling off in production and exports doubtless had many causes, but one of the most significant was the Haitian's revolt not only against slavery but also against continuing the same kind of work he had performed as a slave. He saw not too much difference between forced, unpaid labor and working for any large landholder at subsistence wages. To the Haitian slave the inspiring battle cry of the French Revolution did not mean that all men would work together on another's man plantation and receive the same wages. It meant that every man would have his own garden to work for himself as he chose; every man would be a full citizen, with land of his own, free to come and go, to plant what he wished, to sell what he could. Despite long years under a colonial slave system, the Haitian still remembered a different way of life in Africa, where mass production for export was not the primary objective of labor.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the population of Haiti was not much more than half a million—less than one sixth of what it is today. There was plenty of land, and much of it had not yet been wasted by constant tilling and erosion. When the French were driven out, the Haitian peasant re-created an economic [illegible] of his own liking. The plantation system which had poured out [illegible]ar and coffee and indigo for Europe faded away, and in its place there sprang up an agrarian system which has continued until the present day. In the early

[1] [Franklin, The Present State of Hayti, p. 362. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

any usual measure. But Haitians do produce by traditional craft methods a surprisingly large number of the articles they need for daily life. In the countryside it is possible to see many persons engaged, mostly on a part-time basis, in craft activities and home industry that have their roots in the prerevolutionary era. Leatherworkers operating small, crude tanneries still flourish. Charcoal-burners, and operators of small lime kilns that produce building material, are found in every village. Smiths make and repair simple tools, working with forges of archaic design. Combs are made from cows' horns and tortoiseshell, buttons from bone; carrying-bags, fish traps, and a wide variety of baskets from withes, bamboo strips, and grasses; wooden bowls, mortars and pestles, tool handles and spoons from local woods; dippers, pots, and candelabra from tin cans; and sandals from tires and inner tubes. Sawyers cut and dress timber; cabinetmakers still manufacture simple furniture of traditional design from the fast-disappearing tropical woods; many women, working either with the simplest sorts of sewing machines or by hand, make clothing for use and for sale. Along the coasts there are dugout-makers, shipbuilders, and sail- and seine-makers. Simple mattresses, fabricated from local grasses, are sold in every large marketplace, as are crude ceramic wares made by local potters. At the start of the twentieth century, Italian immigrants brought a sturdy tradition of cobbling to Haiti, which has been destroyed only recently by the flood of American imported shoes with their attached prestige, until recently, *vitièlo* was a colloquial term for shoe, coming from the name of the most famous of those Italian cobblers.

One of the striking features of Haiti's craft traditions is its relative stability since the revolution. It was under slavery that Haitians first became "westernized," learning what were then standard French craft practices, adjusted to local colonial conditions, probably with some modifying features coming from the African past. It was before the revolution that the Haitian people learned and stabilized their consumer tastes, agricultural and craft standards, and work procedures. Such preferences and standards were worked out primarily in terms of the demands of the plantation regime itself; but even the most repressive social system leaves some opportunity for acculturation. Today's sugar-making shops and rural rum distilleries employ techniques centuries old and little modified over time. Housebuilding and woodworking techniques in the countryside are substantially

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

of living only for the day by making people content with a low level of physical existence. Haitian peasants were isolated from the rest of the world; and one who has no standard of comparison rarely has the incentive to improve his living conditions.

Production declined between 1806 and 1843 both in quantity and in quality. Sugar, the staple of colonial trade and still an important export under Christophe, disappeared from the market figures altogether under Boyer. Most of the cane which was raised was worked into syrup and then into tafia (raw rum) for local consumption. Careful attention and the well-ordered machinery necessary for sugar manufacture were both lacking in 1843. Sugar cane was almost never newly planted, but simply lasted on from French days; what plants there were had little attention: they were not manured, or ploughed, or stripped of their dead leaves. Everything was left to nature. The production of coffee in actual number of pounds stood up well, although the quality fell off through lack of cultivation; the price in world markets steadily declined, however, so that the crop of 1843 brought in only twelve million francs as compared with twenty million for the smaller crop of 1822.[63]

Practically every acre of the fertile soil of Haiti was cultivated in 1806, the methods steadily improving under Christophe. Irrigation projects were then being developed to replace those destroyed in the wars, and a measure of experimentation went on with new crops and fertilizers. In 1843, however, what was called a coffee "plantation" was actually only a large tract of land on which coffee trees grew wild. There was no laying out of the lands nor any improvement of the soil or pruning of the trees to strengthen the parent stem. Until the berries were ready to be picked the coffee tree was rarely touched, except when pigs scratched their backs on it, or goats and donkeys cropped the grass around it. Cotton likewise received little cultivation. Cocoa raising practically ceased altogether, for it required intelligent management.

Haiti under Dessalines still had many buildings of French con-

63. The state figures for 1843 revealed only four money crops, no one of which was as productive of income as sugar had been. In the comparative tables given below it must be remembered that prices declined between 1822 and 1843.

	5-Year Average, 1822–26	*1843*
Coffee	34,000,000 pounds	35,000,000 pounds
Cotton	678,000 "	2,000,000 "
Campêche	5,600 "	30,000,000 "
Acajou	2,460,000 feet	6,000,000 feet

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

list except in raw form, in which it had an annual sale of only a few thousand pounds. Other subordinate exports were cotton, logwood, lignum vitae, mahogany, tortoise shells, hides, cacao, cassia, wax, ginger, bullocks' horns, and tobacco—and many of these came primarily from the Dominican rather than the Haitian part of the island, during the twenty-two year period of union. The imports were mainly clothing and provisions. That an agricultural country should need to bring in flour, butter, cheese, lard, beef, pork, candles, and especially—in the light of former days—refined sugar, is eloquent testimony to the degree to which food production had declined since colonial times. Other imports were more to be expected, since manufacture had never developed: linen, cotton goods of all kinds, some few woolens, cutlery, iron goods, wines and brandies, oil, lumber, coarse iron goods, earthenware, tin plates, and minor articles.[11]

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Gone now were the days of big things in Haiti. Estates of thousands of acres would in Boyer's time have been only a liability. Profits were measured, or rather hoped for, in terms of hundreds rather than thousands of dollars.[12] Saint-Domingue of the 1780's was one of the exciting parts of the world to traders; Haiti of fifty years later was little more than a vague name except to specialists. Any country relying for its economic security upon one crop and its sale in a foreign market must expect vicissitudes in its income. Haiti had these in full measure. And so the prosperity of the country steadily diminished.[13]

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11. See the very careful report to Great Britain by her consul, Charles Mackenzie, in 1830: *Notes on Hayti*, II, 175–190. [113]

12. Mackenzie (*Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti*, Document XI) reports in 1825: "Generally speaking, no sugar is manufactured on the estates devoted to the cultivation of the sugar cane; the juice is either inspissated to a coarse sirup, and sold for common use, or distilled into a very inferior rum, called here 'Tafia.'" Then, citing the case of Tor, an estate formerly owned by Pétion but in 1825 by Boyer, he reports: "Formerly 1,700 carreaux were in cane; 1,500 slaves were employed on it; 3 sugar mills were constantly at work, and excellent clayed sugar was made. Now only about 7 carreaux are in cultivation; 30 laborers are employed; the only produce is a little sirup and tafia, which last is retailed in a small shop by the side of the road, in front of the president's residence." [249] [257] [274]

13. These vicissitudes have been frequently noted. Droughts and hurricanes, pests and earthquakes, were causes of constant apprehension. The chief forces at work to diminish Haitian prosperity were two: the division of land into small parcels at home, and the competition of other countries with Haitian coffee abroad. The price of coffee had declined in all the European markets, making the return to the cultivator exceedingly small.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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342 322 178 unchanged from an earlier era. The prevailing quality of Haitian rural and craft industry, then, is one of great stability and conservatism.

493 463 At the same time, of course, major events since the revolution have left their imprint on this part of life. Hardly a roadside village in Haiti today, for instance, lacks an automobile mechanic, even though these men are mostly self-educated and work with hardly any tools. Their skills became part of Haitian culture in this century and are often of a simple order no longer typical of more developed areas. Tire 383 177 tubes, for instance, are "vulcanized" by the use of an ingenious device made from a hoard and an old piston, kerosene providing the heat to make the seal; this technique, along with the sewing of damaged truck tires, was almost certainly introduced and diffused by the United States Marines.

47 31 178 But these quaint additions do not alter the fact that shop and factory industry are nearly absent, and extractive industry virtually nonexistent. Haiti's one alumina extraction enterprise, foreign-owned, is now shut down. There is but one flour mill, and that is foreign-[258] owned as well. One or two textile mills and sugar factories, estab-[339] lished with foreign capital, still function, as do a modern cement factory and a few other small plants established in the 1950s. These [464] industries, scanty as they are, were of great importance to Haiti, since they represented substantial investments, held out the promise of reduced dependence on imports in significant categories, and contributed to the beginnings of an industrial proletariat. However, they involved only a tiny fraction of the national labor force, and they have not proved entirely successful. As a result, Haiti lacks any reserve of labor acquainted with modern industry, even though many people, both urban and rural, work at tasks that might be considered more industrial than agricultural.

47 433 178 171 Most important for the present discussion, the minor developments in Haitian industry have not led to an expanded market and have not resulted in any firm increase in productivity. Industrial growth, in the sense in which it has occurred in countries such as those of Western Europe—or for that matter in Mexico or Argentina—is entirely lacking. The absence of such growth is perhaps especially significant if Haiti be compared with a neighbor such as Jamaica or Puerto Rico. [648] These countries, one now independent, the other a North American dependency—have both gained real increments from the investment activities of outsiders;

R. Courlander B-5 (1937-1938) 1960 BV3 11481 BV3

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Qua'm perd' un garçon moin jain' l'ent' oh!
Ma rélé,
Oh qua'm perdit mamman moin ma crié! [Ex. 102]

I cried,
Oh, when I lost my mother I cried!
I cried,
Oh, when I lost my mother I cried!
When I lost a man I found another, oh!
When I lost a man I found another, oh!
I cried,
Oh, when I lost my mother I cried!

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Protest or complaint songs are sometimes directed against no one in particular but simply call the attention of listeners to the singer's misfortunes. In many such songs the president or one of the deities is mentioned by name. The singer in this way implicitly places responsibility for help. In the following song, one complains of hunger, another theme that runs throughout Haitian folklore and Haitian life.

Rwo! President qui voyé rélé'm!
Moin pas bwè moin pas mangé!
M'pas bwè moin pas mangé!
Oh m'pas bwè moin pas mangé!
President qui voyé rélé'm rwo!
M'pas bwè moin pas mangé! [Ex. 103]

Rwo! * The President sends for me!
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!
Oh, I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!
The President sends for me, *rwo!*
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!

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[176]
[182]

Here the loa Ogoun Balindjo is called upon to take note of prying, insincere people who come to a person's house, observe what is going on, and go away to gossip:

Ogoun Balindjo
Yo vini gè'dé'm
Pou' y'allé valé oh!
Ogoun Balindjo
Li yé wè bouche yé oh!
Ogoun Balindjo
Pas wè yo vini gè'dé moin? [Ex. 104]

Ogoun Balindjo
They come to look at me

* An exclamation.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

2. *Health*

Historians who seek to explain the rise and fall of nations in terms of a single cause might do worse than hit upon health and disease as the all-important explanation. Unless spectacular epidemics have appeared in a country's history, the average person is rarely aware of how diet may affect a people, or of how backwardness in achievement is often directly related to disease. It may well be that the development of *medical* history will yet cause a radical revision of certain philosophies of history.

146 "The diet of the Haitian peasants has not improved since the slavery period," says Dr. Camille Lhérisson.[5] When people are
164 hungry in Haiti, they eat (if they can find food) until their hunger has been appeased; but what they eat, though it may fill their stomachs, is often decidedly deficient in the proper nourishment. Mangoes, yams, and beans are common enough so that few people actually go hungry; eggs, milk, meat, and many other essentials of a balanced diet, on the contrary, are scarce. People do not die of hunger, but rather of the diseases which accompany malnutrition. It is said that many peasants allow the fires in their homes to die out when the mangoes begin to ripen, subsisting almost wholly upon this fruit for weeks. One sees nearly naked children whose distended
[261] bellies are testimony to faulty diet. There are frequent cases of geophagy (eating of dirt) both by children and by adults in their unreasoned craving for certain dietetic elements; one result of the practice is the swallowing of eggs and larvae of intestinal parasites.

178 Scientific progress in medicine during the nineteenth century and
743 the first years of the twentieth passed Haiti by completely. There
759 were during the whole history of the country until 1915 hardly a score of reputable physicians; even had there been doctors, hospital facilities and equipment were lacking. Dr. Robert P. Parsons de-
114 scribes Haiti in 1915 as "an unspeakable hotbed of diseases, ranking
164 second to none in the world in downright rottenness." He further described the "mass of three million people, sick, suffering beyond all power of words to describe, crippled, and weakened from the ravages of a host of diseases (for the most part preventable and curable), pitifully helpless and hopelessly resigned to their lot."[6]

5. "Diseases of the Peasants of Haiti," *American Journal of Public Health*, XXV, No. 8 (August, 1935), 924.
6. *History of Haitian Medicine* (New York, 1930), pp. 4-5.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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164 apparently hale and hearty, but lassitude sapping all energy. A group
744 of doctors from the Rockefeller Foundation discovered that among
164 4,439 persons examined in various surveys two decades ago sixty-seven per cent showed malarial parasites in the blood. Since the American Occupation steps have been taken to control the disease and much progress has resulted: some of the towns are now practically free of it. But the battle against malaria will never be won so long as the anopheles mosquito breeds in the island; it means an endless war of constant vigilance as well as education—one which must be carried on simultaneously in the neighboring Dominican Republic.

Hookworm, like malaria, is also ordinarily quite undramatic in its symptoms. There is no specific pain, but rather a progressive inertia. Since practically every country person goes barefoot it would be miraculous if hookworm were not widespread, for sanitation is entirely lacking in peasant communities. Dr. Lhérisson reported in 1935 that twenty-six per cent of the mass of Haitian people examined
[369] up to that time had been found infested by hookworms. The final
[291] figure will probably be revised upward, for the persons most easily examined are townspeople who have better sanitation and more shoes. Only the Cul-de-Sac plain, extending east from Port-au-Prince, is free of the disease, for the larvae do not develop in salty ground. Hookworm attacks not only the barefoot, but likewise the
[261] well shod. Poor sanitation and geophagy suggest themselves as two explanations of this fact.

Like malaria, hookworm has been accepted calmly enough as one of the normal burdens of life. In slave days and for some time thereafter it was called "stomach trouble," and since it was common, was not even a case for the Vodun practitioner. It was not until 1924 that the Rockefeller Foundation through its Payne mission revealed the significance of the disease and began to establish dispensaries in
[291] country districts and undertake a campaign of sanitation. If every Haitian were to wear shoes the incidence of the disease would, of course, decidedly decrease; but the advice to wear shoes is a counsel of perfection, for large peasant families are no more able to afford this luxury than all American families are able to buy champagne and caviar. Progress has been made along the lines of hygiene and sanitation, but hookworm continues to undermine the energy of the people.

164 Yaws is, of the morbid triad, the most virulent and the common-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

[History of Haiti in 17th-18th Centuries— The Haitian White Population]

175 merous contemporary accounts, and most present-day works,
105 give both texts and illustrations which make the economy of
563 the plantation clear.[83] Though many stories of the magnifi-
567 cence of plantation life are found in current works, writers
342 of the period seem to agree that but little attention was paid
175 to convenience. Inventories of the contents of houses show
105 that furnishings were at a minimum; a few chairs and small
563 tables in the sitting- and reception-rooms, beds and minor ac-
352 cessories in the way of furniture in the bedrooms, dining-room tables and chairs and a cabinet for dishes. These pieces were usually built in the colony and made of native hard woods; substantial, they were essentially plain. As Baron Wimpffen remarked, "Taste, Sir, is still Creolian at Saint Domingo; and, unfortunately, the Creolian is not the right taste, — it smells too much of the *Boucan*."[83]

175 The table set was not distinguished. Meat, though the most
105 important dish at the principal meals, was poor, but, on the
567 other hand, fish, game, and wild fowl were excellent, and the
563 best of French wines were available.[84] Whatever the fare, how-
352 ever, it was served in the grand manner, often on plate rather
262 than chinaware, and by the many liveried house-servants which every great establishment could boast. An account of the mode of service has been preserved in the reminiscences of one who, writing some years later of a repast served him in 1787, says: "There were many more of these domestics of both sexes than there were diners. I could but admire their attention to the smallest details of the service, the whiteness of their clothing, and the beautiful kerchiefs in the Créole manner elegantly arranged about the heads of the women. . . . But
[291] all of them moved about on bare feet; this was the distinctive sign of slavery."[85]

175 As portrayed in contemporary works, Haitian white life is
181 seen to have been lived entirely in terms of material goods and
105 of display. Just as there was little intellectual life, so religion
771 was but a matter of form. One M. de Larnage, writing from
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1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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241 782 The first of the rice-harvest is pounded in a mortar. A chicken is killed, or, if the farmer is a man of some means, he may offer two chickens, which are stewed together with red beans. The rice, cooked separately, is put on one platter or in a calabash and the stew in another, and these are taken to the field, where they are cast to the four quarters of the earth. Some of this is also given to the spirit residing in any stream which may be on the property. In addition, sacred trees are rewarded for their care over the field with some of this food placed at the foot of each, but only after they have demonstrated their merit by a successful yield. A prayer of thanks, couched in terms such as these, is next pronounced:

[778] [824] [539]

> *"Tout ça quitté. Aidé moin à travailler durant l'année, quitté ba moin force, courage. Moin bien content jodi-a, main ça moin porté ba-ou, c'e pou' ca toujou' bon. Ba moin force l'année pou' moin travaille plus l'année prochain. Merci.* — All this remains [here for you]. Help me to work during the year, give me strength and courage. Today I am well satisfied; here is what I bring you that all may always be well with me. Give me strength this year that I may work more next year. Thank you."

The family and their friends who may be present then return to the house and eat the remaining food.

241 782 262 It is also held dangerous to eat yams until the spirits are given the first of the new crop that comes to hand.[7] This is true even though a person may not himself be a farmer, but purchases his yams in the market. Unless this is done: *"Cap' malade, cap' tué même. Marassa kèmbé 'ou, morts, too, et mystères.* — You can become ill, you can even die. Twins will seize (molest) you; the dead, too, and the *mystères.*" The ceremony occurs during November or December, and in addition to the "Guinea" yams — for this ceremony is not performed for the great coarse yams — it is necessary to have imported dried salt fish, fish from Haitian waters which are dried

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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in Port-au-Prince, native or "créole" rice, red beans, and olive oil. The rice and beans are cooked separately, as are the yams and the two kinds of salt fish, each being seasoned with oil, salt, and pepper. The ordinary plates or calabashes on which food is offered the *loa*, or African deities, and the characteristic special double plates used in the twin cult, are prepared by rubbing them with olive oil. When the food is ready, it is placed in the proper containers in a closed room, and the family gather and say prayers of the Church — the Pater Noster, the Ave Maria, and the Credo — after which the *loa*, the twins, and the dead are called to come and eat. From midday until after sunset the room remains unopened, so that these beings may partake of the offerings placed there for them. Finally, when darkness has fallen, the family enter, and the food, whose essence is believed to have been consumed by the spirits, is eaten. 241 182 262

At times when a garden yields but little, the owner may suspect that black magic is the cause. He thereupon tries to recall any of his neighbors who might have occasion to feel envious of him, or those with whom he may have quarreled. He does nothing overt at this time except to watch for signs of hostility on the part of the suspect, but when the time for the next planting arrives, he not only obtains a strong charm to protect his own garden, but if he is particularly exercised and thinks his suspicions are well justified, he may set a countercharm in the field of his neighbor who he believes has harmed him. This would only be done in exceptional cases, where, for instance, the crops of one cultivator had failed when the fields about his had yielded well; for, in the main, garden magic is directed toward protective rather than toward malevolent ends. 241 189

A certain proportion of the harvest is reserved for use at home and the remainder is sold in the markets. Since these markets, which as the primary channel of distribution rank with farming in their importance in Haitian economy, they may best be considered. 433 443

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curred during the night, they wait for daylight. Salt is added to the hole, "so that the evil eye cannot take it (for magic purposes), for with salt it spoils very quickly." Neither the hole nor its contents are held to be of future importance, and though the child may be shown where the cord and placenta were buried, by that time nothing will remain of it which might be of use to a maker of charms. After three or four days the cord falls off and muscat powder is applied to heal the wound cleanly. The bit of cord is saved, and if the child becomes ill, this is boiled and the water given as a drink. Occasionally an entire umbilical cord is dried and retained; and one woman spoke of the cord of her mother as still being in existence.

The mother is also bathed in water in which calabash leaves and other ingredients have been steeped, and after being carefully dried, a band is tightly tied about her abdomen to give her support. A cloth is placed to cover the vagina, which is not cleansed until the following day, though after that the vaginal region is washed twice daily for some forty days. Red wine is given to women immediately after delivery to sustain them until food can be prepared. Bananas, salt fish, milk, chocolate, and a dish of stew made of chicken and rice are offered, and in most instances the women eat heartily.

The cloths used during childbirth are carefully guarded, the woman herself or a trusted member of her family seeing to the task of washing them, so as to prevent their being used for evil magic. If a miscarriage occurs, the fetus is buried in a hole dug in the floor of the woman's house while the woman herself is bathed and otherwise cared for as in the case of a normal delivery.

A woman is usually up and about three or four days after the birth of her child, or sooner if there is no one to help her with her household duties, in which case she may even be obliged to perform the heavy work of going to the river for water within the week, though she is careful not to bend down

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853 Breast-feeding begins on the third day, but if the milk does
[789] not come, the mother goes to a woman "specialist" who
[854] knows the herbs which are believed to induce the flow. When the mother is ill or tubercular, the infant is given to a wet-nurse. Once he has begun to nurse, he is fed whenever he cries, and as soon as he can sit up he is given the same food as
846 the mother eats. For the first two or three months after the
262 birth of her child a woman refrains from eating egg-plant, fresh fish — although she may eat salt fish — white beans or any others larger than Congo peas, pork, lard, and all fruit.
304 The ears of a female child are pierced when she is about a
30 month old for the gold ear-rings which are worn by girls and women of all ages. If the parents cannot afford them at the time, however, thread is placed in the holes until a sum sufficient to provide this important trinket has been accumulated.

856 A child is taught to sit up beginning with the end of the
854 third or fourth month, and by the time he is six or seven months old he can sit quite well; girls are believed to be more precocious than boys in acquiring this skill. When about ten months old, or sooner, an older sister, a little girl, or the father or mother takes the child by the hand and teaches him to walk, later allowing him to hold one end of a stick for sup-
[754] port. A child is never left alone, for fear of the evil eye or of
[789] werewolves, so that a mother does not even cross the threshold of her house without taking her baby with her, while if for some reason she cannot avoid leaving her child while she is in the yard, an empty bottle is placed near its pillow as a pro-
856 tective device. Teething is a matter of importance, since the
855 attitudes of the parents toward a child may be determined by
763 the first teeth to appear. If these are cut in the upper jaw, it is said that the child's mother will survive his father, and when this occurs, the mother takes every precaution to conceal the fact from her husband, so he will not hate the child. Others hold, however, that the appearance of an upper tooth first denotes that either the father or the mother is soon to die.[4]

856 Instruction starts early in the life of a child. Beginning with
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1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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In the Haitian cuisine the prevalence of stews, of dishes fried in deep fat, of the generous use of pepper in seasoning, are all African, as are even the names of certain dishes, such as *acansan*, a Nigerian-Dahomean term which designates the cooked balls of cornmeal. One of the few European intrusions is white bread, while the cassava cakes, also important in native diet, derive from the aboriginal Indian inhabitants.

In its outward forms the economic system under which the Haitian peasant lives seems entirely based upon European pecuniary patterns. Money follows the French system, even to the official use of the French designation, *centimes*, for the smallest parts of the principal unit of currency, the *gourde*. Both paper money and coins are used, and as the result of the Marine occupation American money is as well known as the currency of the country itself. Buying and selling goes on in the accepted European manner, the price of such export crops as cotton, sugar-cane, and coffee responding to the fluctuations of the world market. In many of its inner aspects also, the values of the Haitian are influenced by the money economy taken over from Europe and America.

The conclusion that the economy of Africa has been swept aside by that of Europe needs, nevertheless, to be qualified if certain historical and psychological factors are not to be ignored. It must not be forgotten that in West Africa, long before the period of European contact, a monetary system based on the cowrie shell had been fully developed. The prestige of wealth, the resulting drive to obtain property, the pursuits of buying and selling, and other aspects of a pecuniary civilization were as current in West Africa at the time of slaving, and continue today, as in Europe or in Haiti. When some of the attitudes associated with the economic life are analyzed, it is no simple matter, therefore, to state whether they stem from African or European sources, or both.

One pattern common to both economies, the validation of position through the conspicuous display of resources, has

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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such matters as the passing on of the *loa* in families, the duties toward family dead, and the possible inheritance of food taboos are recalled. Like all these survivals, that of food taboos is not as clear in its expression in Haiti as in its aboriginal setting. Its determination is largely by trial and error, so that a mother, before the birth of her child, not only abstains from eating the foods harmful to her, but later carefully tries these on the child to ascertain their effect. Yet the custom, at best, is a tenuous one. Sometimes, if food uncongenial to a parent has ill effects on a person, "he goes on eating it until he becomes accustomed to it" — though this statement brought forth an emphatic dissent from another Haitian: "Not II If a food harms me once, I am through with it."

Africanisms are particularly marked in the organization of and attitudes toward the ancestral cult. Today the fear of the power of the dead is as living in Haiti as in West Africa, despite the influence of the Catholic Church in changing concepts of the heavenly world of the dead and the role of ghosts on earth. It is quite true that the outer forms of ceremonialism taken by ancestor-worship in West Africa have disappeared; but when the meticulousness with which the rites of death are carried out, and the institution of *mangé morts* are remembered, it is seen that the spirit of African ritual observances has by no means been lost. African elements have survived even in the services for the dead, now largely taken over by the Church. On the anniversary of death a special commemorative mass is sung in the church, which the family of the dead attend in a body. Before they leave the habitation for the mass, however, animals are killed to provide meat for the feast which follows the Church service, and for the *mangé morts*, which also takes place at the same time. Immediately after the mass a reception takes place at the house of some member of the family who lives in town, or at the home of a friend, where cakes and liquors are served. At about noon, however, family and friends proceed to the habitation, where

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

before the houngan. Staring into the tub, he shook his asson and called upon a certain loa to enter. Then he placed a lighted candle upright in the tub and watched it for a moment. The flame was suddenly snuffed out. The houngan looked concerned. He removed the candle and called for another one. When he placed the new candle in the tub it remained burning. The houngan smiled. The loa had agreed to enter. The houngan and his chief assistant placed the tub upon the head of the waiting hounsi. She trembled violently as though she had received a shock, then leaped to her feet. The loa had mounted her and presumably was sitting in the tub on her head. She began to stagger back and forth across the dance court, while the drums beat a salute. The tub tottered dangerously but did not fall. The possessed hounsi then began to whirl. She stopped, and the tub continued to spin for a few seconds on her head. She twirled again in the opposite direction. Each time she stopped she waited for the tub to stop spinning. The twirling motion was accompanied by a constant jerking and lurching, as though she were about to lose her balance, but she never stumbled or fell. After perhaps five minutes of this violent "riding" by the loa, the houngan approached her with his asson and conducted her into the hounfor, the tub still on her head. Inside the hounfor he removed the tub, sent the loa away, and left the hounsi to rest.

There was more dancing, and after a while the service was transferred to a small temporary cloth-covered structure resembling an American Indian hogan. The hounsi bossale—the servitors whose loa had not been "tamed" or conditioned—lay before the structure on their faces, side by side. There were twelve of them. The other hounsi covered them completely with white sheets. The houngan entered the hogan-like structure (the *card*) with a candle and a bell. He tinkled his bell and began to call upon the loa to speak to the hounsi bossale. Through his mouth, first one spirit and then another made comments. The hounsi under the sheets were tensely quiet, until one of them began to jerk and scream. Several others, as though responding to a trigger, joined in the screaming. Older women came to quiet them. The hysterical reaction of the hounsi bossale was regarded as simply a reflection of their beginners' status. Their loa had not yet been controlled. The ritual continued until the early hours of the morning, the loa and ancient ancestors coming in to speak, one after another.

The First Yams and the First Rice

Each year, when the yams are harvested there is a great festival known as the *mangé yam*. Of all things grown in Haiti, the yam is perhaps the most significant. It is the most vital of all staples, and it is traditional. The yam

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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curred during the night, they wait for daylight. Salt is added to the hole, "so that the evil eye cannot take it (for magic purposes), for with salt it spoils very quickly." Neither the hole nor its contents are held to be of future importance, and though the child may be shown where the cord and placenta were buried, by that time nothing will remain of it which might be of use to a maker of charms. After three or four days the cord falls off and muscat powder is applied to heal the wound cleanly. The bit of cord is saved, and if the child becomes ill, this is boiled and the water given as a drink. Occasionally an entire umbilical cord is dried and retained; and one woman spoke of the cord of her mother as still being in existence.

The mother is also bathed in water in which calabash leaves and other ingredients have been steeped, and after being carefully dried, a band is tightly tied about her abdomen to give her support. A cloth is placed to cover the vagina, which is not cleansed until the following day, though after that the vaginal region is washed twice daily for some forty days. Red wine is given to women immediately after delivery to sustain them until food can be prepared. Bananas, salt fish, milk, chocolate, and a dish of stew made of chicken and rice are offered, and in most instances the women eat heartily.

The cloths used during childbirth are carefully guarded, the woman herself or a trusted member of her family seeing to the task of washing them, so as to prevent their being used for evil magic. If a miscarriage occurs, the fetus is buried in a hole dug in the floor of the woman's house while the woman herself is bathed and otherwise cared for as in the case of a normal delivery.

A woman is usually up and about three or four days after the birth of her child, or sooner if there is no one to help her with her household duties, in which case she may even be obliged to perform the heavy work of going to the river for water within the week, though she is careful not to bend down

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the phrase: "This is natural." Children are not spaced, for normally a man resumes intercourse with his wife the second or third month after childbirth. Except for the drinking of coconut milk and salt, which is believed to be effective in preventing conception if taken before intercourse, contraceptives are not known to women, which means that pregnancies follow in rapid succession. Families are not too large, however, despite this, those numbering seven or eight children being rare, even in the hills. The reason for this is a high incidence of infant mortality, which is obvious despite the absence of vital statistics. Abortions are usually resorted to by young women, who sustain the operation done by the uncertain skill of an old woman, in the fear that bearing a child will later stand in the way of a desirable legal marriage. Some men, however, take the precaution of placing a grain of native salt on the tongue while having intercourse during an illicit affair, believing that this will be effective in preventing conception.

A childless woman first goes to a *vodun* priest, to have him determine by divination if a co-wife has not invoked magic against her. If her question receives an affirmative answer, she acquires a "counter-charm" to offset the effect of the other woman's magic. Should such a charm be ineffective, she would offer her prayers before the shrines of the saints and make pilgrimages to such sacred places as Saut d'Eau, there phrasing her petition to the Virgin in some manner such as the prayer overheard as a woman lighted a candle and held it in her hand before placing it on a sacred rock:

> *"Vièrge Miracles, Manman, voilà, depuis six ans depuis qui moins marié; moin apé vivre seul avec pauvre malhereux moin-a. Ça fait trois fois moin vini nan pié ou. Pas 'bliè mandé moin fait ou, pour charité, moin ou petit pitite. Moin va minnis li ba ou. Moin apé parti, Manman, s' ou' pli, songé ça pitite m' mandé ou.—*

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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with it, or the body is made to lie face downwards in the coffin, since the discomfort of this position causes the spirit of the dead to avenge itself on the sorcerer who caused the death. When a man has been killed by magic, his surviving relatives go to a *hungan* or a *bocor* to discover the culprit. The names of those suspected of the deed are called. Before the diviner stands a pottery jar filled with magically treated water. When the unwilling image of the guilty one finally appears, the *hungan* plunges his knife into it, and as the water turns red, those watching know that when the specified number of days have passed, the guilty one will be dead.[12] Should a suspect be innocent, the image of the Virgin Mary or of St. John is sometimes seen when he is called; but if one known to be guilty does not appear, it is proof that his magic is stronger than that used to call him. Recourse is then had to a powerful *wanga*, or poison, or to the spirit of someone dead, an *âme abandonée* who has led a life of evil and himself been a murderer. "They would certainly not send the spirit of the one just killed. He is too green" — to bring death to the killer. If none of these measures prevail, no further acts of revenge are attempted against the suspect, the feeling being that he has supplied himself with too powerful magic to allow effective revenge to be taken.

On occasion, an apparent death is felt not to be a real death, but rather the simulacre of death brought about by the machination of a sorcerer. The corpse is thereupon given poison or stabbed with a dagger, to make certain that an apparent death becomes an actual one, but the person who stabs the body must stand behind it in order that the corpse as slave of the sorcerer may not reveal who had stabbed him when summoned, and thus make of the one who had robbed him of his prey a substitute victim. If poison has not been administered to the corpse, or if the body was not stabbed, after the funeral the sorcerer recovers the body, which, deprived of its soul, works for him as a *zombi*, only returning to the grave when the time decreed by God for his natural death is reached, or if
he is accidentally fed salt.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haki SV3

Many of his potions are of a mystical and 759
semiritual nature; yet from roots and leaves he brews specific medicines 751
for specific illnesses, such as rheumatism, fevers, malaria, worms, and 755
yaws. Sometimes his cures are effective, sometimes they fail. The leaf 757
doctor is consulted for poisons and their antidotes, though many poisons, such as that in the wari bean, may be gathered and dispensed by anyone.

One of the macabre figures in Haitian folk belief is the *zombie*. In 775
the most general sense, the name designates the bland soul of a person who died without the distinction of having a loa in his head. The soul or spirit has no special will. It cannot affect the living in any way, unlike the lutin, the djablesse, and those who were buried possessed of mystéres. It does not harass enemies or importune its descendants. It is an undynamic, simple, otherworldly spirit, a sort of negative afterimage. It does not need to be placated or feared.

But the word *zombie* has another, more popular meaning, signifying 775
a human being who has "died" and been resurrected from the graveyard 789
by members of the Zeaubeaup Society, by a wicked sorcerer, or by some 754
other person who has realized the "power" to perform this act.

The Haitian countryside is full of tales about fresh graves that have been robbed of their bodies by practitioners of this special form of black magic. By a secret formula these soulless "dead" are revived and given a semblance of life. They lack only the power of will. Without that, they are at the complete command of the sorcerer who has disinterred them. They are presumed to be spirited away and put to work at drudgery in some remote place. Stories are told of plantations in the mountains whose entire labor force is made up of zombies, the animated dead. You can tell a zombie when you see him. His eyes are dull and glazed, he gives no sign of recognition to people he once knew, he moves slowly and plodklingly at his tasks, and he takes orders only from his master. He neither sings nor dances, and he eats and drinks without interest. His facial expression never changes. He is emotionally and mentally dead. Neither the rites of the Church nor those of Vodoun can help him. There is only one formula for breaking the spell. If he eats [263] salt he will either regain full life or die a merciful death. The master therefore takes great care that his zombies never have salt.

Haitians have many explanations of this mystical phenomenon. Some [184] hold that the sorcerer has the unique power to revive the dead. Others believe that the victim is not really dead but has succumbed to a virulent poison which numbs all the senses and stops bodily functions but does not truly kill. Upon disinterment, the victim is given an antidote which restores most physical processes but leaves the mind in an inert state, without will or the power to resist.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

512 neighbors paying friendly visits and of playing children gradu-
[264] ally become stilled. It is the time for the evening meal. By nine o'clock at the latest all is quiet and Mirebalais, man and beast, is asleep.

796 The *vodun* drums are heard only on Saturday nights, and
529 then the dance must be sufficiently close to the town, and the wind in the right direction, for the sound to be audible.
[256] Permits for these dances must be obtained, and are regularly given by the police officials — or were in 1934 — and word is passed on that on a given Saturday certain households will give *vodun* dances. If the dances are held in the foothills to the west, the Tombe River must be forded, and the existence of such a barrier between the village and the site of the dance makes this a favorite region in which to hold them, even though they may have official sanction. During the rainy sea-
[484] son attendance at dances on the opposite bank of the Arti-
[501] bonite River depends on the height of the stream, for when it is in flood not even the dugout canoes of the Haitians can cross it, while the ferry which Moreau de St. Mery speaks of as having been established in 1749 does not even exist in local tradition.[14] Yet no dance lacks participants or spectators, for these occasions furnish the principal opportunity for recreation even as they fill their proper religious function. Early in
[798] the week discussions can be heard of the dances to be held, and though the official frown of the Catholic priest is always to be reckoned with, the importance of these dances, and the numbers who attend them, do not seem markedly lessened by
[554] this fact. Those whose social position in the community makes them more sensitive to such criticism merely take the precaution to slip quietly out of town after dark.

796 When occasions of local or national significance and church holidays are celebrated, the town is full of country folk and
[788] visitors from the cities. Christmas and New Year's, Mardi Gras and Easter are all periods for such celebrations, while the first Sunday of every month witnesses a religious procession

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

[History of Haiti in 17th-18th Centuries— The Haitian white Population]

175 merous contemporary accounts, and most present-day works,
105 give both texts and illustrations which make the economy of
563 the plantation clear.[50] Though many stories of the magnifi-
567 cence of plantation life are found in current works, writers
342 of the period seem to agree that but little attention was paid
to convenience. Inventories of the contents of houses show
175 that furnishings were at a minimum; a few chairs and small
105 tables in the sitting- and reception-rooms, beds and minor ac-
563 cessories in the way of furniture in the bedrooms, dining-room
352 tables and chairs and a cabinet for dishes. These pieces were usually built in the colony and made of native hard woods; substantial, they were essentially plain. As Baron Wimpffen remarked, "Taste, Sir, is still Creolian at Saint Domingo; and, unfortunately, the Creolian is not the right taste, — it smells too much of the *Boucan*."[51]

175 The table set was not distinguished. Meat, though the most
105 important dish at the principal meals, was poor, but, on the
567 other hand, fish, game, and wild fowl were excellent, and the
563 best of French wines were available.[52] Whatever the fare, how-
352 ever, it was served in the grand manner, often on plate rather
352 than chinaware, and by the many liveried house-servants which every great establishment could boast. An account of the mode of service has been preserved in the reminiscences of one who, writing some years later of a repast served him in 1787, says: "There were many more of these domestics of both sexes than there were diners. I could but admire their attention to the smallest details of the service, the whiteness of their clothing, and the beautiful kerchiefs in the Créole manner elegantly arranged about the heads of the women. . . . But [241] all of them moved about on bare feet; this was the distinctive sign of slavery."[53]

175 As portrayed in contemporary works, Haitian white life is
181 seen to have been lived entirely in terms of material goods and
105 of display. Just as there was little intellectual life, so religion
77 was but a matter of form. One M. de Larnage, writing from
563

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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CHAPTER IV

THE SETTING OF HAITIAN LIFE

Since the discovery by the Spaniards that the wealth of Haiti lay rather in cultivating sugar than in the exploitation of gold mines, its dominant economy has been agricultural. In the valley of Mirebalais, as elsewhere in the island, the small cultivator holds the center of the economic stage. In the main he works his own land, inherited from his father or acquired through purchase. He may also cultivate additional plots of ground which he rents, since much of the land expropriated when independence was gained was retained by the State and today is leased for nominal fees.[1]

The life of the Haitian farmer, though hard, is simple and self-contained. With but few exceptions, he supplies all his necessities, for he commands almost the entire range of techniques known to his culture; hence Haitian economy shows a lack of specialization that in the main is only relieved by the sex division of labor. The day's work begins at dawn, the women rising before the men to prepare coffee, the invariable drink of early morning. When finished with his breakfast, the farmer goes to his field, where, except for the hottest hours, he works until sundown, his one meal being brought to him at about nine or ten o'clock in the morning. His wife meanwhile occupies herself with her household tasks, pounding grain in her mortar or working in her garden near by.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Miscellaneous

512 grain in her mortar or working in her garden near by. On
[343] market days she takes the produce of the family's fields to the
[338] town to sell. If she has young children, she cares for them
[355] while she does her other work, but when they are old enough,
[391] they help her about the house if they are girls, or, if boys, go with their father to the garden. From time to time, when
[356] house repairs are needed or there are implements to be
[241] mended, the man spends a day at home getting these odd jobs done; otherwise only serious illness in the family keeps him from his fields.

512 The times for meals have not varied since the days when
264 Moreau de St. Mery described the eating-habits of the slaves.[8] In addition to the mid-morning repast, the only other meal is that eaten after the man returns from his field, this being
[562] the largest of the day. A wife does not sit down with her
[593] husband, but usually eats earlier with her small children and holds herself ready to serve him upon his return, when, if he is alone, she remains to tell him the day's gossip. Visitors are
[574] often present, for peasant etiquette demands that all comers
[576] be offered food, and, as one Haitian expressed it, "The peasant would kill you for the insult if you did not share your meal with him." Bedtime, as might be expected, is early.

512 On Sundays and on the days of festivals this routine is in-
521 terrupted, when, if the occasion is of sufficient importance
[196] and the habitation is not too far from town, the peasant and his family attend mass. On Saturday nights there is usually a *vodun* dance, when the early hour for retirement is forgotten and all-night festivities precede Sunday's rest. On such days
[264] the principal meal is eaten at three or four o'clock in the afternoon, and all the adults share it together, while at one side the children are fed from the dishes of their parents in response to the insistent repetition of the demand "*Ba'm pa'm* — give me my portion." *

* This is an example of the elision characteristic of Haitian Créole, it being abbreviated from *Ba moin part moin* or, in French, *Donnez-moi ma part.*

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

17
fact that a family will often strike out for itself, deserting [584]
the parental home, show a European independence foreign to
native African thought. Yet the arrangement of meal-times, [264]
and the fact that a wife rarely eats with her husband, are [592]
African, as are the modes of correction, especially the feeling [841]
that flogging with a stick is the best disciplinary method. In- [201]
deed, the characteristic snap of the fingers employed by the [681]
Haitian to indicate a beating is exactly that which is used in
Dahomey to signify beheading! In the attitude toward chil- [855]
dren African traditions have been warped by European cus-
tom, which has introduced a certain hardness of feeling that,
whatever the cost, children must be brought in line with so-
cial convention, together with a resulting harshness of treat-
ment that is anything but African.

17
Another important facet of Haitian life in which the effect 322
of contact is telling includes art and recreational activities.
Perhaps because of the conditions of slavery, or the difficulties
of life after independence had been attained, much of these
forms of African tradition has been lost, not to be replaced
by corresponding borrowings from European sources. Wood-
carving, an outstanding element in the æsthetic life of West
Africa, is almost entirely absent. Near Mirebalais lives a man
who can carve a pipe in the likeness of a human face, but there
is no similarity between the products of his craft and West
African figurines or masks, and he is thought of as an un-
usual person whose carving is an interesting but not socially
significant avocation. It was stated, though without adequate
corroboration, that before the Marine occupation Mirebalais
boasted *vodun* drums on which heads "like the ones on these
pipes" had been carved. Today the only form of decorative
work in wood to be seen is the scroll-work designs which act as
ventilating devices over doorways. They are done with the
jigsaws of the carpenters, and no fertility of conception or
felicity in composition marks these artistically crude efforts.

Other African crafts, which, though essentially utilitarian

D: Courlander B-4 (1937-1955) 1960 EV3 Haiti EV3

compensated by a "feast" and party given at the end of the day by the host. More usual than the *corvée* is the regular sharing of work on one another's fields—the *rouda*, or "taking turns." 476 241

An early morning work gathering is known as a *dourant jou'*. It meets early in the day, sometimes before dawn, continues until ten or eleven in the morning, when the sun becomes hot, and then disperses. An afternoon coumbite is called a *diné-machete* (dinner machete) and lasts from about two in the afternoon until early evening. When the work is finished, the men go to the house of the host, where they have dinner, much in the manner of the American threshing party. An all-day affair is called a grand coumbite.

Essential to all coumbites are musicians and singing leaders. The instruments used are various, according to local custom. In the south they are usually drums, *tymbales*, and bamboo trumpets. In some areas of the north, the *lambi*, or conch-shell trumpet, is favored. 476 241 533 [534]

According to the custom in the south, on the day of the coumbite the drummers arise in the false dawn before sunrise and begin a roundabout march to the home of the host. They pass before the huts of all the neighbors who are going to join the party, playing a *rappel* on the drums. By one's and two's the workers come down the trails to join the procession, bringing hoes, machetes, or sickles as required. As the marching group grows larger, there is talking, laughter, and perhaps singing. Most of the men who join the procession are from close by. Others who may have to travel from a distance, perhaps from the next valley, go directly to the house of the host. When the workers arrive there, the women of the house serve coffee. This is the usual breakfast of the Haitian peasant. [272] [264]

Then the drummers play another *rappel*, and the men go down to the field that is to be tilled. There may be ten, twenty, or fifty of them. Some coumbites are even larger. If the group is a small one, the men line up together. The singing leader, called a *samba* or *simidor*, begins a song, the drummers play, the hoes begin to rise and fall in unison, and the workers join in the singing. If the group is large it will divide into two or three squads, each trying to outdo the other. The men stand shoulder to shoulder, moving the hoes up and down together, syncopating their movements by pauses as they sing their responsive parts. Sometimes tafia or rum is portioned out. The squads move forward slowly, inching their way across the field. The samba beats on his hoe blade with a stone to keep time for his song. His job is to "encourage" the men. He may sing old familiar songs or compose new ones, songs with humor and bite in them, ribald songs, and songs of ridicule. They may criticize 476 241 533 461

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

443 eleven hundred and fifty sellers offer their wares in the course
443 of a single day. A careful tally is kept of these, since a fee for
651 the right of entry into the market is collected from all those who sell. Local tradespeople pay ten centimes each market day, but if they are sellers of meat they must pay five centimes a day for the right of entry, in addition to an annual license fee of 11.35 gourdes. A peddler of notions who goes about from one market center to another must, on coming to Mirebalais, either present a license costing 11.35 gourdes which grants the right to do business in any market of Haiti, or pay fifty centimes for permission to sell on any given market day. Other taxes collected for the upkeep of the market are particularly concerned with the transportation and sale of livestock. A fee of 3.50 gourdes is assessed when a cow is transported from one region to another or taken to the market for sale; one gourde must be paid the local tax-collector if a live animal is sold, the seller paying the tax; while if neither party to the sale knows how to write, a notary fee of two gourdes is assessed for drawing up a certificate of ownership. A fee of 3.25 gourdes is collected when a cow or bullock is butchered to be sold; for the slaughtering of a goat or pig, fees of two and one and a half gourdes, respectively, are collected.

443 A word must be said regarding the ubiquitous "small markets" that consist of a few women gathered at crossroads or at strategic points in towns on days when there is no large market, or wherever people gather. In Mirebalais such venders sit near the dispensary when it is open on Tuesdays. At cock-
[265] fights and dances or at communal celebrations a small group of women is invariably found who sell drinks, bread, sweets, and other articles of food. At these "markets," too, such cooking aids as lard are sold, which both for these small markets and the larger ones is remelted and poured into little bottles selling for five centimes each. The returns from this petty trade are very small, yet in the aggregate they probably bulk at some figure that is not insignificant in the local economy.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

before returning for the night's effort. By midnight the dance 796
is in full swing. Though individuals here and there may absent themselves for a time, the attendance remains relatively constant, until as the crowing of cocks marks the approaching dawn, the number of dancers begins to dwindle rapidly, and with full daylight few remain other than members of the family. Only rarely does a *vodun* dance last well into the morning; what one sees after sunrise are the poorer drummers beating their mediocre rhythms for the young people who continue a desultory circling about the central pole. This does not mean that the *vodun* deities shun the daylight. It is merely because the participants must hurry away to get into their Sunday clothes for early mass in the village church.

The obligations of the family giving a dance are clearly established by tradition. Most important is the *tonnelle,* which they must build, and the drums and their accessory gong and rattles, which they must furnish. The drummers are not paid, but are given much attention when the refreshments that must be provided are distributed. These usually take the form of *clairin,* though coffee and bread may also be offered the guests early in the morning. The *clairin,* or raw rum, is passed [273]
from time to time, but not in sufficient quantity to cause inebriation. Those who supplement this with a generous supply of their own, and show the effect of it, are regarded with anything but approval.[3] Other accessories for the dance which must be at hand are the banners used to salute the deities, and the candles and water needed to bring those possessed out of the more violent stages of their seizures. If anything else is [265]
required or the guests desire further refreshments, these may [343]
always be bought from the women who set up their little stands at every dance.

Drums, iron, and rattles are indispensable for a *vodun* 796
dance. The drums, of the characteristic hollow-log African 834
type, tuned with pegs inserted in the sides and reinforced with twine wound about the stretched heads of cow-hide or goat-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

> migration of souls. Too often it has come about that the *Ibos* of a given plantation have agreed all to hang themselves, in order to return to their country."

So well recognized was this tendency of the Ibo slaves to commit suicide, that they were described in Créole by the formula: "*Ibos pend' cor' a yo* — The Ibos (are those who) hang themselves." None the less, many slaves from this tribe were acquired. Their strong communal and tribal ties made it advantageous for those who owned them to obtain more of them, since newcomers "were accorded help, care, and instruction by those who had preceded them."

According to St. Mery, the Negroes most common in the colony came from the Congo coast and Angola, and were known by the generic term *Congos*. The *Franc-Congos*, who came from the kingdoms of Congo and Angola, were

> "of a docility and gayety that makes them much desired. Loving song, dance, and ornaments, they make excellent domestics, while their intelligence, their facility in speaking a pure Créole, their jovial countenances without markings . . . cause people to prefer them for house-servants; they also make good laborers and good fishermen."

That the large numbers of Congo Negroes imported into Haiti have left no more of the elements of their culture in the island than are found is perhaps due to this very devotion to their masters, for a lively tradition of the present tells how, during the slave revolts, the Congo Negroes most often remained on the side of their masters and most often betrayed their fellows.

Not all the Negroes from the Congo area were as amiable as these just mentioned. The *Mondongos* had "the most execrable excess of eating their fellows." This quotation gains special significance because of the prominence which it has

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

175 162 266 567 been given through its use to substantiate the many charges of cannibalism in Haiti that have been made. Yet those who, desirous of establishing such cannibalism, quote this passage from St. Mery do not always remember to quote it in its complete context:

> "Some of these butchers of human flesh are also brought to Santo Domingo . . . where, as in Africa, they are the horror of the other Negroes, notably of the Congos, who, because of their nearness to them [in Africa], are most exposed to their cruelties." [4]

194 162 567 These are thus the tribes who were presumably the most important in the Negro ancestry of the Haitians of today. Was there any least common denominator in language which made it possible for slaves fresh from Africa to communicate with one another after their arrival in Haiti? Was there sufficient similarity in their cultures so that this might form the basis for a retention of African beliefs and behavior despite the vicissitudes of slavery? And what were the characteristics of the African civilizations of these people?

191 194 197 567 The picture of West African life, as it is commonly drawn, emphasizes the great number of small tribal groups following dissimilar modes of life, speaking mutually unintelligible languages, and worshipping different gods. In a very general sense this is not untrue. On the face of it, the number of languages that are spoken in the area from which the slaves were derived would seem to have constituted an effective barrier not alone to any concerted action on the part of slaves, but even to communication between them, especially since in many regions of the New World it was a fixed policy to separate slaves from the same tribe.

Yet behind this semblance of sharp dissimilarities lies a basic unity of language and culture in all of West Africa, so that though languages were and are mutually unintelligible, structurally and idiomatically they are much the same. This

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

he is accidentally fed salt. Though the concept has been presented in recent years with unjustifiable sensationalism to the reading public,[13] it is indisputably a living one. One aspect of it has been responsible for much of the conviction with which positive statements are made of personal knowledge of cannibalism in Haiti, as has been shown most clearly by Dr. Parsons:

> "A *gangi* who keeps a *zombi* may transform him into a stone, perhaps in front of his house, or into any kind of animal. Transforming him into a pig or sheep or cow, he may kill him and sell him in the market. In this belief we have the basis of the gossip and court testimony about human flesh sold in the market. It is *zombi* flesh, not human flesh, that is so disposed of. But foreigners know nothing about *zombi*, nor do the native witnesses explain in court what they have in mind when they are testifying to purchase of meat from the cemetery. 'People does *eat* people at Aux Cayes, I *know* it,' said Sam, as he told of human fingernails found on pigs' feet, explaining *to my question* that the pig had been a *zombi*. Had I not followed up his first statement and learned that he had never heard of anybody killed directly for marketing, an idea which amazed him at that, I would certainly have been left with an impression of cannibalism totally misleading."[14]

Precisely the same concept exists in Mirebalais as in Jacmel, where the foregoing material was collected, except that in its elaboration it underscores the point made in the quotation just given. *Zombi* meat can be recognized by the fact that it rapidly spoils, and when cooked, brings much white foam to the top of the stew, while such meat, sold as beef, turns white like veal; all this warns against eating it, and shows the active distaste with which it is regarded. Indeed, one of the duties of a person's *loa* is said to be that of warning him when he is

[P.166]

15. Secret-Society Songs

575 171 Secret societies were once common in Haiti, as they were in other parts of the New World where West Africans settled in large numbers. The institution of the secret society was strong in various parts of West Africa from which the slaves came. The tradition was particularly notable among the tribes of Nigeria. In the New World it offered to slaves and to freed Negroes an opportunity for social organization and fraternal relationships which otherwise had been pretty well shattered by the nature of slavery and the profuse admixture of cultures. A number of elderly Haitians have [648] suggested that it was the Haitian secret societies rather than the Vodoun and Congo cults which fomented underground resistance and slave revolts against the French in the last years of the eighteenth century.

174 178 576 [496] At this late date it is difficult to reconstruct much of the secret-society picture. Such groups as may have survived until recently did so in vitiated and changed form. They have been supplanted in large measure by the *société*, a kind of mutual-aid association with both economic and recreational functions. It is exclusive, but not irrevocably so, and it is not secret. The société often corresponds roughly with the membership of a hountor, or cult temple.

575 178 266 173 Old people still talk about true secret societies, however. There was a Moundongue secret society, separate from the Moundongue cult, whose members were recruited from the survivors of the Moundongue tribe and their descendants. Other secret societies were not based on tribal affiliation but were recruited from the population at large. One such group was the Vinbindingue, also known as the Blinbindingue and the Balbindingue. Its practices were feared. According to tradition, the Vinbindingue was predatory and held cannibalistic rites, as did other groups such as the Moundongue Society, the Cochon Rouge (the Red Pig Society), the Zeaubeaups, the Cochon Gris (the Gray Pig Society), and the Calinda 000 Society. How much of their reputation for cannibalism was deserved is

[Herskovits, Dahomey, I P. 256. Cf. P. 353, Category 116. -- Analyst]

How much of their reputation for cannibalism was deserved is a matter of speculation. Bizarre tales told by the colonists, as well as rumors and legends propagated about the societies by nonmembers who feared them, did result in a body of folklore which portrays these groups as malevolent. The societies themselves, no doubt, often supported such beliefs to increase the awe in which they were held. 173 575 266

In modern Haiti, however, there is no secret or fraternal society of the kind that probably existed in prerevolutionary days. Nor is there anything comparable to the Abakwa, or Carabali, an Ibo secret society that has survived in Cuba.[2] 178 575

Curiously enough, the most significant noncult organization in Haiti today is the Masonic order. Yet it has not remained distinct from the cults but has become interwoven with them. Many Vodoun and Congo services have rites or dances that are designated as Mazonne (Masonic). Houngans often feel that affiliation with the Masonic order offers distinction and prestige for the hounfor that the ordinary cult center does not have. 575 794

As for the Calinda, the Cochon Rouge, the Cochon Gris, the Zeaubeaup, the Vinbindingue, and the Moundongue societies, they appear to survive in name rather than in fact. The rumors and tales go on, as they do about zombies, devils and lou-garos. It is mostly at carnival time that their names are heard. A Mardi Gras band, appropriately costumed, may herald itself as a Calinda or a Cochon Rouge group. It will sing songs it regards as appropriate to the kind of effect it is trying to achieve. Such groups are not taken seriously. They are merely part of the carnival fun. But to members of older generations they do recall tales about the secret societies that met under the limbs of the mapou tree by torchlight to conduct their nocturnal affairs. 178 575

The songs that follow are reputed to belong to the Calinda, Vinbindingue, and Zeaubeaup societies; but they are infected with a frivolous quality which suggests they may have been heard for the first time in the carnival celebration rather than in the dark shadows of the mapou. 533* 575

One of the legends concerning the Balbindingue, or Vinbindingue, is that of the dancing drum. The theme is a special one, but it is related to other stories about dancing calabashes in the Calbasse ritual and about dancing hoes. This song describes a gathering at such a dance: 533* 539* 575

Balbindingue!
C'est li a'homme mwé yé!
Cimbiles tonnerre!
Balbindingue!
C'est yon seul tambour qui danse!
Pardon mon père!
Balbindingue!
C'est li a'homme mwé yé! [Ex. 124]

2 [See Courlander "Abakwa Meeting in Guanabacoa," Journal of Negro History, XXIX (1944), 461ff. Cf. Cat. 116, P. 353. -- Analyst]

Balbindingue!
It is here my men are!
Cemetery thunder!
Balbindingue!
It is a single drum which dances!
Pardon, my father!
Balbindingue!
It is here my men are!

It is told of the Vinbindingue that their members are sometimes required to subject themselves to the ordeal of rubbing hot peppers in their eyes, which results in acute pain and temporary blindness. According to some explanations, this is one of the "tests" of a Vinbindingue man. Red, inflamed eyes are a standard symbol of malevolence. One informant explained that the Vinbindingue members blind themselves so that they cannot see what kind of flesh they are eating:

Jé'm pété m'pas wè ladans ma métié piment!
Jé'm pété m'pas wè ladans ma métié diffé! [Ex. 125]

My eyes are blind, I can't see, I've put pepper in them!
My eyes are blind, I can't see, I've put fire in them!

Another Vinbindingue song is a humorously macabre dialogue between the members of the society and a victim. He is asked whether he would prefer to be quartered or eaten whole. Each time they are about to act according to his wishes he changes his mind:

Déver a déquatier ça ou pitôt? Déquatier!
C'est cancha dévoré ça ou pitôt?
Moin'm assez déquatier!

C'est cancha dévoré ça ou pitôt?
Déver a déquatier ça ou pitôt?
Moin pitot dévoré!

Déver a déquatier ça ou pitôt?
Déver a déquatier ça ou pitôt?
Moin pitot déquatier! [Ex. 126]

Devoured or quartered, which do you prefer? To be quartered!
Cut up or devoured, which do you prefer?
I've been quartered enough!

Cut up or devoured, which do you prefer?
Devoured or quartered, which do you prefer?
I'd sooner be devoured!

Devoured or quartered, which do you prefer?
Devoured or quartered, which do you prefer?
I'd sooner be quartered!

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

A brief song identifies by name a man who has participated in a Vin-bindingue affair: 533* 539* 266● 575

> Y'r é soi' Cimila mangé ti moune yo!
> Y'r é soi' Cimila mangé ti moune yo! [Ex. 127]
>
> Last night Cimila ate little children!
> Last night Cimila ate little children!

A Calinda song speaks more tangently of its business. It refers to doing "washing," a very special kind of washing that requires no bluing: 533* 539* 575

> Waille waille waille, savonné sans métié 'digo!
> Waille waille waille, savonné sans métié 'digo! [Ex. 128]
>
> *Waille waille waille*, wash without bluing!
> *Waille waille waille*, wash without bluing!

And a Zeaubeaup song complains that a ouanga (a black-magic bundle) has been swallowed by a snake. It seems to specify that some of the members of the group are zombies, the animated dead: 533* 539* 575 775

> L'Arcahaye nous là nous là!
> L'Arcahaye nous là nous là!
> L'Arcahaye, couléve valé ouanga moin!
> Ti ga'çons mes zeaubeaups, waille waille mes zeaubeaups!
> Ti ga'çons mes zeaubeaups, waille waille mes zeaubeaups!
> Ti ga'çons mes zeaubeaups, waille waille mes zombies!
>
> Arcahaye I was there I was there!
> Arcahaye I was there I was there!
> At Arcahaye a snake swallowed my *ouanga!*
> Young men, my zeaubeaups, *waille waille* my zeaubeaups!
> Young men, my zeaubeaups, *waille waille* my zeaubeaups!
> Young men, my zeaubeaups, *waille waille* my zombies!

755 Specialists in the magic of healing sometimes hit upon remarkable remedies, just as those who concentrate upon causing ailments learn the most effective ways of poisoning a victim's body or, by suggestion, of ruining his peace of mind. In the soil of infinite belief in spiritual powers the seeds of suspicion take firm root.

754 776 From the realm of recognized magic in which most natives at one time or another indulge, one crosses the threshold into a world of sorcery, perversion, and evil mystery. Here no normal person walks, for it is perilous ground. Here is no illumination from any loa or saint, but a grisly darkness coming down by tradition through centuries of whispered fear. From European folklore by way of French storytellers the Haitian peasant has taken the idea of the werewolf, whom he conceives always to be feminine. The male counterpart is the demon. These creatures are men and women who have a passion for eating human flesh and drinking human blood; cannibalism being abhorrent to normal persons, these abnormal ones through the blackest of magic are believed to be able to transform themselves into werewolves and demons, in which shape they glut themselves before effecting the change once more into human form. One does well to beware of persons with red eyes or black spots in the corner of the eye: these are the telltale marks of the cannibalistically inclined. No accredited ethnographer has ever received a direct report of encounter with werewolves or demons, but the haunting fear is present among the people. There is always an old man who lives in the next valley who has definite knowledge of them, and there are bocors who are "well known" to be able to give this vile power of lycanthropy to people. A person particularly afraid of werewolves will wear a special garde to ward off the evil.

754 776 From Africa comes the belief in the baka, an evil spirit who has a family resemblance to former Christian notions of the devil. The baka will make a bargain with a man, giving him some special power or greatly desired boon in return for the life of a member of his family. The bargain seems always to be cumulative, so that the mortal is never out of debt. When first one member of a family dies, and then a second and a third, the family is sure to consult a houngan in order to discover whether such an engagement exists. The knowledge apparently does little good, for the baka is always there at the appointed hour, mowing down one member after another until finally the bargainer himself is killed. One might wonder, since it is

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

[P. 66 is blank]

CHAPTER IV

THE SETTING OF HAITIAN LIFE

Since the discovery by the Spaniards that the wealth of Haiti lay rather in cultivating sugar than in the exploitation of gold mines, its dominant economy has been agricultural. In the valley of Mirebalais, as elsewhere in the island, the small cultivator holds the center of the economic stage. In the main he works his own land, inherited from his father or acquired through purchase. He may also cultivate additional plots of ground which he rents, since much of the land expropriated when independence was gained was retained by the State and today is leased for nominal fees.[1]

The life of the Haitian farmer, though hard, is simple and self-contained. With but few exceptions, he supplies all his necessities, for he commands almost the entire range of techniques known to his culture; hence Haitian economy shows a lack of specialization that in the main is only relieved by the sex division of labor. The day's work begins at dawn, the women rising before the men to prepare coffee, the invariable drink of early morning. When finished with his breakfast, the farmer goes to his field, where, except for the hottest hours, he works until sundown, his one meal being brought to him at about nine or ten o'clock in the morning. His wife meanwhile occupies herself with her household tasks, pounding grain in her mortar or working in her garden near by.

compensated by a "feast" and party given at the end of the day by the host. More usual than the *corvée* is the regular sharing of work on one another's fields—the *ronde*, or "taking turns."

An early morning work gathering is known as a *dessaut jou'*. It meets early in the day, sometimes before dawn, continues until ten or eleven in the morning, when the sun becomes hot, and then disperses. An afternoon coumbite is called a *diné-machete* (dinner machete) and lasts from about two in the afternoon until early evening. When the work is finished, the men go to the house of the host, where they have dinner, much in the manner of the American threshing party. An all-day affair is called a grand coumbite.

Essential to all coumbites are musicians and singing leaders. The instruments used are various, according to local custom. In the south they are usually drums, *tymbales*, and bamboo trumpets. In some areas of the north, the *lambi*, or conch-shell trumpet, is favored.

According to the custom in the south, on the day of the coumbite the drummers arise in the false dawn before sunrise and begin a roundabout march to the home of the host. They pass before the huts of all the neighbors who are going to join the party, playing a *rappel* on the drums. By one's and two's the workers come down the trails to join the procession, bringing hoes, machetes, or sickles as required. As the marching group grows larger, there is talking, laughter, and perhaps singing. Most of the men who join the procession are from close by. Others who may have to travel from a distance, perhaps from the next valley, go directly to the house of the host. When the workers arrive there, the women of the house serve coffee. This is the usual breakfast of the Haitian peasant.

Then the drummers play another *rappel*, and the men go down to the field that is to be tilled. There may be ten, twenty, or fifty of them. Some coumbites are even larger. If the group is a small one, the men line up together. The singing leader, called a *sonbe* or *sinnéler*, begins a song, the drummers play, the hoes begin to rise and fall in unison, and the workers join in the singing. If the group is large it will divide into two or three squads, each trying to outdo the other. The men stand shoulder to shoulder, moving the hoes up and down together, syncopating their movements by pauses as they sing their responsive parts. Sometimes tafia or rum is portioned out. The squads move forward slowly, inching their way across the field. The sonbe beats on his hoe blade with a stone to keep time for his song. His job is to "encourage" the men. He may sing old familiar songs or compose new ones, songs with humor and bite in them, ribald songs, and songs of ridicule. They may criticize

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

spring water in the country districts is frequently

164 polluted by all sorts of excreta; the watering of milk is a common
[364] practice, and samples of milk have been generally found to contain
[272] many times the normal amount of bacilli. The cases of tuberculosis are practically always complicated by malaria.

Dysentery, when caused by bacilli, is epidemic in nature. In Haiti this form, known as "colerin," annually affects about a quarter of the rural population. Another type, caused by a variety of amoeba, affects another ten or twenty per cent, according to the region. Enteritis is less serious than dysentery but just as prevalent, being
[146] caused by protozoa and intestinal worms. Poor diet, the abuse of
[273] alcohol, premature weaning, and unwise nursing are also responsible.
[853] Granular conjunctivitis affected sixteen per cent of the children examined by the Rockefeller Foundation.

Cancer seems to strike only a normal number of Haitians; goitre is common in the mountain districts; leprosy has become a menace in the West and South; elephantiasis is present, particularly in the South; gusarola (characterized by patches of skin assuming different color) is fairly common in the Cul-de-Sac plain; chicken pox, influenza, and meningitis epidemics are occasionally serious.

164 The health of the peasant women is seriously and continuously
462 endangered by their mode of life and work. It is customary for
482 females, from girlhood onward, to carry heavy burdens on their
845 heads—over steep paths in the mountains, along rocky trails, up hill and down. The commonest sight in Haiti is to see a woman swinging along with a great load of fuel, a tin of water, a bundle of building material, a basket of fruit, on her head. Cranial bones are flattened, the spine is bent, internal organs are strained or damaged. For ill-nourished persons to carry heavy weights for long distances with
[461] little rest means undue pressure on the heart and lungs, and so an
[843] increasing tendency to cardiac and pulmonary infections as well as chronic anemia. Overwork frequently results in miscarriages.

As has been said, childbirth often occurs by the roadside, on the
844 way to market, or in the market place. In no case can a peasant
[846] woman remain in bed for a proper period either before or after
(164) parturition. Midwives are untrained; they use primitive methods which inevitably result in defective development of infants, lessened
853 resistance to disease, high infant mortality, and a prevalence of abdominal diseases in women. Pressure of work, whether in the field or on the way to market, makes a mother soon stop nursing her

1: Herskovits E-4, 6 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

curred during the night, they wait for daylight. Salt is added to the hole, "so that the evil eye cannot take it (for magic purposes), for with salt it spoils very quickly." Neither the hole nor its contents are held to be of future importance, and though the child may be shown where the cord and placenta were buried, by that time nothing will remain of it which might be of use to a maker of charms. After three or four days the cord falls off and muscat powder is applied to heal the wound cleanly. The bit of cord is saved, and if the child becomes ill, this is boiled and the water given as a drink. Occasionally an entire umbilical cord is dried and retained; and one woman spoke of the cord of her mother as still being in existence.

The mother is also bathed in water in which calabash leaves and other ingredients have been steeped, and after being carefully dried, a band is tightly tied about her abdomen to give her support. A cloth is placed to cover the vagina, which is not cleansed until the following day, though after that the vaginal region is washed twice daily for some forty days. Red wine is given to women immediately after delivery to sustain them until food can be prepared. Bananas, salt fish, milk, chocolate, and a dish of stew made of chicken and rice are offered, and in most instances the women eat heartily.

The cloths used during childbirth are carefully guarded, the woman herself or a trusted member of her family seeing to the task of washing them, so as to prevent their being used for evil magic. If a miscarriage occurs, the fetus is buried in a hole dug in the floor of the woman's house while the woman herself is bathed and otherwise cared for as in the case of a normal delivery.

A woman is usually up and about three or four days after the birth of her child, or sooner if there is no one to help her with her household duties, in which case she may even be obliged to perform the heavy work of going to the river for water within the week, though she is careful not to bend down

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

before returning for the night's effort. By midnight the dance 796
is in full swing. Though individuals here and there may absent themselves for a time, the attendance remains relatively constant, until as the crowing of cocks marks the approaching dawn, the number of dancers begins to dwindle rapidly, and with full daylight few remain other than members of the family. Only rarely does a *vodun* dance last well into the morning; what one sees after sunrise are the poorer drummers beating their mediocre rhythms for the young people who continue a desultory circling about the central pole. This does not mean that the *vodun* deities shun the daylight. It is merely because the participants must hurry away to get into their Sunday clothes for early mass in the village church.

The obligations of the family giving a dance are clearly established by tradition. Most important is the *tonnelle*, which they must build, and the drums and their accessory gong and rattles, which they must furnish. The drummers are not paid, but are given much attention when the refreshments that must be provided are distributed. These usually take the form of *clairin*, though coffee and bread may also be offered the guests early in the morning. The *clairin*, or raw rum, is passed [273] ●
from time to time, but not in sufficient quantity to cause inebriation. Those who supplement this with a generous supply of their own, and show the effect of it, are regarded with anything but approval.[8] Other accessories for the dance which must be at hand are the banners used to salute the deities, and the candles and water needed to bring those possessed out of the more violent stages of their seizures. If anything else is [265]
required or the guests desire further refreshments, these may [343]
always be bought from the women who set up their little stands at every dance.

Drums, iron, and rattles are indispensable for a *vodun* 796
dance. The drums, of the characteristic hollow-log African 534
type, tuned with pegs inserted in the sides and reinforced with twine wound about the stretched heads of cow-hide or goat-

In Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

contents, is given by Wirkus, 178–9.

[1] Compare this description with the *hounfort* pictured in Johnston, p. 194.

[2] It is to be emphasized that in the course of the *vodun* rituals witnessed during this field-work, none of the "frenzy of the blood lust" that is so favorite an aspect of these ceremonies with writers of books on Haiti was encountered. As an extreme example of this heightening of the tone with which a ceremony is described, the work of Seabrook may be cited, for phrases such as "blood-maddened, sex-maddened, god-maddened" used by him mark perhaps an all-time record for distortion of the inner discipline of the *vodun* cult.

[3] Cf. Parsons's brief sketch, (I), 172–3, of a *mangé loi*, though the "bloody anointing" of which she speaks was not seen to occur in Mirebalais *services*. Detailed descriptions of what apparently were *services* are given by Wirkus, 168 ff., who, though honest in recounting what he saw, realized nothing of its significance; and Seabrook (pp. 54–70), who reads so much into what he purports to have witnessed that the entire account is rendered useless.

CHAPTER X

[1] Compare Parsons (I), 167–72.

[2] The drunkenness at serious dances reported by Parsons (I), 172, and others, would not be tolerated in Mirebalais.

[3] Price-Mars (I), 208, gives the name of *assotér* for the great drum.

[4] Much nonsense has been written concerning these drums. Many writers – all non-Haitians – stress the existence of a drum language, which seems to be an assertion of dubious truth.

[5] This is a striking example of what Dorsainvil (I), 73–4 and 131 ff., calls the *masque vodouique* in detailing the effects of possession on the features of the possessed. See also the discussion of possession in Price-Mars (I), 122–3. The Gede possession described by Craige, 73–4, must, on the basis of customary Haitian behavior under possession, be subject to reinterpretation.

[6] Cf. Parsons (I), 172.

violently. The bounsi complain that Malt' Grand Chimin treats them as though they were flour being ground in a mill:

Temp' changé nouvelle allé!
Bonjou' Papa bonjou' Roi Grand Chimin!
M'mandé Papa ça'm fai!
Temp' changé nouvelle allé!
Bonjou' Papa bonjou' Roi Grand Chimin!
M'mandé Papa ça'm fai!
Papa m'pas moin moulin!
Nou dit na bougit moin!
Papa m'pas moin moulin!
Nou dit na bougit moin! [Ex. 85]

Times change, the news goes out!
Good day, Papa, good day, Roi Grand Chimin!
I ask you, Papa, what did I do?
Times change, the news goes out!
Good day, Papa, good day, Roi Grand Chimin!
I ask you, Papa, what did I do?
Papa, I am not corn flour!
You say you will grind me!
Papa, I am not corn flour!
You say you will grind me!

When there is sickness within the société there may be songs for the absent ones. Here is a song for an ailing bounsi:

Moin allé wè li, bounsi malade oh!
Moin allé wè ça, bounsi malade oh!
Moin allé wè bourgan, bounsi malade oh! [Ex. 86]

I am going to see there, the bounsi is sick, oh!
I am going to see it, the bounsi is sick, oh!
I am going to see, bourgan, the bounsi is sick, oh!

Again, the members of the société call upon Ogoun, or St. Jacques, to help one of their number who is sick:

St. Jacques mawé chwal li,
Li pas dit personne oh,
Vèyé li pou' moin!
Li mat gainyain vers,
Li mat gainyain moline nan dos,
St. Jacques oh!
Ba li lavie pou' moin! [Ex. 87]

St. Jacques tire his horse,
He tells no one, oh,
Take care of him for me!
He may have worms,
He may have sores on his back,
St. Jacques, oh!
Protect him for me!

Ogoun is the dispenser of rum, and in virtually all Ogoun rituals rum is at some time or another in evidence. Sometimes rum is poured into a hot iron pot and burns into flame. The iron pot is described as Ogoun's

2: Courlander 8-6 (1820-1854) 1850 SV3 11681 SV3

house, which is on fire. But there is no grief, because Ogoun is the master of fire:

Pierre, Pierre Narcisse oh!	Pierre, Pierre Narcisse, oh!
Yago *mondo*!	Yago *mondo*!
Caille Ogoun bouli!	Ogoun's house is burning!
Gildive Ogoun bel Di	Ogoun's distillery is beautiful!
Na ouwili! [Ex. 88]	We console ourselves!

Some of the ritual songs that have persisted through the years have lost their explicit meaning but continue to survive because of beautiful melodies and perhaps the strange images they evoke. Such a song is this one to the loa Atti Daï, from the Dahomey service:

Atti Daï oh!	Atti Daï, oh!
Yo voyé dit moin	They sent to tell me
Min ochili malade!*	The sun was sick!
Quan'm *ti vini*	When I *arrived*
Moin joinni ochili mouri!	I found the sun had died!
Quan'm *ti vini*	When I arrived
Moin joinni ochili mouri!	I found the sun had died!
C'est regrettant ça	What grief it was
Pou'm enterré ochili! [Ex.89]	For me to bury the sun!

One of the truly lovely songs of the Dahomey rites, both in melody and in lyrics, is the following one to the deity Ezilie. It shows clear evidence of Catholic ritual influence in both its text and its music. Ezilie Fréda, who seems to be speaking most of the lines, is identified with the Virgin Mary, and the tone of this piece casts her more in her Catholic role than her African. The deity is speaking from Yaguza, a place described as being "on the other side of the water." In form the song is atypical in that it has more than one movement and progresses from one idea to another.

Ezilie Noinoin oh!
Ezilie Noinoin oh!
Ezilie oh, c'est moin Yaguza!

Ezilie n'ap manché n'ap monté n'ap parlé pou' ronpe y'ap parlé pawole moin!
Ezilie n'ap manché n'ap monté pou' ronpe y'ap parlé pawole ouwili
Ezilie Noinoin oh!
Ezilie Fréda oh Noinoin oh!
Ezilie Fréda oh, c'est moin Yaguza!

Manchouse ah yo chiche nan caille li yo vié djoffi! oh wout ronpe ochili pou lèd!
Manchouse yo passé yo monté ti à gilouse y'apé ghémoine la nuit yo!

---

*Some Haitian informants reported that *ochili* means "sun." Others felt that this word in the song was really *lisli*, a diminutive of *Anlisli*, another name for Atti Daï.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1954) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

476 241 532 461 men who have failed to join the coumbite, or praise the host, or single out various individuals for comment. The songs of the coumbite are a newspaper of the affairs of the people. The news is personalized, editorialized, and replete with comic vignettes.[1]

476 241 461 594 At noon the drummers signal a halt, and the workers shoulder their hoes, wipe off their machetes, and adjourn to the house for food. If it is a grand coumbite, the men rest for several hours, talking, catching up on sleep, or playing cards or *mayemba*. About three o'clock they go back to the fields to work until evening. Then comes the feast, under the canopy adjoining the house. The host and his wife have killed and cooked one or more goats, depending on the size of the group. The men are served meat, rice, beans, and whatever else has been prepared. [293] Afterward, women join the party, and there is more tafia or rum. Some of the men then drift homeward, but most stay on for dancing. Zouc, Congo, or Juba drums are brought out, and the festivities begin. If another coumbite is not scheduled for the next day, the music and dancing may last well into the night.

476 562 Women, too, have coumbites to perform various kinds of large tasks, from field work to winnowing and coffee sorting, though in general the women's work groups lack the festive character of the men's gatherings.

476 241 595 There is a more tightly knit form of coumbite, known as a *société*. In southern Haiti there are the société Congo and the société Martinique; in northern Haiti there is the société Ciyé. These sociétés are clubs built around mutual work needs and recreational activities. The société Congo that appears in the town or city streets during Rara days, with bamboo or conch-shell trumpets, drums, flags, and masks, is usually composed of the men who have joined forces to till the fields. In some instances, it may also conform roughly to membership in a particular houfor, or cult center. Unlike the ordinary coumbite, the société is not a group which meets only at ground-breaking or harvesting time; it is a permanent organization with regular, sometimes day-to-day, obligations. Week after week it moves from one man's land to another, doing the tasks that have to be done. There is no question of "Can you come?" The group goes first to one man's land, then to another's until all the work has been done. If a member of the société falls sick, so that he cannot work his own field, the société takes over his tasks for him.

476 Coumbites are held not only for agricultural work but for house-building, and sometimes for the building of a houfor.

[191] The Haitian cooperative work group has much in common with European and American husking and barn-building parties; but it has

[1] [For footnote see Category 116, p. 352. -- Ana 1957]

535 older man, they leaped into the air and came together in mock combat. First one would strike and the other would parry, then the second would strike and the first would parry, always in time to the beating Congo drums. On another signal all six dancers leaped into the air vertically, twisting into a full turn each time, landing in position to strike and parry.

Spectators standing around the dancers clapped their hands and sang:

[539]

Mouwondi na fai la guè!
Eya eya eya!
Nous c'est sanchon la guè!
Ou pas tendé canon'm tiré?

Mouwondi, we will make war!
Eya eya eya!
We are a nation of war!
Don't you hear my cannon shooting?

[293] When the dancers and drummers seemed fatigued, they were offered rum to drink. The dancers drank without breaking step or interrupting the battle. The bearded man held the lip of his glass between his teeth, and without using his hands to steady it, tipped his head back and let the rum run into his mouth, all the while stamping his feet and leaping with the others.

[164] I was told later that the Mouwondi was from the north, and that the dancers were recent arrivals from Port-de-Paix. But some of the older people declared that in former times the dance was known in the south by the name Calinda.

114 535 The Calinda dance, like the Vodoun, the Pèro, and several others, is mentioned frequently in the old literature on Haiti, Trinidad, Martinique, and Guadeloupe. It has been described variously as a funeral dance, an exhibitionistic sexual display, and a stick dance. It was reported by Saint-Méry as a dance in which men and women paired off. Early in the eighteenth century, Père Labat described it as a line dance, with the women on one side and the men on the other. Lafcadio Hearn saw it as a stick dance. And the word Calinda appears sometimes in songs of the Vodoun cult. The name may have lost specific meaning early in the life of the colonies; but it is more likely that early chroniclers used the term inexactly to refer to a multitude of different dances. In Haiti, [915] identification of the Calinda has been further confused by the existence of the Calinda secret society, which had special dances of its own, all called Calinda.

Although confusions and contradictions exist, the testimony of older Haitians is that the Calinda was a stick dance, known also by the name Mouwondi.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

Spring water in the country districts is frequently not—

164 [364] [272] luted by all sorts of excreta; the watering of milk is a common practice, and samples of milk have been generally found to contain many times the normal amount of bacilli. The cases of tuberculosis are practically always complicated by malaria.

Dysentery, when caused by bacilli, is epidemic in nature. In Haiti this form, known as "colerin," annually affects about a quarter of the rural population. Another type, caused by a variety of amoeba, affects another ten or twenty per cent, according to the region. Enteritis is less serious than dysentery but just as prevalent, being [146] [273] caused by protozoa and intestinal worms. Poor diet, the abuse of alcohol, premature weaning, and unwise nursing are also responsible. [853] Granular conjunctivitis affected sixteen per cent of the children examined by the Rockefeller Foundation.

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

527 On Saturday nights one hears the drums beating all over the country, but if one follows the sound he is more than likely to end [534] up at nothing more esoteric than a neighborhood dance. Other [535] musical instruments than drums are rare, but any community has drums; and these set a rhythm to which one can dance. Generally food is available at these affairs, as well as drinks both hard and soft. 273 It is not extraordinary to discover that a few of the men have drunk rather freely of clairin, the raw rum of the country; most drunkenness seems to lead to good-natured ribaldry rather than to offensive violence. It is unusual for a drunken man to cause damage of any 535 serious nature. The dancing corresponds neither to American ballroom dancing nor to set folk dancing. Most of it is done solo, and an individual participates or remains on the outskirts of the enclosure as 533 the mood of the moment impels him. Over the beat of the drum can be heard one of the current songs, more than likely a bit smutty in nature, and frequently poking fun at some well-known personage, or making allusions which in normal speech might seem crude.

541 One of the popular Sunday afternoon sports is the *gaguère*, or cock-fight, held under a shelter back of a home. Much small betting goes [525] on. The spectators sit or stoop close around the dusty ring, talking to the cock they are backing, commenting on the fight, offering advice to the owner. Between rounds the cocks are rubbed down, sprayed with water or rum, fondled and excited anew. Toward the latter stages of any fight the spectacle becomes gory and, to the uninitiated, distinctly cruel.

526 There is singularly little sport in Haiti. Élite youths play tennis; boys enjoy football; and swimming is a common diversion. Few sports are competitive and, so far as the writer has observed, the peasants have in their games practically nothing resembling organization.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

any usual measure. But Haitians do produce by traditional craft methods a surprisingly large number of the articles they need for daily life. In the countryside it is possible to see many persons engaged, mostly on a part-time basis, in craft activities and home industry that have their roots in the prerevolutionary era. Leatherworkers operating small, crude tanneries still flourish. Charcoal-burners, and operators of small lime kilns that produce building material, are found in every village. Smiths make and repair simple tools, working with forges of archaic design. Combs are made from cows' horns and tortoiseshell, buttons from bone; carrying-bags, fish traps, and a wide variety of baskets from withes, bamboo strips, and grasses; wooden bowls, mortars and pestles, tool handles and spoons from local woods; dippers, pots, and candelabra from tin cans; and sandals from tires and inner tubes. Sawyers cut and dress timber; cabinetmakers still manufacture simple furniture of traditional design from the fast-disappearing tropical woods; many women, working either with the simplest sorts of sewing machines or by hand, make clothing for use and for sale. Along the coasts there are dugout-makers, shipbuilders, and seine-makers. Simple mattresses, fabricated from local grasses, are sold in every large marketplace, as are crude ceramic wares made by local potters. At the start of the twentieth century, Italian immigrants brought a sturdy tradition of cobbling to Haiti, which has been destroyed only recently by the flood of American imported shoes with their attached prestige, until recently, *vitille* was a colloquial term for shoe, coming from the name of the most famous of those Italian cobblers.

One of the striking features of Haiti's craft traditions is its relative stability since the revolution. It was under slavery that Haitians first became "westernized," learning what were then standard French craft practices, adjusted to local colonial conditions, probably with some modifying features coming from the African past. It was before the revolution that the Haitian people learned and stabilized their consumer tastes, agricultural and craft standards, and work procedures. Such preferences and standards were worked out primarily in terms of the demands of the plantation regime itself; but even the most repressive social system leaves some opportunity for acculturation. Today's sugar-making shops and rural rum distilleries employ techniques centuries old and little modified over time. Housebuilding and woodworking techniques in the countryside are substantially

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

list except in raw form, in which it had an annual sale of only a few thousand pounds. Other subordinate exports were cotton, logwood, lignum vitae, mahogany, tortoise shells, hides, cacao, cassia, wax, ginger, bullocks' horns, and tobacco—and many of these came primarily from the Dominican rather than the Haitian part of the island, during the twenty-two year period of union. The imports were mainly clothing and provisions. That an agricultural country should need to bring in flour, butter, cheese, lard, beef, pork, candles, and especially—in the light of former days—refined sugar, is eloquent testimony to the degree to which food production had declined since colonial times. Other imports were more to be expected, since manufacture had never developed: linen, cotton goods of all kinds, some few woolens, cutlery, iron goods, wines and brandies, oil, lumber, coarse iron goods, earthenware, tin plates, and minor articles.[11]

Gone now were the days of big things in Haiti. Estates of thousands of acres would in Boyer's time have been only a liability. Profits were measured, or rather hoped for, in terms of hundreds rather than thousands of dollars.[12] Saint-Domingue of the 1780's was one of the exciting parts of the world to traders; Haiti of fifty years later was little more than a vague name except to specialists. Any country relying for its economic security upon one crop and its sale in a foreign market must expect vicissitudes in its income. Haiti had these in full measure. And so the prosperity of the country steadily diminished.[13]

11. See the very careful report to Great Britain by her consul, Charles Mackenzie, in 1830: *Notes on Haiti*, II, 175–190.

12. Mackenzie [*Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Haiti*, Document XI] reports in 1825: "Generally speaking, no sugar is manufactured on the estates devoted to the cultivation of the sugar cane; the juice is either inspissated to a coarse sirup, and sold for common use, or distilled into a very inferior rum, called here 'Tafia.'" Then, citing the case of Tur, an estate formerly owned by Pétion but in 1825 by Boyer, he reports: "Formerly 1,500 caravans were in cane; 1,500 slaves were employed on it; 3 sugar mills were constantly at work, and excellent clayed sugar was made. Now only about 7 caravans are in cultivation; 50 laborers are employed; the only produce is a little sirup and tafia, which last is retailed in a small shop by the side of the road, in front of the president's residence."

13. These vicissitudes have been frequently noted. Droughts and hurricanes, pests and earthquakes, were causes of constant apprehension. The chief forces at work to diminish Haitian prosperity were two: the division of land into small parcels at home, and the competition of other countries with Haitian coffee abroad. The price of coffee had declined in all the European markets, making the return to the cultivator exceedingly small.

L: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

844 The child is delivered on a mat or cloth placed on the ground, and the navel cord is cut with scissors, leaving a length of three finger-breadths. The end of the cord is cauterized with a red-hot iron, treated with oil, and bandaged with a piece of cloth. If the infant emits no cry after birth, the midwife shakes it or strikes it smartly to start its breathing, but should this be insufficient, a large *gawavelle*, or wooden bowl used to serve food at feasts, is overturned so as to cover the child, and this is beaten for a few moments, a procedure which is held both to awaken the child and to give it needed warmth. After being bathed in tepid water in which calabash leaves have been steeped,[1] about a teaspoonful of muscat, palm oil, and sugar is fed the infant. An abdominal band is put on in place, and the child is dressed in a nightgown tightly pinned, so as to envelop its form and cause it to grow straight-limbed and firm of muscle. The process of moulding the head is begun at once, pressure being applied once a day for the first three days of life. The nostrils are pinched every few moments during the first day of life and several times each of the succeeding days, to cause them to be narrow. This matter of shaping the head and compressing the nostrils is sufficiently important to have figured in the accounts of birth conventions as given by a number of persons, though there is some disagreement as to the details of the practice, some maintaining that the head is shaped every eight days for two months and the nostrils compressed many times a day for a period of eight days. The baby continues to be bathed in tepid water, and, if born during the winter months, a fire always burns in the house.

844 The placenta is buried in a special hole dug in the room where the birth occurred, the preferred places for this being beneath the bed or at the threshold. Any of the women in attendance may bury the placenta, though usually the midwife sees to its disposal. If delivery takes place during the day, it is buried immediately after ejection, but if the birth has oc-

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

any usual measure. But Haitians do produce by traditional craft methods a surprisingly large number of the articles they need for daily life. In the countryside it is possible to see many persons engaged, mostly on a part-time basis, in craft activities and home industry that have their roots in the prerevolutionary era. Leatherworkers operating small, crude tanneries still flourish. Charcoal-burners, and operators of small lime kilns that produce building material, are found in every village. Smiths make and repair simple tools, working with forges of archaic design. Combs are made from cows' horns and tortoiseshell, buttons from bone; carrying-bags, fish traps, and a wide variety of baskets from withes, bamboo strips, and grasses; wooden bowls, mortars and pestles, tool handles and spoons from local woods; dippers, pots, and candelabra from tin cans; and sandals from tires and inner tubes. Sawyers cut and dress timber; cabinetmakers still manufacture simple furniture of traditional design from the fast-disappearing tropical woods; many women, working either with the simplest sorts of sewing machines or by hand, make clothing for use and for sale. Along the coasts there are dugout-makers, shipbuilders, and seine- and seine-makers. Simple mattresses, fabricated from local grasses, are sold in every large marketplace, as are crude ceramic wares made by local potters. At the start of the twentieth century, Italian immigrants brought a sturdy tradition of cobbling to Haiti, which has been destroyed only recently by the flood of American imported shoes with their attached prestige, until recently, *ritèlè* was a colloquial term for shoe, coming from the name of the most famous of these Italian cobblers.

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J: Herskovits E-4,5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

178 [illegible] in Africa, also allow play for the aesthetic impulse, have been
[525] lost as well. Ironworking is absent not only because the necessary
[526] deposits of iron ore are lacking, but because the technique of shaping the metal into various forms, which in Africa is in the hands of specialists, was apparently suppressed in the time
[286] of slavery. No native cloth is woven. Basketry has survived,
178 but whereas in Africa designs of no small artistic merit are
285 achieved in this medium, it is markedly utilitarian in Haiti. Even from a technical point of view, the basketry forms are of the simplest, the panniers used for transportation of products on mule-back being merely an in-and-out weave, and the plaited strips of which hats and the *moreoute*, or carrying basket, are made are of a parallel simplicity.

524 Few African recreational forms have survived. *Wari*, the
525 draughts-like West African game found today in many parts
178 of the West Indies, is unknown in the interior of Haiti, though it has been introduced into Port-au-Prince, where it is played by longshoremen who have learned it from the sailors of near-by islands. String figures, important in West Africa, are not encountered, and no children's pursuits comparable to the play of young Africans were seen in Mirebalais, if the minor ceremony of marking the loss of childhood teeth be excepted. African types of recreation have in the main given way to cock-fights and card-games, both of which derive their interest from the opportunities they offer for gambling—a fact important in itself, since gambling is not one of the widespread African vices. The most important card-games are *trois-sept*, *mariage*, and *bezique*, and both men and women
[541] know them and play them for stakes. Similarly cock-fighting, particularly during the dry season, is a passionate avocation of the men. Large sums are wagered on the results of an encounter, and feeling often runs high.*

533 The Haitian genius for art and recreation is best embodied
535 in the dance and its accompanying songs and drum rhythms. Virtuosity is attained not only by the dancers, but even more

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-HH]

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54. Inside surface of a calabash bowl used in rituals of the houngfor, painted in black and white. The figure represents the graveyard lou, Baron Samedi, with a pick, shovel, and tombstone. Length, 15 inches.

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55. An altar cousin, the traditional present keepsake.

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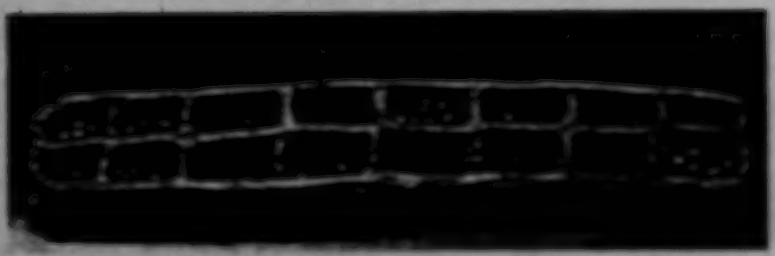

56. Wari board cut from a mahogany log. Length, 29 inches.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1958) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 112-I]

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(3/4)

19. Donkey with a load of charcoal. Where the terrain is not too rugged, donkeys or small horses do some of the carrying. The smoking of charcoal has helped to denude the mountains of their forests.

2: Courlander B-5 (1927-1953) 1963 SV3 Haiti SV3

And when the revolution came he produced for the Haitian armies knives, gun parts, and wheels to transport cannon. By the tens of thousands he made ingeniously devised metal objects to be thrown on the roads, before the French cavalry troops—objects so shaped that, no matter how they fell, a single sharp point stood erect to cripple the enemy horses. Yet knowledge of the West African uses of iron did not altogether disappear, and during the first century of independence the Haitian blacksmith created many old-style knives, spears, and ritual objects for the cult temple.

Even today, some of this old-style work is to be found in hounfors in the southwestern peninsula. One may see simple or ornate iron standards, made to support ceremonial offerings or candles, strikingly similar to standards in ancestral shrines in Dahomey. There are iron bells, both single and double, made in pure West African style; ornate ritual swords and sabers which are the crests of certain deities; coiled and uncoiled iron serpents representing the gods Damballa and Ayida; and stylized or semirealistic portraits of the deities. Many of these old pieces are nineteenth-century survivals; others have been forged within the past decade.

An over-all impression of Haitian material culture is that artistic decoration is almost entirely absent and that the prime emphasis is on utility. Wooden cooking spoons are efficient in form, but missing from them is the delicate decorative carving often found in West Africa. The long wooden washing bowl, or *gamelle*, and the wooden mortar in which grain is pulverized are likewise clean-cut but stark and plainly utilitarian. Clay bowls, bottles, and storage jars are usually of simple, uniform design, with only accidental variations; there is little use of glazes, and the clay is often heavy and thick. Should there be a wari gameboard in the peasant hut, the chances are that it is roughly made, without legs or carved designs. Dugout canoes are usually crude in appearance, heavy and thick-walled, and irregular in form.

Yet there are many evidences—though one must seek them out—that esthetic impulses are quite alive. The gay peasant straw knapsack, or *alfor*, without which no mountain man makes a journey, has a charm and grace that is not diminished by familiarity and cheapness. Decorated with sisal braid and tassels, and colored with green and magenta dyes, each *alfor* on close inspection appears to be unique. In some communities in the south and southwest, burlap squares also are painted with these traditional dyes. About forty inches across, and made of sugar bags, these paintings swarm with geometric patterns and sometimes with figures of flowers and animals. They are purely decorative, being

[See plates 42-51, pp. 112-DD—112-FF.--Analyst]

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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535 in the dance and its accompanying songs and drum rhythms. Virtuosity is attained not only by the dancers, but even more

3: Hemkovin E-4,5 (1924) 1927 SV3 Hold SV3
Microfilm

342

ABOVE, *A country dwelling.*
BELOW, *A combine at work.*

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[facing P. 11]

L: Herskovits E-4,8 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

[History of Haiti in 19th-18th centuries— The Haitian white population]

175 105 563 567 342 merous contemporary accounts, and most present-day works, give both texts and illustrations which make the economy of the plantation clear.[48] Though many stories of the magnificence of plantation life are found in current works, writers of the period seem to agree that but little attention was paid to convenience. Inventories of the contents of houses show

175 105 563 352 that furnishings were at a minimum; a few chairs and small tables in the sitting- and reception-rooms, beds and minor accessories in the way of furniture in the bedrooms, dining-room tables and chairs and a cabinet for dishes. These pieces were usually built in the colony and made of native hard woods; substantial, they were essentially plain. As Baron Wimpffen remarked, "Taste, Sir, is still Creolian at Saint Domingo; and, unfortunately, the Creolian is not the right taste, — it smells too much of the *Bouran*."[49]

175 105 567 563 352 The table set was not distinguished. Meat, though the most important dish at the principal meals, was poor, but, on the other hand, fish, game, and wild fowl were excellent, and the best of French wines were available.[50] Whatever the fare, however, it was served in the grand manner, often on plate rather than chinaware, and by the many liveried house-servants which every great establishment could boast. An account of the mode of service has been preserved in the reminiscences of one who, writing some years later of a repast served him in 1787, says: "There were many more of these domestics of both sexes than there were diners. I could but admire their attention to the smallest details of the service, the whiteness of their clothing, and the beautiful kerchiefs in the Créole manner elegantly arranged about the heads of the women. . . . But

[291] all of them moved about on bare feet; this was the distinctive sign of slavery."[51]

175 181 105 77 563 As portrayed in contemporary works, Haitian white life is seen to have been lived entirely in terms of material goods and of display. Just as there was little intellectual life, so religion was but a matter of form. One M. de Larnage, writing from

ABOVE, *Preparing the food for a cannibal feast.*
BELOW, *Drums marking the beat for the hoes.*

[facing p. 72]

I: Handwritin X-4,5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Schwinlab

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above, One of the workers at a combine.
below, A Haitian cornfield.

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[facing p. 93]

ABOVE, *An action de grâce preceding a vodun service, when prayers of the Church are read by the petit' savanne.*

BELOW, *As the vodun priest takes over, he twirls a member of the family to bring on possession.*

[facing p. 160]

Ii: Hawkesville E-4, 5 (1504) 1997 SV3 Hall SV3
Mirebalais

ABOVE, *The possessed woman offering a candle and pouring sanctified water before the altar.*

BELOW, *The vodun priest exhorting the possessed woman.*

[facing P.161]

L: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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men and women exchange gossip and sit about, joining in the songs or merely observing the proceedings; while the young people form part of the singing, dancing circle that revolves almost without pause about the central post of the *tonnelle*, the shelter where the festivities are held.

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To speak of discipline in connection with these dances is to evoke new and astonishing images for readers familiar with the more popular literature on Haiti. It is admittedly true that as one first witnesses a vodun dance, one's reaction is that this is a performance governed solely by the dictates of individual possession. These ceremonies are usually held at night, deep in the bush, lighted only by a small, smoking oil lamp and by the candles fastened to the pegs of the drums, while the participants dress in anything but their best clothing, and in their belts the men carry the machetes always worn by the Haitian peasant. Add to this the effect of the unceasing rhythms of the drumming, the blanket of sound from the unison singing of the participants, the violence of the possessions, and it is not strange that the untrained observer tends to assess what he sees in almost any terms but those of the underlying discipline that defines all activity in the worship of the gods. A release of psychic tension is undoubtedly afforded those who become possessed, and this is also experienced to a lesser degree by all those in attendance. Nevertheless, it must be emphasized, despite so much that has been written to the contrary, that this form of worship of the *loa* is neither unrestrained hysteria nor drunken orgiastic satisfaction of the sex drive. The behavior of the participants, in terms of the accepted patterns of European and American religious decorum, often seems uncouth, vigorous, violent, and even dangerous, when it is merely the expression of a different tradition. And as for the orgiastic aspects of these rites, Haitians have ample opportunity to satisfy their sexual impulses elsewhere, without making this a basic and constant element in the worship of their gods.

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Vodun dances, in Mirebalais as elsewhere, take place on

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AT A VODUN DANCE

ABOVE, *The dancers crowding about the central post of the shelter.*
BELOW, *Drums and drummers.*

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[facing p. 1913]

[illegible]

ABOVE, At a voduin dance: those possessed whirling about the central post.
BELOW, Making the voduin drum: describing the sign of the cross with lighted candles over the unheaded bodies.

[facing P. 244]

CSU
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ABOVE, *Making the vodun drum: stretching the cow-hide heads.*
BELOW, *Consecrating the drums: they must be "dressed," like anyone who is baptized.*

CSU
Sac
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[facing p. 245]

European straight chair, and if peasants often sleep on mats laid on the ground in African fashion, this is only because their resources do not permit them the luxury of beds. The accessory field-house is called an *ajoupa*, a designation which represents one of the few recognizable contributions of the aboriginal inhabitants of the island to its present-day culture, since, according to Charlevoix,[8] it was first applied to the huts of the buccaneers, called by them *aioupas*, a name taken over from the Spaniards, who themselves had adapted it from the native Indian term.

Clothing is also of European style. The men, who wear shirt and trousers, long ago discarded the West African loincloth and the covering great-cloth worn toga-fashion, while the hats they wear are of course equally of European type. The absence of shoes, though characteristic of Africa, is not necessarily of significance, for shoes are not only an accepted article of dress, but are symbols of worldliness, and when lacking from the costume, indicate only an inability to purchase them. The dress of women is no less European, though only the old women continue the fashions of the days of St. John, who reported that "the females generally keep to a long white chemise, covered over with a blue cotton dress that reaches to their bare feet, and is drawn in around the waist."[9] As in his time, white is favored for days of festivity, and the head-kerchief is also seen, even if it is less omnipresent than in his day. The younger women who count themselves sophisticated scorn the kerchiefs and wear hats, but elderly women wind white kerchiefs about their heads in the West African manner. The invariable mark of the *mambu*, in addition to her jeweled fingers, is the white kerchief with a very large straw hat worn over it.

One special form of dress that represents a complex merging of European and African secular and religious customs is the *robe de pénitence*. For men this takes the form of a multicolored shirt, for women a dress whose colors are dictated by

ABOVE, *Consecrating the drums: the "godfathers" and "godmothers" standing by with lighted candles as prayers of the Church are recited.*

BELOW, *The vodun priest employing African rites to complete the consecration of the drums.*

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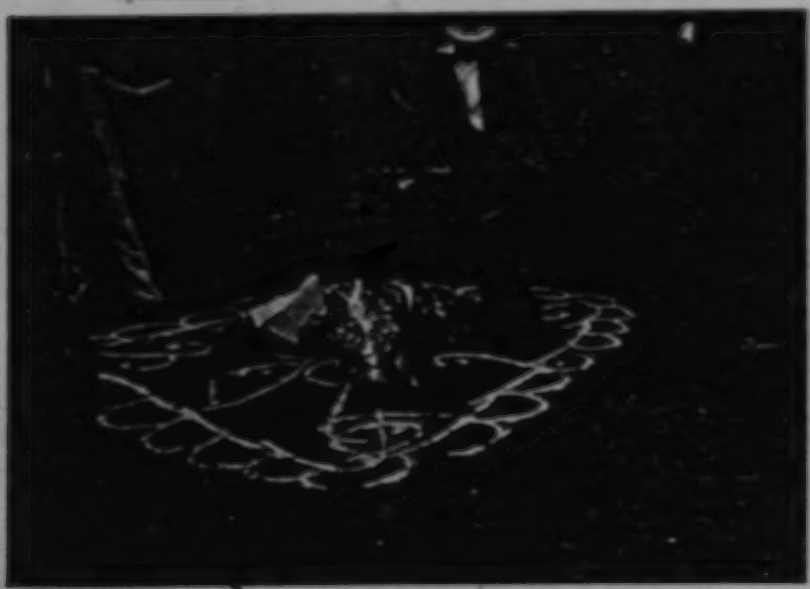

[Facing P. 282]

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AT SAUT D'EAU

ABOVE. Large crowds of worshippers drawn by this fête of the Church.
BELOW. Possession coming on as a voodoo deity "mounts the head" of a devotee who, climbing a tree, exhorts those gathered to hear him.

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[facing P. 283]

fires in their houses at night to keep out the damp cold that sweeps through the passes. And a man on the trail before dawn may wear a blanket over his head and carry a glowing ember with him for warmth.

On the south coast there are sometimes hurricanes and tidal waves, and many a small fishing boat and grass-covered house has been washed away in these storms. But the great mountains of the southern range deflect the winds, so that to the north their full fury is never known.

In the great Bay of Gonaïves the fishing boats sail out at night with the friendly winds that carry them to the fishing grounds of the island of La Gonave, and they return to the shore with their catches in the morning, or in the afternoon with the setting sun. The sailing boats from the tiny fishing village called Ville Matelot each day pass the deserted islet named Isle à Cabrit, where four Indian camps once stood. Today Isle à Cabrit is only a waterless, deserted place, a hunting ground for Carib and Arawak pottery and carved stone images.

In the frontier lakes of the Cul-de-Sac Plain there are wild ducks and alligators. Here the villagers fish with nets from rafts and dugout canoes. Now and then an iguana is seen, but there is little other game, because the edible wildlife of the country was long ago eaten by hungry people.

For the things that grow wild the Haitian is grateful—the avocado, the mango, the cashew, and the cotton which once planted produces again and again each year. He is grateful for the coconut palms, the calabash tree, the gourd vines, and the medicinal herbs that grow on every side. But the gifts of nature are not prolific. Most of the great stands of timber—lignum vitae, mahogany, dyewood and pine—have been cut away. Once fertile garden spots have dried up, and the soil that produces the yams, the pumpkins, the kafir, and the rice is tired.

But the Haitian himself is not tired. He has suffered from malaria, yaws, and chronic hunger; yet out of the great old mountains of Haiti he has fashioned a way of life and a nation.

The Haitian of today was created out of the fabric of three continents—Africa, America, and Europe. He was shaped out of the plains and hills of Nigeria, Dahomey, and the Congo; the summers and winters of Europe; and the mountains and mountain mists of Haiti itself. He is the synthesis of the folk beliefs of the French and Spanish peasants, the Yoruba and the Arada of West Africa, and perhaps of the Carib Indians with whom he had close contact during his first days in the New World. He has brought into affinity the religious practices of Africa and the beliefs of the Church of Rome. He is outwardly simple and poor, but inwardly he is a complicated and rich man. He is rich in music, in the capacity for spiritual expression, in tradition, in folklore, and in memories. He has been able

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-BB]
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39. *A wedding scene near Plaisance.*

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40. *Saturday night hombucks.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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3. Country people carrying produce to market. The highways of Haiti's economic life are the mountain trails and the unpaved roads over which the produce of countless small gardens is carried in bundles and baskets.

[P112-C]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-CC]
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42. Voodoo drummers, northern Haiti. The drums are characteristic of that region. The boy at left, although only twelve or thirteen years old, is an accomplished drummer.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P.112-D]

4. *A peasant of the Montagnes Noires region, southern Haiti.*

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Z: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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[P-112-E]

5 and 6. *Cane workers near Croix-des-Bouquets. Only on the large company plantations are oxen and carts used.*

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2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P-112-F]

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7. *A small coumbite, northern Haiti.*

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8. *Coumbite, southern Haiti. Vaccine players at the right; flag of the société at the left.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 112-G]

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9. *Calling the coumbite: signaling on a conch-shell trumpet.*

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10. *A women's coumbite weeding a cornfield near the town of Plaisance.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-H]

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11 and 12. *Market day. On each woman's head is the agricultural produce she will sell in the village or city market. When she returns she will carry a lighter load of things she has purchased, and tied in her handkerchief will be a few small coins.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 112-I]

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[314]

13. *Donkey with a load of charcoal. Where the terrain is not too rugged, donkeys or small horses do some of the carrying. The making of charcoal has helped to denude the mountains of their forests.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-J]

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15. *Pulverizing grain into meal. The mortar and pestle are standard kitchen fixtures.*

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14. *Fishermen of Ville des Matelots, on the Bay of Gonaives.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-K]

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16. *Man with a machete making a wari board. The machete is used for cutting trees, trimming brush, weeding gardens, fashioning wooden objects such as drums and mortars, and many other purposes.*

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17. *Winnowing grain with a woven tray.*

2: Courlander .B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3 [P-112-L]

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18. Young Haitians in school. After a century and a half of independence, education remains one of Haiti's most acute problems. Only a small percentage of the country's children are in schools.

Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112 - MM]
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[535]

69. Rara dancing near Gonaives. Vaccine players are at the left.

70. A Rara group near Port-au-Prince. At the left are the baka drum and a tynbale. One of the four vaccines, center, is made of metal. Behind the musicians are the soldiers flag and a banpion.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-P]
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793

24. *A houngan of a small cult center in northern Haiti.*

25. *A prêt' savane. This lay cleric reads the scriptures at appropriate times in the Vodoun rituals.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 112-Q]

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[776]
[534]

26. Service for the loa Agué in a boat at sea. In the center, two houngi hold the vessel's flags. Between them and the houngan is the bedecked barque d'Agué, a replika miniature vessel which will be set adrift. An ogan and a drum are at the lower right.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-R]

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27. *Saluting the loa. In the center, with sword, is the laplace, flanked by two houngi carrying sequin-studded flags. In the background, left, is the houngan with his asson.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-RR]

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77. *Playing Théâtre.*

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78. *Playing Balanci Yayo.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[? 112-5]

58. A yam harvest festival. The men are carrying the yams into the peristyle of the houseforto be cut up and shared with the family ancestors and the loa...

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2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-SS]

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79 and 80. Playing the tombour maringouin, or mosquito drum. Beneath the earth bow is a portable resonator. The player plucks the string with one hand and with the other varies the pitch by pressure on the end of the bow.

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81. A miniature brass casting, an Ashanti gold weight, in the form of a spring snare used for catching small game. The device can be recognized as an antecedent of the Haitian portable mosquito drum.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-T]

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29. *The* bain de Noël, *or Christmas bath. The men are pulverizing leaves in the mortar, to the accompaniment of singing by the houngi and drumming. Later, a "bains" will be made of the pounded leaves, and all will share it.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P 112-TT]

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9a. *Playing the vèvèmbo, or bamboo zanporo.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 112-V]

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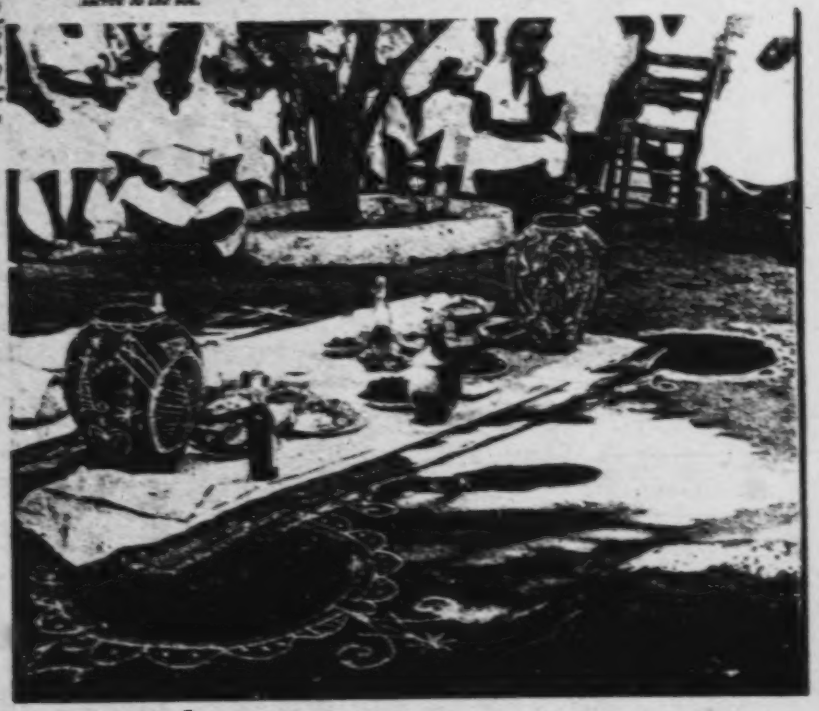
31. *An Ibo service in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. Laid out on the mat is a feast for the Ibo lwa. The houngan ritually feeds the deities by placing food in the holes at each end of the mat. Designs on the pots are the symbolic patterns found generally in vèvès. The tree in the background, surrounded by a low curbing, is sacred to the lwa.*



2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-Y]

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35. *A houngi in the first stage of possession by a loa.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

535 The Pétro dance is similar in many respects to other serious cult dances, but it is primarily a complicated and sometimes agitated foot dance. The second of the two drums beats "rest-two-three." On "two" the right foot pushes forward in a thrusting, sliding motion, and on "three" the left moves outward and the right moves in. The position is held on the "rest," though there is no visible pause, because of the speed of the dance. Shoulder movement is only of secondary importance in the Pétro, though the arms are constantly moving gracefuly to balance the foot movements. Women sometimes use a typical Congo pose, with the left hand on the hip and the right hand held poised in the air.

The Jenvalo, the supplication dance of the Dahomey rites, is quite different in both spirit and technique. The dancers, usually older rather than younger people, move in a generally counterclockwise direction around the sacred center post of the dance court. They dance with gracefully bent backs, their hands touching their knees. The shoulders and the upper part of the body move forward and back in a gentle, graceful, undulating movement. The dancers pirouette lightly from time to time, the women holding their long skirts out to the side to make a restrained *leillé*. They sometimes pause to perform a brief cross step with other dancers, but there is no pairing off. They are dancing as individuals—or, more accurately, as a group. There is occasional improvising, inventing, and performing of difficult maneuvers; but the individual dancer moves always with the others in a slowly revolving amorphous circle around the center post. The graceful bending and undulating of the upper body give even to strangers an impression of respectful supplication.

Near the town of Jérémie in southern Haiti some years ago I saw a performance of the Mousondi "battle-dance," an activity of the Congo "nation." The dance was performed by six men, several of them stripped to the waist, the others wearing the traditional blue denim peasant jackets. The leader of the dancers was a bearded man about fifty years old, lean and athletic. On his legs he wore anklets made of seed pods and beer-bottle caps which rattled rhythmically as he moved. On a string around his neck he wore a wooden whistle, which he blew from time to time to accent the beat of the drums and to give signals.

[291] [301] [534]

The dancing took place around a bonfire. The music was provided by three musicians, two playing Congo drums and the third beating hardwood sticks against a board. Each of the dancers carried a stick about thirty inches long. They moved first clockwise, then counterclockwise, then half of them moved in one direction and half in the other, weaving in and out, holding their sticks like sabers. On a signal given by the

[533]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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any usual measure. But Haitians do produce by traditional craft methods a surprisingly large number of the articles they need for daily life. In the countryside it is possible to see many persons engaged, mostly on a part-time basis, in craft activities and home industry that have their roots in the prerevolutionary era. Leatherworkers operating small, crude tanneries still flourish. Charcoal-burners, and operators of small lime kilns that produce building material, are found in every village. Smiths make and repair simple tools, working with forges of archaic design. Combs are made from cows' horns and tortoiseshell, buttons from bone; carrying-bags, fish traps, and a wide variety of baskets from withes, bamboo strips, and grasses; wooden bowls, mortars and pestles, tool handles and spoons from local woods; dippers, pots, and candelabra from tin cans; and sandals from tires and inner tubes. Sawyers cut and dress timber; cabinetmakers still manufacture simple furniture of traditional design from the fast-disappearing tropical woods; many women, working either with the simplest sorts of sewing machines or by hand, make clothing for use and for sale. Along the coasts there are dugout-makers, shipbuilders, and sail- and seine-makers. Simple mattresses, fabricated from local grasses, are sold in every large marketplace, as are crude ceramic wares made by local potters. At the start of the twentieth century, Italian immigrants brought a sturdy tradition of cobbling to Haiti, which has been destroyed only recently by the flood of American imported shoes with their attached prestige, until recently, *vitièlo* was a colloquial term for shoe, coming from the name of the most famous of those Italian cobblers.

One of the striking features of Haiti's craft traditions is its relative stability since the revolution. It was under slavery that Haitians first became "westernized," learning what were then standard French craft practices, adjusted to local colonial conditions, probably with some modifying features coming from the African past. It was before the revolution that the Haitian people learned and stabilized their consumer tastes, agricultural and craft standards, and work procedures. Such preferences and standards were worked out primarily in terms of the demands of the plantation regime itself; but even the most repressive social system leaves some opportunity for acculturation. Today's sugar-making shops and rural rum distilleries employ techniques centuries old and little modified over time. Housebuilding and woodworking techniques in the countryside are substantially

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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One of Christopha's rules was that no cultivator attached to

a plantation—and every ordinary country person was so attached 175
—might leave the estate without permission from a military officer.[10] 566
Two of the common folkways of Haitian peasant life since his time 178
have been immobility and general acceptance of orders from the [484]
military. Both characteristics had been fostered by slavery and by the régimes of Toussaint and Dessalines, and these folkways became fixed under Christophe.

Other rules introduced by the King, however, lapsed shortly after 175
his strong hand was removed. For example, the monarch required of 178
the whole population that whenever they visited the capital on feast 291
days or went to the market towns on Saturdays they be decently clad 527
in clean clothes.[11] Since the time of Christophe, neatness of appear- 183
ance has hardly been a folk characteristic, probably because of poverty rather than lack of desire to dress well. Nor did scrupulous [461]
regularity of work in the fields continue as a folkway later, when the great plantations were broken up.

Like a father the King tried to inculcate moral standards of honesty 175
in his people. To prevent theft he had small valuables, such as watches 577
or jewelry or purses, "planted," and if the finder did not immediately 177
turn them over to the nearest Dahomet, punishment was meted out. Such a policy made honesty contagious. Thefts and depredation were soon almost unknown. The most tempting store of wealth could be left safely unlocked or in the open air. Christophe's achievement in this matter is eloquent testimony to his success as a paternal leader, for it is no small task to initiate moral ideas among people who for a generation have lacked them. Even today it is the proud boast of the Haitians that their people are honest.

As compared with the liberties of farmers in the United States of 175
the same period, the Haitian agricultural workers' freedom was 566
infinitesimally small, but by contrast with the bondage of slavery, their new status was definitely higher.

10. Christophe called his royal police force "Dahomets," after the West African kingdom, Dahomey, from which most of the men had come. They were not ordinary [625]
soldiers but especially imported and carefully selected men whose intelligence made them stand out from their fellows. Each Dahomet was given a course of training in his task as administrator before being sent out. The general consensus of foreign visitors was that these Dahomets were efficient even in small matters.

11. This rule was partly an indication of Christophe's vanity, personal and national, [577]
for he was deeply desirous of the good opinion of white visitors, especially those from England. He wanted Europeans to respect Haiti as they would respect any small [186]
state, and not to praise it merely as an example of "Negro progress."

Any foray into possible psychological reasons is guesswork. It
461 might be hazarded that the men felt they had fought for freedom and so deserved to enjoy its benefits; or that agriculture smacked of the old days of slavery and should be avoided by the superior male; or that since ambition for progress was not a Haitian characteristic, and the work of women produced enough food, there was no reason to change a routine which did very well. One cannot speak with definiteness on these matters. And it was upper-class Haitians and foreigners who adjudged peasant men lazy; slaves and "forced" laborers always appear lazy to their masters.

462 In modern times at least, male peasants toil strenuously, although not so continuously as their females. The preparation of the ground for planting is hard work, and is done entirely by men. Harvesting, housebuilding, marketing the coffee (one form of marketing not beneath a man's dignity)—these are men's major contributions to economic life.

177 People who live in isolation commonly tend to slide back in such
178 externalities as clothes, manners, neatness of person and of dwelling, speech, and social ritual. Almost from the very beginning of Haitian history, most of the people were effectively isolated from the rest of the world, so that the superficial aspects of daily life exhibited to all visitors the spectacle of retrogression.

175 Christophe, who had frequent English visitors in his kingdom,
656 forced his subjects to dress neatly. After his time no ruler made regulations for dress. The men commonly wore a pair of cotton
● 291 trousers and an abbreviated shirt, while women's dress was a loose-fitting garment which might be called a Mother Hubbard. Children could, and can now, be seen up to the age of four or five without
[369] any clothes at all. The nearer the countrypeople live to towns, where the example of the élite is before them, the better their dress is likely to be.

342 Slave cabins on the former plantations were inhabited by the free Haitians until decay set in and the cabins fell down. They were ordinarily superseded by huts which could be constructed of withes
[333] and thatch. The British Minister during the eighteen-twenties saw a man near Plaisance building his house, "plastering the wattling, of which the walls were composed, with a mixture of mud and ashes," using his hand as a trowel.[18] Almost never did a hut have more than

18. Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, I, 150.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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164 apparently hale and hearty, but lassitude sapping all energy. A group
744 of doctors from the Rockefeller Foundation discovered that among
164 4,439 persons examined in various surveys two decades ago sixty-seven per cent showed malarial parasites in the blood. Since the American Occupation steps have been taken to control the disease and much progress has resulted: some of the towns are now practically free of it. But the battle against malaria will never be won so long as the anopheles mosquito breeds in the island; it means an endless war of constant vigilance as well as education—one which must be carried on simultaneously in the neighboring Dominican Republic.

Hookworm, like malaria, is also ordinarily quite undramatic in its symptoms. There is no specific pain, but rather a progressive inertia. Since practically every country person goes barefoot it would be miraculous if hookworm were not widespread, for sanitation is entirely lacking in peasant communities. Dr. Lhérisson reported in 1935 that twenty-six per cent of the mass of Haitian people examined
[369] up to that time had been found infested by hookworms. The final figure will probably be revised upward, for the persons most easily
[291] examined are townspeople who have better sanitation and more shoes. Only the Cul-de-Sac plain, extending east from Port-au-Prince, is free of the disease, for the larvae do not develop in salty ground. Hookworm attacks not only the barefoot, but likewise the
[261] well shod. Poor sanitation and geophagy suggest themselves as two explanations of this fact.

Like malaria, hookworm has been accepted calmly enough as one of the normal burdens of life. In slave days and for some time thereafter it was called "stomach trouble," and since it was common, was not even a case for the Vodun practitioner. It was not until 1924 that the Rockefeller Foundation through its Payne mission revealed the significance of the disease and began to establish dispensaries in
[291] country districts and undertake a campaign of sanitation. If every Haitian were to wear shoes the incidence of the disease would, of course, decidedly decrease; but the advice to wear shoes is a counsel of perfection, for large peasant families are no more able to afford this luxury than all American families are able to buy champagne and caviar. Progress has been made along the lines of hygiene and sanitation, but hookworm continues to undermine the energy of the people.

164 Yaws is, of the morbid triad, the most virulent and the common-

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

North of the square stands the church, a substan-
tial structure with rounded arches in the Roman style, roofed
over, like most other buildings, with galvanized iron. Other
public buildings are the town hall — the Mairie — and the
"Hall of Justice"; near by are the stone walls of a public
building begun some years ago as a school, but destined ap-
parently to house what is known as the "Bureau of Contribu-
tions," a euphemism for the tax-collector's quarters. Despite
the fact that Mirebalais was one of the most difficult regions
for the American occupation to subdue during the Caco up-
rising of 1918–20,[18] it was one of the first districts where the
Guarde d'Haiti was completely Haitianized, and from which
all American Marine officers were withdrawn. Only a small
detachment is stationed there at present. Its well-kept bar-
racks are near the church, and the prisons form a part of the
same compound, from whence issue daily the striped-suited
prisoners, men and women, under guard or alone on parole,
who do communal work in the town and the near-by country-
side.

The town awakens at dawn to the chattering of domesti-
cated guinea-fowl and the crowing of cocks. Occasionally a
camion rumbles through the principal thoroughfare; more
rarely an automobile dashes by in great clouds of dust on its
way to Las Cahobas, or Hinche, or Santo Domingo City. If
it is a market day, the streets are early filled with country folk
on their way to dispose of their produce, and the clatter from
the market place behind the church is heard everywhere until
the heat of the day brings a lull to all commerce, and drowsi-
ness once more settles over everything. By mid-afternoon
during the planting season, drums can be heard over the
countryside. The sounds are not those of the "throbbing"
vodun drums — though they have more than once been mis-
taken for them by travelers — but they set the rhythm for
the communal work of the *combites*, which perform co-
operative agricultural labor. As the rapid dusk follows the
disappearance of the sun behind the mountains, the voices of

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

352 197 European straight chair, and if peasants often sleep on mats laid on the ground in African fashion, this is only because their resources do not permit them the luxury of beds. The 342 accessory field-house is called an *ajupa*, a designation which represents one of the few recognizable contributions of the aboriginal inhabitants of the island to its present-day culture, since, according to Charlevoix,[2] it was first applied to the huts of the buccaneers, called by them *aioupas*, a name taken over from the Spaniards, who themselves had adapted it from the native Indian term.

291 197 Clothing is also of European style. The men, who wear shirt and trousers, long ago discarded the West African loincloth and the covering great-cloth worn toga-fashion, while the hats they wear are of course equally of European type. The absence of shoes, though characteristic of Africa, is not necessarily of significance, for shoes are not only an accepted article of dress, but are symbols of worldliness, and when lacking from the costume, indicate only an inability to purchase them. The dress of women is no less European, though only the old women continue the fashions of the days of St. John, who reported that "the females generally keep to a long white chemise, covered over with a blue cotton dress that reaches to their bare feet, and is drawn in around the waist."[3] As in his time, white is favored for days of festivity, and the head-kerchief is also seen, even if it is less omnipresent than in his day. The younger women who count themselves sophisticated scorn the kerchiefs and wear hats, but elderly women wind white kerchiefs about their heads in the West [793] African manner. The invariable mark of the *mambu*, in addition to her jeweled fingers, is the white kerchief with a very large straw hat worn over it.

292 197 196 One special form of dress that represents a complex merging of European and African secular and religious customs is the *rade de pénitence*. For men this takes the form of a multicolored shirt, for women a dress whose colors are dictated by

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the *loa*. In one instance a man wore a red shirt with black crosses appliquéd on it; dresses of this type worn by women or children are made of cotton cloth, pieced together patchwork-quilt fashion, of either three, seven, seventeen, or twenty-one different colors or patterns, with reds, blues, and white predominating. These garments are worn for a specified time, also named by the *loa*. The term *pénitence* has been taken from Church terminology, and the motivating sanction derives equally from African and Christian concepts;[4] for example, the wearing of the garment is a compliment to the African deities represented by the colors, while the various rules about abstinence during its term of wearing is the European pattern of "penitence."

The elaborate cicatrizations, or raised designs made by scarifying the body, which marked the slaves newly arrived from Africa have quite disappeared, but a few scars can be discerned on the body or arms of a man by a practiced eye. These represent an African carry-over in the form of a *garde* applied by the injection of some magically endowed substance into a cut which thereafter gives what may be thought of as a kind of spiritual inoculation. African fashions of hair-tying have been retained by the women almost unchanged, and, as in Africa, hair-braiding is a highly developed art, so that the styles in which hair can be braided seem innumerable. This is particularly true of dressing the hair of small girls, whose heads are decorated with braids going the length of the skull, or dividing the scalp into small squares, each with its tuft of hair, or by a part in the middle with lines going at right angles from it across the head. These styles of braiding are not named as in other parts of the New World and in Africa, but the tradition of intricate braiding has lost none of its vigor.

The implements of the Haitian are both of European and African derivation. The ubiquitous machete, a saber-like tool employed in all manner of ways, from chopping down trees

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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534 782 778 The drumheads were cut from a large ox-hide, purchased in the market place. In the early morning sunlight another "little ceremony" was performed before they were attached. Placing the three unheaded bodies of the drums in a row, with the iron in its place, the maker poured *clairin* before each, and having cut a native candle in three pieces, he took them in his left hand as he crossed himself, saying: "*Au nom d' Père, au nom d' Fils, au nom d' Saint Esprit.*" He then [788] lighted the three wicks, and taking each lighted candle in turn in his right hand, he made the sign of the cross with it and attached it to the "mother peg" of each drum. There the flames were allowed to flicker for a moment before the work of heading the drums began.

534 The hide was first attached to the "mother peg," then to the one opposite, and then to the two at right angles to the first pair. This is hard work, for to obtain the proper degree of initial tautness several men must strain at the resistant hide, and that is why four cuts are made where a peg is to go instead of the three that are needed, for frequently a strip breaks and the extra hole is used to re-thread the peg. The great drum has nine pegs, the one of medium size seven, and the small one six, not five, "because the *boula* is a thief, taking the beat away from the iron." The head was cut away from the rest of the great ox-hide only after it was in place. The final step was to knot the cord — braided the day before, of native sisal — to the *manman* peg of each drum, and then to twine it eight, six, or five times about their bodies.

534 778 788 The drums, now finished, were then put aside for a week to allow the damp heads to dry, awaiting the final sanctification. During this period they could not be played. It was held unwise to do more than tap them lightly with the finger-nail to test their resonance and the extent to which the heads were dry. Meanwhile preparations were being made for the baptism. Drums, like human beings, must be clothed when they [292] appear in public, and *rades*, apron-like garments, a white bro-

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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cade for Damballa, a red print for Ogun, and a third, a flowered blue material, for all the other gods, were first made. They were ruffled at the bottom, with strips of the material, attached as are apron-strings, to hold them in place. Four eggs, three "native" candles, three white candles, white flour, corn flour, two cassava cakes, two biscuits, three small-sized loaves of bread, two bottles of *kola, clairin,* and holy water, were also provided for the baptism. Finally on the appointed day — a Saturday, so that the drums could afterwards be used for a *vodun* dance — the drums, drumsticks, and iron, with the dresses and the food that had been provided for the ceremony, were taken to the scene of the rite, a habitation where a *tonnelle* had been built for the accompanying dance. 534 778 288 [292]

The ceremony began at about five o'clock in the afternoon, the drums being dressed by their godmothers. Just as a child who is to be baptized in church must have godparents, so drums must have their godparents, and following the logic of this position, since the owner of the drums is regarded as their father, he uses the terms *compère* and *commère* for those who have "stood up" with his drums, just as he would for those who might sponsor his children. The *prêt' savanne* first called for some twigs from an orange tree and a bit of cotton, as the drums, standing on end, were covered with a clean white cloth. Grouped about them and ranged behind the officiant were the owner and godparents of the drums, holding lighted candles in their hands, with which they made the sign of the cross from time to time. As the prayers began, the participants crossed themselves, and the *prêt' savanne* sprinkled the drums with holy water, using a spray of orange-leaves. Among his prayers were the Credo, the Ave Maria, the Pater Noster, and the Salve, interspersed with hymns sung by the assembled group. After about half an hour of prayer the officiant, holding an egg in his hand, made the sign of the cross three times over each of the drumheads. Ordinarily the eggs would have been broken, their contents rubbed on the drum- [608] [793]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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The falls, therefore, in association with the purely Catholic rituals carried on at the village church, are seen to hold an important if unofficial place in the complex of rites known in the Haitian Church calendar as the Fête of Saut d'Eau.

During the two or three days preceding the fête and on the fifteenth of July itself, an air of great gayety not unlike the carnival spirit accompanying European Church festivals pervades the surrounding country. Camions traverse the almost impassable side road, bringing crowds of people from Port-au-Prince, from the Dominican border, and even from the north, who throng the streets and the shrines and tramp the miles from the village to the waterfalls or visit the nearer sacred sites of St. John's Wood and En bas Palmes, to light candles and ask the satisfaction of their needs. Like the falls themselves, these spots by their very beauty awaken a sense of emotional awareness, and it is not strange that here, as at the falls, many possessions occur. At night, in particular, the great trees with their interlacing serpent-like roots, the gaping earth which at En bas Palmes is witness to the uprooting of the palm trees where the miracle occurred, and the stream of sacred water, all make a scene of indescribable eeriness, heightened by the flickering candles given as offerings, and the open lamps of those who stay the night here to fulfill their vows.

In the town itself gambling and other games go on, and dances of all kinds are held at night, among them *vodun* and *bal*, though at these public dances no possessions are countenanced. One of the most colorful aspects of the scene is the *penitants*, wearing clothing of varied colors in fulfillment of a request by the *loa* they worship or an obligation to them. Such folk are not permitted in church unless the clothing which marks them is covered by ordinary dress, but they walk the streets, often possessed and often using their power to heal those whom they encounter. Possessions by Ogun, by Gede, by Baron Samedi, by Damballa, by Erzilie and other *vodun* deities were observed, particularly at the shrines, where their devotees prophesied and healed the sick.

In certain communities there is some continuity over a period of years, the Rara or Chariopié band remaining more or less intact. Normally it has a *mait'* Rara, also called *major* or *président*, who assumes the organizational responsibilities for the group. This means getting new costumes for the participants when required, refurbishing the old costumes and musical instruments, and recruiting special talent—perhaps a new "king." Where the same group continues from year to year, the mait' Rara actually serves as a sort of executive secretary. In some instances, however, the initiative for forming a group is undertaken by the mait' Rara himself. He chooses the costumes and *décor* of the group; he recruits the musicians and the young women and girls who form the singing and dancing chorus; and he chooses the roi Lwalwadi, who will be the group's main feature. He may decide upon the theme around which the group will be built, and may even decide upon the repertoire of songs it will sing. The mait' Rara has specific responsibilities and is obligated to provide his band with refreshments and food. 541 575 624

Expenses of the group are defrayed by collections made in the course of its "exercises." The band will stop before a crowd of spectators, or before a house, and will perform until it receives a gift known as *payé sorti* (pay to go) money. After receiving its payé sorti, the group performs an encore and then moves on. This custom of performing for gifts appears to have been known in colonial days. Eugène Aubin notes that the slaves on the plantations celebrated on New Year's Day with drums and dances.[1] At midnight they appeared before the foreman or owner of the plantation. One of the slaves would recite a speech to him, or perhaps the group would sing a song praising the master's virtues. Then, over the heads of the celebrants, a slave would extend a long bamboo pole with a beribboned basket fastened to the end. The plantation master would place his gift in the basket, after which the group would leave the house. 541 575 175

Some few groups do not have a "king" but are built around musical instruments or other features. However, the "king" is regarded as an old tradition. Aubin reported that the roi Lwalwadi dates from the time of the Emperor Soulouque in the nineteenth century. Soulouque is said to have named the first roi Lwalwadi in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. But there are reasons to suspect that these dancing virtuosi, by whatever name they were called, existed long before Soulouque entered the picture. 575 175 535

The roi Lwalwadi is a dancer of very special talents, and it is said that, though his title is not hereditary, his dances have been handed down within the family from rois of other years. Much care is given to the costume he wears. It is sometimes made of expensive satin or velvet 575 535 [292]

[1] [Aubin, En Haiti, p. 42. Cf. p. 351, Category 116.--Analyst]

575 and covered with tiny mirrors or bits of colored glass. The towering
535 headdress of antlers or papier-mâché sculpture unavoidably recalls similar
[292] headdresses in West Africa. Each roi has his own style of dance, which is usually accompanied by drums. It may be a belly dance, a dance of delicate balance, or one of complicated footwork and semiacrobatics such as the imitation of a pair of scissors at work. Throughout the dancing the headdress remains majestically erect.

541 In addition to the roi Lwalwadi and the mâit' Rara (who is con-
575 stantly in the midst of things, blowing his whistle), there are other
524 traditional Rara personalities: the *major jonc*, who juggles with a metal
[534] baton (sometimes two or three of these jugglers work together), and the *jongleur*, a juggler or strong man who performs such feats as dancing while holding a fully set table off the ground with his teeth.

184 On the southwest peninsula, in the region around Jérémie, there
541 is a splurge of wrestling exhibitions during Rara days. Known as *pingé*,
526 this festival wrestling is done with a background of excited drumming
533 and has a striking resemblance to wrestling traditions in West Africa.
[191] Local "champions" will invade a neighboring community, sometimes traveling considerable distances to make a challenge. As in West Africa, some of these wrestlers take their own musicians with them. The musicians often are provided by the village in which the events take place. If a challenge is accepted, the spectators form a large circle, with the wrestlers in the center and the musicians to one side. There may be drums and bamboo flutes, occasionally supplemented by large earthern jars and lengths of bamboo beaten with sticks. The wrestlers are dressed only in shorts. When a man is thrown, the event is over, and another pair of wrestlers takes over. Sometimes a "champion" will take on a series of opponents until he is tired. Afterward he may move on to another community to find new competition, perhaps accompanied by a large group of friends and supporters from his own village. When the Rara season comes to an end, pingé is over for the year. It is one of the few athletic sport activities of the Haitian peasant.

541 And now and then during Rara a *debois* is seen. The *debois* is a
536 carved wooden marionette with a short handle below. Its arms and legs are moved by pulling a string. It is usually painted, and sometimes it is
[831] dressed. One debois observed was provided with a loose dresslike costume; when the string was pulled, a large phallus hinged into view in an erect position. This marionette was an object of endless funmaking among spectators.[2]

Another type of marionette is the "Two Kings," made of papier-mâché and operated with strings. The "Two Kings," sitting in a papier-

2 [Footnote appears in category 116, p. 351. --Analyst]

.2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-NN]
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71. *Rara at Léogane. Behind the dancing majours jonc: a member of the group holds their banner, which depicts a bird catching a lizard. The costumes are traditional and are believed to date from colonial days.*

2: Courlander, B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-00]
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72. *A roi Lavalwadi in the Cul-de-Sac Plain.*

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73. *Rara stick dancers in Port-au-Prince.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-PP]
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74. *Chaluska dancers in Port-au-Prince.*

75. *Maypole dancers. Musicians are sitting next to the pole.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-QQ]
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[184] [171] 76. *A Rara group near Phaisance. The costumes differ from those in the south. Note the Madras waistcloths, reminiscent of West African dress.*

Z: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-Z]
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36. Possessed by the loa Gédé Nimbo, two women dance the deity's favorite step, the Banda.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

[p. 234]

XIII

CONSTITUTIONS AND POLITICAL FORMS

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QUITE aside from its castes and the political separation of 1807–20, Haiti has always consisted of two nations, one living in and near the towns and so within reach of established government, the other rural and yet capable of ordering its own affairs by folk rules without much actual governmental machinery. It is through the former that Haiti has a political history. Indeed, one is tempted to say that more than half the people have continually got along without any government whatever of a formal sort, for being peaceably inclined they have found custom and usage [669] sufficient for their needs. These people have been rarely disturbed by the state's rulers; revolutionary chieftains alone have found it worth their while to stir up the country folk to an active interest in politics.

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The formal subdivisions of Haiti have been, through most of its history, three: the *commune*, roughly corresponding to the American township; the *arrondissement*, a group of communes, just as the American county is a group of townships; and the *département*, comprising several arrondissements. All three terms were borrowed from France, although their significance was altered when applied to the Haitian scene.

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In the days of Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, the government had owned vast plantations which were under the control of the military. Pétion and Boyer instituted the commune by combining numerous estates and farms into a group likewise to be controlled by soldiers. Until the American Occupation the police system of the country was military, with ordinary soldiers keeping order and making arrests when necessary. Since few people are less given to disorder than the Haitian peasants, the task of keeping order was not a serious one; indeed, soldiers were frequently stationed among their friends and relatives, who never thought of them as police. It sometimes [293] happened, however, that soldiers were assigned to other parts of the country, where they swaggered about with their *cocomacaques* (heavy-jointed canes), using these or the flat of their swords to enforce their often arbitrary commands.

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In every commune recognized by the state was an important

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

any usual measure. But Haitians do produce by traditional craft methods a surprisingly large number of the articles they need for daily life. In the countryside it is possible to see many persons engaged, mostly on a part-time basis, in craft activities and home industry that have their roots in the prerevolutionary era. Leatherworkers operating small, crude tanneries still flourish. Charcoal-burners, and operators of small lime kilns that produce building material, are found in every village. Smiths make and repair simple tools, working with forges of archaic design. Combs are made from cows' horns and tortoiseshell, buttons from bone; carrying-bags, fish traps, and a wide variety of baskets from withes, bamboo strips, and grasses; wooden bowls, mortars and pestles, tool handles and spoons from local woods; dippers, pots, and candelabra from tin cans; and sandals from tires and inner tubes. Sawyers cut and dress timber; cabinetmakers still manufacture simple furniture of traditional design from the fast-disappearing tropical woods; many women, working either with the simplest sorts of sewing machines or by hand, make clothing for use and for sale. Along the coasts there are dugout-makers, shipbuilders, and sail- and seine-makers. Simple mattresses, fabricated from local grasses, are sold in every large marketplace, as are crude ceramic wares made by local potters. At the start of the twentieth century, Italian immigrants brought a sturdy tradition of cobbling to Haiti, which has been destroyed only recently by the flood of American imported shoes with their attached prestige, until recently, *vitièlo* was a colloquial term for shoe, coming from the name of the most famous of those Italian cobblers.

One of the striking features of Haiti's craft traditions is its relative stability since the revolution. It was under slavery that Haitians first became "westernized," learning what were then standard French craft practices, adjusted to local colonial conditions, probably with some modifying features coming from the African past. It was before the revolution that the Haitian people learned and stabilized their consumer tastes, agricultural and craft standards, and work procedures. Such preferences and standards were worked out primarily in terms of the demands of the plantation regime itself; but even the most repressive social system leaves some opportunity for acculturation. Today's sugar-making shops and rural rum distilleries employ techniques centuries old and little modified over time. Housebuilding and woodworking techniques in the countryside are substantially

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

853 Breast-feeding begins on the third day, but if the milk does
[789] not come, the mother goes to a woman "specialist" who
[854] knows the herbs which are believed to induce the flow. When the mother is ill or tubercular, the infant is given to a wet-nurse. Once he has begun to nurse, he is fed whenever he cries, and as soon as he can sit up he is given the same food as
846 the mother eats. For the first two or three months after the
262 birth of her child a woman refrains from eating egg-plant, fresh fish — although she may eat salt fish — white beans or any others larger than Congo peas, pork, lard, and all fruit.
304 The ears of a female child are pierced when she is about a
301 month old for the gold ear-rings which are worn by girls and women of all ages. If the parents cannot afford them at the time, however, thread is placed in the holes until a sum sufficient to provide this important trinket has been accumulated.

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854 third or fourth month, and by the time he is six or seven months old he can sit quite well; girls are believed to be more precocious than boys in acquiring this skill. When about ten months old, or sooner, an older sister, a little girl, or the father or mother takes the child by the hand and teaches him to walk, later allowing him to hold one end of a stick for sup-
[754] port. A child is never left alone, for fear of the evil eye or of
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856 tective device. Teething is a matter of importance, since the
855 attitudes of the parents toward a child may be determined by
763 the first teeth to appear. If these are cut in the upper jaw, it is said that the child's mother will survive his father, and when this occurs, the mother takes every precaution to conceal the fact from her husband, so he will not hate the child. Others hold, however, that the appearance of an upper tooth first denotes that either the father or the mother is soon to die.[4]

856 Instruction starts early in the life of a child. Beginning with
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2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 112-I]

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13. *Donkey with a load of charcoal. Where the terrain is not too rugged, donkeys or small horses do some of the carrying. The making of charcoal has helped to denude the mountains of their forests.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

535 The Pétro dance is similar in many respects to other serious cult dances, but it is primarily a complicated and sometimes agitated foot dance. The second of the two drums beats "rest-two-three." On "two" the right foot pushes forward in a thrusting, sliding motion, and on "three" the left moves outward and the right moves in. The position is held on the "rest," though there is no visible pause, because of the speed of the dance. Shoulder movement is only of secondary importance in the Pétro, though the arms are constantly moving gracefuly to balance the foot movements. Women sometimes use a typical Congo pose, with the left hand on the hip and the right hand held poised in the air.

The Jenvalo, the supplication dance of the Dahomey rites, is quite different in both spirit and technique. The dancers, usually older rather than younger people, move in a generally counterclockwise direction around the sacred center post of the dance court. They dance with gracefully bent backs, their hands touching their knees. The shoulders and the upper part of the body move forward and back in a gentle, graceful, undulating movement. The dancers pirouette lightly from time to time, the women holding their long skirts out to the side to make a restrained *laillé*. They sometimes pause to perform a brief cross step with other dancers, but there is no pairing off. They are dancing as individuals—or, more accurately, as a group. There is occasional improvising, inventing, and performing of difficult maneuvers; but the individual dancer moves always with the others in a slowly revolving amorphous circle around the center post. The graceful bending and undulating of the upper body give even to strangers an impression of respectful supplication.

Near the town of Jérémie in southern Haiti some years ago I saw a performance of the Mousondi "battle-dance," an activity of the Congo [291] "nation." The dance was performed by six men, several of them stripped to the waist, the others wearing the traditional blue denim peasant jackets. The leader of the dancers was a bearded man about fifty years [301] old, lean and athletic. On his legs he wore anklets made of seed pods and [534] beer-bottle caps which rattled rhythmically as he moved. On a string around his neck he wore a wooden whistle, which he blew from time to time to accent the beat of the drums and to give signals.

[533] The dancing took place around a bonfire. The music was provided by three musicians, two playing Congo drums and the third beating hardwood sticks against a board. Each of the dancers carried a stick about thirty inches long. They moved first clockwise, then counterclockwise, then half of them moved in one direction and half in the other, weaving in and out, holding their sticks like sabers. On a signal given by the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

dead must first count them, he can never accomplish this before daylight. From these precautions, it is evident that for the Haitian the reality of existence after death is no fictional one, as is even more vividly illustrated in the answer given to the question whether or not a flute, such as young boys play, would be placed in the coffin of a lad: "What! And have the dead going about all the time blowing it?"

When dressed, the body is placed on a mat or mattress or in a hammock and covered with a clean cloth. A *bande de machoire*, which goes under the chin and over the head to hold the jaw in place, in earlier days, as today in remote sections of the valley, served the double purpose of making possible the identification of a ghost as such, and of keeping the moisture inside the mouth. At present, however, it is usually removed when the body is placed in the coffin. In earlier times also, as today among the peasants in the hills, the nostrils and ears were plugged with cotton. The body and head are shaved of all hair, and the finger- and toe-nails clipped; hair and clippings are later placed in the coffin and buried with the body. The eyes usually close naturally; it is a bad sign if they do not, indicating, as it does, that magic has caused death. Putrefaction, or any unusual sign connected with death such as when a cadaver swells, or a body remains warm and perspires, or, as mentioned, when the eyes remain open, is held to be an indication that the soul has been taken by a sorcerer and the person "sold"—all signalling a "bad" death and requiring that a dagger be struck into the body and burial take place immediately.

Some time later, the *prêt' savanne* comes to read prayers if the death has occurred in the countryside, or the priest of the local Catholic church if in the town or near it. After the prayers have been said and relatives and friends have addressed the dead and "given him commissions," such as "Say good-day to my mother," "Ask my father to help us, for the weather has been bad this year for the crops . . ." the body is

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the *loa*. In one instance a man wore a red shirt with black crosses appliquéd on it; dresses of this type worn by women or children are made of cotton cloth, pieced together patchwork-quilt fashion, of either three, seven, seventeen, or twenty-one different colors or patterns, with reds, blues, and white predominating. These garments are worn for a specified time, also named by the *loa*. The term *pénitence* has been taken from Church terminology, and the motivating sanction derives equally from African and Christian concepts;[4] for example, the wearing of the garment is a compliment to the African deities represented by the colors, while the various rules about abstinence during its term of wearing is the European pattern of "penitence." 292 177 776

The elaborate cicatrizations, or raised designs made by scarifying the body, which marked the slaves newly arrived from Africa have quite disappeared, but a few scars can be discerned on the body or arms of a man by a practiced eye. These represent an African carry-over in the form of a *garde* applied by the injection of some magically endowed substance into a cut which thereafter gives what may be thought of as a kind of spiritual inoculation. African fashions of hair-tying have been retained by the women almost unchanged, and, as in Africa, hair-braiding is a highly developed art, so that the styles in which hair can be braided seem innumerable. This is particularly true of dressing the hair of small girls, whose heads are decorated with braids going the length of the skull, or dividing the scalp into small squares, each with its tuft of hair, or by a part in the middle with lines going at right angles from it across the head. These styles of braiding are not named as in other parts of the New World and in Africa, but the tradition of intricate braiding has lost none of its vigor. 304 789 178 307 178

The implements of the Haitian are both of European and African derivation. The ubiquitous machete, a saber-like tool employed in all manner of ways, from chopping down trees 412 177 [439]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P.112-G]

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9. *Calling the coumbite: signaling on a conch-shell trumpet.*

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10. *A women's coumbite weeding a cornfield near the town of Plaisance.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-K]

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16. *Man with a machete making a wari board. The machete is used for cutting trees, trimming brush, weeding gardens, fashioning wooden objects such as drums and mortars, and many other purposes.*

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17. *Winnowing grain with a woven tray.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3 [P.112-L]

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18. *Young Haitians in school. After a century and a half of independence, education remains one of Haiti's most acute problems. Only a small percentage of the country's children are in schools.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P.112-0]

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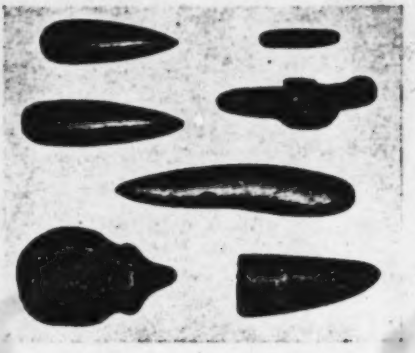

22. *An assortment of stones (Indian artifacts) from the altar of a houmfor in the mountains above Jacmel. All are regarded as thunder stones thrown to earth by the loa Sobo and Kébiosu, or as stones containing the essence of other deities.*

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23. *A houngan of southern Haiti divining with the aid of his asson, bell, and (right) gembo.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P.112-TT]

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82. *Playing the tikambas, or bamboo stampers.*

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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[789] not come, the mother goes to a woman "specialist" who
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Mirebalais

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3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

789 generally through no wish of their own, have the uncanny ability to cause evil simply by a glance. One look is enough to do the damage. Although theory is a bit vague on this point, it appears that certain irritable spirits use the agency of the human eye to vent their spleen on mortals who are fortunate: good looks and strokes of luck act, consequently, as lodestones to the fateful glance. And where the [175] glance falls ill luck may spread, harming all within reach. In the days [304] of slavery people had such a fear of the evil eye that they did not hesitate to disfigure infants who at birth seemed to be particularly handsome and so likely to attract attention. Nowadays the practice 777 is to avert the glance by making an *arrêt*. This "halt" may be either a 789 special charm worn on the person or else the mark of a half-moon done with a caustic vegetable substance on the cheek. As with Europeans who believe in the evil eye, certain specialists ply a lucrative trade through their reputation for effective charms against the maldioque.

Other charms may be mentioned. There is the *garde* which protects its wearer against evil of any variety—the near relative of the good-luck charm worn by thousands of "civilized" people. There is the *ouanga*, or *wanga*, compounded to achieve a special end, generally an evil one. Faine remarks that ouanga is

[192] A Créole word of African origin [signifying] a philtre or simple of a special kind, compounded by an *houngan* out of such diverse ingredients as a dead chicken, some grains of indigo and maize, amulets, pieces of money, asafoetida, etc., the whole contained in a half-calabash. . . . The Ouanga, placed in the home of an enemy, is designed to bring him bad luck even to the extent of giving him elephantiasis ("gros pied") when he has inadvertently stepped on the ouanga.[27]

The ouanga is the Haitian equivalent of the hoodoo, for through its influence one may (or so he believes) bring illness, misfortune, or death to an enemy. For every ouanga there is a garde, for every evil a cure. The art lies in finding out the nature of the ouanga causing harm, and then knowing exactly what to do to fend it off.

751 Historically the most interesting garde is that called a *drogue*, 789 which is thought to insulate one against wound by weapons or bullets. Reference has already been made to the utter abandon with which the Negroes, both at the time of the insurrection and later in

[27] Jules Faine, *Philologie Créole* (Port-au-Prince, 1937), p. 129.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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342 322 178 unchanged from an earlier era. The prevailing quality of Haitian rural and craft industry, then, is one of great stability and conservatism.

493 463 At the same time, of course, major events since the revolution have left their imprint on this part of life. Hardly a roadside village in Haiti today, for instance, lacks an automobile mechanic, even though these men are mostly self-educated and work with hardly any tools. Their skills became part of Haitian culture in this century and are often of a simple order no longer typical of more developed areas. Tire 383 177 tubes, for instance, are "vulcanized" by the use of an ingenious device made from a board and an old piston, kerosene providing the heat to make the seal; this technique, along with the sewing of damaged truck tires, was almost certainly introduced and diffused by the United States Marines.

47 31 178 But these quaint additions do not alter the fact that shop and factory industry are nearly absent, and extractive industry virtually nonexistent. Haiti's one alumina extraction enterprise, foreign-owned, is now shut down. There is but one flour mill, and that is foreign-[258] owned as well. One or two textile mills and sugar factories, estab-[339] lished with foreign capital, still function, as do a modern cement factory and a few other small plants established in the 1950s. These [464] industries, scanty as they are, were of great importance to Haiti, since they represented substantial investments, held out the promise of reduced dependence on imports in significant categories, and contributed to the beginnings of an industrial proletariat. However, they involved only a tiny fraction of the national labor force, and they have not proved entirely successful. As a result, Haiti lacks any reserve of labor acquainted with modern industry, even though many people, both urban and rural, work at tasks that might be considered more industrial than agricultural.

47 433 178 171 Most important for the present discussion, the minor developments in Haitian industry have not led to an expanded market and have not resulted in any firm increase in productivity. Industrial growth, in the sense in which it has occurred in countries such as those of Western Europe—or for that matter in Mexico or Argentina—is entirely lacking. The absence of such growth is perhaps especially significant if Haiti be compared with a neighbor such as Jamaica or Puerto Rico. [648] These countries, one now independent, the other a North American dependency—have both gained real increments from the investment activities of outsiders;

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

The hard work of cultivating the fields is abated only during the dry season — the winter months of December to February — though even during these months there is no dearth of tasks about the house which must be cared for, such as repairs of various sorts and, above all, rethatching. There is, however, also more time for recreation than at other seasons, so that throughout the countryside there are dances and cock-fights. With February, however, work in the fields must be resumed.

The Haitian farmer does not practice any formal rotation of crops, but continues to plant a given crop in the same field until the harvest becomes perceptibly smaller than in former years, when a change is made to another type of produce. Later, when the same phenomenon is again observed, a third crop may be planted, but sooner or later the land is "put to rest," in which case it either is allowed to lie fallow or is planted with cotton, which is not thought of in the same category as other crops, but is held to be a tree, and, like other trees that of themselves spring up in a fallow field, is believed to give strength to the exhausted earth. A field of this kind remains outside cultivation as a "fallen garden" for four or five years, and the animals are allowed to enter freely and graze in it until it has become a "new garden" again.

If a field is to be made out of hitherto unworked land, or ground which has lain fallow for several years is to be cultivated once again, the work is begun by cutting down the trees. The twigs are heaped preparatory to burning them, and the larger branches and the tree-trunks are used to make fences. After the dried leaves and branches have been burned, the field is cleared of small brush, and is then ready for its initial hoeing, which, according to the crops to be planted, is sometimes delayed until some months later. Usually, however, after two or three rains have cooled and softened land that has been burned over, work continues on it. The hoeing is

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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One other aspect of the apportionment of the land of an estate remains to be considered, the matter of leaving land for the support of ancestral ceremonies. There is no general agreement in Mirebalais as to the customary practice. It was first stated that four or five *carreaux* of land, which a man himself had "held in trust," are added to the inheritance of the eldest son, to be similarly held by him. The "trustee" calls in the other members of the family to help work this land, and the proceeds from marketing its entire yield are devoted to the support of family rituals, or used for such other general purposes as aiding a member of the family who requires funds to save himself from disgrace, and the family from scandalous gossip.

The practice of alienating land to provide for the worship of the ancestors would appear to be common in the southern peninsula and in the plain of the Cul-de-Sac; and one person, not a native of Mirebalais, told how he found it impossible to buy some land he wished to acquire because it had been consecrated for this purpose. Certain men cited examples of land which had belonged to the "old, old people of the family," control of which was vested in the family head and could therefore never be divided or sold. But this is land where the family house of worship stands and where ceremonies for the family deities and ancestors are held, something not at all comparable with setting aside workable land to yield a yearly income for services of the dead. The closest resemblance to this found in Mirebalais is when a man or a woman during life sets aside a portion of land or other belongings, declaring: "When I die, dispose of this and with the proceeds care for the expenses of my funeral and discharge these obligations which I leave you." Other persons spoke of land, which having been in the family for a very long period of time may not be sold, since it had proved to be extremely good, and the "will of the ancients" is that it never be alienated. Those who men-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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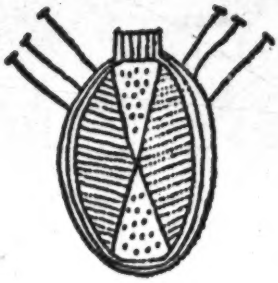
tioned this latter instance advanced it as a possible alternative to the custom found elsewhere in Haiti, adding that it was the duty of the living to honor their ancestors, and not for the ancestors to make provision to honor themselves, particularly since the dead can enforce the discharge of this duty by sending illness, bad fortune, and death to those of their descendants who are remiss.

To a very appreciable degree, what is inherited forms the foundation of whatever wealth a man may accumulate during his lifetime. Yet there are few, among the peasants at least, who do not seek by all means to add to their heritage, for among those folk the ambition to obtain more and more land is a dominating one. To this end the peasant skimps and saves, depriving himself even of his important needs, until at the proper time some choice parcel of ground comes on the market.

How does a man go about accumulating the funds necessary to amass property? Ordinarily a young man is given a plot of ground by his father, and the produce, as mentioned, is marketed for him by his mother, who saves the proceeds for him. When he marries, his wife takes over this task, and together the two strive to extract as large earnings as possible from his plot. In addition, a man may take a *job*. Such work, always paid for by the unit rather than by the day or week, is usually that of cultivating a plot of ground for its owner, and the amount agreed upon is paid when the field has been harvested. The young man at the same time can also cultivate his own fields and participate in communal labor. Another way of adding to the earnings of his fields is to help the large landowners on their cotton plantations. This work is paid for in kind with baskets of cotton, which in turn are sold to factors who come from the coast to buy both large and small quantities. A man may also increase his income by working in the cane-fields or at the caldrons when the sirup is boiled. Each

[P.110]



9. Land and Work

31 16 [461] There is a common Haitian saying which goes: "Pitit mangé, travaille youn pile" (A little food, but tremendous work). This is the way the Haitian peasant sees it. There is endless labor in the fields or in the perpetually eroding mountain gardens, on landholdings that are too small to give any promise of a better life. The rains that give life to the crops take away, year by year, the nourishment of the soil. Where forests or lush groves once grew on the hillsides, there are now deep, dry gullies. Where coffee plants, cotton, and yams once grew abundantly, there are now fields of stones. This is the heritage of the peasant farmer of today. Small holdings on the hillsides and in the valleys have become smaller through the years as the population has swelled and the land been subdivided. Three and a half millon people must take their sustenance from that land. More than three hundred persons must share each square mile of soil. But most of Haiti is mountainous and formidable to agriculture. Two-thirds of the land area is untillable by modern standards. There is less than one acre of useful land per person. The best of the land in the alluvial valleys is held by large corporations producing sugar and sisal. Flat, arid stretches elsewhere are semi-desert.

24 433 [226] In the small gardens the peasants grow maize, *ti mis* (millet), coffee, bananas and plantains, cotton, beans of various kinds, yams, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, and manioc. In the delta areas they grow rice, and along the long coastline thousands of fishermen sail out in crude but sturdy boats to bring back fish fom the sea. Citrus trees, mango trees, and avocado trees grow wild; but they are fewer than in the old days. The Haitian works the soil and manages to subsist, but nature and history have not been kind to him.

18 46 Even less kind have been some of the chroniclers of the past, who have sought to disparage the Haitian as a lazy and careless creature who would

rather starve than work. An Englishman, James Franklin, wrote in 1828, for example:

> Experiments may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coercion and want will impel the Haytian to labour; and I have my doubts as to the practicability of enforcing labour in Hayti until the people have been better instructed, and their characters become changed.

As Franklin summarized it: "Nature is too generous to the Haytian; he never wants, and so never works for hire, as do free labourers in other countries."

The early nineteenth century saw a flood of such bitter comments about the remains of the once rich and flourishing French colony of St. Domingue. The vast productivity of Haiti under French rule had made that colony one of the richest in the New World. The country was dotted with sugar mills, brick-covered wells, and warehouses; and carefully built brick aqueducts, irrigation canals, locks, and dams assured water for the plantations. In 1790, under the slave system, Haiti had exported 163,000,000 pounds of sugar. In 1826, a quarter of a century after the revolution, it was reported to have exported 33,000 pounds.

This falling off in production and exports doubtless had many causes, but one of the most significant was the Haitian's revolt not only against slavery but also against continuing the same kind of work he had performed as a slave. He saw not too much difference between forced, unpaid labor and working for any large landholder at subsistence wages. To the Haitian slave the inspiring battle cry of the French Revolution did not mean that all men would work together on another's man plantation and receive the same wages. It meant that every man would have his own garden to work for himself as he chose; every man would be a full citizen, with land of his own, free to come and go, to plant what he wished, to sell what he could. Despite long years under a colonial slave system, the Haitian still remembered a different way of life in Africa, where mass production for export was not the primary objective of labor.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the population of Haiti was not much more than half a million—less than one sixth of what it is today. There was plenty of land, and much of it had not yet been wasted by constant tilling and erosion. When the French were driven out, the Haitian peasant re-created an economic world of his own liking. The plantation system which had poured out sugar and coffee and indigo for Europe faded away, and in its place there sprang up an agrarian system which has continued until the present day. In the early

[Franklin, The Present State of Hayti, p. 362. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

175 In the early
178 years of independence, Emperor Henry Christophe in the north and
311 President Pétion in the south tried to stem the disintegration of the
[643] magnificent plantations. Christophe's measures in the region he con-
[656] trolled were sometimes stern, according to legend; but the plantation system and the plantations themselves gradually fell into decay, along with the aqueducts, the warehouses, and the sugar mills. For the Haitian had returned to a tradition of landholding antedating his enslavement.

175 Europe's loss of the Pearl of the Antilles aroused bitter words from
618 Frenchmen and Englishmen for the better part of the century. They
181 accused the Negro of laziness and lack of ability, repeating endlessly that only as a colony could Haiti ever be of any use to anybody. The London *Times* deplored the Haitian's unwillingness to work for wages, speculating that he had "no desire for property strong enough to induce him to labor with sustained power." In the United States, antiabolitionist enthusiasts cited the Haitian situation as an example of what would happen to the American economy if the slaves were freed.

464 The Haitian's reluctance to work for wages did not reflect an aversion
423 to owning property, however, as the London *Times* supposed. On the
311 contrary, it was engendered by his desire for property. The land was there and waiting, only needing a house to be built upon it, and to be cleared and tilled. The typical Haitian wanted not dubious, seasonal wage work but a farm of his own. The more ambitious peasant aspired to two farms, or even three, with a homestead and a family on each.

423 If a man worked hard and made a success of one plot, he could put
595 away money and eventually buy a second. The additional land might be
178 separated by some miles from the original farm. On the new ground
583 the man would build another house and take another wife to take care of it in his absence. Known as *plaçage*, this arrangement had complete community sanction. A man whose energies and good fortune made an extra household possible was expected to make such an arrangement. It was not a new institution bred in the chaos following the
[797] Revolution, nor was it, as some missionaries held, an evidence of moral deterioration of the Haitian character. It was simply a persisting concept of West African life.[2] The woman who occupied the second or third household was not a concubine. Like the first wife, she had enhanced prestige in her community. She had authority and responsibility. Her work, her position, and her rewards were not essentially different from those of the first wife.[3] It is true that her marriage was not consecrated by a church or civil ceremony, but, ordinarily, neither was that of the
[581] first wife. Contrary to European misconceptions, such unions were true marriages in the sense that they had full sanction of the community.

[2,3 [Footnotes appear in Category 116, pp. 351-352. --Analyst]

167 a massacre in the western part of the Dominican Republic which took
175 the lives of an estimated five thousand to fifteen thousand Haitians.
[648] The survivors fled homeward, and many were settled in frontier areas by the government. Even so, today there are believed to be some sixty or seventy thousand Haitians still living east of the border. Large numbers of Haitians, particularly men, migrated to Cuba in the years following World War I, in search of better wages in the cane fields. By 1931 there were more than eighty thousand Haitians in that country. But resentment by local Cuban labor and the onset of the depression combined to force the repatriation of great numbers of them. Thirty thousand Haitians came home from Cuba in the years 1936 and 1937 alone.

16 Solution of Haiti's problem of overpopulation does not seem imminent.
[842] The obvious answers would seem to be birth control, emigration, wiser use of natural resources, and industrialization. Since the country is predominantly Catholic, and since much social value is placed on children, birth control seems unlikely. And as health facilities become more widespread and infant mortality drops, the pressure will become more acute. Emigration seems to offer no hope, since neighboring islands and countries
[311] on the mainland give no encouragement. The Haitian may yet learn to con-
[47] serve his land and to get more out of it, to stock his lakes with fish, and to bring more fish in from the sea. But this will not suffice. Nothing is left but industrialization, and that seems to be a thing of the far-distant future.

181 Nevertheless, the character of Haitian life remains essentially agrarian.
167 The displaced peasant, whether he is now a hotel "houseboy," a taxi
461 driver, or a cane cutter, dreams of returning to the land some day and growing bananas, coffee, and cotton that will make him independent. In far-off places such as Havana and New York, Haitians work and save money with the expectation that one day they will come home, buy fifteen or twenty acres of ground, build a new house, and live out their
[178] lives as decently prosperous *habitants*. The traditions of the agricultural society, along with Vodoun, continue to play a significant role in the life of the people.

476 One such tradition is the institution of the *coumbite*, a loosely knit
241 coöperative work party of neighbors and friends. The word itself probably comes from the Spanish *convide*, or *convite*, meaning "to invite." A member of the group holds a coumbite by notifying his fellow members that on such-and-such a day his fields will require clearing or hoeing. There are several variants of the work gathering. One, called *carré* or *corvée*, meets at irregular intervals and only on special invitation. There are no regular reciprocal obligations in the *corvée;* the workers are

[Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," Journal of Negro History, October, 1940, P. 515. Cf. P. 352, Category 116. --Analyst)

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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same century in which Haiti withdrew. The yeomanry of Haiti in the nineteenth century was hence able to develop a traditionalism of unusual firmness and persistence.

This traditionalism, however, has had a high price. The economic productivity of the rural cultivator has not risen; it can be argued convincingly that poor land use, erosion, and population growth have meant lower levels of consumption for the common people in 1966 than obtained a hundred years or more ago. The rural masses, though overwhelmingly consisting of landholders, have been unable to break out of a stagnation that is economic as well as cultural. Such stasis has been based to some extent on the limited responsiveness of the rural folk to outside stimulus. But also important in maintaining the past is the national institutional system that took on its characteristic shape after 1804, and under which the rural masses still live. That system, the origins of which Leyburn has examined and assessed with such care, is controlled, as we have seen, by a numerically small segment of the national population that is markedly distinct from the yeomanry itself.

The nature and internal differentiation of the elite needs much more study, though it seems clear already that it is by no means a single solidary class embracing all but the yeomen. Whatever the structure of the elite, the relationship between the yeomen on the one hand and the real holders of power on the other must be understood if one is to understand Haiti. The yeoman is defined in terms of the elite; he is dependent upon it and subject to it. This is what is meant when it is said that the yeomanry, like the elite, forms only a part-society. Yet without the yeomen, there would be no elite. The elite live by controlling and taxing the rural masses, and find their sustenance and their power in rural productivity. Elite and yeomen, then, are bound together in unequal but interdependent relationships in Haiti as they are in other less developed societies of a similar kind. In such cases, the political role of the yeomanry is usually minor, and few opportunities may arise for the expansion of its political strength. If the yeomanry fails to increase its productivity in ways that enable it to control more of its own surpluses, its role in affecting national political decisions may grow narrower rather than wider, and this ominous possibility has become a worldwide phenomenon. It becomes more intensified wherever industry and trade grow, unaccompanied by parallel growth in yeoman productivity or in new and more widely representative national institutions.

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369 development of interior transport. The only passable roads in the
494 Republic run from Aux Cayes in the south to the capital, and from
Cap Haïtien in the north to the capital. Transport and communica-
646 tions simply symbolize the power that Port-au-Prince wields, since the same circumstances characterize all national institutional arrangements. Thus Haiti is an extreme example of urban domination, even though its urban population is a fraction of the national total. The consequence has been to keep most of the rural folk cut off from the apparatus that effects national decisions and shapes national policy. Haiti's national legislature, never important in limiting presidential power, is less so today than ever; at best, it had only represented the interests of provincial towns as opposed to the capital, and never the interests of the mass of country people.

701 The local military and judiciary officials possess the formal author-
692 ity vested in them by the state, and their power is very considerable.
642 Few local people would dare challenge their decisions, and the de-
369 vices for appeal against arbitrary exercise of authority are few. Admittedly, at the lowest local level the *chef de section*—who is traditionally appointed by the captain of the military in the *commune* center and is himself a yeoman—is subject to some genuine restraint by local inhabitants. Jean Comhaire-Sylvain (1955:620–24) has argued convincingly that the people of a community are capable of insisting on democratic procedure in those matters requiring decision that come to the attention of local authority. But such decisions have little or nothing to do with larger issues. The yeomanry cannot directly make its wishes felt in national politics; and national politics are conducted almost without reference to the aspirations of the rural masses. It is precisely in the separateness of local life from the mainstream of national decision-making that the political impotence of the yeomanry is demonstrated.

311 Haiti's agrarian nature cannot be expressed simply by saying it is a
423 rural and yeoman country. Haiti does not have a "land problem," as
171 that phrase is conventionally applied to Latin America. It does, it is true, suffer from land shortage, inasmuch as too little land is worked at too low a level of productivity and must feed too many mouths. But a very substantial proportion of the rural masses owns land, or has regular access to it. It is true that most land is held in small plots and without clear title. But those persons who own no land or who lack land to work are proportionally fewer than in any other Carib-

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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bean country, and perhaps fewer than in any country in Latin America. The agriculture itself, with the exceptions now of those very few large-scale plantations in sisal and sugarcane, is adapted to small plots and is worked with intensive labor and few tools on hilly land. Compared with agricultural production, especially of cash crops, in most mainland Latin American countries, productivity is low. The yeomanry is conservative in its agricultural practices, and not ready to change unless the changes entail minimal risk and the gains to be realized are clearly demonstrable (Erasmus, 1952:20–26). Yeomen cultivate with three goals in mind: cash income from world-market commodities (for instance, coffee, sisal, vetiver); cash income from items produced for local sale and consumption; and subsistence. While they are heavily involved in production for sale, their crop choices and land-use patterns rest fundamentally on a subsistence orientation. All grow a substantial part of their own food, especially sorghum, maize, sweet potatoes, taro, manioc, malanga (*Xanthosoma sagittifolium* Schott), plantains and bananas, fruits and vegetables, and rice where possible. The land is invested with considerable affect: gods live in it; it is the ultimate security against privation; family members are buried in it; food and wealth come from it; and it is good in itself, even if not cultivated. While such attitudes are common in yeoman societies, Haiti's history of slavery, and of access to land through revolution, has given a special symbolic significance to landowning. Land is valued above all else and is sometimes held "uneconomically"—that is, even when the capital and labor power to work it are lacking.

Leyburn describes better than any other writer the history of land acquisition by the yeoman after 1804. The French plantations lay in ruins, never to recover, while early authoritarian attempts to restore the prerevolutionary economy under native Haitian leadership soon failed. In the course of a century, the Haitian people laid claim to their own soil, while population growth and the adoption of the French tradition of equal inheritance progressively reduced the average size of holdings. In spite of some plantation development after the United States occupation, most agricultural land in Haiti is still employed in small holdings, and "land reform" in the conventional sense—the breaking-up of large estates and the creation of a class of small landholders—is nearly irrelevant to Haiti's needs.

As today's yeomanry cultivates, so its womenfolk market. Nearly

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133 rains become torrents, washing away crops and soil. Brooks which run most of the year the Haitians dignify by the name of "rivière"; not even the largest, however—the Artibonite, which drains over a fifth of the country—is navigable for anything above a rowboat. The second largest "river," Les Trois Rivières, is only 96 kilometres long. Many of the smaller streams disappear into sinkholes or caves in limestone, veritable lost rivers. Even some of the lakes are ephemeral.

133 Most of the best land of the country lies in its few plains flanking
● 311 the mountains near the coasts, or extending like wedges into the mountainous regions. In the northeast in the country back of Cap-
175 Haïtien is the Plaine du Nord; here in colonial times were the most
[134] flourishing of the French plantations, the palatial residences, and the slaves who in 1791 began the insurrection which ultimately led to Haiti's independence. In the middle region are the Artibonite Plain near the coast, and the Central Plain back of the Black Mountains. Eastward from Port-au-Prince, the capital, is the Cul-de-Sac; and in the southwestern peninsula is the small plain of Les Cayes. All over the country in French days sugar cane grew in abundance, making white men wealthy. The irrigation systems have long since disappeared; fertilizer is far too costly for use; trees have been cut down to make room for hundreds of tiny farms to support the increasing population.

133 Not even all the plains are naturally productive. Many of them, on
134 the contrary, are arid, sterile, and forbidding, covered with cacti and other spiny plants. Indeed, the most arid areas of Haiti, including its salt marshes, are lowlands.

13 Although the country is wholly in the tropics, the usual preconceived notion of the tropics does not apply. There are no impenetrable rain forests or jungles, no wild beasts, and very few snakes.
132 Because of the mountains, there are wide differences in rainfall, soil, and vegetation, within a short distance. Occasional hurricanes do great damage to shipping and the water fronts. Infrequent droughts sometimes last for two or three months. Hailstorms that damage growing crops are fairly common. Taken as a whole, the country has an ample but not heavy rainfall; coming generally from the east and northeast, the trade winds strike the high ridges in the north and there deposit the greater part of their moisture in the Plaine du Nord. By the time they have passed down the western slope and across the Central Plain they are dried and rarefied, so that this region becomes

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can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them. There are some instances of proprietors leasing their lands to persons who undertake to cultivate them, for which they receive about one-third of the produce; but this is far from being general, and I imagine can only be accomplished by military men who have the command of troops, and who are thereby enabled to till them by working parties daily sent out for that purpose.[47]

An interesting side light is provided by a Quaker visitor, Candler, who in 1842 wrote that he was struck by the entire equality which seemed to exist between servant and master. Every workman was addressed in courteous manner, as "*mon fils.*"[48] On inquiry, Candler was told that the profits of planting were good that year, laborers were scarce, and it was therefore "necessary to conciliate all by kindness, or no work would be done."

A particularly grim account of the state of cultivation near the close of Boyer's administration (1842) is given by a Frenchman:

> The fields of Haiti are dead. There where under slavery thousands of tons of sugar were made, now one sees only a few crops and a little syrup to turn into raw rum. Lively growths of cactus cover with thorns the acres of cane, of fields, of pastures deserted by the hand of man; the cactus invades the towns, coming even up to the heart of the cities, flourishing in the midst of ruins, as if to insult the inhabitants. . . . On the one hand, no one cultivates with regularity, because everyone is discouraged by the thefts of cane and fruit by people without any moral discipline, and in a country without police; while on the other hand, people complain of being poor, and of not being able to devote enough money to indispensable improvements. . . . And if the proprietors cannot even make work progress, imagine the condition of the poor![49]

As the people grew individually poorer, the value of the land sank until it was useless for an owner to try to prevent squatting on his estate. Holdings grew smaller and smaller, in spite of the prohibition on sales of real estate in parcels less than fifteen acres. Good land might be had in every part of the island quite cheaply, much of it even from the government which had enacted the restrictive law. Any man not satisfied with his condition as a paid laborer might, if

47. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti* (*Saint Domingo*), (London, 1828), p. 313.
48. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti* (London, 1842), p. 37.
49. V. Schoelcher, *Colonies étrangères et Haïti: résultats de l'émancipation anglaise* (Paris, 1842), II, 263 ff.

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recognized that the really important characteristics peculiar to the peasant are his sentiments and attitudes, the intense attachment to his native soil and family tradition, which, even in the economic sphere, take precedence over the desire for individual advancement and gain."[51] 463 241

Haiti in 1804 was still a country of large estates, and Dessalines and Christophe strove to keep it so. Under the active generosity of Pétion and the passive indifference of Boyer after his Code Rural had failed, few great plantations were left intact. The recorded donations of these two presidents to their generals, civil functionaries, and lesser officers, are as follows:[52] 175 24 423 671 425

134 grants of 150 carreaux (about 450 acres).		Total:	59,300 acres.
176	35	105	18,480
639	30	90	57,510
711	25	75	54,325
2,322	20	60	139,320
8,000	5	15	120,000
		Grand total:	448,935 acres.

Haiti followed French law rather than British, so that the rule of primogeniture did not prevail. It requires only a moment's reflection to see that even within a single generation the thousands of small properties noted in the table would be subdivided many times, since a father apportioned his land to all his sons. By 1842 it is probable that not a single plantation of the size common in colonial times was still intact.[53] On the testimony of numerous government officials and commandants of arrondissements, it was estimated in that year that 46,610 small landed properties were under fair cultivation.[54] If the population at that time be estimated at 800,000, seven eighths of whom were engaged in agriculture, there would accordingly be about fifteen people (including children) to each rural property. But 175 428 178 423 (311) [162]

A large number of small estates are left out of this account, which are said to be *badly* cultivated, or neglected. Taking the number of each separate 175 241

51. C. von Dietze, "Peasantry," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, XII, 50.
52. This table is compiled from figures cited in Armand Thoby, *La Question agraire en Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1888), *passim*, and Dr. P. Dalencour, *Le Sauvetage national par le retour à la terre* (Port-au-Prince, 1923), p. 18.
53. See Raymond Renaud, *Le Régime foncier en Haïti* (Paris, 1934), pp. 42–45.
54. Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 241 family on an average, at 5 persons, husband, wife, and three children, we arrive at the conclusion, that the head of every third family in the state is engaged in cultivating his own freehold; a proportion of independent [311] proprietors, such as perhaps scarcely any other country in the world can [231] exhibit. The number of acres cultivated by these small proprietors, varies from 9 to 30; many of them keep horses, cows, and goats: they raise suffi- [437] cient provisions of the bread kind, such as yams, plantains, and bananas, for the main support of their families; they kill hogs for meat, and they dispose [438] of their coffee, cotton, hemp, castor oil, and fruit, at the public market for money, to purchase clothing, furniture, and other necessaries. The houses [342] they live in, though poorly furnished, are decent habitations; and many of them have gardens attached, neatly fenced in with bamboo, or with log-wood, or aloe hedges.[55]

175 423 427 If these figures are even approximately accurate, the majority of the people of Haiti had not yet become peasants in the sense of being landowners, for in the statement cited only a third of the people owned their land. Another large group, however, possibly a third of the population, were squatters, living on land which technically belonged to someone else but from which they were never ejected. The remaining third, excluding the town and village dwellers, were in the intermediate stage between hirelings and peasants. Some worked for a given rate of wages, but the larger number worked for shares of the produce on the land of large proprietors.

175 473 427 24 The crop-sharing system (Americans of the twentieth century call it share-cropping) of the 'thirties and 'forties was an automatic but temporary adjustment worked out in perfect disregard of the Code Rural. In general, two arrangements prevailed. By one the laborers worked in return for half the total produce of the estate, raising food for themselves in gardens provided by the owner; under the other they worked for a quarter of the produce, the proprietor guaranteeing to keep them in provisions. There was no general concurrence in Haiti at the time as to which plan was the more economical to the laborer and his family. Certainly both schemes were prejudicial to large crops of coffee and sugar, and therefore to the economic prosperity of the proprietors and the state; since this was so, the crop-sharing expedient was short-lived. Workers participating in it lived in the huts and cabins which, under the old régime, had been inhabited by their slave ancestors. As these fell to pieces others, cheaper and less soundly built, were constructed to take their place.

The crop-sharing system, economically debilitating though it was,

55. *Ibid.*

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593
have been gathered from trees which grew wild. Both men and 241
women labor, with the work divided according to regular custom 439
between the sexes, the men dominating the scene only in the marketing of coffee.

134
Nature was opulent enough at the beginning of Haitian independence. The wars had ruined irrigation ditches, sugar refineries, 311
and mechanical equipment, but the soil was still abundantly fertile. But generations of farming by people without knowledge of fertilization or soil conservation have worn out much of the land. Trees have been cut to provide lumber and clearings for more farms; in the rainy seasons torrents have coursed down the mountainsides, washing away soil and exposing the earth to the rays of a tropical sun. Because the country is overpopulated every available acre is put to 311
use, and to overuse, thus still more depleting the land. It is a vicious circle, for the next generation must extract yet more from the earth and so weaken it further. Hard work is the lot of the peasant, therefore, during every month of the year except the dry season. There 241
has never been a formal rotation of crops: a farmer continues to plant the same crop in the same field until the harvest is perceptibly smaller than before. Then he changes to another type of produce. Sooner or later he will allow the land to lie fallow for several years until, by the action of nature or the grazing over it of cattle, it has regained a measure of its fertility.

241
The strenuous work of clearing fields and preparing them for cultivation is man's job. Since the peasants owned their plots it has 574
almost always been done in coöperation by the men of the neighborhood. What on the American frontier would have been called a 476
"bee" is known in Haiti as a *coumbite*, or *combite*, often carried on as an enterprise of the local *Société Congo*, the informal neighborhood group for mutual aid and fellowship.[6]

A man who has a large job on hand announces a coumbite for any [527]
day except Sunday, always a day of rest, and whatever other week-

6. The word "coumbite" was apparently borrowed from the Spanish part of the [192]
island, and from the Spanish word *convidar*, convey. In Colombia "convite" means exactly what "coumbite" means in Haiti: a gathering of peasants to work in common, or else a coöperative society for mutual agricultural self-help.

Professor Herskovits (*Life in a Haitian Valley*, chap. IV) describes the Société Congo [114]
in detail. The use of the name "Congo" indicates the African tradition, and is particu- [192]
larly noteworthy in connection with a kind of coöperative work which Herskovits finds particularly Dahomean.

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105 to regard the people as neighbors, their first impression is generally
13 their abiding one.

And yet the land has its memorable beauties. To lie at anchor in
13 the harbor at Port-au-Prince early in the morning and watch the long arm of the southern peninsula turn gradually from purple vagueness to brilliant green as the sun rises back of the capital; to see a tiny ship with its patched and colored sail glide quietly by on its way out to the island of La Gonâve, lying twenty miles to the west, like a morsel about to be swallowed by the open jaws of the "mainland"; to hear the morning noises drifting across the water, with a snatch of song or laughter in the air; to watch Port-au-Prince come to life, white and sparkling as the sun strikes it—this is the proper introduction to Haiti. Beyond the capital are the hills and mountains; if one will take the time, he may look back as he climbs and see not only the whiteness of the city, but the gracious sweep of the harbor, and the peninsula losing itself in the western distance. He will think without apology of a lesser Naples, and will not miss Vesuvius. Within the country is every variety of scenery: high mountains whose peaks are frequently shrouded in misty clouds; ranges of lower mountains ("*morne*" is the eloquent Haitian name for them) which can be melancholy, kindly, or forbidding, as the spirit of the traveler wills; dull wastes of salt marshes; arid deserts where cactus grows, spiked and hairy, to enormous heights; canyons, waterfalls, dried-up streams; moors, little jungles, farms; rich plantations of sugar cane, dusty stretches of sheer barrenness—everything, in fact, from majesty to complete insipidity. Rarely can one find such utter diversity in a small space as in Haiti. One might fancy himself successively on Egdon Heath, in an Arizona desert, among the Dakota Bad Lands, in old Saint-Domingue, in tropical Africa, in the Pyrenees.

361 The sad truth remains: nothing that man has done in Haiti for a
[342] century and a quarter has been worthy of the landscape. A few government buildings in Port-au-Prince are passable, and the city as a whole is not a blemish; yet not to have seen it is to have missed no great aesthetic experience. Elsewhere the towns and villages run the gamut from monotonous small-scale structures to mere collections
● 311 of shanties. Great gashes have been cut in the forests by generations of earth-hungry peasants who needed farms. Much of the land looks poor; indeed, thousands of once fertile acres are now beyond any use at all, grown up in cactus, because of overuse and misuse for-

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●311 merly. Wherever the overcrowded Haitians have lived since 1815, there beauty has had to give way to gnawing necessity which lacked either the imagination or the means to be sightly.

105 One can stand upon a morne and watch a rain storm rush down the valley, bending the palm trees in its fury, and think Haiti still a magnificent sight. Then one must descend the mountainside past rickety shacks and rocky fields, and the feeling grows that not all the kindly simplicity of the people is enough to lift the country from its [134] dilapidation. As he nears the village, the afternoon scent of roasting coffee will delight him; but then he sees the squalor of village life and is reminded that three million souls are here trying to eke out an existence upon a small area of declining fertility.

Much in Haiti is picturesque if one can keep his mind from wandering to the conditions which lie behind the picturesqueness. [482] Women stride down from the hills with great loads on their heads; [443] aged crones, pipe in mouth, sit perched on the haunches of tiny donkeys with their bulging panniers; the great market square in the [492] town is a scene of noisy confusion with hundreds of women and [482] children, a mixture of smells, thousands of little piles of soap, candy, gewgaws, vegetables, gaping chickens tied together by the feet, [434] shirts, canes, bolts of cloth. All the weary women, however, must [146] trudge back up to their shanties on the mountainside when the market is over. Many of them do not see ten dollars in cash during the year, and their little children, with bellies bulging, give evidence [164] of undernourishment. Without doctors, without even the rudiments of hygiene, they manage somehow to subsist, or else die, frequently of disease which might easily have been prevented.

565 In Port-au-Prince and a few other towns live enough members of the élite to make one momentarily forget the plight of the masses. [342] The houses of the well-to-do are substantially built, if not often [351] attractive. Their garden walls are brilliant with bougainvillea, their walks with hibiscus. Tiny red lizards (analis) make flashes of color along the walls. On shady verandas and in the parlors one hears delightful conversation, eats excellent food, savors the pleasures of [575] civilization. The clubs of the élite are pleasing, their tennis is good, [526] their dancing graceful. To be among these families as a welcome guest is an experience in gracious hospitality which can never be [535] forgotten. Too soon, however, one must leave these havens of urbanity and pass through districts of the town which haunt the mind with their grim want.

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3. *Pétion, Boyer, and Inginac as Administrators*

Pétion lived very simply in the South, like a plain republican magistrate. He sat on his piazza, accessible to all his people. He had a quiet way of answering his opponents which did not make enemies of them. He made his secretary answer every letter that arrived, no matter how small; many were simply inquiries about the President's health. Yet the wars between Pétion and Christophe dragged on from 1807 to 1812,[8] draining the finances of the republic. Not only the crops declined: so also did most of the public improvements instituted by the colonial planters; so did trade; so did habits of industry. Everything seemed to conspire against hard work. The rich plains of the Cul-de-Sac and the Artibonite Valley were ravaged by fire and warfare; necessary equipment for sugar making was destroyed, the money for new machines and buildings was unavailable; and the men were drawn away from their land by military duties.

Inginac, Boyer's secretary of state, after the Revolution of 1843 had got rid of both the President and his secretary, wrote his memoirs. There are some revealing passages. Inginac reports that Pétion told him only forty days before his death that Boyer was a man of probity and delicacy, "but unhappily he is petulant; he is too [illegible] dominate, and he will bring unhappiness to the country if he does not change."[9] Inginac cites cases to show that Pétion's prophecy was correct. Boyer in 1820 repealed the most unpopular laws, particularly those requiring personal corvée and the repair of public roads; but instead of taking advice from his cabinet on important economic matters, he frequently announced that he was president and would not be run by anybody. Consequently, according to Inginac, he made mistakes which might have been avoided.[9] Defending himself, the former secretary offers a clue to the failure of the régime—possibly unavoidable—by showing that the administration merely suggested, did not require, action:

"Have I not constantly, not only preached and corresponded about the necessity of making agriculture prosperous, but also given work at as high wages as the treasury could afford: Have I not created habitations on lands formerly totally uncultivated, putting formerly idle men to work: Have I not published at my own expense, although I directed the National Printery, methods for cultivating tobacco and coffee plants, of which I distributed gratis several thousand copies?"[10]

In spite of all encouragement which the administration could offer, agricultural production continued to decline, while expenses increased, and external trade fell off from a third to a half. The government had to borrow from the banking firm of Lafitte in France to find even the interest for

8. Hostilities between the two parts of Haiti ceased about 1812 because of the mutual fear on the part of Christophe and Pétion of Napoleon's ascendancy, and the threat which this continued to the whole former colony. Their war had ravaged the plantations and removed laborers from the soil. Then came the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain, cutting off many of the supplies which Haiti drew from both countries. There was accordingly an unwritten truce, with no further hostilities. A neutral territory of ten leagues between the boundaries of the two states was tacitly agreed upon: neither army was to enter it. This was the rich plain of Boucassin, once the garden of the island, now a wilderness.

9. Joseph Balthazar Inginac, *Memoirs* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1843), pp. 32, 34, 38.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

payments due to the French government.

2: Courlander 9-6 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

rather starve than work. An Englishman, James Franklin, wrote in 1828, for example:

> Experiments may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coercion and want will impel the Haytian to labour; and I have my doubts as to the practicability of enforcing labour in Hayti until the people have been better instructed, and their characters become changed.

As Franklin summarized it: "Nature is too generous to the Haytian; he never wants, and so never works for hire, as do free labourers in other countries."

The early nineteenth century saw a flood of such bitter comments about the remains of the once rich and flourishing French colony of St. Domingue. The vast productivity of Haiti under French rule had made that colony one of the richest in the New World. The country was dotted with sugar mills, brick-covered wells, and warehouses; and carefully built brick aqueducts, irrigation canals, locks, and dams assured water for the plantations. In 1790, under the slave system, Haiti had exported 163,000,000 pounds of sugar. In 1826, a quarter of a century after the revolution, it was reported to have exported 33,000 pounds.

This falling off in production and exports doubtless had many causes, but one of the most significant was the Haitian's revolt not only against slavery but also against continuing the same kind of work he had performed as a slave. He saw not too much difference between forced, unpaid labor and working for any large landholder at subsistence wages. To the Haitian slave the inspiring battle cry of the French Revolution did not mean that all men would work together on another's man plantation and receive the same wages. It meant that every man would have his own garden to work for himself as he chose; every man would be a full citizen, with land of his own, free to come and go, to plant what he wished, to sell what he could. Despite long years under a colonial slave system, the Haitian still remembered a different way of life in Africa, where mass production for export was not the primary objective of labor.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the population of Haiti was not much more than half a million—less than one sixth of what it is today. There was plenty of land, and much of it had not yet been wasted by constant tilling and erosion. When the French were driven out, the Haitian peasant re-created an economic world of his own liking. The plantation system which had poured out sugar and coffee and indigo for Europe faded away, and in its place there sprang up an agrarian system which has continued until the present day. In the early

[Franklin, The Present State of Hayti, p. 362. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

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[P 112-AA]

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[789] 37. *A small graveyard in the mountains at Furcy. The little alcoves in the tombs are for food offerings on special anniversaries.*

312

[776] 38. *Stone and brick covering of spring on Morne l'Hôpital believed to have been constructed in colonial times. Many persons have testified that here the voices of the lwa have been heard bubbling up with the water.*

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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be given to Haiti for vast rubber plantings.[11] Opposition to Lescot comes chiefly from those who consider him too friendly with the Dominicans who killed hundreds of Haitian workers in 1937, Lescot having figured prominently in negotiations that led to the Dominican government's agreement to pay indemnities to Haiti for the slaughter.

Reviewing the whole course of Haitian history, the field of politics seems to have marshaled itself behind a few regularities. In every case there have been voices raised to protest, yet the ruling clique, whatever its grouping, has effectively supported these characteristic political customs:

1. Complete dominance of political life by the president. Strong men seem to be necessary to rule ignorant masses. Even the revolutions precipitated by parties campaigning for parliamentarianism have, when successful, become governments by the president. This concentration of power in one man's hands makes the next revolution possible, for it is easier to overthrow one man than to eliminate a party based upon wide suffrage and diffused responsibility.

2. The inferior position of cabinet ministers. These have resembled neither European nor American secretaries of state in their responsibilities, but have been little more than clerks appointed by the president to serve as heads of a bureau. The treasurer-general, for example, during most of Haiti's history has merely received the moneys, while the president disbursed them. The secretary-general has neither originated nor conducted the details of public policy. Often as not, the minister has made a convenient whipping boy when the president has got himself involved in internal or foreign complications: by demanding the minister's resignation the president remained unscathed.

3. The unimportance of the legislature. It has made useful patron-

11. The European War, threatening the supply of rubber coming to the United States from British Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies, has made the American government seek new sources. The Department of Agriculture established an experimental station and breeding gardens for rubber plants in Haiti, and the results were so successful that extensive areas were planted with rubber trees. Haiti and the United States in May, 1941, reached a long-term agreement for "the development of agriculture and commerce"; the projects embraced under the agreement include not only rubber but the further development of Haiti's banana plantations, the planting of oil crops, drug plants, spices, fiber plants, the stimulation of handicraft industries, and the development of forestry resources peculiar to the tropics. A further extension of an additional $300,000 in credits will be made for use on highways, irrigation projects, and to provide transportation facilities for the areas to be planted to rubber trees.

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fires in their houses at night to keep out the damp cold that sweeps through the passes. And a man on the trail before dawn may wear a blanket over his head and carry a glowing ember with him for warmth.

On the south coast there are sometimes hurricanes and tidal waves, and many a small fishing boat and grass-covered house has been washed away in these storms. But the great mountains of the southern range deflect the winds, so that to the north their full fury is never known.

In the great Bay of Gonaïves the fishing boats sail out at night with the friendly winds that carry them to the fishing grounds of the island of La Gonave, and they return to the shore with their catches in the morning, or in the afternoon with the setting sun. The sailing boats from the tiny fishing village called Ville Matelot each day pass the deserted islet named Isle à Cabrit, where four Indian camps once stood. Today Isle à Cabrit is only a waterless, denuded place, a hunting ground for Carib and Arawak pottery and carved stone images.

In the frontier lakes of the Cul-de-Sac Plain there are wild ducks and alligators. Here the villagers fish with nets from rafts and dugout canoes. Now and then an iguana is seen, but there is little other game, because the edible wildlife of the country was long ago eaten by hungry people.

For the things that grow wild the Haitian is grateful—the avocado, the mango, the cashew, and the cotton which once planted produces again and again each year. He is grateful for the coconut palms, the calabash tree, the gourd vines, and the medicinal herbs that grow on every side. But the gifts of nature are not prolific. Most of the great stands of timber—lignum vitae, mahogany, dyewood and pine—have been cut away. Once fertile garden spots have dried up, and the soil that produces the yams, the pumpkins, the kaffir, and the rice is tired.

But the Haitian himself is not tired. He has suffered from malaria, yaws, and chronic hunger; yet out of the great old mountains of Haiti he has fashioned a way of life and a nation.

The Haitian of today was created out of the fabric of three continents—Africa, America, and Europe. He was shaped out of the plains and hills of Nigeria, Dahomey, and the Congo; the summers and winters of Europe; and the mountains and mountain mists of Haiti itself. He is the synthesis of the folk beliefs of the French and Spanish peasants, the Yoruba and the Arada of West Africa, and perhaps of the Carib Indians with whom he had close contact during his first days in the New World. He has brought into affinity the religious practices of Africa and the beliefs of the Church of Rome. He is outwardly simple and poor, but inwardly he is a complicated and rich man. He is rich in music, in the capacity for spiritual expression, in tradition, in folklore, and in memories. He has been able

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any usual measure. But Haitians do produce by traditional craft methods a surprisingly large number of the articles they need for daily life. In the countryside it is possible to see many persons engaged, mostly on a part-time basis, in craft activities and home industry that have their roots in the prerevolutionary era. Leatherworkers operating small, crude tanneries still flourish. Charcoal-burners, and operators of small lime kilns that produce building material, are found in every village. Smiths make and repair simple tools, working with forges of archaic design. Combs are made from cows' horns and tortoiseshell, buttons from bone; carrying-bags, fish traps, and a wide variety of baskets from withes, bamboo strips, and grasses; wooden bowls, mortars and pestles, tool handles and spoons from local woods; dippers, pots, and candelabra from tin cans; and sandals from tires and inner tubes. Sawyers cut and dress timber; cabinetmakers still manufacture simple furniture of traditional design from the fast-disappearing tropical woods; many women, working either with the simplest sorts of sewing machines or by hand, make clothing for use and for sale. Along the coasts there are dugout-makers, shipbuilders, and sail- and seine-makers. Simple mattresses, fabricated from local grasses, are sold in every large marketplace, as are crude ceramic wares made by local potters. At the start of the twentieth century, Italian immigrants brought a sturdy tradition of cobbling to Haiti, which has been destroyed only recently by the flood of American imported shoes with their attached prestige, until recently, *vitièlo* was a colloquial term for shoe, coming from the name of the most famous of those Italian cobblers.

One of the striking features of Haiti's craft traditions is its relative stability since the revolution. It was under slavery that Haitians first became "westernized," learning what were then standard French craft practices, adjusted to local colonial conditions, probably with some modifying features coming from the African past. It was before the revolution that the Haitian people learned and stabilized their consumer tastes, agricultural and craft standards, and work procedures. Such preferences and standards were worked out primarily in terms of the demands of the plantation regime itself; but even the most repressive social system leaves some opportunity for acculturation. Today's sugar-making shops and rural rum distilleries employ techniques centuries old and little modified over time. Housebuilding and woodworking techniques in the countryside are substantially

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[P. 112-I]

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[314]

13. *Donkey with a load of charcoal. Where the terrain is not too rugged, donkeys or small horses do some of the carrying. The making of charcoal has helped to denude the mountains of their forests.*

534 [177] the Haitian word for "twins." They are used primarily for secular music of the Cuban type, and may in fact be an importation from Cuba. The marassa is one of the few drums on which a finger technique is used; that is, striking with individual fingers rather than with grouped fingers. Marassas are often played in concert with guitars and marimbas.

The *basse* is the shallow finger drum resembling what in the United States is called the tambourine. Constructed in the pattern of an African prototype, its head is usually fifteen or eighteen inches in diameter and made of goatskin. Small metal disks sometimes are inserted in the frame [314] [237] to act as rattles. The head is kept well coated with resin or beeswax and is tapped and rubbed with the fingers. The *basse* is used only for secular music, except in the rare instances when it is used in Congo services. Some Haitians believe that the name of the instrument comes from the word *Basque*.

534 202 It is reported that signal drums were still in use a decade ago in remote sections of the southwestern peninsula. One of these instruments, according to description, is distinguished mainly by its large belly and small mouth; like the Juba drum, it is played on its side. Another style of signal drum has a slit in the side and is played erect, much like an African slit-log drum standing on end.

534 [171] Another percussion instrument is the bamboo stamping tube, called the *ganbo* or *ti kanmbo*. It is African in origin and probably takes its name from the Loango term for the same device, *dikanmbo*.[2] The stamping tube is simply a length of bamboo, open at one end and closed at the other by a natural joint membrane. The closed end is struck sharply upon the ground, and the tone comes from the open top. The device works like an inverted drum, the closed end functioning like a drumhead. A battery of four or five ganbos may provide the percussion music otherwise played by drums. The musician corresponding to the *bulatier* of the drum orchestra plays two small stamping tubes, one in each hand. The other musicians have one each, thicker and longer than the bulatier's and producing deeper tones. Cupped hands are manipulated over the open ends for varying the sounds. This instrument [171] has survived in various parts of the New World where Africans were settled, particularly other West Indian islands, Brazil, and Venezuela. In Venezuela the stamping tubes are called *quitiplas*.[3] They have recently been reported from various areas of West Africa, including French Equatorial Africa.[4]

534 648 798 The ganbos had a singular burst of popularity in Haiti during the United States military occupation of the country after the first World War, when drums were often seized and destroyed. Drums could not [115]

[2] [Informant: Joseph Lengo, Brazzaville. Cf. P 354, Category 116. --Analyst]

[3] [Library of Congress album, Folk Music of Venezuela. Cf P 354 Category 116. --Analyst]

[4] [Pamphlet accompanying recording, Music of Equatorial Africa (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1950). Cf. P 354, Cat. 116. --Analyst]

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South in general had the most loyal feeling toward a government which had been benevolently generous to them. A blend of the two might have been fruitful. 175 642 643

It was not any want of patriotism that caused Boyer to miss his great opportunity but rather a defect of ability. Desiring, like Pétion, to lead rather than to drive his people, he nevertheless lacked even more than his former chief the force of personality which might have persuaded them to work hard for the greater glory of Haiti. Despising the brutal compulsion exercised by Dessalines and Christophe, which he regarded as savage and too closely resembling the earlier methods of slave owners; wishing to emulate solely the gentleness of his predecessor, Boyer hoped for a number of years that his people would become industrious of their own accord. His hopes were frustrated. During his twenty-five-year presidency the mass of Haitians became so indifferent to pecuniary inducements that little work could be got from them beyond that required to produce necessary food. As commerce declined, the President was driven to fresh issues of debased currency and to the opening of mines in different parts of the country, though he knew that the richest mine Haiti possessed was its still fertile soil. 175 433 [652] [316]

For the first seven years Boyer pursued a policy based on hopeful expectation, refusing to inaugurate any of the forceful measures of his black predecessors. But by 1823 the treasury, enriched though it had been by the surplus from Christophe's exchequer, was empty; in 1824 disbursements exceeded income. Convinced in 1825 that his *laissez-faire* policy was failing to produce results, he decided to heed the insistent counsel of those (including most of the aristocratic, landholding class) who advised the reëstablishment of a coercive system of agriculture. His officials showed him that nowhere in the country were sugar plantations any longer being cultivated on a great scale—except for a few estates run by government officials who could command the forced labor of convicts. The policy of offering cultivators a fourth of the total crop of a plantation as wages was luring practically no laborers to work.[37] Even the few owners who offered the fourth plus daily wages had no success. Quite simply, the average Haitian preferred to be his own master, working only when he wished, and particularly working only for himself and his family. 175 652 24 433 466

37. This fourth in wages must not be confused with the quarter in taxes abolished by Pétion. See page 46 for a discussion of the quarter-crop wage system.

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175 Boyer carried on Pétion's policy of no taxation. It was not until the American
657 Occupation that Haitians could be said to be taxed. Ninety per cent of the state's
income between 1900 and 1915 regularly came from tariffs, and only ten per cent
[652] from internal taxes. Even the efforts of the Americans, resulting in the laws of 1924 and 1928, were on the whole restricted to a few excise taxes. A land tax was hopeless, due to the utter confusion of titles and the stubborn impassivity of peasant squatters.[5]

2. *Monetary Policy of Pétion and Boyer*

175 The monetary situation in Haiti was chaotic in its early days. The gold money
652 of France, Spain, England, and the United States circulated, as did small French coins, and the coins and paper money created by the Haitian rulers, who had complete control over money. For example, Pétion decreed[6] an increase in the value of the *gourde d'Espagne* from 8 livres 5 sols, to 9 livres; of the French *écu* of 6 francs from 9 livres to 9 livres 15 sols; and the 5 franc écu from 7 livres 10 sols to 8 livres 5 sols; this almost doubled the value of money in circulation. He also struck small coins to replace the pieces of 30, 24, 15, 12, and 6 sols of France. His small coins were merely token money.[7] The paper currency created by Pétion and so easily counterfeited has been mentioned.

[433] Boyer was continually in financial perplexities. Production was declining while expenditures had to be radically increased on account of the settlement with France in 1825. Boyer's budget was not a large one judged by modern standards, the average expenditure each year being about $5,000,000. To meet this, customs duties on imports and exports brought in about $2,200,000 annually; territorial duties on produce, houses, patents or licenses, market fees, and the like, a similar
[316] sum; but some half-million dollars had to be borrowed each year. The government hoped to get something from developing mines in the Spanish part of the island,
[425] but this hope failed. It was thought also that the sale of government lands might bring in some revenue, but few people wanted to invest money, when they had it,
[454] in land, with agricultural affairs developing as they were and no way of making
[465] people work: investment in trade was more promising. The national treasury was so empty that both the civil and military officials were poorly paid. It was fre-
[661] quently said that almost all administrators and persons in authority were open to bribery. Meantime the number of civil servants was increasing: there was a swarm
[647] of hirelings and subalterns in every commune, like a host of vampires. By their lack of honesty, conscientiousness, and efficiency, immense sums were lost annually to the treasury.

5. See the *Report of the American High Commissioner* (1929), p. 19.

6. May 4, 1808.

7. *Pétion voyant s'échapper de ses États les gourdes qu'effrayaient ses démêlés avec Christophe, eut pour les retenir l'ingénieuse idée d'y pratiquer une trouée. Ce moyen était trop efficace pour ne pas réussir, et il était trop simple pour que l'emploi n'en fut pas généralisé au moins par un équivalent. Ainsi, lorsqu'il en vint à battre monnaie, le chef de l'état du Sud descendit le titre de sa gourde à peu près au titre de la gourde espagnole tarée par son emporte-pièce. Il lui donne 858 millièmes de fin.*" Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, II, 194.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

machetes, circles, mortar shapes, and so on—each with its own specific meaning. Sometimes the vèvè becomes openly pictorial, and there emerges a ship for the loa Agwé, snakes for Damballa and Ayida, a bull for the loa Taureau, a knapsack for the loa Azaka, or even a portrait of a deity, perhaps smoking a pipe or holding a sword. 788 532

The vèvè is not a permanent record. It is made as an act of supplication or veneration, and once it is finished it has no further value. In the ensuing ritual and dance, the vèvè is obliterated by the feet that pass across it. At the hands of one houngan, this invocational act results in a crude, even childlike, design. At the hands of another, it produces a drawing of beauty, integration, and highly developed form.

The drum-making craft, too, has offered an unbroken sequence of opportunity for satisfying artistic urges. The drum has a traditional form that cannot be tampered with; its shape is predetermined by its function, by the log from which it is hewn, and by existing standards. And yet, the drum maker has found it an object on which he can devise new decorative motifs, and he may even give it personal uniqueness. Some drums have styles that may be associated with specific regions of the country, others bear the stamp of the individual artist. Paint has been used on Haitian drums for a hundred years or more as a complement to carving. One assotor drum dating from the earliest days of the Republic, and now preserved in a collection owned by the Bureau of Ethnology in Port-au-Prince, is decorated with a medallion showing the Haitian coat of arms, grenadiers, red and yellow snakes, and a sun with a face. This magnificent instrument, apparently the only one of its age and kind to have survived the years, is one of Haiti's art treasures. 178 534 531

The *conis*, or calabash bowl, of the hounfor rites is another object which is decorated with motifs. Abstract designs, ritual symbols, and sometimes human and animal figures are painted on the inner or concave surface of the bowl. 322 531 [532]

The rural traditional arts of Haiti have had a belated impact on the arts of the city. Within the past fifteen years there have appeared a number of painters, sculptors in wood and ceramics, and ironworkers who constitute an art movement sometimes referred to as the Haitian "renaissance." Many of these artists draw heavily on national lore and legend for inspiration and subject matter. Some of them are men who came only recently from villages or distant farms. Their work adorns many public buildings in Port-au-Prince and is eagerly sought by art collectors. Members of the elite class who once looked with embarrassment on the "primitive" countryside are finding increasing respect for the potentialities of their country cousins. 184 531 532 32 [571]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

fact that a family will often strike out for itself, deserting the parental home, show a European independence foreign to native African thought. Yet the arrangement of meal-times, and the fact that a wife rarely eats with her husband, are African, as are the modes of correction, especially the feeling that flogging with a stick is the best disciplinary method. Indeed, the characteristic snap of the fingers employed by the Haitian to indicate a beating is exactly that which is used in Dahomey to signify beheading! In the attitude toward children African traditions have been warped by European custom, which has introduced a certain hardness of feeling that, whatever the cost, children must be brought in line with social convention, together with a resulting harshness of treatment that is anything but African.

Another important facet of Haitian life in which the effect of contact is telling includes art and recreational activities. Perhaps because of the conditions of slavery, or the difficulties of life after independence had been attained, much of these forms of African tradition has been lost, not to be replaced by corresponding borrowings from European sources. Wood-carving, an outstanding element in the æsthetic life of West Africa, is almost entirely absent. Near Mirebalais lives a man who can carve a pipe in the likeness of a human face, but there is no similarity between the products of his craft and West African figurines or masks, and he is thought of as an unusual person whose carving is an interesting but not socially significant avocation. It was stated, though without adequate corroboration, that before the Marine occupation Mirebalais boasted *vodun* drums on which heads " like the ones on these pipes " had been carved. Today the only form of decorative work in wood to be seen is the scroll-work designs which act as ventilating devices over doorways. They are done with the jigsaws of the carpenters, and no fertility of conception or felicity in composition marks these artistically crude efforts.

Other African crafts, which, though essentially utilitarian

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

is ruled by God, it is necessary to invoke God with the ritual of His Church before the rites to placate the *loa* may begin. But the important business of the occasion is to placate the *loa*, and it is only when the *hungan* takes over from the *prêt' savanne* that the series of rituals commence which, for the Haitian, hold emotional force and psychological value.

In the description of the baptism of a *loa* given in a preceding chapter, the use of Church ritual in bringing the African spirits under control will be remembered. No clearer illustration can be given of this merging of traditions than in a detailed account of the manner of making and validating *vodun* drums. These drums are of the characteristic African hollow-log type, with skin heads held in place and tuned by means of pegs, which are tied fast about the drumhead with cord. Before the tree which furnished the bodies was cut, an invocation was pronounced by their maker and an offering — a *mangé sec* — was made, that all the gods might come when called by the finished drums. A candle was lighted and *verver* described about the base of the tree. Eggs, broken against the trunk, were rubbed on the bark; while both soft and alcoholic drinks were given as libations, since not all the gods desire the same refreshment. After the tree had been felled and that part of the trunk that was needed for the drums was cut off, the maker was free to proceed with shaping the bodies of the drums by first gouging out the inside of the trunk, then stripping the bark, and finally carving the characteristic foot at the base. Before the next step of boring the holes for the pegs was taken, *clairin* was poured inside each drum, at the entrance to the habitation of the maker, and toward the man's cornfield. The first hole bored in each drum was carefully marked, for this was the significant *manman*. Here the first peg is inserted; the skin head is first attached here; and here the cord about the head is first knotted; while it is the peg in this hole that must always be first struck when the completed drum is tuned.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-II]

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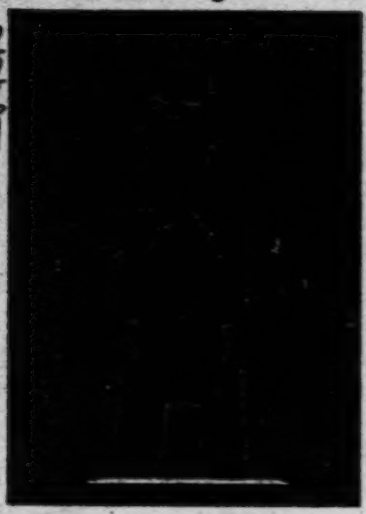

57. *Old wood carving of an unidentified deity, from a hounfor near Léogane. It is startlingly similar to the African carving shown in no. 58.*

58. *A wood carving from the Bambala tribe, western Belgian Congo. (Collection of Segy Gallery.)*

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59. *Carvings of more recent date, representing the loa of twins, from a hounfor in southern Haiti. Height, 12 and 14 inches.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-JJ]

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60. *A carved cane head from the southwestern mountains.*

61. *Detail of a wood carving made about 1930 in the region of Port-au-Prince, representing the loa Loko. Work of this kind in mahogany has in the past thirty years deteriorated into neo-"African" carvings made for the tourist trade.*

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62. *A cayembouque. Cut from a single calabash, the two parts fit together tightly to form a single container. Some cayembouques are a foot or more tall. Height, 8 inches.*

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63. *Terra-cotta figurines from the Cap Haïtien region.*

64. *Detail of a dye-painted burlap cloth. Animal and flower figures and geometric designs are used interchangeably.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-K]

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16. Man with a machete making a wari board. The machete is used for cutting trees, trimming brush, weeding gardens, fashioning wooden objects such as drums and mortars, and many other purposes.

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17. Winnowing grain with a woven tray.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

And when the revolution came he produced for the Haitian armies 175
knives, gun parts, and wheels to transport cannon. By the tens of thou- 178
sands he made ingeniously devised metal objects to be thrown on the 326
roads, before the French cavalry troops—objects so shaped that, no 648
matter how they fell, a single sharp point stood erect to cripple the enemy horses. Yet knowledge of the West African uses of iron did not altogether disappear, and during the first century of independence the Haitian blacksmith created many old-style knives, spears, and ritual objects for the cult temple.

Even today, some of this old-style work is to be found in hounfors in 326
the southwestern peninsula. One may see simple or ornate iron standards, 178
made to support ceremonial offerings or candles, strikingly similar to 178
standards in ancestral shrines in Dahomey. There are iron bells, both [184]
single and double, made in pure West African style; ornate ritual swords [534]
and sabers which are the crests of certain deities; coiled and uncoiled [171]
iron serpents representing the gods Damballa and Ayida; and stylized [176]
or semirealistic portraits of the deities. Many of these old pieces are nineteenth-century survivals; others have been forged within the past decade. [2]

An over-all impression of Haitian material culture is that artistic 322
decoration is almost entirely absent and that the prime emphasis is 531
on utility. Wooden cooking spoons are efficient in form, but missing from them is the delicate decorative carving often found in West Africa. The long wooden washing bowl, or *gamelle*, and the wooden mortar in which grain is pulverized are likewise clean-cut but stark and plainly utilitarian. Clay bowls, bottles, and storage jars are usually of simple, 323
uniform design, with only accidental variations; there is little use of glazes, and the clay is often heavy and thick. Should there be a wari 524
gameboard in the peasant hut, the chances are that it is roughly made, 322
without legs or carved designs. Dugout canoes are usually crude in ap- 501
pearance, heavy and thick-walled, and irregular in form.

Yet there are many evidences—though one must seek them out—that 531
esthetic impulses are quite alive. The gay peasant straw knapsack, or [317]
alfor, without which no mountain man makes a journey, has a charm [182]
and grace that is not diminished by familiarity and cheapness. Dec- [285]
orated with sisal braid and tassels, and colored with green and magenta [386]
dyes, each *alfor* on close inspection appears to be unique. In some com- 531
munities in the south and southwest, burlap squares also are painted 353
with these traditional dyes. About forty inches across, and made of sugar [184]
bags, these paintings swarm with geometric patterns and sometimes with figures of flowers and animals. They are purely decorative, being

[2] [See plates 42-51, pp. 112-DD—112-FF.—Analyst]

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1968) 1960 SV3 Hait SV3

used for wall hangings much as appliquéd cloths are used in Dahomey. Near Cap Haitien, in the north, ceramic workers make crude clay figurines of roosters, pigs, dogs, cows, and people. The "purpose" of these figurines is obscure, but it is likely that they are intended for use in Vodoun ritual, a number of them having been observed in hounfors in the vicinity of the town of Grande Rivière du Nord. In some mountain villages, canes carved with animal and human heads are commonly seen. Nor is the tradition of carving gourds and calabashes, popular in various regions of West Africa, altogether forgotten. The *cayambonque*, a divided calabash with the top ingeniously cut to fit into the lower part so as to form a sealed container, is sometimes covered with carved geometric designs, usually crude and haphazard but on occasion meticulous. Until recent years the common *cha-cha*, or gourd rattle, was similarly carved.

Most of the visible traditional art is to be found in the environs of the cult temple. The inner walls of many hounfors are covered with ritual designs and symbols and portraits of the deities. On the altar, sometimes, crude wood carvings of deities are seen, along with forged iron objects, carved [illegible] bowls, and grotesquely shaped drumsticks known as *baguettes guinée*. All the wooden objects are characterized by a plainness that relegates them to the category of purely functional and expendable things. The wood carving of a deity is not an image, it is a representation; it can be sold or otherwise disposed of, even thrown away if infested with beetles, and another object can be used to replace it. The only concern of the cult priest in this matter is that the deity concerned should understand the situation properly and not take offense. Thus there is no strong feeling that the wood carving should be a realistic representation or that it should be "beautiful." One relatively antique wood carving, completely West African in style, was found some years ago in a hounfor near Léogane and is now in the collection of the Musée du Peuple Haitien in Port-au-Prince (see fig. 57).

One of the most flourishing arts of the hounfor is the *vèvè*, or ritual drawing made on the earth in the course of a service. Most commonly these beautiful and ornate designs are made with white meal or flour, and in a few of the cults, primarily the Pétro, lampblack and red brick dust are also used. The vèvè is made by the houngan or the mambo. With sure, practiced movements, the cult priest allows the meal to trickle through his fingertips onto the ground where the rites are taking place, usually in the peristyle of the hounfôr itself. The drawings he makes are composed of a multiplicity of cabalistic symbols—heart shapes, stars, interlocked V's, flags, abstract phallic forms, crosses, swords,

2: Courlander B-1 (1937-1950) 1963 SV3 Haiti SV3

machetes, circles, mortar shapes, and so on—each with its own specific meaning. Sometimes the vèvè becomes openly pictorial, and there emerges a ship for the loa Agwé, snakes for Damballa and Ayida, a bull for the loa Taureau, a knapsack for the loa Azaka, or even a portrait of a deity, perhaps smoking a pipe or holding a sword. 78 59 532

The vèvè is not a permanent record. It is made as an act of supplication or veneration, and once it is finished it has no further value. In the ensuing ritual and dance, the vèvè is obliterated by the feet that pass across it. At the hands of one houngan, this invocational act results in a crude, even childlike, design. At the hands of another, it produces a drawing of beauty, integration, and highly developed form.

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The *coui*, or calabash bowl, of the houngfor rites is another object which is decorated with motifs. Abstract designs, ritual symbols, and sometimes human and animal figures are painted on the inner or concave surface of the bowl. 322 531 [532]

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2. Courlander B-6 (1937-1943) 1960 HV3 Hait HV3

534 322 [412] of drum making is a very skilled one, but the tools are The craft simple: chisels, machetes, and fire. The core of the log is removed by burning and gouging, and the outside is shaped with a machete, or sometimes a hatchet. The wood is selected and processed carefully. Firing of the core of the log depends a great deal on how dry the wood is, for the wood must burn slowly. It is believed that wood cut at the right stage of growth and at the right phase of the moon is resistant to the [829] ever-present powder-post beetles. Mahogany was once favored because it was durable and beetle resistant, even though it was heavy. But in recent decades mahogany has become scarce, and modern drums are made of lighter woods.

534 698 [531] 971 Drums made in the nineteenth century not only conformed to the patterns of certain West African prototypes but were also carved and decorated. Some of these old drums are still to be seen, but there are not many left. An ancient carved *assator* drum (previously cited) has fortunately been preserved by the Bureau d'Ethnologie. But between the ravages of the powder-post beetles, age, and the periodic orgies of drum burning by the church and misguided public officials, most of these [548] ancient works of art have long since disappeared. During the American occupation of Haiti—from World War I to 1932—American military personnel also contributed to the mania for drum burning. And as late as 1941 there was a massive, cleric-inspired drive to wipe out these instruments as remnants of *sauvage* elements in Haitian life.

534 178 531 The effect of this war against the drum was only to improve the business of the professional drum maker. Drums had become expendable, hence they were made simpler. The carved decorations disappeared. Paint was substituted, and less attention was given to detail. The important thing was to produce a good functional instrument. But the creative instincts of the drum makers sometimes still take over, and many of the modern drums are beautifully proportioned, with delicate geometric patterns carved around the base, or foot. Among certain categories of drums the painted decorations consist solely of the name of the loa to whom the instruments have been dedicated—St. Jacques perhaps, or Papa Pierre, or Ezilie.

534 191 714 196 534 Drums differ in design according to the use for which they are intended. The Arada or Vodoun drums are used primarily in connection with the dances and rituals of the Vodoun cult—the cult built around the gods and rites of Arada and Yoruba theology. They resemble closely drums which are used today in Dahomey, Nigeria, and Togoland. They usually come in sets of three. The largest, the *manman* (also called *hounsor* or *hounsogri*), may be three to four feet high. The middle-sized drum, or *second* (also called *grandé* or *moyen*), is about two feet

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 193]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

any usual measure. But Haitians do produce by traditional craft methods a surprisingly large number of the articles they need for daily life. In the countryside it is possible to see many persons engaged, mostly on a part-time basis, in craft activities and home industry that have their roots in the prerevolutionary era. Leatherworkers operating small, crude tanneries still flourish. Charcoal-burners, and operators of small lime kilns that produce building material, are found in every village. Smiths make and repair simple tools, working with forges of archaic design. Combs are made from cows' horns and tortoiseshell, buttons from bone; carrying-bags, fish traps, and a wide variety of baskets from withes, bamboo strips, and grasses; wooden bowls, mortars and pestles, tool handles and spoons from local woods; dippers, pots, and candelabra from tin cans; and sandals from tires and inner tubes. Sawyers cut and dress timber; cabinetmakers still manufacture simple furniture of traditional design from the fast-disappearing tropical woods; many women, working either with the simplest sorts of sewing machines or by hand, make clothing for use and for sale. Along the coasts there are dugout-makers, shipbuilders, and sail- and seine-makers. Simple mattresses, fabricated from local grasses, are sold in every large marketplace, as are crude ceramic wares made by local potters. At the start of the twentieth century, Italian immigrants brought a sturdy tradition of cobbling to Haiti, which has been destroyed only recently by the flood of American imported shoes with their attached prestige, until recently, *vitièlo* was a colloquial term for shoe, coming from the name of the most famous of those Italian cobblers.

One of the striking features of Haiti's craft traditions is its relative stability since the revolution. It was under slavery that Haitians first became "westernized," learning what were then standard French craft practices, adjusted to local colonial conditions, probably with some modifying features coming from the African past. It was before the revolution that the Haitian people learned and stabilized their consumer tastes, agricultural and craft standards, and work procedures. Such preferences and standards were worked out primarily in terms of the demands of the plantation regime itself; but even the most repressive social system leaves some opportunity for acculturation. Today's sugar-making shops and rural rum distilleries employ techniques centuries old and little modified over time. Housebuilding and woodworking techniques in the countryside are substantially

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

342 322 178 unchanged from an earlier era. The prevailing quality of Haitian rural and craft industry, then, is one of great stability and conservatism.

493 463 At the same time, of course, major events since the revolution have left their imprint on this part of life. Hardly a roadside village in Haiti today, for instance, lacks an automobile mechanic, even though these men are mostly self-educated and work with hardly any tools. Their skills became part of Haitian culture in this century and are often of a simple order no longer typical of more developed areas. Tire 383 177 tubes, for instance, are "vulcanized" by the use of an ingenious device made from a board and an old piston, kerosene providing the heat to make the seal; this technique, along with the sewing of damaged truck tires, was almost certainly introduced and diffused by the United States Marines.

47 31 178 But these quaint additions do not alter the fact that shop and factory industry are nearly absent, and extractive industry virtually nonexistent. Haiti's one alumina extraction enterprise, foreign-owned, is now shut down. There is but one flour mill, and that is foreign- [258] owned as well. One or two textile mills and sugar factories, estab- [339] lished with foreign capital, still function, as do a modern cement factory and a few other small plants established in the 1950s. These [464] industries, scanty as they are, were of great importance to Haiti, since they represented substantial investments, held out the promise of reduced dependence on imports in significant categories, and contributed to the beginnings of an industrial proletariat. However, they involved only a tiny fraction of the national labor force, and they have not proved entirely successful. As a result, Haiti lacks any reserve of labor acquainted with modern industry, even though many people, both urban and rural, work at tasks that might be considered more industrial than agricultural.

47 433 178 171 Most important for the present discussion, the minor developments in Haitian industry have not led to an expanded market and have not resulted in any firm increase in productivity. Industrial growth, in the sense in which it has occurred in countries such as those of Western Europe—or for that matter in Mexico or Argentina—is entirely lacking. The absence of such growth is perhaps especially significant if Haiti be compared with a neighbor such as Jamaica or Puerto Rico. [648] These countries, one now independent, the other a North American dependency—have both gained real increments from the investment activities of outsiders;

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61. *Detail of a wood carving made about 1930 in the region of Port-au-Prince, representing the loa Loko. Work of this kind in mahogany has in the past thirty years deteriorated into neo-"African" carvings made for the tourist trade.*

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63. *Terra-cotta figurines from the Cap Haitien region.*

64. *Detail of a dye-painted burlap cloth. Animal and flower figures and geometric designs are used interchangeably.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

And when the revolution came he produced for the Haitian armies knives, gun parts, and wheels to transport cannon. By the tens of thousands he made ingeniously devised metal objects to be thrown on the roads, before the French cavalry troops—objects so shaped that, no matter how they fell, a single sharp point stood erect to cripple the enemy horses. Yet knowledge of the West African uses of iron did not altogether disappear, and during the first century of independence the Haitian blacksmith created many old-style knives, spears, and ritual objects for the cult temple.

Even today, some of this old-style work is to be found in hounfors in the southwestern peninsula. One may see simple or ornate iron standards, made to support ceremonial offerings or candles, strikingly similar to standards in ancestral shrines in Dahomey. There are iron bells, both single and double, made in pure West African style; ornate ritual swords and sabers which are the crests of certain deities; coiled and uncoiled iron serpents representing the gods Damballa and Ayida; and stylized or semirealistic portraits of the deities. Many of these old pieces are nineteenth-century survivals; others have been forged within the past decade. ⁂

An over-all impression of Haitian material culture is that artistic decoration is almost entirely absent and that the prime emphasis is on utility. Wooden cooking spoons are efficient in form, but missing from them is the delicate decorative carving often found in West Africa. The long wooden washing bowl, or *gamelle*, and the wooden mortar in which grain is pulverized are likewise clean-cut but stark and plainly utilitarian. Clay bowls, bottles, and storage jars are usually of simple, uniform design, with only accidental variations; there is little use of glazes, and the clay is often heavy and thick. Should there be a wari gameboard in the peasant hut, the chances are that it is roughly made, without legs or carved designs. Dugout canoes are usually crude in appearance, heavy and thick-walled, and irregular in form.

Yet there are many evidences—though one must seek them out—that esthetic impulses are quite alive. The gay peasant straw knapsack, or *alfor*, without which no mountain man makes a journey, has a charm and grace that is not diminished by familiarity and cheapness. Decorated with sisal braid and tassels, and colored with green and magenta dyes, each *alfor* on close inspection appears to be unique. In some communities in the south and southwest, burlap squares also are painted with these traditional dyes. About forty inches across, and made of sugar bags, these paintings swarm with geometric patterns and sometimes with figures of flowers and animals. They are purely decorative, being

⁂ [See plates 42-51, pp. 112-DD—112-FF.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

used for wall hangings much as appliquéd cloths are used in Dahomey. Near Cap Haitien, in the north, ceramic workers make crude clay figurines of roosters, pigs, dogs, cows, and people. The "purpose" of these figurines is obscure, but it is likely that they are intended for use in Vodoun ritual, a number of them having been observed in hounfors in the vicinity of the town of Grande Rivière du Nord. In some mountain villages, canes carved with animal and human heads are commonly seen. Nor is the tradition of carving gourds and calabashes, popular in various regions of West Africa, altogether forgotten. The *cayambouque*, a divided calabash with the top ingeniously cut to fit into the lower part so as to form a sealed container, is sometimes covered with carved geometric designs, usually crude and haphazard but on occasion meticulous. Until recent years the common *cha-cha*, or gourd rattle, was similarly carved.

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One of the most flourishing arts of the hounfor is the *vèvè*, or ritual drawing made on the earth in the course of a service. Most commonly these beautiful and ornate designs are made with white meal or flour, and in a few of the cults, primarily the Pétro, lampblack and red brick dust are also used. The vèvè is made by the houngan or the mambo. With sure, practiced movements, the cult priest allows the meal to trickle through his fingertips onto the ground where the rites are taking place, usually in the peristyle of the hounfor itself. The drawings he makes are composed of a multiplicity of cabalistic symbols—heart shapes, stars, interlocked V's, flags, abstract phallic forms, crosses, swords,

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

178 other African crafts, which, though essentially utilitarian, in Africa, also allow play for the æsthetic impulse, have been lost as well. Ironworking is absent not only because the necessary deposits of iron ore are lacking, but because the technique of shaping the metal into various forms, which in Africa is in the hands of specialists, was apparently suppressed in the time of slavery. No native cloth is woven. Basketry has survived, but whereas in Africa designs of no small artistic merit are achieved in this medium, it is markedly utilitarian in Haiti. Even from a technical point of view, the basketry forms are of the simplest, the panniers used for transportation of products on mule-back being merely an in-and-out weave, and the plaited strips of which hats and the *macoute*, or carrying basket, are made are of a parallel simplicity.

Few African recreational forms have survived. *Wari*, the draughts-like West African game found today in many parts of the West Indies, is unknown in the interior of Haiti, though it has been introduced into Port-au-Prince, where it is played by longshoremen who have learned it from the sailors of near-by islands. String figures, important in West Africa, are not encountered, and no children's pursuits comparable to the play of young Africans were seen in Mirebalais, if the minor ceremony of marking the loss of childhood teeth be excepted. African types of recreation have in the main given way to cock-fights and card-games, both of which derive their interest from the opportunities they offer for gambling—a fact important in itself, since gambling is not one of the widespread African vices. The most important card-games are *trois-sept*, *marriage*, and *bezique*, and both men and women know them and play them for stakes. Similarly cock-fighting, particularly during the dry season, is a passionate avocation of the men. Large sums are wagered on the results of an encounter, and feeling often runs high.[6]

The Haitian genius for art and recreation is best embodied in the dance and its accompanying songs and drum rhythms. Virtuosity is attained not only by the dancers, but even more

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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[325] [326] [286] 178 285

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[541]

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[776]

42. Forged iron "saber" of the loa Damballa, from a hounfor near Léogane. Height, 32 inches.

43. Forged iron standard for holding ritual objects, from a hounfor in the region of Léogane. Height, 18 inches.

[532]
[D76]

[534]

44. Ancient iron figure of the loa Quinçon Fer, from a hounfor near Léogane. Height, 12 inches.

45. Old iron ritual bell, or ogan, from a hounfor in southern Haiti. Height, 11 inches.

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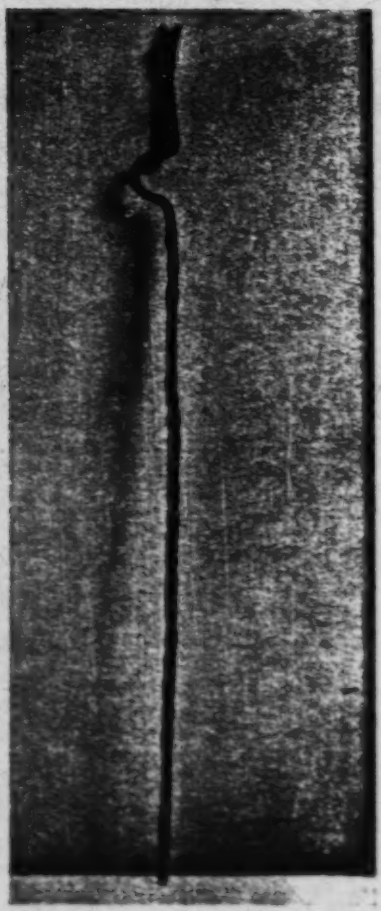

46. Forged iron rod in the stylized form of a snake, representing the loa Damballa, from southern Haiti. Height, 34 inches.

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47. Iron sculpture on a Nago altar of a hounfor near Gonaives, representing a bird sitting on a tree.

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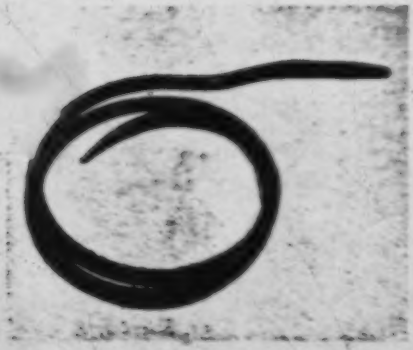
48. A sculptured iron standard in a hounfor in the Cul-de-Sac Plain.



49. Forged snake, representing Damballa, from southern Haiti. Length in coiled form, 9 inches.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-FF]
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50. *Representation of the loa La Sirène, made by a contemporary blacksmith.*

51. *Representation of the loa St. Jacques by the same blacksmith.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1968) 1968 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 122]

10. The Arts– Flour, Wood, and Iron

122 It is the nonmaterial arts and traditions that have thrived best in Haiti
128 through the years of slavery, political unrest, and poverty. Religious con-
53 cepts, music, dancing, folk tales, proverbs, and games are found every-
569 where in profusion. Material arts of the past have fared less well. Today, nothing is left of the old African knowledge of wood carving, metal casting, appliqué work, and weaving. Why such major African arts have died out in Haiti is no mystery. They disappeared simply because there was no place for them under the slave system or in the new Haitian society which followed it.

122 Under the colonial masters, the demands made on the New World
128 African were for coffee, cotton, and indigo. His creative talents were
569 channeled into carpentry, masonry, and the building of facilities for
532 production. There were no traditional artistic outlets or patrons for the wood carver, and no need for the weaver. Nor, during the years of slavery, was there much leisure for the craftsman to do his work even for the fun of it, should he be so inclined; indeed, this approach to wood carving or any other art would have been little understood or appreciated by most West Africans. A man who made an art object purely and simply to express a creative urge rather than to fill an express need would have been regarded as slightly eccentric. The old West African wood carvings with which we are now familiar were made because they were *required* for some purpose. A figure of a deity was needed in a shrine, a carved protective guard was needed for the household, a grave marker or a ceremonial mask was obligatory.

122 In Haiti the needs of those who ruled were different. The slave with
128 knowledge of the forge was not put to work making spears, ceremonial
569 axes, and the like; he was assigned the task of making grillwork for
● 532 houses, hinges and bolts, iron tires for coach wheels, and metal parts for the sugar mills. The anonymous African ironworker did his job well.

2: Courlander 8-5 (1827-1855) 1965 SV3 HaRi SV3

And when the revolution came he produced for the Haitian armies knives, gun parts, and wheels to transport cannon. By the tens of thousands he made ingeniously devised metal objects to be thrown on the roads, before the French cavalry troops—objects so shaped that, no matter how they fell, a single sharp point stood erect to cripple the enemy horses. Yet knowledge of the West African uses of iron did not altogether disappear, and during the first century of independence the Haitian blacksmith created many old-style knives, spears, and ritual objects for the cult temple.

Even today, some of this old-style work is to be found in boundfors in the southwestern peninsula. One may see simple or ornate iron standards, made to support ceremonial offerings or candles, strikingly similar to standards in ancestral shrines in Dahomey. There are iron bells, both single and double, made in pure West African style; ornate ritual swords and sabers which are the crests of certain deities; coiled and uncoiled iron serpents representing the gods Damballa and Ayida; and stylized or semirealistic portraits of the deities. Many of these old pieces are nineteenth-century survivals; others have been forged within the past decade. ⁂

An over-all impression of Haitian material culture is that artistic decoration is almost entirely absent and that the prime emphasis is on utility. Wooden cooking spoons are efficient in form, but missing from them is the delicate decorative carving often found in West Africa. The long wooden washing bowl, or *gamelle*, and the wooden mortar in which grain is pulverized are likewise clean-cut but stark and plainly utilitarian. Clay bowls, bottles, and storage jars are usually of simple, uniform design, with only accidental variations; there is little use of glazes, and the clay is often heavy and thick. Should there be a washboard in the peasant hut, the chances are that it is roughly made, without legs or carved designs. Dugout canoes are usually crude in appearance, heavy and thick-walled, and irregular in form.

Yet there are many evidences—though one must seek them out—that esthetic impulses are quite alive. The gay peasant straw knapsack, or *sifter*, without which no mountain man makes a journey, has a charm and grace that is not diminished by familiarity and cheapness. Decorated with steel braid and tassels, and colored with green and magenta dyes, each *sifter* on close inspection appears to be unique. In some communities in the south and southwest, burlap squares also are painted with these traditional dyes. About forty inches across, and made of sugar bags, these paintings swarm with geometric patterns and sometimes with figures of flowers and animals. They are purely decorative, being

⁂ [See plates 42-51, pp. 112-DD—112-FF.—Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

any usual measure. But Haitians do produce by traditional craft methods a surprisingly large number of the articles they need for daily life. In the countryside it is possible to see many persons engaged, mostly on a part-time basis, in craft activities and home industry that have their roots in the prerevolutionary era. Leatherworkers operating small, crude tanneries still flourish. Charcoal-burners, and operators of small lime kilns that produce building material, are found in every village. Smiths make and repair simple tools, working with forges of archaic design. Combs are made from cows' horns and tortoiseshell, buttons from bone; carrying-bags, fish traps, and a wide variety of baskets from withes, bamboo strips, and grasses; wooden bowls, mortars and pestles, tool handles and spoons from local woods; dippers, pots, and candlesticks from tin cans; and sandals from tires and inner tubes. Sawyers cut and dress timber; cabinetmakers still manufacture simple furniture of traditional design from the fast-disappearing tropical woods; many women, working either with the simplest sorts of sewing machines or by hand, make clothing for use and for sale. Along the coasts there are dugout-makers, shipbuilders, and sail- and seine-makers. Simple mattresses, fabricated from local grasses, are sold in every large marketplace, as are crude ceramic wares made by local potters. At the start of the twentieth century, Italian immigrants brought a sturdy tradition of cobbling to Haiti, which has been destroyed only recently by the flood of American imported shoes with their attached prestige, until recently, *ritiliti* was a colloquial term for shoe, coming from the name of the most famous of these Italian cobblers.

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Haiti under Dessalines still had many building

175 of French con-
178 struction, both plantation mansions and slave quarters. With forced
331 labor available these had been kept in a measure of repair. Christophe, not content with leftovers from colonial days, had sponsored architectural activity all over his kingdom; if his citadel is the most noteworthy example, there are also to his credit lesser palaces and government warehouses. Almost no building was done by Pétion and Boyer, however, and by the 1840's the constructions of the French [731] had fallen into serious disrepair. Severe earthquakes and fires quickly ruined what time had already weakened. By the middle of the century one saw, instead of trim slave quarters near great mansions, a few straggling towns of one-story houses, the hillsides dotted with ramshackle huts, and the plains with daubed shacks.

175 From great estates to tiny plots; from carefully tilled fields to
178 small gardens in a wilderness; from financial prosperity to debt;
181 from directed enterprise to sloth; from an attitude of hopeful de-
433 termination to one of tolerance for things as they are—these are the striking contrasts of the two periods. It could hardly have been imagined in Christophe's day that the smart, disciplined Dahomet would be succeeded by casual ragamuffins who dozed on their tilted chairs while on sentry duty. Christophe had liked his subjects to be well dressed, and insisted on it; but the British consul in Boyer's time wrote that "the laborers are, generally speaking, nearly naked; in fact, adults only wearing what is barely necessary to prevent indecent exposure, while the children of both sexes run about without covering of any kind."[64]

175 It was the parceling of landed estates combined with the disap-
178 pearance of forced labor which initiated the transition from serfdom
433 to peasantry. Personalities as dynamic as Christophe's or as brutal as
[446] Dessalines' would have been required to keep the people in a servile
[433] condition in a land of tropical fertility. Contemporary foreign judg-
[461] ment was almost unanimous in placing the blame for declining
[164] prosperity upon indolence (the word is continually repeated, generally preceded by the adjective "natural"). It may be noted in passing that no one at the time seems to have realized how widespread were the debilitating diseases of hookworm and malaria, which can make apparently husky men prefer rest to work. Responsibility for economic failure rests as much upon the governing class,

64. Charles Mackenzie, *Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti* (1829), p. 86.

in the services. In the court, the bases of four sacred trees . . . are surrounded by circles of masonry [low brick walls]. These *reposoirs* are inhabited by the *loa* Legba, Ogoun, Loco and Sango.[5]

There is little in Aubin's description to suggest that houmfors were much different a half century ago from what they are today. He erred in identifying the "thunder stones" solely with Damballa. But his eye for detail was acute. In 1950 a mambo in the neighborhood of this houmfor described by Aubin affirmed that some of the loa stones and old coins which he mentioned are still to be found among the properties of a houmfor in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. Others were lost in one of the cleric-inspired raids which despoiled cult temples of drums and other paraphernalia about fifteen years ago.

Many services are held outside the houmfor and the peristyle. Some rituals, such as animal sacrifices and "talking to the loa below the water," may take place some distance from the cult buildings. Indeed, various Vodoun ceremonies may be held at waterfalls, at the seashore, in sacred groves, in ordinary homes, in a boat at sea,[6] or under a sacred tree.

The rites of the houmfor are almost without number. They are associated with the supplication or conciliation of virtually countless deities, each of which has his own special service. There are services in multitudinous combinations and permutations for the dead, for twins, for albinos, and for unborn children. There are ceremonies for the elevation of houmsi and for initiation, smoke and fire ordeals, and tests of other kinds. There are *manjé loa* (feasts for the deities) and *manjé morts* (feasts for the dead). There are services for the sick, for the crops, and for the harvest. In one context or another, Vodoun relates to nearly every aspect and phase of life—and its counterpart, death. Since every region, every locality, and, in fact, almost every houmfor has developed its own ritual out of the common materials, it is possible to see hundreds of ceremonies without ever seeing precisely the same one twice. Yet the common elements bind them all together.

One such prime element is the possession, the "mounting" of the human body by one of the deities. Possession is a psychological phenomenon common to the rites of many cults throughout the world. It is known in Asia, Africa, Europe, and America. It is not the unique property of the African and his Haitian descendant. In the United States it is a commonplace not only among certain Negro cults but certain white cults as well. The United States Negro had ample West African inspiration for his witness in the church and at the baptism. The intellectual meaning of these witnesses has changed, as have their outward forms to a measurable extent, but their emotional content has not altered.

5 [translated from the French of Aubin, En Haiti, pp. 59-59. Cf. P. 349, Category 16. — Author]
6 [Footnote appears on p. 349, Category 16. — Author]

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

Any force into possible psychological reason is guesswork. It

461 might be hazarded that the men felt they had fought for freedom and so deserved to enjoy its benefits; or that agriculture smacked of the old days of slavery and should be avoided by the superior male; or that since ambition for progress was not a Haitian characteristic, and the work of women produced enough food, there was no reason to change a routine which did very well. One cannot speak with definiteness on these matters. And it was upper-class Haitians and foreigners who adjudged peasant men lazy; slaves and "forced" laborers always appear lazy to their masters.

462 In modern times at least, male peasants toil strenuously, although not so continuously as their females. The preparation of the ground for planting is hard work, and is done entirely by men. Harvesting, housebuilding, marketing the coffee (one form of marketing not beneath a man's dignity)—these are men's major contributions to economic life.

177 People who live in isolation commonly tend to slide back in such
178 externalities as clothes, manners, neatness of person and of dwelling, speech, and social ritual. Almost from the very beginning of Haitian history, most of the people were effectively isolated from the rest of the world, so that the superficial aspects of daily life exhibited to all visitors the spectacle of retrogression.

175 Christophe, who had frequent English visitors in his kingdom,
656 forced his subjects to dress neatly. After his time no ruler made
241 regulations for dress. The men commonly wore a pair of cotton trousers and an abbreviated shirt, while women's dress was a loose-fitting garment which might be called a Mother Hubbard. Children could, and can now, be seen up to the age of four or five without
[349] any clothes at all. The nearer the countrypeople live to towns, where the example of the élite is before them, the better their dress is likely to be.

342 Slave cabins on the former plantations were inhabited by the free Haitians until decay set in and the cabins fell down. They were ordinarily superseded by huts which could be constructed of withes
[333] and thatch. The British Minister during the eighteen-twenties saw a man near Plaisance building his house, "plastering the wattling, of which the walls were composed, with a mixture of mud and ashes," using his hand as a trowel.[18] Almost never did a hut have more than

18. Mackenzie, op. cit., I, 150.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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342 322 178 unchanged from an earlier era. The prevailing quality of Haitian rural and craft industry, then, is one of great stability and conservatism.

493 463 At the same time, of course, major events since the revolution have left their imprint on this part of life. Hardly a roadside village in Haiti today, for instance, lacks an automobile mechanic, even though these men are mostly self-educated and work with hardly any tools. Their skills became part of Haitian culture in this century and are often of a simple order no longer typical of more developed areas. Tire 313 tubes, for instance, are "vulcanized" by the use of an ingenious de- 177 vice made from a board and an old piston, kerosene providing the heat to make the seal; this technique, along with the sewing of damaged truck tires, was almost certainly introduced and diffused by the United States Marines.

47 But these quaint additions do not alter the fact that shop and factory industry are nearly absent, and extractive industry virtually non- 31 existent. Haiti's one alumina extraction enterprise, foreign-owned, is 178 now shut down. There is but one flour mill, and that is foreign- [258] owned as well. One or two textile mills and sugar factories, estab- [359] lished with foreign capital, still function, as do a modern cement factory and a few other small plants established in the 1950s. These [464] industries, scanty as they are, were of great importance to Haiti, since they represented substantial investments, held out the promise of reduced dependence on imports in significant categories, and contributed to the beginnings of an industrial proletariat. However, they involved only a tiny fraction of the national labor force, and they have not proved entirely successful. As a result, Haiti lacks any reserve of labor acquainted with modern industry, even though many people, both urban and rural, work at tasks that might be considered more industrial than agricultural.

47 Most important for the present discussion, the minor developments in Haitian industry have not led to an expanded market and have not 433 resulted in any firm increase in productivity. Industrial growth, in 178 the sense in which it has occurred in countries such as those of West- 171 ern Europe—or for that matter in Mexico or Argentina—is entirely lacking. The absence of such growth is perhaps especially significant if Haiti be compared with a neighbor such as Jamaica or Puerto Rico. [648] These countries, one now independent, the other a North American dependency—have both gained real increments from the investment activities of outsiders;

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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important point in the warfare between the northern Empire of Christophe and the southern Republic of Pétion is well known, since the boundary between the two, never definitely fixed, might be roughly considered as the Artibonite, control of which, as always, depended on also obtaining control of the strategic hills about the town.[11] It is not possible to discover more than approximate figures for the population of Mirebalais at the present time, since no census of the district has been made, and the most recent figure of 51,000 for the commune is derived from the baptismal records in the parish church.[12]

From the earliest years of settlement of the valley, the town has been the center of its life. The government of the commune is located here; here the courts sit; and here the best schools and the only church of the district are found. Yet it is a small town, numbering less than two hundred and fifty houses, and crossed by but three principal thoroughfares stretching north and south, with ten or twelve cross-lanes. The houses on the principal streets, rectangular and small, are built of wood, plastered over with clay, painted, and roofed with sheet iron. On the outskirts of the town the roofing is of straw, or banana-leaf thatch, while the walls themselves are made of twilled wythes. No house lacks its veranda, however small, where people may be seen sitting late of an afternoon and early in the evening, but the life of the women is lived chiefly in the courtyards behind these houses that line the streets, where the cookhouses are found and the storehouses, and where all work is done. The *place*, or town square, lies at the point where the principal route between Port-au-Prince and the Dominican border turns sharply to the east. Consisting of an acre or two of cleared land, it is overgrown with weeds except when, in preparing for festive occasions, the prisoners from the town jail may be seen spending long hours, machetes in hand, cutting the grass, a few blades at a time. North of the square stands the church, a substan-

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

North of the square stands the church, a substan-
tial structure with rounded arches in the Roman style, roofed
over, like most other buildings, with galvanized iron. Other
public buildings are the town hall — the Mairie — and the
"Hall of Justice"; near by are the stone walls of a public
building begun some years ago as a school, but destined ap-
parently to house what is known as the "Bureau of Contribu-
tions," a euphemism for the tax-collector's quarters. Despite
the fact that Mirebalais was one of the most difficult regions
for the American occupation to subdue during the Caco up-
rising of 1918–20,[10] it was one of the first districts where the
Guarde d'Haiti was completely Haitianized, and from which
all American Marine officers were withdrawn. Only a small
detachment is stationed there at present. Its well-kept bar-
racks are near the church, and the prisons form a part of the
same compound, from whence issue daily the striped-suited
prisoners, men and women, under guard or alone on parole,
who do communal work in the town and the near-by country-
side.

The town awakens at dawn to the chattering of domesti-
cated guinea-fowl and the crowing of cocks. Occasionally a
camion rumbles through the principal thoroughfare; more
rarely an automobile dashes by in great clouds of dust on its
way to Las Cahobas, or Hinche, or Santo Domingo City. If
it is a market day, the streets are early filled with country folk
on their way to dispose of their produce, and the clatter from
the market place behind the church is heard everywhere until
the heat of the day brings a lull to all commerce, and drowsi-
ness once more settles over everything. By mid-afternoon
during the planting season, drums can be heard over the
countryside. The sounds are not those of the "throbbing"
vodun drums — though they have more than once been mis-
taken for them by travelers — but they set the rhythm for
the communal work of the *combites*, which perform co-
operative agricultural labor. As the rapid dusk follows the
disappearance of the sun behind the mountains, the voices of

I: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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ABOVE, *A country dwelling.*
BELOW, *A combite at work.*

[facing p. 11]

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

[History of Haiti in 17th-18th Centuries -- The Haitian White Population]

affable, generous perhaps to the point of ostentation, confident, brave, a sure friend and a good father"[38] — such are his good points as set down by one who was perhaps surer-eyed than others in seeing his deficiencies, though these traits seem to have concerned more his relations with his fellow-whites than those which affected his bearing toward his Negro slaves. 175 563 579 591 [159]

The young Créole women of this same environment were destined for early marriage — too early for their best development, whether physical or mental. Given to exacting the fulfillment of their slightest caprices, they were, like their men, creatures of passion. If they survived their first pregnancies, which as a result of too early marriages often came before they were physically in condition to support the rigors of childbirth, they soon lost their youthful allure and became the unattractive women of the type so maliciously described by the Comte de C***.[39] In such cases they frequently survived not one but several husbands. Their associations were chiefly with their Negro women slaves, who were full confidantes, sleeping in the same chamber with their mistresses and on occasion sharing informal meals with them, though they never ate at the same table. And because, by a fine turn of irony, these Negro women were often at the same time the concubines of the husbands, brothers, or sons of their mistresses, they were as often as not treated alternately with the greatest tenderness and the harshest brutality.[40]

Whatever the inner life of white Haitians, native-born or Créole, outward ostentation was the rule. In the cities poorly furnished houses were cared for by a numerous retinue of uniformed retainers; "the supreme achievement for a European being to have himself served, he hires slaves while he waits for the time when he can own them."[41] In the country, too, life was lived on as lavish a scale as possible. This is not the place to describe the houses of masters and slaves, or the buildings needed for working sugar-cane or indigo or preparing coffee, or their distribution over the plantation, for no- 175 105 563 579 369 569

175 563 579 105 342

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175 merous contemporary accounts, and most present-day works,
105 give both texts and illustrations which make the economy of
563 the plantation clear.[44] Though many stories of the magnifi-
567 cence of plantation life are found in current works, writers
342 of the period seem to agree that but little attention was paid
175 to convenience. Inventories of the contents of houses show
105 that furnishings were at a minimum; a few chairs and small
563 tables in the sitting- and reception-rooms, beds and minor ac-
352 cessories in the way of furniture in the bedrooms, dining-room tables and chairs and a cabinet for dishes. These pieces were usually built in the colony and made of native hard woods; substantial, they were essentially plain. As Baron Wimpffen remarked, "Taste, Sir, is still Creolian at Saint Domingo; and, unfortunately, the Creolian is not the right taste, — it smells too much of the *Boucan*."[45]

175 The table set was not distinguished. Meat, though the most
105 important dish at the principal meals, was poor, but, on the
567 other hand, fish, game, and wild fowl were excellent, and the
563 best of French wines were available.[46] Whatever the fare, how-
352 ever, it was served in the grand manner, often on plate rather
352 than chinaware, and by the many liveried house-servants which every great establishment could boast. An account of the mode of service has been preserved in the reminiscences of one who, writing some years later of a repast served him in 1787, says: "There were many more of these domestics of both sexes than there were diners. I could but admire their attention to the smallest details of the service, the whiteness of their clothing, and the beautiful kerchiefs in the Créole manner elegantly arranged about the heads of the women. . . . But
[291] all of them moved about on bare feet; this was the distinctive sign of slavery."[47]

175 As portrayed in contemporary works, Haitian white life is
181 seen to have been lived entirely in terms of material goods and
105 of display. Just as there was little intellectual life, so religion
291 was but a matter of form. One M. de Larnage, writing from
563

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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CHAPTER XIII

AFRICA AND EUROPE IN HAITIAN LIFE

With the historical background of Haitian culture and its present-day organization in mind, we may now seek to disentangle the varied sources from which the institutions described in the preceding pages have been derived. The formalized expressions of religion will be treated in the chapter which follows; here the manner in which Europe and Africa have determined the forms of other phases of Haitian peasant life will be analyzed. 121

Even such a simple aspect of peasant life as the house, or *caille*, as it is termed, furnishes an illustration of this intermingling of cultures. In the countryside the typical dwelling is a rectangular structure of two rooms with a thatched gabled roof and walls of woven withes daubed with mud.[1] The rectangular floor plan and the roof are of West African type, but since both of these are also familiar in Europe, the house thus probably represents the coalescence of two dwelling forms which were originally not strikingly unlike each other. The type of thatching is purely African, as is the wall construction, for walls of twilled withes can be seen in West Africa today. On the other hand, what there is of furniture is entirely European. The African stool has given way to the 342 171 352 177

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

352 European straight chair, and if peasants often sleep on mats
197 laid on the ground in African fashion, this is only because
their resources do not permit them the luxury of beds. The
342 accessory field-house is called an *ajupa*, a designation which
represents one of the few recognizable contributions of the
aboriginal inhabitants of the island to its present-day culture,
since, according to Charlevoix,[9] it was first applied to the huts
of the buccaneers, called by them *aiouipas*, a name taken over
from the Spaniards, who themselves had adapted it from the
native Indian term.

291 Clothing is also of European style. The men, who wear
197 shirt and trousers, long ago discarded the West African loin-
cloth and the covering great-cloth worn toga-fashion, while
the hats they wear are of course equally of European type.
The absence of shoes, though characteristic of Africa, is not
necessarily of significance, for shoes are not only an accepted
article of dress, but are symbols of worldliness, and when
lacking from the costume, indicate only an inability to pur-
chase them. The dress of women is no less European, though
only the old women continue the fashions of the days of St.
John, who reported that "the females generally keep to a
long white chemise, covered over with a blue cotton dress that
reaches to their bare feet, and is drawn in around the waist."[10]
As in his time, white is favored for days of festivity, and the
head-kerchief is also seen, even if it is less omnipresent than
in his day. The younger women who count themselves so-
phisticated scorn the kerchiefs and wear hats, but elderly
women wind white kerchiefs about their heads in the West
[113] African manner. The invariable mark of the *manbo*, in ad-
dition to her jeweled fingers, is the white kerchief with a very
large straw hat worn over it.

292 One special form of dress that represents a complex merging
197 of European and African secular and religious customs is the
196 *vode de pénitence*. For men this takes the form of a multi-
colored shirt, for women a dress whose colors are dictated by

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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to the Haitian *baka* found in the New World are the *bakru* of Dutch Guiana, who in turn derive from the "little folk" of West African belief, beings that are always important in making magic. See Herskovits, M. and F. (IV), 105–7.

[10] Dorsainvil (I), 150, mentions this rite.

[10] Notably by Seabrook, 92 ff., who made great capital of the concept and purported actually to have seen these beings! Parsons (II), ii, 392. Tale 77, I, reproduces a Haitian's account in Créole of how a Sorcerer goes about ensnaring a victim to make of him a zombi.

[10] Parsons (I), 178–9.

CHAPTER XIII

[1] Price-Mars (II), 96 ff., gives a detailed description of the peasant house. The beehive-shaped hut mentioned by Craige, 56, is not found in Mirebalais, though the valley is but a short distance from Hinche, of which he was writing. Seabrook, 18, also describes the interior of a peasant house.

[2] Charlevoix, ii, 42.

[3] St. John, 155.

[4] Seabrook, 104 ff., devotes some space to a discussion of *pénitence*, but so changes its meaning to the Haitians that it is quite useless in making a serious comparison of data.

[5] See the discussion in Dorsainvil (I), 150, concerning other reversions of African moon behavior in Haiti.

[6] Craige, Seabrook, and Wickes, all give lively accounts of cock-fights.

[7] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 1–15, for accounts of the manner in which stories are told in Haiti. It is to be noted that the African belief that a tale must not be told during the daytime persists there.

[8] A large collection of Haitian folk-tales has been published recently by Parsons (II), ii, 370–398.

[9] Audain has published what is perhaps the largest collection of Créole proverbs; his work, however, is unfortunately out of print.

CHAPTER XIV

[1] Dorsainvil (I), 158.

[2] Exceptions to this statement must be made in the casual the careful study of the relationship between Catholicism and voudun by Price-

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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any usual measure. But Haitians do produce by traditional craft methods a surprisingly large number of the articles they need for daily life. In the countryside it is possible to see many persons engaged, mostly on a part-time basis, in craft activities and home industry that have their roots in the prerevolutionary era. Leatherworkers operating small, crude tanneries still flourish. Charcoal-burners, and operators of small lime kilns that produce building material, are found in every village. Smiths make and repair simple tools, working with forges of archaic design. Combs are made from cows' horns and tortoiseshell, buttons from bone; carrying-bags, fish traps, and a wide variety of baskets from withes, bamboo strips, and grasses; wooden bowls, mortars and pestles, tool handles and spoons from local woods; dippers, pots, and candelabra from tin cans; and sandals from tires and inner tubes. Sawyers cut and dress timber; cabinetmakers still manufacture simple furniture of traditional design from the fast-disappearing tropical woods; many women, working either with the simplest sorts of sewing machines or by hand, make clothing for use and for sale. Along the coasts there are dugout-makers, shipbuilders, and sail- and seine-makers. Simple mattresses, fabricated from local grasses, are sold in every large marketplace, as are crude ceramic wares made by local potters. At the start of the twentieth century, Italian immigrants brought a sturdy tradition of cobbling to Haiti, which has been destroyed only recently by the flood of American imported shoes with their attached prestige, until recently, *ritiliè* was a colloquial term for shoe, coming from the name of the most famous of these Italian cobblers.

One of the striking features of Haiti's craft traditions is its relative stability since the revolution. It was under slavery that Haitians first became "westernized," learning what were then standard French craft practices, adjusted to local colonial conditions, probably with some modifying features coming from the African past. It was before the revolution that the Haitian people learned and stabilized their consumer tastes, agricultural and craft standards, and work procedures. Such preferences and standards were worked out primarily in terms of the demands of the plantation regime itself; but even the most repressive social system leaves some opportunity for acculturation. Today's sugar-making shops and rural rum distilleries employ techniques centuries old and little modified over time. Housebuilding and woodworking techniques in the countryside are substantially

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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342 322 178 unchanged from an earlier era. The prevailing quality of Haitian rural and craft industry, then, is one of great stability and conservatism.

493 463 At the same time, of course, major events since the revolution have left their imprint on this part of life. Hardly a roadside village in Haiti today, for instance, lacks an automobile mechanic, even though these men are mostly self-educated and work with hardly any tools. Their skills became part of Haitian culture in this century and are often of a simple order no longer typical of more developed areas. Tire tubes, for instance, are "vulcanized" by the use of an ingenious device made from a board and an old piston, kerosene providing the heat to make the seal; this technique, along with the sewing of damaged truck tires, was almost certainly introduced and diffused by the United States Marines. 313 177

But these quaint additions do not alter the fact that shop and factory industry are nearly absent, and extractive industry virtually nonexistent. Haiti's one alumina extraction enterprise, foreign-owned, is now shut down. There is but one flour mill, and that is foreign-owned as well. One or two textile mills and sugar factories, established with foreign capital, still function, as do a modern cement factory and a few other small plants established in the 1950s. These industries, scanty as they are, were of great importance to Haiti, since they represented substantial investments, held out the promise of reduced dependence on imports in significant categories, and contributed to the beginnings of an industrial proletariat. However, they involved only a tiny fraction of the national labor force, and they have not proved entirely successful. As a result, Haiti lacks any reserve of labor acquainted with modern industry, even though many people, both urban and rural, work at tasks that might be considered more industrial than agricultural. 47 51 178 [250] [359] [464]

Most important for the present discussion, the minor developments in Haitian industry have not led to an expanded market and have not resulted in any firm increase in productivity. Industrial growth, in the sense in which it has occurred in countries such as those of Western Europe—or for that matter in Mexico or Argentina—is entirely lacking. The absence of such growth is perhaps especially significant if Haiti be compared with a neighbor such as Jamaica or Puerto Rico. These countries, one now independent, the other a North American dependency—have both gained real increments from the investment activities of outsiders; 47 433 178 178 [648]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 241 family on an average, at 5 persons, husband, wife, and three children, we arrive at the conclusion, that the head of every third family in the state is engaged in cultivating his own freehold; a proportion of independent [311] proprietors, such as perhaps scarcely any other country in the world can exhibit. The number of acres cultivated by these small proprietors, varies [231] from 9 to 30; many of them keep horses, cows, and goats: they raise sufficient provisions of the bread kind, such as yams, plantains, and bananas, for [437] the main support of their families; they kill hogs for meat, and they dispose [431] of their coffee, cotton, hemp, castor oil, and fruit, at the public market for money, to purchase clothing, furniture, and other necessaries. The houses [342] they live in, though poorly furnished, are decent habitations; and many of them have gardens attached, neatly fenced in with bamboos, or with logwood, or aloe hedges.[22]

175 423 427 If these figures are even approximately accurate, the majority of the people of Haiti had not yet become peasants in the sense of being landowners, for in the statement cited only a third of the people owned their land. Another large group, however, possibly a third of the population, were squatters, living on land which technically belonged to someone else but from which they were never ejected. The remaining third, excluding the town and village dwellers, were in the intermediate stage between hirelings and peasants. Some worked for a given rate of wages, but the larger number worked for shares of the produce on the land of large proprietors.

175 The crop-sharing system (Americans of the twentieth century call 472 it share-cropping) of the 'thirties and 'forties was an automatic but 427 temporary adjustment worked out in perfect disregard of the Code 24 Rural. In general, two arrangements prevailed. By one the laborers worked in return for half the total produce of the estate, raising food for themselves in gardens provided by the owner; under the other they worked for a quarter of the produce, the proprietor guaranteeing to keep them in provisions. There was no general concurrence in Haiti at the time as to which plan was the more economical to the laborer and his family. Certainly both schemes were prejudicial to large crops of coffee and sugar, and therefore to the economic prosperity of the proprietors and the state; since this was so, the crop-sharing expedient was short-lived. Workers participating in it lived in the huts and cabins which, under the old régime, had been inhabited by their slave ancestors. As these fell to pieces others, cheaper and less soundly built, were constructed to take their place.

The crop-sharing system, economically debilitating though it was,

22. Ibid.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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Parents are generally kind to their children, so far as physical
855 punishment is concerned. The average peasant child can hardly
861 properly be said to be "brought up": he merely grows, eats whatever
his family eats or whatever fruits he can pick up, and learns his place
152 in the community as he matures. In anger, parents are likely to use
in correction the first thing that comes to hand. There is a surprising
callousness to pain among these generally kindly people: they beat
their donkeys unmercifully, and strap harness over open sores; they
carry chickens, head down and feet tied together and mouths gaping,
for miles in the sun; they revel in gory cockfights. If, therefore, a
parent is minded to beat his child, he will probably do a thorough
[578] job of it. A peasant woman, pommeling her son with a broomstick,
replied to the protests of a white passer-by, "*Li nègre; li pas fait li mal.*"
("He's a Negro; it won't hurt him.") The interference of a stranger
in the beating of a wife by her man, armed with a club, was resented
by both man and woman as an interference with a purely family
quarrel.

831 The concept of sexual continence is lacking among the peasants.
839 Sex, indeed, hardly enters the realm of morality except in connection
864 with adulterous dalliance of one man with another's woman. There
is no virtue in abstaining from sex relations when the sexual urge is
strong. Mothers tell love stories in all their frank details to their
young daughters, and some who care about such matters are adept
in all love connected with stimulating and satisfying a man's desire.[5]
• [342] Since huts are small and the whole family sleeps in the same room,
children have ample opportunity to observe the sexual life of their
parents. If a girl, as a result of her own experiments, has a child born
to her, there is no disgrace. Practically every peasant is "illegitimate,"
so that the term means nothing; a baby will then be old enough to
assist in the work of the home, thus becoming an asset. It is expected
that as soon as a youth grows up he will find a mate and begin a
family of his own.

241 The family is as important an element of peasant life as formal
939 marriage is unimportant. It is the economic unit. Ever since the days
572 of Pétion Haitian economy has been one of small things: even the
crops are small subsistence crops of maize, millet, beans, rice, yams,
and frequently trees of bananas, plantains, and coffee, which require
no particular cultivation. Enough coffee has been produced in Haiti
for annual export ever since 1804, but until recent years the beans

5. See Zora Neale Hurston, *Tell My Horse*, pp. 22 ff.

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Any force into possible psychological reason is guesswork. It

461 might be hazarded that the men felt they had fought for freedom and so deserved to enjoy its benefits; or that agriculture smacked of the old days of slavery and should be avoided by the superior male; or that since ambition for progress was not a Haitian characteristic, and the work of women produced enough food, there was no reason to change a routine which did very well. One cannot speak with definiteness on these matters. And it was upper-class Haitians and foreigners who adjudged peasant men lazy; slaves and "forced" laborers always appear lazy to their masters.

462 In modern times at least, male peasants toil strenuously, although not so continuously as their females. The preparation of the ground for planting is hard work, and is done entirely by men. Harvesting, housebuilding, marketing the coffee (one form of marketing not beneath a man's dignity)—these are men's major contributions to economic life.

177 People who live in isolation commonly tend to slide back in such
178 externalities as clothes, manners, neatness of person and of dwelling, speech, and social ritual. Almost from the very beginning of Haitian history, most of the people were effectively isolated from the rest of the world, so that the superficial aspects of daily life exhibited to all visitors the spectacle of retrogression.

175 Christophe, who had frequent English visitors in his kingdom,
656 forced his subjects to dress neatly. After his time no ruler made
241 regulations for dress. The men commonly wore a pair of cotton trousers and an abbreviated shirt, while women's dress was a loose-fitting garment which might be called a Mother Hubbard. Children could, and can now, be seen up to the age of four or five without
[340] any clothes at all. The nearer the countrypeople live to towns, where the example of the élite is before them, the better their dress is likely to be.

● 342 Slave cabins on the former plantations were inhabited by the free Haitians until decay set in and the cabins fell down. They were ordinarily superseded by huts which could be constructed of wishes
[333] and thatch. The British Minister during the eighteen-twenties saw a man near Plaisance building his house, "plastering the wattling, of which the walls were composed, with a mixture of mud and ashes," using his hand as a trowel.[18] Almost never did a hut have more than

18. Mackenzie, op. cit., I, 150.

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two rooms to house the whole family. "In these huts, filth and every species of uncleanliness prevail, for the people give themselves up to their indolent and lazy habits. It is common to see the pigs and poultry herding with the family."[19]

The furnishings in the huts were as simple as the construction. Rarely was there more than one bed, if that; the children of the family used mats for sleeping. A table, a stool, a couple of patched chairs, calabash bowls, an iron pot or two (and in later days, discarded gasoline tins), comprise the household equipment.

The fine roads of the French régime became rutted and washed, were overgrown with weeds, and soon reverted to wasteland or became nothing more than paths. Carriages ceased to be of any use, and there were few wagons; donkeys and horses became the regular means of transportation, and this was true until the Americans began to build roads again in 1916. The colonial régime had left a legacy of bridges, public buildings, parks, irrigation ditches; practically every improvement of this nature crumbled in slow decay and was not replaced. The temperate Dr. Brown closed his account of the Haiti of 1836 with the following paragraph:

> To sum up all that might be said upon the actual condition of Hayti, poverty and degradation stare one in the face wherever he goes—and the state of the whole island will be fully understood in the United States when it is bluntly asserted, that the country is one continuous negro village, built of mud cabins, and unfurnished with the usual comforts of life. The population is, with small exceptions, an indolent, naked multitude, without sustenance or a disposition to make exertions to obtain it; without enormous vices, but petty and insignificant in every thing relating to human character, and not many removes from the tribes upon the Niger in point of civilization. The fact is indisputable, that as a nation the blacks of Saint Domingo are in a retrograde movement as regards intellectual improvement, and no obstacle seems to exist to prevent this descent to barbarism. The government and institutions of the country must for the present remain unstable, and it is difficult to pronounce what the changes involved in the future will produce.[20]

Progress, as Westerners understand it, comes through contacts and competition, both of which were lacking to Haiti in large measure throughout the whole of the nineteenth century. While externally

19. Franklin, op. cit., p. 296.
20. Op. cit., II, 288–289.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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105 to regard the people as neighbors, their first impression is generally
13 their abiding one.

And yet the land has its memorable beauties. To lie at anchor in
13 the harbor at Port-au-Prince early in the morning and watch the long arm of the southern peninsula turn gradually from purple vagueness to brilliant green as the sun rises back of the capital; to see a tiny ship with its patched and colored sail glide quietly by on its way out to the island of La Gonâve, lying twenty miles to the west, like a morsel about to be swallowed by the open jaws of the "mainland"; to hear the morning noises drifting across the water, with a snatch of song or laughter in the air; to watch Port-au-Prince come to life, white and sparkling as the sun strikes it—this is the proper introduction to Haiti. Beyond the capital are the hills and mountains; if one will take the time, he may look back as he climbs and see not only the whiteness of the city, but the gracious sweep of the harbor, and the peninsula losing itself in the western distance. He will think without apology of a lesser Naples, and will not miss Vesuvius. Within the country is every variety of scenery: high mountains whose peaks are frequently shrouded in misty clouds; ranges of lower mountains ("*morne*" is the eloquent Haitian name for them) which can be melancholy, kindly, or forbidding, as the spirit of the traveler wills; dull wastes of salt marshes; arid deserts where cactus grows, spiked and hairy, to enormous heights; canyons, waterfalls, dried-up streams; moors, little jungles, farms; rich plantations of sugar cane, dusty stretches of sheer barrenness—everything, in fact, from majesty to complete insipidity. Rarely can one find such utter diversity in a small space as in Haiti. One might fancy himself successively on Egdon Heath, in an Arizona desert, among the Dakota Bad Lands, in old Saint-Domingue, in tropical Africa, in the Pyrenees.

361 The sad truth remains: nothing that man has done in Haiti for a
[342] century and a quarter has been worthy of the landscape. A few government buildings in Port-au-Prince are passable, and the city as a whole is not a blemish; yet not to have seen it is to have missed no great aesthetic experience. Elsewhere the towns and villages run the gamut from monotonous small-scale structures to mere collections
311 of shanties. Great gashes have been cut in the forests by generations of earth-hungry peasants who needed farms. Much of the land looks poor; indeed, thousands of once fertile acres are now beyond any use at all, grown up in cactus, because of overuse and misuse for-

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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311 merly. Wherever the overcrowded Haitians have lived since 1815, there beauty has had to give way to gnawing necessity which lacked either the imagination or the means to be sightly.

105 One can stand upon a morne and watch a rain storm rush down the valley, bending the palm trees in its fury, and think Haiti still a magnificent sight. Then one must descend the mountainside past rickety shacks and rocky fields, and the feeling grows that not all the kindly simplicity of the people is enough to lift the country from its [134] dilapidation. As he nears the village, the afternoon scent of roasting coffee will delight him; but then he sees the squalor of village life and is reminded that three million souls are here trying to eke out an existence upon a small area of declining fertility.

Much in Haiti is picturesque if one can keep his mind from wandering to the conditions which lie behind the picturesqueness. [482] Women stride down from the hills with great loads on their heads; [443] aged crones, pipe in mouth, sit perched on the haunches of tiny donkeys with their bulging panniers; the great market square in the [492] town is a scene of noisy confusion with hundreds of women and [492] children, a mixture of smells, thousands of little piles of soap, candy, gewgaws, vegetables, gaping chickens tied together by the feet, [434] shirts, canes, bolts of cloth. All the weary women, however, must [146] trudge back up to their shanties on the mountainside when the market is over. Many of them do not see ten dollars in cash during the year, and their little children, with bellies bulging, give evidence [164] of undernourishment. Without doctors, without even the rudiments of hygiene, they manage somehow to subsist, or else die, frequently of disease which might easily have been prevented.

565 In Port-au-Prince and a few other towns live enough members of the élite to make one momentarily forget the plight of the masses. [342] The houses of the well-to-do are substantially built, if not often [351] attractive. Their garden walls are brilliant with bougainvillea, their walks with hibiscus. Tiny red lizards (analis) make flashes of color along the walls. On shady verandas and in the parlors one hears delightful conversation, eats excellent food, savors the pleasures of [575] civilization. The clubs of the élite are pleasing, their tennis is good, [526] their dancing graceful. To be among these families as a welcome guest is an experience in gracious hospitality which can never be [535] forgotten. Too soon, however, one must leave these havens of urbanity and pass through districts of the town which haunt the mind with their grim want.

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Mirebalais

tial structure with rounded arches in the Roman style, roofed over, like most other buildings, with galvanized iron. Other public buildings are the town hall — the *Mairie* — and the "Hall of Justice"; near by are the stone walls of a public building begun some years ago as a school, but destined apparently to house what is known as the "Bureau of Contributions," a euphemism for the tax-collector's quarters. Despite the fact that Mirebalais was one of the most difficult regions for the American occupation to subdue during the Caco uprising of 1918–20,[10] it was one of the first districts where the Garde d'Haiti was completely Haitianized, and from which all American Marine officers were withdrawn. Only a small detachment is stationed there at present. Its well-kept barracks are near the church, and the prisons form a part of the same compound, from whence issue daily the striped-suited prisoners, men and women, under guard or alone on parole, who do communal work in the town and the near-by countryside.

The town awakens at dawn to the chattering of domesticated guinea-fowl and the crowing of cocks. Occasionally a camion rumbles through the principal thoroughfare; more rarely an automobile dashes by in great clouds of dust on its way to Las Cahobas, or Hinche, or Santo Domingo City. If it is a market day, the streets are early filled with country folk on their way to dispose of their produce, and the clatter from the market place behind the church is heard everywhere until the heat of the day brings a lull to all commerce, and drowsiness once more settles over everything. By mid-afternoon during the planting season, drums can be heard over the countryside. The sounds are not those of the "throbbing" vodun drums — though they have more than once been mistaken for them by travelers — but they set the rhythm for the communal work of the *combites*, which perform cooperative agricultural labor. As the rapid dusk follows the disappearance of the sun behind the mountains, the voices of

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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There are sections, particularly in the capital, in which shanties more resembling chicken coops than dwellings house whole families under leaky roofs of crude thatch. Privacy, cleanliness, sanitation, are not to be thought of. That the sun is warm in Haiti is a blessing, for cold would creep through the gaping walls. Where the shanty dwellers go in the rain, where they get their food, what relieves the dreary round of daily monotony the important people of Haiti do not know, nor do many of them seem to care. President Vincent undertook to clear away a section of the most abject slums in Port-au-Prince, erected in their place a series of two-room (likewise two-family) houses about a central square. Compared with the hovels they replaced the new houses are palatial; compared with houses Americans would consider adequate, they look more like unimaginative garages. With what rapidity an epidemic of serious nature might sweep the lower sections of the city, which are but one vast slum, is a thought too harrowing to entertain.

In the whole city there are hardly half a dozen buildings which would detain the lover of architecture. The president's palace is a gleaming white structure, somewhat resembling the White House in Washington. With its background of lofty mountains it makes an impressive picture, although it stands naked in the vast public square of the city. Young palm trees are now growing in the square, and may before many years provide for the palace the setting it deserves. Inside the palace one's chief impression is of emptiness. Other government buildings range from plain white edifices which fulfill their practical function without any suggestion of aesthetic graciousness, down through the inferior grades to wooden structures which one passes without a second glance. The cathedral, placed upon an eminence, is unattractive both in its exterior and in the glaring interior. Upon one of its finger towers at night gleams a light to guide ships into the harbor. The clubs and a few of the villas are pleasant to look at; the colleges of the lay brothers are impressively large, but bespeak the provincial town.

Indeed, one wanders up and down the country in search of man-made beauty and finds only two examples, both partially ruined, and both in the North: Christophe's magnificent citadel, La Ferrière, and the shattered shell of his charming palace, Sans Souci.

The citadel is breath-taking. Astride a great peak the huge edifice resembles the mighty beak of a ship about to soar off into the atmosphere. Inside one can wander through endless vaults, gaze from

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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712 the battlements far off across the tortuous mass of mountains and
[713] green valleys, admire the sheer strength of will which made His Majesty's subjects bear four hundred cannon up the steep and rocky path—not to mention thousands of cannon balls now rusting away after a century of disuse, or the powder and shot which once filled
[173] the magazines. It is said that five thousand soldiers could be housed in the fortress at once. If this is hyperbole, one hardly dare challenge
[703] it, for the whole Citadel belittles the individual man. It is likewise said that Christophe once made a battalion of soldiers march off the cliff to their death merely to demonstrate his absolute control over
[566] them. Such stories grow up around His Black Majesty. He lies entombed in his useless but still superb fortress—and lives in the memory of the Northerners, one of whom said proudly: "We of the North have a great heritage, and you will find that we are all dominated by *une psychologie citadelleuse*."

Dungeons, secret passages, royal apartments, separate rooms for each of the old Dutch, Spanish, French, and English cannon, some of them dating back to the seventeenth century—all the paraphernalia of the storybook fortress is present. From a bastion one gazes, as from an alp, for miles in any direction, and feels that La Ferrière is certainly one of the most impressive, and one of the most futile, edifices in the world. If the silent cannon had ever been fired, their balls would have rumbled harmlessly down the mountainside. The suspicion grows that Christophe achieved his architectural miracle not primarily as a defense against the French, but to make his subjects proud of what a nation of despised ex-slaves could accomplish.

•344 Five miles away, at the foot of the mountain, is the village of
644 Milot, with the ruins of the palace of Sans Souci. Of yellow stone, it spreads out spaciously like a French château. Its rooms must have been magnificent. The palace is so situated that one may look out across the northern plains to the sea, or up the valleys to mountain peaks. In Sans Souci Christophe shot himself in 1820 when he knew that only *souci* would remain to him if he lived.

489 Transportation from one part of the country to another is far from
[496] easy. There are no railroads—unless one counts the short line running north a few miles from Port-au-Prince to nowhere in particular, and the equally short line coming west into Cap-Haïtien from the fields
[491] of the northern plain. Roads built by the American Marines make automobile travel between the main towns possible, if one does not

[illegible] tial structure with rounded arches in the Roman style, roofed over, like most other buildings, with galvanized iron. Other public buildings are the town hall — the Mairie — and the "Hall of Justice"; near by are the stone walls of a public building begun some years ago as a school, but destined apparently to house what is known as the "Bureau of Contributions," a euphemism for the tax-collector's quarters. Despite the fact that Mirebalais was one of the most difficult regions for the American occupation to subdue during the Caco uprising of 1918–20,[10] it was one of the first districts where the Garde d'Haiti was completely Haitianized, and from which all American Marine officers were withdrawn. Only a small detachment is stationed there at present. Its well-kept barracks are near the church, and the prisons form a part of the same compound, from whence issue daily the striped-suited prisoners, men and women, under guard or alone on parole, who do communal work in the town and the near-by countryside.

The town awakens at dawn to the chattering of domesticated guinea-fowl and the crowing of cocks. Occasionally a camion rumbles through the principal thoroughfare: more rarely an automobile dashes by in great clouds of dust on its way to Las Cahobas, or Hinche, or Santo Domingo City. If it is a market day, the streets are early filled with country folk on their way to dispose of their produce, and the clatter from the market place behind the church is heard everywhere until the heat of the day brings a lull to all commerce, and drowsiness once more settles over everything. By mid-afternoon during the planting season, drums can be heard over the countryside. The sounds are not those of the "throbbing" vodun drums — though they have more than once been mistaken for them by travelers — but they set the rhythm for the communal work of the *combites*, which perform cooperative agricultural labor. As the rapid dusk follows the disappearance of the sun behind the mountains, the voices of

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MIRERALAIS

ABOVE, *A street.*

BELOW, *The place and the church.*

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[facing P. 10]

L: Herskovits 8-4, 8 (1936) 1937 SV2 HAIT SV2
Herskovits

Simple annual rites are held for the gods in January, each family giving small offerings in its house of worship to its own deities. These minor ceremonies are not to be confused with the extended rituals which a family may perform but once in a decade or a generation. Because of the extensive preparation and large outlay these entail, such rites are often postponed from year to year. According to some, this postponement is sought through an *action de grâce*, based on Church ritual, while others maintain that it is but necessary on his special day to appeal to the deity who is troubling the family, give a small offering — a *mangé sec* — and ask for the desired respite. This may be done several times, until crop failures, sudden deaths, and the loss of valuable property begin to afflict the family, whereupon the family head seeks out a *houngan*, who by divination determines the supernatural forces that are responsible for these misfortunes; and when his statement that the gods have reached the end of their patience is confirmed independently by several other priests who are consulted, active preparations for the major rite are finally set in motion.

Any such important ceremony must be held on the ancestral habitation, and centers in the *maison de servitude*, the family house of service for the gods. The house itself, to be differentiated from the *hounfort*, or "temple" of the *vodun* priest, may be elaborate or simple in accordance with the status of family members in the *vodun* cult.[9] At one end of the sacred house is a platform about two and one half feet high on which are placed calabash plates for the *loa*, six for the Créole deities, three for the Mystères Guinée, and a white plate with a "thunder stone," or Neolithic celt, and a necklace for Damballa. Not all *caillies mystères* are painted, but some, it is said, are green "for hope," and some red "for victory," while one was said to have designs of flowers and snakes painted on the wall above the platform.[9] These houses usually have two rectangular rooms, each with a separate entrance and each having its platform at the narrow end facing the doorway. One of

the rooms is consecrated to the *loa*, the other to the spirits of twins and the family dead. If the house is a large one with three rooms, the third will be for the Congo *loa*. It was also said that occasionally such places of worship reserve one room for the Rada deities, a second for the Pèyro *loa*, and the third for the Congo gods, the dead and twins being worshipped elsewhere. For the Ibo gods, however, it is agreed in Mirebalais that there is never a separate room. But whether the gods are worshipped in a single-room thatched shelter or a more impressive "temple" with a metal roof, none of the major categories of supernatural powers are neglected.

In the main, large ceremonies are concerned with the task of restraining, or less often of pacifying, deities that have been molesting a family, and of making concrete those who have been demonstrating their goodwill toward the group. Such rites must be sharply differentiated from the ordinary *vodun* dance which, coming after the family ritual, forms but a part of this complex, and serves to express joy at the danger averted and gratitude for the good that the friendly *loa* are to bring. At the ceremony drums may or may not be employed; at *vodun* dances they are indispensable. Possession is induced at the ceremony by the *houngan's* invocations; at the dance by the rhythm of the drums. The ceremony is attended only by members of the family and those who are specially invited; invitations to the *vodun* dance are broadcast over the countryside, and all take part in the social phases of the evening. For the ceremony, sacrifices not alone of cereals and drinks but also of the blood of animals are provided; at the *vodun* dance only minor offerings are given. And while both types of ritual are a part of a single functioning religious system, it is at the first where the most important end is achieved, that of obtaining protection from hostile gods and gaining the favor of those who are friendly.

The pattern of the ceremony — called a *service loa* — is sufficiently definite to allow a generalized version to be given.

preparing to seek shelter from the rain, new possessions continued, until, saying: "The *loa* are greater than I am," he went on with the ceremony, singing:

Ounège Dumballa Wedo,	Ounège Dumballa Wedo,
Lainé ouèl, Ounège-o!	Permit coiling, Ounège!
Ai-bobo!	*Ai-bobo!*
Main entré,	I enter,
M'ap salué loa.	I salute the loa.
Ogun, Ogun Achade,	Ogun, Ogun Achade,
O, Ogun Achade,	O, Ogun Achade,
Hier soir Ogun fai' yon rêve'-o	Last night Ogun dreamed a dream-o
Rêve' li tourné légédé.	Dreamed he turned a spy.

A woman became possessed by Dumballa, as did the young man who had "had" Gede the preceding night of the ceremony; the woman was in a gay mood, going about smiling and laughing, while the man threw himself in the water and rolled like a snake. And since the *loa* were coming so strongly, the *houngan* began the ceremony of washing and presenting the sacrificial animals, which this time included two white male goats, one very large and one smaller, a white sheep, and six or seven fowls of various colors. The presentation made, the entire group marched singing up the path to the houses, the flag-bearers saluting with their banners the woman so happy in her possession.

As the procession came up the hill, it passed a newly built small house, intended to serve as the family place of worship for the *loa* now introduced into the habitation, and a framework of brush, or *tonnelle*, that had been erected as a shelter under which the postponed *vodun* dance was to have taken place. Without pausing, they proceeded slowly to the gate-

of the other. Arrived at the *tonnelle*, both were finally induced to come to their feet, to be immediately sent away and freshly dressed.

Inside the family shrine, on the ground at the right hand as one entered, were the articles of food and drink that usually constitute a "dry" offering, or *manger sec* — rolls, cassava, cakes, grilled maize, coffee grounds, sirup, and bowls of cornmeal called *ayrausset*, with water. The *houngan* made more *sevoey* just inside this door to honor the gods that were to be worshipped here, as the "ceremony of the sheep," a sacrifice for the Rada *loa* named St. John the Baptist, was begun. A table was placed under the *tonnelle*, and a container of water in which the animal was first washed. He was then made to stand on the table, where a fresh white table-cloth had been spread, while he was combed, powdered, and perfumed. A piece of white cotton cloth was tied about the horns of the animal, and a lighted white candle was held in place on the right horn or at times between the horns by an attendant. While a song honoring Damballa Wedo was sung, the *houngan* went into the small house to care for the two women, who were still in a state of possession. He set them dancing inside and after a few minutes they were led forth by "Legba," each to pour water and to light a candle before the sheep. The two goats were next washed and "dressed," white cloths and soft beeswax candles also being twisted about their horns. Other offerings under the *tonnelle* were a white pigeon for Damballa and a red cock for Ogun.

Each member of the family now took the fowl or animal that was his offering, as all were summoned inside the shrine, where final directions were given regarding the disposal of the sacrifices, and invocations were spoken to the gods. After this they came out, placing the animals before the men who were waiting to see to the killing, which was carried out in a manner even more matter-of-fact than on the first night of the ceremony. By this time it was about half past six o'clock, and

Saturday nights. This is not because of the especially sacred character of the day, but rather because the Haitian government, in order to assure a continuous working week, refuses permits for other days. The occasions for the dances are varied, as is evident from those given during the course of this fieldwork. One of these was that of a *hungan* as a compliment to visitors "who knew Dahomey" and was conducted as a serious rite in the worship of the *loa*. Two dances marked the end of *services* for family gods, and were variously interpreted as tributes to the family dead and the twins, who must not be neglected in any religious observance, and as celebrations offered in praise of the gods who were to protect the families, giving the dances, to mark the "restraining" of the evil spirits responsible for their troubles. Two other dances celebrated the "baptism" and initial use of new sets of drums. As has been pointed out, there are also non-religious occasions on which *vodun* dances are given. On days of secular celebrations, such as the anniversary of the declaration of Haitian independence, or the withdrawal of the Marines, the *vodun* dancing is purely social, though the ritual drums are used, the sacred songs are sung, and the steps of the dances are those seen at any Saturday-night gathering. Added to the fact that no possessions or other manifestations of serious worship of the *loa* occur, the "secular" *vodun* dances differ from the others in that they are held away from any family shrine, taking place within towns or cities, something never permitted in their non-social, religious counterparts.

The *vodun* dance — and in the remainder of this chapter only the dance which has significance in the worship of the *loa* will be considered — is patterned like all other ceremonies of the cult.[1] It is held at a family habitation, under an open brush shelter known as a *tonnelle*, constructed for the occasion next to the family *maison de servitude*. If the habitation at which the dance is given is not the one where this house of worship is found, the shelter is built near a hut so that those possessed will have a place to retire.

will have a place to retire. The *tonnelle*, which is merely a flat brush roof supported by a number of upright posts, must be built strongly enough to withstand the assaults of those possessed, who not only lean heavily on the supports, but sometimes climb through the brush roof to lie for a time on the cross-beams which form the base for this flimsy covering. Its ostensible aim is to protect the participants from what is known as the *neige*, or "snow," as the heavy dew is called, but, as might be expected, the structure has a ceremonial as well as a utilitarian purpose. Of particular importance is the central post, called the *poteau ciseme*, or the *poteau mitan*, because the gods are believed to wait there until their drum rhythms sound, when they use this to descend into the *tonnelle*. The fire which burns during the whole period of the dance near the entrance to the habitation is also characteristic and indispensable. It is for Legba, who, as guardian of the entrance-way must first be worshipped, in order that he may permit the other deities to come.

The dances may begin shortly after sundown, but are not fully under way until two or three hours later, and last all night. In no case was a dance witnessed which began while there was daylight, though during the dry months, January and February, when there is no work to be done in the fields, dances open at a somewhat earlier hour. The rectangular dancing space under the *tonnelle* is lined with spectators, who are seated on such chairs and benches as the family giving the dance can provide or such others as have been brought by their owners, though, in the main, people stand. The vigor of the dance varies as the night progresses. It is usually slow in starting, people drifting in later as they finish their evening meal, while the best drummers are rarely present at the outset. Unless the dance follows an earlier ceremony, such as the baptism of drums, or a *hounfort*, the *houngan* in charge also does not appear until a late hour and even when there has been an earlier rite, such a personage may well go to his home to rest before returning for the night's effort.

The cult of the dead * is to be differentiated from the worship of the *loa* and from the twin cult in that its African form has been modified to a far greater extent than those others by the influence of the Catholic Church. Yet, though the modes in which respect is shown the dead are principally those of the Church, the attitudes and beliefs which underlie the cult —the meticulousness with which the tranquillity of the dead is insured, the fear in which they are held, and, above all, their close association with magic as an important sanction behind this force—all these take on a distinctly African stage. Perhaps the point of view taken toward the dead, and the manner in which the living cope with their power, can best be set forth at the outset by giving a sketch of the pattern of funerary and post-funeral rites, since these form the basis of the entire cult.

Wailing by all present begins with the approach of death. There are cries such as: "*Adiek, bon Dieu, Mamman ma-o, wei, wei! Jodi-a tel-et-tel quittil mouwi! Cété m'ap wé li ewe?* —Good-by, O good God, O my mother, wei, wei! Today such-and-such a one has died! Where will I see him again?" The members of the family tie white or black kerchiefs about their waists, while others present use kerchiefs of any color at hand. The doors of any *hounfort* or *maison de servitude* in the habitation are closed, and thorny acacia branches are placed in front of them, so that the dead, who are believed to go about everywhere, cannot "spoil" the sacred place by entering it.

The body is laid in a shallow trench dug in the floor of the room, and there washed and prepared for the funeral by a professional *baigneur des morts*—man or woman according to the sex of the dead—and his assistants. Some member of the family watches them to see that the "three drops" of moisture believed to be in every dead person's mouth are not caught on a cloth when the body is turned over, for they are held to have great potency for the working of black magic, and a sorcerer would give a great deal for them. Cold water,

all aspects of the natural and supernatural. But the reputable cult priest does not dabble in "black" magic—the kind that maims or destroys human beings. One who does so is said to "work with two hands": one for the law, and one for evil. (The expression *servi di mano*—"serving with two hands"—is also applied to a cult chief who deals with deities of more than one "nation.") Many a cult priest in making his ritual floor drawings on the earth holds his left hand behind his back and draws with his right, giving testimony that he "works with one hand" only.

Each cult priest maintains his own cult temple, or *hounfor*. There are no cult officials above him, as there is no formal religious organization beyond the hounfor itself. Within his own special community he is therefore the chief religious functionary, the apex of an intravillage social organization. Under the cult priest, ordinarily, there are two grades of assistants, and below them two classes of servitors.

The cult priest is usually referred to as a *houngan*, a Fon (Dahomean) title signifying "spirit chief." Sometimes he is called *gangan* (a Bantu word meaning "conjurer" or "doctor"),[2] or *caplo*. He also is known by the title *houn* or *houn*, which seems to be derived from *houna*, the diviner or priest of the Dahomean Fa cult.[3] The houn is, in fact, sometimes referred to as a *diviner*, and he is regarded by some Haitians as a clairvoyant and a practitioner of magic. As in Dahomey, the houn in Haiti foretells fate through the throwing of shells or chips, much in the manner of the secular game *mayombe*. He also reads destiny with small sticks or seeds. In earlier days the cult priest was sometimes known by the Yoruba name *babalos*, a title which has been corrupted to *papalos*. A female cult leader is known as a *mambo*. She is presumed to have, in a general way, the same powers as the houngan, though in some quarters her *connaissance*, or "understanding," is not regarded so highly, and her status is believed to be somewhat lower.

Directly under the houngan is his chief assistant, the *laplace*, and perhaps a little below him on the ladder, the *mambo caille*. The laplace is regarded as the vice-houngan, and he assumes responsibility for running the hounfor in the absence of his chief. The mambo caille, a woman, runs the cult center in the absence of both the houngan and the laplace. One step further down the ladder is the *houngfoiron*, who acts as a sort of chief of the main body of devotees. These high-ranking assistants to the houngan are sometimes called *hadjiras*, or keepers of the altar.

The servitors of the cult are known as *hounsi*, or "spirit wives," a name that was given to certain categories of cult servants in Dahomey.[4] There are two main groups of hounsi: *kanzo* (those who have passed through a ritual fire test) and *hounsis* (those whose lua are wild or untamed). The

[2] [Footnote appears on p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]
[3] [Gorer, Africa Dances, p. 129; Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 208 ff. Cf. p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]
[4] [Foot note appears on p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1907-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[793] approval of the candidate's elevation is needed. He is also regarded as
[969] being on more intimate terms with the family ancestors who, likewise,
[783] must be in accord with the proceedings. The candidate for the asson is confined within the hounfor for a number of days, during which he takes purification baths and participates in other rituals. The rites that take place during this period are prescribed by the ekler priest who has assumed responsibility. When the purification is ended, the candidate emerges into the *peristyle* (roofed court) to participate in the general service, and to undergo further tests.

Present during the ceremonies are all the principal houngans of the region—men who will be friendly associates of the new priest or, possibly, unfriendly competitors. The candidate is tested on his knowledge
[789] of how to use the asson and the tiny hand bell, and in the course of the service he is mounted by the loa who is the chief protector of the cult tem-
[782] ple. Animals are sacrificed, and all the loa sacred to the hounfor are invoked and asked for their approval and support. But it is not only the loa
[794] and the dead who must indicate their approval. The ekler houngan polls the hounsi kanzo on whether they will accept their new cult chief and fol-
[533] low him. He also asks the chief drummer, who polls his assistant drummers. It is taken for granted that the decision is in the hands of the hounsi. The consensus is known before the actual service, but the formality of asking the question is observed. Should the hounsi refuse to accept the candidate for the asson, the elevation cannot take place.

[793] The city and the countryside contain many self-styled houngans and
[554] bocors who are not recognized as bona fide by the community, regardless
[62] of the route by which they claim to have achieved their station. Sometimes
[791] they are regarded as *pas fort* (not strong); that is, they do not have profound knowledge and understanding. The Haitian is quick to detect the difference between a houngan who knows and one who does not know. Many are stated to be outright fakes. One man who attempted to hold a service in Port-au-Prince aroused such contempt and disgust that a number of persons who had been drawn by genuine interest walked out with remarks that the man should be punished. In fact, his failure to show any
[533] essential qualifications for the houngan's role was commented upon in a song of ridicule that made its appearance at a secular dance that same night. The song noted some of the humorous aspects of the service, such as when the "impostor" struck himself vigorously on the head with the flat of a machete to show his "strength" and virtually incapacitated himself for the rest of the evening.

● 346 It is easily observed that no two hounfors are exactly alike. They differ

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

in many details. But, in general, the cult establishment consists of a central building of one or more rooms with an adjoining court, or peristyle, over which there is a covering—usually a straw roof. The covering, called the *tonnelle*, is supported by a number of poles, one of which is placed squarely in the center of the court. This center pole—the *po'teau mitan* or *po'teau planté*—is the focus of most of the ritual activities. The loa who descend upon the service enter by way of this pole. The ritual *vèvès*, or flour paintings, are made at its foot. Around it all the dancing takes place. On certain rare occasions when rituals are held in the open, a carefully selected tree becomes the center post—though it is by no means certain that the po'teau mitan is not, in fact, a symbolic tree.

The building adjoining the peristyle contains the inner sanctum. Here are deposited the paraphernalia of the cult, such as ritual bottles and jars, flags of the société, and the iron kettles used in various ceremonies. On the walls there may be primitive paintings of the special loa of the hounfor, or perhaps of his symbol. The loa of the sea, Agwé, may be represented by a ship. Damballa, the serpent-rainbow loa, may be represented by a snake or a rainbow. Usually there are colored lithographs of Catholic saints, who have both Catholic and African names. And there are hand-beaten iron crosses, dishes containing Indian celts in which loa are believed to reside, gourd bowls, and carved wooden double and triple bowls used for services to dead twins and triplets. Upon the altar place, called *badji*, there are the *crichet* or *govis*, earthen jars or bottles in which rest the loa removed from the heads of people who have died. Sometimes special niches are built on the hounfor grounds for the deities. Each cult priest designs his hounfor in his own way.

A hounfor belonging to a mambo near the town of Croix des Missions gave the appearance of having a large and prosperous société. Under the tonnelle eight beautifully carved Arada drums were suspended from a single peg. At a respectable distance hung a Martinique drum used only for dances on the occasion of a Nine Night. Inside the hounfor was an impressive display of sacred objects and decorations. One corner of the room was reserved for Symbi Yendéxo, a patron loa of drinking water and rainfall. He was portrayed on the wall as a long, thin snake crawling in a maze of crosses. On the ground beneath the picture was a small concrete pool, in which two water snakes swam. Another corner was reserved for Agwé, and on his wall was a picture of a steamship. Along the back of the altar was an impressive array of govis, containing the spirits removed from the heads of deceased persons. There was a large plate of loa stones, and various protective charms stood near by. Flags and sabres

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

346 794 353 778 were stacked against the wall, and set about in various places were several assons, iron crosses, Catholic lithographs, chains and iron bars for the loa Ogoun, candles set in bottles, and an old forged double bell of African design.

346 353 Some of the hounfors found elsewhere are more elaborate and reflect the richer resources of the immediate community, or the creative impulses of the houngan and his helpers, or the pressure of competition. Some cult temples are prolific with painted designs and symbolic representations of the deities. Others are unpretentious, simple, and even Spartan.

346 [113] In his book *En Haiti*, written approximately fifty years ago, Eugene Aubin describes a hounfor in the Cul-de-Sac Plain, a few miles from Port-au-Prince, as he saw it in 1906:

346 353 794 778 [The] *hounfor* is fronted by a *peristyle*, which is used for the Vodoun dancers and services; it is a large area, with a floor of beaten earth, covered with a straw roof. On three sides the walls rise to support the roof; on the fourth there is the inscription:

Société la Fleur de Guinée
Roi d'Engole
[*Flower of Africa Society*
King of Angola]

indicating the name of the patron of the society [the loa Roi Angole, or Wangol], over which the *houngan* presides. The *hounfor* is an ordinary house, a little larger than average. The sanctuary contains a principal *pé* [altar], running the whole length of the room on one side, and another altar, a little smaller, in one of the corners. These *pés* are altars largely made of brick, in which the under part is decorated with hearts and stars in relief; above, draperies hang from the ceiling. The lateral *pé* is divided into three compartments. There are, therefore, four sections in all, consecrated to each of the *loa* served in the *hounfor:* Aguay Aoyo [Agwé Woyo], [M6] Damballa, Ogoun Badagry, and Loco [Loko], Nago King. Maître Aguay is represented by the customary little boat; a medallion is consecrated to Monsieur Damballa, shown holding two snakes in his hand; a figure on horseback represents Ogoun Badagry, with a woman at one side holding a flag; Papa Loco is pictured in full uniform, smoking a pipe and fanning himself. The walls are covered with religious paintings [Catholic lithographs]. The back of the altar is occupied by numerous carafes in baked clay, called *canaris*, which contain the . . . *mystères* [spirits taken from the heads of the dead] gathered in the *hounfor;* in front are bottles of wine, liqueurs and vermouth presented to them in homage; then the plates, the cups for the *mangers-marassas* [feasts for the twin spirit], crucifixes, hand bells, *assons* for directing the dance or calling the *loa;* plates filled with polished stones [celts] inherited from the Indians—"thunder stones," symbols of Damballa, which Saugo [Sobo] the god of lightning hurls from the sky into the enclosure of his favorite *papaïs* [*houngans*]. Beside these miraculous stones are many coins of copper or silver [property of the *loa*]. The *loa* . . . possess coins of Joseph Bonaparte, King of Spain, minted in 1811; of Frederick VII of Denmark, 1859; of Charles IV of Spain, 1783, and of President Boyer, dated year 27 and year 30 of Haitian Independence. On the ground there is placed a coconut-oil lamp; in the corner, the flags of the *hounfor* and the saber of [the] *hapleur*, the man who acts as master of ceremonies in the services.

2: Courlander B-5 (1837-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

in the services. In the court, the bases of four sacred trees . . . are surrounded by circles of masonry [low brick walls]. These *reposoirs* are inhabited by the *loa* Legba, Ogoun, Loco and Sauge.[5]

There is little in Aubin's description to suggest that hounfors were much different a half century ago from what they are today. He errs in identifying the "thunder stones" solely with Damballa. But his eye for detail was acute. In 1950 a mambo in the neighborhood of this hounfor described by Aubin affirmed that some of the loa stones and old coins which he mentioned are still to be found among the properties of a hounfor in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. Others were lost in one of the cleric-inspired raids which despoiled cult temples of drums and other paraphernalia about fifteen years ago.

Many services are held outside the hounfor and the peristyle. Some rituals, such as animal sacrifices and "talking to the loa below the water," may take place some distance from the cult buildings. Indeed, various Vodoun ceremonies may be held at waterfalls, at the seashore, in sacred groves, in ordinary homes, in a boat at sea,[6] or under a sacred tree.

The rites of the hounfor are almost without number. They are associated with the supplication or conciliation of virtually countless deities, each of which has his own special service. There are services in multitudinous combinations and permutations for the dead, for twins, for albinos, and for unborn children. There are ceremonies for the elevation of hounsi and for initiation, smoke and fire ordeals, and tests of other kinds. There are *mangé loa* (feasts for the deities) and *mangé morts* (feasts for the dead). There are services for the sick, for the crops, and for the harvest. In one context or another, Vodoun relates to nearly every aspect and phase of life—and its counterpart, death. Since every region, every locality, and, in fact, almost every hounfor has developed its own ritual out of the common materials, it is possible to see hundreds of ceremonies without ever seeing precisely the same one twice. Yet the common elements bind them all together.

One such prime element is the possession, the "mounting" of the human body by one of the deities. Possession is a psychological phenomenon common to the rites of many cults throughout the world. It is known in Asia, Africa, Europe, and America. It is not the unique property of the African and his Haitian descendant. In the United States it is a commonplace not only among certain Negro cults but certain white cults as well. The United States Negro had ample West African inspiration for his seizures in the church and at the baptism. The intellectual meaning of these seizures has changed, as have their outward forms to a measurable extent, but their emotional content has not altered.

[5] Translated from the French of Aubin, *En Haiti*, pp. 59-59. Cf. p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst

[6] [Footnote appears on p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-S (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

they say, and "rides" them. What the possessed persons do then depends upon the personality and whim of the loa. Generally they take on the special personal characteristics of the loa. Their voices and manners change and their postures and attitudes undergo transfiguration. They may talk about the "island below the water," about community ancestors, about intimate affairs of the community, or about how things are going back in Africa. Sometimes they utter words or phrases recognized as "African language." And on occasion possessed persons talking *langage* are said to be speaking Greek, Arabic, Hebrew, or Spanish. At the moment of first impact, when the loa enter their heads, they stagger, jerk, and tremble, often falling on the ground. Then, soon afterward, their behavior begins to move in a groove of conventionalized activity.

Most commonly the loa arrive during religious rituals or dances. They come by way of the *po'teau mitan*, the center pole which supports the roof of the peristyle. It is around this pole that the sacred vèvès, or flour drawings, are made. At the foot of the pole sacrifices are offered and libations are poured.

Yet possession may occur anywhere and at any time. The sound of a certain drumbeat may be the signal for it, or a sudden fright, or an emotional crisis, or any situation to which possession has been conditioned. The houngan or the mambo may facilitate possession, control it, and terminate it. The cult priest is acutely sensitive to the conditions favorable to possession. He knows how to heighten emotional tension and how to soften it. A competent houngan "plays" his service as though it were a delicate instrument. He takes everything in, issues instructions to his servitors from time to time, orders the drum tempo increased or diminished, knows how to change pace. Sometimes he hovers in the background unobtrusively, encouraging the singing and dancing like a benevolent father. At other times he comes to the center of the activities and takes command. He becomes the focus of all eyes. His slightest action is watched with intensity. He may take the hand of one of the servitors, pirouette him about, and compel the loa to enter. When the servitor is "mounted," the houngan may conduct him through ritual activity. At the right moment the houngan may help the loa to leave.

The spectators who observe possession in others are usually aware of the identity of the loa who has entered. When the ancient loa Damballa Wèdo comes in, his "horse" falls to the ground, wriggles like a snake, and makes what are considered to be snakelike sounds in his throat. For Damballa is the venerable deity identified with the rainbow, which in ancient Dahomean lore was thought to be the great serpent come out from the underworld to drink after a rain. When the loa Ogoun Chango enters,

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1959) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Boulicha Nago, or Boulicha of the Nagos; Èzilie Wèdo and Èzilie Doba, possibly from Wèdo and Doba in Dahomey; Tijean Pied Chèche (Tijean Dry Feet), a loa of bad character, "dry feet" signifying malevolence; and Legba Grand Chimin, or Legba of the Highway. 776 171 552

Identification of loa is often made difficult by the use of the generic or family title only. The term Nago covers all the loa associated with this "nation" (Nago Piment, Amine Nago, Boulicha Nago, etc.), but in a song or service any one of them is as likely as not to be referred to simply as Nago, with no clue to his exact identity. Each listener takes the name to designate the Nago loa with whom he is most familiar, unless possession occurs and the loa is otherwise identified by the behavior of his "horse." 776 552

On the whole, it appears that there was in the beginning a strong awareness of regional origins. There are names among the cult pantheons which indicate Senegal, Dahomey, Nigeria, Congo, and Angola origins. Many loa bear the names of African towns. Among the Ogoun family of loa, for example, are such regional designations as Badagry and Jèkkè, the first being a town in Nigeria and the second in Dahomey. It is clear that a detailed geographical knowledge of certain West African regions would considerably illuminate a study of Haitian loa. 776 174 552

Local shrines, too, doubtless enter into the naming system. Badagry is the name of a town in Nigeria, and it is also a Dahomean word designating the structure in which young men used to be circumcised and initiated into the secrets of warriors. In this particular light, the loa Ogoun Badagry might be regarded as the deity of that particular ritual center. 346 174 776 552

In discussing the complicated relationship of their loa, Haitians sometimes say: "There are seven of everything. There are seven Marassas, seven Ogouns, seven Èzilies. There are seven brothers and sisters in every family of loa." Or they say something such as: "There is only one Legba, but there are seven. There is only one Ogoun, but he has many moods and names. There is only one Èzilie, but she has seven faces." This concept is also held by the Arara (Arada) cult of Cuba. It is interesting to note the extent to which duplications and new generations of loa have been set up into family households in the most literal sense. Those families are still growing. In the Gèdé family I have counted more than thirty seemingly distinct individuals (see Appendix I).[1] Herskovits mentions a number of others, and still more have been cited by other writers on the subject. When I pointed out to some Haitians that the Gèdé family numbered far more than seven individuals, they were unable to account for the situation. Other Haitians took the vast army of Gèdés as a matter of course. The Ogoun family, too, is large and growing. Twenty-seven Ogouns are listed in the compilation in Appendix I. Still more have been recorded elsewhere. 776 801

[1] [See p. 317ff., Category 116.-- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

of ground maize prepared by the laplace. The chicken, released, sat motionless, making no effort to escape. All watched attentively, the houngan shaking his rattle and bell. Suddenly the chicken cocked its head and, seeming to see the corn for the first time, reached out and pecked at it. This was the loa receiving the sacrifice—a difficult conception if one thinks of the chicken itself as the sacrifice. "Chébo," l'Autorité, snatched the chicken up, danced violently about, the loa in full possession of her body. With a swift movement of the saber, she cut the chicken's throat and caused the first drop of blood to fall into the hole. When the chicken stopped struggling, it was left there, head downward. L'Autorité took up a cock which was given her, cradled him, and set him before the ground maize. When he pecked at it, she picked him up and danced, around and around, jerking, lunging, never quite falling. She took his comb between her teeth, supporting his body gently with her hands, and spun around and around. Then she released him, cut his throat, and placed him in the hole with the chicken.

At the side of the hounfor, waiting, was a goat (called by the ritual name Dogwé). He had a fine silky white coat and a long beard. He was brought in to the place of sacrifice, and l'Autorité dropped to her knees to embrace his neck with her arms. She remained there a moment, her cheek against his, talking to him. Then she arose, a machete in hand instead of a saber, and began to pirouette while three men threw the goat on his side. Then she cut with the machete, and the goat's blood, too, began to run into the hole. For the first time her dance became unquestionably frenzied. She swung strong, full blows of the machete at the goat's neck, finally severing the head. From the hindquarters she cut a piece of red meat and placed it in her mouth.

At a signal from the houngan, three men carried the goat's body away to be dressed and cooked, and a woman came forward to wipe the blood from Papa Chébo's face.

The drums began again, a Dahomé dance, and the people relaxed. Many joined in the dancing while l'Autorité strutted about shaking hands and talking *langage*. She also danced, with gestures and movements wholly masculine. At one point she briefly advanced on another woman, making sexual gestures.

The houngan and his houngénicon retired to the front room of the hut. A new mat had been placed there for the houngénicon. She lay down on it, and the houngan sat in a chair against the wall. This was the beginning of the ceremony of calling *les morts en bas dleau* (the dead below the water).

Meanwhile, before the hounfor, the laplace and a hounsi were building

769 the *card*, a hogan-like structure made of bent saplings covered with cotton
793 cloth.
794 Rain had been threatening all evening, and now it began. Some people
796 crowded into the hut where the goat was being barbecued. Others came
(346) into the hut where the houngénicon lay; in the back room, with the pé, Chébo, l'Autorité, strutted and shook hands with the visitors. The straw roof leaked a little, but no one minded very much. The houngan and his houngénicon, who had been under a strain, relaxed. The rain would mark the length of the intermission. Except for the sound of the rain and "Chébo's" *langage*, there was no noise. No one spoke. Then the houngan,
769 his eyes closed, began to sing an Ibo song.
793
796
539

Ibo Lazile oh, éya!
Grand gout manqué tuyé moin!
A la yun an six mois m' sous la mer,
Grand gout manqué tuyé moin!

Ibo Lazile, oh, éya!
Hunger has not killed me!
One year and six months I have been under the sea,
Hunger has not killed me!

The others sang responsively:

Ibo Lazile, oh, Ibo!
Ibo grand gout pas tuyé'm, Ibo!

Ibo Lazile, oh, Ibo!
Ibo, hunger has not killed me, Ibo!

After a while the houngan called "Abobo!"—which was the signal to conclude. The rain was still coming down, and he called "Abobo!" for the rain to cease also. But it did not stop, and everyone laughed. He began another song, also Ibo:

Ianman Ibo lélé!
Ianman Ibo lélé!
Pilet pied'm mandé pardon,
Ça pardon wa fai pou moin?
Ça ou gainyan con ça? [Ex. 80]

Ianman Ibo lélé!
Ianman Ibo lélé!
Step on my foot and ask my pardon,
What will the pardon do for me?
What do you have [what are you doing] like that?

And the others came in, spiritedly:

Ianman, oh, un hunh!
Ianman, con ça'm dansé Ibo!
Ianman, oh, un hunh!

Ianman, oh, un hunh!
Ianman, like this I dance, Ibo!
Ianman, oh, un hunh!

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

While those in the front room were singing, l'Autorité, in the inner room, was suddenly thrown about violently by her possession. She raced into one wall of the hut, striking her head, flung herself back against the opposite wall, kicking, trembling, calling out strange *langage*. She crashed into the pé, upsetting the dishes, and then fell across the mat where the children were lying half asleep. One of them, a boy of about four, became hysterical. He knew the woman, but he had never seen her like this. His mother carried him to the front room, where she finally quieted his crying. L'Autorité, spent for the moment, lay across the mat. No one touched her. Later, when the singing was resumed, she got to her feet and made the rounds once more, shaking hands again and again. She was now smoking a pipe.

When the houngan heard the rain subsiding, he again called out "Abobo!" as though he were giving the order to cease, and everyone, himself included, laughed again. When it had definitely stopped, someone went out to shake the water from the canopy. The drums were brought out of their shelter, and although the ground was sticky with mud, the dancing was resumed. The houngan asked for a fast Nago dance, and the front room of the hut was once more emptied of everyone except the houngan and his houngénicon.

The laplace and his assistant went up the hill to put the finishing touches to the *card*, the temporary structure in which the houngan was going to receive the loa and the dead. From a small chest of chinaware, the houngénicon set a "table" for the loa on the ground where she sat. The sacrifice had been for a single loa, Chébo; the rest of the service was for all the loa served by the family. The houngan, sitting next to the houngénicon, sounded his rattle and spoke *langage*. He sang quietly, a song which only the houngénicon could hear, watching her intently. A large basket of dishes, bottles, and various other paraphernelia was brought by a hounsi. Candles were lighted and set on the ground. The houngan gave a signal, and the hounsi brought a large square of white cotton cloth, which they stretched tight over the houngénicon like a canopy. The candle flame and the silhouette of the houngénicon could be seen through the cloth, but the details of the service were not visible. Sometimes, the houngan, his bell and rattle in hand, would go under the cloth to assist in the calling of the loa. Then, without warning, things began to happen very rapidly.

One of the hounsi who sat before the door began to quiver and make strange noises in her throat: "Ka, ka, k-k-k-k-k-k-a!" Her body shook violently, and her head rolled on her shoulders. Almost simultaneously something began to happen under the cloth where the houngénicon was, and the members of the family crowded up to the *card* by the hounfor. The houngénicon lay stiffly, her eyes closed, the white cloth removed. The

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Oh, a day will come when they will remember me here, *kélé manyan!*
Oh, Damballa Wèdo *é, kélé manyan.*
Oh, Ayida Wèdo *é, kélé manyan!*
Oh, a day will come for you to remember me here, *kélé manyan!*

During the evening about twenty loa and ancestors came into the *caye* to talk. When the last had finished speaking the hills were already light, and the service was over.

Service for Èzilie Fréda and St. Jacques Majeur

This service took place not in the open but under a tonnelle surrounded by four walls, adjoining the hounfor of Alexis Stephan on the west fringes of Port-au-Prince. Separate from the hounfor and dance court was a shrine to the "dead" loa Gèdé Nimbo. The shrine was a small shed open on one side. Within, lighted by flickering oil lamps, was a life-size effigy of Gèdé, a scarecrow-like figure dressed in the loa's traditional attire—black tail coat and trousers, and a tall opera hat. On the otherwise blank face of the figure were smoked glasses with white rims.

The dancing was progressing under the supervision of the houngan's adjutant, the laplace. He wandered among the drummers and dancers, encouraged the singing, and issued orders here and there. No one seemed to take him very seriously. There was a good deal of joking, and the gathering seemed very much like an old-fashioned family reunion. There were perhaps a hundred dancers and spectators—friends, relatives, and devotees of Stephan's hounfor. Everyone was watching with affection an old woman who could not be restrained from dancing. She executed old classical steps and postures with a skill that called for running comment all around her. As each piece came to an end someone would step up to her and say something like: "Woy, Manman, mais ou passé mwé!" (Oh, Mother, you are better than me!). Then they would attempt to get her to sit down again, but she would only shake them off and urge the drummers to get going if they were not too tired.

Eventually, the houngan, Stephan, made a casual entrance through the door of his adjoining hounfor. He held the usual ritual rattle and bell in his hand, and sauntered around to chat with his friends.

Gradually, almost imperceptibly, the dancing became more serious. Soon, only the hounsi, the female servitors, were dancing. The drums played a salute to Legba, the first loa to be called upon in a Vodoun service. For it is Legba who opens all gates and all highways, and who paves the way for communication with other deities. Though he is not the greatest of the loa, he is one of the most ancient. The houngan spilled water on the ground as a libation, and the dancing continued.

2: Courlander B-4 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

remembers many of the details. But during the administration of President Louis Borno (1922–1930) there was a reenactment of the original march. There suddenly appeared in the streets of Port-au-Prince a crowd of Gèdé *mystères*—houngans "possessed" by Gèdé Nimbo and attired in Gèdé dress: tall black hats, long black tail coats, smoked glasses, black skirts over their black trousers. They carried flags, waved polka-dot kerchiefs, shook their ceremonial rattles, and paused sometimes to wipe the perspiration from one another's faces. They became the nucleus of a huge, noisy crowd moving up the hill toward the palace. Market women followed instead of going home; street gamins screamed and raced among them. Before they had arrived at the palace grounds they had taken on the semblance of a huge Mardi Gras band. They swerved through the gates of the palace grounds and along the drive, right to the steps of the palace itself. The guards, taken by surprise, waited helplessly for their officers to arrive.

At the palace door, the houngans demanded money from the president. Borno was in a dilemma. He was reputed to be sympathetic to Vodoun ritual but was only surreptitiously so. He feared the houngans, and he feared public opinion. What would the upper class of Port-au-Prince think, the Latin-culture Haitians? With Gèdé's worst manners, the Gèdé mystères cavorted on the palace steps. Finally Borno gave in. He sent the money out to them, and then the crowd of Gèdés marched out of the palace grounds, waving their flags and shaking their rattles.

Service for the Hounsi Bossale

This ritual of calling the loa to speak through the mouth of the Vodoun priest took place in the Bolosse section of Port-au-Prince. The hounfor was situated in a congested slum area of the city, but the grounds around it were spacious. The hounfor itself was small and unpretentious, and except for the adjoining tonnelle would easily have been mistaken for another small wooden house. The houngan was a heavy-set man with a black mustache. Quick to laugh and easy in his movements, he nevertheless commanded solemn respect from the hounsi and the other participants. His soft-spoken voice expressed assurance and authority.

There were a number of possessions in the course of the dancing, all more or less routine. Each time a possession occurred, the houngan came forward with his asson and bell, gave a pitcher of water and a candle to the possessed devotee, and conducted her through a ritual at the foot of the center post.

Later, one of the hounsi came and sat at the houngan's feet. She was not possessed but obviously was in a state of high tension. Other servitors brought from the hounfor a wooden washtub and set it on the ground

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

793 before the houngan. Staring into the tub, he shook his asson and called
794 upon a certain loa to enter. Then he placed a lighted candle upright in the
796 tub and watched it for a moment. The flame was suddenly snuffed out.
797 The houngan looked concerned. He removed the candle and called for another one. When he placed the new candle in the tub it remained burning. The houngan smiled. The loa had agreed to enter. The houngan and his chief assistant placed the tub upon the head of the waiting hounsi. She trembled violently as though she had received a shock, then leaped to her feet. The loa had mounted her and presumably was sitting in the tub on her head. She began to stagger back and forth across the dance court, while the drums beat a salute. The tub tottered dangerously but did not fall. The possessed hounsi then began to whirl. She stopped, and the tub continued to spin for a few seconds on her head. She twirled again in the opposite direction. Each time she stopped she waited for the tub to stop spinning. The twirling motion was accompanied by a constant jerking and lurching, as though she were about to lose her balance, but she never stumbled or fell. After perhaps five minutes of this violent "riding" by the loa, the houngan approached her with his asson and conducted her into the hounfor, the tub still on her head. Inside the hounfor he removed the tub, sent the loa away, and left the hounsi to rest.

[346] There was more dancing, and after a while the service was transferred to a small temporary cloth-covered structure resembling an American Indian hogan. The hounsi bossale—the servitors whose loa had not been "tamed" or conditioned—lay before the structure on their faces, side by side. There were twelve of them. The other hounsi covered them completely with white sheets. The houngan entered the hogan-like structure (the *card*) with a candle and a bell. He tinkled his bell and began to call upon the loa to speak to the hounsi bossale. Through his mouth, first one spirit and then another made comments. The hounsi under the sheets were tensely quiet, until one of them began to jerk and scream. Several others, as though responding to a trigger, joined in the screaming. Older women came to quiet them. The hysterical reaction of the hounsi bossale was regarded as simply a reflection of their beginners' status. Their loa had not yet been controlled. The ritual continued until the early hours of the morning, the loa and ancient ancestors coming in to speak, one after another.

The First Yams and the First Rice

244 Each year, when the yams are harvested there is a great festival known as
[796] the *mangé yam*. Of all things grown in Haiti, the yam is perhaps the most
[262] significant. It is the most vital of all staples, and it is traditional. The yam

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1969 SV3 HaHi SV3

If it should happen that on the appointed day four years later the family is unable to hold the regular feast for Grand Bois, the grand famille goes to the tree sacred to the loa, with a bottle of *siro'* and other token gifts. He explains the difficulties of the family; he tells the loa that it has been a bad year, that the crops have been poor, and that the family has not been able to accumulate enough money to buy sacrificial animals. He asks Grand Bois for a six-month postponement. The loa agrees to the postponement, making his intentions clear through various signs when the grand famille is possessed. "Grand Bois is a good loa," people say, "but if you fail to meet your obligations to him he will be very stern. If you don't keep your promise to him, he may seize you [i.e., kill you]."

When the rites for Malt' Grand Bois are finished, services for Ogoun and the Dahomé deities may be held, beginning on Friday and running through the week end. The Ogoun service is a festive affair. There is much singing and dancing, and early on Saturday morning the sacrificial bull is dressed and decorated with red and blue kerchiefs. Red and blue ribbons are tied to his horns, and he is led on a grand tour to various places, including Ogoun's tree. The drummers walk behind him, and after them members of the family, some dancing, some singing, and some mounted by the loa Ogoun. The procession passes three times around the cemetery, then heads back toward the family *habitation*. When the participants reach the tree sacred to Legba, they sing to this loa, invoking him to "ouvri bayè pou' moin" (open the gate for me). Finally, when the procession reaches the *habitation*, the sacrificial bull is killed. After Ogoun has been served his mangé, the rites are terminated with an *action de grâce*.

Near Anse-à-Veau there is a dried-up spring. It is said that many years ago during a big service for Malt' Grand Bois a man mounted by this loa rushed to the foot of a large tree and began clawing at the ground. He dug a hole there with his hands, and when it was only a few feet deep, water began to flow. The members of the société later enlarged the hole and lined it with stone. It was discovered that a giant crab was living in this water. One year, a service to Malt' Grand Bois was missed. The crab disappeared from the spring, and soon the water stopped flowing. "Grand Bois gives," the people say, "but if he is not remembered he also takes back."

Possession by the Loa Pinga Maza

On the outskirts of Port-au-Prince there is a hounfor dedicated to the loa Pinga Maza, also known by the name Bakulu Baka. He is a ferocious and fearsome spirit of the Pétro family who is known for his propensity

to "eat" people; that is, to destroy them. To do this he employs such means as disease, insanity, and destruction of crops. If a man serves Pinga Maza well, the loa protects him in return; but for those who anger him, Pinga is a menacing and vengeful creature. People often say, "Pinga, c'est djab" (Pinga is a devil).

The Pinga hounfor in Port-au-Prince is called the *Société de la Belle Jeune Fleur*. Its peristyle is simple and is hardly distinguishable from those of other small hounfors. Around the base of the center pole is a three-foot-high wall of masonry, decorated with simple cult symbols. The outer room of the hounfor proper also resembles many another. The familiar pot têtes containing loa stand on a wooden altar, and there are Catholic lithographs on the walls. But the inner room belongs exclusively to Pinga Maza. Here are all the accoutrements and objects sacred to the deity. Everything is red. Pinga's clothing and kerchiefs are red. On the walls are painted esoteric designs—hands, skulls, and crosses—all in red. The bottles, magic bundles, and govis on the altar are decorated with red cloth, ribbons, or paint. In the middle of the earthen floor is embedded a heavy wooden cross. On each end of the crossbeam hangs a large calabash resembling a bulbous hand. And on top of the upright is affixed a human skull. The total impression of this hounfor is that of a bizarre aberration, calculated to intimidate and terrify. The houngan himself is relatively young, literate, and city wise. His personality is smooth and sharp, and he lacks the air of sincerity and easy simplicity which most often characterizes the houngan of the mountains.

In this inner room, before the skull and the cross, there took place a small service for a client, to determine what kind of magic was needed to fend off malevolent actions of an enemy. On the day of the divining session, there hung from the rafters of the tonnelle a long rope, which extended into a deep hole in the earth near the door. Hanging on the rope, down inside the hole, were two gray dolls tightly bound together. Hanging still farther down were a knife, a fork, and other, unidentifiable objects. This cluster of magic paraphernalia was an *expédition* at work; it was an elaborate pouin, which was working against an enemy who lived far away.

Before entering the hounfor, the houngan took a long rope whip from the wall and cracked it seven times before the door. This process, known as *frete cache*, was to "wake up" the loa within. The houngan then entered, followed by the client who was seeking help. They paused briefly in the outer room, where the houngan took up his asson and bell and made a small vèvè on the ground. He spoke briefly in *langage* and then passed on through the door to the inner room. There the

of Haiti. But the route to it is through water. When the Haitians say "under the water" they do not mean under the sea. The ocean is regarded as the special domain of Agwé, La Sirène, and a few related deities, but it has nothing to do with most loa. "Under the water" specifically means under the springs, the rivers, and the fresh-water lakes. Fresh water has the greatest of significance in relation to most of the Vodoun deities.

When a loa comes to visit his Haitian children he comes by way of the *chimin dlean* (the water road)—that is to say, by way of the river, the waterfall, or the spring. Because the spring is the primary source of fresh water, it is the most direct means of contact with the land of the loa. Tales are heard everywhere of persons who, drawing water from the spring at night, heard the voices of loa or the sound of singing and drumming coming up from somewhere below. And virtually all the tales about human beings who visited the land of the loa describe them as descending into a river or disappearing into a waterfall.

The loa are accustomed to traveling by the "water road." And in all aspects of the Vodoun service, this "water road" is refreshed and replenished. When the road is dry, contact with the loa is diminished. When it is moist, the loa travel easily.

Thus, the houngan constantly uses water to entice and invite the deities. He holds a glass or pitcher of water at the center pole of his peristyle. He extends it toward the four cardinal points. He spills water at the foot of the center pole. He spills water in the hounfor at the foot of the *pé*, or altar. He sets a pitcher of water at the gateway of his *habitation*. And often, during a service, he pours a pathway of water in the dust from his gateway into his peristyle. Within nearly every hounfor there is at least one *bassin*, or pool, dedicated to the loa who is the *maît' caille*, the master of the house. These pools are carefully filled with water drawn from the springs. They are places of rest and refreshment for the deities whose names or portraits are inscribed on the walls above.

Sometimes rites and services are held at the site of the spring, the houngan and his entourage marching down to it from the hounfor for the occasion. So, too, there are annual pilgrimages to waterfalls such as Saut d'Eau, where the loa mount their "horses" in profusion.

Within the hounfor, during a service, the cult priest and the servitors pour "libations" of water on the earth, so that the loa may be refreshed. And virtually without end, the hounfor is the scene of ritual ceremonies in which the loa is bathed and thus "renewed" in the heads of his servitors.*

* [For footnote, see category 116, p. 351.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[B 112-M]

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19. *Vodoun altar of the houmfor "Caille Aguré" in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. On the wall behind the altar are names of favored loa. On the altar are jars containing loa and souls of dead persons. Painted on its front wall, against which swords and flags are leaning, is the ship of Loa Aguré.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1927-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P.112-N]

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20. A Voodoo altar in northern Haiti, scarcely distinguishable from a Catholic shrine. Houngfors range from the simple to the complex, from the poor to the rich, from the primitive to the sophisticated, and from the bizarre to the artistic.

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21. Altar in the houngfor "Société de la Belle Jeune Fleur" in Port-au-Prince dedicated to the loa Ponga Mana. The cross surmounted by the skull represents the deity. Behind the table, leaning against the cross, is the pendo with which this loa "grounds" his ceremonies. On the other table are razor blades for Ponga Mana to eat.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-R]

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25. Saluting the lua. In the center, with sword, is the laplace, flanked by two houngi carrying sequin-studded flags. In the background, left, is the houngan with his asson.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[7 112-5]

28. A yam harvest festival. The men are carrying the yams into the peristyle of the houngfor to be cut up and shared with the family ancestors and the loa.

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2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-T]

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29. *The bain de Noël, or Christmas bath. The men are pulverizing leaves in the mortar, to the accompaniment of singing by the houngi and drumming. Later, a "bainou" will be made of the pounded leaves, and all will share it.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

used for wall hangings much as appliquéd cloths are used in Dahomey. Near Cap Haitien, in the north, ceramic workers make crude clay figurines of roosters, pigs, dogs, cows, and people. The "purpose" of these figurines is obscure, but it is likely that they are intended for use in Vodoun ritual, a number of them having been observed in hounfors in the vicinity of the town of Grande Rivière du Nord. In some mountain villages, canes carved with animal and human heads are commonly seen. Nor is the tradition of carving gourds and calabashes, popular in various regions of West Africa, altogether forgotten. The *cayambouque*, a divided calabash with the top ingeniously cut to fit into the lower part so as to form a sealed container, is sometimes covered with carved geometric designs, usually crude and haphazard but on occasion meticulous. Until recent years the common *cha-cha*, or gourd rattle, was similarly carved.

Most of the visible traditional art is to be found in the environs of the cult temple. The inner walls of many hounfors are covered with ritual designs and symbols and portraits of the deities. On the altar, sometimes, crude wood carvings of deities are seen, along with forged iron objects, carved marassa bowls, and grotesquely shaped drumsticks known as *baguettes guinée*. All the wooden objects are characterized by a plainness that relegates them to the category of purely functional and expendable things. The wood carving of a deity is not an image, it is a representation; it can be sold or otherwise disposed of, even thrown away if infested with beetles, and another object can be used to replace it. The only concern of the cult priest in this matter is that the deity concerned should understand the situation properly and not take offense. Thus there is no strong feeling that the wood carving should be a realistic representation or that it should be "beautiful." One relatively antique wood carving, completely West African in style, was found some years ago in a hounfor near Léogane and is now in the collection of the Musée du Peuple Haitien in Port-au-Prince (see fig. 57).

One of the most flourishing arts of the hounfor is the *vèvè*, or ritual drawing made on the earth in the course of a service. Most commonly these beautiful and ornate designs are made with white meal or flour, and in a few of the cults, primarily the Pétro, lampblack and red brick dust are also used. The vèvè is made by the houngan or the mambo. With sure, practiced movements, the cult priest allows the meal to trickle through his fingertips onto the ground where the rites are taking place, usually in the peristyle of the hounfor itself. The drawings he makes are composed of a multiplicity of cabalistic symbols—heart shapes, stars, interlocked V's, flags, abstract phallic forms, crosses, swords,

[The Vodoun Pantheon]

776 171 any iron object, such as a sugar vat. In West Africa, Chango (or Shango) and Ogoun were considered separate deities. In Nigeria, according to Ellis, they were brothers, closely associated with each other. Among the Yoruba, Chango was a thunder-and-lightning god and he is believed to have been one of the early kings of Oyo. The African Chango, like the Haitian, is identified with fire, a corollary of lightning, and persons possessed by him may carry pots of fire on their heads and perform other fire tests.[12]

Chango Gold. Another manifestation of Ogoun Chango.

Ogoun Bachango. Possibly the same as Ogoun Chango, or he may be named after the Bachangos, a Congo tribe. A warrior and ironworker.

Ogoun Balizal. One of the Ogoun family.

Nimbo Nimbo. One of the Ogoun family.

Archardé, Achardé, Chardé, or Chadé. One of the Ogoun escorte, sometimes called Ogoun Chadé, or Chadé Bocor.

Ogoun Yimsin. One of the Ogoun brothers.

Obatala, or Batala. A loa of war. Among the Yoruba people of Nigeria, Obatala was a sky deity and protector of the town gates. He was thought to form children in the womb and was therefore believed responsible for albinism and congenital deformities.[13] Obatala and Chango are among the main Lucumí (Yoruba) deities in Cuba.

Ogoun Bayé. An aspect of Ogoun who functions as a gateway guardian.

Ogoun Blanc (White Ogoun). He does not drink rum, which is a favorite beverage of his brothers.

Ogoun Jebba

Ogoun Jèkka, Jèkkè, or Yèkkè. A warrior and ironworker. Jèkkè may have been a shrine or regional designation.

Ogoun Kèrèk

Ogoun Kénison

Yalodé, or Ogoun Lodé. Brother of Ogoun Badagry and the other Ogouns. Yalodé is clearly of Dahomean origin.[13]

Ogoun Panama, or Ogoun Palama. Guardian against sunstroke, or spirit responsible for sunstroke. A brother of Ogoun Badagry. He is usually seen wearing a Panama hat.

Ogoun Pierre Narcisse

Ogoun Jèrouge (Ogoun Red Eyes). A malevolent Ogoun brother, red eyes being a mark of bad behavior. Some people feel that he is a member of the Pétro rather than the Vodoun pantheon.

Nago Piment. A member of the Ogoun escorte. He eats hot peppers.

Boulicha Nago

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776 346 [184] Gèdé Nimbo, or Nibo, also called Brave Gèdé. One of the powerful deities of the Vodoun pantheon, particularly in the region of Port-au-Prince, where many hounfors cater extensively to him. Gèdé Nimbo, along with his numerous brothers and his vast escorte, is a "dead" loa, a spirit of the graveyard, a sexual rascal, and a violator [178] of propriety. He is served apart from the other loa, and usually he has a separate altar or shrine outside the central hounfor. Cult centers for Gèdé are often near graveyards, though not necessarily so. Gèdé services abound around the main cem- 776 etery of Port-au-Prince. Gèdé Nimbo has various manifestations, but he is usually

[12] [Ellis, The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples, P.47; W. R. Bascom, in Introduction to record album Drums of the Yoruba of Nigeria (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1950). Cf. P. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[12] Ellis, The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples p. 38 ff. Cf. P. 354, Cat. 116. -Analyst]

[13] Ellis, The Ewe-Speaking Peoples, pp. 71-74; Herskovits, op. cit. I, 39. Cf. P. 354, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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[p. 113]

INTRODUCTION

IF the visitor to Haiti is first struck by the wide separation between the élite and the peasant masses, the person who knows Haiti only through books is sure to think of it as a country of Voodoo. There is no error of fact here, for Voodoo is characteristic of Haiti. Nevertheless, what the American conjures up in his mind when he uses the word is almost certain to be misleading. In spite of detailed reports of anthropologists the average American clings firmly to his notion that Voodoo is Negro superstition chiefly concerned with charms or spells to "hoodoo" (a variation of the same word) an enemy. Scientists rarely succeed in correcting long-held but incorrect or one-sided impressions of the meaning of terms; they end rather by inventing a new word, or else continue the generally losing fight for precise usage, and so preserve the confusion.[1] 771

Since there is small likelihood of eradicating the inexact connotations of "Voodoo," many recent anthropologists have adopted such spellings as Vodun, Vodou, Vodoun, Vaudou, and Vodûn, all renditions of local pronunciation of the same term. *Vodun* (pronounced Vo-doon) has been chosen for use in this work, in the hope that readers will bear in mind that the folk religion is not mere idle superstition. A grasp of the real and distinctive religious beliefs and cult practices of the Haitian is very necessary to an understanding of the social picture. [104]

Like its caste system, the religious life of Haiti presents far-reaching contrasts. The only approved religion of the country is Roman Catholicism. To this faith all the élite who are religiously inclined, or wish to pay formal homage to the institution of religion, belong. No Protestant sect has ever gained a real foothold in Haiti. Catholic churches are among the imposing edifices in every town; Catholic priests are an everyday sight as they go about their parishes; Catholic brothers and sisters, with state support and approval, direct much of the higher education in the country. 771 195 184 [346] [793] [871]

1. Witness in anthropology the contrast between the popular and the scholarly meaning of *culture*, *race*, *taboo*, and *fetish*; in chemistry of *reaction* (as when a man is asked his "reaction" to an opinion); in psychology of *instinct*, *innate*, and *inherent*; and in sociology of *caste*, *institution*, and *social*.

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The depths to which Haiti descended under Soulouque made the task of his successor relatively simple. It would prove wise and generally popular to reverse the Emperor's action, in whatever respect. President Geffrard was the more successful as an antidote to the Emperor because of his practical intelligence. The best time to strike for the revival of Catholicism would be immediately after the heyday of Vodun. In 1859, the first year of his incumbency, Geffrard consequently undertook negotiations with the Holy See, sending two plenipotentiaries for the discussions. Because the Haitian delegates persuasively depicted the sorry state of religion in their country, because they showed themselves and their President willing to defer to papal wishes, and because the new Pope was filled with missionary zeal to reclaim Haiti for the Faith, all problems were overcome. An early agreement was reached, and the Concordat, signed in Rome on March 28, 1860, was approved by the Haitian Senate on the first of April. A commission was dispatched to Haiti immediately, one which did thoroughly and well its task of delimiting the boundaries of dioceses, allocating bishops and other clergy, and founding a seminary. An archbishop of Port-au-Prince was consecrated, and the Catholic Church, Roman and apostolic, at long last became officially established once more in the republic. The breach of fifty-five years was healed.

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In one sense the reform had come too late. All the peasants were by this time thoroughly imbued with the ideas of Vodun, as were the lower orders in the towns. Most of the élite either clandestinely practiced Vodun or ignored religion altogether. On the other hand, practically no Haitian was opposed to Catholicism, not even the most ardent devotee of the obscurer cult. The native faith had grown up quietly enough, making its adjustments to the outward forms of Catholicism which still existed in the country. To every Vodun worshiper there were simply two hierarchies of spiritual beings, each with its own powers; to believe in one was not to deny the other. The new Catholic priests, then, met no hostility; what they had to deal with was an ineradicable folk religion which accepted everything and rejected little in the spiritual realm.

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The Archbishop, his band of forty priests, and a small group of Brothers and Sisters set to work with fervor. Nearly everything had to be rebuilt from the ground. Church buildings were in such disrepair that it was considered more economical to erect new ones than

175 795 [346]

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175 795 346 to try to renovate the old. Gradually the work became established, increasing in scope with the years.

175 795 It is not necessary to present a detailed history of the work of Catholicism in Haiti since 1860. The most striking feature of these years is its relationship to Vodun, which will be treated shortly. The progress made by the Church itself can best be seen by a summary of conditions in 1930.

794 795 162 Haiti is divided into dioceses named after its principal towns and cities. The population statistics are based upon figures of births covering more than fifty years, and although estimates, they are probably as accurate as any other population statistics for Haiti:

Archdiocese of Port-au-Prince	942,700
Diocese of Cap-Haïtien	453,000
Diocese of Les Cayes	628,000
Diocese of Gonaïves	475,000
Diocese of Port-de-Paix	153,590
Total	2,652,290

793 To care for this large and predominantly illiterate population there are 205 priests,[14] only 8 of whom are Haitians; 105 Brothers; and 366 Sisters.[15] The assiduous educational work of these *religieux* will be discussed in another connection.

794 162 The country's 10,200 square miles are divided into 112 parishes, which generally correspond to the political communes, although there are several parishes in the larger centres of population. In the rural sections 465 mission chapels are located at strategic points.[16]

550 Any casual attempt to assess the importance of religion in the daily

14. Of these, 156 are in charge of parishes or missions (the secular priests). The remaining 49 are regular clergy (that is, belonging to a religious or monastic order). All parishes in the diocese of Port-de-Paix and two in Port-au-Prince are in charge of the regular clergy; the other regular monks are doing educational work or other special service connected with the dioceses. [794]

15. The Brothers are Frères de l'Instruction Chrétienne; of the number 83 are French, 10 French Canadian, 9 Spanish, and 3 Haitian. The Sisters belong to three congregations: 146 to St. Joseph de Cluny, 198 to Les Filles de la Sagesse, and 22 to Les Filles de Marie. [793] [792]

16. All the figures cited above are drawn from the *Report of the Forbes Commission to Haiti*, 1930, pp. 16–17.

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787 proper control, as they should be. If an unwanted god persists in
114 mounting an individual, the pertinacious one is commanded to go away or the victim himself is sent home until he can recover his own personality. Many people strongly resist possession when it is imminent. Judged by our own standards, possession of the Vodun variety could certainly not be called normal; judged by Haitian standards, however, it would be absurd to call abnormal an experience known and approved by the majority of the community.[29]

796 Possession occurs either at the service or at the dance. Here again
535 the white man has nothing in his religious experience to enable him
787 to comprehend the pattern of Haitian religion. The service corresponds nearly enough to the Catholic Mass or to more realistic sacrifices in ancient Jewish rites, but neither of these faiths nor any other the white man knows well has dancing for religion's sake. In Vodun, however, the dance is of equal importance with the service.

778 In the tiny *houmfort* (also spelled *hounfort*) of the priest, which is
● 346 little more than a hut with earthen floor, the service begins. To call
796 this structure a temple is at once to make it too imposing and to confuse the white man in his attempt to understand the scene; it is no more of a temple than was a tiny primitive early Christian church. Most houmforts in Haiti would be crowded if twenty people were present. At one end is an altar, more or less resembling the high altar in a Catholic chapel; on it are placed a crucifix, flowers, candles, fruit and food, wine, lithographs of Catholic saints, and whatever other objects, Catholic or Vodun, local practice may dictate and individual taste prefer. Upon the floor are traced formal cabalistic patterns, generally in corn meal, both to fend off evil influences and as required by the particular loa. The officiants may be male or female or both. To the service ordinarily come only the members of the family and their specifically invited guests; neighbors and friends will attend the subsequent dance.

796 A student of Catholicism would find in the first part of the service
788 a great deal of ritual borrowed from the Church. The blessing,
177 genuflections, making the sign of the cross, responses, and the like,
782 all clearly show a Catholic background which accords well with
787 certain objects upon the altar. Imperceptibly the strictly Vodun element obtrudes itself. The loa are asked whether they will accept

29. The statement of the two sides of this controversy may be found in Dorsainvil, *op. cit.*, throughout; and in Herskovits, *op. cit.*, particularly pp. 146–147.

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the sacrifices; food is set before the sacrificial animal, and if this food is eaten by the creature or creatures, it is known that the loa is satisfied. Then comes the actual sacrifice of the animal, a slaying neither ostentatious nor dramatic, since often it does not occur in the houmfort itself. It is at this juncture that possession is looked for. The loa, by seizing one or more of his devotees—or, if possession fails, by the divination of the priest—makes known his desires. The demands of the loa are likely to be modest: a candle, a special article of food, certain specific attentions. Occasionally he insists upon an impressive sacrifice. Whatever his desires, they must be gratified or else the loa will mildly harass the family; long refusal will produce anger and full vengeance. If the god is Rada, his sacrifice will be white, red, or vari-colored; if he is Pétro, he will wish black or gray animals—chickens, turkeys, goats, bullocks. 796 782 787 788 177

The service itself, then, is entirely religious in nature, consisting wholly of ceremonies and rituals conducted by officiating priests, with the purpose of restraining or pacifying gods who may have been pursuing a family with misfortune, or gratifying those who have made it happy. The dance following the service apparently expresses the joy of the family at dangers averted and gratitude for blessings bestowed. 796 535 [782]

In contrast to the private character of the service, the dance has all the appearance of a social event. Invitations to it are sent all over the countryside. People attend for good fellowship, gossip, and the sheer delight of dancing, but in the background one is always aware of a religious element as well. The dance is held in a specially constructed *tonnelle*, a roof of boughs and leaves supported by uprights. Drums are not always used at the earlier service, but no dance could be held without them. The crowd drifts in slowly, so that the dance may be long in getting under way. The best drummers in the community may not arrive until after two or three hours. Three drums of different sizes, all properly baptized, set the rhythms, and sometimes gourd rattles embroider a commentary upon the beat. Whereas at the service possession comes as a result of the priest's invocations, at the dance it is inspired by the drumming. Each loa has his own particular rhythm, so that as soon as it is determined what god has seized upon a dancer the drummers take up the rhythm of that god. The officiant immediately rushes to the mounted person with a calabash of water and a candle; by following the "horse" around and [346] [534] 796 535 787

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There are sections, particularly in the capital, in which shanties more resembling chicken coops than dwellings house whole families under leaky roofs of crude thatch. Privacy, cleanliness, sanitation, are not to be thought of. That the sun is warm in Haiti is a blessing, for cold would creep through the gaping walls. Where the shanty dwellers go in the rain, where they get their food, what relieves the dreary round of daily monotony the important people of Haiti do not know, nor do many of them seem to care. President Vincent undertook to clear away a section of the most abject slums in Port-au-Prince, erected in their place a series of two-room (likewise two-family) houses about a central square. Compared with the hovels they replaced the new houses are palatial; compared with houses Americans would consider adequate, they look more like unimaginative garages. With what rapidity an epidemic of serious nature might sweep the lower sections of the city, which are but one vast slum, is a thought too harrowing to entertain. 362

In the whole city there are hardly half a dozen buildings which would detain the lover of architecture. The president's palace is a gleaming white structure, somewhat resembling the White House in Washington. With its background of lofty mountains it makes an impressive picture, although it stands naked in the vast public square of the city. Young palm trees are now growing in the square, and may before many years provide for the palace the setting it deserves. Inside the palace one's chief impression is of emptiness. Other government buildings range from plain white edifices which fulfill their practical function without any suggestion of aesthetic graciousness, down through the inferior grades to wooden structures which one passes without a second glance. The cathedral, placed upon an eminence, is unattractive both in its exterior and in the glaring interior. Upon one of its finger towers at night gleams a light to guide ships into the harbor. The clubs and a few of the villas are pleasant to look at; the colleges of the lay brothers are impressively large, but bespeak the provincial town. 344 644 344 346 [349]

Indeed, one wanders up and down the country in search of man-made beauty and finds only two examples, both partially ruined, and both in the North: Christophe's magnificent citadel, La Ferrière, and the shattered shell of his charming palace, Sans Souci. 712 344

The citadel is breath-taking. Astride a great peak the huge edifice resembles the mighty beak of a ship about to soar off into the atmosphere. Inside one can wander through endless vaults, gaze from 712

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311 merly. Wherever the overcrowded Haitians have lived since 1815, there beauty has had to give way to gnawing necessity which lacked either the imagination or the means to be sightly.

105 One can stand upon a morne and watch a rain storm rush down the valley, bending the palm trees in its fury, and think Haiti still a magnificent sight. Then one must descend the mountainside past rickety shacks and rocky fields, and the feeling grows that not all the kindly simplicity of the people is enough to lift the country from its [134] dilapidation. As he nears the village, the afternoon scent of roasting coffee will delight him; but then he sees the squalor of village life and is reminded that three million souls are here trying to eke out an existence upon a small area of declining fertility.

Much in Haiti is picturesque if one can keep his mind from wandering to the conditions which lie behind the picturesqueness. [482] Women stride down from the hills with great loads on their heads; [443] aged crones, pipe in mouth, sit perched on the haunches of tiny donkeys with their bulging panniers; the great market square in the [492] town is a scene of noisy confusion with hundreds of women and [482] children, a mixture of smells, thousands of little piles of soap, candy, gewgaws, vegetables, gaping chickens tied together by the feet, [434] shirts, canes, bolts of cloth. All the weary women, however, must trudge back up to their shanties on the mountainside when the [146] market is over. Many of them do not see ten dollars in cash during the year, and their little children, with bellies bulging, give evidence [164] of undernourishment. Without doctors, without even the rudiments of hygiene, they manage somehow to subsist, or else die, frequently of disease which might easily have been prevented.

565 In Port-au-Prince and a few other towns live enough members of the élite to make one momentarily forget the plight of the masses. [342] The houses of the well-to-do are substantially built, if not often [351] attractive. Their garden walls are brilliant with bougainvillea, their walks with hibiscus. Tiny red lizards (analis) make flashes of color along the walls. On shady verandas and in the parlors one hears delightful conversation, eats excellent food, savors the pleasures of [575] civilization. The clubs of the élite are pleasing, their tennis is good, [526] their dancing graceful. To be among these families as a welcome guest is an experience in gracious hospitality which can never be [535] forgotten. Too soon, however, one must leave these havens of urbanity and pass through districts of the town which haunt the mind with their grim want.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

[History of Haiti in 17th-18th Centuries— The Haitian White Population]

175 merous contemporary accounts, and most present-day works,
105 give both texts and illustrations which make the economy of
563 the plantation clear.[33] Though many stories of the magnifi-
567 cence of plantation life are found in current works, writers
342 of the period seem to agree that but little attention was paid
175 to convenience. Inventories of the contents of houses show
105 that furnishings were at a minimum; a few chairs and small
563 tables in the sitting- and reception-rooms, beds and minor ac-
352 cessories in the way of furniture in the bedrooms, dining-room tables and chairs and a cabinet for dishes. These pieces were usually built in the colony and made of native hard woods; substantial, they were essentially plain. As Baron Wimpffen remarked, " Taste, Sir, is still Creolian at Saint Domingo; and, unfortunately, the Creolian is not the right taste, — it smells too much of the *Boucan*." [33]

175 The table set was not distinguished. Meat, though the most
105 important dish at the principal meals, was poor, but, on the
567 other hand, fish, game, and wild fowl were excellent, and the
563 best of French wines were available.[34] Whatever the fare, how-
352 ever, it was served in the grand manner, often on plate rather
[262] than chinaware, and by the many liveried house-servants which every great establishment could boast. An account of the mode of service has been preserved in the reminiscences of one who, writing some years later of a repast served him in 1787, says: " There were many more of these domestics of both sexes than there were diners. I could but admire their attention to the smallest details of the service, the whiteness of their clothing, and the beautiful kerchiefs in the Créole manner elegantly arranged about the heads of the women. . . . But
[291] all of them moved about on bare feet; this was the distinctive sign of slavery." [35]

175 As portrayed in contemporary works, Haitian white life is
181 seen to have been lived entirely in terms of material goods and
105 of display. Just as there was little intellectual life, so religion
77 was but a matter of form. One M. de Larnage, writing from
563

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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CHAPTER XIII

AFRICA AND EUROPE IN HAITIAN LIFE

With the historical background of Haitian culture and its present-day organization in mind, we may now seek to disentangle the varied sources from which the institutions described in the preceding pages have been derived. The formalized expressions of religion will be treated in the chapter which follows; here the manner in which Europe and Africa have determined the forms of other phases of Haitian peasant life will be analyzed. 121

Even such a simple aspect of peasant life as the house, or *caille*, as it is termed, furnishes an illustration of this intermingling of cultures. In the countryside the typical dwelling is a rectangular structure of two rooms with a thatched gabled roof and walls of woven withes daubed with mud.[1] The rectangular floor plan and the roof are of West African type, but since both of these are also familiar in Europe, the house thus probably represents the coalescence of two dwelling forms which were originally not strikingly unlike each other. The type of thatching is purely African, as is the wall construction, for walls of twilled withes can be seen in West Africa today. On the other hand, what there is of furniture is entirely European. The African stool has given way to the 342 171 352 179

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

352 177 European straight chair, and if peasants often sleep on mats laid on the ground in African fashion, this is only because their resources do not permit them the luxury of beds. The 342 accessory field-house is called an *ajupa*, a designation which represents one of the few recognizable contributions of the aboriginal inhabitants of the island to its present-day culture, since, according to Charlevoix,[2] it was first applied to the huts of the buccaneers, called by them *aioupas*, a name taken over from the Spaniards, who themselves had adapted it from the native Indian term.

291 177 Clothing is also of European style. The men, who wear shirt and trousers, long ago discarded the West African loincloth and the covering great-cloth worn toga-fashion, while the hats they wear are of course equally of European type. The absence of shoes, though characteristic of Africa, is not necessarily of significance, for shoes are not only an accepted article of dress, but are symbols of worldliness, and when lacking from the costume, indicate only an inability to purchase them. The dress of women is no less European, though only the old women continue the fashions of the days of St. John, who reported that "the females generally keep to a long white chemise, covered over with a blue cotton dress that reaches to their bare feet, and is drawn in around the waist."[3] As in his time, white is favored for days of festivity, and the head-kerchief is also seen, even if it is less omnipresent than in his day. The younger women who count themselves sophisticated scorn the kerchiefs and wear hats, but elderly women wind white kerchiefs about their heads in the West [193] African manner. The invariable mark of the *mambu*, in addition to her jeweled fingers, is the white kerchief with a very large straw hat worn over it.

292 177 One special form of dress that represents a complex merging 196 of European and African secular and religious customs is the *rade de pénitence*. For men this takes the form of a multicolored shirt, for women a dress whose colors are dictated by

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

any usual measure. But Haitians do produce by traditional craft methods a surprisingly large number of the articles they need for daily life. In the countryside it is possible to see many persons engaged, mostly on a part-time basis, in craft activities and home industry that have their roots in the prerevolutionary era. Leatherworkers operating small, crude tanneries still flourish. Charcoal-burners, and operators of small lime kilns that produce building material, are found in every village. Smiths make and repair simple tools, working with forges of archaic design. Combs are made from cows' horns and tortoiseshell, buttons from bone; carrying-bags, fish traps, and a wide variety of baskets from withes, bamboo strips, and grasses; wooden bowls, mortars and pestles, tool handles and spoons from local woods; dippers, pots, and candelabra from tin cans; and sandals from tires and inner tubes. Sawyers cut and dress timber; cabinetmakers still manufacture simple furniture of traditional design from the fast-disappearing tropical woods; many women, working either with the simplest sorts of sewing machines or by hand, make clothing for use and for sale. Along the coasts there are dugout-makers, shipbuilders, and sail- and seine-makers. Simple mattresses, fabricated from local grasses, are sold in every large marketplace, as are crude ceramic wares made by local potters. At the start of the twentieth century, Italian immigrants brought a sturdy tradition of cobbling to Haiti, which has been destroyed only recently by the flood of American imported shoes with their attached prestige, until recently, *vitièlo* was a colloquial term for shoe, coming from the name of the most famous of those Italian cobblers.

One of the striking features of Haiti's craft traditions is its relative stability since the revolution. It was under slavery that Haitians first became "westernized," learning what were then standard French craft practices, adjusted to local colonial conditions, probably with some modifying features coming from the African past. It was before the revolution that the Haitian people learned and stabilized their consumer tastes, agricultural and craft standards, and work procedures. Such preferences and standards were worked out primarily in terms of the demands of the plantation regime itself; but even the most repressive social system leaves some opportunity for acculturation. Today's sugar-making shops and rural rum distilleries employ techniques centuries old and little modified over time. Housebuilding and woodworking techniques in the countryside are substantially

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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two rooms to house the whole family. "In these huts, filth and every species of uncleanliness prevail, for the people give themselves up to their indolent and lazy habits. It is common to see the pigs and poultry herding with the family."[19] 342 [515]

The furnishings in the huts were as simple as the construction. Rarely was there more than one bed, if that; the children of the family used mats for sleeping. A table, a stool, a couple of patched chairs, calabash bowls, an iron pot or two (and in later days, discarded gasoline tins), comprise the household equipment. 352 [415]

The fine roads of the French régime became rutted and washed, were overgrown with weeds, and soon reverted to wasteland or became nothing more than paths. Carriages ceased to be of any use, and there were few wagons; donkeys and horses became the regular means of transportation, and this was true until the Americans began to build roads again in 1916. The colonial régime had left a legacy of bridges, public buildings, parks, irrigation ditches; practically every improvement of this nature crumbled in slow decay and was not replaced. The temperate Dr. Brown closed his account of the Haiti of 1836 with the following paragraph: 653 492 493 491 114 105

To sum up all that might be said upon the actual condition of Hayti, poverty and degradation stare one in the face wherever he goes—and the state of the whole island will be fully understood in the United States when it is bluntly asserted, that the country is one continuous negro village, built of mud cabins, and unfurnished with the usual comforts of life. The population is, with small exceptions, an indolent, naked multitude, without sustenance or a disposition to make exertions to obtain it; without enormous vices, but petty and insignificant in every thing relating to human character, and not many removes from the tribes upon the Niger in point of civilization. The fact is indisputable, that as a nation the blacks of Saint Domingo are in a retrograde movement as regards intellectual improvement, and no obstacle seems to exist to prevent this descent to barbarism. The government and institutions of the country must for the present remain unstable, and it is difficult to pronounce what the changes involved in the future will produce.[20]

Progress, as Westerners understand it, comes through contacts and competition, both of which were lacking to Haiti in large measure throughout the whole of the nineteenth century. While externally 177 178

19. Franklin, op. cit., p. 396.
20. Op. cit., II, 288–289.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

Simple annual rites are held for the gods in January, each family giving small offerings in its house of worship to its own deities. These minor ceremonies are not to be confused with the extended rituals which a family may perform but once in a decade or a generation. Because of the extensive preparation and large outlay these entail, such rites are often postponed from year to year. According to some, this postponement is sought through an *action de grâce*, based on Church ritual, while others maintain that it is but necessary on his special day to appeal to the deity who is troubling the family, give a small offering — a *mangé sec* — and ask for the desired respite. This may be done several times, until crop failures, sudden deaths, and the loss of valuable property begin to afflict the family, whereupon the family head seeks out a *hungan*, who by divination determines the supernatural forces that are responsible for these misfortunes; and when his statement that the gods have reached the end of their patience is confirmed independently by several other priests who are consulted, active preparations for the major rite are finally set in motion.

Any such important ceremony must be held on the ancestral habitation, and centers in the *maison de servitude*, the family house of service for the gods. The house itself, to be differentiated from the *humfort*, or "temple" of the *vodun* priest, may be elaborate or simple in accordance with the status of family members in the *vodun* cult.[8] At one end of the sacred house is a platform about two and one half feet high on which are placed calabash plates for the *loa*, six for the Créole deities, three for the Mystères Guinée, and a white plate with a "thunder stone," or Neolithic celt, and a necklace for Damballa. Not all *cailles mystères* are painted, but some, it is said, are green "for hope," and some red "for victory," while one was said to have designs of flowers and snakes painted on the wall above the platform.[9] These houses usually have two rectangular rooms, each with a separate entrance and each having its platform at the narrow end facing the doorway. One of

1: Herskovits E-4, 1 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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ABOVE, *A vodun altar: both Catholic and African religious symbols are to be seen.*
BELOW, *Mystical designs traced in cornmeal on the ground about a shrine.*

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[facing p. 192]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

for all uses to which those of their type are put. During their making and after their completion they had been sanctified by rites that vividly illustrate the merging of traditions in Haitian religion: by means of offerings to the African gods, and through baptism by the rites of the Church.[3]

The *action de grâce* is another integral part of *vodun* ceremonialism that is essentially Catholic, since its lengthy service is composed entirely of prayers and hymns of the Church. As has been shown, the *action de grâce*, which precedes a *vodun service*, takes place before an "altar" which, important both then and at the later, more African rites, in itself documents in no small measure the combining of Catholicism and *vodun*. One, employed at a *service* not described in the earlier chapters, was covered with a red and white checked table-cloth, on top of which a smaller white cloth was spread.* Pinned to the canopy and to the front of the table-cloth were various chromolithographs of the saints; St. Michael attacking the Devil, Mater Dolorosa, St. James, the Virgin Mary and Jesus (the Assumption), and St. Expeditius. In front of the representation of St. James stood a crucifix with the figure of Jesus, in accordance with the custom of never omitting to have one of these at any *vodun* ceremonial. The table bore many offerings; at the back were four bottles of soft drinks, with cups; while also to be seen were several hard rolls, an ear of corn, a dish containing eggs, and another holding, among other things, rice. One of the containers on the table held holy water, while candles for use both in the *action de grâce* and in the later *vodun* rituals lay beside this. Thus crucifix, candles, pictures of the saints, and holy water were combined in this ceremony with offerings of food and drink to be given the gods that the ancestors had brought from Africa.[4] The songs sung at the voduistic portions of these *services* also reflect the psychological unity of Catholic and African elements in *vodun* worship. One of these declares:

* This altar is shown in the illustration facing p. 192.

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Je crois en Dieu,	I believe in God,
Oui, Santa Maria.	Yes, St. Mary.
Santa Maria,	St. Mary,
Qui sorte nan Guinée.	Who came from Guinea.
Je crois en Dieu,	I believe in God,
Oui, Santa Maria.	Yes, St. Mary.

Another for the Virgin of Allada, sung in Leogane, is as follows:

Santa Maria la Madaleine,	St. Mary Magdalene
Prié pou' loa yo.	Pray for their *loa.*
O Allada-e,	O Allada-e,
Sonné une sonne pou' moin,	Ring a bell for me,
Pour m'allé.	So I may go.
M'dit, Allada-o,	I say, Allada-o,
Sonné une sonne	Ring a bell
Pou' les pitites nagé.	For the drowned children.

Of these elements, the portraits of the saints, or *images,* offer one of the most vivid instances of the mingling of African and European elements in Haitian belief, for they are the outward symbol of the psychological reconciliation that has been effected between the saints of the Church and the African deities. This is nothing peculiar to Haiti alone. In West Africa, wherever Catholicism has obtained something of a foothold, certain pagan deities are regularly identified with saints of the Church, and the same phenomenon is found in Cuba[6] and Brazil.[6] This identification of saints with the *loa,* whether initiated as a ruse against the detection of African worship or emanating from a reasoned analogy, would seem in Haiti, at least, to act as a device to achieve an adjustment between two conflicting systems by emphasizing the resemblance between Catholic saints and African nature deities. The importance of the *images* as symbolizing the reconcilia-

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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tion is consequently of the first order, while the presence of these chromolithographs in every Haitian hut and on the altars of *vodun* ceremonies indicates how deeply the acceptance of this identification has gone. In the house occupied in Mirebalais during this investigation, the following *images* were found on the wall:

Moses	St. Augustine	Our Lady of Mount Carmel
St. Peter the Apostle	St. Michael	St. Clara
Baptism of Christ	Peter and Paul	

It is perhaps worth mentioning that the owner of the house, when renting it, stipulated that these *images* were to remain in place, for their power kept the house, its contents and occupants from harm.

No greater concurrence of opinion is had in the designations of saints given to corresponding *loa* than in any other facet of Haitian belief. Those here listed were obtained in two ways: either the equivalents of *loa* were named in the course of discussions with priests and other members of the *vodun* cult, or the *images* themselves were shown to members of the cult, and the names of the corresponding *loa* were recorded. Mater Dolorosa is held by most persons to be Gran' Erzilie, but in one instance this figure was equated with Erzilie Freda Dahomey with the insistent qualification that the two were not the same *loa*. The saint is represented as richly clothed, wearing many rings and necklaces and surrounded by other evidences of great wealth, so that the correspondence arises from the fact that Erzilie is held to be the richest of the *loa*. Notre Dame d'Alta Gracia is related to the *loa* Kpanyol, or the Spanish *loa*, while Notre Dame de Grâce is the water-goddess

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

in many details. But, in general, the cult establishment consists of a central building of one or more rooms with an adjoining court, or peristyle, over which there is a covering—usually a straw roof. The covering, called the *tonnelle,* is supported by a number of poles, one of which is placed squarely in the center of the court. This center pole—the *po'teau mitan* or *po'teau planté*—is the focus of most of the ritual activities. The loa who descend upon the service enter by way of this pole. The ritual *vèvès,* or flour paintings, are made at its foot. Around it all the dancing takes place. On certain rare occasions when rituals are held in the open, a carefully selected tree becomes the center post—though it is by no means certain that the po'teau mitan is not, in fact, a symbolic tree.

The building adjoining the peristyle contains the inner sanctum. Here are deposited the paraphernalia of the cult, such as ritual bottles and jars, flags of the société, and the iron kettles used in various ceremonies. On the walls there may be primitive paintings of the special loa of the hounfor, or perhaps of his symbol. The loa of the sea, Agwé, may be represented by a ship. Damballa, the serpent-rainbow loa, may be represented by a snake or a rainbow. Usually there are colored lithographs of Catholic saints, who have both Catholic and African names. And there are hand-beaten iron crosses, dishes containing Indian celts in which loa are believed to reside, gourd bowls, and carved wooden double and triple bowls used for services to dead twins and triplets. Upon the altar place, called *badji,* there are the *criches* or *govis,* earthen jars or bottles in which rest the loa removed from the heads of people who have died. Sometimes special niches are built on the hounfor grounds for the deities. Each cult priest designs his hounfor in his own way.

A hounfor belonging to a mambo near the town of Croix des Missions gave the appearance of having a large and prosperous société. Under the tonnelle eight beautifully carved Arada drums were suspended from a single peg. At a respectable distance hung a Martinique drum used only for dances on the occasion of a Nine Night. Inside the hounfor was an impressive display of sacred objects and decorations. One corner of the room was reserved for Symbi Yendézo, a patron loa of drinking water and rainfall. He was portrayed on the wall as a long, thin snake crawling in a maze of crosses. On the ground beneath the picture was a small concrete pool, in which two water snakes swam. Another corner was reserved for Agwé, and on his wall was a picture of a steamship. Along the back of the altar was an impressive array of govis, containing the spirits removed from the heads of deceased persons. There was a large plate of loa stones, and various protective charms stood near by. Flags and sabres

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

346 794 353 778 were stacked against the wall, and set about in various places were several assons, iron crosses, Catholic lithographs, chains and iron bars for the loa Ogoun, candles set in bottles, and an old forged double bell of African design.

346 353 Some of the hounfors found elsewhere are more elaborate and reflect the richer resources of the immediate community, or the creative impulses of the houngan and his helpers, or the pressure of competition. Some cult temples are prolific with painted designs and symbolic representations of the deities. Others are unpretentious, simple, and even Spartan.

346 [113] In his book *En Haiti,* written approximately fifty years ago, Eugene Aubin describes a hounfor in the Cul-de-Sac Plain, a few miles from Port-au-Prince, as he saw it in 1906:

346 353 794 778 [The] *hounfor* is fronted by a *peristyle,* which is used for the Vodoun dances and services; it is a large area, with a floor of beaten earth, covered with a straw roof. On three sides the walls rise to support the roof; on the fourth there is the inscription:

Société la Fleur de Guinée
Roi d'Engole
[*Flower of Africa Society*
King of Angola]

indicating the name of the patron of the society [the loa Roi Angole, or Wangol], over which the *houngan* presides. The *hounfor* is an ordinary house, a little larger than average. The sanctuary contains a principal *pé* [altar], running the whole length of the room on one side, and another altar, a little smaller, in one of the corners. These *pés* are altars largely made of brick, in which the under part is decorated with hearts and stars in relief; above, draperies hang from the ceiling. The lateral *pé* is divided into three compartments. There are, therefore, four sections in all, consecrated to each of the *loa* served in the *hounfor:* Aguay Aoyo [Agwé Woyo], Damballa, Ogoun Badagry, and Loco [Loko], Nago King. Maître Aguay is represented by the customary little boat; a medallion is consecrated to Monsieur Damballa, shown holding two snakes in his hand; a figure on horseback represents Ogoun Badagry, with a woman at one side holding a flag; Papa Loco is pictured in full uniform, smoking a pipe and fanning himself. The walls are covered with religious paintings [Catholic lithographs]. The back of the altar is occupied by numerous carafes in baked clay, called *canaris,* which contain the . . . *mystères* [spirits taken from the heads of the dead] gathered in the *hounfor;* in front are bottles of wine, liqueurs and vermouth presented to them in homage; then the plates, the cups for the *mangers-marassas* [feasts for the twin spirit], crucifixes, hand bells, *assons* for directing the dance or calling the *loa;* plates filled with polished stones [celts] inherited from the Indians—"thunder stones," symbols of Damballa, which Saugo [Sobo] the god of lightning hurls from the sky into the enclosure of his favorite *papaloi* [*houngan*]. Beside these miraculous stones are many coins of copper or silver [property of the *loa*]. The *loa* . . . possess coins of Joseph Bonaparte, King of Spain, minted in 1811; of Frederick VII of Denmark, 1859; of Charles IV of Spain, 1783, and of President Boyer, dated year 27 and year 30 of Haitian Independence. On the ground there is placed a coconut-oil lamp; in the corner, the flags of the *hounfor* and the saber of [the] *laplace,* the man who acts as master of ceremonies in the services.

[116]

2; Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

776 to "eat" people; that is, to destroy them. To do this he employs such
[753] means as disease, insanity, and destruction of crops. If a man serves
[828] Pinga Maza well, the loa protects him in return; but for those who anger
[731] him, Pinga is a menacing and vengeful creature. People often say, "Pinga, c'est djab" (Pinga is a devil).

346 The Pinga hounfor in Port-au-Prince is called the *Société de la Belle*
353 *Jeune Fleur*. Its peristyle is simple and is hardly distinguishable from
794 those of other small hounfors. Around the base of the center pole is
778 a three-foot-high wall of masonry, decorated with simple cult symbols. The outer room of the hounfor proper also resembles many another. The familiar pot têtes containing loa stand on a wooden altar, and there are Catholic lithographs on the walls. But the inner room belongs exclusively to Pinga Maza. Here are all the accoutrements and objects sacred to the deity. Everything is red. Pinga's clothing and kerchiefs are red. On the walls are painted esoteric designs—hands, skulls, and crosses—all in red. The bottles, magic bundles, and govis on the altar are decorated with red cloth, ribbons, or paint. In the middle of the earthen floor is embedded a heavy wooden cross. On each end of the crossbeam hangs a large calabash resembling a bulbous hand. And on top of the upright is affixed a human skull. The total impression of this hounfor is that of a bizarre aberration, calculated to intimidate and terrify. The houngan himself is relatively young, literate, and city wise. His personality is smooth and sharp, and he lacks the air of sincerity and easy simplicity which most often characterizes the houngan of the mountains.

353 In this inner room, before the skull and the cross, there took place a
754 small service for a client, to determine what kind of magic was needed
755 to fend off malevolent actions of an enemy. On the day of the divining session, there hung from the rafters of the tonnelle a long rope, which extended into a deep hole in the earth near the door. Hanging on the rope, down inside the hole, were two gray dolls tightly bound together. Hanging still farther down were a knife, a fork, and other, unidentifiable objects. This cluster of magic paraphernalia was an *expédition* at work; it was an elaborate pouin, which was working against an enemy who lived far away.

793 Before entering the hounfor, the houngan took a long rope whip
755 from the wall and cracked it seven times before the door. This process, known as *frete cache*, was to "wake up" the loa within. The houngan then entered, followed by the client who was seeking help. They paused briefly in the outer room, where the houngan took up his asson and bell and made a small vèvè on the ground. He spoke briefly in *langage* and then passed on through the door to the inner room. There the

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-M]

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19. *Vodoun altar of the hounfor "Caille Agwé" in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. On the wall behind the altar are names of favored loa. On the altar are jars containing loa and souls of dead persons. Painted on its front wall, against which swords and flags are leaning, is the ship of Loa Agwé.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 112-N]

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20. A Vodoun altar in northern Haiti, scarcely distinguishable from a Catholic shrine. Hounfors range from the simple to the complex, from the poor to the rich, from the primitive to the sophisticated, and from the bizarre to the artistic.

[794
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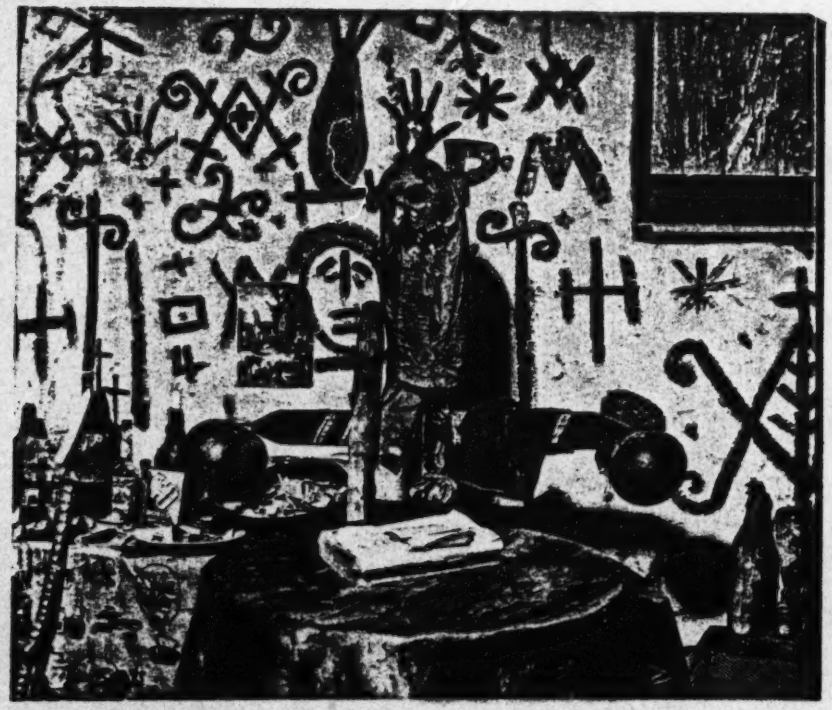
21. Altar in the hounfor "Société de la Belle Jeune Fleur" in Port-au-Prince dedicated to the loa Pinga Maza. The cross surmounted by the skull represents the deity. Behind the table, leaning against the cross, is the pestle with which this loa "grinds" his enemies. On the other table are razor blades for Pinga Maza to eat.



2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-R]
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27. *Saluting the loa. In the center, with sword, is the laplace, flanked by two hounsi carrying sequin-studded flags. In the background, left, is the houngan with his asson.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 112-5]

28. A yam harvest festival. The men are carrying the yams into the peristyle of the hounfor to be cut up and shared with the family ancestors and the loa.

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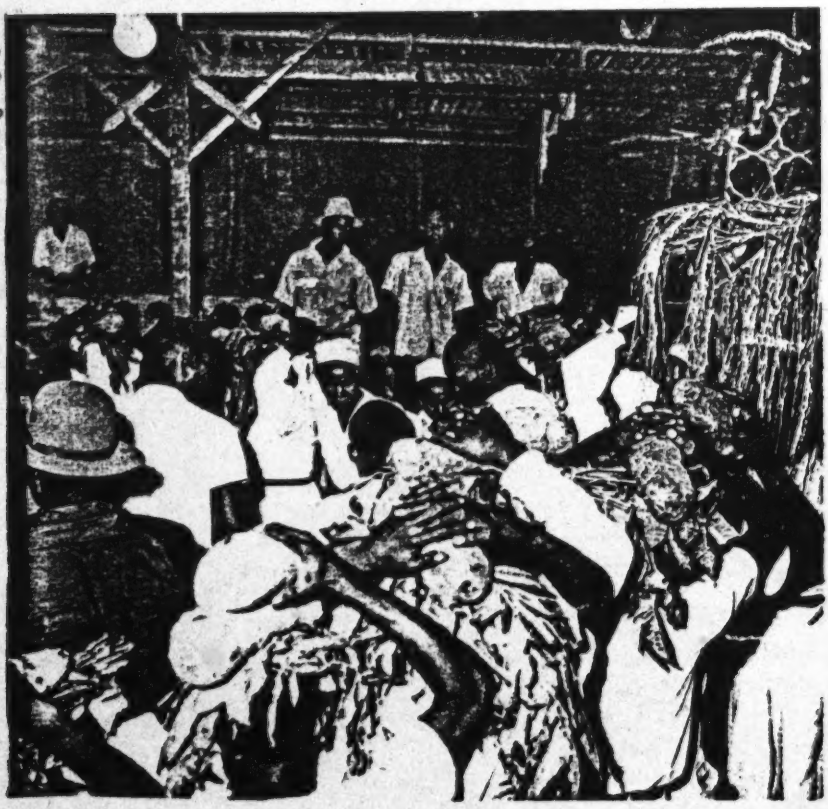

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-T]

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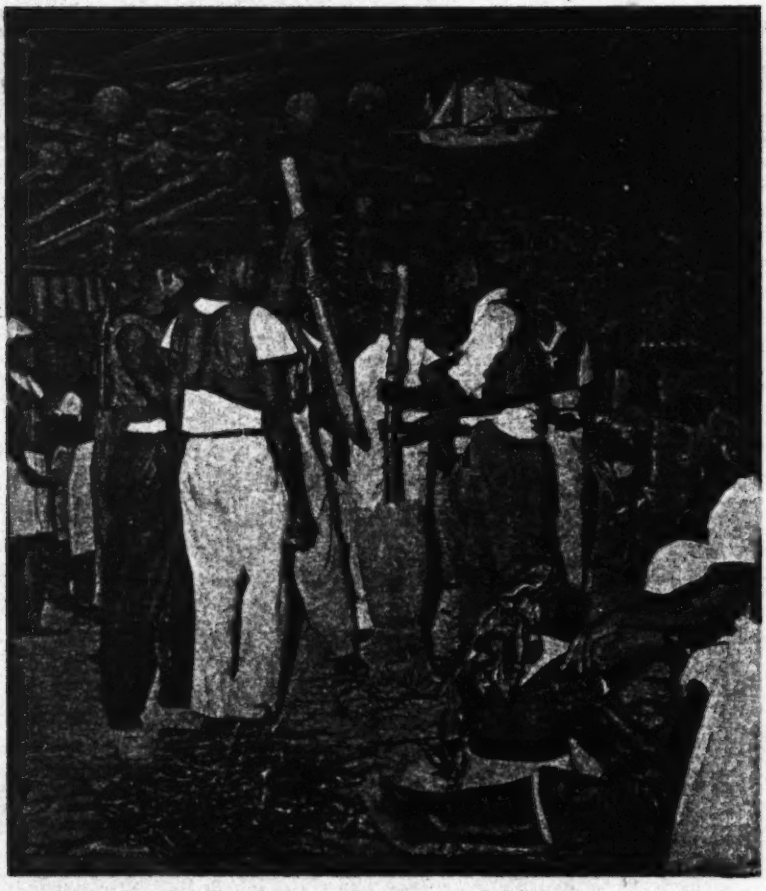

29. *The* bain de Noël, *or Christmas bath. The men are pulverizing leaves in the mortar, to the accompaniment of singing by the hounsi and drumming. Later, a "lotion" will be made of the powdered leaves, and all will share it.*

And when the revolution came he produced for the Haitian armies knives, gun parts, and wheels to transport cannon. By the tens of thousands he made ingeniously devised metal objects to be thrown on the roads, before the French cavalry troops—objects so shaped that, no matter how they fell, a single sharp point stood erect to cripple the enemy horses. Yet knowledge of the West African uses of iron did not altogether disappear, and during the first century of independence the Haitian blacksmith created many old-style knives, spears, and ritual objects for the cult temple.

Even today, some of this old-style work is to be found in hounfors in the southwestern peninsula. One may see simple or ornate iron standards, made to support ceremonial offerings or candles, strikingly similar to standards in ancestral shrines in Dahomey. There are iron bells, both single and double, made in pure West African style; ornate ritual swords and sabers which are the crests of certain deities; coiled and uncoiled iron serpents representing the gods Damballa and Ayida; and stylized or semirealistic portraits of the deities. Many of these old pieces are nineteenth-century survivals; others have been forged within the past decade. ℞

An over-all impression of Haitian material culture is that artistic decoration is almost entirely absent and that the prime emphasis is on utility. Wooden cooking spoons are efficient in form, but missing from them is the delicate decorative carving often found in West Africa. The long wooden washing bowl, or *gamelle*, and the wooden mortar in which grain is pulverized are likewise clean-cut but stark and plainly utilitarian. Clay bowls, bottles, and storage jars are usually of simple, uniform design, with only accidental variations; there is little use of glazes, and the clay is often heavy and thick. Should there be a wari gameboard in the peasant hut, the chances are that it is roughly made, without legs or carved designs. Dugout canoes are usually crude in appearance, heavy and thick-walled, and irregular in form.

Yet there are many evidences—though one must seek them out—that esthetic impulses are quite alive. The gay peasant straw knapsack, or *alfor*, without which no mountain man makes a journey, has a charm and grace that is not diminished by familiarity and cheapness. Decorated with sisal braid and tassels, and colored with green and magenta dyes, each *alfor* on close inspection appears to be unique. In some communities in the south and southwest, burlap squares also are painted with these traditional dyes. About forty inches across, and made of sugar bags, these paintings swarm with geometric patterns and sometimes with figures of flowers and animals. They are purely decorative, being

℞ [See plates 42-51, pp. 112-DD—112-FF.--Analyst]

2; Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

used for wall hangings much as appliquéd cloths are used in Dahomey. Near Cap Haitien, in the north, ceramic workers make crude clay figurines of roosters, pigs, dogs, cows, and people. The "purpose" of these figurines is obscure, but it is likely that they are intended for use in Vodoun ritual, a number of them having been observed in hounfors in the vicinity of the town of Grande Rivière de Nord. In some mountain villages, canes carved with animal and human heads are commonly seen. Nor is the tradition of carving gourds and calabashes, popular in various regions of West Africa, altogether forgotten. The *cayambouque*, a divided calabash with the top ingeniously cut to fit into the lower part so as to form a sealed container, is sometimes covered with carved geometric designs, usually crude and haphazard but on occasion meticulous. Until recent years the common *cha-cha*, or gourd rattle, was similarly carved.

Most of the visible traditional art is to be found in the environs of the cult temple. The inner walls of many hounfors are covered with ritual designs and symbols and portraits of the deities. On the altar, sometimes, crude wood carvings of deities are seen, along with forged iron objects, carved marassa bowls, and grotesquely shaped drumsticks known as *baguettes guinée*. All the wooden objects are characterized by a plainness that relegates them to the category of purely functional and expendable things. The wood carving of a deity is not an image, it is a representation; it can be sold or otherwise disposed of, even thrown away if infested with beetles, and another object can be used to replace it. The only concern of the cult priest in this matter is that the deity concerned should understand the situation properly and not take offense. Thus there is no strong feeling that the wood carving should be a realistic representation or that it should be "beautiful." One relatively antique wood carving, completely West African in style, was found some years ago in a hounfor near Léogane and is now in the collection of the Musée du Peuple Haitien in Port-au-Prince (see fig. 57).

One of the most flourishing arts of the hounfor is the *vèvè*, or ritual drawing made on the earth in the course of a service. Most commonly these beautiful and ornate designs are made with white meal or flour, and in a few of the cults, primarily the Pétro, lampblack and red brick dust are also used. The vèvè is made by the houngan or the mambo. With sure, practiced movements, the cult priest allows the meal to trickle through his fingertips onto the ground where the rites are taking place, usually in the peristyle of the hounfor itself. The drawings he makes are composed of a multiplicity of cabalistic symbols—heart shapes, stars, interlocked V's, flags, abstract phallic forms, crosses, swords,

796 A candle was attached to a peg of each drum, which, with the lantern that hung near the central post, gave unusually good light. However, as possessions began, the candles on the drums were extinguished as those possessed fell against them, and no more than one could be kept lighted.

[354] [787]

793 With the arrival of the *hungan* at about half past nine, the 776 dancing became even more animated, and Ogun "came" as 539 soon as he took over the *manman* drum, but despite this, the 796 *hungan* continued the ritual invocation to call all the *loa:*

Moin rhelé Papa Legba, St. Jo,	I call Papa Legba, St. Joseph,
Moin rhelé Damballa papa,	I call Papa Damballa,
Moin rhelé Papa Damballa, St. Jo,	I call Papa Damballa, St. Joseph,
Moin rhelé Loko Atinsu, St. Jo.	I call Loko Atinsu, St. Joseph.
La vie nan mains Bon Dieu,	Life is in the hands of God,
Seigneur, moin rhelé Ogun Ferraille, St. Jo.	Master, I call Ogun Ferraille, St. Joseph.
Moin rhelé Damballa Wedo,	I call Damballa Wedo,
Moin rhelé Aida Wedo, Seigneur.	I call Aida Wedo, Master.
La vie nan mains Bon Dieu.	Life is in the hands of God.
Moin rhelé Papa Agasu, St. Jo, Dokwe Agwe,	I call Papa Agasú, St. Joseph, Dokwe Agwe,
Moin rhelé Mait' Ossange,	I call Master Ossange,
Moin rhelé Mait' St. Jean,	I call Master St. John,
Moin rhelé Gran' Siligbo,	I call Gran' Siligbo,
Moin rhelé Agwe Woyo,	I call Agwe Woyo,
Moin rhelé Loa 'Bitation,	I call the *loa* of the habitation,

Oh, a day will come when they will remember me here, *kélé manyan!* 796
Oh, Damballa Wèdo *é, kélé manyan.* 769
Oh, Ayida Wèdo *é, kélé manyan!* 787
Oh, a day will come for you to remember me here, *kélé manyan!* [539]

During the evening about twenty loa and ancestors came into the *card* [776] to talk. When the last had finished speaking the hills were already light, and the service was over.

Service for Èzilie Fréda and St. Jacques Majeur

This service took place not in the open but under a tonnelle surrounded 796 by four walls, adjoining the hounfor of Alexis Stephan on the west fringes 776 of Port-au-Prince. Separate from the hounfor and dance court was a 346 shrine to the "dead" loa Gèdé Nimbo. The shrine was a small shed open on one side. Within, lighted by flickering oil lamps, was a life-size effigy [532] of Gèdé, a scarecrow-like figure dressed in the loa's traditional attire— [354] black tail coat and trousers, and a tall opera hat. On the otherwise blank face of the figure were smoked glasses with white rims.

The dancing was progressing under the supervision of the houngan's 796 adjutant, the laplace. He wandered among the drummers and dancers, [794] encouraged the singing, and issued orders here and there. No one seemed to take him very seriously. There was a good deal of joking, and the [522] gathering seemed very much like an old-fashioned family reunion. There were perhaps a hundred dancers and spectators—friends, relatives, and devotees of Stephan's hounfor. Everyone was watching with affection an old woman who could not be restrained from dancing. She executed old classical steps and postures with a skill that called for running comment all around her. As each piece came to an end someone would step up to her and say something like: "Woy, Manman, mais ou passé mwé!" (Oh, Mother, you are better than me!). Then they would attempt to get her to sit down again, but she would only shake them off and urge the drummers to get going if they were not too tired.

Eventually, the houngan, Stephan, made a casual entrance through the [793] door of his adjoining hounfor. He held the usual ritual rattle and bell in [534] his hand, and sauntered around to chat with his friends.

Gradually, almost imperceptibly, the dancing became more serious. 796 Soon, only the hounsi, the female servitors, were dancing. The drums 776 played a salute to Legba, the first loa to be called upon in a Vodoun serv- [794] ice. For it is Legba who opens all gates and all highways, and who paves the way for communication with other deities. Though he is not the greatest of the loa, he is one of the most ancient. The houngan spilled water on [782] the ground as a libation, and the dancing continued.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

512 grain in her mortar or working in her garden near by. On
[443] market days she takes the produce of the family's fields to the
[938] town to sell. If she has young children, she cares for them
[855] while she does her other work, but when they are old enough,
[857] they help her about the house if they are girls, or, if boys, go with their father to the garden. From time to time, when
[356] house repairs are needed or there are implements to be
[241] mended, the man spends a day at home getting these odd jobs done; otherwise only serious illness in the family keeps him from his fields.

512 The times for meals have not varied since the days when
264 Moreau de St. Mery described the eating-habits of the slaves.[3] In addition to the mid-morning repast, the only other meal is that eaten after the man returns from his field, this being
[562] the largest of the day. A wife does not sit down with her
[593] husband, but usually eats earlier with her small children and holds herself ready to serve him upon his return, when, if he is alone, she remains to tell him the day's gossip. Visitors are
[574] often present, for peasant etiquette demands that all comers
[576] be offered food, and, as one Haitian expressed it, "The peasant would kill you for the insult if you did not share your meal with him." Bedtime, as might be expected, is early.

512 On Sundays and on the days of festivals this routine is in-
527 terrupted, when, if the occasion is of sufficient importance
[796] and the habitation is not too far from town, the peasant and his family attend mass. On Saturday nights there is usually a *vodun* dance, when the early hour for retirement is forgotten and all-night festivities precede Sunday's rest. On such days
[264] the principal meal is eaten at three or four o'clock in the afternoon, and all the adults share it together, while at one side the children are fed from the dishes of their parents in response to the insistent repetition of the demand "*Ba'm pa'm* — give me my portion." *

* This is an example of the elision characteristic of Haitian Créole, it being abbreviated from *Ba moin part moin* or, in French, *Donnez-moi ma part.*

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

while others had fled to the mountains; the first group I caused to be beaten, and cut off the ears of the others, and since then no complaint has been heard."[4] Charlevoix also tells of the brutal treatment of the early slaves; how the Negroes were given even less consideration than the Indians, since there was not only much greater difference in skin color between them and the whites than between the color of the Indians and the Europeans, but the added reason existed that

> "slavery, as far as the native Indians were concerned, was based solely on the right of the most powerful, whereas in the case of the Negroes, they having been bought and sold by their own people, it seemed that one need have less scruple in making them bear the full weight of their servitude."[5]

The rapidity with which the slave-trade grew, especially in the latter portion of the seventeenth century and the eighteenth, need not be stressed here. With the passage of the western part of the island into the hands of the French following the provisions of the treaty of Ryswick in 1697, and as a result of the picturesque but predatory activities of the buccaneers, who did much to demoralize the Spanish regime, French participation in the trade grew apace,[7] so that slightly more than a half-century later seven "companies" were engaged in carrying Negroes to the French possessions in the New World.[8] Though in the earlier decades of the eighteenth century Martinique was the best market, Haiti, because of her vast resources, came to absorb the greater part of the available slaves.[9]

From the earliest times most of the slaves were destined for work in the fields, but some were employed as house-servants. These latter had the greatest opportunities to learn the ways of the whites and, moreover, since many of the women were mistresses of their owners, not only did a mingling of traditions and modes of life result, but a merging of

1: Herskovits 2-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

the blood-streams of the two races as well. And though in the custom of French Santo Domingo, as elsewhere in the New World, even a suspicion of Negro ancestry was sufficient to cut a person off from social intercourse with white society, yet these mixed-bloods were to become an important factor in establishing the patterns of Haitian Negro tradition, just as their descendants were to exert no small influence in the development of Haitian culture after the establishment of independent Haiti.

Numerous terms designated the various degrees of crossing, some of which, surviving in present-day speech, are familiar to us, such as the words "mulatto" and "quadroon." But examining Moreau de St. Mery's painstaking analysis of the various possible amounts of crossing that could be recognized, reading his speculations regarding the smallest proportion of Negro blood that could be regarded as negligible, noting how he traces Negro blood to its last vestige, as in a cross which would give one part Negro as against 8,191 parts white, a telling impression is received of the great significance of race-crossing for the Haitians of that time.[10] Such words as *sacatra*, *griffe*, *marabou*, *métif*, and *mamelouc* not only gave information as to the amount of crossing represented in the persons designated by them, but even indicated which parent, father or mother, was white and which one was wholly or partially Negro. Crossing was by no means restricted to matings between white masters and their slave women, for records show that Negro men did not fail to hold an attraction for their white mistresses. Nor did all the sharpness with which the color-line was drawn prevent actual marriages between whites and persons of color. In such instances, however, the white person was cast out from association with his fellow-Europeans, as the name applied to him, *mahallé*, sufficiently shows.[11]

Slavery cut across all these varying degrees of color, so that just as there might be free Negroes who were wholly African

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

INTRODUCTION

THE VALLEY OF MIREBALAIS

THE TRAVELER comes suddenly on the valley of Mirebalais, as the road from the capital turns the shoulder of a hill. Long and narrow, the plain stretches before him with its many tones of green. Ahead is the village from which the valley takes its name, its metal roofs aglow in the sunlight, or reflecting the gray sky of the rainy season. Here and there appears a yellow, muddy slash made by the Artibonite River, while framing the valley are the mountains, rising one behind another as they complete its encirclement. 133 361

This first glimpse of the country gives no hint of a numerous population. It is as though this valley, like so many other things in Haiti, had set out to belie its own reality and, in this impression, at the very outset to point the lesson that the observer must seek well beneath the surface if he is to attain any understanding of the country and its people. For just as the unsettled appearance of this Haitian valley conceals numerous habitations, cultivated fields, and hard-working inhabitants, so the frenzy of Haitian religious rites is but a gloss upon disciplined ceremonialism, and the relatively placid everyday existence of the Haitian peasant but a mask behind which is waged a spiritual conflict that is his heritage from the dual sources of his traditions. 121

The commune of Mirebalais is situated in the heart of central Haiti. Lying some thirty-five miles from Port-au-Prince, 101 361 [491]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

both town and district are bisected by the main route between the capitals of the Haitian and the Dominican republics. Yet, once again, this geographical nearness but distorts the psychological distance between Mirebalais and the metropolis. For though the busses, converted from camions, pass to and from the coastal city several times a week, the valley and even the town which is its center drowse in essential isolation. A few hundred yards off the main road find the Haitian peasant following the mode of life of his forebears, oblivious of events outside the valley. Only for a few of the *notables* of the town, the *gros nègres*, who have personal, political, or business contacts with Port-au-Prince, is the comparative proximity to the capital meaningful.

It is not possible to say how long this valley has been inhabited. Certainly the early Indians roamed there; and there, as in other parts of the island of Hispaniola, the tragedy of their extinction under the brutality of early Spanish rule must have taken place. Moreau de St. Mery, to whom all students of Haiti must acknowledge a debt of gratitude for his painstakingly accurate reports of life on the island, gives the derivation of its name.

> "Mirebalais received its name," he says, "because of the enormous numbers of wild animals the first Frenchmen found there, which recalled to them the small district in the region of Poitou [in France], called Mirebalais, where some of them had probably first seen the light of day. These quadrupeds, first introduced by the Spaniards, had no difficulty in multiplying there after the Indians had disappeared from their native land and the Spaniards, reduced in numbers, were obliged to abandon the great plains, so that horses, cattle, etc. came to exercise exclusive domain."[1]

St. Mery's work, which traces the development of Mirebalais as one of the parishes of pre-Revolutionary Haiti, makes it

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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important point in the warfare between the northern Empire of Christophe and the southern Republic of Pétion is well known, since the boundary between the two, never definitely fixed, might be roughly considered as the Artibonite, control of which, as always, depended on also obtaining control of the strategic hills about the town.[11] It is not possible to discover more than approximate figures for the population of Mirebalais at the present time, since no census of the district has been made, and the most recent figure of 51,000 for the commune is derived from the baptismal records in the parish church.[12]

From the earliest years of settlement of the valley, the town has been the center of its life. The government of the commune is located here; here the courts sit; and here the best schools and the only church of the district are found. Yet it is a small town, numbering less then two hundred and fifty houses, and crossed by but three principal thoroughfares stretching north and south, with ten or twelve cross-lanes. The houses on the principal streets, rectangular and small, are built of wood, plastered over with clay, painted, and roofed with sheet iron. On the outskirts of the town the roofing is of straw, or banana-leaf thatch, while the walls themselves are made of twilled wythes. No house lacks its veranda, however small, where people may be seen sitting late of an afternoon and early in the evening, but the life of the women is lived chiefly in the courtyards behind these houses that line the streets, where the cookhouses are found and the storehouses, and where all work is done. The *place,* or town square, lies at the point where the principal route between Port-au-Prince and the Dominican border turns sharply to the east. Consisting of an acre or two of cleared land, it is overgrown with weeds except when, in preparing for festive occasions, the prisoners from the town jail may be seen spending long hours, machetes in hand, cutting the grass, a few blades at a time. North of the square stands the church, a substan-

North of the square stands the church, a substan-
tial structure with rounded arches in the Roman style, roofed 361
over, like most other buildings, with galvanized iron. Other 344
public buildings are the town hall — the Mairie — and the [346]
"Hall of Justice"; near by are the stone walls of a public
building begun some years ago as a school, but destined ap-
parently to house what is known as the "Bureau of Contribu-
tions," a euphemism for the tax-collector's quarters. Despite 175
the fact that Mirebalais was one of the most difficult regions 648
for the American occupation to subdue during the Caco up- 625
rising of 1918–20,[12] it was one of the first districts where the
Guarde d'Haiti was completely Haitianized, and from which
all American Marine officers were withdrawn. Only a small 625
detachment is stationed there at present. Its well-kept bar- 699
racks are near the church, and the prisons form a part of the [342]
same compound, from whence issue daily the striped-suited [292]
prisoners, men and women, under guard or alone on parole,
who do communal work in the town and the near-by country-
side.

The town awakens at dawn to the chattering of domesti- 366
cated guinea-fowl and the crowing of cocks. Occasionally a 461
camion rumbles through the principal thoroughfare; more 512
rarely an automobile dashes by in great clouds of dust on its 476
way to Las Cahobas, or Hinche, or Santo Domingo City. If
it is a market day, the streets are early filled with country folk
on their way to dispose of their produce, and the clatter from
the market place behind the church is heard everywhere until
the heat of the day brings a lull to all commerce, and drowsi-
ness once more settles over everything. By mid-afternoon
during the planting season, drums can be heard over the
countryside. The sounds are not those of the "throbbing"
vodun drums — though they have more than once been mis-
taken for them by travelers — but they set the rhythm for
the communal work of the *combites*, which perform co-
operative agricultural labor. As the rapid dusk follows the 512
disappearance of the sun behind the mountains, the voices of

1: Hankovitz E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

361
363

MIREBALAIS

ABOVE, *A street.*

BELOW, *The place and the church.*

346

[facing P. 10]

2: Courlander 3-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 1]

1. The Making of the Haitian

If you come to Haiti by sea, a way that is old-fashioned but full of magic, 133
you are first aware of the island as a range of hills rising out of the water, and then, as you sail closer, new ranges come into view behind the first, and eventually you see that everything is mountains. The ranges pile up in the distance and finally lose themselves in the white morning mists that the country people call "snow." A Haitian proverb says, "Behind the mountains are mountains," and that is a true picture of the island.

In the summer after the rains have come, the hills and mountain slopes 134
are green; but later they turn brown, and it is then that one notices the 132
deep gashes where the earth has eroded and washed away into the valleys below and into the sea.

From the top of the range called La Selle ("The Saddle"), when the 132
heavy mists form and settle across the highland valleys one sees nothing 133
but the great rounded sugar-loaf peaks, which appear as floating islands in a vast sea of white.

From a distant ship in the Caribbean in the full glare of daylight it is 361
hard to imagine that millions of people have made a home of these mountains. But at night it is different. The mountains are alive then with twinkling spots of light made by cooking fires, torches, and electric bulbs. For 361
the hillsides as well as the coastal lowlands are dotted with tiny huts and 487
homesteads, and the trails from one village to another crisscross and lie on the land like a woven net. They lead from the high-up places down to the seacoast towns, through the waterless mesa of the frontier, through the pine forests of the southern range, through dense blankets of wild strawberries, wild-bamboo groves, and plantations of coffee. They find their way to the salt marches, the rice fields of the Artibonite Valley, and the cities.

In the lowlands the days are hot and tropical. It is there the sugar cane, 132
bananas, and plantains grow so lushly. In the mountains the people have [241]

. 2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

For many Haitians, the struggle to obtain a piece of ground and to hold onto it is the very heart of the struggle for existence. On Morne l'Hôpital in 1932 I knew a man who owned ten acres of gardens. He had it planted in bananas and plantains, yams, and cotton. He had two cows and a calf and a grove of mango trees and coconut palms. His house was clean, tidy, and by Haitian standards well furnished. Eighteen years later he had less than an acre of land, no trees, no cotton, and no cattle. His family had become impoverished. He had three grown children and virtually no land to leave to them except that on which the house stood. His troubles began with a lawsuit over his land title. He sold his cattle to raise money to pay his court expenses. He lost half of his land as a result of the lawsuit, most of it the part with the good trees. Later, he sold more land to raise "eating money," and then rented it from the new owner. He could not grow enough cash crops to pay the rent and was finally evicted. Today he has not enough ground left on which to grow food for himself and his wife the year round. 423 691 511

The diminution of adequate landholdings has resulted in the disappearances of many of the *lacours* (hamlets) that were a familiar sight a few decades ago. Young people traditionally built their houses near the family homesteads until there were five, six, or a dozen houses in a group. There was a natural family community which shared a common social life and the work of the fields. But as the population increased and the landholdings shrank, young people and old began to move away in search of new land, or work in the cities. Often where the lacour remains it is only as a settlement of landless house renters who work where they may for wages. 178 423 361 166 [596] [621]

Economic refugees from rural areas seek wage work in the cities, returning to their original homes only on special festive days for family reunions. The men find employment as gardeners, servants, construction laborers, and stevedores. Some find work on the sugar and sisal plantations, others in craft industries making straw hats, baskets, shoes, chairs, and mahogany ware for export. The struggle in the big city of Port-au-Prince is for many of them worse than the poverty they left behind. There are the inevitable slums and the constant threat of hunger. It is in the big city that one hears most often the words *moin grand gout* (I am hungry), and least often the words *Bondieu bon* (God is good). 166 464

The land hunger increases, and the overflow of the mountain settlements continues to move cityward. In former years there was a trend toward emigration across the eastern border into the Dominican Republic, which has a population density roughly one third or one fourth that of Haiti. This trend was checked, temporarily at least, in 1937 by 167 195 [648]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

That the separateness of yeomanry and elite had visible and sociologically important expression in physical type in Haiti was a clear consequence of the history of that country. But the traditional preponderant light skins at the top of the structure and the preponderant darkness at its base are less important than the domination of the total structure, and of the institutional means for changing it, by a mere fraction of the national population. It is the *power* of the elite which has mattered through time; its physical appearance has been only a historically derived expression of that power. Such a balance of politically weak masses against numerically sparse power holders is common, perhaps particularly in the "less developed world"; but each such case has certain special characteristics. Haiti's special nature is not simply in its being a yeoman country, and one in which a small group dominates the mass. As a rural, agrarian, unindustrialized, politically sovereign, and quasi-capitalistic country, Haiti shares much with other lands; but in each regard its own particularity needs to be assessed.

565 563 664 642 [181] [171]

The rurality of Haiti is extreme, not simply because there are no concentrations of population in excess of 25,000 except for Port-au-Prince and Cap Haïtien but also because towns of intermediate size are few in number, and the urban concentrations in the country's two cities are substantially of relatively recent rural origin. Port-au-Prince dominates the Republic in all of its economic, political, and social activities. Furthermore, the rural towns have been losing to the capital, not gaining from it. Until the United States occupation, the larger towns of the coast, such as Jérémie, Jacmel, and St. Marc, were united economically with each other, and to some extent with the capital, by a lively coastwise shipping system, and the inland towns were tributary to those of the coast. The growth of inland transport during the occupation strengthened the interior towns while coastwise shipping declined, but the capital grew even more important as the sole economic center of the Republic. Since the 1940s, the rapid deterioration of the road system has left both inland and coastal towns enfeebled; only Port-au-Prince has remained strong.

361 369 489

The dominion of Port-au-Prince is firm, and there is no focus of power in the countryside that can counteract it. Those few foreign enterprises in Haiti that base themselves outside the capital city use local port facilities (e.g. Miragoâne for Reynolds Aluminum, Cap Haïtien for the sisal plantations of the north) and do not affect the development of the interior transport.

369 473 504 489

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 669 ex-slave, each of whom aroused his own group to fight off the invading Spaniards and English.

These two men emerging from the maelstrom were the cultured colored general, Rigaud, and the powerful Negro, Toussaint. United in purpose in 1793, they soon began to oppose each other. Their dissent foreshadowed the rift which was permanently to divide free Haiti.

175 159 669 Rigaud, born at Les Cayes in 1761,[14] had been brought up in Bordeaux, France, where he was taught the trade of a goldsmith. Like many other colored colonial youths, he went briefly to Georgia to fight on the side of the Americans in their revolution against England. Gifted with extraordinary military talent, he rose to prominence in Saint-Domingue following the slave insurrection, and played a major part in expelling the British from the colony. He was fiery, intellectual, and brilliant, but lacking in self-control and political subtlety, which put him at a disadvantage with Toussaint. Rigaud's admirers—almost the whole body of free colored people—included all the influential persons in the colony once the whites had been cowed or driven out; the South was devoted to him body and soul, and he had numerous partisans in the provinces of the North and West. But Toussaint was the idol of the half-million blacks.

Born a slave, Toussaint was fortunate in having a kindly master who permitted him the sort of work which gave him leisure for reading. He studied eagerly, devouring all accounts he could find of the military exploits of Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar. Apparently he took no part in the slave uprising; on the contrary, he helped his master escape to the United States and later regularly provided him with money. Then he himself went to the Spanish part of the island, where he made a military reputation in the Spanish colonial army. When General Laveaux sought his aid against the invaders of harassed Saint-Domingue, the ex-slave accepted his overtures. Detractors of Toussaint call him a "cunning hypocrite" for joining and then deserting the Spaniards, and for accepting high rank under a French general whom he was even then (so it is asserted) planning to supersede. His decision to return to Saint-Domingue was certainly crucial, for it began his meteoric ascent to power.

[648] Accompanied by the black troops he had captained in the Spanish

[632] 364 14. Les Cayes, the third largest town in modern Haiti, was even in colonial times an important seaport. It is located on the southwestern peninsula.

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people: "If ever you refuse, or grumblingly accept, the laws which the genius guarding your destinies dictates to me for your happiness, you will merit the fate of ungrateful people. But perish that hideous idea!" There can be little doubt that he wished Haiti under his direction to become prosperous; but it is likewise clear that he was personally self-centred and inordinately grasping. 175 642 643

Each step Dessalines took to further his ambitions either for Haitian prosperity or for his own fortunes had its bearing upon the development of social classes in the country. Extermination of all remaining whites was one of the first tasks he set himself. On a promise of clemency he lured several hundred gullible French out of hiding, and butchered them in cold blood. His campaign of extirpation was methodical and thorough. To try to penetrate into the psychological background of this violence is to desert fact for speculation: it may have been a desire for revenge on the French, pure and simple; it may have been gloating sadism; he may have wished to warn France against any future attempts to regain possession of the country; or he may have wanted to notify his subjects of his intention to rule with severe discipline. Certainly this last aim was achieved, if any of his people did not already know, after two years of warfare, the extent of his ruthlessness. He ruled by fear and by threats, never by the cultivation of loyalties.

Apparently he was afraid that Napoleon would renew his efforts to subdue the former colony. To forestall such an attempt he ordered each of his governing subalterns to construct one great fort on the most prominent hill in their district—a scheme which led immediately to the institution of forced labor. He likewise devised a plan, not actually put into effect, for destroying all towns and plantations near the coast and moving the capital to an inland village; and so isolating Haitians from all contact with the outside world. 175 643 466 712 361

Turning to domestic policy, he faced a herculean task. The warfare of 1802–3 had left the country in chaos. Plantations and agricultural projects were almost totally ruined. All habits of steady industry had been lost. Dread of a possible new attack by the French made necessary a great army, and this in turn removed most able-bodied men from productive labor in the fields, while the construction of fortresses still further depleted the labor supply. The first census of free Haiti, in 1805 (probably not highly accurate), showed only 380,000 people, with the women outnumbering men by almost three to two. 175 643 433 701 464 712 175 162

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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tion? Here again, the decision of a leader fixed the direction of Haitian life for decades to come. It is agreed by commentators that overmilitarization was the bane of nineteenth-century Haiti. One tenth of all able-bodied men were constantly in active army service. Moreover, all the male cultivators on plantations must hold themselves in readiness to obey the government's call to arms; ammunition and arms were stored in every parish. A military mentality was nourished, the people early learning the lesson (apparently unchallenged by any liberal) that the army should rule and the people obey.

Although the common soldiers were ex-slaves who, upon dismissal from service, would return to the ranks of agricultural workers, their officers had a higher status. Noncommissioned officers had a long road to travel to eminence, but like the overseers they had at least a glimpse of the promised land of distinction. Captains and generals had this vision within their grasp: they were already of the élite.

In the subcategory of "artisans" were included all the townspeople who carried on crafts or trades. It must be remembered that Haiti had no cities, and that its two largest towns then numbered probably no more than 10,000 people each, so that artisans were not numerous. Since there was a distinction in the arduousness of various pursuits as well as in their financial return there existed in this category, as in the official and military, some chance for social prestige.

The only persons remaining outside the categories mentioned were colored landowners who had held estates in the colonial period. Dessalines took active steps to gain control of most of the land in the country, but at his death in 1806 there were still many of the old proprietors left who were, in the main, determined to hold their land and preserve their dignity as non-laborers.

Assassination by his political foes ended the career of Dessalines only two years after he assumed power. In 1805 he had had himself crowned emperor in imitation of Napoleon, but unlike Napoleon he permitted no nobility. "*Moi seul, je suis noble!*" he replied to ambitious henchmen who asked for the establishment of a peerage. It was the Emperor's tactless handling of the social situation which caused his murder, for he touched sensitive nerves on the raw in attacking property rights, inherited privilege, color distinctions, and social aspirations. The cultivators grumblingly accepted his decrees; the ambitious upper group did not.

The former affranchis fully intended to keep their lands once the

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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631 [361] Overlapping these military arrondissements have been financial arrondissements, generally six in number. The capital of each of these was a port, with a customs house: Port-au-Prince and Jacmel in the West, Les Cayes and Jérémie in the South, Cap-Haïtien in the North, and Gonaïves in the Artibonite.

Finally there were the five *départements*. These seem never to have been much more than geographical divisions to which it was convenient occasionally to refer. In more recent years, as records have been kept with more accuracy, the departments have developed important clerical significance.

[162]

Département	*Capital*	*Estimated Population (1930)*
North	Cap-Haïtien	450,000
Northwest	Port-de-Paix	150,000
Artibonite	Gonaïves	475,000
West	Port-au-Prince	950,000
South	Les Cayes	650,000

According to the present constitution, the country still has its five administrative departments, but has increased its other political subdivisions. There are 27 arrondissements to attend to governmental details, and in addition, 10 prefectures overlapping the arrondissements and serving as units of police control. The arrondissements are still further subdivided into 94 communes, 43 military posts, and 551 rural sections. Each commune is administered by a communal magistrate, appointed by the secretary of the interior, and so subordinate to the central government. This magistrate is assisted by a communal council or a municipal council, composed of elected prominent citizens.[a]

692 693 Courts have existed only in the important towns, which since Boyer's presidency have varied in number from four to eight. Each of these courts has consisted of a president or *doyen*, four judges, four substitute judges, a commissioner appointed by the president of the republic to keep watch over the proceedings of the body, and various inferior clerks and secretaries. Judges are politically appointed, either by the president of the republic or by his cabinet. Civil cases which exceed fifty dollars in extent have been handled by these courts, as also all appeals from decisions of local juges de paix. To the judges were added in 1826 juries to assist in criminal cases

693 695

a. See Luc Dorsinville, *Géographie-Atlas* (Port-au-Prince, 1929), *passim*.

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policy of encouraging trade with his friends and prohibiting it with his enemies—both arbitrarily. The variation of Pétion was a sort of mercantilism, with set high tariffs.

What Dessalines planned was in terms of Western statecraft so weird that white onlookers felt they were restrained in calling Dessalines a transplanted African tribal chieftain. So passionately intense was the fury of that general against all whites that he took every precaution he could devise to prevent face-to-face dealings between his Haitians and foreigners. By deceit, treachery, and ingenious cruelty he conducted a massacre which deserves comparison with that of Saint Bartholomew: this effectively rid the country of white residents. Since for a time Haiti would have to depend for economic survival upon trade with foreigners, Dessalines next conceived a project whereby the whole population would be gathered in the centre of the island, in the most protected valleys and the gorges of the highest mountains. In these fastnesses the people would never see a white but would work on the land, producing sugar and coffee and cotton for export without ever leaving their local habitations. On the seacoast would be established certain "counters" over which a few incorruptible Haitians, chosen by the Emperor himself, would sell local products and buy the necessary imported goods. Impregnable fortresses were to guard access to the interior,[a] which would be reached by new roads from the seacoast "counters." Every seaport was to be destroyed as soon as new towns could be built in the back country. Already when his death intervened Dessalines had moved his capital from the Cape (that is, Cap-Haïtien, formerly Cap Français) to the inland village of Marchand (in the department of the Artibonite; now renamed Dessalines), and his next plan was to transfer Port-au-Prince eight leagues inland to the plantation Dérance, among the mountains.

Dessalines has been thought absurd, childish, barbaric. But there is something poignant, even tragic, in this fiery determination of the black chieftain, bitter over the cruelties and indignity to which his people had been subject for decades, to use this alien island as best he could and preserve his people at any cost from such another domination.

Despite his scheme for ultimate isolation of the people, Dessalines kept everyone steadily at work by the forced-labor system instituted

a. See p. 247 and note 13. under Toussaint.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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105 to regard the people as neighbors, their first impression is generally
13 their abiding one.

And yet the land has its memorable beauties. To lie at anchor in
13 the harbor at Port-au-Prince early in the morning and watch the long arm of the southern peninsula turn gradually from purple vagueness to brilliant green as the sun rises back of the capital; to see a tiny ship with its patched and colored sail glide quietly by on its way out to the island of La Gonâve, lying twenty miles to the west, like a morsel about to be swallowed by the open jaws of the "mainland"; to hear the morning noises drifting across the water, with a snatch of song or laughter in the air; to watch Port-au-Prince come to life, white and sparkling as the sun strikes it—this is the proper introduction to Haiti. Beyond the capital are the hills and mountains; if one will take the time, he may look back as he climbs and see not only the whiteness of the city, but the gracious sweep of the harbor, and the peninsula losing itself in the western distance. He will think without apology of a lesser Naples, and will not miss Vesuvius. Within the country is every variety of scenery: high mountains whose peaks are frequently shrouded in misty clouds; ranges of lower mountains ("*morne*" is the eloquent Haitian name for them) which can be melancholy, kindly, or forbidding, as the spirit of the traveler wills; dull wastes of salt marshes; arid deserts where cactus grows, spiked and hairy, to enormous heights; canyons, waterfalls, dried-up streams; moors, little jungles, farms; rich plantations of sugar cane, dusty stretches of sheer barrenness—everything, in fact, from majesty to complete insipidity. Rarely can one find such utter diversity in a small space as in Haiti. One might fancy himself successively on Egdon Heath, in an Arizona desert, among the Dakota Bad Lands, in old Saint-Domingue, in tropical Africa, in the Pyrenees.

361 The sad truth remains: nothing that man has done in Haiti for a
[342] century and a quarter has been worthy of the landscape. A few government buildings in Port-au-Prince are passable, and the city as a whole is not a blemish; yet not to have seen it is to have missed no great aesthetic experience. Elsewhere the towns and villages run the gamut from monotonous small-scale structures to mere collections
311 of shanties. Great gashes have been cut in the forests by generations of earth-hungry peasants who needed farms. Much of the land looks poor; indeed, thousands of once fertile acres are now beyond any use at all, grown up in cactus, because of overuse and misuse for-

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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489 mind dust, ruts, and a steady succession of bumps. To travel in the
[49] average hired car, driven by a Haitian, is one of the grim experiences of life. The driver speeds as if pursued by a demon, while the peasant pedestrians leap for safety into the ditches; the unfortunate passenger is moved to close his eyes to avoid seeing the inevitable crash which
[36] does not come. The most comfortable means of travel if one is going only to towns is by ship, for practically all of Haiti's towns are seaports.

162 To know the towns is still not to know Haiti, however, for two
577 million or more Haitians live in the rural regions. These are the people. And if they are ignorant and not too clean, they are nevertheless models of kindly generosity. It is the proud boast even of the élite that one may travel the length and breadth of the land in perfect safety, in no danger of life or of personal property.

105 Many homely sights linger in the mind: women washing the family clothes in the stream, laughing and gossiping with their neighbors; men and women talking in animated fashion to themselves, arguing, cajoling, explaining as they walk along; individuals carrying a single flower, simply because it is beautiful; barefoot women, gnarled of hand and lined of face, kneeling in the Catholic church at prayer; taxi drivers who cruise by, hissing in order to attract the attention of a visitor who obviously can afford to ride instead of walk; an apparently ceaseless procession of patient donkeys, always laden, sometimes ridden by women, sometimes urged along from behind; the so-called buses each with its witty or its florid name (Plaisance, Éclair, Grâce-à-Dieu, Polichinelle, Sauve-qui-peut, Montparnasse), which like glorified buckboards jostle woodenly from the town to country hamlets; the winsome, open smile and gay laughter of a peasant boy; the ingratiating charm of a sleeping baby in the noise of the market place. To know the average Haitian is to feel a warm affection for him. His life is never easy, yet he bears it all with true beauty of spirit. If *le bon Dieu* sends distress, he will also make it possible for distress to be borne.

576 The people are polite, whether to each other or to strangers. A younger person greets an older one as *compère* or *commère*—literally, godfather or godmother; to his equal he says "*frère*" or "*m'sieu*."
[367] Sometimes one sees a local patriarch instructing little children in
[609] "deportment." This courtesy extends to hospitality: a stranger is almost sure to be offered shelter and food wherever he stops.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 These newcomers in the class structure enjoyed regular urban em-
565 ployment, were mostly literate and legally married, and harbored strong ambitions for the education of their children. Such persons were certainly not elite members, and their behavior (as, for instance, in their preference for speaking Creole rather than French) showed it; yet they were not part of the rural masses, nor merely an example of Marx's *Lumpenproletariat*. Yet significance of this new group for the Leyburn "caste" theory of the elite is considerable. Even today, if such persons lapse into poverty, their ideology will continue to
[467] matter politically. Estimé's regime also loosed new political trends, since at first some encouragement was given to labor unions, and the
[362] construction of urban low-cost housing was undertaken. We are unable to measure the long-term effects of these changes, but their reality raises some questions about the rigidity that Leyburn's analysis imputed to Haitian social structure.

175 In May 1950, after an unsuccessful bid to extend his term of office
669 illegally, Estimé's regime was toppled, again by a military junta. To
643 power came Paul Magloire, the first military figure to become chief
159 executive since the start of the United States occupation. Like Estimé before him, Magloire symbolized certain effects of the occupation upon Haiti's social and political structure and the way that structure was continuing to change. Magloire's origins were not within the elite, to judge by the traditional criteria. He was a black man, and from the north; born in Quartier Morin, he associated himself with the elite of the north coast port of Cap Haïtien, Haiti's second largest city. By marriage to a "Capoise," whose family status was much higher than his own, and by a successful career in the military during the occupation, Magloire penetrated elite circles. As commander of the Palace Guard, he had been a member of the junta that ousted Lescot in 1946, replacing him with Estimé. In 1950, when Magloire became president, after the army had forcibly discharged both houses of the legislature, he apparently had the support of the elite and of the business class, if not of the popular forces that had backed Estimé.

175 Magloire may be said to have moderated considerably the intensity
643 of Haitian politics, and his administration was not marked by so sharp an ideological concern with the relative roles of elite and coun-
[433] tryman. Times were good, and levels of life, both in the countryside and in the capital, were probably as high as they had been at any time in Haitian history. Certain economic gains were made in the tourist

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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There are sections, particularly in the capital, in which shanties more resembling chicken coops than dwellings house whole families under leaky roofs of crude thatch. Privacy, cleanliness, sanitation, are not to be thought of. That the sun is warm in Haiti is a blessing, for cold would creep through the gaping walls. Where the shanty dwellers go in the rain, where they get their food, what relieves the dreary round of daily monotony the important people of Haiti do not know, nor do many of them seem to care. President Vincent undertook to clear away a section of the most abject slums in Port-au-Prince, erected in their place a series of two-room (likewise two-family) houses about a central square. Compared with the hovels they replaced the new houses are palatial; compared with houses Americans would consider adequate, they look more like unimaginative garages. With what rapidity an epidemic of serious nature might sweep the lower sections of the city, which are but one vast slum, is a thought too harrowing to entertain.

In the whole city there are hardly half a dozen buildings which would detain the lover of architecture. The president's palace is a gleaming white structure, somewhat resembling the White House in Washington. With its background of lofty mountains it makes an impressive picture, although it stands naked in the vast public square of the city. Young palm trees are now growing in the square, and may before many years provide for the palace the setting it deserves. Inside the palace one's chief impression is of emptiness. Other government buildings range from plain white edifices which fulfill their practical function without any suggestion of aesthetic graciousness, down through the inferior grades to wooden structures which one passes without a second glance. The cathedral, placed upon an eminence, is unattractive both in its exterior and in the glaring interior. Upon one of its finger towers at night gleams a light to guide ships into the harbor. The clubs and a few of the villas are pleasant to look at; the colleges of the lay brothers are impressively large, but bespeak the provincial town.

Indeed, one wanders up and down the country in search of man-made beauty and finds only two examples, both partially ruined, and both in the North: Christophe's magnificent citadel, La Ferrière, and the shattered shell of his charming palace, Sans Souci.

The citadel is breath-taking. Astride a great peak the huge edifice resembles the mighty beak of a ship about to soar off into the atmosphere. Inside one can wander through endless vaults, gaze from

important point in the warfare between the northern Empire of Christophe and the southern Republic of Pétion is well known, since the boundary between the two, never definitely fixed, might be roughly considered as the Artibonite, control of which, as always, depended on also obtaining control of the strategic hills about the town.[10] It is not possible to discover more than approximate figures for the population of Mirebalais at the present time, since no census of the district has been made, and the most recent figure of 31,000 for the commune is derived from the baptismal records in the parish church.[11]

From the earliest years of settlement of the valley, the town has been the center of its life. The government of the commune is located here; here the courts sit; and here the best schools and the only church of the district are found. Yet it is a small town, numbering less than two hundred and fifty houses, and crossed by but three principal thoroughfares stretching north and south, with ten or twelve cross-lanes. The houses on the principal streets, rectangular and small, are built of wood, plastered over with clay, painted, and roofed with sheet iron. On the outskirts of the town the roofing is of straw, or banana-leaf thatch, while the walls themselves are made of twilled wythes. No house lacks its veranda, however small, where people may be seen sitting late of an afternoon and early in the evening, but the life of the women is lived chiefly in the courtyards behind these houses that line the streets, where the cookhouses are found and the storehouses, and where all work is done. The *place*, or town square, lies at the point where the principal route between Port-au-Prince and the Dominican border turns sharply to the east. Consisting of an acre or two of cleared land, it is overgrown with weeds except when, in preparing for festive occasions, the prisoners from the town jail may be seen spending long hours, machetes in hand, cutting the grass, a few blades at a time. North of the square stands the church, a substan-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

361
363

MIREBALAIS

ABOVE, *A street.*

BELOW, *The place and the church.*

346

[facing P. 10]

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

[History of Haiti in 17th-18th Centuries — The Haitian White population]

175 planters and expressing their contempt for the townspeople,
223 speaks of the towns as existing primarily to serve the needs of
565 these country squires as centers for the storage and disposal
369 of their produce: "There are found merchants, artisans,
[463] judges, recorders, solicitors, notaries, bailiffs, doctors. But one finds neither nobles, men of property, nor persons of wit and perception."[16]

175 The physical aspect of the cities had little to recommend them, especially since the utter lack of sanitation made for extreme uncleanliness in all Haitian centers. This fact is of special interest in the light of the frequent references to this trait of Haitian cities in the writings of those Europeans who described the life of independent Haiti. Invariably in such accounts the littered state of the streets, even in the capital, is stressed, and tendered as evidence of the absence of civilization in this Negro Republic.[17] Even though occasional mention is made that this state of affairs existed before the Revolution, nowhere, whether in St. John or in the later writers who date from the time of the occupation of the country by the United States Marine Corps, is there any realization that this condition antedates the independence of Haiti. The cleanliness of Africans in Africa wherever the natives have ready access to water has been well attested, and is still true in those regions from which the ancestors of the people of Haiti principally derived.

175 Yet some aspects of life in the towns livened the picture of
591 Haitian colonial existence. Outstanding were the opportu-
368 nities offered by these centers for social intercourse, and even
523 for intellectual and artistic stimulation of a kind, such as was afforded by the famous *Cercle des Philadelphes* of Cap Française, dedicated to literary, philosophical, and, above all, to political discussions.[18] Masonic lodges, later taken over by the Negroes and today of appreciable importance in Haiti, were also instituted by the French, the first having been founded at the Cap in 1790.[19] Purely social meeting-places, such as public

Spring water in the country districts is frequently

164 not-
[364] luted by all sorts of excreta; the watering of milk is a common
[272] practice, and samples of milk have been generally found to contain many times the normal amount of bacilli. The cases of tuberculosis are practically always complicated by malaria.

Dysentery, when caused by bacilli, is epidemic in nature. In Haiti this form, known as "colerin," annually affects about a quarter of the rural population. Another type, caused by a variety of amoeba, affects another ten or twenty per cent, according to the region. Enteritis is less serious than dysentery but just as prevalent, being
[146] caused by protozoa and intestinal worms. Poor diet, the abuse of
[273] alcohol, premature weaning, and unwise nursing are also responsible.
[853] Granular conjunctivitis affected sixteen per cent of the children examined by the Rockefeller Foundation.

Cancer seems to strike only a normal number of Haitians; goitre is common in the mountain districts; leprosy has become a menace in the West and South; elephantiasis is present, particularly in the South; gusarola (characterized by patches of skin assuming different color) is fairly common in the Cul-de-Sac plain; chicken pox, influenza, and meningitis epidemics are occasionally serious.

164 The health of the peasant women is seriously and continuously
462 endangered by their mode of life and work. It is customary for
482 females, from girlhood onward, to carry heavy burdens on their
145 heads—over steep paths in the mountains, along rocky trails, up hill and down. The commonest sight in Haiti is to see a woman swinging along with a great load of fuel, a tin of water, a bundle of building material, a basket of fruit, on her head. Cranial bones are flattened, the spine is bent, internal organs are strained or damaged. For ill-nourished persons to carry heavy weights for long distances with
[461] little rest means undue pressure on the heart and lungs, and so an
[845] increasing tendency to cardiac and pulmonary infections as well as chronic anemia. Overwork frequently results in miscarriages.

As has been said, childbirth often occurs by the roadside, on the
844 way to market, or in the market place. In no case can a peasant
[846] woman remain in bed for a proper period either before or after
[164] parturition. Midwives are untrained; they use primitive methods which inevitably result in defective development of infants, lessened
853 resistance to disease, high infant mortality, and a prevalence of abdominal diseases in women. Pressure of work, whether in the field or on the way to market, makes a mother soon stop nursing her

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 701 648 177 625 652 669 Since it was an entrenched interest, however, no responsible statesman had dared to threaten its hold. The Marines swept it out of existence, undertaking to substitute for it a trained constabulary of only 2,000 men who should combine routine military tasks with police duty in the scattered towns. Results were immediately apparent: the weighty incubus of soldiers' wages was lifted from the treasury; thousands of men were deprived of sinecures and put back into productive economic activities; the constant threat of armed revolution was removed; better order was kept by 2,000 trained men in trim uniform than by twelve times that number of ragged loafers who called themselves soldiers; and since the army was no longer the great steppingstone to political office, the élite felt more secure from assault by ambitious but uneducated army men. From 1843 to 1915 the élite had endured many lower-caste presidents because these were able to control the army; now the army had disappeared.

175 648 [743] [744] [365] [491] [45] The Marines did much that was of indisputable benefit to Haiti. This was acknowledged even by the most vocal patriots who soon began to campaign for an end of the Occupation. Where there had been no real work in public health, Americans now built hospitals, established clinics, cleaned up the sources of many diseases, laid down sewage systems, gave the towns pure water. In 1915 there were only three automobiles in the country, and no roads for them to travel; the Americans built many miles of paved roads. In 1915 there had been only one wharf, two short stretches of railroad, two lighthouses, one electric plant; the Americans undertook electrification, telephone systems, the construction of administration buildings, and other public conveniences. Whether in such visible matters or in the obscurer realms of currency, banking, and budgets hardly a phase of daily life was left untouched. And judged by the standards of civilization the Marines improved what they touched.

175 648 642 But rancor against the Americans began early and continued to the bitter end in 1934. The pride of all Haitians was deeply wounded by the Occupation. For 111 years they had governed themselves and had assumed themselves to be a sovereign nation; the Marines patroling the countryside were vivid reminders that Haiti had never been independent except by sufferance, and that white men were once more overseeing the destinies of colored and Negro men. Nevertheless, the reasons proclaimed for opposing the Occupation were not those of hurt vanity. Some of those given were entirely

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

North of the square stands the church, a substan-
tial structure with rounded arches in the Roman style, roofed
over, like most other buildings, with galvanized iron. Other
public buildings are the town hall — the Mairie — and the
"Hall of Justice"; near by are the stone walls of a public
building begun some years ago as a school, but destined ap-
parently to house what is known as the "Bureau of Contribu-
tions," a euphemism for the tax-collector's quarters. Despite
the fact that Mirebalais was one of the most difficult regions
for the American occupation to subdue during the Caco up-
rising of 1918–20,[18] it was one of the first districts where the
Guarde d'Haiti was completely Haitianized, and from which
all American Marine officers were withdrawn. Only a small
detachment is stationed there at present. Its well-kept bar-
racks are near the church, and the prisons form a part of the
same compound, from whence issue daily the striped-suited
prisoners, men and women, under guard or alone on parole,
who do communal work in the town and the near-by country-
side.

The town awakens at dawn to the chattering of domesti-
cated guinea-fowl and the crowing of cocks. Occasionally a
camion rumbles through the principal thoroughfare; more
rarely an automobile dashes by in great clouds of dust on its
way to Las Cahobas, or Hinche, or Santo Domingo City. If
it is a market day, the streets are early filled with country folk
on their way to dispose of their produce, and the clatter from
the market place behind the church is heard everywhere until
the heat of the day brings a lull to all commerce, and drowsi-
ness once more settles over everything. By mid-afternoon
during the planting season, drums can be heard over the
countryside. The sounds are not those of the "throbbing"
vodun drums — though they have more than once been mis-
taken for them by travelers — but they set the rhythm for
the communal work of the *combites*, which perform co-
operative agricultural labor. As the rapid dusk follows the
disappearance of the sun behind the mountains, the voices of

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

may next be considered. Two types of markets exist — those in the countryside where produce is often sold at wholesale, and the town markets where retail trading takes place. In Mirebalais, as elsewhere, the principal market day is Saturday, though smaller markets are held on Thursdays, and roadside gatherings of women offering small amounts of foodstuffs or cooked foods are to be found everywhere. The country markets occur at present only on Tuesdays, though in earlier times the markets shared the days of the week in rotation. To heighten the importance of the towns, however, and to encourage the peasants to work steadily in their fields by concentrating the time spent at market, it has been officially decreed that the schedule given above be followed. Before this, the rotation of the markets in the commune of Mirebalais was as follows:

MONDAY: Yabodoun; La Civelle; Landale;
TUESDAY: Mirebalais;
WEDNESDAY: Dufailly (a fairly large country market); Labouli; Colombie (a very large market);
THURSDAY: Mirebalais;
FRIDAY: Chambo and Canarde (the most important country markets in the valley);
SATURDAY: Mirebalais.

The Mirebalais market is located near the central square not far from the confluence of the Artibonite and Tombe rivers, though until relatively recent times it was held in the *place* before the church. It occupies a large fenced-in space reserved for the purpose, which on the days of the great markets hums with activity. Each tradeswoman has her place there, which she retains by a kind of informal agreement, held to so well, for all its informality, that if a woman is compelled to be absent for a time, those who sit near by watch it for her and warn anyone who takes it that it must be relinquished when the original occupant returns. If despite this warning

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

[History of Haiti in 17th-18th Centuries — The Haitian White Population]

175 563 565 369 [463] planters and expressing their contempt for the townspeople, speaks of the towns as existing primarily to serve the needs of these country squires as centers for the storage and disposal of their produce: "There are found merchants, artisans, judges, recorders, solicitors, notaries, bailiffs, doctors. But one finds neither nobles, men of property, nor persons of wit and perception."[16]

175 324 563 The physical aspect of the cities had little to recommend them, especially since the utter lack of sanitation made for extreme uncleanliness in all Haitian centers. This fact is of special interest in the light of the frequent references to this trait of Haitian cities in the writings of those Europeans who described the life of independent Haiti. Invariably in such accounts the littered state of the streets, even in the capital, is stressed, and tendered as evidence of the absence of civilization in this Negro Republic.[17] Even though occasional mention is made that this state of affairs existed before the Revolution, nowhere, whether in St. John or in the later writers who date from the time of the occupation of the country by the United States Marine Corps, is there any realization that this condition antedates the independence of Haiti. The cleanliness of Africans in Africa wherever the natives have ready access to water has been well attested, and is still true in those regions from which the ancestors of the people of Haiti principally derive.

175 571 368 563 Yet some aspects of life in the towns livened the picture of Haitian colonial existence. Outstanding were the opportunities offered by these centers for social intercourse, and even for intellectual and artistic stimulation of a kind, such as was afforded by the famous *Cercle des Philadelphes* of Cap Française, dedicated to literary, philosophical, and, above all, to political discussions.[18] Masonic lodges, later taken over by the Negroes and today of appreciable importance in Haiti, were also instituted by the French, the first having been founded at the Cap in 1740.[19] Purely social meeting-places, such as public

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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baths or public halls, were in operation, while in the towns of Cap Français, Port-au-Prince, Leogane, Saint-Marc, and Cayes, theaters were established which produced "the latest plays from Paris" and attracted large audiences.[20]

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Despite all this, the canker of homesickness constantly gnawed at the colonists even in the towns — the feeling that a stay in the colony was only for the interval needed to allow a man to escape to the mother country with a fortune. On the estates the loneliness and isolation of plantation life are commented upon repeatedly. A letter of the period, without place or date, found in the family papers of the historian de Vassière, discusses this with poignancy:

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> "Have pity for an existence which must be eked out far from the world of our own people. We here number five whites, my father, my mother, my two brothers, and myself, surrounded by more than two hundred slaves, the number of our negroes who are domestics alone coming almost to thirty. From morning to night, wherever we turn, their faces meet our eyes. No matter how early we awaken, they are at our bedsides, and the custom which obtains here not to make the least move without the help of one of these Negro servants brings it about not only that we live in their society the greater portion of the day, but also that they are involved in the least important events of our daily life. Should we go outside our house to the workshops, we are still subject to this strange propinquity. Add to this the fact that our conversation has almost entirely to do with the health of our slaves, their needs which must be cared for, the manner in which they are to be distributed about the estate, or their attempts at revolt, and you will come to understand that our entire life is so closely identified with that of these unfortunates that, in the end, it is the same as theirs. And despite whatever pleasure may come from that almost ab-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Revolution.[13] St. Mery also records the importation and sale in 1730 of more than five hundred Natchez Indians from New France (Louisiana) "as well as others at a later date, both from Louisiana and Canada."[14] 175 563

A final class of settler must be mentioned, whose coming is reported to have given a better tone to the drab picture of Haitian life. This class was composed of members of the French nobility, who in their new home attempted to maintain the standards which characterized and regulated their lives in France. Unlike many of the earlier inhabitants, to whom the difficult life of the planter did not appeal, the nobles tended to continue their status as country gentlemen in their new environment, and, by establishing plantations, to reproduce in so far as was possible, their situation in France as a group of landed proprietors. As a result, there soon grew up between these planters living on their estates and the population of the cities and towns the same distinctions of caste and the same blind rivalry which, before the Revolution, separated the French country squires and the city dwellers in France itself.[15] 175 563 565 175 563 565 369

The existence of these two classes within the white population of the colony, which is commented upon by many writers of the period, must have presented to the Negro slaves strikingly different views of the life of the whites. In a manuscript of Moreau de St. Mery, at present in the archives of the Ministry of Colonies in Paris, a group of some two hundred of these gentlefolk who in 1763 lived in the region of what today is Cap Haitien, in northern Haiti, is spoken of as that of a special class, and their existence is contrasted with that of the city folk. Living on their plantations, with the cultivation of which they were exclusively occupied, their mode of life was different from that of the inhabitants of the cities and towns, where were found dealers in wholesale produce, officers of the crown, lawyers, solicitors, and merchants. Some forty years later another writer, writing from the point of view of the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

[History of Haiti in 17th-18th Centuries — The Haitian White Population]

175 563 565 369 [463] planters and expressing their contempt for the townspeople, speaks of the towns as existing primarily to serve the needs of these country squires as centers for the storage and disposal of their produce: "There are found merchants, artisans, judges, recorders, solicitors, notaries, bailiffs, doctors. But one finds neither nobles, men of property, nor persons of wit and perception." [16]

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affable, generous perhaps to the point of ostentation, confident, brave, a sure friend and a good father "[28] — such are his good points as set down by one who was perhaps surer-eyed than others in seeing his deficiencies, though these traits seem to have concerned more his relations with his fellow-whites than those which affected his bearing toward his Negro slaves.

The young Créole women of this same environment were destined for early marriage — too early for their best development, whether physical or mental. Given to exacting the fulfillment of their slightest caprices, they were, like their men, creatures of passion. If they survived their first pregnancies, which as a result of too early marriages often came before they were physically in condition to support the rigors of childbirth, they soon lost their youthful allure and became the unattractive women of the type so maliciously described by the Comte de C***.[29] In such cases they frequently survived not one but several husbands. Their associations were chiefly with their Negro women slaves, who were full confidantes, sleeping in the same chamber with their mistresses and on occasion sharing informal meals with them, though they never ate at the same table. And because, by a fine turn of irony, these Negro women were often at the same time the concubines of the husbands, brothers, or sons of their mistresses, they were as often as not treated alternately with the greatest tenderness and the harshest brutality.[30]

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Whatever the inner life of white Haitians, native-born or Créole, outward ostentation was the rule. In the cities poorly furnished houses were cared for by a numerous retinue of uniformed retainers; "the supreme achievement for a European being to have himself served, he hires slaves while he waits for the time when he can own them."[31] In the country too, life was lived on as lavish a scale as possible. This is not the place to describe the houses of masters and slaves, or the buildings needed for working sugar-cane or indigo or preparing coffee, or their distribution over the plantation, for nu

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1; Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Petit-Goave on 25 June 1743, complains that it is unbelievable "what indifference the people of these districts have toward spiritual matters." [50] So little attention was paid to the rites of the Church that when the baptism of an infant was to be performed, it often proved difficult to find a godfather who had taken the sacrament, and many children were therefore never baptized. As might be expected, the churches were in a bad state, often having no more than earthen walls and floors, roofed with thatch, and being used as threshing-floors as well as places of worship. The description which Père Labat has given us of a church at Cap Français,[51] and of the manner in which the communicants conducted themselves during such services as were held, shows the decadence of the one religion that had any place among the white inhabitants. The clergy, too, reflected this same decadence. For though the early libertines who posed as priests were later replaced by members of such orders as the Jacobins, the Jesuits, and the Capucins, even this did not end the scandals that, from the first days of the establishment of the Catholic Church on the island, marked its ministrations.

What impression must the Negroes have obtained from their opportunities to observe the life of their masters? What patterns of behavior, what moral codes, what concepts of the way in which the Europeans regulated their own lives and, as officials, regulated the lives of others, must have been stamped on the minds of these Africans? That the present emphasis on the importance of wealth, or that a love of and demand for display, should characterize Haitian life of the cities today is not strange. Nor is it difficult to comprehend how certain other aspects of Haitian life that have so been underscored in the last half-century by those who have written of the Haitians should have developed from this initial stimulus — not to the extent to which this emphasis would lead one to believe, to be sure, but enough to give a basis for the exaggerations which have been published.[52]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

584 truth, but the matter is recognized as one which concerns
836 only her husband and herself, and if he is willing to keep
836 her, it is his own affair. Consensus of opinion in Mirebalais
369 is that the percentage of girls who do not have pre-marital sexual relations is relatively small, but the belief is expressed that chastity is more prevalent among country women than among those of the town, where, in turn, it is more frequent than in larger centers such as Port-au-Prince. Even though
836 pre-marital relations are commonplace, however, the preg-
848 nancy of an unmarried girl is regarded as both reprehensible and unfortunate, and she is severely beaten for it by her family. In such cases, if the father of the unborn child will take the girl, his parents are sent to bring her, but where the parents of the man refuse to ask for the girl because they do not approve of her, then, if he still desires her, he must himself face the anger of her parents. Should he not wish to come for her, she may either remain with her family or seek work in another community. In any event, her child will be well cared for by her family, and no reproach will attach to it because of the circumstances of its birth.

585 Before a mating of any type is consummated, the familial
782 spirits must be notified of the approaching event so that they
776 may be well disposed toward it, for no union where this is neglected can enjoy happiness or peace. One Mirebalais woman was pointed out as an object lesson of the necessity of doing this. Though a devotee of several gods, neither she nor her husband was willing to perform the necessary rites for her gods before their marriage. She was suffering from an
[753] acute case of melancholia after the birth of her first child, and
[828] the prevailing opinion was that she was going mad because of the neglect of her duty toward her deities. Shortly before a woman goes to her husband, therefore, a *couvert sec* for the Rada deities is given both by herself and by her betrothed. If the family of either the young man or the woman possess deities of the powerful Pétro group, more inclusive offerings

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

he is assured of more solicitous care from her and more deferential treatment from her children. And though when this has occurred his "legal" wife may at his death come with a justice of the peace to claim his body and his effects, this move is anticipated, so that what he has given the *placée* wife and her children is usually well out of the way. "Often they find only the four walls of the house."

A certain number of unmarried men result from this system of plural matings, some of whom remain single by preference, particularly in the cities, where the incidence of homosexuality far exceeds that found in the country. In Mirebalais itself, when the final withdrawal of the American Marines from Haiti was being celebrated, a dance called *manuba*, significantly enough the only one held indoors, was one in which male dancers danced together in couples. The sexual problem of the younger unmarried men is more often solved by means of liaisons with married women, though this has its dangers in the countryside, where the movements of every individual are known and the least tendency to unsanctioned social behavior is soon the subject for widespread gossip. Prostitutes are found everywhere, and they are by no means visited by unmarried men alone. On the whole, sex "adventures" are more indulged in by men than women, even allowing for the tendency of some women to have affairs with youths. A belief widely held, that plural wives tend so to exhaust the virility of a man that he must seek "remedies" of a magical nature from the priests of the *vodun* cult and from sorcerers, must also be mentioned. Frigidity is a principal cause for female homosexuality, and, because of a wife's reluctance to satisfy her husband, it not infrequently happens that she is sent back to her parents, where she may seek out other women. The most prevalent Haitian attitude toward homosexuality in either sex, it may be remarked, is one of derision rather than vindictiveness, as the term applied to effeminate men, *commères*, may suggest.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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That the separateness of yeomanry and elite had visible and sociologically important expression in physical type in Haiti was a clear consequence of the history of that country. But the traditional preponderant light skins at the top of the structure and the preponderant darkness at its base are less important than the domination of the total structure, and of the institutional means for changing it, by a mere fraction of the national population. It is the *power* of the elite which has mattered through time; its physical appearance has been only a historically derived expression of that power. Such a balance of politically weak masses against numerically sparse power holders is common, perhaps particularly in the "less developed world"; but each such case has certain special characteristics. Haiti's special nature is not simply in its being a yeoman country, and one in which a small group dominates the mass. As a rural, agrarian, unindustrialized, politically sovereign, and quasi-capitalistic country, Haiti shares much with other lands; but in each regard its own particularity needs to be assessed.

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The rurality of Haiti is extreme, not simply because there are no concentrations of population in excess of 25,000 except for Port-au-Prince and Cap Haïtien but also because towns of intermediate size are few in number, and the urban concentrations in the country's two cities are substantially of relatively recent rural origin. Port-au-Prince dominates the Republic in all of its economic, political, and social activities. Furthermore, the rural towns have been losing to the capital, not gaining from it. Until the United States occupation, the larger towns of the coast, such as Jérémie, Jacmel, and St. Marc, were united economically with each other, and to some extent with the capital, by a lively coastwise shipping system, and the inland towns were tributary to those of the coast. The growth of inland transport during the occupation strengthened the interior towns while coastwise shipping declined, but the capital grew even more important as the sole economic center of the Republic. Since the 1940s, the rapid deterioration of the road system has left both inland and coastal towns enfeebled; only Port-au-Prince has remained strong.

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The dominion of Port-au-Prince is firm, and there is no focus of power in the countryside that can counteract it. Those few foreign enterprises in Haiti that base themselves outside the capital city use local port facilities (e.g. Miragoâne for Reynolds Aluminum, Cap Haïtien for the sisal plantations of the north) and do not affect the development of the interior transport.

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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369 development of interior transport. The only passable roads in the
494 Republic run from Aux Cayes in the south to the capital, and from
646 Cap Haïtien in the north to the capital. Transport and communications simply symbolize the power that Port-au-Prince wields, since the same circumstances characterize all national institutional arrangements. Thus Haiti is an extreme example of urban domination, even though its urban population is a fraction of the national total. The consequence has been to keep most of the rural folk cut off from the apparatus that effects national decisions and shapes national policy. Haiti's national legislature, never important in limiting presidential power, is less so today than ever; at best, it had only represented the interests of provincial towns as opposed to the capital, and never the interests of the mass of country people.

701 The local military and judiciary officials possess the formal author-
692 ity vested in them by the state, and their power is very considerable.
642 Few local people would dare challenge their decisions, and the de-
369 vices for appeal against arbitrary exercise of authority are few. Admittedly, at the lowest local level the *chef de section*—who is traditionally appointed by the captain of the military in the *commune* center and is himself a yeoman—is subject to some genuine restraint by local inhabitants. Jean Comhaire-Sylvain (1955:620–24) has argued convincingly that the people of a community are capable of insisting on democratic procedure in those matters requiring decision that come to the attention of local authority. But such decisions have little or nothing to do with larger issues. The yeomanry cannot directly make its wishes felt in national politics; and national politics are conducted almost without reference to the aspirations of the rural masses. It is precisely in the separateness of local life from the mainstream of national decision-making that the political impotence of the yeomanry is demonstrated.

311 Haiti's agrarian nature cannot be expressed simply by saying it is a
423 rural and yeoman country. Haiti does not have a "land problem," as
171 that phrase is conventionally applied to Latin America. It does, it is true, suffer from land shortage, inasmuch as too little land is worked at too low a level of productivity and must feed too many mouths. But a very substantial proportion of the rural masses owns land, or has regular access to it. It is true that most land is held in small plots and without clear title. But those persons who own no land or who lack land to work are proportionally fewer than in any other Carib-

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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intrepidity in enterprise is required. It is striking that those foreign captains of industry—mainly from the United States—who invest in Haiti, expect (and often get) governmental guarantees of a sort they could not dream of in their own countries; in this regard, they merely conform to Haitian expectations.

Haiti's problems, then, are not simply those that face any less developed country, vast though such problems may be. Nor is it intelligent to lay Haiti's problems at the feet of the nation's present rulers. The structure of the national economy has not changed significantly during the past twenty-five years—except that boom years could provide a temporary aura of prosperity—regardless of the philosophy or popularity of the regime in power. If nothing else, the present nadir of Haiti's fortunes demonstrates that United States aid averaging twelve and a half million dollars yearly over more than a decade has produced no enduring improvements of any kind. It may further demonstrate that, shockingly poor as the country is, it emphatically does not depend on such aid. As of 1964, the regime in power was operating on a monthly budget of $1,800,000, only $400,000 of which went for purposes other than salaries. In other words, the ministries do little more than perpetuate themselves unchanged. The yeomanry, living near subsistence level, continues to produce most of what it needs, while restricting its cash expenditures even more severely than in the past. The risks—in terms, say, of public health—of running a society under these circumstances are great; but there is no reason to suppose that regimes of the Haitian sort will be destroyed or improved by a show of popular unrest originating in the countryside. Difficult as life is for the Haitian countryman, and no people in Latin America lives more poorly, the real pinch is probably being experienced more acutely among the city folk than among their rural fellow citizens. It matters politically, therefore, who these city folk are and what they do.

To begin with, there has been a significant loss of professional people, almost all of whom were urban, through migration and exile, especially since 1958. Haitian doctors, dentists, and other professionals are widely scattered today, both in the developed and the less developed countries of the world. Former army officers, journalists, diplomats, businessmen, and academicians have fled political repression, perhaps with the hope of eventually returning to their own country.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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565 511 paring to try to move one step up the social ladder. Shoes are a symbol: wearing these, one must also wear a suit instead of a faded shirt and patched trousers; the suit demands personal cleanliness and a better home; all these lead the country man to town life with its additional expenses. So arduous a climb does not allure many of the Haitian common folk.

565 181 Because the standard of living, with its tangibles and intangibles, clearly separates the castes, the élite observe all the rules with rigor. Their etiquette is formal. Culture (in the popular, not the anthropological meaning) is respected with almost religious devotion.

565 511 434 Since the maintenance of a high standard of living is costly, it is obvious that another source of caste distinction lies in the inequalities of wealth and property. Wealth is a relative term, however, and the Haitian peasant is so poor that by contrast a few hundred dollars' income a year will seem like riches. The élite live economically by American standards, yet even parsimonious spending of money may, when governed by a consciousness of social distinctions, make the peak of aristocracy unassailable.

565 369 The élite live in towns. Many of them own country estates, but regard these as secondary to their residences in Port-au-Prince, Pétionville, Cap-Haïtien, Jérémie, and the other few towns. To live a rural life is to be isolated, out of the stream of fashion, news, social activity. What profession can one follow in a rustic valley? One who is class-conscious must see and be seen by others of his class, otherwise he would be forgotten by "those who count." In the towns are the schools; there French is spoken; there, and there only, financial and social opportunities exist. True, plebeians form the majority of the population even in the towns, so that urbanization alone is not a mark of caste; it must be taken in conjunction with the others.

565 581 Formal marriage is another requisite for membership in the élite. As will shortly be apparent, sex relations in Haiti are quite casual, as judged by American standards. The majority of Haitian families are established by parents who have gone through neither a civil nor a religious ceremony. This is not to imply that spouses are unfaithful to each other, or that there is not mutual respect within the family circle; it merely means that most people regard formal marriage as a luxury which they cannot afford, or in any case as a ceremony which custom has made superfluous. Once again, however, the aristocrat holds to the form. If a family can point to legal marriages among

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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mar or any schoolmaster's correction; he behaves like his fellows; he learns by trial and error, by imitation, by the praise and ridicule of his elders, what to do and what not to do. What really matters in life is having food to eat, avoiding bad luck in health and crops, having a wife and family, keeping on the right side of the spirits, and being able at night to dance, sing, and tell tales with his friends. He wears no tight-fitting clothes, never bothers about fashions, certainly never puzzles his brain to reconcile his theological and philosophical views with each other. This is by no means a poetic or idyllic existence for him, however. The peasant is so poor that misfortune may be catastrophic; the soil he has to farm is worn out by decades of erosion and crude tillage; disease is so widespread that most people know misery. A man cannot, even if he would, save up for a rainy day; he lacks the necessary implements to plough deep while sluggards sleep. One is safe so long as he does what everyone else does, and if this rule breaks down, at least misery will have company. Keep out of hatm's way if possible, but bear it stoically when it comes. Avoid what is strange—particularly all legal documents, courts, politics, city ways, and people who shout orders. The peasant is conservative because radical changes, such as come from revolutions, for example, dislocate his life, leaving him worse off than before. Progress and improvement are to him only vague abstractions, much less real than the struggle for mere existence.

For the élite, on the other hand, life is rather a struggle to maintain and improve the standard of living. It is always easier to predict what a person will not do than what he will. It would be hard to define, therefore, a typical aristocrat. In one basic matter, however, the high-class Haitian is poles removed from the peasant: instead of accepting things as they are ("*Bon Dieu bon*," runs the peasant saying: God is good—and the inflection of the voice implies that the second "bon" may also mean "inscrutable"), the élite person is restlessly dissatisfied with the conditions of life: economic, social, political. His unexpressed ideal is to be accepted as an equal in the cultured circles of Western society, to have the same entrée to courts, clubs, and parties abroad as cultivated white Europeans and Americans.

Since the country has never had an accurate census, it is not possible to say precisely how many persons belong to each caste. By the most generous estimates not one out of twenty-five Haitians is élite—and such a figure stretches the category to a point which no literate

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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162 citizen would admit. The few cities and towns of Haiti do not con-
565 tain more than 250,000 people in a total population which the atlases
369 generally put around 2,500,000. Since to live in the city is one necessary mark of aristocracy, and since obviously not every town- or city-dweller is an aristocrat, it is probably nearer the mark to infer that not more than two or three per cent of the people are of the élite.

565 A slightly larger group would fit neither category. This inter-
554 mediate section would consist chiefly of those who have taken a few steps toward the upper stratum; they may wear shoes and keep a small shop and speak a few words of French, but not yet be accepted in "respectable" society; aristocrats will look down on them while the masses will regard them with curious interest. Yet these are not what Europeans would call a middle class. In their own generation, they are rootless and insecure. Their children will have as many advantages as the parents can afford, so that the next generation may increase the distance between itself and the common folk. Included in this intermediate group are also a few who, having come from up, are now on the way down.

433 If the terms "masses" and "peasants" are used interchangeably in
162 these pages, it is because the vast majority of the people get their living from the soil. Haiti is, as it has always been, an agricultural country. The end-paper map lists all towns which claim as many as 7,500 people; only one, the capital, Port-au-Prince, has more than 100,000.[7]

162 At least nine out of ten Haitians, therefore, lead rural lives, and
184 easily fit the designation of peasant. They live in little communities,
105 generally of less than a hundred persons, rather than in scattered houses. A detailed map would be dotted with place names of these

[162] 7. The estimates made by Woodring, in his *Geology of the Republic of Haiti*, p. 65,
[114] are as follows:

Port-au-Prince	125,000	Saint-Marc	10,000
Cap-Haïtien	20,000	Jacmel	10,000
Les Cayes	15,000	Port-de-Paix	7,500
Gonaïves	12,000	Jérémie	7,500

It should be noted that all eight of these towns, which by Woodring's estimate have a total of 207,000, are seaports. The country is so mountainous that no cities have grown up in the interior. The map also includes a number of towns smaller than 7,500: these are capitals of *arrondissements* or seats of *communes*. Woodring remarks that if the people who live in towns having a population of more than a thousand were added to the list shown, the total "urban" population then would be between 225,000 and 250,000, which is barely ten per cent of the total in the country.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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to attempt to retrace the path of property evolution, which has steadily taken its own course since the time of Pétion."[11] 175 423

With the peasants prevailingly satisfied in their daily round of life, the separation of upper and lower castes in Haitian society has gradually become an accepted fact. At least ninety per cent of the total population now belong to the peasant group, whose members are as much reconciled to their status as in the United States the poorest colored folk to theirs. Vaguely they may often wish they had the privileges and luxuries of those above them; often, likewise, they feel resentment at the way in which they are treated; but in so far as it is permissible to generalize about two million people, it is fair to say that the Haitian peasant rarely complains of his lot. 565 [162]

Of the remaining ten per cent of the population a small fraction look upon themselves as élite. Some families of this group can be traced back to colonial times when their ancestors were already affranchis; others began to take on aristocracy under Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, and Boyer. Those whose forebears have become élite only since 1843 are less firmly entrenched in the topmost class. However, since no president since Boyer has ever succeeded in weakening caste lines, the élite one or two per cent may be said to constitute a stable social group. [178]

It is significant that although the blacks had the government in their hands for three quarters of a century they were unable to effect any slight change either in caste membership or in caste lines.

The part of the population which is neither élite nor peasant is not "middle class," as that term is understood in the Western World. It is rather a shifting percentage of Haitians whose one prevailing characteristic is their residence in towns. Some are wage earners, some small tradesmen; some are ex-élite on the way down the 565 369

11. The intimate observer of the Haitian peasant never fails to comment upon his love of the land. Whereas the colonial planter attached a value to his estate because it produced wealth, the peasant loves his little plot because it is his home. Through all the dozen successive constitutions of Haiti, the one unchangeable article has been the prohibition of sale to foreigners of real estate in the country. Haitian land is for Haitian people—or was so until after the American Occupation. Likewise, the peasant is suspicious of any law which seems likely to reintroduce the system of large properties, for these might condemn him to leave his land and work at wages for the benefit of a master who, whether kindly or pitiless, would still deprive him of his present liberty. Therefore the Haitian countryman defends with all his force this soil to which his liberty attaches him, and which he cultivates after his own manner. "The Haitian loves his land almost as a man loves his woman." [181] [421] [425] [423] [24]

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565 social ladder, while others are ex-peasants on the way up. Acceptance
● 569 by the élite entails requirements severe enough to discourage many aspirants at the same time, the heavens can be stormed by those
[55] willing to endure the heat and strain of battle. Lacking descent from former affranchis, the only means by which the ambitious may achieve entrance into the élite caste is by money, education, sustained social show and leisure, "proper" marriage, and separation from lower caste friends; and one generation rarely suffices to win acceptance by the élite.

565 The townspeople rarely attempt to break down the caste barrier. Servants, day laborers, delivery clerks, menials in general, they consider themselves one step removed from the peasants, and they know their place in the social hierarchy. By the scrupulous observances of the élite by the casual acceptance of their status by the peasants, even by the very effort of the ambitious to improve their lot, the caste system is constantly reaffirmed and fulfilled.

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Any foray into possible psychological reasons is guesswork. It
461 might be hazarded that the men felt they had fought for freedom and so deserved to enjoy its benefits; or that agriculture smacked of the old days of slavery and should be avoided by the superior male; or that since ambition for progress was not a Haitian characteristic, and the work of women produced enough food, there was no reason to change a routine which did very well. One cannot speak with definiteness on these matters. And it was upper-class Haitians and foreigners who adjudged peasant men lazy; slaves and "forced" laborers always appear lazy to their masters.

462 In modern times at least, male peasants toil strenuously, although not so continuously as their females. The preparation of the ground for planting is hard work, and is done entirely by men. Harvesting, housebuilding, marketing the coffee (one form of marketing not beneath a man's dignity)—these are men's major contributions to economic life.

177 People who live in isolation commonly tend to slide back in such
178 externalities as clothes, manners, neatness of person and of dwelling, speech, and social ritual. Almost from the very beginning of Haitian history, most of the people were effectively isolated from the rest of the world, so that the superficial aspects of daily life exhibited to all visitors the spectacle of retrogression.

175 Christophe, who had frequent English visitors in his kingdom,
656 forced his subjects to dress neatly. After his time no ruler made
291 regulations for dress. The men commonly wore a pair of cotton trousers and an abbreviated shirt, while women's dress was a loose-fitting garment which might be called a Mother Hubbard. Children could, and can now, be seen up to the age of four or five without
[369] any clothes at all. The nearer the countrypeople live to towns, where the example of the élite is before them, the better their dress is likely to be.

342 Slave cabins on the former plantations were inhabited by the free Haitians until decay set in and the cabins fell down. They were ordinarily superseded by huts which could be constructed of withes
[333] and thatch. The British Minister during the eighteen-twenties saw a man near Plaisance building his house, "plastering the wattling, of which the walls were composed, with a mixture of mud and ashes," using his hand as a trowel.[18] Almost never did a hut have more than

18. Mackenzie, op. cit., I, 150.

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175 178 181 prosper." Yet every change of administration saw merely a new embroidery on the old theme of sterility.[17]

175 565 The further weakness of social or class consciousness has already been treated at length. It kept the whole nation divided from top to bottom, setting black against colored, North against South, countryside against town. It meant a perennial civil war, latent at times, but constantly breaking out in new insurrections.

175 669 701 Some day a diligent scholar may try to catalogue the revolutions which Haiti has undergone. Magloire discusses sixty-nine "important" ones between 1806 and 1879;[18] but the latter date was merely the threshold of renewed revolutionary activity. There seems to have been very little pattern in these uprisings, except that almost never were they a spontaneous revolt of the masses, as the Slave Insurrection of 1791 had been. The peasants were constantly being impressed into service with the army of a general who had presidential ambitions. From the middle years of the nineteenth century certain peasants found fighting a more profitable trade than any other, and began to hire themselves out as mercenaries. In the North these professional guerrilla warriors were known as *cacos*, in the South as *piquets*. Their methods were those of terror and rapine. They were a constant menace to the peace, and their suppression was one of the announced purposes of the American Occupation, for every revolutionary chief felt it necessary to hire their services.

176 369 669 Another recognized procedure of revolution was incendiarism. Haitian politics is almost wholly the affair of townsmen, and more narrowly of the men of the six important towns—Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, Jérémie, Les Cayes, Gonaïves, and Saint-Marc. Except for their principal buildings and villas, these towns are constructed of wood or other inflammable material. Leaders of insurrections therefore have habitually set fire to the poorer sections of the towns, and as frequently as not this threat has won over the populace, who preferred overthrowing the government to having their homes burned. Support of the insurrection becomes a form of fire insurance. Such a state of affairs is eloquent testimony to the cynical attitude of the political leaders toward the masses.

680 A revolution directed by a general of real ambition was likely to

17. Auguste Magloire, *Histoire d'Haïti d'après un plan nouveau* (Port-au-Prince, 1909), I, 230, 243, 250–251, develops this theme at length.
18. *Ibid.*, Vol. II.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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[p. 234]

XIII

CONSTITUTIONS AND POLITICAL FORMS

•369 64 QUITE aside from its castes and the political separation of 1807–20, Haiti has always consisted of two nations, one living in and near the towns and so within reach of established government, the other rural and yet capable of ordering its own affairs by folk rules without much actual governmental machinery. It is through the former that Haiti has a political history. Indeed, one is tempted to say that more than half the people have continually got along without any government whatever of a formal sort, for being peaceably inclined they have found custom and usage [669] sufficient for their needs. These people have been rarely disturbed by the state's rulers; revolutionary chieftains alone have found it worth their while to stir up the country folk to an active interest in politics.

631 The formal subdivisions of Haiti have been, through most of its history, three: the *commune*, roughly corresponding to the American 177 township; the *arrondissement*, a group of communes, just as the American county is a group of townships; and the *département*, comprising several arrondissements. All three terms were borrowed from France, although their significance was altered when applied to the Haitian scene.

175 In the days of Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, the government had owned vast plantations which were under the control of 24 the military. Pétion and Boyer instituted the commune by combin- 475 ing numerous estates and farms into a group likewise to be controlled 701 by soldiers. Until the American Occupation the police system of the 632 country was military, with ordinary soldiers keeping order and making arrests when necessary. Since few people are less given to disorder than the Haitian peasants, the task of keeping order was not a serious one; indeed, soldiers were frequently stationed among their friends and relatives, who never thought of them as police. It some- [293] times happened, however, that soldiers were assigned to other parts of the country, where they swaggered about with their *cocomacaques* (heavy-jointed canes), using these or the flat of their swords to enforce their often arbitrary commands.

In every commune recognized by the state was an important

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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In every commune recognized by the state was an important

official appointed by the president—the *juge de paix*. The term has little relation to our "justice of the peace." It implies rather the function performed by the old English country squire, who often by his prestige managed to patch up differences between neighbors without allowing matters to come to an issue, but who if the issue were joined sat as judge. The decision of the judge was final in all civil matters up to fifty dollars—and the case was rare in which peasants dealt in affairs as large as this. In the more populous communes (those containing large villages or towns) the juge de paix was more impersonal. He might render decisions, subject to appeal, in cases up to a hundred dollars. All minor police cases came within the province of this official, whose judgment was final in matters up to a twelve-dollar fine or a jail sentence of five days. All criminal cases began with this judge, but those of the gravest sort were speedily sent to higher courts. 63.2 693

By and large rural Haiti got along with a minimum of civil government, and urban Haiti was governed much as a small provincial town of the nineteenth century. 369 64

Several communes made an arrondissement, another political subdivision with a distinct military cast. Through most of her history Haiti had an average of about twenty of these arrondissements, each of them presided over by an army officer of high rank appointed by the president. In arrondissements containing important capitals a general, in lesser ones a brigadier-general, exercised both military and civil authority. This man was the medium through which the central government made known its decisions and laws. Because life could be tedious in a dull country town, in a district full of peaceful peasants, many of the generals spent their time in reflecting upon the chances of a successful insurrection which might make them important in national affairs. As already noted, the standard of discipline in the army was never very high, so that the presiding officer of an arrondissement might have a real sinecure if he was not ambitious.[1] 631 701

1. The military arrondissement always bore the name of the principal town or village within its borders. The following list shows the important places during the time of Boyer: [631] [701] [103]

In the department of the North there were five arrondissements: Cap-Haïtien, Grande-Rivière, Marmelade, Port Liberté, Limbé.
In the Northwest, three: Port-de-Paix, Cap Nicolas Môle, Le Borgne.
In the Artibonite, three: Saint-Marc, Gonaïves, Mirebalais.
In the West, three: Port-au-Prince, Jacmel, Léogane.
In the South, five: Les Cayes, Jérémie, Aquin, Tiburon, Nippes.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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674 Soldiers, then, had no great difficulty policing town and country-
369 side, for there was little more crime in the towns than in rural regions. A person arrested would be haled before the nearest juge de
696 paix who would, if necessary, sentence him to jail—which meant
697 sending him to one of the larger towns. This was rather a severe penalty, for the jails were filthy; moreover, only about ten cents a week was ordinarily allotted to each prisoner for food with the result that if a prisoner's family did not supply him, he was likely to be near starvation. Extra work was required for extra fare. Haiti was probably no worse off in respect to its jails than most European and American countries at the time, for this was before the era of prison reform. Inmates of jails were likely to be only petty thieves.

697 During certain régimes the presidents or their generals managed to have numbers of convicts sentenced to hard work, in order to have forced labor on their private estates or projects dear to them. Under any administration there were likely to be a few convicts who performed repair work on streets and roads. It was the usual practice to chain or rope them together by pairs, three yards apart; accompanied by soldiers with loaded muskets, the convicts labored from daylight to sunset, with an hour and a half for a meal at noon. The government pretended to provide for them, but in order to save expense two of the criminals accompanied by two soldiers with fixed bayonets were sent about the neighborhood to beg for the group. The result was that the wretches went ill fed and half naked. They slept in jail on beds which were little more than boards.

701 The final and most persistent branch of government has been the
175 army.[11] Owing to the overmilitarization of Haiti, generals were perennially participating in the civil government—or engaged in overthrowing it. It was to be expected that following the revolution the new independent state formed in 1804 should have a military cast. Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, Geffrard, Boyer, Cangé, Yayou, Magloire Ambroise, Férou, François, Capoix, Rigaud—these were the great generals and the only important statesmen. It was as if in America not only Washington had been a military leader, but also Adams, Jefferson, Franklin, Jay, Hamilton, Madison, Pinckney,

[647] 11. In most governments there has been a body which, although connected with the legislature, had functions pertaining to the law. This was the Chamber of Accounts, a body of five men who examined into and reported to the president upon every branch of expenditure and collection of revenues. It might recommend to him certain financial reforms or improvements, but had no power to enforce its suggestions.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Besides the figures given above must be set there of the government

budget, which is annually in the neighborhood of $7,000,000, and of its annual imports and exports, neither of which generally exceeds $10,000,000 a year. Chicago, with its population of three million, has an annual budget of about $275,000,000, aside from state and federal services. 652 [439]

To care for all the needs of three million people in Haiti there is a sum of money less than that available annually to several of our American universities. Out of the seven million dollars must come all salaries of officials, legislators, judges, policemen, schoolteachers; the wages of all janitors and day laborers employed by the government; the upkeep of all schools, roads, lighthouses, experiment stations; the maintenance of such important public services as health, sanitation, education, soil development, reforestation. Since there are few towns, practically every improvement which takes place must be paid for by the central government. [369]

Haiti's growth in population is not a new thing. It has been increasing steadily since 1804 while the soil of the country was being worn out and foreign trade grew stagnant. The country is entirely agricultural, there being absolutely no manufacturing industry worth the name. The people consequently live upon a subsistence economy. The soil is still fertile enough to preserve life in the teeming population, though undernourishment is general. Most of the people have no "artificial" wants and could not satisfy them under present conditions even if they had. 161 [134] [439] 433 164 [134] [511]

Assuming the census of Dessalines in 1805 to be even approximately accurate, the population is now eight times what it was then. The working of the Law of Population[3] is implacable: if population increases while economic efficiency remains static or declines, either there will be an increasing death rate or the standard of living must sink—or both. In the case of Haiti, economic efficiency is certainly not what it was under the forced-labor system of Dessalines: the death rate has been continuously high; it is the standard of living which has suffered. 161 433 178 [165] [511]

To grasp the import of Haiti's problem of overpopulation one

3. "Population tends to increase up to the limit of the supporting power of the land, relative to the economic efficiency and to the standard of living of the people at the time." (For an amplification of this discussion on overpopulation, see the note on p. 320.) The law of population as stated here is a modification of that given by Sumner and Keller, *The Science of Society*, I, 46; their statement, in turn, is that of Malthus with the added cultural issues of economic efficiency and the standard of living. [114]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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164 apparently hale and hearty, but lassitude sapping all energy. A group
744 of doctors from the Rockefeller Foundation discovered that among
164 4,439 persons examined in various surveys two decades ago sixty-seven per cent showed malarial parasites in the blood. Since the American Occupation steps have been taken to control the disease and much progress has resulted: some of the towns are now practically free of it. But the battle against malaria will never be won so long as the anopheles mosquito breeds in the island; it means an endless war of constant vigilance as well as education—one which must be carried on simultaneously in the neighboring Dominican Republic.

Hookworm, like malaria, is also ordinarily quite undramatic in its symptoms. There is no specific pain, but rather a progressive inertia. Since practically every country person goes barefoot it would be miraculous if hookworm were not widespread, for sanitation is entirely lacking in peasant communities. Dr. Lhérisson reported in 1935 that twenty-six per cent of the mass of Haitian people examined
[369] up to that time had been found infested by hookworms. The final
[291] figure will probably be revised upward, for the persons most easily examined are townspeople who have better sanitation and more shoes. Only the Cul-de-Sac plain, extending east from Port-au-Prince, is free of the disease, for the larvae do not develop in salty ground. Hookworm attacks not only the barefoot, but likewise the
[261] well shod. Poor sanitation and geophagy suggest themselves as two explanations of this fact.

Like malaria, hookworm has been accepted calmly enough as one of the normal burdens of life. In slave days and for some time thereafter it was called "stomach trouble," and since it was common, was not even a case for the Vodun practitioner. It was not until 1924 that the Rockefeller Foundation through its Payne mission revealed the significance of the disease and began to establish dispensaries in
[291] country districts and undertake a campaign of sanitation. If every Haitian were to wear shoes the incidence of the disease would, of course, decidedly decrease; but the advice to wear shoes is a counsel of perfection, for large peasant families are no more able to afford this luxury than all American families are able to buy champagne and caviar. Progress has been made along the lines of hygiene and sanitation, but hookworm continues to undermine the energy of the people.

164 Yaws is, of the morbid triad, the most virulent and the common-

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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3. *Education*

871 To a people like the Americans who accept democracy as desirable, and regard universal education as a necessary basis for democracy, it would seem a simple matter for the Haitians to build schools all over the countryside, pass laws requiring attendance, and so within a decade, or at the outside a generation, reform the whole country. To the American, education is the fount from which all democratic blessings flow. For the Haitian the problem is neither so clearly defined nor so simply solved.

565 871 The élite, who are solidly in control of the government, are aristocrats partly (largely, one might even say) because they are educated. Because of the maxim of Haitian life since the beginning that a literate man should not do manual labor, any program which proposed universal education would cut the ground from under the present social structure by giving the masses equal opportunities with the élite, and at the same time ruin the economic organization by making peasants want to desert field labor for professions and business. An ordinary degree of self-interest is quite sufficient to explain the lack of enthusiasm of the ruling class when the subject of general education is broached.

871 Good reasons are often given by people in lieu of real reasons for their actions. One of the good reasons advanced by Haitian ministries for the failure of the government to promote universal education is its cost. Those American states whose population is prevailingly rural know the validity of this reasoning. With children [369] scattered over the rural regions—and nine out of ten Haitians do not live in towns or large villages—it would require thousands of new school buildings to reach the prospective students. Salaries of teachers, purchase of supplies, and general upkeep would have to be added annually to the national budget in addition to the initial outlay for the erection of school buildings. Here one comes up immediately against the unyielding fact of the puny national income. Its $7,000,000 could under no circumstances be stretched to cover an architectural program commensurate with Haiti's educational needs.

871 178 Another good reason for the failure of democratic education is the demonstrated apathy of the masses. In the zeal for improvement during the early days of the Occupation, rural schools were estab-

533 476 rhythmically, to the accompaniment of drums, *catas*, or hons, while a 178 461 singing leader composes topical songs in which the labores join.

The tools which a rural Haitian chooses, and the way he uses them, 171 412 often are in a West African tradition. He performs a multitude of tasks with his machete, or bush knife: weeding a garden, peeling an orange, cutting down a tree, making a drum or mortar, opening a coconut. It is an all-purpose tool, as it is in Africa. Until a few years ago it was supplemented by the extra-long, heavier, "double machete." The axe and the chisel are known and used too, but the machete is supreme. 492 The hoe is the tool for tilling the soil, even in the flat county, and even [241] though the Haitian has horses and cattle which could pull a plow. [412] Horses are for riding and not for pulling. In carrying loads the Haitian peasant still prefers the head to the shoulders. If he has a donkey, the [538] donkey will carry for him. An old Haitian proverb goes: "Meçi Bondieu pou' bourrique là, si nous pas gainyain bourrique là faut Haitien po'té tout bagaille" (Thank God for the donkey, if we didn't have the donkey the Haitian would have to carry everything)." Generally speaking, the 489 481 rough and rocky terrain of Haiti and inadequate secondary roads have 493 done nothing to encourage the use of carts or wagons.

Corn is stored in the trees, as in West Africa, or in granaries built 171 [251] upon stilts, also as in West Africa. The Haitian makes his fire in the African fashion, with several long sticks or poles meeting point-to-point [372] in the heart of the fire. As the ends are consumed, the sticks are pushed [252] toward the center. Grain is pulverized in large wooden mortars, as in West Africa, and winnowed in a woven tray. Fish traps are some- [227] times woven in the traditional West African manner, and fishermen often [226] set their nets in converging spirals and beat the water with sticks to [501] drive the fish to the center. And on the rivers and lakes are to be seen dugout canoes of a kind familiar on the inland waters of West Africa.

The folklore of the fields contains many themes known to the West 171 241 African. One old Haitian farmer, discussing the spiritual relationship of the planter to the earth, declared that a man must be strong and potent when he plants, else the crops will be vitiated and sickly. For [834] this reason, he said, a man must not plant seeds the day after he has had sexual intercourse, because he has been temporarily drained of his life-giving powers.[9]

171 538 The tale of the hoe that worked by itself in the fields is also widespread. It enters many animal and Bouki stories, and also is known in a form that is familiar in West Africa. In this story, there was once a man who owned a hoe which worked by itself whenever a magical formula was pronounced. It would stop working whenever the magical

9 [For footnote, see Category 116, p 352.--Analyst]

132 fires in their houses at night to keep out the damp cold that sweeps
[374] through the passes. And a man on the trail before dawn may wear a
[291] blanket over his head and carry a glowing ember with him for warmth.

132 On the south coast there are sometimes hurricanes and tidal waves, and
133 many a small fishing boat and grass-covered house has been washed away
[131] in these storms. But the great mountains of the southern range deflect the winds, so that to the north their full fury is never known.

226 In the great Bay of Gonaïves the fishing boats sail out at night with the
133 friendly winds that carry them to the fishing grounds of the island of La
172 Gonave, and they return to the shore with their catches in the morning, or in the afternoon with the setting sun. The sailing boats from the tiny fishing village called Ville Matelot each day pass the deserted islet named Isle à Cabrit, where four Indian camps once stood. Today Isle à Cabrit is only a waterless, denuded place, a hunting ground for Carib and Arawak pottery and carved stone images.

136 In the frontier lakes of the Cul-de-Sac Plain there are wild ducks and
[224] alligators. Here the villagers fish with nets from rafts and dugout canoes.
[561] Now and then an iguana is seen, but there is little other game, because the edible wildlife of the country was long ago eaten by hungry people.

137 For the things that grow wild the Haitian is grateful—the avocado,
[241] the mango, the cashew, and the cotton which once planted produces again and again each year. He is grateful for the coconut palms, the calabash tree, the gourd vines, and the medicinal herbs that grow on every side. But
[313] the gifts of nature are not prolific. Most of the great stands of timber—
[134] lignum vitae, mahogany, dyewood and pine—have been cut away. Once fertile garden spots have dried up, and the soil that produces the yams, the pumpkins, the kaffir, and the rice is tired.

181 But the Haitian himself is not tired. He has suffered from malaria,
164 yaws, and chronic hunger; yet out of the great old mountains of Haiti he has fashioned a way of life and a nation.

105 The Haitian of today was created out of the fabric of three continents—
181 Africa, America, and Europe. He was shaped out of the plains and hills of Nigeria, Dahomey, and the Congo; the summers and winters of Europe; and the mountains and mountain mists of Haiti itself. He is the synthesis of the folk beliefs of the French and Spanish peasants, the Yoruba and the Arada of West Africa, and perhaps of the Carib Indians with whom he had close contact during his first days in the New World. He has brought into affinity the religious practices of Africa and the beliefs of the Church of Rome. He is outwardly simple and poor, but inwardly he is a complicated and rich man. He is rich in music, in the capacity for spiritual expression, in tradition, in folklore, and in memories. He has been able

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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unchanged from an earlier era. The prevailing quality of Haitian rural and craft industry, then, is one of great stability and conservatism.

At the same time, of course, major events since the revolution have left their imprint on this part of life. Hardly a roadside village in Haiti today, for instance, lacks an automobile mechanic, even though these men are mostly self-educated and work with hardly any tools. Their skills become part of Haitian culture in this century and are often of a simple order no longer typical of more developed areas. Tire tubes, for instance, are "vulcanized" by the use of an ingenious device made from a board and an old piston, kerosene providing the heat to make the seal; this technique, along with the sewing of damaged truck tires, was almost certainly introduced and diffused by the United States Marines.

But these quaint additions do not alter the fact that shop and factory industry are nearly absent, and extractive industry virtually nonexistent. Haiti's one alumina extraction enterprise, foreign-owned, is now shut down. There is but one flour mill, and that is foreign-owned as well. One or two textile mills and sugar factories, established with foreign capital, still function, as do a modern cement factory and a few other small plants established in the 1950s. These industries, scanty as they are, were of great importance to Haiti, since they represented substantial investments, held out the promise of reduced dependence on imports in significant categories, and contributed to the beginnings of an industrial proletariat. However, they involved only a tiny fraction of the national labor force, and they have not proved entirely successful. As a result, Haiti lacks any reserve of labor acquainted with modern industry, even though many people, both urban and rural, work at tasks that might be considered more industrial than agricultural.

Most important for the present discussion, the minor developments in Haitian industry have not led to an expanded market and have not resulted in any firm increase in productivity. Industrial growth, in the sense in which it has occurred in countries such as those of Western Europe—or for that matter in Mexico or Argentina—is entirely lacking. The absence of such growth is perhaps especially significant if Haiti be compared with a neighbor such as Jamaica or Puerto Rico. These countries, one now independent, the other a North American dependency—have both gained real increments from the investment activities of outsiders;

2: Courlander B-8 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

And when the revolution came he produced for the Haitian armies knives, gun parts, and wheels to transport cannon. By the tens of thousands he made ingeniously devised metal objects to be thrown on the roads, before the French cavalry troops—objects so shaped that, no matter how they fell, a single sharp point stood erect to cripple the enemy horses. Yet knowledge of the West African uses of iron did not altogether disappear, and during the first century of independence the Haitian blacksmith created many old-style knives, spears, and ritual objects for the cult temple.

Even today, some of this old-style work is to be found in hounfors in the southwestern peninsula. One may see simple or ornate iron standards, made to support ceremonial offerings or candles, strikingly similar to standards in ancestral shrines in Dahomey. There are iron bells, both single and double, made in pure West African style; ornate ritual swords and sabers which are the crests of certain deities; coiled and uncoiled iron serpents representing the gods Damballa and Ayida; and stylized or semirealistic portraits of the deities. Many of these old pieces are nineteenth-century survivals; others have been forged within the past decade.

An over-all impression of Haitian material culture is that artistic decoration is almost entirely absent and that the prime emphasis is on utility. Wooden cooking spoons are efficient in form, but missing from them is the delicate decorative carving often found in West Africa. The long wooden washing bowl, or *gamelle*, and the wooden mortar in which grain is pulverized are likewise clean-cut but stark and plainly utilitarian. Clay bowls, bottles, and storage jars are usually of simple, uniform design, with only accidental variations; there is little use of glazes, and the clay is often heavy and thick. Should there be a wari gameboard in the peasant hut, the chances are that it is roughly made, without legs or carved designs. Dugout canoes are usually crude in appearance, heavy and thick-walled, and irregular in form.

Yet there are many evidences—though one must seek them out—that esthetic impulses are quite alive. The gay peasant straw knapsack, or *alfor*, without which no mountain man makes a journey, has a charm and grace that is not diminished by familiarity and cheapness. Decorated with sisal braid and tassels, and colored with green and magenta dyes, each *alfor* on close inspection appears to be unique. In some communities in the south and southwest, burlap squares also are painted with these traditional dyes. About forty inches across, and made of sugar bags, these paintings swarm with geometric patterns and sometimes with figures of flowers and animals. They are purely decorative, being

[See plates 42-51, pp. 112-DD—112-FF.--Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

any usual measure. But Haitians do produce by traditional craft methods a surprisingly large number of the articles they need for daily life. In the countryside it is possible to see many persons engaged, mostly on a part-time basis, in craft activities and home industry that have their roots in the prerevolutionary era. Leatherworkers operating small, crude tanneries still flourish. Charcoal-burners, and operators of small lime kilns that produce building material, are found in every village. Smiths make and repair simple tools, working with forges of archaic design. Combs are made from cows' horns and tortoiseshell, buttons from bone; carrying-bags, fish traps, and a wide variety of baskets from withes, bamboo strips, and grasses; wooden bowls, mortars and pestles, tool handles and spoons from local woods; dippers, pots, and candelabra from tin cans; and sandals from tires and inner tubes. Sawyers cut and dress timber; cabinetmakers still manufacture simple furniture of traditional design from the fast-disappearing tropical woods; many women, working either with the simplest sorts of sewing machines or by hand, make clothing for use and for sale. Along the coasts there are dugout-makers, shipbuilders, and sail- and seine-makers. Simple mattresses, fabricated from local grasses, are sold in every large marketplace, as are crude ceramic wares made by local potters. At the start of the twentieth century, Italian immigrants brought a sturdy tradition of cobbling to Haiti, which has been destroyed only recently by the flood of American imported shoes with their attached prestige, until recently, *sitiile* was a colloquial term for shoe, coming from the name of the most famous of those Italian cobblers.

One of the striking features of Haiti's craft traditions is its relative stability since the revolution. It was under slavery that Haitians first became "westernized," learning what were then standard French craft practices, adjusted to local colonial conditions, probably with some modifying features coming from the African past. It was before the revolution that the Haitian people learned and stabilized their consumer tastes, agricultural and craft standards, and work procedures. Such performances and standards were worked out primarily in terms of the demands of the plantation regime itself; but even the most repressive social system leaves some opportunity for acculturation. Today's sugar-making shops and rural rum distilleries employ techniques centuries old and little modified over time. Housebuilding and woodworking techniques in the countryside are substantially

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

to cutting fruit, though seen in Africa, was probably introduced there by the early traders, and all machetes found today in Haiti are imported from Europe or America. The same is true of the hoe, for the short-handled, broad-bladed West African hoe has given way to the European long-handled type, though the blade of the Haitian hoe is somewhat broader than that used in America and Europe. Despite the presence of domesticated animals to draw the plow, this implement has never gained favor in Haiti, nor have recent efforts to teach the Haitian peasant the use of the plow achieved any degree of success. He prefers his African mode of cultivation, to say which implies more than just the employment of a certain implement, since even such matters as the manner in which he employs his hands and feet in the process of planting are included. When the Dahomean plants, for example, he holds a calabash of seed under his left arm, from which he takes the grains with his right hand. As he moves down the rows of newly turned earth, he makes a depression with the heel of his right foot, drops a few grains into this depression and, replacing the earth with his toes, takes a step so that he can repeat the process with his left foot. This is exactly the manner in which Haitians were observed planting in the valley of Mirebalais.* Unlike the usage in Africa, however—where the men clear the ground, the men and women plant, and the women tend the growing crops—the European pattern, which places agriculture in all its essential phases in the hands of men, has been taken over almost in its entirety.

The women have retained almost without change the African modes of preparing food. Grain is first pounded in an African-like mortar, with an aboriginal type of pestle, while the shelled kernels are winnowed in a large round basketry tray. The cooking is either done on a raised mud platform in the cooking shelter, as in West Africa, or on three stones, employed as rests for the pots, a method equally characteristic of East Africa. In the Haitian cuisine the prevalence of stews, of

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 work until noon. A two-hour siesta followed, but from two until
566 sunset there was steady work. Only after evening prayers was the
512 worker free. During the day no cultivator might leave his task except
466 for direct need. The lame and the halt were not required to till the fields, but must carry around buckets of drinking water, take care of the children, and do odd jobs about the estate.

175 Christophe made a steady and, in the main, successful effort to
566 explain to the people the necessity of hard work on the plantation. As with the noblemen, the serfs knew precisely what was expected of
466 them, and why. Their regimentation was strict, but understandable. It was clearly stipulated that if a worker shirked his job he was to be put in prison and made to do forced labor there. Laziness in the fields was to be punished by strokes from the overseer's liane. Hard and steady work was demanded during the whole thirteen years of Christophe's rule, but only rarely was there complaint, as there had been constantly under Dessalines, of cruelty on the part of overseers.

175 The quarter part of the total crop of any plantation was to go to
465 the workers as wages, and, since production increased and prices rose, this quarter which they were free to spend as they pleased provided a powerful incentive to further industry. As compared with anything they had known before, the workers were now recipients of an ample income. On the plantations they cultivated
[423] the money crops of sugar and coffee. In addition, each family had
[241] its own garden plot on which to raise the food crops—yams, plantains, beans, and bananas—for personal use.[2]

175 Christophe was so far ahead of his time that he tried to introduce
177 British methods of agriculture into his kingdom. The results were insignificant. The plough, although obviously superior in efficiency
● 407 to the hoe, eliminated the sociable companionship of working in
178 unison, and demanded horses and mules which the country lacked. The innovations were consequently too radical to be accepted. In the main, the agricultural methods of the kingdom continued to be those familiar in slave days.

175 Thirteen years of careful direction can fix many patterns of social
178 routine. One of Christophe's rules was that no cultivator attached to

[241] 2. The staples of other countries, such as Irish potatoes, wheat, barley, and oats, did not flourish in Haiti. On the large plantations, indigo and cotton, which had been money crops in the French regime, were generally neglected, as they had been in the time of Dessalines.

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

796 535 men and women exchange gossip and sit about, joining in the songs or merely observing the proceedings; while the young people form part of the singing, dancing circle that revolves almost without pause about the central post of the *tonnelle*, the shelter where the festivities are held.

796 To speak of discipline in connection with these dances is to evoke new and astonishing images for readers familiar with the more popular literature on Haiti. It is admittedly true that as one first witnesses a *vodun* dance, one's reaction is that this is a performance governed solely by the dictates of individual possession. These ceremonies are usually held at night, deep in the bush, lighted only by a small, smoking oil lamp and by the candles fastened to the pegs of the drums, while the participants dress in anything but their best clothing, and in their belts the men carry the machetes always worn by the Haitian peasant. Add to this the effect of the unceasing rhythms of the drumming, the blanket of sound from the unison singing of the participants, the violence of the possessions, and it is not strange that the untrained observer tends to assess what he sees in almost any terms but those of the underlying discipline that defines all activity in the worship of the gods. A release of psychic tension is undoubtedly afforded those who become possessed, and this is also experienced to a lesser degree by all those in attendance. Nevertheless, it must be emphasized, despite so much that has been written to the contrary, that this form of worship of the *loa* is neither unrestrained hysteria nor drunken orgiastic satisfaction of the sex drive. The behavior of the participants, in terms of the accepted patterns of European and American religious decorum, often seems uncouth, vigorous, violent, and even dangerous, when it is merely the expression of a different tradition. And as for the orgiastic aspects of these rites, Haitians have ample opportunity to satisfy their sexual impulses elsewhere, without making this a basic and constant element in the worship of their gods.

796 *Vodun* dances, in Mirebalais as elsewhere, take place on

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-M]

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19. *Vodoun altar of the houngfor "Caille Aguet" in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. On the wall behind the altar are names of favored loa. On the altar are jars containing loa and souls of dead persons. Painted on its front wall, against which swords and flags are leaning, is the ship of Loa Aguet.*

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

the *loa*. In one instance a man wore a red shirt with black crosses appliquéd on it; dresses of this type worn by women or children are made of cotton cloth, pieced together patchwork-quilt fashion, of either three, seven, seventeen, or twenty-one different colors or patterns, with reds, blues, and white predominating. These garments are worn for a specified time, also named by the *loa*. The term *pénitence* has been taken from Church terminology, and the motivating sanction derives equally from African and Christian concepts;* for example, the wearing of the garment is a compliment to the African deities represented by the colors, while the various rules about abstinence during its term of wearing is the European pattern of "penitence."

The elaborate cicatrizations, or raised designs made by scarifying the body, which marked the slaves newly arrived from Africa have quite disappeared, but a few scars can be discerned on the body or arms of a man by a practiced eye. These represent an African carry-over in the form of a *garde* applied by the injection of some magically endowed substance into a cut which thereafter gives what may be thought of as a kind of spiritual inoculation. African fashions of hair-tying have been retained by the women almost unchanged, and, as in Africa, hair-braiding is a highly developed art, so that the styles in which hair can be braided seem innumerable. This is particularly true of dressing the hair of small girls, whose heads are decorated with braids going the length of the skull, or dividing the scalp into small squares, each with its tuft of hair, or by a part in the middle with lines going at right angles from it across the head. These styles of braiding are not named as in other parts of the New World and in Africa, but the tradition of intricate braiding has lost none of its vigor.

The implements of the Haitian are both of European and African derivation. The ubiquitous machete, a saber-like tool employed in all manner of ways, from chopping down trees

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

to cutting fruit, though seen in Africa, was probably introduced there by the early traders, and all machetes found today in Haiti are imported from Europe or America. The same is true of the hoe, for the short-handled, broad-bladed West African hoe has given way to the European long-handled type, though the blade of the Haitian hoe is somewhat broader than that used in America and Europe. Despite the presence of domesticated animals to draw the plow, this implement has never gained favor in Haiti, nor have recent efforts to teach the Haitian peasant the use of the plow achieved any degree of success. He prefers his African mode of cultivation, to say which implies more than just the employment of a certain implement, since even such matters as the manner in which he employs his hands and feet in the process of planting are included. When the Dahomean plants, for example, he holds a calabash of seed under his left arm, from which he takes the grains with his right hand. As he moves down the rows of newly turned earth, he makes a depression with the heel of his right foot, drops a few grains into this depression and, replacing the earth with his toes, takes a step so that he can repeat the process with his left foot. This is exactly the manner in which Haitians were observed planting in the valley of Mirebalais.* Unlike the usage in Africa, however—where the men clear the ground, the men and women plant, and the women tend the growing crops—the European pattern, which places agriculture in all its essential phases in the hands of men, has been taken over almost in its entirety.

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2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P-112-F]

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7. A small ensemble, northern Haiti.

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8. Ensemble, southern Haiti. Tambour players at the right; flag of the ensemble at the left.

Z: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-J]

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19. Pulverizing grain into meal. The mortar and pestle are standard kitchen fixtures.

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20. Fishermen of Villa des Mulets, on the Bay of Gonâves.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-K]

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16. Man with a machete making a vevi board. The machete is used for cutting trees, trimming brush, weeding gardens, fashioning wooden objects such as drums and mortars, and many other purposes.

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17. Winnowing grain with a woven tray.

2: Courlander B-5 (1907-1968) 1966 1973 1982 1983

rhythmically, to the accompaniment of drums, cows or horns, while a singing leader composes topical songs in which the laborers join.

The tools which a rural Haitian chooses, and the way he uses them, often are in a West African tradition. He performs a multitude of tasks with his machete, or bush knife: weeding a garden, peeling an orange, cutting down a tree, making a drum or maracas, opening a coconut. It is an all-purpose tool, as it is in Africa. Until a few years ago it was supplemented by the extra-long, heavier, "double machete." The axe and the chisel are known and used too, but the machete is supreme. The hoe is the tool for tilling the soil, even in the flat country, and even though the Haitian has horses and cattle which could pull a plow. Horses are for riding and not for pulling. In carrying loads, the Haitian peasant still prefers the head to the shoulders. If he has a donkey, the donkey will carry for him. An old Haitian proverb goes: "Mèçi Bondieu pou' bourique li, si nous pas gainyain bourique l' fout Haitien pa'l' tout bagaille" (Thank God for the donkey, if we didn't have the donkey the Haitian would have to carry everything)." Generally speaking, the rough and rocky terrain of Haiti and inadequate secondary roads have done nothing to encourage the use of carts or wagons.

Corn is stored in the trees, as in West Africa, or in granaries built upon stilts, also as in West Africa. The Haitian makes his fire in the African fashion, with several long sticks or poles meeting point-to-point in the heart of the fire. As the ends are consumed, or sticks are pushed toward the center. Grain is pulverized in large wooden mortars, as in West Africa, and winnowed in a woven tray. Fish traps are sometimes woven in the traditional West African manner, and fishermen often set their nets in converging spirals and beat the water with sticks to drive the fish to the center. And on the rivers and lakes are to be seen dugout canoes of a kind familiar on the inland waters of West Africa.

The folklore of the fields contains many themes known to the West African. One old Haitian farmer, discussing the ritual relationship of the planter to the earth, declared that a man must be strong and potent when he plants, else the crops will be stunted and sickly. For this reason, he said, a man must not plant seeds for day after he has had sexual intercourse, because he has been temporarily drained of his life-giving powers.[9]

The tale of the hoe that worked by itself in the fields is also widespread. It enters many animal and Bouki stories, and also is known in a form that is familiar in West Africa. In this story, there was once a man who owned a hoe which worked by itself whenever a magical formula was pronounced. It would stop working whenever the magical

9 [For footnote, see Category 116, P 352.— Analyst]

The Cuff

of drum making is a very skilled one, but the tools are simple: chisels, machetes, and fire. The core of the log is removed by burning and gouging, and the outside is shaped with a machete, or sometimes a hatchet. The wood is selected and processed carefully. Firing of the core of the log depends a great deal on how dry the wood is, for the wood must burn slowly. It is believed that wood cut at the right stage of growth and at the right phase of the moon is resistant to the ever-present powder-post beetles. Mahogany was once favored because it was durable and beetle resistant, even though it was heavy. But in recent decades mahogany has become scarce, and modern drums are made of lighter woods.

Drums made in the nineteenth century not only conformed to the patterns of certain West African prototypes but were also carved and decorated. Some of these old drums are still to be seen, but there are not many left. An ancient carved master drum (previously cited) has fortunately been preserved by the Bureau d'Ethnologie. But between the ravages of the powder-post beetles, age, and the periodic orgies of drum burning by the church and misguided public officials, most of these ancient works of art have long since disappeared. During the American occupation of Haiti—from World War I to 1932—American military personnel also contributed to the mania for drum burning. And as late as 1941 there was a massive, civic-inspired drive to wipe out these instruments as remnants of *savage* elements in Haitian life.

The effect of this war against the drum was only to improve the business of the professional drum maker. Drums had become expendable, hence they were made simpler. The carved decorations disappeared. Paint was substituted, and less attention was given to detail. The important thing was to produce a good functional instrument. But the creative instincts of the drum makers sometimes still take over, and many of the modern drums are beautifully proportioned, with delicate geometric patterns carved around the base, or foot. Among certain categories of drums the painted decorations consist solely of the name of the loa to whom the instruments have been dedicated—St. Jacques perhaps, or Papa Pierre, or Erzilie.

Drums differ in design according to the use for which they are intended. The Arada or Vodoun drums are used primarily in connection with the dances and rituals of the Vodoun cult—the cult built around the gods and rites of Arada and Yoruba theology. They resemble closely drums which are used today in Dahomey, Nigeria, and Togoland. They usually come in sets of three. The largest, the *manman* (also called *hounfor* or *hounsigui*), may be three to four feet high. The middle-sized drum, or *second* (also called *grandé* or *mayor*), is about two feet

(Text continues on p. 193)

I: Courlander B-4 (1937-1939) 1960 SW3 Haiti SW3

easily be hidden, but the gourdes were simply slipped into the straw roofs and thus put out of sight. Moreover, by some strange process of reasoning, military authorities regarded the bamboos as "harmless," though they were used for the same purposes as the centralized drums.

There are numerous other kinds of simple percussion devices. One such instrument, now less commonly seen than previously, is a length of open bamboo laid in the crotches of two Y-shaped sticks set in the ground. Like other *cuac*, the bamboo is beaten with two sticks. Some Haitians believe that in former days such bamboos were played in batteries like a xylophone.

Sometimes a light-weight wooden cylinder, or perhaps a drum denuded of its pipping head, is carried by the timekeeper of a combite. It, also, is played on the side with sticks.

Wooden mortars for pulverizing grain take on the character of musical instruments when used in combination with voices. When two or more mortars are used, with two men or women wielding the long pulverizing pestles in each mortar, the rhythmic effects can become fairly complicated.

The *claves* or *palos* (small hardwood sticks) are used primarily in connection with secular dances of a Cuban type, or to accompany such instruments as the guitar and the marimba. One stick is held loosely in the natural fold of the hand, so that it is free to vibrate, and is struck sharply with the second stick. The tone is almost metallic because of the hardness of the wood, usually lignum vitae. The name of the instrument is recognizable as a form of *clave*, or *clavo*, Spanish for "peg" or "nail." It is thought that wooden shipbuilding pegs provided the name for this device, which has equivalents in West Africa.

Among the folk instruments there are various kinds of horns and trumpets. Cows' horns are played musically in some parts of the southern peninsula, though usually they are used as ritual instruments and signaling devices. Wooden trumpets called *pitaux* are carved from the stems of the papaya tree. Conch-shell trumpets, known as *lambis*, are commonly used as signaling devices by fishermen. They are also to be found among the combites, in Rara festivities, and occasionally in rituals, where they are usually identified with sea deities. In carnival times the old fashioned phonograph horn makes its appearance as a combined trumpet and voice amplifier.

Probably the most important of the trumpets is the one made of bamboo. It is called a *vaccine* or *bois bouvique*. Both names have interesting origins. The cow's horn was at one time used for magico-medical purposes. The local doctor used it as an "applicator" of powders and potions. A small opening was made in the point of the horn, and

[See plate 8, p. 112-F. -- Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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The people of the island were able to maintain some continuity with the past, even while the new setting and changing conditions led to the development of certain innovations in society and culture. In a few Caribbean societies, Haiti included, freedom brought with it the opportunity to create a yeomanry—an independent, landholding class of agriculturists who produced most of their own consumption needs and also produced commodities for sale. These were "reconstituted yeomen," whose ways of life combined elements from the African and American Indian past, as well as considerable European and Asian influences, in new cultural constellations.

Haitian country folk are a particularly good example of such a historical process. The crops Haitian yeomen cultivate include the maize, sweet potatoes, and manioc of the indigenous American Indian (Taino) people, and other cultigens such as papaya and avocado which had been domesticated in mainland aboriginal America; and items like taro and mangoes from Oceania, sesame and sugarcane which originated in the Middle East and India, and vegetables from Europe. Their domestic animals, including cattle, swine, and fowls, are nearly all from the Old World. The chief agricultural tools—hoe, billhook, and dibble, which are well adapted to Haiti's shallow topsoil and hilly terrain—may be European or African in origin; the practice of burning off weeds before planting may be African or American Indian. In the case of each trait—crop, tool, practice—one is confronted by the diverse and entangled culture history of the Haitian people. What is true of agriculture is true of all else. The religion of Haiti is at once two religions rather than one: Catholicism *and* voodoun. Yet these two belief systems form a single ideology for most Haitians, particularly in the rural areas and among those of the urban lower classes. The Creole language is similarly complex in origin. While its lexicon is predominantly derived from French, parts of its syntax are not of Romance origin. For instance, the use of postpositive nominalizing particles and the absence of gender typify Haitian Creole, and are decidedly not Romance in character. Terminology shows much the same; for example, animal names and anatomical terms are mainly French in origin, but some cooked foods carry names of African provenience.

The "mixing" of various elements of culture from different traditions is, of course, neither uniquely Caribbean nor uniquely Haitian. All cultures are growths out of the past, and change by losing and gaining traits and by combining and recombining their substance in

.2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1938) 1964 SV2 Haiti SV2

[P.112-D]

a. A peasant of the Mirogoane Nalou region, southern Haiti.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-H]

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11 and 12. *Market day. On each woman's head is the agricultural produce she will sell in the village or city market. When she returns she will carry a lighter load of things she has purchased, and tied in her handkerchief will be a few small coins.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-JJ]

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60. *A carved cane head from the southwestern mountains.*

61. *Detail of a wood carving made about 1930 in the region of Port-au-Prince, representing the loa Loko. Work of this kind in mahogany has in the past thirty years deteriorated into neo-"African" carvings made for the tourist trade.*

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62. *A coyembouque. Cut from a single calabash, the two parts fit together tightly to form a single container. Some coyembouques are a foot or more tall. Height, 8 inches.*

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63. *Terra-cotta figurines from the Cap Haïtien region.*

64. *Detail of a dye-painted burlap cloth. Animal and flower figures and geometric designs are used interchangeably.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-K]

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16. *Man with a machete making a ouri board. The machete is used for cutting trees, trimming brush, weeding gardens, fashioning wooden objects such as drums and mortars, and many other purposes.*

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17. *Winnowing grain with a woven tray.*

Ji Gourlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1968 BV3 Haiti BV3

[P. 112-V]

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p. *An Ibo weaver in the Calabar Plain. Loid sat on the mat is a loom for the Ibo ion. The hunsgan usually feeds the shuttle by placing feed in the hole at each end of the mat. Designs on the pots are the symbolic patterns found generally in ainds. The tree in the background, surrounded by a low cording, is sacred to the ion.*

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

any usual measure. But Haitians do produce by traditional craft methods a surprisingly large number of the articles they need for daily life. In the countryside it is possible to see many persons engaged, mostly on a part-time basis, in craft activities and home industry that have their roots in the prerevolutionary era. Leatherworkers operating small, crude tanneries still flourish. Charcoal-burners, and operators of small lime kilns that produce building material, are found in every village. Smiths make and repair simple tools, working with forges of archaic design. Combs are made from cows' horns and tortoiseshell, buttons from bone; carrying-bags, fish traps, and a wide variety of baskets from withes, bamboo strips, and grasses; wooden bowls, mortars and pestles, tool handles and spoons from local woods; dippers, pots, and candlesticks from tin cans; and sandals from tires and inner tubes. Sawyers cut and dress timber; cabinetmakers still manufacture simple furniture of traditional design from the fast-disappearing tropical woods; many women, working either with the simplest sorts of sewing machines or by hand, make clothing for use and for sale. Along the coasts there are dugout-makers, shipbuilders, and sail- and wine-makers. Simple mattresses, fabricated from local grasses, are sold in every large marketplace, as are crude ceramic wares made by local potters. At the start of the twentieth century, Italian immigrants brought a sturdy tradition of cobbling to Haiti, which has been destroyed only recently by the flood of American imported shoes with their attached prestige, until recently, *vitiliò* was a colloquial term for shoe, coming from the name of the most famous of these Italian cobblers.

One of the striking features of Haiti's craft traditions is its relative stability since the revolution. It was under slavery that Haitians first became "westernized," learning what were then standard French craft practices, adjusted to local colonial conditions, probably with some modifying features coming from the African past. It was before the revolution that the Haitian people learned and stabilized their consumer tastes, agricultural and craft standards, and work procedures. Such preferences and standards were worked out primarily in terms of the demands of the plantation regime itself; but even the most repressive social system leaves some opportunity for acculturation. Today's sugar-making shops and rural rum distilleries employ techniques centuries old and little modified over time. Housebuilding and woodworking techniques in the countryside are substantially

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

two room to house the whole family. "In these huts, filth and every species of uncleanliness prevail, for the people give themselves up to their indolent and lazy habits. It is common to see the pigs and poultry bedding with the family."[19]

The furnishings in the huts were as simple as the construction. Rarely we there more than one bed, if that; the children of the family used mats for sleeping. A table, a stool, a couple of patched chairs, calabash bowls, an iron pot or two (and in later days, discarded gasoline tins), comprise the household equipment.

The fine roads of the French régime became ruined and washed, were overgrown with weeds, and soon reverted to wasteland or became nothing more than paths. Carriages ceased to be of any use, and there were few wagons; donkeys and horses became the regular means of transportation, and this was true until the Americans began to build roads again in 1916. The colonial régime had left a legacy of bridges public buildings, parks, irrigation ditches; practically every improvement of this nature crumbled in slow decay and was not replaced. The temperate Dr. Brown closed his account of the Haiti of 1836 with the following paragraph:

> To sum up all that might be said upon the actual condition of Hayti, poverty and degradation stare one in the face wherever he goes—and the state of the whole island will be fully understood in the United States when it is linearly assumed, that the country is one continuous negro village, built of mud cabins, and unfurnished with the usual comforts of life. The population is, with small exceptions, an indolent, naked multitude, without ambition or a disposition to make exertions to obtain it; without enormous vice, but petty and insignificant in every thing relating to human character, and not many removes from the tribes upon the Niger in point of civilization. The fact is indisputable, that as a nation the blacks of Saint Domingo are in a retrograde movement as regards intellectual improvement, and no obstacle seems to exist to prevent this descent to barbarism. The government and institutions of the country must for the present remain unstable, and it is difficult to pronounce what the changes involved in the future will produce.[20]

Progress, as Westerners understand it, comes through contacts and competition, both of which were lacking to Haiti in large measure throughout the whole of the nineteenth century. While externally

19. Franklin, op. cit., p. 206.
20. Op. cit., II, 228-229.

men and women exchange gossip and sit about, joining in the songs or merely observing the proceedings; while the young people form part of the singing, dancing circle that revolves almost without pause about the central post of the *temmelle*, the shelter where the festivities are held.

To speak of discipline in connection with these dances is to evoke new and astonishing images for readers familiar with the more popular literature on Haiti. It is admittedly true that as one first witnesses a *vodun* dance, one's reaction is that this is a performance governed solely by the dictates of individual possession. These ceremonies are usually held at night, deep in the bush, lighted only by a small, smoking oil lamp and by the candles fastened to the pegs of the drums, while the participants dress in anything but their best clothing, and in their belts the men carry the machetes always worn by the Haitian peasant. Add to this the effect of the unceasing rhythms of the drumming, the blanket of sound from the unison singing of the participants, the violence of the possessions, and it is not strange that the untrained observer tends to assess what he sees in almost any terms but those of the underlying discipline that defines all activity in the worship of the gods. A release of psychic tension is undoubtedly afforded those who become possessed, and this is also experienced to a lesser degree by all those in attendance. Nevertheless, it must be emphasized, despite so much that has been written to the contrary, that this form of worship of the *loa* is neither unrestrained hysteria nor drunken orgiastic satisfaction of the sex drive. The behavior of the participants, in terms of the accepted patterns of European and American religious decorum, often seems uncouth, vigorous, violent, and even dangerous, when it is merely the expression of a different tradition. And as for the orgiastic aspects of these rites, Haitians have ample opportunity to satisfy their sexual impulses elsewhere, without making this a basic and constant element in the worship of their gods.

Vodun dances, in Mirebalais as elsewhere, take place on

541 half-demon cannibals who meet in secret in the hollow heart of the mapou tree. Some are dressed in comic ancient military attire, replete with swords, epaulets, medals, and outlandish beards, representing "the Generals." Others, under the name Bande Automobiniquer, follow a human phonograph—a leader singing through an antique Edison horn.

541 And there are bands of male *rabasiers*, or Maypole dancers, some of
SS them attired as women, weaving their colored ribbons around portable poles, to the accompaniment of guitars, marimbadas, and cha-chas. Male stick dancers known as *bateaux*, dressed in women's clothing, crouch in circles and perform baton-tapping dances to the accompaniment of drumming and singing. Other small bands wander about impersonating characters from folklore or politics in grotesque homemade costumes. One might see, for example, a familiar horse driving before him a band of zombies, wielding a whip, and barking out weird raucous commands.

After the cataclysmic grand finale of the Mardi Gras at Shrovetide there is the briefest of lulls, and then the country is in the throes of Rara. The day of the *roi* Lewlewali (the King of Lewlewali) has arrived. Hundreds of Rara bands move through the towns and villages, each with its orchestra of bamboo trumpets or conch-shell horns and its "king"—an orneerly clad dancer or baton juggler. The Rara bands move from place to place, dance, sing, exhibit their featured performers, and then move on, pressed perhaps by other bands behind them or jostled by another group moving in the opposite direction. When darkness comes, the bands light their way with wooden torches or candlesticks
• [416] of tiny oil lamps. Every week end for seven weeks, in the heat of day and the darkness of night, the mountain trails are alive with these processions.

541 The Rara festivities reach their climax on Good Friday week end, and by Easter morning they are ended. During these final days there is a last grand display, with troupes coming in from the mountains and the plains to the larger cities and towns. One of the traditional Rara convocation centers in the south is the town of Léogane. On Good Friday week end, Léogane is transformed into a milling, surging, trumpeting mass of celebrating country people.

[533] The songs heard during Rara are full of praise or derision for well-
[831] known personalities. Some of them are boldly ribald or licentious. And
[535] often the dancing itself is openly sexual in its implications. Haitians humorously refer to this kind of dancing as *ravagé* (enraged, crazy).

541 Early in January, even while the Mardi Gras is in progress, each
675 community gets down to the business of organizing its Rara group. It may be organized in one of several ways. In certain communities there

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-0]

998

22. *An assortment of stones (Indian artifacts) from the altar of a houngfor in the mountains above Jacmel. All are regarded as thunder stones thrown to earth by the loa Sobo and Kilbiton, or as stones containing the essence of other deities.*

993
789
998
142
302
416

23. *A houngan of southern Haiti divining with the aid of his asson, bell, and (right) gourds.*

The division of the land is said almost invariably to result in lawsuits, and some litigations have been known to stretch over a period of a decade and more, for, as one resident of Mirebalais remarked, "Because of a few feet of land a peasant will, if necessary, spend a thousand gourdes at court." If a woman is the heir, her husband may intervene in a dispute to protect her interests, but if she matter goes to court, only the husband of a "married" wife has a right to appear as an interested party; the mate of a *placée* may only act as a witness. When minor grandchildren inherit, their mother, whether married or *placée*, is their legal guardian and may enter suit to protect their interests.

The rights of a woman to the property of her father may be modified if a dowry has been given her husband at the time of her "legal" marriage, though dowries are rarely given among peasants. If she is a *placée*, or if a dowry had not passed at the time of her "marriage," the land she inherits from her parents is held by her for her children, who will in time inherit it from her, so that many parcels of land deemed by natives to belong to a single family group are found to be divided among people who bear different surnames. It is not without interest to note in passing that in contrast to the acrid disputes which characterize the settlement of a father's goods, the distribution of a mother's property is seldom disturbed by dissension.

In addition to land and money, which form the most important part of any estate, are the flocks, herds, and beasts of burden of the dead man, and his personal tools and implements. These are sometimes willed to brothers and sisters or favorite nephews. Land and money, however, may not be alienated, but must go to the man's own children or to such others as may have been legally adopted. A child can be deprived of participation in the estate only if formally disinherited by means of a sworn document attested before a notary. As has been stated, daughters who have been given

2: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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175 French were driven out. They could not but be alarmed as they saw
423 the steady direction of Dessalines' moves toward a complete mo-
425 nopoly of land ownership by the state. On the very day following
471 independence, a decree proclaimed that all lands owned by France in colonial days now belonged to Haiti. Next (February 7, 1804) Dessalines canceled all sales and donations made to mulattoes and ex-slaves by fleeing French who, in a last despairing effort to salvage something from the wreckage of olden days, had "conveyed" their lands to non-whites. By these two strokes all lands owned by white men before 1803 became state property,[5] but only the second clipped the wings of socially ambitious colored people.

175 Serious uneasiness was caused by the next measure, an order for a
●421 general verification of property titles. This would have been a deli-
[693] cate task at best, considering the disorder of the past thirteen years. It was made more complicated to carry out by the serious lack of men trained in law. A few like Balthazar Inginac, later an important adviser and trusted friend of two presidents, were scrupulously conscientious, but by the same token highly unpopular with those whom they deprived of newly (and shoddy) acquired "estates." The majority of officials, according to report, listened to the pleading of many who had managed by hook or crook to secure a tenuous claim to vacant properties, validating their fraudulent titles for them. It has been claimed, without rebuttal, that most of these officials were not above taking bribes. When complaint was made to Dessalines of such actions he took steps to make his appointees do their duty, but each confiscation made new enemies for Dessalines.

Some of the mulattoes, citing their French paternity, claimed land formerly owned by their French fathers, even though these parents had never regarded their sons as more than bastards. Dessalines once broke out in furious answer to such a claimant: "*Et les pauvres*
175 *nègres dont les pères sont en Afrique, ils n'auront donc rien!*"
425 The state took over thousands of acres. Those Haitians, colored or
550 black, who aspired to landownership as the foundation of position,

[642] 5. The hatred of the Haitians for the French, and because of them, for white people
[648] in general, was seen not only in these confiscations but in commitments for the future. A proclamation of April 28, 1804, suppressed to "all foreigners" the right to own property in land. The first Haitian constitution, May 20, 1805, took an even more drastic step in saying that "no white man shall henceforth set foot in this country as a landowner," and that "*all* property formerly belonging to a white Frenchman" was now confiscate to the profit of the state.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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prestige, and the normal fulfillment of dignity, were thus frustrated in their efforts. They began to see that the Emperor intended to withhold from them freedom, room for the exercise of ability or power, fullness of life in whatever form. Not only was there little opportunity for achieving prestige; the repressive and contemptuous attitude of Dessalines denied them even ordinary negative respect, without which dignity of life is impossible.

By confiscation of vacant and falsely claimed estates, Dessalines created a vast public domain. He did not hesitate to secure other lands which he considered valuable, resorting to arbitrary and often cruel means—even, it is said, to forgery and murder—to dispossess those who stood firm in their claims. This attack on private property added other dissidents to his enemies—men who felt themselves clearly in the right legally and morally, men who with clear consciences joined the movement to put down a tyrant. The land thus acquired was leased in parcels at an annual rent to the highest bidders.[6]

The Emperor was blind to the normal human needs of the better elements of the population. He deprived them of property in land, the only basis they knew for wealth and independence; he forbade enterprises undertaken by individual initiative; he continually wounded delicate sensibilities. The Emperor was not a man to spare people's feelings, and he dared use the frank but dangerous words Negro and mulatto. He once shouted to a group of pleaders for position: "*Pensez parole à vous, nègres et mulâtres! Nous avons tous combattu contre les blancs; les biens que nous avons conquis en versant notre sang, appartiennent à nous tous; j'entends qu'ils soient partagés avec égalité!*" It was not only Dessalines' idea of "equity" which aroused the *anciens libres* but his use of the descriptive nouns they hated.

The colored people were well aware of the hostility of Dessalines to their group. He was inferior to them in learning, and knew it. He was certainly, by the world's judgment, inferior to them in birth. His very deficiencies by comparison with his colored subjects made him hate them more: for example, he was passionately fond of dancing, preferring compliments on his grace to praise of his statesmanship; yet his awkwardness on the ballroom floor even

6. Although there are no records extant to show the exact amount of land which Dessalines succeeded in bringing into state ownership, it is estimated that more than two thirds of all the productive plantations in Haiti in 1806 were in the hands of the government. Other estimates range as high as ninety per cent.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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174 642 170 at least a generation behind them, but rather their complete lack of any experience in self-rule. The author continues:[13]

In addition to the vanity of the black which was flattered by the distribution of principalities and duchies, there was the political thought which wished to fortify things by words. The most important sugar manufactories were distributed, with the property title, to the principal officers and civil agents of the government. Workers were allotted to these very much as were the Indians to the first Spanish conquerors . . . . Moreover, since African blood dominated in the North [that is, since there were few mulattoes and lighter-skinned people], the feudal lords, aided by the color of their skin, could enforce obedience to a yoke which in name only was modified [from slavery].[14]

[471]

175 642 566 631 421 625 692 The social organization of Christophe's kingdom, then, was one of large properties, with all the feudalistic trappings, resting upon a solid base of wage-earning serfdom. In contrast to medieval feudalism, the king was here much more than *primus inter pares*. Thanks to the policy of Dessalines, most land had come into state ownership, so that the nobility received their estates by royal favor, and held them as leases only so long as the King pleased. As in the Middle Ages, the noblemen were petty monarchs within the district granted to their jurisdiction. Their freedom of action, however, was even here subject to scrutiny: detachments of Royal Dahomeys[15] were stationed in every cantonment or parish, to enforce discipline, keep the King informed, and find their own subsistence without a drain on the royal treasury. In every district was set up a court of *chef-chaussée* to see that justice obtained.[16] The King's law, not the nobleman's private code, prevailed in the whole country.[17]

13. R. Lepelletier *de Saint-Remy, Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1846), II, 167-168.

14. Organized after the model of the police force existing in France before 1789.

15. These courts were composed of a royally appointed marechal and his assistant, a king's procurer, and a clerk.

[671]

16. The Code Henry was promulgated on January 30, 1812. It consisted of seven parts: Civil, Commercial, Shipping and Maritime, Civil Procedure, Criminal and Police Process, Agricultural, and Military. In general the Code followed French precedent, but the section on Agriculture was Christophe's own. Sir James Barskett (in his *History of the Island of St. Domingo* [London, 1818], p. 413) calls this part "a thing unexampled among other nations." It reveals not only the King's absorption in the main economic enterprise of his state, but also his skill in devising an integrated functioning of a social order of nobility and serfs with a plantation economy based on money crops. This Agricultural Law regulated such diverse matters as the reciprocal duties of proprietors and cultivators, the policing of plantations, and the culture and preparation of the major crops. It set forth industry as the parent of virtue, and idleness as the source of vice.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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to be confirmed. They had lost their best friend and their "petit père." 175

Dessalines would be emperor and Christophe king, but Pétion 643
was content to remain a simple president. He was an anomaly—as if 159
a Parisian of delicate sensibilities and mellow tolerance had somehow come to power with a darker skin in an alien land.

He has been highly praised and is worthy of eulogy. The fact remains that his country was sick when he came to power and poor when he died; united in 1806 and divided in 1818. Candor compels his admirers to admit that many of the calamities of the social and economic history of Haiti can be traced back to Pétion's administration.

The crucial act of Pétion was to parcel the land. From that policy 175
flowed the enduring consequences which became the predominant 223
socio-economic characteristics of Haiti. 421

Until Pétion's time the island had never known small properties. 178
Large estates had been the mark of social distinction in the French colony; Toussaint had kept the plantations large,[18] while Dessalines and Christophe had absorbed more and more land for the state, leasing it out in great blocks. The constitution of 1806[19] gave no indication of impending change, for it specifically declared all land to be the property of the Haitian nation. Within three years, however, the process of dividing and giving away the state's lands was well under way.

It would be illuminating to know what mental process in Pétion moved him to make so radical an about-face in land policy. The reasons he gave were, first, that the people had ably defended their country and so deserved a reward; second, that he wanted all the people to have a vital interest in the actual soil itself.[20] These may have been his only reasons. Others suggest themselves: the republic owed wages to its large standing army, which were more easily paid in land, of which the state had much, than in cash, of which it had little and progressively less; it would be much easier to keep peace in a country where men were free than where they were serfs; and the example of free ownership in the South would seem alluring enough

18. He permitted the leasing of plantations as small as fifty acres if the soil were especially rich. [427]

19. December 27. This document was largely the handiwork of Pétion.

20. The former explanation he consistently gave in his various messages to the Senate proposing progressive parcelings of the land; the latter he wrote to a friend, saying that he wished to "*remercier chez tous l'amour du sol.*"

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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to Christophe's serfs in the North to cause defections eminently sufficient to win the civil war for the republic."

Those who would read into Pétion's democratization of land ownership the liberal convictions of a far-sighted statesman must ignore the evidence of his earliest land acts. For two or three years nothing was so apparent as that Pétion wished to please his friends, the mulatto aristocrats. He not only had the Senate restore to their former owners all lands of which Dessalines had despoiled them, but he also agreed to a law authorizing a cash payment up to the full value of crops planted and then lost during the last year of the Emperor's rule.[22] By these concessions the President immediately wiped out the rancor left behind him by Dessalines, reversed that ruler's whole land policy, gained the support of thousands of aspirants for social position, and bound in personal loyalty to his regime all the colored leaders.

He went further. Insecurity of tenure under Dessalines had worried landlords who were not actually evicted of their estates, and so the President undertook to guarantee security. Thereafter all sales of land were to be registered by government deed, and so confirmed to the purchaser in perpetuity; government courts would be empowered to settle disputes over payment of rents; proof of the death of the testator must be forthcoming before wills could be probated. Not even the single limitation on ownership—that if the proprietor of an estate should remain away from Haiti the state might lease his property and receive the income from it—disturbed them, for they were patriots enough, and poor enough, to feel that Haitians should live at home.

As if this were not enough to please the landed gentry, the tax

21. Saint-Rémy, *Pétion et Haïti* (Paris, 1854–57), V, 163–166, suggests another reason, namely, that people will always be more ready to defend land they actually own than for an impersonal state. This sounds logical, but certainly the Negroes had fought valiantly enough to drive out the French in 1803, landless though they were. Saint-Rémy continues: "And moreover, was it not time to dismember the enormous plantations which still bore the names of those colonists whose mother country might still at any moment demand to reclaim their heritage? And could this dismemberment be achieved otherwise than by giving the people an honorable title to it?"

22. Two successive laws, February 9 and March 18, 1807, achieved these ends. The former specified that all persons who, by purchase or gift or legacy, had acquired land before November 1, 1803 (when Rochambeau surrendered) or since February 7, 1804 (when Dessalines had ordered a confirmation of all titles) should be newly assured of their rights to such holdings. There was a single, possibly unimportant, limitation: the acquisition must have been *by* Haitiens *from* Haitiens.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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applicant, of his regular conduct, and his ability to maintain himself economically in the town. Land laborers might not send their children to school or have them apprenticed in a town without a certificate from the same judge. Under no pretext might a worker establish a shop or sell his produce in the countryside; certain exceptions were made of necessary articles of food and home manufacture. No laborer might build a home in rural parts except on the plantation to which he was attached. 175 671 24 566 693

An individual, once placed by the government in the category of "cultivator," might never be removed from that class except by official authorization. Even with the consent of the proprietor and the agricultural administrator of the district, he was not to quit the estate to which he was bound for more than eight days.

We may further note in the Code that coöperative enterprise among the workers is forbidden. Anticipating the possible tendency of laborers to set up what in modern times would be called a producers' coöperative, presumably to lapse thereafter into laziness, the Code requires that every worker engage himself individually by authentic contract to the service of a proprietor or lessee. Such engagements for la grande culture are not to be for less than three years, or more than nine. Penalties for infractions of these rules are fines, imprisonment, or forced labor on public works in the chief town of the commune. 175 671 474 686 566

The Code directs the management of agricultural property and grazing establishments,[20] also the making of contracts between the proprietor and his hirelings. Rural police are established, in imitation of Christophe's Dahomets, to act as inspectors of plantations and of the workers on them. 175 671 625 421

The section repressing vagrancy is very full. All persons not proprietors or lessees, yet living in rural parts without having made a contract with some producer, are classed as vagabonds, to be arrested and taken before the magistrate. This official will warn them that by law they are bound to make a contract, and that if they refuse they will be sent to prison. Should a vagabond persist in refusing to sign a contract after eight days of confinement, he is condemned to labor on public works until he agrees. Should the prisoner be a minor, he will be sent to his parents. 175 686 24

20. This latter item was inserted as an adjustment to one of the primary occupations of the Spanish end of the island.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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unplanned, unobserved

Haitian peasantry, to sum up, began as the result of two policies intended to achieve ends quite different; first, presidential gifts of land, the chief purpose of which had been to pay the soldiers of the republic; and second, the crop-sharing system adopted by landlords after the failure of Boyer's Code. 175 421 24 463 178

6. *The Drawing of Caste Lines* (1820–1843)

Almost every major presidential aim of Boyer came to grief. His tranquil quarter-century rule, the unified island, the financial surplus with which his presidency began, the peace with France after 1825—all these advantages combined with his good intentions did not save his projects from shipwreck. Near the beginning of his régime he announced that, like his revered predecessor Pétion, he felt the safety of Haiti to lie in the abolition of all color distinctions and prejudices. Just as his great Code Rural proved a complete failure, however, so did his efforts to do away with the color line. On the contrary, it was during Boyer's time that class distinctions became fixed, in large part although not wholly, on the basis of color. 175 178 565

Stating that the policy of his government was to put an end, as far as possible, to jealousies of caste, he consistently for a few years promoted a black every time a promotion had been given to a mulatto or other light-skinned person. This procedure soon met an insuperable obstacle. Government posts in general required literacy, and only a very small number of blacks were educated, so that the supply of Negroes was not sufficient to furnish him with candidates. Since one of the few roads to lucrative success lay in official positions, ambitious young colored men sought eagerly for government office, and Boyer soon had no alternative but to advance men of his own complexion. In the army, on the other hand, literacy was not necessary for promotion. Ambitious Negro youths, therefore, frequently chose this career which, while not very profitable in monetary rewards, at least gave a man a certain social status and economic security. 175 647 563 212 555 175 701 555 563

Because of the state of education in the republic, consequently, an ugly situation developed, with the civil arm of government almost wholly in control of the colored element and the military force dominated by blacks. Fortunately for the country no crisis developed during the 1820's and 1830's which made an open breach between army and state. 175 647 701 [563]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 178 565 433 439 [423] [428]

fortunes, that is, a few thousands of dollars, for a small number of élite, and to make the presidency a position economically rewarding enough to justify revolutionary conspiracies. The growth of a peasantry set in train during the long régime of Boyer continued, unbroken even by the numerous insurrections, until fixed in the mores. Land owned by the countryfolk was divided and redivided among their heirs, so that even holdings of moderate size became smaller.

175 643 566 423

Not one of the twenty-two rulers following Boyer made the slightest effort to return the country to the forced labor system of Dessalines and Christophe. They seemed to recognize the inevitability of a peasant way of life, or at least the impossibility of luring the people back to directed labor after a long experience of freedom. On the contrary, several presidents still further parceled the land.

175 643 423

President Guerrier, for example, the very year after Boyer was deposed, put on sale at moderate prices those state lands in the North not reserved for public use.[5] If the revolutionaries of 1843 had hoped to bring back Christophe's system of forced labor, their hopes were doomed to disappointment because of the state's need of immediate income. Christophe's state land areas were now broken up in the one part of the country where a few large plantations still existed.

175 643 421 423

President Geffrard in 1862 gave his blessing to small ownership, the basis of peasantry. Whereas Pétion's laws had prohibited sales of land in parcels less than fifteen acres, Geffrard's law regularized the leasing and sale of national property in lots of fifteen acres *at most*. Geffrard was the first president openly to admit that many government lands had been lost to citizens by squatting. In an endeavor to give legality to land held by squatters' rights, his law demanded that squatters register their claims, announcing that within a short time there would be no further dismemberment of the national patrimony except by grants and sales.[6] Few registrations were made, however, for the Haitian peasant had already acquired a suspicion of legal documents he could not read or understand, and he could see no reason for legalizing a status in which, with the squatter's tenacity and inertia, he already felt himself secure.

Haiti was in constant financial straits. Money had to be borrowed

5. By a law of September 23, 1844.
6. Law of August 14, 1862. The articles cited here are 2 and 4.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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to attempt to retrace the path of property evolution, which has steadily taken its own course since the time of Pétion."

With the peasants prevailingly satisfied in their daily round of life, the separation of upper and lower castes in Haitian society has gradually become an accepted fact. At least ninety per cent of the total population now belong to the peasant group, whose members are as much reconciled to their status as in the United States the poorest colored folk to theirs. Vaguely they may often wish they had the privileges and luxuries of those above them; often, likewise, they feel resentment at the way in which they are treated; but in so far as it is permissible to generalize about two million people, it is fair to say that the Haitian peasant rarely complains of his lot.

Of the remaining ten per cent of the population a small fraction look upon themselves as élite. Some families of this group can be traced back to colonial times when their ancestors were already affranchis; others began to take on aristocracy under Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, and Boyer. Those whose forebears have become élite only since 1843 are less firmly entrenched in the topmost class. However, since no president since Boyer has ever succeeded in weakening caste lines, the élite one or two per cent may be said to constitute a stable social group.

It is significant that although the blacks had the government in their hands for three quarters of a century they were unable to effect any slight change either in caste membership or in caste lines.

The part of the population which is neither élite nor peasant is not "middle class," as that term is understood in the Western World. It is rather a shifting percentage of Haitians whose one prevailing characteristic is their residence in towns. Some are wage earners, some small tradesmen; some are ex-élite on the way down the

11. The intimate observer of the Haitian peasant never fails to comment upon his love of the land. Whereas the colonial planter attached a value to his estate because it produced wealth, the peasant loves his little plot because it is his home. Through all the sixteen successive constitutions of Haiti, the one unchangeable article has been the prohibition of sale to foreigners of real estate in the country. Haitian land is for Haitian people—or was so until after the American Occupation. Likewise, the peasant is suspicious of any law which seems likely to reintroduce the system of large properties, for these might condemn him to leave his land and work at wages for the benefit of a master who, whether kindly or pitiless, would still deprive him of his present liberty. Therefore the Haitian countryman defends with all his force this soil to which his liberty attaches him, and which he cultivates after his own manner. "The Haitian loves his land almost as a man loves his woman."

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it seems not radically to have affected the masses but only the fairly well-to-do.

The *Royal Almanac* for the year 1814 touches proudly upon the moral state of the kingdom. The author of the almanac, the Comte de la Limonade, says: "Great attention is paid to morals and manners. Marriage is honored, protected, and encouraged; no Haitian who is unmarried can fill any place of distinction. Divorce is not permitted." All this was true; yet the mass of Haitians still remained unmarried. Nevertheless, the quotation indicates the extent to which Christophe had gone in his effort to reform marriage and morals among his people; to set them in the European tradition and draw them out of their African and colonial backgrounds.

While Christophe was trying to effect reforms in the North, Pétion was accepting his Southern folk as they were. Hardly a law during his twelve-year administration touches the subject of marriage. The élite colored people continued to make proper legal marriages and so insure the inheritance of their legitimate children. The common folk lived their family lives without weddings, and if property questions arose, custom ruled, backed by public opinion in their little communities.

Such are the backgrounds out of which modern Haitian sex relations have developed. From African tradition came family life, the importance of property to stabilize a union, insignificance of a wedding ceremony, familiarity with matrilineal kinship and descent; from French colonial practice, formal marriage to establish a family with social ambition, casual sex relations for pleasure outside this marriage, the claim of legitimate children to all property (in contrast to folk custom, where few legitimate children were born); from Dessalines, an emphasis upon the African tradition and realism; from Christophe, an insistence upon strict French practice in marriage and in the passage of property.

From among these alternatives Haiti made a choice which is an excellent example of what Keller calls "automatic selection in the mores."[7] There was no congress to select one procedure rather than another. Because Pétion and Boyer followed a *laissez-faire* policy in social matters, the people took the path of least resistance.

7. A. G. Keller, *Societal Evolution* (revised ed., New York, 1931), chaps. IV and V.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

land, whose bodies are buried in it, and whose spirits watch over it. As has been shown in the discussion of property, land in Haiti is owned privately, and, once title has passed, is subject to no alienation, except at the will of the owner — an attitude also held toward property of other categories, as is evidenced by the fact that most of the possessions of a man, particularly his livestock, are marked for identification, and theft is severely punished. Even the disposal of stray animals whose owners cannot be identified must follow well-defined legal procedure, in accordance with which they are held by the officers of the commune for a stated period of time before being sold at public auction. All marks on these animals are carefully noted in the records, so that title to them may be duly established.

In the organization of production and distribution an African mold, if not full content, predominates. The co-operative work-system, which is so important in maintaining agricultural production, is directly related to comparable groupings of West Africa, of which a distinctive form is the *dokpwe* of Dahomey, described when the African origins of Haitian culture were examined. The *combite,* as an instrument of co-operative labor and mutual self-help, with its tradition of giving no pecuniary reward for work done, but of making the feast which comes at the end of the day's labor adequate return — all these represent pure retentions of African practice. Even more striking is the carry-over in the attitudes which go with these outer forms — the manner in which the participants look forward with pleasant anticipation to taking part in *combites,* the enjoyment which they derive from their group work, and the verve with which the work is done are clear expressions of these attitudes. The role of the *combite*-song in exercising social control and enforcing conformity to local custom is entirely African, as is its function in stimulating work by setting a rhythm for it.

African, too, is the institution of the market, though in this

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 While the broad problems of marriage, inheritance, and legiti-
582 macy were not to be solved by the official act of any ruler, the efforts made, particularly those by Dessalines and Christophe, had their effect upon the development of the marital institution in Haiti.

671 "Whereas," begins the preamble of Dessalines' law of May 28,
848 1805, "it is necessary to fix in immutable order the status and rights of children born out of wedlock, and whereas it is important to reconcile what nature and society owe them with the political interests of the state," therefore it behooves the government to lay
[581] down the specific rules which follow. Nothing in the law pushes the people toward marriage, but every provision strengthens the family, which they had known both in Africa and in the slave régime of the colony.

175 Henceforth no stigma is to attach to the fact of illegitimacy, nor is
671 there to be discrimination in favor of children born in wedlock. The
848 status of a child will depend upon recognition by its parents. If a
428 child's maternal connection is established, he has rights in her property; if the father likewise recognize his offspring, the child has rights in the paternal property; even if the recognition of a child is so long delayed that the parents die, that child who can prove his descent is to receive the name and his own share of property from the deceased. There is but one single provision in which an illegitimate child has an inferior status: should a couple decide to be legally married, they must recognize the natural offspring of either party before or during the wedding ceremony, if such children are to have full claims of inheritance; delay until after the ceremony cuts their claim to only one fourth that of children born legitimately; refusal to recognize the natural child disinherits him, unless he can prove his descent.

[422] Since the Emperor was already engaged upon his campaign to
[423] acquire lands for the state, the property rights guaranteed would refer chiefly to personal property, and only secondarily to land still owned by individuals. Both men and women owned personal property, however, and must therefore pass on this property, a definite percentage going to each son and daughter.

The law is weak in some of its details. It does not specify, for example, how an unmarried father shall leave his property—whether by name to each child he has recognized as his own, or by name to the mothers of his children. It is strong in that it is simple: property

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

[History of Haiti in 17th-18th Centuries
The Haitian white population]

175 181 567 501 563

solute dominance which it is given us to exercise over them, what regrets do not assail us daily because of our inability to have contact and correspondence with others than these unfortunates, so far removed from us in point of view, customs, and education." [21]

175 567 501 423 563

This letter speaks of the presence of five whites. The psychological state of the planter who, unmarried and alone, spent his days without the companionship of a fellow-being who as much as shared a common language with him may well be imagined. Even where there were white overseers, the prevailing sense of caste was so strong that while these ate with the head of the estate, they did not live under the same roof, for they were subordinates and were treated as such. For his most constant companions the owner had his house-servants, unless he maintained a mulatto concubine who cooked his food and looked after his personal wants, shared his confidences, and reported to him any disaffection on the part of the Negro slaves. It is understandable that, having made his fortune, the planter did not delay his return to France, where, once back in Paris, he lived lavishly on the revenues from his estates; and letters in the Ministry of Colonies show the extent to which this phenomenon of absentee ownership characterized pre-Revolutionary Santo Domingo.[22]

175 181 563

Haiti being thought of as but an interlude in a man's life, the loosening of moral tone so complained of in contemporary works resulted, and with this went the many forms of display in which these colonists indulged and those other aspects of colonial custom which were so often ridiculed by European travelers of the period. The distance of Haiti from Paris, or, in a later period, the time which had elapsed since the French loss of Haiti, has, however, lent an enchantment to "Créole life" which is reflected in an idealized portrayal of this existence, much in the manner of the effusions on the graciousness and glamour of life in what is termed "the old South." [23] One

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

attitudes of these writers were in the main far from sympathetic toward Haiti, and their interests extended but little to the customs of the great masses of Haitians. That the fear of slavery was still alive in the early part of the nineteenth century is apparent from an incident related by Mackenzie; "that, some decades later, the sense of racial differences continued to exist is evident from folk-sayings about the characteristics of whites, mulattoes, and Negroes recorded by St. John."[46] The concept of rank seems to have maintained itself in its full flavor, with no lack of social classes in Haitian urban society and no lack of vigor in perpetuating the earlier prejudices of caste.

The majority of the population remained on the land, for by 1830 the great estates had been completely broken up, and were cultivated in the main by small concessionaires. The dress of these country inhabitants seems to have remained much as it had been under French control, and the emphasis on good manners that so marks African social intercourse had been retained to such an extent that St. John, no admirer of the Haitian people, was forced to remark upon it.[46] Markets which were conducted in African fashion had been established, and these were supplemented by itinerant peddlers. The institution of *plaçage*, a reconciliation of African plural marriage with the monogamy of European custom, of which more will be said in a later chapter, was known in the early days of independence. The rites of birth and death were marked with their special ceremonies, and in both instances it can be seen that the African elements of the cultural heritage were not being forgotten. Dancing continued as the principal form of recreation, and to the traditional dances, which still persist, were added European styles.[47]

Above all, African religious customs were being observed. *Vodun* rites continued to flourish and magic was practiced as in the days preceding independence, as is to be seen from the notorious and all too often repeated tale of the "Congo bean

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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CHAPTER IV

THE SETTING OF HAITIAN LIFE

SINCE the discovery by the Spaniards that the wealth of Haiti lay rather in cultivating sugar than in the exploitation of gold mines, its dominant economy has been agricultural. In the valley of Mirebalais, as elsewhere in the island, the small cultivator holds the center of the economic stage. In the main he works his own land, inherited from his father or acquired through purchase. He may also cultivate additional plots of ground which he rents, since much of the land expropriated when independence was gained was retained by the State and today is leased for nominal fees.[1]

The life of the Haitian farmer, though hard, is simple and self-contained. With but few exceptions, he supplies all his necessities, for he commands almost the entire range of techniques known to his culture; hence Haitian economy shows a lack of specialization that in the main is only relieved by the sex division of labor. The day's work begins at dawn, the women rising before the men to prepare coffee, the invariable drink of early morning. When finished with his breakfast, the farmer goes to his field, where, except for the hottest hours, he works until sundown, his one meal being brought to him at about nine or ten o'clock in the morning. His wife meanwhile occupies herself with her household tasks, pounding grain in her mortar or working in her garden near by.

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

the "illegitimate" none, it would seem that the children of the legal marriage have a "social duty" to care for those of a *placée* wife who receive nothing, a moral obligation which is met because of a far stronger sanction than the fear of gossip. The belief holds that the dead will deeply resent an injustice to any of his children and will cause misfortune to befall a man who does not fulfill his duty toward those who should have shared in the property of their father.

Those who do inherit divide the land, flocks, herds, and all other possessions of the deceased equally, regardless of age or sex. If a man is wealthy, he may draw up a will providing for the disposal of such items of his property as under Haitian law it is not mandatory to apportion among his children. Where there is not enough land to permit each of the survivors to work an individual plot, this may be sold and the money distributed, or those who retain the land may buy an equivalent acreage elsewhere for the others, so that some of the members of the family leave the habitation to make new homes of their own in the manner already described. Similarly, though in dividing the land it is customary to allot a good parcel to the son who has worked it, if the other land is much worse and the division is disputed, an arrangement paralleling the one described may be made to allow of a fairer division. When an heir who, for instance, has taken up permanent residence in Port-au-Prince wishes to dispose of his share instead of returning to work it or of having it cultivated for him, he sells it to his brothers and sisters, or, rarely, to a stranger, for all effort is made to retain ancestral land within the family. Similarly, a part of the property of the dead may be sold to meet claims on his estate — debts or funeral costs or the expense of erecting a tomb. This would be particularly true if these expenses had been met by one of the heirs, in which case he must be compensated before the estate may be divided. Consultation with the family elders always precedes such action, however.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

428 The division of the land is said almost invariably to entail
423 lawsuits, and some litigations have been known to stretch
691 over a period of a decade and more, for, as one resident of Mirebalais remarked, "Because of a few feet of land a peasant will, if necessary, spend a thousand gourdes at court." If a woman is the heir, her husband may intervene in a dispute to protect her interests, but if the matter goes to court, only the husband of a "married" wife has a right to appear as an interested party; the mate of a *placée* may only act as a witness. When minor grandchildren inherit, their mother, whether married or *placée*, is their legal guardian and may enter suit to protect their interests.

428 The rights of a woman to the property of her father may be
423 nullified if a dowry has been given her husband at the time
583 of her "legal" marriage, though dowries are rarely given
562 among peasants. If she is a *placée*, or if a dowry had not passed at the time of her "marriage," the land she inherits from her parents is held by her for her children, who will in time inherit it from her, so that many parcels of land deemed by natives to belong to a single family group are found to be divided among people who bear different surnames. It is not without interest to note in passing that in contrast to the acrid disputes which characterize the settlement of a father's goods, the distribution of a mother's property is seldom disturbed by dissension.

42 In addition to land and money, which form the most important part of any estate, are the flocks, herds, and beasts of burden of the dead man, and his personal tools and implements. These are sometimes willed to brothers and sisters or favorite nephews. Land and money, however, may not be alienated, but must go to the man's own children or to such others as may have been legally adopted. A child can be deprived of participation in the estate only if formally disinherited by means of a sworn document attested before a
000 notary. As has been stated, daughters who have been given

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

tioned this latter instance advanced it as a possible alternative to the custom found elsewhere in Haiti, adding that it was the duty of the living to honor their ancestors, and not for the ancestors to make provision to honor themselves, particularly since the dead can enforce the discharge of this duty by sending illness, bad fortune, and death to those of their descendants who are remiss.

To a very appreciable degree, what is inherited forms the foundation of whatever wealth a man may accumulate during his lifetime. Yet there are few, among the peasants at least, who do not seek by all means to add to their heritage, for among those folk the ambition to obtain more and more land is a dominating one. To this end the peasant skimps and saves, depriving himself even of his important needs, until at the proper time some choice parcel of ground comes on the market.

How does a man go about accumulating the funds necessary to amass property? Ordinarily a young man is given a plot of ground by his father, and the produce, as mentioned, is marketed for him by his mother, who saves the proceeds for him. When he marries, his wife takes over this task, and together the two strive to extract as large earnings as possible from his plot. In addition, a man may take a *job*. Such work, always paid for by the unit rather than by the day or week, is usually that of cultivating a plot of ground for its owner, and the amount agreed upon is paid when the field has been harvested. The young man at the same time can also cultivate his own fields and participate in communal labor. Another way of adding to the earnings of his fields is to help the large landowners on their cotton plantations. This work is paid for in kind with baskets of cotton, which in turn are sold to factors who come from the coast to buy both large and small quantities. A man may also increase his income by working in the cane-fields or at the caldrons when the sirup is boiled. Each

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

453 454 556 worker receives about ten gourdes a week, in addition to his food, and the work often is of several months' duration. To do this, however, it is necessary for him to hire another to work his own garden for the period he is thus engaged. As extra [454] money is gradually accumulated, more land is purchased, so that the returns become greater; and the process is accelerated when, upon the death of a man's father, other family land is added to what he already owns.

439 454 556 Thus the drive to obtain property is an obsession with the Haitian peasant. The question of a few centimes, to say nothing of a gourde, is hotly argued; for instance, in the bidding for unclaimed lost animals held periodically at the Mairie in Mirebalais, bids are often raised by as little as five centimes, with the bidder waiting until the last possible moment, the third call of the auctioneer, before pledging the additional sum. Those who have money prefer silver to paper and usually keep it in a trunk at home, but if troublous times impend, the money is put in jars and hidden in the ground. In this way it happens that when a man dies, much of his money is lost to his heirs, for he rarely tells even his wife or children what he has done with it.

556 Yet this point must be stressed — in the mind of the Haitian peasant, though wealth is desired for the prestige it gives, it is rarely prized for the display it permits. Frequently when a person of large means is pointed out in the market place, he will be simply if not poorly dressed. To make undue display of possessions would arouse envy, and envy brings upon a man's household the evil eye. Wealth is rather manifested in extensive farms, in elaborate ceremonies for the rituals held for family ancestors and for family gods, in the education of children to the end that they may eventually move to the capital and there attain social and political position of importance. Wealth brings prestige to its owner through the word-of-mouth comment of his neighbors, and with this he is content,

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

been largely lost in the peasant culture, possibly because of a prudence dictated by conditions of life wherein evidences of the possession of wealth — certainly in the case of a peasant — were an invitation to those who would despoil him. Only when a family of position gives a ceremony, or when one of its members is married or dies, is the lavishness of its preparations such as to suggest the importance of its place in the community. This does not hold for the individual. Personal ostentation is the more strongly inhibited by the belief that another's envy may bring ill fortune to the one against whom it is directed. In Mirebalais it has almost become a byword that the really substantial cititens look as though they were the poorest. This tradition in no way interferes with the preoccupation with adding to one's possessions, or with the desire to exert the power and enjoy the position that go with a command of large resources, or the will to pass on as large an inheritance as possible to children. In their origin, such drives can be ascribed neither to Europe nor to Africa, nor, for that matter, to the experiences of slavery, but rather to the interplay of two homologous patterns of culture that has produced the economic system and the economic motivations found in Haiti today.

In the matter of land tenure, and in attitudes toward private property, African tradition has disintegrated almost completely. Under the characteristic West African form of land tenure, land of a tribe is vested in the tribal head, who allots it to families for use. Trespass upon it is not permitted while it is under active cultivation, and the produce of the land is the property of the one who has worked it. Only palm trees are privately owned by those who have planted them; otherwise land that goes uncultivated for a longer period than is necessary to restore its fertility may be re-allotted. In some regions land worked by an individual is his because of his membership in a large relationship group, whose ownership derives from the power of its ancestors who had lived on this

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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land, whose bodies are buried in it, and whose spirits watch over it. As has been shown in the discussion of property, land in Haiti is owned privately, and, once title has passed, is subject to no alienation, except at the will of the owner — an attitude also held toward property of other categories, as is evidenced by the fact that most of the possessions of a man, particularly his livestock, are marked for identification, and theft is severely punished. Even the disposal of stray animals whose owners cannot be identified must follow well-defined legal procedure, in accordance with which they are held by the officers of the commune for a stated period of time before being sold at public auction. All marks on these animals are carefully noted in the records, so that title to them may be duly established.

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In the organization of production and distribution an African mold, if not full content, predominates. The co-operative work-system, which is so important in maintaining agricultural production, is directly related to comparable groupings of West Africa, of which a distinctive form is the *dokpwe* of Dahomey, described when the African origins of Haitian culture were examined. The *combite*, as an instrument of co-operative labor and mutual self-help, with its tradition of giving no pecuniary reward for work done, but of making the feast which comes at the end of the day's labor adequate return — all these represent pure retentions of African practice. Even more striking is the carry-over in the attitudes which go with these outer forms — the manner in which the participants look forward with pleasant anticipation to taking part in *combites*, the enjoyment which they derive from their group work, and the verve with which the work is done are clear expressions of these attitudes. The role of the *combite*-song in exercising social control and enforcing conformity to local custom is entirely African, as is its function in stimulating work by setting a rhythm for it.

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African, too, is the institution of the market, though in this

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2: Clarlander 8-5 (1937-1938) 1960 SV3 HA21 SV3

rather starve than work. An Englishman, James Franklin, wrote in 1828, for example:

> Experiments may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coercion and want will impel the Haytian to labour; and I have my doubts as to the practicability of enforcing labour in Hayti until the people have been better instructed, and their characters become changed.

As Franklin summarized it: "Nature is too generous to the Haytian; he never wants, and so never works for hire, as do free labourers in other countries."

The early nineteenth century saw a flood of such bitter comments about the remains of the once rich and flourishing French colony of St. Domingue. The vast productivity of Haiti under French rule had made that colony one of the richest in the New World. The country was dotted with sugar mills, brick-covered wells, and warehouses; and carefully built brick aqueducts, irrigation canals, locks, and dams assured water for the plantations. In 1790, under the slave system, Haiti had exported 163,000,000 pounds of sugar. In 1826, a quarter of a century after the revolution, it was reported to have exported 33,000 pounds.

This falling off in production and exports doubtless had many causes, but one of the most significant was the Haitian's revolt not only against slavery but also against continuing the same kind of work he had performed as a slave. He saw not too much difference between forced, unpaid labor and working for any large landholder at subsistence wages. To the Haitian slave the inspiring battle cry of the French Revolution did not mean that all men would work together on another's man plantation and receive the same wages. It meant that every man would have his own garden to work for himself as he chose; every man would be a full citizen, with land of his own, free to come and go, to plant what he wished, to sell what he could. Despite long years under a colonial slave system, the Haitian still remembered a different way of life in Africa, where mass production for export was not the primary objective of labor.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the population of Haiti was not much more than half a million—less than one sixth of what it is today. There was plenty of land, and much of it had not yet been wasted by constant tilling and erosion. When the French were driven out, the Haitian peasant re-created an economic world of his own liking. The plantation system which had poured out sugar and coffee and indigo for Europe faded away, and in its place there sprang up an agrarian system which has continued until the present day. In the early

[Franklin, The Present State of Hayti, p. 362. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

D: Contender 8-5 (1937-1963) 1960 SV3 Hdd SV3

175 In the early
198 years of independence, Emperor Henry Christophe in the north and
311 President Pétion in the south tried to stem the disintegration of the
[643] magnificent plantations. Christophe's measures in the region he con-
[556] trolled were sometimes stern, according to legend; but the plantation system and the plantations themselves gradually fell into decay, along with the aqueducts, the warehouses, and the sugar mills. For the Haitian had returned to a tradition of landholding antedating his enslavement.

175 Europe's loss of the Pearl of the Antilles aroused bitter words from
643 Frenchmen and Englishmen for the better part of the century. They
187 accused the Negro of laziness and lack of ability, repeating endlessly that only as a colony could Haiti ever be of any use to anybody. The London *Times* deplored the Haitian's unwillingness to work for wages, speculating that he had "no desire for property strong enough to induce him to labor with sustained power." In the United States, antiabolitionist enthusiasts cited the Haitian situation as an example of what would happen to the American economy if the slaves were freed.

444 The Haitian's reluctance to work for wages did not reflect an aversion
423 to owning property, however, as the London *Times* supposed. On the
311 contrary, it was engendered by his desire for property. The land was there and waiting, only needing a house to be built upon it, and to be cleared and tilled. The typical Haitian wanted not dubious, seasonal wage work but a farm of his own. The more ambitious peasant aspired to two farms, or even three, with a homestead and a family on each.

423 If a man worked hard and made a success of one plot, he could put
595 away money and eventually buy a second. The additional land might be
198 separated by some miles from the original farm. On the new ground
583 the man would build another house and take another wife to take care of it in his absence. Known as *plaçage*, this arrangement had complete community sanction. A man whose energies and good fortune made an extra household possible was expected to make such an arrangement. It was not a new institution bred in the chaos following the
[919] Revolution, nor was it, as some missionaries held, an evidence of moral deterioration of the Haitian character. It was simply a persisting concept of West African life.[5] The woman who occupied the second or third household was not a concubine. Like the first wife, she had enhanced prestige in her community. She had authority and responsibility. Her work, her position, and her rewards were not essentially different from those of the first wife.[6] It is true that her marriage was not consecrated by a church or civil ceremony, but, ordinarily, neither was that of the
[581] first wife. Contrary to European misconceptions, such unions were true marriages in the sense that they had full sanction of the community.

5, 6 [Footnotes appear in Category 116, pp. 351-352. -- Analyst]

857 868 handle it; lighter work first, heavier work later. Small boys tend cattle and help the men in the fields.

178 511 The Haitian *habitant* (the peasant) is poorer and hungrier today than he was fifty years ago, or even twenty years ago. In 1955 I visited a number of peasant families I had known since 1932, and with hardly an exception I found them worse off than they had been before. Their tiny landholdings had shrunk. Some land that had been lush had dried [134] up and eroded. Little groves of trees had disappeared. Clothes had become shabby, and many of the men could no longer afford to wear the inexpensive traditional blue denim costume that was once so common. In the cities there is evidence that some of the elite have improved their life. But in a large part of the countryside the peasants are finding that the old system that served them for a hundred and fifty years can no longer feed them adequately.

423 178 One of the adverse forces is the shrinking of landholdings. Once a peasant family may have owned and worked fifty or seventy acres of ground. But it is traditional that on a man's death his land is divided [428] among the heirs. If a man with fifty acres of land has two sons, each son inherits approximately twenty-five acres. On their deaths, the land 423 is again subdivided. But even this is not the whole story. A UNESCO 427 survey of the Marbial Valley region in south Haiti in 1948–1949 reported:

> At the turn of the century there were numerous peasant families who lived in relatively easy circumstances, and who possessed as much as thirty to forty *carreaux* * [425] of land planted with coffee and subsistence crops. The heirs of these lands, when they found themselves in straitened circumstances, would sell some parcels of it in the hope of being able to increase their holdings again later on. In the worst cases they became the tenants of absentee landlords who lived in the cities. Nowadays, not only is the size of holdings very small, sometimes only one-eighth of a *carreau*, but they are also scattered, and most peasants are obliged to go from one place to another to cultivate their various owned, rented, or share-cropped fields.[§]

671 595 Haitian law—the civil code—does not recognize the rights of illegitimate children born after a legal marriage. But Haitian custom does. 423 As a result, a Haitian who has a *placée* wife in addition to his "legal" 848 wife may circumvent the law by deeding to her a portion of his gardens during his lifetime, thereby diminishing his holdings.

423 691 Furthermore, many landholdings are not clearly defined. There are few accurate surveys, and often the boundaries are vague. Titles to many of the holdings cannot be clearly established, and as a result there are constant lawsuits. To pay the expenses of defending his interests in court, a Haitian may have to sell a strip of his land.

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* A carreau is about three and a third acres.

§ [UNESCO, The Haiti Pilot Project, p. 18. Cf. P352, category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-6 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

For many Haitians, the struggle to obtain a piece of ground and to hold onto it is the very heart of the struggle for existence. On Morne l'Hôpital in 1932 I knew a man who owned ten acres of gardens. He had it planted in bananas and plantains, yams, and cotton. He had two cows and a calf and a grove of mango trees and coconut palms. His house was clean, tidy, and by Haitian standards well furnished. Eighteen years later he had less than an acre of land, no trees, no cotton, and no cattle. His family had become impoverished. He had three grown children and virtually no land to leave to them except that on which the house stood. His troubles began with a lawsuit over his land title. He sold his cattle to raise money to pay his court expenses. He lost half of his land as a result of the lawsuit, most of it the part with the good trees. Later, he sold more land to raise "eating money," and then rented it from the new owner. He could not grow enough cash crops to pay the rent and was finally evicted. Today he has not enough ground left on which to grow food for himself and his wife the year round.

The diminution of adequate landholdings has resulted in the disappearances of many of the *lacours* (hamlets) that were a familiar sight a few decades ago. Young people traditionally built their houses near the family homesteads until there were five, six, or a dozen houses in a group. There was a natural family community which shared a common social life and the work of the fields. But as the population increased and the landholdings shrank, young people and old began to move away in search of new land, or work in the cities. Often where the lacour remains it is only as a settlement of landless house renters who work where they may for wages.

Economic refugees from rural areas seek wage work in the cities, returning to their original homes only on special festive days for family reunions. The men find employment as gardeners, servants, construction laborers, and stevedores. Some find work on the sugar and sisal plantations, others in craft industries making straw hats, baskets, shoes, chairs, and mahogany ware for export. The struggle in the big city of Port-au-Prince is for many of them worse than the poverty they left behind. There are the inevitable slums and the constant threat of hunger. It is in the big city that one hears most often the words *moin grand gout* (I am hungry), and least often the words *Bondieu bon* (God is good).

The land hunger increases, and the overflow of the mountain settlements continues to move cityward. In former years there was a trend toward emigration across the eastern border into the Dominican Republic, which has a population density roughly one third or one fourth that of Haiti. This trend was checked, temporarily at least, in 1937 by

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Chapter 5: *Services for the Loa and the Family Ancestors* (*pp. 41–74*)

[1]Note that the houngan and the laplace are performing services normally performed by the *petit serviteur*.

[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 165.

[3]Parsons, *Spirit Cult in Haiti*.

[4]Account given by Jean Ravel Pintro.

[5]Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana.

[6]Account given by Voluska Saintvil. A. W. Cardinall notes in his book *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 69): "Trees are in most cases treated with respect. Before a man dare fell one *lot* a canoe he must and invariably does sacrifice to its spirit and apologizes *lot* the harm he is about to do it."

[7]The rite of *rafraichi tête* is conducted periodically *lot* a *mait' tête* after the original *lord tête* ceremony. The purpose is to "refresh" the loa and make him content with his residence in the head of the devotee.

[8]Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, p. 213.

[9]It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain Negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form.

[10]Odette Menescon Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Voudoun Loa," in Appendix A of Deren, *Divine Horsemen*, p. 264.

Chapter 6: *Songs of the Peristyle* (*pp. 75–94*)

[1]This theme is further commented on in chap. 13. Compare with the following excerpt from a Surinam song reported by Herskovits in *Suriname Folk-Lore* (p. 689):

> I have no mother there,
> I have no father there,
> I have no sister there,
> I haven't got anybody there.

Chapter 7: *In the Mapou Tree: Magic, Demons, and Compacts* (*pp. 95–104*)

[1]Simpson, "Haitian Magic," *Social Forces*, October, 1940, p. 97.

[2]Note the coincidence of the term *gris-gris* or *grigri* as used in the United States, where it has the same meaning as *mojo*, or "voodoo" charm.

[3]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 503.

[4]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, p. 243.

Chapter 8: *Mardi Gras and Rara: Jugglers, Maypoles, and Kings* (*pp. 105–109*)

[1]Aubin, *En Haïti*, p. 42.

[2]Marionettes of this kind have been observed in both East and West Africa and are well known in the region of Senegal. I saw a phallic marionette, virtually identical with the Haitian version, in the neighborhood of Khartoum, Sudan.

Chapter 9: *Land and Work* (*pp. 110–121*)

[1]Franklin, *The Present State of Haiti*, p. 362.

[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 300 ff., describes Dahomean polygamous marriage in its various forms. Although Dahomean plural marriage is complex in terms of gifts, obligations, and

relations between the husband and the wife's family, it is nevertheless commonplace for men who can afford it to have more than one wife.

[3]Simpson, in "Sexual and Familial Institutions in Northern Haiti," *American Anthropologist*, October–December, 1942, p. 656, observes that in northern Haiti there are three distinct types of plaçage. "A *femme-caille* shares her mate's house, while a *maman pitite* is a woman who has born children for a man without living in his house. A *femme plaçée* does not live in her consort's house, and she has given him no children." Although none of these women has any legal rights of inheritance, Simpson notes, "moral claims to a man's property stand in descending order for these three classes of plaçées."

[4]Johnston, *The Negro in the New World*.

[5]UNESCO, *The Haiti Pilot Project*, p. 18.

[6]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 515.

[7]The group work patterns of Haiti show a common ancestry with Negro gang work patterns in the United States. While nothing as formalized as the coumbite persists among American Negroes, similarities are striking. The emphasis on rhythm, the swinging of hammers or picks in unison, the need for a singing leader, the responsive chorus, and the frequent use of some kind of percussion to keep time, all derive from a common concept of the nature of group work.

[8]Herskovits, "Some Aspects of Dahomean Ethnology," *Africa*, Vol. V (July, 1932), pp. 266–296.

[9]Cardinall, *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 109), observes that among the Krachi people of Togoland "no man may have sexual intercourse with a woman for seven days before he goes hunting."

[10]An Ashanti story told by Rattray in *Akan-Ashanti Folk-Tales* credits the hedgehog with owning the original hoe; according to this version, the hoe escaped across the sea to the country of the white men, who then possessed the secret. Afterward, the white men brought many hoes to Ashanti.

Chapter 11: *Dancing and Dance Drama* (*pp. 126–136*)

[1]Quoted in Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 73.

[2]Actually a banjo-like instrument of African provenience. The similarity of the word *banza* to *banjo* appears to be more than a coincidence.

[3]Saint-Méry, *De la danse*, as translated by Lillian Moore in "Moreau de Saint-Méry and 'Dance,'" *Dance Index*, October, 1946, p. 238.

[4]Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[5]Brandy or rum with gunpowder is sometimes drunk by persons possessed by the loa Ogoun, deity of war.

[6]Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[7]United Nations photograph no. 62065.

[8]Students of United States Negro life will recognize the word *coundjaille* as a variant of *coonjine*, a dance known on the lower Mississippi. According to one observer, Dr. Willis James of Spelman College, Atlanta, small Negro boys on the docks used to call to the boat passengers:

> "Throw me a nickel
> Throw me a dime
> If you want to see me
> Do the coonjine."

The term *coonjine* is still used to mean hand-loading of cotton bales on river boats. When this loading was done mainly by hand some years ago, the stevedores worked rhythmically in a line and sang. An old man from Louisiana testified that within his own memory the dockside *coonjine* was accompanied by makeshift drums and other percussion.

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369 development of interior transport. The only passable roads in the
494 Republic run from Aux Cayes in the south to the capital, and from
Cap Haïtien in the north to the capital. Transport and communica-
646 tions simply symbolize the power that Port-au-Prince wields, since the same circumstances characterize all national institutional arrangements. Thus Haiti is an extreme example of urban domination, even though its urban population is a fraction of the national total. The consequence has been to keep most of the rural folk cut off from the apparatus that effects national decisions and shapes national policy. Haiti's national legislature, never important in limiting presidential power, is less so today than ever; at best, it had only represented the interests of provincial towns as opposed to the capital, and never the interests of the mass of country people.

701 The local military and judiciary officials possess the formal author-
692 ity vested in them by the state, and their power is very considerable.
642 Few local people would dare challenge their decisions, and the de-
369 vices for appeal against arbitrary exercise of authority are few. Admittedly, at the lowest local level the *chef de section*—who is traditionally appointed by the captain of the military in the *commune* center and is himself a yeoman—is subject to some genuine restraint by local inhabitants. Jean Comhaire-Sylvain (1955:620–24) has argued convincingly that the people of a community are capable of insisting on democratic procedure in those matters requiring decision that come to the attention of local authority. But such decisions have little or nothing to do with larger issues. The yeomanry cannot directly make its wishes felt in national politics; and national politics are conducted almost without reference to the aspirations of the rural masses. It is precisely in the separateness of local life from the mainstream of national decision-making that the political impotence of the yeomanry is demonstrated.

311 Haiti's agrarian nature cannot be expressed simply by saying it is a
423 rural and yeoman country. Haiti does not have a "land problem," as
171 that phrase is conventionally applied to Latin America. It does, it is true, suffer from land shortage, inasmuch as too little land is worked at too low a level of productivity and must feed too many mouths. But a very substantial proportion of the rural masses owns land, or has regular access to it. It is true that most land is held in small plots and without clear title. But those persons who own no land or who lack land to work are proportionally fewer than in any other Carib-

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bean country, and perhaps fewer than in any country in Latin America. The agriculture itself, with the exceptions now of those very few large-scale plantations in sisal and sugarcane, is adapted to small plots and is worked with intensive labor and few tools on hilly land. Compared with agricultural production, especially of cash crops, in most mainland Latin American countries, productivity is low. The yeomanry is conservative in its agricultural practices, and not ready to change unless the changes entail minimal risk and the gains to be realized are clearly demonstrable (Erasmus, 1952:20–26). Yeomen cultivate with three goals in mind: cash income from world-market commodities (for instance, coffee, sisal, vetiver); cash income from items produced for local sale and consumption; and subsistence. While they are heavily involved in production for sale, their crop choices and land-use patterns rest fundamentally on a subsistence orientation. All grow a substantial part of their own food, especially sorghum, maize, sweet potatoes, taro, manioc, malanga (*Xanthosoma sagittifolium* Schott), plantains and bananas, fruits and vegetables, and rice where possible. The land is invested with considerable affect: gods live in it; it is the ultimate security against privation; family members are buried in it; food and wealth come from it; and it is good in itself, even if not cultivated. While such attitudes are common in yeoman societies, Haiti's history of slavery, and of access to land through revolution, has given a special symbolic significance to landowning. Land is valued above all else and is sometimes held "uneconomically"—that is, even when the capital and labor power to work it are lacking.

Leyburn describes better than any other writer the history of land acquisition by the yeoman after 1804. The French plantations lay in ruins, never to recover, while early authoritarian attempts to restore the prerevolutionary economy under native Haitian leadership soon failed. In the course of a century, the Haitian people laid claim to their own soil, while population growth and the adoption of the French tradition of equal inheritance progressively reduced the average size of holdings. In spite of some plantation development after the United States occupation, most agricultural land in Haiti is still employed in small holdings, and "land reform" in the conventional sense—the breaking-up of large estates and the creation of a class of small landholders—is nearly irrelevant to Haiti's needs.

As today's yeomanry cultivates, so its womenfolk market. Nearly

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175 565 took their place in the business life of the towns, sending their children to parish schools. Colored youths served in the colonial constabulary and in the militia, acquiring a knowledge of arms and warfare later to be useful to them.

175 565 423 567 162 Estimates of their wealth vary. Some say that in 1791 they owned a third of all the land in the colony and a fourth of all the slaves; others more conservative put the figure at one fifth of each. Even this is impressive enough to account for much of the growing jealousy of their position. And by 1791 the whites outnumbered them only ten to seven.[5]

562 595 563 175 581 White women in general added their support to a movement instigated by the petits blancs for discrimination against all gens de couleur. Many wives felt resentment against the colored people because of the frequency with which their husbands took colored mistresses.[6] Moreover, the wealth of the colony attracted an immigration of Frenchwomen with marriageable but undowered daughters—in the candid French phrase, "*de filles à marier et sans dot*"—who seem to have assumed that young planters would want white French wives, even though impecunious ones. It was a shock to quite a number of them to discover that a colonial youth might prefer a colored girl who brought a dowry with her.[7]

175 565 829 Indiscreet affranchis often gave additional grounds for resentment against their group. Wishing to dissociate themselves altogether from their Negro ancestry and to be assured of social eminence, some accounted for their dark complexions by reference to obscure Indian progenitors. On this ground many secured letters patent from local government officials, of course on payment of a fee, legally estab-

162 5. The census listed 40,000 whites to 28,000 colored. L. E. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description . . . de la partie française . . . de Saint-Domingue* (Philadelphia, 1797), I, 285, gave the following figures for 1790:

	Square Leagues	*Population*	*Whites*	*Affranchis*	*Slaves*
North	480	195,000	16,000	9,000	170,000
West	820	194,000	14,000	12,500	168,000
South	186	130,000	10,000	6,500	114,000
Totals	1,486	519,000	40,000	28,000	452,000

6. One governor reported to Paris that he considered sexual jealousy the greatest cause of unrest in the colony.

7. See Sir Harry H. Johnston, *The Negro in the New World* (New York, 1910), p. 141.

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tion? Here again, the decision of a leader fixed the direction of Haitian life for decades to come. It is agreed by commentators that overmilitarization was the bane of nineteenth-century Haiti. One tenth of all able-bodied men were constantly in active army service. Moreover, all the male cultivators on plantations must hold themselves in readiness to obey the government's call to arms; ammunition and arms were stored in every parish. A military mentality was nourished, the people early learning the lesson (apparently unchallenged by any liberal) that the army should rule and the people obey.

Although the common soldiers were ex-slaves who, upon dismissal from service, would return to the ranks of agricultural workers, their officers had a higher status. Noncommissioned officers had a long road to travel to eminence, but like the overseers they had at least a glimpse of the promised land of distinction. Captains and generals had this vision within their grasp: they were already of the élite.

In the subcategory of "artisans" were included all the townspeople who carried on crafts or trades. It must be remembered that Haiti had no cities, and that its two largest towns then numbered probably no more than 10,000 people each, so that artisans were not numerous. Since there was a distinction in the arduousness of various pursuits as well as in their financial return there existed in this category, as in the official and military, some chance for social prestige.

The only persons remaining outside the categories mentioned were colored landowners who had held estates in the colonial period. Dessalines took active steps to gain control of most of the land in the country, but at his death in 1806 there were still many of the old proprietors left who were, in the main, determined to hold their land and preserve their dignity as non-laborers.

Assassination by his political foes ended the career of Dessalines only two years after he assumed power. In 1805 he had had himself crowned emperor in imitation of Napoleon, but unlike Napoleon he permitted no nobility. "*Moi seul, je suis noble!*" he replied to ambitious henchmen who asked for the establishment of a peerage. It was the Emperor's tactless handling of the social situation which caused his murder, for he touched sensitive nerves on the raw in attacking property rights, inherited privilege, color distinctions, and social aspirations. The cultivators grumblingly accepted his decrees; the ambitious upper group did not.

The former affranchis fully intended to keep their lands once the

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The former affranchis fully intended to keep their lands once the

175 French were driven out. They could not but be alarmed as they saw
● 423 the steady direction of Dessalines' moves toward a complete mo-
425 nopoly of land ownership by the state. On the very day following
471 independence, a decree proclaimed that all lands owned by France in colonial days now belonged to Haiti. Next (February 7, 1804) Dessalines canceled all sales and donations made to mulattoes and ex-slaves by fleeing French who, in a last despairing effort to salvage something from the wreckage of olden days, had "entrusted" their lands to non-whites. By these two strokes all lands owned by white men before 1803 became state property,[5] but only the second clipped the wings of socially ambitious colored people.

175 Serious uneasiness was caused by the next measure, an order for a
421 general verification of property titles. This would have been a deli-
[693] cate task at best, considering the disorder of the past thirteen years. It was made more complicated to carry out by the serious lack of men trained in law. A few like Balthasar Inginac, later an important adviser and trusted friend of two presidents, were scrupulously conscientious, but by the same token highly unpopular with those whom they deprived of newly (and shadily) acquired "estates." The majority of officials, according to report, listened to the pleading of many who had managed by hook or crook to secure a tenuous claim to vacant properties, validating their fraudulent titles for them. It has been claimed, without rebuttal, that most of these officials were not above taking bribes. When complaint was made to Dessalines of such actions he took steps to make his appointees do their duty, but each confiscation made new enemies for Dessalines.

Some of the mulattoes, citing their French paternity, claimed land formerly owned by their French fathers, even though these parents had never regarded their sons as more than bastards. Dessalines once broke out in furious answer to such a claimant: "*Et les pauvres*
175 *nègres dont les pères sont en Afrique, ils n'auront donc rien!*"
425 The state took over thousands of acres. Those Haitians, colored or
556 black, who aspired to landownership as the foundation of position,

[642] 5. The hatred of the Haitians for the French, and because of them, for white people
[648] in general, was seen not only in these confiscations but in commitments for the future. A proclamation of April 28, 1804, suppressed to "all foreigners" the right to own property in land. The first Haitian constitution, May 20, 1805, took an even more drastic step in saying that "no white man shall henceforth set foot in this country as a landowner," and that "*all* property formerly belonging to a white Frenchman" was now confiscate to the profit of the state.

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prestige, and the normal fulfillment of dignity, were thus frustrated in their efforts. They began to see that the Emperor intended to withhold from them freedom, room for the exercise of ability or power, fullness of life in whatever form. Not only was there little opportunity for achieving prestige; the repressive and contemptuous attitude of Dessalines denied them even ordinary negative respect, without which dignity of life is impossible.

By confiscation of vacant and falsely claimed estates, Dessalines created a vast public domain. He did not hesitate to secure other lands which he considered valuable, resorting to arbitrary and often cruel means—even, it is said, to forgery and murder—to dispossess those who stood firm in their claims. This attack on private property added other dissidents to his enemies—men who felt themselves clearly in the right legally and morally, men who with clear consciences joined the movement to put down a tyrant. The land thus acquired was leased in parcels at an annual rent to the highest bidders.[6]

The Emperor was blind to the normal human needs of the better elements of the population. He deprived them of property in land, the only basis they knew for wealth and independence; he forbade enterprises undertaken by individual initiative; he continually wounded delicate sensibilities. The Emperor was not a man to spare people's feelings, and he dared use the frank but dangerous words Negro and mulatto. He once shouted to a group of pleaders for position: "*Prenez garde à vous, nègres et mulâtres! Nous avons tous combattu contre les blancs; les biens que nous avons conquis en versant notre sang, appartiennent à nous tous; j'entends qu'ils soient partagés avec équité!*" It was not only Dessalines' idea of "equity" which aroused the *anciens libres* but his use of the descriptive nouns they hated.

The colored people were well aware of the hostility of Dessalines to their group. He was inferior to them in learning, and knew it. He was certainly, by the world's judgment, inferior to them in birth. His very deficiencies by comparison with his colored subjects made him hate them more: for example, he was passionately fond of dancing, preferring compliments on his grace to praise of his statesmanship; yet his awkwardness on the ballroom floor even

6. Although there are no records extant to show the exact amount of land which Dessalines succeeded in bringing into state ownership, it is estimated that more than two thirds of all the productive plantations in Haiti in 1806 were in the hands of the government. Other estimates range as high as ninety per cent.

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175 work until noon. A two-hour siesta followed, but from two until
566 sunset there was steady work. Only after evening prayers was the
512 worker free. During the day no cultivator might leave his task except
466 for direst need. The lame and the halt were not required to till the fields, but must carry around buckets of drinking water, take care of the children, and do odd jobs about the estate.

175 Christophe made a steady and, in the main, successful effort to
566 explain to the people the necessity of hard work on the plantation.
466 As with the noblemen, the serfs knew precisely what was expected of them, and why. Their regimentation was strict, but understandable. It was clearly stipulated that if a worker shirked his job he was to be put in prison and made to do forced labor there. Laziness in the fields was to be punished by strokes from the overseer's liane. Hard and steady work was demanded during the whole thirteen years of Christophe's rule, but only rarely was there complaint, as there had been constantly under Dessalines, of cruelty on the part of overseers.

175 The quarter part of the total crop of any plantation was to go to
465 the workers as wages, and, since production increased and prices rose, this quarter which they were free to spend as they pleased provided a powerful incentive to further industry. As compared with anything they had known before, the workers were now recipients of an ample income. On the plantations they cultivated
[423] the money crops of sugar and coffee. In addition, each family had
[241] its own garden plot on which to raise the food crops—yams, plantains, beans, and bananas—for personal use.[9]

175 Christophe was so far ahead of his time that he tried to introduce
177 British methods of agriculture into his kingdom. The results were
407 insignificant. The plough, although obviously superior in efficiency
178 to the hoe, eliminated the sociable companionship of working in unison, and demanded horses and mules which the country lacked. The innovations were consequently too radical to be accepted. In the main, the agricultural methods of the kingdom continued to be those familiar in slave days.

175 Thirteen years of careful direction can fix many patterns of social
178 routine. One of Christophe's rules was that no cultivator attached to

[241] 9. The staples of other countries, such as Irish potatoes, wheat, barley, and oats, did not flourish in Haiti. On the large plantations, indigo and cotton, which had been money crops in the French régime, were generally neglected, as they had been in the time of Dessalines.

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171 feudal holdings to absolute ownership of land by the influential. It is
175 strangely paradoxical that an aristocrat, the light-skinned Pétion,
631 representing the cultured group in society, broke the economic power of his own aristocratic class and made the former slaves not serfs but peasants. It is doubtful whether he intended either result.

175 Alexandre Pétion was the antithesis of Haiti's three eminent blacks
643 in all but military skill. Toussaint's genius as a fighter lay in his
159 surprise moves, Dessalines' in his recklessness, Christophe's in his bulldog determination; but Pétion was a great general because he knew when to retire and so lead his enemy into an exposed position. The three Negroes had been born in slavery; Pétion, coming of a cultured and sophisticated affranchi family, grew up in France. Dessalines was a crude ruffian by comparison, while in the face of Pétion's suavity Christophe's impetuousness seemed rankly uncouth. Where they bludgeoned, Pétion persuaded; where they hacked their way through opposition in the determination to gain an end, he graciously yielded and so won new friends. Tactful at every point, he survived even such contretemps as his refusal of the hand of the Emperor's daughter.

As leader of a young nation, Pétion might almost be said to have had too broad an understanding of human nature. He was a gentle ruler over his people; when they erred he did not punish or upbraid, but excused their misdeeds by assuming the cause to be some fatal compulsion over which they momentarily had no control. He had no wish to drive the nation to "success." Neither did he care to use his position for personal aggrandizement. His mind was supple and practical, disdainful of abstractions, undeluded by resounding slogans, fertile in compromise, not finical as to means, always unsurprised, exquisitely tactful. When crises arose to dismay his ministers, Pétion's philosophic calm was undisturbed.

Cynically tolerant, he gave office to political enemies if they chanced to be able. A representative of the topmost class of society,
[648] he managed to moderate antagonisms based on color. He gave
[87] sanctuary and financial succor to the Spanish-American liberator, Simón Bolívar; he established the foundations of an educational
[423] system; he defended the state against Christophe's power; he ruled constitutionally; and he gave land to his people, even to the humblest of them. When he died, his subjects for miles around came into Port-au-Prince, where they stood weeping about his palace, refusing

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to be comforted. They had lost their best friend and their "*petit père.*" 175

Dessalines would be emperor and Christophe king, but Pétion was content to remain a simple president. He was an anomaly—as if a Parisian of delicate sensibilities and mellow tolerance had somehow come to power with a darker skin in an alien land. 643 159

He has been highly praised and is worthy of eulogy. The fact remains that his country was rich when he came to power and poor when he died; united in 1806 and divided in 1818. Candor compels his admirers to admit that many of the calamities of the social and economic history of Haiti can be traced back to Pétion's administration.

The crucial act of Pétion was to parcel the land. From that policy flowed the enduring consequences which became the predominant socio-economic characteristics of Haiti. 175 223 421

Until Pétion's time the island had never known small properties. Large estates had been the mark of social distinction in the French colony; Toussaint had kept the plantations large,[18] while Dessalines and Christophe had absorbed more and more land for the state, leasing it out in great blocks. The constitution of 1806[19] gave no indication of impending change, for it specifically declared all land to be the property of the Haitian nation. Within three years, however, the process of dividing and giving away the state's lands was well under way. 178

It would be illuminating to know what mental process in Pétion moved him to make so radical an about-face in land policy. The reasons he gave were, first, that the people had ably defended their country and so deserved a reward; second, that he wanted all the people to have a vital interest in the actual soil itself.[20] These may have been his only reasons. Others suggest themselves: the republic owed wages to its large standing army, which were more easily paid in land, of which the state had much, than in cash, of which it had little and progressively less; it would be much easier to keep peace in a country where men were free than where they were serfs; and the example of free ownership in the South would seem alluring enough

18. He permitted the leasing of plantations as small as fifty acres if the soil were especially rich. [427]

19. December 27. This document was largely the handiwork of Pétion.

20. The former explanation he consistently gave in his various messages to the Senate proposing progressive parcelings of the land; the latter he wrote to a friend, saying that he wished to "*enraciner chez tous l'amour du sol.*"

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to Christophe's serfs in the North to cause defections ultimately sufficient to win the civil war for the republic.[21]

Those who would read into Pétion's democratization of land tenure the liberal convictions of a far-sighted statesman must ignore the evidence of his earliest land acts. For two or three years nothing was so apparent as that Pétion wished to please his friends, the mulatto aristocrats. He not only had the Senate restore to their former owners all lands of which Dessalines had despoiled them, but he also agreed to a law authorizing a cash payment up to the full value of crops planted and then lost during the last year of the Emperor's rule.[22] By these concessions the President immediately wiped out the rancor left behind him by Dessalines, reversed that ruler's whole land policy, gained the support of thousands of aspirants for social position, and bound in personal loyalty to his régime all the colored leaders.

He went further. Insecurity of tenure under Dessalines had worried landlords who were not actually mulcted of their estates, and so the President undertook to guarantee security. Thereafter all sales of land were to be registered by government deed, and so confirmed to the purchaser in perpetuity; government courts would be empowered to settle disputes over payment of rents; proof of the death of the testator must be forthcoming before wills could be probated. Not even the single limitation on ownership—that if the proprietor of an estate should remain away from Haiti the state might lease his property and receive the income from it—disturbed them, for they were patriots enough, and poor enough, to feel that Haitians should live at home.

As if this were not enough to please the landed gentry, the tax

21. Saint-Rémy, *Pétion et Haïti* (Paris, 1854–57), V, 165–166, suggests another reason, namely, that people will always be more ready to defend land they actually own than for an impersonal state. This sounds logical, but certainly the Negroes had fought ardently enough to drive out the French in 1803, landless though they were. Saint-Rémy continues: "And moreover, was it not time to dismember the enormous plantations which still bore the names of those colonists whose mother country might still at any moment descend to reclaim their heritage? And could this dismemberment be achieved otherwise than by giving the people an honorable title to it?"

22. Two successive laws, February 9 and March 16, 1807, achieved these ends. The former specified that all persons who, by purchase or gift or legacy, had acquired land before November 1, 1803 (when Rochambeau surrendered) or since February 7, 1804 (when Dessalines had ordered a confirmation of all titles) should be newly assured of their rights to such holdings. There was a single, possibly unimportant, limitation: the acquisition must have been *by* Haitians *from* Haitians.

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As if this were not enough to please the landed gentry,

the tax

of one quarter of the crop was abolished.[23] This tax worked moderately well on great plantations with hundreds of workers and a large annual budget, but it bore heavily, sometimes unfairly, on smaller farms. To give up the government's fourth meant a tremendous drop in state revenues, but this was to be compensated by a new tax of ten *gourdes* (a gourde was then worth about five cents) on every thousand pounds of coffee sold in the country, and by an export tax on coffee. A man might raise sugar or make syrup, tafia (raw rum), and distilled rum, without paying any tax at all. Coffee culture requires little careful cultivation, while sugar required a great deal; removing the tax from sugar would, it was hoped, encourage the cultivation of cane. The President was putting into practice the then novel idea of Adam Smith that the more freedom an enterpriser is allowed, the more he will produce, so that by pursuing his own self-interest he unintentionally benefits the state. To know definitely what taxes will be imposed, reasoned Pétion, is more of an inducement to a landlord than to face the double fluctuation of crop prices and the state's quarter. Small proprietors and sugar planters were now, like the larger landholders, attracted to Pétion's régime. 175 651 471

His final boon to proprietors, and one which Adam Smith would not have approved, was that of governmental subsidies in bad years. When prices of coffee and sugar were low, the state bought large quantities of these crops for the purpose of raising their price. The result was to increase the debt and to make the people feel that the state was responsible for individual economic success, rather than their own efforts. 175 652

These first concessions were all made to the important people of the South—to the mulattoes, families of the old régime, persons who desired economic prominence in order to bolster social position. The small folk of the Republic came next. The President recommended to the Senate the abolition of the law dating back to Toussaint's time which prohibited the holding of plantations of less than a minimum acreage. The Senate accordingly[24] reduced the minimum holding to thirty acres.[25] Actually this legislation did not bring 175 423

23. By a law of March 9, 1807. This tax was instituted by Toussaint and continued in effect by Dessalines and Christophe.

24. On April 21, 1807.

25. Or ten *carreaux*. Toussaint's law had allowed properties of fifty acres only in cases of exceptional fertility of land. See Note 18.

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175 about any radical change, for few of the common people could find
●423 money to pay for thirty acres, while the well-to-do all wanted more.

[433] Every concession desired by the landed proprietors had now been granted—with the result that economic prosperity was showing a steady decline. It was only when this fact was abundantly apparent that Pétion took the step for which he has since been so fulsomely praised and so roundly criticized. By permission of the Senate, in a law of December 30, 1809, he began to give away state lands: fifteen acres of cultivable soil to every soldier in the army, to be held in perpetuity, with proportionately larger grants to higher officers.

Opposition immediately arose to this measure, and from expected quarters. The owners of great estates protested that if soldiers had farms, other people would soon want (and receive) them, leaving no workers on the large plantations. Social climbers protested, for when practically anyone can own land there is no particular social distinction in having it. Pétion's minister, Bonnet, opposed the permanent alienation of the chief financial resource of the state, proposing instead the grant of long-term loans to soldiers for the purchase of land. Pétion was not insensible to the logic of some of these objections; he said, however, that a nation which relied upon the willing labor of masses of its citizens was ultimately stronger than one which depended upon forced labor of any kind. As for the socially aspiring, he could ignore their arguments since they were not publicly and openly expressed. To his minister he pointed out that loans, if made, would in all probability never be repaid, so that one might as well face the reality at once and give people the land.

All through the next decade Pétion made new and democratic divisions of the land. Able generals were given large tracts, partly as wages, partly as a stimulus to productive agriculture on their part. By another enactment, military invalids were rewarded with land. Eventually most of the rest of the public domain was either put on sale at such moderate price that thousands of humble Haitians might purchase their bit, or was effectively occupied by people who "squatted" far up in the hills, out of official view.

175 The democratization of land led to new adjustments in the eco-
471 nomic system. People who owned small farms would obviously not
24 continue to raise sugar and coffee, but rather turn to food crops for immediate family consumption. Only the large plantations could carry on the cultivation of money crops. These in turn, no longer able

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they even comment upon his unselfish generosity, which seems to have been entirely free of any desire for personal gain. They accuse him rather of taking the easiest course—that of trying to pacify every group in the republic: the masses, by giving them land and removing any external compulsion to work on it; the army, by making their enlistment profitable; the aspiring aristocrats, by validating their titles to estates and not challenging their prestige with a demand for responsibility. Strong states, the critics argue, are built on lines of discipline, not of perpetual yielding.

From an economic point of view a more valid criticism would ask the simple question: what was the practical result of his policies? Under the three previous Negro rulers agriculture had prospered, for these men kept state lands intact and forced the population to work; under Pétion, on the contrary, prosperity steadily declined with the division of land and the removal of compulsion. To expect a body of illiterate, inexperienced ex-slaves automatically to develop such economic virtues as industry, foresight, and thrift in a land which never knew any of these is not realistic, but merely quixotic. The Haitian critic Magloire implies that Pétion was either completely and cynically indifferent to common graft or else naïvely confident that men newly free would somehow be preternaturally honest. He goes into detail:

> Lands were distributed free, without order or method, each person taking what came his way and establishing himself as he could; graft and jobbery, under varied guises, governed the granting of concessions. As for properties in the towns, some people established themselves in upstairs apartments and others in ground-floor ones, without bothering to think of the lawsuits which might result from this disorder. In the sales made by the State, 50 and 100 and 200 gourdes were paid for real estate which was worth 10,000 and 20,000 and 40,000 gourdes or more. The administration put up for sale the property of towns, of communes, and of the State. Even buildings occupied in colonial days by officials, buildings whose construction had cost considerable sums, were bestowed on the people. . . .
>
> By a too great fractioning of the national domain, and carried away by the influence of false egalitarian and democratic ideas, Pétion brought about what a modern writer calls "the forcible neglect of agriculture"[32] throughout the Republic.[33]

32. J. N. Léger, *Haiti: son histoire et ses détracteurs* (New York, 1907), p. 162.
33. Auguste Magloire, *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social* (Port-au-Prince, 1909), pp. 260–263.

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of contracts. It is worthy of note that soldiers assigned to estates were responsible for their actions not to any civil authority but only to their military superiors. 175 692 24

On paper, at least, the Code meant for the worker a return to the serfdom instituted by Toussaint and continued by his black successors.[41] Boyer's new system was richer in detail than Christophe's, but it clearly owed much to that monarch's practical scheme. There is a vital difference, however: serfdom under the Negro rulers worked because discipline was enforced; Boyer's effort to reintroduce it was an abject failure. 175 566 671

Many commentators have praised the Code as able and intelligent. Since the effort to revive familiar practice did not succeed, it is important to understand the reasons for failure of an almost perfect paper plan; one similar to the system which had functioned in all Haiti from 1798 to 1806, and in northern Haiti until 1820.

To begin with—and this was in great measure its final downfall—the workers simply ignored it. When Toussaint had first introduced serfdom, many Negroes quietly moved up into remote hills where they would be out of sight; a good number had remained away from surveillance, raising children who cherished their own independence of action. The influence of this group gradually spread. Moreover, for nineteen years in the South, ever since Pétion had first become president, the masses had had increasing experience of economic freedom. There is no doubt that the majority of the people preferred a low standard of living with liberty to great national prosperity depending on personal compulsion. Northern "cultivators" had known force and efficiency under Christophe, but they, too, preferred their five-year experience of easygoing life in reunited Haiti. Such complete, antagonistic inertia toward the law made its enforcement impossible. Individual cases of sabotage might be dealt with, but not wholesale refusal of the group to sign contracts.

Aside from this, too much land had already been given away throughout at least half the country to make possible a fair and efficient functioning of the Code. Any forced-labor system would have had to depend on large plantations. Since Pétion had divided 175 423

41. R. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, "La République d'Haïti: ses dernières révolutions; sa situation actuelle," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, XV, No. 4 (Nov., 1845), p. 15, called it "*l'inféodation à la glèbe*," which it certainly was. The whole Code was designed to prevent any further parceling of the land and any further lapse into idleness on the part of the workers. [114]

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175 423 up so many of these, there was no way short of a revolution to reconstitute the now parceled estates. Obviously the Code did not envisage the control of serfs by small property owners, yet there were more small owners than large.

175 184 466 In the third place, the Spanish-speaking masses of the eastern part of the island had never experienced the kind of forced labor with which most Haitians had been at one time or another familiar. Their noncoöperation made enforcement difficult.

175 647 Finally, the administration of so detailed a plan called for the establishment, at once and yet in complete order, of a fully trained corps of bureaucrats, perfectly coöperating with each other, most of them educated, and all incorruptibly honest. If every literate person in the state had been drafted for service, Boyer could not have filled all the offices required by the Code.

175 465 434 After brief and piecemeal experience with the law in operation, moreover, even the few remaining large landholders turned against it. While they approved the provisions for forced labor, they discovered that to turn over to the workers a quarter or half of the annual crop, in a falling world market, gave too slim a profit.[42] Without the support even of its original sponsors, failure of the law was inevitable.

175 648 652 These factors alone would have been enough to kill the Code; but its real death blow came from an entirely different quarter. The year before the agricultural laws were passed, Boyer had achieved what he considered to be a political master stroke. He had made a financial settlement with France whereby Haiti, in return for a large sum in cash and regular annual payments for sixty years thereafter, should receive full recognition of independence from France; also the former mother country would renounce all claims to any properties in the country. Boyer had felt that the chief debilitating influence on the political and economic life of his people was the constant dread that France might one day return to claim her lost colony. To rid the nation of that incubus, therefore, seemed to him a high feat of statesmanship, no matter what the financial cost.[43]

[433] [24] 42. Coffee, now the staple crop of Haiti, was meeting competition from the other coffee-producing countries of the world. To put the sugar manufactories into working condition again called for more money than was available.

[643] [644] 43. Boyer's hand was forced to a certain extent by France, which had been exerting diplomatic pressure upon Haiti; the President, however, seemed to regard the settlement as a distinct coup.

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175 The result was entirely different from Boyer's expectations. As a
114 French critic graphically puts it, the Haitians
703

> who had never had more than a borrowed energy—that inspired by fear of French invasion—when they saw themselves freed, by a solemn treaty, from all attack on their coasts, seemed to allow their arms to drop relaxed at their sides, saying, *Let's take a rest.* The soldier who up till now had squeezed his body into a uniform and had subjected himself to European discipline, shouldering his arms, staring straight ahead as if seeing nothing, now began to leave unbuttoned the uniform which choked him, dragged a mattress into his sentry-box so that he might sleep through his watch, and let his cross slip to the earth never to pick it up again.[44]

175 In short, the Haitian army as a disciplined force ceased to exist, and
701 with it all authority of its officers. Boyer had counted upon the
703 army to enforce the provisions of the Code Rural, but now a soldier's
671 life was a paid sinecure. By gaining political security Haiti had in-
433 advertently lost its last chance of economic prosperity through a system of forced labor.

175 Wherever the Code was put into partial operation, revenue from
423 plantations continued to decline. The price of real estate dropped
433 proportionately. It was a simple matter for workmen who had
435 signed contracts to avoid carrying out their stipulations, and just as
466 simple to evade the law requiring fifteen acres' minimum for a single holding. Practically every Haitian wanted to own a bit of land; once he had acquired his bit, however small, he had (or so he felt) earned an exemption from directed labor.

175 Only on estates near the few big towns, where government
671 officials were concentrated, was there much pretense of trying to
625 enforce the Code. Sentries at the gates of Port-au-Prince were
661 authorized to confiscate plantains, yams, or fruit brought by any worker who, in contravention of the Code, had strayed to market on a forbidden day, but sentries soon acquired the habit of not seeing countryfolk who passed the gates. Reports kept cropping up that rural policemen were robbing poor cultivators of their coffee under pretense of protecting them from the penalties for breach of the law; this suggests that the Code was used rather for graft than for the stimulation of agriculture.

175 By and large, however, the Code was merely ignored. Agents
671 could not be found who were willing to stand in any community
625
535
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44. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, Saint-Domingue, II, 181.

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against almost unanimous public opinion opposing enforcement. In 1828 it was reported that dancing, which the Code had strictly limited to week ends, was a nightly diversion near the capital. One of the principal dancing resorts was the house of a captain of rural police, the very man who was supposed to repress such amusements.[45]

Boyer had done his best, and his best was merely a good piece of office work. When his Code failed to operate, he could think of nothing further to suggest for the economic rehabilitation of Haiti. The last fifteen years of his administration witnessed a gradual lapse into that small-scale farming which was to be characteristic of Haiti for the remainder of the nineteenth century. By comparison with former standards, production and steady industry had both fallen off since Boyer came to the presidency. The testimony of visiting foreigners is unanimous on the decline of industry.

The British consul, Mackenzie, said in 1827 that there was very little field labor then being done, and that only elderly people, principally aged "Guinea Negroes" long accustomed to steady work, carried on the tradition. No measures of the government could induce young people born in Haiti to labor or to change from their "habitual vagrancy."[46] Another Englishman, James Franklin, remarked in 1828 that land values throughout the republic had greatly declined because no one could make a profit within any moderate time. Labor was high, he writes, for ordinary wages did not attract the workers who preferred idleness. (This word is certainly unfair: it was work at their own bidding which they preferred, not idleness.) Government lands lay untilled, no one evincing the slightest desire to purchase or utilize them. Franklin continues:

> Land also in the possession of individuals is similarly circumstanced; and those who are large proprietors cannot effect a sale of any produce which they may have beyond the quantity which they can consume; consequently a proprietor may have an immense extent of land, and yet be quite unable to derive any benefit from it by cultivation, or to convert it into money, for the want of purchasers. Thus . . . there is no individual wealth in the country, because, although a man may have very large landed possessions, still those possessions are unavailable, for they produce him nothing, as he can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them.

45. Although dancing is spoken of here as an amusement, it is highly probable that at least a part of it had connection with the Voodun religion.

46. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti* (London, 1830), I, 100. Mackenzie is clearly exaggerating, unless by "field labor" he means work on plantations, in contrast to farming on small plots.

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can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them. There are some instances of proprietors leasing their lands to persons who undertake to cultivate them, for which they receive about one-third of the produce; but this is far from being general, and I imagine can only be accomplished by military men who have the command of troops, and who are thereby enabled to till them by working parties daily sent out for that purpose.[47]

An interesting side light is provided by a Quaker visitor, Candler, who in 1842 wrote that he was struck by the entire equality which seemed to exist between servant and master. Every workman was addressed in courteous manner, as "*mon fils*."[48] On inquiry, Candler was told that the profits of planting were good that year, laborers were scarce, and it was therefore "necessary to conciliate all by kindness, or no work would be done."

A particularly grim account of the state of cultivation near the close of Boyer's administration (1842) is given by a Frenchman:

> The fields of Haiti are dead. There where under slavery thousands of tons of sugar were made, now one sees only a few crops and a little syrup to turn into raw rum. Lively growths of cactus cover with thorns the acres of cane, of fields, of pastures deserted by the hand of man; the cactus invades the towns, coming even up to the heart of the cities, flourishing in the midst of ruins, as if to insult the inhabitants. . . . On the one hand, no one cultivates with regularity, because everyone is discouraged by the thefts of cane and fruit by people without any moral discipline, and in a country without police; while on the other hand, people complain of being poor, and of not being able to devote enough money to indispensable improvements. . . . And if the proprietors cannot even make work progress, imagine the condition of the poor![49]

As the people grew individually poorer, the value of the land sank until it was useless for an owner to try to prevent squatting on his estate. Holdings grew smaller and smaller, in spite of the prohibition on sales of real estate in parcels less than fifteen acres. Good land might be had in every part of the island quite cheaply, much of it even from the government which had enacted the restrictive law. Any man not satisfied with his condition as a paid laborer might, if

47. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti (Saint Domingo)*, (London, 1828), p. 313.
48. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti* (London, 1842), p. 37.
49. V. Schoelcher, *Colonies étrangères et Haïti: résultats de l'émancipation anglaise* (Paris, 1842), II, 263 ff.

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he could save or borrow the money, buy a small patch and become a freeholder in his own right. And in the mountains, if one were willing to endure isolation, one could get much land by squatter's claim.

A vivid indication of the declining economic condition of the country will be found in the actual scale of real-estate prices. In the eighteen-twenties the finest land in the republic did not sell for more than $60 an acre, even when contiguous to a port for shipping or extremely fertile. Such a price would have been ridiculous in the days of the French colony. Farms in the plains and mountains, suitable for cocoa and cotton, could be had in Boyer's time for $20 or $30 an acre in any quantity from ten to five hundred acres. In the rich Artibonite Valley small plots for horticultural purposes sold for $40 an acre; indigo and cotton land rarely brought over $30; and a complete cotton plantation which had borne richly in colonial days sold for from $12 to $20 an acre. In the North, despite its fertility and more careful cultivation under Christophe, land seldom brought more than $40 or $45, while pasture lands could scarcely find purchasers at $40. A lot in Port-au-Prince with a frontage of sixty feet and a depth of fifty, well situated for trading purposes, brought only $200.[50] Fifteen years later even these prices were fantastically high, for by then no one was wealthy enough to purchase an estate.

5. *Lapse into Peasantry* (*1827–1843*)

"Peasant" is one of those words whose meaning everyone knows yet whose definition is never precise. It clearly carries the connotation of farming the land by conservative, generally uneducated, persons whose families have for generations lived on the same plot of earth without any great ambition to move away or change their economic lot. It means small ownership. And most particularly it means a comparatively low social status, for we think of peasantry as existing only in those countries which have a clear-cut social class system, with a stratification which would make it difficult for a person to move from one class to another. His land is to the peasant both home and living; his household is dependent almost solely upon the product of its own labor. He is generally conceived to be too complacent, if not too ignorant or too dull, to take advantage of commercial opportunities which might bring him wealth. "It is increasingly

50. These figures for 1824–28 are from Franklin, *op. cit.*, p. 314.

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recognized that the really important characteristics peculiar to the peasant are his sentiments and attitudes, the intense attachment to his native soil and family tradition, which, even in the economic sphere, take precedence over the desire for individual advancement and gain."[51] 463 241

Haiti in 1804 was still a country of large estates, and Dessalines and Christophe strove to keep it so. Under the active generosity of Pétion and the passive indifference of Boyer after his Code Rural had failed, few great plantations were left intact. The recorded donations of these two presidents to their generals, civil functionaries, and lesser officers, are as follows:[52] 175 24 423 671 425

134 grants of 150 carreaux (about 450 acres). Total: 59,300 acres.

176	35	105	18,480
639	30	90	57,510
711	25	75	54,325
2,322	20	60	139,320
8,000	5	15	120,000

Grand total: 448,935 acres.

Haiti followed French law rather than British, so that the rule of primogeniture did not prevail. It requires only a moment's reflection to see that even within a single generation the thousands of small properties noted in the table would be subdivided many times, since a father apportioned his land to all his sons. By 1842 it is probable that not a single plantation of the size common in colonial times was still intact.[53] On the testimony of numerous government officials and commandants of arrondissements, it was estimated in that year that 46,610 small landed properties were under fair cultivation.[54] If the population at that time be estimated at 800,000, seven eighths of whom were engaged in agriculture, there would accordingly be about fifteen people (including children) to each rural property. But 175 428 178 423 [311] [162]

A large number of small estates are left out of this account, which are said to be *badly* cultivated, or neglected. Taking the number of each separate 175 241

51. C. von Dietze, "Peasantry," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, XII, 50.

52. This table is compiled from figures cited in Armand Thoby, *La Question agraire en Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1888), *passim*, and Dr. F. Dalencour, *Le Sauvetage national par le retour à la terre* (Port-au-Prince, 1923), p. 18.

53. See Raymond Renaud, *Le Régime foncier en Haïti* (Paris, 1934), pp. 42–45.

54. Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

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175 241 family on an average, at 5 persons, husband, wife, and three children, we arrive at the conclusion, that the head of every third family in the state is engaged in cultivating his own freehold; a proportion of independent [311] proprietors, such as perhaps scarcely any other country in the world can exhibit. The number of acres cultivated by these small proprietors, varies [231] from 9 to 30; many of them keep horses, cows, and goats: they raise suffi- [437] cient provisions of the bread kind, such as yams, plantains, and bananas, for the main support of their families; they kill hogs for meat, and they dispose [431] of their coffee, cotton, hemp, castor oil, and fruit, at the public market for money, to purchase clothing, furniture, and other necessaries. The houses [342] they live in, though poorly furnished, are decent habitations; and many of them have gardens attached, neatly fenced in with bamboo, or with log-wood, or aloe hedges.[55]

175 423 427 If these figures are even approximately accurate, the majority of the people of Haiti had not yet become peasants in the sense of being landowners, for in the statement cited only a third of the people owned their land. Another large group, however, possibly a third of the population, were squatters, living on land which technically belonged to someone else but from which they were never ejected. The remaining third, excluding the town and village dwellers, were in the intermediate stage between hirelings and peasants. Some worked for a given rate of wages, but the larger number worked for shares of the produce on the land of large proprietors.

175 473 427 24 The crop-sharing system (Americans of the twentieth century call it share-cropping) of the 'thirties and 'forties was an automatic but temporary adjustment worked out in perfect disregard of the Code Rural. In general, two arrangements prevailed. By one the laborers worked in return for half the total produce of the estate, raising food for themselves in gardens provided by the owner; under the other they worked for a quarter of the produce, the proprietor guaranteeing to keep them in provisions. There was no general concurrence in Haiti at the time as to which plan was the more economical to the laborer and his family. Certainly both schemes were prejudicial to large crops of coffee and sugar, and therefore to the economic prosperity of the proprietors and the state; since this was so, the crop-sharing expedient was short-lived. Workers participating in it lived in the huts and cabins which, under the old régime, had been inhabited by their slave ancestors. As these fell to pieces others, cheaper and less soundly built, were constructed to take their place.

The crop-sharing system, economically debilitating though it was,

55. *Ibid.*

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175 563 564 [178] ions. Intermarriages between persons of widely different color became extremely rare, being regarded by many lighter Haitians with actual disgust. Everyone with social pretensions wanted to be whiter. Dr. Brown stated it baldly: "The pure negro seeks to ally himself to the griffe,[59] the griffe to the mulatto, the mulatto to the quateroon, the latter to a mustif, and the mustif, having but an untraceable tinge of African blood in his organization, is uproariously indignant if he is accused of having any at all."[60] An educated young black of several generations of free parents was scornfully turned down by a lighter-skinned woman considerably his inferior in breeding and wealth because her children would be darker than herself—"*petits enfants griffes*," as she put it. The prejudices of colored people against blacks was almost as great, if not quite as intense, as the former prejudice of whites against colored people in colonial times. No one forgot that there had been black as well as colored freedmen in the colony; but it was much simpler for people of color to claim their long career as élite than for blacks to do so.

The attitude of upper-class Haitians toward whites in the midst of all this color prejudice was an interesting mixture. On the one hand, all good Haitians professed to dread a return of the whites; on the other, they welcomed white businessmen in the country. In a certain respect the whites were regarded much as were the Jews of Europe in the Middle Ages: they were wealthy—and therefore legitimate [673] objects of pillage, necessary evils for the sake of finance. Theft from a [671] white man by government action was a service to the state. Laws [641] were consequently varied from time to time with the sole purpose of profiting from a foreigner's position. True, the trader might protest [423] to his home government, but if England or the United States took a strong stand, Haiti could always retreat; if those governments did not stand firm, Haiti had gained. In the Haitian courts the whites had little show, for Article 38 of the Constitution forbade them to own real estate or to become citizens; they might not even hold a lease for more than ten years; and they might not marry Haitian women.

Nevertheless, the analogy with mediaeval Jews falls down at one vital point: whites were not viewed with contempt. Quite the con-

[192] 59. A term denoting three parts in four of Negro blood. This term as well as "mustif" goes back to colonial white society; neither was, or is, used by cultivated Haitians.

60. Brown, *op. cit.*, II, 283–284.

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175 178 565 433 439 [423] [428]

fortunes, that is, a few thousands of dollars, for a small number of élite, and to make the presidency a position economically rewarding enough to justify revolutionary conspiracies. The growth of a peasantry set in train during the long régime of Boyer continued, unbroken even by the numerous insurrections, until fixed in the mores. Land owned by the countryfolk was divided and redivided among their heirs, so that even holdings of moderate size became smaller.

175 643 566 423

Not one of the twenty-two rulers following Boyer made the slightest effort to return the country to the forced labor system of Dessalines and Christophe. They seemed to recognize the inevitability of a peasant way of life, or at least the impossibility of luring the people back to directed labor after a long experience of freedom. On the contrary, several presidents still further parceled the land.

175 643 423

President Guerrier, for example, the very year after Boyer was deposed, put on sale at moderate prices those state lands in the North not reserved for public use.[5] If the revolutionaries of 1843 had hoped to bring back Christophe's system of forced labor, their hopes were doomed to disappointment because of the state's need of immediate income. Christophe's state land areas were now broken up in the one part of the country where a few large plantations still existed.

175 643 421 423

President Geffrard in 1862 gave his blessing to small ownership, the basis of peasantry. Whereas Pétion's laws had prohibited sales of land in parcels less than fifteen acres, Geffrard's law regularized the leasing and sale of national property in lots of fifteen acres *at most*. Geffrard was the first president openly to admit that many government lands had been lost to citizens by squatting. In an endeavor to give legality to land held by squatters' rights, his law demanded that squatters register their claims, announcing that within a short time there would be no further dismemberment of the national patrimony except by grants and sales.[6] Few registrations were made, however, for the Haitian peasant had already acquired a suspicion of legal documents he could not read or understand, and he could see no reason for legalizing a status in which, with the squatter's tenacity and inertia, he already felt himself secure.

Haiti was in constant financial straits. Money had to be borrowed

5. By a law of September 23, 1844.
6. Law of August 14, 1862. The articles cited here are 2 and 4.

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Haiti was in constant financial straits. Money had to be borrowed

abroad; then paid back at the promised time or a foreign warship would appear at some Haitian port. The steady drain of annual indemnity payments to France,[7] the cost of subduing revolutionary movements, and the large sum eaten up even in times of peace by wages to the army made successive presidents continue to yield government land for small sums of ready cash, in spite of Geffrard's announcement that no more state lands would be alienated. Nissage Saget, coming to power by a successful revolution, paid out fifteen acres to each soldier who fought in his campaign in the South.[8] The straits of the government resembled those of the Continental Congress in America during the Revolution. 175 652 [171]

Another impulse to parcel the land came during the administration of President Lysius Salomon (1879–88). The debt to France had finally, after half a century, been paid off; that incubus removed, Salomon instituted numerous reforms, financial, military, educational. On February 26, 1883, he signed a law by which every citizen of Haiti might conceivably become a landowner even if he lacked money to buy land. Upon receipt of a written agreement to cultivate certain tropical crops—specifically, sugar, coffee, cotton, cacao, and tobacco—the government would grant provisional title to a portion of fifteen to twenty-five acres of land taken from the public domain. The grant became final if, after a period of from two to five years, three quarters of the land had been effectively cultivated. 175 643 671 423 [648]

Five hundred requests were made in 1884 for such grants, and twelve hundred in the following year.[9] Thereafter one finds no records of applications for land; the peasants had discovered the hidden trap in this apparent generosity. How could a peasant with a tiny farm lacking implements and tools, not to mention ready cash, be expected to cultivate important crops on fifteen or twenty acres of land? He would have to cut down trees, uproot wild plants, fertilize the ground, purchase equipment and seeds, and then wait several years for a crop. As Thoby says, "And even then he was not a

7. See above, pp. 70–71.

8. Law of July 12, 1870. In August of the same year, Nissage required an inventory to be taken of state lands remaining.

9. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Manuel d'histoire d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1934), p. 317, cites these figures. They are contested by Dr. F. Dalencour, *Le Sauvetage national par le retour à la terre*, p. 31, who maintains that only 800 applications came in altogether. Here, as elsewhere, Haitian records are incomplete. [114] [423]

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175 proprietor in the true sense of the word, for he might not change his
643 crops and cultivate bananas, potatoes, yams, peas, or other food-
671 stuffs."[10] Critics of Salomon point out that these conditional grants
423 were designed to make of the peasant a simple fiscal workman for the state, to force him once more to labor for the public rather than for himself. The legislators of 1883 were preoccupied not with the welfare of the peasant, but solely with the increase of production and of fiscal revenue.

The law of 1883, then, like the Code Rural of 1826, fell into desuetude. The peasant was canny enough to see that passing a law did not change realities: he might still squat on government land and yet not be thrown off by the government. Both Boyer's Code and Salomon's law, although of entirely different inspiration, tried to regiment the Haitian peasant in agricultural lines beneficial to state finances but uncongenial to himself.

175 Up to the time of the American Occupation of 1915, there were
423 no other measures of much influence upon the status of the peasant. The whole impulse of the common people seemed to be toward the acquisition of plots of land for themselves. By the indifference or impotence of the state, they were allowed to install themselves upon government lands, there to found families and pass on the property upon which they had settled. Thus occurred what might be called a "natural"—certainly unplanned and automatic—development of small property. At first it came at the expense of the great domains; next, through allowing state leases to expire and be given cheaply into the hands of small farmers; finally there were the grants and sales at low prices to thousands of soldiers.

Time validated the peasants' claims, but the state has never formally done so. Legally it might be argued that only a small fraction of the population of Haiti has an indisputable right to the land on which it lives. By strict interpretation most of the peasants are still squatters whom the government might dispossess. The American Occupation, in view of this confusion, tried in businesslike fashion to survey the land and establish property rights. The task proved so extremely difficult that it was soon given up. It met with the stubborn refusal of the peasants to state their claims or take any interest in legalizing their rights. No administration has been foolhardy enough

10. Armand Thoby, *La Question agraire en Haïti*, p. 45.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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to attempt to retrace the path of property evolution, which has steadily taken its own course since the time of Pétion.[11] 175 423

With the peasants prevailingly satisfied in their daily round of life, the separation of upper and lower castes in Haitian society has gradually become an accepted fact. At least ninety per cent of the total population now belong to the peasant group, whose members are as much reconciled to their status as in the United States the poorest colored folk to theirs. Vaguely they may often wish they had the privileges and luxuries of those above them; often, likewise, they feel resentment at the way in which they are treated; but in so far as it is permissible to generalize about two million people, it is fair to say that the Haitian peasant rarely complains of his lot. 565 [162]

Of the remaining ten per cent of the population a small fraction look upon themselves as élite. Some families of this group can be traced back to colonial times when their ancestors were already affranchis; others began to take on aristocracy under Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, and Boyer. Those whose forebears have become élite only since 1843 are less firmly entrenched in the topmost class. However, since no president since Boyer has ever succeeded in weakening caste lines, the élite one or two per cent may be said to constitute a stable social group. [178]

It is significant that although the blacks had the government in their hands for three quarters of a century they were unable to effect any slight change either in caste membership or in caste lines.

The part of the population which is neither élite nor peasant is not "middle class," as that term is understood in the Western World. It is rather a shifting percentage of Haitians whose one prevailing characteristic is their residence in towns. Some are wage earners, some small tradesmen; some are ex-élite on the way down the 565 369

11. The intimate observer of the Haitian peasant never fails to comment upon his love of the land. Whereas the colonial planter attached a value to his estate because it produced wealth, the peasant loves his little plot because it is his home. Through all the sixteen successive constitutions of Haiti, the one unchangeable article has been the prohibition of sale to foreigners of real estate in the country. Haitian land is for Haitian people—or was so until after the American Occupation. Likewise, the peasant is suspicious of any law which seems likely to reintroduce the system of large properties, for these might condemn him to leave his land and work at wages for the benefit of a master who, whether kindly or pitiless, would still deprive him of his present liberty. Therefore the Haitian countryman defends with all his force this soil to which his liberty attaches him, and which he cultivates after his own manner. "The Haitian loves his land almost as a man loves his woman." [181] [421] [425] [423] [24]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 648 642 423 563 The Occupation had had other far-reaching consequences. It had removed from the Constitution an article which had endured from the very first—the prohibition against ownership of land by white people. Americans argued that since Haiti's greatest potential source of wealth was agricultural (sugar and coffee in particular), new methods were needed if rehabilitation were to occur. Only foreign whites had both the necessary wealth and the requisite agricultural knowledge: therefore, whites must be attracted into the country by an opportunity to establish plantations. Although the Senate of Haiti protested violently against this reversal of tradition, which struck at the people's long pride in their complete ownership of the land, the Americans yielded only on the point of requiring five years' residence of the white landlord in the country. The influx of foreign whites has not been large, but in the Plaine du Nord and Port-au-Prince the white "colonies" are considerably larger now than in 1914.

175 648 563 Up to the present moment the white element in Haiti has not exerted any noticeable pressure on the government. Its mere presence, however, is bound to be a restraining influence on politicians, for most of the whites are Americans, and the government at Washington may not always follow a good-neighbor policy. With the clannishness so usual in white colonists living among darker people, the Americans in Haiti have their private clubs and their closed social set. For the first time since 1804 the élite are socially not the highest-ranking persons in the country.

175 648 563 144 The physical presence of several hundred white Marines for nineteen years had also one unplanned but inevitable result: an increase in the amount of white blood in the population. For many decades numerous élite had rested comfortably beneath their light skins, knowing that only they, with their greater mobility in the world, had any real chance to sustain a white strain. The Occupation, however, brought white men in contact with black women; there was a steady average of 2,000 white Marines in the country for two [554] decades. The light skin of resulting offspring suggested to many the possibility of a climb up the social ladder now that the most difficult rung had already been achieved. No figures are available on the number of children born in Haiti between 1915 and 1934 of white fathers, but it was a perceptible influx in the lower class.

175 458 Haitian businessmen enjoyed a greater economic prosperity during the Occupation than they had ever known before. It is commonly

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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reported in Haiti that although they joined patriotically in the cheering when the Marines embarked in 1934, many of them shed tears to see the departure of 2,000 monthly salaries, most of which had been enriching the local tills. Indeed, the country came much closer to establishing a mercantile middle class during the Occupation than ever before. The only real control left behind by the Americans was an overseer of the national budget, destined to leave as soon as Haiti's external debt was finally paid off. To that end the government saved rather than spent, so that businessmen found no comfort in the state of economic affairs, particularly during a decade of world depression and European disturbance. Nationalist economic theories in Europe have upset Haitian markets, so that the élite thriftily save their pennies against hard times instead of spending them freely on present luxuries. The American overseer of the budget withdrew in 1941.

175 458 [648] [652]

At many points the forces of the Occupation touched unwittingly upon deep-rooted prejudices of the Haitian people. In order to secure laborers for road construction the Marines revived an old corvée law of Christophe's time, requiring forced labor on public works at the need of the government. Many of the ill-nourished peasants were taxed beyond their physical powers by work on the roads, so that an armed revolt by caco guerrillas broke out. Its suppression required months of time and cost many lives, leaving in its train a great deal of ill will.

175 648 466 669 653

The efficient Americans also came to grief when they attempted to make Haitians orderly in the American way. Land titles were in chaos, as we have noted. American experts wished to find a basis for internal taxation, so that economic reform might be effective and permanent. The effort to have people declare their claims so that these might be properly registered had to be given up after a few weeks, for the peasant owners knew without written deeds their local boundaries, and among the squatters those who realized their title might not stand under strict investigation were understandably averse to having questions of property tenure raised by the authorities of an alien and interfering government.

175 648 423

Wherever Marine barracks were located, there were centres of a cultural dissemination which was bound in the long run to affect Haitian ideas and practices. Automobiles, radios, amusements, even the daily conversation of the Marines, all left their mark upon a people who had been effectively isolated from the world for more than a century.

175 648 177

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 While the broad problems of marriage, inheritance, and legiti-
582 macy were not to be solved by the official act of any ruler, the efforts made, particularly those by Dessalines and Christophe, had their effect upon the development of the marital institution in Haiti.

671 "Whereas," begins the preamble of Dessalines' law of May 28,
848 1805, "it is necessary to fix in immutable order the status and rights of children born out of wedlock, and whereas it is important to reconcile what nature and society owe them with the political interests of the state," therefore it behooves the government to lay
[581] down the specific rules which follow. Nothing in the law pushes the people toward marriage, but every provision strengthens the family, which they had known both in Africa and in the slave régime of the colony.

175 Henceforth no stigma is to attach to the fact of illegitimacy, nor is
671 there to be discrimination in favor of children born in wedlock. The status of a child will depend upon recognition by its parents. If a
848 child's maternal connection is established, he has rights in her
428 property; if the father likewise recognize his offspring, the child has rights in the paternal property; even if the recognition of a child is so long delayed that the parents die, that child who can prove his descent is to receive the name and his own share of property from the deceased. There is but one single provision in which an illegitimate child has an inferior status: should a couple decide to be legally married, they must recognize the natural offspring of either party before or during the wedding ceremony, if such children are to have full claims of inheritance; delay until after the ceremony cuts their claim to only one fourth that of children born legitimately; refusal to recognize the natural child disinherits him, unless he can prove his descent.

[422] Since the Emperor was already engaged upon his campaign to
acquire lands for the state, the property rights guaranteed would
[423] refer chiefly to personal property, and only secondarily to land still owned by individuals. Both men and women owned personal property, however, and must therefore pass on this property, a definite percentage going to each son and daughter.

The law is weak in some of its details. It does not specify, for example, how an unmarried father shall leave his property—whether by name to each child he has recognized as his own, or by name to the mothers of his children. It is strong in that it is simple: property

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 ment that two thirds of the members of either Chamber must be
642 present before a law could be voted—a stipulation making it possible
[646] for any clique to hold up legislation by absenting itself.

1874. The constitution of Domingue who, having defeated the
[643] Liberals, promulgated a constitution "profoundly modifying" the language of the 1867 document. It legally concentrated power in the hands of the president—where, indeed, it had always been in spite of constitutional declarations.

1879. Salomon's first constitution, which professed to be a re-examination of Haitian institutions, but was actually not different in essentials from the document of 1846. The line from Pétion to Riché to Salomon and his successors was the main one from which deviations, such as those of Soulouque, occurred.

1886. Salomon's second constitution, a mild revision of his first.

[178] 1889. Hyppolite, the new president, felt it necessary to have a new constitution, although like the constitution of 1886 this was little more than a revision of that of 1879. Under the 1889 document Haiti continued to function, more and more haltingly, up to the time of the American Occupation.

[648] 1918. The constitution drawn up in Washington[7] and forced through in Haiti by a farcical plebiscite. Its most debated provision
[423] was the elimination of the prohibition against ownership of land by foreign whites, thus ending the one common point in all previous constitutions since 1805. For the rest, it changed little of the actual
[641] structure of Haitian government, but provided a great number of unaccustomed democratic rights: freedom of assembly, trial by jury in political cases, direct election of senators, submission of amendments to popular vote, freedom of the press.

[641] 1927. Although this is considered merely a revision of the 1918 constitution, its changes were actually more noteworthy than many expected by the so-called new constitutions. Thirteen amendments were carried by popular vote, again so overwhelming as to be ridiculous, restricting many of the democratic liberties granted in 1918 which had proved embarrassing both to President Borno and

7. Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his campaign for the vice-presidency of the United States in 1920, claimed that he had written most of this constitution while he was Woodrow Wilson's assistant-secretary of the navy. (See the *New York Times*, August 19, 1920.) The constitution was approved in Haiti by a vote of 69,337 to 335.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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178 777 776 If the underlying philosophy of the universe held by the Haitian is summarized, as it can be abstracted from his expressions of belief and from his observed behavior, this philosophy might be phrased somewhat as follows: The ruler of the universe is God, its Creator, who shares this task with His son Jesus, the saints of the Church, and the Holy Ghost. Man has been endowed with a soul, and the soul, which has come from God, returns to God for judgment and, if necessary, for punishment at the end of its sojourn on earth. From Africa — *Guinée* — the Negroes brought other deities, termed variously *loa, mystères,* or *saints,*[9] and these deities have been inherited through succeeding generations by the descendants of those who brought them to Haiti. The specific function of the African spirits in the Haitian system was given in the following terms by one of their devotees: "The *loa* are occupied with men, their task is to cure. They can make a person work better than he otherwise would. When the *loa* possess people, they give helpful advice. But they cannot do the things that God does. They can protect a garden, but they cannot make a garden grow, for streams, rain, and thunder come from God." Another statement clearly shows the same concept: "God made the *loa,* but did not make them so they might do evil. [424] [425] When a man purchases a *loa* for money, that spirit will do evil as well as good, but God becomes angry and will not accept these bad spirits into the sky, and He drives them away."

776 In the ordering of his daily life, however, the forces which are foremost in the consciousness of the Haitian make up the triad expressed in the phrase "*les mystères, les morts, et les marassa* — the *loa,* the dead, and the twins." Because of their special character, an examination of the twin cult and the cult

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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from its ill effects after the evil has been exorcised, must also know the forces they are combating if they are to achieve any measure of success. By the same token, practitioners of black magic must know what steps may be taken to counteract their *wangas* so that, if necessary, they can in turn call forth supernatural emissaries to strengthen the evil impulses originally set in motion. In this sense, therefore, the *hungan*, the *gangan*, the *bocor*, and the *caplata* employ essentially the same techniques and operate with the same forces, the difference between them being one of degree rather than of kind. "*Hungan, c'est magazin. Gaigné un pile marchandise* — The *hungan* is like a shop. He has a lot of merchandise," says the Haitian, quoting a well-known proverb as he makes the point.

In the main, it can be said that though the *hungan* and the *gangan* practice magic, their main preoccupation is with the *loa* — the maladies they send to affect a man and his possessions — while the *bocor* is concerned almost exclusively with setting in motion the agents that actuate black magic, and the *caplata* dabbles in anything that is wanted. One important means whereby the sorcerer obtains his powers is the evil *loa*, but there is this essential difference between them: the gods of the *hungan* are family gods who come to him through the natural course of inheritance, endowing him with the *connaissance* that gives him his control over the supernatural world, while the *bocor* buys his gods. And when a god is bought, it is always acquired so as to enhance the position of its owner at all costs, despite the knowledge that the power thus purchased is dearly bought, bringing its own eventual punishment. Sometimes an ambitious *hungan* adds to his familial *loa* other "purchased" gods, but this is resented by the deities who have given him his powers, so that in time these benevolent powers take all means to humble and crush him. Furthermore, gods acquired in this way pass on to unwilling members of their owner's family and, after a generation or two of mischief-making, must be "restrained" or "banished." A number of

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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776 d'Angole) is obviously Angola, while the designations Ibo
171 and Congo speak for themselves. Simbi is a Congo deity, as
are Bumba and Lemba. Finally, in the categories of gods im-
[162] portant in the regions of Haiti other than Mirebalais are the
Loa Sénégal, and the Loa Mondong, both of which are names
of African tribes mentioned in the early literature as contributing to the Haitian slave population. But all recognition of geographical names as such has disappeared, and they have been transmuted into designations of gods.

192 Outstanding here is the word *vodun* itself, already indicated
197 as Dahomean, where it is a general term for "deity," though in Haiti its use has become more restricted and the symbol for deity has become the word *loa*, or *mystère*. The origin of the designation *loa*, which has been claimed to be a corruption of the French *roi*, is debatable. It is true that in West Africa certain deities are regarded as kings, yet this derivation is not convincing in view of the fact that in the *vodun* cult as found in Haiti at present or as described in earlier sources the *loa* are never generally referred to as kings, something that tends to strengthen statements that have been made to the effect that the word comes from the language of a Congo tribe.[1] The source of the root *hun-*, which figures in the terms *hungan*, *hunsi*, and *humfort*, is clear, for in Dahomey it is a synonym for the word *vodun*. *Hungan* and *hunsi* are even more definitely traceable than *humfort*, since the ending *-gan*, the Dahomean word for chief, designates the priest as the chief of the spirits, and *-si*, "wife," is employed in the sense of "wife of the god" or his devotee, in Africa as in Haiti. The female counterpart of *hungan*, *mambu*, cannot be definitely assigned, but may be of Bantu derivation, and is certainly an African word.

776 Other uncontaminated Africanisms can be discerned in the
171 attitude of the Haitians toward the *loa* and in the ceremonies
178 for them. One of the most characteristic is the inheritance of
● 424 *loa* in families, a direct survival of the belief which not only
769

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

makes for deification of the family dead, but constitutes the oldest ancestor of a relationship group one of the great gods and thus causes families to give primary allegiance to a restricted number of deities. The most striking aspect of this tradition preserved in Haiti is that all ceremonies must be given by family groups, and at them only members of the family may with propriety become possessed. Possession itself, and the elements which constitute the possession complex — the use of the drums, the rhythms associated with particular gods, the importance of songs in calling the spirits, the mode of worship through specific dances for specific deities — these make up another series of Africanisms. In the dance itself the use of iron to sound basic rhythms for the drums, the outer form and function of the rattle, and the fact that the circle of participants always rotates in a counter-clockwise direction, are equally African. The modes of behavior to be observed as possession comes on and the psychological release that follows it both derive from the same source, as do the beliefs that rituals must be held on the days sacred to the particular god being worshipped.

Another retention of African tradition is a belief in the importance of sacrifice. It will be remembered that it is held to be more essential to "feed" the gods than to dance for them. This is also the tradition of all peoples of the region from which the slaves were derived, and in a sense reflects the very immediate relationship that obtains between Africans, or Haitians, and their gods. Since in both regions each deity performs the double role of doing good for those who worship it properly and harassing those who neglect it, the importance of giving adequate sacrifices to avert evil is evident. In both Haiti and Africa, however, these may differ with the wealth of the individual giving the offering, with the number of persons who contribute toward the ceremony where offerings are given, or with the seriousness of the situation which the deity is being asked to remedy. That the gods permit such varia-

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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today not only in Mirebalais, but, in their essential outlines, throughout the Republic.

The larger relationship grouping originates in the immediate family, and the formation of new extended families is a continuing arc. Characteristically, the process begins when a man leaves the habitation of his father and, with his wife, settles on land somewhat remote from the dwellings of either his people or those of his wife. As the sons of this couple grow up and marry, they make their homes near that of their father, so that in time a group of immediate families related in the paternal line clusters about the dwelling of this original settler, forming a habitation. The continuation of the process depends upon the amount of land available to the group; in any event, given enough time, land to permit all the male descendants of the founder to support themselves and their families will be lacking, so that the younger men will repeat the process that has been described, and themselves become the founders of new habitations whose members, with the passing of generations, will eventually be lost to the original group. While land is available, a young man is given several hectares by his father when he marries, and here he establishes his household. If the family have prospered, additional land is bought as more young men grow up, so that the relationship group may become a community of considerable size.

In accordance with this rule of residence, only rarely will a man settle on the property of his wife's parents, since to do so reflects unfavorably on his personal status. When this does occur, it is probably because of a serious quarrel with his own people. In such a case, if his marriage endures, he becomes a quasi-member of his wife's family, but unless he has committed some extremely grave offense, such as publicly insulting or striking a parent or grandparent, he does not forfeit membership in his own group.[1] Similarly, the fact of his having settled away from the habitation of his family does not disinherit him, for, as will be seen, this occurs in but the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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tioned this latter instance advanced it as a possible alternative to the custom found elsewhere in Haiti, adding that it was the duty of the living to honor their ancestors, and not for the ancestors to make provision to honor themselves, particularly since the dead can enforce the discharge of this duty by sending illness, bad fortune, and death to those of their descendants who are remiss.

To a very appreciable degree, what is inherited forms the foundation of whatever wealth a man may accumulate during his lifetime. Yet there are few, among the peasants at least, who do not seek by all means to add to their heritage, for among those folk the ambition to obtain more and more land is a dominating one. To this end the peasant skimps and saves, depriving himself even of his important needs, until at the proper time some choice parcel of ground comes on the market.

How does a man go about accumulating the funds necessary to amass property? Ordinarily a young man is given a plot of ground by his father, and the produce, as mentioned, is marketed for him by his mother, who saves the proceeds for him. When he marries, his wife takes over this task, and together the two strive to extract as large earnings as possible from his plot. In addition, a man may take a *job*. Such work, always paid for by the unit rather than by the day or week, is usually that of cultivating a plot of ground for its owner, and the amount agreed upon is paid when the field has been harvested. The young man at the same time can also cultivate his own fields and participate in communal labor. Another way of adding to the earnings of his fields is to help the large landowners on their cotton plantations. This work is paid for in kind with baskets of cotton, which in turn are sold to factors who come from the coast to buy both large and small quantities. A man may also increase his income by working in the cane-fields or at the caldrons when the sirup is boiled. Each

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older relatives participate in the rites as at any death; moreover, the rule *gran' moun pas sui' 'ti moun* holds only where a father, mother, grandparent, or older sister or brother is concerned.*

Unless the dead was known to be a sorcerer his house is not abandoned. If, unlike most of his kind, a reputed sorcerer is survived by children, they continue to live in his house, and though no gesture of marked social disapprobation is made, few persons attend the funeral and fewer still put foot inside the house afterwards, which means there is little of the habitual calling on the survivors. An abandoned house of this type is called *caille yun moun lou' gawou*—the house of a werewolf. If a stranger were to buy such a house, he would first have to "restrain" the evil spirits who continued there. Generally, however, a man will not buy land unless a diviner ascertains that no evil beings have ever been associated with it.

Such, in outline, are the principal rites for the dead and the outer manifestations of the sanctions which validate the cult for its followers. Fundamentally, these derive from the power which the dead wield in the world of the living—power that is held to come directly from God, who has not only given the dead all the rights of the living, but also the right to return to earth as ghosts. There are several types of dead, two of these being the *vien-viens* and the *zombi*. The *vien-viens* are ordinary ghosts; the latter, who will be discussed in the next chapter, are those whose souls have been "sold" by sorcerers and are therefore doomed to wander the earth until their destined time arrives to return to God. Still another type of dead are the ghosts of children who die before baptism, called *lutins*, who ride young horses, so that when a wild colt with a tangled mane is seen, it is said that a *lutin* has been on his back. The souls of the dead are held first to go to God in the sky, where they are condemned to purgatory or hell or permitted to remain in paradise; "It is God who creates, therefore when someone dies, he returns to Him." And as for the effect of pur-

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2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

857 handle it; lighter work first, heavier work later. Small boys tend cattle
868 and help the men in the fields.

178 The Haitian *habitant* (the peasant) is poorer and hungrier today than
511 he was fifty years ago, or even twenty years ago. In 1955 I visited a number of peasant families I had known since 1932, and with hardly an exception I found them worse off than they had been before. Their tiny landholdings had shrunk. Some land that had been lush had dried
[134] up and eroded. Little groves of trees had disappeared. Clothes had become shabby, and many of the men could no longer afford to wear the inexpensive traditional blue denim costume that was once so common. In the cities there is evidence that some of the elite have improved their life. But in a large part of the countryside the peasants are finding that the old system that served them for a hundred and fifty years can no longer feed them adequately.

423 One of the adverse forces is the shrinking of landholdings. Once a
178 peasant family may have owned and worked fifty or seventy acres of ground. But it is traditional that on a man's death his land is divided
[428] among the heirs. If a man with fifty acres of land has two sons, each son inherits approximately twenty-five acres. On their deaths, the land
423 is again subdivided. But even this is not the whole story. A UNESCO
427 survey of the Marbial Valley region in south Haiti in 1948–1949 reported:

> At the turn of the century there were numerous peasant families who lived in relatively easy circumstances, and who possessed as much as thirty to forty *carreaux* * of land planted with coffee and subsistence crops. The heirs of these lands, when they
> [425] found themselves in straitened circumstances, would sell some parcels of it in the hope of being able to increase their holdings again later on. In the worst cases they became the tenants of absentee landlords who lived in the cities. Nowadays, not only is the size of holdings very small, sometimes only one-eighth of a *carreau*, but they are also scattered, and most peasants are obliged to go from one place to another to cultivate their various owned, rented, or share-cropped fields.[8] A

671 Haitian law—the civil code—does not recognize the rights of illegiti-
595 mate children born after a legal marriage. But Haitian custom does.
423 As a result, a Haitian who has a *placée* wife in addition to his "legal"
848 wife may circumvent the law by deeding to her a portion of his gardens during his lifetime, thereby diminishing his holdings.

423 Furthermore, many landholdings are not clearly defined. There are
691 few accurate surveys, and often the boundaries are vague. Titles to many of the holdings cannot be clearly established, and as a result there are constant lawsuits. To pay the expenses of defending his interests in court, a Haitian may have to sell a strip of his land.

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* A carreau is about three and a third acres.

§ A [UNESCO, The Haiti Pilot Project, p. 18. Cf. P352, category 116. -- Analyst]

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tion? Here again, the decision of a leader fixed the direction of Haitian life for decades to come. It is agreed by commentators that overmilitarization was the bane of nineteenth-century Haiti. One tenth of all able-bodied men were constantly in active army service. Moreover, all the male cultivators on plantations must hold themselves in readiness to obey the government's call to arms; ammunition and arms were stored in every parish. A military mentality was nourished, the people early learning the lesson (apparently unchallenged by any liberal) that the army should rule and the people obey.

Although the common soldiers were ex-slaves who, upon dismissal from service, would return to the ranks of agricultural workers, their officers had a higher status. Noncommissioned officers had a long road to travel to eminence, but like the overseers they had at least a glimpse of the promised land of distinction. Captains and generals had this vision within their grasp: they were already of the élite.

In the subcategory of "artisans" were included all the townspeople who carried on crafts or trades. It must be remembered that Haiti had no cities, and that its two largest towns then numbered probably no more than 10,000 people each, so that artisans were not numerous. Since there was a distinction in the arduousness of various pursuits as well as in their financial return there existed in this category, as in the official and military, some chance for social prestige.

The only persons remaining outside the categories mentioned were colored landowners who had held estates in the colonial period. Dessalines took active steps to gain control of most of the land in the country, but at his death in 1806 there were still many of the old proprietors left who were, in the main, determined to hold their land and preserve their dignity as non-laborers.

Assassination by his political foes ended the career of Dessalines only two years after he assumed power. In 1805 he had had himself crowned emperor in imitation of Napoleon, but unlike Napoleon he permitted no nobility. "*Moi seul, je suis noble!*" he replied to ambitious henchmen who asked for the establishment of a peerage. It was the Emperor's tactless handling of the social situation which caused his murder, for he touched sensitive nerves on the raw in attacking property rights, inherited privilege, color distinctions, and social aspirations. The cultivators grumblingly accepted his decrees; the ambitious upper group did not.

The former affranchis fully intended to keep their lands once the

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The former affranchis fully intended to keep their lands once the

175 French were driven out. They could not but be alarmed as they saw
423 the steady direction of Dessalines' moves toward a complete mo-
425 nopoly of land ownership by the state. On the very day following
471 independence, a decree proclaimed that all lands owned by France in colonial days now belonged to Haiti. Next (February 7, 1804) Dessalines canceled all sales and donations made to mulattoes and ex-slaves by fleeing French who, in a last despairing effort to salvage something from the wreckage of olden days, had "entrusted" their lands to non-whites. By these two strokes all lands owned by white men before 1803 became state property,[5] but only the second clipped the wings of socially ambitious colored people.

175 Serious uneasiness was caused by the next measure, an order for a
421 general verification of property titles. This would have been a deli-
[693] cate task at best, considering the disorder of the past thirteen years. It was made more complicated to carry out by the serious lack of men trained in law. A few like Balthasar Inginac, later an important adviser and trusted friend of two presidents, were scrupulously conscientious, but by the same token highly unpopular with those whom they deprived of newly (and shadily) acquired "estates." The majority of officials, according to report, listened to the pleading of many who had managed by hook or crook to secure a tenuous claim to vacant properties, validating their fraudulent titles for them. It has been claimed, without rebuttal, that most of these officials were not above taking bribes. When complaint was made to Dessalines of such actions he took steps to make his appointees do their duty, but each confiscation made new enemies for Dessalines.

Some of the mulattoes, citing their French paternity, claimed land formerly owned by their French fathers, even though these parents had never regarded their sons as more than bastards. Dessalines once broke out in furious answer to such a claimant: "*Et les pauvres*
175 *nègres dont les pères sont en Afrique, ils n'auront donc rien!*"
425 The state took over thousands of acres. Those Haitians, colored or
556 black, who aspired to landownership as the foundation of position,

[642] 5. The hatred of the Haitians for the French, and because of them, for white people
[648] in general, was seen not only in these confiscations but in commitments for the future. A proclamation of April 28, 1804, suppressed to "all foreigners" the right to own property in land. The first Haitian constitution, May 20, 1805, took an even more drastic step in saying that "no white man shall henceforth set foot in this country as a landowner," and that "*all* property formerly belonging to a white Frenchman" was now confiscate to the profit of the state.

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prestige, and the normal fulfillment of dignity, were thus frustrated in their efforts. They began to see that the Emperor intended to withhold from them freedom, room for the exercise of ability or power, fullness of life in whatever form. Not only was there little opportunity for achieving prestige; the repressive and contemptuous attitude of Dessalines denied them even ordinary negative respect, without which dignity of life is impossible.

By confiscation of vacant and falsely claimed estates, Dessalines created a vast public domain. He did not hesitate to secure other lands which he considered valuable, resorting to arbitrary and often cruel means—even, it is said, to forgery and murder—to dispossess those who stood firm in their claims. This attack on private property added other dissidents to his enemies—men who felt themselves clearly in the right legally and morally, men who with clear consciences joined the movement to put down a tyrant. The land thus acquired was leased in parcels at an annual rent to the highest bidders.[6]

The Emperor was blind to the normal human needs of the better elements of the population. He deprived them of property in land, the only basis they knew for wealth and independence; he forbade enterprises undertaken by individual initiative; he continually wounded delicate sensibilities. The Emperor was not a man to spare people's feelings, and he dared use the frank but dangerous words Negro and mulatto. He once shouted to a group of pleaders for position: "*Prenez garde à vous, nègres et mulâtres! Nous avons tous combattu contre les blancs; les biens que nous avons conquis en versant notre sang, appartiennent à nous tous; j'entends qu'ils soient partagés avec équité!*" It was not only Dessalines' idea of "equity" which aroused the *anciens libres* but his use of the descriptive nouns they hated.

The colored people were well aware of the hostility of Dessalines to their group. He was inferior to them in learning, and knew it. He was certainly, by the world's judgment, inferior to them in birth. His very deficiencies by comparison with his colored subjects made him hate them more: for example, he was passionately fond of dancing, preferring compliments on his grace to praise of his statesmanship; yet his awkwardness on the ballroom floor even

6. Although there are no records extant to show the exact amount of land which Dessalines succeeded in bringing into state ownership, it is estimated that more than two thirds of all the productive plantations in Haiti in 1806 were in the hands of the government. Other estimates range as high as ninety per cent.

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175 against almost unanimous public opinion opposing enforcement. In
671 1828 it was reported that dancing, which the Code had strictly
625 limited to week ends, was a nightly diversion near the capital. One
535 of the principal dancing resorts was the house of a captain of rural
517 police, the very man who was supposed to repress such amusements.[45]

175 Boyer had done his best, and his best was merely a good piece of
178 office work. When his Code failed to operate, he could think of
24 nothing further to suggest for the economic rehabilitation of Haiti.
433 The last fifteen years of his administration witnessed a gradual lapse into that small-scale farming which was to be characteristic of Haiti for the remainder of the nineteenth century. By comparison with former standards, production and steady industry had both fallen off since Boyer came to the presidency. The testimony of visiting foreigners is unanimous on the decline of industry.

175 The British consul, Mackenzie, said in 1827 that there was very
114 little field labor then being done, and that only elderly people,
435 principally aged "Guinea Negroes" long accustomed to steady work,
461 carried on the tradition. No measures of the government could
464 induce young people born in Haiti to labor or to change from their
184 "habitual vagrancy."[46] Another Englishman, James Franklin, remarked in 1828 that land values throughout the republic had greatly declined because no one could make a profit within any moderate time. Labor was high, he writes, for ordinary wages did not attract the workers who preferred idleness. (This word is certainly unfair: it was work at their own bidding which they preferred, not idleness.) Government lands lay untilled, no one evincing the slightest desire to purchase or utilize them. Franklin continues:

114 Land also in the possession of individuals is similarly circumstanced; and
175 those who are large proprietors cannot effect a sale of any produce which
433 they may have beyond the quantity which they can consume; consequently
423 a proprietor may have an immense extent of land, and yet be quite unable
425 to derive any benefit from it by cultivation, or to convert it into money, for the want of purchasers. Thus . . . there is no individual wealth in the country, because, although a man may have very large landed possessions, still those possessions are unavailable, for they produce him nothing, as he can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them.

[534] 45. Although dancing is spoken of here as an amusement, it is highly probable that at least a part of it had connection with the Vodun religion.

[241] 46. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti* (London, 1830), I, 100. Mackenzie is clearly exaggerating, unless by "field labor" he means work on plantations, in contrast to farming on small plots.

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can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them. There are some instances of proprietors leasing their lands to persons who undertake to cultivate them, for which they receive about one-third of the produce; but this is far from being general, and I imagine can only be accomplished by military men who have the command of troops, and who are thereby enabled to till them by working parties daily sent out for that purpose.[47]

An interesting side light is provided by a Quaker visitor, Candler, who in 1842 wrote that he was struck by the entire equality which seemed to exist between servant and master. Every workman was addressed in courteous manner, as "*mon fils*."[48] On inquiry, Candler was told that the profits of planting were good that year, laborers were scarce, and it was therefore "necessary to conciliate all by kindness, or no work would be done."

A particularly grim account of the state of cultivation near the close of Boyer's administration (1842) is given by a Frenchman:

> The fields of Haiti are dead. There where under slavery thousands of tons of sugar were made, now one sees only a few crops and a little syrup to turn into raw rum. Lively growths of cactus cover with thorns the acres of cane, of fields, of pastures deserted by the hand of man; the cactus invades the towns, coming even up to the heart of the cities, flourishing in the midst of ruins, as if to insult the inhabitants. . . . On the one hand, no one cultivates with regularity, because everyone is discouraged by the thefts of cane and fruit by people without any moral discipline, and in a country without police; while on the other hand, people complain of being poor, and of not being able to devote enough money to indispensable improvements. . . . And if the proprietors cannot even make work progress, imagine the condition of the poor![49]

As the people grew individually poorer, the value of the land sank until it was useless for an owner to try to prevent squatting on his estate. Holdings grew smaller and smaller, in spite of the prohibition on sales of real estate in parcels less than fifteen acres. Good land might be had in every part of the island quite cheaply, much of it even from the government which had enacted the restrictive law. Any man not satisfied with his condition as a paid laborer might, if

47. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti (Saint Domingo)*, (London, 1828), p. 313.
48. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti* (London, 1842), p. 37.
49. V. Schoelcher, *Colonies étrangères et Haïti: résultats de l'émancipation anglaise* (Paris, 1842), II, 263 ff.

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he could save or borrow the money, buy a small patch and become a freeholder in his own right. And in the mountains, if one were willing to endure isolation, one could get much land by squatter's claim.

A vivid indication of the declining economic condition of the country will be found in the actual scale of real-estate prices. In the eighteen-twenties the finest land in the republic did not sell for more than $60 an acre, even when contiguous to a port for shipping or extremely fertile. Such a price would have been ridiculous in the days of the French colony. Farms in the plains and mountains, suitable for cocoa and cotton, could be had in Boyer's time for $20 or $30 an acre in any quantity from ten to five hundred acres. In the rich Artibonite Valley small plots for horticultural purposes sold for $40 an acre; indigo and cotton land rarely brought over $30; and a complete cotton plantation which had borne richly in colonial days sold for from $12 to $20 an acre. In the North, despite its fertility and more careful cultivation under Christophe, land seldom brought more than $40 or $45, while pasture lands could scarcely find purchasers at $40. A lot in Port-au-Prince with a frontage of sixty feet and a depth of fifty, well situated for trading purposes, brought only $200.[50] Fifteen years later even these prices were fantastically high, for by then no one was wealthy enough to purchase an estate.

5. *Lapse into Peasantry* (1827–1843)

"Peasant" is one of those words whose meaning everyone knows yet whose definition is never precise. It clearly carries the connotation of farming the land by conservative, generally uneducated, persons whose families have for generations lived on the same plot of earth without any great ambition to move away or change their economic lot. It means small ownership. And most particularly it means a comparatively low social status, for we think of peasantry as existing only in those countries which have a clear-cut social class system, with a stratification which would make it difficult for a person to move from one class to another. His land is to the peasant both home and living; his household is dependent almost solely upon the product of its own labor. He is generally conceived to be too complacent, if not too ignorant or too dull, to take advantage of commercial opportunities which might bring him wealth. "It is increasingly

50. These figures for 1824–28 are from Franklin, *op. cit.*, p. 314.

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recognized that the really important characteristics peculiar to the peasant are his sentiments and attitudes, the intense attachment to his native soil and family tradition, which, even in the economic sphere, take precedence over the desire for individual advancement and gain."[51]

Haiti in 1804 was still a country of large estates, and Dessalines and Christophe strove to keep it so. Under the active generosity of Pétion and the passive indifference of Boyer after his Code Rural had failed, few great plantations were left intact. The recorded donations of these two presidents to their generals, civil functionaries, and lesser officers, are as follows:[52]

134 grants of 150 carreaux (about 450 acres).		Total:	59,300 acres.
176	35	105	18,480
639	30	90	57,510
711	25	75	54,325
2,322	20	60	139,320
8,000	5	15	120,000
		Grand total:	448,935 acres.

Haiti followed French law rather than British, so that the rule of primogeniture did not prevail. It requires only a moment's reflection to see that even within a single generation the thousands of small properties noted in the table would be subdivided many times, since a father apportioned his land to all his sons. By 1842 it is probable that not a single plantation of the size common in colonial times was still intact.[53] On the testimony of numerous government officials and commandants of arrondissements, it was estimated in that year that 46,610 small landed properties were under fair cultivation.[54] If the population at that time be estimated at 800,000, seven eighths of whom were engaged in agriculture, there would accordingly be about fifteen people (including children) to each rural property. But

A large number of small estates are left out of this account, which are said to be *badly* cultivated, or neglected. Taking the number of each separate

51. C. von Dietze, "Peasantry," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, XII, 50.
52. This table is compiled from figures cited in Armand Thoby, *La Question agraire en Haiti* (Port-au-Prince, 1888), *passim*, and Dr. P. Dalencour, *Le Sauvetage national par le retour à la terre* (Port-au-Prince, 1923), p. 18.
53. See Raymond Renaud, *Le Régime foncier en Haiti* (Paris, 1934), pp. 42–45.
54. Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

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The crop-sharing system, economically debilitating, it was, though

had one great advantage to the laborer: he felt himself free and independent, with the right to engage himself to any man or to refrain from working altogether. No longer was he bound to the soil of one plantation, forced to labor under a "driver," forbidden to dance or to sleep when the mood seized him. This new freedom imparted to him a self-consequence which made him, in his own estimation, almost as important as a freeholder. The master could not say to his men, "Go into such a field and dig cane holes. The clouds are gathering and we must get in the young plants"; or, "Weed such a field," or "Prune the coffee trees today." Neither could he send a band of young people at his discretion to pick the coffee berries as they ripened, or to cull the bad berries, when pulped and dried, from the good. Every man was, so to speak, master of his own house and his own hours, considering himself at liberty to work with his family at almost any time and in any manner he pleased. 175 427 461 24 466

Herein lay the fatal defect of the crop-sharing system. There was no way of coming to an agreement among the laborers on an estate as to the amount of labor to be performed by each. One man was weaker than another; one more disposed to drink or to loaf than another. The whole group of, say, twenty families was to share in common the half or the quarter of the gross produce; but who should measure the exact proportion which would fall in justice to each family? 175 427 24 461

These annual disagreements led to a compromise which ultimately broke down even the moderate-sized estates. The proprietor, in order to avoid disputes, divided his fields among his laborers, allowing one family five acres, another ten, a third twenty, according to the nature of the land and the sort of produce which could be raised upon it. True, the proprietor lost by this division all the benefits of concentrating labor in a particular field at a particular season; also, if he wished to have necessary work done in haste which required a large number of laborers, he had to bribe them (generally by a drink of rum or tafia). Obviously, when such difficulties stood in the way of necessary repairs and improvements, the proprietors simply preferred to allow their estates to deteriorate. Like the workers, they acquired an attitude of not worrying about the future; unlike the frame of mind of the workers, their attitude came from resigned acceptance of the inevitable, not from preoccupation with the present. 175 473 427 24 425 461

Certain astute proprietors tried to get as many families together as could act in concert without jarring or jealousy, and to induce them,

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175 by persuasion, to do as much work as possible for his and their own
473 interests. In a few cases the success of such efforts was tolerably good;
427 but one worker disposed to be sullen or idle, or even not physically
24 strong, might throw the whole scheme into disorder. One's own
● 425 profits would be cut by the misdeeds of others even when one had
461 himself been industrious. This caused a decline of incentive, sometimes among a whole group of potentially good workers, because one or two of the number shirked. Probably the most patent evil of such arrangements was that every laborer realized that he did not suffer as directly for idleness or neglect as when working for himself; his fellow workers shared the consequences of his misconduct in some degree, and his employer in a still greater measure. The driving force of individual responsibility was removed.

[692] Boyer and Inginac, foreseeing just such disorder, had tried to
[686] provide against it in the Code Rural by giving summary powers to local judges to inflict penalties upon lazy or malingering workers. Quite aside, however, from the loss of time and the inconvenience to both parties in going constantly to a judge for his decision, the proprietor was afraid to act on this principle to any extent, since if he did so he might lose his laborers altogether.

175 It was a rare proprietor, then, who could hope to make much of a
473 fortune out of his plantation. More and more the landowners, having
427 subdivided their fields, grew lax in overseeing them. The workers,
24 freed from constant supervision, accustomed by long habit to living
466 in one hut, and unconsciously developing a mentality which made
425 them feel, as did American squatters on frontier lands, that they had a right to the land they tilled, imperceptibly developed into peasants.
178 The state's remaining properties, no longer under cultivation, were invaded by families of small farmers, and the government took no steps to oust them or send them back to privately owned plantations. The estates of individual aristocrats underwent the same fate if not
[625] carefully watched. Theoretically, it was the duty of the army to drive out squatters, to force laborers back into "proper" agricultural work; but the army consisted of peasant youths who would not turn against people of their own group.

671 Legal irregularity was gradually sanctioned by the passage of
178 time, usage being a stronger guarantor of rights than unenforced laws on the statute books.

680 Haitian peasantry, to sum up, began as the unplanned, undesired

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to attempt to retrace the path of property evolution, which has steadily taken its own course since the time of Pétion.[11] 175 423

With the peasants prevailingly satisfied in their daily round of life, the separation of upper and lower castes in Haitian society has gradually become an accepted fact. At least ninety per cent of the total population now belong to the peasant group, whose members are as much reconciled to their status as in the United States the poorest colored folk to theirs. Vaguely they may often wish they had the privileges and luxuries of those above them; often, likewise, they feel resentment at the way in which they are treated; but in so far as it is permissible to generalize about two million people, it is fair to say that the Haitian peasant rarely complains of his lot. 565 [162]

Of the remaining ten per cent of the population a small fraction look upon themselves as élite. Some families of this group can be traced back to colonial times when their ancestors were already affranchis; others began to take on aristocracy under Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, and Boyer. Those whose forebears have become élite only since 1843 are less firmly entrenched in the topmost class. However, since no president since Boyer has ever succeeded in weakening caste lines, the élite one or two per cent may be said to constitute a stable social group. [178]

It is significant that although the blacks had the government in their hands for three quarters of a century they were unable to effect any slight change either in caste membership or in caste lines.

The part of the population which is neither élite nor peasant is not "middle class," as that term is understood in the Western World. It is rather a shifting percentage of Haitians whose one prevailing characteristic is their residence in towns. Some are wage earners, some small tradesmen; some are ex-élite on the way down the 565 369

11. The intimate observer of the Haitian peasant never fails to comment upon his love of the land. Whereas the colonial planter attached a value to his estate because it produced wealth, the peasant loves his little plot because it is his home. Through all the sixteen successive constitutions of Haiti, the one unchangeable article has been the prohibition of sale to foreigners of real estate in the country. Haitian land is for Haitian people—or was so until after the American Occupation. Likewise, the peasant is suspicious of any law which seems likely to reintroduce the system of large properties, for these might condemn him to leave his land and work at wages for the benefit of a master who, whether kindly or pitiless, would still deprive him of his present liberty. Therefore the Haitian countryman defends with all his force this soil to which his liberty attaches him, and which he cultivates after his own manner. "The Haitian loves his land almost as a man loves his woman." [181] [42] [425] [423] [24]

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175 Boyer carried on Pétion's policy of no taxation. It was not until the American
657 Occupation that Haitians could be said to be taxed. Ninety per cent of the state's
income between 1900 and 1915 regularly came from tariffs, and only ten per cent
[652] from internal taxes. Even the efforts of the Americans, resulting in the laws of 1924 and 1928, were on the whole restricted to a few excise taxes. A land tax was hopeless, due to the utter confusion of titles and the stubborn impassivity of peasant squatters.[5]

2. *Monetary Policy of Pétion and Boyer*

175 The monetary situation in Haiti was chaotic in its early days. The gold money
652 of France, Spain, England, and the United States circulated, as did small French coins, and the coins and paper money created by the Haitian rulers, who had complete control over money. For example, Pétion decreed[6] an increase in the value of the *gourde d'Espagne* from 8 livres 5 sols, to 9 livres; of the French *écu* of 6 francs from 9 livres to 9 livres 15 sols; and the 5 franc écu from 7 livres 10 sols to 8 livres 5 sols; this almost doubled the value of money in circulation. He also struck small coins to replace the pieces of 30, 24, 15, 12, and 6 sols of France. His small coins were merely token money.[7] The paper currency created by Pétion and so easily counterfeited has been mentioned.

[433] Boyer was continually in financial perplexities. Production was declining while expenditures had to be radically increased on account of the settlement with France in 1825. Boyer's budget was not a large one judged by modern standards, the average expenditure each year being about $5,000,000. To meet this, customs duties on imports and exports brought in about $2,200,000 annually; territorial duties on produce, houses, patents or licenses, market fees, and the like, a similar
[316] sum; but some half-million dollars had to be borrowed each year. The government hoped to get something from developing mines in the Spanish part of the island,
[425] but this hope failed. It was thought also that the sale of government lands might bring in some revenue, but few people wanted to invest money, when they had it,
[454] in land, with agricultural affairs developing as they were and no way of making
[465] people work: investment in trade was more promising. The national treasury was so empty that both the civil and military officials were poorly paid. It was fre-
[661] quently said that almost all administrators and persons in authority were open to bribery. Meantime the number of civil servants was increasing: there was a swarm
[647] of hirelings and subalterns in every commune, like a host of vampires. By their lack of honesty, conscientiousness, and efficiency, immense sums were lost annually to the treasury.

5. See the *Report of the American High Commissioner* (1929), p. 19.

6. May 4, 1808.

7. *Pétion voyant s'échapper de ses États les gourdes qu'effrayaient ses démêlés avec Christophe, eut pour les retenir l'ingénieuse idée d'y pratiquer une troude. Ce moyen était trop efficace pour ne pas réussir, et il était trop simple pour que l'emploi n'en fut pas généralisé au moins par un équivalent. Ainsi, lorsqu'il en vint à battre monnaie, le chef de l'état du Sud descendit le titre de sa gourde à peu près au titre de la gourde espagnole tarée par son empereur-pièce. Il lui donne 858 millièmes de fin.*" Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, II, 194.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

as has been stated, daughters who have been given 428
a dowry forfeit their share, but even when a formal *dot* has 683
not passed, the number of animals given her when she went 626
to her husband is mentioned and she is sometimes asked to waive a corresponding portion of her share in consideration of what she has already received. If she refuses to do this, however, there is no recourse but to allow her her full share, though public opinion would censure such greed.

Debts incurred by the dead must be repaid before the estate 428
can be settled, while attempts are also made to collect all loans 426
made by him. Where no written statement of a debt exists, a declaration by the dying man before witnesses is necessary; otherwise his heirs acknowledge their obligation at their pleasure. Conversely, if no statement attested by a notary exists to verify a loan made by him, his heirs have no means of collecting it. On the whole, lending has been found through experience to be ill-advised unless such a "paper" has been executed before a notary, and land has been pledged as collateral either before the head of the family of the borrower or before a magistrate. For though interest is not demanded by the peasants, and loans are made as a gesture of friendship, "even the people of the hills" — to use the Mirebalais idiom for the most naïve rustics — have learned that just debts are often not repaid where there is no legally enforceable claim.

A man who dies childless leaves his property to his brothers 428
and sisters by the same father and mother. The husband of a "legally" married woman who dies childless is said to have the right to one fourth of her property, the rest going to her relatives, but most often "they drive him away," giving him nothing, and since a man is customarily too proud to contest the matter, he does not insist on receiving his due. A childless [768]
widow continues to live in her dead husband's house until her death, and she also receives one fourth of her husband's property. At her death the house passes to her husband's relatives, but the quarter of his estate which she had received goes to her family.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 If contemporary testimony can be credited, the complete indifference of the Haitian élite to business was matched by their ignorance
452 of finance when this was anything more complicated than cash pay-
453 ment transactions or face-to-face exchange. They seem to have been wholly unfamiliar with the uses of commercial paper, the meaning of overdrafts, or bills of exchange. Individual credit was not understood, nor was a signature enough to start a flow of business. As one person from France put it in 1846, "It takes 10,000 francs of money to do 10,000 francs of business."[14] If a merchant doing a good business found his purse empty and needed only to borrow in order to purchase other goods, that circumstance offered to his mind "a redoubtable extremity enveloped in profound mystery; and it is a rule of loyalty and of honor to which Haitian commerce is never false, that the paper on which a man has placed his signature should remain, until the day the loan is paid back, impenetrably shut up in the portfolio of the lender."

[426] Interest, if money could be borrowed at all, was at the rate of one per cent a day, three per cent a month, and from sixteen per cent to twenty per cent a year. Thus letters of credit and promissory notes never moved the slightest business transaction in the country. To seek credit was to confess one's financial embarrassment.

175 The economic ills which harassed Haiti under Boyer were, to a
45 greater or less degree, the same that bedeviled the country for the rest of the century. It seems worth while to list them, for they reveal the mentality of the ruling clique and caste—a mentality which could see no reason for altering of these basic matters, and which during administration after administration devoted itself to superficialities. Haiti's weaknesses were not entirely due to folly and clumsiness, however, but to a perfectly natural ignorance. There was no background for economic thinking: how should ex-slaves with a handful of old freedmen be familiar with credit, banking, overdrafts, and the like? Even education in France would not necessarily offer enlightenment on these matters. "Culture" meant literature, not economics.

These, then, have been the major economic defects of Haiti, 1806 to 1915, due partly to ineptitude, partly to imperfect education:

175 1. The exclusion of all foreign or white investment, industry, and
454 capital. One article in every constitution was given over to this
648

14. R. Lepelletier de Saine-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, II, 187.

1: Herskovits E-4, 6 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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CHAPTER IV

THE SETTING OF HAITIAN LIFE

SINCE the discovery by the Spaniards that the wealth of Haiti lay rather in cultivating sugar than in the exploitation of gold mines, its dominant economy has been agricultural. In the valley of Mirebalais, as elsewhere in the island, the small cultivator holds the center of the economic stage. In the main he works his own land, inherited from his father or acquired through purchase. He may also cultivate additional plots of ground which he rents, since much of the land expropriated when independence was gained was retained by the State and today is leased for nominal fees.[1]

241 423 [433] [428] [432] [427]

The life of the Haitian farmer, though hard, is simple and self-contained. With but few exceptions, he supplies all his necessities, for he commands almost the entire range of techniques known to his culture; hence Haitian economy shows a lack of specialization that in the main is only relieved by the sex division of labor. The day's work begins at dawn, the women rising before the men to prepare coffee, the invariable drink of early morning. When finished with his breakfast, the farmer goes to his field, where, except for the hottest hours, he works until sundown, his one meal being brought to him at about nine or ten o'clock in the morning. His wife meanwhile occupies herself with her household tasks, pounding grain in her mortar or working in her garden near by.

512 [433] [272] [24] [264] [252] [241]

1: Herskovits E-4, 8 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

in at the same time, while calabashes and melon vines are planted where the ash of the fires that consumed the cleared brush can fertilize them. Rice, which grows some four months before it matures, is planted between May and August in special patches reserved for this crop. Millet, planted in July, August, and September, can be harvested in January. Potatoes and manioc are put in the earth the latter quarter of the year and are harvested during the next dry season. Bananas, according to their species, are planted between April and September. Red beans, which mature twice a year and are [illegible] where it is cool, are planted in January and February and in August and September; they are harvested in June and January. 241

Sugar-cane is almost as important today as it was in the earliest days of Haitian agriculture. It is planted from May to July and gathered a year later, two fields being necessary if an annual crop is to be harvested. Once the cane is in the ground, however, it gives crop after crop without the need of preparing the fields or planting new shoots each year. Yams and *malangas* are cultivated on the mountainsides, the land often being worked by a system of share-cropping whereby a farmer who lives in the valley but owns mountain land employs a near-by peasant to work for him, providing him with the necessary supplies and entering into an agreement that the crop will be divided equally between them. This system, however, is said by the landowning Haitians to be unsatisfactory, since there is no way to verify the yield without spending an excessive amount of time. The Haitian farmer grows other produce: cabbage, squash, onions, garlic, peanuts, peppers, papaya, and spices, while the trees near the houses give coconuts, oranges, avocados, mangos, guavas, and other fruits. [427]

Crops are not planted during the first quarter of the moon, the preferred time in Mirebalais being from eight days after the new moon until the full moon. It is held that anything 241 821

2; Courlander B-5 (1937-1968) 1969 SV3 Hait SV3

857 868 handle it; lighter work first, heavier work later. Small boys tend cattle and help the men in the fields.

178 511 The Haitian *habitant* (the peasant) is poorer and hungrier today than he was fifty years ago, or even twenty years ago. In 1955 I visited a number of peasant families I had known since 1932, and with hardly an exception I found them worse off than they had been before. Their tiny landholdings had shrunk. Some land that had been lush had dried [134] up and eroded. Little groves of trees had disappeared. Clothes had become shabby, and many of the men could no longer afford to wear the inexpensive traditional blue denim costume that was once so common. In the cities there is evidence that some of the elite have improved their life. But in a large part of the countryside the peasants are finding that the old system that served them for a hundred and fifty years can no longer feed them adequately.

423 178 One of the adverse forces is the shrinking of landholdings. Once a peasant family may have owned and worked fifty or seventy acres of ground. But it is traditional that on a man's death his land is divided [428] among the heirs. If a man with fifty acres of land has two sons, each son inherits approximately twenty-five acres. On their deaths, the land 423 is again subdivided. But even this is not the whole story. A UNESCO 427 survey of the Marbial Valley region in south Haiti in 1948–1949 reported:

> At the turn of the century there were numerous peasant families who lived in relatively easy circumstances, and who possessed as much as thirty to forty *carreaux* * [425] of land planted with coffee and subsistence crops. The heirs of these lands, when they found themselves in straitened circumstances, would sell some parcels of it in the hope of being able to increase their holdings again later on. In the worst cases they became the tenants of absentee landlords who lived in the cities. Nowadays, not only is the size of holdings very small, sometimes only one-eighth of a *carreau*, but they are also scattered, and most peasants are obliged to go from one place to another to cultivate their various owned, rented, or share-cropped fields.[§]

671 595 423 848 Haitian law—the civil code—does not recognize the rights of illegitimate children born after a legal marriage. But Haitian custom does. As a result, a Haitian who has a *placée* wife in addition to his "legal" wife may circumvent the law by dividing to her a portion of his gardens during his lifetime, thereby diminishing his holdings.

423 691 Furthermore, many landholdings are not clearly defined. There are few accurate surveys, and often the boundaries are vague. Titles to many of the holdings cannot be clearly established, and as a result there are constant lawsuits. To pay the expenses of defending his interests in court, a Haitian may have to sell a strip of his land.

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* A carreau is about three and a third acres.

§ [UNESCO, The Haiti Pilot Project, p. 18. Cf P352, category 116. -- Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

prestige, and the normal fulfillment of dignity, were thus frustrated in their efforts. They began to see that the Emperor intended to withhold from them freedom, room for the exercise of ability or power, fullness of life in whatever form. Not only was there little opportunity for achieving prestige; the repressive and contemptuous attitude of Dessalines denied them even ordinary negative respect, without which dignity of life is impossible.

By confiscation of vacant and falsely claimed estates, Dessalines created a vast public domain. He did not hesitate to secure other lands which he considered valuable, resorting to arbitrary and often cruel means—even, it is said, to forgery and murder—to dispossess those who stood firm in their claims. This attack on private property added other dissidents to his enemies—men who felt themselves clearly in the right legally and morally, men who with clear consciences joined the movement to put down a tyrant. The land thus acquired was leased in parcels at an annual rent to the highest bidders.[6]

The Emperor was blind to the normal human needs of the better elements of the population. He deprived them of property in land, the only basis they knew for wealth and independence; he forbade enterprises undertaken by individual initiative; he continually wounded delicate sensibilities. The Emperor was not a man to spare people's feelings, and he dared use the frank but dangerous words Negro and mulatto. He once shouted to a group of pleaders for position: "*Prenez garde à vous, nègres et mulâtres! Nous avons tous combattu contre les blancs; les biens que nous avons conquis en versant notre sang, appartiennent à nous tous; j'entends qu'ils soient partagés avec équité!*" It was not only Dessalines' idea of "equity" which aroused the *anciens libres* but his use of the descriptive nouns they hated.

The colored people were well aware of the hostility of Dessalines to their group. He was inferior to them in learning, and knew it. He was certainly, by the world's judgment, inferior to them in birth. His very deficiencies by comparison with his colored subjects made him hate them more: for example, he was passionately fond of dancing, preferring compliments on his grace to praise of his statesmanship; yet his awkwardness on the ballroom floor even

6. Although there are no records extant to show the exact amount of land which Dessalines succeeded in bringing into state ownership, it is estimated that more than two thirds of all the productive plantations in Haiti in 1806 were in the hands of the government. Other estimates range as high as ninety per cent.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

Taxes were heavy

175 651 652 and work strenuous; but there were a sound currency, commercial and agricultural prosperity, and a full treasury.

Like many a great man he was an overweening egotist. His 175 643 159 energy and ambition, for Haiti as well as for himself, neither understood nor tolerated a lesser determination than his own. At times he seemed more intent upon the letter than upon the spirit of his laws. Probably his chief defect, a common failing of strong men, was a disregard for humble individual worth. To write of him invites the most colorful vocabulary. He is Black Majesty and the Emperor Jones. By almost any standards of leadership he would be accounted a great man. He lacked only those few final, subtle qualities which make for sheer genius. In 1820, stricken by paralysis and faced with defections in his army, he died as he had lived, dramatically, ending his life with a specially saved bullet (folklore says a silver one), in his palace of the ironic name, Sans Souci.

175 643 In no significant respect did Christophe change the feudal structure of economic organization begun by Toussaint and carried on by Dessalines. It was in administration, especially as it affected social status, that the thirteen years of Christophe were important for the [641] future of Haiti. Where the Emperor had been an unpredictable tyrant whose heavy hand inspired only terror, Christophe was a sternly just father whose well-disciplined children respected, admired, and even loved him.

175 427 655 566 643 The land policy of the two régimes was similar. Government estates were farmed out on five-year leases to the highest bidders among the well-to-do; large plantations belonging to the state were tilled by cultivators who might, without taking the term too harshly, be called serfs; loyal supporters and wealthy individuals were entrusted with responsibility. Like Dessalines, Christophe added wealth to power and rendered all his subjects dependent upon himself rather than on their own resources and influence—but all this with a difference.

175 643 642 565 Where the Emperor had denied the natural vanity of his aides by refusing them nobility, Christophe accepted their ambition as perfectly normal and made use of it for his own purposes. Four years after he had established his state, he changed it from a republic to a kingdom; all his important men he made dukes, barons, counts, knights. He warned them that he would expect them to live up to the dignities conferred upon them. Pomp and regalia are costly;

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

to be comforted. They had lost their best friend and their "*petit père.*" 175

Dessalines would be emperor and Christophe king, but Pétion was content to remain a simple president. He was an anomaly—as if a Parisian of delicate sensibilities and mellow tolerance had somehow come to power with a darker skin in an alien land. 643 159

He has been highly praised and is worthy of eulogy. The fact remains that his country was rich when he came to power and poor when he died; united in 1806 and divided in 1818. Candor compels his admirers to admit that many of the calamities of the social and economic history of Haiti can be traced back to Pétion's administration.

The crucial act of Pétion was to parcel the land. From that policy flowed the enduring consequences which became the predominant socio-economic characteristics of Haiti. 175 423 421

Until Pétion's time the island had never known small properties. Large estates had been the mark of social distinction in the French colony; Toussaint had kept the plantations large,[18] while Dessalines and Christophe had absorbed more and more land for the state, leasing it out in great blocks. The constitution of 1806[19] gave no indication of impending change, for it specifically declared all land to be the property of the Haitian nation. Within three years, however, the process of dividing and giving away the state's lands was well under way. 178

It would be illuminating to know what mental process in Pétion moved him to make so radical an about-face in land policy. The reasons he gave were, first, that the people had ably defended their country and so deserved a reward; second, that he wanted all the people to have a vital interest in the actual soil itself.[20] These may have been his only reasons. Others suggest themselves: the republic owed wages to its large standing army, which were more easily paid in land, of which the state had much, than in cash, of which it had little and progressively less; it would be much easier to keep peace in a country where men were free than where they were serfs; and the example of free ownership in the South would seem alluring enough

18. He permitted the leasing of plantations as small as fifty acres if the soil were especially rich. [427]

19. December 27. This document was largely the handiwork of Pétion.

20. The former explanation he consistently gave in his various messages to the Senate proposing progressive parcelings of the land; the latter he wrote to a friend, saying that he wished to "*marcher dans sens l'esprit du sol.*"

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

to command the forced labor of serfs, had to develop a new technique for securing manual labor. Legislation soon recognized the new state of affairs by enactments which kept distinct *la grande culture* and *la petite culture*. The former had to do with the production of sugar and coffee, from which the republic derived its wealth; the latter with small farming. *La petite culture* was simple cultivation of whatever the small owner wished to raise. Large-scale culture, on the other hand, became rather complicated.

Owners of great estates had to guide them only their experience of slave days and of serfdom under Toussaint and Dessalines. Now that both were gone, few planters were wealthy enough to pay wages for day labor; a new variation was needed. It was forthcoming in the *métayer* system—a crop-sharing arrangement with tenants closely resembling that which prevails today in some parts of the United States. The owner leased his estate in large or small plots to tenants. Half the income went to the landlord and half to the tenant; but the landlord must furnish the sugar mill and other necessary machinery where cane was raised. Laws were passed to give a measure of security to the proprietor. The contract between him and the tenant (*fermier*)[26] must be signed before a civil official; the engagement must extend through the harvesting of one crop; tenants even then might not abandon their contracts except after notice of three months, with a declaration to the local official.

Punishments were stipulated for the breaking of contracts. A tenant who had made an agreement and then abandoned the *habitation*, even for a visit elsewhere, without a certificate attesting his regularity, might be imprisoned for eight days the first time, a month the second, and three months the third, such imprisonment to be spent in hard labor on public works. Any disputes arising between plantation owners and tenants were to be taken before the local justice. If they threatened to develop into serious cases, the justice was to notify the commandant of the nearest important town. A person who fomented disturbance of such agreements (the Haitian equivalent of "labor agitators," style 1810) might be imprisoned for a year, as also his accomplices. Commandants of each arrondissement must put down disorder as soon as requested by landlords, tenant farmers, or overseers. They must likewise make frequent patrols of

26. The word "fermier" must not be translated simply as "farmer"; the idea of a contract and a rental fee is implicit in the French word.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them. There are some instances of proprietors leasing their lands to persons who undertake to cultivate them, for which they receive about one-third of the produce; but this is far from being general, and I imagine can only be accomplished by military men who have the command of troops, and who are thereby enabled to till them by working parties daily sent out for that purpose.[47]

An interesting side light is provided by a Quaker visitor, Candler, who in 1842 wrote that he was struck by the entire equality which seemed to exist between servant and master. Every workman was addressed in courteous manner, as "*mon fils*."[48] On inquiry, Candler was told that the profits of planting were good that year, laborers were scarce, and it was therefore "necessary to conciliate all by kindness, or no work would be done."

A particularly grim account of the state of cultivation near the close of Boyer's administration (1842) is given by a Frenchman:

> The fields of Haiti are dead. There where under slavery thousands of tons of sugar were made, now one sees only a few crops and a little syrup to turn into raw rum. Lively growths of cactus cover with thorns the acres of cane, of fields, of pastures deserted by the hand of man; the cactus invades the towns, coming even up to the heart of the cities, flourishing in the midst of ruins, as if to insult the inhabitants. . . . On the one hand, no one cultivates with regularity, because everyone is discouraged by the thefts of cane and fruit by people without any moral discipline, and in a country without police; while on the other hand, people complain of being poor, and of not being able to devote enough money to indispensable improvements. . . . And if the proprietors cannot even make work progress, imagine the condition of the poor![49]

As the people grew individually poorer, the value of the land sank until it was useless for an owner to try to prevent squatting on his estate. Holdings grew smaller and smaller, in spite of the prohibition on sales of real estate in parcels less than fifteen acres. Good land might be had in every part of the island quite cheaply, much of it even from the government which had enacted the restrictive law. Any man not satisfied with his condition as a paid laborer might, if

47. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti (Saint Domingo)*, (London, 1828), p. 313.
48. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti* (London, 1842), p. 37.
49. V. Schoelcher, *Colonies étrangères et Haïti: résultats de l'émancipation anglaise* (Paris, 1842), II, 263 ff.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 family on an average, at 5 persons, husband, wife, and three children, we
241 arrive at the conclusion, that the head of every third family in the state is engaged in cultivating his own freehold; a proportion of independent
[311] proprietors, such as perhaps scarcely any other country in the world can exhibit. The number of acres cultivated by these small proprietors, varies
[231] from 9 to 30; many of them keep horses, cows, and goats: they raise suffi-
[437] cient provisions of the bread kind, such as yams, plantains, and bananas, for the main support of their families; they kill hogs for meat, and they dispose
[438] of their coffee, cotton, hemp, castor oil, and fruit, at the public market for money, to purchase clothing, furniture, and other necessaries. The houses
[342] they live in, though poorly furnished, are decent habitations; and many of them have gardens attached, neatly fenced in with bamboo, or with logwood, or aloe hedges.[55]

175 If these figures are even approximately accurate, the majority of the people of Haiti had not yet become peasants in the sense of being
423 landowners, for in the statement cited only a third of the people
427 owned their land. Another large group, however, possibly a third of the population, were squatters, living on land which technically belonged to someone else but from which they were never ejected. The remaining third, excluding the town and village dwellers, were in the intermediate stage between hirelings and peasants. Some worked for a given rate of wages, but the larger number worked for shares of the produce on the land of large proprietors.

175 The crop-sharing system (Americans of the twentieth century call
473 it share-cropping) of the 'thirties and 'forties was an automatic but temporary adjustment worked out in perfect disregard of the Code
427 Rural. In general, two arrangements prevailed. By one the laborers
24 worked in return for half the total produce of the estate, raising food for themselves in gardens provided by the owner; under the other they worked for a quarter of the produce, the proprietor guaranteeing to keep them in provisions. There was no general concurrence in Haiti at the time as to which plan was the more economical to the laborer and his family. Certainly both schemes were prejudicial to large crops of coffee and sugar, and therefore to the economic prosperity of the proprietors and the state; since this was so, the crop-sharing expedient was short-lived. Workers participating in it lived in the huts and cabins which, under the old régime, had been inhabited by their slave ancestors. As these fell to pieces others, cheaper and less soundly built, were constructed to take their place.

The crop-sharing system, economically debilitating though it was,

55. *Ibid.*

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

The crop-sharing system, economically debilitating though it was,

had one great advantage to the laborer: he felt himself free and independent, with the right to engage himself to any man or to refrain from working altogether. No longer was he bound to the soil of one plantation, forced to labor under a "driver," forbidden to dance or to sleep when the mood seized him. This new freedom imparted to him a self-consequence which made him, in his own estimation, almost as important as a freeholder. The master could not say to his men, "Go into such a field and dig cane holes. The clouds are gathering and we must get in the young plants"; or, "Weed such a field," or "Prune the coffee trees today." Neither could he send a band of young people at his discretion to pick the coffee berries as they ripened, or to cull the bad berries, when pulped and dried, from the good. Every man was, so to speak, master of his own house and his own hours, considering himself at liberty to work with his family at almost any time and in any manner he pleased. 175 427 461 24 466

Herein lay the fatal defect of the crop-sharing system. There was no way of coming to an agreement among the laborers on an estate as to the amount of labor to be performed by each. One man was weaker than another; one more disposed to drink or to loaf than another. The whole group of, say, twenty families was to share in common the half or the quarter of the gross produce; but who should measure the exact proportion which would fall in justice to each family? 175 427 24 461

These annual disagreements led to a compromise which ultimately broke down even the moderate-sized estates. The proprietor, in order to avoid disputes, divided his fields among his laborers, allowing one family five acres, another ten, a third twenty, according to the nature of the land and the sort of produce which could be raised upon it. True, the proprietor lost by this division all the benefits of concentrating labor in a particular field at a particular season; also, if he wished to have necessary work done in haste which required a large number of laborers, he had to bribe them (generally by a drink of rum or tafia). Obviously, when such difficulties stood in the way of necessary repairs and improvements, the proprietors simply preferred to allow their estates to deteriorate. Like the workers, they acquired an attitude of not worrying about the future; unlike the frame of mind of the workers, their attitude came from resigned acceptance of the inevitable, not from preoccupation with the present. 175 473 427 24 425 461

Certain astute proprietors tried to get as many families together as could act in concert without jarring or jealousy, and to induce them,

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 by persuasion, to do as much work as possible for his and their own
473 interests. In a few cases the success of such efforts was tolerably good;
427 but one worker disposed to be sullen or idle, or even not physically
24 strong, might throw the whole scheme into disorder. One's own
425 profits would be cut by the misdeeds of others even when one had
461 himself been industrious. This caused a decline of incentive, sometimes among a whole group of potentially good workers, because one or two of the number shirked. Probably the most patent evil of such arrangements was that every laborer realized that he did not suffer as directly for idleness or neglect as when working for himself; his fellow workers shared the consequences of his misconduct in some degree, and his employer in a still greater measure. The driving force of individual responsibility was removed.

[692] Boyer and Inginac, foreseeing just such disorder, had tried to
[686] provide against it in the Code Rural by giving summary powers to local judges to inflict penalties upon lazy or malingering workers. Quite aside, however, from the loss of time and the inconvenience to both parties in going constantly to a judge for his decision, the proprietor was afraid to act on this principle to any extent, since if he did so he might lose his laborers altogether.

175 It was a rare proprietor, then, who could hope to make much of a
473 fortune out of his plantation. More and more the landowners, having
427 subdivided their fields, grew lax in overseeing them. The workers,
24 freed from constant supervision, accustomed by long habit to living
466 in one hut, and unconsciously developing a mentality which made
425 them feel, as did American squatters on frontier lands, that they had
178 a right to the land they tilled, imperceptibly developed into peasants. The state's remaining properties, no longer under cultivation, were invaded by families of small farmers, and the government took no steps to oust them or send them back to privately owned plantations. The estates of individual aristocrats underwent the same fate if not
[625] carefully watched. Theoretically, it was the duty of the army to drive out squatters, to force laborers back into "proper" agricultural work; but the army consisted of peasant youths who would not turn against people of their own group.

671 Legal irregularity was gradually sanctioned by the passage of
178 time, usage being a stronger guarantor of rights than unenforced laws on the statute books.

680 Haitian peasantry, to sum up, began as the unplanned, undesired

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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however, as on the masses. Nothing was done to educate the people and so inculcate in them the desire for a higher standard of living. Where food is easily got, the government gentle, and the people ignorant, one hardly looks for progress. 175 178 433 [511]

Foreigners who knew Haiti were prophesying doom through most of Boyer's administration. The British consul was the most vocal of these prophets. He toured the whole republic in 1828 and found only local variations on a sorry state of affairs. At Jacmel he reported a parceling of the land, a decline of plantations, and a horror of corporal punishment by the people; it seemed to surprise him that every blow given a worker was returned in kind. In the arrondissements of Saint-Marc and Gonaïves cotton continued to be the chief crop as it had been in French days but quantity and quality had declined. At Petite-Rivière relative prosperity prevailed because the lands there were under the control of a former lieutenant of Christophe, who managed to apply that king's stern discipline to his workers. From Gonaïves to Cap Nicolas Môle cultivation was at a low ebb; near Cap-Haïtien everything agricultural was in ruins.[65] 114 175 178 433 466 24

Industry and discipline, the two commonest characteristics of the Haiti of Christophe, were precisely those most notably absent from the Negro masses of 1843. Obedience had given way to independence of behavior. A visitor in 1842 describes the actual condition of a plantation in the arrondissement of Furcy. Where formerly thirty-two families had toiled industriously, under strict overseers who were free to inflict physical punishment upon laggards, now only twelve families remained, the rest having become "freeholders." These twelve had a crop-sharing agreement with the owner of the estate whereby they received the income from half the 10,000 pounds of coffee yielded by the land; but also they 175 178 181 466 464 427

appropriate to themselves almost the whole of the provisions which the land furnishes, sending down only a few of the rarer vegetables, beans, peas, and artichokes, to their master, for his table at Port-au-Prince, and supplying his need when he comes to reside for a few days in the country. This he knows very well, but has no alternative but to bear it quietly.[66]

65. See particularly *ibid.*, pp. 94, 103–105. The consul clearly felt that the only hope of salvation in Haiti was a reintroduction of some sort of coercion such as that used by Dessalines and Christophe.

66. Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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CHAPTER IV

THE SETTING OF HAITIAN LIFE

SINCE the discovery by the Spaniards that the wealth of Haiti lay rather in cultivating sugar than in the exploitation of gold mines, its dominant economy has been agricultural. In the valley of Mirebalais, as elsewhere in the island, the small cultivator holds the center of the economic stage. In the main he works his own land, inherited from his father or acquired through purchase. He may also cultivate additional plots of ground which he rents, since much of the land expropriated when independence was gained was retained by the State and today is leased for nominal fees.[1]

The life of the Haitian farmer, though hard, is simple and self-contained. With but few exceptions, he supplies all his necessities, for he commands almost the entire range of techniques known to his culture; hence Haitian economy shows a lack of specialization that in the main is only relieved by the sex division of labor. The day's work begins at dawn, the women rising before the men to prepare coffee, the invariable drink of early morning. When finished with his breakfast, the farmer goes to his field, where, except for the hottest hours, he works until sundown, his one meal being brought to him at about nine or ten o'clock in the morning. His wife meanwhile occupies herself with her household tasks, pounding grain in her mortar or working in her garden near by.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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belong to the father, who, in turn, is the legally recognized 582
father of all the offspring of his wife unless he divorces her — 671
something which, because of Church regulations, occurs but 858
rarely. Children born outside legal marriage have no right to 851
the name of their father. Such a one is entered under his moth- 848
er's name in the record of births, though he may and often does 858
take his father's name in school or later in life, this ultimately 551
becoming the name by which he is known and which he hands
on to his children. It is in the inheritance of the father's prop- 428
erty that children born of the various types of matings are 858
said to be most strongly differentiated, though it was particu- 848
larly with this method of distributing heritable goods reported in Mirebalais that officials in the capital disagreed. The assertion is made that while the children of a "legal" wife inherit three quarters of the estate, and the other "natural" children receive one fourth, the "illegitimate" offspring have no legal right to any of the dead man's property. They must either be provided for by their father before his death or be aided on occasion by a natural brother who has inherited from their common father and feels a moral obligation toward these children of their father. Children of plural 595
wives call each other by the terms "brother" and "sister," 593
and in some instances they get on fairly well together. More [601]
generally, however, their attitudes toward one another are colored by those of their mothers, so that verbal if not physical encounters may take place when they meet.

Where, as perhaps in the majority of cases, there is a 593
monogamous union, "legal" or "*placée*," cemented by mutual affection and mutual interest in the future of the children, life goes on calmly. Each spouse performs the tasks allotted by custom, and the children are reared in an atmosphere which varies with the fortunes and temperaments of those who make up the household. Fathers are said to prefer their daughters, and mothers their sons, among their children, but for this the Haitian has no explanation other than the phrase: "This is natural."

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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today not only in Mirebalais, but, in their essential outlines, throughout the Republic.

The larger relationship grouping originates in the immediate family, and the formation of new extended families is a continuing arc. Characteristically, the process begins when a man leaves the habitation of his father and, with his wife, settles on land somewhat remote from the dwellings of either his people or those of his wife. As the sons of this couple grow up and marry, they make their homes near that of their father, so that in time a group of immediate families related in the paternal line clusters about the dwelling of this original settler, forming a habitation. The continuation of the process depends upon the amount of land available to the group; in any event, given enough time, land to permit all the male descendants of the founder to support themselves and their families will be lacking, so that the younger men will repeat the process that has been described, and themselves become the founders of new habitations whose members, with the passing of generations, will eventually be lost to the original group. While land is available, a young man is given several hectares by his father when he marries, and here he establishes his household. If the family have prospered, additional land is bought as more young men grow up, so that the relationship group may become a community of considerable size.

In accordance with this rule of residence, only rarely will a man settle on the property of his wife's parents, since to do so reflects unfavorably on his personal status. When this does occur, it is probably because of a serious quarrel with his own people. In such a case, if his marriage endures, he becomes a quasi-member of his wife's family, but unless he has committed some extremely grave offense, such as publicly insulting or striking a parent or grandparent, he does not forfeit membership in his own group.[1] Similarly, the fact of his having settled away from the habitation of his family does not disinherit him, for, as will be seen, this occurs in but the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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591 596 428 rarest of instances, and only by fixed legal procedure, since mere verbal denial of family rights cannot deprive a person of his inheritance.

594 432 434 454 Within the immediate family it is the duty of the man to procure food for his wife and children. When his fields have been harvested, the produce is taken to the house and given to the wife, who retains a portion of it for the needs of the household and sells the surplus at the market, using the money to buy clothing and other necessaries for her husband, her children, and herself. A part of the sum she receives may be used to purchase animals to be used for transport, food, or breeding-purposes; and whatever money is left over is saved, particularly if a desirable plot of ground is available, or a mass and ceremony for the ancestors or promised rituals for the gods are in prospect. The woman, who is held to be more thrifty than the man, is thus the banker of the family. Her opinion is prized by her husband, and though a man has the legal right to dispose of a horse or a cow or his own land as he desires, in most households nothing would be done until [593] the wife was consulted. It is true that quarrels often arise concerning family funds held by the wife, especially when a man questions the accounting given him, or on occasion when he wants money to bet on a cock-fight or for drinking or other personal needs whose cost he does not care to have reviewed. But for many men the problem is quite well solved by the expedient of deducting a sum from his earnings without telling his wife that she has not been given the full amount.

596 It is only in relatively small matters that the membership of a household acts as a self-determining unit. In affairs of greater moment the extended family must figure, for despite the informality of its organization — at least as manifested in Mirebalais — and its lack of legal sanction, its power, especially as lodged in the old folk, is none the less real. It is because of this that it is said: "The peasant consults his elders about everything he does." When a transaction of some im-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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portance is being considered, particularly where the buying or selling of some land is involved, all the members of a habitation may be consulted and the opinion of the oldest man in the family, the "family head," is almost invariably followed. At the death of a man his widow inherits all his property for the duration of her lifetime or until she remarries. Her children by her dead husband, if minors, do not receive their inheritance at once, but the elders of the habitation of their father hold this property in trust for them and act as their guardians. The deities of the *vodun* cult are believed to be inherited in family lines, a tradition that gives the larger family one of its most pronouncedly African traits; while the accompanying African belief in the inheritance of the soul within the family, despite its existence in Mirebalais principally as a survival, is yet of importance in adding its sanction to help maintain the inner cohesion of the group.[2]

It may be well at this point to investigate the position, duties, and powers of the oldest male member of the group, who is the head of this informal extended family.[3] His house must be in the ancestral habitation, though he need not live in the same dwelling as his predecessor. Just as he is consulted on projects of a secular nature, his is the important voice in the worship of the ancestors and the family gods. He does not carry on the actual routine of the cult unless he is a priest, but no ceremony would be attempted without his consent and full instructions from him, and the call for the rite would be made in his name.

Examples of the exercise of his power in various circumstances are given. "He may threaten: 'Very well. If you will not listen, I am through. Do what you like.'" In such a case he will refuse "to extend his hand" when a member of his family meets some difficulty, and a man thus punished forfeits the outstanding economic advantage of belonging to his relationship group, the right to call on the members of his family for aid when he is in trouble. For otherwise all relatives

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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596 [581] [603] parents are friendly toward each other, so that the conflict that might result from a division of authority rarely develops. Were it otherwise, it could easily happen that a person who had been ordered, or forbidden, to do something against his own wishes by the head of his paternal family would plead with the head of his mother's group and receive support to justify his disobedience. To most Haitians such a hypothetical incident was amusing to contemplate, for the elders are said always to work together. Rare is the occasion when one interferes with the decision of another, and never to the knowledge of the subject of such a decision.

596 888 626 A family elder who has no sons to care for him is well looked after by the other members of the group "until the grave." Fear as well as a moral obligation prompts this. "He might curse you," it is explained, or "He might say: 'Watch out for your own old age! You mistreated me in my old age, and you will suffer in yours.'" Such pronouncements are greatly dreaded, especially because of his control over the supernatural forces that aid or harm the family and its members.

428 The closeness of the tie between social institutions and economic life is most evident in the matter of inheritance. For though the prestige that accrues from the possession of wealth makes for strong competition through the exercise of individual initiative, yet supporting the struggle of an individual for the augmentation of his holdings are the forces of family sanction and family aid, while his very start in life is obtained primarily through the help of his relatives during their lifetime or the property he inherits from them at their death.

428 858 As has been suggested, all a man's children by a "legally" married wife inherit from him, or, if he has not espoused a wife by a Church wedding, the children of his *placée* wife or wives receive his property. Whether or not it is true that the "legitimate" children inherit three quarters of the possessions of their father, the "natural" children one fourth, and

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1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the "illegitimate" none, it would seem that the children of the legal marriage have a "social duty" to care for those of a *placée* wife who receive nothing, a moral obligation which is met because of a far stronger sanction than the fear of gossip. The belief holds that the dead will deeply resent an injustice to any of his children and will cause misfortune to befall a man who does not fulfill his duty toward those who should have shared in the property of their father.

Those who do inherit divide the land, flocks, herds, and all other possessions of the deceased equally, regardless of age or sex. If a man is wealthy, he may draw up a will providing for the disposal of such items of his property as under Haitian law it is not mandatory to apportion among his children. Where there is not enough land to permit each of the survivors to work an individual plot, this may be sold and the money distributed, or those who retain the land may buy an equivalent acreage elsewhere for the others, so that some of the members of the family leave the habitation to make new homes of their own in the manner already described. Similarly, though in dividing the land it is customary to allot a good parcel to the son who has worked it, if the other land is much worse and the division is disputed, an arrangement paralleling the one described may be made to allow of a fairer division. When an heir who, for instance, has taken up permanent residence in Port-au-Prince wishes to dispose of his share instead of returning to work it or of having it cultivated for him, he sells it to his brothers and sisters, or, rarely, to a stranger, for all effort is made to retain ancestral land within the family. Similarly, a part of the property of the dead may be sold to meet claims on his estate—debts or funeral costs or the expense of erecting a tomb. This would be particularly true if these expenses had been met by one of the heirs, in which case he must be compensated before the estate may be divided. Consultation with the family elders always precedes such action, however.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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428 The division of the land is said almost invariably to entail
423 lawsuits, and some litigations have been known to stretch
691 over a period of a decade and more, for, as one resident of Mirebalais remarked, "Because of a few feet of land a peasant will, if necessary, spend a thousand gourdes at court." If a woman is the heir, her husband may intervene in a dispute to protect her interests, but if the matter goes to court, only the husband of a "married" wife has a right to appear as an interested party; the mate of a *placée* may only act as a witness. When minor grandchildren inherit, their mother, whether married or *placée*, is their legal guardian and may enter suit to protect their interests.

428 The rights of a woman to the property of her father may be
423 nullified if a dowry has been given her husband at the time
583 of her "legal" marriage, though dowries are rarely given
562 among peasants. If she is a *placée*, or if a dowry had not passed at the time of her "marriage," the land she inherits from her parents is held by her for her children, who will in time inherit it from her, so that many parcels of land deemed by natives to belong to a single family group are found to be divided among people who bear different surnames. It is not without interest to note in passing that in contrast to the acrid disputes which characterize the settlement of a father's goods, the distribution of a mother's property is seldom disturbed by dissension.

42 In addition to land and money, which form the most important part of any estate, are the flocks, herds, and beasts of burden of the dead man, and his personal tools and implements. These are sometimes willed to brothers and sisters or favorite nephews. Land and money, however, may not be alienated, but must go to the man's own children or to such others as may have been legally adopted. A child can be deprived of participation in the estate only if formally disinherited by means of a sworn document attested before a
000 notary. As has been stated, daughters who have been given

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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a dowry forfeit their share, but even when a formal dot has not passed, the number of animals given her when she went to her husband is mentioned and she is sometimes asked to waive a corresponding portion of her share in consideration of what she has already received. If she refuses to do this, however, there is no recourse but to allow her her full share, though public opinion would censure such greed.

Debts incurred by the dead must be repaid before the estate can be settled, while attempts are also made to collect all loans made by him. Where no written statement of a debt exists, a declaration by the dying man before witnesses is necessary; otherwise his heirs acknowledge their obligation at their pleasure. Conversely, if no statement attested by a notary exists to verify a loan made by him, his heirs have no means of collecting it. On the whole, lending has been found through experience to be ill-advised unless such a "paper" has been executed before a notary, and land has been pledged as collateral either before the head of the family of the borrower or before a magistrate. For though interest is not demanded by the peasants, and loans are made as a gesture of friendship, "even the people of the hills" — to use the Mirebalais idiom for the most naive rustics — have learned that just debts are often not repaid where there is no legally enforceable claim.

A man who dies childless leaves his property to his brothers and sisters by the same father and mother. The husband of a "legally" married woman who dies childless is said to have the right to one fourth of her property, the rest going to her relatives, but most often "they drive him away," giving him nothing, and since a man is customarily too proud to contest the matter, he does not insist on receiving his due. A childless widow continues to live in her dead husband's house until her death, and she also receives one fourth of her husband's property. At her death the house passes to her husband's relatives, but the quarter of his estate which she had received goes to her family.

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One other aspect of the apportionment of the land of an estate remains to be considered, the matter of leaving land for the support of ancestral ceremonies. There is no general agreement in Mirebalais as to the customary practice. It was first stated that four or five *carreaux* of land, which a man himself had "held in trust," are added to the inheritance of the eldest son, to be similarly held by him. The "trustee" calls in the other members of the family to help work this land, and the proceeds from marketing its entire yield are devoted to the support of family rituals, or used for such other general purposes as aiding a member of the family who requires funds to save himself from disgrace, and the family from scandalous gossip.

The practice of alienating land to provide for the worship of the ancestors would appear to be common in the southern peninsula and in the plain of the Cul-de-Sac; and one person, not a native of Mirebalais, told how he found it impossible to buy some land he wished to acquire because it had been consecrated for this purpose. Certain men cited examples of land which had belonged to the "old, old people of the family," control of which was vested in the family head and could therefore never be divided or sold. But this is land where the family house of worship stands and where ceremonies for the family deities and ancestors are held, something not at all comparable with setting aside workable land to yield a yearly income for services of the dead. The closest resemblance to this found in Mirebalais is when a man or a woman during life sets aside a portion of land or other belongings, declaring: "When I die, dispose of this and with the proceeds care for the expenses of my funeral and discharge these obligations which I leave you." Other persons spoke of land, which having been in the family for a very long period of time may not be sold, since it had proved to be extremely good, and the "will of the ancients" is that it never be alienated. Those who men-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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tioned this latter instance advanced it as a possible alternative to the custom found elsewhere in Haiti, adding that it was the duty of the living to honor their ancestors, and not for the ancestors to make provision to honor themselves, particularly since the dead can enforce the discharge of this duty by sending illness, bad fortune, and death to those of their descendants who are remiss.

To a very appreciable degree, what is inherited forms the foundation of whatever wealth a man may accumulate during his lifetime. Yet there are few, among the peasants at least, who do not seek by all means to add to their heritage, for among those folk the ambition to obtain more and more land is a dominating one. To this end the peasant skimps and saves, depriving himself even of his important needs, until at the proper time some choice parcel of ground comes on the market.

How does a man go about accumulating the funds necessary to amass property? Ordinarily a young man is given a plot of ground by his father, and the produce, as mentioned, is marketed for him by his mother, who saves the proceeds for him. When he marries, his wife takes over this task, and together the two strive to extract as large earnings as possible from his plot. In addition, a man may take a *job*. Such work, always paid for by the unit rather than by the day or week, is usually that of cultivating a plot of ground for its owner, and the amount agreed upon is paid when the field has been harvested. The young man at the same time can also cultivate his own fields and participate in communal labor. Another way of adding to the earnings of his fields is to help the large landowners on their cotton plantations. This work is paid for in kind with baskets of cotton, which in turn are sold to factors who come from the coast to buy both large and small quantities. A man may also increase his income by working in the cane-fields or at the caldrons when the sirup is boiled. Each

857 868 handle it; lighter work first, heavier work later. Small boys tend cattle and help the men in the fields.

178 511 The Haitian *habitant* (the peasant) is poorer and hungrier today than he was fifty years ago, or even twenty years ago. In 1935 I visited a number of peasant families I had known since 1932, and with hardly an exception I found them worse off than they had been before. Their [134] tiny landholdings had shrunk. Some land that had been lush had dried up and eroded. Little groves of trees had disappeared. Clothes had become shabby, and many of the men could no longer afford to wear the inexpensive traditional blue denim costume that was once so common. In the cities there is evidence that some of the elite have improved their life. But in a large part of the countryside the peasants are finding that the old system that served them for a hundred and fifty years can no longer feed them adequately.

423 178 One of the adverse forces is the shrinking of landholdings. Once a peasant family may have owned and worked fifty or seventy acres of ground. But it is traditional that on a man's death his land is divided [428] among the heirs. If a man with fifty acres of land has two sons, each son inherits approximately twenty-five acres. On their deaths, the land 423 is again subdivided. *But even this is not the whole story.* A UNESCO 427 survey of the Marbial Valley region in south Haiti in 1948–1949 reported:

> At the turn of the century there were numerous peasant families who lived in relatively easy circumstances, and who possessed as much as thirty to forty *carreaux* * [425] of land planted with coffee and subsistence crops. The heirs of these lands, when they found themselves in straitened circumstances, would sell some parcels of it in the hope of being able to increase their holdings again later on. In the worst cases they became the tenants of absentee landlords who lived in the cities. Nowadays, not only is the size of holdings very small, sometimes only one-eighth of a *carreau*, but they are also scattered, and most peasants are obliged to go from one place to another to cultivate their various owned, rented, or share-cropped fields.[§]

671 595 Haitian law—the civil code—does not recognize the rights of illegitimate children born after a legal marriage. But Haitian custom does. 423 848 As a result, a Haitian who has a *placée* wife in addition to his "legal" wife may circumvent the law by deeding to her a portion of his gardens during his lifetime, thereby diminishing his holdings.

423 691 Furthermore, many landholdings are not clearly defined. There are few accurate surveys, and often the boundaries are vague. Titles to many of the holdings cannot be clearly established, and as a result there are constant lawsuits. To pay the expenses of defending his interests in court, a Haitian may have to sell a strip of his land.

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* A *carreau* is about three and a third acres.

§ [UNESCO, The Haiti Pilot Project, p. 18. Cf. P352, Category 116. -- Analyst]

relations between the husband and the wife's family, it is nevertheless commonplace for men who can afford it to have more than one wife.

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[8]Simpson, in "Sexual and Familial Institutions in Northern Haiti," *American Anthropologist*, October-December, 1941, p. 656, observes that in northern Haiti there are three distinct types of plaçage. "A *femme-ciille* shares her mate's house, while a *femme plaçée* is a woman who has been children for a man without living in his house. A *femme placée* does not live in her concert's house, and she has given him no children." Although none of these women has any legal rights of inheritance, Simpson notes, "moral claims to a man's property stand in descending order for these three classes of plaçées."

[9]Johnson, *The Negro in the New World*.

[10]UNESCO, *The Haiti Pilot Project*, p. 18.

[11]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 315.

[12]The group work patterns of Haiti show a common ancestry with Negro gang work patterns in the United States. While nothing so formalized as the counbite persists among American Negroes, similarities are striking. The emphasis on rhythm, the swinging of hammers or picks in unison, the need for a singing leader, the responsive chorus, and the frequent use of some kind of percussion to keep time, all derive from a common concept of the nature of group work.

[13]Herskovits, "Some Aspects of Dahomean Ethnology," *Africa*, Vol. V (July, 1932), pp. 266-298.

[14]Cardinall, *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 109), observes that among the Krachi people of Togoland "no man may have sexual intercourse with a woman for seven days before he goes hunting."

[15]An Ashanti story told by Rattray in *Akan-Ashanti Folk-Tales* credits the hedgehog with owning the original hoe; according to this version, the hoe escaped across the sea to the country of the white men, who then pourtrayed the secret. Afterward, the white man brought many hoes to Ashanti.

Chapter 11: *Dancing and Dance Drama* (pp. 126-136)

[1]Quoted in Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 73.

[2]Actually a banjo-like instrument of African provenience. The similarity of the word *banza* to *banjo* appears to be more than a coincidence.

[3]Saint-Méry, *De la danse*, as translated by Lillian Moore in "Moreau de Saint-Méry and Dance," *Dance Index*, October, 1946, p. 238.

[4]Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[5]Brandy or rum with gunpowder is sometimes drunk by persons possessed by the loa Ogoun, deity of war.

[6]Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[7]United Nations photograph no. 62265.

[8]Students of United States Negro life will recognize the word *coundjille* as a variant of *coonjine*, a dance known on the lower Mississippi. According to one observer, Dr. Willis James of Spelman College, Atlanta, small Negro boys on the docks used to call to the boat passengers:

> "Throw me a nickel
> Throw me a dime
> If you want to see me
> Do the coonjine."

The term *coonjine* is still used to mean hand-loading of cotton bales on river boats. When this loading was done mainly by hand some years ago, the stevedores worked rhythmically in a line and sang. An old man from Louisiana testified that within his own memory the dockside *coonjine* was accompanied by makeshift drums and other percussion.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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to Christophe's serfs in the North to cause defections ultimately sufficient to win the civil war for the republic.[21]

Those who would read into Pétion's democratization of land tenure the liberal convictions of a far-sighted statesman must ignore the evidence of his earliest land acts. For two or three years nothing was so apparent as that Pétion wished to please his friends, the mulatto aristocrats. He not only had the Senate restore to their former owners all lands of which Dessalines had despoiled them, but he also agreed to a law authorizing a cash payment up to the full value of crops planted and then lost during the last year of the Emperor's rule.[22] By these concessions the President immediately wiped out the rancor left behind him by Dessalines, reversed that ruler's whole land policy, gained the support of thousands of aspirants for social position, and bound in personal loyalty to his régime all the colored leaders.

He went further. Insecurity of tenure under Dessalines had worried landlords who were not actually mulcted of their estates, and so the President undertook to guarantee security. Thereafter all sales of land were to be registered by government deed, and so confirmed to the purchaser in perpetuity; government courts would be empowered to settle disputes over payment of rents; proof of the death of the testator must be forthcoming before wills could be probated. Not even the single limitation on ownership—that if the proprietor of an estate should remain away from Haiti the state might lease his property and receive the income from it—disturbed them, for they were patriots enough, and poor enough, to feel that Haitians should live at home.

As if this were not enough to please the landed gentry, the tax

21. Saint-Rémy, *Pétion et Haïti* (Paris, 1854–57), V, 165–166, suggests another reason, namely, that people will always be more ready to defend land they actually own than for an impersonal state. This sounds logical, but certainly the Negroes had fought ardently enough to drive out the French in 1803, landless though they were. Saint-Rémy continues: "And moreover, was it not time to dismember the enormous plantations which still bore the names of those colonists whose mother country might still at any moment descend to reclaim their heritage? And could this dismemberment be achieved otherwise than by giving the people an honorable title to it?"

22. Two successive laws, February 9 and March 16, 1807, achieved these ends. The former specified that all persons who, by purchase or gift or legacy, had acquired land before November 1, 1803 (when Rochambeau surrendered) or since February 7, 1804 (when Dessalines had ordered a confirmation of all titles) should be newly assured of their rights to such holdings. There was a single, possibly unimportant, limitation: the acquisition must have been by Haitiens *from* Haitiens.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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recognized that the really important characteristics peculiar to the peasant are his sentiments and attitudes, the intense attachment to his native soil and family tradition, which, even in the economic sphere, take precedence over the desire for individual advancement and gain."[51] 463 241

Haiti in 1804 was still a country of large estates, and Dessalines and Christophe strove to keep it so. Under the active generosity of Pétion and the passive indifference of Boyer after his Code Rural had failed, few great plantations were left intact. The recorded donations of these two presidents to their generals, civil functionaries, and lesser officers, are as follows:[52] 175 24 423 671 425

134 grants of 150 carreaux (about 450 acres).			Total: 59,300 acres.
176	35	105	18,480
639	30	90	57,510
711	25	75	54,325
2,322	20	60	139,320
8,000	5	15	120,000
			Grand total: 448,935 acres.

Haiti followed French law rather than British, so that the rule of primogeniture did not prevail. It requires only a moment's reflection to see that even within a single generation the thousands of small properties noted in the table would be subdivided many times, since a father apportioned his land to all his sons. By 1842 it is probable that not a single plantation of the size common in colonial times was still intact.[53] On the testimony of numerous government officials and commandants of arrondissements, it was estimated in that year that 46,610 small landed properties were under fair cultivation.[54] If the population at that time be estimated at 800,000, seven eighths of whom were engaged in agriculture, there would accordingly be about fifteen people (including children) to each rural property. But 175 428 178 423 (311) [162]

A large number of small estates are left out of this account, which are said to be *badly* cultivated, or neglected. Taking the number of each separate 175 241

51. C. von Dietze, "Peasantry," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, XII, 50.
52. This table is compiled from figures cited in Armand Thoby, *La Question agraire en Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1888), *passim*, and Dr. P. Dalencour, *Le Sauvetage national par le retour à la terre* (Port-au-Prince, 1923), p. 18.
53. See Raymond Renaud, *Le Régime foncier en Haïti* (Paris, 1934), pp. 42–45.
54. Candler, op. cit., p. 122.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 178 565 433 439 [423] [428]

fortunes, that is, a few thousands of dollars, for a small number of élite, and to make the presidency a position economically rewarding enough to justify revolutionary conspiracies. The growth of a peasantry set in train during the long régime of Boyer continued, unbroken even by the numerous insurrections, until fixed in the mores. Land owned by the countryfolk was divided and redivided among their heirs, so that even holdings of moderate size became smaller.

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Not one of the twenty-two rulers following Boyer made the slightest effort to return the country to the forced labor system of Dessalines and Christophe. They seemed to recognize the inevitability of a peasant way of life, or at least the impossibility of luring the people back to directed labor after a long experience of freedom. On the contrary, several presidents still further parceled the land.

175 643 423

President Guerrier, for example, the very year after Boyer was deposed, put on sale at moderate prices those state lands in the North not reserved for public use.[5] If the revolutionaries of 1843 had hoped to bring back Christophe's system of forced labor, their hopes were doomed to disappointment because of the state's need of immediate income. Christophe's state land areas were now broken up in the one part of the country where a few large plantations still existed.

175 643 421 423

President Geffrard in 1862 gave his blessing to small ownership, the basis of peasantry. Whereas Pétion's laws had prohibited sales of land in parcels less than fifteen acres, Geffrard's law regularized the leasing and sale of national property in lots of fifteen acres *at most*. Geffrard was the first president openly to admit that many government lands had been lost to citizens by squatting. In an endeavor to give legality to land held by squatters' rights, his law demanded that squatters register their claims, announcing that within a short time there would be no further dismemberment of the national patrimony except by grants and sales.[6] Few registrations were made, however, for the Haitian peasant had already acquired a suspicion of legal documents he could not read or understand, and he could see no reason for legalizing a status in which, with the squatter's tenacity and inertia, he already felt himself secure.

800

Haiti was in constant financial straits. Money had to be borrowed

5. By a law of September 23, 1844.
6. Law of August 24, 1862. The articles cited here are 2 and 4.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

erosity and equity now gave way to malevolence and personal license: 114

Putting no restraint upon his passions, he travelled about, followed by 643
actors, dancers, musicians, and courtesans. An indefatigable dancer, as soon 159
as he arrived in a place he gave a ball. Under Toussaint Louverture, in 831
order to please the Governor-General everyone approached the holy altar; under Dessalines one gained glory by dancing well. The Emperor, giving himself up to scandalous pleasures, forgot that he was head of the state. The greatest immorality reigned about him. With a gaiety sometimes grotesque, he told the ladies who frequented his court how much he admired their beauty, no matter how ugly they actually were. Following his example, his major officers of state kept concubines in every town in the empire. . . . When the emperor entered a town, the honest women were gravely disturbed, for their virtue was menaced not only by him but also by his officers of state. Many mothers kept their daughters shut up to keep them from the notice of those who were powerful enough to take them, with impunity, by violence.[3]

Marriage, then, looked at from the standards of any white Western 175
country, was in a sorry state in Haiti. Continued warfare had broken 831
up many even of the families which, though unrecognized by the 581
white planters, had nevertheless been formed during slavery; and the camp life of soldiers roaming the countryside confirmed the casual attitude of the people toward sex. Every ex-slave was a hero, and liberty was sweet. Under Dessalines it was scarcely wise for a prominent man to marry an attractive wife, the Emperor might so soon set himself to seduce her. Above all, there was no tradition of formal marriage. This was the chief factor to bear upon future marriage and sexual customs of the Haitians; and in appraising them is the paramount fact to keep in mind.

Meanwhile, children were being born. Their mothers were 175
known, but often the fathers were not, for the vast majority of 848
infants were born out of wedlock. Dessalines, a realist except in 428
matters which touched his vanity, saw the necessity of establishing a status for these children, not on grounds of morality but for economic expediency, to avoid future disputes over inheritance. French precedent did not serve his need, for according to French law an illegitimate child may not inherit: a parent in France is not free to leave his property as he will, but must pass it on to his legitimate heirs.

3. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 239.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 While the broad problems of marriage, inheritance, and legiti-
512 macy were not to be solved by the official act of any ruler, the efforts made, particularly those by Dessalines and Christophe, had their effect upon the development of the marital institution in Haiti.

671 "Whereas," begins the preamble of Dessalines' law of May 28,
848 1805, "it is necessary to fix in immutable order the status and rights of children born out of wedlock, and whereas it is important to reconcile what nature and society owe them with the political interests of the state," therefore it behooves the government to lay
[581] down the specific rules which follow. Nothing in the law pushes the people toward marriage, but every provision strengthens the family, which they had known both in Africa and in the slave régime of the colony.

175 Henceforth no stigma is to attach to the fact of illegitimacy, nor is
671 there to be discrimination in favor of children born in wedlock. The status of a child will depend upon recognition by its parents. If a
848 child's maternal connection is established, he has rights in her
428 property; if the father likewise recognize his offspring, the child has rights in the paternal property; even if the recognition of a child is so long delayed that the parents die, that child who can prove his descent is to receive the name and his own share of property from the deceased. There is but one single provision in which an illegitimate child has an inferior status: should a couple decide to be legally married, they must recognize the natural offspring of either party before or during the wedding ceremony, if such children are to have full claims of inheritance; delay until after the ceremony cuts their claim to only one fourth that of children born legitimately; refusal to recognize the natural child disinherits him, unless he can prove his descent.

[422] Since the Emperor was already engaged upon his campaign to
[423] acquire lands for the state, the property rights guaranteed would refer chiefly to personal property, and only secondarily to land still owned by individuals. Both men and women owned personal property, however, and must therefore pass on this property, a definite percentage going to each son and daughter.

The law is weak in some of its details. It does not specify, for example, how an unmarried father shall leave his property—whether by name to each child he has recognized as his own, or by name to the mothers of his children. It is strong in that it is simple: property

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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must pass to an illegitimate child if recognition is accorded. It is likewise strong in its harmony with actual conditions: in the absence of legal marriage among the people, it would have been manifestly unfair to favor a few fortunate children. Dessalines argued that the revolution had legitimized all Haitians; that it was unjust to prevent a child's inheriting from the person who had given him life; and that since all Haitians had come out of slavery and degradation into freedom, no new inequalities should be instituted.[4]

If this law encouraged family life, it weakened marriage both of the civil and religious kind: where was the sense in the expensive luxury of a wedding when children were just as legitimate without it? By conforming to folk practice the Emperor confirmed it. Only the aristocrats disliked his law, for it seemed to make light of one of the distinctions they cherished—the formal wedding. It irked them to have the State place a casual child upon an equal plane with one born after proper marriage.

At still another point the law accorded with living conditions at the time. During the years of fighting many men had been killed, and always the large standing army kept thousands of others away from settled farm life. Home, then, was for a child the abode of his mother—a fact recognized by the law's insistence upon maternal relationship rather than paternity. Such a word as "matriarchate" has no place here; but from the days of Dessalines to modern times, the lowly Haitian thinks of his home primarily as where his mother lives.

As if the advantages of formal wedding were not already sufficiently weakened by this law, other enactments of the empire struck at other phases of marriage. Divorce was permitted for adultery, for incompatibility of temperament or character, and by mutual consent. Such provisions not only broke away completely from Catholic practice, but made getting out of wedlock a casual matter of taking an oath. The complaint of incompatibility need be made by only one spouse; "mutual consent" as a ground for divorce was probably not allowed in 1805 in any other country of the Western World.

Dessalines did not appear to care one whit for the good opinion of white foreigners. It sufficed for him if Haiti endured, whatever Europeans thought of her. Christophe, on the other hand, was extremely sensitive to foreign disapproval. Many of his official acts can

4. According to the testimony of Madiou, *op. cit.*, III, 216.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 643 648 be explained only as efforts to win outside respect for his kingdom of blacks. He was aware of the scorn in which white people held the apparent absence of all sexual morality in Haiti, and so set about introducing reforms. Even as a general he had opposed the dissoluteness of Dessalines.

175 643 582 671 581 [595] In an early pronouncement Christophe proscribes concubinage (by which he meant the unmarried unions of the people), libertinage, and "all those disorders which weaken the family." To proscribe an evil is not necessarily to put an end to it, however, and so he tried also to persuade and educate his people to the habit of full legal marriage. His steps at persuasion were various. In speeches he urged weddings upon his subjects; yet a man could see little reason for tying himself to one woman for life, assuming *legal* responsibilities at an expense, when already from experience he knew that he could have a woman's loyalty without the ceremony. Although weddings somewhat increased after 1806, Christophe's verbal campaign was a failure. He next tried force. In one town he made all the females assemble in the public square; then, separating the married from the unmarried, commanded his royal guards to advance, each to select an unmarried woman who should become his wife. At other times he selected young men and women by lot and had them married "by their King's authority." No nobleman in the kingdom could long remain unwed: indeed, Queen Victoria might have approved Christophe's solicitude for the moral uprightness of the Haitian court.

175 671 848 428 Another means by which Christophe forced his people into formal marriage was the indirect one of attacking property rights. Realizing that Dessalines' law by guaranteeing inheritance to natural children encouraged people to remain unmarried, he rescinded it by one of the first acts of his rule.[5] This act reestablished French practice, making it all but impossible for illegitimate children to inherit anything. Most persons of property found this law persuasive where words had left them cold. Madiou thought the law "excessively severe in a country where nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of the population were born out of wedlock,"[6] and he spoke of its disharmony with general practice at the time. Actually,

5. Law of March 23, 1807.
6. Madiou, op. cit., III, 411.

it seems not radically to have affected the masses but only the fairly well-to-do.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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it seems not radically to have affected the masses but only the fairly well-to-do.

The *Royal Almanac* for the year 1814 touches proudly upon the moral state of the kingdom. The author of the almanac, the Comte de la Limonade, says: "Great attention is paid to morals and manners. Marriage is honored, protected, and encouraged; no Haitian who is unmarried can fill any place of distinction. Divorce is not permitted." All this was true; yet the mass of Haitians still remained unmarried. Nevertheless, the quotation indicates the extent to which Christophe had gone in his effort to reform marriage and morals among his people; to set them in the European tradition and draw them out of their African and colonial backgrounds.

While Christophe was trying to effect reforms in the North, Pétion was accepting his Southern folk as they were. Hardly a law during his twelve-year administration touches the subject of marriage. The élite colored people continued to make proper legal marriages and so insure the inheritance of their legitimate children. The common folk lived their family lives without weddings, and if property questions arose, custom ruled, backed by public opinion in their little communities.

Such are the backgrounds out of which modern Haitian sex relations have developed. From African tradition came family life, the importance of property to stabilize a union, insignificance of a wedding ceremony, familiarity with matrilineal kinship and descent; from French colonial practice, formal marriage to establish a family with social ambition, casual sex relations for pleasure outside this marriage, the claim of legitimate children to all property (in contrast to folk custom, where few legitimate children were born); from Dessalines, an emphasis upon the African tradition and realism; from Christophe, an insistence upon strict French practice in marriage and in the passage of property.

From among these alternatives Haiti made a choice which is an excellent example of what Keller calls "automatic selection in the mores."[7] There was no congress to select one procedure rather than another. Because Pétion and Boyer followed a *laissez-faire* policy in social matters, the people took the path of least resistance.

7. A. G. Keller, *Societal Evolution* (revised ed., New York, 1931), chaps. IV and V.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

114 consider it novel when it changes little but detail; and some of Haiti's
175 seventeen documents were too short-lived to be significant. Haiti
642 shows her Frenchness in this constitution making, this love of being
171 logical and having the details all written down in proper order.

175 To try to analyze the content of so many documents would be a work of supererogation.[5] A brief comment upon each, however, will improve one's acquaintance with the mind of Haitian statesmen.

175 1801. Toussaint L'Ouverture's constitution, laying the framework
642 of his venture as director of the colony while still acknowledging its
466 relationship to France. In it he announced himself governor-general for life with the right to name his successor, thereby becoming the forerunner of the strong-man principle in politics. The most important part of this constitution was its detailed organization of the forced-labor system.

175 1805. Dessalines' constitution establishing the empire. In many
642 respects it did not differ from Toussaint's previous document, for the
563 same military organization was preserved, and the same system of forced labor; otherwise, there was little structure of government. One article was included which was to appear in every other constitution of Haiti up to 1918: "No white man shall set foot on this territory as master or as landowner."[6] In other respects there were sagacious provisions which did not endure. For example, the generic name of "blacks" was adopted for all Haitians, of whatever color.
175 The Emperor was trying thus to forestall the dissensions which
642 inevitably must result from the growth of social classes based on skin
[463] color. Another important provision was that every citizen who was not an ordinary cultivator must learn and practice some mechanical art. This was not merely a thrust at the aristocratic pretensions of the old affranchis, but also an endeavor to make Haiti industrious and self-sufficient. Except in the North, where Dessalines' deputy Christophe kept the requirement, the article was honored only in the breach. The social situation was touched at one other point: "No one is worthy of being a Haitian who is not a good father, a good son, a good husband, and a good soldier." Parents were forbidden to
[428] disinherit their children. Although, as has been shown, the Emperor

5. Such an analysis was made by Louis-Joseph Janvier, *Les Constitutions d'Haïti, 1801–85* (Paris, 1886).

6. He had made this declaration first on April 28, 1804; at that time the words "No white man" read "No colonist nor European."

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

portance is being considered, particularly where the buying or selling of some land is involved, all the members of a habitation may be consulted and the opinion of the oldest man in the family, the "family head," is almost invariably followed. At the death of a man his widow inherits all his property for the duration of her lifetime or until she remarries. Her children by her dead husband, if minors, do not receive their inheritance at once, but the elders of the habitation of their father hold this property in trust for them and act as their guardians. The deities of the *vodun* cult are believed to be inherited in family lines, a tradition that gives the larger family one of its most pronouncedly African traits; while the accompanying African belief in the inheritance of the soul within the family, despite its existence in Mirebalais principally as a survival, is yet of importance in adding its sanction to help maintain the inner cohesion of the group.[2]

It may be well at this point to investigate the position, duties, and powers of the oldest male member of the group, who is the head of this informal extended family.[3] His house must be in the ancestral habitation, though he need not live in the same dwelling as his predecessor. Just as he is consulted on projects of a secular nature, his is the important voice in the worship of the ancestors and the family gods. He does not carry on the actual routine of the cult unless he is a priest, but no ceremony would be attempted without his consent and full instructions from him, and the call for the rite would be made in his name.

Examples of the exercise of his power in various circumstances are given. "He may threaten: 'Very well. If you will not listen, I am through. Do what you like.'" In such a case he will refuse "to extend his hand" when a member of his family meets some difficulty, and a man thus punished forfeits the outstanding economic advantage of belonging to his relationship group, the right to call on the members of his family for aid when he is in trouble. For otherwise all relatives

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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made of key-men in the district informally called *chefs d'esquade*. They have the reputation of being those to whose call a number of men, perhaps a dozen, perhaps two or three times that many, will respond and come to give the aid that is desired. Such a person is given a "bouquet"—a bottle of *clairin*—which insures the appearance of himself and his group on the date set. A *combite* may be held at any time during the week except Sundays, which are dedicated to rest, and Tuesdays (in earlier times Mondays), when tradition holds a person must be free to work his own fields and care for tasks needed to be done at his own house. There is no requirement in either law or custom to respond to the call for communal work, and the larger landowners, who usually reside in the towns, rarely participate in a *combite*. So great is the pleasure derived from work of this sort, however, and so living is the realization among the peasantry of its potential benefits, that a man hesitates before he refuses to take part in a *combite* to which he has been summoned. Sometimes a man who has been faithful in his attendance at *combites* and has worked well at them falls ill during the time for planting or for clearing his ground of underbrush or for hoeing. In such case a *combite* is summoned, and even though this man is unable to offer the usual feast, his services are remembered and the men work with a will to insure the proper preparation of his ground.

The scene in a field where a large *combite* is at work is an arresting one. The men form a line, with a drummer in front of their hoes. The *simidor*, who leads the singing as he works with the others, adds the rhythm of his song to the regular beats of the drum, thus setting the time for the strokes of the implements wielded by the workers. This drum, slung about the neck of the drummer, is of the European form, never the hollowed-out African type that figures in religious rites. Its sound can carry far, however, and thus it not only beats the time for the hoes, but notifies all concerned that the *combite*

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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his fourth or fifth month, he is reprimanded for laziness if 856
late in sitting up, and when he is taught to walk his parents 861
call out: "Come, lazy one! Come on!" He receives no physical punishment, however, until somewhat older. Thus, for example, if after a child can crawl he is told not to go beyond the threshold, he is scolded the first two or three times he disobeys, but after this he is beaten with a small stick on the buttocks or thighs. Similar means are used to teach him at the same age not to go near the fire, to avoid the thorny cacti used to fence gardens, not to put things in his mouth, and — especially because of black magic — not to pick up anything from the ground. Training for bowel and bladder control is begun 863
shortly after birth and is continued at every opportunity the mother may have to pick up the child, so that he is usually fairly well trained when a year old, though complete control is achieved only after two years or more. A child who wets his mat is beaten, but "not too hard."

Baptism takes place when all is in readiness for the cere- 851
mony, a matter of a month or two after birth, unless the child 852
is seriously ill, in which case he is baptized immediately. The 608
fee of 2.50 gourdes to the civil officer who registers the birth [651]
is paid by the father. The godfather pays a similar amount to the priest for baptizing the infant, and in addition, if he desires and is able, he may both aid the godmother in meeting the expenses of dressing the child and give the mother a gift. The godmother furnishes the child with a shirt, a dress, a [431]
bonnet — "a pretty one" — stockings, shoes, and, if she can afford it, silk for a ribbon-trimmed coverlet. These gifts are obligatory, and even where a hasty baptism of a sick child has made it impossible to provide properly for his outfitting, if he survives, his mother is given a present of money by both godparents so she can procure this finery.

As in most Catholic countries, the godparents play an im- 608
portant role in the life of their godchild. Not only do they "stand in the place of father and mother" at his baptism, but

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CHAPTER IV

THE SETTING OF HAITIAN LIFE

Since the discovery by the Spaniards that the wealth of Haiti lay rather in cultivating sugar than in the exploitation of gold mines, its dominant economy has been agricultural. In the valley of Mirebalais, as elsewhere in the island, the small cultivator holds the center of the economic stage. In the main he works his own land, inherited from his father or acquired through purchase. He may also cultivate additional plots of ground which he rents, since much of the land expropriated when independence was gained was retained by the State and today is leased for nominal fees.[1]

The life of the Haitian farmer, though hard, is simple and self-contained. With but few exceptions, he supplies all his necessities, for he commands almost the entire range of techniques known to his culture; hence Haitian economy shows a lack of specialization that is the mark of only relatively the sex division of labor. The day's work begins at dawn, the women rising before the men to prepare coffee, the invariable drink of early morning. When finished with his breakfast, the farmer goes to his field, where, except for the hottest hours, he works until sundown, his one meal being brought to him at about nine or ten o'clock in the morning. His wife meanwhile occupies herself with her household tasks, pounding grain in her mortar or working in her garden near by.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

591 592 425 rarest of instances, and only by fixed legal procedure, since mere verbal denial of family rights cannot deprive a person of his inheritance.

594 630 632 634 451 Within the immediate family it is the duty of the man to procure food for his wife and children. When his fields have been harvested, the produce is taken to the house and given to the wife, who retains a portion of it for the needs of the household and sells the surplus at the market, using the money to buy clothing and other necessaries for her husband, her children, and herself. A part of the sum she receives may be used to purchase animals to be used for transport, food, or breeding purposes; and whatever money is left over is saved, particularly if a desirable plot of ground is available, or a mass and ceremony for the ancestors or promised rituals for the gods are in prospect. The woman, who is held to be more thrifty than the man, is thus the banker of the family. Her opinion is prized by her husband, and though a man has the legal right to dispose of a horse or a cow or his own land as he desires, in most households nothing would be done until (593) the wife was consulted. It is true that quarrels often arise concerning family funds held by the wife, especially when a man questions the accounting given him, or on occasion when he wants money to bet on a cock-fight or for drinking or other personal needs whose cost he does not care to have reviewed. But for many men the problem is quite well solved by the expedient of deducting a sum from his earnings without telling his wife that she has not been given the full amount.

596 It is only in relatively small matters that the membership of a household acts as a self-determining unit. In affairs of greater moment the extended family must figure, for despite the informality of its organization — at least as manifested in Mirebalais — and its lack of legal sanction, its power, especially as lodged in the old folk, is none the less real. It is because of this that it is said: "The peasant consults his elders about everything he does." When a transaction of some im-

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his "horse" may trample in glowing coals, plunge his hands in boiling oil, or play with red-hot iron bars. For Ogoun Chango is a fire-eater—a deity of the forge and of battle. The deity Legba is characterized as a limping old man. A "horse" possessed by Legba may caroot about on a kind of cane-crutch called a Legba stick. Each loa has his distinctive mark. As the Haitians say, "you learn about the loa by watching his horses." 776 787

In addition to having homes in Africa or below the water, most loa have special residing places in Haiti, such as stones, caves, trees, waterfalls, or springs. One may come across a boulder or a bamboo grove sacred to a certain loa, and food offerings are likely to be seen there. Many loa are identified with some specific variety of tree and will "inhabit" all such trees throughout the country. Loa Calbasie, for example, lives in the calabash tree, and Loa Général Brisé in the chardette tree. Offerings to these deities are set out underneath the tree or hung in its branches, and services may be held around the trunk. 776 778 [782] [782]

Loa also live in the old Carib and Arawak celts which are found from time to time. These "loa stones," as they are called, are identified by their forms and their ability to pass certain tests. Some Haitians declare the stones must be able to "whistle," to perspire when blown upon, and to "talk." The loa stones ordinarily are passed on from one generation to another, in the houmfor and in the peasant hut alike. In this way the loa who inhabit them are inherited. Sometimes, but rarely, stones are sold; disposing of a loa stone requires an elaborate ceremony to guarantee that the seller will not be injured by the loa, who is likely to feel "wounded." In such a ceremony the loa is fed and placated and asked to go his way in peace. The loa stones are sometimes called "thunder stones," in the belief that they were hurled to earth by the deities Kebiosso, Sobo, and Chango (all of whom had similar functions among the Arada and Yoruba peoples of West Africa). The stones are cared for by their owners with the greatest reverence. [432] [782] [171]

Loa are acquired by individuals in various ways. Many Haitians hold that every infant is born with a *mait' tête*—a spirit who is "master of the head." In this light, no individual is without a loa, although the deity may never manifest interest in the individual by an act of possession. A man may acquire a loa in the course of his life, although in that event the original mait' tête must be retired from his head. The "inherited" loa are usually not the personal deities but the special protectors of the household or the houmfor and are known as "loa of the house" or "family loa." 776

Should a man acquire a new loa to replace the old as his mait' tête, he must undergo a ceremony known as *laver tête*—the "washing of the head." The old loa is retired and sent away, leaving the field clear for the new 776 789

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1: Herskovits E-6,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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in Port-au-Prince, native or "créole" rice, red beans, and olive oil. The rice and beans are cooked separately, as are the yams and the two kinds of salt fish, each being seasoned with oil, salt, and pepper. The ordinary plates or calabashes on which food is offered the *loa*, or African deities, and the characteristic special double plates used in the twin cult, are prepared by rubbing them with olive oil. When the food is ready, it is placed in the proper containers in a closed room, and the family gather and say prayers of the Church — the Pater Noster, the Ave Maria, and the Credo — after which the *loa*, the twins, and the dead are called to come and eat. From midday until after sunset the room remains unopened, so that these beings may partake of the offerings placed there for them. Finally, when darkness has fallen, the family enter, and the food, whose essence is believed to have been consumed by the spirits, is eaten.

At times when a garden yields but little, the owner may suspect that black magic is the cause. He thereupon tries to recall any of his neighbors who might have occasion to feel envious of him, or those with whom he may have quarreled. He does nothing overt at this time except to watch for signs of hostility on the part of the suspect, but when the time for the next planting arrives, he not only obtains a strong charm to protect his own garden, but if he is particularly exercised and thinks his suspicions are well justified, he may set a counter-charm in the field of his neighbor who he believes has harmed him. This would only be done in exceptional cases, where, for instance, the crops of one cultivator had failed when the fields about his had yielded well; for, in the main, garden magic is directed toward protective rather than toward malevolent ends.

A certain proportion of the harvest is reserved for use at home and the remainder is sold in the markets. Since these markets, which as the primary channel of distribution rank with farming in their importance in Haitian economy, they must be considered.

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

In the Haitian cuisine the prevalence of stews, of dishes fried in deep fat, of the generous use of pepper in seasoning, are all African, as are even the names of certain dishes, such as *acassan*, a Nigerian-Dahomean term which designates the cooked balls of cornmeal. One of the few European intrusions is white bread, while the cassava cakes, also important in native diet, derive from the aboriginal Indian inhabitants.

In its outward forms the economic system under which the Haitian peasant lives seems entirely based upon European pecuniary patterns. Money follows the French system, even to the official use of the French designation, *centimes*, for the smallest parts of the principal unit of currency, the *gourde*. Both paper money and coins are used, and as the result of the Marine occupation American money is as well known as the currency of the country itself. Buying and selling goes on in the accepted European manner, the price of such export crops as cotton, sugar-cane, and coffee responding to the fluctuations of the world market. In many of its inner aspects also, the values of the Haitian are influenced by the money economy taken over from Europe and America.

The conclusion that the economy of Africa has been swept aside by that of Europe needs, nevertheless, to be qualified if certain historical and psychological factors are not to be ignored. It must not be forgotten that in West Africa, long before the period of European contact, a monetary system based on the cowrie shell had been fully developed. The prestige of wealth, the resulting drive to obtain property, the pursuits of buying and selling, and other aspects of a pecuniary civilization were as current in West Africa at the time of slaving, and continue today, as in Europe or in Haiti. When some of the attitudes associated with the economic life are analyzed, it is no simple matter, therefore, to state whether they stem from African or European sources, or both.

One pattern common to both economies, the validation of position through the conspicuous display of resources, has

[P.110]

9. Land and Work

There is a common Haitian saying which goes: "Piti mangé, travaille yoan pik" (A little food, but tremendous work). This is the way the Haitian peasant sees it. There is endless labor in the fields or in the perpetually eroding mountain gardens, on landholdings that are too small to give any promise of a better life. The rains that give life to the crops take away, year by year, the nourishment of the soil. Where forests or lush groves once grew on the hillsides, there are now deep, dry gullies. Where coffee plants, cotton, and yams once grew abundantly, there are now fields of stones. This is the heritage of the peasant farmer of today. Small holdings on the hillsides and in the valleys have become smaller through the years as the population has swelled and the land been subdivided. Three and a half million people must take their sustenance from that land. More than three hundred persons must share each square mile of soil. But most of Haiti is mountainous and formidable to agriculture. Two-thirds of the land area is untillable by modern standards. There is less than one acre of useful land per person. The best of the land in the alluvial valleys is held by large corporations producing sugar and sisal. Flat, arid stretches elsewhere are semi-desert.

In the small gardens the peasants grow maize, *ti mis* (millet), coffee, bananas and plantains, cotton, beans of various kinds, yams, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, and manioc. In the delta areas they grow rice, and along the long coastline thousands of fishermen sail out in crude but sturdy boats to bring back fish from the sea. Citrus trees, mango trees, and avocado trees grow wild; but they are fewer than in the old days. The Haitian works the soil and manages to subsist, but nature and history have not been kind to him.

Even less kind have been some of the chroniclers of the past, who have sought to disparage the Haitian as a lazy and careless creature who would

2: Courlander B-1 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

rather starve than work. An Englishman, James Franklin, wrote in 1828, for example:

> Experiments may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coercion and want will impel the Haytian to labour; and I have my doubts as to the practicability of enforcing labour in Hayti until the people have been better instructed, and their characters become changed.

As Franklin summarized it: "Nature is too generous to the Haytian; he never wants, and so never works for hire, as do free labourers in other countries."

The early nineteenth century saw a flood of such bitter comments about the remains of the once rich and flourishing French colony of St. Domingue. The vast productivity of Haiti under French rule had made that colony one of the richest in the New World. The country was dotted with sugar mills, brick-covered wells, and warehouses; and carefully built brick aqueducts, irrigation canals, locks, and dams assured water for the plantations. In 1790, under the slave system, Haiti had exported 163,000,000 pounds of sugar. In 1826, a quarter of a century after the revolution, it was reported to have exported 35,000 pounds.

This falling off in production and exports doubtless had many causes, but one of the most significant was the Haitian's revolt not only against slavery but also against continuing the same kind of work he had performed as a slave. He saw not too much difference between forced, unpaid labor and working for any large landholder at subsistence wages. To the Haitian slave the inspiring battle cry of the French Revolution did not mean that all men would work together on another's man plantation and receive the same wages. It meant that every man would have his own garden to work for himself as he chose; every man would be a full citizen, with land of his own, free to come and go, to plant what he wished, to sell what he could. Despite long years under a colonial slave system, the Haitian still remembered a different way of life in Africa, where mass production for export was not the primary objective of labor.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the population of Haiti was not much more than half a million—less than one sixth of what it is today. There was plenty of land, and much of it had not yet been wasted by constant tilling and erosion. When the French were driven out, the Haitian peasant re-created an economic world of his own liking. The plantation system which had poured out sugar and coffee and indigo for Europe faded away, and in its place there sprang up an agrarian system which has continued until the present day. In the early

[Franklin, The Present State of Hayti, p. 362. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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attitudes toward French culture in all of its expressions, and by a new feeling of kinship for the peoples and cultures of Africa.

The variety of views expressed by Haitian intellectuals was colored by differences no more subtle than those characteristic of the intellectuals of any other country in the Caribbean region—even though North American observers unfortunately persist in treating such differences as politically irrelevant. There were those spokesmen who continued to embrace French culture and to reject "Africanism," only deploring the North American presence in Haiti. Others embodied their views in a staunchly Haitian nationalism and, as they began to view their country in a new light, invested the Haitian folk with an unrealistically romantic picturesqueness. Still others fastened upon the African theme with special intensity, and thereby gave a strong racist tinge to their nationalism.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, anthropology came to be seen as an important means for giving Haitians an accurate—that is, an "inside"—picture of their own society; a number of young ethnologists, mainly self-trained, began to publish works on Haitian culture. Soon anthropology was pressed into a political mold, anticipating similar developments in other "colonial" countries. The first novels purporting to deal with the common people, though sometimes tinged with idealized preconceptions of rural society, were published; and an impressive number of competent young poets devoted themselves to aesthetic explorations of the Haitian spirit. Haitian cultural and intellectual life, in short, was taken up with the rediscovery of Haiti and its people.

But the Estimé regime did not produce changes in the economic structure of Haitian society of importance proportionate to the national cultural renaissance. Even those modifications in the class structure for which Estimé is sometimes given credit might not have occurred, were it not for educational reforms that had begun in the 1920s and the beneficial effects of Haiti's prosperity of the mid-1940s. What Estimé could do was to open the ranks of an inefficiently large bureaucracy to able, if sometimes inadequately trained, newcomers of poor rural antecedents.

At the same time, as the Combaire-Sylvains have suggested (1959: 179–89), a qualitatively different class group was beginning to emerge in Port-au-Prince during Estimé's presidency, and the presence of such a group suggests that new economic forces were firmly stirring.

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175 565 These newcomers in the class structure enjoyed regular urban employment, were mostly literate and legally married, and harbored strong ambitions for the education of their children. Such persons were certainly not elite members, and their behavior (as, for instance, in their preference for speaking Creole rather than French) showed it; yet they were not part of the rural masses, nor merely an example of Marx's *Lumpenproletariat*. Yet significance of this new group for the Leyburn "caste" theory of the elite is considerable. Even today, if such persons lapse into poverty, their ideology will continue to matter politically. Estimé's regime also loosed new political trends, [467] since at first some encouragement was given to labor unions, and the [362] construction of urban low-cost housing was undertaken. We are unable to measure the long-term effects of these changes, but their reality raises some questions about the rigidity that Leyburn's analysis imputed to Haitian social structure.

175 669 643 159 In May 1950, after an unsuccessful bid to extend his term of office illegally, Estimé's regime was toppled, again by a military junta. To power came Paul Magloire, the first military figure to become chief executive since the start of the United States occupation. Like Estimé before him, Magloire symbolized certain effects of the occupation upon Haiti's social and political structure and the way that structure was continuing to change. Magloire's origins were not within the elite, to judge by the traditional criteria. He was a black man, and from the north; born in Quartier Morin, he associated himself with the elite of the north coast port of Cap Haïtien, Haiti's second largest city. By marriage to a "Capoise," whose family status was much higher than his own, and by a successful career in the military during the occupation, Magloire penetrated elite circles. As commander of the Palace Guard, he had been a member of the junta that ousted Lescot in 1946, replacing him with Estimé. In 1950, when Magloire became president, after the army had forcibly discharged both houses of the legislature, he apparently had the support of the elite and of the business class, if not of the popular forces that had backed Estimé.

175 643 Magloire may be said to have moderated considerably the intensity of Haitian politics, and his administration was not marked by so sharp an ideological concern with the relative roles of elite and countryman. Times were good, and levels of life, both in the countryside [433] and in the capital, were probably as high as they had been at any time in Haitian history. Certain economic gains were made in the tourist

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industry, in the processing of essential oils, in extractive operations (bauxite, copper), and in the manufacture of a few essential commodities. The official attitude toward private investment, even by foreigners, was unusually benign; and coffee, the big export crop, enjoyed a boom. Again, however, little effect could be seen in the basic economic structure. By 1956–57, when the Magloire regime was toppled, the era of apparent prosperity had come to an end.

Magloire's tenure ended as had his predecessor's; after a vain attempt to prolong his regime by forcing through new laws, he was brought down by the army and was succeeded by a series of juntas. The politics of the brief interregnum preceding the accession of François Duvalier was complicated by the rival claims of four presidential aspirants: Clément Jumelle, Daniel Fignolé, Louis Déjoie, and François Duvalier. These four men represented significantly different trends in Haitian thinking and were supported by different social groups. Jumelle, although regarded as the spiritual inheritor of the Magloire administration, won the support of many Haitian intellectuals; his appeal was partly grounded in his experience as finance minister in the Magloire cabinet, but the scandalous graft of the Magloire administration worked against him. Fignolé, too, had been a cabinet minister, but his antecedents and political philosophy differed sharply from Jumelle's. An eloquent, intense man of rural lower-class origins, Fignolé was regarded by many as a dangerous demagogue. His support came largely from the poorer urban classes, and his reputation as a union leader and as a "self-made" former minister of education gave him special strength among urban groups. Déjoie, considered to be the candidate of most of the business community and of the elite, was a highly successful agronomist and businessman who had done much to build rural industry; it is also generally believed that Déjoie was the "unofficial candidate" of the United States. Duvalier, trained as a doctor of medicine and for long an enthusiastic amateur ethnologist, had been a political enemy of the Magloire regime and, as a former minister in the Estimé cabinet, saw himself as the ideological descendant of Estimé. Duvalier appears eventually to have become the army's choice, ostensibly because he was considered "manageable"; at any rate, it was Duvalier who finally emerged as president, ending the uneasy interim which followed Magloire's ejection.*

* Probably the most penetrating analysis of Haitian politics of the time is that provided by Maingot, supra, to which this interpretation owes much.

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regime. That President Duvalier has been able to stay in power in spite of internal dissaffection, sometime hostile United States propaganda, a dire economic situation, personal ill health, and other woes, is a tribute to his political acumen, if not to his principles. None of this means, of course, that such consummate skill will continue to work; Haitian governments have a way of falling suddenly, and the Duvalier regime will probably not prove an exception. 175 642 648 643

Dr. Duvalier's success indicates that he has made certain correct assessments, not only of Haiti's social and political structure but also of United States policy with regard to Haiti. The occupation was notable for its failure to make any telling alterations in the economic structure or level of development of the country. Many beneficial changes were made, as Leyburn demonstrates, particularly in the areas of health and health services, communications, government administration, education, and transport (though the use of corvée labor on the roads led to serious abuses, and stimulated sanguinary guerilla warfare). But most significantly, the United States institutionalized the army and police forces. The ragged bands of political mercenaries of the past were dissolved; the officer-ridden army was transformed into a small, well-trained, and well-organized force. Eventual firm control by this force of weaponry, communications, and transport ended the era of presidential succession by invasion, turned the army into the major locus of nonelectoral, president-making power, and may have ended forever the possibility of an agrarian revolt against the central authority. Another political effect of the occupation was the importance it imparted to the United States ambassador, whose political opinions thereafter would matter significantly in the transmission of power at the top of the Haitian governmental system. The Duvalier regime has continuously taken full account of the consequences of United States interest; and its leaders have been able to watch the operation of that interest in the political events occurring between the fall of the Lescot government and the present. 175 648 [433] 114 744 20 871 489 175 648 701 643 669 625

In the view of one acute observer, President Duvalier, in order to consolidate his power, had to cope with three other loci of political strength in addition to the army and the United States ambassador. The business community, located for the most part in Port-au-Prince, had strongly supported Déjoie's candidacy during the interregnum; its leaders were mainly members of the elite, and many had strong 175 643 66

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same century in which Haiti withdrew. The yeomanry of Haiti in the nineteenth century was hence able to develop a traditionalism of unusual firmness and persistence.

This traditionalism, however, has had a high price. The economic productivity of the rural cultivator has not risen; it can be argued convincingly that poor land use, erosion, and population growth have meant lower levels of consumption for the common people in 1966 than obtained a hundred years or more ago. The rural masses, though overwhelmingly consisting of landholders, have been unable to break out of a stagnation that is economic as well as cultural. Such stasis has been based to some extent on the limited responsiveness of the rural folk to outside stimulus. But also important in maintaining the past is the national institutional system that took on its characteristic shape after 1804, and under which the rural masses still live. That system, the origins of which Leyburn has examined and assessed with such care, is controlled, as we have seen, by a numerically small segment of the national population that is markedly distinct from the yeomanry itself.

The nature and internal differentiation of the elite needs much more study, though it seems clear already that it is by no means a single solidary class embracing all but the yeomen. Whatever the structure of the elite, the relationship between the yeomen on the one hand and the real holders of power on the other must be understood if one is to understand Haiti. The yeoman is defined in terms of the elite; he is dependent upon it and subject to it. This is what is meant when it is said that the yeomanry, like the elite, forms only a part-society. Yet without the yeomen, there would be no elite. The elite live by controlling and taxing the rural masses, and find their sustenance and their power in rural productivity. Elite and yeomen, then, are bound together in unequal but interdependent relationships in Haiti as they are in other less developed societies of a similar kind. In such cases, the political role of the yeomanry is usually minor, and few opportunities may arise for the expansion of its political strength. If the yeomanry fails to increase its productivity in ways that enable it to control more of its own surpluses, its role in affecting national political decisions may grow narrower rather than wider, and this ominous possibility has become a worldwide phenomenon. It becomes more intensified wherever industry and trade grow, unaccompanied by parallel growth in yeoman productivity or in new and more widely representative national institutions.

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311 bean country, and perhaps fewer than in any country in Latin Amer-
423 ica. The agriculture itself, with the exceptions now of those very few
171 large-scale plantations in sisal and sugarcane, is adapted to small plots and is worked with intensive labor and few tools on hilly land. Com-
433 pared with agricultural production, especially of cash crops, in most
178 mainland Latin American countries, productivity is low. The yeomanry is conservative in its agricultural practices, and not ready to change unless the changes entail minimal risk and the gains to be real-
241 ized are clearly demonstrable (Erasmus, 1952:20–26). Yeomen culti-
177 vate with three goals in mind: cash income from world-market
185 commodities (for instance, coffee, sisal, vetiver); cash income from
434 items produced for local sale and consumption; and subsistence. While they are heavily involved in production for sale, their crop choices and land-use patterns rest fundamentally on a subsistence orientation. All grow a substantial part of their own food, especially sorghum, maize, sweet potatoes, taro, manioc, malanga (*Xanthosoma sagittifolium* Schott), plantains and bananas, fruits and vegetables, and
423 rice where possible. The land is invested with considerable affect:
823 gods live in it; it is the ultimate security against privation; family
471 members are buried in it; food and wealth come from it; and it is good in itself, even if not cultivated. While such attitudes are common in yeoman societies, Haiti's history of slavery, and of access to land through revolution, has given a special symbolic significance to landowning. Land is valued above all else and is sometimes held "uneconomically"—that is, even when the capital and labor power to work it are lacking.

114 Leyburn describes better than any other writer the history of land
115 acquisition by the yeoman after 1804. The French plantations lay in
413 ruins, never to recover, while early authoritarian attempts to restore the prerevolutionary economy under native Haitian leadership soon failed. In the course of a century, the Haitian people laid claim to their own soil, while population growth and the adoption of the French tradition of equal inheritance progressively reduced the average size of holdings. In spite of some plantation development after the United States occupation, most agricultural land in Haiti is still employed in small holdings, and "land reform" in the conventional sense—the breaking-up of large estates and the creation of a class of small landholders—is nearly irrelevant to Haiti's needs.

462 As today's yeomanry cultivates, so its women folk market. Nearly
493

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three hundred marketplaces serve the towns and countryside, some of them patronized by thousands of buyers and sellers on market days. By participating in active small-scale trade, the wives of the yeomen contribute in a limited way to national economic efficiency and growth. As in all heavily agrarian economies marked by poor storage facilities, inferior transportation, and low consumer incomes there is considerable substitution of labor for capital, and there are high losses through spoilage. Except for the marketing of export commodities, much time is consumed in bargaining, in carrying, and in hand-processing of various sorts. But these activities are the accompaniments of the general low level of development of the Haitian economy, not one of its causes.

The economic challenges posed by agriculture on the one hand, and by marketing on the other, differ significantly. Since these activities are carried out predominantly along the lines of a sexual division of labor, the Haitian countrymen and their marketing wives differ in some regards in their attitudes. Foreign observers of the nineteenth century commented regularly on the industry and energy of Haitian rural women, stressing their predominance in trade. Some writers have attributed this convention to the West African tradition, since women are the marketers, men the farmers, in many African societies. Leyburn, however, notes that the militarism and political unrest that have marked Haiti during so much of its history were serious impediments to peaceful trade. Women came to predominate in marketing, he theorizes, because men did what they could to avoid the towns, since they were often impressed into roving army bands if they traveled far from home. Whatever the historical causes may be, it has been established that the women of Haiti's countryside carry on most of the internal trade, while their husbands do most of the farming. These women, on the whole, know more about the towns, mix more easily with outsiders, and show more intrepidity in trade than the men show in agriculture. Yet it has been demonstrated that, for most of them, the scale of their enterprise is so modest and the economic opportunities open to them so restricted that their energy and daring can do little to increase the level of productive activity (Mintz, 1964:256–86).

Haiti's lack of large factories, mechanized production, and a skilled industrial labor force means that the country is unindustrialized by any usual measure.

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342 322 178 unchanged from an earlier era. The prevailing quality of Haitian rural and craft industry, then, is one of great stability and conservatism.

493 463 At the same time, of course, major events since the revolution have left their imprint on this part of life. Hardly a roadside village in Haiti today, for instance, lacks an automobile mechanic, even though these men are mostly self-educated and work with hardly any tools. Their skills became part of Haitian culture in this century and are often of a simple order no longer typical of more developed areas. 383 177 Tire tubes, for instance, are "vulcanized" by the use of an ingenious device made from a board and an old piston, kerosene providing the heat to make the seal; this technique, along with the sewing of damaged truck tires, was almost certainly introduced and diffused by the United States Marines.

47 31 178 But these quaint additions do not alter the fact that shop and factory industry are nearly absent, and extractive industry virtually nonexistent. Haiti's one alumina extraction enterprise, foreign-owned, is now shut down. There is but one flour mill, and that is foreign-[258] owned as well. One or two textile mills and sugar factories, estab-[339] lished with foreign capital, still function, as do a modern cement factory and a few other small plants established in the 1950s. These [464] industries, scanty as they are, were of great importance to Haiti, since they represented substantial investments, held out the promise of reduced dependence on imports in significant categories, and contributed to the beginnings of an industrial proletariat. However, they involved only a tiny fraction of the national labor force, and they have not proved entirely successful. As a result, Haiti lacks any reserve of labor acquainted with modern industry, even though many people, both urban and rural, work at tasks that might be considered more industrial than agricultural.

47 433 178 179 Most important for the present discussion, the minor developments in Haitian industry have not led to an expanded market and have not resulted in any firm increase in productivity. Industrial growth, in the sense in which it has occurred in countries such as those of Western Europe—or for that matter in Mexico or Argentina—is entirely lacking. The absence of such growth is perhaps especially significant if Haiti be compared with a neighbor such as Jamaica or Puerto Rico. [649] These countries, one now independent, the other a North American dependency—have both gained real increments from the investment activities of outsiders.

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activities of outsiders; Haiti has experienced few such increments, even as a result of the United States occupation. Its citizens cannot readily migrate anywhere; its educational system cannot prepare its people adequately for the modern world; its civil service has proved neither stable nor reliable; its labor force has limited experience with the factory system; and even two decades of active North American intervention did nothing to remake the economic and political structure of the nation. In more recent years, some of the "development projects" foisted on the people of a sovereign Haiti by foreigners working with Haitian officials would not have been tolerated by the colonial representatives of any foreign power obligated to report its activities before the United Nations Trusteeship Council. In view of these things, one is tempted to claim that Haiti has suffered from all the disadvantages of political sovereignty while enjoying none of its advantages.

Unlike those colonial dependencies that were able, over time, to develop internal political ideologies through which to face the pressures imposed by the colonial powers, Haiti was tested by hardly any challenge but its own lack of development. In this sense only can it be said that the freedom Haiti had won in an incredible revolution against powerful enemies came to be a punishment. The struggle brought the Haitian people justified admiration in many quarters, but its price has been isolation and virtual abandonment.

It was the United States occupation that made a lie of Haitian sovereignty, and even of the invincibility of its people. The Haitian "bandits," variously estimated to have numbered from 2,000 to 6,000, who died in what is probably best described as a war of resistance against the North Americans, were barely able to maintain even a brief local conflict against several well-armed companies of United States Marines. Yet that occupation gave Haiti little in return for its denial of the claim of national sovereignty. The public works and reform programs initiated by the United States, designed to give the country roads, schools, hospitals, a disciplined army, a "legitimate" government, and a schooled civil service, hardly endured longer than the occupation itself, since nothing had been done to transform the social and economic base of the society. Within a decade of the North American withdrawal, the gleaming superstructure the occupation created had begun to decay. The major effect of North Amer-

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The major effect of the North

Amer-
648 ican tenure seems to have been to make possible a much more telling
642 centralism in political control than had been operative in Haiti at any time since the fall of the Christophe regime; and the consequences of this change are still being felt.

241 Small-scale rural cultivators are famous for their tendency to con-
565 fine their consumption to culturally conventionalized levels—that is,
433 to live as their predecessors lived before them. Though they are in-
178 volved in commercial spheres larger than the communities in which
185 they live, they seek to limit that involvement and to maintain their
511 cash expenditures at a low level. It is in this sense that Haiti might be
472 called a "quasi-capitalistic" society. To put it another way, yeomen of this sort do not seek to change or to expand their production—rather, they aim to conserve a way of life set by tradition. The ideology of resistance to social and cultural change is one of the major obstacles to development; but it would be rash to damn such an ideology without reflection. In Haiti, for instance, there has long been pressure upon the rural masses to expand their production of coffee, the major export crop. However, this pressure has not been accompanied by any serious grass-roots attempt to improve coffee production or to offer genuine incentives to the cultivators. The yeomanry has no assurance at all that any expansion of effort will lead to gains *for them*; and they are little prepared to invest such effort merely because they are told that it will be good for Haiti. In fact, it is likely
[439] that the production of subsistence crops has expanded in recent years at the cost of coffee production, for the yeoman knows that he can at least be sure of eating and of selling locally such crops as maize, sorghum, and yams, regardless of what may happen in Port-au-Prince or to the world coffee market. This view, combined with the yeoman's painfully acquired distrust of those who prate at length concerning his welfare, has meant a virtual stagnation of agricultural export production, even though the whole land quite literally depends on this production in order to progress.

241 The effect of this rural resistance is to create an apparent very sharp
565 difference in goals between countryman and bureaucrat. It is per-
433 fectly understandable that the countryman should fail to see the con-
185 nection between heightened coffee production and a higher level of public welfare and social services. His experiences hardly persuade him that it is his surplus-producing capacity that underlies the kind and quality of public institutions with which the state provides him.

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Nor does his effort in producing more and better cash crops translate itself directly into higher consumption, since he has no say in setting the price for his coffee. Under the circumstances, it is naïve to suppose that "education" alone can make the yeoman's role in economic or political development a more active one. The disposition to maintain a habitual level of consumption, rather than to believe that an increase in productivity will result in expanding services or improved consumption, is difficult to change; and the quasi-capitalistic quality of Haitian agricultural production is merely one way of saying as much. Economic change, in this sense, has to depend partly on changes in attitudes toward production. Until an agricultural extension service worthy of the name is able to make a massive attack on the shortcomings of yeoman cultivation in Haiti, this conservatism will perpetuate itself. And agricultural extension will not be able to wage this battle for change—even when its services become adequate in quality and quantity—unless the promises of greater economic rewards or of improved social services for the rural masses are occasionally honored.

The term "quasi-capitalistic" has much less force, of course, when applied to urban enterprise. But there, too, economic activity has a curiously static quality when compared to enterprise in more developed countries. The Port-au-Prince capitalist is famous for "playing it safe." Import-export trade, tourist hotels, guided tours, gas stations, and urban slum real estate are more rewarding spheres of investment than shops or commercial farms. A small but economically important Syrian-Lebanese-Italian group limits its local investment accordingly, as do most of those "native" Haitians who carry on their businesses in the towns and cities. Elite families consist largely of siblings who interlock their economic activities with government, the military, agricultural processing and exporting, consumer-goods importing, tourist-connected services, and the professions. A slum block, a post in the ministry of tourism, a cabinetry, or a tour agency, can be a lucrative investment; few indeed are the Haitians prepared to take the risks needed to develop highly productive farms, to produce improved strains of poultry, or to introduce industrial skills through a modern machine shop. And the reasons for this lack of verve and daring are easy to find. Governmental instability, excessive taxation, lack of access to markets, and the absence of roads, communications, small-scale credit facilities, and the like mean that special

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intrepidity in enterprise is required. It is striking that those foreign captains of industry—mainly from the United States—who invest in Haiti, expect (and often get) governmental guarantees of a sort they could not dream of in their own countries; in this regard, they merely conform to Haitian expectations.

Haiti's problems, then, are not simply those that face any less developed country, vast though such problems may be. Nor is it intelligent to lay Haiti's problems at the feet of the nation's present rulers. The structure of the national economy has not changed significantly during the past twenty-five years—except that boom years could provide a temporary aura of prosperity—regardless of the philosophy or popularity of the regime in power. If nothing else, the present nadir of Haiti's fortunes demonstrates that United States aid averaging twelve and a half million dollars yearly over more than a decade has produced no enduring improvements of any kind. It may further demonstrate that, shockingly poor as the country is, it emphatically does not depend on such aid. As of 1964, the regime in power was operating on a monthly budget of $1,800,000, only $400,000 of which went for purposes other than salaries. In other words, the ministries do little more than perpetuate themselves unchanged. The yeomanry, living near subsistence level, continues to produce most of what it needs, while restricting its cash expenditures even more severely than in the past. The risks—in terms, say, of public health—of running a society under these circumstances are great; but there is no reason to suppose that regimes of the Haitian sort will be destroyed or improved by a show of popular unrest originating in the countryside. Difficult as life is for the Haitian countryman, and no people in Latin America lives more poorly, the real pinch is probably being experienced more acutely among the city folk than among their rural fellow citizens. It matters politically, therefore, who these city folk are and what they do.

To begin with, there has been a significant loss of professional people, almost all of whom were urban, through migration and exile, especially since 1958. Haitian doctors, dentists, and other professionals are widely scattered today, both in the developed and the less developed countries of the world. Former army officers, journalists, diplomats, businessmen, and academicians have fled political repression, perhaps with the hope of eventually returning to their own country.

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162 565 369 citizen would admit. The few cities and towns of Haiti do not contain more than 250,000 people in a total population which the censuses generally put around 2,500,000. Since to live in the city is one necessary mark of aristocracy, and since obviously not every town- or city-dweller is an aristocrat, it is probably nearer the mark to infer that not more than two or three per cent of the people are of the élite.

565 554 A slightly larger group would fit neither category. This intermediate section would consist chiefly of those who have taken a few steps toward the upper stratum; they may wear shoes and keep a small shop and speak a few words of French, but not yet be accepted in "respectable" society; aristocrats will look down on them while the masses will regard them with curious interest. Yet these are not what Europeans would call a middle class. In their own generation, they are rootless and insecure. Their children will have as many advantages as the parents can afford, so that the next generation may increase the distance between itself and the common folk. Included in this intermediate group are also a few who, having once been up, are now on the way down.

433 162 If the terms "masses" and "peasants" are used interchangeably in these pages, it is because the vast majority of the people get their living from the soil. Haiti is, as it has always been, an agricultural country. The end-paper map lists all towns which claim as many as 7,500 people; only one, the capital, Port-au-Prince, has more than 200,000.

162 184 105 At least nine out of ten Haitians, therefore, lead rural lives, and easily fit the designation of peasant. They live in little communities, generally of less than a hundred persons, rather than in scattered houses. A detailed map would be dotted with place names of these

[162] [114] 2. The estimates made by Woodring, in his *Geology of the Republic of Haiti*, p. 82, are as follows:

Port-au-Prince	125,000	Saint-Marc	12,000
Cap-Haïtien	20,000	Jacmel	10,000
Les Cayes	15,000	Port-de-Paix	7,500
Gonaïves	12,000	Jérémie	7,500

It should be noted that all eight of these towns, which by Woodring's estimate have a total of 207,000, are seaports. The country is so mountainous that no cities have grown up in the interior. The map also includes a number of towns smaller than 7,500; these are capitals of arrondissements or seats of communes. Woodring remarks that if the people who live in towns having a population of more than a thousand were added to the list above, the total "urban" population then would be between 225,000 and 250,000, which is barely ten per cent of the total in the country.

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tiny communities, some of them designating "villages" of only four or five houses. For numbers of peasants hidden away in the valleys or on mountain farms, the only contact with the larger world comes through visits to the nearest market town—which itself may count only a thousand souls. The peasant is thus effectively isolated. The American Financial Adviser to the Government has estimated the average *annual* income of the Haitian at $20 a head.[8] The smallness of the sum limits the material contacts of the peasant with the outside world. Rural schools are few,[9] consequently all but a small percentage of the rising generation is growing up illiterate. Lack of mental stimulus completes the isolation. Bound to the soil by the need of wresting a livelihood from rocky, gullied, and increasingly unproductive land, harassed by ill-health, and governed by a group whose own security would be threatened by improving his lot, it is little wonder that the peasant is unprogressive, or that he struggles along at a bare subsistence level.[10]

Haiti is rural and agricultural, then, with a population density of about 250 per square mile. The people, living without machine industry and with very little foreign trade, must get their living from 10,000 square miles, not of lush tropical soil but of rocky, mountainous country which, after a century and a half of poor farming, has been stripped of most of its forests and much of its topsoil.

A glance at a relief map of the West Indies would show clearly that the islands are the tops of a mountain range, whose lowlands were long since submerged by the Caribbean Sea. Looked at from above, Haiti seems a jumbled mass of mountains running in all directions.[11] Down their slopes flow many small streams which after

8. Dr. W. W. Cumberland, cited by Paul H. Douglas, "The American Occupation of Haiti," *Political Science Quarterly*, XLII (1927), 258.

9. The average monthly salary of $13 (until recently only $6) for rural schoolmasters would not draw many wide-awake young men, even if schoolhouses existed for them. The salary, indeed, is so small that only inferior persons are attracted, often men who know little more than their pupils. See chap. XV, 3.

10. Mrs. Blair Niles, in *Black Haiti* (New York, 1926), pp. 187–188, tells of a prisoner who preferred to remain in jail rather than be freed. "'Where he gone out,' she quotes the officer as saying, 'he'll be in again. You'll see. Here he gets nine cents a day for food, an' that's more than the average Haitian ever has.'"

11. One can well believe the story told by Hinrichs D. Bonsor, *Haiti* (Washington, 1893), p. 3) of the English admiral who, asked by George III for a description of the island, crumpled a sheet of paper, threw it on the table, and said: "Sire, Haiti looks like that." The same tale is told of Puerto Rico, with a Spanish admiral speaking to Queen Isabella.

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increasingly arid as its altitude decreases. Next to the Plaine du Nord, the best-watered part of Haiti is the southwestern peninsula, which projects far beyond the shelter of the mountains in the rest of the island. 132

When one subtracts from the 10,000 square miles all the sterile wastes of cactus, the salt marshes and brackish lakes, and the rock barrens, one realizes the inevitability of a low standard of living for the mass of the people. Other nations buy little from Haiti, local industries never reach even the proportions familiar to small-town Americans, and the total national budget is less than seven million dollars a year. Not even the élite are well-to-do by American small-town standards; it is only by comparison with the masses that they can be said to constitute a favored economic class. They rule the country, however, and what benefits accrue to Haiti rarely get beyond their pockets. 433 [431] [651] [565]

The resident of Haiti can never lose sight of the social distinctions between the two castes, for they permeate every phase of Haitian life. It has been so since the first hours of the republic. Indeed, the origins of the caste system lie in the French colonial days of the eighteenth century. 565 175 178

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equaled the demand for them; in 1791 the census listed half a million then living, but no writer seems to have even a vague idea of how many millions were imported during the sixty years of the colony's heyday.

Production, particularly of sugar and coffee, steadily increased until the tiny colony ranked among the wealthiest regions of the world. The Spanish Indies were declining, so that Saint-Domingue alone far outranked them all combined between 1766 and 1791. Splendid roads were built, extensive irrigation projects developed, and stately mansions erected. Life moved along with ceremony and display—for the planters; attended by their black lackeys, the white French masters entertained royally or were driven like lords in their coaches to make formal visits to neighbors. Many of these well-to-do colonials spent half their time in Paris, ostentatiously spending their riches. To be "wealthy as a Creole" came to be a common expression in France.[1] Perhaps nowhere in the Americas was existence at once so delightful and so ornamental as it was for the wealthy planters among the 36,000 whites of Saint-Domingue in 1791.

For the mother country, too, this small bit of tropical land was profitable during the latter days of Bourbon royalty. Neither Martinique nor Guadeloupe could compare with it in value. In 1789 nearly two thirds of the foreign commercial interests of France centred in Saint-Domingue; its combined exports and imports were valued at more than $140,000,000; its sugar, coffee, indigo, and cotton supplied the home market and employed in prosperous years more than 700 ocean-going vessels, with as many as 80,000 seamen.[2]

Where wealth exists, social distinctions generally develop. In Saint-Domingue the evolving class system produced such discord that sparks from the French Revolution eventually set off an explosion in the colony. Casual surveys of Haitian history generally record that in 1791 the slaves revolted, and that out of this insurrection grew the war of independence. This is true; but it was not the resentment of slaves against their masters which caused the final explosion; the slaves were tinder used by others to keep the conflagration burning. Negro slaves, of course, did not figure in the "class" system; they were below the classes of colonial society. The class system, properly

1. The word "creole" means only "colonial born"; there is no connotation of race mixture in the term.

2. Pamphile de Lacroix, *Mémoires*, II, 277.

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people: "If ever you refuse, or grumblingly accept, the laws which the genius guarding your destinies dictates to me for your happiness, you will merit the fate of ungrateful people. But perish that hideous idea!" There can be little doubt that he wished Haiti under his direction to become prosperous; but it is likewise clear that he was personally self-centred and inordinately grasping.

Each step Dessalines took to further his ambitions either for Haitian prosperity or for his own fortunes had its bearing upon the development of social classes in the country. Extermination of all remaining whites was one of the first tasks he set himself. On a promise of clemency he lured several hundred gullible French out of hiding, and butchered them in cold blood. His campaign of extirpation was methodical and thorough. To try to penetrate into the psychological background of this violence is to desert fact for speculation: it may have been a desire for revenge on the French, pure and simple; it may have been gloating sadism; he may have wished to warn France against any future attempts to regain possession of the country; or he may have wanted to notify his subjects of his intention to rule with severe discipline. Certainly this last aim was achieved, if any of his people did not already know, after two years of warfare, the extent of his ruthlessness. He ruled by fear and by threats, never by the cultivation of loyalties.

Apparently he was afraid that Napoleon would renew his efforts to subdue the former colony. To forestall such an attempt he ordered each of his governing subalterns to construct one great fort on the most prominent hill in their district—a scheme which led immediately to the institution of forced labor. He likewise devised a plan, not actually put into effect, for destroying all towns and plantations near the coast and moving the capital to an inland village; and so isolating Haitians from all contact with the outside world.

Turning to domestic policy, he faced a herculean task. The warfare of 1802–3 had left the country in chaos. Plantations and agricultural projects were almost totally ruined. All habits of steady industry had been lost. Dread of a possible new attack by the French made necessary a great army, and this in turn removed most able-bodied men from productive labor in the fields, while the construction of fortresses still further depleted the labor supply. The first census of free Haiti, in 1805 (probably not highly accurate), showed only 380,000 people, with the women outnumbering men by almost three to two.

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two. Here was a decline of about 150,000 from 1790.[2] It is a commentary on the man's forcefulness that in spite of all difficulties Dessalines established an effective economic organization. Its basis was serfdom.

Every citizen, he announced, must consider himself in one of two categories, laborer or soldier. There were to be no shirkers in the new Haiti; if a man was not in the army, he must do manual labor. Artisans who followed a craft counted as laborers. Women, since they could not join the army, must work shoulder to shoulder with their men. It was understood that direction of Haiti's new order would be carried on by state officials who were neither laborers nor soldiers, but these officials were to be so few that they would not constitute a separate third category.

This step of Dessalines' was a radical one. It proclaimed the mastery of state over individual; and even more significantly it divided the people according to economic task, rather than birth, wealth, color, or social status. At first the more ambitious citizens bore patiently with the arbitrary decree, thinking they might be able to achieve comfortable status under a lenient definition of "soldier" or else by sinecure tasks as officials. Their disillusionment was swift. Even swifter was the chagrin of the lowly folk who had been slaves, for they found themselves now in actual bondage to one of their own color.

All people except soldiers, ran the decree, must be "attached as cultivators to a plantation." This might be translated to read "bound to the soil." The vast majority of the people were forced willy-nilly into agriculture. It was "formally prohibited for a cultivator to desert the plantation to which he was assigned"; conversely, it was a crime to give asylum to a runaway cultivator, male or female.[3] If such conditions differed from slavery, they were at least close to what the mediaeval world knew as serfdom. But under this régime of forced labor the recently ravaged fields once more became productive: cotton plantations again covered the plain of the Artibonite, and sugar refineries were slowly rebuilt all over the country.

To forestall complaint from the people once again driven into

2. See, for an analysis of population figures, Placide Justin, *Histoire politique et statistique de l'île d'Haïti, Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1826), pp. 502–503.

3. A certain Mlle. Chapotin, of respectable family, was accused of having harbored a fugitive female cultivator, and, since she was unable to pay immediately the fine imposed upon her by the police at Port-au-Prince, she was condemned to serve a jail term.

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field labor, the ruler emphasized the clemency of his new régime. 175
Labor the people must, but not under the whip; that arch symbol of 566
slavery was abolished forever. The working day was shortened by a 466
third. It was provided that, if just reason were shown, a man might even secure permission from his district commissioner to move from the plantation to which he was attached.

These were words. Facts were another matter. The overseers had been ordered to exact so much labor from their underlings, yet without whips; knowing no persuading power other than chastisement, they backed up their commands with blows of *lianes*, thick pliable vines which could be gathered anywhere in the island. Thus the laggard was driven, the law kept to the letter, and the overseer praised by his superiors. As for the working day, crops must be tended at the proper moment, so that the boasted shortening of hours generally came to little. Finally, the right to secure permission to move away from a plantation was effectively limited by the refusal of commissioners to grant any such request.

Every public expression of Dessalines showed a solicitude for the welfare of the workers, while his every act indicated that he regarded them as impersonal parts of the machine of state. He knew by his own former experience as a slave what a day's stint should be and the ruses used by laborers to avoid steady work; he was therefore able to order agricultural labor on a realistic basis.

The economic organization created by Dessalines provided the 175
roots for the peasantry which was soon to develop as a characteristic 178
form of Haitian life. Among these fundamental conditions were the 463
existence of agriculture as a prevalent occupation, the immobility of 24
all workers on the land, and a thorough schooling of the people in 433
patient acceptance. Dessalines might theoretically have established 566
some other economic system—a division of estates into small properties, for example, with each farmer a master of his own destiny; a democratic coöperative economy; slavery again; feudalism with a landed gentry. At critical times, one leader's choice may affect the whole future life of the country. The decision of Dessalines to 175
keep the bulk of his people in servitude, without using the termi- 566
nology of slavery, gave the new freemen no opportunity to become acquainted with work other than tillage. They were sent back to the only tasks they had ever known, their horizons were just as limited as before, their personal freedom just as restricted. The worst punishments of slavery, together with torture and gross overwork,

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Northern Haiti flourished magnificently under Christophe's sternly benevolent rule. The King had that daring spirit of initiative which was so generally lacking in later Haitian history; he had, in addition, the power necessary to force through a new adjustment if the old way showed defects.[27] He excited artificial wants among his leaders by making nobles of them, and then compelled them to satisfy these wants without ever slipping back to a lower standard of living. Thirteen years of enforced labor and of order kept by a rigorously effective police force gave northern Haiti the kind of prosperity she had known in colonial days. Christophe encouraged commerce and protected foreign traders. He called in all debased coinage, substituting for it sound gold and silver currency. The revenue he raised was larger than it had been since 1791, amounting to about $3,500,000 annually. Probably the most eloquent testimony to his success is the fact that at his death, when the kingdom of the North was once more united with the republic of the South, more than six million dollars found their way into the republican treasury.

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The Black King's economic system worked. It was based on a social division of the people, with the masses doing manual labor, and the aristocrats definitely set apart and recognized as upper class. By 1820 Haiti was well on its way toward the caste system.

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3. *Pétion* (*1807–1818*)

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Almost all Latin-American countries in the nineteenth century exhibited one common feature: an aristocratic landowning class lording it over peons. Haiti did not follow this pattern. She had aristocrats and peasants, but the aristocrats did not own most of the land, and the peasants were not peons. If later rulers had kept the organization of economic life begun by Toussaint and developed by his fellow blacks, Dessalines and Christophe, it is almost certain that Haitian social evolution would have resembled that of the rest of Latin America, for it would not have been a great change from

27. Dantès Vaval, "Le Roi d'Haïti Henri Christophe," in *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti*, II, No. 3 (June 1931), p. 14, says that Haiti's periodic civil troubles and social misfortunes, both ending in a diminution of the state's autonomy, have been due to economic maladjustments. "Our weaknesses in political life derive from our immobility in material production." Immobility is an index of stagnation. Few rulers of Haiti have been at once powerful enough to overcome the immobility and wise enough to know what measures had to be taken.

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175 423 about any radical change, for few of the common people could find money to pay for thirty acres, while the well-to-do all wanted more.

[433] Every concession desired by the landed proprietors had now been granted—with the result that economic prosperity was showing a steady decline. It was only when this fact was abundantly apparent that Pétion took the step for which he has since been so fulsomely praised and so roundly criticized. By permission of the Senate, in a law of December 30, 1809, he began to give away state lands: fifteen acres of cultivable soil to every soldier in the army, to be held in perpetuity, with proportionately larger grants to higher officers.

Opposition immediately arose to this measure, and from expected quarters. The owners of great estates protested that if soldiers had farms, other people would soon want (and receive) them, leaving no workers on the large plantations. Social climbers protested, for when practically anyone can own land there is no particular social distinction in having it. Pétion's minister, Bonnet, opposed the permanent alienation of the chief financial resource of the state, proposing instead the grant of long-term loans to soldiers for the purchase of land. Pétion was not insensible to the logic of some of these objections; he said, however, that a nation which relied upon the willing labor of masses of its citizens was ultimately stronger than one which depended upon forced labor of any kind. As for the socially aspiring, he could ignore their arguments since they were not publicly and openly expressed. To his minister he pointed out that loans, if made, would in all probability never be repaid, so that one might as well face the reality at once and give people the land.

All through the next decade Pétion made new and democratic divisions of the land. Able generals were given large tracts, partly as wages, partly as a stimulus to productive agriculture on their part. By another enactment, military invalids were rewarded with land. Eventually most of the rest of the public domain was either put on sale at such moderate price that thousands of humble Haitians might purchase their bit, or was effectively occupied by people who "squatted" far up in the hills, out of official view.

175 471 24 The democratization of land led to new adjustments in the economic system. People who owned small farms would obviously not continue to raise sugar and coffee, but rather turn to food crops for immediate family consumption. Only the large plantations could carry on the cultivation of money crops. These in turn, no longer able

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to spend one's time in the allotted garden patch than to cultivate sugar cane steadily in the heat of the day. In a garden there was more variety to the work, and more independent decision; in a cane field all must work in unison to be effective. Moreover, the yield from the garden was a daily thing, while that of the cane fields came but once a year. Less and less were the overseers able to get the tenants away from their gardens and into the fields.

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Not all the sabotage came from the common folk. Landowners had their normal share of profit motive. The complex system of social security and benevolent stewardship ate away much of the income of the estate.[29] More important, the owners had had no experience of plantation management other than by directing forced labor. Corporal punishment was now abolished, but to the owner it was still unthinkable that there should be no coercion in plantation work. The laws protecting labor therefore left them bewildered, and they did not hold up their part of the system. Finding it expensive to maintain sugar machinery, impossible to engage docile workers, and necessary to finance social security, most of the "aristocrats" simply took the easier path of leasing their estates in small subdivisions, getting out of them what they could.

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Another unexpected result of Pétion's general policy was to shift the main produce of the republic from sugar to coffee. Sugar had for decades been the staple crop of southern Haiti; but its cultivation requires scrupulous care and expensive machinery. Coffee, on the other hand, grows wild both in the lowlands and at heights of three thousand feet. It is "wild" in the sense that plants spring from seeds dropped by parent trees, without careful planting. When it became obvious that the workers were not to be persuaded to regular work in the cane fields, the landlords broke up the large plantations so necessary to sugar cultivation. Each tenant farmer was almost sure to find coffee trees on his rented plot of land. He would harvest the berries but would do little or nothing to tend and improve the plants, as he did not own them. In French days coffee trees had been pruned, fertilized, grafted; the new Haitian farmer simply let nature take its course. Pétion's careful planning resulted consequently in an entirely unplanned, accidental, and automatic adjustment to new conditions of life.

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29. That the landlords did not too vigorously protest this system of care for the workers was due to their familiarity with similar care in slave days. [466]

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175 Haitian writers sometimes praise Pétion for his democratic lean-
642 ings, by implication criticizing Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe
178 for their feudalistic notions. If the blacks were undemocratic, at least
433 they had experience back of the system they selected for administer-
ing the land: their methods worked. Pétion's plan, on the contrary, admirable though it seemed to later "liberals," was unexpectedly disappointing. The national income declined; estates were steadily broken up and sub-leased to small farmers; sugar disappeared from the state's balance sheet, while coffee did not supply an equivalent income; discipline of the workers gave way to individualism. Although the whole legislative code favored the landlords, la grande culture crumbled. One is driven to conclude that Pétion simply tried one device after another—always the easiest he could find—to keep state economy functioning.

175 When Pétion came to power, the common folk of southern Haiti
178 were serfs with a memory of slavery; when he died, they were
565 peasants. At the beginning of his régime the mulattoes and other social aspirants felt they were struggling for very existence against the relentless policies of black rulers; as it closed they were beyond any doubt aristocrats, but by the same token progressively less well-to-do. No one any longer attacked their social pretensions; but the worldly wealth on which these pretensions were based was disappearing along with the country's prosperity, so that new criteria had to be developed.

175 As we have said, the keynote of Pétion's rule was persuasion.
671 Where Dessalines ordered, Pétion suggested; where Christophe decreed, Pétion recommended. There is not a single act one could cite during his entire presidency which had the effect of tightening up the organization of the republic. When laws were not properly observed, instead of penalties being made more severe or sure of application, the laws themselves were calmly allowed to lapse. In fact, the period from 1807 to 1818 was one of transition, of experiment, of discovering a congenial way of life. Since it was clear that the mass of citizens were peacefully disposed and unambitious, the President was inclined to let custom rule in each little community. Laws were not repealed, but they were enforced only when general public opinion was clearly in their favor. At many points the upper class would have liked more disciplinary control over the masses and said so to Pétion; yet they realized that in a less than ideal world one

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175 In his easygoing republic Pétion saw prosperity slowly wane,
433 cultivation decline, profits give way to deficits. He issued a large
652 amount of paper currency, and continually hoped for better times
534 which did not come. The days of large fortunes were over. The economic system affected the aristocrats: although they were still landowners, so also were thousands of common folk. The criterion of rank became increasingly not wealth, but rather pursuit of a career which demanded no manual labor. Distinctions, if they are to be effective, must be made on the basis of conditions not easily achieved by all and sundry. Education and good French met this requirement; even more did a light skin color.

175 Pétion, darling of the mulattoes though he was, never drew a color
643 line. There is no suggestion in any of his actions that he gave prefer-
641 ence in his appointments to people of his own color. He suppressed
563 at least one insurrection led by men who would have liked to stir up color prejudice. He often tried by quiet irony to make his people less sensitive to their complexions. It is eloquent testimony to his fairness that the 200,000 blacks in the republic never faltered in their love for him. They had ample reason to mistrust the haughty and ambitious colored people, some of whom had lorded it over them in colonial days; but they knew that the President did not share their pretentious attitude. One look at the North, ruled by a black, was enough to convince any Southerner that his happiness was safer in the hands of a mulatto than in those of a Negro ex-slave. At Pétion's death, therefore, there was no demur at the succession to power of another light-skinned man.

175 Haitians of a later day have discussed at great length the wisdom
643 of Pétion's parceling of state lands. His supporters (and they are
642 numerous) as well as his critics generally keep the controversy on the lofty plane of ideals, intentions, and hypothetical contingencies. Pétion is praised for being generous to humble folk where all other rulers of his country had been severe; for being a realist in accepting and adjusting his measures to the limitations of the average Haitian's character; for building a patriotism upon love of one's own small plot of land; for ruling constitutionally, with his Senate, rather than dictatorially. Most especially, Pétion is the one man among the early rulers who seemed to have any realization of the human values involved. Material gain is desirable but not at the expense of liberty. Freedom means something, even in poverty.

The critics do not challenge Pétion's good intentions or integrity;

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they even comment upon his unselfish generosity, which seems to have been entirely free of any desire for personal gain. They accuse him rather of taking the easiest course—that of trying to pacify every group in the republic: the masses, by giving them land and removing any external compulsion to work on it; the army, by making their enlistment profitable; the aspiring aristocrats, by validating their titles to estates and not challenging their prestige with a demand for responsibility. Strong states, the critics argue, are built on lines of discipline, not of perpetual yielding.

From an economic point of view a more valid criticism would ask the simple question: what was the practical result of his policies? Under the three previous Negro rulers agriculture had prospered, for these men kept state lands intact and forced the population to work; under Pétion, on the contrary, prosperity steadily declined with the division of land and the removal of compulsion. To expect a body of illiterate, inexperienced ex-slaves automatically to develop such economic virtues as industry, foresight, and thrift in a land which never knew any of these is not realistic, but merely quixotic. The Haitian critic Magloire implies that Pétion was either completely and cynically indifferent to common graft or else naively confident that men newly free would somehow be preternaturally honest. He goes into detail:

> Lands were distributed free, without order or method, each person taking what came his way and establishing himself as he could; graft and jobbery, under varied guises, governed the granting of concessions. As for properties in the towns, some people established themselves in upstairs apartments and others in ground-floor ones, without bothering to think of the lawsuits which might result from this disorder. In the sales made by the State, 50 and 100 and 200 gourdes were paid for real estate which was worth 10,000 and 20,000 and 40,000 gourdes or more. The administration put up for sale the property of towns, of communes, and of the State. Even buildings occupied in colonial days by officials, buildings whose construction had cost considerable sums, were bestowed on the people. . . .
>
> By a too great fractioning of the national domain, and carried away by the influence of false egalitarian and democratic ideas, Pétion brought about what a modern writer calls "the forcible neglect of agriculture" throughout the Republic.[33]

32. J. N. Léger, *Haïti: son histoire et ses détracteurs* (New York, 1907), p. 162.
33. Auguste Magloire, *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social* (Port-au-Prince, 1929), pp. 260–263.

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175 Practically every contemporary foreign visitor contrasted the
114 divergent policies of Christophe and Pétion to the overwhelming
433 advantage of the former. One Englishman, intent upon defending the Negro against the charge of "natural indolence," went so far as to say that the majority of the people in the republic, although "possessed of small estates, on which they earned their living," were yet no less diligent than the forced laborers on Christophe's plantations in the North.[34] His only proof of this contention, however, was the greater volume of commerce at Port-au-Prince, capital of the republic, than at Cap-Henry (now Cap-Haïtien), capital of the kingdom.

175 The economic case is strongly against Pétion. The decline of
433 large-scale agriculture, the empty treasury, governmental purchase
652 of surpluses when prices were low, debasing the coinage[35]—by such
642 practical proofs, the republic was vastly less efficient than the stern dictatorship of the kingdom. But Pétion's people had freedom, while Christophe's were serfs. And Pétion's republic endured, to become reunited Haiti. The kingdom perished with Christophe.

4. *The Final Effort toward Plantation Life (1818–1826)*

175 The mantle of Pétion fell in 1818 upon the shoulders of his
643 meticulous secretary and minister, Jean-Pierre Boyer. Two years
642 later, upon the death of Christophe, the kingdom of the North was once again united, without a struggle, to the South.[36] It is conceivable that the refined mulatto Boyer might have infused into his people a spirit of industry and ambition, now that tranquillity reigned after fourteen years of separation and warfare. The people of the North had had a long experience of intense activity, while those of the

34. W. W. Harvey, *Sketches of Hayti; from the Expulsion of the French, to the Death of Christophe* (London, 1827), 399–361 ff.

[652] 35. Pétion's coins were so easily imitated that the country was inundated with counterfeit money. The government issued only five million dollars worth of this currency, but in 1818 twelve millions were in circulation, the surplus having been fabricated in Europe and the United States.

[175] [643] [642] [648] 36. In 1822–23 Boyer likewise succeeded, with little fighting, in bringing the Spanish two thirds of the island (Santo Domingo) into the republic. For the first time since 1697 the whole island was really united under one rule. Toussaint had held it in 1801–2 and the Haitians claimed it thereafter, but real unity did not come until Boyer's time, when all the Spanish colonies in the New World were breaking away from their mother country. Santo Domingo regained its independence in 1844 shortly after the abdication of Boyer.

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South in general had the most loyal feeling toward a government which had been benevolently generous to them. A blend of the two might have been fruitful.

It was not any want of patriotism that caused Boyer to miss his great opportunity but rather a defect of ability. Desiring, like Pétion, to lead rather than to drive his people, he nevertheless lacked even more than his former chief the force of personality which might have persuaded them to work hard for the greater glory of Haiti. Deploring the brutal compulsion exercised by Dessalines and Christophe, which he regarded as savage and too closely resembling the earlier methods of slave owners; wishing to emulate solely the gentleness of his predecessor, Boyer hoped for a number of years that his people would become industrious of their own accord. His hopes were frustrated. During his twenty-five-year presidency the mass of Haitians became so indifferent to pecuniary inducements that little work could be got from them beyond that required to produce necessary food. As commerce declined, the President was driven to fresh issues of debased currency and to the opening of mines in different parts of the country, though he knew that the richest mine Haiti possessed was in still fertile soil.

For the first seven years Boyer pursued a policy based on hopeful expectation, refusing to inaugurate any of the forceful measures of his black predecessors. But by 1823 the treasury, enriched though it had been by the surplus from Christophe's exchequer, was empty; in 1824 disbursements exceeded income. Convinced in 1825 that his *laissez-faire* policy was failing to produce results, he decided to heed the insistent counsel of those (including most of the aristocratic, landholding class) who advised the reestablishment of a coercive system of agriculture. His officials showed him that nowhere in the country were sugar plantations any longer being cultivated on a great scale—except for a few estates run by government officials who could command the forced labor of convicts. The policy of offering cultivators a fourth of the total crop of a plantation as wages was luring practically no laborers to work.[37] Even the few owners who offered the fourth plus daily wages had no success. Quite simply, the average Haitian preferred to be his own master, working only when he wished, and particularly working only for himself and his family.

37. This fourth in wages must not be confused with the quarter in taxes abolished by Pétion. See page 46 for a discussion of the quarter-crop wage system.

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175 423 up so many of these, there was no way short of a revolution to reconstitute the now parcelled estates. Obviously the Code did not envisage the control of serfs by small property owners, yet there were more small owners than large.

175 177 466 In the third place, the Spanish-speaking masses of the eastern part of the island had never experienced the kind of forced labor with which most Haitians had been at one time or another familiar. Their noncooperation made enforcement difficult.

175 647 Finally, the administration of so detailed a plan called for the establishment, at once and yet in complete order, of a fully trained corps of bureaucrats, perfectly cooperating with each other, most of them educated, and all incorruptibly honest. If every literate person in the state had been drafted for service, Boyer could not have filled all the offices required by the Code.

175 465 434 After brief and piecemeal experience with the law in operation, moreover, even the few remaining large landholders turned against it. While they approved the provisions for forced labor, they discovered that to turn over to the workers a quarter or half of the annual crop, in a falling world market, gave too slim a profit.[42] Without the support even of its original sponsors, failure of the law was inevitable.

175 648 652 These factors alone would have been enough to kill the Code; but its real death blow came from an entirely different quarter. The year before the agricultural laws were passed, Boyer had achieved what he considered to be a political master stroke. He had made a financial settlement with France whereby Haiti, in return for a large sum in cash and regular annual payments for sixty years thereafter, should receive full recognition of independence from France; also the former mother country would renounce all claims to any properties in the country. Boyer had felt that the chief debilitating influence on the political and economic life of his people was the constant dread that France might one day return to claim her lost colony. To rid the nation of that incubus, therefore, seemed to him a high feat of statesmanship, no matter what the financial cost.[43]

[433] [24] 42. Coffee, now the staple crop of Haiti, was meeting competition from the other coffee-producing countries of the world. To put the sugar manufactories into working condition again called for more money than was available.

[643] [644] 43. Boyer's hand was forced to a certain extent by France, which had been exerting diplomatic pressure upon Haiti; the President, however, seemed to regard the settlement as a distinct coup.

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175 The result was entirely different from Boyer's expectations. As a
119 French critic graphically puts it, the Haitians
703

> who had never had more than a borrowed energy—that inspired by fear of French invasion—when they saw themselves freed, by a solemn treaty, from all attack on their coasts, seemed to allow their arms to drop relaxed at their sides, saying, *Let's take a rest*. The soldier who up till now had squeezed his body into a uniform and had subjected himself to European discipline, shouldering his arms, staring straight ahead as if seeing nothing, now began to leave unbuttoned the uniform which choked him, dragged a mattress into his sentry-box so that he might sleep through his watch, and let his cross slip to the earth never to pick it up again.[44]

175 In short, the Haitian army as a disciplined force ceased to exist, and
704 with it all authority of its officers. Boyer had counted upon the
703 army to enforce the provisions of the Code Rural, but now a soldier's
671 life was a paid sinecure. By gaining political security Haiti had in-
933 advertently lost its last chance of economic prosperity through a system of forced labor.

175 Wherever the Code was put into partial operation, revenue from
423 plantations continued to decline. The price of real estate dropped
433 proportionately. It was a simple matter for workmen who had
435 signed contracts to avoid carrying out their stipulations, and just as
436 simple to evade the law requiring fifteen acres' minimum for a single holding. Practically every Haitian wanted to own a bit of land; once he had acquired his bit, however small, he had (or so he felt) earned an exemption from directed labor.

175 Only on estates near the few big towns, where government
671 officials were concentrated, was there much pretense of trying to
625 enforce the Code. Sentries at the gates of Port-au-Prince were
661 authorized to confiscate plantains, yams, or fruit brought by any worker who, in contravention of the Code, had strayed to market on a forbidden day, but sentries soon acquired the habit of not seeing countryfolk who passed the gates. Reports kept cropping up that rural policemen were robbing poor cultivators of their coffee under pretense of protecting them from the penalties for breach of the law; this suggests that the Code was used rather for graft than for the stimulation of agriculture.

175 By and large, however, the Code was merely ignored. Agents
671 could not be found who were willing to stand in any community
625
535
517

44. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, II, 181.

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175 against almost unanimous public opinion opposing enforcement. In
691 1828 it was reported that dancing, which the Code had strictly
635 limited to week ends, was a nightly diversion near the capital. One
526 of the principal dancing resorts was the house of a captain of rural
517 police, the very man who was supposed to repress such amusements.[45]

Boyer had done his best, and his best was merely a good piece of
175 office work. When his Code failed to operate, he could think of
178 nothing further to suggest for the economic rehabilitation of Haiti.
29 The last fifteen years of his administration witnessed a gradual lapse
433 into that small-scale farming which was to be characteristic of Haiti for the remainder of the nineteenth century. By comparison with former standards, production and steady industry had both fallen off since Boyer came to the presidency. The testimony of visiting foreigners is unanimous on the decline of industry.

The British consul, Mackenzie, said in 1827 that there was very
178 little field labor then being done, and that only elderly people,
114 principally aged "Guinea Negroes" long accustomed to steady work,
436 carried on the tradition. No measures of the government could
461 induce young people born in Haiti to labor or to change from their
464 "habitual vagrancy."[46] Another Englishman, James Franklin, re-
189 marked in 1828 that land values throughout the republic had greatly declined because no one could make a profit within any moderate time. Labor was high, he writes, for ordinary wages did not attract the workers who preferred idleness. (This word is certainly unfair: it was work at their own bidding which they preferred, not idleness.) Government lands lay untilled, no one evincing the slightest desire to purchase or utilize them. Franklin continues:

> 114 Land also in the possession of individuals is similarly circumstanced; and
> 175 those who are large proprietors cannot effect a sale of any produce which
> 433 they may have beyond the quantity which they can consume; consequently
> 423 a proprietor may have an immense extent of land, and yet be quite unable
> 425 to derive any benefit from it by cultivation, or to convert it into money, for the want of purchasers. Thus . . . there is no individual wealth in the country, because, although a man may have very large landed possessions, still those possessions are unavailable, for they produce him nothing, as he can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them.

[534] 45. Although dancing is spoken of here as an amusement, it is highly probable that at least a part of it had connection with the Vodun religion.

[541] 46. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti* (London, 1830), I, 100. Mackenzie is clearly exaggerating, unless by "field labor" he means work on plantations, in contrast to farming on small plots.

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can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them. There are some instances of proprietors leasing their lands to persons who undertake to cultivate them, for which they receive about one-third of the produce; but this is far from being general, and I imagine can only be accomplished by military men who have the command of troops, and who are thereby enabled to till them by working parties daily sent out for that purpose.[47]

An interesting side light is provided by a Quaker visitor, Candler, who in 1842 wrote that he was struck by the entire equality which seemed to exist between servant and master. Every workman was addressed in courteous manner, as "mon fils."[48] On inquiry, Candler was told that the profits of planting were good that year, laborers were scarce, and it was therefore "necessary to conciliate all by kindness, or no work would be done."

A particularly grim account of the state of cultivation near the close of Boyer's administration (1842) is given by a Frenchman:

> The fields of Haiti are dead. There where under slavery thousands of tons of sugar were made, now one sees only a few crops and a little syrup to turn into raw rum. Lively growths of cactus cover with thorns the acres of cane, of fields, of pastures deserted by the hand of man; the cactus invades the towns, coming even up to the heart of the cities, flourishing in the midst of ruins, as if to insult the inhabitants. . . . On the one hand, no one cultivates with regularity, because everyone is discouraged by the thefts of cane and fruit by people without any moral discipline, and in a country without police; while on the other hand, people complain of being poor, and of not being able to devote enough money to indispensable improvements. . . . And if the proprietors cannot even make work progress, imagine the condition of the poor![49]

As the people grew individually poorer, the value of the land sank until it was useless for an owner to try to prevent squatting on his estate. Holdings grew smaller and smaller, in spite of the prohibition on sales of real estate in parcels less than fifteen acres. Good land might be had in every part of the island quite cheaply, much of it even from the government which had enacted the restrictive law. Any man not satisfied with his condition as a paid laborer might, if

47. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti* (*Saint Domingo*) (London, 1828), p. 313.
48. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti* (London, 1842), p. 37.
49. V. Schoelcher, *Colonies étrangères et Haïti: résultats de l'émancipation anglaise* (Paris, 1842), II, 263 ff.

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175 563 565 [701] [669] an ineffective government, momentarily in the hands of colored elite. Attempting to dominate politics was a numerically small group of colored people and a still smaller group of Negroes. Although prevailingly black, the army might be, and in the later nineteenth century was continually, used by whichever group offered more. A third power, a middle class, might have balanced these antagonistic factions. Lacking such a moderating influence, Haiti was the victim of recurrent revolutionary movements.

175 178 642 643 At the time of Boyer, actual democracy would have been no safeguard, for it would have meant the supremacy of ignorance. His rule was the beginning of unfortunate days for Haiti. After the auspicious opening years, the President became an impotent onlooker as his country declined. It is instructive to compare the Haiti of Dessalines and Christophe with the Haiti of 1843, only one generation later.[6a]

175 178 642 433 466 The Haiti of 1806 had been a beehive of activity. Soldiers, foremen, and policemen then stood over the workers with lashes to force them to labor for the benefit of their state. Production was carefully planned, an ordered hierarchy making every person in the country responsible to another higher than himself until the ruler was reached at the pinnacle. The cardinal fault of any laborer was to shirk at his task. The year 1843, on the contrary, found Haiti in a condition of quiescence which, to those who remembered the old days, resembled torpor. The central government had ceased to drive its citizens, and its half-hearted attempts at persuasion were futile. Overseers, drivers of gangs of workers, soldiers whose duty it was to enforce labor, had disappeared from the scene. Every man was his own master.

175 178 511 The standard of living in 1806 as in 1843 was low; but in the earlier year there had been a promise of great things to come once Haiti had rebuilt what war had destroyed. The succeeding years, however, failed to inculcate into the people a desire for any higher standard of life. Country dwellers were benighted; ignorance deepened the habit

[162] [175] 6a. Haiti has never had an accurate census, so that it is impossible even to estimate the total population of the country either in 1806 or in 1843. The figures of 380,000 and 800,000 given by some authors for the two years are mere guesses. Likewise, one can only deduce the proportion of people in the main economic and social categories; probably seventy-five per cent of the Haitians were serfs in 1806 and the same percentage peasants in 1843; the "aristocracy," including all who did not derive a living by manual labor or army service, could hardly have reached five per cent in either year; the army, house servants, day laborers in the cities, and petty businessmen would make up the other twenty per cent.

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of living only for the day by making people content with a low level of physical existence. Haitian peasants were isolated from the rest of the world; and one who has no standard of comparison rarely has the incentive to improve his living conditions.

Production declined between 1806 and 1843 both in quantity and in quality. Sugar, the staple of colonial trade and still an important export under Christophe, disappeared from the market figures altogether under Boyer. Most of the cane which was raised was worked into syrup and then into tafia (raw rum) for local consumption. Careful attention and the well-ordered machinery necessary for sugar manufacture were both lacking in 1843. Sugar cane was almost never newly planted, but simply lasted on from French days; what plants there were had little attention: they were not manured, or ploughed, or stripped of their dead leaves. Everything was left to nature. The production of coffee in actual number of pounds stood up well, although the quality fell off through lack of cultivation; the price in world markets steadily declined, however, so that the crop of 1843 brought in only twelve million francs as compared with twenty million for the smaller crop of 1822.[49]

Practically every acre of the fertile soil of Haiti was cultivated in 1806, the methods steadily improving under Christophe. Irrigation projects were then being developed to replace those destroyed in the wars, and a measure of experimentation went on with new crops and fertilizers. In 1843, however, what was called a coffee "plantation" was actually only a large tract of land on which coffee trees grew wild. There was no laying out of the lands nor any improvement of the soil or pruning of the trees to strengthen the parent stem. Until the berries were ready to be picked the coffee tree was rarely touched, except when pigs scratched their backs on it, or goats and donkeys cropped the grass around it. Cotton likewise received little cultivation. Cocoa raising practically ceased altogether, for it required intelligent management.

Haiti under Dessalines still had many buildings of French con-

49. The state figures for 1843 revealed only four money crops, no one of which was as productive of income as sugar had been. In the comparative tables given below it must be remembered that prices declined between 1822 and 1843.

	3-Year Average, 1822–26	1843
Coffee	34,000,000 pounds	35,000,000 pounds
Cotton	678,000 "	2,000,000 "
Campêche	3,600 "	30,000,000 "
Acajou	2,460,000 feet	6,000,000 feet

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Haiti under Dessalines still had many building

175 of French con-
178 struction, both plantation mansions and slave quarters. With forced
331 labor available these had been kept in a measure of repair. Christophe, not content with leftovers from colonial days, had sponsored architectural activity all over his kingdom; if his citadel is the most noteworthy example, there are also to his credit lesser palaces and government warehouses. Almost no building was done by Pétion and Boyer, however, and by the 1840's the constructions of the French
[731] had fallen into serious disrepair. Severe earthquakes and fires quickly ruined what time had already weakened. By the middle of the century one saw, instead of trim slave quarters near great mansions, a few straggling towns of one-story houses, the hillsides dotted with ramshackle huts, and the plains with daubed shacks.

175 From great estates to tiny plots; from carefully tilled fields to
178 small gardens in a wilderness; from financial prosperity to debt;
181 from directed enterprise to sloth; from an attitude of hopeful de-
433 termination to one of tolerance for things as they are—these are the striking contrasts of the two periods. It could hardly have been imagined in Christophe's day that the smart, disciplined Dahomet would be succeeded by casual ragamuffins who dozed on their tilted chairs while on sentry duty. Christophe had liked his subjects to be well dressed, and insisted on it; but the British consul in Boyer's time wrote that "the laborers are, generally speaking, nearly naked; in fact, adults only wearing what is barely necessary to prevent indecent exposure, while the children of both sexes run about without covering of any kind."[64]

175 It was the parceling of landed estates combined with the disap-
178 pearance of forced labor which initiated the transition from serfdom
433 to peasantry. Personalities as dynamic as Christophe's or as brutal as
[442] Dessalines' would have been required to keep the people in a servile
[483] condition in a land of tropical fertility. Contemporary foreign judg-
[461] ment was almost unanimous in placing the blame for declining
[164] prosperity upon indolence (the word is continually repeated, generally preceded by the adjective "natural"). It may be noted in passing that no one at the time seems to have realized how widespread were the debilitating diseases of hookworm and malaria, which can make apparently husky men prefer rest to work. Responsibility for economic failure rests as much upon the governing class,

64. Charles Mackenzie, *Communications Received at the Foreign Office [of Great Britain] Relative to Hayti* (1829), p. 86.

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however, as on the masses. Nothing was done to educate the people and so inculcate in them the desire for a higher standard of living. Where food is easily got, the government gentle, and the people ignorant, one hardly looks for progress.

Foreigners who knew Haiti were prophesying doom through most of Boyer's administration. The British consul was the most vocal of these prophets. He toured the whole republic in 1828 and found only local variations on a sorry state of affairs. At Jacmel he reported a parceling of the land, a decline of plantations, and a horror of corporal punishment by the people; it seemed to surprise him that every blow given a worker was returned in kind. In the arrondissements of Saint-Marc and Gonaïves cotton continued to be the chief crop as it had been in French days but quantity and quality had declined. At Petite-Rivière relative prosperity prevailed because the lands there were under the control of a former lieutenant of Christophe, who managed to apply that king's stern discipline to his workers. From Gonaïves to Cap Nicolas Môle cultivation was at a low ebb; near Cap-Haïtien everything agricultural was in ruins.[65]

Industry and discipline, the two commonest characteristics of the Haiti of Christophe, were precisely those most notably absent from the Negro masses of 1843. Obedience had given way to independence of behavior. A visitor in 1842 describes the actual condition of a plantation in the arrondissement of Furcy. Where formerly thirty-two families had toiled industriously, under strict overseers who were free to inflict physical punishment upon laggards, now only twelve families remained, the rest having become "freeholders." These twelve had a crop-sharing agreement with the owner of the estate whereby they received the income from half the 10,000 pounds of coffee yielded by the land; but also they

appropriate to themselves almost the whole of the provisions which the land furnishes, sending down only a few of the rarer vegetables, beans, peas, and artichokes, to their master, for his table at Port-au-Prince, and supplying his need when he comes to reside for a few days in the country. This he knows very well, but has no alternative but to bear it quietly.[66]

65. See particularly *ibid.*, pp. 94, 103–105. The consul clearly felt that the only hope of salvation in Haiti was a reintroduction of some sort of coercion such as that used by Dessalines and Christophe.

66. Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

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"empire" tottered to economic ruin. Graft, default on the debt, increasing deficits, and debased currency were the order of the day, and so continued until 1859, when the accumulation of anger over the useless wars and the humiliating defeats made the Emperor so unpopular that a new and more carefully planned revolution accomplished his downfall. 175 643 652 669

Fifteen years of administration by Negro rulers had broken the political power of the colored élite. Only three light-skinned men became president thereafter until the occupation of Haiti by the American Marines in 1915; in the seventy-two years following Boyer's downfall, mulattoes ruled during only eight. The army under a black general was too powerful, a colored president too hampered by suspicion, to make the political game worth the candle. The colored élite, therefore, adapted themselves to existing conditions as best they could, controlling the business life of Haiti, filling the law offices and, because of their literacy, the secretaryships of state, and indulging in honorific cultural pursuits. 175 643 178 564

In the years after Soulouque the basic realities of Haitian life were changed hardly at all by shifting political administrations. Some of the presidents were mildly progressive, many were indifferent; still more were actually harmful; but the lives of the mass of peasants were not often touched by presidential vagaries. Politics was an affair almost wholly of townspeople, of the army, the élite, and the pseudo-élite. Revolutions, counterrevolutions, movements of reform, international tangles, financial woes, and most of the other complications to which unstable states are heir, absorbed the attention of rulers and upper-class folk who were politically inclined. 175 643 66

Constitutions were made by presidents and changed by their successors; the Senate passed contradictory laws in the same session if the chief executive so recommended; the courts were presided over by the president's men. Haitian law in the latter half of the nineteenth century was what the president's immediate strength and wish made it—or else it was folk custom, undisturbed by the rulers. 175 642 671 692

Never once, in the three quarters of a century after Boyer's time, did Haiti approach the high standard of production known in colonial days or in the early years of independence. The pattern of Haitian social and economic life became fixed in this seventy-five years. Haiti became a country of small-scale tillage by a peasant population, with only enough external trade to provide moderate 175 178 433 565 439

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175 178 565 433 439 [423] [428] fortunes, that is, a few thousands of dollars, for a small number of élite, and to make the presidency a position economically rewarding enough to justify revolutionary conspiracies. The growth of a peasantry set in train during the long régime of Boyer continued, unbroken even by the numerous insurrections, until fixed in the mores. Land owned by the countryfolk was divided and redivided among their heirs, so that even holdings of moderate size became smaller.

175 643 566 423 Not one of the twenty-two rulers following Boyer made the slightest effort to return the country to the forced labor system of Dessalines and Christophe. They seemed to recognize the inevitability of a peasant way of life, or at least the impossibility of luring the people back to directed labor after a long experience of freedom. On the contrary, several presidents still further parceled the land.

175 643 423 President Guerrier, for example, the very year after Boyer was deposed, put on sale at moderate prices those state lands in the North not reserved for public use.[5] If the revolutionaries of 1843 had hoped to bring back Christophe's system of forced labor, their hopes were doomed to disappointment because of the state's need of immediate income. Christophe's state land areas were now broken up in the one part of the country where a few large plantations still existed.

175 643 421 423 President Geffrard in 1862 gave his blessing to small ownership, the basis of peasantry. Whereas Pétion's laws had prohibited sales of land in parcels less than fifteen acres, Geffrard's law regularized the leasing and sale of national property in lots of fifteen acres *at most*. Geffrard was the first president openly to admit that many government lands had been lost to citizens by squatting. In an endeavor to give legality to land held by squatters' rights, his law demanded that squatters register their claims, announcing that within a short time there would be no further dismemberment of the national patrimony except by grants and sales.[6] Few registrations were made, however, for the Haitian peasant had already acquired a suspicion of legal documents he could not read or understand, and he could see no reason for legalizing a status in which, with the squatter's tenacity and inertia, he already felt himself secure.

Haiti was in constant financial straits. Money had to be borrowed

5. By a law of September 23, 1844.
6. Law of August 14, 1862. The articles cited here are 2 and 4.

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to his demands for revision and for his selection as president for life, retained the constitution they had written and chose Pétion president in his stead, the rupture was instant and complete. 175 642 [667]

Dictator as against restricted president, strong man as against class or group rule, Negro against mulatto, army against civil government, executive against legislature, North against South—these are the phases of the subsequent dichotomy in Haitian politics. 175 665

A good case can easily be made for the advocates of force in Haitian government, particularly in its early days. For years the majority of men had lost the habit of steady work on the land; a strong hand was needed to reëstablish in the countryside that economic order without which liberty shrivels. The people had become accustomed to taking orders from their military leaders, and these from their commanding officer. Those, moreover, were times of crisis, when France might suddenly descend again upon her former colony: few crises can be dealt with by debating societies. Looking back on the course of Haitian history, one may point out also that the country prospered under the dictatorships of Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe as it never did under the limited presidencies.[4] 175 642 433 656

In 1806, therefore, the aristocratic party got its wish, although only at the price of splitting the country in two. They established a government with a president of their own and a Senate filled with their representatives. The earliest legislation naturally enough favored their own landholding group. When prosperity did not result, Pétion began to recommend to the Senate a division of the land. More and more, although the representative form was preserved, Pétion ruled as a dictator. He was mild enough not to arouse antagonism; as is always the case when freedom of speech is curbed and summary legislation required, the plea of crisis was used to justify extraordinary measures. 175 642 665 646 643

The legislative party was firmly in the saddle by 1820 when Boyer reunited North and South, and shared his power with the Senate. 175 642 643

4. The argument for dictatorship is familiar to the modern world. A defense of "socialitarianism," published in 1816 by authority of Christophe (then King Henry I), is amusingly like certain European utterances of the nineteen-thirties: "The King has the sweet satisfaction of seeing that the cultivators [who were forced to work on the land whether they wanted to or not], being everywhere regularly paid [though the sum might be tiny], are praising the freedom they enjoy." And again: "Hayti chose a kingdom in order to shun forever that chaos, that confusion and perpetual clashing, which result from those monstrous associations known under the name of *popular bodies*." Anon., *Hayatian Papers* (1816), pp. 109, 113. [829]

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be given to Haiti for vast rubber plantings.[21] Opposition to Lescot comes chiefly from those who consider him too friendly with the Dominicans who killed hundreds of Haitian workers in 1937, Lescot having figured prominently in negotiations that led to the Dominican government's agreement to pay indemnities to Haiti for the slaughter.

Reviewing the whole course of Haitian history, the field of politics seems to have marshaled itself behind a few regularities. In every case there have been voices raised to protest, yet the ruling clique, whatever its grouping, has effectively supported these characteristic political customs:

1. Complete dominance of political life by the president. Strong men seem to be necessary to rule ignorant masses. Even the revolutions precipitated by parties campaigning for parliamentarianism have, when successful, become governments by the president. This concentration of power in one man's hands makes the next revolution possible, for it is easier to overthrow one man than to eliminate a party based upon wide suffrage and diffused responsibility.

2. The inferior position of cabinet ministers. These have resembled neither European nor American secretaries of state in their responsibilities, but have been little more than clerks appointed by the president to serve as heads of a bureau. The treasurer-general, for example, during most of Haiti's history has merely received the moneys, while the president disbursed them. The secretary-general has neither originated nor conducted the details of public policy. Often as not, the minister has made a convenient whipping boy when the president has got himself involved in internal or foreign complications: by demanding the minister's resignation the president remained unscathed.

3. The unimportance of the legislature. It has made useful patron-

21. The European War, threatening the supply of rubber coming to the United States from British Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies, has made the American government seek new sources. The Department of Agriculture established an experimental station and breeding gardens for rubber plants in Haiti, and the results were so successful that extensive areas were planted with rubber trees. Haiti and the United States in May, 1941, reached a long-term agreement for "the development of agriculture and economy"; the projects embraced under the agreement include not only rubber but the further development of Haiti's banana plantations, the planting of oil crops, drug plants, spices, fiber plants, the stimulation of handicraft industries, and the development of forestry resources peculiar to the tropics. A further extension of an additional $500,000 in credits will be made for use on highways, irrigation projects, and to provide transportation facilities for the areas to be planted to rubber trees.

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175 Haiti under Dessalines seemed to be flourishing, although it was
433 less productive than under the French colonial régime. This was partly because the material damage of the wars had been too great to be quickly repaired; partly it was because many of the free Haitians had discovered ways of disappearing into the remote valleys, there to live the life of independent squatters, safe from the blows of Dessalines' overseers. Tables of exports showed that sugar production was rapidly declining, and that coffee was now becoming the principal crop of the country.[4] Many cane fields, indeed, were turning into rugged thickets, their mills and refineries falling to ruins beside the clogged irrigation ditches.

175 It was a bewildering "system," then, this instituted by Dessalines:
466 intense activity of serfs on government plantations, but an increasing
439 number of deserting squatters; foreign trade encouraged, yet run by
579 principles of local favoritism. Even the old-fashioned practice of piracy was reëstablished, for the Emperor gave letters of marque to some of his subjects who owned ships, allowing them to pursue French and Spanish vessels as the rightful prey of an enemy country. Sometimes these Haitian corsairs even disturbed smaller English merchant ships. Finally, it was Dessalines who said to his favorites, "*Plumez la poule* [that is, the Haitian people], *mais prenez garde qu'elle ne crie pas.*"

175 Christophe, upon his accession to power in the North, completely
439 abandoned the fantastic schemes of Dessalines for putting an end to
437 all contact between Haitians and foreigners. Among his earliest acts were efforts to undo the economic measures of the Emperor. In his first address he proclaimed certain free ports, announcing that the flags of all nations would be respected and property protected.[5] Next he abolished the consignment system of trading, allowing all foreign traders free access to Haitian merchants. This open system did away with the need of smuggling.

175 Because Christophe was almost pathetically anxious to make a
439 good impression upon Great Britain, he was scrupulous in living up
648 to his promises of security of property and justice in commercial dealings—to British merchants. The United States fared ill at the King's hands, for it was a young republic which had by refusing

4. See note on this chapter, p. 320, section 4.

5. His constitution of 1807 likewise makes this promise: "The government solemnly guarantees to foreign merchants the security of their persons and property."

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United Kingdom, the United States, and Haiti, in proportion to population, were 185, 165, and 125,[18] yet Haiti had no carrying trade while the other two countries had, and so the profits were drained from the land.[19]

In short, as Haiti became accustomed to managing her own affairs, she became content with—or at least, reconciled to—little things. Inertia and tradition worked in their persistent fashion, with no effective stimulation from outside to combat them. From tradition and seclusion springs prejudice, and this became obvious whenever a change was proposed, particularly one which suggested bringing white people back to the country. To the élite it might mean the end of their social supremacy; to the masses, the end of their independence of daily action. The prejudice against sugar making was rooted in the same kind of suspicion. When a large landowner tried to institute a sugar mill on his estate, he met an adamant refusal of his hired workers to labor in it: "*Moué pas esclave!*" (I'm no slave!) The Negroes even disliked a bell to ring them to work on a plantation, for it suggested the slavery of the old régime.

Just before the Civil War in the United States a humanitarian gentleman developed a project of conducting numerous free American Negroes to Haiti in a planned migration. He discussed in a pamphlet[20] all the possible trades which might flourish in that country, if the migrants were to assume the position of a middle class; but his list is significantly small—sixteen occupations, on the order of tailoring, coopering, and blacksmithing, were all he could think of.[21] He made three comments which he hoped would attract the Negro Americans, as to a virgin field of opportunity: that in the

18. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 111–113, cites these figures, and says: "[Thus] Hayti, poor, and despised as she is, has a commerce, *in native produce*, nearly three-fourths as large, *in proportion to her population*, as our own United Kingdom, which is the great manufacturing part of the world; and seven-eighths as large as that of the United States, where the staple exports are produced by the labour of 3,000,000 slaves!"

19. Mackenzie (*Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti*, Document V) reports that in 1825 exports were valued at $5,793,758, and imports at $4,660,174; the trading was carried on in 552 *foreign* ships, of which 374 were American, 78 British, and 65 French. No Haitian ship traded abroad.

20. Benjamin S. Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans*. See particularly pp. 3–9.

21. His complete list is: tailor, shoemaker, baker, cabinetmaker, carpenter, mason, lime-burner, distiller, cooper, wheelwright, saddler, blacksmith, tinner, hatter, small-boat maker, potter.

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Besides the figures given above must be set there of the government

budget, which is annually in the neighborhood of $7,000,000, and of 652
its annual imports and exports, neither of which generally exceeds [439]
$10,000,000 a year. Chicago, with its population of three million, has an annual budget of about $275,000,000, aside from state and federal services.

To care for all the needs of three million people in Haiti there is a sum of money less than that available annually to several of our American universities. Out of the seven million dollars must come all salaries of officials, legislators, judges, policemen, schoolteachers; the wages of all janitors and day laborers employed by the government; the upkeep of all schools, roads, lighthouses, experiment stations; the maintenance of such important public services as health, sanitation, education, soil development, reforestation. Since there [369]
are few towns, practically every improvement which takes place must be paid for by the central government.

Haiti's growth in population is not a new thing. It has been in- 161
creasing steadily since 1804 while the soil of the country was being [134]
worn out and foreign trade grew stagnant. The country is entirely [439]
agricultural, there being absolutely no manufacturing industry worth the name. The people consequently live upon a subsistence economy. 433
The soil is still fertile enough to preserve life in the teeming popula- 164
tion, though undernourishment is general. Most of the people have [134]
no "artificial" wants and could not satisfy them under present con- [511]
ditions even if they had.

Assuming the census of Dessalines in 1805 to be even approxi- 161
mately accurate, the population is now eight times what it was then. 433
The working of the Law of Population[3] is implacable: if population 176
increases while economic efficiency remains static or declines, either there will be an increasing death rate or the standard of living must sink—or both. In the case of Haiti, economic efficiency is certainly [165]
not what it was under the forced-labor system of Dessalines: the [511]
death rate has been continuously high; it is the standard of living which has suffered.

To grasp the import of Haiti's problem of overpopulation one

3. "Population tends to increase up to the limit of the supporting power of the land, relative to the economic efficiency and to the standard of living of the people at the time." (For an amplification of this discussion on overpopulation, see the note on p. 320.) The law of population as stated here is a modification of that given by Sumner and Keller, *The Science of Society*, I, 46; their statement, in turn, is that of Malthus with the added cultural items of economic efficiency and the standard of living. [114]

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To grasp the import of Haiti's problem of

270 every population one

THE HAITIAN PEOPLE

161 should imagine the number of Vermonters sextupled, working with
● 433 hand tools and using methods which their great-grandfathers would
171 have considered antiquated; imagine the state with only a hundred
511 miles of paved roads, with no harnessed water power, no substantial fortunes, no middle class; imagine the farms gullied and worn out; ninety-five per cent of the people illiterate and undernourished; the state having no industry and practically no goods imported from New York, Massachusetts, or any other part of the United States. Under such conditions the low standard of living would be readily understandable.

Haiti might also be compared with Mississippi. Less than a quarter the size of that American state, it nevertheless has a larger population. Both Haiti and Mississippi are agricultural, with few towns, although no part of Haiti now has land as richly fertile as that of the Yazoo Delta. The low standard of living of the Mississippi share-cropper, whether Negro or white, is notorious—yet he has access to a few of the perquisites of civilization, whether these be elementary schools or moving pictures; the Haitian peasant lacks even these. In America the undercurrent of feeling is that something should be, probably eventually will be, done to improve the lot of the share-cropper. Certainly there is wealth enough in the country at large to alleviate conditions where they are deemed to be socially unhealthy. Not so in Haiti: the land is poorer, the numbers even greater, the area much smaller; and there is no wealth in the country, nor enough social vision among the upper classes to deal with the relentless increase of numbers.

168 How conceivably might this problem be dealt with? The first answer which would occur to many Americans, namely, birth control, is out of the question at present. Expense would stand in the way of its use by people who hardly ever see money; the peasants, unable to read, suspicious of new-fangled ways, untouched by all efforts to "uplift" them, and with no educational agencies, could hardly be converted to the use of contraceptives; while the Catholic
[795] Church, which until now has not had to raise its voice against birth control in Haiti, would fight any proposal to introduce it as it fought the campaign in Puerto Rico.

167 Another possible answer is migration. This solution many Haitians
648 have tried without prompting. With little money available for

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175 Boyer carried on Pétion's policy of no taxation. It was not until the American
651 Occupation that Haitians could be said to be taxed. Ninety per cent of the state's
income between 1900 and 1915 regularly came from tariffs, and only ten per cent
[652] from internal taxes. Even the efforts of the Americans, resulting in the laws of 1924
and 1928, were on the whole restricted to a few excise taxes. A land tax was hopeless, due to the utter confusion of titles and the stubborn impassivity of peasant squatters.[5]

2. *Monetary Policy of Pétion and Boyer*

175 The monetary situation in Haiti was chaotic in its early days. The gold money
652 of France, Spain, England, and the United States circulated, as did small French coins, and the coins and paper money created by the Haitian rulers, who had complete control over money. For example, Pétion decreed[6] an increase in the value of the *gourde d'Espagne* from 8 livres 5 sols, to 9 livres; of the French écu of 6 francs from 9 livres to 9 livres 15 sols; and the 5 franc écu from 7 livres 10 sols to 8 livres 5 sols; this almost doubled the value of money in circulation. He also struck small coins to replace the pieces of 30, 24, 15, 12, and 6 sols of France. His small coins were merely token money.[7] The paper currency created by Pétion and so easily counterfeited has been mentioned.

[433] Boyer was continually in financial perplexities. Production was declining while expenditures had to be radically increased on account of the settlement with France in 1825. Boyer's budget was not a large one judged by modern standards, the average expenditure each year being about $5,000,000. To meet this, customs duties on imports and exports brought in about $2,200,000 annually; territorial duties on produce, houses, patents or licenses, market fees, and the like, a similar
[316] sum; but some half-million dollars had to be borrowed each year. The government hoped to get something from developing mines in the Spanish part of the island,
[425] but this hope failed. It was thought also that the sale of government lands might bring in some revenue, but few people wanted to invest money, when they had it,
[454] in land, with agricultural affairs developing as they were and no way of making
[465] people work: investment in trade was more promising. The national treasury was so empty that both the civil and military officials were poorly paid. It was fre-
[661] quently said that almost all administrators and persons in authority were open to bribery. Meantime the number of civil servants was increasing: there was a swarm
[647] of hirelings and subalterns in every commune, like a host of vampires. By their lack of honesty, conscientiousness, and efficiency, immense sums were lost annually to the treasury.

5. See the *Report of the American High Commissioner* (1929), p. 19.

6. May 4, 1808.

7. *Pétion voyant s'échapper de ses États les gourdes qu'effrayaient ses démêlés avec Christophe, eut pour les retenir l'ingénieuse idée d'y pratiquer une troude. Ce moyen était trop efficace pour ne pas réussir, et il était trop simple pour que l'emploi n'en fut pas généralisé au moins par un équivalent. Ainsi, lorsqu'il en vint à battre monnaie, le chef de l'état du Sud descendit le titre de sa gourde à peu près au titre de la gourde espagnole tarée par son emporte-pièce. Il lui donne 858 millièmes de fin.*" Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, II, 194.

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3. *Pétion, Boyer, and Inginac as Administrators*

Pétion lived very simply in the South, like a plain republican magistrate. He sat on his piazza, accessible to all his people. He had a quiet way of answering his opponents which did not make enemies of them. He made his secretary answer every letter that arrived, no matter how small; many were simply inquiries about the President's health. Yet the wars between Pétion and Christophe dragged on from 1807 to 1812,[8] draining the finances of the republic. Not only the crops declined: so also did most of the public improvements instituted by the colonial planters; so did trade; so did habits of industry. Everything seemed to conspire against hard work. The rich plains of the Cul-de-Sac and the Artibonite Valley were ravaged by fire and warfare; necessary equipment for sugar making was destroyed, the money for new machines and buildings was unavailable; and the men were drawn away from their land by military duties.

Inginac, Boyer's secretary of state, after the Revolution of 1843 had got rid of both the President and his secretary, wrote his memoirs. There are some revealing passages. Inginac reports that Pétion told him only forty days before his death that Boyer was a man of probity and delicacy, "but unhappily he is petulant; he is too set in his ways to conciliate those who might assist him. In everything *he* wants to dominate, and he will bring unhappiness to the country if he does not change." Inginac cites cases to show that Pétion's prophecy was correct. Boyer in 1820 repealed the most unpopular laws, particularly those requiring personal corvée and the repair of public roads; but instead of taking advice from his cabinet on important economic matters, he frequently announced that he was president and would not be run by anybody. Consequently, according to Inginac, he made mistakes which might have been avoided.[9] Defending himself, the former secretary offers a clue to the failure of the régime—possibly unavoidable—by showing that the administration merely suggested, did not require, action:

"Have I not constantly, not only preached and corresponded about the necessity of making agriculture prosperous, but also given work at as high wages as the treasury could afford? Have I not created habitations on lands formerly totally uncultivated, putting formerly idle men to work? Have I not published at my own expense, although I directed the National Printery, methods for cultivating tobacco and coffee plants, of which I distributed gratis several thousand copies?"[10]

In spite of all encouragement which the administration could offer, agricultural production continued to decline, while expenses increased, and external trade fell off from a third to a half. The government had to borrow from the banking firm of Lafitte in Paris to find even the interest for

8. Hostilities between the two parts of Haiti ceased about 1812 because of the mutual fear on the part of Christophe and Pétion of Napoleon's ascendancy, and the threat which this constituted to the whole former colony. Their war had ravaged the plantations and removed laborers from the soil. Then came the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain, cutting off many of the supplies which Haiti drew from both countries. There was accordingly an unwritten truce, with no further hostilities. A neutral territory of ten leagues between the boundaries of the two states was tacitly agreed upon: neither army was to enter it. This was the rich plain of Boucassin, once the garden of the island, now a wilderness.

9. Joseph Balthazar Inginac, *Memoires* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1843), pp. 32, 34, 38.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

payments due to the French government.

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of Lafitte in Paris to find even the interest for payments due to the French government.

4. Exports from Haiti

Sugar was the great crop of French colonial days in Saint-Domingue, with coffee, indigo, and cotton lucrative secondary crops. The first table shows the rapid decline of sugar, indigo, and cotton between 1791 and 1839, near the end of Boyer's administration.

CROPS

	Sugar	*Indigo*	*Cotton*
1791 (colony)	163,405,220 lbs.	930,016 lbs.	6,286,126 lbs.
1802 (Toussaint)	53,400,000	37,600	4,050,000
1804 (Dessalines)	47,600,000	35,400	3,000,000
1818 (Pétion)	1,896,449	0	384,001
1825 (Boyer)	2,020	0	815,697
1839 (Boyer)	6,000	0	1,402,792

By contrast coffee production, although it declined, remained large enough to provide the state with some income. After 1810 it was the principal crop of the country.

Coffee Production

1791	68,151,180 lbs.	1818	20,280,589 lbs.
1802	34,370,000	1825	36,034,300
1804	31,000,000	1839	43,854,666

In 1935–36 the Vincent government reported the export of 76,600,000 pounds of sugar, 79,400,000 pounds of coffee, and 12,700,000 pounds of cotton.[11]

CHAPTER XV

What Haiti faces, economically and socially, can be seen in terms of the law of population: "Population tends to increase up to the limit of the supporting power of the land, relative to the economic efficiency and to the standard of living of the people at the time." This law may be better visualized by stating it in forms of an equation:

$$\frac{\text{Population}}{\text{Productivity of land}} = \frac{\text{Economic Efficiency}}{\text{Standard of Living}}$$

Another way of stating the law is this:

Population + Standard of Living = Productivity of Land + Economic Effi-

11. These tables are compiled from material in Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description . . . de . . . Saint-Domingue, passim;* Great Britain Foreign Office, *Communications Relative to Hayti* (London, 1825), p. 159; Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti*, II, 172 ff.; Aléxandre Bonneau, *Haïti: ses progrès, son avenir* (Paris, 1862), pp. 35, 36; John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, p. 105; L.-J. Marcelin, *Haïti: ses guerres civiles* (Paris, 1892), p. 32; Charles F. Pressoir, "Pages de géographie économique," *Revue de la Société d'Histoire*, III, vi, 18; James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 318 ff.; *Rapport annuel du représentant fiscal d'Haïti*, October, 1935–September, 1936, pp. 189–195.

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ciency. It is immediately evident that no one of the four variables can be increased or lowered without disturbing the balance.

In French colonial times, the white and colored population was but 68,000. This figure excludes all the Negro slaves. The land was highly productive. Economic efficiency was likewise high. Now, after a century and a half, the population is near 3,000,000, the land is wearing out, and economic efficiency is almost a negative quantity. The standard of living has obviously suffered tremendously as compared with that of the French planters and free colored people of colonial times. Even if it be protested that the comparison should rather be between early and modern Haitians than between upper-caste colonials and modern Haitians, we should still compare a population of 380,000 with one of 3,000,000 on just about the same amount of land, for what has been taken up by clearing away forests has been compensated for by erosion and reversion to waste. And as has been said economic efficiency has deteriorated.

If, then, the standard of living—the usual test of a people's prosperity and contentment—is to be raised, Haiti must:

a. Lower the birth rate, and so work on its population.

b. Rebuild and fertilize its soil (that is, improve its land).

c. Adopt machinery, learn scientific methods, apply intelligent management.

All three must be done seriatim or in combination. To foreigners, particularly to visitors from the United States, there is a moral imperative in the Haitian situation, a feeling that something ought to be done, and that right early. To Haitian peasants, on the other hand, "progress" would mean change, and change is an uncomfortable interruption of the familiar. Knowing this attitude, the Haitian government is not goaded into action.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

591 rarest of instances, and only by fixed legal procedure, since
596 mere verbal denial of family rights cannot deprive a person
428 of his inheritance.

596 Within the immediate family it is the duty of the man to
432 procure food for his wife and children. When his fields have
434 been harvested, the produce is taken to the house and given
454 to the wife, who retains a portion of it for the needs of the household and sells the surplus at the market, using the money to buy clothing and other necessaries for her husband, her children, and herself. A part of the sum she receives may be used to purchase animals to be used for transport, food, or breeding-purposes; and whatever money is left over is saved, particularly if a desirable plot of ground is available, or a mass and ceremony for the ancestors or promised rituals for the gods are in prospect. The woman, who is held to be more thrifty than the man, is thus the banker of the family. Her opinion is prized by her husband, and though a man has the legal right to dispose of a horse or a cow or his own land as he desires, in most households nothing would be done until
593 the wife was consulted. It is true that quarrels often arise concerning family funds held by the wife, especially when a man questions the accounting given him, or on occasion when he wants money to bet on a cock-fight or for drinking or other personal needs whose cost he does not care to have reviewed. But for many men the problem is quite well solved by the expedient of deducting a sum from his earnings without telling his wife that she has not been given the full amount.

596 It is only in relatively small matters that the membership of a household acts as a self-determining unit. In affairs of greater moment the extended family must figure, for despite the informality of its organization — at least as manifested in Mirebalais — and its lack of legal sanction, its power, especially as lodged in the old folk, is none the less real. It is because of this that it is said: "The peasant consults his elders about everything he does." When a transaction of some im-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

tioned this latter instance advanced it as a possible alternative to the custom found elsewhere in Haiti, adding that it was the duty of the living to honor their ancestors, and not for the ancestors to make provision to honor themselves, particularly since the dead can enforce the discharge of this duty by sending illness, bad fortune, and death to those of their descendants who are remiss.

To a very appreciable degree, what is inherited forms the foundation of whatever wealth a man may accumulate during his lifetime. Yet there are few, among the peasants at least, who do not seek by all means to add to their heritage, for among those folk the ambition to obtain more and more land is a dominating one. To this end the peasant skimps and saves, depriving himself even of his important needs, until at the proper time some choice parcel of ground comes on the market.

How does a man go about accumulating the funds necessary to amass property? Ordinarily a young man is given a plot of ground by his father, and the produce, as mentioned, is marketed for him by his mother, who saves the proceeds for him. When he marries, his wife takes over this task, and together the two strive to extract as large earnings as possible from his plot. In addition, a man may take a *job*. Such work, always paid for by the unit rather than by the day or week, is usually that of cultivating a plot of ground for its owner, and the amount agreed upon is paid when the field has been harvested. The young man at the same time can also cultivate his own fields and participate in communal labor. Another way of adding to the earnings of his fields is to help the large landowners on their cotton plantations. This work is paid for in kind with baskets of cotton, which in turn are sold to factors who come from the coast to buy both large and small quantities. A man may also increase his income by working in the cane-fields or at the caldrons when the sirup is boiled. Each

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453 434 556 worker receives about ten gourdes a week, in addition to his food, and the work often is of several months' duration. To do this, however, it is necessary for him to hire another to work his own garden for the period he is thus engaged. As extra [454] money is gradually accumulated, more land is purchased, so that the returns become greater; and the process is accelerated when, upon the death of a man's father, other family land is added to what he already owns.

439 454 556 Thus the drive to obtain property is an obsession with the Haitian peasant. The question of a few centimes, to say nothing of a gourde, is hotly argued; for instance, in the bidding for unclaimed lost animals held periodically at the Mairie in Mirebalais, bids are often raised by as little as five centimes, with the bidder waiting until the last possible moment, the third call of the auctioneer, before pledging the additional sum. Those who have money prefer silver to paper and usually keep it in a trunk at home, but if troublous times impend, the money is put in jars and hidden in the ground. In this way it happens that when a man dies, much of his money is lost to his heirs, for he rarely tells even his wife or children what he has done with it.

556 Yet this point must be stressed — in the mind of the Haitian peasant, though wealth is desired for the prestige it gives, it is rarely prized for the display it permits. Frequently when a person of large means is pointed out in the market place, he will be simply if not poorly dressed. To make undue display of possessions would arouse envy, and envy brings upon a man's household the evil eye. Wealth is rather manifested in extensive farms, in elaborate ceremonies for the rituals held for family ancestors and for family gods, in the education of children to the end that they may eventually move to the capital and there attain social and political position of importance. Wealth brings prestige to its owner through the word-of-mouth comment of his neighbors, and with this he is content,

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case certain aspects of the historical development of Haiti have doubtless tended to reinforce African custom. Reference has been made to the fact that the great proportion of traders are women, a truism in Africa as in Haiti, where by general rule men are the producers and women the distributors of goods. In Haiti, however, the fact that for many decades men were likely to be arbitrarily impressed into military service by local chieftains when they came to town — particularly in Mirebalais, which had always been one of the centers of Caco activity — discouraged them from attending the markets. Thus African usage has here been reinforced by the historical fact of Haitian political instability. The fact that the proceeds from trading belong to the woman who does the trading, and that in consequence women are encountered who, though married, command independent means and exercise full control over their resources, is a carry-over of African tradition and, as in Africa, this gives to women a position in the economic world quite foreign to conventional European practice.

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The form of the family as found in Mirebalais demonstrates that the African social grouping which comprises all those descended on one side of the family has largely disappeared there, though it is possible that at least the vestiges of it may have survived in other regions of Haiti. Yet in West Africa, though descent is legally counted on but one side of the family, psychological adherence to the families of both parents is everywhere important. Therefore it is logical to assume that this concept, reinforced by the pattern of dual descent and double familial affiliation of the French, has been retained in Haiti to the neglect of the aboriginal larger groupings, where, as has been seen, not only is relationship counted on both sides of the family, but, more significantly, the right to reprimand and punish is held and exerted by elders in both the maternal and the paternal lines. On the other hand, it is apparent that the feeling for larger relationship groups has not been entirely lost, particularly in the paternal line, when

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311 bean country, and perhaps fewer than in any country in Latin Amer-
423 ica. The agriculture itself, with the exceptions now of those very few
171 large-scale plantations in sisal and sugarcane, is adapted to small plots and is worked with intensive labor and few tools on hilly land. Com-
433 pared with agricultural production, especially of cash crops, in most
178 mainland Latin American countries, productivity is low. The yeomanry is conservative in its agricultural practices, and not ready to change unless the changes entail minimal risk and the gains to be real-
241 ized are clearly demonstrable (Erasmus, 1952:20–26). Yeomen culti-
177 vate with three goals in mind: cash income from world-market
185 commodities (for instance, coffee, sisal, vetiver); cash income from
434 items produced for local sale and consumption; and subsistence. While they are heavily involved in production for sale, their crop choices and land-use patterns rest fundamentally on a subsistence orientation. All grow a substantial part of their own food, especially sorghum, maize, sweet potatoes, taro, manioc, malanga (*Xanthosoma sagittifolium* Schott), plantains and bananas, fruits and vegetables, and
423 rice where possible. The land is invested with considerable affect:
823 gods live in it; it is the ultimate security against privation; family
471 members are buried in it; food and wealth come from it; and it is good in itself, even if not cultivated. While such attitudes are common in yeoman societies, Haiti's history of slavery, and of access to land through revolution, has given a special symbolic significance to landowning. Land is valued above all else and is sometimes held "uneconomically"—that is, even when the capital and labor power to work it are lacking.

114 Leyburn describes better than any other writer the history of land
175 acquisition by the yeoman after 1804. The French plantations lay in
423 ruins, never to recover, while early authoritarian attempts to restore the prerevolutionary economy under native Haitian leadership soon failed. In the course of a century, the Haitian people laid claim to their own soil, while population growth and the adoption of the French tradition of equal inheritance progressively reduced the average size of holdings. In spite of some plantation development after the United States occupation, most agricultural land in Haiti is still employed in small holdings, and "land reform" in the conventional sense—the breaking-up of large estates and the creation of a class of small land-
462 holders—is nearly irrelevant to Haiti's needs.
493 As today's yeomanry cultivates, so its womenfolk market. Nearly

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565 511 paring to try to move one step up the social ladder. Shoes are a symbol: wearing these, one must also wear a suit instead of a faded shirt and patched trousers; the suit demands personal cleanliness and a better home; all these lead the country man to town life with its additional expenses. So arduous a climb does not allure many of the Haitian common folk.

565 181 Because the standard of living, with its tangibles and intangibles, clearly separates the castes, the élite observe all the rules with rigor. Their etiquette is formal. Culture (in the popular, not the anthropological meaning) is respected with almost religious devotion.

565 511 434 Since the maintenance of a high standard of living is costly, it is obvious that another source of caste distinction lies in the inequalities of wealth and property. Wealth is a relative term, however, and the Haitian peasant is so poor that by contrast a few hundred dollars' income a year will seem like riches. The élite live economically by American standards, yet even parsimonious spending of money may, when governed by a consciousness of social distinctions, make the peak of aristocracy unassailable.

565 369 The élite live in towns. Many of them own country estates, but regard these as secondary to their residences in Port-au-Prince, Pétionville, Cap-Haïtien, Jérémie, and the other few towns. To live a rural life is to be isolated, out of the stream of fashion, news, social activity. What profession can one follow in a rustic valley? One who is class-conscious must see and be seen by others of his class, otherwise he would be forgotten by "those who count." In the towns are the schools; there French is spoken; there, and there only, financial and social opportunities exist. True, plebeians form the majority of the population even in the towns, so that urbanization alone is not a mark of caste; it must be taken in conjunction with the others.

565 581 Formal marriage is another requisite for membership in the élite. As will shortly be apparent, sex relations in Haiti are quite casual, as judged by American standards. The majority of Haitian families are established by parents who have gone through neither a civil nor a religious ceremony. This is not to imply that spouses are unfaithful to each other, or that there is not mutual respect within the family circle; it merely means that most people regard formal marriage as a luxury which they cannot afford, or in any case as a ceremony which custom has made superfluous. Once again, however, the aristocrat holds to the form. If a family can point to legal marriages among

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tiny communities, some of them designating "villages" of only four or five houses. For numbers of peasants hidden away in the valleys or on mountain farms, the only contact with the larger world comes through visits to the nearest market town—which itself may count only a thousand souls. The peasant is thus effectively isolated. The American Financial Adviser to the Government has estimated the average *annual* income of the Haitian at $20 a head.[8] The smallness of the sum limits the material contacts of the peasant with the outside world. Rural schools are few,[9] consequently all but a small percentage of the rising generation is growing up illiterate. Lack of mental stimulus completes the isolation. Bound to the soil by the need of wresting a livelihood from rocky, gullied, and increasingly unproductive land, harassed by ill-health, and governed by a group whose own security would be threatened by improving his lot, it is little wonder that the peasant is unprogressive, or that he struggles along at a bare subsistence level.[10]

Haiti is rural and agricultural, then, with a population density of about 250 per square mile. The people, living without machine industry and with very little foreign trade, must get their living from 10,000 square miles, not of lush tropical soil but of rocky, mountainous country which, after a century and a half of poor farming, has been stripped of most of its forests and much of its topsoil.

A glance at a relief map of the West Indies would show clearly that the islands are the tops of a mountain range, whose lowlands were long since submerged by the Caribbean Sea. Looked at from above, Haiti seems a jumbled mass of mountains running in all directions.[11] Down their slopes flow many small streams which after

8. Dr. W. W. Cumberland, cited by Paul H. Douglas, "The American Occupation of Haiti," *Political Science Quarterly*, XLII (1927), 258.

9. The average monthly salary of $13 (until recently only $6) for rural schoolteachers would not draw many wide-awake young men, even if schoolhouses existed for classes. The salary, indeed, is so small that only inferior persons are attracted, often men who know little more than their pupils. See chap. XV, 3.

10. Mrs. Blair Niles, in *Black Haiti* (New York, 1926), pp. 185–186, tells of a prisoner who preferred to remain in jail rather than be freed. "When he gets out," she quotes the officer as saying, "he'll be in again. You'll see. Here he gets nine cents a day for food, an' that's more than the average Haitian ever has."

11. One can well believe the story (told by Ebenezer D. Bassett, *Haiti* [Washington, 1893], p. 3) of the English admiral who, asked by George III for a description of the island, crumpled a sheet of paper, threw it on the table, and said: "Sire, Haiti looks like that." The same tale is told of Puerto Rico, with a Spanish admiral speaking to Queen Isabella.

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175 423 up so many of these, there was no way short of a revolution to reconstitute the now parceled estates. Obviously the Code did not envisage the control of serfs by small property owners, yet there were more small owners than large.

175 184 466 In the third place, the Spanish-speaking masses of the eastern part of the island had never experienced the kind of forced labor with which most Haitians had been at one time or another familiar. Their noncoöperation made enforcement difficult.

175 647 Finally, the administration of so detailed a plan called for the establishment, at once and yet in complete order, of a fully trained corps of bureaucrats, perfectly coöperating with each other, most of them educated, and all incorruptibly honest. If every literate person in the state had been drafted for service, Boyer could not have filled all the offices required by the Code.

175 465 434 After brief and piecemeal experience with the law in operation, moreover, even the few remaining large landholders turned against it. While they approved the provisions for forced labor, they discovered that to turn over to the workers a quarter or half of the annual crop, in a falling world market, gave too slim a profit.[42] Without the support even of its original sponsors, failure of the law was inevitable.

175 648 652 These factors alone would have been enough to kill the Code; but its real death blow came from an entirely different quarter. The year before the agricultural laws were passed, Boyer had achieved what he considered to be a political master stroke. He had made a financial settlement with France whereby Haiti, in return for a large sum in cash and regular annual payments for sixty years thereafter, should receive full recognition of independence from France; also the former mother country would renounce all claims to any properties in the country. Boyer had felt that the chief debilitating influence on the political and economic life of his people was the constant dread that France might one day return to claim her lost colony. To rid the nation of that incubus, therefore, seemed to him a high feat of statesmanship, no matter what the financial cost.[43]

[433] [24] 42. Coffee, now the staple crop of Haiti, was meeting competition from the other coffee-producing countries of the world. To put the sugar manufactories into working condition again called for more money than was available.

[643] [644] 43. Boyer's hand was forced to a certain extent by France, which had been exerting diplomatic pressure upon Haiti; the President, however, seemed to regard the settlement as a distinct coup.

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175 finally the license was obtained, it authorized the foreigner to carry
439 on only a wholesale business—not with other foreign traders or with
656 any resident aliens, but with Haitians in the six open ports.[10] The
441 minimum of goods to be sold in any deal was fixed, so that no foreigner could inadvertently enter the retail business. Such licenses cost between $1,600 and $2,000, sums so large that few foreigners were drawn to the island.

Quite obviously the government sought to keep the external trade of Haiti under its control; it is equally obvious that under the licensing system, with its high fees and strict surveillance, only a small number of dealers were attracted, who consequently monopolized what little trade there was. Retail business being prohibited to them, their imports had to be sold by Haitians.

175 Not even this necessity created a middle class in the country, for
565 the purchasing power of the peasants and other lower-caste Haitians
434 was small; also the total sum of imports and exports was not large enough to support a middle class. The retail trade was chiefly in the
443 hands of town women. These *marchandes*, as they were called, em-
441 ployed a number of hucksters—likewise women—to traverse the countryside surrounding the open ports, attend the markets, and report either every evening, or every week or month, depending upon their findings. The white man let his marchande know how much coffee he required, and this information was passed on to the local speculator who, at a very moderate profit, collected the coffee beans from the peasants in his neighborhood. Imports were distributed in like manner over the countryside. In its small way this system worked well enough, for the good faith of respectable marchandes could be counted upon both by the white trader and by the local dealers. A few European and American traders found it profitable to set up as marchandes the women with whom they cohabited, for this arrangement brought them nearer to the retail trade.

175 During Boyer's long administration the staple export was coffee,
439 still cultivated on a few remaining plantations but mostly picked
24 from plants growing wild, and sold by the peasants as their one source of money income. Sugar disappeared almost wholly from the

[504] 10. Namely, Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, Gonaïves, Jacmel, Les Cayes, and Jérémie; from 1822 to 1844 there were also two open ports in the Spanish part of the island which, during those years, was a part of Haiti.

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list except in raw form, in which it had an annual sale of only a few thousand pounds. Other subordinate exports were cotton, logwood, lignum vitae, mahogany, tortoise shells, hides, cacao, cassia, wax, ginger, bullocks' horns, and tobacco—and many of these came primarily from the Dominican rather than the Haitian part of the island, during the twenty-two year period of union. The imports were mainly clothing and provisions. That an agricultural country should need to bring in flour, butter, cheese, lard, beef, pork, candles, and especially—in the light of former days—refined sugar, is eloquent testimony to the degree to which food production had declined since colonial times. Other imports were more to be expected, since manufacture had never developed: linen, cotton goods of all kinds, some few woolens, cutlery, iron goods, wines and brandies, oil, lumber, coarse iron goods, earthenware, tin plates, and minor articles.[11]

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Gone now were the days of big things in Haiti. Estates of thousands of acres would in Boyer's time have been only a liability. Profits were measured, or rather hoped for, in terms of hundreds rather than thousands of dollars.[12] Saint-Domingue of the 1780's was one of the exciting parts of the world to traders; Haiti of fifty years later was little more than a vague name except to specialists. Any country relying for its economic security upon one crop and its sale in a foreign market must expect vicissitudes in its income. Haiti had these in full measure. And so the prosperity of the country steadily diminished.[13]

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11. See the very careful report to Great Britain by her consul, Charles Mackenzie, in 1830: *Notes on Hayti*, II, 175–190. [113]

12. Mackenzie (*Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti*, Document XI) reports in 1825: "Generally speaking, no sugar is manufactured on the estates devoted to the cultivation of the sugar cane; the juice is either inspissated to a coarse sirup, and sold for common use, or distilled into a very inferior rum, called here 'Tafia.'" Then, citing the case of Tor, an estate formerly owned by Pétion but in 1825 by Boyer, he reports: "Formerly 1,700 carreaux were in cane; 1,500 slaves were employed on it; 3 sugar mills were constantly at work, and excellent clayed sugar was made. Now only about 7 carreaux are in cultivation; 50 laborers are employed; the only produce is a little sirup and tafia, which last is retailed in a small shop by the side of the road, in front of the president's residence." [249] [257] [274]

13. These vicissitudes have been frequently noted. Droughts and hurricanes, pests and earthquakes, were causes of constant apprehension. The chief forces at work to diminish Haitian prosperity were two: the division of land into small parcels at home, and the competition of other countries with Haitian coffee abroad. The price of coffee had declined in all the European markets, making the return to the cultivator exceedingly small.

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quarantine: "Haiti for the Haitians." At first the prohibition on white ownership of land and financial investment in the country was attributable to a fear of reënslavement; then to a fear that financial commitments (which no Haitian really understood) would somehow lead to political subjection; and always the feeling of pride, combined with a desperate need of self-justification, made the Haitians want to keep their country entirely under control of their own people. It is, of course, possible that if white people had been allowed free access to the country, they might have destroyed the "Black Republic"; excluding white men altogether, however, seriously curtailed economic activity.

2. Overmilitarization. The army, numerous out of all proportion to the population, took the ablest men out of production, drained the treasury, and was a constant source of revolutionary activity.

3. Poor methods of agriculture. Critics often complained that Haiti ought to return to the system of large estates and forced labor; it apparently occurred to no one to suggest that education of the peasants might have made the land productive once more, by teaching the people new methods. Dividing up the land was an inevitable necessity unless every ruler were as willing as Christophe to be a dictator and as capable; but to keep the peasants in ignorance was not a necessity. Peasant landowners in Europe frequently tend their acres with skill, while in Haiti, with neither experience nor instruction in methods of tillage on small farms, the people developed steadily more destructive ways of farming.

4. Inefficient marketing. Assuming Haiti's dependence upon the staple crop of coffee and the handling of this crop by foreign merchants, every government seemed intent upon putting obstacles in the path of efficient marketing procedure.[15] The white trader could deal only with Haitians (who were ignorant in matters of international trade); although the foreigner had to pay a huge license fee in order to deal at all in Haitian products, he got no security in return, for he might not own land or obtain a lien on the real property of a citizen.[16] Banking and exchange facilities were wholly lacking.

15. In 1833 Boyer thought to "encourage" Haitians to commercial effort by gradually expelling foreign traders, refusing to grant them any new licenses to trade. His scheme failed, for the élite were not interested. Indeed, the actual effect of his plan was to disrupt the steady flow of exports and increase discontent with Boyer on the part of the élite plantation owners whose small profits were momentarily interrupted.

16. See James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 374 ff.

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311 merly. Wherever the overcrowded Haitians have lived since 1815, there beauty has had to give way to gnawing necessity which lacked either the imagination or the means to be sightly.

105 One can stand upon a morne and watch a rain storm rush down the valley, bending the palm trees in its fury, and think Haiti still a magnificent sight. Then one must descend the mountainside past rickety shacks and rocky fields, and the feeling grows that not all the kindly simplicity of the people is enough to lift the country from its [134] dilapidation. As he nears the village, the afternoon scent of roasting coffee will delight him; but then he sees the squalor of village life and is reminded that three million souls are here trying to eke out an existence upon a small area of declining fertility.

Much in Haiti is picturesque if one can keep his mind from wandering to the conditions which lie behind the picturesqueness. [482] Women stride down from the hills with great loads on their heads; [443] aged crones, pipe in mouth, sit perched on the haunches of tiny donkeys with their bulging panniers; the great market square in the [492] town is a scene of noisy confusion with hundreds of women and [482] children, a mixture of smells, thousands of little piles of soap, candy, gewgaws, vegetables, gaping chickens tied together by the feet, [434] shirts, canes, bolts of cloth. All the weary women, however, must [146] trudge back up to their shanties on the mountainside when the market is over. Many of them do not see ten dollars in cash during the year, and their little children, with bellies bulging, give evidence [164] of undernourishment. Without doctors, without even the rudiments of hygiene, they manage somehow to subsist, or else die, frequently of disease which might easily have been prevented.

565 In Port-au-Prince and a few other towns live enough members of the élite to make one momentarily forget the plight of the masses. [342] The houses of the well-to-do are substantially built, if not often [351] attractive. Their garden walls are brilliant with bougainvillea, their walks with hibiscus. Tiny red lizards (analis) make flashes of color along the walls. On shady verandas and in the parlors one hears delightful conversation, eats excellent food, savors the pleasures of [575] civilization. The clubs of the élite are pleasing, their tennis is good, [526] their dancing graceful. To be among these families as a welcome guest is an experience in gracious hospitality which can never be [535] forgotten. Too soon, however, one must leave these havens of urbanity and pass through districts of the town which haunt the mind with their grim want.

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the newcomer persists in retaining the place, an informal appeal is taken to the local magistrate, who invariably settles the matter by deciding in favor of the original occupant. 443 626 629

Each woman tends to specialize in certain commodities, such as meat or cloths or notions or baskets. The venders of foodstuffs, other than meat, however, vary their offerings with the season. This latter class of sellers mainly comprises women who, living in the town, constitute a group of "middlemen," either buying produce at the country markets, or, going off with their pack animals into the back country, return with saddle-bags loaded with the purchases they have made direct from the farmer.[8] 443 442

Country women are also well represented among the traders, and as they come streaming into town on market days with their head burdens, or driving the heavily laden, slow-plodding donkeys, they fill the streets with color and movement that make up one of the most picturesque aspects of Mirebalais life. A load may consist of one type of produce only, or a woman may bring rice, maize, beans, and bananas, as well as home-made brooms and baskets. All transactions in the market are for cash, and there is no barter of any kind, for the pattern of a money economy has been too deeply lodged in Haitian tradition to allow any other mode of exchange. Prices are based on supply and demand rather than on any agreement between sellers, since contact with the capital causes the current prices paid there for all kinds of produce to be generally known. Another factor which enters into price-fixing, however, is prestige. It is regarded as a mark of incompetence for a woman, whether from country or town, to return home with unsold produce, and since the reputation of being a clever trader is highly valued, this is avoided when at all possible, and the vender adjusts her prices as the day wears on to insure that she will dispose of everything she has brought. 443 [482] [492] [436] [437] 443 435 [554] [558]

In Mirebalais, as elsewhere, the markets are best attended during harvest months, when by official count as many as 443

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558 793 685 given him by a third party for whom he had done what was euphemistically called "a piece of work." The evidence clearly showed that the animal, which he had killed to feed a *combite*, had been stolen, and since this *gangan* could not establish his defense that he was an innocent receiver of stolen goods, he was convicted and sentenced to three months in prison, and to pay the owner of the pig the exorbitant sum — sixty-five gourdes — asked as damages. Sympathy was very generally with the *gangan*, but the opinion most often heard expressed was that his power had obviously been lessened by his misuse of the *connaissance* the gods had given him, or they would not have permitted even his arrest, much less his conviction. To reinforce the point, specific reference was repeatedly made to the *hungan* most popular in the valley at the time, about whom it was said that, for example, were he accused before a court, the officers might even enter his house in search of him while he was present, but they would still be unable to see that he was before them.

793 435 554 Other attitudes held toward workers of magic developed in connection with this case. The popular *hungan* was often called on, it was said, because his work was well done and his fees were not too high; it was pointed out that there were renowned *vodun* priests who charged five hundred gourdes for a *service* which this man directed effectively for but little over one hundred; moreover, such men often failed to remove the evil deities which were troubling the family that employed them, but would instead add more, so that their clients would 793 435 776 984 soon have need of them again. Practices such as these, especially that of overcharging, are frowned upon by the *loa*, and if persisted in they "spoil" the power of the priest. This was one of the reasons why, in the opinion of many individuals, the *gangan* in question had been convicted. "He was once a remarkable *gangan*, but he has spoiled his *loa* by using them for evil, and by asking too much money for what he was employed

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to do. The *loa* would come, but they wouldn't give him the same *connaissance*."

One of the most important of the forces behind all magic is the *Malt' Carrefour*, the Master of the Crossroads. The possible identity of this *loa* with Legba, who guards the entrance to houses and is also thought of as a guardian of the highways, was a question that could not be satisfactorily resolved, though it seems most likely that the two are quite distinct, since Legba is but rarely called upon when magic is being performed. One Haitian versed in magic stated:

> "The *Malt' Carrefour* is like the president. Legba is like a minister. God sent the *Malt' Carrefour*. He commands Baron Samedi. Before going to the cemetery to perform [black] magic you must pass the crossroads, and therefore he is able to restrain you if he is not properly worshipped. He commands Damballa. He commands the Rada and Pétro gods. He commands all the saints because all of these must pass the crossroads. Therefore when one has a *garde carrefour*, a person will die a death sent by God [that is, a natural death] and not one caused by *magie* or the *mystères*."

The *Malt' Carrefour* must be "paid" each year on All Saints' Day, when seven cents in copper coins are given and a white chicken is killed, cooked, and placed in a wooden container with rice, biscuits, cassava, potatoes, bananas, and other kinds of food, both cooked and uncooked, to be deposited at a crossroad with the statement: "Here is food; thank you for having cared for me. If evil *loa* wish to harm me, *Malt' Carrefour*, restrain them." As this is said, a candle is lighted and an invocation pronounced:

> *"Au nom de Malt' Carrefou'; au nom de Malt' Grand Bois; au nom de Baron Cimitière! Jodia, premier la*

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so that both forms must be considered by one interested in social institutions as constituting true marriage. The prestige which is derived from a Church union, however, is of appreciable significance; sufficient, indeed, to motivate weddings at which the children and even grandchildren of the principals act as attendants. A man and woman may live together as *placées* ten or fifteen years or more before they have amassed the necessary amount to pay for a legal marriage. It is only when parents of young people are prosperous enough to pay for a Church marriage that their union receives the stamp of approval of the Church, for the Church wedding involves considerable expenditure in terms of Haitian peasant economy. A "first class" wedding, for example, calls for the payment of 47.50 gourdes; a "second class" ceremony, 40 gourdes; and the least expensive, or "third class" rite costs 34 to 36 gourdes, while in addition to this, five gourdes must be paid the assistant who rings the church bells, and a fixed fee of 25 gourdes is assessed for the civil registration of the marriage. The wedding ring is, of course, indispensable; a modest one, of gold, costs 60 gourdes. Food and drinks served at the festivities following the Church service cost, conservatively, another fifty gourdes, while if an ox is slaughtered to provide a more elaborate feast, the amount is correspondingly greater. Finally, the person who reads the necessary prayers before the festivities begin and the musicians who play for the *bal* must also be compensated. It can readily be seen, therefore, how a man and woman may live together in a *placée* union for years before their resources permit a legal marriage.

Whatever the type of mating, the first steps toward betrothal are taken by the young man. Though he has courted the girl of his choice and his proposal is acceptable to her, customary procedure demands that she refer him to her parents, whereupon his parents appear before those of the girl to make their plea on his behalf. If both families reside

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any usual measure. But Haitians do produce by traditional craft methods a surprisingly large number of the articles they need for daily life. In the countryside it is possible to see many persons engaged, mostly on a part-time basis, in craft activities and home industry that have their roots in the prerevolutionary era. Leatherworkers operating small, crude tanneries still flourish. Charcoal-burners, and operators of small lime kilns that produce building material, are found in every village. Smiths make and repair simple tools, working with forges of archaic design. Combs are made from cows' horns and tortoiseshell, buttons from bone; carrying-bags, fish traps, and a wide variety of baskets from withes, bamboo strips, and grasses; wooden bowls, mortars and pestles, tool handles and spoons from local woods; dippers, pots, and candelabra from tin cans; and sandals from tires and inner tubes. Sawyers cut and dress timber; cabinetmakers still manufacture simple furniture of traditional design from the fast-disappearing tropical woods; many women, working either with the simplest sorts of sewing machines or by hand, make clothing for use and for sale. Along the coasts there are dugout-makers, shipbuilders, and sail- and seine-makers. Simple mattresses, fabricated from local grasses, are sold in every large marketplace, as are crude ceramic wares made by local potters. At the start of the twentieth century, Italian immigrants brought a sturdy tradition of cobbling to Haiti, which has been destroyed only recently by the flood of American imported shoes with their attached prestige, until recently, *vitièlo* was a colloquial term for shoe, coming from the name of the most famous of those Italian cobblers.

One of the striking features of Haiti's craft traditions is its relative stability since the revolution. It was under slavery that Haitians first became "westernized," learning what were then standard French craft practices, adjusted to local colonial conditions, probably with some modifying features coming from the African past. It was before the revolution that the Haitian people learned and stabilized their consumer tastes, agricultural and craft standards, and work procedures. Such preferences and standards were worked out primarily in terms of the demands of the plantation regime itself; but even the most repressive social system leaves some opportunity for acculturation. Today's sugar-making shops and rural rum distilleries employ techniques centuries old and little modified over time. Housebuilding and woodworking techniques in the countryside are substantially

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175 The result was entirely different from Boyer's expectations. As a
114 French critic graphically puts it, the Haitians
703 who had never had more than a borrowed energy—that inspired by fear of French invasion—when they saw themselves freed, by a solemn treaty, from all attack on their coasts, seemed to allow their arms to drop relaxed at their sides, saying, *Let's take a rest.* The soldier who up till now had squeezed his body into a uniform and had subjected himself to European discipline, shouldering his arms, staring straight ahead as if seeing nothing, now began to leave unbuttoned the uniform which choked him, dragged a mattress into his sentry-box so that he might sleep through his watch, and let his cross slip to the earth never to pick it up again.[44]

175 In short, the Haitian army as a disciplined force ceased to exist, and
701 with it all authority of its officers. Boyer had counted upon the
703 army to enforce the provisions of the Code Rural, but now a soldier's
671 life was a paid sinecure. By gaining political security Haiti had in-
433 advertently lost its last chance of economic prosperity through a system of forced labor.

175 Wherever the Code was put into partial operation, revenue from
423 plantations continued to decline. The price of real estate dropped
433 proportionately. It was a simple matter for workmen who had signed contracts to avoid carrying out their stipulations, and just as
435 simple to evade the law requiring fifteen acres' minimum for a single
466 holding. Practically every Haitian wanted to own a bit of land; once he had acquired his bit, however small, he had (or so he felt) earned an exemption from directed labor.

175 Only on estates near the few big towns, where government
671 officials were concentrated, was there much pretense of trying to
625 enforce the Code. Sentries at the gates of Port-au-Prince were
661 authorized to confiscate plantains, yams, or fruit brought by any worker who, in contravention of the Code, had strayed to market on a forbidden day, but sentries soon acquired the habit of not seeing countryfolk who passed the gates. Reports kept cropping up that rural policemen were robbing poor cultivators of their coffee under pretense of protecting them from the penalties for breach of the law; this suggests that the Code was used rather for graft than for the stimulation of agriculture.

175 By and large, however, the Code was merely ignored. Agents
671 could not be found who were willing to stand in any community
625 44. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, II, 181.
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175 against almost unanimous public opinion opposing enforcement. In
671 1828 it was reported that dancing, which the Code had strictly
625 limited to week ends, was a nightly diversion near the capital. One
535 of the principal dancing resorts was the house of a captain of rural
517 police, the very man who was supposed to repress such amusements.[45]

175 Boyer had done his best, and his best was merely a good piece of
178 office work. When his Code failed to operate, he could think of
24 nothing further to suggest for the economic rehabilitation of Haiti.
433 The last fifteen years of his administration witnessed a gradual lapse into that small-scale farming which was to be characteristic of Haiti for the remainder of the nineteenth century. By comparison with former standards, production and steady industry had both fallen off since Boyer came to the presidency. The testimony of visiting foreigners is unanimous on the decline of industry.

175 The British consul, Mackenzie, said in 1827 that there was very
114 little field labor then being done, and that only elderly people,
435 principally aged "Guinea Negroes" long accustomed to steady work,
461 carried on the tradition. No measures of the government could
464 induce young people born in Haiti to labor or to change from their
184 "habitual vagrancy."[46] Another Englishman, James Franklin, remarked in 1828 that land values throughout the republic had greatly declined because no one could make a profit within any moderate time. Labor was high, he writes, for ordinary wages did not attract the workers who preferred idleness. (This word is certainly unfair: it was work at their own bidding which they preferred, not idleness.) Government lands lay untilled, no one evincing the slightest desire to purchase or utilize them. Franklin continues:

114 Land also in the possession of individuals is similarly circumstanced; and
175 those who are large proprietors cannot effect a sale of any produce which
433 they may have beyond the quantity which they can consume; consequently
423 a proprietor may have an immense extent of land, and yet be quite unable
425 to derive any benefit from it by cultivation, or to convert it into money, for the want of purchasers. Thus . . . there is no individual wealth in the country, because, although a man may have very large landed possessions, still those possessions are unavailable, for they produce him nothing, as he can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them.

[534] 45. Although dancing is spoken of here as an amusement, it is highly probable that at least a part of it had connection with the Vodun religion.

[241] 46. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti* (London, 1830), I, 100. Mackenzie is clearly exaggerating, unless by "field labor" he means work on plantations, in contrast to farming on small plots.

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can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them. There are some instances of proprietors leasing their lands to persons who undertake to cultivate them, for which they receive about one-third of the produce; but this is far from being general, and I imagine can only be accomplished by military men who have the command of troops, and who are thereby enabled to till them by working parties daily sent out for that purpose.[47]

An interesting side light is provided by a Quaker visitor, Candler, who in 1842 wrote that he was struck by the entire equality which seemed to exist between servant and master. Every workman was addressed in courteous manner, as "*mon fils.*"[48] On inquiry, Candler was told that the profits of planting were good that year, laborers were scarce, and it was therefore "necessary to conciliate all by kindness, or no work would be done."

A particularly grim account of the state of cultivation near the close of Boyer's administration (1842) is given by a Frenchman:

> The fields of Haiti are dead. There where under slavery thousands of tons of sugar were made, now one sees only a few crops and a little syrup to turn into raw rum. Lively growths of cactus cover with thorns the acres of cane, of fields, of pastures deserted by the hand of man; the cactus invades the towns, coming even up to the heart of the cities, flourishing in the midst of ruins, as if to insult the inhabitants. . . . On the one hand, no one cultivates with regularity, because everyone is discouraged by the thefts of cane and fruit by people without any moral discipline, and in a country without police; while on the other hand, people complain of being poor, and of not being able to devote enough money to indispensable improvements. . . . And if the proprietors cannot even make work progress, imagine the condition of the poor![49]

As the people grew individually poorer, the value of the land sank until it was useless for an owner to try to prevent squatting on his estate. Holdings grew smaller and smaller, in spite of the prohibition on sales of real estate in parcels less than fifteen acres. Good land might be had in every part of the island quite cheaply, much of it even from the government which had enacted the restrictive law. Any man not satisfied with his condition as a paid laborer might, if

47. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti (Saint Domingo)*, (London, 1828), p. 313.
48. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti* (London, 1842), p. 37.
49. V. Schoelcher, *Colonies étrangères et Haïti: résultats de l'émancipation anglaise* (Paris, 1842), II, 263 ff.

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175 he could save or borrow the money, buy a small patch and become a
425 freeholder in his own right. And in the mountains, if one were willing to endure isolation, one could get much land by squatter's claim.

175 A vivid indication of the declining economic condition of the country will be found in the actual scale of real-estate prices. In the
● 435 eighteen-twenties the finest land in the republic did not sell for more
423 than $60 an acre, even when contiguous to a port for shipping or extremely fertile. Such a price would have been ridiculous in the days of the French colony. Farms in the plains and mountains, suitable for cocoa and cotton, could be had in Boyer's time for $20 or $30 an acre in any quantity from ten to five hundred acres. In the rich Artibonite Valley small plots for horticultural purposes sold for $40 an acre; indigo and cotton land rarely brought over $30; and a complete cotton plantation which had borne richly in colonial days sold for from $12 to $20 an acre. In the North, despite its fertility and more careful cultivation under Christophe, land seldom brought more than $40 or $45, while pasture lands could scarcely find purchasers at $40. A lot in Port-au-Prince with a frontage of sixty feet and a depth of fifty, well situated for trading purposes, brought only $200.[50] Fifteen years later even these prices were fantastically high, for by then no one was wealthy enough to purchase an estate.

5. *Lapse into Peasantry* (1827–1843)

463 "Peasant" is one of those words whose meaning everyone knows yet whose definition is never precise. It clearly carries the connotation
241 of farming the land by conservative, generally uneducated, persons whose families have for generations lived on the same plot of earth without any great ambition to move away or change their economic lot. It means small ownership. And most particularly it means a comparatively low social status, for we think of peasantry as existing only in those countries which have a clear-cut social class system, with a stratification which would make it difficult for a person to move from one class to another. His land is to the peasant both home and living; his household is dependent almost solely upon the product of its own labor. He is generally conceived to be too complacent, if not too ignorant or too dull, to take advantage of commercial opportunities which might bring him wealth. "It is increasingly

50. These figures for 1824–28 are from Franklin, *op. cit.*, p. 314.

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the newcomer persists in retaining the place, an informal appeal is taken to the local magistrate, who invariably settles the matter by deciding in favor of the original occupant.

Each woman tends to specialize in certain commodities, such as meat or cloths or notions or baskets. The venders of foodstuffs, other than meat, however, vary their offerings with the season. This latter class of sellers mainly comprises women who, living in the town, constitute a group of "middlemen," either buying produce at the country markets, or, going off with their pack animals into the back country, return with saddle-bags loaded with the purchases they have made direct from the farmer.[8]

Country women are also well represented among the traders, and as they come streaming into town on market days with their head burdens, or driving the heavily laden, slow-plodding donkeys, they fill the streets with color and movement that make up one of the most picturesque aspects of Mirebalais life. A load may consist of one type of produce only, or a woman may bring rice, maize, beans, and bananas, as well as home-made brooms and baskets. All transactions in the market are for cash, and there is no barter of any kind, for the pattern of a money economy has been too deeply lodged in Haitian tradition to allow any other mode of exchange. Prices are based on supply and demand rather than on any agreement between sellers, since contact with the capital causes the current prices paid there for all kinds of produce to be generally known. Another factor which enters into price-fixing, however, is prestige. It is regarded as a mark of incompetence for a woman, whether from country or town, to return home with unsold produce, and since the reputation of being a clever trader is highly valued, this is avoided when at all possible, and the vender adjusts her prices as the day wears on to insure that she will dispose of everything she has brought.

In Mirebalais, as elsewhere, the markets are best attended during harvest months, when by official count as many as

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In the Haitian cuisine the prevalence of dishes fried in deep fat, of the generous use of pepper in seasoning, are all African, as are even the names of certain dishes, such as *acansan*, a Nigerian-Dahomean term which designates the cooked balls of cornmeal. One of the few European intrusions is white bread, while the cassava cakes, also important in native diet, derive from the aboriginal Indian inhabitants.

In its outward forms the economic system under which the Haitian peasant lives seems entirely based upon European pecuniary patterns. Money follows the French system, even to the official use of the French designation, *centimes*, for the smallest parts of the principal unit of currency, the *gourde*. Both paper money and coins are used, and as the result of the Marine occupation American money is as well known as the currency of the country itself. Buying and selling goes on in the accepted European manner, the price of such export crops as cotton, sugar-cane, and coffee responding to the fluctuations of the world market. In many of its inner aspects also, the values of the Haitian are influenced by the money economy taken over from Europe and America.

The conclusion that the economy of Africa has been swept aside by that of Europe needs, nevertheless, to be qualified if certain historical and psychological factors are not to be ignored. It must not be forgotten that in West Africa, long before the period of European contact, a monetary system based on the cowrie shell had been fully developed. The prestige of wealth, the resulting drive to obtain property, the pursuits of buying and selling, and other aspects of a pecuniary civilization were as current in West Africa at the time of slaving, and continue today, as in Europe or in Haiti. When some of the attitudes associated with the economic life are analyzed, it is no simple matter, therefore, to state whether they stem from African or European sources, or both.

One pattern common to both economies, the validation of position through the conspicuous display of resources, has

2: Courlander 9-6 (1937-1963) 1960 SV3 Hait SV3

533
539

Cousin, oh, cousin, oh,
Cousin, don't take cousin, oh, cousin!

[436] (A *gourdain* is one-quarter of a gourde, or the equivalent of five cents in United States money. *Dé gourdain* is ten cents.)

[198] EXAMPLE 141 consists entirely of ritual language.

EXAMPLE 142

Call Dumballa, call Donici, call Dumballa Wèdo,
Dumballa, call Dumballa Wèdo, Dumballa.

[196] (Dumballa and Donici are the names of loa.)

EXAMPLE 143

Ibo, I am a big man, oh!
Ibo, I am a big man, oh!
Ibo, I am the patriarch, oh, I am the patriarch, oh,
I am the chief of my house!

[196] (Ibo is the name of a loa, from whose point of view the song is being sung. Ibo is stating his seniority in his house, or family, for there are other loa related to him. The word *grand* in Creole, as used here, is [192] difficult to translate. It means good or elder, or both. A *grand famille* is the oldest in the extended family, and usually carries the connotation of head or chief.)

EXAMPLE 144

Ibo Ibo é, Samardi Kama!
Etc.

[196] (Samardi Kama is the name of a loa of the Ibo family. The song consists of a repetition of his name, with variations.)

EXAMPLE 145

Ibo Ibo é, Marianni é!
Etc., with variations.

[196] (This is a song to the loa Marianni, of the Ibo family. Except for his name, in various combinations, there are no words.)

[198] [189] EXAMPLE 146 is a song for the making of magic. It is entirely in ritual language.

EXAMPLE 147

Call Ouange, call Lalouan in the water!
Ouange, oh, call Ouange in the water!
Ouange, oh, call Ouange in the water!

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453 454 556 worker receives about ten gourdes a week, in addition to his food, and the work often is of several months' duration. To do this, however, it is necessary for him to hire another to work his own garden for the period he is thus engaged. As extra [454] money is gradually accumulated, more land is purchased, so that the returns become greater; and the process is accelerated when, upon the death of a man's father, other family land is added to what he already owns.

437 454 556 Thus the drive to obtain property is an obsession with the Haitian peasant. The question of a few centimes, to say nothing of a gourde, is hotly argued; for instance, in the bidding for unclaimed lost animals held periodically at the Mairie in Mirebalais, bids are often raised by as little as five centimes, with the bidder waiting until the last possible moment, the third call of the auctioneer, before pledging the additional sum. Those who have money prefer silver to paper and usually keep it in a trunk at home, but if troublous times impend, the money is put in jars and hidden in the ground. In this way it happens that when a man dies, much of his money is lost to his heirs, for he rarely tells even his wife or children what he has done with it.

556 Yet this point must be stressed — in the mind of the Haitian peasant, though wealth is desired for the prestige it gives, it is rarely prized for the display it permits. Frequently when a person of large means is pointed out in the market place, he will be simply if not poorly dressed. To make undue display of possessions would arouse envy, and envy brings upon a man's household the evil eye. Wealth is rather manifested in extensive farms, in elaborate ceremonies for the rituals held for family ancestors and for family gods, in the education of children to the end that they may eventually move to the capital and there attain social and political position of importance. Wealth brings prestige to its owner through the word-of-mouth comment of his neighbors, and with this he is content,

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 family on an average, at 5 persons, husband, wife, and three children, we
241 arrive at the conclusion, that the head of every third family in the state is engaged in cultivating his own freehold; a proportion of independent [311] proprietors, such as perhaps scarcely any other country in the world can [231] exhibit. The number of acres cultivated by these small proprietors, varies from 9 to 30; many of them keep horses, cows, and goats: they raise suffi- [437] cient provisions of the bread kind, such as yams, plantains, and bananas, for the main support of their families; they kill hogs for meat, and they dispose [438] of their coffee, cotton, hemp, castor oil, and fruit, at the public market for money, to purchase clothing, furniture, and other necessaries. The houses [342] they live in, though poorly furnished, are decent habitations; and many of them have gardens attached, neatly fenced in with bamboo, or with log-wood, or aloe hedges.[55]

175 If these figures are even approximately accurate, the majority of
423 the people of Haiti had not yet become peasants in the sense of being landowners, for in the statement cited only a third of the people
427 owned their land. Another large group, however, possibly a third of the population, were squatters, living on land which technically belonged to someone else but from which they were never ejected. The remaining third, excluding the town and village dwellers, were in the intermediate stage between hirelings and peasants. Some worked for a given rate of wages, but the larger number worked for shares of the produce on the land of large proprietors.

175 The crop-sharing system (Americans of the twentieth century call
473 it share-cropping) of the 'thirties and 'forties was an automatic but temporary adjustment worked out in perfect disregard of the Code
427 Rural. In general, two arrangements prevailed. By one the laborers
24 worked in return for half the total produce of the estate, raising food for themselves in gardens provided by the owner; under the other they worked for a quarter of the produce, the proprietor guaranteeing to keep them in provisions. There was no general concurrence in Haiti at the time as to which plan was the more economical to the laborer and his family. Certainly both schemes were prejudicial to large crops of coffee and sugar, and therefore to the economic prosperity of the proprietors and the state; since this was so, the crop-sharing expedient was short-lived. Workers participating in it lived in the huts and cabins which, under the old régime, had been inhabited by their slave ancestors. As these fell to pieces others, cheaper and less soundly built, were constructed to take their place.

The crop-sharing system, economically debilitating though it was,

55. *Ibid.*

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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under Toussaint. The ravages of warfare were partially repaired, so that commerce once again appeared at the seaports. English, American, Danish, Swedish, and German vessels now shared what once the French had monopolized. Toussaint's export duties of ten per cent on sugar, coffee, cotton, and cacao were kept by Dessalines, and import duties likewise remained just about the same as formerly: twelve per cent.

A strange stopgap trading scheme was devised. Dessalines named the specific ports at which foreign ships might enter, then established a number of Haitian "consignees" at each of these ports. Numbers were given to each of these men. The first ship which entered the harbor was consigned to the shop of the trader having Number 1, the second to Number 2, and so on until each consignee had dealt with a foreigner, when Number 1 would receive the right to a second ship's cargo.[3] The captain of a vessel sent to Haiti did not know until his arrival in port who would be his consignee. If the probity of the Haitian merchant to whom fate assigned the captain did not inspire confidence, he was not obliged to sell goods to him—but was prohibited from selling them thereafter anywhere else in the country.

In this system there was room for every sort of irregularity and graft. More often than not Dessalines gave the assignments to his favorites, this to a military leader, that to an administrative officer, the other to some simple citizen whom he wished to reward. Often two ships would appear on the horizon at the same time: a consignee would then rush to the officer of the port and promise him half or a quarter of his commission if he would assign the more important of the vessels to his own number; the officer would then order the richer vessel in first.

Violent discontent arose over this system, which meant great profit to the beneficiaries of the monopoly and nothing to those excluded from it. As usual under a rigid system, means were found to evade the monopoly. Foreign ship captains found it well worth their while to sell clandestinely to individuals not high in the favor of the Emperor. This smuggling increased, the captains being both ingenious and adaptable to the needs of their dealers; sometimes the trade was wholesale, sometimes retail. Naturally enough, the Emperor imposed heavy fines on the smuggling operations when detected, but the illicit trade did not cease.

3. This mode of consignment was sanctioned by a decree of Dessalines on September 6, 1805.

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175 Haiti under Dessalines seemed to be flourishing, although it was
433 less productive than under the French colonial régime. This was partly because the material damage of the wars had been too great to be quickly repaired; partly it was because many of the free Haitians had discovered ways of disappearing into the remote valleys, there to live the life of independent squatters, safe from the blows of Dessalines' overseers. Tables of exports showed that sugar production was rapidly declining, and that coffee was now becoming the principal crop of the country.[4] Many cane fields, indeed, were turning into rugged thickets, their mills and refineries falling to ruins beside the clogged irrigation ditches.

175 It was a bewildering "system," then, this instituted by Dessalines:
466 intense activity of serfs on government plantations, but an increasing
439 number of deserting squatters; foreign trade encouraged, yet run by
579 principles of local favoritism. Even the old-fashioned practice of piracy was reëstablished, for the Emperor gave letters of marque to some of his subjects who owned ships, allowing them to pursue French and Spanish vessels as the rightful prey of an enemy country. Sometimes these Haitian corsairs even disturbed smaller English merchant ships. Finally, it was Dessalines who said to his favorites, "*Plumez la poule* [that is, the Haitian people], *mais prenez garde qu'elle ne crie pas.*"

175 Christophe, upon his accession to power in the North, completely
439 abandoned the fantastic schemes of Dessalines for putting an end to
● 437 all contact between Haitians and foreigners. Among his earliest acts were efforts to undo the economic measures of the Emperor. In his first address he proclaimed certain free ports, announcing that the flags of all nations would be respected and property protected.[5] Next he abolished the consignment system of trading, allowing all foreign traders free access to Haitian merchants. This open system did away with the need of smuggling.

175 Because Christophe was almost pathetically anxious to make a
439 good impression upon Great Britain, he was scrupulous in living up
648 to his promises of security of property and justice in commercial dealings—to British merchants. The United States fared ill at the King's hands, for it was a young republic which had by refusing

4. See note on this chapter, p. 320, section 4.

5. His constitution of 1807 likewise makes this promise: "The government solemnly guarantees to foreign merchants the security of their persons and property."

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512 grain in her mortar or working in her garden near by. On
[443] market days she takes the produce of the family's fields to the
[438] town to sell. If she has young children, she cares for them
[855] while she does her other work, but when they are old enough,
[857] they help her about the house if they are girls, or, if boys, go with their father to the garden. From time to time, when
[356] house repairs are needed or there are implements to be
[241] mended, the man spends a day at home getting these odd jobs done; otherwise only serious illness in the family keeps him from his fields.

512 The times for meals have not varied since the days when
264 Moreau de St. Mery described the eating-habits of the slaves.[9] In addition to the mid-morning repast, the only other meal is that eaten after the man returns from his field, this being
[562] the largest of the day. A wife does not sit down with her
[593] husband, but usually eats earlier with her small children and holds herself ready to serve him upon his return, when, if he is alone, she remains to tell him the day's gossip. Visitors are
[574] often present, for peasant etiquette demands that all comers
[576] be offered food, and, as one Haitian expressed it, "The peasant would kill you for the insult if you did not share your meal with him." Bedtime, as might be expected, is early.

512 On Sundays and on the days of festivals this routine is in-
527 terrupted, when, if the occasion is of sufficient importance
[796] and the habitation is not too far from town, the peasant and his family attend mass. On Saturday nights there is usually a *vodun* dance, when the early hour for retirement is forgotten and all-night festivities precede Sunday's rest. On such days
[264] the principal meal is eaten at three or four o'clock in the afternoon, and all the adults share it together, while at one side the children are fed from the dishes of their parents in response to the insistent repetition of the demand "*Ba'm pa'm* — give me my portion." *

* This is an example of the elision characteristic of Haitian Créole, it being abbreviated from *Ba moin part moin* or, in French, *Donnez-moi ma part.*

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Northern Haiti flourished magnificently under Christophe's sternly benevolent rule. The King had that daring spirit of initiative which was so generally lacking in later Haitian history; he had, in addition, the power necessary to force through a new adjustment if the old way showed defects.[17] He excited artificial wants among his leaders by making nobles of them, and then compelled them to satisfy these wants without ever slipping back to a lower standard of living. Thirteen years of enforced labor and of order kept by a rigorously effective police force gave northern Haiti the kind of prosperity she had known in colonial days. Christophe encouraged commerce and protected foreign traders. He called in all debased coinage, substituting for it sound gold and silver currency. The revenue he raised was larger than it had been since 1791, amounting to about $3,500,000 annually. Probably the most eloquent testimony to his success is the fact that at his death, when the kingdom of the North was once more united with the republic of the South, more than six million dollars found their way into the republican treasury.

The Black King's economic system worked. It was based on a social division of the people, with the masses doing manual labor, and the aristocrats definitely set apart and recognized as upper class. By 1820 Haiti was well on its way toward the caste system.

3. *Pétion* (*1807–1818*)

Almost all Latin-American countries in the nineteenth century exhibited one common feature: an aristocratic landowning class lording it over peons. Haiti did not follow this pattern. She had aristocrats and peasants, but the aristocrats did not own most of the land, and the peasants were not peons. If later rulers had kept the organization of economic life begun by Toussaint and developed by his fellow blacks, Dessalines and Christophe, it is almost certain that Haitian social evolution would have resembled that of the rest of Latin America, for it would not have been a great change from

17. Duraciné Vaval, "Le Roi d'Haïti Henri Christophe," in *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti*, II, No. 3 (June 1931), p. 14, says that Haiti's periodic civil troubles and social misfortunes, both ending in a diminution of the state's autonomy, have been due to economic maladjustments. "Our weaknesses in political life derive from our immobility in material production." Immobility is an index of stagnation. Few rulers of Haiti have been at once powerful enough to overcome the immobility and wise enough to know what measures had to be taken.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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The crop-sharing system, economically debilitating though it was,

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to cutting fruit, though seen in Africa, was probably introduced there by the early traders, and all machetes found today in Haiti are imported from Europe or America. The same is true of the hoe, for the short-handled, broad-bladed West African hoe has given way to the European long-handled type, though the blade of the Haitian hoe is somewhat broader than that used in America and Europe. Despite the presence of domesticated animals to draw the plow, this implement has never gained favor in Haiti, nor have recent efforts to teach the Haitian peasant the use of the plow achieved any degree of success. He prefers his African mode of cultivation, to say which implies more than just the employment of a certain implement, since even such matters as the manner in which he employs his hands and feet in the process of planting are included. When the Dahomean plants, for example, he holds a calabash of seed under his left arm, from which he takes the grains with his right hand. As he moves down the rows of newly turned earth, he makes a depression with the heel of his right foot, drops a few grains into this depression and, replacing the earth with his toes, takes a step so that he can repeat the process with his left foot. This is exactly the manner in which Haitians were observed planting in the valley of Mirebalais.[8] Unlike the usage in Africa, however — where the men clear the ground, the men and women plant, and the women tend the growing crops — the European pattern, which places agriculture in all its essential phases in the hands of men, has been taken over almost in its entirety.

The women have retained almost without change the African modes of preparing food. Grain is first pounded in an African-like mortar, with an aboriginal type of pestle, while the shelled kernels are winnowed in a large round basketry tray. The cooking is either done on a raised mud platform in the cooking shelter, as in West Africa, or on three stones, employed as rests for the pots, a method equally characteristic of Africa. In the Haitian cuisine the prevalence of stews, of

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the *loa*. In one instance a man wore a red shirt with black crosses appliquéd on it; dresses of this type worn by women or children are made of cotton cloth, pieced together patchwork-quilt fashion, of either three, seven, seventeen, or twenty-one different colors or patterns, with reds, blues, and white predominating. These garments are worn for a specified time, also named by the *loa*. The term *pénitence* has been taken from Church terminology, and the motivating sanction derives equally from African and Christian concepts;[4] for example, the wearing of the garment is a compliment to the African deities represented by the colors, while the various rules about abstinence during its term of wearing is the European pattern of "penitence."

The elaborate cicatrizations, or raised designs made by scarifying the body, which marked the slaves newly arrived from Africa have quite disappeared, but a few scars can be discerned on the body or arms of a man by a practiced eye. These represent an African carry-over in the form of a *garde* applied by the injection of some magically endowed substance into a cut which thereafter gives what may be thought of as a kind of spiritual inoculation. African fashions of hair-tying have been retained by the women almost unchanged, and, as in Africa, hair-braiding is a highly developed art, so that the styles in which hair can be braided seem innumerable. This is particularly true of dressing the hair of small girls, whose heads are decorated with braids going the length of the skull, or dividing the scalp into small squares, each with its tuft of hair, or by a part in the middle with lines going at right angles from it across the head. These styles of braiding are not named as in other parts of the New World and in Africa, but the tradition of intricate braiding has lost none of its vigor.

The implements of the Haitian are both of European and African derivation. The ubiquitous machete, a saber-like tool employed in all manner of ways, from chopping down trees

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

rather starve than work. An Englishman, James Franklin, wrote in 1828, for example:

> Experiments may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coercion and want will impel the Haytian to labour; and I have my doubts as to the practicability of enforcing labour in Hayti until the people have been better instructed, and their characters become changed.

As Franklin summarized it: "Nature is too generous to the Haytian; he never wants, and so never works for hire, as do free labourers in other countries."

The early nineteenth century saw a flood of such bitter comments about the remains of the once rich and flourishing French colony of St. Domingue. The vast productivity of Haiti under French rule had made that colony one of the richest in the New World. The country was dotted with sugar mills, brick-covered wells, and warehouses; and carefully built brick aqueducts, irrigation canals, locks, and dams assured water for the plantations. In 1790, under the slave system, Haiti had exported 163,000,000 pounds of sugar. In 1826, a quarter of a century after the revolution, it was reported to have exported 33,000 pounds.

This falling off in production and exports doubtless had many causes, but one of the most significant was the Haitian's revolt not only against slavery but also against continuing the same kind of work he had performed as a slave. He saw not too much difference between forced, unpaid labor and working for any large landholder at subsistence wages. To the Haitian slave the inspiring battle cry of the French Revolution did not mean that all men would work together on another's man plantation and receive the same wages. It meant that every man would have his own garden to work for himself as he chose; every man would be a full citizen, with land of his own, free to come and go, to plant what he wished, to sell what he could. Despite long years under a colonial slave system, the Haitian still remembered a different way of life in Africa, where mass production for export was not the primary objective of labor.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the population of Haiti was not much more than half a million—less than one sixth of what it is today. There was plenty of land, and much of it had not yet been wasted by constant tilling and erosion. When the French were driven out, the Haitian peasant re-created an economic world of his own liking. The plantation system which had poured out sugar and coffee and indigo for Europe faded away, and in its place there sprang up an agrarian system which has continued until the present day. In the early

[Franklin, The Present State of Hayti, p. 362. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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648 The financing of these many revolutions was usually provided by
669 foreign merchants, bent upon installing a government that would
565 grant them special economic concessions (Munro, 1964:326–31). The
701 United States occupation ended this doleful succession of regimes
439 and, by throwing its weight to the elite, by suppressing military activity in the countryside, and by reforming the army, the United States gave a new meaning to the separation of the elite and the yeomanry. Leyburn's interpretation is consistent with these events; yet some Haitian scholars have differed with Leyburn's analysis.

114 In a lengthy review article, the dean of Haitian historians, Dr. Jean
564 Price-Mars (1942:1–50), questions the applicability of the term
563 "caste" to the social groupings of Haitian society. He notes that
671 Haitian law after the revolution never legitimized any distinction on grounds of physical type, unlike a society such as the United States—
144 that in fact, the very basis of Haitian polity was the absence of such distinctions. Furthermore, Leyburn's interpretation is qualified by the fact that the elite and the rural masses are not entirely distinctive physically. In some parts of rural Haiti, particularly in the southern peninsula, there are many light-skinned people; and many individuals who qualify as members of the elite on all other counts are very dark in appearance. The fact that being "Negro" or "white" in Haiti is viewed as a matter of degree, rather than of kind, complicated by all the other criteria of social position employed in drawing distinctions, has important implications for the way social barriers have operated in that country.*

114 Leyburn did not contend that all the effects of the United States
565 occupation were in the direction of increasing the gap between the ELITE AND THE YEOMANRY.

563 * In this regard, Haiti is aligned with most of Latin America, in contradistinction to the
564 United States, where many persons believe that "one drop of Negro blood" [sic] makes a "Negro." The failure of North Americans to distinguish between sociological and genetic
171 categories of physical type has led to considerable confusion in their dealings with Latin Amer-
144 ica and in their understanding of Latin American societies. North American race prejudice at its most extreme sees color as the primary basis for social ranking, and no individual accomplishment (for instance, in terms of economic or intellectual success) can overshadow the inferior status unalterably bestowed by certain physical traits. Haitian—and generally all Latin American—social distinctions do not rest solely on considerations of physical type; a black skin does not "doom" an individual if his attainments make him otherwise the equal of his lighter-skinned fellow citizens. Hence, it might be argued that the term "caste" would be more appropriate when applied to the Negro people of the United States (regardless of phenotype, and including those "Negroes" who are *sociologically* identified with the Negro people even if their physical appearance is dramatically Caucasian) than when applied to the peoples of Latin America.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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The major effect of the North

Amer-
648 ican tenure seems to have been to make possible a much more telling
642 centralism in political control than had been operative in Haiti at any time since the fall of the Christophe regime; and the consequences of this change are still being felt.

241 Small-scale rural cultivators are famous for their tendency to con-
565 fine their consumption to culturally conventionalized levels—that is,
433 to live as their predecessors lived before them. Though they are in-
178 volved in commercial spheres larger than the communities in which
185 they live, they seek to limit that involvement and to maintain their
511 cash expenditures at a low level. It is in this sense that Haiti might be
472 called a "quasi-capitalistic" society. To put it another way, yeomen of this sort do not seek to change or to expand their production—rather, they aim to conserve a way of life set by tradition. The ideology of resistance to social and cultural change is one of the major obstacles to development; but it would be rash to damn such an ideology without reflection. In Haiti, for instance, there has long been pressure upon the rural masses to expand their production of coffee, the major export crop. However, this pressure has not been accompanied by any serious grass-roots attempt to improve coffee production or to offer genuine incentives to the cultivators. The yeomanry has no assurance at all that any expansion of effort will lead to gains *for them*; and they are little prepared to invest such effort merely because they are told that it will be good for Haiti. In fact, it is likely
• [439] that the production of subsistence crops has expanded in recent years at the cost of coffee production, for the yeoman knows that he can at least be sure of eating and of selling locally such crops as maize, sorghum, and yams, regardless of what may happen in Port-au-Prince or to the world coffee market. This view, combined with the yeoman's painfully acquired distrust of those who prate at length concerning his welfare, has meant a virtual stagnation of agricultural export production, even though the whole land quite literally depends on this production in order to progress.

241 The effect of this rural resistance is to create an apparent very sharp
565 difference in goals between countryman and bureaucrat. It is per-
433 fectly understandable that the countryman should fail to see the con-
185 nection between heightened coffee production and a higher level of public welfare and social services. His experiences hardly persuade him that it is his surplus-producing capacity that underlies the kind and quality of public institutions with which the state provides him.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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increasingly arid as its altitude decreases. Next to the Plaine du Nord, the best-watered part of Haiti is the southwestern peninsula, which projects far beyond the shelter of the mountains in the rest of the island. 132

When one subtracts from the 10,000 square miles all the sterile wastes of cactus, the salt marshes and brackish lakes, and the rock barrens, one realizes the inevitability of a low standard of living for the mass of the people. Other nations buy little from Haiti, local industries never reach even the proportions familiar to small-town Americans, and the total national budget is less than seven million dollars a year. Not even the élite are well-to-do by American small-town standards; it is only by comparison with the masses that they can be said to constitute a favored economic class. They rule the country, however, and what benefits accrue to Haiti rarely get beyond their pockets. 433 [439] [651] [565]

The resident of Haiti can never lose sight of the social distinctions between the two castes, for they permeate every phase of Haitian life. It has been so since the first hours of the republic. Indeed, the origins of the caste system lie in the French colonial days of the eighteenth century. 565 175 178

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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[p. 14]

II

FRENCH COLONIAL ORIGINS

175 648 FRANCE'S wealthiest colony in 1791 was, and had been for decades, the small territory of Saint-Domingue, as Haiti was known at that time. It had belonged to France for less than a century. French freebooters and buccaneers of the seventeenth century actually presented the colony to their mother country, for these sea rovers, harrying the Spanish Main, used as a base for their predatory raids the small island of Tortuga (La Tortue, The Turtle) off the northern coast of Haiti. They often came over to the western part of the large Spanish island of Santo Domingo (Haiti), then almost deserted, to shoot wild cattle for food; then they would hasten back to Tortuga for safety. At first Tortuga had been shared by English, Dutch, and French buccaneers, but gradually the French came to outnumber the others, so that when the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697 concluded the War of the Grand Alliance, France claimed and Spain ceded the western third of the island of Santo Domingo. The English and Dutch were meanwhile picking up other Caribbean fragments of the decaying Spanish Empire.

175 563 24 The early years of this new French colony were unimpressive, the majority of its residents being former buccaneers, who could hardly have regarded agricultural life as other than dull, and who certainly did not make successful farmers. Only when new immigrants from France in the seventeen-twenties demonstrated that steady profits could be made by raising indigo, sugar, coffee, and cocoa, all of which flourished in the region, did the era of prosperity begin. [464] [439] Plantations were soon staked out all over Saint-Domingue. The great problem was to find adequate labor for the fields. Whoever had crops to sell was sure of a ready market, but crops would not grow 175 24 567 without cultivation. Since there were no natives in Saint-Domingue for the French planters to exploit, the colonizers chose the other favorite alternative of the eighteenth century: Negro slavery. In the 1730's Saint-Domingue began to compete with England's North American colonies for the cargo of the steady stream of slave ships from Africa. There is no indication that the supply of blacks ever

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

equaled the demand for them; in 1791 the census listed half a million then living, but no writer seems to have even a vague idea of how many millions were imported during the sixty years of the colony's heyday.

Production, particularly of sugar and coffee, steadily increased until the tiny colony ranked among the wealthiest regions of the world. The Spanish Indies were declining, so that Saint-Domingue alone far outranked them all combined between 1766 and 1791. Splendid roads were built, extensive irrigation projects developed, and stately mansions erected. Life moved along with ceremony and display—for the planters; attended by their black lackeys, the white French masters entertained royally or were driven like lords in their coaches to make formal visits to neighbors. Many of these well-to-do colonials spent half their time in Paris, ostentatiously spending their riches. To be "wealthy as a Creole" came to be a common expression in France.[1] Perhaps nowhere in the Americas was existence at once so delightful and so ornamental as it was for the wealthy planters among the 36,000 whites of Saint-Domingue in 1791.

For the mother country, too, this small bit of tropical land was profitable during the latter days of Bourbon royalty. Neither Martinique nor Guadeloupe could compare with it in value. In 1789 nearly two thirds of the foreign commercial interests of France centred in Saint-Domingue; its combined exports and imports were valued at more than $140,000,000; its sugar, coffee, indigo, and cotton supplied the home market and employed in prosperous years more than 700 ocean-going vessels, with as many as 80,000 seamen.[2]

Where wealth exists, social distinctions generally develop. In Saint-Domingue the evolving class system produced such discord that sparks from the French Revolution eventually set off an explosion in the colony. Casual surveys of Haitian history generally record that in 1791 the slaves revolted, and that out of this insurrection grew the war of independence. This is true; but it was not the resentment of slaves against their masters which caused the final explosion; the slaves were tinder used by others to keep the conflagration burning. Negro slaves, of course, did not figure in the "class" system; they were below the classes of colonial society. The class system, properly

1. The word "creole" means only "colonial born"; there is no connotation of race mixture in the term.

2. Pamphile de Lacroix, *Mémoires*, II, 277.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Northern Haiti flourished magnificently under Christophe's sternly benevolent rule. The King had that daring spirit of initiative which was so generally lacking in later Haitian history; he had, in addition, the power necessary to force through a new adjustment if the old way showed defects.[17] He excited artificial wants among his leaders by making nobles of them, and then compelled them to satisfy these wants without ever slipping back to a lower standard of living. Thirteen years of enforced labor and of order kept by a rigorously effective police force gave northern Haiti the kind of prosperity she had known in colonial days. Christophe encouraged commerce and protected foreign traders. He called in all debased coinage, substituting for it sound gold and silver currency. The revenue he raised was larger than it had been since 1791, amounting to about $3,500,000 annually. Probably the most eloquent testimony to his success is the fact that at his death, when the kingdom of the North was once more united with the republic of the South, more than six million dollars found their way into the republican treasury.

175 643 642 433 [438] [439] [652]

The Black King's economic system worked. It was based on a social division of the people, with the masses doing manual labor, and the aristocrats definitely set apart and recognized as upper class. By 1820 Haiti was well on its way toward the caste system.

175 565

3. *Pétion* (*1807–1818*)

171 175 631

Almost all Latin-American countries in the nineteenth century exhibited one common feature: an aristocratic landowning class lording it over peons. Haiti did not follow this pattern. She had aristocrats and peasants, but the aristocrats did not own most of the land, and the peasants were not peons. If later rulers had kept the organization of economic life begun by Toussaint and developed by his fellow blacks, Dessalines and Christophe, it is almost certain that Haitian social evolution would have resembled that of the rest of Latin America, for it would not have been a great change from

17. Duraciné Vaval, "Le Roi d'Haïti Henri Christophe," in *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti*, II, No. 3 (June 1931), p. 14, says that Haiti's periodic civil troubles and social misfortunes, both ending in a diminution of the state's autonomy, have been due to economic maladjustments. "Our weakness in political life derive from our immobility in material production." Immobility is an index of stagnation. Few rulers of Haiti have been at once powerful enough to overcome the immobility and wise enough to know what measures had to be taken.

[114]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

of living only for the day by making people content with a low level of physical existence. Haitian peasants were isolated from the rest of the world; and one who has no standard of comparison rarely has the incentive to improve his living conditions.

Production declined between 1806 and 1843 both in quantity and in quality. Sugar, the staple of colonial trade and still an important export under Christophe, disappeared from the market figures altogether under Boyer. Most of the cane which was raised was worked into syrup and then into tafia (raw rum) for local consumption. Careful attention and the well-ordered machinery necessary for sugar manufacture were both lacking in 1843. Sugar cane was almost never newly planted, but simply lasted on from French days; what plants there were had little attention: they were not manured, or ploughed, or stripped of their dead leaves. Everything was left to nature. The production of coffee in actual number of pounds stood up well, although the quality fell off through lack of cultivation; the price in world markets steadily declined, however, so that the crop of 1843 brought in only twelve million francs as compared with twenty million for the smaller crop of 1822.[43]

Practically every acre of the fertile soil of Haiti was cultivated in 1806, the methods steadily improving under Christophe. Irrigation projects were then being developed to replace those destroyed in the wars, and a measure of experimentation went on with new crops and fertilizers. In 1843, however, what was called a coffee "plantation" was actually only a large tract of land on which coffee trees grew wild. There was no laying out of the lands nor any improvement of the soil or pruning of the trees to strengthen the parent stem. Until the berries were ready to be picked the coffee tree was rarely touched, except when pigs scratched their backs on it, or goats and donkeys cropped the grass around it. Cotton likewise received little cultivation. Cocoa raising practically ceased altogether, for it required intelligent management.

Haiti under Dessalines still had many buildings of French con-

43. The state figures for 1843 revealed only four money crops, no one of which was as productive of income as sugar had been. In the comparative tables given below it must be remembered that prices declined between 1822 and 1843.

	5-Year Average, 1822–26	1843
Coffee	34,000,000 pounds	35,000,000 pounds
Cotton	678,000 "	2,000,000 "
Campêche	5,600 "	30,000,000 "
Acajou	2,460,000 feet	6,000,000 feet

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

"empire" tottered to economic ruin. Graft, default on the debt, increasing deficits, and debased currency were the order of the day, *and so continued until 1859, when the accumulation of anger over* the useless wars and the humiliating defeats made the Emperor so unpopular that a new and more carefully planned revolution accomplished his downfall. 175 643 652 669

Fifteen years of administration by Negro rulers had broken the political power of the colored élite. Only three light-skinned men became president thereafter until the occupation of Haiti by the American Marines in 1915; in the seventy-two years following Boyer's downfall, mulattoes ruled during only eight. The army under a black general was too powerful, a colored president too hampered by suspicion, to make the political game worth the candle. The colored élite, therefore, adapted themselves to existing conditions as best they could, controlling the business life of Haiti, filling the law offices and, because of their literacy, the secretaryships of state, and indulging in honorific cultural pursuits. 175 643 178 564

In the years after Soulouque the basic realities of Haitian life were changed hardly at all by shifting political administrations. Some of the presidents were mildly progressive, many were indifferent; still more were actually harmful; but the lives of the mass of peasants were not often touched by presidential vagaries. Politics was an affair almost wholly of townspeople, of the army, the élite, and the pseudo-élite. Revolutions, counterrevolutions, movements of reform, international tangles, financial woes, and most of the other complications to which unstable states are heir, absorbed the attention of rulers and upper-class folk who were politically inclined. 175 643 66

Constitutions were made by presidents and changed by their successors; the Senate passed contradictory laws in the same session if the chief executive so recommended; the courts were presided over by the president's men. Haitian law in the latter half of the nineteenth century was what the president's immediate strength and wish made it—or else it was folk custom, undisturbed by the rulers. 175 642 671 692

Never once, in the three quarters of a century after Boyer's time, did Haiti approach the high standard of production known in colonial days or in the early years of independence. The pattern of Haitian social and economic life became fixed in this seventy-five years. Haiti became a country of small-scale tillage by a peasant population, with only enough external trade to provide moderate 175 178 433 565 439

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 178 565 433 439 [423] [428]

fortunes, that is, a few thousands of dollars, for a small number of élite, and to make the presidency a position economically rewarding enough to justify revolutionary conspiracies. The growth of a peasantry set in train during the long régime of Boyer continued, unbroken even by the numerous insurrections, until fixed in the mores. Land owned by the countryfolk was divided and redivided among their heirs, so that even holdings of moderate size became smaller.

175 643 566 423

Not one of the twenty-two rulers following Boyer made the slightest effort to return the country to the forced labor system of Dessalines and Christophe. They seemed to recognize the inevitability of a peasant way of life, or at least the impossibility of luring the people back to directed labor after a long experience of freedom. On the contrary, several presidents still further parceled the land.

175 643 423

President Guerrier, for example, the very year after Boyer was deposed, put on sale at moderate prices those state lands in the North not reserved for public use.[5] If the revolutionaries of 1843 had hoped to bring back Christophe's system of forced labor, their hopes were doomed to disappointment because of the state's need of immediate income. Christophe's state land areas were now broken up in the one part of the country where a few large plantations still existed.

175 643 421 423

President Geffrard in 1862 gave his blessing to small ownership, the basis of peasantry. Whereas Pétion's laws had prohibited sales of land in parcels less than fifteen acres, Geffrard's law regularized the leasing and sale of national property in lots of fifteen acres *at most*. Geffrard was the first president openly to admit that many government lands had been lost to citizens by squatting. In an endeavor to give legality to land held by squatters' rights, his law demanded that squatters register their claims, announcing that within a short time there would be no further dismemberment of the national patrimony except by grants and sales.[6] Few registrations were made, however, for the Haitian peasant had already acquired a suspicion of legal documents he could not read or understand, and he could see no reason for legalizing a status in which, with the squatter's tenacity and inertia, he already felt himself secure.

200

Haiti was in constant financial straits. Money had to be borrowed

5. By a law of September 23, 1844.
6. Law of August 14, 1862. The articles cited here are 2 and 4.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Parents are generally kind to their children, so far as physical
855 punishment is concerned. The average peasant child can hardly
861 properly be said to be "brought up": he merely grows, eats whatever
his family eats or whatever fruits he can pick up, and learns his place
152 in the community as he matures. In anger, parents are likely to use in correction the first thing that comes to hand. There is a surprising callousness to pain among these generally kindly people: they beat their donkeys unmercifully, and strap harness over open sores; they carry chickens, head down and feet tied together and mouths gaping, for miles in the sun; they revel in gory cockfights. If, therefore, a parent is minded to beat his child, he will probably do a thorough
[578] job of it. A peasant woman, pommeling her son with a broomstick, replied to the protests of a white passer-by, "*Li nègue; li pas fait li mal.*" ("He's a Negro; it won't hurt him.") The interference of a stranger in the beating of a wife by her man, armed with a club, was resented by both man and woman as an interference with a purely family quarrel.

831 The concept of sexual continence is lacking among the peasants.
834 Sex, indeed, hardly enters the realm of morality except in connection
864 with adulterous dalliance of one man with another's woman. There is no virtue in abstaining from sex relations when the sexual urge is strong. Mothers tell love stories in all their frank details to their young daughters, and some who care about such matters are adept in all lore connected with stimulating and satisfying a man's desire.[5]
[342] Since huts are small and the whole family sleeps in the same room, children have ample opportunity to observe the sexual life of their parents. If a girl, as a result of her own experiments, has a child born to her, there is no disgrace. Practically every peasant is "illegitimate," so that the term means nothing; a baby will soon be old enough to assist in the work of the home, thus becoming an asset. It is expected that as soon as a youth grows up he will find a mate and begin a family of his own.

241 The family is as important an element of peasant life as formal
● 431 marriage is unimportant. It is the economic unit. Ever since the days
593 of Pétion Haitian economy has been one of small things: even the crops are small subsistence crops of maize, millet, beans, rice, yams, and frequently trees of bananas, plantains, and coffee, which require no particular cultivation. Enough coffee has been produced in Haiti for annual export ever since 1804, but until recent years the beans

5. See Zora Neale Hurston, *Tell My Horse*, pp. 22 ff.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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have been gathered from trees which grew wild. Both men and women labor, with the work divided according to regular custom between the sexes, the men dominating the scene only in the marketing of coffee.

Nature was opulent enough at the beginning of Haitian independence. The wars had ruined irrigation ditches, sugar refineries, and mechanical equipment, but the soil was still abundantly fertile. But generations of farming by people without knowledge of fertilization or soil conservation have worn out much of the land. Trees have been cut to provide lumber and clearings for more farms; in the rainy seasons torrents have coursed down the mountainsides, washing away soil and exposing the earth to the rays of a tropical sun. Because the country is overpopulated every available acre is put to use, and to overuse, thus still more depleting the land. It is a vicious circle, for the next generation must extract yet more from the earth and so weaken it further. Hard work is the lot of the peasant, therefore, during every month of the year except the dry season. There has never been a formal rotation of crops: a farmer continues to plant the same crop in the same field until the harvest is perceptibly smaller than before. Then he changes to another type of produce. Sooner or later he will allow the land to lie fallow for several years until, by the action of nature or the grazing over it of cattle, it has regained a measure of its fertility.

The strenuous work of clearing fields and preparing them for cultivation is man's job. Since the peasants owned their plots it has almost always been done in coöperation by the men of the neighborhood. What on the American frontier would have been called a "bee" is known in Haiti as a *coumbite*, or *combite*, often carried on as an enterprise of the local *Société Congo*, the informal neighborhood group for mutual aid and fellowship.[6]

A man who has a large job on hand announces a coumbite for any day except Sunday, always a day of rest, and whatever other week-

6. The word "coumbite" was apparently borrowed from the Spanish part of the island, and from the Spanish word *convidar*, convey. In Colombia "convite" means exactly what "coumbite" means in Haiti: a gathering of peasants to work in common, or else a coöperative society for mutual agricultural self-help.

Professor Herskovits (*Life in a Haitian Valley*, chap. IV) describes the Société Congo in detail. The use of the name "Congo" indicates the African tradition, and is particularly noteworthy in connection with a kind of coöperative work which Herskovits finds particularly Dahomean.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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[p. 250]

XIV
COMMERCE

121 THIS book is no more fundamentally concerned with the de-
•439 tailed economic history of Haiti than with its intimate political events; our attention is bent here, as elsewhere, on the broad functioning of social institutions. Peasant agricultural life has already been depicted: the products of the peasant's labor, when marketed, have brought whatever prosperity the state and its ruling caste have enjoyed. These marketed products have consisted chiefly of coffee, with a very little sugar and cotton. The present section concerns Haiti's economic relations with the outside world.

175 It was the commerce of the colony of Saint-Domingue which
439 made that small division of the Antillean island so valuable to its mother country. Exports in the last year before the revolution are estimated at fifty million dollars (461 million livres) in terms of modern money.[1] Although commerce was seriously interrupted by the troubled state of affairs in the 1790's, the upswing of prosperity under Toussaint indicated that the country had still highly profitable enterprises. Merchants in the young United States were particularly intent upon the benefits to be derived from trade in molasses. All foreign trade was violently interrupted once more in 1802–3, when the revolution was in progress; but the interest of larger nations in what would issue from the Haitian declaration of independence in 1804 was out of all apparent proportion to the size of the tiny country. Their interest was partially in the question of whether ex-slaves could rule themselves politically; even more they were interested in the economic future of Haiti.

Three divergent economic policies were pursued by the early rulers, three variations among which future presidents might choose the one in their opinion most profitable. That of Dessalines was progressively to isolate Haiti, tolerating foreign trade only so long as it seemed necessary to establish the country's self-sufficiency. Christophe's, on the other hand, was the traditional monarch's

1. H. P. Davis, *Black Democracy* (2d ed., New York, 1929), p. 25; Anténor Firmin, *M. Roosevelt, président des États-Unis, et la république d'Haïti* (New York, 1905), pp. 435–436.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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policy of encouraging trade with his friends and prohibiting it with his enemies—both arbitrarily. The variation of Pétion was a sort of mercantilism, with set high tariffs.

What Dessalines planned was in terms of Western statecraft so weird that white onlookers felt they were restrained in calling Dessalines a transplanted African tribal chieftain. So passionately intense was the fury of that general against all whites that he took every precaution he could devise to prevent face-to-face dealings between his Haitians and foreigners. By deceit, treachery, and ingenious cruelty he conducted a massacre which deserves comparison with that of Saint Bartholomew: this effectively rid the country of white residents. Since for a time Haiti would have to depend for economic survival upon trade with foreigners, Dessalines next conceived a project whereby the whole population would be gathered in the centre of the island, in the most protected valleys and the gorges of the highest mountains. In these fastnesses the people would never see a white but would work on the land, producing sugar and coffee and cotton for export without ever leaving their local habitations. On the seacoast would be established certain "counters" over which a few incorruptible Haitians, chosen by the Emperor himself, would sell local products and buy the necessary imported goods. Impregnable fortresses were to guard access to the interior,[2] which would be reached by new roads from the seacoast "counters." Every seaport was to be destroyed as soon as new towns could be built in the back country. Already when his death intervened Dessalines had moved his capital from the Cape (that is, Cap-Haïtien, formerly Cap Français) to the inland village of Marchand (in the department of the Artibonite; now renamed Dessalines), and his next plan was to transfer Port-au-Prince eight leagues inland to the plantation Dérance, among the mountains.

Dessalines has been thought absurd, childish, barbaric. But there is something poignant, even tragic, in this fiery determination of the black chieftain, bitter over the cruelties and indignity to which his people had been subject for decades, to use this alien island as best he could and preserve his people at any cost from such another domination.

Despite his scheme for ultimate isolation of the people, Dessalines kept everyone steadily at work by the forced-labor system instituted

2. See p. 247 and note 13. under Toussaint.

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under Toussaint. The ravages of warfare were partially repaired, so that commerce once again appeared at the seaports. English, American, Danish, Swedish, and German vessels now shared what once the French had monopolized. Toussaint's export duties of ten per cent on sugar, coffee, cotton, and cacao were kept by Dessalines, and import duties likewise remained just about the same as formerly: twelve per cent.

A strange stopgap trading scheme was devised. Dessalines named the specific ports at which foreign ships might enter, then established a number of Haitian "consignees" at each of these ports. Numbers were given to each of these men. The first ship which entered the harbor was consigned to the shop of the trader having Number 1, the second to Number 2, and so on until each consignee had dealt with a foreigner, when Number 1 would receive the right to a second ship's cargo.[3] The captain of a vessel sent to Haiti did not know until his arrival in port who would be his consignee. If the probity of the Haitian merchant to whom fate assigned the captain did not inspire confidence, he was not obliged to sell goods to him—but was prohibited from selling them thereafter anywhere else in the country.

In this system there was room for every sort of irregularity and graft. More often than not Dessalines gave the assignments to his favorites, this to a military leader, that to an administrative officer, the other to some simple citizen whom he wished to reward. Often two ships would appear on the horizon at the same time: a consignee would then rush to the officer of the port and promise him half or a quarter of his commission if he would assign the more important of the vessels to his own number; the officer would then order the richer vessel in first.

Violent discontent arose over this system, which meant great profit to the beneficiaries of the monopoly and nothing to those excluded from it. As usual under a rigid system, means were found to evade the monopoly. Foreign ship captains found it well worth their while to sell clandestinely to individuals not high in the favor of the Emperor. This smuggling increased, the captains being both ingenious and adaptable to the needs of their dealers; sometimes the trade was wholesale, sometimes retail. Naturally enough, the Emperor imposed heavy fines on the smuggling operations when detected, but the illicit trade did not cease.

3. This mode of consignment was sanctioned by a decree of Dessalines on September 6, 1805.

175 Haiti under Dessalines seemed to be flourishing, although it was
433 less productive than under the French colonial régime. This was partly because the material damage of the wars had been too great to be quickly repaired; partly it was because many of the free Haitians had discovered ways of disappearing into the remote valleys, there to live the life of independent squatters, safe from the blows of Dessalines' overseers. Tables of exports showed that sugar production was rapidly declining, and that coffee was now becoming the principal crop of the country.[4] Many cane fields, indeed, were turning into rugged thickets, their mills and refineries falling to ruins beside the clogged irrigation ditches.

175 It was a bewildering "system," then, this instituted by Dessalines:
466 intense activity of serfs on government plantations, but an increasing
● 439 number of deserting squatters; foreign trade encouraged, yet run by
579 principles of local favoritism. Even the old-fashioned practice of piracy was reëstablished, for the Emperor gave letters of marque to some of his subjects who owned ships, allowing them to pursue French and Spanish vessels as the rightful prey of an enemy country. Sometimes these Haitian corsairs even disturbed smaller English merchant ships. Finally, it was Dessalines who said to his favorites, "*Plumez la poule* [that is, the Haitian people], *mais prenez garde qu'elle ne crie pas.*"

175 Christophe, upon his accession to power in the North, completely
439 abandoned the fantastic schemes of Dessalines for putting an end to
437 all contact between Haitians and foreigners. Among his earliest acts were efforts to undo the economic measures of the Emperor. In his first address he proclaimed certain free ports, announcing that the flags of all nations would be respected and property protected.[5] Next he abolished the consignment system of trading, allowing all foreign traders free access to Haitian merchants. This open system did away with the need of smuggling.

175 Because Christophe was almost pathetically anxious to make a
439 good impression upon Great Britain, he was scrupulous in living up
648 to his promises of security of property and justice in commercial dealings—to British merchants. The United States fared ill at the King's hands, for it was a young republic which had by refusing

4. See note on this chapter, p. 320, section 4.
5. His constitution of 1807 likewise makes this promise: "The government solemnly guarantees to foreign merchants the security of their persons and property."

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175 recognition to the kingdom specifically failed to pay him proper
439 respect. Moreover he seized the property of American merchants in
648 his kingdom to make good a sum of $123,955.19 he could not recover from a Baltimore firm.[6] Agriculture flourished in the North, but the English were not yet certain whether Haitian credit could be trusted. The demand of the traders for cash was allowed, and so with almost no risk British dealers supplied the steady demand for staple trade goods,[7] taking in return either coffee and sugar or the equivalent in cash.

175 Christophe was chary of publishing any specific figures on the
439 economic life of his kingdom: we have no way, therefore, of estimating either the annual production or the annual income. One of his statesmen, Baron de Vastey, affirmed that in 1817 more than 150 ships were supplied with cargoes of coffee and sugar at the Cape alone.[8] This number is equal to that which sailed from the port during its most peaceful and prosperous periods in colonial times; one suspects the baron of exaggerating. We know, however, that Christophe was the chief merchant in his kingdom, setting his own prices and disposing of his own goods before others could sell; we know, too, that he left a large fortune in his coffers when he died.

175 Like Dessalines, King Henry Christophe had his pirates, and re-
579 doubtable ones. But he warned them to prey only on French ships
439 bound for ports in Pétion's republic in the South; he did not wish his trade interfered with in the North.

The policies of Dessalines and Christophe were personal, based upon their subjective prejudices and preferences; those of Pétion were more in accord with the practice of other civilized nations of the time. They had to be, perforce, in view of the economic and political position of his republic.

175 Southern Haiti had never, even in colonial times, been so intensely
439 cultivated as the North. Foreign traders were accustomed to deal at
648 the Cape, now the capital of Christophe's dominion. while Port-au-Prince was but a secondary market. After the civil war Christophe had practically allied himself with Great Britain. If this coup were to be counterbalanced, Pétion would have to choose for allies among

6. See Ludwell L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938*, p. 48.

7. Christophe did not encourage his people to purchase any of the extravagantly rich manufactures of Europe, but rather to keep their wants simple.

8. Formerly Cap François, then Cap-Haïtien, but under Christophe renamed in his
[103] honor Cap-Henry; it is now Cap-Haïtien.

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the still weak United States, France—the traditional enemy of Haitians, and moribund Spain, who was in fact shortly to lose most of her empire in the New World. Since he did not mean to drive his people to work, he resolved to exploit to the full the benefits of foreign trade in the hope that profits from exports would stimulate production. As for allies, he cultivated the friendship of the United States, but also sought to wean British merchants from the Northern ports. To this end, although he levied duties of twelve per cent on goods of other nations, he reduced duties on English goods to five per cent.[9]

Pétion, content to govern without an impressive court, gave the greatest encouragement possible to trade; he sheared expenses and managed to balance his budget. In 1818, for example, his revenues were $2,646,000 and his expenses $2,144,000, giving the republic a respectable surplus of $502,000.

Because Boyer was Pétion's disciple he followed in his predecessor's footsteps, thus fixing in his quarter-century administration the pattern of foreign trade under a tariff system. The Haitian élite seem never to have taken to commercial enterprise, nor has the country ever developed an economist even of fifth rank. Haitian thought, so eloquently articulate along political lines, has simply never turned its attention in any solid and serious way to economic problems. Nearly the whole of the foreign commerce of the republic from the earliest days was conducted by foreign merchants resident in Haiti. This was partly because the credit of the Haitians was not so generally established as to inspire confidence, but mostly it was due to lack of interest of the people in foreign trade.

In the eighteenth century Saint-Domingue had been almost the only colony producing such tropical products as sugar and coffee on a large scale; the absence of effective competition accounted for most of the prosperity of the French colony. In the nineteenth century, however, competition developed rapidly; and at this very time the laws and court decisions of Haiti began to hamper the business of the foreign merchants dealing there. By Article 21 of Boyer's Law of Patents, all persons engaging in any trade or profession except that of cultivation of the soil must be provided with a license or patent; all foreigners admitted as merchants into the republic must first secure the president's permission to acquire a patent; and when

9 See the Ariist of October 15, 1814.

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175 finally the license was obtained, it authorized the foreigner to carry
439 on only a wholesale business—not with other foreign traders or with
656 any resident aliens, but with Haitians in the six open ports.[10] The
441 minimum of goods to be sold in any deal was fixed, so that no foreigner could inadvertently enter the retail business. Such licenses cost between $1,600 and $2,000, sums so large that few foreigners were drawn to the island.

Quite obviously the government sought to keep the external trade of Haiti under its control; it is equally obvious that under the licensing system, with its high fees and strict surveillance, only a small number of dealers were attracted, who consequently monopolized what little trade there was. Retail business being prohibited to them, their imports had to be sold by Haitians.

175 Not even this necessity created a middle class in the country, for
565 the purchasing power of the peasants and other lower-caste Haitians
434 was small; also the total sum of imports and exports was not large enough to support a middle class. The retail trade was chiefly in the
443 hands of town women. These *marchandes*, as they were called, em-
441 ployed a number of hucksters—likewise women—to traverse the countryside surrounding the open ports, attend the markets, and report either every evening, or every week or month, depending upon their findings. The white man let his marchande know how much coffee he required, and this information was passed on to the local speculator who, at a very moderate profit, collected the coffee beans from the peasants in his neighborhood. Imports were distributed in like manner over the countryside. In its small way this system worked well enough, for the good faith of respectable marchandes could be counted upon both by the white trader and by the local dealers. A few European and American traders found it profitable to set up as marchandes the women with whom they cohabited, for this arrangement brought them nearer to the retail trade.

175 During Boyer's long administration the staple export was coffee,
439 still cultivated on a few remaining plantations but mostly picked
24 from plants growing wild, and sold by the peasants as their one source of money income. Sugar disappeared almost wholly from the

[504] 10. Namely, Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, Gonaïves, Jacmel, Les Cayes, and Jérémie; from 1822 to 1844 there were also two open ports in the Spanish part of the island which, during those years, was a part of Haiti.

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list except in raw form, in which it had an annual sale of only a few thousand pounds. Other subordinate exports were cotton, logwood, lignum vitae, mahogany, tortoise shells, hides, cacao, cassia, wax, ginger, bullocks' horns, and tobacco—and many of these came primarily from the Dominican rather than the Haitian part of the island, during the twenty-two year period of union. The imports were mainly clothing and provisions. That an agricultural country should need to bring in flour, butter, cheese, lard, beef, pork, candles, and especially—in the light of former days—refined sugar, is eloquent testimony to the degree to which food production had declined since colonial times. Other imports were more to be expected, since manufacture had never developed: linen, cotton goods of all kinds, some few woolens, cutlery, iron goods, wines and brandies, oil, lumber, coarse iron goods, earthenware, tin plates, and minor articles.[11]

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Gone now were the days of big things in Haiti. Estates of thousands of acres would in Boyer's time have been only a liability. Profits were measured, or rather hoped for, in terms of hundreds rather than thousands of dollars.[12] Saint-Domingue of the 1780's was one of the exciting parts of the world to traders; Haiti of fifty years later was little more than a vague name except to specialists. Any country relying for its economic security upon one crop and its sale in a foreign market must expect vicissitudes in its income. Haiti had these in full measure. And so the prosperity of the country steadily diminished.[13]

11. See the very careful report to Great Britain by her consul, Charles Mackenzie, in 1830: *Notes on Hayti*, II, 175–190. [113]

12. Mackenzie (*Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti*, Document XI) reports in 1825: "Generally speaking, no sugar is manufactured on the estates devoted to the cultivation of the sugar cane; the juice is either inspissated to a coarse sirup, and sold for common use, or distilled into a very inferior rum, called here 'Tafia.'" Then, citing the case of Tor, an estate formerly owned by Pétion but in 1825 by Boyer, he reports: "Formerly 1,700 carreaux were in cane; 1,500 slaves were employed on it; 3 sugar mills were constantly at work, and excellent clayed sugar was made. Now only about 7 carreaux are in cultivation; 50 laborers are employed; the only produce is a little sirup and tafia, which last is retailed in a small shop by the side of the road, in front of the president's residence." [249] [257] [274]

13. These vicissitudes have been frequently noted. Droughts and hurricanes, pests and earthquakes, were causes of constant apprehension. The chief forces at work to diminish Haitian prosperity were two: the division of land into small parcels at home, and the competition of other countries with Haitian coffee abroad. The price of coffee had declined in all the European markets, making the return to the cultivator exceedingly small.

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quarantine: "Haiti for the Haitians." At first the prohibition on white ownership of land and financial investment in the country was attributable to a fear of reënslavement; then to a fear that financial commitments (which no Haitian really understood) would somehow lead to political subjection; and always the feeling of pride, combined with a desperate need of self-justification, made the Haitians want to keep their country entirely under control of their own people. It is, of course, possible that if white people had been allowed free access to the country, they might have destroyed the "Black Republic"; excluding white men altogether, however, seriously curtailed economic activity.

2. Overmilitarization. The army, numerous out of all proportion to the population, took the ablest men out of production, drained the treasury, and was a constant source of revolutionary activity.

3. Poor methods of agriculture. Critics often complained that Haiti ought to return to the system of large estates and forced labor; it apparently occurred to no one to suggest that education of the peasants might have made the land productive once more, by teaching the people new methods. Dividing up the land was an inevitable necessity unless every ruler were as willing as Christophe to be a dictator and as capable; but to keep the peasants in ignorance was not a necessity. Peasant landowners in Europe frequently tend their acres with skill, while in Haiti, with neither experience nor instruction in methods of tillage on small farms, the people developed steadily more destructive ways of farming.

4. Inefficient marketing. Assuming Haiti's dependence upon the staple crop of coffee and the handling of this crop by foreign merchants, every government seemed intent upon putting obstacles in the path of efficient marketing procedure.[15] The white trader could deal only with Haitians (who were ignorant in matters of international trade); although the foreigner had to pay a huge license fee in order to deal at all in Haitian products, he got no security in return, for he might not own land or obtain a lien on the real property of a citizen.[16] Banking and exchange facilities were wholly lacking.

15. In 1833 Boyer thought to "encourage" Haitians to commercial effort by gradually expelling foreign traders, refusing to grant them any new licenses to trade. His scheme failed, for the élite were not interested. Indeed, the actual effect of his plan was to disrupt the steady flow of exports and increase discontent with Boyer on the part of the élite plantation owners whose small profits were momentarily interrupted.

16. See James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 374 ff.

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175 441 Justice in the courts was administered by Haitians whose narrow patriotism biased their decisions.

439 648 5. A temperamental tariff policy. Not only were imports subject to a tariff which might be changed at the whim of any president, but 175 exports also were taxed. When an administration was in need of 651 funds it might suddenly, without warning, raise the tax on coffee 489 exports and so disrupt a merchant's business plans. The customs-houses were in charge of Haitians who steadily became more inefficient and grasping as the century progressed, until many foreign merchants felt that the only way of getting business dispatched was by means of bribes. Examinations at customs were long drawn out, often there was open thievery, and erroneous valuations were common.

175 6. The burden of the indemnity to France. Contracted by Boyer 657 in 1825, this annual payment for sixty years was an incubus to every [648] administration, leaving no surplus in the treasury for public works, education, or any internal development; likewise, it made the threat of foreign interference all the more imminent.

7. A debased currency. Pétion was the first president to devalue money, and his example was frequently followed thereafter. Counterfeiting was general. When a country's monetary system is unstable, its officials accustomed to bribery and graft,[17] and its financial structure almost nonexistent, there is little chance for sound economic development.

175 8. Dependence upon a single crop. Haitian economy was tied to 245 the staple coffee, grown with indifferent care, prepared for the market in outmoded fashion, and sold in competition with coffee from more scientifically run plantations in other tropical countries.

175 9. Political instability. The recurrent revolutions in Haiti made 439 foreigners chary of participating in the country's business, since the 66 government which made a contract might be out of office before the ink was dry.

175 10. Indifference of the élite to economic pursuits. What profits 439 were obtainable went into the pockets of foreign merchants, not 565 those of Haitian businessmen. In 1842 the comparative exports of the

[643] 17. Sir Spenser St. John, always a bitter critic of Haiti, remarked (*Hayti, or The* [159] *Black Republic*, p. 88) sardonically that "Boyer had the rare quality of being honest, [661] and left in the treasury, on his departure, the sum of £200,000, the first and last chief who was ever guilty of so unaccountable a weakness."

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United Kingdom, the United States, and Haiti, in proportion to population, were 185, 165, and 125,[18] yet Haiti had no carrying trade while the other two countries had, and so the profits were drained from the land.[19]

In short, as Haiti became accustomed to managing her own affairs, she became content with—or at least, reconciled to—little things. Inertia and tradition worked in their persistent fashion, with no effective stimulation from outside to combat them. From tradition and seclusion springs prejudice, and this became obvious whenever a change was proposed, particularly one which suggested bringing white people back to the country. To the élite it might mean the end of their social supremacy; to the masses, the end of their independence of daily action. The prejudice against sugar making was rooted in the same kind of suspicion. When a large landowner tried to institute a sugar mill on his estate, he met an adamant refusal of his hired workers to labor in it: "*Moué pas esclave!*" (I'm no slave!) The Negroes even disliked a bell to ring them to work on a plantation, for it suggested the slavery of the old régime.

Just before the Civil War in the United States a humanitarian gentleman developed a project of conducting numerous free American Negroes to Haiti in a planned migration. He discussed in a pamphlet[20] all the possible trades which might flourish in that country, if the migrants were to assume the position of a middle class; but his list is significantly small—sixteen occupations, on the order of tailoring, coopering, and blacksmithing, were all he could think of.[21] He made three comments which he hoped would attract the Negro Americans, as to a virgin field of opportunity: that in the

18. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 111–113, cites these figures, and says: "[Thus] Hayti, poor, and despised as she is, has a commerce, *in native produce*, nearly three-fourths as large, *in proportion to her population*, as our own United Kingdom, which is the great manufacturing part of the world; and seven-eighths as large as that of the United States, where the staple exports are produced by the labour of 3,000,000 slaves!"

19. Mackenzie (*Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti*, Document V) reports that in 1825 exports were valued at $5,793,758, and imports at $4,660,174; the trading was carried on in 552 *foreign* ships, of which 374 were American, 78 British, and 65 French. No Haitian ship traded abroad.

20. Benjamin S. Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans*. See particularly pp. 3–9.

21. His complete list is: tailor, shoemaker, baker, cabinetmaker, carpenter, mason, lime-burner, distiller, cooper, wheelwright, saddler, blacksmith, tinner, hatter, small-boat maker, potter.

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Besides the figures given above must be set there of the government

budget, which is annually in the neighborhood of $7,000,000, and of 652
its annual imports and exports, neither of which generally exceeds [439]
$10,000,000 a year. Chicago, with its population of three million, has an annual budget of about $275,000,000, aside from state and federal services.

To care for all the needs of three million people in Haiti there is a sum of money less than that available annually to several of our American universities. Out of the seven million dollars must come all salaries of officials, legislators, judges, policemen, schoolteachers; the wages of all janitors and day laborers employed by the government; the upkeep of all schools, roads, lighthouses, experiment stations; the maintenance of such important public services as health, sanitation, education, soil development, reforestation. Since there [369]
are few towns, practically every improvement which takes place must be paid for by the central government.

Haiti's growth in population is not a new thing. It has been in- 161
creasing steadily since 1804 while the soil of the country was being [134]
worn out and foreign trade grew stagnant. The country is entirely [439]
agricultural, there being absolutely no manufacturing industry worth the name. The people consequently live upon a subsistence economy. 433
The soil is still fertile enough to preserve life in the teeming popula- 164
tion, though undernourishment is general. Most of the people have [134]
no "artificial" wants and could not satisfy them under present con- [511]
ditions even if they had.

Assuming the census of Dessalines in 1805 to be even approxi- 161
mately accurate, the population is now eight times what it was then. 433
The working of the Law of Population[3] is implacable: if population 178
increases while economic efficiency remains static or declines, either there will be an increasing death rate or the standard of living must sink—or both. In the case of Haiti, economic efficiency is certainly [165]
not what it was under the forced-labor system of Dessalines: the [511]
death rate has been continuously high; it is the standard of living which has suffered.

To grasp the import of Haiti's problem of overpopulation one

3. "Population tends to increase up to the limit of the supporting power of the land, relative to the economic efficiency and to the standard of living of the people at the time." (For an amplification of this discussion on overpopulation, see the note on p. 320.) The law of population as stated here is a modification of that given by Sumner and Keller, *The Science of Society*, I, 46; their statement, in turn, is that of Malthus with the added cultural items of economic efficiency and the standard of living. [114]

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3. *Pétion, Boyer, and Inginac as Administrators*

Pétion lived very simply in the South, like a plain republican magistrate. He sat on his piazza, accessible to all his people. He had a quiet way of answering his opponents which did not make enemies of them. He made his secretary answer every letter that arrived, no matter how small; many were simply inquiries about the President's health. Yet the wars between Pétion and Christophe dragged on from 1807 to 1812,[8] draining the finances of the republic. Not only the crops declined: so also did most of the public improvements instituted by the colonial planters; so did trade; so did habits of industry. Everything seemed to conspire against hard work. The rich plains of the Cul-de-Sac and the Artibonite Valley were ravaged by fire and warfare; necessary equipment for sugar making was destroyed, the money for new machines and buildings was unavailable; and the men were drawn away from their land by military duties.

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Inginac, Boyer's secretary of state, after the Revolution of 1843 had got rid of both the President and his secretary, wrote his memoirs. There are some revealing passages. Inginac reports that Pétion told him only forty days before his death that Boyer was a man of probity and delicacy, "but unhappily he is petulant; he is too set in his ways to conciliate those who might assist him. In everything *he* wants to dominate, and he will bring unhappiness to the country if he does not change." Inginac cites cases to show that Pétion's prophecy was correct. Boyer in 1820 repealed the most unpopular laws, particularly those requiring personal corvée and the repair of public roads; but instead of taking advice from his cabinet on important economic matters, he frequently announced that he was president and would not be run by anybody. Consequently, according to Inginac, he made mistakes which might have been avoided.[9] Defending himself, the former secretary offers a clue to the failure of the régime—possibly unavoidable—by showing that the administration merely suggested, did not require, action:

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"Have I not constantly, not only preached and corresponded about the necessity of making agriculture prosperous, but also given work at as high wages as the treasury could afford? Have I not created habitations on lands formerly totally uncultivated, putting formerly idle men to work? Have I not published at my own expense, although I directed the National Printery, methods for cultivating tobacco and coffee plants, of which I distributed gratis several thousand copies?"[10]

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In spite of all encouragement which the administration could offer, agricultural production continued to decline, while expenses increased, and external trade fell off from a third to a half. The government had to borrow from the banking firm of Lafitte in Paris to find even the interest for payments due to the French government.

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8. Hostilities between the two parts of Haiti ceased about 1812 because of the mutual fear on the part of Christophe and Pétion of Napoleon's ascendancy, and the threat which this constituted to the whole former colony. Their war had ravaged the plantations and removed laborers from the soil. Then came the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain, cutting off many of the supplies which Haiti drew from both countries. There was accordingly an unwritten truce, with no further hostilities. A neutral territory of ten leagues between the boundaries of the two states was tacitly agreed upon: neither army was to enter it. This was the rich plain of Boucassin, once the garden of the island, now a wilderness.

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9. Joseph Balthasar Inginac, *Memoires* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1843), pp. 32, 34, 38.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

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of Lafitte in Paris to find even the interest for payments due to the French government.

4. *Exports from Haiti*

Sugar was the great crop of French colonial days in Saint-Domingue, with coffee, indigo, and cotton lucrative secondary crops. The first table shows the rapid decline of sugar, indigo, and cotton between 1791 and 1839, near the end of Boyer's administration.

CROPS

	Sugar	*Indigo*	*Cotton*
1791 (colony)	163,405,220 lbs.	930,016 lbs.	6,286,126 lbs.
1802 (Toussaint)	53,400,000	37,600	4,050,000
1804 (Dessalines)	47,600,000	35,400	3,000,000
1818 (Pétion)	1,896,449	0	384,001
1825 (Boyer)	2,020	0	815,697
1839 (Boyer)	6,000	0	1,402,792

By contrast coffee production, although it declined, remained large enough to provide the state with some income. After 1810 it was the principal crop of the country.

Coffee Production

1791	68,151,180 lbs.	1818	20,280,589 lbs.
1802	34,370,000	1825	36,034,300
1804	31,000,000	1839	43,854,666

In 1935–36 the Vincent government reported the export of 76,600,000 pounds of sugar, 79,400,000 pounds of coffee, and 12,700,000 pounds of cotton.[11]

CHAPTER XV

What Haiti faces, economically and socially, can be seen in terms of the law of population: "Population tends to increase up to the limit of the supporting power of the land, relative to the economic efficiency and to the standard of living of the people at the time." This law may be better visualized by stating it in forms of an equation:

$$\frac{\text{Population}}{\text{Productivity of land}} = \frac{\text{Economic Efficiency}}{\text{Standard of Living}}$$

Another way of stating the law is this:

Population + Standard of Living = Productivity of Land + Economic Effi-

11. These tables are compiled from material in Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description . . . de . . . Saint-Domingue, passim*; Great Britain Foreign Office, *Communications Relative to Hayti* (London, 1825), p. 159; Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti*, II, 172 ff.; Alexandre Bonneau, *Haïti: ses progrès, son avenir* (Paris, 1862), pp. 35, 36; John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, p. 105; L.-J. Marcelin, *Haïti: ses guerres civiles* (Paris, 1892), p. 32; Charles F. Pressoir, "Pages de géographie économique," *Revue de la Société d'Histoire*, III, vi, 18; James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 318 ff.; *Rapport annuel du représentant fiscal d'Haïti*, October, 1935–September, 1936, pp. 189–195.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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114 461 462 as it is cursed by the present military despotism, the utmost that the women of Haiti can do is to keep their country just above the waters of bankruptcy and their households from complete despair.[9]

701 175 Since 1910 the military has been reformed, and the women are not mulcted by soldiers and officers; Sir Harry's prophecy regarding the material benefits of removing the curse of military despotism was overly optimistic.

441 443 175 Rounding out the economic life of the peasant is the market, which provides an outlet for whatever surplus is produced, a source of needed supplies and a modicum of money, as well as an almost imperative diversion for hard-working women. The origin of Haitian markets may have been either French or West African, for both regions had them. They were certainly in existence by 1803 in Saint-Domingue, for Madiou speaks of the trade of the plainsmen of the Cul-de-Sac with the holders of what then was called Port Républicain (now Port-au-Prince), adding: "Each Sunday at Croix-des-Bouquets a market was held which brought together more than 4,000 cultivators, male and female, with the permission of the overseers or proprietors."[10] That so large a number came to the market is an indication of the social as well as the economic nature of this institution. Similarly, in the North in 1803, "Rochambeau, now master at the Cape, set about attending to the market established at Petit-Anse in July. After having suppressed all the markets which existed around the Cape, he opened a single and general one, 13th August, at Petit-Anse, one league from the city." The French general was making use of a familiar economic device to carry forward the economic life of the colony during the trying period of the wars.

175 441 462 466 702 In independent Haiti it was an almost immediate development that the women generally should do the marketing, the men being either required to work on the land or busy at military duty. It came to be accepted quite simply that going to market was a woman's work. From 1843 on through most of the century there was an additional reason why peasant men would not go to the market towns: recruits were needed, both for the army and whatever revolutionary coup might be brewing; a man who did not relish fighting did better to stay out of sight in the hills. In fact, this has even been called the chief

9. *The Negro in the New World*, pp. 196–197.
10. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 24, 34.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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reason for which women assumed a larger part of the agricultural work than in the early days of the century: to keep their husbands indoors during the hours of daylight.

Haitian markets seemed to fascinate foreign visitors a hundred years ago as they do today. One Englishman, describing the markets at Cap-Haïtien and Gonaïves, said that riding one morning to market in the latter small town he passed 465 persons and all sorts of animals. "The women as usual were decently dressed; and the men were more respectable than any we had seen on our route: they were evidently small cultivators who live on their own freeholds. . . . All were cheerful and happy."[11]

Ever since force was withdrawn from the economic life of the Haitians—that is, since 1820—a steady round of criticism has been leveled at the "laziness" of the average male. Much of this can be discounted as coming from unsympathetic white foreigners who visited Haiti to find proof of Negro inferiority; some of it again is not significant, since it is the product of élite essayists who cherished the preposession that the black was born to menial labor, and that if he did not work he had small reason for existence. The fact remains that not even friendly authors have been able to refrain from comment upon the inertia of the Haitian man, whether of the 1830's or, indeed, the present day. It is worth selecting half a dozen of the earlier criticisms, ranging from 1826 to 1860—two by Haitians, two by Englishmen, and two by Americans. Impressionistic, they nevertheless establish a basis from which to gauge the accuracy or inaccuracy of the charge.

In 1826, Placide Justin, drawing most of his material from the notes of the British agent in the Antilles, wrote: "The Haitian man is characterized by an almost unbelievable inertia. He is practically without ambition in political as well as in private life. No one seems to worry about tomorrow."[12] Two years later the Englishman, James Franklin, compared the régimes of Christophe in the North and of Pétion and Boyer in the South; with the former he was entirely sympathetic, but in 1828

the state of ignorance prevailing among the people in the mountains and the interior parts is almost inconceivable. It appears as if the work of civilization had not commenced, and that the people had not taken one

11. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Haiti*, pp. 25, 26.
12. *Mémoire politique et statistique de l'île d'Haïti*, p. 134.

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the still weak United States, France—the traditional enemy of Haitians, and moribund Spain, who was in fact shortly to lose most of her empire in the New World. Since he did not mean to drive his people to work, he resolved to exploit to the full the benefits of foreign trade in the hope that profits from exports would stimulate production. As for allies, he cultivated the friendship of the United States, but also sought to wean British merchants from the Northern ports. To this end, although he levied duties of twelve per cent on goods of other nations, he reduced duties on English goods to five per cent.[9]

Pétion, content to govern without an impressive court, gave the greatest encouragement possible to trade; he sheared expenses and managed to balance his budget. In 1818, for example, his revenues were $2,646,000 and his expenses $2,144,000, giving the republic a respectable surplus of $502,000.

Because Boyer was Pétion's disciple he followed in his predecessor's footsteps, thus fixing in his quarter-century administration the pattern of foreign trade under a tariff system. The Haitian élite seem never to have taken to commercial enterprise, nor has the country ever developed an economist even of fifth rank. Haitian thought, so eloquently articulate along political lines, has simply never turned its attention in any solid and serious way to economic problems. Nearly the whole of the foreign commerce of the republic from the earliest days was conducted by foreign merchants resident in Haiti. This was partly because the credit of the Haitians was not so generally established as to inspire confidence, but mostly it was due to lack of interest of the people in foreign trade.

In the eighteenth century Saint-Domingue had been almost the only colony producing such tropical products as sugar and coffee on a large scale; the absence of effective competition accounted for most of the prosperity of the French colony. In the nineteenth century, however, competition developed rapidly; and at this very time the laws and court decisions of Haiti began to hamper the business of the foreign merchants dealing there. By Article 21 of Boyer's Law of Patents, all persons engaging in any trade or profession except that of cultivation of the soil must be provided with a license or patent; all foreigners admitted as merchants into the republic must first secure the president's permission to acquire a patent; and when

9 See the Arrêté of October 15, 1814.

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175 finally the license was obtained, it authorized the foreigner to carry
459 on only a wholesale business—not with other foreign traders or with
656 any resident aliens, but with Haitians in the six open ports.[10] The
● 441 minimum of goods to be sold in any deal was fixed, so that no foreigner could inadvertently enter the retail business. Such licenses cost between $1,600 and $2,000, sums so large that few foreigners were drawn to the island.

Quite obviously the government sought to keep the external trade of Haiti under its control; it is equally obvious that under the licensing system, with its high fees and strict surveillance, only a small number of dealers were attracted, who consequently monopolized what little trade there was. Retail business being prohibited to them, their imports had to be sold by Haitians.

175 Not even this necessity created a middle class in the country, for
565 the purchasing power of the peasants and other lower-caste Haitians
434 was small; also the total sum of imports and exports was not large enough to support a middle class. The retail trade was chiefly in the
443 hands of town women. These *marchandes*, as they were called, em-
441 ployed a number of hucksters—likewise women—to traverse the countryside surrounding the open ports, attend the markets, and report either every evening, or every week or month, depending upon their findings. The white man let his marchande know how much coffee he required, and this information was passed on to the local speculator who, at a very moderate profit, collected the coffee beans from the peasants in his neighborhood. Imports were distributed in like manner over the countryside. In its small way this system worked well enough, for the good faith of respectable marchandes could be counted upon both by the white trader and by the local dealers. A few European and American traders found it profitable to set up as marchandes the women with whom they cohabited, for this arrangement brought them nearer to the retail trade.

175 During Boyer's long administration the staple export was coffee,
439 still cultivated on a few remaining plantations but mostly picked
24 from plants growing wild, and sold by the peasants as their one source of money income. Sugar disappeared almost wholly from the

10. Namely, Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, Gonaïves, Jacmel, Les Cayes, and Jérémie; from 1822 to 1844 there were also two open ports in the Spanish part of the island which, during these years, was a part of Haiti.

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quarantine: "Haiti for the Haitians." At first the prohibition on white ownership of land and financial investment in the country was attributable to a fear of reënslavement; then to a fear that financial commitments (which no Haitian really understood) would somehow lead to political subjection; and always the feeling of pride, combined with a desperate need of self-justification, made the Haitians want to keep their country entirely under control of their own people. It is, of course, possible that if white people had been allowed free access to the country, they might have destroyed the "Black Republic"; excluding white men altogether, however, seriously curtailed economic activity.

2. Overmilitarization. The army, numerous out of all proportion to the population, took the ablest men out of production, drained the treasury, and was a constant source of revolutionary activity.

3. Poor methods of agriculture. Critics often complained that Haiti ought to return to the system of large estates and forced labor; it apparently occurred to no one to suggest that education of the peasants might have made the land productive once more, by teaching the people new methods. Dividing up the land was an inevitable necessity unless every ruler were as willing as Christophe to be a dictator and as capable; but to keep the peasants in ignorance was not a necessity. Peasant landowners in Europe frequently tend their acres with skill, while in Haiti, with neither experience nor instruction in methods of tillage on small farms, the people developed steadily more destructive ways of farming.

4. Inefficient marketing. Assuming Haiti's dependence upon the staple crop of coffee and the handling of this crop by foreign merchants, every government seemed intent upon putting obstacles in the path of efficient marketing procedure.[15] The white trader could deal only with Haitians (who were ignorant in matters of international trade); although the foreigner had to pay a huge license fee in order to deal at all in Haitian products, he got no security in return, for he might not own land or obtain a lien on the real property of a citizen.[16] Banking and exchange facilities were wholly lacking.

15. In 1833 Boyer thought to "encourage" Haitians to commercial effort by gradually expelling foreign traders, refusing to grant them any new licenses to trade. His scheme failed, for the élite were not interested. Indeed, the actual effect of his plan was to disrupt the steady flow of exports and increase discontent with Boyer on the part of the élite plantation owners whose small profits were momentarily interrupted.

16. See James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 374 ff.

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175 441 Justice in the courts was administered by Haitians whose narrow patriotism biased their decisions.

439 648 5. A temperamental tariff policy. Not only were imports subject to a tariff which might be changed at the whim of any president, but 175 exports also were taxed. When an administration was in need of 651 funds it might suddenly, without warning, raise the tax on coffee 489 exports and so disrupt a merchant's business plans. The customs-houses were in charge of Haitians who steadily became more inefficient and grasping as the century progressed, until many foreign merchants felt that the only way of getting business dispatched was by means of bribes. Examinations at customs were long drawn out, often there was open thievery, and erroneous valuations were common.

175 6. The burden of the indemnity to France. Contracted by Boyer 657 in 1825, this annual payment for sixty years was an incubus to every [648] administration, leaving no surplus in the treasury for public works, education, or any internal development; likewise, it made the threat of foreign interference all the more imminent.

7. A debased currency. Pétion was the first president to devalue money, and his example was frequently followed thereafter. Counterfeiting was general. When a country's monetary system is unstable, its officials accustomed to bribery and graft,[17] and its financial structure almost nonexistent, there is little chance for sound economic development.

175 8. Dependence upon a single crop. Haitian economy was tied to 245 the staple coffee, grown with indifferent care, prepared for the market in outmoded fashion, and sold in competition with coffee from more scientifically run plantations in other tropical countries.

175 9. Political instability. The recurrent revolutions in Haiti made 439 foreigners chary of participating in the country's business, since the 66 government which made a contract might be out of office before the ink was dry.

175 10. Indifference of the élite to economic pursuits. What profits 439 were obtainable went into the pockets of foreign merchants, not 568 those of Haitian businessmen. In 1842 the comparative exports of the

[643] 17. Sir Spenser St. John, always a bitter critic of Haiti, remarked (*Hayti, or The* [151] *Black Republic*, p. 88) sardonically that "Boyer had the rare quality of being honest, [661] and left in the treasury, on his departure, the sum of £200,000, the first and last chief who was ever guilty of so unaccountable a weakness."

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600 may next be considered. Two types of markets exist — those
443 in the countryside where produce is often sold at wholesale,
[442] and the town markets where retail trading takes place. In Mirebalais, as elsewhere, the principal market day is Saturday, though smaller markets are held on Thursdays, and roadside gatherings of women offering small amounts of foodstuffs or cooked foods are to be found everywhere. The country markets occur at present only on Tuesdays, though in earlier times the markets shared the days of the week in rotation. To heighten the importance of the towns, however, and to encourage the peasants to work steadily in their fields by concentrating the time spent at market, it has been officially decreed that the schedule given above be followed. Before this, the rotation of the markets in the commune of Mirebalais was as follows:

MONDAY: Yabodoun; La Civelle; Landale;
TUESDAY: Mirebalais;
WEDNESDAY: Dufailly (a fairly large country market); Labouli; Colombie (a very large market);
THURSDAY: Mirebalais;
FRIDAY: Chambo and Canarde (the most important country markets in the valley);
SATURDAY: Mirebalais.

[366] The Mirebalais market is located near the central square not far from the confluence of the Artibonite and Tombe rivers, though until relatively recent times it was held in the *place* before the church. It occupies a large fenced-in space reserved for the purpose, which on the days of the great mar-
443 kets hums with activity. Each tradeswoman has her place
626 there, which she retains by a kind of informal agreement, held to so well, for all its informality, that if a woman is compelled to be absent for a time, those who sit near by watch it for her and warn anyone who takes it that it must be relinquished
[627] when the original occupant returns. If despite this warning

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the newcomer persists in retaining the place, an informal appeal is taken to the local magistrate, who invariably settles the matter by deciding in favor of the original occupant. 443 626 627

Each woman tends to specialize in certain commodities, such as meat or cloths or notions or baskets. The venders of foodstuffs, other than meat, however, vary their offerings with the season. This latter class of sellers mainly comprises women who, living in the town, constitute a group of "middlemen," either buying produce at the country markets, or, going off with their pack animals into the back country, return with saddle-bags loaded with the purchases they have made direct from the farmer.[8] 443 442

Country women are also well represented among the traders, and as they come streaming into town on market days with their head burdens, or driving the heavily laden, slow-plodding donkeys, they fill the streets with color and movement that make up one of the most picturesque aspects of Mirebalais life. A load may consist of one type of produce only, or a woman may bring rice, maize, beans, and bananas, as well as home-made brooms and baskets. All transactions in the market are for cash, and there is no barter of any kind, for the pattern of a money economy has been too deeply lodged in Haitian tradition to allow any other mode of exchange. Prices are based on supply and demand rather than on any agreement between sellers, since contact with the capital causes the current prices paid there for all kinds of produce to be generally known. Another factor which enters into price-fixing, however, is prestige. It is regarded as a mark of incompetence for a woman, whether from country or town, to return home with unsold produce, and since the reputation of being a clever trader is highly valued, this is avoided when at all possible, and the vender adjusts her prices as the day wears on to insure that she will dispose of everything she has brought. 443 [482] [492] [436] [437] 443 435 [554] [558]

In Mirebalais, as elsewhere, the markets are best attended during harvest months, when by official count as many as 443

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512 grain in her mortar or working in her garden near by. On
[443] market days she takes the produce of the family's fields to the
[438] town to sell. If she has young children, she cares for them
[855] while she does her other work, but when they are old enough,
[857] they help her about the house if they are girls, or, if boys, go with their father to the garden. From time to time, when
[356] house repairs are needed or there are implements to be
[241] mended, the man spends a day at home getting these odd jobs done; otherwise only serious illness in the family keeps him from his fields.

512 The times for meals have not varied since the days when
264 Moreau de St. Mery described the eating-habits of the slaves.[8] In addition to the mid-morning repast, the only other meal is that eaten after the man returns from his field, this being
[562] the largest of the day. A wife does not sit down with her
[593] husband, but usually eats earlier with her small children and holds herself ready to serve him upon his return, when, if he is alone, she remains to tell him the day's gossip. Visitors are
[574] often present, for peasant etiquette demands that all comers
[576] be offered food, and, as one Haitian expressed it, "The peasant would kill you for the insult if you did not share your meal with him." Bedtime, as might be expected, is early.

512 On Sundays and on the days of festivals this routine is in-
527 terrupted, when, if the occasion is of sufficient importance
[796] and the habitation is not too far from town, the peasant and his family attend mass. On Saturday nights there is usually a *vodun* dance, when the early hour for retirement is forgotten and all-night festivities precede Sunday's rest. On such days
[264] the principal meal is eaten at three or four o'clock in the afternoon, and all the adults share it together, while at one side the children are fed from the dishes of their parents in response to the insistent repetition of the demand "*Ba'm pa'm* — give me my portion." *

* This is an example of the elision characteristic of Haitian Créole, it being abbreviated from *Ba moin pari moin* or, in French, *Donnez-moi ma part.*

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in Port-au-Prince, native or "créole" rice, red beans, and olive oil. The rice and beans are cooked separately, as are the yams and the two kinds of salt fish, each being seasoned with oil, salt, and pepper. The ordinary plates or calabashes on which food is offered the *loa*, or African deities, and the characteristic special double plates used in the twin cult, are prepared by rubbing them with olive oil. When the food is ready, it is placed in the proper containers in a closed room, and the family gather and say prayers of the Church — the Pater Noster, the Ave Maria, and the Credo — after which the *loa*, the twins, and the dead are called to come and eat. From midday until after sunset the room remains unopened, so that these beings may partake of the offerings placed there for them. Finally, when darkness has fallen, the family enter, and the food, whose essence is believed to have been consumed by the spirits, is eaten.

At times when a garden yields but little, the owner may suspect that black magic is the cause. He thereupon tries to recall any of his neighbors who might have occasion to feel envious of him, or those with whom he may have quarreled. He does nothing overt at this time except to watch for signs of hostility on the part of the suspect, but when the time for the next planting arrives, he not only obtains a strong charm to protect his own garden, but if he is particularly exercised and thinks his suspicions are well justified, he may set a counter-charm in the field of his neighbor who he believes has harmed him. This would only be done in exceptional cases, where, for instance, the crops of one cultivator had failed when the fields about his had yielded well; for, in the main, garden magic is directed toward protective rather than toward malevolent ends.

A certain proportion of the harvest is reserved for use at home and the remainder is sold in the markets. Since these markets, which as the primary channel of distribution rank with farming in their importance in Haitian economy, they may next be considered.

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600 443 [442] may next be considered. Two types of markets exist — those in the countryside where produce is often sold at wholesale, and the town markets where retail trading takes place. In Mirebalais, as elsewhere, the principal market day is Saturday, though smaller markets are held on Thursdays, and roadside gatherings of women offering small amounts of foodstuffs or cooked foods are to be found everywhere. The country markets occur at present only on Tuesdays, though in earlier times the markets shared the days of the week in rotation. To heighten the importance of the towns, however, and to encourage the peasants to work steadily in their fields by concentrating the time spent at market, it has been officially decreed that the schedule given above be followed. Before this, the rotation of the markets in the commune of Mirebalais was as follows:

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the newcomer persists in retaining the place, an informal appeal is taken to the local magistrate, who invariably settles the matter by deciding in favor of the original occupant. 443 626 627

Each woman tends to specialize in certain commodities, such as meat or cloths or notions or baskets. The venders of foodstuffs, other than meat, however, vary their offerings with the season. This latter class of sellers mainly comprises women who, living in the town, constitute a group of "middlemen," either buying produce at the country markets, or, going off with their pack animals into the back country, return with saddle-bags loaded with the purchases they have made direct from the farmer.[8] 443 442

Country women are also well represented among the traders, and as they come streaming into town on market days with their head burdens, or driving the heavily laden, slow-plodding donkeys, they fill the streets with color and movement that make up one of the most picturesque aspects of Mirebalais life. A load may consist of one type of produce only, or a woman may bring rice, maize, beans, and bananas, as well as home-made brooms and baskets. All transactions in the market are for cash, and there is no barter of any kind, for the pattern of a money economy has been too deeply lodged in Haitian tradition to allow any other mode of exchange. Prices are based on supply and demand rather than on any agreement between sellers, since contact with the capital causes the current prices paid there for all kinds of produce to be generally known. Another factor which enters into price-fixing, however, is prestige. It is regarded as a mark of incompetence for a woman, whether from country or town, to return home with unsold produce, and since the reputation of being a clever trader is highly valued, this is avoided when at all possible, and the vender adjusts her prices as the day wears on to insure that she will dispose of everything she has brought. 443 [482] [492] [436] [437] 443 435 [554] [558]

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eleven hundred and fifty sellers offer their wares in the course of a single day. A careful tally is kept of these, since a fee for the right of entry into the market is collected from all those who sell. Local tradespeople pay ten centimes each market day, but if they are sellers of meat they must pay five centimes a day for the right of entry, in addition to an annual license fee of 11.35 gourdes. A peddler of notions who goes about from one market center to another must, on coming to Mirebalais, either present a license costing 11.35 gourdes which grants the right to do business in any market of Haiti, or pay fifty centimes for permission to sell on any given market day. Other taxes collected for the upkeep of the market are particularly concerned with the transportation and sale of livestock. A fee of 3.50 gourdes is assessed when a cow is transported from one region to another or taken to the market for sale; one gourde must be paid the local tax-collector if a live animal is sold, the seller paying the tax; while if neither party to the sale knows how to write, a notary fee of two gourdes is assessed for drawing up a certificate of ownership. A fee of 3.25 gourdes is collected when a cow or bullock is butchered to be sold; for the slaughtering of a goat or pig, fees of two and one and a half gourdes, respectively, are collected.

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A word must be said regarding the ubiquitous "small markets" that consist of a few women gathered at crossroads or at strategic points in towns on days when there is no large market, or wherever people gather. In Mirebalais such venders sit near the dispensary when it is open on Tuesdays. At cockfights and dances or at communal celebrations a small group of women is invariably found who sell drinks, bread, sweets, and other articles of food. At these "markets," too, such cooking aids as lard are sold, which both for these small markets and the larger ones is remelted and poured into little bottles selling for five centimes each. The returns from this petty trade are very small, yet in the aggregate they probably bulk at some figure that is not insignificant in the local economy.

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tioned this latter instance advanced it as a possible alternative to the custom found elsewhere in Haiti, adding that it was the duty of the living to honor their ancestors, and not for the ancestors to make provision to honor themselves, particularly since the dead can enforce the discharge of this duty by sending illness, bad fortune, and death to those of their descendants who are remiss.

To a very appreciable degree, what is inherited forms the foundation of whatever wealth a man may accumulate during his lifetime. Yet there are few, among the peasants at least, who do not seek by all means to add to their heritage, for among those folk the ambition to obtain more and more land is a dominating one. To this end the peasant skimps and saves, depriving himself even of his important needs, until at the proper time some choice parcel of ground comes on the market.

How does a man go about accumulating the funds necessary to amass property? Ordinarily a young man is given a plot of ground by his father, and the produce, as mentioned, is marketed for him by his mother, who saves the proceeds for him. When he marries, his wife takes over this task, and together the two strive to extract as large earnings as possible from his plot. In addition, a man may take a *job*. Such work, always paid for by the unit rather than by the day or week, is usually that of cultivating a plot of ground for its owner, and the amount agreed upon is paid when the field has been harvested. The young man at the same time can also cultivate his own fields and participate in communal labor. Another way of adding to the earnings of his fields is to help the large landowners on their cotton plantations. This work is paid for in kind with baskets of cotton, which in turn are sold to factors who come from the coast to buy both large and small quantities. A man may also increase his income by working in the cane-fields or at the caldrons when the sirup is boiled. Each

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

before returning for the night's effort. By midnight the dance 796
is in full swing. Though individuals here and there may absent themselves for a time, the attendance remains relatively constant, until as the crowing of cocks marks the approaching dawn, the number of dancers begins to dwindle rapidly, and with full daylight few remain other than members of the family. Only rarely does a *vodun* dance last well into the morning; what one sees after sunrise are the poorer drummers beating their mediocre rhythms for the young people who continue a desultory circling about the central pole. This does not mean that the *vodun* deities shun the daylight. It is merely because the participants must hurry away to get into their Sunday clothes for early mass in the village church.

The obligations of the family giving a dance are clearly established by tradition. Most important is the *tonnelle,* which they must build, and the drums and their accessory gong and rattles, which they must furnish. The drummers are not paid, but are given much attention when the refreshments that must be provided are distributed. These usually take the form of *clairin,* though coffee and bread may also be offered the guests early in the morning. The *clairin,* or raw rum, is passed [273]
from time to time, but not in sufficient quantity to cause inebriation. Those who supplement this with a generous supply of their own, and show the effect of it, are regarded with anything but approval.[8] Other accessories for the dance which must be at hand are the banners used to salute the deities, and the candles and water needed to bring those possessed out of the more violent stages of their seizures. If anything else is [265]
required or the guests desire further refreshments, these may [343]
always be bought from the women who set up their little stands at every dance.

Drums, iron, and rattles are indispensable for a *vodun* 796
dance. The drums, of the characteristic hollow-log African 534
type, tuned with pegs inserted in the sides and reinforced with twine wound about the stretched heads of cow-hide or goat-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

land, whose bodies are buried in it, and whose spirits watch over it. As has been shown in the discussion of property, land in Haiti is owned privately, and, once title has passed, is subject to no alienation, except at the will of the owner — an attitude also held toward property of other categories, as is evidenced by the fact that most of the possessions of a man, particularly his livestock, are marked for identification, and theft is severely punished. Even the disposal of stray animals whose owners cannot be identified must follow well-defined legal procedure, in accordance with which they are held by the officers of the commune for a stated period of time before being sold at public auction. All marks on these animals are carefully noted in the records, so that title to them may be duly established.

In the organization of production and distribution an African mold, if not full content, predominates. The co-operative work-system, which is so important in maintaining agricultural production, is directly related to comparable groupings of West Africa, of which a distinctive form is the *dokpwe* of Dahomey, described when the African origins of Haitian culture were examined. The *combite*, as an instrument of co-operative labor and mutual self-help, with its tradition of giving no pecuniary reward for work done, but of making the feast which comes at the end of the day's labor adequate return — all these represent pure retentions of African practice. Even more striking is the carry-over in the attitudes which go with these outer forms — the manner in which the participants look forward with pleasant anticipation to taking part in *combites*, the enjoyment which they derive from their group work, and the verve with which the work is done are clear expressions of these attitudes. The role of the *combite*-song in exercising social control and enforcing conformity to local custom is entirely African, as is its function in stimulating work by setting a rhythm for it.

African, too, is the institution of the market, though in this

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

443 171 178 case certain aspects of the historical development of Haiti have doubtless tended to reinforce African custom. Reference has been made to the fact that the great proportion of traders are women, a truism in Africa as in Haiti, where by general rule men are the producers and women the distributors of goods. In Haiti, however, the fact that for many decades men were likely to be arbitrarily impressed into military service by local chieftains when they came to town — particularly in Mirebalais, which had always been one of the centers of Caco activity — discouraged them from attending the markets. Thus African usage has here been reinforced by the historical fact of Haitian political instability. The fact that the proceeds from trading belong to the woman who does the trading, and that in consequence women are encountered who, though married, command independent means and exercise full control over their resources, is a carry-over of African tradition and, as in Africa, this gives to women a position in the economic world quite foreign to conventional European practice.

[102] 443 434 562 178 171

59 611 178 The form of the family as found in Mirebalais demonstrates that the African social grouping which comprises all those descended on one side of the family has largely disappeared there, though it is possible that at least the vestiges of it may have survived in other regions of Haiti. Yet in West Africa, though descent is legally counted on but one side of the family, psychological adherence to the families of both parents is everywhere important. Therefore it is logical to assume that this concept, reinforced by the pattern of dual descent and double familial affiliation of the French, has been retained in Haiti to the neglect of the aboriginal larger groupings, where, as has been seen, not only is relationship counted on both sides of the family, but, more significantly, the right to reprimand and punish is held and exerted by elders in both the maternal and the paternal lines. On the other hand, it is apparent that the feeling for larger relationship groups has not been entirely lost, particularly in the paternal line, when

[171] [177]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-H]

291
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445

11 and 12. *Market day. On each woman's head is the agricultural produce she will sell in the village or city market. When she returns she will carry a lighter load of things she has purchased, and tied in her handkerchief will be a few small coins.*

[The Vodoun Pantheon]

the earth like the carrying pad that women wear to support bundles on their heads. [776] Whenever Ayida Wèdo shifted his position there were earthquakes.[1] When the rainbow appeared after a rain it was said that Ayida had come out from under the earth to drink of the fresh water. [171] [821]

Damballa Grand Chemin (Damballa of the Highway). Another manifestation of Damballa as a protector of those on long journeys. [484]

Damballa Verre. Another manifestation of Damballa.

Dereci Wedo. Considered to be the daughter of Damballa. The ending of her name (-ci) suggests that at one time she may have been considered a wife rather than a daughter.

Doki Wedo. A member of Damballa's family.

Aclio Wedo. A member of Damballa's family. Said to be a "work loa" who aids men with their gardens, especially in time of illness. [241]

Erzulie Dodo, or Dodoa, sometimes spelled Ezouli. One of the "big" loa of the Dahomé pantheon, a symbol of purity, and sometimes identified with the Virgin Mary. Her color is white, and services to her include a ritual sweeping and sprinkling of the earth and a perfuming of the air. Food offerings to her include corn meal and eggs. Male "horses" of Erzulie are sometimes bound to her by mystic marriages, and they are obligated to refrain from sexual intercourse on certain days which belong to her. There are a number of Erzulies, regarded as members of the same family or, in some cult centers, as different manifestations of the same deity. Some Haitians regard Erzulie Dodo as the ancestor of the Erzulie family and refer to her as Grand Erzulie. Note that there is a Dahomean town named Dogba at approximately 0° 6' E., 6° 50' N. [179] [822] [482] [587] [834] [588]

Erzulie Fréda, or Erzulie Dahomey (Dahomé), or Erzulie Fréda Dahomey. Like Erzulie Dodo, she is a symbol of purity and is identified with the Virgin Mary. Mystic marriages are performed with her, and her "horses" are obligated to refrain from sexual intercourse on certain days. She is also a giver of wealth. [179] [588] [587] [834]

Erzulie Wedo. A sister or daughter of Erzulie Dodo and also related to Damballa.

Erzulie Manon. A sister of Erzulie Fréda.

Erzulie Bamba. A manifestation of Erzulie who is especially fond of the Bamba dance.

Erzulie Jimenez (Red Eyes). A stern and hard Erzulie who is often identified with Petro rather than Dahomé rites.

Aloes Fréda. A member of the Erzulie cohorts, regarded as a market-place protector. In Dahomey, Aloes was a protector of all public gathering places.[2] [483] [971]

Aloes Badakri

Aloes Dlaku Bras Bowe

Malvasia Maasa. A special form of Erzulie as priestess.

Malvasia Espanola, or Pasiola. A person mounted by this Erzulie talks only Spanish. [587] [971]

Sogo, or Sogbo. A thunder deity who hurls stones to the earth when angered. Some of the stones thrown by Sogbo are regarded as the sacred residence of various loa. Sogbo (or Sogbo) is a member of the original Thunder pantheon of Dahomey. [776] [171]

Sogo Badé, or Sogo Badé, or simply Badé. A close relative of Sogbo, regarded as the protector of the houngan (*houfo*). In Dahomey, Badé is sometimes referred to as the son of the deity Sogbo.[3]

[1] [See Ellis, The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, pp. 43-44; also Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 246ff. Cf. p. 354 Category 116. -- Analyst]

[2] [Ellis, op. cit., p. 52. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[3] [Herskovits, op. cit., pp. 162ff. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

311 bean country, and perhaps fewer than in any country in Latin Amer-
423 ica. The agriculture itself, with the exceptions now of those very few
171 large-scale plantations in sisal and sugarcane, is adapted to small plots
and is worked with intensive labor and few tools on hilly land. Com-
433 pared with agricultural production, especially of cash crops, in most
178 mainland Latin American countries, productivity is low. The yeo-
manry is conservative in its agricultural practices, and not ready to
change unless the changes entail minimal risk and the gains to be real-
241 ized are clearly demonstrable (Erasmus, 1952:20–26). Yeomen culti-
177 vate with three goals in mind: cash income from world-market
185 commodities (for instance, coffee, sisal, vetiver); cash income from
434 items produced for local sale and consumption; and subsistence.
While they are heavily involved in production for sale, their crop
choices and land-use patterns rest fundamentally on a subsistence
orientation. All grow a substantial part of their own food, especially
sorghum, maize, sweet potatoes, taro, manioc, malanga (*Xanthosoma sagittifolium* Schott), plantains and bananas, fruits and vegetables, and
423 rice where possible. The land is invested with considerable affect:
823 gods live in it; it is the ultimate security against privation; family
471 members are buried in it; food and wealth come from it; and it is
good in itself, even if not cultivated. While such attitudes are common in yeoman societies, Haiti's history of slavery, and of access to land through revolution, has given a special symbolic significance to landowning. Land is valued above all else and is sometimes held "uneconomically"—that is, even when the capital and labor power to work it are lacking.

114 Leyburn describes better than any other writer the history of land
175 acquisition by the yeoman after 1804. The French plantations lay in
483 ruins, never to recover, while early authoritarian attempts to restore
the prerevolutionary economy under native Haitian leadership soon failed. In the course of a century, the Haitian people laid claim to their own soil, while population growth and the adoption of the French tradition of equal inheritance progressively reduced the average size of holdings. In spite of some plantation development after the United States occupation, most agricultural land in Haiti is still employed in small holdings, and "land reform" in the conventional sense—the breaking-up of large estates and the creation of a class of small landholders—is nearly irrelevant to Haiti's needs.

462 As today's yeomanry cultivates, so its women folk market. Nearly
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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

three hundred marketplaces serve the towns and countryside, some of them patronized by thousands of buyers and sellers on market days. By participating in active small-scale trade, the wives of the yeomen contribute in a limited way to national economic efficiency and growth. As in all heavily agrarian economies marked by poor storage facilities, inferior transportation, and low consumer incomes there is considerable substitution of labor for capital, and there are high losses through spoilage. Except for the marketing of export commodities, much time is consumed in bargaining, in carrying, and in hand-processing of various sorts. But these activities are the accompaniments of the general low level of development of the Haitian economy, not one of its causes.

The economic challenges posed by agriculture on the one hand, and by marketing on the other, differ significantly. Since these activities are carried out predominantly along the lines of a sexual division of labor, the Haitian countrymen and their marketing wives differ in some regards in their attitudes. Foreign observers of the nineteenth century commented regularly on the industry and energy of Haitian rural women, stressing their predominance in trade. Some writers have attributed this convention to the West African tradition, since women are the marketers, men the farmers, in many African societies. Leyburn, however, notes that the militarism and political unrest that have marked Haiti during so much of its history were serious impediments to peaceful trade. Women came to predominate in marketing, he theorizes, because men did what they could to avoid the towns, since they were often impressed into roving army bands if they traveled far from home. Whatever the historical causes may be, it has been established that the women of Haiti's countryside carry on most of the internal trade, while their husbands do most of the farming. These women, on the whole, know more about the towns, mix more easily with outsiders, and show more intrepidity in trade than the men show in agriculture. Yet it has been demonstrated that, for most of them, the scale of their enterprise is so modest and the economic opportunities open to them so restricted that their energy and daring can do little to increase the level of productive activity (Mintz, 1964:256–86).

Haiti's lack of large factories, mechanized production, and a skilled industrial labor force means that the country is unindustrialized by any usual measure.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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581 suspicion of legal complications is well founded: the priests therefore
794 try to concentrate their attack upon the remaining motives. Thus one priest issued a notice at a certain mountain chapel that he would perform no weddings there for persons who wore shoes; an increase in weddings followed. By such devices, and by constant sermons on the significance of the sacrament, he has persuaded many of his parishioners to be married, yet the vast majority of them continue in plaçage.[4]

581 Informally entered unions among the peasants, then, rest upon a sound, practical, economic basis. If the priests are ever to be successful in their campaign for more weddings, Haitian peasant economy must undergo a change; even then the plurality of women (if indeed it exists), now more or less absorbed by plaçage, will work against the reform.

562 It is confusing to speak of "status" in connection with the domestic
565 life of hard-working people, for status implies law, and law hardly touches peasant life. Custom governs all—inevitably, since the majority of peasant women have not been legally married, and since no peasant would willingly take a case to law. Yet women have a definite status as compared with men.

In almost every detail a peasant woman's life differs from that of elite women. The rule of life in country districts is unremitting labor
462 for the female from childhood up. She cooks and makes clothes,
565 labors in the fields after the men have cleared them, does the family
443 washing in the nearest stream, carries water, does whatever housework is required. Practically every Haitian peasant woman has her experience of going to market to sell the vegetables, trinkets, or
[484] other wares her family may produce, and to buy necessities. This trip to market may be short, or as long as twenty miles. One of the characteristic sights of Haiti is the seemingly endless procession of women coming down from the hills trudging, or rather swinging majestically along, with a great load on the head, or riding on the haunches of a tiny donkey loaded with bulging panniers. Arrived at

4. As a result of his campaign for more weddings he has had some unusual experiences. Once, in the midst of the wedding ceremony, a bride rushed out of the chapel and shortly gave birth to a child; when she was able to move again, the ceremony was resumed. Again, traveling into the mountains to perform a similar ceremony, he found a crowd assembled under a tree, assisting at another birth of an infant to a bride-to-be. Sometimes he encounters the argument by a peasant that he will not consent to a wedding until his spouse has proved her fecundity by bearing a certain number of children.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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the market, the women sit all day in the broiling sun, and in Port-au-Prince at least, sometimes sleep near by for the night, in order to complete their purchases and sales and to get their fill of companionable gossip. They are often accompanied by the youngest of their children, some of whom have to be carried. 462 565 443

Some observers profess to see evidences of a matriarchate among the peasants, for as a general rule the woman attends to the business dealings of the market place, handles the money, directs her children, and manages the household. If the man has more than one placée spouse, complete control of the farm is the woman's during the absence of her man. It is a superficial judgment, however, to speak of the peasant mother as a matriarch. The man owns the land, chooses his women, calls for help at the moment he pleases for preparation of the ground for planting; and when he knows his end to be near, summons all his families and disposes of his property as he sees fit. His decision is final. But he is no more a patriarch than his woman is a matriarch: they are economic partners in a struggle for existence. 562 593 592

By our standards, the woman is inferior to the man, not only in rights but in being one spouse of several. He may contract several unions, while she may have only one. She does more steady, if not more actual, physical labor than the man. When he is at home, she must offer him the best of the food. As usual in simple societies, however, the issue rarely arises as to superiority or inferiority of the sexes. Customary behavior is followed without much question. 562

There is one great contrast between élite and peasant women, in the matter of childbirth. The élite mother takes as much care of herself during pregnancy and parturition as would an American woman in well-to-do circles. The peasant mother, on the contrary, cannot allow herself the luxury of medical attention, nor can she spare the time to rest quietly. Like many so-called "primitive" women, she apparently finds herself little incommoded either by pregnancy or birth. Babies are born frequently in the market place, the mother having come down from the hills only that day with her goods. It is not unusual to hear of the birth of a child in a roadside ditch or in a grove by the path to and from the market town. The care given mother and infant is primitive: the navel cord is cut with a sharp stone or a piece of broken glass; a short rest is thought sufficient before the mother resumes her task. As might be expected, the death rate from infection is high and women age prematurely. 565 844 846 [165] [145]

Parents are generally kind to their children, so far as physical

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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as it is cursed by the present military despotism, the utmost that the women of Haiti can do is to keep their country just above the waters of bankruptcy and their households from complete despair.[9]

Since 1910 the military has been reformed, and the women are not insulted by soldiers and officers; Sir Harry's prophecy regarding the material benefits of removing the curse of military despotism was overly optimistic.

Rounding out the economic life of the peasant is the market, which provides an outlet for whatever surplus is produced, a source of needed supplies and a modicum of money, as well as an almost imperative diversion for hard-working women. The origin of Haitian markets may have been either French or West African, for both regions had them. They were certainly in existence by 1803 in Saint-Domingue, for Madiou speaks of the trade of the plainsmen of the Cul-de-Sac with the holders of what then was called Port Républicain (now Port-au-Prince), adding: "Each Sunday at Croix-des-Bouquets a market was held which brought together more than 4,000 cultivators, male and female, with the permission of the overseers or proprietors."[10] That so large a number came to the market is an indication of the social as well as the economic nature of this institution. Similarly, in the North in 1803, "Rochambeau, now master at the Cape, set about attending to the market established at Petit-Anse in July. After having suppressed all the markets which existed around the Cape, he opened a single and general one, 13th August, at Petit-Anse, one league from the city." The French general was making use of a familiar economic device to carry forward the economic life of the colony during the trying period of the wars.

In independent Haiti it was an almost immediate development that the women generally should do the marketing, the men being either required to work on the land or busy at military duty. It came to be accepted quite simply that going to market was a woman's work. From 1843 on through most of the century there was an additional reason why peasant men would not go to the market towns: recruits were needed, both for the army and whatever revolutionary coup might be brewing; a man who did not relish fighting did better to stay out of sight in the hills. In fact, this has even been called the chief

9. *The Negro in the New World*, pp. 196–197.
10. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 24, 34.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 finally the license was obtained, it authorized the foreigner to carry
459 on only a wholesale business—not with other foreign traders or with
656 any resident aliens, but with Haitians in the six open ports.[10] The
441 minimum of goods to be sold in any deal was fixed, so that no foreigner could inadvertently enter the retail business. Such licenses cost between $1,600 and $2,000, sums so large that few foreigners were drawn to the island.

Quite obviously the government sought to keep the external trade of Haiti under its control; it is equally obvious that under the licensing system, with its high fees and strict surveillance, only a small number of dealers were attracted, who consequently monopolized what little trade there was. Retail business being prohibited to them, their imports had to be sold by Haitians.

175 Not even this necessity created a middle class in the country, for
565 the purchasing power of the peasants and other lower-caste Haitians
434 was small; also the total sum of imports and exports was not large enough to support a middle class. The retail trade was chiefly in the
443 hands of town women. These *marchandes*, as they were called, em-
441 ployed a number of hucksters—likewise women—to traverse the countryside surrounding the open ports, attend the markets, and report either every evening, or every week or month, depending upon their findings. The white man let his marchande know how much coffee he required, and this information was passed on to the local speculator who, at a very moderate profit, collected the coffee beans from the peasants in his neighborhood. Imports were distributed in like manner over the countryside. In its small way this system worked well enough, for the good faith of respectable marchandes could be counted upon both by the white trader and by the local dealers. A few European and American traders found it profitable to set up as marchandes the women with whom they cohabited, for this arrangement brought them nearer to the retail trade.

175 During Boyer's long administration the staple export was coffee,
439 still cultivated on a few remaining plantations but mostly picked
24 from plants growing wild, and sold by the peasants as their one source of money income. Sugar disappeared almost wholly from the

[504] 10. Namely, Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, Gonaïves, Jacmel, Les Cayes, and Jérémie; from 1822 to 1844 there were also two open ports in the Spanish part of the island which, during those years, was a part of Haiti.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

311 merly. Wherever the overcrowded Haitians have lived since 1815, there beauty has had to give way to gnawing necessity which lacked either the imagination or the means to be sightly.

105 One can stand upon a morne and watch a rain storm rush down the valley, bending the palm trees in its fury, and think Haiti still a magnificent sight. Then one must descend the mountainside past rickety shacks and rocky fields, and the feeling grows that not all the kindly simplicity of the people is enough to lift the country from its [134] dilapidation. As he nears the village, the afternoon scent of roasting coffee will delight him; but then he sees the squalor of village life and is reminded that three million souls are here trying to eke out an existence upon a small area of declining fertility.

Much in Haiti is picturesque if one can keep his mind from wandering to the conditions which lie behind the picturesqueness. [482] Women stride down from the hills with great loads on their heads; [443] aged crones, pipe in mouth, sit perched on the haunches of tiny donkeys with their bulging panniers; the great market square in the [492] town is a scene of noisy confusion with hundreds of women and [482] children, a mixture of smells, thousands of little piles of soap, candy, gewgaws, vegetables, gaping chickens tied together by the feet, [434] shirts, canes, bolts of cloth. All the weary women, however, must [146] trudge back up to their shanties on the mountainside when the market is over. Many of them do not see ten dollars in cash during the year, and their little children, with bellies bulging, give evidence [164] of undernourishment. Without doctors, without even the rudiments of hygiene, they manage somehow to subsist, or else die, frequently of disease which might easily have been prevented.

565 In Port-au-Prince and a few other towns live enough members of the élite to make one momentarily forget the plight of the masses. [342] The houses of the well-to-do are substantially built, if not often [351] attractive. Their garden walls are brilliant with bougainvillea, their walks with hibiscus. Tiny red lizards (analis) make flashes of color along the walls. On shady verandas and in the parlors one hears delightful conversation, eats excellent food, savors the pleasures of [575] civilization. The clubs of the élite are pleasing, their tennis is good, [526] their dancing graceful. To be among these families as a welcome guest is an experience in gracious hospitality which can never be [535] forgotten. Too soon, however, one must leave these havens of urbanity and pass through districts of the town which haunt the mind with their grim want.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

But in the early days Merringue

195 643 * 533 * 539 563 ●444 piece called "Merci Papa Vincent" was very popular. According to the song, the noteworthy achievement of the President was the law he sponsored to drive the "Syrians" out of the retail trades:

Nous conné moune qui raimé peuple là,
C'est Président Vincent!
Nous conné moune qui raimé peuple li,
C'est Président Vincent!
Nous conné moune qui raimé peuple li,
C'est Président Vincent!
Nous conné moune qui raimé peuple,
C'est Président Vincent!
A nous rélé, merci Papa Vincent!
A nous rélé, merci Papa Vincent!
A nous crié, merci Papa Vincent!

Qui moune qui hai commerce en detail là?
C'est Président Vincent!
Qui moune qui hai commerce en detail là?
C'est Président Vincent!
Qui moune qui hai commerce en detail là?
C'est Président Vincent!
A nous rélé, merci Papa Vincent!
A nous rélé, merci Papa Vincent!

We know the man who loves the people,
He is President Vincent!
We know the man who loves the people,
He is President Vincent!
We know the man who loves the people,
He is President Vincent!
We know the man who loves the people,
He is President Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!

Who is the man who gave us the retail business?
It is President Vincent!
Who is the man who gave us the retail business?
It is President Vincent!
Who is the man who gave us the retail business?
It is President Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!

195 198 643 * 533 * 539 This song soon became the "official" musical theme of the President and was heard in the carnival festivities, at salon dances, and at military functions. But as discontent with Vincent grew, less adulatory versions

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

660 457 country. The complete enfeeblement of tourism has also led to some
445 migration and to an accompanying decline of services and service
668 "industries" in the capital. These losses have surely hurt Haiti and
642 have damaged its chances for growth as well as its capacity to main-
66 tain the health, education, and morale of its people. It is not clear,
167 however, to what extent such changes may have produced a negative political reaction to the Duvalier regime. Urban support for Dr. Duvalier appears to have come from some intellectuals, from some army officers, and from portions of the urban lower classes; but numerically most important were those low-paid but literate and aspiring wage-earners whom the Comhaire-Sylvains (1959) refer to as "Class III" members. These observers have stressed that the Class III group consisted mainly of industrial employees, those engaged in food-processing, hotel services, workshops, and the like. It was this group that the Comhaire-Sylvains credited with the Duvalier victory in 1957, pointing out in addition that "in the small country towns almost all officials, both civil and military, and traders, seemed to belong to this class" (p. 185). If the economic crisis that has gripped Haiti in recent years severely affects the position of this class, the political situation will reflect as much. But the ideology of Class III members—so far as it can be inferred at all—would suggest that one Duvalier may merely be replaced by another. At the same time, the depopulation of those groupings whose members might have led a qualitatively different kind of opposition, during the period of tenure of the United States Marine Corps Mission to Duvalier, may have indefinitely postponed the opportunity for creating a genuinely new political direction.

66 To state it another way, there are no signs at this time that the re-
178 gime in power will be pulled down by any organized Haitian opposition. More important, since regimes resting on a narrow popular base have a way of falling without change, there is no indication that within Haiti's present national institutional structure, a genuine opposition to Duvalier-type governments can take shape. This means that even if regime should follow regime in rapid succession, there is little reason to expect that any of them could effect fundamental changes in Haitian society. If such an interpretation is correct, it presupposes an internal equilibrium or stasis so strong that no force for change in half a century has been able to make a politically significant difference.

114 This pessimistic view is supported by what is known at this time

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 701 648 177 625 652 669 Since it was an entrenched interest, however, no responsible statesman had dared to threaten its hold. The Marines swept it out of existence, undertaking to substitute for it a trained constabulary of only 2,000 men who should combine routine military tasks with police duty in the scattered towns. Results were immediately apparent: the weighty incubus of soldiers' wages was lifted from the treasury; thousands of men were deprived of sinecures and put back into productive economic activities; the constant threat of armed revolution was removed; better order was kept by 2,000 trained men in trim uniform than by twelve times that number of ragged loafers who called themselves soldiers; and since the army was no longer the great steppingstone to political office, the élite felt more secure from assault by ambitious but uneducated army men. From 1843 to 1915 the élite had endured many lower-caste presidents because these were able to control the army; now the army had disappeared.

175 648 [743] [744] [365] [491] [45] The Marines did much that was of indisputable benefit to Haiti. This was acknowledged even by the most vocal patriots who soon began to campaign for an end of the Occupation. Where there had been no real work in public health, Americans now built hospitals, established clinics, cleaned up the sources of many diseases, laid down sewage systems, gave the towns pure water. In 1915 there were only three automobiles in the country, and no roads for them to travel; the Americans built many miles of paved roads. In 1915 there had been only one wharf, two short stretches of railroad, two lighthouses, one electric plant; the Americans undertook electrification, telephone systems, the construction of administration buildings, and other public conveniences. Whether in such visible matters or in the obscurer realms of currency, banking, and budgets hardly a phase of daily life was left untouched. And judged by the standards of civilization the Marines improved what they touched.

175 648 642 But rancor against the Americans began early and continued to the bitter end in 1934. The pride of all Haitians was deeply wounded by the Occupation. For 111 years they had governed themselves and had assumed themselves to be a sovereign nation; the Marines patroling the countryside were vivid reminders that Haiti had never been independent except by sufferance, and that white men were once more overseeing the destinies of colored and Negro men. Nevertheless, the reasons proclaimed for opposing the Occupation were not those of hurt vanity. Some of those given were entirely

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

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[426] Interest, if money could be borrowed at all, was at the rate of one per cent a day, three per cent a month, and from sixteen per cent to twenty per cent a year. Thus letters of credit and promissory notes never moved the slightest business transaction in the country. To seek credit was to confess one's financial embarrassment.

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45 greater or less degree, the same that bedeviled the country for the rest of the century. It seems worth while to list them, for they reveal the mentality of the ruling clique and caste—a mentality which could see no reason for altering of these basic matters, and which during administration after administration devoted itself to superficialities. Haiti's weaknesses were not entirely due to folly and clumsiness, however, but to a perfectly natural ignorance. There was no background for economic thinking: how should ex-slaves with a handful of old freedmen be familiar with credit, banking, overdrafts, and the like? Even education in France would not necessarily offer enlightenment on these matters. "Culture" meant literature, not economics.

These, then, have been the major economic defects of Haiti, 1806 to 1915, due partly to ineptitude, partly to imperfect education:

175 1. The exclusion of all foreign or white investment, industry, and
454 capital. One article in every constitution was given over to this
648

14. R. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, Saint-Domingue, II, 187.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

the still weak United States, France—the traditional enemy of Haitians, and moribund Spain, who was in fact shortly to lose most of her empire in the New World. Since he did not mean to drive his people to work, he resolved to exploit to the full the benefits of foreign trade in the hope that profits from exports would stimulate production. As for allies, he cultivated the friendship of the United States, but also sought to wean British merchants from the Northern ports. To this end, although he levied duties of twelve per cent on goods of other nations, he reduced duties on English goods to five per cent.[9]

175 439 648 [651]

Pétion, content to govern without an impressive court, gave the greatest encouragement possible to trade; he sheared expenses and managed to balance his budget. In 1818, for example, his revenues were $2,646,000 and his expenses $2,144,000, giving the republic a respectable surplus of $502,000.

175 439 652

Because Boyer was Pétion's disciple he followed in his predecessor's footsteps, thus fixing in his quarter-century administration the pattern of foreign trade under a tariff system. The Haitian élite seem never to have taken to commercial enterprise, nor has the country ever developed an economist even of fifth rank. Haitian thought, so eloquently articulate along political lines, has simply never turned its attention in any solid and serious way to economic problems. Nearly the whole of the foreign commerce of the republic from the earliest days was conducted by foreign merchants resident in Haiti. This was partly because the credit of the Haitians was not so generally established as to inspire confidence, but mostly it was due to lack of interest of the people in foreign trade.

175 439 652 [441] [452]

In the eighteenth century Saint-Domingue had been almost the only colony producing such tropical products as sugar and coffee on a large scale; the absence of effective competition accounted for most of the prosperity of the French colony. In the nineteenth century, however, competition developed rapidly; and at this very time the laws and court decisions of Haiti began to hamper the business of the foreign merchants dealing there. By Article 21 of Boyer's Law of Patents, all persons engaging in any trade or profession except that of cultivation of the soil must be provided with a license or patent; all foreigners admitted as merchants into the republic must first secure the president's permission to acquire a patent; and when

175 439 656 441

9 See the Arrêté of October 13, 1814.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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quarantine: "Haiti for the Haitians." At first the prohibition on white ownership of land and financial investment in the country was attributable to a fear of recnslavement; then to a fear that financial commitments (which no Haitian really understood) would somehow lead to political subjection; and always the feeling of pride, combined with a desperate need of self-justification, made the Haitians want to keep their country entirely under control of their own people. It is, of course, possible that if white people had been allowed free access to the country, they might have destroyed the "Black Republic"; excluding white men altogether, however, seriously curtailed economic activity.

2. Overmilitarization. The army, numerous out of all proportion to the population, took the ablest men out of production, drained the treasury, and was a constant source of revolutionary activity.

3. Poor methods of agriculture. Critics often complained that Haiti ought to return to the system of large estates and forced labor; it apparently occurred to no one to suggest that education of the peasants might have made the land productive once more, by teaching the people new methods. Dividing up the land was an inevitable necessity unless every ruler were as willing as Christophe to be a dictator and as capable; but to keep the peasants in ignorance was not a necessity. Peasant landowners in Europe frequently tend their acres with skill, while in Haiti, with neither experience nor instruction in methods of tillage on small farms, the people developed steadily more destructive ways of farming.

4. Inefficient marketing. Assuming Haiti's dependence upon the staple crop of coffee and the handling of this crop by foreign merchants, every government seemed intent upon putting obstacles in the path of efficient marketing procedure.[14] The white trader could deal only with Haitians (who were ignorant in matters of international trade); although the foreigner had to pay a huge license fee in order to deal at all in Haitian products, he got no security in return, for he might not own land or obtain a lien on the real property of a citizen.[15] Banking and exchange facilities were wholly lacking.

15. In 1833 Boyer thought to "encourage" Haitians to commercial effort by gradually expelling foreign traders, refusing to grant them any new licenses to trade. His scheme failed, for the élite were not interested. Indeed, the actual effect of his plan was to disrupt the steady flow of exports and increase discontent with Boyer on the part of the élite plantation owners whose small profits were momentarily interrupted.

16. See James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 374 ff.

are no customary playmate or joking relationships between grandparents and grandchildren, a man would rather go to his grandparents when in trouble than to his parents or uncles, because of the greater indulgence they show him.

At about the age of seven or eight the children's play-life is invaded by the serious work which they must increasingly assume. According to their sex, they are instructed by father or mother, each parent teaching the child the work he will be most occupied with as he matures. For some children, naturally, this education is deferred longer than for others, but, as a rule, boys of four or five may be seen playing about the field "helping" father by bringing him a leaf with which to light his cigarette, or "hoeing" in company with him, while girls are early permitted the pleasure of accompanying their mothers to market. By observing his father at work and by helping in small tasks the boy gradually learns how to do a man's work, until at about the age of fifteen he himself can cultivate a garden. Two or three years later he is given a field of his own and seed with which to sow it. The produce from it he brings to his mother to sell for him, and she keeps what money it brings, so that he will have his savings when he wishes to marry. Little girls, for whom acquaintance with the techniques of selling in the market is desirable, are given small articles to dispose of, and the proceeds belong to them, though some mothers demand an accounting from the young tradeswomen as a further measure of training. A woman also teaches her daughter to sew, to cook, and to wash and iron, instruction which is continued until a girl, ready to be given in marriage, is able to manage all of a woman's work.

If a family can afford the expense, children begin to be prepared for their first communion at eight or ten years of age; but members of poor families must wait until the money can be found — which means that some classes of candidates include grown men and women. At about the customary age for confirmation the children are informed of the family vows

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[595] [533] [illegible] market place, quarreling is invariably heard; or if one of them sings *point* — derisive songs — against the other and goes so far as to name the object of derision, fighting and court action follow.

[595] [533] [654] Though many cases of *plaçage* are the result of affairs between young people which result in conception, it is essential in any event that the consent of the families of the man and the woman concerned be obtained to give the mating social validity. When the union is once entered upon, divorce occurs only with the abandonment or mistreatment of the woman, or her infidelity, for in these *plaçage* matches, the moral support of her family makes a man reluctant to send his wife away without ample justification. When a man does divorce a *placée* wife for reasons of infidelity, she may either go to another man or return to the house of her parents, where she supports herself. If after a period of years she has not established a household with another man, it often happens that her husband takes her back. Most frequently, however, where children have been born to a mating, a woman's infidelity is punished merely by beating; and proof that a wife is a wife whether or not she is legally "married" is offered by the Haitian man in this fact that a *placée* is beaten for this and less serious reasons as readily as a legal wife. Prompt [454] action is taken against the adulterer, which, though it may on occasion be as drastic as murder, generally takes the form of [649] recourse to magic charms. Women who carry on illicit relationships take all care, therefore, to guard unceasingly against the birth of offspring.

[595] [533] Many men, at least, hold that a man is often much closer to a *placée* than to a legal wife, for the former is more attentive and less demanding than the wife with her legally assured status and permanence of tenure. Thus it comes about that [454] *placée* spouses are frequently given generous money gifts, to be saved for the future of their children, while as a man grows older he may take up his residence with a *placée* wife, where

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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he is assured of more solicitous care from her and more deferential treatment from her children. And though when this has occurred his "legal" wife may at his death come with a justice of the peace to claim his body and his effects, this move is anticipated, so that what he has given the *placée* wife and her children is usually well out of the way. "Often they find only the four walls of the house."

A certain number of unmarried men result from this system of plural matings, some of whom remain single by preference, particularly in the cities, where the incidence of homosexuality far exceeds that found in the country. In Mirebalais itself, when the final withdrawal of the American Marines from Haiti was being celebrated, a dance called *manuba*, significantly enough the only one held indoors, was one in which male dancers danced together in couples. The sexual problem of the younger unmarried men is more often solved by means of liaisons with married women, though this has its dangers in the countryside, where the movements of every individual are known and the least tendency to unsanctioned social behavior is soon the subject for widespread gossip. Prostitutes are found everywhere, and they are by no means visited by unmarried men alone. On the whole, sex "adventures" are more indulged in by men than women, even allowing for the tendency of some women to have affairs with youths. A belief widely held, that plural wives tend so to exhaust the virility of a man that he must seek "remedies" of a magical nature from the priests of the *vodun* cult and from sorcerers, must also be mentioned. Frigidity is a principal cause for female homosexuality, and, because of a wife's reluctance to satisfy her husband, it not infrequently happens that she is sent back to her parents, where she may seek out other women. The most prevalent Haitian attitude toward homosexuality in either sex, it may be remarked, is one of derision rather than vindictiveness, as the term applied to effeminate men, *commères*, may suggest.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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591 rarest of instances, and only by fixed legal procedure, since
596 mere verbal denial of family rights cannot deprive a person
428 of his inheritance.

596 Within the immediate family it is the duty of the man to
432 procure food for his wife and children. When his fields have
434 been harvested, the produce is taken to the house and given
454 to the wife, who retains a portion of it for the needs of the household and sells the surplus at the market, using the money to buy clothing and other necessaries for her husband, her children, and herself. A part of the sum she receives may be used to purchase animals to be used for transport, food, or breeding purposes; and whatever money is left over is saved, particularly if a desirable plot of ground is available, or a mass and ceremony for the ancestors or promised rituals for the gods are in prospect. The woman, who is held to be more thrifty than the man, is thus the banker of the family. Her opinion is prized by her husband, and though a man has the legal right to dispose of a horse or a cow or his own land as he desires, in most households nothing would be done until
(593) the wife was consulted. It is true that quarrels often arise concerning family funds held by the wife, especially when a man questions the accounting given him, or on occasion when he wants money to bet on a cock-fight or for drinking or other personal needs whose cost he does not care to have reviewed. But for many men the problem is quite well solved by the expedient of deducting a sum from his earnings without telling his wife that she has not been given the full amount.

596 It is only in relatively small matters that the membership of a household acts as a self-determining unit. In affairs of greater moment the extended family must figure, for despite the informality of its organization — at least as manifested in Mirebalais — and its lack of legal sanction, its power, especially as lodged in the old folk, is none the less real. It is because of this that it is said: "The peasant consults his elders about everything he does." When a transaction of some im-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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453 454 455 556 worker receives about ten gourdes a week, in addition to his food, and the work often is of several months' duration. To do this, however, it is necessary for him to hire another to work his own garden for the period he is thus engaged. As extra money is gradually accumulated, more land is purchased, so that the returns become greater; and the process is accelerated when, upon the death of a man's father, other family land is added to what he already owns.

[454]

437 454 556 Thus the drive to obtain property is an obsession with the Haitian peasant. The question of a few centimes, to say nothing of a gourde, is hotly argued; for instance, in the bidding for unclaimed lost animals held periodically at the Mairie in Mirebalais, bids are often raised by as little as five centimes, with the bidder waiting until the last possible moment, the third call of the auctioneer, before pledging the additional sum. Those who have money prefer silver to paper and usually keep it in a trunk at home, but if troublous times impend, the money is put in jars and hidden in the ground. In this way it happens that when a man dies, much of his money is lost to his heirs, for he rarely tells even his wife or children what he has done with it.

556 Yet this point must be stressed — in the mind of the Haitian peasant, though wealth is desired for the prestige it gives, it is rarely prized for the display it permits. Frequently when a person of large means is pointed out in the market place, he will be simply if not poorly dressed. To make undue display of possessions would arouse envy, and envy brings upon a man's household the evil eye. Wealth is rather manifested in extensive farms, in elaborate ceremonies for the rituals held for family ancestors and for family gods, in the education of children to the end that they may eventually move to the capital and there attain social and political position of importance. Wealth brings prestige to its owner through the word-of-mouth comment of his neighbors, and with this he is content,

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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Some *baka* are believed to be "doubles" of sorcerers who take animal form and roam at night doing evil. Pigs encountered at night are especially dreaded because of this, and those of a gray color, held to be more potent for evil than those of any other shade, are sedulously avoided. The tale is told of a man who, having encountered a gray pig at midnight which passed between his legs at great speed, was ill for months afterwards. It is also recounted how several men of uncommon bravery waited for one such pig and beat it, and how the next morning an old woman was found on whose bent back wounds inflicted by sticks could be seen. It is because of stories such as this that it is held important to worship the good *loa*. For if the devotee of a *loa* meets a *baka* at night, the *loa* comes to his head and the *baka* flees in terror. An autobiographical incident was related to make this point. When a lad, the man who told the tale joined his playmates in an escapade which had as its aim to frighten some young women returning home late from a *vodun* dance. Draped in white sheets they stationed themselves near a bridge, turning about before lighted candles in the ground. The young women were possessed by their *loa* the instant they caught sight of these apparitions, who promptly fled the scene to avoid capture by those who came running in reply to the songs and cries emitted by the protecting gods!

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Baka are often employed to guard buried money. "In this country, when you find money buried in jars, it is an affair of *baka*. There is never one jar, but always two or three, and you must call a *houngan* to find out which one you may take and which you must not touch. Generally the finder is allowed to take half of the treasure, for if he took all, he would be tormented by the *baka* who had been left as guardian." Such jars, it is said, are usually found with human bones beside them or under them, and tradition has it that the slave-owners who are believed to have been strong in magic customarily killed the most evil slave on a plantation that his spirit might keep watch over the jars. If the owner never returned, the spirit of the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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slave, as a "sold *baka*," remained to wreak vengeance upon anyone who dared disturb his charge. 776 454

The reality of the *baka* to the Haitian was made dramatically vivid by an incident involving an old blind and deaf horse. It occurred one night on the principal streets of the town of Mirebalais itself. The horse was first noticed as the sun set, groping his way along, and finally circling the turn of the road. Though people shouted at the animal, he would not give way. As darkness came and doors and windows were barred, the horse blundered into the small veranda of a house inhabited by an elderly woman, her daughter, and her grandchildren. The younger woman cried out with fright when, timidly peering about the side of the house, she saw their visitor, but the older woman, whose age made her fearless in the face of this supernatural danger, opened a window and vigorously attacked the animal with a heavy stick, while he unhurriedly tried to get clear of the blows and finally moved on to the next veranda, and so from house to house down the street. On this night the habitual tranquillity did not settle over the town, and all of the next day and many days thereafter there was quiet talk of the danger that had been abroad, and much speculation of its intended destination. 776 825

The *baka* are sometimes confused with the *démons*, as is seen in the fragmentary information that was obtained about the existence of secret societies, so feared by Mirebalais folk because of their reputation for working all kinds of evil that it was with difficulty that even the names of two of them could be learned — the "Bizangu," whose members appear at night wearing horns and holding candles, and "Les Cochons sans Poils." The former, termed *démons*, are believed to be able to change into animals when they do their evil work, a feat which would seem to make them *baka*. The societies all meet in the open country at night, and each has a small drum. They are called together by the beating of one rock against another in a manner reminiscent of the Zanghero society of Porto Novo, Dahomey. 754 776 575 [202] [171]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

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quarantine: "Haiti for the Haitians." At first the prohibition on white ownership of land and financial investment in the country was attributable to a fear of reënslavement; then to a fear that financial commitments (which no Haitian really understood) would somehow lead to political subjection; and always the feeling of pride, combined with a desperate need of self-justification, made the Haitians want to keep their country entirely under control of their own people. It is, of course, possible that if white people had been allowed free access to the country, they might have destroyed the "Black Republic"; excluding white men altogether, however, seriously curtailed economic activity.

2. Overmilitarization. The army, numerous out of all proportion to the population, took the ablest men out of production, drained the treasury, and was a constant source of revolutionary activity.

3. Poor methods of agriculture. Critics often complained that Haiti ought to return to the system of large estates and forced labor; it apparently occurred to no one to suggest that education of the peasants might have made the land productive once more, by teaching the people new methods. Dividing up the land was an inevitable necessity unless every ruler were as willing as Christophe to be a dictator and as capable; but to keep the peasants in ignorance was not a necessity. Peasant landowners in Europe frequently tend their acres with skill, while in Haiti, with neither experience nor instruction in methods of tillage on small farms, the people developed steadily more destructive ways of farming.

4. Inefficient marketing. Assuming Haiti's dependence upon the staple crop of coffee and the handling of this crop by foreign merchants, every government seemed intent upon putting obstacles in the path of efficient marketing procedure.[25] The white trader could deal only with Haitians (who were ignorant in matters of international trade); although the foreigner had to pay a huge license fee in order to deal at all in Haitian products, he got no security in return, for he might not own land or obtain a lien on the real property of a citizen.[26] Banking and exchange facilities were wholly lacking.

25. In 1833 Boyer thought to "encourage" Haitians to commercial effort by gradually expelling foreign traders, refusing to grant them any new licenses to trade. His scheme failed, for the Haitians were not interested. Indeed, the actual effect of his plan was to disrupt the steady flow of exports and increase discontent with Boyer on the part of the foreign plantation owners whose small profits were momentarily interrupted.

26. See James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, 339–374 ff.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 Boyer carried on Pétion's policy of no taxation. It was not until the American
657 Occupation that Haitians could be said to be taxed. Ninety per cent of the state's
[652] income between 1900 and 1915 regularly came from tariffs, and only ten per cent from internal taxes. Even the efforts of the Americans, resulting in the laws of 1924 and 1928, were on the whole restricted to a few excise taxes. A land tax was hopeless, due to the utter confusion of titles and the stubborn impassivity of peasant squatters.[5]

2. *Monetary Policy of Pétion and Boyer*

175 The monetary situation in Haiti was chaotic in its early days. The gold money
652 of France, Spain, England, and the United States circulated, as did small French coins, and the coins and paper money created by the Haitian rulers, who had complete control over money. For example, Pétion decreed[6] an increase in the value of the *gourde d'Espagne* from 8 livres 5 sols, to 9 livres; of the French *écu* of 6 francs from 9 livres to 9 livres 15 sols; and the 5 franc écu from 7 livres 10 sols to 8 livres 5 sols; this almost doubled the value of money in circulation. He also struck small coins to replace the pieces of 30, 24, 15, 12, and 6 sols of France. His small coins were merely token money.[7] The paper currency created by Pétion and so easily counterfeited has been mentioned.

[433] Boyer was continually in financial perplexities. Production was declining while expenditures had to be radically increased on account of the settlement with France in 1825. Boyer's budget was not a large one judged by modern standards, the average expenditure each year being about $5,000,000. To meet this, customs duties on imports and exports brought in about $2,500,000 annually; ministerial duties on produce, houses, patents or licenses, market fees, and the like, a similar
[316] sum; but some half-million dollars had to be borrowed each year. The government
[425] hoped to get something from developing mines in the Spanish part of the island, but this hope failed. It was thought also that the sale of government lands might
[454] bring in some revenue, but few people wanted to invest money, when they had it, in land, with agricultural affairs developing as they were and no way of making
[465] people work: investment in trade was more promising. The national treasury was so empty that both the civil and military officials were poorly paid. It was fre-
[661] quently said that almost all administrators and persons in authority were open to bribery. Meanwhile the number of civil servants was increasing: there was a swarm
[647] of hangers and subalterns in every commune, like a host of vampires. By their lack of honesty, conscientiousness, and efficiency, immense sums were lost annually to the treasury.

5. See the *Report of the American High Commissioner* (1929), p. 19.
6. May 4, 1808.
7. *Pétion voyant l'échappatoire de ses Etats les gourdes qu'effectuaient ses détrôlés avec Christophe, crut pouvoir les retenir l'équivalence table et y provoquer une trouble. Ce moyen était trop efficace pour ne pas réussir, et il était trop simple pour que l'emploi d'un fait pas généralisé de contre par son dépréciateur. Aussi, lorsqu'il en vint à battre monnaie, le chef de l'Etat du Sud décrétait le titre de sa gourde à pas gris au titre de la gourde espagnole tarée par son compatriote. Il lui donna 8,50 millièmes de fin.* Lespinasse de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, II, 194.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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country. The complete enfeeblement of tourism has also led to some migration and to an accompanying decline of services and service "industries" in the capital. These losses have surely hurt Haiti and have damaged its chances for growth as well as its capacity to maintain the health, education, and morale of its people. It is not clear, however, to what extent such changes may have produced a negative political reaction to the Duvalier regime. Urban support for Dr. Duvalier appears to have come from some intellectuals, from some army officers, and from portions of the urban lower classes; but numerically most important were those low-paid but literate and aspiring wage-earners whom the Combaire-Sylvains (1959) refer to as "Class III" members. These observers have stressed that the Class III group consisted mainly of industrial employees, those engaged in food-processing, hotel services, workshops, and the like. It was this group that the Combaire-Sylvains credited with the Duvalier victory in 1957, pointing out in addition that "in the small country towns almost all officials, both civil and military, and traders, seemed to belong to this class" (p. 185). If the economic crisis that has gripped Haiti in recent years severely affects the position of this class, the political situation will reflect as much. But the ideology of Class III members—so far as it can be inferred at all—would suggest that one Duvalier may merely be replaced by another. At the same time, the depopulation of those groupings whose members might have led a qualitatively different kind of opposition, during the period of tenure of the United States Marine Corps Mission to Duvalier, may have indefinitely postponed the opportunity for creating a genuinely new political direction.

To state it another way, there are no signs at this time that the regime in power will be pulled down by any organized Haitian opposition. More important, since regimes resting on a narrow popular base have a way of falling without change, there is no indication that within Haiti's present national institutional structure, a genuine opposition to Duvalier-type governments can take shape. This means that even if regime should follow regime in rapid succession, there is little reason to expect that any of them could effect fundamental changes in Haitian society. If such an interpretation is correct, it presupposes an internal equilibrium or stasis so strong that no force for change in half a century has been able to make a politically significant difference.

This pessimistic view is supported by what is known at this time

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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A revolution directed by a general of real ambition was likely to 175
involve an appeal to foreign powers. Haiti being almost roadless, 669
ships were important for moving troops and blockading seaports. 698
Many a chieftain has purchased six or eight ships abroad, and with 457
this "navy" won his fight. Financial intrigue was frequent. By bor- 441
rowing money from France, Germany, or England, with the promise 505
to reshape Haitian financial policy to the benefit of the creditor country, several revolutionaries have secured funds for arms and the necessary soldiers to effect a coup. Sooner or later also one might expect to see the Môle Saint Nicolas, which guards the Windward Passage pathway between Cuba and Haiti, come into the picture. Cession of the Mole has frequently been held out as bait for foreign support, but popular opposition to white ownership of any Haitian land has always stopped actual cession. When Haiti's debt to Germany was due, she borrowed from France to pay it, and then later borrowed from the United States to pay France. All such appeals to foreign powers have merely drawn attention to the defenseless position of the country; many a successful revolutionary chief has lived to regret his appeal for aid.[19]

The one time between 1804 and 1915 when political opinion was 175
vocal and truly significant was in the latter years of Boyer's administration. Then it took pains to attack specific evils with steady per- 665
sistence, even though the cures suggested were vague. Yet after the 208
successful elimination of Boyer, politicians who had worked so brilliantly in the opposition showed themselves even more incapable. Political thought, at a low ebb for the next forty years, revived only when, after 1883, the Liberals were eliminated from politics. Their complete defeat seems to have given elite thinkers time for sober reflection upon the plight of their country. Before 1843 the critics had been in a position to make their words effective; after 1883 they wrote—soberly, brilliantly, persuasively—but their books and pamphlets were read only by a small group of fellow aristocrats who already thought as they did, or disagreed with them in print. Political homilies made no impression upon the minds of the peasants left uneducated by all the elite presidents of Haiti.

In the crucial days of the American Occupation, once again political [648]
debate rose to brilliant heights. The rude shock of seeing foreign

19. See, on this whole subject of Haiti's foreign relations, an excellent chapter in Schmeckebier, op. cit., chap. IX.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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Foreign relations, in the political sense, most of revolved during

175 the nineteenth century about loans and insurrections. Haiti main-
648 tained legations in those countries to which she exported most of her coffee and from which she might obtain credit. Revolutionary leaders sometimes promised as a bait for foreign assistance either tariff preferences or the cession of Môle Saint Nicolas for a naval base; if successful, they might fulfill the first promise but, because of the Monroe Doctrine and the watchful jealousy of the big powers, the Môle was never ceded. The United States had varied dealings with Haiti. Before the Civil War there was more than one movement to transplant freed slaves from this country to Haiti; after the war the United States came very near annexing Haiti; and negotiations over the cession of the Môle did not end until America acquired Guantánimo Bay, across the Windward Passage in Cuba, as a naval base to guard the entrance to the Caribbean.[1]

It was finally the combination of complicated economic affairs and political collapse which produced the Occupation of 1915. In the
175 preceding year both France and Germany threatened to send war-
652 ships to collect loans due them, and were stopped only by the out-
457 break of the World War. An American bank held as its subsidiary the Bank of Haiti, in which the government deposited its funds; when in 1914–15 the presidents followed each other in rapid succession, the bank on instructions from New York refused to allow the government to withdraw its funds. Haiti in retaliation threatened to seize its deposits by force, but the New York bank persuaded the United States government to send a ship to transfer the gold from Port-au-Prince to New York. There were other financial complications, particularly those relating to defaulted payments to a railroad
175 company. What finally precipitated the Occupation, however, was
648 anarchy. When, in July, 1915, President Sam slaughtered 168 poli-
[579] tical prisoners and was himself mobbed and murdered, the American government ordered the landing of its Marines from a warship conveniently anchored in the harbor near Port-au-Prince.[2]

From 1915 to 1934 the foreign affairs of Haiti were under the direction of the United States, whose main concern was to order the economic relations of the country in such fashion that Haiti should

1. The foreign relations of Haiti with the United States have been closely treated in Lockwood L. Monnagan, *Haiti and the United States*, 1714–1938.

2. One of the best accounts of the events leading up to the Occupation is that of H. P. Davis, *Black Democracy*.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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not find herself constantly embroiled with European states and American financial interests. The Haitian debt was funded, and a financial adviser remained in the country even after the Occupation came to an end. It is expected that by 1943 the last debt will be paid; the financial adviser, however, withdrew in 1941. Since the Occupation, although the republic has been free to manage her own affairs, she has consulted frequently with the State Department in Washington.

Nineteen years of occupation ended the century of Haitian isolation. The Americans built roads, conducted health campaigns, made their presence felt even in remote hamlets and valleys. American authors, political, romantic, and sensational, discovered the Antillean republic. Steamship companies stopped their cruises for a few hours at Cap-Haïtien to allow tourists to visit the Citadel, and at Port-au-Prince to see the sights of the capital. Every Haitian now realizes that there is a world outside.

Whatever crises have arisen in Haitian affairs, certain problems have persisted. For whom do they constitute a source of worry? Since the government has always been a dictatorship, limited or absolute, subject to no party control, the incumbents of office have never had the experience of being constantly reminded by their opponents of the misery or daily worries of the population. After a hundred years the people have learned that relief is not to be expected from politicians. Occasionally a dramatic revolutionary leader has persuaded some of the people that the officials in power were responsible for their distress, and so worked up a following; yet even when such movements succeeded, the masses never benefited. To most governments of the past century Haiti's problem has been only one: to frustrate insurrection. There is evidence that recent administrations have busied themselves assiduously with the country's internal problems, although none of them has been adequately solved. The élite, at least as a group, do not feel any apparent responsibility for the maladjustments, nor obligation to effect the necessary reforms. A few persons, and these almost without exception not in office, know what ails the country and say so; a smaller number propose reasonable solutions. The problems remain. Of these the three outstanding are overpopulation with all its accompanying ills, health, and education.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 648 642 423 563 The Occupation had had other far-reaching consequences. It had removed from the Constitution an article which had endured from the very first—the prohibition against ownership of land by white people. Americans argued that since Haiti's greatest potential source of wealth was agricultural (sugar and coffee in particular), new methods were needed if rehabilitation were to occur. Only foreign whites had both the necessary wealth and the requisite agricultural knowledge: therefore, whites must be attracted into the country by an opportunity to establish plantations. Although the Senate of Haiti protested violently against this reversal of tradition, which struck at the people's long pride in their complete ownership of the land, the Americans yielded only on the point of requiring five years' residence of the white landlord in the country. The influx of foreign whites has not been large, but in the Plaine du Nord and Port-au-Prince the white "colonies" are considerably larger now than in 1914.

175 648 563 Up to the present moment the white element in Haiti has not exerted any noticeable pressure on the government. Its mere presence, however, is bound to be a restraining influence on politicians, for most of the whites are Americans, and the government at Washington may not always follow a good-neighbor policy. With the clannishness so usual in white colonists living among darker people, the Americans in Haiti have their private clubs and their closed social set. For the first time since 1804 the élite are socially not the highest-ranking persons in the country.

175 648 563 144 The physical presence of several hundred white Marines for nineteen years had also one unplanned but inevitable result: an increase in the amount of white blood in the population. For many decades numerous élite had rested comfortably beneath their light skins, knowing that only they, with their greater mobility in the world, had any real chance to sustain a white strain. The Occupation, however, brought white men in contact with black women; there was a steady average of 2,000 white Marines in the country for two decades. The light skin of resulting offspring suggested to many the possibility of a climb up the social ladder now that the most difficult rung had already been achieved. No figures are available on the number of children born in Haiti between 1915 and 1934 of white fathers, but it was a perceptible influx in the lower class. [594]

175 + 58 Haitian businessmen enjoyed a greater economic prosperity during the Occupation than they had ever known before. It is commonly

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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reported in Haiti that although they joined patriotically in the cheering when the Marines embarked in 1934, many of them shed tears to see the departure of 2,000 monthly salaries, most of which had been enriching the local tills. Indeed, the country came much closer to establishing a mercantile middle class during the Occupation than ever before. The only real control left behind by the Americans was an overseer of the national budget, destined to leave as soon as Haiti's external debt was finally paid off. To that end the government saved rather than spent, so that businessmen found no comfort in the state of economic affairs, particularly during a decade of world depression and European disturbance. Nationalist economic theories in Europe have upset Haitian markets, so that the élite thriftily save their pennies against hard times instead of spending them freely on present luxuries. The American overseer of the budget withdrew in 1941.

175 458 [648] [652]

At many points the forces of the Occupation touched unwittingly upon deep-rooted prejudices of the Haitian people. In order to secure laborers for road construction the Marines revived an old corvée law of Christophe's time, requiring forced labor on public works at the need of the government. Many of the ill-nourished peasants were taxed beyond their physical powers by work on the roads, so that an armed revolt by caco guerrillas broke out. In suppression required months of time and cost many lives, leaving in its train a great deal of ill will.

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The efficient Americans also came to grief when they attempted to make Haitians orderly in the American way. Land titles were in chaos, as we have noted. American experts wished to find a basis for internal taxation, so that economic reform might be effective and permanent. The effort to have people declare their claims so that these might be properly registered had to be given up after a few weeks, for the peasant owners knew without written deeds their local boundaries, and among the squatters those who realized their title might not stand under strict investigation were understandably averse to having questions of property matters raised by the authorities of an alien and interfering government.

175 648 423

Wherever Marine barracks were located, there were centers of a cultural discontinuity which was bound in the long run to affect Haitian ideas and practices. Automobiles, radios, amusements, even the daily conversation of the Marines, all left their mark upon a people who had been effectively isolated from the world for more than a century.

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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lie except in raw form, in which it had an annual sale of only a few thousand pounds. Other subordinate exports were cotton, logwood, lignum vitae, mahogany, tortoise shells, hides, cacao, cassia, wax, ginger, bullocks' horns, and tobacco—and many of these came primarily from the Dominican rather than the Haitian part of the island, during the twenty-two year period of union. The imports were mainly clothing and provisions. That an agricultural country should need to bring in flour, butter, cheese, lard, beef, pork, candles, and especially—in the light of former days—refined sugar, is eloquent testimony to the degree to which food production had declined since colonial times. Other imports were more to be expected, since manufacture had never developed: linen, cotton goods of all kinds, some few woolens, cutlery, iron goods, wines and brandies, oil, lumber, coarse iron goods, earthenware, tin plates, and minor articles.[11]

Gone now were the days of big things in Haiti. Estates of thousands of acres would in Boyer's time have been only a liability. Profits were measured, or rather hoped for, in terms of hundreds rather than thousands of dollars.[12] Saint-Domingue of the 1780's was one of the exciting parts of the world to traders; Haiti of fifty years later was little more than a vague name except to specialists. Any country relying for its economic security upon one crop and its sale in a foreign market must expect vicissitudes in its income. Haiti had these in full measure. And so the prosperity of the country steadily diminished.[13]

(11. See the very careful report to Great Britain by her consul, Charles Mackenzie, in 1840: Notes on Haiti, II, 177–190.

(12. Mackenzie [Correspondence Received at the Foreign Office [of Great Britain] Relative to Haiti, Document XII] reports in 1840: "Generally speaking, no sugar is manufactured on the estates devoted to the cultivation of the sugar cane; the juice is either boiled down in a coarse shape, and sold for consumption raw, or distilled into a very inferior rum, called here 'Tafia.'" Thus, citing the case of Tet, an estate formerly owned by Pétion but in 1840 by Boyer, he reports: "Formerly 1,700 carreaux were in cane; 1,400 slaves were employed on it; 3 sugar mills were constantly at work, and excellent clayed sugar was made. Now only about 7 carreaux are in cultivation; 70 laborers are employed; the only produce is a little cheap coarse rum, which has to be retailed in a small shop by the side of the road, in front of the proprietor's residence."

(13. These vicissitudes have been frequently noted. Droulhac and Lamothe, great coffee cultivators, were aware of economic interdependence. The chief factors at work to diminish Haitian prosperity were now the division of land into small parcels of house, and the competition of other countries with Haitian coffee abroad. The price of coffee had declined in all the European markets, making the return to the cultivator considerably small.

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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3. Pétion, Boyer, and Inginac as Administrators

Pétion lived very simply in the South, like a plain republican magistrate. He sat on his piazza, accessible to all his people. He had a quiet way of answering his opponents which did not make enemies of them. He made his secretary answer every letter that arrived, no matter how small; many were simply inquiries about the President's health. Yet the wars between Pétion and Christophe dragged on from 1807 to 1812,[1] draining the finances of the republic. Not only the crops declined; so also did most of the public improvements instituted by the colonial planters; so did trade; so did habits of industry. Everything seemed to conspire against hard work. The rich plains of the Cul-de-Sac and the Artibonite Valley were ravaged by fire and warfare; necessary equipment for sugar making was destroyed; the money for new machines and buildings was unavailable; and the men were drawn away from their land by military duties.

Inginac, Boyer's secretary of state, after the Revolution of 1843 had got rid of both the President and his secretary, wrote his memoirs. There are some revealing passages. Inginac reports that Pétion told him only forty days before his death that Boyer was a man of probity and delicacy. "but unhappily he is petulant; he is too set in his ways to conciliate those who might assist him. In everything he wants to dominate, and he will bring unhappiness to the country if he does not change."[2] Inginac cites cases to show that Pétion's prophecy was correct. Boyer in 1820 repealed the more unpopular laws, particularly those requiring personal corvée and the repair of public roads; but instead of taking advice from his cabinet on important economic matters, he frequently announced that he was president and would not be run by anybody. Consequently, according to Inginac, he made mistakes which might have been avoided.[3] Defending himself, the former secretary offers a clue to the failure of the régime—possibly unavoidable—by showing that the administration merely suggested, did not require, action:

"Have I not constantly, not only preached and correspondent about the necessity of making agriculture prosperous, but also given work at as high wages as the country could afford. Have I not created fabrications on lands formerly totally uncultivated, putting formerly idle men to work? Have I not published at my own expense, although I directed the National Primary, methods for cultivating tobacco and coffee plants, of which I distributed gratis several thousand copies?"

In spite of all encouragement which the administration could offer, agricultural production continued to decline, while expenses increased, and external trade fell off from a third to a half. The government had to borrow from the banking firm of [illegible] to [illegible] the [illegible] of [illegible]

1. Hostilities between the two parts of Haiti ceased about 1812 because of the external fear on the part of Christophe and Pétion of Napoleon's aggressions, and the threat which this constituted to the whole former colony. There was had ravaged the plantations and removed laborers from the soil. Then came the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain, cutting off many of the supplies which Haiti drew from both countries. There was accordingly no operation mood, with no further hostilities. A neutral territory of ten leagues between the boundaries of the two states was widely spread upon; neither army was to cross it. This was the rich plain of Bonnaire, once the garden of the island, now a wilderness.

2. Joseph Balthazar Inginac, *Mémoires* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1843), pp. 32, 34, 35.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

payments due to the French government.

1: Hurston E-4,5 (1934) 1937 1V3 Haiti 1V3
Mirebalais

tial structure with rounded arches in the Roman style, roofed over, like most other buildings, with galvanized iron. Other public buildings are the town hall — the *Mairie* — and the "Hall of Justice"; near by are the stone walls of a public building begun some years ago as a school, but destined apparently to house what is known as the "Bureau of Contributions," a euphemism for the tax-collector's quarters. Despite the fact that Mirebalais was one of the most difficult regions for the American occupation to subdue during the Caco uprising of 1918–20,[10] it was one of the first districts where the Gendarmerie d'Haïti was completely Haitianized, and from which all American Marine officers were withdrawn. Only a small detachment is stationed there at present. Its well-kept barracks are near the church, and the prisons form a part of the same compound, from whence issue daily the striped-suited prisoners, men and women, under guard or alone on parole, who do communal work in the town and the near-by countryside.

The town awakens at dawn to the chattering of domesticated guinea-fowl and the crowing of cocks. Occasionally a camion rumbles through the principal thoroughfare; more rarely an automobile dashes by in great clouds of dust on its way to Las Cahobas, or Hinche, or Santo Domingo City. If it is a market day, the streets are early filled with country folk on their way to dispose of their produce, and the clatter from the market place behind the church is heard everywhere until the heat of the day brings a lull to all commerce, and drowsiness once more settles over everything. By mid-afternoon during the planting season, drums can be heard over the countryside. The sounds are not those of the "throbbing" voodoo drums — though they have more than once been mistaken for them by travelers — but they set the rhythm for the communal work of the *combites*, which perform cooperative agricultural labor. As the rapid dusk follows the disappearance of the sun behind the mountains, the voices of

Honolulu E-4, 1 (1934) 1937 SV3 HaLI SV3
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above, *A country dwelling.*
below, *A combine at work.*

(facing P. 11)

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

CHAPTER III

WORKING THE AMALGAM

L75 S67 42 214

THE FIRST slaves brought to the New World — those Negroes needed, according to the familiar account, to replace the Indians who preferred death to bondage — reached Haiti in 1510.[1] The sanguine hope of the colonists that the labor of one Negro would be worth more than that of four Indians was, however, not borne out by experience, for the work of these slaves was far from satisfactory, and their death-rate was distressingly high.[2] Yet though they were found to be useless in the gold mines, their owners were more than compensated by the discovery that they made excellent laborers in the cultivation of sugar-cane and the making of sugar. So profitable was this, indeed, that Haiti, with the rest of the West Indies, came to be known as the "sugar islands," and it is recounted how "the magnificent palaces erected by Charles V at Madrid and Toledo were built solely from the revenues obtained from the monopoly of the crown on the importation of sugar from the Island of Espagnole."[3]

L75 S67

During these early times the fundamental rule of slavery in Haiti was laid down: "In all that has to do with slavery, custom is everything, the law is nothing."[4] In 1518 one Zuazo, a licentiate, writing to the King, stated that the control of Negro slaves depended entirely upon the treatment accorded them. "Some of those I found on my arrival were thieves,

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1904) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

175 178 567 [179] tinuation of African cultural traditions was not easy, certain things did persist. While the material facts of the life of the slaves was at once subordinated to European patterns—in dress and implements and to a certain extent in housing, for example[26]—yet in other matters they could live as they had lived in Africa. Thus one account of the time, quoted by [164] [543] de Vassière,[27] tells how the slaves carried on communal hoeing, timing their strokes to the rhythms of songs that begged some favor of their visitor, or to songs of praise (and, when the white observer was not present, undoubtedly also singing songs of derision), in the characteristic African fashion that, as will be seen, has survived in Haitian peasant life to this day. Similarly their traditions of cooking, of eating, of fixing the time for their meals (despite St. Mery's comment that "the Negro has no other rule of eating than the demands of his appetite"), of respect for their elders; their attitudes toward death and their rituals of burial, their dances, their songs, and, above all, their non-Christian religious beliefs, all continued to be stamped with the mark of Africa.[28] On the 17 other hand, opportunities to learn and imitate French cus- 567 toms were by no means neglected, for the prestige of the masters filtered through the ranks of the slaves until it reached even the field-hands, for the nearer in service the Negro was to the person of his master, the more Europeanized was his behavior and the prouder he was and the more he exploited his opportunities to follow European patterns of habit.[29] Not only did the house-servants imitate French dances,[30] but we are told how in Martinique, for example, all the slaves were taught these figures.[31] In the field of religion, also, the efforts [199] of the Church to capitalize the royal edicts which made baptism of the slaves compulsory were far from vain, at least in so far as the outward manifestations of their acceptance of the faith were concerned. Writings of the time, however, do not omit comment on the discouragement of the missionizing Fathers who seriously undertook this task, because too often

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

done by the owner himself only if the field is very small; otherwise one of the co-operative work-groups thus form such an important element in Haitian rural economy must be called.

The regulation of communal labor in Mirebalais, though extremely informal, is none the less effective. There are three or four types of such organizations, none of which requires a large outlay of funds on the part of the one whose land is being worked, and only one of which, the "mutual association," has any restriction as to membership. In this last case, three or four or five men agree to work for each other a given number of hours, rotating their working period of three hours or half a day in the fields of each of the parties to the agreement. The other co-operative groups vary principally as to their size and the time of day when their work is carried on. The smallest is the *mise*, which consists of perhaps half a dozen or ten men who come to help a neighbor in his work, and labor from early morning until about the middle of the morning. A somewhat larger group, who work from about this time until midday, is known as a *coup de main*. Finally, there is the *combite*, the Mirebalais form of the characteristic organization for mutual self-help known elsewhere in Haiti as the *Société Congo*.[3]

Though strenuous physical labor is involved in the work of the *combite*, for the Haitian it symbolizes recreation and enjoyment — the stimulus of working with one's fellows, the pleasure of gossiping with friends, and the partaking of the feast which marks the climax of the day. All this makes the occasion one to be anticipated and enjoyed, and no one witnessing ten or fifteen men on horseback, each with a hoe over his shoulder, shouting and laughing as they clatter by at full gallop, can fail to sense their eager desire to arrive at their destination, a near-by *combite*.[4]

When a man or a woman needs help in preparing a field — for women, particularly those who sell in the market, may often become wealthy and large cultivators — a request is

L: Herskovits E-4,8 (1934) 1937 SV2 HAIT SV2
Mirebalais

made of key-men in the district informally called *chefs d'escuade*. They have the reputation of being those to whose call a number of men, perhaps a dozen, perhaps two or three times that many, will respond and come to give the aid that is desired. Such a person is given a "bouquet"—a bottle of *clairin*—which insures the appearance of himself and his group on the date set. A *combite* may be held at any time during the week except Sundays, which are dedicated to rest, and Tuesdays (in earlier times Mondays), when tradition holds a person must be free to work his own fields and care for tasks needed to be done at his own house. There is no requirement in either law or custom to respond to the call for communal work, and the larger landowners, who usually reside in the towns, rarely participate in a *combite*. So great is the pleasure derived from work of this sort, however, and so living is the realization among the peasantry of its potential benefits, that a man hesitates before he refuses to take part in a *combite* to which he has been summoned. Sometimes a man who has been faithful in his attendance at *combites* and has worked well at them falls ill during the time for planting or for clearing his ground of underbrush or for hoeing. In such case a *combite* is summoned, and even though this man is unable to offer the usual feast, his services are remembered and the men work with a will to insure the proper preparation of his ground.

The scene in a field where a large *combite* is at work is an arresting one. The men form a line, with a drummer in front of their hoes. The *simidor*, who leads the singing as he works with the others, adds the rhythm of his song to the regular beats of the drum, thus setting the time for the strokes of the implements wielded by the workers. This drum, slung about the neck of the drummer, is of the European form, never the hollowed-out African type that figures in religious rites. Its sound can carry far, however, and thus it not only beats the time for the hoes, but notifies all concerned that the *combite*

L: Hambourdin 2-4,8 (1934) 1937 SV3 Hadt SV3
Microfilmed

is under way. The size of the *combite* is judged by the number of drums and *lambi*, or conch-shell horns used, for where two or three of either are required, an especially large group of workers is usually assembled. It may be observed in passing that it is undoubtedly the sound of this *combite* drum, heard in the mountains or through the brush by travelers, that has so often been mistaken for the "mysterious booming" of the *vodun* drums.*

The preparation of the food is the work of the women of the household giving the *combite*, aided by their female relations and the wives of friends and neighbors. This is no small task, for goats and even a bullock may be killed to feed a large *combite*, while in addition other dishes to go with the meat must be cooked. Each woman is given charge of a great pot and does her best to see to it that an appetizing dish is ready for the men when their work is done. While the food is being cooked, the real object of the *combite*, the clearing of the field, is being pursued. A *chef d'esquade*, usually with a small group, begins the afternoon's labor, and, being a fast worker, he himself sets the pace. As more men arrive, he walks about, encouraging the constantly increasing number of men in their efforts, seeing to it that the tempo originally set is continued, and when necessary picking up a hoe to restore a lagging rhythm. Occasionally the *chef d'esquade* will stand in front of the men to make sure that all keep together, and if the lazy cannot be roused to work by direct order or through ridicule, he will drive them away.

The work progresses with incredible speed as the line moves down the field. In one case a *combite* of between fifty and seventy-five men completely cleared a field of several acres in a single afternoon, and this without undue effort or what appeared to be the expenditure of much energy. The flashing of the hoes in the brilliant sunlight accentuates the color of the scene; each implement is raised high above the head of the one who wields it, to be brought down at the proper in-

above, *Preparing the food for a cookfire feast.*
below, *Drums marking the beat for the hunt.*

(facing P. 92)

sant and in almost perfect accord with the hoes of all the other men in line. Pauses are frequent, and men often drop out of the line for a longer period of rest — even those not of the type laughingly called *majeurs*, who shirk their task and come to a *combite* principally to share in the feasting — and these, for the time being, join the singing with added verve. During the periods of rest, re-alignments are made and, if necessary, the direction of the line is changed; after a short time, however, the cry of the *simidor* rings out, the initial statement of a song is sounded, and as the chorus swings into the melody, the hoes rise again, the beat of the drum is begun, the plaintive notes of the *lambi* are heard, and the workers once more move down the field.*

Acting as the representative of the owner of the field to be cleared is a man who is called the *directeur*. If a large number of workers, a hundred or more, are assembled, he may divide them into two groups, assigning each half of the field, and then there is competition to see which group will first complete its allotted task. On such an occasion there would not only be more than one drum, but also more than one principal singer, or *simidor*, and the songs would thereupon have improvised words boasting of the prowess of the winning side, and ridiculing its opponents. The "director" also apportions the food, for it is customary to follow the rule which holds that since not all workers are equally eager or competent, so the rewards should not be the same for all. The shirkers are well known. They come but a little before sunset, or, arriving earlier, dawdle, walking about with their hoes and accomplishing but little during the afternoon. The lack of enthusiasm of these *majeurs* for work does not escape the "director," for though all who come to the *combite* must be fed, such men receive relatively little, while those who have worked the hardest not only are rewarded with dishes heaped with especially choice morsels of meat, but often find several sous when they reach the bottom of the dish.

The *combite* songs are distinctive in Haitian music for their melodic quality. Song in unison, as is characteristic of most forms of Negro music, they contain the statement of a theme by the leader and a response from a chorus, so that the contrast between this great volume of sound from the chorus and the solo voice of the *simèdor* is singularly effective. It is not the melodic qualities alone that make these songs so appealing to the Haitians, however. At the *combite* a man not only learns all the gossip of the day, but enjoys learning and singing the songs which caustically comment on the shortcomings of neighbors, or evaluate the hospitality of those who have called *combites*, or detail scandal, phrased with sufficient directness to allow the reference of the song to remain clear, but warily, so as not to give the individual pilloried ground for direct recrimination. The *simèdor* is thus a person to be feared, since in addition to his ability as a singer and a leader of song, he is also an outstanding improviser. As one Haitian expressed it, "The *simèdor* is a journalist, and every *simèdor* is a Judas!"

One or two examples of these songs will make clear their favor among a people to whose natural love of gossip is added a patterned relish for oblique public statement of individual shortcomings. The first comments on a miserly *combite* host:

À là!	Down!
Moin dit, messieurs,	I say, messieurs.
Moin p'ralé nan combite ga-é	I went to that *combite*
Moin pas mangé.	[But] I did not eat.
Moin allé, moin pas joinne un grogue	I went, but I found no drink
Pour moin buè.	To drink.
Assé-a! En à!	Enough! Up!
Moin dit, messieurs,	I say, messieurs.
M'allé nan combite ga-é	I went to that *combite*

Moin pas joinne mangé	[But] I found no food
Pou' m'mangé.	To eat.

Another song refers to a pungent bit of local gossip, which, though known to everyone, concerned an affair that precluded the mention of names. This is usually the case, for it is not ordinarily deemed wise to make specific references; yet this must not be thought of as an invariable rule, as is shown by the fact that a number of these songs were recorded where names were mentioned with great freedom. Thus in Mirebalais as elsewhere, circumstances must govern cases; the composer of the following short song did not feel it politic to do more than recall the case:

Ca va reglé,	This will be arranged,
En é, a!	Up, a!
Affai' cousine germaine	The affair of a first cousin
A'c cousin germain.	With her first cousin.

Reference is also made to an impending quarrel where a suspicion of magic practices entered:

Moin dit, Juda,	I say, Judas,
Allé l'église;	Go to the church;
Quand ou apè tourné	When you return
Ou a quitté moin tranquille, o-o;	You will leave me in peace, o-o;
Si ou allé l'église,	If you go to the church,
Ou apè quitté moin tranquille, o-o.	You will leave me in peace, o-o.

Still another song is a challenge, for in it the singer boasts that he is the equal of the man figuratively designated in it, and will cause trouble if resisted:

À là!	Down!
M'apé mandé qui moune	I ask what person
Qui en dedans caille là.	Is in that house.

Compère répond':	My friend replies:
"C'é' moin qui avec cousine moin."	"It is I who am with my cousin."
Assé-é!	Enough!
Moin en dedans déjà.	I am already inside.
En é-é-o!	Up, o!
Nan point taureau	No bull
Pasé taureau.	Is better than [this] bull.
En é-o!	Up, o!

Finally, there may be cited a composition which complains against a shirker who comes and eats, but does little work:

Samba, é-é,	Samba, é-é,
Moin vé ou malhonnet,	I see that you are a dishonest man,
Tonnèrre!	Tonnèrre! *
Moin planté maïs moin,	I plant my maize,
L'année rive,	The year rolls round,
Moin planté mangé,	I plant food,
Ou apé managé li.	You eat it.
En é-é-o!	In the air!
Moin planté zabocs,	I plant avocados,
Ça pou' ou mangé,	They are for you to eat,
Ou malhonnet-o.	You are a dishonest man-o.
Tonnèrre!	Tonnèrre!

The field cleared and hoed, the work of planting begins. This is carried on in accordance with a well-defined calendar of agriculture, which takes as its starting-point the beginning of the rains. Maize, which matures quickly, is the first crop, and is planted during the latter part of March or early in April, unless the rains are delayed, when it is planted later that month. Congo peas, which mature less rapidly, are put

* *Tonnèrre*, "thunder," is a Haitian-French oath; the original is retained because in translation its force is lost.

land, whose bodies are buried in it, and whose spirits watch over it. As has been shown in the discussion of property, land in Haiti is owned privately, and, once title has passed, is subject to no alienation, except at the will of the owner — an attitude also held toward property of other categories, as is evidenced by the fact that most of the possessions of a man, particularly his livestock, are marked for identification, and theft is severely punished. Even the disposal of stray animals whose owners cannot be identified must follow well-defined legal procedure, in accordance with which they are held by the officers of the commune for a stated period of time before being sold at public auction. All marks on these animals are carefully noted in the records, so that title to them may be duly established.

In the organization of production and distribution an African mold, if not full content, predominates. The co-operative work-system, which is so important in maintaining agricultural production, is directly related to comparable groupings of West Africa, of which a distinctive form is the *dokpwe* of Dahomey, described when the African origins of Haitian culture were examined. The *combite*, as an instrument of co-operative labor and mutual self-help, with its tradition of giving no pecuniary reward for work done, but of making the feast which comes at the end of the day's labor adequate return — all these, represent pure retentions of African practice. Even more striking is the carry-over in the attitudes which go with these outer forms — the manner in which the participants look forward with pleasant anticipation to taking part in *combites*, the enjoyment which they derive from their group work, and the verve with which the work is done are clear expressions of these attitudes. The role of the *combite*-song in exercising social control and enforcing conformity to local custom is entirely African, as is its function in stimulating work by setting a rhythm for it.

African, too, is the institution of the market, though in this

one seed from that tomato would ever take root under the hot sun. Some time later, when I knew this man well, I talked to him about the care with which seeds must be planted if they are to grow properly. I told him how we grow our tomatoes. He listened carefully, nodding his head. When I had finished he said: "Yes, that must be a good way to do things in your country. But here in this valley God is good. He does not forget his children. From the broken tomato many plants will sprout. When God is good to you, you do not have to count the seeds." I suggested that perhaps one should not waste any of the precious seeds that God had provided; and to this he replied: "How is there waste? My garden is made to flourish by Zaka [the country man's special deity]. Some people give Zaka a feast every year, but between times they forget. Zaka helps me in my work, and I don't forget him. When I break the tomato and put it on the ground that way, it is a little taste for Zaka. Whatever I plant, I give him some. He is good to me, I am good to him."

What I learned from many incidents like this one was that the eye does not always see correctly. The old man was not just planting tomatoes, nor was he performing a conventionalized ritual act. It was a highly personalized act of faith in nature and confidence in the deity who shared his work.

A large part of this book deals with Vodoun, the religious practices based on West African traditions. One soon discovers that the songs and dances of Vodoun ritual are not merely music and motion supplementing and decorating more serious affairs. Virtually every aspect of Vodoun ritual is placative or invocational. The songs that are sung and the dances that are danced are direct supplications of various supernatural forces.

Undoubtedly, a number of principles which are put forward in this study do not apply equally to every region of Haiti; but they are, I think, true in general terms. Not until one has accepted the fact that different explanations exist for given phenomena, that the same rites are performed in different fashion in different places, and that the cult priests themselves do not agree on many details, may one begin to work toward a general view of the Haitian scene.

All of Haitian life is not Vodoun. And there are of course some Haitians who are relatively outside the central circle of its influence. But the inner meanings of Vodoun and its relationship to the total view of life permeate the entire scene. Music, too, binds together practically the entire fabric of Haitian existence. It is essential not only to the cult temple but to countless workaday activities. Agrarian work groups often perform their tasks to the accompaniment of a drum. And in the cult temple, the iron hoe of the fields often serves as a percussion instrument.

The Drum and the Hoe is the result of studies made over a period of

[P.110]

9. Land and Work

There is a common Haitian saying which goes: "Piti manjé, travaille yonn pile" (A little food, but tremendous work). This is the way the Haitian peasant sees it. There is endless labor in the fields or in the perpetually eroding mountain gardens, on landholdings that are too small to give any promise of a better life. The rains that give life to the crops take away, year by year, the nourishment of the soil. Where forests or lush grasses once grew on the hillsides, there are now deep, dry gullies. Where coffee plants, cotton, and yams once grew abundantly, there are now fields of stones. This is the heritage of the peasant farmer of today. Small holdings on the hillsides and in the valleys have become smaller through the years as the population has swelled and the land been subdivided. Three and a half million people must take their sustenance from that land. More than three hundred persons must share each square mile of soil. But most of Haiti is mountainous and formidable to agriculture. Two-thirds of the land area is uncultivable by modern standards. There is less than one acre of useful land per person. The best of the land in the alluvial valleys is held by large corporations producing sugar and sisal. Flat, arid stretches elsewhere are semi-desert.

In the small gardens the peasants grow maize, *ti mèl* (millet), coffee, bananas and plantains, cotton, beans of various kinds, yams, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, and manioc. In the delta areas they grow rice, and along the long coastline thousands of fishermen sail out in crude but sturdy boats to bring back fish from the sea. Citrus trees, mango trees, and avocado trees grow wild; but they are fewer than in the old days. The Haitian works the soil and manages to subsist, but nature and history have not been kind to him.

Even less kind have been some of the chroniclers of the past, who have sought to disparage the Haitian as a lazy and careless creature who would

rather starve than work. An Englishman, James Franklin, wrote in 1828, for example:

> Experience may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coercion and want will impel the Haytian to labour; and I have my doubts as to the practicability of enforcing labour in Hayti until the people have been better instructed, and their characters become changed.

As Franklin summarized it: "Nature is too generous to the Haytian; he never wants, and so never works for hire, as do free labourers in other countries."[1]

The early nineteenth century saw a flood of such bitter comments about the remains of the once rich and flourishing French colony of St. Domingue. The vast productivity of Haiti under French rule had made that colony one of the richest in the New World. The country was dotted with sugar mills, brick-covered wells, and warehouses; and carefully built irrigation canals, locks, and dams assured water for the plantations. In 1790, under the slave system, Haiti had exported 163,000,000 pounds of sugar. In 1826, a quarter of a century after the revolution, it was reported to have exported 33,000 pounds.

This falling off in production and exports doubtless had many causes, but one of the most significant was the Haitian's revolt not only against slavery but also against continuing the same kind of work he had performed as a slave. He saw not too much difference between forced, unpaid labor and working for any large landholder at subsistence wages. To the Haitian slave the inspiring battle cry of the French Revolution did not mean that all men would work together on another's man plantation and receive the same wages. It meant that every man would have his own garden to work for himself as he chose; every man would be a full citizen, with land of his own, free to come and go, to plant what he wished, to sell what he could. Despite long years under a colonial slave system, the Haitian still remembered a different way of life in Africa, where mass production for export was not the primary objective of labor.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the population of Haiti was not much more than half a million—less than one sixth of what it is today. There was plenty of land, and much of it had not yet been wasted by constant tilling and erosion. When the French were driven out, the Haitian peasant re-created an economic world of his own liking. The plantation system which had poured out sugar and coffee and indigo for Europe faded away, and in its place there sprang up an agrarian system which has continued until the present day. In the early

[1] [Franklin, The Present State of Hayti, p. 362. Cf. p. 351, category 116. -- Analyst]

162 a massacre in the western part of the Dominican Republic which took
[248] the lives of an estimated five thousand to fifteen thousand Haitians. The survivors fled homeward, and many were settled in frontier areas by the government. Even so, today there are believed to be some sixty or seventy thousand Haitians still living east of the border. Large numbers of Haitians, particularly men, migrated to Cuba in the years following World War I, in search of better wages in the cane fields. By 1931 there were more than eighty thousand Haitians in that country. But resentment by local Cuban labor and the onset of the depression combined to force the repatriation of great numbers of them. Thirty thousand Haitians came home from Cuba in the years 1936 and 1937 alone.

16 Solution of Haiti's problem of overpopulation does not seem imminent.
[242] The obvious answers would seem to be birth control, emigration, wiser use of natural resources, and industrialization. Since the country is predominantly Catholic, and since much social value is placed on children, birth control seems unlikely. And as health facilities become more widespread and infant mortality drops, the pressure will become more acute. Emigration seems to offer no hope, since neighboring islands and countries
[311] on the mainland give no encouragement. The Haitian may yet learn to conserve his land and to get more out of it, to stock his lakes with fish, and to
[89] bring more fish in from the sea. But this will not suffice. Nothing is left but industrialization, and that seems to be a thing of the far-distant future.

181 Nevertheless, the character of Haitian life remains essentially agrarian.
165 The displaced peasant, whether he is now a hotel "houseboy," a taxi
161 driver, or a cane cutter, dreams of returning to the land some day and growing bananas, coffee, and cotton that will make him independent. In far-off places such as Havana and New York, Haitians work and save money with the expectation that one day they will come home, buy fifteen or twenty acres of ground, build a new house, and live out their lives as decently prosperous habitants. The traditions of the agricultural
[198] society, along with Voodoo, continue to play a significant role in the life of the people.

197 One such tradition is the institution of the *coumbite*, a loosely knit
[24] cooperative work party of neighbors and friends. The word itself probably comes from the Spanish *convide*, or *convoir*, meaning "to invite." A member of the group holds a coumbite by notifying his fellow members that on such-and-such a day his fields will require clearing or hoeing. There are several variants of the work gathering. One, called *cavé* or *cavée*, meets at irregular intervals and only on special invitation. There are no regular reciprocal obligations in the *cavée*; the workers are

[Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," Journal of Negro History, October, 1940, p. 615. Cf. p. 352, Category 116. --Analyst]

compensated by a "feast" and party given at the end of the day by the host. More usual than the *coumbit* is the regular sharing of work on one another's fields—the *ronde*, or "taking turns."

An early morning work gathering is known as a *dessant jou*. It starts early in the day, sometimes before dawn, sometimes just ten or eleven in the morning, when the sun becomes hot, and then dispersa. An afternoon coumbite is called a *dini-marchè* (dinner market) and lasts from about two in the afternoon until early evening. When the work is finished, the men go to the house of the host, where they have dinner, much in the manner of the American threshing party. An all-day affair is called a grand coumbite.

Essential to all coumbites are musicians and singing leaders. The instruments used are various, according to local customs. In the south they are usually drums, cymbals, and bamboo trumpets. In some areas of the north, the *lambi*, or conch-shell trumpet, is favored.

According to the custom in the south, on the day of the coumbite the drummers arise in the false dawn before sunrise and begin a round-about march to the house of the host. They pass before the hats of all the neighbors who are going to join the party, playing a *rappel* on the drums. By one's and two's the workers come down for trails to join the procession, bringing hoes, machetes, or sickles as required. As the marching group grows larger, there is talking, laughter, and perhaps singing. Most of the men who join the procession are from close by. Others who may have to travel from a distance, perhaps from the next valley, go directly to the house of the host. When the workers arrive there, the women of the house serve coffee. This is the usual breakfast of the Haitian peasant.

Then the drummers play another *rappel*, and the men go down to the field that is to be tilled. There may be ten, twenty, or fifty of them. Some coumbites are even larger. If the group is a small one, the men line up together. The singing leader, called a *sonbe* or *simbiler*, begins a song, the drummers play, the hoes begin to rise and fall in unison, and the workers join in the singing. If the group is large it will divide into two or three squads, each trying to outdo the other. The men stand shoulder to shoulder, moving the hoes up and down together, synchronizing their movements by pauses as they sing their responsive parts. Sometimes tafia or rum is portioned out. The squads move forward slowly, inching their way across the field. The sonbe beats on his hoe blade with a stone to keep time for his song. His job is to "encourage" the men. He may sing old familiar songs or compose new ones, songs with humor and bite in them, ribald songs, and songs of ridicule. They may criticize

476 476 532 532 men who have failed to join the coumbite, or praise the host, or single out various individuals for comment. The songs of the coumbite are a newspaper of the affairs of the people. The news is personalized, editorialized, and replete with caustic epigrams.[1]

476 476 532 594 At noon the drummers signal a halt, and the workers shoulder their hoes, wipe off their machetes, and adjourn to the house for food. If it is a grand coumbite, the men rest for several hours, talking, catching up on sleep, or playing cards or dominoes. About three o'clock they go back to the fields to work until evening. Then comes the feast, under the canopy adjoining the house. The host and his wife have killed and cooked one or more goats, depending on the size of the group. The men are served meat, rice, beans, and whatever else has been prepared.

[203] Afterward, women join the party, and there is more talk or rum. Some of the men then drift homeward, but most stay on for dancing. Zouc, Congo, or John drums are brought out, and the festivities begin. If another coumbite is not scheduled for the next day, the music and dancing may last well into the night.

476 532 Women, too, have coumbites to perform various kinds of large tasks, from field work to winnowing and coffee sorting, though in general the women's work groups lack the festive character of the men's gatherings.

476 532 575 There is a more tightly knit form of coumbite, known as a *société*. In southern Haiti there are the société Congo and the société Martinique; in northern Haiti there is the société Cipé. These sociétés are clubs built around mutual work needs and recreational activities. The société Congo that appears in the town or city streets during Rara days, with bamboo or conch-shell trumpets, drums, flags, and masks, is usually composed of the men who have joined forces to till the fields. In some instances, it may also conform roughly to membership in a particular houngfor, or cult center. Unlike the ordinary coumbite, the société is not a group which meets only at ground-breaking or harvesting time; it is a permanent organization with regular, sometimes day-to-day, obligations. Week after week it moves from one man's land to another, doing the tasks that have to be done. There is no question of "Can you come?" The group goes first to one man's land, then to another's until all the work has been done. If a member of the société falls sick, so that he cannot work his own field, the société takes over his tasks for him.

476 Coumbites are held not only for agricultural work but for house-building, and sometimes for the building of a houngfor.

[191] The Haitian coöperative work group has much in common with European and American husking and barn-building parties; but it has

[For footnote see Category 116, P. 352. -- Anal 151]

many non-European characteristics. The manner of work, even down to specific minor activity, has direct and hardly disputable West African connections. Instead of the short-handled West African hoe, the Haitians use a long-handled one, and they work more erect than stooped. But the rhythmic, synchronized use of the hoe, the singing leader and the musicians who stand to one side to "encourage" the workers, the calling of the workers by drum *cryptic*, the special consideration for the sick, and the concept of long-term community endeavor are all of West African beginnings. The *coumbite* is the legitimate descendant of the Dahomean *dokpwe*, the *kwem* of the Mandiba (Cameroons), the *ko* of the Kpelle (Liberia), and other West African cooperative systems.

Although the *dokpwe* of Dahomey is a more formal and intricate institution, permeated with certain abstract and ritual concepts, its social and functional characteristics are not greatly different from those of the Haitian *coumbite*, in which cooperation is marked. Herskovits notes that working with the Dahomean *dokpwe*

> expresses recreation rather than labor to the individual member. There is song and dance to drumming and the sound of gongs, on the way and after arrival, and there is feasting and an exhibition of skill. It is an impressive sight to see from forty to a hundred men hoeing earth for wells, or laying thatch, or hoeing the earth with various movements to the accompaniment of conversation and laughter, and the songs of each of their fellows, who, for the moment at ease, have constituted themselves the chorus.

When more than one *dokpwe* is summoned for work on the same project, Herskovits notes,

> there is great rivalry among the organizations to see which one will first complete its allotted task. If only one *dokpwe* is present, there is either individual rivalry, or the *dokpwe* may be divided into two groups which compete one against the other. The food which is provided at these times of collective labor is as rich fare as the owner can afford . . .[*]

An underlying factor in the Dahomean *dokpwe* is awareness of itself as "the manpower of Dahomey," and the members regard themselves as exercising their fundamental privilege as Dahomeans. This attitude toward the *coumbite* continues to prevail in Haiti. Like the hounfor—but even more significantly in terms of routine, workaday life—the *coumbite* and the *société* are an expression of social ties and of the pervading interest in the common welfare.

Certain patterns of the *coumbite* have been carried over into non-agrarian labor in the towns and cities, wherever group work is required. The carrying of coffee and sugar bags in the warehouses, the loading of ships, and the repairing of roads—all are traditionally performed

[*] [Herskovits, "Some Aspects of Dahomean Ethnology," Africa, Vol. V (July, 1932), pp. 266-296. Cf. p. 352, Category 116. -- Analyst]

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533 476 128 461 rhythmically, to the accompaniment of drums, *catas*, or horns, while a singing leader composes topical songs in which the laborers join.

171 412 The tools which a rural Haitian chooses, and the way he uses them, often are in a West African tradition. He performs a multitude of tasks with his machete, or bush knife: weeding a garden, peeling an orange, cutting down a tree, making a drum or mortar, opening a coconut. It is an all-purpose tool, as it is in Africa. Until a few years ago it was supplemented by the extra-long, heavier, "double machete." The axe and the chisel are known and used too, but the machete is supreme. 492 The hoe is the tool for tilling the soil, even in the flat country, and even [241] though the Haitian has horses and cattle which could pull a plow. [412] Horses are for riding and not for pulling. In carrying loads, the Haitian peasant still prefers the head to the shoulders. If he has a donkey, the [538] donkey will carry for him. An old Haitian proverb goes: "Meçi Bondieu pou' bourrique là, si nous pas gainyain bourrique là faut Haitien po'té tout bagaille" (Thank God for the donkey, if we didn't have the donkey the Haitian would have to carry everything)." Generally speaking, the 489 48 493 rough and rocky terrain of Haiti and inadequate secondary roads have done nothing to encourage the use of carts or wagons.

171 [251] Corn is stored in the trees, as in West Africa, or in granaries built upon stilts, also as in West Africa. The Haitian makes his fire in the [392] African fashion, with several long sticks or poles meeting point-to-point in the heart of the fire. As the ends are consumed, the sticks are pushed [252] toward the center. Grain is pulverized in large wooden mortars, as [222] in West Africa, and winnowed in a woven tray. Fish traps are some- [222] times woven in the traditional West African manner, and fishermen often act their nets in converging spirals and beat the water with sticks to [501] drive the fish to the center. And on the rivers and lakes are to be seen dugout canoes of a kind familiar on the inland waters of West Africa.

171 241 The folklore of the fields contains many themes known to the West African. One old Haitian farmer, discussing the spiritual relationship of the planter to the earth, declared that a man must be strong and potent when he plants, else the crops will be vitiated and sickly. For [834] this reason, he said, a man must not plant seeds the day after he has had sexual intercourse, because he has been temporarily drained of his life-giving powers.[9]

171 538 The tale of the hoe that worked by itself in the fields is also widespread. It enters many animal and Bouki stories, and also is known in a form that is familiar in West Africa. In this story, there was once a man who owned a hoe which worked by itself whenever a magical formula was pronounced. It would stop working whenever the magical

9 [For footnote, see Category 116, P 352.-- Analyst]

* 533 * 539 626 [576] A protest theme that runs through many a song stems from the feeling of having been slighted or improperly received in the house of another person. The following song airs the complaint of a person who feels he has been treated shabbily. Metaphorically, he says he is used to eating from an earthern bowl but has been served food in a gourd dish, from which only the poorest of people eat.

Ma 'bituê mangé nan bolle,
M'pap mangé nan couis ciyé! [Ex. 97]

I'm accustomed to eating from a bowl;
I'm not going to eat from a cut gourd!

[574] Or again, there is the story of the unwelcome voyager, a person who travels all the way from Jérémie, far out on the southern peninsula, to the distant town of Arcahaye, only to find that he is not wanted there:

Moin sort' Jérémie!	I come from Jérémie!
Moin passé Aux Cayes!	I pass through Aux Cayes!
M'rivé L'Arcahaye, mes amis!	I arrive in Arcahaye, my friends!
C'est moin même yo pas vlé wè yà,	It is me they don't wish to see here,
Moin ya wè!	It is me they see!
C'est moin même yo pas vlé wè yà,	It is me they don't wish to see here,
Moin ya wè oh!	It is me they see, oh!
C'est moin même yo pas vlé wè yà,	It is me they don't wish to see here,
Moin ya wè oh!	It is me they see, oh!

[461] A man complains sometimes of the work that has been foisted upon him by an employer, or by a neighbor with whom he exchanges labor:

M'pas muletie oh moin pas muletie oh!
Habitant prend moin po'lé café!

I'm not a mule, oh, I'm not a mule, oh!
The farmer takes me to carry coffee!

* 533 * 539 794 626 Even the officials of the hounfor may be publicly reproached in song for acts of injustice. In the following example the houngénicon, the Vodoun priest's assistant, is taken to task. The song probably was first heard in the course of a ceremony at which the houngénicon was present:

Daromain y wa, houngénicon oh!
Daromain y wa, 'génicon é!
Daromain y wa, yo fai mangé raison moin!
Lè moin vlé pa'lé ou pas vlé moin pa'lé!
Lè moin vlé chanté ou pas vlé moin chanté là!
Daromain y wa, yo fai mangé raison moin! [Ex. 98]

Dahomey *y wa*,* houngénicon, oh!
Dahomey *y wa*, houngénicon, *é!*
Dahomey *y wa*, they do me wrong!

* The word Dahomey is frequently used as an exclamation.

in construction but stands a little shorter. Two Pétro drums of slightly 534
different sizes and tones, called *baka* and *ti baka*, in combination with one or more rattles, an iron percussion device, and sometimes an assot, make up an orchestra.

The *assot* is a small board which is beaten with sticks. Often these sticks are flat, and sometimes a small wooden bench is substituted for the board.

Dances for which the Congo or Pétro drums are used include Pétro, 534
Kitta, Bumba, Salongo, Bambarra, Moumlongue, Congo Loangue, Pas- 535
torel, Mousondi, and Moutchétché. The drum for the Congo Loangue dance formerly was somewhat taller and narrower than the present Pétro drum, but the distinction is no longer maintained.

The Juba, or Martinique, drum is similar to the Pétro or Congo but wider and squatter. It is laid on its side for playing, the drummer sitting astride and pressing his heel against the drumhead to mute it or change the pitch. For Juba or related music, a second man, called the *catalier* (the one who *catas*), beats sticks against the body of the instrument behind the drummer.

In the northern part of Haiti one also finds the Zesse drum, used 184
exclusively for the Zesse dance. It is cylindrical, about thirty inches 534
high, and is played in an upright position. A wire is stretched across the goatskin head in the manner of a snare drum. Like all drums with goatskin heads, it is beaten with the naked hands.

A large two-headed drum called the *tymbale* is used as a work drum 534
for labor societies and for processions, and in combination with other [461] [535]
drums it sometimes appears in the Juba and secular Congo dances. The heads are mounted on hoops, which are held fast by lacing. The drum [482]
is carried by a rope slung over the shoulder or around the neck. Sometimes an assot striking board is affixed to the body of the drum.

A miniature copy of the tymbale is called a *tambourine*. It is used in carnival dances, notably the Mascaron. Carried by a cord which hangs around the neck, it is played with two diminutive sticks. Drumming [462]
is primarily a man's prerogative, but during carnival days women or girls may be seen playing the *tambourine*.

In southwestern Haiti, and possibly elsewhere, special drums are used 184
for the Manuba dance. The Manuba drum is about a foot long, cylindrical, 534
and about five inches in diameter, with two drumheads held together 535
with cords. A pair of these drums is joined by a rope about two feet long, which is hung around the neck so that the two drums are in convenient playing position on the chest.

Twin drums which are hung over the knee are known as *marasas*— 534
[192]
The Haitian word for "twins."

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easily be hidden, but the ganbos were simply slipped into the straw 534
roofs and thus put out of sight. Moreover, by some strange process of 648
reasoning, military authorities regarded the bamboos as "harmless," 798
though they were used for the same purposes as the contraband drums.

There are numerous other kinds of simple percussion devices. One 534
such instrument, now less commonly seen than previously, is a length of open bamboo laid in the crotches of two Y-shaped sticks set in the ground. Like other *catas*, the bamboo is beaten with two sticks. Some Haitians believe that in former days such bamboos were played in batteries like a xylophone.

Sometimes a light-weight wooden cylinder, or perhaps a drum de- [461]
nuded of its playing head, is carried by the timekeeper of a coumbite. [476]
It, also, is played on the side with sticks.

Wooden mortars for pulverizing grain take on the character of musical 534
instruments when used in combination with voices. When two or more 533
mortars are used, with two men or women wielding the long polelike 412
pestles in each mortar, the rhythmic effects can become fairly complicated.

The *claves* or *palos* (small hardwood sticks) are used primarily in 534
connection with secular dances of a Cuban type, or to accompany such 535
instruments as the guitar and the marimba. One stick is held loosely in [177]
the natural fold of the hand, so that it is free to vibrate, and is struck sharply with the second stick. The tone is almost metallic because of [824]
the hardness of the wood, usually lignum vitae. The name of the instrument is recognizable as a form of *clavar*, or *clavo*, Spanish for "peg" or "nail." It is thought that wooden shipbuilding pegs provided the [171]
name for this device, which has equivalents in West Africa.

Among the folk instruments there are various kinds of horns and 534
trumpets. Cows' horns are played musically in some parts of the southern 184
peninsula, though usually they are used as ritual instruments and signaling devices. Wooden trumpets called *pistons* are carved from the stems [824]
of the papaya tree. Conch-shell trumpets, known as *lambis*, are com- [202]
monly used as signaling devices by fishermen. They are also to be found among the coumbites, in Rara festivities, and occasionally in rituals, where they are usually identified with sea deities. In carnival [541]
times the old fashioned phonograph horn makes its appearance as a com- [216]
bined trumpet and voice amplifier.

Probably the most important of the trumpets is the one made of 534
bamboo. It is called a *succine*, or *bois bourrique*. Both names have in- 755
teresting origins. The cow's horn was at one time used for magico- [237]
medical purposes. The leaf doctor used it as an "applicator" of powders and potions. A small opening was made in the point of the horn, and
[See plate 8, P. 112-F. -- Analyst]

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relations between the husband and the wife's family, it is nevertheless commonplace for men who can afford it to have more than one wife.

[8]Simpson, in "Sexual and Familial Institutions in Northern Haiti," *American Anthropologist*, October-December, 1942, p. 656, observes that in northern Haiti there are three distinct types of plaçage. "A *femme-caille* shares her mate's house, while a *maman pitite* is a woman who has born children for a man without living in his house. A *femme plaçée* does not live in her consort's house, and she has given him no children." Although none of these women has any legal rights of inheritance, Simpson notes, "moral claims to a man's property stand in descending order for these three classes of plaçées."

[9]Johnston, *The Negro in the New World*.

[10]UNESCO, *The Haiti Pilot Project*, p. 18.

[11]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 515.

[12]The group work patterns of Haiti show a common ancestry with Negro gang work patterns in the United States. While nothing as formalized as the coumbite persists among American Negroes, similarities are striking. The emphasis on rhythm, the swinging of hammers or picks in unison, the need for a singing leader, the responsive chorus, and the frequent use of some kind of percussion to keep time, all derive from a common concept of the nature of group work.

[13]Herskovits, "Some Aspects of Dahomean Ethnology," *Africa*, Vol. V (July, 1932), pp. 256–276.

[14]Cardinall, *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 109), observes that among the Krachi people of Togoland "no man may have sexual intercourse with a woman for seven days before he goes hunting."

[15]An Ashanti story told by Rattray in *Akan-Ashanti Folk-Tales* credits the hedgehog with owning the original hoe; according to this version, the hoe escaped across the sea to the country of the white men, who then possessed the secret. Afterward, the white men brought many hoes to Ashanti.

Chapter 11: *Dancing and Dance Drama* (*pp. 126–136*)

[1]Quoted in Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 73.

[2]Actually a banjo-like instrument of African provenience. The similarity of the word *banza* to *banjo* appears to be more than a coincidence.

[3]Saint-Méry, *De la danse*, as translated by Lillian Moore in "Moreau de Saint-Méry and 'Danse,'" *Dance Index*, October, 1946, p. 238.

[4]Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[5]Brandy or rum with gunpowder is sometimes drunk by persons possessed by the loa Ogoun, deity of war.

[6]Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[7]United Nations photograph no. 62065.

[8]Students of United States Negro life will recognize the word *coundjille* as a variant of *coonjine*, a dance known on the lower Mississippi. According to one observer, Dr. Willis James of Spelman College, Atlanta, small Negro boys on the docks used to call to the boat passengers:

> "Throw me a nickel
> Throw me a dime
> If you want to see me
> Do the coonjine."

The term *coonjine* is still used to mean hand-loading of cotton bales on river boats. When this loading was done entirely by hand some years ago, the stevedores worked rhythmically in a line and sang. An old man from Louisiana testified that within his own memory the dockside *coonjine* was accompanied by makeshift drums and other percussion.

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565 *caste* is the only word to describe the effective separation of aristocrats from the masses. The caste system is a vivid fact, for it regulates a person's profession, speech, religion, marriage, family life, politics, clothes, social mobility—in short, his whole life from cradle to grave.

175 Haiti won its freedom from the France of Napoleon in 1804,
648 becoming thus the second independent state in the Western Hemisphere. It had been during the eighteenth century France's most prosperous colony, its wealth depending upon slavery and the planta-
565 tion system. With the whites driven out, social distinctions which
642 actually had their roots in colonial times began immediately to develop among the people, all of whom had some proportion of African blood in their veins. During the course of the next century the criteria for aristocracy slowly assumed recognizable form, so that now even the most casual observer is aware that Haiti cannot by any stretch of the imagination be called a democratic country, with an open class system. The two castes are the élite and the masses. They are as different as day from night, as nobleman from peasant; and they are as separate as oil and water. The élite are generally reckoned
[162] to compose at the outside not more than three per cent of the population.

565 The élite do not work with their hands. This is the cardinal rule of Haitian society. Upon it rests the whole economic structure of the
463 country, and to this the course of national history has led. All the
[461] professions, most governmental and military offices, and the large business enterprises are effectively closed to young men of the masses. Indeed, so completely accepted are caste rules, so practically difficult would it be for peasant youths to acquire the money and education necessary for such careers, that at birth a boy's future place in economic life is, within narrow limits, already predetermined. For the élite, law is the most popular of the professions, partly because it is the quickest avenue of approach to high political office; government, in turn, is the only career which can make a man rich within a few years. Next in popularity to law comes medicine. Teaching is not lucrative enough to attract many promising youths, and the priests of the Roman Catholic Church are almost all white Frenchmen.[2]

793 2. An effort was once made by the Catholic Church to train native Haitian priests,
797 but the peasants would have none of them after they were ordained. They drove them out, saying, "Go away! How do you expect God to listen to you? You are not white; you don't know anything." And the Haitian priests had to be transferred as missionaries to Africa.

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565 171 Modern usage, having borrowed the word "caste" from India, employs it loosely to mean a rigid class system of which the people are conscious.[4] In India caste was always endogamous and connected with occupation. Kroeber defines it as "an endogamous and hereditary division of an ethnic unit occupying a position of superior or inferior rank or social esteem in comparison with other such subdivisions."[5] Castes, as distinguished from social classes, "have emerged into social consciousness to the point where custom and law attempt their rigid and permanent separation from one another." By each of these criteria Haiti has castes.

565 582 [463] [461] The élite are endogamous in that they would not consider marriage into the masses. The one exception to the endogamic practice is marriage with a white foreigner. Whereas in India all members of a caste had the same general occupation, in Haiti several occupations are open to caste members; but the distinction between honorable and demeaning work is understood by all, so that no person has free choice as regards the two larger categories. Haitian law does not name the social divisions, nor does it legislate the masses into a subordinate position[6]—for the simple reason that there is no conceivable need to enact what already exists. The laws of Haiti are administered by élite officials; these men make the definitions and interpretations. The judge always knows the custom, so that (as in most countries) the same offense brings different penalties for upper- and lower-class offenders. Custom holds sway, and custom is more tyrannical than any body of law.

Inside the castes may be found social distinctions familiar in democracies and in every other kind of society. Interest in politics, business, literature, or sport draws people of like minds together and makes cliques. There are well-to-do families who outshine their neighbors, just as there are peasant landholders who dominate their rural communities. A high civil official has more prestige than a doctor with a small practice, just as among the masses a house servant for an élite family outranks a beggar.

565 511 105 185 For the majority of Haitians, life is too elemental to be concerned with artificial wants. The peasant talks, unfettered by rules of gram-

4. See also W. Lloyd Warner, "American Caste and Class," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLII, No. 2 (Sept. 1936), 234–237; and John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (New Haven, 1937), pp. 62 ff.

5. A. L. Kroeber, "Caste," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, III, 254.

6. Such efforts were made, however, in the early days of the republic. See chap. III.

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One of Christophe's rules was that no cultivator attached to

a plantation—and every ordinary country person was so attached 175
—might leave the estate without permission from a military officer.[10] 566
Two of the common folkways of Haitian peasant life since his time 178
have been immobility and general acceptance of orders from the [484]
military. Both characteristics had been fostered by slavery and by the régimes of Toussaint and Dessalines, and these folkways became fixed under Christophe.

Other rules introduced by the King, however, lapsed shortly after 175
his strong hand was removed. For example, the monarch required of 178
the whole population that whenever they visited the capital on feast 291
days or went to the market towns on Saturdays they be decently clad 527
in clean clothes.[11] Since the time of Christophe, neatness of appear- 183
ance has hardly been a folk characteristic, probably because of
poverty rather than lack of desire to dress well. Nor did scrupulous [44]
regularity of work in the fields continue as a folkway later, when the great plantations were broken up.

Like a father the King tried to inculcate moral standards of honesty 175
in his people. To prevent theft he had small valuables, such as watches 577
or jewelry or purses, "planted," and if the finder did not immediately 177
turn them over to the nearest Dahomet, punishment was meted out. Such a policy made honesty contagious. Thefts and depredation were soon almost unknown. The most tempting store of wealth could be left safely unlocked or in the open air. Christophe's achievement in this matter is eloquent testimony to his success as a paternal leader, for it is no small task to initiate moral ideas among people who for a generation have lacked them. Even today it is the proud boast of the Haitians that their people are honest.

As compared with the liberties of farmers in the United States of 175
the same period, the Haitian agricultural workers' freedom was 566
infinitesimally small, but by contrast with the bondage of slavery, their new status was definitely higher.

10. Christophe called his royal police force "Dahomets," after the West African [625]
kingdom, Dahomey, from which most of the men had come. They were not ordinary soldiers but especially imported and carefully selected men whose intelligence made them stand out from their fellows. Each Dahomet was given a course of training in his task as administrator before being sent out. The general consensus of foreign visitors was that these Dahomets were efficient even in small matters.

11. This rule was partly an indication of Christophe's vanity, personal and national, [577]
for he was deeply desirous of the good opinion of white visitors, especially those from [186]
England. He wanted Europeans to respect Haiti as they would respect any small state, and not to praise it merely as an example of "Negro progress."

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vengeance but the utter extermination of that race."[12] He even ordered the execution of a mulatto woman in Gonaives because she had prayed for the success of Pétion.

During the latter years of his reign his personal popularity waned somewhat, owing to his relentless insistence upon efficiency and to his increasing tendency to lose his temper. Defections to the South occurred almost daily. The cultivators, comparing their never-ceasing toil on Northern plantations with the reported liberty and leisure of life in the South, continually drifted away. So alluring was the paradise of ease (and poverty) of the neighboring realm that Christophe found it necessary to keep a cordon of soldiers along the borders of his kingdom to prevent desertions. His administration now embarked on actual persecution of colored people. Inflammatory pamphlets were spread abroad, designed to make the Negroes think that the mulattoes were planning to enslave them once again. Under this campaign of propaganda many light-skinned Northerners had to go into hiding.

Despite all discrimination, the important line was drawn between cultivators who formed nine tenths of the population, and aristocrats who, with the army, made up the remainder. The nobility, the directors of landed estates, and the generals directed the activities of other people, so that the colonial prejudice against manual labor was strengthened. Here lay the basis of a persistent Haitian attitude of mind: to work with one's hands is to show oneself a member of the masses; to direct others is the distinction of the upper class. Education, neglected under Dessalines altogether, was fostered by Christophe. He established a few schools, inviting as schoolmasters certain Englishmen familiar with the then popular methods of the Lancasterian system; but since the cultivators were busy on the plantations, only the children of aristocrats benefited by the limited educational system and the social distance between classes was increased.

A French commentator says that Christophe showed unusual insight in devising for his kingdom "the only organization of which an African society was capable," namely, a combination of military despotism with certain benevolent inclinations, and territorial feudalism based upon a nobility created by the King. Actually, it suited not so much the African background of the people, which lay

12. Dr. Jonathan Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo* (Philadelphia, 1837), II, 197.

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175 against almost unanimous public opinion opposing enforcement. In
671 1828 it was reported that dancing, which the Code had strictly
625 limited to week ends, was a nightly diversion near the capital. One
535 of the principal dancing resorts was the house of a captain of rural
517 police, the very man who was supposed to repress such amusements.[45]

Boyer had done his best, and his best was merely a good piece of
175 office work. When his Code failed to operate, he could think of
178 nothing further to suggest for the economic rehabilitation of Haiti.
24 The last fifteen years of his administration witnessed a gradual lapse
433 into that small-scale farming which was to be characteristic of Haiti for the remainder of the nineteenth century. By comparison with former standards, production and steady industry had both fallen off since Boyer came to the presidency. The testimony of visiting foreigners is unanimous on the decline of industry.

175 The British consul, Mackenzie, said in 1827 that there was very
114 little field labor then being done, and that only elderly people,
435 principally aged "Guinea Negroes" long accustomed to steady work,
● 461 carried on the tradition. No measures of the government could
464 induce young people born in Haiti to labor or to change from their
184 "habitual vagrancy."[46] Another Englishman, James Franklin, remarked in 1828 that land values throughout the republic had greatly declined because no one could make a profit within any moderate time. Labor was high, he writes, for ordinary wages did not attract the workers who preferred idleness. (This word is certainly unfair: it was work at their own bidding which they preferred, not idleness.) Government lands lay untilled, no one evincing the slightest desire to purchase or utilize them. Franklin continues:

114 Land also in the possession of individuals is similarly circumstanced; and
175 those who are large proprietors cannot effect a sale of any produce which
433 they may have beyond the quantity which they can consume; consequently
423 a proprietor may have an immense extent of land, and yet be quite unable
425 to derive any benefit from it by cultivation, or to convert it into money, for the want of purchasers. Thus . . . there is no individual wealth in the country, because, although a man may have very large landed possessions, still those possessions are unavailable, for they produce him nothing, as he can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them.

[534] 45. Although dancing is spoken of here as an amusement, it is highly probable that at least a part of it had connection with the Vodun religion.

[241] 46. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti* (London, 1830), I, 100. Mackenzie is clearly exaggerating, unless by "field labor" he means work on plantations, in contrast to farming on small plots.

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can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them. There are some instances of proprietors leasing their lands to persons who undertake to cultivate them, for which they receive about one-third of the produce; but this is far from being general, and I imagine can only be accomplished by military men who have the command of troops, and who are thereby enabled to till them by working parties daily sent out for that purpose.[47]

An interesting side light is provided by a Quaker visitor, Candler, who in 1842 wrote that he was struck by the entire equality which seemed to exist between servant and master. Every workman was addressed in courteous manner, as "*mon fils*."[48] On inquiry, Candler was told that the profits of planting were good that year, laborers were scarce, and it was therefore "necessary to conciliate all by kindness, or no work would be done."

A particularly grim account of the state of cultivation near the close of Boyer's administration (1842) is given by a Frenchman:

> The fields of Haiti are dead. There where under slavery thousands of tons of sugar were made, now one sees only a few crops and a little syrup to turn into raw rum. Lively growths of cactus cover with thorns the acres of cane, of fields, of pastures deserted by the hand of man; the cactus invades the towns, coming even up to the heart of the cities, flourishing in the midst of ruins, as if to insult the inhabitants. . . . On the one hand, no one cultivates with regularity, because everyone is discouraged by the thefts of cane and fruit by people without any moral discipline, and in a country without police; while on the other hand, people complain of being poor, and of not being able to devote enough money to indispensable improvements. . . . And if the proprietors cannot even make work progress, imagine the condition of the poor![49]

As the people grew individually poorer, the value of the land sank until it was useless for an owner to try to prevent squatting on his estate. Holdings grew smaller and smaller, in spite of the prohibition on sales of real estate in parcels less than fifteen acres. Good land might be had in every part of the island quite cheaply, much of it even from the government which had enacted the restrictive law. Any man not satisfied with his condition as a paid laborer might, if

47. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti (Saint Domingo)*, (London, 1828), p. 313.
48. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti* (London, 1842), p. 37.
49. V. Schoelcher, *Colonies étrangères et Haïti: résultats de l'émancipation anglaise* (Paris, 1842), II, 263 ff.

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The crop-sharing system, economically debilitating though it was,

had one great advantage to the laborer: he felt himself free and independent, with the right to engage himself to any man or to refrain from working altogether. No longer was he bound to the soil of one plantation, forced to labor under a "driver," forbidden to dance or to sleep when the mood seized him. This new freedom imparted to him a self-consequence which made him, in his own estimation, almost as important as a freeholder. The master could not say to his men, "Go into such a field and dig cane holes. The clouds are gathering and we must get in the young plants"; or, "Weed such a field," or "Prune the coffee trees today." Neither could he send a band of young people at his discretion to pick the coffee berries as they ripened, or to cull the bad berries, when pulped and dried, from the good. Every man was, so to speak, master of his own house and his own hours, considering himself at liberty to work with his family at almost any time and in any manner he pleased.

175 427 461 24 466

Herein lay the fatal defect of the crop-sharing system. There was no way of coming to an agreement among the laborers on an estate as to the amount of labor to be performed by each. One man was weaker than another; one more disposed to drink or to loaf than another. The whole group of, say, twenty families was to share in common the half or the quarter of the gross produce; but who should measure the exact proportion which would fall in justice to each family?

175 427 24 461

These annual disagreements led to a compromise which ultimately broke down even the moderate-sized estates. The proprietor, in order to avoid disputes, divided his fields among his laborers, allowing one family five acres, another ten, a third twenty, according to the nature of the land and the sort of produce which could be raised upon it. True, the proprietor lost by this division all the benefits of concentrating labor in a particular field at a particular season; also, if he wished to have necessary work done in haste which required a large number of laborers, he had to bribe them (generally by a drink of rum or tafia). Obviously, when such difficulties stood in the way of necessary repairs and improvements, the proprietors simply preferred to allow their estates to deteriorate. Like the workers, they acquired an attitude of not worrying about the future; unlike the frame of mind of the workers, their attitude came from resigned acceptance of the inevitable, not from preoccupation with the present.

175 473 427 24 425 461

Certain astute proprietors tried to get as many families together as could act in concert without jarring or jealousy, and to induce them,

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175 by persuasion, to do as much work as possible for his and their own
473 interests. In a few cases the success of such efforts was tolerably good;
427 but one worker disposed to be sullen or idle, or even not physically
24 strong, might throw the whole scheme into disorder. One's own
425 profits would be cut by the misdeeds of others even when one had
461 himself been industrious. This caused a decline of incentive, sometimes among a whole group of potentially good workers, because one or two of the number shirked. Probably the most patent evil of such arrangements was that every laborer realized that he did not suffer as directly for idleness or neglect as when working for himself; his fellow workers shared the consequences of his misconduct in some degree, and his employer in a still greater measure. The driving force of individual responsibility was removed.

[692] Boyer and Inginac, foreseeing just such disorder, had tried to
[686] provide against it in the Code Rural by giving summary powers to local judges to inflict penalties upon lazy or malingering workers. Quite aside, however, from the loss of time and the inconvenience to both parties in going constantly to a judge for his decision, the proprietor was afraid to act on this principle to any extent, since if he did so he might lose his laborers altogether.

175 It was a rare proprietor, then, who could hope to make much of a
473 fortune out of his plantation. More and more the landowners, having
427 subdivided their fields, grew lax in overseeing them. The workers,
24 freed from constant supervision, accustomed by long habit to living
466 in one hut, and unconsciously developing a mentality which made
425 them feel, as did American squatters on frontier lands, that they had
178 a right to the land they tilled, imperceptibly developed into peasants. The state's remaining properties, no longer under cultivation, were invaded by families of small farmers, and the government took no steps to oust them or send them back to privately owned plantations. The estates of individual aristocrats underwent the same fate if not
[625] carefully watched. Theoretically, it was the duty of the army to drive out squatters, to force laborers back into "proper" agricultural work; but the army consisted of peasant youths who would not turn against people of their own group.

671 Legal irregularity was gradually sanctioned by the passage of
178 time, usage being a stronger guarantor of rights than unenforced laws on the statute books.

880 Haitian peasantry, to sum up, began as the unplanned, undesired

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Haiti under Dessalines still had many building

175 of French con-
178 struction, both plantation mansions and slave quarters. With forced
331 labor available these had been kept in a measure of repair. Christophe, not content with leftovers from colonial days, had sponsored architectural activity all over his kingdom; if his citadel is the most noteworthy example, there are also to his credit lesser palaces and government warehouses. Almost no building was done by Pétion and Boyer, however, and by the 1840's the constructions of the French [731] had fallen into serious disrepair. Severe earthquakes and fires quickly ruined what time had already weakened. By the middle of the century one saw, instead of trim slave quarters near great mansions, a few straggling towns of one-story houses, the hillsides dotted with ramshackle huts, and the plains with daubed shacks.

175 From great estates to tiny plots; from carefully tilled fields to
178 small gardens in a wilderness; from financial prosperity to debt;
181 from directed enterprise to sloth; from an attitude of hopeful de-
433 termination to one of tolerance for things as they are—these are the striking contrasts of the two periods. It could hardly have been imagined in Christophe's day that the smart, disciplined Dahomet would be succeeded by casual ragamuffins who dozed on their tilted chairs while on sentry duty. Christophe had liked his subjects to be well dressed, and insisted on it; but the British consul in Boyer's time wrote that "the laborers are, generally speaking, nearly naked; in fact, adults only wearing what is barely necessary to prevent indecent exposure, while the children of both sexes run about without covering of any kind."[64]

175 It was the parceling of landed estates combined with the disap-
178 pearance of forced labor which initiated the transition from serfdom
433 to peasantry. Personalities as dynamic as Christophe's or as brutal as
[440] Dessalines' would have been required to keep the people in a servile
[433] condition in a land of tropical fertility. Contemporary foreign judg-
[440] ment was almost unanimous in placing the blame for declining
[164] prosperity upon indolence (the word is continually repeated, generally preceded by the adjective "natural"). It may be noted in passing that no one at the time seems to have realized how widespread were the debilitating diseases of hookworm and malaria, which can make apparently husky men prefer rest to work. Responsibility for economic failure rests as much upon the governing class,

64. Charles Mackenzie, *Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti* (1829), p. 86.

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476 241 574 [527]

day local practice dedicates to work in one's own fields—generally Monday or Tuesday. The prospect of working with one's fellows, of a midday feast with plentiful drink, of singing, talking, and hearing the news, is enough to induce most of the neighbors to come, even though the work will be hard. As with American log-rollings and house-raisings, there is a practical reason for accepting the invitation: by participating in other coumbites a man will be able to invite his neighbors to help him in his own larger tasks. The work is done in rhythm[7] as on Southern road gangs in the United States, with one man specially designated to beat the drum, blow the conch, or sing a topical song, to set the pace. While the men are at work, the women prepare the noonday feast.

[461]

114 476 574 174 171 178 241

This typical characteristic of Haitian rural life has been described in detail as it operates near the village of Mirebalais by Prof. Melville J. Herskovits. His contention is that the custom, in general and in detail, derives from Dahomey, West Africa, the home of many of the original slaves.[8] Although his evidence is impressive, there are nevertheless objections to it. Coöperative enterprise for tasks larger than one man can accomplish alone is common in the United States and in parts of Europe and South America, as well as in Africa. It is not an economic device which strikes one as requiring unusual inventiveness, for cases of it are common even where the participants have had no previous experience of it. Further, Dahomean practice could not have been kept up during slave days, nor yet during the régimes of Toussaint, Dessalines, Christophe, and Pétion. (The first three required forced labor under overseers, and landownership by peasants was still rare under Pétion, although a beginning had been made.) In the thirty years from 1790, when the last slaves arrived, until Christophe died in 1820, many old ways were certainly forgotten. Not a single one of the numerous books written by visitors during Boyer's quarter-century, 1818 to 1843, mentions the practice, which certainly must have struck Englishmen, Frenchmen, and Americans if it had been characteristic of the peasant life of the time. If one concludes that the coumbite did not become peasant practice until the mid-nineteenth century, all possibility of contact with Negroes familiar with Dahomean routine has disappeared. What

7. A Haitian poet, Charles F. Pressoir, entitles a book of his verses *Au Rythme des coumbites* (Port-au-Prince, 1933).
8. *Op. cit.*, chap. IV.

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remains is the verbal handing down of recollections, one of the most natural things in the world and one congenial to Haitian peasants. Every region, every village, has its accomplished storytellers. The phenomenal resemblances in detail of the coumbite to Dahomean coöperative work may be due therefore to this verbal tradition. 74 241 574 476 538

Once the men have cleared and prepared the field, the care of the crop devolves upon the women. For this there has been a long background of tradition. In African agricultural regions, in the plantations of Saint-Domingue during slave days, under the forced labor régimes of Toussaint and his successors, women had been field workers. They had never known anything else. We have seen that many of the present-day practices of Haiti go back to the times of Pétion and Boyer: during this period women did field work, not by decree of government but by force of circumstance. Their men were constantly taken away from the farms for service in the large army; if crops were to be raised, women must do the work. Sometimes soldiers were stationed near their own homes, and could help in production; but they could be called on to march, at short notice and in peacetime, anywhere in the country. Many of the later presidents made it a definite policy frequently to change the station of regiments, so as to prevent revolutionary projects and guard against the soldiers' being tampered with by the disaffected in any single community. 241 175 462 701

Sir Harry Johnston records his observations on the Haiti of 1910 as follows: 114

The women are the best part of the nation. They are splendid, unremitting toilers. In the face of all discouragements with which a bad Government clouds their existence the women of Haiti remind one of certain patient types of ant or termite, who, as fast as you destroy their labour of months or days, hasten to repair it with unslackening energy. The market-women that descend from the country farms to the Haitian towns know that on their way to the market-place, and in that market-place, they will be robbed by soldiers and officers until the margin of profit on the sale of their wares has practically disappeared. Yet they continue to toil, to raise poultry and cattle, till the fields, see to their gardens, make pottery and mats. They cannot stop to reason, but must go on working from three years old to the end of their lives. Such industry (which is almost equally supplemented by that of the peasant husbands) protected should make Haiti one of the richest countries in the world for its size and population; but so long 114 462 461 [701]

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114 461 462 as it is cursed by the present military despotism, the utmost that the women of Haiti can do is to keep their country just above the waters of bankruptcy and their households from complete despair.[9]

701 175 Since 1910 the military has been reformed, and the women are not mulcted by soldiers and officers; Sir Harry's prophecy regarding the material benefits of removing the curse of military despotism was overly optimistic.

441 443 175 Rounding out the economic life of the peasant is the market, which provides an outlet for whatever surplus is produced, a source of needed supplies and a modicum of money, as well as an almost imperative diversion for hard-working women. The origin of Haitian markets may have been either French or West African, for both regions had them. They were certainly in existence by 1803 in Saint-Domingue, for Madiou speaks of the trade of the plainsmen of the Cul-de-Sac with the holders of what then was called Port Républicain (now Port-au-Prince), adding: "Each Sunday at Croix-des-Bouquets a market was held which brought together more than 4,000 cultivators, male and female, with the permission of the overseers or proprietors."[10] That so large a number came to the market is an indication of the social as well as the economic nature of this institution. Similarly, in the North in 1803, "Rochambeau, now master at the Cape, set about attending to the market established at Petit-Anse in July. After having suppressed all the markets which existed around the Cape, he opened a single and general one, 13th August, at Petit-Anse, one league from the city." The French general was making use of a familiar economic device to carry forward the economic life of the colony during the trying period of the wars.

175 441 462 466 702 In independent Haiti it was an almost immediate development that the women generally should do the marketing, the men being either required to work on the land or busy at military duty. It came to be accepted quite simply that going to market was a woman's work. From 1843 on through most of the century there was an additional reason why peasant men would not go to the market towns: recruits were needed, both for the army and whatever revolutionary coup might be brewing; a man who did not relish fighting did better to stay out of sight in the hills. In fact, this has even been called the chief

9. *The Negro in the New World*, pp. 196–197.
10. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 24, 54.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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reason for which women assumed a larger part of the agricultural work than in the early days of the century: to keep their husbands indoors during the hours of daylight.

Haitian markets seemed to fascinate foreign visitors a hundred years ago as they do today. One Englishman, describing the markets at Cap-Haïtien and Gonaïves, said that riding one morning to market in the latter small town he passed 465 persons and all sorts of animals. "The women as usual were decently dressed; and the men were more respectable than any we had seen on our route: they were evidently small cultivators who live on their own freeholds. . . . All were cheerful and happy."[11]

Ever since force was withdrawn from the economic life of the Haitians—that is, since 1820—a steady round of criticism has been leveled at the "laziness" of the average male. Much of this can be discounted as coming from unsympathetic white foreigners who visited Haiti to find proof of Negro inferiority; some of it again is not significant, since it is the product of élite essayists who cherished the preposession that the black was born to menial labor, and that if he did not work he had small reason for existence. The fact remains that not even friendly authors have been able to refrain from comment upon the inertia of the Haitian man, whether of the 1830's or, indeed, the present day. It is worth selecting half a dozen of the earlier criticisms, ranging from 1826 to 1860—two by Haitians, two by Englishmen, and two by Americans. Impressionistic, they nevertheless establish a basis from which to gauge the accuracy or inaccuracy of the charge.

In 1826, Placide Justin, drawing most of his material from the notes of the British agent in the Antilles, wrote: "The Haitian man is characterized by an almost unbelievable inertia. He is practically without ambition in political as well as in private life. No one seems to worry about tomorrow."[12] Two years later the Englishman, James Franklin, compared the régimes of Christophe in the North and of Pétion and Boyer in the South; with the former he was entirely sympathetic, but in 1828

the state of ignorance prevailing among the people in the mountains and the interior parts is almost inconceivable. It appears as if the work of civilization had not commenced, and that the people had not taken one

11. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 25, 26.
12. *Mémoire politique et statistique de l'île d'Haïti*, p. 336.

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114 voluntary step towards improving themselves in any one thing. . . . Experiments may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coercion and want will impel the Haytian to labour; and I have my doubts as to the practicability of enforcing labour in Hayti until the people have been better instructed, and their characters become changed. . . . Nature is too generous to the Haytian; he never wants, and so never works for hire, as do free labourers in other countries.[13]

An American, Dr. Jonathan Brown of Philadelphia, in 1837 published a volume which in most respects seems quite dispassionate. He says:

[462] The females are compelled to perform most of the labor. Those of the country employ themselves in cultivating the soil, while the men spend their time in traversing the country on horseback, in drinking, smoking, and other habits equally unprofitable. The females of the town perform all the retail traffic of the country. . . . They derive a subsistence for themselves and for their families.[14]

175 Boyer's secretary of state, Inginac, tried by means of a pamphlet—
241 which few Haitians could have read—to urge the peasants of 1840
208 to greater activity. He says that although coffee is the chief source of
178 Haitian wealth, although every day small properties have been multiplied, although times are improving, yet the old routines are still followed in coffee cultivation, as if the men would never work and "as if the Haitians were not susceptible of making any progress in the sciences."[15]

114 In 1842 an English Quaker, John Candler, wrote that without a
461 modicum of labor the peasants could not subsist at all; "but they do not, and they will not, work hard to please anybody, and hence agriculture languishes, and commerce is stationary."[16] Finally, in 1860, Benjamin Hunt, an American, remarked: "If one wants to be lazy, Hayti is the place. It is possible to get through the day with little annoyance from cold, hunger, or the police, and with the least possible amount of work."[17] Similar testimony could be greatly multiplied. It is only in recent years that any author has affirmed that

13. *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 339–340.
14. *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, II, 281.
15. Joseph Balthazar Inginac, "*Culture du caffier et préparation de la fève pour les Bords au commerce*" [a pamphlet], (Port-au-Prince, 1840), p. 1.
16. *Brief Notices of Hayti*, p. 38.
17. *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afro-Americans*, p. 12.

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the men as well as the women work arduously. It seems justifiable to conclude that industry has not always been a characteristic of the Haitian male; and to ask why. 114 461

One valid reason is, of course, political. As we have seen, until the American Occupation Haiti was greatly overmilitarized. Almost every able-bodied male was at one time or another during his prime a soldier in the army. Since the bane of the country from 1804 to 1915 was its revolutions, there was room for a man to serve either in the regular army or, lured by future promises, in the guerrilla forces of a scheming general. To be drawn away from the land at the very moment of physical maturity was to predispose a youth against humdrum field work. As a soldier he traveled, knew excitement, was fed and clothed, and could loaf, except during battle. So schooled, upon retirement from the army a man was hardly disposed to settle down to steady labor. Even if as a young man he remained upon his farm, he might at any moment be called away to service, just when he was most needed for the crop. If Haiti was to be fed, the women, who alone were exempt from army service, provided the only available regular workers. 175 701 461

Tradition offers another explanation for masculine independence of hard work. The African background of female agricultural labor has been cited. In slavery the men had been degraded by being forced to do work of this sort, while the lot of women hardly differed from what it had been in the old country. Under Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, with their large armies, women, already numerically preponderant, formed the vast majority of field workers. Independent small farming hardly changed the picture. African tradition, moreover, made the man master of his property and wives, the rôle of woman being that of man's inferior and useful servant. 174 462 562 567

Disease is another partial explanation. Until recently no one seems to have been aware of the prevalence in Haiti of such diseases as hookworm, malaria, and tuberculosis which, without necessarily affecting a person outwardly, may nevertheless sap his vitality, leaving him listless and worn out by even slight exertion. Obviously much of what was called laziness was due to disease. But the flaw in this reasoning is that illness makes no discrimination between the sexes. If men were disease-ridden, so were women: yet the latter were steadily industrious. 164 461

Any foray into possible psychological reasons is guesswork. It

Any foray into possible psychological reasons is guesswork. It
461 might be hazarded that the men felt they had fought for freedom and so deserved to enjoy its benefits; or that agriculture smacked of the old days of slavery and should be avoided by the superior male; or that since ambition for progress was not a Haitian characteristic, and the work of women produced enough food, there was no reason to change a routine which did very well. One cannot speak with definiteness on these matters. And it was upper-class Haitians and foreigners who adjudged peasant men lazy; slaves and "forced" laborers always appear lazy to their masters.

462 In modern times at least, male peasants toil strenuously, although not so continuously as their females. The preparation of the ground for planting is hard work, and is done entirely by men. Harvesting, housebuilding, marketing the coffee (one form of marketing not beneath a man's dignity)—these are men's major contributions to economic life.

177 People who live in isolation commonly tend to slide back in such
178 externalities as clothes, manners, neatness of person and of dwelling, speech, and social ritual. Almost from the very beginning of Haitian history, most of the people were effectively isolated from the rest of the world, so that the superficial aspects of daily life exhibited to all visitors the spectacle of retrogression.

175 Christophe, who had frequent English visitors in his kingdom,
656 forced his subjects to dress neatly. After his time no ruler made
291 regulations for dress. The men commonly wore a pair of cotton trousers and an abbreviated shirt, while women's dress was a loose-fitting garment which might be called a Mother Hubbard. Children could, and can now, be seen up to the age of four or five without
[369] any clothes at all. The nearer the countrypeople live to towns, where the example of the élite is before them, the better their dress is likely to be.

342 Slave cabins on the former plantations were inhabited by the free Haitians until decay set in and the cabins fell down. They were ordinarily superseded by huts which could be constructed of withes and thatch. The British Minister during the eighteen-twenties saw a
[333] man near Plaisance building his house, "plastering the wattling, of which the walls were composed, with a mixture of mud and ashes," using his hand as a trowel.[18] Almost never did a hut have more than

18. Mackenzie, op. cit., I, 150.

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United Kingdom, the United States, and Haiti, in proportion to population, were 185, 165, and 125,[18] yet Haiti had no carrying trade while the other two countries had, and so the profits were drained from the land.[19]

In short, as Haiti became accustomed to managing her own affairs, she became content with—or at least, reconciled to—little things. Inertia and tradition worked in their persistent fashion, with no effective stimulation from outside to combat them. From tradition and seclusion springs prejudice, and this became obvious whenever a change was proposed, particularly one which suggested bringing white people back to the country. To the élite it might mean the end of their social supremacy; to the masses, the end of their independence of daily action. The prejudice against sugar making was rooted in the same kind of suspicion. When a large landowner tried to institute a sugar mill on his estate, he met an adamant refusal of his hired workers to labor in it: "*Moué pas esclave!*" (I'm no slave!) The Negroes even disliked a bell to ring them to work on a plantation, for it suggested the slavery of the old régime.

Just before the Civil War in the United States a humanitarian gentleman developed a project of conducting numerous free American Negroes to Haiti in a planned migration. He discussed in a pamphlet[20] all the possible trades which might flourish in that country, if the migrants were to assume the position of a middle class; but his list is significantly small—sixteen occupations, on the order of tailoring, coopering, and blacksmithing, were all he could think of.[21] He made three comments which he hoped would attract the Negro Americans, as to a virgin field of opportunity: that in the

18. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 111–113, cites these figures, and says: "[Thus] Hayti, poor, and despised as she is, has a commerce, *in native produce*, nearly three-fourths as large, *in proportion to her population*, as our own United Kingdom, which is the great manufacturing part of the world; and seven-eighths as large as that of the United States, where the staple exports are produced by the labour of 3,000,000 slaves!"

19. Mackenzie (*Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti*, Document V) reports that in 1825 exports were valued at $5,793,758, and imports at $4,660,174; the trading was carried on in 552 *foreign* ships, of which 374 were American, 78 British, and 65 French. No Haitian ship traded abroad.

20. Benjamin S. Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans*. See particularly pp. 3–9.

21. His complete list is: tailor, shoemaker, baker, cabinetmaker, carpenter, mason, lime-burner, distiller, cooper, wheelwright, saddler, blacksmith, tinner, hatter, small-boat maker, potter.

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Spring water in the country districts is frequently

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[364] luted by all sorts of excreta; the watering of milk is a common
[272] practice, and samples of milk have been generally found to contain many times the normal amount of bacilli. The cases of tuberculosis are practically always complicated by malaria.

Dysentery, when caused by bacilli, is epidemic in nature. In Haiti this form, known as "colerin," annually affects about a quarter of the rural population. Another type, caused by a variety of amoeba, affects another ten or twenty per cent, according to the region. Enteritis is less serious than dysentery but just as prevalent, being
[146] caused by protozoa and intestinal worms. Poor diet, the abuse of
[273] alcohol, premature weaning, and unwise nursing are also responsible.
[853] Granular conjunctivitis affected sixteen per cent of the children examined by the Rockefeller Foundation.

Cancer seems to strike only a normal number of Haitians; goitre is common in the mountain districts; leprosy has become a menace in the West and South; elephantiasis is present, particularly in the South; gusarola (characterized by patches of skin assuming different color) is fairly common in the Cul-de-Sac plain; chicken pox, influenza, and meningitis epidemics are occasionally serious.

164 The health of the peasant women is seriously and continuously
462 endangered by their mode of life and work. It is customary for
482 females, from girlhood onward, to carry heavy burdens on their heads—over steep paths in the mountains, along rocky trails, up hill
145 and down. The commonest sight in Haiti is to see a woman swinging along with a great load of fuel, a tin of water, a bundle of building material, a basket of fruit, on her head. Cranial bones are flattened, the spine is bent, internal organs are strained or damaged. For ill-nourished persons to carry heavy weights for long distances with
[461] little rest means undue pressure on the heart and lungs, and so an
[843] increasing tendency to cardiac and pulmonary infections as well as chronic anemia. Overwork frequently results in miscarriages.

844 As has been said, childbirth often occurs by the roadside, on the way to market, or in the market place. In no case can a peasant
[846] woman remain in bed for a proper period either before or after
[164] parturition. Midwives are untrained; they use primitive methods which inevitably result in defective development of infants, lessened
853 resistance to disease, high infant mortality, and a prevalence of abdominal diseases in women. Pressure of work, whether in the field or on the way to market, makes a mother soon stop nursing her

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

While farming and marketing are by far the most widespread occupations, it must not be concluded that all specialization of economic function is lacking. The list of those in the *arrondissement* of Mirebalais who in 1934 paid license fees gives a comprehensive picture of the varied nature of their occupations: 463

2 justices of the peace	2 mattress-makers
2 notaries	2 ironworkers who repair the caldrons for boiling sugar
5 "pleaders" before the courts	15 bakers
1 doctor	21 butchers
6 surveyors	23 distillers
4 woodworkers	4 millers
48 carpenters	1 hairdresser
12 sawyers	4 jewelers
40 masons	2 general storekeepers
14 tailors	43 venders of notions in the market place
3 dressmakers	16 peddlers
4 shoemakers	

Sex division of labor cuts across these categories. Thus the baking of bread is in the hands of women, some of whom operate ovens of considerable capacity, and women are dressmakers and laundresses. Candles are made of beeswax by old women, but the cotton that is used for the wicks, or for hammocks or fish-nets or cinches of saddles, is spun by both elderly men and women. In the main, however, the rule is that manual labor outside the house is in the hands of men, while women are the housekeepers and tradespeople. Farming has been mentioned as an occupation primarily for men. All woodworking is done by men, who make furniture and fashion the dugout canoes used on the Haitian rivers; men also do basketry and weave straw hats; leather-working is in their hands as well, and they make shoes and saddles. No pottery is 462 463

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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463

manufactured in the valley of Mirebalais, but elsewhere in Haiti men are the potters. The African knowledge of iron-working has been lost, but there are those who repair iron implements and the great pots used in making sugar, and those who work in tin. Some men specialize in making rope, others in building the mills which crush the sugar-cane. Not everyone knows how to make *clairin*, the strong drink of the peasants, and some do nothing except distill this. Painters are found who paint the larger houses built in the town, as well as those occasionally erected by the more prosperous peasants in the countryside. The calling of the mason is a well-established one. These craftsmen build the walls of the more pretentious stone houses, but more particularly find their time taken up in the erection of tombs.

565 With economic specialization goes a stratification of Haitian society, roughly drawn, but based on prestige and the command of economic resources, in which the following classes are informally recognized: [9] There are the *pauvres*, indigent folk, who for some reason have forfeited or otherwise lost their family connections and whatever they may have owned and now must actually beg to obtain enough to eat. One finds but few of these except in the larger centers; in Mirebalais they number not more than five or six. One such is an elderly man who originally came from another part of the island, lost what he owned, and when he became deaf was no longer able to earn a living. He was occasionally set at some menial task such as carrying water or gathering firewood. In another category are those known as *malheureux* — folk who are usually, though not always, incompetent, but who are generally regarded as unlucky. They may work hard on their land, but their crops fail or yield meagerly; they may obtain a *job*, but something goes wrong with it — the work is temporary, or they cannot collect the wages due them, or illness follows every period of employment.[10]

The second group comprises the middle class. This class

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

to cutting fruit, though seen in Africa, was probably introduced there by the early traders, and all machetes found today in Haiti are imported from Europe or America. The same is true of the hoe, for the short-handled, broad-bladed West African hoe has given way to the European long-handled type, though the blade of the Haiti hoe is somewhat broader than that used in America and Europe. Despite the presence of domesticated animals to draw the plow, this implement has never gained favor in Haiti, nor have recent efforts to teach the Haitian peasant the use of the plow achieved any degree of success. He prefers his African mode of cultivation, to say which implies more than just the employment of a certain implement, since even such matters as the manner in which he employs his hands and feet in the process of planting are included. When the Dahomean plants, for example, he holds a calabash of seed under his left arm, from which he takes the grains with his right hand. As he moves down the rows of newly turned earth, he makes a depression with the heel of his right foot, drops a few grains into this depression and, replacing the earth with his toes, takes a step so that he can repeat the process with his left foot. This is exactly the manner in which Haitians were observed planting in the valley of Mirebalais.[8] Unlike the usage in Africa, however — where the men clear the ground, the men and women plant, and the women tend the growing crops — the European pattern, which places agriculture in all its essential phases in the hands of men, has been taken over almost in its entirety.

The women have retained almost without change the African modes of preparing food. Grain is first pounded in an African-like mortar, with an aboriginal type of pestle, while the shelled kernels are winnowed in a large round basketry tray. The cooking is either done on a raised mud platform in the cooking shelter, as in West Africa, or on three stones, employed as rests for the pots, a method equally characteristic of Africa. In the Haitian cuisine the prevalence of stews, of

Like their ancestors in preslavery days, the Haitians had a clear-cut 462
and equitable division of labor between the sexes which was particularly
suited to the agrarian life. The pattern of work sharing seems to have
been misunderstood by nineteenth-century chroniclers, many of whom [114]
complained that the Haitian male napped in the shade while the women
performed all the labor. It is quite true that the Haitian peasant woman
is a relentless toiler. It may even be, as Sir Harry Johnston declared early in
the twentieth century, that "the women are the best part of the Haitian
nation." This Englishman wrote glowingly of the Haitian woman's forti-
tude and energy:

> In the face of all discouragements, with which a bad government clouds their existence the women of Haiti . . . continue to toil, to raise poultry and cattle, till the fields, see to their gardens, make pottery and mats. They cannot stop to reason, but must go on working from three years old to the end of their lives. Such industry (which is almost equally supplemented by that of the peasant husbands) protected should make Haiti one of the richest countries in the world for its size and population.[4]

But as Johnston surmised, the Haitian man, too, treads an unstopping
wheel. Although it is the women who are seen crowding the trails and
roads on market days, behind the produce they vend is the work of the
men. For it is primarily the men who break the ground and plant,
cultivate, and harvest the crops. It is the men who cut timber and build
the houses, who dig and process lime for plastering the walls, and who
thatch the roofs. And the houses do not last forever but must be rebuilt
time and again. It is the men who cut and transport wood for fuel, dig
red clay from the clay beds for pottery, make the mortars in which
the grain is pulverized, build terraces for the gardens, make charcoal, go
to sea for fish, and work at the village forge. On the plantations they
cut the cane and the sisal. In the city they carry the heavy coffee and
sugar bags, load the ships, make bricks, and build roads.

The women, for their part, run the household, care for the children,
carry water from the springs, launder at the river's edge, cook, sew, play
a supporting role in the field work, carry the crops to market, sell them,
and bring back things which the garden does not produce. The woman
may be the business manager of the household, and sometimes from
the proceeds of special projects she may be able to put aside small savings
of her own.

Children slip into their work roles at an early age. Boys and girls as 857
young as three or four may be seen carrying small tins of water on 868
their heads, on their way from the springs, usually in groups with older
girls or women. Young girls assume woman's work as soon as they can

4 [Johnston, The Negro in The New World. Cf P. 352, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

in construction but stands a little shorter. Two Pétro drums of slightly 534
different sizes and tones, called *baka* and *ti baka*, in combination with one or more rattles, an iron percussion device, and sometimes an assot, make up an orchestra.

The *assot* is a small board which is beaten with sticks. Often these sticks are flat, and sometimes a small wooden bench is substituted for the board.

Dances for which the Congo or Pétro drums are used include Pétro, 534
Kitta, Bumba, Salongo, Bambarra, Moundongue, Congo Loangue, Pas- 535
torel, Mousondi, and Moutchétché. The drum for the Congo Loangue dance formerly was somewhat taller and narrower than the present Pétro drum, but the distinction is no longer maintained.

The Juba, or Martinique, drum is similar to the Pétro or Congo but wider and squatter. It is laid on its side for playing, the drummer sitting astride and pressing his heel against the drumhead to mute it or change the pitch. For Juba or related music, a second man, called the *catalier* (the one who *catas*), beats sticks against the body of the instrument behind the drummer.

In the northern part of Haiti one also finds the Zesse drum, used 184
exclusively for the Zesse dance. It is cylindrical, about thirty inches 534
high, and is played in an upright position. A wire is stretched across the goatskin head in the manner of a snare drum. Like all drums with goatskin heads, it is beaten with the naked hands.

A large two-headed drum called the *tymbale* is used as a work drum 534
for labor societies and for processions, and in combination with other [461]
drums it sometimes appears in the Juba and secular Congo dances. The [535]
heads are mounted on hoops, which are held fast by lacing. The drum [482]
is carried by a rope slung over the shoulder or around the neck. Sometimes an assot striking board is affixed to the body of the drum.

A miniature copy of the tymbale is called a *tambourine*. It is used in carnival dances, notably the Mascaron. Carried by a cord which hangs around the neck, it is played with two diminutive sticks. Drumming [962]
is primarily a man's prerogative, but during carnival days women or girls may be seen playing the *tambourine*.

In southwestern Haiti, and possibly elsewhere, special drums are used 184
for the Manuba dance. The Manuba drum is about a foot long, cylindrical, 534
and about five inches in diameter, with two drumheads held together 535
with cords. A pair of these drums is joined by a rope about two feet long, which is hung around the neck so that the two drums are in convenient playing position on the chest.

Twin drums which are hung over the knee are known as *marassas*— 534
[192]
The Haitian word for "twins."

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

bean country, and perhaps fewer than in any country in Latin America. The agriculture itself, with the exceptions now of those very few large-scale plantations in sisal and sugarcane, is adapted to small plots and is worked with intensive labor and few tools on hilly land. Compared with agricultural production, especially of cash crops, in most mainland Latin American countries, productivity is low. The yeomanry is conservative in its agricultural practices, and not ready to change unless the changes entail minimal risk and the gains to be realized are clearly demonstrable (Erasmus, 1952:20–26). Yeomen cultivate with three goals in mind: cash income from world-market commodities (for instance, coffee, sisal, vetiver); cash income from items produced for local sale and consumption; and subsistence. While they are heavily involved in production for sale, their crop choices and land-use patterns rest fundamentally on a subsistence orientation. All grow a substantial part of their own food, especially sorghum, maize, sweet potatoes, taro, manioc, malanga (*Xanthosoma sagittifolium* Schott), plantains and bananas, fruits and vegetables, and rice where possible. The land is invested with considerable affect: gods live in it; it is the ultimate security against privation; family members are buried in it; food and wealth come from it; and it is good in itself, even if not cultivated. While such attitudes are common in yeoman societies, Haiti's history of slavery, and of access to land through revolution, has given a special symbolic significance to landowning. Land is valued above all else and is sometimes held "uneconomically"—that is, even when the capital and labor power to work it are lacking.

Leyburn describes better than any other writer the history of land acquisition by the yeoman after 1804. The French plantations lay in ruins, never to recover, while early authoritarian attempts to restore the prerevolutionary economy under native Haitian leadership soon failed. In the course of a century, the Haitian people laid claim to their own soil, while population growth and the adoption of the French tradition of equal inheritance progressively reduced the average size of holdings. In spite of some plantation development after the United States occupation, most agricultural land in Haiti is still employed in small holdings, and "land reform" in the conventional sense—the breaking-up of large estates and the creation of a class of small landholders—is nearly irrelevant to Haiti's needs.

As today's yeomanry cultivates, so its womenfolk market. Nearly

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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462 443 three hundred marketplaces serve the towns and countryside, some of them patronized by thousands of buyers and sellers on market days. By participating in active small-scale trade, the wives of the yeomen contribute in a limited way to national economic efficiency and growth. As in all heavily agrarian economies marked by poor storage facilities, inferior transportation, and low consumer incomes there is considerable substitution of labor for capital, and there are high losses through spoilage. Except for the marketing of export commodities, much time is consumed in bargaining, in carrying, and in hand-processing of various sorts. But these activities are the accompaniments of the general low level of development of the Haitian economy, not one of its causes.

443 241 462 The economic challenges posed by agriculture on the one hand, and by marketing on the other, differ significantly. Since these activities are carried out predominantly along the lines of a sexual division of labor, the Haitian countrymen and their marketing wives differ in some regards in their attitudes. Foreign observers of the 114 462 nineteenth century commented regularly on the industry and energy of Haitian rural women, stressing their predominance in trade. Some 174 175 writers have attributed this convention to the West African tradition, since women are the marketers, men the farmers, in many African 443 societies. Leyburn, however, notes that the militarism and political 241 unrest that have marked Haiti during so much of its history were 433 serious impediments to peaceful trade. Women came to predominate in marketing, he theorizes, because men did what they could to avoid the towns, since they were often impressed into roving army bands if they traveled far from home. Whatever the historical causes may be, it has been established that the women of Haiti's countryside carry on most of the internal trade, while their husbands do most of the farming. These women, on the whole, know more about the towns, mix more easily with outsiders, and show more intrepidity in trade than the men show in agriculture. Yet it has been demonstrated that, for most of them, the scale of their enterprise is so modest and the economic opportunities open to them so restricted that their energy and daring can do little to increase the level of productive activity (Mintz, 1964:256–86).

47 Haiti's lack of large factories, mechanized production, and a skilled industrial labor force means that the country is unindustrialized by any usual measure.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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581 suspicion of legal complications is well founded: the priests therefore
794 try to concentrate their attack upon the remaining motives. Thus one priest issued a notice at a certain mountain chapel that he would perform no weddings there for persons who wore shoes; an increase in weddings followed. By such devices, and by constant sermons on the significance of the sacrament, he has persuaded many of his parishioners to be married, yet the vast majority of them continue in plaçage.[4]

581 Informally entered unions among the peasants, then, rest upon a sound, practical, economic basis. If the priests are ever to be successful in their campaign for more weddings, Haitian peasant economy must undergo a change; even then the plurality of women (if indeed it exists), now more or less absorbed by plaçage, will work against the reform.

562 It is confusing to speak of "status" in connection with the domestic
565 life of hard-working people, for status implies law, and law hardly touches peasant life. Custom governs all—inevitably, since the majority of peasant women have not been legally married, and since no peasant would willingly take a case to law. Yet women have a definite status as compared with men.

In almost every detail a peasant woman's life differs from that of élite women. The rule of life in country districts is unremitting labor
462 for the female from childhood up. She cooks and makes clothes,
565 labors in the fields after the men have cleared them, does the family
443 washing in the nearest stream, carries water, does whatever housework is required. Practically every Haitian peasant woman has her experience of going to market to sell the vegetables, trinkets, or
[484] other wares her family may produce, and to buy necessities. This trip to market may be short, or as long as twenty miles. One of the characteristic sights of Haiti is the seemingly endless procession of women coming down from the hills trudging, or rather swinging majestically along, with a great load on the head, or riding on the haunches of a tiny donkey loaded with bulging panniers. Arrived at

4. As a result of his campaign for more weddings he has had some unusual experiences. Once, in the midst of the wedding ceremony, a bride rushed out of the chapel and shortly gave birth to a child; when she was able to move again, the ceremony was resumed. Again, traveling into the mountains to perform a similar ceremony, he found a crowd assembled under a tree, assisting at another birth of an infant to a bride-to-be. Sometimes he encounters the argument by a peasant that he will not consent to a wedding until his spouse has proved her fecundity by bearing a certain number of children.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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the market, the women sit all day in the broiling sun, and in Port-au-Prince at least, sometimes sleep near by for the night, in order to complete their purchases and sales and to get their fill of companionable gossip. They are often accompanied by the youngest of their children, some of whom have to be carried. 462 565 443

Some observers profess to see evidences of a matriarchate among the peasants, for as a general rule the woman attends to the business dealings of the market place, handles the money, directs her children, and manages the household. If the man has more than one placée spouse, complete control of the farm is the woman's during the absence of her man. It is a superficial judgment, however, to speak of the peasant mother as a matriarch. The man owns the land, chooses his women, calls for help at the moment he pleases for preparation of the ground for planting; and when he knows his end to be near, summons all his families and disposes of his property as he sees fit. His decision is final. But he is no more a patriarch than his woman is a matriarch: they are economic partners in a struggle for existence. 562 593 592

By our standards, the woman is inferior to the man not only in rights but in being one spouse of several. He may contract several unions, while she may have only one. She does more steady, if not more actual, physical labor than the man. When he is at home, she must offer him the best of the food. As usual in simple societies, however, the issue rarely arises as to superiority or inferiority of the sexes. Customary behavior is followed without much question. 562

There is one great contrast between élite and peasant women, in the matter of childbirth. The élite mother takes as much care of herself during pregnancy and parturition as would an American woman in well-to-do circles. The peasant mother, on the contrary, cannot allow herself the luxury of medical attention, nor can she spare the time to rest quietly. Like many so-called "primitive" women, she apparently finds herself little incommoded either by pregnancy or birth. Babies are born frequently in the market place, the mother having come down from the hills only that day with her goods. It is not unusual to hear of the birth of a child in a roadside ditch or in a grove by the path to and from the market town. The care given mother and infant is primitive: the navel cord is cut with a sharp stone or a piece of broken glass; a short rest is thought sufficient before the mother resumes her task. As might be expected, the death rate from infection is high and women age prematurely. 565 844 846 [165] [145]

Parents are generally kind to their children, so far as physical

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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remains is the verbal handing down of recollections, one of the most natural things in the world and one congenial to Haitian peasants. Every region, every village, has its accomplished storytellers. The phenomenal resemblances in detail of the coumbite to Dahomean coöperative work may be due therefore to this verbal tradition. 174 241 574 476 538

Once the men have cleared and prepared the field, the care of the crop devolves upon the women. For this there has been a long background of tradition. In African agricultural regions, in the plantations of Saint-Domingue during slave days, under the forced labor régimes of Toussaint and his successors, women had been field workers. They had never known anything else. We have seen that many of the present-day practices of Haiti go back to the times of Pétion and Boyer: during this period women did field work, not by decree of government but by force of circumstance. Their men were constantly taken away from the farms for service in the large army; if crops were to be raised, women must do the work. Sometimes soldiers were stationed near their own homes, and could help in production; but they could be called on to march, at short notice and in peacetime, anywhere in the country. Many of the later presidents made it a definite policy frequently to change the station of regiments, so as to prevent revolutionary projects and guard against the soldiers' being tampered with by the disaffected in any single community. 241 175 462 701

Sir Harry Johnston records his observations on the Haiti of 1910 as follows: 114

The women are the best part of the nation. They are splendid, unremitting toilers. In the face of all discouragements with which a bad Government clouds their existence the women of Haiti remind one of certain patient types of ant or termite, who, as fast as you destroy their labour of months or days, hasten to repair it with unslackening energy. The market-women that descend from the country farms to the Haitian towns know that on their way to the market-place, and in that market-place, they will be robbed by soldiers and officers until the margin of profit on the sale of their wares has practically disappeared. Yet they continue to toil, to raise poultry and cattle, till the fields, see to their gardens, make pottery and mats. They cannot stop to reason, but must go on working from three years old to the end of their lives. Such industry (which is almost equally supplemented by that of the peasant husbands) protected should make Haiti one of the richest countries in the world for its size and population; but so long 114 462 461 [701]

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114 461 as it is cursed by the present military despotism, the utmost that the women 462 of Haiti can do is to keep their country just above the waters of bankruptcy and their households from complete despair.[9]

701 Since 1910 the military has been reformed, and the women are not 175 mulcted by soldiers and officers; Sir Harry's prophecy regarding the material benefits of removing the curse of military despotism was overly optimistic.

441 443 175 Rounding out the economic life of the peasant is the market, which provides an outlet for whatever surplus is produced, a source of needed supplies and a modicum of money, as well as an almost imperative diversion for hard-working women. The origin of Haitian markets may have been either French or West African, for both regions had them. They were certainly in existence by 1803 in Saint-Domingue, for Madiou speaks of the trade of the plainsmen of the Cul-de-Sac with the holders of what then was called Port Républicain (now Port-au-Prince), adding: "Each Sunday at Croix-des-Bouquets a market was held which brought together more than 4,000 cultivators, male and female, with the permission of the overseers or proprietors."[10] That so large a number came to the market is an indication of the social as well as the economic nature of this institution. Similarly, in the North in 1803, "Rochambeau, now master at the Cape, set about attending to the market established at Petit-Anse in July. After having suppressed all the markets which existed around the Cape, he opened a single and general one, 13th August, at Petit-Anse, one league from the city." The French general was making use of a familiar economic device to carry forward the economic life of the colony during the trying period of the wars.

175 441 462 466 702 In independent Haiti it was an almost immediate development that the women generally should do the marketing, the men being either required to work on the land or busy at military duty. It came to be accepted quite simply that going to market was a woman's work. From 1843 on through most of the century there was an additional reason why peasant men would not go to the market towns: recruits were needed, both for the army and whatever revolutionary coup might be brewing; a man who did not relish fighting did better to stay out of sight in the hills. In fact, this has even been called the chief

9. *The Negro in the New World*, pp. 196–197.
10. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 24, 54.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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reason for which women assumed a larger part of the agricultural work than in the early days of the century: to keep their husbands indoors during the hours of daylight.

Haitian markets seemed to fascinate foreign visitors a hundred years ago as they do today. One Englishman, describing the markets at Cap-Haïtien and Gonaïves, said that riding one morning to market in the latter small town he passed 465 persons and all sorts of animals. "The women as usual were decently dressed; and the men were more respectable than any we had seen on our route: they were evidently small cultivators who live on their own freeholds. . . . All were cheerful and happy."[11]

Ever since force was withdrawn from the economic life of the Haitians—that is, since 1820—a steady round of criticism has been leveled at the "laziness" of the average male. Much of this can be discounted as coming from unsympathetic white foreigners who visited Haiti to find proof of Negro inferiority; some of it again is not significant, since it is the product of élite essayists who cherished the prepossession that the black was born to menial labor, and that if he did not work he had small reason for existence. The fact remains that not even friendly authors have been able to refrain from comment upon the inertia of the Haitian man, whether of the 1830's or, indeed, the present day. It is worth selecting half a dozen of the earlier criticisms, ranging from 1826 to 1860—two by Haitians, two by Englishmen, and two by Americans. Impressionistic, they nevertheless establish a basis from which to gauge the accuracy or inaccuracy of the charge.

In 1826, Placide Justin, drawing most of his material from the notes of the British agent in the Antilles, wrote: "The Haitian man is characterized by an almost unbelievable inertia. He is practically without ambition in political as well as in private life. No one seems to worry about tomorrow."[12] Two years later the Englishman, James Franklin, compared the régimes of Christophe in the North and of Pétion and Boyer in the South; with the former he was entirely sympathetic, but in 1828

the state of ignorance prevailing among the people in the mountains and the interior parts is almost inconceivable. It appears as if the work of civilization had not commenced, and that the people had not taken one

11. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 25, 26.
12. *Histoire politique et statistique de l'île d'Haïti*, p. 536.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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114 461 voluntary step towards improving themselves in any one thing. . . . Experiments may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coërcion and want will impel the Haytian to labour; and I have my doubts as to the practicability of enforcing labour in Hayti until the people have been better instructed, and their characters become changed. . . . Nature is too generous to the Haytian; he never wants, and so never works for hire, as do free labourers in other countries.[13]

An American, Dr. Jonathan Brown of Philadelphia, in 1837 published a volume which in most respects seems quite dispassionate. He says:

[462] The females are compelled to perform most of the labor. Those of the country employ themselves in cultivating the soil, while the men spend their time in traversing the country on horseback, in drinking, smoking, and other habits equally unprofitable. The females of the town perform all the retail traffic of the country. . . . They derive a subsistence for themselves and for their families.[14]

175 241 208 178 Boyer's secretary of state, Inginac, tried by means of a pamphlet—which few Haitians could have read—to urge the peasants of 1840 to greater activity. He says that although coffee is the chief source of Haitian wealth, although every day small properties have been multiplied, although times are improving, yet the old routines are still followed in coffee cultivation, as if the men would never work and "as if the Haitians were not susceptible of making any progress in the sciences."[15]

114 461 In 1842 an English Quaker, John Candler, wrote that without a modicum of labor the peasants could not subsist at all; "but they do not, and they will not, work hard to please anybody, and hence agriculture languishes, and commerce is stationary."[16] Finally, in 1860, Benjamin Hunt, an American, remarked: "If one wants to be lazy, Hayti is the place. It is possible to get through the day with little annoyance from cold, hunger, or the police, and with the least possible amount of work."[17] Similar testimony could be greatly multiplied. It is only in recent years that any author has affirmed that

13. *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 359–362.
14. *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, II, 281.
15. Joseph Balthasar Inginac, "*Culture du caffier et préparation de la fève pour être livrée au commerce*" [a pamphlet], (Port-au-Prince, 1840), p. 1.
16. *Brief Notices of Hayti*, p. 38.
17. *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans*, p. 12.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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the men as well as the women work arduously. It seems justifiable to conclude that industry has not always been a characteristic of the Haitian male; and to ask why. 114, 461

One valid reason is, of course, political. As we have seen, until the American Occupation Haiti was greatly overmilitarized. Almost every able-bodied male was at one time or another during his prime a soldier in the army. Since the bane of the country from 1804 to 1915 was its revolutions, there was room for a man to serve either in the regular army or, lured by future promises, in the guerrilla forces of a scheming general. To be drawn away from the land at the very moment of physical maturity was to predispose a youth against humdrum field work. As a soldier he traveled, knew excitement, was fed and clothed, and could loaf, except during battle. So schooled, upon retirement from the army a man was hardly disposed to settle down to steady labor. Even if as a young man he remained upon his farm, he might at any moment be called away to service, just when he was most needed for the crop. If Haiti was to be fed, the women, who alone were exempt from army service, provided the only available regular workers. 175 701 461

Tradition offers another explanation for masculine independence of hard work. The African background of female agricultural labor has been cited. In slavery the men had been degraded by being forced to do work of this sort, while the lot of women hardly differed from what it had been in the old country. Under Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, with their large armies, women, already numerically preponderant, formed the vast majority of field workers. Independent small farming hardly changed the picture. African tradition, moreover, made the man master of his property and wives, the rôle of woman being that of man's inferior and useful servant. 174 462 562 567

Disease is another partial explanation. Until recently no one seems to have been aware of the prevalence in Haiti of such diseases as hookworm, malaria, and tuberculosis which, without necessarily affecting a person outwardly, may nevertheless sap his vitality, leaving him listless and worn out by even slight exertion. Obviously much of what was called laziness was due to disease. But the flaw in this reasoning is that illness makes no discrimination between the sexes. If men were disease-ridden, so were women: yet the latter were steadily industrious. 164 461

Any foray into possible psychological reasons is guesswork. It

Any foray into possible psychological reasons is guesswork. It
461 might be hazarded that the men felt they had fought for freedom and so deserved to enjoy its benefits; or that agriculture smacked of the old days of slavery and should be avoided by the superior male; or that since ambition for progress was not a Haitian characteristic, and the work of women produced enough food, there was no reason to change a routine which did very well. One cannot speak with definiteness on these matters. And it was upper-class Haitians and foreigners who adjudged peasant men lazy; slaves and "forced" laborers always appear lazy to their masters.

462 In modern times at least, male peasants toil strenuously, although not so continuously as their females. The preparation of the ground for planting is hard work, and is done entirely by men. Harvesting, housebuilding, marketing the coffee (one form of marketing not beneath a man's dignity)—these are men's major contributions to economic life.

177 People who live in isolation commonly tend to slide back in such
178 externalities as clothes, manners, neatness of person and of dwelling, speech, and social ritual. Almost from the very beginning of Haitian history, most of the people were effectively isolated from the rest of the world, so that the superficial aspects of daily life exhibited to all visitors the spectacle of retrogression.

175 Christophe, who had frequent English visitors in his kingdom,
656 forced his subjects to dress neatly. After his time no ruler made
291 regulations for dress. The men commonly wore a pair of cotton trousers and an abbreviated shirt, while women's dress was a loose-fitting garment which might be called a Mother Hubbard. Children could, and can now, be seen up to the age of four or five without
[369] any clothes at all. The nearer the countrypeople live to towns, where the example of the élite is before them, the better their dress is likely to be.

342 Slave cabins on the former plantations were inhabited by the free Haitians until decay set in and the cabins fell down. They were ordinarily superseded by huts which could be constructed of withes
[333] and thatch. The British Minister during the eighteen-twenties saw a man near Plaisance building his house, "plastering the wattling, of which the walls were composed, with a mixture of mud and ashes," using his hand as a trowel.[18] Almost never did a hut have more than

18. Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, I, 150.

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Spring water in the country districts is frequently

164 not-
[364] luted by all sorts of excreta; the watering of milk is a common practice, and samples of milk have been generally found to contain
[272] many times the normal amount of bacilli. The cases of tuberculosis are practically always complicated by malaria.

Dysentery, when caused by bacilli, is epidemic in nature. In Haiti this form, known as "colerin," annually affects about a quarter of the rural population. Another type, caused by a variety of amoeba, affects another ten or twenty per cent, according to the region. Enteritis is less serious than dysentery but just as prevalent, being
[146] caused by protozoa and intestinal worms. Poor diet, the abuse of
[273] alcohol, premature weaning, and unwise nursing are also responsible. Granular conjunctivitis affected sixteen per cent of the children
[853] examined by the Rockefeller Foundation.

Cancer seems to strike only a normal number of Haitians; goitre is common in the mountain districts; leprosy has become a menace in the West and South; elephantiasis is present, particularly in the South; gusarola (characterized by patches of skin assuming different color) is fairly common in the Cul-de-Sac plain; chicken pox, influenza, and meningitis epidemics are occasionally serious.

164 The health of the peasant women is seriously and continuously
462 endangered by their mode of life and work. It is customary for
482 females, from girlhood onward, to carry heavy burdens on their heads—over steep paths in the mountains, along rocky trails, up hill
145 and down. The commonest sight in Haiti is to see a woman swinging along with a great load of fuel, a tin of water, a bundle of building material, a basket of fruit, on her head. Cranial bones are flattened, the spine is bent, internal organs are strained or damaged. For ill-nourished persons to carry heavy weights for long distances with
[461] little rest means undue pressure on the heart and lungs, and so an
[843] increasing tendency to cardiac and pulmonary infections as well as chronic anemia. Overwork frequently results in miscarriages.

As has been said, childbirth often occurs by the roadside, on the
844 way to market, or in the market place. In no case can a peasant
[846] woman remain in bed for a proper period either before or after
[164] parturition. Midwives are untrained; they use primitive methods which inevitably result in defective development of infants, lessened
853 resistance to disease, high infant mortality, and a prevalence of abdominal diseases in women. Pressure of work, whether in the field or on the way to market, makes a mother soon stop nursing her

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

[History of Haiti in 17th-18th Centuries - The Haitian White population]

175 563 565 369 [463] planters and expressing their contempt for the townspeople, speaks of the towns as existing primarily to serve the needs of these country squires as centers for the storage and disposal of their produce: "There are found merchants, artisans, judges, recorders, solicitors, notaries, bailiffs, doctors. But one finds neither nobles, men of property, nor persons of wit and perception." [16]

175 563 The physical aspect of the cities had little to recommend them, especially since the utter lack of sanitation made for extreme uncleanliness in all Haitian centers. This fact is of special interest in the light of the frequent references to this trait of Haitian cities in the writings of those Europeans who described the life of independent Haiti. Invariably in such accounts the littered state of the streets, even in the capital, is stressed, and tendered as evidence of the absence of civilization in this Negro Republic.[17] Even though occasional mention is made that this state of affairs existed before the Revolution, nowhere, whether in St. John or in the later writers who date from the time of the occupation of the country by the United States Marine Corps, is there any realization that this condition antedates the independence of Haiti. The cleanliness of Africans in Africa wherever the natives have ready access to water has been well attested, and is still true in those regions from which the ancestors of the people of Haiti principally derive.

175 591 368 563 Yet some aspects of life in the towns livened the picture of Haitian colonial existence. Outstanding were the opportunities offered by these centers for social intercourse, and even for intellectual and artistic stimulation of a kind, such as was afforded by the famous *Cercle des Philadelphes* of Cap Française, dedicated to literary, philosophical, and, above all, to political discussions.[18] Masonic lodges, later taken over by the Negroes and today of appreciable importance in Haiti, were also instituted by the French, the first having been founded at the Cap in 1740.[19] Purely social meeting-places, such as public

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Mirebalais

While farming and marketing are by far the most widespread occupations, it must not be concluded that all specialization of economic function is lacking. The list of those in the *arrondissement* of Mirebalais who in 1934 paid license fees gives a comprehensive picture of the varied nature of their occupations: 463

2 justices of the peace	2 mattress-makers
2 notaries	2 ironworkers who repair the caldrons for boiling sugar
5 "pleaders" before the courts	15 bakers
1 doctor	21 butchers
6 surveyors	23 distillers
4 woodworkers	4 millers
48 carpenters	1 hairdresser
12 sawyers	4 jewelers
40 masons	2 general storekeepers
14 tailors	43 venders of notions in the market place
3 dressmakers	16 peddlers
4 shoemakers	

Sex division of labor cuts across these categories. Thus the baking of bread is in the hands of women, some of whom operate ovens of considerable capacity, and women are dressmakers and laundresses. Candles are made of beeswax by old women, but the cotton that is used for the wicks, or for hammocks or fish-nets or cinches of saddles, is spun by both elderly men and women. In the main, however, the rule is that manual labor outside the house is in the hands of men, while women are the housekeepers and tradespeople. Farming has been mentioned as an occupation primarily for men. All woodworking is done by men, who make furniture and fashion the dugout canoes used on the Haitian rivers; men also do basketry and weave straw hats; leather-working is in their hands as well, and they make shoes and saddles. No pottery is 462 463

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Mirebalais

462
463

manufactured in the valley of Mirebalais, but elsewhere in Haiti men are the potters. The African knowledge of iron-working has been lost, but there are those who repair iron implements and the great pots used in making sugar, and those who work in tin. Some men specialize in making rope, others in building the mills which crush the sugar-cane. Not everyone knows how to make *clairin*, the strong drink of the peasants, and some do nothing except distill this. Painters are found who paint the larger houses built in the town, as well as those occasionally erected by the more prosperous peasants in the countryside. The calling of the mason is a well-established one. These craftsmen build the walls of the more pretentious stone houses, but more particularly find their time taken up in the erection of tombs.

565 With economic specialization goes a stratification of Haitian society, roughly drawn, but based on prestige and the command of economic resources, in which the following classes are informally recognized: There are the *pauvres*, indigent folk, who for some reason have forfeited or otherwise lost their family connections and whatever they may have owned and now must actually beg to obtain enough to eat. One finds but few of these except in the larger centers; in Mirebalais they number not more than five or six. One such is an elderly man who originally came from another part of the island, lost what he owned, and when he became deaf was no longer able to earn a living. He was occasionally set at some menial task such as carrying water or gathering firewood. In another category are those known as *malheureux* — folk who are usually, though not always, incompetent, but who are generally regarded as unlucky. They may work hard on their land, but their crops fail or yield meagerly; they may obtain a *job*, but something goes wrong with it — the work is temporary, or they cannot collect the wages due them, or illness follows every period of employment.[20]

The second group comprises the middle class. This class

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any usual measure. But Haitians do produce by traditional craft methods a surprisingly large number of the articles they need for daily life. In the countryside it is possible to see many persons engaged, mostly on a part-time basis, in craft activities and home industry that have their roots in the prerevolutionary era. Leatherworkers operating small, crude tanneries still flourish. Charcoal-burners, and operators of small lime kilns that produce building material, are found in every village. Smiths make and repair simple tools, working with forges of archaic design. Combs are made from cows' horns and tortoiseshell, buttons from bone; carrying-bags, fish traps, and a wide variety of baskets from withes, bamboo strips, and grasses; wooden bowls, mortars and pestles, tool handles and spoons from local woods; dippers, pots, and candelabra from tin cans; and sandals from tires and inner tubes. Sawyers cut and dress timber; cabinetmakers still manufacture simple furniture of traditional design from the fast-disappearing tropical woods; many women, working either with the simplest sorts of sewing machines or by hand, make clothing for use and for sale. Along the coasts there are dugout-makers, shipbuilders, and sail- and seine-makers. Simple mattresses, fabricated from local grasses, are sold in every large marketplace, as are crude ceramic wares made by local potters. At the start of the twentieth century, Italian immigrants brought a sturdy tradition of cobbling to Haiti, which has been destroyed only recently by the flood of American imported shoes with their attached prestige, until recently, *vitièlo* was a colloquial term for shoe, coming from the name of the most famous of those Italian cobblers.

One of the striking features of Haiti's craft traditions is its relative stability since the revolution. It was under slavery that Haitians first became "westernized," learning what were then standard French craft practices, adjusted to local colonial conditions, probably with some modifying features coming from the African past. It was before the revolution that the Haitian people learned and stabilized their consumer tastes, agricultural and craft standards, and work procedures. Such preferences and standards were worked out primarily in terms of the demands of the plantation regime itself; but even the most repressive social system leaves some opportunity for acculturation. Today's sugar-making shops and rural rum distilleries employ techniques centuries old and little modified over time. Housebuilding and woodworking techniques in the countryside are substantially

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342 322 178 unchanged from an earlier era. The prevailing quality of Haitian rural and craft industry, then, is one of great stability and conservatism.

493 463 At the same time, of course, major events since the revolution have left their imprint on this part of life. Hardly a roadside village in Haiti today, for instance, lacks an automobile mechanic, even though these men are mostly self-educated and work with hardly any tools. Their skills became part of Haitian culture in this century and are often of a simple order no longer typical of more developed areas. Tire 383 177 tubes, for instance, are "vulcanized" by the use of an ingenious device made from a board and an old piston, kerosene providing the heat to make the seal; this technique, along with the sewing of damaged truck tires, was almost certainly introduced and diffused by the United States Marines.

47 31 178 But these quaint additions do not alter the fact that shop and factory industry are nearly absent, and extractive industry virtually nonexistent. Haiti's one alumina extraction enterprise, foreign-owned, is now shut down. There is but one flour mill, and that is foreign-[258] owned as well. One or two textile mills and sugar factories, estab-[339] lished with foreign capital, still function, as do a modern cement [464] factory and a few other small plants established in the 1950s. These industries, scanty as they are, were of great importance to Haiti, since they represented substantial investments, held out the promise of reduced dependence on imports in significant categories, and contributed to the beginnings of an industrial proletariat. However, they involved only a tiny fraction of the national labor force, and they have not proved entirely successful. As a result, Haiti lacks any reserve of labor acquainted with modern industry, even though many people, both urban and rural, work at tasks that might be considered more industrial than agricultural.

47 433 178 171 Most important for the present discussion, the minor developments in Haitian industry have not led to an expanded market and have not resulted in any firm increase in productivity. Industrial growth, in the sense in which it has occurred in countries such as those of Western Europe—or for that matter in Mexico or Argentina—is entirely lacking. The absence of such growth is perhaps especially significant if Haiti be compared with a neighbor such as Jamaica or Puerto Rico. [648] These countries, one now independent, the other a North American dependency—have both gained real increments from the investment activities of outsiders,

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intrepidity in enterprise is required. It is striking that those foreign captains of industry—mainly from the United States—who invest in Haiti, expect (and often get) governmental guarantees of a sort they could not dream of in their own countries; in this regard, they merely conform to Haitian expectations.

Haiti's problems, then, are not simply those that face any less developed country, vast though such problems may be. Nor is it intelligent to lay Haiti's problems at the feet of the nation's present rulers. The structure of the national economy has not changed significantly during the past twenty-five years—except that boom years could provide a temporary aura of prosperity—regardless of the philosophy or popularity of the regime in power. If nothing else, the present nadir of Haiti's fortunes demonstrates that United States aid averaging twelve and a half million dollars yearly over more than a decade has produced no enduring improvements of any kind. It may further demonstrate that, shockingly poor as the country is, it emphatically does not depend on such aid. As of 1964, the regime in power was operating on a monthly budget of $1,800,000, only $400,000 of which went for purposes other than salaries. In other words, the ministries do little more than perpetuate themselves unchanged. The yeomanry, living near subsistence level, continues to produce most of what it needs, while restricting its cash expenditures even more severely than in the past. The risks—in terms, say, of public health—of running a society under these circumstances are great; but there is no reason to suppose that regimes of the Haitian sort will be destroyed or improved by a show of popular unrest originating in the countryside. Difficult as life is for the Haitian countryman, and no people in Latin America lives more poorly, the real pinch is probably being experienced more acutely among the city folk than among their rural fellow citizens. It matters politically, therefore, who these city folk are and what they do.

To begin with, there has been a significant loss of professional people, almost all of whom were urban, through migration and exile, especially since 1958. Haitian doctors, dentists, and other professionals are widely scattered today, both in the developed and the less developed countries of the world. Former army officers, journalists, diplomats, businessmen, and academicians have fled political repression, perhaps with the hope of eventually returning to their own country.

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565 *caste* is the only word to describe the effective separation of aristocrats from the masses. The caste system is a vivid fact, for it regulates a person's profession, speech, religion, marriage, family life, politics, clothes, social mobility—in short, his whole life from cradle to grave.

175 Haiti won its freedom from the France of Napoleon in 1804,
648 becoming thus the second independent state in the Western Hemisphere. It had been during the eighteenth century France's most prosperous colony, its wealth depending upon slavery and the planta-
565 tion system. With the whites driven out, social distinctions which
642 actually had their roots in colonial times began immediately to develop among the people, all of whom had some proportion of African blood in their veins. During the course of the next century the criteria for aristocracy slowly assumed recognizable form, so that now even the most casual observer is aware that Haiti cannot by any stretch of the imagination be called a democratic country, with an open class system. The two castes are the élite and the masses. They are as different as day from night, as nobleman from peasant; and they are as separate as oil and water. The élite are generally reckoned
[162] to compose at the outside not more than three per cent of the population.

565 The élite do not work with their hands. This is the cardinal rule of Haitian society. Upon it rests the whole economic structure of the
● 463 country, and to this the course of national history has led. All the
[461] professions, most governmental and military offices, and the large business enterprises are effectively closed to young men of the masses. Indeed, so completely accepted are caste rules, so practically difficult would it be for peasant youths to acquire the money and education necessary for such careers, that at birth a boy's future place in economic life is, within narrow limits, already predetermined. For the élite, law is the most popular of the professions, partly because it is the quickest avenue of approach to high political office; government, in turn, is the only career which can make a man rich within a few years. Next in popularity to law comes medicine. Teaching is not lucrative enough to attract many promising youths, and the priests of the Roman Catholic Church are almost all white Frenchmen.[2]

793 2. An effort was once made by the Catholic Church to train native Haitian priests,
797 but the peasants would have none of them after they were ordained. They drove them out, saying, "Go away! How do you expect God to listen to you? You are not white; you don't know anything." And the Haitian priests had to be transferred as missionaries to Africa.

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565 171 Modern usage, having borrowed the word "caste" from India, employs it loosely to mean a rigid class system of which the people are conscious.[4] In India caste was always endogamous and connected with occupation. Kroeber defines it as "an endogamous and hereditary division of an ethnic unit occupying a position of superior or inferior rank or social esteem in comparison with other such subdivisions."[5] Castes, as distinguished from social classes, "have emerged into social consciousness to the point where custom and law attempt their rigid and permanent separation from one another." By each of these criteria Haiti has castes.

565 582 [463] [461] The élite are endogamous in that they would not consider marriage into the masses. The one exception to the endogamic practice is marriage with a white foreigner. Whereas in India all members of a caste had the same general occupation, in Haiti several occupations are open to caste members; but the distinction between honorable and demeaning work is understood by all, so that no person has free choice as regards the two larger categories. Haitian law does not name the social divisions, nor does it legislate the masses into a subordinate position[6]—for the simple reason that there is no conceivable need to enact what already exists. The laws of Haiti are administered by élite officials; these men make the definitions and interpretations. The judge always knows the custom, so that (as in most countries) the same offense brings different penalties for upper- and lower-class offenders. Custom holds sway, and custom is more tyrannical than any body of law.

Inside the castes may be found social distinctions familiar in democracies and in every other kind of society. Interest in politics, business, literature, or sport draws people of like minds together and makes cliques. There are well-to-do families who outshine their neighbors, just as there are peasant landholders who dominate their rural communities. A high civil official has more prestige than a doctor with a small practice, just as among the masses a house servant for an élite family outranks a beggar.

565 511 105 185 For the majority of Haitians, life is too elemental to be concerned with artificial wants. The peasant talks, unfettered by rules of gram-

4. See also W. Lloyd Warner, "American Caste and Class," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLII, No. 2 (Sept. 1936), 234–237; and John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (New Haven, 1937), pp. 62 ff.

5. A. L. Kroeber, "Caste," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, III, 254.

6. Such efforts were made, however, in the early days of the republic. See chap. III.

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175 two. Here was a decline of about 150,000 from 1790.[2] It is a com-
162 mentary on the man's forcefulness that in spite of all difficulties
[566] Dessalines established an effective economic organization. Its basis was serfdom.

175 Every citizen, he announced, must consider himself in one of two
463 categories, laborer or soldier. There were to be no shirkers in the new Haiti; if a man was not in the army, he must do manual labor.
642 Artisans who followed a craft counted as laborers. Women, since
656 they could not join the army, must work shoulder to shoulder with
[562] their men. It was understood that direction of Haiti's new order would be carried on by state officials who were neither laborers nor soldiers, but these officials were to be so few that they would not constitute a separate third category.

175 This step of Dessalines' was a radical one. It proclaimed the mastery
642 of state over individual; and even more significantly it divided the people according to economic task, rather than birth, wealth, color,
565 or social status. At first the more ambitious citizens bore patiently with the arbitrary decree, thinking they might be able to achieve comfortable status under a lenient definition of "soldier" or else by sinecure tasks as officials. Their disillusionment was swift. Even swifter was the chagrin of the lowly folk who had been slaves, for they found themselves now in actual bondage to one of their own color.

175 All people except soldiers, ran the decree, must be "attached as
566 cultivators to a plantation." This might be translated to read "bound to the soil." The vast majority of the people were forced willy-nilly
466 into agriculture. It was "formally prohibited for a cultivator to desert the plantation to which he was assigned"; conversely, it was a crime to give asylum to a runaway cultivator, male or female.[3] If such conditions differed from slavery, they were at least close to
[433] what the mediaeval world knew as serfdom. But under this régime of forced labor the recently ravaged fields once more became productive: cotton plantations again covered the plain of the Artibonite, and sugar refineries were slowly rebuilt all over the country.

To forestall complaint from the people once again driven into

2. See, for an analysis of population figures, Placide Justin, *Histoire politique et statistique de l'Ile d'Hayti, Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1826), pp. 502–503.

3. A certain Mlle. Chapotin, of respe[illegible]ble family, was accused of having harbored a fugitive female cultivator, and, since she was unable to pay immediately the fine imposed upon her by the police at Port-au-Prince, she was condemned to serve a jail term.

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field labor, the ruler emphasized the clemency of his new régime. 175
Labor the people must, but not under the whip; that arch symbol of 566
slavery was abolished forever. The working day was shortened by a 466
third. It was provided that, if just reason were shown, a man might even secure permission from his district commissioner to move from the plantation to which he was attached.

These were words. Facts were another matter. The overseers had been ordered to exact so much labor from their underlings, yet without whips; knowing no persuading power other than chastisement, they backed up their commands with blows of *lianes*, thick pliable vines which could be gathered anywhere in the island. Thus the laggard was driven, the law kept to the letter, and the overseer praised by his superiors. As for the working day, crops must be tended at the proper moment, so that the boasted shortening of hours generally came to little. Finally, the right to secure permission to move away from a plantation was effectively limited by the refusal of commissioners to grant any such request.

Every public expression of Dessalines showed a solicitude for the welfare of the workers, while his every act indicated that he regarded them as impersonal parts of the machine of state. He knew by his own former experience as a slave what a day's stint should be and the ruses used by laborers to avoid steady work; he was therefore able to order agricultural labor on a realistic basis.

The economic organization created by Dessalines provided the 175
roots for the peasantry which was soon to develop as a characteristic 178
form of Haitian life. Among these fundamental conditions were the 463
existence of agriculture as a prevalent occupation, the immobility of 24
all workers on the land, and a thorough schooling of the people in 433
patient acceptance. Dessalines might theoretically have established 566
some other economic system—a division of estates into small properties, for example, with each farmer a master of his own destiny; a democratic coöperative economy; slavery again; feudalism with a landed gentry. At critical times, one leader's choice may affect the whole future life of the country. The decision of Dessalines to 175
keep the bulk of his people in servitude, without using the termi- 566
nology of slavery, gave the new freemen no opportunity to become acquainted with work other than tillage. They were sent back to the only tasks they had ever known, their horizons were just as limited as before, their personal freedom just as restricted. The worst punishments of slavery, together with torture and gross overwork,

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175 were abolished; with such concessions the people must be satisfied.
566 Dessalines tacitly confessed his inability to follow any course but the French colonial system, with modifications introduced by Toussaint.

167 Many of the blacks, having tasted a moment's freedom, were not
175 inclined to give it up. Before the new order of Dessalines was firmly established, therefore, they ran away with their families into the hills, where they escaped official notice. As squatters they lived out their lives unmolested. By the time they were officially rediscovered, all Haiti had become a land of peasants.

175 At the other end of the ladder from the laborers were the officials,
463 who might be great men or small clerks, members of the entourage of the governor-general or merely overseers of a plantation. In order
555 to keep the vast agricultural economy functioning smoothly it was
647 necessary to have hundreds of agents, directors, clerks, and overseers,
565 each of whom must report to a superior. In this official class there was at least a possibility of realizing an ambition for oneself; there was a basis of comparison; more important, there was some possibility of attracting favorable attention of persons in high places and so of gaining promotion. Inevitably something of the colonial state of mind must have carried over into the new era, so that an ex-slave would consider himself as having risen in the world to be now performing a task which only white men used to do—to be spared field labor and to direct the work of others. Out of this group of petty agents rose a few men of ambition who were later to belong to the élite.

175 Higher officers of state were in a much more favorable position to
565 achieve social eminence. Not only did they perform no manual
647 labor; they were twice removed from that life, since they directed the men who directed the workers. They handled funds. They came
[212] into contact with Dessalines himself. Many former gens de couleur filled these important posts, for the number of Haitians who could read and write was woefully limited.

175 The army was the great power in the country, for the new state
701 was a military one. Since fear of a return of the French required the maintenance of a large standing army,[4] Dessalines made a virtue of this apparent necessity, using his soldiers to enforce discipline among the cultivators. On whom else could he rely for his local administration

4. Humboldt estimated that the army of Dessalines numbered 37,300, which would be one tenth of the total population. Other estimates run as low as 15,000. Even this figure would be about a tenth of the male population.

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tion? Here again, the decision of a leader fixed the direction of Haitian life for decades to come. It is agreed by commentators that overmilitarization was the bane of nineteenth-century Haiti. One tenth of all able-bodied men were constantly in active army service. Moreover, all the male cultivators on plantations must hold themselves in readiness to obey the government's call to arms; ammunition and arms were stored in every parish. A military mentality was nourished, the people early learning the lesson (apparently unchallenged by any liberal) that the army should rule and the people obey.

Although the common soldiers were ex-slaves who, upon dismissal from service, would return to the ranks of agricultural workers, their officers had a higher status. Noncommissioned officers had a long road to travel to eminence, but like the overseers they had at least a glimpse of the promised land of distinction. Captains and generals had this vision within their grasp: they were already of the élite.

In the subcategory of "artisans" were included all the townspeople who carried on crafts or trades. It must be remembered that Haiti had no cities, and that its two largest towns then numbered probably no more than 10,000 people each, so that artisans were not numerous. Since there was a distinction in the arduousness of various pursuits as well as in their financial return there existed in this category, as in the official and military, some chance for social prestige.

The only persons remaining outside the categories mentioned were colored landowners who had held estates in the colonial period. Dessalines took active steps to gain control of most of the land in the country, but at his death in 1806 there were still many of the old proprietors left who were, in the main, determined to hold their land and preserve their dignity as non-laborers.

Assassination by his political foes ended the career of Dessalines only two years after he assumed power. In 1805 he had had himself crowned emperor in imitation of Napoleon, but unlike Napoleon he permitted no nobility. "*Moi seul, je suis noble!*" he replied to ambitious henchmen who asked for the establishment of a peerage. It was the Emperor's tactless handling of the social situation which caused his murder, for he touched sensitive nerves on the raw in attacking property rights, inherited privilege, color distinctions, and social aspirations. The cultivators grumblingly accepted his decrees; the ambitious upper group did not.

The former affranchis fully intended to keep their lands once the

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175 he could save or borrow the money, buy a small patch and become a
425 freeholder in his own right. And in the mountains, if one were willing to endure isolation, one could get much land by squatter's claim.

175 A vivid indication of the declining economic condition of the country will be found in the actual scale of real-estate prices. In the
435 eighteen-twenties the finest land in the republic did not sell for more
423 than $60 an acre, even when contiguous to a port for shipping or extremely fertile. Such a price would have been ridiculous in the days of the French colony. Farms in the plains and mountains, suitable for cocoa and cotton, could be had in Boyer's time for $20 or $30 an acre in any quantity from ten to five hundred acres. In the rich Artibonite Valley small plots for horticultural purposes sold for $40 an acre; indigo and cotton land rarely brought over $30; and a complete cotton plantation which had borne richly in colonial days sold for from $12 to $20 an acre. In the North, despite its fertility and more careful cultivation under Christophe, land seldom brought more than $40 or $45, while pasture lands could scarcely find purchasers at $40. A lot in Port-au-Prince with a frontage of sixty feet and a depth of fifty, well situated for trading purposes, brought only $200.[50] Fifteen years later even these prices were fantastically high, for by then no one was wealthy enough to purchase an estate.

5. *Lapse into Peasantry* (*1827–1843*)

● 463 "Peasant" is one of those words whose meaning everyone knows
241 yet whose definition is never precise. It clearly carries the connotation of farming the land by conservative, generally uneducated, persons whose families have for generations lived on the same plot of earth without any great ambition to move away or change their economic lot. It means small ownership. And most particularly it means a comparatively low social status, for we think of peasantry as existing only in those countries which have a clear-cut social class system, with a stratification which would make it difficult for a person to move from one class to another. His land is to the peasant both home and living; his household is dependent almost solely upon the product of its own labor. He is generally conceived to be too complacent, if not too ignorant or too dull, to take advantage of commercial opportunities which might bring him wealth. "It is increasingly

50. These figures for 1824–28 are from Franklin, *op. cit.*, p. 314.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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recognized that the really important characteristics peculiar to the peasant are his sentiments and attitudes, the intense attachment to his native soil and family tradition, which, even in the economic sphere, take precedence over the desire for individual advancement and gain."[51] 463 241

Haiti in 1804 was still a country of large estates, and Dessalines and Christophe strove to keep it so. Under the active generosity of Pétion and the passive indifference of Boyer after his Code Rural had failed, few great plantations were left intact. The recorded donations of these two presidents to their generals, civil functionaries, and lesser officers, are as follows:[52] 175 24 423 671 425

134 grants of 150 carreaux (about 450 acres).		Total:	59,300 acres.
176	35	105	18,480
639	30	90	57,510
711	25	75	54,325
2,322	20	60	139,320
8,000	5	15	120,000
		Grand total:	448,935 acres.

Haiti followed French law rather than British, so that the rule of primogeniture did not prevail. It requires only a moment's reflection to see that even within a single generation the thousands of small properties noted in the table would be subdivided many times, since a father apportioned his land to all his sons. By 1842 it is probable that not a single plantation of the size common in colonial times was still intact.[53] On the testimony of numerous government officials and commandants of arrondissements, it was estimated in that year that 46,610 small landed properties were under fair cultivation.[54] If the population at that time be estimated at 800,000, seven eighths of whom were engaged in agriculture, there would accordingly be about fifteen people (including children) to each rural property. But 175 428 178 423 [311] [162]

A large number of small estates are left out of this account, which are said to be *badly* cultivated, or neglected. Taking the number of each separate 175 241

51. C. von Dietze, "Peasantry," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, XII, 50.
52. This table is compiled from figures cited in Armand Thoby, *La Question agraire en Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1888), *passim*, and Dr. F. Dalencour, *Le Sauvetage national par le retour à la terre* (Port-au-Prince, 1923), p. 18.
53. See Raymond Renaud, *Le Régime foncier en Haïti* (Paris, 1934), pp. 42–45.
54. Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

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unplanned, undesired

Haitian peasantry, to sum up, began as the result of two policies intended to achieve ends quite different; first, presidential gifts of land, the chief purpose of which had been to pay the soldiers of the republic; and second, the crop-sharing system adopted by landlords after the failure of Boyer's Code. 175 421 24 463 178

6. *The Drawing of Caste Lines* (*1820–1843*)

Almost every major presidential aim of Boyer came to grief. His tranquil quarter-century rule, the unified island, the financial surplus with which his presidency began, the peace with France after 1825—all these advantages combined with his good intentions did not save his projects from shipwreck. Near the beginning of his régime he announced that, like his revered predecessor Pétion, he felt the safety of Haiti to lie in the abolition of all color distinctions and prejudices. Just as his great Code Rural proved a complete failure, however, so did his efforts to do away with the color line. On the contrary, it was during Boyer's time that class distinctions became fixed, in large part although not wholly, on the basis of color. 175 178 565

Stating that the policy of his government was to put an end, as far as possible, to jealousies of caste, he consistently for a few years promoted a black every time a promotion had been given to a mulatto or other light-skinned person. This procedure soon met an insuperable obstacle. Government posts in general required literacy, and only a very small number of blacks were educated, so that the supply of Negroes was not sufficient to furnish him with candidates. Since one of the few roads to lucrative success lay in official positions, ambitious young colored men sought eagerly for government office, and Boyer soon had no alternative but to advance men of his own complexion. In the army, on the other hand, literacy was not necessary for promotion. Ambitious Negro youths, therefore, frequently chose this career which, while not very profitable in monetary rewards, at least gave a man a certain social status and economic security. 175 647 563 212 555 175 701 555 563

Because of the state of education in the republic, consequently, an ugly situation developed, with the civil arm of government almost wholly in control of the colored element and the military force dominated by blacks. Fortunately for the country no crisis developed during the 1820's and 1830's which made an open breach between army and state. 175 647 701 [563]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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of the parish church to which each party belongs, and no ceremony may be performed by a priest without the presentation of the certificate of the civil marriage. 585

According to the legal code, as well as actual practice of the upper classes, woman is man's definite inferior in rights.[7] The Haitian code follows closely that of Napoleon, and both conform in general to practice common among substantial people in the Haiti and France of the early nineteenth century. Spouses equally owe to each other fidelity, succor, and assistance; the husband owes protection to his wife, the wife obedience to her husband. Although the wife must live with her husband wherever he chooses, he conversely must receive her when she comes to live with him, and must provide food for her. No wife may purchase, sell, give, or otherwise alienate property without the consent of her husband; moreover, the husband alone has the administration of goods coming in the dowry, so long as the union endures. 562

The modern movement for women's rights has hardly touched Haiti.[8] Women may not vote, nor may they hold public office. Among the élite, in theory and in practice woman's place is in the home, caring for the household and the children. One might imagine himself in provincial France as he sees the daily life of upper-class Haitian women: the ordering of meals, directing of servants, sewing, shopping, visiting, party going, occasional novel reading, driving in the family car. Different from French practice, however, is the taboo against most manual labor: this is the task of servants only. The élite housewife may cook but not sweep, sew but not launder, bargain with a huckster but not carry home her purchases. A woman of the upper classes would demean herself to enter business. Since the American Occupation, as a matter of fact, a few women have been daring enough to become secretaries and stenographers, but there seems to be nothing like a concerted movement for the "emancipation" of élite women. There are schools for girls, but these do not reach as far as the schools for boys; women are not admitted to the law school or medical school, for a woman lawyer or doctor would be unthinkable in Haitian society. [463] [871] [463]

7. See Louis Borno, *Code civil d'Haïti annoté* (Port-au-Prince, 1892), chap. VI, articles 196–201.

8. See, however, Madeleine G. Sylvain, "The Feminist Movement in Haiti," *Bulletin of the Pan-American Union*, LXXIII, No. 6 (June, 1939), 315–321. [113]

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114 consider it novel when it changes little but detail; and some of Haiti's
175 seventeen documents were too short-lived to be significant. Haiti
642 shows her Frenchness in this constitution making, this love of being
171 logical and having the details all written down in proper order.

To try to analyze the content of so many documents would be a
175 work of supererogation.[5] A brief comment upon each, however, will improve one's acquaintance with the mind of Haitian statesmen.

175 1801. Toussaint L'Ouverture's constitution, laying the framework
642 of his venture as director of the colony while still acknowledging its
466 relationship to France. In it he announced himself governor-general for life with the right to name his successor, thereby becoming the forerunner of the strong-man principle in politics. The most important part of this constitution was its detailed organization of the forced-labor system.

175 1805. Dessalines' constitution establishing the empire. In many
642 respects it did not differ from Toussaint's previous document, for the same military organization was preserved, and the same system of
563 forced labor; otherwise, there was little structure of government. One article was included which was to appear in every other constitution of Haiti up to 1918: "No white man shall set foot on this territory as master or as landowner."[6] In other respects there were sagacious provisions which did not endure. For example, the generic name of "blacks" was adopted for all Haitians, of whatever color.
175 The Emperor was trying thus to forestall the dissensions which
642 inevitably must result from the growth of social classes based on skin
[463] color. Another important provision was that every citizen who was not an ordinary cultivator must learn and practice some mechanical art. This was not merely a thrust at the aristocratic pretensions of the old affranchis, but also an endeavor to make Haiti industrious and self-sufficient. Except in the North, where Dessalines' deputy Christophe kept the requirement, the article was honored only in the breach. The social situation was touched at one other point: "No one is worthy of being a Haitian who is not a good father, a good
[428] son, a good husband, and a good soldier." Parents were forbidden to disinherit their children. Although, as has been shown, the Emperor

5. Such an analysis was made by Louis-Joseph Janvier, *Les Constitutions d'Haïti, 1801–85* (Paris, 1886).

6. He had made this declaration first on April 28, 1804; at that time the words "No white man" read "No colonist nor European."

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

rather starve than work. An Englishman, James Franklin, wrote in 1828, for example:

> Experiments may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coercion and want will impel the Haytian to labour; and I have my doubts as to the practicability of enforcing labour in Hayti until the people have been better instructed, and their characters become changed.

As Franklin summarized it: "Nature is too generous to the Haytian; he never wants, and so never works for hire, as do free labourers in other countries."

The early nineteenth century saw a flood of such bitter comments about the remains of the once rich and flourishing French colony of St. Domingue. The vast productivity of Haiti under French rule had made that colony one of the richest in the New World. The country was dotted with sugar mills, brick-covered wells, and warehouses; and carefully built brick aqueducts, irrigation canals, locks, and dams assured water for the plantations. In 1790, under the slave system, Haiti had exported 163,000,000 pounds of sugar. In 1826, a quarter of a century after the revolution, it was reported to have exported 33,000 pounds.

This falling off in production and exports doubtless had many causes, but one of the most significant was the Haitian's revolt not only against slavery but also against continuing the same kind of work he had performed as a slave. He saw not too much difference between forced, unpaid labor and working for any large landholder at subsistence wages. To the Haitian slave the inspiring battle cry of the French Revolution did not mean that all men would work together on another's man plantation and receive the same wages. It meant that every man would have his own garden to work for himself as he chose; every man would be a full citizen, with land of his own, free to come and go, to plant what he wished, to sell what he could. Despite long years under a colonial slave system, the Haitian still remembered a different way of life in Africa, where mass production for export was not the primary objective of labor.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the population of Haiti was not much more than half a million—less than one sixth of what it is today. There was plenty of land, and much of it had not yet been wasted by constant tilling and erosion. When the French were driven out, the Haitian peasant re-created an economic world of his own liking. The plantation system which had poured out sugar and coffee and indigo for Europe faded away, and in its place there sprang up an agrarian system which has continued until the present day. In the early

[Franklin, The Present State of Hayti, p. 362. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

175 In the early
178 years of independence, Emperor Henry Christophe in the north and
311 President Pétion in the south tried to stem the disintegration of the
[643] magnificent plantations. Christophe's measures in the region he con-
[656] trolled were sometimes stern, according to legend; but the plantation system and the plantations themselves gradually fell into decay, along with the aqueducts, the warehouses, and the sugar mills. For the Haitian had returned to a tradition of landholding antedating his enslavement.

175 Europe's loss of the Pearl of the Antilles aroused bitter words from
648 Frenchmen and Englishmen for the better part of the century. They
181 accused the Negro of laziness and lack of ability, repeating endlessly that only as a colony could Haiti ever be of any use to anybody. The London *Times* deplored the Haitian's unwillingness to work for wages, speculating that he had "no desire for property strong enough to induce him to labor with sustained power." In the United States, antiabolitionist enthusiasts cited the Haitian situation as an example of what would happen to the American economy if the slaves were freed.

464 The Haitian's reluctance to work for wages did not reflect an aversion
423 to owning property, however, as the London *Times* supposed. On the
311 contrary, it was engendered by his desire for property. The land was there and waiting, only needing a house to be built upon it, and to be cleared and tilled. The typical Haitian wanted not dubious, seasonal wage work but a farm of his own. The more ambitious peasant aspired to two farms, or even three, with a homestead and a family on each.

423 If a man worked hard and made a success of one plot, he could put
595 away money and eventually buy a second. The additional land might be
178 separated by some miles from the original farm. On the new ground
583 the man would build another house and take another wife to take care of it in his absence. Known as *placage*, this arrangement had complete community sanction. A man whose energies and good fortune made an extra household possible was expected to make such an arrangement. It was not a new institution bred in the chaos following the
[997] Revolution, nor was it, as some missionaries held, an evidence of moral deterioration of the Haitian character. It was simply a persisting concept of West African life.[a] The woman who occupied the second or third household was not a concubine. Like the first wife, she had enhanced prestige in her community. She had authority and responsibility. Her work, her position, and her rewards were not essentially different from those of the first wife.[b] It is true that her marriage was not consecrated by a church or civil ceremony, but, ordinarily, neither was that of the
[581] first wife. Contrary to European misconceptions, such unions were true marriages in the sense that they had full sanction of the community.

a, b [Footnotes appear in Category 116, pp. 351-352. --Analyst]

2: Courlander B-6 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

For many Haitians, the struggle to obtain a piece of ground and to hold onto it is the very heart of the struggle for existence. On Morne l'Hôpital in 1932 I knew a man who owned ten acres of gardens. He had it planted in bananas and plantains, yams, and cotton. He had two cows and a calf and a grove of mango trees and coconut palms. His house was clean, tidy, and by Haitian standards well furnished. Eighteen years later he had less than an acre of land, no trees, no cotton, and no cattle. His family had become impoverished. He had three grown children and virtually no land to leave to them except that on which the house stood. His troubles began with a lawsuit over his land title. He sold his cattle to raise money to pay his court expenses. He lost half of his land as a result of the lawsuit, most of it the part with the good trees. Later, he sold more land to raise "eating money," and then rented it from the new owner. He could not grow enough cash crops to pay the rent and was finally evicted. Today he has not enough ground left on which to grow food for himself and his wife the year round.

The diminution of adequate landholdings has resulted in the disappearances of many of the *lacours* (hamlets) that were a familiar sight a few decades ago. Young people traditionally built their houses near the family homesteads until there were five, six, or a dozen houses in a group. There was a natural family community which shared a common social life and the work of the fields. But as the population increased and the landholdings shrank, young people and old began to move away in search of new land, or work in the cities. Often where the lacour remains it is only as a settlement of landless house renters who work where they may for wages.

Economic refugees from rural areas seek wage work in the cities, returning to their original homes only on special festive days for family reunions. The men find employment as gardeners, servants, construction laborers, and stevedores. Some find work on the sugar and sisal plantations, others in craft industries making straw hats, baskets, shoes, chairs, and mahogany ware for export. The struggle in the big city of Port-au-Prince is for many of them worse than the poverty they left behind. There are the inevitable slums and the constant threat of hunger. It is in the big city that one hears most often the words *moin grand gout* (I am hungry), and least often the words *Bondieu bon* (God is good).

The land hunger increases, and the overflow of the mountain settlements continues to move cityward. In former years there was a trend toward emigration across the eastern border into the Dominican Republic, which has a population density roughly one third or one fourth that of Haiti. This trend was checked, temporarily at least, in 1937 by

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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342 322 178 unchanged from an earlier era. The prevailing quality of Haitian rural and craft industry, then, is one of great stability and conservatism.

493 463 At the same time, of course, major events since the revolution have left their imprint on this part of life. Hardly a roadside village in Haiti today, for instance, lacks an automobile mechanic, even though these men are mostly self-educated and work with hardly any tools. Their skills became part of Haitian culture in this century and are often of a simple order no longer typical of more developed areas. 383 177 Tire tubes, for instance, are "vulcanized" by the use of an ingenious device made from a board and an old piston, kerosene providing the heat to make the seal; this technique, along with the sewing of damaged truck tires, was almost certainly introduced and diffused by the United States Marines.

47 31 178 But these quaint additions do not alter the fact that shop and factory industry are nearly absent, and extractive industry virtually nonexistent. Haiti's one alumina extraction enterprise, foreign-owned, is now shut down. There is but one flour mill, and that is foreign-[258] owned as well. One or two textile mills and sugar factories, estab-[339] lished with foreign capital, still function, as do a modern cement factory and a few other small plants established in the 1950s. These [464] industries, scanty as they are, were of great importance to Haiti, since they represented substantial investments, held out the promise of reduced dependence on imports in significant categories, and contributed to the beginnings of an industrial proletariat. However, they involved only a tiny fraction of the national labor force, and they have not proved entirely successful. As a result, Haiti lacks any reserve of labor acquainted with modern industry, even though many people, both urban and rural, work at tasks that might be considered more industrial than agricultural.

47 433 178 171 Most important for the present discussion, the minor developments in Haitian industry have not led to an expanded market and have not resulted in any firm increase in productivity. Industrial growth, in the sense in which it has occurred in countries such as those of Western Europe—or for that matter in Mexico or Argentina—is entirely lacking. The absence of such growth is perhaps especially significant if Haiti be compared with a neighbor such as Jamaica or Puerto Rico. [648] These countries, one now independent, the other a North American dependency—have both gained real increments from the investment activities of outsiders.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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[p. 14]

II

FRENCH COLONIAL ORIGINS

175 648 FRANCE'S wealthiest colony in 1791 was, and had been for decades, the small territory of Saint-Domingue, as Haiti was known at that time. It had belonged to France for less than a century. French freebooters and buccaneers of the seventeenth century actually presented the colony to their mother country, for these sea rovers, harrying the Spanish Main, used as a base for their predatory raids the small island of Tortuga (La Tortue, The Turtle) off the northern coast of Haiti. They often came over to the western part of the large Spanish island of Santo Domingo (Haiti), then almost deserted, to shoot wild cattle for food; then they would hasten back to Tortuga for safety. At first Tortuga had been shared by English, Dutch, and French buccaneers, but gradually the French came to outnumber the others, so that when the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697 concluded the War of the Grand Alliance, France claimed and Spain ceded the western third of the island of Santo Domingo. The English and Dutch were meanwhile picking up other Caribbean fragments of the decaying Spanish Empire.

175 563 24 The early years of this new French colony were unimpressive, the majority of its residents being former buccaneers, who could hardly have regarded agricultural life as other than dull, and who certainly did not make successful farmers. Only when new immigrants from France in the seventeen-twenties demonstrated that steady profits could be made by raising indigo, sugar, coffee, and cocoa, all of which flourished in the region, did the era of prosperity begin. [464] [439] Plantations were soon staked out all over Saint-Domingue. The great problem was to find adequate labor for the fields. Whoever had crops to sell was sure of a ready market, but crops would not grow 175 24 567 without cultivation. Since there were no natives in Saint-Domingue for the French planters to exploit, the colonizers chose the other favorite alternative of the eighteenth century: Negro slavery. In the 1730's Saint-Domingue began to compete with England's North American colonies for the cargo of the steady stream of slave ships from Africa. There is no indication that the supply of blacks ever

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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people: "If ever you refuse, or grumblingly accept, the laws which the genius guarding your destinies dictates to me for your happiness, you will merit the fate of ungrateful people. But perish that hideous idea!" There can be little doubt that he wished Haiti under his direction to become prosperous; but it is likewise clear that he was personally self-centred and inordinately grasping. 175 642 643

Each step Dessalines took to further his ambitions either for Haitian prosperity or for his own fortunes had its bearing upon the development of social classes in the country. Extermination of all remaining whites was one of the first tasks he set himself. On a promise of clemency he lured several hundred gullible French out of hiding, and butchered them in cold blood. His campaign of extirpation was methodical and thorough. To try to penetrate into the psychological background of this violence is to desert fact for speculation: it may have been a desire for revenge on the French, pure and simple; it may have been gloating sadism; he may have wished to warn France against any future attempts to regain possession of the country; or he may have wanted to notify his subjects of his intention to rule with severe discipline. Certainly this last aim was achieved, if any of his people did not already know, after two years of warfare, the extent of his ruthlessness. He ruled by fear and by threats, never by the cultivation of loyalties.

Apparently he was afraid that Napoleon would renew his efforts to subdue the former colony. To forestall such an attempt he ordered each of his governing subalterns to construct one great fort on the most prominent hill in their district—a scheme which led immediately to the institution of forced labor. He likewise devised a plan, not actually put into effect, for destroying all towns and plantations near the coast and moving the capital to an inland village; and so isolating Haitians from all contact with the outside world. 175 643 466 712 361

Turning to domestic policy, he faced a herculean task. The warfare of 1802–3 had left the country in chaos. Plantations and agricultural projects were almost totally ruined. All habits of steady industry had been lost. Dread of a possible new attack by the French made necessary a great army, and this in turn removed most able-bodied men from productive labor in the fields, while the construction of fortresses still further depleted the labor supply. The first census of free Haiti, in 1805 (probably not highly accurate), showed only 380,000 people, with the women outnumbering men by almost three to two, 175 643 433 701 464 712 175 162

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 against almost unanimous public opinion opposing enforcement. In
671 1828 it was reported that dancing, which the Code had strictly
625 limited to week ends, was a nightly diversion near the capital. One
535 of the principal dancing resorts was the house of a captain of rural
517 police, the very man who was supposed to repress such amusements.[45]

Boyer had done his best, and his best was merely a good piece of
175 office work. When his Code failed to operate, he could think of
178 nothing further to suggest for the economic rehabilitation of Haiti.
24 The last fifteen years of his administration witnessed a gradual lapse
433 into that small-scale farming which was to be characteristic of Haiti for the remainder of the nineteenth century. By comparison with former standards, production and steady industry had both fallen off since Boyer came to the presidency. The testimony of visiting foreigners is unanimous on the decline of industry.

175 The British consul, Mackenzie, said in 1827 that there was very
114 little field labor then being done, and that only elderly people,
436 principally aged "Guinea Negroes" long accustomed to steady work,
461 carried on the tradition. No measures of the government could
464 induce young people born in Haiti to labor or to change from their
184 "habitual vagrancy."[46] Another Englishman, James Franklin, remarked in 1828 that land values throughout the republic had greatly declined because no one could make a profit within any moderate time. Labor was high, he writes, for ordinary wages did not attract the workers who preferred idleness. (This word is certainly unfair: it was work at their own bidding which they preferred, not idleness.) Government lands lay untilled, no one evincing the slightest desire to purchase or utilize them. Franklin continues:

> 114 Land also in the possession of individuals is similarly circumstanced; and
> 175 those who are large proprietors cannot effect a sale of any produce which
> 433 they may have beyond the quantity which they can consume; consequently
> 423 a proprietor may have an immense extent of land, and yet be quite unable
> 425 to derive any benefit from it by cultivation, or to convert it into money, for the want of purchasers. Thus . . . there is no individual wealth in the country, because, although a man may have very large landed possessions, still those possessions are unavailable, for they produce him nothing, as he can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them.

[534] 45. Although dancing is spoken of here as an amusement, it is highly probable that at least a part of it had connection with the Vodun religion.

[241] 46. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti* (London, 1830), I, 100. Mackenzie is clearly exaggerating, unless by "field labor" he means work on plantations, in contrast to farming on small plots.

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however, as on the masses. Nothing was done to educate the people and so inculcate in them the desire for a higher standard of living. Where food is easily got, the government gentle, and the people ignorant, one hardly looks for progress. 175 178 433 [511]

Foreigners who knew Haiti were prophesying doom through most of Boyer's administration. The British consul was the most vocal of these prophets. He toured the whole republic in 1828 and found only local variations on a sorry state of affairs. At Jacmel he reported a parceling of the land, a decline of plantations, and a horror of corporal punishment by the people; it seemed to surprise him that every blow given a worker was returned in kind. In the arrondissements of Saint-Marc and Gonaïves cotton continued to be the chief crop as it had been in French days but quantity and quality had declined. At Petite-Rivière relative prosperity prevailed because the lands there were under the control of a former lieutenant of Christophe, who managed to apply that king's stern discipline to his workers. From Gonaïves to Cap Nicolas Môle cultivation was at a low ebb; near Cap-Haïtien everything agricultural was in ruins.[65] 114 175 178 433 466 24

Industry and discipline, the two commonest characteristics of the Haiti of Christophe, were precisely those most notably absent from the Negro masses of 1843. Obedience had given way to independence of behavior. A visitor in 1842 describes the actual condition of a plantation in the arrondissement of Furcy. Where formerly thirty-two families had toiled industriously, under strict overseers who were free to inflict physical punishment upon laggards, now only twelve families remained, the rest having become "freeholders." These twelve had a crop-sharing agreement with the owner of the estate whereby they received the income from half the 10,000 pounds of coffee yielded by the land; but also they 175 178 181 466 464 427

appropriate to themselves almost the whole of the provisions which the land furnishes, sending down only a few of the rarer vegetables, beans, peas, and artichokes, to their master, for his table at Port-au-Prince, and supplying his need when he comes to reside for a few days in the country. This he knows very well, but has no alternative but to bear it quietly.[66]

65. See particularly *ibid.*, pp. 94, 103–105. The consul clearly felt that the only hope of salvation in Haiti was a reintroduction of some sort of coercion such as that used by Dessalines and Christophe.

66. Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

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3. *Pétion, Boyer, and Inginac as Administrators*

Pétion lived very simply in the South, like a plain republican magistrate. He sat on his piazza, accessible to all his people. He had a quiet way of answering his opponents which did not make enemies of them. He made his secretary answer every letter that arrived, no matter how small; many were simply inquiries about the President's health. Yet the wars between Pétion and Christophe dragged on from 1807 to 1812,[8] draining the finances of the republic. Not only the crops declined: so also did most of the public improvements instituted by the colonial planters; so did trade; so did habits of industry. Everything seemed to conspire against hard work. The rich plains of the Cul-de-Sac and the Artibonite Valley were ravaged by fire and warfare; necessary equipment for sugar making was destroyed, the money for new machines and buildings was unavailable; and the men were drawn away from their land by military duties.

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Inginac, Boyer's secretary of state, after the Revolution of 1843 had got rid of both the President and his secretary, wrote his memoirs. There are some revealing passages. Inginac reports that Pétion told him only forty days before his death that Boyer was a man of probity and delicacy, "but unhappily he is petulant; he is too set in his ways to conciliate those who might assist him. In everything *he* wants to dominate, and he will bring unhappiness to the country if he does not change." Inginac cites cases to show that Pétion's prophecy was correct. Boyer in 1820 repealed the most unpopular laws, particularly those requiring personal corvée and the repair of public roads; but instead of taking advice from his cabinet on important economic matters, he frequently announced that he was president and would not be run by anybody. Consequently, according to Inginac, he made mistakes which might have been avoided.[9] Defending himself, the former secretary offers a clue to the failure of the régime—possibly unavoidable—by showing that the administration merely suggested, did not require, action:

[466]

"Have I not constantly, not only preached and corresponded about the necessity of making agriculture prosperous, but also given work at as high wages as the treasury could afford? Have I not created habitations on lands formerly totally uncultivated, putting formerly idle men to work? Have I not published at my own expense, although I directed the National Printery, methods for cultivating tobacco and coffee plants, of which I distributed gratis several thousand copies?"[10]

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In spite of all encouragement which the administration could offer, agricultural production continued to decline, while expenses increased, and external trade fell off from a third to a half. The government had to borrow from the banking firm of Lafitte in Paris to find even the interest for

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8. Hostilities between the two parts of Haiti ceased about 1812 because of the mutual fear on the part of Christophe and Pétion of Napoleon's ascendancy, and the threat which this constituted to the whole former colony. Their war had ravaged the plantations and removed laborers from the soil. Then came the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain, cutting off many of the supplies which Haiti drew from both countries. There was accordingly an unwritten truce, with no further hostilities. A neutral territory of ten leagues between the boundaries of the two states was tacitly agreed upon: neither army was to enter it. This was the rich plain of Boucassin, once the garden of the island, now a wilderness.

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[648]
[728]

9. Joseph Balthasar Inginac, *Memoirs* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1843), pp. 32, 34, 38.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

payments due to the French government.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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78 fice of the animals. At one point the *adjanikon* holding the
79 calabash in which the blood was caught threw it on the ground
533 in anger, declaring that animals should not be killed for people who were too indifferent to come and sing the songs that accompany the giving of offerings. Some of those present thereupon detached themselves and came to watch the killing of the two small pigs, as the song, repeated over and over, changed to:

[539] *O minmin, moin couteau la,* — Oh, here, here is my knife,
Soso na pé tué, soso, — A pig is to be killed, a pig,
Jodi-a. — Today.

78 At this point several other men joined in handling the larger
79 animals, for now the one killing the sacrifices could only hold the mouth of each beast before he cut its throat. And when the boar was to be sacrificed, even more assistance was needed, and a line of rope had to be fastened about his snout before he could be handled at all. The killing was ended when the
[533] sacrificial goat was slaughtered, to the accompaniment of the
[539] song:

Ma'ze Louisa, — Miss Louisa,
M'ap' tué ou jodi-a, — I kill you today,
Pour Erzilie, 'Ti Kita, — For Erzilie, 'Ti Kita,
Gé Rouge, Pié Sèche. — Gé Rouge, Pié Sèche.

The calabash containing the blood was now placed on the *trône,* while the carcasses were gathered in an orderly pile in front of it. The *hungan* described a circle about the massed bodies with cornmeal, also making two white lines in the form of a cross over them. He then began to sing the *adoration* that
● [465] follows every killing, while the family and all others present threw coins for him into the dish that rested on the bodies, only a few sous of which he gave to his assistants. This rite ended as the women came to him one by one, each to take a

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always takes place on a Sunday. The prayers of the novena, whatever week-day they may begin, are recited either by the priest, if in town, or by a *prêt' savanne*. The family and a few friends, who gather to hear the prayers and to sing hymns, take their places about a table covered with a white cloth, on which are placed *images* of the saints, a crucifix, two candles which must burn for the nine days, and two bouquets of flowers. A lamp of oil in a glass with a floating wick must also burn day and night. Each session of the novena lasts some two hours, and no refreshments are served those who attend.

On the day of the *dernière prière* those invited come to help cover the walls of the room with white sheets — sometimes the ceiling is also covered — and hang white curtains over doors and windows. Wreaths are placed on the table and attached to the sheets on the walls, and *images* of the saints are pinned to the white table-cloth as it hangs down. Liquor, cakes, *kola, clairin* and other refreshments are made ready, according to the family means, these being held so essential that if the family lacks the funds at the moment to provide them, the novena may be stopped on the eighth day, and the *dernière prière* postponed for a month or even two. The same type of song is sung at this rite as at wakes, and the mourners wail once again, though not so loudly as just after the occurrence of death. At about eleven o'clock, after having recited the last prayer of the novena, a *libera* is sung to "drive the dead from the house," since now they are through with him — followed by an *adoration* for the *prêt' savanne*. Since, unlike the custom at *vodun* ceremonies, these coins are his entire fee for the novena as well as for this evening's ceremony, he sees to it that the song which marks it continues until all members of the family have donated a sum that he regards adequate. The *adoration* over, the refreshments are passed, so that the *dernière prière* most often ends at midnight, though those in attendance sometimes remain until morning, playing games, telling stories, and singing canticles as at wakes.

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The family then take the other container to a crossroad, where it is deposited as an offering for Legba, and its contents are eaten by the dogs, who significantly, in Dahomey are the animals sacred to this deity. Following this, the adults enter the closed room, to feast at the laden table. 769 [782]

Several days after the funeral two gourdes are paid a priest — "a real one," not a *prêt' savanne* — to chant a *libera* at the grave, a rite that must be repeated each year on All Saints' Day. Each year, also, food is given the dead, though "not so much as following a funeral." Chickens, beans, rice, and coffee are the principal part of such an offering, for which no priest need be called, as the ceremony is merely to let the dead know that they are not forgotten. Every three or five years, however, a large *mangé* must be given for all the family dead, and if held on the family habitation, there is social dancing, where such favorites of the ancestors as the *martinique*, the *banda*, the *calebasse*, and the *zesse* are danced.[8] [793] [765] [535]

Differences in procedure mark various modes of death. When a person is killed by lightning, a justice of the peace must be called and the burial is performed at once. Such a one has no "last prayer," because, death by lightning being a punishment of God, it is felt that the dead probably made an oath which he subsequently violated. Those killed by lightning or who die of smallpox are not mourned, but no explanation could be obtained for this obvious survival of African custom. If a leper has concealed his disease, mourning is worn for him, though if the cause of death is generally known this is forgone. There is customarily no mourning for suicides, and never where the regulations of the Church are rigorously applied. 766 [171] [762]

If the dead person was a *vodun* priest or otherwise had strong *connaissence*, steps are taken before his death to "remove the *loa* from his head" so that his soul will not go under the water, for, as has been explained, such souls are held to be powerful spirits which may cause their family much harm 764 766 776 775

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 work until noon. A two-hour siesta followed, but from two until
566 sunset there was steady work. Only after evening prayers was the
512 worker free. During the day no cultivator might leave his task except
466 for direst need. The lame and the halt were not required to till the fields, but must carry around buckets of drinking water, take care of the children, and do odd jobs about the estate.

175 Christophe made a steady and, in the main, successful effort to
566 explain to the people the necessity of hard work on the plantation. As with the noblemen, the serfs knew precisely what was expected of
466 them, and why. Their regimentation was strict, but understandable. It was clearly stipulated that if a worker shirked his job he was to be put in prison and made to do forced labor there. Laziness in the fields was to be punished by strokes from the overseer's liane. Hard and steady work was demanded during the whole thirteen years of Christophe's rule, but only rarely was there complaint, as there had been constantly under Dessalines, of cruelty on the part of overseers.

175 The quarter part of the total crop of any plantation was to go to
465 the workers as wages, and, since production increased and prices rose, this quarter which they were free to spend as they pleased provided a powerful incentive to further industry. As compared with anything they had known before, the workers were now recipients of an ample income. On the plantations they cultivated
[423] the money crops of sugar and coffee. In addition, each family had
[241] its own garden plot on which to raise the food crops—yams, plantains, beans, and bananas—for personal use.[9]

175 Christophe was so far ahead of his time that he tried to introduce
177 British methods of agriculture into his kingdom. The results were insignificant. The plough, although obviously superior in efficiency
407 to the hoe, eliminated the sociable companionship of working in
178 unison, and demanded horses and mules which the country lacked. The innovations were consequently too radical to be accepted. In the main, the agricultural methods of the kingdom continued to be those familiar in slave days.

175 Thirteen years of careful direction can fix many patterns of social
178 routine. One of Christophe's rules was that no cultivator attached to

[241] 9. The staples of other countries, such as Irish potatoes, wheat, barley, and oats, did not flourish in Haiti. On the large plantations, indigo and cotton, which had been money crops in the French régime, were generally neglected, as they had been in the time of Dessalines.

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their districts, principally during the working hours of the day. They were held responsible for all consequences of their own negligence.

This whole flow of legislation was designed primarily for the protection of the great landed proprietors, yet there were other laws which aided the masses. In former days workers had been coerced through corporal punishment. This was by law now abolished. Temporary assignments of garden plots were required for each family of laborers; medical care must be provided at the expense of the planter; the aged and infirm must be guaranteed the right to keep their homes and gardens even though no longer able to work. Expectant mothers in the fourth month of pregnancy must be relieved of field work, with no limitation of their right to share in the estate's income; mothers of nursing children must be permitted to remain at home until the weaning of their infants.

A great concession to the workers was made by abolishing the office of "inspector of cultures." In the days of Toussaint and Dessalines each district of the country had had its inspector, whose duty it was to see that crop cultivation proceeded according to schedule.[27] This man's disapproval of conditions resulted in fines and personal chastisement. By abolishing the office Pétion effected a great saving in salaries, for there had been thousands of these inspectors; on the other hand, the watchfulness of the inspectors had kept agricultural production at a high level. With no officials to dog the footsteps of the workers, crops immediately fell off.

Pétion clearly expected la grande culture to be the prevailing mode of agriculture in the republic. He fostered all kinds of legislation regulating it, even aside from that already mentioned. For example, a complete schedule was prepared for the division of income of the estate.[28] But the entire system was too neatly worked out and artificial to be effective, particularly since it was not backed up with force. The threat of punishment removed, most workers began gradually, often deliberately, to sabotage the system. It was much more pleasant

27. Christophe followed his predecessors in keeping the district inspectors.

28. This could be very complicated. A tenant farmer might hire workers, and so have to share his half of the income with them. In such cases, the division of the money crops was to be made in kind or in money, at current prices, in the presence of the local justice, his assessors, and an officer of the *gendarmerie*. The workers' "fourth" was divided into portions of which three went to the first foreman, two to each of the skilled workers, one and a half to each male or female worker, and one half to each child laborer between ten and fourteen years of age.

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175 A cultivator who loafs on his assigned job shall spend twenty-four
566 hours in jail for his first offense and lose his wages; for a second
671 offense he must work on public projects. Field labor shall be regu-
24 larly carried on from Monday morning until Friday evening, except for legal holidays; work begins at dawn, continues except for a half-hour at breakfast until noon, stops then for two hours, and is
[943] once more resumed until sunset. Pregnant females are to be assigned to light work only, and after the fourth month of pregnancy need
[846] do no field work. Four months after delivery, a mother is to return to field work, but with three hours a day less than before, until she has weaned her child. Disobedience and insult to overseers are punishable by imprisonment. Since Saturdays, Sundays, and holi-
[527] days are free, there is to be no dancing or any other festivity by night or day from Monday through Friday.

175 On each estate is to be a hierarchy of directors, all of whom the
671 workers shall obey. In ascending order, these men are drivers (or
473 squad foremen),[40] jobbers, sublessees, lessees, proprietors and man-
24 agers, overseers of districts, and police.

In establishing a system of remuneration Boyer kept the accus-
175 tomed method of allotting a proportion of the marketed crop to the
● 465 workers in lieu of hourly or daily wages. In any season from a
24 quarter to a half of the gross receipts of the estates was to go to the laborers, the exact proportion in any year to be determined by the government. It was assumed by Boyer and Inginac that there would be an added inducement to work if the laborers' share were distributed not equally, but rather in proportion to the merit and worth of the individual, these evaluations to be made by the recommendation of overseers.

175 Enforcement of the Code was placed in the hands of local justices
692 and the army. Soldiers were to be assigned to each plantation, re-
24 ceiving their living from it, in return preserving order and routine. Although the whip was once more prohibited, steady labor might still be enforced by other means; the law definitely stated that soldiers were to discipline the lazy, the lawless, and the vagrant. Local justices were to deal with any civil difficulties arising in the execution

[192] 40. The word "driver" was commonly used in West Indian slave colonies with no other meaning than that attached to the word when one speaks of a man "driving" his horses. It is not necessary to beat a horse to make it go properly; a word of direction may suffice.

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175 423 up so many of these, there was no way short of a revolution to reconstitute the now parceled estates. Obviously the Code did not envisage the control of serfs by small property owners, yet there were more small owners than large.

175 184 466 In the third place, the Spanish-speaking masses of the eastern part of the island had never experienced the kind of forced labor with which most Haitians had been at one time or another familiar. Their noncoöperation made enforcement difficult.

175 647 Finally, the administration of so detailed a plan called for the establishment, at once and yet in complete order, of a fully trained corps of bureaucrats, perfectly coöperating with each other, most of them educated, and all incorruptibly honest. If every literate person in the state had been drafted for service, Boyer could not have filled all the offices required by the Code.

175 465 434 After brief and piecemeal experience with the law in operation, moreover, even the few remaining large landholders turned against it. While they approved the provisions for forced labor, they discovered that to turn over to the workers a quarter or half of the annual crop, in a falling world market, gave too slim a profit.[42] Without the support even of its original sponsors, failure of the law was inevitable.

175 648 652 These factors alone would have been enough to kill the Code; but its real death blow came from an entirely different quarter. The year before the agricultural laws were passed, Boyer had achieved what he considered to be a political master stroke. He had made a financial settlement with France whereby Haiti, in return for a large sum in cash and regular annual payments for sixty years thereafter, should receive full recognition of independence from France; also the former mother country would renounce all claims to any properties in the country. Boyer had felt that the chief debilitating influence on the political and economic life of his people was the constant dread that France might one day return to claim her lost colony. To rid the nation of that incubus, therefore, seemed to him a high feat of statesmanship, no matter what the financial cost.[43]

[433] [24] 42. Coffee, now the staple crop of Haiti, was meeting competition from the other coffee-producing countries of the world. To put the sugar manufactories into working condition again called for more money than was available.

[643] [648] 43. Boyer's hand was forced to a certain extent by France, which had been exerting diplomatic pressure upon Haiti; the President, however, seemed to regard the settlement as a distinct coup.

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643 reason of his power to name agents accredited to foreign governments; with the approval of the Senate he made treaties and wars. In cases of malversation, or gross corruption, the president might be denounced by the Senate (his own nominees), and the High Court of Justice (his own appointees) would sit in judgment on him; matters [669] have never reached this pass, however, for the Haitian method of checking a president's "malversation" has been the more direct one of revolution.

643 At a salary generally set in the neighborhood of thirty or forty thousand dollars the president could live luxuriously, the highest-[465] paid person in Haiti. The salary combined with the prestige and [661] perquisites of office was enough to explain the eagerness with which men sought the position. "Perquisites" often enough included graft.

645 Details of administration have been in the hands of various departments of state, their number depending upon the constitution then in force. As has been said, the president generally regarded his cabinet members as little more than clerks to attend to details. Only a few in the whole nineteenth century stand out prominently as directors of policy—Boyer as Pétion's secretary-general; Inginac, holding the same position under Boyer; Anténor Firmin, Hyppolite's foreign secretary; and a handful of others. During the four years, 1843–47, of "ephemeral governments" the cabinet ministers sometimes managed to rule their offices, and under the succession of ignorant Negro generals at the end of the century, if the educated élite secretaries had not taken charge of affairs no one would have handled them. Constitutional language made the cabinet officers seem more important than they were, however, for the actual position of a minister was usually that of head clerk, chief errand boy and handy man for the president, and convenient scapegoat when crises arose in foreign affairs, finances, public works, or other spheres.

646 The legislative body has ordinarily consisted of two chambers, the Senate and the Chamber of Representatives. Senators must be thirty years old. They have ordinarily served a nine-year term, being available for reëlection only after three years out of office. The method of choice curbed their power: the lower house selected each senator from a list of three nominated by the president for each vacancy. For a salary of sixteen hundred dollars and freedom from arrest in civil cases, all the senator had to do was to correspond with the president and lower house on public affairs, and decree appro-

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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643 and being the personal property of the monarch and recipients of his
701 royal favor, were to constitute the perpetual support of his throne.
625 Only four thousand of these compulsory immigrants came, but
625 Christophe made them into very effective companies of police, whom he named the Royal Dahomets from the country of their origin. They performed the duties of a gendarmerie in all the districts of the North, drove the cultivators to their labors, watched over property and the security of the proprietors, and maintained industry and a strict subordination among all ranks of people in the kingdom.

175 Christophe's regular troops were well clothed and armed. They
701 were kept under stern discipline, no mercy or relaxation being
[703] shown them; delinquency on their part brought flagellation or a military execution. The troops received only a nominal stipend, and each soldier was required to gain his subsistence by cultivating a few acres of ground allotted to him out of the national domain. The usual quarter of this income had, of course, to be turned over as a tax to the state. Although the King's power was maintained by soldiers, he never coddled them. "The soldiers of the army as well as the laborers of the plantations lived in perpetual dread of the rod of authority," wrote Brown.[14] They seem to have developed a tradition of some special fetish power possessed by Christophe, a sort of *mana*, to use anthropological terminology. Even princes and dukes were chastised by the King's orders, and then made to do menial work by way of further punishment.

Conditions in the republic of Pétion were similar and yet different —similar in that soldiers formed the support of the government, different in that Pétion did not rule by fear. Every individual man between 16 and 60, a few cultivators excepted, was required by law to be a soldier, either in the *corps solde* (regular troops of the line), or in the *corps non solde* (national guard). The former, both under Pétion and in the early days of Boyer, had about 40,000 men distributed in strong detachments in towns and communes all over the
[914] country. Their costume, instead of being neat, uniform, and daily inspected as with Christophe's army, was ragged and mismated; they
[465] managed according to popular parlance "to find linen on every hedge." They were paid from fifty cents to a dollar a month, ac-
[541] cording to the existing solvency or exigency of the state. Each week
[512] end a parade and review was held, and then a small fatigue party was taken to do actual duty, the others being dismissed until the next

14. *Op. cit.*, II, 209.

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175 Boyer carried on Pétion's policy of no taxation. It was not until the American
657 Occupation that Haitians could be said to be taxed. Ninety per cent of the state's
income between 1900 and 1915 regularly came from tariffs, and only ten per cent
[652] from internal taxes. Even the efforts of the Americans, resulting in the laws of 1924
and 1928, were on the whole restricted to a few excise taxes. A land tax was hopeless, due to the utter confusion of titles and the stubborn impassivity of peasant squatters.[5]

2. *Monetary Policy of Pétion and Boyer*

175 The monetary situation in Haiti was chaotic in its early days. The gold money
652 of France, Spain, England, and the United States circulated, as did small French
coins, and the coins and paper money created by the Haitian rulers, who had complete control over money. For example, Pétion decreed[6] an increase in the value of the *gourde d'Espagne* from 8 livres 5 sols, to 9 livres; of the French *écu* of 6 francs from 9 livres to 9 livres 15 sols; and the 5 franc écu from 7 livres 10 sols to 8 livres 5 sols; this almost doubled the value of money in circulation. He also struck small coins to replace the pieces of 30, 24, 15, 12, and 6 sols of France. His small coins were merely token money.[7] The paper currency created by Pétion and so easily counterfeited has been mentioned.

[433] Boyer was continually in financial perplexities. Production was declining while expenditures had to be radically increased on account of the settlement with France in 1825. Boyer's budget was not a large one judged by modern standards, the average expenditure each year being about $5,000,000. To meet this, customs duties on imports and exports brought in about $2,200,000 annually; territorial duties on produce, houses, patents or licenses, market fees, and the like, a similar
[316] sum; but some half-million dollars had to be borrowed each year. The government hoped to get something from developing mines in the Spanish part of the island,
[425] but this hope failed. It was thought also that the sale of government lands might bring in some revenue, but few people wanted to invest money, when they had it,
[454] in land, with agricultural affairs developing as they were and no way of making
[465] people work: investment in trade was more promising. The national treasury was so empty that both the civil and military officials were poorly paid. It was fre-
[661] quently said that almost all administrators and persons in authority were open to bribery. Meantime the number of civil servants was increasing: there was a swarm
[647] of hirelings and subalterns in every commune, like a host of vampires. By their lack of honesty, conscientiousness, and efficiency, immense sums were lost annually to the treasury.

5. See the *Report of the American High Commissioner* (1929), p. 19.

6. May 4, 1808.

7. *Pétion voyant s'échapper de ses États les gourdes qu'effrayaient ses démêlés avec Christophe, eut pour les retenir l'ingénieuse idée d'y pratiquer une troude. Ce moyen était trop efficace pour ne pas réussir, et il était trop simple pour que l'emploi n'en fut pas généralisé au moins par un équivalent. Ainsi, lorsqu'il en vint à battre monnaie, le chef de l'état du Sud descendit le titre de sa gourde à peu près au titre de la gourde espagnole tarée par son empoisonpièce. Il lui donne 858 millièmes de fin.*" Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, II, 194.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

rather starve than work. An Englishman, James Franklin, wrote in 1828, for example:

> Experiments may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coercion and want will impel the Haytian to labour; and I have my doubts as to the practicability of enforcing labour in Hayti until the people have been better instructed, and their characters become changed.

As Franklin summarized it: "Nature is too generous to the Haytian; he never wants, and so never works for hire, as do free labourers in other countries."

The early nineteenth century saw a flood of such bitter comments about the remains of the once rich and flourishing French colony of St. Domingue. The vast productivity of Haiti under French rule had made that colony one of the richest in the New World. The country was dotted with sugar mills, brick-covered wells, and warehouses; and carefully built brick aqueducts, irrigation canals, locks, and dams assured water for the plantations. In 1790, under the slave system, Haiti had exported 163,000,000 pounds of sugar. In 1826, a quarter of a century after the revolution, it was reported to have exported 33,000 pounds.

This falling off in production and exports doubtless had many causes, but one of the most significant was the Haitian's revolt not only against slavery but also against continuing the same kind of work he had performed as a slave. He saw not too much difference between forced, unpaid labor and working for any large landholder at subsistence wages. To the Haitian slave the inspiring battle cry of the French Revolution did not mean that all men would work together on another's man plantation and receive the same wages. It meant that every man would have his own garden to work for himself as he chose; every man would be a full citizen, with land of his own, free to come and go, to plant what he wished, to sell what he could. Despite long years under a colonial slave system, the Haitian still remembered a different way of life in Africa, where mass production for export was not the primary objective of labor.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the population of Haiti was not much more than half a million—less than one sixth of what it is today. There was plenty of land, and much of it had not yet been wasted by constant tilling and erosion. When the French were driven out, the Haitian peasant re-created an economic world of his own liking. The plantation system which had poured out sugar and coffee and indigo for Europe faded away, and in its place there sprang up an agrarian system which has continued until the present day. In the early

[Franklin, The Present State of Hayti, p. 362. Cf. p. 351, category 116. -- Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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people: "If ever you refuse, or grumblingly accept, the laws which the genius guarding your destinies dictates to me for your happiness, you will merit the fate of ungrateful people. But perish that hideous idea!" There can be little doubt that he wished Haiti under his direction to become prosperous; but it is likewise clear that he was personally self-centred and inordinately grasping. 175 642 643

Each step Dessalines took to further his ambitions either for Haitian prosperity or for his own fortunes had its bearing upon the development of social classes in the country. Extermination of all remaining whites was one of the first tasks he set himself. On a promise of clemency he lured several hundred gullible French out of hiding, and butchered them in cold blood. His campaign of extirpation was methodical and thorough. To try to penetrate into the psychological background of this violence is to desert fact for speculation: it may have been a desire for revenge on the French, pure and simple; it may have been gloating sadism; he may have wished to warn France against any future attempts to regain possession of the country; or he may have wanted to notify his subjects of his intention to rule with severe discipline. Certainly this last aim was achieved, if any of his people did not already know, after two years of warfare, the extent of his ruthlessness. He ruled by fear and by threats, never by the cultivation of loyalties.

Apparently he was afraid that Napoleon would renew his efforts to subdue the former colony. To forestall such an attempt he ordered each of his governing subalterns to construct one great fort on the most prominent hill in their district—a scheme which led immediately to the institution of forced labor. He likewise devised a plan, not actually put into effect, for destroying all towns and plantations near the coast and moving the capital to an inland village; and so isolating Haitians from all contact with the outside world. 175 643 466 712 361

Turning to domestic policy, he faced a herculean task. The warfare of 1802–3 had left the country in chaos. Plantations and agricultural projects were almost totally ruined. All habits of steady industry had been lost. Dread of a possible new attack by the French made necessary a great army, and this in turn removed most able-bodied men from productive labor in the fields, while the construction of fortresses still further depleted the labor supply. The first census of free Haiti, in 1805 (probably not highly accurate), showed only 380,000 people, with the women outnumbering men by almost three to two, 175 643 433 701 464 712 175 162

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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two. Here was a decline of about 150,000 from 1790.[2] It is a commentary on the man's forcefulness that in spite of all difficulties Dessalines established an effective economic organization. Its basis was serfdom.

Every citizen, he announced, must consider himself in one of two categories, laborer or soldier. There were to be no shirkers in the new Haiti; if a man was not in the army, he must do manual labor. Artisans who followed a craft counted as laborers. Women, since they could not join the army, must work shoulder to shoulder with their men. It was understood that direction of Haiti's new order would be carried on by state officials who were neither laborers nor soldiers, but these officials were to be so few that they would not constitute a separate third category.

This step of Dessalines' was a radical one. It proclaimed the mastery of state over individual; and even more significantly it divided the people according to economic task, rather than birth, wealth, color, or social status. At first the more ambitious citizens bore patiently with the arbitrary decree, thinking they might be able to achieve comfortable status under a lenient definition of "soldier" or else by sinecure tasks as officials. Their disillusionment was swift. Even swifter was the chagrin of the lowly folk who had been slaves, for they found themselves now in actual bondage to one of their own color.

All people except soldiers, ran the decree, must be "attached as cultivators to a plantation." This might be translated to read "bound to the soil." The vast majority of the people were forced willy-nilly into agriculture. It was "formally prohibited for a cultivator to desert the plantation to which he was assigned"; conversely, it was a crime to give asylum to a runaway cultivator, male or female.[3] If such conditions differed from slavery, they were at least close to what the mediaeval world knew as serfdom. But under this régime of forced labor the recently ravaged fields once more became productive: cotton plantations again covered the plain of the Artibonite, and sugar refineries were slowly rebuilt all over the country.

To forestall complaint from the people once again driven into

2. See, for an analysis of population figures, Placide Justin, *Histoire politique et statistique de l'Ile d'Haytí, Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1826), pp. 502–503.

3. A certain Mlle. Chaporin, of respectable family, was accused of having harbored a fugitive female cultivator, and, since she was unable to pay immediately the fine imposed upon her by the police at Port-au-Prince, she was condemned to serve a jail term.

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field labor, the ruler emphasized the clemency of his new régime. Labor the people must, but not under the whip; that arch symbol of slavery was abolished forever. The working day was shortened by a third. It was provided that, if just reason were shown, a man might even secure permission from his district commissioner to move from the plantation to which he was attached.

These were words. Facts were another matter. The overseers had been ordered to exact so much labor from their underlings, yet without whips; knowing no persuading power other than chastisement, they backed up their commands with blows of *lianes*, thick pliable vines which could be gathered anywhere in the island. Thus the laggard was driven, the law kept to the letter, and the overseer praised by his superiors. As for the working day, crops must be tended at the proper moment, so that the boasted shortening of hours generally came to little. Finally, the right to secure permission to move away from a plantation was effectively limited by the refusal of commissioners to grant any such request.

Every public expression of Dessalines showed a solicitude for the welfare of the workers, while his every act indicated that he regarded them as impersonal parts of the machine of state. He knew by his own former experience as a slave what a day's stint should be and the ruses used by laborers to avoid steady work; he was therefore able to order agricultural labor on a realistic basis.

The economic organization created by Dessalines provided the roots for the peasantry which was soon to develop as a characteristic form of Haitian life. Among these fundamental conditions were the existence of agriculture as a prevalent occupation, the immobility of all workers on the land, and a thorough schooling of the people in patient acceptance. Dessalines might theoretically have established some other economic system—a division of estates into small properties, for example, with each farmer a master of his own destiny; a democratic coöperative economy; slavery again; feudalism with a landed gentry. At critical times, one leader's choice may affect the whole future life of the country. The decision of Dessalines to keep the bulk of his people in servitude, without using the terminology of slavery, gave the new freemen no opportunity to become acquainted with work other than tillage. They were sent back to the only tasks they had ever known, their horizons were just as limited as before, their personal freedom just as restricted. The worst punishments of slavery, together with torture and gross overwork,

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therefore plantations must be made to yield the uttermost farthing if the nobleman was to pay for the necessities of strict court etiquette. It was by no means a childish whim which prompted Christophe to call himself a king; rather an intelligent utilization of the human material the leader had to work with. Vanity was to serve an economic and a political purpose.

Christophe perceived that the defect of Dessalines' reign had been lack of security, both of person and property. Agriculture is a long-term investment and so must be hedged about by orderly rules. To this end the monarch stated his laws clearly, charged a fixed tax—one fourth of the annual crop—which would enrich the kingdom while allowing the tenant-proprietor a reasonable profit, and then guaranteed that no arbitrary demands would be made. Certainly there was no pampering of the wealthy, but there was ample prosperity resulting from regularity and security.

The ordinary citizen was, as he had been, bound to the soil as an agricultural laborer. This quasi-serfdom, however, was comparative freedom. It simply meant that the home and work of a man must be at the plantation on which he had been born. Saturday afternoons and Sundays were free, so that the laborers might make the most of their opportunities to visit the nearest market village, to buy and sell small goods, gossip, and enjoy the sociability of being part of a crowd. Being bound to the soil meant simply that they could not move, when the impulse seized them, to another plantation or another part of the country. Those whose mothers or relatives were natives of a plantation must return to that estate, being forbidden to live in towns. No person, military or other, who did not derive his living from a plantation, could marry an agricultural worker—a prohibition designed to prevent workers from leaving estates because of family ties, and particularly to prevent women, as mothers of future cultivators, from deserting agriculture.

Medieval serfdom itself went no further in binding people to the soil. Indeed, it did not go so far in regulating the daily life of serfs. Under Christophe the cultivators lived according to a routine as strict as that of a school. Reveille was rung as early as three o'clock to arouse women to prepare breakfasts for their menfolk; by four or four-thirty the bell was sounded for the commencement of work, which began after prayers had been led by the overseer. At nine o'clock there was a pause for luncheon, and then a resumption of

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175 work until noon. A two-hour siesta followed, but from two until
566 sunset there was steady work. Only after evening prayers was the
512 worker free. During the day no cultivator might leave his task except
466 for direst need. The lame and the halt were not required to till the fields, but must carry around buckets of drinking water, take care of the children, and do odd jobs about the estate.

175 Christophe made a steady and, in the main, successful effort to
566 explain to the people the necessity of hard work on the plantation. As with the noblemen, the serfs knew precisely what was expected of
466 them, and why. Their regimentation was strict, but understandable. It was clearly stipulated that if a worker shirked his job he was to be put in prison and made to do forced labor there. Laziness in the fields was to be punished by strokes from the overseer's liane. Hard and steady work was demanded during the whole thirteen years of Christophe's rule, but only rarely was there complaint, as there had been constantly under Dessalines, of cruelty on the part of overseers.

175 The quarter part of the total crop of any plantation was to go to
465 the workers as wages, and, since production increased and prices rose, this quarter which they were free to spend as they pleased provided a powerful incentive to further industry. As compared with anything they had known before, the workers were now recipients of an ample income. On the plantations they cultivated
[423] the money crops of sugar and coffee. In addition, each family had
[241] its own garden plot on which to raise the food crops—yams, plantains, beans, and bananas—for personal use.[9]

175 Christophe was so far ahead of his time that he tried to introduce
177 British methods of agriculture into his kingdom. The results were insignificant. The plough, although obviously superior in efficiency
407 to the hoe, eliminated the sociable companionship of working in
178 unison, and demanded horses and mules which the country lacked. The innovations were consequently too radical to be accepted. In the main, the agricultural methods of the kingdom continued to be those familiar in slave days.

175 Thirteen years of careful direction can fix many patterns of social
178 routine. One of Christophe's rules was that no cultivator attached to

[241] 9. The staples of other countries, such as Irish potatoes, wheat, barley, and oats, did not flourish in Haiti. On the large plantations, indigo and cotton, which had been money crops in the French régime, were generally neglected, as they had been in the time of Dessalines.

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their districts, principally during the working hours of the day. They were held responsible for all consequences of their own negligence.

This whole flow of legislation was designed primarily for the protection of the great landed proprietors, yet there were other laws which aided the masses. In former days workers had been coerced through corporal punishment. This was by law now abolished. Temporary assignments of garden plots were required for each family of laborers; medical care must be provided at the expense of the planter; the aged and infirm must be guaranteed the right to keep their homes and gardens even though no longer able to work. Expectant mothers in the fourth month of pregnancy must be relieved of field work, with no limitation of their right to share in the estate's income; mothers of nursing children must be permitted to remain at home until the weaning of their infants.

A great concession to the workers was made by abolishing the office of "inspector of cultures." In the days of Toussaint and Dessalines each district of the country had had its inspector, whose duty it was to see that crop cultivation proceeded according to schedule.[27] This man's disapproval of conditions resulted in fines and personal chastisement. By abolishing the office Pétion effected a great saving in salaries, for there had been thousands of these inspectors; on the other hand, the watchfulness of the inspectors had kept agricultural production at a high level. With no officials to dog the footsteps of the workers, crops immediately fell off.

Pétion clearly expected la grande culture to be the prevailing mode of agriculture in the republic. He fostered all kinds of legislation regulating it, even aside from that already mentioned. For example, a complete schedule was prepared for the division of income of the estate.[28] But the entire system was too neatly worked out and artificial to be effective, particularly since it was not backed up with force. The threat of punishment removed, most workers began gradually, often deliberately, to sabotage the system. It was much more pleasant

27. Christophe followed his predecessors in keeping the district inspectors.

28. This could be very complicated. A tenant farmer might hire workers, and so have to share his half of the income with them. In such cases, the division of the money crops was to be made in kind or in money, at current prices, in the presence of the local justice, his assessors, and an officer of the *gendarmerie*. The workers' "fourth" was divided into portions of which three went to the first foreman, two to each of the skilled workers, one and a half to each male or female worker, and one half to each child laborer between ten and fourteen years of age.

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to spend one's time in the allotted garden patch than to cultivate sugar cane steadily in the heat of the day. In a garden there was more variety to the work, and more independent decision; in a cane field all must work in unison to be effective. Moreover, the yield from the garden was a daily thing, while that of the cane fields came but once a year. Less and less were the overseers able to get the tenants away from their gardens and into the fields.

175 466 24 656

Not all the sabotage came from the common folk. Landowners had their normal share of profit motive. The complex system of social security and benevolent stewardship ate away much of the income of the estate.[29] More important, the owners had had no experience of plantation management other than by directing forced labor. Corporal punishment was now abolished, but to the owner it was still unthinkable that there should be no coercion in plantation work. The laws protecting labor therefore left them bewildered, and they did not hold up their part of the system. Finding it expensive to maintain sugar machinery, impossible to engage docile workers, and necessary to finance social security, most of the "aristocrats" simply took the easier path of leasing their estates in small subdivisions, getting out of them what they could.

175 466 471 24

Another unexpected result of Pétion's general policy was to shift the main produce of the republic from sugar to coffee. Sugar had for decades been the staple crop of southern Haiti; but its cultivation requires scrupulous care and expensive machinery. Coffee, on the other hand, grows wild both in the lowlands and at heights of three thousand feet. It is "wild" in the sense that plants spring from seeds dropped by parent trees, without careful planting. When it became obvious that the workers were not to be persuaded to regular work in the cane fields, the landlords broke up the large plantations so necessary to sugar cultivation. Each tenant farmer was almost sure to find coffee trees on his rented plot of land. He would harvest the berries but would do little or nothing to tend and improve the plants, as he did not own them. In French days coffee trees had been pruned, fertilized, grafted; the new Haitian farmer simply let nature take its course. Pétion's careful planning resulted consequently in an entirely unplanned, accidental, and automatic adjustment to new conditions of life.

175 433 245 249

29. That the landlords did not too vigorously protest this system of care for the workers was due to their familiarity with similar care in slave days. [466]

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South in general had the most loyal feeling toward a government which had been benevolently generous to them. A blend of the two might have been fruitful. 175 642 643

It was not any want of patriotism that caused Boyer to miss his great opportunity but rather a defect of ability. Desiring, like Pétion, to lead rather than to drive his people, he nevertheless lacked even more than his former chief the force of personality which might have persuaded them to work hard for the greater glory of Haiti. Despising the brutal compulsion exercised by Dessalines and Christophe, which he regarded as savage and too closely resembling the earlier methods of slave owners; wishing to emulate solely the gentleness of his predecessor, Boyer hoped for a number of years that his people would become industrious of their own accord. His hopes were frustrated. During his twenty-five-year presidency the mass of Haitians became so indifferent to pecuniary inducements that little work could be got from them beyond that required to produce necessary food. As commerce declined, the President was driven to fresh issues of debased currency and to the opening of mines in different parts of the country, though he knew that the richest mine Haiti possessed was its still fertile soil. 175 433 [652] [316]

For the first seven years Boyer pursued a policy based on hopeful expectation, refusing to inaugurate any of the forceful measures of his black predecessors. But by 1823 the treasury, enriched though it had been by the surplus from Christophe's exchequer, was empty; in 1824 disbursements exceeded income. Convinced in 1825 that his *laissez-faire* policy was failing to produce results, he decided to heed the insistent counsel of those (including most of the aristocratic, landholding class) who advised the reëstablishment of a coercive system of agriculture. His officials showed him that nowhere in the country were sugar plantations any longer being cultivated on a great scale—except for a few estates run by government officials who could command the forced labor of convicts. The policy of offering cultivators a fourth of the total crop of a plantation as wages was luring practically no laborers to work.[37] Even the few owners who offered the fourth plus daily wages had no success. Quite simply, the average Haitian preferred to be his own master, working only when he wished, and particularly working only for himself and his family. 175 652 24 433 466

37. This fourth in wages must not be confused with the quarter in taxes abolished by Pétion. See page 46 for a discussion of the quarter-crop wage system.

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175 423 up so many of these, there was no way short of a revolution to reconstitute the now parceled estates. Obviously the Code did not envisage the control of serfs by small property owners, yet there were more small owners than large.

175 184 466 In the third place, the Spanish-speaking masses of the eastern part of the island had never experienced the kind of forced labor with which most Haitians had been at one time or another familiar. Their noncoöperation made enforcement difficult.

175 647 Finally, the administration of so detailed a plan called for the establishment, at once and yet in complete order, of a fully trained corps of bureaucrats, perfectly coöperating with each other, most of them educated, and all incorruptibly honest. If every literate person in the state had been drafted for service, Boyer could not have filled all the offices required by the Code.

175 465 434 After brief and piecemeal experience with the law in operation, moreover, even the few remaining large landholders turned against it. While they approved the provisions for forced labor, they discovered that to turn over to the workers a quarter or half of the annual crop, in a falling world market, gave too slim a profit.[42] Without the support even of its original sponsors, failure of the law was inevitable.

175 648 652 These factors alone would have been enough to kill the Code; but its real death blow came from an entirely different quarter. The year before the agricultural laws were passed, Boyer had achieved what he considered to be a political master stroke. He had made a financial settlement with France whereby Haiti, in return for a large sum in cash and regular annual payments for sixty years thereafter, should receive full recognition of independence from France; also the former mother country would renounce all claims to any properties in the country. Boyer had felt that the chief debilitating influence on the political and economic life of his people was the constant dread that France might one day return to claim her lost colony. To rid the nation of that incubus, therefore, seemed to him a high feat of statesmanship, no matter what the financial cost.[43]

[433] [24] 42. Coffee, now the staple crop of Haiti, was meeting competition from the other coffee-producing countries of the world. To put the sugar manufactories into working condition again called for more money than was available.

[643] [648] 43. Boyer's hand was forced to a certain extent by France, which had been exerting diplomatic pressure upon Haiti; the President, however, seemed to regard the settlement as a distinct coup.

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175 The result was entirely different from Boyer's expectations. As a
114 French critic graphically puts it, the Haitians
703

> who had never had more than a borrowed energy—that inspired by fear of French invasion—when they saw themselves freed, by a solemn treaty, from all attack on their coasts, seemed to allow their arms to drop relaxed at their sides, saying, *Let's take a rest.* The soldier who up till now had squeezed his body into a uniform and had subjected himself to European discipline, shouldering his arms, staring straight ahead as if seeing nothing, now began to leave unbuttoned the uniform which choked him, dragged a mattress into his sentry-box so that he might sleep through his watch, and let his cross slip to the earth never to pick it up again.[44]

175 In short, the Haitian army as a disciplined force ceased to exist, and
701 with it all authority of its officers. Boyer had counted upon the
703 army to enforce the provisions of the Code Rural, but now a soldier's
671 life was a paid sinecure. By gaining political security Haiti had in-
433 advertently lost its last chance of economic prosperity through a system of forced labor.

175 Wherever the Code was put into partial operation, revenue from
423 plantations continued to decline. The price of real estate dropped
433 proportionately. It was a simple matter for workmen who had
435 signed contracts to avoid carrying out their stipulations, and just as
466 simple to evade the law requiring fifteen acres' minimum for a single holding. Practically every Haitian wanted to own a bit of land; once he had acquired his bit, however small, he had (or so he felt) earned an exemption from directed labor.

175 Only on estates near the few big towns, where government
671 officials were concentrated, was there much pretense of trying to
625 enforce the Code. Sentries at the gates of Port-au-Prince were
661 authorized to confiscate plantains, yams, or fruit brought by any worker who, in contravention of the Code, had strayed to market on a forbidden day, but sentries soon acquired the habit of not seeing countryfolk who passed the gates. Reports kept cropping up that rural policemen were robbing poor cultivators of their coffee under pretense of protecting them from the penalties for breach of the law; this suggests that the Code was used rather for graft than for the stimulation of agriculture.

175 By and large, however, the Code was merely ignored. Agents
671 could not be found who were willing to stand in any community
625
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44. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, II, 181.

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can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them. There are some instances of proprietors leasing their lands to persons who undertake to cultivate them, for which they receive about one-third of the produce; but this is far from being general, and I imagine can only be accomplished by military men who have the command of troops, and who are thereby enabled to till them by working parties daily sent out for that purpose.[47]

An interesting side light is provided by a Quaker visitor, Candler, who in 1842 wrote that he was struck by the entire equality which seemed to exist between servant and master. Every workman was addressed in courteous manner, as "*mon fils.*"[48] On inquiry, Candler was told that the profits of planting were good that year, laborers were scarce, and it was therefore "necessary to conciliate all by kindness, or no work would be done."

A particularly grim account of the state of cultivation near the close of Boyer's administration (1842) is given by a Frenchman:

> The fields of Haiti are dead. There where under slavery thousands of tons of sugar were made, now one sees only a few crops and a little syrup to turn into raw rum. Lively growths of cactus cover with thorns the acres of cane, of fields, of pastures deserted by the hand of man; the cactus invades the towns, coming even up to the heart of the cities, flourishing in the midst of ruins, as if to insult the inhabitants. . . . On the one hand, no one cultivates with regularity, because everyone is discouraged by the thefts of cane and fruit by people without any moral discipline, and in a country without police; while on the other hand, people complain of being poor, and of not being able to devote enough money to indispensable improvements. . . . And if the proprietors cannot even make work progress, imagine the condition of the poor![49]

As the people grew individually poorer, the value of the land sank until it was useless for an owner to try to prevent squatting on his estate. Holdings grew smaller and smaller, in spite of the prohibition on sales of real estate in parcels less than fifteen acres. Good land might be had in every part of the island quite cheaply, much of it even from the government which had enacted the restrictive law. Any man not satisfied with his condition as a paid laborer might, if

47. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti (Saint Domingo)*, (London, 1828), p. 313.
48. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti* (London, 1842), p. 37.
49. V. Schoelcher, *Colonies étrangères et Haïti: résultats de l'émancipation anglaise* (Paris, 1842), II, 263 ff.

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The crop-sharing system, economically debilitating, it was, though

had one great advantage to the laborer: he felt himself free and independent, with the right to engage himself to any man or to refrain from working altogether. No longer was he bound to the soil of one plantation, forced to labor under a "driver," forbidden to dance or to sleep when the mood seized him. This new freedom imparted to him a self-consequence which made him, in his own estimation, almost as important as a freeholder. The master could not say to his men, "Go into such a field and dig cane holes. The clouds are gathering and we must get in the young plants"; or, "Weed such a field," or "Prune the coffee trees today." Neither could he send a band of young people at his discretion to pick the coffee berries as they ripened, or to cull the bad berries, when pulped and dried, from the good. Every man was, so to speak, master of his own house and his own hours, considering himself at liberty to work with his family at almost any time and in any manner he pleased.

175 427 461 24 466

Herein lay the fatal defect of the crop-sharing system. There was no way of coming to an agreement among the laborers on an estate as to the amount of labor to be performed by each. One man was weaker than another; one more disposed to drink or to loaf than another. The whole group of, say, twenty families was to share in common the half or the quarter of the gross produce; but who should measure the exact proportion which would fall in justice to each family?

175 427 24 461

These annual disagreements led to a compromise which ultimately broke down even the moderate-sized estates. The proprietor, in order to avoid disputes, divided his fields among his laborers, allowing one family five acres, another ten, a third twenty, according to the nature of the land and the sort of produce which could be raised upon it. True, the proprietor lost by this division all the benefits of concentrating labor in a particular field at a particular season; also, if he wished to have necessary work done in haste which required a large number of laborers, he had to bribe them (generally by a drink of rum or tafia). Obviously, when such difficulties stood in the way of necessary repairs and improvements, the proprietors simply preferred to allow their estates to deteriorate. Like the workers, they acquired an attitude of not worrying about the future; unlike the frame of mind of the workers, their attitude came from resigned acceptance of the inevitable, not from preoccupation with the present.

175 473 427 24 425 461

Certain astute proprietors tried to get as many families together as could act in concert without jarring or jealousy, and to induce them,

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175 by persuasion, to do as much work as possible for his and their own
473 interests. In a few cases the success of such efforts was tolerably good;
427 but one worker disposed to be sullen or idle, or even not physically
24 strong, might throw the whole scheme into disorder. One's own
425 profits would be cut by the misdeeds of others even when one had
461 himself been industrious. This caused a decline of incentive, sometimes among a whole group of potentially good workers, because one or two of the number shirked. Probably the most patent evil of such arrangements was that every laborer realized that he did not suffer as directly for idleness or neglect as when working for himself; his fellow workers shared the consequences of his misconduct in some degree, and his employer in a still greater measure. The driving force of individual responsibility was removed.

[692] Boyer and Inginac, foreseeing just such disorder, had tried to
[686] provide against it in the Code Rural by giving summary powers to local judges to inflict penalties upon lazy or malingering workers. Quite aside, however, from the loss of time and the inconvenience to both parties in going constantly to a judge for his decision, the proprietor was afraid to act on this principle to any extent, since if he did so he might lose his laborers altogether.

175 It was a rare proprietor, then, who could hope to make much of a
473 fortune out of his plantation. More and more the landowners, having
427 subdivided their fields, grew lax in overseeing them. The workers,
24 freed from constant supervision, accustomed by long habit to living
466 in one hut, and unconsciously developing a mentality which made
425 them feel, as did American squatters on frontier lands, that they had
178 a right to the land they tilled, imperceptibly developed into peasants. The state's remaining properties, no longer under cultivation, were invaded by families of small farmers, and the government took no steps to oust them or send them back to privately owned plantations. The estates of individual aristocrats underwent the same fate if not
[625] carefully watched. Theoretically, it was the duty of the army to drive out squatters, to force laborers back into "proper" agricultural work; but the army consisted of peasant youths who would not turn against people of their own group.

671 Legal irregularity was gradually sanctioned by the passage of
178 time, usage being a stronger guarantor of rights than unenforced laws on the statute books.

680 Haitian peasantry, to sum up, began as the unplanned, undesired

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175 563 565 [701] [669] an ineffective government, momentarily in the hands of colored élite. Attempting to dominate politics was a numerically small group of colored people and a still smaller group of Negroes. Although prevailingly black, the army might be, and in the later nineteenth century was continually, used by whichever group offered more. A third power, a middle class, might have balanced these antagonistic factions. Lacking such a moderating influence, Haiti was the victim of recurrent revolutionary movements.

175 178 642 643 At the time of Boyer, actual democracy would have been no safeguard, for it would have meant the supremacy of ignorance. His rule was the beginning of unfortunate days for Haiti. After the auspicious opening years, the President became an impotent onlooker as his country declined. It is instructive to compare the Haiti of Dessalines and Christophe with the Haiti of 1843, only one generation later.[62]

175 178 642 433 466 The Haiti of 1806 had been a beehive of activity. Soldiers, foremen, and policemen then stood over the workers with lianes to force them to labor for the benefit of their state. Production was carefully planned, an ordered hierarchy making every person in the country responsible to another higher than himself until the ruler was reached at the pinnacle. The cardinal fault of any laborer was to shirk at his task. The year 1843, on the contrary, found Haiti in a condition of quiescence which, to those who remembered the old days, resembled torpor. The central government had ceased to drive its citizens, and its half-hearted attempts at persuasion were futile. Overseers, drivers of gangs of workers, soldiers whose duty it was to enforce labor, had disappeared from the scene. Every man was his own master.

175 178 511 The standard of living in 1806 as in 1843 was low; but in the earlier year there had been a promise of great things to come once Haiti had rebuilt what war had destroyed. The succeeding years, however, failed to inculcate into the people a desire for any higher standard of life. Country dwellers were benighted; ignorance deepened the habit

[162] [175] 62. Haiti has never had an accurate census, so that it is impossible even to estimate the total population of the country either in 1806 or in 1843. The figures of 380,000 and 800,000 given by some authors for the two years are mere guesses. Likewise, one can only deduce the proportion of people in the main economic and social categories; probably seventy-five per cent of the Haitians were serfs in 1806 and the same percentage peasants in 1843; the "aristocracy," including all who did not derive a living by manual labor or army service, could hardly have reached five per cent in either year; the army, house servants, day laborers in the towns, and petty businessmen would make up the other twenty per cent.

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Haiti under Dessalines still had many building

175 of French con-
178 struction, both plantation mansions and slave quarters. With forced
331 labor available these had been kept in a measure of repair. Christophe, not content with leftovers from colonial days, had sponsored architectural activity all over his kingdom; if his citadel is the most noteworthy example, there are also to his credit lesser palaces and government warehouses. Almost no building was done by Pétion and Boyer, however, and by the 1840's the constructions of the French
[731] had fallen into serious disrepair. Severe earthquakes and fires quickly ruined what time had already weakened. By the middle of the century one saw, instead of trim slave quarters near great mansions, a few straggling towns of one-story houses, the hillsides dotted with ramshackle huts, and the plains with daubed shacks.

175 From great estates to tiny plots; from carefully tilled fields to
178 small gardens in a wilderness; from financial prosperity to debt;
181 from directed enterprise to sloth; from an attitude of hopeful de-
433 termination to one of tolerance for things as they are—these are the striking contrasts of the two periods. It could hardly have been imagined in Christophe's day that the smart, disciplined Dahomet would be succeeded by casual ragamuffins who dozed on their tilted chairs while on sentry duty. Christophe had liked his subjects to be well dressed, and insisted on it; but the British consul in Boyer's time wrote that "the laborers are, generally speaking, nearly naked; in fact, adults only wearing what is barely necessary to prevent indecent exposure, while the children of both sexes run about without covering of any kind."[64]

175 It was the parceling of landed estates combined with the disap-
178 pearance of forced labor which initiated the transition from serfdom
433 to peasantry. Personalities as dynamic as Christophe's or as brutal as
[466] Dessalines' would have been required to keep the people in a servile
[483] condition in a land of tropical fertility. Contemporary foreign judg-
[461] ment was almost unanimous in placing the blame for declining
[164] prosperity upon indolence (the word is continually repeated, generally preceded by the adjective "natural"). It may be noted in passing that no one at the time seems to have realized how widespread were the debilitating diseases of hookworm and malaria, which can make apparently husky men prefer rest to work. Responsibility for economic failure rests as much upon the governing class,

64. Charles Mackenzie, *Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti* (1829), p. 86.

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however, as on the masses. Nothing was done to educate the people and so inculcate in them the desire for a higher standard of living. Where food is easily got, the government gentle, and the people ignorant, one hardly looks for progress.

Foreigners who knew Haiti were prophesying doom through most of Boyer's administration. The British consul was the most vocal of these prophets. He toured the whole republic in 1828 and found only local variations on a sorry state of affairs. At Jacmel he reported a parceling of the land, a decline of plantations, and a horror of corporal punishment by the people; it seemed to surprise him that every blow given a worker was returned in kind. In the arrondissements of Saint-Marc and Gonaïves cotton continued to be the chief crop as it had been in French days but quantity and quality had declined. At Petite-Rivière relative prosperity prevailed because the lands there were under the control of a former lieutenant of Christophe, who managed to apply that king's stern discipline to his workers. From Gonaïves to Cap Nicolas Môle cultivation was at a low ebb; near Cap-Haïtien everything agricultural was in ruins.[65]

Industry and discipline, the two commonest characteristics of the Haiti of Christophe, were precisely those most notably absent from the Negro masses of 1843. Obedience had given way to independence of behavior. A visitor in 1842 describes the actual condition of a plantation in the arrondissement of Furcy. Where formerly thirty-two families had toiled industriously, under strict overseers who were free to inflict physical punishment upon laggards, now only twelve families remained, the rest having become "freeholders." These twelve had a crop-sharing agreement with the owner of the estate whereby they received the income from half the 10,000 pounds of coffee yielded by the land; but also they

> appropriate to themselves almost the whole of the provisions which the land furnishes, sending down only a few of the rarer vegetables, beans, peas, and artichokes, to their master, for his table at Port-au-Prince, and supplying his need when he comes to reside for a few days in the country. This he knows very well, but has no alternative but to bear it quietly.[66]

65. See particularly *ibid.*, pp. 94, 103–105. The consul clearly felt that the only hope of salvation in Haiti was a reintroduction of some sort of coercion such as that used by Dessalines and Christophe.

66. Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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reported in Haiti that although they joined patriotically in the cheering when the Marines embarked in 1934, many of them shed tears to see the departure of 2,000 monthly salaries, most of which had been enriching the local tills. Indeed, the country came much closer to establishing a mercantile middle class during the Occupation than ever before. The only real control left behind by the Americans was an overseer of the national budget, destined to leave as soon as Haiti's external debt was finally paid off. To that end the government saved rather than spent, so that businessmen found no comfort in the state of economic affairs, particularly during a decade of world depression and European disturbance. Nationalist economic theories in Europe have upset Haitian markets, so that the élite thriftily save their pennies against hard times instead of spending them freely on present luxuries. The American overseer of the budget withdrew in 1941.

175 458 [648] [652]

At many points the forces of the Occupation touched unwittingly upon deep-rooted prejudices of the Haitian people. In order to secure laborers for road construction the Marines revived an old corvée law of Christophe's time, requiring forced labor on public works at the need of the government. Many of the ill-nourished peasants were taxed beyond their physical powers by work on the roads, so that an armed revolt by caco guerrillas broke out. Its suppression required months of time and cost many lives, leaving in its train a great deal of ill will.

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The efficient Americans also came to grief when they attempted to make Haitians orderly in the American way. Land titles were in chaos, as we have noted. American experts wished to find a basis for internal taxation, so that economic reform might be effective and permanent. The effort to have people declare their claims so that these might be properly registered had to be given up after a few weeks, for the peasant owners knew without written deeds their local boundaries, and among the squatters those who realized their title might not stand under strict investigation were understandably averse to having questions of property tenure raised by the authorities of an alien and interfering government.

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Wherever Marine barracks were located, there were centres of a cultural dissemination which was bound in the long run to affect Haitian ideas and practices. Automobiles, radios, amusements, even the daily conversation of the Marines, all left their mark upon a people who had been effectively isolated from the world for more than a century.

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Granted these obvious difficulties, there is still little to be said for the zeal or integrity of churchmen in Saint-Domingue. Father Cabon cites a report to Rome in 1794, which, he remarks, "was not designed to be made public, and does not bear the earmarks of passion," and which flatly states that "since the expulsion of the Jesuits, the curés have for the most part led lives so indecent . . . that the citizens and Negroes have lost all the sentiments of religion which the Jesuits gave them."[3] There had been distinguished churchmen in Saint-Domingue before 1750, authors, scientists, teachers of some note, but none appeared thereafter. The rich French colony was not a bright star in the Catholic crown.

Undeterred by those who might have been their spiritual guides, the white people followed the easy path of self-indulgence. The universal testimony of visitors is that, with a few notable exceptions, immorality and cruelty were daily commonplaces. To make a fortune was the prime ambition of every white man, since money made possible the luxurious enjoyment of this world's goods. Protest against money-making or soft living would have been futile. Administrative agents turned public office to their own profit; judges sold justice to the highest bidder; planters drove their slaves to death; and priests dispensed religious solace for a tidy sum.

The freedmen, who in everything patterned their lives after social leaders in the white planter class, had no more concern for religion than their models. They attended Mass occasionally as a social event, where they might see and be seen. When in the latter days of the colony discriminatory legislation required that colored persons sit in separate parts of the church, most of the affranchis simply refrained from attending Mass: their religious zeal was not so great as to make them submit to the public shame of segregation. In their daily lives, likewise, they followed the example of the white planters in pursuing pleasure rather than sobriety, "culture" rather than religious zeal. Like the whites, they were often licentious in their conduct. When it came their turn to direct affairs of state in free Haiti, there was little interest in spiritual matters among them. The intellectuals of the group paid homage to the liberal philosophers of the century rather than to religious thinkers.

If religion was at a low ebb in the prosperous days of the colony, it almost disappeared in the excitement of the years following the

3. Ibid., p. 35. revolt of the slaves (1791).

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114 461 462 as it is cursed by the present military despotism, the utmost that the women of Haiti can do is to keep their country just above the waters of bankruptcy and their households from complete despair.[9]

701 175 Since 1910 the military has been reformed, and the women are not mulcted by soldiers and officers; Sir Harry's prophecy regarding the material benefits of removing the curse of military despotism was overly optimistic.

441 443 175 Rounding out the economic life of the peasant is the market, which provides an outlet for whatever surplus is produced, a source of needed supplies and a modicum of money, as well as an almost imperative diversion for hard-working women. The origin of Haitian markets may have been either French or West African, for both regions had them. They were certainly in existence by 1803 in Saint-Domingue, for Madiou speaks of the trade of the plainsmen of the Cul-de-Sac with the holders of what then was called Port Républicain (now Port-au-Prince), adding: "Each Sunday at Croix-des-Bouquets a market was held which brought together more than 4,000 cultivators, male and female, with the permission of the overseers or proprietors."[10] That so large a number came to the market is an indication of the social as well as the economic nature of this institution. Similarly, in the North in 1803, "Rochambeau, now master at the Cape, set about attending to the market established at Petit-Anse in July. After having suppressed all the markets which existed around the Cape, he opened a single and general one, 13th August, at Petit-Anse, one league from the city." The French general was making use of a familiar economic device to carry forward the economic life of the colony during the trying period of the wars.

175 441 462 466 702 In independent Haiti it was an almost immediate development that the women generally should do the marketing, the men being either required to work on the land or busy at military duty. It came to be accepted quite simply that going to market was a woman's work. From 1843 on through most of the century there was an additional reason why peasant men would not go to the market towns: recruits were needed, both for the army and whatever revolutionary coup might be brewing; a man who did not relish fighting did better to stay out of sight in the hills. In fact, this has even been called the chief

9. *The Negro in the New World*, pp. 196–197.
10. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 24, 54.

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reason for which women assumed a larger part of the agricultural work than in the early days of the century: to keep their husbands indoors during the hours of daylight.

Haitian markets seemed to fascinate foreign visitors a hundred years ago as they do today. One Englishman, describing the markets at Cap-Haïtien and Gonaïves, said that riding one morning to market in the latter small town he passed 465 persons and all sorts of animals. "The women as usual were decently dressed; and the men were more respectable than any we had seen on our route: they were evidently small cultivators who live on their own freeholds. . . . All were cheerful and happy."[11]

Ever since force was withdrawn from the economic life of the Haitians—that is, since 1820—a steady round of criticism has been leveled at the "laziness" of the average male. Much of this can be discounted as coming from unsympathetic white foreigners who visited Haiti to find proof of Negro inferiority; some of it again is not significant, since it is the product of élite essayists who cherished the prepossession that the black was born to menial labor, and that if he did not work he had small reason for existence. The fact remains that not even friendly authors have been able to refrain from comment upon the inertia of the Haitian man, whether of the 1830's or, indeed, the present day. It is worth selecting half a dozen of the earlier criticisms, ranging from 1826 to 1860—two by Haitians, two by Englishmen, and two by Americans. Impressionistic, they nevertheless establish a basis from which to gauge the accuracy or inaccuracy of the charge.

In 1826, Placide Justin, drawing most of his material from the notes of the British agent in the Antilles, wrote: "The Haitian man is characterized by an almost unbelievable inertia. He is practically without ambition in political as well as in private life. No one seems to worry about tomorrow."[12] Two years later the Englishman, James Franklin, compared the régimes of Christophe in the North and of Pétion and Boyer in the South; with the former he was entirely sympathetic, but in 1828

> the state of ignorance prevailing among the people in the mountains and the interior parts is almost inconceivable. It appears as if the work of civilization had not commenced, and that the people had not taken one

11. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 25, 26.
12. *Histoire politique et statistique de l'île d'Haïti*, p. 336.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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114 consider it novel when it changes little but detail; and some of Haiti's
175 seventeen documents were too short-lived to be significant. Haiti
642 shows her Frenchness in this constitution making, this love of being
171 logical and having the details all written down in proper order.

175 To try to analyze the content of so many documents would be a work of supererogation.[5] A brief comment upon each, however, will improve one's acquaintance with the mind of Haitian statesmen.

175 1801. Toussaint L'Ouverture's constitution, laying the framework
642 of his venture as director of the colony while still acknowledging its
466 relationship to France. In it he announced himself governor-general for life with the right to name his successor, thereby becoming the forerunner of the strong-man principle in politics. The most important part of this constitution was its detailed organization of the forced-labor system.

175 1805. Dessalines' constitution establishing the empire. In many
642 respects it did not differ from Toussaint's previous document, for the same military organization was preserved, and the same system of
563 forced labor; otherwise, there was little structure of government. One article was included which was to appear in every other constitution of Haiti up to 1918: "No white man shall set foot on this territory as master or as landowner."[6] In other respects there were sagacious provisions which did not endure. For example, the generic name of "blacks" was adopted for all Haitians, of whatever color.
175 The Emperor was trying thus to forestall the dissensions which
642 inevitably must result from the growth of social classes based on skin
[463] color. Another important provision was that every citizen who was not an ordinary cultivator must learn and practice some mechanical art. This was not merely a thrust at the aristocratic pretensions of the old affranchis, but also an endeavor to make Haiti industrious and self-sufficient. Except in the North, where Dessalines' deputy Christophe kept the requirement, the article was honored only in the breach. The social situation was touched at one other point: "No one is worthy of being a Haitian who is not a good father, a good
[428] son, a good husband, and a good soldier." Parents were forbidden to disinherit their children. Although, as has been shown, the Emperor

5. Such an analysis was made by Louis-Joseph Janvier, *Les Constitutions d'Haïti, 1801–83* (Paris, 1886).

6. He had made this declaration first on April 28, 1804; at that time the words "No white man" read "No colonist nor European."

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Patrick Henry, Randolph, and Samuel Adams as well. Madiou estimates that there were 52,500 men in the army in 1804, when Haiti's population was less than 400,000.[12] 175 701

Fear of the return of the French kept the army large, and the administration of agricultural affairs under both Dessalines and Christophe was in charge of it. The construction of a fortress in every district put laborers under the direct influence of the military.[13] In addition to the corvée, or forced labor, required to construct these fortifications, the workers of the nation in the time of Dessalines also had to clear the hillsides and the ravines connecting valleys, and plant them with bananas, yams, plantains, and other provisions to supply the garrisons which manned the forts. 175 712 466 [705]

The Emperor left his army to feed and clothe itself. Occasional rations were given as a part of wages, but they were irregularly distributed. In the South particularly the troops began to murmur and desert, stirred up by their mulatto officers who were themselves no better rewarded, and who were already beginning their plot to overthrow the Emperor. The accusation was made that the money which should have gone to the army was being used on Dessalines' mistresses. The soldiers indulged themselves in that most damaging of Haitian weapons, the witty song, full of double meanings but deadly in its thrust at public personages; by these symbolic songs the fall of Dessalines was not only predicted but actually prepared. 175 705 701

Christophe kept a military state, but he had learned many lessons from watching affairs under Dessalines. Realizing that he could not trust the preservation of his régime to the fickleness of an army which had seen his rise to power and had already deserted its first commander in chief, knowing too that there was treason even among his own guards, he made a contract with a company of foreign merchants for the transportation of twenty thousand blacks from Africa. These were to make up a military force independent of the Haitians, 175 643 701 625

12. *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 122.

13. Each general was commanded by Dessalines to build a fort on one of the mountains in his district. The design seems to have been left to the general. A few of the fortifications were truly impressive. Christophe built La Ferrière near Milot in the North; Pétion the fortress of Jean-Jacques at Grand Fond, four leagues from Port-au-Prince; Capoix called his Les Trois Pavillons, in the range of mountains back of Port-de-Paix; Gingé and Yayou together built Canapan near Léogane; Magloire Ambroise constructed a fortress near Cap Rouge and called it by that name; Geffrard built Pierrot near Les Cayes; Pérou built Madiraut near Jérémie; François began but did not finish Le Bonnet Carré near Aquin. [712]

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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policy of encouraging trade with his friends and prohibiting it with his enemies—both arbitrarily. The variation of Pétion was a sort of mercantilism, with set high tariffs.

What Dessalines planned was in terms of Western statecraft so weird that white onlookers felt they were restrained in calling Dessalines a transplanted African tribal chieftain. So passionately intense was the fury of that general against all whites that he took every precaution he could devise to prevent face-to-face dealings between his Haitians and foreigners. By deceit, treachery, and ingenious cruelty he conducted a massacre which deserves comparison with that of Saint Bartholomew: this effectively rid the country of white residents. Since for a time Haiti would have to depend for economic survival upon trade with foreigners, Dessalines next conceived a project whereby the whole population would be gathered in the centre of the island, in the most protected valleys and the gorges of the highest mountains. In these fastnesses the people would never see a white but would work on the land, producing sugar and coffee and cotton for export without ever leaving their local habitations. On the seacoast would be established certain "counters" over which a few incorruptible Haitians, chosen by the Emperor himself, would sell local products and buy the necessary imported goods. Impregnable fortresses were to guard access to the interior,[2] which would be reached by new roads from the seacoast "counters." Every seaport was to be destroyed as soon as new towns could be built in the back country. Already when his death intervened Dessalines had moved his capital from the Cape (that is, Cap-Haïtien, formerly Cap Français) to the inland village of Marchand (in the department of the Artibonite; now renamed Dessalines), and his next plan was to transfer Port-au-Prince eight leagues inland to the plantation Dérance, among the mountains.

Dessalines has been thought absurd, childish, barbaric. But there is something poignant, even tragic, in this fiery determination of the black chieftain, bitter over the cruelties and indignity to which his people had been subject for decades, to use this alien island as best he could and preserve his people at any cost from such another domination.

Despite his scheme for ultimate isolation of the people, Dessalines kept everyone steadily at work by the forced-labor system instituted

2. See p. 247 and note 13. under Toussaint.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 Haiti under Dessalines seemed to be flourishing, although it was
433 less productive than under the French colonial régime. This was partly because the material damage of the wars had been too great to be quickly repaired; partly it was because many of the free Haitians had discovered ways of disappearing into the remote valleys, there to live the life of independent squatters, safe from the blows of Dessalines' overseers. Tables of exports showed that sugar production was rapidly declining, and that coffee was now becoming the principal crop of the country.[4] Many cane fields, indeed, were turning into rugged thickets, their mills and refineries falling to ruins beside the clogged irrigation ditches.

175 It was a bewildering "system," then, this instituted by Dessalines:
● 466 intense activity of serfs on government plantations, but an increasing
439 number of deserting squatters; foreign trade encouraged, yet run by
579 principles of local favoritism. Even the old-fashioned practice of piracy was reëstablished, for the Emperor gave letters of marque to some of his subjects who owned ships, allowing them to pursue French and Spanish vessels as the rightful prey of an enemy country. Sometimes these Haitian corsairs even disturbed smaller English merchant ships. Finally, it was Dessalines who said to his favorites, "*Plumez la poule* [that is, the Haitian people], *mais prenez garde qu'elle ne crie pas.*"

175 Christophe, upon his accession to power in the North, completely
439 abandoned the fantastic schemes of Dessalines for putting an end to
437 all contact between Haitians and foreigners. Among his earliest acts were efforts to undo the economic measures of the Emperor. In his first address he proclaimed certain free ports, announcing that the flags of all nations would be respected and property protected.[5] Next he abolished the consignment system of trading, allowing all foreign traders free access to Haitian merchants. This open system did away with the need of smuggling.

175 Because Christophe was almost pathetically anxious to make a
439 good impression upon Great Britain, he was scrupulous in living up
648 to his promises of security of property and justice in commercial dealings—to British merchants. The United States fared ill at the King's hands, for it was a young republic which had by refusing

4. See note on this chapter, p. 320, section 4.
5. His constitution of 1807 likewise makes this promise: "The government solemnly guarantees to foreign merchants the security of their persons and property."

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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élite toward *les noirs*. The mildest expression of general opinion is that it would be a waste of time to try to educate the masses, for they are so nearly like animals that they could not absorb even the simplest education. Peasants eat when they are hungry, rise and go to sleep with light and darkness, are unable to count, like animals sense changes in weather; peasants are kindly but stupid, like donkeys: this is the kind of summary one hears from the mouths of the élite. It is possible that the élite are merely imitating the attitude toward the Negro of many white people they have seen.

[466] Treatment of servants is revealing. They are often reviled for their thickheadedness. When one remonstrates with an employer for his frequent upbraiding of workmen, there is sure to be a look of pained surprise. Said one man: "You can no more hurt the feelings of a peasant than you can hurt the feelings of a mule." Servants simply do not feel as human beings do, but must be "broken," like a horse. This is not to say that many kindly employers do not exist, but rather that working people are not regarded as belonging to the higher orders of nature. A Catholic priest who devoted a good part of his time to work in the hills was told by some of his élite parishioners that this was a waste of time, for such dull people could not possibly benefit from his teachings.

Thoughtful men, on the other hand, know well enough that it is possible to improve the lot of the people. But if the peasant should be well educated he would become ambitious; where then would be the monopoly which is now held by the aristocrats on wealth, government, education? Merest self-interest prompts one to defend the status quo. This definitely worries many of the upper group. Aware that so long as conditions remain as they are Haiti will be poor and backward, they are nevertheless not ready to promote what would be a thoroughgoing social revolution. If any government should become oversolicitous for the well-being of the masses, it would soon find itself bitterly opposed by the upper class. In the long run, what will be the result of keeping things as they are? Élite who know their history can find several possible answers, no one of which appeals to them: a peasants' revolt, a Reign of Terror, intervention by a foreign power. They are on the horns of a dilemma: if as rulers they promote material welfare, they lose their present positions of security; if they do not promote a change, violent change will unseat them.

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3. Pétion, Boyer, and Inginac as Administrators

Pétion lived very simply in the South, like a plain republican magistrate. He sat on his piazza, accessible to all his people. He had a quiet way of answering his opponents which did not make enemies of them. He made his secretary answer every letter that arrived, no matter how small; many were simply inquiries about the President's health. Yet the wars between Pétion and Christophe dragged on from 1807 to 1812,[8] draining the finances of the republic. Not only the crops declined: so also did most of the public improvements instituted by the colonial planters; so did trade; so did habits of industry. Everything seemed to conspire against hard work. The rich plains of the Cul-de-Sac and the Artibonite Valley were ravaged by fire and warfare; necessary equipment for sugar making was destroyed, the money for new machines and buildings was unavailable; and the men were drawn away from their land by military duties.

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Inginac, Boyer's secretary of state, after the Revolution of 1843 had got rid of both the President and his secretary, wrote his memoirs. There are some revealing passages. Inginac reports that Pétion told him only forty days before his death that Boyer was a man of probity and delicacy, "but unhappily he is petulant; he is too set in his ways to conciliate those who might assist him. In everything *he* wants to dominate, and he will bring unhappiness to the country if he does not change." Inginac cites cases to show that Pétion's prophecy was correct. Boyer in 1820 repealed the most unpopular laws, particularly those requiring personal corvée and the repair of public roads; but instead of taking advice from his cabinet on important economic matters, he frequently announced that he was president and would not be run by anybody. Consequently, according to Inginac, he made mistakes which might have been avoided.[9] Defending himself, the former secretary offers a clue to the failure of the régime—possibly unavoidable—by showing that the administration merely suggested, did not require, action:

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"Have I not constantly, not only preached and corresponded about the necessity of making agriculture prosperous, but also given work at as high wages as the treasury could afford: Have I not created habitations on lands formerly totally uncultivated, putting formerly idle men to work: Have I not published at my own expense, although I directed the National Printery, methods for cultivating tobacco and coffee plants, of which I distributed gratis several thousand copies?"[10]

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In spite of all encouragement which the administration could offer, agricultural production continued to decline, while expenses increased, and external trade fell off from a third to a half. The government had to borrow from the banking firm of Lafitte in Paris to find even the interest for payments due to the French government.

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8. Hostilities between the two parts of Haiti ceased about 1812 because of the mutual fear on the part of Christophe and Pétion of Napoleon's ascendancy, and the threat which this constituted to the whole former colony. Their war had ravaged the plantations and removed laborers from the soil. Then came the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain, cutting off many of the supplies which Haiti drew from both countries. There was accordingly an unwritten truce, with no further hostilities. A neutral territory of two leagues between the boundaries of the two states was tacitly agreed upon: neither army was to enter it. This was the rich plain of Boucassin, once the garden of the island, now a wilderness.

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9. Joseph Balthazar Inginac, *Mémoires* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1843), pp. 32, 34, 38.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

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175 565 These newcomers in the class structure enjoyed regular urban employment, were mostly literate and legally married, and harbored strong ambitions for the education of their children. Such persons were certainly not elite members, and their behavior (as, for instance, in their preference for speaking Creole rather than French) showed it; yet they were not part of the rural masses, nor merely an example of Marx's *Lumpenproletariat.* Yet significance of this new group for the Leyburn "caste" theory of the elite is considerable. Even today, if such persons lapse into poverty, their ideology will continue to matter politically. Estimé's regime also loosed new political trends, since at first some encouragement was given to labor unions, and the construction of urban low-cost housing was undertaken. We are unable to measure the long-term effects of these changes, but their reality raises some questions about the rigidity that Leyburn's analysis imputed to Haitian social structure.

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175 669 643 159 In May 1950, after an unsuccessful bid to extend his term of office illegally, Estimé's regime was toppled, again by a military junta. To power came Paul Magloire, the first military figure to become chief executive since the start of the United States occupation. Like Estimé before him, Magloire symbolized certain effects of the occupation upon Haiti's social and political structure and the way that structure was continuing to change. Magloire's origins were not within the elite, to judge by the traditional criteria. He was a black man, and from the north; born in Quartier Morin, he associated himself with the elite of the north coast port of Cap Haïtien, Haiti's second largest city. By marriage to a "Capoise," whose family status was much higher than his own, and by a successful career in the military during the occupation, Magloire penetrated elite circles. As commander of the Palace Guard, he had been a member of the junta that ousted Lescot in 1946, replacing him with Estimé. In 1950, when Magloire became president, after the army had forcibly discharged both houses of the legislature, he apparently had the support of the elite and of the business class, if not of the popular forces that had backed Estimé.

175 643 Magloire may be said to have moderated considerably the intensity of Haitian politics, and his administration was not marked by so sharp an ideological concern with the relative roles of elite and countryman. Times were good, and levels of life, both in the countryside and in the capital, were probably as high as they had been at any time in Haitian history. Certain economic gains were made in the tourist

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643 At the same time, the President has expressed his favorable interest
771 in vodoun and is said to practice it; this statement, however, has
795 overtones of malevolence that are not appropriate. Vodoun is a religion, though it lacks a centralized priestly hierarchy or administrative organization. Outside the elite, Catholicism in Haiti has always been colored by vodoun elements. The Haitian people as a whole invest no effort in distinguishing what is "really Catholic" from what is not, in their religious practices; in this regard Haitian countrymen do not really differ from folk practitioners of Catholicism anywhere. By its misreading of the piety of the Haitian masses, and its unceasing hostility to vodoun—quite different from the church policy in the so-called "Indian countries" of Latin America—the Church had failed to secure its influence over the Haitian people. In contrast, Duvalier's understanding of Haitian religious sociology has proved superior, and is consistent with the *authentique* ideology of the 1940s, though doubtless much more extreme in its implications.

642 Finally, the Duvalier regime has invaded such institutions as the
871 National University and the trade unions, and maintains close sur-
● 467 veillance over any individuals it regards as politically suspicious. Loy-
204 alty oaths are required at the university; a public press no longer ex-
661 ists; the unions, never strong, are now entirely powerless. But it should be clear from this description of the Duvalier regime that repression is not the key to Duvalier power so much as the means for perpetuating that power under Haitian conditions. The key to Du-
642 valier power is to be found instead in the structure of Haitian society,
648 in the social history of the past two decades, and in the policy of the United States, weakened by its inescapable preference for "stability" over "radicalism." In his own way, President Duvalier is as radical as he can be; but he is no Castro. It is now an open secret that Haiti's support for sanctions against Cuba approved at Punta del Este was matched by economic concessions from the United States; that the Marines, knowingly or not, immobilized anti-Duvalier opposition in a period when its supporters could be picked off, driven into exile, or jailed; that the official Duvalier offer of Môle St. Nicholas to the United States as a substitute for Guantánamo, though irrelevant, was warmly reassuring to some North American political thinkers; and that Duvalier, while he employs considerable "blackmail diplomacy" in his dealings with the United States and is now out of favor, is still considered "reliable" in that most important respect.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

167 175 [648] a massacre in the western part of the Dominican Republic which took the lives of an estimated five thousand to fifteen thousand Haitians. The survivors fled homeward, and many were settled in frontier areas by the government. Even so, today there are believed to be some sixty or seventy thousand Haitians still living east of the border. Large numbers of Haitians, particularly men, migrated to Cuba in the years following World War I, in search of better wages in the cane fields. By 1931 there were more than eighty thousand Haitians in that country.[6] But resentment by local Cuban labor and the onset of the depression combined to force the repatriation of great numbers of them. Thirty thousand Haitians came home from Cuba in the years 1936 and 1937 alone.

16 [842] Solution of Haiti's problem of overpopulation does not seem imminent. The obvious answers would seem to be birth control, emigration, wiser use of natural resources, and industrialization. Since the country is predominantly Catholic, and since much social value is placed on children, birth control seems unlikely. And as health facilities become more widespread and infant mortality drops, the pressure will become more acute. Emigration seems to offer no hope, since neighboring islands and countries [311] on the mainland give no encouragement. The Haitian may yet learn to conserve his land and to get more out of it, to stock his lakes with fish, and to [47] bring more fish in from the sea. But this will not suffice. Nothing is left but industrialization, and that seems to be a thing of the far-distant future.

181 167 461 Nevertheless, the character of Haitian life remains essentially agrarian. The displaced peasant, whether he is now a hotel "houseboy," a taxi driver, or a cane cutter, dreams of returning to the land some day and growing bananas, coffee, and cotton that will make him independent. In far-off places such as Havana and New York, Haitians work and save money with the expectation that one day they will come home, buy fifteen or twenty acres of ground, build a new house, and live out their lives as decently prosperous *habitants*. The traditions of the agricultural [128] society, along with Vodoun, continue to play a significant role in the life of the people.

476 241 One such tradition is the institution of the *coumbite*, a loosely knit coöperative work party of neighbors and friends. The word itself probably comes from the Spanish *convide*, or *convite*, meaning "to invite." A member of the group holds a coumbite by notifying his fellow members that on such-and-such a day his fields will require clearing or hoeing. There are several variants of the work gathering. One, called *carré* or *corvée*, meets at irregular intervals and only on special invitation. There are no regular reciprocal obligations in the *corvée;* the workers are

[6] [Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," Journal of Negro History, October, 1940, p. 515. Cf. p. 352, Category 116. --Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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462 three hundred marketplaces serve the towns and countryside, some
443 of them patronized by thousands of buyers and sellers on market days. By participating in active small-scale trade, the wives of the yeomen contribute in a limited way to national economic efficiency and growth. As in all heavily agrarian economies marked by poor storage facilities, inferior transportation, and low consumer incomes there is considerable substitution of labor for capital, and there are high losses through spoilage. Except for the marketing of export commodities, much time is consumed in bargaining, in carrying, and in hand-processing of various sorts. But these activities are the accompaniments of the general low level of development of the Haitian economy, not one of its causes.

443 The economic challenges posed by agriculture on the one hand,
241 and by marketing on the other, differ significantly. Since these ac-
462 tivities are carried out predominantly along the lines of a sexual division of labor, the Haitian countrymen and their marketing wives
114 differ in some regards in their attitudes. Foreign observers of the
462 nineteenth century commented regularly on the industry and energy
174 of Haitian rural women, stressing their predominance in trade. Some
175 writers have attributed this convention to the West African tradition,
443 since women are the marketers, men the farmers, in many African
241 societies. Leyburn, however, notes that the militarism and political
433 unrest that have marked Haiti during so much of its history were serious impediments to peaceful trade. Women came to predominate in marketing, he theorizes, because men did what they could to avoid the towns, since they were often impressed into roving army bands if they traveled far from home. Whatever the historical causes may be, it has been established that the women of Haiti's countryside carry on most of the internal trade, while their husbands do most of the farming. These women, on the whole, know more about the towns, mix more easily with outsiders, and show more intrepidity in trade than the men show in agriculture. Yet it has been demonstrated that, for most of them, the scale of their enterprise is so modest and the economic opportunities open to them so restricted that their energy and daring can do little to increase the level of productive activity (Mintz, 1964:256–86).

● 47 Haiti's lack of large factories, mechanized production, and a skilled industrial labor force means that the country is unindustrialized by any usual measure.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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342 322 178 unchanged from an earlier era. The prevailing quality of Haitian rural and craft industry, then, is one of great stability and conservatism.

493 463 At the same time, of course, major events since the revolution have left their imprint on this part of life. Hardly a roadside village in Haiti today, for instance, lacks an automobile mechanic, even though these men are mostly self-educated and work with hardly any tools. Their skills became part of Haitian culture in this century and are often of a simple order no longer typical of more developed areas. Tire 383 tubes, for instance, are "vulcanized" by the use of an ingenious device 177 made from a board and an old piston, kerosene providing the heat to make the seal; this technique, along with the sewing of damaged truck tires, was almost certainly introduced and diffused by the United States Marines.

● 47 31 178 But these quaint additions do not alter the fact that shop and factory industry are nearly absent, and extractive industry virtually nonexistent. Haiti's one alumina extraction enterprise, foreign-owned, is now shut down. There is but one flour mill, and that is foreign-[258] owned as well. One or two textile mills and sugar factories, estab-[339] lished with foreign capital, still function, as do a modern cement [464] factory and a few other small plants established in the 1950s. These industries, scanty as they are, were of great importance to Haiti, since they represented substantial investments, held out the promise of reduced dependence on imports in significant categories, and contributed to the beginnings of an industrial proletariat. However, they involved only a tiny fraction of the national labor force, and they have not proved entirely successful. As a result, Haiti lacks any reserve of labor acquainted with modern industry, even though many people, both urban and rural, work at tasks that might be considered more industrial than agricultural.

47 433 178 171 Most important for the present discussion, the minor developments in Haitian industry have not led to an expanded market and have not resulted in any firm increase in productivity. Industrial growth, in the sense in which it has occurred in countries such as those of Western Europe—or for that matter in Mexico or Argentina—is entirely lacking. The absence of such growth is perhaps especially significant if Haiti be compared with a neighbor such as Jamaica or Puerto Rico. [648] These countries, one now independent, the other a North American dependency—have both gained real increments from the investment activities of outsiders;

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activities of outsiders; Haiti has experienced few such increments, even as a result of the United States occupation. Its citizens cannot readily migrate anywhere; its educational system cannot prepare its people adequately for the modern world; its civil service has proved neither stable nor reliable; its labor force has limited experience with the factory system; and even two decades of active North American intervention did nothing to remake the economic and political structure of the nation. In more recent years, some of the "development projects" foisted on the people of a sovereign Haiti by foreigners working with Haitian officials would not have been tolerated by the colonial representatives of any foreign power obligated to report its activities before the United Nations Trusteeship Council. In view of these things, one is tempted to claim that Haiti has suffered from all the disadvantages of political sovereignty while enjoying none of its advantages.

Unlike those colonial dependencies that were able, over time, to develop internal political ideologies through which to face the pressures imposed by the colonial powers, Haiti was tested by hardly any challenge but its own lack of development. In this sense only can it be said that the freedom Haiti had won in an incredible revolution against powerful enemies came to be a punishment. The struggle brought the Haitian people justified admiration in many quarters, but its price has been isolation and virtual abandonment.

It was the United States occupation that made a lie of Haitian sovereignty, and even of the invincibility of its people. The Haitian "bandits," variously estimated to have numbered from 2,000 to 6,000, who died in what is probably best described as a war of resistance against the North Americans, were barely able to maintain even a brief local conflict against several well-armed companies of United States Marines. Yet that occupation gave Haiti little in return for its denial of the claim of national sovereignty. The public works and reform programs instituted by the United States, designed to give the country roads, schools, hospitals, a disciplined army, a "legitimate" government, and a schooled civil service, hardly endured longer than the occupation itself, since nothing had been done to transform the social and economic base of the society. Within a decade of the North American withdrawal, the gleaming superstructure the occupation created had begun to decay. The major effect of North Amer-

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241 565 185 433 Nor does his effort in producing more and better cash crops translate itself directly into higher consumption, since he has no say in setting the price for his coffee. Under the circumstances, it is naïve to suppose that "education" alone can make the yeoman's role in economic or political development a more active one. The disposition to maintain a habitual level of consumption, rather than to believe that an increase in productivity will result in expanding services or improved consumption, is difficult to change; and the quasi-capitalistic quality of Haitian agricultural production is merely one way of saying as much. Economic change, in this sense, has to depend partly on changes in attitudes toward production. Until an agricultural extension service worthy of the name is able to make a massive attack on the shortcomings of yeoman cultivation in Haiti, this conservatism will perpetuate itself. And agricultural extension will not be able to wage this battle for change—even when its services become adequate in quality and quantity—unless the promises of greater economic rewards or of improved social services for the rural masses are occasionally honored.

● 47 433 565 178 The term "quasi-capitalistic" has much less force, of course, when applied to urban enterprise. But there, too, economic activity has a curiously static quality when compared to enterprise in more developed countries. The Port-au-Prince capitalist is famous for "playing it safe." Import-export trade, tourist hotels, guided tours, gas stations, and urban slum real estate are more rewarding spheres of investment than shops or commercial farms. A small but economically important Syrian–Lebanese–Italian group limits its local investment accordingly, as do most of those "native" Haitians who carry on their businesses in the towns and cities. Elite families consist largely of siblings who interlock their economic activities with government, the military, agricultural processing and exporting, consumer-goods importing, tourist-connected services, and the professions. A slum block, a post in the ministry of tourism, a colonelcy, or a tour agency, can be a lucrative investment; few indeed are the Haitians prepared to take the risks needed to develop highly productive farms, to produce improved strains of poultry, or to introduce industrial skills through a modern machine shop. And the reasons for this lack of verve and daring are easy to find. Governmental instability, excessive [648] taxation, lack of access to markets, and the absence of roads, communication, small-scale credit facilities, and the like mean that special

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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intrepidity in enterprise is required. It is striking that those foreign captains of industry—mainly from the United States—who invest in Haiti, expect (and often get) governmental guarantees of a sort they could not dream of in their own countries; in this regard, they merely conform to Haitian expectations.

Haiti's problems, then, are not simply those that face any less developed country, vast though such problems may be. Nor is it intelligent to lay Haiti's problems at the feet of the nation's present rulers. The structure of the national economy has not changed significantly during the past twenty-five years—except that boom years could provide a temporary aura of prosperity—regardless of the philosophy or popularity of the regime in power. If nothing else, the present nadir of Haiti's fortunes demonstrates that United States aid averaging twelve and a half million dollars yearly over more than a decade has produced no enduring improvements of any kind. It may further demonstrate that, shockingly poor as the country is, it emphatically does not depend on such aid. As of 1964, the regime in power was operating on a monthly budget of $1,800,000, only $400,000 of which went for purposes other than salaries. In other words, the ministries do little more than perpetuate themselves unchanged. The yeomanry, living near subsistence level, continues to produce most of what it needs, while restricting its cash expenditures even more severely than in the past. The risks—in terms, say, of public health—of running a society under these circumstances are great; but there is no reason to suppose that regimes of the Haitian sort will be destroyed or improved by a show of popular unrest originating in the countryside. Difficult as life is for the Haitian countryman, and no people in Latin America lives more poorly, the real pinch is probably being experienced more acutely among the city folk than among their rural fellow citizens. It matters politically, therefore, who these city folk are and what they do.

To begin with, there has been a significant loss of professional people, almost all of whom were urban, through migration and exile, especially since 1958. Haitian doctors, dentists, and other professionals are widely scattered today, both in the developed and the less developed countries of the world. Former army officers, journalists, diplomats, businessmen, and academicians have fled political repression, perhaps with the hope of eventually returning to their own country.

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bean country, and perhaps fewer than in any country in Latin America. The agriculture itself, with the exceptions now of those very few large-scale plantations in sisal and sugarcane, is adapted to small plots and is worked with intensive labor and few tools on hilly land. Compared with agricultural production, especially of cash crops, in most mainland Latin American countries, productivity is low. The yeomanry is conservative in its agricultural practices, and not ready to change unless the changes entail minimal risk and the gains to be realized are clearly demonstrable (Erasmus, 1952:20–26). Yeomen cultivate with three goals in mind: cash income from world-market commodities (for instance, coffee, sisal, vetiver); cash income from items produced for local sale and consumption; and subsistence. While they are heavily involved in production for sale, their crop choices and land-use patterns rest fundamentally on a subsistence orientation. All grow a substantial part of their own food, especially sorghum, maize, sweet potatoes, taro, manioc, malanga (*Xanthosoma sagittifolium* Schott), plantains and bananas, fruits and vegetables, and rice where possible. The land is invested with considerable affect: gods live in it; it is the ultimate security against privation; family members are buried in it; food and wealth come from it; and it is good in itself, even if not cultivated. While such attitudes are common in yeoman societies, Haiti's history of slavery, and of access to land through revolution, has given a special symbolic significance to landowning. Land is valued above all else and is sometimes held "uneconomically"—that is, even when the capital and labor power to work it are lacking.

Leyburn describes better than any other writer the history of land acquisition by the yeoman after 1804. The French plantations lay in ruins, never to recover, while early authoritarian attempts to restore the prerevolutionary economy under native Haitian leadership soon failed. In the course of a century, the Haitian people laid claim to their own soil, while population growth and the adoption of the French tradition of equal inheritance progressively reduced the average size of holdings. In spite of some plantation development after the United States occupation, most agricultural land in Haiti is still employed in small holdings, and "land reform" in the conventional sense—the breaking-up of large estates and the creation of a class of small landholders—is nearly irrelevant to Haiti's needs.

As today's yeomanry cultivates, so its womenfolk market. Nearly

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tion? Here again, the decision of a leader fixed the direction of Haitian life for decades to come. It is agreed by commentators that overmilitarization was the bane of nineteenth-century Haiti. One tenth of all able-bodied men were constantly in active army service. Moreover, all the male cultivators on plantations must hold themselves in readiness to obey the government's call to arms; ammunition and arms were stored in every parish. A military mentality was nourished, the people early learning the lesson (apparently unchallenged by any liberal) that the army should rule and the people obey.

Although the common soldiers were ex-slaves who, upon dismissal from service, would return to the ranks of agricultural workers, their officers had a higher status. Noncommissioned officers had a long road to travel to eminence, but like the overseers they had at least a glimpse of the promised land of distinction. Captains and generals had this vision within their grasp: they were already of the élite.

In the subcategory of "artisans" were included all the townspeople who carried on crafts or trades. It must be remembered that Haiti had no cities, and that its two largest towns then numbered probably no more than 10,000 people each, so that artisans were not numerous. Since there was a distinction in the arduousness of various pursuits as well as in their financial return there existed in this category, as in the official and military, some chance for social prestige.

The only persons remaining outside the categories mentioned were colored landowners who had held estates in the colonial period. Dessalines took active steps to gain control of most of the land in the country, but at his death in 1806 there were still many of the old proprietors left who were, in the main, determined to hold their land and preserve their dignity as non-laborers.

Assassination by his political foes ended the career of Dessalines only two years after he assumed power. In 1805 he had had himself crowned emperor in imitation of Napoleon, but unlike Napoleon he permitted no nobility. "*Moi seul, je suis noble!*" he replied to ambitious henchmen who asked for the establishment of a peerage. It was the Emperor's tactless handling of the social situation which caused his murder, for he touched sensitive nerves on the raw in attacking property rights, inherited privilege, color distinctions, and social aspirations. The cultivators grumblingly accepted his decrees; the ambitious upper group did not.

The former affranchis fully intended to keep their lands once the

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The former affranchis fully intended to keep their lands

once the French were driven out. They could not but be alarmed as they saw the steady direction of Dessalines' moves toward a complete monopoly of land ownership by the state. On the very day following independence, a decree proclaimed that all lands owned by France in colonial days now belonged to Haiti. Next (February 7, 1804) Dessalines canceled all sales and donations made to mulattoes and ex-slaves by fleeing French who, in a last despairing effort to salvage something from the wreckage of olden days, had "entrusted" their lands to non-whites. By these two strokes all lands owned by white men before 1803 became state property,[5] but only the second clipped the wings of socially ambitious colored people.

Serious uneasiness was caused by the next measure, an order for a general verification of property titles. This would have been a delicate task at best, considering the disorder of the past thirteen years. It was made more complicated to carry out by the serious lack of men trained in law. A few like Balthasar Inginac, later an important adviser and trusted friend of two presidents, were scrupulously conscientious, but by the same token highly unpopular with those whom they deprived of newly (and shadily) acquired "estates." The majority of officials, according to report, listened to the pleading of many who had managed by hook or crook to secure a tenuous claim to vacant properties, validating their fraudulent titles for them. It has been claimed, without rebuttal, that most of these officials were not above taking bribes. When complaint was made to Dessalines of such actions he took steps to make his appointees do their duty, but each confiscation made new enemies for Dessalines.

Some of the mulattoes, citing their French paternity, claimed land formerly owned by their French fathers, even though these parents had never regarded their sons as more than bastards. Dessalines once broke out in furious answer to such a claimant: "*Et les pauvres nègres dont les pères sont en Afrique, ils n'auront donc rien!*"

The state took over thousands of acres. Those Haitians, colored or black, who aspired to landownership as the foundation of position,

5. The hatred of the Haitians for the French, and because of them, for white people in general, was seen not only in those confiscations but in commitments for the future. A proclamation of April 28, 1804, suppressed to "all foreigners" the right to own property in land. The first Haitian constitution, May 20, 1805, took an even more drastic step in saying that "no white man shall henceforth set foot in this country as a landowner," and that "*all* property formerly belonging to a white Frenchman" was now confiscate to the profit of the state.

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114 642 175 at least a generation behind them, but rather their complete lack of any experience in self-rule. The author continues:

> In addition to the vanity of the black which was flattered by the distribution of principalities and duchies, there was the political thought which wished to fortify things by words. The most important sugar manufactories were distributed, with the property title, to the principal officers and civil agents of the government. Workers were allotted to these very much as were the Indians to the first Spanish conquerors. . . . Moreover, since African blood dominated in the North [that is, since there were few mulattoes and lighter-skinned people], the feudal lords, aided by the color of their skin, could enforce obedience to a yoke which in name only was modified [from slavery].[13]

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175 642 566 631 421 625 692 The social organization of Christophe's kingdom, then, was one of large properties, with all the feudalistic trappings, resting upon a solid base of wage-earning serfdom. In contrast to mediaeval feudalism, the king was here much more than *primus inter pares*. Thanks to the policy of Dessalines, most land had come into state ownership, so that the nobility received their estates by royal favor, and held them as leases only so long as the King pleased. As in the Middle Ages, the noblemen were petty monarchs within the district granted to their jurisdiction. Their freedom of action, however, was even here subject to scrutiny: detachments of Royal Dahomeys[14] were stationed in every cantonment or parish, to enforce discipline, keep the King informed, and find their own subsistence without a drain on the royal treasury. In every district was set up a court of *sénéchaussée* to see that justice obtained.[15] The King's law, not the nobleman's private code, prevailed in the whole country.[16]

13. R. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1846), II, 167–168.

14. Organized after the model of the police force existing in France before 1789.

15. These courts were composed of a royally appointed seneschal and his assistant, a king's procurer, and a clerk.

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16. The Code Henry was promulgated on January 30, 1812. It consisted of seven parts: Civil, Commercial, Shipping and Maritime, Civil Process, Criminal and Police Process, Agricultural, and Military. In general the Code followed French precedent, but the section on Agriculture was Christophe's own. Sir James Baker (in his *History of the Island of St. Domingo* [London, 1818], p. 413) calls this part "a thing unexampled among other nations." It reveals not only the King's absorption in the main economic enterprise of his state, but also his skill in devising an integrated functioning of a social order of nobility and serfs with a plantation economy based on money crops. This Agricultural Law regulated such diverse matters as the reciprocal duties of proprietors and cultivators, the policing of plantations, and the culture and preparation of the major crops. It set forth industry as the parent of virtue, and idleness as the source of vice.

do if this were not enough to please the landed gentry, the tax

of one quarter of the crop was abolished.[23] This tax worked moderately well on great plantations with hundreds of workers and a large annual budget, but it bore heavily, sometimes unfairly, on smaller farms. To give up the government's fourth meant a tremendous drop in state revenues, but this was to be compensated by a new tax of ten *gourdes* (a gourde was then worth about five cents) on every thousand pounds of coffee sold in the country, and by an export tax on coffee. A man might raise sugar or make syrup, tafia (raw rum), and distilled rum, without paying any tax at all. Coffee culture required little careful cultivation, while sugar required a great deal; removing the tax from sugar would, it was hoped, encourage the cultivation of cane. The President was putting into practice the then novel idea of Adam Smith that the more freedom an enterpriser is allowed, the more he will produce, so that by pursuing his own self-interest he unintentionally benefits the state. To know definitely what taxes will be imposed, reasoned Pétion, is more of an inducement to a landlord than to face the double fluctuation of crop prices and the state's quarter. Small proprietors and sugar planters were now, like the larger landholders, attracted to Pétion's régime. 175 651 471

His final boon to proprietors, and one which Adam Smith would not have approved, was that of governmental subsidies in bad years. When prices of coffee and sugar were low, the state bought large quantities of these crops for the purpose of raising their price. The result was to increase the debt and to make the people feel that the state was responsible for individual economic success, rather than their own efforts. 175 652

These first concessions were all made to the important people of the South—to the mulattoes, families of the old régime, persons who desired economic prominence in order to bolster social position. The small folk of the Republic came next. The President recommended to the Senate the abolition of the law dating back to Toussaint's time which prohibited the holding of plantations of less than a minimum acreage. The Senate accordingly[24] reduced the minimum holding to thirty acres.[25] Actually this legislation did not bring 175 423

23. By a law of March 9, 1807. This tax was instituted by Toussaint and continued in effect by Dessalines and Christophe.

24. On April 21, 1807.

25. Or ten carreaux. Toussaint's law had allowed properties of fifty acres only in cases of exceptional fertility of land. See Note 18.

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about any radical change, for few of the common people could find money to pay for thirty acres, while the well-to-do all wanted more.

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Every concession desired by the landed proprietors had now been granted—with the result that economic prosperity was showing a steady decline. It was only when this fact was abundantly apparent that Pétion took the step for which he has since been so famously praised and so roundly criticized. By permission of the Senate, in a law of December 30, 1809, he began to give away state lands: fifteen acres of cultivable soil to every soldier in the army, to be held in perpetuity, with proportionately larger grants to higher officers.

Opposition immediately arose to this measure, and from expected quarters. The owners of great estates protested that if soldiers had farms, other people would soon want (and receive) them, leaving no workers on the large plantations. Social climbers protested, for when practically anyone can own land there is no particular social distinction in having it. Pétion's minister, Bonnet, opposed the permanent alienation of the chief financial resource of the state, proposing instead the grant of long-term loans to soldiers for the purchase of land. Pétion was not insensible to the logic of some of these objections; he said, however, that a nation which relied upon the willing labor of masses of its citizens was ultimately stronger than one which depended upon forced labor of any kind. As for the socially aspiring, he could ignore their arguments since they were not publicly and openly expressed. To his minister he pointed out that loans, if made, would in all probability never be repaid, so that one might as well face the reality at once and give people the land.

All through the next decade Pétion made new and democratic divisions of the land. Able generals were given large tracts, partly as wages, partly as a stimulus to productive agriculture on their part. By another enactment, military invalids were rewarded with land. Eventually most of the rest of the public domain was either put on sale at such moderate price that thousands of humble Haitians might purchase their bit, or was effectively occupied by people who "squatted" far up in the hills, out of official view.

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The democratization of land led to new adjustments in the economic system. People who owned small farms would obviously not continue to raise sugar and coffee, but rather turn to food crops for immediate family consumption. Only the large plantations could carry on the cultivation of money crops. These in turn, no longer able

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to command the forced labor of serfs, had to develop a new technique for securing manual labor. Legislation soon recognized the new state of affairs by enactments which kept distinct *la grande culture* and *la petite culture*. The former had to do with the production of sugar and coffee, from which the republic derived its wealth; the latter with small farming. *La petite culture* was simple cultivation of whatever the small owner wished to raise. Large-scale culture, on the other hand, became rather complicated.

Owners of great estates had to guide them only their experience of slave days and of serfdom under Toussaint and Dessalines. Now that both were gone, few planters were wealthy enough to pay wages for day labor; a new variation was needed. It was forthcoming in the *métayer* system—a crop-sharing arrangement with tenants closely resembling that which prevails today in some parts of the United States. The owner leased his estate in large or small plots to tenants. Half the income went to the landlord and half to the tenant; but the landlord must furnish the sugar mill and other necessary machinery where cane was raised. Laws were passed to give a measure of security to the proprietor. The contract between him and the tenant (*fermier*)[26] must be signed before a civil official; the engagement must extend through the harvesting of one crop; tenants even then might not abandon their contracts except after notice of three months, with a declaration to the local official.

Punishments were stipulated for the breaking of contracts. A tenant who had made an agreement and then abandoned the *habitation*, even for a visit elsewhere, without a certificate attesting his regularity, might be imprisoned for eight days the first time, a month the second, and three months the third, such imprisonment to be spent in hard labor on public works. Any disputes arising between plantation owners and tenants were to be taken before the local justice. If they threatened to develop into serious cases, the justice was to notify the commandant of the nearest important town. A person who fomented disturbance of such agreements (the Haitian equivalent of "labor agitators," style 1810) might be imprisoned for a year, as also his accomplices. Commandants of each arrondissement must put down disorder as soon as requested by landlords, tenant farmers, or overseers. They must likewise make frequent patrols of

26. The word "fermier" must not be translated simply as "farmer"; the idea of a contract and a rental fee is implicit in the French word.

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to spend one's time in the allotted garden patch than to cultivate sugar cane steadily in the heat of the day. In a garden there was more variety to the work, and more independent decision; in a cane field all must work in unison to be effective. Moreover, the yield from the garden was a daily thing, while that of the cane fields came but once a year. Less and less were the overseers able to get the tenants away from their gardens and into the fields. 175 466 24 656

Not all the sabotage came from the common folk. Landowners had their normal share of profit motive. The complex system of social security and benevolent stewardship ate away much of the income of the estate.[29] More important, the owners had had no experience of plantation management other than by directing forced labor. Corporal punishment was now abolished, but to the owner it was still unthinkable that there should be no coercion in plantation work. The laws protecting labor therefore left them bewildered, and they did not hold up their part of the system. Finding it expensive to maintain sugar machinery, impossible to engage docile workers, and necessary to finance social security, most of the "aristocrats" simply took the easier path of leasing their estates in small subdivisions, getting out of them what they could. 175 466 471 24

Another unexpected result of Pétion's general policy was to shift the main produce of the republic from sugar to coffee. Sugar had for decades been the staple crop of southern Haiti; but its cultivation requires scrupulous care and expensive machinery. Coffee, on the other hand, grows wild both in the lowlands and at heights of three thousand feet. It is "wild" in the sense that plants spring from seeds dropped by parent trees, without careful planting. When it became obvious that the workers were not to be persuaded to regular work in the cane fields, the landlords broke up the large plantations so necessary to sugar cultivation. Each tenant farmer was almost sure to find coffee trees on his rented plot of land. He would harvest the berries but would do little or nothing to tend and improve the plants, as he did not own them. In French days coffee trees had been pruned, fertilized, grafted; the new Haitian farmer simply let nature take its course. Pétion's careful planning resulted consequently in an entirely unplanned, accidental, and automatic adjustment to new conditions of life. 175 433 245 249

29. That the landlords did not too vigorously protest this system of care for the workers was due to their familiarity with similar care in slave days. [466]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

The major effect of the North

Amer-
648 ican tenure seems to have been to make possible a much more telling
642 centralism in political control than had been operative in Haiti at any time since the fall of the Christophe regime; and the consequences of this change are still being felt.

241 Small-scale rural cultivators are famous for their tendency to con-
565 fine their consumption to culturally conventionalized levels—that is,
433 to live as their predecessors lived before them. Though they are in-
178 volved in commercial spheres larger than the communities in which
185 they live, they seek to limit that involvement and to maintain their
511 cash expenditures at a low level. It is in this sense that Haiti might be
● 472 called a "quasi-capitalistic" society. To put it another way, yeomen of this sort do not seek to change or to expand their production—rather, they aim to conserve a way of life set by tradition. The ideology of resistance to social and cultural change is one of the major obstacles to development; but it would be rash to damn such an ideology without reflection. In Haiti, for instance, there has long been pressure upon the rural masses to expand their production of coffee, the major export crop. However, this pressure has not been accompanied by any serious grass-roots attempt to improve coffee production or to offer genuine incentives to the cultivators. The yeomanry has no assurance at all that any expansion of effort will lead to gains *for them*; and they are little prepared to invest such effort merely because they are told that it will be good for Haiti. In fact, it is likely
[439] that the production of subsistence crops has expanded in recent years at the cost of coffee production, for the yeoman knows that he can at least be sure of eating and of selling locally such crops as maize, sorghum, and yams, regardless of what may happen in Port-au-Prince or to the world coffee market. This view, combined with the yeoman's painfully acquired distrust of those who prate at length concerning his welfare, has meant a virtual stagnation of agricultural export production, even though the whole land quite literally depends on this production in order to progress.

241 The effect of this rural resistance is to create an apparent very sharp
565 difference in goals between countryman and bureaucrat. It is per-
433 fectly understandable that the countryman should fail to see the con-
185 nection between heightened coffee production and a higher level of public welfare and social services. His experiences hardly persuade him that it is his surplus-producing capacity that underlies the kind and quality of public institutions with which the state provides him.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

prestige, and the normal fulfillment of dignity, were thus frustrated in their efforts. They began to see that the Emperor intended to withhold from them freedom, room for the exercise of ability or power, fullness of life in whatever form. Not only was there little opportunity for achieving prestige; the repressive and contemptuous attitude of Dessalines denied them even ordinary negative respect, without which dignity of life is impossible.

By confiscation of vacant and falsely claimed estates, Dessalines created a vast public domain. He did not hesitate to secure other lands which he considered valuable, resorting to arbitrary and often cruel means—even, it is said, to forgery and murder—to dispossess those who stood firm in their claims. This attack on private property added other dissidents to his enemies—men who felt themselves clearly in the right legally and morally, men who with clear consciences joined the movement to put down a tyrant. The land thus acquired was leased in parcels at an annual rent to the highest bidders.[6]

The Emperor was blind to the normal human needs of the better elements of the population. He deprived them of property in land, the only basis they knew for wealth and independence; he forbade enterprises undertaken by individual initiative; he continually wounded delicate sensibilities. The Emperor was not a man to spare people's feelings, and he dared use the frank but dangerous words Negro and mulatto. He once shouted to a group of pleaders for position: "*Prenez garde à vous, nègres et mulâtres! Nous avons tous combattu contre les blancs; les biens que nous avons conquis en versant notre sang, appartiennent à nous tous; j'entends qu'ils soient partagés avec équité!*" It was not only Dessalines' idea of "equity" which aroused the *anciens libres* but his use of the descriptive nouns they hated.

The colored people were well aware of the hostility of Dessalines to their group. He was inferior to them in learning, and knew it. He was certainly, by the world's judgment, inferior to them in birth. His very deficiencies by comparison with his colored subjects made him hate them more: for example, he was passionately fond of dancing, preferring compliments on his grace to praise of his statesmanship; yet his awkwardness on the ballroom floor even

6. Although there are no records extant to show the exact amount of land which Dessalines succeeded in bringing into state ownership, it is estimated that more than two thirds of all the productive plantations in Haiti in 1806 were in the hands of the government. Other estimates range as high as ninety per cent.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

That the separateness of yeomanry and elite had visible and sociologically important expression in physical type in Haiti was a clear consequence of the history of that country. But the traditional preponderant light skins at the top of the structure and the preponderant darkness at its base are less important than the domination of the total structure, and of the institutional means for changing it, by a mere fraction of the national population. It is the *power* of the elite which has mattered through time; its physical appearance has been only a historically derived expression of that power. Such a balance of politically weak masses against numerically sparse power holders is common, perhaps particularly in the "less developed world"; but each such case has certain special characteristics. Haiti's special nature is not simply in its being a yeoman country, and one in which a small group dominates the mass. As a rural, agrarian, unindustrialized, politically sovereign, and quasi-capitalistic country, Haiti shares much with other lands; but in each regard its own particularity needs to be assessed.

The rurality of Haiti is extreme, not simply because there are no concentrations of population in excess of 25,000 except for Port-au-Prince and Cap Haïtien but also because towns of intermediate size are few in number, and the urban concentrations in the country's two cities are substantially of relatively recent rural origin. Port-au-Prince dominates the Republic in all of its economic, political, and social activities. Furthermore, the rural towns have been losing to the capital, not gaining from it. Until the United States occupation, the larger towns of the coast, such as Jérémie, Jacmel, and St. Marc, were united economically with each other, and to some extent with the capital, by a lively coastwise shipping system, and the inland towns were tributary to those of the coast. The growth of inland transport during the occupation strengthened the interior towns while coastwise shipping declined, but the capital grew even more important as the sole economic center of the Republic. Since the 1940s, the rapid deterioration of the road system has left both inland and coastal towns enfeebled; only Port-au-Prince has remained strong.

The dominion of Port-au-Prince is firm, and there is no focus of power in the countryside that can counteract it. Those few foreign enterprises in Haiti that base themselves outside the capital city use local port facilities (e.g. Mirebalais for Reynolds Aluminum, Cap Haïtien for the sisal plantations of the north) and do not affect the development of the interior transport.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966

SV3 Haiti SV3

[1804-1843]

175 A cultivator who loafs on his assigned job shall spend twenty-four
566 hours in jail for his first offense and lose his wages; for a second
671 offense he must work on public projects. Field labor shall be regu-
24 larly carried on from Monday morning until Friday evening, except for legal holidays; work begins at dawn, continues except for a half-hour at breakfast until noon, stops then for two hours, and is
[943] once more resumed until sunset. Pregnant females are to be assigned to light work only, and after the fourth month of pregnancy need
[846] do no field work. Four months after delivery, a mother is to return to field work, but with three hours a day less than before, until she has weaned her child. Disobedience and insult to overseers are punishable by imprisonment. Since Saturdays, Sundays, and holi-
[528] days are free, there is to be no dancing or any other festivity by night or day from Monday through Friday.

175 On each estate is to be a hierarchy of directors, all of whom the
671 workers shall obey. In ascending order, these men are drivers (or
● 943 squad foremen),[40] jobbers, sublessees, lessees, proprietors and man-
24 agers, overseers of districts, and police.

In establishing a system of remuneration Boyer kept the accus-
175 tomed method of allotting a proportion of the marketed crop to the
485 workers in lieu of hourly or daily wages. In any season from a
24 quarter to a half of the gross receipts of the estates was to go to the laborers, the exact proportion in any year to be determined by the government. It was assumed by Boyer and Inginac that there would be an added inducement to work if the laborers' share were distributed not equally, but rather in proportion to the merit and worth of the individual, these evaluations to be made by the recommendation of overseers.

175 Enforcement of the Code was placed in the hands of local justices
692 and the army. Soldiers were to be assigned to each plantation, re-
24 ceiving their living from it, in return preserving order and routine. Although the whip was once more prohibited, steady labor might still be enforced by other means; the law definitely stated that soldiers were to discipline the lazy, the lawless, and the vagrant. Local justices were to deal with any civil difficulties arising in the execution

[192] 40. The word "driver" was commonly used in West Indian slave colonies with no other meaning than that attached to the word when one speaks of a man "driving" his horses. It is not necessary to beat a horse to make it go properly; a word of direction may suffice.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 family on an average, at 5 persons, husband, wife, and three children, we
241 arrive at the conclusion, that the head of every third family in the state is engaged in cultivating his own freehold; a proportion of independent
[311] proprietors, such as perhaps scarcely any other country in the world can exhibit. The number of acres cultivated by these small proprietors, varies
[231] from 9 to 30; many of them keep horses, cows, and goats: they raise suffi-
[437] cient provisions of the bread kind, such as yams, plantains, and bananas, for the main support of their families; they kill hogs for meat, and they dispose
[431] of their coffee, cotton, hemp, castor oil, and fruit, at the public market for money, to purchase clothing, furniture, and other necessaries. The houses
[342] they live in, though poorly furnished, are decent habitations; and many of them have gardens attached, neatly fenced in with bamboo, or with logwood, or aloe hedges.[33]

175 If these figures are even approximately accurate, the majority of
423 the people of Haiti had not yet become peasants in the sense of being landowners, for in the statement cited only a third of the people
427 owned their land. Another large group, however, possibly a third of the population, were squatters, living on land which technically belonged to someone else but from which they were never ejected. The remaining third, excluding the town and village dwellers, were in the intermediate stage between hirelings and peasants. Some worked for a given rate of wages, but the larger number worked for shares of the produce on the land of large proprietors.

175 The crop-sharing system (Americans of the twentieth century call
473 it share-cropping) of the 'thirties and 'forties was an automatic but temporary adjustment worked out in perfect disregard of the Code
427 Rural. In general, two arrangements prevailed. By one the laborers
24 worked in return for half the total produce of the estate, raising food for themselves in gardens provided by the owner; under the other they worked for a quarter of the produce, the proprietor guaranteeing to keep them in provisions. There was no general concurrence in Haiti at the time as to which plan was the more economical to the laborer and his family. Certainly both schemes were prejudicial to large crops of coffee and sugar, and therefore to the economic prosperity of the proprietors and the state; since this was so, the crop-sharing expedient was short-lived. Workers participating in it lived in the huts and cabins which, under the old régime, had been inhabited by their slave ancestors. As these fell to pieces others, cheaper and less soundly built, were constructed to take their place.

The crop-sharing system, economically debilitating though it was,

33. Ibid.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

The crop-sharing system, economically debilitating it was, though

had one great advantage to the laborer: he felt himself free and independent, with the right to engage himself to any man or to refrain from working altogether. No longer was he bound to the soil of one plantation, forced to labor under a "driver," forbidden to dance or to sleep when the mood seized him. This new freedom imparted to him a self-consequence which made him, in his own estimation, almost as important as a freeholder. The master could not say to his men, "Go into such a field and dig cane holes. The clouds are gathering and we must get in the young plants"; or, "Weed such a field," or "Prune the coffee trees today." Neither could he send a band of young people at his discretion to pick the coffee berries as they ripened, or to cull the bad berries, when pulped and dried, from the good. Every man was, so to speak, master of his own house and his own hours, considering himself at liberty to work with his family at almost any time and in any manner he pleased. 175 427 461 24 466

Herein lay the fatal defect of the crop-sharing system. There was no way of coming to an agreement among the laborers on an estate as to the amount of labor to be performed by each. One man was weaker than another; one more disposed to drink or to loaf than another. The whole group of, say, twenty families was to share in common the half or the quarter of the gross produce; but who should measure the exact proportion which would fall in justice to each family? 175 427 24 461

These annual disagreements led to a compromise which ultimately broke down even the moderate-sized estates. The proprietor, in order to avoid disputes, divided his fields among his laborers, allowing one family five acres, another ten, a third twenty, according to the nature of the land and the sort of produce which could be raised upon it. True, the proprietor lost by this division all the benefits of concentrating labor in a particular field at a particular season; also, if he wished to have necessary work done in haste which required a large number of laborers, he had to bribe them (generally by a drink of rum or tafia). Obviously, when such difficulties stood in the way of necessary repairs and improvements, the proprietors simply preferred to allow their estates to deteriorate. Like the workers, they acquired an attitude of not worrying about the future; unlike the frame of mind of the workers, their attitude came from assigned acceptance of the inevitable, not from preoccupation with the present. 175 473 427 24 425 461

Certain astute proprietors tried to get as many families together as could act in concert without jarring or jealousy, and to induce them,

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 by persuasion, to do as much work as possible for his and their own
473 interests. In a few cases the success of such efforts was tolerably good;
427 but one worker disposed to be sullen or idle, or even not physically
24 strong, might throw the whole scheme into disorder. One's own
425 profits would be cut by the misdeeds of others even when one had
461 himself been industrious. This caused a decline of incentive, sometimes among a whole group of potentially good workers, because one or two of the number shirked. Probably the most patent evil of such arrangements was that every laborer realized that he did not suffer as directly for idleness or neglect as when working for himself; his fellow workers shared the consequences of his misconduct in some degree, and his employer in a still greater measure. The driving force of individual responsibility was removed.

[692] Boyer and Inginac, foreseeing just such disorder, had tried to
[686] provide against it in the Code Rural by giving summary powers to local judges to inflict penalties upon lazy or malingering workers. Quite aside, however, from the loss of time and the inconvenience to both parties in going constantly to a judge for his decision, the proprietor was afraid to act on this principle to any extent, since if he did so he might lose his laborers altogether.

175 It was a rare proprietor, then, who could hope to make much of a
473 fortune out of his plantation. More and more the landowners, having
427 subdivided their fields, grew lax in overseeing them. The workers,
24 freed from constant supervision, accustomed by long habit to living
466 in one hut, and unconsciously developing a mentality which made
425 them feel, as did American squatters on frontier lands, that they had a right to the land they tilled, imperceptibly developed into peasants.
178 The state's remaining properties, no longer under cultivation, were invaded by families of small farmers, and the government took no steps to oust them or send them back to privately owned plantations. The estates of individual aristocrats underwent the same fate if not
[625] carefully watched. Theoretically, it was the duty of the army to drive out squatters, to force laborers back into "proper" agricultural work; but the army consisted of peasant youths who would not turn against people of their own group.

671 Legal irregularity was gradually sanctioned by the passage of
178 time, usage being a stronger guarantor of rights than unenforced laws on the statute books.

870 Haitian peasantry, to sum up, began as the unplanned, undesired

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

applicant, of his regular conduct, and his ability to maintain himself economically in the town. Land laborers might not send their children to school or have them apprenticed in a town without a certificate from the same judge. Under no pretext might a worker establish a shop or sell his produce in the countryside; certain exceptions were made of necessary articles of food and home manufacture. No laborer might build a home in rural parts except on the plantation to which he was attached. 175 671 24 566 693

An individual, once placed by the government in the category of "cultivator," might never be removed from that class except by official authorization. Even with the consent of the proprietor and the agricultural administrator of the district, he was not to quit the estate to which he was bound for more than eight days.

We may further note in the Code that coöperative enterprise among the workers is forbidden. Anticipating the possible tendency of laborers to set up what in modern times would be called a producers' coöperative, presumably to lapse thereafter into laziness, the Code requires that every worker engage himself individually by authentic contract to the service of a proprietor or lessee. Such engagements for la grande culture are not to be for less than three years, or more than nine. Penalties for infractions of these rules are fines, imprisonment, or forced labor on public works in the chief town of the commune. 175 671 474 686 566

The Code directs the management of agricultural property and grazing establishments,[19] also the making of contracts between the proprietor and his hirelings. Rural police are established, in imitation of Christophe's Dahomeys, to act as inspectors of plantations and of the workers on them. 175 671 625 421

The section repressing vagrancy is very full. All persons not proprietors or lessees, yet living in rural parts without having made a contract with some producer, are classed as vagabonds, to be arrested and taken before the magistrate. This official will warn them that by law they are bound to make a contract, and that if they refuse they will be sent to prison. Should a vagabond persist in refusing to sign a contract after eight days of confinement, he is condemned to labor on public works until he agrees. Should the prisoner be a minor, he will be sent to his parents. 175 686 24

19. This latter term was borrowed as an adjustment to one of the primary occupations of the Spanish and of the island.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

Taxes were heavy

175 651 652 and work strenuous; but there were a sound currency, commercial and agricultural prosperity, and a full treasury.

Like many a great man he was an overweening egotist. His 175 643 159 energy and ambition, for Haiti as well as for himself, neither understood nor tolerated a lesser determination than his own. At times he seemed more intent upon the letter than upon the spirit of his laws. Probably his chief defect, a common failing of strong men, was a disregard for humble individual worth. To write of him invites the most colorful vocabulary. He is Black Majesty and the Emperor Jones. By almost any standards of leadership he would be accounted a great man. He lacked only those few final, subtle qualities which make for sheer genius. In 1820, stricken by paralysis and faced with defections in his army, he died as he had lived, dramatically, ending his life with a specially saved bullet (folklore says a silver one), in his palace of the ironic name, Sans Souci.

175 643 In no significant respect did Christophe change the feudal structure of economic organization begun by Toussaint and carried on by Dessalines. It was in administration, especially as it affected social status, that the thirteen years of Christophe were important for the [641] future of Haiti. Where the Emperor had been an unpredictable tyrant whose heavy hand inspired only terror, Christophe was a sternly just father whose well-disciplined children respected, admired, and even loved him.

175 427 The land policy of the two régimes was similar. Government estates were farmed out on five-year leases to the highest bidders among the well-to-do; large plantations belonging to the state were • 415 tilled by cultivators who might, without taking the term too harshly, 655 be called serfs; loyal supporters and wealthy individuals were entrusted with responsibility. Like Dessalines, Christophe added wealth 566 643 to power and rendered all his subjects dependent upon himself rather than on their own resources and influence—but all this with a difference.

175 643 Where the Emperor had denied the natural vanity of his aides by refusing them nobility, Christophe accepted their ambition as perfectly normal and made use of it for his own purposes. Four years 642 after he had established his state, he changed it from a republic to a 565 kingdom; all his important men he made dukes, barons, counts, knights. He warned them that he would expect them to live up to the dignities conferred upon them. Pomp and regalia are costly;

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

[p. 234]

XIII

CONSTITUTIONS AND POLITICAL FORMS

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QUITE aside from its castes and the political separation of 1807–20, Haiti has always consisted of two nations, one living in and near the towns and so within reach of established government, the other rural and yet capable of ordering its own affairs by folk rules without much actual governmental machinery. It is through the former that Haiti has a political history. Indeed, one is tempted to say that more than half the people have continually got along without any government whatever of a formal sort, for being peaceably inclined they have found custom and usage [669] sufficient for their needs. These people have been rarely disturbed by the state's rulers; revolutionary chieftains alone have found it worth their while to stir up the country folk to an active interest in politics.

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The formal subdivisions of Haiti have been, through most of its history, three: the *commune*, roughly corresponding to the American township; the *arrondissement*, a group of communes, just as the American county is a group of townships; and the *département*, comprising several arrondissements. All three terms were borrowed from France, although their significance was altered when applied to the Haitian scene.

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475
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In the days of Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, the government had owned vast plantations which were under the control of the military. Pétion and Boyer instituted the commune by combining numerous estates and farms into a group likewise to be controlled by soldiers. Until the American Occupation the police system of the country was military, with ordinary soldiers keeping order and making arrests when necessary. Since few people are less given to disorder than the Haitian peasants, the task of keeping order was not a serious one; indeed, soldiers were frequently stationed among their friends and relatives, who never thought of them as police. It sometimes happened, however, that soldiers were assigned to other parts [283] of the country, where they swaggered about with their *coumangues* (heavy-jointed canes), using these or the flat of their swords to enforce their often arbitrary commands.

In every commune recognized by the state was an important

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

North of the square stands the church, a substantial structure with rounded arches in the Roman style, roofed over, like most other buildings, with galvanized iron. Other public buildings are the town hall — the Mairie — and the "Hall of Justice"; near by are the stone walls of a public building begun some years ago as a school, but destined apparently to house what is known as the "Bureau of Contributions," a euphemism for the tax-collector's quarters. Despite the fact that Mirebalais was one of the most difficult regions for the American occupation to subdue during the Caco uprising of 1918–20,[10] it was one of the first districts where the Guarde d'Haiti was completely Haitianized, and from which all American Marine officers were withdrawn. Only a small detachment is stationed there at present. Its well-kept barracks are near the church, and the prisons form a part of the same compound, from whence issue daily the striped-suited prisoners, men and women, under guard or alone on parole, who do communal work in the town and the near-by countryside.

The town awakens at dawn to the chattering of domesticated guinea-fowl and the crowing of cocks. Occasionally a camion rumbles through the principal thoroughfare; more rarely an automobile dashes by in great clouds of dust on its way to Las Cahobas, or Hinche, or Santo Domingo City. If it is a market day, the streets are early filled with country folk on their way to dispose of their produce, and the clatter from the market place behind the church is heard everywhere until the heat of the day brings a lull to all commerce, and drowsiness once more settles over everything. By mid-afternoon during the planting season, drums can be heard over the countryside. The sounds are not those of the "throbbing" voodoo drums — though they have more than once been mistaken for them by travelers — but they set the rhythm for the communal work of the *combites*, which perform cooperative agricultural labor. As the rapid dusk follows the disappearance of the sun behind the mountains, the voices of

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Hadd SV3
Microlab

3412

ABOVE, *A country dwelling.*
BELOW, *A combine at work.*

(facing P. 11)

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

done by the owner himself only if the field is very small; otherwise one of the co-operative work-groups that form such an important element in Haitian rural economy must be called.

The regulation of communal labor in Mirebalais, though extremely informal, is none the less effective. There are three or four types of such organizations, none of which requires a large outlay of funds on the part of the one whose land is being worked, and only one of which, the "mutual association," has any restriction as to membership. In this last case, three or four or five men agree to work for each other a given number of hours, rotating their working period of three hours or half a day in the fields of each of the parties to the agreement. The other co-operative groups vary principally as to their size and the time of day when their work is carried on. The smallest is the *mire*, which consists of perhaps half a dozen or ten men who come to help a neighbor in his work, and labor from early morning until about the middle of the morning. A somewhat larger group, who work from about this time until midday, is known as a *coup de main*. Finally, there is the *combite*, the Mirebalais form of the characteristic organization for mutual self-help known elsewhere in Haiti as the *Société Cange*.[8]

Though strenuous physical labor is involved in the work of the *combite*, for the Haitian it symbolizes recreation and enjoyment — the stimulus of working with one's fellows, the pleasure of gossiping with friends, and the partaking of the feast which marks the climax of the day. All this makes the occasion one to be anticipated and enjoyed, and no one who sees ten or fifteen men on horseback, each with a hoe over his shoulder, shouting and laughing as they clatter by at full gallop, can fail to sense their eager desire to arrive at their destination, a near-by *combite*.[9]

When a man or a woman needs help in preparing a field — for women, particularly those who sell in the market, may often become wealthy and large cultivators — a request is

1: Herskovits E-4,8 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

made of key-men in the district informally called *chefs d'escouade*. They have the reputation of being those to whose call a number of men, perhaps a dozen, perhaps two or three times that many, will respond and come to give the aid that is desired. Such a person is given a "bouquet"—a bottle of *clairin*—which insures the appearance of himself and his group on the date set. A *combite* may be held at any time during the week except Sundays, which are dedicated to rest, and Tuesdays (in earlier times Mondays), when tradition holds a person must be free to work his own fields and care for tasks needed to be done at his own house. There is no requirement in either law or custom to respond to the call for communal work, and the larger landowners, who usually reside in the towns, rarely participate in a *combite*. So great is the pleasure derived from work of this sort, however, and so living is the realization among the peasantry of its potential benefits, that a man hesitates before he refuses to take part in a *combite* to which he has been summoned. Sometimes a man who has been faithful in his attendance at *combites* and has worked well at them falls ill during the time for planting or for clearing his ground of underbrush or for hoeing. In such case a *combite* is summoned, and even though this man is unable to offer the usual feast, his services are remembered and the men work with a will to insure the proper preparation of his ground.

The scene in a field where a large *combite* is at work is an arresting one. The men form a line, with a drummer in front of their hoes. The *simbiler*, who leads the singing as he works with the others, adds the rhythm of his song to the regular beats of the drum, thus setting the time for the strokes of the implements wielded by the workers. This drum, slung about the neck of the drummer, is of the European form, never the hollowed-out African type that figures in religious rites. Its sound can carry far, however, and thus it not only beats the time for the hoes, but notifies all concerned that the *combite*

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

is under way. The size of the *combite* is judged by the number of drums and *lambi*, or conch-shell horns used, for where two or three of either are required, an especially large group of workers is usually assembled. It may be observed in passing that it is undoubtedly the sound of this *combite* drum, heard in the mountains or through the brush by travelers, that has so often been mistaken for the "mysterious booming" of the *vodun* drums.[4]

The preparation of the food is the work of the women of the household giving the *combite*, aided by their female relations and the wives of friends and neighbors. This is no small task, for goats and even a bullock may be killed to feed a large *combite*, while in addition other dishes to go with the meat must be cooked. Each woman is given charge of a great pot and does her best to see to it that an appetizing dish is ready for the men when their work is done. While the food is being cooked, the real object of the *combite*, the clearing of the field, is being pursued. A *chef d'esquade*, usually with a small group, begins the afternoon's labor, and, being a fast worker, he himself sets the pace. As more men arrive, he walks about, encouraging the constantly increasing number of men in their efforts, seeing to it that the tempo originally set is continued, and when necessary picking up a hoe to restore a lagging rhythm. Occasionally the *chef d'esquade* will stand in front of the men to make sure that all keep together, and if the lazy cannot be roused to work by direct order or through ridicule, he will drive them away.

The work progresses with incredible speed as the line moves down the field. In one case a *combite* of between fifty and seventy-five men completely cleared a field of several acres in a single afternoon, and this without undue effort or what appeared to be the expenditure of much energy. The flashing of the hoes in the brilliant sunlight accentuates the color of the scene; each implement is raised high above the head of the one who wields it, to be brought down at the proper in-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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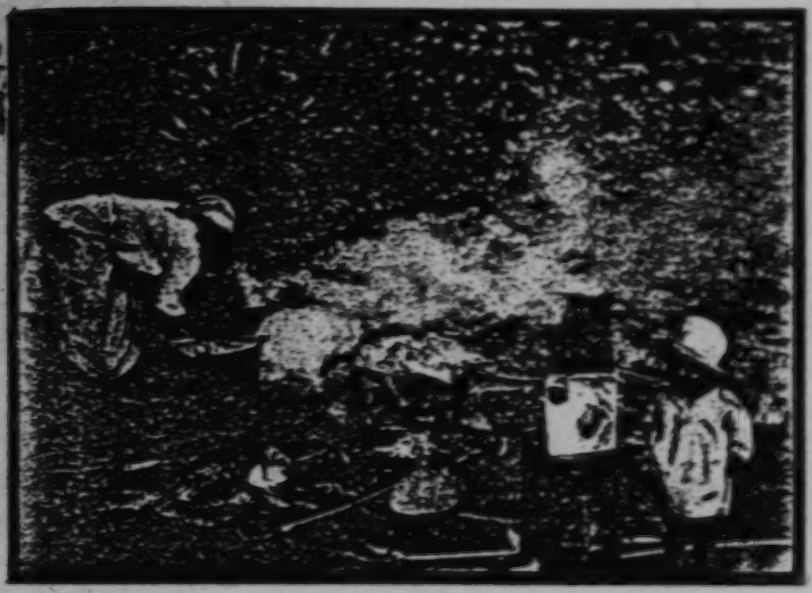

ABOVE, *Preparing the food for a combite feast.*
BELOW, *Drums marking the beat for the hoes.*

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[facing P. 72]

·1: Hemkovits E-4, 6 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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stant and in almost perfect accord with the hoes of all the other men in line. Pauses are frequent, and men often drop out of the line for a longer period of rest — even those not of the type laughingly called *majeurs*, who shirk their task and come to a *combite* principally to share in the feasting — and these, for the time being, join the singing with added verve. During the periods of rest, re-alignments are made and, if necessary, the direction of the line is changed; after a short time, however, the cry of the *simidor* rings out, the initial statement of a song is sounded, and as the chorus swings into the melody, the hoes rise again, the beat of the drum is begun, the plaintive notes of the *lambi* are heard, and the workers once more move down the field.[8]

Acting as the representative of the owner of the field to be cleared is a man who is called the *directeur*. If a large number of workers, a hundred or more, are assembled, he may divide them into two groups, assigning each half of the field, and then there is competition to see which group will first complete its allotted task. On such an occasion there would not only be more than one drum, but also more than one principal singer, or *simidor*, and the songs would thereupon have improvised words boasting of the prowess of the winning side, and ridiculing its opponents. The "director" also apportions the food, for it is customary to follow the rule which holds that since not all workers are equally eager or competent, so the rewards should not be the same for all. The shirkers are well known. They come but a little before sunset, or, arriving earlier, dawdle, walking about with their hoes and accomplishing but little during the afternoon. The lack of enthusiasm of these *majeurs* for work does not escape the "director," for though all who come to the *combite* must be fed, such men receive relatively little; while those who have worked the hardest not only are rewarded with dishes heaped with especially choice morsels of meat, but often find several sous when they reach the bottom of the dish.

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Le Herskovits 3-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

461 The *combite* songs are distinctive in Haitian music for
476 their melodic quality. Sung in unison, as is characteristic of
533 most forms of Negro music, they contain the statement of a theme by the leader and a response from a chorus, so that the contrast between this great volume of sound from the chorus and the solo voice of the *simidor* is singularly effective. It is not the melodic qualities alone that make these songs so
476 appealing to the Haitians, however. At the *combite* a man
533 not only learns all the gossip of the day, but enjoys learning
461 and singing the songs which caustically comment on the
78 shortcomings of neighbors, or evaluate the hospitality of those
626 who have called *combites*, or detail scandal, phrased with
203 sufficient directness to allow the reference of the song to remain clear, but warily, so as not to give the individual pilloried ground for direct recrimination. The *simidor* is thus a person to be feared, since in addition to his ability as a singer and a leader of song, he is also an outstanding improviser. As one Haitian expressed it, "The *simidor* is a journalist, and every *simidor* is a Judas!"

476 One or two examples of these songs will make clear their
533 favor among a people to whose natural love of gossip is added
530 a patterned relish for oblique public statement of individual
471 shortcomings. The first comments on a miserly *combite* host:
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À tè!	Down!
Moin dit, messieurs,	I say, messieurs,
Moin p'valé nan combite ça-é	I went to that *combite*
Moin pas mangé.	[But] I did not eat.
Moin allé, moin pas joinne un grogue	I went, but I found no drink
Pour moin buè.	To drink.
Assé-a! En è!	Enough! Up!
Moin dit, messieurs,	I say, messieurs,
M'allé nan combite ça-é	I went to that *combite*

1: Herskovits E-6, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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Moin pas joinne mangé	[But] I found no food
Pau' m'mangé.	To eat.

Another song refers to a pungent bit of local gossip, which, though known to everyone, concerned an affair that precluded the mention of names. This is usually the case, for it is not ordinarily deemed wise to make specific references; yet this must not be thought of as an invariable rule, as is shown by the fact that a number of these songs were recorded where names were mentioned with great freedom. Thus in Mirebalais as elsewhere, circumstances must govern cases; the composer of the following short song did not feel it politic to do more than recall the case:

Ca va reglé,	This will be arranged,
En é, o!	Up, o!
Affai' cousine germaine	The affair of a first cousin
A'c cousin germain.	With her first cousin.

Reference is also made to an impending quarrel where a suspicion of magic practices entered:

Moin dit, Judas,	I say, Judas,
Allé l'église;	Go to the church;
Quand ou apè tourné	When you return
Ou à quitté moin tranquille, o-o;	You will leave me in peace, o-o;
Si ou allé l'église,	If you go to the church,
Ou apè quitté moin tranquille, o-o.	You will leave me in peace, o-o.

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Still another song is a challenge, for in it the singer boasts that he is the equal of the man figuratively designated in it, and will cause trouble if resisted:

À tè!	Down!
M'apè mandé qui moune	I ask what person
Qui en dedans caille là.	Is in that house.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

Compère répond':	My friend replies:
"C'é' moin qui avec cousine moin."	"It is I who am with my cousin."
Assé-é!	Enough!
Moin en dedans déjà.	I am already inside.
En é-é-o!	Up, o!
Nan point taureau	No bull
Passé taureau.	Is better than [this] bull.
En é-o!	Up, o!

Finally, there may be cited a composition which complains against a shirker who comes and eats, but does little work:

Samba, é-é,	Samba, *é-é,*
Moin vé ou malhonnet,	I see that you are a dishonest man,
Tonnèrre!	*Tonnèrre!* *
Moin planté mais moin,	I plant my maize,
L'année rive,	The year rolls round,
Moin planté mangé,	I plant food,
Ou apè managé li.	You eat it.
En é-é-o!	In the air!
Moin planté saboca,	I plant avocados,
Ça pou' ou mangé,	They are for you to eat,
Ou malhonnet-o.	You are a dishonest man-o.
Tonnèrre!	*Tonnèrre!*

The field cleared and hoed, the work of planting begins. This is carried on in accordance with a well-defined calendar of agriculture, which takes as its starting-point the beginning of the rains. Maize, which matures quickly, is the first crop, and is planted during the latter part of March or early in April, unless the rains are delayed, when it is planted later that month. Congo peas, which mature less rapidly, are put

* *Tonnèrre*, "thunder," is a Haitian-French oath; the original is retained because in translation its force is lost.

In: Hambourin 2-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mürbeleb

land, whose bodies are buried in it, and whose spirits watch over it. As has been shown in the discussion of property, land in Haiti is owned privately, and, once title has passed, is subject to no alienation, except at the will of the owner — an attitude also held toward property of other categories, as is evidenced by the fact that most of the possessions of a man, particularly his livestock, are marked for identification, and theft is severely punished. Even the disposal of stray animals whose owners cannot be identified must follow well-defined legal procedure, in accordance with which they are held by the officers of the commune for a stated period of time before being sold at public auction. All marks on these animals are carefully noted in the records, so that title to them may be duly established.

In the organization of production and distribution an African mold, if not full content, predominates. The co-operative work-system, which is so important in maintaining agricultural production, is directly related to comparable groupings of West Africa, of which a distinctive form is the *dokpwe* of Dahomey, described when the African origins of Haitian culture were examined. The *combite*, as an instrument of co-operative labor and mutual self-help, with its tradition of giving no pecuniary reward for work done, but of making the feast which comes at the end of the day's labor adequate return — all these represent pure retentions of African practice. Even more striking is the carry-over in the attitudes which go with these outer forms — the manner in which the participants look forward with pleasant anticipation to taking part in *combites*, the enjoyment which they derive from their group work, and the verve with which the work is done are clear expressions of these attitudes. The role of the *combite*-song in exercising social control and enforcing conformity to local custom is entirely African, as is its function in stimulating work by setting a rhythm for it.

African, too, is the institution of the market, though in this

2: Cosmikmakr B-5 (1957-1966) 1960 SV3 Hold SV3
[P112-F]

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7. A small cosmikmakr, southern Haiti.

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8. Cosmikmakr, southern Haiti. Vaccine players at the right; flag of the cosmikmakr at the left.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P.112-G]

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9. *Calling the coumbite: signaling on a conch-shell trumpet.*

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10. *A women's coumbite weeding a cornfield near the town of Plaisance.*

a massacre in the western part of the Dominican Republic which took the lives of an estimated five thousand to fifteen thousand Haitians. The survivors fled homeward, and many were settled in frontier areas by the government. Even so, today there are believed to be some sixty or seventy thousand Haitians still living east of the border. Large numbers of Haitians, particularly men, migrated to Cuba in the years following World War I, in search of better wages in the cane fields. By 1931 there were more than eighty thousand Haitians in that country. But resentment by local Cuban labor and the onset of the depression combined to force the repatriation of great numbers of them. Thirty thousand Haitians came home from Cuba in the years 1936 and 1937 alone.

Solution of Haiti's problem of overpopulation does not seem imminent. The obvious answers would seem to be birth control, emigration, wiser use of natural resources, and industrialization. Since the country is predominantly Catholic, and since much social value is placed on children, birth control seems unlikely. And as health facilities become more widespread and infant mortality drops, the pressure will become more acute. Emigration seems to offer no hope, since neighboring islands and countries on the mainland give no encouragement. The Haitian may yet learn to conserve his land and to get more out of it, to stock his lakes with fish, and to bring more fish in from the sea. But this will not suffice. Nothing is left but industrialization, and that seems to be a thing of the far-distant future.

Nevertheless, the character of Haitian life remains essentially agrarian. The displaced peasant, whether he is now a hotel "houseboy," a taxi driver, or a cane cutter, dreams of returning to the land some day and growing bananas, coffee, and cotton that will make him independent. In far-off places such as Havana and New York, Haitians work and save money with the expectation that one day they will come home, buy fifteen or twenty acres of ground, build a new house, and live out their lives as decently prosperous *habitants*. The traditions of the agricultural society, along with Voudoun, continue to play a significant role in the life of the people.

One such tradition is the institution of the *coumbite*, a loosely knit cooperative work party of neighbors and friends. The word itself probably comes from the Spanish *convide*, or *convite*, meaning "to invite." A member of the group holds a coumbite by notifying his fellow members that on such-and-such a day his fields will require clearing or hoeing. There are several variants of the work gathering. One, called *corvé* or *corvée*, meets at irregular intervals and only on special invitation. There are no regular reciprocal obligations in the *corvée*; the workers are

[Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy" Journal of Negro History, October, 1940, p. 515. Cf. p. 352, Category 116. --Analyst)

compensated by a "feast" and party given at the end of the day by the host. More usual than the *coumbite* is the regular sharing of work on one another's fields—the *rouule*, or "taking turns."

An early morning work gathering is known as a *dancant jou*. It meets early in the day, sometimes before dawn, continues until ten or eleven in the morning, when the sun becomes hot, and then disperses. An afternoon coumbite is called a *diné-machete* (dinner machete) and lasts from about two in the afternoon until early evening. When the work is finished, the men go to the house of the host, where they have dinner, much in the manner of the American threshing party. An all-day affair is called a *grand coumbite*.

Essential to all coumbites are musicians and singing leaders. The instruments used are various, according to local custom. In the south they are usually drums, *tynwhistes*, and bamboo trumpets. In some areas of the north, the *lambi*, or conch-shell trumpet, is favored.

According to the custom in the south, on the day of the coumbite the drummers arise in the false dawn before sunrise and begin a roundabout march to the house of the host. They pass before the huts of all the neighbors who are going to join the party, playing a *rappel* on the drums. By one's and two's the workers come down the trails to join the procession, bringing hoes, machetes, or sickles as required. As the marching group grows larger, there is talking, laughter, and perhaps singing. Most of the men who join the procession are from close by. Others who may have to travel from a distance, perhaps from the next valley, go directly to the house of the host. When the workers arrive there, the women of the house serve coffee. This is the usual breakfast of the Haitian peasant.

Then the drummers play another *rappel*, and the men go down to the field that is to be tilled. There may be ten, twenty, or fifty of them. Some coumbites are even larger. If the group is a small one, the men line up together. The singing leader, called a *sambe* or *siniéor*, begins a song, the drummers play, the hoes begin to rise and fall in unison, and the workers join in the singing. If the group is large it will divide into two or three squads, each trying to outdo the other. The men stand shoulder to shoulder, moving the hoes up and down together, syncopating their movements by pauses as they sing their responsive parts. Sometimes tafia or rum is portioned out. The squads move forward slowly, inching their way across the field. The sambe beats on his hoe blade with a stone to keep time for his song. His job is to "encourage" the men. He may sing old familiar songs or compose new ones, songs with humor and bite in them, ribald songs, and songs of ridicule. They may criticize

476 241 532 461 men who have failed to join the coumbite, or praise the host, or single out various individuals for comment. The songs of the coumbite are a newspaper of the affairs of the people. The news is personalized, editorialized, and replete with comic vignettes.[1]

476 241 521 514 At noon the drummers signal a halt, and the workers shoulder their hoes, wipe off their machetes, and adjourn to the house for food. If it is a grand coumbite, the men rest for several hours, talking, catching up on sleep, or playing cards or *mayombe*. About three o'clock they go back to the fields to work until evening. There comes the feast, under the canopy adjoining the house. The host and his wife have killed and cooked one or more goats, depending on the size of the group. The men are served meat, rice, beans, and whatever else has been prepared. [273] Afterward, women join the party, and there is more tafia or rum. Some of the men then drift homeward, but most stay on for dancing. Zouc, Congo, or John drums are brought out, and the festivities begin. If another coumbite is not scheduled for the next day, the music and dancing may last well into the night.

476 562 Women, too, have coumbites to perform various kinds of large tasks, from field work to winnowing and coffee sorting, though in general the women's work groups lack the festive character of the men's gatherings.

476 241 515 There is a more tightly knit form of coumbite, known as a *société*. In southern Haiti there are the société Congo and the société Martiniquer; in northern Haiti there is the société Cayé. These societies are clubs built around mutual work needs and recreational activities. The société Congo that appears in the town or city streets during Rara days, with bamboo or conch-shell trumpets, drums, flags, and masks, is usually composed of the men who have joined forces to till the fields. In some instances, it may also conform roughly to membership in a particular houngfor, or cult center. Unlike the ordinary coumbite, the société is not a group which meets only at ground-breaking or harvesting time; it is a permanent organization with regular, sometimes day-to-day, obligations. Work after work it moves from one man's land to another, doing the tasks that have to be done. There is no question of "Can you come?" The group goes first to one man's land, then to another's until all the work has been done. If a member of the société falls sick, so that he cannot work his own field, the société takes over his tasks for him.

476 Coumbites are held not only for agricultural work but for house-building, and sometimes for the building of a houngfor.

[191] The Haitian coöperative work group has much in common with European and American husking and barn-building parties; but it has

[For footnote see Category 116, P. 352. -- Ana 1957]

many non-European characteristics. The manner of work, even down to specific motor activity, has direct and hardly disputable West African connections. Instead of the short-handled West African hoe, the Haitians use a long-handled one, and they work more erect than stooped. But the rhythmic, synchronized use of the hoe, the singing leader and the musicians who stand to one side to "encourage" the workers, the calling of the workers by drum *rappels*, the special consideration for the sick, and the concept of long-term community endeavor are all of West African beginnings. The coumbite is the legitimate descendant of the Dahomean *dokpaw*, the *kwaw* of the Mandiba (Cameroons), the *ko* of the Kpelle (Liberia), and other West African cooperative systems.

Although the *dokpaw* of Dahomey is a more formal and intricate institution, permeated with certain abstract and ritual concepts, its social and functional characteristics are not greatly different from those of the Haitian coumbite, in which cooperation is marked. Herskovits notes that working with the Dahomean *dokpaw*

> represents recreation rather than labor to the individual member. There is song and dance to drumming and the sound of gongs, on the way and after arrival, and there is feasting and an exhibition of skill. It is an impressive sight to see from forty to a hundred men kneeling earth for walls, or laying thatch, or hoeing the earth with unison movements to the accompaniment of conversation and laughter, and the songs of each of their fellows, who, for the moment at rest, have constituted themselves the chorus.

When more than one *dokpaw* is summoned for work on the same project, Herskovits notes,

> there is great rivalry among the organizations to see which one will first complete its allotted task. If only one *dokpaw* is present, there is either individual rivalry, or the *dokpaw* may be divided into two groups which compete one against the other. The food which is provided at these times of collective labor is as rich fare as the owner can afford . . .[8]

An underlying factor in the Dahomean *dokpaw* is awareness of itself as "the manpower of Dahomey," and the members regard themselves as exercising their fundamental privilege as Dahomeans. This attitude toward the coumbite continues to prevail in Haiti. Like the houngfor—but even more significantly in terms of routine, workaday life—the coumbite and the société are an expression of social ties and of the pervading interest in the common welfare.

Certain patterns of the coumbite have been carried over into non-agrarian labor in the towns and cities, wherever group work is required. The carrying of coffee and sugar bags in the warehouses, the loading of ships, and the repairing of roads—all are traditionally performed

[8] [Herskovits, "Some Aspects of Dahomean Ethnology," Africa, Vol. V (July, 1932), pp. 266-296. Cf. p. 352, Category 116. -- Analyst.]

533 rhythmically, to the accompaniment of drums, *catas*, or horns, while a
497 singing leader composes topical songs in which the laborers join.
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The tools which a rural Haitian chooses, and the way he uses them,
171 often are in a West African tradition. He performs a multitude of
412 tasks with his machete, or bush knife: weeding a garden, peeling an orange, cutting down a tree, making a drum or mortar, opening a coconut. It is an all-purpose tool, as it is in Africa. Until a few years ago it was supplemented by the extra-long, heavier, "double machete." The axe and the chisel are known and used too, but the machete is supreme. The hoe is the tool for tilling the soil, even in the flat country, and even
492 though the Haitian has horses and cattle which could pull a plow.
[540] Horses are for riding and not for pulling. In carrying loads, the Haitian
[412] peasant still prefers the head to the shoulders. If he has a donkey, the
[538] donkey will carry for him. An old Haitian proverb goes: "Merçi Bondieu pou' bourrique li, si nous pas gainyain bourrique li fait Haitien pa'li tout bagaille" (Thank God for the donkey, if we didn't have the donkey the Haitian would have to carry everything)." Generally speaking, the
489 rough and rocky terrain of Haiti and inadequate secondary roads have
487 done nothing to encourage the use of carts or wagons.
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Corn is stored in the trees, as in West Africa, or in granaries built
171 upon stilts, also as in West Africa. The Haitian makes his fire in the
[251] African fashion, with several long sticks or poles meeting point-to-point
[392] in the heart of the fire. As the ends are consumed, the sticks are pushed
[252] toward the center. Grain is pulverized in large wooden mortars, as
[222] in West Africa, and winnowed in a woven tray. Fish traps are sometimes woven in the traditional West African manner, and fishermen often
[224] set their nets in converging spirals and beat the water with sticks to
[501] drive the fish to the center. And on the rivers and lakes are to be seen dugout canoes of a kind familiar on the inland waters of West Africa.

The folklore of the fields contains many themes known to the West
171 African. One old Haitian farmer, discussing the spiritual relationship
241 of the planting to the earth, declared that a man must be strong and potent when he plants, else the crops will be vitiated and sickly. For
[834] this reason, he said, a man must not plant seeds the day after he has had sexual intercourse, because he has been temporarily drained of his life-giving powers.[9]

The tale of the hoe that worked by itself in the fields is also wide-
171 spread. It enters many animal and Bouki stories, and also is known
538 in a form that is familiar in West Africa. In this story, there was once a man who owned a hoe which worked by itself whenever a magical formula was pronounced. It would stop working whenever the magical

9 [For footnote, see Category 116, P 352.-- Analyst]

535 *Rebondo, or Rombondo:* Danced [illegible] occasion of building a new house.
535 *Mawari:* Danced by a secret [illegible] communal work on the land of one of its members.
476 *Ti Coumbe:* Another secret work dance, sometimes closely related to Voodoo ritual. Known in Brazil as Macumba.
Kouse, or Coumbijolie: A dance connected with communal work celebrations.[a]

Rara and Carnival Dances

535 541 *Rara, also called Chemipié, Lewbouli, and Vaccine:* The perambulating dances of the Rara festival.
Mascarade, or Cowpé: Danced for the Mardi Gras.
Pailleur: Any carnival dance in costume.
Rarassie: A carnival stick dance with West African precedents.
Tèlèl Rikan: The carnival Magpie dance.
Congo Pailleur: The "Straw Congo," or "Costume Congo," the carnival dance of the secret Congo. It is also known as Cipé and Congo Mardi Gras.
Rabordage: A Mardi Gras perambulating dance.
Chalucka: A Mardi Gras dance in which the participants are dressed as nineteenth-century generals. Comic mimicry. Also referred to as Charles Oscar.
Zinjare
Rabara
Mayouane

Other Secular and Miscellaneous Dances

535 *Zouc:* A gage dance of northern Haiti.
Calinda: A mock battle dance. Also a dance of the Calinda "secret society."
Ka: A dance which takes its name from the *ka*, a member drum.
Bèlè, or Belair
Mangoulins
Ti Crip: This is regarded by some informants as one of the Pitou dances.
Malfou: "The Hawk," a dance of northern Haiti.
Pinyinpar: A simple "good time" dance.
Bambilé: A simple "good time" dance.
Bombarde: A "good time" dance. The term is often used to designate any social dance. As a verb, *bombardé* means "to dance" or "to have a good time."

Secular Dances of European Type

535 179 *Meringue:* There are three main types of Meringue—the drawing-room Meringue, the ordinary "ballroom" Meringue, and the Meringue Coumbijolie (which is fast and agitated). A development of the last decade or so is the jazz Meringue.
Ti Bobine: This is a sort of square dance, though it is sometimes danced in Meringue style.
Méwout, or Mèwout: The minuet.
Polka
Waltz
Quadrille
Mazurka
Courandaise

[a] [Footnote appears on p. 352, Category 116.--Analyst]

[P.166]

15. Secret-Society Songs

575 Secret societies were once common in Haiti, as they were in other parts of
191 the New World where West Africans settled in large numbers. The institution of the secret society was strong in various parts of West Africa from which the slaves came. The tradition was particularly notable among the tribes of Nigeria. In the New World it offered to slaves and to freed Negroes an opportunity for social organization and fraternal relationships which otherwise had been pretty well shattered by the nature of slavery and the profuse admixture of cultures. A number of elderly Haitians have
[448] suggested that it was the Haitian secret societies rather than the Voodoun and Congo cults which fomented underground resistance and slave revolts against the French in the last years of the eighteenth century.

174 At this late date it is difficult to reconstruct much of the secret-society
178 picture. Such groups as may have survived until recently did so in vitiated
575 and changed form. They have been supplanted in large measure by the
[196] *société*, a kind of mutual-aid association with both economic and recreational functions. It is exclusive, but not irrevocably so, and it is not secret. The *société* often corresponds roughly with the membership of a *houmfor*, or cult temple.

575 Old people still talk about true secret societies, however. There was a
178 Moundongue secret society, separate from the Moundongue cult, whose
266 members were recruited from the survivors of the Moundongue tribe and
193 their descendants. Other secret societies were not based on tribal affiliation but were recruited from the population at large. One such group was the Vinbindingue, also known as the Blinbindingue and the Balbindingue. Its practices were feared. According to tradition, the Vinbindingue was predatory and held cannibalistic rites, as did other groups such as the Moundongue Society, the Cochon Rouge (the Red Pig Society), the Zezubeaupa, the Cochon Gris (the Gray Pig Society), and the Calinda
000 Society. How much of their reputation for cannibalism was deserved is

[Herskovits, Dahomey, I, P. 256. Cf. P. 353, Category 116. -- Analyst]

easily be hidden, but the gourds were simply slipped into the straw 534
roofs and thus put out of sight. Moreover, by some strange process of 548
reasoning, military authorities regarded the bamboos as "harmless," 748
though they were used for the same purposes as the constricted drums.

There are numerous other kinds of simple percussion devices. One 534
such instrument, now less commonly seen than previously, is a length of open bamboo laid in the crotches of two Y-shaped sticks set in the ground. Like other *catas*, the bamboo is beaten with two sticks. Some Haitians believe that in former days such bamboos were played in batteries like a xylophone.

Sometimes a light-weight wooden cylinder, or perhaps a drum de- [461]
tached of its playing head, is carried by the timekeeper of a *cumbiche*. [896]
It, also, is played on the side with sticks.

Wooden mortars for pulverizing grain take on the character of musical 534
instruments when used in combination with voice. When two or more 553
mortars are used, with two men or women wielding the long pole-like 412
pestles in each mortar, the rhythmic effects can become fairly complicated.

The *claves* or *palos* (small hardwood sticks) are used primarily in 534
connection with secular dances of a Cuban type, or to accompany such 535
instruments as the guitar and the marimba. One stick is held loosely in [177]
the natural fold of the hand, so that it is free to vibrate, and is struck sharply with the second stick. The tone is almost metallic because of [824]
the hardness of the wood, usually lignum vitae. The name of the instrument is recognizable as a form of *clavar*, or *clave*, Spanish for "peg" or "nail." It is thought that wooden shipbuilding pegs provided the [171]
name for this device, which has equivalents in West Africa.

Among the folk instruments there are various kinds of horns and 534
trumpets. Cows' horns are played musically in some parts of the southern 184
peninsula, though usually they are used as ritual instruments and signaling devices. Wooden trumpets called *pitons* are carved from the stems [824]
of the papaya tree. Conch-shell trumpets, known as *lambis*, are com- [802]
monly used as signaling devices by fishermen. They are also to be found among the coumbites, in Rara festivities, and occasionally in rituals, where they are usually identified with sea deities. In carnival [541]
times the old fashioned phonograph horn makes its appearance as a com- [216]
bined trumpet and voice amplifier.

Probably the most important of the trumpets is the one made of 534
bamboo. It is called a *saccine* or *bois bourriquet*. Both names have in- 755
teresting origins. The cow's horn was at one time used for magico- [237]
medical purposes. The leaf doctor used it as an "applicator" of powders and potions. A small opening was made in the point of the horn, and

[See plate 8, P. 112-F. -- Analyst]

Your dance, mayoyoo!
Find your woman, mayoyoo!
Mayoyoo yoo!

(*Pailleter* means "all decorated up," "Lady," "in carnival regalia." It is also the name of a dance, *mayoyoo*, used here as an exclamation.)

Example 168 was said to be in "Spanish."

Example 169

Go to your mother's house,
Go to your mother's house,
Go to your mother's house, my dear,
Do not come and give me an argument!
Go to your mother's house, my dear,
Go to your mother's house, my dear,
Go to your mother's house, my dear,
And do not give me an argument!
Little girl who doesn't know how to wash and iron,
Go home to your mother,
Little girl who doesn't know how to wash and iron,
Go home to your mother!
Angelina, Angelina, go to your mother's house!
Angelina, Angelina, go to your mother's house!

Example 170

Oh I'm not a mule,
Oh I'm not a mule, oh!
The farmer takes me to carry his collect!

(A good-natured protest song of the kind often sung by commbites.)

Example 173 has no text. It is exclamatory throughout.

Example 174

E Laina, where should I go, Laina E!
Laina, the children are hypocrites, oh!
Eo.

Example 175

Eva Maudie Susan, I am coming town
To take away the honey!

Example 176

Adieu kining kining kining,
Oh I say my prayer to God to send rain!

(The first line is ritual language, but it appears to have been originally a phrase recited by the prêt' savane.)

relations between the husband and the wife's family, it is nevertheless commonplace for men who can afford it to have more than one wife.

*Simpson, in "Social and Familial Institutions in Northern Haiti," *American Anthropologist*, October-December, 1941, p. 696, observes that in northern Haiti there are three distinct types of plaçage. "A *fanmme-cuille* shares her man's house, while a *maman petite* is a woman who has bore children for a man without living in his house. A *fanmme plaçée* does not live in her amant's house, and she has given him no children." Although most of these women have any legal rights of inheritance, Simpson notes, "social status to a man's property stand in descending order for these three classes of plaçée."

*Johnson, *The Negro in the New World*.

*UNESCO, *The Haiti Film Project*, p. 18.

*Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 311.

*The group work patterns of Haiti show a common ancestry with Negro gang work patterns in the United States. While nothing so formalized as the ensemble patterns among American Negroes, similarities are striking. The emphasis on rhythm, the swinging of hammers or picks in unison, the need for a singing leader, the responsive chorus, and the frequent use of some kind of percussion to keep time, all derive from a common concept of the nature of group work.

*Herskovits, "Some Aspects of Dahomean Ethnology," *Africa*, Vol. V (July, 1932), pp. 266-268.

*Cardinall, *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 109), observes that among the Krachi people of Togoland "no man may have sexual intercourse with a woman for seven days before he goes hunting."

*The Ashanti story told by Rattray in *Akan-Ashanti Folk-Tales* omits the laughing with covering the original lost; according to this version, the hat escaped across the sea to the country of the white men, who then possessed the secret. Afterward, the white men brought many hats to Ashanti.

Chapter III: *Dancing and Dance Drama* (pp. 126-138)

*Quoted in Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 33.

*Actually a banjo-like instrument of African provenience. The similarity of the word *banza* to *banjo* appears to be more than a coincidence.

*Saint-Méry, *De la danse*, as translated by Lilian Moore in "Moreau de Saint-Méry and Dance," *Dance Index*, October, 1946, p. 258.

*Moore, op. cit., p. 258.

*Brandy or rum with gunpowder is sometimes drunk by persons possessed by the loa Ogoun, deity of war.

*Moore, op. cit., p. 258.

*United Nations photograph no. 6109.

*Students of United States Negro life will recognize the word *crawfish* as a variant of *crawjier*, a dance known on the lower Mississippi. According to one observer, Dr. Willis James of Spelman College, Atlanta, small Negro boys on the docks used to call to the boat passengers:

> "Throw me a nickel
> Throw me a dime
> If you want to see me
> Do the crawjim."

The term *crawjier* is still used to mean hand-loading of cotton bales on river boats. When this loading was done mainly by hand some years ago, the stevedores worked rhythmically in a line and sang. An old man from Louisiana testified that within his own memory the double *crawjier* was accompanied by rattlebelt drums and other percussion.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

have been gathered from trees which grew wild. Both men and women labor, with the work divided according to regular custom between the sexes, the men dominating the scene only in the marketing of coffee.

Nature was opulent enough at the beginning of Haitian independence. The wars had ruined irrigation ditches, sugar refineries, and mechanical equipment, but the soil was still abundantly fertile. But generations of farming by people without knowledge of fertilization or soil conservation have worn out much of the land. Trees have been cut to provide lumber and clearings for more farms; in the rainy seasons torrents have coursed down the mountainsides, washing away soil and exposing the earth to the rays of a tropical sun. Because the country is overpopulated every available acre is put to use, and to overuse, thus still more depleting the land. It is a vicious circle, for the next generation must extract yet more from the earth and so weaken it further. Hard work is the lot of the peasant, therefore, during every month of the year except the dry season. There has never been a formal rotation of crops: a farmer continues to plant the same crop in the same field until the harvest is perceptibly smaller than before. Then he changes to another type of produce. Sooner or later he will allow the land to lie fallow for several years until, by the action of nature or the grazing over it of cattle, it has regained a measure of its fertility.

The strenuous work of clearing fields and preparing them for cultivation is man's job. Since the peasants owned their plots it has almost always been done in coöperation by the men of the neighborhood. What on the American frontier would have been called a "bee" is known in Haiti as a *coumbite*, or *combite*, often carried on as an enterprise of the local *Société Congo*, the informal neighborhood group for mutual aid and fellowship.[6]

A man who has a large job on hand announces a coumbite for any day except Sunday, always a day of rest, and whatever other week-

6. The word "coumbite" was apparently borrowed from the Spanish part of the island, and from the Spanish word *convidar*, convey. In Colombia "convite" means exactly what "coumbite" means in Haiti: a gathering of peasants to work in common, or else a coöperative society for mutual agricultural self-help.

Professor Herskovits (*Life in a Haitian Valley*, chap. IV) describes the Société Congo in detail. The use of the name "Congo" indicates the African tradition, and is particularly noteworthy in connection with a kind of coöperative work which Herskovits finds particularly Dahomean.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

476 241 574 [527] day local practice dedicates to work in one's own fields—generally Monday or Tuesday. The prospect of working with one's fellows, of a midday feast with plentiful drink, of singing, talking, and hearing the news, is enough to induce most of the neighbors to come, even though the work will be hard. As with American log-rollings and house-raisings, there is a practical reason for accepting the invitation: by participating in other coumbites a man will be able to invite his neighbors to help him in his own larger tasks. The work is [461] done in rhythm[7] as on Southern road gangs in the United States, with one man specially designated to beat the drum, blow the conch, or sing a topical song, to set the pace. While the men are at work, the women prepare the noonday feast.

114 476 574 174 171 178 241 This typical characteristic of Haitian rural life has been described in detail as it operates near the village of Mirebalais by Prof. Melville J. Herskovits. His contention is that the custom, in general and in detail, derives from Dahomey, West Africa, the home of many of the original slaves.[8] Although his evidence is impressive, there are nevertheless objections to it. Coöperative enterprise for tasks larger than one man can accomplish alone is common in the United States and in parts of Europe and South America, as well as in Africa. It is not an economic device which strikes one as requiring unusual inventiveness, for cases of it are common even where the participants have had no previous experience of it. Further, Dahomean practice could not have been kept up during slave days, nor yet during the régimes of Toussaint, Dessalines, Christophe, and Pétion. (The first three required forced labor under overseers, and landownership by peasants was still rare under Pétion, although a beginning had been made.) In the thirty years from 1790, when the last slaves arrived, until Christophe died in 1820, many old ways were certainly forgotten. Not a single one of the numerous books written by visitors during Boyer's quarter-century, 1818 to 1843, mentions the practice, which certainly must have struck Englishmen, Frenchmen, and Americans if it had been characteristic of the peasant life of the time. If one concludes that the coumbite did not become peasant practice until the mid-nineteenth century, all possibility of contact with Negroes familiar with Dahomean routine has disappeared. What

7. A Haitian poet, Charles F. Fressois, entitles a book of his verses *Au Rythme des coumbites* (Port-au-Prince, 1933).
8. Op. cit., chap. IV.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

remains is the verbal handing down of recollections, one of the most natural things in the world and one congenial to Haitian peasants. Every region, every village, has its accomplished storytellers. The phenomenal resemblances in detail of the coumbite to Dahomean coöperative work may be due therefore to this verbal tradition. 174 241 574 476 535

Once the men have cleared and prepared the field, the care of the crop devolves upon the women. For this there has been a long background of tradition. In African agricultural regions, in the plantations of Saint-Domingue during slave days, under the forced labor régimes of Toussaint and his successors, women had been field workers. They had never known anything else. We have seen that many of the present-day practices of Haiti go back to the times of Pétion and Boyer: during this period women did field work, not by decree of government but by force of circumstance. Their men were constantly taken away from the farms for service in the large army; if crops were to be raised, women must do the work. Sometimes soldiers were stationed near their own homes, and could help in production; but they could be called on to march, at short notice and in peacetime, anywhere in the country. Many of the later presidents made it a definite policy frequently to change the station of regiments, so as to prevent revolutionary projects and guard against the soldiers' being tampered with by the disaffected in any single community. 241 175 462 701

Sir Harry Johnston records his observations on the Haiti of 1910 as follows: 114

The women are the best part of the nation. They are splendid, unremitting toilers. In the face of all discouragements with which a bad Government clouds their existence the women of Haiti remind one of certain patient types of ant or termite, who, as fast as you destroy their labour of months or days, hasten to repair it with unslackening energy. The market-women that descend from the country farms to the Haitian towns know that on their way to the market-place, and in that market-place, they will be robbed by soldiers and officers until the margin of profit on the sale of their wares has practically disappeared. Yet they continue to toil, to raise poultry and cattle, till the fields, see to their gardens, make pottery and mats. They cannot stop to reason, but must go on working from three years old to the end of their lives. Such industry (which is almost equally supplemented by that of the peasant husbands) protected should make Haiti one of the richest countries in the world for its size and population; but so long 114 462 461 [701]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1958) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

they have no feet and climb into the nearest palm tree. This song comments on Tijean's ability to climb with his single foot. (Haitians do not "shinny" up trees, but walk up, bracing the soles of the feet against the trunk.)

Tijean ou pas gainyain pieds,
Tijean ou pas gainyain pieds,
Comment ou fai monté cocoyé?
Lans bayè ro Legba, Jean Pétro,
Lans bayè ro!

Tijean, you have no feet,
Tijean, you have no feet,
How do you climb the coconut tree?
By using Legba's gate, Jean Pétro,
By using the gate!

When the loa begin to arrive in the hounfor to participate in the ceremonies, there is usually a song taking note of their coming. Sometimes the words describing the action are the deity's own account of what is happening, as in this song to the loa Sobo:

C'est passé n'ap passé là!
C'est passé ma passé là!
É hounsi bossale é yo lommain nom moin!
Yo lommain nom moin yo lommain nom moin!
Yo rélé hounsi kanzo!
Yo rélé Daromain!
Yo rélé mwé! [Ex. 50]

I am passing through, I am passing through!
I am passing, I am passing here!
É, the hounsi bossale call my name!
They are calling for me, they are calling for me!
The hounsi kanzo are calling!
Dahomey is calling!
They are calling me!

In another rite one might hear this song about the arrival of the deity Simba, from the point of view of the servitors rather than of the loa:

Simba Kitta vini wè moin, oh!
Oh Simba wa vini wè moin là, oh saints yà! [Ex. 51]

Simba Kitta comes to see me, oh!
Oh, Simba will come to see me here, oh saints!

When the deity Boulicha Nago comes in, there is a call for the drums to be played:

Nago 'rivé-é,
Boulicha Nago 'rivé-é!
Nago 'rivé-é,
Boulicha Nago 'rivé-é!
Li lè li temps bata là!
Li lè li temps bata là!
Nago 'rivé jodi-à oh enhé! [Ex. 52]

Nago arrives,
Boulicha Nago arrives!
Nago arrives,
Boulicha Nago arrives!
It is time, beat the drums!
It is time, beat the drums!
Nago comes today, oh, *enhé!*

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

the newcomer persists in retaining the place, an informal appeal is taken to the local magistrate, who invariably settles the matter by deciding in favor of the original occupant.

Each woman tends to specialize in certain commodities, such as meat or cloths or notions or baskets. The venders of foodstuffs, other than meat, however, vary their offerings with the season. This latter class of sellers mainly comprises women who, living in the town, constitute a group of "middlemen," either buying produce at the country markets, or, going off with their pack animals into the back country, return with saddle-bags loaded with the purchases they have made direct from the farmer.[8]

Country women are also well represented among the traders, and as they come streaming into town on market days with their head burdens, or driving the heavily laden, slow-plodding donkeys, they fill the streets with color and movement that make up one of the most picturesque aspects of Mirebalais life. A load may consist of one type of produce only, or a woman may bring rice, maize, beans, and bananas, as well as home-made brooms and baskets. All transactions in the market are for cash, and there is no barter of any kind, for the pattern of a money economy has been too deeply lodged in Haitian tradition to allow any other mode of exchange. Prices are based on supply and demand rather than on any agreement between sellers, since contact with the capital causes the current prices paid there for all kinds of produce to be generally known. Another factor which enters into price-fixing, however, is prestige. It is regarded as a mark of incompetence for a woman, whether from country or town, to return home with unsold produce, and since the reputation of being a clever trader is highly valued, this is avoided when at all possible, and the vender adjusts her prices as the day wears on to insure that she will dispose of everything she has brought.

In Mirebalais, as elsewhere, the markets are best attended during harvest months, when by official count as many as

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1938) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Bamburra is walking, low hips!
Bamburra is going to walk, low hips!

Damballa Wèdo, being a snake deity, "threads" or "winds" his way like a serpent, and this song describes a serpentine course taken by the dancers as Damballa (here identified as a Nago man) arrives:

Filé na filé, Damballa Wèdo vini wè moin!
Filé na filé, Nèg' Nago vini wè'm là! [Ex. 74]

Wind, we wind, Damballa Wèdo comes to see me!
Wind, we wind, the Nago man comes to see me here!

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After the dancing has been going on for a long while and the pace is fast, there may be a song of banter, such as the following from the Dahomey rites. The dancers sing *laillé, laillé!*, describing a figure of the dance in which the skirts are swirled, and note that they have worn out the drummers. They even offer to carry on their backs those dancers who are ready to fall by the wayside:

Laillé laillé!
Oh laillé laillé oh viéco'!
Tambouyé bouké!
Tambouyé bouké viéco'!
Laillé laillé oh viéco'!
Laillé laillé tambouyé bouké houngan'm!
M'po'té sou corps moin vié sor!
Tambouyé bouké ça!
Laillé laillé! [Ex. 75]

Laillé laillé!
Oh, *laillé laillé*, oh, old people!
The drummers are tired!
The drummers are tired, old people!
Laillé laillé, oh, old people!
Laillé laillé, the drummers are tired, my *houngan!*
I'll carry you on my back, old sister!
The drummers are tired there!
Laillé laillé!

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Interspersed among the songs of the hounfor there are sometimes warnings or admonitions. Usually they are tangent and indirect in statement, and may be from the point of view of the loa or of the houngan. In the following pouin song, which accompanies the ritual of making magic, there is a warning to certain people who will feel the effects of the magic. The ceremony includes, among other things, the dropping of lemons, roots, and leaves by the houngan into his sacred basin or pond. The houngan sings:

[P 105]

8. Mardi Gras and Rara: Jugglers, Maypoles, and Kings

From early in January until Easter, each year, the Haitian countryside 541
is infected with a riotous carnival spirit that puts all else in the background. First comes Mardi Gras, beginning early in January and building to a great climax at Shroveside. And then on Ash Wednesday begins the seven-week festival known as Rara, Lwalwadi, or Chariopié.

Every week end in the Mardi Gras season the country roads and 541
villages are alive with special music, dancing bands, and traditional 533
kinds of masquerading. The little crossroads in the mountains where the *habitants* usually hold their markets are suddenly swarming with drummers, trumpeters, magicians, jugglers, masked dancers, and acrobats. Each band has its own name, its banners and paraphernalia, new topical songs composed for the occasion, and sometimes a dance virtuoso. Each [535]
roving band competes for the attention and admiration of the spectators, and its ranks are often swelled by passers-by moving in the same direction who choose to dance their way along the roads rather than walk. Often women and girls on distant market errands will join in [482]
the celebration, seemingly unencumbered by the heavy loads they carry on their heads.

The Mardi Gras of the mountains and the plains is a dynamic spring 184
rite of which the urban elite version is only a pale and feeble imitation. 541
There are no pretty floats, no exhibits of female beauty, and no Coca-Cola advertisements. Sometimes the country bands move into Port-au-Prince and join the urban activities.

One by one the spectacles pass by on their uncertain way—to north 541
or south, into the town or out of the town, wherever chance leads them. In addition to the musicians, acrobats, jugglers, and masked dancers, there are baton twirlers, comedians on stilts, and mimes. Each group has its own theme. One may call itself the Zeaubeaups, another the Cochons Gris, another Cochons Rouges—names designating legendary

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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3. Country people carrying produce to market. The highways of Haiti's economic life are the mountain trails and the unpaved roads over which the produce of countless small gardens is carried in bundles and baskets.

[P 112-C]

[P.112-D]

4. *A peasant of the Montagnes Noires region, southern Haiti.*

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2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-H]

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11 and 12. *Market day. On each woman's head is the agricultural produce she will sell in the village or city market. When she returns she will carry a lighter load of things she has purchased, and tied in her handkerchief will be a few small coins.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-HH]

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54. Inside surface of a calabash bowl used in rituals of the houngfor, painted in black and white. The figure represents the graveyard loa, Baron Samedi, with a pick, shovel, and tombstone. Length, 15 inches.

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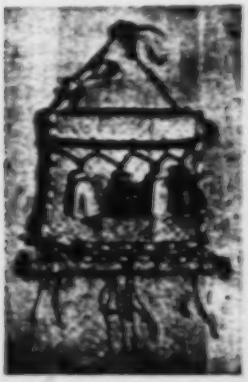

55. An alfor cousin, the traditional peasant knapsack.

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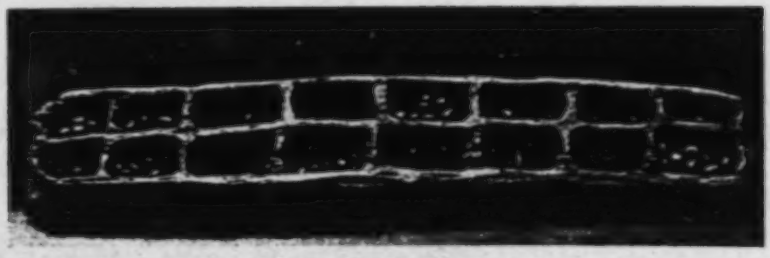

56. Wari board cut from a mahogany log. Length, 29 inches.

And when the revolution came he produced for the Haitian armies 175
knives, gun parts, and wheels to transport cannon. By the tens of thou- 178
sands he made ingeniously devised metal objects to be thrown on the 326
roads, before the French cavalry troops—objects so shaped that, no 648
matter how they fell, a single sharp point stood erect to cripple the enemy horses. Yet knowledge of the West African uses of iron did not altogether disappear, and during the first century of independence the Haitian blacksmith created many old-style knives, spears, and ritual objects for the cult temple.

Even today, some of this old-style work is to be found in hounfors in 326
the southwestern peninsula. One may see simple or ornate iron standards, 178
made to support ceremonial offerings or candles, strikingly similar to 178
standards in ancestral shrines in Dahomey. There are iron bells, both [184]
single and double, made in pure West African style; ornate ritual swords [534]
and sabers which are the crests of certain deities; coiled and uncoiled [171]
iron serpents representing the gods Damballa and Ayida; and stylized [176]
or semirealistic portraits of the deities. Many of these old pieces are nineteenth-century survivals; others have been forged within the past decade. 7 8

An over-all impression of Haitian material culture is that artistic 322
decoration is almost entirely absent and that the prime emphasis is 531
on utility. Wooden cooking spoons are efficient in form, but missing from them is the delicate decorative carving often found in West Africa. The long wooden washing bowl, or *gamelle*, and the wooden mortar in which grain is pulverized are likewise clean-cut but stark and plainly utilitarian. Clay bowls, bottles, and storage jars are usually of simple, 323
uniform design, with only accidental variations; there is little use of glazes, and the clay is often heavy and thick. Should there be a wari 524
gameboard in the peasant hut, the chances are that it is roughly made, 322
without legs or carved designs. Dugout canoes are usually crude in ap- 501
pearance, heavy and thick-walled, and irregular in form.

Yet there are many evidences—though one must seek them out—that 531
esthetic impulses are quite alive. The gay peasant straw knapsack, or [519]
alfor, without which no mountain man makes a journey, has a charm [482]
and grace that is not diminished by familiarity and cheapness. Dec- [285]
orated with sisal braid and tassels, and colored with green and magenta [386]
dyes, each *alfor* on close inspection appears to be unique. In some com- 531
munities in the south and southwest, burlap squares also are painted 353
with these traditional dyes. About forty inches across, and made of sugar [184]
bags, these paintings swarm with geometric patterns and sometimes with figures of flowers and animals. They are purely decorative, being

7 8 [See plates 42-51, pp. 112-DD—112-FF.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-6 (1937-1954) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

in construction but stands a little shorter. Two Pétro drums of slightly different sizes and tones, called *baka* and *ti baka*, in combination with one or more rattles, an iron percussion device, and sometimes an assot, make up an orchestra. 534

The *assot* is a small board which is beaten with sticks. Often these sticks are flat, and sometimes a small wooden bench is substituted for the board.

Dances for which the Congo or Pétro drums are used include Pétro, Kitta, Bumba, Salongo, Bambarra, Moundongue, Congo Loangue, Pastorel, Mousouli, and Moutchétché. The drum for the Congo Loangue dance formerly was somewhat taller and narrower than the present Pétro drum, but the distinction is no longer maintained. 534 535

The Juba, or Martinique, drum is similar to the Pétro or Congo but wider and squatter. It is laid on its side for playing, the drummer sitting astride and pressing his heel against the drumhead to mute it or change the pitch. For Juba or related music, a second man, called the *catalier* (the one who *catas*), beats sticks against the body of the instrument behind the drummer.

In the northern part of Haiti one also finds the Zesse drum, used exclusively for the Zesse dance. It is cylindrical, about thirty inches high, and is played in an upright position. A wire is stretched across the goatskin head in the manner of a snare drum. Like all drums with goatskin heads, it is beaten with the naked hands. 184 534

A large two-headed drum called the *tymbale* is used as a work drum for labor societies and for processions, and in combination with other drums it sometimes appears in the Juba and secular Congo dances. The heads are mounted on hoops, which are held fast by lacing. The drum is carried by a rope slung over the shoulder or around the neck. Sometimes an assot striking board is affixed to the body of the drum. 534 [461] [535] [482]

A miniature copy of the tymbale is called a *tambourine*. It is used in carnival dances, notably the Mascaron. Carried by a cord which hangs around the neck, it is played with two diminutive sticks. Drumming is primarily a man's prerogative, but during carnival days women or girls may be seen playing the *tambourine*. [462]

In southwestern Haiti, and possibly elsewhere, special drums are used for the Manuba dance. The Manuba drum is about a foot long, cylindrical, and about five inches in diameter, with two drumheads held together with cords. A pair of these drums is joined by a rope about two feet long, which is hung around the neck so that the two drums are in convenient playing position on the chest. 184 534 535

Twin drums which are hung over the knee are known as *manessas*— 534 [192]
The Haitian word for "twins."

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

spring water in the country districts is frequently not-

164 [364] [272] luted by all sorts of excreta; the watering of milk is a common practice, and samples of milk have been generally found to contain many times the normal amount of bacilli. The cases of tuberculosis are practically always complicated by malaria.

Dysentery, when caused by bacilli, is epidemic in nature. In Haiti this form, known as "colerin," annually affects about a quarter of the rural population. Another type, caused by a variety of amoeba, affects another ten or twenty per cent, according to the region. Enteritis is less serious than dysentery but just as prevalent, being [146] [273] caused by protozoa and intestinal worms. Poor diet, the abuse of alcohol, premature weaning, and unwise nursing are also responsible. [853] Granular conjunctivitis affected sixteen per cent of the children examined by the Rockefeller Foundation.

Cancer seems to strike only a normal number of Haitians; goitre is common in the mountain districts; leprosy has become a menace in the West and South; elephantiasis is present, particularly in the South; gusarola (characterized by patches of skin assuming different color) is fairly common in the Cul-de-Sac plain; chicken pox, influenza, and meningitis epidemics are occasionally serious.

164 462 482 145 The health of the peasant women is seriously and continuously endangered by their mode of life and work. It is customary for females, from girlhood onward, to carry heavy burdens on their heads—over steep paths in the mountains, along rocky trails, up hill and down. The commonest sight in Haiti is to see a woman swinging along with a great load of fuel, a tin of water, a bundle of building material, a basket of fruit, on her head. Cranial bones are flattened, the spine is bent, internal organs are strained or damaged. For ill-nourished persons to carry heavy weights for long distances with [461] [843] little rest means undue pressure on the heart and lungs, and so an increasing tendency to cardiac and pulmonary infections as well as chronic anemia. Overwork frequently results in miscarriages.

844 As has been said, childbirth often occurs by the roadside, on the way to market, or in the market place. In no case can a peasant [846] [164] woman remain in bed for a proper period either before or after parturition. Midwives are untrained; they use primitive methods which inevitably result in defective development of infants, lessened 853 resistance to disease, high infant mortality, and a prevalence of abdominal diseases in women. Pressure of work, whether in the field or on the way to market, makes a mother soon stop nursing her

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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311 merly. Wherever the overcrowded Haitians have lived since 1815, there beauty has had to give way to gnawing necessity which lacked either the imagination or the means to be sightly.

105 One can stand upon a morne and watch a rain storm rush down the valley, bending the palm trees in its fury, and think Haiti still a magnificent sight. Then one must descend the mountainside past rickety shacks and rocky fields, and the feeling grows that not all the kindly simplicity of the people is enough to lift the country from its [134] dilapidation. As he nears the village, the afternoon scent of roasting coffee will delight him; but then he sees the squalor of village life and is reminded that three million souls are here trying to eke out an existence upon a small area of declining fertility.

Much in Haiti is picturesque if one can keep his mind from wandering to the conditions which lie behind the picturesqueness. [482] Women stride down from the hills with great loads on their heads; [443] aged crones, pipe in mouth, sit perched on the haunches of tiny donkeys with their bulging panniers; the great market square in the [492] town is a scene of noisy confusion with hundreds of women and [482] children, a mixture of smells, thousands of little piles of soap, candy, gewgaws, vegetables, gaping chickens tied together by the feet, [434] shirts, canes, bolts of cloth. All the weary women, however, must [146] trudge back up to their shanties on the mountainside when the market is over. Many of them do not see ten dollars in cash during the year, and their little children, with bellies bulging, give evidence [164] of undernourishment. Without doctors, without even the rudiments of hygiene, they manage somehow to subsist, or else die, frequently of disease which might easily have been prevented.

565 In Port-au-Prince and a few other towns live enough members of the élite to make one momentarily forget the plight of the masses. [342] The houses of the well-to-do are substantially built, if not often [351] attractive. Their garden walls are brilliant with bougainvillea, their walks with hibiscus. Tiny red lizards (analis) make flashes of color along the walls. On shady verandas and in the parlors one hears delightful conversation, eats excellent food, savors the pleasures of [575] civilization. The clubs of the élite are pleasing, their tennis is good, [526] their dancing graceful. To be among these families as a welcome guest is an experience in gracious hospitality which can never be [535] forgotten. Too soon, however, one must leave these havens of urbanity and pass through districts of the town which haunt the mind with their grim want.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1932 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

512 neighbors paying friendly visits and of playing children gradu-
[264] ally become stilled. It is the time for the evening meal. By nine o'clock at the latest all is quiet and Mirebalais, man and beast, is asleep.

796 The *vodun* drums are heard only on Saturday nights, and
529 then the dance must be sufficiently close to the town, and the wind in the right direction, for the sound to be audible.
[256] Permits for these dances must be obtained, and are regularly given by the police officials — or were in 1934 — and word is passed on that on a given Saturday certain households will give *vodun* dances. If the dances are held in the foothills to the west, the Tombe River must be forded, and the existence of such a barrier between the village and the site of the dance makes this a favorite region in which to hold them, even though they may have official sanction. During the rainy sea-
[484] son attendance at dances on the opposite bank of the Arti-
[501] bonite River depends on the height of the stream, for when it is in flood not even the dugout canoes of the Haitians can cross it, while the ferry which Moreau de St. Mery speaks of as having been established in 1749 does not even exist in local tradition.[14] Yet no dance lacks participants or spectators, for these occasions furnish the principal opportunity for recreation even as they fill their proper religious function. Early in
[798] the week discussions can be heard of the dances to be held, and though the official frown of the Catholic priest is always to be reckoned with, the importance of these dances, and the numbers who attend them, do not seem markedly lessened by
[554] this fact. Those whose social position in the community makes them more sensitive to such criticism merely take the precaution to slip quietly out of town after dark.

796 When occasions of local or national significance and church holidays are celebrated, the town is full of country folk and
[788] visitors from the cities. Christmas and New Year's, Mardi Gras and Easter are all periods for such celebrations, while the first Sunday of every month witnesses a religious procession

2: Courlander B-5 (1837-1914) 1900 SV3 Hall SV3

[The Vodoun Pantheon]

the earth like the carrying pad that women wear to support bundles on their heads. Wherever Ayido Wido shifted his position there were earthquakes.[1] When the rainbow appeared after a rain it was said that Ayido had come out from under the earth to drink of the fresh water. [776] [171] [821]

Dumballa Grand Chemin (Dumballa of the Highway). Another manifestation of Dumballa as a protector of those on long journeys. [484]

Dumballa Vieux. Another manifestation of Dumballa.

Dumbo Wiso. Considered to be the daughter of Dumballa. The ending of her name (-o) suggests that at one time she may have been considered a wife rather than a daughter.

Dosu Wiso. A member of Dumballa's family.

Aziko Wiso. A member of Dumballa's family. Said to be a "work loa" who aids men with their gardens, especially in time of illness. [241]

Erzulie Dosu, or Dosso, sometimes spelled Ezouloe. One of the "big" loa of the Dahomey pantheon, a symbol of purity, and sometimes identified with the Virgin Mary. Her color is white, and services to her include a ritual sweeping and sprinkling of the earth and a perfuming of the air. Food offerings to her include corn meal and eggs. Male "horses" of Erzulie are sometimes bound to her by mystic marriage, and they are obligated to refrain from sexual intercourse on certain days which belong to her. There are a number of Erzulies, regarded as members of the same family or, in some cult centers, as different manifestations of the same deity. Some Haitians regard Erzulie Dobo as the ancestor of the Erzulie family and refer to her as Grand Erzulie. Note that there is a Dahomean town named Dogbo at approximately 0° 8' E., 6° 40' N. [199] [822] [782] [587] [834] [588]

Erzulie Fedee, or Erzulie Dossessou (Dahomey), or Erzulie Fedee Dossessou. Like Erzulie Dobo, she is a symbol of purity and is identified with the Virgin Mary. Mystic marriages are performed with her, and her "horses" are obligated to refrain from sexual intercourse on certain days. She is also a giver of wealth. [199] [588] [587] [834]

Erzulie Wiso. A sister or daughter of Erzulie Dobo and also related to Dumballa.

Erzulie Masson. A sister of Erzulie Fedee.

Erzulie Bawdo. A manifestation of Erzulie who is especially fond of the Bawdo dance.

Erzulie Jibonna (Red Eyes). A stern and hard Erzulie who is often identified with Petro rather than Dahomey rites.

Aloso Fedee. A member of the Erzulie escorte, regarded as a market-place protector. In Dahomey, Aloso was a protector of all public gathering places.[2] [443] [171]

Aloso Badjadré

Aloso Dokpo Bosu Bosu

Mofrosso Masson. A special form of Erzulie as priestess.

Mofrosso Espagnola, or Pasqua. A person mounted by this Erzulie talks only Spanish. [587] [191]

Sogbo, or Sogbo. A thunder deity who hurls stones to the earth when angered. Some of the stones thrown by Sobo are regarded as the sacred residence of various loa. Sobo (or Sogbo) is a member of the original Thunder pantheon of Dahomey. [776] [171]

Sogbo Badé, or Sogbo Badé, or simply Badé. A close relative of Sobo, regarded as the protector of the hounfor (*hoed*). In Dahomey, Badé is sometimes referred to as the son of the deity Sobo.[3]

[1] [See Ellis, The Ewe-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, pp. 47-49; and Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 245ff. Cf. p. 354 Category 116. -- Analyst]
[2] [Ellis, op. cit., p. 52. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst]
[3] [Herskovits, op. cit., pp. 162ff. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

One of Christophe's rules was that no cultivator attached to

a plantation—and every ordinary country person was so attached 175
—might leave the estate without permission from a military officer.[10] 566
Two of the common folkways of Haitian peasant life since his time 178
have been immobility and general acceptance of orders from the [484]
military. Both characteristics had been fostered by slavery and by the régimes of Toussaint and Dessalines, and these folkways became fixed under Christophe.

Other rules introduced by the King, however, lapsed shortly after 175
his strong hand was removed. For example, the monarch required of 178
the whole population that whenever they visited the capital on feast 291
days or went to the market towns on Saturdays they be decently clad 527
in clean clothes.[11] Since the time of Christophe, neatness of appear- 183
ance has hardly been a folk characteristic, probably because of
poverty rather than lack of desire to dress well. Nor did scrupulous [44]
regularity of work in the fields continue as a folkway later, when the great plantations were broken up.

Like a father the King tried to inculcate moral standards of honesty 175
in his people. To prevent theft he had small valuables, such as watches 577
or jewelry or purses, "planted," and if the finder did not immediately 177
turn them over to the nearest Dahomet, punishment was meted out. Such a policy made honesty contagious. Thefts and depredation were soon almost unknown. The most tempting store of wealth could be left safely unlocked or in the open air. Christophe's achievement in this matter is eloquent testimony to his success as a paternal leader, for it is no small task to initiate moral ideas among people who for a generation have lacked them. Even today it is the proud boast of the Haitians that their people are honest.

As compared with the liberties of farmers in the United States of 175
the same period, the Haitian agricultural workers' freedom was 566
infinitesimally small, but by contrast with the bondage of slavery, their new status was definitely higher.

10. Christophe called his royal police force "Dahomets," after the West African [625]
kingdom, Dahomey, from which most of the men had come. They were not ordinary soldiers but especially imported and carefully selected men whose intelligence made them stand out from their fellows. Each Dahomet was given a course of training in his task as administrator before being sent out. The general consensus of foreign visitors was that these Dahomets were efficient even in small matters.

11. This rule was partly an indication of Christophe's vanity, personal and national, [577]
for he was deeply desirous of the good opinion of white visitors, especially those from England. He wanted Europeans to respect Haiti as they would respect any small [186]
state, and not to praise it merely as an example of "Negro progress."

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

In most countries in which Westerners are familiar, social distinctions take the form of classes, which are to a greater or less degree mutable. In Haiti, as we have repeatedly indicated, the distinctions are so rigid that *caste* is the only properly descriptive term. There is hardly a Haitian who would not be able to state immediately whether he or any person he knew was, or was not, élite. So it has been with steady persistence ever since Dessalines and Christophe gave way to Pétion and Boyer. Élite youth marries élite girl, and the folkways of the group are passed on from parent to children, thus perpetuating the distinctions. In the pages which follow, all the marks of separation of castes will be examined: religion, economic occupation, marriage, language, manners, and the rest. 565 178

Certain aspects of the classic example of the caste system, seen in India, are lacking in Haiti. Religion, for instance, does not require caste endogamy, nor does civil law implicitly acknowledge caste lines by reference to the rights of people of a certain occupation. Custom does more than religion and law could, however, to enforce conformity to the understood rules. Probably the most open efforts to enact caste lines into law were the pronouncements of Dessalines and Christophe that all but a few people should be bound to the soil; and Boyer's Code Rural—a feeble echo of days gone by. The two black rulers were able to enforce the distinctions they made; but when they died their feudal arrangements lapsed, while the separation of classes continued. With the recurrence of revolutions after 1843 it behooved the élite, when occasionally they were in authority, not to lay themselves open to fresh attack upon grounds of aristocratic presumption, for they never knew when they might need the support of the masses. Any black revolutionary leader would have been able to turn an enacted caste law to his own ends, even if a Senate consisting predominantly of light-colored men had had the power to enact such a law. Time and inertia won the battle for the élite. By not joining issue with the masses at any definite point, the aristocrats gained their end of caste distinction, for they were willing to endure the self-discipline necessary to the maintenance of social standards, as the masses were not. [564] [170]

Just as in colonial days the ambition of the well-to-do freedman was to go to France for his education and his holidays, so in free Haiti the lure of France has continued to be strong for the aristocrat. There is not a trace of animosity against the country which enslaved the Negroes, and which in 1802–3 tried by trickery to take away the 565 484 177 186

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

565 rights of people of Negro blood. As a distinguished Haitian re-
484 marked, "It is from France that we draw our culture, our language,
our literature, our attitudes of mind: why should we not love her?"
177 The more time the élite spend in France, the less kinship they feel
186 with the masses. There is not necessarily any conscious snobbery in this increasing discrepancy; it simply results from a life spent in entirely different environments. The Boston Brahmin, for example, may be kindhearted and yet feel little kinship with a Mississippi share-cropper.

564 Inside the castes one may find social distinctions familiar in democracies. There are well-to-do élite who set the standards of manners and entertainment, and there are peasant landholders who through force of personality dominate their rural neighborhoods. The intellectual man of the upper classes stands somewhat apart from the social whirl of "high society." An important government official has more prestige among the leisured classes than a small businessman, just as a powerful religious adept is more honored among the peasants than a happy-go-lucky ragamuffin. It is obvious, however, that within the élite caste social discrimination occurs more frequently and is more accurately observed than among the country people.

[184] Such phrases as "Haitian religion" or "Haitian public opinion"
[77] are accurate only in so far as the person who uses them defines the
[208] adjective "Haitian." One might describe truly a phenomenon characteristic of ninety-five out of a hundred Haitians and yet, in the opinion of those who dominate the economic, political, and social life, do injustice to Haiti.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

581 suspicion of legal complications is well founded: the priests therefore
794 try to concentrate their attack upon the remaining motives. Thus one priest issued a notice at a certain mountain chapel that he would perform no weddings there for persons who wore shoes; an increase in weddings followed. By such devices, and by constant sermons on the significance of the sacrament, he has persuaded many of his parishioners to be married, yet the vast majority of them continue in plaçage.[4]

581 Informally entered unions among the peasants, then, rest upon a sound, practical, economic basis. If the priests are ever to be successful in their campaign for more weddings, Haitian peasant economy must undergo a change; even then the plurality of women (if indeed it exists), now more or less absorbed by plaçage, will work against the reform.

562 It is confusing to speak of "status" in connection with the domestic
565 life of hard-working people, for status implies law, and law hardly touches peasant life. Custom governs all—inevitably, since the majority of peasant women have not been legally married, and since no peasant would willingly take a case to law. Yet women have a definite status as compared with men.

In almost every detail a peasant woman's life differs from that of élite women. The rule of life in country districts is unremitting labor
462 for the female from childhood up. She cooks and makes clothes,
565 labors in the fields after the men have cleared them, does the family
443 washing in the nearest stream, carries water, does whatever housework is required. Practically every Haitian peasant woman has her experience of going to market to sell the vegetables, trinkets, or
● [484] other wares her family may produce, and to buy necessities. This trip to market may be short, or as long as twenty miles. One of the characteristic sights of Haiti is the seemingly endless procession of women coming down from the hills trudging, or rather swinging majestically along, with a great load on the head, or riding on the haunches of a tiny donkey loaded with bulging panniers. Arrived at

4. As a result of his campaign for more weddings he has had some unusual experiences. Once, in the midst of the wedding ceremony, a bride rushed out of the chapel and shortly gave birth to a child; when she was able to move again, the ceremony was resumed. Again, traveling into the mountains to perform a similar ceremony, he found a crowd assembled under a tree, assisting at another birth of an infant to a bride-to-be. Sometimes he encounters the argument by a peasant that he will not consent to a wedding until his spouse has proved her fecundity by bearing a certain number of children.

[P. 1]

1. The Making of the Haitian

If you come to Haiti by sea, a way that is old-fashioned but full of magic, 133
you are first aware of the island as a range of hills rising out of the water, and then, as you sail closer, new ranges come into view behind the first, and eventually you see that everything is mountains. The ranges pile up in the distance and finally lose themselves in the white morning mists that the country people call "snow." A Haitian proverb says, "Behind the mountains are mountains," and that is a true picture of the island.

In the summer after the rains have come, the hills and mountain slopes 134
are green; but later they turn brown, and it is then that one notices the 132
deep gashes where the earth has eroded and washed away into the valleys below and into the sea.

From the top of the range called La Selle ("The Saddle"), when the 132
heavy mists form and settle across the highland valleys one sees nothing 133
but the great rounded sugar-loaf peaks, which appear as floating islands in a vast sea of white.

From a distant ship in the Caribbean in the full glare of daylight it is 361
hard to imagine that millions of people have made a home of these mountains. But at night it is different. The mountains are alive then with twinkling spots of light made by cooking fires, torches, and electric bulbs. For 361
the hillsides as well as the coastal lowlands are dotted with tiny huts and 487
homesteads, and the trails from one village to another crisscross and lie on the land like a woven net. They lead from the high-up places down to the seacoast towns, through the waterless mesa of the frontier, through the pine forests of the southern range, through dense blankets of wild strawberries, wild-bamboo groves, and plantations of coffee. They find their way to the salt marches, the rice fields of the Artibonite Valley, and the cities.

In the lowlands the days are hot and tropical. It is there the sugar cane, 132
bananas, and plantains grow so lushly. In the mountains the people have [241]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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[491
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3. Country people carrying produce to market. The highways of Haiti's economic life are the mountain trails and the unpaved roads over which the produce of countless small gardens is carried in bundles and baskets.

[P. 112-C]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 112-I]

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142
285
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301
492
487

[314]

13. *Donkey with a load of charcoal. Where the terrain is not too rugged, donkeys or small horses do some of the carrying. The making of charcoal has helped to denude the mountains of their forests.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

rather starve than work. An Englishman, James Franklin, wrote in 1828, for example:

> Experiments may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coercion and want will impel the Haytian to labour; and I have my doubts as to the practicability of enforcing labour in Hayti until the people have been better instructed, and their characters become changed.

As Franklin summarized it: "Nature is too generous to the Haytian; he never wants, and so never works for hire, as do free labourers in other countries."[1]

The early nineteenth century saw a flood of such bitter comments about the remains of the once rich and flourishing French colony of St. Domingue. The vast productivity of Haiti under French rule had made that colony one of the richest in the New World. The country was dotted with sugar mills, brick-covered wells, and warehouses; and carefully built brick aqueducts, irrigation canals, locks, and dams assured water for the plantations. In 1790, under the slave system, Haiti had exported 163,000,000 pounds of sugar. In 1826, a quarter of a century after the revolution, it was reported to have exported 33,000 pounds.

This falling off in production and exports doubtless had many causes, but one of the most significant was the Haitian's revolt not only against slavery but also against continuing the same kind of work he had performed as a slave. He saw not too much difference between forced, unpaid labor and working for any large landholder at subsistence wages. To the Haitian slave the inspiring battle cry of the French Revolution did not mean that all men would work together on another's man plantation and receive the same wages. It meant that every man would have his own garden to work for himself as he chose; every man would be a full citizen, with land of his own, free to come and go, to plant what he wished, to sell what he could. Despite long years under a colonial slave system, the Haitian still remembered a different way of life in Africa, where mass production for export was not the primary objective of labor.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the population of Haiti was not much more than half a million—less than one sixth of what it is today. There was plenty of land, and much of it had not yet been wasted by constant tilling and erosion. When the French were driven out, the Haitian peasant re-created an economic world of his own liking. The plantation system which had poured out sugar and coffee and indigo for Europe faded away, and in its place there sprang up an agrarian system which has continued until the present day. In the early

[1] [Franklin, The Present State of Hayti, P. 362. Cf. P. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

533 476 178 461 rhythmically, to the accompaniment of drums, *catas*, or horns, while a singing leader composes topical songs in which the laborers join.

171 412 The tools which a rural Haitian chooses, and the way he uses them, often are in a West African tradition. He performs a multitude of tasks with his machete, or bush knife: weeding a garden, peeling an orange, cutting down a tree, making a drum or mortar, opening a coconut. It is an all-purpose tool, as it is in Africa. Until a few years ago it was supplemented by the extra-long, heavier, "double machete." The axe and the chisel are known and used too, but the machete is supreme. 492 The hoe is the tool for tilling the soil, even in the flat country, and even [241] though the Haitian has horses and cattle which could pull a plow. [412] Horses are for riding and not for pulling. In carrying loads, the Haitian peasant still prefers the head to the shoulders. If he has a donkey, the [538] donkey will carry for him. An old Haitian proverb goes: "Meçi Bondieu pou' bourrique là, si nous pas gainyain bourrique là faut Haitien po'té tout bagaille" (Thank God for the donkey, if we didn't have the donkey the Haitian would have to carry everything)." Generally speaking, the 489 491 493 rough and rocky terrain of Haiti and inadequate secondary roads have done nothing to encourage the use of carts or wagons.

171 [25] Corn is stored in the trees, as in West Africa, or in granaries built upon stilts, also as in West Africa. The Haitian makes his fire in the [372] African fashion, with several long sticks or poles meeting point-to-point in the heart of the fire. As the ends are consumed, the sticks are pushed [252] toward the center. Grain is pulverized in large wooden mortars, as [227] in West Africa, and winnowed in a woven tray. Fish traps are some- [226] times woven in the traditional West African manner, and fishermen often set their nets in converging spirals and beat the water with sticks to [501] drive the fish to the center. And on the rivers and lakes are to be seen dugout canoes of a kind familiar on the inland waters of West Africa.

171 241 The folklore of the fields contains many themes known to the West African. One old Haitian farmer, discussing the spiritual relationship of the planter to the earth, declared that a man must be strong and potent when he plants, else the crops will be vitiated and sickly. For [834] this reason, he said, a man must not plant seeds the day after he has had sexual intercourse, because he has been temporarily drained of his life-giving powers.[9]

171 538 The tale of the hoe that worked by itself in the fields is also widespread. It enters many animal and Bouki stories, and also is known in a form that is familiar in West Africa. In this story, there was once a man who owned a hoe which worked by itself whenever a magical formula was pronounced. It would stop working whenever the magical

9 [For footnote, see Catagory 116, P. 352.-- Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

regime. That President Duvalier has been able to stay in power in spite of internal dissaffection, sometime hostile United States propaganda, a dire economic situation, personal ill health, and other woes, is a tribute to his political acumen, if not to his principles. None of this means, of course, that such consummate skill will continue to work; Haitian governments have a way of falling suddenly, and the Duvalier regime will probably not prove an exception.

Dr. Duvalier's success indicates that he has made certain correct assessments, not only of Haiti's social and political structure but also of United States policy with regard to Haiti. The occupation was notable for its failure to make any telling alterations in the economic structure or level of development of the country. Many beneficial changes were made, as Leyburn demonstrates, particularly in the areas of health and health services, communications, government administration, education, and transport (though the use of corvée labor on the roads led to serious abuses, and stimulated sanguinary guerilla warfare). But most significantly, the United States institutionalized the army and police forces. The ragged bands of political mercenaries of the past were dissolved; the officer-ridden army was transformed into a small, well-trained, and well-organized force. Eventual firm control by this force of weaponry, communications, and transport ended the era of presidential succession by invasion, turned the army into the major locus of nonelectoral, president-making power, and may have ended forever the possibility of an agrarian revolt against the central authority. Another political effect of the occupation was the importance it imparted to the United States ambassador, whose political opinions thereafter would matter significantly in the transmission of power at the top of the Haitian governmental system. The Duvalier regime has continuously taken full account of the consequences of United States interest; and its leaders have been able to watch the operation of that interest in the political events occurring between the fall of the Lescot government and the present.

In the view of one acute observer, President Duvalier, in order to consolidate his power, had to cope with three other loci of political strength in addition to the army and the United States ambassador. The business community, located for the most part in Port-au-Prince, had strongly supported Déjoie's candidacy during the interregnum; its leaders were mainly members of the elite, and many had strong

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

That the separateness of yeomanry and elite had visible and sociologically important expression in physical type in Haiti was a clear consequence of the history of that country. But the traditional preponderant light skins at the top of the structure and the preponderant darkness at its base are less important than the domination of the total structure, and of the institutional means for changing it, by a mere fraction of the national population. It is the *power* of the elite which has mattered through time; its physical appearance has been only a historically derived expression of that power. Such a balance of politically weak masses against numerically sparse power holders is common, perhaps particularly in the "less developed world"; but each such case has certain special characteristics. Haiti's special nature is not simply in its being a yeoman country, and one in which a small group dominates the mass. As a rural, agrarian, unindustrialized, politically sovereign, and quasi-capitalistic country, Haiti shares much with other lands; but in each regard its own particularity needs to be assessed.

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The rurality of Haiti is extreme, not simply because there are no concentrations of population in excess of 25,000 except for Port-au-Prince and Cap Haïtien but also because towns of intermediate size are few in number, and the urban concentrations in the country's two cities are substantially of relatively recent rural origin. Port-au-Prince dominates the Republic in all of its economic, political, and social activities. Furthermore, the rural towns have been losing to the capital, not gaining from it. Until the United States occupation, the larger towns of the coast, such as Jérémie, Jacmel, and St. Marc, were united economically with each other, and to some extent with the capital, by a lively coastwise shipping system, and the inland towns were tributary to those of the coast. The growth of inland transport during the occupation strengthened the interior towns while coastwise shipping declined, but the capital grew even more important as the sole economic center of the Republic. Since the 1940s, the rapid deterioration of the road system has left both inland and coastal towns enfeebled; only Port-au-Prince has remained strong.

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The dominion of Port-au-Prince is firm, and there is no focus of power in the countryside that can counteract it. Those few foreign enterprises in Haiti that base themselves outside the capital city use local port facilities (e.g. Miragoâne for Reynolds Aluminum, Cap Haïtien for the sisal plantations of the north) and do not affect the development of the interior transport.

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 441 Justice in the courts was administered by Haitians whose narrow patriotism biased their decisions.

439 648 5. A temperamental tariff policy. Not only were imports subject to a tariff which might be changed at the whim of any president, but 175 exports also were taxed. When an administration was in need of 651 funds it might suddenly, without warning, raise the tax on coffee 489 exports and so disrupt a merchant's business plans. The customs-houses were in charge of Haitians who steadily became more inefficient and grasping as the century progressed, until many foreign merchants felt that the only way of getting business dispatched was by means of bribes. Examinations at customs were long drawn out, often there was open thievery, and erroneous valuations were common.

175 6. The burden of the indemnity to France. Contracted by Boyer 652 in 1825, this annual payment for sixty years was an incubus to every [648] administration, leaving no surplus in the treasury for public works, education, or any internal development; likewise, it made the threat of foreign interference all the more imminent.

7. A debased currency. Pétion was the first president to devalue money, and his example was frequently followed thereafter. Counterfeiting was general. When a country's monetary system is unstable, its officials accustomed to bribery and graft,[17] and its financial structure almost nonexistent, there is little chance for sound economic development.

175 8. Dependence upon a single crop. Haitian economy was tied to 245 the staple coffee, grown with indifferent care, prepared for the market in outmoded fashion, and sold in competition with coffee from more scientifically run plantations in other tropical countries.

175 9. Political instability. The recurrent revolutions in Haiti made 439 foreigners chary of participating in the country's business, since the 66 government which made a contract might be out of office before the ink was dry.

175 10. Indifference of the élite to economic pursuits. What profits 439 were obtainable went into the pockets of foreign merchants, not 565 those of Haitian businessmen. In 1842 the comparative exports of the

[643] 17. Sir Spenser St. John, always a bitter critic of Haiti, remarked (*Hayti, or The* [159] *Black Republic*, p. 88) sardonically that "Boyer had the rare quality of being honest, [661] and left in the treasury, on his departure, the sum of £200,000, the first and last chief who was ever guilty of so unaccountable a weakness."

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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712 the battlements far off across the tortuous mass of mountains and
[713] green valleys, admire the sheer strength of will which made His Majesty's subjects bear four hundred cannon up the steep and rocky path—not to mention thousands of cannon balls now rusting away after a century of disuse, or the powder and shot which once filled
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Dungeons, secret passages, royal apartments, separate rooms for each of the old Dutch, Spanish, French, and English cannon, some of them dating back to the seventeenth century—all the paraphernalia of the storybook fortress is present. From a bastion one gazes, as from an alp, for miles in any direction, and feels that La Ferrière is certainly one of the most impressive, and one of the most futile, edifices in the world. If the silent cannon had ever been fired, their balls would have rumbled harmlessly down the mountainside. The suspicion grows that Christophe achieved his architectural miracle not primarily as a defense against the French, but to make his subjects proud of what a nation of despised ex-slaves could accomplish.

344 Five miles away, at the foot of the mountain, is the village of
644 Milot, with the ruins of the palace of Sans Souci. Of yellow stone, it spreads out spaciously like a French château. Its rooms must have been magnificent. The palace is so situated that one may look out across the northern plains to the sea, or up the valleys to mountain peaks. In Sans Souci Christophe shot himself in 1820 when he knew that only *souci* would remain to him if he lived.

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[496] north a few miles from Port-au-Prince to nowhere in particular, and the equally short line coming west into Cap-Haïtien from the fields
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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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● 489 mind dust, ruts, and a steady succession of bumps. To travel in the
[49] average hired car, driven by a Haitian, is one of the grim experiences of life. The driver speeds as if pursued by a demon, while the peasant pedestrians leap for safety into the ditches; the unfortunate passenger is moved to close his eyes to avoid seeing the inevitable crash which
[36] does not come. The most comfortable means of travel if one is going only to towns is by ship, for practically all of Haiti's towns are seaports.

162 To know the towns is still not to know Haiti, however, for two
577 million or more Haitians live in the rural regions. These are the people. And if they are ignorant and not too clean, they are nevertheless models of kindly generosity. It is the proud boast even of the élite that one may travel the length and breadth of the land in perfect safety, in no danger of life or of personal property.

105 Many homely sights linger in the mind: women washing the family clothes in the stream, laughing and gossiping with their neighbors; men and women talking in animated fashion to themselves, arguing, cajoling, explaining as they walk along; individuals carrying a single flower, simply because it is beautiful; barefoot women, gnarled of hand and lined of face, kneeling in the Catholic church at prayer; taxi drivers who cruise by, hissing in order to attract the attention of a visitor who obviously can afford to ride instead of walk; an apparently ceaseless procession of patient donkeys, always laden, sometimes ridden by women, sometimes urged along from behind; the so-called buses each with its witty or its florid name (Plaisance, Éclair, Grâce-à-Dieu, Polichinelle, Sauve-qui-peut, Montparnasse), which like glorified buckboards jostle woodenly from the town to country hamlets; the winsome, open smile and gay laughter of a peasant boy; the ingratiating charm of a sleeping baby in the noise of the market place. To know the average Haitian is to feel a warm affection for him. His life is never easy, yet he bears it all with true beauty of spirit. If *le bon Dieu* sends distress, he will also make it possible for distress to be borne.

576 The people are polite, whether to each other or to strangers. A younger person greets an older one as *compère* or *commère*—literally, godfather or godmother; to his equal he says "*frère*" or "*m'sieu.*"
[867] Sometimes one sees a local patriarch instructing little children in "deportment." This courtesy extends to hospitality: a stranger is
[609] almost sure to be offered shelter and food wherever he stops.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

INTRODUCTION

THE VALLEY OF MIREBALAIS

THE TRAVELER comes suddenly on the valley of Mirebalais, as the road from the capital turns the shoulder of a hill. Long and narrow, the plain stretches before him with its many tones of green. Ahead is the village from which the valley takes its name, its metal roofs aglow in the sunlight, or reflecting the gray sky of the rainy season. Here and there appears a yellow, muddy slash made by the Artibonite River, while framing the valley are the mountains, rising one behind another as they complete its encirclement. 133 361

This first glimpse of the country gives no hint of a numerous population. It is as though this valley, like so many other things in Haiti, had set out to belie its own reality and, in this impression, at the very outset to point the lesson that the observer must seek well beneath the surface if he is to attain any understanding of the country and its people. For just as the unsettled appearance of this Haitian valley conceals numerous habitations, cultivated fields, and hard-working inhabitants, so the frenzy of Haitian religious rites is but a gloss upon disciplined ceremonialism, and the relatively placid everyday existence of the Haitian peasant but a mask behind which is waged a spiritual conflict that is his heritage from the dual sources of his traditions. 121

The commune of Mirebalais is situated in the heart of central Haiti. Lying some thirty-five miles from Port-au-Prince, 101 361 [191]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

both town and district are bisected by the main route between the capitals of the Haitian and the Dominican republics. Yet, once again, this geographical nearness but distorts the psychological distance between Mirebalais and the metropolis. For though the busses, converted from camions, pass to and from the coastal city several times a week, the valley and even the town which is its center drowse in essential isolation. A few hundred yards off the main road find the Haitian peasant following the mode of life of his forebears, oblivious of events outside the valley. Only for a few of the *notables* of the town, the *gros nègres*, who have personal, political, or business contacts with Port-au-Prince, is the comparative proximity to the capital meaningful.

It is not possible to say how long this valley has been inhabited. Certainly the early Indians roamed there; and there, as in other parts of the island of Hispaniola, the tragedy of their extinction under the brutality of early Spanish rule must have taken place. Moreau de St. Mery, to whom all students of Haiti must acknowledge a debt of gratitude for his painstakingly accurate reports of life on the island, gives the derivation of its name.

> "Mirebalais received its name," he says, "because of the enormous numbers of wild animals the first Frenchmen found there, which recalled to them the small district in the region of Poitou [in France], called Mirebalais, where some of them had probably first seen the light of day. These quadrupeds, first introduced by the Spaniards, had no difficulty in multiplying there after the Indians had disappeared from their native land and the Spaniards, reduced in numbers, were obliged to abandon the great plains, so that horses, cattle, etc. came to exercise exclusive domain."[1]

St. Mery's work, which traces the development of Mirebalais as one of the parishes of pre-Revolutionary Haiti, makes it

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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3. Country people carrying produce to market. The highways of Haiti's economic life are the mountain trails and the unpaved roads over which the produce of countless small gardens is carried in bundles and baskets.

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533 476 178 461 rhythmically, to the accompaniment of drums, *catas*, or horns, while a singing leader composes topical songs in which the laborers join.

171 412 The tools which a rural Haitian chooses, and the way he uses them, often are in a West African tradition. He performs a multitude of tasks with his machete, or bush knife: weeding a garden, peeling an orange, cutting down a tree, making a drum or mortar, opening a coconut. It is an all-purpose tool, as it is in Africa. Until a few years ago it was supplemented by the extra-long, heavier, "double machete." The axe and the chisel are known and used too, but the machete is supreme. 492 The hoe is the tool for tilling the soil, even in the flat country, and even [241] though the Haitian has horses and cattle which could pull a plow. [412] Horses are for riding and not for pulling. In carrying loads, the Haitian peasant still prefers the head to the shoulders. If he has a donkey, the [538] donkey will carry for him. An old Haitian proverb goes: "Meçi Bondieu pou' bourrique là, si nous pas gainyain bourrique là faut Haitien po'té tout bagaille" (Thank God for the donkey, if we didn't have the donkey the Haitian would have to carry everything)." Generally speaking, the 489 rough and rocky terrain of Haiti and inadequate secondary roads have 491 done nothing to encourage the use of carts or wagons. 493

171 Corn is stored in the trees, as in West Africa, or in granaries built [25] upon stilts, also as in West Africa. The Haitian makes his fire in the [392] African fashion, with several long sticks or poles meeting point-to-point in the heart of the fire. As the ends are consumed, the sticks are pushed [252] toward the center. Grain is pulverized in large wooden mortars, as [227] in West Africa, and winnowed in a woven tray. Fish traps are some- [226] times woven in the traditional West African manner, and fishermen often set their nets in converging spirals and beat the water with sticks to [501] drive the fish to the center. And on the rivers and lakes are to be seen dugout canoes of a kind familiar on the inland waters of West Africa.

171 The folklore of the fields contains many themes known to the West 241 African. One old Haitian farmer, discussing the spiritual relationship of the planter to the earth, declared that a man must be strong and potent when he plants, else the crops will be vitiated and sickly. For [834] this reason, he said, a man must not plant seeds the day after he has had sexual intercourse, because he has been temporarily drained of his life-giving powers.[9]

171 538 The tale of the hoe that worked by itself in the fields is also widespread. It enters many animal and Bouki stories, and also is known in a form that is familiar in West Africa. In this story, there was once a man who owned a hoe which worked by itself whenever a magical formula was pronounced. It would stop working whenever the magical

9 [For footnote, see Category 116, P 352.-- Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 701 648 177 625 652 669 Since it was an entrenched interest, however, no responsible statesman had dared to threaten its hold. The Marines swept it out of existence, undertaking to substitute for it a trained constabulary of only 2,000 men who should combine routine military tasks with police duty in the scattered towns. Results were immediately apparent: the weighty incubus of soldiers' wages was lifted from the treasury; thousands of men were deprived of sinecures and put back into productive economic activities; the constant threat of armed revolution was removed; better order was kept by 2,000 trained men in trim uniform than by twelve times that number of ragged loafers who called themselves soldiers; and since the army was no longer the great steppingstone to political office, the élite felt more secure from assault by ambitious but uneducated army men. From 1843 to 1915 the élite had endured many lower-caste presidents because these were able to control the army; now the army had disappeared.

175 648 [743] [744] [365] [491] [45] The Marines did much that was of indisputable benefit to Haiti. This was acknowledged even by the most vocal patriots who soon began to campaign for an end of the Occupation. Where there had been no real work in public health, Americans now built hospitals, established clinics, cleaned up the sources of many diseases, laid down sewage systems, gave the towns pure water. In 1915 there were only three automobiles in the country, and no roads for them to travel; the Americans built many miles of paved roads. In 1915 there had been only one wharf, two short stretches of railroad, two lighthouses, one electric plant; the Americans undertook electrification, telephone systems, the construction of administration buildings, and other public conveniences. Whether in such visible matters or in the obscurer realms of currency, banking, and budgets hardly a phase of daily life was left untouched. And judged by the standards of civilization the Marines improved what they touched.

175 648 642 But rancor against the Americans began early and continued to the bitter end in 1934. The pride of all Haitians was deeply wounded by the Occupation. For 111 years they had governed themselves and had assumed themselves to be a sovereign nation; the Marines patroling the countryside were vivid reminders that Haiti had never been independent except by sufferance, and that white men were once more overseeing the destinies of colored and Negro men. Nevertheless, the reasons proclaimed for opposing the Occupation were not those of hurt vanity. Some of those given were entirely

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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two rooms to house the whole family. "In these huts, filth and every species of uncleanliness prevail, for the people give themselves up to their indolent and lazy habits. It is common to see the pigs and poultry herding with the family."[19]

The furnishings in the huts were as simple as the construction. Rarely was there more than one bed, if that; the children of the family used mats for sleeping. A table, a stool, a couple of patched chairs, calabash bowls, an iron pot or two (and in later days, discarded gasoline tins), comprise the household equipment.

The fine roads of the French régime became rutted and washed, were overgrown with weeds, and soon reverted to wasteland or became nothing more than paths. Carriages ceased to be of any use, and there were few wagons; donkeys and horses became the regular means of transportation, and this was true until the Americans began to build roads again in 1916. The colonial régime had left a legacy of bridges, public buildings, parks, irrigation ditches; practically every improvement of this nature crumbled in slow decay and was not replaced. The temperate Dr. Brown closed his account of the Haiti of 1836 with the following paragraph:

> To sum up all that might be said upon the actual condition of Hayti, poverty and degradation stare one in the face wherever he goes—and the state of the whole island will be fully understood in the United States when it is bluntly asserted, that the country is one continuous negro village, built of mud cabins, and unfurnished with the usual comforts of life. The population is, with small exceptions, an indolent, naked multitude, without sustenance or a disposition to make exertions to obtain it; without enormous vices, but petty and insignificant in every thing relating to human character, and not many removes from the tribes upon the Niger in point of civilization. The fact is indisputable, that as a nation the blacks of Saint Domingo are in a retrograde movement as regards intellectual improvement, and no obstacle seems to exist to prevent this descent to barbarism. The government and institutions of the country must for the present remain unstable, and it is difficult to pronounce what the changes involved in the future will produce.[20]

Progress, as Westerners understand it, comes through contacts and competition, both of which were lacking to Haiti in large measure throughout the whole of the nineteenth century. While externally

19. Franklin, *op. cit.*, p. 356.
20. *Op. cit.*, II, 288–289.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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A revolution directed by a general of real ambition was likely to
involve an appeal to foreign powers. Haiti being almost roadless, 175
ships were important for moving troops and blockading seaports. 669
Many a chieftain has purchased six or eight ships abroad, and with 648
this "navy" won his fight. Financial intrigue was frequent. By bor- 457
rowing money from France, Germany, or England, with the promise [491]
to reshape Haitian financial policy to the benefit of the creditor [505]
country, several revolutionaries have secured funds for arms and the necessary soldiers to effect a coup. Sooner or later also one might expect to see the Môle Saint Nicolas, which guards the Windward Passage pathway between Cuba and Haiti, come into the picture. Cession of the Mole has frequently been held out as bait for foreign support, but popular opposition to white ownership of any Haitian land has always stopped actual cession. When Haiti's debt to Germany was due, she borrowed from France to pay it, and then later borrowed from the United States to pay France. All such appeals to foreign powers have merely drawn attention to the defenseless position of the country; many a successful revolutionary chief has lived to regret his appeal for aid.[19]

The one time between 1804 and 1915 when political opinion was 175
vocal and truly significant was in the latter years of Boyer's administration. Then it took pains to attack specific evils with steady per- 665
sistence, even though the cures suggested were vague. Yet after the 208
successful elimination of Boyer, politicians who had worked so brilliantly in the opposition showed themselves even more incapable. Political thought, at a low ebb for the next forty years, revived only when, after 1883, the Liberals were eliminated from politics. Their complete defeat seems to have given élite thinkers time for sober reflection upon the plight of their country. Before 1843 the critics had been in a position to make their words effective; after 1883 they wrote—soberly, brilliantly, persuasively—but their books and pamphlets were read only by a small group of fellow aristocrats who already thought as they did, or disagreed with them in print. Political homilies made no impression upon the minds of the peasants left uneducated by all the élite presidents of Haiti.

In the crucial days of the American Occupation, once again political [648]
debate rose to brilliant heights. The rude shock of seeing foreign

19. See, on this whole subject of Haiti's foreign relations, an excellent chapter in Montague, *op. cit.*, chap. IX.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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be given to Haiti for vast rubber plantings.[21] Opposition to Lescot comes chiefly from those who consider him too friendly with the Dominicans who killed hundreds of Haitian workers in 1937, Lescot having figured prominently in negotiations that led to the Dominican government's agreement to pay indemnities to Haiti for the slaughter.

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Reviewing the whole course of Haitian history, the field of politics seems to have marshaled itself behind a few regularities. In every case there have been voices raised to protest, yet the ruling clique, whatever its grouping, has effectively supported these characteristic political customs:

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1. Complete dominance of political life by the president. Strong men seem to be necessary to rule ignorant masses. Even the revolutions precipitated by parties campaigning for parliamentarianism have, when successful, become governments by the president. This concentration of power in one man's hands makes the next revolution possible, for it is easier to overthrow one man than to eliminate a party based upon wide suffrage and diffused responsibility.

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2. The inferior position of cabinet ministers. These have resembled neither European nor American secretaries of state in their responsibilities, but have been little more than clerks appointed by the president to serve as heads of a bureau. The treasurer-general, for example, during most of Haiti's history has merely received the moneys, while the president disbursed them. The secretary-general has neither originated nor conducted the details of public policy. Often as not, the minister has made a convenient whipping boy when the president has got himself involved in internal or foreign complications: by demanding the minister's resignation the president remained unscathed.

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3. The unimportance of the legislature. It has made useful patron-

21. The European War, threatening the supply of rubber coming to the United States from British Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies, has made the American government seek new sources. The Department of Agriculture established an experimental station and breeding gardens for rubber plants in Haiti, and the results were so successful that extensive areas were planted with rubber trees. Haiti and the United States in May, 1941, reached a long-term agreement for "the development of agriculture and economy"; the projects embraced under the agreement include not only rubber but the further development of Haiti's banana plantations, the planting of oil crops, drug plants, spices, fiber plants, the stimulation of handicraft industries, and the development of forestry resources peculiar to the tropics. A further extension of an additional $500,000 in credits will be made for use on highways, irrigation projects, and to provide transportation facilities for the areas to be planted to rubber trees.

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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policy of encouraging trade with his friends and prohibiting it with his enemies—both arbitrarily. The variation of Pétion was a sort of mercantilism, with set high tariffs.

What Dessalines planned was in terms of Western statecraft so weird that white onlookers felt they were restrained in calling Dessalines a transplanted African tribal chieftain. So passionately intense was the fury of that general against all whites that he took every precaution he could devise to prevent face-to-face dealings between his Haitians and foreigners. By deceit, treachery, and ingenious cruelty he conducted a massacre which deserves comparison with that of Saint Bartholomew: this effectively rid the country of white residents. Since for a time Haiti would have to depend for economic survival upon trade with foreigners, Dessalines next conceived a project whereby the whole population would be gathered in the centre of the island, in the most protected valleys and the gorges of the highest mountains. In these fastnesses the people would never see a white but would work on the land, producing sugar and coffee and cotton for export without ever leaving their local habitations. On the seacoast would be established certain "counters" over which a few incorruptible Haitians, chosen by the Emperor himself, would sell local products and buy the necessary imported goods. Impregnable fortresses were to guard access to the interior,[a] which would be reached by new roads from the seacoast "counters." Every seaport was to be destroyed as soon as new towns could be built in the back country. Already when his death intervened Dessalines had moved his capital from the Cape (that is, Cap-Haïtien, formerly Cap Français) to the inland village of Marchand (in the department of the Artibonite; now renamed Dessalines), and his next plan was to transfer Port-au-Prince eight leagues inland to the plantation Dérance, among the mountains.

Dessalines has been thought absurd, childish, barbaric. But there is something poignant, even tragic, in this fiery determination of the black chieftain, bitter over the cruelties and indignity to which his people had been subject for decades, to use this alien island as best he could and preserve his people at any cost from such another domination.

Despite his scheme for ultimate isolation of the people, Dessalines kept everyone steadily at work by the forced-labor system instituted

a. See p. 247 and note 13.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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not find herself constantly embroiled with European states and American financial interests. The Haitian debt was funded, and a financial adviser remained in the country even after the Occupation came to an end. It is expected that by 1943 the last debt will be paid; the financial adviser, however, withdrew in 1941. Since the Occupation, although the republic has been free to manage her own affairs, she has consulted frequently with the State Department in Washington.

Nineteen years of occupation ended the century of Haitian isolation. The Americans built roads, conducted health campaigns, made their presence felt even in remote hamlets and valleys. American authors, political, romantic, and sensational, discovered the Antillean republic. Steamship companies stopped their cruises for a few hours at Cap-Haïtien to allow tourists to visit the Citadel, and at Port-au-Prince to see the sights of the capital. Every Haitian now realizes that there is a world outside.

Whatever crises have arisen in Haitian affairs, certain problems have persisted. For whom do they constitute a source of worry? Since the government has always been a dictatorship, limited or absolute, subject to no party control, the incumbents of office have never had the experience of being constantly reminded by their opponents of the misery or daily worries of the population. After a hundred years the people have learned that relief is not to be expected from politicians. Occasionally a dramatic revolutionary leader has persuaded some of the people that the officials in power were responsible for their distress, and so worked up a following; yet even when such movements succeeded, the masses never benefited. To most governments of the past century Haiti's problem has been only one: to frustrate insurrection. There is evidence that recent administrations have busied themselves assiduously with the country's internal problems, although none of them has been adequately solved. The élite, at least as a group, do not feel any apparent responsibility for the maladjustments, nor obligation to effect the necessary reforms. A few patriots, and those almost without exception not in office, know what ails the country and say so; a smaller number propose reasonable solutions. The problems remain. Of these the three outstanding are overpopulation with all its accompanying ills, health, and education.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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489 mind dust, ruts, and a steady succession of bumps. To travel in the
[49] average hired car, driven by a Haitian, is one of the grim experiences of life. The driver speeds as if pursued by a demon, while the peasant pedestrians leap for safety into the ditches; the unfortunate passenger is moved to close his eyes to avoid seeing the inevitable crash which
[361] does not come. The most comfortable means of travel if one is going only to towns is by ship, for practically all of Haiti's towns are seaports.

162 To know the towns is still not to know Haiti, however, for two
577 million or more Haitians live in the rural regions. These are the people. And if they are ignorant and not too clean, they are nevertheless models of kindly generosity. It is the proud boast even of the élite that one may travel the length and breadth of the land in perfect safety, in no danger of life or of personal property.

105 Many homely sights linger in the mind: women washing the family clothes in the stream, laughing and gossiping with their neighbors; men and women talking in animated fashion to themselves, arguing, cajoling, explaining as they walk along; individuals carrying a single flower, simply because it is beautiful; barefoot women, gnarled of hand and lined of face, kneeling in the Catholic church at prayer; taxi drivers who cruise by, hissing in order to attract the attention of a visitor who obviously can afford to ride instead of walk; an apparently ceaseless procession of patient donkeys, always laden, sometimes ridden by women, sometimes urged along from behind; the so-called buses each with its witty or its florid name (Plaisance, Éclair, Grâce-à-Dieu, Polichinelle, Sauve-qui-peut, Montparnasse), which like glorified buckboards jostle woodenly from the town to country hamlets; the winsome, open smile and gay laughter of a peasant boy; the ingratiating charm of a sleeping baby in the noise of the market place. To know the average Haitian is to feel a warm affection for him. His life is never easy, yet he bears it all with true beauty of spirit. If *le bon Dieu* sends distress, he will also make it possible for distress to be borne.

576 The people are polite, whether to each other or to strangers. A younger person greets an older one as *compère* or *commère*—literally, godfather or godmother; to his equal he says "*frère*" or "*m'sieu*."
[867] Sometimes one sees a local patriarch instructing little children in
[608] "deportment." This courtesy extends to hospitality: a stranger is almost sure to be offered shelter and food wherever he stops.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

the newcomer persists in retaining the place, an informal appeal is taken to the local magistrate, who invariably settles the matter by deciding in favor of the original occupant. 443 626 629

Each woman tends to specialize in certain commodities, such as meat or cloths or notions or baskets. The venders of foodstuffs, other than meat, however, vary their offerings with the season. This latter class of sellers mainly comprises women who, living in the town, constitute a group of "middlemen," either buying produce at the country markets, or, going off with their pack animals into the back country, return with saddle-bags loaded with the purchases they have made direct from the farmer.[8] 443 442

Country women are also well represented among the traders, and as they come streaming into town on market days with their head burdens, or driving the heavily laden, slow-plodding donkeys, they fill the streets with color and movement that make up one of the most picturesque aspects of Mirebalais life. A load may consist of one type of produce only, or a woman may bring rice, maize, beans, and bananas, as well as home-made brooms and baskets. All transactions in the market are for cash, and there is no barter of any kind, for the pattern of a money economy has been too deeply lodged in Haitian tradition to allow any other mode of exchange. Prices are based on supply and demand rather than on any agreement between sellers, since contact with the capital causes the current prices paid there for all kinds of produce to be generally known. Another factor which enters into price-fixing, however, is prestige. It is regarded as a mark of incompetence for a woman, whether from country or town, to return home with unsold produce, and since the reputation of being a clever trader is highly valued, this is avoided when at all possible, and the vender adjusts her prices as the day wears on to insure that she will dispose of everything she has brought. 443 [482] [492] [436] [437] 443 435 [554] [558]

In Mirebalais, as elsewhere, the markets are best attended during harvest months, when by official count as many as 443

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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[P. 112-E]

5 and 6. *Cane workers near Croix-des-Bouquets. Only on the large company plantations are oxen and carts used.*

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2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-H]

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11 and 12. *Market day. On each woman's head is the agricultural produce she will sell in the village or city market. When she returns she will carry a lighter load of things she has purchased, and tied in her handkerchief will be a few small coins.*

[P. 112-I]

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[314]

13. *Donkey with a load of charcoal. Where the terrain is not too rugged, donkeys or small horses do some of the carrying. The making of charcoal has helped to denude the mountains of their forests.*

533 476 178 461 rhythmically, to the accompaniment of drums, *catas*, or horns, while a singing leader composes topical songs in which the laborers join.

171 412 The tools which a rural Haitian chooses, and the way he uses them, often are in a West African tradition. He performs a multitude of tasks with his machete, or bush knife: weeding a garden, peeling an orange, cutting down a tree, making a drum or mortar, opening a coconut. It is an all-purpose tool, as it is in Africa. Until a few years ago it was supplemented by the extra-long, heavier, "double machete." The axe and the chisel are known and used too, but the machete is supreme.

492 [241] [412] The hoe is the tool for tilling the soil, even in the flat country, and even though the Haitian has horses and cattle which could pull a plow. Horses are for riding and not for pulling. In carrying loads, the Haitian peasant still prefers the head to the shoulders. If he has a donkey, the donkey will carry for him. An old Haitian proverb goes: "Meçi Bondieu pou' bourrique là, si nous pas gainyain bourrique là faut Haitien po'té tout bagaille" (Thank God for the donkey, if we didn't have the donkey the Haitian would have to carry everything)." Generally speaking, the rough and rocky terrain of Haiti and inadequate secondary roads have done nothing to encourage the use of carts or wagons.

[538] 489 491 493

171 [251] [372] [252] [227] [226] [501] Corn is stored in the trees, as in West Africa, or in granaries built upon stilts, also as in West Africa. The Haitian makes his fire in the African fashion, with several long sticks or poles meeting point-to-point in the heart of the fire. As the ends are consumed, the sticks are pushed toward the center. Grain is pulverized in large wooden mortars, as in West Africa, and winnowed in a woven tray. Fish traps are sometimes woven in the traditional West African manner, and fishermen often set their nets in converging spirals and beat the water with sticks to drive the fish to the center. And on the rivers and lakes are to be seen dugout canoes of a kind familiar on the inland waters of West Africa.

171 241 The folklore of the fields contains many themes known to the West African. One old Haitian farmer, discussing the spiritual relationship of the planter to the earth, declared that a man must be strong and potent when he plants, else the crops will be vitiated and sickly. For this reason, he said, a man must not plant seeds the day after he has had sexual intercourse, because he has been temporarily drained of his life-giving powers.[9]

[834]

171 538 The tale of the hoe that worked by itself in the fields is also widespread. It enters many animal and Bouki stories, and also is known in a form that is familiar in West Africa. In this story, there was once a man who owned a hoe which worked by itself whenever a magical formula was pronounced. It would stop working whenever the magical

9 [For footnote, see Category 116, p. 352.-- Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

two rooms to house the whole family. "In these huts, filth and every species of uncleanliness prevail, for the people give themselves up to their indolent and lazy habits. It is common to see the pigs and poultry herding with the family."[19] 342 [515]

The furnishings in the huts were as simple as the construction. Rarely was there more than one bed, if that; the children of the family used mats for sleeping. A table, a stool, a couple of patched chairs, calabash bowls, an iron pot or two (and in later days, discarded gasoline tins), comprise the household equipment. 352 [415]

The fine roads of the French régime became rutted and washed, were overgrown with weeds, and soon reverted to wasteland or became nothing more than paths. Carriages ceased to be of any use, and there were few wagons; donkeys and horses became the regular means of transportation, and this was true until the Americans began to build roads again in 1916. The colonial régime had left a legacy of bridges, public buildings, parks, irrigation ditches; practically every improvement of this nature crumbled in slow decay and was not replaced. The temperate Dr. Brown closed his account of the Haiti of 1836 with the following paragraph: 653 492 493 491 114 105

To sum up all that might be said upon the actual condition of Hayti, poverty and degradation stare one in the face wherever he goes—and the state of the whole island will be fully understood in the United States when it is bluntly asserted, that the country is one continuous negro village, built of mud cabins, and unfurnished with the usual comforts of life. The population is, with small exceptions, an indolent, naked multitude, without sustenance or a disposition to make exertions to obtain it; without enormous vices, but petty and insignificant in every thing relating to human character, and not many removes from the tribes upon the Niger in point of civilization. The fact is indisputable, that as a nation the blacks of Saint Domingo are in a retrograde movement as regards intellectual improvement, and no obstacle seems to exist to prevent this descent to barbarism. The government and institutions of the country must for the present remain unstable, and it is difficult to pronounce what the changes involved in the future will produce.[20]

Progress, as Westerners understand it, comes through contacts and competition, both of which were lacking to Haiti in large measure throughout the whole of the nineteenth century. While externally 177 178

19. Franklin, *op. cit.*, p. 356.
20. *Op. cit.*, II, 288-289.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

311 merly. Wherever the overcrowded Haitians have lived since 1815, there beauty has had to give way to gnawing necessity which lacked either the imagination or the means to be sightly.

105 One can stand upon a morne and watch a rain storm rush down the valley, bending the palm trees in its fury, and think Haiti still a magnificent sight. Then one must descend the mountainside past rickety shacks and rocky fields, and the feeling grows that not all the kindly simplicity of the people is enough to lift the country from its [134] dilapidation. As he nears the village, the afternoon scent of roasting coffee will delight him; but then he sees the squalor of village life and is reminded that three million souls are here trying to eke out an existence upon a small area of declining fertility.

Much in Haiti is picturesque if one can keep his mind from wandering to the conditions which lie behind the picturesqueness. [482] Women stride down from the hills with great loads on their heads; [443] aged crones, pipe in mouth, sit perched on the haunches of tiny donkeys with their bulging panniers; the great market square in the [492] town is a scene of noisy confusion with hundreds of women and [482] children, a mixture of smells, thousands of little piles of soap, candy, gewgaws, vegetables, gaping chickens tied together by the feet, [434] shirts, canes, bolts of cloth. All the weary women, however, must [146] trudge back up to their shanties on the mountainside when the market is over. Many of them do not see ten dollars in cash during the year, and their little children, with bellies bulging, give evidence [164] of undernourishment. Without doctors, without even the rudiments of hygiene, they manage somehow to subsist, or else die, frequently of disease which might easily have been prevented.

565 In Port-au-Prince and a few other towns live enough members of the élite to make one momentarily forget the plight of the masses. [342] The houses of the well-to-do are substantially built, if not often [351] attractive. Their garden walls are brilliant with bougainvillea, their walks with hibiscus. Tiny red lizards (analis) make flashes of color along the walls. On shady verandas and in the parlors one hears delightful conversation, eats excellent food, savors the pleasures of [575] civilization. The clubs of the élite are pleasing, their tennis is good, [526] their dancing graceful. To be among these families as a welcome guest is an experience in gracious hospitality which can never be [535] forgotten. Too soon, however, one must leave these havens of urbanity and pass through districts of the town which haunt the mind with their grim want.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 3V3 Hait. 3V3

 The cow was

never seen again, and after a prêt' savane had read prayers over the spring the people again drew water from it.

Baka more often change themselves into gray or red pigs, but one ingenious baka was said to have transformed himself into a bicycle, which was seen traveling alone at night on the road from Port-au-Prince to Léogane.

Some people wear charms against the baka's malevolence; but the most effective weapon is the cocomacaque stick. The cocomacaque, or monkey palm, is a palm tree that grows only a few feet high. It has magical powers to drive off not only baka but other evil beings as well. When the tree is growing in its natural state, it is said, you must never mention its name in its own presence. Should you say within its hearing, for example, "Look at the cocomacaque," it will wilt and fall over, losing all its vital powers. The trunk of this midget palm is a favorite material for fashioning a walking stick or a short baton. A man going on a long journey into strange country may carry a cococmacaque stick with him to brandish at the crossroads where baka lurk, or to drive off strange animals that may be baka in disguise.

In their relationships with human beings, the baka are not always random. Sometimes, for a terrible price, they will undertake to make a man rich or to "eat" his enemies for him.

In some parts of Haiti, baka seemingly have found their way into the ranks of the loa. In the Congo-Guinée pantheon there is a deity called Bakulu Baka, or Babaku Baka. He is a malevolent spirit who "eats" people in the best baka tradition, and he lives, significantly, in the mapou tree, which is shunned by all good loa.

The *engagements*, or compacts, in which baka sometimes figure are usually made with another sort of creature, the *djab*, or devil. A djab is a manlike being but is superhuman, ferocious, and terrible. Some djab are small, some large, some innocent in appearance, some grotesque. They are supernatural sorcerers who deal out riches in exchange for human beings. A frustrated or desperate man may go to a djab and ask for a favor, which will usually be granted for a heart-rending price. Persons who appear to gain wealth suddenly may be suspected of having entered into an *engagement* with a powerful djab.

One story is about a man of Port-au-Prince who, needing a large sum of money, went to a famous djab who lives in a cave known as Trou Fourban. This powerful djab agreed to provide all the money required, but only on condition that the man deliver to him each year one of his children. The man suddenly came into a large fortune. But when the anniversary of his compact arrived, he did not go to Trou Fourban

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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[P.112-E]

5 and 6. Cane workers near Croix-des-Bouquets. Only on the large company plantations are oxen and carts used.

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2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1968) 1980 SV3 Haiti SV3

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9 [For footnote, see Category 116, P 352.-- Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

342 322 178 unchanged from an earlier era. The prevailing quality of Haitian rural and craft industry, then, is one of great stability and conservatism.

493 463 At the same time, of course, major events since the revolution have left their imprint on this part of life. Hardly a roadside village in Haiti today, for instance, lacks an automobile mechanic, even though these men are mostly self-educated and work with hardly any tools. Their skills became part of Haitian culture in this century and are often of a simple order no longer typical of more developed areas. 383 177 Tire tubes, for instance, are "vulcanized" by the use of an ingenious device made from a board and an old piston, kerosene providing the heat to make the seal; this technique, along with the sewing of damaged truck tires, was almost certainly introduced and diffused by the United States Marines.

47 31 178 But these quaint additions do not alter the fact that shop and factory industry are nearly absent, and extractive industry virtually nonexistent. Haiti's one alumina extraction enterprise, foreign-owned, is now shut down. There is but one flour mill, and that is foreign-[258] owned as well. One or two textile mills and sugar factories, estab-[339] lished with foreign capital, still function, as do a modern cement factory and a few other small plants established in the 1950s. These [464] industries, scanty as they are, were of great importance to Haiti, since they represented substantial investments, held out the promise of reduced dependence on imports in significant categories, and contributed to the beginnings of an industrial proletariat. However, they involved only a tiny fraction of the national labor force, and they have not proved entirely successful. As a result, Haiti lacks any reserve of labor acquainted with modern industry, even though many people, both urban and rural, work at tasks that might be considered more industrial than agricultural.

47 433 178 171 Most important for the present discussion, the minor developments in Haitian industry have not led to an expanded market and have not resulted in any firm increase in productivity. Industrial growth, in the sense in which it has occurred in countries such as those of Western Europe—or for that matter in Mexico or Argentina—is entirely lacking. The absence of such growth is perhaps especially significant if Haiti be compared with a neighbor such as Jamaica or Puerto Rico. [648] These countries, one now independent, the other a North American dependency—have both gained real increments from the investment activities of outsiders;

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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two rooms to house the whole family. "In these huts, filth and every species of uncleanliness prevail, for the people give themselves up to their indolent and lazy habits. It is common to see the pigs and poultry herding with the family."[19]

The furnishings in the huts were as simple as the construction. Rarely was there more than one bed, if that; the children of the family used mats for sleeping. A table, a stool, a couple of patched chairs, calabash bowls, an iron pot or two (and in later days, discarded gasoline tins), comprise the household equipment.

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> To sum up all that might be said upon the actual condition of Hayti, poverty and degradation stare one in the face wherever he goes—and the state of the whole island will be fully understood in the United States when it is bluntly asserted, that the country is one continuous negro village, built of mud cabins, and unfurnished with the usual comforts of life. The population is, with small exceptions, an indolent, naked multitude, without sustenance or a disposition to make exertions to obtain it; without enormous vices, but petty and insignificant in every thing relating to human character, and not many removes from the tribes upon the Niger in point of civilization. The fact is indisputable, that as a nation the blacks of Saint Domingo are in a retrograde movement as regards intellectual improvement, and no obstacle seems to exist to prevent this descent to barbarism. The government and institutions of the country must for the present remain unstable, and it is difficult to pronounce what the changes involved in the future will produce.[20]

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19. Franklin, op. cit., p. 304.
20. Op. cit., II, 288-289.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

101 36 [491] both town and district are bisected by the main route between the capitals of the Haitian and the Dominican republics. Yet, once again, this geographical nearness but distorts the psychological distance between Mirebalais and the metropolis. [494] For though the busses, converted from camions, pass to and from the coastal city several times a week, the valley and even the town which is its center drowse in essential isolation. A few hundred yards off the main road find the Haitian peasant following the mode of life of his forebears, oblivious of events outside the valley. Only for a few of the *notables* of the town, the *gros nègres,* who have personal, political, or business contacts with Port-au-Prince, is the comparative proximity to the capital meaningful.

174 It is not possible to say how long this valley has been inhabited. Certainly the early Indians roamed there; and there, as in other parts of the island of Hispaniola, the tragedy of their extinction under the brutality of early Spanish rule must 175 have taken place. Moreau de St. Mery, to whom all students of 103 Haiti must acknowledge a debt of gratitude for his painstakingly accurate reports of life on the island, gives the derivation of its name.

> "Mirebalais received its name," he says, "because of the enormous numbers of wild animals the first Frenchmen found there, which recalled to them the small district in the region of Poitou [in France], called Mirebalais, where some of them had probably first seen the light of day. These quadrupeds, first introduced by the Spaniards, had no difficulty in multiplying there after the Indians had disappeared from their native land and the Spaniards, reduced in numbers, were obliged to abandon the great plains, so that horses, cattle, etc. came to exercise exclusive domain."[1]

175 St. Mery's work, which traces the development of Mirebalais as one of the parishes of pre-Revolutionary Haiti, makes it

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

The falls, therefore, in association with the purely Catholic rituals carried on at the village church, are seen to hold an important if unofficial place in the complex of rites known in the Haitian Church calendar as the Fête of Saut d'Eau.

During the two or three days preceding the fête and on the fifteenth of July itself, an air of great gayety not unlike the carnival spirit accompanying European Church festivals pervades the surrounding country. Camions traverse the almost impassable side road, bringing crowds of people from Port-au-Prince, from the Dominican border, and even from the north, who throng the streets and the shrines and tramp the miles from the village to the waterfalls or visit the nearer sacred sites of St. John's Wood and En bas Palmes, to light candles and ask the satisfaction of their needs. Like the falls themselves, these spots by their very beauty awaken a sense of emotional awareness, and it is not strange that here, as at the falls, many possessions occur. At night, in particular, the great trees with their interlacing serpent-like roots, the gaping earth which at En bas Palmes is witness to the uprooting of the palm trees where the miracle occurred, and the stream of sacred water, all make a scene of indescribable eeriness, heightened by the flickering candles given as offerings, and the open lamps of those who stay the night here to fulfill their vows.

In the town itself gambling and other games go on, and dances of all kinds are held at night, among them *vodun* and *bal*, though at these public dances no possessions are countenanced. One of the most colorful aspects of the scene is the *penitants*, wearing clothing of varied colors in fulfillment of a request by the *loa* they worship or an obligation to them. Such folk are not permitted in church unless the clothing which marks them is covered by ordinary dress, but they walk the streets, often possessed and often using their power to heal those whom they encounter. Possessions by Ogun, by Gede, by Baron Samedi, by Damballa, by Erzilie and other *vodun* deities were observed, particularly at the shrines, where their devotees prophesied and healed the sick.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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369 development of interior transport. The only passable roads in the
494 Republic run from Aux Cayes in the south to the capital, and from
646 Cap Haïtien in the north to the capital. Transport and communications simply symbolize the power that Port-au-Prince wields, since the same circumstances characterize all national institutional arrangements. Thus Haiti is an extreme example of urban domination, even though its urban population is a fraction of the national total. The consequence has been to keep most of the rural folk cut off from the apparatus that effects national decisions and shapes national policy. Haiti's national legislature, never important in limiting presidential power, is less so today than ever; at best, it had only represented the interests of provincial towns as opposed to the capital, and never the interests of the mass of country people.

701 The local military and judiciary officials possess the formal author-
692 ity vested in them by the state, and their power is very considerable.
642 Few local people would dare challenge their decisions, and the de-
369 vices for appeal against arbitrary exercise of authority are few. Admittedly, at the lowest local level the *chef de section*—who is traditionally appointed by the captain of the military in the *commune* center and is himself a yeoman—is subject to some genuine restraint by local inhabitants. Jean Comhaire-Sylvain (1955:620–24) has argued convincingly that the people of a community are capable of insisting on democratic procedure in those matters requiring decision that come to the attention of local authority. But such decisions have little or nothing to do with larger issues. The yeomanry cannot directly make its wishes felt in national politics; and national politics are conducted almost without reference to the aspirations of the rural masses. It is precisely in the separateness of local life from the mainstream of national decision-making that the political impotence of the yeomanry is demonstrated.

311 Haiti's agrarian nature cannot be expressed simply by saying it is a
423 rural and yeoman country. Haiti does not have a "land problem," as
171 that phrase is conventionally applied to Latin America. It does, it is true, suffer from land shortage, inasmuch as too little land is worked at too low a level of productivity and must feed too many mouths. But a very substantial proportion of the rural masses owns land, or has regular access to it. It is true that most land is held in small plots and without clear title. But those persons who own no land or who lack land to work are proportionally fewer than in any other Carib-

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Président passé là,
L'ap monté au gouvernment! [Ex. 118]

The President passes by,
He is taking over the government!
The President passes by,
He is taking over the government!

*533 758 646 It is not only great political events that are perpetuated in songs like these; many are the comments on little people in the government, such as a legislator named Daniel Fignolé. One of Fignolé's deeds, probably apocryphal, which is recorded in folk song has to do with an act of justice in a hospital in Port-au-Prince. According to the song, Fignolé entered the hospital and found the rich patients on beds and the poor patients on mats on the floor. He promptly ordered the rich patients placed on the floor and the poor patients placed on the beds. (A few [643] years later, after serving as president for less than three weeks, Fignolé became a political exile in the United States.)

*533 499 496 There is also an old song about a government engineer named Louis Gentil Tippenhauer—or Ti 'Benhauer (Little 'Benhauer), as he was commonly known. Tippenhauer is now an old man, but when he was young he was in charge of the construction of a section of the Haitian narrow-gauge railway. There was an accident in which a smoking locomotive jumped the tracks. Though small in stature, Tippenhauer had a forceful personality. He quickly assembled his workmen, and with chains, ropes, and crowbars they wrestled the locomotive back on the rails. The song commemorating the dramatic event was born at the height of the rescue operation. It is marked with concern for the feelings of Engineer Tippenhauer:

*[539]

Ti 'Benhauer rélé, "Porté cord pou' marré li!"
Ti 'Benhauer rélé, "Porté chaine pou' enchainé li!"
Si ou marré'l la laguè, devant Bondieu!
Pau' diab', pau' 'Benhauer, machine na deraillé!
Pau' diab', pau' 'Benhauer, machine na deraillé!

Ti 'Benhauer shouts, "Bring a rope to tie it!"
Ti 'Benhauer shouts, "Bring a chain to chain it!"
If you tie it, it unties itself, before God!
Poor devil, poor 'Benhauer, the machine is derailed!
Poor devil, poor 'Benhauer, the machine is derailed!

It is more than half a century since the affair of the derailed locomotive, and the railroad itself is not much longer for this world. But the song is still sung, and mostly by people who have no personal knowledge of the man named Tippenhauer.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

712 the battlements far off across the tortuous mass of mountains and
[713] green valleys, admire the sheer strength of will which made His Majesty's subjects bear four hundred cannon up the steep and rocky path—not to mention thousands of cannon balls now rusting away after a century of disuse, or the powder and shot which once filled
[173] the magazines. It is said that five thousand soldiers could be housed in the fortress at once. If this is hyperbole, one hardly dare challenge
[703] it, for the whole Citadel belittles the individual man. It is likewise said that Christophe once made a battalion of soldiers march off the cliff to their death merely to demonstrate his absolute control over
[766] them. Such stories grow up around His Black Majesty. He lies entombed in his useless but still superb fortress—and lives in the memory of the Northerners, one of whom said proudly: "We of the North have a great heritage, and you will find that we are all dominated by *une psychologie citadelienne*."

Dungeons, secret passages, royal apartments, separate rooms for each of the old Dutch, Spanish, French, and English cannon, some of them dating back to the seventeenth century—all the paraphernalia of the storybook fortress is present. From a bastion one gazes, as from an alp, for miles in any direction, and feels that La Ferrière is certainly one of the most impressive, and one of the most futile, edifices in the world. If the silent cannon had ever been fired, their balls would have rumbled harmlessly down the mountainside. The suspicion grows that Christophe achieved his architectural miracle not primarily as a defense against the French, but to make his subjects proud of what a nation of despised ex-slaves could accomplish.

344 Five miles away, at the foot of the mountain, is the village of
644 Milot, with the ruins of the palace of Sans Souci. Of yellow stone, it spreads out spaciously like a French château. Its rooms must have been magnificent. The palace is so situated that one may look out across the northern plains to the sea, or up the valleys to mountain peaks. In Sans Souci Christophe shot himself in 1820 when he knew that only *souci* would remain to him if he lived.

489 Transportation from one part of the country to another is far from
easy. There are no railroads—unless one counts the short line running
[496] north a few miles from Port-au-Prince to nowhere in particular, and the equally short line coming west into Cap-Haïtien from the fields
[491] of the northern plain. Roads built by the American Marines make automobile travel between the main towns possible, if one does not

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Président passé là,
L'ap monté au gouvernment! [Ex. 118]

The President passes by,
He is taking over the government!
The President passes by,
He is taking over the government!

*533 758 646 It is not only great political events that are perpetuated in songs like these; many are the comments on little people in the government, such as a legislator named Daniel Fignolé. One of Fignolé's deeds, probably apocryphal, which is recorded in folk song has to do with an act of justice in a hospital in Port-au-Prince. According to the song, Fignolé entered the hospital and found the rich patients on beds and the poor patients on mats on the floor. He promptly ordered the rich patients placed on the floor and the poor patients placed on the beds. (A few [643] years later, after serving as president for less than three weeks, Fignolé became a political exile in the United States.)

*533 ● 499 496 There is also an old song about a government engineer named Louis Gentil Tippenhauer—or Ti 'Benhauer (Little 'Benhauer), as he was commonly known. Tippenhauer is now an old man, but when he was young he was in charge of the construction of a section of the Haitian narrow-gauge railway. There was an accident in which a smoking locomotive jumped the tracks. Though small in stature, Tippenhauer had a forceful personality. He quickly assembled his workmen, and with chains, ropes, and crowbars they wrestled the locomotive back on the rails. The song commemorating the dramatic event was born at the height of the rescue operation. It is marked with concern for the feelings of Engineer Tippenhauer:

*[539]

Ti 'Benhauer rélé, "Porté cord pou' marré li!"
Ti 'Benhauer rélé, "Porté chaine pou' enchainé li!"
Si ou marré'l la laguè, devant Bondieu!
Pau' diab', pau' 'Benhauer, machine na deraillé!
Pau' diab', pau' 'Benhauer, machine na deraillé!

Ti 'Benhauer shouts, "Bring a rope to tie it!"
Ti 'Benhauer shouts, "Bring a chain to chain it!"
If you tie it, it unties itself, before God!
Poor devil, poor 'Benhauer, the machine is derailed!
Poor devil, poor 'Benhauer, the machine is derailed!

It is more than half a century since the affair of the derailed locomotive, and the railroad itself is not much longer for this world. But the song is still sung, and mostly by people who have no personal knowledge of the man named Tippenhauer.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

512 neighbors paying friendly visits and of playing children gradu-
[264] ally become stilled. It is the time for the evening meal. By nine o'clock at the latest all is quiet and Mirebalais, man and beast, is asleep.

796 The *vodun* drums are heard only on Saturday nights, and
527 then the dance must be sufficiently close to the town, and the wind in the right direction, for the sound to be audible.
[556] Permits for these dances must be obtained, and are regularly given by the police officials — or were in 1934 — and word is passed on that on a given Saturday certain households will give *vodun* dances. If the dances are held in the foothills to the west, the Tombe River must be forded, and the existence of such a barrier between the village and the site of the dance makes this a favorite region in which to hold them, even though they may have official sanction. During the rainy sea-
[484] son attendance at dances on the opposite bank of the Arti-
[501] bonite River depends on the height of the stream, for when it is in flood not even the dugout canoes of the Haitians can cross it, while the ferry which Moreau de St. Mery speaks of as having been established in 1749 does not even exist in local tradition.[14] Yet no dance lacks participants or spectators, for these occasions furnish the principal opportunity for recrea-
[798] tion even as they fill their proper religious function. Early in the week discussions can be heard of the dances to be held, and though the official frown of the Catholic priest is always to be reckoned with, the importance of these dances, and the numbers who attend them, do not seem markedly lessened by
[554] this fact. Those whose social position in the community makes them more sensitive to such criticism merely take the precaution to slip quietly out of town after dark.

796 When occasions of local or national significance and church holidays are celebrated, the town is full of country folk and
[788] visitors from the cities. Christmas and New Year's, Mardi Gras and Easter are all periods for such celebrations, while the first Sunday of every month witnesses a religious procession

132 fires in their houses at night to keep out the damp cold that sweeps
[374] through the passes. And a man on the trail before dawn may wear a
[291] blanket over his head and carry a glowing ember with him for warmth.

132 On the south coast there are sometimes hurricanes and tidal waves, and
133 many a small fishing boat and grass-covered house has been washed away
[131] in these storms. But the great mountains of the southern range deflect the winds, so that to the north their full fury is never known.

226 In the great Bay of Gonaïves the fishing boats sail out at night with the
133 friendly winds that carry them to the fishing grounds of the island of La
172 Gonave, and they return to the shore with their catches in the morning, or in the afternoon with the setting sun. The sailing boats from the tiny fishing village called Ville Matelot each day pass the deserted islet named Isle à Cabrit, where four Indian camps once stood. Today Isle à Cabrit is only a waterless, denuded place, a hunting ground for Carib and Arawak pottery and carved stone images.

136 In the frontier lakes of the Cul-de-Sac Plain there are wild ducks and
[226] alligators. Here the villagers fish with nets from rafts and dugout canoes.
[501] Now and then an iguana is seen, but there is little other game, because the edible wildlife of the country was long ago eaten by hungry people.

137 For the things that grow wild the Haitian is grateful—the avocado,
[241] the mango, the cashew, and the cotton which once planted produces again and again each year. He is grateful for the coconut palms, the calabash tree, the gourd vines, and the medicinal herbs that grow on every side. But
[313] the gifts of nature are not prolific. Most of the great stands of timber—
[134] lignum vitae, mahogany, dyewood and pine—have been cut away. Once fertile garden spots have dried up, and the soil that produces the yams, the pumpkins, the kaffir, and the rice is tired.

181 But the Haitian himself is not tired. He has suffered from malaria,
164 yaws, and chronic hunger; yet out of the great old mountains of Haiti he has fashioned a way of life and a nation.

105 The Haitian of today was created out of the fabric of three continents—
181 Africa, America, and Europe. He was shaped out of the plains and hills of Nigeria, Dahomey, and the Congo; the summers and winters of Europe; and the mountains and mountain mists of Haiti itself. He is the synthesis of the folk beliefs of the French and Spanish peasants, the Yoruba and the Arada of West Africa, and perhaps of the Carib Indians with whom he had close contact during his first days in the New World. He has brought into affinity the religious practices of Africa and the beliefs of the Church of Rome. He is outwardly simple and poor, but inwardly he is a complicated and rich man. He is rich in music, in the capacity for spiritual expression, in tradition, in folklore, and in memories. He has been able

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-J]

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15. Pulverizing grain into meal. The mortar and pestle are standard kitchen fixtures.

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14. Fishermen of Ville des Matelots, on the Bay of Gonaïves.

[P. 112-Q]

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26. Service for the loa Agué in a boat at sea. In the center, two houngi hold the société's flags. Between them and the houngan is the bedecked barque d'Agué, a raftlike miniature vessel which will be set adrift. An ogan and a drum are at the lower right.

533 476 178 461 rhythmically, to the accompaniment of drums, *catas*, or horns, while a singing leader composes topical songs in which the laborers join.

171 412 The tools which a rural Haitian chooses, and the way he uses them, often are in a West African tradition. He performs a multitude of tasks with his machete, or bush knife: weeding a garden, peeling an orange, cutting down a tree, making a drum or mortar, opening a coconut. It is an all-purpose tool, as it is in Africa. Until a few years ago it was supplemented by the extra-long, heavier, "double machete." The axe and the chisel are known and used too, but the machete is supreme. 492 The hoe is the tool for tilling the soil, even in the flat country, and even [341] though the Haitian has horses and cattle which could pull a plow. [412] Horses are for riding and not for pulling. In carrying loads, the Haitian peasant still prefers the head to the shoulders. If he has a donkey, the [538] donkey will carry for him. An old Haitian proverb goes: "Meçi Bondieu pou' bourrique là, si nous pas gainyain bourrique là faut Haitien po'té tout bagaille" (Thank God for the donkey, if we didn't have the donkey 489 the Haitian would have to carry everything)." Generally speaking, the 491 rough and rocky terrain of Haiti and inadequate secondary roads have 493 done nothing to encourage the use of carts or wagons.

171 Corn is stored in the trees, as in West Africa, or in granaries built [251] upon stilts, also as in West Africa. The Haitian makes his fire in the [372] African fashion, with several long sticks or poles meeting point-to-point in the heart of the fire. As the ends are consumed, the sticks are pushed [252] toward the center. Grain is pulverized in large wooden mortars, as [227] in West Africa, and winnowed in a woven tray. Fish traps are some- [226] times woven in the traditional West African manner, and fishermen often set their nets in converging spirals and beat the water with sticks to [501] drive the fish to the center. And on the rivers and lakes are to be seen dugout canoes of a kind familiar on the inland waters of West Africa.

171 241 The folklore of the fields contains many themes known to the West African. One old Haitian farmer, discussing the spiritual relationship of the planter to the earth, declared that a man must be strong and potent when he plants, else the crops will be vitiated and sickly. For [834] this reason, he said, a man must not plant seeds the day after he has had sexual intercourse, because he has been temporarily drained of his life-giving powers.[9]

171 538 The tale of the hoe that worked by itself in the fields is also widespread. It enters many animal and Bouki stories, and also is known in a form that is familiar in West Africa. In this story, there was once a man who owned a hoe which worked by itself whenever a magical formula was pronounced. It would stop working whenever the magical

9 [For footnote, see Category 116, P. 352.-- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

And when the revolution came he produced for the Haitian armies knives, gun parts, and wheels to transport cannon. By the tens of thousands he made ingeniously devised metal objects to be thrown on the roads, before the French cavalry troops—objects so shaped that, no matter how they fell, a single sharp point stood erect to cripple the enemy horses. Yet knowledge of the West African uses of iron did not altogether disappear, and during the first century of independence the Haitian blacksmith created many old-style knives, spears, and ritual objects for the cult temple.

Even today, some of this old-style work is to be found in hounfors in the southwestern peninsula. One may see simple or ornate iron standards, made to support ceremonial offerings or candles, strikingly similar to standards in ancestral shrines in Dahomey. There are iron bells, both single and double, made in pure West African style; ornate ritual swords and sabers which are the crests of certain deities; coiled and uncoiled iron serpents representing the gods Damballa and Ayida; and stylized or semirealistic portraits of the deities. Many of these old pieces are nineteenth-century survivals; others have been forged within the past decade. [1]

An over-all impression of Haitian material culture is that artistic decoration is almost entirely absent and that the prime emphasis is on utility. Wooden cooking spoons are efficient in form, but missing from them is the delicate decorative carving often found in West Africa. The long wooden washing bowl, or *gamelle*, and the wooden mortar in which grain is pulverized are likewise clean-cut but stark and plainly utilitarian. Clay bowls, bottles, and storage jars are usually of simple, uniform design, with only accidental variations; there is little use of glazes, and the clay is often heavy and thick. Should there be a wari gameboard in the peasant hut, the chances are that it is roughly made, without legs or carved designs. Dugout canoes are usually crude in appearance, heavy and thick-walled, and irregular in form.

Yet there are many evidences—though one must seek them out—that esthetic impulses are quite alive. The gay peasant straw knapsack, or *alfor*, without which no mountain man makes a journey, has a charm and grace that is not diminished by familiarity and cheapness. Decorated with sisal braid and tassels, and colored with green and magenta dyes, each *alfor* on close inspection appears to be unique. In some communities in the south and southwest, burlap squares also are painted with these traditional dyes. About forty inches across, and made of sugar bags, these paintings swarm with geometric patterns and sometimes with figures of flowers and animals. They are purely decorative, being

[1] [See plates 42-51, pp. 112-DD—112-FF.--Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

That the separateness of yeomanry and elite had visible and sociologically important expression in physical type in Haiti was a clear consequence of the history of that country. But the traditional preponderant light skins at the top of the structure and the preponderant darkness at its base are less important than the domination of the total structure, and of the institutional means for changing it, by a mere fraction of the national population. It is the *power* of the elite which has mattered through time; its physical appearance has been only a historically derived expression of that power. Such a balance of politically weak masses against numerically sparse power holders is common, perhaps particularly in the "less developed world", but each such case has certain special characteristics. Haiti's special nature is not simply in its being a yeoman country, and one in which a small group dominates the mass. As a rural, agrarian, unindustrialized, politically sovereign, and quasi-capitalistic country, Haiti shares much with other lands; but in each regard its own particularity needs to be assessed.

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The rurality of Haiti is extreme, not simply because there are no concentrations of population in excess of 25,000 except for Port-au-Prince and Cap Haïtien but also because towns of intermediate size are few in number, and the urban concentrations in the country's two cities are substantially of relatively recent rural origin. Port-au-Prince dominates the Republic in all of its economic, political, and social activities. Furthermore, the rural towns have been losing to the capital, not gaining from it. Until the United States occupation, the larger towns of the coast, such as Jérémie, Jacmel, and St. Marc, were united economically with each other, and to some extent with the capital, by a lively coastwise shipping system, and the inland towns were tributary to those of the coast. The growth of inland transport during the occupation strengthened the interior towns while coastwise shipping declined, but the capital grew even more important as the sole economic center of the Republic. Since the 1940s, the rapid deterioration of the road system has left both inland and coastal towns enfeebled; only Port-au-Prince has remained strong.

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The dominion of Port-au-Prince is firm, and there is no focus of power in the countryside that can counteract it. Those few foreign enterprises in Haiti that base themselves outside the capital city use local port facilities (e.g. Miragoâne for Reynolds Aluminum, Cap Haïtien for the sisal plantations of the north) and do not affect the development of the interior transport.

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3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

policy of encouraging trade with his friends and prohibiting it with his enemies—both arbitrarily. The variation of Pétion was a sort of mercantilism, with set high tariffs.

What Dessalines planned was in terms of Western statecraft so weird that white onlookers felt they were restrained in calling Dessalines a transplanted African tribal chieftain. So passionately intense was the fury of that general against all whites that he took every precaution he could devise to prevent face-to-face dealings between his Haitians and foreigners. By deceit, treachery, and ingenious cruelty he conducted a massacre which deserves comparison with that of Saint Bartholomew: this effectively rid the country of white residents. Since for a time Haiti would have to depend for economic survival upon trade with foreigners, Dessalines next conceived a project whereby the whole population would be gathered in the centre of the island, in the most protected valleys and the gorges of the highest mountains. In these fastnesses the people would never see a white but would work on the land, producing sugar and coffee and cotton for export without ever leaving their local habitations. On the seacoast would be established certain "counters" over which a few incorruptible Haitians, chosen by the Emperor himself, would sell local products and buy the necessary imported goods. Impregnable fortresses were to guard access to the interior,[2] which would be reached by new roads from the seacoast "counters." Every seaport was to be destroyed as soon as new towns could be built in the back country. Already when his death intervened Dessalines had moved his capital from the Cape (that is, Cap-Haïtien, formerly Cap Français) to the inland village of Marchand (in the department of the Artibonite; now renamed Dessalines), and his next plan was to transfer Port-au-Prince eight leagues inland to the plantation Dérance, among the mountains.

Dessalines has been thought absurd, childish, barbaric. But there is something poignant, even tragic, in this fiery determination of the black chieftain, bitter over the cruelties and indignity to which his people had been subject for decades, to use this alien island as best he could and preserve his people at any cost from such another domination.

Despite his scheme for ultimate isolation of the people, Dessalines kept everyone steadily at work by the forced-labor system instituted

2. See p. 247 and note 23. under Toussaint.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 finally the license was obtained, it authorized the foreigner to carry
439 on only a wholesale business—not with other foreign traders or with
656 any resident aliens, but with Haitians in the six open ports.[10] The
441 minimum of goods to be sold in any deal was fixed, so that no foreigner could inadvertently enter the retail business. Such licenses cost between $1,600 and $2,000, sums so large that few foreigners were drawn to the island.

Quite obviously the government sought to keep the external trade of Haiti under its control; it is equally obvious that under the licensing system, with its high fees and strict surveillance, only a small number of dealers were attracted, who consequently monopolized what little trade there was. Retail business being prohibited to them, their imports had to be sold by Haitians.

175 Not even this necessity created a middle class in the country, for
565 the purchasing power of the peasants and other lower-caste Haitians
434 was small; also the total sum of imports and exports was not large enough to support a middle class. The retail trade was chiefly in the
443 hands of town women. These *marchandes*, as they were called, em-
441 ployed a number of hucksters—likewise women—to traverse the countryside surrounding the open ports, attend the markets, and report either every evening, or every week or month, depending upon their findings. The white man let his marchande know how much coffee he required, and this information was passed on to the local speculator who, at a very moderate profit, collected the coffee beans from the peasants in his neighborhood. Imports were distributed in like manner over the countryside. In its small way this system worked well enough, for the good faith of respectable marchandes could be counted upon both by the white trader and by the local dealers. A few European and American traders found it profitable to set up as marchandes the women with whom they cohabited, for this arrangement brought them nearer to the retail trade.

175 During Boyer's long administration the staple export was coffee,
439 still cultivated on a few remaining plantations but mostly picked
24 from plants growing wild, and sold by the peasants as their one source of money income. Sugar disappeared almost wholly from the

[504] 10. Namely, Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, Gonaïves, Jacmel, Les Cayes, and Jérémie; from 1822 to 1844 there were also two open ports in the Spanish part of the island which, during those years, was a part of Haiti.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 equaled the demand for them; in 1791 the census listed half a million
24 then living, but no writer seems to have even a vague idea of how
567 many millions were imported during the sixty years of the colony's heyday.

175 Production, particularly of sugar and coffee, steadily increased
245 until the tiny colony ranked among the wealthiest regions of the
249 world. The Spanish Indies were declining, so that Saint-Domingue
433 alone far outranked them all combined between 1766 and 1791.
511 Splendid roads were built, extensive irrigation projects developed,
565 and stately mansions erected. Life moved along with ceremony and display—for the planters; attended by their black lackeys, the white French masters entertained royally or were driven like lords in their coaches to make formal visits to neighbors. Many of these well-to-do colonials spent half their time in Paris, ostentatiously spending their riches. To be "wealthy as a Creole" came to be a common expression in France.[1] Perhaps nowhere in the Americas was existence at once so delightful and so ornamental as it was for the wealthy planters among the 36,000 whites of Saint-Domingue in 1791.

175 For the mother country, too, this small bit of tropical land was
439 profitable during the latter days of Bourbon royalty. Neither Mar-
505 tinique nor Guadeloupe could compare with it in value. In 1789
648 nearly two thirds of the foreign commercial interests of France centred in Saint-Domingue; its combined exports and imports were valued at more than $140,000,000; its sugar, coffee, indigo, and cotton supplied the home market and employed in prosperous years more than 700 ocean-going vessels, with as many as 80,000 seamen.[2]

175 Where wealth exists, social distinctions generally develop. In
565 Saint-Domingue the evolving class system produced such discord
669 that sparks from the French Revolution eventually set off an explosion in the colony. Casual surveys of Haitian history generally record that in 1791 the slaves revolted, and that out of this insurrection grew the war of independence. This is true; but it was not the resentment of slaves against their masters which caused the final explosion; the
175 slaves were tinder used by others to keep the conflagration burning.
565 Negro slaves, of course, did not figure in the "class" system; they
[567] were below the classes of colonial society. The class system, properly

[10] 1. The word "creole" means only "colonial born"; there is no connotation of race mixture in the term.

2. Pamphile de Lacroix, *Mémoires*, II, 277.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

A revolution directed by a general of real ambition was likely to involve an appeal to foreign powers. Haiti being almost roadless, ships were important for moving troops and blockading seaports. Many a chieftain has purchased six or eight ships abroad, and with this "navy" won his fight. Financial intrigue was frequent. By borrowing money from France, Germany, or England, with the promise to reshape Haitian financial policy to the benefit of the creditor country, several revolutionaries have secured funds for arms and the necessary soldiers to effect a coup. Sooner or later also one might expect to see the Môle Saint Nicolas, which guards the Windward Passage pathway between Cuba and Haiti, come into the picture. Cession of the Mole has frequently been held out as bait for foreign support, but popular opposition to white ownership of any Haitian land has always stopped actual cession. When Haiti's debt to Germany was due, she borrowed from France to pay it, and then later borrowed from the United States to pay France. All such appeals to foreign powers have merely drawn attention to the defenseless position of the country; many a successful revolutionary chief has lived to regret his appeal for aid.[19]

175 669 648 457 [491] [505]

The one time between 1804 and 1915 when political opinion was vocal and truly significant was in the latter years of Boyer's administration. Then it took pains to attack specific evils with steady persistence, even though the cures suggested were vague. Yet after the successful elimination of Boyer, politicians who had worked so brilliantly in the opposition showed themselves even more incapable. Political thought, at a low ebb for the next forty years, revived only when, after 1883, the Liberals were eliminated from politics. Their complete defeat seems to have given élite thinkers time for sober reflection upon the plight of their country. Before 1843 the critics had been in a position to make their words effective; after 1883 they wrote—soberly, brilliantly, persuasively—but their books and pamphlets were read only by a small group of fellow aristocrats who already thought as they did, or disagreed with them in print. Political homilies made no impression upon the minds of the peasants left uneducated by all the élite presidents of Haiti.

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In the crucial days of the American Occupation, once again political debate rose to brilliant heights. The rude shock of seeing foreign [648]

19. See, on this whole subject of Haiti's foreign relations, an excellent chapter in Montague, op. cit., chap. IX.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

857 868 handle it; lighter work first, heavier work later. Small boys tend cattle and help the men in the fields.

178 511 The Haitian *habitant* (the peasant) is poorer and hungrier today than he was fifty years ago, or even twenty years ago. In 1955 I visited a number of peasant families I had known since 1932, and with hardly an exception I found them worse off than they had been before. Their tiny landholdings had shrunk. Some land that had been lush had dried [134] up and eroded. Little groves of trees had disappeared. Clothes had become shabby, and many of the men could no longer afford to wear the inexpensive traditional blue denim costume that was once so common. In the cities there is evidence that some of the elite have improved their life. But in a large part of the countryside the peasants are finding that the old system that served them for a hundred and fifty years can no longer feed them adequately.

423 178 One of the adverse forces is the shrinking of landholdings. Once a peasant family may have owned and worked fifty or seventy acres of ground. But it is traditional that on a man's death his land is divided [428] among the heirs. If a man with fifty acres of land has two sons, each son inherits approximately twenty-five acres. On their deaths, the land 423 is again subdivided. But even this is not the whole story. A UNESCO 427 survey of the Marbial Valley region in south Haiti in 1948–1949 reported:

> At the turn of the century there were numerous peasant families who lived in relatively easy circumstances, and who possessed as much as thirty to forty *carreaux* * [425] of land planted with coffee and subsistence crops. The heirs of these lands, when they found themselves in straitened circumstances, would sell some parcels of it in the hope of being able to increase their holdings again later on. In the worst cases they became the tenants of absentee landlords who lived in the cities. Nowadays, not only is the size of holdings very small, sometimes only one-eighth of a *carreau*, but they are also scattered, and most peasants are obliged to go from one place to another to cultivate their various owned, rented, or share-cropped fields.[§]

671 595 423 848 Haitian law—the civil code—does not recognize the rights of illegitimate children born after a legal marriage. But Haitian custom does. As a result, a Haitian who has a *placée* wife in addition to his "legal" wife may circumvent the law by deeding to her a portion of his gardens during his lifetime, thereby diminishing his holdings.

423 691 Furthermore, many landholdings are not clearly defined. There are few accurate surveys, and often the boundaries are vague. Titles to many of the holdings cannot be clearly established, and as a result there are constant lawsuits. To pay the expenses of defending his interests in court, a Haitian may have to sell a strip of his land.

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* A carreau is about three and a third acres.

§ [UNESCO, The Haiti Pilot Project, p. 18. Cf. P352, category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

For many Haitians, the struggle to obtain a piece of ground and to 423
hold onto it is the very heart of the struggle for existence. On Morne 691
l'Hôpital in 1932 I knew a man who owned ten acres of gardens. He had 511
it planted in bananas and plantains, yams, and cotton. He had two cows and a calf and a grove of mango trees and coconut palms. His house was clean, tidy, and by Haitian standards well furnished. Eighteen years later he had less than an acre of land, no trees, no cotton, and no cattle. His family had become impoverished. He had three grown children and virtually no land to leave to them except that on which the house stood. His troubles began with a lawsuit over his land title. He sold his cattle to raise money to pay his court expenses. He lost half of his land as a result of the lawsuit, most of it the part with the good trees. Later, he sold more land to raise "eating money," and then rented it from the new owner. He could not grow enough cash crops to pay the rent and was finally evicted. Today he has not enough ground left on which to grow food for himself and his wife the year round.

The diminution of adequate landholdings has resulted in the dis- 178
appearances of many of the *lacours* (hamlets) that were a familiar sight a 423
few decades ago. Young people traditionally built their houses near the 361
family homesteads until there were five, six, or a dozen houses in a 166
group. There was a natural family community which shared a common [596]
social life and the work of the fields. But as the population increased and [621]
the landholdings shrank, young people and old began to move away in search of new land, or work in the cities. Often where the lacour remains it is only as a settlement of landless house renters who work where they may for wages.

Economic refugees from rural areas seek wage work in the cities, 166
returning to their original homes only on special festive days for family 464
reunions. The men find employment as gardeners, servants, construction laborers, and stevedores. Some find work on the sugar and sisal plantations, others in craft industries making straw hats, baskets, shoes, chairs, and mahogany ware for export. The struggle in the big city of Port-au-Prince is for many of them worse than the poverty they left behind. There are the inevitable slums and the constant threat of hunger. It is in the big city that one hears most often the words *moin grand gout* (I am hungry), and least often the words *Bondieu bon* (God is good).

The land hunger increases, and the overflow of the mountain settle- 167
ments continues to move cityward. In former years there was a trend 195
toward emigration across the eastern border into the Dominican Re-
public, which has a population density roughly one third or one fourth
that of Haiti. This trend was checked, temporarily at least, in 1937 by [648]

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same century in which Haiti withdrew. The yeomanry of Haiti in the nineteenth century was hence able to develop a traditionalism of unusual firmness and persistence.

This traditionalism, however, has had a high price. The economic productivity of the rural cultivator has not risen; it can be argued convincingly that poor land use, erosion, and population growth have meant lower levels of consumption for the common people in 1966 than obtained a hundred years or more ago. The rural masses, though overwhelmingly consisting of landholders, have been unable to break out of a stagnation that is economic as well as cultural. Such stasis has been based to some extent on the limited responsiveness of the rural folk to outside stimulus. But also important in maintaining the past is the national institutional system that took on its characteristic shape after 1804, and under which the rural masses still live. That system, the origins of which Leyburn has examined and assessed with such care, is controlled, as we have seen, by a numerically small segment of the national population that is markedly distinct from the yeomanry itself.

The nature and internal differentiation of the elite needs much more study, though it seems clear already that it is by no means a single solidary class embracing all but the yeomen. Whatever the structure of the elite, the relationship between the yeomen on the one hand and the real holders of power on the other must be understood if one is to understand Haiti. The yeoman is defined in terms of the elite; he is dependent upon it and subject to it. This is what is meant when it is said that the yeomanry, like the elite, forms only a part-society. Yet without the yeomen, there would be no elite. The elite live by controlling and taxing the rural masses, and find their sustenance and their power in rural productivity. Elite and yeomen, then, are bound together in unequal but interdependent relationships in Haiti as they are in other less developed societies of a similar kind. In such cases, the political role of the yeomanry is usually minor, and few opportunities may arise for the expansion of its political strength. If the yeomanry fails to increase its productivity in ways that enable it to control more of its own surpluses, its role in affecting national political decisions may grow narrower rather than wider, and this ominous possibility has become a worldwide phenomenon. It becomes more intensified wherever industry and trade grow, unaccompanied by parallel growth in yeoman productivity or in new and more widely representative national institutions.

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The major effect of the North

Amer-
648 ican tenure seems to have been to make possible a much more telling
642 centralism in political control than had been operative in Haiti at any time since the fall of the Christophe regime; and the consequences of this change are still being felt.

241 Small-scale rural cultivators are famous for their tendency to con-
565 fine their consumption to culturally conventionalized levels—that is,
433 to live as their predecessors lived before them. Though they are in-
178 volved in commercial spheres larger than the communities in which
185 they live, they seek to limit that involvement and to maintain their
● 511 cash expenditures at a low level. It is in this sense that Haiti might be
472 called a "quasi-capitalistic" society. To put it another way, yeomen of this sort do not seek to change or to expand their production—rather, they aim to conserve a way of life set by tradition. The ideology of resistance to social and cultural change is one of the major obstacles to development; but it would be rash to damn such an ideology without reflection. In Haiti, for instance, there has long been pressure upon the rural masses to expand their production of coffee, the major export crop. However, this pressure has not been accompanied by any serious grass-roots attempt to improve coffee production or to offer genuine incentives to the cultivators. The yeomanry has no assurance at all that any expansion of effort will lead to gains *for them*; and they are little prepared to invest such effort merely because they are told that it will be good for Haiti. In fact, it is likely
[439] that the production of subsistence crops has expanded in recent years at the cost of coffee production, for the yeoman knows that he can at least be sure of eating and of selling locally such crops as maize, sorghum, and yams, regardless of what may happen in Port-au-Prince or to the world coffee market. This view, combined with the yeoman's painfully acquired distrust of those who prate at length concerning his welfare, has meant a virtual stagnation of agricultural export production, even though the whole land quite literally depends on this production in order to progress.

241 The effect of this rural resistance is to create an apparent very sharp
565 difference in goals between countryman and bureaucrat. It is per-
433 fectly understandable that the countryman should fail to see the con-
185 nection between heightened coffee production and a higher level of public welfare and social services. His experiences hardly persuade him that it is his surplus-producing capacity that underlies the kind and quality of public institutions with which the state provides him.

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intrepidity in enterprise is required. It is striking that those foreign captains of industry—mainly from the United States—who invest in Haiti, expect (and often get) governmental guarantees of a sort they could not dream of in their own countries; in this regard, they merely conform to Haitian expectations.

Haiti's problems, then, are not simply those that face any less developed country, vast though such problems may be. Nor is it intelligent to lay Haiti's problems at the feet of the nation's present rulers. The structure of the national economy has not changed significantly during the past twenty-five years—except that boom years could provide a temporary aura of prosperity—regardless of the philosophy or popularity of the regime in power. If nothing else, the present nadir of Haiti's fortunes demonstrates that United States aid averaging twelve and a half million dollars yearly over more than a decade has produced no enduring improvements of any kind. It may further demonstrate that, shockingly poor as the country is, it emphatically does not depend on such aid. As of 1964, the regime in power was operating on a monthly budget of $1,800,000, only $400,000 of which went for purposes other than salaries. In other words, the ministries do little more than perpetuate themselves unchanged. The yeomanry, living near subsistence level, continues to produce most of what it needs, while restricting its cash expenditures even more severely than in the past. The risks—in terms, say, of public health—of running a society under these circumstances are great; but there is no reason to suppose that regimes of the Haitian sort will be destroyed or improved by a show of popular unrest originating in the countryside. Difficult as life is for the Haitian countryman, and no people in Latin America lives more poorly, the real pinch is probably being experienced more acutely among the city folk than among their rural fellow citizens. It matters politically, therefore, who these city folk are and what they do.

To begin with, there has been a significant loss of professional people, almost all of whom were urban, through migration and exile, especially since 1958. Haitian doctors, dentists, and other professionals are widely scattered today, both in the developed and the less developed countries of the world. Former army officers, journalists, diplomats, businessmen, and academicians have fled political repression, perhaps with the hope of eventually returning to their own country.

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The distinction between castes on the basis of occupation is nowhere more clearly seen than in the feminine sphere. The peasant woman, from childhood onward, is an indefatigable laborer, absolutely indispensable to the economic life of the country. She not only performs the usual domestic functions but works in the fields as well. She carries marketable goods, sometimes for miles, to the town for sale. The aristocratic woman, on the other hand, is rarely active in business. Indeed, until very recent years no career was open to her outside the home, nor would custom have allowed her to follow one; even now, teaching and a few clerical positions in government service are her only business opportunities. She directs the household economy but has servants if she can possibly afford them. Her place is definitely in the home. 565 562

The second infallible test of membership in the élite caste is education and an ability to speak French. When Haiti was a slave colony belonging to France, the hundreds of thousands of blacks imported from Africa had no common tongue, coming as they did from wide stretches of the continent; the French spoken by their overseers, a development of the Norman dialect,[3] became their one language, known as Créole. Every Haitian, high and low, knows and uses this language, for nursemaids speak it to the upper-class children in their charge, and all servants speak it. The élite consequently learn it at a tender age, and must use it in all their dealings with the lower orders. Among themselves, however, they speak French. The official language of the country is French. To speak correct French is an immediate announcement that one has had the advantage of schooling and has been in contact with the aristocracy. Theoretically, Haitian education is free and democratic; actually, no peasant child could be spared from labor long enough for schooling, or find money for proper clothes to go to school in. 565 197 [87]

Inevitably the standard of living is a reflection of caste membership. "The élite wear shoes," explained General Butler laconically to the United States Senate investigating committee, when asked what characterized the classes of Haiti. His elliptical remark is true. Peasants, indeed, could not afford to purchase shoes, but more particularly they could not afford to dress up to the standard set by the shoes. When a man of the masses dons the castoff shoes of some aristocrat, the logical assumption by everyone is that this man is pre- 565 511

3. See chap. XVIII.

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565 paring to try to move one step up the social ladder. Shoes are a sym-
● 511 bol: wearing these, one must also wear a suit instead of a faded shirt and patched trousers; the suit demands personal cleanliness and a better home; all these lead the country man to town life with its additional expenses. So arduous a climb does not allure many of the Haitian common folk.

565 Because the standard of living, with its tangibles and intangibles,
181 clearly separates the castes, the élite observe all the rules with rigor. Their etiquette is formal. Culture (in the popular, not the anthropological meaning) is respected with almost religious devotion.

565 Since the maintenance of a high standard of living is costly, it is
511 obvious that another source of caste distinction lies in the inequalities
434 of wealth and property. Wealth is a relative term, however, and the Haitian peasant is so poor that by contrast a few hundred dollars' income a year will seem like riches. The élite live economically by American standards, yet even parsimonious spending of money may, when governed by a consciousness of social distinctions, make the peak of aristocracy unassailable.

565 The élite live in towns. Many of them own country estates, but
369 regard these as secondary to their residences in Port-au-Prince, Pétionville, Cap-Haïtien, Jérémie, and the other few towns. To live a rural life is to be isolated, out of the stream of fashion, news, social activity. What profession can one follow in a rustic valley? One who is class-conscious must see and be seen by others of his class, otherwise he would be forgotten by "those who count." In the towns are the schools; there French is spoken; there, and there only, financial and social opportunities exist. True, plebeians form the majority of the population even in the towns, so that urbanization alone is not a mark of caste; it must be taken in conjunction with the others.

565 Formal marriage is another requisite for membership in the élite.
581 As will shortly be apparent, sex relations in Haiti are quite casual, as judged by American standards. The majority of Haitian families are established by parents who have gone through neither a civil nor a religious ceremony. This is not to imply that spouses are unfaithful to each other, or that there is not mutual respect within the family circle; it merely means that most people regard formal marriage as a luxury which they cannot afford, or in any case as a ceremony which custom has made superfluous. Once again, however, the aristocrat holds to the form. If a family can point to legal marriages among

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565 171 Modern usage, having borrowed the word "caste" from India, employs it loosely to mean a rigid class system of which the people are conscious.[4] In India caste was always endogamous and connected with occupation. Kroeber defines it as "an endogamous and hereditary division of an ethnic unit occupying a position of superior or inferior rank or social esteem in comparison with other such subdivisions."[5] Castes, as distinguished from social classes, "have emerged into social consciousness to the point where custom and law attempt their rigid and permanent separation from one another." By each of these criteria Haiti has castes.

565 582 [463] [461] The élite are endogamous in that they would not consider marriage into the masses. The one exception to the endogamic practice is marriage with a white foreigner. Whereas in India all members of a caste had the same general occupation, in Haiti several occupations are open to caste members; but the distinction between honorable and demeaning work is understood by all, so that no person has free choice as regards the two larger categories. Haitian law does not name the social divisions, nor does it legislate the masses into a subordinate position[6]—for the simple reason that there is no conceivable need to enact what already exists. The laws of Haiti are administered by élite officials; these men make the definitions and interpretations. The judge always knows the custom, so that (as in most countries) the same offense brings different penalties for upper- and lower-class offenders. Custom holds sway, and custom is more tyrannical than any body of law.

Inside the castes may be found social distinctions familiar in democracies and in every other kind of society. Interest in politics, business, literature, or sport draws people of like minds together and makes cliques. There are well-to-do families who outshine their neighbors, just as there are peasant landholders who dominate their rural communities. A high civil official has more prestige than a doctor with a small practice, just as among the masses a house servant for an élite family outranks a beggar.

565 511 105 185 For the majority of Haitians, life is too elemental to be concerned with artificial wants. The peasant talks, unfettered by rules of gram-

4. See also W. Lloyd Warner, "American Caste and Class," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLII, No. 2 (Sept. 1936), 234–237; and John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (New Haven, 1937), pp. 62 ff.

5. A. L. Kroeber, "Caste," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, III, 254.

6. Such efforts were made, however, in the early days of the republic. See chap. III.

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mar or any schoolmaster's correction; he behaves like his fellows; he learns by trial and error, by imitation, by the praise and ridicule of his elders, what to do and what not to do. What really matters in life is having food to eat, avoiding bad luck in health and crops, having a wife and family, keeping on the right side of the spirits, and being able at night to dance, sing, and tell tales with his friends. He wears no tight-fitting clothes, never bothers about fashions, certainly never puzzles his brain to reconcile his theological and philosophical views with each other. This is by no means a poetic or idyllic existence for him, however. The peasant is so poor that misfortune may be catastrophic; the soil he has to farm is worn out by decades of erosion and crude tillage; disease is so widespread that most people know misery. A man cannot, even if he would, save up for a rainy day; he lacks the necessary implements to plough deep while sluggards sleep. One is safe so long as he does what everyone else does, and if this rule breaks down, at least misery will have company. Keep out of harm's way if possible, but bear it stoically when it comes. Avoid what is strange—particularly all legal documents, courts, politics, city ways, and people who shout orders. The peasant is conservative because radical changes, such as come from revolutions, for example, dislocate his life, leaving him worse off than before. Progress and improvement are to him only vague abstractions, much less real than the struggle for mere existence.

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For the élite, on the other hand, life is rather a struggle to maintain and improve the standard of living. It is always easier to predict what a person will not do than what he will. It would be hard to define, therefore, a typical aristocrat. In one basic matter, however, the high-class Haitian is poles removed from the peasant: instead of accepting things as they are ("*Bon Dieu bon,*" runs the peasant saying: God is good—and the inflection of the voice implies that the second "bon" may also mean "inscrutable"), the élite person is restlessly dissatisfied with the conditions of life: economic, social, political. His unexpressed ideal is to be accepted as an equal in the cultured circles of Western society, to have the same entrée to courts, clubs, and parties abroad as cultivated white Europeans and Americans.

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Since the country has never had an accurate census, it is not possible to say precisely how many persons belong to each caste. By the most generous estimates not one out of twenty-five Haitians is élite—and such a figure stretches the category to a point which no literate

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equaled the demand for them; in 1791 the census listed half a million then living, but no writer seems to have even a vague idea of how many millions were imported during the sixty years of the colony's heyday.

Production, particularly of sugar and coffee, steadily increased until the tiny colony ranked among the wealthiest regions of the world. The Spanish Indies were declining, so that Saint-Domingue alone far outranked them all combined between 1766 and 1791. Splendid roads were built, extensive irrigation projects developed, and stately mansions erected. Life moved along with ceremony and display—for the planters; attended by their black lackeys, the white French masters entertained royally or were driven like lords in their coaches to make formal visits to neighbors. Many of these well-to-do colonials spent half their time in Paris, ostentatiously spending their riches. To be "wealthy as a Creole" came to be a common expression in France.[1] Perhaps nowhere in the Americas was existence at once so delightful and so ornamental as it was for the wealthy planters among the 36,000 whites of Saint-Domingue in 1791.

For the mother country, too, this small bit of tropical land was profitable during the latter days of Bourbon royalty. Neither Martinique nor Guadeloupe could compare with it in value. In 1789 nearly two thirds of the foreign commercial interests of France centred in Saint-Domingue; its combined exports and imports were valued at more than $140,000,000; its sugar, coffee, indigo, and cotton supplied the home market and employed in prosperous years more than 700 ocean-going vessels, with as many as 80,000 seamen.[2]

Where wealth exists, social distinctions generally develop. In Saint-Domingue the evolving class system produced such discord that sparks from the French Revolution eventually set off an explosion in the colony. Casual surveys of Haitian history generally record that in 1791 the slaves revolted, and that out of this insurrection grew the war of independence. This is true; but it was not the resentment of slaves against their masters which caused the final explosion; the slaves were tinder used by others to keep the conflagration burning. Negro slaves, of course, did not figure in the "class" system; they were below the classes of colonial society. The class system, properly

1. The word "creole" means only "colonial born"; there is no connotation of race mixture in the term.

2. Pamphile de Lacroix, *Memoires*, II, 277.

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175 563 565 [701] [669] an ineffective government, momentarily in the hands of colored élite. Attempting to dominate politics was a numerically small group of colored people and a still smaller group of Negroes. Although prevailingly black, the army might be, and in the later nineteenth century was continually, used by whichever group offered more. A third power, a middle class, might have balanced these antagonistic factions. Lacking such a moderating influence, Haiti was the victim of recurrent revolutionary movements.

175 178 642 643 At the time of Boyer, actual democracy would have been no safeguard, for it would have meant the supremacy of ignorance. His rule was the beginning of unfortunate days for Haiti. After the auspicious opening years, the President became an impotent onlooker as his country declined. It is instructive to compare the Haiti of Dessalines and Christophe with the Haiti of 1843, only one generation later.[62]

175 178 642 433 466 The Haiti of 1806 had been a beehive of activity. Soldiers, foremen, and policemen then stood over the workers with lianes to force them to labor for the benefit of their state. Production was carefully planned, an ordered hierarchy making every person in the country responsible to another higher than himself until the ruler was reached at the pinnacle. The cardinal fault of any laborer was to shirk at his task. The year 1843, on the contrary, found Haiti in a condition of quiescence which, to those who remembered the old days, resembled torpor. The central government had ceased to drive its citizens, and its half-hearted attempts at persuasion were futile. Overseers, drivers of gangs of workers, soldiers whose duty it was to enforce labor, had disappeared from the scene. Every man was his own master.

175 178 511 The standard of living in 1806 as in 1843 was low; but in the earlier year there had been a promise of great things to come once Haiti had rebuilt what war had destroyed. The succeeding years, however, failed to inculcate into the people a desire for any higher standard of life. Country dwellers were benighted; ignorance deepened the habit

[162] [175] 62. Haiti has never had an accurate census, so that it is impossible even to estimate the total population of the country either in 1806 or in 1843. The figures of 380,000 and 800,000 given by some authors for the two years are mere guesses. Likewise, one can only deduce the proportion of people in the main economic and social categories; probably seventy-five per cent of the Haitians were serfs in 1806 and the same percentage peasants in 1843; the "aristocracy," including all who did not derive a living by manual labor or army service, could hardly have reached five per cent in either year; the army, house servants, day laborers in the towns, and petty businessmen would make up the other twenty per cent.

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of living only for the day by making people content with a low level of physical existence. Haitian peasants were isolated from the rest of the world; and one who has no standard of comparison rarely has the incentive to improve his living conditions.

Production declined between 1806 and 1843 both in quantity and in quality. Sugar, the staple of colonial trade and still an important export under Christophe, disappeared from the market figures altogether under Boyer. Most of the cane which was raised was worked into syrup and then into tafia (raw rum) for local consumption. Careful attention and the well-ordered machinery necessary for sugar manufacture were both lacking in 1843. Sugar cane was almost never newly planted, but simply lasted on from French days; what plants there were had little attention: they were not manured, or ploughed, or stripped of their dead leaves. Everything was left to nature. The production of coffee in actual number of pounds stood up well, although the quality fell off through lack of cultivation; the price in world markets steadily declined, however, so that the crop of 1843 brought in only twelve million francs as compared with twenty million for the smaller crop of 1822.[63]

Practically every acre of the fertile soil of Haiti was cultivated in 1806, the methods steadily improving under Christophe. Irrigation projects were then being developed to replace those destroyed in the wars, and a measure of experimentation went on with new crops and fertilizers. In 1843, however, what was called a coffee "plantation" was actually only a large tract of land on which coffee trees grew wild. There was no laying out of the lands nor any improvement of the soil or pruning of the trees to strengthen the parent stem. Until the berries were ready to be picked the coffee tree was rarely touched, except when pigs scratched their backs on it, or goats and donkeys cropped the grass around it. Cotton likewise received little cultivation. Cocoa raising practically ceased altogether, for it required intelligent management.

Haiti under Dessalines still had many buildings of French con-

63. The state figures for 1843 revealed only four money crops, no one of which was as productive of income as sugar had been. In the comparative tables given below it must be remembered that prices declined between 1822 and 1843.

	5-Year Average, 1822–26	*1843*
Coffee	34,000,000 pounds	35,000,000 pounds
Cotton	678,000 "	2,000,000 "
Campêche	5,600 "	30,000,000 "
Acajou	2,460,000 feet	6,000,000 feet

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however, as on the masses. Nothing was done to educate the people and so inculcate in them the desire for a higher standard of living. Where food is easily got, the government gentle, and the people ignorant, one hardly looks for progress.

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Foreigners who knew Haiti were prophesying doom through most of Boyer's administration. The British consul was the most vocal of these prophets. He toured the whole republic in 1828 and found only local variations on a sorry state of affairs. At Jacmel he reported a parceling of the land, a decline of plantations, and a horror of corporal punishment by the people; it seemed to surprise him that every blow given a worker was returned in kind. In the arrondissements of Saint-Marc and Gonaïves cotton continued to be the chief crop as it had been in French days but quantity and quality had declined. At Petite-Rivière relative prosperity prevailed because the lands there were under the control of a former lieutenant of Christophe, who managed to apply that king's stern discipline to his workers. From Gonaïves to Cap Nicolas Môle cultivation was at a low ebb; near Cap-Haïtien everything agricultural was in ruins.[65]

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Industry and discipline, the two commonest characteristics of the Haiti of Christophe, were precisely those most notably absent from the Negro masses of 1843. Obedience had given way to independence of behavior. A visitor in 1842 describes the actual condition of a plantation in the arrondissement of Furcy. Where formerly thirty-two families had toiled industriously, under strict overseers who were free to inflict physical punishment upon laggards, now only twelve families remained, the rest having become "freeholders." These twelve had a crop-sharing agreement with the owner of the estate whereby they received the income from half the 10,000 pounds of coffee yielded by the land; but also they

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appropriate to themselves almost the whole of the provisions which the land furnishes, sending down only a few of the rarer vegetables, beans, peas, and artichokes, to their master, for his table at Port-au-Prince, and supplying his need when he comes to reside for a few days in the country. This he knows very well, but has no alternative but to bear it quietly.[66]

65. See particularly *Ibid.*, pp. 94, 103–105. The consul clearly felt that the only hope of salvation in Haiti was a reintroduction of some sort of coercion such as that used by Dessalines and Christophe.

66. Candler, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

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Besides the figures given above must be set there of the government

budget, which is annually in the neighborhood of $7,000,000, and of its annual imports and exports, neither of which generally exceeds $10,000,000 a year. Chicago, with its population of three million, has an annual budget of about $275,000,000, aside from state and federal services. 652 [439]

To care for all the needs of three million people in Haiti there is a sum of money less than that available annually to several of our American universities. Out of the seven million dollars must come all salaries of officials, legislators, judges, policemen, schoolteachers; the wages of all janitors and day laborers employed by the government; the upkeep of all schools, roads, lighthouses, experiment stations; the maintenance of such important public services as health, sanitation, education, soil development, reforestation. Since there are few towns, practically every improvement which takes place must be paid for by the central government. [369]

Haiti's growth in population is not a new thing. It has been increasing steadily since 1804 while the soil of the country was being worn out and foreign trade grew stagnant. The country is entirely agricultural, there being absolutely no manufacturing industry worth the name. The people consequently live upon a subsistence economy. The soil is still fertile enough to preserve life in the teeming population, though undernourishment is general. Most of the people have no "artificial" wants and could not satisfy them under present conditions even if they had. 161 [134] [439] 433 164 [134] [511]

Assuming the census of Dessalines in 1805 to be even approximately accurate, the population is now eight times what it was then. The working of the Law of Population[3] is implacable: if population increases while economic efficiency remains static or declines, either there will be an increasing death rate or the standard of living must sink—or both. In the case of Haiti, economic efficiency is certainly not what it was under the forced-labor system of Dessalines: the death rate has been continuously high; it is the standard of living which has suffered. 161 433 176 [165] [511]

To grasp the import of Haiti's problem of overpopulation one

3. "Population tends to increase up to the limit of the supporting power of the land, relative to the economic efficiency and to the standard of living of the people at the time." (For an amplification of this discussion on overpopulation, see the note on p. 320.) The law of population as stated here is a modification of that given by Sumner and Keller, *The Science of Society*, I, 46; their statement, in turn, is that of Malthus with the added cultural items of economic efficiency and the standard of living. [114]

To grasp the import of Haiti's problem of 270 over population one.

THE HAITIAN PEOPLE

161 should imagine the number of Vermonters sextupled, working with
433 hand tools and using methods which their great-grandfathers would
171 have considered antiquated; imagine the state with only a hundred
● 511 miles of paved roads, with no harnessed water power, no substantial fortunes, no middle class; imagine the farms gullied and worn out; ninety-five per cent of the people illiterate and undernourished; the state having no industry and practically no goods imported from New York, Massachusetts, or any other part of the United States. Under such conditions the low standard of living would be readily understandable.

Haiti might also be compared with Mississippi. Less than a quarter the size of that American state, it nevertheless has a larger population. Both Haiti and Mississippi are agricultural, with few towns, although no part of Haiti now has land as richly fertile as that of the Yazoo Delta. The low standard of living of the Mississippi share-cropper, whether Negro or white, is notorious—yet he has access to a few of the perquisites of civilization, whether these be elementary schools or moving pictures; the Haitian peasant lacks even these. In America the undercurrent of feeling is that something should be, probably eventually will be, done to improve the lot of the share-cropper. Certainly there is wealth enough in the country at large to alleviate conditions where they are deemed to be socially unhealthy. Not so in Haiti: the land is poorer, the numbers even greater, the area much smaller; and there is no wealth in the country, nor enough social vision among the upper classes to deal with the relentless increase of numbers.

168 How conceivably might this problem be dealt with? The first answer which would occur to many Americans, namely, birth control, is out of the question at present. Expense would stand in the way of its use by people who hardly ever see money; the peasants, unable to read, suspicious of new-fangled ways, untouched by all efforts to "uplift" them, and with no educational agencies, could hardly be converted to the use of contraceptives; while the Catholic
[795] Church, which until now has not had to raise its voice against birth control in Haiti, would fight any proposal to introduce it as it fought the campaign in Puerto Rico.

167 Another possible answer is migration. This solution many Haitians
C48 have tried without prompting. With little money available for

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

North of the square stands the Caserne, a substantial structure with rounded arches in the Roman style, roofed over, like most other buildings, with galvanized iron. Other public buildings are the town hall — the Mairie — and the "Hall of Justice"; near by are the stone walls of a public building begun some years ago as a school, but destined apparently to house what is known as the "Bureau of Contributions," a euphemism for the tax-collector's quarters. Despite the fact that Mirebalais was one of the most difficult regions for the American occupation to subdue during the Caco uprising of 1918–20,[11] it was one of the first districts where the Guarde d'Haiti was completely Haitianized, and from which all American Marine officers were withdrawn. Only a small detachment is stationed there at present. Its well-kept barracks are near the church, and the prisons form a part of the same compound, from whence issue daily the striped-suited prisoners, men and women, under guard or alone on parole, who do communal work in the town and the near-by countryside.

The town awakens at dawn to the chattering of domesticated guinea-fowl and the crowing of cocks. Occasionally a camion rumbles through the principal thoroughfare; more rarely an automobile dashes by in great clouds of dust on its way to Las Cahobas, or Hinche, or Santo Domingo City. If it is a market day, the streets are early filled with country folk on their way to dispose of their produce, and the clatter from the market place behind the church is heard everywhere until the heat of the day brings a lull to all commerce, and drowsiness once more settles over everything. By mid-afternoon during the planting season, drums can be heard over the countryside. The sounds are not those of the "throbbing" *vodun* drums — though they have more than once been mistaken for them by travelers — but they set the rhythm for the communal work of the *combites*, which perform cooperative agricultural labor. As the rapid dusk follows the disappearance of the sun behind the mountains, the voices of

512 neighbors paying friendly visits and of playing children gradually become stilled. It is the time for the evening meal. By nine o'clock at the latest all is quiet and Mirebalais, man and beast, is asleep.

The *vodun* drums are heard only on Saturday nights, and then the dance must be sufficiently close to the town, and the wind in the right direction, for the sound to be audible. Permits for these dances must be obtained, and are regularly given by the police officials — or were in 1934 — and word is passed on that on a given Saturday certain households will give *vodun* dances. If the dances are held in the foothills to the west, the Tombe River must be forded, and the existence of such a barrier between the village and the site of the dance makes this a favorite region in which to hold them, even though they may have official sanction. During the rainy season attendance at dances on the opposite bank of the Artibonite River depends on the height of the stream, for when it is in flood not even the dugout canoes of the Haitians can cross it, while the ferry which Moreau de St. Mery speaks of as having been established in 1749 does not even exist in local tradition.[14] Yet no dance lacks participants or spectators, for these occasions furnish the principal opportunity for recreation even as they fill their proper religious function. Early in the week discussions can be heard of the dances to be held, and though the official frown of the Catholic priest is always to be reckoned with, the importance of these dances, and the numbers who attend them, do not seem markedly lessened by this fact. Those whose social position in the community makes them more sensitive to such criticism merely take the precaution to slip quietly out of town after dark.

When occasions of local or national significance and church holidays are celebrated, the town is full of country folk and visitors from the cities. Christmas and New Year's, Mardi Gras and Easter are all periods for such celebrations, while the first Sunday of every month witnesses a religious procession

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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CHAPTER IV

THE SETTING OF HAITIAN LIFE

Since the discovery by the Spaniards that the wealth of Haiti lay rather in cultivating sugar than in the exploitation of gold mines, its dominant economy has been agricultural. In the valley of Mirebalais, as elsewhere in the island, the small cultivator holds the center of the economic stage. In the main he works his own land, inherited from his father or acquired through purchase. He may also cultivate additional plots of ground which he rents, since much of the land expropriated when independence was gained was retained by the State and today is leased for nominal fees.[1]

The life of the Haitian farmer, though hard, is simple and self-contained. With but few exceptions, he supplies all his necessities, for he commands almost the entire range of techniques known to his culture; hence Haitian economy shows a lack of specialization that in the main is only relieved by the sex division of labor. The day's work begins at dawn, the women rising before the men to prepare coffee, the invariable drink of early morning. When finished with his breakfast, the farmer goes to his field, where, except for the hottest hours, he works until sundown, his one meal being brought to him at about nine or ten o'clock in the morning. His wife meanwhile occupies herself with her household tasks, pounding grain in her mortar or working in her garden near by.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

512 grain in her mortar or working in her garden near by. On
[443] market days she takes the produce of the family's fields to the
[438] town to sell. If she has young children, she cares for them
[855] while she does her other work, but when they are old enough,
[891] they help her about the house if they are girls, or, if boys, go with their father to the garden. From time to time, when
[856] house repairs are needed or there are implements to be
[241] mended, the man spends a day at home getting these odd jobs done; otherwise only serious illness in the family keeps him from his fields.

512 The times for meals have not varied since the days when
264 Moreau de St. Mery described the eating-habits of the slaves.[8] In addition to the mid-morning repast, the only other meal is that eaten after the man returns from his field, this being the largest of the day. A wife does not sit down with her
[562] husband, but usually eats earlier with her small children and
[593] holds herself ready to serve him upon his return, when, if he is alone, she remains to tell him the day's gossip. Visitors are
[574] often present, for peasant etiquette demands that all comers
[576] be offered food, and, as one Haitian expressed it, "The peasant would kill you for the insult if you did not share your meal with him." Bedtime, as might be expected, is early.

512 On Sundays and on the days of festivals this routine is in-
527 terrupted, when, if the occasion is of sufficient importance
[196] and the habitation is not too far from town, the peasant and his family attend mass. On Saturday nights there is usually a *vodun* dance, when the early hour for retirement is forgotten and all-night festivities precede Sunday's rest. On such days
[264] the principal meal is eaten at three or four o'clock in the afternoon, and all the adults share it together, while at one side the children are fed from the dishes of their parents in response to the insistent repetition of the demand "*Ba'm pa'm* — give me my portion." *

* This is an example of the elision characteristic of Haitian Créole, it being abbreviated from *Ba mois part mois ou*, in French, *Donnez-moi ma part.*

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

therefore plantations must be made to yield the uttermost farthing if the nobleman was to pay for the necessities of strict court etiquette. It was by no means a childish whim which prompted Christophe to call himself a king; rather an intelligent utilization of the human material the leader had to work with. Vanity was to serve an economic and a political purpose. 175 643 642 565

Christophe perceived that the defect of Dessalines' reign had been lack of security, both of person and property. Agriculture is a long-term investment and so must be hedged about by orderly rules. To this end the monarch stated his laws clearly, charged a fixed tax—one fourth of the annual crop—which would enrich the kingdom while allowing the tenant-proprietor a reasonable profit, and then guaranteed that no arbitrary demands would be made. Certainly there was no pampering of the wealthy, but there was ample prosperity resulting from regularity and security. 175 651

The ordinary citizen was, as he had been, bound to the soil as an agricultural laborer. This quasi-serfdom, however, was comparative freedom. It simply meant that the home and work of a man must be at the plantation on which he had been born. Saturday afternoons and Sundays were free, so that the laborers might make the most of their opportunities to visit the nearest market village, to buy and sell small goods, gossip, and enjoy the sociability of being part of a crowd. Being bound to the soil meant simply that they could not move, when the impulse seized them, to another plantation or another part of the country. Those whose mothers or relatives were natives of a plantation must return to that estate, being forbidden to live in towns. No person, military or other, who did not derive his living from a plantation, could marry an agricultural worker—a prohibition designed to prevent workers from leaving estates because of family ties, and particularly to prevent women, as mothers of future cultivators, from deserting agriculture. 175 566 641 466 [582]

Mediaeval serfdom itself went no further in binding people to the soil. Indeed, it did not go so far in regulating the daily life of serfs. Under Christophe the cultivators lived according to a routine as strict as that of a school. Reveille was rung as early as three o'clock to arouse women to prepare breakfasts for their menfolk; by four or four-thirty the bell was sounded for the commencement of work, which began after prayers had been led by the overseer. At nine o'clock there was a pause for luncheon, and then a resumption of 175 566 512 466

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 work until noon. A two-hour siesta followed, but from two until
566 sunset there was steady work. Only after evening prayers was the
512 worker free. During the day no cultivator might leave his task except
466 for direst need. The lame and the halt were not required to till the fields, but must carry around buckets of drinking water, take care of the children, and do odd jobs about the estate.

175 Christophe made a steady and, in the main, successful effort to
566 explain to the people the necessity of hard work on the plantation. As with the noblemen, the serfs knew precisely what was expected of
466 them, and why. Their regimentation was strict, but understandable. It was clearly stipulated that if a worker shirked his job he was to be put in prison and made to do forced labor there. Laziness in the fields was to be punished by strokes from the overseer's liane. Hard and steady work was demanded during the whole thirteen years of Christophe's rule, but only rarely was there complaint, as there had been constantly under Dessalines, of cruelty on the part of overseers.

175 The quarter part of the total crop of any plantation was to go to
465 the workers as wages, and, since production increased and prices rose, this quarter which they were free to spend as they pleased provided a powerful incentive to further industry. As compared with anything they had known before, the workers were now recipients of an ample income. On the plantations they cultivated
[423] the money crops of sugar and coffee. In addition, each family had
[241] its own garden plot on which to raise the food crops—yams, plantains, beans, and bananas—for personal use.[9]

175 Christophe was so far ahead of his time that he tried to introduce
177 British methods of agriculture into his kingdom. The results were insignificant. The plough, although obviously superior in efficiency
407 to the hoe, eliminated the sociable companionship of working in
178 unison, and demanded horses and mules which the country lacked. The innovations were consequently too radical to be accepted. In the main, the agricultural methods of the kingdom continued to be those familiar in slave days.

175 Thirteen years of careful direction can fix many patterns of social
178 routine. One of Christophe's rules was that no cultivator attached to

[241] 9. The staples of other countries, such as Irish potatoes, wheat, barley, and oats, did not flourish in Haiti. On the large plantations, indigo and cotton, which had been money crops in the French régime, were generally neglected, as they had been in the time of Dessalines.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

643 and being the personal property of the monarch and recipients of his
701 royal favor, were to constitute the perpetual support of his throne.
625 Only four thousand of these compulsory immigrants came, but
625 Christophe made them into very effective companies of police, whom he named the Royal Dahomets from the country of their origin. They performed the duties of a gendarmerie in all the districts of the North, drove the cultivators to their labors, watched over property and the security of the proprietors, and maintained industry and a strict subordination among all ranks of people in the kingdom.

175 Christophe's regular troops were well clothed and armed. They
701 were kept under stern discipline, no mercy or relaxation being
[703] shown them; delinquency on their part brought flagellation or a military execution. The troops received only a nominal stipend, and each soldier was required to gain his subsistence by cultivating a few acres of ground allotted to him out of the national domain. The usual quarter of this income had, of course, to be turned over as a tax to the state. Although the King's power was maintained by soldiers, he never coddled them. "The soldiers of the army as well as the laborers of the plantations lived in perpetual dread of the rod of authority," wrote Brown.[14] They seem to have developed a tradition of some special fetish power possessed by Christophe, a sort of *mana*, to use anthropological terminology. Even princes and dukes were chastised by the King's orders, and then made to do menial work by way of further punishment.

Conditions in the republic of Pétion were similar and yet different —similar in that soldiers formed the support of the government, different in that Pétion did not rule by fear. Every individual man between 16 and 60, a few cultivators excepted, was required by law to be a soldier, either in the *corps solde* (regular troops of the line), or in the *corps non solde* (national guard). The former, both under Pétion and in the early days of Boyer, had about 40,000 men distributed in strong detachments in towns and communes all over the
[914] country. Their costume, instead of being neat, uniform, and daily inspected as with Christophe's army, was ragged and mismated; they
[465] managed according to popular parlance "to find linen on every hedge." They were paid from fifty cents to a dollar a month, ac-
[541] cording to the existing solvency or exigency of the state. Each week
[512] end a parade and review was held, and then a small fatigue party was taken to do actual duty, the others being dismissed until the next

14. *Op. cit.*, II, 209.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 701 Saturday to use their time cultivating the soil, pursuing some [512] mechanical craft, or acting as day laborers.

692 703 175 It must be once more emphasized that the civil was everywhere subservient to the military power. The administration of justice in tribunals was carried out only at the pleasure of the army chiefs. No person would have dared bring suit against a high officer; the only efficacious way of obtaining justice against petty offenders was through summary decision and corporal chastisement by the commanding officer.

701 625 175 By the close of Boyer's rule, during which he had kept the army up to its full numbers while pursuing a policy of economy, the outward appearance of the troops was almost ludicrous. They appeared at review wearing generally what pleased them or what they could scrape together, for they had to supply their own clothing and arms. The only effectual employment of the soldiery was as armed police, for Haiti never had to fight external powers. The soldiers drummed and fifed, mustered on parade and went through the formations, but otherwise merely stood (or sat) sentry at the doors of public offices, hunted up at the command of the magistrates *les mauvais sujets*, guarded prisons and prisoners on chain-gang duty, loitered at barriers, collected tolls, and examined permits.

175 701 [669] [703] A large army, practically idle, could easily be seduced into the support of revolutionary movements. Principles of discipline and loyalty current in European armies of the day were nonexistent in nineteenth-century Haiti. The numbers in the army varied from twenty to forty or fifty thousand. A strange estimate was made for the year 1867: 6,500 general officers and staff; 7,000 regimental officers; and only 6,500 soldiers.[15] It was said that "*tout Haïtien qui n'était pas général de division était au moins soldat.*" The higher grades became rewards for political service; the lower ranks had to be filled up by recruiting parties—when these were abroad, all men who did not desire a period of enforced leisure away from home remained in hiding.

While the army was not alone responsible for the tragedies of insurrection and mismanagement which consistently befell the country, it was never uninvolved in these misfortunes. Only the [648] radical reforms undertaken by the American Occupation saved modern Haiti from continued military domination.

15. Sir Spenser St. John, *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, p. 310.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

children usually sleep with their parents' bed until they are six or 864
eight years old, and the same room until they are ten or twelve. 513
They are counted on to sleep soundly enough, but it happens that a child sometimes awakens and, unknown to his parents, observes them. Though brothers and sisters sometimes continue to sleep together until the age of puberty, it is said that [835] attempts at intercourse between them rarely occur, for, according to Haitians, the children gradually sense that this is regarded as bad, and a boy approaching puberty who wishes to satisfy his desire for sex play goes to find a "little neighbor." Later, when the nubile girls are withdrawn from the company of the boys, the latter play with younger girls who have not yet reached puberty, or carry on "affairs" with those older than themselves; indeed, it is from these latter that they obtain full knowledge of sexual procedure. 864

What has been said concerning the growth and training of 597
children applies mainly to those who live with their parents. No discussion of the development of the child, however, can neglect to mention the widespread institution of a form of [184] quasi-adoption, found not only in Mirebalais, but in all other parts of Haiti. By this is not meant legal adoption, though that, too, is known and at times occurs. Quasi-adoption involves children who are called "*'ti moun qui 'reté à caille 'oun*—small folk who stay at your house," or, more briefly, *'ti moun*. They are the children, often of peasants, "given" to friends who live in a town or, as is the case with some families of Mirebalais, "given" to friends or acquaintances living in the capital. To what extent this relationship offers a means for the exploitation of children in other parts of Haiti cannot be said, though tales of abuses of it, especially in Port-au-Prince, are heard. To give a person a child in this manner is in Mirebalais regarded as a token of friendship, and such children as [572] were observed, though poorly clothed, were fed not much differently from the children of the families with which they were sent to live. When the *'ti moun* grows older, he leaves and returns to his own home, though the relationship between

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* 539
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It wasn't my fault!
It wasn't my fault mother!
It wasn't my fault!
There was a man looking for a bargain!
Rwo woyol *
There was a man looking for a bargain!
There was a man in the yard,
Carry the news, oh, *sol* †

Another scandal song, spiced with ridicule, refers tangently to a specific situation and points a moral:

Coulié li yé waille-o! Coulié li yé waille-o!
Coulié li yé waille-o! Coulié li yé waille-o!
Si ou prend yun femme pas vlé lavé pied
Ou pas besoin mandé qui gen li yé! [Ex. 109]

Now she is there, *waille-o!* Now she is there, *waille-o!* ‡
Now she is there, *waille-o!* Now she is there, *waille-o!*
If you take a woman who doesn't want to wash her feet
You don't have to ask what kind she is!

● [515] The practice of washing one's feet before an intimacy enters into numerous gossip songs. In the following one, the woman asks her friend Pierre for water to wash with so that she may take advantage of Joseph's absence in the city:

Ba moin dleau nèg' moin pou' moin lavé pied moin!
Mandé dleau mon chè' Pierre pou' moin lavé pied moin!
Mandé dleau pou' moin lavé pied moin!
Joseph danger pas là, l'allé laville oh!
Joseph danger pas là, l'allé laville oh!

Give me water, my fellow, to wash my feet!
I ask for water, my dear Pierre, to wash my feet!
I ask for water to wash my feet!
Joseph who is dangerous is not here, he has gone to the city!
Joseph who is dangerous is not here, he has gone to the city!

Another bit of gossip with perhaps a more graphic account of the woman's deceit tells what happens in Achélo's house when he isn't home:

Viré do' allé!
Oh viré do' allé!
Achélo viré do' allé!
Viré do' allé!
Oh viré do' allé!

* Exclamatory.
† Exclamatory.
‡ Exclamatory.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

two rooms to house the whole family. "In these huts, filth and every species of uncleanliness prevail, for the people give themselves up to their indolent and lazy habits. It is common to see the pigs and poultry herding with the family."[19]

The furnishings in the huts were as simple as the construction. Rarely was there more than one bed, if that; the children of the family used mats for sleeping. A table, a stool, a couple of patched chairs, calabash bowls, an iron pot or two (and in later days, discarded gasoline tins), comprise the household equipment.

The fine roads of the French régime became rutted and washed, were overgrown with weeds, and soon reverted to wasteland or became nothing more than paths. Carriages ceased to be of any use, and there were few wagons; donkeys and horses became the regular means of transportation, and this was true until the Americans began to build roads again in 1916. The colonial régime had left a legacy of bridges, public buildings, parks, irrigation ditches; practically every improvement of this nature crumbled in slow decay and was not replaced. The temperate Dr. Brown closed his account of the Haiti of 1836 with the following paragraph:

> To sum up all that might be said upon the actual condition of Hayti, poverty and degradation stare one in the face wherever he goes—and the state of the whole island will be fully understood in the United States when it is bluntly asserted, that the country is one continuous negro village, built of mud cabins, and unfurnished with the usual comforts of life. The population is, with small exceptions, an indolent, naked multitude, without sustenance or a disposition to make exertions to obtain it; without enormous vices, but petty and insignificant in every thing relating to human character, and not many removes from the tribes upon the Niger in point of civilization. The fact is indisputable, that as a nation the blacks of Saint Domingo are in a retrograde movement as regards intellectual improvement, and no obstacle seems to exist to prevent this descent to barbarism. The government and institutions of the country must for the present remain unstable, and it is difficult to pronounce what the changes involved in the future will produce.[20]

Progress, as Westerners understand it, comes through contacts and competition, both of which were lacking to Haiti in large measure throughout the whole of the nineteenth century. While externally

19. Franklin, op. cit., p. 396.
20. Op. cit., II, 288-289.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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ABOVE, *A country dwelling.*
BELOW, *A combite at work.*

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[facing P. 11]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 112-D]

4. *A peasant of the Montagnes Noires region, southern Haiti.*

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2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P.112-G]

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9. *Calling the coumbite: signaling on a conch-shell trumpet.*

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10. *A woman's coumbite weeding a cornfield near the town of Plaisance.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-K]

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16. Man with a machete making a wari board. The machete is used for cutting trees, trimming brush, weeding gardens, fashioning wooden objects such as drums and mortars, and many other purposes.

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17. Winnowing grain with a woven tray.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-SS]

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79 and 80. Playing the musical marimpoin, or mouqueine drum. Beneath the earth bow is a portable variant. The player plucks the string with one hand and with the other varies the pitch by pressure on the end of the bow.

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81. A miniature brass casting, an Ashanti gold weight, in the form of a spring snare used for catching small game. The device can be recognized as an antecedent of the Haitian portable mouqueine drum.

J: Coverlander B-5 (1935-1955) 1960 BV3 Haiti BV3
[P 112-TT]
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6. *Playing the vèvèvèvè, or bamboo marimba.*

J: Constander B-5 (1931-1955) 1960 SV3 Rain SV3

[P. 112-V]

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V. *An Ibo woman in the Calabar Plain. Laid out on the mat is a feast for the Ibo lot. The hunter ritually feeds the dead by placing food in the holes at each end of the mat. Designs on the pots are the symbolic patterns found generally in ritual. The tree in the background, surrounded by a low curbing, is sacred to the Ibo.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

534 533 the pegs. High notes are achieved by striking the drumhead near the rim, and low notes near the center.

534 516 The drummers usually sit together on a bench or in chairs at one side of the dance court. The larger and middle drums are slightly tipped to keep their "mouths" open; the *bula* stands squarely on its base and is therefore somewhat muted. The player of the *manman* often drums in a standing position, bracing the instrument by means of a cord around his thigh.

534 796 Another drum associated with the Arada rites is the assotor. This drum is usually about six feet high, and may be from two to two and a half feet in diameter. It is played in an upright position, and two or three small "windows" near the base permit the sound to emerge. [794] This big drum is used only for the Assotor service, at which the Dahomey "nation" plays host to the loa of all the various rites. Usually there is only a single drummer, who plays while standing on a bench or raised platform; but on occasion, two or even three drummers play simultaneously on the single drumhead.

534 171 It is interesting to note in passing that most of the Vodoun drums have Dahomean names and are of Dahomean design, despite the fact that Yoruban religious motifs have survived. The Yoruban double-headed *bata* drum, used in Nigeria for invocation of the principal deities, appears to have survived in decadent form on the island of La Gonave, where it is known as *pongwé*. Curiously, it is played not like the Yoruban *bata* (one hand on each head) but like another Yoruban instrument, 534 the *dundun*, or pressure drum. The instrument is held under one arm and played only on the forward head. Significantly enough, this drum [794] is said to be used only for Nago (Yoruba) rites. Another drum reserved [796] for Nago services is found in the region of Léogane. It resembles the Arada drum in every respect except that it stands on three carved legs.

Drums associated with the services of the Congo "nation" are distinctly different from those found in Vodoun ritual. No drumsticks are used, and the heads are of goatskin rather than cowhide and are held in place by a system of cords and hoops. The Congo drum seen today stands about three feet high; old people say that within their memory there was a variety of Congo drum as tall as a man. Unlike the Arada [531] drum, the Congo drum usually has no carved or painted decoration. For the "pure" Congo rites, two of these instruments, accompanied by gourd or metal rattles of various kinds, constitutes an orchestra. One typically Congo rattling device, called *mayoyo*, consists of three large gourds containing pebbles, on the top of a long pole.

A variant of the Congo drum is used for Pétro rites. It is similar

2: Cambender 8-5 (1837-1860) 1960 SV3 HARI SV3

And when the revolution came he produced for the Haitian armies knives, gun parts, and wheels to transport cannon. By the tens of thousands he made ingeniously devised metal objects to be thrown on the roads, before the French cavalry troops—objects so shaped that, no matter how they fell, a single sharp point stood erect to cripple the enemy horses. Yet knowledge of the West African uses of iron did not altogether disappear, and during the first century of independence the Haitian blacksmith created many old-style knives, spears, and ritual objects for the cult temple.

Even today, some of this old-style work is to be found in houmfors in the southwestern peninsula. One may see simple or ornate iron standards, made to support ceremonial offerings or candles, strikingly similar to standards in ancestral shrines in Dahomey. There are iron bells, both single and double, made in pure West African style; ornate ritual swords and sabers which are the crests of certain deities; coiled and uncoiled iron serpents representing the gods Dumballa and Ayida; and stylized or semirealistic portraits of the deities. Many of these old pieces are nineteenth-century survivals; others have been forged within the past decade.[2]

An over-all impression of Haitian material culture is that artistic decoration is almost entirely absent and that the prime emphasis is on utility. Wooden cooking spoons are efficient in form, but missing from them is the delicate decorative carving often found in West Africa. The long wooden washing bowl, or *gamelle*, and the wooden mortar in which grain is pulverized are likewise clean-cut but stark and plainly utilitarian. Clay bowls, bottles, and storage jars are usually of simple, uniform design, with only accidental variations; there is little use of glazes, and the clay is often heavy and thick. Should there be a water gourd-bowl in the peasant hut, the chances are that it is roughly made, without legs or carved designs. Dugout canoes are usually crude in appearance, heavy and thick-walled, and irregular in form.

Yet there are many evidences—though one must seek them out—that esthetic impulses are quite alive. The gay peasant straw knapsack, or *alfar*, without which no mountain man makes a journey, has a charm and grace that is not diminished by familiarity and cheapness. Decorated with sisal braid and tassels, and colored with green and magenta dyes, each *alfar* on close inspection appears to be unique. In some communities in the south and southwest, burlap squares also are painted with these traditional dyes. About forty inches across, and made of sugar bags, these paintings swarm with geometric patterns and sometimes with figures of flowers and animals. They are purely decorative, being

[2] [See plates 42-51, pp. 112-DD—112FF. -- Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 The result was entirely different from Boyer's expectations. As a
114 French critic graphically puts it, the Haitians

703 who had never had more than a borrowed energy—that inspired by fear of French invasion—when they saw themselves freed, by a solemn treaty, from all attack on their coasts, seemed to allow their arms to drop relaxed at their sides, saying, *Let's take a rest.* The soldier who up till now had squeezed his body into a uniform and had subjected himself to European discipline, shouldering his arms, staring straight ahead as if seeing nothing, now began to leave unbuttoned the uniform which choked him, dragged a mattress into his sentry-box so that he might sleep through his watch, and let his cross slip to the earth never to pick it up again.[44]

175 In short, the Haitian army as a disciplined force ceased to exist, and
701 with it all authority of its officers. Boyer had counted upon the
703 army to enforce the provisions of the Code Rural, but now a soldier's
671 life was a paid sinecure. By gaining political security Haiti had in-
433 advertently lost its last chance of economic prosperity through a system of forced labor.

175 Wherever the Code was put into partial operation, revenue from
423 plantations continued to decline. The price of real estate dropped
433 proportionately. It was a simple matter for workmen who had
435 signed contracts to avoid carrying out their stipulations, and just as
446 simple to evade the law requiring fifteen acres' minimum for a single holding. Practically every Haitian wanted to own a bit of land; once he had acquired his bit, however small, he had (or so he felt) earned an exemption from directed labor.

175 Only on estates near the few big towns, where government
671 officials were concentrated, was there much pretense of trying to
625 enforce the Code. Sentries at the gates of Port-au-Prince were
661 authorized to confiscate plantains, yams, or fruit brought by any worker who, in contravention of the Code, had strayed to market on a forbidden day, but sentries soon acquired the habit of not seeing countryfolk who passed the gates. Reports kept cropping up that rural policemen were robbing poor cultivators of their coffee under pretense of protecting them from the penalties for breach of the law; this suggests that the Code was used rather for graft than for the stimulation of agriculture.

175 By and large, however, the Code was merely ignored. Agents
671 could not be found who were willing to stand in any community
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44. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, II, 181.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 against almost unanimous public opinion opposing enforcement. In
671 1828 it was reported that dancing, which the Code had strictly
625 limited to week ends, was a nightly diversion near the capital. One
535 of the principal dancing resorts was the house of a captain of rural
517 police, the very man who was supposed to repress such amusements.[45]

Boyer had done his best, and his best was merely a good piece of
175 office work. When his Code failed to operate, he could think of
178 nothing further to suggest for the economic rehabilitation of Haiti.
24 The last fifteen years of his administration witnessed a gradual lapse
433 into that small-scale farming which was to be characteristic of Haiti for the remainder of the nineteenth century. By comparison with former standards, production and steady industry had both fallen off since Boyer came to the presidency. The testimony of visiting foreigners is unanimous on the decline of industry.

The British consul, Mackenzie, said in 1827 that there was very
175 little field labor then being done, and that only elderly people,
114 principally aged "Guinea Negroes" long accustomed to steady work,
435 carried on the tradition. No measures of the government could
461 induce young people born in Haiti to labor or to change from their
464 "habitual vagrancy."[46] Another Englishman, James Franklin, re-
184 marked in 1828 that land values throughout the republic had greatly declined because no one could make a profit within any moderate time. Labor was high, he writes, for ordinary wages did not attract the workers who preferred idleness. (This word is certainly unfair: it was work at their own bidding which they preferred, not idleness.) Government lands lay untilled, no one evincing the slightest desire to purchase or utilize them. Franklin continues:

114 Land also in the possession of individuals is similarly circumstanced; and
175 those who are large proprietors cannot effect a sale of any produce which
433 they may have beyond the quantity which they can consume; consequently
423 a proprietor may have an immense extent of land, and yet be quite unable
425 to derive any benefit from it by cultivation, or to convert it into money, for the want of purchasers. Thus . . . there is no individual wealth in the country, because, although a man may have very large landed possessions, still those possessions are unsaleable, for they produce him nothing, as he can [illegible] [illegible] to [illegible] society or [illegible] [illegible]

[534] 45. Although dancing is spoken of here as an amusement, it is highly probable that at least a part of it had connection with the Voodoo religion.

[241] 46. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Haiti* (London, 1830), I, 120. Mackenzie is clearly exaggerating, unless by "field labor" he means work on plantations, in contrast to farming on small plots.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

793 werewolves as well as of the ingredients to concoct healing
997 baths. Certain priests worship and control a large number of
755 deities, as is shown by those which comprise the personal pantheon of a *gangan* from the valley of Mirebalais: Gedenibo, Erzilie Gé Rouge; 'Ti Kita Demembré; Simbi en Deux Eaux; Bumba Trois Île; Legba; St. Jacques; Ogun Ferraille, Ogun Balandjo, Ogun Ashade; Lemba; Aizan Keleké, Aizan Wedo, Aida Wedo, Damballa Wedo; Baron Samedi, Bosu Trois Cornes; Congo Wangol, Malt' Mapou; Agasu; Agwe, Agweto Woyo; Kadia-Bosu; Sobo Gran'; l'Afrique Guinée. Whatever his ability, the *hungan* can cure only diseases "sent by man" — that is, those caused by magic — and by the *loa*, since against illness sent by God he can do nothing. Gossip
[521] disapprovingly whispers how in more than one instance a *hungan* took advantage of his position and the trust of his clients, falsely to represent himself as able to cure an illness "sent by God" through stating it was due to magic.

793 An important function of the *hungan* or *mambu* is to fore-
787 tell the future, and it is as a diviner that the *vodun* priest or priestess is most often employed. No major rite would be considered by a family unless divination were resorted to, but consultation is made for a far wider range of affairs than those of a purely religious nature, and no proposed undertaking of any importance in the secular field is begun without visiting a diviner to discover whether or not the fates are propitious. When divining, the priest is usually under possession by his gods, but other methods, such as gazing into a crystal or basin of water, may also be employed. Several divining séances were visited, but no description of them need be given here, since a number of accounts, including an especially full one by Parsons, are available.[28]

793 Though a certain hierarchy seems to exist among the *vodun*
189 priests in other districts of Haiti, in Mirebalais the organiza-
755 tion of the cult is informal to an extreme degree.[29] In the
787 minds of the cult members, various priests in the same region

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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Devant Baron, Gede,	Before Baron, Gede,
Derrière la croix, Gede,	Behind the cross, Gede,
Jodi-a m'p' nan sang m'we,	Today I am troubled,
Gedevi, vhele Gede, ça Gede,	Gedevi, call Gede, this Gede,
Jodi-a m'pas nan sang moin.	Today I am troubled.
Balai, rouzé, cerclé, quitté.	Cease to sweep, sprinkle, hoe.
Moin pas nan sang, Baron Samedi.	I am troubled, Baron Samedi.

Shortly after eleven o'clock the *hungan* intervened to calm those possessed, for the time was at hand to give the sacrifices. Summoning the family to assemble again before the *trône* with the offerings, he commenced a long ritual in which each creature was prepared by being carefully washed and combed, while the hour for Boss was also fastidiously perfumed and powdered. At the direction of the *hungan*, the fowls were first offered, the killing taking place at a distance of some thirty or forty feet behind the *trône*. The chickens were held with the two wings and the head in the left hand, so that the neck was exposed. The knife was passed twice over the neck to describe a cross, after which each fowl was cleanly and skillfully dispatched. One of the assistants of the *hungan* held a small calabash in which some of the blood of each animal was caught, and another, knife in hand, sang with him that they were offering this *kokio* to the deity for whom it was intended. As the last of the chickens was being killed, the *hungan* left the *trône* and quietly strangled the pigeons for Damballa.

All possessions had ceased, except that of a man "mounted" by Gede and a woman by Simbi. The man particularly attracted much attention, for Gede is known as a gossip, and so diverting were his revelations of family scandal that all were too absorbed listening to him to show any interest in the sacrifice of the animals.

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Qua'n pard' un gayan main jain' l'eau' ah! 533*
Ma rêl, 539*
Oh qua'n pardi manman main ma crié! [Ex. 102] 593

I cried,
Oh, when I lost my mother I cried!
I cried,
Oh, when I lost my mother I cried!
When I lost a man I found another, ah!
When I lost a man I found another, ah!
I cried,
Oh, when I lost my mother I cried!

Protest or complaint songs are sometimes directed against no one in particular but simply call the attention of listeners to the singer's misfortunes. In many such songs the president or one of the deities is mentioned by name. The singer in this way implicitly places responsibility for help. In the following song, one complains of hunger, another theme that runs throughout Haitian folklore and Haitian life. 533* 539* 261

Rwa! President qui wayé rêl'm!
Main pas bwé main pas manger!
M'pas bwé main pas manger!
Oh m'pas bwé main pas manger!
President qui wayé rêl'm, rwa!
M'pas bwé main pas manger! [Ex. 103]

Rwa! * The President sends for me!
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!
Oh, I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!
The President sends for me, *rwa!*
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!

Here the lwa Ogoun Balindjo is called upon to take note of prying, inconsiderate people who come to a person's house, observe what is going on, and go away to gossip: 533* 539* 221 [976] [982]

Ogoun Balindjo
Yo vini gè'd'm
Pou' y'alé valé ah!
Ogoun Balindjo
Li yé wé bouche yé ah!
Ogoun Balindjo
Pa wé yo vini gè'd'm main? [Ex. 104]

Ogoun Balindjo
They come to look at me

* An exclamation.

To go away and talk, oh!
Ogoun Balindjo
The eyes see, the mouth is closed, oh! *
Ogoun Balindjo
Don't you see they come to look at me?

Or again, the loa Ogoun and Loko Atino are invoked to witness a person's misery, though in this song the cause is not explained:

Ogoun oh gè'dè mèè!
Papa Ogoun ou wa gè'dè mèè!
Gè'dè mèè oh Lok' Atino gè'dè mèè li yè! [Ex. 109]

Ogoun, oh, look at my misery!
Papa Ogoun, you will look at my misery!
Look at my misery, oh, Loko Atino, look at my misery here!

The impulse to criticism most often stems from personal injuries, but on occasion songs are used as a community affair to exert social pressures on an errant member of the neighborhood:

Fè' Jean-Pierre wa quitté boè tafia!
Fè' Jean-Pierre ó mouse yo tousé!

Beaber Jean-Pierre, ouap drinking tafia! †
Beaber Jean-Pierre, the little children are naked!

Although discussions of neighbors' affairs tend to have this moral tone, a vast number of songs are pure gossip and are sung for their ribald or wry humor, as the case may be. In some the objects of ridicule are named; in others the allusions are indirect, so that only those who are familiar with the situation will know the people concerned. Open quarreling often provides amusement and substance for satire. The community can sense petulance, stupidity, and stubbornness through a confusion of charges and countercharges, and is quick to burlesque them. Thus there are public pressures against petty and needless disturbances. The following song refers to a dispute over ownership of an unnamed article.

Mèsi dè c'ou bagaille grand monsieur! Ciyè!
C'ou bagaille grand monsieur! Ciyè!
Mèsi dè c'ou zaffai grand monsieur! Ciyè!
C'ou bagaille grand monsieur! Ciyè!
Mèsi dè n'ap chaché li! Ciyè!
N'ap pouvé li! Ciyè!
Mèsi dè c'ou bagaille grand monsieur! Ciyè!
C'ou bagaille grand monsieur! Ciyè! [Ex. 108]

* That is, a sin, the eyes should see and the mouth should be closed.
† An alcoholic drink.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

hands. In colonial times fortunes came to plantation owners, and since then have come only to political officeholders. With money one can go to France where he will be accepted as a human being, not turned aside as a Negro; with money one can get an education, live a life of leisure, acquire luxuries. Hence the popularity of law as a profession, for it is the career by which one enters politics. That a president should begin life as an impecunious barrister and end it as a well-to-do landlord, the owner of several villas and motorcars, seems praiseworthy, natural, logical. The American success story is "from log cabin to White House," but with no implication of monetary gain from such progress; the Haitian success story is rather "from penury to plutocracy."

It is not enough, however, to aim high in the material sphere. In proportion to their numbers the élite are extraordinarily ambitious for intellectual achievement. A distinction is sometimes made between the social élite and the intellectual élite, the former being decidedly more numerous.[1] Conversation in a Haitian drawing room is likely to be on about the same intellectual plane as in America except in specifically literary and artistic circles. Poetry, philosophy, literary trends, historical speculation are staples of discussion in more than a few homes. A recent president wrote many metaphysical poems. An American author, attending a social function consisting chiefly of secretaries of state, was amazed to find the group absorbed in a dispute about poetry.[2]

Aristocrats have always kept the lower orders at a distance socially. In Haiti this rule is observed with rigor. To suggest that a possible reason for such harshness of attitude and behavior toward servants and working people might be four lac white visitors should class all persons of color together would be unkind, though not unsound. In general, there is a deep conviction that the masses are stupid. Although persons of culture exist who are generally solicitous for the betterment of their life, there is really no comparison which will make clear to the white reader the ordinary attitude of mind of

1. This distinction is clearly made in John Leth, "Caste and Class in Haiti," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLVI, No. 1 (July, 1940), p. 30 ff.

2. W. B. Seabrook, *The Magic Island*, p. 161. "On my way home from the palace," concludes the author, "I reflected how queer it would seem for a group of cabinet ministers and Treasury officials at the White House to be earnestly discussing the poetry of an American anthology which included metaphysical love-lyrics by Calvin Coolidge."

2: Courlander 9-4 (1937-1938) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Oh, a day will come when they will remember me here, *Ayibobo!*
Oh, Damballa Wédo *é, Ayibobo.*
Oh, Ayida Wédo *é, Ayibobo!*
Oh, a day will come for you to remember me here, *Ayibobo!*

During the evening about twenty loa and ancestors came into the *cord* to talk. When the last had finished speaking the hills were already light, and the service was over.

Service for Erzulie Frèda and St. Jacques Majeur

This service took place not in the open but under a tonnelle surrounded by four walls, adjoining the houmfor of Alexis Stephan on the west fringes of Port-au-Prince. Separate from the houmfor and dance court was a shrine to the "dead" loa Gédé Nimbo. The shrine was a small shed open on one side. Within, lighted by flickering oil lamps, was a life-size effigy of Gédé, a scarecrow-like figure dressed in the loa's traditional attire—black tail coat and trousers, and a tall opera hat. On the otherwise blank face of the figure were smoked glasses with white rims.

The dancing was progressing under the supervision of the houngan's adjoint, the laplace. He wandered among the drummers and dancers, encouraged the singing, and issued orders here and there. No one seemed to take him very seriously. There was a good deal of joking, and the gathering seemed very much like an old-fashioned family reunion. There were perhaps a hundred dancers and spectators—friends, relatives, and devotees of Stephan's houmfor. Everyone was watching with affection an old woman who could not be restrained from dancing. She executed old classical steps and postures with a skill that called for running comment all around her. As each piece came to an end someone would step up to her and say something like: "Way, Maman, mais ou pawl mwel!" (Oh, Mother, you are better than me!). Then they would attempt to get her to sit down again, but she would only shake them off and urge the drummers to get going if they were not too tired.

Eventually, the houngan, Stephan, made a casual entrance through the door of his adjoining houmfor. He held the usual ritual castle and bell in his hand, and ambulated around to chat with his friends.

Gradually, almost imperceptibly, the dancing became more serious. Soon, only the houmsi, the female servitors, were dancing. The drums played a salute to Legba, the first loa to be called upon in a Vodoun service. For it is Legba who opens all gates and all highways, and who paves the way for communication with other deities. Though he is not the greatest of the loa, he is one of the most ancient. The houngan spilled water on the ground as a libation, and the dancing continued.

To go away and talk, eh!
Ogoun Balindjo
The eyes are, the mouth is closed, eh!*
Ogoun Balindjo
Don't you see they come to look at me?

Or again, the loa Ogoun and Loko Atino are invoked to witness a person's misery, though in this song the cause is not explained:

Ogoun eh gi'dé mèd!
Papa Ogoun ou wa gi'dé mèd!
Gi'dé mèd eh Lok' Atino gi'dé mèd li yé! [Ex. 105]

Ogoun, eh, look at my misery!
Papa Ogoun, you will look at my misery!
Look at my misery, eh, Loko Atino, look at my misery here!

The impulse to criticism most often stems from personal injuries, but on occasion songs are used as a community affair to exert social pressures on an errant member of the neighborhood:

Fè' Jean-Pierre wa quitté boè tafia!
Fè' Jean-Pierre ti cousse yo tound!

Brother Jean-Pierre, stop drinking tafia!†
Brother Jean-Pierre, the little children are naked!

Although discussions of neighbors' affairs tend to have this moral tone, a vast number of songs are pure gossip and are sung for their ribald or wry humor, as the case may be. In some the objects of ridicule are named; in others the allusions are indirect, so that only those who are familiar with the situation will know the people concerned. Open quarreling often provides amusement and substance for satire. The community can scorn petulance, stupidity, and stubbornness through a confusion of charges and countercharges, and is quick to burlesque them. Thus there are public pressures against petty and needless disturbances. The following song refers to a dispute over ownership of an unusual article.

Mèsi dè c'wè bagèlle grand monnè! Ogèl!
C'wè bagèlle grand monnè! Ogèl!
Mèsi dè c'wè mèlè grand monnè! Ogèl!
C'wè bagèlle grand monnè! Ogèl!
Mèsi dè c'ap chachè li! Ogèl!
N'ap pannè li! Ogèl!
Mèsi dè c'wè bagèlle grand monnè! Ogèl!
C'wè bagèlle grand monnè! Ogèl! [Ex. 106]

* That is to say, the eyes should see and the mouth should be closed.
† An alcoholic drink.

and, wearying of the singing, join the group outside the house, where those playing games and the story-tellers are gathered. One popular game is "forfeits," and a forfeit, if reclaimed by a girl, requires the singing of a *chanson de romance*, or if by a man, calls for the recitation of a poem or a humorous folk-tale. Before a forfeit is returned, all sing to a hand-clapping accompaniment:

C'est bien bon,	It is very good,
C'est bien bon,	It is very good,
Aha!	Aha!

Card-games, such as *mariai* (marriage), *trois-sept*, and *bezique*, are also played. All these games are entered into with zest, for an important purpose in holding the wake is to amuse the dead, whose body lies near by, and thus send him away in good humor. When drinks are passed, the recipients must make three libations before drinking, one explanation holding that this is in accordance with the formula Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, another that the offering is for the *lou*, the dead, and the *marasse*. At about five o'clock in the morning the angelus closes the wake, after which most of those present leave, and only close friends and relatives remain to help with preparations for the funeral. This must take place the day following death, not only because of a legal requirement, but because of the fact that were a body to remain unburied for two nights, the expense of two wakes would have to be met. Before the ceremony of burial takes place, small children are often passed over the coffin three times, in leave-taking, that the spirit of the dead may not return for them.

The funeral itself is held in accordance with the rites of the Church, the difference between funerals consisting principally in the elaborateness of the ritual and the length of time the church bells are tolled, which in turn is determined by the ability of the family of the dead to meet the varying fees. Thus at the funeral of the mother of the *diputé* from Mire-

1: Herskovits E-4.5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

178 [illegible] in Africa, also allow play for the aesthetic impulse, have been
[525] lost as well. Ironworking is absent not only because the necessary deposits of iron ore are lacking, but because the technique
[526] of shaping the metal into various forms, which in Africa is in the hands of specialists, was apparently suppressed in the time
[536] of slavery. No native cloth is woven. Basketry has survived,
178 but whereas in Africa designs of no small artistic merit are
285 achieved in this medium, it is markedly utilitarian in Haiti. Even from a technical point of view, the basketry forms are of the simplest, the panniers used for transportation of products on mule-back being merely an in-and-out weave, and the plaited strips of which hats and the *marouste*, or carrying basket, are made are of a parallel simplicity.

● 524 Few African recreational forms have survived. *Wari*, the
525 draughts-like West African game found today in many parts
178 of the West Indies, is unknown in the interior of Haiti, though it has been introduced into Port-au-Prince, where it is played by longshoremen who have learned it from the sailors of near-by islands. String figures, important in West Africa, are not encountered, and no children's pursuits comparable to the play of young Africans were seen in Mirebalais, if the minor ceremony of marking the loss of childhood teeth be excepted. African types of recreation have in the main given way to cock-fights and card-games, both of which derive their interest from the opportunities they offer for gambling—a fact important in itself, since gambling is not one of the widespread African vices. The most important card-games are *trois-sept*, *mariage*, and *bezique*, and both men and women
[541] know them and play them for stakes. Similarly cock-fighting, particularly during the dry season, is a passionate avocation of the men. Large sums are wagered on the results of an encounter, and feeling often runs high.*

529 The Haitian genius for art and recreation is best embodied
535 in the dance and its accompanying songs and drum rhythms. Virtuosity is attained not only by the dancers, but even more

L: Haiphonia I-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV2 H401 SV3
Mirebalais

with the purely Catholic rituals carried on at the village church, are seen to hold an important if unofficial place in the complex of rites known in the Haitian Church calendar as the Fête of Saint d'Eau.

During the two or three days preceding the fête and on the fifteenth of July itself, an air of great gayety not unlike the carnival spirit accompanying European Church festivals pervades the surrounding country. Caminons traverse the almost impassable side road, bringing crowds of people from Port-au-Prince, from the Dominican border, and even from the north, who throng the streets and the shrines and tramp the miles from the village to the waterfalls or visit the nearer sacred sites of St. John's Wood and En bas Palmes, to light candles and ask the satisfaction of their needs. Like the falls themselves, these spots by their very beauty awaken a sense of emotional awareness, and it is not strange that here, as at the falls, many possessions occur. At night, in particular, the great trees with their interlacing serpent-like roots, the gaping earth which at En bas Palmes is witness to the upsprouting of the palm trees where the miracle occurred, and the stream of sacred water, all make a scene of indescribable eerieness, heightened by the flickering candles given as offerings, and the open lamps of those who stay the night here to fulfill their vows.

In the town itself gambling and other games go on, and dances of all kinds are held at night, among them vodun and Iwé, though at these public dances no possessions are encouraged. One of the most colorful aspects of the scene is the pèlerinots, wearing clothing of varied colors in fulfillment of a request by the loa they worship or an obligation to them. Such folk are not permitted in church unless the clothing which marks them is covered by ordinary dress, but they walk the streets, often possessed and often using their power to heal those whom they encounter. Possessions by Ogun, by Gede, by Baron Samedi, by Damballa, by Erzilie and other vodun deities were observed, particularly at the shrines, where their devotees performed acts beyond the sick.

with the corpse as are nearby with friends. The one who buried the corpse remains ceremonially at its side as members of the family come and go, since the body must never be alone.[1]

But outside the house another kind of activity goes on. There the young people usually gather to sing gay songs, to play games, and to listen to stories. A professional storyteller, or a nonprofessional of repute, is called upon to entertain the children. He may give an entire night to Bouki and Malice stories, or to *contes* with interspersed songs in which the audience participates. Special singing games, stick games, and card games are played. But the drums are silent, both in the dead person's house and in the countryside at large. Rhythms for the game songs are provided by hand-clapping, or by vocal sounds which simulate percussion instruments.

Burial ceremonies vary according to local tradition and the status of the deceased person. Near the little fishing village of Petit Goave in south-western Haiti, I witnessed a funeral cortege which might have been seen almost anywhere in the country. It was led by the widow of the dead man. She rode on a white horse, followed by four men carrying the dead body on a litter made of plain planks. There was no coffin, the body being covered only by its white shroud.[2] Behind the corpse plodded a group of twelve or fifteen peasants, friends and relatives of the dead man. Some of them had just come in from the fields and still carried their machetes in their hands. Others carried short *coutumacque* sticks, which are believed useful for warding off loaks and other demons who lurk along the path of the traveler.

The woman on the horse lamented loudly. When she came to where other peasants stood respectfully at the road's edge, she stopped her horse and faced them, raising her voice to an anguished pitch, calling on them to take note of her bereavement and of the fine virtues of the dead man. Some of the spectators whom she addressed, standing with their hats in hand, nodded and tried to say consoling words, such as "Oui Maman, li grand moune" (Yes, Mama, he was a fine man), or "Quand Bondieu vlé ou li prend" (When God wants you he takes you). A market woman with a load on her head suddenly became possessed by a loa as the cortege passed her. This seemed to increase the anguish of the widow, who lamented with increased vigor.

The four men carrying the corpse sometimes moved in a zigzag course, first to one side of the road, then to the other. When the procession came to a crossroad it stopped momentarily. The bougan, scarcely distinguishable from the other peasants in blue denim, came forward and stood in the center of the crossroads shaking his tiny hand bell and calling upon Maît' Kalfo (Master of the Crossroads) to grant safe passage. While he

[1] [Instead v. 15, op. cit., p. 208. Cf. p. 350 Category 16. — Analyst]
[2] [For foot note, See Category 16, p. 350. — Analyst]

beyond the obvious fear of contagion. In his study of Dahomey, Herskovits notes:

> . . . Smallpox is believed to be sent as a punishment for grave offenses in the eyes of these [the Sagbata] deities, and it is taken to indicate that either the dead person himself or a member of his family has committed some heinous crime such as the practice of black magic. A person who dies of smallpox may only be buried after permission has been given by the chief priest of the Earth cult.[8]

Thus, in Haiti, though the connections with the past are clouded, it is clear that victims of lightning and smallpox are treated as a special class of criminals or malefactors.

Ordinary malefactors such as malevolent criminals and murderers—until recent years, at least—were not buried in the common graveyard. They, too, were segregated at the periphery of the cemetery or buried at the edge of a trail or road where the traffic would not permit them to rest and where their graves would be under constant surveillance. The roadside grave sometimes was also the fate of a person killed by lightning.

That these special burials are related to the Dahomean and Yoruban concepts of retribution for crimes against the deities is supported by the similarity of treatment accorded victims of lightning and diverse and common criminals. In Haiti, Herskovits observes: "Those who die of smallpox or leprosy, suicides, or persons shot as a punishment for crime are not buried in the communal cemetery, but in special sections of the graveyard," the suicides and criminals being set apart from the others.[9]

Graves found near the seashore, lake shores, or riverbanks frequently are declared to belong to persons who died of drowning.

Approximately nine days after a person's death, the "last prayers" are said, and the soul of the deceased is presumed to have departed from the house. Once more, under the tonnelle outside there are games, storytelling, and singing. On this night, however, there is also drumming and dancing of a special kind. Usually it is the Jobo, or Martinique, dance, which is believed to be specially enjoyed by the dead, and it is the older people, rather than the young, who participate. These festivities are believed to give cheer to the deceased and to "encourage" him on his way. On the next night comes the mangé morts, the feast for the family dead, a ritual which continues periodically through the years.

Sometimes in Haiti you may come upon an old tomb or grave before which a dish of specially prepared food has been set. This is part of the mangé morts ritual.

A man may make provisions in advance of his death for the rites which follow his burial. He may designate special animals to be killed, have

[8] [Ibid., pp. 397–398. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.—Author]

[9] [Herskovits, Life in a Haitian Valley, p. 214. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.—Author]

In the Artibonite Valley, where much rice is grown, a similar ceremony takes place before the rice is gathered from the fields. In this ceremony it is rice that is shared with the family ancestors, who have first rights, and with close friends who have aided with the planting. This feast is called *manjé divi*, or sometimes *goutt divi*, the tasting of the rice. Small amounts of rice are taken from the fields, cooked with red beans or Congo beans, or perhaps made into dumplings. The farmer's friends and relatives gather while the food is still cooking, and play games such as *awari* and *trois-sept*. The children play *gage* games and sing songs, and sometimes a *mal' conte*—a storyteller—comes to entertain them.

When the food is finally ready, the family ancestors are given their share. The farmer takes a calabash bowl of the rice and walks around the house grounds calling upon his immediate ancestors to accept their share. He drops a little food on the ground for the remembered dead, for the unknown dead who preceded them, for the Haitian dead, and for the dead of Africa. He also drops small portions for the dead twins, the dead albinos, the deformed dead, and the dead who have lost limbs, and for the distressed dead who have been improperly buried, or who may not have received the feasts that were due them. Afterward, he offers food to those who died of drowning, or who were lost at sea and never heard of again.

Each course is shared with the ancestors. The farmer takes a pitcher of water, spilling a little here and a little there until the dead have quenched their thirst. He also gives a little of everything to the family loa. Then the calabashes are set out on a bench or table reserved for the dead, and this food is not disturbed. Food for the marassas is set out separately on the ground in three small *canis*, or gourd dishes.

The family ancestors whose good will has made the harvest possible having been taken care of, the food is now shared among the extended family and the friends who helped in the fields. Later there are prayers to the loa, the saints, and God, led by the houngan or a prêt' savane. To finish the affair, there may be Juba-type dances for the older people, while the children watch or play *gage* games.

Only after this service are the farmer and his family and his *coumbite* (mutual labor group), if he belongs to one, free to go out and harvest the rice.[9]

These feasts of the rice and yam harvests are not of New World origin. Similar harvest festivals for yams or rice are held over a wide area of West Africa. There, as in Haiti, the fundamental concern is with the family ancestors, whose good will must be constantly nourished so that the rains continue to fall, the crops flourish, and human beings remain fertile. Among the Ashanti of Ghana, for example, the yam and rice harvests are

[9] Account given by Jean Ravel Pinto. CG P.351, Category 116. -- Analysis]

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1945) 1960 SV3 11a21 SV3

575 and covered with tiny mirrors or bits of colored glass. The towering
535 headdress of antlers or papier-mâché sculpture unavoidably recalls similar
[292] headdresses in West Africa. Each roi has his own style of dance, which is usually accompanied by drums. It may be a belly dance, a dance of delicate balance, or one of complicated footwork and semiacrobatics such as the imitation of a pair of scissors at work. Throughout the dancing the headdress remains majestically erect.

541 In addition to the roi Lwalwadi and the mâit' Rara (who is con-
576 stantly in the midst of things, blowing his whistle), there are other
524 traditional Rara personalities: the *major jour*, who juggles with a metal
[534] baton (sometimes two or three of these jugglers work together), and the *jongleur*, a juggler or strong man who performs such feats as dancing while holding a fully set table off the ground with his teeth.

184 On the southwest peninsula, in the region around Jérémie, there
541 is a splurge of wrestling exhibitions during Rara days. Known as *pingé*,
526 this festival wrestling is done with a background of excited drumming
533 and has a striking resemblance to wrestling traditions in West Africa.
[191] Local "champions" will invade a neighboring community, sometimes traveling considerable distances to make a challenge. As in West Africa, some of these wrestlers take their own musicians with them. The musicians often are provided by the village in which the events take place. If a challenge is accepted, the spectators form a large circle, with the wrestlers in the center and the musicians to one side. There may be drums and bamboo flutes, occasionally supplemented by large earthern jars and lengths of bamboo beaten with sticks. The wrestlers are dressed only in shorts. When a man is thrown, the event is over, and another pair of wrestlers takes over. Sometimes a "champion" will take on a series of opponents until he is tired. Afterward he may move on to another community to find new competition, perhaps accompanied by a large group of friends and supporters from his own village. When the Rara season comes to an end, pingé is over for the year. It is one of the few athletic sport activities of the Haitian peasant.

541 And now and then during Rara a *debois* is seen. The *debois* is a
537 carved wooden marionette with a short handle below. Its arms and legs
536 are moved by pulling a string. It is usually painted, and sometimes it is
[831] dressed. One debois observed was provided with a loose dresslike costume; when the string was pulled, a large phallus hinged into view in an erect position. This marionette was an object of endless funmaking among spectators.[2]

Another type of marionette is the "Two Kings," made of papier-mâché and operated with strings. The "Two Kings," sitting in a papier-

[2] [Footnote appears in category 116, p. 351.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-H.H]

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54. Inside surface of a calabash bowl used in rituals of the houngfor, painted in black and white. The figure represents the graveyard lwa, Baron Samedi, with a pick, shovel, and tombstone. Length, 15 inches.

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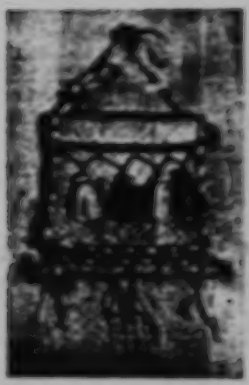
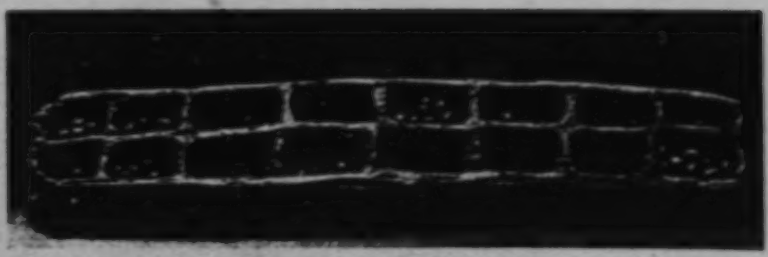


55. An ajor cousin, the traditional peasant keepsack.

524



56. Wari board cut from a mahogany log. Length, 29 inches.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-RR]

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77. *Playing Thiaure.*

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78. *Playing Balanet Yaya.*

And when the revolution came he produced for the Haitian armies knives, gun parts, and wheels to transport cannon. By the tens of thousands he made ingeniously devised metal objects to be thrown on the roads, before the French cavalry troops—objects so shaped that, no matter how they fell, a single sharp point stood erect to cripple the enemy horses. Yet knowledge of the West African uses of iron did not altogether disappear, and during the first century of independence the Haitian blacksmith created many old-style knives, spears, and ritual objects for the cult temple.

Even today, some of this old-style work is to be found in houfours in the southwestern peninsula. One may see simple or ornate iron standards, made to support ceremonial offerings or candles, strikingly similar to standards in ancestral shrines in Dahomey. There are iron bells, both single and double, made in pure West African style; ornate ritual swords and sabers which are the crests of certain deities; coiled and uncoiled iron serpents representing the gods Damballa and Ayido; and stylized or semirealistic portraits of the deities. Many of these old pieces are nineteenth-century survivals; others have been forged within the past decade.

An over-all impression of Haitian material culture is that artistic decoration is almost entirely absent and that the prime emphasis is on utility. Wooden cooking spoons are efficient in form, but missing from them is the delicate decorative carving often found in West Africa. The long wooden washing bowl, or *gamelle*, and the wooden mortar in which grain is pulverized are likewise clean-cut but stark and plainly utilitarian. Clay bowls, bottles, and storage jars are usually of simple, uniform design, with only accidental variations; there is little use of glazes, and the clay is often heavy and thick. Should there be a warf gameboard in the peasant hut, the chances are that it is roughly made, without legs or carved designs. Dugout canoes are usually crude in appearance, heavy and thick-walled, and irregular in form.

Yet there are many evidences—though one must seek them out—that esthetic impulses are quite alive. The gay peasant straw knapsack, or *alfor*, without which no mountain man makes a journey, has a charm and grace that is not diminished by familiarity and cheapness. Decorated with sisal braid and tassels, and colored with green and magenta dyes, each *alfor* on close inspection appears to be unique. In some communities in the south and southwest, burlap squares also are painted with these traditional dyes. About forty inches across, and made of sugar bags, these paintings swarm with geometric patterns and sometimes with figures of flowers and animals. They are purely decorative, being

[See plates 42-51, pp. 112-DD—112-FF.--Analyst]

Çaliro Çaliro 'yé!
Mirre an hanaile lé!
Ça qui fas arangé ranya yé!
Mirre an hanaile lé! [Ex. 122]

Way way way!
Way way way!
Way way way!
Those who can't fight, take care of yourselves!
Take me into the battle!
Çaliro, this Çaliro!
Take me into the battle!
Those who are delicate, take care of yourselves!
Take me into the battle!

Another battle cry in song goes:

C'est mon mirre, c'est mon mirre!
C'est mon mirre, c'est mon mirre!
Pas wi'n déjà gros Nig' rwa!
Na mainyain djab lé!

It is me myself, it is me myself!
It is me myself, it is me myself!
Don't you see I am a big man, rwa?
I will hold that devil!

In the following song an aggrieved man declares he is strong as a bull, and warns his enemy to beware.

Anou mayain tè glisé mou c'est lé ch!
Anou mayain tè glisé mou c'est lé ch!

I'll fix you, treacherous fellow,* I am a bull, ch!
I'll fix you, treacherous fellow, I am a bull, ch!

Even a successful game of dice is the subject of bragging:

Paré frai,
Oh paré belle,
Paré an beauté!
Paré frai,
Oh paré belle,
Paré an beauté!
Yr é mir frappé mo,
Mon fé trois beaué [Ex. 123]

More than sweet,
Oh, more than handsome,
More than a beauty!
More than sweet,
Oh, more than handsome,
More than a beauty!
Last night I played dice,
I made three aces!

* *Tè glisé*, literally "slippery earth," means a person who is treacherous.

[P 185]

17. Children's World: Gage Songs and Games

On the night of last prayers for a deceased person, and on other party occasions, children while away the hours until bedtime with special songs and games. Sometimes the games are led by an older member of the family. More often, left to their own devices, the children play unsupervised. It is regarded as fitting that the youngest members of the community should be enjoying themselves while the last rites are being held for one who has recently died. This view is held not merely in regard to children; older people, too, engage in gay activities, such as dancing the Juba. [533] [534] [764] [535]

Many children's games are known throughout the country, others have only a regional popularity. The games mentioned here are among those played in southern Haiti, mainly in the neighborhood of the capital, Port-au-Prince. [184] [524]

One favorite is known as Balancé Yaya. The children—as few as four or as many as ten or twelve—crouch on the ground in a circle. Each of them has a stone in his hand, which he strikes rhythmically on the earth as they sing together: [524] [533] [539]

Jésus, Marie, Joseph oh,
Ket li mangé pigeon moin.
Jésus, Marie, Joseph oh,
Ket li mangé pigeon moin.
Ket pawé, Robinette pawé,
Fal' ti Marie marché, allé li. . . . [Ex. 129]

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, oh,
The rat has eaten my pigeon.
Jesus, Mary, Joseph, oh,
The rat has eaten my pigeon.
The rat goes by, Robinette goes by,
Make little Mary walk, go there. . . .

526 On the words *alli li*, each of the players slides his stone in front of another
533 person. There is no fixed direction of rotation, and the stone may be passed to the left or to the right, or even across the circle. This passing of stones continues while the players sing:

539

Balawé Yaya,
Yaya oh,
Yaya Madame Mongo,
Balawé Yaya mein,
Mein lo' pelow mein,
C'ee pee' Yaya,
Balawé Yaya
Yaya oh
Yaya Madame Mongo. [Ex. 129]

Eem up, Yaya,
Yaya, oh,
Yaya Madame Mongo,
Eem up, my Yaya,
I say my prayers,
They see her Yaya,
Eem up, Yaya,
Yaya, oh,
Yaya Madame Mongo.

While this part of the song is being sung, the stones are being passed rapidly this way and that. Players may use only one hand for this purpose, and at some stage one of them finds himself with more stones in front of him than he can dispose of, and he is declared *gaga*, or "it." Then the game begins anew.

527 In another animated game called Thétaw, the boys and girls stand in a circle and sing, clapping hands and going through a variety of postures, gestures, and dance steps. It is a sort of "follow the leader" routine. First, one of the group makes rhythmic motions in time to the music, and the other players must do the same thing. The leader may swing his hips, do fancy footwork, posture with his arms, or twist about, and the others in the circle are obliged to imitate him. Then another child gets his turn to set the pace. One of the songs heard with this game is the following,
533 539 which imitates the voice of the guinea hen:

Cipan Cimalé
C'est ça mamman'm té di mein,
Cipan Cimalé
C'est ça mamman'm té di mein,
Cipan Cimalé
Ate tain tain Cimalé
Ring ting ting Cimalé
Tink tink tink tink Cimalé
Wa tink tink Cimalé
(And so on, with variations.) [Ex. 130]

Cipan Cimalé
This is what my mother told me,
Cipan Cimalé
This is what my mother told me,
Cipan Cimalé
Ate tain tain Cimalé

Ruing ruing ruing Cinsdal
Tuink tuink tuink tuink Cinsdal
Wa tuink tuink Cinsdal

For the game called Dilina, two chairs are required as props. They are placed a few feet from each other, facing toward the center. Behind one chair is a boy, behind the other a girl. The other children clap their hands and sing:

Cuel'm pawl, Dilina!
Cuel'm vint, c'ua Dilina!
Mamman mamman, Dilina!
Papa papa, Dilina!
Mamman mamman, Dilina!
Papa papa, Dilina!
Cuel'm pawl, Dilina!
Cuel'm vint, c'ua Dilina!
Dilina jaké ah jaké, Dilina!
Jaké pou' la'gent, Dilina! [Ex. 131]

Wherever I pass is Dilina!
Wherever I turn is Dilina!
Grandmother, Dilina!
Grandfather, Dilina!
Grandmother, Dilina!
Grandfather, Dilina!
Wherever I pass is Dilina!
Wherever I turn is Dilina!
Dilina works, ah, works, Dilina!
Works for money, Dilina!

The two children in the center, at a given signal, begin to move, each circling his own chair. The circling continues, the girl pacing her movements in an effort to avoid meeting the boy face to face. The boy times his movements so that he may meet the girl face to face. If and when he accomplishes his purpose he takes his reward—an embrace—and another couple comes forward to repeat the play.

Another game of the courting variety is called Find a Beautiful Woman. A chair is placed in the center of the play area, and a girl is designated to sit there as the "beautiful woman." She has nothing else to do. The others sing:

Chach' yun femme qui belle ah!
Sindé, Sindé Macaya!
Chach' yun femme qui belle, fel'!
Sindé, Sindé Macaya! [Ex. 132]

Look for a woman who is beautiful, ah!
Sindé, Sindé Macaya!
Look for a woman who is beautiful, brother!
Sindé, Sindé Macaya!

Holding a kerchief in his hand, one of the children marches or dances around the chair of the "beautiful woman." After several trips around, he retires and drops the kerchief in the lap of another player, who comes forward and repeats the performance. Anyone who refuses to pay his respects to the "beautiful woman" is "it."

Some games are of the personal "test" or ordeal kind. In one of them

524 the objective is to refrain from laughing. A player stands in the middle of a circle of seated participants, each of whom in turn gives a laugh of some kind—a giggle, a loud laugh, an ironic laugh, a laugh of ridicule, and so on. If the player in the center cannot refrain from laughing with the others, he loses and someone else takes his place in the middle.

Various kinds of blindfold games go by the name Boule, or Boulé. In one of them, a blindfolded player moves from one seated child to another, feeling them with his hands as he goes, and trying to identify them by touch. When he guesses correctly, the identified person changes places with him, and the game continues.

In a second form of Boulé, it is the person in the center who can see, and the seated players who are blindfolded. The one in the center moves around the inside of the circle with a kerchief in his hand, pressing it against the lap of each blindfolded player as he passes. Somewhere en route he leaves the handkerchief in a lap. It is so light that it is not easily detected. If a blindfolded person guesses correctly that the handkerchief is in his lap he is freed from the circle and comes to the center. If he guesses incorrectly, it a mark against him.

Still another type of game is based on quick and accurate responses. This one is called Uncle Pierre. Each player in the group is given a name specifying a number of sheep. That is, the first player's name may be Ten Sheep; the next one, Fourteen Sheep; the next one, Seven Sheep; the next one, Nineteen Sheep; and so on.

The "master" of the group begins by saying, "Uncle Pierre went to my farm and took Seven Sheep."

The person named Seven Sheep must reply, "Tomantor."

The "master" asks, "How many sheep did he take?"

And Seven Sheep replies, selecting the name of one of the other participants, "Nineteen Sheep."

The one named Nineteen Sheep replies, "Tomantor."

The "master" call out, "How many sheep did he take?"

Nineteen Sheep answers, "Fourteen Sheep."

Fourteen Sheep answers, "Tomantor."

And so on. If a player answers to the wrong number, or if he gives a name for which there isn't a corresponding player, he loses and is gage.[1]

[1] [The description of this game is from Paul, "Les Jeux à gage, Bulletin du Bureau d'Ethnologie, July, 1949, P. 51. Cf. P. 353, Category 116. -- Analyst]

534 [541] Among the noisemakers heard mostly at the time of the Rara festival (usually on Good Friday) are the *ene-ene*, or bull-roarer—a thin flat piece of wood whirled on the end of a cord—and the *rara*, the common wooden ratchet. Various types of wooden flutes, usually of bamboo, are also used.

[164] In the remoter parts of the mountains you may now and then hear of an instrument known as the *Aweto*. A century ago, it would appear, the *Aweto* was a stringed instrument resembling a banjo. The similarity of names is striking, in view of the instrument's early form. Today, [199] however, the word *Aweto* is applied to the homemade fiddle which is used to accompany the minuet and other old dances of European origin.

534 A children's instrument seen sometimes in the mountains is constructed 524 of half of a calabash shell, across the opening of which have been 178 stretched a number of cords. This plucked device appears to be a decadent form of the African trough zither.

[pp 203-313 not processed]

2. Games

THE GAME OF CAILLE, OR WARI

524 [illegible] [184] The African counting game played with beans or stones in a carved wooden tray (known in various parts of Africa as *wari*, *mancala*, *adi*, etc.) is still known and played in the southwestern mountains of Haiti, particularly in the region south of the Léogane Plain. In Africa the game has innumerable variants. Most often the carved playing board or tray has two rows of six, seven, or eight holes, or pockets, sometimes with a large pocket at each end for winnings. In Ethiopia the playing board consists of three rows of six pockets each. In the upper Congo region a form of the game uses a board of twenty-eight pockets in four rows. Among wandering herding peoples in East Africa the holes are simply dug in the earth, and for playing pieces stones or dried camel droppings are used. The game not only is widespread throughout Africa but has an ancient tradition in Indonesia, the Philippines, southern and southeastern Asia, and the Arabic Middle East.

In Haiti the game is usually called *caille*, or "house." It is played on a long, sixteen-hole board of the kind used in West Africa. The playing pieces are usually maize kernels, dried peas, or wari beans. Where wari beans are used, the game is sometimes called by that name. This is a curious syncretism. The wari bean itself is so named because of a black marking which looks like a smile, in Creole *we ri* ("going to laugh"). There are several ways of playing wari in Haiti; all have the common objective of capturing pieces on the opponent's side of the board. This is referred to as entering his "house" and "eating" the occupants, a terminology that is employed elsewhere where the game is known.

524 One method of playing is as follows. Starting with four pieces in every hole, a player takes up all the pieces from any hole on his own side of the board and redistributes them in a counterclockwise direction, dropping one into each hole as far as they will go. When his last piece is

[p. 332]

dropped, he picks up the contents of the next hole and continues the redistribution. Should his last piece eventually fall into an empty pocket, his turn is ended and his opponent begins. However, if his last piece falls into a hole containing one or two pieces, he "eats" these pieces along with the piece which he places there. He continues the play as before, starting with the following hole, monopolizing the play until he ends in an empty hole. The one who takes the most pieces wins. In some Haitian variants of the game, each person's play is limited to the distribution of the contents of a single hole.

THE GAME OF MAYAMBA

This game, like *calik*, appears to be of African origin. It is played with four chips made of shell, baked clay, or broken chinaware. One side of each chip is white, the other usually blue. Any number of players may participate, and, as in dice, all compete against the thrower. *Mayamba* has a strictly gambling incentive. If a player throws two whites and two blues, or four whites, or four blues, he wins. If he throws any odd combination he loses.

(Eve-fee is ritual language. Hausa kazas are the servitors of the hoodoo being addressed by an unidentified lwa.)

Example 136

Achadi, ah, ah!
Achadi, I have no mother here to speak for me!
Achadi, ah!
Achadi, I have no mother here to speak for me!
Oh Achadi, ah!
Ogoun is bad, ah!
Achadi Papa!
Ogoun is bad, ah!
Etc.

(The song is addressed to the lwa Achadi; it complains of the behavior of another lwa, Ogoun.)

Example 137

Bear the drum for me!
I shall . . . . , bear the drum for me!
Etc.
Three times after the Angelus, ah!
Three times after the Angelus, ah!

(This appears to be a children's game song. Three "times" after the Angelus would be three hours after six o'clock in the evening.)

Example 138

Liberia fell down!
Liberia fell down! *Adolf*
I am sending a whip for his back!
Etc.

(A children's game song.)

Example 139

Adolina!
Mèyèwèdè Aloba, my Loko, Adolina!
Mèyèwèdè Aloba, my Loko, Adolina!
Mèyèwèdè my Loko, Adolina!
Etc.

(This is a song of supplication to the lwa Loko. The word *mèyèwèdè* signifies supplication.)

Example 140

Tan-zoro is not a dollar,
Cousin, don't take cousin, ah, cousin!

533 Ekkorra 163

536
539
524 The pig says wain!
The pig says wain, but sound!
Etc.
See the pig having fun!
Kukl, cukl, but sound!

(A children's game song.)

Ekkorra 164

Bedouest crwd
Adieu, Bedouest, make Bedouest walk!
Bedouest, that's it, that's it, Bedouest!
Make Bedouest walk!

(A children's game song.)

533 Ekkorra 165
539

You arrive, Rigal, you sound!
You arrive, Rigal, you arrive!
When Rigal turned into a large pig,
He came to Jacmel to see us!

(This song names a specific individual, Rigal, as having turned into a pig, like a member of the Vishinfingar Society, but it is not clear whether it is intended to be taken seriously or is merely humor.)

Ekkorra 166

I will swing, oh!
The mosquito says I will swing, oh!
Etc.

534 (Swing is the sound the mosquito makes. The song is usually sung to the accompaniment of the *zendour* maringouin, or mosquito drum.)

Ekkorra 167

The small boy stands on the terrace,
He stamps his feet *doo doo!*
The small boy stands on the terrace,
He stamps his feet *doo doo!*
Oh, [unchained?] gives them *pulitre*, oh!
The small boy stands on the terrace,
He stamps his feet *doo doo!*
[Unchained?] gives them *pulitre*, oh!
Furiously gives them *pulitre*, oh!
Mayouni!
Find your woman, *mayouni!*
Mayou-youni!

178 [illegible] in Africa, also allow play for the aesthetic impulse, have been
[525] lost as well. Ironworking is absent not only because the necessary deposits of iron ore are lacking, but because the technique
[526] of shaping the metal into various forms, which in Africa is in the hands of specialists, was apparently suppressed in the time
[536] of slavery. No native cloth is woven. Basketry has survived,
178 but whereas in Africa designs of no small artistic merit are
285 achieved in this medium, it is markedly utilitarian in Haiti. Even from a technical point of view, the basketry forms are of the simplest, the panniers used for transportation of products on mule-back being merely an in-and-out weave, and the plaited strips of which hats and the *manoute*, or carrying basket, are made are of a parallel simplicity.

524 Few African recreational forms have survived. *Wari*, the
525 draughts-like West African game found today in many parts
178 of the West Indies, is unknown in the interior of Haiti, though it has been introduced into Port-au-Prince, where it is played by longshoremen who have learned it from the sailors of near-by islands. Skiing figures, important in West Africa, are not encountered, and no children's pursuits comparable to the play of young Africans were seen in Mirebalais, if the minor ceremony of marking the loss of childhood teeth be excepted. African types of recreation have in the main given way to cock-fights and card-games, both of which derive their interest from the opportunities they offer for gambling—a fact important in itself, since gambling is not one of the widespread African vices. The most important card-games are *trois-sept*, *marriage*, and *bezique*, and both men and women
[541] know them and play them for stakes. Similarly cock-fighting, particularly during the dry season, is a passionate avocation of the men. Large sums are wagered on the results of an encounter, and feeling often runs high.*

533 The Haitian genius for art and recreation is best embodied
535 in the dance and its accompanying songs and drum rhythms. Virtuosity is attained not only by the dancers, but even more

with the poorly Catholic rituals carried on at the village church, are seen to hold an important if unofficial place in the complex of cults known in the Haitian Church calendar as the Fête of Saint d'Eau.

During the two or three days preceding the fête and on the fifteenth of July itself, an air of great gayety not unlike the carnival spirit accompanying European Church festivals pervades the surrounding country. Carriers traverse the almost impassable side road, bringing crowds of people from Port-au-Prince, from the Dominican border, and even from the north, who throng the streets and the shrines and tramp the miles from the village to the waterfalls or visit the nearer sacred sites of St. John's Wood and En bas Palmes, to light candles and ask the satisfaction of their needs. Like the falls themselves, these spots by their very beauty awaken a sense of transcendental awareness, and it is not strange that here, as at the falls, many possessions occur. At night, in particular, the great trees with their interlacing serpent-like roots, the gaping earth which at En bas Palmes is witness to the uprooting of the palm trees where the miracle occurred, and the stream of sacred water, all make a scene of indescribable eerieness, heightened by the flickering candles given as offerings, and the open lamps of those who stay the night here to fulfill their vows.

In the town itself gambling and other games go on, and dances of all kinds are held at night, among them *vodun* and *bal*, though at these public dances no possessions are commenced. One of the most colorful aspects of the scene is the *penitents*, wearing clothing of varied colors in fulfillment of a request by the *loa* they worship or an obligation to them. Such folk are not permitted in church unless the clothing which marks them is covered by ordinary dress, but they walk the streets, often possessed and often using their power to heal those whom they encounter. Possessions by Ogun, by Gede, by Baron Samedi, by Damballa, by Ertilie and other vodun deities were observed, particularly at the shrines, where their devotees prophesied and healed the sick.

of whom are sincere practicing voodooists as they are sincere practicing Catholics, who do not post an end to the worship of false gods.

The absence of graphic and plastic arts in Haitian culture, commented upon in a preceding chapter, must also be regarded as a case in point in laying bare the anatomy of this inner conflict of tradition, since it is important to recognize that the suppression of these forms of the prevalent African tradition would seem to have lost to the Haitian an important outlet for the resolution of inner tensions caused by pent-up drives. Even more revealing is the substitution of games of chance for those games of skill which in most African and New World Negro societies are played for their own sake alone—that is, for the prestige accruing to the skillful player. The strain that accompanies this play for stakes, often of no inconsiderable value in terms of the resources of the players, is patent to the most casual observer. The question here arises whether or not the craving for excitement of this kind may not in Haiti be traceable to the inhibition, under slavery, of some of the more gracious forms of African life which there make for social equilibrium. Might it not represent a kind of compensation for the thwarted psychic ease with which a culturally undisturbed people approach their own existence—a state of being which, in contrast, is quite lacking in Haiti?

A singularly illuminating comment upon these manifestations of instability in Haitian life has been made by Dr. J. C. Dorsainvil, who in drawing his conclusion called both upon his own medical training and on his experience of many years as a profound student of his own people. "It has perhaps been insufficiently remarked to what an astonishing degree the Haitian people live on their nerves."[1] As might be expected, he advances a number of possible explanations of the causes that underlie this state of "living on nerves." The wear and tear of life in the tropics is given as one reason; another is the excitement of the *vodun* dances with their frenzy of possession;

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

dropped, he picks up the contents of the next hole and continues the re- 524
distribution. Should his last piece eventually fall into an empty pocket, his turn is ended and his opponent begins. However, if his last piece falls into a hole containing one or two pieces, he "eats" those pieces along with the piece which he places there. He continues the play as before, starting with the following hole, monopolizing the play until he ends in an empty hole. The one who takes the most pieces wins. In some [184]
Haitian variants of the game, each person's play is limited to the distribution of the contents of a single hole.

THE GAME OF MAYAMBA

This game, like *caille*, appears to be of African origin. It is played with [171]
four chips made of shell, baked clay, or broken chinaware. One side of each chip is white, the other usually blue. Any number of players may participate, and, as in dice, all compete against the thrower. *Mayamba* [525]
has a strictly gambling incentive. If a player throws two whites and two blues, or four whites, or four blues, he wins. If he throws any odd combination he loses.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

as *houngfor*, *houngi*, *houngbaison*, *houngtor*, etc. *Mystère* is of obvious French origin. *Loa* is probably from the Bantu, but it could be from the Yoruba.

[7]Various methods and formulas are employed in "tying" a loa. Sometimes making the sign of the cross is regarded as adequate, or the saying of a prayer. In "The Voduu Service in Northern Haiti" (*American Anthropologist*, XLII, 242–243), George Eaton Simpson reports that the "tying" of a loa sometimes results in a contest between the individual concerned and his houngan. If the houngan wants the *mait' tête* to come in, he must neutralize the ritual barriers the "horse" has put in the way. "One procedure for bringing on possession in a servant who has tried to 'tie' his chief god is for the priest to stand in front of the person whom he suspects, make the sign of the cross, and strike him on the forehead three times with a sacrificial stone. Usually these blows are hard enough to make blood spurt. The servant then begs the pardon of the angry god, and as soon as possible he unties the knots in his handkerchief [the method he has used for 'tying' his loa]."

[8]Herskovits, *Dahomey*.

CHAPTER 4: *Death Rites* (*pp. 30–40*)

[1]Maurice Delafosse, *L'Ame nègre*. Translation from *Free France*, special issue No. 4, French Press and Information Service, New York, June, 1945.

[2]Leo A. Verwilghen, in booklet describing peoples of the Kwango region, accompanying *Music of the Western Congo*, recordings issued by the Ethnic Folkways Library.

[3]Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu*, pp. 88–89.

[4]W. M. Eiselen and I. Schapera, "Religious Beliefs and Practices," in Schapera, *The Bantu-speaking Tribes of South Africa*, p. 250.

[5]Translated from the French of Aubin, *En Haïti*, p. 212.

[6]Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, pp. 213–214.

[7]Hall and others, *Haitian Creole*, American Anthropological Association, Memoir No. 54, pp. 188–189.

[8]Simpson, "Four Voduu Ceremonies," *Journal of American Folklore*, April-June, 1946, pp. 155–162.

[9]As translated by Courlander from Simpson's Creole text, *ibid.*, p. 156. The preceding paragraph is from p. 155.

[10]Translated by Courlander from the Creole of Simpson's text.

[11]This and the preceding paragraph are from Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

[12]These shells, as indicated elsewhere, are part of the paraphernalia of the Voduu priest and appear to be an inheritance from the priests of the Fa cult of Dahomey. The divining shells are usually thrown on the ground in fours, and the readings depend upon combinations of "heads and tails." The manner of throwing the shells, as well as the number used, corresponds closely with the Haitian secular gambling game *mayawbe* (see Appendix 2), though the purpose is obviously different. In some priestly rites in Haiti, ashes rather than the customary shells are used for divining.

[13]Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

[14]*Ibid.*, p. 161.

[15]Herskovits, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

[16]Herskovits (*ibid.*) notes that persons who die of smallpox, lightning, and certain other phenomena are not buried in coffins. Some of my informants indicated this to be their understanding also, but they said that the dead are buried without coffins for strictly economic reasons as well.

[17]Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

[18]Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. 156.

[19]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 398.

[20]*Ibid.*, pp. 397–398.

[21]Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, p. 214.

[22]Hall and others, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

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527 On Saturday nights one hears the drums beating all over the
[534] country, but if one follows the sound he is more than likely to end
[535] up at nothing more esoteric than a neighborhood dance. Other musical instruments than drums are rare, but any community has drums; and these set a rhythm to which one can dance. Generally food is available at these affairs, as well as drinks both hard and soft.
273 It is not extraordinary to discover that a few of the men have drunk rather freely of clairin, the raw rum of the country; most drunkenness seems to lead to good-natured ribaldry rather than to offensive violence. It is unusual for a drunken man to cause damage of any
535 serious nature. The dancing corresponds neither to American ballroom dancing nor to set folk dancing. Most of it is done solo, and an individual participates or remains on the outskirts of the enclosure as
533 the mood of the moment impels him. Over the beat of the drum can be heard one of the current songs, more than likely a bit smutty in nature, and frequently poking fun at some well-known personage, or making allusions which in normal speech might seem crude.

541 One of the popular Sunday afternoon sports is the *gaguère*, or cock-
[525] fight, held under a shelter back of a home. Much small betting goes on. The spectators sit or stoop close around the dusty ring, talking to the cock they are backing, commenting on the fight, offering advice to the owner. Between rounds the cocks are rubbed down, sprayed with water or rum, fondled and excited anew. Toward the latter stages of any fight the spectacle becomes gory and, to the uninitiated, distinctly cruel.

526 There is singularly little sport in Haiti. Élite youths play tennis; boys enjoy football; and swimming is a common diversion. Few sports are competitive and, so far as the writer has observed, the peasants have in their games practically nothing resembling organization.

575 and covered with tiny mirrors or bits of colored glass. The towering
535 headdress of antlers or papier-mâché sculpture unavoidably recalls similar
[292] headdresses in West Africa. Each roi has his own style of dance, which is usually accompanied by drums. It may be a belly dance, a dance of delicate balance, or one of complicated footwork and semiacrobatics such as the imitation of a pair of scissors at work. Throughout the dancing the headdress remains majestically erect.

541 In addition to the roi Lwalwali and the mâit' Rara (who is con-
576 stantly in the midst of things, blowing his whistle), there are other
524 traditional Rara personalities: the *major jonc*, who juggles with a metal
[534] baton (sometimes two or three of these jugglers work together), and the *jongleur*, a juggler or strong man who performs such feats as dancing while holding a fully set table off the ground with his teeth.

184 On the southwest peninsula, in the region around Jérémie, there
541 is a splurge of wrestling exhibitions during Rara days. Known as *pingé*,
526 this festival wrestling is done with a background of excited drumming
533 and has a striking resemblance to wrestling traditions in West Africa.
[191] Local "champions" will invade a neighboring community, sometimes traveling considerable distances to make a challenge. As in West Africa, some of these wrestlers take their own musicians with them. The musicians often are provided by the village in which the events take place. If a challenge is accepted, the spectators form a large circle, with the wrestlers in the center and the musicians to one side. There may be drums and bamboo flutes, occasionally supplemented by large earthern jars and lengths of bamboo beaten with sticks. The wrestlers are dressed only in shorts. When a man is thrown, the event is over, and another pair of wrestlers takes over. Sometimes a "champion" will take on a series of opponents until he is tired. Afterward he may move on to another community to find new competition, perhaps accompanied by a large group of friends and supporters from his own village. When the Rara season comes to an end, pingé is over for the year. It is one of the few athletic sport activities of the Haitian peasant.

541 And now and then during Rara a *debois* is seen. The *debois* is a
536 carved wooden marionette with a short handle below. Its arms and legs are moved by pulling a string. It is usually painted, and sometimes it is
[831] dressed. One debois observed was provided with a loose dresslike costume; when the string was pulled, a large phallus hinged into view in an erect position. This marionette was an object of endless funmaking among spectators.[2]

Another type of marionette is the "Two Kings," made of papier-mâché and operated with strings. The "Two Kings," sitting in a papier-

[2] [Footnote appears in category 116, p. 351. --Analyst]

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311 merly. Wherever the overcrowded Haitians have lived since 1815, there beauty has had to give way to gnawing necessity which lacked either the imagination or the means to be sightly.

105 One can stand upon a morne and watch a rain storm rush down the valley, bending the palm trees in its fury, and think Haiti still a magnificent sight. Then one must descend the mountainside past rickety shacks and rocky fields, and the feeling grows that not all the kindly simplicity of the people is enough to lift the country from its [134] dilapidation. As he nears the village, the afternoon scent of roasting coffee will delight him; but then he sees the squalor of village life and is reminded that three million souls are here trying to eke out an existence upon a small area of declining fertility.

Much in Haiti is picturesque if one can keep his mind from wandering to the conditions which lie behind the picturesqueness. [482] Women stride down from the hills with great loads on their heads; [443] aged crones, pipe in mouth, sit perched on the haunches of tiny donkeys with their bulging panniers; the great market square in the [492] town is a scene of noisy confusion with hundreds of women and [482] children, a mixture of smells, thousands of little piles of soap, candy, gewgaws, vegetables, gaping chickens tied together by the feet, [434] shirts, canes, bolts of cloth. All the weary women, however, must [146] trudge back up to their shanties on the mountainside when the market is over. Many of them do not see ten dollars in cash during the year, and their little children, with bellies bulging, give evidence [164] of undernourishment. Without doctors, without even the rudiments of hygiene, they manage somehow to subsist, or else die, frequently of disease which might easily have been prevented.

565 In Port-au-Prince and a few other towns live enough members of the élite to make one momentarily forget the plight of the masses. [342] The houses of the well-to-do are substantially built, if not often [351] attractive. Their garden walls are brilliant with bougainvillea, their walks with hibiscus. Tiny red lizards (analis) make flashes of color along the walls. On shady verandas and in the parlors one hears delightful conversation, eats excellent food, savors the pleasures of [575] civilization. The clubs of the élite are pleasing, their tennis is good, [526] their dancing graceful. To be among these families as a welcome guest is an experience in gracious hospitality which can never be [535] forgotten. Too soon, however, one must leave these havens of urbanity and pass through districts of the town which haunt the mind with their grim want.

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512 neighbors paying friendly visits and of playing children gradu-
[264] ally become stilled. It is the time for the evening meal. By nine o'clock at the latest all is quiet and Mirebalais, man and beast, is asleep.

796 The *vodun* drums are heard only on Saturday nights, and
527 then the dance must be sufficiently close to the town, and the wind in the right direction, for the sound to be audible.
[556] Permits for these dances must be obtained, and are regularly given by the police officials — or were in 1934 — and word is passed on that on a given Saturday certain households will give *vodun* dances. If the dances are held in the foothills to the west, the Tombe River must be forded, and the existence of such a barrier between the village and the site of the dance makes this a favorite region in which to hold them, even though they may have official sanction. During the rainy sea-
[484] son attendance at dances on the opposite bank of the Arti-
[501] bonite River depends on the height of the stream, for when it is in flood not even the dugout canoes of the Haitians can cross it, while the ferry which Moreau de St. Mery speaks of as having been established in 1749 does not even exist in local tradition.[14] Yet no dance lacks participants or spectators, for these occasions furnish the principal opportunity for recreation even as they fill their proper religious function. Early in
[798] the week discussions can be heard of the dances to be held, and though the official frown of the Catholic priest is always to be reckoned with, the importance of these dances, and the numbers who attend them, do not seem markedly lessened by
[554] this fact. Those whose social position in the community makes them more sensitive to such criticism merely take the precaution to slip quietly out of town after dark.

796 When occasions of local or national significance and church holidays are celebrated, the town is full of country folk and
[788] visitors from the cities. Christmas and New Year's, Mardi Gras and Easter are all periods for such celebrations, while the first Sunday of every month witnesses a religious procession

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about the square that precedes the principal mass of the day. 796 188
These processions, however, are as a mere rehearsal for the great procession held during the festival of St. Louis, the patron saint of the town. At that time the statue of the saint, carried by the faithful — among whom can be seen more than one perspiring *vodun* priest and *bocor* — is taken triumphantly through the streets to insure a good year. The nearness of the valley to the village of Ville Bonheur makes the 796 [184]
great religious festival of Saut d'Eau, where the "miracle of the Virgin" is believed to have occurred, almost a local matter. And though Saut d'Eau lies well over the mountains, July 15 finds most of the population of Mirebalais away from home celebrating the miraculous revelation with folk from other parts of Haiti. May Day is celebrated as the "Fête de 527
l'Agriculture," and two years ago a new day of rejoicing was added to the calendar of festivals. This is known as the "Festival of the Second Independence," the anniversary of the departure of the American Marines from Haiti, and is marked by the "illumination" of all houses the night before and a solemn discourse from the mayor after a Te Deum has been sung in the church.

Thus life in the valley of Mirebalais continues the course 175
it has followed for the past two hundred years. Though its [178]
history, as we can reconstruct it, has been marked by turbulent periods, these have been far from the rule. It is true that because of its position it has always been a point to be defended, and often, both before and after the time of Haitian independence, it has been a region where decisive encounters with those who controlled the Spanish portion of the island have taken place. Not for many years, however, until the Caco 175
uprising against the American Marines, did Mirebalais ex- 648
perience military activities on any considerable scale. After the death of Charlemagne Perrault, when his successor selected the valley as a strategic point to be defended, a large force of Marines was encamped near the confluence of the

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512 grain in her mortar or working in her garden near by. On
[413] market days she takes the produce of the family's fields to the
[438] town to sell. If she has young children, she cares for them
[855] while she does her other work, but when they are old enough,
[897] they help her about the house if they are girls, or, if boys, go with their father to the garden. From time to time, when
[856] house repairs are needed or there are implements to be
[241] mended, the man spends a day at home getting these odd jobs done; otherwise only serious illness in the family keeps him from his fields.

512 The times for meals have not varied since the days when
264 Moreau de St. Mery described the eating-habits of the slaves.[1] In addition to the mid-morning repast, the only other meal is that eaten after the man returns from his field, this being
[562] the largest of the day. A wife does not sit down with her
[593] husband, but usually eats earlier with her small children and holds herself ready to serve him upon his return, when, if he is alone, she remains to tell him the day's gossip. Visitors are
[574] often present, for peasant etiquette demands that all comers
[576] be offered food, and, as one Haitian expressed it, "The peasant would kill you for the insult if you did not share your meal with him." Bedtime, as might be expected, is early.

512 On Sundays and on the days of festivals this routine is in-
521 terrupted, when, if the occasion is of sufficient importance
[196] and the habitation is not too far from town, the peasant and his family attend mass. On Saturday nights there is usually a *vodun* dance, when the early hour for retirement is forgotten and all-night festivities precede Sunday's rest. On such days
[264] the principal meal is eaten at three or four o'clock in the afternoon, and all the adults share it together, while at one side the children are fed from the dishes of their parents in response to the insistent repetition of the demand "*Ba'm pa'm* — give me my portion." *

* This is an example of the elision characteristic of Haitian Créole, it being abbreviated from *Ba moin part moin* or, in French, *Donnez-moi ma part*.

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he is assured of more solicitous care from her and more deferential treatment from her children. And though when this has occurred his "legal" wife may at his death come with a justice of the peace to claim his body and his effects, this move is anticipated, so that what he has given the *placée* wife and her children is usually well out of the way. "Often they find only the four walls of the house."

A certain number of unmarried men result from this system of plural matings, some of whom remain single by preference, particularly in the cities, where the incidence of homosexuality far exceeds that found in the country. In Mirebalais itself, when the final withdrawal of the American Marines from Haiti was being celebrated, a dance called *manuba*, significantly enough the only one held indoors, was one in which male dancers danced together in couples. The sexual problem of the younger unmarried men is more often solved by means of liaisons with married women, though this has its dangers in the countryside, where the movements of every individual are known and the least tendency to unsanctioned social behavior is soon the subject for widespread gossip. Prostitutes are found everywhere, and they are by no means visited by unmarried men alone. On the whole, sex "adventures" are more indulged in by men than women, even allowing for the tendency of some women to have affairs with youths. A belief widely held, that plural wives tend so to exhaust the virility of a man that he must seek "remedies" of a magical nature from the priests of the *vodun* cult and from sorcerers, must also be mentioned. Frigidity is a principal cause for female homosexuality, and, because of a wife's reluctance to satisfy her husband, it not infrequently happens that she is sent back to her parents, where she may seek out other women. The most prevalent Haitian attitude toward homosexuality in either sex, it may be remarked, is one of derision rather than vindictiveness, as the term applied to effeminate men, *commères*, may suggest.

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lighted. Chicken and rice may also be cooked for any god except Gede, while chocolate and rice with milk are favored, since it is said "the *loa* love desserts"—a commentary on the very immediate and human character of these spirits.

The actual baptism, or "washing of the head," is performed on the third day of the ceremony by a *vodun* priest or priestess who is a member of the family, though any member who has important *loa* and the necessary *connaissance* may officiate if the membership of the family includes no priest. As at any baptism, there must be a godfather and godmother, and preference is given those who are the parents of twins or are themselves twins. The officiant must be possessed at the time, since, it is said, "one *loa* baptizes another." Leaves of the basilique tree are steeped in perfumed cold water, and the hands of the one who baptizes are first immersed in the liquid; then, while songs of the *loa* and canticles of the Virgin are sung, he washes the head of the person to be baptized. Possession occurs immediately, and the new devotee lies back, half conscious, while all others kneel, seeking word from the *loa* to learn if it is satisfied. If an affirmative answer is given, all retire, the person possessed remaining in the room to sleep through the night. A "ball," but not a *vodun* dance, may celebrate the event either the next day or later, but this is not obligatory, and most often those present, after eating, quietly disperse. The following day the one who has been baptized goes to the family place of worship and greets those who have helped him. Only one further rite is necessary, and this solely when the *loa bossal* is revealed to be a hostile god. Then the *loa*, after having been baptized, is "restrained" by being placed in a jar and buried, so it cannot later emerge and trouble the family of the one to whom it has come.[13]

The ceremony of baptism, in Mirebalais, is in no sense a first step into any *vodun* hierarchy, for, as will be seen, no such hierarchy exists in this valley. One important priest there derives his power from *loa* that have never been bap-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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Saturday nights. This is not because of the especially sacred character of the day, but rather because the Haitian government, in order to assure a continuous working week, refuses permits for other days. The occasions for the dances are varied, as is evident from those given during the course of this field-work. One of these was that of a *hungan* as a compliment to visitors "who knew Dahomey" and was conducted as a serious rite in the worship of the *loa*. Two dances marked the end of *services* for family gods, and were variously interpreted as tributes to the family dead and the twins, who must not be neglected in any religious observance, and as celebrations offered in praise of the gods who were to protect the families, giving the dances, to mark the "restraining" of the evil spirits responsible for their troubles. Two other dances celebrated the "baptism" and initial use of new sets of drums. As has been pointed out, there are also non-religious occasions on which *vodun* dances are given. On days of secular celebrations, such as the anniversary of the declaration of Haitian independence, or the withdrawal of the Marines, the *vodun* dancing is purely social, though the ritual drums are used, the sacred songs are sung, and the steps of the dances are those seen at any Saturday-night gathering. Added to the fact that no possessions or other manifestations of serious worship of the *loa* occur, the "secular" *vodun* dances differ from the others in that they are held away from any family shrine, taking place within towns or cities, something never permitted in their non-social, religious counterparts.

The *vodun* dance—and in the remainder of this chapter only the dance which has significance in the worship of the *loa* will be considered—is patterned like all other ceremonies of the cult.[1] It is held at a family habitation, under an open brush shelter known as a *tonnelle*, constructed for the occasion next to the family *maison de servitude*. If the habitation at which the dance is given is not the one where this house of worship is found, the shelter is built near a hut so that those possessed will have a place to retire.

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

tempo. The chorus and leader sing responsively, their parts overlapping in traditional African style. The shoulder movements, foot movements, the way the arms are carried, and the typical posture of feet flat on the ground, bent knees, and swayed back—all are of African derivation. These postures and movements are broad and direct. There are few of the decorative and "fine" movements that one sees in the dances of Indonesia, Cambodia, and India. Where the Javanese lays stress on the pose of the hands and the delicate movements of the fingers, the Haitian dancer is concerned with the position of the arms and the motions of the shoulders. The Indonesian sense of poised balance or suspended movement is absent. In its place there is an attitude of strong frontal assault against natural forces such as gravity, or direct submission to those forces. There is almost always a feeling of solidity and stability in Haitian posture, and of a proximity between the body and the earth, but the total effect is dynamic. Indonesian dancing seems to express a comprehension of the unseen and the supernatural; Haitian dancing seems to express an intimate understanding of nature.

Dancing touches on virtually every aspect of life in Haiti. It plays a part in the supplication of loa, the placation of the dead, and the making of magic; in the consecration of a hounfor, the installation of a houngan, and the initiation of cult members; in planting, harvesting, and house-building. Catholic Church holidays, Nine Nights, baptisms, the election of a new president, and ordinary social gatherings—all are celebrated, in part, at least, by dancing.

Haitian dancing is participative rather than exhibitionistic. It is to join rather than to watch. There are some dances, however, which require special skills, and a few which are highly individualistic. Several types of dances are described elsewhere in this book. Verbal description cannot do justice to an art such as dancing, of course; but some brief sketches may help to suggest the differences between one Haitian dance and another.

In the Congo Mazonne, for example, men and women pair off and dance face to face, making contact occasionally but only briefly. The arms are stretched forward as though to embrace the partner around the waist, but the actual embrace never materializes. The partners dance sometimes as though they are unaware of each other and are simply part of a larger group; then they approach, move as mirrored reproductions, and separate. Loin movement is free, and there is a restrained sexual intensity, though direct sexual implications are not necessarily present. Sometimes the woman holds the hem of her skirt in her hands, while the man holds his jacket open toward his partner.

One of Christophe's rules was that no cultivator attached to

a plantation—and every ordinary country person was so attached —might leave the estate without permission from a military officer.* Two of the common folkways of Haitian peasant life since his time have been immobility and general acceptance of orders from the military. Both characteristics had been fostered by slavery and by the régimes of Toussaint and Dessalines, and these folkways became fixed under Christophe. 175 566 178 [484]

Other rules introduced by the King, however, lapsed shortly after his strong hand was removed. For example, the monarch required of the whole population that whenever they visited the capital on feast days or went to the market towns on Saturdays they be decently clad in clean clothes.** Since the time of Christophe, neatness of appearance has hardly been a folk characteristic, probably because of poverty rather than lack of desire to dress well. Nor did scrupulous regularity of work in the fields continue as a folkway later, when the great plantations were broken up. 175 178 291 527 183 [441]

Like a father the King tried to inculcate moral standards of honesty in his people. To prevent theft he had small valuables, such as watches or jewelry or purses, "planted," and if the finder did not immediately turn them over to the nearest Dahomet, punishment was meted out. Such a policy made honesty contagious. Thefts and depredation were soon almost unknown. The most tempting store of wealth could be left safely unlocked or in the open air. Christophe's achievement in this matter is eloquent testimony to his success as a paternal leader, for it is no small task to initiate moral ideas among people who for a generation have lacked them. Even today it is the proud boast of the Haitians that their people are honest. 175 577 177

As compared with the liberties of farmers in the United States of the same period, the Haitian agricultural workers' freedom was infinitesimally small, but by contrast with the bondage of slavery, their new status was definitely higher. 175 566

10. Christophe called his royal police force "Dahomets," after the West African kingdom, Dahomey, from which most of the men had come. They were not ordinary soldiers but especially imported and carefully selected men whose intelligence made them stand out from their fellows. Each Dahomet was given a course of training in his task as administrator before being sent out. The general consensus of foreign visitors was that these Dahomets were efficient even in small matters. [625]

11. This rule was partly an indication of Christophe's vanity, personal and national, for he was deeply desirous of the good opinion of white visitors, especially those from England. He wanted Europeans to respect Haiti as they would respect any small state, and not to praise it merely as an example of "Negro progress." [577] [186]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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may not have all the heart desires. Under Dessalines there had been stern discipline of the workers but no recognition of the aristocracy; now under Pétion the people went their own inefficient way, but aristocratic eminence was happily recognized.

Examples of experimental legislation abound. Some proposals succeeded but more failed. One of the partial successes was the establishment of an agricultural holiday, *la fête de l'Agriculture*, to stimulate interest in good cultivation. Two months before the day set, the commandants of departments, arrondissements, and cantons, together with the justices of these divisions, were to nominate the laborer in each parish who had done the best work of the year. A prize medal was awarded not only for the sake of honoring him but also to stimulate his fellows. Similarly the officials would choose a child between seven and ten years of age, living on the best cultivated *habitation* in the district and belonging to parents most distinguished by their conduct and fondness for work, to be brought up and educated at the expense of the state. The annual feast was celebrated for many years after Pétion's death, but the officials became too lax to make careful selections of prize-winners. The holiday was kept, therefore, but served none of its original purposes.

As a case of legislation that failed may be cited the highly moral measure encouraging, but not requiring, legitimate marriages among cultivators rather than the customary informal union without ceremony. The preamble of this law pointed out that legal marriages were

the only means of assuring a person of all the advantages of society; of procuring consolation, care, and help in sorrows and in sickness; of making purity of customs, so necessary for the happiness of men and the conservation of their health, reign among the people; of steadily increasing the population of each habitation; of extending agriculture and of increasing production.[30]

The mass of people, however, had had no experience of legal marriage. In the time of slavery such unions would not have been respected by an owner who wished to sell his slaves, and Dessalines had seemed to care very little whether people married or merely lived together informally. It will shortly be seen in detail how lasting was this inertia of tradition.[31]

30. Cited in Saint-Rémy, op. cit., V, 29.
31. See Part III, "Sex Relations and Home Life."

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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[1804-1843]

175 A cultivator who loafs on his assigned job shall spend twenty-four
566 hours in jail for his first offense and lose his wages; for a second
671 offense he must work on public projects. Field labor shall be regu-
24 larly carried on from Monday morning until Friday evening, except for legal holidays; work begins at dawn, continues except for a half-hour at breakfast until noon, stops then for two hours, and is [843] once more resumed until sunset. Pregnant females are to be assigned to light work only, and after the fourth month of pregnancy need [846] do no field work. Four months after delivery, a mother is to return to field work, but with three hours' a day less than before, until she has weaned her child. Disobedience and insult to overseers are punishable by imprisonment. Since Saturdays, Sundays, and holi- [527] days are free, there is to be no dancing or any other festivity by night or day from Monday through Friday.

175 On each estate is to be a hierarchy of directors, all of whom the
671 workers shall obey. In ascending order, these men are drivers (or
913 squad foremen),[40] jobbers, sublessees, lessees, proprietors and man-
24 agers, overseers of districts, and police.

In establishing a system of remuneration Boyer kept the accus-
175 tomed method of allotting a proportion of the marketed crop to the
485 workers in lieu of hourly or daily wages. In any season from a
24 quarter to a half of the gross receipts of the estates was to go to the laborers, the exact proportion in any year to be determined by the government. It was assumed by Boyer and Inginac that there would be an added inducement to work if the laborers' share were distributed not equally, but rather in proportion to the merit and worth of the individual, these evaluations to be made by the recommendation of overseers.

175 Enforcement of the Code was placed in the hands of local justices
692 and the army. Soldiers were to be assigned to each plantation, re-
24 ceiving their living from it, in return preserving order and routine. Although the whip was once more prohibited, steady labor might still be enforced by other means; the law definitely stated that soldiers were to discipline the lazy, the lawless, and the vagrant. Local justices were to deal with any civil difficulties arising in the execution

[192] 40. The word "driver" was commonly used in West Indian slave colonies with no other meaning than that attached to the word when one speaks of a man "driving" his horses. It is not necessary to beat a horse to make it go properly; a word of direction may suffice.

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plausible, such as the race prejudice displayed by many individual Marines;[4] the unnecessary slaughter in the suppression of *cacos* (guerrilla) rebellions in the North; the continued holding of offices (and salaries) by Americans too impatient to train Haitians, as by the Agreement of 1915 they were supposed to do; the fostering rather than elimination of military psychology among the people by the presence of armed Marines. 175 648 642

The campaign against the Occupation was generally on the highest level of patriotism, for it threw out one variation after another on the same theme: We Haitians are not being allowed to govern ourselves. Some realists knew that their hurt national pride was accompanied by disappointment that certain salaries were not reaching Haitian pockets, certain prestige of office not redounding to the credit of Haitian men. What if the real reason for opposition were not the openly avowed one: The Marines must go! Order had been restored and government reestablished. It was patent that any administration which could effect the withdrawal would be immensely popular: it was equally patent that if the Americans left the country, the benefits of their efficiency and material improvement would remain as a tangible boon to Haiti. 175 648 642 668

President Stenio Vincent, elected in 1930 after a campaign in which the Americans did not interfere, began the negotiations with Washington. With President Hoover he made headway toward reforms, but President Roosevelt's attitude was more actively cooperative. In 1934 Vincent had a series of conferences with the President of the United States; the latter, in pursuit of his good-neighbor policy, persuaded the American Senate to order the Occupation at an end and turn over without cost to Haiti many buildings, supplies, and equipment used by the Marines. Vincent personally benefited from the withdrawal of 1934. He called himself Haiti's "second Liberator,"[5] and made the anniversary of the American departure a national holiday. Indirectly the élite also benefited for now, entrenched in office, they could govern without white supervision. The material equipment was there to be enjoyed by the whole people at no further expense to them. 175 648 642 [643] [139] [527] [563]

4. The United States government in the early days had sent Marines from the Southern States to Haiti, on the theory that they would, from long acquaintance with Negroes, know how to "handle" them. This stupid blunder was shortly rectified.

5. Dessalines had, of course, been the first.

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have been gathered from trees which grew wild. Both men and women labor, with the work divided according to regular custom between the sexes, the men dominating the scene only in the marketing of coffee.

Nature was opulent enough at the beginning of Haitian independence. The wars had ruined irrigation ditches, sugar refineries, and mechanical equipment, but the soil was still abundantly fertile. But generations of farming by people without knowledge of fertilization or soil conservation have worn out much of the land. Trees have been cut to provide lumber and clearings for more farms; in the rainy seasons torrents have coursed down the mountainsides, washing away soil and exposing the earth to the rays of a tropical sun. Because the country is overpopulated every available acre is put to use, and to overuse, thus still more depleting the land. It is a vicious circle, for the next generation must extract yet more from the earth and so weaken it further. Hard work is the lot of the peasant, therefore, during every month of the year except the dry season. There has never been a formal rotation of crops: a farmer continues to plant the same crop in the same field until the harvest is perceptibly smaller than before. Then he changes to another type of produce. Sooner or later he will allow the land to lie fallow for several years until, by the action of nature or the grazing over it of cattle, it has regained a measure of its fertility.

The strenuous work of clearing fields and preparing them for cultivation is man's job. Since the peasants owned their plots it has almost always been done in coöperation by the men of the neighborhood. What on the American frontier would have been called a "bee" is known in Haiti as a *coumbite*, or *combite*, often carried on as an enterprise of the local *Société Congo*, the informal neighborhood group for mutual aid and fellowship.[4]

A man who has a large job on hand announces a coumbite for any day except Sunday, always a day of rest, and whatever other week-

4. The word "coumbite" was apparently borrowed from the Spanish part of the island, and from the Spanish word *convite*, convey. In Colombia "convite" means exactly what "coumbite" means in Haiti: a gathering of persons to work in common, or also a coöperative society for mutual agricultural self-help.

Professor Herskovits (*Life in a Haitian Valley*, chap. IV) describes the Société Congo in detail. The use of the name "Congo" indicates the African tradition, and is particularly noticeable in connection with a kind of coöperative work which Herskovits finds particularly Dahomean.

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476 241 day local practice dedicates to work in one's own fields—generally 574 Monday or Tuesday. The prospect of working with one's fellows, of a midday feast with plentiful drink, of singing, talking, and hear- [527] ing the news, is enough to induce most of the neighbors to come, even though the work will be hard. As with American log-rollings and house-raisings, there is a practical reason for accepting the invitation: by participating in other coumbites a man will be able to invite his neighbors to help him in his own larger tasks. The work is [461] done in rhythm[7] as on Southern road gangs in the United States, with one man specially designated to beat the drum, blow the conch, or sing a topical song, to set the pace. While the men are at work, the women prepare the noonday feast.

114 This typical characteristic of Haitian rural life has been described 476 in detail as it operates near the village of Mirebalais by Prof. Melville 574 J. Herskovits. His contention is that the custom, in general and in 174 detail, derives from Dahomey, West Africa, the home of many of 171 the original slaves.[8] Although his evidence is impressive, there are 178 nevertheless objections to it. Coöperative enterprise for tasks larger 241 than one man can accomplish alone is common in the United States and in parts of Europe and South America, as well as in Africa. It is not an economic device which strikes one as requiring unusual inventiveness, for cases of it are common even where the participants have had no previous experience of it. Further, Dahomean practice could not have been kept up during slave days, nor yet during the régimes of Toussaint, Dessalines, Christophe, and Pétion. (The first three required forced labor under overseers, and landownership by peasants was still rare under Pétion, although a beginning had been made.) In the thirty years from 1790, when the last slaves arrived, until Christophe died in 1820, many old ways were certainly forgotten. Not a single one of the numerous books written by visitors during Boyer's quarter-century, 1818 to 1843, mentions the practice, which certainly must have struck Englishmen, Frenchmen, and Americans if it had been characteristic of the peasant life of the time. If one concludes that the coumbite did not become peasant practice until the mid-nineteenth century, all possibility of contact with Negroes familiar with Dahomean routine has disappeared. What

7. A Haitian poet, Charles F. Pressoir, entitles a book of his verses *Au Rythme des coumbites* (Port-au-Prince, 1933).
8. *Op. cit.*, chap. IV.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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527 On Saturday nights one hears the drums beating all over the country, but if one follows the sound he is more than likely to end [534] up at nothing more esoteric than a neighborhood dance. Other [535] musical instruments than drums are rare, but any community has drums; and these set a rhythm to which one can dance. Generally food is available at these affairs, as well as drinks both hard and soft. 273 It is not extraordinary to discover that a few of the men have drunk rather freely of clairin, the raw rum of the country; most drunkenness seems to lead to good-natured ribaldry rather than to offensive violence. It is unusual for a drunken man to cause damage of any 535 serious nature. The dancing corresponds neither to American ballroom dancing nor to set folk dancing. Most of it is done solo, and an individual participates or remains on the outskirts of the enclosure as 533 the mood of the moment impels him. Over the beat of the drum can be heard one of the current songs, more than likely a bit smutty in nature, and frequently poking fun at some well-known personage, or making allusions which in normal speech might seem crude.

541 One of the popular Sunday afternoon sports is the *gaguère*, or cock-[525] fight, held under a shelter back of a home. Much small betting goes on. The spectators sit or stoop close around the dusty ring, talking to the cock they are backing, commenting on the fight, offering advice to the owner. Between rounds the cocks are rubbed down, sprayed with water or rum, fondled and excited anew. Toward the latter stages of any fight the spectacle becomes gory and, to the uninitiated, distinctly cruel.

526 There is singularly little sport in Haiti. Élite youths play tennis; boys enjoy football; and swimming is a common diversion. Few sports are competitive and, so far as the writer has observed, the peasants have in their games practically nothing resembling organization.

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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makes for deification of the family dead, but constitutes the oldest ancestor of a relationship group one of the great gods and thus causes families to give primary allegiance to a restricted number of deities. The most striking aspect of this tradition preserved in Haiti is that all ceremonies must be given by family groups, and at them only members of the family may with propriety become possessed. Possession itself, and the elements which constitute the possession complex — the use of the drums, the rhythms associated with particular gods, the importance of songs in calling the spirits, the mode of worship through specific dances for specific deities — these make up another series of Africanisms. In the dance itself the use of iron to sound basic rhythms for the drums, the outer form and function of the rattle, and the fact that the circle of participants always rotates in a counter-clockwise direction, are equally African. The modes of behavior to be observed as possession comes on and the psychological release that follows it both derive from the same source, as do the beliefs that rituals must be held on the days sacred to the particular god being worshipped.

Another retention of African tradition is a belief in the importance of sacrifice. It will be remembered that it is held to be more essential to "feed" the gods than to dance for them. This is also the tradition of all peoples of the region from which the slaves were derived, and in a sense reflects the very immediate relationship that obtains between Africans, or Haitians, and their gods. Since in both regions each deity performs the double role of doing good for those who worship it properly and harassing those who neglect it, the importance of giving adequate sacrifices to avert evil is evident. In both Haiti and Africa, however, these may differ with the wealth of the individual giving the offering, with the number of persons who contribute toward the ceremony where offerings are given, or with the seriousness of the situation which the deity is being asked to remedy. That the gods permit such varia-

with the corpse or are nearby with friends. The one who bathed the corpse remains constantly at its side as members of the family come and go, since the body must never be alone.[15] 764

But outside the house another kind of activity goes on. There the young people usually gather to sing gay songs, to play games, and to listen to stories. A professional storyteller, or a nonprofessional of repute, is called upon to entertain the children. He may give an entire night to Bouki and Malice stories, or to *contes* with interspersed songs in which the audience participates. Special singing games, stick games, and card games are played. But the drums are silent, both in the dead person's house and in the countryside at large. Rhythms for the game songs are provided by hand-clapping, or by vocal sounds which simulate percussion instruments. 764 524 53

Burial ceremonies vary according to local tradition and the status of the deceased person. Near the little fishing village of Petit Goave in southwestern Haiti, I witnessed a funeral cortege which might have been seen almost anywhere in the country. It was led by the widow of the dead man. She rode on a white horse, followed by four men carrying the dead body on a litter made of plain planks. There was no coffin, the body being covered only by its white shroud.[16] Behind the corpse plodded a group of twelve or fifteen peasants, friends and relatives of the dead man. Some of them had just come in from the fields and still carried their machetes in their hands. Others carried short *cocomacaque* sticks, which are believed useful for warding off baka and other demons who lurk along the path of the traveler. 764 [184]

The woman on the horse lamented loudly. When she came to where other peasants stood respectfully at the road's edge, she stopped her horse and faced them, raising her voice to an anguished pitch, calling on them to take note of her bereavement and of the fine virtues of the dead man. Some of the spectators whom she addressed, standing with their hats in hand, nodded and tried to say consoling words, such as "Oui Manman, li grand moune" (Yes, Mama, he was a fine man), or "Quand Bondieu vlé ou li prend" (When God wants you he takes you). A market woman with a load on her head suddenly became possessed by a loa as the cortege passed her. This seemed to increase the anguish of the widow, who lamented with increased vigor.

The four men carrying the corpse sometimes moved in a zigzag course, first to one side of the road, then to the other. When the procession came to a crossroad it stopped momentarily. The houngan, scarcely distinguishable from the other peasants in blue denim, came forward and stood in the center of the crossroads shaking his tiny hand bell and calling upon Malt' Kalfu (Master of the Crossroads) to grant safe passage. While he [193] [176]

[15] [Herskovits, op. cit., p. 208. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.--Analyst]
[16] [For footnote, see Category 116, p. 350.--Analyst]

beyond the obvious fear of contagion. In his study of Dahomey, Herskovits notes: 766 [171]

> . . . Small-pox is believed to be sent as a punishment for grave offenses in the eyes of these [the Saghata] deities, and it is taken to indicate that either the dead person himself or a member of his family has committed some heinous crime such as the practice of black magic. A person who dies of small-pox may only be buried after permission has been given by the chief priest of the Earth cult.[20]

Thus, in Haiti, though the connections with the past are clouded, it is clear that victims of lightning and smallpox are treated as a special class of criminals or malefactors. 174 753 761 766

Ordinary malefactors such as malevolent criminals and murderers—until recent years, at least—were not buried in the common graveyard. They, too, were segregated at the periphery of the cemetery or buried at the edge of a trail or road where the traffic would not permit them to rest and where their graves would be under constant surveillance. The roadside grave sometimes was also the fate of a person killed by lightning. 766

That these special burials are related to the Dahomean and Yoruban concepts of retribution for crimes against the deities is supported by the similarity of treatment accorded victims of lightning and disease and common criminals. In Haiti, Herskovits observes: "Those who die of small-pox or leprosy, suicides, or persons shot as a punishment for crime are not buried in the communal cemetery, but in special sections of the graveyard," the suicides and criminals being set apart from the others.[21] 761 753 766 [174] [121] [681] [762]

Graves found near the seashore, lake shores, or riverbanks frequently are declared to belong to persons who died of drowning. 766

Approximately nine days after a person's death, the "last prayers" are said, and the soul of the deceased is presumed to have departed from the house. Once more, under the tonnelle outside there are games, storytelling, and singing. On this night, however, there is also drumming and dancing of a special kind. Usually it is the Juba, or Martinique, dance, which is believed to be specially enjoyed by the dead, and it is the older people, rather than the young, who participate. These festivities are believed to give cheer to the deceased and to "encourage" him on his way. On the next night comes the mangé mort, the feast for the family dead, a ritual which continues periodically through the years. 765 53 [775] [524] [769]

Sometimes in Haiti you may come upon an old tomb or grave before which a dish of specially prepared food has been set. This is part of the mangé mort ritual. 764 769

A man may make provision in advance of his death for the rites which follow his burial. He may designate special animals to be killed, leave 763 764

[20] [Ibid., pp. 397–398. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.--Analyst]

[21] [Herskovits, Life in a Haitian Valley, p. 214. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

541 half-demon cannibals who meet in secret in the hollow heart of the mapou tree. Some are dressed in comic ancient military attire, replete with swords, epaulets, medals, and outlandish beards, representing "the Generals." Others, under the name Bande Autophonique, follow a human phonograph—a leader singing through an antique Edison horn.

541 53 And there are bands of male *rubaniers,* or Maypole dancers, some of them attired as women, weaving their colored ribbons around portable poles, to the accompaniment of guitars, marimbulas, and cha-chas. Male stick dancers known as *batonni,* dressed in women's clothing, crouch in circles and perform baton-tapping dances to the accompaniment of drumming and singing. Other small bands wander about impersonating characters from folklore or politics in grotesque homemade costumes. One might see, for example, a fanciful bocor driving before him a band of zombies, wielding a whip, and barking out weird raucous commands.

After the cataclysmic grand finale of the Mardi Gras at Shrovetide there is the briefest of lulls, and then the country is in the throes of Rara. The day of the *roi* Lwalwadi (the King of Lwalwadi) has arrived. Hundreds of Rara bands move through the towns and villages, each with its orchestra of bamboo trumpets or conch-shell horns and its "king"—an ornately clad dancer or baton juggler. The Rara bands move from place to place, dance, sing, exhibit their featured performers, and then move on, pressed perhaps by other bands behind them or jostled by another group moving in the opposite direction. When darkness comes, the bands light their way with wooden torches or candelabra [416] of tiny oil lamps. Every week end for seven weeks, in the heat of day and the darkness of night, the mountain trails are alive with these processions.

541 The Rara festivities reach their climax on Good Friday week end, and by Easter morning they are ended. During these final days there is a last grand display, with troupes coming in from the mountains and the plains to the larger cities and towns. One of the traditional Rara convocation centers in the south is the town of Léogane. On Good Friday week end, Léogane is transformed into a milling, surging, trumpeting mass of celebrating country people.

[533] The songs heard during Rara are full of praise or derision for well-
[831] known personalities. Some of them are boldly ribald or licentious. And
[535] often the dancing itself is openly sexual in its implications. Haitians humorously refer to this kind of dancing as *enragé* (enraged, crazy).

541 675 Early in January, even while the Mardi Gras is in progress, each community gets down to the business of organizing its Rara group. It may be organized in one of several ways. In certain communities there

2; Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 122]

10. The Arts– Flour, Wood, and Iron

177 178 53 567 It is the nonmaterial arts and traditions that have thrived best in Haiti through the years of slavery, political unrest, and poverty. Religious concepts, music, dancing, folk tales, proverbs, and games are found everywhere in profusion. Material arts of the past have fared less well. Today, nothing is left of the old African knowledge of wood carving, metal casting, appliqué work, and weaving. Why such major African arts have died out in Haiti is no mystery. They disappeared simply because there was no place for them under the slave system or in the new Haitian society which followed it.

177 178 567 532 Under the colonial masters, the demands made on the New World African were for coffee, cotton, and indigo. His creative talents were channeled into carpentry, masonry, and the building of facilities for production. There were no traditional artistic outlets or patrons for the wood carver, and no need for the weaver. Nor, during the years of slavery, was there much leisure for the craftsman to do his work even for the fun of it, should he be so inclined; indeed, this approach to wood carving or any other art would have been little understood or appreciated by most West Africans. A man who made an art object purely and simply to express a creative urge rather than to fill an express need would have been regarded as slightly eccentric. The old West African wood carvings with which we are now familiar were made because they were *required* for some purpose. A figure of a deity was needed in a shrine, a carved protective guard was needed for the household, a gravé marker or a ceremonial mask was obligatory.

177 178 567 326 In Haiti the needs of those who ruled were different. The slave with knowledge of the forge was not put to work making spears, ceremonial axes, and the like; he was assigned the task of making grillwork for houses, hinges and bolts, iron tires for coach wheels, and metal parts for the sugar mills. The anonymous African ironworker did his job well.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Hahi SV3

The last

535 form is heard most often during carnival days. In all variations of the Meringue, the dance is performed by couples in ballroom style. Among
[831] the elite, it is restrained. Elsewhere it is much more animated, with free and uninhibited pelvic motions similar to those seen at the Saturday night *bamboche*. Although the Haitian regards his Meringue as a national
171 popular dance, Spanish-type music has infiltrated heavily from the Do-
177 minican Republic, Cuba, and other islands of the West Indies. Thousands
●53 of Haitians returning from contract labor in Cuba have brought with them not only Cuban songs and rhythms but Cuban instruments as well. It has not been a one-way affair, however, for the Arada cults of eastern Cuba have been built substantially around immigrants from Haiti, and in the Cuban mountains you may hear music and see dances of Afro-Haitian origin.

Still other kinds of dances are to be found in remote villages of Haiti—the old folk dances of Europe. The villagers still know and perform the waltz, the polka, the mazurka and the quadrille, usually to the accompaniment of violins or guitars, or possibly an accordion.

But the influences are not all ancient ones. Jazz has infiltrated the Meringue. And some years ago a small boy asked me with some concern whether I had taken proper account of a very important dance called *le black bottom*.

535 Following is a list of dances known to Haitians today. Some of them
[178] are found throughout Haiti, some are known only regionally, and a few are on the verge of extinction.

Dances Connected with Vodoun Ritual

Arada*, or *Rada: One of the main dances of the Vodoun service, named after the Dahomean city and cult center, Allada.

Anago*, or *Nago: Named after the Nagos, a branch of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria. For deities of Nago origin.

Mahi: Named after the Mahi people of Dahomey.

Dérêal: A Mahi dance of northern Haiti.

Parigale: Another Mahi type of dance. Possibly from *pas régal* (royal step).

Jenvalo*, or *Yenvalo: A supplication dance, variously called Jenvalo Doba (*dos bas*, low back), Jenvalo Jénon (*genoux*, knees), and Dobado.

Zépaule: A supplication dance in which the movements are made primarily by the shoulders (*les épaules*). It is sometimes called Jenvalo Zépaule or Jenvalo Débout (standing Jenvalo).

Flavorodoun: Another type of shoulder dance known in the north.

Banda*, or *Chica: A gay and sometimes ribald dance, said to be much favored by the loa Cousin Zaka and the loa Gèdé.

Maconne Rada: The "Masonic" Rada dance; often danced for the loa Gèdé.

Carabienne* or *Crabienne: A rest dance, interspersed into long-drawn-out Arada

[i.e., the "Meringue Coundjaille" in which the rhythm is very fast. -- Analyst]

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54. Inside surface of a calabash bowl used in rituals of the hounfor, painted in black and white. The figure represents the graveyard loa, Baron Samedi, with a pick, shovel, and tombstone. Length, 15 inches.

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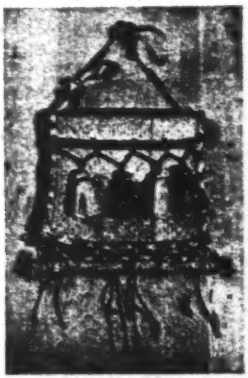

55. An alfor cousin, the traditional peasant knapsack.

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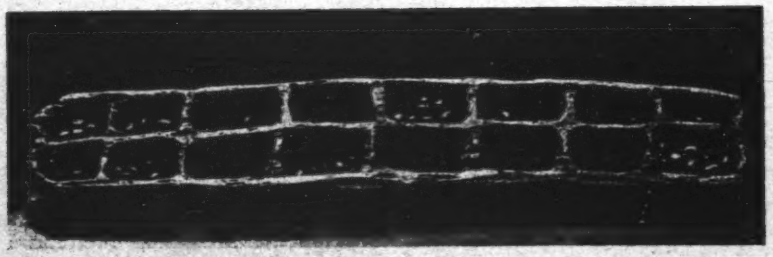

56. Wari board cut from a mahogany log. Length, 29 inches.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-JJ]

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60. *A carved cane head from the southwestern mountains.*

61. *Detail of a wood carving made about 1930 in the region of Port-au-Prince, representing the loa Loko. Work of this kind in mahogany has in the past thirty years deteriorated into neo-"African" carvings made for the tourist trade.*

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62. *A cayambouque. Cut from a single calabash, the two parts fit together tightly to form a single container. Some cayambouques are a foot or more tall. Height, 8 inches.*

63. *Terra-cotta figurines from the Cap Haitien region.*

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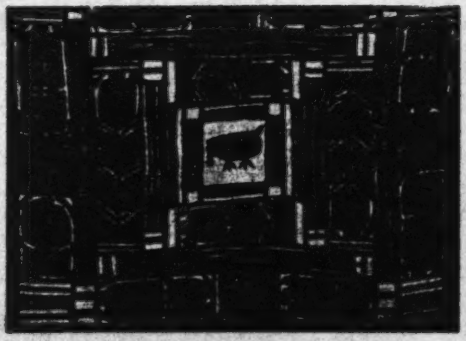

64. *Detail of a dye-painted burlap cloth. Animal and flower figures and geometric designs are used interchangeably.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

And when the revolution came he produced for the Haitian armies knives, gun parts, and wheels to transport cannon. By the tens of thousands he made ingeniously devised metal objects to be thrown on the roads, before the French cavalry troops—objects so shaped that, no matter how they fell, a single sharp point stood erect to cripple the enemy horses. Yet knowledge of the West African uses of iron did not altogether disappear, and during the first century of independence the Haitian blacksmith created many old-style knives, spears, and ritual objects for the cult temple.

Even today, some of this old-style work is to be found in hounfors in the southwestern peninsula. One may see simple or ornate iron standards, made to support ceremonial offerings or candles, strikingly similar to standards in ancestral shrines in Dahomey. There are iron bells, both single and double, made in pure West African style; ornate ritual swords and sabers which are the crests of certain deities; coiled and uncoiled iron serpents representing the gods Damballa and Ayida; and stylized or semirealistic portraits of the deities. Many of these old pieces are nineteenth-century survivals; others have been forged within the past decade. ℞

An over-all impression of Haitian material culture is that artistic decoration is almost entirely absent and that the prime emphasis is on utility. Wooden cooking spoons are efficient in form, but missing from them is the delicate decorative carving often found in West Africa. The long wooden washing bowl, or *gamelle,* and the wooden mortar in which grain is pulverized are likewise clean-cut but stark and plainly utilitarian. Clay bowls, bottles, and storage jars are usually of simple, uniform design, with only accidental variations; there is little use of glazes, and the clay is often heavy and thick. Should there be a wari gameboard in the peasant hut, the chances are that it is roughly made, without legs or carved designs. Dugout canoes are usually crude in appearance, heavy and thick-walled, and irregular in form.

Yet there are many evidences—though one must seek them out—that esthetic impulses are quite alive. The gay peasant straw knapsack, or *alfor,* without which no mountain man makes a journey, has a charm and grace that is not diminished by familiarity and cheapness. Decorated with sisal braid and tassels, and colored with green and magenta dyes, each *alfor* on close inspection appears to be unique. In some communities in the south and southwest, burlap squares also are painted with these traditional dyes. About forty inches across, and made of sugar bags, these paintings swarm with geometric patterns and sometimes with figures of flowers and animals. They are purely decorative, being

℞ [See plates 42-51, pp. 112-DD—112-FF.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

used for wall hangings much as appliquéd cloths are used in Dahomey. Near Cap Haitien, in the north, ceramic workers make crude clay figurines of roosters, pigs, dogs, cows, and people. The "purpose" of these figurines is obscure, but it is likely that they are intended for use in Vodoun ritual, a number of them having been observed in hounfors in the vicinity of the town of Grande Rivière du Nord. In some mountain villages, canes carved with animal and human heads are commonly seen. Nor is the tradition of carving gourds and calabashes, popular in various regions of West Africa, altogether forgotten. The *cayambouque*, a divided calabash with the top ingeniously cut to fit into the lower part so as to form a sealed container, is sometimes covered with carved geometric designs, usually crude and haphazard but on occasion meticulous. Until recent years the common *cha-cha*, or gourd rattle, was similarly carved.

Most of the visible traditional art is to be found in the environs of the cult temple. The inner walls of many hounfors are covered with ritual designs and symbols and portraits of the deities. On the altar, sometimes, crude wood carvings of deities are seen, along with forged iron objects, carved marassa bowls, and grotesquely shaped drumsticks known as *baguettes guinée*. All the wooden objects are characterized by a plainness that relegates them to the category of purely functional and expendable things. The wood carving of a deity is not an image, it is a representation; it can be sold or otherwise disposed of, even thrown away if infested with beetles, and another object can be used to replace it. The only concern of the cult priest in this matter is that the deity concerned should understand the situation properly and not take offense. Thus there is no strong feeling that the wood carving should be a realistic representation or that it should be "beautiful." One relatively antique wood carving, completely West African in style, was found some years ago in a hounfor near Léogane and is now in the collection of the Musée du Peuple Haitien in Port-au-Prince (see fig. 57).

One of the most flourishing arts of the hounfor is the *vèvè*, or ritual drawing made on the earth in the course of a service. Most commonly these beautiful and ornate designs are made with white meal or flour, and in a few of the cults, primarily the Pétro, lampblack and red brick dust are also used. The vèvè is made by the houngan or the mambo. With sure, practiced movements, the cult priest allows the meal to trickle through his fingertips onto the ground where the rites are taking place, usually in the peristyle of the hounfor itself. The drawings he makes are composed of a multiplicity of cabalistic symbols—heart shapes, stars, interlocked V's, flags, abstract phallic forms, crosses, swords,

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

machetes, circles, mortar shapes, and so on—each with its own specific meaning. Sometimes the vèvè becomes openly pictorial, and there emerges a ship for the loa Agwé, snakes for Damballa and Ayida, a bull for the loa Taureau, a knapsack for the loa Azaka, or even a portrait of a deity, perhaps smoking a pipe or holding a sword. 788 532

The vèvè is not a permanent record. It is made as an act of supplication or veneration, and once it is finished it has no further value. In the ensuing ritual and dance, the vèvè is obliterated by the feet that pass across it. At the hands of one houngan, this invocational act results in a crude, even childlike, design. At the hands of another, it produces a drawing of beauty, integration, and highly developed form.

The drum-making craft, too, has offered an unbroken sequence of opportunity for satisfying artistic urges. The drum has a traditional form that cannot be tampered with; its shape is predetermined by its function, by the log from which it is hewn, and by existing standards. And yet, the drum maker has found it an object on which he can devise new decorative motifs, and he may even give it personal uniqueness. Some drums have styles that may be associated with specific regions of the country, others bear the stamp of the individual artist. Paint has been used on Haitian drums for a hundred years or more as a complement to carving. One assotor drum dating from the earliest days of the Republic, and now preserved in a collection owned by the Bureau of Ethnology in Port-au-Prince, is decorated with a medallion showing the Haitian coat of arms, grenadiers, red and yellow snakes, and a sun with a face. This magnificent instrument, apparently the only one of its age and kind to have survived the years, is one of Haiti's art treasures. 178 534 531

The *conis*, or calabash bowl, of the hounfor rites is another object which is decorated with motifs. Abstract designs, ritual symbols, and sometimes human and animal figures are painted on the inner or concave surface of the bowl. 322 531 [532]

The rural traditional arts of Haiti have had a belated impact on the arts of the city. Within the past fifteen years there have appeared a number of painters, sculptors in wood and ceramics, and ironworkers who constitute an art movement sometimes referred to as the Haitian "renaissance." Many of these artists draw heavily on national lore and legend for inspiration and subject matter. Some of them are men who came only recently from villages or distant farms. Their work adorns many public buildings in Port-au-Prince and is eagerly sought by art collectors. Members of the elite class who once looked with embarrassment on the "primitive" countryside are finding increasing respect for the potentialities of their country cousins. 184 531 532 32 [571]

534 322 [412] of drum making is a very skilled one, but the tools are simple: chisels, machetes, and fire. The core of the log is removed by burning and gouging, and the outside is shaped with a machete, or sometimes a hachet. The wood is selected and processed carefully. Firing of the core of the log depends a good deal on how dry the wood is, for the wood must burn slowly. It is believed that wood cut at the right stage of growth and at the right phase of the moon is resistant to the ever-present powder-post beetles. Mahogany was once favored because [824] it was durable and beetle resistant, even though it was heavy. But in recent decades mahogany has become scarce, and modern drums are made of lighter woods.

534 798 [531] [171] Drums made in the nineteenth century not only conformed to the patterns of certain West African prototypes but were also carved and decorated. Some of these old drums are still to be seen, but there are not many left. An ancient carved assotor drum (previously cited) has fortunately been preserved by the Bureau d'Ethnologie. But between the ravages of the powder-post beetles, age, and the periodic orgies of drum burning by the church and misguided public officials, most of these ancient works of art have long since disappeared. During the American [648] occupation of Haiti—from World War I to 1932—American military personnel also contributed to the mania for drum burning. And as late as 1941 there was a massive, cleric-inspired drive to wipe out these instruments as remnants of *sauvage* elements in Haitian life.

534 178 531 The effect of this war against the drum was only to improve the business of the professional drum maker. Drums had become expendable, hence they were made simpler. The carved decorations disappeared. Paint was substituted, and less attention was given to detail. The important thing was to produce a good functional instrument. But the creative instincts of the drum makers sometimes still take over, and many of the modern drums are beautifully proportioned, with delicate geometric patterns carved around the base, or foot. Among certain categories of drums the painted decorations consist solely of the name of the loa to whom the instruments have been dedicated—St. Jacques perhaps, or Papa Pierre, or Ezilie.

534 171 794 796 Drums differ in design according to the use for which they are intended. The Arada or Vodoun drums are used primarily in connection with the dances and rituals of the Vodoun cult—the cult built around the gods and rites of Arada and Yoruba theology. They resemble closely drums which are used today in Dahomey, Nigeria, and Togoland. They 534 usually come in sets of three. The largest, the *manman* (also called *hounfor* or *hountogri*), may be three to four feet high. The middle-sized drum, or *second* (also called *grondé* or *moyen*), is about two feet

[Text continues on p. 193]

[P. 191]

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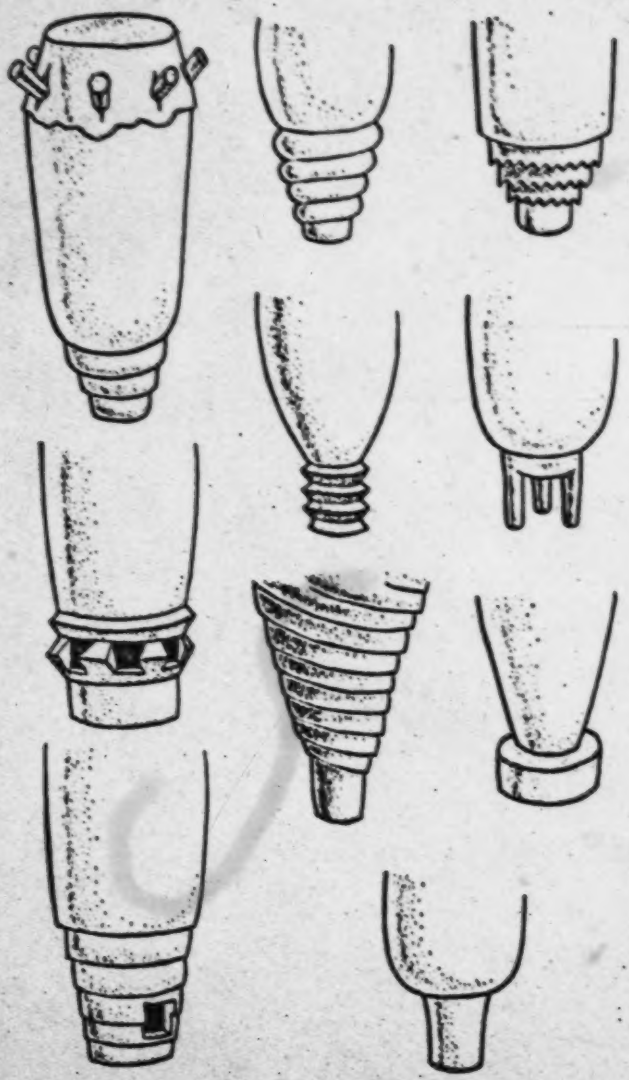

INDIVIDUALITY IN DRUM DESIGNING: Although the Arada or Dahomey-style drum is distinct from those of other "nations" or cults, there is a noteworthy variety of artistic decoration in the carving of the base. Some patterns are found only in certain regions or villages.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

534 533 the pegs. High notes are achieved by striking the drumhead near the rim, and low notes near the center.

534 516 The drummers usually sit together on a bench or in chairs at one side of the dance court. The larger and middle drums are slightly tipped to keep their "mouths" open; the *bula* stands squarely on its base and is therefore somewhat muted. The player of the *manman* often drums in a standing position, bracing the instrument by means of a cord around his thigh.

534 796 Another drum associated with the Arada rites is the assotor. This drum is usually about six feet high, and may be from two to two and a half feet in diameter. It is played in an upright position, and two or three small "windows" near the base permit the sound to emerge. [794] This big drum is used only for the Assotor service, at which the Dahomey "nation" plays host to the loa of all the various rites. Usually there is only a single drummer, who plays while standing on a bench or raised platform; but on occasion, two or even three drummers play simultaneously on the single drumhead.

534 171 It is interesting to note in passing that most of the Vodoun drums have Dahomean names and are of Dahomean design, despite the fact that Yoruban religious motifs have survived. The Yoruban double-headed *bata* drum, used in Nigeria for invocation of the principal deities, appears to have survived in decadent form on the island of La Gonave, where it is known as *pongwé*. Curiously, it is played not like the Yoruban *bata* (one hand on each head) but like another Yoruban instrument, 534 the *dundun*, or pressure drum. The instrument is held under one arm and played only on the forward head. Significantly enough, this drum is said to be used only for Nago (Yoruba) rites. Another drum reserved [794] for Nago services is found in the region of Léogane. It resembles the [796] Arada drum in every respect except that it stands on three carved legs.

Drums associated with the services of the Congo "nation" are distinctly different from those found in Vodoun ritual. No drumsticks are used, and the heads are of goatskin rather than cowhide and are held in place by a system of cords and hoops. The Congo drum seen today stands about three feet high; old people say that within their memory there was a variety of Congo drum as tall as a man. Unlike the Arada drum, the Congo drum usually has no carved or painted decoration. For [531] the "pure" Congo rites, two of these instruments, accompanied by gourd or metal rattles of various kinds, constitutes an orchestra. One typically Congo rattling device, called *mayoyo*, consists of three large gourds containing pebbles, on the top of a long pole.

A variant of the Congo drum is used for Pétro rites. It is similar

Rara season two special rattles are used. One of them is made of metal and resembles a tin can with a wooden handle. The metal sometimes is perforated with numerous small holes, and inside are *hobali* seeds, which act as rattlers. This instrument, known as a *tchancy*, is usually decorated with colorful ribbons when in use. (In northern Haiti the term *tchancy* is used to designate metal wrist rattles worn by drummers.) The other Rara rattle, called *jouconjou* or *jouejou*, is made of three gourds carried on a long pole. One of the gourds is affixed to the end of the pole, and the others are fastened to the terminals of a short crossbar, giving the effect of a cross with bulbous ends. Since many of the Rara processions are dramatizations of the Christ epic, the instrument could be interpreted as a Christian symbol, though its conversion into a noisemaker appears to be an African conception. The *jouconjou* may be a variant of the small rattle-cross which is used by the Abakwa secret society in Cuba.[8]

534 541 [824] [531] [171]

The sacred gourd rattle of the cult priest is called *asson* or *bakour*. It is pear-shaped and covered with a network of beads which act as external strikers. It is used by the houngan to summon the spirits of the dead, to praise or call upon the deities, and to accompany the performance of magic. The asson is of West African derivation, and its counterparts are to be found among the cults of Martinique, Trinidad, Cuba, Brazil, Venezuela, and elsewhere where African traditions have left their mark. The gourds from which the assons are made are grown in a special grove sacred to the loa.

534 78 171 778

A large calabash rattle has been reported from several isolated regions of Haiti, primarily from the north. Some rattles of this kind have been described as more than twenty inches in height and covered by a network of external strikers, usually wari beans. The calabash rattles are used in groups of three. They are shaken and thumped against the palm of the hand, producing both deep and high-pitched sounds. These oversize rattles are employed without drums and are said to be associated with Arada-Nago rites. They appear to be a survival of the instrument known among the Yoruba as the *shèkèrè* and are found in Cuba in both Dahomey and Lucumí (Yoruba) cult centers.

534 [184] [171]

Probably one of the oldest of Haitian folk instruments is the earth bow, known as the *tambour maringouin*, or mosquito drum. Traditionally the mosquito drum is made in the following way:

A hole is dug in the earth, perhaps a foot or more deep. It is covered with palm or banana bark, which is pegged firmly all around. A cord is attached to the center of the bark membrane and drawn taut to a bent green sapling, one end of which is buried in the ground at a slight angle. The cord is plucked and snapped with the fingers of one hand, while

8 [See Courlander, "Musical Instruments of Cuba," Musical Quarterly, April, 1942, pp. 233-234. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst)

1: Herskovits E-4, 6 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

Simple annual rites are held for the gods in January, each family giving small offerings in its house of worship to its own deities. These minor ceremonies are not to be confused with the extended rituals which a family may perform but once in a decade or a generation. Because of the extensive preparation and large outlay these entail, such rites are often postponed from year to year. According to some, this postponement is sought through an *action de grâce*, based on Church ritual, while others maintain that it is but necessary on his special day to appeal to the deity who is troubling the family, give a small offering — a *mangé sec* — and ask for the desired respite. This may be done several times, until crop failures, sudden deaths, and the loss of valuable property begin to afflict the family, whereupon the family head seeks out a *hungan*, who by divination determines the supernatural forces that are responsible for these misfortunes; and when his statement that the gods have reached the end of their patience is confirmed independently by several other priests who are consulted, active preparations for the major rite are finally set in motion.

Any such important ceremony must be held on the ancestral habitation, and centers in the *maison de servitude*, the family house of service for the gods. The house itself, to be differentiated from the *humfort*, or "temple" of the *vodun* priest, may be elaborate or simple in accordance with the status of family members in the *vodun* cult.[2] At one end of the sacred house is a platform about two and one half feet high on which are placed calabash plates for the *loa*, six for the Créole deities, three for the Mystères Guinée, and a white plate with a "thunder stone," or Neolithic celt, and a necklace for Damballa. Not all *cailles mystères* are painted, but some, it is said, are green "for hope," and some red "for victory," while one was said to have designs of flowers and snakes painted on the wall above the platform.[3] These houses usually have two rectangular rooms, each with a separate entrance and each having its platform at the narrow end facing the doorway. One of

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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based on the rituals that were observed. In every case at least two major officiants are necessary, the *prêt' savanne* and the *hungan*, though the role of the latter is the all-important one. Last-minute preparations are made during the final morning, but what is needed will have been accumulated over a period of many months. Tables to hold offerings — sometimes two, sometimes more — are arranged at the sacred places on the family habitation, usually near streams or great trees where the gods reside. Eggs, cereals, drinks, and cornmeal — the food of the gods — are brought, and the animals to be sacrificed are tethered near by. Early in the afternoon the family, dressed in white, assemble, while the *vodun* priest with cornmeal describes on the ground the cabalistic designs called *vever*, and he sees to it that all has its proper place on the altar, whether it be the ever-present crucifix, or the chromolithographs of the saints, or the bottles of "drink" — usually non-alcoholic — or cereals and flour of various kinds. Consecrated water must be on hand, particularly at the big "altar," as the table covered by a canopy to protect the sacred objects is called.

The first part of the ceremony is an *action de grâce*, which in Mirebalais requires an hour or more, but which is said to last two or three hours in southern Haiti. This ritual, entirely derived from the litany of the Church, must always precede any *vodun* ceremony of the kind being considered here. Its purpose is said "to set the *loa* in movement" and to notify them of the rites that are to come, but psychologically it also serves to assure the participants that they are not proceeding to the worship of African gods without having paid friendly homage to God, the ruler of the universe, and the saints. The songs and prayers are brought to a close by an *adoration*, when offerings of money are made by members of the family to pay the officiant. At this point the songs change to a more African rhythm, and the *vodun* priest takes active charge.

As darkness falls, on the first day of the rite, he summons the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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nals were being performed. If they failed to wave their banners vigorously or often enough, the one in charge chided them for their lack of zeal, whereupon their movements would become a kind of dance. During the *adoration* each member of the family was called upon to give coins or candles, the first for the *prêt' savanne*, though this was not his entire fee.

With the benediction, the *action de grâce* came to an end, and the solemn, tired voice of the *prêt' savanne* was heard intoning a hymn, which, in the usual fashion, was repeated by the assembled group until, without interlude, without even a pause, the interpolations of the chorus gradually changed, so that the rhythm became African, and, with the transition, the *vodun* priest took over the leadership. The *hungan* began by repeating several times the phrase which throughout the entire ceremony was to punctuate all its climaxes, "*Grâce* [*et*] *mise'corde*," and the family murmured it in response. He then ordered each member of the family to address himself to the *loa*, telling what troubles had befallen him and what favors he desired. An assistant now took six candles from the *trône*. Proceeding in a counter-clockwise direction, he described a large circle about that part of the meadow where the ceremony was to take place, fixing a candle in the ground at intervals. Four of these were for the four corners of the earth, one was for Mait' 'Bitation — the deity termed Master of the Habitation — and one for the Mait' Source — the Master of the Stream. When the members of the family, each holding a lighted candle, had formed in a line, they were bidden to place these candles in the earth within the area described by the six already there, and as they scattered over the sacred ground, little flickering flames dotted the hillside and the grassy meadow behind the *trône* in the deepening dusk.

Then all returned to the altar, and the *hungan*, taking the first of three plates made ready for him, began to describe *veves*. One plate held white cornmeal flour, one was filled with gray ashes, called Guinea flour, and the third contained

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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78 a black powder of ground, roasted coffee beans. Starting at the
793 tree near the "first" table for Bosu, he traced a white line
796 that, passing the second table and the trees for Simbi, con-
532 tinued to the *trône,* to which subsidiary motifs were then added in gray and black, making of the designs an intricate geometric composition.

78 With bell in hand and a small whistle in his mouth, both of
79 which later were entrusted to his assistants, the *hungan* went about, blowing the whistle at intervals to call the *loa.* Singing,
[533] he directed that a wooden boat-shaped basin containing water be placed in front and a little to the left of the *trône* for washing the feet of the sacrificial animals. Though all the family were present, they were again ritually summoned in song to come with the sacrifices and were ordered to stand near by with lighted candles while the animals were bathed. As they gathered, the *hungan* became possessed by Simbi, who took it upon himself to set the fee for conducting this ceremony at 117.10 gourdes. When he announced this sum, loud pleas of poverty were heard from the family, while speaking through the priest, the god bargained with them until the sum of 110 gourdes was finally agreed upon.

[533] The *hungan* now sang a long invocation, inviting the gods of all those places where Africans live to come. First the feet of the fowl were washed, then those of the pigs, and finally of the goat. Each fowl was passed over the body and head of every
[822] member of the family as it was presented with the requisite song to the proper *loa* — the red and black cock for Legba, the black fowl for Gede, the red one for Ogun, the white for Damballa, and the fowl with ruffled plumage for Congo Zandor. Then each was placed on the ground in front of three small piles of food taken from the *trône.* They were watched with anxiety by all present, for the pecking at the food is a signal that the god accepts the animal given him. The small pigs for 'Ti Kita Demembré, and the boar for Bosu, were offered the same food as the fowls; the goat for Erzilie Gé Rouge was pre-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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spot somewhat farther down the stream than the site of the earlier ceremony, and later at the family habitation on the hill. There was one table arranged as a *trône* and under its canopy, beside the *images*, the candles, and the crucifix, were white foods such as rice and white beans. Instead of Pétro *loa*, this time the ceremony was to bring Rada gods who were to be asked for children, good health, and good fortune. The *trône* was just below the confluence of two brooks, near some great palm trees. Near by was a weir, while in the larger stream, below the point of juncture, were two small natural pools.

When the *action de grâce*, which did not differ from that witnessed earlier, was ended, the *hungan* again made his *verver*, and these were yet richer in design than on the previous occasion. As he finished he took a number of the women of the family by the right hand, spinning each in turn several times to induce possession. The *loa* Damballa Siligwe "came" almost at once, possessing a woman who threw herself into the stream, threshing about as a "serpent." No one troubled himself to attend to her, however, as she emerged and walked about in her wet clothes behind the *trône* and in front of it, so that, according to the *hungan*, the *loa* became angry and would not come, thus making it necessary to sing many more songs of praise and entreaty. As he sang, the *hungan* seized one member of the family after another by the hand, spinning them about and making them kneel before the *trône* to bring the *loa*.

Moin dit Gran',	I say, Gran',
Bonjou', Gran',	Good-day, Gran',
Bonjou', bonjou'.	Good-day, good-day.
Enfants, la yo, Gran',	It is their children, Gran',
Qui ap mandé coumen nous ye-e,	Who ask how you are,
Enfants yo	Their children
Qui ap dit bonjou'.	Who say good-day.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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Once again the *hungan* made *verver* and, as he did so, the woman possessed by Damballa, leaping across the brook, climbed into a calabash tree, holding to the near-by palm fronds for support as she shook the tree to punctuate her shouted directions and demands. As she climbed higher and higher, the *hungan* pleaded: "Go no further, Papa. Climb no further," but to no avail. By this time it was after four o'clock, and since this day the rains did not delay, the *hungan* entreated her to descend from the tree, to permit him and the others assembled there to go up the hill out of the downpour. Wooing the "*loa*" with song, he urged: 78 79

Verver ci mè' a tè,	Here is *verver* on the ground,
Pinga cè'émonie moin,	Take heed of my ceremony,
Shango, ago-e!	Shango, *ago-e!*

[533] [534]

While he sang, he made *verver* about the base of the tree on which the woman was standing and along the bank of the stream. But he still had no success, for she persisted with much violence to recount the wrong that had been done by the family to provoke the anger of the gods—how one member had bargained with a *hungan* to induce him to send evil *loa* to the other members of the family, that they might die and his inheritance might be the greater. Before she would consent to descend, all the sacrifices had to be brought for her inspection, and all those possessed were required to go up the hill and dress in clean clothes. Returning in the rain, the freshly dressed women gathered about the base of the tree, exhibiting the sacrificial animals to the *loa*, the chickens held high in the hands of their donors, and the goats and sheep prominently placed. Slowly, very slowly, as the downpour continued, the woman began to descend, and many times she hesitated, so that it was more than ten minutes before she reached the ground. [532]

But even after she was on the ground and the *hungan* was

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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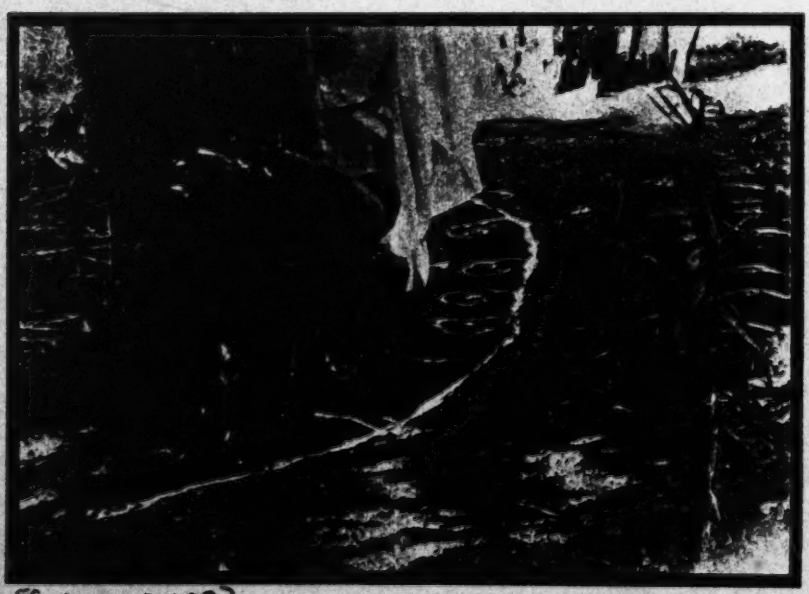
ABOVE, *A* vodun *altar: both Catholic and African religious symbols are to be seen.*
BELOW, *Mystical designs traced in cornmeal on the ground about a shrine.*

532



[facing p. 192]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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of whom are sincere practicing voduists as they are sincere practicing Catholics, who do not put an end to the worship of false gods.

The absence of graphic and plastic arts in Haitian culture, commented upon in a preceding chapter, must also be regarded as a case in point in laying bare the anatomy of this inner conflict of tradition, since it is important to recognize that the suppression of these forms of the prevalent African tradition would seem to have lost to the Haitian an important outlet for the resolution of inner tensions caused by pent-up drives. Even more revealing is the substitution of games of chance for those games of skill which in most African and New World Negro societies are played for their own sake alone—that is, for the prestige accruing to the skillful player. The strain that accompanies this play for stakes, often of no inconsiderable value in terms of the resources of the players, is patent to the most casual observer. The question here arises whether or not the craving for excitement of this kind may not in Haiti be traceable to the inhibition, under slavery, of some of the more gracious forms of African life which there make for social equilibrium. Might it not represent a kind of compensation for the thwarted psychic ease with which a culturally undisturbed people approach their own existence—a state of being which, in contrast, is quite lacking in Haiti?

A singularly illuminating comment upon these manifestations of instability in Haitian life has been made by Dr. J. C. Dorsainvil, who in drawing his conclusion called both upon his own medical training and on his experience of many years as a profound student of his own people. "It has perhaps been insufficiently remarked to what an astonishing degree the Haitian people live on their nerves." [1] As might be expected, he advances a number of possible explanations of the causes that underlie this state of "living on nerves." The wear and tear of life in the tropics is given as one reason; another is the excitement of the *vodun* dances with their frenzy of possession;

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

When the dance drama ended, the hounsi carried the flags back into the hounfor. Then they sat on the ground while the houngan came forward to the center post to make his ritual flour drawing. Holding the flour in his hand, he allowed a little of it to trickle out in a fine white line. He worked rapidly, with half-closed eyes, speaking *langage*. A complicated white geometric pattern grew on the earth around the center post. Among its intricate designs highly stylized phallic forms were discernible. When the houngan had finished the drawing, he wrote the name of the loa whom they were serving: Ogoun Badagry. Then the other houngans and mambos came forward, one at a time, to add to the design. When the vèvè was completed it covered virtually the entire dance court. 793 794 787 789 796 532

The laplace came from the hounfor with a bundle of brilliantly colored beads. He stood by the houngan at the center post. One by one the hounsi came before the houngan, dropped on their knees, and kissed the ground. Around each hounsi's neck the houngan placed a string of beads. He raised her, pirouetted her first to the right, then to the left. The pirouette was to encourage possession by the loa. 793 794 787 789 796

From the hounfor the hounsi now brought herbs and vegetables for the sacrifice. Baskets and bottles were set out neatly on the ground, along with bundles of sticks and the iron pots, or *zins*. [782]

The dance was resumed in a single rotating line around the houngan and the ritual offerings. Two hounsi in the center of the circle built fires, one on each side of the court. Over the fires they set the ritual iron pots. They poured oil into the pots and began the preparation of ritual food balls, like dumplings, from the ingredients at hand. One by one they dropped the dumplings into the oil, which was soon boiling.

The drumming, singing, and dancing were sustained at a high tension. A second team of drummers took over without a break in the music. The dancers now were almost exhausted. With a quick motion, the houngan spilled some rum into one of the boiling pots. A blue alcohol flame shot high into the air. Some of the hounsi screamed but continued to dance. Three of them fell to the ground, their limbs jerking uncontrollably. The loa had entered. Two of the "mounted" hounsi arose and continued to dance, staggering and jerking across the dance court. The third had to be lifted and carried into the hounfor.

The man who was to undergo initiation was waiting in the *djévo*, a special room in the hounfor. For the past seven days he had lain on a mat in the djévo, in virtual isolation except for visits from the houngan and the laplace.

Now the kanzo initiate was brought out, completely covered with a white cloth. Only his hands and feet could be seen. With one hand on the shoulder of the laplace, who preceded him, he moved with the dancers

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

were set out in a row, and before them four *couis*, the half-gourd bowls used in services to the marassas, the twin spirits. 769 796

In the house, at the center of the floor, was a round flat stone about ten inches in diameter and about two inches thick, resembling a millstone. This was the *pierre-manman*, the mother stone responsible for the coming of the other loa stones and who cared for them in the absence of the family. In this stone, they said, was the spirit of the old loa Nananbouclou. On a mat in the corner of the room two children slept. 787 778

Outside, on a chair, his back against the wall of the house, the houngan sat, his rattle and bell in hand. He had come several miles to conduct the service. Most of those who danced were his own hounsi. The houngan was "strong" and well known in the region; people said he had worked for high government officials, including the president himself. 769 796 787 793

After several rounds of Arada dancing in which children as well as adults took part, the drums stopped. The houngan and his laplace moved up to the building which served for the night as the hounfor. It was up a steep slope, about a hundred feet from the dance court. There they prepared for the sacrifice to Chébo Profiel, the honored loa of the evening. Passing in and out among the spectators was a woman who would be possessed by Papa Chébo; since he was the guest of the service, she (or the loa in her head) was free to come and go as she chose, to speak as she pleased, and to do what she wished. Mostly she shook hands with people, a ceremony which continued throughout the night. First she would offer the right hand, then the left; or perhaps both at once, in which case the hands would be shaken downward vigorously three or four times. Someone ignorantly said, "Bon soir, Madame!" and she turned on him to reprimand his insolence. She was not "Madame," she was *l'Autorité*, the Authority. 769 796 794 787

During the course of the evening the conviction became stronger and stronger in her that she was Chébo Profiel. From the time we first saw her until the end of the evening her personality underwent marked changes. She "became" Papa Chébo.

The houngan sat before a small hole, possibly a foot deep and ten inches in diameter, in front of the hounfor. The fresh earth was piled neatly to the side, and an enameled plate was set on top of it. Around the hole were the various dishes to be offered to Chébo Profiel. The laplace prayed in Latin, a short Catholic service. Then the houngan, shaking his beaded rattle and tinkling his bell, called for Chébo to "enter." He made a small maize-flour drawing around the hole, and then began the feeding of the loa. The plates arranged for the feast contained roasted maize, roasted peanuts, bread, cassava, rice, and other foods. There were bottles of rum, 782 793 796 787 769 [532]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Oh, a day will come when they will remember me here, *kélé manyan!* 796
Oh, Damballa Wèdo *é, kélé manyan.* 769
Oh, Ayida Wèdo *é, kélé manyan!* 787
Oh, a day will come for you to remember me here, *kélé manyan!* [539]

During the evening about twenty loa and ancestors came into the *card* [776] to talk. When the last had finished speaking the hills were already light, and the service was over.

Service for Èzilie Fréda and St. Jacques Majeur

This service took place not in the open but under a tonnelle surrounded 796 by four walls, adjoining the hounfor of Alexis Stephan on the west fringes 776 of Port-au-Prince. Separate from the hounfor and dance court was a 346 shrine to the "dead" loa Gèdé Nimbo. The shrine was a small shed open on one side. Within, lighted by flickering oil lamps, was a life-size effigy [532] of Gèdé, a scarecrow-like figure dressed in the loa's traditional attire— [354] black tail coat and trousers, and a tall opera hat. On the otherwise blank face of the figure were smoked glasses with white rims.

The dancing was progressing under the supervision of the houngan's 796 adjutant, the laplace. He wandered among the drummers and dancers, [794] encouraged the singing, and issued orders here and there. No one seemed to take him very seriously. There was a good deal of joking, and the [522] gathering seemed very much like an old-fashioned family reunion. There were perhaps a hundred dancers and spectators—friends, relatives, and devotees of Stephan's hounfor. Everyone was watching with affection an old woman who could not be restrained from dancing. She executed old classical steps and postures with a skill that called for running comment all around her. As each piece came to an end someone would step up to her and say something like: "Woy, Manman, mais ou passé mwél" (Oh, Mother, you are better than me!). Then they would attempt to get her to sit down again, but she would only shake them off and urge the drummers to get going if they were not too tired.

Eventually, the houngan, Stephan, made a casual entrance through the [793] door of his adjoining hounfor. He held the usual ritual rattle and bell in [534] his hand, and sauntered around to chat with his friends.

Gradually, almost imperceptibly, the dancing became more serious. 796 Soon, only the hounsi, the female servitors, were dancing. The drums 776 played a salute to Legba, the first loa to be called upon in a Vodoun serv- [794] ice. For it is Legba who opens all gates and all highways, and who paves the way for communication with other deities. Though he is not the greatest of the loa, he is one of the most ancient. The houngan spilled water on [782] the ground as a libation, and the dancing continued.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

796 Then a well-dressed young man entered, and the drummers swiftly
793 changed to the salute reserved for guests of distinction. The hounsi sang,
[554] "Président passe là, l'ap monté au gouvernment!" and waved paper flags
[202] and kerchiefs. The young man was a distant relative of Stephan's; he also was a houngan.

After a while Stephan brought from his hounfor a second asson, or ritual rattle, and another small hand bell, both of which he handed to the young man. He was extending the courtesy of his hounfor, sharing his
[576] instruments of authority and religious power with his fellow houngan. Then followed an exhibition between the two houngans that was half duel and half ballet. They stood face to face, each of them holding the asson in one hand and the tiny bell in the other. Stephan was "testing" the young houngan for the edification of all present. Each tiny move made by Stephan was duplicated simultaneously by his guest, as though he were a mirrored reflection.

Every posture Stephan made was duplicated instantly by his guest. The assons and the bells were agitated constantly. The rattle in the young man's hand did precisely what Stephan's did. The two men looked into each other's eyes with intensity, as though this bound their movements together and unified them. When Stephan twisted to the left, the other houngan twisted to the right. Every contortion of the young man was an exact replica of Stephan's movements. The two assons rattled out the same rhythms and the same signals; so did the bells. The backdrop for this "test" was provided by the drummers. The faces of the two men broke into a sweat from the intense nervous effort. At last it came to an end. A woman came forward and wiped their faces with a colored kerchief. The "testing" ceremony was over. The visiting houngan had been proved.

796 Stephan then made a ritual vèvè, or maize-flour ritual drawing on the
793 ground. Afterward there was more singing and dancing by the hounsi.
787 They sang several songs for Ezilie Fréda, the "pure" loa. And Alexis
[532] Stephan went into a trance. It was unexpected. The servitors had not
[794] prepared for it. In this emergency the visiting houngan took over. He
[776] seemed a little anxious. He was unfamiliar with the particular psychological factors at play in this particular hounfor. He was not certain of the character of Stephan's possession. But he took over grimly. The houngénicon, an older woman, stepped forward to help. While the young houngan wielded the asson and bell, the woman issued instructions. Stephan, his head hanging back, his eyes closed, was supported by two of the hounsi. Other servitors hurriedly brought out a white sheet and spread it on the ground. A chair and a table were set upon the sheet, and Stephan was placed in the chair, where he now sat with his head hanging limply on his chest.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh Ogoun oh!
C'est pas mangé rangé
Pral tuyé chwal moin! [Ex. 44]

Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh, Ogoun, oh!
There is no poisoned food
That will kill my horse!

Ogoun Fai, known also by the Christian name St. Jacques, is the deity of war, and this song describes his courage and valor:

St. Jacques Majeur a voyé dit'm ga'çon déjà!
St. Jacques oh voyé dit'm ga'çon déjà!
St. Jacques Majeur a voyé dit'm ga'çon la-guè!
St. Jacques oh voyé dit'm ga'çon la-guè! [Ex. 45]

Major St. Jacques sent to tell me he is already a man!
St. Jacques, oh, sent to tell me he is already a man!
Major St. Jacques sent to tell me he is a man of war!
St. Jacques, oh, sent to tell me he is a man of war!

Should the service be to the loa Damballa Wèdo, symbolized as a rainbow and a great serpent, this song might be sung, commenting that he cannot be drowned in the water:

Papa Damballa ou c'est coulève oh!
Pouq'ou pas néyé?
Pouq'ou pas néyé?
Damballa pouq'ou pas néyé nan dleau? [Ex. 46]

Papa Damballa you are a snake, oh!
Why don't you drown?
Why don't you drown?
Damballa, why don't you drown in the water?

[778] Damballa, the rainbow, is in fact the source of the water that bubbles
[823] from the earth in springs. He is a patron of the spring, and there he often lives in the form of a water snake. In many a hounfor where Damballa is specially revered there is a *bassin*, or pool, dedicated to him.
[532] On the wall behind the pool there is usually a painting of Damballa and Ayida, depicted as great serpents, sometimes with a feathered headdress. The pool is kept filled with fresh water from the spring, and
[231] here one or more small snakes—symbols of Damballa and Ayida—reside:

Ala loa marché nan dleau
C'est Damballa!
Ala loa marché nan dleau
C'est Damballa!
Papa Damballa c'est tête à dleau!
Papa Damballa c'est tête à dleau!

There is a loa who lives in the water,
It is Damballa!

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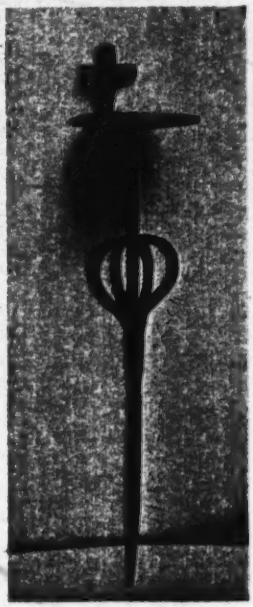
42. *Forged iron "saber" of the loa Damballa, from a hounfor near Léogane. Height, 32 inches.*



43. *Forged iron standard for holding ritual objects, from a hounfor in the region of Léogane. Height, 18 inches.*

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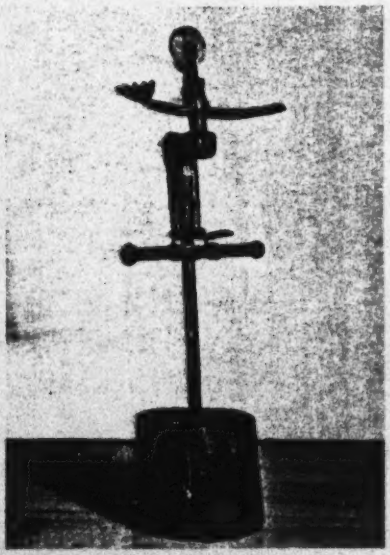

44. *Ancient iron figure of the loa Quançon Fer, from a hounfor near Léogane. Height, 12 inches.*

45. *Old iron ritual bell, or ogan, from a hounfor in southern Haiti. Height, 11 inches.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-EE]

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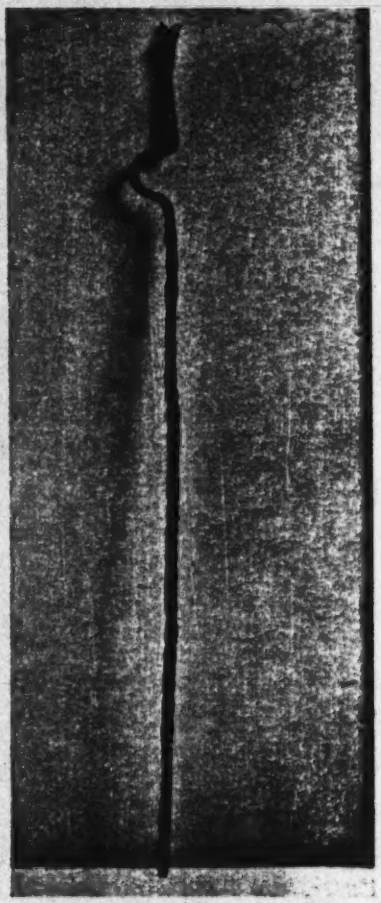

46. Forged iron rod in the stylized form of a snake, representing the loa Damballa, from southern Haiti. Height, 34 inches.

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47. Iron sculpture on a Nago altar of a hounfor near Gonaives, representing a bird sitting on a tree.

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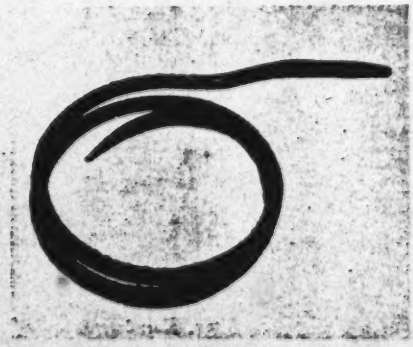
48. A sculptured iron standard in a hounfor in the Cul-de-Sac Plain.



49. Forged snake, representing Damballa, from southern Haiti. Length in coiled form, 9 inches.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-GG]
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52 and 53. *Wall paintings representing loa, in a small hounfor on Morne l'Hôpital.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-HH]

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54. Inside surface of a calabash bowl used in rituals of the hounfor, painted in black and white. The figure represents the graveyard loa, Baron Samedi, with a pick, shovel, and tombstone. Length, 15 inches.

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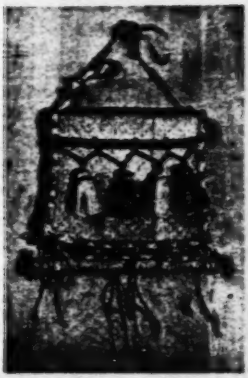

55. An alfor cousin, the traditional peasant knapsack.

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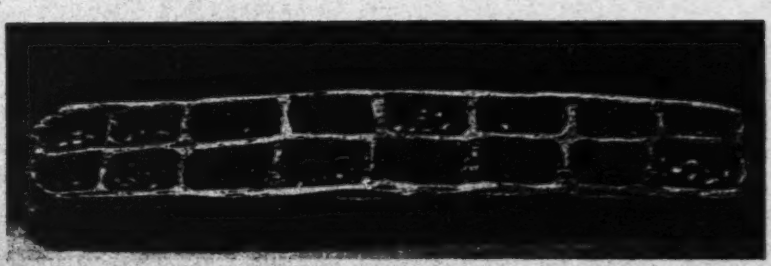

56. Wari board cut from a mahogany log. Length, 29 inches.

[P. 112-II]

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57. *Old wood carving of an unidentified deity, from a hounfor near Léogane. It is startlingly similar to the African carving shown in no. 58.*

58. *A wood carving from the Bambala tribe, western Belgian Congo. (Collection of Segy Gallery.)*

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59. *Carvings of more recent date, representing the loa of twins, from a hounfor in southern Haiti. Height, 12 and 14 inches.*

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60. *A carved cane head from the southwestern mountains.*

61. *Detail of a wood carving made about 1930 in the region of Port-au-Prince, representing the loa Loko. Work of this kind in mahogany has in the past thirty years deteriorated into neo-"African" carvings made for the tourist trade.*

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62. *A cayambouque. Cut from a single calabash, the two parts fit together tightly to form a single container. Some cayambouques are a foot or more tall. Height, 8 inches.*

63. *Terra-cotta figurines from the Cap Haitien region.*

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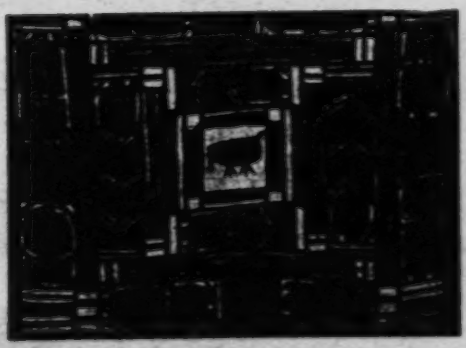

64. *Detail of a dye-painted burlap cloth. Animal and flower figures and geometric designs are used interchangeably.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-KK]

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65 and 66. Modern "primitive" paintings by Bourmond Byron. (Collection of Roger Coster.)

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-LL]

●532

67. *A contemporary "primitive" by M. Stephane.*

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68. *A painting by G. Abillard showing a Rara group led by a juggler holding a table in his teeth. (Collection of Marshall Stearns.)*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-M]

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19. *Vodoun altar of the hounfor "Caille Agué" in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. On the wall behind the altar are names of favored loa. On the altar are jars containing loa and souls of dead persons. Painted on its front wall, against which swords and flags are leaning, is the ship of Loa Agué.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-N]
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20. *A Voduun altar in northern Haiti, scarcely distinguishable from a Catholic shrine. Houmfors range from the simple to the complex, from the poor to the rich, from the primitive to the sophisticated, and from the bizarre to the artistic.*

[794
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21. *Altar in the houmfor "Société de la Belle Jeune Fleur" in Port-au-Prince dedicated to the loa Pinga Maza. The cross surmounted by the skull represents the deity. Behind the table, leaning against the cross, is the pestle with which this loa "grinds" his enemies. On the other table are razor blades for Pinga Maza to eat.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3Shelf SV3

[p. 112-V]

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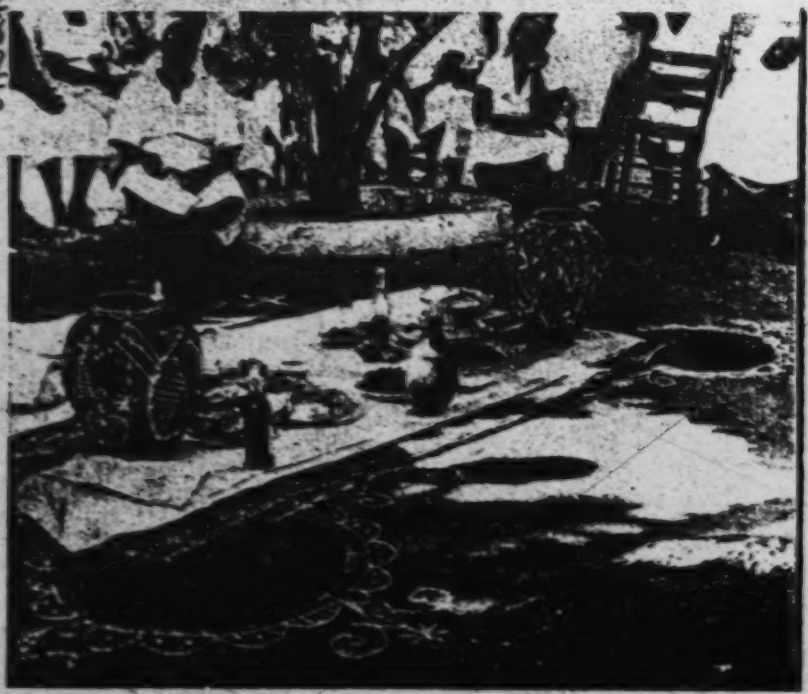
32. An Ibo service in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. Laid out on the mat is a feast for the Ibo lwa. The houngan ritually feeds the dead by placing food in the holes at each end of the mat. Designs on the pots are the symbolic patterns found generally in Haiti. The mat in the background, surrounded by a low curbing, is moved to the lwa.



2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-W]
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32. *Maize-flour drawing, or vèvè, for the loa Simbi.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-X]

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33. *An ancient assotor drum, believed to have been made early in the nineteenth century. Seen faintly on the painted surface are a guinea hen and a palm tree.*

34. *An assotor drum in full regalia for a service in the Cul-de-Sac Plain.*

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2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 122]

10. The Arts– Flour, Wood, and Iron

177 178 53 567 It is the nonmaterial arts and traditions that have thrived best in Haiti through the years of slavery, political unrest, and poverty. Religious concepts, music, dancing, folk tales, proverbs, and games are found everywhere in profusion. Material arts of the past have fared less well. Today, nothing is left of the old African knowledge of wood carving, metal casting, appliqué work, and weaving. Why such major African arts have died out in Haiti is no mystery. They disappeared simply because there was no place for them under the slave system or in the new Haitian society which followed it.

177 178 567 532 Under the colonial masters, the demands made on the New World African were for coffee, cotton, and indigo. His creative talents were channeled into carpentry, masonry, and the building of facilities for production. There were no traditional artistic outlets or patrons for the wood carver, and no need for the weaver. Nor, during the years of slavery, was there much leisure for the craftsman to do his work even for the fun of it, should he be so inclined; indeed, this approach to wood carving or any other art would have been little understood or appreciated by most West Africans. A man who made an art object purely and simply to express a creative urge rather than to fill an express need would have been regarded as slightly eccentric. The old West African wood carvings with which we are now familiar were made because they were *required* for some purpose. A figure of a deity was needed in a shrine, a carved protective guard was needed for the household, a grave marker or a ceremonial mask was obligatory.

177 178 567 326 In Haiti the needs of those who ruled were different. The slave with knowledge of the forge was not put to work making spears, ceremonial axes, and the like; he was assigned the task of making grillwork for houses, hinges and bolts, iron tires for coach wheels, and metal parts for the sugar mills. The anonymous African ironworker did his job well.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

used for wall hangings much as appliquéd cloths are used in Dahomey. Near Cap Haitien, in the north, ceramic workers make crude clay figurines of roosters, pigs, dogs, cows, and people. The "purpose" of these figurines is obscure, but it is likely that they are intended for use in Vodoun ritual, a number of them having been observed in hounfors in the vicinity of the town of Grande Rivière du Nord. In some mountain villages, canes carved with animal and human heads are commonly seen. Nor is the tradition of carving gourds and calabashes, popular in various regions of West Africa, altogether forgotten. The *cayambouque*, a divided calabash with the top ingeniously cut to fit into the lower part so as to form a sealed container, is sometimes covered with carved geometric designs, usually crude and haphazard but on occasion meticulous. Until recent years the common *cha-cha*, or gourd rattle, was similarly carved.

Most of the visible traditional art is to be found in the environs of the cult temple. The inner walls of many hounfors are covered with ritual designs and symbols and portraits of the deities. On the altar, sometimes, crude wood carvings of deities are seen, along with forged iron objects, carved marassa bowls, and grotesquely shaped drumsticks known as *baguettes guinée*. All the wooden objects are characterized by a plainness that relegates them to the category of purely functional and expendable things. The wood carving of a deity is not an image, it is a representation; it can be sold or otherwise disposed of, even thrown away if infested with beetles, and another object can be used to replace it. The only concern of the cult priest in this matter is that the deity concerned should understand the situation properly and not take offense. Thus there is no strong feeling that the wood carving should be a realistic representation or that it should be "beautiful." One relatively antique wood carving, completely West African in style, was found some years ago in a hounfor near Léogane and is now in the collection of the Musée du Peuple Haitien in Port-au-Prince (see fig. 57).

One of the most flourishing arts of the hounfor is the *vèvè*, or ritual drawing made on the earth in the course of a service. Most commonly these beautiful and ornate designs are made with white meal or flour, and in a few of the cults, primarily the Pétro, lampblack and red brick dust are also used. The vèvè is made by the houngan or the mambo. With sure, practiced movements, the cult priest allows the meal to trickle through his fingertips onto the ground where the rites are taking place, usually in the peristyle of the hounfor itself. The drawings he makes are composed of a multiplicity of cabalistic symbols—heart shapes, stars, interlocked V's, flags, abstract phallic forms, crosses, swords,

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

machetes, circles, mortar shapes, and so on—each with its own specific meaning. Sometimes the vèvè becomes openly pictorial, and there emerges a ship for the loa Agwé, snakes for Damballa and Ayida, a bull for the loa Taureau, a knapsack for the loa Azaka, or even a portrait of a deity, perhaps smoking a pipe or holding a sword. 788 532

The vèvè is not a permanent record. It is made as an act of supplication or veneration, and once it is finished it has no further value. In the ensuing ritual and dance, the vèvè is obliterated by the feet that pass across it. At the hands of one houngan, this invocational act results in a crude, even childlike, design. At the hands of another, it produces a drawing of beauty, integration, and highly developed form.

The drum-making craft, too, has offered an unbroken sequence of opportunity for satisfying artistic urges. The drum has a traditional form that cannot be tampered with; its shape is predetermined by its function, by the log from which it is hewn, and by existing standards. And yet, the drum maker has found it an object on which he can devise new decorative motifs, and he may even give it personal uniqueness. Some drums have styles that may be associated with specific regions of the country, others bear the stamp of the individual artist. Paint has been used on Haitian drums for a hundred years or more as a complement to carving. One assotor drum dating from the earliest days of the Republic, and now preserved in a collection owned by the Bureau of Ethnology in Port-au-Prince, is decorated with a medallion showing the Haitian coat of arms, grenadiers, red and yellow snakes, and a sun with a face. This magnificent instrument, apparently the only one of its age and kind to have survived the years, is one of Haiti's art treasures. 178 534 531

The *couis*, or calabash bowl, of the hounfor rites is another object which is decorated with motifs. Abstract designs, ritual symbols, and sometimes human and animal figures are painted on the inner or concave surface of the bowl. 322 531 [532]

The rural traditional arts of Haiti have had a belated impact on the arts of the city. Within the past fifteen years there have appeared a number of painters, sculptors in wood and ceramics, and ironworkers who constitute an art movement sometimes referred to as the Haitian "renaissance." Many of these artists draw heavily on national lore and legend for inspiration and subject matter. Some of them are men who came only recently from villages or distant farms. Their work adorns many public buildings in Port-au-Prince and is eagerly sought by art collectors. Members of the elite class who once looked with embarrassment on the "primitive" countryside are finding increasing respect for the potentialities of their country cousins. 184 531 532 32 [571]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

175 178 567 [177] tinuation of African cultural traditions was not easy, certain things did persist. While the material facts of the life of the slaves was at once subordinated to European patterns — in dress and implements and to a certain extent in housing, for example [23] — yet in other matters they could live as they had lived in Africa. Thus one account of the time, quoted by de Vassière,[24] tells how the slaves carried on communal hoe-[461] [533] ing, timing their strokes to the rhythms of songs that begged some favor of their visitor, or to songs of praise (and, when the white observer was not present, undoubtedly also singing songs of derision), in the characteristic African fashion that, as will be seen, has survived in Haitian peasant life to this day. Similarly their traditions of cooking, of eating, of fixing the time for their meals (despite St. Mery's comment that "the Negro has no other rule of eating than the demands of his appetite"), of respect for their elders; their attitudes toward death and their rituals of burial, their dances, their songs, and, above all, their non-Christian religious beliefs, all continued to be stamped with the mark of Africa.[25] On the other hand, opportunities to learn and imitate French cus-17 567 toms were by no means neglected, for the prestige of the masters filtered through the ranks of the slaves until it reached even the field-hands, for the nearer in service the Negro was to the person of his master, the more Europeanized was his behavior and the prouder he was and the more he exploited his opportunities to follow European patterns of habit.[26] Not only did the house-servants imitate French dances,[27] but we are told how in Martinique, for example, all the slaves were taught these figures.[28] In the field of religion, also, the efforts [199] of the Church to capitalize the royal edicts which made baptism of the slaves compulsory were far from vain, at least in so far as the outward manifestations of their acceptance of the faith were concerned. Writings of the time, however, do not omit comment on the discouragement of the missionizing Fathers who seriously undertook this task, because too often

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stant and in almost perfect accord with the hoes of all the other men in line. Pauses are frequent, and men often drop out of the line for a longer period of rest — even those not of the type laughingly called *majeurs,* who shirk their task and come to a *combite* principally to share in the feasting — and these, for the time being, join the singing with added verve. During the periods of rest, re-alignments are made and, if necessary, the direction of the line is changed; after a short time, however, the cry of the *simidor* rings out, the initial statement of a song is sounded, and as the chorus swings into the melody, the hoes rise again, the beat of the drum is begun, the plaintive notes of the *lambi* are heard, and the workers once more move down the field.[8]

Acting as the representative of the owner of the field to be cleared is a man who is called the *directeur.* If a large number of workers, a hundred or more, are assembled, he may divide them into two groups, assigning each half of the field, and then there is competition to see which group will first complete its allotted task. On such an occasion there would not only be more than one drum, but also more than one principal singer, or *simidor,* and the songs would thereupon have improvised words boasting of the prowess of the winning side, and ridiculing its opponents. The " director " also apportions the food, for it is customary to follow the rule which holds that since not all workers are equally eager or competent, so the rewards should not be the same for all. The shirkers are well known. They come but a little before sunset, or, arriving earlier, dawdle, walking about with their hoes and accomplishing but little during the afternoon. The lack of enthusiasm of these *majeurs* for work does not escape the " director," for though all who come to the *combite* must be fed, such men receive relatively little; while those who have worked the hardest not only are rewarded with dishes heaped with especially choice morsels of meat, but often find several sous when they reach the bottom of the dish.

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461 The *combite* songs are distinctive in Haitian music for
476 their melodic quality. Sung in unison, as is characteristic of
533 most forms of Negro music, they contain the statement of a theme by the leader and a response from a chorus, so that the contrast between this great volume of sound from the chorus and the solo voice of the *simidor* is singularly effective. It is not the melodic qualities alone that make these songs so
476 appealing to the Haitians, however. At the *combite* a man
533 not only learns all the gossip of the day, but enjoys learning
461 and singing the songs which caustically comment on the
626 shortcomings of neighbors, or evaluate the hospitality of those
203 who have called *combites,* or detail scandal, phrased with sufficient directness to allow the reference of the song to remain clear, but warily, so as not to give the individual pilloried ground for direct recrimination. The *simidor* is thus a person to be feared, since in addition to his ability as a singer and a leader of song, he is also an outstanding improviser. As one Haitian expressed it, "The *simidor* is a journalist, and every *simidor* is a Judas!"

476 One or two examples of these songs will make clear their
533 favor among a people to whose natural love of gossip is added
539 a patterned relish for oblique public statement of individual
461 shortcomings. The first comments on a miserly *combite* host:
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À tè!	Down!
Moin dit, messieurs,	I say, messieurs,
Moin p'ralé nan combite ça-é	I went to that *combite*
Moin pas mangé.	[But] I did not eat.
Moin allé, moin pas joinne un grogue	I went, but I found no drink
Pour moin bwè.	To drink.
Assé-a! En é!	Enough! Up!
Moin dit, messieurs,	I say, messieurs,
M'allé nan combite ça-é	I went to that *combite*

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Moin pas joinne mangé	[But] I found no food
Pou' m'mangé.	To eat.

Another song refers to a pungent bit of local gossip, which, though known to everyone, concerned an affair that precluded the mention of names. This is usually the case, for it is not ordinarily deemed wise to make specific references; yet this must not be thought of as an invariable rule, as is shown by the fact that a number of these songs were recorded where names were mentioned with great freedom. Thus in Mirebalais as elsewhere, circumstances must govern cases; the composer of the following short song did not feel it politic to do more than recall the case:

Ca va reglé,	This will be arranged,
En é, o!	Up, o!
Affai' cousine germaine	The affair of a first cousin
A'c cousin germain.	With her first cousin.

Reference is also made to an impending quarrel where a suspicion of magic practices entered:

Moin dit, Juda,	I say, Judas,
Allé l'église;	Go to the church;
Quand ou apè tourné	When you return
Ou a quitté moin tranquille, o-o;	You will leave me in peace, o-o;
Si ou allé l'église,	If you go to the church,
Ou apè quitté moin tranquille, o-o.	You will leave me in peace, o-o.

Still another song is a challenge, for in it the singer boasts that he is the equal of the man figuratively designated in it, and will cause trouble if resisted:

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À tè!	Down!
M'apé mandé qui moune	I ask what person
Qui en dedans caille là.	Is in that house.

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Compère répond':	My friend replies:
"C'e' moin qui avec cousine moin."	"It is I who am with my cousin."
Assé-é!	Enough!
Moin en dedans déjà.	I am already inside.
En é-é-o!	Up, o!
Nan point taureau	No bull
Passé taureau.	Is better than [this] bull.
En é-o!	Up, o!

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Finally, there may be cited a composition which complains against a shirker who comes and eats, but does little work:

Samba, é-é,	Samba, *é-é,*
Moin vé ou malhonnet,	I see that you are a dishonest man,
Tonnèrre!	*Tonnèrre!* *
Moin planté maïs moin,	I plant my maize,
L'année rive,	The year rolls round,
Moin planté mangé,	I plant food,
Ou apè managé li.	You eat it.
En é-é-o!	In the air!
Moin planté zaboca,	I plant avocados,
Ça pou' ou mangé,	They are for you to eat,
Ou malhonnet-o.	You are a dishonest man-o.
Tonnèrre!	*Tonnèrre!*

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The field cleared and hoed, the work of planting begins. This is carried on in accordance with a well-defined calendar of agriculture, which takes as its starting-point the beginning of the rains. Maize, which matures quickly, is the first crop, and is planted during the latter part of March or early in April, unless the rains are delayed, when it is planted later that month. Congo peas, which mature less rapidly, are put

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* *Tonnèrre,* "thunder," is a Haitian-French oath; the original is retained because in translation its force is lost.

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trance of the house — three times if there is one door (for the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost), three times before each door if there are two entrances, and once before each door if there are three. The wedding procession goes to church on foot. The men, if they are from the countryside, are stiff, uncomfortable, and hot in their unaccustomed "best" clothing and their often painful shoes, while the women are also self-conscious in their new dresses. The elaborateness of the ceremony varies with the fee paid the priest, but at all events the clanging church bell is heard notifying the town and its environs that a marriage is being consecrated.

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If the family of the bride or groom are well known in Mirebalais, a wedding reception may be given at their house for friends of the couple and of their parents, but the real festivities are held after the return to the new family home. As the procession approaches it, the "bush-priest," a functionary who, because of his knowledge of French, can read the prayers of the Church, waits at the gate with two aides, small boys or girls, each with a flag, one red and one white. He has sacred water in one hand and a lighted candle in the other, and as he pours this water on the ground three times he intones the Pater Noster, the Ave Maria, the Credo, and other prayers. These concluded, hymns are sung by all the participants, and singing, a procession is formed with the "bush-priest" in the lead, followed by the flag-bearers, the couple who have just been married, arm in arm, the "godfather" and "godmother" of the marriage, as the witnesses are called, the parents of the bride and groom, and other close relatives. As the procession reaches the door of the house, it pauses and water is thrown on the ground three times; the circuit of the house is made twice again, and each time, as the door is reached, water is thrown, until, the third tour completed, the participants solemnly enter.

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There coffee, liqueurs, wine, *kola*, and cakes are served to the principals and the more important members of the com-

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595 or if women who share the same mate meet in the
533 market place, quarreling is invariably heard; or if one of them sings *point* — derisive songs — against the other and goes so far as to name the object of derision, fighting and court action follow.

58 Though many cases of *plaçage* are the result of affairs be-
595 tween young people which result in conception, it is essential
684 in any event that the consent of the families of the man and the woman concerned be obtained to give the mating social validity. When the union is once entered upon, divorce occurs only with the abandonment or mistreatment of the woman, or her infidelity, for in these *plaçage* matches, the moral support of her family makes a man reluctant to send his wife away without ample justification. When a man does divorce a *placée* wife for reasons of infidelity, she may either go to another man or return to the home of her parents, where she supports herself. If after a period of years she has not established a household with another man, it often happens that her husband takes her back. Most frequently, however, where children have been born to a mating, a woman's infidelity is punished merely by beating; and proof that a wife is a wife whether or not she is legally "married" is offered by the Haitian man in this fact that a *placée* is beaten for this and less serious reasons as readily as a legal wife. Prompt
[754] action is taken against the adulterer, which, though it may on occasion be as drastic as murder, generally takes the form of
[848] recourse to magic charms. Women who carry on illicit relationships take all care, therefore, to guard unceasingly against the birth of offspring.

595 Many men, at least, hold that a man is often much closer
593 to a *placée* than to a legal wife, for the former is more attentive and less demanding than the wife with her legally assured status and permanence of tenure. Thus it comes about that
[454] *placée* spouses are frequently given generous money gifts, to be saved for the future of their children, while as a man grows older he may take up his residence with a *placée* wife, where

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the one possessed, possessions of this kind mean either that the *loa* needs baptism; or that, being baptized, its devotee has been negligent in serving the god.

No actual rite of baptism of a *loa* — or, as it is also termed, of *lavé tête,* "washing the head" — was witnessed, but the account of the ceremony given here, obtained independently from several persons, represents an adequate exposition of the rite as performed in Mirebalais. A room is prepared where the person whose *loa* is to be baptized must remain for three days. The mat or bed on which the neophyte rests is covered with fresh sheets and pillow-cases, and three changes of clothing are made ready, one of which must be entirely new for the last day of the ceremony. These are in the color of the god being "baptized"; that is, if the *loa* were revealed to be such a one as Damballa, Aida Wedo, or Gran' Erzilie, everything would be white, but if it were Gran' Siligbo, the colors would be blue and white; if Ogun, everything would be red; if Ossange, blue; where the god is one of the Pétro suite, such as 'Ti Kita or Bosu, everything would be black.*

During the three days' "retreat" the one whose *loa* is being consecrated lies alone. All day long the men and women of the family sit in the next room or outside the house, singing and praying, though at night they sleep, since "this is not a wake." They not only sing the songs sacred to the *loa* being baptized, but also the canticles of the Virgin, while prayers of the Church are recited under the leadership of the *prêt' savanne,* the "bush-priest" whose ability to read the prayers makes him an essential figure in all *vodun* rites. They may from time to time have "a little procession" about the room where the novitiate lies, when small banners in the color of the god are carried. Soft drinks and a *mangé sec* — a "dry" offering — are given the god, and white tapers and an oil lamp are

* A detailed listing of the names, attributes, and powers of the more widely worshipped *loa,* the colors, days, and trees or other places sacred to them, and the "squads" into which they are conceived to be formed, will be found in an appendix at the end of this book.

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lighted. Chicken and rice may also be cooked for any god except Gede, while chocolate and rice with milk are favored, since it is said "the *loa* love desserts"—a commentary on the very immediate and human character of these spirits.

The actual baptism, or "washing of the head," is performed on the third day of the ceremony by a *vodun* priest or priestess who is a member of the family, though any member who has important *loa* and the necessary *connaissance* may officiate if the membership of the family includes no priest. As at any baptism, there must be a godfather and godmother, and preference is given those who are the parents of twins or are themselves twins. The officiant must be possessed at the time, since, it is said, "one *loa* baptizes another." Leaves of the basilique tree are steeped in perfumed cold water, and the hands of the one who baptizes are first immersed in the liquid; then, while songs of the *loa* and canticles of the Virgin are sung, he washes the head of the person to be baptized. Possession occurs immediately, and the new devotee lies back, half conscious, while all others kneel, seeking word from the *loa* to learn if it is satisfied. If an affirmative answer is given, all retire, the person possessed remaining in the room to sleep through the night. A "ball," but not a *vodun* dance, may celebrate the event either the next day or later, but this is not obligatory, and most often those present, after eating, quietly disperse. The following day the one who has been baptized goes to the family place of worship and greets those who have helped him. Only one further rite is necessary, and this solely when the *loa bossal* is revealed to be a hostile god. Then the *loa*, after having been baptized, is "restrained" by being placed in a jar and buried, so it cannot later emerge and trouble the family of the one to whom it has come.[13]

The ceremony of baptism, in Mirebalais, is in no sense a first step into any *vodun* hierarchy, for, as will be seen, no such hierarchy exists in this valley. One important priest there derives his power from *loa* that have never been bap-

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based on the rituals that were observed. In every case at least two major officiants are necessary, the *prêt' savanne* and the *hungan*, though the role of the latter is the all-important one. Last-minute preparations are made during the final morning, but what is needed will have been accumulated over a period of many months. Tables to hold offerings — sometimes two, sometimes more — are arranged at the sacred places on the family habitation, usually near streams or great trees where the gods reside. Eggs, cereals, drinks, and cornmeal — the food of the gods — are brought, and the animals to be sacrificed are tethered near by. Early in the afternoon the family, dressed in white, assemble, while the *vodun* priest with cornmeal describes on the ground the cabalistic designs called *verver*, and he sees to it that all has its proper place on the altar, whether it be the ever-present crucifix, or the chromolithographs of the saints, or the bottles of "drink" — usually non-alcoholic — or cereals and flour of various kinds. Consecrated water must be on hand, particularly at the big "altar," as the table covered by a canopy to protect the sacred objects is called.

The first part of the ceremony is an *action de grâce*, which in Mirebalais requires an hour or more, but which is said to last two or three hours in southern Haiti. This ritual, entirely derived from the litany of the Church, must always precede any *vodun* ceremony of the kind being considered here. Its purpose is said "to set the *loa* in movement" and to notify them of the rites that are to come, but psychologically it also serves to assure the participants that they are not proceeding to the worship of African gods without having paid friendly homage to God, the ruler of the universe, and the saints. The songs and prayers are brought to a close by an *adoration*, when offerings of money are made by members of the family to pay the officiant. At this point the songs change to a more African rhythm, and the *vodun* priest takes active charge.

As darkness falls, on the first day of the rite, he summons the

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uals were being performed. If they failed to wave their banners vigorously or often enough, the one in charge chided them for their lack of zeal, whereupon their movements would become a kind of dance. During the *adoration* each member of the family was called upon to give coins or candles, the first for the *prêt' savanne,* though this was not his entire fee.

With the benediction, the *action de grâce* came to an end, and the solemn, tired voice of the *prêt' savanne* was heard intoning a hymn, which, in the usual fashion, was repeated by the assembled group until, without interlude, without even a pause, the interpolations of the chorus gradually changed, so that the rhythm became African, and, with the transition, the *vodun* priest took over the leadership. The *hungan* began by repeating several times the phrase which throughout the entire ceremony was to punctuate all its climaxes, "*Grâce* [*et*] *mise'corde,*" and the family murmured it in response. He then ordered each member of the family to address himself to the *loa,* telling what troubles had befallen him and what favors he desired. An assistant now took six candles from the *trône.* Proceeding in a counter-clockwise direction, he described a large circle about that part of the meadow where the ceremony was to take place, fixing a candle in the ground at intervals. Four of these were for the four corners of the earth, one was for Mait' 'Bitation — the deity termed Master of the Habitation — and one for the Mait' Source — the Master of the Stream. When the members of the family, each holding a lighted candle, had formed in a line, they were bidden to place these candles in the earth within the area described by the six already there, and as they scattered over the sacred ground, little flickering flames dotted the hillside and the grassy meadow behind the *trône* in the deepening dusk.

Then all returned to the altar, and the *hungan,* taking the first of three plates made ready for him, began to describe *verver.* One plate held white cornmeal flour, one was filled with gray ashes, called Guinea flour, and the third contained

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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78 a black powder of ground, roasted coffee beans. Starting at the
793 tree near the "first" table for Bosu, he traced a white line
796 that, passing the second table and the trees for Simbi, con-
532 tinued to the *trône*, to which subsidiary motifs were then added in gray and black, making of the designs an intricate geometric composition.

78 With bell in hand and a small whistle in his mouth, both of
79 which later were entrusted to his assistants, the *hungan* went about, blowing the whistle at intervals to call the *lua*. Singing,
[533] he directed that a wooden boat-shaped basin containing water be placed in front and a little to the left of the *trône* for washing the feet of the sacrificial animals. Though all the family were present, they were again ritually summoned in song to come with the sacrifices and were ordered to stand near by with lighted candles while the animals were bathed. As they gathered, the *hungan* became possessed by Simbi, who took it upon himself to set the fee for conducting this ceremony at 117.10 gourdes. When he announced this sum, loud pleas of poverty were heard from the family, while speaking through the priest, the god bargained with them until the sum of 110 gourdes was finally agreed upon.

[533] The *hungan* now sang a long invocation, inviting the gods of all those places where Africans live to come. First the feet of the fowl were washed, then those of the pigs, and finally of the goat. Each fowl was passed over the body and head of every
[872] member of the family as it was presented with the requisite song to the proper *loa* — the red and black cock for Legba, the black fowl for Gede, the red one for Ogun, the white for Damballa, and the fowl with ruffled plumage for Congo Zandor. Then each was placed on the ground in front of three small piles of food taken from the *trône*. They were watched with anxiety by all present, for the pecking at the food is a signal that the god accepts the animal given him. The small pigs for Ti Kita Demembré, and the boar for Bosu, were offered the same food as the fowls; the goat for Erillie Gé Rouge was pre-

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sensed with the leaves on a branch of the sacred tree. All the animals ate, a favorable omen.

This ceremony was held during the rainy season, but the usual afternoon rains had held off. At this time, however — about eight o'clock — threatening clouds came up and soon the tropical downpour began. The heavy rain continued for more than an hour and the subsequent drizzle did not end until almost midnight, but this was not permitted to interfere with the proceedings. Now the participants took places before the "first" table, for Bosu, again with their offerings. Inasmuch as Bosu was the deity who had shown the greatest ill will toward the family, those present awaited the decision with heightened tenseness as the goat, frightened by the many people gathered about, hesitated long before he nibbled at the leaves held out to him by the *hungan*. But eventually all the animals ate, meeting this paramount test, and as each partook of the food the *hungan* several times called out "*Grâce mise'corde*," the family echoing their response with emotion. Now two men who had strong Bosu gods knelt before the table, and the fowls were again and again touched to their heads and passed over their bodies in gestures that described the sign of the cross, in order to induce their gods to come to them.

As the singing became louder and more rhythmical, various [533] members of the family became possessed. The deities who responded to the calls were, in the order of their appearance, [176] Kita, Ezilie, Simbi, Bosu, Damballa, and finally Gede (Papa Gedenibo). The possessions took their characteristic African form, with some of the possessed running about, jumping into the fire for Legba, and stamping on the embers with their bare feet, others reeling with arms waving, still others rolling on the ground, which, as the rain continued, soon became very muddy. Most of those under possession were women, but about nine-thirty one man became possessed by Simbi, and [176] later another by Gede. As the *loa* "came" in ever greater

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number, exclamations of pleasure were heard that the gods were responding. Outwardly, the ritual seemed completely disorganized, the "*loa*" and the spectators moving, mud-bespattered, tense, from the table for Bosu to that for Simbi, and back, or to the *trône*.

The singing went on without interruption to the accompaniment of the bell and occasional blasts of the whistle. Among the songs heard during this period of possession were:

Bosu li join' qui chose a tè,	Bosu found something on the ground,
Pas remassé li.	Do not pick it up.
Bosu ma'ché,	Bosu goes about,
Li join qui chose a tè',	He found something on the ground,
Pas remassé li.	Do not pick it up.
Un va cutrave	You will come to harm
Si ou ramassé li.	If you pick it up.
Va enragé Bosu.	You will anger Bosu.
Simbi en Deux Eaux,	Simbi en Deux Eaux
M'we fé p'ou,	I do for you,
F'e p'moin,	Do for me,
Fi-a, Congo,	Help, O Congo,
Congo Zandor.	Congo Zandor.
Simbi Kita Kita, travaille pour nous,	Simbi Kita Kita, work for us,
Jodi-a pour nous,	Today for us,
Demain pou' zotl'.	Tomorrow for others.
Erzilie, o Lemba,	Erzilie, o Lemba,
M'ap' mandé coté Erzilie ye.	I ask, where is Erzilie.
Mangé a'paré.	The food is ready.
Gedenibo, derrière la croix, Gede,	Gedenibo, behind the cross, Gede.

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Devant Baron, Gede,	Before Baron, Gede,
Derrière la croix, Gede,	Behind the cross, Gede,
Jodi-a m'p' nan sang m'we,	Today I am troubled,
Gedevi, vhele Gede, ça Gede,	Gedevi, call Gede, this Gede,
Jodi-a m'pas nan sang moin.	Today I am troubled.
Balai, rousé, cerclé, quitté.	Cease to sweep, sprinkle, hoe.
Moin pas nan sang, Baron Samedi.	I am troubled, Baron Samedi.

Shortly after eleven o'clock the *hungan* intervened to calm those possessed, for the time was at hand to give the sacrifices. Summoning the family to assemble again before the *trône* with the offerings, he commenced a long ritual in which each creature was prepared by being carefully washed and combed, while the boar for Bosu was also fastidiously perfumed and powdered. At the direction of the *hungan*, the fowls were first offered, the killing taking place at a distance of some thirty or forty feet behind the *trône*. The chickens were held with the two wings and the head in the left hand, so that the neck was exposed. The knife was passed twice over the neck to describe a cross, after which each fowl was cleanly and skillfully dispatched. One of the assistants of the *hungan* held a small calabash in which some of the blood of each animal was caught, and another, knife in hand, sang with him that they were offering this *kokio* to the deity for whom it was intended. As the last of the chickens was being killed, the *hungan* left the *trône* and quietly strangled the pigeons for Damballa. 78 79

All possessions had ceased, except that of a man "mounted" by Gede and a woman by Simbi. The man particularly attracted much attention, for Gede is known as a gossip, and so diverting were his revelations of family scandal that all were too absorbed listening to him to show any interest in the sacrifice of the animals. [176] [521]

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78 79 533 fice of the animals. At one point the *adjanikon* holding the calabash in which the blood was caught threw it on the ground in anger, declaring that animals should not be killed for people who were too indifferent to come and sing the songs that accompany the giving of offerings. Some of those present thereupon detached themselves and came to watch the killing of the two small pigs, as the song, repeated over and over, changed to:

[539] *O minmin, moin couteau la,* — Oh, here, here is my knife,
Soso na pé tué, soso, — A pig is to be killed, a pig,
Jodi-a. — Today.

78 79 At this point several other men joined in handling the larger animals, for now the one killing the sacrifices could only hold the mouth of each beast before he cut its throat. And when the boar was to be sacrificed, even more assistance was needed, and a line of rope had to be fastened about his snout before he could be handled at all. The killing was ended when the [533] sacrificial goat was slaughtered, to the accompaniment of the [639] song:

Ma'ze Louisa, — Miss Louisa,
M'ap' tué ou jodi-a, — I kill you today,
Pour Erzilie, 'Ti Kita, — For Erzilie, 'Ti Kita,
Gé Rouge, Pié Sèche. — Gé Rouge, Pié Sèche.

The calabash containing the blood was now placed on the *trône*, while the carcasses were gathered in an orderly pile in front of it. The *hungan* described a circle about the massed bodies with cornmeal, also making two white lines in the form of a cross over them. He then began to sing the *adoration* that [465] follows every killing, while the family and all others present threw coins for him into the dish that rested on the bodies, only a few sous of which he gave to his assistants. This rite ended as the women came to him one by one, each to take a

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fore never return to trouble the living. As witness to this, he was now putting the cross in place, "which causes everything that is evil to flee," to remain until it rotted away.

Simbi djo was "restrained" where the *trône* had been; Lemba under the mango tree near the place of the table for Bosu. Some of the meat of the pigs was buried in these places with all other kinds of cooked food, and the gods were told that they were to repose there for from seven to seventeen years, after which they would again be fed. A cross of iron was buried with the cooked meat, and as each jar, both now and earlier, was put in place, this song was sung:

Poussé allé,	Get you gone,
Poussé allé,	Get you gone,
Icit pas pays ou.	This is not your country.
Ça lan Guinée,	It is Guinée,
Qui pays ou.	That is your country.

A violent rain-storm not only made it impossible to reach the place of the ceremony the following day, but also made it necessary for the family to defer all but a few of the more essential rites. The second day's ritual was thereupon put over to Saturday, when according to original intentions the *vodun* dance that had been planned to close this complex of ceremonies was to have occurred, but which in consequence was postponed until some weeks later.

The ritual of the second day of this *cérémonie* began much earlier than that of the first, for by about one-thirty in the afternoon the *action de grâce* was almost completed. As one approached, a newly dug mound of earth with a cross over it where the troublesome deities had been buried was to be seen just outside the land belonging to the family. The cross was draped with a black cloth, and was itself painted blue and white, while a rosary and a magic *garde* of native twine were suspended from it.

On this afternoon the ritual was performed in two places, a

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spot somewhat farther down the stream than the site of the earlier ceremony, and later at the family habitation on the hill. There was one table arranged as a *trône* and under its canopy, beside the *images*, the candles, and the crucifix, were white foods such as rice and white beans. Instead of Pétro *loa*, this time the ceremony was to bring Rada gods who were to be asked for children, good health, and good fortune. The *trône* was just below the confluence of two brooks, near some great palm trees. Near by was a weir, while in the larger stream, below the point of juncture, were two small natural pools.

When the *action de grâce*, which did not differ from that witnessed earlier, was ended, the *hungan* again made his *verver*, and these were yet richer in design than on the previous occasion. As he finished he took a number of the women of the family by the right hand, spinning each in turn several times to induce possession. The *loa* Damballa Siligwe "came" almost at once, possessing a woman who threw herself into the stream, threshing about as a "serpent." No one troubled himself to attend to her, however, as she emerged and walked about in her wet clothes behind the *trône* and in front of it, so that, according to the *hungan*, the *loa* became angry and would not come, thus making it necessary to sing many more songs of praise and entreaty. As he sang, the *hungan* seized one member of the family after another by the hand, spinning them about and making them kneel before the *trône* to bring the *loa*.

Moin dit Gran',	I say, Gran',
Bonjou', Gran',	Good-day, Gran',
Bonjou', bonjou'.	Good-day, good-day.
Enfants, la yo, Gran',	It is their children, Gran',
Qui ap mandé coumen nous ye-e,	Who ask how you are,
Enfants yo	Their children
Qui ap dit bonjou'.	Who say good-day.

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Damballa Wedo,	Damballa Wedo,
Papa, nan pié boi',	Papa, in the tree,
Moin pa' pe' monté.	I cannot climb.
Papa ou c'é' coulev',	Papa, you are a serpent,
Papa ou c'é' Dagowe.	Papa, you are Dagowe.
Damballa Siligwe, Anvalou,	Damballa Siligwe, Anvalou,
Nous salué ou.	We salute you.
Ça nous dit,	What do you say,
Alada Sisigwe?	Alada Sisigwe?
Papa Damballa moin,	Papa Damballa mine,
Signalé nous,	Show us,
Signalé nous Dahomey.	Show us Dahomey.
Nous acé! Nous acé!	We are here! We are here!
Papa Ogun qui met' pié	Papa Ogun who enters
Nan humfort.	The *humfort*
Ago, ago-e!	*Ago, ago-e!*
Kadia Bosu,	Kadia Bosu,
Nous acé,	We are here,
Kadia Bosu.	Kadia Bosu.

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These songs failed to bring the gods, and the mother of the girl who had been possessed was sternly commanded to take her up the hill to the house and dress her in clean dry clothes. Before she could return, another young woman who, it was later learned, was a member of the family from the region of Grand Bois, some distance away, came running down the hill possessed by Damballa. Crying out for more room, she ordered those sitting near the *trône* to move on as she roughly pulled others toward her. Now the *loa* came rapidly, with six or seven immediate possessions; and even one reluctant girl who stood by nervously, hesitating to soil the fresh white dress trimmed in blue which she, like the other women of the family, was wearing, was soon " mounted " by her *loa*.

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Once again the *hungan* made *verver* and, as he did so, the woman possessed by Damballa, leaping across the brook, climbed into a calabash tree, holding to the near-by palm fronds for support as she shook the tree to punctuate her shouted directions and demands. As she climbed higher and higher, the *hungan* pleaded: "Go no further, Papa. Climb no further," but to no avail. By this time it was after four o'clock, and since this day the rains did not delay, the *hungan* entreated her to descend from the tree, to permit him and the others assembled there to go up the hill out of the downpour. Wooing the "*loa*" with song, he urged:

Verver ci mè' a tè,	Here is *verver* on the ground,
Pinga cé'émonie moin,	Take heed of my ceremony,
Shango, ago-e!	Shango, *ago-e!*

While he sang, he made *verver* about the base of the tree on which the woman was standing and along the bank of the stream. But he still had no success, for she persisted with much violence to recount the wrong that had been done by the family to provoke the anger of the gods—how one member had bargained with a *hungan* to induce him to send evil *loa* to the other members of the family, that they might die and his inheritance might be the greater. Before she would consent to descend, all the sacrifices had to be brought for her inspection, and all those possessed were required to go up the hill and dress in clean clothes. Returning in the rain, the freshly dressed women gathered about the base of the tree, exhibiting the sacrificial animals to the *loa*, the chickens held high in the hands of their donors, and the goats and sheep prominently placed. Slowly, very slowly, as the downpour continued, the woman began to descend, and many times she hesitated, so that it was more than ten minutes before she reached the ground.

But even after she was on the ground and the *hungan* was

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78 79 preparing to seek shelter from the rain, new possessions continued, until, saying: "The *loa* are greater than I am," he went on with the ceremony, singing:

[533] [539]

Ossange Damballa Wedo,	Ossange Damballa Wedo,
Laissé coulé, Ossange-o!	Permit coiling, Ossange!
Ai-bobo!	*Ai-bobo!*
Moin entré,	I enter,
M'ap saluè loa.	I salute the *loa.*
Ogun, Ogun Achade,	Ogun, Ogun Ashade,
O, Ogun Achade,	O, Ogun Ashade,
Hier soir Ogun fai' yun rêve'-o	Last night Ogun dreamed a dream-o
Rêve' li tourné lègèdé.	Dreamed he turned a spy.

A woman became possessed by Damballa, as did the young man who had "had" Gede the preceding night of the ceremony; the woman was in a gay mood, going about smiling and laughing, while the man threw himself in the water and rolled like a snake. And since the *loa* were coming so strongly, the *hungan* began the ceremony of washing and presenting the sacrificial animals, which this time included two white male goats, one very large and one smaller, a white sheep, and six or seven fowls of various colors. The presentation made, the entire group marched singing up the path to the houses, the flag-bearers saluting with their banners the woman so happy in her possession.

[346] As the procession came up the hill, it passed a newly built small house, intended to serve as the family place of worship for the *loa* now introduced into the habitation, and a framework of brush, or *tonnelle,* that had been erected as a shelter under which the postponed *vodun* dance was to have taken place. Without pausing, they proceeded slowly to the gate-

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way, where a ceremony was held for Legba, the guardian of entrances, that he might permit the other *loa* to pass. 78 79

At the direction of the *hungan*, the bars of the gateway were let down as prayers, the Pater Noster and the Ave Maria, were said. Then he sang: [539] [533]

Papa Legba,	Papa Legba,
Fé ou gagné patience	Have patience
Pou' ou service.	At your *service.*
Ago, ago-e!	*Ago, ago-e!*
Papa Legba,	Papa Legba,
Sorti lan Guinée,	Come from Guinea,
Pou' nou' passé.	That we may pass.

As this song and others of similar tenor were sung, the man who had been first possessed by Gede, and earlier in the afternoon by Damballa, strode shouting along the path beside the entrance, into the near-by fire, which was made the hotter as several men blew on it and poured rum into the flames; he stamped in it until he was seized and calmed. The *hungan* once more began to make *verver*, this time at the gateway, as he sang: [533] [539]

Papa Legba,	Papa Legba,
Na pé mandé,	We ask you,
Ça wé la?	What do you see there?
Adoré-é-o	We worship, oh,
A-i bobo!	*A-i bobo!*
Papa Legba,	Papa Legba,
Ouvri barrière pou' nou', ago-ye!	Open the gateway for us, *ago-ye!*
Ouvri chemin pou' moin.	Open the path for me.

As he sang, he passed the red and black cock for Legba over the body of the possessed man sitting in a chair, who thereupon resumed his excited movements, reeling along the path 78 79 533 539

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and from time to time again tramping in the fire, as these songs were heard:

Legba cuiscuignon,	Legba who limps along,
À la longtemps,	It is a long time
Moin pas wé 'ou.	I have not seen you.
Papa Legba, wé!	Papa Legba, look!
L'ouvri barrière pou' nous passé.	Open the gateway that we may pass.
E-ago-ye!	*E-ago-ye!*
Legba chita lan barrière	Legba who sits on the gate
Ba nou' passé.	Give us the right to pass.
Ago-ye-e!	*Ago-ye-e!*

The chicken was also passed over other members of the family, but without bringing on any new possessions, and was several times presented on both sides of the entrance-way, wings outstretched, the *hungan* occasionally half-kneeling. Finally stepping inside the entrance, he wrung the neck of the animal, which was destined later to be roasted and to hang for several days over the gateway. While the *loa* Legba was dancing in the fire, Gran' Erzilie "came to the head" of a woman who, after violent possession and a great deal of pacing back and forth in company with "Legba," went down on her knees. Still another woman became possessed, by Damballa, and rolled in the mud. Another procession, for the return to the *tonnelle,* was formed as a lilting song was sung, with everyone dancing to it. "Legba," walking backwards, led the way, calling out: "This way, Papa, come this way." The one possessed by Gran' Erzilie followed on her knees, while, some distance behind, "Damballa" rolled from side to side as she moved her body face-downward along the path. After a few moments the woman on her knees began to beat the ground rhythmically as she proceeded, and as "Damballa" caught up with her, she beat this rhythm on the thighs and buttocks

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796 535 men and women exchange gossip and sit about, joining in the songs or merely observing the proceedings; while the young people form part of the singing, dancing circle that revolves almost without pause about the central post of the *tonnelle*, the shelter where the festivities are held.

796 To speak of discipline in connection with these dances is to evoke new and astonishing images for readers familiar with the more popular literature on Haiti. It is admittedly true that as one first witnesses a *vodun* dance, one's reaction is that this is a performance governed solely by the dictates of individual [416] possession. These ceremonies are usually held at night, deep in [291] the bush, lighted only by a small, smoking oil lamp and by the [411] candles fastened to the pegs of the drums, while the participants dress in anything but their best clothing, and in their belts the men carry the machetes always worn by the Haitian [533] peasant. Add to this the effect of the unceasing rhythms of the drumming, the blanket of sound from the unison singing of the participants, the violence of the possessions, and it is not strange that the untrained observer tends to assess what he sees in almost any terms but those of the underlying discipline that defines all activity in the worship of the gods. A release of [154] psychic tension is undoubtedly afforded those who become possessed, and this is also experienced to a lesser degree by all 796 those in attendance. Nevertheless, it must be emphasized, de- 786 spite so much that has been written to the contrary, that this form of worship of the *loa* is neither unrestrained hysteria nor drunken orgiastic satisfaction of the sex drive. The behavior of the participants, in terms of the accepted patterns of European and American religious decorum, often seems uncouth, vigorous, violent, and even dangerous, when it is merely the expression of a different tradition. And as for the orgiastic aspects of these rites, Haitians have ample opportunity to satisfy their sexual impulses elsewhere, without making this a basic and constant element in the worship of their gods.

796 *Vodun* dances, in Mirebalais as elsewhere, take place on

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796 534 533 [178] skin, are played in batteries of three, the largest being called *manman*,[3] the middle the *seconde*, and the smallest the *bula*.[4] To be used in dances, the drums, like the *loa* of the worshippers, must be "baptized," as will be seen when an account of their making and consecration is given in a later chapter. The iron, or *ogan*, usually consists of the blade of a hoe struck by a large spike, and the rattle, *açon*, in the form most often encountered, is a rounded calabash, containing seeds or pebbles. The iron and the rattles set the basic, steady beat about which the complex drum rhythms play. The smallest drum first takes the time after the iron and the rattles have begun, the notes being played with an accessory figure by means of two thin sticks. The medium-sized drum is next heard, while the *manman*, ritually the most important of the three, comes in last. The *seconde* also has two sticks, one short, thick, and straight, the other a small bow, which gives an added resilience to the notes of the drums' subsidiary rhythms. In playing the great drum, the single crooked stick, called a *baguette*, is held in the right hand, while the left strikes the drumhead with heel or fingers according to the quality of tone desired. The drumstick itself is wielded either against the skin head or against its wooden side, thus permitting a further variation in tone. 796 When "salutes" to the gods are called for by the drums, it is 796 the voice of the *manman* that signals the sweeping circular 533 movements of the dancers, dictating with its beat the dips and semi-prostrations of this figure in the ritual dancing, called *asagwe*. The drum rhythms are always distinctive for each type of *loa*, and every devotee knows the rhythms which call his god.

796 534 [187] The drums and iron are the focus of all activity of the dance, especially since those who are possessed dance facing the drums, in whose beat is heard the voice of the gods. Hence the spectators cluster most closely about them, for anything of significance which happens must happen here. The players of the rattles — it is but rarely that more than one rattle is not

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employed — do not remain with the drummers. These instruments are ordinarily in the hands of *hunsi*, who join the massed ring of dancers that constantly circles about the center pole. These dancers are not under possession, but are merely enjoying the evening or participating in the social aspect of the dance preparatory to becoming possessed. The rattle is held high above the heads of the dancers, and its sharp, steady notes are produced by quick, short, measured movements of the wrist. The end of a song, which sometimes does not come until fifteen or twenty minutes after its initial statement, is usually marked by a continuous shaking of a rattle, a process which effectually breaks the rhythm and makes it possible to begin a new song. The player of the rattle is an outstanding singer, who usually initiates the fresh refrain and continues to sing its repetitions as soloist in the alternation of solo and chorus which marks Haitian *vodun* singing as it marks most West African and New World Negro religious music.

When a possession occurs, the songs for the deity who has "arrived" are taken up as the drums play the rhythm of the god. As his possession comes on, the devotee falls to the ground, rolling before the drums, or staggers blindly about the dancing-space, or otherwise follows the characteristic behavior attributed to his god. After a time he begins to dance, whereupon a *hunsi* or the *hungan*, taking a calabash of water in one hand and a lighted candle in the other, dances opposite him, saluting the god as he performs his every movement in reverse; if he turns clockwise, the one dancing with him turns counter-clockwise; if he moves to the right, the other moves to the left. Except when executing these turns, the functionary of the cult never takes his eyes from the eyes of the possessed person, almost, as it were, hypnotizing him to help him come to himself. Eventually the possessed one recovers sufficiently to take the candle and the calabash of water in his own hands. Often spilling water as he moves, he makes his way to the central pole, pouring an offering and making the sign of the cross with the candle before it.

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pressed with the temerity of those who danced in the fire for Legba. 796 794 787 159

At a certain dance, however, he volunteered to help in a small way in promoting the activities of the evening, such as serving *clairin* to the drummers, while he himself danced the social dance about the central post of the *tonnelle*. As the tempo of the dance heightened, he became more deeply imbued with the spirit of the occasion and shouted: " If the *loa* comes to me, I will accept it! " as he plunged again into the circle of dancers. When the drums sounded the salute to the gods, he would awkwardly execute the accompanying backward turning movement of the figure.

After a time he left the *tonnelle*, but before many moments had elapsed a commotion was heard at the near-by *barrière*, where he was reeling in the first stage of possession, just inside the gate, while a fully possessed woman in a figured dress stalked back and forth. An *adjanikon*, with candle and calabash of water, was trying to " settle " his possession, but he fell to the ground and rolled on his back, lying prostrate with legs and arms outstretched and twitching. The *adjanikon*, putting aside the candle and water, lifted his limp body to its feet and then slowly, according to the accepted pattern, holding him upright, swayed with him in time to the song that all twelve or fifteen persons present were by now singing, until, staggering, the possessed man was able to support himself: [533] [539]

Damballa-o, Damballa-e,	Damballa-o, Damballa-e,
Damballa-o, Damballa Wedo,	Damballa-o, Damballa Wedo,
'Gadé ça ou fait' moin.	See what you have done to me.

Steadily fixing his eyes on the possessed one, the *adjanikon* now danced with him, turning always in the opposite direction as he offered him the candle and the water, which, how-

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796 ever, the man was not yet able to hold. Moving backwards
791 toward the *maison de servitude,* all the spectators continued
787 to sing the song of Damballa, while the man to whom the god
159 had come half-danced and was half-carried up the path to the *tonnelle* and taken into the family house of worship.

When he had sufficiently recovered to be able to hold the
[188] candle and the water, he poured the water and unsteadily bowed three times in the accepted manner before the *couvert sec* to the Rada gods. He now was enough in control of himself to emerge, and, with the *adjanikon* dancing before him with water and a candle, he once again came into the *tonnelle,* before the drums. As he appeared, the drummers stopped the Ogun rhythm they had been sounding, and in an intense silence all waited for the god to announce himself. Half on his
[533] knees before the drums, the one possessed began to sing in a
[539] cracked voice:

Damballa Wedo,	Damballa Wedo,
Papa m' c'est coulev'-o,	Papa, I am a serpent-o,
Na poi' bois	There is no tree
Moin pa' li monté.	I cannot climb.

With this initial statement, the Damballa rhythm rolled from the drums, as all echoed the song in chorused response, while the possessed figure, in strict conformity to the pattern, first poured water at the central post and then consecutively before the iron and each of the drums. Returning to the central post, he whirled about it, almost but never quite falling, until he could dance before the drums, awkwardly but acceptably, before he disappeared to rest in a near-by house.

796 The explanation offered by this man of the manner in
787 which he became possessed, and his varying attitudes toward
159 his possession, are revealing. On several previous occasions
793 the *hungan* who officiated at the dance had noticed that he was attending *vodun* rites and had joked with him about his interest in them. Once at an earlier dance this *hungan* had

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796 tablishment of the family *maison de servitude*, a special ritual
[782] for Legba at the *barrière* was required. The one who took charge threw some rum on the *boucan* that had been made for Legba. Taking a candle, he struck the drums with it; then described *verver* and placed an egg on the white flour he piled
796 just inside the *barrière*. The rite proceeded no farther, how-
578 ever, for with the appearance of the head of the family, accompanied by his wife and son, who was the young man who had been possessed by Gede the first night of the *service*, a discussion arose which soon developed into a quarrel, because the family head felt that he had not been notified of this dance in the manner due his position. Finally with the cry: "If anything happens to the family because of this, I am not responsible," he departed in a rage. This was regarded as serious, because should a dance which ended an important rite be held with some of the family absent, the gods might be angered and serious consequences might follow. The woman, who had been instrumental in seeing that the *service* was given and had cared for most of the preparations, bravely decided to continue with the ritual, however, and the drumming was resumed.

796 Alcohol and flour were thereupon poured on the drum-
● 533 heads, while a number of songs were sung by all present:
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[782]

Bonjou' manman, bonjou' papa,	Good-day, mamma, good-day, papa,
Ma p' mandé coumen nou' yè	I ask how are you.
Lan Guinée gangnin dent'.	In Guinea there are teeth.
Moin entré, moin entré,	I entered, I entered,
Ou pas salué moin.	You did not greet me.
Agoue-e, hunto	Agowe, hunto (spirit in the drum)
Agasu-e	Agasu-e
Agoué-e hunto, e-o.	Agowe hunto, e-o.

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Jean Pétro,	Jean Pétro,
Depuis moin sorti la ville	Since I left town
Moin apé cassé pié moin.	I have broken my foot.
Ça qui fait petit moun fronté.	That is what makes the children impertinent.
Yawé-é-é	Yawé-é-é,
Gedenibo Mazaca	Gedenibo Mazaca,
M'apé rhélé Saints forts	I call the strong saints,
Yawé-é	Yawé-é-é,
Saints forts-é-é	Strong gods-é-é.
P'ti Garçon Lemba,	Little boy Lemba,
P'ti' pilon ça,	A small pestle he.
Na pilé yo, Lemba-o.	Crush them, Lemba-o.

Finally the instruments were lifted over the *barrière*, the *ogan* 796
and rattles first, then the drums in order from smallest to
largest, followed by the spectators. Ahead of the procession [194]
were *hunsi* with flags, and all continued singing until the
maison de servitude and the *tonnelle* used during the *service*
were reached.

The drums were carried about the house three times in procession before being taken inside. There, facing the place where the food had been offered — for the house was as yet quite bare, with no suggestion of an altar — the drums were beaten and songs sung to the Rada gods whose sanctuary this was. Though at the moment none of the good drummers had arrived, the drums were placed in line with the north end of the house, and the drumming for the dance commenced. Dancing began about the center pole, but no possessions occurred until shortly after eight o'clock. By that time better drummers had come, and the crowd had so increased that the drums were moved to accommodate those dancing, the drummers now having their backs to the front wall of the sacred house. A candle was attached to a peg of each drum, which,

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Moin rhelé Aizan,	I call Aizan,
Moin rhelé Sobo, St. Jo, Dokwe Agwe,	I call Sobo, St. Joseph, Dokwe Agwe,
Moin rhelé Papa Gede,	I call Papa Gede,
Moin rhelé toutes mystères.	I call all the gods.

When he had ended his song a number of the "salutes" were played on the drums, to which all danced backward in circles, ending the figure in bows before the drums, which were rolling out the call. In the course of the evening a large number of gods were summoned, but, as would be expected, only the *loa* of the family came to this ceremony. Possessions were observed for Legba, Damballa, Ogun Balandjo, Ogun Galloné, Ogun Ferraille, Gede, and Kadya Bosu. St. John, Ossange, Aizan, Ashadé Bokor, Gran' Bosu, Magie, Jean Pétro, Congo, Guinée, Sobo, Bade, and Agwe Woyo, were the *loa* who refused their summons. Though no deity held the center of the stage for too long a time, the evening was notable because it was marked by an unusually large number of Ogun and Damballa possessions, which seemed constantly to alternate. Damballa being the stronger *loa*, his appearance when Ogun was present necessitated the retirement of the latter; but since the possession of Ogun by one woman was particularly persistent, this god returned again and again. As at a number of dances, the *haut chant* for Ogun Galloné, the French marching-song that salutes the "general," was among the songs heard, when those possessed by the god skipped from one end of the *tonnelle* to the other before the drums.

One particularly striking Damballa possession came on suddenly. As a tall, strong man was seized by the god, he gave a great shout and grasped the beams of the *tonnelle*, disappearing upward through the thatch. For a moment it did not seem that he had climbed on the roof of the *tonnelle*, until a head and arms which appeared between the palm fronds showed he

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cal, rapid, continuous jumping, with the body held rigid. As he bobbed up and down, holding his candle under his chin so that the light distorted his features and emphasized the vacant stare in his eyes, he monotonously repeated the sharp sounds of his god: "*Ke-ke-ke-ke-ke-ke-ke!*" or "*Hoi! Hoi! Hoi!*" Standing before some, he would greet them by taking their crossed hands in his strong grip and bringing them down in a single movement that shook the entire body. Once he removed the red kerchief he wore, extending it as an indication he wished gifts of money; he used it to wipe the perspiration from the faces of others; while he would merely run his hands through the hair of still others.[4]

As daybreak neared, the crowd thinned, so that by half past five few of the good drummers or important men remained. Persons who had been sleeping roused themselves, and there was a general exodus. Most of those who had been at the dance did not go to sleep, however, for early Sunday morning mass an hour later found them at the church saying their prayers and listening to the sermon of the priest.

In contrast, another dance visited was noteworthy for its many and varied possessions. It was held at the habitation of one of the fathers-in-law of a *houngan*, and began somewhat later, the drums not arriving until almost eight o'clock. Only a minor ceremony was necessary to bring them through this gateway. The host three times poured water inside the gate, while three men played on the drums and a fourth tapped the ogan for a moment. The proceedings began when an elderly *houssi* summoned Legba, invoking in her song Siligbo Vavon, Dahomey, Ogun, Bade, and "all *loa*." The *houngan* who was host himself arrived at nine o'clock, and the excellence of his drumming caused one possession to follow another with great rapidity. The dance was a large one, and by midnight there were at least two hundred persons in attendance, while at one time fifty or more were dancing about the central post and as many as seven or eight were possessed at once.

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Preferably, these cult objects are made of pottery, joined by a ligature in twos or threes, as required. The plates rest in a box or on a small table which stands in a corner of an inner room of the house. If the family worshipping the twins is a poor one, joined calabashes or wooden plates are acceptable, and such are found more often in the valley of Mirebalais than pottery plates. The "altar" made by the plates is completed by an *image*—a chromolithograph—of the twin saints, Cosmas and Damien, placed on the wall above them.

The principal rite of the twin cult is the *mangé marasa*. A minor ceremony, if the family has living twins or twins recently dead, it is held, as has already been said, at Christmas and at harvest time; otherwise only at Christmas. Yams and salt fish are separately cooked, and a dish of beans mixed with olive oil is provided. In the morning this food is taken to a closed room, where it is deposited both in the *marasa* plates and in ordinary containers placed for those who attend the rite. As the offering is made, songs such as the following are sung:

Marasa, m'a pé mandé,	Spirit of twins, I ask,
Ça wé la si 'ou content?	Are you content with what you see there?
Ago-e-e.	*Ago-e-e.*
Adoré nan pié Damballa,	Worship at the tree of Damballa,
Ago-e-e.	*Ago-e-e.*
Marasa bois,	Twins of the forest,
Marasa carrefour,	Twins of the crossroad,
M'a pé mandé,	I ask,
Ça wé la si 'ou content?	Are you content with what you see there?
Adoré nan pié kumfort,	Worship at the *kumfort*,
Aouvré-e, agu!	Care for us, agu!
Marasa dé, trois, quatre,	Twins two, three, four,

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M'a pé mandé,	I ask,
Ça wé la si 'ou content?	Are you content with what you see there?

The food is eaten the same afternoon. If the twins are actually alive, everything they wear must be new and they must have identical clothes. At the sacrifice of the January harvest, native rice, cakes, okra, bananas, and one, two, or three chickens, designated by the twins themselves, are offered. The food is put in place, and as songs are sung it is left until the following day, when it is eaten. The worship of twins differs markedly in various parts of Haiti. In Leogane, for example, some have such a ceremony only at harvest time, and have a greater *mangé marassa* every five years, when a goat and a chicken are killed and offered with the usual non-animal foods.

Twins stand in a peculiarly intimate relation to each other, as might be expected from the traditional African belief that twins share a single soul, which, as far as could be determined, only survives in attitude in Mirebalais. Should one die, the living twin must put aside a bit of all food he eats, or a small part of any gift given him, for the other. If the twins are both girls, the attempt is usually made to have them betrothed and married at about the same time. If the female twin of a pair is married, she must give a present to her twin brother, and similarly her husband sees to it that his wife's male twin also receives a substantial gift from him as a peace offering, for it is dangerous to wait until the other decides on some overt mischief. The perplexing factor in dealing with twins is that they themselves often do not consciously will the trouble they bring. For example, should the twin of a married woman not feel friendly toward his sister's husband, though he might make a conscious effort to overcome this dislike, his spirit might proceed to use its full power to harass the man in such a way as to trouble the relationship of the couple.

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764 placed in the coffin, which must always be used for burial. Even if a person is poor, "he can always borrow a plank from a neighbor, for people are charitable in matters of death," or, if a family cannot immediately afford to have carpenters make the coffin, they are paid later, a few gourdes at a time. This [867] also holds for the professional bather of corpses, who receives three to five gourdes in the countryside, fifteen gourdes in Mirebalais, and, it is said, perhaps fifty in Port-au-Prince. A pig or a goat is killed to feed those who dig the grave and carry the coffin, "so they can do their work well." Otherwise these men receive no payment, for "people do such things for each other."

The wake,[6] which takes place on the night of death, is one of the most important ceremonies in the cycle of rites for the [766] [851] dead. Wakes are held for all dead, even for very young children if they have been baptized, though if a baby dies before baptism, it is buried without ceremony in a little box in the courtyard of the habitation. During the wake the body lies in the second room of the house, the long white candle used at the deceased's first communion standing lighted at his feet. If the dead was not a communicant, newly bought candles are placed at his head and feet. The wife and children either stay with the corpse or are near by with friends. The one who bathed the corpse remains constantly at its side as the members of the family come and go, since the body must never remain alone. Wailing goes on all night, and as more relatives arrive, those already there echo their cries.

On a table in another room a white cloth is spread, and a crucifix, images of the saints, flowers, lighted candles, and a lamp of oil are placed on it. The singers bring their song- [533] books, since the canticles of the Church are almost the only songs heard. At times songs are specially composed for the occasion, but these always concern themselves with death. Those who stand before the table, principally women, lead the singing, the others acting as a chorus. People come and go

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and, wearying of the singing, join the group outside the house, where those playing games and the story-tellers are gathered. One popular game is "forfeits," and a forfeit, if reclaimed by a girl, requires the singing of a *chanson de romance*, or if by a man, calls for the recitation of a poem or a humorous folk-tale. Before a forfeit is returned, all sing to a hand-clapping accompaniment:

C'est bien bon,	It is very good,
C'est bien bon,	It is very good,
Aha!	Aha!

Card-games, such as *mariai* (marriage), *trois-arpt*, and *besique*, are also played. All these games are entered into with zest, for an important purpose in holding the wake is to amuse the dead, whose body lies near by, and thus send him away in good humor. When drinks are passed, the recipients must make three libations before drinking, one explanation holding that this is in accordance with the formula Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, another that the offering is for the *loa*, the dead, and the *marassa*. At about five o'clock in the morning the angelus closes the wake, after which most of those present leave, and only close friends and relatives remain to help with preparations for the funeral. This must take place the day following death, not only because of a legal requirement, but because of the fact that were a body to remain unburied for two nights, the expense of two wakes would have to be met. Before the ceremony of burial takes place, small children are often passed over the coffin three times, in leave-taking, that the spirit of the dead may not return for them.

The funeral itself is held in accordance with the rites of the Church, the difference between funerals consisting principally in the elaborateness of the ritual and the length of time the church bells are tolled, which in turn is determined by the ability of the family of the dead to meet the varying fees. Thus at the funeral of the mother of the *député* from Mire-

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always takes place on a Sunday. The prayers of the novena, whatever week-day they may begin, are recited either by the priest, if in town, or by a *prêt' savanne*. The family and a few friends, who gather to hear the prayers and to sing hymns, take their places about a table covered with a white cloth, on which are placed *images* of the saints, a crucifix, two candles which must burn for the nine days, and two bouquets of flowers. A lamp of oil in a glass with a floating wick must also burn day and night. Each session of the novena lasts some two hours, and no refreshments are served those who attend. [765] [787] [793]

On the day of the *dernière prière* those invited come to help cover the walls of the room with white sheets — sometimes the ceiling is also covered — and hang white curtains over doors and windows. Wreaths are placed on the table and attached to the sheets on the walls, and *images* of the saints are pinned to the white table-cloth as it hangs down. Liquor, cakes, *kola*, *clairin* and other refreshments are made ready, according to the family means, these being held so essential that if the family lacks the funds at the moment to provide them, the novena may be stopped on the eighth day, and the *dernière prière* postponed for a month or even two. The same type of song is sung at this rite as at wakes, and the mourners wail once again, though not so loudly as just after the occurrence of death. At about eleven o'clock, after having recited the last prayer of the novena, a *libera* is sung to "drive the dead from the house," since now they are through with him — followed by an *adoration* for the *prêt' savanne*. Since, unlike the custom at *vodun* ceremonies, these coins are his entire fee for the novena as well as for this evening's ceremony, he sees to it that the song which marks it continues until all members of the family have donated a sum that he regards adequate. The *adoration* over, the refreshments are passed, so that the *dernière prière* most often ends at midnight, though those in attendance sometimes remain until morning, playing games, telling stories, and singing canticles as at wakes. [533] [793] [765]

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with the words: "Tell it what you have to say. Tell it that you are passing on to it all your pain, everything." When she had finished, the *mambu* once again took the chick, holding its head as she described three crosses on the ground with its beak. She now put some of the earth in which she had made the crosses into a white dish, returning the chick to the woman and telling her to speak to it again, and this time to expectorate three times into its open beak as she finished. The *mambu*, holding the fowl in one hand, thereupon poured some of the mixture from the bottle, and some *clairin*, in the plate that contained the earth, lighting the *clairin* with her free hand and directing the patient to rub her nipples with it. Then she returned the bottle to the pregnant woman, telling her to recount her need to it once more, and then to cork it.

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The *mambu* next chewed some of the soup and rubbed it over the cork to "seal" the bottle, saying: "When you send a letter through the mail, you seal it," and instructed the pregnant woman to place the bottle in her house and see to it that it was not uncorked, for in it was contained her life and the life of her child. "Open it before delivery and pass its contents over your abdomen." A cord was put about the waist of the woman and tied tightly, not to be untied until the growing child in her womb should cause it to break of itself. While the *garde* was being made the *mambu* sang this song:

[533] [539]

M' pas 'ti bête,	I am not a little animal,
M' pas 'ti cochon,	I am not a little pig,
Pou' on cové,	That one can confine me,
Pou' on marré moin.	That one can tie me up.
Ça qui fait bien,	He who does good,
Cé bien li wé;	Good he will see;
Ça qui fait mal,	He who does evil,
Cé mal li wé.	Evil he will see.
Côté marré corde moin,	Where I tie my cord,
Yo pana la qui li.	They are stronger than it [the evil].

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the cord once over the center, and then at right angles so as to form a cross, crying: "*A-i bobo!*" To hold the cloth in place, he continued to pass the thread about the ball of earth again and again, though according to no special design after the first right angle had been made. As he did this, he sang:

Garde la monté.	This *garde* is fashioned.
Dié nou e-e na coffré yo-o	O God, close them-o.
Moin dit garde la monté.	I say this *garde* is fashioned.
Dié nou e-e na coffré yo-o	O God, close them.
Garde-e, na coffré yo.	*Garde-e*, close them.
Calefou', cé nou minmé,	Crossroads, it is we who are here,
Nou Pemba pa joué.	Pemba, do not play.
Ça nou minmé.	It is we who are here.
Loa Pemba, joué na joué,	*Loa Pemba*, playing he plays,
Magie loa,	*Loa* of magic,
Magie Calfou',	Magic of the Crossroads,
Ça nou minmé.	It is we who are here.

His singing was interrupted by this invocation:

Au nom de Dieu,	In the name of God,
Au nom de Sainte Vierge,	In the name of the Holy Virgin,
Au nom de St. Louis,	In the name of St. Louis,
Au nom de Marasa,	In the name of the Twins,
Voici poin' garde pou' épargné malin esprits marché dans la nuit.	Here is a charm to foil the evil spirits who walk by night.
Au nom de Saints du Ciél,	In the name of the Saints of the Sky,
Au nom de Saints de Té',	In the name of the Saints of the Earth,

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Au nom de Saints de la Lune,	In the name of the Saints of the Moon,
Au nom de Saints des Étoiles,	In the name of the Saints of the Stars,
Au nom de Saint de Vent,	In the name of the Saint of the Wind,
Au nom de Saint de Tempête,	In the name of the Saint of the Tempest,
Voici yun garde protection pou' marché dans la nuit,	See, here is a *garde* which gives protection as one walks at night,
Pou' Malt' Calefu'.	For the Master of the Crossroads.

(533) The entwining of the *garde* ended with this song:

Zoumba-é, ai papa, ai manman,	*Zumba-é, ai* father, *ai* mother,
Calefu' barré yo,	The Crossroads bars them,
Cimitière barré yo,	The Cemetery bars them,
Moin monté garde moin,	I fashion my *garde,*
Ai manman, ai papa,	*Ai* mother, *ai* father,
Zoumba-é-é.	*Zumba-é-é.*

789 With the specially treated earth from the crossroads now safely enclosed in its red cotton, the officiant placed it in a white plate and made *verver* about it, using cinders which are termed *farine Guinée,* "the flour of Guinea," and lighted two bits of red candle. The *verver* circled the plate, and also described two long straight lines which crossed at right angles at the center of the circle, each being terminated by a candle — two large and two small. On the floor, near one of the large candles, the seven coppers were placed, and four small piles of cinders were heaped inside the circle, in the following manner:

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789 making this *garde*. I have not obligated anyone else in any way."

789 539 He now poured *clairin* on the plate, lighted it, and stepped five times over the fire, twice turning the *garde* about in the flame, rubbing his face, hands, and head with the burning liquid, as he pronounced the following invocation:

Au nom de Malt' Grand Bois,	In the name of the Master of the Great Forest,
Qui soldat Malt' Carrefour,	Who is a soldier of the Master of the Crossroads,
Au nom Malt' Cimitière,	In the name of Malolu, of the Cemetery,
Au nom de Malolu,	In the name of Malolu,
Au nom de Kadia-Bosu,	In the name of Kadia-Bosu,
Qui soldat Malt' Carrefour nan toute pays,	Who is the soldier of the Master of the Crossroads in all countries,
Voici un couvert qui preparé ce soir pou' 'ou.	Here is an offering prepared this evening for you.

Extinguishing the *clairin*, he relighted it and repeated what he had just done as another Haitian, a spectator, commented: "If it were not a good *garde*, he would be burned." Finally [533] he sang the following song, which ended this part of the ceremony:

Garde la wé magie carrefou',	This *garde* sees the magic of the Crossroads,
Moin pralé sond'é point.	I am going to test a charm.
Magie cimitière,	Magic of the cemetery,
Moin pralé sond'é point.	I am going to test a charm.

789 The officiant, gathering up the food, the plate, the candles, and the remaining half of the red cloth, prepared to go to

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land, whose bodies are buried in it, and whose spirits watch over it. As has been shown in the discussion of property, land in Haiti is owned privately, and, once title has passed, is subject to no alienation, except at the will of the owner — an attitude also held toward property of other categories, as is evidenced by the fact that most of the possessions of a man, particularly his livestock, are marked for identification, and theft is severely punished. Even the disposal of stray animals whose owners cannot be identified must follow well-defined legal procedure, in accordance with which they are held by the officers of the commune for a stated period of time before being sold at public auction. All marks on these animals are carefully noted in the records, so that title to them may be duly established.

In the organization of production and distribution an African mold, if not full content, predominates. The co-operative work-system, which is so important in maintaining agricultural production, is directly related to comparable groupings of West Africa, of which a distinctive form is the *dokpwe* of Dahomey, described when the African origins of Haitian culture were examined. The *combite*, as an instrument of co-operative labor and mutual self-help, with its tradition of giving no pecuniary reward for work done, but of making the feast which comes at the end of the day's labor adequate return — all these represent pure retentions of African practice. Even more striking is the carry-over in the attitudes which go with these outer forms — the manner in which the participants look forward with pleasant anticipation to taking part in *combites*, the enjoyment which they derive from their group work, and the verve with which the work is done are clear expressions of these attitudes. The role of the *combite*-song in exercising social control and enforcing conformity to local custom is entirely African, as is its function in stimulating work by setting a rhythm for it.

African, too, is the institution of the market, though in this

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178 other African crafts, which, though essentially utilitarian in Africa, also allow play for the æsthetic impulse, have been lost as well. Ironworking is absent not only because the necessary deposits of iron ore are lacking, but because the technique of shaping the metal into various forms, which in Africa is in the hands of specialists, was apparently suppressed in the time of slavery. No native cloth is woven. Basketry has survived, but whereas in Africa designs of no small artistic merit are achieved in this medium, it is markedly utilitarian in Haiti. Even from a technical point of view, the basketry forms are of the simplest, the panniers used for transportation of products on mule-back being merely an in-and-out weave, and the plaited strips of which hats and the *macoute*, or carrying basket, are made are of a parallel simplicity.

[325] [326] [286] 178 285

524 525 178 Few African recreational forms have survived. *Wari*, the draughts-like West African game found today in many parts of the West Indies, is unknown in the interior of Haiti, though it has been introduced into Port-au-Prince, where it is played by longshoremen who have learned it from the sailors of near-by islands. String figures, important in West Africa, are not encountered, and no children's pursuits comparable to the play of young Africans were seen in Mirebalais, if the minor ceremony of marking the loss of childhood teeth be excepted. African types of recreation have in the main given way to cock-fights and card-games, both of which derive their interest from the opportunities they offer for gambling—a fact important in itself, since gambling is not one of the widespread African vices. The most important card-games are *trois-sept*, *marriage*, and *bezique*, and both men and women know them and play them for stakes. Similarly cock-fighting, particularly during the dry season, is a passionate avocation of the men. Large sums are wagered on the results of an encounter, and feeling often runs high.[6]

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●533 535 The Haitian genius for art and recreation is best embodied in the dance and its accompanying songs and drum rhythms. Virtuosity is attained not only by the dancers, but even more

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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especially by the drummers. Experience among other Caribbean Negro cultures and in Africa itself has failed to reveal greater skill in calling forth intricate rhythms from batteries of drums than can be found at any Haitian religious gathering. The enthusiasm with which a man takes his place at a drum, the manner in which he loses himself in his drumming, the skill with which he maintains the time of his complex beats in common with two other drummers and those who manipulate the rattles and the iron, bespeak long training and a passionate devotion to the art. The same is true of dancing. The best drummer, the finest dancer, hold positions of esteem in the community, and on occasion their fame will go beyond the valley, an occurrence as unusual as it is valued. The excellence of the drumming and dancing and the concomitant artistry in song can be understood when one considers the age at which training is begun in these arts. At Mirebalais an infant of no more than two years has been seen to dance creditably, while a young boy of six gave a demonstration of drumming that spoke eloquently of his promise as a drummer of talent. Before every *vodun* dance the boys take over the drums while the younger girls dance to their rhythms. They are watched with a critical eye by their elders, who from time to time correct them or praise those who do well.

The accompanying musical forms are almost entirely African in their rhythmic structure, but European influence is traceable in their melodic line, which varies from unchanged European folk-melodies to purely African songs. In the use of the falsetto, however, in the statement of a theme by a leader and its repetition by a chorus, and in the countless modulations introduced into the song, the singing is entirely African, as are the postures struck by those singing.

The importance of the dance is apparent from the large range of dances. Of *vodun* dances there are the *avalou*, or *yanvalou*, a word meaning supplication in the speech of Whydah; the specialized steps for the various Rada and Pétro gods; for

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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for all uses to which those of their type are put. During their making and after their completion they had been sanctified by rites that vividly illustrate the merging of traditions in Haitian religion: by means of offerings to the African gods, and through baptism by the rites of the Church.[3]

The *action de grâce* is another integral part of *vodun* ceremonialism that is essentially Catholic, since its lengthy service is composed entirely of prayers and hymns of the Church. As has been shown, the *action le grâce*, which precedes a *vodun service*, takes place before an "altar" which, important both then and at the later, more African rites, in itself documents in no small measure the combining of Catholicism and *vodun*. One, employed at a *service* not described in the earlier chapters, was covered with a red and white checked table-cloth, on top of which a smaller white cloth was spread.* Pinned to the canopy and to the front of the table-cloth were various chromolithographs of the saints: St. Michael attacking the Devil, Mater Dolorosa, St. James, the Virgin Mary and Jesus (the Assumption), and St. Expelitius. In front of the representation of St. James stood a crucifix with the figure of Jesus, in accordance with the custom of never omitting to have one of these at any *vodun* ceremonial. The table bore many offerings; at the back were four bottles of soft drinks, with cups; while also to be seen were several hard rolls, an ear of corn, a dish containing eggs, and another holding, among other things, rice. One of the containers on the table held holy water, while candles for use both in the *action de grâce* and in the later *vodun* rituals lay beside this. Thus crucifix, candles, pictures of the saints, and holy water were combined in this ceremony with offerings of food and drink to be given the gods that the ancestors had brought from Africa.[4] The songs sung at the voduistic portions of these *services* also reflect the psychological unity of Catholic and African elements in *vodun* worship. One of these declares:

* This altar is shown in the illustration facing p. 192.

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Je crois en Dieu,	I believe in God,
Oui, Santa Maria.	Yes, St. Mary.
Santa Maria,	St. Mary,
Qui sorte nan Guinée.	Who came from Guinea.
Je crois en Dieu,	I believe in God,
Oui, Santa Maria.	Yes, St. Mary.

Another for the Virgin of Allada, sung in Leogane, is as follows:

Santa Maria la Madaleine,	St. Mary Magdalene
Prié pou' loa yo.	Pray for their *loa.*
O Allada-e,	O Allada-e,
Sonné une sonne pou' moin,	Ring a bell for me,
Pour m'allé.	So I may go.
M'dit, Allada-o,	I say, Allada-o,
Sonné une sonne	Ring a bell
Pou' les pitites nagé.	For the drowned children.

Of these elements, the portraits of the saints, or *images,* offer one of the most vivid instances of the mingling of African and European elements in Haitian belief, for they are the outward symbol of the psychological reconciliation that has been effected between the saints of the Church and the African deities. This is nothing peculiar to Haiti alone. In West Africa, wherever Catholicism has obtained something of a foothold, certain pagan deities are regularly identified with saints of the Church, and the same phenomenon is found in Cuba [a] and Brazil.[b] This identification of saints with the *loa,* whether initiated as a ruse against the detection of African worship or emanating from a reasoned analogy, would seem in Haiti, at least, to act as a device to achieve an adjustment between two conflicting systems by emphasizing the resemblance between Catholic saints and African nature deities. The importance of the *images* as symbolizing the reconcilia-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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in the Pétro group. The Erzilie gods are put in both categories, while Gran' Siligbo, designated in the first list as Pétro, was assigned to both "companies" by the person who gave the third list, and named as a Rada deity by the one who gave the second. Furthermore, the third list, that of the singer, comprises *loa* whose "names" are undoubtedly the result of the acceptance by this man of certain phrases from his songs as valid designations of gods, especially such names as "Aizan Marché Loko" or "Loko Kisigwé." It is not without interest to speculate on this as a possible mechanism by means of which new names are added to the *vodun* pantheon.

Only one of the lists specifically assigned gods to other than the Rada and Pétro categories. One of these was termed *Guinée* and included the following names of deities:

Kaplaou	Congo
Enwizo	Loa Sinegal
Wangol	Cangaron

The other was the Ibo group, accorded two names, the Loa Mondongue and a *loa* named Ibo Lélé.

More variable, however, than classifications of the *loa* are accounts of attributes and interrelationships, and details of their worship. Yet certain traits and functions of the gods and aspects of their ritual can be set forth. One way in which the Haitians determine such matters is by reference to the songs sung in honor of the gods. Again and again the texts of such songs were cited as authority, suggesting that they are the "holy word" of *vodun* theology and an important device in stabilizing the details of belief. The attributes of the gods which follow are the result of extended discussions with folk who possessed all degrees of knowledge of the details of the cult and who were all active participants in it.

Legba, guardian of the crossroads, the highway, and the *barrière*, the entrance to every house, yard, or garden, is one of the most important *vodun* deities. He is generally conceived

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[General information on Haitian songs will be found in category 116, pp. 137-169. However, these songs are broken up by subject coverage in the text as follows:

songs of complaint, recrimination and gossip -- pp. 137-147
political songs -- pp. 148-162
songs of bravado and boasting -- pp. 163-165
secret society songs -- pp. 167-169.]

[P. vii]
[P. vi is blank]

Preface

Every student of Haitian life is soon impressed by the richess of the materials spread out before him and the necessity of limitinghis field of investigation. A study of Haitian religious practices, for example, draws one deeper and deeper into profusion, variation, and contradition. One finds little difficulty in drawing a generalized picture with swift, bold lines; but when he descends into detail he discovers that the bood generalizations of the religious system contain within them many sifting and even warring motifs, and that what in one region is held to be true is not so regarded in another. The gods of *Vodoun* that are reverd in one village are given only perfunctory treatment in another. Rites for the dead have a common denominator everywhere in the country, but each community brings to them something of its own or emphasizes traditions that elsewhere are forgotten. So it is also with music and dancig. A traditional drum rhythm may have one name in the north and another in the south, or a certain rhythm may be called by different names. There are diverse opinions about which dances are preferred by certain cities. The meaning of a song can be interpreted differently by different pople. It is therefore no wonder that competent works on Haiti do not completely agree with one another in many respects, or that they seem, now and then, to be saying different or even contradictory things. Yet in may instances the seeming inconsistencies are in reality only minor variaus within an overall scheme. [121] [184] [776] [769] [533] [535] [533]

The purpose of this book is to present a broad view of certain aspects of Haitian culture and wherever possible to extract some of the flavor of Haitian thinking as well as its sense. It is easy to be fooled in regard to both. I remember seeing an old bearded man in the mountains beyond Furcy walking around his freshly hoed garden breaking a ripe tomato into small juicy bits which he scattered on the ground. It was about as primitive a method of planting as I had ever seen, and I wondered if even [121] [24]

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one seed from that tomato would ever take root under the hot sun. Some time later, when I knew this man well, I talked to him about the care with which seeds must be planted if they are to grow properly. I told him how *we* grew *our* tomatoes. He listened carefully, nodding his head. When I had finished he said: "Yes, that must be a good way to do things in your country. But here in this valley God is good. He does not forget his children. From the broken tomato many plants will sprout. When God is good to you, you do not have to count the seeds." I suggested that perhaps one should not waste any of the precious seeds that God had provided; and to this he replied: "How is there waste? My garden is made to flourish by Zaka [the country man's special deity]. Some people give Zaka a feast every year, but between times they forget. Zaka helps me in my work, and I don't forget him. When I break the tomato and put it on the ground that way, it is a little taste for Zaka. Whatever I plant, I give him some. He is good to me, I am good to him."

What I learned from many incidents like this one was that the eye does not always see correctly. The old man was not just planting tomatoes, nor was he performing a conventionalized ritual act. It was a highly personalized act of faith in nature and confidence in the deity who shared his work.

A large part of this book deals with Vodoun, the religious practices based on West African traditions. One soon discovers that the songs and dances of Vodoun ritual are not merely music and motion supplementing and decorating more serious affairs. Virtually every aspect of Vodoun ritual is placative or invocational. The songs that are sung and the dances that are danced are direct supplication of various supernatural forces.

Undoubtedly, a number of principles which are put forward in this study do not apply equally to every region of Haiti; but they are, I think, true in general terms. Not until one has accepted the fact that different explanations exist for given phenomena, that the same rites are performed in different fashion in different places, and that the cult priests themselves do not agree on many details, may one begin to work toward a general view of the Haitian scene.

All of Haitian life is not Vodoun. And there are of course some Haitians who are relatively outside the central circle of its influence. But the inner meanings of Vodoun and its relationship to the total view of life permeate the entire scene. Music, too, binds together practically the entire fabric of Haitian existence. It is essential not only to the cult temple but to countless workaday activities. Agrarian work groups often perform their tasks to the accompaniment of a drum. And in the cult temple, the iron hoe of the fields often serves as a percussion instrument.

The Drum and the Hoe is the result of studies made over a period of

793 approval of the candidate's elevation is needed. He is also regarded as
[769] being on more intimate terms with the family ancestors who, likewise,
[783] must be in accord with the proceedings. The candidate for the asson is confined within the hounfor for a number of days, during which he takes purification baths and participates in other rituals. The rites that take place during this period are prescribed by the elder priest who has assumed responsibility. When the purification is ended, the candidate emerges into the *peristyle* (roofed court) to participate in the general service, and to undergo further tests.

Present during the ceremonies are all the principal houngans of the region—men who will be friendly associates of the new priest or, possibly, unfriendly competitors. The candidate is tested on his knowledge
[789] of how to use the asson and the tiny hand bell, and in the course of the service he is mounted by the loa who is the chief protector of the cult temple.
[782] Animals are sacrificed, and all the loa sacred to the hounfor are invoked and asked for their approval and support. But it is not only the loa
[794] and the dead who must indicate their approval. The elder houngan polls the hounsi kanzo on whether they will accept their new cult chief and fol-
[533] low him. He also asks the chief drummer, who polls his assistant drummers. It is taken for granted that the decision is in the hands of the hounsi. The consensus is known before the actual service, but the formality of asking the question is observed. Should the hounsi refuse to accept the candidate for the asson, the elevation cannot take place.

793 The city and the countryside contain many self-styled houngans and
554 bocors who are not recognized as bona fide by the community, regardless
627 of the route by which they claim to have achieved their station. Sometimes
[791] they are regarded as *pas fort* (not strong); that is, they do not have profound knowledge and understanding. The Haitian is quick to detect the difference between a houngan who knows and one who does not know. Many are stated to be outright fakes. One man who attempted to hold a service in Port-au-Prince aroused such contempt and disgust that a number of persons who had been drawn by genuine interest walked out with remarks that the man should be punished. In fact, his failure to show any
[533] essential qualifications for the houngan's role was commented upon in a song of ridicule that made its appearance at a secular dance that same night. The song noted some of the humorous aspects of the service, such as when the "impostor" struck himself vigorously on the head with the flat of a machete to show his "strength" and virtually incapacitated himself for the rest of the evening.

346 It is easily observed that no two hounfors are exactly alike. They differ

they say, and "rides" them. What the possessed persons do then depends upon the personality and whim of the loa. Generally they take on the special personal characteristics of the loa. Their voices and manners change and their postures and attitudes undergo transfiguration. They may talk about the "island below the water," about community ancestors, about intimate affairs of the community, or about how things are going back in Africa. Sometimes they utter words or phrases recognized as "African language." And on occasion possessed persons talking *language* are said to be speaking Greek, Arabic, Hebrew, or Spanish. At the moment of first impact, when the loa enter their heads, they stagger, jerk, and tremble, often falling on the ground. Then, soon afterward, their behavior begins to move in a gamut of conventionalized activity.

Most commonly the loa arrive during religious rituals or dances. They come by way of the *po'teau mitan*, the center pole which supports the roof of the peristyle. It is around this pole that the sacred vèvès, or floor drawings, are made. At the foot of the pole sacrifices are offered and libations are poured.

Yet possession may occur anywhere and at any time. The sound of a certain drumbeat may be the signal for it, or a sudden fright, or an emotional crisis, or any situation to which possession has been conditioned. The houngan or the mambo may facilitate possession, control it, and terminate it. The cult priest is acutely sensitive to the conditions favorable to possession. He knows how to heighten emotional tension and how to soften it. A competent houngan "plays" his service as though it were a delicate instrument. He takes everything in, issues instructions to his servitors from time to time, orders the drum tempo increased or diminished, knows how to change pace. Sometimes he hovers in the background unobtrusively, encouraging the singing and dancing like a benevolent father. At other times he comes to the center of the activities and takes command. He becomes the focus of all eyes. His slightest action is watched with intensity. He may take the hand of one of the servitors, pirouette him about, and compel the loa to enter. When the servitor is "mounted," the houngan may conduct him through ritual activity. At the right moment the houngan may help the loa to leave.

The spectators who observe possession in others are usually aware of the identity of the loa who has entered. When the ancient loa Dumballa Wèdo comes in, his "horse" falls to the ground, wriggles like a snake, and makes what are considered to be snakelike sounds in his throat. For Dumballa is the venerable deity identified with the rainbow, which in ancient Dahomean lore was thought to be the great serpent come out from the underworld to drink after a rain. When the loa Ogoun Chango enters,

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6. Songs of the Peristyle

The songs that are sung in the peristyle are virtually numberless and have a wide range of themes. In general, they are in the spirit of supplication or placation. Preponderantly they relate in some way to the deities. A loa may be described, invoked, or called upon to perform certain deeds. He may be cajoled, joked with, and even criticized. But it is all a family affair. The servitors and the *fidèles* are the loa's "children," his "heavy," his "leaves in the woods." The loa, the spirits of the dead, and the living members of the cult are all members of the same "nation." Whether supplication or admonition, the songs of the peristyle and the houmfor all have an intimate character. The affairs of the loa are the affairs of the world. What concerns one individual concerns all.

The themes of the songs have to do with the drama of the cult ritual, the coming and going of the deities, sickness and death, the welfare of the dead, and the behavior of the living.

The cult service is a dramatic presentation which synchronizes and brings into sharp focus the heritage of religious and folk beliefs. The songs describe and evaluate what is going on. Sometimes they are cryptic and tangent, but to those participating and those watching they are clear. As the action is usually related and progressive, so are the songs. Each song has its own place and its own meaning. One song is not readily interchangeable with another. Each service has its appropriate music, for these reflect developing phases of the houmfor ritual.

Some of the songs are addressed to the loa; others seem to be the words of the loa themselves. In many of the songs there is an implicit dialogue between one or more loa and the singers. This dialogue is not rendered in a form which is immediately understandable to a stranger. There is a constantly shifting point of view, so that sometimes the words are third-person comments about the loa or the situation,

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sometimes they are the words of the deity, sometimes words addressed to the deity. The name of the loa may appear anywhere in the song, as both an invocational word and a rhythmic device, with the result that unless one is aware of the song structure he may lose the sense and intent of the words. In these two lines, for example:

> Master Agwé comes from the sea,
> My cannon is loaded.

The first line describes what happens, from the standpoint of a third person; the second line is a statement by the loa Agwé. Or, take this single line:

> Marie Louise oh, we are mixed up!

Here Marie Louise seems to be the person addressed, but in fact it is Marie Louise who is talking. Again:

> I don't see my blood, Master Ogoun!

It is not Ogoun who is addressed; the words are his own.

As in nonreligious songs, there is a pattern stanza which is repeated over and over again. As the song goes on, there may be variations for interest and certain embellishments, but by and large the form remains constant. In religious singing there are relatively few examples of songs which progress from one idea to another. When the theme has been stated, that is the song.

One of the preliminary songs in many ritual services is a greeting to the men and women of the société who are present. It is an *ochan*, or salute of welcome, and comes before the loa themselves are addressed:

Messieurs-dames bonsoir!	Gentlemen and ladies, good evening!
M'apé mandé nou!	I ask you!
Messieurs-dames bonsoir!	Gentlemen and ladies, good evening!
M'apé mandé nou	I ask you
Qui gens nous yé! [Ex. 41]	What people are we?

The answer to the question is implicit, for they are the people of the société, members of the Arada "nation" or Anago "nation," as the case may be.

In almost any service of the Dahomey "nation" the first supplicatory song is addressed to Legba, the keeper of the gate, the guardian of the crossroads, and the "go-between" who intercedes with other loa in the affairs of men. The first appeal to Legba is to open the gate, over which he is master, so that the voices of supplication may be heard and understood. The open gate also provides access for other loa to the service.

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Attibon Legba ouvri bayè pou' moin ago!
Ou wè Attibon Legba ouvri bayè pou' moin ouvri bayè!
M'apé *rentré* quand mo *tourné*,
Ma salué loa yo!

Attibon Legba, open the gate for me, *ago!*
You see, Attibon Legba, open the gate for me, open the gate!
I will enter when I return,
I salute the loa!

After this appeal, or sometimes while it is being sung, the houngan spills a little water on the earth at the base of the po'teau mitan. It is an inducement for the loa to "enter," for the loa reside "below the water" and their passage into the hounfor is made easier by water. The houngan may spill his water in a long path from the entrance of the peristyle to the po'teau mitan, or extend his pitcher invitingly to the four points of the compass. Then, perhaps, another song is sung to Legba:

Papa Legba nan hounfor moin!
Papa Legba nan hounfor moin!
Papa Legba nan hounfor moin!
Ou même qui porté drapeau,
C'est ou même ka paré soleil pou' loa yo!
Papa Legba, Papa Legba!

Papa Legba is in my hounfor!
Papa Legba is in my hounfor!
Papa Legba is in my hounfor!
You who carry the flag,
It is you who shade the loa from the sun!
Papa Legba, Papa Legba!

As the ritual gets under way, there may be a general song of welcome to all the loa of the cult, such as this one:

Bonjou' oh bonjou' bonjou' bonjou' bonjou'!
Bonjou' oh bonjou' bonjou' bonjou' bonjou'!
Oh bonjou' oh bonjou' loa moin! [Ex. 43]

Good day, oh, good day, good day, good day, good day!
Good day, oh, good day, good day, good day, good day!
Oh, good day, oh, good day my loa!

When the service is well in progress, the songs may describe the qualities of the deities—their character, behavior and needs. If it is Balindjo, for example, the song may advertise that persons with this loa in their heads are immune to poison:

Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh Ogoun ah!

Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh, Ogoun, ah!

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Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh Ogoun oh!
C'est pas manjé manjé
Pral voyé chwal manjé! [Ex. 44]

Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh, Ogoun, oh!
There is no poisoned food
That will kill my horse!

Ogoun Fai, known also by the Christian name St. Jacques, is the deity of war, and this song describes his courage and valor:

St. Jacques Majeur a voyé dit'm ga'pas déjà!
St. Jacques oh voyé dit'm ga'pas déjà!
St. Jacques Majeur a voyé dit'm ga'pas la-guè!
St. Jacques oh voyé dit'm ga'pas la-guè! [Ex. 45]

Major St. Jacques sent to tell me he is already a man!
St. Jacques, oh, sent to tell me he is already a man!
Major St. Jacques sent to tell me he is a man of war!
St. Jacques, oh, sent to tell me he is a man of war!

Should the service be to the lou Dumballa Wèdo, symbolized as a rainbow and a great serpent, this song might be sung, commenting that he cannot be drowned in the water:

Papa Dumballa ou c'est couleve oh!
Pourquoi pas ndyé?
Pourquoi pas ndyé?
Dumballa pourquoi pas ndyé nan dlowo? [Ex. 46]

Papa Dumballa you are a snake, oh!
Why don't you drown?
Why don't you drown?
Dumballa, why don't you drown in the water?

Dumballa, the rainbow, is in fact the source of the water that bubbles from the earth in springs. He is a patron of the spring, and there he often lives in the form of a water snake. In many a houmfor where Dumballa is specially revered there is a *bassin*, or pool, dedicated to him. On the wall behind the pool there is usually a painting of Dumballa and Ayida, depicted as great serpents, sometimes with a feathered headdress. The pool is kept filled with fresh water from the spring, and here one or more small snakes—symbols of Dumballa and Ayida—reside:

Ala lou manché nan dlowo
C'est Dumballa!
Ala lou manché nan dlowo
C'est Dumballa!
Papa Dumballa c'est ou à dlowo!
Papa Dumballa c'est ou à dlowo!

There is a lou who lives in the water,
It is Dumballa!

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There is a lou who lives in the water,
It is Dumballa!
Papa Dumballa is the spring!
Papa Dumballa is the spring!

Ayida Wèdo, another aspect of Dumballa, is also known as a snake and a rainbow. A song describing Ayida's attributes goes:

Ayida c'est arc-en-ciel ah!
Ou ap' vin' fai ovalive!
Ayida c'est arc-en-ciel!
Pas wè n'ap fai ovalive? [Ex. 47]

Ayida is a rainbow, ah!
You will come in like a snake!
Ayida is a rainbow!
Don't you see I come in as a snake?

Agwé Weyo, one of the major deities of the sea, is believed to be responsible for thunder over the ocean, which is described as the sound of his cannon shooting:

Mèl' Agwé m'ri nan la mer,
Canon'n chargé!
Mèl' Agwé m'ri nan la mer,
Canon'n chargé!
Mèl' Agwé m'ri nan la mer,
Canon'n chargé ah!
Canon'n chargé pou'n tiré Mèl' A'Weyo! [Ex. 48]

Master Agwé comes from the sea,
My cannon is loaded!
Master Agwé comes from the sea,
My cannon is loaded!
Master Agwé comes from the sea,
My cannon is loaded, ah!
My cannon is loaded to fire, Master Agwé Weyo!

The lou Kitta, or Simbi Kitta, of the Guinée pantheon is one of the water deities. He is described as coming out of the water dripping wet:

Kitta ah m'ri nan dlaw li tout' mouillé!
Oh Kitta ah m'ri nan dlaw li tout' mouillé!
Oh Kitta m'ri nan dlaw li tout' mouillé!
Oh nan point lougan pawé Bondieu nan peyi-pi! [Ex. 37]

Kitta, ah, comes out of the water, he is all wet!
Oh, Kitta, ah, comes out of the water, he is all wet!
Oh, Kitta comes out of the water, he is all wet!
Oh, there is no lougan in this country greater than God!

Tijean Petro of the Petro "nation" is small, and agile even though he has only one foot. (Some people say that Tijean Petro has no feet at all.) This somewhat malevolent deity hides in the leaves of the coconut palm, and from there he sometimes preys on passers-by, particularly children. Persons possessed by Tijean Petro may move about as though they have no feet and climb into the malvert palm tree. [287]

they have no feet and climb into the nearest palm tree. This song comments on Tijean's ability to climb with his single foot. (Haitians do not "shinny" up trees, but walk up, bracing the soles of the feet against the trunk.)

Tijean ou pas gainyain pieds,
Tijean ou pas gainyain pieds,
Comment ou fai monté cocoyé?
Lann bayé ou Legba, Jean Pèro,
Lann bayé ou!

Tijean, you have no feet,
Tijean, you have no feet,
How do you climb the coconut tree?
By using Legba's gaff, Jean Pèro,
By using the gaff!

When the loa begin to arrive in the hounfor to participate in the ceremonies, there is usually a song taking note of their coming. Sometimes the words describing the action are the deity's own account of what is happening, as in this song to the loa Sobo:

C'est passé n'ap passé lè!
C'est passé ma passé lè!
Ê, bossou bossale ê yo bannmain nom mwin!
Yo bannmain nom mwin yo bannmain nom mwin!
Yo sèlé bossou kanno!
Yo sèlé Dahomain!
Yo sèlé mwé! [Ex. 50]

I am passing through, I am passing through!
I am passing, I am passing here!
Ê, the bossou bossale call my name!
They are calling for me, they are calling for me!
The bossou kanno are calling!
Dahomey is calling!
They are calling me!

In another rite one might hear this song about the arrival of the deity Simbo, from the point of view of the servitors rather than of the loa:

Simbo Kitta vini wè mwin, oh!
Oh, Simbo wa vini wè mwin lè, oh mèsi yè! [Ex. 51]

Simbo Kitta comes to see me, oh!
Oh, Simbo will come to see me here, oh mèsi!

When the deity Boulicha Nago comes in, there is a call for the drums to be played:

Nago 'rivé-é,
Boulicha Nago 'rivé-é!
Nago 'rivé-é,
Boulicha Nago 'rivé-é!
Li lè li tempo batta lè!
Li lè li tempo batta lè!
Nago 'rivé jodi-à oh ovèé! [Ex. 52]

Nago arrives,
Boulicha Nago arrives!
Nago arrives,
Boulicha Nago arrives!
It is time, beat the drums!
It is time, beat the drums!
Nago comes today, oh, *ovèé!*

Sobo, too, demands his drums as he arrives, as well as all the other paraphernalia for his ritual:

Cotè yo cotè yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Sobo mandè bouma' 'Lindo!	Sobo asks for his Allada bouma!
Cotè yo cotè yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Cotè yo cotè yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Sobo mandè tambou' Rada!	Sobo asks for his Arada drums!
Cotè yo cotè yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Cotè yo cotè yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Sobo mandè pouin Allada!	Sobo asks for his Allada magic!
Cotè yo cotè yo? [Ex. 53]	Where are they, where are they?

When more than one loa comes into the service at the same time there is confusion. Each loa is supposed to await his turn, so that the ritual and the dance may be conducted in an orderly way. Sometimes, however, two or more deities come in at once, throwing the orderly process out of gear. This song takes note of the simultaneous arrival of the loa Adja, Loko, Sobo, Sedje, and others.

Adja non mèl, oh Adja oh!
Adja non mèl!
Non mèl Papa Loko, non mèl jodi-à!

Adja non mèl, oh Adja oh!
Adja non mèl!
Non mèl Sedje sonn non mèl jodi-à!

Adja non mèl, oh Adja oh!
Adja pèn mèl!
Non mèl Lèl' ouèl Nèg' Sobo non mèl jodi-à! [Ex. 54]

Adja we are mixed, oh, Adja, oh!
Adja we are mixed!
We are mixed Papa Loko, we are mixed up today!

Adja we are mixed, oh, Adja, oh!
Adja we are mixed!
We are mixed Sedje, enough, we are mixed up today!

Adja we are mixed, oh, Adja, oh!
Adja we are mixed!
We are mixed all the time, Nèg' Sobo, we are mixed up today!

When the loa come in en masse this way, some are asked to retire so that the service can proceed smoothly. In a similar instance, the deity Marie Louise is willing to withdraw from the scene but demands that a present or sacrifice be given to her first.

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Marie Louise oh nou mêlé!	Marie Louise, oh, we are mixed up!
Marie Louise oh nou mêlé!	Marie Louise, oh, we are mixed up!
Ganl ça ou ba mwin pou'm alé?	Where is my gift so that I can go?

Often, when it is time to leave the service, the deity announces through the medium of the song that he has other affairs to attend to elsewhere. Ogoun Achalé, for example, makes a swift departure:

Ogoun volé!	Ogoun flies!
Anagol	Anagol
Ogoun volé Achalé!	Ogoun flies Achalé!
Anago Papa! [Ex. 95]	Anago Papa!

As the deity Général Brisé departs, he tells his servitors that he is "going to Gol," and that he turns responsibility for their affairs over to them:

Général Brisé pays ya nan main ok!
Ago-é! Ago-é-é!
Général Brisé pays ya nan main ok!
Pays ya nan main
M'pral Bondiès djab ok! [Ex. 96]

General Brisé, the country is in your hands, ok!
Ago-é! Ago-é-é!
General Brisé, the country is in your hands, ok!
The country is in your hands,
I am going to Gol, ok!

The loa Bumba, in reply to a query, declares that he must go because he has work to do in his fields:

Bumba qui ou pralé?	Bumba, where are you going?
Bumba qui ou pralé?	Bumba, where are you going?
Bumba qui ou pralé?	Bumba, where are you going?
Bumba qui ou pralé?	Bumba, where are you going?
M'planté mangé!	I am planting mangé!
Planté patate!	Planting potatoes!
Planté giromon!	Planting pumpkins!
Planté banane!	Planting plantains!
Wallo Bumba qui ou pralé? [Ex. 97]	Wallo Bumba, where are you going?

The deities Malé' Bois and Malé' Dieu declare as they depart that they are on their way to Africa, and leave the impression that things are pretty nice over there:

Malé' Dieu qui m'li nou dieu!	Malé' Dieu who comes out of the woods!
Malé' Bois qui m'li nou bois!	Malé' Bois who comes out of the woods!
Nan Guinée plaisir-à belle ok!	In Africa pleasure is beautiful, ok!
A n'alé wi yo! [Ex. 98]	We are going to go!

As the loa Mamèo Ayida of the Guinée pantheon leaves the hounfor to return to Africa, her "children" ask her not to stay there too long. And they ask her to bring back to Haiti with her some good magic for use in the hounfor:

> Mamèo Ayida *ô!*
> Prol nan Guinée-à, pingo ou mèd-à m'kouté!
> Si ou joinsl bon ounango wa pa'ô!
> Si ou joinsl bon loisin wa pa'ô! [Ex. 59]
>
> Mamèo Ayida *ô!*
> Go to Africa, take care not to stay, I am waiting!
> If you find a good ounango, bring it!
> If you find a good loisin, bring it!

Giving food to the loa is a focal point in religious rituals. Many songs describe the sacrifice, signify that the loa are waiting for their food, or otherwise dramatize this significant activity. In the following song the deity Damballa asks for the goat with which he is to be fed.

> Damballa Wèdo oh c'est sang-ô!
> Damballa mandé the cabris,
> C'est sang li mandé!
> Damballa Wèdo oh c'est sang-ô!
> Damballa mandé the cabris,
> C'est sang li mandé!
> Damballa Wèdo oh c'est sang li mandé!
> Oh sweet! [Ex. 60]
>
> Damballa Wèdo, oh, it is blood *ô!*
> Damballa asks for the head of the goat,
> It is blood he asks for!
> Damballa Wèdo, oh, it is blood *ô!*
> Damballa asks for the head of the goat,
> It is blood he asks for!
> Damballa Wèdo, oh, it is blood he asks for!
> Oh, enough!

For Ogoun they sometimes sing:

> Papa Ogoun qui gain' yon mangé
> Tout manma pas mangé li!
> Ezéli ezéli, ohé! [Ex. 61]
>
> It is Papa Ogoun who has a feast,
> Not everyone may eat it!
> *Ezéli ezéli, ohé!*

But sometimes Ogoun is dissatisfied that there is no feast ready for him, and he complains.

2: Courlander B-5 (1897-1968) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Ogoun é oh mwin blessé!	Ogoun é, oh, I am hurt!
Ogoun é oh mwin blessé!	Ogoun é, oh, I am hurt!
A pas m'blessé Ferci,	Now I am hurt, Ferci,
M'pas wè sang mwin!	I don't see my blood!
M'pas wè sang'm Mèt Ogoun,	I don't see my blood, Master Ogoun,
Mwin pas wè sang mwin!	I don't see my blood!
M'pas wè sang'm Badagry,	I don't see my blood, Badagry
Mwin pas wè sang mwin là! [Ex. 62]	I don't see my blood here!

The loa Mounlongue, like Damballa, likes goat meat, and it can be cooked in two ways:

Yè yè yè!
Mounlongue oh!
Oh Mounlongue oh yè yè yè!
Mounlongue mangé cabrit bouillé,
Mounlongue mangé cabrit boussuélé! [Ex. 63]

Yè yè yè!
Mounlongue, oh!
Oh, Mounlongue, oh, yè yè yè!
Mounlongue eats boiled goat,
Mounlongue eats roasted goat!

Or again, the servitors may sing:

Cote pasé ou ba'ou mangé, oh Ti Mounlongue ah!
Cote pasé ou ba'ou mangé, Mounlongue ah! [Ex. 64]

Wherever you are, we give you food, oh, Ti Mounlongue there!
Wherever you are, we give you food, Mounlongue there!

The loa Adja also has animal sacrifices and special dishes for his mangé, but sometimes he—and the "horses" he mounts—will eat broken glass:

Oh Adja mangé bouteille dévoyé!
Adja vèvè' vèvè'!
Adja mangé bouteille dévoyé!
Adja vèvè' vèvè'! [Ex. 65]

Oh, Adja eats the bottom of a bottle!
Adja, old one, old one!
Adja eats the bottom of a bottle!
Adja, old one, old one!

For the loa Lanman Ibo the proper sacrifice is a rooster, and the deity declares:

Manchan Ibo m'a mangé gros coq oh manchan Ibo!
Manchan Ibo m'a mangé gros coq!
Manchan Ibo m'a mangé gros coq oh manchan Ibo!
Wallo wallo wallo! [Ex. 66]

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 HaHi SV3

Ibo nation, I am going to eat a large cock, oh, Ibo nation!
Ibo nation, I am going to eat a large cock!
Ibo nation, I am going to eat a large cock, oh, Ibo nation!
Wanlo wanlo wanlo!

The Ibo service is often a strictly family affair rather than a broad community ritual. The family replies to the Ibo loa in the following song.

La famille vin' payé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
Vin' payé sang!	Comes to pay blood!
La famille vin' payé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
Ibo Lanlé wahoutè! [Ex. 41]	It is Ibo Lanlé's wish!

The loa Nago frankly tells the people that if they want to come to his house (his shrine, or the hounfor) they will have to pay something for the privilege:

Si nou wè ouf'n demeuré,	If you see where I live,
Si nou wè ouf'n demeuré,	If you see where I live,
Fau'n payé bonbon pou' ça!	You have to give cookies for that!
Anago Nago!	Anago Nago!
Vin' wè ouf'n demeuré! [Ex. 67]	Come see where I live!

The "dead" spirit Gèdé Nimbo, the guardian or master of the cemetery, who often engages in bizarre activities which poke fun at the codes of social behavior, is sometimes regarded as a special protector of children. Precisely because he is overlord of all that has to do with the grave, his good will is sought, particularly in behalf of the young; and in many services of the Nago rites his protection is bought by money gifts:

Gèdé main la'gent,
M'apé ba ou la'gent la'gent,
M'apé ba ou la'gent pou' gè'dé nonfants la yo!
M'apé ba ou la'gent pou' gè'dé nonfants la yo!

Gèdé, take the money,
I will give you money, money,
I will give you money to guard the children!
I will give you money to guard the children!

In the course of the ceremonies when, from time to time, the honored loa of the occasion enters into the head of one of the servitors, the houngan will place in the hands of the mounted person a lighted candle and a pitcher of water. The possessed servitor approaches the sacred center post and spills a little water on the ground for the deity. After certain other rituals, the houngan, or one of his assistants, conducts the mounted "horse" into the hounfor to the altar. In the following song, as the possession comes on, there is a call for a lighted candle.

Simbi non wè oh!
Simbi djab non wè!
Oh Simbi non wè oh!
Simbi non wè oh!
Simbi wa lumè chandèlle pou' claiè mwin! [Ex. 68]

Simbi doesn't see, oh!
Sorry Simbi doesn't see!
Oh, Simbi doesn't see, oh!
Simbi doesn't see, oh!
Simbi [says] you will light the candle so I can see!

Some of the songs refer to the dancing of the loa who enter the bodies of the servitors. The deity Loko asks for his hounsi, through whom he will dance:

Coté pèitu mwin yo,
Mainain'm nan hounfor, m'ap djèllè!
Ne pas Loko,
Coté pèitu mwin yo! [Ex. 69]

Where are my children,
Take me into the hounfor, I will *djèllè*!
Now, Loko,
Where are my children!

Another deity, who is not expressly named, tells his "leaves in the woods"—that is, his hounsi—that he has danced since he was a child:

Fè nan bois bèlè mwin!
Oh dèpi'm pèit m'ap danse!
Fè nan bois bèlè!
Fè nan bois bèlè mwin oh!
Oh fè nan bois bèlè mwin oh!
Dèpi'm pèit m'ap danse!
Fè nan bois bèlè mwin! [Ex. 70]

Leaves in the woods call me!
Oh, since I was small I have danced!
Leaves in the woods *bèlè*!
Leaves in the woods call me, oh!
Oh, leaves in the woods call me, oh!
Since I was small I have danced!
Leaves in the woods call me!

In the following song the loa Macaya Bumba is called upon by the hounsi to hurry up and get on with his dancing.

Macaya Bumba Bumba!
Lèvè danse!
Macaya Bumba!
Bumba mwa chèr vini danse! [Ex. 71]

Macaya Bumba Bumba!
Get up and dance!
Macaya Bumba!
Bumba my dear, come and dance!

A song for the deity Ianman in the course of the Ibo dancing and ritual goes:

Ibo Wèl!
Ibo Wèl!
Manchan Ibo yo ava gainyain ava yo Ibo Wèl!

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1964) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Iaoman con ça, con ça!
Iaoman con ça'm danse! Iba!
Iaoman con ça, con ça!
Iaoman con ça'm danse! Iba!
Iaoman con ça, con ça!
Iaoman *é-wa é-wa é-wa!* [Ex. 72]

Iba *Iba!*
Iba *Iba!*
Iba Nation, what are you doing there, Iba *Iba!*
Iaoman, like that, like that!
Iaoman, like that I dance the Iba!
Iaoman, like that, like that!
Iaoman, like that I dance the Iba!
Iaoman, like that, like that!
Iaoman *é-wa é-wa é-wa!*

Another song containing the same zestful appreciation of dancing is for the loa Kitta. The words "my mother isn't dead" and "my father isn't dead" are simply expressions of good fortune and happiness which embellish the command to do the Kitta steps:

Ai ti ga'ças ba'n pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti *pi'ças* ba'n pas Kitta!

Manman pas manzi ba'n pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti *pi'ças* ba'n pas Kitta!

M'da pitit ga'ças ba'n pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti *pi'ças* ba'n pas Kitta!

Papa pas manzi ba'n pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti pi'ças ba'n pas Kitta! [Ex. 73]

Ai, little man, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps!

My mother is not dead, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps!

I say little man, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps!

My father is not dead, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps!]

A song for the loa Bambara describes the movements of his dance. Bambara is symbolized by the crab, and the dance posture with "low hips" is regarded as characteristic of the crab's movements:

Bambara kip pensiled, ville bas!
Bambara all pensiled, ville bas!

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[For Footnote, see Category 16, P. 351. --Analyst]

2; Courlander 8-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Rambara is walking, low hips!
Rambara is going to walk, low hips!

Damballa Wèdo, being a snake deity, "threads" or "winds" his way like a serpent, and this song describes a serpentine course taken by the dancers as Damballa (here identified as a Nago man) arrives:

Fèl na fèl, Damballa Wèdo vini wè mèsi!
Fèl na fèl, Nèg' Nago vini wè'n lèl [Ex. 74]

Wind, we wind, Damballa Wèdo comes to see us!
Wind, we wind, the Nago man comes to see us here!

After the dancing has been going on for a long while and the pace is fast, there may be a song of humor, such as the following from the Dahomey rites. The dancers sing *lolèl, lolèl!*, describing a figure of the dance in which the skirts are swirled, and note that they have worn out the drummers. They even offer to carry on their backs those dancers who are ready to fall by the wayside:

Lolèl lolèl!
Oh lolèl lolèl oh vèlos'!
Tambouyè bouki!
Tambouyè bouki vèlos'!
Lolèl lolèl oh vèlos'!
Lolèl lolèl tambouyè bouki houngan'ni!
M'pa'ni ann ranpe mèsi vèl ou!
Tambouyè bouki pa!
Lolèl lolèl! [Ex. 75]

Lolèl lolèl!
Oh, *lolèl lolèl*, oh, old people!
The drummers are tired!
The drummers are tired, old people!
Lolèl lolèl, oh, old people!
Lolèl lolèl, the drummers are tired, my *houngan*!
I'll carry you on my back, old dance!
The drummers are tired there!
Lolèl lolèl!

Interspersed among the songs of the houngfor there are sometimes warnings or admonitions. Usually they are tangent and indirect in statement, and may be from the point of view of the loa or of the houngan. In the following petèo song, which accompanies the ritual of making magic, there is a warning to certain people who will feel the effects of the magic. The ceremony includes, among other things, the dropping of leaves, roots, and leaves by the houngan into his sacred basin or pond. The houngan sings:

2: Courlander 8-6 (1927-1952) 1960 8V3 Hebi 8V3

Trois fil trois citron ah!
Trois fil trois citron ah!
Moin di ewo, youn jour ou wa bouin moin!
Trois fil trois racine ah!
Moin di ouè, youn jour ou wa bouin moin!
Gainyain bouin moin trois racine tombé bolette,
Quand ou wa' blié fas' ramassé changé! [Ex. 76]

Three leaves, three lemons, ah!
Three leaves, three lemons, ah!
I say ewo, one day you are going to send me!
Three leaves, three roots, ah!
I say yes, one day you are going to send me!
I have my pond into which three roots fall,
When you wish to forget you will have to remember!

In another song the houngan warns against ingratitude on the part of persons for whom special magical services have been carried out:

Ouanga ya ah ouanga chaud!
Ouanga ya ouanga chaud!
Li pou' payé li pinga ou fachè!
Ou mandé'm ouanga li ou content!
Ou mandé'm ouanga li ou content!
Li pou' payé li pinga ou fachè! [Ex. 77]

This ouanga, ah, hot ouanga!
This ouanga, ah, hot ouanga!
When it's time to pay for it don't be angry!
You ask me for the ouanga, you are happy!
You ask me for the ouanga, you are happy!
When it's time to pay for it don't be angry!

Somberly and in metaphor, the deity Kitta Démambré speaks of an unhappy event which occurred in the town of Léogane, and warns those concerned that it must not happen again:

Kitta Démambré, pinga ou fai'm ya 'ouve ah!
Nan Léogane ti poule-li manzé ouan ah!
Nan Léogane ti poule-li manzé ouan ah ah!
Kitta Démambré, pinga ou fai'm ya ouvre ah! [Ex. 78]

Kitta Démambré, take care that you don't do that to me again, ah!
In Léogane the little chicken died in its egg!
In Léogane the little chicken died in its egg!
Kitta Démambré, take care that you don't do that to me again!

An unnamed spirit warns that the moment for placation has come and suggests that calling on him after he has gone from the *poteliche* of the houngan Dorda would be of no use.

M'apé rélé mein en bas pavillon lao mein!
Lainel'm dèmélé mein en bas pavillon ch Dèrès!
Jou'm ellé pèrgs you bannmain nom mein! [Ex. 79]

I will call, I am under the law's canopy!
Let me get straightened out under Dèrès's canopy!
The day I am gone take care they do not call my name!

In a lighter vein, to the gayest of music, there is this admonition that a wrong cannot be righted simply by saying "excuse me":

Bo Mèl!
Bo Mèl!
Pèl pèel'm ou mamèl'm pardon!
Pèl pèel'm ou mamèl'm pardon!
Ça pardon-li wa fait pas' mein? [Ex. 80]

Bo Mèl!
Bo Mèl!
You step on my foot and ask my pardon!
You step on my foot and ask my pardon!
The pardon, what good will it do me?

And the deity Ogoun Kèrèkon warns those who do not speak of him with respect that he is not ready to accept such a slight as a light matter.

Ogoun YIAÀ YIAÀ ça Nèg' Kèrèkon él
Ogoun YIAÀ ça Nèg' Kèrèkon él
Ch tous lès jours c'est pa'li Ogoun mal!
Ogoun pas content' lèréel! [Ex. 81]

Ogoun YIAÀ YIAÀ there, man of Kèrèkon!
Ogoun YIAÀ there, man of Kèrèkon!
Oh, constantly talking bad about Ogoun!
Ogoun doesn't like joking!

The lwa Ogoun Panama, like ordinary mortals, is concerned about people who "come to look and go away to talk."

Ogoun ch m' c'est Nèg' Panama él
Ogoun ch m' c'est Nèg' Panama él
Ta vini pa'li!
Ta vini pa'li!
Oh Ogoun ch m' c'est Nèg' Panama él [Ex. 82]

Ogoun, oh, I am the Panama man él
Ogoun, oh, I am the Panama man él
They come to look!
They come to look!
Oh, Ogoun, oh, I am the Panama man él

The loa Aizan complains more vigorously of the bad behavior of human beings:

> Aizan Aizan!
> Dipis tempo y'ap pa'lé ma mainé
> Ciné ça yo gainyain?
> Bouche à yo papa papa!
> Dipuds à yo pitit pitit!
> Ciné ça pou' yo pa'dm ok? [Ex. 83]
>
> Aizan, Aizan!
> For a long time they have been talking about me!
> What's wrong with them?
> Their mouths go *papa papa!*
> Their jaws go *pitit pitit!*
> What is the excuse?

Even on routine business the loa are inclined to be petulant, or to protest that they have been mistreated, that their followers gossip about them, or that they are not ardent enough. Here the deity Simbi en dis Eaux complains bitterly that she is not loved by her servitors, the "leaves in the woods," and asks a bonsal named Lolo for news to take to spirits of the ancestors who live "below the water":

> Fé man bain con ça mon yé!
> Non point ménain pas mandé quitté!
> Fé man bain con ça mon yé!
> Non point ménain pas mandé quitté!
> Simbi en dis Eaux,
> Qui mani en bas dlaw!
> Gardé ça yo fai manin!
> M'dis Lolo, ba main nouvelle pou'm ba yo! [Ex. 84]
>
> Leaves in the woods, that's the way you are!
> There is no love that does not ask to end!
> Leaves in the woods, that's the way you are!
> There is no love that does not ask to end!
> Simbi en dis Eaux,
> Who comes from below the water!
> See what they do to me!
> I say, Lolo, give me the news to give them!

But if the loa complain about the behavior of their followers, the servitors also may complain. Songs sung in the bonsier may chide the deities for ancestral deeds, for forgetting their "children," or for carelessness. In the following song the spirit Moli' Grand Chemin is criticized for measuring his "leaves" with such fury that they are thrown about

violently. The houngi complain that Ioki' Grand Chimin treats them as though they were flour being grounds in a mill:

Temp' changé nouvelle ohé!
Bonjour' Papa bonjour' Roi Grand Chimin!
M'mandé Papa ça'm fai!
Temp' changé nouvelle ohé!
Bonjour' Papa bonjour' Roi Grand Chimin!
M'mandé Papa ça'm fai!
Papa m'pas moin moulin!
Nous dis na bougé moint!
Papa m'pas moin moulin!
Nous dis na bougé moint! [L. 8]

Times change, the news go out!
Good day, Papa, good day Roi Grand Chimin!
I ask you, Papa, what did I do?
Times change, the news go out!
Good day, Papa, good day Roi Grand Chimin!
I ask you, Papa, what did I do?
Papa, I am not corn flour!
You say you will grind me
Papa, I am not corn flour!
You say you will grind me

When there is sickness within the société there may be songs for the absent ones. Here is a song for an ailing houngi:

Moin allé wé li, houngi malade ohé!
Moin allé wé ça, houngi malade ohé!
Moin allé wé houngan, houngi malade ohé! [Ex. 86]

I am going to see there, the houngi is sick, ohé!
I am going to see it, the houngi is sick, ohé!
I am going to see, houngan the houngi is sick, ohé!

Again, the members of the société call upon Ogoun, or St. Jacques, to help one of their number who is sick:

St. Jacques mond cheval li,
Li pas dis personne ohé,
Vépé li pas' malé!
Li mon gainguin verre,
Li mon gainguin malice mon dos,
St. Jacques ohé!
Ba li bein pas' malé! [Ex. 87]

St. Jacques dis lui bonne,
He talk no one, ah,
Take care of him for me!
He may have worms,
He may have sores on his back,
St. Jacques, ohé!
Protect him for me!

Ogoun is the dispenser of rum, and, virtually all Ogoun rituals rum is at some time or another in evidence. Sometimes rum is poured into a hot iron pot and burnt into flame. The rum pot is dedicated to Ogoun's

house, which is on fire. But there is no grief, because Ogun is the master of fire:

Pierre, Pierre Nanéme ohé	Pierre, Pierre Nanéme, ohé
Yaga mondé!	Yaga mondé!
Cadie Ogun bouffé!	Ogun's house is burning!
Gbéléve Ogun bel Dé	Ogun's distillery is beautiful!
Ne mondé! [Ex. 98]	We console ourselves!

Some of the ritual songs that have persisted through the years have lost their explicit meaning but continue to survive because of beautiful melodies and perhaps the strange images they evoke. Such a song is this one to the lwa Avri Dié, from the Dahomey service:

Avri Dié ohé	Avri Dié, ohé
Yo wapé dé monin	They are to tell me
Mio wéhé mahodé!*	The sun was sick!
Quan'ko of ciel	When I arrived
Mioto jéné wéhé monsé!	I found the sun had died!
Quan'ko of ciel	When I arrived
Mioto jéné wéhé monsé!	I found the sun had died!
C'est regrettable ça	What grief it was
Pas'ko monsé wéhé! [Ex.99]	For me to bury the sun!

One of the truly lovely songs of the Dahomey rites, both in melody and in lyrics, is the following one to the deity Eulée. It shows clear evidence of Catholic ritual influence in both its text and its music. Eulée Fédda, who seems to be speaking most of the lines, is identified with the Virgin Mary, and the tone of this piece casts her more in her Catholic role than her African. The deity is speaking from Yagaza, a place described as being "on the other side of the water." In form the song is atypical in that it has more than one movement and progresses from one idea to another.

Eulée Nainsée ohé
Eulée Nainsée ohé
Eulée oh, c'est moin Yagaza!

Eulée o'ap monté o'ap monté o'ap pavé pas' ranga y'ap pavé pavée monin!
Eulée o'ap monté o'ap monté pas' ranga y'ap pavé pavée monté!
Eulée Nainsée ohé
Eulée Fédda oh Nainsée ohé
Eulée Fédda oh, c'est moin Yagaza!

Manhoman oh yo dédo mon mallo li yo ché djoklé oh mon ranga mahé pas lé!
Manhoman yo pavé yo mahé ché à gbémon y'apé gbémoin le mon yé!

---

*Some Dahomeans informed that ohé means "no." Others felt that this word in the song was really hoh, a diminutive of Avrikodji, another name for Avri Dié.

Ballie Noinoin oh!
Ballie Noinoin oh!
Ballie oh ba' c'ou ouain Yagout!

Lawéné fai hands tout temps mbéli pas Well!
Lawéné fai hands tout temps mbéli pas Well!
Ballie Noinoin oh!
Ballie Noinoin oh!
Ballie Pétite oh, coté ouain ba' Yagout!

Ballie Pétite Nig' Sabo Nig' Grand Chimin Nig' Bainwand Cordéquéné doubs ça!
Ballie Noinoin oh!
Ballie Noinoin oh!
Ballie Pétite coté ou yé? Moin li Yagout! [Ex. pa]

Grandmother Ballie, oh!
Grandmother Ballie, oh!
It is I Ballie, Yagout!

Ballie we are walking, we are listening, we are speaking, they are speaking my words now!
Ballie we are walking, we are listening, they are speaking my words now!
Grandmother Ballie, oh!
Ballie Pétite, oh, Grandmother, oh!
Ballie Pétite, oh, it is I, Yagout!

The women sitting in the house door, they want to have a good time, oh, until the sun comes up!
The women go by, they fall on the earth on their knees, they complain about their troubles!
Grandmother Ballie, oh!
Grandmother Ballie, oh!
Ballie, oh, it is I on Yagout side!

The dew glisters until the sun comes up!
The dew glisters until the sun comes up!
Grandmother Ballie, oh!
Grandmother Ballie, oh!
Ballie Pétite, oh, I am on Yagout side!

Ballie Pétite, Nig' Sabo, Nig' Grand Chimin, Nig' Bainwand, Cordéquéné, fetish dance!*
Grandmother Ballie, oh!
Grandmother Ballie, oh!
Ballie Pétite, where are you? I am on Yagout side!

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* These women who are being called upon here to withdraw and are to remain upon the scene while Ballie is present.

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others only half believe, and many look upon these creatures as imaginary but exciting to talk about.

The zombie finds a favored place in the tales children make up to tell one another, and the traditional song played by children on the earth bow or mouquito drum goes:

Mouloupwin pinga zombie oh, Bobo Marie!
Mouloupwin pinga zombie!
Mouloupwin pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie!
Mouloupwin pinga zombie! [Ex. 91]

Mouquito lewave the zombie, oh, Bobo Marie!
Mouquito lewave the zombie!
Mouquito lewave the zombie, lewave the zombie, lewave the zombie, lewave the zombie, lewave the zombie!
Mouquito lewave the zombie!

Or they may sing with great bravado, to the clapping of hands:

Chaingodoing, nou pral manjé zombie!
Chaingodoing, nou ward
Chaingodoing, nou pral manjé zombie!
Chaingodoing, ouhouwé!
Chaingodoing, nou pral manjé zombie!
Chaingodoing, kokokokoming! [Ex. 92]

Chaingodoing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingodoing, now ward
Chaingodoing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingodoing, ouhouwé!
Chaingodoing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingodoing, kokokokoming!

(P 105)

8. Mardi Gras and Rara: Jugglers, Maypoles, and Kings

From early in January until Easter, each year, the Haitian countryside is infected with a riotous carnival spirit that puts all else in the background. First comes Mardi Gras, beginning early in January and building to a great climax at Shrovetide. And then on Ash Wednesday begins the seven-week festival known as Rara, Lwalwali, or Chariapid. 54

Every week end in the Mardi Gras season the country roads and villages are alive with special music, dancing bands, and traditional kinds of masquerading. The little crossroads in the mountains where the Ashkinazy usually hold their markets are suddenly swarming with drummers, trumpeters, magicians, jugglers, masked dancers, and acrobats. Each band has its own name, its banners and paraphernalia, new topical songs composed for the occasion, and sometimes a dance steppers. Each roving band competes for the attention and admiration of the spectators, and its ranks are often swelled by passers-by moving in the same direction who choose to dance their way along the roads rather than walk. Often women and girls on distant market grounds will join in the celebration, seemingly unencumbered by the heavy loads they carry on their heads. 54 55 55 55

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541 half-demon cannibals who meet in secret in the hollow heart of the mapou tree. Some are dressed in comic ancient military attire, replete with swords, epaulets, medals, and outlandish beards, representing "the Generals." Others, under the name Bande Autophonique, follow a human phonograph—a leader singing through an antique Edison horn.

541 53 And there are bands of male *rubanniers*, or Maypole dancers, some of them attired as women, weaving their colored ribbons around portable poles, to the accompaniment of guitars, marimbulas, and cha-chas. Male stick dancers known as *batonni*, dressed in women's clothing, crouch in circles and perform baton-tapping dances to the accompaniment of drumming and singing. Other small bands wander about impersonating characters from folklore or politics in grotesque homemade costumes. One might see, for example, a fanciful boeur driving before him a band of zombies, wielding a whip, and barking out weird raucous commands.

After the cataclysmic grand finale of the Mardi Gras at Shrovetide there is the briefest of lulls, and then the country is in the throes of Rara. The day of the *roi* Lwalwadi (the King of Lwalwadi) has arrived. Hundreds of Rara bands move through the towns and villages, each with its orchestra of bamboo trumpets or conch-shell horns and its "king"—an ornately clad dancer or baton juggler. The Rara bands move from place to place, dance, sing, exhibit their featured performers, and then move on, pressed perhaps by other bands behind them or jostled by another group moving in the opposite direction. When darkness comes, the bands light their way with wooden torches or candelabra [416] of tiny oil lamps. Every week end for seven weeks, in the heat of day and the darkness of night, the mountain trails are alive with these processions.

541 The Rara festivities reach their climax on Good Friday week end, and by Easter morning they are ended. During these final days there is a last grand display, with troupes coming in from the mountains and the plains to the larger cities and towns. One of the traditional Rara convocation centers in the south is the town of Léogâne. On Good Friday week end, Léogâne is transformed into a milling, surging, trumpeting mass of celebrating country people.

[533] The songs heard during Rara are full of praise or derision for well-
[531] known personalities. Some of them are boldly ribald or licentious. And
[536] often the dancing itself is openly sexual in its implications. Haitians humorously refer to this kind of dancing as *ewegé* (enraged, crazy).

541 675 Early in January, even while the Mardi Gras is in progress, each community gets down to the business of organizing its Rara group. It may be organized in one of several ways. In certain communities there

575 and covered with tiny mirrors or bits of colored glass. The towering
535 headdress of antlers or papier-mâché sculpture unavoidably recalls similar
[292] headdresses in West Africa. Each roi has his own style of dance, which is usually accompanied by drums. It may be a belly dance, a dance of delicate balance, or one of complicated footwork and semiacrobatics such as the imitation of a pair of scissors at work. Throughout the dancing the headdress remains majestically erect.

541 In addition to the roi Lwalwali and the mäit' Rara (who is con-
576 stantly in the midst of things, blowing his whistle), there are other
524 traditional Rara personalities: the *major jonc*, who juggles with a metal
[534] baton (sometimes two or three of these jugglers work together), and the *jonglewr*, a juggler or strong man who performs such feats as dancing while holding a fully set table off the ground with his teeth.

184 On the southwest peninsula, in the region around Jérémie, there
541 is a splurge of wrestling exhibitions during Rara days. Known as *pingé*,
526 this festival wrestling is done with a background of excited drumming
533 and has a striking resemblance to wrestling traditions in West Africa.
[191] Local "champions" will invade a neighboring community, sometimes traveling considerable distances to make a challenge. As in West Africa, some of these wrestlers take their own musicians with them. The musicians often are provided by the village in which the events take place. If a challenge is accepted, the spectators form a large circle, with the wrestlers in the center and the musicians to one side. There may be drums and bamboo flutes, occasionally supplemented by large earthern jars and lengths of bamboo beaten with sticks. The wrestlers are dressed only in shorts. When a man is thrown, the event is over, and another pair of wrestlers takes over. Sometimes a "champion" will take on a series of opponents until he is tired. Afterward he may move on to another community to find new competition, perhaps accompanied by a large group of friends and supporters from his own village. When the Rara season comes to an end, pingé is over for the year. It is one of the few athletic sport activities of the Haitian peasant.

541 And now and then during Rara a *debois* is seen. The *debois* is a
536 carved wooden marionette with a short handle below. Its arms and legs are moved by pulling a string. It is usually painted, and sometimes it is
[831] dressed. One debois observed was provided with a loose dresslike costume; when the string was pulled, a large phallus hinged into view in an erect position. This marionette was an object of endless funmaking among spectators.[*]

Another type of marionette is the "Two Kings," made of papier-mâché and operated with strings. The "Two Kings," sitting in a papier-

[*] [Footnote appears in Category 116, p. 351. --Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 ST3 Haiti ST3
[P 112-CC]

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41. Voodoo drummers, northern Haiti. The drums are characteristic of that region. The boy at left, although only twelve or thirteen years old, is an accomplished drummer.

compensated by a "feast" and party given at the end of the day by the host. More usual than the *coverte* is the regular sharing of work on one another's fields—the *rendé*, or "taking turns."

An early morning work gathering is known as a *dounant jou*. It meets early in the day, sometimes before dawn, continues until ten or eleven in the morning, when the sun becomes hot, and then disperses. An afternoon coumbite is called a *dini-machete* (dinner machete) and lasts from about two in the afternoon until early evening. When the work is finished, the men go to the house of the host, where they have dinner, much in the manner of the American threshing party. An all-day affair is called a grand coumbite.

Essential to all coumbites are musicians and singing leaders. The instruments used are various, according to local custom. In the south they are usually drums, *tymbales*, and bamboo trumpets. In some areas of the north, the *lambi*, or conch-shell trumpet, is favored.

According to the custom in the south, on the day of the coumbite the drummers arise in the false dawn before sunrise and begin a round-about march to the house of the host. They pass before the huts of all the neighbors who are going to join the party, playing a *rappel* on the drums. By one's and two's the workers come down the trails to join the procession, bringing hoes, machetes, or sickles as required. As the marching group grows larger, there is talking, laughter, and perhaps singing. Most of the men who join the procession are from close by. Others who may have to travel from a distance, perhaps from the next valley, go directly to the house of the host. When the workers arrive there, the women of the house serve coffee. This is the usual breakfast of the Haitian peasant.

Then the drummers play another *rappel*, and the men go down to the field that is to be tilled. There may be ten, twenty, or fifty of them. Some coumbites are even larger. If the group is a small one, the men line up together. The singing leader, called a *samba* or *sirnidor*, begins a song, the drummers play, the hoes begin to rise and fall in unison, and the workers join in the singing. If the group is large it will divide into two or three squads, each trying to outdo the other. The men stand shoulder to shoulder, moving the hoes up and down together, syncopating their movements by pauses as they sing their responsive parts. Sometimes tafia or rum is portioned out. The squads move forward slowly, inching their way across the field. The samba beats on his hoe blade with a stone to keep time for his song. His job is to "encourage" the men. He may sing old familiar songs or compose new ones, songs with humor and bite in them, ribald songs, and songs of ridicule. They may criticize

476 241 533 461 men who have failed to join the coumbite, or praise the host, or single out various individuals for comment. The songs of the coumbite are a newspaper of the affairs of the people. The news is personalized, editorialized, and replete with comic vignettes.[1]

476 241 521 584 At noon the drummers signal a halt, and the workers shoulder their hoes, wipe off their machetes, and adjourn to the house for food. If it is a grand coumbite, the men rest for several hours, talking, catching up on sleep, or playing cards or *mayomba*. About three o'clock they go back to the fields to work until evening. Then comes the feast, under the canopy adjoining the house. The host and his wife have killed and cooked one or more goats, depending on the size of the group. The men are served meat, rice, beans, and whatever else has been prepared. [203] Afterward, women join the party, and there is more tafia or rum. Some of the men then drift homeward, but most stay on for dancing. Zoze, Congo, or Juba drums are brought out, and the festivities begin. If another coumbite is not scheduled for the next day, the music and dancing may last well into the night.

476 562 Women, too, have coumbites to perform various kinds of large tasks, from field work to winnowing and coffee sorting, though in general the women's work groups lack the festive character of the men's gatherings.

476 241 515 There is a more tightly knit form of coumbite, known as a *société*. In southern Haiti there are the société Congo and the société Martinique; in northern Haiti there is the société Clyé. These sociétés are clubs built around mutual work needs and recreational activities. The société Congo that appears in the town or city streets during Rara days, with bamboo or conch-shell trumpets, drums, flags, and masks, is usually composed of the men who have joined forces to till the fields. In some instances, it may also conform roughly to membership in a particular houmfor, or cult center. Unlike the ordinary coumbite, the société is not a group which meets only at ground-breaking or harvesting time; it is a permanent organization with regular, sometimes day-to-day, obligations. Week after week it moves from one man's land to another, doing the tasks that have to be done. There is no question of "Can you come?" The group goes first to one man's land, then to another's until all the work has been done. If a member of the société falls sick, so that he cannot work his own field, the société takes over his tasks for him.

476 Coumbites are held not only for agricultural work but for house-building, and sometimes for the building of a houmfor.

[191] The Haitian coöperative work group has much in common with European and American husking and barn-building parties; but it has

[For footnote See Category 116, P-352. -- Analysis]

many non-European characteristics. The manner of work, even down to specific motor activity, has direct and hardly disputable West African connections. Instead of the short-handled West African hoe, the Haitians use a long-handled one, and they work more erect than stooped. But the rhythmic, synchronized use of the hoe, the singing leader and the musicians who stand to one side to "encourage" the workers, the calling of the workers by drum *rappels*, the special consideration for the sick, and the concept of long-term community endeavor are all of West African beginnings. The coumbite is the legitimate descendant of the Dahomean *dokpwe*, the *kwaw* of the Mambila (Cameroons), the *ko* of the Kpelle (Liberia), and other West African cooperative systems.

Although the *dokpwe* of Dahomey is a more formal and intricate institution, permeated with certain abstract and ritual concepts, its social and functional characteristics are not greatly different from those of the Haitian coumbite, in which cooperation is marked. Herskovits notes that working with the Dahomean *dokpwe*

> represents recreation rather than labor to the individual member. There is song and dance to drumming and the sound of gongs, on the way and after arrival, and there is feasting and an exhibition of skill. It is an impressive sight to see from forty to a hundred men kneading earth for walls, or laying thatch, or hoeing the earth with unison movements to the accompaniment of conversation and laughter, and the songs of each of their fellows, who, for the moment at rest, have constituted themselves the chorus.

When more than one *dokpwe* is summoned for work on the same project, Herskovits notes,

> there is great rivalry among the organizations to see which one will first complete its allotted task. If only one *dokpwe* is present, there is either individual rivalry, or the *dokpwe* may be divided into two groups which compete one against the other. The food which is provided at these times of collective labor is as rich fare as the owner can afford . . .[8]

An underlying factor in the Dahomean *dokpwe* is awareness of itself as "the manpower of Dahomey," and the members regard themselves as exercising their fundamental privilege as Dahomeans. This attitude toward the coumbite continues to prevail in Haiti. Like the houseboat—but even more significantly in terms of routine, workaday life—the coumbite and the société are an expression of social ties and of the pervading interest in the common welfare.

Certain patterns of the coumbite have been carried over into non-agrarian labor in the towns and cities, wherever group work is required. The carrying of coffee and sugar bags in the warehouses, the loading of ships, and the repairing of roads—all are traditionally performed

[8] [Herskovits, "Some Aspects of Dahomean Ethnology," Africa, Vol. V (July, 1932), pp. 266-296. Cf. p. 352, Category 116. -- Analysis]

533 171 128 461 rhythmically, to the accompaniment of drums, cutar, or horns, while a singing leader composes topical songs in which the laborers join.

171 492 The tools which a rural Haitian chooses, and the way he uses them, often are in a West African tradition. He performs a multitude of tasks with his machete, or bush knife: weeding a garden, peeling an orange, cutting down a tree, making a drum or mortar, opening a coconut. It is an all-purpose tool, as it is in Africa. Until a few years ago it was supplemented by the extra-long, heavier, "double machete." The axe and the chisel are known and used too, but the machete is supreme. 492 The hoe is the tool for tilling the soil, even in the flat country, and even 541 though the Haitian has horses and cattle which could pull a plow. 412 Horses are for riding and not for pulling. In carrying loads, the Haitian peasant still prefers the head to the shoulders. If he has a donkey, the 538 donkey will carry for him. An old Haitian proverb goes: "Mèçi Bondieu pou' bourique li, si nous pas gainyain bourique li fait Haitien pa'll vont bagaille" (Thank God for the donkey, if we didn't have the donkey the Haitian would have to carry everything)." Generally speaking, the 489 rough and rocky terrain of Haiti and inadequate secondary roads have 493 done nothing to encourage the use of carts or wagons.

Corn is stored in the trees, as in West Africa, or in granaries built 171 upon stilts, also as in West Africa. The Haitian makes his fire in the 25 African fashion, with several long sticks or poles meeting point-to-point 398 in the heart of the fire. As the ends are consumed, the sticks are pushed 352 toward the center. Grain is pulverized in large wooden mortars, as 339 in West Africa, and winnowed in a woven tray. Fish traps are some- 332 times woven in the traditional West African manner, and fishermen often set their nets in converging spirals and beat the water with sticks to 501 drive the fish to the center. And on the rivers and lakes are to be seen dugout canoes of a kind familiar on the inland waters of West Africa.

171 The folklore of the fields contains many themes known to the West 241 African. One old Haitian farmer, discussing the spiritual relationship of the planter to the earth, declared that a man must be strong and potent when he plants, else the crops will be vitiated and sickly. For 134 this reason, he said, a man must not plant seeds the day after he has had sexual intercourse, because he has been temporarily drained of his life-giving powers.[9]

171 538 The tale of the hoe that worked by itself in the fields is also widespread. It enters many animal and Bouki stories, and also is known in a form that is familiar in West Africa. In this story, there was once a man who owned a hoe which worked by itself whenever a magical formula was pronounced. It would stop working whenever the magical

9 [For footnote, see Category 116, P 352.-- Analyst]

114 535 tion helped to perpetuate some prevailing misunderstandings and errors. This distinguished observer wrote:

> The Negroes of the Gold Coast, warlike, bloody, accustomed to human sacrifice, know only dances as frenzies as themselves, while those from the Congo, Senegalese and other African shepherds or agricultural tribes, love dancing as a relaxation, as a source of sensual pleasure. Brought from all parts of Africa to our Colonies . . . . , the Negroes brought here and preserved their taste for the dance, a taste so strong that, however tired out from work the Negro may be, he always finds strength to dance and even to travel a long distance to satisfy this desire.
>
> When the Negroes want to dance, they take two drums, that is, two hollow
> 114 533 logs, of unequal length, with one end open, while the other is covered with
> 535 sheepskin. These drums . . . resound under blows of the wrist and movements of the fingers of a Negro who sits astride of each drum. The larger drum is beaten slowly, the other more rapidly. This monotonous and hollow sound is accompanied by the noise of a certain number of calabashes which have been filled with
> 534 pebbles . . . Several *banzas*, a sort of large guitar with four strings,[3] join the concert, the tempo of which is regulated by the clapping hands of the Negro women, who form a large circle. They form a sort of chorus, which responds to one or two accident solo voices, which repeat or improvise a song.[4]

535 As for the dance movements themselves, Saint-Méry wrote:

> A male and [a] female dancer, or several dancers divided into equal numbers of each sex, jump into the center of the circle and begin to dance, always two by two. This dance, which varies little, consists of a very simple step in which one foot is put forward after the other, and then drawn back quickly, while striking the toe and the heel on the ground . . . Some turn in place, or around the woman, who turns slow and changes places with her partner; that is all which one sees, except for the movement of the arms which the men raise and lowers with the elbows quite close to the body and the hands almost closed. The woman holds two ends of a handkerchief, which she waves . . . One would hardly believe how lively and animated it is, and how much grace it derives from the sinuosos with which the musical rhythm is followed. The dancers replace one another without respite, and the Negroes are so intoxicated with pleasure that it is necessary to force them to conclude dances of this sort, called *kalenda*.[5]

[114] [191] Saint-Méry then brings forth one of his conclusions, that this dance is obviously the development of a "comparatively uncivilized people," and that it comes from Africa, "where its characteristic features exist everywhere, even among the Hottentots."

114 535 199 [191] Here he missed the point altogether. Although many of the characteristics of this *kalenda* (or Calinda) were African, it had already been intensively hybridized with European dance concepts, such as the pairing off of males and females, who danced as couples. Then, as today, the dances which amazed and shocked the European observer were precisely the ones that had taken over certain European traditions.

3 [Actually a banjo-like instrument of African provenience. The similarity of the word banza to banjo appears to be more than a coincidence. Cf. P 352, Category 116. — Analyst]
4 [Saint-Méry, De la danse, as translated by Lillian Moore in "Morgan de Saint Méry and 'Danse,'" Dance Index, October, 1946, P 238. Cf. P 352, Category 116. — Analyst]
5 Moore, op. cit., P. 238. Cf. P 352, Category 116. — Analyst]

Saint-Méry also wrote about some of the religious dances, which he identified by name: 191 536

> In Santo Domingo, and especially in the western, French section, there has existed for a long time a kind of dance called the Vaudoux [Voodoo] . . . which is characterized by movements where the upper part of the body, the shoulders and the head seem to move convulsively. This dance is accompanied by the drums, the clapping of hands, and group singing . . .
>
> The Vaudoux is nothing compared to the Don Pedro . . . , another Negro dance, also known in the western part of Santo Domingo since 1788. Don Pedro was the name of a Negro of the Petit-Goave section, of Spanish origin, who by his daring character and certain superstitious practices, had acquired among the Negroes enough influence to be denounced by the government as the instigator of some dancing plots. The dance which bears his name consists, like the Vaudoux, in the shaking of the shoulders and the head, but this shaking is extremely violent, and to increase it still further the Negroes drink, while dancing, brandy in which they have mixed finely ground gunpowder . . . [1] They dance with the most horrible contortions, until finally they fall into a sort of epilepsy . . . [2]

Making allowances for Saint-Méry's imaginative interpretation of many of the things he saw, the Haitian dance of today is not far different from that of the eighteenth century. It is cast in the West African mold, with Dahomean still Yoruban motifs predominating over European and other Western infiltrations. As in Saint-Méry's day, the drummers sit at the edge of the dance court, a leader wielding a gourd rattle leads the singing, and the dancers and spectators constitute the chorus. The dancers usually move around the center of the court in a counterclockwise direction. Their steps and postures vary according to the type of dance being performed. The *jerouale*, for example, is danced with a bent back, hands touching the knees. In the *Zipande* dance the dancers are erect, and most of the movements are made with the shoulders. In the *Pitro* (the Don Pedro described by Saint-Méry) there is a constant, almost agitated movement of the feet. The songs accompanying these cult dances, while presented in African style, may have hybrid or even French melodies, though in the main they are more African than European. The over-all context of the cult dances, as well as most of the secular ones, is West African, with constant interplay between the singers, dancers, and drummers. Sometime the dancers "drive" the drummers, sometimes the drummers "drive" the dancers. Certain beats of the drum are signals for special movements and postures. On hearing special beats or rolls, the dancers may leap vertically into the air, or perform a *laillé* (a swirling motion that causes the skirts to flare out), or a *djaillé* (excitement motions). Increased tension among the dancers may cause the drummers to shift the beat, or to increase

[1 Brandy or rum with gunpowder is sometimes drunk by persons possessed by the loa Ogoun, deity of war. Cf. P. 352, Cat. 116. --Analyst]
[2 Moore, op. cit., P 238. Cf. P. 352, Cat. 116. --Analyst]

tempo. The chorus and leader sing responsively, their parts overlapping in traditional African style. The shoulder movements, foot movements, the way the arms are carried, and the typical posture of feet flat on the ground, knees bent, and swayed back—all are of African derivation.

These postures and movements are broad and direct. There are few of the decorative and "fine" movements that one sees in the dances of Indonesia, Cambodia, and India. Where the Javanese lays stress on the poses of the hands and the delicate movements of the fingers, the Haitian dancer is concerned with the position of the arms and the motions of the shoulders. The Indonesian sense of poised balance or suspended movement is absent. In its place there is an attitude of strong frontal assault against natural forces such as gravity, or direct submission to these forces. There is almost always a feeling of solidity and stability in Haitian posture, and of a proximity between the body and the earth, but the total effect is dynamic. Indonesian dancing seems to express a comprehension of the unseen and the supernatural; Haitian dancing seems to express an intimate understanding of nature.

Dancing touches on virtually every aspect of life in Haiti. It plays a part in the supplication of loa, the placation of the dead, and the making of magic; in the consecration of a houmfor, the installation of a houngan, and the initiation of cult members; in planting, harvesting, and house-building. Catholic Church holidays, Nine Nights, baptisms, the election of a new president, and ordinary social gatherings—all are celebrated, in part, at least, by dancing.

Haitian dancing is participative rather than exhibitionistic. It is to join rather than to watch. There are some dances, however, which require special skills, and a few which are highly individualistic. Several types of dances are described elsewhere in this book. Verbal description cannot do justice to an art such as dancing, of course; but some brief sketches may help to suggest the differences between one Haitian dance and another.

In the Congo Manouse, for example, men and women pair off and dance face to face, making contact occasionally but only briefly. The arms are stretched forward as though to embrace the partner around the waist, but the actual embrace never materializes. The partners dance sometimes as though they are unaware of each other and are simply part of a larger group; then they approach, move as mirrored reproductions, and separate. Loin movement is free, and there is a restrained sexual intensity, though direct sexual implications are not necessarily present. Sometimes the woman holds the hem of her skirt in her hands, while the man holds his jacket open toward his partner.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

535 The Pétro dance is similar in many respects to other serious cult dances, but it is primarily a complicated and sometimes agitated foot dance. The second of the two drums beats "one-two-three." On "two" the right foot pushes forward in a thrusting, sliding motion, and on "three" the left moves outward and the right moves in. The position is held on the "one," though there is no visible pause, because of the speed of the dance. Shoulder movement is only of secondary importance in the Pétro, though the arms are constantly moving gracefully to balance the foot movements. Women sometimes use a typical Congo pose, with the left hand on the hip and the right hand held poised in the air.

The Jonvale, the supplication dance of the Dahomey rites, is quite different in both spirit and technique. The dancers, usually older rather than younger people, move in a generally counterclockwise direction around the sacred center post of the dance court. They dance with gracefully bent backs, their hands touching their knees. The shoulders and the upper part of the body move forward and back in a gentle, graceful, undulating movement. The dancers pirouette lightly from time to time, the women holding their long skirts out to the side to make a restrained *ballet*. They sometimes pause to perform a brief cross step with other dancers, but there is no pairing off. They are dancing as individuals—or, more accurately, as a group. There is occasional improvising, inventing, and performing of difficult maneuvers; but the individual dancer moves always with the others in a slowly revolving amorphous circle around the center post. The graceful bending and undulating of the upper body give even to strangers an impression of respectful supplication.

Near the town of Jérémie in southern Haiti some years ago I saw a performance of the Mouzondi "battle-dance," an activity of the Congo "nation." The dance was performed by six men, several of them stripped to the waist, the others wearing the traditional blue denim peasant jackets. The leader of the dancers was a bearded man about fifty years old, lean and athletic. On his legs he wore anklets made of seed pods and beer-bottle caps which rattled rhythmically as he moved. On a string around his neck he wore a wooden whistle, which he blew from time to time to accent the beat of the drums and to give signals.

[291] [301] [534]

The dancing took place around a bonfire. The music was provided by three musicians, two playing Congo drums and the third beating hardwood sticks against a board. Each of the dancers carried a stick about thirty inches long. They moved first clockwise, then counterclockwise, then half of them moved in one direction and half in the other, weaving in and out, holding their sticks like sabers. On a signal given by the

[533]

[illegible]!
I'o le bere ayi mere ere!
[illegible]!
[illegible]!
I'o le a ekigbe dere, which dawere!
[illegible], ayi lelere!
[illegible]!
I'o le bere ayi mere ere!

It is told of the Vishindingue that their members are sometimes required to subject themselves to the ordeal of rubbing hot peppers in their eyes, which results in acute pain and temporary blindness. According to some explanations, this is one of the "tests" of a Vishindingue man. Red, inflamed eyes are a standard symbol of malevolence. One informant explained that the Vishindingue members blind themselves so that they cannot see what kind of flesh they are eating:

[537]
[538]

M'o pika ni'you wi ladoun ma mokel pimere!
M'o pika ni'you wi ladoun ma mokel dere! [Ex. 125]

My eyes are blind, I can't see, I've put pepper in them!
My eyes are blind, I can't see, I've put fire in them!

Another Vishindingue song is a humorously macabre dialogue between the members of the society and a victim. He is asked whether he would prefer to be quartered or eaten whole. Each time they are about to act according to his wishes he changes his mind:

Dévor a dépquéter ya ma pinki? Dépquéter!
C'ma cocha dévoré ya ma pinki?
Mein'n ouere dépquéter!

C'ma cocha dévoré ya ma pinki?
Dévor a dépquéter ya ma pinki?
Mein pinn dévoré!

Dévor a dépquéter ya ma pinki?
Dévor a dépquéter ya ma pinki?
Mein pinn dépquéter! [Ex. 126]

Devoured or quartered, which do you prefer? To be quartered!
Cut up or devoured, which do you prefer?
I've been quartered enough!

Cut up or devoured, which do you prefer?
Devoured or quartered, which do you prefer?
I'd sooner be devoured!

Devoured or quartered, which do you prefer?
Devoured or quartered, which do you prefer?
I'd sooner be quartered!

dramatic art. The narrator interprets his characters as he goes along, providing different voices, singing, giving humorous or tragic emphasis, and changing his facial expressions to convey the temper and mood of the protagonists. He imitates the movements and actions of the animals. In print, his broad gestures and sly intimations are all lost. The Haitian tale is a vehicle for the actor, who plays his theme according to circumstances and the responsiveness of his audience. The storyteller, like the musician, is likely to be found almost anywhere. But there are storytellers of special renown, known as *maît' contes*—who may be called upon to entertain young people at a party or Nine Night gathering. They have seemingly endless repertoires and can go on indefinitely telling tales about Bouki and Malice, or Jean Sotte and Jean L'Esprit. In former times, the *maît' conte* used an instrument such as the *hoeco* to interpret his narration with music. Old people recall that trough zithers and other instruments of African design were once employed for this purpose.

Anansi, the spider trickster-hero and buffoon of West Africa, has survived in Haiti as well as elsewhere in the Antilles. In Jamaica and other British islands, Anansi has become Brother Anansi, Sister Nancy, or just plain Nancy. Although he usually figures in tales dealing with other animals, he has more and more come to assume a human form, as he has in Haitian tales. But in Haiti the name Anansi is only rarely heard. Anansi's cleverness and stupidity are now attributed to two characters named Ti Malice and Nonc' Bouki, both of whom are regarded as human beings.

In West Africa the spider hero directed his mischief against the great and strong creatures of the forest, now one, now another. In Haiti, Ti Malice, who has inherited Anansi's wit and guile, pits himself mostly against Bouki, who has inherited Anansi's stubborn nature and his pompous stupidities. Ti Malice (whose first name probably comes from the Spanish *tío*, uncle) has become the slick sharpy of the city, the clever and predatory "operator," the practical joker. Like his spider prototype, Ti Malice has humor as well as cunning, though he is often remorseless. Bouki is full of self-confidence but is slow-witted and an easy prey for Ti Malice. He is thought of as a clumsy peasant of the mountains. He has a constant desire to pit himself against Ti Malice, and a capacity for involving himself in utterly fantastic situations which appeal to the Haitian sense of the ridiculous.

In many respects this team of comedians resembles another pair known in South and Central America—Tío Conejo (Uncle Rabbit) and Tío Coyote; both are pranksters, but the rabbit usually manages to outwit the coyote. Ti Malice and Bouki also figure in the universal tar-baby story, and in many other tales known in the United States in which Br'er Rabbit

[P 185]

17. Children's World: Gage Songs and Games

On the night of last prayers for a deceased person, and on other party occasions, children while away the hours until bedtime with special songs and games. Sometimes the games are led by an older member of the family. More often, left to their own devices, the children play unsupervised. It is regarded as fitting that the youngest members of the community should be enjoying themselves while the last rites are being held for one who has recently died. This view is held not merely in regard to children; older people, too, engage in gay activities, such as dancing the Juba. 533 524 764 [535]

Many children's games are known throughout the country, others have only a regional popularity. The games mentioned here are among those played in southern Haiti, mainly in the neighborhood of the capital, Port-au-Prince. 184 524

One favorite is known as Balancé Yaya. The children—as few as four or as many as ten or twelve—crouch on the ground in a circle. Each of them has a stone in his hand, which he strikes rhythmically on the earth as they sing together: 524 [533] [539]

> Jésus, Marie, Joseph oh,
> Rat li manjé pigeon mwin,
> Jésus, Marie, Joseph oh,
> Rat li manjé pigeon mwin,
> Rat passé, Rabinette passé,
> Fal' ti Marie marché, alé li. . . . [Ex. 129]

> Jesus, Mary, Joseph, oh,
> The rat has eaten my pigeon.
> Jesus, Mary, Joseph, oh,
> The rat has eaten my pigeon.
> The rat goes by, Rabinette goes by,
> Make little Mary walk, go there. . . .

524 On the words *alli la*, each of the players takes his stone in front of another
533 person. There is no fixed direction of rotation, and the stone may be passed to the left or to the right, or even across the circle. This passing of stones continues while the players sing:

539 Rolmed Yaya,
Yaya oh,
Yaya Mokoue Mongo.
Rolmed Yaya mein,
Mon lo' pelee mein,
C'est pas' Yaya,
Rolmed Yaya
Yaya oh
Yaya Mokoue Mongo. [Ex. 129]

Even up, Yaya,
Yaya, oh,
Yaya Mokoue Mongo.
Even up, my Yaya,
I say my prayers,
They are for Yaya,
Even up, Yaya,
Yaya, oh,
Yaya Mokoue Mongo.

While this part of the song is being sung, the stones are being passed rapidly this way and that. Players may use only one hand for this purpose, and at some stage one of them finds himself with more stones in front of him than he can dispose of, and he is declared *gaga*, or "it." Then the game begins anew.

524 In another animated game called Thiaw, the boys and girls stand in a circle and sing, clapping hands and going through a variety of postures, gestures, and dance steps. It is a sort of "follow the leader" routine. First, one of the group makes rhythmic motions in time to the music, and the other players must do the same thing. The leader may swing his hips, do fancy footwork, posture with his arms, or twist about, and the others in the circle are obliged to imitate him. Then another child gets his turn to set the pace. One of the songs heard with this game is the following,
533 539 which imitates the voice of the guinea hen:

Cipan Cimalo!
C'est ça mamman'in ti di mein,
Cipan Cimalo!
C'est ça mamman'in ti di mein,
Cipan Cimalo!
Air tain tain Cimalo!
Rang tang tang Cimalo!
Tink tink tink tink Cimalo!
Wa tink tink Cimalo!
(And so on, with variations.) [Ex. 130]

Cipan Cimalo!
This is what my mother told me,
Cipan Cimalo!
This is what my mother told me,
Cipan Cimalo!
Air tain tain Cimalo!

Ruing ruing ruing Cinsale!
Tuck tuck tuck tuck Cinsale!
Wu tuck tuck Cinsale!

For the game called Délina, two chairs are required as props. They are placed a few feet from each other, facing toward the center. Behind one chair is a boy, behind the other a girl. The other children clap their hands and sing:

Cuef'm pawd, Délina!
Cuef'm vied, c'est Délina!
Mamman mamman, Délina!
Papa papa, Délina!
Mamman mamman, Délina!
Papa papa, Délina!
Cuef'm pawd, Délina!
Cuef'm vied, c'est Délina!
Délina jabé ah jabé, Délina!
Jabé pou' la'gent, Délina! [Ex. 131]

Wherever I pass is Délina!
Wherever I turn is Délina!
Grandmother, Délina!
Grandfather, Délina!
Grandmother, Délina!
Grandfather, Délina!
Wherever I pass is Délina!
Wherever I turn is Délina!
Délina works, oh, works, Délina!
Works for money, Délina!

The two children in the center, at a given signal, begin to move, each circling his own chair. The circling continues, the girl pacing her movements in an effort to avoid meeting the boy face to face. The boy times his movements so that he may meet the girl face to face. If and when he accomplishes his purpose he takes his reward—an embrace—and another couple comes forward to repeat the play.

Another game of the courting variety is called Find a Beautiful Woman. A chair is placed in the center of the play area, and a girl is designated to sit there as the "beautiful woman." She has nothing else to do. The others sing:

Chach' pou femme qui belle oh!
Sindé, Sindé Macaya!
Chach' pou femme qui belle, hé!
Sindé, Sindé Macaya! [Ex. 132]

Look for a woman who is beautiful, oh!
Sindé, Sindé Macaya!
Look for a woman who is beautiful, brother!
Sindé, Sindé Macaya!

Holding a kerchief in his hand, one of the children marches or dances around the chair of the "beautiful woman." After several trips around, he retires and drops the kerchief in the lap of another player, who comes forward and repeats the performance. Anyone who refuses to pay his respects to the "beautiful woman" is "it."

Some games are of the personal "test" or ordeal kind. In one of them

[P 189]

18. Musical Instruments

The Haitian people have drawn heavily on both Europe and Africa for their musical inspiration. In music, as in other traditions, the country is bicultural. There is, on the one hand, the music of the social *élite*—the literate and educated class which is concentrated in the cities—and on the other hand, the music of the peasants, the plantation workers, and the lower economic groups of the town. The *élite* music is in the European or Western tradition, while the true folk music of Haiti flows, in the main, in the wake of West African musical culture. The instruments of *élite* music are primarily those of Western Europe. The instruments of the folk music of the country are those which can best interpret the mainstream currents of the West African heritage—instruments of African design and function. European-style instruments have infiltrated into the folk music too, but the over-all picture is that of a survival of African musical devices to interpret music cast in an African mold. It is the folk-music instruments which call for examination—the instruments that are made in the villages and tiny huts in the mountains, the instruments on which the significant music of Haiti depends.

The materials from which these instruments are made are usually those found upon the land. If a man wishes to make a drum, he cuts down a tree for the purpose. For material for a bamboo trumpet he goes to the bamboo grove. For a flute, he cuts a reed. Metal is used for making African-style bells, rattles, singing horns, and substitutes for bamboo trumpets.

The drum in its many forms is the most common instrument of all. It is used for dances of all kinds, for cult rites, for war music on the road and in the field, and for assembly calls and signals. Not very many years ago the older people in the south of Haiti still spoke of the "talking drums" they had seen as children.

The craft of drum making is a very skilled one, but the tools are

high. The smaller—the *bata*, or *kitá* (sometimes called *dundun*)—is about eighteen or twenty inches high. They are all called sometimes by the Yoruba name *bata*, originally applied to a two-headed instrument. 534

Arada drumheads are of cowhide, held in place by hardwood pegs set into the bodies of the drums at an angle. The drums are tuned by driving in or loosening the pegs. Even the slitting of the skins where the pegs pass through them is African in pattern. In Cuba the drums of the Arada (there called Arará) cult are made in precisely the same way, though they are used in batteries of four rather than three. [171]

In a variation of the peg type of fastening, the skin is attached to a hoop, which, in turn, is held in place by ropes laced to the pegs. Each drum maker has his own preference as to the angle and size of the pegs, the proportions of the drums, and the wood from which they are made. One drum maker near Lingwe claimed to be able to identify the region from which a drum came by examination of the pegs and the carvings around the base. 184 534

The small Arada drum, the *bata*, is usually "whipped" with two long thin sticks to provide a sharp and penetrating sound. The middle-sized drum is played with one bare hand and a stick. The stick may be straight or bowed. The bowed drumstick is known as an *egida*, the name used for the same type of stick in Dahomey.[A] On infrequent occasions the *meyere* drum is played with two sticks—one straight and one bowed. The large drum, the *mamman*, is played by the most accomplished of the drummers in the orchestra. He plays with one bare hand and one stick, which may be of various forms. It may be straight, have a hook-shaped head, or be mallet-shaped; or it may be the grotesquely twisted stick known as a *Aguerre Gainér*. All three forms are known in Dahomey and elsewhere in West Africa. 534 191

The three Haitian Arada drums, supplemented by an African-style bell known as an *ogan* and small gourd rattles (*cha-chas*), form the standard orchestra for most dances of the Vodoun cult. The *ogan*—the forged iron bell with an external striker—has all but disappeared in recent years, along with the institution of the village forge. In its place one may see any kind of metallic object, such as a hoe blade, a link of chain, or a length of pipe, all of which are referred to by the old name *ogan*. In Cuba the Arará cult preserves the bell, both in single and double form, under the same name. The word *ogan* probably derives from the Yoruba term for this instrument, *ogaunu*. 171 178 534 796

Playing in concert, the three Arada drums produce a range of tones, and the player of the *mamman*—the chief of orchestra—adds to the effect by frequently striking his stick against the side of the drum above 533 534

[A] [Herskovits and Herskovits, Suriname Folk-Lore, p. 89 The stick is also known in Suriname. Cf. p. 353, Category 116. -- Analyst]

the pegs. High notes are achieved by striking the drumhead near the rim, and low notes near the center.

The drummers usually sit together on a bench or in chairs at one side of the dance court. The larger and middle drums are slightly tipped to keep their "mouths" open; the *bata* stands squarely on its base and is therefore somewhat muted. The player of the *massamba* often drums in a standing position, bracing the instrument by means of a cord around his thigh.

Another drum associated with the Arada rites is the *massamba*. This drum is usually about six feet high, and may be from two to two and a half feet in diameter. It is played in an upright position, and two or three small "windows" near the base permit the sound to emerge. This big drum is used only for the Asentor services, at which the Dahomey "nation" plays host to the lwa of all the various rites. Usually there is only a single drummer, who plays while standing on a bench or raised platform; but on occasions, two or even three drummers play simultaneously on the single drumhead.

It is interesting to note in passing that most of the Yoruban drums have Dahomean names and are of Dahomean design, despite the fact that Yoruban religious motifs have survived. The Yoruban double-headed *bata* drum, used in Nigeria for invocation of the principal deities, appears to have survived in decadent form on the island of La Gonave, where it is known as *pangavi*. Curiously, it is played not like the Yoruban *bata* (one hand on each head) but like another Yoruban instrument, the *dundun*, or pressure drum. The instrument is held under one arm and played only on the forward head. Significantly enough, this drum is said to be used only for Nago (Yoruba) rites. Another drum reserved for Nago services is found in the region of Limbe. It resembles the Arada drum in every respect except that it stands on three carved legs.

Drums associated with the services of the Congo "nation" are distinctly different from those found in Yoruban ritual. No drumsticks are used, and the heads are of goatskin rather than cowhide and are held in place by a system of cords and hoops. The Congo drum seen today stands about three feet high; old people say that within their memory there was a variety of Congo drum as tall as a man. Unlike the Arada drum, the Congo drum usually has no carved or painted decoration. For the "pure" Congo rites, two of these instruments, accompanied by gourd or metal rattles of various kinds, constitute an orchestra. One typically Congo rattling device, called *mayaya*, consists of three large gourds containing pebbles, on the top of a long pole.

A variant of the Congo drum is used for Petro rites. It is similar

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Hait SV3

easily be hidden, but the ganbos were simply slipped into the straw roofs and thus put out of sight. Moreover, by some strange process of reasoning, military authorities regarded the bamboos as "harmless," though they were used for the same purposes as the contraband drums. 534 648 798

There are numerous other kinds of simple percussion devices. One such instrument, now less commonly seen than previously, is a length of open bamboo laid in the crotches of two Y-shaped sticks set in the ground. Like other *cutas*, the bamboo is beaten with two sticks. Some Haitians believe that in former days such bamboos were played in batteries like a xylophone. 534

Sometimes a light-weight wooden cylinder, or perhaps a drum denuded of its playing head, is carried by the timekeeper of a coumbite. It, also, is played on the side with sticks. [461] [476]

Wooden mortars for pulverizing grain take on the character of musical instruments when used in combination with voices. When two or more mortars are used, with two men or women wielding the long polelike pestles in each mortar, the rhythmic effects can become fairly complicated. 534 533 412

The *claves* or *palos* (small hardwood sticks) are used primarily in connection with secular dances of a Cuban type, or to accompany such instruments as the guitar and the marimba. One stick is held loosely in the natural fold of the hand, so that it is free to vibrate, and is struck sharply with the second stick. The tone is almost metallic because of the hardness of the wood, usually lignum vitae. The name of the instrument is recognizable as a form of *clavar*, or *clavo*, Spanish for "peg" or "nail." It is thought that wooden shipbuilding pegs provided the name for this device, which has equivalents in West Africa. 534 535 [177] [824] [171]

Among the folk instruments there are various kinds of horns and trumpets. Cows' horns are played musically in some parts of the southern peninsula, though usually they are used as ritual instruments and signaling devices. Wooden trumpets called *pistons* are carved from the stems of the papaya tree. Conch-shell trumpets, known as *lambis*, are commonly used as signaling devices by fishermen. They are also to be found among the coumbites, in Rara festivities, and occasionally in rituals, where they are usually identified with sea deities. In carnival times the old fashioned phonograph horn makes its appearance as a combined trumpet and voice amplifier. 534 184 [824] [202] [541] [216]

Probably the most important of the trumpets is the one made of bamboo. It is called a *sarcine* or *bois bourique*. Both names have interesting origins. The cow's horn was at one time used for magico-medical purposes. The leaf doctor used it as an "applicator" of powders and potions. A small opening was made in the point of the horn, and 534 755 [237]

[See plate 8, P. 112-F. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

534 the horn itself was filled with the magico-medical preparation, which
755 was called *vaccine*. The point of the horn was applied to parts of the body which needed treatment, and the powers of the potion were thus transmitted to the affected areas. In time, the cow's horn itself came to be known as a *vaccine*. Eventually the horn used for musical purposes took over the name, which was then transferred to the bamboo trumpet. The other name by which the bamboo trumpet is known, *bois bourrique*, means burro wood. But it probably is a corruption of *voix bourrique*, meaning "donkey's voice," an accurate description of the sound it makes.

534 The vaccine consists of a length of bamboo, with a joint membrane at
533 one end cut into a mouthpiece. Trumpets of different sizes give different tones, and three to five of them together constitute a vaccine orchestra. Vaccines are employed by the coumbites in the fields, and they are heard in the towns and cities primarily during the pre-Easter festivities. In the Rara festivals the vaccine players march together, blowing and tapping their trumpets with sticks, followed by a crowd of dancers. Traditionally, the bamboo trumpet is not employed in religious music, although in recent years it has made its appearance occasionally in Congo-Guinée rites.

534 There are two kinds of musical scrapers. The one more often seen is the *grage*, a piece of sheet metal perforated in the fashion of our common kitchen grater. It is "played" by scraping a piece of wire or a nail across its rough surface. Found in secular rather than religious settings, the grage is likely to be used in combination with such instruments as the *tambourine*, marimba, claves, and basse. The second form of scraper is the *dentlé*, or *dentli*, a notched stick played with a bamboo scraping blade. The free end of the stick is sometimes braced against a bench or a plank, which acts as a sounding board. Some Haitians reported that in the old days gourds were used as sounding chambers.

534 The scraper in one form or another appears to have both Indian and
171 West African precedents. Its relationship to the washboard as used in Negro folk music in the United States is obvious. The notched gourd
[177] called the *guiro*, found in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and other West Indian islands, appears to be present in Haiti only as an imported instrument.

534 Rattles of various types are used in religious and secular dances, in
535 the invocation of deities, and as accompaniment for solo singing. The most common of the rattles is the simple cha-cha, or *kwa-kwa*. It is a small gourd with a wooden handle, with seeds inside. It is usually played by the singing leader as a device to keep time. Sometimes the long dry seed pods of the cha-cha tree are used as a substitute.

000 In the Rara season two special rattles are used. One of them is made

534 its tension is varied by pressure on the bowed stick with the other hand, producing a change of pitch. The covered hole acts as a sound chamber.

In a "portable" model of the mosquito drum a tin pail or can is used for a sounding chamber. The pail is inverted and fastened to a small plank, to which the sapling also is affixed. It is believed by some observers that the instrument has special significance during the pre-Easter holidays (Mardi Gras and Rara),* but it may be used at almost any time of the year. The "accompaniment" for the mosquito drum usually consists of some kind of *cata*—sticks beaten upon a board or on the drumhead itself. On occasion, two or three of these instruments are beaten together, and the rough bark membrane may be rasped for additional effects. Most of the songs that go with the mosquito drum are secular. One of the appropriate songs favored by children goes:

[541]

[533] [534]

Maringouin dit moin ta zwing oh!
Maringouin dit moin ta zwing!
Ta zwing oh!
Ta zwing! [Ex. 166]

Mosquito says I will zwing, oh!
Mosquito says I will zwing!
Will zwing, oh!
Will zwing! *

534 191 The earth bow has a clear African ancestry. In almost identical form it has been found in the French Sudan, among the Washambala of East Africa, the Bongos in the eastern Congo, the Bafia and Baya in the Cameroons, the Fulbe in the Sahara region, and the Futadjallon people in Nigeria.

The German explorer Georg Schweinfurth might have been describing a Haitian scene when he wrote, some eighty-five years ago, of the Bongos:

> Performers may be seen sitting for an hour together with an instrument of this sort: They stick one end of the bow into the ground, and fasten the string over a cavity covered with bark, which opens into an aperture for the escape of the sound. They pass one hand from one part of the bow to another, and with the other they play upon the string with the bamboo twig and produce a variety of humming airs which are really rather pretty. This is a common pastime with the lads who are put in charge of the goats. I have seen them apply themselves very earnestly and with obvious interest to their musical practice, and the ingenious use to which they apply the secrets of the theory of sound.

* The hum of the mosquito as it strikes.

[Comhaire Sylvain, Les Contes haitiens, pp. 97-98. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst]
[Curt Sachs, Geist und Werden der Musikinstrumente (Berlin, 1934), pp. 60-61. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]
[Schweinfurth, The Heart of Africa, I, 287. Cf. p. 354 Category 116. -- Analyst]

[P 340]

5. Translations of Songs in Chapter 19

533 539 Many of the Creole song texts included with the music in chapter 19 are translated and explained in earlier chapters. The following examples are translations of song texts in chapter 19 to which there is no reference elsewhere in the book.

EXAMPLE 133

Ezilie Wèdo, *ago*, oh!
The Creoles say like this,
I am not in Africa any more,
I shall do as I please!
The Creoles say like this,
I am not in Africa any more,
I shall do as I please, oh!
I bring myself,
I take myself away,
I do what I please, oh!

[196] [192] (Ezilie Wèdo is the name of a loa. She boasts that she comes to Haiti and returns to Africa whenever she wishes. The word *ago* is exclamatory and means something like "I am here.")

EXAMPLE 134

The Forty Days [Lent], three women, three virgins,
Prayers for the saints, prayers for the walking saints!
Prayers for the loa Saint Antoine, oh, we ask your pardon!

EXAMPLE 135

In Africa are loa, oh!
Ewo ewo, hounsi kanzo!
Ewo ewo, hounsi kanzo!
In Africa are loa, *aibobo!*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

(*Evo évo* is ritual language. Hounsi kanzo are the servitors of the hounfor being addressed by an unidentified loa.) 533 539 [198] [794]

EXAMPLE 136

Achadé, oh, oh!
Achadé, I have no mother here to speak for me!
Achadé, oh!
Achadé, I have no mother here to speak for me!
Oh Achadé, oh!
Ogoun is bad, oh!
Achadé Papa!
Ogoun is bad, oh!
Etc.

(The song is addressed to the loa Achadé; it complains of the behavior of another loa, Ogoun.) [782]

EXAMPLE 137

Beat the drum for me!
I shall . . . , beat the drum for me!
Etc.
Three times after the Angelus, oh!
Three times after the Angelus, oh!

(This appears to be a children's game song. Three "times" after the Angelus would be three hours after six o'clock in the evening.) [524]

EXAMPLE 138

Liberist fell down!
Liberist fell down! *Adiê!*
I am sending a whip for his back!
Etc.

(A children's game song.)

EXAMPLE 139

Adaïzo!
Miyenvalo Aloko, my Loko, Adaïzo!
Miyenvalo Aloko, my Loko, Adaïzo!
Miyenvalo my Loko, Adaïzo!
Etc.

(This is a song of supplication to the loa Loko. The word *miyenvalo* signifies supplication.) [782]

EXAMPLE 140

Ten cents is not a dollar,
Cousin, don't take cousin, oh, cousin!

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Cousin, oh, cousin, oh,
Cousin, don't take cousin, oh, cousin!

[436] (A *gourdain* is one-quarter of a gourde, or the equivalent of five cents in United States money. *Dé gourdain* is ten cents.)

[198] EXAMPLE 141 consists entirely of ritual language.

EXAMPLE 142

Call Damballa, call Domici, call Damballa Wèdo,
Damballa, call Damballa Wèdo, Damballa.

[196] (Damballa and Domici are the names of loa.)

EXAMPLE 143

Ibo, I am a big man, oh!
Ibo, I am a big man, oh!
Ibo, I am the patriarch, oh, I am the patriarch, oh,
I am the chief of my house!

[196] (Ibo is the name of a loa, from whose point of view the song is being sung. Ibo is stating his seniority in his house, or family, for there are other loa related to him. The word *grand* in Creole, as used here, is [192] difficult to translate. It means good or elder, or both. A *grand famille* is the oldest in the extended family, and usually carries the connotation of head or chief.)

EXAMPLE 144

Ibo Ibo é, Samardi Kama!
Etc.

[196] (Samardi Kama is the name of a loa of the Ibo family. The song consists of a repetition of his name, with variations.)

EXAMPLE 145

Ibo Ibo é, Marianni é!
Etc., with variations.

[196] (This is a song to the loa Marianni, of the Ibo family. Except for his name, in various combinations, there are no words.)

[198] EXAMPLE 146 is a song for the making of magic. It is entirely in ritual lan-
[189] guage.

EXAMPLE 147

Call Osange, call Labosan in the water!
Osange, oh, call Osange in the water!
Osange, oh, call Osange in the water!

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

(A song for the loa Osange. Literally, the song specifies Osange "in the water," but the sense is "under the water," where the loa reside. 533 539 [192]

EXAMPLE 148

Yabofé my dear, they don't need me!
I will see [enter through] the center post if they *djaguél*
Yabofé my dear, they don't need me!
I will see the center post if they *djaguél*
Ferei doesn't see me any more!
I will see the center post if they *djaguél*

(Yabofé and Ferei are the names of loa. Even though addressed as "Yabofé my dear," it is Yabofé who is speaking. If one thinks of it as "Dear Yabofé says," the shifting point of view becomes less confusing. The term *djagué* indicates a kind of tension and excitement which builds up before possessions take place. Yabofé says that if the people *djagué* he is prepared to enter through the center post.) [176]

EXAMPLE 149

Take me (to go), oh!
To the house, oh!

EXAMPLE 150

Damballa! Damballa!
Damballa Wèdo Damballa!
Damballa, *enhé!*
Sacred Damballa! Damballa!

(The song is an invocation to the loa Damballa. The word *enhé* is exclamatory.) [182] [192]

EXAMPLE 151

Ibo Lélé, oh!

(Ibo Lélé is the name of a loa.)

EXAMPLE 152

We thread our way [like a snake],
Damballa Wèdo is a snake, oh!

(The "threading" is a description of conventionalized dance movements suggesting the crawling of a snake. The loa Damballa is identified as a snake.) [535] [176]

EXAMPLE 153

Loko Sindé asks for wind, é!

533
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Wind, wind, wind, Loko Sindé asks for wind!
Wind, wind, wind!

[996] (The loa Loko Sindé calls for wind to make the sailboat move.)

EXAMPLE 154

Innocent, don't you see I'm innocent!
It is God in heaven who will judge me!
Innocent, don't you see I'm innocent!
It is God in heaven who will judge me!
Ferei's goat here looks for the water road!
The goat of the saints seeks the road to the house!
In Africa everyone is sick, oh!
Papa, I will save them!

EXAMPLE 155

Marianni, oh!
Adié, Moundongue!
Marianni!
To the other side I am passing!
I am leaving here!

[996] (This is a song to the loa Marianni Moundongue. He says he is leaving the hounfor to return to the other side—that is, Africa.)

EXAMPLE 156

Azui, oh, I am a snake, oh!
Azui Papa, I am a snake, oh!
Azui, oh, I am a snake, oh!
Azui Papa, I am a snake, oh!
Don't you see the pouin there is spoiled?
Don't you see the pouin there is spoiled?
It has rolled into the mud!
I sound my asson!

[996] (Azui is a loa characterized as a snake. The second part of the song is topical. It appears that a pouin, or magic bundle, has fallen into the mud and been soiled. The last line represents words of the houngan, who shakes his ritual rattle.)

EXAMPLE 157

Ah! It is I, it is I, it is I!
It is I, oh, it is Mademoiselle Ayida, it is I!
Sitting by the boat there they speak ill of us (me), oh!
It is I, oh, it is I, centerpost, it is I!

[996] (Mademoiselle Ayida is the loa Ayida Wèdo.)

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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EXAMPLE 158

Ayida isn't joking, oh!
Ayida isn't joking with them!
Eula, [ritual] language, oh!
Ayida isn't joking, oh!
Ayida isn't joking with them!
Those who wish to be satisfied are satisfied!
Those who wish to be angry are angry, oh!
Ayida, oh!
Ayida isn't joking with them!

EXAMPLE 159

Long live the king and dear queen, oh!
Another misfortune, [they] talk behind my back!
Long live the king and dear queen, oh!
Another misfortune, [they] talk behind my back!
Fire, oh, heat!
Fire, oh, heat, oh!
Another misfortune, [they] talk behind my back!

EXAMPLE 160

Legba Aguator é!
Oh what loa are you?
Agó I am a loa!
Legba Aguator é!
Oh what loa are you here?
Quitti quitti yé, oh, I am a Nago loa!
Legba Aguator é! What loa are you!

EXAMPLE 161

Oh, *colico ya ya,* my little banza, *colico!*
In truth, *colico ya ya,* my little banza, *colico!*
Colico ya ya, my little banza, *colico!*
A non paillé colico ya ya, my little banza, *colico!*

(A children's story song. The italicized parts are not translatable. The banza is a small musical instrument; currently the word is used for a banjo or fiddle, formerly it designated an instrument of African origin.) [534]

EXAMPLE 162

Adié Compère Frog, that is not running!
Frog hops, ti dong, ti dong dong, frog hops!

(A children's song from a story about a race between the frog and the horse.)

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1968) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

533 EXAMPLE 163
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The pig says wain!
The pig says wain, hot mama!
Etc.
See the pig having fun!
Enkè, enkè, hot mama!

(A children's *gage* song.)

EXAMPLE 164

Bwèment rwo!
Adieu, Bwèment, make Bwèment walk!
Bwèment, that's it, that's it, Bwèment!
Make Bwèment walk!

(A children's game song.)

533 EXAMPLE 165
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You arrive, Rigal, you enter!
You arrive, Rigal, you arrive!
When Rigal turned into a large pig,
He came to Jacmel to eat us!

(This song names a specific individual, Rigal, as having turned into a pig, like a member of the Vinbindingue Society, but it is not clear whether it is intended to be taken seriously or is merely banter.)

EXAMPLE 166

I will zwing, oh!
The mosquito says I will zwing, oh!
Etc.

[534] (Zwing is the sound the mosquito makes. The song is usually sung to the accompaniment of the *tambour maringouin*, or mosquito drum.)

EXAMPLE 167

The small boy stands on the terrace,
He stamps his feet *dao dao!*
The small boy stands on the terrace,
He stamps his feet *dao dao!*
Oh, [unchained?] gives them *paillette*, oh!
The small boy stands on the terrace,
He stamps his feet *dao dao!*
[Unchained?] gives them *paillette*, oh!
Furiously gives them *paillette*, oh!
Mayousse!
Find your woman, *mayousse!*
Mayou-yousse!

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Your share, *mayouse*!
Find your woman, *mayouse*!
Mayou-pouse!

(*Paillette* means "all decorated up," "fancy," "in carnival regalia." It is also the name of a dance, as is *mayouse*, used here as an exclamation.) [192] [535]

EXAMPLE 168 was said to be in "Spanish."

EXAMPLE 169

Go to your mother's house,
Go to your mother's house,
Go to your mother's house, my dear,
Do not come and give me an argument!
Go to your mother's house, my dear,
Go to your mother's house, my dear,
Go to your mother's house, my dear,
And do not give me an argument!
Little girl who doesn't know how to wash and iron,
Go home to your mother,
Little girl who doesn't know how to wash and iron,
Go home to your mother!
Angelico, Angelico, go to your mother's house!
Angelico, Angelico, go to your mother's house!

EXAMPLE 172

Oh I'm not a mule,
Oh I'm not a mule, oh!
The farmer takes me to carry his coffee!

(A good-natured protest song of the kind often sung by coumbites.) [496]

EXAMPLE 173 has no text. It is exclamatory throughout.

EXAMPLE 174

É Laiza, where should I go, Laiza é!
Laiza, the children are hypocrites, oh!
Etc.

EXAMPLE 175

Ewa Mambo Susan, I am cutting trees
To take away the honey!

EXAMPLE 176

Adiou kining kining kining,
Oh I say my prayer to God to send rain!

(The first line is ritual language, but it appears to have been originally a phrase recited by the prêt' savane.) [198]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1968) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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EXAMPLE 178

Osan, oh, Lèlè, oh!
Osan, oh, Lèlè, oh!
They take the asson of the loa and serve evil, oh!
Let it sink!

[626] [976] (The song criticizes someone who has become a houngan and has used his powers wrongly. Osan Lèlè is the loa to whom the complaint is being addressed, or he may be the one lodging the complaint.)

EXAMPLE 179

Farmer, call the loa for me, *ago-é!*
Farmer, call the loa for me *now*,
Call the loa for me now,
Gèdé has engaged me!

[976] [192] (Gèdé is a loa. *Habitant* signifies "farmer" or "peasant" but could be translated as "countryman.")

EXAMPLE 180

Boulicha, I arrive,
See my misfortune!
I will cut them, I have no knife!
Boulicha Nago, I will cut them, *malovié!*

[976] [198] (The loa Boulicha Nago announces his arrival and complains that people have mistreated him. He says he will avenge himself without a knife. *Malovié* is ritual language.)

EXAMPLE 181

I am going to see the hounsi bossale, oh,
I am going to see if they are in accord with me.
Etc.

EXAMPLE 182

I cry honor before my loa's altar,
Cry honor, and no one replies!
I cry honor before my loa's altar,
Cry honor, and no one replies!
All who speak well [of me], I am here, I will listen, oh!
All who speak evil [of me], I am here, I will listen to them!
They sign my name, Allada, but they do not sign my feet,
I ask where will they see me!

2: Courlander B-S (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

CHAPTER 5: *Services for the Loa and the Family Ancestors* (*pp. 41–74*)

[1]Note that the houngan and the laplace are performing services normally performed by the *petit savane*.

[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 165.

[3]Parsons, *Spirit Cult in Haiti*.

[4]Account given by Jean Ravel Pintro.

[5]Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana.

[6]Account given by Volusia Saintvil, A. W. Cardinall notes in his book *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 69): "Trees are in most cases treated with respect. Before a man dare fell one for a canoe he must and invariably does sacrifice to its spirit and apologizes for the harm he is about to do it."

[7]The rite of *rafraîchi tête* is conducted periodically for a *maît' tête* after the original *lavé tête* ceremony. The purpose is to "refresh" the loa and make him content with his residence in the head of the devotee.

[8]Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, p. 233.

[9]It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain Negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form.

[10]Odette Menneson Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Voudoun Loa," in Appendix A of Deren, *Divine Horsemen*, p. 264.

CHAPTER 6: *Songs of the Peristyle* (*pp. 75–94*)

[1]This theme is further commented on in chap. 13. Compare with the following excerpt from a Surinam song reported by Herskovits in *Suriname Folk-Lore* (p. 689):

> I have no mother there,
> I have no father there,
> I have no sister there,
> I haven't got anybody there.

CHAPTER 7: *In the Mapou Tree: Magic, Demons, and Compacts* (*pp. 95–104*)

[1]Simpson, "Haitian Magic," *Social Forces*, October, 1940, p. 97.

[2]Note the coincidence of the term *gris-gris* or *grigri* as used in the United States, where it has the same meaning as *mojo*, or "voodoo" charm.

[3]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 503.

[4]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, p. 243.

CHAPTER 8: *Mardi Gras and Rara: Jugglers, Maypoles, and Kings* (*pp. 105–109*)

[1]Aubin, *En Haïti*, p. 42.

[2]Marionettes of this kind have been observed in both East and West Africa and are well known in the region of Senegal. I saw a phallic marionette, virtually identical with the Haitian version, in the neighborhood of Khartoum, Sudan.

CHAPTER 9: *Land and Work* (*pp. 110–121*)

[1]Franklin, *The Present State of Haiti*, p. 362.

[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 300 ff., describes Dahomean polygamous marriage in its various forms. Although Dahomean plural marriage is complex in terms of gifts, obligations, and

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

relations between the husband and the wife's family, it is nevertheless commonplace for men who can afford it to have more than one wife.

[3]Simpson, in "Sexual and Familial Institutions in Northern Haiti," *American Anthropologist*, October–December, 1942, p. 656, observes that in northern Haiti there are three distinct types of plaçage. "A *femme-caille* shares her mate's house, while a *maman pitite* is a woman who has born children for a man without living in his house. A *femme plaçée* does not live in her consort's house, and she has given him no children." Although none of these women has any legal rights of inheritance, Simpson notes, "moral claims to a man's property stand in descending order for these three classes of plaçées."

[4]Johnston, *The Negro in the New World*.

[5]UNESCO, *The Haiti Pilot Project*, p. 18.

[6]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 515.

[7]The group work patterns of Haiti show a common ancestry with Negro gang work patterns in the United States. While nothing as formalized as the coumbite persists among American Negroes, similarities are striking. The emphasis on rhythm, the swinging of hammers or picks in unison, the need for a singing leader, the responsive chorus, and the frequent use of some kind of percussion to keep time, all derive from a common concept of the nature of group work.

[8]Herskovits, "Some Aspects of Dahomean Ethnology," *Africa*, Vol. V (July, 1932), pp. 266–276.

[9]Cardinall, *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 109), observes that among the Krachi people of Togoland "no man may have sexual intercourse with a woman for seven days before he goes hunting."

[10]An Ashanti story told by Rattray in *Akan-Ashanti Folk-Tales* credits the hedgehog with owning the original hoe; according to this version, the hoe escaped across the sea to the country of the white men, who then possessed the secret. Afterward, the white men brought many hoes to Ashanti.

Chapter 11: *Dancing and Dance Drama* (*pp. 126–136*)

[1]Quoted in Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 73.

[2]Actually a banjo-like instrument of African provenience. The similarity of the word *banza* to *banjo* appears to be more than a coincidence.

[3]Saint-Méry, *De la danse*, as translated by Lillian Moore in "Moreau de Saint-Méry and Dance," *Dance Index*, October, 1946, p. 238.

[4]Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[5]Brandy or rum with gunpowder is sometimes drunk by persons possessed by the loa Ogoun, deity of war.

[6]Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[7]United Nations photograph no. 62065.

[8]Students of United States Negro life will recognize the word *coundjaille* as a variant of *coonjine*, a dance known on the lower Mississippi. According to one observer, Dr. Willis James of Spelman College, Atlanta, small Negro boys on the docks used to call to the boat passengers:

> "Throw me a nickel
> Throw me a dime
> If you want to see me
> Do the coonjine."

The term *coonjine* is still used to mean hand-loading of cotton bales on river boats. When this loading was done mainly by hand some years ago, the stevedores worked rhythmically in a line and sang. An old man from Louisiana testified that within his own memory the dockside *coonjine* was accompanied by makeshift drums and other percussion.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

527 On Saturday nights one hears the drums beating all over the country, but if one follows the sound he is more than likely to end [534] up at nothing more esoteric than a neighborhood dance. Other [535] musical instruments than drums are rare, but any community has drums; and these set a rhythm to which one can dance. Generally food is available at these affairs, as well as drinks both hard and soft. 273 It is not extraordinary to discover that a few of the men have drunk rather freely of clairin, the raw rum of the country; most drunkenness seems to lead to good-natured ribaldry rather than to offensive violence. It is unusual for a drunken man to cause damage of any 535 serious nature. The dancing corresponds neither to American ballroom dancing nor to set folk dancing. Most of it is done solo, and an individual participates or remains on the outskirts of the enclosure as • 533 the mood of the moment impels him. Over the beat of the drum can be heard one of the current songs, more than likely a bit smutty in nature, and frequently poking fun at some well-known personage, or making allusions which in normal speech might seem crude.

541 One of the popular Sunday afternoon sports is the *gagwère*, or cock-[525] fight, held under a shelter back of a home. Much small betting goes on. The spectators sit or stoop close around the dusty ring, talking to the cock they are backing, commenting on the fight, offering advice to the owner. Between rounds the cocks are rubbed down, sprayed with water or rum, fondled and excited anew. Toward the latter stages of any fight the spectacle becomes gory and, to the uninitiated, distinctly cruel.

526 There is singularly little sport in Haiti. Élite youths play tennis; boys enjoy football; and swimming is a common diversion. Few sports are competitive and, so far as the writer has observed, the peasants have in their games practically nothing resembling organization.

I: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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ABOVE, *A country dwelling.*
BELOW, *A combite at work.*

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[facing P. 11]

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

made of key-men in the district informally called *chefs d'escuade*. They have the reputation of being those to whose call a number of men, perhaps a dozen, perhaps two or three times that many, will respond and come to give the aid that is desired. Such a person is given a "bouquet"—a bottle of *clairin*—which insures the appearance of himself and his group on the date set. A *combite* may be held at any time during the week except Sundays, which are dedicated to rest, and Tuesdays (in earlier times Mondays), when tradition holds a person must be free to work his own fields and care for tasks needed to be done at his own house. There is no requirement in either law or custom to respond to the call for communal work, and the larger landowners, who usually reside in the towns, rarely participate in a *combite*. So great is the pleasure derived from work of this sort, however, and so living is the realization among the peasantry of its potential benefits, that a man hesitates before he refuses to take part in a *combite* to which he has been summoned. Sometimes a man who has been faithful in his attendance at *combites* and has worked well at them falls ill during the time for planting or for clearing his ground of underbrush or for hoeing. In such case a *combite* is summoned, and even though this man is unable to offer the usual feast, his services are remembered and the men work with a will to insure the proper preparation of his ground.

The scene in a field where a large *combite* is at work is an arresting one. The men form a line, with a drummer in front of their hoes. The *simidor*, who leads the singing as he works with the others, adds the rhythm of his song to the regular beats of the drum, thus setting the time for the strokes of the implements wielded by the workers. This drum, slung about the neck of the drummer, is of the European form, never the hollowed-out African type that figures in religious rites. Its sound can carry far, however, and thus it not only beats the time for the hoes, but notifies all concerned that the *combite*

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

241 is under way. The size of the *combite* is judged by the number
461 of drums and *lambi*, or conch-shell horns used, for where two
476 or three of either are required, an especially large group of
534 workers is usually assembled. It may be observed in passing that it is undoubtedly the sound of this *combite* drum, heard in the mountains or through the brush by travelers, that has so often been mistaken for the "mysterious booming" of the *vodun* drums.[1]

241 The preparation of the food is the work of the women of
524 the household giving the *combite*, aided by their female rela-
252 tions and the wives of friends and neighbors. This is no small
476 task, for goats and even a bullock may be killed to feed a large *combite*, while in addition other dishes to go with the meat must be cooked. Each woman is given charge of a great pot and does her best to see to it that an appetising dish is ready for the men when their work is done. While the food
476 is being cooked, the real object of the *combite*, the clearing
241 of the field, is being pursued. A *chef d'esquade*, usually with
461 a small group, begins the afternoon's labor, and, being a fast worker, he himself sets the pace. As more men arrive, he walks about, encouraging the constantly increasing number of men in their efforts, seeing to it that the tempo originally set is continued, and when necessary picking up a hoe to restore a lagging rhythm. Occasionally the *chef d'esquade* will
[526] stand in front of the men to make sure that all keep together, and if the lazy cannot be roused to work by direct order or through ridicule, he will drive them away.

The work progresses with incredible speed as the line moves down the field. In one case a *combite* of between fifty and seventy-five men completely cleared a field of several acres in a single afternoon, and this without undue effort or what appeared to be the expenditure of much energy. The flashing of the hoes in the brilliant sunlight accentuates the color of the scene; each implement is raised high above the head of the one who wields it, to be brought down at the proper in-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

ABOVE, *Preparing the food for a combite feast.*
BELOW, *Drums marking the beat for the hoes.*

[facing P. 72]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

number, exclamations of pleasure were heard that the gods were responding. Outwardly, the ritual seemed completely disorganized, the "*loa*" and the spectators moving, mud-bespattered, tense, from the table for Bosu to that for Simbi, and back, or to the *trône*.

The singing went on without interruption to the accompaniment of the bell and occasional blasts of the whistle. Among the songs heard during this period of possession were:

Bosu li join' qui chose a tè,	Bosu found something on the ground,
Pas remassé li.	Do not pick it up.
Bosu ma'ché,	Bosu goes about,
Li join qui chose a tè',	He found something on the ground,
Pas remassé li.	Do not pick it up.
Un va entrave	You will come to harm
Si ou ramassé li.	If you pick it up.
Va enragé Bosu.	You will anger Bosu.
Simbi en Deux Eaux,	Simbi en Deux Eaux
M'we fé p'ou,	I do for you,
F'e p'moin,	Do for me,
Fi-a, Congo,	Help, O Congo,
Congo Zandor.	Congo Zandor.
Simbi Kita Kita, travaille pour nous,	Simbi Kita Kita, work for us,
Jodi-a pour nous,	Today for us,
Demain pou' zott'.	Tomorrow for others.
Erzilie, o Lemba,	Erzilie, o Lemba,
M'ap' mandé coté Erzilie ye.	I ask, where is Erzilie.
Mangé a'paré.	The food is ready.
Gedenibo, derrière la croix, Gede,	Gedenibo, behind the cross, Gede.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

before returning for the night's effort. By midnight the dance is in full swing. Though individuals here and there may absent themselves for a time, the attendance remains relatively constant, until as the crowing of cocks marks the approaching dawn, the number of dancers begins to dwindle rapidly, and with full daylight few remain other than members of the family. Only rarely does a *vodun* dance last well into the morning; what one sees after sunrise are the poorer drummers beating their mediocre rhythms for the young people who continue a desultory circling about the central pole. This does not mean that the *vodun* deities shun the daylight. It is merely because the participants must hurry away to get into their Sunday clothes for early mass in the village church.

The obligations of the family giving a dance are clearly established by tradition. Most important is the *tonnelle*, which they must build, and the drums and their accessory gong and rattles, which they must furnish. The drummers are not paid, but are given much attention when the refreshments that must be provided are distributed. These usually take the form of *clairin*, though coffee and bread may also be offered the guests early in the morning. The *clairin*, or raw rum, is passed from time to time, but not in sufficient quantity to cause inebriation. Those who supplement this with a generous supply of their own, and show the effect of it, are regarded with anything but approval.[1] Other accessories for the dance which must be at hand are the banners used to salute the deities, and the candles and water needed to bring those possessed out of the more violent stages of their seizures. If anything else is required or the guests desire further refreshments, these may always be bought from the women who set up their little stands at every dance.

Drums, iron, and rattles are indispensable for a *vodun* dance. The drums, of the characteristic hollow-log African type, tuned with pegs inserted in the sides and reinforced with twine wound about the stretched heads of cow-hide or goat-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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skin, are played in batteries of three, the largest being called *manman*,[3] the middle the *seconde*, and the smallest the *bula*.[4] To be used in dances, the drums, like the *loa* of the worshippers, must be "baptized," as will be seen when an account of their making and consecration is given in a later chapter. The iron, or *ogan*, usually consists of the blade of a hoe struck by a large spike, and the rattle, *açon*, in the form most often encountered, is a rounded calabash, containing seeds or pebbles. The iron and the rattles set the basic, steady beat about which the complex drum rhythms play. The smallest drum first takes the time after the iron and the rattles have begun, the notes being played with an accessory figure by means of two thin sticks. The medium-sized drum is next heard, while the *manman*, ritually the most important of the three, comes in last. The *seconde* also has two sticks, one short, thick, and straight, the other a small bow, which gives an added resilience to the notes of the drums' subsidiary rhythms. In playing the great drum, the single crooked stick, called a *baguette*, is held in the right hand, while the left strikes the drumhead with heel or fingers according to the quality of tone desired. The drumstick itself is wielded either against the skin head or against its wooden side, thus permitting a further variation in tone.

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When "salutes" to the gods are called for by the drums, it is the voice of the *manman* that signals the sweeping circular movements of the dancers, dictating with its beat the dips and semi-prostrations of this figure in the ritual dancing, called *asagwe*. The drum rhythms are always distinctive for each type of *loa*, and every devotee knows the rhythms which call his god.

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The drums and iron are the focus of all activity of the dance, especially since those who are possessed dance facing the drums, in whose beat is heard the voice of the gods. Hence the spectators cluster most closely about them, for anything of significance which happens must happen here. The players of the rattles — it is but rarely that more than one rattle is not

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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employed — do not remain with the drummers. These instruments are ordinarily in the hands of *hunsi*, who join the massed ring of dancers that constantly circles about the center pole. These dancers are not under possession, but are merely enjoying the evening or participating in the social aspect of the dance preparatory to becoming possessed. The rattle is held high above the heads of the dancers, and its sharp, steady notes are produced by quick, short, measured movements of the wrist. The end of a song, which sometimes does not come until fifteen or twenty minutes after its initial statement, is usually marked by a continuous shaking of a rattle, a process which effectually breaks the rhythm and makes it possible to begin a new song. The player of the rattle is an outstanding singer, who usually initiates the fresh refrain and continues to sing its repetitions as soloist in the alternation of solo and chorus which marks Haitian *vodun* singing as it marks most West African and New World Negro religious music.

When a possession occurs, the songs for the deity who has "arrived" are taken up as the drums play the rhythm of the god. As his possession comes on, the devotee falls to the ground, rolling before the drums, or staggers blindly about the dancing-space, or otherwise follows the characteristic behavior attributed to his god. After a time he begins to dance, whereupon a *hunsi* or the *hungan*, taking a calabash of water in one hand and a lighted candle in the other, dances opposite him, saluting the god as he performs his every movement in reverse; if he turns clockwise, the one dancing with him turns counter-clockwise; if he moves to the right, the other moves to the left. Except when executing these turns, the functionary of the cult never takes his eyes from the eyes of the possessed person, almost, as it were, hypnotizing him to help him come to himself. Eventually the possessed one recovers sufficiently to take the candle and the calabash of water in his own hands. Often spilling water as he moves, he makes his way to the central pole, pouring an offering and making the sign of the cross with the candle before it.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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have a *hungan* divine its identity so that she might thereafter worship it and be under its protection. As in the other case discussed, the personality involved here is not without interest. The woman was one of the shrewdest traders in the Mirebalais market, and noted for her hardness. Underneath this, however, the presence of much vital energy could be felt as well as a passionate desire for gayety and attention from members of the other sex. That the essential lack of satisfaction of these drives in her life, as discussed and observed, figured in bringing on her possession cannot be doubted, and, as such, throws significant light on the nature of the psychological aspects of the phenomenon.

These instances, however, must not be thought of as a regular part of the ritual of the dances. Though a dance was attended almost every Saturday night during the course of an entire summer, and a number of *services* and other *vodun* rites in addition, these were the only occasions when a *loa bossal* appeared. In order, therefore, to document the pattern of the *vodun* dance that has already been given, some of the dances witnessed may be described in outline.

The first of these is a dance which, originally intended as the culmination of the *service* described in the preceding chapter, failed to fulfill its end because of a quarrel between two important members of the family. None the less, it proved to be one of the most spirited and typical dances witnessed. The habitation, when reached shortly after six o'clock, was deserted, except for a few people who seemed to be waiting disconsolately. Among them were several *hunsi* in white, and two who carried banners, while the three drums, each "dressed" in its skirt-like covering, stood before the entrance, the drumsticks and the *ogan* lying on the *barrière* itself. Since the *hungan* had not arrived, one or two of the men present took charge as darkness came on. Before this dance began, it was necessary to introduce the drums ceremonially into the compound, and as this was the first *vodun* dance after the es-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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AT A VODUN DANCE

ABOVE, *The dancers crowding about the central post of the shelter.*
BELOW, *Drums and drummers.*

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[facing p. 193]

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ABOVE, *At a* vodun *dance: those possessed whirling about the central post.*
BELOW, *Making the* vodun *drum: describing the sign of the cross with lighted candles over the unheaded bodies.*

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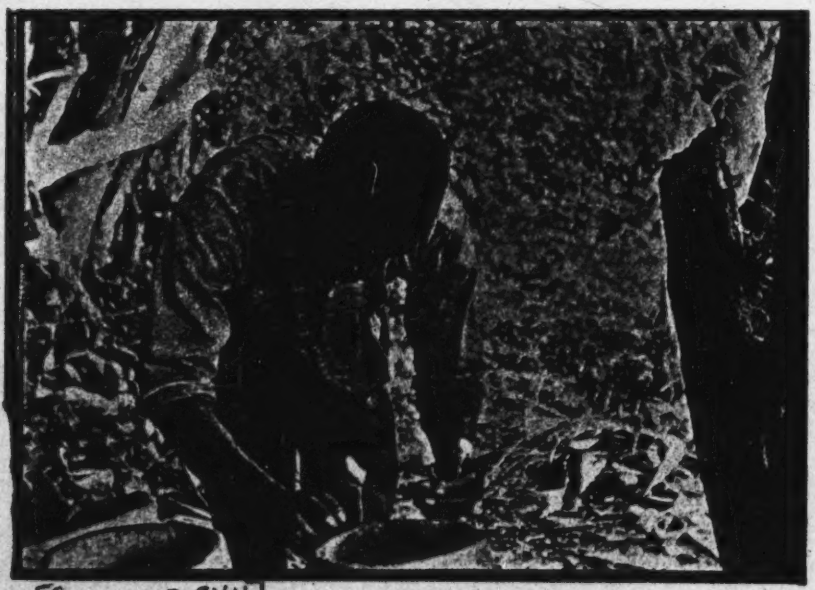

[facing p. 244]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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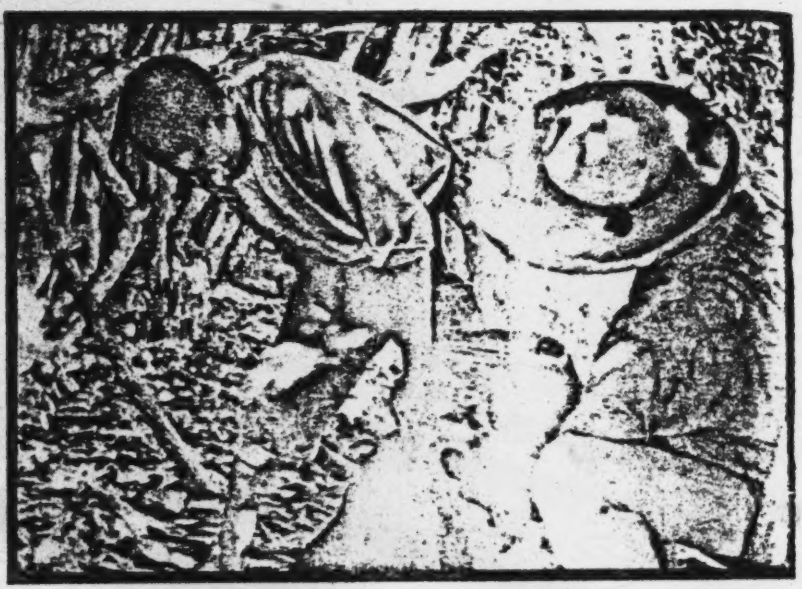

ABOVE, *Making the* vodun *drum: stretching the cow-hide heads.*
BELOW, *Consecrating the drums: they must be "dressed," like anyone who is baptized.*

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[facing p. 245]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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is ruled by God, it is necessary to invoke God with the ritual of His Church before the rites to placate the *loa* may begin. But the important business of the occasion is to placate the *loa*, and it is only when the *hungan* takes over from the *prêt' savanne* that the series of rituals commence which, for the Haitian, hold emotional force and psychological value.

In the description of the baptism of a *loa* given in a preceding chapter, the use of Church ritual in bringing the African spirits under control will be remembered. No clearer illustration can be given of this merging of traditions than in a detailed account of the manner of making and validating *vodun* drums. These drums are of the characteristic African hollow-log type, with skin heads held in place and tuned by means of pegs, which are tied fast about the drumhead with cord. Before the tree which furnished the bodies was cut, an invocation was pronounced by their maker and an offering — a *mangé sec* — was made, that all the gods might come when called by the finished drums. A candle was lighted and *verver* described about the base of the tree. Eggs, broken against the trunk, were rubbed on the bark; while both soft and alcoholic drinks were given as libations, since not all the gods desire the same refreshment. After the tree had been felled and that part of the trunk that was needed for the drums was cut off, the maker was free to proceed with shaping the bodies of the drums by first gouging out the inside of the trunk, then stripping the bark, and finally carving the characteristic foot at the base. Before the next step of boring the holes for the pegs was taken, *clairin* was poured inside each drum, at the entrance to the habitation of the maker, and toward the man's cornfield. The first hole bored in each drum was carefully marked, for this was the significant *manman*. Here the first peg is inserted; the skin head is first attached here; and here the cord about the head is first knotted; while it is the peg in this hole that must always be first struck when the completed drum is tuned.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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534 782 778 The drumheads were cut from a large ox-hide, purchased in the market place. In the early morning sunlight another "little ceremony" was performed before they were attached. Placing the three unheaded bodies of the drums in a row, with the iron in its place, the maker poured *clairin* before each, and having cut a native candle in three pieces, he took them in his left hand as he crossed himself, saying: "*Au nom d' Père, au nom d' Fils, au nom d' Saint Esprit.*" He then [788] lighted the three wicks, and taking each lighted candle in turn in his right hand, he made the sign of the cross with it and attached it to the "mother peg" of each drum. There the flames were allowed to flicker for a moment before the work of heading the drums began.

534 The hide was first attached to the "mother peg," then to the one opposite, and then to the two at right angles to the first pair. This is hard work, for to obtain the proper degree of initial tautness several men must strain at the resistant hide, and that is why four cuts are made where a peg is to go instead of the three that are needed, for frequently a strip breaks and the extra hole is used to re-thread the peg. The great drum has nine pegs, the one of medium size seven, and the small one six, not five, "because the *boula* is a thief, taking the beat away from the iron." The head was cut away from the rest of the great ox-hide only after it was in place. The final step was to knot the cord — braided the day before, of native sisal — to the *manman* peg of each drum, and then to twine it eight, six, or five times about their bodies.

534 778 788 The drums, now finished, were then put aside for a week to allow the damp heads to dry, awaiting the final sanctification. During this period they could not be played. It was held unwise to do more than tap them lightly with the finger-nail to test their resonance and the extent to which the heads were dry. Meanwhile preparations were being made for the bap- [292] tism. Drums, like human beings, must be clothed when they appear in public, and *rades*, apron-like garments, a white bro-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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cade for Damballa, a red print for Ogun, and a third, a flowered blue material, for all the other gods, were first made. They were ruffled at the bottom, with strips of the material, attached as are apron-strings, to hold them in place. Four eggs, three "native" candles, three white candles, white flour, corn flour, two cassava cakes, two biscuits, three small-sized loaves of bread, two bottles of *kola, clairin,* and holy water, were also provided for the baptism. Finally on the appointed day — a Saturday, so that the drums could afterwards be used for a *vodun* dance — the drums, drumsticks, and iron, with the dresses and the food that had been provided for the ceremony, were taken to the scene of the rite, a habitation where a *tonnelle* had been built for the accompanying dance. 534 778 788 [292]

The ceremony began at about five o'clock in the afternoon, the drums being dressed by their godmothers. Just as a child who is to be baptized in church must have godparents, so drums must have their godparents, and following the logic of this position, since the owner of the drums is regarded as their father, he uses the terms *compère* and *commère* for those who have "stood up" with his drums, just as he would for those who might sponsor his children. The *prêt' savanne* first called for some twigs from an orange tree and a bit of cotton, as the drums, standing on end, were covered with a clean white cloth. Grouped about them and ranged behind the officiant were the owner and godparents of the drums, holding lighted candles in their hands, with which they made the sign of the cross from time to time. As the prayers began, the participants crossed themselves, and the *prêt' savanne* sprinkled the drums with holy water, using a spray of orange-leaves. Among his prayers were the Credo, the Ave Maria, the Pater Noster, and the Salve, interspersed with hymns sung by the assembled group. After about half an hour of prayer the officiant, holding an egg in his hand, made the sign of the cross three times over each of the drumheads. Ordinarily the eggs would have been broken, their contents rubbed on the drum- [608] [993]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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534 778 788 heads, and *clairin* poured over these, but on this occasion the rite was postponed, for the eggs would have dampened the drumheads so they could not have been played for the evening's dance. Yet this deviation from the strict ritual did not permit any laxity in meeting the obligation when promised—that is, the day following the dance.

534 778 788 793 The *hungan* took charge as soon as the prayers were finished. Placing the drums to form a triangle on the ground, with the iron, rattles, and sticks near by, he put the offerings inside the space enclosed by the bodies, and with white cornmeal made *verver* about them, while at the foot of each drum he placed an egg; then, covering the drums with a clean cloth, he threw parched corn on it. From time to time he interrupted his silent invocations by ringing a bell held in one hand, until the arrival of the time for the vehement haggling over the price of his services, which interrupted the ritual. [552] This matter settled, he asked for the names to be given the drums, and proceeded to "christen" the small one Gran' Siligbo, the middle-sized Damballa, and the great drum Ogun Shango. At this point, were the owner desirous of having special powers given his drums, as is frequently the case, the *hungan* would endow them with a *n'âme,* or soul, at the same time instructing the spirit of the drums, called *huntôr,* in what was desired of it, and prescribing what must be given the drums by their owner to make their powers effective. But in this case no such *n'âme* was asked, and the ceremony continued.

Summoning the gods, he lifted the cloth over the drums and instructed the "father" to pour water in three places between them, to set the drums on end, and to beat one of them. This was the *seconde,* called Damballa, and its having been initially struck indicated that the god after whom it was named was most important for this set. This ended the cere- 534 778 788 mony of baptism, and the drummers took charge so that the evening's dance might begin, for now the drums were ready

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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for all uses to which those of their type are put. During their making and after their completion they had been sanctified by rites that vividly illustrate the merging of traditions in Haitian religion: by means of offerings to the African gods, and through baptism by the rites of the Church.[3]

The *action de grâce* is another integral part of *vodun* ceremonialism that is essentially Catholic, since its lengthy service is composed entirely of prayers and hymns of the Church. As has been shown, the *action de grâce,* which precedes a *vodun service,* takes place before an "altar" which, important both then and at the later, more African rites, in itself documents in no small measure the combining of Catholicism and *vodun.* One, employed at a *service* not described in the earlier chapters, was covered with a red and white checked table-cloth, on top of which a smaller white cloth was spread.* Pinned to the canopy and to the front of the table-cloth were various chromolithographs of the saints; St. Michael attacking the Devil, Mater Dolorosa, St. James, the Virgin Mary and Jesus (the Assumption), and St. Expeditius. In front of the representation of St. James stood a crucifix with the figure of Jesus, in accordance with the custom of never omitting to have one of these at any *vodun* ceremonial. The table bore many offerings; at the back were four bottles of soft drinks, with cups; while also to be seen were several hard rolls, an ear of corn, a dish containing eggs, and another holding, among other things, rice. One of the containers on the table held holy water, while candles for use both in the *action de grâce* and in the later *vodun* rituals lay beside this. Thus crucifix, candles, pictures of the saints, and holy water were combined in this ceremony with offerings of food and drink to be given the gods that the ancestors had brought from Africa.[4] The songs sung at the voduistic portions of these *services* also reflect the psychological unity of Catholic and African elements in *vodun* worship. One of these declares:

* This altar is shown in the illustration facing p. 192.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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ABOVE, *Consecrating the drums: the "godfathers" and "godmothers" standing by with lighted candles as prayers of the Church are recited.*

BELOW, *The* vodun *priest employing African rites to complete the consecration of the drums.*

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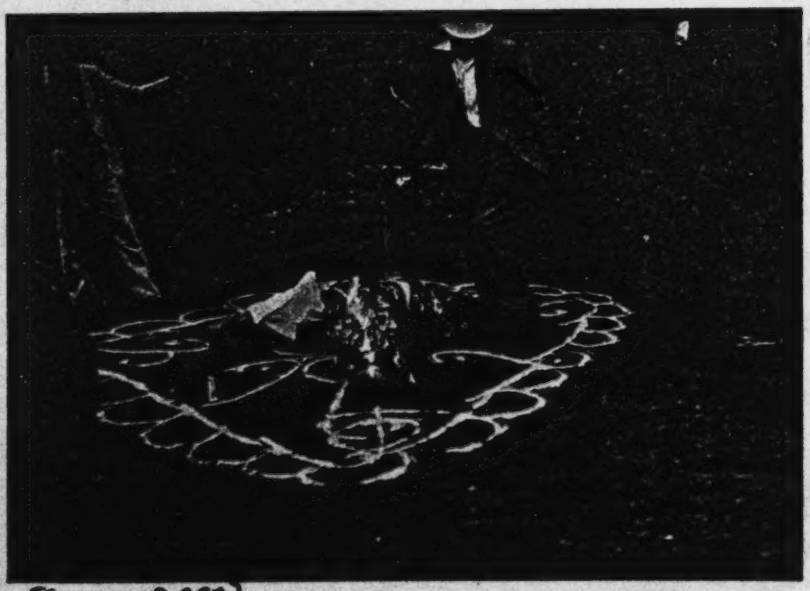

[facing P. 282]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

in many details. But, in general, the cult establishment consists of a central building of one or more rooms with an adjoining court, or peristyle, over which there is a covering—usually a straw roof. The covering, called the *tonnelle,* is supported by a number of poles, one of which is placed squarely in the center of the court. This center pole—the *po'teau mitan* or *po'teau planté*—is the focus of most of the ritual activities. The loa who descend upon the service enter by way of this pole. The ritual *vèvès,* or flour paintings, are made at its foot. Around it all the dancing takes place. On certain rare occasions when rituals are held in the open, a carefully selected tree becomes the center post—though it is by no means certain that the po'teau mitan is not, in fact, a symbolic tree.

The building adjoining the peristyle contains the inner sanctum. Here are deposited the paraphernalia of the société, such as ritual bottles and jars, flags of the société, and the iron kettles used in various ceremonies. On the walls there may be primitive paintings of the special loa of the hounfor, or perhaps of his symbol. The loa of the sea, Agwé, may be represented by a ship. Damballa, the serpent-rainbow loa, may be represented by a snake or a rainbow. Usually there are colored lithographs of Catholic saints, who have both Catholic and African names. And there are hand-beaten iron crosses, dishes containing Indian celts in which loa are believed to reside, gourd bowls, and carved wooden double and triple bowls used for services to dead twins and triplets. Upon the altar place, called *badji,* there are the *criches* or *govis,* earthen jars or bottles in which rest the loa removed from the heads of people who have died. Sometimes special niches are built on the hounfor grounds for the deities. Each cult priest designs his hounfor in his own way.

A hounfor belonging to a mambo near the town of Croix des Missions gave the appearance of having a large and prosperous société. Under the tonnelle eight beautifully carved Arada drums were suspended from a single peg. At a respectable distance hung a Martinique drum used only for dances on the occasion of a Nine Night. Inside the hounfor was an impressive display of sacred objects and decorations. One corner of the room was reserved for Symbi Yendézo, a patron loa of drinking water and rainfall. He was portrayed on the wall as a long, thin snake crawling in a maze of crosses. On the ground beneath the picture was a small concrete pool, in which two water snakes swam. Another corner was reserved for Agwé, and on his wall was a picture of a steamship. Along the back of the altar was an impressive array of govis, containing the spirits removed from the heads of deceased persons. There was a large plate of loa stones, and various protective charms stood near by. Flags and sabres

793 kola (a soft drink), *clairin*, and syrup. The houngan, entreating Chébo to
796 accept, poured a little *clairin* into the hole. The loa seemed to accept, for
782 the *clairin* was quickly absorbed in the ground. The houngan took rice
787 from the plate with his fingers, about the amount he might place in his
769 own mouth, and put it gently into the hole. He was feeding Papa Chébo, literally placing the food in his mouth. After the rice, which was dry, the houngan poured in a little more *clairin* to moisten it. He ordered the laplace to break up the bread, and then he placed a small piece in the hole and washed it down with a little rum. The houngan seemed to understand that Papa Chébo Profiel was hungry, and that he was also an epicure. He allowed him to taste the roasted corn, and then washed it down with a trickle of kola. Then he gave him a taste of the roasted peanuts, and another morsel of bread. Once Chébo got his mouth too full in his zest for the meal, and the assemblage had to wait for him to finish "coughing." Then the houngan gave him a long drink of kola to clear his windpipe. After that the houngan was more careful in the way he fed him—a little cassava, a drink, a little bread. As the houngan fed the loa, some of the spectators reached over and placed small coins in the empty dish by the hole. These too were for Chébo. Finally, Chébo was through eating. The food was gone.

769 The houngan, shaking his rattle and his bell, blew two sharp notes on
794 his whistle. At the door of the hounfor appeared l'Autorité, the hounsi
787 possessed by Papa Chébo. More than ever she resembled the loa, and less
791 than ever she resembled herself. In one hand she held a saber. Her bodily
[793] movements were spasmodic, as though she was being forced to do things
[534] to which she was not accustomed. She moved slowly into the circle, her eyes almost closed; she leaned backward, then twisted grotesquely around, jerked this way and that, buffeted by the loa. Suddenly she began to whirl.
[793] The houngan called "Tambouyé!" and the drummers beat a slow complicated rhythm, a salute to Chébo. The loa had really "entered" now. There was no mistaking the jerky, irresponsible movements of the hounsi's head and shoulders. She leaned backward as though about to fall, incredibly kept her balance, rolled forward as though she were going to plunge to the ground, and twisted herself upright once more. The saber passed close to the faces of the spectators, even scratched some of them and cut their clothing. Her movements had a definitely masculine character. Chébo Profiel was a man.

782 She reached over to seize a chicken that was held out to her. Grasping
787 its legs with her free hand, she continued her spinning, twisting, lurching
794 dance. Then she cradled the chicken, rocking it back and forth until it
796 was in a hypnotic trance. She placed it on the ground before a tiny pile
769

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Oh, a day will come when they will remember me here, *kélé manyan!*
Oh, Damballa Wèdo *é, kélé manyan.*
Oh, Ayida Wèdo *é, kélé manyan!*
Oh, a day will come for you to remember me here, *kélé manyan!*

During the evening about twenty loa and ancestors came into the *card* to talk. When the last had finished speaking the hills were already light, and the service was over.

Service for Èzilie Fréda and St. Jacques Majeur

This service took place not in the open but under a tonnelle surrounded by four walls, adjoining the hounfor of Alexis Stephan on the west fringes of Port-au-Prince. Separate from the hounfor and dance court was a shrine to the "dead" loa Gèdé Nimbo. The shrine was a small shed open on one side. Within, lighted by flickering oil lamps, was a life-size effigy of Gèdé, a scarecrow-like figure dressed in the loa's traditional attire—black tail coat and trousers, and a tall opera hat. On the otherwise blank face of the figure were smoked glasses with white rims.

The dancing was progressing under the supervision of the houngan's adjutant, the laplace. He wandered among the drummers and dancers, encouraged the singing, and issued orders here and there. No one seemed to take him very seriously. There was a good deal of joking, and the gathering seemed very much like an old-fashioned family reunion. There were perhaps a hundred dancers and spectators—friends, relatives, and devotees of Stephan's hounfor. Everyone was watching with affection an old woman who could not be restrained from dancing. She executed old classical steps and postures with a skill that called for running comment all around her. As each piece came to an end someone would step up to her and say something like: "Woy, Manman, mais ou passé mwé!" (Oh, Mother, you are better than me!). Then they would attempt to get her to sit down again, but she would only shake them off and urge the drummers to get going if they were not too tired.

Eventually, the houngan, Stephan, made a casual entrance through the door of his adjoining hounfor. He held the usual ritual rattle and bell in his hand, and sauntered around to chat with his friends.

Gradually, almost imperceptibly, the dancing became more serious. Soon, only the hounsi, the female servitors, were dancing. The drums played a salute to Legba, the first loa to be called upon in a Vodoun service. For it is Legba who opens all gates and all highways, and who paves the way for communication with other deities. Though he is not the greatest of the loa, he is one of the most ancient. The houngan spilled water on the ground as a libation, and the dancing continued.

celebrated with elaborate rituals for the dead. As in Haiti, great importance is laid on the presence of all living descendants, whose numbers are calculated to influence the ancestors' behavior. And as in Haiti, the first yams and the first rice are offered to the dead, and only after the family ritual does the family divide the crop.[5]

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Service for the Assotor Drum

The *assotor* drum is the largest and most sacred of all Haitian drums. Around it is built an impressive and elaborate service known as the *mangé assotor*, which, according to local traditions and circumstances, may be held as often as every three years or as infrequently as every twenty-one years. The period between mangés always consists of an odd number of years. A houngan from Jérémie declared the service might properly be held every three, five, or seven years. Another cult priest in the Cul-de-Sac Plain said it could be held every seven, seventeen, or twenty-one years. The assotor is known as the *plus grand moune* (the most venerable "man") of the hounfor. However, few cult centers possess an assotor. "Assotor c'est fort bagaille, c'est pas zaffai tout moune" (The assotor is powerful, it isn't everybody's affair), Haitians say. This is what a man from Jérémie tells about it:

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"The assotor is the greatest of all things in the hounfor. The Rada drums are only for the Dahomey nation. The Congo drums are for the Congo nation. The assotor is a man of Dahomey, but he is for all nations. It is for all loa—Pétro, Congo, Bumba, Dahomey. The assotor belongs to Dahomey, but when there is a great service the assotor is the host to the loa of every rite, the loa of Haiti and of Africa. When the assotor is played, the loa are awakened everywhere. Loa who have been forgotten by the Creoles (Haitians) will come to the service and mount people, and when the loa have gone, many people don't know what loa has been riding them. Some ancient spirits from far away come only to the assotor service, and when it is over they aren't heard of again.

534 796 778 184 787 [776]

"The assotor drum is not for small things, it is for great occasions. For some people there are no occasions in their whole lives great enough for an assotor service. When all other things have failed, it is only then that the assotor is called upon.

534 796 778. 787.

"If a big houngan should have an assotor drum, he can have only one, and it is the chief of the hounfor. All other drums are its servants. You can make an assotor, but it is not necessarily an assotor. It may look like an assotor and not be an assotor. To be an assotor it must not only have the shape of an assotor but it must be accepted by the loa. There was a houngan near Jérémie who made an assotor and held a great service with it,

[5 [Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana. Cf. p. 351, category 116. -- Analyst] [115]

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

534 796 778 787 but it wasn't a genuine assotor and the loa didn't come. The drummer beat the assotor, but none of the loa came. As he played, the stick kept falling out of his hand. This was a bad signal (omen). None of the people got loa in their heads. The houngan was in a great sweat, but nothing happened. Another houngan came after the third day and told him to bring the service to an end. He did that. They threw the false assotor away and no one would touch it.

534 796 778 782 787 [776] "To make an assotor, there is first a service. The houngan goes into the woods to find a great tree that is suitable. The trunk must be big enough so that the drum is at least as tall as a man. Most assotors are six feet high or more. The houngan must buy the tree from Maît' Grand Bois, the loa who is Master of the Forest. There is a service under the tree, a goat or a bull is killed, and the houngan places money on the ground for Maît' Grand Bois. Then Maît' Grand Bois mounts his horses. He enters the head of the houngénicon or the laplace. Sometimes he rides the houngan himself. He is very rough with his horses. But if he accepts the money, the houngan has the tree cut down, and he has an assotor drum made. When the drum is finished, a special stick must be made to beat it. Again they go to the woods. They carry the great assotor drum with them. There is singing but no dancing or drumming. They find a tree from which they will cut the drumstick, and there is a service. The houngan must buy the branch from which the drumstick will be made. He offers money to Maît' Grand Bois, the same as before. He spills a little water on the ground for Maît' Grand Bois. He holds a candle in his hand. They sing to Maît' Grand Bois to let them have the stick. Maît' Grand Bois is the master of all the trees, but he is thinking also of the other loa and how they feel about it. On the Island Below the Water he consults with them. If he agrees to give the stick, he makes it known by mounting some of the hounsi, or the houngan, or maybe the man who will be the special assotor drummer. Then they cut down the branch and make the drumstick.

534 778 776 "The assotor drum is not dedicated to Ogoun or Èzilie or any other single loa. If it is baptized, it is given its own name, Assotor. The spirit of the assotor is multiple, for it is the *rappel* for all loa everywhere. The spirit of the assotor is called Assotor, and it is a kind of loa, but it is not one loa but all loa.

534 796 778 776 "In the assotor service, all loa come. Ogoun, Damballa, Legba, Tijean Pétro, Dan Pétro, Gèdé, Maît' Cimitière, they all come. The big loa come and the little loa, the chiefs and their escortes. Every big loa has an escorte of twenty-one smaller loa. Some of the smaller loa have their own escortes. Damballa comes crawling like a snake. Makanda comes crawling like a snake. Ogoun comes fighting, chewing on nails or anything iron. Badé

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

comes quietly. Pié Cassé comes crawling because of his broken feet. Each loa comes in his own way. 534 796

"First there is dancing for the Congo and Pétro loa. There is dancing for the Kanga and Ibo nation. Last of all is Dahomé, for the assotor belongs to the Dahomé nation, and Dahomé is the host. 778 776 [184]

"The assotor service is the biggest of all services. It last fifteen days. Old people say that once there were services lasting more than twenty days. Every day, animals are killed—bulls, goats, pigs, chickens, turkeys—all according to the loa who are there to be fed. When Moundongue is fed, a dog's ears are clipped in his honor, because Moundongue is fond of dogs. More happens in the assotor mangé than all the rest of the year. Dahomé is host to the other nations, so the Rada service comes last. But the assotor drum is the host even to Dahomé, and it is fed last of all. [182]

"The assotor drum is dressed in the finest of clothing and kerchiefs during the mangé. It is the king of everything.

"When the mangé assotor is ended, when the drum has been fed, there is an immediate Mass held in church for the souls in purgatory. You don't need to have any special reason, but you must hold the Mass for all the dead. You serve coffee, sandwiches, cake, and other refreshments for all the people. 534 796 769.

"When there is no mangé going on, the assotor is kept in a special place in the hounfor. Every seven or nine months the houngan has a special *rappel* beaten for it on the Rada drums, and rum is spilled on the ground for it. It is a great responsibility to own an assotor. But it does great things for the houngan who owns it." 534 778 796

Service for Mait' Grand Bois at Anse-à-Veau

Orthodox tradition in the region of Anse-à-Veau places the loa Mait' Grand Bois as the most potent and venerable of deities. He is the supreme mystère, whose good will or eccentric whim determines the fortunes of all men. Somewhat subsidiary to Grand Bois, but served within the same rites, are two other non-Dahomé loa—Moundongue (of Congo origin) and Ibo. Older people of Anse-à-Veau regard this trilogy, along with Femme Grand Bois (the wife of Mait' Grand Bois), as the core of "Guinée" ritual. There is also a second group of deities, consisting primarily of Ogoun Feraille, Ezilie, and Fréda Dahomé; these loa are of the Dahomey family and are regarded as somewhat less important. Should services for any of them be held, they follow rites for the Grand Bois constellation. People in this region hold that there is only one Ibo loa, one Moundongue, one Ogoun, and one Ezilie, each of them with many names or manifestations. Legba, the Dahomean spirit of procreation, 184 776

[For footnote, see Category 116, p. 351. --Analyst]

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others only half believe, and many look upon these creatures as imaginary but exciting to talk about.

The zombie finds a favored place in the tales children make up to tell one another, and the traditional song played by children on the earth bow or mosquito drum goes:

Maringouin pinga zombie oh, Bobo Maria!
Maringouin pinga zombie!
Maringouin pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie!
Maringouin pinga zombie! [Ex. 92]

Mosquito beware the zombie, oh, Bobo Maria!
Mosquito beware the zombie!
Mosquito beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie!
Mosquito beware the zombie!

Or they may sing with great bravado, to the clapping of hands.

Chaingadaing, nou pral mangé zombie!
Chaingadaing, teau teau!
Chaingadaing, nou pral mangé zombie!
Chaingadaing, colocotol
Chaingadaing, nou pral mangé zombie!
Chaingadaing, kalsinkaintaing! [Ex. 93]

Chaingadaing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingadaing, teau teau!
Chaingadaing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingadaing, colocotol
Chaingadaing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingadaing, kalsinkaintaing!

575 and covered with tiny mirrors or bits of colored glass. The towering
533 headdress of antlers or papier-mâché sculpture unavoidably recalls similar
[292] headdresses in West Africa. Each roi has his own style of dance, which is usually accompanied by drums. It may be a belly dance, a dance of delicate balance, or one of complicated footwork and semiacrobatics such as the imitation of a pair of scissors at work. Throughout the dancing the headdress remains majestically erect.

541 In addition to the roi Lwalwali and the mâit' Rara (who is con-
575 stantly in the midst of things, blowing his whistle), there are other
524 traditional Rara personalities: the *major jonc*, who juggles with a metal
[534] baton (sometimes two or three of these jugglers work together), and the *jongleur*, a juggler or strong man who performs such feats as dancing while holding a fully set table off the ground with his teeth.

184 On the southwest peninsula, in the region around Jérémie, there
541 is a splurge of wrestling exhibitions during Rara days. Known as *pingé*,
526 this festival wrestling is done with a background of excited drumming
533 and has a striking resemblance to wrestling traditions in West Africa.
[191] Local "champions" will invade a neighboring community, sometimes traveling considerable distances to make a challenge. As in West Africa, some of these wrestlers take their own musicians with them. The musicians often are provided by the village in which the events take place. If a challenge is accepted, the spectators form a large circle, with the wrestlers in the center and the musicians to one side. There may be drums and bamboo flutes, occasionally supplemented by large earthern jars and lengths of bamboo beaten with sticks. The wrestlers are dressed only in shorts. When a man is thrown, the event is over, and another pair of wrestlers takes over. Sometimes a "champion" will take on a series of opponents until he is tired. Afterward he may move on to another community to find new competition, perhaps accompanied by a large group of friends and supporters from his own village. When the Rara season comes to an end, pingé is over for the year. It is one of the few athletic sport activities of the Haitian peasant.

541 And now and then during Rara a *debois* is seen. The *debois* is a
533 carved wooden marionette with a short handle below. Its arms and legs
556 are moved by pulling a string. It is usually painted, and sometimes it is
[831] dressed. One debois observed was provided with a loose dresslike costume; when the string was pulled, a large phallus hinged into view in an erect position. This marionette was an object of endless funmaking among spectators.[2]

Another type of marionette is the "Two Kings," made of papier-mâché and operated with strings. The "Two Kings," sitting in a papier-

[Footnote appears in Category 116, p. 351. --Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

mâché carriage or on papier-mâché horses, make their appearance during Rara as well as on the Day of the Kings (*Les Rois*). 541 536

Among the traditional paraphernalia carried by Rara groups are cocomacaque sticks, cha-cha rattles, metal rattles called *tchancy*, a set of rattles on a tall thin pole (called *jonconjon*), candelabra bearing candles or oil lamps (*lampions*), banners and flags, and such miscellaneous musical instruments as the *grage* scraper, bamboo scraping devices, the *hasse* finger drum, *assots* (beating boards), and various kinds of secular drums. 541 575 534

The general tone of Rara is nonreligious. The dancing is free from the decorous restraints which characterize most religious ritual, and some early observers of the festival were shocked by what they saw. Some of them went so far as to attribute Haiti's dense population to the "licentious activities" and reckless abandon of the spring carnival. The Catholic Church and some political administrators have sporadically sought to suppress Rara, along with Vodoun ritual. And even today in Port-au-Prince the foreign visitor often is urged to watch the elite Mardi Gras with its floats and mulatto queens as a substitute. 541 [535] [795] [656]

Although Rara has an over-all tone of secular abandon, it has links with both Catholic and Vodoun ritual. Good Friday is given over in good measure to miming the story of Jesus and Judas. A perambulating band may carry an effigy of Judas hanging from a pole. Another will burn the Judas effigy, or drag it in the dust as the crowd moves along the road. In another group a man playing the part of Judas may crawl on his hands and knees along the trail, while Jesus' avengers pursue him with long, cracking whips. 541 179 536

Tying in with Vodoun ritual, virtually all Rara drums and other paraphernalia are "dedicated" or "rededicated" before Lent in special hounfor services. And on the last day of Rara, usually late in the night, prayers are said, the loa are called upon, and some of the festive paraphernalia is thrown into a fire to be consumed. 541 796 534 [178]

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[P. 112-CC]

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41. *Vodoun drummers, northern Haiti. The drums are characteristic of that region. The boy at left, although only twelve or thirteen years old, is an accomplished drummer.*

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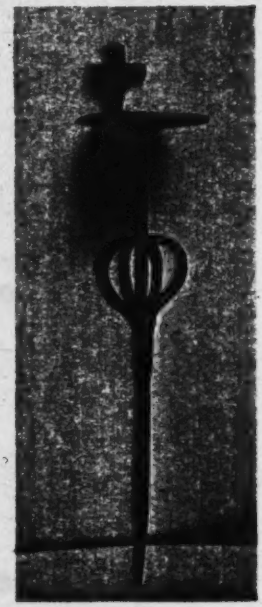
42. *Forged iron "saber" of the loa Damballa, from a hounfor near Léogane. Height, 32 inches.*



43. *Forged iron standard for holding ritual objects, from a hounfor in the region of Léogane. Height, 18 inches.*

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[534]

44. *Ancient iron figure of the loa Quançon Fer, from a hounfor near Léogane. Height, 12 inches.*

45. *Old iron ritual bell, or ogan, from a hounfor in southern Haiti. Height, 11 inches.*

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[P-112-F]

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7. *A small coumbite, northern Haiti.*

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8. *Coumbite, southern Haiti. Vaccine players at the right; flag of the socitat at the left.*

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[P.112-G]

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9. *Calling the coumbite: signaling on a conch-shell trumpet.*

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10. *A women's coumbite weeding a cornfield near the town of Plaisance.*

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[P. 112 - MM]

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69. Rara dancing near Gonâives. Vaccine players are at the left.

70. A Rara group near Port-au-Prince. At the left are the baka drum and a symbale. One of the four vaccines, center, is made of metal. Behind the musicians are the society's flag and a lampion.

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[P. 112-Q]

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26. Service for the loa Agwé in a boat at sea. In the center, two hounsi hold the société's flags. Between them and the houngan is the bedecked barque d'Agwé, a raftlike miniature vessel which will be set adrift. An ogan and a drum are at the lower right.

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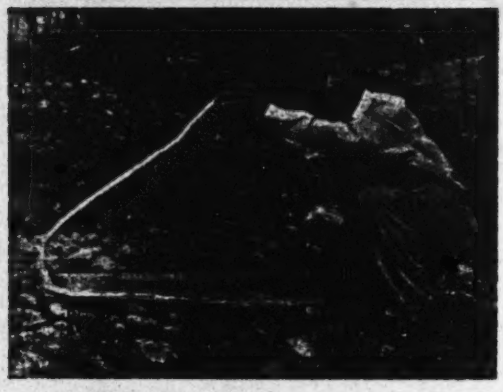

79 and 80. *Playing the tambour maringouin, or mosquito drum. Beneath the earth bow is a portable variant. The player plucks the string with one hand and with the other varies the pitch by pressure on the end of the bow.*

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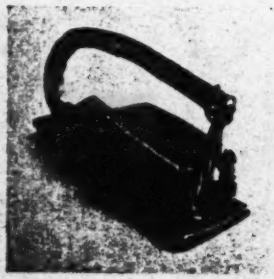
81. *A miniature brass casting, an Ashanti gold weight, in the form of a spring snare used for catching small game. The device can be recognized as an antecedent of the Haitian portable mosquito drum.*



2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P.112-TT]

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82. *Playing the sikambas, or bamboo stampers.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-UU]

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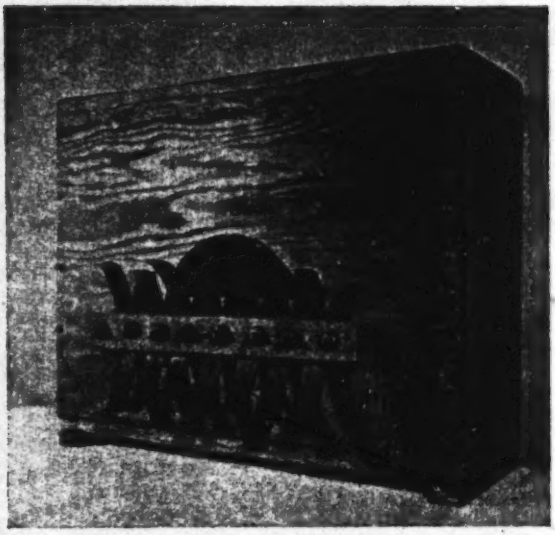

83. *Haitian marimbula with keys made of steel springs. Height of box, approximately 18 inches, width 24 inches. The player sits on the box and plays the keys with his finger tips. Compare with nos. 84 and 85.*

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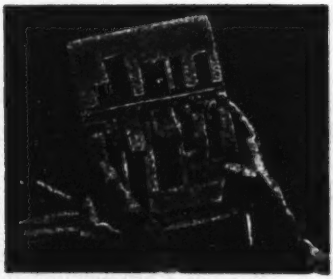
84. *A simple African sansa, or likembe, played with the thumbs. This one is from the Topoke people in the Congo.*



85. *A marimbula from Cuba, still small enough to play with the thumbs in the manner of its African prototype. The heavy steel springs are like those on the Haitian instrument.*

[P. 112-VV]

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86. *The dentlé, or notched scraping stick.*

87. *Sacred calabash rattle from northern Haiti.*

88. *The tchancy, a metal rattle used chiefly for secular music.*

[778]

89. *A houngan's asson, showing network of beads and snake bones.*

90. *A ka drum, showing method of lacing and the sliding rope tighteners.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-X]

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33. *An ancient assotor drum, believed to have been made early in the nineteenth century. Seen faintly on the painted surface are a guinea hen and a palm tree.*

34. *An assotor drum in full regalia for a service in the Cul-de-Sac Plain.*

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2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

compensated by a "feast" and party given at the end of the day by the host. More usual than the *corvée* is the regular sharing of work on one another's fields—the *ronde*, or "taking turns." 476 241

An early morning work gathering is known as a *dourant jou'*. It meets early in the day, sometimes before dawn, continues until ten or eleven in the morning, when the sun becomes hot, and then disperses. An afternoon coumbite is called a *diné-machete* (dinner machete) and lasts from about two in the afternoon until early evening. When the work is finished, the men go to the house of the host, where they have dinner, much in the manner of the American threshing party. An all-day affair is called a grand coumbite.

Essential to all coumbites are musicians and singing leaders. The instruments used are various, according to local custom. In the south they are usually drums, *tymbales*, and bamboo trumpets. In some areas of the north, the *lambi*, or conch-shell trumpet, is favored. 476 241 533 [534]

According to the custom in the south, on the day of the coumbite the drummers arise in the false dawn before sunrise and begin a roundabout march to the home of the host. They pass before the huts of all the neighbors who are going to join the party, playing a *rappel* on the drums. By one's and two's the workers come down the trails to join the procession, bringing hoes, machetes, or sickles as required. As the marching group grows larger, there is talking, laughter, and perhaps singing. Most of the men who join the procession are from close by. Others who may have to travel from a distance, perhaps from the next valley, go directly to the house of the host. When the workers arrive there, the women of the house serve coffee. This is the usual breakfast of the Haitian peasant. [272] [264]

Then the drummers play another *rappel*, and the men go down to the field that is to be tilled. There may be ten, twenty, or fifty of them. Some coumbites are even larger. If the group is a small one, the men line up together. The singing leader, called a *samba* or *simidor*, begins a song, the drummers play, the hoes begin to rise and fall in unison, and the workers join in the singing. If the group is large it will divide into two or three squads, each trying to outdo the other. The men stand shoulder to shoulder, moving the hoes up and down together, syncopating their movements by pauses as they sing their responsive parts. Sometimes tafia or rum is portioned out. The squads move forward slowly, inching their way across the field. The samba beats on his hoe blade with a stone to keep time for his song. His job is to "encourage" the men. He may sing old familiar songs or compose new ones, songs with humor and bite in them, ribald songs, and songs of ridicule. They may criticize 476 241 533 461

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

And when the revolution came he produced for the Haitian armies knives, gun parts, and wheels to transport cannon. By the tens of thousands he made ingeniously devised metal objects to be thrown on the roads, before the French cavalry troops—objects so shaped that, no matter how they fell, a single sharp point stood erect to cripple the enemy horses. Yet knowledge of the West African uses of iron did not altogether disappear, and during the first century of independence the Haitian blacksmith created many old-style knives, spears, and ritual objects for the cult temple.

Even today, some of this old-style work is to be found in hounfors in the southwestern peninsula. One may see simple or ornate iron standards, made to support ceremonial offerings or candles, strikingly similar to standards in ancestral shrines in Dahomey. There are iron bells, both single and double, made in pure West African style; ornate ritual swords and sabers which are the crests of certain deities; coiled and uncoiled iron serpents representing the gods Damballa and Ayida; and stylized or semirealistic portraits of the deities. Many of these old pieces are nineteenth-century survivals; others have been forged within the past decade.

An over-all impression of Haitian material culture is that artistic decoration is almost entirely absent and that the prime emphasis is on utility. Wooden cooking spoons are efficient in form, but missing from them is the delicate decorative carving often found in West Africa. The long wooden washing bowl, or *gamelle,* and the wooden mortar in which grain is pulverized are likewise clean-cut but stark and plainly utilitarian. Clay bowls, bottles, and storage jars are usually of simple, uniform design, with only accidental variations; there is little use of glazes, and the clay is often heavy and thick. Should there be a wari gameboard in the peasant hut, the chances are that it is roughly made, without legs or carved designs. Dugout canoes are usually crude in appearance, heavy and thick-walled, and irregular in form.

Yet there are many evidences—though one must seek them out—that esthetic impulses are quite alive. The gay peasant straw knapsack, or *alfor,* without which no mountain man makes a journey, has a charm and grace that is not diminished by familiarity and cheapness. Decorated with sisal braid and tassels, and colored with green and magenta dyes, each *alfor* on close inspection appears to be unique. In some communities in the south and southwest, burlap squares also are painted with these traditional dyes. About forty inches across, and made of sugar bags, these paintings swarm with geometric patterns and sometimes with figures of flowers and animals. They are purely decorative, being

[See plates 42-51, pp. 112-DD—112-FF.--Analyst]

used for wall hangings much as appliquéd cloths are used in Dahomey. Near Cap Haitien, in the north, ceramic workers make crude clay figurines of roosters, pigs, dogs, cows, and people. The "purpose" of these figurines is obscure, but it is likely that they are intended for use in Vodoun ritual, a number of them having been observed in hounfors in the vicinity of the town of Grande Rivière du Nord. In some mountain villages, canes carved with animal and human heads are commonly seen. Nor is the tradition of carving gourds and calabashes, popular in various regions of West Africa, altogether forgotten. The *cayambouque*, a divided calabash with the top ingeniously cut to fit into the lower part so as to form a sealed container, is sometimes covered with carved geometric designs, usually crude and haphazard but on occasion meticulous. Until recent years the common *cha-cha*, or gourd rattle, was similarly carved.

Most of the visible traditional art is to be found in the environs of the cult temple. The inner walls of many hounfors are covered with ritual designs and symbols and portraits of the deities. On the altar, sometimes, crude wood carvings of deities are seen, along with forged iron objects, carved marassa bowls, and grotesquely shaped drumsticks known as *baguettes guinée*. All the wooden objects are characterized by a plainness that relegates them to the category of purely functional and expendable things. The wood carving of a deity is not an image, it is a representation; it can be sold or otherwise disposed of, even thrown away if infested with beetles, and another object can be used to replace it. The only concern of the cult priest in this matter is that the deity concerned should understand the situation properly and not take offense. Thus there is no strong feeling that the wood carving should be a realistic representation or that it should be "beautiful." One relatively antique wood carving, completely West African in style, was found some years ago in a hounfor near Léogane and is now in the collection of the Musée du Peuple Haitien in Port-au-Prince (see fig. 57).

One of the most flourishing arts of the hounfor is the *vèvè*, or ritual drawing made on the earth in the course of a service. Most commonly these beautiful and ornate designs are made with white meal or flour, and in a few of the cults, primarily the Pétro, lampblack and red brick dust are also used. The vèvè is made by the houngan or the mambo. With sure, practiced movements, the cult priest allows the meal to trickle through his fingertips onto the ground where the rites are taking place, usually in the peristyle of the hounfor itself. The drawings he makes are composed of a multiplicity of cabalistic symbols—heart shapes, stars, interlocked V's, flags, abstract phallic forms, crosses, swords,

2: Courlander 9-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

machetes, circles, mortar shapes, and so on—each with its own specific meaning. Sometimes the vèvè becomes openly pictorial, and there emerges a ship for the loa Agwé, snakes for Damballa and Ayida, a bull for the loa Taureau, a knapsack for the loa Azaka, or even a portrait of a deity, perhaps smoking a pipe or holding a sword.

The vèvè is not a permanent record. It is made as an act of supplication or veneration, and once it is finished it has no further value. In the ensuing ritual and dance, the vèvè is obliterated by the feet that pass across it. At the hands of one houngan, this invocational act results in a crude, even childlike, design. At the hands of another, it produces a drawing of beauty, integration, and highly developed form.

The drum-making craft, too, has offered an unbroken sequence of opportunity for satisfying artistic urges. The drum has a traditional form that cannot be tampered with; its shape is predetermined by its function, by the log from which it is hewn, and by existing standards. And yet, the drum maker has found it an object on which he can devise new decorative motifs, and he may even give it personal uniqueness. Some drums have styles that may be associated with specific regions of the country, others bear the stamp of the individual artist. Paint has been used on Haitian drums for a hundred years or more as a complement to carving. One assotor drum dating from the earliest days of the Republic, and now preserved in a collection owned by the Bureau of Ethnology in Port-au-Prince, is decorated with a medallion showing the Haitian coat of arms, grenadiers, red and yellow snakes, and a sun with a face. This magnificent instrument, apparently the only one of its age and kind to have survived the years, is one of Haiti's art treasures.

The *conis*, or calabash bowl, of the hounfor rites is another object which is decorated with motifs. Abstract designs, ritual symbols, and sometimes human and animal figures are painted on the inner or concave surface of the bowl.

The rural traditional arts of Haiti have had a belated impact on the arts of the city. Within the past fifteen years there have appeared a number of painters, sculptors in wood and ceramics, and ironworkers who constitute an art movement sometimes referred to as the Haitian "renaissance." Many of these artists draw heavily on national lore and legend for inspiration and subject matter. Some of them are men who came only recently from villages or distant farms. Their work adorns many public buildings in Port-au-Prince and is eagerly sought by art collectors. Members of the elite class who once looked with embarrassment on the "primitive" countryside are finding increasing respect for the potentialities of their country cousins.

114 tion helped to perpetuate some prevailing misunderstandings and errors.
535 This distinguished observer wrote:

> The Negroes of the Gold Coast, warlike, bloody, accustomed to human sacrifice, know only dances as ferocious as themselves, while those from the Congo, Senegalese and other African shepherds or agricultural tribes, love dancing as a relaxation, as a source of sensual pleasure. Brought from all parts of Africa to our Colonies . . . , the Negroes brought here and preserved their taste for the dance, a taste so strong that, however tired out from work the Negro may be, he always finds strength to dance and even to travel a long distance to satisfy this desire.
>
> 114 When the Negroes want to dance, they take two drums, that is, two hollow
> 533 logs, of unequal length, with one end open, while the other is covered with
> 535 sheepskin. These drums . . . resound under blows of the wrist and movements of the fingers of a Negro who sits astride of each drum. The larger drum is beaten slowly, the other more rapidly. This monotonous and hollow sound is accompanied by the noise of a certain number of calabashes which have been filled with
> [534] pebbles . . . Several *banzas*, a sort of large guitar with four strings,[2] join the concert, the tempo of which is regulated by the clapping hands of the Negro women, who form a large circle. They form a sort of chorus, which responds to one or two strident solo voices, which repeat or improvise a song.[3]

535 As for the dance movements themselves, Saint-Méry wrote:

> A male and [a] female dancer, or several dancers divided into equal numbers of each sex, jump into the center of the circle and begin to dance, always two by two. This dance, which varies little, consists of a very simple step in which one foot is put forward after the other, and then drawn back quickly, while striking the toe and the heel on the ground . . . Some turn in place, or around the woman, who turns also and changes places with her partner; that is all which one sees, except for the movement of the arms which the man raises and lowers with the elbows quite close to the body and the hands almost closed. The woman holds two ends of a handkerchief, which she waves . . . One would hardly believe how lively and animated it is, and how much grace it derives from the strictness with which the musical rhythm is followed. The dancers replace one another without respite, and the Negroes are so intoxicated with pleasure that it is necessary to force them to conclude dances of this sort, called *kalendas*.[4]

[114] Saint-Méry then brings forth one of his conclusions, that this dance
[171] is obviously the development of a "comparatively uncivilized people," and that it comes from Africa, "where its characteristic features exist everywhere, even among the Hottentots."

114 Here he missed the point altogether. Although many of the char-
535 acteristics of this *kalenda* (or Calinda) were African, it had already been
179 intensively hybridized with European dance concepts, such as the pairing
[171] off of males and females, who danced as couples. Then, as today, the dances which amazed and shocked the European observer were precisely the ones that had taken over certain European traditions.

2 [Actually a banjo-like instrument of African provenience. The similarity of the word banza to banjo appears to be more than a coincidence. Cf. P. 352 category 116. -- Analyst]
3 [Saint-Méry, De la danse, as translated by Lillian Moore in Moreau de Saint Méry and "Danse," Dance Index, October, 1946, P. 238. Cf P. 352 Category 116. -- Analyst]
4 Moore, op. cit., P. 238. Cf. P. 352, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

535 The Pétro dance is similar in many respects to other serious cult dances, but it is primarily a complicated and sometimes agitated foot dance. The second of the two drums beats "rest-two-three." On "two" the right foot pushes forward in a thrusting, sliding motion, and on "three" the left moves outward and the right moves in. The position is held on the "rest," though there is no visible pause, because of the speed of the dance. Shoulder movement is only of secondary importance in the Pétro, though the arms are constantly moving gracefuly to balance the foot movements. Women sometimes use a typical Congo pose, with the left hand on the hip and the right hand held poised in the air.

The Jenvalo, the supplication dance of the Dahomey rites, is quite different in both spirit and technique. The dancers, usually older rather than younger people, move in a generally counterclockwise direction around the sacred center post of the dance court. They dance with gracefully bent backs, their hands touching their knees. The shoulders and the upper part of the body move forward and back in a gentle, graceful, undulating movement. The dancers pirouette lightly from time to time, the women holding their long skirts out to the side to make a restrained *laillé*. They sometimes pause to perform a brief cross step with other dancers, but there is no pairing off. They are dancing as individuals—or, more accurately, as a group. There is occasional improvising, inventing, and performing of difficult maneuvers; but the individual dancer moves always with the others in a slowly revolving amorphous circle around the center post. The graceful bending and undulating of the upper body give even to strangers an impression of respectful supplication.

Near the town of Jérémie in southern Haiti some years ago I saw a performance of the Mousondi "battle-dance," an activity of the Congo "nation." The dance was performed by six men, several of them stripped [291] to the waist, the others wearing the traditional blue denim peasant jackets. The leader of the dancers was a bearded man about fifty years [301] old, lean and athletic. On his legs he wore anklets made of seed pods and beer-bottle caps which rattled rhythmically as he moved. On a string [534] around his neck he wore a wooden whistle, which he blew from time to time to accent the beat of the drums and to give signals.

[533] The dancing took place around a bonfire. The music was provided by three musicians, two playing Congo drums and the third beating hardwood sticks against a board. Each of the dancers carried a stick about thirty inches long. They moved first clockwise, then counterclockwise, then half of them moved in one direction and half in the other, weaving in and out, holding their sticks like sabers. On a signal given by the

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

dramatic art. The narrator interprets his characters as he goes along, providing different voices, singing, giving humorous or tragic emphasis, and changing his facial expressions to convey the temper and mood of the protagonists. He imitates the movements and actions of the animals. In print, his broad gestures and sly intimations are all lost. The Haitian tale is a vehicle for the actor, who plays his theme according to circumstances and the responsiveness of his audience. The storyteller, like the musician, is likely to be found almost anywhere. But there are storytellers of special renown, known as *mait' contes*—who may be called upon to entertain young people at a party or Nine Night gathering. They have seemingly endless repertoires and can go on indefinitely telling tales about Bouki and Malice, or Jean Saute and Jean L'Esprit. In former times, the mait' conte used an instrument such as the *banza* to intersperse his narration with music. Old people recall that trough zithers and other instruments of African design were once employed for this purpose.

Anansi, the spider trickster-hero and buffoon of West Africa, has survived in Haiti as well as elsewhere in the Antilles. In Jamaica and other British islands, Anansi has become Brother Anansi, Sister Nancy, or just plain Nancy. Although he usually figures in tales dealing with other animals, he has more and more come to assume a human form, as he has in Haitian tales. But in Haiti the name Anansi is only rarely heard. Anansi's cleverness and stupidity are now attributed to two characters named Ti Malice and Nonc' Bouki, both of whom are regarded as human beings.

In West Africa the spider hero directed his mischief against the great and strong creatures of the forest, now one, now another. In Haiti, Ti Malice, who has inherited Anansi's wit and guile, pits himself mostly against Bouki, who has inherited Anansi's stubborn nature and his pompous stupidities. Ti Malice (whose first name probably comes from the Spanish *tio*, uncle) has become the slick sharpy of the city, the clever and predatory "operator," the practical joker. Like his spider prototype, Ti Malice has humor as well as cunning, though he is often remorseless. Bouki is full of self-confidence but is slow-witted and an easy prey for Ti Malice. He is thought of as a clumsy peasant of the mountains. He has a constant desire to pit himself against Ti Malice, and a capacity for involving himself in utterly fantastic situations which appeal to the Haitian sense of the ridiculous.

In many respects this team of comedians resembles another pair known in South and Central America—Tio Conejo (Uncle Rabbit) and Tio Coyote; both are pranksters, but the rabbit usually manages to outwit the coyote. Ti Malice and Bouki also figure in the universal tar-baby story, and in many other tales known in the United States in which Br'er Rabbit

[P. 189]

18. Musical Instruments

The Haitian people have drawn heavily on both Europe and Africa for 177
their musical inspiration. In music, as in other traditions, the country is 533
bicultural. There is, on the one hand, the music of the so-called *élite*—the 534
literate and educated class which is concentrated in the cities—and on 184
the other hand, the music of the peasants, the plantation laborers, and 571
the lower economic groups of the town. The *élite* music is in the European or Western tradition, while the true folk music of Haiti follows, in the main, in the wake of West African musical culture. The instruments of *élite* music are primarily those of Western Europe. The instruments of 177
the folk music of the country are those which can best interpret the main- 533
stream currents of the West African heritage—instruments of African 534
design and function. European-style instruments have infiltrated into the folk music too, but the over-all picture is that of a survival of African musical devices to interpret music cast in an African mold. It is the folk-music instruments which call for examination—the instruments that are made in the villages and tiny huts in the mountains, the instruments on which the significant music of Haiti depends.

The materials from which these instruments are made are usually 534
those found upon the land. If a man wishes to make a drum, he cuts down a tree for the purpose. For material for a bamboo trumpet he goes to the bamboo grove. For a flute, he cuts a reed. Metal is used for making African-style bells, rattles, singing horns, and substitutes for bamboo trumpets.

The drum in its many forms is the most common instrument of all. It is used for dances of all kinds, for cult rites, for work music on the road and in the field, and for assembly calls and signals. Not very many years ago the older people in the south of Haiti still spoke of the "talking drums" they had seen as children.

The craft of drum making is a very skilled one, but the tools are

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

534 322 [412] of drum making is a very skilled one, but the tools are The craft simple: chisels, machetes, and fire. The core of the log is removed by burning and gouging, and the outside is shaped with a machete, or sometimes a hachet. The wood is selected and processed carefully. Firing of the core of the log depends a good deal on how dry the wood is, for the wood must burn slowly. It is believed that wood cut at the right stage of growth and at the right phase of the moon is resistant to the [824] ever-present powder-post beetles. Mahogany was once favored because it was durable and beetle resistant, even though it was heavy. But in recent decades mahogany has become scarce, and modern drums are made of lighter woods.

534 298 [531] [171] Drums made in the nineteenth century not only conformed to the patterns of certain West African prototypes but were also carved and decorated. Some of these old drums are still to be seen, but there are not many left. An ancient carved assotor drum (previously cited) has fortunately been preserved by the Bureau d'Ethnologie. But between the ravages of the powder-post beetles, age, and the periodic orgies of drum burning by the church and misguided public officials, most of these [648] ancient works of art have long since disappeared. During the American occupation of Haiti—from World War I to 1932—American military personnel also contributed to the mania for drum burning. And as late as 1941 there was a massive, cleric-inspired drive to wipe out these instruments as remnants of *sauvage* elements in Haitian life.

534 178 531 The effect of this war against the drum was only to improve the business of the professional drum maker. Drums had become expendable, hence they were made simpler. The carved decorations disappeared. Paint was substituted, and less attention was given to detail. The important thing was to produce a good functional instrument. But the creative instincts of the drum makers sometimes still take over, and many of the modern drums are beautifully proportioned, with delicate geometric patterns carved around the base, or foot. Among certain categories of drums the painted decorations consist solely of the name of the loa to whom the instruments have been dedicated—St. Jacques perhaps, or Papa Pierre, or Ezilie.

534 191 194 196 534 Drums differ in design according to the use for which they are intended. The Arada or Vodoun drums are used primarily in connection with the dances and rituals of the Vodoun cult—the cult built around the gods and rites of Arada and Yoruba theology. They resemble closely drums which are used today in Dahomey, Nigeria, and Togoland. They usually come in sets of three. The largest, the *maman* (also called *hounsor* or *hounsogri*), may be three to four feet high. The middle-sized drum, or *second* (also called *grandé* or *moyen*), is about two feet

[Text continues on p. 193]

[P. 191]

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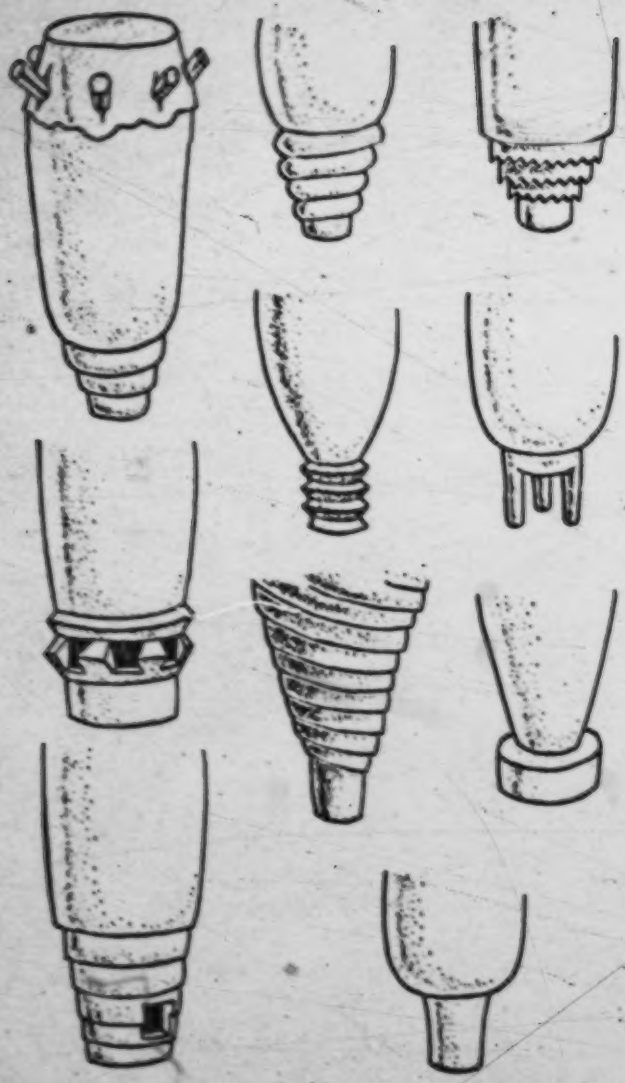
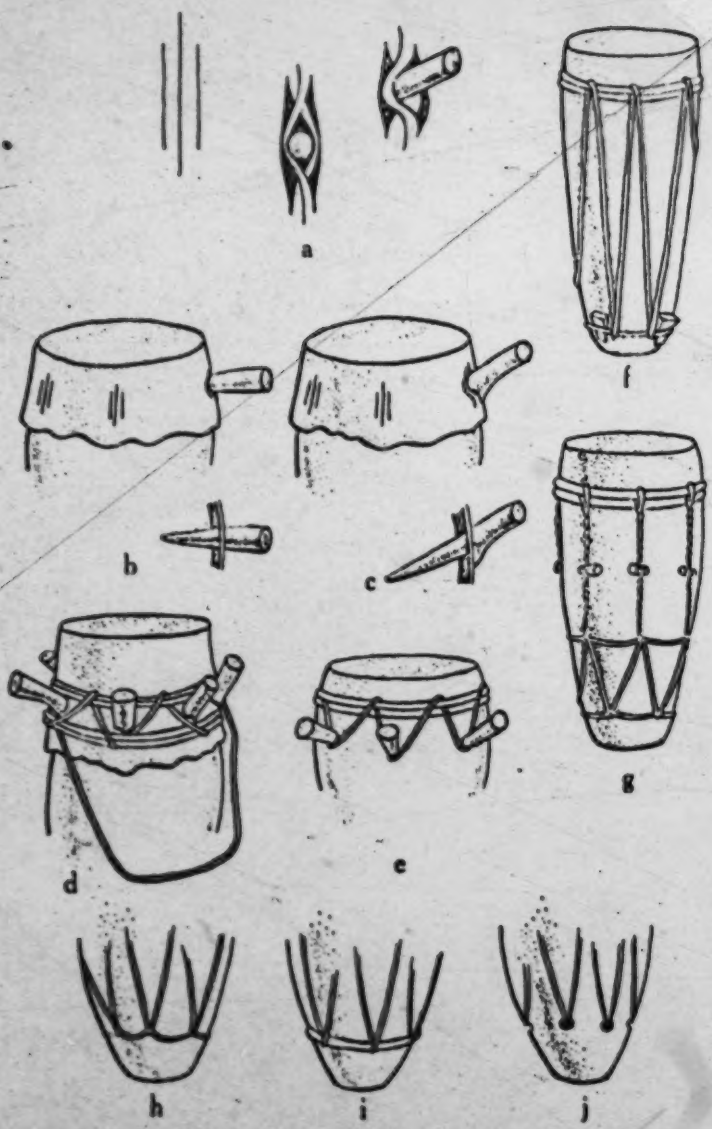


INDIVIDUALITY IN DRUM DESIGNING: Although the Arada or Dahomey-style drum is distinct from those of other "nations" or cults, there is a noteworthy variety of artistic decoration in the carving of the base. Some patterns are found only in certain regions or villages.

[P.192]

● 534



MOUNTING OF DRUMHEADS: To fasten the Arada drumhead to the drum, three slits are made in the skin over the peg hole, forming two short strips (*a*, left); peg or hook is inserted as shown in *a*, center and right. *b*, peg mounting. *c*, hook mounting. *d*, traditional pattern for lacing of cord. *e*, Arada drum showing combination of peg and hoop mounting techniques: the skin is fastened around the lower hoop; the upper hoop, laced to the pegs, holds it in place. Congo and Juba-type mountings are shown in *f* and *g*; in *f*, tension on the cords is provided by hammering down the wedges at the base; in *g*, the tourniquet method is used. *h*–*j*, three ways of fastening the cords to the base of these drums. In *h*, a cord loop is employed, and in *i*, a wooden hoop. Sometimes holes are provided in the base, through which the cords are laced, as in *j*.

high. The smallest—the *bula*, or *bébé* (sometimes called *dundun*)—is 534
about eighteen or twenty inches high. They are all called sometimes by the Yoruba name *bata*, originally applied to a two-headed instrument.

Arada drumheads are of cowhide, held in place by hardwood pegs set into the bodies of the drums at an angle. The drums are tuned by driving in or loosening the pegs. Even the slitting of the skins where the pegs pass through them is African in pattern. In Cuba the drums of the Arada (there called Arara) cult are made in precisely the same way, though they are used in batteries of four rather than three. [171]

In a variation of the peg type of fastening, the skin is attached to a 184
hoop, which, in turn, is held in place by ropes laced to the pegs. Each 534
drum maker has his own preference as to the angle and size of the pegs, the proportions of the drums, and the wood from which they are made. One drum maker near Léogane claimed to be able to identify the region from which a drum came by examination of the pegs and the carvings around the base.

The small Arada drum, the *bula*, is usually "whipped" with two long 534
thin sticks to provide a sharp and penetrating sound. The middle-sized 171
drum is played with one bare hand and a stick. The stick may be straight or bowed. The bowed drumstick is known as an *agida*, the name used for the same type of stick in Dahomey.[1] On infrequent occasions the *moyen* drum is played with two sticks—one straight and one bowed. The large drum, the *manman*, is played by the most accomplished of the drummers in the orchestra. He plays with one bare hand and one stick, which may be of various forms. It may be straight, have a hook-shaped head, or be mallet-shaped; or it may be the grotesquely twisted stick known as a *baguette Guinée*. All these forms are known in Dahomey and elsewhere in West Africa.

The three Haitian Arada drums, supplemented by an African-style 171
bell known as an *ogan* and small gourd rattles (cha-chas), form the 178
standard orchestra for most dances of the Vodoun cult. The *ogan*—the 534
forged iron bell with an external striker—has all but disappeared in 796
recent years, along with the institution of the village forge. In its place one may see any kind of metallic object, such as a hoe blade, a link of chain, or a length of pipe, all of which are referred to by the old name *ogan*. In Cuba the Arada cult preserves the bell, both in single and double form, under the same name. The word *ogan* probably derives from the Yoruba term for this instrument, *eganran*.

Playing in concert, the three Arada drums produce a range of tones, 533
and the player of the *manman*—the chief of orchestra—adds to the 534
effect by frequently striking his stick against the side of the drum above

[1] [Herskovits and Herskovits, Suriname Folk-Lore, P. 87. The stick is also known in Suriname. Cf. P. 353, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

534 533 the pegs. High notes are achieved by striking the drumhead near the rim, and low notes near the center.

534 516 The drummers usually sit together on a bench or in chairs at one side of the dance court. The larger and middle drums are slightly tipped to keep their "mouths" open; the *bula* stands squarely on its base and is therefore somewhat muted. The player of the *manman* often drums in a standing position, bracing the instrument by means of a cord around his thigh.

534 796 Another drum associated with the Arada rites is the assotor. This drum is usually about six feet high, and may be from two to two and a half feet in diameter. It is played in an upright position, and two or three small "windows" near the base permit the sound to emerge. [794] This big drum is used only for the Assotor service, at which the Dahomey "nation" plays host to the loa of all the various rites. Usually there is only a single drummer, who plays while standing on a bench or raised platform; but on occasion, two or even three drummers play simultaneously on the single drumhead.

534 171 It is interesting to note in passing that most of the Vodoun drums have Dahomean names and are of Dahomean design, despite the fact that Yoruban religious motifs have survived. The Yoruban double-headed *bata* drum, used in Nigeria for invocation of the principal deities, appears to have survived in decadent form on the island of La Gonave, where it is known as *pongwé*. Curiously, it is played not like the Yoruban *bata* (one hand on each head) but like another Yoruban instrument, 534 the *dundun*, or pressure drum. The instrument is held under one arm and played only on the forward head. Significantly enough, this drum is said to be used only for Nago (Yoruba) rites. Another drum reserved [794] for Nago services is found in the region of Léogane. It resembles the [796] Arada drum in every respect except that it stands on three carved legs.

Drums associated with the services of the Congo "nation" are distinctly different from those found in Vodoun ritual. No drumsticks are used, and the heads are of goatskin rather than cowhide and are held in place by a system of cords and hoops. The Congo drum seen today stands about three feet high; old people say that within their memory there was a variety of Congo drum as tall as a man. Unlike the Arada [531] drum, the Congo drum usually has no carved or painted decoration. For the "pure" Congo rites, two of these instruments, accompanied by gourd or metal rattles of various kinds, constitutes an orchestra. One typically Congo rattling device, called *mayoyo*, consists of three large gourds containing pebbles, on the top of a long pole.

A variant of the Congo drum is used for Pétro rites. It is similar

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in construction but stands a little shorter. Two Pétro drums of slightly different sizes and tones, called *baka* and *ti baka*, in combination with one or more rattles, an iron percussion device, and sometimes an assot, make up an orchestra. 534

The *assot* is a small board which is beaten with sticks. Often these sticks are flat, and sometimes a small wooden bench is substituted for the board.

Dances for which the Congo or Pétro drums are used include Pétro, Kitta, Bumba, Salongo, Bambarra, Moundongue, Congo Loangue, Pastorel, Mousondi, and Moutchétché. The drum for the Congo Loangue dance formerly was somewhat taller and narrower than the present Pétro drum, but the distinction is no longer maintained. 534 535

The Juba, or Martinique, drum is similar to the Pétro or Congo but wider and squatter. It is laid on its side for playing, the drummer sitting astride and pressing his heel against the drumhead to mute it or change the pitch. For Juba or related music, a second man, called the *catalier* (the one who *catas*), beats sticks against the body of the instrument behind the drummer.

In the northern part of Haiti one also finds the Zesse drum, used exclusively for the Zesse dance. It is cylindrical, about thirty inches high, and is played in an upright position. A wire is stretched across the goatskin head in the manner of a snare drum. Like all drums with goatskin heads, it is beaten with the naked hands. 184 534

A large two-headed drum called the *tymbale* is used as a work drum for labor societies and for processions, and in combination with other drums it sometimes appears in the Juba and secular Congo dances. The heads are mounted on hoops, which are held fast by lacing. The drum is carried by a rope slung over the shoulder or around the neck. Sometimes an assot striking board is affixed to the body of the drum. 534 [461] [535] [482]

A miniature copy of the tymbale is called a *tambourine*. It is used in carnival dances, notably the Mascaron. Carried by a cord which hangs around the neck, it is played with two diminutive sticks. Drumming is primarily a man's prerogative, but during carnival days women or girls may be seen playing the *tambourine*. [462]

In southwestern Haiti, and possibly elsewhere, special drums are used for the Manuba dance. The Manuba drum is about a foot long, cylindrical, and about five inches in diameter, with two drumheads held together with cords. A pair of these drums is joined by a rope about two feet long, which is hung around the neck so that the two drums are in convenient playing position on the chest. 184 534 535

Twin drums which are hung over the knee are known as *marassas*— 534 [192]
The Haitian word for "twins."

534 [177] the Haitian word for "twins." They are used primarily for secular music of the Cuban type, and may in fact be an importation from Cuba. The marassa is one of the few drums on which a finger technique is used; that is, striking with individual fingers rather than with grouped fingers. Marassas are often played in concert with guitars and marimbas.

The *basse* is the shallow finger drum resembling what in the United States is called the tambourine. Constructed in the pattern of an African prototype, its head is usually fifteen or eighteen inches in diameter and made of goatskin. Small metal disks sometimes are inserted in the frame [314] to act as rattles. The head is kept well coated with resin or beeswax and [237] is tapped and rubbed with the fingers. The *basse* is used only for secular music, except in the rare instances when it is used in Congo services. Some Haitians believe that the name of the instrument comes from the word *Basque*.

534 202 It is reported that signal drums were still in use a decade ago in remote sections of the southwestern peninsula. One of these instruments, according to description, is distinguished mainly by its large belly and small mouth; like the Juba drum, it is played on its side. Another style of signal drum has a slit in the side and is played erect, much like an African slit-log drum standing on end.

534 [171] Another percussion instrument is the bamboo stamping tube, called the *ganbo* or *ti kanmbo*. It is African in origin and probably takes its name from the Loango term for the same device, *dikanmbo*.[2] The stamping tube is simply a length of bamboo, open at one end and closed at the other by a natural joint membrane. The closed end is struck sharply upon the ground, and the tone comes from the open top. The device works like an inverted drum, the closed end functioning like a drumhead. A battery of four or five ganbos may provide the percussion music otherwise played by drums. The musician corresponding to the *bulatier* of the drum orchestra plays two small stamping tubes, one in each hand. The other musicians have one each, thicker and longer than the bulatier's and producing deeper tones. Cupped hands are manipulated over the open ends for varying the sounds. This instrument [171] has survived in various parts of the New World where Africans were settled, particularly other West Indian islands, Brazil, and Venezuela. In Venezuela the stamping tubes are called *quitiplas*.[3] They have recently been reported from various areas of West Africa, including French Equatorial Africa.[4]

534 648 798 The ganbos had a singular burst of popularity in Haiti during the United States military occupation of the country after the first World War, when drums were often seized and destroyed. Drums could not

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[2] [Informant: Joseph Lengo, Brazzaville. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. --Analyst]

[3] [Library of Congress album, Folk Music of Venezuela. Cf p 354 Category 116. --Analyst]

[4] [Pamphlet accompanying recording, Music of Equatorial Africa (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1950). Cf. p 354, cat. 116. --Analyst]

easily be hidden, but the ganbos were simply slipped into the straw 534
roofs and thus put out of sight. Moreover, by some strange process of 648
reasoning, military authorities regarded the bamboos as "harmless," 798
though they were used for the same purposes as the contraband drums.

There are numerous other kinds of simple percussion devices. One 534
such instrument, now less commonly seen than previously, is a length of open bamboo laid in the crotches of two Y-shaped sticks set in the ground. Like other *catas*, the bamboo is beaten with two sticks. Some Haitians believe that in former days such bamboos were played in batteries like a xylophone.

Sometimes a light-weight wooden cylinder, or perhaps a drum de- [461]
nuded of its playing head, is carried by the timekeeper of a coumbite. [476]
It, also, is played on the side with sticks.

Wooden mortars for pulverizing grain take on the character of musical 534
instruments when used in combination with voices. When two or more 533
mortars are used, with two men or women wielding the long polelike 412
pestles in each mortar, the rhythmic effects can become fairly complicated.

The *claves* or *palos* (small hardwood sticks) are used primarily in 534
connection with secular dances of a Cuban type, or to accompany such 535
instruments as the guitar and the marimba. One stick is held loosely in [177]
the natural fold of the hand, so that it is free to vibrate, and is struck
sharply with the second stick. The tone is almost metallic because of [824]
the hardness of the wood, usually lignum vitae. The name of the instrument is recognizable as a form of *clavar*, or *clavo*, Spanish for "peg"
or "nail." It is thought that wooden shipbuilding pegs provided the [171]
name for this device, which has equivalents in West Africa.

Among the folk instruments there are various kinds of horns and 534
trumpets. Cows' horns are played musically in some parts of the southern 184
peninsula, though usually they are used as ritual instruments and signaling devices. Wooden trumpets called *pistons* are carved from the stems [824]
of the papaya tree. Conch-shell trumpets, known as *lambis*, are com- [202]
monly used as signaling devices by fishermen. They are also to be found among the coumbites, in Rara festivities, and occasionally in
rituals, where they are usually identified with sea deities. In carnival [541]
times the old fashioned phonograph horn makes its appearance as a com- [216]
bined trumpet and voice amplifier.

Probably the most important of the trumpets is the one made of 534
bamboo. It is called a *vaccine* or *bois bourrique*. Both names have in- 755
teresting origins. The cow's horn was at one time used for magico- [237]
medical purposes. The leaf doctor used it as an "applicator" of powders and potions. A small opening was made in the point of the horn, and
[See plate 8, P. 112-F. -- Analyst]

534 755 the horn itself was filled with the magico-medical preparation, which was called *vaccine*. The point of the horn was applied to parts of the body which needed treatment, and the powers of the potion were thus transmitted to the affected areas. In time, the cow's horn itself came to be known as a *vaccine*. Eventually the horn used for musical purposes took over the name, which was then transferred to the bamboo trumpet. The other name by which the bamboo trumpet is known, *bois bourrique*, means burro wood. But it probably is a corruption of *voix bourrique*, meaning "donkey's voice," an accurate description of the sound it makes.

534 533 The vaccine consists of a length of bamboo, with a joint membrane at one end cut into a mouthpiece. Trumpets of different sizes give different tones, and three to five of them together constitute a vaccine orchestra. Vaccines are employed by the coumbites in the fields, and they are heard in the towns and cities primarily during the pre-Easter festivities. In the Rara festivals the vaccine players march together, blowing and tapping their trumpets with sticks, followed by a crowd of dancers. Traditionally, the bamboo trumpet is not employed in religious music, although in recent years it has made its appearance occasionally in Congo-Guinée rites.

534 There are two kinds of musical scrapers. The one more often seen is the *grage*, a piece of sheet metal perforated in the fashion of our common kitchen grater. It is "played" by scraping a piece of wire or a nail across its rough surface. Found in secular rather than religious settings, the grage is likely to be used in combination with such instruments as the *tambourine*, marimba, claves, and basse. The second form of scraper is the *dentlé*, or *dentli*, a notched stick played with a bamboo scraping blade. The free end of the stick is sometimes braced against a bench or a plank, which acts as a sounding board. Some Haitians reported that in the old days gourds were used as sounding chambers. 534 171 The scraper in one form or another appears to have both Indian and West African precedents. Its relationship to the washboard as used in Negro folk music in the United States is obvious. The notched gourd [177] called the *guiro*, found in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and other West Indian islands, appears to be present in Haiti only as an imported instrument.

534 535 Rattles of various types are used in religious and secular dances, in the invocation of deities, and as accompaniment for solo singing. The most common of the rattles is the simple cha-cha, or *kwa-kwa*. It is a small gourd with a wooden handle, with seeds inside. It is usually played by the singing leader as a device to keep time. Sometimes the long dry seed pods of the cha-cha tree are used as a substitute.

000 In the Rara season two special rattles are used. One of them is made

Rara season two special rattles are used. One of them is made of metal and resembles a tin can with a wooden handle. The metal sometimes is perforated with numerous small holes, and inside are *hoholi* seeds, which act as rattlers. This instrument, known as a *tchancy*, is usually decorated with colorful ribbons when in use. (In northern Haiti the term *tchancy* is used to designate metal wrist rattles worn by drummers.) The other Rara rattle, called *jouconjou* or *joucjou*, is made of three gourds carried on a long pole. One of the gourds is affixed to the end of the pole, and the others are fastened to the terminals of a short crossbar, giving the effect of a cross with bulbous ends. Since many of the Rara processions are dramatizations of the Christ epic, the instrument could be interpreted as a Christian symbol, though its conversion into a noisemaker appears to be an African conception. The *jouconjou* may be a variant of the small rattle-cross which is used by the Abakwa secret society in Cuba.[8]

534 534 [824] [531] [171]

The sacred gourd rattle of the cult priest is called *asson* or *baksor*. It is pear-shaped and covered with a network of beads which act as external strikers. It is used by the houngan to summon the spirits of the dead, to praise or call upon the deities, and to accompany the performance of magic. The asson is of West African derivation, and its counterparts are to be found among the cults of Martinique, Trinidad, Cuba, Brazil, Venezuela, and elsewhere where African traditions have left their mark. The gourds from which the assons are made are grown in a special grove sacred to the loa.

534 78 171 778

A large calabash rattle has been reported from several isolated regions of Haiti, primarily from the north. Some rattles of this kind have been described as more than twenty inches in height and covered by a network of external strikers, usually wari beans. The calabash rattles are used in groups of three. They are shaken and thumped against the palm of the hand, producing both deep and high-pitched sounds. These oversize rattles are employed without drums and are said to be associated with Arada-Nago rites. They appear to be a survival of the instrument known among the Yoruba as the *shèkèrè* and are found in Cuba in both Dahomey and Lucumí (Yoruba) cult centers.

534 [84] [171]

Probably one of the oldest of Haitian folk instruments is the earth bow, known as the *tambour maringouin*, or mosquito drum. Traditionally the mosquito drum is made in the following way:

A hole is dug in the earth, perhaps a foot or more deep. It is covered with palm or banana bark, which is pegged firmly all around. A cord is attached to the center of the bark membrane and drawn taut to a bent green sapling, one end of which is buried in the ground at a slight angle. The cord is plucked and snapped with the fingers of one hand, while

8 [See Courlander, "Musical Instruments of Cuba," Musical Quarterly, April, 1942, pp. 233-234. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst)

534 its tension is varied by pressure on the bowed stick with the other hand, producing a change of pitch. The covered hole acts as a sound chamber.

In a "portable" model of the mosquito drum a tin pail or can is used for a sounding chamber. The pail is inverted and fastened to a small plank, to which the sapling also is affixed. It is believed by some observers that the instrument has special significance during the pre-Easter holidays (Mardi Gras and Rara),* but it may be used at almost any time of the year. The "accompaniment" for the mosquito drum usually consists of some kind of *cata*—sticks beaten upon a board or on the drumhead itself. On occasion, two or three of these instruments are beaten together, and the rough bark membrane may be rasped for additional effects. Most of the songs that go with the mosquito drum are secular. One of the appropriate songs favored by children goes:

[541]

[533]
[534]

Maringouin dit moin ta zwing oh!
Maringouin dit moin ta zwing!
Ta zwing oh!
Ta zwing! [Ex. 166]

Mosquito says I will zwing, oh!
Mosquito says I will zwing!
Will zwing, oh!
Will zwing! *

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The earth bow has a clear African ancestry. In almost identical form it has been found in the French Sudan, among the Washambala of East Africa, the Bongos in the eastern Congo, the Bafia and Baya in the Cameroons, the Fulbe in the Sahara region, and the Futadjallon people in Nigeria.

The German explorer Georg Schweinfurth might have been describing a Haitian scene when he wrote, some eighty-five years ago, of the Bongos:

> Performers may be seen sitting for an hour together with an instrument of this sort: They stick one end of the bow into the ground, and fasten the string over a cavity covered with bark, which opens into an aperture for the escape of the sound. They pass one hand from one part of the bow to another, and with the other they play upon the string with the bamboo twig and produce a variety of humming airs which are really rather pretty. This is a common pastime with the lads who are put in charge of the goats. I have seen them apply themselves very earnestly and with obvious interest to their musical practice, and the ingenious use to which they apply the secrets of the theory of sound.

* The hum of the mosquito as it strikes.

[Combaire Sylvain, Les Contes haitiens, pp. 97-98. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[Curt Sachs, Geist und Werden der Musikinstrumente (Berlin, 1929), pp. 60-61. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]

[Schweinfurth, The Heart of Africa, I, 287. Cf. p. 354 Category 116. -- Analyst]

Except for the "aperture for the escape of the sound," the Bongo instrument is identical with the Haitian earth bow. The resemblance of the instrument to a spring snare strongly suggests that it may have been developed from some such device for catching game. This possibility is strengthened by the use of the earth bow among certain of the Bambarra hunters of the French Sudan as a game lure, the music played upon it being thought to have magical properties to attract animals to the region of the hunt.[9] A "portable" type of spring snare used among the Ashanti of Ghana is strikingly similar in form to the Haitian "portable" earth bow (see fig. 80).[a] 534 171 174

This instrument has survived not only in Haiti but in the United States as well. The washtub device that is an important part of American Negro folk music is a clear development of the earth bow. The washtub is inverted and a cord is attached to the tin bottom. The other end of the cord is fastened to a stick which is braced against the lip of the bottom side of the tub. The stick and the cord are manipulated precisely like the Haitian and African instruments. There is implicit evidence that the role of the washtub has been taken over in modern jazz orchestras by the double-bass fiddle. 534 171

Another device of African provenience is the Haitian *marimba* (also called *malimba, manimba,* and *marimbula*). It consists of a wooden box upon which a series of metal strips is mounted in such a way that they may be plucked with the fingers. In the face of the box, directly behind the keys, there is an aperture to permit the escape of the sound. The number of keys varies from three to seven or more, though some of them may produce duplicate tones. The instrument is usually about the size of a soap box. The musician sits upon it, facing the same way as the keyboard, and plays with his hands between his knees. The marimba is used for carnival music and for dances of the secular types, frequently in combination with a guitar, claves, and a cha-cha. It is a West Indian development of the small African *m'bila* or *sansa,* or "thumb piano." Several examples of the smaller instruments played with the thumbs have been found elsewhere in the West Indies, notably in Cuba,[10] and large forms of the sansa have been reported in recent years in Africa.

Among the instruments more or less restricted to religious service are whistles and small hand bells, which are used for invoking and saluting the loa and the dead. *Canaries* (large clay water vessels) also enter into ritual use. They are sung into, tapped with sticks, and on some occasions are covered with goatskin heads and played like a drum. 534 796

[a] [Fig 80 appears on p. 112-55. -- Analyst]
[9] [Informant: Sobi has Tore, Bamako. Cf. p. 354, [115] category 116. -- Analyst]
[10] [See Courlander, op. cit., p. 239. Cf. p. 354, cat. 116. -- Analyst]

534 [541] Among the noisemakers heard mostly at the time of the Rara festival (usually on Good Friday) are the *von-von*, or bull-roarer—a thin flat piece of wood whirled on the end of a cord—and the *rara*, the common wooden ratchet. Various types of wooden flutes, usually of bamboo, are also used.

[184] In the remoter parts of the mountains you may now and then hear of an instrument known as the *banza*. A century ago, it would appear, the *banza* was a stringed instrument resembling a banjo. The similarity of names is striking, in view of the instrument's early form. Today, [177] however, the word *banza* is applied to the homemade fiddle which is used to accompany the minuet and other old dances of European origin.

534 524 178 A children's instrument seen sometimes in the mountains is constructed of half of a calabash shell, across the opening of which have been stretched a number of cords. This plucked device appears to be a decadent form of the African trough zither.

[pp. 203-313 not processed]

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Example 158

Ayida isn't joking, oh!
Ayida isn't joking with them!
Enla, [ritual] language, oh!
Ayida isn't joking, oh!
Ayida isn't joking with them!
Those who wish to be satisfied are satisfied!
Those who wish to be angry are angry, oh!
Ayida, oh!
Ayida isn't joking with them!

Example 159

Long live the king and dear queen, oh!
Another misfortune, [they] talk behind my back!
Long live the king and dear queen, oh!
Another misfortune, [they] talk behind my back!
Fire, oh, heat!
Fire, oh, heat, oh!
Another misfortune, [they] talk behind my back!

Example 160

Legba Aguator é!
Oh what loa are you?
Ago I am a loa!
Legba Aguator é!
Oh what loa are you here?
Quitti quitti yé, oh, I am a Nago loa!
Legba Aguator é! What loa are you!

Example 161

Oh, *colico ya ya*, my little banza, *colico!*
In truth, *colico ya ya*, my little banza, *colico!*
Colico ya ya, my little banza, *colico!*
A nou paillé colico ya ya, my little banza, *colico!*

(A children's story song. The italicized parts are not translatable. The banza is a small musical instrument; currently the word is used for a banjo or fiddle, formerly it designated an instrument of African origin.) [534]

Example 162

Adié Compère Frog, that is not running!
Frog hops, ti dong, ti dong dong, frog hops!

(A children's song from a story about a race between the frog and the horse.)

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

533 EXAMPLE 163
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The pig says wain!
The pig says wain, hot mama!
Etc.
See the pig having fun!
Enhé, enhé, hot mama!

(A children's *gage* song.)

EXAMPLE 164

Bwèment rwo!
Adieu, Bwèment, make Bwèment walk!
Bwèment, that's it, that's it, Bwèment!
Make Bwèment walk!

(A children's game song.)

533 EXAMPLE 165
539

You arrive, Rigal, you enter!
You arrive, Rigal, you arrive!
When Rigal turned into a large pig,
He came to Jacmel to eat us!

(This song names a specific individual, Rigal, as having turned into a pig, like a member of the Vinbindingue Society, but it is not clear whether it is intended to be taken seriously or is merely banter.)

EXAMPLE 166

I will zwing, oh!
The mosquito says I will zwing, oh!
Etc.

[534] (Zwing is the sound the mosquito makes. The song is usually sung to the accompaniment of the *tambour maringouin,* or mosquito drum.)

EXAMPLE 167

The small boy stands on the terrace,
He stamps his feet *duo duo!*
The small boy stands on the terrace,
He stamps his feet *duo duo!*
Oh, [unchained?] gives them *paillette,* oh!
The small boy stands on the terrace,
He stamps his feet *duo duo!*
[Unchained?] gives them *paillette,* oh!
Furiously gives them *paillette,* oh!
Mayousse!
Find your woman, *mayousse!*
Mayou-yousse!

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3.Haiti SV3

Chapter 5: *Services for the Loa and the Family Ancestors* (pp. 41-74)

[1]Note that the houngan and the laplace are performing services normally performed by the *prêt' savane*.

[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 165.

[3]Parsons, *Spirit Cult in Hayti*.

[4]Account given by Jean Ravel Pintro.

[5]Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana.

[6]Account given by Voluska Saintvil. A. W. Cardinall notes in his book *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 69): "Trees are in most cases treated with respect. Before a man dare fell one for a canoe he must and invariably does sacrifice to its spirit and apologizes for the harm he is about to do it."

[7]The rite of *rafraîchi tête* is conducted periodically for a *maît' tête* after the original *lavé tête* ceremony. The purpose is to "refresh" the loa and make him content with his residence in the head of the devotee.

[8]Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, p. 233.

[9]It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain Negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form.

[10]Odette Mennesson Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Voudoun Loa," in Appendix A of Deren, *Divine Horsemen*, p. 264.

Chapter 6: *Songs of the Peristyle* (pp. 75-94)

[1]This theme is further commented on in chap. 13. Compare with the following excerpt from a Surinam song reported by Herskovits in *Suriname Folk-Lore* (p. 689):

> I have no mother there,
> I have no father there,
> I have no sister there,
> I haven't got anybody there.

Chapter 7: *In the Mapou Tree: Magic, Demons, and Compacts* (pp. 95-104)

[1]Simpson, "Haitian Magic," *Social Forces*, October, 1940, p. 97.

[2]Note the coincidence of the term *gris-gris* or *grigri* as used in the United States, where it has the same meaning as *mojo*, or "voodoo" charm.

[3]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 503.

[4]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, p. 243.

Chapter 8: *Mardi Gras and Rara: Jugglers, Maypoles, and Kings* (pp. 105-109)

[1]Aubin, *En Haiti*, p. 42.

[2]Marionettes of this kind have been observed in both East and West Africa and are well known in the region of Senegal. I saw a phallic marionette, virtually identical with the Haitian version, in the neighborhood of Khartoum, Sudan.

Chapter 9: *Land and Work* (pp. 110-121)

[1]Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, p. 362.

[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 320 ff., describes Dahomean polygamous marriage in its various forms. Although Dahomean plural marriage is complex in terms of gifts, obligations, and

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 against almost unanimous public opinion opposing enforcement. In
671 1828 it was reported that dancing, which the Code had strictly
625 limited to week ends, was a nightly diversion near the capital. One
535 of the principal dancing resorts was the house of a captain of rural
517 police, the very man who was supposed to repress such amusements.[45]

175 Boyer had done his best, and his best was merely a good piece of
178 office work. When his Code failed to operate, he could think of
24 nothing further to suggest for the economic rehabilitation of Haiti.
433 The last fifteen years of his administration witnessed a gradual lapse into that small-scale farming which was to be characteristic of Haiti for the remainder of the nineteenth century. By comparison with former standards, production and steady industry had both fallen off since Boyer came to the presidency. The testimony of visiting foreigners is unanimous on the decline of industry.

175 The British consul, Mackenzie, said in 1827 that there was very
114 little field labor then being done, and that only elderly people,
435 principally aged "Guinea Negroes" long accustomed to steady work,
461 carried on the tradition. No measures of the government could
464 induce young people born in Haiti to labor or to change from their
184 "habitual vagrancy."[46] Another Englishman, James Franklin, remarked in 1828 that land values throughout the republic had greatly declined because no one could make a profit within any moderate time. Labor was high, he writes, for ordinary wages did not attract the workers who preferred idleness. (This word is certainly unfair: it was work at their own bidding which they preferred, not idleness.) Government lands lay untilled, no one evincing the slightest desire to purchase or utilize them. Franklin continues:

> 114 Land also in the possession of individuals is similarly circumstanced; and
> 175 those who are large proprietors cannot effect a sale of any produce which
> 433 they may have beyond the quantity which they can consume; consequently
> 423 a proprietor may have an immense extent of land, and yet be quite unable
> 425 to derive any benefit from it by cultivation, or to convert it into money, for the want of purchasers. Thus . . . there is no individual wealth in the country, because, although a man may have very large landed possessions, still those possessions are unavailable, for they produce him nothing, as he can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them.

[534] 45. Although dancing is spoken of here as an amusement, it is highly probable that at least a part of it had connection with the Vodun religion.

[241] 46. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti* (London, 1830), I, 100. Mackenzie is clearly exaggerating, unless by "field labor" he means work on plantations, in contrast to farming on small plots.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

the sacrifices; food is set before the sacrificial animal, and if this food is eaten by the creature or creatures, it is known that the loa is satisfied. Then comes the actual sacrifice of the animal, a slaying neither ostentatious nor dramatic, since often it does not occur in the houmfort itself. It is at this juncture that possession is looked for. The loa, by seizing one or more of his devotees—or, if possession fails, by the divination of the priest—makes known his desires. The demands of the loa are likely to be modest: a candle, a special article of food, certain specific attentions. Occasionally he insists upon an impressive sacrifice. Whatever his desires, they must be gratified or else the loa will mildly harass the family; long refusal will produce anger and full vengeance. If the god is Rada, his sacrifice will be white, red, or vari-colored; if he is Pétro, he will wish black or gray animals—chickens, turkeys, goats, bullocks.

The service itself, then, is entirely religious in nature, consisting wholly of ceremonies and rituals conducted by officiating priests, with the purpose of restraining or pacifying gods who may have been pursuing a family with misfortune, or gratifying those who have made it happy. The dance following the service apparently expresses the joy of the family at dangers averted and gratitude for blessings bestowed.

In contrast to the private character of the service, the dance has all the appearance of a social event. Invitations to it are sent all over the countryside. People attend for good fellowship, gossip, and the sheer delight of dancing, but in the background one is always aware of a religious element as well. The dance is held in a specially constructed *tonnelle*, a roof of boughs and leaves supported by uprights. Drums are not always used at the earlier service, but no dance could be held without them. The crowd drifts in slowly, so that the dance may be long in getting under way. The best drummers in the community may not arrive until after two or three hours. Three drums of different sizes, all properly baptized, set the rhythms, and sometimes gourd rattles embroider a commentary upon the beat. Whereas at the service possession comes as a result of the priest's invocations, at the dance it is inspired by the drumming. Each loa has his own particular rhythm, so that as soon as it is determined what god has seized upon a dancer the drummers take up the rhythm of that god. The officiant immediately rushes to the mounted person with a calabash of water and a candle; by following the "horse" around and

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

527 On Saturday nights one hears the drums beating all over the country, but if one follows the sound he is more than likely to end [534] up at nothing more esoteric than a neighborhood dance. Other [535] musical instruments than drums are rare, but any community has drums; and these set a rhythm to which one can dance. Generally food is available at these affairs, as well as drinks both hard and soft. 273 It is not extraordinary to discover that a few of the men have drunk rather freely of clairin, the raw rum of the country; most drunkenness seems to lead to good-natured ribaldry rather than to offensive violence. It is unusual for a drunken man to cause damage of any 535 serious nature. The dancing corresponds neither to American ballroom dancing nor to set folk dancing. Most of it is done solo, and an individual participates or remains on the outskirts of the enclosure as 533 the mood of the moment impels him. Over the beat of the drum can be heard one of the current songs, more than likely a bit smutty in nature, and frequently poking fun at some well-known personage, or making allusions which in normal speech might seem crude.

541 One of the popular Sunday afternoon sports is the *gaguère*, or cock-fight, held under a shelter back of a home. Much small betting goes [525] on. The spectators sit or stoop close around the dusty ring, talking to the cock they are backing, commenting on the fight, offering advice to the owner. Between rounds the cocks are rubbed down, sprayed with water or rum, fondled and excited anew. Toward the latter stages of any fight the spectacle becomes gory and, to the uninitiated, distinctly cruel.

526 There is singularly little sport in Haiti. Élite youths play tennis; boys enjoy football; and swimming is a common diversion. Few sports are competitive and, so far as the writer has observed, the peasants have in their games practically nothing resembling organization.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

attitudes of these writers were in the main far from sympathetic toward Haiti, and their interests extended but little to the customs of the great masses of Haitians. That the fear of slavery was still alive in the early part of the nineteenth century is apparent from an incident related by Mackenzie;[64] that, some decades later, the sense of racial differences continued to exist is evident from folk-sayings about the characteristics of whites, mulattoes, and Negroes recorded by St. John.[65] The concept of rank seems to have maintained itself in its full flavor, with no lack of social classes in Haitian urban society and no lack of vigor in perpetuating the earlier prejudices of caste.

The majority of the population remained on the land, for by 1830 the great estates had been completely broken up, and were cultivated in the main by small concessionaires. The dress of these country inhabitants seems to have remained much as it had been under French control, and the emphasis on good manners that so marks African social intercourse had been retained to such an extent that St. John, no admirer of the Haitian people, was forced to remark upon it.[66] Markets which were conducted in African fashion had been established, and these were supplemented by itinerant peddlers. The institution of *plaçage*, a reconciliation of African plural marriage with the monogamy of European custom, of which more will be said in a later chapter, was known in the early days of independence. The rites of birth and death were marked with their special ceremonies, and in both instances it can be seen that the African elements of the cultural heritage were not being forgotten. Dancing continued as the principal form of recreation, and to the traditional dances, which still persist, were added European styles.[67]

Above all, African religious customs were being observed. *Vodun* rites continued to flourish and magic was practiced as in the days preceding independence, as is to be seen from the notorious and all too often repeated tale of the "Congo bean

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

he is assured of more solicitous care from her and more deferential treatment from her children. And though when this has occurred his "legal" wife may at his death come with a justice of the peace to claim his body and his effects, this move is anticipated, so that what he has given the *placée* wife and her children is usually well out of the way. "Often they find only the four walls of the house."

A certain number of unmarried men result from this system of plural matings, some of whom remain single by preference, particularly in the cities, where the incidence of homosexuality far exceeds that found in the country. In Mirebalais itself, when the final withdrawal of the American Marines from Haiti was being celebrated, a dance called *manuba*, significantly enough the only one held indoors, was one in which male dancers danced together in couples. The sexual problem of the younger unmarried men is more often solved by means of liaisons with married women, though this has its dangers in the countryside, where the movements of every individual are known and the least tendency to unsanctioned social behavior is soon the subject for widespread gossip. Prostitutes are found everywhere, and they are by no means visited by unmarried men alone. On the whole, sex "adventures" are more indulged in by men than women, even allowing for the tendency of some women to have affairs with youths. A belief widely held, that plural wives tend so to exhaust the virility of a man that he must seek "remedies" of a magical nature from the priests of the *vodun* cult and from sorcerers, must also be mentioned. Frigidity is a principal cause for female homosexuality, and, because of a wife's reluctance to satisfy her husband, it not infrequently happens that she is sent back to her parents, where she may seek out other women. The most prevalent Haitian attitude toward homosexuality in either sex, it may be remarked, is one of derision rather than vindictiveness, as the term applied to effeminate men, *commères*, may suggest.

L: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1237 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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CHAPTER VIII

WHAT IS "VOODOO"?

MORE than any other single term, the word "voodoo" is called to mind whenever mention is made of Haiti. Conceived as a grim system of African practices, it has come to be identified with fantastic and cruel rites and to serve as a symbol of daring excursions into the esoteric. Not only has emphasis been placed on its frenzied rites and the cannibalism supposed on occasion to accompany them, but its dark mysteries of magic and "zombis" have been so stressed that it has become customary to think of the Haitians as living in a universe of psychological terror. 771

What, then, is "voodoo"? "Voodoo," or *vodun*, as it will be termed here, following native pronunciation, is a complex of African belief and ritual governing in large measure the religious life of the Haitian peasantry.[1] It also has an even more restricted meaning in Mirebalais, where the word often simply denotes a form of sacred dance accompanied by spirit-possession or merely a dance which on occasion may take its place along with the *calenda*, the *martinique*, the *zouc*, and other social dances at public celebrations, where an occurrence of possession would be rare and in questionable taste. This latter meaning was recognized by St. Mery: 184 791 535 989 171 791 535

"The Calenda and the Chica are not the only dances in the colony which have come from Africa. There is an-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

171 other one which has been known there for many years,
771 principally in the west, which bears the name of *Vau-*
535 *doux*. . . . But it is not only as a dance that the *Vaudoux* merits consideration, for it occurs under circumstances which assign to it a place among the institutions where superstition and bizarre practices play a considerable part." [3]

171 In Dahomey, whence the term has come, *vodun*, as has al-
771 ready been stated, signifies "god" and is a general name for
776 all deities. This source of the word has likewise long been
[192] known, as a reading of St. Mery shows:

> "According to the Arada Negroes, the real followers of *Vaudoux* in the colony . . . *Vaudoux* signifies an all-powerful and supernatural being on which depend all the events that come to pass on this globe." [4]

171 Similarly, de Vassière [5] quotes with approval a parallel defini-
771 tion from Peytraud, while modern Haitian writers also em-
776 phasize its Dahomean origin.[6] This meaning of the word had,
192 however, undergone a change in its new home even during
173 pre-Revolutionary times, for, according to St. Mery, the "all-
925 powerful and supernatural being" had come to be a non-venomous serpent that stood as a symbol "for all those who
184 professed this same doctrine." Today in Mirebalais even this
771 identification is a thing of the past, though the prominence
776 given serpent-worship in Haiti by most writers [7] would make
925 it reasonable to suppose that elsewhere in the island serpents are maintained by priests of the *vodun* cult and play an important role in the rites at which the gods are worshipped. Indeed, one priest from Arcahaie encountered in Mirebalais mentioned the fact that in his own temple he kept such a snake. Yet in our valley no worship of serpents as such was encountered, and there were even those who declared that they had no hesitation in killing any snake, though these brave assertions could not be tested. Serpent-worship in Mirebalais

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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796 535 men and women exchange gossip and sit about, joining in the songs or merely observing the proceedings; while the young people form part of the singing, dancing circle that revolves almost without pause about the central post of the *tonnelle*, the shelter where the festivities are held.

796 To speak of discipline in connection with these dances is to evoke new and astonishing images for readers familiar with the more popular literature on Haiti. It is admittedly true that as one first witnesses a *vodun* dance, one's reaction is that this is a performance governed solely by the dictates of individual [416] possession. These ceremonies are usually held at night, deep in [291] the bush, lighted only by a small, smoking oil lamp and by the [411] candles fastened to the pegs of the drums, while the participants dress in anything but their best clothing, and in their belts the men carry the machetes always worn by the Haitian [533] peasant. Add to this the effect of the unceasing rhythms of the drumming, the blanket of sound from the unison singing of the participants, the violence of the possessions, and it is not strange that the untrained observer tends to assess what he sees in almost any terms but those of the underlying discipline that defines all activity in the worship of the gods. A release of [154] psychic tension is undoubtedly afforded those who become possessed, and this is also experienced to a lesser degree by all those in attendance. Nevertheless, it must be emphasized, de- 796 786 spite so much that has been written to the contrary, that this form of worship of the *loa* is neither unrestrained hysteria nor drunken orgiastic satisfaction of the sex drive. The behavior of the participants, in terms of the accepted patterns of European and American religious decorum, often seems uncouth, vigorous, violent, and even dangerous, when it is merely the expression of a different tradition. And as for the orgiastic aspects of these rites, Haitians have ample opportunity to satisfy their sexual impulses elsewhere, without making this a basic and constant element in the worship of their gods.

796 *Vodun* dances, in Mirebalais as elsewhere, take place on

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AT A VODUN DANCE

ABOVE, *The dancers crowding about the central post of the shelter.*
BELOW, *Drums and drummers.*

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[facing p. 193]

1; Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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The family then take the other container to a crossroad, where it is deposited as an offering for Legba, and its contents are eaten by the dogs, who significantly, in Dahomey are the animals sacred to this deity. Following this, the adults enter the closed room, to feast at the laden table. 769 [782]

Several days after the funeral two gourdes are paid a priest — "a real one," not a *prêt' savanne* — to chant a *libera* at the grave, a rite that must be repeated each year on All Saints' Day. Each year, also, food is given the dead, though "not so much as following a funeral." Chickens, beans, rice, and coffee are the principal part of such an offering, for which no priest need be called, as the ceremony is merely to let the dead know that they are not forgotten. Every three or five years, however, a large *mangé* must be given for all the family dead, and if held on the family habitation, there is social dancing, where such favorites of the ancestors as the *martinique*, the *banda*, the *calebasse*, and the *zesse* are danced.[8] [793] [765] [535]

Differences in procedure mark various modes of death. When a person is killed by lightning, a justice of the peace must be called and the burial is performed at once. Such a one has no "last prayer," because, death by lightning being a punishment of God, it is felt that the dead probably made an oath which he subsequently violated. Those killed by lightning or who die of smallpox are not mourned, but no explanation could be obtained for this obvious survival of African custom. If a leper has concealed his disease, mourning is worn for him, though if the cause of death is generally known this is forgone. There is customarily no mourning for suicides, and never where the regulations of the Church are rigorously applied. 766 [171] [762]

If the dead person was a *vodun* priest or otherwise had strong *connaissance*, steps are taken before his death to "remove the *loa* from his head" so that his soul will not go under the water, for, as has been explained, such souls are held to be powerful spirits which may cause their family much harm 764 766 776 775

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178 other African crafts, which, though essentially utilitarian in Africa, also allow play for the æsthetic impulse, have been lost as well. Ironworking is absent not only because the necessary deposits of iron ore are lacking, but because the technique of shaping the metal into various forms, which in Africa is in the hands of specialists, was apparently suppressed in the time of slavery. No native cloth is woven. Basketry has survived, but whereas in Africa designs of no small artistic merit are achieved in this medium, it is markedly utilitarian in Haiti. Even from a technical point of view, the basketry forms are of the simplest, the panniers used for transportation of products on mule-back being merely an in-and-out weave, and the plaited strips of which hats and the *macoute*, or carrying basket, are made are of a parallel simplicity.

[325] [326] [286] 178 285

Few African recreational forms have survived. *Wari*, the draughts-like West African game found today in many parts of the West Indies, is unknown in the interior of Haiti, though it has been introduced into Port-au-Prince, where it is played by longshoremen who have learned it from the sailors of near-by islands. String figures, important in West Africa, are not encountered, and no children's pursuits comparable to the play of young Africans were seen in Mirebalais, if the minor ceremony of marking the loss of childhood teeth be excepted. African types of recreation have in the main given way to cock-fights and card-games, both of which derive their interest from the opportunities they offer for gambling—a fact important in itself, since gambling is not one of the widespread African vices. The most important card-games are *trois-sept*, *marriage*, and *bezique*, and both men and women know them and play them for stakes. Similarly cock-fighting, particularly during the dry season, is a passionate avocation of the men. Large sums are wagered on the results of an encounter, and feeling often runs high.[6]

524 525 178 [541]

The Haitian genius for art and recreation is best embodied in the dance and its accompanying songs and drum rhythms. Virtuosity is attained not only by the dancers, but even more

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especially by the drummers. Experience among other Caribbean Negro cultures and in Africa itself has failed to reveal greater skill in calling forth intricate rhythms from batteries of drums than can be found at any Haitian religious gathering. The enthusiasm with which a man takes his place at a drum, the manner in which he loses himself in his drumming, the skill with which he maintains the time of his complex beats in common with two other drummers and those who manipulate the rattles and the iron, bespeak long training and a passionate devotion to the art. The same is true of dancing. The best drummer, the finest dancer, hold positions of esteem in the community, and on occasion their fame will go beyond the valley, an occurrence as unusual as it is valued. The excellence of the drumming and dancing and the concomitant artistry in song can be understood when one considers the age at which training is begun in these arts. At Mirebalais an infant of no more than two years has been seen to dance creditably, while a young boy of six gave a demonstration of drumming that spoke eloquently of his promise as a drummer of talent. Before every *vodun* dance the boys take over the drums while the younger girls dance to their rhythms. They are watched with a critical eye by their elders, who from time to time correct them or praise those who do well.

The accompanying musical forms are almost entirely African in their rhythmic structure, but European influence is traceable in their melodic line, which varies from unchanged European folk-melodies to purely African songs. In the use of the falsetto, however, in the statement of a theme by a leader and its repetition by a chorus, and in the countless modulations introduced into the song, the singing is entirely African, as are the postures struck by those singing.

The importance of the dance is apparent from the large range of dances. Of *vodun* dances there are the *avalou*, or *yanvalou*, a word meaning supplication in the speech of Whydah; the specialized steps for the various Rada and Pétro gods; for

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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535 177 178 [096] *magie* and for the Congo, Ibo, and Nago *loa;* the *mazon,* as an interlude dance between possessions; and steps of the *asagwe,* or salute to the gods. There is also the Martinique cycle of secular dances, including the *zesse, callebasse,* and *banda;* the *rara* dances found only at Easter time, and the social Congo dances. Finally European dancing, called *bal,* is performed to the sound of a drum, a phonograph record, or a small orchestra. With a qualified exception of the last, the type of dancing in all these is African. The essence of style in these dances lies in the manipulation of feet and the muscles of the body, particularly those of shoulders, hips, and buttocks, the patterns of which have been carried over in their entirety from the aboriginal homeland. For men and women to dance with arms about each other, as do Europeans, is still regarded in Mirebalais as immoral.

538 178 The trait of African culture that has survived most tenaciously in all the New World, even where European influence has been strongest, is that of folk-literature — of tales, proverbs, and riddles.[7] Though these have flourished in Haiti as elsewhere, prolonged story-telling sessions, so characteristic of other Negro groups, were not encountered in Mirebalais. It is likely that this is principally a seasonal phenomenon, and the failure to find long evenings of story-telling during the summer months, when the rains are at their height and work in the fields is hardest, may properly be an expression of this seasonal variation. As elsewhere in Negro societies, tales and riddles are told at wakes, though their enjoyment by children and their function as a part of the education of the child are as important as in Africa itself. The familiar types of African animal stories and the tales of human tricksters and magicians are well known, and well told. The figure who corresponds to Br'er Rabbit, or to the spider Anansi, is the little 'Ti Malice, while the foil for his pranks is the great awkward Bouki.[8]

One folkloristic element that gives Haitian life a strong African flavor is the proverb, which, as elsewhere in Negro

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The falls, therefore, in association with the purely Catholic rituals carried on at the village church, are seen to hold an important if unofficial place in the complex of rites known in the Haitian Church calendar as the Fête of Saut d'Eau.

During the two or three days preceding the fête and on the fifteenth of July itself, an air of great gayety not unlike the carnival spirit accompanying European Church festivals pervades the surrounding country. Camions traverse the almost impassable side road, bringing crowds of people from Port-au-Prince, from the Dominican border, and even from the north, who throng the streets and the shrines and tramp the miles from the village to the waterfalls or visit the nearer sacred sites of St. John's Wood and En bas Palmes, to light candles and ask the satisfaction of their needs. Like the falls themselves, these spots by their very beauty awaken a sense of emotional awareness, and it is not strange that here, as at the falls, many possessions occur. At night, in particular, the great trees with their interlacing serpent-like roots, the gaping earth which at En bas Palmes is witness to the uprooting of the palm trees where the miracle occurred, and the stream of sacred water, all make a scene of indescribable eeriness, heightened by the flickering candles given as offerings, and the open lamps of those who stay the night here to fulfill their vows.

In the town itself gambling and other games go on, and dances of all kinds are held at night, among them *vodun* and *bal*, though at these public dances no possessions are countenanced. One of the most colorful aspects of the scene is the *penitants*, wearing clothing of varied colors in fulfillment of a request by the *loa* they worship or an obligation to them. Such folk are not permitted in church unless the clothing which marks them is covered by ordinary dress, but they walk the streets, often possessed and often using their power to heal those whom they encounter. Possessions by Ogun, by Gede, by Baron Samedi, by Damballa, by Erzilie and other *vodun* deities were observed, particularly at the shrines, where their devotees prophesied and healed the sick.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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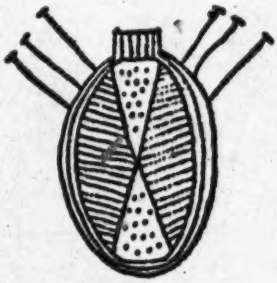

Preface

Every student of Haitian life is soon impressed by the richness of the materials spread out before him and the necessity of limiting his field of investigation. A study of Haitian religious practices, for example, draws one deeper and deeper into profusion, variation, and contradiction. One finds little difficulty in drawing a generalized picture with swift, bold lines; but when he descends into detail he discovers that the broad generalizations of the religious system contain within them many shifting and even warring motifs, and that what in one region is held to be true is not so regarded in another. The gods of *Vodoun* that are revered in one village are given only perfunctory treatment in another. Rites for the dead have a common denominator everywhere in the country, but each community brings to them something of its own or emphasizes traditions that elsewhere are forgotten. So it is also with music and dancing. A traditional drum rhythm may have one name in the north and another in the south, or a certain rhythm may be called by different names. There are diverse opinions about which dances are preferred by certain deities. The meaning of a song can be interpreted differently by different people. It is therefore no wonder that competent works on Haiti do not completely agree with one another in many respects, or that they seem, now and then, to be saying different or even contradictory things. Yet in many instances the seeming inconsistencies are in reality only minor variants within an overall scheme.

The purpose of this book is to present a broad view of certain aspects of Haitian culture and wherever possible to extract some of the flavor of Haitian thinking as well as its sense. It is easy to be fooled in regard to both. I remember seeing an old bearded man in the mountains beyond Furcy walking around his freshly hoed garden breaking a ripe tomato into small juicy bits which he scattered on the ground. It was about as primitive a method of planting as I had ever seen, and I wondered if even

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

one seed from that tomato would ever take root under the hot sun. Some time later, when I knew this man well, I talked to him about the care with which seeds must be planted if they are to grow properly. I told him how *we* grew *our* tomatoes. He listened carefully, nodding his head. When I had finished he said: "Yes, that must be a good way to do things in your country. But here in this valley God is good. He does not forget his children. From the broken tomato many plants will sprout. When God is good to you, you do not have to count the seeds." I suggested that perhaps one should not waste any of the precious seeds that God had provided; and to this he replied: "How is there waste? My garden is made to flourish by Zaka [the country man's special deity]. Some people give Zaka a feast every year, but between times they forget. Zaka helps me in my work, and I don't forget him. When I break the tomato and put it on the ground that way, it is a little taste for Zaka. Whatever I plant, I give him some. He is good to me, I am good to him."

What I learned from many incidents like this one was that the eye does not always see correctly. The old man was not just planting tomatoes, nor was he performing a conventionalized ritual act. It was a highly personalized act of faith in nature and confidence in the deity who shared his work.

A large part of this book deals with Vodoun, the religious practices based on West African traditions. One soon discovers that the songs and dances of Vodoun ritual are not merely music and motion supplementing and decorating more serious affairs. Virtually every aspect of Vodoun ritual is placative or invocational. The songs that are sung and the dances that are danced are direct supplication of various supernatural forces.

Undoubtedly, a number of principles which are put forward in this study do not apply equally to every region of Haiti; but they are, I think, true in general terms. Not until one has accepted the fact that different explanations exist for given phenomena, that the same rites are performed in different fashion in different places, and that the cult priests themselves do not agree on many details, may one begin to work toward a general view of the Haitian scene.

All of Haitian life is not Vodoun. And there are of course some Haitians who are relatively outside the central circle of its influence. But the inner meanings of Vodoun and its relationship to the total view of life permeate the entire scene. Music, too, binds together practically the entire fabric of Haitian existence. It is essential not only to the cult temple but to countless workaday activities. Agrarian work groups often perform their tasks to the accompaniment of a drum. And in the cult temple, the iron hoe of the fields often serves as a percussion instrument.

The Drum and the Hoe is the result of studies made over a period of

793 794 787 796 789

Attached to the ever-present po'teau mitan, or center post, were three oil lamps which threw a flickering light. At the entrance to the dance court a glowing-hot iron bar stood erect in a charcoal fire—the symbol of kanzo and of the loa Ogoun.

When the preliminary dances were over, the hounsi retired to one side of the court, where they sat in two rows facing the center.

Ritual rattle and bell in hand, the houngan took his place by the sacred center post. He was an elderly man with a gray beard. He wore a red kerchief like a turban around his head. He smoked a cigar, and in his free hand he held a bottle of rum. The red kerchief, the rum, and the cigar were all in honor of Ogoun. He moved back and forth across the center of the court, talking casually, even joking and laughing. The drums began again, on a signal from the houngan, and a number of visiting houngans and mambos came forward and began a stately Jenvalo dance. The backs [535] of their hands touching their knees, their backs bent low, they moved slowly counterclockwise around the center post. The mambos outnumbered the houngans four to one. The hounsi sitting on the sidelines sang. The song was for Maîtresse Èzilie. The houngan in charge stood by patiently, deep in thought. His assistant, the laplace, kept time with a small rattle and led the singing.

When the song came to an end, the visiting cult priests and priestesses retired from the dance ground. Again the hounsi danced. Afterward the houngan began to talk *langage*, twirling his bottle of rum about recklessly. He was speaking to a loa. The chief drummer beat out a salute to Ogoun. Then the houngan raised the bottle and placed it to his ear. It gurgled away, some of the liquid trickling down his face. He seemed to be swallowing the rum.

While all the hounsi, with bowed heads, sat on the ground, the houngan recited from the ritual of the Catholic service. Latin words, then Creole words in Latin cadences. After a while the houngan's assistant took over the recitation, and the hounsi answered him responsively.[1] When the prayers were over, the hounsi arose and passed into the hounfor. The drums began a fast Nago rhythm, and the hounsi emerged with brilliant silk flags studded with tiny brass rivets. The houngan's chief assistants—the laplace and the houngénicon—carried military sabers upraised. The dancers circled in single file around the center post, a triumphal military heralding of the deity of war and the forge.

To the accompaniment of a crescendo of drums, the procession suddenly reversed its direction. Watching the upraised saber of the laplace for a signal, the hounsi reversed their direction again.

000 When the dance drama ended, the hounsi carried the flags back into

1 [Note that the houngan and the laplace are performing services normally performed by the prêt savane. Cf. P. 351, Category 116. -- Analys]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

of ground maize prepared by the laplace. The chicken, released, sat motionless, making no effort to escape. All watched attentively, the houngan shaking his rattle and bell. Suddenly the chicken cocked its head and, seeming to see the corn for the first time, reached out and pecked at it. This was the loa receiving the sacrifice—a difficult conception if one thinks of the chicken itself as the sacrifice. "Chébo," l'Autorité, snatched the chicken up, danced violently about, the loa in full possession of her body. With a swift movement of the saber, she cut the chicken's throat and caused the first drop of blood to fall into the hole. When the chicken stopped struggling, it was left there, head downward. L'Autorité took up a cock which was given her, cradled him, and set him before the ground maize. When he pecked at it, she picked him up and danced, around and around, jerking, lunging, never quite falling. She took his comb between her teeth, supporting his body gently with her hands, and spun around and around. Then she released him, cut his throat, and placed him in the hole with the chicken.

At the side of the hounfor, waiting, was a goat (called by the ritual name Dogwé). He had a fine silky white coat and a long beard. He was brought in to the place of sacrifice, and l'Autorité dropped to her knees to embrace his neck with her arms. She remained there a moment, her cheek against his, talking to him. Then she arose, a machete in hand instead of a saber, and began to pirouette while three men threw the goat on his side. Then she cut with the machete, and the goat's blood, too, began to run into the hole. For the first time her dance became unquestionably frenzied. She swung strong, full blows of the machete at the goat's neck, finally severing the head. From the hindquarters she cut a piece of red meat and placed it in her mouth.

At a signal from the houngan, three men carried the goat's body away to be dressed and cooked, and a woman came forward to wipe the blood from Papa Chébo's face.

The drums began again, a Dahomé dance, and the people relaxed. Many joined in the dancing while l'Autorité strutted about shaking hands and talking *langage*. She also danced, with gestures and movements wholly masculine. At one point she briefly advanced on another woman, making sexual gestures.

The houngan and his houngénicon retired to the front room of the hut. A new mat had been placed there for the houngénicon. She lay down on it, and the houngan sat in a chair against the wall. This was the beginning of the ceremony of calling *les morts en bas dleau* (the dead below the water).

Meanwhile, before the hounfor, the laplace and a hounsi were building

769 houngan carried out the large round basket in which lay the bottles and
793 the pierre-loas. The hounsi gathered around it, ten of them, to carry it to
794 the *card*. In the bottles were *les morts en bas dlean* (the spirits of the dead
796 from below the water). Carrying the flags, three hounsi danced, singing,
787 up to the *card*. After them the laplace came, carrying in his left hand a plate of maize flour from which he made vèvès in the line of advance, simple marks symbolizing the crossroads. The drums were beating a special salute to the loa. The ten hounsi carrying the basket danced and sang. As they moved up the hill, they rotated, so that the basket revolved like the [535] hub of a wheel. Their progress was not smooth, however; they jerked forward and backward as they rotated. Arriving before the *card*, first one, then a second, was entered by her loa. They fell, jerked, and stumbled. This was all a very good omen. The houngan called "Abobol" for them to resist such possession, and the hounsi all sat down on the ground. The houngan placed the basket inside the *card* and entered after it. He called for his little bell, which the laplace passed in to him. The laplace closed the flap down tight, from the outside, and placed the flags against it.

Upon a signal given from within, the hounsi began a song:

[539]

La famille semblé,
Oh semblé nous!
La famille semblé,
Oh nous semblé pou nou pa'lé parole nous là!
La famille semblé!

The family gathers,
Oh, we gather!
The family gathers,
Oh, we gather to speak our words here!
The family gathers!

769 The laplace took his position, his back to the *card*, while inside, because
796 of the candle burning there, the houngan could be seen setting out the
787 contents of the basket. The candle went out, and in the *card* the little bell
[794] began to tinkle. The singing stopped. The houngan was beginning to
[793] talk to the dead below the water. First he talked *langage*. Then his voice was heard through the constant sound of the tiny bell, supplicating Papa Loko to talk a little bit with his "children." A faint, tremulous voice, that of a tired old grandfather, was heard to answer. Papa Loko was stirring himself out of a long silence. He talked a long while to the houngan. Sometimes they both spoke at once. Faintly he was heard to say that he had come a long way to see his children, and that he was very tired. But as he talked his strength returned to him, and, asking the houngan to wait, he spoke directly to his "children," who sat, respectfully and awed,

796 He was the center of all eyes. Most of the time he danced alone, gyrating
787 recklessly. Sometimes he danced with his houngénicon. Those who
793 watched clapped hands and uttered sounds imitating drums, for drums
796 were not being used in this service. The houngan carried the inevitable *clochette*, or tiny hand bell.

When newcomers arrived, Gèdé greeted them by shaking both their hands downward, vigorously, three times. Then he wiped their faces with his kerchief, a ceremony which he repeated from time to time. He [535] danced with each of them a kind of Jenvalo step, simple, restrained, and dignified. One of the visitors fell to his knees to converse with him.

The entire evening was built around the houngan's representation of Gèdé. Properly speaking, the houngan was not in a trance. He was in full possession of all his normal faculties and was conscious of the slightest inconveniences and disturbances. Several times the clay bowl of his pipe fell from the reed stem, scattering hot ashes on the ground, and each time he paused to allow the houngénicon to clear them away. Yet he was carried away by his certainty that he was Gèdé. The obvious conviction of those who watched seemed to fortify him in his role. As the evening wore on, he became more and more detached from his normal personality. His psychic condition was not that of one who had been "mounted" by a loa; it was, rather, a continuously progressive ecstasy.

796 Gèdé is, in fact, more than a loa of the cemetery; he is a personification
76[of death in all its macabre, humorous, and unpredictable aspects. Death is not merely a thing dying; it is an entity, a positive force in nature. Death is Gèdé Nimbo. I believe that when the houngan became Gèdé, all who had crowded into his hut felt themselves to be in the presence of death itself. Death, a dynamic, aggressive force, danced and pirouetted among them, talking the language of the dead and of old Africa.

796 Gèdé is often stern, austere, and forbidding, but he has other aspects. Haitians take amused pleasure at the terror he can strike into the hearts of the mighty. An old Gèdé song goes:

[539]

Papa Gèdé bel ga'çon!	Papa Gèdé is a handsome fellow!
Papa Gèdé bel ga'çon!	Papa Gèdé is a handsome fellow!
L'habillé tout en noi'!	He is dressed all in black
Pou'l monté au palais!	For he is going up to the palace!
L'habillé tout en blanc	When he's dressed all in white
Li semblé yun deputé!	He looks like a deputy!
L'habillé tout en noi'!	When he's dressed all in black
Li semblé yun senateur!	He resembles a senator!

796 According to tradition, the song had its origin in a march on the capital
788 by some houngans many years ago. The story is very old and no one
793 remembers many of the details.
539

243 796 769 In the Artibonite Valley, where much rice is grown, a similar ceremony takes place before the rice is gathered from the fields. In this ceremony it is rice that is shared with the family ancestors, who have first rights, and with close friends who have aided with the planting. This feast is called [252] *mangé diri*, or sometimes *goûté diri*, the tasting of the rice. Small amounts of rice are taken from the fields, cooked with red beans or Congo beans, or perhaps made into dumplings. The farmer's friends and relatives gather [524] while the food is still cooking, and play games such as *wari* and *trois-sept*. [538] The children play *gage* games and sing songs, and sometimes a *malé conte*—a storyteller—comes to entertain them.

When the food is finally ready, the family ancestors are given their share. The farmer takes a calabash bowl of the rice and walks around the house grounds calling upon his immediate ancestors to accept their share. He drops a little food on the ground for the remembered dead, for the unknown dead who preceded them, for the Haitian dead, and for the dead of Africa. He also drops small portions for the dead twins, the dead albinos, the deformed dead, and the dead who have lost limbs, and for the distressed dead who have been improperly buried, or who may not have received the feasts that were due them. Afterward, he offers food to those who died of drowning, or who were lost at sea and never heard of again.

Each course is shared with the ancestors. The farmer takes a pitcher of water, spilling a little here and a little there until the dead have quenched their thirst. He also gives a little of everything to the family loa. Then the calabashes are set out on a bench or table reserved for the dead, and this food is not disturbed. Food for the marassas is set out separately on the ground in three small *conis*, or gourd dishes.

The family ancestors whose good will has made the harvest possible having been taken care of, the food is now shared among the extended family and the friends who helped in the fields. Later there are prayers [782] to the loa, the saints, and God, led by the houngan or a prêt' savane. To [796] finish the affair, there may be Juba-type dances for the older people, while [536] the children watch or play *gage* games. [524]

Only after this service are the farmer and his family and his *coumbite* (mutual labor group), if he belongs to one, free to go out and harvest the rice.[4]

243 243 796 769 171 These feasts of the rice and yam harvests are not of New World origin. Similar harvest festivals for yams or rice are held over a wide area of West Africa. There, as in Haiti, the fundamental concern is with the family ancestors, whose good will must be constantly nourished so that the rains continue to fall, the crops flourish, and human beings remain fertile. Among the Ashanti of Ghana, for example, the yam and rice harvests are

4 [Account given by Jean Ravel Pintro. Cf. P. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Ianman con ça, con ça!
Ianman con ça'm dansé Ibo!
Ianman con ça, con ça!
Ianman con ça'm dansé Ibo!
Ianman con ça, con ça!
Ianman é-wa é-wa é-wa! [Ex. 72]

Ibo *Hé!*
Ibo *Hé!*
Ibo Nation, what are you doing there, Ibo *Hé!*
Ianman, like that, like that!
Ianman, like that I dance the Ibo!
Ianman, like that, like that!
Ianman, like that I dance the Ibo!
Ianman, like that, like that!
Ianman *é-wa é-wa é-wa!*

Another song containing the same zestful appreciation of dancing is for the loa Kitta. The words "my mother isn't dead" and "my father isn't dead" are simply expressions of good fortune and happiness which embellish the command to do the Kitta steps:

Ai ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!

Manman pas mouri ba'm pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!

M'dit pitit ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!

Papa pas mouri ba'm pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta! [Ex. 73]

Ai, little man, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps!

My mother is not dead, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps!

I say little man, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps!

My father is not dead, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps! ¹/₄

A song for the loa Bambarra describes the movements of his dance. Bambarra is symbolized by the crab, and the dance posture with "low hips" is regarded as characteristic of the crab's movements: [535]

Bambarra kap promèné, taille bas!
Bambarra ché promèné, taille bas!

¹/₄ [For footnote, see category 116, p. 351. --Analyst]

2. Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Bambarra is walking, low hips!
Bambarra is going to walk, low hips!

Damballa Wèdo, being a snake deity, "threads" or "winds" his way like a serpent, and this song describes a serpentine course taken by the dancers as Damballa (here identified as a Nago man) arrives:

Filé na filé, Damballa Wèdo vini wè moin!
Filé na filé, Nèg' Nago vini wè'm là! [Ex. 74]

Wind, we wind, Damballa Wèdo comes to see me!
Wind, we wind, the Nago man comes to see me here!

After the dancing has been going on for a long while and the pace is fast, there may be a song of banter, such as the following from the Dahomey rites. The dancers sing *laillé, laillé!*, describing a figure of the dance in which the skirts are swirled, and note that they have worn out the drummers. They even offer to carry on their backs those dancers who are ready to fall by the wayside:

Laillé laillé!
Oh laillé laillé oh viéco'l
Tambouyé bouké!
Tambouyé bouké viéco'l
Laillé laillé oh viéco'l
Laillé laillé tambouyé bouké houngan'ml
M'po'té sou corps moin vié sur!
Tambouyé bouké ça!
Laillé laillé! [Ex. 75]

Laillé laillé!
Oh, *laillé laillé*, oh, old people!
The drummers are tired!
The drummers are tired, old people!
Laillé laillé, oh, old people!
Laillé laillé, the drummers are tired, my *houngan!*
I'll carry you on my back, old sister!
The drummers are tired there!
Laillé laillé!

Interspersed among the songs of the hounfor there are sometimes warnings or admonitions. Usually they are tangent and indirect in statement, and may be from the point of view of the loa or of the houngan. In the following pouin song, which accompanies the ritual of making magic, there is a warning to certain people who will feel the effects of the magic. The ceremony includes, among other things, the dropping of lemons, roots, and leaves by the houngan into his sacred basin or pond. The houngan sings:

(P 105)

8. Mardi Gras and Rara: Jugglers, Maypoles, and Kings

From early in January until Easter, each year, the Haitian countryside 541
is infected with a riotous carnival spirit that puts all else in the background. First comes Mardi Gras, beginning early in January and building to a great climax at Shrovetide. And then on Ash Wednesday begins the seven-week festival known as Rara, Lwalwali, or Chariopié.

Every week end in the Mardi Gras season the country roads and 541
villages are alive with special music, dancing bands, and traditional 533
kinds of masquerading. The little crossroads in the mountains where the *habitants* usually hold their markets are suddenly swarming with drummers, trumpeters, magicians, jugglers, masked dancers, and acrobats. Each band has its own name, its banners and paraphernalia, new topical songs composed for the occasion, and sometimes a dance virtuoso. Each [535] •
rowing band competes for the attention and admiration of the spectators, and its ranks are often swelled by passers-by moving in the same direction who choose to dance their way along the roads rather than walk. Often women and girls on distant market errands will join in [482]
the celebration, seemingly unencumbered by the heavy loads they carry on their heads.

The Mardi Gras of the mountains and the plains is a dynamic spring 184
rite of which the urban elite version is only a pale and feeble imitation. 541
There are no pretty floats, no exhibits of female beauty, and no Coca-Cola advertisements. Sometimes the country bands move into Port-au-Prince and join the urban activities.

One by one the spectacles pass by on their uncertain way—to north 541
or south, into the town or out of the town, wherever chance leads them. In addition to the musicians, acrobats, jugglers, and masked dancers, there are baton twirlers, comedians on stilts, and mimes. Each group has its own theme. One may call itself the Zwabwaye, another the Cochons Gris, another Cochons Rouges—names designating legendary

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Hait SV3

541 half-demon cannibals who meet in secret in the hollow heart of the mapou tree. Some are dressed in comic ancient military attire, replete with swords, epaulets, medals, and outlandish beards, representing "the Generals." Others, under the name Bande Autophonique, follow a human phonograph—a leader singing through an antique Edison horn.

541 53 And there are bands of male *rubaniers*, or Maypole dancers, some of them attired as women, weaving their colored ribbons around portable poles, to the accompaniment of guitars, marimoulas, and cha-chas. Male stick dancers known as *batonni*, dressed in women's clothing, crouch in circles and perform baton-tapping dances to the accompaniment of drumming and singing. Other small bands wander about impersonating characters from folklore or politics in grotesque homemade costumes. One might see, for example, a fanciful bocor driving before him a band of zombies, wielding a whip, and barking out weird raucous commands.

After the cataclysmic grand finale of the Mardi Gras at Shrovetide there is the briefest of lulls, and then the country is in the throes of Rara. The day of the *roi* Lwalwali (the King of Lwalwali) has arrived. Hundreds of Rara bands move through the towns and villages, each with its orchestra of bamboo trumpets or conch-shell horns and its "king"—an ornately clad dancer or baton juggler. The Rara bands move from place to place, dance, sing, exhibit their featured performers, and then move on, pressed perhaps by other bands behind them or jostled by another group moving in the opposite direction. When darkness comes, the bands light their way with wooden torches or candelabra [416] of tiny oil lamps. Every week end for seven weeks, in the heat of day and the darkness of night, the mountain trails are alive with these processions.

541 The Rara festivities reach their climax on Good Friday week end, and by Easter morning they are ended. During these final days there is a last grand display, with troupes coming in from the mountains and the plains to the larger cities and towns. One of the traditional Rara convocation centers in the south is the town of Léogane. On Good Friday week end, Léogane is transformed into a milling, surging, trumpeting mass of celebrating country people.

[533] The songs heard during Rara are full of praise or derision for well-[931] known personalities. Some of them are boldly ribald or licentious. And [535] often the dancing itself is openly sexual in its implications. Haitians humorously refer to this kind of dancing as *enragé* (enraged, crazy).

541 675 Early in January, even while the Mardi Gras is in progress, each community gets down to the business of organizing its Rara group. It may be organized in one of several ways. In certain communities there

2: Courlander 3-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV2 Haiti SV3

In certain communities there

is some continuity over a period of years, the Rara or Chariopié band remaining more or less intact. Normally it has a *malt'* Rara, also called *major* or *président*, who assumes the organizational responsibilities for the group. This means getting new costumes for the participants when required, refurbishing the old costumes and musical instruments, and recruiting special talent—perhaps a new "king." Where the same group continues from year to year, the malt' Rara actually serves as a sort of executive secretary. In some instances, however, the initiative for forming a group is undertaken by the malt' Rara himself. He chooses the costumes and *décor* of the group; he recruits the musicians and the young women and girls who form the singing and dancing chorus; and he chooses the roi Lwalwadi, who will be the group's main feature. He may decide upon the theme around which the group will be built, and may even decide upon the repertoire of songs it will sing. The malt' Rara has specific responsibilities and is obligated to provide his band with refreshments and food.

Expenses of the group are defrayed by collections made in the course of its "exercises." The band will stop before a crowd of spectators, or before a house, and will perform until it receives a gift known as *payé sorti* (pay to go) money. After receiving its payé sorti, the group performs an encore and then moves on. This custom of performing for gifts appears to have been known in colonial days. Eugène Aubin notes that the slaves on the plantations celebrated on New Year's Day with drums and dances.[1] At midnight they appeared before the foreman or owner of the plantation. One of the slaves would recite a speech to him, or perhaps the group would sing a song praising the master's virtues. Then, over the heads of the celebrants, a slave would extend a long bamboo pole with a beribboned basket fastened to the end. The plantation master would place his gift in the basket, after which the group would leave the house.

Some few groups do not have a "king" but are built around musical instruments or other features. However, the "king" is regarded as an old tradition. Aubin reported that the roi Lwalwadi dates from the time of the Emperor Soulouque in the nineteenth century. Soulouque is said to have named the first roi Lwalwadi in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. But there are reasons to suspect that these dancing virtuosi, by whatever name they were called, existed long before Soulouque entered the picture.

The roi Lwalwadi is a dancer of very special talents, and it is said that, though his title is not hereditary, his dances have been handed down within the family from rois of other years. Much care is given to the costume he wears. It is sometimes made of expensive satin or velvet

[1] [Aubin, En Haïti, p. 42. CF p. 351, Category 116.--Analyst]

and covered with tiny mirrors or bits of colored glass. The towering headdress of antlers or papier-mâché sculpture unavoidably recalls similar headdresses in West Africa. Each *roi* has his own style of dance, which is usually accompanied by drums. It may be a belly dance, a dance of delicate balance, or one of complicated footwork and semiacrobatics such as the imitation of a pair of scissors at work. Throughout the dancing the headdress remains majestically erect.

In addition to the *roi* Lwalwak and the *milit'* Rara (who is constantly in the midst of things, blowing his whistle), there are other traditional Rara personalities: the *major jour*, who juggles with a metal baton (sometimes two or three of these jugglers work together), and the *jongleur*, a juggler or strong man who performs such feats as dancing while holding a fully set table off the ground with his teeth.

On the southwest peninsula, in the region around Jérémie, there is a upsurge of wrestling exhibitions during Rara days. Known as *pingé*, this festival wrestling is done with a background of excited drumming and has a striking resemblance to wrestling traditions in West Africa. Local "champions" will invade a neighboring community, sometimes traveling considerable distances to make a challenge. As in West Africa, some of these wrestlers take their own musicians with them. The musicians often are provided by the village in which the events take place. If a challenge is accepted, the spectators form a large circle, with the wrestlers in the center and the musicians to one side. There may be drums and bamboo flutes, occasionally supplemented by large earthern jars and lengths of bamboo beaten with sticks. The wrestlers are dressed only in shorts. When a man is thrown, the event is over, and another pair of wrestlers takes over. Sometimes a "champion" will take on a series of opponents until he is tired. Afterward he may move on to another community to find new competition, perhaps accompanied by a large group of friends and supporters from his own village. When the Rara season comes to an end, pingé is over for the year. It is one of the few athletic sport activities of the Haitian peasant.

And now and then during Rara a *dèbois* is seen. The *dèbois* is a carved wooden marionette with a short handle below. Its arms and legs are moved by pulling a string. It is usually painted, and sometimes it is dressed. One dèbois observed was provided with a loose dresslike costume; when the string was pulled, a large phallus hinged into view in an erect position. This marionette was an object of endless fun-making among spectators.[1]

Another type of marionette is the "Two Kings," made of papier-mâché and operated with strings. The "Two Kings," sitting in a papier-

[1] [Footnote appears in Category 116, p 351. --Analyst]

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1938) 1960 SV3 Hai21 SV3

mâché carriage or on papier-mâché horses, make their appearance during Rara as well as on the Day of the Kings (*Les Rois*). 541 536

Among the traditional paraphernalia carried by Rara groups are encouracaque sticks, cha-cha rattles, metal rattles called *tchasey*, a set of rattles on a tall thin pole (called *jouvenjou*), candelabra bearing candles or oil lamps (*lampions*), banners and flags, and such miscellaneous musical instruments as the *grage* scraper, bamboo scraping devices, the *kaco* finger drum, *assots* (beating boards), and various kinds of secular drums. 541 575 534

The general tone of Rara is nonreligious. The dancing is free from the decorous restraints which characterize most religious ritual, and some early observers of the festival were shocked by what they saw. Some of them went so far as to attribute Haiti's dense population to the "licentious activities" and reckless abandon of the spring carnival. The Catholic Church and some political administrators have sporadically sought to suppress Rara, along with Vodoun ritual. And even today in Port-au-Prince the foreign visitor often is urged to watch the elite Mardi Gras with its floats and mulatto queens as a substitute. 541 [535] [795] [256]

Although Rara has an over-all tone of secular abandon, it has links with both Catholic and Vodoun ritual. Good Friday is given over in good measure to miming the story of Jesus and Judas. A perambulating band may carry an effigy of Judas hanging from a pole. Another will burn the Judas effigy, or drag it in the dust as the crowd moves along the road. In another group a man playing the part of Judas may crawl on his hands and knees along the trail, while Jesus' avengers pursue him with long, cracking whips. 541 179 536

Tying in with Vodoun ritual, virtually all Rara drums and other paraphernalia are "dedicated" or "rededicated" before Lent in special houngfor services. And on the last day of Rara, usually late in the night, prayers are said, the loa are called upon, and some of the festive paraphernalia is thrown into a fire to be consumed. 541 796 534 [178]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-BB]

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39. *A wedding scene near Plaisance.*

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40. *Saturday night bamboche.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 112 - MM]

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[535]

69. *Rara dancing near Gonaives. Vaccine players are at the left.*

70. *A Rara group near Port-au-Prince. At the left are the baka drum and a tymbale. One of the four vaccines, center, is made of metal. Behind the musicians are the cacoid's flag and a lampion.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-00]

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72. *A roi Lavalwadi in the Cul-de-Sac Plain.*

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73. *Rara stick dancers in Port-au-Prince.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti S
[P. 112-PP]
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74. *Chaluska dancers in Port-au-Prince.*

75. *Maypole dancers. Musicians are sitting next to the pole.*

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[p. 126]

11. Dancing and Dance Drama

177 178 535 The dances of Haiti, like the loa, are almost beyond counting. Like the loa, too, the dances have personalities of their own, sometimes too subtle for the stranger to detect. If there is one valid generalization, it is that the inspiration for the Haitian dance is primarily African. There have been changes in the course of the more than four hundred years since the first Africans came to the New World. Some of the old dances have disappeared altogether; others have developed new characteristics. New dances came into being with European rather than African form. Some of the most traditional dances have become sparse and lean, stripped of the decorative pageantry of earlier days. There are also the French quadrilles and similar square dances which have survived since colonial days in remote parts of the mountains. But it is the quadrille and not the dance of African origin which is atypical in Haiti's folk culture. Dancing is deeply rooted in almost all the important events of Haitian life. It is one of the few arts that have survived from preslavery days.

535 178 175 Early European travelers in Haiti were greatly taken by the dances they found there. Some observers, like Moreau de Saint-Méry, a Frenchman born in Martinique, have left invaluable documentation of the dances of the late eighteenth century. Saint-Méry described many dances that are still known in modern Haiti, such as the Chica, the Calinda, the Vodoun, and the Pétro. From his accounts one may assume that these dances have not changed much to this day.

114 But many of the foreign authors and journalists of early days were astoundingly lacking in understanding and quick to bare their prejudices and to pronounce their moral judgments. Like the explorers of our own time who delight in "returning alive" from some jungle land and in commenting upon all the strange, bizarre, dangerous, and wicked things they think they have seen, the explorer of the Dark Island often described the Haitian as a depraved branch of the human species. One such ob-

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

One such ob- 114
server, commenting upon the dances of the elite and of the peasant 535
declared:

> All the more undisguised is the crude sensuality among the lower classes of the Haitian population. Here every motion is obscene; and I am not at all considering the popular merrymakings or dance festivals secretly held partly in open, partly in forests, which are more like orgies, in which the African savagery, which has outlived centuries, has unbridled expression.[1]

Whatever the Haitian dance is, it is none of these things. The Haitian 535
himself is neither obscene nor unbridled. His dancing, like his everyday 831
life, is governed by social controls. He would be as surprised and offended by a sexual orgy as most Europeans. But he is not burdened with abstract concepts of chastity. Sex impulses are as fundamental and as taken [183]
for granted as rain, drought, and sunlight. The Haitian finds no virtue in living according to standards that have no relation to his realities.

The Haitian, like the West African, is undoubtedly a less tormented creature, so far as sex is concerned, than his European and American cousins. Since he is less tormented he can be more frank. And it was an expression of this frankness in certain of the Haitian secular dances that once aroused dismay among foreign chroniclers, and that still stirs the curiosity of tourists.

Yet if you were to witness fifty Haitian dances in their natural setting, you still might not see any direct sex expression. You might see more sex play and display in a dance hall or night club in New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, or Los Angeles. That is not to say that there are no sexual allusions in Haitian dancing. In the ordinary Saturday night *bamboche*, or social dance, there may be a good deal of loin movement and suggestion. In Haitian context, however, it is no more significant than two persons of opposite sexes pressing close together to the music of a dreamy orchestra at the "Roseland." In Haitian religious dancing, sexual motifs may occasionally emerge, but they are integral parts of ritualistic symbolism.

One of the deficiencies of early literature on the dances of Haiti is 114
that it did not differentiate between religious and secular dances. Further- 535
more, it is evident that writers tended to use a single name, such as Chica or Bamboula, to cover virtually any kind of dance festivity, much as many white Cubans refer today to all sorts of Afro-Cuban cult dances as Bembé. Because the terminology of ill-informed planters was adopted by the chroniclers, we are now able to form only some very general notions of Haitian dancing of the eighteenth century and before. Of all the reporters on the dance, Moreau de Saint-Méry seems to have been aware of differences, though his frequent departures into specula-

[Quoted in Courlander, Haiti Singing, p. 73. Cf. p. 352, Category 116 -- Analyst]

114 tion helped to perpetuate some prevailing misunderstandings and errors.
535 This distinguished observer wrote:

> The Negroes of the Gold Coast, warlike, bloody, accustomed to human sacrifice, know only dances as ferocious as themselves, while those from the Congo, Senegalese and other African shepherds or agricultural tribes, love dancing as a relaxation, as a source of sensual pleasure. Brought from all parts of Africa to our Colonies . . . , the Negroes brought here and preserved their taste for the dance, a taste so strong that, however tired out from work the Negro may be, he always finds strength to dance and even to travel a long distance to satisfy this desire.
>
> 114 When the Negroes want to dance, they take two drums, that is, two hollow
> 533 logs, of unequal length, with one end open, while the other is covered with
> 535 sheepskin. These drums . . . resound under blows of the wrist and movements of the fingers of a Negro who sits astride of each drum. The larger drum is beaten slowly, the other more rapidly. This monotonous and hollow sound is accompanied by the noise of a certain number of calabashes which have been filled with
> 534 pebbles . . . Several *banzas*, a sort of large guitar with four strings,[2] join the concert, the tempo of which is regulated by the clapping hands of the Negro women, who form a large circle. They form a sort of chorus, which responds to one or two strident solo voices, which repeat or improvise a song.[3]

535 As for the dance movements themselves, Saint-Méry wrote:

> A male and [a] female dancer, or several dancers divided into equal numbers of each sex, jump into the center of the circle and begin to dance, always two by two. This dance, which varies little, consists of a very simple step in which one foot is put forward after the other, and then drawn back quickly, while striking the toe and the heel on the ground . . . Some turn in place, or around the woman, who turns also and changes places with her partner; that is all which one sees, except for the movement of the arms which the man raises and lowers with the elbows quite close to the body and the hands almost closed. The woman holds two ends of a handkerchief, which she waves . . . One would hardly believe how lively and animated it is, and how much grace it derives from the strictness with which the musical rhythm is followed. The dancers replace one another without respite, and the Negroes are so intoxicated with pleasure that it is necessary to force them to conclude dances of this sort, called *kalendas*.[4]

114 Saint-Méry then brings forth one of his conclusions, that this dance
171 is obviously the development of a "comparatively uncivilized people," and that it comes from Africa, "where its characteristic features exist everywhere, even among the Hottentots."

114 Here he missed the point altogether. Although many of the char-
535 acteristics of this *kalenda* (or Calinda) were African, it had already been
171 intensively hybridized with European dance concepts, such as the pairing
171 off of males and females, who danced as couples. Then, as today, the dances which amazed and shocked the European observer were precisely the ones that had taken over certain European traditions.

2 [Actually a banjo-like instrument of African provenience. The similarity of the word banza to banjo appears to be more than a coincidence. Cf. P. 352 Category 116. -- Analyst]
3 [Saint-Méry, De la danse, as translated by Lillian Moore in "Moreau de Saint Méry and "Danse," Dance Index, October, 1946, P. 238. Cf. P. 352 Category 116. -- Analyst]
4 Moore, op. cit., P. 238. Cf. P. 352, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Saint-Méry also wrote about some of the religious dances, which h identified by name: 171 535

In Santo Domingo, and especially in the western, French section, there has existd for a long time a kind of dance called the Vaudoux [Vodoun] . . . which is characterized by movements where the upper part of the body, the shoulders and th head seem to move convulsively. This dance is accompanied by the drums, th clapping of hands, and group singing . . .

The Vaudoux is nothing compared to the Don Pedro . . . , another Negro danc, also known in the western part of Santo Domingo since 1768. Don Pedro was th name of a Negro of the Petit-Goave section, of Spanish origin, who by his darig character and certain superstitious practices, had acquired among the Negres enough influence to be denounced by the government as the instigator of sme alarming plots. The dance which bears his name consists, like the Vaudoux in the shaking of the shoulders and the head, but this shaking is extremely violnt, and to increase it still further the Negroes drink, while dancing, brandy in wich they have mixed finely ground gunpowder . . .[a] They dance with the most hortile contortions, until finally they fall into a sort of epilepsy . . .[a]

Making allowances for Saint-Méry's imaginative interpretation of may of the things he saw, the Haitian dance of today is not far diffemt from that of the eighteenth century. It is cast in the West Afrian mold, with Dahomean and Yoruban motifs predominating over Europan and other Western infiltrations. As in Saint-Méry's day, the drummers sit at the edge of the dance court, a leader wiekling a gourd rale leads the singing, and the dancers and spectators constitute the chous. The dancers usually move around the center of the court in a counterclockwise direction. Their steps and postures vary according to the tpe of dance being performed. The Jenvalo, for example, is danced wit a stooped body, hands touching the knees. In the Zépaule dance the daners are erect, and most of the movements are made with the shoulers. In the Pétro (the Don Pedro described by Saint-Méry) there is a constant, almost agitated movement of the feet. The songs accompanying these cult dances, while presented in African style, may have hybrid or even French melodies, though in the main they are more African than European. The over-all context of the cult dances, as well as most of the secular ones, is West African, with constant interplay between the singers, dancers, and drummers. Sometime the dancers "drive" the drummers, sometimes the drummers "drive" the dancers. Certain beats of the drum are signals for special movements and postures. On hearing special beats or rolls, the dancers may leap vertically into the air, or perform a *laillé* (a swirling motion that causes the skirts to flare out), or a *djaillé* (excitement motions). Increased tension among the dancers may cause the drummers to shift the beat, or to increase

172 178 533 535 [114]

[a] [Brandy or rum with gunpowder is sometimes drunk by persons possessed by the loa Ogoun, deity of war. Cf. p. 352, Cat. 116. --Analyst]

[a] Moore, op. cit., p. 238. Cf. p. 352, Cat. 116. --Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

tempo. The chorus and leader sing responsively, their parts overlapping in traditional African style. The shoulder movements, foot movements, the way the arms are carried, and the typical posture of feet flat on the ground, bent knees, and swayed back—all are of African derivation. These postures and movements are broad and direct. There are few of the decorative and "fine" movements that one sees in the dances of Indonesia, Cambodia, and India. Where the Javanese lays stress on the pose of the hands and the delicate movements of the fingers, the Haitian dancer is concerned with the position of the arms and the motions of the shoulders. The Indonesian sense of poised balance or suspended movement is absent. In its place there is an attitude of strong frontal assault against natural forces such as gravity, or direct submission to those forces. There is almost always a feeling of solidity and stability in Haitian posture, and of a proximity between the body and the earth, but the total effect is dynamic. Indonesian dancing seems to express a comprehension of the unseen and the supernatural; Haitian dancing seems to express an intimate understanding of nature.

Dancing touches on virtually every aspect of life in Haiti. It plays a part in the supplication of loa, the placation of the dead, and the making of magic; in the consecration of a hounfor, the installation of a houngan, and the initiation of cult members; in planting, harvesting, and house-building. Catholic Church holidays, Nine Nights, baptisms, the election of a new president, and ordinary social gatherings—all are celebrated, in part, at least, by dancing.

Haitian dancing is participative rather than exhibitionistic. It is to join rather than to watch. There are some dances, however, which require special skills, and a few which are highly individualistic. Several types of dances are described elsewhere in this book. Verbal description cannot do justice to an art such as dancing, of course; but some brief [illegible] and another.

In the Congo Mazonne, for example, men and women pair off and dance face to face, making contact occasionally but only briefly. The arms are stretched forward as though to embrace the partner around the waist, but the actual embrace never materializes. The partners dance sometimes as though they are unaware of each other and are simply part of a larger group; then they approach, move as mirrored reproductions, and separate. Loin movement is free, and there is a restrained sexual intensity, though direct sexual implications are not necessarily present. Sometimes the woman holds the hem of her skirt in her hands, while the man holds his jacket open toward his partner.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

535 The Pétro dance is similar in many respects to other serious cult dances, but it is primarily a complicated and sometimes agitated foot dance. The second of the two drums beats "rest-two-three." On "two" the right foot pushes forward in a thrusting, sliding motion, and on "three" the left moves outward and the right moves in. The position is held on the "rest," though there is no visible pause, because of the speed of the dance. Shoulder movement is only of secondary importance in the Pétro, though the arms are constantly moving gracefuly to balance the foot movements. Women sometimes use a typical Congo pose, with the left hand on the hip and the right hand held poised in the air.

The Jenvalo, the supplication dance of the Dahomey rites, is quite different in both spirit and technique. The dancers, usually older rather than younger people, move in a generally counterclockwise direction around the sacred center post of the dance court. They dance with gracefully bent backs, their hands touching their knees. The shoulders and the upper part of the body move forward and back in a gentle, graceful, undulating movement. The dancers pirouette lightly from time to time, the women holding their long skirts out to the side to make a restrained *laillé*. They sometimes pause to perform a brief cross step with other dancers, but there is no pairing off. They are dancing as individuals—or, more accurately, as a group. There is occasional improvising, inventing, and performing of difficult maneuvers; but the individual dancer moves always with the others in a slowly revolving amorphous circle around the center post. The graceful bending and undulating of the upper body give even to strangers an impression of respectful supplication.

Near the town of Jérémie in southern Haiti some years ago I saw a performance of the Mousondi "battle-dance," an activity of the Congo "nation." The dance was performed by six men, several of them stripped to the waist, the others wearing the traditional blue denim peasant jackets. The leader of the dancers was a bearded man about fifty years old, lean and athletic. On his legs he wore anklets made of seed pods and beer-bottle caps which rattled rhythmically as he moved. On a string around his neck he wore a wooden whistle, which he blew from time to time to accent the beat of the drums and to give signals.

[90] [301] [534]

The dancing took place around a bonfire. The music was provided by three musicians, two playing Congo drums and the third beating hardwood sticks against a board. Each of the dancers carried a stick about thirty inches long. They moved first clockwise, then counterclockwise, then half of them moved in one direction and half in the other, weaving in and out, holding their sticks like sabers. On a signal given by the

[533]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

535 older man, they leaped into the air and came together in mock combat. First one would strike and the other would parry, then the second would strike and the first would parry, always in time to the beating Congo drums. On another signal all six dancers leaped into the air vertically, twisting into a full turn each time, landing in position to strike and parry.

Spectators standing around the dancers clapped their hands and sang:

[539]

Mousondi na fai la guè!
Éya éya éya!
Nous c'est nanchon la guè!
Ou pas tendé canon'm tiré?

Mousondi, we will make war!
Éya éya éya!
We are a nation of war!
Don't you hear my cannon shooting?

[293] When the dancers and drummers seemed fatigued, they were offered rum to drink. The dancers drank without breaking step or interrupting the battle. The bearded man held the lip of his glass between his teeth, and without using his hands to steady it, tipped his head back and let the rum run into his mouth, all the while stamping his feet and leaping with the others.

[184] I was told later that the Mousondi was from the north, and that the dancers were recent arrivals from Port-de-Paix. But some of the older people declared that in former times the dance was known in the south by the name Calinda.

114 535 The Calinda dance, like the Vodoun, the Pétro, and several others, is mentioned frequently in the old literature on Haiti, Trinidad, Martinique, and Guadaloupe. It has been described variously as a funeral dance, an exhibitionistic sexual display, and a stick dance. It was reported by Saint-Méry as a dance in which men and women paired off. Early the women on one side and the men on the other. Lafcadio Hearn saw it as a stick dance. And the word Calinda appears sometimes in songs of the Vodoun cult. The name may have lost specific meaning early in the life of the colonies; but it is more likely that early chroniclers used the term inexactly to refer to a multitude of different dances. In Haiti, [915] identification of the Calinda has been further confused by the existence of the Calinda secret society, which had special dances of its own, all called Calinda.

Although confusions and contradictions exist, the testimony of older Haitians is that the Calinda was a stick dance, known also by the name Mousondi.

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Mousondi. In present-day Trinidad there is a Calinda dance which closely resembles the Mousondi; Puerto Rico has its Bomba Calindán; and under another name the "battle dance" survives among Negro communities in Surinam. The counterpart of the Calinda in Brazil is the Capoeira, for which musical accompaniment is provided by African-style "belly harps" (musical bows with gourd resonators) called *berimbau*. The tradition lingers on in Haiti in modern mock prize-fighting dances sometimes performed in Rara season.

The stick dance (*Battonie*) of the Haitian carnival season, mentioned in chapter 8, is of more than passing interest for the reason that almost identical dances have been reported from some areas of West Africa. In the Haitian dance (see fig. 73) the baton wielders, all males, for unexplained reasons are attired in women's clothing. A photograph made in 1958 of a baton dance among the Ewe people of Togoland depicts a scene scarcely distinguishable from a Haitian Rara performance, and it is noteworthy that its all-male cast is in women's dress.

In addition, there remain a number of fragments of dances of the past. In religious ritual, on rare occasions, one may see animal dances in which the performers mimic animal movements, holding in their hands long sticks to simulate front legs. This type of dance has been reported frequently in West Africa, particularly in connection with totemic rituals.

There is a dance in the Arada ritual in which the loa Legba is invoked. A hounsi—usually a man—comes onto the dance court wearing a kind of cane-crutch called the *baton* Legba, or Legba stick. The baton is about the length of a cane, with a long, grotesquely twisted "handle" that fits under the crotch of the legs. The dancer wraps one leg around the stick and walks as though he has only one foot. In the dance, he spins around on the stick, leaps, and pirouettes. Identification of the seem clearly to relate it to the phallic sticks used in dances for Legba in Dahomey.

Among the secular exhibitionistic dances of Haiti, there is one in which a man stands on his head and goes through erotic motions to the accompaniment of drums.

In addition to the almost countless dances of African origin or inspiration, there is the ever-popular Meringue, a European-type social dance which is known in many forms. Haitian connoisseurs of this dance believe there are three main forms of the Meringue: the "Meringue de Concert," in which the rhythm is slow and "caressing"; the "dance Meringue," in which the rhythm is quasi-fast and very gay; and the "Meringue Coundjaille," in which the rhythm is very fast. The last

[United Nations Photograph no. 67065. Cf P 352, category 116. -- Aug 1957]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1953) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

The 1951

535 form[2] is heard most often during carnival days. In all variations of the Meringue, the dance is performed by couples in ballroom style. Among [831] the elite, it is restrained. Elsewhere it is much more animated, with free and uninhibited pelvic motions similar to those seen at the Saturday night *bamboche*. Although the Haitian regards his Meringue as a national 171 popular dance, Spanish-type music has infiltrated heavily from the Do- 177 minican Republic, Cuba, and other islands of the West Indies. Thousands 53 of Haitians returning from contract labor in Cuba have brought with them not only Cuban songs and rhythms but Cuban instruments as well. It has not been a one-way affair, however, for the Arada cults of eastern Cuba have been built substantially around immigrants from Haiti, and in the Cuban mountains you may hear music and see dances of Afro-Haitian origin.

Still other kinds of dances are to be found in remote villages of Haiti—the old folk dances of Europe. The villagers still know and perform the waltz, the polka, the mazurka and the quadrille, usually to the accompaniment of violins or guitars, or possibly an accordion.

But the influences are not all ancient ones. Jazz has infiltrated the Meringue. And some years ago a small boy asked me with some concern whether I had taken proper account of a very important dance called *le black bottom*.

535 Following is a list of dances known to Haitians today. Some of them [178] are found throughout Haiti, some are known only regionally, and a few are on the verge of extinction.

Dances Connected with Vodoun Ritual

Arada, or Rada: One of the main dances of the Vodoun service, named after the Dahomean city and cult center, Allada.

Anago, or Nago: Named after the Nagos, a branch of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria. For deities of Nago origin.

Mahi: Named after the Mahi people of Dahomey.

Congos: Another [illegible] type of [illegible], Haiti.

Jovando, or Yovando: A supplication dance, variously called Jovando Dobo (*dos bas*, low back), Jovando Jénou (*genoux*, knees), and Dobado.

Zépaule: A supplication dance in which the movements are made primarily by the shoulders (*les épaules*). It is sometimes called Jovando Zépaule or Jovando Débout (standing Jovando).

Flaveredoun: Another type of shoulder dance known in the north.

Banda, or Chire: A gay and sometimes ribald dance, said to be much favored by the lwa Cousin Zaka and the lwa Gédé.

Mazouer Rada: The "Masonic" Rada dance; often danced for the lwa Gédé.

Carabinier or Crabinier: A rest dance, interpreted into long-drawn-out Arada

[i.e., the "Meringue Coundjaille" in which the rhythm is very fast.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

rites to break the tension. The name appears to have come from the word "Caribbean." 535

Magic: A dance accompanying a magic-making ritual.
Pouin: A dance accompanying the making of a pouin. [964]
Calebasse: A dance accompanying the calabash ritual, for the dead.
Dahomé: One of the principal dances of the Vodoun group, named after Dahomey.
Bamboche: Another sex dance, from northern Haiti. Carried over into secular dancing, it has become the commonplace Bamboche.
Boukoverse: From northern Haiti.
Mamba, or Mamba: A dance associated with Dahomey rites, accompanied by percussion music played on small drums hung around the neck.
Assator: A dance accompanying rites for the assator drum.

Dances Connected with Congo and Petro Ritual

Petro, or Don Petro: The principal dance of the Petro cult.
Kitse Mouillé: The "Wet Kitse," danced for the Simbi family of loa, patrons of rain and the spring. Sometimes called Danse Simbi. On rare occasions the Kitse Mouillé is accepted as Vodoun rather than Petro.
Kitse Chèche, or Sèche: The "Dry Kitse," danced for loa of the Kitse group other than the patrons of the spring. Sometimes identified with Vodoun rites rather than with the Petro.
Bamba, or Limbo: Named after Congo tribes.
Moundongue: A dance for the loa Moundongue. Named after a tribe in the northern Congo.
Solonge, or Kitse: From southwestern Haiti. Solonge is the name of a tribe in Angola.
Bambara: Named after the Bambaras of southwestern Africa.
Congo Lounque, or Congo Franc: Named after Lounque in the Congo.
Congo Monsour: The "Masonic" Congo dance, known also as Congo Larose and Congo Colole. Some informants believe the dance originated in a lounfor called Société La Rose, from which it derives one of its names.
Pasavel: A Congo sex dance.
Mouvendi: A battle dance.
Mamèbèché: A dance of northern Haiti for paying a debt to a loa.
Mayoyo: This dance is nearly extinct.
Monsour Petro: The "Masonic" dance of the Petro rites.

Dances of the Dahomey Group of the Vodoun Group

loa.
Kongo or Congolese: Named after West African tribes.

Dances of the Juba Group

Juba, or Martinique: Danced on the occasion of Last Prayers, when the spirit of a newly deceased person has been sent on its way. It is also danced on various [964] [995] ceremonial occasions, and sometimes at the special request of a loa or an ancestor.

535 *Rebouk*, or *Rombouk*: Danced on the occasion of building a new house.
535 *Maxort*: Danced by a *société* after communal work on the land of one of its members.
476 *Ti Coumbe*: Another *société* work dance, sometimes closely related to Vodoun ritual. Known in Brazil as Macumba.
Kouer, or *Coundjaille*: A dance connected with communal work celebrations.[8]

Rara and Carnival Dances

535 541 *Rara*, also called *Charinpié*, *Lavalavali*, and *Vorrier*: The perambulating dances of the Rara festival.
Mazurun, or *Corsyé*: Danced for the Mardi Gras.
Pailette: Any carnival dance in costume.
Bateonin: A carnival stick dance with West African precedents.
Trisé Rikan: The carnival Maypole dance.
Congo Pailette: The "Straw Congo," or "Costume Congo," the carnival dance of the *société* Congo. It is also known as Cipé and Congo Mardi Gras.
Rabodage: A Mardi Gras perambulating dance.
Chalouka: A Mardi Gras dance in which the participants are dressed as nineteenth-century generals. Comic mimicry. Also referred to as Charles Oscar.
Zinipen
Rabato
Mayouzou

Other Secular and Miscellaneous Dances

535 *Zouc*: A gage dance of northern Haiti.
Calinda: A mock battle dance. Also a dance of the Calinda "secret society."
Ka: A dance which takes its name from the *ka*, a secular drum.
Bilé, or *Belair*
Mangouline
Ti Crip: This is regarded by some informants as one of the Pitou dances.
Malfou: "The Hawk," a dance of northern Haiti.
Pinpique: A simple "good time" dance.
Rombili: A simple "good time" dance.
Rombacke: A "good time" dance. The term is often used to designate any social dance. As a verb, *bombarkil* means "to dance" or "to have a good time."

Secular Dances of European Type

535 1199 *Meringue*: There are three main types of Meringue—the drawing-room Meringue, the ordinary "ballroom" Meringue, and the Meringue Coundjaille (which is
Ti Bobine: This is a sort of square dance, though it is sometimes danced in Meringue style.
Mirawet, or *Mirawet*: The minuet.
Polka
Waltz
Quadrille
Mazurka
Contredance

[Footnote appears on p. 352, Category 116.--Analyst]

[P 185]

17. Children's World: Gage Songs and Games

On the night of last prayers for a deceased person, and on other party occasions, children while away the hours until bedtime with special songs and games. Sometimes the games are led by an older member of the family. More often, left to their own devices, the children play unsupervised. It is regarded as fitting that the youngest members of the community should be enjoying themselves while the last rites are being held for one who has recently died. This view is held not merely in regard to children; older people, too, engage in gay activities, such as dancing the Juba. 533 524 764 [535]

Many children's games are known throughout the country, others have only a regional popularity. The games mentioned here are among those played in southern Haiti, mainly in the neighborhood of the capital, Port-au-Prince. 184 524

One favorite is known as Balancé Yaya. The children—as few as four or as many as ten or twelve—crouch on the ground in a circle. Each of them has a stone in his hand, which he strikes rhythmically on the earth as they sing together: 624 [533] [534]

> Jésus, Marie, Joseph oh,
> Jésus, Marie, Joseph oh,
> Rat li manjé pigeon mein.
> Rat passé, Rabinette passé,
> Pal' ti Marie marché, allé li. . . . [Ex. 129]

> Jesus, Mary, Joseph, oh,
> The rat has eaten my pigeon.
> Jesus, Mary, Joseph, oh,
> The rat has eaten my pigeon.
> The rat goes by, Rabinette goes by.
> Make little Mary walk, go there. . . .

in construction but stands a little shorter. Two Nèro drums of slightly 534
different sizes and tones, called *boko* and *ti boko*, in combination with one or more rattles, an iron percussion device, and sometimes an *asson*, make up an orchestra.

The *asson* is a small board which is beaten with sticks. Often these sticks are flat, and sometimes a small wooden bench is substituted for the board.

Dances for which the Congo or Nèro drums are used include Nèro, 534
Kita, Bombo, Salongo, Bambara, Monnkongue, Congo Lounguer, Pa- 535
tawel, Monnouk, and Monnbichel. The drum for the Congo Lounguer dance formerly was somewhat taller and narrower than the present Nèro drum, but the distinction is no longer maintained.

The Juba, or Martinique, drum is similar to the Nèro or Congo but wider and squatter. It is laid on its side for playing, the drummer sitting outside and pressing his heel against the drumhead to tune it or change the pitch. For Juba or related music, a second man, called the *cotelier* (the-one who *cotes*), beats sticks against the body of the instrument behind the drummer.

In the northern part of Haiti one also finds the Zèwe drum, used 184
exclusively for the Zèwe dance. It is cylindrical, about thirty inches 534
high, and is played in an upright position. A wire is stretched across the goatskin head in the manner of a snare drum. Like all drums with goatskin heads, it is beaten with the naked hands.

A large two-headed drum called the *tymbale* is used as a work drum 534
for labor societies and for processions, and in combination with other 535
drums it sometimes appears in the Juba and secular Congo dances. The heads are mounted on hoops, which are held fast by lacing. The drum is carried by a rope slung over the shoulder or around the neck. Sometimes an asson striking board is affixed to the body of the drum.

A miniature copy of the tymbale is called a *tambourine*. It is used in carnival dances, notably the Macaron. Carried by a cord which hangs around the neck, it is played with two diminutive sticks. Drumming girls may be seen playing the *tambourine*.

In southwestern Haiti, and possibly elsewhere, special drums are used 184
for the Mamba dance. The Mamba drum is about a foot long, cylindrical, 534
and about five inches in diameter, with two drumheads held together 535
with cords. A pair of these drums is joined by a rope about two feet long, which is hung around the neck so that the two drums are in convenient playing position on the chest.

Twin drums which are hung over the knee are known as *marasa*— 534
THE HAITIAN WORD FOR "TWINS."

Z: Courlander 8-6 (1937-1950) 1960 SV3 HAIR SV3

easily be hidden, but the *gaulos* were simply slipped into the straw 534
roofs and thus put out of sight. Moreover, by some strange process of 648
reasoning, military authorities regarded the bamboos as "harmless," 798
though they were used for the same purposes as the contraband drums.

There are numerous other kinds of simple percussion devices. One 534
such instrument, now less commonly seen than previously, is a length of open bamboo laid in the crotches of two Y-shaped sticks set in the ground. Like other *catas*, the bamboo is beaten with two sticks. Some Haitians believe that in former days such bamboos were played in batteries like a xylophone.

Sometimes a light-weight wooden cylinder, or perhaps a drum de- [461]
nuded of its playing head, is carried by the timekeeper of a coumbite. [476]
It, also, is played on the side with sticks.

Wooden mortars for pulverizing grain take on the character of musical 534
instruments when used in combination with voices. When two or more 533
mortars are used, with two men or women wielding the long polelike 412
pestles in each mortar, the rhythmic effects can become fairly complicated.

The *claves* or *palos* (small hardwood sticks) are used primarily in 534
connection with secular dances of a Cuban type, or to accompany such 535
instruments as the guitar and the marimba. One stick is held loosely in [177]
the natural fold of the hand, so that it is free to vibrate, and is struck sharply with the second stick. The tone is almost metallic because of [824]
the hardness of the wood, usually lignum vitae. The name of the instrument is recognizable as a form of *clavar*, or *clava*, Spanish for "peg" or "nail." It is thought that wooden shipbuilding pegs provided the [171]
name for this device, which has equivalents in West Africa.

Among the folk instruments there are various kinds of horns and 534
trumpets. Cows' horns are played musically in some parts of the southern 184
peninsula, though usually they are used as ritual instruments and signaling devices. Wooden trumpets called *pistons* are carved from the stems [824]
of the *cassava* tree. Conch-shell trumpets, known as *lambis*, are com- [902]
monly used as signaling devices by fishermen. They are also to be
found among the coumbites, in Rara festivities, and occasionally in rituals, where they are usually identified with sea deities. In carnival [541]
times the old fashioned phonograph horn makes its appearance as a com- [216]
bined trumpet and voice amplifier.

Probably the most important of the trumpets is the one made of 534
bamboo. It is called a *sarcier* or *bois bourique*. Both names have in- 755
teresting origins. The cow's horn was at one time used for magico- [237]
medical purposes. The leaf doctor used it as an "applicator" of powders and potions. A small opening was made in the point of the horn, and

[See plate 8, P. 112-F. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

534 the horn itself was filled with the magico-medical preparation, which
955 was called *vaccine*. The point of the horn was applied to parts of the body which needed treatment, and the powers of the potion were thus transmitted to the affected areas. In time, the cow's horn itself came to be known as a *vaccine*. Eventually the horn used for musical purposes took over the name, which was then transferred to the bamboo trumpet. The other name by which the bamboo trumpet is known, *bois bourrique*, means burro wood. But it probably is a corruption of *voix bourrique*, meaning "donkey's voice," an accurate description of the sound it makes.

534 The vaccine consists of a length of bamboo, with a joint membrane at
533 one end cut into a mouthpiece. Trumpets of different sizes give different tones, and three to five of them together constitute a vaccine orchestra. Vaccines are employed by the coumbites in the fields, and they are heard in the towns and cities primarily during the pre-Easter festivities. In the Rara festivals the vaccine players march together, blowing and tapping their trumpets with sticks, followed by a crowd of dancers. Traditionally, the bamboo trumpet is not employed in religious music, although in recent years it has made its appearance occasionally in Congo-Guinée rites.

534 There are two kinds of musical scrapers. The one more often seen is the *grage*, a piece of sheet metal perforated in the fashion of our common kitchen grater. It is "played" by scraping a piece of wire or a nail across its rough surface. Found in secular rather than religious settings, the grage is likely to be used in combination with such instruments as the *tambourine*, marimba, claves, and basse. The second form of scraper is the *dentlé*, or *dentli*, a notched stick played with a bamboo scraping blade. The free end of the stick is sometimes braced against a bench or a plank, which acts as a sounding board. Some Haitians reported that in the old days gourds were used as sounding chambers.

534 The scraper in one form or another appears to have both Indian and
171 West African precedents. Its relationship to the washboard as used in Negro folk music in the United States is obvious. The notched gourd
[177] called the *guiro*, found in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and other West Indian islands, appears to be present in Haiti only as an imported instrument.

534 Rattles of various types are used in religious and secular dances, in
535 the invocation of deities, and as accompaniment for solo singing. The most common of the rattles is the simple cha-cha, or *kwa-kwa*. It is a small gourd with a wooden handle, with seeds inside. It is usually played by the singing leader as a device to keep time. Sometimes the long dry seed pods of the cha-cha tree are used as a substitute.

000 In the Rara season two special rattles are used. One of them is made

2: Courlander B-6 (1857-1910) 1960 BV3 Haiti BV3

(A song for the loa Ozange. Literally, the song specifies Ozange "in the water," but the *serviteur* is "under the water," where the loa resides. 533 537 (192)

Example 148

Yaboût my dear, they don't need me!
I will see [enter through] the center post if they *djeguel*!
Yaboût my dear, they don't need me!
I will see the center post if they *djeguel*!
Ferci doesn't see me any more!
I will see the center post if they *djeguel*!

(Yaboût and Ferci are the names of loa. Even though addressed as "Yaboût my dear," it is Yaboût who is speaking. If one thinks of it as "Dear Yaboût says," the shifting point of view becomes less confusing. The term *djeguel* indicates a kind of tension and excitement which builds up before possessions take place. Yaboût says that if the people *djeguel* he is prepared to enter through the center post.) (196)

Example 149

Take me (to go), oh!
To the house, oh!

Example 150

Dumballa! Dumballa!
Dumballa Wèdo Dumballa!
Dumballa, *eshé*!
Sacred Dumballa! Dumballa!

(The song is an invocation to the loa Dumballa. The word *eshé* is exclamatory.) (192) (192)

Example 151

Ilo Lèé, oh!

(Ilo Lèé is the name of a loa.)

Example 152

We thread our way [like a snake],
Dumballa Wèdo is a snake, oh!

(The "threading" is a description of conventionalized dance movements suggesting the crawling of a snake. The loa Dumballa is identified as a snake.) (535) (196)

Example 153

Lakes Shoûl asks for wind, ô

533
537

Your show, *mayouse*!
Find your woman, *mayouse*!
Mayou-pouse!

(*Paillette* means "all decorated up," "fancy," "in carnival regalia." It is also the name of a dance, as is *mayouse*, used here as an exclamation.) [192] [535]

Example 168 was said to be in "Spanish."

Example 169

Go to your mother's house,
Go to your mother's house,
Go to your mother's house, my dear,
Do not come and give me an argument!
Go to your mother's house, my dear,
Go to your mother's house, my dear,
Go to your mother's house, my dear,
And do not give me an argument!
Little girl who doesn't know how to wash and iron,
Go home to your mother,
Little girl who doesn't know how to wash and iron,
Go home to your mother!
Angelica, Angelica, go to your mother's house!
Angelica, Angelica, go to your mother's house!

Example 172

Oh I'm not a mule,
Oh I'm not a mule, oh!
The farmer takes me to carry his coffee!

(A good-natured protest song of the kind often sung by crumbites.) [196]

Example 173 has no text. It is exclamatory throughout.

Example 174

E Laine, where should I go, Laine E!
Laine, the children are hypocrites, oh!
Eo.

Example 175

Eve blanche Swan, I am coming town
To take away the honey!

Example 176

Adieu djoing djoing djoing.
Oh I say my prayer to God to send rain!

(The first line is ritual language, but it appears to have been originally a phrase cooked by the petit' servant.) [198]

relations between the husband and the wife's family, it is nevertheless commonplace for men who can afford it to have more than one wife.

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175 The result was entirely different from Boyer's expectations. As a
114 French critic graphically puts it, the Haitians

703 who had never had more than a borrowed energy—that inspired by fear of French invasion—when they saw themselves freed, by a solemn treaty, from all attack on their coasts, seemed to allow their arms to drop relaxed at their sides, saying, *Let's take a rest.* The soldier who up till now had squeezed his body into a uniform and had subjected himself to European discipline, shouldering his arms, staring straight ahead as if seeing nothing, now began to leave unbuttoned the uniform which choked him, dragged a mattress into his sentry-box so that he might sleep through his watch, and let his cross slip to the earth never to pick it up again.[44]

175 In short, the Haitian army as a disciplined force ceased to exist, and
701 with it all authority of its officers. Boyer had counted upon the
703 army to enforce the provisions of the Code Rural, but now a soldier's
671 life was a paid sinecure. By gaining political security Haiti had in-
433 advertently lost its last chance of economic prosperity through a system of forced labor.

175 Wherever the Code was put into partial operation, revenue from
423 plantations continued to decline. The price of real estate dropped
433 proportionately. It was a simple matter for workmen who had
435 signed contracts to avoid carrying out their stipulations, and just as
466 simple to evade the law requiring fifteen acres' minimum for a single holding. Practically every Haitian wanted to own a bit of land; once he had acquired his bit, however small, he had (or so he felt) earned an exemption from directed labor.

175 Only on estates near the few big towns, where government
671 officials were concentrated, was there much pretense of trying to
625 enforce the Code. Sentries at the gates of Port-au-Prince were
661 authorized to confiscate plantains, yams, or fruit brought by any worker who, in contravention of the Code, had strayed to market on a forbidden day, but sentries soon acquired the habit of not seeing countryfolk who passed the gates. Reports kept cropping up that rural policemen were robbing poor cultivators of their coffee under pretense of protecting them from the penalties for breach of the law; this suggests that the Code was used rather for graft than for the stimulation of agriculture.

175 By and large, however, the Code was merely ignored. Agents
671 could not be found who were willing to stand in any community
625 44. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, Saint-Domingue, II, 181.
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against almost unanimous public opinion opposing enforcement. In 1828 it was reported that dancing, which the Code had strictly limited to week ends, was a nightly diversion near the capital. One of the principal dancing resorts was the house of a captain of rural police, the very man who was supposed to repress such amusements.[45]

Boyer had done his best, and his best was merely a good piece of office work. When his Code failed to operate, he could think of nothing further to suggest for the economic rehabilitation of Haiti. The last fifteen years of his administration witnessed a gradual lapse into that small-scale farming which was to be characteristic of Haiti for the remainder of the nineteenth century. By comparison with former standards, production and steady industry had both fallen off since Boyer came to the presidency. The testimony of visiting foreigners is unanimous on the decline of industry.

The British consul, Mackenzie, said in 1827 that there was very little field labor then being done, and that only elderly people, principally aged "Guinea Negroes" long accustomed to steady work, carried on the tradition. No measures of the government could induce young people born in Haiti to labor or to change from their "habitual vagrancy."[46] Another Englishman, James Franklin, remarked in 1828 that land values throughout the republic had greatly declined because no one could make a profit within any moderate time. Labor was high, he wrote, for ordinary wages did not attract the workers who preferred idleness. (This word is certainly unfair: it was work at their own bidding which they preferred, not idleness.) Government lands lay untilled, no one evincing the slightest desire to purchase or utilize them. Franklin continues:

> Land also in the possession of individuals is similarly circumstanced; and those who are large proprietors cannot effect a sale of any produce which they may have beyond the quantity which they can consume; consequently a proprietor may have an immense extent of land, and yet be quite unable to derive any benefit from it by cultivation, or to convert it into money, for the want of purchasers. Thus . . . there is no individual wealth in the country, because, although a man may have very large landed possessions, still those possessions are unavailable, for they produce him nothing, as he [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

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175
567 along that river, Dahomey was the name of a powerful kingdom under a political administration which embraced a fair amount of interchange of ideas and similarity of social institutions, including religion.

175 Discretion made the planters separate slaves who knew each other,
567 in order to minimize opportunities for revolt among them. This
178 policy, although it prevented the rapid growth of "slave" customs, at the same time dispersed Dahomeans all over the colony; beliefs and practices held in common among the slaves were likely to take on a Dahomean cast. Since their work was directed, their freedom of movement limited, and their family life broken up, there was practically no opportunity for the outcropping of any African ideas relating to economic life, government, property, education, or
175 marriage. The one sphere in which it was possible for Old World
178 beliefs to continue was the religious. No slave dealer could penetrate
796 the minds of his workers or silence their folk tales and folk songs in
771 the evening when work was done; even the strictest plantation
•535 owners allowed dances in the slave quarters on Saturday nights and Sunday. It is the dance, a vital part of Dahomean religion, which seems to have formed the nucleus around which the diverse beliefs of African tribesmen grouped themselves, for it was a form of action which need not involve anything more than amusement or emotional release, if the participant were not religiously inclined. In the beginning, as Goethe observes, was the Act. To this simple Act of dancing, the Word, with thought behind it, could easily be added later. Practically all African tribesmen danced; and the numerous Dahomeans had a dance which was customarily for diversion but could be turned to a religious purpose as well.

771 Here, then, was the skeleton of a slave religion. Although every
171 single African tribe had its own beliefs and ritual, each (so far as we
174 know) had common elements with every other one. For example, all slaves, whether Senegalese or Angolese, believed in a multiplicity of spiritual beings, some of whom controlled the aspects of nature—lightning and storms, the sea, the sky. They thought that disease and other ill fortune came from spirits who must be placated in order to win back health and well-being. All felt that the normal course of events could be altered by magical spells, formulae, or charms; that one could bring misfortune to an enemy, luck to oneself, or ward off otherwise inevitable fate. Most of them had been accustomed to

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learn the properties of plants, both for healing and for poison. Except for the belief in spiritual beings, this folk knowledge would hardly have been classed as religious, for it was useful in every phase of daily life; the classification is that of the anthropologist, not of the simple black.

If Dahomean beliefs prevailed over others of African origin, it was chiefly because of the numerical preponderance of Dahomeans in the colony, together with the popularity of their religious dances. The Dahomean spirits or gods were Vodun; the dance in which the worshiper sought the inspiration of the spirits was a Vodun dance. Like all but the highly organized religions, this one recognized the validity of other beliefs. Its practitioners were not bigots. No hierarchy existed to keep out new accretions. Imperceptibly these were added to the original basic form: here an Arada spirit, there a Congolese prayer, and in many instances a Catholic saint, until the composite Vodun religion began to take shape.

There is no evidence that during colonial times Vodun was ever considered important by the white ruling class—certainly not as a faith. To most planters the word was the name for a vigorous dance. Judging from Moreau de Saint-Méry's description it was held openly enough, at times being witnessed by the whites as a sort of nocturnal diversion. Moreau knew, as did other whites, that there were "superstitious beliefs" connected with it, yet the offhand use of the word "superstition" was indication enough that the beliefs were not regarded as important. We have seen, however, what profitable use the slaves were able to make of the apparent innocence of their dances. When the idea of revolt began to germinate among them, gathering on each plantation at least once a week they had ample opportunity to hatch their plans. It is known that the campaign for revolt was developed partly under the stimulus of the Negro Bookman, a *houngan* or priest of Vodun. By means of drumbeats, which to the whites merely pounded out the rhythm for dancing but had for centuries been a means of communication at long distance in parts of West Africa, that ripening plot was telegraphed from one plantation to another. Even more important, perhaps, was the unity of feeling made possible, despite all incoherence of tradition and language, by the Vodun background.

The revolt of half a million slaves was a success. This fact has been rather too calmly accepted by historians of Saint-Domingue, who

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787 proper control, as they should be. If an unwanted god persists in
114 mounting an individual, the pertinacious one is commanded to go away or the victim himself is sent home until he can recover his own personality. Many people strongly resist possession when it is imminent. Judged by our own standards, possession of the Vodun variety could certainly not be called normal; judged by Haitian standards, however, it would be absurd to call abnormal an experience known and approved by the majority of the community.[20]

796 Possession occurs either at the service or at the dance. Here again
535 the white man has nothing in his religious experience to enable him
787 to comprehend the pattern of Haitian religion. The service corresponds nearly enough to the Catholic Mass or to more realistic sacrifices in ancient Jewish rites, but neither of these faiths nor any other the white man knows well has dancing for religion's sake. In Vodun, however, the dance is of equal importance with the service.

778 In the tiny *hounfort* (also spelled *houmfort*) of the priest, which is
346 little more than a hut with earthen floor, the service begins. To call
796 this structure a temple is at once to make it too imposing and to confuse the white man in his attempt to understand the scene; it is no more of a temple than was a tiny primitive early Christian church. Most hounforts in Haiti would be crowded if twenty people were present. At one end is an altar, more or less resembling the high altar in a Catholic chapel; on it are placed a crucifix, flowers, candles, fruit and food, wine, lithographs of Catholic saints, and whatever other objects, Catholic or Vodun, local practice may dictate and individual taste prefer. Upon the floor are traced formal cabalistic patterns, generally in corn meal, both to fend off evil influences and as required by the particular loa. The officiants may be male or female or both. To the service ordinarily come only the members of the family and their specifically invited guests; neighbors and friends will attend the subsequent dance.

796 A student of Catholicism would find in the first part of the service
788 a great deal of ritual borrowed from the Church. The blessing,
777 genuflections, making the sign of the cross, responses, and the like,
782 all clearly show a Catholic background which accords well with
787 certain objects upon the altar. Imperceptibly the strictly Vodun element obtrudes itself. The loa are asked whether they will accept

20. The statements of the two sides of this controversy may be found in Dorsainvil, op. cit., throughout; and in Herskovits, op. cit., particularly pp. 146–147.

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the sacrifices; food is set before the sacrificial animal, and if this food is eaten by the creature or creatures, it is known that the loa is satisfied. Then comes the actual sacrifice of the animal, a slaying neither ostentatious nor dramatic, since often it does not occur in the hounfort itself. It is at this juncture that possession is looked for. The loa, by seizing one or more of his devotees—or, if possession fails, by the divination of the priest—makes known his desires. The demands of the loa are likely to be modest: a candle, a special article of food, certain specific attentions. Occasionally he insists upon an impressive sacrifice. Whatever his desires, they must be gratified or else the loa will mildly harass the family; long refusal will produce anger and full vengeance. If the god is Rada, his sacrifice will be white, red, or vari-colored; if he is Pétro, he will wish black or gray animals—chickens, turkeys, goats, bullocks. 796 782 787 788 177

The service itself, then, is entirely religious in nature, consisting wholly of ceremonies and rituals conducted by officiating priests, with the purpose of restraining or pacifying gods who may have been pursuing a family with misfortune, or gratifying those who have made it happy. The dance following the service apparently expresses the joy of the family at dangers averted and gratitude for blessings bestowed. 796 535 [12]

In contrast to the private character of the service, the dance has all the appearance of a social event. Invitations to it are sent all over the countryside. People attend for good fellowship, gossip, and the sheer delight of dancing, but in the background one is always aware of a religious element as well. The dance is held in a specially constructed *ounfor*, a roof of boughs and leaves supported by uprights. Drums are not always used at the earlier service, but no dance could be held without them. The crowd drifts in slowly, so that the dance may be long in getting under way. The best drummers in the community may not arrive until after two or three hours. Three drums of different sizes, all properly baptized, set the rhythms, and sometimes gourd rattles embroider a commentary upon the beat. Whereas at the service possession comes as a result of the priest's invocations, at the dance it is inspired by the drumming. Each loa has his own particular rhythm, so that as soon as it is determined what god has mounted upon a dancer the drummers take up the rhythm of that god. The officiant immediately rushes to the mounted person with a calabash of water and a candle; by following the "horse" around and [346] [534] 796 535 787

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7 96 steadying his attention, he practically hypnotizes him back into full
●535 consciousness. As soon as the possessed is normal again, water out of
787 the calabash is poured at the central post and a sign of the cross is made with the candle before it.

796 Contrary to the expectation of thrill-seeking white visitors, the
535 Vodun dance does not merit the name of an orgy. True, the dancers
796 wear their old clothes, for they are going to have violent exercise; true also, those who are possessed give the impression of losing some of their inhibitions. But the dancers do not embrace each other as at a white man's dance; the drinking which occurs is hardly ever excessive; and the climax of a successful dance is religious experience.
[831] The Haitian is no more obsessed by sex than is the American; indeed, living simply and without many of the artifical restraints of "civilization," he is probably less so. What white visitors sometimes see, under the impression that they are witnessing a Vodun dance, is nothing more than a secular Saturday night social dance. It, too, has drum rhythms instead of an orchestra, musical instruments being rare in Haiti; but the dance has no more religious (or "Voodoo") significance than a barn dance in the United States.

771 Creed and practice go hand in hand in Haiti. The Vodun wor-
776 shiper believes in the loa of his faith and does he things necessary to get in touch with them. These conceptions are the major part of his creed, as the corresponding actions form the bulk of his religious activity.

A few articles of the creed remain. "I believe in respect to twins
171 ..." Hundreds of so-called primitive peoples see in twins some special
845 significance, now fortunate, now tragic. Many of the tribes along the
787 Atlantic coast of Africa thought of twins as an omen, so that the presence of ritual regard for them in Haiti is hardly surprising. It is probably incorrect to speak of the worship, or the cult, of twins, for they are not deified, nor is there a common ritual for them: thousands of persons pay them no homage whatever. One family has a high regard for twins because it has numbered them among its ancestors or recent relatives; another family pays respect to all twins because a priest has advised seeking the good luck which comes from *marasa* (twins). There seems to be some confusion of thought about
[782] this aspect of religion: twins are not gods, but merely omens from the gods; yet sacrifices are made to them. Christmas and harvest are the usual seasons for the offering. Food is prepared in the morning

3: Leyburn Z84, 5 (no date) 1966
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merly. Wherever the overcrowded Haitians have lived since 1815, there beauty has had to give way to gnawing necessity which lacked either the imagination or the means to be sightly.

One can stand upon a morne and watch a rain storm rush down the valley, bending the palm trees in its fury, and think Haiti still a magnificent sight. Then one must descend the mountainside past rickety shacks and rocky fields, and the feeling grows that not all the kindly simplicity of the people is enough to lift the country from its dilapidation. As he nears the village, the afternoon scent of roasting coffee will delight him; but then he sees the squalor of village life and is reminded that three million souls are here trying to eke out an existence upon a small area of declining fertility.

Much in Haiti is picturesque if one can keep his mind from wandering to the conditions which lie behind the picturesqueness. Women stride down from the hills with great loads on their heads; aged crones, pipe in mouth, sit perched on the haunches of tiny donkeys with their bulging panniers; the great market square in the town is a scene of noisy confusion with hundreds of women and children, a mixture of smells, thousands of little piles of soap, candy, gewgaws, vegetables, gaping chickens tied together by the feet, shirts, canes, bolts of cloth. All the weary women, however, must trudge back up to their shanties on the mountainside when the market is over. Many of them do not see ten dollars in cash during the year, and their little children, with bellies bulging, give evidence of undernourishment. Without doctors, without even the rudiments of hygiene, they manage somehow to subsist, or else die, frequently of disease which might easily have been prevented.

In Port-au-Prince and a few other towns live enough members of the *élite* to make one momentarily forget the plight of the masses. The houses of the well-to-do are substantially built, if not often attractive. Their garden walls are brilliant with bougainvillea, their walks with hibiscus. Tiny red lizards (anolis) make flashes of color along the walls. On shady verandas and in the parlors one hears delightful conversation, eats excellent food, savors the pleasures of civilization. The clubs of the *élite* are pleasing, their music is good, their dancing graceful. To be among these families as a welcome guest is an experience in gracious hospitality which can never be forgotten. Too soon, however, one must leave these havens of urbanity and pass through districts of the town which haunt the mind with their grim want.

527 On Saturday nights one hears the drums beating all over the country, but if one follows the sound he is more than likely to end [534] up at nothing more esoteric than a neighborhood dance. Other [535] musical instruments than drums are rare, but any community has drums; and these set a rhythm to which one can dance. Generally food is available at these affairs, as well as drinks both hard and soft. 273 It is not extraordinary to discover that a few of the men have drunk rather freely of clairin, the raw rum of the country; most drunkenness seems to lead to good-natured ribaldry rather than to offensive violence. It is unusual for a drunken man to cause damage of any 535 serious nature. The dancing corresponds neither to American ballroom dancing nor to set folk dancing. Most of it is done solo, and an individual participates or remains on the outskirts of the enclosure as 533 the mood of the moment impels him. Over the beat of the drum can be heard one of the current songs, more than likely a bit smutty in nature, and frequently poking fun at some well-known personage, or making allusions which in normal speech might seem crude.

541 One of the popular Sunday afternoon sports is the *gaguère*, or cock-[525] fight, held under a shelter back of a home. Much small betting goes on. The spectators sit or stoop close around the dusty ring, talking to the cock they are backing, commenting on the fight, offering advice to the owner. Between rounds the cocks are rubbed down, sprayed with water or rum, fondled and excited anew. Toward the latter stages of any fight the spectacle becomes gory and, to the uninitiated, distinctly cruel.

526 There is singularly little sport in Haiti. Elite youths play tennis; boys enjoy football; and swimming is a common diversion. Few sports are competitive and, so far as the writer has observed, the peasants have in their games practically nothing resembling organization.

2: Courlander 9-5 (1937-1969) 1969 SV3 Haiti SV3

and covered with tiny mirrors or bits of colored glass. The towering headdress of antlers or papier-mâché sculpture unavoidably recalls similar headdresses in West Africa. Each roi has his own style of dance, which is usually accompanied by drums. It may be a belly dance, a dance of delicate balance, or one of complicated footwork and semiacrobatics such as the imitation of a pair of scissors at work. Throughout the dancing the headdress remains majestically erect.

In addition to the roi Lwalwali and the mèt' Rara (who is constantly in the midst of things, blowing his whistle), there are other traditional Rara personalities: the *major jour*, who juggles with a metal baton (sometimes two or three of these jugglers work together), and the *jonglèw*, a juggler or strong man who performs such feats as dancing while holding a fully set table off the ground with his teeth.

On the southwest peninsula, in the region around Jérémie, there is a upsurge of wrestling exhibitions during Rara days. Known as *pingé*, this festival wrestling is done with a background of excited drumming and has a striking resemblance to wrestling traditions in West Africa. Local "champions" will invade a neighboring community, sometimes traveling considerable distances to make a challenge. As in West Africa, some of these wrestlers take their own musicians with them. The musicians often are provided by the village in which the events take place. If a challenge is accepted, the spectators form a large circle, with the wrestlers in the center and the musicians to one side. There may be drums and bamboo fifes, occasionally supplemented by large earthern jars and lengths of bamboo beaten with sticks. The wrestlers are dressed only in shorts. When a man is thrown, the event is over, and another pair of wrestlers takes over. Sometimes a "champion" will take on a series of opponents until he is tired. Afterward he may move on to another community to find new competition, perhaps accompanied by a large group of friends and supporters from his own village. When the Rara season comes to an end, pingé is over for the year. It is one of the few athletic sport activities of the Haitian peasant.

And now and then during Rara a *debèze* is seen. The *debèze* is a carved wooden marionette with a short handle below. Its arms and legs are moved by pulling a string. It is usually painted, and sometimes it is dressed. One debèze observed was provided with a loose dewlike costume; when the string was pulled, a large phallus hinged into view in an erect position. This marionette was an object of endless fun-making among spectators.[1]

Another type of marionette is the "Two Kings," made of papier-mâché and operated with strings. The "Two Kings," sitting in a papier-

[1] [Footnote appears in Caribbean 66, p 351. --Ana Ilsr]

2: Courlander 9-6 (1937-1950) 1960 SV3 HAIS SV3

mâché carriage or on papier-mâché horses, make their appearance during Rara as well as on the Day of the Kings (*Les Rois*).

Among the traditional paraphernalia carried by Rara groups are encouragement sticks, cha-cha rattles, metal rattles called *tchawy*, a set of rattles on a tall thin pole (called *pouwapou*), candelabra bearing candles or oil lamps (*lampions*), banners and flags, and such miscellaneous musical instruments as the *grage* scraper, bamboo scraping devices, the *bazar* finger drum, *ocoto* (beating boards), and various kinds of secular drums.

The general tone of Rara is nonreligious. The dancing is free from the decorous restraints which characterize most religious ritual, and some early observers of the festival were shocked by what they saw. Some of them went so far as to attribute Haiti's dense population to the "licentious activities" and reckless abandon of the spring carnival. The Catholic Church and some political administrators have sporadically sought to suppress Rara, along with Vodoun ritual. And even today in Port-au-Prince the foreign visitor often is urged to watch the elite Mardi Gras with its floats and mulatto queens as a substitute.

Although Rara has an over-all tone of secular abandon, it has links with both Catholic and Vodoun ritual. Good Friday is given over in good measure to miming the story of Jesus and Judas. A perambulating band may carry an effigy of Judas hanging from a pole. Another will burn the Judas effigy, or drag it in the dust as the crowd moves along the road. In another group a man playing the part of Judas may crawl on his hands and knees along the trail, while Jesus' scourgers pursue him with long, cracking whips.

Tying in with Vodoun ritual, virtually all Rara drums and other paraphernalia are "dedicated" or "rededicated" before Lent in special lwanday services. And on the last day of Rara, usually late in the night, prayers are said, the loa are called upon, and some of the festive paraphernalia is thrown into a fire to be consumed.

Chapter 5: *Services for the Loa and the Family Ancestors* (pp. 41–54)

Note that the houngan and the hounsi are performing services normally performed by the *petit serviteur*.

*Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 189.

*Parsons, *Spirit Cult in Haiti*.

*Account given by Jean Rosel Pierre.

*Informant: Albert Kali Perrault, Gonaïves.

*Account given by Yolande Salnave. A. W. Cardinall notes in his book *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 84): "Twins are in some cases treated with respect. Before a man does his work for a career he must invariably does sacrifice to the spirits and apologizes for the harm he is about to do it."

*The rite of *rafraîchi* *ofo* is conducted periodically for a *mèt* *ofo* after the original *lavè* *ofo* ceremony. The purpose is to "refresh" the loa and make him content with his residence in the head of the devotee.

*Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, p. 113.

*It is of interest to note the persistence of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain Negro cults in the United States. River baptisms often is attended by certain mimetic in familiar form.

*Valdemar Rosenvold, "Notes on Two Marriages with Voodoo Law," in Appendix A of Deren, *Divine Horsemen*, p. 280.

Chapter 6: *Songs of the Periyale* (pp. 55–70)

*This theme is further commented on in chap. 13. Compare with the following excerpt from a Surinam song reported by Herskovits in *Suriname Folk-Lore* (p. 683):

> I have no mother there,
> I have no father there,
> I have no sister there,
> I haven't got anybody there.

Chapter 7: *In the Mapou Tree: Magic, Demons, and Conquests* (pp. 55–70)

*Simpson, "Haitian Magic," *Social Forces*, October, 1940, p. 69.

*Note the coincidence of the term *gangain* or *gagni* as used in the United States, where it has the same meaning as magic, or "conjure" charm.

*Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 379.

*Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, p. 103.

Chapter 8: *Mardi Gras and Rara: Jugglers, Magpies, and Kings* (pp. 105–119)

*Malkin, *En Haïti*, p. 40.

*Performances of this kind have been observed in both East and West Africa and are well known in the region of Bengal. I saw a phallic masquerade, virtually identical with the Haitian version, in the neighborhood of Khartoum, Sudan.

Chapter 9: *Land and Work* (pp. 120–131)

*Franklin, *The Present State of Haiti*, p. 180.

*Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, pp. 8. Although Dahomean polygamous marriage is by custom Loma. Although Dahomean plural marriage is complete in terms of gifts, obligations, and

L: Herskovits E-4.5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

from its ill effects after the evil has been exercised, must also know the forces they are combating if they are to achieve any measure of success. By the same token, practitioners of black magic must know what steps may be taken to counteract their *wanga* so that, if necessary, they can in turn call forth supernatural emissaries to strengthen the evil impulses originally set in motion. In this sense, therefore, the *houngan*, the *gangan*, the *bocor*, and the *caplata* employ essentially the same techniques and operate with the same forces, the difference between them being one of degree rather than of kind. "*Houngan, c'est magasin. Gaigné un pile marchandise* — The *houngan* is like a shop. He has a lot of merchandise," says the Haitian, quoting a well-known proverb as he makes the point.

In the main, it can be said that though the *houngan* and the *gangan* practice magic, their main preoccupation is with the *loa* — the maladies they send to affect a man and his possessions — while the *bocor* is concerned almost exclusively with setting in motion the agents that actuate black magic, and the *caplata* dabbles in anything that is wanted. One important means whereby the sorcerer obtains his powers is the evil *loa*, but there is this essential difference between them: the gods of the *houngan* are family gods who come to him through the natural course of inheritance, endowing him with the consciousness that gives him his control over the supernatural world, while the *bocor* buys his gods. And when a god is bought, it is always acquired so as to enhance the position of its owner at all costs, despite the knowledge that the power thus purchased is dearly bought, bringing its own eventual punishment. Sometimes an ambitious *houngan* adds to his familial *loa* other "purchased" gods, but this is resented by the deities who have given him his powers, so that in time these benevolent powers take all means to humble and crush him. Furthermore, gods acquired in this way pass on to unwilling members of their owner's family and, after a generation or two of mischief-making, must be "restrained" or "banished." A number of

535 197 198 196 *nagie* and for the Congo, Ibo, and Nago *loa*; the *mazon*, as an interbaie dance between possessions; and steps of the *angaw*, or salute to the gods. There is also the Martinique cycle of secular dances, including the *zouc*, *calibaine*, and *banda*; the rara dances found only at Easter time, and the social Congo dances. Finally European dancing, called *bal*, is performed to the sound of a drum, a phonograph record, or a small orchestra. With a qualified exception of the last, the type of dancing in all these is African. The essence of style in these dances lies in the manipulation of feet and the muscles of the body, particularly those of shoulders, hips, and buttocks, the patterns of which have been carried over in their entirety from the aboriginal homeland. For men and women to dance with arms about each other, as do Europeans, is still regarded in Mirebalais as immoral.

538 198 The trait of African culture that has survived most tenaciously in all the New World, even where European influence has been strongest, is that of folk-literature — of tales, proverbs, and riddles.[7] Though these have flourished in Haiti as elsewhere, prolonged story-telling sessions, so characteristic of other Negro groups, were not encountered in Mirebalais. It is likely that this is principally a seasonal phenomenon, and the failure to find long evenings of story-telling during the summer months, when the rains are at their height and work in the fields is hardest, may properly be an expression of this seasonal variation. As elsewhere in Negro societies, tales and riddles are told at wakes, though their enjoyment by children and their function as a part of the education of the child are as important as in Africa itself. The familiar types of African animal stories and the tales of human tricksters and magicians are well known, and well told. The figure who corresponds to Br'er Rabbit, or to the spider Anansi, is the little 'Ti Malice, while the foil for his pranks is the great awkward Boukî.[8]

One folkloristic element that gives Haitian life a strong African flavor is the proverb, which, as elsewhere in Negro

3: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

cultures, is used not only to point morals for the young but as an expression of the characteristically oblique forms of Negro expression in a quarrel, or in sounding a warning, or in commenting acidly on some social situation. A famous proverb, quoted from the earliest days, is today heard often in Mirebalais: "*Zafai' mouton pas zafai' cabrit*—The affairs of the sheep are not the affairs of the goat"—an injunction against gossip. When a person boasts that no one can harm him, the reply may come: "It is on a narrow path that one has to deal with a difficult horse." Should a man dismiss an experience as of but little consequence to him, he may hear the comment: "Often one pays an ox for a goat." When one person does harm to another, his victim may warn him with the phrase: "Behind the mountains are other mountains." If a man whose fortunes are flourishing attempts to console another who has suffered misfortune, or a rich man jibes at a poor one, the retort may be: "The rock under the water doesn't know how the rock in the sun suffers." To such an extent do proverbs comment on all aspects of life that almost no extended conversation occurs without them. Some of these are of European origin, but both numerically and in their use their character is preponderantly African, as is shown by their specific correspondence to proverbs used today in the regions from which the Negroes of Haiti were derived.*

In the practice of magic, and more especially of black magic, it has been noted that African and European traditions have combined into an integrated cultural unit. The outward expression of magic in the charm or "fetish" as an aspect of African life is so obvious that it has been commented on by all observers. In Haiti, though the charms are not prominently displayed and personal charms especially are worn beneath the clothing, this concept of their importance in coping with life has been retained. Yet, as has been seen, Haitian magic is not African alone. For while the forces behind protective magic are primarily the *loa*, and those behind black magic are

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

overturn his memory, overturn his thought, overturn his house, overturn for me my enemies visible and invisible; cause the thunder and the tempest to break them into pieces. And in honor of St. Bouleversé, three Paters and three Ave Marias. . . .[8]

Thus it is seen how Catholicism invades the beliefs and rites of the *vodun* cult. In an analogous fashion *vodun* has not failed to make itself felt in certain festivals of the Church,[9] for while elements of *vodun*, rigidly suppressed inside the Catholic churches, are absent except in so far as they can be carried on surreptitiously, they are nevertheless integral parts of these fêtes in the minds of the folk who make pilgrimages to them. So arresting is the resulting mingling of practices, and so significant for the amalgamation of cultures that has taken place in Haiti, that a detailed discussion will be given of the most prominent instance of this type, the festival in honor of the Virgin of the Palms, which takes place each year on July fifteenth at Ville-Bonheur, or, as it is better known, at Saut d'Eau. The festival of 1926 has been described by Price-Mars;[10] here certain observations made during the fête of 1934 may be given, especially as they have to do with those aspects of the mythology which validate the festival, and as they illustrate the non-Catholic, voduistic phases of the celebration, of importance for the points being considered in this chapter.

Beside the church, Ville-Bonheur has three especially sacred spots, St. John, En bas Palmes, and Saut d'Eau — the falls themselves. At St. John is a large *campêche* tree surrounded by many palms, from beneath which flow streams of water. St. John is said to have appeared here, carrying his scepter as in the chromolithographs, and at that time water began to flow in the sacred springs, and except for one short period has continued ever since as holy water, being used for drinking and bathing, but never for purposes of cooking. The priests

1: Herskovits E-4,6 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

to the Haitian *baka* found in the New World are the *bakru* of Dutch Guiana, who in turn derive from the "little folk" of West African belief, beings that are always important in making magic. See Herskovits, M. and F. (IV), 105–7.

[10] Dorsainvil (I), 150, mentions this rite.

[10] Notably by Seabrook, 92 ff., who made great capital of the concept and purported actually to have seen these beings! Parsons (II), ii, 591. Tale 77, I, reproduces a Haitian's account in Créole of how a Sorcerer goes about ensnaring a victim to make of him a zombi.

[11] Parsons (I), 178–9.

CHAPTER XIII

[1] Price-Mars (II), 96 ff., gives a detailed description of the peasant house. The beehive-shaped hut mentioned by Craige, 56, is not found in Mirebalais, though the valley is but a short distance from Hinche, of which he was writing. Seabrook, 18, also describes the interior of a peasant house.

[2] Charlevoix, ii, 42.

[3] St. John, 159.

[4] Seabrook, 104 ff., devotes some space to a discussion of *pénitence*, but so changes its meaning to the Haitians that it is quite useless in making a serious comparison of data.

[5] See the discussion in Dorsainvil (I), 150, concerning other retentions of African motor behavior in Haiti.

[6] Craige, Seabrook, and Wirkus, all give lively accounts of cock-fights.

[7] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 1–15, for accounts of the manner in which stories are told in Haiti. It is to be noted that the African belief that a tale must not be told during the daytime persists there.

[8] A large collection of Haitian folk-tales has been published recently by Parsons (II), ii, 470–596.

[9] Audain has published what is perhaps the largest collection of Créole proverbs; his work, however, is unfortunately out of print.

CHAPTER XIV

[1] Dorsainvil (I), 158.

[2] Exceptions to this statement must be made in the case of the careful study of the relationship between Catholicism and *vodun* by Price-

2: Courlander

SV3 Haiti SV3

● 538

[For the themes of various Haitian songs, see categories 535 and 539.]

243 In the Artibonite Valley, where much rice is grown, a similar ceremony
193 takes place before the rice is gathered from the fields. In this ceremony it
128 is rice that is shared with the family ancestors, who have first rights, and
169 with close friends who have aided with the planting. This feast is called
[552] *manger diri*, or sometimes *goutt diri*, the tasting of the rice. Small amounts of rice are taken from the fields, cooked with red beans or Congo beans, or perhaps made into dumplings. The farmer's friends and relatives gather
[524] while the food is still cooking, and play games such as *avoi* and *trois-orye*.
[538] The children play *gage* games and sing songs, and sometimes a *mèl' caste*—a storyteller—comes to entertain them.

When the food is finally ready, the family ancestors are given their share. The farmer takes a calabash bowl of the rice and walks around the house grounds calling upon his immediate ancestors to accept their share. He drops a little food on the ground for the remembered dead, for the unknown dead who preceded them, for the Haitian dead, and for the dead of Africa. He also drops small portions for the dead twins, the dead albinos, the deformed dead, and the dead who have lost limbs, and for the distressed dead who have been improperly buried, or who may not have received the feasts that were due them. Afterward, he offers food to those who died of drowning, or who were lost at sea and never heard of again.

Each course is shared with the ancestors. The farmer takes a pitcher of water, spilling a little here and a little there until the dead have quenched their thirst. He also gives a little of everything to the family loa. Then the calabashes are set out on a bench or table reserved for the dead, and this food is not disturbed. Food for the marassas is set out separately on the ground in three small *coui*, or gourd dishes.

The family ancestors whose good will has made the harvest possible having been taken care of, the food is now shared among the extended family and the friends who helped in the fields. Later there are prayers
[188] to the loa, the saints, and God, led by the houngan or a prêt' savane. To
[176] finish the affair, there may be Juba-type dances for the older people, while
[536] the children watch or play *gage* games.
[524] Only after this service are the farmer and his family and his *coumbite* (mutual labor group), if he belongs to one, free to go out and harvest the rice.[4]

243 These feasts of the rice and yam harvests are not of New World origin.
243 Similar harvest festivals for yams or rice are held over a wide area of West
196 Africa. There, as in Haiti, the fundamental concern is with the family
128 ancestors, whose good will must be constantly nourished so that the rains
171 continue to fall, the crops flourish, and human beings remain fertile. Among the Ashanti of Ghana, for example, the yam and rice harvests are

[4 Account given by Jean Ravel Pintro. Cf. P. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

never seen again, and after a pot' sevane had read prayers over the
spring the people again dr[illegible] raw water from it.

Baka more often change[illegible] themselves into gray or red pigs, but one
ingenious baka was said [illegible] to have transformed himself into a bicycle,
which was seen traveling [illegible] alone at night on the road from Port-au-Prince
to Léogane.

Some people wear cha[illegible] rms against the baka's malevolence; but the
most effective weapon is [illegible] the cocomacque stick. The cocomacque, or
monkey palm, is a palm [illegible] tree that grows only a few feet high. It has
magical powers to drive o[illegible] ff not only baka but other evil beings as well.
When the tree is growing [illegible] in its natural state, it is said, you must never
mention its name in its o[illegible] n presence. Should you say within its hearing,
for example, "Look at the [illegible] cocomacque," it will wilt and fall over, losing
all its vital powers. The t[illegible] ronk of this midget palm is a favorite material
for fashioning a walking [illegible] stick or a short baton. A man going on a long
journey may carry a cocomacque stick with him
to bewildish at the crowd[illegible] ands where baka lurk, or to drive off strange
animals that may be bak[illegible] s in disguise.

In their relationships [illegible] with human beings, the baka are not always
ransom. Sometimes, for a [illegible] terrible price, they will undertake to make a
man rich or to "eat" his e[illegible] enemies for him.

In some parts of Haiti, [illegible] baka seemingly have found their way into the
ranks of the loa. In the [illegible] Congo-Guinée pantheon there is a deity called
Bakulu Baka, or Bubuka [illegible] Baka. He is a malevolent spirit who "eats"
people in the best baka tr[illegible] dition, and he lives, significantly, in the mapou
tree, which is shunned b[illegible] y all good loa.

The *engagemente*, or c[illegible] ompacts, in which baka sometimes figure are
usually made with anoth[illegible] er sort of creature, the *djab*, or devil. A djab
is a manlike being but [illegible] is superhuman, ferocious, and terrible. Some
djab are small, some large[illegible] , some innocent in appearance, some grotesque.
They are supernatural s[illegible] orcerers who deal out riches in exchange for
human beings. A frustrat[illegible] ed or desperate man may go to a djab and ask
for a favor, which will [illegible] usually be granted for a heart-rending price.
Persons who appear to ga[illegible] in wealth suddenly may be suspected of having
entered into an *engagem*[illegible] *ent* with a powerful djab.

One story is about a m[illegible] an of Port-au-Prince who, needing a large sum
of money, went to a fam[illegible] ous djab who lives in a cave known as Trou
Fourbon. This powerful [illegible] djab agreed to provide all the money required,
but only on condition th[illegible] at the man deliver to him each year one of
his children. The man s[illegible] uddenly came into a large fortune. But when
the anniversary of his co[illegible] mpact arrived, he did not go to Trou Fourbon

with one of his children as he had agreed. That night his oldest child died. The next year to the day, his second child died. And the third year, the third child died. On the fourth anniversary, the man's wife died. On the fifth, he himself died. The *djab* of Trou Fourbon had collected his debt.

Another great *djab* lives on the northern mountain called Morne Rondo. A man of Cap Haïtien was said to have made a compact with him for wealth. One day there was a great hubbub in front of the man's house. A crowd gathered and stood peering inside his door. What they saw was a rain of money falling down from the rafters. The floor was covered with ten-gourde bills. When the *gendarmerie* came to investigate, they stood at the doorway in awe, watching the money float to the floor. The man finally closed the door. That night he moved away, and no one in Cap Haïtien ever saw him again.

The *djab* are insatiable. For their favors—which range from providing wealth and political position to destroying one's enemies—they always demand more in return than the recipient has counted on. Catholic ritual is called upon in some instances to break the *djab*'s chain of demands.

Some tales are told in which human beings outwit the *djab*, particularly the lesser ones; but more often than not, the *djab* have the last laugh. During the big hurricane which hit Haïti in 1954, a huge landslide occurred near the place called Bayè Roche in the La Selle Mountains. An entire village was wiped out, covered by the falling rocks. Throughout this region the disaster was attributed to the action of a *djab* reputed to live in one of the nearby caves. Many lost cattle were found wandering near Bayè Roche, and they were believed to be people whom the malevolent *djab* had transformed into animals.

The height of bravado is to demand to be confronted with a big *djab* face to face. There is a song which goes:

> Condoit'm ché ché!
> Condoit'm ché djab nan Trou Fourbon!
> Condoit'm ché! [Ex. 51]
>
> Take me, ché!
> Take me to the *djab* in Trou Fourbon!
> Take me!

There are still other supernatural creatures in Haïtian lore who must be guarded against, such as the *djablesse*, the *revenant*, and the *loup*. The *djablesse* is a female ghost who must live in the woods for a number of years before she can enter heaven, as a punishment for the crime of

The connection between the Haitian zombie and certain soulless beings of West Africa is quite apparent. Herskovits has observed that in Dahomey there are tales of persons thought to be dead who were found wandering in far-off places. These individuals had no memories of their former lives. "They were soulless beings, whose death was not real, but resulted from the machinations of sorcerers who made them appear as dead, and then, when buried, removed them from their graves and sold them into servitude in some far-away land."[1]

According to stories told by some Haitians, in ceremonies for the dead where there is suspicion that the deceased was the victim of this particular kind of poisoning a close relative stabs the body with a knife before burial to assure that it will not become a zombie. In other instances, close guard is kept over the grave for a number of days and nights, so that the body cannot be stolen.

Some members of the elite publicly dismiss the whole business as savage fantasy but privately say something like: "I don't believe in this sort of thing, but how can you explain the case of Marie Zombom in Cap Haïtien?" And then they will tell of curious events of which they have firsthand knowledge.

There are numerous legends of persons who died and were buried, only to reappear perhaps years later in some mountain village, or in the big city of Port-au-Prince. An educated man in Port-au-Prince declared that a dead cousin of his reappeared one day in the city ten years after her burial. He tried to speak with her, but she answered only haltingly and gave no sign of recognition. After this one appearance, he said, she was never seen again. Another Haitian from the north told of a graveyard watch in his village to prevent disinterment of the grave of a young girl who had just died. The two watchers dozed fitfully, and suddenly awoke to see a man removing the girl's body. When they jumped to their feet and went after him he escaped into the shadows. But the girl staggered about, fell to the ground, and gave birth to a baby. Both the girl and her newborn child were taken to the village and given salt to eat. Both of them recovered.

One villager from the southern mountains reported that in his travels he came upon a coffee plantation on the sparsely populated mountain called Morne la Selle, and found all the laborers to be zombies. They did not sing as they worked, their movements were slow and cumbersome, and they did not sweat in the hot sun. When he asked for a drink of water, no one replied. While he stood trying to converse, the master of the plantation came with a hard leather whip and angrily ordered him to leave.

[1] [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, p. 243. Cf p. 351, category 116. -- Analyst]

533 477 128 461 rhythmically, to the accompaniment of drums, cutas, or horns, while a singing leader composes topical songs in which the laborers join.

The tools which a rural Haitian chooses, and the way he uses them, 171 482 often are in a West African tradition. He performs a multitude of tasks with his machete, or bush knife: weeding a garden, peeling an orange, cutting down a tree, making a drum or mortar, opening a coconut. It is an all-purpose tool, as it is in Africa. Until a few years ago it was supplemented by the cutra-long, heavier, "double machete." The axe and the chisel are known and used too, but the machete is supreme. 492 The hoe is the tool for tilling the soil, even in the flat country, and even 140 though the Haitian has horses and cattle which could pull a plow. 142 Horses are for riding and not for pulling. In carrying loads, the Haitian peasant still prefers the head to the shoulders. If he has a donkey, the [538] donkey will carry for him. An old Haitian proverb goes: "Mèçi Bondieu pou' bourique: li, si nous pas gainyain bourique li fait Haitien pa'd tout bagaille" (Thank God for the donkey, if we didn't have the donkey the Haitian would have to carry everything)." Generally speaking, the 489 rough and rocky terrain of Haiti and inadequate secondary roads have 491 493 done nothing to encourage the use of carts or wagons.

Corn is stored in the trees, as in West Africa, or in granaries built 171 upon stilts, also as in West Africa. The Haitian makes his fire in the [251] African fashion, with several long sticks or poles meeting point-to-point [372] in the heart of the fire. As the ends are consumed, the sticks are pushed [252] toward the center. Grain is pulverized in large wooden mortars, as [227] in West Africa, and winnowed in a woven tray. Fish traps are some- [224] times woven in the traditional West African manner, and fishermen often set their nets in converging spirals and beat the water with sticks to [501] drive the fish to the center. And on the rivers and lakes are to be seen dugout canoes of a kind familiar on the inland waters of West Africa.

The folklore of the fields contains many themes known to the West 171 241 African. One old Haitian farmer, discussing the spiritual relationship of the planter to the earth, declared that a man must be strong and potent when he plants, else the crops will be vitiated and sickly. For [834] this reason, he said, a man must not plant seeds the day after he has had sexual intercourse, because he has been temporarily drained of his life-giving powers.[a]

171 538 The tale of the hoe that worked by itself in the fields is also widespread. It enters many animal and Bouki stories, and also is known in a form that is familiar in West Africa. In this story, there was once a man who owned a hoe which worked by itself whenever a magical formula was pronounced. It would stop working whenever the magical

a [For footnote, see Category 116, p 352.-- Analyst]

countersorcler was given. The owner of the hoe was happy and prosperous until one day a thief (in one version, the trickster Anansi) stole the hoe and put it to work in his own fields. But the thief knew only the words to command the hoe to begin, not the words to stop it. He could not stop the hoe from working, and it worked its way out of the valley until it came to the country of the white people.[2] The whites knew the words to stop the hoe, and so they gained control of it. It is said by some that the whites fashioned the hoe into a plow.

171 535

[2] [For footnote, see category B6, p 352.--Analyst]

[P 198]

13. Comments on the Mighty: Political Songs

The African-style song of social criticism has found no worthier subjects than the historic political figures of Haiti. There is no doubt that the African slaves used this art form to express their feelings toward the white masters as they had used it to comment upon the behavior of their own chiefs and fellow tribesmen. The worthy leaders were praised in song; the unworthy were castigated and their sin, failures, and social misdemeanors publicized in folk songs. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, slavery had come to an end in Haiti. The deep democratic sense of human dignity had outlasted the colonial masters and emerged tempered and sharp. The songs of criticism became not only comments upon political figures but campaign propaganda as well. They dwelt upon the accomplishments or faults of the candidates for political office. Friendly songs sought out every virtue, and invented others, in the man or woman being praised. Unfriendly songs looked out and lacerated or poked biting fun at the subject, not even sparing his physical deformities.

Yet the political songs are more than statements of merit or fault. Cumulatively they are a kind of folk history of Haiti. No political aspirant ever went unsung by his peasant army, or unridiculed by his opponent's followers. The songs the people sang about their heroes and their enemies recall events and details that formal history has forgotten or ignored. The memory of the folk song is powerful and long. Some of the recollections go back more than a century.

History books tell us that in December, 1843, Major Charles Hérard aloé Rivière was elected to the office of the presidency, and that a new constitution was drawn up by the Constituent Assembly. The new constitution was an accomplishment of the liberal and democratic forces of the nation. It guaranteed certain civil rights to the people. It provided that judges be elected instead of appointed, abolished life terms for

[P. 163]

14. Songs of Bravado and Boasting

Among the secular songs are many which have boasting, bravado, or challenges as their central theme. Usually this kind of song is playful in tone, though sometimes there may be a serious or even an ominous undercurrent. Often the challenges are directed toward, or concern, djobs and dèwous. Just as often they involve persons of great prestige and power, perhaps the president himself. These songs say, in effect, "What's afraid of the bog-gard?"—or of the president, or of the demons of such-and-such a mountain, as the case may be. Sometimes the bravado itself is implicit, but as often as not the singer challenges the world to take him before some feared personage, human or supernatural, and see what will happen. 533* 538

In one such song, the singer boasts that he is ready to be conducted before a fearful and underworld deity named Jean Zombie. As though to assure the listeners that he is in his right mind, the challenger emphasizes that he has not been drinking anything intoxicating and is perfectly sober: 533* 539* 1775

Rwul Jean Zombie ah vini wè mwin, conduit'm ale!
Rwul Jean Zombie ah vini wè mwin, conduit'm ale!
M'pas boè tafia pas' nan fèt tèmin!
Dèwou bonèfor mwin conduit'm ale!
Jean Zombie ah wie wa conduit'm ale!
M'pas boè tafia pas' nan fèt tèmin! [Ex. 109]

Rwul Jean Zombie, ah, ennen to ou ou, take me to him!
Rwul Jean Zombie, ah, ennen to ou ou, take me to him!
I haven't drunk tafia, I am not drunk!
I am at my bonèfor, take me to him!
Jean Zombie, ah wie wa, take me to him!
I haven't drunk tafia, I am not drunk!

Another song challenges the community to take the singer to face the president—right into the president's parlor. The fact that the president 533* 539* 643

[p. 190]

16. Folk Tales: Bouki, Malice, and Jean Saute

538 In the folk tales and legends of Haiti there has been a powerful assimilation from many cultures. There are stories of European and African derivation, and countless others that are to be found in one form or another in the Middle East, Asia, and throughout the Americas. The precise origins of many of these stories probably will never be known. Some of them are as ancient as the Panchatantra and have variants in India, Indonesia, Korea, Egypt, West Africa, and northern Europe. It is likely that many tales with this broad distribution came into Haiti by way of Europe, along with the French, Spanish, and English settlers. But numerous stories told in Europe are well known in West and Central Africa too. The folk tales of the world have an astonishing universality. The adventures of the West African hare and spider are closely paralleled in the tales of the American Negro Br'er Rabbit, the hare of Thailand, and the mouse deer of Indonesia.

538 In Haiti today, as in other islands of the West Indies, there is an endless repertoire of folk stories of many kinds—animal tales; trickster tales; stories about magicians, kings, and princesses; *contes fables*; and stories that account for the beginnings of things, the behavior of certain animals, and their physical appearance. There are European dragons and devils, and beasts of the African forests. Some of the stories are long and episodic, some are so brief—even curt—that they have lost their original core. They may point out moral or ethical values or, more commonly, strike completely amoral levels in which the humor depends upon acts that in real life would be regarded as cruel. Like the folk songs, the tales are often used to express the democratic equality of the small person with the great. In many instances it is the small man who triumphs over the powerful and rich. In the Bouki-Malice cycle it is usually the little wily trickster who wins over the larger and physically stronger opponents.

[191]

None of the Haitian tales are meant to be read, for storytelling is a

dramatic art. The narrator interprets his characters as he goes along, providing different voices, singing, giving humorous or tragic emphasis, and changing his facial expressions to convey the temper and mood of the protagonists. He imitates the movements and actions of the animals. In print, his broad gestures and sly intimations are all lost. The Haitian tale is a vehicle for the actor, who plays his theme according to circumstances and the responsiveness of his audience. The storyteller, like the musician, is likely to be found almost anywhere. But there are storytellers of special renown, known as *moît' contes*—who may be called upon to entertain young people at a party or Nine Night gathering. They have seemingly endless repertoires and can go on indefinitely telling tales about Bouki and Malice, or Jean Sotte and Jean L'Esprit. In further times, the *moît' conte* used an instrument such as the *hoeco* to interpose his narration with music. Old people recall that rough rillers and other instruments of African design were once employed for this purpose.

Anansi, the spider trickster-hero and buffoon of West Africa, has survived in Haiti as well as elsewhere in the Antilles. In Jamaica and other British islands, Anansi has become Brother Anansi, Sister Nancy, or just plain Nancy. Although he usually figures in tales dealing with other animals, he has more and more come to assume a human form, as he has in Haitian tales. But in Haiti the name Anansi is only rarely heard. Anansi's cleverness and stupidity are now attributed to two characters named Ti Malice and Nonc' Bouki, both of whom are regarded as human beings.

In West Africa the spider hero directed his mischief against the great and strong creatures of the forest, now one, now another. In Haiti, Ti Malice, who has inherited Anansi's wit and guile, pits himself mainly against Bouki, who has inherited Anansi's stubborn nature and his pompous stupidities. Ti Malice (whose first name probably comes from the Spanish *tío*, uncle) has become the slick sharpy of the city, the clever and predatory "operator," the practical joker. Like his spider prototype, Ti Malice has humor as well as cunning, though he is often remorseless. Bouki is full of self-confidence but is slow-witted and an easy prey for Ti Malice. He is thought of as a clumsy peasant of the mountains. He has a constant desire to pit himself against Ti Malice, and a capacity for involving himself in utterly fantastic situations which appeal to the Haitian sense of the ridiculous.

In many respects this team of comedians resembles another pair known in South and Central America—Tío Conejo (Uncle Rabbit) and Tío Coyote; both are pranksters, but the rabbit usually manages to outwit the coyote. Ti Malice and Bouki also figure in the universal tar-baby story, and in many other tales known in the United States in which Br'er Rabbit

171 558 and Br'er Fox are the protagonists. Many of these tales, like the characters themselves, have West African prototypes, though others seem to have been created out of the workaday substance of Haitian life. They are not, however, essentially children's tales. Some of them involve risqué or ribald escapades.

Among the Haitian tales are numerous themes which stem directly from African lore, such as the hoe that worked by itself in the fields; the single grain of seed corn which, when drawn across the ground, grew an entire field of maize; and the pot that boiled without fire. There are many remnants also of the African tale in which a "tail feather" of an elephant is required for some magic purpose. There is a pursuit which follows the acquisition of the elephant hairs, and the pursued person saves himself with these magical eggs. When he throws one on the ground, a huge river springs up behind him. When he throws down another, a forest appears behind him, and so on.[1] The elephant's tail feather is regarded as a very powerful protective charm in many regions of West Africa. That the memory of it should continue in Haiti so precisely, although there are no elephants, is striking.

177 558 Although Haitian folk tales are abundant and are well loved, over the years they have tended to become more and more simple. The episodic European tales of kings and princesses and monsters that have been taken over are, generally, of a naive kind without moral or intellectual significance. They are interesting for the twists and turns of fate and for momentary laughs.

The tale of Grandmother's Bath is a case in point. In this story, Jean Saute (Stupid John) is left at home to care for Grandmother while Jean L'Esprit (Smart John) goes to market. Jean Saute puts Grandmother in a tub and pours boiling water over her, killing her instantly. He looks at the grimace on her face and concludes that she is enjoying it immensely; so he sticks her pipe in her mouth and pours more water over her. When Jean L'Esprit returns, Jean Saute is very proud of himself. But Jean L'Esprit discovers that Grandmother is dead. The brothers then pack their belongings to go to the city. There follows a series of strange and bizarre adventures. Jean L'Esprit sends his dull-witted brother back for something he has forgotten; Jean Saute misunderstands and brings the door off the house. Throughout their adventures Jean Saute carries the door with him. When they get to the forest they climb into a tree to sleep for the night, Jean Saute carrying his door along. While they are there, a convocation of devils (*djab*) takes place under the tree. Jean Saute has to urinate, and he does so into the middle of the convocation. The devils shout gleefully that it is wine from heaven and try to catch the water. Eventually the door

[1] [Footnote appear on P. 353, Category 116. --Analyst]

falls from the tree and frightens them away. The two brothers continue on their way and come to a country where it is always night—a great dragon with seven heads has swallowed the sun.[5] The two brothers kill the dragon, with the help of Jean Sauté's stupidity. They cut into the monster and find a silver box, which they open, releasing the sun from captivity. The news goes on ahead. When they arrive at the city, the king, in appreciation, offers them the choice of his daughters. Jean L'Esprit, as might be expected, chooses the youngest and most beautiful. Jean Sauté turns them all down and asks to marry the king's cook.

This story seems to be one of the most extended tales in Haitian lore, unless one groups all the Bouki-Malice stories together in a single cycle. However, most European-style tales (Beauty and the Beast and Jack and the Beanstalk, for instance) have suffered considerable deterioration. In the process of adaptation, such tales lost much of the original detail and decorative motif that made them interesting to the Europeans. They become stark and brief, fragmentary anecdotes about kings, devils, and snakes.

With some few exceptions, the African stories have undergone less change: the Singing Tortoise (found later in this chapter) and Anansi's Tug of War, for example. But even in the tales of African origin there has been simplification to the extent that many of them are mere fragments; in some even the central point itself has been lost. The Bouki-Malice tales, counterparts of the Anansi stories of West Africa, have lost the contemplative tone found in the African originals. Moral points of the kind commonly made in African tales have almost entirely disappeared and are to be found only in proverbs. If the good wins over the bad, that is simply an accident of fate; for the bad wins over the good just as frequently. Death and sadism are constant themes. But the prime conflict remains the smart against the stupid, and the small and weak against the large and powerful.

Like kindred tales elsewhere in the West Indies and in the United States, many of the stories have standard beginnings and endings. The storyteller begins by saying "Cric," and his audience replies, "Crac." When he comes to the end he usually uses a variant of:

"I was there and saw it. And Malice gave me a kick and sent me all the way here to tell you about it." Or: "So I have run all the way here to tell it to you." Or: "That's the story, and if you don't believe me, tafia will never kill you." Or: "They gave me a blow, and I have just come to my senses." Or again: "So he kicked me over the house and here I am." These formula endings often provide a dramatic punch for the children who are listening.

[Footnote appears on p. 353, category 116 – Analysis]

relations between the husband and the wife's family, it is nevertheless commonplace for men who can afford it to have more than one wife.

*Simpson, in "Social and Familial Institutions in Northern Haiti," *American Anthropologist*, October-December, 1951, p. 1[illegible], observes that in northern Haiti there are three distinct types of plaçage. "A *premier-rang* shares her man's house, while a *second-rang* girls is a woman who has been children for a man without living in his house. A *troisième-rang* girls does not live in her consort's house, and she has given him no children." Although these women of three ranks have any legal rights of inheritance, Simpson notes, "social claims to a man's property stand in descending order for these three classes of plaçage."

*Johnson, *The Negro in the New World*.

*UNESCO, *The Haiti Pilot Project*, p. 18.

*Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 3[illegible].

*The group work patterns of Haiti show a common ancestry with Negro gang work patterns in the United States. While nothing so formalized as the countless patterns among American Negroes, similarities are striking. The emphasis on rhythm, the swinging of implements or picks in unison, the need for a singing leader, the responsive chorus, and the frequent use of some kind of percussion to keep time, all derive from a common concept of the nature of group work.

*Herskovits, "Some Aspects of Dahomean Ethnology," *Africa*, Vol. V (July, 1932), 3[illegible] passim.

*Cornbrook, *Tales Told in Tuguland* (p. 1[illegible]), observes that among the Kwahi people of Tuguland "no man may have sexual intercourse with a woman for seven days before he goes hunting."

*The Ashanti story told by Rattray in *Akan-Ashanti Folk-Tales* omits the ledgeling with covering the original lost; according to this version, the lost escaped across the sea to the country of the white men, who then possessed the secret. Afterward, the white men brought many boats to Ashanti.

Chapter III: *Dancing and Dance Drama* (pp. 1[illegible]-1[illegible])

*Quoted in Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 73.

*Actually a banjo-like instrument of African parentage. The similarity of the word *banza* to *banjo* appears to be more than a coincidence.

*Saint-Méry, *De la danse*, as translated by Lilian Moore in "Moreau de Saint-Méry and Dance," *Dance Index*, October, 1948, p. 238.

*Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

*"Brandy or rum" with gunpowder is sometimes drunk by persons possessed by the loa Ogoun, deity of war.

*Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

*United Nations photograph no. [illegible].

*Students of United States Negro life will recognize the word *counfuffy* as a variant of *conjure*, a dance known on the lower Mississippi. According to one observer, Dr. Willis James of Spelman College, Atlanta, small Negro boys on the docks used to call to the boat passengers:

> "Throw me a nickel
> Throw me a dime
> If you want to see me
> Do the counfuffy."

The term *counfuffy* is still used to mean hand-loading of cotton bales on river boats. When this loading was done mainly by hand some years ago, the stevedores worked rhythmically in a line and sang. An old man from Louisiana testified that within his own memory the double *counfuffy* was accompanied by mahogany drums and other percussion.

Chapter 12: *Songs of Complaint, Recrimination, and Gossip* (pp. 137–142)

[illegible] and [illegible], *Surinamese Folk Lore*, pp. 177–[illegible].

Chapter 13: *Comments on the Mighty: Political Songs* (pp. 148–161)

[illegible], *Haiti, Her History and Her Detractors*.

Chapter 15: *Secret-Society Songs* (pp. 186–189)

[illegible], *Dahomey*, I, p. [illegible].

[illegible], "Modern Mooring in Guadeloupe," *Journal of Negro History*, XXIX (1944), p. [illegible].

Chapter 16: *Folk Tales: Boukí, Malice, and Jean Sonnet* (pp. 190–204)

"The theme of throwing magic objects upon the ground to ward off a pursuer is widely known, but the story as told in Africa has special characteristics of its own, such as the elephant hair. In Ashanti tales, the prize is the tail of the queen elephant, which is needed to serve as a cushion.

"This part of the tale, at least, dealing with the dragon that swallowed the man, seems to be known in western Europe. Some reports of the tale of Grandmother's Bath have come from France.

"Variants of "The Persistent Wooer Who Wins the Hand of Ancora" are widely known around the world. The story is told among the Bemali of East Africa, with the legendary character Ahamoyen, a Persian wrestler-hero, playing the title role. Anansi plays the same part in West Africa, and other wrestler-heroes are identified with the same adventure in India and Southeast Asia. The tale has been reported also from the West Indian island of St. Martin ("He Moves the King's Candidates," in Parsons, *Folk-Lore of the Antilles, French and English*, Part II).

"The fishing story mentioned here, except for the chase, is found in many versions in West Africa. The second part of the tale, the pursuit, has a special Haitian flavor. Boukí chases Malice through the cult chief's ritual grounds and the church, with Malice trying to make appropriate use of the situations, to a special delight to Haitians. The dialogue between Boukí and Malice's behind is also regarded as very humorous.

"Known in virtually all Negro communities in the Americas, the tale of eating the honey (or butter, pork, or lard) seems to have come to the New World by way of Africa, although it is also known in Europe.

"The theme of the singing tortoise (or other animal, or an object such as a shell) has appeared in folk tales ranging from West Africa through the Americas to the Far East. This Haitian variant bears a striking resemblance to a tortoise story from the Gold Coast (Ghana). In the Gold Coast variant the tortoise asks the hunter who finds him to keep his singing ability a secret, but the hunter has to tell about his discovery. When the village headman hears about it, he calls for a test. The tortoise refuses to sing, and the hunter is punished. Then the tortoise sings his song, which emphasizes the hunter's bad faith. The philosophical tone of the Haitian tortoise's songs, particularly the last one, is quite similar. The last line of the song is from a Haitian proverb.

Chapter 17: *Children's World: Game Songs and Games* (pp. 183–188)

"The description of this game is from Paul, "Les jeux à gage," *Bulletin de Bureau d'Ethnologie*, July, 1945, p. 51.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Chapter 18: *Musical Instruments* (*pp. 189–202*)

[1]Herskovits and Herskovits, *Suriname Folk-Lore*, p. 87. The stick is also known in Surinam.

[2]Informant: Joseph Longo, Brazzaville.

[3]Library of Congress album, *Folk Music of Venezuela*.

[4]Pamphlet accompanying recordings, *Music of Equatorial Africa* (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1950).

[5]See Courlander, "Musical Instruments of Cuba," *Musical Quarterly*, April, 1942, pp. 233–234.

[6]Cornhaire Sylvain, *Les Contes haïtiens*, pp. 97–98.

[7]Curt Sachs, *Geist und Werden der Musikinstrumente* (Berlin, 1929), pp. 60–61.

[8]Schweinfurth, *The Heart of Africa*, I, 287.

[9]Informant: Sékhan Touré, Bamako.

[10]See Courlander, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

Appendix 1: *The Pantheons* (*pp. 335–349*)

[1]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 245 ff.

[2]See Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa*, pp. 47–48; and Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 245 ff.

[3]Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

[4]Herskovits, *op. cit.*, pp. 152 ff.

[5]*Ibid.*, pp. 101 ff.

[6]*Ibid.*, pp. 201 ff.

[7]Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa*, p. 67.

[8]Herskovits, *op. cit.*, pp. 105 ff.

[9]Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, pp. 45, 67 ff.

[10]Library of Congress Recording No. 101.

[11]Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, p. 47; W. R. Bascom, in Introduction to record album *Drums of the Yoruba of Nigeria* (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1950).

[12]Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, pp. 38 ff.

[13]Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples*, pp. 72–74; Herskovits, *op. cit.*, I, 35.

[14]Herskovits, *Life In a Haitian Valley*, p. 267.

[15]*Ibid.*, p. 280.

[16]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 108–109.

[17]Ellis, *The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa*, p. 68.

[18]Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, pp. 79–80.

[19]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 165 ff. Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples*, p. 83, says that this deity was especially important in the town of Aghome.

[20]Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, pp. 45, 76.

[21]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 104.

[22]Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples*, pp. 72–74.

[23]Saint-Méry, *De la danse*, p. 45.

[24]Carter, *Africa Dances*, p. 188.

[25]Bad eyes as a symbol of malevolence appear in the folklore of many Negro cultures. Our own American ballad about the gambler Stackalee states:

> "The judge says, 'Stackalee, I would spare your life,
> But I know you're a bad man, I can see it in your red eyes.'"

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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remains is the verbal handing down of recollections, one of the most natural things in the world and one congenial to Haitian peasants. Every region, every village, has its accomplished storytellers. The phenomenal resemblances in detail of the coumbite to Dahomean coöperative work may be due therefore to this verbal tradition. 174 241 574 476 538

Once the men have cleared and prepared the field, the care of the crop devolves upon the women. For this there has been a long background of tradition. In African agricultural regions, in the plantations of Saint-Domingue during slave days, under the forced labor régimes of Toussaint and his successors, women had been field workers. They had never known anything else. We have seen that many of the present-day practices of Haiti go back to the times of Pétion and Boyer: during this period women did field work, not by decree of government but by force of circumstance. Their men were constantly taken away from the farms for service in the large army; if crops were to be raised, women must do the work. Sometimes soldiers were stationed near their own homes, and could help in production; but they could be called on to march, at short notice and in peacetime, anywhere in the country. Many of the later presidents made it a definite policy frequently to change the station of regiments, so as to prevent revolutionary projects and guard against the soldiers' being tampered with by the disaffected in any single community. 241 175 462 701

Sir Harry Johnston records his observations on the Haiti of 1910 as follows: 114

The women are the best part of the nation. They are splendid, unremitting toilers. In the face of all discouragements with which a bad Government clouds their existence the women of Haiti remind one of certain patient types of ant or termite, who, as fast as you destroy their labour of months or days, hasten to repair it with unslackening energy. The market-women that descend from the country farms to the Haitian towns know that on their way to the market-place, and in that market-place, they will be robbed by soldiers and officers until the margin of profit on the sale of their wares has practically disappeared. Yet they continue to toil, to raise poultry and cattle, till the fields, see to their gardens, make pottery and mats. They cannot stop to reason, but must go on working from three years old to the end of their lives. Such industry (which is almost equally supplemented by that of the peasant husbands) protected should make Haiti one of the richest countries in the world for its size and population; but so long 114 462 461 [701]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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[p. 290]

XVII

OUTER ASPECTS OF HAITI

[538] HAITIAN poets rarely sing the beauty of their native land, nor do the travelers who roam the earth dwell long upon this particular pearl of the Antilles. Mountains slope down into the sea, sunlight sparkles upon the foaming waves as they roll in, peninsulas and bays lend variety to the coast line: yet the majestic display does not make the visitor cherish Haiti in his mind and heart alongside Sicily or Scotland or Maine or Japan. Columbus in 1492 thought the island "enchanting," saying that "it is a wonder. Its mountains and plains, and meadows and fields, are so beautiful and rich for planting and sowing, and rearing cattle of all kinds, and for building towns and villages" that it "surpasses anything that would be believed by one who had not seen it."[1] The Spanish admiral viewed his discoveries with the eye of faith, seeing the glories which might come to be; his enthusiasm was matched by other early Spaniards. The French in the eighteenth century likewise thought the land beautiful, and with skillful management made their human habitations an ornament to generous nature.

13 105 If one could view Haiti only from the sea or from the air, he would probably, like the Spaniards and Frenchmen, speak in rhapsodies, for the land still stands up out of the sea—"the highest peak of that submerged mountain range whose summits appear as the islands of the Greater Antilles."[2] Visitors disembark from their ships or planes, however, see the poverty, the backwardness, the pathetic smallness of human effort which matches so ill with what nature originally provided, and come away with a feeling of disappointment. Not even the little things of Haiti are immediately attractive: the peasants are not "quaint," their costumes are not "picturesque," their towns are not "colorful"; even the souvenirs to take back to the tourist ship have likely as not been made in New York and imported by the local shops. Outsiders, distracted by the human element, hardly glance at the scenery; and since as conducted tourists they are not likely to penetrate far beyond the seacoast, or stay long enough

1. Christopher Columbus, *Select Letters*, R. H. Major, ed. (London, 1870), p. 3.
2. Blair Niles, *Black Haiti*, p. 6.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 192 if a blow were given on the face the word "*pimme*" was added to the verb describing that blow, but if a stick had been used, "*bimme*" was added, and if a whip, then "*v'lap v'lap.*"

One of the Negro contributions which gives a delightful charm to 175 the language is the principle of doubling, whether the word is 193 adjective, adverb, verb, or pronoun. Faine cites the following examples:

ioùn bel, bel femme—an extraordinarily beautiful woman.
li té bien, bien malade—he was very gravely ill.
li marcher, l'marcher, l'marcher—he kept on walking and walking.
li-minme, li-minme—it is really he himself.[8]

175 Still another and very important Negro contribution is the wealth of proverbs. A person may say practically anything he chooses in ● 538 proverbs, particularly if he uses to its fullest the significant tones of which his voice is capable. As many as 1,500 of these proverbs have been collected, and there is reason to believe that as many more could be found.[9] In general they say the same things proverbs say in any language:

Fer couper fer. Il faut du fer pour couper le fer; which is to signify, "Great needs demand great remedies."

Tit cochon tit sang. Un petit cochon a peu de sang; that is, "From each according to his means."

Sel pas besoin vanter tête li. Le sel n'a pas besoin de se vanter; or, "Real merit never needs to boast."

Since some of the proverbs make allusions to elephants and tigers, animals not found in the Caribbean region, it is clear that these at least, and maybe others, go far back in the wisdom of the folk.

538 Storytelling is a well-cultivated art in Haiti. The folklore of Créole is rich, some of it bearing close resemblance to the Negro tales current in the southern United States, particularly the Br'er Rabbit tales. When a group gathers and a story is about to begin, the teller says, "Cric?"—as if to say, "Shall I tell you a story?" or, "Are you ready?" To this his listeners reply, "Crac!"—or, "Please do! Certainly!" or, "We are listening." The two words together make a sort of rapport between raconteur and audience, an overture, "Once upon a time."

8. Faine, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
9. J. J. Audain, *Proverbes* (Port-au-Prince, 1877), cites 1,011 Haitian proverbs in Créole, and E. Chenet, *Proverbes créoles* (Port-au-Prince, 1896), records 1,456 proverbs.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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Only a beginning has been made of collecting the thousands of "Cric? Crac!" stories current in Haiti.

It is only recently that people have written Créole, so that there is no standard orthography. Every writer spells words phonetically, with consequent irregularities, and with wide differences between two people writing the same thing. Recent etymological studies may lead eventually to a dictionary and a standard spelling. In order that the reader may see the resemblance of Créole to French, yet its differences from that language, we shall quote a part of one of La Fontaine's fables put into Créole verse by Georges Sylvain.[10] His own French retranslation accompanies the fable, turning such phrases as "female pig" into "sow."

Nan temps toutt bett té palé,
Té g'ain (palant pa respé)
Té g'ain gnou fémel cochon.
Zott connin gen cochon bon?
Cila-là té fait zanmi
Avec gnou fémel chien, qui
Té prett pou mi bas. Chien-là,
Gnou jou, dit cochon con ça:
"Moin pré pou moin accouché,
"Ma comré, t'en pri! souplé,
"Pémett moin prêté gnou coin
"Nan pac ou, pou pititt moin."

Au temps où toutes les bêtes parlaient,
Il y avait (sauf votre respect)
Il y avait une truie.
Vous savez comme les truies sont bonnes gens?
Celle-ci avait fait amitié
Avec une chienne, qui
Était sur le point de mettre bas. La chienne
Un jour, dit à la truie:
"Me voilà près d'accoucher,
"Ma commère, je vous en prie, s'il vous plaît,
"Permettez-moi d'emprunter un coin
"De votre parc, pour mes enfants."[11]

The terseness of the language is fascinating, a situation is hit off precisely in a few words: a stuffed shirt has been deflated, and the truth has been told. A Haitian was heard to say, "Nègue riche li mulatte; mulatte pauvre li nègue"—a rich Negro is accounted a mulatto; a poor mulatto is to all intents and purposes no better than a Negro. And there is a profound comment on the whole caste system.

Wherever the French went in the Caribbean region the Créole language spread—in Louisiana, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Guiana. Each region has its own peculiarities, but in general it may be said that these other regions show much more French (as distinct from Norman) influence on Créole, and much less Spanish and English influence. Similarly in Haitian towns, where the élite speak French

10. *Cric? Crac! Fables de La Fontaine racontées par un montagnard haïtien et transcrites en vers créoles* (Port-au-Prince, 1929), p. 21.

11. "Zott" means "vous autres"; "gnou" is "une."

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

461 476 533 The *combite* songs are distinctive in Haitian music for their melodic quality. Sung in unison, as is characteristic of most forms of Negro music, they contain the statement of a theme by the leader and a response from a chorus, so that the contrast between this great volume of sound from the chorus and the solo voice of the *simidor* is singularly effective. It is not the melodic qualities alone that make these songs so appealing to the Haitians, however. At the *combite* a man not only learns all the gossip of the day, but enjoys learning and singing the songs which caustically comment on the shortcomings of neighbors, or evaluate the hospitality of those who have called *combites*, or detail scandal, phrased with sufficient directness to allow the reference of the song to remain clear, but warily, so as not to give the individual pilloried ground for direct recrimination. The *simidor* is thus a person to be feared, since in addition to his ability as a singer and a leader of song, he is also an outstanding improviser. As one Haitian expressed it, "The *simidor* is a journalist, and every *simidor* is a Judas!"

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476 533 539 461 626 One or two examples of these songs will make clear their favor among a people to whose natural love of gossip is added a patterned relish for oblique public statement of individual shortcomings. The first comments on a miserly *combite* host:

À tè!	Down!
Moin dit, messieurs,	I say, messieurs,
Moin p'ralé nan combite ça-é	I went to that *combite*
Moin pas mangé.	[But] I did not eat.
Moin allé, moin pas joinne un grogue	I went, but I found no drink
Pour moin bwè.	To drink.
Assé-a! En é!	Enough! Up!
Moin dit, messieurs,	I say, messieurs,
M'allé nan combite ça-é	I went to that *combite*

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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Moin pas joinne mangé	[But] I found no food
Pou' m'mangé.	To eat.

Another song refers to a pungent bit of local gossip, which, though known to everyone, concerned an affair that precluded the mention of names. This is usually the case, for it is not ordinarily deemed wise to make specific references; yet this must not be thought of as an invariable rule, as is shown by the fact that a number of these songs were recorded where names were mentioned with great freedom. Thus in Mirebalais as elsewhere, circumstances must govern cases; the composer of the following short song did not feel it politic to do more than recall the case:

Ca va reglé,	This will be arranged,
En é, o!	Up, o!
Affai' cousine germaine	The affair of a first cousin
A'c cousin germain.	With her first cousin.

Reference is also made to an impending quarrel where a suspicion of magic practices entered:

Moin dit, Juda,	I say, Judas,
Allé l'église;	Go to the church;
Quand ou apè tourné	When you return
Ou a quitté moin tranquille, o-o;	You will leave me in peace, o-o;
Si ou allé l'église,	If you go to the church,
Ou apè quitté moin tranquille, o-o.	You will leave me in peace, o-o.

Still another song is a challenge, for in it the singer boasts that he is the equal of the man figuratively designated in it, and will cause trouble if resisted:

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À tè!	Down!
M'apé mandé qui moune	I ask what person
Qui en dedans caille là.	Is in that house.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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Compère répond':	My friend replies:
"C'e' moin qui avec cousine moin."	"It is I who am with my cousin."
Assé-é!	Enough!
Moin en dedans déjà.	I am already inside.
En é-é-o!	Up, o!
Nan point taureau	No bull
Passé taureau.	Is better than [this] bull.
En é-o!	Up, o!

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Finally, there may be cited a composition which complains against a shirker who comes and eats, but does little work:

Samba, é-é,	Samba, *é-é,*
Moin vé ou malhonnet,	I see that you are a dishonest man,
Tonnèrre!	*Tonnèrre!* *
Moin planté maïs moin,	I plant my maize,
L'année rive,	The year rolls round,
Moin planté mangé,	I plant food,
Ou apè managé li.	You eat it.
En é-é-o!	In the air!
Moin planté zaboca,	I plant avocados,
Ça pou' ou mangé,	They are for you to eat,
Ou malhonnet-o.	You are a dishonest man-o.
Tonnèrre!	*Tonnèrre!*

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The field cleared and hoed, the work of planting begins. This is carried on in accordance with a well-defined calendar of agriculture, which takes as its starting-point the beginning of the rains. Maize, which matures quickly, is the first crop, and is planted during the latter part of March or early in April, unless the rains are delayed, when it is planted later that month. Congo peas, which mature less rapidly, are put

[195]

* *Tonnèrre,* "thunder," is a Haitian-French oath; the original is retained because in translation its force is lost.

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planted at other times will spoil. Similarly, millet and maize must not be harvested during these periods, or small insects will eat the grain. "No crop whose root is used for food may be planted during the forbidden phases of the moon," say the educated cultivators also, citing experiences of their own or of their neighbors who, being skeptical, planted their potatoes or other tubers during the wrong phase of the moon, only to have them completely spoil. In some instances not only the phases of the moon, but entire months are held unpropitious for planting. Thus July is regarded as a "weak" month for planting potatoes and plantains, while April, May, June, and August are preferred ones.

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As in all Negro cultures, the Haitians dare not ignore the supernatural powers that rule the universe, where the question of getting a living is concerned. In the valley of Mirebalais, if the land where a field is to be made has a stream, a cock must be sacrificed to the spirit that resides in it, together with oil, peas, and some non-intoxicating drink. In making the offering, protection is asked against those who might steal from the field or injure it:

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> "*Maître Source, moin mandé pou' ou gadé jardin moin vini fait ici. Cé pas pou' ou laissé méchant, malfaiteur contrarié tout ça moin mété nan terr'a. Si moin bien récolté, moin va ba ou un pile mangé.* — Master of the Stream, I pray you to protect the garden I have just made here. Do not permit any evil designing person to harm all that I have put into the ground. If I harvest well, I will give you much food."

An invocation such as the following might also be pronounced on this occasion:

> "*Jesu Christ, les Saints, Marassa, les Morts: M'ap' travaillé; m'ap' planté graines-là. Pou' fai'l donné pou' moin, pou' m' join, pou' m' bai' Mystères, les Saintes, les Marassa, les Morts.* — Jesus Christ, Saints, Twins, the

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Dead: I have worked; I have planted this seed. Make it yield for me, that I may make offerings to the Mysteries, the Saints, the Twins, the Dead." 241 782 539

At the entrance to the field the cranium of a horse, a mule, or a burro may be erected on a pole as magic against evil, and a wooden cross to which limes are attached may also be raised to protect against any expression of envy that might place a spell upon the growing plants. Finally, if there is any reason to believe that evil magic may have been invoked against the owner, a *hungan*, or *vodun* priest is summoned to make a charm to ward it off, and, with a little ceremony, he inters this charm in the middle of the garden or at its entrance. 241 789

In addition to this, first fruits must be given as an offering to the supernatural forces whose goodwill has permitted a bountiful yield, particularly in the case of staple crops such as maize and rice. As the first heads of maize are brought in, they are roasted, and the kernels are cut from the cobs. The head of the household then throws them to the four cardinal points either in the garden or before his house, and as he does this, he pronounces an invocation such as the following: 241 782 [823] [539]

"Jesu Christ, les Saints, les Marassa, les Morts: M' jet' mai' bai' ou, c'est pou' toujou' m' gagne bai' ou, et pou' m' gagne courai' pou' travai' a'c p'tit' moin, a'c femme moin, a'c parent' moin, a'c toute famille-a. Conserve m' pou' m' pas malade, pou' m' toujours join pou, m' bai' ou. — Jesus Christ, the Saints, the Twins, the Dead: I throw maize for you, that I may always have some to give, that I may gain courage [strength] to work, and also my children, my wife, my relations, and all my family. Care for me that I do not fall ill, so that I may always have [something] to give you."

After this ritual the new crop is available to its owner for whatever use he may care to make of it.

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241 782 The first of the rice-harvest is pounded in a mortar. A chicken is killed, or, if the farmer is a man of some means, he may offer two chickens, which are stewed together with red beans. The rice, cooked separately, is put on one platter or in a calabash and the stew in another, and these are taken to the field, where they are cast to the four quarters of the earth. Some of this is also given to the spirit residing in any stream which may be on the property. In addition, sacred trees are rewarded for their care over the field with some of this food placed at the foot of each, but only after they have demonstrated their merit by a successful yield. A prayer of thanks, couched in terms such as these, is next pronounced:

[478] [829]

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> *"Tout ça quitté. Aidé moin à travailler durant l'année, quitté ba moin force, courage. Moin bien content jodi-a, main ça moin porté ba-ou, c'e pou' ca toujou' bon. Ba moin force l'année pou' moin travaille plus l'année prochain. Merci.* — All this remains [here for you]. Help me to work during the year, give me strength and courage. Today I am well satisfied; here is what I bring you that all may always be well with me. Give me strength this year that I may work more next year. Thank you."

The family and their friends who may be present then return to the house and eat the remaining food.

241 782 262 It is also held dangerous to eat yams until the spirits are given the first of the new crop that comes to hand.[1] This is true even though a person may not himself be a farmer, but purchases his yams in the market. Unless this is done: *"Cap' malade, cap' tué même. Marassa kèmbé 'ou, morts, too, et mystères.* — You can become ill, you can even die. Twins will seize (molest) you; the dead, too, and the *mystères.*" The ceremony occurs during November or December, and in addition to the "Guinea" yams — for this ceremony is not performed for the great coarse yams — it is necessary to have imported dried salt fish, fish from Haitian waters which are dried

1: Herskovits E-4, 6 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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other evil spirit or evil magic that may be directed against her. If she is a worshipper of the African deities of the *vodun* cult, she may also ask the *vodun* priest to determine by divination what spirit will protect the child, and what her own deity asks to insure his aid. During all her pregnancy she is particularly careful to avoid eating those foods which are "hateful" to her — that is, which cause her to become ill — though in Mirebalais, at least, it is not necessary that she refrain from partaking of the foods "hateful" to her husband. A pregnant woman has privileges and powers not shared with other women, as was evidenced when a Haitian man once appeared with his eye half shut, explaining that the sty was a punishment for his refusal to buy something his pregnant spouse had coveted. "They do not always know they are sending you a sty, but it is a power they have," he made clear.

Shortly before parturition is expected, both the pregnant woman and her husband invoke the aid of the family deities and make them offerings of a *couvert sec*.* The rite is an informal one that need not necessarily take place in the familial house of worship; if it is more convenient, it may be performed inside their own house or in the courtyard. After repeating the Pater Noster and the Ave Maria, a prayer such as the following is pronounced by the woman:

> "*Toutes mystères, tant pour papa que manman, du même de côté mari moin: m'ap mandé ou pou' moin fait un heureuse accouchement, pou' l'ouv'i chemin ba moin.* — All the gods, both of my father and of my mother, as well as those of my husband: I ask that you cause me to have a good delivery, that you open the road for me."

At the same time the family ancestors are not overlooked:

> "*Moin mandé nou' tous pou' nou' vini délivré moin, pou' nou' l'ouvri chemin pou' moin, pou' pas quitté*

* The various types of offerings will be discussed in the next section of this book.

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843 782 782 539 *malin esprit barré chemin qu'en moment delivrance moin apé rivé. Nou' toutes Invisibles, les Saints, les Morts, Marassa, vini assisté moin jou'-a.*—I ask you all to come deliver me, that you open the way for me, that you do not allow evil spirits to bar my path when the time of the delivery approaches. May you all, Invisible Beings, the Saints, the Dead, Twins, come to my aid on that day."

843 782 796 Should one of the couple be a devotee of Damballa or Erzilie, both of them jealous gods, a chicken or two is added to the customary offerings, and some gift pleasing to the god, such as a dress or suit of his sacred color, is made him. Normally no further precautions need be taken. If, however, the 843 789 pregnant woman has had one or two miscarriages, she and her husband go to a *vodun* priest, preferably a woman, and obtain 793 a "medicine" to be used in bathing the abdominal and vaginal areas as a precaution against *mauvaises aires*, the werewolves believed to consume children in the womb. If the preg- 755 nancy this time terminates successfully, some of the same 793 medicine is rubbed on the child shortly after birth and several times during the ensuing weeks, but should the infant later fall ill, the *vodun* priest brings herbs and makes a smoke-fire to drive away the werewolves that are believed still to be hovering about.

844 782 At the onset of labor, if either the father or the mother of the unborn child is vowed to Damballa, another sacrifice is made to this god and to the spirits of twins, giving a *couvert sec* and one or two chickens and pigeons to each. If a *vodun* priest has determined what deity protects the child, a sacrifice is also given this spirit, and prayers are said to the spirits of twins, the dead of the families of both the man and the woman, and all other supernatural beings, saints of the Church and *vodun* gods alike.

844 Meanwhile the woman has been placed on the ground on

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608 remembrances are expected from them on birthdays or saints' days, while the young person, when older, often brings his problems to them, knowing that they will give him their most disinterested advice. A man may turn to his godparents for aid before asking it of his family, for they are regarded as truest of friends. Nor does he stand in awe of them as he does of his older relations. There is a free joking give-and-take between godparent and godchild, which reflects this attitude of warm affection. A person even stands in a special relationship to the children of his godparents, calling them "baptismal
608 brothers" or "baptismal sisters." Among the peasants, though
582 not among the inhabitants of the larger centers, not only marriage but even those non-Church unions otherwise socially sanctioned are frowned upon between "baptismal brothers and sisters." And Mirebalais has it that when Church marriage is contemplated by two such individuals, special authorization from the Archbishop must first be obtained.[8]

851 Saturday is the day favored for baptisms, permitting as it
852 does the child to be brought to town on a market day. The
608 mother rarely attends, and usually the father is also absent when the godparents bring the infant to the baptismal font, where the priest gives him his name and receives him into the Church. Later in the day the parents are visited by their friends and relatives, who, if they can afford it, bring gifts for the child and partake of the drinks and refreshments that are provided.

851 Following the Church baptism at an interval which varies
852 with differing circumstances, the father and mother and the
782 godfather and godmother present the child to the family deities. Arriving at the family habitation the father says:

[539] *"Mystères-o, nou' même qui te après Grand Maître protège et delivre, moin vin' remercie nou'. Et en même temps main petite la pou' ga'dé pou' moin. Pas quitté mauvaise lawou gagné l'empi' sou' li. Ba li force, santé,*

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et preserve li cont'e tout mal. Ba li couraille pou' moin. Yun jou', c'est li-même qui allé remplacé nou' pou' servi nou' quan' nou' pas pè la. — O spirits, you who after the Great Master protect and deliver, I come to thank you. At the same time here is the child [you are] to protect for me. Do not let werewolves gain power over him. Grant him strength, health, and preserve him against all evil. Give him courage for me. One day he himself will replace us to serve you when we are no longer here." 851 852 539 782

Inasmuch as it is always necessary to invoke all three categories of supernatural beings, a similar invocation is pronounced for the dead and the spirits of twins. The rite, however, may be even simpler than this. If the family house of worship is near by, and the relationship group is one which numbers important members of the *vodun* cult, the child may be taken into this house, water thrown on the ground three times, and a candle lighted. In such cases no invocation is pronounced. 851 852 782 [164]

Most mothers nurse their infants until they are about eighteen months old, though children may be weaned when as young as a year. Weaning is accomplished in a day or two. On the day selected, a bitter plant called *laloi* is spread on the mother's breasts, and when the child asks and is given the breast and refuses it because of the bitter taste, his favorite food is at once offered as a substitute. So efficacious is this method that one day's training is ordinarily enough. As a further precaution the child is not allowed to sleep with his mother for three or four nights after being weaned, so that he cannot take the breast at night, and is only given a place in the mother's bed after her milk has ceased to flow. 862 [324]

The earlier years of a child are in the main free from care, and, with due allowance for the differences in individual temperaments and family traditions, he is given much his own way. Young children make "mud food" and build play-houses. When somewhat older, they organize games of 857 [855]

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hide-and-seek and enjoy story-telling sessions, when the tales of 'Ti Malice and Bouki are recounted. Still older ones make drums out of jars and "arrange a dance." Little girls play with dolls made for them by the older children, while boys with sticks for horses organize themselves into "armies" with their seniors as officers. When a child's teeth fall out, a minor ceremony is performed. As each tooth is detached, the child throws it on the roof of the mother's house, saying:

"Rat, rat, rat,	"Rat, rat, rat,
M'jet' yun bel' 'ti dent	I give you a nice little
ba 'ou,	tooth,
Ba'm yun vieille dent."	Give me an old tooth."

At this same time a beginning of formal education is made, especially if the child lives in the town or near enough to it to allow him to reach one of the schools there. These schools are under both secular and Catholic auspices, and in them the pupil is instructed in the rudiments of European education, learning to read and write and to do simple problems in arithmetic. If he shows proficiency and the means of his family permit, he may go on to a secondary school at Port-au-Prince or some other center; in the main, however, this schooling is all he ever receives, if he is permitted this much.

It is not to be supposed that a child is allowed to grow up without learning how to conduct himself in accordance with the traditional code of Haitian behavior, for the punishment that follows departures from this code is always both prompt and extremely painful, beating with sticks being the mode of correction most often employed. The mechanisms of education and control operate the more effectively because they are exercised by a fairly large group of persons, which includes not only the father and mother of the child, but also his grandparents, his uncles and aunts on both sides of the family, and his older brothers, sisters, and cousins. Less restraint is exercised before grandparents than other relations, for while there

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the phrase: "This is natural." Children are not spaced, for normally a man resumes intercourse with his wife the second or third month after childbirth. Except for the drinking of coconut milk and salt, which is believed to be effective in preventing conception if taken before intercourse, contraceptives are not known to women, which means that pregnancies follow in rapid succession. Families are not too large, however, despite this, those numbering seven or eight children being rare, even in the hills. The reason for this is a high incidence of infant mortality, which is obvious despite the absence of vital statistics. Abortions are usually resorted to by young women, who sustain the operation done by the uncertain skill of an old woman, in the fear that bearing a child will later stand in the way of a desirable legal marriage. Some men, however, take the precaution of placing a grain of native salt on the tongue while having intercourse during an illicit affair, believing that this will be effective in preventing conception.

A childless woman first goes to a *vodun* priest, to have him determine by divination if a co-wife has not invoked magic against her. If her question receives an affirmative answer, she acquires a "counter-charm" to offset the effect of the other woman's magic. Should such a charm be ineffective, she would offer her prayers before the shrines of the saints and make pilgrimages to such sacred places as Saut d'Eau, there phrasing her petition to the Virgin in some manner such as the prayer overheard as a woman lighted a candle and held it in her hand before placing it on a sacred rock:

> *"Vièrge Miracles, Manman, voilà, depuis six ans depuis qui moins marié; moin apé vivre seul avec pauvre malheureux moin-a. Ça fait trois fois moin vini nan pié ou. Pas 'blié mandé moin fait ou, pour charité, moin ou petit pitite. Moin va minnin li ba ou. Moin apé parti, Manman, s' ou' pli, songé ça pitite m' mandé ou.—*

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Virgin of Miracles, Mother, I have been married for six years; I am still living alone with my poor unfortunate one. This is the third time I come to you. For charity's sake, do not forget to send me a child. I have brought this for you. Now I am about to leave [but], Mother, please think of the little one I ask of you."

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number, exclamations of pleasure were heard that the gods were responding. Outwardly, the ritual seemed completely disorganized, the "*loa*" and the spectators moving, mud-bespattered, tense, from the table for Bosu to that for Simbi, and back, or to the *trône*.

The singing went on without interruption to the accompaniment of the bell and occasional blasts of the whistle. Among the songs heard during this period of possession were:

Bosu li join' qui chose a tè,	Bosu found something on the ground,
Pas ramassé li.	Do not pick it up.
Bosu ma'ché,	Bosu goes about,
Li join qui chose a tè',	He found something on the ground,
Pas ramassé li.	Do not pick it up.
Ou va cutrave	You will come to harm
Si ou ramassé li.	If you pick it up.
Va enragé Bosu.	You will anger Bosu.
Simbi en Deux Eaux,	Simbi en Deux Eaux
M'we fé p'ou,	I do for you,
F'e p'moin,	Do for me,
Fi-a, Congo,	Help, O Congo,
Congo Zandor.	Congo Zandor.
Simbi Kita Kita, travaille pour nous,	Simbi Kita Kita, work for us,
Jodi-a pour nous,	Today for us,
Demain pou' zott'.	Tomorrow for others.
Erzilie, o Lemba,	Erzilie, o Lemba,
M'ap' mandé coté Erzilie ye.	I ask, where is Erzilie.
Mangé a'pare.	The food is ready.
Gedenibo, derrière la croix, Gede,	Gedenibo, behind the cross, Gede.

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Devant Baron, Gede,	Before Baron, Gede,
Derrière la croix, Gede,	Behind the cross, Gede,
Jodi-a m'p' nan sang m'we,	Today I am troubled,
Gedevi, rhele Gede, ça Gede,	Gedevi, call Gede, this Gede,
Jodi-a m'pas nan sang moin.	Today I am troubled.
Balai, rousé, cerclé, quitté.	Cease to sweep, sprinkle, hoe.
Moin pas nan sang, Baron Samedi.	I am troubled, Baron Samedi.

Shortly after eleven o'clock the *hungan* intervened to calm those possessed, for the time was at hand to give the sacrifices. Summoning the family to assemble again before the *trône* with the offerings, he commenced a long ritual in which each creature was prepared by being carefully washed and combed, while the boar for Bosu was also fastidiously perfumed and powdered. At the direction of the *hungan*, the fowls were first offered, the killing taking place at a distance of some thirty or forty feet behind the *trône*. The chickens were held with the two wings and the head in the left hand, so that the neck was exposed. The knife was passed twice over the neck to describe a cross, after which each fowl was cleanly and skillfully dispatched. One of the assistants of the *hungan* held a small calabash in which some of the blood of each animal was caught, and another, knife in hand, sang with him that they were offering this *koklo* to the deity for whom it was intended. As the last of the chickens was being killed, the *hungan* left the *trône* and quietly strangled the pigeons for Damballa. 78 79

All possessions had ceased, except that of a man "mounted" by Gede and a woman by Simbi. The man particularly attracted much attention, for Gede is known as a gossip, and so diverting were his revelations of family scandal that all were too absorbed listening to him to show any interest in the sacrifice of the animals. [176] [521]

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78 79 533 fice of the animals. At one point the *adjanikon* holding the calabash in which the blood was caught threw it on the ground in anger, declaring that animals should not be killed for people who were too indifferent to come and sing the songs that accompany the giving of offerings. Some of those present thereupon detached themselves and came to watch the killing of the two small pigs, as the song, repeated over and over, changed to:

[539]

O minmin, moin couteau la,	Oh, here, here is my knife,
Soso na pé tué, soso,	A pig is to be killed, a pig,
Jodi-a.	Today.

78 79 At this point several other men joined in handling the larger animals, for now the one killing the sacrifices could only hold the mouth of each beast before he cut its throat. And when the boar was to be sacrificed, even more assistance was needed, and a line of rope had to be fastened about his snout before he could be handled at all. The killing was ended when the [533] sacrificial goat was slaughtered, to the accompaniment of the [539] song:

Ma'ze Louisa,	Miss Louisa,
M'ap' tué ou jodi-a,	I kill you today,
Pour Erzilie, 'Ti Kita,	For Erzilie, 'Ti Kita,
Gé Rouge, Pié Sèche.	Gé Rouge, Pié Sèche.

The calabash containing the blood was now placed on the *trône*, while the carcasses were gathered in an orderly pile in front of it. The *hungan* described a circle about the massed bodies with cornmeal, also making two white lines in the form of a cross over them. He then began to sing the *adoration* that [465] follows every killing, while the family and all others present threw coins for him into the dish that rested on the bodies, only a few sous of which he gave to his assistants. This rite ended as the women came to him one by one, each to take a

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fore never return to trouble the living. As witness to this, he was now putting the cross in place, "which causes everything that is evil to flee," to remain until it rotted away.

Simbi djo was "restrained" where the *trône* had been; Lemba under the mango tree near the place of the table for Bosu. Some of the meat of the pigs was buried in these places with all other kinds of cooked food, and the gods were told that they were to repose there for from seven to seventeen years, after which they would again be fed. A cross of iron was buried with the cooked meat, and as each jar, both now and earlier, was put in place, this song was sung:

Poussé allé,	Get you gone,
Poussé allé,	Get you gone,
Icit pas pays ou.	This is not your country.
Ça lan Guinée,	It is Guinée,
Qui pays ou.	That is your country.

A violent rain-storm not only made it impossible to reach the place of the ceremony the following day, but also made it necessary for the family to defer all but a few of the more essential rites. The second day's ritual was thereupon put over to Saturday, when according to original intentions the *vodun* dance that had been planned to close this complex of ceremonies was to have occurred, but which in consequence was postponed until some weeks later.

The ritual of the second day of this *cérémonie* began much earlier than that of the first, for by about one-thirty in the afternoon the *action de grâce* was almost completed. As one approached, a newly dug mound of earth with a cross over it where the troublesome deities had been buried was to be seen just outside the land belonging to the family. The cross was draped with a black cloth, and was itself painted blue and white, while a rosary and a magic *garde* of native twine were suspended from it.

On this afternoon the ritual was performed in two places, a

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spot somewhat farther down the stream than the site of the earlier ceremony, and later at the family habitation on the hill. There was one table arranged as a *trône* and under its canopy, beside the *images*, the candles, and the crucifix, were white foods such as rice and white beans. Instead of Pétro *loa*, this time the ceremony was to bring Rada gods who were to be asked for children, good health, and good fortune. The *trône* was just below the confluence of two brooks, near some great palm trees. Near by was a weir, while in the larger stream, below the point of juncture, were two small natural pools.

When the *action de grâce*, which did not differ from that witnessed earlier, was ended, the *hungan* again made his *verver*, and these were yet richer in design than on the previous occasion. As he finished he took a number of the women of the family by the right hand, spinning each in turn several times to induce possession. The *loa* Damballa Siligwe "came" almost at once, possessing a woman who threw herself into the stream, threshing about as a "serpent." No one troubled himself to attend to her, however, as she emerged and walked about in her wet clothes behind the *trône* and in front of it, so that, according to the *hungan*, the *loa* became angry and would not come, thus making it necessary to sing many more songs of praise and entreaty. As he sang, the *hungan* seized one member of the family after another by the hand, spinning them about and making them kneel before the *trône* to bring the *loa*.

Moin dit Gran',	I say, Gran',
Bonjou', Gran',	Good-day, Gran',
Bonjou', bonjou'.	Good-day, good-day.
Enfants, la yo, Gran',	It is their children, Gran',
Qui ap mandé coumen nous ye-e,	Who ask how you are,
Enfants yo	Their children
Qui ap dit bonjou'.	Who say good-day.

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Damballa Wedo,	Damballa Wedo,
Papa, nan pié boi',	Papa, in the tree,
Moin pa' pe' monté.	I cannot climb.
Papa ou c'é' coulev',	Papa, you are a serpent,
Papa ou c'é' Dagowe.	Papa, you are Dagowe.
Damballa Siligwe, Anvalou,	Damballa Siligwe, Anvalou,
Nous salué ou.	We salute you.
Ça nous dit,	What do you say,
Alada Sisigwe?	Alada Sisigwe?
Papa Damballa moin,	Papa Damballa mine,
Signalé nous,	Show us,
Signalé nous Dahomey.	Show us Dahomey.
Nous acé! Nous acé!	We are here! We are here!
Papa Ogun qui met' pié	Papa Ogun who enters
Nan humfort.	The *humfort*
Ago, ago-e!	*Ago, ago-e!*
Kadia Bosu,	Kadia Bosu,
Nous acé,	We are here,
Kadia Bosu.	Kadia Bosu.

These songs failed to bring the gods, and the mother of the girl who had been possessed was sternly commanded to take her up the hill to the house and dress her in clean dry clothes. Before she could return, another young woman who, it was later learned, was a member of the family from the region of Grand Bois, some distance away, came running down the hill possessed by Damballa. Crying out for more room, she ordered those sitting near the *trône* to move on as she roughly pulled others toward her. Now the *loa* came rapidly, with six or seven immediate possessions; and even one reluctant girl who stood by nervously, hesitating to soil the fresh white dress trimmed in blue which she, like the other women of the family, was wearing, was soon "mounted" by her *loa*.

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Once again the *hungan* made *verver* and, as he did so, the woman possessed by Damballa, leaping across the brook, climbed into a calabash tree, holding to the near-by palm fronds for support as she shook the tree to punctuate her shouted directions and demands. As she climbed higher and higher, the *hungan* pleaded: "Go no further, Papa. Climb no further," but to no avail. By this time it was after four o'clock, and since this day the rains did not delay, the *hungan* entreated her to descend from the tree, to permit him and the others assembled there to go up the hill out of the downpour. Wooing the "*loa*" with song, he urged:

Verver ci mè' a tè,	Here is *verver* on the ground,
Pinga cé'émonie moin,	Take heed of my ceremony,
Shango, ago-e!	Shango, *ago-e!*

While he sang, he made *verver* about the base of the tree on which the woman was standing and along the bank of the stream. But he still had no success, for she persisted with much violence to recount the wrong that had been done by the family to provoke the anger of the gods—how one member had bargained with a *hungan* to induce him to send evil *loa* to the other members of the family, that they might die and his inheritance might be the greater. Before she would consent to descend, all the sacrifices had to be brought for her inspection, and all those possessed were required to go up the hill and dress in clean clothes. Returning in the rain, the freshly dressed women gathered about the base of the tree, exhibiting the sacrificial animals to the *loa*, the chickens held high in the hands of their donors, and the goats and sheep prominently placed. Slowly, very slowly, as the downpour continued, the woman began to descend, and many times she hesitated, so that it was more than ten minutes before she reached the ground.

But even after she was on the ground and the *hungan* was

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78 79 preparing to seek shelter from the rain, new possessions continued, until, saying: "The *loa* are greater than I am," he went on with the ceremony, singing:

[533] [539]

Ossange Damballa Wedo,	Ossange Damballa Wedo,
Laissé coulé, Ossange-o!	Permit coiling, Ossange!
Ai-bobo!	*Ai-bobo!*
Moin entré,	I enter,
M'ap saluë loa.	I salute the *loa.*
Ogun, Ogun Achade,	Ogun, Ogun Ashade,
O, Ogun Achade,	O, Ogun Ashade,
Hier soir Ogun fai' yun rêve'-o	Last night Ogun dreamed a dream-o
Rêve' li tourné lègèdé.	Dreamed he turned a spy.

A woman became possessed by Damballa, as did the young man who had "had" Gede the preceding night of the ceremony; the woman was in a gay mood, going about smiling and laughing, while the man threw himself in the water and rolled like a snake. And since the *loa* were coming so strongly, the *hungan* began the ceremony of washing and presenting the sacrificial animals, which this time included two white male goats, one very large and one smaller, a white sheep, and six or seven fowls of various colors. The presentation made, the entire group marched singing up the path to the houses, the flag-bearers saluting with their banners the woman so happy in her possession.

[346] As the procession came up the hill, it passed a newly built small house, intended to serve as the family place of worship for the *loa* now introduced into the habitation, and a framework of brush, or *tonnelle,* that had been erected as a shelter under which the postponed *vodun* dance was to have taken place. Without pausing, they proceeded slowly to the gate-

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way, where a ceremony was held for Legba, the guardian of entrances, that he might permit the other *loa* to pass.

At the direction of the *hungan*, the bars of the gateway were let down as prayers, the Pater Noster and the Ave Maria, were said. Then he sang:

Papa Legba,	Papa Legba,
Fé ou gagné patience	Have patience
Pou' ou service.	At your *service.*
Ago, ago-é!	*Ago, ago-é!*
Papa Legba,	Papa Legba,
Sorti lan Guinée,	Come from Guinea,
Pou' nou' passé.	That we may pass.

As this song and others of similar tenor were sung, the man who had been first possessed by Gede, and earlier in the afternoon by Damballa, strode shouting along the path beside the entrance, into the near-by fire, which was made the hotter as several men blew on it and poured rum into the flames; he stamped in it until he was seized and calmed. The *hungan* once more began to make *verver*, this time at the gateway, as he sang:

Papa Legba,	Papa Legba,
Na pé mandé,	We ask you,
Ça wé la?	What do you see there?
Adoré-é-o	We worship, oh,
A-i bobo!	*A-i bobo!*
Papa Legba,	Papa Legba,
Ouvri barrière pou' nou', ago-ye!	Open the gateway for us, *ago-ye!*
Ouvri chemin pou' moin.	Open the path for me.

As he sang, he passed the red and black cock for Legba over the body of the possessed man sitting in a chair, who thereupon resumed his excited movements, reeling along the path

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and from time to time again tramping in the fire, as these songs were heard:

Legba cuiscuignon,	Legba who limps along,
À la longtemps,	It is a long time
Moin pas wé 'ou.	I have not seen you.
Papa Legba, wé!	Papa Legba, look!
L'ouvri barrière pou' nous passé.	Open the gateway that we may pass.
E-ago-ye!	*E-ago-ye!*
Legba chita lan barrière	Legba who sits on the gate
Ba nou' passé.	Give us the right to pass.
Ago-ye-e!	*Ago-ye-e!*

The chicken was also passed over other members of the family, but without bringing on any new possessions, and was several times presented on both sides of the entrance-way, wings outstretched, the *hungan* occasionally half-kneeling. Finally stepping inside the entrance, he wrung the neck of the animal, which was destined later to be roasted and to hang for several days over the gateway. While the *loa* Legba was dancing in the fire, Gran' Erzilie "came to the head" of a woman who, after violent possession and a great deal of pacing back and forth in company with "Legba," went down on her knees. Still another woman became possessed, by Damballa, and rolled in the mud. Another procession, for the return to the *tonnelle,* was formed as a lilting song was sung, with everyone dancing to it. "Legba," walking backwards, led the way, calling out: "This way, Papa, come this way." The one possessed by Gran' Erzilie followed on her knees, while, some distance behind, "Damballa" rolled from side to side as she moved her body face-downward along the path. After a few moments the woman on her knees began to beat the ground rhythmically as she proceeded, and as "Damballa" caught up with her, she beat this rhythm on the thighs and buttocks

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pressed with the temerity of those who danced in the fire for Legba.

At a certain dance, however, he volunteered to help in a small way in promoting the activities of the evening, such as serving *clairin* to the drummers, while he himself danced the social dance about the central post of the *tonnelle*. As the tempo of the dance heightened, he became more deeply imbued with the spirit of the occasion and shouted: " If the *loa* comes to me, I will accept it! " as he plunged again into the circle of dancers. When the drums sounded the salute to the gods, he would awkwardly execute the accompanying backward turning movement of the figure.

After a time he left the *tonnelle*, but before many moments had elapsed a commotion was heard at the near-by *barrière*, where he was reeling in the first stage of possession, just inside the gate, while a fully possessed woman in a figured dress stalked back and forth. An *adjanikon*, with candle and calabash of water, was trying to " settle " his possession, but he fell to the ground and rolled on his back, lying prostrate with legs and arms outstretched and twitching. The *adjanikon*, putting aside the candle and water, lifted his limp body to its feet and then slowly, according to the accepted pattern, holding him upright, swayed with him in time to the song that all twelve or fifteen persons present were by now singing, until, staggering, the possessed man was able to support himself:

Damballa-o, Damballa-e,	Damballa-o, Damballa-e,
Damballa-o, Damballa Wedo,	Damballa-o, Damballa Wedo,
'Gadé ça ou fait' moin.	See what you have done to me.

Steadily fixing his eyes on the possessed one, the *adjanikon* now danced with him, turning always in the opposite direction as he offered him the candle and the water, which, how-

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796 ever, the man was not yet able to hold. Moving backwards
794 toward the *maison de servitude,* all the spectators continued
787 to sing the song of Damballa, while the man to whom the god
159 had come half-danced and was half-carried up the path to the *tonnelle* and taken into the family house of worship.

[188] When he had sufficiently recovered to be able to hold the candle and the water, he poured the water and unsteadily bowed three times in the accepted manner before the *couvert sec* to the Rada gods. He now was enough in control of himself to emerge, and, with the *adjanikon* dancing before him with water and a candle, he once again came into the *tonnelle,* before the drums. As he appeared, the drummers stopped the Ogun rhythm they had been sounding, and in an intense silence all waited for the god to announce himself. Half on his knees before the drums, the one possessed began to sing in a [533] [539] cracked voice:

Damballa Wedo,	Damballa Wedo,
Papa m' c'est coulev'-o,	Papa, I am a serpent-o,
Na poi' bois	There is no tree
Moin pa' li monté.	I cannot climb.

With this initial statement, the Damballa rhythm rolled from the drums, as all echoed the song in chorused response, while the possessed figure, in strict conformity to the pattern, first poured water at the central post and then consecutively before the iron and each of the drums. Returning to the central post, he whirled about it, almost but never quite falling, until he could dance before the drums, awkwardly but acceptably, before he disappeared to rest in a near-by house.

796 The explanation offered by this man of the manner in
787 which he became possessed, and his varying attitudes toward
159 his possession, are revealing. On several previous occasions
793 the *hungan* who officiated at the dance had noticed that he was attending *vodun* rites and had joked with him about his interest in them. Once at an earlier dance this *hungan* had

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796 tablishment of the family *maison de servitude*, a special ritual
[782] for Legba at the *barrière* was required. The one who took charge threw some rum on the *boucan* that had been made for Legba. Taking a candle, he struck the drums with it; then described *verver* and placed an egg on the white flour he piled
796 just inside the *barrière*. The rite proceeded no farther, how-
578 ever, for with the appearance of the head of the family, accompanied by his wife and son, who was the young man who had been possessed by Gede the first night of the *service*, a discussion arose which soon developed into a quarrel, because the family head felt that he had not been notified of this dance in the manner due his position. Finally with the cry: "If anything happens to the family because of this, I am not responsible," he departed in a rage. This was regarded as serious, because should a dance which ended an important rite be held with some of the family absent, the gods might be angered and serious consequences might follow. The woman, who had been instrumental in seeing that the *service* was given and had cared for most of the preparations, bravely decided to continue with the ritual, however, and the drumming was resumed.

796 Alcohol and flour were thereupon poured on the drum-
533 heads, while a number of songs were sung by all present:

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[782]

Bonjou' manman, bonjou' papa,	Good-day, mamma, good-day, papa,
Ma p' mandé coumen nou' yè	I ask how are you.
Lan Guinée gangnin dent'.	In Guinea there are teeth.
Moin entré, moin entré,	I entered, I entered,
Ou pas salué moin.	You did not greet me.
Agoue-e, hunto	Agowe, hunto (spirit in the drum)
Agasu-e	Agasu-e
Agoué-e hunto, e-o.	Agowe hunto, e-o.

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Jean Pétro,	Jean Pétro,
Depuis moin sorti la ville	Since I left town
Moin apé cassé pié moin.	I have broken my foot.
Ça qui fait petit moun fronté.	That is what makes the children impertinent.
Yawé-é-é	Yawé-é-é,
Gedenibo Mazaca	Gedenibo Mazaca,
M'apé rhélé Saints forts	I call the strong saints,
Yawé-é	Yawé-é-é,
Saints forts-é-é	Strong gods-é-é.
P'ti Garçon Lemba,	Little boy Lemba,
P'ti' pilon ça,	A small pestle he,
Na pilé yo, Lemba-o.	Crush them, Lemba-o.

Finally the instruments were lifted over the *barrière*, the *ogan* 796
and rattles first, then the drums in order from smallest to largest, followed by the spectators. Ahead of the procession [794]
were *hunsi* with flags, and all continued singing until the *maison de servitude* and the *tonnelle* used during the *service* were reached.

The drums were carried about the house three times in procession before being taken inside. There, facing the place where the food had been offered — for the house was as yet quite bare, with no suggestion of an altar — the drums were beaten and songs sung to the Rada gods whose sanctuary this was. Though at the moment none of the good drummers had arrived, the drums were placed in line with the north end of the house, and the drumming for the dance commenced. Dancing began about the center pole, but no possessions occurred until shortly after eight o'clock. By that time better drummers had come, and the crowd had so increased that the drums were moved to accommodate those dancing, the drummers now having their backs to the front wall of the sacred house. A candle was attached to a peg of each drum, which,

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796 A candle was attached to a peg of each drum, which,
[354] with the lantern that hung near the central post, gave unusu-
[187] ally good light. However, as possessions began, the candles on the drums were extinguished as those possessed fell against them, and no more than one could be kept lighted.

793 With the arrival of the *hungan* at about half past nine, the
776 dancing became even more animated, and Ogun "came" as
539 soon as he took over the *manman* drum, but despite this, the
796 *hungan* continued the ritual invocation to call all the *loa:*

Moin rhelé Papa Legba, St. Jo,	I call Papa Legba, St. Joseph,
Moin rhelé Damballa papa,	I call Papa Damballa,
Moin rhelé Papa Damballa, St. Jo,	I call Papa Damballa, St. Joseph,
Moin rhelé Loko Atinsu, St. Jo.	I call Loko Atinsu, St. Joseph.
La vie nan mains Bon Dieu,	Life is in the hands of God,
Seigneur, moin rhelé Ogun Ferraille, St. Jo.	Master, I call Ogun Ferraille, St. Joseph.
Moin rhelé Damballa Wedo,	I call Damballa Wedo,
Moin rhelé Aida Wedo, Seigneur.	I call Aida Wedo, Master.
La vie nan mains Bon Dieu.	Life is in the hands of God.
Moin rhelé Papa Agasu, St. Jo, Dokwe Agwe,	I call Papa Agasu, St. Joseph, Dokwe Agwe,
Moin rhelé Malt' Ossange,	I call Master Ossange,
Moin rhelé Malt' St. Jean,	I call Master St. John,
Moin rhelé Gran' Siligbo,	I call Gran' Siligbo,
Moin rhelé Agwe Woyo,	I call Agwe Woyo,
Moin rhelé Loa 'Bitation,	I call the *loa* of the habitation,

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Moin rhelé Aizan,	I call Aizan,
Moin rhelé Sobo, St. Jo, Dokwe Agwe,	I call Sobo, St. Joseph, Dokwe Agwe,
Moin rhelé Papa Gede,	I call Papa Gede,
Moin rhelé toutes mystères.	I call all the gods.

When he had ended his song a number of the "salutes" 796 were played on the drums, to which all danced backward in 797 circles, ending the [illegible]re in bows before the drums, which [793] were rolling out the call. In the course of the evening a large number of gods were summoned, but, as would be expected, only the *loa* of the family came to this ceremony. Possessions [796] were observed for Legba, Damballa, Ogun Balandjo, Ogun Galloné, Ogun Ferraille, Gede, and Kadya Bosu. St. John, Ossange, Aizan, Ashadé Bokor, Gran' Bosu, Magie, Jean Pétro, Congo, Guinée, Sobo, Bade, and Agwe Woyo, were the *loa* who refused their summons. Though no deity held the center of the stage for too long a time, the evening was notable because it was marked by an unusually large number of Ogun and Damballa possessions, which seemed constantly to alternate. Damballa being the stronger *loa,* his appearance when Ogun was present necessitated the retirement of the latter; but since the possession of Ogun by one woman was particularly persistent, this god returned again and again. As at a [533] number of dances, the *haut chant* for Ogun Galloné, the French marching-song that salutes the "general," was among the songs heard, when those possessed by the god skipped from one end of the *tonnelle* to the other before the drums.

One particularly striking Damballa possession came on suddenly. As a tall, strong man was seized by the god, he gave a great shout and grasped the beams of the *tonnelle,* disappearing upward through the thatch. For a moment it did not seem that he had climbed on the roof of the *tonnelle,* until a head and arms which appeared between the palm fronds showed he

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845 ample, long before ordinary folk.[2] If promised offerings in the
[787] event of an ample harvest, their aid in bringing about this
[782] desired end is even more fruitful than that of the *loa* or the
[769] dead, who are therefore appealed to only indirectly.

Twins, however, are capricious beings, ready to do harm if they are not humored. Consequently, twins must be given anything they ask for, and it is especially important to provide them with the clothes they covet, when giving a *mangé marassa*. If their father fails to provide these new clothes, they
[153] will *kembé* (seize) him, and he may at once have an attack of fever or a bad toothache or earache; or, more likely still, he will be seriously constipated, since this is the punishment particularly favored by the *marassa*, just as the *loa* most frequently send dysentery, and the dead cause headaches. If lack
845 of resources makes it impossible to provide what they demand,
539 a painstaking explanation must be given them or they will
828 drive a person mad in the manner recounted in the following *marassa* myth:

> There were once twins, one good and one evil. They were working a field with another brother, but the evil one refused to help. The other two, therefore, said they would not give him any food. Because of this the evil twin drove the third brother insane. After they had long prayed that he reconsider, he finally agreed to restore sanity to his brother, but insisted on inflicting deafness as a punishment, so that this brother was deaf until he died.

845 At the birth of twins, special "twin plates" are provided
778 when their birth is announced to the *loa* — either before or
[769] after their Church baptism — where offerings to the spirits of twins are placed. Usually paired, the plates may be three in number, in which case the third is for the *dosu*, the child born after twins, who is believed to be even more powerful than twins themselves and is thus an important figure in the cult.

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Preferably, these cult objects are made of pottery, joined by a ligature in twos or threes, as required. The plates rest in a box or on a small table which stands in a corner of an inner room of the house. If the family worshipping the twins is a poor one, joined calabashes or wooden plates are acceptable, and such are found more often in the valley of Mirebalais than pottery plates. The "altar" made by the plates is completed by an *image* — a chromolithograph — of the twin saints, Comas and Damien, placed on the wall above them. 845 778 [776]

The principal rite of the twin cult is the *mangé marassa*. A minor ceremony, if the family has living twins or twins recently dead, it is held, as has already been said, at Christmas and at harvest time; otherwise only at Christmas. Yams and salt fish are separately cooked, and a dish of beans mixed with olive oil is provided. In the morning this food is taken to a closed room, where it is deposited both in the *marassa* plates and in ordinary containers placed for those who attend the rite. As the offering is made, songs such as the following are sung: 845 769 845 769 533 539

Marassa, m'a pé mandé,	Spirit of twins, I ask,
Ça wé la si 'ou content?	Are you content with what you see there?
Ago-e-e.	*Ago-e-e.*
Adoré nan pié Damballa,	Worship at the tree of Damballa,
Ago-e-e.	*Ago-e-e.*
Marassa bra,	Twins of the forest,
Marassa carrefour,	Twins of the crossroad,
M'a pé mandé,	I ask,
Ça wè la si 'ou content?	Are you content with what you see there?
Adoré nan pié humfort,	Worship at the *humfort*,
Assuré-e, ago!	Care for us, *ago!*
Marassa dé, trois, quatre,	Twins two, three, four,

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M'a pé mandé,	I ask,
Ça wé la si 'ou content?	Are you content with what you see there?

The food is eaten the same afternoon. If the twins are actually alive, everything they wear must be new and they must have identical clothes. At the sacrifice of the January harvest, native rice, cakes, okra, bananas, and one, two, or three chickens, designated by the twins themselves, are offered. The food is put in place, and as songs are sung it is left until the following day, when it is eaten. The worship of [184] twins differs markedly in various parts of Haiti. In Leogane, for example, some have such a ceremony only at harvest time, and have a greater *mangé marassa* every five years, when a goat and a chicken are killed and offered with the usual non-animal foods.

845 [171] [184] [769] Twins stand in a peculiarly intimate relation to each other, as might be expected from the traditional African belief that twins share a single soul, which, as far as could be determined, only survives in attitude in Mirebalais. Should one die, the living twin must put aside a bit of all food he eats, or a small part of any gift given him, for the other. If the twins are both girls, the attempt is usually made to have them betrothed and married at about the same time. If the female twin of a pair is married, she must give a present to her twin brother, and similarly her husband sees to it that his wife's male twin also receives a substantial gift from him as a peace offering, for it is dangerous to wait until the other decides on some overt mischief. The perplexing factor in dealing with twins is that they themselves often do not consciously will the trouble they bring. For example, should the twin of a married woman not feel friendly toward his sister's husband, though he might make a conscious effort to overcome this dislike, his spirit might proceed to use its full power to harass the man in such a way as to trouble the relationship of the couple.

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and, wearying of the singing, join the group outside the house, where those playing games and the story-tellers are gathered. One popular game is "forfeits," and a forfeit, if reclaimed by a girl, requires the singing of a *chanson de romance*, or if by a man, calls for the recitation of a poem or a humorous folk-tale. Before a forfeit is returned, all sing to a hand-clapping accompaniment:

C'est bien bon,	It is very good,
C'est bien bon,	It is very good,
Aha!	Aha!

Card-games, such as *mariai* (marriage), *trois-sept*, and *bezique*, are also played. All these games are entered into with zest, for an important purpose in holding the wake is to amuse the dead, whose body lies near by, and thus send him away in good humor. When drinks are passed, the recipients must make three libations before drinking, one explanation holding that this is in accordance with the formula Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, another that the offering is for the *loa*, the dead, and the *marassa*. At about five o'clock in the morning the angelus closes the wake, after which most of those present leave, and only close friends and relatives remain to help with preparations for the funeral. This must take place the day following death, not only because of a legal requirement, but because of the fact that were a body to remain unburied for two nights, the expense of two wakes would have to be met. Before the ceremony of burial takes place, small children are often passed over the coffin three times, in leave-taking, that the spirit of the dead may not return for them.

The funeral itself is held in accordance with the rites of the Church, the difference between funerals consisting principally in the elaborateness of the ritual and the length of time the church bells are tolled, which in turn is determined by the ability of the family of the dead to meet the varying fees. Thus at the funeral of the mother of the *député* from Mire-

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to do. The *loa* would come, but they wouldn't give him the same *connaissance*."

One of the most important of the forces behind all magic is the *Malt' Carrefour*, the Master of the Crossroads. The possible identity of this *loa* with Legba, who guards the entrance to houses and is also thought of as a guardian of the highways, was a question that could not be satisfactorily resolved, though it seems most likely that the two are quite distinct, since Legba is but rarely called upon when magic is being performed. One Haitian versed in magic stated:

> "The *Malt' Carrefour* is like the president. Legba is like a minister. God sent the *Malt' Carrefour*. He commands Baron Samedi. Before going to the cemetery to perform [black] magic you must pass the crossroads, and therefore he is able to restrain you if he is not properly worshipped. He commands Damballa. He commands the Rada and Pétro gods. He commands all the saints because all of these must pass the crossroads. Therefore when one has a *garde carrefour*, a person will die a death sent by God [that is, a natural death] and not one caused by *magie* or the *mystères*."

The *Malt' Carrefour* must be "paid" each year on All Saints' Day, when seven cents in copper coins are given and a white chicken is killed, cooked, and placed in a wooden container with rice, biscuits, cassava, potatoes, bananas, and other kinds of food, both cooked and uncooked, to be deposited at a crossroad with the statement: "Here is food; thank you for having cared for me. If evil *loa* wish to harm me, *Malt' Carrefour*, restrain them." As this is said, a candle is lighted and an invocation pronounced:

> *"Au nom de Malt' Carrefou'; au nom de Malt' Grand Bois; au nom de Baron Cimitière! Jodia, premier la*

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Toussaint, voici un couvert moin porté ba ou. Ou gardé vot' enfant, comme vot' père et vot' mère dans la maison. — In the name of the Master of the Crossroads; in the name of the Master of the Great Forest; in the name of Baron Cemetery! Today, the first of All Saints' Day, here are offerings I bring you. Guard your child as your father and your mother in the house."

[788] *Clairin* is thrown three times at each fork of the crossroads, and some is also sprinkled in the center and at each corner of the container of food. Three bits of earth are finally lifted from the corners of the crossroads and taken to the home of the worshipper. Here they are put in a plate with *clairin*, which is first lighted and then extinguished, so that the members of the family can anoint themselves with it and receive strength with which to face the new year.

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Good magic has many expressions. Thus there is said to be secret knowledge, transmitted in certain families from generation to generation, of how to control the rains. Those who have control of magic of this sort are to be recognized when they are seen to be completely dry while walking in a downpour. Generally such powers are used to insure a rainless day for a *combite* or *service*, or to cause rain to fall the day after a *combite* has made the field ready for hoeing, or when the proper time for planting is at hand. Eventually, it is said, in response to a temptation too great to be resisted, the possessor of such magic will put it to other, evil ends. Then sooner or later the punishment for this abuse of his knowledge is visited upon him, so that in the end he meets his death by being struck by the avenging lightning.

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The most powerful type of protective magic is known as a *drogue*. One of the most potent of these — of the type referred to by Léger in commenting on the ox-tail carried by Hyacinthe, or such a one as tradition holds Christophe possessed, which gave him immunity from all but silver bullets — makes

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with the words: "Tell it what you have to say. Tell it that you are passing on to it all your pain, everything." When she had finished, the *mambu* once again took the chick, holding its head as she described three crosses on the ground with its beak. She now put some of the earth in which she had made the crosses into a white dish, returning the chick to the woman and telling her to speak to it again, and this time to expectorate three times into its open beak as she finished. The *mambu*, holding the fowl in one hand, thereupon poured some of the mixture from the bottle, and some *clairin*, in the plate that contained the earth, lighting the *clairin* with her free hand and directing the patient to rub her nipples with it. Then she returned the bottle to the pregnant woman, telling her to recount her need to it once more, and then to cork it.

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The *mambu* next chewed some of the soap and rubbed it over the cork to "seal" the bottle, saying: "When you send a letter through the mail, you seal it," and instructed the pregnant woman to place the bottle in her house and see to it that it was not uncorked, for in it was contained her life and the life of her child. "Open it before delivery and pass its contents over your abdomen." A cord was put about the waist of the woman and tied tightly, not to be untied until the growing child in her womb should cause it to break of itself. While the *garde* was being made the *mambu* sang this song:

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M' pas 'ti bête,	I am not a little animal,
M' pas 'ti cochon,	I am not a little pig,
Pou' on cové,	That one can confine me,
Pou' on marré moin.	That one can tie me up.
Ça qui fait bien,	He who does good,
Cé bien li wé;	Good he will see;
Ça qui fait mal,	He who does evil,
Cé mal li wé.	Evil he will see.
Côté marré corde moin,	Where I tie my cord,
Yo passa la qui li.	They are stronger than it [the evil?].

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In addition, the maker of the charm brought a candle with him, and, more importantly, earth from the four corners of a crossroad. 789

All shutters and doors of the house where the ritual was performed were closed and barred so that no passer-by might report the performance to the authorities, inasmuch as the practice of magic in any form is severely punished and the house was in the town itself. This constituted a departure from the usual practice, for in ordinary cases the rite would have been carried out at a crossroad in the countryside, where chances of detection would be slight.

The maker of the charm began by kneading the earth he had taken from a crossroad into the form of a small pear, about the size of a child's fist. Then taking seven plus seven measures of thread, he first burned the ends and then passed the resulting bundle of fourteen strands repeatedly over one of the native beeswax candles, twisting and doubling it so that it made a length of substantial cord. When completed, he put it to one side and made another like it, saying as he did so: [539]

Au nom de St. Garde,	In the name of St. Garde,
Aujourd'hui, Lundi, nous cordé votre garde.	Today, Monday, we twine your *garde.*
Au nom de Malt' Carrefu',	In the name of the Master of the Crossroads,
Au nom de prière garde,	In the name of the prayer of charms,
Au nom Marie Shango,	In the name of Marie Shango,
Au nom de Gran' Malolu,	In the name of Gran' Malolu,
Qui marche accompagné Malt' Calfu'.	Who goes together with the Master of the Crossroads.

The purpose of this invocation was to summon both the Master of the Crossroads and his wife, Malolu, and the name of [176]

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the *loa* was pronounced as the cord was actually finished. *Clairin* was then poured in three places on the threshold and drunk by all present.

Seated on a mat, the dealer in magic next placed the molded earth near by and put a dish of cassava bread, cake, and corn and a bottle of *kola* beside it, with the seven coppers and the red cotton, while he placed a candle on an empty white plate and lighted it. From his pocket he took a thick white candle of his own, and a razor, with which he cut it into three pieces. He then removed his shoes. After two pieces of the candle had been placed upright against the plate, the red cloth was torn in half and one portion of it, folded once, was laid on the white plate, the molded earth being set down in the center of this piece of cloth with the thread near by, as the officiant intoned:

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Au nom Dieu de Tè'	In the name of the God of the Earth,
Au nom Dieu dit Fils,	In the name of God called the Son,
Au nom Dieu du Cièl,	In the name of God of the Sky,
Au nom de Ste. Vierge,	In the name of the Holy Virgin,
Au nom de St. Louis,	In the name of St. Louis.*
Au nom de Vierge de Ca'mel,	In the name of the Virgin of Carmel,
Voici poin' garde	Here is a *point garde*
Qui pr' allé marré ce soir, Lundi.	Which I am tying this evening, Monday.

He thereupon poured *clairin* on the four corners of the cloth and on the earth, "since the soul of Mait' Carrefour is in the earth."

Taking up the red cloth with the earth in it, he tied it with

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* The patron saint of Mirebalais.

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the cord once over the center, and then at right angles so as to form a cross, crying: "*A-i bobo!*" To hold the cloth in place, he continued to pass the thread about the ball of earth again and again, though according to no special design after the first right angle had been made. As he did this, he sang:

Garde la monté.	This *garde* is fashioned.
Dié nou e-e na coffré yo-o	O God, close them-o.
Moin dit garde la monté.	I say this *garde* is fashioned.
Dié nou e-e na coffré yo-o	O God, close them.
Garde-e, na coffré yo.	*Garde-e,* close them.
Calefou', cé nou minmé,	Crossroads, it is we who are here,
Nou Pemba pa joué.	Pemba, do not play.
Ça nou minmé.	It is we who are here.
Loa Pemba, joué na joué,	*Loa Pemba,* playing he plays,
Magie loa,	*Loa* of magic,
Magie Calfou',	Magic of the Crossroads,
Ça nou minmé.	It is we who are here.

His singing was interrupted by this invocation:

Au nom de Dieu,	In the name of God,
Au nom de Sainte Vierge,	In the name of the Holy Virgin,
Au nom de St. Louis,	In the name of St. Louis,
Au nom de Marassa,	In the name of the Twins,
Voici poin' garde pou' épargné malin esprits marché dans la nuit.	Here is a charm to foil the evil spirits who walk by night.
Au nom de Saints du Ciél,	In the name of the Saints of the Sky,
Au nom de Saints de Té',	In the name of the Saints of the Earth,

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Au nom de Saints de la Lune,	In the name of the Saints of the Moon,
Au nom de Saints des Étoiles,	In the name of the Saints of the Stars,
Au nom de Saint de Vent,	In the name of the Saint of the Wind,
Au nom de Saint de Tempête,	In the name of the Saint of the Tempest,
Voici yun garde protection pou' marché dans la nuit,	See, here is a *garde* which gives protection as one walks at night,
Pou' Malt' Calefu'.	For the Master of the Crossroads.

[533] The entwining of the *garde* ended with this song:

Zoumba-é, ai papa, ai manman,	*Zumba-é, ai* father, *ai* mother,
Calefu' barré yo,	The Crossroads bars them,
Cimitière barré yo,	The Cemetery bars them,
Moin monté garde moin,	I fashion my *garde,*
Ai manman, ai papa,	*Ai* mother, *ai* father,
Zoumba-é-é.	*Zumba-é-é.*

789 With the specially treated earth from the crossroads now safely enclosed in its red cotton, the officiant placed it in a white plate and made *verver* about it, using cinders which are termed *farine Guinée,* "the flour of Guinea," and lighted two bits of red candle. The *verver* circled the plate, and also described two long straight lines which crossed at right angles at the center of the circle, each being terminated by a candle — two large and two small. On the floor, near one of the large candles, the seven coppers were placed, and four small piles of cinders were heaped inside the circle, in the following manner:

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789 making this *garde*. I have not obligated anyone else in any way."

789 He now poured *clairin* on the plate, lighted it, and stepped
539 five times over the fire, twice turning the *garde* about in the flame, rubbing his face, hands, and head with the burning liquid, as he pronounced the following invocation:

Au nom de Mait' Grand Bois,	In the name of the Master of the Great Forest,
Qui soldat Mait' Carrefour,	Who is a soldier of the Master of the Crossroads,
Au nom Mait' Cimitière,	In the name of Malolu, of the Cemetery,
Au nom de Malolu,	In the name of Malolu,
Au nom de Kadia-Bosu,	In the name of Kadia-Bosu,
Qui soldat Mait' Carrefour nan toute pays,	Who is the soldier of the Master of the Crossroads in all countries,
Voici un couvert qui preparé ce soir pou' 'ou.	Here is an offering prepared this evening for you.

Extinguishing the *clairin*, he relighted it and repeated what he had just done as another Haitian, a spectator, commented: "If it were not a good *garde*, he would be burned." Finally
[533] he sang the following song, which ended this part of the ceremony:

Garde la wé magie carrefou',	This *garde* sees the magic of the Crossroads,
Moin pralé sond'é point.	I am going to test a charm.
Magie cimitière,	Magic of the cemetery,
Moin pralé sond'é point.	I am going to test a charm.

789 The officiant, gathering up the food, the plate, the candles, and the remaining half of the red cloth, prepared to go to

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the crossroads, where he alone would have to conduct the brief rite that was necessary to complete the making of this *garde*. As he arrived at his destination — this portion of the description is his — the plate was put down with the *kola* beside it, and *clairin* was poured on the ground. The lighted candles were placed near by, and with arms outstretched, he spoke the following formula:

Au nom de Mait' Carrefour,	In the name of the Master of the Crossroads,
Voici un couvert sec deposé jodi-a, Lundi.	Here is an offering placed today, Monday.
Au nom de Mait' Gran' Bra,	In the name of the Master of the Great Forest,
Ce couvert est pou' vous.	This offering is for you.
Mait' Carrefou', pour garde moin, sorti pou' 'ou.	Master of the Crossroads, for [the sake of] my charm, which comes from you.
Moin mandé pou' gardé	I ask that you protect me
Nan tout ces moin capab' trouvé moin	In all I may encounter
Pou' bien, nan pou' mal.	Of good, and of evil.

Before leaving the crossroads, the maker of the *garde* touched the plate and bottles three times to earth, calling the names of Master of the Crossroads, Master of the Great Forest, and Master of the Cemetery.

While the nature and forms of good magic that have been thus far discussed show a characteristic African pattern, the presence of the factor of medieval European magic is evident, though this is not as sharply identifiable here as in the functioning of the less pleasant aspects of these supernatural powers. That this merging of two traditions is fundamental in all Haitian magical practice must nevertheless be patent to all who have had experience with it, unless in their intentness on

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cultures, is used not only to point morals for the young but as an expression of the characteristically oblique forms of Negro expression in a quarrel, or in sounding a warning, or in commenting acidly on some social situation. A famous proverb, quoted from the earliest days, is today heard often in Mirebalais: "*Zafai' mouton pas zafai' cabrit*—The affairs of the sheep are not the affairs of the goat"—an injunction against gossip. When a person boasts that no one can harm him, the reply may come: "It is on a narrow path that one has to deal with a difficult horse." Should a man dismiss an experience as of but little consequence to him, he may hear the comment: "Often one pays an ox for a goat." When one person does harm to another, his victim may warn him with the phrase: "Behind the mountains are other mountains." If a man whose fortunes are flourishing attempts to console another who has suffered misfortune, or a rich man jibes at a poor one, the retort may be: "The rock under the water doesn't know how the rock in the sun suffers." To such an extent do proverbs comment on all aspects of life that almost no extended conversation occurs without them. Some of these are of European origin, but both numerically and in their use their character is preponderantly African, as is shown by their specific correspondence to proverbs used today in the regions from which the Negroes of Haiti were derived.[9]

In the practice of magic, and more especially of black magic, it has been noted that African and European traditions have combined into an integrated cultural unit. The outward expression of magic in the charm or "fetish" as an aspect of African life is so obvious that it has been commented on by all observers. In Haiti, though the charms are not prominently displayed and personal charms especially are worn beneath the clothing, this concept of their importance in coping with life has been retained. Yet, as has been seen, Haitian magic is not African alone. For while the forces behind protective magic are primarily the *loa*, and those behind black magic are

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789 754 177 178 the powers that control the souls of the dead and those creatures of evil whose powers come from Satan — all this being African enough, in the sense that evil magic exists in Africa as elsewhere — the point, which bears repetition, is that the primary sanctions for evil magic have been reinforced by the books of magic handed down from medieval Europe.

789 177 178 In this system, however, not only do European books of magic figure, but the Church also has its place. "The things of the Church are always affairs of magic," remarked one Haitian, meaning that they are best adapted to this purpose and are used when the opportunity is had. It is for this reason that great care is taken to keep all sacred objects in churches from the hands of unauthorized persons. To have something that has come from a church, such as a bit of a priest's robe or a few splinters from the statue of a saint, enlists the power of these on behalf of any objective that the maker of magic has in view, and invests any *garde* made with these with the power of God Himself. Thus the twofold meaning of the proverb: [539] "*Vrai maré corde, vrai wanga, c'est l'Eglise* — The real tying of the cord, the true *wanga,* is the Church," or, similarly: "*Vrai hungan c'est l'Église* — The true *hungan* is the [754] Church." However, whether it be through such African-like practices as the use of colored cloth, or caolin, or the tying of knots, or whether objects filched from the sanctuary of the church be employed, evil magic, derived alike from African and European sources, continues as a potent force of Haitian peasant life. For perhaps in magic more than in any other aspect of his culture has the peasant achieved a synthesis of the two currents that have contributed to his civilization. He has taken from both, and inasmuch as both adhere to a more general pattern which marks all the Old World, neither tradition has had to give way to the other.

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for all uses to which those of their type are put. During their making and after their completion they had been sanctified by rites that vividly illustrate the merging of traditions in Haitian religion: by means of offerings to the African gods, and through baptism by the rites of the Church.[3]

The *action de grâce* is another integral part of *vodun* ceremonialism that is essentially Catholic, since its lengthy service is composed entirely of prayers and hymns of the Church. As has been shown, the *action de grâce,* which precedes a *vodun service,* takes place before an "altar" which, important both then and at the later, more African rites, in itself documents in no small measure the combining of Catholicism and *vodun.* One, employed at a *service* not described in the earlier chapters, was covered with a red and white checked table-cloth, on top of which a smaller white cloth was spread.* Pinned to the canopy and to the front of the table-cloth were various chromolithographs of the saints; St. Michael attacking the Devil, Mater Dolorosa, St. James, the Virgin Mary and Jesus (the Assumption), and St. Expeditius. In front of the representation of St. James stood a crucifix with the figure of Jesus, in accordance with the custom of never omitting to have one of these at any *vodun* ceremonial. The table bore many offerings; at the back were four bottles of soft drinks, with cups; while also to be seen were several hard rolls, an ear of corn, a dish containing eggs, and another holding, among other things, rice. One of the containers on the table held holy water, while candles for use both in the *action de grâce* and in the later *vodun* rituals lay beside this. Thus crucifix, candles, pictures of the saints, and holy water were combined in this ceremony with offerings of food and drink to be given the gods that the ancestors had brought from Africa.[4] The songs sung at the voduistic portions of these *services* also reflect the psychological unity of Catholic and African elements in *vodun* worship. One of these declares:

* This altar is shown in the illustration facing p. 192.

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Je crois en Dieu,	I believe in God,
Oui, Santa Maria.	Yes, St. Mary.
Santa Maria,	St. Mary,
Qui sorte nan Guinée.	Who came from Guinea.
Je crois en Dieu,	I believe in God,
Oui, Santa Maria.	Yes, St. Mary.

Another for the Virgin of Allada, sung in Leogane, is as follows:

Santa Maria la Madaleine,	St. Mary Magdalene
Prié pou' loa yo.	Pray for their *loa.*
O Allada-e,	O Allada-e,
Sonné une sonne pou' moin,	Ring a bell for me,
Pour m'allé.	So I may go.
M'dit, Allada-o,	I say, Allada-o,
Sonné une sonne	Ring a bell
Pou' les pitites nagé.	For the drowned children.

Of these elements, the portraits of the saints, or *images,* offer one of the most vivid instances of the mingling of African and European elements in Haitian belief, for they are the outward symbol of the psychological reconciliation that has been effected between the saints of the Church and the African deities. This is nothing peculiar to Haiti alone. In West Africa, wherever Catholicism has obtained something of a foothold, certain pagan deities are regularly identified with saints of the Church, and the same phenomenon is found in Cuba[8] and Brazil.[9] This identification of saints with the *loa,* whether initiated as a ruse against the detection of African worship or emanating from a reasoned analogy, would seem in Haiti, at least, to act as a device to achieve an adjustment between two conflicting systems by emphasizing the resemblance between Catholic saints and African nature deities. The importance of the *images* as symbolizing the reconcilia-

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gory is St. John the Baptist, worshipped as *loa* St. Jean Baptiste, who sends the thunder and lightning. The power and irresponsibility which characterize him contrast strangely with the gentle child holding a lamb, shown on the *image*. The connection becomes apparent in the light of African mythology, however, where the ram is the emblem of the god of thunder, while following this same belief lambs are sacrificed to St. Jean Baptiste in Haiti. The following myth is told of him:

> On a given day of the year God permits each saint to have control over the universe. St. John the Baptist, however, is so irresponsible, and his rage so violent, that God fears the consequences if he were allowed to exert his power on his day. By plying him with drink the day before, he is therefore made so drunk that when he falls asleep he does not awaken for five days. When he is told his day has already passed, his rage is so terrible that great storms flay the earth, and it is a commonplace in Mirebalais that this day is marked by thunder and lightning storms of almost hurricane proportions. Though he can do some damage, his power is now limited, however, to his own sphere.

In the second category are the forces of nature personified and worshipped as saints. Among those specifically named were St. Soleil (St. Sun), St. la Lune (St. Moon), Sts. Étoiles (St. Stars), and St. la Terre (St. Earth). Even more striking is the concept that the power capable of bringing reverses is to be worshipped, as a copy of an *oraison* to St. Bouleversé which was obtained clearly shows:

> St. Bouleversé, you who have the power to overturn the earth, you are a saint and I am a sinner. I invoke you, and I take you for my patron from today onward. I send you to seek out such-and-such a one; overturn his head,

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overturn his memory, overturn his thought, overturn his house, overturn for me my enemies visible and invisible; cause the thunder and the tempest to break them into pieces. And in honor of St. Bouleversé, three Paters and three Ave Marias. . . .[8]

Thus it is seen how Catholicism invades the beliefs and rites of the *vodun* cult. In an analogous fashion *vodun* has not failed to make itself felt in certain festivals of the Church,[9] for while elements of *vodun*, rigidly suppressed inside the Catholic churches, are absent except in so far as they can be carried on surreptitiously, they are nevertheless integral parts of these fêtes in the minds of the folk who make pilgrimages to them. So arresting is the resulting mingling of practices, and so significant for the amalgamation of cultures that has taken place in Haiti, that a detailed discussion will be given of the most prominent instance of this type, the festival in honor of the Virgin of the Palms, which takes place each year on July fifteenth at Ville-Bonheur, or, as it is better known, at Saut d'Eau. The festival of 1926 has been described by Price-Mars;[10] here certain observations made during the fête of 1934 may be given, especially as they have to do with those aspects of the mythology which validate the festival, and as they illustrate the non-Catholic, voduistic phases of the celebration, of importance for the points being considered in this chapter.

Beside the church, Ville-Bonheur has three especially sacred spots, St. John, En bas Palmes, and Saut d'Eau — the falls themselves. At St. John is a large *campêche* tree surrounded by many palms, from beneath which flow streams of water. St. John is said to have appeared here, carrying his scepter as in the chromolithographs, and at that time water began to flow in the sacred springs, and except for one short period has continued ever since as holy water, being used for drinking and bathing, but never for purposes of cooking. The priests

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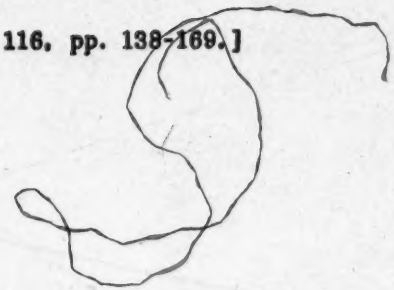
[For the texts of Haitian songs, see category 116, pp. 138-169.]



2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

of the Catholic Church and fused with old folk beliefs of Europe. In Dahomey, which was the wellspring for much of Haiti's culture, there was no supreme deity quite like the one introduced to the slaves by the missionaries. There was a pantheon of gods with Mawu and Lisa at the top. They were children of a common parent, Nananbuluku. None of these deities was strictly comparable to our idea of a supreme being. Nananbuluku survives in Haiti as Nananbouclou or Nananbélécou, one of many loa. Among the neighboring Yoruba the high god was Olorun. Like the Dahomean Mawu and Lisa, Olorun was quite remote from the lives of men. The gods who were invoked and placated were the several hundred *orisha* created by Olorun. The nearby Ashanti people had a simpler pantheon, with the sky god Nyame supreme among them.

In the present Haitian concept of the supernatural, God is at the very apex of the pantheon, though he is distinctly of another order. His power as the supreme source of all things is fully recognized. A Haitian song, associated with Vodoun ritual but of probable recent origin, goes:

> C'est Bondieu qui voyé moin, quand li vlé moin l'apprend. [Ex. 37]
>
> It is God who sent me, when he wants me he'll take me.

Another song, from the Guinée service, goes:

> Oh, Kitta, oh so'ti nan dleau, li tout mouillé!
> Oh, nen point houngan passé Bondieu nan pays-ya! [Ex. 36]
>
> Oh, Kitta comes out of the water, he is dripping wet!
> Oh, there is no houngan in this country greater than God!

Although it is recognized, or at least stated, that God is a supreme force, God is not regarded as the entire supernatural force of the world. In many Vodoun services the houngan may invoke, as separate categories of the unseen, the loa, the dead, the *marassas* (twin spirits), and God. Haitians do not have a consistent schematized picture of the supernatural world. God comes first, but (as in West Africa) he is less immediate than the loa. He is identified with destiny; yet within the framework of that destiny man's lot can be bettered or worsened through dealings with the dead, the baka and lou-garos (demons and vampires), and the cult priests.

In many of the folk tales of Haiti, God appears as another character in a cast which may include as protagonists animals, loa, Christian saints, and ordinary men and women. One such tale is about a visit which all the dogs decided to pay to God. They started off through the woods together, but one of them was distracted by the smell of carrion. He left his friends for a brief time, found the carrion, and ate some of it. Then he hurriedly joined his companions again. Together they came to God's house and were admitted to the parlor, where they sat around making polite conver-

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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sation with God and one another. But after a while God caught the scent of the carrion which was still smeared on the nose of the dog who had eaten it. He sniffed the air several times to test the unpleasant odor. Misjudging it, he concluded that one of the dogs had befouled his parlor, and he demanded to know who had done this impolite thing. The dogs were deeply concerned that one of their party had desecrated God's house. They immediately began to run around smelling each other to determine who the culprit was. But they never found the evidence, because it was on a dog's nose. The dogs still, to this day, are trying to discover who committed a deed that never actually happened.

In some of the tales God competes in the real world with other supernatural and natural forces. One story tells how he was overcome by a Vodoun priest:

A houngan named Bocor Zandolite once held a great ritual service. People came from the whole countryside. It was a long service, scheduled to last for seven weeks. Chickens, goats, and bulls were sacrificed. The finest drummers in the country were drumming. Everyone danced, and the celebration went on day after day, night after night, without stopping. The noise was deafening. God heard it. It kept him from sleeping at night, and in the daytime he could not concentrate on his work. Finally, God decided he would have to put a stop to it. So he called St. John and instructed him to go down and order Bocor Zandolite to bring the service to an end. St. John went down and approached the gate of Bocor Zandolite's hounfor. Bocor Zandolite met him at the gate. He took St. John by the hand. St. John sang:

> Factionnaire ouv'é bayè pou' moin passé!
>
> Guard, open the gate for me to pass!

And Bocor Zandolite replied by singing:

> Wa wa ilé londja londja!
> Bocor Zandolite wa wa ilé londja londja! [Ex. 38]

[This is supposed to represent the houngan talking *langage*.] Then he shook St. John's hands three times and pirouetted him around, first to the left and then to the right. Suddenly St. John staggered and began to talk *langage*. He grasped the center pole of the dance court and twirled round and round it. Then Bocor Zandolite gave him a lighted candle and a glass of water, and St. John spilled a bit of the water on the ground in honor of the loa who had entered his head.

When a week went by and St. John didn't come back, God became angry. The noise of the drumming and singing was getting worse. So he

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called St. Patrick and sent him down to stop the ceremony. St. Patrick approached the hounfor and sang: 776 539

> Factionnaire ouv'é bayè pou' moin passé!

And again Bocor Zandolite came to the gate and sang:

> Wa wa ilé londja londja!
> Bocor Zandolite wa wa ilé londja londja!

He took St. Patrick by the hands, pirouetted him around, and a loa came into St. Patrick's head, too.

Another week went by, and when St. Patrick didn't return, God sent St. Michael. The same thing happened to St. Michael. God then sent St. Anthony, and later he sent St. Peter. But when St. Peter didn't return, God became very angry indeed. He hadn't slept for weeks. So he decided to go down himself and put an end to the affair. He approached the hounfor singing "Factionnaire ouv'é bayè pou' moin passé!" And Bocor Zandolite replied as he had before. He took God by the hands to greet him. He shook hands downward three times, then he pirouetted God to the right and to the left. God suddenly staggered and reeled from one end of the habitation to the other. The drummers beat a special salute, and the singers sang loudly and clapped their hands, for God had a loa in his head.

This tale appears to relish the superiority of the loa over God. Yet there is no sense of sacrilege. Although the Haitian concept of God is that of a supreme force, and a source of good, the Christian deity also has some of the attributes of paramount gods in certain West African religious systems which make him less remote and even, on occasion, somewhat fallible. He figures in Haitian lore very much like the Ashanti sky god, Nyankonpon, who has dealings with animals and human beings and is sometimes outwitted by them. Although Nyankonpon has the power to dispense favors, justice, and punishment to mortals, he himself lives within, rather than superior to, a well-established physical system. His marvelous deeds are only slightly superior to those of other, lesser gods, or of sorcerers, or of the trickster Anansi. In fact, in one Ashanti tale Nyankonpon finds himself very much in the same situation as God in the Haitian tale, being forced to dance to the music of the trickster's drum. 776 539 171 177

The Christian saints, too, have been incorporated into the Haitian system, and they also have been syncretized with Vodoun elements. They have become identified with various loa according to their most obvious characteristics. St. Patrick, because he is always pictured with snakes, has become one with Damballa and Ayida, who are also symbolized by snakes. Èzilie Fréda, the female loa characterized by purity, has become 776 177

764 766 793 776

rites took place in the region of Plaisance in northern Haiti. Such a ceremony, Simpson notes, may be attended by several houngans other than the Vodoun priest who is officially in charge. They "share the obligation and pleasure of conducting this service for their colleague, their former rival, and perhaps their former enemy." In a room of the deceased houngan's house is the body, attended by the family, relatives, close friends, and the officiating houngan and his assistants.

. . . Near the body, which is covered by a sheet, are placed a jug and a new canari (a large earthen jar). The officiating houngan makes the sign of the cross, mumbles a few ritual formulas, and taking a spoon puts some "manger les morts" (special food for the dead) in the canari: plantains, yams, bananas, tairauts, sweet potatoes, corn meal, roasted corn, bread, cakes, rice, millet, meat, chicken, pistachio, chopped coconut, and other kinds of food. He then adds some water and stirs this mixture. . . . The other houngans perform the same rite. The family, friends, and others in the room imitate the acts of the houngans with the green branches which they hold in their hands. In a grave voice and with solemn gestures the officiant then appeals to the *loas* with songs and prayers. He invites them to come to the aid of their faithful servant, to protect him in the other world as they have protected him in this world. Following the songs and prayers the leader pronounces these words:

764 766 793 776 539

"Innocent! A good man has left us!
The mother of the children weeps.
Weep, console yourselves.
Boss Accelon, he was here.
He died.
Master Pierre Jean-Baptiste, he was here.
He died.
General Baptiste, he was here.
He died.
Marius who was left,
He died.
But Brother Joseph survives,
We will cry, we will console ourselves." [9]

The weeping and the cries redouble, but the *père-savane* [prêt' savane] and the houngan carry on. In the other room the *père-savane* solemnly intones:

"I have only one soul
Which must be saved.
By the eternal flame,
I must preserve it." [10]

The officiating houngan speaks directly to the dead man: "Boss Marius, here is a canari that your heirs have especially prepared for you so that in the future you will not have any trouble and demand other sacrifices of them. You others, the dead, are always unreasonable. Because you have peace you forget that the times are hard and that on this earth we unfortunate men are crushed by suffering. Leave your family in peace after this service, Boss Marius. Do not torment them, and do not send illnesses to their children or misery to their older people. You were always a good

9 [As translated by Courlander from Simpson's Creole text, ibid., p. 156. The preceding paragraph is from p. 155. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

10 [Translated by Courlander from the Creole of Simpson's text. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

764 father when you were living. Continue to protect your family after death. If you
766 need other services give abundantly to your heirs in order to obtain satisfaction. Oh,
793 good father, good servant, good parent, good friend! Good-bye! Do not forget us as
776 we shall not forget you."[11] A

[539] Then the houngan goes to the canarie, strikes it three times with a piece of palm bark, and chants an invocation to the loa and to God, while members of the family dance where they stand, shaking the green branches they hold. There follows an invocation to twins. After a number of loa [787] have "entered" the service, as manifested by possessions, the houngan undertakes to find out how death came to the deceased man. An assistant brings the sacred divining shells[12] A of the dead man, and the officiating houngan throws them on the floor, pours tafia three times, and lights a candle. The shells are then consulted. Three times he goes through the procedure of casting the shells and consulting them. Later he announces that "the death of Boss Marius is not the death of an ordinary man, that [775] he is now resting in La Ville-au-Camp (capital of the loas which is 'under the water'), and that the loas will continue to protect his descendants provided that they show themselves worthy of protection."[13] A There is more singing and ritual, and then the canarie is covered. The loa from the head of Marius has found a temporary resting place. A little later in the service "the houngan raises the canari as high as possible, almost as high as his face, as he repeats the last line: 'Where may I find refuge?' With a quick movement the canari is shattered. The food is scattered, the loas are satisfied, and the crowd breaks into disorderly flight. . . ."[14] A A few hours later the body of the deceased is buried.

764 It is obvious that these rituals vary a good deal according to regional
184 practices and according to the importance of the persons for whom they
776 are conducted. Furthermore, there is a good deal of difference of opinion among Haitians as to what actually takes place when the malt' tête is taken from the head of the deceased man.

793 Although the prêt' savane (bush priest) is subsidiary to the houngan at
764 death rites, his is nevertheless a conspicuous presence. He may begin the
184 services with prayers for the dead, in which the family joins, while the houngan remains in the background. Later, the houngan takes over. In certain regions, however, the prêt' savane is dispensed with altogether, his function being absorbed by the houngan.

764 As reported by Herskovits, the wake for the dead is one of the most important ceremonies in the death rites. He says:

[766] Wakes are held for all dead, even for very young children if they have been baptized, though if a baby dies before baptism, it is buried without ceremony in a little box in the courtyard of the habitation. . . . The wife and the children either stay

11 A [This and the preceding paragraph are from Simpson, Op. Cit., P. 156. Cf. P. 350, Category 116. -Analyst]
12 A [For footnote, see Category 116, P. 350. -- Analyst]
13 A [Simpson, Op. Cit., P. 159. Cf. P. 350 Category 116. -- Analyst]
14 A [Ibid., P. 161. Cf. P. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

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769 the *card*, a hogan-like structure made of bent saplings covered with cotton
793 cloth.
794
796 Rain had been threatening all evening, and now it began. Some people
[346] crowded into the hut where the goat was being barbecued. Others came into the hut where the houngénicon lay; in the back room, with the pé, Chèbo, l'Autorité, strutted and shook hands with the visitors. The straw roof leaked a little, but no one minded very much. The houngan and his houngénicon, who had been under a strain, relaxed. The rain would mark the length of the intermission. Except for the sound of the rain and "Chèbo's" *language*, there was no noise. No one spoke. Then the houngan,
769 his eyes closed, began to sing an Ibo song.
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● 539

Ibo Lazile oh, éya!
Grand gout manqué tuyé moin!
A la yun an six mois m' sous la mer,
Grand gout manqué tuyé moin!

Ibo Lazile, oh, éya!
Hunger has not killed me!
One year and six months I have been under the sea,
Hunger has not killed me!

The others sang responsively:

Ibo Lazile, oh, Ibo!
Ibo grand gout pas tuyé'm, Ibo!

Ibo Lazile, oh, Ibo!
Ibo, hunger has not killed me, Ibo!

After a while the houngan called "Abobo!"—which was the signal to conclude. The rain was still coming down, and he called "Abobo!" for the rain to cease also. But it did not stop, and everyone laughed. He began another song, also Ibo:

Iaaman Ibo lélé!
Iaaman Ibo lélé!
Pilet pied'm mandé pardon,
Ça pardon wa fai pou moin?
Ça ou gainyan ona ça? [Ex. So]

Iaaman Ibo lélé!
Iaaman Ibo lélé!
Step on my foot and ask my pardon,
What will the pardon do for me?
What do you have [what are you doing] like that?

And the others came in, spiritedly:

Iaaman, oh, un hunh!
Iaaman, ona ça'm danse Ibo!
Iaaman, oh, un hunh!

Iaaman, oh, un hunh!
Iaaman, like this I dance, Ibo!
Iaaman, oh, un hunh!

769 houngan carried out the large round basket in which lay the bottles and
793 the pierre-loas. The hounsi gathered around it, ten of them, to carry it to
794 the *cord*. In the bottles were *les morts en bas dleau* (the spirits of the dead
796 from below the water). Carrying the flags, three hounsi danced, singing,
787 up to the *cord*. After them the laplace came, carrying in his left hand a plate of maize flour from which he made vèvès in the line of advance, simple marks symbolizing the crossroads. The drums were beating a special salute to the loa. The ten hounsi carrying the basket danced and sang. As they moved up the hill, they rotated, so that the basket revolved like the [535] hub of a wheel. Their progress was not smooth, however; they jerked forward and backward as they rotated. Arriving before the *cord*, first one, then a second, was entered by her loa. They fell, jerked, and stumbled. This was all a very good omen. The houngan called "Abobo!" for them to resist such possession, and the hounsi all sat down on the ground. The houngan placed the basket inside the *cord* and entered after it. He called for his little bell, which the laplace passed in to him. The laplace closed the flap down tight, from the outside, and placed the flags against it.

Upon a signal given from within, the hounsi began a song:

[539]

La famille semblé,
Oh semblé nous!*
La famille semblé,
Oh nous semblé pou nou pa'lé parole nous là!
La famille semblé!

The family gathers,
Oh, we gather!
The family gathers,
Oh, we gather to speak our words here!
The family gathers!

769 The laplace took his position, his back to the *cord*, while inside, because
796 of the candle burning there, the houngan could be seen setting out the
787 contents of the basket. The candle went out, and in the *cord* the little bell
[794] began to tinkle. The singing stopped. The houngan was beginning to
[793] talk to the dead below the water. First he talked *langage*. Then his voice was heard through the constant sound of the tiny bell, supplicating Papa Loko to talk a little bit with his "children." A faint, tremulous voice, that of a tired old grandfather, was heard to answer. Papa Loko was stirring himself out of a long silence. He talked a long while to the houngan. Sometimes they both spoke at once. Faintly he was heard to say that he had come a long way to see his children, and that he was very tired. But as he talked his strength returned to him, and, asking the houngan to wait, he spoke directly to his "children," who sat, respectfully and awed,

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around the *card*. Here everyone participated. This was why they had come. Benevolently Papa Loko greeted them: "Bonjou, ti moune moin yo, c'est Papa Loko" (Good day, all my children, this is Papa Loko). Together they all answered eagerly: "Bon soir, Papa!" "Bon soir, Grand!" "Bon soir, cher Papa!" "Bon soir, cher Loko!" Papa Loko told them about his journey, and persons long dead whom he had seen below the water, and he passed on the news from the island below the sea. Then he began to address them singly, asking questions, giving news of dead relatives, and showing a vital interest in the problems of his "children." They answered him. "Oui, Papa," and "Non, Papa Loko," and took deeply to heart anything he said, whether praise or criticism:

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[539]

Bon jour, Télisman!	Good day, Télisman!
Bon soir, Papa!	Good evening, Papa!
Comment nou yé, Télisman?	How are you, Télisman?
Tout bien, Papa Loko!	Everything is fine, Papa Loko!
C'est ou même qui travaille tres dit?	Are you one who works very hard?
Oui, Papa, moin travaille an pile.	Yes, Papa, I work a great deal.
Ou travaille pou' vié maman ou?	You care for your old mother?
Oui, Papa.	Yes, Papa.
Télisman, piit moin, faut ou planté jardin ou encore. Graine, li pas bon.	Télisman, my child, you will have to plant your garden again. The seeds you planted are no good.
Merci, cher Loko!	Thank you, dear Loko!
Ou poco blié'm, Télisman.	You do not forget me, Télisman.
Non, cher Loko.	No, dear Loko.
Yo dit ou praillé travaille en ville.	They say you are going to work in the city.
Lé'm capab', Papa.	When I can, Papa.
Pas blié moune morne ça yo, Télisman.	Do not forget the people of the hills, Télisman.
Non, cher Loko, m' pas blié yo.	No, dear Loko, I will not forget them.
Papa ou dit'm ba ou bon soir pou'li.	Your father asked me to say good evening to you for him.
Merci, Papa.	Thank you, Papa.
Papa Loko fini pa'lé ou, Télisman.	Papa Loko is through talking to you, Télisman.
Merci, Papa.	Thank you, Papa.
Chongé 'm, Télisman.	Remember me, Télisman.

Papa Loko talked in turn to everyone in the family who was present, and inquired, sometimes suspiciously, after those who were absent. After many minutes, Papa Loko said regretfully that he had to go away, and bade them au revoir. They were all sorry he was leaving, because he was well loved. He spoke a few words with the houngan, and then his voice faded away. Only the tinkling of the little bell remained.

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769 796 787 Then, faintly, came the broken voice of an old woman who was crying. The houngan said her children were waiting to see her, and asked her to enter. Moyise had been dead many generations already, but she was still crying over the circumstances of her death, and because she had left her children behind her. The houngan, speaking gently, asked her to try to stop crying because her children were waiting. Little by little she controlled herself. She greeted them all and talked with each member of the family in turn. She showed a special interest in the women and children and was concerned about family problems.

After Moyise went away, Docile, Moyise' daughter, came. She greeted them all and then complained that when she had died she had been buried in a grave near that of a thief; now she wished for her body to be moved. Alixe, on whose place the grave was situated, promised to take care of the matter, and Docile became placated. Her voice faded away. Inside the *cord*, the houngan talked *langage* and rang his bell.

After Docile came Joseph and his son Jougleau. Joseph and Jougleau timed their entrance badly and came in together, both talking at once. The houngan tried to straighten out the situation, and for a moment the three of them were conversing simultaneously. Then Jougleau withdrew and returned when his father was through. After Jougleau came still later generations, represented by Ti Perci and her children, Na and Bernicia. Bernicia came crying bitterly about something. The houngan asked her to stop, because he could not bear to hear women crying. Everyone laughed, and Bernicia controlled herself.

[776] Then Damballa Wèdo, the ancient loa, came, speaking with an aged and broken voice. Feebly he sang his song in "African" language:

[539]

Ago! Damballa Wèdo!
Oh Damballa Wèdo kian kian!
Oh Damballa Wèdo kian kian!
Oh ha ha ha Damballa Wèdo kian kian!
Oh Damballa Wèdo kian kian! [Ex. 39]

[776] Later, Damballa sang again, calling on Legba to act as witness to his words:

[539]

Ago-é Attibon Legba oh é!
Oh Damballa Wèdo é kélé manyan!
Oh gainyain jou' ya chongé mein lì kélé manyan!
Oh Damballa Wèdo é kélé manyan!
Oh Ayida Wèdo é kélé manyan!
Oh gainyain jou' pou' chongé mein lì kélé manyan! [Ex. 40]

Ago-é Attibon Legba *oh é!*
Oh, Damballa Wèdo *é, kélé manyan!*

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Oh, a day will come when they will remember me here, *kélé manyan!* 796
Oh, Damballa Wèdo *é, kélé manyan.* 769
Oh, Ayida Wèdo *é, kélé manyan!* 787
Oh, a day will come for you to remember me here, *kélé manyan!* [539]

During the evening about twenty loa and ancestors came into the *card* [776] to talk. When the last had finished speaking the hills were already light, and the service was over.

Service for Èzilie Fréda and St. Jacques Majeur

This service took place not in the open but under a tonnelle surrounded 796 by four walls, adjoining the hounfor of Alexis Stephan on the west fringes 776 of Port-au-Prince. Separate from the hounfor and dance court was a 346 shrine to the "dead" loa Gèdé Nimbo. The shrine was a small shed open on one side. Within, lighted by flickering oil lamps, was a life-size effigy [532] of Gèdé, a scarecrow-like figure dressed in the loa's traditional attire— [354] black tail coat and trousers, and a tall opera hat. On the otherwise blank face of the figure were smoked glasses with white rims.

The dancing was progressing under the supervision of the houngan's 796 adjutant, the laplace. He wandered among the drummers and dancers, [794] encouraged the singing, and issued orders here and there. No one seemed to take him very seriously. There was a good deal of joking, and the [522] gathering seemed very much like an old-fashioned family reunion. There were perhaps a hundred dancers and spectators—friends, relatives, and devotees of Stephan's hounfor. Everyone was watching with affection an old woman who could not be restrained from dancing. She executed old classical steps and postures with a skill that called for running comment all around her. As each piece came to an end someone would step up to her and say something like: "Woy, Manman, mais ou passé mwél" (Oh, Mother, you are better than me!). Then they would attempt to get her to sit down again, but she would only shake them off and urge the drummers to get going if they were not too tired.

Eventually, the houngan, Stephan, made a casual entrance through the [793] door of his adjoining hounfor. He held the usual ritual rattle and bell in [534] his hand, and sauntered around to chat with his friends.

Gradually, almost imperceptibly, the dancing became more serious. 796 Soon, only the hounsi, the female servitors, were dancing. The drums 776 played a salute to Legba, the first loa to be called upon in a Vodoun serv- [794] ice. For it is Legba who opens all gates and all highways, and who paves the way for communication with other deities. Though he is not the greatest of the loa, he is one of the most ancient. The houngan spilled water on [782] the ground as a libation, and the dancing continued.

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his *zozo* (penis) to which his glasses were affixed. As the dance progressed, the possessions came rapidly. The possessed persons, men and women alike, leaped about the tonnelle, mimicking copulation. They broke drinking glasses on the ground, threw themselves upon the drummers, and careened and crashed into spectators and dancers. In the course of the service there were nearly twenty possessions—all of them noteworthy for their portrayal of Gèdé Nimbo as a loa who has contempt for proprieties. For he is the spirit of the cemetery, the one who laughs last and best. 776 787 796

Near the mountain town of Kenskoff I saw another service for Gèdé, which showed a different aspect of the loa of the graveyard. It took place inside the hut of a rural houngan, who was conducting the affair for his own immediate family and a few close friends. The hut itself was small. Its single room had been partitioned into two by hanging a sheet in the middle. On one side of the sheet a young child was lying on a mat next to the carefully stored Arada drums. On the other side the ceremony was taking place. Great bouquets of red flowers were arranged in a corner; above them hung a colored lithograph of the Christ child; below, on the floor, was a crude oil lamp with a floating wick. The floor area was no more than seven feet square, but at least twelve persons were crowded there, and others clustered in the doorway. Ritual flags leaned against the wall, one of red silk with a gold fringe, another of white silk with blue polka dots. A tiny space remained in the center of the floor for the houngan, whose "possession" by Gèdé was the feature of the service. [793]

The houngan was dressed in a black stovepipe hat, a blue blouse with white polka dots, and a black skirt over black trousers. In his hand he carried a walking stick. He smoked a pipe constantly, a variation of the customary cigarette. In the tiny space in the center of the room, the houngan—or, more properly, Gèdé Nimbo—danced. The houngan's personality had changed—his voice, his postures, all his mannerisms. He spoke only through his nose, for that is the way Gèdé talks, as though he had a cleft palate. 776 787 796 793

He whirled around and around, singing and talking *langage* in turn. His family sang: [539]

> Gèdé-vi yo wè ago-é!
> Gèdé-vi yo wè!
> Papa Gèdé c'est loa!
>
> It is Gèdé-vi they see, *ago-é!* *
> It is Gèdé-vi they see!
> Papa Gèdé is a *loa!*

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* *Ago!* exclamatory, signifying "I am here."

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796 He was the center of all eyes. Most of the time he danced alone, gyrating
787 recklessly. Sometimes he danced with his houngénicon. Those who
793 watched clapped hands and uttered sounds imitating drums, for drums
796 were not being used in this service. The houngan carried the inevitable *clochette*, or tiny hand bell.

When newcomers arrived, Gèdé greeted them by shaking both their hands downward, vigorously, three times. Then he wiped their faces with his kerchief, a ceremony which he repeated from time to time. He [535] danced with each of them a kind of Jenvalo step, simple, restrained, and dignified. One of the visitors fell to his knees to converse with him.

The entire evening was built around the houngan's representation of Gèdé. Properly speaking, the houngan was not in a trance. He was in full possession of all his normal faculties and was conscious of the slightest inconveniences and disturbances. Several times the clay bowl of his pipe fell from the reed stem, scattering hot ashes on the ground, and each time he paused to allow the houngénicon to clear them away. Yet he was carried away by his certainty that he was Gèdé. The obvious conviction of those who watched seemed to fortify him in his role. As the evening wore on, he became more and more detached from his normal personality. His psychic condition was not that of one who had been "mounted" by a loa; it was, rather, a continuously progressive ecstasy.

776 Gèdé is, in fact, more than a loa of the cemetery; he is a personification
761 of death in all its macabre, humorous, and unpredictable aspects. Death is not merely a thing dying; it is an entity, a positive force in nature. Death is Gèdé Nimbo. I believe that when the houngan became Gèdé, all who had crowded into his hut felt themselves to be in the presence of death itself. Death, a dynamic, aggressive force, danced and pirouetted among them, talking the language of the dead and of old Africa.

796 Gèdé is often stern, austere, and forbidding, but he has other aspects. Haitians take amused pleasure at the terror he can strike into the hearts of the mighty. An old Gèdé song goes:

[539]

Papa Gèdé bel ga'çon!	Papa Gèdé is a handsome fellow!
Papa Gèdé bel ga'çon!	Papa Gèdé is a handsome fellow!
L'habillé tout en noi'!	He is dressed all in black
Pou'l monté au palais!	For he is going up to the palace!
L'habillé tout en blanc	When he's dressed all in white
Li semblé yun deputé!	He looks like a deputy!
L'habillé tout en noi'!	When he's dressed all in black
Li semblé yun senateur!	He resembles a senator!

776 According to tradition, the song had its origin in a march on the capital
787 by some houngans many years ago. The story is very old and no one
793 remembers many of the details.
539

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184 the gate, and the crossroads, is not regarded in the same light as the other
796 loa but as a messenger and interceder, and as the crossroads protector. He it is who helps in the placation of the major gods, and who guards people against accident, chance, and evil spirits on the highway.

796 In traditional form, services for Maît' Grand Bois and Femme Grand
787 Bois are conducted by the family without the aid of a houngan, under
796 the direction of the oldest male member of the family. The rites begin on a Thursday. With a tiny bell in his hand, the elder who directs the service (he is called *grand famille*) calls upon Maît' Grand Bois to come and receive his feast. The procedures are solemn. The grand [787] famille and the family sing. At last Grand Bois enters the head of the old man who is conducting the rites. Then the sacrificial animals are brought forward and killed, and the women take the meat and begin the cooking of the mangé. While the food is cooking, the family sits and waits. Sometimes the grand famille begins a song, in which others join. The cooking takes a long while. Sometime during the night, when the food is ready, it is placed in two baskets—one for Maît' Grand Bois and one for his wife, Femme Grand Bois. Into each basket goes meat, corn meal, rice, bread, cookies, peanut cakes, cassava, and other delicacies. The two baskets are hung by ropes from the roof of the tonnelle, or from the branch of a tree. During the entire night, none of the family eats. Maît' Grand Bois and his wife partake of the feast as they please. At six o'clock in the morning, the baskets are taken down, and the family is free to eat what the loa have left for them.

When the food is gone, the bones that are left are carried to a nearby stream and washed until they are white and shining. The bones are then placed in a large calabash bowl. Sweet-scented leaves from special trees are placed in the bowl with the bones, and water is added. The [783] mixture becomes a ritual lotion, or "bath." The entire family kneels before the liquid, which they rub on their faces, heads, arms, hands, legs, and feet. When the ritual bathing is over, they sing:

[539]

La famille vin' payé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
La famille vin' payé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
Cérémonie là c'est fini! [Ex. 41]	The ceremony is finished!

Afterward, each member of the family places a small coin in the calabash dish with the bones and leaves, and the residue is then buried in a deep hole at a crossroads. A heavy post (*borne*) is erected at the site, with [211] markings to indicate the date of the service, and the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, each representing a year. Every year one of the numbers is checked off, and at the end of four years another service for Maît' Grand Bois and Femme Grand Bois is held.

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533 sometimes they are the words of the deity, sometimes words addressed
794 to the deity. The name of the loa may appear anywhere in the song, as
796 both an invocational word and a rhythmic device, with the result that
776 unless one is aware of the song structure he may lose the sense and
533 intent of the words. In these two lines, for example:

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> Master Agwé comes from the sea,
> My cannon is loaded.

796 The first line describes what happens, from the standpoint of a third person; the second line is a statement by the loa Agwé. Or, take this single line:

> Marie Louise oh, we are mixed up!

Here Marie Louise seems to be the person addressed, but in fact it is Marie Louise who is talking. Again:

> I don't see my blood, Master Ogoun!

It is not Ogoun who is addressed; the words are his own.

As in nonreligious songs, there is a pattern stanza which is repeated over and over again. As the song goes on, there may be variations for interest and certain embellishments, but by and large the form remains constant. In religious singing there are relatively few examples of songs which progress from one idea to another. When the theme has been stated, that is the song.

533 One of the preliminary songs in many ritual services is a greeting to
539 the men and women of the société who are present. It is an *ochan,* or
794 salute of welcome, and comes before the loa themselves are addressed:
576

Messieurs-dames bonsoir!	Gentlemen and ladies, good evening!
M'apé mandé nou!	I ask you!
Messieurs-dames bonsoir!	Gentlemen and ladies, good evening!
M'apé mandé nou	I ask you
Qui gens nous yé! [Ex. 42]	What people are we?

The answer to the question is implicit, for they are the people of the société, members of the Arada "nation" or Anago "nation," as the case may be.

782 In almost any service of the Dahomey "nation" the first supplicatory
776 song is addressed to Legba, the keeper of the gate, the guardian of the
533 crossroads, and the "go-between" who intercedes with other loa in the
794 affairs of men. The first appeal to Legba is to open the gate, over which he is master, so that the voices of supplication may be heard and understood. The open gate also provides access for other loa to the service.

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Attibon Legba ouvri bayè pou' moin ago!
Ou wè Attibon Legba ouvri bayè pou' moin ouvri bayè!
M'apé rentré quand ma tourné,
Ma salut loa yo!

Attibon Legba, open the gate for me, *ago!*
You see, Attibon Legba, open the gate for me, open the gate!
I will enter when I return,
I salute the loa!

After this appeal, or sometimes while it is being sung, the houngan spills a little water on the earth at the base of the po'teau mitan. It is an inducement for the loa to "enter," for the loa reside "below the water" and their passage into the hounfor is made easier by water. The houngan may spill his water in a long path from the entrance of the peristyle to the po'teau mitan, or extend his pitcher invitingly to the four points of the compass. Then, perhaps, another song is sung to Legba:

[793]
[823]
[778]

Papa Legba nan hounfor moin!
Papa Legba nan hounfor moin!
Papa Legba nan hounfor moin!
Ou même qui porté drapeau,
C'est ou même ka paré soleil pou' loa yo!
Papa Legba, Papa Legba!

Papa Legba is in my hounfor!
Papa Legba is in my hounfor!
Papa Legba is in my hounfor!
You who carry the flag,
It is you who shade the loa from the sun!
Papa Legba, Papa Legba!

As the ritual gets under way, there may be a general song of welcome to all the loa of the cult, such as this one:

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Bonjou' oh bonjou' bonjou' bonjou' bonjou'!
Bonjou' oh bonjou' bonjou' bonjou' bonjou'!
Oh bonjou' oh bonjou' loa moin! [Ex. 43]

Good day, oh, good day, good day, good day, good day!
Good day, oh, good day, good day, good day, good day!
Oh, good day, oh, good day my loa!

When the service is well in progress, the songs may describe the qualities of the deities—their character, behavior and needs. If it is Balindjo, for example, the song may advertise that persons with this loa in their heads are immune to poison:

Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh Ogoun oh!

Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh, Ogoun, oh!

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Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh Ogoun oh!
C'est pas mangé rangé
Pral tuyé chwal moin! [Ex. 44]

Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh, Ogoun, oh!
There is no poisoned food
That will kill my horse!

Ogoun Fai, known also by the Christian name St. Jacques, is the deity of war, and this song describes his courage and valor:

St. Jacques Majeur a voyé dit'm ga'çon déjà!
St. Jacques oh voyé dit'm ga'çon déjà!
St. Jacques Majeur a voyé dit'm ga'çon la-guè!
St. Jacques oh voyé dit'm ga'çon la-guè! [Ex. 45]

Major St. Jacques sent to tell me he is already a man!
St. Jacques, oh, sent to tell me he is already a man!
Major St. Jacques sent to tell me he is a man of war!
St. Jacques, oh, sent to tell me he is a man of war!

Should the service be to the loa Damballa Wèdo, symbolized as a rainbow and a great serpent, this song might be sung, commenting that he cannot be drowned in the water:

Papa Damballa ou c'est coulève oh!
Pouq'ou pas néyé?
Pouq'ou pas néyé?
Damballa pouq'ou pas néyé nan dleau? [Ex. 46]

Papa Damballa you are a snake, oh!
Why don't you drown?
Why don't you drown?
Damballa, why don't you drown in the water?

[778] [823] Damballa, the rainbow, is in fact the source of the water that bubbles from the earth in springs. He is a patron of the spring, and there he often lives in the form of a water snake. In many a hounfor where Damballa is specially revered there is a *bassin*, or pool, dedicated to him. [532] On the wall behind the pool there is usually a painting of Damballa and Ayida, depicted as great serpents, sometimes with a feathered headdress. The pool is kept filled with fresh water from the spring, and [231] here one or more small snakes—symbols of Damballa and Ayida—reside:

Ala loa marché nan dleau
C'est Damballa!
Ala loa marché nan dleau
C'est Damballa!
Papa Damballa c'est tête à dleau!
Papa Damballa c'est tête à dleau!

There is a loa who lives in the water,
It is Damballa!

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There is a loa who lives in the water,
It is Damballa!
Papa Damballa is the spring!
Papa Damballa is the spring!

Ayida Wèdo, another aspect of Damballa, is also known as a snake and a rainbow. A song describing Ayida's attributes goes:

Ayida c'est arc-en-ciel oh!
Ou ap' vin' fai coulève!
Ayida c'est arc-en-ciel!
Pas wè n'ap fai coulève? [Ex. 47]

Ayida is a rainbow, oh!
You will come in like a snake!
Ayida is a rainbow!
Don't you see I come in as a snake?

Agwé Woyo, one of the major deities of the sea, is believed to be responsible for thunder over the ocean, which is described as the sound of his cannon shooting:

Malt' Agwé so'ti nan la mer,
Canon'm chargé-é!
Malt' Agwé so'ti nan la mer,
Canon'm chargé!
Malt' Agwé so'ti nan la mer,
Canon'm chargé oh!
Canon'm chargé pou'm tiré Malt' A'Woyo! [Ex. 48]

Master Agwé comes from the sea,
My cannon is loaded!
Master Agwé comes from the sea,
My cannon is loaded!
Master Agwé comes from the sea,
My cannon is loaded, oh!
My cannon is loaded to fire, Master Agwé Woyo!

The loa Kitta, or Simbi Kitta, of the Guinée pantheon is one of the water deities. He is described as coming out of the water dripping wet:

Kitta oh so'ti nan dleau li tou' mouillé!
Oh Kitta oh so'ti nan dleau li tou' mouillé!
Oh Kitta so'ti nan dleau li tou' mouillé!
Oh nen point houngan passé Bondieu nan pays-yà! [Ex. 37]

Kitta, oh, comes out of the water, he is all wet!
Oh, Kitta, oh, comes out of the water, he is all wet!
Oh, Kitta comes out of the water, he is all wet!
Oh, there is no houngan in this country greater than God!

Tijean Pétro of the Pétro "nation" is small, and agile even though he has only one foot. (Some people say that Tijean Petro has no feet at all.) This somewhat malevolent deity hides in the leaves of the coconut palm, and from there he sometimes preys on passers-by, particularly children. Persons mounted by Tijean Pétro may move about as though they have no feet and climb into the nearest palm tree. [787]

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they have no feet and climb into the nearest palm tree. This song comments on Tijean's ability to climb with his single foot. (Haitians do not "shinny" up trees, but walk up, bracing the soles of the feet against the trunk.)

Tijean ou pas gainyain pieds,
Tijean ou pas gainyain pieds,
Comment ou fai monté cocoyé?
Lans bayè ro Legba, Jean Pétro,
Lans bayè ro!

Tijean, you have no feet,
Tijean, you have no feet,
How do you climb the coconut tree?
By using Legba's gate, Jean Pétro,
By using the gate!

533 539 776 794 796

When the loa begin to arrive in the hounfor to participate in the ceremonies, there is usually a song taking note of their coming. Sometimes the words describing the action are the deity's own account of what is happening, as in this song to the loa Sobo:

C'est passé n'ap passé là!
C'est passé ma passé là!
É hounsi bossale é yo lommain nom moin!
Yo lommain nom moin yo lommain nom moin!
Yo rélé hounsi kanzo!
Yo rélé Daromain!
Yo rélé mwé! [Ex. 50]

I am passing through, I am passing through!
I am passing, I am passing here!
É, the hounsi bossale call my name!
They are calling for me, they are calling for me!
The hounsi kanzo are calling!
Dahomey is calling!
They are calling me!

In another rite one might hear this song about the arrival of the deity Simba, from the point of view of the servitors rather than of the loa:

Simba Kitta vini wè moin, oh!
Oh Simba wa vini wè moin là, oh saints yà! [Ex. 51]

Simba Kitta comes to see me, oh!
Oh, Simba will come to see me here, oh saints!

When the deity Boulicha Nago comes in, there is a call for the drums to be played:

Nago 'rivé-é,
Boulicha Nago 'rivé-é!
Nago 'rivé-é,
Boulicha Nago 'rivé-é!
Li lè li temps bata là!
Li lè li temps bata là!
Nago 'rivé jodi-à oh enhé! [Ex. 52]

Nago arrives,
Boulicha Nago arrives!
Nago arrives,
Boulicha Nago arrives!
It is time, beat the drums!
It is time, beat the drums!
Nago comes today, oh, *enhé!*

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Sobo, too, demands his drums as he arrives, as well as all the other paraphernalia for his ritual:

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Coté yo coté yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Sobo mandé hounsi 'Llada!	Sobo asks for his Allada hounsi!
Coté yo coté yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Coté yo coté yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Sobo mandé tambou' Rada!	Sobo asks for his Arada drums!
Coté yo coté yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Coté yo coté yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Sobo mandé pouin Allada!	Sobo asks for his Allada magic!
Coté yo coté yo? [Ex. 53]	Where are they, where are they?

When more than one loa comes into the service at the same time there is confusion. Each loa is supposed to await his turn, so that the ritual and the dance may be conducted in an orderly way. Sometimes, however, two or more dieties come in at once, throwing the orderly process out of gear. This song takes note of the simultaneous arrival of the loa Adja, Loko, Sobo, Sedje, and others.

Adja non mélé, oh Adja oh!
Adja non mélé!
Non mélé Papa Loko, non mélé jodi-à!

Adja non mélé, oh Adja oh!
Adja non mélé!
Non mélé Sedje assez non mélé jodi-à!

Adja non mélé, oh Adja oh!
Adja non mélé!
Non mélé kilé oudé Nèg' Sobo non mélé jodi-à! [Ex. 54]

Adja we are mixed, oh, Adja, oh!
Adja we are mixed!
We are mixed Papa Loko, we are mixed up today!

Adja we are mixed, oh, Adja, oh!
Adja we are mixed!
We are mixed Sedje, enough, we are mixed up today!

Adja we are mixed, oh, Adja, oh!
Adja we are mixed!
We are mixed all the time, Nèg' Sobo, we are mixed up today!

When the loa come in en masse this way, some are asked to retire so that the service can proceed smoothly. In a similar instance, the deity Marie Louise is willing to withdraw from the scene but demands that a present or sacrifice be given to her first. [782]

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Marie Louise oh nou mêlé!	Marie Louise, oh, we are mixed up!
Marie Louise oh nou mêlé!	Marie Louise, oh, we are mixed up!
Coté ça ou ba moin pou'm allé?	Where is my gift so that I can go?

Often, when it is time to leave the service, the deity announces through the medium of the song that he has other affairs to attend to elsewhere. Ogoun Achadé, for example, makes a swift departure:

Ogoun volé!	Ogoun flies!
Anago!	Anago!
Ogoun volé Achadé!	Ogoun flies Achadé!
Anago Papa! [Ex. 55]	Anago Papa!

As the deity Général Brisé departs, he tells his servitors that he is "going to God," and that he turns responsibility for their affairs over to them:

Général Brisé pays ya nan main oh!
Ago-é! Ago-é-é!
Général Brisé pays ya nan main oh!
Pays ya nan main
M'pral Bondieu djab oh! [Ex. 56]

General Brisé, the country is in your hands, oh!
Ago-é! Ago-é-é!
General Brisé, the country is in your hands, oh!
The country is in your hands,
I am going to God, oh!

The loa Bumba, in reply to a query, declares that he must go because he has work to do in his fields:

Bumba qui coto prallé?	Bumba, where are you going?
Bumba qui coto prallé?	Bumba, where are you going?
Bumba qui coto prallé?	Bumba, where are you going?
Bumba qui coto prallé?	Bumba, where are you going?
M'planté manga!	I am planting mangas!
Planté patate!	Planting potatoes!
Planté jawmoun!	Planting pumpkins!
Planté banane!	Planting plantains!
Waille Bumba qui coto prallé? [Ex. 57]	*Waille* Bumba, where are you going?

The deities Mait' Bois and Mait' Dleau declare as they depart that they are on their way to Africa, and leave the impression that things are pretty nice over there:

Mait' Dleau qui so'ti nans dleau!	Mait' Dleau who comes out of the water!
Mait' Bois qui so'ti nans bois!	Mait' Bois who comes out of the woods!
Nan Guinée plaisi-à belle oh!	In Africa pleasure is beautiful, oh!
A n'allé wè yo! [Ex. 58]	We are going to see!

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As the loa Mambo Ayida of the Guinée pantheon leaves the hounfor to return to Africa, her "children" ask her not to stay there too long. And they ask her to bring back to Haiti with her some good magic for use in the hounfor:

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Mambo Ayida é!
Pral nan Guinée-à, pinga ou misé-à m'tendé!
Si ou joind bon ouanga wa po'té!
Si ou joind bon lotion wa po'té! [Ex. 59]

Mambo Ayida *é!*
Go to Africa, take care not to stay, I am waiting!
If you find a good ouanga, bring it!
If you find a good lotion, bring it!

Giving food to the loa is a focal point in religious rituals. Many songs describe the sacrifice, signify that the loa are waiting for their food, or otherwise dramatize this significant activity. In the following song the deity Damballa asks for the goat with which he is to be fed.

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Damballa Wèdo oh c'est sang-é!
Damballa mandé tête cabrit,
C'est sang li mandé!
Damballa Wèdo oh c'est sang-é!
Damballa mandé tête cabrit,
C'est sang li mandé!
Damballa Wèdo oh c'est sang li mandé!
Oh assez! [Ex. 60]

Damballa Wèdo, oh, it is blood *é!*
Damballa asks for the head of the goat,
It is blood he asks for!
Damballa Wèdo, oh, it is blood *é!*
Damballa asks for the head of the goat,
It is blood he asks for!
Damballa Wèdo, oh, it is blood he asks for!
Oh, enough!

For Ogoun they sometimes sing:

Papa Ogoun qui gain' yun mangé
Tout moune pas mangé li!
Enhé enhé, oh! [Ex. 61]

It is Papa Ogoun who has a feast,
Not everyone may eat it!
Enhé enhé, oh!

But sometimes Ogoun is dissatisfied that there is no feast ready for him, and he complains.

533 Ogoun é oh moin blessé! — Ogoun é, oh, I am hurt!
539 Ogoun é oh moin blessé! — Ogoun é, oh, I am hurt!
776 A pas m'blessé Ferei, — Now I am hurt, Ferei,
M'pas wè sang moin! — I don't see my blood!
782 M'pas wè sang'm Malt Ogoun, — I don't see my blood, Master Ogoun,
794 Moin pas wè sang moin! — I don't see my blood!
796 M'pas wè sang'm Badagry, — I don't see my blood, Badagry
Moin pas wè sang moin là! [Ex. 62] — I don't see my blood here!

The loa Moundongue, like Damballa, likes goat meat, and it can be cooked in two ways:

Yè yè yè!
Moundongue oh!
Oh Moundongue oh yè yè yè!
Moundongue mangé cabrit boulé,
Moundongue mangé cabrit boucané! [Ex. 63]

Yè yè yè!
Moundongue, oh!
Oh, Moundongue, oh, *yè yè yè!*
Moundongue eats boiled goat,
Moundongue eats roasted goat!

Or again, the servitors may sing:

Coto passé na ba'ou mangé, oh Ti Moundongue nà!
Coto passé na ba'ou mangé, Moundongue nà! [Ex. 64]

Wherever you are, we give you food, oh, Ti Moundongue there!
Wherever you are, we give you food, Moundongue there!

[787] The loa Adja also has animal sacrifices and special dishes for his
[789] mangé, but sometimes he—and the "horses" he mounts—will eat broken glass:

Oh Adja mangé bounda dèmijon!
Adja véco' véco'!
Adja mangé bounda dèmijon!
Adja véco' véco'! [Ex. 65]

Oh, Adja eats the bottom of a bottle!
Adja, old one, old one!
Adja eats the bottom of a bottle!
Adja, old one, old one!

For the loa Ianman Ibo the proper sacrifice is a rooster, and the deity declares:

Nanchon Ibo m'ta mangé gros coq oh nanchon Ibo!
Nanchon Ibo m'ta mangé gros coq!
Nanchon Ibo m'ta mangé gros coq oh nanchon Ibo!
Waille waille waille! [Ex. 66]

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Ibo nation, I am going to eat a large cock, oh, Ibo nation!
Ibo nation, I am going to eat a large cock!
Ibo nation, I am going to eat a large cock, oh, Ibo nation!
Waille waille waille!

The Ibo service is often a strictly family affair rather than a broad community ritual. The family replies to the Ibo loa in the following song. [184]

La famille vin' payé sang,
Vin' payé sang!
La famille vin' payé sang,
Ibo Lazile volonté! [Ex. 41]

The family comes to pay blood,
Comes to pay blood!
The family comes to pay blood,
It is Ibo Lazile's wish!

The loa Nago frankly tells the people that if they want to come to his house (his shrine, or the hounfor) they will have to pay something for the privilege:

Si nou wè coté'm demeuré,
Si nou wè coté'm demeuré,
Fau'm payé bonbon pou' ça!
Anago Nago!
Vin' wè coté'm demeuré! [Ex. 67]

If you see where I live,
If you see where I live,
You have to give cookies for that!
Anago Nago!
Come see where I live!

The "dead" spirit Gèdé Nimbo, the guardian or master of the cemetery, who often engages in bizarre activities which poke fun at the codes of social behavior, is sometimes regarded as a special protector of children. Precisely because he is overlord of all that has to do with the grave, his good will is sought, particularly in behalf of the young; and in many services of the Nago rites his protection is bought by money gifts: 776 782 796 794

Gèdé main la'gent,
M'apé ba ou la'gent la'gent,
M'apé ba ou la'gent pou' ga'dé zenfants la yo!
M'apé ba ou la'gent pou' ga'dé zenfants la yo!

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[533]

Gèdé, take the money,
I will give you money, money,
I will give you money to guard the children!
I will give you money to guard the children!

In the course of the ceremonies when, from time to time, the honored loa of the occasion enters into the head of one of the servitors, the houngan will place in the hands of the mounted person a lighted candle and a pitcher of water. The possessed servitor approaches the sacred center post and spills a little water on the ground for the deity. After certain other rituals, the houngan, or one of his assistants, conducts the mounted "horse" into the hounfor to the altar. In the following song, as the possession comes on, there is a call for a lighted candle. 787 796 794 776 [533] [539]

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Simbi non wè oh!
Simbi djab non wè!
Oh Simbi non wè oh!
Simbi non wè oh!
Simbi wa lumé chandelle pou' clairé moin! [Ex. 68]

Simbi doesn't see, oh!
Stern Simbi doesn't see!
Oh, Simbi doesn't see, oh!
Simbi doesn't see, oh!
Simbi [says] you will light the candle so I can see!

Some of the songs refer to the dancing of the loa who enter the bodies of the servitors. The deity Loko asks for his hounsi, through whom he will dance:

Coté pitits moin yo,
Mainain'm nan hounfor, m'ap djaillé!
Na pas Loko,
Coté pitits moin yo! [Ex. 69]

Where are my children,
Take me into the hounfor, I will *djaillé!*
Now, Loko,
Where are my children!

Another deity, who is not expressly named, tells his "leaves in the woods"—that is, his hounsi—that he has danced since he was a child:

Fé nan bois hélé moin!	Leaves in the woods call me!
Oh dépi'm pitit m'ap dansé!	Oh, since I was small I have danced!
Fé nan bois hé-é!	Leaves in the woods *hé-é!*
Fé nan bois hélé moin oh!	Leaves in the woods call me, oh!
Oh fé nan bois hélé moin oh!	Oh, leaves in the woods call me, oh!
Dépi'm pitit m'ap dansé!	Since I was small I have danced!
Fé nan bois hélé moin! [Ex. 70]	Leaves in the woods call me!

In the following song the loa Macaya Bumba is called upon by the hounsi to hurry up and get on with his dancing.

Macaya Bumba Bumba!	Macaya Bumba Bumba!
Lèvé dansé!	Get up and dance!
Macaya Bumba!	Macaya Bumba!
Bumba mon cher vini dansé! [Ex. 71]	Bumba my dear, come and dance!

A song for the deity Ianman in the course of the Ibo dancing and ritual goes:

Ibo lélé!
Ibo lélé!
Nanchon Ibo ça ou gainyain con ça Ibo lélé!

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Ianman con ça, con ça!
Ianman con ça'm dansé Ibo!
Ianman con ça, con ça!
Ianman con ça'm dansé Ibo!
Ianman con ça, con ça!
Ianman é-wa é-wa é-wa! [Ex. 72]

Ibo *Hii!*
Ibo *Hii!*
Ibo Nation, what are you doing there, Ibo *Hii!*
Ianman, like that, like that!
Ianman, like that I dance the Ibo!
Ianman, like that, like that!
Ianman, like that I dance the Ibo!
Ianman, like that, like that!
Ianman *é-wa é-wa é-wa!*

Another song containing the same zestful appreciation of dancing is for the loa Kitta. The words "my mother isn't dead" and "my father isn't dead" are simply expressions of good fortune and happiness which embellish the command to do the Kitta steps:

Ai ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!

Manman pas mouri ba'm pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!

M'dit pitit ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!

Papa pas mouri ba'm pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta! [Ex. 73]

Ai, little man, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps!

My mother is not dead, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps!

I say little man, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps!

My father is not dead, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps! ¾

A song for the loa Bambarra describes the movements of his dance. Bambarra is symbolized by the crab, and the dance posture with "low hips" is regarded as characteristic of the crab's movements: [535]

Bambarra kap promèné, taille bas!
Bambarra ébé promèné, taille bas!

¾ [For footnote, see category 116, p. 351. --Analyst]

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1953) 1960 SV3 H481 SV3

Rambura is walking, low hips!
Rambura is going to walk, low hips!

Damballa Wèdo, being a snake deity, "threads" or "winds" his way like a serpent, and this song describes a serpentine course taken by the dancers as Damballa (here identified as a Nago man) arrives:

Filé na filé, Damballa Wèdo vini wè mòin!
Filé na filé, Nèg' Nago vini wè'm là! [Ex. 74]

Wind, we wind, Damballa Wèdo comes to see me!
Wind, we wind, the Nago man comes to see me here!

After the dancing has been going on for a long while and the pace is fast, there may be a song of banter, such as the following from the Dahomey rites. The dancers sing *laillé, laillé!*, describing a figure of the dance in which the skirts are swirled, and note that they have worn out the drummers. They even offer to carry on their backs those dancers who are ready to fall by the wayside:

Laillé laillé!
Oh laillé laillé oh viéos'!
Tambouyé boukè!
Tambouyé boukè viéos'!
Laillé laillé oh viéos'!
Laillé laillé tambouyé boukè houngan'm!
M'po'té sou corps moin vié sor!
Tambouyé boukè ça!
Laillé laillé! [Ex. 75]

Laillé laillé!
Oh, *laillé laillé*, oh, old people!
The drummers are tired!
The drummers are tired, old people!
Laillé laillé, oh, old people!
Laillé laillé, the drummers are tired, my *houngan!*
I'll carry you on my back, old sister!
The drummers are tired there!
Laillé laillé!

Interspersed among the songs of the hounfor there are sometimes warnings or admonitions. Usually they are tangent and indirect in statement, and may be from the point of view of the loa or of the houngan. In the following pouin song, which accompanies the ritual of making magic, there is a warning to certain people who will feel the effects of the magic. The ceremony includes, among other things, the dropping of lemons, roots, and leaves by the houngan into his sacred basin or pond. The houngan sings:

R Courlander 8-5 (1937-1968) 1969 8V3 Haiti 8V3

Trois fé trois citron oh!
Trois fé trois citron oh!
Moin dit rwo, youn jour ou wa besoin moin!
Trois fé trois racine oh!
Moin dit ouè, youn jour ou wa besoin moin!
Gainyain bassin moin trois racine tombé ladans,
Quand ou wa' blé fas' ramassé changé! [Ex. 76]

Three leaves, three lemons, oh!
Three leaves, three lemons, oh!
I say *rwo*, one day you are going to need me!
Three leaves, three roots, oh!
I say *yes*, one day you are going to need me!
I have my pond into which these roots fall,
When you wish to forget you will have to remember!

In another song the houngan warns against ingratitude on the part of persons for whom special magical services have been carried out:

Ouanga ça oh ouanga chaud!
Ouanga ça ouanga chaud!
Lè pou' payé li pinga ou fâché!
Ou mandé'm ouanga lè ou content!
Ou mandé'm ouanga lè ou content!
Lè pou' payé li pinga ou fâché! [Ex. 77]

This ouanga, oh, hot ouanga!
This ouanga, oh, hot ouanga!
When it's time to pay for it don't be angry!
You ask me for the ouanga, you are happy!
You ask me for the ouanga, you are happy!
When it's time to pay for it don't be angry!

Somberly and in metaphor, the deity Kitta Démambré speaks of an unhappy event which occurred in the town of Léogane, and warns those concerned that it must not happen again:

Kitta Démambré, pinga ou fai'm ça 'ouve oh!
Nan Léogane ti poule-là mouri nan zé!
Nan Léogane ti poule-là mouri nan zé oh!
Kitta Démambré, pinga ou fai'm ça encore oh! [Ex. 78]

Kitta Démambré, take care that you don't do that to me again, oh!
In Léogane the little chicken died in its egg!
In Léogane the little chicken died in its egg!
Kitta Démambré, take care that you don't do that to me again!

An unnamed spirit warns that the moment for placation has come and suggests that calling on him after he has gone from the *peristyle* of the houngan Derés would be of no use.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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M'apé rélé moin en bas pavillon lou moin!
Laissé'm démêlé moin en bas pavillon oh Derés!
Jou'm allé pinga you lamemin nom moin! [Ex. 79]

I will call, I am under the lou's canopy!
Let me get straightened out under Derés's canopy!
The day I am gone take care they do not call my name!

In a lighter vein, to the gayest of music, there is this admonition that a wrong cannot be righted simply by saying "excuse me":

Iho lélé!
Iho lélé!
Pilé pied'm ou mandé'm pardon!
Pilé pied'm ou mandé'm pardon!
Ça pardon-li wa fait pou' moin? [Ex. 80]

Iho *lélé!*
Iho *lélé!*
You step on my foot and ask my pardon!
You step on my foot and ask my pardon!
The pardon, what good will it do me?

And the deity Ogoun Kénison warns those who do not speak of him with respect that he is not ready to accept such a slight as a light matter.

Ogoun Yèkhè Yèkhè ça Nèg' Kénison é!
Ogoun Yèkhè ça Nèg' Kénison é!
Oh tous les jours c'est pa'lé Ogoun mal!
Ogoun pas conn' betise! [Ex. 81]

Ogoun Yèkhè Yèkhè there, man of Kénison!
Ogoun Yèkhè there, man of Kénison!
Oh, constantly talking bad about Ogoun!
Ogoun doesn't like joking!

The lou Ogoun Panama, like ordinary mortals, is concerned about people who "come to look and go away to talk."

Ogoun oh m' c'est Nèg' Panama é!
Ogoun oh m' c'est Nèg' Panama é!
Yo vini gs'dé!
Yo vini pa'lé!
Oh Ogoun oh m' c'est Nèg' Panama é! [Ex. 82]

Ogoun, oh, I am the Panama man *é!*
Ogoun, oh, I am the Panama man *é!*
They come to look!
They come to look!
Oh, Ogoun, oh, I am the Panama man *é!*

2: Courlander 8-3 (1937-1965) 1960 8V3 H&R1 8V3

The loa Alson complains more vigorously of the bad behavior of human beings:

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Alson Alson!
Dipis temps y'ap pa'lé sou moin!
Caté ça yo gainyain?
Bouche à yo paya paya!
Djaule à yo pèté pèté!
Caté ça pou' yo pa'dan oh? [Ex. 83]

Alson, Alson!
For a long time they have been talking about me!
What's wrong with them?
Their mouths go *paya paya!*
Their jaws go *pèté pèté!*
What is the excuse?

Even on routine business the loa are inclined to be petulant, or to protest that they have been mistreated, that their followers gossip about them, or that they are not ardent enough. Here the deity Simbi en des Eaux complains bitterly that she is not loved by her servitors, the "leaves in the woods," and asks a hounsi named Lolo for news to take to spirits of the ancestors who live "below the water":

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Fé nan bois con ça nou yé!
Nen point ramain pas mandé quint!
Fé nan bois con ça nou yé!
Nen point ramain pas mandé quint!
Simbi en des Eaux,
Qui sorti en bas dleau!
Gardé ça yo fai moin!
M'dit Lolo, ba moin nouvelle pou'm ba yo! [Ex. 84]

Leaves in the woods, that's the way you are!
There is no love that does not ask to end!
Leaves in the woods, that's the way you are!
There is no love that does not ask to end!
Simbi en des Eaux,
Who comes from below the water!
See what they do to me!
I say, Lolo, give me the news to give them!

But if the loa complain about the behavior of their followers, the servitors also may complain. Songs sung in the hounfor may chide the deities for antisocial deeds, for forgetting their "children," or for carelessness. In the following song the spirit Malt' Grand Chimin is criticized for mounting his "horses" with such fury that they are thrown about

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violently. The hounsi complain that Malt' Grand Chimin treats them as though they were flour being ground in a mill:

Temp' changé nouvelle allé!
Bonjou' Papa bonjou' Roi Grand Chimin!
M'mandé Papa ça'm fai!
Temp' changé nouvelle allé!
Bonjou' Papa bonjou' Roi Grand Chimin!
M'mandé Papa ça'm fai!
Papa m'pas mais moulin!
Nou dit na bougit moin!
Papa m'pas mais moulin!
Nou dit na bougit moin! [Ex. 85]

Times change, the news goes out!
Good day, Papa, good day, Roi Grand Chimin!
I ask you, Papa, what did I do?
Times change, the news goes out!
Good day, Papa, good day, Roi Grand Chimin!
I ask you, Papa, what did I do?
Papa, I am not corn flour!
You say you will grind me!
Papa, I am not corn flour!
You say you will grind me!

When there is sickness within the société there may be songs for the absent ones. Here is a song for an ailing hounsi:

Moin allé wè li, hounsi malade oh!
Main allé wè ça, hounsi malade oh!
Moin allé wè houngan, hounsi malade oh! [Ex. 86]

I am going to see there, the hounsi is sick, oh!
I am going to see it, the hounsi is sick, oh!
I am going to see, houngan, the hounsi is sick, oh!

Again, the members of the société call upon Ogoun, or St. Jacques, to help one of their number who is sick:

St. Jacques maré chwal li,
Li pas dit personne oh,
Vèyé li pou' moin!
Li met gainyain verre,
Li met gainyain maline nan dos,
St. Jacques oh!
Ba li lavie pou' moin! [Ex. 87]

St. Jacques ties his horse,
He tells no one, oh,
Take care of him for me!
He may have worms,
He may have sores on his back,
St. Jacques, oh!
Protect him for me!

Ogoun is the dispenser of rum, and in virtually all Ogoun rituals rum is at some time or another in evidence. Sometimes rum is poured into a hot iron pot and bursts into flame. The iron pot is described as Ogoun's

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1954) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

house, which is on fire. But there is no grief, because Ogoun is the master of fire: 796 776 273

Pierre, Pierre Narcisse oh!	Pierre, Pierre Narcisse, oh!
Yago moula-é!	*Yago moula-é!*
Caille Ogoun boulé!	Ogoun's house is burning!
Gihlive Ogoun bel là!	Ogoun's distillery is beautiful!
Na consolé! [Ex. 88]	We console ourselves!

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Some of the ritual songs that have persisted through the years have lost their explicit meaning but continue to survive because of beautiful melodies and perhaps the strange images they evoke. Such a song is this one to the loa Atti Daï, from the Dahomey service: 533 539 776 [178]

Atti Daï oh!	Atti Daï, oh!
Yo voyé dit moin	They sent to tell me
Min soleil malade! *	The sun was sick!
Quan'm té rivé	When I arrived
Moin joind soleil mouri!	I found the sun had died!
Quan'm té rivé	When I arrived
Moin joind soleil mouri!	I found the sun had died!
C'est regrettant ça	What grief it was
Pou'm enterré soleil! [Ex. 89]	For me to bury the sun!

One of the truly lovely songs of the Dahomey rites, both in melody and in lyrics, is the following one to the deity Ezilie. It shows clear evidence of Catholic ritual influence in both its text and its music. Ezilie Fréda, who seems to be speaking most of the lines, is identified with the Virgin Mary, and the tone of this piece casts her more in her Catholic role than her African. The deity is speaking from Yagaza, a place described as being "on the other side of the water." In form the song is atypical in that it has more than one movement and progresses from one idea to another. [177]

Ezilie Nainain oh!
Ezilie Nainain oh!
Ezilie oh, c'est moin Yagaza!

Ezilie n'ap marché n'ap couté n'ap parlé pou' temps y'ap parlé parole moin!
Ezilie n'ap marché n'ap couté pou' temps y'ap parlé parole mwé!
Ezilie Nainain oh!
Ezilie Fréda oh Nainain oh!
Ezilie Fréda oh, c'est moin Yagaza!

Maudames nô yo chiin nan caille là yo vlé djaillé oh tout temps soleil pas lévé!
Maudames yo pané ya tombé tô à gâteau y'apé plainnin le soet yo!

* Some Haitian informants vouched that *soleil* meant "sun." Others felt that the word in the song was really Iolé, a diminutive of *Atiolé*, another name for Atti Daï. [114] [115]

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Ezilie Nainain oh!
Ezilie Nainain oh!
Ezilie oh bo' c'est moin Yagaza!

Larouzé fai handa tout temps soleil pas lévé!
Larouzé fai handa tout temps soleil pas lévé!
Ezilie Nainain oh!
Ezilie Nainain oh!
Ezilie Fréda oh, coté moin bo' Yagaza!

Ezilie Fréda Nèg' Sobo Nèg' Grand Chimin Nèg' Balairouzé Cercléquitté abobo ça!
Ezilie Nainain oh!
Ezilie Nainain oh!
Ezilie Fréda coté ou yé? Moin là Yagaza! [Ex. 90]

Grandmother Ezilie, oh!
Grandmother Ezilie, oh!
It is I Ezilie, Yagaza!

Ezilie we are walking, we are listening, we are speaking, they are speaking my words now!
Ezilie we are walking, we are listening, they are speaking my words now!
Grandmother Ezilie, oh!
Ezilie Fréda, oh, Grandmother, oh!
Ezilie Fréda, oh, it is I, Yagaza!

The women sitting in the house there, they want to have a good time, oh, until the sun comes up!
The women go by, they fall on the earth on their knees, they complain about their troubles!
Grandmother Ezilie, oh!
Grandmother Ezilie, oh!
Ezilie, oh, it is I on Yagaza side!

The dew glistens until the sun comes up!
The dew glistens until the sun comes up!
Grandmother Ezilie, oh!
Grandmother Ezilie, oh!
Ezilie Fréda, oh, I am on Yagaza side!

Ezilie Fréda, Nèg' Sobo, Nèg' Grand Chimin, Nèg' Balairouzé, Cercléquitté, finish there! *
Grandmother Ezilie, oh!
Grandmother Ezilie, oh!
Ezilie Fréda, where are you? I am on Yagaza side!

---

* These various lwa are being called upon here to withdraw and not to intrude upon the scene while Ezilie is present.

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with one of his children as he had agreed. That night his oldest child died. The next year to the day, his second child died. And the third year, the third child died. On the fourth anniversary, the man's wife died. On the fifth, he himself died. The djab of Trou Fourban had collected his debt.

Another great djab lives on the northern mountain called Morne Ronde. A man of Cap Haitien was said to have made a compact with him for wealth. One day there was a great hubbub in front of the man's house. A crowd gathered and stood peering inside his door. What they saw was a rain of money falling down from the rafters. The floor was covered with ten-gourde bills. When the *gendarmerie* came to investigate, they stood at the doorway in awe, watching the money float to the floor. The man finally closed the door. That night he moved away, and no one in Cap Haitien ever saw him again.

The djab are insatiable. For their favors—which range from providing wealth and political position to destroying one's enemies—they always demand more in return than the recipient has counted on. Catholic ritual is called upon in some instances to break the djab's chain of demands.

Some tales are told in which human beings outwit the djab, particularly the lesser ones; but more often than not, the djab have the last laugh. During the big hurricane which hit Haiti in 1954, a huge landslide occurred near the place called Bayè Roche in the La Selle Mountains. An entire village was wiped out, covered by the falling rocks. Throughout this region the disaster was attributed to the action of a djab reputed to live in one of the nearby caves. Many lost cattle were found wandering near Bayè Roche, and they were believed to be people whom the malevolent djab had transformed into animals.

The height of bravado is to demand to be confronted with a big djab face to face. There is a song which goes:

> Conduit'm allé oh!
> Conduit'm allé djab nan Trou Fourban!
> Conduit'm allé! [Ex. 91]
>
> Take me, oh!
> Take me to the djab in Trou Fourban!
> Take me!

There are still other supernatural creatures in Haitian lore who must be guarded against, such as the *djablesse*, the *revenant*, and the *lutin*. The *djablesse* is a female ghost who must live in the woods for a number of years before she can enter heaven, as a punishment for the crime of

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When they are not working, it is said, zombies are tied with special ropes made from the leaves of the banana tree. One popular song goes:

> Nans Léogane
> Yo marré zombie nans paille fig-banane!
> Abobo wye-oh!
>
> In Léogane
> They tie the zombie with banana straw!
> That is all, *wye-oh!*

Some Haitians tell you they know there are zombies because they have seen them. Not too many years ago a visiting writer stoutly declared that she, too, knew there were zombies because she had seen one—in the mental hospital at Pont Beudet. Although her reasoning was not quite airtight, the possibility that mental defectives are sometimes mistaken for zombies is worth considering.

Houngans who "work with two hands" are reputed to be able to gain permanent control over persons by means of a formula known as *tuyé-lèvé* (kill and raise). Either for himself or a client, the houngan gains power over the victim by "killing" him through special magic and then "removing the soul" (*retiré n'âme*). The victim, presumed to be normally dead, is buried by his family; the houngan then retrieves the body and "restores the soul" (*metté n'âme*). With his soul restored, the victim has, in effect, become a slave of the houngan, who can do with him as he wishes. He differs from a zombie in that he has a soul, whereas the zombie has none.

Some Haitians believe that even one who has died a nonmagic death may be raised from the dead. To accomplish this, the houngan or bocor stands over the body, goes through a specified ritual, and calls out the dead person's name: "Albert Moreau! Albert Moreau! Albert Moreau! Lèvé non! Lèvé non! Lèvé non!" ("Get up! Get up! Get up!") Then, it is said, the dead man may awaken.

It is believed that a houngan may also command the souls of dead persons to perform services for him against an enemy. The souls at his disposal for this work are those which he keeps in earthern jars in his hounfor. Should he wish to plague an enemy, he will send one of these souls to the man's house to make him sick, or lazy, or insane. Usually, the man does not know what is happening to him; but if he becomes aware that a dead soul is working on him, he attempts to find out which houngan has sent it. Perhaps the houngan can be bought off. If not, another houngan may provide relief.

While some believe in the reality of the various demons and specters,

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others only half believe, and many look upon these creatures as imaginary but exciting to talk about.

The zombie finds a favored place in the tales children make up to tell one another, and the traditional song played by children on the earth bow or mosquito drum goes:

Maringouin pinga zombie oh, Bobo Maria!
Maringouin pinga zombie!
Maringouin pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie!
Maringouin pinga zombie! [Ex. 92]

Mosquito beware the zombie, oh, Bobo Maria!
Mosquito beware the zombie!
Mosquito beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie!
Mosquito beware the zombie!

Or they may sing with great bravado, to the clapping of hands.

Chaingadaing, nou pral mangé zombie!
Chaingadaing, teau teau!
Chaingadaing, nou pral mangé zombie!
Chaingadaing, colocoto!
Chaingadaing, nou pral mangé zombie!
Chaingadaing, kalainkaintaing! [Ex. 93]

Chaingadaing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingadaing, teau teau!
Chaingadaing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingadaing, colocoto!
Chaingadaing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingadaing, kalainkaintaing!

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535 older man, they leaped into the air and came together in mock combat. First one would strike and the other would parry, then the second would strike and the first would parry, always in time to the beating Congo drums. On another signal all six dancers leaped into the air vertically, twisting into a full turn each time, landing in position to strike and parry.

Spectators standing around the dancers clapped their hands and sang:

[539]

Mousondi na fai la guè!
Éya éya éya!
Nous c'est nanchon la guè!
Ou pas tendé canon'm tiré?

Mousondi, we will make war!
Éya éya éya!
We are a nation of war!
Don't you hear my cannon shooting?

[273] When the dancers and drummers seemed fatigued, they were offered rum to drink. The dancers drank without breaking step or interrupting the battle. The bearded man held the lip of his glass between his teeth, and without using his hands to steady it, tipped his head back and let the rum run into his mouth, all the while stamping his feet and leaping with the others.

[184] I was told later that the Mousondi was from the north, and that the dancers were recent arrivals from Port-de-Paix. But some of the older people declared that in former times the dance was known in the south by the name Calinda.

114 535 The Calinda dance, like the Vodoun, the Pétro, and several others, is mentioned frequently in the old literature on Haiti, Trinidad, Martinique, and Guadaloupe. It has been described variously as a funeral dance, an exhibitionistic sexual display, and a stick dance. It was reported by Saint-Méry as a dance in which men and women paired off. Early in the eighteenth century, Père Labat described it as a line dance, with the women on one side and the men on the other. Lafcadio Hearn saw it as a stick dance. And the word Calinda appears sometimes in songs of the Vodoun cult. The name may have lost specific meaning early in the life of the colonies; but it is more likely that early chroniclers used the term inexactly to refer to a multitude of different dances. In Haiti, [595] identification of the Calinda has been further confused by the existence of the Calinda secret society, which had special dances of its own, all called Calinda.

Although confusions and contradictions exist, the testimony of older Haitians is that the Calinda was a stick dance, known also by the name Mousondi.

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Balbindingue!
It is here my men are!
Cemetery thunder!
Balbindingue!
It is a single drum which dances!
Pardon, my father!
Balbindingue!
It is here my men are!

575 It is told of the Vinbindingue that their members are sometimes required to subject themselves to the ordeal of rubbing hot peppers in their eyes, which results in acute pain and temporary blindness. According to some explanations, this is one of the "tests" of a Vinbindingue man. Red, inflamed eyes are a standard symbol of malevolence. One informant explained that the Vinbindingue members blind themselves so that they cannot see what kind of flesh they are eating:

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Jé'm pété m'pas wè ladans ma métté piment!
Jé'm pété m'pas wè ladans ma métté difé! [Ex. 125]

My eyes are blind, I can't see, I've put pepper in them!
My eyes are blind, I can't see, I've put fire in them!

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Another Vinbindingue song is a humorously macabre dialogue between the members of the society and a victim. He is asked whether he would prefer to be quartered or eaten whole. Each time they are about to act according to his wishes he changes his mind:

Dévor a déquatier ça ou pitôt? Déquatier!
C'est catcha dévoré ça ou pitôt?
Moin'm assez déquatier!

C'est catcha dévoré ça ou pitôt?
Dévor a déquatier ça ou pitôt?
Moin pitot dévoré!

Dévor a déquatier ça ou pitôt?
Dévor a déquatier ça ou pitôt?
Moin pitot déquatier! [Ex. 126]

Devoured or quartered, which do you prefer? To be quartered!
Cut up or devoured, which do you prefer?
I've been quartered enough!

Cut up or devoured, which do you prefer?
Devoured or quartered, which do you prefer?
I'd sooner be devoured!

Devoured or quartered, which do you prefer?
Devoured or quartered, which do you prefer?
I'd sooner be quartered!

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539 The stories that follow are "typical" tales, recorded in various parts of Haiti.

THE PRESIDENT WANTS NO MORE OF ANANSI

Anansi and all his smart ways irritated the President so much that the President told him one day: "Anansi, I'm tired of your foolishness. Don't you ever let me see your face again." So Anansi went away from the palace. And a few days later he saw the President coming down the street, so he quickly stuck his head into the open door of a limekiln.

Everyone on the street took off their hats when the President passed. When he came to the limekiln, he saw Anansi's behind sticking out. He became angry and said, "Qui bounda ça qui pas salué mwé?" (Whose behind is it that doesn't salute me?) Anansi took his head out of the limekiln and said, "C'est bounda 'Nansi qui pas salué ou." (It's Anansi's behind which didn't salute you.)

The President said angrily, "Anansi, you don't respect me."

Anansi said: "President, I was just doing what you told me to do. You told me never to let you see my face."

The President said: "Anansi, I've had enough of your foolishness. I don't ever want to see you again, clothed or naked."

So Anansi went away. But the next day when he saw the President coming down the street he took his clothes off and put a fish net over his head. When the President saw him he shouted, "Anansi, didn't I tell you I never wanted to see you again clothed or naked?" And Anansi said, "My President, I respect what you tell me. I'm not clothed and I'm not naked."

This time the President told him, "Anansi, if I ever catch you again on Haitian soil I'll have you shot."

So Anansi boarded a boat and sailed to Jamaica. He bought a pair of heavy shoes and put sand in them. Then he put the shoes on his feet and took another boat back to Haiti. When he arrived at Port-au-Prince he found the President standing on the pier.

"Anansi," the President said sternly, "didn't I tell you that if I ever caught you on Haitian soil again I'd have you shot?"

"You told me that, Papa, and I respected what you said. I went to Jamaica and filled my shoes with sand. So I didn't disobey you because I'm now walking on English soil."[3]

[3] [Footnote appears on P. 353, Category 116.--Analysis]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

BOUKI AND TI MALICE GO FISHING

Criel Crael

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Bouki and Ti Malice went into the fishing business together. Ti Malice painted the name St. Jacques on the front of the boat, poured some rum over it and christened it. Bouki took some rum and poured it over the back end of the boat and christened it Papa Pierre. They went out to sea and caught fish. When they came home, Ti Malice counted the fish. "There are eighteen fish," he said. "How shall we divide?"

"I'll take one and you take one until they're gone," Bouki said.

Malice said: "There are so few fish it isn't worth while. You take all the fish today and I'll take all the fish tomorrow."

"Oh no," Bouki said, "I'm not totally stupid. You take all today and I'll take all tomorrow." So Malice took all the fish.

They went out again the next day, and when they came home Malice counted again and said, "There are so few, you take all today and I'll take all tomorrow."

"Oh no," Bouki said, "you're trying to cheat me. You take all today and I'll take all tomorrow." So Malice took all.

The next day they went out again. And when they were returning Ti Malice said, "*Waille*, such a small catch. I'm glad it's your turn to take all today."

Bouki became angry and said, "Are you trying to break my head? I'm no fool. You take the catch today and I'll take it tomorrow."

Every day Ti Malice took the whole catch. Every day Bouki got nothing. Malice got fatter and Bouki got thinner. Every day it was this way, until one day Bouki looked at Malice and saw how fat he was getting. It came to him suddenly that he had been cheated. He shouted at Ti Malice and began to chase him. They ran through the peristyle of the town hounfor, and Ti Malice said "cata-cata," imitating the sound of a drum, and called on Ogoun and Damballa to save him.

They ran through the church, where the priest was holding a service. Malice crossed himself and said a quick prayer, without stopping for a second, and ran out again. They ran, ran, ran, and Bouki was getting closer. Ti Malice came to a limekiln with a hole in it. He tried to crawl through, but he stuck at the hips. No matter how hard he tried, he couldn't get through. Finally Bouki came along. He stopped and looked in all directions. There was no Ti Malice, only the behind facing him from the limekiln.

Bouki put on his best manners, and said, "Behind, have you seen Ti Malice?"

● 539 The behind replied, "Take off your hat when you address me."

Bouki took off his hat to Ti Malice's behind. He said politely, "Why are you smiling at me? I only asked if you saw Ti Malice?"

"I smile when I please," the behind said.

"Have you seen Ti Malice?" Bouki said.

"Push me and I'll tell you," the behind said.

Bouki pushed.

"Harder," the behind said.

Bouki pushed harder.

"Harder yet," the behind said.

Bouki gave a big push, and Ti Malice went through the hole into the limekiln. And that was the way he made his escape.

BAPTIZING THE BABIES

Cric! Crac!

Malice and Bouki made a coumbite together. First they were going to cultivate Malice's garden; afterward Bouki's garden. So they took their machetes and started to work cultivating Malice's peas and yams.

Malice said, "Did you hear someone calling me?" Bouki replied, "I didn't hear anything."

They chopped weeds some more, and Ti Malice said, "Someone is calling me." He put down his machete and went over the hill. He went to Bouki's house and took down Bouki's honey gourd. He sat in the shade of Bouki's house and drank as much honey as he could. Then he hung the gourd up and went back to his field, where Bouki was working, working, working.

"Who was it?" Bouki asked. "Oh, those people wanted me to be godfather to their baby." Bouki asked, "What did you name the baby?" Ti Malice said "I named him *Coummencé* (Beginning)."

They chopped more weeds, and Malice said, "Excuse me, someone is calling me again." He put down his machete and went over the hill back to Bouki's house. He took down the honey gourd and sat in the shade and drank as much as he could. Bouki was still in Malice's garden, working, working, working. Malice put the honey gourd back and returned to his garden.

"Some important people wanted me for godfather," Malice said. Bouki asked, "What did you name the baby?" Ti Malice answered, "I called this one *Dé Fois* (Two Times)."

They worked some more, and Malice said, "*Waille*, they are calling me again." He put his machete down and went over the hill to Bouki's house

[Footnote appears on P. 353, Category 116.--Analyst]

and got the honey gourd down again. He drank, drank, drank until it was all gone. Then he came back. 539

Bouki had finished weeding Malice's garden. "What did you call this baby?" Bouki asked. "Oh, this one was the last, so I called him *Ai Bobo* (Finish)," Malice said.

Malice's garden was all cultivated. He said to Bouki, "Now we will cultivate your garden." But Bouki was exhausted from doing Malice's work as well as his own. He said, "I'll have to let my own weeds grow. I'm done in."

He went home and took his honey gourd down for a drink, but it was empty. He was so angry he kicked me all the way here to tell you about it.[8]

UNCLE BOUKI GETS WHEE-AI

Uncle Bouki went down to the city to market, to sell some yams, and while he was there he got hungry. He saw an old man squatting by the side of the road, eating something. The old man was enjoying his food tremendously, and Bouki's mouth watered. Bouki tipped his hat and said to the old man, "Where can I get some of whatever you are eating?" But the old man was deaf. He didn't hear a word Bouki said. Bouki asked him then, "What do you call that food?" Just then the old man bit into a hot pepper, and he said loudly, "Whee-ai!" Bouki thanked him and went into the market. He went everywhere asking for five centimes worth of whee-ai. The people only laughed. Nobody had any whee-ai.

He went home thinking about whee-ai. He met Ti Malice on the way. Ti Malice listened to him and said, "I will get you some whee-ai." Malice went down and got some cactus leaves. He put them in a sack. He put some oranges on top of the cactus leaves. He put a pineapple on top. Then a potato. Then he brought the sack to Bouki. Bouki reached in and took out a potato. "That's no whee-ai," he said. He reached in and took out a pineapple. "That no whee-ai," Bouki said. He reached in and took out oranges. "That's no whee-ai," he said. Then he reached way to the bottom and grabbed the cactus leaves. The needles stuck into his hand. He jumped into the air. He shouted, "Whee-ai!"

"That's your whee-ai," Malice said.

BOUKI AND TI BEF

Bouki and Ti Bef (Calf). The calf's mother had died. He was an orphan. Bouki was crossing the fields one day and he saw Ti Bef grazing all by himself. Bouki's mouth watered. He wanted to eat Ti Bef. So he said, "Ti

[8] [Footnote appears on p. 353, Category 116.--Analyst]

2; Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

539 Bef, I haven't seen you for a long time. Where do you live these days?" But the calf knew Bouki. So he said, "I sleep over there on top of the hill."

That night Bouki took a sack and crept to the top of the hill; but he couldn't find Ti Bef. Ti Bef was sleeping in the woods. Bouki looked all night without finding him, and when he went home his children said, "Where is Ti Bef?" Bouki just slapped them and told them to keep quiet. The next day Bouki saw Ti Bef grazing, and he asked, "Ti Bef, where were you last night? I dropped by and I didn't find you home."

Ti Bef said: "Oh, last night I found a place in the woods. That is where I sleep now."

The next night Bouki searched in the woods, but he didn't find the calf. The next day, he said to Ti Bef, "Oh Ti Bef, I just happened to drop by the woods last night, but I didn't find you home. Where were you?" And the calf replied, "Last night I found a nice place by the spring. That's where I sleep now."

So the next night Bouki took his sack and searched by the spring, but he didn't find Ti Bef. He began to get very angry.

When he saw Ti Bef the next day he said, "Ti Bef, you have been telling me lies. Where do you really live?" Ti Bef said to him, "None' Bouki, I really live in that cave there in the mountain."

The cave belonged to a tiger. That night Bouki took his sack and went up to the cave. He said, "Are you there?" And the tiger replied, "Of course I'm here." So Bouki went into the dark cave, took hold of the tiger, and tried to put him in the sack. But the tiger knocked Bouki down. He tore his clothes off, he bit him, and he mauled him. Bouki ran home. His children wanted to know where Ti Bef was. Bouki said, "Woy, that Ti Bef is a devil! He is so small and weak in the daytime, but at night he's as ferocious as a tiger! So if you happen to meet him anywhere, show him the greatest respect."

I asked Bouki about it myself, and he kicked me from there to here to tell you about it.

JEAN SAUTE MAKES THE KING'S DAUGHTER LAUGH

One day Jean Saute's mother sent him to the city to work as an apprentice with a storekeeper. After Jean had worked with the storekeeper for a month, the man gave him a small goat for his wages. Jean carried the goat home on his head. When the neighbors saw him coming they all had to laugh at Jean's stupidity, and Jean's mother was very embarrassed. "That's no way to do with a goat," she scolded. "You tie it on a cord and put it on the ground."

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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But the next month the storekeeper paid Jean in money. So Jean tied a string to the money and dragged it on the ground till he got home. Jean's mother was angry. "That's not what you do with money," she said. "You put it in your pocket!"

When Jean got back to the city the king was offering a reward to anyone who could make his daughter laugh. It was said that the king's daughter had never laughed since she was born.

The storekeeper paid Jean off with a donkey the next time. Remembering the scolding his mother had given him, Jean tried to put the donkey in his pocket. Just then the king's daughter passed. When she saw Jean Saute trying to put the donkey in his pocket, she had to laugh. And when the king heard about it he gave Jean Saute the reward.

THE SINGING TORTOISE

A tortoise was crawling along slowly one day when he came to a fine garden where many birds were eating. They were eating the peas and millet of a farmer named Pierre Jean. The turkey, the chicken, the pigeon, the duck, and even the *récinole* [nightingale] were there. They invited the tortoise to eat with them. But he replied: "Oh, no. If the farmer who owns the garden surprises us, you can fly away. But where would I be? He would catch me and beat me."

The birds said, "We will give you wings." And each of the birds took some of its feathers and attached them to the tortoise. So he came and ate with them. But while they were eating, the récinole called out, "Habitant 'rivé! Habitant 'rivé!" (The farmer is coming! The farmer is coming!). And in a panic they all grabbed the feathers they had given the tortoise and flew away. Tortoise crawled, crawled, crawled; but he was too slow. Uncle Pierre Jean caught him. He was going to beat him. But the tortoise began to sing:

> Colico Pierre Jean oh!
> Colico Pierre Jean oh!
> Si'm capab' m'pito volé, enhé!
> C'est regrettant ça, m'pas gainyain zel!
>
> Colico Pierre Jean, oh!
> Colico Pierre Jean, oh!
> If I could I would fly, *enhé!*
> What a tragedy, I have no wings!

The farmer was amazed to hear a tortoise sing. He liked the tortoise's song, and he asked him to sing again. Tortoise sang his song again. Pierre Jean took the tortoise home and put him in a box. Then he went to

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

539 Port-au-Prince and asked the people to make bets with him. He said he would bet them any amount of money he had a tortoise that could sing. Some people bet one gourde, some people bet five gourdes. And then the President came along in his carriage. When he saw the crowd he stopped and said, "Ça nous gainyain icite?" ("What is going on here?")

When he heard about Pierre Jean's singing tortoise, the President said, "This man is a Ti Malice; there aren't any tortoises that sing. I will bet you one hundred thousand gourdes." But Pierre Jean said, "I can't bet that much. I am a poor man." The President said. "Nevertheless, you are a vagabond trying to cheat the people. I will bet you one hundred thousand gourdes. If you lose the bet I will have you shot."

Meanwhile Madame Pierre Jean heard rumors that her husband had a talking tortoise in the house. She searched until she found the tortoise, and she asked him to sing. "I can only sing by the edge of the river," the tortoise said. So she took him to the edge of the river. "My feet must be wet," the tortoise said. So she put him in the water by the bank of the river. And then he crawled into the water quickly and swam away. Madame Pierre Jean heard the crowd coming up to the house from the city. She was frightened. She ran home, and on the way she caught a small lizard. She put the lizard in the box and closed the lid. When the men from the city arrived, Pierre Jean took them to the box. The President said, "Let the singing begin."

Pierre Jean said then, "Sing, tortoise, sing." The lizard replied from inside the box, "Cric!" Pierre Jean said again, "Sing, tortoise sing!" And the lizard replied, "Crac!" The President was angry and said, "You call that singing? Open the box!" They opened the box and found only the small zandolite. The President said, "You are a cheat. Take this man down to the river to have him shot." So they took Pierre Jean down to the river and stood him by a tree to shoot him. And just at that moment the tortoise stuck his head out of the water and sang:

Colico Pierré Jean oh!
Colico Pierre Jean oh!
Si ou capab' ou pito volé enhé!
C'est regrettant ça, ou pas gainyain zel!

Colico Pierre Jean, oh!
Colico Pierre Jean, oh!
If you could you would fly, *enhé!*
What a tragedy you have no wings!

"Ah, that is my tortoise!" Pierre Jean said. "Listen to him sing!" And the tortoise continued to sing.

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539

Colico Président, oh!
Colico Président, oh!
Nonc' Pierre Jean pa'lé trop enhé!
Sotte pas tuyé Haitien, fai li siè!

Colico President, oh!
Colico President, oh!
Uncle Pierre Jean talks too much, *enhé!*
Stupidity doesn't kill a Haitian, it makes him sweat!

When the President heard that, he turned Pierre Jean loose and paid him the hundred thousand gourdes. But it was the last they saw of the singing tortoise.*

FROG, CHIEF OF THE WELL

One time there was a drought, and there was no place for the animals to get water. So God provided a well where all the animals could come to drink, and he put Frog in charge. Frog was to receive the animals who came to quench their thirst. But when the animals came, the frog refused to provide them with water. When the cow came to drink, the frog sang from inside the well:

M'apé mandé ça qui là donc, enhé, ça qui là?
M'apé mandé ça qui là donc, enhé, ça qui là?

I am asking who is there, *enhé*, who is there?
I am asking who is there, *enhé*, who is there?

And the cow sang back:

C'est moin bèf qui nan pi à!

It is I, the cow, at the well!

And the frog replied:

Moin dit bèf allez donc,
Pi à chèche! [Ex. 177]

I say, cow, go away,
The well is dry!

The cow went away and died from thirst. Then the horse came and asked for water, and the frog conversed in the same way with him as he had with the cow:

M'apé mandé ça qui là donc, enhé, ça qui là?
M'apé mandé ça qui là donc, enhé, ça qui là?
C'est moin ch'wal qui nan pi à!
Moin dit ch'wal nen point dlesu,
Pi à chèche!

* [Footnote appears on p. 353, Category 116.--Analyst]

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I am asking who is there, *enhé*, who is there?
I am asking who is there, *enhé*, who is there?
It is I, the horse, at the well!
I say, horse, there is no water,
The well is dry!

The horse went away suffering, and he died of thirst. The other animals came in turn: the donkey, the goat, the dog, the cat, and the birds. The frog turned them all away in the same manner, and they suffered and died of thirst.

So, one day, God said: "What is this? I put Frog in charge of the water. I will have to go and see what is the matter." So he went to the well, and when he got there the frog called out:

M'apé mandé ça qui là, enhé, ça qui là?
M'apé mandé ça qui là, enhé, ça qui là?

And God replied:

C'est moin Papa Bondieu qui nan pi là!

It is I, Father God, who is at the well!

And Frog answered:

Papa Bondieu nen point dlèau,
Pi à chèche!

Father God, there is no water,
The well is dry!

So God cut off the frog's tail. From that time on, the frog has had no tail; but you still find him in the well.

UN, DEUX, TROIS, CINQ, SIX

In a small village on the edge of a forest there lived a woman with an only son, a hunchback named Jean. She sent Jean into the forest to gather firewood one day. The boy went a little farther in his search than he had ever gone before, and he came upon a clearing in which a crowd of little *djab* (devil) children were playing games. He stood on the edge of the clearing and watched them. As they danced around in a circle they sang:

Un, deux, trois, cinq, six,
C'est con ça ti djab fai ti mi.

One, two, three, five, six,
That's the way little djab make millet.

One of the djab children saw him and invited him to join in the game. So he joined them, dancing the way they did and singing their song. They

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

were so delighted with him that they took him to the djab village, which lay deeper in the forest. They told their fathers and mothers about how nice Jean was, and how he played djab games with them. The big djab gathered around and asked him to sing the song for them. He sang: 539

> One, two, three, five, six,
> That's the way little djab make millet.

The djab were so pleased with Jean that they removed the hump from his back and gave him a bag of gold. Jean went home, and when his mother saw he no longer had a hump she was very happy. He told her what had happened, and he gave her the bag of gold.

Next door to the poor woman there lived a rich widow with a spoiled and arrogant boy just Jean's age. His name was Jacques. When the widow heard of the gold Jean had brought home from the djab, she sent Jacques into the forest too. She gave him three empty sacks to fill with treasure, and he went to the clearing where the little djab were playing. They were singing:

> One, two, three, five, six,
> That's the way the little djab make millet.

Without waiting to be invited, he ran forward and said, "What's the matter with you stupid djab, don't you know how to count? The song should go like this:

> Un, deux, trois, quatre, cinq, six,
> Djab sauvé ça yo pas ouè' fai anyien.

> One, two, three, four, five, six,
> The stupid djab don't know how to do anything.

The djab children stopped their playing. But they took Jacques home to their village and told the big djab, "This boy says we don't know how to do anything." The big djab gathered around and asked the boy to sing for them. Again he sang:

> One, two, three, four, five, six,
> The stupid djab don't know how to do anything.

The big djab frowned and asked him what his empty sacks were for. He told them, "The hunchbacked boy came and you took care of him. I came so you could take care of me."

The djab told Jacques, "We will do something for you, too." And they took the hump they had removed from Jean's back and put it on Jacques' back, and they put rocks in his empty sacks. When he got home, his mother shrieked at the sight of him, but it was too late.

2: Caschander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Hall SV3

539 That is why people sometimes warn other people not to be arrogant by saying "Djab saute ça yo pas conné fai anyien."

THE FOUR HUNCHBACKS

Three hunchbacked brothers lived with their father in a village in the deep woods. They were all woodcutters. One day the father, who was an old man, died. When he had been buried and the gage had been held for him, the brothers said to each other, "There is no need for us to stay any longer in the woods. Let us go to our brother in the city."

So they dressed in their best clothes and went to the city. They found the shop which their brother owned, and they entered. Their brother, also a hunchback, was not there, but his wife was tending the shop. When they told her who they were, her heart sank. She said to herself, "Now my husband will want to take care of these hillbillies. We'll have to share everything with them!" But she talked nicely as though they were welcome, and she took them to her house and fed them; but she put poison into their food so that they died.

Then she found a man with a boat, and she told him she'd give him twenty-five gourdes if he'd take a body out to sea and dispose of it. So he came to the house, and she showed him one of the bodies. He put it in a sack and carried it down to his boat. He took the body out to sea and threw it overboard. Then he came back for his money. She then showed him the body of the second brother and said, "But you haven't done the work yet. Here is the body just where I left it." The boatman was confused. He was sure he had already done the job. But he put the second body in his sack, lugged it to his boat, and went out to sea with it.

He returned after that to the woman's house, but she said, "What kind of a man are you that wants to be paid before he works?" And she showed him the body of the third brother. The boatman became furious. "So you've come back!" he shouted at the body. "This time you are going out to sea to stay!" And he carried the body down to his boat. This time he sailed far out to sea and disposed of it. "That is the end," the boatman said. "Now I will get my money."

He returned to the woman's house. Night was just falling, and the woman's husband was just returning. When the boatman's eyes fell on him he went into a rage.

"So!" he shouted, "So you're back again! And walking around, too! I'll fix you this time." He leaped upon the woman's husband and killed him, dragged his body down to the sea, and threw it in.

[P. 185]

17. Children's World: Gage Songs and Games

On the night of last prayers for a deceased person, and on other party occasions, children while away the hours until bedtime with special songs and games. Sometimes the games are led by an older member of the family. More often, left to their own devices, the children play unsupervised. It is regarded as fitting that the youngest members of the community should be enjoying themselves while the last rites are being held for one who has recently died. This view is held not merely in regard to children; older people, too, engage in gay activities, such as dancing the Juba.

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Many children's games are known throughout the country, others have only a regional popularity. The games mentioned here are among those played in southern Haiti, mainly in the neighborhood of the capital, Port-au-Prince.

184 524

One favorite is known as Balancé Yaya. The children—as few as four or as many as ten or twelve—crouch on the ground in a circle. Each of them has a stone in his hand, which he strikes rhythmically on the earth as they sing together:

524 [533] [539]

Jésus, Marie, Joseph oh,
Rat li mangé pigeon moin.
Jésus, Marie, Joseph oh,
Rat li mangé pigeon moin.
Rat passé, Robinette passé,
Fai' ti Marie marché, allé là. . . . [Ex. 129]

Jesus, Mary, Joseph, oh,
The rat has eaten my pigeon.
Jesus, Mary, Joseph, oh,
The rat has eaten my pigeon.
The rat goes by, Robinette goes by,
Make little Mary walk, go there. . . .

524 533 On the words *allé la*, each of the players slides his stone in front of another person. There is no fixed direction of rotation, and the stone may be passed to the left or to the right, or even across the circle. This passing of stones continues while the players sing:

[539]

Relancé Yaya,
Yaya oh,
Yaya Madame Mango,
Relancé Yaya main,
Moin fai' prière main,
C'est pour' Yaya,
Relancé Yaya
Yaya oh
Yaya Madame Mango. [Ex. 129]

Even up, Yaya,
Yaya, oh,
Yaya Madame Mango,
Even up, my Yaya.
I say my prayers,
They are for Yaya,
Even up, Yaya,
Yaya, oh,
Yaya Madame Mango.

While this part of the song is being sung, the stones are being passed rapidly this way and that. Players may use only one hand for this purpose, and at some stage one of them finds himself with more stones in front of him than he can dispose of, and he is declared *gage*, or "it." Then the game begins anew.

524 In another animated game called Théâtre, the boys and girls stand in a circle and sing, clapping hands and going through a variety of postures, gestures, and dance steps. It is a sort of "follow the leader" routine. First, one of the group makes rhythmic motions in time to the music, and the other players must do the same thing. The leader may swing his hips, do fancy footwork, posture with his arms, or twist about, and the others in the circle are obliged to imitate him. Then another child gets his turn to set the pace. One of the songs heard with this game is the following, which imitates the voice of the guinea hen:

[533 539]

Cipan Cimale!
C'est ça manman'm té dit main,
Cipan Cimale!
C'est ça manman'm té dit main,
Cipan Cimale!
Aie tain tain Cimale!
Ruing ruing ruing Cimale!
Tsink tsink tsink tsink Cimale!
Wa tsink tsink Cimale!
(And so on, with variations.) [Ex. 130]

Cipan Cimale!
This is what my mother told me,
Cipan Cimale!
This is what my mother told me,
Cipan Cimale!
Aie tain tain Cimale!

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Reing taing taing Cimalo!
Taink taink taink taink Cimalo!
Wa taink taink Cimalo!

For the game called Délina, two chairs are required as props. They are placed a few feet from each other, facing toward the center. Behind one chair is a boy, behind the other a girl. The other children clap their hands and sing:

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Cotf'm passé, Délina!	Wherever I pass is Délina!
Cotf'm vini, c'est Délina!	Wherever I turn is Délina!
Mamman mamman, Délina!	Grandmother, Délina!
Papa papa, Délina!	Grandfather, Délina!
Mamman mamman, Délina!	Grandmother, Délina!
Papa papa, Délina!	Grandfather, Délina!
Cotf'm passé, Délina!	Wherever I pass is Délina!
Cotf'm vini, c'est Délina!	Wherever I turn is Délina!
Délina jobé oh jobé, Délina!	Délina works, oh, works, Délina!
Jobé pour la'gent, Délina! [Ex. 131]	Works for money, Délina!

The two children in the center, at a given signal, begin to move, each circling his own chair. The circling continues, the girl pacing her movements in an effort to avoid meeting the boy face to face. The boy times his movements so that he may meet the girl face to face. If and when he accomplishes his purpose he takes his reward—an embrace—and another couple comes forward to repeat the play.

Another game of the courting variety is called Find a Beautiful Woman. A chair is placed in the center of the play area, and a girl is designated to sit there as the "beautiful woman." She has nothing else to do. The others sing:

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Chach' yun femme qui belle oh!
Sindé, Sindé Macaya!
Chach' yun femme qui belle, frè'!
Sindé, Sindé Macaya! [Ex. 132]

Look for a woman who is beautiful, oh!
Sindé, Sindé Macaya!
Look for a woman who is beautiful, brother!
Sindé, Sindé Macaya!

Holding a kerchief in his hand, one of the children marches or dances around the chair of the "beautiful woman." After several trips around, he retires and drops the kerchief in the lap of another player, who comes forward and repeats the performance. Anyone who refuses to pay his respects to the "beautiful woman" is "it."

Some games are of the personal "test" or ordeal kind. In one of them

534 its tension is varied by pressure on the bowed stick with the other hand, producing a change of pitch. The covered hole acts as a sound chamber.

In a "portable" model of the mosquito drum a tin pail or can is used for a sounding chamber. The pail is inverted and fastened to a small plank, to which the sapling also is affixed. It is believed by some observers that the instrument has special significance during the pre-Easter holidays (Mardi Gras and Rara),[2] but it may be used at almost any time of the year. The "accompaniment" for the mosquito drum usually consists of some kind of *cata*—sticks beaten upon a board or on the drumhead itself. On occasion, two or three of these instruments are beaten together, and the rough bark membrane may be rasped for additional effects. Most of the songs that go with the mosquito drum are secular. One of the appropriate songs favored by children goes:

[541]

[533] [534]

> Maringouin dit moin ta zwing oh!
> Maringouin dit moin ta zwing!
> Ta zwing oh!
> Ta zwing! [Ex. 166]
>
> Mosquito says I will zwing, oh!
> Mosquito says I will zwing!
> Will zwing, oh!
> Will zwing!*

534 191 The earth bow has a clear African ancestry. In almost identical form it has been found in the French Sudan, among the Washambala of East Africa, the Bongos in the eastern Congo, the Bafia and Baya in the Cameroons, the Fulbe in the Sahara region, and the Futadjallon people in Nigeria.[1]

The German explorer Georg Schweinfurth might have been describing a Haitian scene when he wrote, some eighty-five years ago, of the Bongos:

> Performers may be seen sitting for an hour together with an instrument of this sort: They stick one end of the bow into the ground, and fasten the string over a cavity covered with bark, which opens into an aperture for the escape of the sound. They pass one hand from one part of the bow to another, and with the other they play upon the string with the bamboo twig and produce a variety of humming airs which are really rather pretty. This is a common pastime with the lads who are put in charge of the goats. I have seen them apply themselves very earnestly and with obvious interest to their musical practice, and the ingenious use to which they apply the secrets of the theory of sound.[3]

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* The hum of the mosquito as it strikes.

[1] [Comhaire Sylvain, Les Contes haïtiens, pp. 97-98. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[2] [Curt Sachs, Geist und Werden der Musikinstrumente (Berlin, 1929), pp. 60-61. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]

[3] [Schweinfurth, The Heart of Africa, I, 287. Cf. p. 354 Category 116. -- Analyst]

[P-334]

3. Proverbs

● 539 *Jou' fè tombé nans dlèw c'est pas jou'l pourri.*
The day a leaf falls in the water is not the day it rots. (Don't count your chickens before they're hatched.)

Dèyè morne gainyain morne.
Behind the mountains are mountains. (No matter how powerful someone is, there are others with powers equal to his.)

C'est pas tout chien qui japé ou pou' viré ga'dé.
You don't have to turn around and look at every dog that barks at you. (Don't worry about every complaint or threat that you hear.)

Chèn gain' quat' pieds mais'l pas ça fait quat' chimin.
A dog has four feet but he can't travel four roads at once. (Said when someone is making excessive demands.)

Bois plus ruvo dit'l wè loin, graine promèné dit'l wè plus loin.
The high tree says he sees far, the walking (traveling) seed says he sees farther. (The small and weak may have more sense than the large and strong.)

Rat mangé cane, zandolite mouri innocent.
The rat eats the sugar cane, the zandolite dies innocent. (One person commits an offense, an innocent person is punished.)

Ça'q ba ou conseil acheté cheval gros vent' saison laplui mais saison sec li pas aidé ou nouri.
A person who gives you advice to buy a horse with a big belly in the rainy season won't help you feed yourself when the dry season comes. (That is, a horse with a big belly is a big eater; there is plenty of grass for him when it rains but not much in the dry season, and a person who gives the foolish advice to buy such a horse isn't likely to be helpful in an emergency.)

Caca pas piquant mais li fout ou marché boité.
Excrement isn't sharp but it makes you limp. (That is, it isn't like a thorn, but if you step in it, it throws you off your stride. Said about some unpleasant affair you'd like to ignore but cannot.)

Bocor ba ou pouin mais l'pas dit ou dormi grand chimin.
The bocor gives you a protective charm but he doesn't tell you to sleep in the middle of the highway. (Even if you feel safe, don't take unnecessary risks.)

539

Jean chaché, Jean trouvé.
Jean seeks, Jean finds. (If you look for trouble you find it.)

Rajé gain' zoreille.
The woods have ears. (Take care not to speak your business loudly.)

Chat chaudé nans dleau chaud li wè dleau frète li peur.
If a cat is burned with hot water, when he sees cold water he is afraid. (Once burned twice shy.)

Cochon marron conné souki bois li fatté.
A wild pig knows on which tree he should scratch himself. (A person knows how to take care of himself.)

Tor' bombé jam' gras.
The bellowing bull is never fat. (Refers to a person who brags but accomplishes little.)

Prison pas fait pou' chien.
Prisons weren't built for dogs. (If a person commits a bad act, no one is surprised if justice catches up with him.)

Roche nans dleau pas conné douleur roche nans soleil.
A rock in the water doesn't comprehend the suffering of the rock in the sun. (If you haven't suffered you can't understand the suffering of others.)

Tambour prêté pas fait bon danse.
A borrowed drum doesn't make a good dance. (A person who lends a drum may reclaim it at any moment. If you are dependent on others you are at their mercy.)

Sotte pas tuyé ou, li fait ou swè.
Stupidity doesn't kill you, but it makes you sweat.

Changana changana.
What is mine is mine. (Perhaps what I have isn't as good as someone else's, but it belongs to me.)

Zaffair Nèg' pas pitit mais c'est jam' quançon qui jis.
The man's affairs aren't small, it's just that his pants are too tight. (Said of a person who may look ludicrous but who nevertheless is well off.)

Bel Français, pas lesprit pou' ça.
Your speaking good French doesn't mean you're smart.

Rayi chien mais dit dent li blanche.
Hate the dog but say his teeth are white. (Give the devil his due. Though you despise a person remember that he is not without means to injure you.)

Bef qui gainyain queue pas jambé difé.
A cow with a tail doesn't walk across a fire. (People in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.)

Jé wè bouche pé.
The eyes see, the mouth is silent. (Don't talk about everything you observe.)

Bat' chien mais tend' maît' li.
Hit the dog but listen for his master.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

539 *Jardin loin gombo dur.*
If the garden is far, the okra is hard. (If you can't reach the grapes, they're sour.)

Baton qui bat' chien noi' c'est li qui b'at' chien blanc.
The stick that beats the black dog [also] beats the white dog. (A knife cuts both ways, or a misfortune can happen to you, too.)

Bourrique fait pitit pou' dos'l posé.
A donkey has children so that he can rest his back.

Lè ba'b zami ou prend dijé metté ba'b ou à latramp.
When your friend's beard catches fire, put your beard to soaking.

Vente gran' gout pas gain' zoreille.
A starving belly doesn't have ears. (That is, it doesn't listen to explanations.)

Mapou tombé, cabrit mangé fé li.
The mapou tree falls, the goat eats its leaves. (When the mighty fall they are helpless even before the weak. This proverb is also used to comment on ingratitude, for the goat eats the leaves that have given him shade.)

Pas quitté bourrique pou' bat' maconte.
Don't leave the donkey to beat the saddle basket. (Don't lose your head and allow the donkey to run away.)

Zozo raide pas gainyain zoreille.
A hard penis has no ears.

Zaffai' mouton pas zaffai' cabrit.
The sheep's affair is none of the goat's business.

Fer coupé fer.
Iron cuts iron. (A person may be strong, but he is not invincible.)

Corde coupé corde.
Cord cuts cord.

Si fer pas coupé fer mashoquet pas gain' travaille.
If iron didn't cut iron, the blacksmith wouldn't have any work. (There's an antidote for everything.)

Apres danse, tambour toujour lourd.
After the dance is over the drum is always heavy.

Jou' fé tombé nans dleau c'est pas jou' li coulé.
The day a leaf falls into the water isn't the day it sinks. (The battle isn't over yet.)

Tambouyé pas capab' danse.
The drummer can't dance. (Each person has his role. A person can't do too many things at once.)

Dé morne pas capab' rencontré, dé moune capab'.
Two mountains cannot meet, two men can. (That is, agreement is possible among people.)

Pilé pied'm ou mandé pa'don, ça pa'don ma fait pou' moin?
You step on my foot and ask my pardon, what good will the pardon do me? (If you injure me the damage is done and it is too late to apologize.)

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

539

Yun seul dwèt pas capab' mangé gombo.
A single finger can't eat okra. (Food is picked up by the fingers. A single finger is inadequate. Used in the sense of "two heads are better than one," or coöperation makes possible what a person cannot do alone.)

Tête cuille cap' trompé soleil, main li pas capab' trompé lapluie.
A roof can fool the sun, but it can't fool the rain. (A person may get by in certain situations, but if he has deficiencies they will show up when the real test comes.)

Jou' malheur lait caillé cassé tête ou.
On a bad day clabbered milk breaks your head. (That is, when things are going badly even clabbered milk can hurt if it falls on you.)

Fourmi pas jam' mouri en bas barrique suc'.
The ant never dies under a barrel of sugar.

Gourd couvri gourd, ou conis couvri conis.
Gourd covers gourd, or bowl covers bowl. (For every force there is an equal or superior force.)

[P 340]

5. Translations of Songs in Chapter 19

533 Many of the Creole song texts included with the music in chapter 19
639 are translated and explained in earlier chapters. The following examples are translations of song texts in chapter 19 to which there is no reference elsewhere in the book.

EXAMPLE 133

Ezilie Wèdo, *ago*, oh!
The Creoles say like this,
I am not in Africa any more,
I shall do as I please!
The Creoles say like this,
I am not in Africa any more,
I shall do as I please, oh!
I bring myself,
I take myself away,
I do what I please, oh!

[176] (Ezilie Wèdo is the name of a loa. She boasts that she comes to Haiti
[192] and returns to Africa whenever she wishes. The word *ago* is exclamatory and means something like "I am here.")

EXAMPLE 134

The Forty Days [Lent], three women, three virgins,
Prayers for the saints, prayers for the walking saints!
Prayers for the loa Saint Antoine, oh, we ask your pardon!

EXAMPLE 135

In Africa are loa, oh!
Ero ero, hounsi kanzo!
Ero ero, hounsi kanzo!
In Africa are loa, *aibobo!*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

(*Evo évo* is ritual language. Hounsi kanzo are the servitors of the hounfor being addressed by an unidentified loa.) 533 539 [198] [794]

EXAMPLE 136

Achadé, oh, oh!
Achadé, I have no mother here to speak for me!
Achadé, oh!
Achadé, I have no mother here to speak for me!
Oh Achadé, oh!
Ogoun is bad, oh!
Achadé Papa!
Ogoun is bad, oh!
Etc.

(The song is addressed to the loa Achadé; it complains of the behavior of another loa, Ogoun.) [782]

EXAMPLE 137

Beat the drum for me!
I shall . . . , beat the drum for me!
Etc.
Three times after the Angelus, oh!
Three times after the Angelus, oh!

(This appears to be a children's game song. Three "times" after the Angelus would be three hours after six o'clock in the evening.) [524]

EXAMPLE 138

Liberist fell down!
Liberist fell down! *Adiél*
I am sending a whip for his back!
Etc.

(A children's game song.)

EXAMPLE 139

Adaïzo!
Miyenvalo Aloko, my Loko, Adaïzo!
Miyenvalo Aloko, my Loko, Adaïzo!
Miyenvalo my Loko, Adaïzo!
Etc.

(This is a song of supplication to the loa Loko. The word *miyenvalo* signifies supplication.) [782]

EXAMPLE 140

Ten cents is not a dollar,
Cousin, don't take cousin, oh, cousin!

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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539

Cousin, oh, cousin, oh,
Cousin, don't take cousin, oh, cousin!

[436] (A *gourdain* is one-quarter of a gourde, or the equivalent of five cents in United States money. *Dé gourdain* is ten cents.)

[198] EXAMPLE 141 consists entirely of ritual language.

EXAMPLE 142

Call Damballa, call Domici, call Damballa Wèdo,
Damballa, call Damballa Wèdo, Damballa.

[976] (Damballa and Domici are the names of loa.)

EXAMPLE 143

Ibo, I am a big man, oh!
Ibo, I am a big man, oh!
Ibo, I am the patriarch, oh, I am the patriarch, oh,
I am the chief of my house!

[976] (Ibo is the name of a loa, from whose point of view the song is being sung. Ibo is stating his seniority in his house, or family, for there are other loa related to him. The word *grand* in Creole, as used here, is [192] difficult to translate. It means good or elder, or both. A *grand famille* is the oldest in the extended family, and usually carries the connotation of head or chief.)

EXAMPLE 144

Ibo Ibo é, Samardi Kama!
Etc.

[976] (Samardi Kama is the name of a loa of the Ibo family. The song consists of a repetition of his name, with variations.)

EXAMPLE 145

Ibo Ibo é, Marianni é!
Etc., with variations.

[976] (This is a song to the loa Marianni, of the Ibo family. Except for his name, in various combinations, there are no words.)

[198] EXAMPLE 146 is a song for the making of magic. It is entirely in ritual lan-
[989] guage.

EXAMPLE 147

Call Osange, call Labosan in the water!
Osange, oh, call Osange in the water!
Osange, oh, call Osange in the water!

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

(A song for the loa Osange. Literally, the song specifies Osange "in the water," but the sense is "under the water," where the loa reside. 533 539 [192]

EXAMPLE 148

Yabofé my dear, they don't need me!
I will see [enter through] the center post if they *djagwé!*
Yabofé my dear, they don't need me!
I will see the center post if they *djagwé!*
Ferei doesn't see me any more!
I will see the center post if they *djagwé!*

(Yabofé and Ferei are the names of loa. Even though addressed as "Yabofé my dear," it is Yabofé who is speaking. If one thinks of it as "Dear Yabofé says," the shifting point of view becomes less confusing. The term *djagwé* indicates a kind of tension and excitement which builds up before possessions take place. Yabofé says that if the people *djagwé* he is prepared to enter through the center post.) [176]

EXAMPLE 149

Take me (to go), oh!
To the house, oh!

EXAMPLE 150

Damballa! Damballa!
Damballa Wèdo Damballa!
Damballa, *enhé!*
Sacred Damballa! Damballa!

(The song is an invocation to the loa Damballa. The word *enhé* is exclamatory.) [182] [192]

EXAMPLE 151

Ibo Lélé, oh!

(Ibo Lélé is the name of a loa.)

EXAMPLE 152

We thread our way [like a snake],
Damballa Wèdo is a snake, oh!

(The "threading" is a description of conventionalized dance movements suggesting the crawling of a snake. The loa Damballa is identified as a snake.) [535] [176]

EXAMPLE 153

Loko Sindé asks for wind, é!

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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539 Wind, wind, wind, Loko Sindé asks for wind!
Wind, wind, wind!

[176] (The loa Loko Sindé calls for wind to make the sailboat move.)

EXAMPLE 154

Innocent, don't you see I'm innocent!
It is God in heaven who will judge me!
Innocent, don't you see I'm innocent!
It is God in heaven who will judge me!
Ferei's goat here looks for the water road!
The goat of the saints seeks the road to the house!
In Africa everyone is sick, oh!
Papa, I will save them!

EXAMPLE 155

Marianni, oh!
Adié, Moundongue!
Mariannil
To the other side I am passing!
I am leaving here!

[176] (This is a song to the loa Marianni Moundongue. He says he is leaving the hounfor to return to the other side—that is, Africa.)

EXAMPLE 156

Azui, oh, I am a snake, oh!
Azui Papa, I am a snake, oh!
Azui, oh, I am a snake, oh!
Azui Papa, I am a snake, oh!
Don't you see the pouin there is spoiled?
Don't you see the pouin there is spoiled?
It has rolled into the mud!
I sound my assos!

[176] (Azui is a loa characterized as a snake. The second part of the song is topical. It appears that a pouin, or magic bundle, has fallen into the mud and been soiled. The last line represents words of the houngan, who shakes his ritual rattle.)

EXAMPLE 157

Ah! It is I, it is I, it is I!
It is I, oh, it is Mademoiselle Ayida, it is I!
Sitting by the boat there they speak ill of us (me), oh!
It is I, oh, it is I, centerpost, it is I!

[176] (Mademoiselle Ayida is the loa Ayida Wèdo.)

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Example 158

Ayida isn't joking, oh!
Ayida isn't joking with them!
Enla, [ritual] language, oh!
Ayida isn't joking, oh!
Ayida isn't joking with them!
Those who wish to be satisfied are satisfied!
Those who wish to be angry are angry, oh!
Ayida, oh!
Ayida isn't joking with them!

Example 159

Long live the king and dear queen, oh!
Another misfortune, [they] talk behind my back!
Long live the king and dear queen, oh!
Another misfortune, [they] talk behind my back!
Fire, oh, heat!
Fire, oh, heat, oh!
Another misfortune, [they] talk behind my back!

Example 160

Legba Aguator é!
Oh what loa are you?
Ago I am a loa!
Legba Aguator é!
Oh what loa are you here?
Quitti quitti yé, oh, I am a Nago loa!
Legba Aguator é! What loa are you!

Example 161

Oh, colico yo yo, my little banza, *colico!*
In truth, *colico yo yo*, my little banza, *colico!*
Colico yo yo, my little banza, *colico!*
A non paillé colico yo yo, my little banza, *colico!*

(A children's story song. The italicized parts are not translatable. The banza is a small musical instrument; currently the word is used for a banjo or fiddle, formerly it designated an instrument of African origin.) [534]

Example 162

Adié Compère Frog, that is not running!
Frog hops, ti dong, ti dong dong, frog hops!

(A children's song from a story about a race between the frog and the horse.)

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

533 EXAMPLE 163
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The pig says wain!
The pig says wain, hot mama!
Etc.
See the pig having fun!
Enhé, enhé, hot mama!

(A children's *gage* song.)

EXAMPLE 164

Bwèment rwo!
Adieu, Bwèment, make Bwèment walk!
Bwèment, that's it, that's it, Bwèment!
Make Bwèment walk!

(A children's game song.)

533 EXAMPLE 165
539

You arrive, Rigal, you enter!
You arrive, Rigal, you arrive!
When Rigal turned into a large pig,
He came to Jacmel to eat us!

(This song names a specific individual, Rigal, as having turned into a pig, like a member of the Vinbindingue Society, but it is not clear whether it is intended to be taken seriously or is merely banter.)

EXAMPLE 166

I will zwing, oh!
The mosquito says I will zwing, oh!
Etc.

[534] (Zwing is the sound the mosquito makes. The song is usually sung to the accompaniment of the *tambour maringouin*, or mosquito drum.)

EXAMPLE 167

The small boy stands on the terrace,
He stamps his feet *dao dao!*
The small boy stands on the terrace,
He stamps his feet *dao dao!*
Oh, [unchained?] gives them *paillette*, oh!
The small boy stands on the terrace,
He stamps his feet *dao dao!*
[Unchained?] gives them *paillette*, oh!
Furiously gives them *paillette*, oh!
Mayousse!
Find your woman, *mayousse!*
Mayou-yousse!

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Your share, mayousse!
Find your woman, *mayousse!*
Mayou-yousse!

(*Paillette* means "all decorated up," "fancy," "in carnival regalia." It is also the name of a dance, as is *mayousse*, used here as an exclamation.) [192] [535]

EXAMPLE 168 was said to be in "Spanish."

EXAMPLE 169

Go to your mother's house,
Go to your mother's house,
Go to your mother's house, my dear,
Do not come and give me an argument!
Go to your mother's house, my dear,
Go to your mother's house, my dear,
Go to your mother's house, my dear,
And do not give me an argument!
Little girl who doesn't know how to wash and iron,
Go home to your mother,
Little girl who doesn't know how to wash and iron,
Go home to your mother!
Angelico, Angelica, go to your mother's house!
Angelico, Angelico, go to your mother's house!

EXAMPLE 172

Oh I'm not a mule,
Oh I'm not a mule, oh!
The farmer takes me to carry his coffee!

(A good-natured protest song of the kind often sung by coumbites.) [476]

EXAMPLE 173 has no text. It is exclamatory throughout.

EXAMPLE 174

É Laiza, where should I go, Laiza é!
Laiza, the children are hypocrites, oh!
Etc.

EXAMPLE 175

Éwa Mambo Susan, I am cutting trees
To take away the honey!

EXAMPLE 176

Adieu kining kining kining.
Oh I say my prayer to God to send rain!

(The first line is ritual language, but it appears to have been originally a phrase recited by the petit' savane.) [198]

2: Courlander B-8 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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●539 EXAMPLE 178

Osan, oh, Lèlè, oh!
Osan, oh, Lèlè, oh!
They take the asson of the loa and serve evil, oh!
Let it sink!

[626] [796] (The song criticizes someone who has become a houngan and has used his powers wrongly. Osan Lèlè is the loa to whom the complaint is being addressed, or he may be the one lodging the complaint.)

EXAMPLE 179

Farmer, call the loa for me, *ago-ê!*
Farmer, call the loa for me now,
Call the loa for me now,
Gèdé has engaged me!

[796] [192] (Gèdé is a loa. *Habitant* signifies "farmer" or "peasant" but could be translated as "countryman.")

EXAMPLE 180

Boulicha, I arrive,
See my misfortune!
I will cut them, I have no knife!
Boulicha Nago, I will cut them, *maloviê!*

[796] [198] (The loa Boulicha Nago announces his arrival and complains that people have mistreated him. He says he will avenge himself without a knife. *Maloviê* is ritual language.)

EXAMPLE 181

I am going to see the houmi houzale, oh,
I am going to see if they are in accord with me.
Etc.

EXAMPLE 182

I cry honor before my loa's altar,
Cry honor, and no one replies!
I cry honor before my loa's altar,
Cry honor, and no one replies!
All who speak well [of me], I am here, I will listen, oh!
All who speak evil [of me], I am here, I will listen to them!
They sign my name, Alado, but they do not sign my feet,
I ask where will they see me!

2: Courlander B-S (1937-1964) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Chapter 5: *Services for the Loa and the Family Ancestors* (pp. 41–74)

[1]Note that the houngan and the laplace are performing services normally performed by the *petit serviteur*.

[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 165.

[3]Parsons, *Spirit Cult in Haiti*.

[4]Account given by Jean Revel Pierre.

[5]Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana.

[6]Account given by Vohinka Saintvil. A. W. Cardinall notes in his book *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 69): "Trees are in most cases treated with respect. Before a man dare fell one for a canoe he must and invariably does sacrifice to its spirit and apologizes for the harm he is about to do it."

[7]The rite of *rafraichi ville* is conducted periodically for a *mait' ville* after the original *lave ville* ceremony. The purpose is to "refresh" the loa and make him content with his residence in the head of the devotee.

[8]Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, p. 213.

[9]It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain Negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form.

[10]Odette Menescom Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Vaudoux Loa," in Appendix A of Deren, *Divine Horsemen*, p. 264.

Chapter 6: *Songs of the Peristyle* (pp. 75–94)

[1]This theme is further commented on in chap. 13. Compare with the following example from a Surinam song reported by Herskovits in *Suriname Folk Lore* (p. 689):

> I have no mother there,
> I have no father there,
> I have no sister there,
> I haven't got anybody there.

Chapter 7: *In the Mapou Tree: Magic, Demons, and Conjure* (pp. 95–104)

[1]Simpson, "Haitian Magic," *Social Forces*, October, 1940, p. 87.

[2]Note the coincidence of the term *grigris* or *grigri* as used in the United States, where it has the same meaning as *magic*, or "voodoo" charm.

[3]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 393.

[4]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, p. 243.

Chapter 8: *Mardi Gras and Rara: Jugglers, Maypoles, and Kings* (pp. 105–109)

[1]Ashby, *En Haiti*, p. 41.

[2]Maypoles of this kind have been observed in both East and West Africa and are well known in the region of Senegal. I saw a phallic maypole, virtually identical with the Haitian version, in the neighborhood of Khartoum, Sudan.

Chapter 9: *Land and Work* (pp. 110–121)

[1]Franklin, *The Present State of Haiti*, p. 362.

[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, pp. 8, describes Dahomean polygamous marriage in its various forms. Although Dahomean plural marriage is complex in terms of gifts, obligations, and

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1953) 1966 SV3 Hall SV3

CHAPTER 12: *Songs of Complaint, Recrimination, and Gossip (pp. 137–147)*

[5]See Herskovits and Herskovits, *Suriname Folk-Lore*, pp. 13-30.

CHAPTER 13: *Comments on the Mighty: Political Songs (pp. 148–161)*

[5]*Liger, Haïti, Her History and Her Detractors.*

CHAPTER 15: *Secret-Society Songs (pp. 166–169)*

[7]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, p. 256.
[8]See Courlander, "Abakwa Meeting in Guanahacabibes," *Journal of Negro History*, XXIX (1944), 46 ff.

CHAPTER 16: *Folk Tales: Bouki, Malice, and Jean Sonnet (pp. 170–184)*

[1]The theme of throwing magic objects upon the ground to ward off a pursuer is widely known, but the story as told in Africa has special characteristics of its own, such as the elephant hair. In Ashanti tales, the prize is the tail of the queen elephant, which is needed to serve as a coffin.

[2]This part of the tale, at least, dealing with the dragon that swallowed the sun, seems to be known in western Europe. Some reports of the tale of Grandmother's Bath have come from France.

[3]Variants of "The President Wants No More of Anansi" are widely known around the world. The story is told among the Somali of East Africa, with the legendary character Abanaseer, a Persian trickster hero, playing the title role. Anansi plays the same part in West Africa, and other trickster heroes are identified with the same adventure in India and Southeast Asia. The tale has been reported also from the West Indian island of St. Martin ("He Mets the King's Conditions," in Parsons, *Folk-Lore of the Antilles, French and English*, Part II).

[4]The fishing story narrated here, except for the chase, is found in many versions in West Africa. The second part of the tale, the pursuit, has a special Haitian flavor. Bouki chasing Malice through the cole chief's ritual grounds and the church, with Malice trying to render appropriate use of the situation, is a special delight to Haitians. The dialogue between Bouki and Malice's behind is also regarded as very humorous.

[5]Known in virtually all Negro communities in the Americas, the tale of eating the honey (or butter, pork, or lard) seems to have come to the New World by way of Africa, although it is also known in Europe.

[6]The theme of the singing tortoise (or other animal, or an object such as a shell) has appeared in folk tales ranging from West Africa through the Americas to the Far East. This Haitian variant bears a striking resemblance to a tortoise story from the Gold Coast (Ghana). In the Gold Coast version the tortoise asks the hunter who finds him to keep his singing ability a secret, but the hunter has to tell about his discovery. When the village headman hears about it, he calls for a test. The tortoise refuses to sing, and the hunter is punished. Then the tortoise sings his song, which emphasizes the hunter's bad faith. The philosophical tone of the Haitian tortoise's songs, particularly the last one, is quite similar. The last line of the song is from a Haitian proverb.

CHAPTER 17: *Children's World: Game Songs and Games (pp. 185–188)*

[1]The description of this game is from Paul, "Les jeux à gage," *Bulletin de Bureau d'Ethnologie*, July, 1925, p. 51.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

Only a beginning has been made of collecting the thousands of "Crac! Crac!" stories current in Haiti.

It is only recently that people have written Créole, so that there is no standard orthography. Every writer spells words phonetically, with consequent irregularities, and with wide differences between two people writing the same thing. Recent etymological studies may lead eventually to a dictionary and a standard spelling. In order that the reader may see the resemblance of Créole to French, yet its differences from that language, we shall quote a part of one of La Fontaine's fables put into Créole verse by Georges Sylvain.[10] His own French retranslation accompanies the fable, turning such phrases as "female pig" into "sow."

Nan temps tout bêt ti poli,	*Au temps où toutes les bêtes parlaient,*
Ti g' ain (palant pa respé)	*Il y avait (sauf votre respect)*
Ti g' ain gnon fémel cochon.	*Il y avait une truie.*
Zott ennemis gnon cochon bonn	*Vous savez comme les truies sont bonnes gens?*
Cilo-là ti fait zannni	*Celle-ci avait fait amitié*
Avec gnon fémel chèvre, qui	*Avec une chèvre, qui*
Ti pètit pou ni bas. Chèvre-là,	*Était sur le point de mettre bas. La chèvre*
Gnon jour, di cochon con ça:	*Un jour, dit à la truie:*
"Mainn pèl pou mainn accouché,	*"Ma veille près d'accoucher,*
"Ma commé, t'on pitil rendé,	*"Ma commère, je vous en prie, s'il vous plaît,*
"Pèmett mainn prêté gnon coin	*"Permettez-moi d'emprunter un coin*
"Nan pat ou, pou pètit mainn."	*"De votre parc, pour mes enfants."*[11]

The terseness of the language is fascinating, a situation is hit off precisely in a few words: a stuffed shirt has been deflated, and the truth has been told. A Haitian was heard to say, "Nègue riche li mulatre; mulatre pauvre li nègue"—a rich Negro is accounted a mulatto; a poor mulatto is to all intents and purposes no better than a Negro. And there is a profound comment on the whole caste system.

Wherever the French went in the Caribbean region the Créole language spread—in Louisiana, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Guiana. Each region has its own peculiarities, but in general it may be said that these other regions show much more French (as distinct from Norman) influence on Créole, and much less Spanish and English influence. Similarly in Haitian towns, where the élite speak French

10. *Crac! Crac! Fables de La Fontaine racontées par un nouveau-né haïtien et traduites en vers créoles* (Port-au-Prince, 1929), p. 21.
11. "Zott" means "vous autres"; "gnon" is "une."

1: Herskovits . E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

178 other African crafts, which, [illegible] in Africa, also allow play for the aesthetic impulse, have been
[325] lost as well. Ironworking is absent not only because the necessary deposits of iron ore are lacking, but because the technique
[326] of shaping the metal into various forms, which in Africa is in the hands of specialists, was apparently suppressed in the time
[286] of slavery. No native cloth is woven. Basketry has survived,
178 but whereas in Africa designs of no small artistic merit are
285 achieved in this medium, it is markedly utilitarian in Haiti. Even from a technical point of view, the basketry forms are of the simplest, the panniers used for transportation of products on mule-back being merely an in-and-out weave, and the plaited strips of which hats and the *macoute*, or carrying basket, are made are of a parallel simplicity.

524 Few African recreational forms have survived. *Wari*, the
525 draughts-like West African game found today in many parts
178 of the West Indies, is unknown in the interior of Haiti, though it has been introduced into Port-au-Prince, where it is played by longshoremen who have learned it from the sailors of near-by islands. String figures, important in West Africa, are not encountered, and no children's pursuits comparable to the play of young Africans were seen in Mirebalais, if the minor ceremony of marking the loss of childhood teeth be excepted. African types of recreation have in the main given way to cock-fights and card-games, both of which derive their interest from the opportunities they offer for gambling—a fact important in itself, since gambling is not one of the widespread African vices. The most important card-games are *trois-sept*, *marriage*, and *bezique*, and both men and women
[541] know them and play them for stakes. Similarly cock-fighting, particularly during the dry season, is a passionate avocation of the men. Large sums are wagered on the results of an encounter, and feeling often runs high.[4]

533 The Haitian genius for art and recreation is best embodied
535 in the dance and its accompanying songs and drum rhythms. Virtuosity is attained not only by the dancers, but even more

[P 105]

8. Mardi Gras and Rara: Jugglers, Maypoles, and Kings

From early in January until Easter, each year, the Haitian countryside 541
is infected with a riotous carnival spirit that puts all else in the background. First comes Mardi Gras, beginning early in January and building to a great climax at Shrovetide. And then on Ash Wednesday begins the seven-week festival known as Rara, Lwalwali, or Chiriquié.

Every week end in the Mardi Gras season the country roads and 541
villages are alive with special music, dancing bands, and traditional 533
kinds of masquerading. The little crossroads in the mountains where the *habitants* usually hold their markets are suddenly swarming with drummers, trumpeters, magicians, jugglers, masked dancers, and acrobats. Each band has its own name, its banners and paraphernalia, new typical songs composed for the occasion, and sometimes a dance virtuoso. Each [535]
rowing band competes for the attention and admiration of the spectators, and its ranks are often swelled by passers-by moving in the same direction who choose to dance their way along the roads rather than walk. Often women and girls on distant market errands will join in [482]
the celebration, seemingly unencumbered by the heavy loads they carry on their heads.

The Mardi Gras of the mountains and the plains is a dynamic spring 184
rite of which the urban elite version is only a pale and feeble imitation. 541
There are no pretty floats, no exhibits of female beauty, and no Coca-Cola advertisements. Sometimes the country bands move into Port-au-Prince and join the urban activities.

One by one the spectacles pass by on their uncertain way—to north 541
or south, into the town or out of the town, wherever chance leads them. In addition to the musicians, acrobats, jugglers, and masked dancers, there are baton twirlers, comedians on stilts, and mimes. Each group has its own theme. One may call itself the Zombrouge, another the Cochons Gris, another Cochons Rouges—names designating legendary

2: Courlander 9-5 (1937-1954) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

541 half-demon cannibals who meet in secret in the hollow heart of the mapou tree. Some are dressed in comic ancient military attire, replete with swords, epaulets, medals, and outlandish beards, representing "the Generals." Others, under the name Bande Autophonique, follow a human phonograph—a leader singing through an antique Edison horn.

541 53 And there are bands of male *rubaniers*, or Maypole dancers, some of them attired as women, weaving their colored ribbons around portable poles, to the accompaniment of guitars, marimbulas, and cha-chas. Male stick dancers known as *batowsi*, dressed in women's clothing, crouch in circles and perform baton-tapping dances to the accompaniment of drumming and singing. Other small bands wander about impersonating characters from folklore or politics in grotesque homemade costumes. One might see, for example, a fanciful bocor driving before him a band of zombies, wielding a whip, and barking out weird raucous commands.

After the cataclysmic grand finale of the Mardi Gras at Showetiale there is the briefest of lulls, and then the country is in the throes of Rara. The day of the *roi* Lwalwali (the King of Lwalwali) has arrived. Hundreds of Rara bands move through the towns and villages, each with its orchestra of bamboo trumpets or conch-shell horns and its "king"—an ornately clad dancer or baton juggler. The Rara bands move from place to place, dance, sing, exhibit their featured performers, and then move on, pressed perhaps by other bands behind them or jostled by another group moving in the opposite direction. When darkness comes, the bands light their way with wooden torches or candelabra [416] of tiny oil lamps. Every week end for seven weeks, in the heat of day and the darkness of night, the mountain trails are alive with these processions.

541 The Rara festivities reach their climax on Good Friday week end, and by Easter morning they are ended. During these final days there is a last grand display, with troupes coming in from the mountains and the plains to the larger cities and towns. One of the traditional Rara convocation centers in the south is the town of Léogane. On Good Friday week end, Léogane is transformed into a milling, surging, trampling mass of celebrating country people.

[533] The songs heard during Rara are full of praise or derision for well- [831] known personalities. Some of them are boldly ribald or licentious. And [535] often the dancing itself is openly sexual in its implications. Haitians humorously refer to this kind of dancing as *ewogé* (enragé, crazy).

541 675 Early in January, even while the Mardi Gras is in progress, each community gets down to the business of organizing its Rara group. It may be organized in one of several ways. In certain communities there

is some continuity over a period of years, the Rara or Chariopié band remaining more or less intact. Normally it has a *malt'* Rara, also called *major* or *président*, who assumes the organizational responsibilities for the group. This means getting new costumes for the participants when required, refurbishing the old costumes and musical instruments, and recruiting special talent—perhaps a new "king." Where the same group continues from year to year, the malt' Rara actually serves as a sort of executive secretary. In some instances, however, the initiative for forming a group is undertaken by the malt' Rara himself. He chooses the costumes and *décor* of the group; he recruits the musicians and the young women and girls who form the singing and dancing chorus; and he chooses the roi Lwalwadi, who will be the group's main feature. He may decide upon the theme around which the group will be built, and may even decide upon the repertoire of songs it will sing. The malt' Rara has specific responsibilities and is obligated to provide his band with refreshments and food.

Expenses of the group are defrayed by collections made in the course of its "exercises." The band will stop before a crowd of spectators, or before a house, and will perform until it receives a gift known as *payé sorti* (pay to go) money. After receiving its payé sorti, the group performs an encore and then moves on. This custom of performing for gifts appears to have been known in colonial days. Eugène Aubin notes that the slaves on the plantations celebrated on New Year's Day with drums and dances.[1] At midnight they appeared before the foreman or owner of the plantation. One of the slaves would recite a speech to him, or perhaps the group would sing a song praising the master's virtues. Then, over the heads of the celebrants, a slave would extend a long bamboo pole with a beribboned basket fastened to the end. The plantation master would place his gift in the basket, after which the group would leave the house.

Some few groups do not have a "king" but are built around musical instruments or other features. However, the "king" is regarded as an old tradition. Aubin reported that the roi Lwalwadi dates from the time of the Emperor Soulouque in the nineteenth century. Soulouque is said to have named the first roi Lwalwadi in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. But there are reasons to suspect that these dancing virtuosi, by whatever name they were called, existed long before Soulouque entered the picture.

The roi Lwalwadi is a dancer of very special talents, and it is said that, though his title is not hereditary, his dances have been handed down within the family from reis of other years. Much care is given to the costume he wears. It is sometimes made of expensive satin or velvet

[1] [Aubin, *En Haïti*, p. 92. Cf. p. 351, Category 16.—Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1938) 1960 SV2 Haiti SV3

and covered with tiny mirrors or bits of colored glass. The towering headdress of antlers or papier-mâché sculpture unavoidably recalls similar headdresses in West Africa. Each roi has his own style of dance, which is usually accompanied by drums. It may be a belly dance, a dance of delicate balance, or one of complicated footwork and semiacrobatics such as the imitation of a pair of scissors at work. Throughout the dancing the headdress remains majestically erect.

In addition to the roi Lwalwali and the milit' Rara (who is constantly in the midst of things, blowing his whistle), there are other traditional Rara personalities: the *major jour*, who juggles with a metal baton (sometimes two or three of these jugglers work together), and the *jonglew*, a juggler or strong man who performs such feats as dancing while holding a fully set table off the ground with his teeth.

On the southwest peninsula, in the region around Jérémie, there is a splurge of wrestling exhibitions during Rara days. Known as *pingé*, this festival wrestling is done with a background of excited drumming and has a striking resemblance to wrestling traditions in West Africa. Local "champions" will invade a neighboring community, sometimes traveling considerable distances to make a challenge. As in West Africa, some of these wrestlers take their own musicians with them. The musicians often are provided by the village in which the events take place. If a challenge is accepted, the spectators form a large circle, with the wrestlers in the center and the musicians to one side. There may be drums and bamboo flutes, occasionally supplemented by large earthern jars and lengths of bamboo beaten with sticks. The wrestlers are dressed only in shorts. When a man is thrown, the event is over, and another pair of wrestlers takes over. Sometimes a "champion" will take on a series of opponents until he is tired. Afterward he may move on to another community to find new competition, perhaps accompanied by a large group of friends and supporters from his own village. When the Rara season comes to an end, pingé is over for the year. It is one of the few athletic sport activities of the Haitian peasant.

And now and then during Rara a *debais* is seen. The *debais* is a carved wooden marionette with a short handle below. Its arms and legs are moved by pulling a string. It is usually painted, and sometimes it is dressed. One debais observed was provided with a loose dresslike costume; when the string was pulled, a large phallus hinged into view in an erect position. This marionette was an object of endless fun-making among spectators.[3]

Another type of marionette is the "Two Kings," made of papier-mâché and operated with strings. The "Two Kings," sitting in a papier-

[3] [Footnote appears in Category 16, p. 351. --Analyst]

2: Courtesier 9-5 (1827-1855) 1960 SV3 HaRI SV3

mâché carriage or on papier-mâché horses, make their appearance during Rara as well as on the Day of the Kings (*Les Rois*).

Among the traditional paraphernalia carried by Rara groups are coconut-cape sticks, cha-cha rattles, metal rattles called *ashoway*, a set of rattles on a tall thin pole (called *jouvenjou*), candelabra bearing candles or oil lamps (*lampions*), banners and flags, and such miscellaneous musical instruments as the grage scraper, bamboo scraping devices, the *hour* finger drum, *assote* (beating boards), and various kinds of secular drums.

The general tone of Rara is nonreligious. The dancing is free from the decorous restraints which characterize most religious ritual, and some early observers of the festival were shocked by what they saw. Some of them went so far as to attribute Haiti's dense population to the "licentious activities" and reckless abandon of the spring carnival. The Catholic Church and some political administrators have sporadically sought to suppress Rara, along with Vodoun ritual. And even today in Port-au-Prince the foreign visitor often is urged to watch the elite Mardi Gras with its floats and mulatto queens as a substitute.

Although Rara has an over-all tone of secular abandon, it has links with both Catholic and Vodoun ritual. Good Friday is given over in good measure to miming the story of Jesus and Judas. A perambulating band may carry an effigy of Judas hanging from a pole. Another will burn the Judas effigy, or drag it in the dust as the crowd moves along the road. In another group a man playing the part of Judas may crawl on his hands and knees along the trail, while Jesus' avengers pursue him with long, cracking whips.

Tying in with Vodoun ritual, virtually all Rara drums and other paraphernalia are "deificated" or "redeificated" before Lent in special houseler services. And on the last day of Rara, usually late in the night, prayers are said, the loa are called upon, and some of the festive paraphernalia is thrown into a fire to be consumed.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-LL]

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67. *A contemporary "primitive" by M. Stephane.*

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68. *A painting by G. Ahlland showing a Rara group led by a juggler holding a table in his teeth. (Collection of Marshall Stearns.)*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 112 - MM]

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69. Rara dancing near Gonaïves. Voodoo flagpoles are at the left.

70. A Rara group near Pointe-Palmes. At the left are the baby doves and a symbolic. One of the four musicians, center, is made of metal. Behind the musicians are the musicians' flag and a lanterne.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-NN]
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70. *Rara at Léogane. Behind the dancing magician (seen a member of the group holds their banner, which depicts a bird carrying a board. The costumes are traditional and are believed to date from colonial days.*

Z: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-00]

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72. *A roi Lwalwadi in the Cul-de-Sac Plain.*

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73. *Rara stick dancers in Port-au-Prince.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937,1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-PP]
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74. *Chalucka dancers in Port-au-Prince.*

75. *Maypole dancers. Musicians are sitting near to the pole.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-QQ]
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[184] [171] *36. A Rara group near Plaisance. The costumes differ from those in the south. Note the Madras headcloth, reminiscent of West African dress.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

535 *Rabouin*, or *Bambouin*: Danced on the occasion of building a new house.
535 *Mascot*: Danced by a société after communal work on the land of one of its members.
476 *Ti Coumbe*: Another société work dance, sometimes closely related to Vodoun ritual. Known in Brazil as Macumba.
Kouze, or *Coundjaille*: A dance connected with communal work celebrations.[8]

Rara and Carnival Dances

535 *Rara*, also called *Chariapié*, *Laralwali*, and *Vernier*: The perambulating dances of
●541 the Rara festival.
Mazurun, or *Cocoyé*: Danced for the Mardi Gras.
Pailleur: Any carnival dance in costume.
Batonnier: A carnival stick dance with West African precedents.
Trèsé Ribon: The carnival Maypole dance.
Congo Pailleur: The "Straw Congo," or "Costume Congo," the carnival dance of the *société* Congo. It is also known as *Cipé* and Congo Mardi Gras.
Rabordage: A Mardi Gras perambulating dance.
Chalouche: A Mardi Gras dance in which the participants are dressed as nineteenth-century generals. Comic mimicry. Also referred to as Charles Oscar.
Zinipen
Rubaw
Mayouzou

Other Secular and Miscellaneous Dances

535 *Zouc*: A gage dance of northern Haiti.
Calinda: A mock battle dance. Also a dance of the Calinda "secret society."
Ka: A dance which takes its name from the *ka*, a wooden drum.
Bèlè, or *Belair*
Mangouline
Ti Coip: This is reputed by some informants as one of the Pitou dances.
Malfini: "The Hawk," a dance of northern Haiti.
Pinpinou: A simple "good time" dance.
Bambili: A simple "good time" dance.
Bambouche: A "good time" dance. The term is often used to designate any social dance. As a verb, *bambouché* means "to dance" or "to have a good time."

Secular Dances of European Type

535 199 *Meringue*: There are three main types of Meringue—the drawing-room Meringue, the ordinary "ballroom" Meringue, and the Meringue Coundjaille (which is fast and agitated). A development of the last decade or so is the jazz Meringue.
Ti Robine: This is a sort of square dance, though it is sometimes danced in Meringue style.
Mirawet, or *Mirawet*: The minuet.
Polka
Waltz
Quadrille
Mazurka
Contredanse

[Footnote appears on p. 352, Category 116.--Author]

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

easily be hidden, but the ganbos were simply slipped into the straw 534
roofs and thus put out of sight. Moreover, by some strange process of 648
reasoning, military authorities regarded the bamboos as "harmless," 798
though they were used for the same purposes as the contraband drums.

There are numerous other kinds of simple percussion devices. One 534
such instrument, now less commonly seen than previously, is a length of open bamboo laid in the crotches of two Y-shaped sticks set in the ground. Like other *catas*, the bamboo is beaten with two sticks. Some Haitians believe that in former days such bamboos were played in batteries like a xylophone.

Sometimes a light-weight wooden cylinder, or perhaps a drum de- [461]
muded of its playing head, is carried by the timekeeper of a coumbite. [496]
It, also, is played on the side with sticks.

Wooden mortars for pulverizing grain take on the character of musical 534
instruments when used in combination with voices. When two or more 533
mortars are used, with two men or women wielding the long poklike 412
pestles in each mortar, the rhythmic effects can become fairly complicated.

The *claves* or *palos* (small hardwood sticks) are used primarily in 534
connection with secular dances of a Cuban type, or to accompany such 535
instruments as the guitar and the marimba. One stick is held loosely in [177]
the natural fold of the hand, so that it is free to vibrate, and is struck sharply with the second stick. The tone is almost metallic because of [824]
the hardness of the wood, usually lignum vitae. The name of the instrument is recognizable as a form of *clavar*, or *clavo*, Spanish for "peg" or "nail." It is thought that wooden shipbuilding pegs provided the [171]
name for this device, which has equivalents in West Africa.

Among the folk instruments there are various kinds of horns and 534
trumpets. Cows' horns are played musically in some parts of the southern 184
peninsula, though usually they are used as ritual instruments and signaling devices. Wooden trumpets called *pitoes* are carved from the stems [824]
of the papaya tree. Conch-shell trumpets, known as *lambis*, are com- [202]
monly used as signaling devices by fishermen. They are also to be found among the coumbites, in Rara festivities, and occasionally in rituals, where they are usually identified with sea deities. In carnival 541
times the old fashioned phonograph horn makes its appearance as a com- [216]
bined trumpet and voice amplifier.

Probably the most important of the trumpets is the one made of 534
bamboo. It is called a *corniet/or bois bourrique*. Both names have in- 755
teresting origins. The cow's horn was at one time used for magico- [837]
medical purposes. The leaf doctor used it as an "applicator" of powders and potions. A small opening was made in the point of the horn, and

1 [See plate 8, p. 112-F. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1938) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Rara season two special rattles are used. One of them is made of metal and resembles a tin can with a wooden handle. The metal sometimes is perforated with numerous small holes, and inside are *kokoli* seeds, which act as rattlers. This instrument, known as a *tchancy*, is usually decorated with colorful ribbons when in use. (In northern Haiti the term *tchancy* is used to designate metal wrist rattles worn by drummers.) The other Rara rattle, called *jouconjou* or *jouejou*, is made of three gourds carried on a long pole. One of the gourds is affixed to the end of the pole, and the others are fastened to the terminals of a short crossbar, giving the effect of a cross with bulbous ends. Since many of the Rara processions are dramatizations of the Christ epic, the instrument could be interpreted as a Christian symbol, though its conversion into a noisemaker appears to be an African conception. The *jouconjou* may be a variant of the small rattle-cross which is used by the Abakwa secret society in Cuba.*

534 24 824 531 171

The sacred gourd rattle of the cult priest is called *asson* or *hokpar*. It is pear-shaped and covered with a network of beads which act as external strikers. It is used by the houngan to summon the spirits of the dead, to praise or call upon the deities, and to accompany the performance of magic. The asson is of West African derivation, and its counterparts are to be found among the cults of Martinique, Trinidad, Cuba, Brazil, Venezuela, and elsewhere where African traditions have left their mark. The gourds from which the assons are made are grown in a special grove sacred to the loa.

534 78 171 178

A large calabash rattle has been reported from several isolated regions of Haiti, primarily from the north. Some rattles of this kind have been described as more than twenty inches in height and covered by a network of external strikers, usually wari beans. The calabash rattles are used in groups of three. They are shaken and thumped against the palm of the hand, producing both deep and high-pitched sounds. These oversize rattles are employed without drums and are said to be associated with Arada-Nago rites. They appear to be a survival of the instrument known among the Yoruba as the *shekere* and are found in Cuba in both Dahomey and Lucumi (Yoruba) cult centers.

534 184 171

Probably one of the oldest of Haitian folk instruments is the earth bow, known as the *tambour mariagasie*, or mosquito drum. Traditionally the mosquito drum is made in the following way:

A hole is dug in the earth, perhaps a foot or more deep. It is covered with palm or banana bark, which is pegged firmly all around. A cord is attached to the center of the bark membrane and drawn taut to a bent green sapling, one end of which is buried in the ground at a slight angle. The cord is plucked and stopped with the fingers of one hand, while

* [See Courlander, "Musical Instruments of Cuba," Musical Quarterly, April, 1942, pp. 233-24. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst]

534 its tension is varied by pressure on the bowed stick with the other hand, producing a change of pitch. The covered hole acts as a sound chamber.

In a "portable" model of the mouquito drum a tin pail or can is used for a sounding chamber. The pail is inverted and fastened to a small plank, to which the sapling also is affixed. It is believed by some observers that the instrument has special significance during the pre-Easter holidays (Mardi Gras and Rara),[9] but it may be used at almost any time of the year. The "accompaniment" for the mouquito drum usually consists of some kind of *cuts*—sticks beaten upon a board or on the drumhead itself. On occasion, two or three of these instruments are beaten together, and the rough bark membrane may be rubbed for additional effects. Most of the songs that go with the mouquito drum are secular. One of the appropriate songs favored by children goes:

[541]

[533] [534]

> Mouiquito dit moin ta swing ah!
> Mouiquito dit moin ta swing!
> To swing ah!
> To swing! [Ex. 166]
>
> Mouquito says I will swing, ah!
> Mouquito says I will swing!
> Will swing, ah!
> Will swing!*

534 191

The earth bow has a clear African ancestry. In almost identical form it has been found in the French Sudan, among the Wahumbulu of East Africa, the Bongos in the eastern Congo, the Bafia and Bayo in the Cameroons, the Fulbe in the Sahara region, and the Fatadjallon people in Nigeria.[1]

The German explorer Georg Schweinfurth might have been describing a Haitian scene when he wrote, some eighty-five years ago, of the Bongos:

> Performers may be seen sitting for an hour together with an instrument of this sort: They stick one end of the bow into the ground, and fasten the string over a cavity covered with bark, which opens into an aperture for the escape of the sound. They pass one hand from one part of the bow to another, and with the other they play upon the string with the bamboo twig and produce a variety of humming airs which are really rather pretty. This is a common pastime with the lads who are put in charge of the goats. I have seen them apply themselves very earnestly and with obvious interest to their musical practice, and the ingenious use to which they apply the secrets of the theory of sound.[2]

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* The basis of the mouquito air is Dahomean.

1 (Combarieu, Sylvain, Les Centres haïtiens, pp. 99-98. Cf. P. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst)

2 (Curt Sachs, Geist und Werden der Musikinstrumente (Berlin, 1929), pp. 60-61. Cf. P. 354, Cat. 116. -- Analyst)

3 (Schweinfurth, The Heart of Africa, I, 287. Cf. P. 354 Category 116. -- Analyst)

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534 [541] Among the noisemakers heard mostly at the time of the Ram festival (usually on Good Friday) are the *ram-ram*, or bull-roarer—a thin flat piece of wood whirled on the end of a cord—and the *rawz*, the common wooden ratchet. Various types of wooden flutes, usually of bamboo, are also used.

[164] In the remoter parts of the mountains you may now and then hear of an instrument known as the *hawza*. A century ago, it would appear, the *hawza* was a stringed instrument resembling a banjo. The similarity of names is striking, in view of the instrument's early form. Today, [179] however, the word *hawza* is applied to the homemade fiddle which is used to accompany the minuet and other old dances of European origin.

534 A children's instrument seen sometimes in the mountains is constructed 524 of half of a calabash shell, across the opening of which have been 178 stretched a number of cords. This plucked device appears to be a decadent form of the African trough zither.

[pp 203-313 not processed]

Courtesy 5: *Services for the Loa and the Family Ancestors* (pp. 41-54)

[1]Note that the houngan and the hounsi are performing services normally performed by the *petit serviteur*.

[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 189.

[3]Parsons, *Spirit Cult in Haiti*.

[4]Account given by Jean Rural Pierre.

[5]Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana.

[6]Account given by Vulumbu Kalunzi, A. W. Cardinall notes in his book *Tales Told in Tongaland* (p. 64): "Twins are in most cases treated with respect. Before a man dies he may care for a twins he must and invariably does sacrifice to his spirit and apologizes for the harm he is about to do it."

[7]The rite of *nefindi* rite is conducted periodically for a *mulf* site after the original *land* site ceremony. The purpose is to "refresh" the loa and make him content with his residence in the head of the devotee.

[8]Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, p. 113.

[9]It is of interest to note the persistence of traditional attitudes toward water dues in certain Negro cults in the United States. Water baptism given is amended by certain mourns in familiar form.

[10]Odette Mennesson Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Vaudoun Loa," in *Appendix A of Dance, Haitian Heritage*, p. 184.

Courtesy 6: *Songs of the Periaylé* (pp. 73-94)

[1]This theme is further commented on in chap. 13. Compare with the following message from a Surinam song reported by Herskovits in *Suriname Folk Lore* (p. 184):

> I have no mother there,
> I have no father there,
> I have no sister there,
> I haven't got anybody there.

Courtesy 7: *In the Mapou Tree: Magic, Demons, and Company* (pp. 95-104)

[1]Simpson, "Haitian Magic," *Social Forces*, October, 1940, p. 80.

[2]Note the similarities of the term *gringite* or *grigri* as used in the United States, where it has the same meaning as magic, or "conjure" charm.

[3]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 373.

[4]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, p. 143.

Courtesy 8: *Mardi Gras and Rara: Jugglers, Mappoles, and Kings* (pp. 105-109)

[1]Métraux, *Ile Haïti*, p. 40.

[2]Performances of this kind have been observed in both East and West Africa and are well known in the region of Senegal. I saw a phallic masquerade, virtually identical with the Haitian version, in the neighborhood of Khartoum, Sudan.

Courtesy 9: *Land and Work* (pp. 110-121)

[1]Métraux, *The Peasant State of Haiti*, p. 180.

[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, pp. 8, describes Dahomean polygamous marriage in its various forms. Although Dahomean plural marriage is complex in terms of gifts, obligations, and forms.

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643 and being the personal property of the monarch and recipients of his
701 royal favor, were to constitute the perpetual support of his throne.
625 Only four thousand of these compulsory immigrants came, but
625 Christophe made them into very effective companies of police, whom he named the Royal Dahomets from the country of their origin. They performed the duties of a gendarmerie in all the districts of the North, drove the cultivators to their labors, watched over property and the security of the proprietors, and maintained industry and a strict subordination among all ranks of people in the kingdom.

175 Christophe's regular troops were well clothed and armed. They
701 were kept under stern discipline, no mercy or relaxation being
[703] shown them; delinquency on their part brought flagellation or a military execution. The troops received only a nominal stipend, and each soldier was required to gain his subsistence by cultivating a few acres of ground allotted to him out of the national domain. The usual quarter of this income had, of course, to be turned over as a tax to the state. Although the King's power was maintained by soldiers, he never coddled them. "The soldiers of the army as well as the laborers of the plantations lived in perpetual dread of the rod of authority," wrote Brown.[14] They seem to have developed a tradition of some special fetish power possessed by Christophe, a sort of *mana*, to use anthropological terminology. Even princes and dukes were chastised by the King's orders, and then made to do menial work by way of further punishment.

Conditions in the republic of Pétion were similar and yet different —similar in that soldiers formed the support of the government, different in that Pétion did not rule by fear. Every individual man between 16 and 60, a few cultivators excepted, was required by law to be a soldier, either in the *corps solde* (regular troops of the line), or in the *corps non solde* (national guard). The former, both under Pétion and in the early days of Boyer, had about 40,000 men distributed in strong detachments in towns and communes all over the
[914] country. Their costume, instead of being neat, uniform, and daily inspected as with Christophe's army, was ragged and mismatched; they managed according to popular parlance "to find linen on every
[466] hedge." They were paid from fifty cents to a dollar a month, ac-
[541] cording to the existing solvency or exigency of the state. Each week
[612] end a parade and review was held, and then a small fatigue party was taken to do actual duty, the others being dismissed until the next

14. Op. cit., II, 209.

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527 On Saturday nights one hears the drums beating all over the country, but if one follows the sound he is more than likely to end [534] up at nothing more exoteric than a neighborhood dance. Other [535] musical instruments than drums are rare, but any community has drums; and these set a rhythm to which one can dance. Generally food is available at these affairs, as well as drinks both hard and soft. 273 It is not extraordinary to discover that a few of the men have drunk rather freely of clairin, the raw rum of the country; most drunkenness seems to lead to good-natured ribaldry rather than to offensive violence. It is unusual for a drunken man to cause damage of any 535 serious nature. The dancing corresponds neither to American ballroom dancing nor to set folk dancing. Most of it is done solo, and an individual participates or remains on the outskirts of the enclosure as 533 the mood of the moment impels him. Over the beat of the drum can be heard one of the current songs, more than likely a bit smutty in nature, and frequently poking fun at some well-known personage, or making allusions which in normal speech might seem crude.

• 541 One of the popular Sunday afternoon sports is the *gaguère*, or cock-[525] fight, held under a shelter back of a home. Much small betting goes on. The spectators sit or stoop close around the dusty ring, talking to the cock they are backing, commenting on the fight, offering advice to the owner. Between rounds the cocks are rubbed down, sprayed with water or rum, fondled and excited anew. Toward the latter stages of any fight the spectacle becomes gory and, to the uninitiated, distinctly cruel.

526 There is singularly little sport in Haiti. Elite youths play tennis; boys enjoy football; and swimming is a common diversion. Few sports are competitive and, so far as the writer has observed, the peasants have in their games practically nothing resembling organization.

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a great outcry of acclamation was heard from those present. Afterwards the visitor, always under the influence of his god, greeted everyone with the crossed-arm handshake of the *loa*,* and ended by dancing opposite the young woman to whom so many gods came — now possessed by still another deity.

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This dance offered an especially striking demonstration of the hold of the Church on the people of Mirebalais. Feeling that motion pictures of an actual *vodun* dance should be made available so that the real nature of the ceremony could be demonstrated and comparisons made between the Haitian and Dahomean practices of which his visitors had told him, the *hungan* himself made all effort to continue the dance until the morning light would permit pictures to be taken; as an inducement to remain, additional *clairin* and biscuits were provided. As daylight approached, however, on one of the few mornings when no early fog obscured the light, the participants began to slip away, so that by sunrise only the usual fifteen or twenty young folk shuffling about the central post were to be seen. Later, in the village, the procession held the first Sunday of each month before the principal mass of the day passed through the square. Many of those who, as dancers or possessed ones, had been active in this *vodun* dance could be seen in it; while next to the priest himself marched the woman who had been possessed by her eleven *vodun* gods during the night just ended.

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he is assured of more solicitous care from her and more deferential treatment from her children. And though when this has occurred his "legal" wife may at his death come with a justice of the peace to claim his body and his effects, this move is anticipated, so that what he has given the *placée* wife and her children is usually well out of the way. "Often they find only the four walls of the house."

A certain number of unmarried men result from this system of plural matings, some of whom remain single by preference, particularly in the cities, where the incidence of homosexuality far exceeds that found in the country. In Mirebalais itself, when the final withdrawal of the American Marines from Haiti was being celebrated, a dance called *manuba*, significantly enough the only one held indoors, was one in which male dancers danced together in couples. The sexual problem of the younger unmarried men is more often solved by means of liaisons with married women, though this has its dangers in the countryside, where the movements of every individual are known and the least tendency to unsanctioned social behavior is soon the subject for widespread gossip. Prostitutes are found everywhere, and they are by no means visited by unmarried men alone. On the whole, sex "adventures" are more indulged in by men than women, even allowing for the tendency of some women to have affairs with youths. A belief widely held, that plural wives tend so to exhaust the virility of a man that he must seek "remedies" of a magical nature from the priests of the *vodun* cult and from sorcerers, must also be mentioned. Frigidity is a principal cause for female homosexuality, and, because of a wife's reluctance to satisfy her husband, it not infrequently happens that she is sent back to her parents, where she may seek out other women. The most prevalent Haitian attitude toward homosexuality in either sex, it may be remarked, is one of derision rather than vindictiveness, as the term applied to effeminate men, *comandvas*, may suggest.

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565 social ladder, while others are ex-peasants on the way up. Acceptance
569 by the élite entails requirements severe enough to discourage many aspirants; at the same time, the heavens can be stormed by those
[55] willing to endure the heat and strain of battle. Lacking descent from former affranchis, the only means by which the ambitious may achieve entrance into the élite caste is by money, education, sustained social show and leisure, "proper" marriage, and separation from lower caste friends; and one generation rarely suffices to win acceptance by the élite.

565 The townspeople rarely attempt to break down the caste barrier. Servants, day laborers, delivery clerks, menials in general, they consider themselves one step removed from the peasants, and they know their place in the social hierarchy. By the scrupulous observances of the élite, by the casual acceptance of their status by the peasants, even by the very effort of the ambitious to improve their lot, the caste system is constantly reaffirmed and fulfilled.

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565 829 ill-mannered vulgarity, their superficiality of mind, their poor taste. He knows well enough that it is not fair to judge a whole nation by a few representatives, yet it is clear to him that these raucous whites regard themselves, and are by others regarded, as lords of creation who need never worry about social acceptance. The Haitian knows himself the superior of most of these white people, whether the test be intellectual or on the basis of gentility. Nevertheless, the white inferior is preferred by all the world to his Haitian superior. The white American can go anywhere and, with his carefree self-assurance, see all doors open to him; the cultured Haitian can go few places away from home, and in even those few many doors are yet closed in his face.

Whether the result of his reflections, which must be provoked anew each time the tourist invasion begins, leads him to bitterness or to cynical acceptance depends upon his temperament. It would be almost impossible not to envy the assurance of the white man. And what must life be like when the thought of one's birth, over which one had no control, forever rises as a specre to haunt one's daily awareness?

Distress of mind may lead the élite in public to impassioned defense of Haitian achievement, but in private he will be all the while imitating the white man and accepting his judgments. The word "ambivalence" is descriptive of his attitude: he wishes to go both ways, to justify Haiti, yet to be regarded as white. Haitian tradition pulls him in one direction, white superiorities the other. There is probably not a single member of the élite who does not feel as if half life's burdens would disappear if only one were white. The darker complexion is one of those hard facts which simply cannot be got around. But one's children can be lighter, and one's grandchildren lighter still, if one marries wisely.

565 55 This is a hope of the future. Meantime there is a pattern of behavior for the present. What has made the white man master of the Western World seems to have been a combination of money, political power, intellectual attainment, and social domination of inferiors. After these, therefore, the proper youth must strive indefatigably. Since these aims are common to the élite they are hardly mentioned; indeed, one wonders sometimes whether even the people themselves are aware of the foundations of their ambition.

No élite man in Haiti ever made money by working with his

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hands. In colonial times farmers came to plantation owners, and since then have come only to political officeholders. With money one can go to France where he will be accepted as a human being, not turned aside as a Negro; with money one can get an education, live a life of leisure, acquire luxuries. Hence the popularity of law as a profession, for it is the career by which one enters politics. That a president should begin life as an impecunious barrister and end it as a well-to-do landlord, the owner of several villas and motorcars, seems praiseworthy, natural, logical. The American success story is "from log cabin to White House," but with no implication of monetary gain from such progress; the Haitian success story is rather "from penury to plutocracy."

It is not enough, however, to aim high in the material sphere. In proportion to their numbers the élite are extraordinarily ambitious for intellectual achievement. A distinction is sometimes made between the social élite and the intellectual élite, the former being decidedly more numerous.[1] Conversation in a Haitian drawing room is likely to be on about the same intellectual plane as in America except in specifically literary and artistic circles. Poetry, philosophy, literary trends, historical speculation are staples of discussion in more than a few homes. A recent president wrote many metaphysical poems. An American author, attending a social function consisting chiefly of secretaries of state, was amazed to find the group absorbed in a dispute about poetry.[2]

Aristocrats have always kept the lower orders at a distance socially. In Haiti this rule is observed with rigor. To suggest that a possible reason for such harshness of attitude and behavior toward servants and working people might be fear lest white visitors should class all persons of color together would be unkind, though not unsound. In general, there is a deep conviction that the masses are stupid. Although persons of culture exist who are generally solicitous for the betterment of their life, there is really no comparison which will make clear to the white reader the ordinary attitude of mind of

1. This distinction is clearly made in John Lobb, "Caste and Class in Haiti," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLVI, No. 1 (July, 1940), p. 30 ff.

2. W. B. Seabrook, *The Magic Island*, p. 161. "On my way home from the palace," concludes the author, "I reflected how queer it would seem for a group of cabinet ministers and Treasury officials at the White House to be earnestly discussing the poetry of an American anthology which included metaphysical love-lyrics by Calvin Coolidge."

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its good health or good looks or some other attribute may unwittingly bring harm to it. For such reasons the child is often burned slightly on the cheek, a ritual carried out by the vodun priest in order that the scar may "give one with evil intentions toward the child an 'occupation' to divert his attention, that would otherwise be devoted to carrying out some evil design."

There is some question as to whether, as in so many Negro cultures, the child is given a special name at birth which is regarded as sacred and a thing to be concealed. In one instance it was stated that while one's "real" name was that given at the time of the Church baptism, everyone has a "nickname" (*petit nom*) that is known to the father and mother alone until the child is old enough to guard its secret character. This name is never spoken aloud, for if an enemy came to know it, he might use it for purposes of black magic against its owner. However, no agreement exists in Mirebalais as to this practice, which may represent a survival of a widespread West African custom.

A child born with a caul is believed to be "strong" in combating all evil spirits. The caul is dried and reduced to powder, and the infant is given some of the powder in water two or three days after birth. If a child is born with the navel cord wrapped about his throat, he is believed by some to be destined for leadership, though others do not hold this to be a significant omen. A child born feet-foremost is regarded with distaste, so that where possible, he is turned about in the womb to facilitate a head presentation. If this cannot be done, the child when he grows up is reproached: "You came like a demon." More often, however, if a child with breech presentation is not stillborn, it is not believed that he will long survive. All such occurrences are attributed to bad magic, and the husband does not delay to seek out a diviner to discover for him what supernatural forces had caused the evil.

Breast-feeding begins on the third day, but if the milk does

belong to the father, who, in turn, is the legally recognized father of all the offspring of his wife unless he divorces her—something which, because of Church regulations, occurs but rarely. Children born outside legal marriage have no right to the name of their father. Such a one is entered under his mother's name in the record of births, though he may and often does take his father's name in school or later in life, this ultimately becoming the name by which he is known and which he hands on to his children. It is in the inheritance of the father's property that children born of the various types of matings are said to be most strongly differentiated, though it was particularly with this method of distributing heritable goods reported in Mirebalais that officials in the capital disagreed. The assertion is made that while the children of a "legal" wife inherit three quarters of the estate, and the other "natural" children receive one fourth, the "illegitimate" offspring have no legal right to any of the dead man's property. They must either be provided for by their father before his death or be aided on occasion by a natural brother who has inherited from their common father and feels a moral obligation toward these children of their father. Children of plural wives call each other by the terms "brother" and "sister," and in some instances they get on fairly well together. More generally, however, their attitudes toward one another are colored by those of their mothers, so that verbal if not physical encounters may take place when they meet.

Where, as perhaps in the majority of cases, there is a monogamous union, "legal" or "*placée*," cemented by mutual affection and mutual interest in the future of the children, life goes on calmly. Each spouse performs the tasks allotted by custom, and the children are reared in an atmosphere which varies with the fortunes and temperaments of those who make up the household. Fathers are said to prefer their daughters, and mothers their sons, among their children, but for this the Haitian has no explanation other than the phrase: "This is natural."

one with the Holy Virgin. St Jacques has become one with Ogoun, St. George with Linglounou, St. Anthony and St. Christopher with Legba, guardian of the highway, and St. Nicholas with Marassa Trois. In northern Haiti the word zouge (from the French, *les anges*—the angels) sometimes is used synonymously with loa or mystère. As for the saints, they are sometimes identified without loa, sometimes with another.

No one in Haiti knows all the loa. Some of them are so ancient as to be nearly forgotten. Others are spontaneous creations or revelations on the part of a possessed person. Some loa names may be the result of a devotee's seizing upon a word or phrase in a religious song and imparting to it the concept of a loa. Sometimes a word in a phrase of *langage* is taken to be a loa's name, and sometimes agglutinated Creole words become the name of a loa.

The possibility of frequent additions to the list of loa is heightened still further by the general illiteracy of the Haitian people and the lack of a stabilizing influence in the written word. The Creole language has marked regional differences. Furthermore, change of consonants or vowels is a commonplace occurrence, so that a single loa's name may have several forms. One may well wonder whether Azaca, Aclijo, and Akaclijo were not originally a single individual. Nevertheless, in the Haitian scheme they are now different personalities.

There is one more complicating factor in identifying loa or compiling a comprehensive roster—the use of multiple names. In addition to the names by which they are generally known, many of the deities have a variety of nicknames. Some of these nicknames are in Creole, some appear to be of West African provenience. The deity Agwé, for example, is frequently called Coqui-nan-Mè—Coqui-in-the-Sea. A loa may have four, five, or even more such nicknames. Sometimes short forms are used. Damballa may be called Da, Sèbo may be called Se, Azaka may be called Za. In addition, some deities have "secret" names, which theoretically are known only to the priesthood and the inner circle of servitors. Multiple naming and the reservation of certain names for special occasions appear to have West African precedents.

In the naming of the loa no neat and methodical system is apparent at any point. The "surname," or what may be in some cases a generic designation, may appear first or last. One may hear Ogoun Changò or Changò Ogoun, Général Brisé or Brisé Général, Congo Savane or Savane Congo. (This is characteristic of everyday speech. A former president of Haiti, Nord Alexis, is often called Alexis Nord.) The "surname" can be a description of "tribal" or "national" affiliation, regional provenience, character and temperament, or an indication of function. Thus we find

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XI

DOMESTIC LIFE OF THE PEASANTS

HAITI apparently has more women than men. This is not merely the casual impression of visitors, but a general conviction among local scholars and priests who know the country intimately. There is no census, of course, so that an investigator lacks means of confirming an unusual biological situation in which, it is said, there are five women to four men, in which many more girls than boys are born, and in which the death rate is higher for females than for males. 162 [69] [163] [165]

During slavery, more men than women were imported into the colony, but the slaughters of the insurrection and the revolution more than balanced the two sexes. The colonial census of 1790, probably inaccurate, showed 452,000 blacks and 28,000 affranchis who had some degree of Negro blood; a census of 1805, which certainly could not have been more than an estimate based on reports of plantation overseers and army officers, reported only 380,000 Haitians. This would indicate a staggering loss of 200,000 within fifteen years. Even with a reasonable juggling of the figures, it is obvious that deaths increased during the troubled years, and obviously males rather than females met their death on battlefields. Commentators on Haiti under Dessalines already speak of the preponderance of women. Other writers during the nineteenth century expressed the opinion that women outnumbered men, but the only figures offered were those in one parish for 1821-26—possibly atypical even if the figures are accurate—showing that 1,305 girls were born as compared with 1,209 boys.[1] 175 162

Certain physicians whose practice takes them into country districts and also certain priests have stated their belief that the number of females born exceeds the number of males. Although these men are in a good position to judge, the statement remains an opinion not yet validated by statistics; if it should prove true, it would be an extraordinary biological freak.[2] Another observation must be set 163 [114]

1. These are the figures of Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Haiti*, II, 118.

2. One physician thinks that the ratio would be as high as five girls to three boys in a few parishes; and a priest recounts his experiences in baptizing girls named "Assez-fille" (Girls-enough), so called by their parents to indicate to deity that the next child should by rights be a boy. Professional observations such as these merely corroborate the general opinion as to the excess of females in the population. [114] [163] [55]

534 hands, and *chairin* poured over these, but on this occasion the rite was postponed, for the eggs would have dampened the drumheads so they could not have been played for the evening's dance. Yet this deviation from the strict ritual did not permit any laxity in meeting the obligation when promised—that is, the day following the dance.

534 The *houngan* took charge as soon as the prayers were finished. Placing the drums to form a triangle on the ground, with the iron, rattles, and sticks near by, he put the offerings inside the space enclosed by the bodies, and with white cornmeal made *serrure* about them, while at the foot of each drum he placed an egg; then, covering the drums with a clean cloth, he threw parched corn on it. From time to time he interrupted his silent invocations by ringing a bell held in one hand, until the arrival of the time for the vehement haggling over the price of his services, which interrupted the ritual. This matter settled, he asked for the names to be given the [552] drums, and proceeded to "christen" the small one Gran' Sèlèghe, the middle-sized Damballa, and the great drum Ogun Shange. At this point, were the owner desirous of having special powers given his drums, as is frequently the case, the *houngan* would endow them with a *n'âme*, or soul, at the same time instructing the spirit of the drums, called *hwatde*, in what was desired of it, and prescribing what must be given the drums by their owner to make their powers effective. But in this case no such *n'âme* was asked, and the ceremony continued.

Summoning the gods, he lifted the cloth over the drums and instructed the "father" to pour water in three places between them, to set the drums on end, and to beat one of them. This was the *seconde*, called Damballa, and its having been initially struck indicated that the god after whom it was named was most important for this set. This ended the ceremony of baptism, and the drummers took charge so that the 534 evening's dance might begin, for now the drums were ready

one with the Holy Virgin. St. Jacques has become one with Ogoun, St. George with Linglesses, St. Anthony and St. Christopher with Legba, guardian of the highway, and St. Nicholas with Marassa Trois. In northern Haiti the word *ange* (from the French, *les anges*—the angels) sometimes is used synonymously with loa or mystère. As for the saints, they are sometimes identified with one loa, sometimes with another.

No one in Haiti knows all the loa. Some of them are so ancient as to be nearly forgotten. Others are spontaneous creations or revelations on the part of a possessed person. Some loa names may be the result of a dreamer's arising upon a word or phrase in a religious song and imparting to it the concept of a loa. Sometimes a word in a phrase of *language* is taken to be a loa's name, and sometimes agglutinated Creole words become the name of a loa.

The possibility of frequent additions to the list of loa is brightened still further by the general illiteracy of the Haitian people and the lack of a stabilizing influence in the written word. The Creole language has marked regional differences. Furthermore, change of consonants or vowels is a commonplace occurrence, so that a single loa's name may have several forms. One may well wonder whether Aza, Adja, and Akadja were not originally a single individual. Nevertheless, in the Haitian scheme they are now different personalities.

There is one more complicating factor in identifying loa or compiling a comprehensive roster—the use of multiple names. In addition to the names by which they are generally known, many of the deities have a variety of nicknames. Some of these nicknames are in Creole, some appear to be of West African provenience. The deity Agwé, for example, is frequently called Coqui-eau-Mer—Coqui-in-the-Sea. A loa may have four, five, or even more such nicknames. Sometimes short forms are used. Damballa may be called Da, Sobo may be called So, Azaka may be called Za. In addition, some deities have "secret" names, which theoretically are known only to the priesthood and the inner circle of servitors. Multiple naming and the reservation of certain names for special occasions appear to have West African precedents.

In the naming of the loa no neat and methodical system is apparent at any point. The "surname," or what may be in some cases a generic designation, may appear first or last. One may hear Ogoun Chango or Chango Ogoun, Général Brisé or Brisé Général, Congo Savane or Savane Congo. (This is characteristic of everyday speech. A former president of Haiti, Nord Alexis, is often called Alexis Nord.) The "surname" can be a description of "tribal" or "national" affiliation, regional provenience, character and temperament, or an indication of function. Thus we find

Boulicha Nago, or Boulicha of the Nagos; Erzilie Wido and Erzilie Dobu, possibly from Wido and Dobu in Dahomey; Tipzan Pied Chiche (Tipzan Dry Feet), a loa of bad character, "dry feet" signifying malevolence; and Legba Grand Chemin, or Legba of the Highway.

Identification of loa is often made difficult by the use of the generic or family title only. The term Nago covers all the loa associated with this "nation" (Nago Pimont, Amine Nago, Boulicha Nago, etc.), but in a song or service any one of them is as likely as not to be referred to simply as Nago, with no clue to his exact identity. Each listener takes the name to designate the Nago loa with whom he is most familiar, unless possession occurs and the loa is otherwise identified by the behavior of his "horse."

On the whole, it appears that there was in the beginning a strong awareness of regional origins. There are names among the cult pantheons which indicate Senegal, Dahomey, Nigeria, Congo, and Angola origins. Many loa bear the names of African towns. Among the Ogoun family of loa, for example, are such regional designations as Badagry and Jibbé, the first being a town in Nigeria and the second in Dahomey. It is clear that a detailed geographical knowledge of certain West African regions would considerably illuminate a study of Haitian loa.

Local shrines, too, doubtless enter into the naming system. Badagry is the name of a town in Nigeria, and it is also a Dahomean word designating the structure in which young men used to be circumcised and initiated into the secrets of warriors. In this particular light, the loa Ogoun Badagry might be regarded as the deity of that particular ritual center.

In discussing the complicated relationship of their loa, Haitians sometimes say: "There are seven of everything. There are seven Marassas, seven Ogouns, seven Erzilies. There are seven brothers and sisters in every family of loa." Or they say something such as: "There is only one Legba, but there are seven. There is only one Ogoun, but he has many moods and names. There is only one Erzilie, but she has seven faces." This concept is also held by the Arara (Arada) cult of Cuba. It is interesting to note the extent to which duplications and new generations of loa have been set up into family households in the most literal sense. These families are still growing. In the Gédé family I have counted more than thirty seemingly distinct individuals (see Appendix I). Herskovits mentions a number of others, and still more have been cited by other writers on the subject. When I pointed out to some Haitians that the Gédé family numbered far more than seven individuals, they were unable to account for the situation. Other Haitians took the vast army of Gédés as a matter of course. The Ogoun family, too, is large and growing. Twenty-seven Ogouns are listed in the compilation in Appendix I. Still more have been recorded elsewhere.

[See p. 317 ff., Category 116. -- Analyst]

its good health or good looks or some other attribute may unwittingly bring harm to it. For such reasons the child is often burned slightly on the cheek, a ritual carried out by the medicine priest in order that the scar may "give one with evil intentions toward the child an 'occupation' to divert his attention, that would otherwise be devoted to carrying out some evil design."

There is some question as to whether, as in so many Negro cultures, the child is given a special name at birth which is regarded as sacred and a thing to be concealed. In one instance it was stated that while one's "real" name was that given at the time of the Church baptism, everyone has a "nickname" (petit nom) that is known to the father and mother alone until the child is old enough to guard its secret character. This name is never spoken aloud, for if an enemy came to know it, he might use it for purposes of black magic against its owner. However, no agreement exists in Mirebalais as to this practice, which may represent a survival of a widespread West African custom.[9]

A child born with a caul is believed to be "strong" in combating all evil spirits. The caul is dried and reduced to powder, and the infant is given some of the powder in water two or three days after birth. If a child is born with the navel cord wrapped about his throat, he is believed by some to be destined for leadership, though others do not hold this to be a significant omen. A child born feet-foremost is regarded with distaste, so that where possible, he is turned about in the womb to facilitate a head presentation. If this cannot be done, the child when he grows up is reproached: "You came like a demon." More often, however, if a child with breech presentation is not stillborn, it is not believed that he will long survive. All such occurrences are attributed to bad magic, and the husband does not delay to seek out a diviner to discover for him what supernatural forces had caused the evil.

Breast-feeding begins on the third day, but if the milk does

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512 neighbors paying friendly visits and of playing children gradu-
[264] ally become stilled. It is the time for the evening meal. By nine o'clock at the latest all is quiet and Mirebalais, man and beast, is asleep.

796 The *vodun* drums are heard only on Saturday nights, and
527 then the dance must be sufficiently close to the town, and the wind in the right direction, for the sound to be audible.
[556] Permits for these dances must be obtained, and are regularly given by the police officials — or were in 1934 — and word is passed on that on a given Saturday certain households will give *vodun* dances. If the dances are held in the foothills to the west, the Tombe River must be forded, and the existence of such a barrier between the village and the site of the dance makes this a favorite region in which to hold them, even though they may have official sanction. During the rainy sea-
[484] son attendance at dances on the opposite bank of the Arti-
[501] bonite River depends on the height of the stream, for when it is in flood not even the dugout canoes of the Haitians can cross it, while the ferry which Moreau de St. Mery speaks of as having been established in 1749 does not even exist in local tradition.[14] Yet no dance lacks participants or spectators, for these occasions furnish the principal opportunity for recreation even as they fill their proper religious function. Early in
[798] the week discussions can be heard of the dances to be held, and though the official frown of the Catholic priest is always to be reckoned with, the importance of these dances, and the numbers who attend them, do not seem markedly lessened by
[554] this fact. Those whose social position in the community makes them more sensitive to such criticism merely take the precaution to slip quietly out of town after dark.

796 When occasions of local or national significance and church holidays are celebrated, the town is full of country folk and
[788] visitors from the cities. Christmas and New Year's, Mardi Gras and Easter are all periods for such celebrations, while the first Sunday of every month witnesses a religious procession

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the newcomer persists in retaining the place, an informal appeal is taken to the local magistrate, who invariably settles the matter by deciding in favor of the original occupant. 443 626 629

Each woman tends to specialize in certain commodities, such as meat or cloths or notions or baskets. The venders of foodstuffs, other than meat, however, vary their offerings with the season. This latter class of sellers mainly comprises women who, living in the town, constitute a group of "middlemen," either buying produce at the country markets, or, going off with their pack animals into the back country, return with saddle-bags loaded with the purchases they have made direct from the farmer.[8] 443 442

Country women are also well represented among the traders, and as they come streaming into town on market days with their head burdens, or driving the heavily laden, slow-plodding donkeys, they fill the streets with color and movement that make up one of the most picturesque aspects of Mirebalais life. A load may consist of one type of produce only, or a woman may bring rice, maize, beans, and bananas, as well as home-made brooms and baskets. All transactions in the market are for cash, and there is no barter of any kind, for the pattern of a money economy has been too deeply lodged in Haitian tradition to allow any other mode of exchange. Prices are based on supply and demand rather than on any agreement between sellers, since contact with the capital causes the current prices paid there for all kinds of produce to be generally known. Another factor which enters into price-fixing, however, is prestige. It is regarded as a mark of incompetence for a woman, whether from country or town, to return home with unsold produce, and since the reputation of being a clever trader is highly valued, this is avoided when at all possible, and the vender adjusts her prices as the day wears on to insure that she will dispose of everything she has brought. 443 [482] [492] [436] [439] 443 435 [554] [558]

In Mirebalais, as elsewhere, the markets are best attended during harvest months, when by official count as many as 443

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558 793 685 given him by a third party for whom he had done what was euphemistically called "a piece of work." The evidence clearly showed that the animal, which he had killed to feed a *combite*, had been stolen, and since this *gangan* could not establish his defense that he was an innocent receiver of stolen goods, he was convicted and sentenced to three months in prison, and to pay the owner of the pig the exorbitant sum — sixty-five gourdes — asked as damages. Sympathy was very generally with the *gangan*, but the opinion most often heard expressed was that his power had obviously been lessened by his misuse of the *connaissance* the gods had given him, or they would not have permitted even his arrest, much less his conviction. To reinforce the point, specific reference was repeatedly made to the *hungan* most popular in the valley at the time, about whom it was said that, for example, were he accused before a court, the officers might even enter his house in search of him while he was present, but they would still be unable to see that he was before them.

793 435 554 Other attitudes held toward workers of magic developed in connection with this case. The popular *hungan* was often called on, it was said, because his work was well done and his fees were not too high; it was pointed out that there were renowned *vodun* priests who charged five hundred gourdes for a *service* which this man directed effectively for but little over one hundred; moreover, such men often failed to remove the evil deities which were troubling the family that employed them, but would instead add more, so that their clients would soon have need of them again. Practices such as these, especially that of overcharging, are frowned upon by the *loa*, and if persisted in they "spoil" the power of the priest. This was one of the reasons why, in the opinion of many individuals, the *gangan* in question had been convicted. "He was once a remarkable *gangan*, but he has spoiled his *loa* by using them for evil, and by asking too much money for what he was employed

793 435 776 784

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769 17 a *mangé* is given, and that evening, when the feast ends, dances are held. Two or three *tonnelles* are provided, the most important of these being the one where the Martinique cycle, the social dances most beloved by the ancestors, is danced. In one of the remaining two a European *bal* is held, and in the other are the *vodun* dancers. Thus even in connection with a commemorative Church mass for the dead the *mangé morts* and the dancing of African dances are included.

595 177 178 [554] The institution of plural marriage, which is socially recognized though not legally sanctioned, is obviously African. Though the *placée* is held in respect and her place in society carries no reproach for herself or her children because of any connotation of immorality, it is of significance for an understanding of the manner of cultural change that prestige in marriage goes with the monogamic union blessed by the Church, and that the "wife"—the woman who is addressed as "Madame"—holds definitely higher social position than the *placée*. Officially the Haitian State is in accord with the position of the Church and recognizes only the European monogamic marriage. Socially, however, African plural marriage is not only tolerated but accepted as a matter of course, and in those instances where plural marriage takes on its most exuberant form, as when men of position have as many as six or seven *placées* in addition to a legal wife, its very size tends to give such a family group, or at least its head, the enviable esteem of his fellow-citizens.

17 [593] [605] [583] Within the family, the deference toward older members and the duties and attitudes toward parents-in-law are African both in form and in spirit. The exaction of guarantees from a young man before marriage, and the necessity of his proving to the family of his fiancée that he can support her, are perhaps in their generalized form universals, but as found in Haiti show once more a retention of specific aboriginal [584] traditions. On the other hand, such aspects of marriage as the formal *lettre de demand* sent when a match is arranged, or the

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especially by the drummers. Experience among other Caribbean Negro cultures and in Africa itself has failed to reveal greater skill in calling forth intricate rhythms from batteries of drums than can be found at any Haitian religious gathering. The enthusiasm with which a man takes his place at a drum, the manner in which he loses himself in his drumming, the skill with which he maintains the time of his complex beats in common with two other drummers and those who manipulate the rattles and the iron, bespeak long training and a passionate devotion to the art. The same is true of dancing. The best drummer, the finest dancer, hold positions of esteem in the community, and on occasion their fame will go beyond the valley, an occurrence as unusual as it is valued. The excellence of the drumming and dancing and the concomitant artistry in song can be understood when one considers the age at which training is begun in these arts. At Mirebalais an infant of no more than two years has been seen to dance creditably, while a young boy of six gave a demonstration of drumming that spoke eloquently of his promise as a drummer of talent. Before every *vodun* dance the boys take over the drums while the younger girls dance to their rhythms. They are watched with a critical eye by their elders, who from time to time correct them or praise those who do well.

The accompanying musical forms are almost entirely African in their rhythmic structure, but European influence is traceable in their melodic line, which varies from unchanged European folk-melodies to purely African songs. In the use of the falsetto, however, in the statement of a theme by a leader and its repetition by a chorus, and in the countless modulations introduced into the song, the singing is entirely African, as are the postures struck by those singing.

The importance of the dance is apparent from the large range of dances. Of *vodun* dances there are the *avalou*, or *yanvalou*, a word meaning supplication in the speech of Whydah; the specialized steps for the various Rada and Pétro gods; for

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793 approval of the candidate's elevation is needed. He is also regarded as
[969] being on more intimate terms with the family ancestors who, likewise,
[783] must be in accord with the proceedings. The candidate for the asson is confined within the hounfor for a number of days, during which he takes purification baths and participates in other rituals. The rites that take place during this period are prescribed by the elder priest who has assumed responsibility. When the purification is ended, the candidate emerges into the *peristyle* (roofed court) to participate in the general service, and to undergo further tests.

Present during the ceremonies are all the principal houngans of the region—men who will be friendly associates of the new priest or, possibly, unfriendly competitors. The candidate is tested on his knowledge
[789] of how to use the asson and the tiny hand bell, and in the course of the service he is mounted by the loa who is the chief protector of the cult tem-
[782] ple. Animals are sacrificed, and all the loa sacred to the hounfor are invoked and asked for their approval and support. But it is not only the loa
[794] and the dead who must indicate their approval. The elder houngan polls the hounsi kanzo on whether they will accept their new cult chief and fol-
[533] low him. He also asks the chief drummer, who polls his assistant drummers. It is taken for granted that the decision is in the hands of the hounsi. The consensus is known before the actual service, but the formality of asking the question is observed. Should the hounsi refuse to accept the candidate for the asson, the elevation cannot take place.

793 The city and the countryside contain many self-styled houngans and
554 bocors who are not recognized as bona fide by the community, regardless
627 of the route by which they claim to have achieved their station. Sometimes
[791] they are regarded as *pas fort* (not strong); that is, they do not have profound knowledge and understanding. The Haitian is quick to detect the difference between a houngan who knows and one who does not know. Many are stated to be outright fakes. One man who attempted to hold a service in Port-au-Prince aroused such contempt and disgust that a number of persons who had been drawn by genuine interest walked out with remarks that the man should be punished. In fact, his failure to show any
[533] essential qualifications for the houngan's role was commented upon in a song of ridicule that made its appearance at a secular dance that same night. The song noted some of the humorous aspects of the service, such as when the "impostor" struck himself vigorously on the head with the flat of a machete to show his "strength" and virtually incapacitated himself for the rest of the evening.

346 It is easily observed that no two hounfors are exactly alike. They differ

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175 793 [659]

ing Boyer's administration, 1818–1843, Catholicism was the state religion but the president was its chief. Leyburn notes:

> Every effort of the state failing to provide proper religious leadership, Boyer resigned himself to permitting those who professed to be priests to practice in the republic. There were seventy so-called priests in the country in 1840. Some of them had once been in the holy orders but had been unfrocked: they found in Haiti not only a haven but a fertile field for gain. In addition to these religious renegades came adventurers who knew just enough of ritual and theology to use the priestly garb as a cover for easy graft. . . . They baptized houses, boats, and doorposts, and blessed fetish charms or amulets, all for a fee.*

175 659

It was not until 1860, after the death of the "Emperor" Soulouque, that Haiti signed a concordat with the Roman Church.

175 793

The role of the prêt' savane became defined after the slave revolts of 1791. His cue was taken from the activities of freebooting Europeans who apparently needed neither religious orders nor profound Catholic knowledge for their pseudo-clerical work. And the long period without a responsible priesthood gave the "bush priest" an opportunity to flourish.

793 77 [554]

The prêt' savane of today has a respected place in the community, though his prestige is not so great as that of the houngan on the one hand or the Catholic priest on the other. His place is guaranteed by his ability to bring to the Vodoun service elements of a competing system which the houngan, operating within the framework of African tradition, does not provide. Acceptance of these Catholic elements as a peripheral part of Vodoun is characteristic of much West African religious thinking, in which new deities and rituals may be added to the old when circumstances require.

793 78

The prêt' savane opens many Vodoun services with an *action de grâce*, reads prayers when a death has occurred, participates in marriage rites, and "baptizes" the hounfor, the cult drums, and the sacred rattles—not to mention the loa themselves! But it is the houngan's powers that are paramount. The "bush priest" is in a sense performing a service for the Vodoun priest, whose rituals and administrations are regarded as the effective and vital ones. The prêt' savane is a cultural afterthought.

[184]

In certain remote and isolated mountain places the prêt' savane is virtually unknown. But there is no sense of deprivation, for the cult priests —even the poorest and the most rustic—have their own way of dealing with the saints, God, and the forces of nature. An aged houngan of the Morne la Selle region explained it this way:

"In everything that is done, God's permission is asked first. Most houngans in the mountains do not know how to read, and they don't know how to pray. But they know many things. They know where the sun rises,

796 793 [594] [202] Then a well-dressed young man entered, and the drummers swiftly changed to the salute reserved for guests of distinction. The hounsi sang, "Président passe là, l'ap monté au gouvernment!" and waved paper flags and kerchiefs. The young man was a distant relative of Stephan's; he also was a houngan.

After a while Stephan brought from his hounfor a second asson, or ritual rattle, and another small hand bell, both of which he handed to the young man. He was extending the courtesy of his hounfor, sharing his [576] instruments of authority and religious power with his fellow houngan. Then followed an exhibition between the two houngans that was half duel and half ballet. They stood face to face, each of them holding the asson in one hand and the tiny bell in the other. Stephan was "testing" the young houngan for the edification of all present. Each tiny move made by Stephan was duplicated simultaneously by his guest, as though he were a mirrored reflection.

Every posture Stephan made was duplicated instantly by his guest. The assons and the bells were agitated constantly. The rattle in the young man's hand did precisely what Stephan's did. The two men looked into each other's eyes with intensity, as though this bound their movements together and unified them. When Stephan twisted to the left, the other houngan twisted to the right. Every contortion of the young man was an exact replica of Stephan's movements. The two assons rattled out the same rhythms and the same signals; so did the bells. The backdrop for this "test" was provided by the drummers. The faces of the two men broke into a sweat from the intense nervous effort. At last it came to an end. A woman came forward and wiped their faces with a colored kerchief. The "testing" ceremony was over. The visiting houngan had been proved.

796 793 787 [532] [794] [776] Stephan then made a ritual vèvè, or maize-flour ritual drawing on the ground. Afterward there was more singing and dancing by the hounsi. They sang several songs for Ezilie Fréda, the "pure" loa. And Alexis Stephan went into a trance. It was unexpected. The servitors had not prepared for it. In this emergency the visiting houngan took over. He seemed a little anxious. He was unfamiliar with the particular psychological factors at play in this particular hounfor. He was not certain of the character of Stephan's possession. But he took over grimly. The houngénicon, an older woman, stepped forward to help. While the young houngan wielded the asson and bell, the woman issued instructions. Stephan, his head hanging back, his eyes closed, was supported by two of the hounsi. Other servitors hurriedly brought out a white sheet and spread it on the ground. A chair and a table were set upon the sheet, and Stephan was placed in the chair, where he now sat with his head hanging limply on his chest.

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588 does not marry his horse. People marry people. Loa marry loa. A man
588 may have a compact with a loa. That is not a marriage. Some of the
184 things that are going on down there in the Plain are not right. They are not the old way. In the old days we did things differently. We did not always run to the houngan. The grand famille knew how to talk to the loa. Up here we don't do things the way they do them down below in the city. People marry people. Loa marry loa."

588 Nevertheless, the practice in the neighborhood of Port-au-Prince and
776 the Cul-de-Sac Plain is for mystic marriages to take place when deemed
[184] useful, essential, or unavoidable. Foremost among the loa involved in these rites is Ezilie Wèdo, the "pure" one, the deity of love, sometimes identified with the Virgin Mary. Other loa known to have taken part in mystic marriages are Damballa, Ogoun, Ayida, Agwé, Gèdé Nimbo or one of his brothers, Cousin Zaka, and Général Clermeil. All these loa—significantly, I think—have clearly defined personalities; much is known about their character and behavior, their likes and dislikes.

588 A man married to Ezilie has special obligations to her for the dura-
[834] tion of his life. On certain days (especially Thursday, which is sacred to this deity), the mortal "husband" may not have sexual intercourse, even though he has a human wife.

588 Circumstances leading to a mystic marriage vary widely, but in each
755 case it is a cult priest who determines whether the rites should be
793 held. Perhaps a person has been afflicted with a series of illnesses or mis-
776 fortunes. He goes to his houngan, who begins a series of communications with the client's loa or with his own. Sometimes many loa are consulted before the desired information is available. Eventually it is determined that a certain deity, for reasons which may or may not
[753] be clear, wishes to have nuptial ties with the client. The illnesses or mis-
[777] fortunes that have been sent are a means of informing or warning the person concerned.

Sometimes the houngan relies on well-established divining methods to ascertain the cause of the difficulties. He may employ the *gembo* (a shell that slides on a string), ashes, or small shells that are thrown on
[787] the ground. Or he may rely on possession by a loa to provide the information.

If it is found that a loa is demanding marriage, arrangements are then made. The rites that follow may take place in a hounfor or at the house of the human bride or groom. Both a prêt' savane and a houngan officiate.

588 The person directly involved, like the loa, usually has something to
554 gain from a mystic marriage. For one thing, he can reasonably expect

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special future help and consideration from the loa (including the cessation of the illnesses or other misfortunes that have led to the marriage). A man (or woman) united with a loa in "matrimony" is "stronger" (*plus fort*) in his relationship to his environment and to other people. For this reason, the initiative for a mystic marriage does not always come from a loa. An ambitious person may seek such a marriage to strengthen his hand, to provide protection against other deities or human enemies, or to gain wealth or position. One observer, Odette Mentesson Rigaud, expresses the opinion that in such instances the marriage "is no longer a religious union of mystic love, but a magic pact."[10] The implicit element of "pact" is so evident in all mystic marriages, even when the initiative comes from the loa, that the distinction is not easily appreciated. However, persons suspected of "pushing" for a marriage with a loa are regarded as presumptuous or reckless, and often they are believed to have hidden motives. It is felt by many that the benefits of such a union can be only temporary and that catastrophe will ultimately follow.

A human party to marriage with a loa is deeply committed. He is subject to jealousy and anger on the part of his mystic mate. His behavior in the hounfor as in his daily life must be beyond the loa's reproach. He must avoid possession by other loa. And he must fulfill endless obligations. Sometimes the prospect of such binding ties is more than a man (or woman) is ready to face, and through the intercession of a strong houngan the loa may be induced to withdraw his demand for marriage. In that event, a special service is held, in the course of which the person buys his freedom with promises of special gifts and feasts for the deity.

One young man I knew was caught in a special dilemma—the houngan and the loa on one side, the Protestant Church on the other. The man, named Maurice, came from the mountains near Léogane. He was married but had no children. His wife's family, still living in Léogane, was Protestant. Maurice himself was a follower of Vodoun, and nominally a Catholic. When his wife was afflicted with a long series of headaches and earaches, Maurice consulted a houngan of Port-au-Prince. The houngan said that the loa Ayida Wèdo was demanding marriage with Maurice, and that the wife's illnesses were an indication of jealousy.

At the same time, the wife's parents came from Léogane and insisted that the girl's illnesses were brought about by God because Maurice was a follower of Vodoun. They demanded that he sever all his connections with Vodoun and become a Protestant.

After considerable anxiety, Maurice "purged" himself of Vodoun and

[10] [Odette Mennesson Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Voudoun Loa", in Appendix A of Deren, Divine Horsemen, P. 264. Cf. P. 351, category 116. -- Analyst]

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with one of his children as he had agreed. That night his oldest child died. The next year to the day, his second child died. And the third year, the third child died. On the fourth anniversary, the man's wife died. On the fifth, he himself died. The djab of Trou Fourban had collected his debt.

Another great djab lives on the northern mountain called Morne Ronde. A man of Cap Haitien was said to have made a compact with him for wealth. One day there was a great hubbub in front of the man's house. A crowd gathered and stood peering inside his door. What they saw was a rain of money falling down from the rafters. The floor was covered with ten-gourde bills. When the *gendarmerie* came to investigate, they stood at the doorway in awe, watching the money float to the floor. The man finally closed the door. That night he moved away, and no one in Cap Haitien ever saw him again.

The djab are insatiable. For their favors—which range from providing wealth and political position to destroying one's enemies—they always demand more in return than the recipient has counted on. Catholic ritual is called upon in some instances to break the djab's chain of demands.

Some tales are told in which human beings outwit the djab, particularly the lesser ones; but more often than not, the djab have the last laugh. During the big hurricane which hit Haiti in 1954, a huge landslide occurred near the place called Bayè Roche in the La Selle Mountains. An entire village was wiped out, covered by the falling rocks. Throughout this region the disaster was attributed to the action of a djab reputed to live in one of the nearby caves. Many lost cattle were found wandering near Bayè Roche, and they were believed to be people whom the malevolent djab had transformed into animals.

The height of bravado is to demand to be confronted with a big djab face to face. There is a song which goes:

> Conduit'm allé oh!
> Conduit'm allé djab nan Trou Fourban!
> Conduit'm allé! [Ex. 91]
>
> Take me, oh!
> Take me to the djab in Trou Fourban!
> Take me!

There are still other supernatural creatures in Haitian lore who must be guarded against, such as the *djablesse*, the *revenant*, and the *lutin*. The *djablesse* is a female ghost who must live in the woods for a number of years before she can enter heaven, as a punishment for the crime of

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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162 citizen would admit. The few cities and towns of Haiti do not con-
565 tain more than 250,000 people in a total population which the atlases
369 generally put around 2,500,000. Since to live in the city is one necessary mark of aristocracy, and since obviously not every town- or city-dweller is an aristocrat, it is probably nearer the mark to infer that not more than two or three per cent of the people are of the élite.

565 A slightly larger group would fit neither category. This inter-
554 mediate section would consist chiefly of those who have taken a few steps toward the upper stratum; they may wear shoes and keep a small shop and speak a few words of French, but not yet be accepted in "respectable" society; aristocrats will look down on them while the masses will regard them with curious interest. Yet these are not what Europeans would call a middle class. In their own generation, they are rootless and insecure. Their children will have as many advantages as the parents can afford, so that the next generation may increase the distance between itself and the common folk. Included in this intermediate group are also a few who, having once been up, are now on the way down.

433 If the terms "masses" and "peasants" are used interchangeably in
162 these pages, it is because the vast majority of the people get their living from the soil. Haiti is, as it has always been, an agricultural country. The end-paper map lists all towns which claim as many as 7,500 people; only one, the capital, Port-au-Prince, has more than 100,000.[7]

162 At least nine out of ten Haitians, therefore, lead rural lives, and
184 easily fit the designation of peasant. They live in little communities,
105 generally of less than a hundred persons, rather than in scattered houses. A detailed map would be dotted with place names of these

[162] 7. The estimates made by Woodring, in his *Geology of the Republic of Haiti*, p. 67,
[114] are as follows:

Port-au-Prince	125,000	Saint-Marc	10,000
Cap-Haïtien	20,000	Jacmel	10,000
Les Cayes	15,000	Port-de-Paix	7,500
Gonaïves	12,000	Jérémie	7,500

It should be noted that all eight of these towns, which by Woodring's estimate have a total of 207,000, are seaports. The country is so mountainous that no cities have grown up in the interior. The map also includes a number of towns smaller than 7,500: these are capitals of *arrondissements* or seats of courts. Woodring remarks that if the people who live in towns having a population of more than a thousand were added to the list above, the total "urban" population then would be between 225,000 and 250,000, which is barely ten per cent of the total in the country.

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175 In his easygoing republic Pétion saw prosperity slowly wane,
433 cultivation decline, profits give way to deficits. He issued a large
652 amount of paper currency, and continually hoped for better times
●534 which did not come. The days of large fortunes were over. The economic system affected the aristocrats: although they were still landowners, so also were thousands of common folk. The criterion of rank became increasingly not wealth, but rather pursuit of a career which demanded no manual labor. Distinctions, if they are to be effective, must be made on the basis of conditions not easily achieved by all and sundry. Education and good French met this requirement; even more did a light skin color.

175 Pétion, darling of the mulattoes though he was, never drew a color
643 line. There is no suggestion in any of his actions that he gave prefer-
641 ence in his appointments to people of his own color. He suppressed
563 at least one insurrection led by men who would have liked to stir up color prejudice. He often tried by quiet irony to make his people less sensitive to their complexions. It is eloquent testimony to his fairness that the 200,000 blacks in the republic never faltered in their love for him. They had ample reason to mistrust the haughty and ambitious colored people, some of whom had lorded it over them in colonial days; but they knew that the President did not share their pretentious attitude. One look at the North, ruled by a black, was enough to convince any Southerner that his happiness was safer in the hands of a mulatto than in those of a Negro ex-slave. At Pétion's death, therefore, there was no demur at the succession to power of another light-skinned man.

175 Haitians of a later day have discussed at great length the wisdom
643 of Pétion's parceling of state lands. His supporters (and they are
642 numerous) as well as his critics generally keep the controversy on the lofty plane of ideals, intentions, and hypothetical contingencies. Pétion is praised for being generous to humble folk where all other rulers of his country had been severe; for being a realist in accepting and adjusting his measures to the limitations of the average Haitian's character; for building a patriotism upon love of one's own small plot of land; for ruling constitutionally, with his Senate, rather than dictatorially. Most especially, Pétion is the one man among the early rulers who seemed to have any realization of the human values involved. Material gain is desirable but not at the expense of liberty. Freedom means something, even in poverty.

The critics do not challenge Pétion's good intentions or integrity;

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 choice of a leader. Not gifted with administrative ability, Hérard
643 blundered first by imprisoning one of the most popular Negro leaders in the country, thereby turning much of the population of the South against him. Next, learning of conspiracies in the Spanish
[669] end of the island, he tried to stamp out revolt by exile and jail sentences, only to precipitate there a real revolution for independence. In his fight against the Dominican separatists he was roundly defeated, and his prestige sank rapidly to the vanishing point. Within two months after his inauguration, he had only one third of the island left over which to attempt to rule. Within a year he was out of power altogether and with him the colored people.

175 The Revolution of 1844, although supported by certain old friends
669 of Boyer, was chiefly a movement of Negroes—followers of the imprisoned black, Salomon; peasants from the South who had been promised much by the previous year's revolutionaries and had got nothing; and particularly the Negro army clique. The significant part of the new revolution was its announced purpose, to lessen the influence of the colored group in government, to have a black president, and to dispossess certain reputedly well-to-do citizens by
[643] dividing their estates among the people. Quickly successful, the insurgents promoted to the presidency the illiterate octogenarian black general, Guerrier, who in Christophe's kingdom had been Duke of Marmalade[3] and Duke of Avancé.

175 For the first time in a quarter-century the Negro element was
643 again in the saddle, where it was to remain for the next fifteen years. Everyone recognized Guerrier's personal courage and admired the
662 common sense which made him prefer conciliation to unnecessary violence as a method of government, but the colored people were shocked at having to live under the rule of another black ex-slave. The idea evoked grim memories. Knowing Guerrier's addiction to drink, the colored faction managed to make him a tool for their own use, so that his brief administration, ending with his death in 1845, was generally known as a "government of understudies." Guerrier was followed in the presidency by another black, likewise an octo-
175 genarian: Louis Pierrot, the handsome brother-in-law of King
643 Christophe. But Pierrot was even more ignorant than Guerrier and

[554] 3. This title generally evokes amusement among non-Haitians. Christophe had merely named his peers after districts whose names had been given by French planters in the eighteenth century. Another of his noblemen was a Count of Limonade.

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175 648 642 423 563 The Occupation had had other far-reaching consequences. It had removed from the Constitution an article which had endured from the very first—the prohibition against ownership of land by white people. Americans argued that since Haiti's greatest potential source of wealth was agricultural (sugar and coffee in particular), new methods were needed if rehabilitation were to occur. Only foreign whites had both the necessary wealth and the requisite agricultural knowledge: therefore, whites must be attracted into the country by an opportunity to establish plantations. Although the Senate of Haiti protested violently against this reversal of tradition, which struck at the people's long pride in their complete ownership of the land, the Americans yielded only on the point of requiring five years' residence of the white landlord in the country. The influx of foreign whites has not been large, but in the Plaine du Nord and Port-au-Prince the white "colonies" are considerably larger now than in 1914.

175 648 563 Up to the present moment the white element in Haiti has not exerted any noticeable pressure on the government. Its mere presence, however, is bound to be a restraining influence on politicians, for most of the whites are Americans, and the government at Washington may not always follow a good-neighbor policy. With the clannishness so usual in white colonists living among darker people, the Americans in Haiti have their private clubs and their closed social set. For the first time since 1804 the élite are socially not the highest-ranking persons in the country.

175 648 563 144 The physical presence of several hundred white Marines for nineteen years had also one unplanned but inevitable result: an increase in the amount of white blood in the population. For many decades numerous élite had rested comfortably beneath their light skins, knowing that only they, with their greater mobility in the world, had any real chance to sustain a white strain. The Occupation, however, brought white men in contact with black women; there was a steady average of 2,000 white Marines in the country for two decades. The light skin of resulting offspring suggested to many the [554] possibility of a climb up the social ladder now that the most difficult rung had already been achieved. No figures are available on the number of children born in Haiti between 1915 and 1934 of white fathers, but it was a perceptible influx in the lower class.

175 458 Haitian businessmen enjoyed a greater economic prosperity during the Occupation than they had ever known before. It is commonly

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Any casual attempt to assess the importance of religion

in the daily

lives of the people is sure to prove erroneous, for in no phase of life are outward appearances so deceptive. What the unsophisticated peasant believes can be ascertained on the whole more accurately than the beliefs of the intelligent élite. To the foreign observer, Roman Catholicism seems to play as large and as small a part in the thinking of the Haitian upper classes as among members of upper-class French society. Outwardly, the élite are professing Catholics or not religious at all. It is considered proper to attend Mass and otherwise to pay respect to religious forms; actually one loses nothing in prestige if he is not a practicing Christian. Society seems to exert no pressure in the matter. Only if a member of the upper class fears for the security of his social position, or knows that rumors are afloat of his addiction to Vodun, does he feel impelled to become assiduous in his open attentions to the Church.

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The national sensitiveness to skin color is apparent in the priestly complexions. Since the old tradition lingers that "baptism by a black will not stick," not even the peasants welcome native Catholic priests. The God and saints of Christianity need the intercession of white men, just as the Vodun spirits need that of natives. In the early days peasants stoned Negro priests who tried to administer the Catholic sacraments. Such an attitude toward a black clergy falls in well with the preferences of the élite. If there were Haitian priests, they would probably be drawn from the élite class since this is the educated group; but it might happen that some devout peasant would rise to the priesthood and so have the care of a parish including élite—a contingency unthinkable to the aristocrat. Snobbishness, indeed, affects the usefulness of the town priests, for the élite members of the congregation insist on having sermons in French, a language which only the small minority understand, rather than in the Créole which is the speech of everyone, intelligible to gentry and humble alike. The Mass is consequently celebrated for the people at large in unknown tongues, Latin for the ritual, French for the sermon; the benefit they derive from it must be wholly from their inner communion stimulated by the actions of the service. The town priests are often willing enough to accede to élite pressure in the matter of language, for they know French as their mother tongue and would have to learn Créole; although some of the more devoted priests become adept in native speech, using it in their personal

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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making Legba (or any of their other loa) unusually handsome or admirable; he is, on the contrary, honored none the less because he is a lame old man who wanders about clothed in rags. His homely aspect seems to be a part of his comfortable nature: the "Papa" with which his invocation is prefaced, though not unusual in addressing loa, seems generally to be spoken with overtones of real affection, with the same feeling of kindliness one has for a benevolent uncle in the neighborhood. In parts of Haiti Legba is associated with the Catholic Saint Anthony.[23] As with other loa, there are special attributes, sacrifices, places, and traditions pertaining to him which are characteristic only of limited localities.

Ezulie is the most generally acknowledged female loa. She is especially interesting because of her resemblances to the Virgin Mary. Although she is Dahomean in origin, she is conceived as pale, almost white, probably by the influence of countless lithographs of the Virgin circulated in Haiti as in any other Catholic country. Ezulie is very wealthy, possessing many different dresses and much jewelry. In these aspects she is unique among the loa. It is quite possible that there is a causal connection between the conception of lightness of color and that of wealth, for the only women who possess jewelry and large wardrobes in Haiti are the light-skinned élite; on the other hand, many pictures of the Virgin depict her in queenly robes and adorned with gems, so that the idea may have been derived principally from her. Ezulie is a trembling woman inhabiting the water. She seems to have no one specific function in connection with which she is worshiped, as with Legba, who guards thresholds; rather, she is approachable in a confidential way, as an understanding mistress might be. Her favorite color being white, all animals sacrificed to her are white, whether turkeys, chickens, or goats.

In somewhat the same manner as Christians conceive of their God in diverse manifestations—Christ as priest or king, God as father or judge—so the Haitians in a more direct, illogical, and naïve way, think of their loa in different manifestations. Maîtresse Ezulie, for example, seems to change her major characteristics altogether when she is Ezulie Gé-rouge (that is, the Red-eyed); then she is Pétro, not Rada; boisterous and rather hearty, not trembling.

The third loa, Damballa, is so prominent that some of the early

23. Price-Mars, op. cit., p. 180.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 Englishman, Sir Spenser St. John, said that he had met placées of the
581 President at dinner, and was asked to trace resemblances between
588 children and their reported father. "No one seeks to conceal it, and
643 the conversation of married ladies continually turns on this subject. One excuse for it is that many of the ladies whom you meet in society were only married after the birth of their first children. However, according to French law, that ceremony renders them all legitimate. Some of those admitted into society are not married at all, but their daughters being married, prevents notice being taken of the false position of the mother."[5]

565 In recent years the élite, although many continue to contract
581 plaçage unions, keep these arrangements quieter than formerly and tend to make them with women lower in the social scale than themselves. Formal and regular marriage is expected and approved among the upper classes of today. Indeed, one modern informant in answer to the question, "What is the primary test of membership among the élite?" replied without hesitation, "Five generations of marriage in the family."[6]

583 Formal marriage is not entered into lightly among the upper
565 classes. It is a serious business watched over by state, family, and church. The interest of the state seems to be to guard against bigamy. The possibility of bigamy is the more likely since one or the other contracting party may have formerly lived in plaçage. The interest of the family is in the wisdom of the alliance. Before a wedding can be performed both parties must have obtained the formal consent of their parents, besides having their banns published at their respective places of permanent residence. There seems to be some doubt whether the courts would uphold a father in his refusal to consent to the marriage of a son over twenty-one years old; but cases are known in which such a refusal has stopped the wedding. Of course, the daughters must always obtain parental consent to marry.

585 The civil wedding, adopted in Haiti at the beginning of her independence, is usually followed by a religious ceremony. The Church, like the State, takes precautions against clandestine marriages and bigamy. Notice of a projected union must be read from the pulpit

5. *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, I, 177–178.

[114] 6. John Lobb, in "Caste and Class in Haiti" (*American Journal of Sociology*, XLVI,
[581] No. 1 [July, 1940], 29), states that "one informant defined family status as a position
[554] resulting from the recognition that in a family the parents had, for generations, been legally married in the church."

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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American masters, had nearly stood still. For almost a century, Haiti's elite had taken justifiable pride in their ancestors' triumph over Napoleonic France, even while they remained enthralled by French culture. This strange ambivalence would no longer do. In effect, the United States occupation compelled Haitian scholars to rediscover what it meant to be Haitian.

As the writing of Jean Price-Mars (1928) expressed that identity culturally, so the regime of Dumarsais Estimé began to express it politically. For the first time, Africa, and not simply France, became an important part of the nationalist dialogue. The Creole language began to be studied in its own right, and a program to end illiteracy through education in Creole was launched. Folkloristic studies, emphasizing the African component in Haitian rural life, especially as expressed in religion, came into vogue. Haitians began to explore their own society as a synthesis that was as much African as it was French—and as a synthesis, rather than as a mechanical alignment of two distinct traditions. The term *esthetique* was employed to express what was "truly Haitian," and Haiti herself was viewed as a unique and original blending of two pasts. Under Estimé, rural folk of promise—and they were, in the nature of things, predominantly dark-skinned—were given greater opportunities, especially to be educated and to enter government service. Moreover, these developments took place at a time when Haiti's economic situation was relatively good, and Estimé enjoyed a measure of popular support rare in Haiti's entire history.

Furthermore, it was during the Estimé regime that Haitian cultural life reached some sort of climax. In the 1920s young Haitian intellectuals had been deeply shaken by the United States occupation and had begun to formulate their own answers to the questions it raised. Not only did Africa come into view as the wellspring of much that was Haitian but Haiti's status as an occupied though once-sovereign power dramatized the need for a social and political philosophy that fitted with hemispheric and international realities. French intellectual currents figured importantly in Haitian political thinking, both because the intellectuals of the French Antilles of the time were inspired by Haitian history and interested in Haiti, and because those islands and Haiti shared a curious affinity in their "Gallo-African" cultures. Anticolonial and Marxist points of view were espoused by a few Haitians, but these perspectives were complicated by changing

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attitudes toward French culture in all of its expressions, and by a new feeling of kinship for the peoples and cultures of Africa.

The variety of views expressed by Haitian intellectuals was colored by differences no more subtle than those characteristic of the intellectuals of any other country in the Caribbean region—even though North American observers unfortunately persist in treating such differences as politically irrelevant. There were those spokesmen who continued to embrace French culture and to reject "Africanism," only deploring the North American presence in Haiti. Others embodied their views in a staunchly Haitian nationalism and, as they began to view their country in a new light, invested the Haitian folk with an unrealistically romantic picturesqueness. Still others fastened upon the African theme with special intensity, and thereby gave a strong racist tinge to their nationalism.

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Not surprisingly, perhaps, anthropology came to be seen as an important means for giving Haitians an accurate—that is, an "inside"—picture of their own society; a number of young ethnologists, mainly self-trained, began to publish works on Haitian culture. Soon anthropology was pressed into a political mold, anticipating similar developments in other "colonial" countries. The first novels purporting to deal with the common people, though sometimes tinged with idealized preconceptions of rural society, were published; and an impressive number of competent young poets devoted themselves to aesthetic explorations of the Haitian spirit. Haitian cultural and intellectual life, in short, was taken up with the rediscovery of Haiti and its people.

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But the Estimé regime did not produce changes in the economic structure of Haitian society of importance proportionate to the national cultural renascence. Even those modifications in the class structure for which Estimé is sometimes given credit might not have occurred, were it not for educational reforms that had begun in the 1920s and the beneficial effects of Haiti's prosperity of the mid-1940s. What Estimé could do was to open the ranks of an inefficiently large bureaucracy to able, if sometimes inadequately trained, newcomers of poor rural antecedents.

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At the same time, as the Comhaire-Sylvains have suggested (1959: 179–89), a qualitatively different class group was beginning to emerge in Port-au-Prince during Estimé's presidency, and the presence of such a group suggests that new economic forces were feebly stirring.

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were abolished; with such concessions the people must be satisfied. Dessalines tacitly confessed his inability to follow any course but the French colonial system, with modifications introduced by Toussaint.

Many of the blacks, having tasted a moment's freedom, were not inclined to give it up. Before the new order of Dessalines was firmly established, therefore, they ran away with their families into the hills, where they escaped official notice. As squatters they lived out their lives unmolested. By the time they were officially rediscovered, all Haiti had become a land of peasants.

At the other end of the ladder from the laborers were the officials, who might be great men or small clerks, members of the entourage of the governor-general or merely overseers of a plantation. In order to keep the vast agricultural economy functioning smoothly it was necessary to have hundreds of agents, directors, clerks, and overseers, each of whom must report to a superior. In this official class there was at least a possibility of realizing an ambition for oneself; there was a basis of comparison; more important, there was some possibility of attracting favorable attention of persons in high places and so of gaining promotion. Inevitably something of the colonial state of mind must have carried over into the new era, so that an ex-slave would consider himself as having risen in the world to be now performing a task which only white men used to do—to be spared field labor and to direct the work of others. Out of this group of petty agents rose a few men of ambition who were later to belong to the élite.

Higher officers of state were in a much more favorable position to achieve social eminence. Not only did they perform no manual labor; they were twice removed from that life, since they directed the men who directed the workers. They handled funds. They came into contact with Dessalines himself. Many former gens de couleur filled these important posts, for the number of Haitians who could read and write was woefully limited.

The army was the great power in the country, for the new state was a military one. Since fear of a return of the French required the maintenance of a large standing army,[4] Dessalines made a virtue of this apparent necessity, using his soldiers to enforce discipline among the cultivators. On whom else could he rely for his local administra-

4. Humboldt estimated that the army of Dessalines numbered 37,300, which would be one tenth of the total population. Other estimates run as low as 15,000. Even this figure would be about a tenth of the male population.

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Haitian peasantry, to sum up, began as the result of two policies intended to achieve ends quite different; first, presidential gifts of land, the chief purpose of which had been to pay the soldiers of the republic; and second, the crop-sharing system adopted by landlords after the failure of Boyer's Code. 175 421 24 463 178

6. *The Drawing of Caste Lines* (*1820–1843*)

Almost every major presidential aim of Boyer came to grief. His tranquil quarter-century rule, the unified island, the financial surplus with which his presidency began, the peace with France after 1825—all these advantages combined with his good intentions did not save his projects from shipwreck. Near the beginning of his régime he announced that, like his revered predecessor Pétion, he felt the safety of Haiti to lie in the abolition of all color distinctions and prejudices. Just as his great Code Rural proved a complete failure, however, so did his efforts to do away with the color line. On the contrary, it was during Boyer's time that class distinctions became fixed, in large part although not wholly, on the basis of color. 175 178 565

Stating that the policy of his government was to put an end, as far as possible, to jealousies of caste, he consistently for a few years promoted a black every time a promotion had been given to a mulatto or other light-skinned person. This procedure soon met an insuperable obstacle. Government posts in general required literacy, and only a very small number of blacks were educated, so that the supply of Negroes was not sufficient to furnish him with candidates. Since one of the few roads to lucrative success lay in official positions, ambitious young colored men sought eagerly for government office, and Boyer soon had no alternative but to advance men of his own complexion. In the army, on the other hand, literacy was not necessary for promotion. Ambitious Negro youths, therefore, frequently chose this career which, while not very profitable in monetary rewards, at least gave a man a certain social status and economic security. 175 647 563 212 555 175 701 555 563

Because of the state of education in the republic, consequently, an ugly situation developed, with the civil arm of government almost wholly in control of the colored element and the military force dominated by blacks. Fortunately for the country no crisis developed during the 1820's and 1830's which made an open breach between army and state. 175 647 701 [563]

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Next to the agricultural system, the state of education in the republic probably had as much to do as anything with fixing the caste system upon Haiti. So long as the mass of people were not only black but illiterate as well, they would have no means of reaching a social status beyond the one in which they existed. Certainly the aspiring Negroes would not wish to enlighten them, for to stir up the whole people would destroy the very possibility of distinction. As W. S. Gilbert puts it, "When everyone is somebody, then no one's anybody." Public education, consequently, hardly advanced a step during Boyer's twenty-five years. It had had a feeble enough beginning under Pétion and remained, as it had been, a prerogative of the well-to-do.[58]

Under the complaisant rule of Boyer, accordingly, the people of color came to regard themselves as the unquestioned élite. Their claim was shared, though not always acknowledged, by a small number of blacks (mostly from the North) who had been anciens libres in colonial Saint-Domingue or noblemen under Christophe; who were literate, or whose wealth and ambition attracted attention. Boyer's boast that "all the feelings and prejudices, either of olden times or of national origin, have been superseded by an intense patriotism" was pure buncombe, as he certainly knew.

If only the best brains of the colored group had been content to serve the government, Haiti might have profited from her situation; but lesser government offices were merely springboards for foreign trade in coffee and mahogany, or for the manipulation of business deals. Not "intense patriotism," as Boyer liked to think, but financial gain was the motivating force of the élite, as it had been from colonial times. The man who could amass a modest fortune, so that his children might be educated and their security assured, had done his duty, and he would have been regarded as quixotic to renounce business opportunities for the dubious honor of minor political office. As a consequence of this natural search for gain, the government during Boyer's administration became less and less efficient. Relatives of élite businessmen were given posts because the President could not afford to offend important families. These minor officials then performed their duties awkwardly, or neglected them, in "the unfailing obliquity of dullness."

Skin color became the obsession of high society. Those who had no other merit of which to boast could still revel in their complex-

58. See chap. XVI.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 643 Suddenly, without warning, he reversed what had been mistaken for docile inactivity, and assumed complete personal command of the reins of office. By means of a well-organized body of secret police, [625] he inspired his own counselors with fear not only for their positions but for their lives. Although illiterate, Soulouque never signed a bill presented to him by his ministers until he was sure he knew its essential core. The hopeful "understudies" were forcibly awakened to the realization that they were hoist on their own petard.

175 643 563 669 The colored element was particularly apprehensive at Soulouque's amazing activity, for the President was clearly setting himself against their group, both in the cabinet and out. Determining clandestinely to get rid of their puppet before he became a Frankenstein's monster to destroy his creators, they fomented a new revolution. This, however, proved to be a strategic error of the first magnitude, for the President was already much stronger than they imagined. The insurrection was quashed with massacre and attendant frightfulness. In the aftermath, as Bouzon mordantly remarks, "the republic was calm—with all the tranquillity of a tomb!" By their ineptitude, the colored group had now made themselves completely insecure.

175 565 643 642 [555] In the second year of his régime Soulouque decided to imitate Dessalines by turning the state into an empire. His coronation was extremely gaudy, as well as expensive. Calling himself Emperor Faustin I, he created a peerage drawn chiefly from among his black generals—four princes, fifty-nine dukes, and numerous counts, barons, and knights. This was merely outward pomp to gratify their craving for prestige, for they had no functions to perform, nor even the necessity of Christophe's peers to pay for their regalia. As nobles they were given no responsibilities in directing economic activity nor any increased political power over districts of the empire. The Emperor's own vanity was flattered by having a peerage. He ruled as an autocrat with blatant despotism. For ten years following the coronation Haiti had to accustom itself to costly expeditions against the Dominican Republic, nearly all ending in defeat for Haiti. The outcome of these intermittent wars was neither gain nor loss of territory by either side, but only temporary rule of occupied districts. Haiti likewise had to accustom itself to sudden executions, to the shabby grandeur of court display, and to financial trickery which would not have deceived a schoolboy. While the heads of his opponents and even his loyal counselors fell, Soulouque's infantile "empire" tottered to economic ruin.

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1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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tioned this latter instance advanced it as a possible alternative to the custom found elsewhere in Haiti, adding that it was the duty of the living to honor their ancestors, and not for the ancestors to make provision to honor themselves, particularly since the dead can enforce the discharge of this duty by sending illness, bad fortune, and death to those of their descendants who are remiss.

To a very appreciable degree, what is inherited forms the foundation of whatever wealth a man may accumulate during his lifetime. Yet there are few, among the peasants at least, who do not seek by all means to add to their heritage, for among those folk the ambition to obtain more and more land is a dominating one. To this end the peasant skimps and saves, depriving himself even of his important needs, until at the proper time some choice parcel of ground comes on the market.

How does a man go about accumulating the funds necessary to amass property? Ordinarily a young man is given a plot of ground by his father, and the produce, as mentioned, is marketed for him by his mother, who saves the proceeds for him. When he marries, his wife takes over this task, and together the two strive to extract as large earnings as possible from his plot. In addition, a man may take a *job*. Such work, always paid for by the unit rather than by the day or week, is usually that of cultivating a plot of ground for its owner, and the amount agreed upon is paid when the field has been harvested. The young man at the same time can also cultivate his own fields and participate in communal labor. Another way of adding to the earnings of his fields is to help the large landowners on their cotton plantations. This work is paid for in kind with baskets of cotton, which in turn are sold to factors who come from the coast to buy both large and small quantities. A man may also increase his income by working in the cane-fields or at the caldrons when the sirup is boiled. Each

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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453 454 556 worker receives about ten gourdes a week, in addition to his food, and the work often is of several months' duration. To do this, however, it is necessary for him to hire another to work his own garden for the period he is thus engaged. As extra [454] money is gradually accumulated, more land is purchased, so that the returns become greater; and the process is accelerated when, upon the death of a man's father, other family land is added to what he already owns.

437 454 556 Thus the drive to obtain property is an obsession with the Haitian peasant. The question of a few centimes, to say nothing of a gourde, is hotly argued; for instance, in the bidding for unclaimed lost animals held periodically at the Mairie in Mirebalais, bids are often raised by as little as five centimes, with the bidder waiting until the last possible moment, the third call of the auctioneer, before pledging the additional sum. Those who have money prefer silver to paper and usually keep it in a trunk at home, but if troublous times impend, the money is put in jars and hidden in the ground. In this way it happens that when a man dies, much of his money is lost to his heirs, for he rarely tells even his wife or children what he has done with it.

556 Yet this point must be stressed — in the mind of the Haitian peasant, though wealth is desired for the prestige it gives, it is rarely prized for the display it permits. Frequently when a person of large means is pointed out in the market place, he will be simply if not poorly dressed. To make undue display of possessions would arouse envy, and envy brings upon a man's household the evil eye. Wealth is rather manifested in extensive farms, in elaborate ceremonies for the rituals held for family ancestors and for family gods, in the education of children to the end that they may eventually move to the capital and there attain social and political position of importance. Wealth brings prestige to its owner through the word-of-mouth comment of his neighbors, and with this he is content,

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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not deeming it necessary to emphasize his position through the conspicuous display of his resources. His children who get to the capital are seldom as prudent, and, as native expression has it, "It takes four generations to achieve the march from the village to the capital, and back to the ancestral village."

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1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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In the Haitian cuisine the prevalence of stews, of dishes fried in deep fat, of the generous use of pepper in seasoning, are all African, as are even the names of certain dishes, such as *acansan*, a Nigerian-Dahomean term which designates the cooked balls of cornmeal. One of the few European intrusions is white bread, while the cassava cakes, also important in native diet, derive from the aboriginal Indian inhabitants.

In its outward forms the economic system under which the Haitian peasant lives seems entirely based upon European pecuniary patterns. Money follows the French system, even to the official use of the French designation, *centimes*, for the smallest parts of the principal unit of currency, the *gourde*. Both paper money and coins are used, and as the result of the Marine occupation American money is as well known as the currency of the country itself. Buying and selling goes on in the accepted European manner, the price of such export crops as cotton, sugar-cane, and coffee responding to the fluctuations of the world market. In many of its inner aspects also, the values of the Haitian are influenced by the money economy taken over from Europe and America.

The conclusion that the economy of Africa has been swept aside by that of Europe needs, nevertheless, to be qualified if certain historical and psychological factors are not to be ignored. It must not be forgotten that in West Africa, long before the period of European contact, a monetary system based on the cowrie shell had been fully developed. The prestige of wealth, the resulting drive to obtain property, the pursuits of buying and selling, and other aspects of a pecuniary civilization were as current in West Africa at the time of slaving, and continue today, as in Europe or in Haiti. When some of the attitudes associated with the economic life are analyzed, it is no simple matter, therefore, to state whether they stem from African or European sources, or both.

One pattern common to both economies, the validation of position through the conspicuous display of resources, has

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 S\3 Haiti SV3
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been largely lost in the peasant culture, possibly because of a prudence dictated by conditions of life wherein evidences of the possession of wealth — certainly in the case of a peasant — were an invitation to those who would despoil him. Only when a family of position gives a ceremony, or when one of its members is married or dies, is the lavishness of its preparations such as to suggest the imporance of its place in the community. This does not hold for the individual. Personal ostentation is the more strongly inhibited by the belief that another's envy may bring ill fortune to the one against whom it is directed. In Mirebalais it has almost become a byword that the really substantial citizens look as though they were the poorest. This tradition in no way interferes with the preoccupation with adding to one's possessions, or with the desire to exert the power and enjoy the position that go with a command of large resources, or the will to pass on as large an inheritance as possible to children. In their origin, such drives can be ascribed neither to Europe nor to Africa, nor, for that matter, to the experiences of slavery but rather to the interplay of two homologous patterns of culture that has produced the economic system and the economic motivations found in Haiti today.

In the matter of land tenure, and in attitudes toward private property, African tradition has disintegrated almost completely. Under the characteristic West African form of land tenure, land of a tribe is vested in the tribal head, who allots it to families for use. Trespass upon it is not permitted while it is under active cultivation, and the produce of the land is the property of the one who has worked it. Only palm trees are privately owned by those who have planted them; otherwise land that goes uncultivated for a longer period than is necessary to restore its fertility may be re-allotted. In some regions land worked by an individual is his because of his membership in a large relationship group, whose ownership derives from the power of its ancestors who had lived on this

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When I want to talk you do not want me to talk!
When I want to sing you do not want me to sing!
Dahomey *y ava*, they do me wrong! *

Another note of criticism within the hounfor concerns a person who has been putting on airs of importance. The song states that he (or she) in reality has not even qualified for the lowest order within the cult, even though he behaves as though he were the cult chief:

Ou poco hounsi oh!	You are not yet a hounsi, oh!
Ou dit'm ou c'est houngan!	You tell me you are a houngan!
Ou poco hounsi!	You are not yet a hounsi!
Ou dit'm ou c'est houngan c'est ça!	You tell me you are a houngan, it is so!
Oh Paille à Terre!	Oh, Straw on Earth! †
Pousé allé!	Push and go!
Oh Allada malade oh! [Ex. 99]	Oh, Allada is sick, oh! ‡

Poverty is so normal in Haitian life that a man who accumulates wealth in any form becomes conspicuous. Ordinarily he does not welcome this conspicuousness. It makes him a target of gossip and rumors, and of those who might wish to collect debts from him, borrow money, or obtain other favors. He becomes a *gros nèg'*, and finds himself increasingly cut off from the community of ordinary, poor people. Needless to say, Haitians, like other people, dream of striking it rich. Wherever poverty has been acute, whether in Europe, Asia, or America, the folklore is full of tales of finding great treasures. Haiti is no exception. Many Haitian folk tales and folk songs deal with this theme, particularly with obtaining wealth by magical or supernatural means. Sometimes riches are obtained through *engagements*, unholy compacts with devils or demons. In some stories loa facilitate the discovery of treasure, in others a powerful bocor accomplishes it through magical practices. If a man suddenly becomes well-to-do, therefore, rumors may spread in regard to how he came by his wealth. If he is suspected of dealings with devils or with a powerful bocor, his apparent success in his venture makes him a neighbor to be feared. To avoid incurring envy and hostility, people tend to play down their financial successes and pretend they have nothing in life but the clothes they wear, their houses, and their gardens. Spreading word that a poor man has hidden money is regarded as a mean and reprehensible act. Numerous folk songs protest against this injustice:

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Désastre tombé nans lacour-wà!
Si m'apé travaille là nans cour-wà,

* Literally: They eat my rights.
† An exclamation, the name of a certain ouanga.
‡ Allada, the name of a town in Dahomey, used in the sense of "people of Dahomey." The line means, "Things are in a bad state of affairs."

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Yo dit'm gainyain largent séré, oh vrai!
Yo mitté conplotaille oh là sou dos moin!
Oh yo mitté conplotaille oh là sou dos moin!
Fai'm payé largent, évo!
Mandé Bondieu pou' nou wè li, so! [Ex. 100]

Disaster descends on my yard!
If I work in the yard there
They say I have hidden money, in truth!
They plot behind my back!
Oh, they plot behind my back!
Make me pay money, *évo!*
I ask God to see it.

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Another theme that runs deeply through Haitian life is the need for a mother. In a society where plaçage is normal and where fathers frequently are transient, the mother has been the stabilizing factor in family life. A *placée* family might see the father only at certain times of the year. If he is a farmer, it will usually be when he comes to work his gardens; then he will move on to other gardens and possibly to another family elsewhere. The loss of a mother, under these conditions, is felt very deeply. Many Haitian songs, in various moods, emphasize the role of the mother in the house. Some of them are gay, like this one, with an undercurrent of sadness:

Oh dèpis manman moin fai moin,	Oh, since my mother made me,
M'pas jamais wè manman moin!	I've never seen my mother!
Waille waille waille waille!	*Waille waille waille waille!* *
Waille waille waille waille!	*Waille waille waille waille!*
M'pas conné manman moin!	I do not know my mother!
Zandolite fai'm!	A *zandolite* made me!
Mabouya fai'm!	A *mabouya* made me!
Zandolite fai'm!	A *zandolite* made me!
Mabouya fai'm! [Ex. 171]	A *mabouya* made me!

The *zandolite* and *mabouya* to which the song refers are small lizards which constantly skitter about on the rocks and in the trees, as though they have no home. The metaphor is clear.

One more song on this subject stresses the importance of having a mother as compared, say, to an unreliable man:

Ma crié,
Oh qua'm perdit manman moin ma rélé!
Ma rélé,
Oh qua'm perdit manman moin crié!
Qua'm perd' un garçon moin join' l'aut' oh!

* Exclamation.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

color predisposed a freedman to separate himself, by marriage with a 563
person at least as light as himself, as far as possible from his slave 175
ancestors.[4]

Aside from paternity, the chief reasons for freeing a slave were 175
faithful or extraordinary service, and the readiness of a master to free
his concubine. By the time of the Revolution many of the free col- 567
ored people had not known slavery in their families for four generations, while still more had been free for two or three. During the century many had acquired wealth by inheritance from former owners. Their close association with well-to-do white planters had [556]
instilled in them the desire to improve their economic fortunes as well as their culture; friendly relationships with their benefactors afforded them the opportunity. Like the grands blancs, the prosperous gens de couleur sent their children to Paris for an education, and went there themselves for pleasure.

As the free colored people flourished, so also did the jealousy of the 175
petits blancs against them. "Society" in Saint-Domingue was beset,
as is any social system which has not yet the sanctity of long tradi- 565
tion, with heartburnings, intrigues, resentment, snobbery. Petit blanc aspired to become grand blanc; small planter longed to be received into the smart set of the wealthy plantation owners; creole resented the toplofty airs of the recent émigré from France. What was more irksome to the petit blanc than his own exclusion from high society was the acceptance into it of many colored people whose parents or grandparents had been African slaves. Since many of the gens de couleur were better educated and more cultured than the lower-class whites, inner consciousness of mental inferiority may have added fuel to the fires of jealousy.

The growing wealth of free colored people was notable in the latter years of the century. One fertile parish in the South (Jérémie) was almost entirely in their hands, while in every other part of the colony they had bought or inherited handsome plantations. They looked upon Saint-Domingue as their fatherland, not hoping (as did many of the whites) to retire to France to spend their fortunes, nor yearning (as did many slaves) to return to Africa. The less ambitious

4. Certain colonial writers diverted themselves by working out all the mathematical 114
combinations of blood mixture, with names for scores of the commoner varieties.
Since people with some part of white blood in their veins might mate with others of 565
their own kind, with lighter or with darker persons, with black or with white, it can be imagined how complicated the question of race mixture might become.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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lishing their freedom from the taint of any black admixture. Having entered white society by such means, and further diluted their Negro blood by judicious marriages, these social climbers frequently became the most pitiless masters of slaves in the colony, the most rigid sticklers for a color line, ruthless enemies of recent freedmen and of those who acknowledged the dark strain in their blood; and having now "passed over" as whites, they snubbed the petits blancs.

The rising tide of color prejudice became apparent in the passage of discriminatory laws. The first of any importance was enacted by the representative Council of the colony, sitting at the capital, Cap Français, in 1758. It prohibited all colored people, except police and militiamen, from carrying swords, sabres, or other side arms—thus denying them one of the outward marks of gentlemen. Four years later the prohibition was extended to the bearing of all firearms, except in service, while in 1767 the sale of munitions to colored persons was forbidden unless ordered by a white officer. Obviously the instigators of prejudice had by this time won a number of ruling grands blancs to the notion that the presence of numerous people of color might constitute a menace to the physical safety of the whites.

Louis XV, the reigning monarch, took no steps to enforce the liberal provisions of the Code Noir of his grandfather; on the contrary, he seems to have favored the passage of discriminatory laws. He made it difficult for colored planters to travel freely in France. The colonial perpetrators of indignities to the gens de couleur, seeing the success of their first efforts, began to propose increasingly severe restrictions, and were gratified by Louis XV's official "Instructions to Administrators" (1771), which stressed the necessity of maintaining a line between the two races which colored people and their descendants might never cross.

For the next two decades the affranchi had to face openly avowed discrimination. One by one his rights in the Code were abrogated. He might not fill any responsible office either in the courts or the militia, for that would elevate him above white persons. Certain careers, such as goldsmithing, were closed to him, because they brought wealth; others, notably medicine and the apothecary's art, were forbidden on the ground that whites might be poisoned;[8] law and religion were barred to him because of their public and honorific

8. It was a common belief in slave colonies that all persons with Negro blood had some "instinctive" knowledge of the science and art of poisoning.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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The former affranchis fully intended to keep their lands once the

175 French were driven out. They could not but be alarmed as they saw
423 the steady direction of Dessalines' moves toward a complete mo-
425 nopoly of land ownership by the state. On the very day following
471 independence, a decree proclaimed that all lands owned by France in colonial days now belonged to Haiti. Next (February 7, 1804) Dessalines canceled all sales and donations made to mulattoes and ex-slaves by fleeing French who, in a last despairing effort to salvage something from the wreckage of olden days, had "entrusted" their lands to non-whites. By these two strokes all lands owned by white men before 1803 became state property,[5] but only the second clipped the wings of socially ambitious colored people.

175 Serious uneasiness was caused by the next measure, an order for a
421 general verification of property titles. This would have been a deli-
[693] cate task at best, considering the disorder of the past thirteen years. It was made more complicated to carry out by the serious lack of men trained in law. A few like Balthasar Inginac, later an important adviser and trusted friend of two presidents, were scrupulously conscientious, but by the same token highly unpopular with those whom they deprived of newly (and shadily) acquired "estates." The majority of officials, according to report, listened to the pleading of many who had managed by hook or crook to secure a tenuous claim to vacant properties, validating their fraudulent titles for them. It has been claimed, without rebuttal, that most of these officials were not above taking bribes. When complaint was made to Dessalines of such actions he took steps to make his appointees do their duty, but each confiscation made new enemies for Dessalines.

Some of the mulattoes, citing their French paternity, claimed land formerly owned by their French fathers, even though these parents had never regarded their sons as more than bastards. Dessalines once broke out in furious answer to such a claimant: "*Et les pauvres*
175 *nègres dont les pères sont en Afrique, ils n'auront donc rien!*"
425 The state took over thousands of acres. Those Haitians, colored or
556 black, who aspired to landownership as the foundation of position,

[642] [648] 5. The hatred of the Haitians for the French, and because of them, for white people in general, was seen not only in these confiscations but in commitments for the future. A proclamation of April 28, 1804, suppressed to "all foreigners" the right to own property in land. The first Haitian constitution, May 20, 1805, took an even more drastic step in saying that "no white man shall henceforth set foot in this country as a landowner," and that "*all* property formerly belonging to a white Frenchman" was now confiscate to the profit of the state.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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prestige, and the normal fulfillment of dignity, were thus frustrated in their efforts. They began to see that the Emperor intended to withhold from them freedom, room for the exercise of ability or power, fullness of life in whatever form. Not only was there little opportunity for achieving prestige; the repressive and contemptuous attitude of Dessalines denied them even ordinary negative respect, without which dignity of life is impossible.

By confiscation of vacant and falsely claimed estates, Dessalines created a vast public domain. He did not hesitate to secure other lands which he considered valuable, resorting to arbitrary and often cruel means—even, it is said, to forgery and murder—to dispossess those who stood firm in their claims. This attack on private property added other dissidents to his enemies—men who felt themselves clearly in the right legally and morally, men who with clear consciences joined the movement to put down a tyrant. The land thus acquired was leased in parcels at an annual rent to the highest bidders.[6]

The Emperor was blind to the normal human needs of the better elements of the population. He deprived them of property in land, the only basis they knew for wealth and independence; he forbade enterprises undertaken by individual initiative; he continually wounded delicate sensibilities. The Emperor was not a man to spare people's feelings, and he dared use the frank but dangerous words Negro and mulatto. He once shouted to a group of pleaders for position: "*Prenez garde à vous, nègres et mulâtres! Nous avons tous combattu contre les blancs; les biens que nous avons conquis en versant notre sang, appartiennent à nous tous; j'entends qu'ils soient partagés avec équité!*" It was not only Dessalines' idea of "equity" which aroused the *anciens libres* but his use of the descriptive nouns they hated.

The colored people were well aware of the hostility of Dessalines to their group. He was inferior to them in learning, and knew it. He was certainly, by the world's judgment, inferior to them in birth. His very deficiencies by comparison with his colored subjects made him hate them more: for example, he was passionately fond of dancing, preferring compliments on his grace to praise of his statesmanship; yet his awkwardness on the ballroom floor even

6. Although there are no records extant to show the exact amount of land which Dessalines succeeded in bringing into state ownership, it is estimated that more than two thirds of all the productive plantations in Haiti in 1806 were in the hands of the government. Other estimates range as high as ninety per cent.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Granted these obvious difficulties, there is still little to be said for the zeal or integrity of churchmen in Saint-Domingue. Father Cabon cites a report to Rome in 1794, which, he remarks, "was not designed to be made public, and does not bear the earmarks of passion," and which flatly states that "since the expulsion of the Jesuits, the curés have for the most part led lives so indecent . . . that the citizens and Negroes have lost all the sentiments of religion which the Jesuits gave them."[3] There had been distinguished churchmen in Saint-Domingue before 1750, authors, scientists, teachers of some note, but none appeared thereafter. The rich French colony was not a bright star in the Catholic crown.

Undeterred by those who might have been their spiritual guides, the white people followed the easy path of self-indulgence. The universal testimony of visitors is that, with a few notable exceptions, immorality and cruelty were daily commonplaces. To make a fortune was the prime ambition of every white man, since money made possible the luxurious enjoyment of this world's goods. Protest against money-making or soft living would have been futile. Administrative agents turned public office to their own profit; judges sold justice to the highest bidder; planters drove their slaves to death; and priests dispensed religious solace for a tidy sum.

The freedmen, who in everything patterned their lives after social leaders in the white planter class, had no more concern for religion than their models. They attended Mass occasionally as a social event, where they might see and be seen. When in the latter days of the colony discriminatory legislation required that colored persons sit in separate parts of the church, most of the affranchis simply refrained from attending Mass: their religious zeal was not so great as to make them submit to the public shame of segregation. In their daily lives, likewise, they followed the example of the white planters in pursuing pleasure rather than sobriety, "culture" rather than religious zeal. Like the whites, they were often licentious in their conduct. When it came their turn to direct affairs of state in free Haiti, there was little interest in spiritual matters among them. The intellectuals of the group paid homage to the liberal philosophers of the century rather than to religious thinkers.

If religion was at a low ebb in the prosperous days of the colony, it almost disappeared in the excitement of the years following the revolt of the slaves (1791).

3. Ibid., p. 33.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

the blood-streams of the two races as well. And though in the custom of French Santo Domingo, as elsewhere in the New World, even a suspicion of Negro ancestry was sufficient to cut a person off from social intercourse with white society, yet these mixed-bloods were to become an important factor in establishing the patterns of Haitian Negro tradition, just as their descendants were to exert no small influence in the development of Haitian culture after the establishment of independent Haiti.

Numerous terms designated the various degrees of crossing, some of which, surviving in present-day speech, are familiar to us, such as the words "mulatto" and "quadroon." But examining Moreau de St. Mery's painstaking analysis of the various possible amounts of crossing that could be recognized, reading his speculations regarding the smallest proportion of Negro blood that could be regarded as negligible, noting how he traces Negro blood to its last vestige, as in a cross which would give one part Negro as against 8,191 parts white, a telling impression is received of the great significance of race-crossing for the Haitians of that time.[10] Such words as *sacatra*, *griffe*, *marabou*, *métif*, and *mamelouc* not only gave information as to the amount of crossing represented in the persons designated by them, but even indicated which parent, father or mother, was white and which one was wholly or partially Negro. Crossing was by no means restricted to matings between white masters and their slave women, for records show that Negro men did not fail to hold an attraction for their white mistresses. Nor did all the sharpness with which the color-line was drawn prevent actual marriages between whites and persons of color. In such instances, however, the white person was cast out from association with his fellow-Europeans, as the name applied to him, *mésallié*, sufficiently shows.[11]

Slavery cut across all these varying degrees of color, so that just as there might be free Negroes who were wholly African

L: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the newcomer persists in retaining the place, an informal appeal is taken to the local magistrate, who invariably settles the matter by deciding in favor of the original occupant. 443 626 629

Each woman tends to specialize in certain commodities, such as meat or cloths or notions or baskets. The venders of foodstuffs, other than meat, however, vary their offerings with the season. This latter class of sellers mainly comprises women who, living in the town, constitute a group of "middlemen," either buying produce at the country markets, or, going off with their pack animals into the back country, return with saddle-bags loaded with the purchases they have made direct from the farmer.[8] 443 442

Country women are also well represented among the traders, and as they come streaming into town on market days with their head burdens, or driving the heavily laden, slow-plodding donkeys, they fill the streets with color and movement that make up one of the most picturesque aspects of Mirebalais life. A load may consist of one type of produce only, or a woman may bring rice, maize, beans, and bananas, as well as home-made brooms and baskets. All transactions in the market are for cash, and there is no barter of any kind, for the pattern of a money economy has been too deeply lodged in Haitian tradition to allow any other mode of exchange. Prices are based on supply and demand rather than on any agreement between sellers, since contact with the capital causes the current prices paid there for all kinds of produce to be generally known. Another factor which enters into price-fixing, however, is prestige. It is regarded as a mark of incompetence for a woman, whether from country or town, to return home with unsold produce, and since the reputation of being a clever trader is highly valued, this is avoided when at all possible, and the vender adjusts her prices as the day wears on to insure that she will dispose of everything she has brought. 443 [482] [492] [436] [439] 443 435 [554] [558]

In Mirebalais, as elsewhere, the markets are best attended during harvest months, when by official count as many as 443

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

today not only in Mirebalais, but, in their essential outlines, throughout the Republic.

The larger relationship grouping originates in the immediate family, and the formation of new extended families is a continuing arc. Characteristically, the process begins when a man leaves the habitation of his father and, with his wife, settles on land somewhat remote from the dwellings of either his people or those of his wife. As the sons of this couple grow up and marry, they make their homes near that of their father, so that in time a group of immediate families related in the paternal line clusters about the dwelling of this original settler, forming a habitation. The continuation of the process depends upon the amount of land available to the group; in any event, given enough time, land to permit all the male descendants of the founder to support themselves and their families will be lacking, so that the younger men will repeat the process that has been described, and themselves become the founders of new habitations whose members, with the passing of generations, will eventually be lost to the original group. While land is available, a young man is given several hectares by his father when he marries, and here he establishes his household. If the family have prospered, additional land is bought as more young men grow up, so that the relationship group may become a community of considerable size.

In accordance with this rule of residence, only rarely will a man settle on the property of his wife's parents, since to do so reflects unfavorably on his personal status. When this does occur, it is probably because of a serious quarrel with his own people. In such a case, if his marriage endures, he becomes a quasi-member of his wife's family, but unless he has committed some extremely grave offense, such as publicly insulting or striking a parent or grandparent, he does not forfeit membership in his own group.[1] Similarly, the fact of his having settled away from the habitation of his family does not disinherit him, for, as will be seen, this occurs in but the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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points — or oblique designations — makes clear the distinction between the two, for the *bocor* invariably and certain *hungans* on occasion are called *nèg' mazi maza,* "Negro who wears his back to the front," or, again, those who "serve with both hands." Though by no means shunning the services of the practitioner, the Haitians of Mirebalais nevertheless look upon the working of magic with a cynicism that is reflected in the gossip about happenings that befall all who practice it, in any form, and particularly those who work evil magic. It is said: "The *hungan* often dies an evil death, and the *bocor* who makes *wanga* almost always. These people kill each other by magic"; or one hears of a woman who one day went to the cemetery to obtain materials needed for her unsavory work and was struck and killed by the thunderbolts which are believed to smite sorcerers.

To keep his reputation, a practitioner of magic, good or evil, must make continual demonstration of his powers. For example, in prescribing a magical cure, it is incumbent upon the *hungan* or *mambu* to foresee all eventualities, even where the directions are not followed, a prescription which is regarded as a strong check on the charlatan and is the reason why a practitioner is prudent in refusing to accept a case beyond his power to aid, since persistent failure to achieve cures will lose a *hungan* his reputation and his practice. Naturally, certain practitioners do not fail on occasion to turn the anxiety of a family over a serious illness to their own account, but inasmuch as the cures made by a man are the most adequate proof of his power, the feeling is that his clients have an unquestioned safeguard against chicanery. This point of view, it may be noted, is of undoubted importance in perpetuating a living faith in magic.

An example of how rapidly a practitioner of magic can lose prestige when some mishap occurs to him was encountered when an important *gangan* of the valley was brought into court charged with the theft of a pig which he claimed was

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558 793 685 given him by a third party for whom he had done what was euphemistically called "a piece of work." The evidence clearly showed that the animal, which he had killed to feed a *combite*, had been stolen, and since this *gangan* could not establish his defense that he was an innocent receiver of stolen goods, he was convicted and sentenced to three months in prison, and to pay the owner of the pig the exorbitant sum—sixty-five gourdes—asked as damages. Sympathy was very generally with the *gangan*, but the opinion most often heard expressed was that his power had obviously been lessened by his misuse of the *connaissance* the gods had given him, or they would not have permitted even his arrest, much less his conviction. To reinforce the point, specific reference was repeatedly made to the *hungan* most popular in the valley at the time, about whom it was said that, for example, were he accused before a court, the officers might even enter his house in search of him while he was present, but they would still be unable to see that he was before them.

793 435 554 Other attitudes held toward workers of magic developed in connection with this case. The popular *hungan* was often called on, it was said, because his work was well done and his fees were not too high; it was pointed out that there were renowned *vodun* priests who charged five hundred gourdes for a *service* which this man directed effectively for but little over one hundred; moreover, such men often failed to remove the evil deities which were troubling the family that employed them, but would instead add more, so that their clients would soon have need of them again. Practices such as these, especially that of overcharging, are frowned upon by the *loa*, and if persisted in they "spoil" the power of the priest. This was one of the reasons why, in the opinion of many individuals, the *gangan* in question had been convicted. "He was once a remarkable *gangan*, but he has spoiled his *loa* by using them for evil, and by asking too much money for what he was employed

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Any casual attempt to assess the importance of religion

in the daily

lives of the people is sure to prove erroneous, for in no phase of life are outward appearances so deceptive. What the unsophisticated peasant believes can be ascertained on the whole more accurately than the beliefs of the intelligent élite. To the foreign observer, Roman Catholicism seems to play as large and as small a part in the thinking of the Haitian upper classes as among members of upper-class French society. Outwardly, the élite are professing Catholics or not religious at all. It is considered proper to attend Mass and otherwise to pay respect to religious forms; actually one loses nothing in prestige if he is not a practicing Christian. Society seems to exert no pressure in the matter. Only if a member of the upper class fears for the security of his social position, or knows that rumors are afloat of his addiction to Vodun, does he feel impelled to become assiduous in his open attentions to the Church.

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The national sensitiveness to skin color is apparent in the priestly complexions. Since the old tradition lingers that "baptism by a black will not stick," not even the peasants welcome native Catholic priests. The God and saints of Christianity need the intercession of white men, just as the Vodun spirits need that of natives. In the early days peasants stoned Negro priests who tried to administer the Catholic sacraments. Such an attitude toward a black clergy falls in well with the preferences of the élite. If there were Haitian priests, they would probably be drawn from the élite class since this is the educated group; but it might happen that some devout peasant would rise to the priesthood and so have the care of a parish including élite—a contingency unthinkable to the aristocrat. Snobbishness, indeed, affects the usefulness of the town priests, for the élite members of the congregation insist on having sermons in French, a language which only the small minority understand, rather than in the Créole which is the speech of everyone, intelligible to gentry and humble alike. The Mass is consequently celebrated for the people at large in unknown tongues, Latin for the ritual, French for the sermon; the benefit they derive from it must be wholly from their inner communion stimulated by the actions of the service. The town priests are often willing enough to accede to élite pressure in the matter of language, for they know French as their mother tongue and would have to learn Créole; although some of the more devoted priests become adept in native speech, using it in their personal

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764 766 776 775 if, after a time, an expensive and troublesome ceremony is not performed to bring them out and lodge them in a jar. The *hungan* who performs the rite of removing these *loa* is 764 766 776 793 preferably himself a member of the family and is usually left alone with one or two assistants and an elderly relative of the dead, but if the family includes no *hungan*, the one who is called, even though greatly trusted, is most carefully watched, because a strange priest might take for himself the valued gods of the dead, leaving only the weak ones. The *hungan* stands in place and calls the name of the dead. He puts some of the hair of the dead in the jar or in a calabash, with which the *loa* is supposed to go, and, unless another member of the family, nominated to receive the *connaissance* of the dead, is present, the jar or calabash is sealed until these spirits can be "given" to a successor.

766 [764] [783] No special purification is needed for a house where death has occurred except when the deceased was tubercular or a leper, when everything except his money is buried or thrown in some unfrequented place. The body of one who has died of smallpox, though washed, is buried as soon after death as possible without being enclosed in a coffin. Those who die of smallpox or leprosy, suicides, or persons shot as a punishment for crime are not buried in the communal cemetery, but in special sections of the graveyard, the lepers and victims of smallpox being separated from the others, for the Church declares these have died of the plague. One who drowns is buried at the riverside where his body is recovered, though if the corpse is not too badly decomposed, the authorities give permission, and the family of the dead can afford the expense of transportation, the body may be brought home. Children are [561] [171] buried in the cemetery, but, on the principle that "the young must serve their elders," the funeral of a child is attended only by those relations who are younger than the dead; for in Haiti, as in Africa, it is not held seemly that the young should be followed to the grave by their elders. At the house, however,

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512 grain in her mortar or working in her garden near by. On
[443] market days she takes the produce of the family's fields to the
[438] town to sell. If she has young children, she cares for them
[855] while she does her other work, but when they are old enough,
[857] they help her about the house if they are girls, or, if boys, go
with their father to the garden. From time to time, when
[356] house repairs are needed or there are implements to be
[241] mended, the man spends a day at home getting these odd
jobs done; otherwise only serious illness in the family keeps
him from his fields.

512 The times for meals have not varied since the days when
264 Moreau de St. Mery described the eating-habits of the slaves.[8]
In addition to the mid-morning repast, the only other meal
is that eaten after the man returns from his field, this being
the largest of the day. A wife does not sit down with her
[562] husband, but usually eats earlier with her small children and
[593] holds herself ready to serve him upon his return, when, if he
is alone, she remains to tell him the day's gossip. Visitors are
[574] often present, for peasant etiquette demands that all comers
[576] be offered food, and, as one Haitian expressed it, "The peasant would kill you for the insult if you did not share your meal with him." Bedtime, as might be expected, is early.

512 On Sundays and on the days of festivals this routine is in-
527 terrupted, when, if the occasion is of sufficient importance
[796] and the habitation is not too far from town, the peasant and
his family attend mass. On Saturday nights there is usually a *vodun* dance, when the early hour for retirement is forgotten
and all-night festivities precede Sunday's rest. On such days
[264] the principal meal is eaten at three or four o'clock in the afternoon, and all the adults share it together, while at one side the children are fed from the dishes of their parents in response to the insistent repetition of the demand "*Ba'm pa'm* — give me my portion." *

* This is an example of the elision characteristic of Haitian Créole, it being abbreviated from *Ba moin part moin* or, in French, *Donnez-moi ma part.*

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he is assured of more solicitous care from her and more deferential treatment from her children. And though when this has occurred his "legal" wife may at his death come with a justice of the peace to claim his body and his effects, this move is anticipated, so that what he has given the *placée* wife and her children is usually well out of the way. "Often they find only the four walls of the house."

A certain number of unmarried men result from this system of plural matings, some of whom remain single by preference, particularly in the cities, where the incidence of homosexuality far exceeds that found in the country. In Mirebalais itself, when the final withdrawal of the American Marines from Haiti was being celebrated, a dance called *manuba*, significantly enough the only one held indoors, was one in which male dancers danced together in couples. The sexual problem of the younger unmarried men is more often solved by means of liaisons with married women, though this has its dangers in the countryside, where the movements of every individual are known and the least tendency to unsanctioned social behavior is soon the subject for widespread gossip. Prostitutes are found everywhere, and they are by no means visited by unmarried men alone. On the whole, sex "adventures" are more indulged in by men than women, even allowing for the tendency of some women to have affairs with youths. A belief widely held, that plural wives tend so to exhaust the virility of a man that he must seek "remedies" of a magical nature from the priests of the *vodun* cult and from sorcerers, must also be mentioned. Frigidity is a principal cause for female homosexuality, and, because of a wife's reluctance to satisfy her husband, it not infrequently happens that she is sent back to her parents, where she may seek out other women. The most prevalent Haitian attitude toward homosexuality in either sex, it may be remarked, is one of derision rather than vindictiveness, as the term applied to effeminate men, *commères*, may suggest.

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428 The division of the land is said almost invariably to entail
423 lawsuits, and some litigations have been known to stretch
691 over a period of a decade and more, for, as one resident of Mirebalais remarked, " Because of a few feet of land a peasant will, if necessary, spend a thousand gourdes at court." If a woman is the heir, her husband may intervene in a dispute to protect her interests, but if the matter goes to court, only the husband of a " married " wife has a right to appear as an interested party; the mate of a *placée* may only act as a witness. When minor grandchildren inherit, their mother, whether married or *placée*, is their legal guardian and may enter suit to protect their interests.

428 The rights of a woman to the property of her father may be
423 nullified if a dowry has been given her husband at the time
583 of her " legal " marriage, though dowries are rarely given
562 among peasants. If she is a *placée*, or if a dowry had not passed at the time of her " marriage," the land she inherits from her parents is held by her for her children, who will in time inherit it from her, so that many parcels of land deemed by natives to belong to a single family group are found to be divided among people who bear different surnames. It is not without interest to note in passing that in contrast to the acrid disputes which characterize the settlement of a father's goods, the distribution of a mother's property is seldom disturbed by dissension.

42 In addition to land and money, which form the most important part of any estate, are the flocks, herds, and beasts of burden of the dead man, and his personal tools and implements. These are sometimes willed to brothers and sisters or favorite nephews. Land and money, however, may not be alienated, but must go to the man's own children or to such others as may have been legally adopted. A child can be deprived of participation in the estate only if formally disinherited by means of a sworn document attested before a
000 notary. As has been stated, daughters who have been given

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case certain aspects of the historical development of Haiti have doubtless tended to reinforce African custom. Reference has been made to the fact that the great proportion of traders are women, a truism in Africa as in Haiti, where by general rule men are the producers and women the distributors of goods. In Haiti, however, the fact that for many decades men were likely to be arbitrarily impressed into military service by local chieftains when they came to town — particularly in Mirebalais, which had always been one of the centers of Caco activity — discouraged them from attending the markets. Thus African usage has here been reinforced by the historical fact of Haitian political instability. The fact that the proceeds from trading belong to the woman who does the trading, and that in consequence women are encountered who, though married, command independent means and exercise full control over their resources, is a carry-over of African tradition and, as in Africa, this gives to women a position in the economic world quite foreign to conventional European practice.

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The form of the family as found in Mirebalais demonstrates that the African social grouping which comprises all those descended on one side of the family has largely disappeared there, though it is possible that at least the vestiges of it may have survived in other regions of Haiti. Yet in West Africa, though descent is legally counted on but one side of the family, psychological adherence to the families of both parents is everywhere important. Therefore it is logical to assume that this concept, reinforced by the pattern of dual descent and double familial affiliation of the French, has been retained in Haiti to the neglect of the aboriginal larger groupings, where, as has been seen, not only is relationship counted on both sides of the family, but, more significantly, the right to reprimand and punish is held and exerted by elders in both the maternal and the paternal lines. On the other hand, it is apparent that the feeling for larger relationship groups has not been entirely lost, particularly in the paternal line, when

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179 suggests that generalizations as to the relative pliability of
178 any specific phases of a culture under exposure to another are premature.

562 Are women more conservative than men in respect to
178 cultural change? The appropriateness of the affirmative answer often given can be tested to advantage in studies such as this. The answer, in Haiti, would seem to be that where work at home shields women from the influences of the outer world, this conservatism is found, but where they have an opportunity to come into contact with new trends, no less change enters into their activities than into that of the men. Thus in such matters as the organization of the Haitian household, the cuisine, or the time of meals, the logic of the situation has caused women to preserve Africanisms in full vigor, while historical causes have also similarly aided them in such things as retaining their African role as traders in the markets. In other phases of their lives, however, women, like men, have accepted European patterns, as is evidenced in the field of religion, where no greater resistance has been shown by women toward new forms than by men.

182 Other examples might be cited, but these indicate how a culture such as that of Haiti, as regards both its inner values and the psychological responses made to them, and its outer form and the manner in which its present-day character was attained, aids in sharpening and clarifying the questions that must be asked and answered if a better grasp of the dynamics of custom and the way in which tradition plays upon the inner being of those who are its carriers is to be had. However, it is not alone in general considerations such as these that the study of Haitian life can be of use. Much that is perplexing in that particular facet of the problem of race which in America is termed the "Negro problem" has both analogy and contrast in Haitian life. It must not be forgotten that the slaves who were brought to continental America were of the same types and of the same background as those imported

all aspects of the natural and supernatural. But the reputable cult priest does not dabble in "black" magic—the kind that maims or destroys human beings. One who does so is said to "work with two hands": one for the loa and one for evil. (The expression *servi dé main*—"serving with two hands"—is also applied to a cult chief who deals with deities of more than one "nation.") Many a cult priest in making his ritual flour drawings on the earth holds his left hand behind his back and draws with his right, giving testimony that he "works with one hand" only.

Each cult priest maintains his own cult temple, or *hounfor*. There are no cult officials above him, as there is no formal religious organization beyond the hounfor itself. Within his own special community he is therefore the chief religious functionary, the apex of an intratemple social organization. Under the cult priest, ordinarily, there are two grades of assistants, and below them two classes of servitors.

The cult priest is usually referred to as a *houngan*, a Fon (Dahomean) title signifying "spirit chief." Sometimes he is called *gangan* (a Bantu word meaning "conjuror" or "doctor")[2] or *capla*. He also is known by the title *bocó* or *bocor*, which seems to be derived from *bocono*, the diviner or priest of the Dahomean Fa cult.[3] The bocor is, in fact, sometimes referred to as a *divineur*, and he is regarded by some Haitians as a clairvoyant and a practitioner of magic. As in Dahomey, the bocor in Haiti foretells fate through the throwing of shells or chips, much in the manner of the secular game *mayamba*. He also reads destiny with small sticks or ashes. In earlier days the cult priest was sometimes known by the Yoruba name *babalao*, a title which has been corrupted to *papaloi*. A female cult leader is known as a *mambo*. She is presumed to have, in a general way, the same powers as the houngan, though in some quarters her *connaissance*, or "understanding," is not regarded so highly, and her status is believed to be somewhat lower.

Directly under the houngan is his chief assistant, the *laplace*, and perhaps a little below him on the ladder, the *mambo caille*. The laplace is regarded as the vice-houngan, and he assumes responsibility for running the hounfor in the absence of his chief. The mambo caille, a woman, runs the cult center in the absence of both the houngan and the laplace. One step farther down the ladder is the *houngénicon*, who acts as a sort of chief of the main body of devotees. These high-ranking assistants to the houngan are sometimes called *badjicans*, or keepers of the altar.

The servitors of the cult are known as *hounsi*, or "spirit wives," a name that was given to certain categories of cult servants in Dahomey.[4] There are two main groups of hounsi: *kanzo* (those who have passed through a ritual fire test) and *bossale* (those whose loa are wild or untamed). The

[2] [Footnote appears on p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]
[3] [Gorer, Africa Dances, p. 129; Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 208 ff. Cf. p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]
[4] [Foot note appears on p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]

476 241 533 461 men who have failed to join the coumbite, or praise the host, or single out various individuals for comment. The songs of the coumbite are a newspaper of the affairs of the people. The news is personalized, editorialized, and replete with comic vignettes.[7]

476 241 461 574 At noon the drummers signal a halt, and the workers shoulder their hoes, wipe off their machetes, and adjourn to the house for food. If it is a grand coumbite, the men rest for several hours, talking, catching up on sleep, or playing cards or *mayamba*. About three o'clock they go back to the fields to work until evening. Then comes the feast, under the canopy adjoining the house. The host and his wife have killed and cooked one or more goats, depending on the size of the group. The men are served meat, rice, beans, and whatever else has been prepared. [273] Afterward, women join the party, and there is more tafia or rum. Some of the men then drift homeward, but most stay on for dancing. Zesse, Congo, or Juba drums are brought out, and the festivities begin. If another coumbite is not scheduled for the next day, the music and dancing may last well into the night.

476 562 Women, too, have coumbites to perform various kinds of large tasks, from field work to winnowing and coffee sorting, though in general the women's work groups lack the festive character of the men's gatherings.

476 241 575 There is a more tightly knit form of coumbite, known as a *société*. In southern Haiti there are the société Congo and the société Martinique; in northern Haiti there is the société Ciyé. These sociétés are clubs built around mutual work needs and recreational activities. The société Congo that appears in the town or city streets during Rara days, with bamboo or conch-shell trumpets, drums, flags, and masks, is usually composed of the men who have joined forces to till the fields. In some instances, it may also conform roughly to membership in a particular hounfor, or cult center. Unlike the ordinary coumbite, the société is not a group which meets only at ground-breaking or harvesting time; it is a permanent organization with regular, sometimes day-to-day, obligations. Week after week it moves from one man's land to another, doing the tasks that have to be done. There is no question of "Can you come?" The group goes first to one man's land, then to another's until all the work has been done. If a member of the société falls sick, so that he cannot work his own field, the société takes over his tasks for him.

476 Coumbites are held not only for agricultural work but for house-building, and sometimes for the building of a hounfor.

[171] The Haitian coöperative work group has much in common with European and American husking and barn-building parties; but it has

[For footnote See Category 116, P. 352. -- Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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The distinction between castes on the basis of occupation is nowhere more clearly seen than in the feminine sphere. The peasant woman, from childhood onward, is an indefatigable laborer, absolutely indispensable to the economic life of the country. She not only performs the usual domestic functions but works in the fields as well. She carries marketable goods, sometimes for miles, to the town for sale. The aristocratic woman, on the other hand, is rarely active in business. Indeed, until very recent years no career was open to her outside the home, nor would custom have allowed her to follow one; even now, teaching and a few clerical positions in government service are her only business opportunities. She directs the household economy but has servants if she can possibly afford them. Her place is definitely in the home. 565 562

The second infallible test of membership in the élite caste is education and an ability to speak French. When Haiti was a slave colony belonging to France, the hundreds of thousands of blacks imported from Africa had no common tongue, coming as they did from wide stretches of the continent; the French spoken by their overseers, a development of the Norman dialect,[3] became their one language, known as Créole. Every Haitian, high and low, knows and uses this language, for nursemaids speak it to the upper-class children in their charge, and all servants speak it. The élite consequently learn it at a tender age, and must use it in all their dealings with the lower orders. Among themselves, however, they speak French. The official language of the country is French. To speak correct French is an immediate announcement that one has had the advantage of schooling and has been in contact with the aristocracy. Theoretically, Haitian education is free and democratic; actually, no peasant child could be spared from labor long enough for schooling, or find money for proper clothes to go to school in. 565 197 [87]

Inevitably the standard of living is a reflection of caste membership. "The élite wear shoes," explained General Butler laconically to the United States Senate investigating committee, when asked what characterized the classes of Haiti. His elliptical remark is true. Peasants, indeed, could not afford to purchase shoes, but more particularly they could not afford to dress up to the standard set by the shoes. When a man of the masses dons the castoff shoes of some aristocrat, the logical assumption by everyone is that this man is pre- 565 511

3. See chap. XVIII.

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175 565 took their place in the business life of the towns, sending their children to parish schools. Colored youths served in the colonial constabulary and in the militia, acquiring a knowledge of arms and warfare later to be useful to them.

175 565 423 567 162 Estimates of their wealth vary. Some say that in 1791 they owned a third of all the land in the colony and a fourth of all the slaves; others more conservative put the figure at one fifth of each. Even this is impressive enough to account for much of the growing jealousy of their position. And by 1791 the whites outnumbered them only ten to seven.[5]

● 562 595 563 175 581 White women in general added their support to a movement instigated by the petits blancs for discrimination against all gens de couleur. Many wives felt resentment against the colored people because of the frequency with which their husbands took colored mistresses.[6] Moreover, the wealth of the colony attracted an immigration of Frenchwomen with marriageable but undowered daughters—in the candid French phrase, "*de filles à marier et sans dot*"—who seem to have assumed that young planters would want white French wives, even though impecunious ones. It was a shock to quite a number of them to discover that a colonial youth might prefer a colored girl who brought a dowry with her.[7]

175 565 829 Indiscreet affranchis often gave additional grounds for resentment against their group. Wishing to dissociate themselves altogether from their Negro ancestry and to be assured of social eminence, some accounted for their dark complexions by reference to obscure Indian progenitors. On this ground many secured letters patent from local government officials, of course on payment of a fee, legally estab-

162 5. The census listed 40,000 whites to 28,000 colored. L. E. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description . . . de la partie française . . . de Saint-Domingue* (Philadelphia, 1797), I, 285, gave the following figures for 1790.

	Square Leagues	*Population*	*Whites*	*Affranchis*	*Slaves*
North	480	195,000	16,000	9,000	170,000
West	820	194,000	14,000	12,500	168,000
South	186	130,000	10,000	6,500	114,000
Totals	1,486	519,000	40,000	28,000	452,000

6. One governor reported to Paris that he considered sexual jealousy the greatest cause of unrest in the colony.

7. See Sir Harry H. Johnston, *The Negro in the New World* (New York, 1910), p. 141.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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two. Here was a decline of about 150,000 from 1790.[2] It is a commentary on the man's forcefulness that in spite of all difficulties Dessalines established an effective economic organization. Its basis was serfdom.

Every citizen, he announced, must consider himself in one of two categories, laborer or soldier. There were to be no shirkers in the new Haiti; if a man was not in the army, he must do manual labor. Artisans who followed a craft counted as laborers. Women, since they could not join the army, must work shoulder to shoulder with their men. It was understood that direction of Haiti's new order would be carried on by state officials who were neither laborers nor soldiers, but these officials were to be so few that they would not constitute a separate third category.

This step of Dessalines' was a radical one. It proclaimed the mastery of state over individual; and even more significantly it divided the people according to economic task, rather than birth, wealth, color, or social status. At first the more ambitious citizens bore patiently with the arbitrary decree, thinking they might be able to achieve comfortable status under a lenient definition of "soldier" or else by sinecure tasks as officials. Their disillusionment was swift. Even swifter was the chagrin of the lowly folk who had been slaves, for they found themselves now in actual bondage to one of their own color.

All people except soldiers, ran the decree, must be "attached as cultivators to a plantation." This might be translated to read "bound to the soil." The vast majority of the people were forced willy-nilly into agriculture. It was "formally prohibited for a cultivator to desert the plantation to which he was assigned"; conversely, it was a crime to give asylum to a runaway cultivator, male or female.[3] If such conditions differed from slavery, they were at least close to what the mediaeval world knew as serfdom. But under this régime of forced labor the recently ravaged fields once more became productive: cotton plantations again covered the plain of the Artibonite, and sugar refineries were slowly rebuilt all over the country.

To forestall complaint from the people once again driven into

2. See, for an analysis of population figures, Placide Justin, *Histoire politique et statistique de l'Ile d'Hayti, Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1826), pp. 502–503.

3. A certain Mlle. Chapotin, of respectable family, was accused of having harbored a fugitive female cultivator, and, since she was unable to pay immediately the fine imposed upon her by the police at Port-au-Prince, she was condemned to serve a jail term.

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175 concludes: "With regard to the ecclesiastical institutions of the
793 republic we may safely say . . . that if the standing army be one cause
795 of the degradation of the people, the Church is surely another; and
[114] the sooner it can be reformed, the better for religion, for morals, and for the physical well-being of the community."[9]

175 Eventually the state felt it necessary to protect the people from
793 these predatory priests. True, people paid for what they considered
795 to be services performed, but the legislators could not permit unlimited graft in the name of religion. An act of 1840,[10] therefore, set
659 a fee of half a dollar for each baptism;[11] $8 for a marriage with Mass, $4 for one without a Mass; an ordinary Mass, 37 cents; a High Mass, service, or funeral "of the first class" (that is, with choir, sacristan, acolytes, and churchwarden), $60; funerals of the second class, $20; funerals of the third class, $10. Articles of the act specify what shall constitute the three classes of service, and it is then stated, "Neither rectors nor vicars shall receive anything for offices at which they do not assist in person, except in cases of illness." The Haitians were not receiving true religious instruction, but at least their government tried to prevent their being mulcted by the spurious churchmen.

175 Since Haiti had no schools except the few attended by children of
771 the élite, religious instruction of youth was almost nonexistent. The
184 average élite man was openly an unbeliever, for it required little acumen to show him that if the priests represented religion there was nothing to commend it. Hunt in 1860 said: "Many of the educated are about where the French were when they left the island. They believe in Voltaire, whom I have not unfrequently heard them
[562] characterize as the greatest man who ever lived."[12] In contrast to the
[114] men, the women made more of a show of being devout and attentive to the formal duties of religion, but according to Franklin they

are not actuated by any religious feeling. Going to church is a mere matter of parade with them, the sabbath being a day of festivities, and not set aside for religious devotion. The female congregations which frequent the churches in Hayti appear better prepared for an opera, or some other public amusement, than for the sacred duties of offering up their prayers in adoration of the Deity.

9. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 98 ff.
10. Chap. IV, articles 28–31.
11. The figures cited in the Act are in gourdes.
12. Benjamin S. Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans* (Philadelphia, 1860), p. 18.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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of the parish church to which each party belongs, and no ceremony may be performed by a priest without the presentation of the certificate of the civil marriage. 585

According to the legal code, as well as actual practice of the upper classes, woman is man's definite inferior in rights.[7] The Haitian code follows closely that of Napoleon, and both conform in general to practice common among substantial people in the Haiti and France of the early nineteenth century. Spouses equally owe to each other fidelity, succor, and assistance; the husband owes protection to his wife, the wife obedience to her husband. Although the wife must live with her husband wherever he chooses, he conversely must receive her when she comes to live with him, and must provide food for her. No wife may purchase, sell, give, or otherwise alienate property without the consent of her husband; moreover, the husband alone has the administration of goods coming in the dowry, so long as the union endures. 562

The modern movement for women's rights has hardly touched Haiti.[8] Women may not vote, nor may they hold public office. Among the élite, in theory and in practice woman's place is in the home, caring for the household and the children. One might imagine himself in provincial France as he sees the daily life of upper-class Haitian women: the ordering of meals, directing of servants, sewing, shopping, visiting, party going, occasional novel reading, driving in the family car. Different from French practice, however, is the taboo against most manual labor: this is the task of servants only. The élite housewife may cook but not sweep, sew but not launder, bargain with a huckster but not carry home her purchases. A woman of the upper classes would demean herself to enter business. Since the American Occupation, as a matter of fact, a few women have been daring enough to become secretaries and stenographers, but there seems to be nothing like a concerted movement for the "emancipation" of élite women. There are schools for girls, but these do not reach as far as the schools for boys; women are not admitted to the law school or medical school, for a woman lawyer or doctor would be unthinkable in Haitian society. [463] [871] [463]

7. See Louis Borno, *Code civil d'Haïti annoté* (Port-au-Prince, 1892), chap. VI, articles 196–201.

8. See, however, Madeleine G. Sylvain, "The Feminist Movement in Haiti," *Bulletin of the Pan-American Union*, LXXIII, No. 6 (June, 1939), 315–321. [113]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

562 The male, by contrast, is master in all matters, including those pertaining to home life. Obviously, he is much freer in his sexual life than is his wife.

586 Divorce is comparatively rare, thanks to the careful solicitude of all parties before formal marriage is contracted, and to the disapproval of the Catholic Church. Since the husband is not, by custom or by public opinion, bound to limit his sexual attentions to his legal wife, one of the common causes of divorce is removed. The code [837] allows formal divorce to the husband for the wife's adultery, and to the wife for her husband's adultery "when he shall bring his concubine into the common dwelling house." Both spouses may secure divorce for excess, for injurious cruelty, for life sentences imposed by [587] a court—"*peines afflictives et infamantes.*" A woman whose marriage has been dissolved by divorce cannot remarry before the expiration of one year, nor is she permitted to remarry her former husband. [562] The opposition of the Church to divorce is a distinct deterrent to [771] women who crave freedom, for women are generally the more devout members of the Church.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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581 suspicion of legal complications is well founded: the priests therefore
794 try to concentrate their attack upon the remaining motives. Thus one priest issued a notice at a certain mountain chapel that he would perform no weddings there for persons who wore shoes; an increase in weddings followed. By such devices, and by constant sermons on the significance of the sacrament, he has persuaded many of his parishioners to be married, yet the vast majority of them continue in plaçage.[4]

581 Informally entered unions among the peasants, then, rest upon a sound, practical, economic basis. If the priests are ever to be successful in their campaign for more weddings, Haitian peasant economy must undergo a change; even then the plurality of women (if indeed it exists), now more or less absorbed by plaçage, will work against the reform.

562 It is confusing to speak of "status" in connection with the domestic
565 life of hard-working people, for status implies law, and law hardly touches peasant life. Custom governs all—inevitably, since the majority of peasant women have not been legally married, and since no peasant would willingly take a case to law. Yet women have a definite status as compared with men.

In almost every detail a peasant woman's life differs from that of élite women. The rule of life in country districts is unremitting labor
462 for the female from childhood up. She cooks and makes cloches,
565 labors in the fields after the men have cleared them, does the family
443 washing in the nearest stream, carries water, does whatever housework is required. Practically every Haitian peasant woman has her experience of going to market to sell the vegetables, trinkets, or
[484] other wares her family may produce, and to buy necessities. This trip to market may be short, or as long as twenty miles. One of the characteristic sights of Haiti is the seemingly endless procession of women coming down from the hills trudging, or rather swinging majestically along, with a great load on the head, or riding on the haunches of a tiny donkey loaded with bulging panniers. Arrived at

4. As a result of his campaign for more weddings he has had some unusual experiences. Once, in the midst of the wedding ceremony, a bride rushed out of the chapel and shortly gave birth to a child; when she was able to move again, the ceremony was resumed. Again, traveling into the mountains to perform a similar ceremony, he found a crowd assembled under a tree, assisting at another birth of an infant to a bride-to-be. Sometimes he encounters the argument by a peasant that he will not consent to a wedding until his spouse has proved her fecundity by bearing a certain number of children.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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the market, the women sit all day in the broiling sun, and in Port-au-Prince at least, sometimes sleep near by for the night, in order to complete their purchases and sales and to get their fill of companionable gossip. They are often accompanied by the youngest of their children, some of whom have to be carried. 462 565 443

Some observers profess to see evidences of a matriarchate among the peasants, for as a general rule the woman attends to the business dealings of the market place, handles the money, directs her children, and manages the household. If the man has more than one placée spouse, complete control of the farm is the woman's during the absence of her man. It is a superficial judgment, however, to speak of the peasant mother as a matriarch. The man owns the land, chooses his women, calls for help at the moment he pleases for preparation of the ground for planting; and when he knows his end to be near, summons all his families and disposes of his property as he sees fit. His decision is final. But he is no more a patriarch than his woman is a matriarch: they are economic partners in a struggle for existence. 562 593 592

By our standards, the woman is inferior to the man not only in rights but in being one spouse of several. He may contract several unions, while she may have only one. She does more steady, if not more actual, physical labor than the man. When he is at home, she must offer him the best of the food. As usual in simple societies, however, the issue rarely arises as to superiority or inferiority of the sexes. Customary behavior is followed without much question. 562

There is one great contrast between élite and peasant women, in the matter of childbirth. The élite mother takes as much care of herself during pregnancy and parturition as would an American woman in well-to-do circles. The peasant mother, on the contrary, cannot allow herself the luxury of medical attention, nor can she spare the time to rest quietly. Like many so-called "primitive" women, she apparently finds herself little incommoded either by pregnancy or birth. Babies are born frequently in the market place, the mother having come down from the hills only that day with her goods. It is not unusual to hear of the birth of a child in a roadside ditch or in a grove by the path to and from the market town. The care given mother and infant is primitive: the navel cord is cut with a sharp stone or a piece of broken glass; a short rest is thought sufficient before the mother resumes her task. As might be expected, the death rate from infection is high and women age prematurely. 565 844 846 [165] [145]

Parents are generally kind to their children, so far as physical

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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the men as well as the women work arduously. It seems justifiable to conclude that industry has not always been a characteristic of the Haitian male; and to ask why. 114 461

One valid reason is, of course, political. As we have seen, until the American Occupation Haiti was greatly overmilitarized. Almost every able-bodied male was at one time or another during his prime a soldier in the army. Since the bane of the country from 1804 to 1915 was its revolutions, there was room for a man to serve either in the regular army or, lured by future promises, in the guerrilla forces of a scheming general. To be drawn away from the land at the very moment of physical maturity was to predispose a youth against humdrum field work. As a soldier he traveled, knew excitement, was fed and clothed, and could loaf, except during battle. So schooled, upon retirement from the army a man was hardly disposed to settle down to steady labor. Even if as a young man he remained upon his farm, he might at any moment be called away to service, just when he was most needed for the crop. If Haiti was to be fed, the women, who alone were exempt from army service, provided the only available regular workers. 175 701 461

Tradition offers another explanation for masculine independence of hard work. The African background of female agricultural labor has been cited. In slavery the men had been degraded by being forced to do work of this sort, while the lot of women hardly differed from what it had been in the old country. Under Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, with their large armies, women, already numerically preponderant, formed the vast majority of field workers. Independent small farming hardly changed the picture. African tradition, moreover, made the man master of his property and wives, the rôle of woman being that of man's inferior and useful servant. 174 462 562 567

Disease is another partial explanation. Until recently no one seems to have been aware of the prevalence in Haiti of such diseases as hookworm, malaria, and tuberculosis which, without necessarily affecting a person outwardly, may nevertheless sap his vitality, leaving him listless and worn out by even slight exertion. Obviously much of what was called laziness was due to disease. But the flaw in this reasoning is that illness makes no discrimination between the sexes. If men were disease-ridden, so were women: yet the latter were steadily industrious. 164 461

Any foray into possible psychological reasons is guesswork. It

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

CHAPTER II

WHAT THE SLAVES FOUND IN HAITI

THOUGH by the time of the French Revolution "the immense army of slavery had increased to such proportions that in the face of it the white world seemed reduced to a mere handful of men,"[1] this was by no means the case in the earliest days of the colony of Santo Domingo. As late as 1681 the whites outnumbered the Negroes almost three to one,[2] and it is not until a hundred years later that, in the words of St. Mery, there were "eleven and three tenths slaves for one white."[3]

Yet in the fashioning of the present-day culture of the Haitian peasants, this "mere handful," exerted an influence out of all proportion to its size. That this should have occurred is not strange in view of the relationship between Negroes and whites, which was that between slaves and masters; that it did occur is amply shown in the contemporary accounts of Haitian and West Indian life, which tell us how the Negroes everywhere made conscious efforts to achieve the standards of those who to them represented power, wealth, and position. But while the prestige of the master-class must be acknowledged, care must be taken not to accept uncritically an assumption that has colored many accounts of the lives of primitive peoples who have come into contact with European

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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1177 cultures — namely, that the traditions and beliefs of these groups cannot withstand the impact of what is termed "civilization." What invariably seems to follow when peoples having differing customs, beliefs, and cultural heritages come into continuous contact is that both give, and each takes. What aspects of the new culture a given people will take, and what in turn they will give, must vary according to the particular historical situation under which the contact occurs. But both 1178 processes do go on, and, as will be shown in the case of Haiti, though the Negroes retained much of their African culture, they also freely took over and adapted the customs and behavior of the Europeans among whom they lived.

563 Certain questions, therefore, must be asked about this white element in the population. To what extent was it a unit in its derivation and in its special customs — did its members come from a single social class of the home country, or were all elements of French society represented? What were the patterns of family life, of religion, of economic organization, of morals, which the whites presented to Negro eyes? These are matters of great significance, for one telling factor in the mingling of cultures is the type of carrier through whom contact between civilizations is effected. If, for example, European missionaries or traders or administrators on short tenure and without their families are introduced into an area, a far different picture of European life will be presented to the native from that were immigrant settlers to come among them with their wives and children; and this result, moreover, to seek finer distinctions, will show additional divergencies according to the social position of these migrants. Therefore it is necessary to consider the types of Frenchmen whose modes of living were to influence the behavior which the descendants of their slaves were to perpetuate when these had attained their freedom as individuals and their independence as a nation.

175 The "Corps of Adventurers" who in 1632 comprised the 563 dominant element in the population of Haiti included four

1; Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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groups: the buccaneers "who were occupied with the hunt," the filibusters "who cruised the seas," the *habitants*, "who cultivated the land," and the bondsmen "who, for the most part, lived with the *habitants* and the buccaneers." [4] Letters of the period permit a somewhat more detailed description of the social groupings of pre-Revolutionary Haiti than that just given — a matter of some importance, since it must have been at this time that the merging of African and European civilizations was at a stage when the basic outlines of its eventual structure were being formed. The early population seems to have been made up in large part of the flotsam and jetsam of Paris; "a sort of obligatory enrollment of colonists, an enforced recruiting of emigrants from those elements of the metropolitan population judged unassimilable" [5] — those who were without means of support or under suspicion of crime, insolvent debtors, "adventurers," and those for whom emigration represented the sole existence open to them.

The *engagés*, or bondsmen, were those who, lacking the funds to pay their passage, pledged themselves to planters for a period of three years. During this time they were treated like the Negro slaves, and at the expiration of their terms were turned into the world with little enough to show for their hard labor.[6] The Protestants who migrated to Haiti were a far different type of settler, but these were few in number, and some, such as the fifty-eight who came to the island in 1687, traveled in the very ships which brought convicts condemned to hard labor for life. Ex-convicts and escaped criminals, discharged soldiers and deserters were also found. In many instances, however, persons of these types seemed by their achievements to have proved themselves not undesirable additions to the population. "I have had 300 of them whom I have placed," wrote one M. de Cussy in 1686; "they are industrious folk, and the planters are very pleased with them." One escaped criminal, who was not discovered as such until many years after he had come to the colony, was permitted to buy

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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175 563 his freedom for ten thousand *livres*, "which," an official report stated, "will be used to build prisons in the Cul-de-Sac." Another did so well in his new home that, though his past was known, he was never molested and died the owner of twenty-two Negro slaves.[7] Others who came to Haiti were sent there for reasons of waywardness, or because they had been involved in escapades that threatened trouble for them or their families, or because, showing no aptitude for gainful employment, their relations chose to send them to the colony rather than to be burdened with their support. Of these early colonists de Vassière says, with apparent justification: "In truth the morale and the manners of this population were what they might be supposed to have been, execrable."[8]

These categories, however, do not give the full tale of the non-Negro peoples who eventually contributed of their blood [567] to the present-day Haitian population. In the earliest times the Spaniards sold white as well as Negro slaves to the New World, as numerous *assientos* testify. Before the time of French control of the western portion of the island, Haiti must have received her proportion of these unfortunates.[9] French women, many of them women of the streets, some mere girls who had come from convents, were imported in the early days to encourage the buccaneers and the filibusters to lead a more settled life.[10] In 1696, when the French abandoned the island of St. Croix, its inhabitants, both masters and slaves, were transported to Haiti, there to re-establish themselves on land allotted to them by the government.[11] Acadians from Newfoundland were landed at the Mole St. Nicholas in 1764, and, as has been mentioned, some of them were eventually settled in the valley of Mirebalais, there to disappear after a few years.[12] At about the same time, in accordance with a policy of increasing the white population, 2,470 Germans were brought to the island. Unlike the Acadians, these people thrived and developed an extensive cultivation of coffee, and their colony was in a healthy state at the time of the French

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Revolution.[13] St. Mery also records the importation and sale in 175
1730 of more than five hundred Natchez Indians from New 563
France (Louisiana) "as well as others at a later date, both from Louisiana and Canada."[14]

A final class of settler must be mentioned, whose coming is 175
reported to have given a better tone to the drab picture of 563
Haitian life. This class was composed of members of the 565
French nobility, who in their new home attempted to maintain the standards which characterized and regulated their lives in France. Unlike many of the earlier inhabitants, to whom the difficult life of the planter did not appeal, the nobles tended to continue their status as country gentlemen in their new environment, and, by establishing plantations, to reproduce in so far as was possible, their situation in France as a group of landed proprietors. As a result, there soon grew up 175
between these planters living on their estates and the popula- 563
tion of the cities and towns the same distinctions of caste and 565
the same blind rivalry which, before the Revolution, sepa- 369
rated the French country squires and the city dwellers in France itself.[15]

The existence of these two classes within the white population of the colony, which is commented upon by many writers of the period, must have presented to the Negro slaves strikingly different views of the life of the whites. In a manuscript of Moreau de St. Mery, at present in the archives of the Ministry of Colonies in Paris, a group of some two hundred of these gentlefolk who in 1763 lived in the region of what today is Cap-Haitien, in northern Haiti, is spoken of as that of a special class, and their existence is contrasted with that of the city folk. Living on their plantations, with the cultivation of which they were exclusively occupied, their mode of life was different from that of the inhabitants of the cities and towns, where were found dealers in wholesale produce, officers of the crown, lawyers, solicitors, and merchants. Some forty years later another writer, writing from the point of view of the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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175 563 565 369 [1963] planters and expressing their contempt for the townspeople, speaks of the towns as existing primarily to serve the needs of these country squires as centers for the storage and disposal of their produce: "There are found merchants, artisans, judges, recorders, solicitors, notaries, bailiffs, doctors. But one finds neither nobles, men of property, nor persons of wit and perception." [16]

175 324 563 The physical aspect of the cities had little to recommend them, especially since the utter lack of sanitation made for extreme uncleanliness in all Haitian centers. This fact is of special interest in the light of the frequent references to this trait of Haitian cities in the writings of those Europeans who described the life of independent Haiti. Invariably in such accounts the littered state of the streets, even in the capital, is stressed, and tendered as evidence of the absence of civilization in this Negro Republic.[17] Even though occasional mention is made that this state of affairs existed before the Revolution, nowhere, whether in St. John or in the later writers who date from the time of the occupation of the country by the United States Marine Corps, is there any realization that this condition antedates the independence of Haiti. The cleanliness of Africans in Africa wherever the natives have ready access to water has been well attested, and is still true in those regions from which the ancestors of the people of Haiti principally derive.

175 507 368 563 Yet some aspects of life in the towns livened the picture of Haitian colonial existence. Outstanding were the opportunities offered by these centers for social intercourse, and even for intellectual and artistic stimulation of a kind, such as was afforded by the famous *Cercle des Philadelphes* of Cap Française, dedicated to literary, philosophical, and, above all, to political discussions.[18] Masonic lodges, later taken over by the Negroes and today of appreciable importance in Haiti, were also instituted by the French, the first having been founded at the Cap in 1740.[19] Purely social meeting-places, such as public

1: Herskovits E-4, 5· (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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baths or public halls, were in operation, while in the towns of Cap Français, Port-au-Prince, Leogane, Saint-Marc, and Cayes, theaters were established which produced "the latest plays from Paris" and attracted large audiences.[20]

Despite all this, the canker of homesickness constantly gnawed at the colonists even in the towns — the feeling that a stay in the colony was only for the interval needed to allow a man to escape to the mother country with a fortune. On the estates the loneliness and isolation of plantation life are commented upon repeatedly. A letter of the period, without place or date, found in the family papers of the historian de Vassière, discusses this with poignancy:

> "Have pity for an existence which must be eked out far from the world of our own people. We here number five whites, my father, my mother, my two brothers, and myself, surrounded by more than two hundred slaves, the number of our negroes who are domestics alone coming almost to thirty. From morning to night, wherever we turn, their faces meet our eyes. No matter how early we awaken, they are at our bedsides, and the custom which obtains here not to make the least move without the help of one of these Negro servants brings it about not only that we live in their society the greater portion of the day, but also that they are involved in the least important events of our daily life. Should we go outside our house to the workshops, we are still subject to this strange propinquity. Add to this the fact that our conversation has almost entirely to do with the health of our slaves, their needs which must be cared for, the manner in which they are to be distributed about the estate, or their attempts at revolt, and you will come to understand that our entire life is so closely identified with that of these unfortunates that, in the end, it is the same as theirs. And despite whatever pleasure may come from that almost ab-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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solute dominance which it is given us to exercise over them, what regrets do not assail us daily because of our inability to have contact and correspondence with others than these unfortunates, so far removed from us in point of view, customs, and education." [21]

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This letter speaks of the presence of five whites. The psychological state of the planter who, unmarried and alone, spent his days without the companionship of a fellow-being who as much as shared a common language with him may well be imagined. Even where there were white overseers, the prevailing sense of caste was so strong that while these ate with the head of the estate, they did not live under the same roof, for they were subordinates and were treated as such. For his most constant companions the owner had his house-servants, unless he maintained a mulatto concubine who cooked his food and looked after his personal wants, shared his confidences, and reported to him any disaffection on the part of the Negro slaves. It is understandable that, having made his fortune, the planter did not delay his return to France, where, once back in Paris, he lived lavishly on the revenues from his estates; and letters in the Ministry of Colonies show the extent to which this phenomenon of absentee ownership characterized pre-Revolutionary Santo Domingo.[22]

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Haiti being thought of as but an interlude in a man's life, the loosening of moral tone so complained of in contemporary works resulted, and with this went the many forms of display in which these colonists indulged and those other aspects of colonial custom which were so often ridiculed by European travelers of the period. The distance of Haiti from Paris, or, in a later period, the time which had elapsed since the French loss of Haiti, has, however, lent an enchantment to "Créole life" which is reflected in an idealized portrayal of this existence, much in the manner of the effusions on the graciousness and glamour of life in what is termed "the old South." [23] One

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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cannot read the extended narrative of the young Comte de C***, reprinted by de Vassière, without questioning this myth of the idyllic life of the Haitian Créole, even though allowing for the disdain with which an exiled Parisian dandy of 1730 would regard the inhabitants of outlying possessions, and allowing also for the savory wit of the man, which undoubtedly led him to underscore the more diverting situations which he encountered.[24]

Mention must be made at this point of the two great divisions of the white population which, as the colonizing period continued, were created by the distinction between those born on the island and those who had migrated there. These divisions cut across the two categories of urban and country dwellers, both of which numbered Haitian-born and native European members. At the time of the French Revolution about three quarters of the whites on the island had been born outside the colony, while of those born in the colony, women comprised the major portion.[25] Haitian-born persons were known by the designation *Créole*, which, according to a definition of the period, included all those " who have first seen the light of day in Santo Domingo " and was, as it is today, a term employed in all the West Indies and in Louisiana.[26] This designation was by no means restricted to the whites, however, for there were Créole Negroes as well as Créole whites; at the present time in Haiti a distinction is even drawn between locally grown " créole " rice and that which is imported!

It is common knowledge that slavery not only affects those who are held in bondage, but deeply influences the master-class as well. In Haiti the role played by the institution of slavery in the formation of the character and personalities of Créole children brought up in a setting of servility, cupidity, brutality, and terror must have been of the utmost importance. The bad temper and domineering nature of Créole youths is commented on again and again by writers of the period. Owing to the unhealthy climate and the failure to

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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maintain adequate hygienic conditions, the health of these children was usually poor, so that from earliest infancy they were spoiled by their parents and servants; their least wishes were gratified, and their least complaints immediately rectified so as to make them petty tyrants in their households. This tyranny was most often exercised over the family slaves. Regardless of the assiduous care these young despots received, and despite the adulation lavished upon their young charges, the Negro servants were seldom sufficiently prompt or adequate in their attentiveness to escape the punishments, often severe, that were meted out to them at the behest of their young masters. This tyranny extended to the play-life of the young Haitian-born white. Surrounded only by the slave children of the plantation, he commanded his contemporaries even more imperiously than his parents commanded the grown slaves.

> " Whatever he saw, he wanted, whatever was shown him he demanded; and if some fatality brought it about that one of his small companions resisted him and he became irritated, they would hurry from all sides in response to his cries and those of the young unfortunate, who, his color having destined him for submission, learned soon enough that he would be forced to give way, perhaps even being meted some punishment to penalize the disobedience of one who had not yet the instinct for servitude." [57]

175 563 567 571 [839]

Grown to manhood, the young Créole continued to act as master of all he surveyed. Imperious, quick-tempered, spoiled, his life lived in large part among slaves, when his sex drive stirred, he took what slave women pleased him. Eventually he married, to be tormented with the thoughts of the possible infidelity of his wife; the more tortured because of his extreme vanity and because, while demanding faithfulness from his spouse, he was continuing his affairs with his Negro women. [157] Yet he had some excellences of character, as well. " Frank,

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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175 563 587 591 [597]

affable, generous perhaps to the point of ostentation, confident, brave, a sure friend and a good father "[28] — such are his good points as set down by one who was perhaps surer-eyed than others in seeing his deficiencies, though these traits seem to have concerned more his relations with his fellow-whites than those which affected his bearing toward his Negro slaves.

The young Créole women of this same environment were destined for early marriage — too early for their best development, whether physical or mental. Given to exacting the fulfillment of their slightest caprices, they were, like their men, creatures of passion. If they survived their first pregnancies, which as a result of too early marriages often came before they were physically in condition to support the rigors of childbirth, they soon lost their youthful allure and became the unattractive women of the type so maliciously described by the Comte de C***.[29] In such cases they frequently survived not one but several husbands. Their associations were chiefly with their Negro women slaves, who were full confidantes, sleeping in the same chamber with their mistresses and on occasion sharing informal meals with them, though they never ate at the same table. And because, by a fine turn of irony, these Negro women were often at the same time the concubines of the husbands, brothers, or sons of their mistresses, they were as often as not treated alternately with the greatest tenderness and the harshest brutality.[30]

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Whatever the inner life of white Haitians, native-born or Créole, outward ostentation was the rule. In the cities poorly furnished houses were cared for by a numerous retinue of uniformed retainers; "the supreme achievement for a European being to have himself served, he hires slaves while he waits for the time when he can own them."[31] In the country, too, life was lived on as lavish a scale as possible. This is not the place to describe the houses of masters and slaves, or the buildings needed for working sugar-cane or indigo or preparing coffee, or their distribution over the plantation, for nu-

175 563 567 105 342

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

[History of Haiti in 17th-18th Centuries— The Haitian White Population]

175 merous contemporary accounts, and most present-day works,
105 give both texts and illustrations which make the economy of
563 the plantation clear.[33] Though many stories of the magnifi-
567 cence of plantation life are found in current works, writers
342 of the period seem to agree that but little attention was paid
to convenience. Inventories of the contents of houses show
175 that furnishings were at a minimum; a few chairs and small
105 tables in the sitting- and reception-rooms, beds and minor ac-
563 cessories in the way of furniture in the bedrooms, dining-room
352 tables and chairs and a cabinet for dishes. These pieces were usually built in the colony and made of native hard woods; substantial, they were essentially plain. As Baron Wimpffen remarked, "Taste, Sir, is still Creolian at Saint Domingo; and, unfortunately, the Creolian is not the right taste, — it smells too much of the *Boucan*."[33]

175 The table set was not distinguished. Meat, though the most
105 important dish at the principal meals, was poor, but, on the
567 other hand, fish, game, and wild fowl were excellent, and the
563 best of French wines were available.[34] Whatever the fare, how-
264 ever, it was served in the grand manner, often on plate rather
[262] than chinaware, and by the many liveried house-servants which every great establishment could boast. An account of the mode of service has been preserved in the reminiscences of one who, writing some years later of a repast served him in 1787, says: "There were many more of these domestics of both sexes than there were diners. I could but admire their attention to the smallest details of the service, the whiteness of their clothing, and the beautiful kerchiefs in the Créole manner elegantly arranged about the heads of the women. . . . But
[291] all of them moved about on bare feet; this was the distinctive sign of slavery."[35]

175 As portrayed in contemporary works, Haitian white life is
181 seen to have been lived entirely in terms of material goods and
105 of display. Just as there was little intellectual life, so religion
771 was but a matter of form. One M. de Larnage, writing from
563

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

[History of Haiti in 17th-18th centuries—The Haitian white population]

Petit-Goave on 25 June 1743, complains that it is unbelievable "what indifference the people of these districts have toward spiritual matters." [46] So little attention was paid to the rites of the Church that when the baptism of an infant was to be performed, it often proved difficult to find a godfather who had taken the sacrament, and many children were therefore never baptized. As might be expected, the churches were in a bad state, often having no more than earthen walls and floors, roofed with thatch, and being used as threshing-floors as well as places of worship. The description which Père Labat has given us of a church at Cap Français,[47] and of the manner in which the communicants conducted themselves during such services as were held, shows the decadence of the one religion that had any place among the white inhabitants. The clergy, too, reflected this same decadence. For though the early libertines who posed as priests were later replaced by members of such orders as the Jacobins, the Jesuits, and the Capucins, even this did not end the scandals that, from the first days of the establishment of the Catholic Church on the island, marked its ministrations.

What impression must the Negroes have obtained from their opportunities to observe the life of their masters? What patterns of behavior, what moral codes, what concepts of the way in which the Europeans regulated their own lives and, as officials, regulated the lives of others, must have been stamped on the minds of these Africans? That the present emphasis on the importance of wealth, or that a love of and demand for display, should characterize Haitian life of the cities today is not strange. Nor is it difficult to comprehend how certain other aspects of Haitian life that have so been underscored in the last half-century by those who have written of the Haitians should have developed from this initial stimulus — not to the extent to which this emphasis would lead one to believe, to be sure, but enough to give a basis for the exaggerations which have been published.[48]

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while others had fled to the mountains; the first group I caused to be beaten, and cut off the ears of the others, and since then no complaint has been heard." [5] Charlevoix also tells of the brutal treatment of the early slaves; how the Negroes were given even less consideration than the Indians, since there was not only much greater difference in skin color between them and the whites than between the color of the Indians and the Europeans, but the added reason existed that

> " slavery, as far as the native Indians were concerned, was based solely on the right of the most powerful, whereas in the case of the Negroes, they having been bought and sold by their own people, it seemed that one need have less scruple in making them bear the full weight of their servitude." [6]

The rapidity with which the slave-trade grew, especially in the latter portion of the seventeenth century and the eighteenth, need not be stressed here. With the passage of the western part of the island into the hands of the French following the provisions of the treaty of Ryswick in 1697, and as a result of the picturesque but predatory activities of the buccaneers, who did much to demoralize the Spanish regime, French participation in the trade grew apace,[7] so that slightly more than a half-century later seven " companies " were engaged in carrying Negroes to the French possessions in the New World.[8] Though in the earlier decades of the eighteenth century Martinique was the best market, Haiti, because of her vast resources, came to absorb the greater part of the available slaves.[9]

From the earliest times most of the slaves were destined for work in the fields, but some were employed as house-servants. These latter had the greatest opportunities to learn the ways of the whites and, moreover, since many of the women were mistresses of their owners, not only did a mingling of traditions and modes of life result, but a merging of

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175 553 52 [357]

the blood-streams of the two races as well. And though in the custom of French Santo Domingo, as elsewhere in the New World, even a suspicion of Negro ancestry was sufficient to cut a person off from social intercourse with white society, yet these mixed-bloods were to become an important factor in establishing the patterns of Haitian Negro tradition, just as their descendants were to exert no small influence in the development of Haitian culture after the establishment of independent Haiti.

Numerous terms designated the various degrees of crossing, some of which, surviving in present-day speech, are familiar to us, such as the words "mulatto" and "quadroon." But examining Moreau de St. Mery's painstaking analysis of the various possible amounts of crossing that could be recognized, reading his speculations regarding the smallest proportion of Negro blood that could be regarded as negligible, noting how he traces Negro blood to its last vestige, as in a cross which would give one part Negro as against 8,191 parts white, a telling impression is received of the great significance of race-crossing for the Haitians of that time.[10] Such words as *sacatra, griffe, marabou, métif,* and *mamelouc* not only gave information as to the amount of crossing represented in the persons designated by them, but even indicated which parent, father or mother, was white and which one was wholly or partially Negro. Crossing was by no means restricted to matings between white masters and their slave women, for records show that Negro men did not fail to hold an attraction for their white mistresses. Nor did all the sharpness with which the color-line was drawn prevent actual marriages between whites and persons of color. In such instances, however, the white [558] person was cast out from association with his fellow-Europeans, as the name applied to him, *mésallié,* sufficiently shows.[11]

Slavery cut across all these varying degrees of color, so that just as there might be free Negroes who were wholly African

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

in descent, so there were "colored" folk who were slaves. As time went on, the lighter-colored slaves were usually employed as house-servants rather than field-hands, bringing about a continuous dilution of the Negro blood that flowed in these strains, and a lightening of their skins. And such was the prestige attached to light color that the mixed-bloods, even though slaves, felt themselves superior to free Negroes of undiluted African stock. This attitude derived from the fact that the lighter slaves were most often manumitted, particularly if they were the children of their owners, and that in other situations, when as slaves they gained the favor of their masters, they were permitted to engage in some remunerative enterprise with the proceeds of which they eventually might purchase their own freedom. These free people of color, or *affranchis*, formed an important part of the Haitian population in pre-Revolutionary times,[13] and played a principal role in the development of Haitian culture. It was through them that European civilization flowed, since because of the closeness of their contacts with the whites they were the instrument by means of which the aboriginal African heritage of the slaves was modified to produce the forms in which it is found in Haiti today.[18]

Yet for all the importance of the freed mixed-bloods in the attainment of Haitian independence and in the fixing of the patterns of Haitian culture, they, like the whites, were but relatively few in number, their strength being but from five to ten per cent of that of slaves.[14] In attempting to analyze the manner in which the present amalgam that is the civilization of Haiti was formed, it is consequently necessary to revert to a consideration of those who were in the majority, the full-blooded Negroes. The tribes from which these Negroes were principally derived have been indicated, together with the outlines of the civilizations of the region of Africa from which they were drawn. To this must be added, as has been for the whites with whom they came in contact, an analysis of the so-

But in the early days Heritage

195 piece called "Merci Papa Vincent" was very popular. According to the
543 song, the noteworthy achievement of the President was the law he
* 533 sponsored to drive the "Syrians" out of the retail trades:
* 539
● 563
444

Nous connê moune qui raimê people lâ,
C'est Président Vincent!
Nous connê moune qui raimê people lâ,
C'est Président Vincent!
Nous connê moune qui raimê people lâ,
C'est Président Vincent!
Nous connê moune qui raimê people,
C'est Président Vincent!
A nous rêlé, merci Papa Vincent!
A nous rêlé, merci Papa Vincent!
A nous crié, merci Papa Vincent!

Qui moune qui bai commerce en detail lâ?
C'est Président Vincent!
Qui moune qui bai commerce en detail lâ?
C'est Président Vincent!
Qui moune qui bai commerce en detail lâ?
C'est Président Vincent!
A nous rêlé, merci Papa Vincent!
A nous rêlé, merci Papa Vincent!

We know the man who loves the people,
He is President Vincent!
We know the man who loves the people,
He is President Vincent!
We know the man who loves the people,
He is President Vincent!
We know the man who loves the people,
He is President Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!

Who is the man who gave us the retail business?
It is President Vincent!
Who is the man who gave us the retail business?
It is President Vincent!
Who is the man who gave us the retail business?
It is President Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!
We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!

175 This song soon became the "official" musical theme of the President and
192 was heard in the carnival festivities, at salon dances, and at military
543 functions. But as discontent with Vincent grew, less adulatory versions
* 533
* 539

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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648 The financing of these many revolutions was usually provided by
669 foreign merchants, bent upon installing a government that would
565 grant them special economic concessions (Munro, 1964:326–31). The
701 United States occupation ended this doleful succession of regimes
439 and, by throwing its weight to the elite, by suppressing military activity in the countryside, and by reforming the army, the United States gave a new meaning to the separation of the elite and the yeomanry. Leyburn's interpretation is consistent with these events; yet some Haitian scholars have differed with Leyburn's analysis.

114 In a lengthy review article, the dean of Haitian historians, Dr. Jean
564 Price-Mars (1942:1–50), questions the applicability of the term
●563 "caste" to the social groupings of Haitian society. He notes that
671 Haitian law after the revolution never legitimized any distinction on grounds of physical type, unlike a society such as the United States—
144 that in fact, the very basis of Haitian polity was the absence of such distinctions. Furthermore, Leyburn's interpretation is qualified by the fact that the elite and the rural masses are not entirely distinctive physically. In some parts of rural Haiti, particularly in the southern peninsula, there are many light-skinned people; and many individuals who qualify as members of the elite on all other counts are very dark in appearance. The fact that being "Negro" or "white" in Haiti is viewed as a matter of degree, rather than of kind, complicated by all the other criteria of social position employed in drawing distinctions, has important implications for the way social barriers have operated in that country.*

114 Leyburn did not contend that all the effects of the United States
565 occupation were in the direction of increasing the gap between the ELITE AND THE YEOMANRY.

563 * In this regard, Haiti is aligned with most of Latin America, in contradistinction to the
564 United States, where many persons believe that "one drop of Negro blood" [sic] makes a
171 "Negro." The failure of North Americans to distinguish between sociological and genetic
144 categories of physical type has led to considerable confusion in their dealings with Latin America and in their understanding of Latin American societies. North American race prejudice at its most extreme sees color as the primary basis for social ranking, and no individual accomplishment (for instance, in terms of economic or intellectual success) can overshadow the inferior status unalterably bestowed by certain physical traits. Haitian—and generally all Latin American—social distinctions do not rest solely on considerations of physical type; a black skin does not "doom" an individual if his attainments make him otherwise the equal of his lighter-skinned fellow citizens. Hence, it might be argued that the term "caste" would be more appropriate when applied to the Negro people of the United States (regardless of phenotype, and including those "Negroes" who are sociologically identified with the Negro people even if their physical appearance is dramatically Caucasian) than when applied to the peoples of Latin America.

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elite and the yeomanry. For instance, he calls attention to one unanticipated (but inevitable) result of the occupation in this connection: the large number of children whose fathers were United States Marines, and whose mothers were members of the Haitian rural masses. In this way the occupation contributed to the growth of the physically intermediate population of Haiti, especially among rural folk, and thus perhaps to some bridging of the gap between yeomen and elite. Much more important, by its contributions to a broadening of the educational system, the occupation enabled talented black-skinned youths to improve themselves and to acquire new aspirations.

Recent economic and political developments in Haiti, through the period 1941–57, have contributed grounds for modification of the Leyburn interpretation. Though Leyburn predicted that "for the present and near future it is safe to say that there will be no more black non-élite presidents" (p. 101), subsequent developments soon proved him wrong. In January 1946, the government of elite member Elie Lescot fell under military pressure. A junta consisting of Franck Lavaud, Antoine Levelt, and Paul Magloire facilitated the installation of Dumarsais Estimé as president. Estimé was a dark-skinned man from the countryside (the village of Verettes, near St. Marc, in west-central Haiti), who had received a good education, served as a minister in the Vincent cabinet and, as a deputy, married a lighter-skinned woman whose family's elite membership was secure. Estimé might well be considered a self-made member of the elite, but he was not born into it, and his accession to power was the political expression of new possibilities in Haitian life.

The changes Estimé's regime symbolized were rooted in the intellectual resistance to the United States occupation and in the search for a Haitian identity in the face of that occupation. The strangely easy domination that the United States wielded over Haitian society for several decades, and the relatively unexploitative but patronizing administration it provided, ended forever a fantasy that had gripped Haitian intellectuals for more than a century. The world of 1804, when a bloodied but defiant Haiti could bar by force of arms Napoleon's dreams of a New World empire (and assist indirectly thereby in the territorial expansion of a still weak United States) had vanished. The time when a Pétion could aid, protect, and politically influence a sick and tired Simón Bolívar was long gone. The world had changed, while Haiti, the Haitians learned under their North

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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Nor is it sufficient to label *Duvalierisme* "pathological" or "paranoid." The roots of this ideology are to be found in Haiti, not elsewhere; its supporters are the product of Haitian times and ideas; and their social identity, while not entirely clear, would probably pose few enigmas if enough data were available.* In order to make clear these assertions, however, it is necessary to look again at Haitian society, the Haitian society Leyburn has described so well, and to reexamine the terms that have been used by him and by others to describe it.

Though the societies of the Caribbean Sea differ significantly from each other, many of them share certain general historical experiences. Unlike the colonial areas of the Old World, these islands were largely populated from abroad, and in this regard they resemble the Atlantic lowland areas of mainland America. However, the colonial history of the islands meant that they would long remain the instruments of policy formulated in foreign capitals. Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and other islands were, during most of their postconquest history, the outposts of far-flung colonial empires, and the design of their societies was conditioned by this dependence and subjugation. As "plantation islands," their agriculture, demography, mode of settlement, and social structure were attuned to metropolitan needs and objectives. Unlike most of Africa and Asia, the Antilles lost their native populations almost entirely, owing to enslavement, overwork, disease, and war, early in the era of conquest and settlement. There remained the vestiges of native traditions, assimilated into the new, growing cultures of the postconquest period. The Indians themselves, wherever they were able to survive, were also assimilated through interbreeding with Old World migrants.

The newcomers came from Europe, Africa, and Asia, bringing with them what they could of their ancestral traditions, but never able to transfer their social heritages as intact bodies of belief and behavior. Hence the cultures of the new Caribbean societies were built up out of elements originating in many different places, while their social forms took shape under conditions of colonial control. The peoples of the islands were able to maintain some continuities with

* One interpreter of the Haitian political scene (Bastien, 1960:243-48) has suggested that Leyburn's analysis of Haitian society as a "two-caste" system greatly influenced local political thinking by strengthening one idea: "The black intellectual must regain political power for the benefit of the country's majority."

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new ways. The virtual extirpation of indigenous culture, however, occurred in few areas outside the New World; it was particularly characteristic of the coastal and lowland areas of this hemisphere. Hence, Caribbean culture is almost entirely transplanted and recently synthesized. In the Caribbean area, an additional distinction lay in the persistently colonial character of the islands and in the effects of this colonialism on local life. Wherever the plantation flourished, large populations of African origin grew out of the original importations of slaves. This was true from the southern United States to Brazil, but was especially marked in the islands, where local populations of European extraction were either absent or reduced by the spread of the plantation. Only in Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Santo Domingo, and in some of the smaller islands that developed no plantation system, were substantial proportions of Europeans to be found. In Haiti, the early cultural admixture of Colonial Spanish and Indian was soon swamped by the cultures of Africa, and the European cultural component became predominantly French after 1697, when the western third of Hispaniola—today's Haiti—was ceded to France.

But Haitian society did not come to be purely African, in any sense, nor is that society more than broadly similar to the other societies of the Caribbean. The kind of society in which the French masters and their African slaves met and mixed, and the subtropical, colonial environment in which they lived, imposed their own conditions for culture growth. What the Haitian people could keep as a living part out of the African past was limited by the regimen of slave plantation life; what they could borrow or copy from their masters was affected by the nature of the social relationships between those who held power and those who had to bend to it. Ultimately, independence meant that the Haitian people could employ what they already knew and practiced under slavery, but in a wholly new social setting.

The substantial isolation that followed independence led to slowed change, both social and cultural, and to the gradual spread of the yeoman way of life throughout rural Haiti. From 1804 until the United States occupation, Haiti was probably less affected by external developments than any other country in the hemisphere. In this regard, its social history is noticeably different from that of the other Caribbean islands, some of which, like Puerto Rico and Cuba, were forcibly brought back into the mainstream of world developments in the

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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That the separateness of yeomanry and elite had visible and socio- 565
logically important expression in physical type in Haiti was a clear 563
consequence of the history of that country. But the traditional pre- 664
ponderant light skins at the top of the structure and the preponderant 642
darkness at its base are less important than the domination of the total structure, and of the institutional means for changing it, by a mere fraction of the national population. It is the *power* of the elite which has mattered through time; its physical appearance has been only a historically derived expression of that power. Such a balance of politically weak masses against numerically sparse power holders is common, perhaps particularly in the "less developed world"; but each such case has certain special characteristics. Haiti's special nature is not simply in its being a yeoman country, and one in which a small [181]
group dominates the mass. As a rural, agrarian, unindustrialized, po- [171]
litically sovereign, and quasi-capitalistic country, Haiti shares much with other lands; but in each regard its own particularity needs to be assessed.

The rurality of Haiti is extreme, not simply because there are no 361
concentrations of population in excess of 25,000 except for Port-au- 369
Prince and Cap Haïtien but also because towns of intermediate size 489
are few in number, and the urban concentrations in the country's two cities are substantially of relatively recent rural origin. Port-au-Prince dominates the Republic in all of its economic, political, and social activities. Furthermore, the rural towns have been losing to the capital, not gaining from it. Until the United States occupation, the larger towns of the coast, such as Jérémie, Jacmel, and St. Marc, were united economically with each other, and to some extent with the capital, by a lively coastwise shipping system, and the inland towns were tributary to those of the coast. The growth of inland transport during the occupation strengthened the interior towns while coastwise shipping declined, but the capital grew even more important as the sole economic center of the Republic. Since the 1940s, the rapid deterioration of the road system has left both inland and coastal towns enfeebled; only Port-au-Prince has remained strong.

The dominion of Port-au-Prince is firm, and there is no focus of 369
power in the countryside that can counteract it. Those few foreign 473
enterprises in Haiti that base themselves outside the capital city use 504
local port facilities (e.g. Miragoâne for Reynolds Aluminum, Cap 489
Haïtien for the sisal plantations of the north) and do not affect the development of the interior transport.

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121 tomed to hang our knowledge of the growth, development, and decay of social institutions. Whether the book be classified as social history or as sociology is largely a matter of indifference, for the line between those subjects can hardly be drawn without doing violence to comprehensive insight. To view a people with understanding in the characteristic setting of their institutions—marriage, religion, property arrangements, and the rest—one needs not only a description of their ways, but also a knowledge of how they came to be what they are.

167 Two centuries ago nine tenths of the Negro ancestors of the modern
178 Haitians were still in Africa, living under the mores of their own localities, and for the most part entirely unacquainted with the mores of the Western
● 563 World (or, as we ethnocentrically call it, the "civilized" world). First transplanted as slaves to the Caribbean island, then gaining their freedom after some mixture of blood with the white French, the Haitians have built up not only a state but a Haitian culture. The problems to be discussed in this book are as follows:

114 What social structure was set up after the independence in 1804, and by what methods? This question calls for a description of the economic, political, religious, marital, and class organization of the Haitians.

How did this structure function during the next century? There is often a difference between a people's expressed intentions and their ability to carry them out: a state sometimes borrows from some other power a type of constitution which, though logically admirable, does not work effectively under local conditions.

Which structural and functional elements of Haitian life were social heritages from the African past; which were taken over from French models; which were mergings of the two, and which seem to be variations newly produced on Haitian soil?

178 The great leaders of early days, Toussaint L'Ouverture, Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, and Boyer, made an effort to direct Haitian economic and political life along definite lines; however, the pressure of daily life, the necessity of feeding half a million people most of whom had had no experience in solving complicated problems of any sort, soon made it obvious that logical social structures would not long remain logical. The ways evolved were characteristically Haitian; ways in general unplanned, grow-

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[p. 14]

II

FRENCH COLONIAL ORIGINS

175 648 FRANCE'S wealthiest colony in 1791 was, and had been for decades, the small territory of Saint-Domingue, as Haiti was known at that time. It had belonged to France for less than a century. French freebooters and buccaneers of the seventeenth century actually presented the colony to their mother country, for these sea rovers, harrying the Spanish Main, used as a base for their predatory raids the small island of Tortuga (La Tortue, The Turtle) off the northern coast of Haiti. They often came over to the western part of the large Spanish island of Santo Domingo (Haiti), then almost deserted, to shoot wild cattle for food; then they would hasten back to Tortuga for safety. At first Tortuga had been shared by English, Dutch, and French buccaneers, but gradually the French came to outnumber the others, so that when the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697 concluded the War of the Grand Alliance, France claimed and Spain ceded the western third of the island of Santo Domingo. The English and Dutch were meanwhile picking up other Caribbean fragments of the decaying Spanish Empire.

175 563 24 The early years of this new French colony were unimpressive, the majority of its residents being former buccaneers, who could hardly have regarded agricultural life as other than dull, and who certainly did not make successful farmers. Only when new immigrants from France in the seventeen-twenties demonstrated that steady profits could be made by raising indigo, sugar, coffee, and cocoa, all of which flourished in the region, did the era of prosperity begin. [464] [439] Plantations were soon staked out all over Saint-Domingue. The great problem was to find adequate labor for the fields. Whoever had crops to sell was sure of a ready market, but crops would not grow 175 24 567 without cultivation. Since there were no natives in Saint-Domingue for the French planters to exploit, the colonizers chose the other favorite alternative of the eighteenth century: Negro slavery. In the 1730's Saint-Domingue began to compete with England's North American colonies for the cargo of the steady stream of slave ships from Africa. There is no indication that the supply of blacks ever

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175 speaking, consisted of the three groups known as *grands blancs, petits*
565 *blancs*, and *gens de couleur*.[3] Although no precise English term will translate either of the first two categories, the former embraced the important whites—owners of large plantations, wealthy merchants, and high officials of the state; the latter designated all other whites of the colony—shopkeepers, artisans, small planters with only a few slaves, little people busily engaged in social climbing, and shiftless whites lazily slipping downhill. The 28,000 gens de couleur included all free persons who had African blood in their veins.

It is highly probable that without this third group there would have been no violent outbreak in 1791, no achievement of final independence in 1804, and no such caste system as exists in Haiti at the present time.

175 That there were free people of color in the colony was due to a
567 code of laws emanating from Louis XIV, who died in 1715, years
641 before Saint-Domingue had shown any signs of becoming prosper-
648 ous. In 1685 the Grand Monarch had issued a Code Noir to cover all colonial dealings with Negro slaves. Article 59 specified that when a slave secured his liberty, either by cash purchase or by gift of his white master or parent, he was to be regarded as a full French citizen. He might own land, dispose of his wealth as he pleased, bear testimony in legal cases (even against whites), marry as he pleased, vote, bear arms, travel where he wished, embrace any career, own slaves or free them. To Louis and his ministers such provisions probably did not seem particularly magnanimous, for race prejudice was not a characteristic of the French, and it could hardly have been supposed that enough slaves would ever be freed to create much of a problem.

175 In the course of the next hundred years, however, many persons of
563 color in the colony achieved their freedom, and with it French citi-
641 zenship. The greatest number had been granted their liberty because they were the children of white masters by Negro mothers—for race mixture is always a concomitant of white ownership of black slaves.
[595] Concubinage was so regularly practiced in Saint-Domingue that it was considered quite normal. If many of the first freedmen were
563 mulattoes (half-white, half-Negro), by 1791 their descendants might
175 be quadroons, octoroons, or near-whites, for consciousness of skin

3. The gens de couleur were also often called *affranchis*, freedmen, a term which strictly would be inaccurate as applied to a free colored person of the second or third generation.

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color predisposed a freedman to separate himself, by marriage with a 563
person at least as light as himself, as far as possible from his slave 175
ancestors.[4]

Aside from paternity, the chief reasons for freeing a slave were 175
faithful or extraordinary service, and the readiness of a master to free
his concubine. By the time of the Revolution many of the free col- 567
ored people had not known slavery in their families for four generations, while still more had been free for two or three. During the century many had acquired wealth by inheritance from former owners. Their close association with well-to-do white planters had [556]
instilled in them the desire to improve their economic fortunes as well as their culture; friendly relationships with their benefactors afforded them the opportunity. Like the grands blancs, the prosperous gens de couleur sent their children to Paris for an education, and went there themselves for pleasure.

As the free colored people flourished, so also did the jealousy of the 175
petits blancs against them. "Society" in Saint-Domingue was beset, 565
as is any social system which has not yet the sanctity of long tradition, with heartburnings, intrigues, resentment, snobbery. Petit blanc aspired to become grand blanc; small planter longed to be received into the smart set of the wealthy plantation owners; creole resented the toplofty airs of the recent émigré from France. What was more irksome to the petit blanc than his own exclusion from high society was the acceptance into it of many colored people whose parents or grandparents had been African slaves. Since many of the gens de couleur were better educated and more cultured than the lower-class whites, inner consciousness of mental inferiority may have added fuel to the fires of jealousy.

The growing wealth of free colored people was notable in the latter years of the century. One fertile parish in the South (Jérémie) was almost entirely in their hands, while in every other part of the colony they had bought or inherited handsome plantations. They looked upon Saint-Domingue as their fatherland, not hoping (as did many of the whites) to retire to France to spend their fortunes, nor yearning (as did many slaves) to return to Africa. The less ambitious

4. Certain colonial writers diverted themselves by working out all the mathematical 114
combinations of blood mixture, with names for scores of the commoner varieties. 565
Since people with some part of white blood in their veins might mate with others of their own kind, with lighter or with darker persons, with black or with white, it can be imagined how complicated the question of race mixture might become.

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175 565 took their place in the business life of the towns, sending their children to parish schools. Colored youths served in the colonial constabulary and in the militia, acquiring a knowledge of arms and warfare later to be useful to them.

175 565 423 567 162 Estimates of their wealth vary. Some say that in 1791 they owned a third of all the land in the colony and a fourth of all the slaves; others more conservative put the figure at one fifth of each. Even this is impressive enough to account for much of the growing jealousy of their position. And by 1791 the whites outnumbered them only ten to seven.[5]

562 595 563 175 581 White women in general added their support to a movement instigated by the petits blancs for discrimination against all gens de couleur. Many wives felt resentment against the colored people because of the frequency with which their husbands took colored mistresses.[6] Moreover, the wealth of the colony attracted an immigration of Frenchwomen with marriageable but undowered daughters—in the candid French phrase, "*de filles à marier et sans dot*"—who seem to have assumed that young planters would want white French wives, even though impecunious ones. It was a shock to quite a number of them to discover that a colonial youth might prefer a colored girl who brought a dowry with her.[7]

175 565 829 Indiscreet affranchis often gave additional grounds for resentment against their group. Wishing to dissociate themselves altogether from their Negro ancestry and to be assured of social eminence, some accounted for their dark complexions by reference to obscure Indian progenitors. On this ground many secured letters patent from local government officials, of course on payment of a fee, legally estab-

162 5. The census listed 40,000 whites to 28,000 colored. L. E. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description . . . de la partie française . . . de Saint-Domingue* (Philadelphia, 1797), I, 285, gave the following figures for 1790:

	Square Leagues	*Population*	*Whites*	*Affranchis*	*Slaves*
North	480	195,000	16,000	9,000	170,000
West	820	194,000	14,000	12,500	168,000
South	186	130,000	10,000	6,500	114,000
Totals	1,486	519,000	40,000	28,000	452,000

6. One governor reported to Paris that he considered sexual jealousy the greatest cause of unrest in the colony.

7. See Sir Harry H. Johnston, *The Negro in the New World* (New York, 1910), p. 141.

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lishing their freedom from the taint of any black admixture. Having entered white society by such means, and further diluted their Negro blood by judicious marriages, these social climbers frequently became the most pitiless masters of slaves in the colony, the most rigid sticklers for a color line, ruthless enemies of recent freedmen and of those who acknowledged the dark strain in their blood; and having now "passed over" as whites, they snubbed the petits blancs.

The rising tide of color prejudice became apparent in the passage of discriminatory laws. The first of any importance was enacted by the representative Council of the colony, sitting at the capital, Cap Français, in 1758. It prohibited all colored people, except police and militiamen, from carrying swords, sabres, or other side arms—thus denying them one of the outward marks of gentlemen. Four years later the prohibition was extended to the bearing of all firearms, except in service, while in 1767 the sale of munitions to colored persons was forbidden unless ordered by a white officer. Obviously the instigators of prejudice had by this time won a number of ruling grands blancs to the notion that the presence of numerous people of color might constitute a menace to the physical safety of the whites.

Louis XV, the reigning monarch, took no steps to enforce the liberal provisions of the Code Noir of his grandfather; on the contrary, he seems to have favored the passage of discriminatory laws. He made it difficult for colored planters to travel freely in France. The colonial perpetrators of indignities to the gens de couleur, seeing the success of their first efforts, began to propose increasingly severe restrictions, and were gratified by Louis XV's official "Instructions to Administrators" (1771), which stressed the necessity of maintaining a line between the two races which colored people and their descendants might never cross.

For the next two decades the affranchi had to face openly avowed discrimination. One by one his rights in the Code were abrogated. He might not fill any responsible office either in the courts or the militia, for that would elevate him above white persons. Certain careers, such as goldsmithing, were closed to him, because they brought wealth; others, notably medicine and the apothecary's art, were forbidden on the ground that whites might be poisoned;[8] law and religion were barred to him because of their public and honorific

8. It was a common belief in slave colonies that all persons with Negro blood had some "instinctive" knowledge of the science and art of poisoning.

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175 nature.[9] Colored women were forbidden in 1768 to marry white
563 men. In 1779 began a series of laws designed to humiliate the colored
565 person in public: his clothes must be of a different material and cut
671 from the white person's; he must be indoors by nine o'clock in the evening; he might not sit in the same section of churches and theatres with whites.[10]

175 Just at the moment when prejudice and hatred seem to have
648 reached their most menacing proportions, when even moderate
829 white planters began to feel that such passions had been aroused
[669] among both white and colored folk that only brutal severity could
[565] hold them in check, the Revolution began in France. Both sides in the colony hoped to make use of it. The whites saw in the mother country's confusion an opportunity to win self-government for the colony—with themselves, of course, as the untrammeled rulers. The gens de couleur, taking to heart the noble Declaration of the Rights of Man, hoped to regain their full rights as French citizens, guaranteed to them in Louis XIV's Code, but now in abeyance.

175 During the fateful years 1788 to 1793 colonial affairs were inter-
646 twined with developments in France. Men and messages went back
648 and forth between Cap Français and Paris, following the startling
671 announcement that after a lapse of 150 years the States-General would be convoked in May, 1789. At a meeting of the colonial assembly in September, 1788, called to nominate delegates, the group of grands blancs who controlled colonial affairs decided on two daring steps, which later proved to be blunders: first, they named thirty-seven deputies to represent Saint-Domingue; second, they drew up a *Cahier des Doléances*—a list of grievances whose sole palliation, it was implied, would be the granting of permission to the white planters to govern the colony without interference from France. These two decisions, be it said, were not unanimously approved in the assembly at Cap Français; cautious minds warned against pretentious demands which might do nothing more than attract concentrated attention to the state of affairs in Saint-Domingue: it might be wiser, they argued, to let sleeping dogs lie, and ignore the convocation of the States-General. The cautious were outvoted.

[565] 9. A colored lawyer might win a case against a white man; a colored priest might
[829] have to hear the confession of a white woman.

[565] 10. When certain mulattoes arrived at church in Cap Français wearing clothes of the same texture as the whites', constables tore the garments from the backs of male and female alike, leaving them "with no other veil than their shame."

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175 648 642 Noirs, having returned to Saint-Domingue to campaign for the political rights of his group, led with his friend Chavanne a demonstration at Cap Français. The white authorities seized and executed them with notable brutality.

175 648 563 565 This occurred in March, 1791. In May came the news that the National Assembly in France had finally yielded to pressure, and had decreed that men of mixed blood born of free parents should be admitted to representation in colonial assemblies. The chagrin and anger of the whites at this decree was so violent that the governor-general of Saint-Domingue immediately suspended its operation. 175 567 669 The issue was now clearly drawn: free colored men knew that they would never secure their rights except by force. But before they could bring to maturity their plan of action, suddenly the calculations of both parties were completely upset. The Negro slaves revolted.

If ever slaves had reason to rebel, the Negroes of Saint-Domingue did. The same harshness which the whites showed to free colored people marked the treatment of black slaves; and as racial antagonism deepened, white masters seemed to become utterly heartless in their treatment of the inarticulate blacks. Allowing for the exceptions which accompany most generalizations, it is clear from the record that the planters were, in the main, callous, ruthless, some of them even fiendish, in their treatment of slaves. Flogging a man to death was not uncommon; certain slaves were buried alive; pregnant women were forced to work so hard that miscarriage resulted. Some of the punishments meted out were merely brutal; others were torture; and some were sadistic, the masters relishing the pain they were causing. A certain slave in the North was nailed by his hands to a wall, and then, after standing all day in the burning sun, was made to eat his own amputated ears. A woman planter had the tongues of all her slaves cut out; another woman caused the starvation of her maid by having a gag fixed around the child's head.[13] Visitors to the colony in the 1780's often commented on the general want of self-control on the part of the planters—their violent gusts of anger and passionate outbreaks over trifles; and the victims of these outbursts

13. An officer of the court of the Negro king Christophe later wrote in two volumes a gruesome account of the treatment of slaves by French masters in the latter days of the colony. Although certainly exaggerated, it probably contains a measure of truth. See Baron de Vastey, *Réflexions politiques sur les noirs et les blancs* (Sans Souci, 1817); and *Essai sur les causes de la révolution et des guerres civiles d'Hayti* (Sans Souci, 1819).

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prestige, and the normal fulfillment of dignity, were thus frustrated in their efforts. They began to see that the Emperor intended to withhold from them freedom, room for the exercise of ability or power, fullness of life in whatever form. Not only was there little opportunity for achieving prestige; the repressive and contemptuous attitude of Dessalines denied them even ordinary negative respect, without which dignity of life is impossible.

By confiscation of vacant and falsely claimed estates, Dessalines created a vast public domain. He did not hesitate to secure other lands which he considered valuable, resorting to arbitrary and often cruel means—even, it is said, to forgery and murder—to dispossess those who stood firm in their claims. This attack on private property added other dissidents to his enemies—men who felt themselves clearly in the right legally and morally, men who with clear consciences joined the movement to put down a tyrant. The land thus acquired was leased in parcels at an annual rent to the highest bidders.[6]

The Emperor was blind to the normal human needs of the better elements of the population. He deprived them of property in land, the only basis they knew for wealth and independence; he forbade enterprises undertaken by individual initiative; he continually wounded delicate sensibilities. The Emperor was not a man to spare people's feelings, and he dared use the frank but dangerous words Negro and mulatto. He once shouted to a group of pleaders for position: "*Prenez garde à vous, nègres et mulâtres! Nous avons tous combattu contre les blancs; les biens que nous avons conquis en versant notre sang, appartiennent à nous tous; j'entends qu'ils soient partagés avec équité!*" It was not only Dessalines' idea of "equity" which aroused the *anciens libres* but his use of the descriptive nouns they hated.

The colored people were well aware of the hostility of Dessalines to their group. He was inferior to them in learning, and knew it. He was certainly, by the world's judgment, inferior to them in birth. His very deficiencies by comparison with his colored subjects made him hate them more: for example, he was passionately fond of dancing, preferring compliments on his grace to praise of his statesmanship; yet his awkwardness on the ballroom floor even

6. Although there are no records extant to show the exact amount of land which Dessalines succeeded in bringing into state ownership, it is estimated that more than two thirds of all the productive plantations in Haiti in 1806 were in the hands of the government. Other estimates range as high as ninety per cent.

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175 beside other ex-slaves was too evident to avert ridicule, which
643 Dessalines quickly noted. Few opportunities escaped the Emperor,
563 therefore, of making the light-skinned Haitians quake in their boots.
661 He wrote to Pétion (August 24, 1804), leader of the colored people, that in his slaughter of white Frenchmen he had often been "unable" to distinguish between whites and light-colored Haitians. Pétion and his friends knew that Dessalines did not regret his inability to make the distinction.[7]

175 Possibly Dessalines was clear-sighted enough to realize that the old
563 distinctions of color, if allowed to continue in the new state as in-
643 dicative of social prestige, might cause endless strife within the nation. Possibly, on the other hand, he wished to make the lighter-skinned Haitians realize that he, a Negro, was more than their equal. Whatever his underlying motives, he was impatient with the struggle for prestige. The steps he took to eradicate distinctions based upon color were characterized by his usual blunt tactlessness. In 1805 he informed Pétion, the outstanding mulatto general, that a union of black and colored people was essential to the happiness of the Empire; he said he wanted the Haitian people to become *bronzed* by this union, so that there would be no longer any important difference of skin color. All this was preface to a proposal that Pétion, as the ablest of the mulattoes, should marry the Emperor's black daughter, Célimène. Pétion, refined, highly educated, and gently cynical, was considerably perturbed and frankly embarrassed by the suddenness of this radical suggestion. His reply, that he was not inclined to marry at all, offended Dessalines and made him suspect a slight, but he dismissed Pétion with the pointed suggestion that he "think the matter over." Pétion knew, as the Emperor did not, that one of his aides-de-camp, Chancy, was not only in love with Célimène but had already got her with child. It is entirely possible, too, that he was aware of the growing underground opposition to Dessalines and that, as the Emperor's star was beginning to decline, he did not wish

[721] 7. It must be said to the credit of the black masses that they did not relish the systematic slaughter of the whites which so pleased Dessalines. Negro cultivators frequently collected potential victims, hiding them and aiding their escape from the country. The repugnance of the masses for such massacre was so evident that their generals had at times to drive them at bayonet's point. "The blacks of the plain behaved very well," said an exile in a letter (June 1, 1804) written from Jamaica to Moreau de Saint-Méry. Madiou says that after the massacre of the whites some Haitian blacks abandoned their country and went to join former masters in a foreign land.

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to ally himself with the ruling family. When Dessalines shortly discovered his daughter's condition, he burst into maledictions against all mulattoes, saying that they had plotted this disgrace to him and to his family. He went so far as to speak of having them all executed. 175 563 643

The Emperor's determination, and all his measures, could not quench the social ambition of his leading subjects. They bore what must be borne, conspiring meanwhile to get rid of him. They still had the advantage over the masses of a superior education, and they knew the path to eminence, once the obstacle of the Emperor was removed.

Nothing was done during the reign of Dessalines to cultivate the minds of the laboring class. Discipline backed by force was the guiding principle in dealing with them. Instead of trying to educate his people to understand their duties and to take an active part in statecraft, Dessalines—his generals and counselors, mulatto and black alike, thoroughly approving—used only compulsion. There was actually little difference between the attitude of this ruling clique toward the mass of laborers and that of their former white owners. Both looked upon them as cattle. A few of his advisers tried to persuade the Emperor to provide moral and religious education for the people so that they would not be seduced into completely evil ways, but the Emperor replied, "You are wrong: the laborers can be controlled only by fear of punishment and even death; I shall lead them only by these means; my 'morale' shall be the bayonet." 175 643 661 641 [871]

In short, between 1804 and 1806 no prominent figure in Haitian life seems even to have dreamed of "liberal" institutions. Those who had education, knowledge, and culture preserved them carefully for themselves. The wisdom, even the possibility, of enlightening the masses was doubted. Most Haitians remained in complete ignorance of what went on in the outside world. 175 565 641

Dessalines was killed by ambush near Port-au-Prince on October 17, 1806. The mulattoes were generally supposed to have planned the assassination, for it was well known that they had no cause to be fond of him. His callousness had raised up enemies in all walks of life. The cultivators were glad he was gone, because of his harshness. They were virtually slaves again in all but name; it was reported that upon his personal estates he had made unsatisfactory workers run the gauntlet between lines of soldiers armed with thorny switches, and 175 643 661

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000 their new status was definitely higher. Mild serfdom might be
175 thought of as the first intermediate step toward freedom. Democracy
565 was still far off, there being no real middle class upon which to build
566 it. Only the artisans of the towns and the ex-soldiers or the cultivators who had managed to lease small estates could be considered middle class. Christophe forced every dweller in villages or towns to have a manual skill. The only alternative was field work on a plantation.

The "aristocrats" of the kingdom were prevailingly black rather than colored. It was not to be expected that a vain man would soon forget the trick by which the mulattoes had frustrated him in his expectation of becoming the ruler of all Haiti. To say that the inter-
175 mittent civil war between Christophe's kingdom of the North and
669 Pétion's republic of the South was a struggle between blacks and
643 colored people would not do great violence to the essential truth.
563 Christophe's suspicion of gens de couleur was so well known that few were surprised at the high death rate of mulatto generals in the North. The murder of General Clervaux was definitely laid at Christophe's door.

The fact remains that among the nobility were men of all degrees of color. The King liked to say that he neither accepted nor yet took exception to the color of a man's epidermis—that in this matter he was *vert* (green), which is to say, neutral and indifferent. When he was angry his wrath fell indiscriminately upon the offender of whatever complexion. Similarly, when he found a light-skinned man who faithfully supervised a leased estate, thus proving his loyalty, the man was rewarded and promoted. Nevertheless, an
175 underlying prejudice remained in his breast, bursting out occasionally
643 at crises, and having ultimately a serious effect upon the loyalty of
721 many of his people. When some of his subjects, enticed by the easy-
563 going régime of the South, ran away to Pétion's republic, Christophe was angry enough to renew the war against Pétion (1811). The South won the encounter, thereby adding fuel to Christophe's rage.
[727] Three hundred prisoners he had captured he ordered tortured, and the angry King abused and insulted his own officers and executed several soldiers for having lost the battle. These actions caused more defections, renewed punishments, and a more abiding rancor. As one writer put it, the King "now regarded the mulattoes with a hatred so deep and fiendlike, that nothing would satisfy the direness of his

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vengeance but the utter extermination of that race."[12] He even ordered the execution of a mulatto woman in Gonaïves because she had prayed for the success of Pétion.

During the latter years of his reign his personal popularity waned somewhat, owing to his relentless insistence upon efficiency and to his increasing tendency to lose his temper. Defections to the South occurred almost daily. The cultivators, comparing their never-ceasing toil on Northern plantations with the reported liberty and leisure of life in the South, continually drifted away. So alluring was the paradise of ease (and poverty) of the neighboring realm that Christophe found it necessary to keep a cordon of soldiers along the borders of his kingdom to prevent desertions. His administration now embarked on actual persecution of colored people. Inflammatory pamphlets were spread abroad, designed to make the Negroes think that the mulattoes were planning to enslave them once again. Under this campaign of propaganda many light-skinned Northerners had to go into hiding.

Despite all discrimination, the important line was drawn between cultivators who formed nine tenths of the population, and aristocrats who, with the army, made up the remainder. The nobility, the directors of landed estates, and the generals directed the activities of other people, so that the colonial prejudice against manual labor was strengthened. Here lay the basis of a persistent Haitian attitude of mind: to work with one's hands is to show oneself a member of the masses; to direct others is the distinction of the upper class. Education, neglected under Dessalines altogether, was fostered by Christophe. He established a few schools, inviting as schoolmasters certain Englishmen familiar with the then popular methods of the Lancasterian system; but since the cultivators were busy on the plantations, only the children of aristocrats benefited by the limited educational system and the social distance between classes was increased.

A French commentator says that Christophe showed unusual insight in devising for his kingdom "the only organization of which an African society was capable," namely, a combination of military despotism with certain benevolent inclinations, and territorial feudalism based upon a nobility created by the King. Actually, it suited not so much the African background of the people, which lay

12. Dr. Jonathan Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo* (Philadelphia, 1837), II, 197.

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175 In his easygoing republic Pétion saw prosperity slowly wane,
433 cultivation decline, profits give way to deficits. He issued a large
652 amount of paper currency, and continually hoped for better times
554 which did not come. The days of large fortunes were over. The economic system affected the aristocrats: although they were still landowners, so also were thousands of common folk. The criterion of rank became increasingly not wealth, but rather pursuit of a career which demanded no manual labor. Distinctions, if they are to be effective, must be made on the basis of conditions not easily achieved by all and sundry. Education and good French met this requirement; even more did a light skin color.

175 Pétion, darling of the mulattoes though he was, never drew a color
643 line. There is no suggestion in any of his actions that he gave prefer-
641 ence in his appointments to people of his own color. He suppressed
●563 at least one insurrection led by men who would have liked to stir up color prejudice. He often tried by quiet irony to make his people less sensitive to their complexions. It is eloquent testimony to his fairness that the 200,000 blacks in the republic never faltered in their love for him. They had ample reason to mistrust the haughty and ambitious colored people, some of whom had lorded it over them in colonial days; but they knew that the President did not share their pretentious attitude. One look at the North, ruled by a black, was enough to convince any Southerner that his happiness was safer in the hands of a mulatto than in those of a Negro ex-slave. At Pétion's death, therefore, there was no demur at the succession to power of another light-skinned man.

175 Haitians of a later day have discussed at great length the wisdom
643 of Pétion's parceling of state lands. His supporters (and they are
642 numerous) as well as his critics generally keep the controversy on the lofty plane of ideals, intentions, and hypothetical contingencies. Pétion is praised for being generous to humble folk where all other rulers of his country had been severe; for being a realist in accepting and adjusting his measures to the limitations of the average Haitian's character; for building a patriotism upon love of one's own small plot of land; for ruling constitutionally, with his Senate, rather than dictatorially. Most especially, Pétion is the one man among the early rulers who seemed to have any realization of the human values involved. Material gain is desirable but not at the expense of liberty. Freedom means something, even in poverty.

The critics do not challenge Pétion's good intentions or integrity;

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unplanned, undesired

Haitian peasantry, to sum up, began as the result of two policies intended to achieve ends quite different; first, presidential gifts of land, the chief purpose of which had been to pay the soldiers of the republic; and second, the crop-sharing system adopted by landlords after the failure of Boyer's Code. 175 421 24 463 178

6. *The Drawing of Caste Lines* (1820–1843)

Almost every major presidential aim of Boyer came to grief. His tranquil quarter-century rule, the unified island, the financial surplus with which his presidency began, the peace with France after 1825—all these advantages combined with his good intentions did not save his projects from shipwreck. Near the beginning of his régime he announced that, like his revered predecessor Pétion, he felt the safety of Haiti to lie in the abolition of all color distinctions and prejudices. Just as his great Code Rural proved a complete failure, however, so did his efforts to do away with the color line. On the contrary, it was during Boyer's time that class distinctions became fixed, in large part although not wholly, on the basis of color. 175 178 565

Stating that the policy of his government was to put an end, as far as possible, to jealousies of caste, he consistently for a few years promoted a black every time a promotion had been given to a mulatto or other light-skinned person. This procedure soon met an insuperable obstacle. Government posts in general required literacy, and only a very small number of blacks were educated, so that the supply of Negroes was not sufficient to furnish him with candidates. Since one of the few roads to lucrative success lay in official positions, ambitious young colored men sought eagerly for government office, and Boyer soon had no alternative but to advance men of his own complexion. In the army, on the other hand, literacy was not necessary for promotion. Ambitious Negro youths, therefore, frequently chose this career which, while not very profitable in monetary rewards, at least gave a man a certain social status and economic security. 175 647 563 212 555 175 701 555 563

Because of the state of education in the republic, consequently, an ugly situation developed, with the civil arm of government almost wholly in control of the colored element and the military force dominated by blacks. Fortunately for the country no crisis developed during the 1820's and 1830's which made an open breach between army and state. 175 647 701 [563]

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175 563 Color prejudice, in so far as a mass of people is concerned, is generally one-sided, directed by the upper group at the lower. The ordinary illiterate worker between 1820 and 1840 was inclined to accept without much question the superiority of the lighter-skinned Haitians. Resentment was often present, and envy, but hardly prejudice. The real contest developed between the colored élite and the blacks of ambition. The latter had reason to feel proud of their rise from slavery; many had shown ability, and felt themselves the mental and moral equals of the mulattoes; the men who had broken the power of the French, ended slavery, and founded the state were Negroes—and now Haiti was being ruled by mulattoes. The contest between the two groups was the obverse side of prejudice. The envied minority, jealously guarding their distinction, were generally conscious of prejudices which they rationalized with pronouncements about superior mentality and innate qualities. They would concede the difference between an educated black and a mere peasant, but would still cling to the feeling that all the culture in the world would not make the educated Negro a peer of the mulatto.

175 563 114 693 671 Government documents of the period can hardly be expected to call attention to color prejudice and its concomitant resentments. To foreign observers, however, it was immediately apparent and noteworthy as a dominant characteristic of the country. Testimony is unanimous as to its existence; more important, the commentators all agreed that it was growing. An acute Frenchman called Boyer "the slow martyr of his color,"[56] being a mulatto in a republic of blacks: his color made Boyer suspect, so that the President had to spend most of his time and energy trying to avoid conflicts on this issue. It is entirely possible that Boyer's dearest schemes, particularly the enforcement of the Code Rural, failed primarily because the army was controlled by Negroes, whom the President dared not drive too hard; while only the army could have enforced faithful performance by the black laborers. An American doctor stated in 1838 that "the mulattoes, to preserve the sceptre of power in the possession of their caste, are driven to compliances which a negro president would feel himself empowered to spurn from him as the basest infringement on his dignity."[57]

56. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, I, 211. This observation is much more to the point than the specious remarks which follow, attributing Boyer's inaction partly to the enervating effects of the tropical climate.

57. Brown, *op. cit.*, II, 236.

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Next to the agricultural system, the state of education in the republic probably had as much to do as anything with fixing the caste system upon Haiti. So long as the mass of people were not only black but illiterate as well, they would have no means of reaching a social status beyond the one in which they existed. Certainly the aspiring Negroes would not wish to enlighten them, for to stir up the whole people would destroy the very possibility of distinction. As W. S. Gilbert puts it, "When everyone is somebody, then no one's anybody." Public education, consequently, hardly advanced a step during Boyer's twenty-five years. It had had a feeble enough beginning under Pétion and remained, as it had been, a prerogative of the well-to-do.[58]

Under the complaisant rule of Boyer, accordingly, the people of color came to regard themselves as the unquestioned élite. Their claim was shared, though not always acknowledged, by a small number of blacks (mostly from the North) who had been anciens libres in colonial Saint-Domingue or noblemen under Christophe; who were literate, or whose wealth and ambition attracted attention. Boyer's boast that "all the feelings and prejudices, either of olden times or of national origin, have been superseded by an intense patriotism" was pure buncombe, as he certainly knew.

If only the best brains of the colored group had been content to serve the government, Haiti might have profited from her situation; but lesser government offices were merely springboards for foreign trade in coffee and mahogany, or for the manipulation of business deals. Not "intense patriotism," as Boyer liked to think, but financial gain was the motivating force of the élite, as it had been from colonial times. The man who could amass a modest fortune, so that his children might be educated and their security assured, had done his duty, and he would have been regarded as quixotic to renounce business opportunities for the dubious honor of minor political office. As a consequence of this natural search for gain, the government during Boyer's administration became less and less efficient. Relatives of élite businessmen were given posts because the President could not afford to offend important families. These minor officials then performed their duties awkwardly, or neglected them, in "the unfailing obliquity of dullness."

Skin color became the obsession of high society. Those who had no other merit of which to boast could still revel in their complex-

58. See chap. XVI.

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175 ions. Intermarriages between persons of widely different color
563 became extremely rare, being regarded by many lighter Haitians
564 with actual disgust. Everyone with social pretensions wanted to be
[78] whiter. Dr. Brown stated it baldly: "The pure negro seeks to ally himself to the griffe,[59] the griffe to the mulatto, the mulatto to the quateroon, the latter to a mustif, and the mustif, having but an untraceable tinge of African blood in his organization, is uproariously indignant if he is accused of having any at all."[60] An educated young black of several generations of free parents was scornfully turned down by a lighter-skinned woman considerably his inferior in breeding and wealth because her children would be darker than herself—"*petits enfants griffes*," as she put it. The prejudices of colored people against blacks was almost as great, if not quite as intense, as the former prejudice of whites against colored people in colonial times. No one forgot that there had been black as well as colored freedmen in the colony; but it was much simpler for people of color to claim their long career as élite than for blacks to do so.

The attitude of upper-class Haitians toward whites in the midst of all this color prejudice was an interesting mixture. On the one hand, all good Haitians professed to dread a return of the whites; on the other, they welcomed white businessmen in the country. In a certain respect the whites were regarded much as were the Jews of Europe
[673] in the Middle Ages: they were wealthy—and therefore legitimate
[671] objects of pillage, necessary evils for the sake of finance. Theft from a
[641] white man by government action was a service to the state. Laws were consequently varied from time to time with the sole purpose of profiting from a foreigner's position. True, the trader might protest
[423] to his home government, but if England or the United States took a strong stand, Haiti could always retreat; if those governments did not stand firm, Haiti had gained. In the Haitian courts the whites had little show, for Article 38 of the Constitution forbade them to own real estate or to become citizens; they might not even hold a lease for more than ten years; and they might not marry Haitian women.

Nevertheless, the analogy with mediaeval Jews falls down at one vital point: whites were not viewed with contempt. Quite the con-

[192] 59. A term denoting three parts in four of Negro blood. This term as well as "mustif" goes back to colonial white society; neither was, or is, used by cultivated Haitians.

60. Brown, op. cit., II, 283–284.

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trary; they were grudgingly respected as superior beings, arbiters of the fate of the outside world, potential destroyers of the privileges of the Haitian élite should they return to the country in force. Although white men might not legally marry Haitian women, it was not every woman who could resist the opportunity of having children lighter than herself. One indication of the ambiguous attitude toward the whites was seen in religion. In 1842 out of sixty or seventy Roman Catholic priests in the island, only one was a Haitian. Many people in the country were well educated, and certainly more than equals in point of scholarship and *savoir-faire* of the rude priests imported generally from Corsica. But a feeling was current among the peasants that "colored baptism will not stick." There is no indication that the European priests, since they were well paid for their services, attacked this particular heresy. As for the élite, they derived a certain satisfaction in being served by white priests. Aside from the churchmen, however, the only white man in any place of prominence in the country was the mayor of Saint-Marc, whose father had befriended Boyer in former times.

175 563 564 [193]

Few visitors had kind words to say of social conditions in the Haiti of Boyer. As a Frenchman put it:

114 175 642

> Democracy was the rule; but what a democracy! A hodge-podge of the most heterogeneous ideas, an alliance of the most contrary principles, of American federalism with military control; the sovereignty of the people replaced by the sovereignty of a ruling clique; and finally, all the intellectual vainglory of a people young, inexperienced, and for a long time denied the legitimate manifestation of their own wishes. Added to all these inconsistencies is the antagonism of races.[61]

This antagonism was, indeed, paramount. The habitual hauteur and assumed pretensions of the lighter Haitians were a perpetual thorn in the flesh of the ambitious blacks, and thus the breach was everywhere widened and made permanent. The blacks retaliated against these distinctions by refusing to obey orders from mulattoes in office, or by petty outrages against private citizens among the colored group.

175 563

The vital lack of the country, assuming that stability is desirable, was a middle class of any sort. On the base of hundreds of thousands of peasants, illiterate, unambitious, indifferent to progress, was built

175 565 563 [113]

61. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, "La République d'Haïti; ses dernières révolutions; sa situation actuelle," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, XV, No. 4 (Nov., 1843), pp. 681–682.

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175 an ineffective government, momentarily in the hands of colored
563 élite. Attempting to dominate politics was a numerically small group
565 of colored people and a still smaller group of Negroes. Although
[701] prevailingly black, the army might be, and in the later nineteenth
[669] century was continually, used by whichever group offered more. A third power, a middle class, might have balanced these antagonistic factions. Lacking such a moderating influence, Haiti was the victim of recurrent revolutionary movements.

175 At the time of Boyer, actual democracy would have been no safe-
178 guard, for it would have meant the supremacy of ignorance. His
642 rule was the beginning of unfortunate days for Haiti. After the
643 auspicious opening years, the President became an impotent onlooker as his country declined. It is instructive to compare the Haiti of Dessalines and Christophe with the Haiti of 1843, only one generation later.[62]

175 The Haiti of 1806 had been a beehive of activity. Soldiers, fore-
178 men, and policemen then stood over the workers with lianes to
642 force them to labor for the benefit of their state. Production was
433 carefully planned, an ordered hierarchy making every person in the
466 country responsible to another higher than himself until the ruler was reached at the pinnacle. The cardinal fault of any laborer was to shirk at his task. The year 1843, on the contrary, found Haiti in a condition of quiescence which, to those who remembered the old days, resembled torpor. The central government had ceased to drive its citizens, and its half-hearted attempts at persuasion were futile. Overseers, drivers of gangs of workers, soldiers whose duty it was to enforce labor, had disappeared from the scene. Every man was his own master.

175 The standard of living in 1806 as in 1843 was low; but in the earlier
178 year there had been a promise of great things to come once Haiti
511 had rebuilt what war had destroyed. The succeeding years, however, failed to inculcate into the people a desire for any higher standard of life. Country dwellers were benighted; ignorance deepened the habit

[162] 62. Haiti has never had an accurate census, so that it is impossible even to estimate
[175] the total population of the country either in 1806 or in 1843. The figures of 380,000 and 800,000 given by some authors for the two years are mere guesses. Likewise, one can only deduce the proportion of people in the main economic and social categories; probably seventy-five per cent of the Haitians were serfs in 1806 and the same percentage peasants in 1843; the "aristocracy," including all who did not derive a living by manual labor or army service, could hardly have reached five per cent in either year; the army, house servants, day laborers in the towns, and petty businessmen would make up the other twenty per cent.

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175 643 Suddenly, without warning, he reversed what had been mistaken for docile inactivity, and assumed complete personal command of the reins of office. By means of a well-organized body of secret police, [625] he inspired his own counselors with fear not only for their positions but for their lives. Although illiterate, Soulouque never signed a bill presented to him by his ministers until he was sure he knew its essential core. The hopeful "understudies" were forcibly awakened to the realization that they were hoist on their own petard.

175 643 563 669 The colored element was particularly apprehensive at Soulouque's amazing activity, for the President was clearly setting himself against their group, both in the cabinet and out. Determining clandestinely to get rid of their puppet before he became a Frankenstein's monster to destroy his creators, they fomented a new revolution. This, however, proved to be a strategic error of the first magnitude, for the President was already much stronger than they imagined. The insurrection was quashed with massacre and attendant frightfulness. In the aftermath, as Bouzon mordantly remarks, "the republic was calm—with all the tranquillity of a tomb!" By their ineptitude, the colored group had now made themselves completely insecure.

175 565 643 642 [555] In the second year of his régime Soulouque decided to imitate Dessalines by turning the state into an empire. His coronation was extremely gaudy, as well as expensive. Calling himself Emperor Faustin I, he created a peerage drawn chiefly from among his black generals—four princes, fifty-nine dukes, and numerous counts, barons, and knights. This was merely outward pomp to gratify their craving for prestige, for they had no functions to perform, nor even the necessity of Christophe's peers to pay for their regalia. As nobles they were given no responsibilities in directing economic activity nor any increased political power over districts of the empire. The Emperor's own vanity was flattered by having a peerage. He ruled as an autocrat with blatant despotism. For ten years following the coronation Haiti had to accustom itself to costly expeditions against the Dominican Republic, nearly all ending in defeat for Haiti. The outcome of these intermittent wars was neither gain nor loss of territory by either side, but only temporary rule of occupied districts. Haiti likewise had to accustom itself to sudden executions, to the shabby grandeur of court display, and to financial trickery which would not have deceived a schoolboy. While the heads of his opponents and even his loyal counselors fell, Soulouque's infantile "empire" toppered to economic ruin.

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American Marines in Haiti during the next two decades had definite effects upon the social life of the country.

One of the most immediately observable results was the termination of the long political domination by the blacks, and reëstablishment of the colored élite in government control. The four presidents since 1915, Dartiguenave (1915–22), Borno (1922–30), Roy (1930), and Vincent (1930–41), have all been light-skinned. The United States forces had a definite hand in the election of the first two of these men. America's concern was certainly not to return the government to the colored group, but rather to have as titular heads of state men who were educated, temperate of mind, civil in manners—and, of course, mentally "supple" enough to carry out policies agreeable to the State Department at Washington. Since education had for long been a perquisite of the élite only, and since colored élite outnumbered black élite, the chances were good that the choice should fall upon a colored man in 1915 and 1922. Even so, it may have been pure coincidence that the Americans supported mulattoes rather than Negroes; it can hardly be coincidence that the mulatto presidents since 1915 have filled the key offices with colored men. They would assuredly maintain that they had tried to select persons best fitted for office. The fact remains that there are few blacks in the important ministries.

This return to political power of the colored element was one of the most sweeping transformations effected by the Marines, for once again, as in the golden days of Pétion and Boyer, political prestige accompanied and fortified social position. Since 1843 one black or almost black general had succeeded another as president of the republic, and the élite class had perforce to endure them. Socially tolerated these parvenu generals had been, but accepted never. When the Marines arranged the election of President Dartiguenave they effectively reversed the tradition of a century. Since 1915 there have been several Negro candidates for the presidency; in coming elections there are sure to be others; for the present and the near future it is safe to say there will be no more black non-élite presidents.

Such a prophecy is made with a certain assurance because of another result of the Occupation: reform of the army. All true friends of Haiti knew, as most Haitian statesmen had understood for a hundred years, that the huge standing army was an unmitigated burden to the economic, political, and social stability of the country.

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plausible, such as the race prejudice displayed by many individual Marines;[4] the unnecessary slaughter in the suppression of *caco* (guerrilla) rebellions in the North; the continued holding of offices (and salaries) by Americans too impatient to train Haitians, as by the Agreement of 1915 they were supposed to do; the fostering rather than elimination of military psychology among the people by the presence of armed Marines. 175 648 642

The campaign against the Occupation was generally on the highest level of patriotism, for it threw out one variation after another on the same theme: We Haitians are not being allowed to govern ourselves. Some realists knew that their hurt national pride was accompanied by disappointment that certain salaries were not reaching Haitian pockets, certain prestige of office not redounding to the credit of Haitian men. What if the real reason for opposition were not the openly avowed one? The Marines must go! Order had been restored and government reëstablished. It was patent that any administration which could effect the withdrawal would be immensely popular: it was equally patent that if the Americans left the country, the benefits of their efficiency and material improvement would remain as a tangible boon to Haiti. 175 648 642 668

President Sténio Vincent, elected in 1930 after a campaign in which the Americans did not interfere, began the negotiations with Washington. With President Hoover he made headway toward reforms, but President Roosevelt's attitude was more actively cooperative. In 1934 Vincent had a series of conferences with the President of the United States; the latter, in pursuit of his good-neighbor policy, persuaded the American Senate to order the Occupation at an end and turn over without cost to Haiti many buildings, supplies, and equipment used by the Marines. Vincent personally benefited from the withdrawal of 1934. He called himself Haiti's "second Liberator,"[5] and made the anniversary of the American departure a national holiday. Indirectly the élite also benefited for now, entrenched in office, they could govern without white supervision. The material equipment was there to be enjoyed by the whole people at no further expense to them. 175 648 642 [643] [159] [527] [563]

4. The United States government in the early days had sent Marines from the Southern States to Haiti, on the theory that they would, from long acquaintance with Negroes, know how to "handle" them. This stupid blunder was shortly rectified.

5. Dessalines had, of course, been the first.

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175 648 642 423 563 The Occupation had had other far-reaching consequences. It had removed from the Constitution an article which had endured from the very first—the prohibition against ownership of land by white people. Americans argued that since Haiti's greatest potential source of wealth was agricultural (sugar and coffee in particular), new methods were needed if rehabilitation were to occur. Only foreign whites had both the necessary wealth and the requisite agricultural knowledge: therefore, whites must be attracted into the country by an opportunity to establish plantations. Although the Senate of Haiti protested violently against this reversal of tradition, which struck at the people's long pride in their complete ownership of the land, the Americans yielded only on the point of requiring five years' residence of the white landlord in the country. The influx of foreign whites has not been large, but in the Plaine du Nord and Port-au-Prince the white "colonies" are considerably larger now than in 1914.

175 648 563 Up to the present moment the white element in Haiti has not exerted any noticeable pressure on the government. Its mere presence, however, is bound to be a restraining influence on politicians, for most of the whites are Americans, and the government at Washington may not always follow a good-neighbor policy. With the clannishness so usual in white colonists living among darker people, the Americans in Haiti have their private clubs and their closed social set. For the first time since 1804 the élite are socially not the highest-ranking persons in the country.

175 648 563 144 The physical presence of several hundred white Marines for nineteen years had also one unplanned but inevitable result: an increase in the amount of white blood in the population. For many decades numerous élite had rested comfortably beneath their light skins, knowing that only they, with their greater mobility in the world, had any real chance to sustain a white strain. The Occupation, however, brought white men in contact with black women; there was a steady average of 2,000 white Marines in the country for two decades. [554] The light skin of resulting offspring suggested to many the possibility of a climb up the social ladder now that the most difficult rung had already been achieved. No figures are available on the number of children born in Haiti between 1915 and 1934 of white fathers, but it was a perceptible influx in the lower class.

175 458 Haitian businessmen enjoyed a greater economic prosperity during the Occupation than they had ever known before. It is commonly

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sive mood, will speak of the peasant and his contributions to Haiti; he thinks only in terms of his own caste.[8] Upper-class Haitians dread the sight of tourists taking pictures of native scenes, fearing that the travelers will return to their own country and label these pictures, "Typical Haitian Scenes," when, as anyone should know, typical Haiti is upper-class Haiti.[9]

The American Occupation failed of many of its ends because it did not recognize the social situation and its implications; or, realizing them, did not consider them worthy of attention. Roads, telephones, mail service, and improved agricultural methods seemed patently desirable to progressive Americans; to install them for the Haitians seemed generously wise. Yet many well-meant efforts came to grief, for the mass of people, lacking a tradition of orderly free government, did not always understand what the Americans were about, while the élite saw in the activities of the Marines a threat to their own dominance as rulers of the country.[10]

The antiquated, but prevalent, notion of the superior mentality of the white race also flourishes in certain quarters among the élite. Many of them say that the Negro can never originate a civilization, and that with the best of education he remains an inferior man, utterly unfitted for government, utterly incapable of making progress.

8. Witness Marthe Oulié's paragraph (*Les Antilles, filles de France* [Paris, 1935], p. 254): "My amiable host (a member of the élite) was triumphant at my surprise and enchantment. 'You did not expect to find a civilized country. What have the spiteful wits told you? That the Haitians worshipped serpents and made human sacrifices? True, the peasants on the mountain-sides are still very primitive and ignorant, but in the cities you will find many families like ours, cultivated in letters and music, careful and proud of their French culture, and absolutely set against American de-civilization.'"

9. "Should you like a European to take pictures of the slums of your American cities and of the most degraded of your share-croppers, and then circulate these photographs as typical American scenes?" asked one sensitive Haitian.

10. See the *Report of the Forbes Commission to Haiti*, 1930, pp. 18–19. "Illiteracy keeps the peasant masses politically inarticulate, except in case of mobs or bandit gangs, which formerly infested the countryside and often furnished the forces of revolution. These bandit gangs have been broken up and have disappeared under American rule, but the social forces that created them still remain—poverty, ignorance, and the lack of a tradition or desire for orderly free government. It has been the aim of the American Occupation to try to broaden the base of the articulate proletariat and thus make for a sounder democracy and ultimately provide for a more representative government in Haiti. Hence its work in education, in sanitation, in agencies of communication such as roads, telephones, telegraph lines, and regular mail routes. These things naturally are deemed of secondary importance by the Elite, who see in the rise of a middle class a threat to the continuation of their own leadership."

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ress. Others point out the difference between the lower-class Negro of the large commercial towns and the black peasants who live in the plains and mountains. The former, in contact with the roughest of white sailors, are a disgrace to any people, while the countryfolk, seeing only a select few of the whites, appear "to have an innate idea of the white man's superiority," and so treat him with respect. The peasants, according to these speakers, have all the virtues and vices of "wild races": they may acquire a kind of French varnish, but they are "essentially an African people removed from their parent country."[11]

There are among the élite broad-minded, tolerant, and cultured persons. The average member of the caste, however, like the average American, is full of prejudices of all kinds. Travel produces a superficial polish; their patriotism consists of antagonism toward the outside world and an effort to secure position for themselves; they are sure that Haiti's laws are sounder, her culture superior, her schools more advanced, her civilization in general higher, than those of most other nations (France generally excepted).

There are evidences also of certain psychological twists. It used to be said that mulatto Haitians "hate their fathers and despise their mothers," meaning that in colonial times and for a short time after the élite did not like to remember that they derived from a master-slave union. They realize nowadays that they would be accepted as social equals in few countries, and this makes them protest by self-assertion. Certainly a majority of the élite would be completely unwilling to admit that things are anywhere better done than in Haiti.

One generation after the wars which led to independence, the greater number of Haitians had practically forgotten that there was an outside world. Haiti was all they knew. With no standard of comparison for their lot in life the peasants ate, slept, raised their families, fell ill, and died without bothering their heads about such academic abstractions as equality. This uncomplaining acceptance of life, routine, and fate seems to be the essence of peasant existence. The Haitian peasant has been bound to the soil by mental inertia and by tradition more effectively than ever by law. When he has revolted it has been through conviction that someone was trying to change the old familiar ways, or because of physical maltreatment. Peasants have been bribed and paid to revolt, but as mercenaries they have entered only half-heartedly into warfare.

11. The phrases quoted here are fragments of statements made by Haitian élite to the author.

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175 material—Frenchmen who lived "in a deplorable state of morals,
171 too often recalling those of the freebooters and buccaneers" who were their ancestors and predecessors. Even when the calibre of the colonists improved, religion was a minor concern, business and pleasure pushing it well into the background.

There was no great antagonism toward the fathers; indeed, not enough attention was paid to the priests and their work to warrant any very strong feeling. It was indifference and insolence the fathers had to face, or, if they showed too great an interest in the welfare of slaves upon a plantation, suspicion and peremptory curbs. By the old
[671] Code Noir under which the colony theoretically operated, masters were obligated to send their slaves to Mass on Sundays and feast days under penalty of heavy fines; the Code likewise prescribed the baptism of all blacks and their instruction in the Catholic faith. But just as the colonists ignored all parts of the Code antagonistic to their own economic interests, so specifically did they disregard the sections dealing with their religious obligations.

175 Some priests were in any case not too zealous. It was much more
793 agreeable to attend only to external forms, and so participate in the charming life of high society, than to stand firm against laxity. If a
662 priest showed enthusiasm for his duties to his African charges he was
567 almost certain to be accused by the planters of stirring up the slaves
[792] and undermining the foundations of colonial society. This was, in fact, the very accusation leveled at the Jesuits to bring about their expulsion from the colony in 1764. The example was not lost upon other priests.

175 "The safety of the whites demands that the Negroes be kept in
171 profound ignorance," said one of the later governors in a message to France. This sentiment, perfectly expressing the conviction of the
563 majority of planters, not only prevented any secular education of the blacks, but actually kept many of them from instruction in catechism, creed, or any part of the Catholic faith. If instruction is forbidden, few of the sacraments can be administered, for how can a person be confirmed, confess, do penance, if he know not even the first principles of the faith? Few masters objected to the baptism of slave children; on the other hand, they roundly disapproved of the sacrament of marriage for their blacks, since this might place an obstacle in the way of slave sales, and even open the way for assimilation of blacks and whites in the colony.

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Any casual attempt to assess the importance of religion

lives of the people is sure to prove erroneous, for in no phase of life are outward appearances so deceptive. What the unsophisticated peasant believes can be ascertained on the whole more accurately than the beliefs of the intelligent élite. To the foreign observer, Roman Catholicism seems to play as large and as small a part in the thinking of the Haitian upper classes as among members of upper-class French society. Outwardly, the élite are professing Catholics or not religious at all. It is considered proper to attend Mass and otherwise to pay respect to religious forms; actually one loses nothing in prestige if he is not a practicing Christian. Society seems to exert no pressure in the matter. Only if a member of the upper class fears for the security of his social position, or knows that rumors are afloat of his addiction to Vodun, does he feel impelled to become assiduous in his open attentions to the Church. 771 184 [554 558]

The national sensitiveness to skin color is apparent in the priestly complexions. Since the old tradition lingers that "baptism by a black will not stick," not even the peasants welcome native Catholic priests. The God and saints of Christianity need the intercession of white men, just as the Vodun spirits need that of natives. In the early days peasants stoned Negro priests who tried to administer the Catholic sacraments. Such an attitude toward a black clergy falls in well with the preferences of the élite. If there were Haitian priests, they would probably be drawn from the élite class since this is the educated group; but it might happen that some devout peasant would rise to the priesthood and so have the care of a parish including élite—a contingency unthinkable to the aristocrat. Snobbishness, indeed, affects the usefulness of the town priests, for the élite members of the congregation insist on having sermons in French, a language which only the small minority understand, rather than in the Créole which is the speech of everyone, intelligible to gentry and humble alike. The Mass is consequently celebrated for the people at large in unknown tongues, Latin for the ritual, French for the sermon; the benefit they derive from it must be wholly from their inner communion stimulated by the actions of the service. The town priests are often willing enough to accede to élite pressure in the matter of language, for they know French as their mother tongue and would have to learn Créole; although some of the more devoted priests become adept in native speech, using it in their personal 793 829 563 796 191 793 191 796

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175 family and to make only "sensible" marriages, was a fact rarely
581 glimpsed by the critics. A good example of their attitude is the state-
588 ment of the pious English Quaker, John Candler, in 1842:

[114] But few of the merchants or principal inhabitants are married men: concubinage is common, and unhappily, regarded as not dishonorable. Whenever a ball is given, or a large party invited, the invitation is equally extended to "Monsieur and Madame ——" or to "Monsieur —— and his lady"; and by this compounding of moral distinctions among the upper classes, the evil descends to the lower ranks and becomes perpetuated.[3]

[867] And later Candler accuses Haitian mothers of being "utterly dead to all moral considerations," because they do not take pains to instill (middle-class English) ideals of morality, or teach the young the evils of "wayward passion."

175 Not even Haitian authors were willing to accept plaçage as a
114 desirable practice. Beaubrun Ardouin explained that the color preju-
581 dice of colonial times was responsible for what he clearly considered
588 an evil.[4] "The aristocracy of skin" made plaçage prevail over "divine
563 law," for whites would not often in colonial times marry colored women. The same prejudice in the republic kept light-colored men from marrying darker women, but not from living with them. Ardouin believed that Haiti would gain infinitely by adopting "*les bonnes moeurs*," not on moral grounds, but for practical reasons. With regular marriage, he says, there would result a greater fixity of the conjugal state and more confidence on the part of the women, "who too often discover that they are only the satisfaction of a whim"; also the men would reflect more upon the consequence of an infidelity which, in dividing families, might separate children from father or mother and so greatly weaken the delicate relations of paternal love and filial piety. Still another consideration was political: the dispersion which resulted in the inheritance of property when many mothers and children compete. Because of plaçage unions, quite a number of estates had been reduced to almost nothing.

175 As the century progressed, the custom of plaçage prevailed from
581 the President down to the humblest peasant. The women of the
588 President were visited publicly by him; sometimes he was accom-
643 panied on his visits by a staff or selected officers of state. The critical

3. *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 24, 25.
4. *La Géographie de l'Ile d'Haïti*, pp. 181, 96 ff.

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114 consider it novel when it changes little but detail; and some of Haiti's
175 seventeen documents were too short-lived to be significant. Haiti
642 shows her Frenchness in this constitution making, this love of being
171 logical and having the details all written down in proper order.

175 To try to analyze the content of so many documents would be a work of supererogation.[5] A brief comment upon each, however, will improve one's acquaintance with the mind of Haitian statesmen.

175 1801. Toussaint L'Ouverture's constitution, laying the framework
642 of his venture as director of the colony while still acknowledging its
466 relationship to France. In it he announced himself governor-general for life with the right to name his successor, thereby becoming the forerunner of the strong-man principle in politics. The most important part of this constitution was its detailed organization of the forced-labor system.

175 1805. Dessalines' constitution establishing the empire. In many
642 respects it did not differ from Toussaint's previous document, for the same military organization was preserved, and the same system of
●563 forced labor; otherwise, there was little structure of government. One article was included which was to appear in every other constitution of Haiti up to 1918: "No white man shall set foot on this territory as master or as landowner."[6] In other respects there were sagacious provisions which did not endure. For example, the generic name of "blacks" was adopted for all Haitians, of whatever color.
175 The Emperor was trying thus to forestall the dissensions which
642 inevitably must result from the growth of social classes based on skin
[463] color. Another important provision was that every citizen who was not an ordinary cultivator must learn and practice some mechanical art. This was not merely a thrust at the aristocratic pretensions of the old affranchis, but also an endeavor to make Haiti industrious and self-sufficient. Except in the North, where Dessalines' deputy Christophe kept the requirement, the article was honored only in the breach. The social situation was touched at one other point: "No one is worthy of being a Haitian who is not a good father, a good
[428] son, a good husband, and a good soldier." Parents were forbidden to disinherit their children. Although, as has been shown, the Emperor

5. Such an analysis was made by Louis-Joseph Janvier, *Les Constitutions d'Haïti, 1801–85* (Paris, 1886).

6. He had made this declaration first on April 28, 1804; at that time the words "No white man" read "No colonist nor European."

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

114 the culture of their group, but also none of the broader aspects of the motivating forces, the dominant wishes, the attitudes and social values of the masses. Since the élite have often expressed in books their desires and frustrations, one feels that it would be readily possible for a trained social psychologist to learn much from upper-class informants who are anxious to be understood. To penetrate the inner life of the masses would be easier for an American than for a Haitian scholar, who would be enmeshed in the attitudes of class and caste in his own society.

565 Little has been said in this book of the small group of people, generally living in towns, who belong neither to the élite nor to the masses. How much actual social mobility occurs? Of the horizontal variety, that is, movement from place to place within the same social class, very little; of the vertical, or transition from one social class to another, there is likewise little, as has been shown at length in this book; yet there is enough to make a study of social mobility useful. Allied with such an investigation might be one of social distance. The degree of sympathy existing between élite and masses is small; on the other hand, one longs to know the degree of social distance of the individuals who are not yet élite but who regard themselves as definitely superior to the masses: what is their attitude toward the class they have left? And what is the attitude of the élite toward their aspirations?

114 Certain studies have already been made of the effect of the Vodun religion upon the personalities of its practitioners.[6] Even here the surface has been merely skimmed.

177 Haiti, because she is a colored nation in a white Western World, has been even more isolated than she would otherwise have been, even with her island position and her economic poverty. Except for the presence of American Marines for nineteen years there has been little cultural contact with outsiders, and hence little cultural conflict.

[563] It is generally estimated that there are not more than three thousand white people living in Haiti, and these mostly in the capital city. Throughout the nineteenth century it is likely that there were fewer. Haiti shares the island with the Dominican Republic, yet since the independence of the Dominicans in 1844 there has been little warfare, travel, or contact between the two peoples. Haitian workers have crossed the border, it is true, and have returned home (or have

6. See particularly Price-Mars, *Ainsi parle l'oncle*, and Dorsainvil, *Vodou et névrose*.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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[p. 315]

NOTES

CHAPTER II

The period between 1789 and 1803 may be summarized as follows: 175

1789–1791. Struggle for precedence between whites and free colored people, with the balance in favor of the whites. [565]

1791–1793. The slave insurrection, with consequent anarchy, and futile attempts of French commissioners to restore order. Both whites and colored people pushed into the background. [669] [563]

1793–1796. Invasion of the colony by English and Spanish; rise of the mulatto general Rigaud and the black general Toussaint. [648]

1796–1799. Consolidation of power by Toussaint; defeat and expulsion of Rigaud; emigration of whites. [643]

1799–1802. Toussaint in full power as governor-general.

1802–1803. Leclerc's expedition, with its initial successes and ultimate failure. Final achievement of Haitian independence under Dessalines and Christophe. [642]

PART III

Various efforts were made by American abolitionists working with Haitian presidents to colonize freed American Negro slaves in Haiti in the period before the Civil War.[1] All these projects came to unfortunate ends, some even to grimly tragic ones. During Boyer's time about 13,000 American Negroes went to Haiti, the government assigning to each family a portion of land upon its arrival. Very shortly most of those who could afford it returned to this country, and within ten years hardly one was still living upon the land. An American writer, Hunt, says that during his seventeen years in Haiti (before 1860) he had known of but 13 Negroes from America who had been moderately successful; of these, 7 were merchants or traders, 4 mechanics, and 2 lawyers; and all were mulattoes. Five others were barely independent, and all the rest were day laborers or worse. In spite of this, Hunt planned another aided migration of American Negroes to Haiti. Warning them not to expect too much in the way of improvements in agriculture, he adds a significant paragraph: "Should the immigrant obtain quiet possession of unoccupied lands, and begin to use the plough instead of the hoe, his new methods of culture would be likely to draw upon him the jealousy and ill-will of his neighbors. For when new ways are *too* new to be accepted as an example, they are very apt to be felt and resented as a rebuke. More than one of Boyer's old immigrants have told me that they were obliged to give up agriculture and take to trading in towns, on account of annoyances of this sort. They found their fences down, or their water let off, of a morning; or evidences that cattle had been fed on their grounds over night; or the neighboring idlers, of which there are many, had stolen all their plantains and sweet potatoes, fit for the market. I do not mean to say that these Haytian cultivators are worse than any other rude people. On the contrary, I

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1. An excellent description of these projects is found in L. L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938* (Durham, 1940), chap. IV.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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believe they are less bad than many others in like circumstances. For not having great strength of character, they have neither great virtues nor great vices. The English farmers, Birkbeck and Flower, encountered similar troubles, and worse, when, forty years ago [that is, between 1820 and 1830], they brought over their English habits, and settled down with them among our farmers in Illinois."[2]

Montague sums up the general fate of American Negroes who migated to Haiti by saying that some were exploited by the élite (who treated their own blacks in the same fashion), others persecuted by resentful peasant neighbors, and still others, who had expected manna to fall from the Haitian heaven, simply diillusioned at having to work, and so lost heart.[3]

CHAPTER XII

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The following table of the presidents of Haiti summarizes in general the shifting political fortunes of the country. Those presidents who belonged to the élite caste are designated with an asterisk (*). It will be noted that the presidency has generally been in the hands of men from three departments: the North, where Negroes are predominant even among the leaders; the South, always a stronghold of the mulattoes; and the West, where the capital, Port-au-Prince, is located. The Department of the Northwest has never had a president, and the Artibonite only three. The color of the presidents is indicated.

Heads of State	*Color*	*Dates*	*Department*
1. Dessalines	Black	1804–6	North
2. Christophe	Black	1807–20	North
2. *Pétion	Light	1807–18	West
3. *Boyer	Light	1818–43	West
4. *Rivière-Hérard	Light	1843–44	South
5. Guerrier	Black	1844–45	Artibonite
6. Pierrot	Black	1845–46	North
7. Riché	Black	1847–47	North
8. Soulouque	Black	1847–59	West
9. *Geffrard	Dark	1859–67	South
10. *Salnave	Dark	1867–69	North
11. *Nissage-Saget	Light	1870–74	Artibonite
*12. Domingue	Dark	1874–76	South
13. *Boisrond-Canal	Light	1876–79	South
14. Salomon	Black	1879–88	South
15. Légitime	Black	1888–89	South
16. *Hyppolite	Black	1889–96	North
17. Simon Sam	Black	1896–1902	North
18. Nord Alexis	Black	1902–8	North
19. Simon	Black	1908–11	South
20. Leconte	Dark	1911–12	North

2. Benjamin S. Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans*, pp. 14, 11.
3. *Op. cit.*, pp. 71–72.

3: Leyburn SV3 Haiti SV3

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[The information on the Haitian 'caste' organization, which the author discusses throughout the text, is here dealt with under category 565. See Mintz' introduction to the text (category 116) for the distinction between class and caste, as applied to Haiti. The concept of class (565) more closely and sharply defines the phenomena the author refers to in the text than does the concept of caste (564).]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

The financing of these many revolutions was usually provided by foreign merchants, bent upon installing a government that would grant them special economic concessions (Munro, 1964:326–31). The United States occupation ended this doleful succession of regimes and, by throwing its weight to the elite, by suppressing military activity in the countryside, and by reforming the army, the United States gave a new meaning to the separation of the elite and the yeomanry. Leyburn's interpretation is consistent with these events; yet some Haitian scholars have differed with Leyburn's analysis.

In a lengthy review article, the dean of Haitian historians, Dr. Jean Price-Mars (1942:1–50), questions the applicability of the term "caste" to the social groupings of Haitian society. He notes that Haitian law after the revolution never legitimized any distinction on grounds of physical type, unlike a society such as the United States—that in fact, the very basis of Haitian polity was the absence of such distinctions. Furthermore, Leyburn's interpretation is qualified by the fact that the elite and the rural masses are not entirely distinctive physically. In some parts of rural Haiti, particularly in the southern peninsula, there are many light-skinned people; and many individuals who qualify as members of the elite on all other counts are very dark in appearance. The fact that being "Negro" or "white" in Haiti is viewed as a matter of degree, rather than of kind, complicated by all the other criteria of social position employed in drawing distinctions, has important implications for the way social barriers have operated in that country.*

Leyburn did not contend that all the effects of the United States occupation were in the direction of increasing the gap between the ELITE AND THE PEASANTRY.

* In this regard, Haiti is aligned with most of Latin America, in contradistinction to the United States, where many persons believe that "one drop of Negro blood" [sic] makes a "Negro." The failure of North Americans to distinguish between sociological and genetic categories of physical type has led to considerable confusion in their dealings with Latin America and in their understanding of Latin American societies. North American race prejudice at its most extreme uses color as the primary basis for social ranking, and no individual accomplishment (for instance, in terms of economic or intellectual success) can overshadow the inferior status unalterably bestowed by certain physical traits. Haitian—and generally all Latin American—social distinctions do not rest solely on considerations of physical type; a black skin does not "doom" an individual if his attainments make him otherwise the equal of his lighter-skinned fellow citizens. Hence, it might be argued that the term "caste" would be more appropriate when applied to the Negro people of the United States (regardless of phenotype, and including those "Negroes" who are sociologically identified with the Negro people even if their physical appearance is demonstrably Caucasian) than when applied to the people of Latin America.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

Next to the agricultural system, the state of education in the republic probably had as much to do as anything with fixing the caste system upon Haiti. So long as the mass of people were not only black but illiterate as well, they would have no means of reaching a social status beyond the one in which they existed. Certainly the aspiring Negroes would not wish to enlighten them, for to stir up the whole people would destroy the very possibility of distinction. As W. S. Gilbert pun is, "When everyone is somebody, then no one's anybody." Public education, consequently, hardly advanced a step during Boyer's twenty-five years. It had had a feeble enough beginning under Pétion and remained, as it had been, a prerogative of the well-to-do.[8] 175 871 563 564 178

Under the complaisant rule of Boyer, accordingly, the people of color came to regard themselves as the unquestioned élite. Their claim was shared, though not always acknowledged, by a small number of blacks (mostly from the North) who had been anciens libres in colonial Saint-Domingue or noblemen under Christophe; who were literate, or whose wealth and ambition attracted attention. Boyer's boast that "all the feelings and prejudices, either of olden times or of national origin, have been superseded by an intense patriotism" was pure buncombe, as he certainly knew.

If only the best brains of the colored group had been content to serve the government, Haiti might have profited from her situation; but lesser government offices were merely springboards for foreign trade in coffee and mahogany, or for the manipulation of business deals. Not "intense patriotism," as Boyer liked to think, but financial gain was the motivating force of the élite, as it had been from colonial times. The man who could amass a modest fortune, so that his children might be educated and their security assured, had done his duty, and he would have been regarded as quixotic to renounce business opportunities for the dubious honor of minor political office. As a consequence of this natural search for gain, the government during Boyer's administration became less and less efficient. Relatives of élite businessmen were given posts because the President could not afford to offend important families. These minor officials then performed their duties awkwardly, or neglected them, in "the unfailing obliquity of dullness." 175 555 662 661 178 [647]

Skin color became the obsession of high society. Those who had no other merit of which to boast could still revel in their complex- 175 563 564

8. See chap. XVI.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 563 564 [178] ions. Intermarriages between persons of widely different color became extremely rare, being regarded by many lighter Haitians with actual disgust. Everyone with social pretensions wanted to be whiter. Dr. Brown stated it baldly: "The pure negro seeks to ally himself to the griffe,[59] the griffe to the mulatto, the mulatto to the quateroon, the latter to a mustif, and the mustif, having but an untraceable tinge of African blood in his organization, is uproariously indignant if he is accused of having any at all."[60] An educated young black of several generations of free parents was scornfully turned down by a lighter-skinned woman considerably his inferior in breeding and wealth because her children would be darker than herself—"*petits enfants griffes*," as she put it. The prejudices of colored people against blacks was almost as great, if not quite as intense, as the former prejudice of whites against colored people in colonial times. No one forgot that there had been black as well as colored freedmen in the colony; but it was much simpler for people of color to claim their long career as élite than for blacks to do so.

The attitude of upper-class Haitians toward whites in the midst of all this color prejudice was an interesting mixture. On the one hand, all good Haitians professed to dread a return of the whites; on the other, they welcomed white businessmen in the country. In a certain respect the whites were regarded much as were the Jews of Europe [673] in the Middle Ages: they were wealthy—and therefore legitimate [671] objects of pillage, necessary evils for the sake of finance. Theft from a [641] white man by government action was a service to the state. Laws were consequently varied from time to time with the sole purpose of [423] profiting from a foreigner's position. True, the trader might protest to his home government, but if England or the United States took a strong stand, Haiti could always retreat; if those governments did not stand firm, Haiti had gained. In the Haitian courts the whites had little show, for Article 38 of the Constitution forbade them to own real estate or to become citizens; they might not even hold a lease for more than ten years; and they might not marry Haitian women.

Nevertheless, the analogy with mediaeval Jews falls down at one vital point: whites were not viewed with contempt. Quite the con-

[192] 59. A term denoting three parts in four of Negro blood. This term as well as "mustif" goes back to colonial white society; neither was, or is, used by cultivated Haitians.

60. Brown, *op. cit.*, II, 283–284.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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trary; they were grudgingly respected as superior beings, arbiters of the fate of the outside world, potential destroyers of the privileges of the Haitian élite should they return to the country in force. Although white men might not legally marry Haitian women, it was not every woman who could resist the opportunity of having children lighter than herself. One indication of the ambiguous attitude toward the whites was seen in religion. In 1842 out of sixty or seventy Roman Catholic priests in the island, only one was a Haitian. Many people in the country were well educated, and certainly more than equals in point of scholarship and *savoir-faire* of the rude priests imported generally from Corsica. But a feeling was current among the peasants that "colored baptism will not stick." There is no indication that the European priests, since they were well paid for their services, attacked this particular heresy. As for the élite, they derived a certain satisfaction in being served by white priests. Aside from the churchmen, however, the only white man in any place of prominence in the country was the mayor of Saint-Marc, whose father had befriended Boyer in former times.

175 563 564 [193]

Few visitors had kind words to say of social conditions in the Haiti of Boyer. As a Frenchman put it:

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> Democracy was the rule; but what a democracy! A hodge-podge of the most heterogeneous ideas, an alliance of the most contrary principles, of American federalism with military control; the sovereignty of the people replaced by the sovereignty of a ruling clique; and finally, all the intellectual vainglory of a people young, inexperienced, and for a long time denied the legitimate manifestation of their own wishes. Added to all these inconsistencies is the antagonism of races.[61]

This antagonism was, indeed, paramount. The habitual hauteur and assumed pretensions of the lighter Haitians were a perpetual thorn in the flesh of the ambitious blacks, and thus the breach was everywhere widened and made permanent. The blacks retaliated against these distinctions by refusing to obey orders from mulattoes in office, or by petty outrages against private citizens among the colored group.

175 563

The vital lack of the country, assuming that stability is desirable, was a middle class of any sort. On the base of hundreds of thousands of peasants, illiterate, unambitious, indifferent to progress, was built

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61. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, "La République d'Haïti; ses dernières révolutions; sa situation actuelle," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, XV, No. 4 (Nov., 1845), pp. 681–682. [113]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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"empire" tottered to economic ruin. Graft, default on the debt, increasing deficits, and debased currency were the order of the day, and so continued until 1859, when the accumulation of anger over the useless wars and the humiliating defeats made the Emperor so unpopular that a new and more carefully planned revolution accomplished his downfall. 175 643 652 669

Fifteen years of administration by Negro rulers had broken the political power of the colored élite. Only three light-skinned men became president thereafter until the occupation of Haiti by the American Marines in 1915; in the seventy-two years following Boyer's downfall, mulattoes ruled during only eight. The army under a black general was too powerful, a colored president too hampered by suspicion, to make the political game worth the candle. The colored élite, therefore, adapted themselves to existing conditions as best they could, controlling the business life of Haiti, filling the law offices and, because of their literacy, the secretaryships of state, and indulging in honorific cultural pursuits. 175 643 178 564

In the years after Soulouque the basic realities of Haitian life were changed hardly at all by shifting political administrations. Some of the presidents were mildly progressive, many were indifferent; still more were actually harmful; but the lives of the mass of peasants were not often touched by presidential vagaries. Politics was an affair almost wholly of townspeople, of the army, the élite, and the pseudo-élite. Revolutions, counterrevolutions, movements of reform, international tangles, financial woes, and most of the other complications to which unstable states are heir, absorbed the attention of rulers and upper-class folk who were politically inclined. 175 643 66

Constitutions were made by presidents and changed by their successors; the Senate passed contradictory laws in the same session if the chief executive so recommended; the courts were presided over by the president's men. Haitian law in the latter half of the nineteenth century was what the president's immediate strength and wish made it—or else it was folk custom, undisturbed by the rulers. 175 642 671 692

Never once, in the three quarters of a century after Boyer's time, did Haiti approach the high standard of production known in colonial days or in the early years of independence. The pattern of Haitian social and economic life became fixed in this seventy-five years. Haiti became a country of small-scale tillage by a peasant population, with only enough external trade to provide moderate 175 178 433 565 439

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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In most countries in which Westerners are familiar, social distinctions take the form of classes, which are to a greater or less degree mutable. In Haiti, as we have repeatedly indicated, the distinctions are so rigid that *caste* is the only properly descriptive term. There is hardly a Haitian who would not be able to state immediately whether he or any person he knew was, or was not, élite. So it has been with steady persistence ever since Dessalines and Christophe gave way to Pétion and Boyer. Élite youth marries élite girl, and the folkways of the group are passed on from parent to children, thus perpetuating the distinctions. In the pages which follow, all the marks of separation of castes will be examined: religion, economic occupation, marriage, language, manners, and the rest. 565 178

Certain aspects of the classic example of the caste system, seen in India, are lacking in Haiti. Religion, for instance, does not require caste endogamy, nor does civil law implicitly acknowledge caste lines by reference to the rights of people of a certain occupation. Custom does more than religion and law could, however, to enforce conformity to the understood rules. Probably the most open efforts to enact caste lines into law were the pronouncements of Dessalines and Christophe that all but a few people should be bound to the soil; and Boyer's Code Rural—a feeble echo of days gone by. The two black rulers were able to enforce the distinctions they made; but when they died their feudal arrangements lapsed, while the separation of classes continued. With the recurrence of revolutions after 1843 it behooved the élite, when occasionally they were in authority, not to lay themselves open to fresh attack upon grounds of aristocratic presumption, for they never knew when they might need the support of the masses. Any black revolutionary leader would have been able to turn an enacted caste law to his own ends, even if a Senate consisting predominantly of light-colored men had had the power to enact such a law. Time and inertia won the battle for the élite. By not joining issue with the masses at any definite point, the aristocrats gained their end of caste distinction, for they were willing to endure the self-discipline necessary to the maintenance of social standards, as the masses were not. [544] [170]

Just as in colonial days the ambition of the well-to-do freedman was to go to France for his education and his holidays, so in free Haiti the lure of France has continued to be strong for the aristocrat. There is not a trace of animosity against the country which enslaved the Negroes, and which in 1802–3 tried by trickery to take away the 565 484 177 186

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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565 484 177 186 rights of people of Negro blood. As a distinguished Haitian remarked, "It is from France that we draw our culture, our language, our literature, our attitudes of mind: why should we not love her?" The more time the élite spend in France, the less kinship they feel with the masses. There is not necessarily any conscious snobbery in this increasing discrepancy; it simply results from a life spent in entirely different environments. The Boston Brahmin, for example, may be kindhearted and yet feel little kinship with a Mississippi share-cropper.

564 Inside the castes one may find social distinctions familiar in democracies. There are well-to-do élite who set the standards of manners and entertainment, and there are peasant landholders who through force of personality dominate their rural neighborhoods. The intellectual man of the upper classes stands somewhat apart from the social whirl of "high society." An important government official has more prestige among the leisured classes than a small businessman, just as a powerful religious adept is more honored among the peasants than a happy-go-lucky ragamuffin. It is obvious, however, that within the élite caste social discrimination occurs more frequently and is more accurately observed than among the country people.

[184] [177] [208] Such phrases as "Haitian religion" or "Haitian public opinion" are accurate only in so far as the person who uses them defines the adjective "Haitian." One might describe truly a phenomenon characteristic of ninety-five out of a hundred Haitians and yet, in the opinion of those who dominate the economic, political, and social life, do injustice to Haiti.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

[History of Haiti in 17th-18th Centuries - The Haitian White population]

Revolution.[13] St. Mery also records the importation and sale in 1750 of more than five hundred Natchez Indians from New France (Louisiana) "as well as others at a later date, both from Louisiana and Canada."[14] 175 563

A final class of settler must be mentioned, whose coming is reported to have given a better tone to the drab picture of Haitian life. This class was composed of members of the French nobility, who in their new home attempted to maintain the standards which characterized and regulated their lives in France. Unlike many of the earlier inhabitants, to whom the difficult life of the planter did not appeal, the nobles tended to continue their status as country gentlemen in their new environment, and, by establishing plantations, to reproduce in so far as was possible, their situation in France as a group of landed proprietors. As a result, there soon grew up between these planters living on their estates and the population of the cities and towns the same distinctions of caste and the same blind rivalry which, before the Revolution, separated the French country squires and the city dwellers in France itself.[15] 175 563 565 175 563 565 369

The existence of these two classes within the white population of the colony, which is commented upon by many writers of the period, must have presented to the Negro slaves strikingly different views of the life of the whites. In a manuscript of Moreau de St. Mery, at present in the archives of the Ministry of Colonies in Paris, a group of some two hundred of these gentlefolk who in 1783 lived in the region of what today is Cap-Haïtien, in northern Haiti, is spoken of as that of a special class, and their existence is contrasted with that of the city folk. Living on their plantations, with the cultivation of which they were exclusively occupied, their mode of life was different from that of the inhabitants of the cities and towns, where were found dealers in wholesale produce, officers of the crown, lawyers, solicitors, and merchants. Some forty years later another writer, writing from the point of view of the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

[History of Haiti in 17th-18th Centuries - The Haitian White Population]

175 563 565 369 [163] planters and expressing their contempt for the townspeople, speaks of the towns as existing primarily to serve the needs of these country squires as centers for the storage and disposal of their produce: "There are found merchants, artisans, judges, recorders, solicitors, notaries, bailiffs, doctors. But one finds neither nobles, men of property, nor persons of wit and perception." [10]

175 [illegible] 563 The physical aspect of the cities had little to recommend them, especially since the utter lack of sanitation made for extreme uncleanliness in all Haitian centers. This fact is of special interest in the light of the frequent references to this trait of Haitian cities in the writings of those Europeans who described the life of independent Haiti. Invariably in such accounts the littered state of the streets, even in the capital, is stressed, and tendered as evidence of the absence of civilization in this Negro Republic.[11] Even though occasional mention is made that this state of affairs existed before the Revolution, nowhere, whether in St. John or in the later writers who date from the time of the occupation of the country by the United States Marine Corps, is there any realization that this condition antedates the independence of Haiti. The cleanliness of Africans in Africa wherever the natives have ready access to water has been well attested, and is still true in those regions from which the ancestors of the people of Haiti principally derive.

175 591 [illegible] 563 Yet some aspects of life in the towns livened the picture of Haitian colonial existence. Outstanding were the opportunities offered by these centers for social intercourse, and even for intellectual and artistic stimulation of a kind, such as was afforded by the famous *Cercle des Philadelphes* of Cap Française, dedicated to literary, philosophical, and, above all, to political discussions.[12] Masonic lodges, later taken over by the Negroes and today of appreciable importance in Haiti, were also instituted by the French, the first having been founded at the Cap in 1740.[13] Purely social meeting-places, such as public

1; Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

attitudes of these writers were in the main far from sympathetic toward Haiti, and their interests extended but little to the customs of the great masses of Haitians. That the fear of slavery was still alive in the early part of the nineteenth century is apparent from an incident related by Mackenzie; [44] that, some decades later, the sense of racial differences continued to exist is evident from folk-sayings about the characteristics of whites, mulattoes, and Negroes recorded by St. John.[45] The concept of rank seems to have maintained itself in its full flavor, with no lack of social classes in Haitian urban society and no lack of vigor in perpetuating the earlier prejudices of caste.

The majority of the population remained on the land, for by 1830 the great estates had been completely broken up, and were cultivated in the main by small concessionaires. The dress of these country inhabitants seems to have remained much as it had been under French control, and the emphasis on good manners that so marks African social intercourse had been retained to such an extent that St. John, no admirer of the Haitian people, was forced to remark upon it.[46] Markets which were conducted in African fashion had been established, and these were supplemented by itinerant peddlers. The institution of *placage*, a reconciliation of African plural marriage with the monogamy of European custom, of which more will be said in a later chapter, was known in the early days of independence. The rites of birth and death were marked with their special ceremonies, and in both instances it can be seen that the African elements of the cultural heritage were not being forgotten. Dancing continued as the principal form of recreation, and to the traditional dances, which still persist, were added European styles.[47]

Above all, African religious customs were being observed. *Vodun* rites continued to flourish and magic was practiced as in the days preceding independence, as is to be seen from the notorious and all too often repeated tale of the "Congo bean

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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manufactured in the valley of Mirebalais, but elsewhere in Haiti men are the potters. The African knowledge of iron-working has been lost, but there are those who repair iron implements and the great pots used in making sugar, and those who work in tin. Some men specialize in making rope, others in building the mills which crush the sugar-cane. Not everyone knows how to make *clairin*, the strong drink of the peasants, and some do nothing except distill this. Painters are found who paint the larger houses built in the town, as well as those occasionally erected by the more prosperous peasants in the countryside. The calling of the mason is a well-established one. These craftsmen build the walls of the more pretentious stone houses, but more particularly find their time taken up in the erection of tombs.

565 With economic specialization goes a stratification of Haitian society, roughly drawn, but based on prestige and the command of economic resources, in which the following classes are informally recognized: * There are the *pauvres*, indigent folk, who for some reason have forfeited or otherwise lost their family connections and whatever they may have owned and now must actually beg to obtain enough to eat. One finds but few of these except in the larger centers; in Mirebalais they number not more than five or six. One such is an elderly man who originally came from another part of the island, lost what he owned, and when he became deaf was no longer able to earn a living. He was occasionally set at some menial task such as carrying water or gathering firewood. In another category are those known as *malheureux* — folk who are usually, though not always, incompetent, but who are generally regarded as unlucky. They may work hard on their land, but their crops fail or yield meagerly; they may obtain a job, but something goes wrong with it — the work is temporary, or they cannot collect the wages due them, or illness follows every period of employment.[10]

The second group comprises the middle class. This class

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

contains such an overwhelming proportion of the population that no special term is applied to its members. They are comfortably situated, according to Haitian standards, living frugally on their habitations with their families where their lives follow an equitable course, and through them the body of Haitian culture flows, for they are its principal carriers. In the third class is included the *gra nègre* and the *grand nègre*. The first is a man of wealth and position, the owner of a large plantation, and frequently also a former high officer in the Haitian army or in the old Cacobrigades, or a man who may have successfully stood for local or national offices. The *grand nègre* is conceived in Mirebalais to be a man of spiritual power, as represented in the most active and renowned priests of the vodun cult and the successful practitioners of magic. Together, the two categories maybe thought of as constituting the outstandingly successful members of the community, in contrast to the first class, which includes its outstanding failures.

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

114 treatment. In the absence of sufficient analytic material on the intervening years since his book was written, a prefatory note such as this can do little more than comment on Haitian society, either in terms of its present design or in terms of the recent events that may have modified it.

121 114 The central thesis of Leyburn's book is that Haitian society is sharply divided into two segments, and that the national institutional structure is such that no significant alteration in that division has occurred in the entire course of Haiti's history as a sovereign nation. At the base of the society is the rural agricultural sector, making up perhaps as much as 95 per cent of the population; at the top the elite, which dominates the governmental apparatus and all national institutions. These two segments of the society differ, in Leyburn's view, in all important regards: level of income, source of income, education, language, religion, social forms, values and attitudes, and all else. By carefully describing the history of Haitian society from the eve of the revolution until the midst of the United States occupation, he reveals both the origin of this vast social cleavage and the various means employed for its perpetuation. Leyburn was so impressed by the gap which separated yeomanry and elite that he chose to label these social segments castes rather than classes. Members of the elite earn their livings as renteirs, merchants, professionals, and in government, and never engage in manual labor of any sort. They are predominantly urban in residence; their sons attend private lower schools, and then go on to higher education, usually abroad. They are French-speaking, although they also speak Creole, Haiti's national language. Elite religion is Catholicism, elite forms of marriage and domestic organization are "legitimate" and "western." Elite members view themselves as a kind of aristocracy, and feel little commonality in their sharing of Haiti and of Haitian history with the yeomen.

565 [178] [191] [197] [58] [59] [529]

In sharp contrast, the yeomanry is rural, poor, works the land, is illiterate and Creole-speaking only, believes in vodoun rather than in orthodox Catholicism, usually marries by common law and is sometimes polygynous, and remains substantially isolated from the outer world. Finally and importantly—though its particular significance is changing—the elite differs from the rural sector in that the countryman is predominantly negroid in phenotype, while members of the elite are prevailingly lighter-skinned.

114 565 191 771 583 595 144

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

Leyburn noted that the United States occupation affected the nature and rigidity of the barriers separating the yeomanry from the elite. For instance, he calls attention to the fact that the presidents elected during the United States occupation were light-skinned members of the elite. It seemed almost inevitable that, when the North Americans sought men through whom to prosecute their plans for "stabilizing" Haiti, they would settle on educated and worldly politicians, men who were both sufficiently trained and sufficiently pliant for the task. That these men were predominantly light-skinned was a corollary aspect of Haitian social history. In this way Washington played some part in reinforcing and expanding elite power; and herein lies a paradox with which the author of *The Haitian People* has dealt well. While the elite had been able to maintain their wealth and power in Haiti for nearly a century, the presidential succession before the United States occupation had largely been one of military chieftains, principally dark-skinned men from the north of the Republic. Michel Oreste, who had ruled for nine months in 1913–14, was the first civilian to be chosen president in Haiti's entire history up to that time; and Sudre Dartiguenave (1915–22), the North Americans' choice, was the first president since 1879 who was both a southerner and light-skinned. From the last quarter of the nineteenth century until the occupation, in other words, Haiti's presidents were almost entirely dark-skinned northern provincial leaders who literally seized power by invading Port-au-Prince and deposing their predecessors.

Hence, in describing the separation between elite and yeomanry, it is essential to notice the traditional special role of the military, with its particular overtones of color. Here was one institutional feature of Haitian society which was not directly dominated by the elite, and through which nonelite folk were able to attain special power. But in Haiti's case it is significant that the army itself was not firmly institutionalized; regional warlords, rather than a centralized officer corps, made the decisions. Leyburn cites Auguste Magloire, who enumerated *sixty-nine* "important" revolutions between 1806 and 1879; had this enumeration gone forward, it would have been much longer. Of Haiti's twenty-four chief executives between 1807 and 1915, only eight were in office for a period equal to their elected terms, and seventeen were deposed by revolution. Before the United States occupation, then, the continuing power of the elite could be seen as somewhat separate from the succession of nonelite generals who seized office over the years.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

648 The financing of these many revolutions was usually provided by
669 foreign merchants, bent upon installing a government that would
565 grant them special economic concessions (Munro, 1964:326–31). The
701 United States occupation ended this doleful succession of regimes
439 and, by throwing its weight to the elite, by suppressing military activity in the countryside, and by reforming the army, the United States gave a new meaning to the separation of the elite and the yeomanry. Leyburn's interpretation is consistent with these events; yet some Haitian scholars have differed with Leyburn's analysis.

114 In a lengthy review article, the dean of Haitian historians, Dr. Jean
564 Price-Mars (1942:1–50), questions the applicability of the term
563 "caste" to the social groupings of Haitian society. He notes that
671 Haitian law after the revolution never legitimized any distinction on
144 grounds of physical type, unlike a society such as the United States—that in fact, the very basis of Haitian polity was the absence of such distinctions. Furthermore, Leyburn's interpretation is qualified by the fact that the elite and the rural masses are not entirely distinctive physically. In some parts of rural Haiti, particularly in the southern peninsula, there are many light-skinned people; and many individuals who qualify as members of the elite on all other counts are very dark in appearance. The fact that being "Negro" or "white" in Haiti is viewed as a matter of degree, rather than of kind, complicated by all the other criteria of social position employed in drawing distinctions, has important implications for the way social barriers have operated in that country.*

114 Leyburn did not contend that all the effects of the United States
565 occupation were in the direction of increasing the gap between the
ELITE AND THE YEOMANRY.

563 * In this regard, Haiti is aligned with most of Latin America, in contradistinction to the
564 United States, where many persons believe that "one drop of Negro blood" [sic] makes a
171 "Negro." The failure of North Americans to distinguish between sociological and genetic
144 categories of physical type has led to considerable confusion in their dealings with Latin America and in their understanding of Latin American societies. North American race prejudice at its most extreme sees color as the primary basis for social ranking, and no individual accomplishment (for instance, in terms of economic or intellectual success) can overshadow the inferior status unalterably bestowed by certain physical traits. Haitians—and generally all Latin Americans—social distinctions do not rest solely on considerations of physical type; a black skin does not "doom" an individual if his attainments make him otherwise the equal of his lighter-skinned fellow citizens. Hence, it might be argued that the term "caste" would be more appropriate when applied to the Negro people of the United States (regardless of phenotype, and including those "Negroes" who are sociologically identified with the Negro people even if their physical appearance is demonstrably Caucasian) than when applied to the peoples of Latin America.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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elite and the yeomanry. For instance, he calls attention to one unanticipated (but inevitable) result of the occupation in this connection: the large number of children whose fathers were United States Marines, and whose mothers were members of the Haitian rural masses. In this way the occupation contributed to the growth of the physically intermediate population of Haiti, especially among rural folk, and thus perhaps to some bridging of the gap between yeomen and elite. Much more important, by its contributions to a broadening of the educational system, the occupation enabled talented black-skinned youths to improve themselves and to acquire new aspirations.

Recent economic and political developments in Haiti, through the period 1941–57, have contributed grounds for modification of the Leyburn interpretation. Though Leyburn predicted that "for the present and near future it is safe to say that there will be no more black non-élite presidents" (p. 101), subsequent developments soon proved him wrong. In January 1946, the government of elite member Elie Lescot fell under military pressure. A junta consisting of Franck Lavaud, Antoine Levelt, and Paul Magloire facilitated the installation of Dumarsais Estimé as president. Estimé was a dark-skinned man from the countryside (the village of Verettes, near St. Marc, in west-central Haiti), who had received a good education, served as a minister in the Vincent cabinet and, as a deputy, married a lighter-skinned woman whose family's elite membership was secure. Estimé might well be considered a self-made member of the elite, but he was not born into it, and his accession to power was the political expression of new possibilities in Haitian life.

The changes Estimé's regime symbolized were rooted in the intellectual resistance to the United States occupation and in the search for a Haitian identity in the face of that occupation. The strangely easy domination that the United States wielded over Haitian society for several decades, and the relatively unexploitative but patronizing administration it provided, ended forever a fantasy that had gripped Haitian intellectuals for more than a century. The world of 1804, when a bloodied but defiant Haiti could bar by force of arms Napoleon's dreams of a New World empire (and assist indirectly thereby in the territorial expansion of a still weak United States) had vanished. The time when a Pétion could aid, protect, and politically influence a sick and tired Simón Bolívar was long gone. The world had changed, while Haiti, the Haitians learned under their North

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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attitudes toward French culture in all of its expressions, and by a new feeling of kinship for the peoples and cultures of Africa.

The variety of views expressed by Haitian intellectuals was colored by differences no more subtle than those characteristic of the intellectuals of any other country in the Caribbean region—even though North American observers unfortunately persist in treating such differences as politically irrelevant. There were those spokesmen who continued to embrace French culture and to reject "Africanism," only deploring the North American presence in Haiti. Others embodied their views in a staunchly Haitian nationalism and, as they began to view their country in a new light, invested the Haitian folk with an unrealistically romantic picturesqueness. Still others fastened upon the African theme with special intensity, and thereby gave a strong racist tinge to their nationalism.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, anthropology came to be seen as an important means for giving Haitians an accurate—that is, an "inside"—picture of their own society; a number of young ethnologists, mainly self-trained, began to publish works on Haitian culture. Soon anthropology was pressed into a political mold, anticipating similar developments in other "colonial" countries. The first novels purporting to deal with the common people, though sometimes tinged with idealized preconceptions of rural society, were published; and an impressive number of competent young poets devoted themselves to aesthetic explorations of the Haitian spirit. Haitian cultural and intellectual life, in short, was taken up with the rediscovery of Haiti and its people.

But the Estimé regime did not produce changes in the economic structure of Haitian society of importance proportionate to the national cultural renascence. Even those modifications in the class structure for which Estimé is sometimes given credit might not have occurred, were it not for educational reforms that had begun in the 1920s and the beneficial effects of Haiti's prosperity of the mid-1940s. What Estimé could do was to open the ranks of an inefficiently large bureaucracy to able, if sometimes inadequately trained, newcomers of poor rural antecedents.

At the same time, as the Combaire-Sylvains have suggested (1959: 179–89), a qualitatively different class group was beginning to emerge in Port-au-Prince during Estimé's presidency, and the presence of such a group suggests that new economic forces were faintly stirring

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 565 These newcomers in the class structure enjoyed regular urban employment, were mostly literate and legally married, and harbored strong ambitions for the education of their children. Such persons were certainly not elite members, and their behavior (as, for instance, in their preference for speaking Creole rather than French) showed it; yet they were not part of the rural masses, nor merely an example of Marx's *Lumpenproletariat*. Yet significance of this new group for the Leyburn "caste" theory of the elite is considerable. Even today, if such persons lapse into poverty, their ideology will continue to matter politically. Estimé's regime also loosed new political trends, since at first some encouragement was given to labor unions, and the construction of urban low-cost housing was undertaken. We are unable to measure the long-term effects of these changes, but their reality raises some questions about the rigidity that Leyburn's analysis imputed to Haitian social structure.

[467] [362]

175 669 643 159 In May 1950, after an unsuccessful bid to extend his term of office illegally, Estimé's regime was toppled, again by a military junta. To power came Paul Magloire, the first military figure to become chief executive since the start of the United States occupation. Like Estimé before him, Magloire symbolized certain effects of the occupation upon Haiti's social and political structure and the way that structure was continuing to change. Magloire's origins were not within the elite, to judge by the traditional criteria. He was a black man, and from the north; born in Quartier Morin, he associated himself with the elite of the north coast port of Cap Haïtien, Haiti's second largest city. By marriage to a "Capoise," whose family status was much higher than his own, and by a successful career in the military during the occupation, Magloire penetrated elite circles. As commander of the Palace Guard, he had been a member of the junta that ousted Lescot in 1946, replacing him with Estimé. In 1950, when Magloire became president, after the army had forcibly discharged both houses of the legislature, he apparently had the support of the elite and of the business class, if not of the popular forces that had backed Estimé.

175 643 Magloire may be said to have moderated considerably the intensity of Haitian politics, and his administration was not marked by so sharp an ideological concern with the relative roles of elite and countryman. Times were good, and levels of life, both in the countryside and in the capital, were probably as high as they had been at any time in Haitian history. Certain economic gains were made in the tourist

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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same century in which Haiti withdrew. The yeomanry of Haiti in the nineteenth century was hence able to develop a traditionalism of unusual firmness and persistence.

This traditionalism, however, has had a high price. The economic productivity of the rural cultivator has not risen; it can be argued convincingly that poor land use, erosion, and population growth have meant lower levels of consumption for the common people in 1966 than obtained a hundred years or more ago. The rural masses, though overwhelmingly consisting of landholders, have been unable to break out of a stagnation that is economic as well as cultural. Such stasis has been based to some extent on the limited responsiveness of the rural folk to outside stimulus. But also important in maintaining the past is the national institutional system that took on its characteristic shape after 1804, and under which the rural masses still live. That system, the origins of which Leyburn has examined and assessed with such care, is controlled, as we have seen, by a numerically small segment of the national population that is markedly distinct from the yeomanry itself.

The nature and internal differentiation of the elite needs much more study, though it seems clear already that it is by no means a single solidary class embracing all but the yeomen. Whatever the structure of the elite, the relationship between the yeomen on the one hand and the real holders of power on the other must be understood if one is to understand Haiti. The yeoman is defined in terms of the elite; he is dependent upon it and subject to it. This is what is meant when it is said that the yeomanry, like the elite, forms only a part-society. Yet without the yeomen, there would be no elite. The elite live by controlling and taxing the rural masses, and find their sustenance and their power in rural productivity. Elite and yeomen, then, are bound together in unequal but interdependent relationships in Haiti as they are in other less developed societies of a similar kind. In such cases, the political role of the yeomanry is usually minor, and few opportunities may arise for the expansion of its political strength. If the yeomanry fails to increase its productivity in ways that enable it to control more of its own surpluses, its role in affecting national political decisions may grow narrower rather than wider, and this ominous possibility has become a worldwide phenomenon. It becomes more intensified wherever industry and trade grow, unaccompanied by parallel growth in yeoman productivity or in new and more widely representative national institutions.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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That the separateness of yeomanry and elite had visible and sociologically important expression in physical type in Haiti was a clear consequence of the history of that country. But the traditional preponderant light skins at the top of the structure and the preponderant darkness at its base are less important than the domination of the total structure, and of the institutional means for changing it, by a mere fraction of the national population. It is the *power* of the elite which has mattered through time; its physical appearance has been only a historically derived expression of that power. Such a balance of politically weak masses against numerically sparse power holders is common, perhaps particularly in the "less developed world"; but each such case has certain special characteristics. Haiti's special nature is not simply in its being a yeoman country, and one in which a small group dominates the mass. As a rural, agrarian, unindustrialized, politically sovereign, and quasi-capitalistic country, Haiti shares much with other lands; but in each regard its own particularity needs to be assessed.

The rurality of Haiti is extreme, not simply because there are no concentrations of population in excess of 25,000 except for Port-au-Prince and Cap Haïtien but also because towns of intermediate size are few in number, and the urban concentrations in the country's two cities are substantially of relatively recent rural origin. Port-au-Prince dominates the Republic in all of its economic, political, and social activities. Furthermore, the rural towns have been losing to the capital, not gaining from it. Until the United States occupation, the larger towns of the coast, such as Jérémie, Jacmel, and St. Marc, were united economically with each other, and to some extent with the capital, by a lively coastwise shipping system, and the inland towns were tributary to those of the coast. The growth of inland transport during the occupation strengthened the interior towns while coastwise shipping declined, but the capital grew even more important as the sole economic center of the Republic. Since the 1940s, the rapid deterioration of the road system has left both inland and coastal towns enfeebled; only Port-au-Prince has remained strong.

The dominion of Port-au-Prince is firm, and there is no focus of power in the countryside that can counteract it. Those few foreign enterprises in Haiti that base themselves outside the capital city use local port facilities (e.g. Miragoâne for Reynolds Aluminum, Cap Haïtien for the sisal plantations of the north) and do not affect the development of the interior transport.

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The major effect of the North

648 Amer-
642 ican tenure seems to have been to make possible a much more telling centralism in political control than had been operative in Haiti at any time since the fall of the Christophe regime; and the consequences of this change are still being felt.

241 Small-scale rural cultivators are famous for their tendency to con-
565 fine their consumption to culturally conventionalized levels—that is,
433 to live as their predecessors lived before them. Though they are in-
178 volved in commercial spheres larger than the communities in which
185 they live, they seek to limit that involvement and to maintain their
511 cash expenditures at a low level. It is in this sense that Haiti might be
472 called a "quasi-capitalistic" society. To put it another way, yeomen of this sort do not seek to change or to expand their production—rather, they aim to conserve a way of life set by tradition. The ideology of resistance to social and cultural change is one of the major obstacles to development; but it would be rash to damn such an ideology without reflection. In Haiti, for instance, there has long been pressure upon the rural masses to expand their production of coffee, the major export crop. However, this pressure has not been accompanied by any serious grass-roots attempt to improve coffee production or to offer genuine incentives to the cultivators. The yeomanry has no assurance at all that any expansion of effort will lead to gains *for them*; and they are little prepared to invest such effort merely because they are told that it will be good for Haiti. In fact, it is likely
[439] that the production of subsistence crops has expanded in recent years at the cost of coffee production, for the yeoman knows that he can at least be sure of eating and of selling locally such crops as maize, sorghum, and yams, regardless of what may happen in Port-au-Prince or to the world coffee market. This view, combined with the yeoman's painfully acquired distrust of those who prate at length concerning his welfare, has meant a virtual stagnation of agricultural export production, even though the whole land quite literally depends on this production in order to progress.

241 The effect of this rural resistance is to create an apparent very sharp
565 difference in goals between countryman and bureaucrat. It is per-
433 fectly understandable that the countryman should fail to see the con-
185 nection between heightened coffee production and a higher level of public welfare and social services. His experiences hardly persuade him that it is his surplus-producing capacity that underlies the kind and quality of public institutions with which the state provides him.

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241 Nor does his effort in producing more and better cash crops translate
•565 itself directly into higher consumption, since he has no say in setting
185 the price for his coffee. Under the circumstances, it is naïve to sup-
433 pose that "education" alone can make the yeoman's role in economic or political development a more active one. The disposition to maintain a habitual level of consumption, rather than to believe that an increase in productivity will result in expanding services or improved consumption, is difficult to change; and the quasi-capitalistic quality of Haitian agricultural production is merely one way of saying as much. Economic change, in this sense, has to depend partly on changes in attitudes toward production. Until an agricultural extension service worthy of the name is able to make a massive attack on the shortcomings of yeoman cultivation in Haiti, this conservatism will perpetuate itself. And agricultural extension will not be able to wage this battle for change—even when its services become adequate in quality and quantity—unless the promises of greater economic rewards or of improved social services for the rural masses are occasionally honored.

47 The term "quasi-capitalistic" has much less force, of course, when
433 applied to urban enterprise. But there, too, economic activity has a
565 curiously static quality when compared to enterprise in more devel-
178 oped countries. The Port-au-Prince capitalist is famous for "playing it safe." Import-export trade, tourist hotels, guided tours, gas stations, and urban slum real estate are more rewarding spheres of investment than shops or commercial farms. A small but economically important Syrian-Lebanese-Italian group limits its local investment accordingly, as do most of those "native" Haitians who carry on their businesses in the towns and cities. Elite families consist largely of siblings who interlock their economic activities with government, the military, agricultural processing and exporting, consumer-goods importing, tourist-connected services, and the professions. A slum block, a post in the ministry of tourism, a colonelcy, or a tour agency, can be a lucrative investment; few indeed are the Haitians prepared to take the risks needed to develop highly productive farms, to produce improved strains of poultry, or to introduce industrial skills through a modern machine shop. And the reasons for this lack of verve and daring are easy to find. Governmental instability, excessive
[648] taxation, lack of access to markets, and the absence of roads, communication, small-scale credit facilities, and the like mean that special

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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I

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR COUNTRY

IN the ten thousand square miles of Haiti's mountains and valleys more than two and a half million people—some say more than three million—are crowded together. Some are black, some light-skinned, but less than five thousand are white, and these are almost all recent immigrants to the country. Modern Haiti has its racial roots primarily in Africa, but its social roots lie as much in Europe as in Africa; if it is "American" at all, geography and a few fairly superficial characteristics are the only American qualities it displays.

Carrying our own cultural interpretations with us when we visit our Caribbean neighbor, we are likely to misunderstand what we see in Haiti, for it is very easy to think of all colored people in terms of our own. To do so is to remain completely ignorant of Haiti. Whereas in the United States we use "Negro" and "colored" indiscriminately as synonyms, making a real distinction only between "black" and "mulatto," all four terms are taboo in polite society in Haiti. A new descriptive vocabulary, an entirely new frame of reference, must be acquired by the friendly foreign visitor to this West Indian republic.[1]

Probably the most striking phenomenon in the country is its division into two social groups. So rigidly are the class lines set that

1. No greater error of tact can be made by visitors to Haiti than to use such commonly accepted American terms as Negro, colored, mulatto, blacks, Africans. Whereas in the United States such words are employed to describe people with a greater or less degree of Negro blood, in Haiti they are generally regarded as opprobrious epithets, emphasizing the color of the epidermis as all important, while ignoring the essential matters of culture, standard of living, and social background. Not many Haitians would have the grace to reply, as President Pétion suggested to a subaltern who was incensed at a white man for calling him "un nègre," "Why, then, did you not call him 'un blanc'?" Probably the most offensive of all the terms is *mulâtre*, for it calls attention to miscegenation in the family. The educated people in general regard themselves as darker Frenchmen, not as transplanted Africans. Books about Haiti which refer to the "black republic" seem to them to ignore the important fact that the blacks, though numerically preponderant, do not rule. The visitor must accordingly acquire a new vocabulary of color. It is safer not to make any allusion at all to the matter; but if occasion demands, one speaks of "jaune" and "brun," not white and black.

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565 caste is the only word to describe the effective separation of aristocrats from the masses. The caste system is a vivid fact, for it regulates a person's profession, speech, religion, marriage, family life, politics, clothes, social mobility—in short, his whole life from cradle to grave.

175 Haiti won its freedom from the France of Napoleon in 1804,
648 becoming thus the second independent state in the Western Hemisphere. It had been during the eighteenth century France's most prosperous colony, its wealth depending upon slavery and the planta-
565 tion system. With the whites driven out, social distinctions which
642 actually had their roots in colonial times began immediately to develop among the people, all of whom had some proportion of African blood in their veins. During the course of the next century the criteria for aristocracy slowly assumed recognizable form, so that now even the most casual observer is aware that Haiti cannot by any stretch of the imagination be called a democratic country, with an open class system. The two castes are the élite and the masses. They are as different as day from night, as nobleman from peasant; and
[162] they are as separate as oil and water. The élite are generally reckoned to compose at the outside not more than three per cent of the population.

565 The élite do not work with their hands. This is the cardinal rule of Haitian society. Upon it rests the whole economic structure of the
463 country, and to this the course of national history has led. All the
[461] professions, most governmental and military offices, and the large business enterprises are effectively closed to young men of the masses. Indeed, so completely accepted are caste rules, so practically difficult would it be for peasant youths to acquire the money and education necessary for such careers, that at birth a boy's future place in economic life is, within narrow limits, already predetermined. For the élite, law is the most popular of the professions, partly because it is the quickest avenue of approach to high political office; government, in turn, is the only career which can make a man rich within a few years. Next in popularity to law comes medicine. Teaching is not lucrative enough to attract many promising youths, and the priests of the Roman Catholic Church are almost all white Frenchmen.[2]

793 2. An effort was once made by the Catholic Church to train native Haitian priests,
797 but the peasants would have none of them after they were ordained. They drove them out, saying, "Go away! How do you expect God to listen to you? You are not white; you don't know anything." And the Haitian priests had to be transferred as missionaries to Africa.

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The distinction between castes on the basis of occupation is nowhere more clearly seen than in the feminine sphere. The peasant woman, from childhood onward, is an indefatigable laborer, absolutely indispensable to the economic life of the country. She not only performs the usual domestic functions but works in the fields as well. She carries marketable goods, sometimes for miles, to the town for sale. The aristocratic woman, on the other hand, is rarely active in business. Indeed, until very recent years no career was open to her outside the home, nor would custom have allowed her to follow one; even now, teaching and a few clerical positions in government service are her only business opportunities. She directs the household economy but has servants if she can possibly afford them. Her place is definitely in the home. 565 562

The second infallible test of membership in the élite caste is education and an ability to speak French. When Haiti was a slave colony belonging to France, the hundreds of thousands of blacks imported from Africa had no common tongue, coming as they did from wide stretches of the continent; the French spoken by their overseers, a development of the Norman dialect,[3] became their one language, known as Créole. Every Haitian, high and low, knows and uses this language, for nursemaids speak it to the upper-class children in their charge, and all servants speak it. The élite consequently learn it at a tender age, and must use it in all their dealings with the lower orders. Among themselves, however, they speak French. The official language of the country is French. To speak correct French is an immediate announcement that one has had the advantage of schooling and has been in contact with the aristocracy. Theoretically, Haitian education is free and democratic; actually, no peasant child could be spared from labor long enough for schooling, or find money for proper clothes to go to school in. 565 197 [87]

Inevitably the standard of living is a reflection of caste membership. "The élite wear shoes," explained General Butler laconically to the United States Senate investigating committee, when asked what characterized the classes of Haiti. His elliptical remark is true. Peasants, indeed, could not afford to purchase shoes, but more particularly they could not afford to dress up to the standard set by the shoes. When a man of the masses dons the castoff shoes of some aristocrat, the logical assumption by everyone is that this man is pre- 565 511

3. See chap. XVIII.

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565 511 paring to try to move one step up the social ladder. Shoes are a symbol: wearing these, one must also wear a suit instead of a faded shirt and patched trousers; the suit demands personal cleanliness and a better home; all these lead the country man to town life with its additional expenses. So arduous a climb does not allure many of the Haitian common folk.

565 181 Because the standard of living, with its tangibles and intangibles, clearly separates the castes, the élite observe all the rules with rigor. Their etiquette is formal. Culture (in the popular, not the anthropological meaning) is respected with almost religious devotion.

565 511 434 Since the maintenance of a high standard of living is costly, it is obvious that another source of caste distinction lies in the inequalities of wealth and property. Wealth is a relative term, however, and the Haitian peasant is so poor that by contrast a few hundred dollars' income a year will seem like riches. The élite live economically by American standards, yet even parsimonious spending of money may, when governed by a consciousness of social distinctions, make the peak of aristocracy unassailable.

565 369 The élite live in towns. Many of them own country estates, but regard these as secondary to their residences in Port-au-Prince, Pétionville, Cap-Haïtien, Jérémie, and the other few towns. To live a rural life is to be isolated, out of the stream of fashion, news, social activity. What profession can one follow in a rustic valley? One who is class-conscious must see and be seen by others of his class, otherwise he would be forgotten by "those who count." In the towns are the schools; there French is spoken; there, and there only, financial and social opportunities exist. True, plebeians form the majority of the population even in the towns, so that urbanization alone is not a mark of caste; it must be taken in conjunction with the others.

565 581 Formal marriage is another requisite for membership in the élite. As will shortly be apparent, sex relations in Haiti are quite casual, as judged by American standards. The majority of Haitian families are established by parents who have gone through neither a civil nor a religious ceremony. This is not to imply that spouses are unfaithful to each other, or that there is not mutual respect within the family circle; it merely means that most people regard formal marriage as a luxury which they cannot afford, or in any case as a ceremony which custom has made superfluous. Once again, however, the aristocrat holds to the form. If a family can point to legal marriages among

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several generations of ancestors, there can be little question of its high social position. 565 581

Religion affords still another distinction between high and low. Haiti has a folk religion which American tourists call Voodoo (a name which makes them think immediately of superstitious emotionalism or some kind of occult balderdash), but which is more properly called Vodun. It is a true religion in that it answers for the native the questions arising in the world he knows, while giving him confidence to face the crises of life. Vodun is African in origin, Créole in its language, and homely in its creed and practice; none of these makes it any less a religion. The official religion of the country, on the other hand, is Roman Catholicism. Few members of the élite, however their hearts may yearn for the consoling securities of Vodun, dare openly either to acknowledge their "atavism" or to participate in the cult. They must be Catholics or agnostics. It is often remarked that below the surface many a professing Catholic aristocrat cherishes Vodun beliefs; the important fact is that he keeps his folk worship secret. Because the outside world ridicules Vodun as superstition, and because the approved Catholic Church fights it, government restrictions effectively keep its ritual out of the public gaze. All the discriminatory laws, however, have not weakened its hold upon the masses. It is because Vodun is a *folk* religion that the élite cannot permit themselves to adhere to it openly. 565 771

The final and most complicated distinction between the two castes is skin color. Any generalization on this matter is open to numerous exceptions; moreover, the whole question of color in Haiti touches the most sensitive nerves of the upper classes. One must begin by such casual observations as these: the vast majority of the lower orders are definitely dark or even black; the lighter the skin, the more likely a person is to belong to the élite. It is true that there are black aristocrats, and it is equally true that numbers of peasants have light complexions. At almost any function in high society, however, the proportion of dark-skinned persons is decidedly small. Among the youth, the tendency is always to select a spouse whose skin color is light; marriages are often made between aristocrats and white foreigners resident in Haiti, so that the children may lighten the family complexion. While it is therefore inaccurate to assert that no full-blooded Negroes belong to the élite, it is also clear that lighter persons tend to have social advantages. 565 829 581 144

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565 171 Modern usage, having borrowed the word "caste" from India, employs it loosely to mean a rigid class system of which the people are conscious.[4] In India caste was always endogamous and connected with occupation. Kroeber defines it as "an endogamous and hereditary division of an ethnic unit occupying a position of superior or inferior rank or social esteem in comparison with other such subdivisions."[5] Castes, as distinguished from social classes, "have emerged into social consciousness to the point where custom and law attempt their rigid and permanent separation from one another." By each of these criteria Haiti has castes.

565 582 [463] [461] The élite are endogamous in that they would not consider marriage into the masses. The one exception to the endogamic practice is marriage with a white foreigner. Whereas in India all members of a caste had the same general occupation, in Haiti several occupations are open to caste members; but the distinction between honorable and demeaning work is understood by all, so that no person has free choice as regards the two larger categories. Haitian law does not name the social divisions, nor does it legislate the masses into a subordinate position[6]—for the simple reason that there is no conceivable need to enact what already exists. The laws of Haiti are administered by élite officials; these men make the definitions and interpretations. The judge always knows the custom, so that (as in most countries) the same offense brings different penalties for upper- and lower-class offenders. Custom holds sway, and custom is more tyrannical than any body of law.

Inside the castes may be found social distinctions familiar in democracies and in every other kind of society. Interest in politics, business, literature, or sport draws people of like minds together and makes cliques. There are well-to-do families who outshine their neighbors, just as there are peasant landholders who dominate their rural communities. A high civil official has more prestige than a doctor with a small practice, just as among the masses a house servant for an élite family outranks a beggar.

565 511 105 185 For the majority of Haitians, life is too elemental to be concerned with artificial wants. The peasant talks, unfettered by rules of gram-

4. See also W. Lloyd Warner, "American Caste and Class," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLII, No. 2 (Sept. 1936), 234–237; and John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (New Haven, 1937), pp. 62 ff.

5. A. L. Kroeber, "Caste," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, III, 254.

6. Such efforts were made, however, in the early days of the republic. See chap. III.

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mar or any schoolmaster's correction; he behaves like his fellows; he learns by trial and error, by imitation, by the praise and ridicule of his elders, what to do and what not to do. What really matters in life is having food to eat, avoiding bad luck in health and crops, having a wife and family, keeping on the right side of the spirits, and being able at night to dance, sing, and tell tales with his friends. He wears no tight-fitting clothes, never bothers about fashions, certainly never puzzles his brain to reconcile his theological and philosophical views with each other. This is by no means a poetic or idyllic existence for him, however. The peasant is so poor that misfortune may be catastrophic; the soil he has to farm is worn out by decades of erosion and crude tillage; disease is so widespread that most people know misery. A man cannot, even if he would, save up for a rainy day; he lacks the necessary implements to plough deep while sluggards sleep. One is safe so long as he does what everyone else does, and if this rule breaks down, at least misery will have company. Keep out of harm's way if possible, but bear it stoically when it comes. Avoid what is strange—particularly all legal documents, courts, politics, city ways, and people who shout orders. The peasant is conservative because radical changes, such as come from revolutions, for example, dislocate his life, leaving him worse off than before. Progress and improvement are to him only vague abstractions, much less real than the struggle for mere existence.

For the élite, on the other hand, life is rather a struggle to maintain and improve the standard of living. It is always easier to predict what a person will not do than what he will. It would be hard to define, therefore, a typical aristocrat. In one basic matter, however, the high-class Haitian is poles removed from the peasant: instead of accepting things as they are ("*Bon Dieu bon*," runs the peasant saying: God is good—and the inflection of the voice implies that the second "bon" may also mean "inscrutable"), the élite person is restlessly dissatisfied with the conditions of life: economic, social, political. His unexpressed ideal is to be accepted as an equal in the cultured circles of Western society, to have the same entrée to courts, clubs, and parties abroad as cultivated white Europeans and Americans.

Since the country has never had an accurate census, it is not possible to say precisely how many persons belong to each caste. By the most generous estimates not one out of twenty-five Haitians is élite—and such a figure stretches the category to a point which no literate

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162 565 369 citizen would admit. The few cities and towns of Haiti do not contain more than 250,000 people in a total population which the atlases generally put around 2,500,000. Since to live in the city is one necessary mark of aristocracy, and since obviously not every town- or city-dweller is an aristocrat, it is probably nearer the mark to infer that not more than two or three per cent of the people are of the *élite*.

565 554 A slightly larger group would fit neither category. This intermediate section would consist chiefly of those who have taken a few steps toward the upper stratum; they may wear shoes and keep a small shop and speak a few words of French, but not yet be accepted in "respectable" society; aristocrats will look down on them while the masses will regard them with curious interest. Yet these are not what Europeans would call a middle class. In their own generation, they are rootless and insecure. Their children will have as many advantages as the parents can afford, so that the next generation may increase the distance between itself and the common folk. Included in this intermediate group are also a few who, having once been up, are now on the way down.

433 162 If the terms "masses" and "peasants" are used interchangeably in these pages, it is because the vast majority of the people get their living from the soil. Haiti is, as it has always been, an agricultural country. The end-paper map lists all towns which claim as many as 7,500 people; only one, the capital, Port-au-Prince, has more than 100,000.[7]

162 184 105 At least nine out of ten Haitians, therefore, lead rural lives, and easily fit the designation of peasant. They live in little communities, generally of less than a hundred persons, rather than in scattered houses. A detailed map would be dotted with place names of these

[162] [114] 7. The estimates made by Woodring, in his *Geology of the Republic of Haiti*, p. 67, are as follows:

Port-au-Prince	125,000	Saint-Marc	10,000
Cap-Haïtien	20,000	Jacmel	10,000
Les Cayes	15,000	Port-de-Paix	7,500
Gonaïves	12,000	Jérémie	7,500

It should be noted that all eight of these towns, which by Woodring's estimate have a total of 207,000, are seaports. The country is so mountainous that no cities have grown up in the interior. The map also includes a number of towns smaller than 7,500: these are capitals of *arrondissements* or seats of *communes*. Woodring remarks that if the people who live in towns having a population of more than a thousand were added to the list above, the total "urban" population then would be between 225,000 and 250,000, which is barely ten per cent of the total in the country.

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increasingly arid as its altitude decreases. Next to the Plaine du Nord, the best-watered part of Haiti is the southwestern peninsula, which projects far beyond the shelter of the mountains in the rest of the island. 132

When one subtracts from the 10,000 square miles all the sterile wastes of cactus, the salt marshes and brackish lakes, and the rock barrens, one realizes the inevitability of a low standard of living for the mass of the people. Other nations buy little from Haiti, local industries never reach even the proportions familiar to small-town Americans, and the total national budget is less than seven million dollars a year. Not even the élite are well-to-do by American small-town standards; it is only by comparison with the masses that they can be said to constitute a favored economic class. They rule the country, however, and what benefits accrue to Haiti rarely get beyond their pockets. 433 [431] [651] [565]

The resident of Haiti can never lose sight of the social distinctions between the two castes, for they permeate every phase of Haitian life. It has been so since the first hours of the republic. Indeed, the origins of the caste system lie in the French colonial days of the eighteenth century. 565 175 178

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175 equaled the demand for them; in 1791 the census listed half a million
24 them living, but no writer seems to have even a vague idea of how
567 many millions were imported during the sixty years of the colony's heyday.

Production, particularly of sugar and coffee, steadily increased
175 until the tiny colony ranked among the wealthiest regions of the
295 world. The Spanish Indies were declining, so that Saint-Domingue
299 alone far outranked them all combined between 1766 and 1791.
433 Splendid roads were built, extensive irrigation projects developed,
511 and stately mansions erected. Life moved along with ceremony and
565 display—for the planters; attended by their black lackeys, the white French masters entertained royally or were driven like lords in their coaches to make formal visits to neighbors. Many of these well-to-do colonials spent half their time in Paris, ostentatiously spending their riches. To be "wealthy as a Creole" came to be a common expression in France.[1] Perhaps nowhere in the Americas was existence at once so delightful and so ornamental as it was for the wealthy planters among the 36,000 whites of Saint-Domingue in 1791.

For the mother country, too, this small bit of tropical land was
175 profitable during the latter days of Bourbon royalty. Neither Mar-
439 tinique nor Guadeloupe could compare with it in value. In 1789
505 nearly two thirds of the foreign commercial interests of France
648 centred in Saint-Domingue; its combined exports and imports were valued at more than $140,000,000; its sugar, coffee, indigo, and cotton supplied the home market and employed in prosperous years more than 700 ocean-going vessels, with as many as 80,000 seamen.[2]

Where wealth exists, social distinctions generally develop. In
175 Saint-Domingue the evolving class system produced such discord
565 that sparks from the French Revolution eventually set off an explo-
669 sion in the colony. Casual surveys of Haitian history generally record that in 1791 the slaves revolted, and that out of this insurrection grew the war of independence. This is true; but it was not the resentment of slaves against their masters which caused the final explosion; the
175 slaves were tinder used by others to keep the conflagration burning.
565 Negro slaves, of course, did not figure in the "class" system; they
[567] were below the classes of colonial society. The class system, properly

[101] 1. The word "creole" means only "colonial born"; there is no connotation of race mixture in the term.

2. Pamphile de Lacroix, *Mémoires*, II, 277.

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175 speaking, consisted of the three groups known as *grands blancs*, *petits*
● 565 *blancs*, and *gens de couleur*.[3] Although no precise English term will translate either of the first two categories, the former embraced the important whites—owners of large plantations, wealthy merchants, and high officials of the state; the latter designated all other whites of the colony—shopkeepers, artisans, small planters with only a few slaves, little people busily engaged in social climbing, and shiftless whites lazily slipping downhill. The 28,000 gens de couleur included all free persons who had African blood in their veins.

It is highly probable that without this third group there would have been no violent outbreak in 1791, no achievement of final independence in 1804, and no such caste system as exists in Haiti at the present time.

175 That there were free people of color in the colony was due to a
567 code of laws emanating from Louis XIV, who died in 1715, years
641 before Saint-Domingue had shown any signs of becoming prosper-
648 ous. In 1685 the Grand Monarch had issued a Code Noir to cover all colonial dealings with Negro slaves. Article 59 specified that when a slave secured his liberty, either by cash purchase or by gift of his white master or parent, he was to be regarded as a full French citizen. He might own land, dispose of his wealth as he pleased, bear testimony in legal cases (even against whites), marry as he pleased, vote, bear arms, travel where he wished, embrace any career, own slaves or free them. To Louis and his ministers such provisions probably did not seem particularly magnanimous, for race prejudice was not a characteristic of the French, and it could hardly have been supposed that enough slaves would ever be freed to create much of a problem.

175 In the course of the next hundred years, however, many persons of
563 color in the colony achieved their freedom, and with it French citi-
641 zenship. The greatest number had been granted their liberty because they were the children of white masters by Negro mothers—for race mixture is always a concomitant of white ownership of black slaves.
[595] Concubinage was so regularly practiced in Saint-Domingue that it
563 was considered quite normal. If many of the first freedmen were
175 mulattoes (half-white, half-Negro), by 1791 their descendants might be quadroons, octoroons, or near-whites, for consciousness of skin

3. The gens de couleur were also often called *affranchis*, freedmen, a term which strictly would be inaccurate as applied to a free colored person of the second or third generation.

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color predisposed a freedman to separate himself, by marriage with a 563
person at least as light as himself, as far as possible from his slave 175
ancestors.[4]

Aside from paternity, the chief reasons for freeing a slave were 175
faithful or extraordinary service, and the readiness of a master to free 567
his concubine. By the time of the Revolution many of the free colored people had not known slavery in their families for four generations, while still more had been free for two or three. During the century many had acquired wealth by inheritance from former owners. Their close association with well-to-do white planters had [556]
instilled in them the desire to improve their economic fortunes as well as their culture; friendly relationships with their benefactors afforded them the opportunity. Like the grands blancs, the prosperous gens de couleur sent their children to Paris for an education, and went there themselves for pleasure.

As the free colored people flourished, so also did the jealousy of the 175
petits blancs against them. "Society" in Saint-Domingue was beset, 565
as is any social system which has not yet the sanctity of long tradition, with heartburnings, intrigues, resentment, snobbery. Petit blanc aspired to become grand blanc; small planter longed to be received into the smart set of the wealthy plantation owners; creole resented the toplofty airs of the recent émigré from France. What was more irksome to the petit blanc than his own exclusion from high society was the acceptance into it of many colored people whose parents or grandparents had been African slaves. Since many of the gens de couleur were better educated and more cultured than the lower-class whites, inner consciousness of mental inferiority may have added fuel to the fires of jealousy.

The growing wealth of free colored people was notable in the latter years of the century. One fertile parish in the South (Jérémie) was almost entirely in their hands, while in every other part of the colony they had bought or inherited handsome plantations. They looked upon Saint-Domingue as their fatherland, not hoping (as did many of the whites) to retire to France to spend their fortunes, not yearning (as did many slaves) to return to Africa. The less ambitious

4. Certain colonial writers diverted themselves by working out all the mathematical 114
combinations of blood mixture, with names for scores of the commoner varieties. 565
Since people with some part of white blood in their veins might mate with others of their own kind, with lighter or with darker persons, with black or with white, it can be imagined how complicated the question of race mixture might become.

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175 took their place in the business life of the towns, sending their chil-
565 dren to parish schools. Colored youths served in the colonial constabulary and in the militia, acquiring a knowledge of arms and warfare later to be useful to them.

175 Estimates of their wealth vary. Some say that in 1791 they owned a
565 third of all the land in the colony and a fourth of all the slaves; others
423 more conservative put the figure at one fifth of each. Even this is
567 impressive enough to account for much of the growing jealousy of
162 their position. And by 1791 the whites outnumbered them only ten to seven.[5]

562 White women in general added their support to a movement in-
595 stigated by the petits blancs for discrimination against all gens de
563 couleur. Many wives felt resentment against the colored people be-
175 cause of the frequency with which their husbands took colored mis-
581 tresses.[6] Moreover, the wealth of the colony attracted an immigration of Frenchwomen with marriageable but undowered daughters—in the candid French phrase, "*de filles à marier et sans dot*"—who seem to have assumed that young planters would want white French wives, even though impecunious ones. It was a shock to quite a number of them to discover that a colonial youth might prefer a colored girl
175 who brought a dowry with her.[7]

565 Indiscreet affranchis often gave additional grounds for resentment
829 against their group. Wishing to dissociate themselves altogether from their Negro ancestry and to be assured of social eminence, some accounted for their dark complexions by reference to obscure Indian progenitors. On this ground many secured letters patent from local government officials, of course on payment of a fee, legally estab-

162 5. The census listed 40,000 whites to 28,000 colored. L. E. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description . . . de la partie française . . . de Saint-Domingue* (Philadelphia, 1797), I, 285, gave the following figures for 1790:

	Square Leagues	*Population*	*Whites*	*Affranchis*	*Slaves*
North	480	195,000	16,000	9,000	170,000
West	820	194,000	14,000	12,500	168,000
South	186	130,000	10,000	6,500	114,000
Totals	1,486	519,000	40,000	28,000	452,000

6. One governor reported to Paris that he considered sexual jealousy the greatest cause of unrest in the colony.

7. See Sir Harry H. Johnston, *The Negro in the New World* (New York, 1910), p. 141.

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linking their freedom from the taint of any black admixture. Having entered white society by such means, and further diluted their Negro blood by judicious marriages, these social climbers frequently became the most pitiless masters of slaves in the colony, the most rigid sticklers for a color line, ruthless enemies of recent freedmen and of those who acknowledged the dark strain in their blood; and having now "passed over" as whites, they snubbed the petits blancs. 175 565 829 [556]

The rising tide of color prejudice became apparent in the passage of discriminatory laws. The first of any importance was enacted by the representative Council of the colony, sitting at the capital, Cap Français, in 1758. It prohibited all colored people, except police and militiamen, from carrying swords, sabres, or other side arms—thus denying them one of the outward marks of gentlemen. Four years later the prohibition was extended to the bearing of all firearms, except in service, while in 1767 the sale of munitions to colored persons was forbidden unless ordered by a white officer. Obviously the instigators of prejudice had by this time won a number of ruling grands blancs to the notion that the presence of numerous people of color might constitute a menace to the physical safety of the whites. 175 671 565

Louis XV, the reigning monarch, took no steps to enforce the liberal provisions of the Code Noir of his grandfather; on the contrary, he seems to have favored the passage of discriminatory laws. He made it difficult for colored planters to travel freely in France. The colonial perpetrators of indignities to the gens de couleur, seeing the success of their first efforts, began to propose increasingly severe restrictions, and were gratified by Louis XV's official "Instructions to Administrators" (1771), which stressed the necessity of maintaining a line between the two races which colored people and their descendants might never cross. 175 641 563 671

For the next two decades the affranchi had to face openly avowed discrimination. One by one his rights in the Code were abrogated. He might not fill any responsible office either in the courts or the militia, for that would elevate him above white persons. Certain careers, such as goldsmithing, were closed to him, because they brought wealth; others, notably medicine and the apothecary's art, were forbidden on the ground that whites might be poisoned;[8] law and religion were barred to him because of their public and honorific 175 565 563 671

8. It was a common belief in slave colonies that all persons with Negro blood had some "instinctive" knowledge of the science and art of poisoning. [829]

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175 523 525 671 nature.[9] Colored women were forbidden in 1768 to marry white men. In 1779 began a series of laws designed to humiliate the colored person in public: his clothes must be of a different material and cut from the white person's; he must be indoors by nine o'clock in the evening; he might not sit in the same section of churches and theaters with whites.[10]

175 648 829 [649] [565] Just at the moment when prejudice and hatred seem to have reached their most menacing proportions, when even moderate white planters began to feel that such passions had been aroused among both white and colored folk that only brutal severity could hold them in check, the Revolution began in France. Both sides in the colony hoped to make use of it. The whites saw in the mother country's confusion an opportunity to win self-government for the colony—with themselves, of course, as the unrammeled rulers. The gens de couleur, taking to heart the noble Declaration of the Rights of Man, hoped to regain their full rights as French citizens, guaranteed to them in Louis XIV's Code, but now in abeyance.

175 646 648 671 During the fateful years 1788 to 1793 colonial affairs were intertwined with developments in France. Men and messages went back and forth between Cap Français and Paris, following the startling announcement that after a lapse of 150 years the States-General would be convoked in May, 1789. At a meeting of the colonial assembly in September, 1788, called to nominate delegates, the group of grands blancs who controlled colonial affairs decided on two daring steps, which later proved to be blunders: first, they named thirty-seven deputies to represent Saint-Domingue; second, they drew up a *Cahier des Doléances*—a list of grievances whose sole palliation, it was implied, would be the granting of permission to the white planters to govern the colony without interference from France. These two decisions, be it said, were not unanimously approved in the assembly at Cap Français; cautious minds warned against pretentious demands which might do nothing more than attract concentrated attention to the state of affairs in Saint-Domingue: it might be wiser, they argued, to let sleeping dogs lie, and ignore the convocation of the States-General. The cautious were outvoted.

[565] [829] 9. A colored lawyer might win a case against a white man; a colored priest might have to hear the confession of a white woman.

[565] 10. When certain mulattoes arrived at church in Cap Français wearing clothes of the same texture as the whites', constables tore the garments from the backs of male and female alike, leaving them "with no other veil than their shame."

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175 Noirs, having returned to Saint-Domingue to campaign for the
648 political rights of his group, led with his friend Chavanne a demon-
642 stration at Cap Français. The white authorities seized and executed them with notable brutality.

175 This occurred in March, 1791. In May came the news that the
648 National Assembly in France had finally yielded to pressure, and had
673 decreed that men of mixed blood born of free parents should be
563 admitted to representation in colonial assemblies. The chagrin and
565 anger of the whites at this decree was so violent that the governor-general of Saint-Domingue immediately suspended its operation.
175 The issue was now clearly drawn: free colored men knew that they
567 would never secure their rights except by force. But before they
669 could bring to maturity their plan of action, suddenly the calculations of both parties were completely upset. The Negro slaves revolted.

If ever slaves had reason to rebel, the Negroes of Saint-Domingue did. The same harshness which the whites showed to free colored people marked the treatment of black slaves; and as racial antagonism deepened, white masters seemed to become utterly heartless in their treatment of the inarticulate blacks. Allowing for the exceptions which accompany most generalizations, it is clear from the record that the planters were, in the main, callous, ruthless, some of them even fiendish, in their treatment of slaves. Flogging a man to death was not uncommon; certain slaves were buried alive; pregnant women were forced to work so hard that miscarriage resulted. Some of the punishments meted out were merely brutal; others were torture; and some were sadistic, the masters relishing the pain they were causing. A certain slave in the North was nailed by his hands to a wall, and then, after standing all day in the burning sun, was made to eat his own amputated ears. A woman planter had the tongues of all her slaves cut out; another woman caused the starvation of her maid by having a gag fixed around the child's head.[13] Visitors to the colony in the 1780's often commented on the general want of self-control on the part of the planters—their violent gusts of anger and passionate outbreaks over trifles; and the victims of these outbursts

13. An officer of the court of the Negro king Christophe later wrote in two volumes a gruesome account of the treatment of slaves by French masters in the latter days of the colony. Although certainly exaggerated, it probably contains a measure of truth. See Baron de Vastey, *Réflexions politiques sur les noirs et les blancs* (Sans Souci, 1817); and *Essai sur les causes de la révolution et des guerres civiles d'Haïti* (Sans Souci, 1819).

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two. Here was a decline of about 150,000 from 1790.[2] It is a commentary on the man's forcefulness that in spite of all difficulties Dessalines established an effective economic organization. Its basis was serfdom.

Every citizen, he announced, must consider himself in one of two categories, laborer or soldier. There were to be no shirkers in the new Haiti; if a man was not in the army, he must do manual labor. Artisans who followed a craft counted as laborers. Women, since they could not join the army, must work shoulder to shoulder with their men. It was understood that direction of Haiti's new order would be carried on by state officials who were neither laborers nor soldiers, but these officials were to be so few that they would not constitute a separate third category.

This step of Dessalines' was a radical one. It proclaimed the mastery of state over individual; and even more significantly it divided the people according to economic task, rather than birth, wealth, color, or social status. At first the more ambitious citizens bore patiently with the arbitrary decree, thinking they might be able to achieve comfortable status under a lenient definition of "soldier" or else by sinecure tasks as officials. Their disillusionment was swift. Even swifter was the chagrin of the lowly folk who had been slaves, for they found themselves now in actual bondage to one of their own color.

All people except soldiers, ran the decree, must be "attached as cultivators to a plantation." This might be translated to read "bound to the soil." The vast majority of the people were forced willy-nilly into agriculture. It was "formally prohibited for a cultivator to desert the plantation to which he was assigned"; conversely, it was a crime to give asylum to a runaway cultivator, male or female.[3] If such conditions differed from slavery, they were at least close to what the mediaeval world knew as serfdom. But under this régime of forced labor the recently ravaged fields once more became productive: cotton plantations again covered the plain of the Artibonite, and sugar refineries were slowly rebuilt all over the country.

To forestall complaint from the people once again driven into

2. See, for an analysis of population figures, Placide Justin, *Histoire politique et statistique de l'île d'Hayti, Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1826), pp. 502–503.

3. A certain Mlle. Chapotin, of respectable family, was accused of having harbored a fugitive female cultivator, and, since she was unable to pay immediately the fine imposed upon her by the police at Port-au-Prince, she was condemned to serve a jail term.

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were abolished; with such concessions the people must be satisfied. Dessalines tacitly confessed his inability to follow any course but the French colonial system, with modifications introduced by Toussaint.

Many of the blacks, having tasted a moment's freedom, were not inclined to give it up. Before the new order of Dessalines was firmly established, therefore, they ran away with their families into the hills, where they escaped official notice. As squatters they lived out their lives unmolested. By the time they were officially rediscovered, all Haiti had become a land of peasants.

At the other end of the ladder from the laborers were the officials, who might be great men or small clerks, members of the entourage of the governor-general or merely overseers of a plantation. In order to keep the vast agricultural economy functioning smoothly it was necessary to have hundreds of agents, directors, clerks, and overseers, each of whom must report to a superior. In this official class there was at least a possibility of realizing an ambition for oneself; there was a basis of comparison; more important, there was some possibility of attracting favorable attention of persons in high places and so of gaining promotion. Inevitably something of the colonial state of mind must have carried over into the new era, so that an ex-slave would consider himself as having risen in the world to be now performing a task which only white men used to do—to be spared field labor and to direct the work of others. Out of this group of petty agents rose a few men of ambition who were later to belong to the élite.

Higher officers of state were in a much more favorable position to achieve social eminence. Not only did they perform no manual labor; they were twice removed from that life, since they directed the men who directed the workers. They handled funds. They came into contact with Dessalines himself. Many former gens de couleur filled these important posts, for the number of Haitians who could read and write was woefully limited.

The army was the great power in the country, for the new state was a military one. Since fear of a return of the French required the maintenance of a large standing army,[4] Dessalines made a virtue of this apparent necessity, using his soldiers to enforce discipline among the cultivators. On whom else could he rely for his local administra-

4. Humboldt estimated that the army of Dessalines numbered 37,300, which would be one tenth of the total population. Other estimates run as low as 15,000. Even this figure would be about a tenth of the male population.

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to ally himself with the ruling family. When Dessalines shortly 175
discovered his daughter's condition, he burst into maledictions 563
against all mulattoes, saying that they had plotted this disgrace to 643
him and to his family. He went so far as to speak of having them all executed.

The Emperor's determination, and all his measures, could not quench the social ambition of his leading subjects. They bore what must be borne, conspiring meanwhile to get rid of him. They still had the advantage over the masses of a superior education, and they knew the path to eminence, once the obstacle of the Emperor was removed.

Nothing was done during the reign of Dessalines to cultivate the 175
minds of the laboring class. Discipline backed by force was the 643
guiding principle in dealing with them. Instead of trying to educate 661
his people to understand their duties and to take an active part in 641
statecraft, Dessalines—his generals and counselors, mulatto and black [871]
alike, thoroughly approving—used only compulsion. There was actually little difference between the attitude of this ruling clique toward the mass of laborers and that of their former white owners. Both looked upon them as cattle. A few of his advisers tried to persuade the Emperor to provide moral and religious education for the people so that they would not be seduced into completely evil ways, but the Emperor replied, "You are wrong: the laborers can be controlled only by fear of punishment and even death; I shall lead them only by these means; my 'morale' shall be the bayonet."

In short, between 1804 and 1806 no prominent figure in Haitian 175
life seems even to have dreamed of "liberal" institutions. Those who 565
had education, knowledge, and culture preserved them carefully for 641
themselves. The wisdom, even the possibility, of enlightening the masses was doubted. Most Haitians remained in complete ignorance of what went on in the outside world.

Dessalines was killed by ambush near Port-au-Prince on October 17, 1806. The mulattoes were generally supposed to have planned 175
the assassination, for it was well known that they had no cause to be 643
fond of him. His callousness had raised up enemies in all walks of life. 661
The cultivators were glad he was gone, because of his harshness. They were virtually slaves again in all but name; it was reported that upon his personal estates he had made unsatisfactory workers run the gauntlet between lines of soldiers armed with thorny switches, and

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Taxes were heavy

175 651 652 and work strenuous; but there were a sound currency, commercial and agricultural prosperity, and a full treasury.

Like many a great man he was an overweening egotist. His 175 643 159 energy and ambition, for Haiti as well as for himself, neither understood nor tolerated a lesser determination than his own. At times he seemed more intent upon the letter than upon the spirit of his laws. Probably his chief defect, a common failing of strong men, was a disregard for humble individual worth. To write of him invites the most colorful vocabulary. He is Black Majesty and the Emperor Jones. By almost any standards of leadership he would be accounted a great man. He lacked only those few final, subtle qualities which make for sheer genius. In 1820, stricken by paralysis and faced with defections in his army, he died as he had lived, dramatically, ending his life with a specially saved bullet (folklore says a silver one), in his palace of the ironic name, Sans Souci.

175 643 In no significant respect did Christophe change the feudal structure of economic organization begun by Toussaint and carried on by Dessalines. It was in administration, especially as it affected social status, that the thirteen years of Christophe were important for the [641] future of Haiti. Where the Emperor had been an unpredictable tyrant whose heavy hand inspired only terror, Christophe was a sternly just father whose well-disciplined children respected, admired, and even loved him.

175 427 655 546 643 The land policy of the two régimes was similar. Government estates were farmed out on five-year leases to the highest bidders among the well-to-do; large plantations belonging to the state were tilled by cultivators who might, without taking the term too harshly, be called serfs; loyal supporters and wealthy individuals were entrusted with responsibility. Like Dessalines, Christophe added wealth to power and rendered all his subjects dependent upon himself rather than on their own resources and influence—but all this with a difference.

175 643 642 565 Where the Emperor had denied the natural vanity of his aides by refusing them nobility, Christophe accepted their ambition as perfectly normal and made use of it for his own purposes. Four years after he had established his state, he changed it from a republic to a kingdom; all his important men he made dukes, barons, counts, knights. He warned them that he would expect them to live up to the dignities conferred upon them. Pomp and regalia are costly;

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therefore plantations must be made to yield the uttermost farthing if the nobleman was to pay for the necessities of strict court etiquette. It was by no means a childish whim which prompted Christophe to call himself a king; rather an intelligent utilization of the human material the leader had to work with. Vanity was to serve an economic and a political purpose. 175 643 642 565

Christophe perceived that the defect of Dessalines' reign had been lack of security, both of person and property. Agriculture is a long-term investment and so must be hedged about by orderly rules. To this end the monarch stated his laws clearly, charged a fixed tax—one fourth of the annual crop—which would enrich the kingdom while allowing the tenant-proprietor a reasonable profit, and then guaranteed that no arbitrary demands would be made. Certainly there was no pampering of the wealthy, but there was ample prosperity resulting from regularity and security. 175 651

The ordinary citizen was, as he had been, bound to the soil as an agricultural laborer. This quasi-serfdom, however, was comparative freedom. It simply meant that the home and work of a man must be at the plantation on which he had been born. Saturday afternoons and Sundays were free, so that the laborers might make the most of their opportunities to visit the nearest market village, to buy and sell small goods, gossip, and enjoy the sociability of being part of a crowd. Being bound to the soil meant simply that they could not move, when the impulse seized them, to another plantation or another part of the country. Those whose mothers or relatives were natives of a plantation must return to that estate, being forbidden to live in towns. No person, military or other, who did not derive his living from a plantation, could marry an agricultural worker—a prohibition designed to prevent workers from leaving estates because of family ties, and particularly to prevent women, as mothers of future cultivators, from deserting agriculture. 175 566 641 466 [582]

Mediaeval serfdom itself went no further in binding people to the soil. Indeed, it did not go so far in regulating the daily life of serfs. Under Christophe the cultivators lived according to a routine as strict as that of a school. Reveille was rung as early as three o'clock to arouse women to prepare breakfasts for their menfolk; by four or four-thirty the bell was sounded for the commencement of work, which began after prayers had been led by the overseer. At nine o'clock there was a pause for luncheon, and then a resumption of 175 566 512 466

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their new status was definitely higher. Mild serfdom might be thought of as the first intermediate step toward freedom. Democracy was still far off, there being no real middle class upon which to build it. Only the artisans of the towns and the ex-soldiers or the cultivators who had managed to lease small estates could be considered middle class. Christophe forced every dweller in villages or towns to have a manual skill. The only alternative was field work on a plantation.

The "aristocrats" of the kingdom were prevailingly black rather than colored. It was not to be expected that a vain man would soon forget the trick by which the mulattoes had frustrated him in his expectation of becoming the ruler of all Haiti. To say that the intermittent civil war between Christophe's kingdom of the North and Pétion's republic of the South was a struggle between blacks and colored people would not do great violence to the essential truth. Christophe's suspicion of gens de couleur was so well known that few were surprised at the high death rate of mulatto generals in the North. The murder of General Clervaux was definitely laid at Christophe's door.

The fact remains that among the nobility were men of all degrees of color. The King liked to say that he neither accepted nor yet took exception to the color of a man's epidermis—that in this matter he was *vert* (green), which is to say, neutral and indifferent. When he was angry his wrath fell indiscriminately upon the offender of whatever complexion. Similarly, when he found a light-skinned man who faithfully supervised a leased estate, thus proving his loyalty, the man was rewarded and promoted. Nevertheless, an underlying prejudice remained in his breast, bursting out occasionally at crises, and having ultimately a serious effect upon the loyalty of many of his people. When some of his subjects, enticed by the easy-going régime of the South, ran away to Pétion's republic, Christophe was angry enough to renew the war against Pétion (1811). The South won the encounter, thereby adding fuel to Christophe's rage. Three hundred prisoners he had captured he ordered tortured, and the angry King abused and insulted his own officers and executed several soldiers for having lost the battle. These actions caused more defections, renewed punishments, and a more abiding rancor. As one writer put it, the King "now regarded the mulattoes with a hatred so deep and fiendlike, that nothing would satisfy the direness of his

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vengeance but the utter extermination of that race."[12] He even ordered the execution of a mulatto woman in Gonaïves because she had prayed for the success of Pétion.

During the latter years of his reign his personal popularity waned somewhat, owing to his relentless insistence upon efficiency and to his increasing tendency to lose his temper. Defections to the South occurred almost daily. The cultivators, comparing their never-ceasing toil on Northern plantations with the reported liberty and leisure of life in the South, continually drifted away. So alluring was the paradise of ease (and poverty) of the neighboring realm that Christophe found it necessary to keep a cordon of soldiers along the borders of his kingdom to prevent desertions. His administration now embarked on actual persecution of colored people. Inflammatory pamphlets were spread abroad, designed to make the Negroes think that the mulattoes were planning to enslave them once again. Under this campaign of propaganda many light-skinned Northerners had to go into hiding.

Despite all discrimination, the important line was drawn between cultivators who formed nine tenths of the population, and aristocrats who, with the army, made up the remainder. The nobility, the directors of landed estates, and the generals directed the activities of other people, so that the colonial prejudice against manual labor was strengthened. Here lay the basis of a persistent Haitian attitude of mind: to work with one's hands is to show oneself a member of the masses; to direct others is the distinction of the upper class. Education, neglected under Dessalines altogether, was fostered by Christophe. He established a few schools, inviting as schoolmasters certain Englishmen familiar with the then popular methods of the Lancasterian system; but since the cultivators were busy on the plantations, only the children of aristocrats benefited by the limited educational system and the social distance between classes was increased.

A French commentator says that Christophe showed unusual insight in devising for his kingdom "the only organization of which an African society was capable," namely, a combination of military despotism with certain benevolent inclinations, and territorial feudalism based upon a nobility created by the King. Actually, it suited not so much the African background of the people, which lay

12. Dr. Jonathan Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo* (Philadelphia, 1837), II, 197.

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Northern Haiti flourished magnificently under Christophe's sternly benevolent rule. The King had that daring spirit of initiative which was so generally lacking in later Haitian history; he had, in addition, the power necessary to force through a new adjustment if the old way showed defects.[17] He excited artificial wants among his leaders by making nobles of them, and then compelled them to satisfy these wants without ever slipping back to a lower standard of living. Thirteen years of enforced labor and of order kept by a rigorously effective police force gave northern Haiti the kind of prosperity she had known in colonial days. Christophe encouraged commerce and protected foreign traders. He called in all debased coinage, substituting for it sound gold and silver currency. The revenue he raised was larger than it had been since 1791, amounting to about $3,500,000 annually. Probably the most eloquent testimony to his success is the fact that at his death, when the kingdom of the North was once more united with the republic of the South, more than six million dollars found their way into the republican treasury.

175 643 642 433 [438] [439] [692]

The Black King's economic system worked. It was based on a social division of the people, with the masses doing manual labor, and the aristocrats definitely set apart and recognized as upper class. By 1820 Haiti was well on its way toward the caste system.

175 565

3. *Pétion* (*1807–1818*)

171 175 631

Almost all Latin-American countries in the nineteenth century exhibited one common feature: an aristocratic landowning class lording it over peons. Haiti did not follow this pattern. She had aristocrats and peasants, but the aristocrats did not own most of the land, and the peasants were not peons. If later rulers had kept the organization of economic life begun by Toussaint and developed by his fellow blacks, Dessalines and Christophe, it is almost certain that Haitian social evolution would have resembled that of the rest of Latin America, for it would not have been a great change from

17. Durcinal Vaval, "Le Roi d'Haïti Henri Christophe," in *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti*, II, No. 3 (June 1931), p. 14, says that Haiti's periodic civil troubles and social misfortunes, both ending in a diminution of the state's autonomy, have been due to economic maladjustments. "Our weaknesses in political life derive from our immobility in material production." Immobility is an index of stagnation. Few rulers of Haiti have been at once powerful enough to overcome the immobility and wise enough to know what measures had to be taken. [114]

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175 Haitian writers sometimes praise Pétion for his democratic lean-
642 ings, by implication criticizing Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe
178 for their feudalistic notions. If the blacks were undemocratic, at least
433 they had experience back of the system they selected for administering the land: their methods worked. Pétion's plan, on the contrary, admirable though it seemed to later "liberals," was unexpectedly disappointing. The national income declined; estates were steadily broken up and sub-leased to small farmers; sugar disappeared from the state's balance sheet, while coffee did not supply an equivalent income; discipline of the workers gave way to individualism. Although the whole legislative code favored the landlords, la grande culture crumbled. One is driven to conclude that Pétion simply tried one device after another—always the easiest he could find—to keep state economy functioning.

175 When Pétion came to power, the common folk of southern Haiti
178 were serfs with a memory of slavery; when he died, they were
565 peasants. At the beginning of his régime the mulattoes and other social aspirants felt they were struggling for very existence against the relentless policies of black rulers; as it closed they were beyond any doubt aristocrats, but by the same token progressively less well-to-do. No one any longer attacked their social pretensions; but the worldly wealth on which these pretensions were based was disappearing along with the country's prosperity, so that new criteria had to be developed.

175 As we have said, the keynote of Pétion's rule was persuasion.
671 Where Dessalines ordered, Pétion suggested; where Christophe decreed, Pétion recommended. There is not a single act one could cite during his entire presidency which had the effect of tightening up the organization of the republic. When laws were not properly observed, instead of penalties being made more severe or sure of application, the laws themselves were calmly allowed to lapse. In fact, the period from 1807 to 1818 was one of transition, of experiment, of discovering a congenial way of life. Since it was clear that the mass of citizens were peacefully disposed and unambitious, the President was inclined to let custom rule in each little community. Laws were not repealed, but they were enforced only when general public opinion was clearly in their favor. At many points the upper class would have liked more disciplinary control over the masses and said so to Pétion; yet they realized that in a less than ideal world one

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unplanned, unobserved

Haitian peasantry, to sum up, began as the result of two policies intended to achieve ends quite different; first, presidential gifts of land, the chief purpose of which had been to pay the soldiers of the republic; and second, the crop-sharing system adopted by landlords after the failure of Boyer's Code. 175 421 24 463 170

6. *The Drawing of Caste Lines* (*1820–1843*)

Almost every major presidential aim of Boyer came to grief. His tranquil quarter-century rule, the unified island, the financial surplus with which his presidency began, the peace with France after 1825—all these advantages combined with his good intentions did not save his projects from shipwreck. Near the beginning of his régime he announced that, like his revered predecessor Pétion, he felt the safety of Haiti to lie in the abolition of all color distinctions and prejudices. Just as his great Code Rural proved a complete failure, however, so did his efforts to do away with the color line. On the contrary, it was during Boyer's time that class distinctions became fixed, in large part although not wholly, on the basis of color. 175 179 565

Stating that the policy of his government was to put an end, as far as possible, to jealousies of caste, he consistently for a few years promoted a black every time a promotion had been given to a mulatto or other light-skinned person. This procedure soon met an insuperable obstacle. Government posts in general required literacy, and only a very small number of blacks were educated, so that the supply of Negroes was not sufficient to furnish him with candidates. Since one of the few roads to lucrative success lay in official positions, ambitious young colored men sought eagerly for government office, and Boyer soon had no alternative but to advance men of his own complexion. In the army, on the other hand, literacy was not necessary for promotion. Ambitious Negro youths, therefore, frequently chose this career which, while not very profitable in monetary rewards, at least gave a man a certain social status and economic security. 175 647 563 212 555 175 701 555 563

Because of the state of education in the republic, consequently, an ugly situation developed, with the civil arm of government almost wholly in control of the colored element and the military force dominated by blacks. Fortunately for the country no crisis developed during the 1820's and 1830's which made an open breach between army and state. 175 647 701 [563]

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trary; they were grudgingly respected as superior beings, arbiters of the fate of the outside world, potential destroyers of the privileges of the Haitian élite should they return to the country in force. Although white men might not legally marry Haitian women, it was not every woman who could resist the opportunity of having children lighter than herself. One indication of the ambiguous attitude toward the whites was seen in religion. In 1842 out of sixty or seventy Roman Catholic priests in the island, only one was a Haitian. Many people in the country were well educated, and certainly more than equals in point of scholarship and *savoir-faire* of the rude priests imported generally from Corsica. But a feeling was current among the peasants that "colored baptism will not stick." There is no indication that the European priests, since they were well paid for their services, attacked this particular heresy. As for the élite, they derived a certain satisfaction in being served by white priests. Aside from the churchmen, however, the only white man in any place of prominence in the country was the mayor of Saint-Marc, whose father had befriended Boyer in former times.

Few visitors had kind words to say of social conditions in the Haiti of Boyer. As a Frenchman put it:

> Democracy was the rule; but what a democracy! A hodge-podge of the most heterogeneous ideas, an alliance of the most contrary principles, of American federalism with military control; the sovereignty of the people replaced by the sovereignty of a ruling clique; and finally, all the intellectual vainglory of a people young, inexperienced, and for a long time denied the legitimate manifestation of their own wishes. Added to all these inconsistencies is the antagonism of races.[61]

This antagonism was, indeed, paramount. The habitual hauteur and assumed pretensions of the lighter Haitians were a perpetual thorn in the flesh of the ambitious blacks, and thus the breach was everywhere widened and made permanent. The blacks retaliated against these distinctions by refusing to obey orders from mulattoes in office, or by petty outrages against private citizens among the colored group.

The vital lack of the country, assuming that stability is desirable, was a middle class of any sort. On the base of hundreds of thousands of peasants, illiterate, unambitious, indifferent to progress, was built

61. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, "La République d'Haïti; ses dernières révolutions; sa situation actuelle," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, XV, No. 4 (Nov., 1845), pp. 681–682.

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175 563 565 [701] [669] an ineffective government, momentarily in the hands of colored élite. Attempting to dominate politics was a numerically small group of colored people and a still smaller group of Negroes. Although prevailingly black, the army might be, and in the later nineteenth century was continually, used by whichever group offered more. A third power, a middle class, might have balanced these antagonistic factions. Lacking such a moderating influence, Haiti was the victim of recurrent revolutionary movements.

175 178 642 643 At the time of Boyer, actual democracy would have been no safeguard, for it would have meant the supremacy of ignorance. His rule was the beginning of unfortunate days for Haiti. After the auspicious opening years, the President became an impotent onlooker as his country declined. It is instructive to compare the Haiti of Dessalines and Christophe with the Haiti of 1843, only one generation later.[62]

175 178 642 433 466 The Haiti of 1806 had been a beehive of activity. Soldiers, foremen, and policemen then stood over the workers with lianes to force them to labor for the benefit of their state. Production was carefully planned, an ordered hierarchy making every person in the country responsible to another higher than himself until the ruler was reached at the pinnacle. The cardinal fault of any laborer was to shirk at his task. The year 1843, on the contrary, found Haiti in a condition of quiescence which, to those who remembered the old days, resembled torpor. The central government had ceased to drive its citizens, and its half-hearted attempts at persuasion were futile. Overseers, drivers of gangs of workers, soldiers whose duty it was to enforce labor, had disappeared from the scene. Every man was his own master.

175 178 511 The standard of living in 1806 as in 1843 was low; but in the earlier year there had been a promise of great things to come once Haiti had rebuilt what war had destroyed. The succeeding years, however, failed to inculcate into the people a desire for any higher standard of life. Country dwellers were benighted; ignorance deepened the habit

[162] [175] 62. Haiti has never had an accurate census, so that it is impossible even to estimate the total population of the country either in 1806 or in 1843. The figures of 380,000 and 800,000 given by some authors for the two years are mere guesses. Likewise, one can only deduce the proportion of people in the main economic and social categories; probably seventy-five per cent of the Haitians were serfs in 1806 and the same percentage peasants in 1843; the "aristocracy," including all who did not derive a living by manual labor or army service, could hardly have reached five per cent in either year; the army, house servants, day laborers in the towns, and petty businessmen would make up the other twenty per cent.

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175 643 Suddenly, without warning, he reversed what had been mistaken for docile inactivity, and assumed complete personal command of the reins of office. By means of a well-organized body of secret police, [625] he inspired his own counselors with fear not only for their positions but for their lives. Although illiterate, Soulouque never signed a bill presented to him by his ministers until he was sure he knew its essential core. The hopeful "understudies" were forcibly awakened to the realization that they were hoist on their own petard.

175 643 563 669 The colored element was particularly apprehensive at Soulouque's amazing activity, for the President was clearly setting himself against their group, both in the cabinet and out. Determining clandestinely to get rid of their puppet before he became a Frankenstein's monster to destroy his creators, they fomented a new revolution. This, however, proved to be a strategic error of the first magnitude, for the President was already much stronger than they imagined. The insurrection was quashed with massacre and attendant frightfulness. In the aftermath, as Bouzon mordantly remarks, "the republic was calm—with all the tranquillity of a tomb!" By their ineptitude, the colored group had now made themselves completely insecure.

175 565 643 642 [555] In the second year of his régime Soulouque decided to imitate Dessalines by turning the state into an empire. His coronation was extremely gaudy, as well as expensive. Calling himself Emperor Faustin I, he created a peerage drawn chiefly from among his black generals—four princes, fifty-nine dukes, and numerous counts, barons, and knights. This was merely outward pomp to gratify their craving for prestige, for they had no functions to perform, nor even the necessity of Christophe's peers to pay for their regalia. As nobles they were given no responsibilities in directing economic activity nor any increased political power over districts of the empire. The Emperor's own vanity was flattered by having a peerage. He ruled as an autocrat with blatant despotism. For ten years following the 175 643 721 648 728 coronation Haiti had to accustom itself to costly expeditions against the Dominican Republic, nearly all ending in defeat for Haiti. The outcome of these intermittent wars was neither gain nor loss of territory by either side, but only temporary rule of occupied districts. Haiti likewise had to accustom itself to sudden executions, to the shabby grandeur of court display, and to financial trickery which would not have deceived a schoolboy. While the heads of his opponents and even his loyal counselors fell, Soulouque's infantile "empire" tottered to economic ruin.

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"empire" tottered to economic ruin. Graft, default on the debt, increasing deficits, and debased currency were the order of the day, and so continued until 1859, when the accumulation of anger over the useless wars and the humiliating defeats made the Emperor so unpopular that a new and more carefully planned revolution accomplished his downfall. 175 643 652 669

Fifteen years of administration by Negro rulers had broken the political power of the colored élite. Only three light-skinned men became president thereafter until the occupation of Haiti by the American Marines in 1915; in the seventy-two years following Boyer's downfall, mulattoes ruled during only eight. The army under a black general was too powerful, a colored president too hampered by suspicion, to make the political game worth the candle. The colored élite, therefore, adapted themselves to existing conditions as best they could, controlling the business life of Haiti, filling the law offices and, because of their literacy, the secretaryships of state, and indulging in honorific cultural pursuits. 175 643 178 564

In the years after Soulouque the basic realities of Haitian life were changed hardly at all by shifting political administrations. Some of the presidents were mildly progressive, many were indifferent; still more were actually harmful; but the lives of the mass of peasants were not often touched by presidential vagaries. Politics was an affair almost wholly of townspeople, of the army, the élite, and the pseudo-élite. Revolutions, counterrevolutions, movements of reform, international tangles, financial woes, and most of the other complications to which unstable states are heir, absorbed the attention of rulers and upper-class folk who were politically inclined. 175 643 66

Constitutions were made by presidents and changed by their successors; the Senate passed contradictory laws in the same session if the chief executive so recommended; the courts were presided over by the president's men. Haitian law in the latter half of the nineteenth century was what the president's immediate strength and wish made it—or else it was folk custom, undisturbed by the rulers. 175 642 671 692

Never once, in the three quarters of a century after Boyer's time, did Haiti approach the high standard of production known in colonial days or in the early years of independence. The pattern of Haitian social and economic life became fixed in this seventy-five years. Haiti became a country of small-scale tillage by a peasant population, with only enough external trade to provide moderate 175 178 433 565 439

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175 fortunes, that is, a few thousands of dollars, for a small number of
178 élite, and to make the presidency a position economically rewarding
565 enough to justify revolutionary conspiracies. The growth of a
433 peasantry set in train during the long régime of Boyer continued,
439 unbroken even by the numerous insurrections, until fixed in the
[423] mores. Land owned by the countryfolk was divided and redivided
[428] among their heirs, so that even holdings of moderate size became smaller.

Not one of the twenty-two rulers following Boyer made the
175 slightest effort to return the country to the forced labor system of
643 Dessalines and Christophe. They seemed to recognize the inevita-
566 bility of a peasant way of life, or at least the impossibility of luring
423 the people back to directed labor after a long experience of freedom. On the contrary, several presidents still further parceled the land.

President Guerrier, for example, the very year after Boyer was
175 deposed, put on sale at moderate prices those state lands in the North
643 not reserved for public use.[5] If the revolutionaries of 1843 had hoped
423 to bring back Christophe's system of forced labor, their hopes were doomed to disappointment because of the state's need of immediate income. Christophe's state land areas were now broken up in the one part of the country where a few large plantations still existed.

President Geffrard in 1862 gave his blessing to small ownership, the
175 basis of peasantry. Whereas Pétion's laws had prohibited sales of land
643 in parcels less than fifteen acres, Geffrard's law regularized the leasing
421 and sale of national property in lots of fifteen acres *at most*. Geffrard
423 was the first president openly to admit that many government lands had been lost to citizens by squatting. In an endeavor to give legality to land held by squatters' rights, his law demanded that squatters register their claims, announcing that within a short time there would be no further dismemberment of the national patrimony except by grants and sales.[6] Few registrations were made, however, for the Haitian peasant had already acquired a suspicion of legal documents he could not read or understand, and he could see no reason for legalizing a status in which, with the squatter's tenacity and inertia, he already felt himself secure.

800 Haiti was in constant financial straits. Money had to be borrowed

5. By a law of September 23, 1844.
6. Law of August 14, 1862. The articles cited here are 2 and 4.

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to attempt to retrace the path of property evolution, which has steadily taken its own course since the time of Pétion."[11] 175 423

With the peasants prevailingly satisfied in their daily round of life, the separation of upper and lower castes in Haitian society has gradually become an accepted fact. At least ninety per cent of the total population now belong to the peasant group, whose members are as much reconciled to their status as in the United States the poorest colored folk to theirs. Vaguely they may often wish they had the privileges and luxuries of those above them; often, likewise, they feel resentment at the way in which they are treated; but in so far as it is permissible to generalize about two million people, it is fair to say that the Haitian peasant rarely complains of his lot. 565 [162]

Of the remaining ten per cent of the population a small fraction look upon themselves as élite. Some families of this group can be traced back to colonial times when their ancestors were already affranchis; others began to take on aristocracy under Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, and Boyer. Those whose forebears have become élite only since 1843 are less firmly entrenched in the topmost class. However, since no president since Boyer has ever succeeded in weakening caste lines, the élite one or two per cent may be said to constitute a stable social group. [178]

It is significant that although the blacks had the government in their hands for three quarters of a century they were unable to effect any slight change either in caste membership or in caste lines.

The part of the population which is neither élite nor peasant is not "middle class," as that term is understood in the Western World. It is rather a shifting percentage of Haitians whose one prevailing characteristic is their residence in towns. Some are wage earners, some small tradesmen; some are ex-élite on the way down the 565 369

11. The intimate observer of the Haitian peasant never fails to comment upon his love of the land. Whereas the colonial planter attached a value to his estate because it produced wealth, the peasant loves his little plot because it is his home. Through all the sixteen successive constitutions of Haiti, the one unchangeable article has been the prohibition of sale to foreigners of real estate in the country. Haitian land is for Haitian people—or was so until after the American Occupation. Likewise, the peasant is suspicious of any law which seems likely to reintroduce the system of large properties, for these might condemn him to leave his land and work at wages for the benefit of a master who, whether kindly or pitiless, would still deprive him of his present liberty. Therefore the Haitian countryman defends with all his force this soil to which his liberty attaches him, and which he cultivates after his own manner. "The Haitian loves his land almost as a man loves his woman." [181] [421] [425] [423] [24]

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565 social ladder, while others are ex-peasants on the way up. Acceptance
569 by the élite entails requirements severe enough to discourage many aspirants; at the same time, the heavens can be stormed by those
[55] willing to endure the heat and strain of battle. Lacking descent from former affranchis, the only means by which the ambitious may achieve entrance into the élite caste is by money, education, sustained social show and leisure, "proper" marriage, and separation from lower caste friends; and one generation rarely suffices to win acceptance by the élite.

565 The townspeople rarely attempt to break down the caste barrier. Servants, day laborers, delivery clerks, menials in general, they consider themselves one step removed from the peasants, and they know their place in the social hierarchy. By the scrupulous observances of the élite, by the casual acceptance of their status by the peasants, even by the very effort of the ambitious to improve their lot, the caste system is constantly reaffirmed and fulfilled.

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However, as regards caste itself we can now see that after a hundred years practically nothing has changed, even through the Occupation. In the essential structure of the Haitian social system there is still a twofold division. In the mind of élite persons the peasant exists only as a very necessary but essentially stupid part of the country's economic life. The casual visitor who, after two weeks in Port-au-Prince and its environs, has met a few distinguished Haitians, has already sensed the barriers of caste which exist between élite and the lower orders. If the sojourner remains longer and is accepted into the drawing rooms of the élite, he will hear exciting and brilliant discussions of such questions as whether Haitian civilization has in it anything of the African,[6] whether it might not be wise for Haiti to throw over both French and Créole and adopt a new language, and whether the people of the North are not superior to those of the South;[7] however, no self-satisfied member of the élite, in an expan-

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6. See, for example, the article by Lorimer Denis and Dr. François Duvalier, "La Civilisation haïtienne: notre mentalité est-elle africaine ou gallo-latine?" in *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti*, VII, No. 23 (May, 1936), pp. 1–31. Anthony Froude, in his *English in the West Indies* (New York, 1888), tells of an American consul asking a Haitian why the island was not cultivated more intensely. "The dusky soldier laid his hand upon his breast and waved his hand. 'Ah!' he said, 'that might do for English or Germans or Franks; we of the Latin race have higher things to occupy us!'"

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7. This last sentiment was noted by Sir Spencer St. John (*Hayti, or the Black Republic* [London, 1889], p. 14), who calls it a popular idea at the time he wrote and for years before, the élite of the North explaining it by the tradition of industry instilled during Christophe's reign. But Moreau de Saint-Méry had already pointed out that in colonial times there was greater fertility, more abundant rain, more intelligence in management of plantations, more slaves, more distinction and polish among the masters, in the North than in the South. Auguste Magloire (in *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social*, p. 263) thinks the North infinitely superior to the South; it did not participate in the violence of political change in the early days, yet when it did intervene it took the lead. He stated however that the North seemed to be losing its social superiority, and certainly its economic superiority, because of its cultural subordination to France: this made French ideas prevail, and one of the chief French ideas is that political power is supremely important; the North consequently came to seek political superiority when it should have preserved cultural and social preeminence. Pauléus Sannon, on the other hand (*Essai bref critique sur la Révolution de 1843* [Aux Cayes, 1905], pp. 5–9), regards the South as considerably more advanced intellectually. It has never, he says, been able to submit to the absolutist yoke of government, not because of the French influence, for the South was least developed under the colonial régime, but because of its geographical situation, with its long broken coast line, its ports, cities, tribunals, customs-houses, schools, and the like. Those who have outside connections are always more open minded and progressive, he says, than inhabitants of the interior. There is no important town in the South which is not on the sea. Nowhere were the affranchis more numerous or richer than in the South, and these men led the revolution. (See Beauboun Ardouin, *Études sur l'histoire d'Haïti* [Port-au-Prince, 1853–60], I, 97.) All these influences made for a democratic spirit, but also for one of agitation.

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sive mood, will speak of the peasant and his contributions to Haiti; he thinks only in terms of his own caste.[8] Upper-class Haitians dread the sight of tourists taking pictures of native scenes, fearing that the travelers will return to their own country and label these pictures, "Typical Haitian Scenes," when, as anyone should know, typical Haiti is upper-class Haiti.[9]

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The American Occupation failed of many of its ends because it did not recognize the social situation and its implications; or, realizing them, did not consider them worthy of attention. Roads, telephones, mail service, and improved agricultural methods seemed patently desirable to progressive Americans; to install them for the Haitians seemed generously wise. Yet many well-meant efforts came to grief, for the mass of people, lacking a tradition of orderly free government, did not always understand what the Americans were about, while the élite saw in the activities of the Marines a threat to their own dominance as rulers of the country.[10]

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The antiquated, but prevalent, notion of the superior mentality of the white race also flourishes in certain quarters among the élite. Many of them say that the Negro can never originate a civilization, and that with the best of education he remains an inferior man, utterly unfitted for government, utterly incapable of making progress.

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8. Witness Maritze Ouél's paragraph (*Les Antilles, filles de France* [Paris, 1935], p. 254): "My amiable host (a member of the élite) was triumphant at my surprise and enchantment. 'You did not expect to find a civilized country. What have the spiteful wits told you? That the Haitians worshipped serpents and made human sacrifices? True, the peasants on the mountain-sides are still very primitive and ignorant, but in the cities you will find many families like ours, cultivated in letters and music, careful and proud of their French culture, and absolutely set against American de-civilization.'"

[114] [829]

9. "Should you like a European to take pictures of the slums of your American cities and of the most degraded of your share-croppers, and then circulate these photographs as typical American scenes?" asked one sensitive Haitian.

10. See the *Report of the Forbes Commission to Haiti*, 1930, pp. 18–19. "Illiteracy keeps the peasant masses politically inarticulate, except in case of mobs or bandit gangs, which formerly infested the countryside and often furnished the forces of revolution. These bandit gangs have been broken up and have disappeared under American rule, but the social forces that created them still remain—poverty, ignorance, and the lack of a tradition or desire for orderly free government. It has been the aim of the American Occupation to try to broaden the base of the articulate proletariat and thus make for a sounder democracy and ultimately provide for a more representative government in Haiti. Hence its work in education, in sanitation, in agencies of communication such as roads, telephones, telegraph lines, and regular mail routes. These things naturally are deemed of secondary importance by the Elite, who see in the rise of a middle class a threat to the continuation of their own leadership."

[114] [648]

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563 829 ress. Others point out the difference between the lower-class Negro of the large commercial towns and the black peasants who live in the plains and mountains. The former, in contact with the roughest of white sailors, are a disgrace to any people, while the countryfolk, seeing only a select few of the whites, appear "to have an innate idea of the white man's superiority," and so treat him with respect. The peasants, according to these speakers, have all the virtues and vices of "wild races": they may acquire a kind of French varnish, but they are "essentially an African people removed from their parent country."[11]

565 186 There are among the élite broad-minded, tolerant, and cultured persons. The average member of the caste, however, like the average American, is full of prejudices of all kinds. Travel produces a superficial polish; their patriotism consists of antagonism toward the outside world and an effort to secure position for themselves; they are sure that Haiti's laws are sounder, her culture superior, her schools more advanced, her civilization in general higher, than those of most other nations (France generally excepted).

563 829 There are evidences also of certain psychological twists. It used to be said that mulatto Haitians "hate their fathers and despise their mothers," meaning that in colonial times and for a short time after the élite did not like to remember that they derived from a master-slave union. They realize nowadays that they would be accepted as social equals in few countries, and this makes them protest by self-assertion. Certainly a majority of the élite would be completely unwilling to admit that things are anywhere better done than in Haiti.

184 565 181 829 One generation after the wars which led to independence, the greater number of Haitians had practically forgotten that there was an outside world. Haiti was all they knew. With no standard of comparison for their lot in life the peasants ate, slept, raised their families, fell ill, and died without bothering their heads about such academic abstractions as equality. This uncomplaining acceptance of life, routine, and fate seems to be the essence of peasant existence. The Haitian peasant has been bound to the soil by mental inertia and by tradition more effectively than ever by law. When he has revolted it has been through conviction that someone was trying to change the old familiar ways, or because of physical maltreatment. Peasants have been bribed and paid to revolt, but as mercenaries they have entered only half-heartedly into warfare.

11. The phrases quoted here are fragments of statements made by Haitian élite to the author.

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In most countries in which Westerners are familiar, social distinctions take the form of classes, which are to a greater or less degree mutable. In Haiti, as we have repeatedly indicated, the distinctions are so rigid that caste is the only properly descriptive term. There is hardly a Haitian who would not be able to state immediately whether he or any person he knew was, or was not, élite. So it has been with steady persistence ever since Dessalines and Christophe gave way to Pétion and Boyer. Élite youth marries élite girl, and the folkways of the group are passed on from parent to children, thus perpetuating the distinctions. In the pages which follow, all the marks of separation of castes will be examined: religion, economic occupation, marriage, language, manners, and the rest. 565 178

Certain aspects of the classic example of the caste system, seen in India, are lacking in Haiti. Religion, for instance, does not require caste endogamy, nor does civil law implicitly acknowledge caste lines by reference to the rights of people of a certain occupation. Custom does more than religion and law could, however, to enforce conformity to the understood rules. Probably the most open efforts to enact caste lines into law were the pronouncements of Dessalines and Christophe that all but a few people should be bound to the soil; and Boyer's Code Rural—a feeble echo of days gone by. The two black rulers were able to enforce the distinctions they made; but when they died their feudal arrangements lapsed, while the separation of classes continued. With the recurrence of revolutions after 1843 it behooved the élite, when occasionally they were in authority, not to lay themselves open to fresh attack upon grounds of aristocratic presumption, for they never knew when they might need the support of the masses. Any black revolutionary leader would have been able to turn an enacted caste law to his own ends, even if a Senate consisting predominantly of light-colored men had had the power to enact such a law. Time and inertia won the battle for the élite. By not joining issue with the masses at any definite point, the aristocrats gained their end of caste distinction, for they were willing to endure the self-discipline necessary to the maintenance of social standards, as the masses were not. [564] [170]

Just as in colonial days the ambition of the well-to-do freedman was to go to France for his education and his holidays, so in free Haiti the lure of France has continued to be strong for the aristocrat. There is not a trace of animosity against the country which enslaved the Negroes, and which in 1802–3 tried by trickery to take away the 565 484 177 186

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565 484 177 186 rights of people of Negro blood. As a distinguished Haitian remarked, "It is from France that we draw our culture, our language, our literature, our attitudes of mind: why should we not love her?" The more time the élite spend in France, the less kinship they feel with the masses. There is not necessarily any conscious snobbery in this increasing discrepancy; it simply results from a life spent in entirely different environments. The Boston Brahmin, for example, may be kindhearted and yet feel little kinship with a Mississippi share-cropper.

564 Inside the castes one may find social distinctions familiar in democracies. There are well-to-do élite who set the standards of manners and entertainment, and there are peasant landholders who through force of personality dominate their rural neighborhoods. The intellectual man of the upper classes stands somewhat apart from the social whirl of "high society." An important government official has more prestige among the leisured classes than a small businessman, just as a powerful religious adept is more honored among the peasants than a happy-go-lucky ragamuffin. It is obvious, however, that within the élite caste social discrimination occurs more frequently and is more accurately observed than among the country people.

[184] [177] [208] Such phrases as "Haitian religion" or "Haitian public opinion" are accurate only in so far as the person who uses them defines the adjective "Haitian." One might describe truly a phenomenon characteristic of ninety-five out of a hundred Haitians and yet, in the opinion of those who dominate the economic, political, and social life, do injustice to Haiti.

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validity to forms and ideas which we know, in our hearts, might sustain us.[1]

The Haitian peasant is not interested in making formal distinctions. If he is critical, it is only of results, rarely of the means used to obtain those results. If he cannot gain his ends in one way he is not too proud to try another, and still a third. Nineteen out of twenty Haitians, then, being Roman Catholics in religion, are likewise worshipers of Vodun. There is so much mystery in the world, so much misfortune, beauty, sorrow, and joy that it would be unthinkable to deny God or the gods: mankind has worship enough for them all, and need enough of them all. There is to the peasant no conflict between Vodun and Catholicism; the two are complementary, even if sometimes the Catholic priests make coöperation impossible.

Let us recall for a moment the earlier history of the country. In the days of slavery one may imagine the Church would have found it difficult, even if its priests and planters had been willing, to train all the blacks as thorough Catholics. Some concepts took root, some rites immediately appealed. Below the surface, however, the African ideas of the preponderant Dahomeans were spreading through the plantations. In the crucial early days of independence, when the customs and social institutions of the Haitians (as Haitians, not as expatriate slaves) were in process of formation, the country's rulers were not deeply religious; moreover the State was in open schism from the Church. For fifty-five years no approved churchman was at work with the people. The seventy men whom some historians mention as priests were on the whole venal and self-seeking, even vicious. Their least concern was to wean the people away from their superstitions, for precisely in these folk beliefs lay the greatest source of gain. By the time the breach between State and Church was healed it was too late to make single-minded Catholics of the Haitian peasants. They would accept what the new and active priests taught them, but not to the exclusion of what they had believed for a century.

With the élite the Church has had more success; assiduous teach-

1. This either-or dichotomy is not limited to religion: we divide ourselves similarly in politics, family life, residence, and so on. If I am a Lutheran, a Republican, a married man with a home in New York, I cannot at the same time be an Episcopalian, a Democrat, and a voter in Chicago with a second spouse and family there. What is impossible and ridiculous for Americans, however, is in some ways the normal course of life for the Haitian.

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565 ing since 1860 has had its effect upon the children of the upper classes.
771 Two hundred churchmen working with a population of more than two million cannot distribute their benefits equally. Teachers must devote themselves to those whose minds are educable, who have access to schools, and who can afford time for daily classes. An element of social snobbishness entered as well. Catholicism was socially accepted in the Western World whose approval the élite coveted, where Vodun if known at all was regarded as a mere superstition. To prove his separation from the peasant black, the élite person was therefore Catholic or nothing.

[797] It would have required many times two hundred teaching brothers and sisters, all with the zeal of fanatics and the energy of dynamos, to convert the masses away from Vodun. In acquainting the peasants with Church forms and certain beliefs the priests have been entirely successful; in making exclusive Catholics of them they have had no success at all.

771 Every vital social institution is continually in a process of change.
177 Vodun, a very living faith, has steadily borrowed more and more from Catholicism, the only other religion with which the people come in close contact. When one can go from a Saturday night Vodun sacrifice and dance to a Sunday morning Catholic Mass with no feeling of incongruity, it is obvious that the minds of the worshipers are actively predisposed to assimilation of creed and ritual.

796 We have suggested in a previous chapter some traces of the Catholic Mass in Vodun ceremony. The Vodun service regularly begins with a long ritual which the observer who knows both the Créole language and the Catholic liturgy recognizes as being almost entirely Roman. While the Vodun houngan sits quietly by, a special officiant known as the *prêt' savanne* (bush priest) reads or pretends to read from the Catholic prayer book. For the Pater Noster, the creed, the Ave Maria, the Salve Regina, and the prayers, the worshipers kneel or stand as they would in church. Candles burn, water is sprinkled, the sign of the cross is made, the chants are sung. When the benediction completes this part of the service, the houngan takes over to conduct the purely African rites; yet his first words are, "*Grâce mise'-corde,*" and many Catholic interpolations appear even in this second part of the service.

[778] The Vodun ritual is conducted before an altar, in Haitian Créole
[192] called a "trône," which is a perfect marriage between Vodun and

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175 when slaves were to be sold. Even when whole families were brought
567 over together from Africa, it was considered discreet in Saint-
581 Domingue to separate the various members at the slave market, so that there would be little chance of combinations and intrigues.
[794] Theoretically the Church was in favor of regular marriages between slave men and women, but even if the Africans had understood or desired the "sacrament," the opposition of the white planters would have been enough to curb missionary insistence on this point; the Jesuits had already been expelled from the colony for their too great zeal in plantation reforms.

175 As a usual thing, then, slaves simply cohabited. It was not against
567 the rules of a plantation for a slave and the woman with whom he consorted to live together in a slave hut with the children born to
588 them; but neither was it against the rules for the overseer to put
[843] other slaves into the same hut, or to sell promising slave children as if they were cattle.[1] Little was done to prevent sex relations between slaves, although masters had varying attitudes toward the results of these relations: some planters welcomed births as a stockbreeder welcomes additions to his herd; others resented the pregnancy of slave women as an obstacle to necessary field work. In the former case, a planter's capital was increased; in the latter, abortions resulted when the overseer drove pregnant women to hard work under the tropical sun.

175 The freedom of the planters with the persons of their attractive
567 female slaves likewise weakened any tendency toward monogamous
588 family life as conceived by bourgeois European society. The relationship between master and slave woman was momentary. Not often was a woman so beguiling that she could be called a concubine; still less often was she a mistress. The latter estate was the height of any female slave's worldly ambition, for not only might she then be freed, but she could live a life of leisure. In rare cases she might hope to persuade her white paramour into marriage. Almost certainly her mulatto children would be free.

175 In so far as there was any predisposition toward strict observance of
565 European marriage practices, it was most clearly exhibited by the
581 group of affranchis. As freedmen they were intent upon establishing

[567] [581] 1. Under exceptional circumstances slaves found themselves under a benevolent, religious master who allowed them to be married by a priest and thereafter to live together as a family.

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themselves and their families economically and socially. Property was important, so they took pains to insure the legitimacy of their heirs; color was crucial, and so they regulated the marriages of their children to be sure there was no reversion to the black strain. They guarded their fortunes solicitously, provided their daughters with dowries large enough sometimes even to lure a white husband, educated their sons in Paris—behaved, in short, as if they had been pillars of society in provincial France. Like the white planters, the male affranchis often had relations with slave women, but even more rarely than whites were they seduced into marriage with women of the lower orders. 175 565 581

When the slave insurrection and its aftermath freed the half-million blacks in Saint-Domingue it was not to be expected that European middle-class morals and practices should suddenly prevail. Modern usage emerges from the womb of tradition. Neither in Africa nor in the colony had tradition taught the blacks respect for monogamy or for marriage entered into by religious ceremony. If the ex-slaves had reverted to their Dahomean, Congolese, or other African background, they might have introduced the bride price; but to pay a bride price is to assume the existence of wealth, an assumption contrary to fact among the ex-slaves in Saint-Domingue of the 1790's, and Haiti of the 1800's. In neither Dahomey nor the Congo was there much ceremony at the union of a couple; what there was consisted mostly of singing and dancing. If, on the other hand, the people went only by what they had observed in slave days, there was no tradition of binding union or strict codes, as we understand them. A man knew when to stay away from another man's woman; children remained near their mother—these two statements almost cover the situation as of 1796 among the newly freed slaves. 175 581 [583] [585] [837] [855]

Toussaint, apparently a conventional person in what concerned social behavior, wished his people to be "moral." He instituted a time of "holy masses, mystic communions, biblical psalms, and divine ecstasies"[2] for his private edification, and recommended the same for his people. He could not possibly have instilled into them a desire for Christian marriage, however; even if he could, priests would not have been available for the wholesale marrying of scores of thousands of men and women. Local records of weddings at this period are very scanty. 175 643 788 582

2. Saint-Rémy, *Pétion et Haïti*, III, 93.

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must pass to an illegitimate child if recognition is accorded. It is likewise strong in its harmony with actual conditions: in the absence of legal marriage among the people, it would have been manifestly unfair to favor a few fortunate children. Dessalines argued that the revolution had legitimized all Haitians; that it was unjust to prevent a child's inheriting from the person who had given him life; and that since all Haitians had come out of slavery and degradation into freedom, no new inequalities should be instituted.[4]

If this law encouraged family life, it weakened marriage both of the civil and religious kind: where was the sense in the expensive luxury of a wedding when children were just as legitimate without it? By conforming to folk practice the Emperor confirmed it. Only the aristocrats disliked his law, for it seemed to make light of one of the distinctions they cherished—the formal wedding. It irked them to have the State place a casual child upon an equal plane with one born after proper marriage.

At still another point the law accorded with living conditions at the time. During the years of fighting many men had been killed, and always the large standing army kept thousands of others away from settled farm life. Home, then, was for a child the abode of his mother—a fact recognized by the law's insistence upon maternal relationship rather than paternity. Such a word as "matriarchate" has no place here; but from the days of Dessalines to modern times, the lowly Haitian thinks of his home primarily as where his mother lives.

As if the advantages of formal wedding were not already sufficiently weakened by this law, other enactments of the empire struck at other phases of marriage. Divorce was permitted for adultery, for incompatibility of temperament or character, and by mutual consent. Such provisions not only broke away completely from Catholic practice, but made getting out of wedlock a casual matter of taking an oath. The complaint of incompatibility need be made by only one spouse; "mutual consent" as a ground for divorce was probably not allowed in 1805 in any other country of the Western World.

Dessalines did not appear to care one whit for the good opinion of white foreigners. It sufficed for him if Haiti endured, whatever Europeans thought of her. Christophe, on the other hand, was extremely sensitive to foreign disapproval. Many of his official acts can

4. According to the testimony of Madiou, *op. cit.*, III, 216.

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[p. 186]

X

HOME LIFE OF THE ÉLITE

565 581 ONE brief characterization of the élite might be that they are those who carefully observe the proprieties. The proprieties are those of France, and among them is "common sense" in marriage.

175 565 831 581 People of privilege in colonial times, which were the fountainhead of élite tradition, lived at ease and did not concern themselves with manual labor. Nor were they burdened by puritanical codes of sexual morality, but on the contrary enjoyed sex relations with whatever attractive women came their way. But they would have thought it sheer folly to allow momentary delight to interfere with the very practical matter of choosing a wife. Marriage meant increasing one's fortune, strengthening one's social position and connections, establishing one's children. Romance was as irrelevant to all this as to choosing a business partner. This attitude of the French planters, current even in France of the present day, was the standard for freedmen.

175 565 588 581 Even when wealth was most plentiful in colonial society it had not been always easy to find the proper wife for an affranchi youth. For a man to remain single, however, did not mean that he remained celibate. He might, on the contrary, contract a fairly permanent informal union of love, while discreetly refraining from a marriage which would jeopardize his own or his family's status. Such informal unions were not generally regarded as immoral. Good taste, it was felt, was a sufficient guide in all matters of sex outside of marriage.

175 565 581 The unsettled condition of the colony between the slave insurrection of 1791 and the achievement of independence in 1803–4 did not change the affranchi concept of suitable marriage. During the brief two-year rule of Dessalines, the ideal of propriety in marriage remained the same in spite of the Emperor's efforts to undermine the importance of legal weddings and the legitimacy of children. Pétion, upon his accession in 1806, showed himself a true member of the mulatto aristocratic group—indifferent to the morals of the masses so long as custom settled their problems for them, and content with the marriage traditions of the élite. He said publicly what was neces-

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175 565 581 sary for a president to say as to proper respect for moral principles, then left morality to take care of itself.

175 588 565 581 During Pétion's time and that of Boyer there came into common usage the convenient term "*plaçage*" to describe the extramarital unions of respectable people. "Concubinage" was a crude word, with definite overtones of disapprobation; plaçage was more indirect, and carried no connotation of disrepute. Briefly, plaçage was the union of a man and a woman for pleasure, companionship, and a measure of home life, without the assumption by either person of any legal obligations. A man might make as many of these tentative unions as his disposition, his finances, and his tact dictated. Often enough they were with women of his own social class, for Haiti had an excess of women over men; but generally they were contracted with pleasing women of the lower social orders. Young men not yet financially able to marry, younger brothers whose inheritance was too small to support a family, husbands who had married for practical purposes rather than for love, and eagerly lustful men—these were the usual participators in plaçage.

Although for a woman a church wedding might be the height of ambition, and proper parents tried to see that their daughters achieved it, there came to be a feeling that no disgrace attached to being *placée*. Certainly at the beginning a wife outranked a placée, just as in colonial New England a wife outranked an old maid; but to be placée was a far better lot in Haiti than to be a spinster in Massachusetts Bay colony. No one would have thought of calling a placée by so inaccurate a term as "mistress"; still less would anyone have assailed her moral standing. A man who had a mistress might keep his arrangements with her secret; but plaçage unions were, or came to be, quite open. The one great flaw in the arrangement was that near middle age a man might cease to care about his union with the woman. Foresight and adaptability were the only safeguards against this fate.

565 581 588 Nowhere else in the Western World has there been so little actual marriage in proportion to the population as in Haiti. Whether technically it is correct to speak of peasant unions as examples of plaçage is a matter of opinion; certainly the peasants rarely marry. Thousands of Haitian couples in all walks of life could be found at any period since 1804 living quietly together from youth to age, bringing up a family of children with as much order as do others who have had a

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581 wedding to consecrate their state. These unions might be called
565 (after Anglo-Saxon usage) common-law marriages. Many such
588 couples have, late in life, gone through the wedding ceremony at the insistence of children aspiring to social prestige.

175 Haitian writers have frequently felt it necessary to explain and justify to the outside world the practice of plaçage. Thus Saint-Rémy
114 in 1857 wrote: "*Plaçage*, or primitive marriage, is still one of the
581 Haitian customs. It requires no civil or religious formality. I must
588 confess that some of these unions are more respectable than those
565 sanctified by civil and religious law."[1] Dantès Bellegarde in 1934 implied (erroneously) that the practice had always been one limited primarily to peasants. He said:

> Haitians have been accused of immorality because they practice free unions. This reproach is unjust. Concubinage is without doubt the rule among the people [that is, the peasants and workmen]; but it constitutes a sort of *connubium injustum* (unlegal marriage) which, in many cases, has nothing immoral about it, certain "plaçages" having more solidity and seriousness than a large number of regular marriages. In order to understand the existence of this custom and its persistence in the lower classes of Haitian society, one must go back to the colonial epoch: the whites kept numerous concubines, white women being few in Saint-Domingue. (The
> [162] white population of Saint-Domingue was composed in 1789 of 30,826 souls, of whom 21,166 were men and 9,660 women—not counting soldiers and sailors.) On the other hand, the Negroes did not marry each other, because they did not care at all to have wives whom the master might "abuse," to use the word of Père du Tertre; moreover, masters did not require their slaves to be married: they mated them with a view to obtaining fine "products."
>
> Concubinage tends to disappear among us, or at least to become more discreet. In the cultivated class people generally marry, and the girls in most modest condition—having passed through the primary schools—resign themselves willingly today to the diversion of their unused affections to cats and other domestic animals if no one offers to lead such girls to the altar.[2]

175 Nineteenth-century visitors were generally shocked by plaçage,
581 just as middle-class people are usually shocked by sex ways which
588 seem franker than their own. That the Haitian practice was a practical one, based upon a desire to preserve property intact within the

1. *Pétion et Haïti*, V, 66 note.
2. *Un Haïtien parle* (Port-au-Prince, 1934), pp. 30–31.

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175 Englishman, Sir Spenser St. John, said that he had met placées of the
581 President at dinner, and was asked to trace resemblances between
588 children and their reported father. "No one seeks to conceal it, and
643 the conversation of married ladies continually turns on this subject. One excuse for it is that many of the ladies whom you meet in society were only married after the birth of their first children. However, according to French law, that ceremony renders them all legitimate. Some of those admitted into society are not married at all, but their daughters being married, prevents notice being taken of the false position of the mother."[5]

565 In recent years the élite, although many continue to contract
581 plaçage unions, keep these arrangements quieter than formerly and tend to make them with women lower in the social scale than themselves. Formal and regular marriage is expected and approved among the upper classes of today. Indeed, one modern informant in answer to the question, "What is the primary test of membership among the élite?" replied without hesitation, "Five generations of marriage in the family."[6]

583 Formal marriage is not entered into lightly among the upper
565 classes. It is a serious business watched over by state, family, and church. The interest of the state seems to be to guard against bigamy. The possibility of bigamy is the more likely since one or the other contracting party may have formerly lived in plaçage. The interest of the family is in the wisdom of the alliance. Before a wedding can be performed both parties must have obtained the formal consent of their parents, besides having their banns published at their respective places of permanent residence. There seems to be some doubt whether the courts would uphold a father in his refusal to consent to the marriage of a son over twenty-one years old; but cases are known in which such a refusal has stopped the wedding. Of course, the daughters must always obtain parental consent to marry.

585 The civil wedding, adopted in Haiti at the beginning of her independence, is usually followed by a religious ceremony. The Church, like the State, takes precautions against clandestine marriages and bigamy. Notice of a projected union must be read from the pulpit

[114] 5. *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, I, 177–178.
[581] 6. John Lobb, in "Caste and Class in Haiti" (*American Journal of Sociology*, XLVI, No. 1 [July, 1940], 29), states that "one informant defined family status as a position
[554] resulting from the recognition that in a family the parents had, for generations, been legally married in the church."

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Another observation must be set

588 alongside this professional testimony: many men, both aristocrats
162 and common folk, have more than one placée, yet there seem to be enough women for Haitian men.

595 Although peasants in Haiti are rarely married by formal ceremony,
565 the family is a dominant characteristic of peasant life. This sums up the domestic situation among the masses.

When it is recalled that the Negro, from the time he was taken from Africa on slave ships, had almost no experience of the European tradition of conventional marriage, one has a partial explanation of the absence of peasant weddings. For the rest the people are realists, arguing that a man should have as many women as he needs to carry on the economy of his land holdings; the law forbids polygamy, but exerts no control over plural unions which are entered without formal ceremony. It has therefore come to be regularly accepted in the mores that practical need should determine the number of women to one man. If a peasant increases his land holdings, if he buys or inherits a second farm on the other side of the mountain, it is only common sense for him to take a second woman, raise a family by her, and thus have an overseer and a labor supply resident on each of his properties. Everyone in the community knows what women belong to what man, and custom strongly taboos any tampering with another man's spouses.

162 Only the Catholic Church has statistics to reveal the infrequency
581 of marriages among the masses. The story was the same a century ago as now. In the important parish of Gonaïves in 1825 the propor-
163 tion of marriages to births was as 1 to 62; in 1826 they were as 1 to 54.[3] Both figures include marriages and births among the élite, and Gonaïves is a town: in the countryside the proportion of marriages would be much lower. The parish priest of Carrefours, which numbers about a thousand households, stated that in 1936 there had been only ten marriages among his six or eight thousand parishioners.
[848] Another parish priest estimated that only one half of one per cent of the baptisms performed were of children born to parents legally married. Even in the parish of Pétionville, home of many élite, a priest estimates that less than one child in five is born to married
595 parents. A century ago a commandant at Léogane, speaking of a high army officer, said, "He is my brother-in-law: I live with his sister." Near Port-au-Prince lived a rural police captain with six plaçage

3. Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, II, 119–120.

Spouses,

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581 suspicion of legal complications is well founded: the priests therefore
794 try to concentrate their attack upon the remaining motives. Thus one priest issued a notice at a certain mountain chapel that he would perform no weddings there for persons who wore shoes; an increase in weddings followed. By such devices, and by constant sermons on the significance of the sacrament, he has persuaded many of his parishioners to be married, yet the vast majority of them continue in plaçage.[4]

581 Informally entered unions among the peasants, then, rest upon a sound, practical, economic basis. If the priests are ever to be successful in their campaign for more weddings, Haitian peasant economy must undergo a change; even then the plurality of women (if indeed it exists), now more or less absorbed by plaçage, will work against the reform.

562 It is confusing to speak of "status" in connection with the domestic
●565 life of hard-working people, for status implies law, and law hardly touches peasant life. Custom governs all—inevitably, since the majority of peasant women have not been legally married, and since no peasant would willingly take a case to law. Yet women have a definite status as compared with men.

In almost every detail a peasant woman's life differs from that of élite women. The rule of life in country districts is unremitting labor
462 for the female from childhood up. She cooks and makes clothes,
565 labors in the fields after the men have cleared them, does the family
443 washing in the nearest stream, carries water, does whatever housework is required. Practically every Haitian peasant woman has her experience of going to market to sell the vegetables, trinkets, or
[484] other wares her family may produce, and to buy necessities. This trip to market may be short, or as long as twenty miles. One of the characteristic sights of Haiti is the seemingly endless procession of women coming down from the hills trudging, or rather swinging majestically along, with a great load on the head, or riding on the haunches of a tiny donkey loaded with bulging panniers. Arrived at

4. As a result of his campaign for more weddings he has had some unusual experiences. Once, in the midst of the wedding ceremony, a bride rushed out of the chapel and shortly gave birth to a child; when she was able to move again, the ceremony was resumed. Again, traveling into the mountains to perform a similar ceremony, he found a crowd assembled under a tree, assisting at another birth of an infant to a bride-to-be. Sometimes he encounters the argument by a peasant that he will not consent to a wedding until his spouse has proved her fecundity by bearing a certain number of children.

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the market, the women sit all day in the broiling sun, and in Port-au-Prince at least, sometimes sleep near by for the night, in order to complete their purchases and sales and to get their fill of companionable gossip. They are often accompanied by the youngest of their children, some of whom have to be carried.

Some observers profess to see evidences of a matriarchate among the peasants, for as a general rule the woman attends to the business dealings of the market place, handles the money, directs her children, and manages the household. If the man has more than one placée spouse, complete control of the farm is the woman's during the absence of her man. It is a superficial judgment, however, to speak of the peasant mother as a matriarch. The man owns the land, chooses his women, calls for help at the moment he pleases for preparation of the ground for planting; and when he knows his end to be near, summons all his families and disposes of his property as he sees fit. His decision is final. But he is no more a patriarch than his woman is a matriarch: they are economic partners in a struggle for existence.

By our standards, the woman is inferior to the man not only in rights but in being one spouse of several. He may contract several unions, while she may have only one. She does more steady, if not more actual, physical labor than the man. When he is at home, she must offer him the best of the food. As usual in simple societies, however, the issue rarely arises as to superiority or inferiority of the sexes. Customary behavior is followed without much question.

There is one great contrast between élite and peasant women, in the matter of childbirth. The élite mother takes as much care of herself during pregnancy and parturition as would an American woman in well-to-do circles. The peasant mother, on the contrary, cannot allow herself the luxury of medical attention, nor can she spare the time to rest quietly. Like many so-called "primitive" women, she apparently finds herself little incommoded either by pregnancy or birth. Babies are born frequently in the market place, the mother having come down from the hills only that day with her goods. It is not unusual to hear of the birth of a child in a roadside ditch or in a grove by the path to and from the market town. The care given mother and infant is primitive: the navel cord is cut with a sharp stone or a piece of broken glass; a short rest is thought sufficient before the mother resumes her task. As might be expected, the death rate from infection is high and women age prematurely.

Parents are generally kind to their children, so far as physical

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175 669 ary, 1843, Boyer realized that it was futile to oppose the revolution-
[643] aries and departed for exile, going by way of Jamaica to Paris.
[159] Now came the test of the revolutionary leaders.[11] The state was in
their hands; their own representative, Rivière Hérard, was the new
175 president. They proceeded to concoct a ridiculously naïve constitu-
642 tion which by granting a popular vote alienated large bodies of their
648 mulatto support; to insult the black army leaders; and to allow the
669 defeat of Haitian forces by Dominican revolutionaries, thus losing two thirds of the island's area. Every act weakened the party favoring representative government. Within a year Rivière was ousted and a black general was ruling Haiti with a rod of iron. The Revolution of 1843 from which so much was expected had by its very success ruined the parliamentarians, for with power in their hands they showed themselves utterly inept.

175 A succession of black generals now came to the presidency. When
642 Faustin Soulouque became president in 1847, the fourth Negro
643 within four years, and made himself emperor two years later, Haiti found herself once more back at the strong-man principle. The élite were out of office, relegated to inferiority in all phases of political life.

175 In the middle of the nineteenth century the groups upholding the
665 conflicting principles in politics became organized political parties.
565 Those favoring parliamentary rule called themselves Liberals; those believing in the sole rule of a strong dictator were called Nationalists. But by no stretch of the imagination could the Liberal party be considered democratic. The noble principles expressed in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the American Declaration of Independence were uncongenial to Haiti. One of the prime tenets of the Liberals, indeed, was that men were not created equal; rather that certain men (the élite) were clearly the superiors of others. Liberty

[175] [669] 11. The revolution was almost wholly an affair of the élite caste. The mulatto Boyer was deposed, and the mulatto Rivière Hérard took his place. If anyone thought of the peasants, it was only to use them to manipulate and manoeuvre the "outs" into office. Boyer's secretary-general, deposed along with the President, appealed to his countrymen against their accusation of treason against him, saying "My last wishes will be for the prosperity of Haiti and the regeneration of the African caste, to which I have consecrated myself wholeheartedly for forty years, without ever thinking of my own interests." (Joseph Balthasar Inginac, *Message à ses compatriotes, et principalement à ceux qui ont dirigé les affaires populaires de la république depuis la fin de janvier dernier* [Port-au-Prince, March 18, 1843], p. 6). Yet if these are more than hopeful words, they refer only to the distribution of the land which made peasants of the "African caste," and to Inginac's pamphlets on how to raise coffee and other products—which none of the peasants could read.

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was well enough, but all upper-class landlords wanted the privilege of living in leisure on an income derived from the menial labor of black workers. Fraternity was a principle ridiculous to a group whose never-ceasing struggle was to confirm the separation of castes. The term "Liberal," then, was borrowed not from the revolutionary documents of the late eighteenth century, but from the parliamentary parties of the nineteenth—those who saw more opportunity for themselves and their group if the power of tyrants and kings could be curbed by legislatures. The idea was particularly congenial to the Haitian intelligentsia for the simple reason that the powerful rulers of Haiti, past and present, were Negroes who did not share the aims and ideals of the social upper class.[12]

By holding such "liberal" views, the mulatto élite saw their one opportunity not only for curbing the strong men among the Negroes who again and again tried to rule Haiti as if it were a native African state and themselves the supreme chieftains, but also for indulging their own special penchants. A Senate filled with élite politicians suited the talents of the educated aristocrats. They liked constitutions and codes; the law was their favorite profession; they were adepts at drawing neat distinctions between this and that in an academic issue; polished oratory, skilful argument, fluent speech were knacks peculiar to them by temperament, position, education. Boyer had been the beau-ideal of the academic "liberals," with his talkative Senate, his complete set of Codes and national system of courts; the mid-century party members came to realize what they had lost by driving him out.

Every time the Nationalists came to power the colored élite suffered. Under Dessalines they lost greatly in property and position; Christophe had hated and hounded them; Soulouque put many of their leaders to death. The only monarchs Haiti ever had were blacks, and the two most tyrranical presidents in the first seventy-five years after independence were Nationalists (Pierrot, 1845–46, and Domingue, 1874–76).

The experience of the Liberal presidents with parliamentary institutions was not entirely a happy one, however. Pétion and Boyer had

12. It must be recalled that no parliaments of England, France, or the United States in the early nineteenth century had true democratic representation. Property qualifications for voting, rotten boroughs, and the persistence of privilege assured that only the "classes" should have full representation, and so rule the masses.

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The era from 1883 to 1915 was Haiti's worst, politically. Revo-

lution succeeded revolution; the country sank deep into graft and scandal; foreign powers made Haiti debase herself before them. Some of the élite, backed by foreign merchants resident in the country, went so far as to urge annexation by the United States rather than endure continued disorder in economics and degradation in social life. They felt matters had come to such a pass that only so radical a change could clean the Augean stables. This was the period of a succession of political pamphlets[14] written by élite thinkers to set forth the necessary steps of reform. Every president was a black autocrat, holding power by his control over the masses. If an occasional one was more than mediocre (Hyppolite, for example), his good qualities were sure to be more than offset by the ignorant boors (such as Nord Alexis) who followed him.

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True, even the most incompetent of the Negro presidents was obliged to employ a few élite, for literacy was necessary in the foreign office if nowhere else. The aristocrats were impotent, however, for Haitian problems had tremendously increased at the very period when they were losing control of government policy. Reforms were imperative, as every member of the élite knew; but no black president saw the need, or seeing it, had the vaguest idea how to proceed toward effecting them. Beyond the shameful disgrace of Haiti's position in the world of independent nations, the thoughtful could glimpse the anarchy which must inevitably result from continued ineffectiveness.

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Reforms were not forthcoming. Rather, anarchy came, bringing international complications in its wake. The American Marines occupied the country. An era was ended.

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It had been a strange journey in political ideas from the time of Pétion and Christophe to that of the Occupation. The early leaders seemed to envision triumphs for Haiti in a world of great powers, and to see themselves as men with a mission. After Boyer the vision dimmed. We have Soulouque, whose tinsel empire was mere stage setting for the act of a neighborhood bully; the tyrant Domingue; the senile Nord Alexis; the utterly incompetent fly-by-nights in the decade before the Occupation. Even Geffrard the reformer, prob-

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14. Among the most lucid of these were: Démesvar Delorme, *La Misère au sein des richesses* (1873); Edmond Paul, *Les Causes de nos malheurs* (1889); Léonidas Lavaveure, *Haiti: le danger de la patrie* (1893); Alcius Charmant, *Haiti, vivra-t-elle?* (1905); and Auguste Magloire, *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social* (1909).

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Even Geffrard the reformer,

175 643 661 ably the ablest president in the second half-century, who was pledged to reduce the expenses of government (a promise which, since he was accustomed to a life of penury, should have been easy to fulfill), increased his own salary to $50,000 a year, and allowed himself $20,000 more annually for secret service and a similar sum "for the encouragement of arts and sciences." He bought two estates with government money; the meat bill of his family was charged to the budget of his bodyguard, and the family champagne bill to a hospital. After Geffrard, the presidency was openly regarded as the juiciest financial plum in Haiti which, if one could pluck it, would justify the necessary expenditures for a revolution. It seems from contemporary comment, indeed, that Geffrard's actions aroused not censure but rather envy, as if every ambitious Haitian would have welcomed the opportunity to do likewise. The bitingly critical Englishman, Sir Spenser St. John, railed with some justice, "Every Haitian appears fully persuaded that his countrymen never seek office except for the purpose of improving their private fortunes."[15]

175 643 646 The legislature was never a real check upon the President. It was useful to him at times when he wished to delay action on some embarrassing imbroglio with a foreign power, for by referring a measure to the Senate he could stall it in tedious debate. Almost without exception, however, the legislature consisted of the President's men. Its halls were palaces of idle oratory. One whole session was devoted to a discussion of fitting the hall with cushioned seats; another to the propriety of appointing an interpreter for representatives who understood only Créole and not French. To make a man a Senator was a satisfactory way of paying a political debt. To be a Senator was to have social prominence, a salary of $1,600 (decidedly a competence in nineteenth-century Haiti), an opportunity to speak before an audience—and no real responsibility.

178 One may grant without debate the difficulties facing this small and poor country, a Negro state with great white neighbors who regarded it with something less than deference. Yet Haiti in its early days had real promise. Wherein lay its defects? Haitian thinkers knew the answers, and frequently indicted themselves.

175 871 The want of education was a basic weakness. Those who believe in democracy need no rehearsal of the benefits of popular enlightenment. Because the great Negro heads of state were themselves im-

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15. *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, p. 185.

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perfectly educated, and because other matters seemed infinitely more pressing than the setting up of schools, the early Haitians, united in 1804, fell apart within a single generation. On one hand were the élite and a few other townspeople who knew at least something of the outside world; on the other the masses of toiling countryfolk to whom tiny Haitian valleys were the whole universe. The young men of these two classes coming to power could not understand each other; they could not make concessions to each other; and as they fought for what they held true, each grew suspicious of the other if not permanently hostile. The lack of common understanding might still have been repaired in any one generation, but no single president had the vision to inaugurate universal education. Aside from the expense, certain powerful élite citizens often expressed their doubts as to the educability of the peasants; as property owners they would undoubtedly have objected to the unsettling of the economic order, which was based upon the work of an ignorant mass of blacks.[16]

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Without education, the political sphere went unenriched by any flow of new blood from the people. Politics existed in a vacuum. The earthy, candid criticisms of a politically conscious folk never invigorated the discussion of national affairs. Without education, the people had no standards of comparison of Haiti with other nations, and were the easy dupes of whatever insurrectionary agitator could persuade them that their daily woes were caused by the current administration. Without education, high political office became a prerogative of the few, a contest between the Ins and the Outs, a path to personal wealth. Without education, Haiti could never be more than a dictatorship by a man or a clique, her stability endangered with the downfall of each incumbent, for dictatorships rarely provide for continuity in government.

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Another great weakness was the notion that national happiness could be achieved by political means primarily. After the germinal ideas of Christophe and Pétion, which had a basis in economic behavior, hardly another important concept came out of a century of presidents. Haitian politicians have been great arrangers: they have given the country eighteen constitutions and innumerable codes, all admirable in their loving solicitude for precise detail. The common feeling of political aspirants has been, "If we are given power, all will

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16. This argument is clearly stated in Madiou, *op. cit.*, III, 176 ff.

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175 178 181 prosper." Yet every change of administration saw merely a new embroidery on the old theme of sterility.[17]

175 565 The further weakness of social or class consciousness has already been treated at length. It kept the whole nation divided from top to bottom, setting black against colored, North against South, countryside against town. It meant a perennial civil war, latent at times, but constantly breaking out in new insurrections.

175 669 701 Some day a diligent scholar may try to catalogue the revolutions which Haiti has undergone. Magloire discusses sixty-nine "important" ones between 1806 and 1879;[18] but the latter date was merely the threshold of renewed revolutionary activity. There seems to have been very little pattern in these uprisings, except that almost never were they a spontaneous revolt of the masses, as the Slave Insurrection of 1791 had been. The peasants were constantly being impressed into service with the army of a general who had presidential ambitions. From the middle years of the nineteenth century certain peasants found fighting a more profitable trade than any other, and began to hire themselves out as mercenaries. In the North these professional guerrilla warriors were known as *cacos*, in the South as *piquets*. Their methods were those of terror and rapine. They were a constant menace to the peace, and their suppression was one of the announced purposes of the American Occupation, for every revolutionary chief felt it necessary to hire their services.

176 369 669 Another recognized procedure of revolution was incendiarism. Haitian politics is almost wholly the affair of townsmen, and more narrowly of the men of the six important towns—Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, Jérémie, Les Cayes, Gonaïves, and Saint-Marc. Except for their principal buildings and villas, these towns are constructed of wood or other inflammable material. Leaders of insurrections therefore have habitually set fire to the poorer sections of the towns, and as frequently as not this threat has won over the populace, who preferred overthrowing the government to having their homes burned. Support of the insurrection becomes a form of fire insurance. Such a state of affairs is eloquent testimony to the cynical attitude of the political leaders toward the masses.

660 A revolution directed by a general of real ambition was likely to

17. Auguste Magloire, *Histoire d'Haïti d'après un plan nouveau* (Port-au-Prince, 1909), I, 230, 243, 250-251, develops this theme at length.
18. *Ibid.*, Vol. II.

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can "advice and approval," rather than with the legislature subject to popular control. Even under such restrictions the politically minded found ways of exerting pressure on the Marine authorities.

Out of the darkest days of military subjection by a foreign power came a changed order of politics in the country. The practically unbroken line of dull incompetents who had come into the presidency ended; instead of ignorant army leaders, educated men were once more in office; instead of Northern Negroes, élites of Port-au-Prince; instead of benighted martinets bewildered by world affairs, men who, if not great statesmen, at least had minds capable of understanding Haiti's relation to international economics and politics.

The élite were back in power. In the mind of every friend of Haiti arose the question whether the events between 1879 and 1915 had taught them lessons which would make their return to responsibility productive of great things for the country. Because of the abnormal situation resulting from the Occupation, the world depression, and the briefness of their new ascendancy, one cannot yet speak with assurance. Nevertheless, there are few encouraging signs. Political office is still regarded by most candidates in terms of their own advancement rather than service to Haiti. Very little has been done to extend the base of voting by developing local responsibility and education among the masses. Élite youths still receive a classical education, still disdain manual labor, still cherish the ideal of a graceful life of ease. The president still rules as an autocrat supported by the gendarmerie—substitute for the army of former days. One can see no decrease in social distinctions or in the disdain of the élite for peasant people; on the contrary, there has even been an increase of this feeling because the Occupation (through its Agricultural Service particularly) seemed to open paths of development to the peasants. Social antagonism, not social responsibility, still underlies political life.[20]

To every one of these strictures there is a plausible reply. It is no light matter to unsettle the minds of nine tenths of a population by education, to cause an economic revolution by improving agricultural techniques, to admit to political life a people unaccustomed to

20. Dr. Jean Price-Mars, in *La Vocation de l'élite* (Port-au-Prince, 1919), *passim*, especially pp. 51 ff., urges the élite to accept their responsibilities rather than rest upon the debilitating assurance of their innate superiority.

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175 finally the license was obtained, it authorized the foreigner to carry
439 on only a wholesale business—not with other foreign traders or with
656 any resident aliens, but with Haitians in the six open ports.[10] The
441 minimum of goods to be sold in any deal was fixed, so that no foreigner could inadvertently enter the retail business. Such licenses cost between $1,600 and $2,000, sums so large that few foreigners were drawn to the island.

Quite obviously the government sought to keep the external trade of Haiti under its control; it is equally obvious that under the licensing system, with its high fees and strict surveillance, only a small number of dealers were attracted, who consequently monopolized what little trade there was. Retail business being prohibited to them, their imports had to be sold by Haitians.

175 Not even this necessity created a middle class in the country, for
565 the purchasing power of the peasants and other lower-caste Haitians
434 was small; also the total sum of imports and exports was not large enough to support a middle class. The retail trade was chiefly in the
443 hands of town women. These *marchandes*, as they were called, em-
441 ployed a number of hucksters—likewise women—to traverse the countryside surrounding the open ports, attend the markets, and report either every evening, or every week or month, depending upon their findings. The white man let his marchande know how much coffee he required, and this information was passed on to the local speculator who, at a very moderate profit, collected the coffee beans from the peasants in his neighborhood. Imports were distributed in like manner over the countryside. In its small way this system worked well enough, for the good faith of respectable marchandes could be counted upon both by the white trader and by the local dealers. A few European and American traders found it profitable to set up as marchandes the women with whom they cohabited, for this arrangement brought them nearer to the retail trade.

175 During Boyer's long administration the staple export was coffee,
439 still cultivated on a few remaining plantations but mostly picked
24 from plants growing wild, and sold by the peasants as their one source of money income. Sugar disappeared almost wholly from the

10. Namely, Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, Gonaïves, Jacmel, Les Cayes, and Jérémie; from 1822 to 1844 there were also two open ports in the Spanish part of the island which, during those years, was a part of Haiti.

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175 441 439 648 Justice in the courts was administered by Haitians whose narrow patriotism biased their decisions.

5. A temperamental tariff policy. Not only were imports subject to a tariff which might be changed at the whim of any president, but exports also were taxed. When an administration was in need of funds it might suddenly, without warning, raise the tax on coffee exports and so disrupt a merchant's business plans. The customs-houses were in charge of Haitians who steadily became more inefficient and grasping as the century progressed, until many foreign merchants felt that the only way of getting business dispatched was by means of bribes. Examinations at customs were long drawn out, often there was open thievery, and erroneous valuations were common.

175 651 489

6. The burden of the indemnity to France. Contracted by Boyer in 1825, this annual payment for sixty years was an incubus to every administration, leaving no surplus in the treasury for public works, education, or any internal development; likewise, it made the threat of foreign interference all the more imminent.

175 657 [648]

7. A debased currency. Pétion was the first president to devalue money, and his example was frequently followed thereafter. Counterfeiting was general. When a country's monetary system is unstable, its officials accustomed to bribery and graft,[17] and its financial structure almost nonexistent, there is little chance for sound economic development.

8. Dependence upon a single crop. Haitian economy was tied to the staple coffee, grown with indifferent care, prepared for the market in outmoded fashion, and sold in competition with coffee from more scientifically run plantations in other tropical countries.

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9. Political instability. The recurrent revolutions in Haiti made foreigners chary of participating in the country's business, since the government which made a contract might be out of office before the ink was dry.

175 439 66

10. Indifference of the élite to economic pursuits. What profits were obtainable went into the pockets of foreign merchants, not those of Haitian businessmen. In 1842 the comparative exports of the

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[643] [159] [661] 17. Sir Spenser St. John, always a bitter critic of Haiti, remarked (*Hayti, or The Black Republic*, p. 88) sardonically that "Boyer had the rare quality of being honest, and left in the treasury, on his departure, the sum of £200,000, the first and last chief who was ever guilty of so unaccountable a weakness."

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United Kingdom, the United States, and Haiti, in proportion to population, were 185, 165, and 125,[18] yet Haiti had no carrying trade while the other two countries had, and so the profits were drained from the land.[19]

In short, as Haiti became accustomed to managing her own affairs, she became content with—or at least, reconciled to—little things. Inertia and tradition worked in their persistent fashion, with no effective stimulation from outside to combat them. From tradition and seclusion springs prejudice, and this became obvious whenever a change was proposed, particularly one which suggested bringing white people back to the country. To the élite it might mean the end of their social supremacy; to the masses, the end of their independence of daily action. The prejudice against sugar making was rooted in the same kind of suspicion. When a large landowner tried to institute a sugar mill on his estate, he met an adamant refusal of his hired workers to labor in it: "*Moué pas esclave!*" (I'm no slave!) The Negroes even disliked a bell to ring them to work on a plantation, for it suggested the slavery of the old régime.

Just before the Civil War in the United States a humanitarian gentleman developed a project of conducting numerous free American Negroes to Haiti in a planned migration. He discussed in a pamphlet[20] all the possible trades which might flourish in that country, if the migrants were to assume the position of a middle class; but his list is significantly small—sixteen occupations, on the order of tailoring, coopering, and blacksmithing, were all he could think of.[21] He made three comments which he hoped would attract the Negro Americans, as to a virgin field of opportunity: that in the

18. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 111–113, cites these figures, and says: "[Thus] Hayti, poor, and despised as she is, has a commerce, *in native produce*, nearly three-fourths as large, *in proportion to her population*, as our own United Kingdom, which is the great manufacturing part of the world; and seven-eighths as large as that of the United States, where the staple exports are produced by the labour of 3,000,000 slaves!"

19. Mackenzie (*Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti*, Document V) reports that in 1825 exports were valued at $5,793,758, and imports at $4,660,374; the trading was carried on in 552 *foreign* ships, of which 374 were American, 78 British, and 65 French. No Haitian ship traded abroad.

20. Benjamin S. Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans*. See particularly pp. 3–9.

21. His complete list is: tailor, shoemaker, baker, cabinetmaker, carpenter, mason, lime-burner, distiller, cooper, wheelwright, saddler, blacksmith, tanner, hatter, small-boat maker, potter.

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3. *Education*

871 To a people like the Americans who accept democracy as desirable, and regard universal education as a necessary basis for democracy, it would seem a simple matter for the Haitians to build schools all over the countryside, pass laws requiring attendance, and so within a decade, or at the outside a generation, reform the whole country. To the American, education is the fount from which all democratic blessings flow. For the Haitian the problem is neither so clearly defined nor so simply solved.

5&5 871 The élite, who are solidly in control of the government, are aristocrats partly (largely, one might even say) because they are educated. Because of the maxim of Haitian life since the beginning that a literate man should not do manual labor, any program which proposed universal education would cut the ground from under the present social structure by giving the masses equal opportunities with the élite, and at the same time ruin the economic organization by making peasants want to desert field labor for professions and business. An ordinary degree of self-interest is quite sufficient to explain the lack of enthusiasm of the ruling class when the subject of general education is broached.

871 Good reasons are often given by people in lieu of real reasons for their actions. One of the good reasons advanced by Haitian ministries for the failure of the government to promote universal education is its cost. Those American states whose population is prevailingly rural know the validity of this reasoning. With children [369] scattered over the rural regions—and nine out of ten Haitians do not live in towns or large villages—it would require thousands of new school buildings to reach the prospective students. Salaries of teachers, purchase of supplies, and general upkeep would have to be added annually to the national budget in addition to the initial outlay for the erection of school buildings. Here one comes up immediately against the unyielding fact of the puny national income. Its $7,000,000 could under no circumstances be stretched to cover an architectural program commensurate with Haiti's educational needs.

871 178 Another good reason for the failure of democratic education is the demonstrated apathy of the masses. In the zeal for improvement during the early days of the Occupation, rural schools were estab-

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These figures seem moderately impressive by comparison with those of 1875; but a government report of 1931 states[22] that of the 361 rural schools visited by investigators, 89 had no seats for their pupils, and 157 had only from one to three benches; 122 had neither desks nor tables upon which the pupils might work; 341 had no maps. Of the total number of 977 benches found in all the rural schools, 303 were almost unusable, and of the 26 maps in existence, 13 were entirely beyond use. Of the 355 teachers examined, 257 could not read, and 278 could not add, subtract, multiply, or divide. The average monthly salary was 32.07 gourdes, or $6.21. Of the 17,679 pupils enrolled in rural schools, only 4,022 attended. In this same report President Vincent claims to have made a radical reform in all these matters. His rural teachers are trained, many of them at the government agricultural school at Damien; school equipment has been distributed; salaries have been raised to 65 gourdes, or $13. 175 87

The American Occupation showed itself keen to assist education, but unintentionally the measures taken by the whites ran afoul of politics to a serious degree. The excellent agricultural experiment school at Damien was filled with élite students who attended it, in the opinion of many, chiefly in order to receive the scholarships offered; moreover, the class question was raised and bitterly argued: Should peasant students live and study with the élite, and should the curriculum be the same for both? Finally, education was one of the few matters not specifically included in the treaty between Haiti and the United States as under American direction. The result was unhappy: the Occupation was accused of setting up a rival educational "system" to that of the government. Even Bellegarde, most of whose ideas the Americans were trying to carry out, found himself in opposition, chiefly as a result of methods and political implications involved. 648 871 [565]

If only the budget of the country could be increased, one feels that the rural educational problem might be dealt with, for more and more people are aware of what education might do for the country. Even so, there are still many élite who betray their fear that with education the masses will desert the land and cease to be subservient. 871 565

That the élite, who in fact control the country, should receive a training which would fit them for technical skills is a proposal often

22. "*L'Oeuvre d'éducation rurale du gouvernement du Président Vincent*" (Imprimerie de l'État, Port-au-Prince, 1936).

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heard among the more thoughtful.[23] The whole country is teeming
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with opportunities for engineers, doctors, foresters, agronomists, for scientists and specialists of all kinds. Instead of training themselves for such careers the average young men still hanker after the purely honorific career of law, which may lead to governmental posts. A cultured Haitian in 1920 told Dr. Carl Kelsey: "Those of us who have been trained have never been trained to work physically; we do not believe in it; we have no respect for it. We have got to go into the government service; that is the only outlet for any large number of us."[24] And so the average élite boy goes on with his classical training which fits him for nothing but cultured leisure.[25]

23. See especially J. Price-Mars, *La Vocation de l'élite* (Port-au-Prince, 1919), pp. 51 ff.

24. Quoted in Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

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25. In the examinations there is often bribery and other dishonesty, according to credible informants. Some of the élite youths seem to feel that because their fathers hold governmental posts they themselves should be passed, no matter what their showing; and not all teachers have fortitude enough to resist the pressure of important parents, for they fear reprisals in the form of dismissal.

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XVI

PROBLEMS OF THE ÉLITE

TO associate for any length of time with the upper classes of Haitian society is to be aware of a deep unrest, which social charm may cover for the most part, but which inadvertently reveals itself. One discovers a large number of topics which had better not be discussed at all, for they bring a look of distress, wariness, or nervous tension to the face of one's host. To generalize from personal experience is dangerous, if not futile; the present section, therefore, must be read with skepticism. The writer has rarely passed more thoroughly delightful and stimulating hours than in the homes of Haitians. It must not be considered any reflection upon these kindly persons, consequently, if he notes that many of them seemed always to be taking care to guard their faces and their words, lest by look or speech they might be betrayed. What lies behind that guard? What worries the élite? 565

Sensitivity to the opinion of the white world, first of all. The cultured Haitians know that white people generally are inclined to think of all dark-skinned people as Negroes, all originally from Africa, the Dark Continent of superstition, cannibalism, and savagery; they know it to be commonly held that the Negro is mentally inferior to the white, incapable of first-rate achievement in any art or science, always on the verge of a lapse back into barbarism; and they know that in large parts of the white world social lines are firmly held against the Negro. On the other hand, they have been brought up in cultured homes, where stress has always been laid upon things of the intellect. Good manners, correct speech, decorum, social *savoir-faire*—all these and other ingredients of gentle living the élite children have known since infancy, in their homes and in their social circle. It is expected that a person will know what is going on in Paris, will have read the new novels, will be able to talk about philosophical tendencies and intellectual currents. 565 829

In other words, the élite man knows that he is a cultured gentleman in the truest sense. For years he has seen tourist ships landing hundreds of Americans each week at Port-au-Prince and Cap-Haïtien; he has seen the mad revelry of some of these whites, their

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565 829 ill-mannered vulgarity, their superficiality of mind, their poor taste. He knows well enough that it is not fair to judge a whole nation by a few representatives, yet it is clear to him that these raucous whites regard themselves, and are by others regarded, as lords of creation who need never worry about social acceptance. The Haitian knows himself the superior of most of these white people, whether the test be intellectual or on the basis of gentility. Nevertheless, the white inferior is preferred by all the world to his Haitian superior. The white American can go anywhere and, with his carefree self-assurance, see all doors open to him; the cultured Haitian can go few places away from home, and in even those few many doors are yet closed in his face.

Whether the result of his reflections, which must be provoked anew each time the tourist invasion begins, leads him to bitterness or to cynical acceptance depends upon his temperament. It would be almost impossible not to envy the assurance of the white man. And what must life be like when the thought of one's birth, over which one had no control, forever rises as a spectre to haunt one's daily awareness?

Distress of mind may lead the élite in public to impassioned defense of Haitian achievement, but in private he will be all the while imitating the white man and accepting his judgments. The word "ambivalence" is descriptive of his attitude: he wishes to go both ways, to justify Haiti, yet to be regarded as white. Haitian tradition pulls him in one direction, white superiorities the other. There is probably not a single member of the élite who does not feel as if half life's burdens would disappear if only one were white. The darker complexion is one of those hard facts which simply cannot be got around. But one's children can be lighter, and one's grandchildren lighter still, if one marries wisely.

565 55 This is a hope of the future. Meantime there is a pattern of behavior for the present. What has made the white man master of the Western World seems to have been a combination of money, political power, intellectual attainment, and social domination of inferiors. After these, therefore, the proper youth must strive indefatigably. Since these aims are common to the élite they are hardly mentioned; indeed, one wonders sometimes whether even the people themselves are aware of the foundations of their ambition.

No élite man in Haiti ever made money by working with his

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hands. In colonial times fortunes came to plantation owners, and since then have come only to political officeholders. With money one can go to France where he will be accepted as a human being, not turned aside as a Negro; with money one can get an education, live a life of leisure, acquire luxuries. Hence the popularity of law as a profession, for it is the career by which one enters politics. That a president should begin life as an impecunious barrister and end it as a well-to-do landlord, the owner of several villas and motorcars, seems praiseworthy, natural, logical. The American success story is "from log cabin to White House," but with no implication of monetary gain from such progress; the Haitian success story is rather "from penury to plutocracy."

It is not enough, however, to aim high in the material sphere. In proportion to their numbers the élite are extraordinarily ambitious for intellectual achievement. A distinction is sometimes made between the social élite and the intellectual élite, the former being decidedly more numerous.[1] Conversation in a Haitian drawing room is likely to be on about the same intellectual plane as in America except in specifically literary and artistic circles. Poetry, philosophy, literary trends, historical speculation are staples of discussion in more than a few homes. A recent president wrote many metaphysical poems. An American author, attending a social function consisting chiefly of secretaries of state, was amazed to find the group absorbed in a dispute about poetry.[2]

Aristocrats have always kept the lower orders at a distance socially. In Haiti this rule is observed with rigor. To suggest that a possible reason for such harshness of attitude and behavior toward servants and working people might be fear lest white visitors should class all persons of color together would be unkind, though not unsound. In general, there is a deep conviction that the masses are stupid. Although persons of culture exist who are generally solicitous for the betterment of their life, there is really no comparison which will make clear to the white reader the ordinary attitude of mind of

1. This distinction is clearly made in John Lobb, "Caste and Class in Haiti," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLVI, No. 1 (July, 1940), p. 30 ff.

2. W. B. Seabrook, *The Magic Island*, p. 161. "On my way home from the palace," concludes the author, "I reflected how queer it would seem for a group of cabinet ministers and Treasury officials at the White House to be earnestly discussing the poetry of an American anthology which included metaphysical love-lyrics by Calvin Coolidge."

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élite toward *les noirs*. The mildest expression of general opinion is that it would be a waste of time to try to educate the masses, for they are so nearly like animals that they could not absorb even the simplest education. Peasants eat when they are hungry, rise and go to sleep with light and darkness, are unable to count, like animals sense changes in weather; peasants are kindly but stupid, like donkeys: this is the kind of summary one hears from the mouths of the élite. It is possible that the élite are merely imitating the attitude toward the Negro of many white people they have seen.

[466]

Treatment of servants is revealing. They are often reviled for their thickheadedness. When one remonstrates with an employer for his frequent upbraiding of workmen, there is sure to be a look of pained surprise. Said one man: "You can no more hurt the feelings of a peasant than you can hurt the feelings of a mule." Servants simply do not feel as human beings do, but must be "broken," like a horse. This is not to say that many kindly employers do not exist, but rather that working people are not regarded as belonging to the higher orders of nature. A Catholic priest who devoted a good part of his time to work in the hills was told by some of his élite parishioners that this was a waste of time, for such dull people could not possibly benefit from his teachings.

Thoughtful men, on the other hand, know well enough that it is possible to improve the lot of the people. But if the peasant should be well educated he would become ambitious; where then would be the monopoly which is now held by the aristocrats on wealth, government, education? Merest self-interest prompts one to defend the status quo. This definitely worries many of the upper group. Aware that so long as conditions remain as they are Haiti will be poor and backward, they are nevertheless not ready to promote what would be a thoroughgoing social revolution. If any government should become oversolicitous for the well-being of the masses, it would soon find itself bitterly opposed by the upper class. In the long run, what will be the result of keeping things as they are? Élite who know their history can find several possible answers, no one of which appeals to them: a peasants' revolt, a Reign of Terror, intervention by a foreign power. They are on the horns of a dilemma: if as rulers they promote material welfare, they lose their present positions of security; if they do not promote a change, violent change will unseat them.

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311 merly. Wherever the overcrowded Haitians have lived since 1815, there beauty has had to give way to gnawing necessity which lacked either the imagination or the means to be sightly.

105 One can stand upon a morne and watch a rain storm rush down the valley, bending the palm trees in its fury, and think Haiti still a magnificent sight. Then one must descend the mountainside past rickety shacks and rocky fields, and the feeling grows that not all the kindly simplicity of the people is enough to lift the country from its [134] dilapidation. As he nears the village, the afternoon scent of roasting coffee will delight him; but then he sees the squalor of village life and is reminded that three million souls are here trying to eke out an existence upon a small area of declining fertility.

Much in Haiti is picturesque if one can keep his mind from wandering to the conditions which lie behind the picturesqueness. [482] Women stride down from the hills with great loads on their heads; [443] aged crones, pipe in mouth, sit perched on the haunches of tiny donkeys with their bulging panniers; the great market square in the [492] town is a scene of noisy confusion with hundreds of women and [482] children, a mixture of smells, thousands of little piles of soap, candy, gewgaws, vegetables, gaping chickens tied together by the feet, [434] shirts, canes, bolts of cloth. All the weary women, however, must [146] trudge back up to their shanties on the mountainside when the market is over. Many of them do not see ten dollars in cash during the year, and their little children, with bellies bulging, give evidence [164] of undernourishment. Without doctors, without even the rudiments of hygiene, they manage somehow to subsist, or else die, frequently of disease which might easily have been prevented.

565 In Port-au-Prince and a few other towns live enough members of the élite to make one momentarily forget the plight of the masses. [342] The houses of the well-to-do are substantially built, if not often [351] attractive. Their garden walls are brilliant with bougainvillea, their walks with hibiscus. Tiny red lizards (analis) make flashes of color along the walls. On shady verandas and in the parlors one hears delightful conversation, eats excellent food, savors the pleasures of [575] civilization. The clubs of the élite are pleasing, their tennis is good, [526] their dancing graceful. To be among these families as a welcome guest is an experience in gracious hospitality which can never be [535] forgotten. Too soon, however, one must leave these havens of urbanity and pass through districts of the town which haunt the mind with their grim want.

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114 the culture of their group, but also none of the broader aspects of the motivating forces, the dominant wishes, the attitudes and social values of the masses. Since the élite have often expressed in books their desires and frustrations, one feels that it would be readily possible for a trained social psychologist to learn much from upper-class informants who are anxious to be understood. To penetrate the inner life of the masses would be easier for an American than for a Haitian scholar, who would be enmeshed in the attitudes of class and caste in his own society.

565 Little has been said in this book of the small group of people, generally living in towns, who belong neither to the élite nor to the masses. How much actual social mobility occurs? Of the horizontal variety, that is, movement from place to place within the same social class, very little; of the vertical, or transition from one social class to another, there is likewise little, as has been shown at length in this book; yet there is enough to make a study of social mobility useful. Allied with such an investigation might be one of social distance. The degree of sympathy existing between élite and masses is small; on the other hand, one longs to know the degree of social distance of the individuals who are not yet élite but who regard themselves as definitely superior to the masses: what is their attitude toward the class they have left? And what is the attitude of the élite toward their aspirations?

114 Certain studies have already been made of the effect of the Vodun religion upon the personalities of its practitioners.[6] Even here the surface has been merely skimmed.

177 Haiti, because she is a colored nation in a white Western World, has been even more isolated than she would otherwise have been, even with her island position and her economic poverty. Except for the presence of American Marines for nineteen years there has been little cultural contact with outsiders, and hence little cultural conflict.

[563] It is generally estimated that there are not more than three thousand white people living in Haiti, and these mostly in the capital city. Throughout the nineteenth century it is likely that there were fewer. Haiti shares the island with the Dominican Republic, yet since the independence of the Dominicans in 1844 there has been little warfare, travel, or contact between the two peoples. Haitian workers have crossed the border, it is true, and have returned home (or have

6. See particularly Price-Mars, *Ainsi parla l'oncle*, and Dorsainvil, *Vodou et névrose*.

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NOTES

CHAPTER II

The period between 1789 and 1803 may be summarized as follows: 175

1789–1791. Struggle for precedence between whites and free colored people, with the balance in favor of the whites. [565]

1791–1793. The slave insurrection, with consequent anarchy, and futile attempts of French commissioners to restore order. Both whites and colored people pushed into the background. [669] [563]

1793–1796. Invasion of the colony by English and Spanish; rise of the mulatto general Rigaud and the black general Toussaint. [648]

1796–1799. Consolidation of power by Toussaint; defeat and expulsion of Rigaud; emigration of whites. [643]

1799–1802. Toussaint in full power as governor-general.

1802–1803. Leclerc's expedition, with its initial successes and ultimate failure. Final achievement of Haitian independence under Dessalines and Christophe. [642]

PART III

Various efforts were made by American abolitionists working with Haitian presidents to colonize freed American Negro slaves in Haiti in the period before the Civil War.[1] All these projects came to unfortunate ends, some even to grimly tragic ones. During Boyer's time about 13,000 American Negroes went to Haiti, the government assigning to each family a portion of land upon its arrival. Very shortly most of those who could afford it returned to this country, and within ten years hardly one was still living upon the land. An American writer, Hunt, says that during his seventeen years in Haiti (before 1860) he had known of but 13 Negroes from America who had been moderately successful; of these, 7 were merchants or traders, 4 mechanics, and 2 lawyers; and all were mulattoes. Five others were barely independent, and all the rest were day laborers or worse. In spite of this, Hunt planned another aided migration of American Negroes to Haiti. Warning them not to expect too much in the way of improvements in agriculture, he adds a significant paragraph: "Should the immigrant obtain quiet possession of unoccupied lands, and begin to use the plough instead of the hoe, his new methods of culture would be likely to draw upon him the jealousy and ill-will of his neighbors. For when new ways are *too* new to be accepted as an example, they are very apt to be felt and resented as a rebuke. More than one of Boyer's old immigrants have told me that they were obliged to give up agriculture and take to trading in towns, on account of annoyances of this sort. They found their fences down, or their water let off, of a morning; or evidences that cattle had been fed on their grounds over night; or the neighboring idlers, of which there are many, had stolen all their plantains and sweet potatoes, fit for the market. I do not mean to say that these Haytian cultivators are worse than any other rude people. On the contrary, I 175 563

1. An excellent description of these projects is found in L. L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938* (Durham, 1940), chap. IV.

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two. Here was a decline of about 150,000 from 1790.[2] It is a commentary on the man's forcefulness that in spite of all difficulties Dessalines established an effective economic organization. Its basis was serfdom.

Every citizen, he announced, must consider himself in one of two categories, laborer or soldier. There were to be no shirkers in the new Haiti; if a man was not in the army, he must do manual labor. Artisans who followed a craft counted as laborers. Women, since they could not join the army, must work shoulder to shoulder with their men. It was understood that direction of Haiti's new order would be carried on by state officials who were neither laborers nor soldiers, but these officials were to be so few that they would not constitute a separate third category.

This step of Dessalines' was a radical one. It proclaimed the mastery of state over individual; and even more significantly it divided the people according to economic task, rather than birth, wealth, color, or social status. At first the more ambitious citizens bore patiently with the arbitrary decree, thinking they might be able to achieve comfortable status under a lenient definition of "soldier" or else by sinecure tasks as officials. Their disillusionment was swift. Even swifter was the chagrin of the lowly folk who had been slaves, for they found themselves now in actual bondage to one of their own color.

All people except soldiers, ran the decree, must be "attached as cultivators to a plantation." This might be translated to read "bound to the soil." The vast majority of the people were forced willy-nilly into agriculture. It was "formally prohibited for a cultivator to desert the plantation to which he was assigned"; conversely, it was a crime to give asylum to a runaway cultivator, male or female.[3] If such conditions differed from slavery, they were at least close to what the mediaeval world knew as serfdom. But under this régime of forced labor the recently ravaged fields once more became productive: cotton plantations again covered the plain of the Artibonite, and sugar refineries were slowly rebuilt all over the country.

To forestall complaint from the people once again driven into

2. See, for an analysis of population figures, Placide Justin, *Histoire politique et statistique de l'île d'Hayti, Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1826), pp. 502–503.

3. A certain Mlle. Chapotin, of respectable family, was accused of having harbored a fugitive female cultivator, and, since she was unable to pay immediately the fine imposed upon her by the police at Port-au-Prince, she was condemned to serve a jail term.

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field labor, the ruler emphasized the clemency of his new régime. Labor the people must, but not under the whip; that arch symbol of slavery was abolished forever. The working day was shortened by a third. It was provided that, if just reason were shown, a man might even secure permission from his district commissioner to move from the plantation to which he was attached. 175 566 466

These were words. Facts were another matter. The overseers had been ordered to exact so much labor from their underlings, yet without whips; knowing no persuading power other than chastisement, they backed up their commands with blows of *lianes*, thick pliable vines which could be gathered anywhere in the island. Thus the laggard was driven, the law kept to the letter, and the overseer praised by his superiors. As for the working day, crops must be tended at the proper moment, so that the boasted shortening of hours generally came to little. Finally, the right to secure permission to move away from a plantation was effectively limited by the refusal of commissioners to grant any such request.

Every public expression of Dessalines showed a solicitude for the welfare of the workers, while his every act indicated that he regarded them as impersonal parts of the machine of state. He knew by his own former experience as a slave what a day's stint should be and the ruses used by laborers to avoid steady work; he was therefore able to order agricultural labor on a realistic basis.

The economic organization created by Dessalines provided the roots for the peasantry which was soon to develop as a characteristic form of Haitian life. Among these fundamental conditions were the existence of agriculture as a prevalent occupation, the immobility of all workers on the land, and a thorough schooling of the people in patient acceptance. Dessalines might theoretically have established some other economic system—a division of estates into small properties, for example, with each farmer a master of his own destiny; a democratic coöperative economy; slavery again; feudalism with a landed gentry. At critical times, one leader's choice may affect the whole future life of the country. The decision of Dessalines to keep the bulk of his people in servitude, without using the terminology of slavery, gave the new freemen no opportunity to become acquainted with work other than tillage. They were sent back to the only tasks they had ever known, their horizons were just as limited as before, their personal freedom just as restricted. The worst punishments of slavery, together with torture and gross overwork, 175 178 463 24 433 566 175 566

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175 were abolished; with such concessions the people must be satisfied.
●566 Dessalines tacitly confessed his inability to follow any course but the French colonial system, with modifications introduced by Toussaint.

167 Many of the blacks, having tasted a moment's freedom, were not
175 inclined to give it up. Before the new order of Dessalines was firmly established, therefore, they ran away with their families into the hills, where they escaped official notice. As squatters they lived out their lives unmolested. By the time they were officially rediscovered, all Haiti had become a land of peasants.

175 At the other end of the ladder from the laborers were the officials,
463 who might be great men or small clerks, members of the entourage
555 of the governor-general or merely overseers of a plantation. In order to keep the vast agricultural economy functioning smoothly it was
647 necessary to have hundreds of agents, directors, clerks, and overseers,
565 each of whom must report to a superior. In this official class there was at least a possibility of realizing an ambition for oneself; there was a basis of comparison; more important, there was some possibility of attracting favorable attention of persons in high places and so of gaining promotion. Inevitably something of the colonial state of mind must have carried over into the new era, so that an ex-slave would consider himself as having risen in the world to be now performing a task which only white men used to do—to be spared field labor and to direct the work of others. Out of this group of petty agents rose a few men of ambition who were later to belong to the élite.

175 Higher officers of state were in a much more favorable position to
565 achieve social eminence. Not only did they perform no manual
647 labor; they were twice removed from that life, since they directed the men who directed the workers. They handled funds. They came
[212] into contact with Dessalines himself. Many former gens de couleur filled these important posts, for the number of Haitians who could read and write was woefully limited.

175 The army was the great power in the country, for the new state
701 was a military one. Since fear of a return of the French required the maintenance of a large standing army,[4] Dessalines made a virtue of this apparent necessity, using his soldiers to enforce discipline among the cultivators. On whom else could he rely for his local administra-
tion,

4. Humboldt estimated that the army of Dessalines numbered 37,300, which would be one tenth of the total population. Other estimates run as low as 15,000. Even this figure would be about a tenth of the male population.

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Taxes were heavy

175 651 652 and work strenuous; but there were a sound currency, commercial and agricultural prosperity, and a full treasury.

Like many a great man he was an overweening egotist. His 175 643 159 energy and ambition, for Haiti as well as for himself, neither understood nor tolerated a lesser determination than his own. At times he seemed more intent upon the letter than upon the spirit of his laws. Probably his chief defect, a common failing of strong men, was a disregard for humble individual worth. To write of him invites the most colorful vocabulary. He is Black Majesty and the Emperor Jones. By almost any standards of leadership he would be accounted a great man. He lacked only those few final, subtle qualities which make for sheer genius. In 1820, stricken by paralysis and faced with defections in his army, he died as he had lived, dramatically, ending his life with a specially saved bullet (folklore says a silver one), in his palace of the ironic name, Sans Souci.

175 643 In no significant respect did Christophe change the feudal structure of economic organization begun by Toussaint and carried on by Dessalines. It was in administration, especially as it affected social status, that the thirteen years of Christophe were important for the [641] future of Haiti. Where the Emperor had been an unpredictable tyrant whose heavy hand inspired only terror, Christophe was a sternly just father whose well-disciplined children respected, admired, and even loved him.

175 427 475 655 566 643 The land policy of the two régimes was similar. Government estates were farmed out on five-year leases to the highest bidders among the well-to-do; large plantations belonging to the state were tilled by cultivators who might, without taking the term too harshly, be called serfs; loyal supporters and wealthy individuals were entrusted with responsibility. Like Dessalines, Christophe added wealth to power and rendered all his subjects dependent upon himself rather than on their own resources and influence—but all this with a difference.

175 643 642 565 Where the Emperor had denied the natural vanity of his aides by refusing them nobility, Christophe accepted their ambition as perfectly normal and made use of it for his own purposes. Four years after he had established his state, he changed it from a republic to a kingdom; all his important men he made dukes, barons, counts, knights. He warned them that he would expect them to live up to the dignities conferred upon them. Pomp and regalia are costly;

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therefore plantations must be made to yield the uttermost farthing if the nobleman was to pay for the necessities of strict court etiquette. It was by no means a childish whim which prompted Christophe to call himself a king; rather an intelligent utilization of the human material the leader had to work with. Vanity was to serve an economic and a political purpose. 175 643 642 565

Christophe perceived that the defect of Dessalines' reign had been lack of security, both of person and property. Agriculture is a long-term investment and so must be hedged about by orderly rules. To this end the monarch stated his laws clearly, charged a fixed tax—one fourth of the annual crop—which would enrich the kingdom while allowing the tenant-proprietor a reasonable profit, and then guaranteed that no arbitrary demands would be made. Certainly there was no pampering of the wealthy, but there was ample prosperity resulting from regularity and security. 175 651

The ordinary citizen was, as he had been, bound to the soil as an agricultural laborer. This quasi-serfdom, however, was comparative freedom. It simply meant that the home and work of a man must be at the plantation on which he had been born. Saturday afternoons and Sundays were free, so that the laborers might make the most of their opportunities to visit the nearest market village, to buy and sell small goods, gossip, and enjoy the sociability of being part of a crowd. Being bound to the soil meant simply that they could not move, when the impulse seized them, to another plantation or another part of the country. Those whose mothers or relatives were natives of a plantation must return to that estate, being forbidden to live in towns. No person, military or other, who did not derive his living from a plantation, could marry an agricultural worker—a prohibition designed to prevent workers from leaving estates because of family ties, and particularly to prevent women, as mothers of future cultivators, from deserting agriculture. 175 566 641 466 [582]

Mediaeval serfdom itself went no further in binding people to the soil. Indeed, it did not go so far in regulating the daily life of serfs. Under Christophe the cultivators lived according to a routine as strict as that of a school. Reveille was rung as early as three o'clock to arouse women to prepare breakfasts for their menfolk; by four or four-thirty the bell was sounded for the commencement of work, which began after prayers had been led by the overseer. At nine o'clock there was a pause for luncheon, and then a resumption of 175 566 512 466

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175 work until noon. A two-hour siesta followed, but from two until
566 sunset there was steady work. Only after evening prayers was the
512 worker free. During the day no cultivator might leave his task except
466 for direst need. The lame and the halt were not required to till the fields, but must carry around buckets of drinking water, take care of the children, and do odd jobs about the estate.

175 Christophe made a steady and, in the main, successful effort to
566 explain to the people the necessity of hard work on the plantation.
466 As with the noblemen, the serfs knew precisely what was expected of them, and why. Their regimentation was strict, but understandable. It was clearly stipulated that if a worker shirked his job he was to be put in prison and made to do forced labor there. Laziness in the fields was to be punished by strokes from the overseer's liane. Hard and steady work was demanded during the whole thirteen years of Christophe's rule, but only rarely was there complaint, as there had been constantly under Dessalines, of cruelty on the part of overseers.

175 The quarter part of the total crop of any plantation was to go to
465 the workers as wages, and, since production increased and prices rose, this quarter which they were free to spend as they pleased provided a powerful incentive to further industry. As compared with anything they had known before, the workers were now recipients of an ample income. On the plantations they cultivated
[423] the money crops of sugar and coffee. In addition, each family had
[241] its own garden plot on which to raise the food crops—yams, plantains, beans, and bananas—for personal use.[9]

175 Christophe was so far ahead of his time that he tried to introduce
177 British methods of agriculture into his kingdom. The results were insignificant. The plough, although obviously superior in efficiency
407 to the hoe, eliminated the sociable companionship of working in
178 unison, and demanded horses and mules which the country lacked. The innovations were consequently too radical to be accepted. In the main, the agricultural methods of the kingdom continued to be those familiar in slave days.

175 Thirteen years of careful direction can fix many patterns of social
178 routine. One of Christophe's rules was that no cultivator attached to

[241] 9. The staples of other countries, such as Irish potatoes, wheat, barley, and oats, did not flourish in Haiti. On the large plantations, indigo and cotton, which had been money crops in the French régime, were generally neglected, as they had been in the time of Dessalines.

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One of Christophe's rules was that no cultivator attached to

a plantation—and every ordinary country person was so attached —might leave the estate without permission from a military officer.[10] Two of the common folkways of Haitian peasant life since his time have been immobility and general acceptance of orders from the military. Both characteristics had been fostered by slavery and by the régimes of Toussaint and Dessalines, and these folkways became fixed under Christophe.

175 566 178 [484]

Other rules introduced by the King, however, lapsed shortly after his strong hand was removed. For example, the monarch required of the whole population that whenever they visited the capital on feast days or went to the market towns on Saturdays they be decently clad in clean clothes.[11] Since the time of Christophe, neatness of appearance has hardly been a folk characteristic, probably because of poverty rather than lack of desire to dress well. Nor did scrupulous regularity of work in the fields continue as a folkway later, when the great plantations were broken up.

175 178 291 527 183 [461]

Like a father the King tried to inculcate moral standards of honesty in his people. To prevent theft he had small valuables, such as watches or jewelry or purses, "planted," and if the finder did not immediately turn them over to the nearest Dahomet, punishment was meted out. Such a policy made honesty contagious. Thefts and depredation were soon almost unknown. The most tempting store of wealth could be left safely unlocked or in the open air. Christophe's achievement in this matter is eloquent testimony to his success as a paternal leader, for it is no small task to initiate moral ideas among people who for a generation have lacked them. Even today it is the proud boast of the Haitians that their people are honest.

175 577 177

As compared with the liberties of farmers in the United States of the same period, the Haitian agricultural workers' freedom was infinitesimally small, but by contrast with the bondage of slavery, their new status was definitely higher.

175 566

10. Christophe called his royal police force "Dahomets," after the West African kingdom, Dahomey, from which most of the men had come. They were not ordinary soldiers but especially imported and carefully selected men whose intelligence made them stand out from their fellows. Each Dahomet was given a course of training in his task as administrator before being sent out. The general consensus of foreign visitors was that these Dahomets were efficient even in small matters. [625]

11. This rule was partly an indication of Christophe's vanity, personal and national, for he was deeply desirous of the good opinion of white visitors, especially those from England. He wanted Europeans to respect Haiti as they would respect any small state, and not to praise it merely as an example of "Negro progress." [577] [186]

their new status was definitely higher. Mild serfdom might be thought of as the first intermediate step toward freedom. Democracy was still far off, there being no real middle class upon which to build it. Only the artisans of the towns and the ex-soldiers or the cultivators who had managed to lease small estates could be considered middle class. Christophe forced every dweller in villages or towns to have a manual skill. The only alternative was field work on a plantation.

The "aristocrats" of the kingdom were prevailingly black rather than colored. It was not to be expected that a vain man would soon forget the trick by which the mulattoes had frustrated him in his expectation of becoming the ruler of all Haiti. To say that the intermittent civil war between Christophe's kingdom of the North and Pétion's republic of the South was a struggle between blacks and colored people would not do great violence to the essential truth. Christophe's suspicion of gens de couleur was so well known that few were surprised at the high death rate of mulatto generals in the North. The murder of General Clervaux was definitely laid at Christophe's door.

The fact remains that among the nobility were men of all degrees of color. The King liked to say that he neither accepted nor yet took exception to the color of a man's epidermis—that in this matter he was *vert* (green), which is to say, neutral and indifferent. When he was angry his wrath fell indiscriminately upon the offender of whatever complexion. Similarly, when he found a light-skinned man who faithfully supervised a leased estate, thus proving his loyalty, the man was rewarded and promoted. Nevertheless, an underlying prejudice remained in his breast, bursting out occasionally at crises, and having ultimately a serious effect upon the loyalty of many of his people. When some of his subjects, enticed by the easy-going régime of the South, ran away to Pétion's republic, Christophe was angry enough to renew the war against Pétion (1811). The South won the encounter, thereby adding fuel to Christophe's rage. Three hundred prisoners he had captured he ordered tortured, and the angry King abused and insulted his own officers and executed several soldiers for having lost the battle. These actions caused more defections, renewed punishments, and a more abiding rancor. As one writer put it, the King "now regarded the mulattoes with a hatred so deep and fiendlike, that nothing would satisfy the dirness of his

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114 642 175 at least a generation behind them, but rather their complete lack of any experience in self-rule. The author continues:

> In addition to the vanity of the black which was flattered by the distribution of principalities and duchies, there was the political thought which wished to fortify things by words. The most important sugar manufactories were distributed, with the property title, to the principal officers and civil agents of the government. Workers were allotted to these very much as were the Indians to the first Spanish conquerors. . . . Moreover, since African blood dominated in the North [that is, since there were few mulattoes and lighter-skinned people], the feudal lords, aided by the color of their skin, could enforce obedience to a yoke which in name only was modified [from slavery].[13]

[471]

175 642 566 631 421 625 692 The social organization of Christophe's kingdom, then, was one of large properties, with all the feudalistic trappings, resting upon a solid base of wage-earning serfdom. In contrast to mediaeval feudalism, the king was here much more than *primus inter pares*. Thanks to the policy of Dessalines, most land had come into state ownership, so that the nobility received their estates by royal favor, and held them as leases only so long as the King pleased. As in the Middle Ages, the noblemen were petty monarchs within the district granted to their jurisdiction. Their freedom of action, however, was even here subject to scrutiny: detachments of Royal Dahomets[14] were stationed in every cantonment or parish, to enforce discipline, keep the King informed, and find their own subsistence without a drain on the royal treasury. In every district was set up a court of *sénéchaussée* to see that justice obtained.[15] The King's law, not the nobleman's private code, prevailed in the whole country.[16]

13. R. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1846), II, 167–168.

14. Organized after the model of the police force existing in France before 1789.

15. These courts were composed of a royally appointed seneschal and his assistant, a king's procurer, and a clerk.

[671]

16. The Code Henry was promulgated on January 30, 1812. It consisted of seven parts: Civil, Commercial, Shipping and Maritime, Civil Process, Criminal and Police Process, Agricultural, and Military. In general the Code followed French precedent, but the section on Agriculture was Christophe's own. Sir James Basket (in his *History of the Island of St. Domingo* [London, 1818], p. 413) calls this part "a thing unexampled among other nations." It reveals not only the King's absorption in the main economic enterprise of his state, but also his skill in devising an integrated functioning of a social order of nobility and serfs with a plantation economy based on money crops. This Agricultural Law regulated such diverse matters as the reciprocal duties of proprietors and cultivators, the policing of plantations, and the culture and preparation of the major crops. It set forth industry as the parent of virtue, and idleness as the source of vice.

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175 Convinced at last that the easygoing policy was a failure, Boyer
24 devised by way of remedy a new set of agricultural laws. Where his
671 predecessors in the North had forced action first and then issued
643 simple laws to fix the practice, Boyer, always cerebral rather than active, planned a complete Code which was designed to call forth action. On May 1, 1826, following an address by the President, the Senate issued the Code Rural, an ingenious attempt of Boyer and his secretary-general, Inginac, to reorder the agricultural life of Haiti.

Never again in the history of the country was so detailed a scheme worked out. It was an attempt on a grand scale to order the life of all people for common prosperity. In addition to its own broad scope and elaborate detail, it was fortified by almost unanimous support among the aristocracy, not only the ex-peers of Christophe's defunct kingdom, but also the large landowners of the republic who under Pétion had never known large incomes. In considering the Code, one cannot restrain a certain admiration of Boyer's ingenious mind. Yet it marked the end rather than the beginning of plantation agriculture, for it utterly failed of its purpose. It was the impressive monument over the tomb of state control.

To examine it further, we must desert the world of men for one of pure economic device. The journey is hardly one of discovery, for Boyer and his aides were simply attempting to freshen up for use the methods which had served colonial Saint-Domingue and feudal Haiti. For all the tedium of a voyage through the mazes of an economic plan which came to naught, the Code will be found significant as marking the end of a way of life, even when the way which succeeded it had already begun to take form.

175 The dominating principle of the Code was the Haitian's "obliga-
671 tion" to work on the land. To this end, the worker was once more
24 legally attached to the soil. Every individual who was not a public
566 functionary, and who had not private means or a profession—in plain
693 English, every Haitian except the aristocrat, the official, the artisan, and the soldier—was bound to the land, with no right to separate himself from it except in case of imminent danger. An agricultural worker might apply to the local *juge de paix*[38] for permission to quit the countryside to live in a town or village, but the judge was not to give the permission without being assured of the morality of the

38. A functionary who combined the offices of local judge, justice of the peace, and recorder.

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applicant, of his regular conduct, and his ability to maintain himself economically in the town. Land laborers might not send their children to school or have them apprenticed in a town without a certificate from the same judge. Under no pretext might a worker establish a shop or sell his produce in the countryside; certain exceptions were made of necessary articles of food and home manufacture. No laborer might build a home in rural parts except on the plantation to which he was attached. 175 671 24 566 693

An individual, once placed by the government in the category of "cultivator," might never be removed from that class except by official authorization. Even with the consent of the proprietor and the agricultural administrator of the district, he was not to quit the estate to which he was bound for more than eight days.

We may further note in the Code that coöperative enterprise among the workers is forbidden. Anticipating the possible tendency of laborers to set up what in modern times would be called a producers' coöperative, presumably to lapse thereafter into laziness, the Code requires that every worker engage himself individually by authentic contract to the service of a proprietor or lessee. Such engagements for la grande culture are not to be for less than three years, or more than nine. Penalties for infractions of these rules are fines, imprisonment, or forced labor on public works in the chief town of the commune. 175 671 474 686 566

The Code directs the management of agricultural property and grazing establishments,[39] also the making of contracts between the proprietor and his hirelings. Rural police are established, in imitation of Christophe's Dahomets, to act as inspectors of plantations and of the workers on them. 175 671 625 421

The section repressing vagrancy is very full. All persons not proprietors or lessees, yet living in rural parts without having made a contract with some producer, are classed as vagabonds, to be arrested and taken before the magistrate. This official will warn them that by law they are bound to make a contract, and that if they refuse they will be sent to prison. Should a vagabond persist in refusing to sign a contract after eight days of confinement, he is condemned to labor on public works until he agrees. Should the prisoner be a minor, he will be sent to his parents. 175 686 24

39. This latter item was inserted as an adjustment to one of the primary occupations of the Spanish end of the island.

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[1804-1843]

175 A cultivator who loafs on his assigned job shall spend twenty-four
● 566 hours in jail for his first offense and lose his wages; for a second
671 offense he must work on public projects. Field labor shall be regu-
24 larly carried on from Monday morning until Friday evening, except for legal holidays; work begins at dawn, continues except for a half-hour at breakfast until noon, stops then for two hours, and is
[843] once more resumed until sunset. Pregnant females are to be assigned to light work only, and after the fourth month of pregnancy need
[846] do no field work. Four months after delivery, a mother is to return to field work, but with three hours a day less than before, until she has weaned her child. Disobedience and insult to overseers are punishable by imprisonment. Since Saturdays, Sundays, and holi-
[527] days are free, there is to be no dancing or any other festivity by night or day from Monday through Friday.

175 On each estate is to be a hierarchy of directors, all of whom the
671 workers shall obey. In ascending order, these men are drivers (or
473 squad foremen),[40] jobbers, sublessees, lessees, proprietors and man-
24 agers, overseers of districts, and police.

In establishing a system of remuneration Boyer kept the accus-
175 tomed method of allotting a proportion of the marketed crop to the
475 workers in lieu of hourly or daily wages. In any season from a
24 quarter to a half of the gross receipts of the estates was to go to the laborers, the exact proportion in any year to be determined by the government. It was assumed by Boyer and Inginac that there would be an added inducement to work if the laborers' share were distributed not equally, but rather in proportion to the merit and worth of the individual, these evaluations to be made by the recommendation of overseers.

175 Enforcement of the Code was placed in the hands of local justices
692 and the army. Soldiers were to be assigned to each plantation, re-
24 ceiving their living from it, in return preserving order and routine. Although the whip was once more prohibited, steady labor might still be enforced by other means; the law definitely stated that soldiers were to discipline the lazy, the lawless, and the vagrant. Local justices were to deal with any civil difficulties arising in the execution

[192] 40. The word "driver" was commonly used in West Indian slave colonies with no other meaning than that attached to the word when one speaks of a man "driving" his horses. It is not necessary to beat a horse to make it go properly; a word of direction may suffice.

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of contracts. It is worthy of note that soldiers assigned to estates were responsible for their actions not to any civil authority but only to their military superiors. 175 692 24

On paper, at least, the Code meant for the worker a return to the serfdom instituted by Toussaint and continued by his black successors.[41] Boyer's new system was richer in detail than Christophe's, but it clearly owed much to that monarch's practical scheme. There is a vital difference, however: serfdom under the Negro rulers worked because discipline was enforced; Boyer's effort to reintroduce it was an abject failure. 175 566 671

Many commentators have praised the Code as able and intelligent. Since the effort to revive familiar practice did not succeed, it is important to understand the reasons for failure of an almost perfect paper plan; one similar to the system which had functioned in all Haiti from 1798 to 1806, and in northern Haiti until 1820.

To begin with—and this was in great measure its final downfall—the workers simply ignored it. When Toussaint had first introduced serfdom, many Negroes quietly moved up into remote hills where they would be out of sight; a good number had remained away from surveillance, raising children who cherished their own independence of action. The influence of this group gradually spread. Moreover, for nineteen years in the South, ever since Pétion had first become president, the masses had had increasing experience of economic freedom. There is no doubt that the majority of the people preferred a low standard of living with liberty to great national prosperity depending on personal compulsion. Northern "cultivators" had known force and efficiency under Christophe, but they, too, preferred their five-year experience of easygoing life in reunited Haiti. Such complete, antagonistic inertia toward the law made its enforcement impossible. Individual cases of sabotage might be dealt with, but not wholesale refusal of the group to sign contracts.

Aside from this, too much land had already been given away throughout at least half the country to make possible a fair and efficient functioning of the Code. Any forced-labor system would have had to depend on large plantations. Since Pétion had divided 175 423

41. R. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, "La République d'Haïti: ses dernières révolutions; sa situation actuelle," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, XV, No. 4 (Nov., 1845), p. 15, called it "*l'inféodation à la glèbe*," which it certainly was. The whole Code was designed to prevent any further parceling of the land and any further lapse into idleness on the part of the workers. [114]

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175 178 565 433 439 [423] [428] fortunes, that is, a few thousands of dollars, for a small number of élite, and to make the presidency a position economically rewarding enough to justify revolutionary conspiracies. The growth of a peasantry set in train during the long régime of Boyer continued, unbroken even by the numerous insurrections, until fixed in the mores. Land owned by the countryfolk was divided and redivided among their heirs, so that even holdings of moderate size became smaller.

Not one of the twenty-two rulers following Boyer made the 175 643 566 423 slightest effort to return the country to the forced labor system of Dessalines and Christophe. They seemed to recognize the inevitability of a peasant way of life, or at least the impossibility of luring the people back to directed labor after a long experience of freedom. On the contrary, several presidents still further parceled the land.

President Guerrier, for example, the very year after Boyer was 175 643 423 deposed, put on sale at moderate prices those state lands in the North not reserved for public use.[5] If the revolutionaries of 1843 had hoped to bring back Christophe's system of forced labor, their hopes were doomed to disappointment because of the state's need of immediate income. Christophe's state land areas were now broken up in the one part of the country where a few large plantations still existed.

President Geffrard in 1862 gave his blessing to small ownership, the 175 643 421 423 basis of peasantry. Whereas Pétion's laws had prohibited sales of land in parcels less than fifteen acres, Geffrard's law regularized the leasing and sale of national property in lots of fifteen acres *at most*. Geffrard was the first president openly to admit that many government lands had been lost to citizens by squatting. In an endeavor to give legality to land held by squatters' rights, his law demanded that squatters register their claims, announcing that within a short time there would be no further dismemberment of the national patrimony except by grants and sales.[6] Few registrations were made, however, for the Haitian peasant had already acquired a suspicion of legal documents he could not read or understand, and he could see no reason for legalizing a status in which, with the squatter's tenacity and inertia, he already felt himself secure.

Haiti was in constant financial straits. Money had to be borrowed

5. By a law of September 23, 1844.
6. Law of August 14, 1862. The articles cited here are 2 and 4.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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Davers. In 1768 and 1769 they were "but tranquil spectators of the troubles caused by the re-establishment of the militia," the local military forces numbering at this time 260 whites and 291 *affranchis*, or free men of color.[3]

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This white population was made up chiefly of those who came directly from France or were born in the colony, but also included were the Acadians, one of the most interesting groups who settled in Mirebalais. Fleeing from Newfoundland, they were brought to Haiti before they were sent to Louisiana, and in the course of this migration left some of their number in the valley. It is recorded that on the 26th day of October 1764, in consequence of "a Memorial presented by the Chamber of Agriculture of Port-au-Prince, which stressed the healthfulness of Mirebalais,"[4] each of a number of these Acadian families was allotted a plot of eight hundred square paces, not far from the town. The ending of this episode, however, was not happy, for, transported into a tropical climate that failed to measure up to the claims made for it, the Acadians paid so heavy a toll that soon all trace of them vanished.

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But facts such as these tell little of the fundamental social and economic conditions of pre-Revolutionary Haiti, where Negro slavery constituted the foundation upon which the whole structure of life was erected. That Mirebalais was no exception to the prevailing economic regime is shown by Moreau de St. Mery's figures for the district, yet what stresses existed between the masters, the free persons of color, and the slaves, no record remains to show. Despite the fact that slaves and free men of color were accepted in the armed militia, the

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situation was far from tranquil. When, after the French Revolution, there were signs that the decree[5] which accorded to the free men of color political rights equal to those of the whites was in danger of being nullified in practice, it was at Mirebalais that the colored men assembled to insist on the enforcement of this order.[6] Together with some slaves they freed, they formed the nucleus of an army "that under the leader-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

ship of a very intelligent mulatto named Bauvais" gained 175
some successes "over the undisciplined forces in Port-au- 567
Prince" and forced the inhabitants of the capital to recog- 669
nize the power of this group by entering into a definite treaty with them.[7]

There are other indications that life in the valley did not 175
fail to reflect the discontent of the black slaves. Writing in 567
1830, Mackenzie, who was the first British Consul-General to the Haitian Republic, remarked:

> "It is said by some of the best informed Haitians, that among the mountains that stretch from the neighbourhood of Mirebalais to the coast on the east of Jacmel, there is an extensive association of the descendants of the Maroon negroes, whose independence had been recognised long before the revolution by the then existing government."[8]

It is thus apparent that the institution of *marronage*, whereby runaway slaves established themselves in the mountains, in many instances living for years beyond the reach of capture and free from attack, was known in Mirebalais as it was elsewhere. Mirebalais was also not without contact with the great 175
heroes of Haitian history. Toussaint L'Ouverture conquered and lost the town several times before it became a strategic point "from which his lieutenants, Dessalines and Christophe, menaced Arcahaie and the plain of the Cul-de-Sac."[9]

If but little has been recorded concerning Mirebalais before 175
Haitian independence, even less is known of its later history. 162
Mackenzie, reporting the population of Haiti district by district, gives that of Mirebalais in 1802 as 53,649; but in 1825 as only 16,037.[10] Whether the region included under the term 175
"Mirebalais" differed at the two periods, or whether the 669
hardships resulting from the internal strife that racked Haiti [162]
after independence had been gained took a toll of the size suggested by these figures cannot be said. That Mirebalais was an [131]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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CHAPTER I

THE AFRICAN HERITAGE

For the study of a civilization like that of Haiti, which is the result of close and continued contact between peoples with traditions as dissimilar as those of Europe and Africa, a peculiarly lively sense of time depth is needed. Yet though it has been repeatedly stated that Haiti is the child of Africa and France, even those who proclaim this emphatically fail too often to recognize the need for as detailed a knowledge as is possible of how the strands of history were woven into the fabric of Haitian cultural life. It is for this reason that before any description of the culture of Mirebalais can be attempted, not only must the names of the African tribes from which the Haitians were derived be given, but the broad characteristics of their cultures must be considered and, where possible, the classes of their population from which were derived the Negroes who were brought to Haiti. In addition, the importance of knowing the types of Frenchmen who migrated to the island during its colonial period and of understanding the modes of life they followed and presented to their slaves must be viewed as of the first order, while, finally, the manner in which these two sets of traditions were eventually forged into the structure of Haitian life as seen today must be analyzed if more than a superficial glimpse of this life is to result.

Writing in 1730, a Jesuit priest named Pierre François

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1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Xavier de Charlevoix [1] designated the following varieties of slaves found on the island: the *Sénégallois,* who are "of all the Negroes the best fashioned, the easiest to discipline, and the most adapted for domestic service"; the *Bambaras,* "tallest of all, but thieves"; the *Aradas,* "those who know agriculture best, but who are the proudest"; the *Congos,* "the smallest and the most apt at fishing," but who were most prone to desert their masters; the *Nagos,* "the most human"; the *Mondongos,* "the most cruel"; the *Mines,* "the most resolute, the most capricious, and the most subject to despair of themselves."

St. Mery, the importance of whose work has already been mentioned, gives a more detailed list than that of Charlevoix.[2] Of slaves who came from tribes living in the northern part of West Africa he names the *Sénégalais, Yoloffes,* and *Foules,* the *Bambaras, Quiambas, Mandingues,* and *Sosos,* as well as Negroes from the Bissagot Islands, though the last two categories are reported as but sparsely represented in the colony of Santo Domingo. Following the coast of Africa round its great bend, he speaks of the *Bouriquis* and the *Mesurades,* or *Cangas,* as deriving from the region between Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast, while he notes the *Aradas,* the *Caplaous,* the *Mines,* the *Agouas,* the *Socos,* and the *Fantins,* as coming from the area between Cape Appolonia and the Volta River, an area whose tribes made substantial contributions to the Haitian slave population. Farther east, from what was known as the "slave coast" and today comprises Togoland, Dahomey, and western Nigeria, were brought the *Cotocolis,* "who inhabit the kingdom of *Coto,*" the *Popos,* the *Fidas,* and the *Ardras;* while from the interior of the west coast the *Fonds,* the *Maïs,* the *Aoussas,* the *Ibos,* and the *Nagos* are mentioned. Slaves from Benin, in the Niger Delta, as well as the *Mokos* and other tribes of Calabar, were also present in Haiti, though again in small numbers. The basin of the Congo River, how-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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ever, contributed not only many slaves called by the name of that river, but also the *Mayombés*, the *Mousombés*, and the *Mondongues*, though the "true Congos" — the *Franc-Congos* — are listed as having been derived from Angola. As for the rest of the continent, "One does not see at all in Santo Domingo any Africans who have come from the remainder of the west coast of Africa, which ends at the Cape of Good Hope. . . ."[3]

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No final answer can be given about the extent to which these lists of tribal names may be regarded as valid, but the unanimity with which not only Charlevoix and St. Mery, but such other contemporary observers as Bryan Edwards for Jamaica, the Reverend C. G. A. Oldendorps for the Virgin Islands, John G. Stedman and Jan Jacob Hartsinck for Guiana — to name only four — recorded similar African regions and similar tribal names when writing of the slaves of other parts of the New World, offers strong corroborative testimony. Moreover, the fact that every tribal designation given in the lists of Charlevoix and St. Mery can be found on present-day maps of Africa in the approximate region they had indicated confirms the accuracy of these early lists.

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The characteristics of the various types of Negroes recorded by Charlevoix and St. Mery are not without interest. The Senegalese are described as tall and well made, and of an ebony color, their noses almost as straight as those of whites, their hair less tightly curled than that of other Negroes. They had the reputation of possessing a superior morality and were deemed warrior-like. St. Mery had nothing but the highest praise for the Senegalese slave.

> "He is a farmer, intelligent, good, faithful even in love, understanding, and makes an excellent domestic. Living on millet, maize, and rice, he is very sober, excellent in caring for animals, discreet, and above all taciturn, a quality sufficiently rare among the Africans and

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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which one does not find often enough even among civilized peoples."

Not all of the Mohammedan slaves, however, had the desirable qualities of the Senegalese. The Bambara, for example, were depicted as insolent and not always to be trusted, as the designations " those who steal turkeys " and " those who steal sheep " would seem to indicate.

The people between Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast were known as a hardy group prone to revolt and desertion; they were not held desirable as slaves, and thus it is not strange that few of them were found in the colony. A similar appraisal was made of the Gold Coast Negroes, for while they were described as generally well made and intelligent, they were also assessed as unreliable, deceitful, lazy, given to flattery, great consumers of food, drunkards, and wantons. And as for the Fanti and the Mina, they were spoken of as " extremely proud, waging constant warfare, capricious, and ready at any time to commit suicide."

The Negroes of the Slave Coast were favorites in Santo [142] Domingo. Their characteristic lighter skin-color, to be observed at the present time in their peculiar yellowish or reddish hue, confirms their provenience. They were thought intelligent but avaricious, and were designated as " eaters of dogs." The Ardra women, " continuous talkers," and quarrelsome, were rarely employed as domestics, since the Negroes from the region of Dahomey apparently learned French with the greatest of difficulty, so that to understand their speech was considered to be the greatest test " for those who flatter themselves that they have command of Créole."

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The Ibos were found excellent for work in the fields, yet difficult to manage, for the slightest fault-finding or ridicule caused them to commit suicide,

" the idea of which, far from terrifying them, seems to hold an attraction for them, for they believe in the trans-

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

> migration of souls. Too often it has come about that the *Ibos* of a given plantation have agreed all to hang themselves, in order to return to their country."

So well recognized was this tendency of the Ibo slaves to commit suicide, that they were described in Créole by the formula: "*Ibos pend' cor' a yo* — The Ibos (are those who) hang themselves." None the less, many slaves from this tribe were acquired. Their strong communal and tribal ties made it advantageous for those who owned them to obtain more of them, since newcomers "were accorded help, care, and instruction by those who had preceded them."

According to St. Mery, the Negroes most common in the colony came from the Congo coast and Angola, and were known by the generic term *Congos*. The *Franc-Congos*, who came from the kingdoms of Congo and Angola, were

> "of a docility and gayety that makes them much desired. Loving song, dance, and ornaments, they make excellent domestics, while their intelligence, their facility in speaking a pure Créole, their jovial countenances without markings . . . cause people to prefer them for house-servants; they also make good laborers and good fishermen."

That the large numbers of Congo Negroes imported into Haiti have left no more of the elements of their culture in the island than are found is perhaps due to this very devotion to their masters, for a lively tradition of the present tells how, during the slave revolts, the Congo Negroes most often remained on the side of their masters and most often betrayed their fellows.

Not all the Negroes from the Congo area were as amiable as these just mentioned. The *Mondongos* had "the most execrable excess of eating their fellows." This quotation gains special significance because of the prominence which it has

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

175 162 266 567 been given through its use to substantiate the many charges of cannibalism in Haiti that have been made. Yet those who, desirous of establishing such cannibalism, quote this passage from St. Mery do not always remember to quote it in its complete context:

> "Some of these butchers of human flesh are also brought to Santo Domingo . . . where, as in Africa, they are the horror of the other Negroes, notably of the Congos, who, because of their nearness to them [in Africa], are most exposed to their cruelties." [4]

174 162 567 These are thus the tribes who were presumably the most important in the Negro ancestry of the Haitians of today. Was there any least common denominator in language which made it possible for slaves fresh from Africa to communicate with one another after their arrival in Haiti? Was there sufficient similarity in their cultures so that this might form the basis for a retention of African beliefs and behavior despite the vicissitudes of slavery? And what were the characteristics of the African civilizations of these people?

171 174 197 567 The picture of West African life, as it is commonly drawn, emphasizes the great number of small tribal groups following dissimilar modes of life, speaking mutually unintelligible languages, and worshipping different gods. In a very general sense this is not untrue. On the face of it, the number of languages that are spoken in the area from which the slaves were derived would seem to have constituted an effective barrier not alone to any concerted action on the part of slaves, but even to communication between them, especially since in many regions of the New World it was a fixed policy to separate slaves from the same tribe.

Yet behind this semblance of sharp dissimilarities lies a basic unity of language and culture in all of West Africa, so that though languages were and are mutually unintelligible, structurally and idiomatically they are much the same. This

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

is why Créole, not alone in Haiti, but also in Martinique, in Trinidad, and in Louisiana, like Negro English in other portions of the New World, shows such consistency in structure and idiom. The slaves, having mastered a requisite number of words in the language of their masters, merely poured them into this mold of their own linguistic patterns and, approximating the phonetic values of such words in terms of the West African modes of speech, thus established a means of communication between one another, no matter what their tribal derivation.[8]

The region of West Africa which furnished the slaves was an area of great and settled political entities. Here were to be found the Fula and Mandingo empires in the western portion of the area, and the Hausa kingdom in northern Nigeria; the Ashanti and Fanti states in the Gold Coast, and, to the east, the kingdoms of Dahomey, of Yoruba, and of Benin; southward, those of Kongo and Loango. In all this vast territory law and order reigned, and regimentation of behavior under the direction of kings and priests was the rule. With this went a discipline that so deeply stamps African tradition that even the many years of European dominance have not been able to efface it.

The social life in this area, as well as its political organization, is to a very considerable extent a unit. Polygyny, the institution whereby a man may have more than one wife, is found in the entire region. Everywhere descent is counted on one side of the family, either the male or the female, and the larger significant relationship groupings that are composed of those who regard themselves as descended from a single and often mythical totemic ancestor are equally characteristic. Discipline rules within the family as well as outside it and is exacted from the earliest days in the life of a child. Needless to say, it is a far cry from this ordered state of society to the disorganized life which the stereotype of the "savage African" envisages.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

171 Despite the influence of Mohammedanism in the north,
171 there are certain similarities in religion to be found every-
● 567 where. Even among the Mohammedans, magic is as potent as it ever was, and as St. Mery correctly observed for his time regarding the Mohammedan slaves, the aboriginal gods have by no means been forgotten. On the west coast and in the Congo, however, pagan religions having a degree of complexity which accords with the complexity of the other aspects of these civilizations are found everywhere. Magic constitutes only one aspect of these systems in which pantheons of deities, each pantheon and each member of each pantheon with its special function, are held to control the destinies of the world and of man. The ancestral cult is another important aspect of West African belief, with the spirits of the dead envisaged as living on in another world, yet alert to manifest power for good or evil among their descendants. Not only in cosmology, but in ceremonialism as well are there patterns that characterize all West Africa. The worship of the gods through the dance, and the phenomenon of possession of devotees by their deities; the place of song in worship, and the special character of this music; the use of drums and other percussion instruments such as the rattle and iron gong in religious rites; these again are elements which all slaves in Haiti, no matter what their tribal affiliations, had in common.

171 Nevertheless, as one studies Haitian folk-custom and folk-
174 belief today, recognizable survivals of traits from the cultures of all the tribes that have been named are not to be found in anything approaching a comparable degree. Little of Sene-
[567] galese practice is to be seen at present, while similarly, at least in the valley of Mirebalais, far less Congo derivatives can be discerned than would be expected when the vast number of Congo slaves imported into Haiti are recalled. Practically no traces of Gold Coast or Ivory Coast custom and belief are discoverable; the word "Ibo" appears from time to time, and several Ibo gods are worshipped; Nago deities, as will be seen,

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

CHAPTER II

WHAT THE SLAVES FOUND IN HAITI

THOUGH by the time of the French Revolution "the immense army of slavery had increased to such proportions that in the face of it the white world seemed reduced to a mere handful of men,"[1] this was by no means the case in the earliest days of the colony of Santo Domingo. As late as 1681 the whites outnumbered the Negroes almost three to one,[2] and it is not until a hundred years later that, in the words of St. Mery, there were "eleven and three tenths slaves for one white."[3]

Yet in the fashioning of the present-day culture of the Haitian peasants, this "mere handful," exerted an influence out of all proportion to its size. That this should have occurred is not strange in view of the relationship between Negroes and whites, which was that between slaves and masters; that it did occur is amply shown in the contemporary accounts of Haitian and West Indian life, which tell us how the Negroes everywhere made conscious efforts to achieve the standards of those who to them represented power, wealth, and position. But while the prestige of the master-class must be acknowledged, care must be taken not to accept uncritically an assumption that has colored many accounts of the lives of primitive peoples who have come into contact with European

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

[History of Haiti in 17th–18th Centuries – The Haitian white population]

175 563 his freedom for ten thousand *livres*, "which," an official report stated, "will be used to build prisons in the Cul-de-Sac." Another did so well in his new home that, though his past was known, he was never molested and died the owner of twenty-two Negro slaves.[7] Others who came to Haiti were sent there for reasons of waywardness, or because they had been involved in escapades that threatened trouble for them or their families, or because, showing no aptitude for gainful employment, their relations chose to send them to the colony rather than to be burdened with their support. Of these early colonists de Vassière says, with apparent justification: "In truth the morale and the manners of this population were what they might be supposed to have been, execrable."[8]

These categories, however, do not give the full tale of the non-Negro peoples who eventually contributed of their blood to the present-day Haitian population. In the earliest times [564] the Spaniards sold white as well as Negro slaves to the New World, as numerous *assientos* testify. Before the time of French control of the western portion of the island, Haiti must have received her proportion of these unfortunates.[9] French women, many of them women of the streets, some mere girls who had come from convents, were imported in the early days to encourage the buccaneers and the filibusters to lead a more settled life.[10] In 1696, when the French abandoned the island of St. Croix, its inhabitants, both masters and slaves, were transported to Haiti, there to re-establish themselves on land allotted to them by the government.[11] Acadians from Newfoundland were landed at the Mole St. Nicholas in 1764, and, as has been mentioned, some of them were eventually settled in the valley of Mirebalais, there to disappear after a few years.[12] At about the same time, in accordance with a policy of increasing the white population, 2,470 Germans were brought to the island. Unlike the Acadians, these people thrived and developed an extensive cultivation of coffee, and their colony was in a healthy state at the time of the French

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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The Haitian White Population]

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baths or public halls, were in operation, while in the towns of Cap Français, Port-au-Prince, Leogane, Saint-Marc, and Cayes, theaters were established which produced "the latest plays from Paris" and attracted large audiences.[20]

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Despite all this, the canker of homesickness constantly gnawed at the colonists even in the towns — the feeling that a stay in the colony was only for the interval needed to allow a man to escape to the mother country with a fortune. On the estates the loneliness and isolation of plantation life are commented upon repeatedly. A letter of the period, without place or date, found in the family papers of the historian de Vassière, discusses this with poignancy:

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"Have pity for an existence which must be eked out far from the world of our own people. We here number five whites, my father, my mother, my two brothers, and myself, surrounded by more than two hundred slaves, the number of our negroes who are domestics alone coming almost to thirty. From morning to night, wherever we turn, their faces meet our eyes. No matter how early we awaken, they are at our bedsides, and the custom which obtains here not to make the least move without the help of one of these Negro servants brings it about not only that we live in their society the greater portion of the day, but also that they are involved in the least important events of our daily life. Should we go outside our house to the workshops, we are still subject to this strange propinquity. Add to this the fact that our conversation has almost entirely to do with the health of our slaves, their needs which must be cared for, the manner in which they are to be distributed about the estate, or their attempts at revolt, and you will come to understand that our entire life is so closely identified with that of these unfortunates that, in the end, it is the same as theirs. And despite whatever pleasure may come from that almost ab-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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solute dominance which it is given us to exercise over them, what regrets do not assail us daily because of our inability to have contact and correspondence with others than these unfortunates, so far removed from us in point of view, customs, and education." [illegible]

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This letter speaks of the presence of five whites. The psychological state of the planter who, unmarried and alone, spent his days without the companionship of a fellow-being who as much as shared a common language with him may well be [illegible] vailing sense of caste was so strong that while these ate with the head of the estate, they did not live under the same roof, for they were subordinates and were treated as such. For his most constant companions the owner had his house-servants, unless he maintained a mulatto concubine who cooked his food and looked after his personal wants, shared his confidences, and reported to him any disaffection on the part of the Negro slaves. It is understandable that, having made his fortune, the planter did not delay his return to France, where, once back in Paris, he lived lavishly on the revenues from his estates; and letters in the Ministry of Colonies show the extent to which this phenomenon of absentee ownership characterized pre-Revolutionary Santo Domingo."

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Haiti being thought of as but an interlude in a man's life, the loosening of moral tone so complained of in contemporary works resulted, and with this went the many forms of display in which these colonists indulged and those other aspects of colonial custom which were so often ridiculed by European travelers of the period. The distance of Haiti from Paris, or, in a later period, the time which had elapsed since the French loss of Haiti, has, however, lent an enchantment to "Créole life" which is reflected in an idealized portrayal of this existence, much in the manner of the effusions on the graciousness and glamour of life in what is termed "the old South." [illegible] One

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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cannot read the extended narrative of the young Comte de C***, reprinted by de Vassière, without questioning this myth of the idyllic life of the Haitian Créole, even though allowing for the disdain with which an exiled Parisian dandy of 1730 would regard the inhabitants of outlying possessions, and allowing also for the savory wit of the man, which undoubtedly led him to underscore the more diverting situations which he encountered.[38] 175 181 563

Mention must be made at this point of the two great divisions of the white population which, as the colonizing period continued, were created by the distinction between those born on the island and those who had migrated there. These divisions cut across the two categories of urban and country dwellers, both of which numbered Haitian-born and native European members. At the time of the French Revolution about three quarters of the whites on the island had been born outside the colony, while of those born in the colony, women comprised the major portion.[39] Haitian-born persons were known by the designation *Créole*, which, according to a definition of the period, included all those "who have first seen the light of day in Santo Domingo" and was, as it is today, a term employed in all the West Indies and in Louisiana.[40] This designation was by no means restricted to the whites, however, for there were Créole Negroes as well as Créole whites; at the present time in Haiti a distinction is even drawn between locally grown "créole" rice and that which is imported! 175 563

It is common knowledge that slavery not only affects those who are held in bondage, but deeply influences the master-class as well. In Haiti the role played by the institution of slavery in the formation of the character and personalities of Créole children brought up in a setting of servility, cupidity, brutality, and terror must have been of the utmost importance. The bad temper and domineering nature of Créole youths is commented on again and again by writers of the period. Owing to the unhealthy climate and the failure to 567 175 155 563 858 571

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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maintain adequate hygienic conditions, the health of these children was usually poor, so that from earliest infancy they were spoiled by their parents and servants; their least wishes were gratified, and their least complaints immediately rectified so as to make them petty tyrants in their households. This tyranny was most often exercised over the family slaves. Regardless of the assiduous care these young despots received, and despite the adulation lavished upon their young charges, the Negro servants were seldom sufficiently prompt or adequate in their attentiveness to escape the punishments, often severe, that were meted out to them at the behest of their young masters. This tyranny extended to the play-life of the young Haitian-born white. Surrounded only by the slave children of the plantation, he commanded his contemporaries even more imperiously than his parents commanded the grown slaves.

> "Whatever he saw, he wanted, whatever was shown him he demanded; and if some fatality brought it about that one of his small companions resisted him and he became irritated, they would hurry from all sides in response to his cries and those of the young unfortunate, who, his color having destined him for submission, learned soon enough that he would be forced to give way, perhaps even being meted some punishment to penalize the disobedience of one who had not yet the instinct for servitude."

175 563 567 591 [839]

Grown to manhood, the young Créole continued to act as master of all he surveyed. Imperious, quick-tempered, spoiled, his life lived in large part among slaves, when his sex drive stirred, he took what slave women pleased him. Eventually he married, to be tormented with the thoughts of the possible infidelity of his wife; the more tortured because of his extreme vanity and because, while demanding faithfulness from his spouse, he was continuing his affairs with his Negro women.

[157] Yet he had some excellences of character, as well. "Frank,

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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affable, generous perhaps to the point of ostentation, confident, brave, a sure friend and a good father "[28] — such are his good points as set down by one who was perhaps surer-eyed than others in seeing his deficiencies, though these traits seem to have concerned more his relations with his fellow-whites than those which affected his bearing toward his Negro slaves.

The young Créole women of this same environment were destined for early marriage — too early for their best development, whether physical or mental. Given to exacting the fulfillment of their slightest caprices, they were, like their men, creatures of passion. If they survived their first pregnancies, which as a result of too early marriages often came before they were physically in condition to support the rigors of childbirth, they soon lost their youthful allure and became the unattractive women of the type so maliciously described by the Comte de C***.[29] In such cases they frequently survived not one but several husbands. Their associations were chiefly with their Negro women slaves, who were full confidantes, sleeping in the same chamber with their mistresses and on occasion sharing informal meals with them, though they never ate at the same table. And because, by a fine turn of irony, these Negro women were often at the same time the concubines of the husbands, brothers, or sons of their mistresses, they were as often as not treated alternately with the greatest tenderness and the harshest brutality.[30]

Whatever the inner life of white Haitians, native-born or Créole, outward ostentation was the rule. In the cities poorly furnished houses were cared for by a numerous retinue of uniformed retainers; "the supreme achievement for a European being to have himself served, he hires slaves while he waits for the time when he can own them."[31] In the country, too, life was lived on as lavish a scale as possible. This is not the place to describe the houses of masters and slaves, or the buildings needed for working sugar-cane or indigo or preparing coffee, or their distribution over the plantation, for nu-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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175 merous contemporary accounts, and most present-day works,
105 give both texts and illustrations which make the economy of
563 the plantation clear.[33] Though many stories of the magnifi-
567 cence of plantation life are found in current works, writers
342 of the period seem to agree that but little attention was paid to convenience. Inventories of the contents of houses show
175 that furnishings were at a minimum; a few chairs and small
105 tables in the sitting- and reception-rooms, beds and minor ac-
563 cessories in the way of furniture in the bedrooms, dining-room
352 tables and chairs and a cabinet for dishes. These pieces were usually built in the colony and made of native hard woods; substantial, they were essentially plain. As Baron Wimpffen remarked, "Taste, Sir, is still Creolian at Saint Domingo; and, unfortunately, the Creolian is not the right taste, — it smells too much of the *Boucan*."[34]

175 The table set was not distinguished. Meat, though the most
105 important dish at the principal meals, was poor, but, on the
567 other hand, fish, game, and wild fowl were excellent, and the
563 best of French wines were available.[35] Whatever the fare, how-
352 ever, it was served in the grand manner, often on plate rather than chinaware, and by the many liveried house-servants which every great establishment could boast. An account of the mode of service has been preserved in the reminiscences of one who, writing some years later of a repast served him in 1787, says: "There were many more of these domestics of both sexes than there were diners. I could but admire their attention to the smallest details of the service, the whiteness of their clothing, and the beautiful kerchiefs in the Créole manner elegantly arranged about the heads of the women. . . . But [291] all of them moved about on bare feet; this was the distinctive sign of slavery."[36]

175 As portrayed in contemporary works, Haitian white life is
181 seen to have been lived entirely in terms of material goods and
105 of display. Just as there was little intellectual life, so religion
777 was but a matter of form. One M. de Larnage, writing from
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Petit-Goave on 25 June 1743, complains that it is unbelievable "what indifference the people of these districts have toward spiritual matters." [46] So little attention was paid to the rites of the Church that when the baptism of an infant was to be performed, it often proved difficult to find a godfather who had taken the sacrament, and many children were therefore never baptized. As might be expected, the churches were in a bad state, often having no more than earthen walls and floors, roofed with thatch, and being used as threshing-floors as well as places of worship. The description which Père Labat has given us of a church at Cap Français,[47] and of the manner in which the communicants conducted themselves during such services as were held, shows the decadence of the one religion that had any place among the white inhabitants. The clergy, too, reflected this same decadence. For though the early libertines who posed as priests were later replaced by members of such orders as the Jacobins, the Jesuits, and the Capucins, even this did not end the scandals that, from the first days of the establishment of the Catholic Church on the island, marked its ministrations.

What impression must the Negroes have obtained from their opportunities to observe the life of their masters? What patterns of behavior, what moral codes, what concepts of the way in which the Europeans regulated their own lives and, as officials, regulated the lives of others, must have been stamped on the minds of these Africans? That the present emphasis on the importance of wealth, or that a love of and demand for display, should characterize Haitian life of the cities today is not strange. Nor is it difficult to comprehend how certain other aspects of Haitian life that have so been underscored in the last half-century by those who have written of the Haitians should have developed from this initial stimulus — not to the extent to which this emphasis would lead one to believe, to be sure, but enough to give a basis for the exaggerations which have been published.[48]

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CHAPTER III

WORKING THE AMALGAM

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THE FIRST slaves brought to the New World — those Negroes needed, according to the familiar account, to replace the Indians who preferred death to bondage — reached Haiti in 1510.[1] The sanguine hope of the colonists that the labor of one Negro would be worth more than that of four Indians was, however, not borne out by experience, for the work of these slaves was far from satisfactory, and their death-rate was distressingly high.[2] Yet though they were found to be useless in the gold mines, their owners were more than compensated by the discovery that they made excellent laborers in the cultivation of sugar-cane and the making of sugar. So profitable was this, indeed, that Haiti, with the rest of the West Indies, came to be known as the "sugar islands," and it is recounted how "the magnificent palaces erected by Charles V at Madrid and Toledo were built solely from the revenues obtained from the monopoly of the crown on the importation of sugar from the Island of Espagnole."[3]

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During these early times the fundamental rule of slavery in Haiti was laid down: "In all that has to do with slavery, custom is everything, the law is nothing."[4] In 1518 one Zuazo, a licentiate, writing to the King, stated that the control of Negro slaves depended entirely upon the treatment accorded them. "Some of those I found on my arrival were thieves,

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

while others had fled to the mountains; the first group I caused to be beaten, and cut off the ears of the others, and since then no complaint has been heard." [6] Charlevoix also tells of the brutal treatment of the early slaves; how the Negroes were given even less consideration than the Indians, since there was not only much greater difference in skin color between them and the whites than between the color of the Indians and the Europeans, but the added reason existed that

> " slavery, as far as the native Indians were concerned, was based solely on the right of the most powerful, whereas in the case of the Negroes, they having been bought and sold by their own people, it seemed that one need have less scruple in making them bear the full weight of their servitude." [6]

The rapidity with which the slave-trade grew, especially in the latter portion of the seventeenth century and the eighteenth, need not be stressed here. With the passage of the western part of the island into the hands of the French following the provisions of the treaty of Ryswick in 1697, and as a result of the picturesque but predatory activities of the buccaneers, who did much to demoralize the Spanish regime, French participation in the trade grew apace,[7] so that slightly more than a half-century later seven " companies " were engaged in carrying Negroes to the French possessions in the New World.[8] Though in the earlier decades of the eighteenth century Martinique was the best market, Haiti, because of her vast resources, came to absorb the greater part of the available slaves.[9]

From the earliest times most of the slaves were destined for work in the fields, but some were employed as house-servants. These latter had the greatest opportunities to learn the ways of the whites and, moreover, since many of the women were mistresses of their owners, not only did a mingling of traditions and modes of life result, but a merging of

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

the blood-streams of the two races as well. And though in the custom of French Santo Domingo, as elsewhere in the New World, even a suspicion of Negro ancestry was sufficient to cut a person off from social intercourse with white society, yet these mixed-bloods were to become an important factor in establishing the patterns of Haitian Negro tradition, just as their descendants were to exert no small influence in the development of Haitian culture after the establishment of independent Haiti.

Numerous terms designated the various degrees of crossing, some of which, surviving in present-day speech, are familiar to us, such as the words "mulatto" and "quadroon." But examining Moreau de St. Mery's painstaking analysis of the various possible amounts of crossing that could be recognized, reading his speculations regarding the smallest proportion of Negro blood that could be regarded as negligible, noting how he traces Negro blood to its last vestige, as in a cross which would give one part Negro as against 8,191 parts white, a telling impression is received of the great significance of race-crossing for the Haitians of that time.[10] Such words as *sacatra*, *griffe*, *marabou*, *métif*, and *mamelouc* not only gave information as to the amount of crossing represented in the persons designated by them, but even indicated which parent, father or mother, was white and which one was wholly or partially Negro. Crossing was by no means restricted to matings between white masters and their slave women, for records show that Negro men did not fail to hold an attraction for their white mistresses. Nor did all the sharpness with which the color-line was drawn prevent actual marriages between whites and persons of color. In such instances, however, the white person was cast out from association with his fellow-Europeans, as the name applied to him, *mésallié*, sufficiently shows.[11]

Slavery cut across all these varying degrees of color, so that just as there might be free Negroes who were wholly African

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in descent, so there were "colored" folk who were slaves. As time went on, the lighter-colored slaves were usually employed as house-servants rather than field-hands, bringing about a continuous dilution of the Negro blood that flowed in these strains, and a lightening of their skins. And such was the prestige attached to light color that the mixed-bloods, even though slaves, felt themselves superior to free Negroes of undiluted African stock. This attitude derived from the fact that the lighter slaves were most often manumitted, particularly if they were the children of their owners, and that in other situations, when as slaves they gained the favor of their masters, they were permitted to engage in some remunerative enterprise with the proceeds of which they eventually might purchase their own freedom. These free people of color, or *affranchis,* formed an important part of the Haitian population in pre-Revolutionary times,[13] and played a principal role in the development of Haitian culture. It was through them that European civilization flowed, since because of the closeness of their contacts with the whites they were the instrument by means of which the aboriginal African heritage of the slaves was modified to produce the forms in which it is found in Haiti today.[15]

Yet for all the importance of the freed mixed-bloods in the attainment of Haitian independence and in the fixing of the patterns of Haitian culture, they, like the whites, were but relatively few in number, their strength being but from five to ten per cent of that of slaves.[14] In attempting to analyze the manner in which the present amalgam that is the civilization of Haiti was formed, it is consequently necessary to revert to a consideration of those who were in the majority, the full-blooded Negroes. The tribes from which these Negroes were principally derived have been indicated, together with the outlines of the civilizations of the region of Africa from which they were drawn. To this must be added, as has been for the whites with whom they came in contact, an analysis of the so-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

cial classes to which they belonged, as well as the circumstances of their enslavement, their treatment in Africa before shipment to the New World and during the voyage, their initiation into their new mode of life, and the manner in which they lived as slaves, since all of these facts had considerable bearing on the processes which shaped the behavior of their descendants who now inhabit the island.

The integrated political organization of West Africa has been described, as well as the important fact that the class stratification in that region was almost as fixed and its social implications almost as far-reaching as in France. Even the early writers recognized that not all slaves came from the same ranks of society, just as they understood that there were various ways in which enslavement could be achieved. Père Labat, who lived in the West Indies for many years, listed four classes from which slaves were drawn. First, he says, were those whose punishments against native law had been commuted to perpetual banishment — that is, to slavery " for the private profit of the kings "; second were the prisoners of war; third were those who, already the slaves of native princes or of those persons to whom they had been given by these princes, were sold to meet the need of their masters for money; while fourth, comprising the greatest proportion of the slaves, were those snatched from their homes by the marauding bands of robbers who, with the connivance of native rulers, carried on these raids to satisfy the demands of the European dealers.[18] This classification and others of the period, though generally accepted and repeated by later writers, tells little concerning the ranks of society from which the slaves were drawn, except as this may be inferred. For this one must go to present-day West Africa, where a lively tradition of the slave-trade has survived and offers valuable supplementary information.[19]

In the light of the existing traditions in Dahomey and Nigeria, it is evident that from the point of view of the African, Labat's four classes must be compressed into two — the

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

"The Mina Negroes have even been seen to recognize princes of their country . . . prostrating themselves at their feet and rendering them that homage whose contrast to the state of servitude to which these princes have been reduced in the colony offers a striking enough instance of the instability of human greatness." [17]

Yet another group of Africans played a significant role in determining the trends Haitian Negro culture was to take. It is a commonplace among those who have studied New World Negro life that African religion has shown greater resistance to white influence than any other phase of African culture. And to explain this one must again turn to native African tradition. The beginnings of the West African monarchies, whose ruling dynasties eventually came to command great stretches of land, were in tiny principalities that continually "warred" against each other. Tradition has it that the most intransigent of the conquered were the priests of the indigenous local cults, who, because of their activities, were punished with what native idiom still terms "banishment." In the New World these intractable priests continued their rites for their fellow-slaves and instructed the next generation so their knowledge would not be lost to the people. Before their enslavement they had been men of power and influence, and this pattern, carried over in all its strength in the New World, continued them and their descendants as natural leaders. Hence, wherever the opportunity presented itself to strike for liberty, they invoked the spiritual forces to reinforce the power and courage of the military leaders who, like them, had been sold into slavery because their countries had been conquered, or because they had rebelled against the succession in their own lands.

The composition of the slave population as inferred from these traditions is thus seen to be somewhat different from

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that commonly assumed, since the conclusion is inescapable that, if anything, the slaves formed a group whose aboriginal types showed a weighting on the upper end of the African social scale rather than an overwhelming proportion of the less desirable members of society. Such an assumption goes far in explaining how the "slave psychology" generally attributed to Negroes of the New World was anything but a real part of their inner lives, and makes as well for an understanding of the extent to which the Negroes suffered their slavery with a constantly active discontent that is rarely given proper recognition in the study of the history of the period, and to which the drive toward freedom and the traditions of their native land were kept alive despite the restraints imposed by the masters.

Once in the net of the slavers, however, the status of any individual mattered but little, for to the European dealers each Negro was but an added unit of cargo. All last traces of his dignity as a human being were taken from him;[18] in the grants for earlier slaving operations, and in the manifests of the ships of that time, slaves were not even invoiced as human beings, but as "pieces of the Indies" — fractions of the perfect slave, who was conceived as having a height of seven *quartas* of a little more than ten inches each. Under this practice, the stature of each slave, child or adult, having been recorded, the total length of the members of the cargo was divided by the requisite number, and thus reduced to so many of these "pieces of the Indies," the actual number of human beings in the cargo not figuring.[19]

It is unnecessary to detail the horrors of the passage to the New World, for the story has been too often told. One can but conjecture what its effect on those subjected to it must have been, especially when it is viewed as an introduction to their contact with the Europeans who were to be their masters. That the mortality on the voyage was high is well known, but death encountered while the shackled slaves passed the dan-

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gerous bar of the African coast in the native canoes, which often overturned in the surf, is seldom mentioned in the literature of the slave-trade. Yet this was perhaps as great a cause of loss of life as the hardships of the journey to the coast or even the voyage across the Atlantic. 175 567

Arrived at their destination, the slaves were given a period of rest so that they might be in the best of condition when they were placed on the market, to be inspected much as the more costly horses or heads of cattle were appraised. Sometimes the period between the voyage and their purchase was a lengthy one, since they were often held in "warehouses" for extended periods in order to regulate the market. Eventually, however, they were disposed of and, taken to the plantations, branded with the mark of the new master.[20] Induction into plantation life followed a fairly definite pattern: the new slave was first of all "introduced" to the principles of Christianity through an interpreter and then, according to his age, placed in one of the three work-groups which every plantation of any size possessed; the "great" one, composed of the most vigorous men and women; the second, to which the adolescents, the feeble, and the women who were nursing their infants were assigned; and the third, made up of children, who, under the watchful eye of an elderly woman, gathered forage. For the second and third groups the work was not too strenuous, but the members of the "great" work-group labored almost without rest except for the two hours a day allowed for meals and the few hours at night for sleep. And while conditions varied from plantation to plantation, the many contemporary accounts of the unrelenting manner in which the slaves were compelled to work at top speed testify to the harshness of the regime.[21] Small wonder that Charlevoix, contemplating the life of the slaves, wrote the moving paragraphs he composed concerning the hardships of their existence, and the slight compensations their labor afforded them.[22]

Despite the obvious fact that under such conditions the con- [178]

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175 178 567 [177] tinuation of African cultural traditions was not easy, certain things did persist. While the material facts of the life of the slaves was at once subordinated to European patterns — in dress and implements and to a certain extent in housing, for example [23] — yet in other matters they could live as they had lived in Africa. Thus one account of the time, quoted by de Vassière,[24] tells how the slaves carried on communal hoeing, timing their strokes to the rhythms of songs that begged some favor of their visitor, or to songs of praise (and, when the white observer was not present, undoubtedly also singing songs of derision), in the characteristic African fashion that, as will be seen, has survived in Haitian peasant life to this day. Similarly their traditions of cooking, of eating, of fixing the time for their meals (despite St. Mery's comment that "the Negro has no other rule of eating than the demands of his appetite"), of respect for their elders; their attitudes toward death and their rituals of burial, their dances, their songs, and, above all, their non-Christian religious beliefs, all continued to be stamped with the mark of Africa.[25] On the other hand, opportunities to learn and imitate French customs were by no means neglected, for the prestige of the masters filtered through the ranks of the slaves until it reached even the field-hands, for the nearer in service the Negro was to the person of his master, the more Europeanized was his behavior and the prouder he was and the more he exploited his opportunities to follow European patterns of habit.[26] Not only did the house-servants imitate French dances,[27] but we are told how in Martinique, for example, all the slaves were taught these figures.[28] In the field of religion, also, the efforts of the Church to capitalize the royal edicts which made baptism of the slaves compulsory were far from vain, at least in so far as the outward manifestations of their acceptance of the faith were concerned. Writings of the time, however, do not omit comment on the discouragement of the missionizing Fathers who seriously undertook this task, because too often

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the baptism of their converts was followed by serious lapses from the faith, especially under conditions of stress.[19]

One of the most revolting aspects of the institution of slavery, wherever found, is the cruelty with which the suppression of human individuality is prosecuted. In this the French colony of Santo Domingo was no exception, as the list of more ingenious punishments, aside from the more usual ones such as whipping, which were devised to keep the slaves in line, demonstrates.[20] What is more important here are the defenses the Negroes built up against them. Recourse to suicide was especially common, and though the popularly accepted explanations for this range between the desire of the slave to destroy himself because he knew he was valuable property of his master, and the conviction that suicide was one way of achieving his return to the African homeland,[21] there is no reason to assume that, following African tradition, the belief that the ghost of a helpless slave could through suicide become powerful for evil and thus wreak his vengeance did not also figure.[22] But equally widespread in all the New World were the allied weapons of revolt and escape.

Both in the experience of the individual slaves and in the history of New World slavery this tendency to revolt began early. In the former case, many tales are told of how on the march to the African coast, or in the slave barracoons, or on board the slave-ship, the possibility of a desperate dash for freedom had always to be guarded against.[23] Concerning the latter, it is not generally known how early in the history of Negro slaving revolts did occur. The Negro slave-trade began with shipments of slaves to Haiti in 1510; the first slave uprising in Haiti, in 1522, thus took place only twelve years after the commencement of the traffic.[24] In the New World possessions of Spain eleven other rebellions are recorded between the years 1522 and 1553, of which those of 1533, 1537, and 1548 occurred in Santo Domingo.[25] During the following century two revolts took place, one at Port de Paix in 1679

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and another in 1691. The object of this latter rebellion was to massacre all the whites in the district, but it was discovered before the uprising could be effective, and its leaders were executed. Still another incipient revolt in the region of Cap Français was put down in 1704.[26]

In the main, however, there were too few opportunities for united action on the part of the slaves from any considerable area to permit the idea of a general revolt to germinate and grow into action; such rebellions as occurred in the years that followed were local affairs, and were principally the result of specific abuses. Yet the fear of them was always with the planters, and of this fear the *vodun* cult, characterized by St. Mery as being potentially "a terrible weapon" in the hands of the leaders of the cult, was the symbol and crystallizing agent.[27] That there was no lack of realization of the danger to the colonists from slave uprisings is made clear in letters of the period written to France; as early as 1685 M. de Cussy, reporting to the Minister of Colonies in Paris, stated: "In the Negroes we possess a formidable domestic enemy," while a hundred years later an officer of the armies of the King who was also a plantation-owner in Haiti expressed the opinion that "a colony of slaves is a city under constant threat of assault; there one walks on barrels of powder."[28]

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More frequently, however, the expression of protest took the form of *marronage*, of running away to the hills, a phenomenon not restricted to Haiti, since in other regions of the New World, notably Jamaica and Dutch Guiana, the runaways maintained themselves so successfully that they were accorded their independence by formal recognition, as was also done in Haiti in 1784.[29] Figures on the extent to which slaves made off into the mountains tell the measure of their desperation; in 1720 alone, a thousand Negroes gained their freedom in this manner; in 1751, at least 3,500. Some of the leaders of these bands were men of great ability, and the depredations they engaged in caused serious losses to the planters

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in the regions where they operated. The most renowned was Macandal, a "Guinea" Negro, who was finally apprehended and executed in 1758.[40] His name lives today in Haitian peasant tradition, where folkloristic versions of his exploits as one of the earliest of the liberators are still recounted. The pages in St. Mery which tell how the strength of the bands in the mountains behind Croix-des-Bouquets necessitated a constant augmentation of the militia on duty there, is additional evidence of the success of these runaways. The same author's description of a group operating in the parish of Jacmel, found in 1785 to number among its members men more than fifty years of age who had been born in the freedom of the mountains, shows how long the escaped Negroes were able to maintain themselves without capture.[41]

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The very tradition of *marronage* was important. Psychologically, it held out to the slaves a hope, more than ephemeral, of escaping their servitude, and in consequence allowed them to maintain an attitude of mind that kept many of them from becoming a prey to despair. From the point of view of the growth of Haitian culture, moreover, the groups of runaway slaves offered a ready means for the continuation of African traditions and patterns of behavior. Though but few descriptions of the manner of life led by the fugitives in their mountain encampments are to be had, it is apparent that in order to maintain confidence in their own powers of resisting capture and re-enslavement the runaways guarded assiduously all memory of African belief and practice, while even in the material aspects of their existence they tended to revert to aboriginal modes of life. Finally, however, and most important for the future course of Haitian history, was the training of these runaways obtained in the ways of warfare, and the continuation of the warrior tradition among the Negroes. This is one of the reasons why in 1791, when Boukman and his followers stirred the first general slave revolt in the north, the blacks were ready; also when in the course of

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175 the development of European history the French Revolution
●569 sharpened the latent antagonisms between the various classes
669 of whites in the colony, between the whites and the free persons of color, and between masters and slaves, the way had been prepared for the operations of the great military geniuses, Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, through whose leadership the freedom of Haiti was finally achieved.

175 It is not necessary here to give, even in outline, the course of Haitian history during this period of rebellion and afterwards, when Haiti was welded into a single Republic, for this has been often recounted.[48] Nor is it of importance here to continue the well-known political history of the Republic, with its many rebellions, and its wars with the Spanish portion of the island that finally resulted in the formation of the Republic of Santo Domingo; with the brief existence of the "empire" of Faustin I; and with the culmination of this history in what has been called a period of anarchy that brought about the occupation, so recently terminated, of Haiti by the American Marines.[49] Other questions, which concern the social history of independent Haiti, have been given less attention, and only tantalizing hints of their answers appear in the writings of those who have treated of the developing country. How were the impulses toward the mingling of Haitian and French aspects of culture, set in motion during the period of slavery, working out during this time? What influences dominated the scene, once the whites had been finally eliminated? What mechanisms permitted the African traditions brought by the slaves to hold their vitality? It is as through a haze that one glimpses the inner development of Haitian culture after independence; and the glimpses are the dimmer when comparison is made with the many clear and detailed descriptions of the earlier life of the island.

175 It is only by a close reading of the works of such travelers
117 and foreign officials as Hanna, Mackenzie, St. John, and Hazard, that any information of this kind can be obtained. The

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

attitudes of these writers were in the main far from sympathetic toward Haiti, and their interests extended but little to the customs of the great masses of Haitians. That the fear of slavery was still alive in the early part of the nineteenth century is apparent from an incident related by Mackenzie;[44] that, some decades later, the sense of racial differences continued to exist is evident from folk-sayings about the characteristics of whites, mulattoes, and Negroes recorded by St. John.[45] The concept of rank seems to have maintained itself in its full flavor, with no lack of social classes in Haitian urban society and no lack of vigor in perpetuating the earlier prejudices of caste.

The majority of the population remained on the land, for by 1830 the great estates had been completely broken up, and were cultivated in the main by small concessionaires. The dress of these country inhabitants seems to have remained much as it had been under French control, and the emphasis on good manners that so marks African social intercourse had been retained to such an extent that St. John, no admirer of the Haitian people, was forced to remark upon it.[46] Markets which were conducted in African fashion had been established, and these were supplemented by itinerant peddlers. The institution of *plaçage*, a reconciliation of African plural marriage with the monogamy of European custom, of which more will be said in a later chapter, was known in the early days of independence. The rites of birth and death were marked with their special ceremonies, and in both instances it can be seen that the African elements of the cultural heritage were not being forgotten. Dancing continued as the principal form of recreation, and to the traditional dances, which still persist, were added European styles.[47]

Above all, African religious customs were being observed. *Vodun* rites continued to flourish and magic was practiced as in the days preceding independence, as is to be seen from the notorious and all too often repeated tale of the "Congo bean

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Mirebalais

585 munity. All others stay under the brush shelter which has been erected at the side of the house, where men are served the common drink of the Haitian peasant, *clairin*, raw rum. The feast, furnished by the bridegroom, includes beef, pork, and many fowls. "We do not eat badly at a wedding!" is the comment of Haitians. At the weddings of more prosperous folk there may be dancing, but no *vodun* dances are danced. "This is not a thing of *vodun*, but of the Church," is the explanation proffered.

The feasting begun, the bridal couple must submit to much speech-making. Long "lessons in morality" are pronounced by grandfathers, godfathers, and elderly male friends; in fact, anyone moved to speak expounds upon "the road to follow" for the good, the worthy life, and many a warning is given with moving examples of the fate of those who disregarded the counsel given them. The food and drinks consumed, the speech-makers silenced, and the dancers tired, the wedding guests begin to take leave, until by sundown many are gone, and soon the young couple find themselves alone.

175 That plural marriage has existed in Haiti since the time of
595 independence is evident from the available accounts. Little
567 can be learned of slave matings prior to 1804, but it may be assumed that these were in the main temporary and existed at the will of the masters; and while the practice of polygyny among the slaves must have been difficult, if only because of the greater proportion of males, the African pattern seems to have had enough vitality to bring about the re-establishment of the institution as soon as slavery was abolished. Thus, writing in 1830, Makenzie notes a man "not inaptly named 'Taureau'" who "though his means were small, and his cottage still smaller . . . had a harem of no less than six wives."*

175 St. John, some fifty years later, also remarks on the fact that
595

> "In the interior, a well-to-do black lives openly with several women as wives, and I have seen the patriarch

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Microfilm

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Another deep-lying source of the attitude taken toward the Negro concerns his supposed readiness to suffer his slave status. To find the assertion that the Negro is a born servitor, best adapted to caring for those of a higher order in the biological world, it is not necessary to search among the statements of those who, before the Civil War, issued variations on this theme in support of their position. Yet otherwise why did the Negro accept his slave status to the extent to which he did? And, further, just how great was that acceptance? Again, in analyzing the material from Haiti, light is thrown on both questions. Slavery as an institution was one of the few patterns of his new life that rang familiar to past experience, for, as has been seen, slavery — and not necessarily household slavery, but that of the plantation variety which prevailed in the New World — was deeply ingrained in African tradition. Even then, once in the New World, certainly in Haiti and to a far greater extent than is ordinarily grasped elsewhere in the region where slaving prevailed, his acquiescence in his new status was but briefly held, if at all. The tale of slave revolts, beginning but a few years after the original introduction of slaves into Hispaniola and continuing there and elsewhere in the Caribbean, the Guianas, and North and South America until the abolition of slavery, has yet to be told. When it is realized that these rebellions were intermittent throughout the period and took place everywhere in the region; that they resulted in freedom for the Maroons of Jamaica and for the slaves who escaped from the plantations of Haiti before the French were expelled from the island, and in the eventual attainment of independence by the Haitians and, *de facto*, by the Bush Negroes of Dutch Guiana; and that everywhere they held the white population in terror of life and property, the significance of these episodes as pointing the error of current concepts concerning the inner make-up of the Negro is patent. Add to this the revolts of slaves in the barracoons of Africa itself, and on board the ships which

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

brought them to the New World — " revolt insurance " was often carried by the masters of slave-ships — and the demonstration of the falsity of this concept of the Negro as a born slave is complete.

These ideas, however, are fundamental to the Negro problem as it exists at the present time. Admittedly, it is no simple matter to change points of view so generally held, especially when to the weight of economic drives is added the force exerted by the depth in tradition at which they lie. Nevertheless, when current attempts to solve the " Negro problem " come to mind, one is struck by the slight attention paid to such factors as these. Simple solutions, rapid in their operation, are almost invariably sought and inevitably rejected when immediate resolution of the difficulty is not forthcoming. Does it perhaps occur, again pointing lessons derived from the Haitian material, that there are forces of unrecognized power at work which derive from the elementary fact not only that, as has been stated, cultures in contact influence one another, but that in contact they exhibit far greater tenacity than is ordinarily credited them?

The cultural heritage of the African, it has been seen, was not a negligible one. In the entire area from which Africans were drawn it was of sufficient unity so that the differences between the behavior of peoples was but a gloss on the deeper resemblances between their traditions. The slaves were brought to the New World, North America as elsewhere, in great numbers, so that many persons from the same tribes remained in contact with each other. Even though this were not the case, no insuperable linguistic barriers existed. For as with cultures, so with languages; though mutually unintelligible, they were so based on the same grammatical constructions, and so presented the same idiomatic expressions, that the language of the masters spoken in the old patterns sufficed to preserve and hand on the traditions of the forefathers.

What of the belief in the United States that nothing of

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1968) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

to marry work to play, drudgery to singing, and despair to hope. In his complicated world, life and death are simply different aspects of the same thing. Those who die live as long as people remember them. And those who are alive in the physical sense are receptacles for the spiritual forces that exist on all sides—the echoes of the dead, the multitude of spirit beings, good and evil, and dancing and music.

What are the origins of this simple and complicated man?

The beginnings of the Haitian came with the discovery of America and the establishment of slavery in the New World. When the Spanish colonizers first began to organize the economy of the new colony of Hispaniola, as they called it, they attempted to enslave the indigenous Caribs to work the fields. But the Indians of Haiti found no sense and no comfort in the new system. It violated their views of life and destroyed their culture. They were proud, and they were not resilient. They did not care to pan gold for the Spaniards or to grow sugar for them. They died under the conditions of slavery, or fled into the mountains, or took to the sea in their canoes, looking for sanctuary on other islands where the Europeans had not yet settled. They left the rich earth of the Haitian valleys to the conquistadores. In less than eighteen years the new Spanish colony was dying on the vine for lack of laborers. It was then that Spain, like France, England, and Portugal, turned its eyes to Africa. There were old precedents. The Spanish and Portuguese had for many years used the African for labor. They had had intimate contact with Africans during the Moorish invasion of Iberia. And the slave trade had been an old and familiar thing even before the discovery of America.

The first Africans sent to Haiti arrived there in 1510. The precise origins of these first African immigrants to the New World are not known, but they came from somewhere along that long stretch of African coast between Senegal and Angola. It was a great crossroads in world history. As much as any other ethnic group, these Africans and those who came after them built America. They, as much as any other, turned the West Indies into a prize over which the nations of Europe fought for three hundred years. And in Haiti, as in Brazil, the United States, and other American nations, they raised moral and ethical issues for the peoples of European stock which have not been solved to our own day.

The acquisition and transportation of slaves is an old and familiar story. Slavery was an ancient institution in some parts of Africa. Some of the wars between kingdoms were, in part at least, huge slave raids. In other wars, the taking of slaves was only incidental. But the selling of these human chattels to European merchants came as easily to African chieftains as it did to Arab entrepreneurs. Often they were merely selling off

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1963) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

175 "surplus" stock. The African's motives sometimes were political rather
569 then mercenary—to weaken and disperse unfriendly neighboring tribes. Occasionally, members of a royal family, possible contenders for tribal power and all the perogatives that went along with it, were "exiled" in this extremely effective and final way. Although Africans were the victims of this monstrous commerce, it is clear that without the participation and coöperation of other Africans the slave trade as it existed in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries would not have been possible. The African, along with the Asian and the European, shares the guilt for the indecencies and degradation that grow out of human barter.

The voyage to the New World was at best horrible and inhuman. Nothing that can be said about the manner in which the captains of the slavers attempted to care for their cargoes can change the picture. The slaves suffered from thirst, disease, hunger, seasickness, and impersonal brutality. The anxiety and dread which these captives must have suffered in anticipation of things to come are difficult to imagine. A strange, unfamiliar world awaited them across an ocean larger than Africa itself. Some slaves killed themselves. Others who had survived long overland marches died of exhaustion or disease aboard the slave vessels. And many a slaver had to report in its log that a number of chained males, taking advantage of a brief spell on the upper decks, had leaped into the sea.

But among those who reached port in the New World there was a fierce determination to survive. The history of African slavery in the Americas is full of accounts of resistance and revolt against the European masters. The shipwrecked slaves who took over the Island of St. Vincent and came to be known as the Black Caribs, the Ashanti who revolted and vanquished the Dutch armed forces in Surinam, the Maroons of Jamaica, and the ex-slaves of Haiti who destroyed Napoleon's armies, all bear witness to the unquenched spirit of those millions of Africans exiled from their own land.

175 Whereas the Indians of Haiti were not resilient, the Africans were.
162 More and more slaves were poured into Hispaniola. By the eighteenth
569 century the slave population represented countless tribes and kingdoms of West Africa. There were Senegalese, Foulas, Poulards, Sosos, Bambarras, Kiambaras, Mandingos, and Yolofs from northwest Africa. There were Aradas, Mahis, Hacoumas, Ibos, Anagos or Yorubas, Bini, Takwas, Fidas, Aminos, Fantis, Agouas, Sobos, Limbas, and Adjas from the coast and interior of the great bulge of Africa. From Angola and the Congo basin came the Solongos, the Mayombés, the Mousombés, the Moundongues, the Bumbas, the Kangas, and others. Although there is no official record, Haitians themselves say that there were also those tall

people known as the Jangheys, or Dinkas, from the region of the Upper Nile, and Baganda from Uganda.[1] A few proper names that have survived, such as Ras Méké, suggest that there may have been men from Ethiopia among them. Old slavers' records show that numerous shipments were made from Madagascar and Mozambique on the East African coast.[2]

These transplanted people came from all classes and stations of life. Some were criminals condemned and sold by their own tribesmen; others were prisoners captured in intertribal raids or by Arab slave hunts. There were men of royal blood among them, as well as artisans and tribal scholars. The slave cargoes included leaf doctors, bards, musicians, wood carvers, metalworkers, drum makers, boatbuilders, hunters, and farmers.

In Haiti they were thrown together into a common mold. Shoulder to shoulder in the plantation fields were Bambaras, Anagos, Takwas, and Bumbas—peoples with different backgrounds, different languages, different legends, and different traditions. There were Moslems and so-called pagans, herdsmen and river-boatmen. Each of them brought something of his past and unwittingly poured it into the new amalgam that was to be the Haitian.

And into this amalgam flowed some of the literature, the traditions, the religious thoughts, and the superstitions of Europe. Under Spanish, French, and English rulers the slaves were constantly subjected to ways and ideas that were new to them. They absorbed and digested, and out of the diverse and even contradictory elements they worked out new patterns of life and thinking. This was the strength and resiliency of the West African in the New World. His capacity for adaptation and for remembering what was valuable to him and forgetting what had ceased to be useful preserved his spirit and his pride.

Among the things that were lost in this vast process of adaptation were the traditions of wood carving, bronze and brass casting, and weaving. Remembered, however, were music, dancing, games, religious beliefs, concepts of nature and the supernatural, folk tales, and legends. It was the outward, material things that were abandoned, and the inward, nonmaterial things that tended to survive.

The slave system itself was largely responsible for the loss of special arts and skills. Craftsmen with specialized knowledge in metalwork were set to repairing wagons and hoes, or they simply wielded hoes in the fields. Wood carvers found no patrons to encourage them to carve images and stools. The colonial emphasis was on mass production of sugar. Other things were valueless. There was little leisure or incentive for the slave to follow his artistic aptitudes.

[1] [The name Ganda survives in Haiti as the name of a deity. Cf. P. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]
[2] [For foot note, See Category 116, P. 349--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1837-1863) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

17 And yet the things that survived were able to do so, in certain respects,
797 because of the particular brand of thinking of the colonial masters. Why
●567 has so much of the African past survived in Haiti when it has been all but obliterated in the United States? The answer lies primarily in the Catholic background of the Europeans who controlled the colony—first the Spanish, and then the French. The Catholic Church regarded every slave as a soul to be saved, as a complete and finished man except for salvation. And though it was an official of the Church who is alleged to have suggested African slavery in the New World,[3] the Church itself took the view that the differences between the slave owner and the slave were only worldly and transient things. The Church did not insist on washing out of the African mind everything that was there. It regarded its mission as that of supplying the single quality that was lacking—salvation. Its attitudes during the past four hundred years in Haiti have been vacillating and erratic; it has often pressed for destruction of the African cults; but on the whole it has been satisfied with conversion.

The Protestant churches in Haiti, on the contrary, have demanded that their converts become new people. They have forbidden their adherents to take any part in non-Christian rituals or other activities—including even the dance. They have presented them with a simple and painful choice.

These were the essential attitudes that prevailed during slavery days in the United States. In the beginning, while plantation owners fought against church activities among the Negroes, the church and the plantation owners were largely united in their war against "heathen" practices. Africanisms which might have either died in due course or persisted were stamped out with Puritan fervor. Significantly, it was in French-Catholic Louisiana that African-style drumming, singing, and dancing survived in the United States to the beginning of this present century.

The Catholic attitude of tolerance-by-necessity in Haiti won for it most of the country's four million souls. Today, many a Haitian who participates in the rites of Vodoun on Saturday worships in a Catholic chapel on Sunday.

Such sporadic efforts as were made to wipe out African memories in Haiti were unsuccessful. Slowly the uprooted slaves found a common denominator. The peoples of different origins developed a common language based on the French spoken by the masters. Their different religious systems merged one into another.

17 The necessity for adaptation and amalgamation produced a cultural
181 hybrid of an energetic and vital kind. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the people of African descent in Haiti were a cultural alloy, fired

3 [Bartolomé de Las Casas. Cf. p. 349, Category 116. --Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

rather starve than work. An Englishman, James Franklin, wrote in 1828, for example:

> Experiments may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coercion and want will impel the Haytian to labour; and I have my doubts as to the practicability of enforcing labour in Hayti until the people have been better instructed, and their characters become changed.

As Franklin summarized it: "Nature is too generous to the Haytian; he never wants, and so never works for hire, as do free labourers in other countries."

The early nineteenth century saw a flood of such bitter comments about the remains of the once rich and flourishing French colony of St. Domingue. The vast productivity of Haiti under French rule had made that colony one of the richest in the New World. The country was dotted with sugar mills, brick-covered wells, and warehouses; and carefully built brick aqueducts, irrigation canals, locks, and dams assured water for the plantations. In 1790, under the slave system, Haiti had exported 163,000,000 pounds of sugar. In 1826, a quarter of a century after the revolution, it was reported to have exported 33,000 pounds.

This falling off in production and exports doubtless had many causes, but one of the most significant was the Haitian's revolt not only against slavery but also against continuing the same kind of work he had performed as a slave. He saw not too much difference between forced, unpaid labor and working for any large landholder at subsistence wages. To the Haitian slave the inspiring battle cry of the French Revolution did not mean that all men would work together on another's man plantation and receive the same wages. It meant that every man would have his own garden to work for himself as he chose; every man would be a full citizen, with land of his own, free to come and go, to plant what he wished, to sell what he could. Despite long years under a colonial slave system, the Haitian still remembered a different way of life in Africa, where mass production for export was not the primary objective of labor.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the population of Haiti was not much more than half a million—less than one sixth of what it is today. There was plenty of land, and much of it had not yet been wasted by constant tilling and erosion. When the French were driven out, the Haitian peasant re-created an economic world of his own liking. The plantation system which had poured out sugar and coffee and indigo for Europe faded away, and in its place there sprang up an agrarian system which has continued until the present day. In the early

[Franklin, The Present State of Hayti, p. 362. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1968) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 122]

10. The Arts– Flour, Wood, and Iron

It is the nonmaterial arts and traditions that have thrived best in Haiti through the years of slavery, political unrest, and poverty. Religious concepts, music, dancing, folk tales, proverbs, and games are found everywhere in profusion. Material arts of the past have fared less well. Today, nothing is left of the old African knowledge of wood carving, metal casting, appliqué work, and weaving. Why such major African arts have died out in Haiti is no mystery. They disappeared simply because there was no place for them under the slave system or in the new Haitian society which followed it.

Under the colonial masters, the demands made on the New World African were for coffee, cotton, and indigo. His creative talents were channeled into carpentry, masonry, and the building of facilities for production. There were no traditional artistic outlets or patrons for the wood carver, and no need for the weaver. Nor, during the years of slavery, was there much leisure for the craftsman to do his work even for the fun of it, should he be so inclined; indeed, this approach to wood carving or any other art would have been little understood or appreciated by most West Africans. A man who made an art object purely and simply to express a creative urge rather than to fill an express need would have been regarded as slightly eccentric. The old West African wood carvings with which we are now familiar were made because they were *required* for some purpose. A figure of a deity was needed in a shrine, a carved protective guard was needed for the household, a grave marker or a ceremonial mask was obligatory.

In Haiti the needs of those who ruled were different. The slave with knowledge of the forge was not put to work making spears, ceremonial axes, and the like; he was assigned the task of making grillwork for houses, hinges and bolts, iron tires for coach wheels, and metal parts for the sugar mills. The anonymous African ironworker did his job well.

[P. 148]

13. Comments on the Mighty: Political Songs

* 533 538 626 178 The African-style song of social criticism has found no worthier subjects than the historic political figures of Haiti. There is no doubt that the African slaves used this art form to express their feelings toward the white masters as they had used it to comment upon the behavior of their own chiefs and fellow tribesmen. The worthy leaders were praised in song; the unworthy were castigated and their sins, failures, and social misdemeanors publicized in folk songs. By the beginning of the
● [569] nineteenth century, slavery had come to an end in Haiti. The deep democratic sense of human dignity had outlasted the colonial masters
* 533 538 626 178 666 and emerged tempered and sharp. The songs of criticism became not only comments upon political figures but campaign propaganda as well. They dwelt upon the accomplishments or faults of the candidates for political office. Friendly songs sought out every virtue, and invented others, in the man or woman being praised. Unfriendly songs lashed out and lacerated or poked biting fun at the subject, not even sparing his physical deformities.

* 533 538 [666] [173] Yet the political songs are more than statements of merit or fault. Cumulatively they are a kind of folk history of Haiti. No political aspirant ever went unsung by his peasant army, or unridiculed by his opponent's followers. The songs the people sang about their heroes and their enemies recall events and details that formal history has forgotten or ignored. The memory of the folk song is powerful and long. Some of the recollections go back more than a century.

195 412 [643] History books tell us that in December, 1843, Major Charles Hérard aîné Rivière was elected to the office of the presidency, and that a new constitution was drawn up by the Constituent Assembly. The new constitution was an accomplishment of the liberal and democratic forces of the nation. It guaranteed certain civil rights to the people. It provided that judges be elected instead of appointed, abolished life terms for

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 349]

Notes

Chapter 1: *The Making of the Haitian* (pp. 1-7)

[1]The name Ganda survives in Haiti as the name of a deity.

[2]Herskovits, in *The Myth of the Negro Past* (p. 47), provides a tabulation of raw data found in the manifests recorded for slaves shipped to Virginia between 1710 and 1769: 20,964 slaves were reported shipped from "Africa," 3,632 from Gambia, 6,777 from "Guinea," 9,224 from Calabar, 3,860 from Angola, and 1,011 from Madagascar. Of those shipped from the island of Madagascar, 473 were listed as coming from Mozambique.

[3]Bartolomé de Las Casas.

Chapter 2: *Man and the Universe: Vodoun* (pp. 8-18)

[1]See Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 7.

[2]Schweinfurth in *The Heart of Africa*, II, 31, says: "In Loango all exorcists and conjurors are called *ganga*." Leo Wiener, in *Africa and the Discovery of America* (Philadelphia: Innes and Sons, 1922), III, 32, reports: "Forms of *ganga* have in Bantu the meaning 'medicine' but also 'magic'—such as Nyika *ganga* and Kongo *nganga*."

[3]Gorer, *Africa Dances*, p. 120; Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 208 ff.

[4]From the Fon *houn-so* or *houn-su*. Among the Arada of Dahomey a *houn-su* was regarded as a spiritual wife of the deity. She was a servant of the cult temple, and in some instances a wife of the cult priest.

[5]Translated from the French of Aubin, *En Haiti*, pp. 57-59.

[6]Deren, in her *Divine Horsemen* (pp. 119 ff.), gives an excellent report of a service for Agwé in a boat at sea. Aubin (*op. cit.*, p. 108) seems to have given the first description of this service at sea for the loa Agwé.

[7]Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. 119.

[8]*Ibid.*, p. 123. Leyburn advances the theory that Vodoun developed during this period as a result of the vacuum left by the Church. Although the Church did in effect leave the field to the African cults, one must assume that the Arada, Congo, and other cults were already organized and possessed of great vitality before the Haitian revolution. Implicit evidence points to a continuity of cult life from the earliest days of the African on Haitian soil. There are no statistics to reveal the extent of cult membership at the end of the eighteenth century, but the content and form of Vodoun today are so overwhelmingly African that it is difficult to think of Haitian cult activity as the product of a renaissance.

Chapter 3: *The Loa: Gods of the Haitian Mountains* (pp. 19-39)

[1]The term *vodoun*, used in this precise sense, conforms to the original Fon (Dahomean) usage. The term *hounsi*, also of Fon origin, signifies "spirit" and belongs to the same root

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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[p. 14]

II

FRENCH COLONIAL ORIGINS

175 648 FRANCE'S wealthiest colony in 1791 was, and had been for decades, the small territory of Saint-Domingue, as Haiti was known at that time. It had belonged to France for less than a century. French freebooters and buccaneers of the seventeenth century actually presented the colony to their mother country, for these sea rovers, harrying the Spanish Main, used as a base for their predatory raids the small island of Tortuga (La Tortue, The Turtle) off the northern coast of Haiti. They often came over to the western part of the large Spanish island of Santo Domingo (Haiti), then almost deserted, to shoot wild cattle for food; then they would hasten back to Tortuga for safety. At first Tortuga had been shared by English, Dutch, and French buccaneers, but gradually the French came to outnumber the others, so that when the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697 concluded the War of the Grand Alliance, France claimed and Spain ceded the western third of the island of Santo Domingo. The English and Dutch were meanwhile picking up other Caribbean fragments of the decaying Spanish Empire.

175 563 24 The early years of this new French colony were unimpressive, the majority of its residents being former buccaneers, who could hardly have regarded agricultural life as other than dull, and who certainly did not make successful farmers. Only when new immigrants from France in the seventeen-twenties demonstrated that steady profits could be made by raising indigo, sugar, coffee, and cocoa, all of which flourished in the region, did the era of prosperity begin. [464] [439] Plantations were soon staked out all over Saint-Domingue. The great problem was to find adequate labor for the fields. Whoever had crops to sell was sure of a ready market, but crops would not grow 175 without cultivation. Since there were no natives in Saint-Domingue 24 for the French planters to exploit, the colonizers chose the other 567 favorite alternative of the eighteenth century: Negro slavery. In the 1730's Saint-Domingue began to compete with England's North American colonies for the cargo of the steady stream of slave ships from Africa. There is no indication that the supply of blacks ever

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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equaled the demand for them; in 1791 the census listed half a million then living, but no writer seems to have even a vague idea of how many millions were imported during the sixty years of the colony's heyday.

Production, particularly of sugar and coffee, steadily increased until the tiny colony ranked among the wealthiest regions of the world. The Spanish Indies were declining, so that Saint-Domingue alone far outranked them all combined between 1766 and 1791. Splendid roads were built, extensive irrigation projects developed, and stately mansions erected. Life moved along with ceremony and display—for the planters; attended by their black lackeys, the white French masters entertained royally or were driven like lords in their coaches to make formal visits to neighbors. Many of these well-to-do colonials spent half their time in Paris, ostentatiously spending their riches. To be "wealthy as a Creole" came to be a common expression in France.[1] Perhaps nowhere in the Americas was existence at once so delightful and so ornamental as it was for the wealthy planters among the 36,000 whites of Saint-Domingue in 1791.

For the mother country, too, this small bit of tropical land was profitable during the latter days of Bourbon royalty. Neither Martinique nor Guadeloupe could compare with it in value. In 1789 nearly two thirds of the foreign commercial interests of France centred in Saint-Domingue; its combined exports and imports were valued at more than $140,000,000; its sugar, coffee, indigo, and cotton supplied the home market and employed in prosperous years more than 700 ocean-going vessels, with as many as 80,000 seamen.[2]

Where wealth exists, social distinctions generally develop. In Saint-Domingue the evolving class system produced such discord that sparks from the French Revolution eventually set off an explosion in the colony. Casual surveys of Haitian history generally record that in 1791 the slaves revolted, and that out of this insurrection grew the war of independence. This is true; but it was not the resentment of slaves against their masters which caused the final explosion; the slaves were tinder used by others to keep the conflagration burning. Negro slaves, of course, did not figure in the "class" system; they were below the classes of colonial society. The class system, properly

1. The word "creole" means only "colonial born"; there is no connotation of race mixture in the term.

2. Pamphile de Lacroix, *Mémoires*, II, 277.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 speaking, consisted of the three groups known as *grands blancs, petits*
565 *blancs*, and *gens de couleur*.[3] Although no precise English term will translate either of the first two categories, the former embraced the important whites—owners of large plantations, wealthy merchants, and high officials of the state; the latter designated all other whites of the colony—shopkeepers, artisans, small planters with only a few slaves, little people busily engaged in social climbing, and shiftless whites lazily slipping downhill. The 28,000 gens de couleur included all free persons who had African blood in their veins.

It is highly probable that without this third group there would have been no violent outbreak in 1791, no achievement of final independence in 1804, and no such caste system as exists in Haiti at the present time.

175 That there were free people of color in the colony was due to a
567 code of laws emanating from Louis XIV, who died in 1715, years
641 before Saint-Domingue had shown any signs of becoming prosper-
648 ous. In 1685 the Grand Monarch had issued a Code Noir to cover all colonial dealings with Negro slaves. Article 59 specified that when a slave secured his liberty, either by cash purchase or by gift of his white master or parent, he was to be regarded as a full French citizen. He might own land, dispose of his wealth as he pleased, bear testimony in legal cases (even against whites), marry as he pleased, vote, bear arms, travel where he wished, embrace any career, own slaves or free them. To Louis and his ministers such provisions probably did not seem particularly magnanimous, for race prejudice was not a characteristic of the French, and it could hardly have been supposed that enough slaves would ever be freed to create much of a problem.

175 In the course of the next hundred years, however, many persons of
563 color in the colony achieved their freedom, and with it French citi-
641 zenship. The greatest number had been granted their liberty because they were the children of white masters by Negro mothers—for race mixture is always a concomitant of white ownership of black slaves.
[595] Concubinage was so regularly practiced in Saint-Domingue that it was considered quite normal. If many of the first freedmen were
563 mulattoes (half-white, half-Negro), by 1791 their descendants might
175 be quadroons, octoroons, or near-whites, for consciousness of skin

3. The gens de couleur were also often called affranchis, freedmen, a term which strictly would be inaccurate as applied to a free colored person of the second or third generation.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

color predisposed a freedman to separate himself, by marriage with a 563
person at least as light as himself, as far as possible from his slave 175
ancestors.[4]

Aside from paternity, the chief reasons for freeing a slave were 175
faithful or extraordinary service, and the readiness of a master to free
his concubine. By the time of the Revolution many of the free col- 567
ored people had not known slavery in their families for four generations, while still more had been free for two or three. During the century many had acquired wealth by inheritance from former owners. Their close association with well-to-do white planters had [556]
instilled in them the desire to improve their economic fortunes as well as their culture; friendly relationships with their benefactors afforded them the opportunity. Like the grands blancs, the prosperous gens de couleur sent their children to Paris for an education, and went there themselves for pleasure.

As the free colored people flourished, so also did the jealousy of the 175
petits blancs against them. "Society" in Saint-Domingue was beset, 565
as is any social system which has not yet the sanctity of long tradition, with heartburnings, intrigues, resentment, snobbery. Petit blanc aspired to become grand blanc; small planter longed to be received into the smart set of the wealthy plantation owners; creole resented the toplofty airs of the recent émigré from France. What was more irksome to the petit blanc than his own exclusion from high society was the acceptance into it of many colored people whose parents or grandparents had been African slaves. Since many of the gens de couleur were better educated and more cultured than the lower-class whites, inner consciousness of mental inferiority may have added fuel to the fires of jealousy.

The growing wealth of free colored people was notable in the latter years of the century. One fertile parish in the South (Jérémie) was almost entirely in their hands, while in every other part of the colony they had bought or inherited handsome plantations. They looked upon Saint-Domingue as their fatherland, not hoping (as did many of the whites) to retire to France to spend their fortunes, nor yearning (as did many slaves) to return to Africa. The less ambitious

4. Certain colonial writers diverted themselves by working out all the mathematical 114
combinations of blood mixture, with names for scores of the commoner varieties. 565
Since people with some part of white blood in their veins might mate with others of their own kind, with lighter or with darker persons, with black or with white, it can be imagined how complicated the question of race mixture might become.

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175 took their place in the business life of the towns, sending their chil-
565 dren to parish schools. Colored youths served in the colonial constabulary and in the militia, acquiring a knowledge of arms and warfare later to be useful to them.

175 Estimates of their wealth vary. Some say that in 1791 they owned a
565 third of all the land in the colony and a fourth of all the slaves; others
423 more conservative put the figure at one fifth of each. Even this is
567 impressive enough to account for much of the growing jealousy of
162 their position. And by 1791 the whites outnumbered them only ten to seven.[5]

562 White women in general added their support to a movement in-
595 stigated by the petits blancs for discrimination against all gens de
563 couleur. Many wives felt resentment against the colored people be-
175 cause of the frequency with which their husbands took colored mis-
581 tresses.[6] Moreover, the wealth of the colony attracted an immigration of Frenchwomen with marriageable but undowered daughters—in the candid French phrase, "*de filles à marier et sans dot*"—who seem to have assumed that young planters would want white French wives, even though impecunious ones. It was a shock to quite a number of them to discover that a colonial youth might prefer a colored girl who brought a dowry with her.[7]

175 Indiscreet affranchis often gave additional grounds for resentment
565 against their group. Wishing to dissociate themselves altogether
829 from their Negro ancestry and to be assured of social eminence, some accounted for their dark complexions by reference to obscure Indian progenitors. On this ground many secured letters patent from local government officials, of course on payment of a fee, legally estab-

162 5. The census listed 40,000 whites to 28,000 colored. L. E. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description . . . de la partie française . . . de Saint-Domingue* (Philadelphia, 1797), I, 285, gave the following figures for 1790:

	Square Leagues	*Population*	*Whites*	*Affranchis*	*Slaves*
North	480	195,000	16,000	9,000	170,000
West	820	194,000	14,000	12,500	168,000
South	186	130,000	10,000	6,500	114,000
Totals	1,486	519,000	40,000	28,000	452,000

6. One governor reported to Paris that he considered sexual jealousy the greatest cause of unrest in the colony.

7. See Sir Harry H. Johnston, *The Negro in the New World* (New York, 1910), p. 141.

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At Paris the following May, therefore, the thirty-seven delegates presented themselves. Only six were admitted as deputies. And the colonial skeptics proved correct in their apprehensions: revolutionary France soon became very much interested in the state of affairs in Saint-Domingue. 175 648

There had recently been formed in Paris a humanitarian group, considered at the time to be ultra-radical, whose announced purpose was the complete abolition of Negro slavery in all French possessions. Following the principle of demanding much in order to gain something, these *Amis des Noirs* concentrated their most serious efforts on regaining for colored colonial freedmen their former political rights. The recently promulgated "Rights of Man" made it very difficult for the French National Assembly[11] to deny the proposal of the Amis;[12] moreover, at this juncture the colored landlords of Saint-Domingue sent to Paris an offer to make the new French Republic a free gift of one fifth of their wealth on condition of being no longer subject to the creole tyranny of caste. 175 648 567 668

The strategical blunder of the self-assertive white planters having now become entirely apparent to their deputies in Paris, these left no stone unturned to thwart the objective of the Amis des Noirs. By indefatigable manoeuvring they at least partially succeeded, for the National Assembly passed an ambiguous resolution which, while apparently granting political rights to colored people, nevertheless left the interpretation of the grant to already existing colonial authorities. 175 642 648

In the colony complete confusion reigned when news of the resolution was received. Colored people everywhere joyfully demanded their rights, only to be indignantly refused. The whites, with no intention of yielding an inch, were nevertheless undecided as to a proper course of action to pursue: one group wished to announce the colony's immediate independence from France, offering the familiar argument that only white planters knew how to manage the colony's peculiar affairs; the other group still cautiously counseled inaction and waiting for the storm to blow over. A young mulatto, Ogé, educated in France and encouraged by the Amis des

11. The National Assembly had succeeded the States-General.

12. The Assembly was finding "liberté, égalité, fraternité" as uncomfortable a motto to live up to as Americans were finding their own declaration, in 1776, of belief in the "self-evident" proposition that *all* men are created free and equal.

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175 Noirs, having returned to Saint-Domingue to campaign for the
648 political rights of his group, led with his friend Chavanne a demon-
642 stration at Cap Français. The white authorities seized and executed them with notable brutality.

175 This occurred in March, 1791. In May came the news that the
648 National Assembly in France had finally yielded to pressure, and had
563 decreed that men of mixed blood born of free parents should be
565 admitted to representation in colonial assemblies. The chagrin and anger of the whites at this decree was so violent that the governor-general of Saint-Domingue immediately suspended its operation.
175 The issue was now clearly drawn: free colored men knew that they
●567 would never secure their rights except by force. But before they
669 could bring to maturity their plan of action, suddenly the calculations of both parties were completely upset. The Negro slaves revolted.

If ever slaves had reason to rebel, the Negroes of Saint-Domingue did. The same harshness which the whites showed to free colored people marked the treatment of black slaves; and as racial antagonism deepened, white masters seemed to become utterly heartless in their treatment of the inarticulate blacks. Allowing for the exceptions which accompany most generalizations, it is clear from the record that the planters were, in the main, callous, ruthless, some of them even fiendish, in their treatment of slaves. Flogging a man to death was not uncommon; certain slaves were buried alive; pregnant women were forced to work so hard that miscarriage resulted. Some of the punishments meted out were merely brutal; others were torture; and some were sadistic, the masters relishing the pain they were causing. A certain slave in the North was nailed by his hands to a wall, and then, after standing all day in the burning sun, was made to eat his own amputated ears. A woman planter had the tongues of all her slaves cut out; another woman caused the starvation of her maid by having a gag fixed around the child's head.[13] Visitors to the colony in the 1780's often commented on the general want of self-control on the part of the planters—their violent gusts of anger and passionate outbreaks over trifles; and the victims of these outbursts

13. An officer of the court of the Negro king Christophe later wrote in two volumes a gruesome account of the treatment of slaves by French masters in the latter days of the colony. Although certainly exaggerated, it probably contains a measure of truth. See Baron de Vastey, *Réflexions politiques sur les noirs et les blancs* (Sans Souci, 1817); and *Essai sur les causes de la révolution et des guerres civiles d'Hayti* (Sans Souci, 1819).

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were the slaves. Most of the blacks accordingly needed only leadership to arouse them and direct their vengeance. 175 567 669

Very little of the background of the insurrection is known. The certain facts are these: on the night of August 14, 1791, at a pretended Vodun ceremony in the woods of the Turpin plantation, during a violent storm, several wily and powerful slaves laid plans for a general uprising. Their intentions were communicated, apparently by drum signals, to neighboring plantations. Six days later the attack began, the blacks in that section of the North indiscriminately slaughtering every white man, woman, and child on whom they could lay their hands. From this centre the massacre spread, accompanied by general arson, until practically every plantation in the fertile northern plain was a shambles. The whites who had escaped destruction cowered in the capital city.

The insurrection of 1791 returned measure for measure to the planters for their previous cruelties. Whether one reads accounts written by Haitian patriots or by white apologists, the story is the same: the ferocities on both sides were almost incredible. Blacks gutted children and raped women, whites broke captured Negroes on the wheel, poured boiling oil in their ears, and flayed them alive. The Reign of Terror in France was decorous by comparison. The pent-up hatred of decades was working itself out.

Against half a million riotous blacks the handful of whites had no chance. All who could leave the country fled precipitately. The gens de couleur, on the contrary, although at first alarmed, soon discovered that the revolting slaves were inclined to be friendly to them. They accordingly tried to turn the insurrection to their own purpose, to seize the rule of the colony now being depopulated of whites. France, herself in turmoil, sent over various commissioners whose thankless duty it was to try to restore order; but they were incompetent, often worked at odds with each other, and sometimes engaged in actual treachery. Matters were, if anything, complicated by their ministrations. 175 669 [648]

In addition, Spain and England, always ready to harass the French, sent troops into Saint-Domingue on the pretext of trying to put down the slave insurrection lest it spread to their neighboring colonies of Santo Domingo and Jamaica. The French general in the colony, Laveaux, would shortly have been defeated if help had not come from two natives, one a well-to-do mulatto, the other a black [648]

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For three months Toussaint's vigorous fighting broke the force of the French attack; one white army was swept away. But Toussaint made two fatal errors of judgment: he relied upon his trained army with its Negro generals, instead of arming his half-million Negroes for guerrilla warfare; and he trusted the pledged word of honor of Leclerc. His army fought bravely enough against the French legions, but the consensus of military experts is that Toussaint's officers, jealous of his domination and feeling that eventually France must win, treacherously gave over their posts and forces to Leclerc. Christophe surrendered on April 26, and Toussaint had no alternative but to put himself in Leclerc's hands. 175 648 726 728

Napoleon's private orders to Leclerc were positive and precise: "Follow your instructions exactly, and the moment you have rid yourself of Toussaint, Christophe, Dessalines, and the principal brigands, and the masses of the blacks have been disarmed, send over to the continent all the blacks and mulattoes who have played a rôle in the civil troubles. . . . Rid us of these gilded Africans, and we shall have nothing more to wish." Leclerc set himself methodically to carry out these instructions; by April, 1802, he had disarmed the blacks and received Christophe's surrender; the next task was to rid himself of Toussaint. By an apparently innocent invitation to dine and discuss the affairs of the colony, he lured Toussaint into his headquarters on June 10.[20] In the course of the meal Toussaint was seized, bound, and hurried on board a waiting ship. Haiti never saw him again; within a year he died of cold and starvation in a dungeon high in the Jura Mountains of southeastern France. 175 648

With Toussaint out of the way, it was now in order to proceed to the second part of Napoleon's plan—the rétablishment of slavery. Leclerc was to use his own discretion as to the precise moment and manner of announcing this. His instructions from the Minister of Marine, Decrès (June 14, 1802), read in part: 175 648 727 567

> As regards the return of the blacks to the old régime, the bloody struggle out of which you have just come victorious with glory commands us to use the utmost caution. Perhaps we should only entangle ourselves in it anew if we wished precipitately to break that idol of liberty in whose name so much blood has already flowed. For some time yet vigilance, order, a discipline at once rural and military, must take the place of the positive and pronounced slavery of the colored people of your colony. Especially the

20. There is evidence to show that Christophe suggested this stratagem to Leclerc.

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175 master's good usage must re-attach them to his rule. When they shall have
648 felt by comparison the difference between a usurping and tyrannical yoke
727 [apparently he means such a yoke as Toussaint's] and that of the legitimate
567 proprietor interested in their preservation, then the moment will have arrived for making them return to their original condition, from which it was so disastrous to draw them.

175 The plan to reëstablish slavery, however, was never carried out,
648 nor was its scheduled sequel, the occupation of Louisiana. The French
727 soldiers in Saint-Domingue began to succumb to an invisible assailant —yellow fever. The first French army of 17,000 men had been largely consumed in the task of conquering Toussaint's armies; the second was now being swept away by disease. Leclerc's letters to Napoleon pleading for reinforcements soon became frantic in their despair. Fever was weakening the army at the very moment when rumors of impending reënslavement were strengthening the number of active antagonists to the French. The black generals who had deserted Toussaint for Leclerc now swung back again to the opposition. Then Leclerc himself fell ill of the fever. Apparently all-conquering in June, 1802, by November he was dead.

175 This was the turning point in Napoleon's whole American policy.
727 The war had ruined Saint-Domingue economically; it had destroyed
721 plantations, paralyzed labor, and reduced the population to bar-
648 barism. To resume the conquest would have cost France heavily; the army dreaded service in a region where death was almost certain; the financial expense had been frightful: one year of war had consumed 50,000 men and several million dollars, yet at least as many men and as much money would still be needed before any return could be expected. Consequently, Napoleon decided to withdraw from his whole American experiment, saving face as far as possible. He appointed the brave but incompetent Rochambeau to succeed Leclerc, promised him reënforcements—and then broke the Peace of Amiens, so that France became embroiled in a European war. Affairs in Saint-Domingue (including the troops promised to Rochambeau) were conveniently forgotten after March, 1803; and the whole Louisiana territory was sold to the United States.

175 The end of French control in Saint-Domingue came shortly.
648 Rochambeau, as well as he could, waged desultory warfare, hanging, shooting, drowning, burning all the Negroes he could catch; hunting them with fifteen hundred bloodhounds bought in Jamaica for more

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175 material—Frenchmen who lived "in a deplorable state of morals,
171 too often recalling those of the freebooters and buccaneers" who were their ancestors and predecessors. Even when the calibre of the colonists improved, religion was a minor concern, business and pleasure pushing it well into the background.

There was no great antagonism toward the fathers; indeed, not enough attention was paid to the priests and their work to warrant any very strong feeling. It was indifference and insolence the fathers had to face, or, if they showed too great an interest in the welfare of slaves upon a plantation, suspicion and peremptory curbs. By the old [671] Code Noir under which the colony theoretically operated, masters were obligated to send their slaves to Mass on Sundays and feast days under penalty of heavy fines; the Code likewise prescribed the baptism of all blacks and their instruction in the Catholic faith. But just as the colonists ignored all parts of the Code antagonistic to their own economic interests, so specifically did they disregard the sections dealing with their religious obligations.

175 Some priests were in any case not too zealous. It was much more
193 agreeable to attend only to external forms, and so participate in the
662 charming life of high society, than to stand firm against laxity. If a
• 567 priest showed enthusiasm for his duties to his African charges he was
[792] almost certain to be accused by the planters of stirring up the slaves and undermining the foundations of colonial society. This was, in fact, the very accusation leveled at the Jesuits to bring about their expulsion from the colony in 1764. The example was not lost upon other priests.

175 "The safety of the whites demands that the Negroes be kept in
171 profound ignorance," said one of the later governors in a message to
563 France. This sentiment, perfectly expressing the conviction of the majority of planters, not only prevented any secular education of the blacks, but actually kept many of them from instruction in catechism, creed, or any part of the Catholic faith. If instruction is forbidden, few of the sacraments can be administered, for how can a person be confirmed, confess, do penance, if he know not even the first principles of the faith? Few masters objected to the baptism of slave children; on the other hand, they roundly disapproved of the sacrament of marriage for their blacks, since this might place an obstacle in the way of slave sales, and even open the way for assimilation of blacks and whites in the colony.

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Vodun, therefore, show the Catholic influence, exerted in the main unconsciously. 771 M

Unlike the great religions, Vodun lacks a formal theology. As has been said, no seminary exists for the training of priests and priestesses, no congress or college of fathers states or amends the creed; there is no church court to discipline the individual enthusiast, or catechism for the young; no scriptures or sermons are printed or read to strengthen the faith. Vodun is an informal religion of action, not a formal one of reason. It flourishes because it is malleable, adaptive, suited to the needs of a people living close to nature and without education. To give a single lucid description of this Haitian folk religion, created as it is by everybody and by nobody, is about as possible as to give one description of home life, which varies according to the couple. We may, however, outline the common elements of creed and practice. 794 771

2. *Formative Days*

To say casually that Vodun is African in origin is to say little more than that it does not stem from the great world religions. There is no unity in Africa today; there was still less in the eighteenth century when slaves were being imported into Haiti. At that period it was possible to find a new dialect and a different set of folkways every few miles along the western seacoast. Two slaves from one geographical region (the Gold Coast, for example) might not understand each other or have the slightest predisposition to sympathize with each other's customs. 771 174

Colonial planters experimented with slaves from various regions in Africa, just as they might compare breeds of horses; setting tractability off against originality, brute strength against skill, intelligence against health. In this quest for a perfect slave, Negroes were imported from all parts of the Dark Continent, from Senegal in the northwest around the five thousand miles of seacoast to Mozambique and Madagascar in the east. Partly because trading conditions were more favorable in the Dahomey and Congo regions, and partly because the qualities of Dahomean and Congolese were preferred, Negroes from these two sections soon came to predominate over others in the colony. Whereas "Congo" was merely a geographical term, implying no community of feeling among the natives living 175 567

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175 567 along that river, Dahomey was the name of a powerful kingdom under a political administration which embraced a fair amount of interchange of ideas and similarity of social institutions, including religion.

175 567 178 Discretion made the planters separate slaves who knew each other, in order to minimize opportunities for revolt among them. This policy, although it prevented the rapid growth of "slave" customs, at the same time dispersed Dahomeans all over the colony; beliefs and practices held in common among the slaves were likely to take on a Dahomean cast. Since their work was directed, their freedom of movement limited, and their family life broken up, there was practically no opportunity for the outcropping of *any* African ideas relating to economic life, government, property, education, or 175 marriage. The one sphere in which it was possible for Old World 178 beliefs to continue was the religious. No slave dealer could penetrate 796 the minds of his workers or silence their folk tales and folk songs in 771 the evening when work was done; even the strictest plantation 535 owners allowed dances in the slave quarters on Saturday nights and Sunday. It is the dance, a vital part of Dahomean religion, which seems to have formed the nucleus around which the diverse beliefs of African tribesmen grouped themselves, for it was a form of action which need not involve anything more than amusement or emotional release, if the participant were not religiously inclined. In the beginning, as Goethe observes, was the Act. To this simple Act of dancing, the Word, with thought behind it, could easily be added later. Practically all African tribesmen danced; and the numerous Dahomeans had a dance which was ostensibly for diversion but could be turned to a religious purpose as well.

771 171 174 Here, then, was the skeleton of a slave religion. Although every single African tribe had its own beliefs and ritual, each (so far as we know) had common elements with every other one. For example, all slaves, whether Senegalese or Angolese, believed in a multiplicity of spiritual beings, some of whom controlled the aspects of nature—lightning and storms, the sea, the sky. They thought that disease and other ill fortune came from spirits who must be placated in order to win back health and well-being. All felt that the normal course of events could be altered by magical spells, formulae, or charms; that one could bring misfortune to an enemy, luck to oneself, or ward off otherwise inevitable fate. Most of them had been accustomed to

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learn the properties of plants, both for healing and for poison. Except for the belief in spiritual beings, this folk knowledge would hardly have been classed as religious, for it was useful in every phase of daily life; the classification is that of the anthropologist, not of the simple black.

If Dahomean beliefs prevailed over others of African origin, it was chiefly because of the numerical preponderance of Dahomeans in the colony, together with the popularity of their religious dances. The Dahomean spirits or gods were Vodun; the dance in which the worshiper sought the inspiration of the spirits was a Vodun dance. Like all but the highly organized religions, this one recognized the validity of other beliefs. Its practitioners were not bigots. No hierarchy existed to keep out new accretions. Imperceptibly these were added to the original basic form: here an Arada spirit, there a Congolese prayer, and in many instances a Catholic saint, until the composite Vodun religion began to take shape.

There is no evidence that during colonial times Vodun was ever considered important by the white ruling class—certainly not as a faith. To most planters the word was the name for a vigorous dance. Judging from Moreau de Saint-Méry's description it was held openly enough, at times being witnessed by the whites as a sort of nocturnal diversion. Moreau knew, as did other whites, that there were "superstitious beliefs" connected with it, yet the offhand use of the word "superstition" was indication enough that the beliefs were not regarded as important. We have seen, however, what profitable use the slaves were able to make of the apparent innocence of their dances. When the idea of revolt began to germinate among them, gathering on each plantation at least once a week they had ample opportunity to hatch their plans. It is known that the campaign for revolt was developed partly under the stimulus of the Negro Boukman, a *houngan* or priest of Vodun. By means of drumbeats, which to the whites merely pounded out the rhythm for dancing but had for centuries been a means of communication at long distance in parts of West Africa, that ripening plot was telegraphed from one plantation to another. Even more important, perhaps, was the unity of feeling made possible, despite all incoherence of tradition and language, by the Vodun background.

The revolt of half a million slaves was a success. This fact has been rather too calmly accepted by historians of Saint-Domingue, who

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IX

HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDS

TOLERANT understanding of the ways of alien people is rare in matters relating to sex. Occasionally we may regard marital and sexual practices which differ from our own as amusing or ridiculous; more frequently we find them distasteful and disgusting. A long religious heritage has implanted in us a definite personal morality, familiar in Puritanism and in the codes of the great majority of early American pioneers. Accompanying and dominated by this religious aspect has been the legal idea of sexual morality. A middle-class tradition of private property, hence of orderly marriages legally recognized, has schooled us for centuries to approve certain moral and sexual rules: monogamic marriage, children born in wedlock, a public wedding ceremony by approved authorities, censure of sexual relations which might confuse the passage of property. Although sympathetic tolerance for foreign ways has never been an outstanding American characteristic, it is least evident in connection with divergent sexual practices. We do not remind ourselves of the utilitarian basis of a part of our own sexual codes.

Where people have economic and social backgrounds different 577
from those of Western Europe and the United States, other codes 171
will prevail. Elements which have made American moral standards 831
what they are were lacking or appeared in different form in Haiti. Instead of middle-class European tradition there was African tribal practice; instead of diffused small private properties there was slavery; instead of the Puritan notion that sex relations were in general sinful was the less rigorous view that sexual intercourse was entirely normal; instead of the example of monogamous family life constantly before the minds of children growing up, there was the example of libertinage among lofty whites and laxness among the blacks.

Nothing in the experience of the slave régime could have predis- 175
posed toward orderly marriage these people, soon to become Hai- 567
tiens. Certain masters actually prohibited weddings among their 581
slaves, while most others discouraged it, since the development of family ties among the blacks would only have made for complication

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175 567 581 [794] when slaves were to be sold. Even when whole families were brought over together from Africa, it was considered discreet in Saint-Domingue to separate the various members at the slave market, so that there would be little chance of combinations and intrigues. Theoretically the Church was in favor of regular marriages between slave men and women, but even if the Africans had understood or desired the "sacrament," the opposition of the white planters would have been enough to curb missionary insistence on this point; the Jesuits had already been expelled from the colony for their too great zeal in plantation reforms.

175 567 588 [843] As a usual thing, then, slaves simply cohabited. It was not against the rules of a plantation for a slave and the woman with whom he consorted to live together in a slave hut with the children born to them; but neither was it against the rules for the overseer to put other slaves into the same hut, or to sell promising slave children as if they were cattle.[1] Little was done to prevent sex relations between slaves, although masters had varying attitudes toward the results of these relations: some planters welcomed births as a stockbreeder welcomes additions to his herd; others resented the pregnancy of slave women as an obstacle to necessary field work. In the former case, a planter's capital was increased; in the latter, abortions resulted when the overseer drove pregnant women to hard work under the tropical sun.

175 567 588 The freedom of the planters with the persons of their attractive female slaves likewise weakened any tendency toward monogamous family life as conceived by bourgeois European society. The relationship between master and slave woman was momentary. Not often was a woman so beguiling that she could be called a concubine; still less often was she a mistress. The latter estate was the height of any female slave's worldly ambition, for not only might she then be freed, but she could live a life of leisure. In rare cases she might hope to persuade her white paramour into marriage. Almost certainly her mulatto children would be free.

175 565 591 In so far as there was any predisposition toward strict observance of European marriage practices, it was most clearly exhibited by the group of affranchis. As freedmen they were intent upon establishing

[567] [588] 1. Under exceptional circumstances slaves found themselves under a benevolent, religious master who allowed them to be married by a priest and thereafter to live together as a family.

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the men as well as the women work arduously. It seems justifiable to conclude that industry has not always been a characteristic of the Haitian male; and to ask why. 114 461

One valid reason is, of course, political. As we have seen, until the American Occupation Haiti was greatly overmilitarized. Almost every able-bodied male was at one time or another during his prime a soldier in the army. Since the base of the country from 1804 to 1915 was its revolutions, there was room for a man to serve either in the regular army or, lured by future promises, in the guerrilla forces of a scheming general. To be drawn away from the land at the very moment of physical maturity was to predispose a youth against humdrum field work. As a soldier he traveled, knew excitement, was fed and clothed, and could loaf, except during battle. So schooled, upon retirement from the army a man was hardly disposed to settle down to steady labor. Even if as a young man he remained upon his farm, he might at any moment be called away to service, just when he was most needed for the crop. If Haiti was to be fed, the women, who alone were exempt from army service, provided the only available regular workers. 175 701 461

Tradition offers another explanation for masculine independence of hard work. The African background of female agricultural labor has been cited. In slavery the men had been degraded by being forced to do work of this sort, while the lot of women hardly differed from what it had been in the old country. Under Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, with their large armies, women, already numerically preponderant, formed the vast majority of field workers. Independent small farming hardly changed the picture. African tradition, moreover, made the man master of his property and wives, the rôle of woman being that of man's inferior and useful servant. 174 462 562 567

Disease is another partial explanation. Until recently no one seems to have been aware of the prevalence in Haiti of such diseases as hookworm, malaria, and tuberculosis which, without necessarily affecting a person outwardly, may nevertheless sap his vitality, leaving him listless and worn out by even slight exertion. Obviously much of what was called laziness was due to disease. But the flaw in this reasoning is that illness makes no discrimination between the sexes. If men were disease-ridden, so were women: yet the latter were steadily industrious. 164 461

Any foray into possible psychological reasons is guesswork. It

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175 Norman ones were less complicated; English, simpler still, rein-
192 forced the Norman tendency.
197 From the Spaniards of the Caribbean region Créole borrowed not only nouns (generally the most assimilable of words), but a large number of adjectives, pronouns, auxiliary verbs, and certain subtler characteristics of speech.

This amalgam, then, three quarters Norman French, was the Créole language as of 1697 when France acquired Saint-Domingue, when buccaneering became unprofitable, and many of the filibusters settled down to begin a respectable life as plantation owners in the
● 56 new colony. African slaves were soon imported to satisfy the demand
197 for labor. First a few, then thousands a year and increasing thousands,
192 were brought to Saint-Domingue. In all externalities, of which
175 language is one, slaves must yield up their old ways and take on new. The question of interest here is to what extent the Negroes influenced Créole, giving it an "African" character.

The answer, surprising at first, is that the Negro influence was almost negligible.

175 In the first place, Créole was now already a language with a rich
177 vocabulary, all the grammatical equipment, and the necessary regu-
197 larities. The slaves came to the colony from all parts of Africa, and so with widely differing languages. Linguistic maps of Africa indicate the presence of hundreds of dialects up and down the west coast; tribes living fifteen miles apart spoke languages which, although belonging to the same stock, were as different as Spanish and Italian
[191] from each other. Owing to the habit of dispersing the slaves, the average Negro had no common basis of understanding with his fellow slaves on the same plantation. Practically all white foremen and overseers gave orders in Créole; this within one generation became the *lingua franca* of the plantations, an economic necessity, and socially indispensable.

In the second place, there was in Saint-Domingue no equivalent to the familiar objects of life in Africa. Trees, houses, earth there were, of course, but different kinds of trees, houses, and soil. Economic tasks were performed in a different manner with new techniques and organization. Every outward form of life was foreign to the African background. Even assuming that there had been a common Negro speech, it would have found little to attach itself to in the New World. It should be noted that Negroes likewise made few contribu-

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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tions to the English language in the southern United States, where they were slaves for seventy years longer than in Haiti.

Common African economic ways yielded to the plantation system and slavery; the Negroes had no opportunity to govern themselves or settle their own disputes; they mated rather than married; their families might be broken up if the master wished to sell a slave. The one part of life in which they were permitted to follow unhindered their African ways was the intimate one of religion which, since it needed no buildings or organization, did not interfere with work, and could be entirely personal and private, was not suppressed. As has been pointed out, the Dahomean form of religion prevailed over all others and, modified, gained wide adherence among the slaves. It is precisely in Vodun that Créole has taken over its only important African words, such as Vodun, zombi, houngan, maraza, loa, houmfort, bocor, ouanga.

It would be erroneous to imply that the Negroes had no effect upon the language of which they soon became the predominant users.[6] Their operations were of a subtle sort, however. As with the Negroes of the United States, the letter "r" proved difficult, and often disappeared altogether, leaving many words softly slurred. "Marcher," for example, generally sounds as if it were *ma'ché*. Likewise in the course of years they gave the language their own accent, their own modulation and tone, which make Créole sound different on their lips from a white man's way of speaking it. Some scholars attribute this to a *racial* influence—that is, to the morphology of the Negro throat and tongue. It might be pointed out to the contrary that Americans, white like the English, have given the mother tongue their own accent, modulation, and tone. It has certainly not yet been proved that race has anything to do with speech.

Words in imitation of a sound grow up in every language. Several western African dialects, especially Mandingue, seemed fond of onomatopoeia; in Haiti, consequently, one hears many an expressive additional word. Moreau de Saint-Méry[7] noticed this in colonial Saint-Domingue, citing such cases as the addition of "bap" to the verb "tomber," if one had fallen down lightly, or "boum" if heavily;

6. Suzanne Sylvain, *Le Créole haïtien* (Wetteren, Belgium, 1936), p. 10, says that although the African contribution to Haitian Créole is generally considered to be slight, she has personally found 150 words of undoubtable African origin, and feels sure that there are many more.

7. *Description . . . de . . . Saint-Domingue*, II, 36-37.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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been murdered, as in 1937); and the Dominican influence can be seen in northeastern Haiti. The country as a whole, however, remains largely free from non-Haitian influence. This isolation may not continue for many more years, for successive administrations expand their health activities, try to improve economic methods, extend transportation facilities, and pursue policies of "enlightenment." Under such a regimen there will be an inevitable contact either with the experts from foreign countries or with the products of the civilization of those countries. And if Haiti should acquire foreign machines in large numbers, she would inevitably open herself to the dynamic influences which accompany a changing economy.

Such a possibility is in the near future, so that social scientists will shortly have the chance to observe cultural contact and diffusion at work. What is more immediately to the point is the query as to how much diffusion of cultural traits occurred at the beginning of Haitian national life. How much of the African tribal culture persisted through slavery and the period of forced labor into the Haiti of small properties and peasantry? How much, on the other hand, is a borrowing from the French ways of colonial times? These questions have been treated in earlier chapters, but may be here summarized. The external structure of social institutions, particularly those which characterize the life of the élite, is clearly French. Haitian government and law, upper-class marriage, the Catholic religion—all these have a French provenance. Conversely, among the masses, the Vodun religion and possibly certain economic devices (such as the coumbite) stem from Africa. Yet the round of daily life among the people is quite obviously unlike that of any single African group from which slaves were drawn, nor is it a composite of African folkways.[7] Similarly, although the bulk of the population is peasantry, the Haitian peasant is not at all a transplanted French peasant. The folkways and mores of rural Haiti are, to a degree unusual in most countries, products of local experience, uncolored by outside influence.[8]

Students of race find in writings about Haiti the usual sum of generalizations about the temperament and mental characteristics of

7. It must be emphasized that the Haitian slaves were drawn from at least thirty-eight African groups. See J. G. Leyburn, "The Making of a Black Nation," in G. P. Murdock, ed., *Essays in the Science of Society* (New Haven, 1937), pp. 177–204.

8. Herskovits' theory of the African origin of certain Haitian traits has been discussed above, pp. 139–[illegible].

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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175 563 565 369 [563] planters and expressing their contempt for the townspeople, speaks of the towns as existing primarily to serve the needs of these country squires as centers for the storage and disposal of their produce: "There are found merchants, artisans, judges, recorders, solicitors, notaries, bailiffs, doctors. But one finds neither nobles, men of property, nor persons of wit and perception."[16]

175 563 563 The physical aspect of the cities had little to recommend them, especially since the utter lack of sanitation made for extreme uncleanliness in all Haitian centers. This fact is of special interest in the light of the frequent references to this trait of Haitian cities in the writings of those Europeans who described the life of independent Haiti. Invariably in such accounts the littered state of the streets, even in the capital, is stressed, and tendered as evidence of the absence of civilization in this Negro Republic.[17] Even though occasional mention is made that this state of affairs existed before the Revolution, nowhere, whether in St. John or in the later writers who date from the time of the occupation of the country by the United States Marine Corps, is there any realization that this condition antedates the independence of Haiti. The cleanliness of Africans in Africa wherever the natives have ready access to water has been well attested, and is still true in those regions from which the ancestors of the people of Haiti principally derive.

175 563 563 563 Yet some aspects of life in the towns livened the picture of Haitian colonial existence. Outstanding were the opportunities offered by these centers for social intercourse, and even for intellectual and artistic stimulation of a kind, such as was afforded by the famous *Cercle des Philadelphes* of Cap Française, dedicated to literary, philosophical, and, above all, to political discussions.[18] Masonic lodges, later taken over by the Negroes and today of appreciable importance in Haiti, were also instituted by the French, the first having been founded at the Cap in 1740.[19] Purely social meeting-places, such as public

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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baths or public halls, were in operation, while in the towns of Cap Français, Port-au-Prince, Leogane, Saint-Marc, and Cayes, theaters were established which produced "the latest plays from Paris" and attracted large audiences.[20]

Despite all this, the canker of homesickness constantly gnawed at the colonists even in the towns — the feeling that a stay in the colony was only for the interval needed to allow a man to escape to the mother country with a fortune. On the estates the loneliness and isolation of plantation life are commented upon repeatedly. A letter of the period, without place or date, found in the family papers of the historian de Vastière, discusses this with poignancy:

> "Have pity for an existence which must be eked out far from the world of our own people. We here number five whites, my father, my mother, my two brothers, and myself, surrounded by more than two hundred slaves, the number of our negroes who are domestics alone coming almost to thirty. From morning to night, wherever we turn, their faces meet our eyes. No matter how early we awaken, they are at our bedsides, and the custom which obtains here not to make the least move without the help of one of these Negro servants brings it about not only that we live in their society the greater portion of the day, but also that they are involved in the least important events of our daily life. Should we go outside our house to the workshops, we are still subject to this strange propinquity. Add to this the fact that our conversation has almost entirely to do with the health of our slaves, their needs which must be cared for, the manner in which they are to be distributed about the estate, or their attempts at revolt, and you will come to understand that our entire life is so closely identified with that of these unfortunates that, in the end, it is the same as theirs. And despite whatever pleasure may come from that almost ab-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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175 181 569 591 563

solute dominance which it is given us to exercise over them, what regrets do not assail us daily because of our inability to have contact and correspondence with others than these unfortunates, so far removed from us in point of view, customs, and education." [21]

175 569 591 423 563

This letter speaks of the presence of five whites. The psychological state of the planter who, unmarried and alone, spent his days without the companionship of a fellow-being who as much as shared a common language with him may well be imagined. Even where there were white overseers, the prevailing sense of caste was so strong that while these ate with the head of the estate, they did not live under the same roof, for they were subordinates and were treated as such. For his most constant companions the owner had his house-servants, unless he maintained a mulatto concubine who cooked his food and looked after his personal wants, shared his confidences, and reported to him any disaffection on the part of the Negro slaves. It is understandable that, having made his fortune, the planter did not delay his return to France, where, once back in Paris, he lived lavishly on the revenues from his estates; and letters in the Ministry of Colonies show the extent to which this phenomenon of absentee ownership characterized pre-Revolutionary Santo Domingo.[22]

175 181 563

Haiti being thought of as but an interlude in a man's life, the loosening of moral tone so complained of in contemporary works resulted, and with this went the many forms of display in which these colonists indulged and those other aspects of colonial custom which were so often ridiculed by European travelers of the period. The distance of Haiti from Paris, or, in a later period, the time which had elapsed since the French loss of Haiti, has, however, lent an enchantment to "Créole life" which is reflected in an idealized portrayal of this existence, much in the manner of the effusions on the graciousness and glamour of life in what is termed "the old South." [23] One

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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cannot read the extended narrative of the young Comte de C***, reprinted by de Vassière, without questioning this myth of the idyllic life of the Haitian Créole, even though allowing for the disdain with which an exiled Parisian dandy of 1790 would regard the inhabitants of outlying possessions, and allowing also for the savory wit of the man, which undoubtedly led him to underscore the more diverting situations which he encountered.[24] 175 181 563

Mention must be made at this point of the two great divisions of the white population which, as the colonizing period continued, were created by the distinction between those born on the island and those who had migrated there. These divisions cut across the two categories of urban and country dwellers, both of which numbered Haitian-born and native European members. At the time of the French Revolution about three quarters of the whites on the island had been born outside the colony, while of those born in the colony, women comprised the major portion.[25] Haitian-born persons were known by the designation *Créole*, which, according to a definition of the period, included all those "who have first seen the light of day in Santo Domingo" and was, as it is today, a term employed in all the West Indies and in Louisiana.[26] This designation was by no means restricted to the whites, however, for there were Créole Negroes as well as Créole whites; at the present time in Haiti a distinction is even drawn between locally grown "créole" rice and that which is imported! 175 563

It is common knowledge that slavery not only affects those who are held in bondage, but deeply influences the master-class as well. In Haiti the role played by the institution of slavery in the formation of the character and personalities of Créole children brought up in a setting of servility, cupidity, brutality, and terror must have been of the utmost importance. The bad temper and domineering nature of Créole youths is commented on again and again by writers of the period. Owing to the unhealthy climate and the failure to 569 175 155 563 858 571

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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563 maintain adequate hygienic conditions, the health of these
567 children was usually poor, so that from earliest infancy they
175 were spoiled by their parents and servants; their least wishes
155 were gratified, and their least complaints immediately rectified
858 so as to make them petty tyrants in their households. This
591 tyranny was most often exercised over the family slaves. Regardless of the assiduous care these young despots received, and despite the adulation lavished upon their young charges, the Negro servants were seldom sufficiently prompt or adequate in their attentiveness to escape the punishments, often severe, that were meted out to them at the behest of their young masters. This tyranny extended to the play-life of the young Haitian-born white. Surrounded only by the slave children of the plantation, he commanded his contemporaries even more imperiously than his parents commanded the grown slaves.

> "Whatever he saw, he wanted, whatever was shown him he demanded; and if some fatality brought it about that one of his small companions resisted him and he became irritated, they would hurry from all sides in response to his cries and those of the young unfortunate, who, his color having destined him for submission, learned soon enough that he would be forced to give way, perhaps even being meted some punishment to penalize the disobedience of one who had not yet the instinct for servitude."[a]

175 Grown to manhood, the young Créole continued to act as
563 master of all he surveyed. Imperious, quick-tempered, spoiled,
567 his life lived in large part among slaves, when his sex drive
591 stirred, he took what slave women pleased him. Eventually he
(591) married, to be tormented with the thoughts of the possible infidelity of his wife; the more tortured because of his extreme vanity and because, while demanding faithfulness from his spouse, he was continuing his affairs with his Negro women.
(159) Yet he had some excellences of character, as well. "Frank,

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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affable, generous perhaps to the point of ostentation, confident, brave, a sure friend and a good father" [illegible] — such are his good points as set down by one who was perhaps surer-eyed than others in seeing his deficiencies, though these traits seem to have concerned more his relations with his fellow-whites than those which affected his bearing toward his Negro slaves.

The young Créole women of this same environment were destined for early marriage — too early for their best development, whether physical or mental. Given to exacting the fulfillment of their slightest caprices, they were, like their men, creatures of passion. If they survived their first pregnancies, which as a result of too early marriages often came before they were physically in condition to support the rigors of childbirth, they soon lost their youthful allure and became the unattractive women of the type so maliciously described by the Comte de C***.[illegible] In such cases they frequently survived not one but several husbands. Their associations were chiefly with their Negro women slaves, who were full confidantes, sleeping in the same chamber with their mistresses and on occasion sharing informal meals with them, though they never ate at the same table. And because, by a fine turn of irony, these Negro women were often at the same time the concubines of the husbands, brothers, or sons of their mistresses, they were as often as not treated alternately with the greatest tenderness and the harshest brutality.[illegible]

Whatever the inner life of white Haitians, native-born or Créole, outward ostentation was the rule. In the cities poorly furnished houses were cared for by a numerous retinue of uniformed retainers: "the supreme achievement for a European being to have himself served, he hires slaves while he waits for the time when he can own them."[illegible] In the country, too, life was lived on as lavish a scale as possible. This is not the place to describe the houses of masters and slaves, or the buildings needed for working sugar-cane or indigo or preparing coffee, or their distribution over the plantation, for no-

2: Courlander 3-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

machetes, circles, mortar shapes, and so on—each with its own specific meaning. Sometimes the vèvè becomes openly pictorial, and there emerges a ship for the loa Agwé, snakes for Damballa and Ayida, a bull for the loa Taureau, a knapsack for the loa Azaka, or even a portrait of a deity, perhaps smoking a pipe or holding a sword.

The vèvè is not a permanent record. It is made as an act of supplication or veneration, and once it is finished it has no further value. In the ensuing ritual and dance, the vèvè is obliterated by the feet that pass across it. At the hands of one houngan, this invocational act results in a crude, even childlike, design. At the hands of another, it produces a drawing of beauty, integration, and highly developed form.

The drum-making craft, too, has offered an unbroken sequence of opportunity for satisfying artistic urges. The drum has a traditional form that cannot be tampered with; its shape is predetermined by its function, by the log from which it is hewn, and by existing standards. And yet, the drum maker has found it an object on which he can devise new decorative motifs, and he may even give it personal uniqueness. Some drums have styles that may be associated with specific regions of the country, others bear the stamp of the individual artist. Paint has been used on Haitian drums for a hundred years or more as a complement to carving. One ancient drum dating from the earliest days of the Republic, and now preserved in a collection owned by the Bureau of Ethnology in Port-au-Prince, is decorated with a medallion showing the Haitian coat of arms, grenadiers, red and yellow snakes, and a sun with a face. This magnificent instrument, apparently the only one of its age and kind to have survived the years, is one of Haiti's art treasures.

The *canis*, or calabash bowl, of the houngfor rites is another object which is decorated with motifs. Abstract designs, ritual symbols, and sometimes human and animal figures are painted on the inner or concave surface of the bowl.

The rural traditional arts of Haiti have had a belated impact on the arts of the city. Within the past fifteen years there have appeared a number of painters, sculptors in wood and ceramics, and ironworkers who constitute an art movement sometimes referred to as the Haitian "renaissance." Many of these artists draw heavily on national lore and legend for inspiration and subject matter. Some of them are men who came only recently from villages or distant farms. Their work adorns many public buildings in Port-au-Prince and is eagerly sought by art collectors. Members of the elite class who once looked with embarrassment on the "primitive" countryside are finding increasing respect for the possibilities of their country cousins.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 189]

18. Musical Instruments

The Haitian people have drawn heavily on both Europe and Africa for their musical inspiration. In music, as in other traditions, the country is bicultural. There is, on the one hand, the music of the so-called *élite*—the literate and educated class which is concentrated in the cities—and on the other hand, the music of the peasants, the plantation laborers, and the lower economic groups of the town. The *élite* music is in the European or Western tradition, while the true folk music of Haiti follows, in the main, in the wake of West African musical culture. The instruments of *élite* music are primarily those of Western Europe. The instruments of the folk music of the country are those which can best interpret the mainstream currents of the West African heritage—instruments of African design and function. European-style instruments have infiltrated into the folk music too, but the over-all picture is that of a survival of African musical devices to interpret music cast in an African mold. It is the folk-music instruments which call for examination—the instruments that are made in the villages and tiny huts in the mountains, the instruments on which the significant music of Haiti depends.

The materials from which these instruments are made are usually those found upon the land. If a man wishes to make a drum, he cuts down a tree for the purpose. For material for a bamboo trumpet he goes to the bamboo grove. For a flute, he cuts a reed. Metal is used for making African-style bells, rattles, singing horns, and substitutes for bamboo trumpets.

The drum in its many forms is the most common instrument of all. It is used for dances of all kinds, for cult rites, for work music on the road and in the field, and for assembly calls and signals. Not very many years ago the older people in the south of Haiti still spoke of the "talking drums" they had seen as children.

The craft of drum making is a very skilled one, but the tools are

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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must pass to an illegitimate child if recognition is accorded. It is likewise strong in its harmony with actual conditions: in the absence of legal marriage among the people, it would have been manifestly unfair to favor a few fortunate children. Dessalines argued that the revolution had legitimized all Haitians; that it was unjust to prevent a child's inheriting from the person who had given him life; and that since all Haitians had come out of slavery and degradation into freedom, no new inequalities should be instituted.[4]

If this law encouraged family life, it weakened marriage both of the civil and religious kind: where was the sense in the expensive luxury of a wedding when children were just as legitimate without it? By conforming to folk practice the Emperor confirmed it. Only the aristocrats disliked his law, for it seemed to make light of one of the distinctions they cherished—the formal wedding. It irked them to have the State place a casual child upon an equal plane with one born after proper marriage.

At still another point the law accorded with living conditions at the time. During the years of fighting many men had been killed, and always the large standing army kept thousands of others away from settled farm life. Home, then, was for a child the abode of his mother—a fact recognized by the law's insistence upon maternal relationship rather than paternity. Such a word as "matriarchate" has no place here; but from the days of Dessalines to modern times, the lowly Haitian thinks of his home primarily as where his mother lives.

As if the advantages of formal wedding were not already sufficiently weakened by this law, other enactments of the empire struck at other phases of marriage. Divorce was permitted for adultery, for incompatibility of temperament or character, and by mutual consent. Such provisions not only broke away completely from Catholic practice, but made getting out of wedlock a casual matter of taking an oath. The complaint of incompatibility need be made by only one spouse; "mutual consent" as a ground for divorce was probably not allowed in 1805 in any other country of the Western World.

Dessalines did not appear to care one whit for the good opinion of white foreigners. It sufficed for him if Haiti endured, whatever Europeans thought of her. Christophe, on the other hand, was extremely sensitive to foreign disapproval. Many of his official acts can

4. According to the testimony of Madiou, op. cit., III, 116.

eight years old, and the same room until they are ten or twelve. They are counted on to sleep soundly enough, but it happens that a child sometimes awakens and, unknown to his parents, observes them. Though brothers and sisters sometimes continue to sleep together until the age of puberty, it is said that attempts at intercourse between them rarely occur, for, according to Haitians, the children gradually sense that this is regarded as bad, and a boy approaching puberty who wishes to satisfy his desire for sex play goes to find a "little neighbor." Later, when the mobile girls are withdrawn from the company of the boys, the latter play with younger girls who have not yet reached puberty, or carry on "affairs" with those older than themselves; indeed, it is from these latter that they obtain full knowledge of sexual procedure.

What has been said concerning the growth and training of children applies mainly to those who live with their parents. No discussion of the development of the child, however, can neglect to mention the widespread institution of a form of quasi-adoption, found not only in Mirebalais, but in all other parts of Haiti. By this is not meant legal adoption, though that, too, is known and at times occurs. Quasi-adoption involves children who are called "*'ti moun qui 'rosé à caille 'ous* — small folk who stay at your house," or, more briefly, *'ti moun*. They are the children, often of peasants, "given" to friends who live in a town or, as is the case with some families of Mirebalais, "given" to friends or acquaintances living in the capital. To what extent this relationship offers a means for the exploitation of children in other parts of Haiti cannot be said, though tales of abuses of it, especially in Port-au-Prince, are heard. To give a person a child in this manner is in Mirebalais regarded as a token of friendship, and such children as were observed, though poorly clothed, were fed not much differently from the children of the families with which they were sent to live. When the *'ti moun* grows older, he leaves and returns to his own home, though the relationship between

may sing that it is being driven too hard, or that it is underpaid. A president may be disparaged, a neighbor who has violated a social propriety may be ridiculed, and one who has committed an indiscretion may be exposed. Such affairs are the property of the community. They are gay or grim editorials on people and institutions. There is no special ceremonial occasion, as in Surinam, when criticism may be voiced. It can happen almost anywhere, at almost any time. Songs of ridicule or complaint may be heard at the ordinary "good time" secular dance, in the Rara festivities, or even in the middle of a Vodoun religious service. If the coumbites working in the fields are not singing songs of praise, the chances are they are singing songs of criticism. Even a lone worker may sing such songs, with the expectation that they will be heard and passed on. One woman I know, who had been abused in the market place of Port-au-Prince, composed a song of recrimination which she sang loudly all along the road to Kenskoff, some twenty miles away.

Even though the songs may be quite personal, referring to situations that affect only an individual or a small group of people, once they are performed in public they are community property. They survive or fade away according to the appeal they have for others. A song which catches on may outlive its protagonists by many decades. Such a song does not lose its moral point, if it has one, or its satirical punch. It can be revived for use on appropriate occasions—usually without change, sometimes with slight modification to give it direct and timely significance.

One of the recurrent themes of protest has to do with faithlessness of friends. This song, couched in bitter metaphor, declares that the only friends to be trusted are those who are not present:

> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

D. Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 11481 SV3

That friend there, he is not a friend for me! 533*
That friend there, he is not a friend for me, woman! 539*
I pass his house, he gives me a chair to sit in! 626
He goes around speaking bad words about me! 572

Or again, you may hear:

Nig' ami, ous ça ou yé, ago-é!
Nig' ami, ous ça ou yé!
Y'ap manjé avé mo!
Y'ap boé avé mo!
Y'ap ompé lavie mo débout! [Ex. 95]

Black man, like this you are, *ago-é!*
Black man, like this you are!
He will eat with you,
He will drink with you,
He will eat the life out of you!

A man regards his child's godfather as his closest friend outside the family circle. Should either of the two friends fail to fulfill the high standard of behavior demanded by their tie, the other may express disappointment and recrimination, as in this song: 608 626 533* 539*

Compè à mwin compè ou malhonnête!
Ou malhonnête compè compè à mwin compè ou malhonnête!
Premier pitit mwin fal'm ba ou baptêm!
Malheur sivé'm nan bounder ou pas vini wè mwin!

My comrade, comrade, you are dishonest!
You are dishonest, comrade, my comrade, comrade, you are dishonest!
I gave you my first child to baptize!
When misfortune comes to me in the boundoe, you do not come to see me!

Sometimes even the most domestic of grievances are aired in public through means of song: 593 626 533* 539*

Jeanine oh!
Ste Hélène oh!
Jeanine oh!
Ste Hélène oh!
Trois pain soulèvés mari'm ba mwin!
Malédic à pound mwin! [Ex. 96]

Jeanine, oh!
St. Hélène, oh!
Jeanine, oh!
St. Hélène, oh!
Three pains of dough my husband gave me!
This misfortune has taken me!

L: Herskovits E-4, 8 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

512 grain in her mortar or working in her garden near by. On
[413] market days she takes the produce of the family's fields to the
[438] town to sell. If she has young children, she cares for them
[555] while she does her other work, but when they are old enough,
[591] they help her about the house if they are girls, or, if boys, go
with their father to the garden. From time to time, when
[556] house repairs are needed or there are implements to be
[241] mended, the man spends a day at home getting these odd
jobs done; otherwise only serious illness in the family keeps
him from his fields.

512 The times for meals have not varied since the days when
264 Moreau de St. Mery described the eating-habits of the slaves.[9]
In addition to the mid-morning repast, the only other meal
is that eaten after the man returns from his field, this being
[562] the largest of the day. A wife does not sit down with her
[593] husband, but usually eats earlier with her small children and
holds herself ready to serve him upon his return, when, if he
is alone, she remains to tell him the day's gossip. Visitors are
[574] often present, for peasant etiquette demands that all comers
[576] be offered food, and, as one Haitian expressed it, "The peas-
ant would kill you for the insult if you did not share your
meal with him." Bedtime, as might be expected, is early.

512 On Sundays and on the days of festivals this routine is in-
52 terrupted, when, if the occasion is of sufficient importance
[196] and the habitation is not too far from town, the peasant and
his family attend mass. On Saturday nights there is usually a
vodun dance, when the early hour for retirement is forgotten
and all-night festivities precede Sunday's rest. On such days
[264] the principal meal is eaten at three or four o'clock in the
afternoon, and all the adults share it together, while at one
side the children are fed from the dishes of their parents in
response to the insistent repetition of the demand "*Ba'm*
pa'm — give me my portion."*

* This is an example of the elision characteristic of Haitian Créole, it being abbreviated from *ba mois part mois* or, in French, *Donnez-moi ma part.*

L: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

is under way. The size of the *combite* is judged by the number of drums and *lambi*, or conch-shell horns used, for where two or three of either are required, an especially large group of workers is usually assembled. It may be observed in passing that it is undoubtedly the sound of this *combite* drum, heard in the mountains or through the brush by travelers, that has so often been mistaken for the "mysterious booming" of the *vodun* drums.[8]

The preparation of the food is the work of the women of the household giving the *combite*, aided by their female relations and the wives of friends and neighbors. This is no small task, for goats and even a bullock may be killed to feed a large *combite*, while in addition other dishes to go with the meat must be cooked. Each woman is given charge of a great pot and does her best to see to it that an appetizing dish is ready for the men when their work is done. While the food is being cooked, the real object of the *combite*, the clearing of the field, is being pursued. A *chef d'esquade*, usually with a small group, begins the afternoon's labor, and, being a fast worker, he himself sets the pace. As more men arrive, he walks about, encouraging the constantly increasing number of men in their efforts, seeing to it that the tempo originally set is continued, and when necessary picking up a hoe to restore a lagging rhythm. Occasionally the *chef d'esquade* will stand in front of the men to make sure that all keep together, and if the lazy cannot be roused to work by direct order or through ridicule, he will drive them away.

The work progresses with incredible speed as the line moves down the field. In one case a *combite* of between fifty and seventy-five men completely cleared a field of several acres in a single afternoon, and this without undue effort or what appeared to be the expenditure of much energy. The flashing of the hoes in the brilliant sunlight accentuates the color of the scene; each implement is raised high above the head of the one who wields it, to be brought down at the proper in-

2: Handwerke 3-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Hadd SV3
Mbwhalab

ABOVE, *Preparing the food for a combine feast.*
BELOW, *Drums marking the beat for the hoes.*

[facing P. 72]

L: Humboldt E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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sant and in almost perfect accord with the hoes of all the other men in line. Pauses are frequent, and men often drop out of the line for a longer period of rest — even those not of the type laughingly called *majeurs*, who shirk their task and come to a *combite* principally to share in the feasting — and these, for the time being, join the singing with added verve. During the periods of rest, re-alignments are made and, if necessary, the direction of the line is changed; after a short time, however, the cry of the *simidor* rings out, the initial statement of a song is sounded, and as the chorus swings into the melody, the hoes rise again, the beat of the drum is begun, the plaintive notes of the *lambi* are heard, and the workers once more move down the field.[4]

Acting as the representative of the owner of the field to be cleared is a man who is called the *directeur*. If a large number of workers, a hundred or more, are assembled, he may divide them into two groups, assigning each half of the field, and then there is competition to see which group will first complete its allotted task. On such an occasion there would not only be more than one drum, but also more than one principal singer, or *simidor*, and the songs would thereupon have improvised words boasting of the prowess of the winning side, and ridiculing its opponents. The "director" also apportions the food, for it is customary to follow the rule which holds that since not all workers are equally eager or competent, so the rewards should not be the same for all. The shirkers are well known. They come but a little before sunset, or, arriving earlier, dawdle, walking about with their hoes and accomplishing but little during the afternoon. The lack of enthusiasm of these *majeurs* for work does not escape the "director," for though all who come to the *combite* must be fed, such men receive relatively little, while those who have worked the hardest not only are rewarded with dishes heaped with especially choice morsels of meat, but often find several sous when they reach the bottom of the dish.

[533]

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1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mbebelab

such matters as the passing on of the *loa* in families, the duties toward family dead, and the possible inheritance of food taboos are recalled. Like all these survivals, that of food taboos is not as clear in its expression in Haiti as in its aboriginal setting. Its determination is largely by trial and error, so that a mother, before the birth of her child, not only abstains from eating the foods harmful to her, but later carefully tries these on the child to ascertain their effect. Yet the custom, at best, is a tenuous one. Sometimes, if food uncongenial to a parent has ill effects on a person, "he goes on eating it until he becomes accustomed to it"—though this statement brought forth an emphatic dissent from another Haitian: "Not I! If a food harms me once, I am through with it."

Africanisms are particularly marked in the organization of and attitudes toward the ancestral cult. Today the fear of the power of the dead is as living in Haiti as in West Africa, despite the influence of the Catholic Church in changing concepts of the heavenly world of the dead and the role of ghosts on earth. It is quite true that the outer forms of ceremonialism taken by ancestor-worship in West Africa have disappeared; but when the meticulousness with which the rites of death are carried out, and the institution of *mangé morts* are remembered, it is seen that the spirit of African ritual observances has by no means been lost. African elements have survived even in the services for the dead, now largely taken over by the Church. On the anniversary of death a special commemorative mass is sung in the church, which the family of the dead attend in a body. Before they leave the habitation for the mass, however, animals are killed to provide meat for the feast which follows the Church service, and for the *mangé morts*, which also takes place at the same time. Immediately after the mass a reception takes place at the house of some member of the family who lives in town, or at the home of a friend, where cakes and liquors are served. At about noon, however, family and friends proceed to the habitation, where

476 241 533 461 men who have failed to join the coumbite, or praise the host, or single out various individuals for comment. The songs of the coumbite are a newspaper of the affairs of the people. The news is personalized, entertainingly, and replete with comic vignettes.[1]

476 241 521 594 At noon the drummers signal a halt, and the workers shoulder their hoes, wipe off their machetes, and adjourn to the house for food. If it is a grand coumbite, the men rest for several hours, talking, catching up on sleep, or playing cards or *mayombe*. About three o'clock they go back to the fields to work until evening. Then comes the feast, under the canopy adjoining the house. The host and his wife have killed and cooked one or more goats, depending on the size of the group. The men are served meat, rice, beans, and whatever else has been prepared. [273] Afterward, women join the party, and there is more tafia or rum. Some of the men then drift homeward, but most stay on for dancing. Zouc, Congo, or Juba drums are brought out, and the festivities begin. If another coumbite is not scheduled for the next day, the music and dancing may last well into the night.

476 562 Women, too, have coumbites to perform various kinds of large tasks, from field work to winnowing and coffee sorting, though in general the women's work groups lack the festive character of the men's gatherings.

476 241 595 There is a more tightly knit form of coumbite, known as a *société*. In southern Haiti there are the société Congo and the société Martinique; in northern Haiti there is the société Cyé. These sociétés are clubs built around mutual work needs and recreational activities. The société Congo that appears in the town or city streets during Rara days, with bamboo or conch-shell trumpets, drums, flags, and masks, is usually composed of the men who have joined forces to till the fields. In some instances, it may also conform roughly to membership in a particular hounfor, or cult center. Unlike the ordinary coumbite, the société is not a group which meets only at ground-breaking or harvesting time; it is a permanent organization with regular, sometimes day-to-day, obligations. Week after week it moves from one man's land to another, doing the tasks that have to be done. There is no question of "Can you come?" The group goes first to one man's land, then to another's until all the work has been done. If a member of the société falls sick, so that he cannot work his own field, the société takes over his tasks for him.

476 Coumbites are held not only for agricultural work but for house-building, and sometimes for the building of a hounfor.

[171] The Haitian coöperative work group has much in common with European and American husking and barn-building parties; but it has

[For footnote See Category 116, P. 352. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-6 (1937-1963) 1960 SV3 Gazt SV3

tempo. The chorus and leader sing responsively, their parts overlapping in traditional African style. The shoulder movements, foot movements, the way the arms are carried, and the typical posture of feet flat on the ground, bent knees, and swayed back—all are of African derivation.

These postures and movements are broad and direct. There are few of the decorative and "fine" movements that one sees in the dances of Indonesia, Cambodia, and India. Where the Javanese lays stress on the pose of the hands and the delicate movements of the fingers, the Haitian dancer is concerned with the position of the arms and the motions of the shoulders. The Indonesian sense of poised balance or suspended movement is absent. In its place there is an attitude of strong frontal assault against natural forces such as gravity, or direct submission to those forces. There is almost always a feeling of solidity and stability in Haitian posture, and of a proximity between the body and the earth, but the total effect is dynamic. Indonesian dancing seems to express a comprehension of the unseen and the supernatural; Haitian dancing seems to express an intimate understanding of nature.

Dancing touches on virtually every aspect of life in Haiti. It plays a part in the supplication of loa, the placation of the dead, and the making of magic; in the consecration of a houngan, the installation of a houngan, and the initiation of cult members; in planting, harvesting, and house-building. Catholic Church holidays, Nine Nights, baptisms, the election of a new president, and ordinary social gatherings—all are celebrated, in part, at least, by dancing.

Haitian dancing is participative rather than exhibitionistic. It is to join rather than to watch. There are some dances, however, which require special skills, and a few which are highly individualistic. Several types of dances are described elsewhere in this book. Verbal description cannot do justice to an art such as dancing, of course; but some brief sketches may help to suggest the differences between one Haitian dance and another.

In the Congo Maronne, for example, men and women pair off and dance face to face, making contact occasionally but only briefly. The arms are stretched forward as though to embrace the partner around the waist, but the actual embrace never materializes. The partners dance sometimes as though they are unaware of each other and are simply part of a larger group; then they approach, move as mirrored reproductions, and separate. Loin movement is free, and there is a restrained sexual intensity, though direct sexual implications are not necessarily present. Sometimes the woman holds the hem of her skirt in her hands, while the man holds his jacket open toward his partner.

533 A present theme that runs through many a song stems from the
539 feeling of having been slighted or improperly received in the house of
526 another person. The following song sets the complaint of a person who
[576] feels he has been treated shabbily. Metaphorically, he says he is used to eating from an earthern bowl but has been served food in a gourd dish, from which only the poorest of people eat.

> Mo *bésé* *mangé* nan bolo,
> M'pap *mangé* nan coui cyé! [Ex. 97]
>
> I'm accustomed to eating from a bowl;
> I'm not going to eat from a cut gourd!

● [574] Or again, there is the story of the unwelcome voyager, a person who travels all the way from Jérémie, far out on the southern peninsula, to the distant town of Arcahaye, only to find that he is not wanted there:

Moin sort' *Jérémie!*	I come from *Jérémie!*
Moin passé Aux Cayes!	I pass through Aux Cayes!
M'rivé L'Arcahaye, *nos amis!*	I arrive in Arcahaye, my friends!
C'est moin *sabaw* yo pas vlé wè yà,	It is me they don't wish to see here,
Moin yo wè!	It is me they see!
C'est moin *sabaw* yo pas vlé wè yà,	It is me they don't wish to see here,
Moin yo wè oh!	It is me they see, oh!
C'est moin *sabaw* yo pas vlé wè yà,	It is me they don't wish to see here,
Moin yo wè oh!	It is me they see, oh!

[461] A man complains sometimes of the work that has been foisted upon him by an employer, or by a neighbor with whom he exchanges labor:

> M'pas *mulette* oh moin pas *mulette* oh!
> Habitant pressé moin pa'lé café!
>
> I'm not a mule, oh, I'm not a mule, oh!
> The farmer takes me to carry coffee!

533 Even the officials of the *hounfor* may be publicly reproached in song
539 for acts of injustice. In the following example the houngénicon, the
526 Voudoun priest's assistant, is taken to task. The song probably was first
[576] heard in the course of a ceremony at which the houngénicon was present:

> Dawomain y wa, houngénicon oh!
> Dawomain y wa, 'génicon *é*!
> Dawomain y wa, yo fai mangé raison moin!
> Lè moin vlé pa'lé ou pas vlé moin pa'lé!
> Lè moin vlé chanté ou pas vlé moin chanté li!
> Dawomain y wa, yo fai mangé raison moin! [Ex. 98]
>
> Dahomey *y ava*,* houngénicon, oh!
> Dahomey *y ava*, houngénicon, *é*!
> Dahomey *y ava*, they do me wrong!

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* *The word Dahomey is frequently used as an exclamation.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

593 have been gathered from trees which grew wild. Both men and 241 women labor, with the work divided according to regular custom 439 between the sexes, the men dominating the scene only in the marketing of coffee.

Nature was opulent enough at the beginning of Haitian independence. The wars had ruined irrigation ditches, sugar refineries, 134 311 and mechanical equipment, but the soil was still abundantly fertile. But generations of farming by people without knowledge of fertilization or soil conservation have worn out much of the land. Trees have been cut to provide lumber and clearings for more farms; in the rainy seasons torrents have coursed down the mountainsides, washing away soil and exposing the earth to the rays of a tropical sun. Because the country is overpopulated every available acre is put to 311 use, and to overuse, thus still more depleting the land. It is a vicious circle, for the next generation must extract yet more from the earth and so weaken it further. Hard work is the lot of the peasant, therefore, during every month of the year except the dry season. There 241 has never been a formal rotation of crops: a farmer continues to plant the same crop in the same field until the harvest is perceptibly smaller than before. Then he changes to another type of produce. Sooner or later he will allow the land to lie fallow for several years until, by the action of nature or the grazing over it of cattle, it has regained a measure of its fertility.

The strenuous work of clearing fields and preparing them for 241 cultivation is man's job. Since the peasants owned their plots it has 574 almost always been done in coöperation by the men of the neighborhood. 476 What on the American frontier would have been called a "bee" is known in Haiti as a *coumbite*, or *combite*, often carried on as an enterprise of the local *Société Congo*, the informal neighborhood group for mutual aid and fellowship.

A man who has a large job on hand announces a coumbite for any [527] day except Sunday, always a day of rest, and whatever other week-

6. The word "coumbite" was apparently borrowed from the Spanish part of the [192] island, and from the Spanish word *convidar*, convoy. In Colombia "convite" means exactly what "coumbite" means in Haiti: a gathering of persons to work in common, or else a cooperative society for mutual agricultural self-help.

Professor Herskovits (*Life in a Haitian Valley*, chap. IV) describes the Société Congo in detail. The use of the name "Congo" indicates the African tradition, and is particularly noteworthy in connection with a kind of cooperative work which Herskovits finds particularly Dahomean. [114] [192]

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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476 day local practice dedicates to work in one's own fields—generally
247 Monday or Tuesday. The prospect of working with one's fellows,
574 of a midday feast with plentiful drink, of singing, talking, and hear-
[527] ing the news, is enough to induce most of the neighbors to come, even though the work will be hard. As with American log-rollings and house-raisings, there is a practical reason for accepting the invitation: by participating in other coumbites a man will be able to invite his neighbors to help him in his own larger tasks. The work is
[461] done in rhythm[7] as on Southern road gangs in the United States, with one man specially designated to beat the drum, blow the conch, or sing a topical song, to set the pace. While the men are at work, the women prepare the noonday feast.

114 This typical characteristic of Haitian rural life has been described
476 in detail as it operates near the village of Mirebalais by Prof. Melville
574 J. Herskovits. His contention is that the custom, in general and in
174 detail, derives from Dahomey, West Africa, the home of many of
171 the original slaves.[8] Although his evidence is impressive, there are
178 nevertheless objections to it. Coöperative enterprise for tasks larger than one man can accomplish alone is common in the United States
241 and in parts of Europe and South America, as well as in Africa. It is not an economic device which strikes one as requiring unusual inventiveness, for cases of it are common even where the participants have had no previous experience of it. Further, Dahomean practice could not have been kept up during slave days, nor yet during the régimes of Toussaint, Dessalines, Christophe, and Pétion. (The first three required forced labor under overseers, and landownership by peasants was still rare under Pétion, although a beginning had been made.) In the thirty years from 1790, when the last slaves arrived, until Christophe died in 1820, many old ways were certainly forgotten. Not a single one of the numerous books written by visitors during Boyer's quarter-century, 1818 to 1843, mentions the practice, which certainly must have struck Englishmen, Frenchmen, and Americans if it had been characteristic of the peasant life of the time. If one concludes that the coumbite did not become peasant practice until the mid-nineteenth century, all possibility of contact with Negroes familiar with Dahomean routine has disappeared. What

7. A Haitian poet, Charles F. Pressoir, entitles a book of his verses *Au Rythme des coumbites* (Port-au-Prince, 1933).
8. Op. cit., chap. IV.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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remains is the verbal handing down of recollections, one of the most natural things in the world and one congenial to Haitian peasants. Every region, every village, has its accomplished storytellers. The phenomenal resemblances in detail of the coumbite to Dahomean coöperative work may be due therefore to this verbal tradition.

Once the men have cleared and prepared the field, the care of the crop devolves upon the women. For this there has been a long background of tradition. In African agricultural regions, in the plantations of Saint-Domingue during slave days, under the forced labor régime of Toussaint and his successors, women had been field workers. They had never known anything else. We have seen that many of the present-day practices of Haiti go back to the times of Pétion and Boyer: during this period women did field work, not by decree of government but by force of circumstance. Their men were constantly taken away from the farms for service in the large army; if crops were to be raised, women must do the work. Sometimes soldiers were stationed near their own homes, and could help in production; but they could be called on to march, at short notice and in peacetime, anywhere in the country. Many of the later presidents made it a definite policy frequently to change the station of regiments, so as to prevent revolutionary projects and guard against the soldiers' being tampered with by the disaffected in any single community.

Sir Harry Johnston records his observations on the Haiti of 1910 as follows:

> The women are the best part of the nation. They are splendid, unremitting toilers. In the face of all discouragements with which a bad Government clouds their existence the women of Haiti remind one of certain patient types of ant or termite, who, as fast as you destroy their labour of months or days, hasten to repair it with unslackening energy. The market-women that descend from the country farms to the Haitian towns know that on their way to the market-place, and in that market-place, they will be robbed by soldiers and officers until the margin of profit on the sale of their wares has practically disappeared. Yet they continue to toil, to raise poultry and cattle, till the fields, see to their gardens, make pottery and mats. They cannot stop to reason, but must go on working from three years old to the end of their lives. Such industry (which is almost equally supplemented by that of the peasant husbands) protected should make Haiti one of the richest countries in the world for its size and population; but so long

slave, as a "sold *baka*," remained to wreak vengeance upon anyone who dared disturb his charge.

The reality of the *baka* to the Haitian was made dramatically vivid by an incident involving an old blind and deaf horse. It occurred one night on the principal streets of the town of Mirebalais itself. The horse was first noticed as the sun set, groping his way along, and finally circling the turn of the road. Though people shouted at the animal, he would not give way. As darkness came and doors and windows were barred, the horse blundered into the small veranda of a house inhabited by an elderly woman, her daughter, and her grandchildren. The younger woman cried out with fright when, timidly peering about the side of the house, she saw their visitor, but the older woman, whose age made her fearless in the face of this supernatural danger, opened a window and vigorously attacked the animal with a heavy stick, while he unhurriedly tried to get clear of the blows and finally moved on to the next veranda, and so from house to house down the street. On this night the habitual tranquillity did not settle over the town, and all of the next day and many days thereafter there was quiet talk of the danger that had been abroad, and much speculation of its intended destination.

The *baka* are sometimes confused with the *démons*, as is seen in the fragmentary information that was obtained about the existence of secret societies, so feared by Mirebalais folk because of their reputation for working all kinds of evil that it was with difficulty that even the names of two of them could be learned — the "Bizango," whose members appear at night wearing horns and holding candles, and "Les Cochons sans Poils." The former, termed *démons*, are believed to be able to change into animals when they do their evil work, a feat which would seem to make them *baka*. The societies all meet in the open country at night, and each has a small drum. They are called together by the beating of one rock against another in a manner reminiscent of the Zangbeto society of Porto Novo, Dahomey.

Nowo, Dahomey. The members are, of course, not known, but there is always gossip, and occasionally a man, when quarreling, says: "Take care! You don't know who I am. . . ."

Baka, *loupe-garous*, and *démons* are not the only supernatural beings that a person may encounter from time to time. Though not all are creatures of magic, and not all are evil, all of them are treated with due caution. Such are the "river people" — children with six fingers, who are believed to belong to the Mah' Source, the Master of the Stream, and are destined to become *houngens* — this being an example of the good that may come from such supernatural association — or persons with light hair. Those with light hair are more dangerous, however, since occasionally such folk are taken for a time under the water, the men by female spirits and the women by males. One person in Mirebalais told of a distant cousin who disappeared as she went to the river to draw water. She was mourned as dead, but returned after a year and was welcomed home. As she began to recount her adventures, however, she was struck dumb, and never recovered her speech. Another spoke of his experience as a boy with such a water-spirit, a *Maîtresse d'Eaux*. With a companion, he was walking along the bank of the Tombe River, when a woman was seen sitting on a rock combing her long light-colored hair. The other lad was invited to help her and went nearer, step by step, until, as he almost touched the comb, he turned and ran. Some time later he died.

Another category of spirits, already referred to in discussing the cult of the dead, are *zombi*. To understand their nature, however, the use of magic to bring about death or its simulacre, and the measures taken to guard against this, must be first considered. In the preceding chapter it was observed how *hoholi* seeds are placed in the coffin of one suspected of an "unnatural" death to prevent the sorcerer from reaping the fruits of his deed. A cross of pine-wood, made by the *houngan* and empowered by him to repel evil, is frequently also put

541 half-demon cannibals who meet in secret in the hollow heart of the mapou tree. Some are dressed in comic ancient military attire, replete with swords, epaulets, medals, and outlandish beards, representing "the Generals." Others, under the name Bande Aranphonique, follow a human phonograph—a leader singing through an antique Edison horn.

541 And there are bands of male *rabasiers*, or Maypole dancers, some of
55 them attired as women, weaving their colored ribbons around portable poles, to the accompaniment of guitars, marimbulas, and cha-chas. Male stick dancers known as *batonni*, dressed in women's clothing, crouch in circles and perform baton-tapping dances to the accompaniment of drumming and singing. Other small bands wander about impersonating characters from folklore or politics in grotesque homemade costumes. One might see, for example, a fanciful horse driving before him a band of zombies, wielding a whip, and barking out weird raucous commands.

After the cataclysmic grand finale of the Mardi Gras at Showcase there is the briefest of lulls, and then the country is in the throes of Rara. The day of the *roi* Lwalwali (the King of Lwalwali) has arrived. Hundreds of Rara bands move through the towns and villages, each with its orchestra of bamboo trumpets or conch-shell horns and its "king"—an orneately clad dancer or baton juggler. The Rara bands move from place to place, dance, sing, exhibit their featured performers, and then move on, pursued perhaps by other bands behind them or jostled by another group moving in the opposite direction. When darkness comes, the bands light their way with wooden torches or candelabra
[416] of tiny oil lamps. Every week end for seven weeks, in the heat of day and the darkness of night, the mountain trails are alive with these processions.

541 The Rara festivities reach their climax on Good Friday week end, and by Easter morning they are ended. During these final days there is a last grand display, with troupes coming in from the mountains and the plains to the larger cities and towns. One of the traditional Rara convocation centers in the south is the town of Léogane. On Good Friday week end, Léogane is transformed into a milling, surging, trumpeting mass of celebrating country people.

[533] The songs heard during Rara are full of praise or derision for well-
[831] known personalities. Some of them are boldly ribald or licentious. And
[535] often the dancing itself is openly sexual in its implications. Haitians humorously refer to this kind of dancing as *rawjé* (enraged, crazy).

541 Early in January, even while the Mardi Gras is in progress, each
675 community gets down to the business of organizing its Rara group. It may be organized in one of several ways. In certain communities there

In some continuity over a period of years, the Rara or Charivari band 541
remaining more or less intact. Normally it has a *maît' Rara*, also called 575
major or *president*, who assumes the organizational responsibilities for 624
the group. This means getting new costumes for the participants when required, refurbishing the old costumes and musical instruments, and recruiting special talent—perhaps a new "king." Where the same group continues from year to year, the *maît' Rara* actually serves as a sort of executive secretary. In some instances, however, the initiative for forming a group is undertaken by the *maît' Rara* himself. He chooses the costumes and *décor* of the group; he recruits the musicians and the young women and girls who form the singing and dancing chorus; and he chooses the *roi Lwalwadi*, who will be the group's main feature. He may decide upon the theme around which the group will be built, and may even decide upon the repertoire of songs it will sing. The *maît' Rara* has specific responsibilities and is obligated to provide his band with refreshments and food.

Expenses of the group are defrayed by collections made in the course 541
of its "exercises." The band will stop before a crowd of spectators, or 575
before a house, and will perform until it receives a gift known as *payé* 195
sorti (pay to go) money. After receiving its *payé sorti*, the group performs an encore and then moves on. This custom of performing for gifts appears to have been known in colonial days. Eugène Aubin notes that the slaves on the plantations celebrated on New Year's Day with drums and dances.[1] At midnight they appeared before the foreman or owner of the plantation. One of the slaves would recite a speech to him, or perhaps the group would sing a song praising the master's virtues. Then, over the heads of the celebrants, a slave would extend a long bamboo pole with a beribboned basket fastened to the end. The plantation master would place his gift in the basket, after which the group would leave the house.

Some few groups do not have a "king" but are built around musical 575
instruments or other features. However, the "king" is regarded as an old 175
tradition. Aubin reported that the *roi Lwalwadi* dates from the time of 535
the Emperor Soulouque in the nineteenth century. Soulouque is said to have named the first *roi Lwalwadi* in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. But there are reasons to suspect that these dancing virtuosi, by whatever name they were called, existed long before Soulouque entered the picture.

The *roi Lwalwadi* is a dancer of very special talents, and it is said 575
that, though his title is not hereditary, his dances have been handed 535
down within the family from *rois* of other years. Much care is given [292]
to the costume he wears. It is sometimes made of expensive satin or velvet

[1] [Aubin, *En Haïti*, p. 42. Cf. p. 351, Category 116.—Analyst]

and covered with tiny mirrors or bits of colored glass. The towering headdress of feathers or papier-mâché sculpture unmistakably recalls similar headdresses in West Africa. Each *roi* has his own style of dance, which is usually accompanied by drums. It may be a belly dance, a dance of delicate balance, or one of complicated footwork and semicircumlocutions such as the imitation of a pair of scissors at work. Throughout the dancing the headdress remains majestically erect.

In addition to the *roi* Lwdwadi and the *mèt' Rara* (who is constantly in the midst of things, blowing his whistle), there are other traditional Rara personalities: the *major jour*, who juggles with a metal baton (sometimes two or three of these jugglers work together), and the *jonglèur*, a juggler or strong man who performs such feats as dancing while holding a fully set table off the ground with his teeth.

On the southwest peninsula, in the region around Jérémie, there is a upsurge of wrestling exhibitions during Rara days. Known as *pingé*, this festival wrestling is done with a background of excited drumming and has a striking resemblance to wrestling traditions in West Africa. Local "champions" will invade a neighboring community, sometimes traveling considerable distances to make a challenge. As in West Africa, some of these wrestlers take their own musicians with them. The musicians often are provided by the village in which the events take place. If a challenge is accepted, the spectators form a large circle, with the wrestlers in the center and the musicians to one side. There may be drums and bamboo flutes, occasionally supplemented by large earthern jars and lengths of bamboo beaten with sticks. The wrestlers are dressed only in shorts. When a man is thrown, the event is over, and another pair of wrestlers takes over. Sometimes a "champion" will take on a series of opponents until he is tired. Afterward he may move on to another community to find new competition, perhaps accompanied by a large group of friends and supporters from his own village. When the Rara season comes to an end, pingé is over for the year. It is one of the few athletic sport activities of the Haitian peasant.

And now and then during Rara a *drèsèr* is seen. The *drèsèr* is a carved wooden marionette with a short handle below. Its arms and legs are moved by pulling a string. It is usually painted, and sometimes it is dressed. One drèsèr observed was provided with a loose dresslike costume; when the string was pulled, a large phallus hinged into view in an erect position. This marionette was an object of endless funmaking among spectators.[2]

Another type of marionette is the "Two Kings," made of papier-mâché and operated with strings. The "Two Kings," sitting in a papier-

[2] [Footnote appears in Category 16, p. 351. --Analyst]

541 536 stalled carriage or on paper-stalled horses, make their appearance during Rara as well as on the Day of the Kings (*Les Rois*).

541 535 534 Among the traditional paraphernalia carried by Rara groups are enormous paper sticks, cha-cha rattles, metal rattles called *ashoway*, a set of rattles on a tall thin pole (called *jouvenine*), candleholders bearing candles or oil lamps (*lampions*), banners and flags, and such miscellaneous musical instruments as the grapp scraper, bamboo scraping devices, the *kouse* finger drum, *ocoto* (beating boards), and various kinds of secular drums.

541 [535] The general tone of Rara is nonreligious. The dancing is free from the decorous restraints which characterize most religious ritual, and some early observers of the festival were shocked by what they saw. Some of them went so far as to attribute Haiti's dense population to the "licentious activities" and reckless abandon of the spring carnival. The Catholic [535] [536] Church and some political administrators have sporadically sought to suppress Rara, along with Vodoun ritual. And even today in Port-au-Prince the foreign visitor often is urged to watch the elite Mardi Gras with its floats and moderne queens as a substitute.

541 177 536 Although Rara has an over-all tone of secular abandon, it has links with both Catholic and Vodoun ritual. Good Friday is given over in great measure to miming the story of Jesus and Judas. A perambulating band may carry an effigy of Judas hanging from a pole. Another will burn the Judas effigy, or drag it in the dust as the crowd moves along the road. In another group a man playing the part of Judas may crawl on his hands and knees along the trail, while Jesus' avengers pursue him with long, cracking whips.

541 536 537 [178] Tying in with Vodoun ritual, virtually all Rara drums and other paraphernalia are "dedicated" or "rededicated" before Lent in special houngfor services. And on the last day of Rara, usually late in the night, prayers are said, the loa are called upon, and some of the festive paraphernalia is thrown into a fire to be consumed.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 112 - MM]

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[535]

69. Rara dancing near Gonaives. Vaccine players are at the left.

70. A Rara group near Port-au-Prince. At the left are the baka drum and a tambalo. One of the four musicians, center, is made of metal. Behind the musicians are the musicians' flag and a bamboo.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-NN]
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70. Rara at Léogane. Behind the dancing majors (one) a member of the group holds their banner, which depicts a bird catching a lizard. The costumes are traditional and are believed to date from colonial days.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-00]
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72. *A roi Lavalvadi in the Cul-de-Sac Plain.*

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73. *Rara stick dancers in Port-au-Prince.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-QQ]
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292

[184] [71] *76. A Rara group near Plaisance. The costumes differ from those in the south. Note the Madras waistcloths, reminiscent of West African dress.*

476 241 532 461 men who have failed to join the coumbite, or praise the host, or single out various individuals for comment. The songs of the coumbite are a newspaper of the affairs of the people. The news is personalized, editorialized, and replete with comic vignettes.

476 241 461 594 At noon the drummers signal a halt, and the workers shoulder their hoes, wipe off their machetes, and adjourn to the house for food. If it is a grand coumbite, the men rest for several hours, talking, catching up on sleep, or playing cards or *mayamba*. About three o'clock they go back to the fields to work until evening. Then comes the feast, under the canopy adjoining the house. The host and his wife have killed and cooked one or more goats, depending on the size of the group. The men are served meat, rice, beans, and whatever else has been prepared. [273] Afterward, women join the party, and there is more tafia or rum. Some of the men then drift homeward, but most stay on for dancing. Zesse, Congo, or Juba drums are brought out, and the festivities begin. If another coumbite is not scheduled for the next day, the music and dancing may last well into the night.

476 562 Women, too, have coumbites to perform various kinds of large tasks, from field work to winnowing and coffee sorting, though in general the women's work groups lack the festive character of the men's gatherings.

476 241 595 There is a more tightly knit form of coumbite, known as a *société*. In southern Haiti there are the société Congo and the société Martinique; in northern Haiti there is the société Ciyé. These sociétés are clubs built around mutual work needs and recreational activities. The société Congo that appears in the town or city streets during Rara days, with bamboo or conch-shell trumpets, drums, flags, and masks, is usually composed of the men who have joined forces to till the fields. In some instances, it may also conform roughly to membership in a particular hounfor, or cult center. Unlike the ordinary coumbite, the société is not a group which meets only at ground-breaking or harvesting time; it is a permanent organization with regular, sometimes day-to-day, obligations. Week after week it moves from one man's land to another, doing the tasks that have to be done. There is no question of "Can you come?" The group goes first to one man's land, then to another's until all the work has been done. If a member of the société falls sick, so that he cannot work his own field, the société takes over his tasks for him.

476 Coumbites are held not only for agricultural work but for house-building, and sometimes for the building of a hounfor.

[191] The Haitian coöperative work group has much in common with European and American husking and barn-building parties; but it has

[For footnote See Category 116, P. 352. -- Analyst]

535 older man, they leaped into the air and came together in mock combat. First one would strike and the other would parry, then the second would strike and the first would parry, always in time to the beating Congo drums. On another signal all six dancers leaped into the air vertically, twisting into a full turn each time, landing in position to strike and parry.

Spectators standing around the dancers clapped their hands and sang:

[539]

Mousondi na fai la guè!
Eya éya éya!
Nous c'est nanchon la guè!
Ou pas tendé canon'm tiré?

Mousondi, we will make war!
Eya éya éya!
We are a nation of war!
Don't you hear my cannon shooting?

[293] When the dancers and drummers seemed fatigued, they were offered rum to drink. The dancers drank without breaking step or interrupting the battle. The bearded man held the lip of his glass between his teeth, and without using his hands to steady it, tipped his head back and let the rum run into his mouth, all the while stamping his feet and leaping with the others.

[184] I was told later that the Mousondi was from the north, and that the dancers were recent arrivals from Port-de-Paix. But some of the older people declared that in former times the dance was known in the south by the name Calinda.

114 535 The Calinda dance, like the Vodoun, the Pétro, and several others, is mentioned frequently in the old literature on Haiti, Trinidad, Martinique, and Guadaloupe. It has been described variously as a funeral dance, an exhibitionistic sexual display, and a stick dance. It was reported by Saint-Méry as a dance in which men and women paired off. Early in the eighteenth century, Père Labat described it as a line dance, with the women on one side and the men on the other. Lafcadio Hearn saw it as a stick dance. And the word Calinda appears sometimes in songs of the Vodoun cult. The name may have lost specific meaning early in the life of the colonies; but it is more likely that early chroniclers used the term inexactly to refer to a multitude of different dances. In Haiti, [595] identification of the Calinda has been further confused by the existence of the Calinda secret society, which had special dances of its own, all called Calinda.

Although confusions and contradictions exist, the testimony of older Haitians is that the Calinda was a stick dance, known also by the name Mousondi.

[P.166]

15. Secret-Society Songs

575 171 Secret societies were once common in Haiti, as they were in other parts of the New World where West Africans settled in large numbers. The institution of the secret society was strong in various parts of West Africa from which the slaves came. The tradition was particularly notable among the tribes of Nigeria. In the New World it offered to slaves and to freed Negroes an opportunity for social organization and fraternal relationships which otherwise had been pretty well shattered by the nature of slavery and the profuse admixture of cultures. A number of elderly Haitians have [648] suggested that it was the Haitian secret societies rather than the Vodoun and Congo cults which fomented underground resistance and slave revolts against the French in the last years of the eighteenth century.

174 178 576 [476] At this late date it is difficult to reconstruct much of the secret-society picture. Such groups as may have survived until recently did so in vitiated and changed form. They have been supplanted in large measure by the *société*, a kind of mutual-aid association with both economic and recreational functions. It is exclusive, but not irrevocably so, and it is not secret. The *société* often corresponds roughly with the membership of a hounfor, or cult temple.

575 178 266 173 Old people still talk about true secret societies, however. There was a Moundongue secret society, separate from the Moundongue cult, whose members were recruited from the survivors of the Moundongue tribe and their descendants. Other secret societies were not based on tribal affiliation but were recruited from the population at large. One such group was the Vinbindingue, also known as the Blinbindingue and the Balbindingue. Its practices were feared. According to tradition, the Vinbindingue was predatory and held cannibalistic rites, as did other groups such as the Moundongue Society, the Cochon Rouge (the Red Pig Society), the Zeaubeaups, the Cochon Gris (the Gray Pig Society), and the Calinda Society. How much of their reputation for cannibalism was deserved is

[Herskovits, Dahomey, I, P.256. Cf. P.353, Category 116. -- Analyst]

How much of their reputation for cannibalism was deserved is a matter of speculation. Bizarre tales told by the colonists, as well as rumors 173
and legends propagated about the societies by nonmembers who feared 575
them, did result in a body of folklore which portrays these groups as ma- 266
levolent. The societies themselves, no doubt, often supported such beliefs to increase the awe in which they were held.

In modern Haiti, however, there is no secret or fraternal society of the 178
kind that probably existed in prerevolutionary days. Nor is there anything 575
comparable to the Abakwa, or Carabali, an Ibo secret society that has survived in Cuba.[2]

Curiously enough, the most significant noncult organization in Haiti 575
today is the Masonic order. Yet it has not remained distinct from the cults 794
but has become interwoven with them. Many Vodoun and Congo services have rites or dances that are designated as Mazonne (Masonic). Houngans often feel that affiliation with the Masonic order offers distinction and prestige for the hounfor that the ordinary cult center does not have.

As for the Calinda, the Cochon Rouge, the Cochon Gris, the Zeau- 178
beaup, the Vinbindingue, and the Moundongue societies, they appear to 575
survive in name rather than in fact. The rumors and tales go on, as they do about zombies, devils and lou-garos. It is mostly at carnival time that their names are heard. A Mardi Gras band, appropriately costumed, may herald itself as a Calinda or a Cochon Rouge group. It will sing songs it regards as appropriate to the kind of effect it is trying to achieve. Such groups are not taken seriously. They are merely part of the carnival fun. But to members of older generations they do recall tales about the secret societies that met under the limbs of the mapou tree by torchlight to conduct their nocturnal affairs.

The songs that follow are reputed to belong to the Calinda, Vinbin- 533*
dingue, and Zeaubeaup societies; but they are infected with a frivolous 575
quality which suggests they may have been heard for the first time in the carnival celebration rather than in the dark shadows of the mapou.

One of the legends concerning the Balbindingue, or Vinbindingue, is 533*
that of the dancing drum. The theme is a special one, but it is related to 539*
other stories about dancing calabashes in the Calbasse ritual and about 575
dancing hoes. This song describes a gathering at such a dance:

> Balbindingue!
> C'est là n'homme mwé yé!
> Cimitière tonnerre!
> Balbindingue!
> C'est yun seul tambour qui danse!
> Pardon mon père!
> Balbindingue!
> C'est là n'homme mwé yé! [Ex. 124]

2 [See Courlander "Abakwa Meeting in Guanabacoa", Journal of Negro History, XXIX (1944), 461ff. Cf. Cat. 116, p. 353. -- Analyst]

Balbindingue!
It is here my men are!
Cemetery thunder!
Balbindingue!
It is a single drum which dances!
Pardon, my father!
Balbindingue!
It is here my men are!

It is told of the Vinbindingue that their members are sometimes required to subject themselves to the ordeal of rubbing hot peppers in their eyes, which results in acute pain and temporary blindness. According to some explanations, this is one of the "tests" of a Vinbindingue man. Red, inflamed eyes are a standard symbol of malevolence. One informant explained that the Vinbindingue members blind themselves so that they cannot see what kind of flesh they are eating:

Jé'm pété m'pas wè ladans ma mètsé piment!
Jé'm pété m'pas wè ladans ma mètsé difé! [Ex. 125]

My eyes are blind, I can't see, I've put pepper in them!
My eyes are blind, I can't see, I've put fire in them!

Another Vinbindingue song is a humorously macabre dialogue between the members of the society and a victim. He is asked whether he would prefer to be quartered or eaten whole. Each time they are about to act according to his wishes he changes his mind:

Dévor a déquatier ça ou pitèt? Déquatier!
C'est catcha dévoré ça ou pitèt?
Moin'm assez déquatier!

C'est catcha dévoré ça ou pitèt?
Dévor a déquatier ça ou pitèt?
Moin pitot dévoré!

Dévor a déquatier ça ou pitèt?
Dévor a déquatier ça ou pitèt?
Moin pitot déquatier! [Ex. 126]

Devoured or quartered, which do you prefer? To be quartered!
Cut up or devoured, which do you prefer?
I've been quartered enough!

Cut up or devoured, which do you prefer?
Devoured or quartered, which do you prefer?
I'd sooner be devoured!

Devoured or quartered, which do you prefer?
Devoured or quartered, which do you prefer?
I'd sooner be quartered!

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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A brief song identifies by name a man who has participated in a Vinbindingue affair:

> Y'r é soi' Cimila mangé ti moune yo!
> Y'r é soi' Cimila mangé ti moune yo! [Ex. 127]
>
> Last night Cimila ate little children!
> Last night Cimila ate little children!

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A Calinda song speaks more tangently of its business. It refers to doing "washing," a very special kind of washing that requires no bluing:

> Waille waille waille, savonné sans métté 'digo!
> Waille waille waille, savonné sans métté 'digo! [Ex. 128]
>
> *Waille waille waille*, wash without bluing!
> *Waille waille waille*, wash without bluing!

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And a Zeaubeaup song complains that a ouanga (a black-magic bundle) has been swallowed by a snake. It seems to specify that some of the members of the group are zombies, the animated dead:

> L'Arcahaye nous là nous là!
> L'Arcahaye nous là nous là!
> L'Arcahaye, couléve valé ouanga moin!
> Ti ga'çons mes zeaubeaups, waille waille mes zeaubeaups!
> Ti ga'çons mes zeaubeaups, waille waille mes zeaubeaups!
> Ti ga'çons mes zeaubeaups, waille waille mes zombies!
>
> Arcahaye I was there I was there!
> Arcahaye I was there I was there!
> At Arcahaye a snake swallowed my *ouanga!*
> Young men, my zeaubeaups, *waille waille* my zeaubeaups!
> Young men, my zeaubeaups, *waille waille* my zeaubeaups!
> Young men, my zeaubeaups, *waille waille* my zombies!

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

311 merly. Wherever the overcrowded Haitians have lived since 1815, there beauty has had to give way to gnawing necessity which lacked either the imagination or the means to be sightly.

105 One can stand upon a morne and watch a rain storm rush down the valley, bending the palm trees in its fury, and think Haiti still a magnificent sight. Then one must descend the mountainside past rickety shacks and rocky fields, and the feeling grows that not all the kindly simplicity of the people is enough to lift the country from its [134] dilapidation. As he nears the village, the afternoon scent of roasting coffee will delight him; but then he sees the squalor of village life and is reminded that three million souls are here trying to eke out an existence upon a small area of declining fertility.

Much in Haiti is picturesque if one can keep his mind from wandering to the conditions which lie behind the picturesqueness. [482] Women stride down from the hills with great loads on their heads; [443] aged crones, pipe in mouth, sit perched on the haunches of tiny donkeys with their bulging panniers; the great market square in the [492] town is a scene of noisy confusion with hundreds of women and [482] children, a mixture of smells, thousands of little piles of soap, candy, gewgaws, vegetables, gaping chickens tied together by the feet, [434] shirts, canes, bolts of cloth. All the weary women, however, must [146] trudge back up to their shanties on the mountainside when the market is over. Many of them do not see ten dollars in cash during the year, and their little children, with bellies bulging, give evidence [164] of undernourishment. Without doctors, without even the rudiments of hygiene, they manage somehow to subsist, or else die, frequently of disease which might easily have been prevented.

565 In Port-au-Prince and a few other towns live enough members of the élite to make one momentarily forget the plight of the masses. [342] The houses of the well-to-do are substantially built, if not often [351] attractive. Their garden walls are brilliant with bougainvillea, their walks with hibiscus. Tiny red lizards (analis) make flashes of color along the walls. On shady verandas and in the parlors one hears delightful conversation, eats excellent food, savors the pleasures of [575] civilization. The clubs of the élite are pleasing, their tennis is good, [526] their dancing graceful. To be among these families as a welcome guest is an experience in gracious hospitality which can never be [535] forgotten. Too soon, however, one must leave these havens of urbanity and pass through districts of the town which haunt the mind with their grim want.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

512 grain in her mortar or working in her garden near by. On
[413] market days she takes the produce of the family's fields to the
[438] town to sell. If she has young children, she cares for them
[855] while she does her other work, but when they are old enough,
[857] they help her about the house if they are girls, or, if boys, go
with their father to the garden. From time to time, when
[356] house repairs are needed or there are implements to be
[241] mended, the man spends a day at home getting these odd
jobs done; otherwise only serious illness in the family keeps
him from his fields.

512 The times for meals have not varied since the days when
264 Moreau de St. Mery described the eating-habits of the slaves.[8]
In addition to the mid-morning repast, the only other meal
is that eaten after the man returns from his field, this being
[562] the largest of the day. A wife does not sit down with her
[573] husband, but usually eats earlier with her small children and
holds herself ready to serve him upon his return, when, if he
is alone, she remains to tell him the day's gossip. Visitors are
[574] often present, for peasant etiquette demands that all comers
[576] be offered food, and, as one Haitian expressed it, "The peas-
ant would kill you for the insult if you did not share your
meal with him." Bedtime, as might be expected, is early.

512 On Sundays and on the days of festivals this routine is in-
527 terrupted, when, if the occasion is of sufficient importance
[796] and the habitation is not too far from town, the peasant and
his family attend mass. On Saturday nights there is usually a
vodun dance, when the early hour for retirement is forgotten
and all-night festivities precede Sunday's rest. On such days
[264] the principal meal is eaten at three or four o'clock in the
afternoon, and all the adults share it together, while at one
side the children are fed from the dishes of their parents in
response to the insistent repetition of the demand "*Ba'm
pa'm* — give me my portion." *

* This is an example of the elision characteristic of Haitian Créole, it being abbreviated from *Ba moin part moin* or, in French, *Donnez-moi ma part*.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

769 On the following night the *mangé mort* is held, when sacrifices are given the recent and earlier dead of the family. The day is used for preparing the food, after which a table is set as for a dinner, with plates, knives, forks, salt and pepper; and sometimes chairs are placed, though this is not necessary, since it is felt that the dead prefer to eat standing. Chicken, rice, and many other types of dishes are provided, so that the tastes of all the dead may be satisfied. A stew of maize, red beans, salt beef, and pigs' feet cooked with peppers and spices are included for the *morts Guinée*. Under the table are two wooden food-containers, one for the children of the family, the other for the dogs of the household.

Shortly after darkness has fallen, the room containing the table is locked, to remain closed for some two hours, while the family, a few friends, and the *prêt' savanne* pray and sing canticles as they wait for the dead to do their feasting. Before the prayers an announcement is made for whom the food is being given; the known dead of the family are called by name, while "those drowned, those shot," and "those who come from the four corners of the earth" are also summoned. When it is judged that the dead have finished their meal, the *prêt' savanne* or an elder of the family knocks three times on the closed door before he enters and takes up a cup of sacred water and a sprig of orange leaves, with which he blesses the table by sprinkling it. He then carries one of the wooden containers to the gateway and, turning to the children, asks them three times: "*Nous content?*—Are you satisfied?" to which the answer: "*Oui!*" is given. The priest makes a motion as though to place the container on the ground, but instead raises it again, repeating this maneuver for each of the four corners of the earth before he finally puts it down, whereupon all the children rush forward, each striving to obtain as much food as he can. When the children have finished eating, they wipe
• [576] their hands on the hair of the mistress of the house, saying: "*Grâce mist'corde.*" The family then take the other con-

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1953) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

796 Then a well-dressed young man entered, and the drummers swiftly
793 changed to the salute reserved for guests of distinction. The hounsi sang,
[594] "Président passe là, l'ap monté au gouvernment!" and waved paper flags
[702] and kerchiefs. The young man was a distant relative of Stephan's; he also was a houngan.

After a while Stephan brought from his hounfor a second asson, or ritual rattle, and another small hand bell, both of which he handed to the
[596] young man. He was extending the courtesy of his hounfor, sharing his instruments of authority and religious power with his fellow houngan. Then followed an exhibition between the two houngans that was half duel and half ballet. They stood face to face, each of them holding the asson in one hand and the tiny bell in the other. Stephan was "testing" the young houngan for the edification of all present. Each tiny move made by Stephan was duplicated simultaneously by his guest, as though he were a mirrored reflection.

Every posture Stephan made was duplicated instantly by his guest. The assons and the bells were agitated constantly. The rattle in the young man's hand did precisely what Stephan's did. The two men looked into each other's eyes with intensity, as though this bound their movements together and unified them. When Stephan twisted to the left, the other houngan twisted to the right. Every contortion of the young man was an exact replica of Stephan's movements. The two assons rattled out the same rhythms and the same signals; so did the bells. The backdrop for this "test" was provided by the drummers. The faces of the two men broke into a sweat from the intense nervous effort. At last it came to an end. A woman came forward and wiped their faces with a colored kerchief. The "testing" ceremony was over. The visiting houngan had been proved.

796 Stephan then made a ritual vèvè, or maize-flour ritual drawing on the
793 ground. Afterward there was more singing and dancing by the hounsi.
787 They sang several songs for Éailie Fréda, the "pure" loa. And Alexis
[532] Stephan went into a trance. It was unexpected. The servitors had not
794 prepared for it. In this emergency the visiting houngan took over. He
[776] seemed a little anxious. He was unfamiliar with the particular psychological factors at play in this particular hounfor. He was not certain of the character of Stephan's possession. But he took over grimly. The houngénicon, an older woman, stepped forward to help. While the young houngan wielded the asson and bell, the woman issued instructions. Stephan, his head hanging back, his eyes closed, was supported by two of the hounsi. Other servitors hurriedly brought out a white sheet and spread it on the ground. A chair and a table were set upon the sheet, and Stephan was placed in the chair, where he now sat with his head hanging limply on his chest.

533 sometimes they are the words of the deity, sometimes words addressed
794 to the deity. The name of the loa may appear anywhere in the song, as
796 both an invocational word and a rhythmic device, with the result that
796 unless one is aware of the song structure he may lose the sense and
interest of the words. In these two lines, for example:

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> Master Agwé comes from the sea,
> My cannon is loaded.

796 The first line describes what happens, from the standpoint of a third person; the second line is a statement by the loa Agwé. Or, take this single line:

> Marie Louise oh, we are mixed up!

Here Marie Louise seems to be the person addressed, but in fact it is Marie Louise who is talking. Again:

> I don't see my blood, Master Ogoun!

It is not Ogoun who is addressed; the words are his own.

As in nonreligious songs, there is a pattern stanza which is repeated over and over again. As the song goes on, there may be variations for interest and certain embellishments, but by and large the form remains constant. In religious singing there are relatively few examples of songs which progress from one idea to another. When the theme has been stated, that is the song.

533 One of the preliminary songs in many ritual services is a greeting to
533a the men and women of the société who are present. It is an ockan, or
533 salute of welcome, and comes before the loa themselves are addressed:
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Messieurs-dames bonsoir!	Gentlemen and ladies, good evening!
M'apé mandé vous!	I ask you!
Messieurs-dames bonsoir!	Gentlemen and ladies, good evening!
M'apé mandé vous	I ask you
Qui gens vous yé! [Ex. 40]	What people are we?

The answer to the question is implicit, for they are the people of the société, members of the Arada "nation" or Aradgo "nation," as the case may be.

782 In almost any service of the Dahomey "nation" the first supplicatory
796 song is addressed to Legba, the keeper of the gate, the guardian of the
533 crossroads, and the "go-between" who intercedes with other loa in the
794 affairs of men. The first appeal to Legba is to open the gate, over which he is master, so that the voices of supplication may be heard and understood. The open gate also provides access for other loa to the service.

533 539 626 [576] A protest theme that runs through many a song stems from the feeling of having been slighted or improperly received in the house of another person. The following song airs the complaint of a person who feels he has been treated shabbily. Metaphorically, he says he is used to eating from an earthern bowl but has been served food in a gourd dish, from which only the poorest of people eat.

> Mo 'bituè mangè nan bulè,
> M'pap mangè nan coui ciyè! [Ex. 97]
>
> I'm accustomed to eating from a bowl;
> I'm not going to eat from a cut gourd!

[579] Or again, there is the story of the unwelcome voyager, a person who travels all the way from Jérémie, far out on the southern peninsula, to the distant town of Arcahaye, only to find that he is not wanted there:

Moin sort' Jérémie!	I come from Jérémie!
Moin passé Aux Cayes!	I pass through Aux Cayes!
M'rivé L'Arcahaye, ours amis!	I arrive in Arcahaye, my friends!
C'est moin refuse yo pas vlé wè yà,	It is me they don't wish to see here,
Moin yo wè!	It is me they see!
C'est moin refuse yo pas vlé wè yà,	It is me they don't wish to see here,
Moin yo wè oh!	It is me they see, oh!
C'est moin refuse yo pas vlé wè yà,	It is me they don't wish to see here,
Moin yo wè oh!	It is me they see, oh!

[461] A man complains sometimes of the work that has been foisted upon him by an employer, or by a neighbor with whom he exchanges labor:

> M'pas moulette oh moin pas moulette oh!
> Habitant passé moin pa'lé coffi!
>
> I'm not a mule, oh, I'm not a mule, oh!
> The farmer takes me to carry coffee!

533 539 [597] 626 Even the officials of the houngfor may be publicly reproached in song for acts of injustice. In the following example the houngénicon, the Vodoun priest's assistant, is taken to task. The song probably was first heard in the course of a ceremony at which the houngénicon was present:

> Dawomain y wa, houngénicon oh!
> Dawomain y wa, 'génicon ô!
> Dawomain y wa, yo fai mangè raison moin!
> Lè moin vlé pa'lé ou pas vlé moin pa'lé!
> Lè moin vlé chanté ou pas vlé moin chanté là!
> Dawomain y wa, yo fai mangè raison moin! [Ex. 98]
>
> Dahomey y ou,* houngénicon, oh!
> Dahomey y ou, houngénicon, ô!
> Dahomey y ou, they do me wrong!

* The word Dahomey is frequently used as an exclamation.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

I

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR COUNTRY

IN the ten thousand square miles of Haiti's mountains and valleys more than two and a half million people—some say more than three million—are crowded together. Some are black, some light-skinned, but less than five thousand are white, and these are almost all recent immigrants to the country. Modern Haiti has its racial roots primarily in Africa, but its social roots lie as much in Europe as in Africa; if it is "American" at all, geography and a few fairly superficial characteristics are the only American qualities it displays.

Carrying our own cultural interpretations with us when we visit our Caribbean neighbor, we are likely to misunderstand what we see in Haiti, for it is very easy to think of all colored people in terms of our own. To do so is to remain completely ignorant of Haiti. Whereas in the United States we use "Negro" and "colored" indiscriminately as synonyms, making a real distinction only between "black" and "mulatto," all four terms are taboo in polite society in Haiti. A new descriptive vocabulary, an entirely new frame of reference, must be acquired by the friendly foreign visitor to this West Indian republic.[1]

Probably the most striking phenomenon in the country is its division into two social groups. So rigidly are the class lines set that

1. No greater error of tact can be made by visitors to Haiti than to use such commonly accepted American terms as Negro, colored, mulatto, blacks, Africans. Whereas in the United States such words are employed to describe people with a greater or less degree of Negro blood, in Haiti they are generally regarded as opprobrious epithets, emphasizing the color of the epidermis as all important, while ignoring the essential system of culture, standard of living, and social background. Not many Haitians would have the grace to reply, as President Pétion suggested to a subaltern who was incensed at a white man for calling him "un nègre," "Why, then, did you not call him 'un blanc'?" Probably the most offensive of all the terms is *noirs*, for it calls attention to miscegenation in the family. The educated people in general regard themselves as darker Frenchmen, not as transplanted Africans. Books about Haiti which refer to the "black republic" seem to them to ignore the important fact that the blacks, though numerically preponderant, do not rule. The visitor must accordingly acquire a new vocabulary of color. It is safer not to make any allusion at all to the matter; but if occasion demands, one speaks of "jaunes" and "bruns," not white and black.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

mind dust, ruts, and a steady succession of bumps. To travel in the average hired car, driven by a Haitian, is one of the grim experiences of life. The driver speeds as if pursued by a demon, while the peasant pedestrians leap for safety into the ditches; the unfortunate passenger is moved to close his eyes to avoid seeing the inevitable crash which does not come. The most comfortable means of travel if one is going only to towns is by ship, for practically all of Haiti's towns are seaports.

To know the towns is still not to know Haiti, however, for two million or more Haitians live in the rural regions. These are the people. And if they are ignorant and not too clean, they are nevertheless models of kindly generosity. It is the proud boast even of the élite that one may travel the length and breadth of the land in perfect safety, in no danger of life or of personal property.

Many homely sights linger in the mind: women washing the family clothes in the stream, laughing and gossiping with their neighbors; men and women talking in animated fashion to themselves, arguing, cajoling, explaining as they walk along; individuals carrying a single flower, simply because it is beautiful; barefoot women, gnarled of hand and lined of face, kneeling in the Catholic church at prayer; taxi drivers who cruise by, hissing in order to attract the attention of a visitor who obviously can afford to ride instead of walk; an apparently ceaseless procession of patient donkeys, always laden, sometimes ridden by women, sometimes urged along from behind; the so-called buses each with its witty or its florid name (Plaisance, Éclair, Grâce-à-Dieu, Polichinelle, Sauve-qui-peut, Montparnasse), which like glorified buckboards jostle woodenly from the town to country hamlets; the winsome, open smile and gay laughter of a peasant boy; the ingratiating charm of a sleeping baby in the noise of the market place. To know the average Haitian is to feel a warm affection for him. His life is never easy, yet he bears it all with true beauty of spirit. If *le bon Dieu* sends distress, he will also make it possible for distress to be borne.

The people are polite, whether to each other or to strangers. A younger person greets an older one as *compère* or *commère*—literally, godfather or godmother; to his equal he says "*frère*" or "*m'sieu*." Sometimes one sees a local patriarch instructing little children in "deportment." This courtesy extends to hospitality: a stranger is almost sure to be offered shelter and food wherever he stops.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

One of Christophe's rules was that no cultivator attached to

a plantation—and every ordinary country person was so attached —might leave the estate without permission from a military officer.[10] Two of the common folkways of Haitian peasant life since his time have been immobility and general acceptance of orders from the military. Both characteristics had been fostered by slavery and by the régimes of Toussaint and Dessalines, and these folkways became fixed under Christophe. 175 566 178 [484]

Other rules introduced by the King, however, lapsed shortly after his strong hand was removed. For example, the monarch required of the whole population that whenever they visited the capital on feast days or went to the market towns on Saturdays they be decently clad in clean clothes.[11] Since the time of Christophe, neatness of appearance has hardly been a folk characteristic, probably because of poverty rather than lack of desire to dress well. Nor did scrupulous regularity of work in the fields continue as a folkway later, when the great plantations were broken up. 175 178 291 527 183 [44]

Like a father the King tried to inculcate moral standards of honesty in his people. To prevent theft he had small valuables, such as watches or jewelry or purses, "planted," and if the finder did not immediately turn them over to the nearest Dahomet, punishment was meted out. Such a policy made honesty contagious. Thefts and depredation were soon almost unknown. The most tempting store of wealth could be left safely unlocked or in the open air. Christophe's achievement in this matter is eloquent testimony to his success as a paternal leader, for it is no small task to initiate moral ideas among people who for a generation have lacked them. Even today it is the proud boast of the Haitians that their people are honest. 175 577 177

As compared with the liberties of farmers in the United States of the same period, the Haitian agricultural workers' freedom was infinitesimally small, but by contrast with the bondage of slavery, their new status was definitely higher. 175 566

10. Christophe called his royal police force "Dahomets," after the West African kingdom, Dahomey, from which most of the men had come. They were not ordinary soldiers but especially imported and carefully selected men whose intelligence made them stand out from their fellows. Each Dahomet was given a course of training in his task as administrator before being sent out. The general consensus of foreign visitors was that these Dahomets were efficient even in small matters. [625]

11. This rule was partly an indication of Christophe's vanity, personal and national, for he was deeply desirous of the good opinion of white visitors, especially those from England. He wanted Europeans to respect Haiti as they would respect any small state, and not to praise it merely as an example of "Negro progress." [577] [186]

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

IX

HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDS

TOLERANT understanding of the ways of alien people is rare in matters relating to sex. Occasionally we may regard marital and sexual practices which differ from our own as amusing or ridiculous; more frequently we find them distasteful and disgusting. A long religious heritage has implanted in us a definite personal morality, familiar in Puritanism and in the codes of the great majority of early American pioneers. Accompanying and dominated by this religious aspect has been the legal idea of sexual morality. A middle-class tradition of private property, hence of orderly marriages legally recognized, has schooled us for centuries to approve certain moral and sexual rules: monogamic marriage, children born in wedlock, a public wedding ceremony by approved authorities, censure of sexual relations which might confuse the passage of property. Although sympathetic tolerance for foreign ways has never been an outstanding American characteristic, it is least evident in connection with divergent sexual practices. We do not remind ourselves of the utilitarian basis of a part of our own sexual codes.

Where people have economic and social backgrounds different from those of Western Europe and the United States, other codes will prevail. Elements which have made American moral standards what they are were lacking or appeared in different form in Haiti. Instead of middle-class European tradition there was African tribal practice; instead of diffused small private properties there was slavery; instead of the Puritan notion that sex relations were in general sinful was the less rigorous view that sexual intercourse was entirely normal; instead of the example of monogamous family life constantly before the minds of children growing up, there was the example of libertinage among lofty whites and laxness among the blacks.

Nothing in the experience of the slave régime could have predisposed toward orderly marriage these people, soon to become Haitians. Certain masters actually prohibited weddings among their slaves, while most others discouraged it, since the development of family ties among the blacks would only have made for complication

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

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[49] average hired car, driven by a Haitian, is one of the grim experiences of life. The driver speeds as if pursued by a demon, while the peasant pedestrians leap for safety into the ditches; the unfortunate passenger is moved to close his eyes to avoid seeing the inevitable crash which
[361] does not come. The most comfortable means of travel if one is going only to towns is by ship, for practically all of Haiti's towns are seaports.

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● 577 million or more Haitians live in the rural regions. These are the people. And if they are ignorant and not too clean, they are nevertheless models of kindly generosity. It is the proud boast even of the élite that one may travel the length and breadth of the land in perfect safety, in no danger of life or of personal property.

105 Many homely sights linger in the mind: women washing the family clothes in the stream, laughing and gossiping with their neighbors; men and women talking in animated fashion to themselves, arguing, cajoling, explaining as they walk along; individuals carrying a single flower, simply because it is beautiful; barefoot women, gnarled of hand and lined of face, kneeling in the Catholic church at prayer; taxi drivers who cruise by, hissing in order to attract the attention of a visitor who obviously can afford to ride instead of walk; an apparently ceaseless procession of patient donkeys, always laden, sometimes ridden by women, sometimes urged along from behind; the so-called buses each with its witty or its florid name (Plaisance, Éclair, Grâce-à-Dieu, Polichinelle, Sauve-qui-peut, Montparnasse), which like glorified buckboards jostle woodenly from the town to country hamlets; the winsome, open smile and gay laughter of a peasant boy; the ingratiating charm of a sleeping baby in the noise of the market place. To know the average Haitian is to feel a warm affection for him. His life is never easy, yet he bears it all with true beauty of spirit. If *le bon Dieu* sends distress, he will also make it possible for distress to be borne.

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[367] Sometimes one sees a local patriarch instructing little children in
[609] "deportment." This courtesy extends to hospitality: a stranger is almost sure to be offered shelter and food wherever he stops.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

584 in the same district, the background of the young man is well enough known so that no investigation is necessary, though unfailingly a long and formal discussion of the suitor, his qualities, and his prospects ensues. If his home is some distance away, however, meticulous inquiries are made not only concerning the young man and his immediate family, but of
584 his ancestry as well. Should the suitor live near the home of
212 the young woman, as usually happens, his own parents come with a *lettre de demand*. In earlier days the "letter" was written on flowered paper with a lacy border, but today plain colored paper does very well. When presented, it is wrapped
[603] in a green silk handkerchief, "for hope" — the handkerchief
[822] costs about five gourdes, and a similar amount is given the scribe — and is usually carried by the oldest man of the family; that is to say, the paternal grandfather if living, or if he is dead, the father, accompanied by the mother and perhaps the other grandparents. Today it is said that in the
[178] valley of Mirebalais the custom of presenting these letters of request is often disregarded, but is by no means extinct.[7]

The family of the girl is always apprised of the exact time of the visit, and refreshments are on hand. No reply is given at the time of the delivery of the "letter," since the families of both the father and the mother of the girl must consent to the match before it can be finally approved. However, at the stage of the courtship which the presentation of a "letter" implies, this delayed answer is a matter of form, for if the proposal had not been acceptable, the girl would not have been allowed to see the suitor. The refusal of a "letter" has
● [578] been known to occur, but this is regarded as a deadly insult, and deep enmity between the families follows. Should the family of the girl, not wishing to be abrupt, accept the "letter" and proffer refreshments to its bearers, but later return the same "letter" as a sign of rejection, even this would be
584 bitterly resented. Under such circumstances the young man
832 takes steps to obtain revenge by providing himself with a
578

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

love-charm designed to insure the young girl's coming to him. 584
He then uses all persuasion to give her a child and, this [832]
achieved, abandons her to show his contempt for the family [578]
that has formally refused to accept him as a son-in-law.

Usually, however, the visit is returned by the family of [212]
the girl, bearing a "response" of acceptance wrapped in a [822]
red silk handkerchief, "for victory." And just as the family of the young woman had known in advance of the coming of her suitor's relatives, word of the favorable verdict is now sent through indirect channels, so that the family of the young man may also be prepared to receive the emissaries who come on behalf of the girl.

With this formal acceptance of the young man's suit, the 583
wedding waits until he has accumulated the requisites for a 584
household. Custom dictates that even should he be prepared, the ceremony must be delayed for several months while he remains in a probationary state, to assure the family of his fiancée of his worthiness. The young woman is also under surveillance during this time, when she may be asked to help her future mother-in-law with the housework, and particularly with the washing and ironing of linens. Generally a period of from two to three years elapses before the bridegroom accumulates enough to fulfill his obligations in marriage. During this time the family of the young woman is acquiring the things she is expected to bring to her husband: linens and dishes — though in the poorer peasant families these items would not be provided her — cooking utensils, water-containers, knives, forks, and other things needed for the household. Her father also presents her with a horse, a donkey, six or seven pigs, the same number of goats, as well as chickens, guinea-hens, and turkeys.

Tokens of virginity are not demanded before the match, 584
since Mirebalais custom requires that the girl tell before her 836
marriage whether she has had relations with other men. She may be sent away if it is discovered that she has told an un-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

today not only in Mirebalais, but, in their essential outlines, throughout the Republic.

The larger relationship grouping originates in the immediate family, and the formation of new extended families is a continuing arc. Characteristically, the process begins when a man leaves the habitation of his father and, with his wife, settles on land somewhat remote from the dwellings of either his people or those of his wife. As the sons of this couple grow up and marry, they make their homes near that of their father, so that in time a group of immediate families related in the paternal line clusters about the dwelling of this original settler, forming a habitation. The continuation of the process depends upon the amount of land available to the group; in any event, given enough time, land to permit all the male descendants of the founder to support themselves and their families will be lacking, so that the younger men will repeat the process that has been described, and themselves become the founders of new habitations whose members, with the passing of generations, will eventually be lost to the original group. While land is available, a young man is given several hectares by his father when he marries, and here he establishes his household. If the family have prospered, additional land is bought as more young men grow up, so that the relationship group may become a community of considerable size.

In accordance with this rule of residence, only rarely will a man settle on the property of his wife's parents, since to do so reflects unfavorably on his personal status. When this does occur, it is probably because of a serious quarrel with his own people. In such a case, if his marriage endures, he becomes a quasi-member of his wife's family, but unless he has committed some extremely grave offense, such as publicly insulting or striking a parent or grandparent, he does not forfeit membership in his own group.[1] Similarly, the fact of his having settled away from the habitation of his family does not disinherit him, for, as will be seen, this occurs in but the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

796 tablishment of the family *maison de servitude*, a special ritual
[782] for Legba at the *barrière* was required. The one who took charge threw some rum on the *boucan* that had been made for Legba. Taking a candle, he struck the drums with it; then described *verver* and placed an egg on the white flour he piled
796 just inside the *barrière*. The rite proceeded no farther, how-
578 ever, for with the appearance of the head of the family, accompanied by his wife and son, who was the young man who had been possessed by Gede the first night of the *service*, a discussion arose which soon developed into a quarrel, because the family head felt that he had not been notified of this dance in the manner due his position. Finally with the cry: "If anything happens to the family because of this, I am not responsible," he departed in a rage. This was regarded as serious, because should a dance which ended an important rite be held with some of the family absent, the gods might be angered and serious consequences might follow. The woman, who had been instrumental in seeing that the *service* was given and had cared for most of the preparations, bravely decided to continue with the ritual, however, and the drumming was resumed.

796 Alcohol and flour were thereupon poured on the drum-
533 heads, while a number of songs were sung by all present:
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[782]

Bonjou' manman, bonjou' papa,	Good-day, mamma, good-day, papa,
Ma p' mandé coumen nou' yè	I ask how are you.
Lan Guinée gangnin dent'.	In Guinea there are teeth.
Moin entré, moin entré,	I entered, I entered,
Ou pas salué moin.	You did not greet me.
Agoue-e, hunto	Agowe, hunto (spirit in the drum)
Agasu-e	Agasu-e
Agoué-e hunto, e-o.	Agowe hunto, e-o.

To go away and talk, oh!
Ogoun Balindjo
The eyes see, the mouth is closed, oh! *
Ogoun Balindjo
Don't you see they come to look at me?

Or again, the loa Ogoun and Loko Attiso are invoked to witness a person's misery, though in this song the cause is not explained:

Ogoun oh ga'dé misè!
Papa Ogoun ou wa ga'dé misè!
Ga'dé misè oh Lok' Attiso ga'dé misè là yé! [Ex. 105]

Ogoun, oh, look at my misery!
Papa Ogoun, you will look at my misery!
Look at my misery, oh, Loko Attiso, look at my misery here!

The impulse to criticism most often stems from personal injuries, but on occasion songs are used as a community affair to exert social pressures on an errant member of the neighborhood:

Frè' Jean-Pierre wa quitté bwè tafia!
Frè' Jean-Pierre ti moune yo tounè!

Brother Jean-Pierre, stop drinking tafia! †
Brother Jean-Pierre, the little children are naked!

Although discussions of neighbors' affairs tend to have this moral tone, a vast number of songs are pure gossip and are sung for their ribald or wry humor, as the case may be. In some the objects of ridicule are named; in others the allusions are indirect, so that only those who are familiar with the situation will know the people concerned. Open quarreling often provides amusement and substance for satire. The community can sense petulance, stupidity, and stubbornness through a confusion of charges and countercharges, and is quick to burlesque them. Thus there are public pressures against petty and needless disturbances. The following song refers to a dispute over ownership of an unnamed article.

Moin dit c'est bagaille grand mounel Ciyé!
C'est bagaille grand mounel Ciyé!
Moin dit c'est zaffai grand mounè! Ciyé!
C'est bagaille grand mounel Ciyé!
Moin dit n'ap chaché li! Ciyé!
N'ap prend li! Ciyé!
Moin dit c'est bagaille grand mounel Ciyé!
C'est bagaille grand mounel Ciyé! [Ex. 106]

* That is to say, the eyes should see and the mouth should be closed.
† An alcoholic drink.

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I say it belongs to the old man! *Ciyél* *
It's the old man's thing! *Ciyél*
I say it's the old man's affair! *Ciyél*
It's the old man's thing! *Ciyél*
I say I'll look for it! *Ciyél*
I'm going to take it! *Ciyél*
I say it belongs to the old man, *Ciyél*
It's the old man's thing, *Ciyél*

Another burlesque of a quarrel concerns a mother who has sent her daughter down to the river to do the washing. Some question arises as to whether the girl went down to the river at all, or whether she went elsewhere. There is implicit suggestion that the girl may have been at a rendezvous. The mother and the girl argue back and forth: 533* 539* 593 626

Moin voyé Lanmeci nan dleau,	I sent Lanmeci to the water,
Li pas allé!	She didn't go!
Moin voyé Lanmeci nan dleau,	I sent Lanmeci to the water,
Li pas allé!	She didn't go!
Moin voyé Lanmeci nan dleau,	I sent Lanmeci to the water,
Li pas allé!	She didn't go!
Moin voyé Lanmeci nan dleau,	I sent Lanmeci to the water,
Li pas allé!	She didn't go!
Lanmeci coté ou té yé?	Lanmeci, where are you?
Là'm té yé!	I was there!
Là'm té yé!	I was there!
Là'm té yé!	I was there!
Là'm té yé!	I was there!
Là'm! [Ex. 107]	There!

Most of the scandal songs are fragmentary and tangent, though clear in implication, like this one: 533* 539* 626 831

C'est pas faute moin!
C'est pas faute moin!
C'est pas faute moin!
C'est pas faute moin!
C'est pas faute moin manman!
C'est pas faute moin!
Gainyain moune t'ap marché dèyè bien!
Rwo woyo!
Gainyain moune t'ap marché dèyè bien!
Gainyain moune nan lacour à,
Prend nouvelle oh, so! [Ex. 108]

It wasn't my fault!
It wasn't my fault!
It wasn't my fault!

* Used as an exclamation.

Parents are generally kind to their children, so far as physical
855 punishment is concerned. The average peasant child can hardly
861 properly be said to be "brought up": he merely grows, eats whatever
his family eats or whatever fruits he can pick up, and learns his place
152 in the community as he matures. In anger, parents are likely to use in correction the first thing that comes to hand. There is a surprising callousness to pain among these generally kindly people: they beat their donkeys unmercifully, and strap harness over open sores; they carry chickens, head down and feet tied together and mouths gaping, for miles in the sun; they revel in gory cockfights. If, therefore, a parent is minded to beat his child, he will probably do a thorough
[578] job of it. A peasant woman, pommeling her son with a broomstick, replied to the protests of a white passer-by, "*Li nègue; li pas fait li mal.*" ("He's a Negro; it won't hurt him.") The interference of a stranger in the beating of a wife by her man, armed with a club, was resented by both man and woman as an interference with a purely family quarrel.

831 The concept of sexual continence is lacking among the peasants.
834 Sex, indeed, hardly enters the realm of morality except in connection
864 with adulterous dalliance of one man with another's woman. There is no virtue in abstaining from sex relations when the sexual urge is strong. Mothers tell love stories in all their frank details to their young daughters, and some who care about such matters are adept in all lore connected with stimulating and satisfying a man's desire.[5]
[342] Since huts are small and the whole family sleeps in the same room, children have ample opportunity to observe the sexual life of their parents. If a girl, as a result of her own experiments, has a child born to her, there is no disgrace. Practically every peasant is "illegitimate," so that the term means nothing; a baby will soon be old enough to assist in the work of the home, thus becoming an asset. It is expected that as soon as a youth grows up he will find a mate and begin a family of his own.

241 The family is as important an element of peasant life as formal
439 marriage is unimportant. It is the economic unit. Ever since the days
593 of Pétion Haitian economy has been one of small things: even the crops are small subsistence crops of maize, millet, beans, rice, yams, and frequently trees of bananas, plantains, and coffee, which require no particular cultivation. Enough coffee has been produced in Haiti for annual export ever since 1804, but until recent years the beans

5. See Zora Neale Hurston, *Tell My Horse*, pp. 22 ff.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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From Colonel Déro to Private Diplaro,
They marched with fanfare, a great army of foot soldiers!
He thought that he was king!
He thought that he was king!
He thought that he was king!
The Spaniards chased him, he ran like a dog after fresh carrion!

175 Forty-five years later, in 1888, there was a big political rally in Port-
● 539 au-Prince. The two presidential candidates were General Séide Télé-
666 maque and Déus Légitime. Their supporters clashed near the palace,
686 and Télémaque was killed in an exchange of gunfire. Légitime naturally was accused of having murdered his rival, though his supporters would not believe that he had committed such a crime. Evidence for a trial was entirely lacking, and Déus Légitime became president. But feeling ran
* [533] high, and the followers of Télémaque began to sing:
* [539]

Écoutez chers amis l'histoire de Légitime!
Assassin de Séide, et lui est président!
Écoutez bien l'histoire, le gens du nord marchaient
Sur Port-au-Prince un fois pou' vengé la mort de Séide!
Allez au diable, bandit Déus!
Échappez vous, ingrat Déus!
Si vous perdre le temps, Déus,
Florvil vous feura fusillé!

Listen my friends to the story of Légitime!
Assassin of Séide, and he is President!
Listen well to the story, the people of the north will march
On Port-au-Prince one day to avenge the death of Séide!
Go to the devil, bandit Déus!
Escape, ingrate Déus!
If you lose time, Déus,
Florvil will have you shot!

Légitime had this possibility clearly in his mind. And the next year,
[669] when Florvil Gélin Hippolyte marched from the north with an army of *cacos* (peasant troops who hired out to political aspirants), Légitime hurriedly boarded a steamer in the harbor and sailed for Jamaica. Séide Télémaque was considered avenged, as the army bugles still bear witness. For now when the bugle plays reveille it is supposed to be saying:

* [539]

Séide Télémaque, Légitime has fled!
Séide Télémaque, Légitime has fled!

175 The new President, Florvil Hippolyte, died in office in 1896. J. N.
643 Leger, a Haitian historian, tells soberly of Hippolyte's end in the following words.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

* 533 * 539 643 named in the song has been dead for years does not seem to matter very much:

Mènè'm allé oh parleur!	Take me to the parlor!
Mènè'm allé!	Take me!
Mènè'm allé!	Take me!
Mènè'm allé oh parleur Borno!	Take me to Borno's parlor!
Mènè'm allé oh! [Ex. 120]	Take me, oh!

* 533 * 539 625 Sometimes the challenge is directed to a more lowly level of authority, such as the gendarme:

Gendarme, mènè'm nan bureau!
Rwo, gendarme oh! [Ex. 121]

Gendarme, take me to the police station!
Rwo, gendarme, oh!

152 683 579 [183] [626] Haitians are notable for their restraint from physical violence. During holiday celebrations it is not uncommon to see men who have drunk enough tafia to make them act up. Some of them may even be morose and bellicose. But the disturbances of the peace more often than not are verbal. So long as the first blow is not struck, the social pressures against violence operate effectively. But physical assault against an individual—a push, a blow, a slap—is an affront to personal dignity which relieves the victim of the social restraints and gives him the right to bodily revenge. I have seen waterfront rows, fierce and vocal, in which no one but the participants showed much interest. But should one man shove or strike another, the spectators would immediately interfere, for that single physical contact would have removed the barriers to the worst violence. Sometimes at carnival time a man assumes the guise of belligerence. Such a bully may roll up one trouser leg to indicate he is challenging all and sundry to a fight. Usually, passers-by move aside good-naturedly when he approaches. He is not taken seriously; but neither is he challenged, except by another man in the same frame of mind. When two men with rolled trouser legs meet, there may be a verbal encounter, possibly from opposite sides of the street, to the general entertainment of the bystanders. It is usually a serio-comic affair. Some of the folk songs memorialize occasions on which a man has publicly spoiled for a fight, real or imaginary. This song comments briefly on a man named Çalira, who looked for trouble:

* 533 * 539 783 683 579

Woy woy woy!
Woy woy woy!
Woy woy woy!
Çac bien arrangé corps yo!
Mène en bataille là!

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Hall SV3

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Çalira Çalira ça!
Mène en bataille là!
Ça qui fin arrangé corps yo!
Mène en bataille là! [Ex. 122]

Woy woy woy!
Woy woy woy!
Woy woy woy!
Those who can't fight, take care of yourselves!
Take me into the battle!
Çalira, this Çalira!
Take me into the battle!
Those who are delicate, take care of yourselves!
Take me into the battle!

Another battle cry in song goes:

C'est nou même, c'est nou même!
C'est nou même, c'est nou même!
Pas wè'm déjà gros Nèg' rwo!
Na mainyain djab là!

It is me myself, it is me myself!
It is me myself, it is me myself!
Don't you see I am a big man, rwo?
I will hold that devil!

In the following song an aggrieved man declares he is strong as a bull, and warns his enemy to beware.

Anou mayain tè glissé nou c'est bèf oh!
Anou mayain tè glissé nou c'est bèf oh!

I'll fix you, treacherous fellow,* I am a bull, oh!
I'll fix you, treacherous fellow, I am a bull, oh!

Even a successful game of dice is the subject of bragging:

533*
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Passé frai,
Oh passé belle,
Passé un beauté!
Passé frai,
Oh passé belle,
Passé un beauté!
Yr é soir frappé zos,
Non fai trois lasse! [Ex. 123]

More than sweet,
Oh, more than handsome,
More than a beauty!
More than sweet,
Oh, more than handsome,
More than a beauty!
Last night I played dice,
I made three aces!

* *Tè glissé*, literally "slippery earth," means a person who is treacherous.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 433 Haiti under Dessalines seemed to be flourishing, although it was less productive than under the French colonial régime. This was partly because the material damage of the wars had been too great to be quickly repaired; partly it was because many of the free Haitians had discovered ways of disappearing into the remote valleys, there to live the life of independent squatters, safe from the blows of Dessalines' overseers. Tables of exports showed that sugar production was rapidly declining, and that coffee was now becoming the principal crop of the country.[4] Many cane fields, indeed, were turning into rugged thickets, their mills and refineries falling to ruins beside the clogged irrigation ditches.

175 466 439 579 It was a bewildering "system," then, this instituted by Dessalines: intense activity of serfs on government plantations, but an increasing number of deserting squatters; foreign trade encouraged, yet run by principles of local favoritism. Even the old-fashioned practice of piracy was reëstablished, for the Emperor gave letters of marque to some of his subjects who owned ships, allowing them to pursue French and Spanish vessels as the rightful prey of an enemy country. Sometimes these Haitian corsairs even disturbed smaller English merchant ships. Finally, it was Dessalines who said to his favorites, "*Plumez la poule* [that is, the Haitian people], *mais prenez garde qu'elle ne crie pas.*"

175 439 437 Christophe, upon his accession to power in the North, completely abandoned the fantastic schemes of Dessalines for putting an end to all contact between Haitians and foreigners. Among his earliest acts were efforts to undo the economic measures of the Emperor. In his first address he proclaimed certain free ports, announcing that the flags of all nations would be respected and property protected.[5] Next he abolished the consignment system of trading, allowing all foreign traders free access to Haitian merchants. This open system did away with the need of smuggling.

175 439 648 Because Christophe was almost pathetically anxious to make a good impression upon Great Britain, he was scrupulous in living up to his promises of security of property and justice in commercial dealings—to British merchants. The United States fared ill at the King's hands, for it was a young republic which had by refusing

4. See note on this chapter, p. 320, section 4.

5. His constitution of 1807 likewise makes this promise: "The government solemnly guarantees to foreign merchants the security of their persons and property."

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 recognition to the kingdom specifically failed to pay him proper
439 respect. Moreover he seized the property of American merchants in
648 his kingdom to make good a sum of $123,955.19 he could not recover from a Baltimore firm.[6] Agriculture flourished in the North, but the English were not yet certain whether Haitian credit could be trusted. The demand of the traders for cash was allowed, and so with almost no risk British dealers supplied the steady demand for staple trade goods,[7] taking in return either coffee and sugar or the equivalent in cash.

175 Christophe was chary of publishing any specific figures on the
439 economic life of his kingdom: we have no way, therefore, of estimating either the annual production or the annual income. One of his statesmen, Baron de Vastey, affirmed that in 1817 more than 150 ships were supplied with cargoes of coffee and sugar at the Cape alone.[8] This number is equal to that which sailed from the port during its most peaceful and prosperous periods in colonial times; one suspects the baron of exaggerating. We know, however, that Christophe was the chief merchant in his kingdom, setting his own prices and disposing of his own goods before others could sell; we know, too, that he left a large fortune in his coffers when he died.

175 Like Dessalines, King Henry Christophe had his pirates, and re-
579 doubtable ones. But he warned them to prey only on French ships
439 bound for ports in Pétion's republic in the South; he did not wish his trade interfered with in the North.

The policies of Dessalines and Christophe were personal, based upon their subjective prejudices and preferences; those of Pétion were more in accord with the practice of other civilized nations of the time. They had to be, perforce, in view of the economic and political position of his republic.

175 Southern Haiti had never, even in colonial times, been so intensely
439 cultivated as the North. Foreign traders were accustomed to deal at
648 the Cape, now the capital of Christophe's dominion. while Port-au-Prince was but a secondary market. After the civil war Christophe had practically allied himself with Great Britain. If this coup were to be counterbalanced, Pétion would have to choose for allies among

6. See Ludwell L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938*, p. 48.

7. Christophe did not encourage his people to purchase any of the extravagantly rich manufactures of Europe, but rather to keep their wants simple.

8. Formerly Cap François, then Cap-Haïtien, but under Christophe renamed in his
[103] honor Cap-Henry; it is now Cap-Haïtien.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

Foreign relations, in the political sense, revolved during most of

175 648 the nineteenth century about loans and insurrections. Haiti maintained legations in those countries to which she exported most of her coffee and from which she might obtain credit. Revolutionary leaders sometimes promised as a bait for foreign assistance either tariff preferences or the cession of Môle Saint Nicolas for a naval base; if successful, they might fulfill the first promise but, because of the Monroe Doctrine and the watchful jealousy of the big powers, the Môle was never ceded. The United States had varied dealings with Haiti. Before the Civil War there was more than one movement to transplant freed slaves from this country to Haiti; after the war the United States came very near annexing Haiti; and negotiations over the cession of the Môle did not end until America acquired Guantanamo Bay, across the Windward Passage in Cuba, as a naval base to guard the entrance to the Caribbean.[1]

It was finally the combination of complicated economic affairs and political collapse which produced the Occupation of 1915. In the 175 preceding year both France and Germany threatened to send war- 652 ships to collect loans due them, and were stopped only by the out- 457 break of the World War. An American bank held as its subsidiary the Bank of Haiti, in which the government deposited its funds; when in 1914–15 the presidents followed each other in rapid succession, the bank on instructions from New York refused to allow the government to withdraw its funds. Haiti in retaliation threatened to seize its deposits by force, but the New York bank persuaded the United States government to send a ship to transfer the gold from Port-au-Prince to New York. There were other financial complications, particularly those relating to defaulted payments to a railroad 175 company. What finally precipitated the Occupation, however, was 648 anarchy. When, in July, 1915, President Sam slaughtered 168 politi- [579] cal prisoners and was himself mobbed and murdered, the American government ordered the landing of its Marines from a warship conveniently anchored in the harbor near Port-au-Prince.[2]

From 1915 to 1934 the foreign affairs of Haiti were under the direction of the United States, whose main concern was to order the economic relations of the country in such fashion that Haiti should

1. The foreign relations of Haiti with the United States have been clearly treated in Ludwell L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States*, 1714–1938.

2. One of the best accounts of the events leading up to the Occupation is that of H. P. Davis, *Black Democracy*.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

197 a language into their daily speech. What the Americans have done to English, the Haitians in general have done to Créole. It is pertinent briefly to review the early history of Créole in order to comprehend the distinctly Haitian contributions to the language.

175 Through most of the seventeenth century Caribbean waters were full of pirates and buccaneers preying upon Spanish shipping. The
● 579 effective monopoly which lordly Spain held in the preceding century over the trade of Europe with her rich Mexican and South American colonies began, in the early years of the new century, to crumble before the ingenious, speedy, and daring assaults of non-Spanish raiders. French, Dutch, and English sailors were all ready to try their hand at capturing laden Spanish ships. The rich cargoes of gold, silver, and merchandise were alluring enough to make the risk seem worth taking. And indeed the risk was not too great, for Spain's stately galleons were antiquated and cumbersome, generally no match for the flyboats[1] which had speed and much greater manageability. More and more Spanish control over the Caribbean, the Spanish Main, declined as the freebooters increased.

175 French sailors were among the most numerous and reckless of the
579 gadflies who made life miserable for the Spanish traders. Drawn from
648 the northern and northwestern provinces of France, these men had been seafarers all their lives. Harrying Spanish shipping was the most lucrative career for French sailors, and as the seventeenth century wore on their numbers in the Caribbean increased. By 1660 they had established a raiding base on La Tortue, an island off the northern coast of Haiti, where they developed a characteristic way of life —economic, political, and social—between raids.[2] Their presence near Haiti gave France a claim, in the Treaty of Ryswick (1697), to the western part of the island. For the next hundred years this region was to be known as Saint-Domingue.

175 Créole was born of buccaneering. In the seventeenth century the
579 French of Ile-de-France had not yet supplanted the dialects of the
197 French districts; the buccaneers consequently spoke their native speech, and since Norman sailors far outnumbered the others

[175] 1. Origin of "filibuster," "fillibuster," and "freebooter."
[192] 2. It was here that they came to be called "buccaneers." They raided the relatively deserted main island of Haiti (then still under Spanish control) for cattle roaming wild. These cattle they cooked over an open fire, with a certain kind of wood; the process was called "boucanning," and they themselves "boucaniers." They imported wives from the seaport towns of Normandy, and families began to be raised on La Tortue.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175

Norman French became the dominant tongue of the French buccaneers. Words were naturally added from the patois of the neighboring French provinces of Picardy, Brittany, and Anjou, but Norman remained the matrix.[3] With La Tortue as their home base, the buccaneers roamed the Caribbean, coming into constant contact with other people—contact which left its mark, as meetings generally do, upon the speech of the travelers.

579 197

There were still Indians left in some of the islands, and Indians outnumbered Spaniards on the mainland. From these aborigines Créole borrowed many individual words, these being generally the names of things—flora and fauna, food, objects of daily life more or less common throughout the Caribbean world.[4] The grammatical contributions of the Indians were apparently only an emphasis upon tendencies already present in Norman French, such as that of keeping the verb form constant while making other words in the sentence do the work of indicating past, present, or future, continuous or completed action, and the like.

175 197 192 193

Engaged in buccaneering with the French were hundreds of English privateers. Often English and French raided in partnership; for many years both groups shared La Tortue. This contact left a heavy mark upon Créole—a congenial one, indeed, for Norman French had been for more than four centuries the official language of England. Now in the seventeenth century English was giving back to Norman many words in exchange for the ones it had taken.[5] More important than its verbal gift, however, was the influence it exerted toward a simple syntax. As compared with French forms,

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3. An outstanding linguist, John Paine, in *Philologie créole*, p. 1, estimates that three out of four words in Créole are Norman.

175

4. A very few of these Indian words have become familiar in French, and still fewer in English; but one finds many of them, in one form or another, in the whole Caribbean basin. Examples are:

192

agouti, a small rodent	*hamac*, hammock
atoupa, a dish whose base is corn	*ouragan*, hurricane
caiman, alligator	*koyalende*, a very hard wood
igouane, a large lizard	*comphebe*, another hard wood
avocat, the avocado pear	*mabouya*, small lizard
calebasse, calabash	*barbacoa*, barbecue
corossol, a green prickly fruit	*canoë*, a dugout canoe
goyave, guava	*lambi*, a mollusk or conch
gourmet, yam	*tam-tam*, a parcel of bananas

5. Henry Morey, *Glossaire comparatif Anglo-Normand* (Caen, 1888), points out that the modern Norman dialect contains more than 3,000 words common to English and Norman, but not recognized in official French.

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58 Though a certain prestige attaches to marriages solemnized by the Church, it does not follow that these are any the more stable, or effective in performing the functions of the family, than the *plaçage* unions. In the main, especially in the countryside, socially sanctioned matings which do not enjoy the approval of the Church endure as long and hold as respected a place in the community as those in which the woman wears the ring given her in a Church marriage.

There is an obvious difference in the ease with which the two types of marriages can be broken. Once the blessing of the Church has been given, canonical law makes divorce difficult in the extreme, while a *plaçage* mating needs only the mutual consent of the parties concerned to be dissolved. Yet a girl who is to be *placée* is given no less careful instruction before being sent to her mate than one destined for a Church wedding, while in similar fashion the parents of the *placée* make as sure that the man to whom she is given is able to provide for her and her offspring as they would were a Church wedding involved.

For both forms of mating, the customary age of betrothal for a girl is between fifteen and seventeen, and marriage follows when the parents of both the man and the girl are satisfied that the young people are prepared to take up life together. The young man, who must usually have reached the age of nineteen to twenty-one years,[9] must possess a house with the necessary furnishings; a field, ten or twelve goats, and a similar number of pigs, as well as a beast of burden such as a burro or a horse. Above all, however, he must properly "respect" the parents of the girl by helping them work their fields or performing other tasks, such as seeing that the men are called for a *combite* (though he would not be expected to provide the feast), or summoning those needed to do thatching.

Whether married in church or mated under the sanctions of folk-custom, the resulting union is regarded as permanent,

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so that both forms must be considered by one interested in 58 ●
social institutions as constituting true marriage. The prestige which is derived from a Church union, however, is of appreciable significance; sufficient, indeed, to motivate weddings at which the children and even grandchildren of the principals act as attendants. A man and woman may live together as *placées* ten or fifteen years or more before they have amassed the necessary amount to pay for a legal marriage. It 585
is only when parents of young people are prosperous enough 435
to pay for a Church marriage that their union receives the stamp of approval of the Church, for the Church wedding involves considerable expenditure in terms of Haitian peasant economy. A "first class" wedding, for example, calls for the payment of 47.50 gourdes; a "second class" ceremony, 40 gourdes; and the least expensive, or "third class" rite costs 34 to 36 gourdes, while in addition to this, five gourdes must be paid the assistant who rings the church bells, and a fixed fee of 25 gourdes is assessed for the civil registration of the marriage. The wedding ring is, of course, indispensable; a modest one, of gold, costs 60 gourdes. Food and drinks served at the festivities following the Church service cost, conservatively, another fifty gourdes, while if an ox is slaughtered to provide a more elaborate feast, the amount is correspondingly greater. Finally, the person who reads the necessary prayers before the festivities begin and the musicians who play for the *bal* must also be compensated. It can readily be seen, [583]
therefore, how a man and woman may live together in a *placée* union for years before their resources permit a legal marriage.

Whatever the type of mating, the first steps toward be- 584
trothal are taken by the young man. Though he has courted the girl of his choice and his proposal is acceptable to her, customary procedure demands that she refer him to her parents, whereupon his parents appear before those of the girl to make their plea on his behalf. If both families reside

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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595 or a woman who shares the same market place in the
533 market place, quarreling is invariably heard; or if one of them sings *point* — derisive songs — against the other and goes so far as to name the object of derision, fighting and court action follow.

58 Though many cases of *plaçage* are the result of affairs be-
595 tween young people which result in conception, it is essential
684 in any event that the consent of the families of the man and the woman concerned be obtained to give the mating social validity. When the union is once entered upon, divorce occurs only with the abandonment or mistreatment of the woman, or her infidelity, for in these *plaçage* matches, the moral support of her family makes a man reluctant to send his wife away without ample justification. When a man does divorce a *placée* wife for reasons of infidelity, she may either go to another man or return to the home of her parents, where she supports herself. If after a period of years she has not established a household with another man, it often happens that her husband takes her back. Most frequently, however, where children have been born to a mating, a woman's infidelity is punished merely by beating; and proof that a wife is a wife whether or not she is legally "married" is offered by the Haitian man in this fact that a *placée* is beaten for this and less serious reasons as readily as a legal wife. Prompt
[754] action is taken against the adulterer, which, though it may on occasion be as drastic as murder, generally takes the form of
[848] recourse to magic charms. Women who carry on illicit relationships take all care, therefore, to guard unceasingly against the birth of offspring.

595 Many men, at least, hold that a man is often much closer
593 to a *placée* than to a legal wife, for the former is more attentive and less demanding than the wife with her legally assured status and permanence of tenure. Thus it comes about that
[454] *placée* spouses are frequently given generous money gifts, to be saved for the future of their children, while as a man grows older he may take up his residence with a *placée* wife, where

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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114 treatment. In the absence of sufficient analytic material on the inter-
121 vening years since his book was written, a prefatory note such as this can do little more than comment on Haitian society, either in terms of its present design or in terms of the recent events that may have modified it.

121
114 The central thesis of Leyburn's book is that Haitian society is sharply
565 divided into two segments, and that the national institutional struc-
[178] ture is such that no significant alteration in that division has occurred in the entire course of Haiti's history as a sovereign nation. At the base of the society is the rural agricultural sector, making up perhaps as much as 95 per cent of the population; at the top the elite, which dominates the governmental apparatus and all national institutions. These two segments of the society differ, in Leyburn's view, in all important regards: level of income, source of income, education, language, religion, social forms, values and attitudes, and all else. By carefully describing the history of Haitian society from the eve of the revolution until the midst of the United States occupation, he reveals both the origin of this vast social cleavage and the various means employed for its perpetuation. Leyburn was so impressed by the gap which separated yeomanry and elite that he chose to label these social segments castes rather than classes. Members of the elite earn their livings as rentiers, merchants, professionals, and in government, and never engage in manual labor of any sort. They are predominantly urban in residence; their sons attend private lower schools, and then
[191] go on to higher education, usually abroad. They are French-speaking,
[197] although they also speak Creole, Haiti's national language. Elite re-
[58] ligion is Catholicism, elite forms of marriage and domestic organiza-
[59] tion are "legitimate" and "western." Elite members view themselves
[829] as a kind of aristocracy, and feel little commonality in their sharing of Haiti and of Haitian history with the yeomen.

114 In sharp contrast, the yeomanry is rural, poor, works the land, is
565 illiterate and Creole-speaking only, believes in *vodoun* rather than in
191 orthodox Catholicism, usually marries by common law and is some-
771 times polygynous, and remains substantially isolated from the outer
583 world. Finally and importantly—though its particular significance is
595 changing—the elite differs from the rural sector in that the country-
144 man is predominantly negroid in phenotype, while members of the elite are prevailingly lighter-skinned.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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it seems not radically to have affected the masses but only the fairly well-to-do.

The *Royal Almanac* for the year 1814 touches proudly upon the moral state of the kingdom. The author of the almanac, the Comte de la Limonade, says: "Great attention is paid to morals and manners. Marriage is honored, protected, and encouraged; no Haitian who is unmarried can fill any place of distinction. Divorce is not permitted." All this was true; yet the mass of Haitians still remained unmarried. Nevertheless, the quotation indicates the extent to which Christophe had gone in his effort to reform marriage and morals among his people; to set them in the European tradition and draw them out of their African and colonial backgrounds.

While Christophe was trying to effect reforms in the North, Pétion was accepting his Southern folk as they were. Hardly a law during his twelve-year administration touches the subject of marriage. The élite colored people continued to make proper legal marriages and so insure the inheritance of their legitimate children. The common folk lived their family lives without weddings, and if property questions arose, custom ruled, backed by public opinion in their little communities.

Such are the backgrounds out of which modern Haitian sex relations have developed. From African tradition came family life, the importance of property to stabilize a union, insignificance of a wedding ceremony, familiarity with matrilineal kinship and descent; from French colonial practice, formal marriage to establish a family with social ambition, casual sex relations for pleasure outside this marriage, the claim of legitimate children to all property (in contrast to folk custom, where few legitimate children were born); from Dessalines, an emphasis upon the African tradition and realism; from Christophe, an insistence upon strict French practice in marriage and in the passage of property.

From among these alternatives Haiti made a choice which is an excellent example of what Keller calls "automatic selection in the mores."[7] There was no congress to select one procedure rather than another. Because Pétion and Boyer followed a *laissez-faire* policy in social matters, the people took the path of least resistance.

7. A. G. Keller, *Societal Evolution* (revised ed., New York, 1931), chaps. IV and V.

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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be successful, he can count on the members of his family for financial and moral support. 596 584

These are not all the rights of the older members of the family, especially of the family head, over their juniors. All elders may punish by beating, though the oldest member of the family exercises that right most freely and may chastise those who are themselves grown men and women. If there is gossip about a boy or a girl, the family head calls the culprit to reprimand him or, if he believes the case a serious one, to beat him. Among the peasants, particularly, grown men go down on their knees before their elders, when so ordered, for a beating. Such punishments may be particularly severe if the culprit does not soon ask pardon, for since all who are older have the right to beat a younger relative, it sometimes happens that the punishment administered by the head of the family is not considered adequate, and another takes up the stick when the family head has put it down, so that two or three wands may be broken over the back of a stubborn offender. If such a one were to fight back, he would become "accursed," ceasing any longer to be considered a member of the family, and even though no legal steps might be taken to disinherit him, he would lose all caste. This right to beat is accorded by custom rather than by law, but an adult beaten by one of the elders of his own family would think long before he would sue. "There is always a consultation, and a man is discouraged from going to court." 596 627 [622] [691]

Lest the impression may have been given, in considering the role of the elders and their relationship to the younger members of the family, that it is those in the father's line alone who are concerned, it must be emphasized that relatives of both parents exercise substantial control over a person. More than this, since marriage constitutes an agreement between families as well as between an individual man and woman, it follows that both paternal and maternal grand- 596 [581] [603]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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596 parents are friendly toward each other, so that the conflict
[581] that might result from a division of authority rarely develops.
[603] Were it otherwise, it could easily happen that a person who had been ordered, or forbidden, to do something against his own wishes by the head of his paternal family would plead with the head of his mother's group and receive support to justify his disobedience. To most Haitians such a hypothetical incident was amusing to contemplate, for the elders are said always to work together. Rare is the occasion when one interferes with the decision of another, and never to the knowledge of the subject of such a decision.

596 A family elder who has no sons to care for him is well
888 looked after by the other members of the group "until the
626 grave." Fear as well as a moral obligation prompts this. "He might curse you," it is explained, or "He might say: 'Watch out for your own old age! You mistreated me in my old age, and you will suffer in yours.'" Such pronouncements are greatly dreaded, especially because of his control over the supernatural forces that aid or harm the family and its members.

428 The closeness of the tie between social institutions and economic life is most evident in the matter of inheritance. For though the prestige that accrues from the possession of wealth makes for strong competition through the exercise of individual initiative, yet supporting the struggle of an individual for the augmentation of his holdings are the forces of family sanction and family aid, while his very start in life is obtained primarily through the help of his relatives during their lifetime or the property he inherits from them at their death.

428 As has been suggested, all a man's children by a "legally"
858 married wife inherit from him, or, if he has not espoused a wife by a Church wedding, the children of his *placée* wife or wives receive his property. Whether or not it is true that the
428 "legitimate" children inherit three quarters of the posses-
858 sions of their father, the "natural" children one fourth, and
769

175 In the early
178 years of independence, Emperor Henry Christophe in the north and
311 President Pétion in the south tried to stem the disintegration of the
[643] magnificent plantations. Christophe's measures in the region he con-
[656] trolled were sometimes stern, according to legend; but the plantation system and the plantations themselves gradually fell into decay, along with the aqueducts, the warehouses, and the sugar mills. For the Haitian had returned to a tradition of landholding antedating his enslavement.

175 Europe's loss of the Pearl of the Antilles aroused bitter words from
648 Frenchmen and Englishmen for the better part of the century. They
181 accused the Negro of laziness and lack of ability, repeating endlessly that only as a colony could Haiti ever be of any use to anybody. The London *Times* deplored the Haitian's unwillingness to work for wages, speculating that he had "no desire for property strong enough to induce him to labor with sustained power." In the United States, antiabolitionist enthusiasts cited the Haitian situation as an example of what would happen to the American economy if the slaves were freed.

464 The Haitian's reluctance to work for wages did not reflect an aversion
423 to owning property, however, as the London *Times* supposed. On the
311 contrary, it was engendered by his desire for property. The land was there and waiting, only needing a house to be built upon it, and to be cleared and tilled. The typical Haitian wanted not dubious, seasonal wage work but a farm of his own. The more ambitious peasant aspired to two farms, or even three, with a homestead and a family on each.

423 If a man worked hard and made a success of one plot, he could put
595 away money and eventually buy a second. The additional land might be
178 separated by some miles from the original farm. On the new ground
583 the man would build another house and take another wife to take care of it in his absence. Known as *plaçage*, this arrangement had complete community sanction. A man whose energies and good fortune made an extra household possible was expected to make such an arrangement. It was not a new institution bred in the chaos following the
[797] Revolution, nor was it, as some missionaries held, an evidence of moral deterioration of the Haitian character. It was simply a persisting concept of West African life.[2] The woman who occupied the second or third household was not a concubine. Like the first wife, she had enhanced prestige in her community. She had authority and responsibility. Her work, her position, and her rewards were not essentially different from those of the first wife.[3] It is true that her marriage was not consecrated by a church or civil ceremony, but, ordinarily, neither was that of the
[581] first wife. Contrary to European misconceptions, such unions were true marriages in the sense that they had full sanction of the community.

[2,3] [Footnotes appear in Category 116, pp. 351-352. -- Analyst]

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565 511 paring to try to move one step up the social ladder. Shoes are a symbol: wearing these, one must also wear a suit instead of a faded shirt and patched trousers; the suit demands personal cleanliness and a better home; all these lead the country man to town life with its additional expenses. So arduous a climb does not allure many of the Haitian common folk.

565 181 Because the standard of living, with its tangibles and intangibles, clearly separates the castes, the élite observe all the rules with rigor. Their etiquette is formal. Culture (in the popular, not the anthropological meaning) is respected with almost religious devotion.

565 511 434 Since the maintenance of a high standard of living is costly, it is obvious that another source of caste distinction lies in the inequalities of wealth and property. Wealth is a relative term, however, and the Haitian peasant is so poor that by contrast a few hundred dollars' income a year will seem like riches. The élite live economically by American standards, yet even parsimonious spending of money may, when governed by a consciousness of social distinctions, make the peak of aristocracy unassailable.

565 369 The élite live in towns. Many of them own country estates, but regard these as secondary to their residences in Port-au-Prince, Pétionville, Cap-Haïtien, Jérémie, and the other few towns. To live a rural life is to be isolated, out of the stream of fashion, news, social activity. What profession can one follow in a rustic valley? One who is class-conscious must see and be seen by others of his class, otherwise he would be forgotten by "those who count." In the towns are the schools; there French is spoken; there, and there only, financial and social opportunities exist. True, plebeians form the majority of the population even in the towns, so that urbanization alone is not a mark of caste; it must be taken in conjunction with the others.

565 581 Formal marriage is another requisite for membership in the élite. As will shortly be apparent, sex relations in Haiti are quite casual, as judged by American standards. The majority of Haitian families are established by parents who have gone through neither a civil nor a religious ceremony. This is not to imply that spouses are unfaithful to each other, or that there is not mutual respect within the family circle; it merely means that most people regard formal marriage as a luxury which they cannot afford, or in any case as a ceremony which custom has made superfluous. Once again, however, the aristocrat holds to the form. If a family can point to legal marriages among

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several generations of ancestors, there can be little question of its high social position. 565 581

Religion affords still another distinction between high and low. Haiti has a folk religion which American tourists call Voodoo (a name which makes them think immediately of superstitious emotionalism or some kind of occult balderdash), but which is more properly called Vodun. It is a true religion in that it answers for the native the questions arising in the world he knows, while giving him confidence to face the crises of life. Vodun is African in origin, Créole in its language, and homely in its creed and practice; none of these makes it any less a religion. The official religion of the country, on the other hand, is Roman Catholicism. Few members of the élite, however their hearts may yearn for the consoling securities of Vodun, dare openly either to acknowledge their "atavism" or to participate in the cult. They must be Catholics or agnostics. It is often remarked that below the surface many a professing Catholic aristocrat cherishes Vodun beliefs; the important fact is that he keeps his folk worship secret. Because the outside world ridicules Vodun as superstition, and because the approved Catholic Church fights it, government restrictions effectively keep its ritual out of the public gaze. All the discriminatory laws, however, have not weakened its hold upon the masses. It is because Vodun is a *folk* religion that the élite cannot permit themselves to adhere to it openly. 565 771

The final and most complicated distinction between the two castes is skin color. Any generalization on this matter is open to numerous exceptions; moreover, the whole question of color in Haiti touches the most sensitive nerves of the upper classes. One must begin by such casual observations as these: the vast majority of the lower orders are definitely dark or even black; the lighter the skin, the more likely a person is to belong to the élite. It is true that there are black aristocrats, and it is equally true that numbers of peasants have light complexions. At almost any function in high society, however, the proportion of dark-skinned persons is decidedly small. Among the youth, the tendency is always to select a spouse whose skin color is light; marriages are often made between aristocrats and white foreigners resident in Haiti, so that the children may lighten the family complexion. While it is therefore inaccurate to assert that no full-blooded Negroes belong to the élite, it is also clear that lighter persons tend to have social advantages. 565 829 581 144

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175 took their place in the business life of the towns, sending their chil-
565 dren to parish schools. Colored youths served in the colonial constabulary and in the militia, acquiring a knowledge of arms and warfare later to be useful to them.

175 Estimates of their wealth vary. Some say that in 1791 they owned a
565 third of all the land in the colony and a fourth of all the slaves; others
423 more conservative put the figure at one fifth of each. Even this is
567 impressive enough to account for much of the growing jealousy of
162 their position. And by 1791 the whites outnumbered them only ten to seven.[5]

562 White women in general added their support to a movement in-
595 stigated by the petits blancs for discrimination against all gens de
563 couleur. Many wives felt resentment against the colored people be-
175 cause of the frequency with which their husbands took colored mis-
581 tresses.[6] Moreover, the wealth of the colony attracted an immigration of Frenchwomen with marriageable but undowered daughters—in the candid French phrase, "*de filles à marier et sans dot*"—who seem to have assumed that young planters would want white French wives, even though impecunious ones. It was a shock to quite a number of them to discover that a colonial youth might prefer a colored girl
175 who brought a dowry with her.[7]

565 Indiscreet affranchis often gave additional grounds for resentment
829 against their group. Wishing to dissociate themselves altogether from their Negro ancestry and to be assured of social eminence, some accounted for their dark complexions by reference to obscure Indian progenitors. On this ground many secured letters patent from local government officials, of course on payment of a fee, legally estab-

162 5. The census listed 40,000 whites to 28,000 colored. L. E. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description . . . de la partie française . . . de Saint-Domingue* (Philadelphia, 1797), I, 285, gave the following figures for 1790:

	Square Leagues	*Population*	*Whites*	*Affranchis*	*Slaves*
North	480	195,000	16,000	9,000	170,000
West	820	194,000	14,000	12,500	168,000
South	186	130,000	10,000	6,500	114,000
Totals	1,486	519,000	40,000	28,000	452,000

6. One governor reported to Paris that he considered sexual jealousy the greatest cause of unrest in the colony.

7. See Sir Harry H. Johnston, *The Negro in the New World* (New York, 1910), p. 141.

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IX

HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDS

TOLERANT understanding of the ways of alien people is rare in matters relating to sex. Occasionally we may regard marital and sexual practices which differ from our own as amusing or ridiculous; more frequently we find them distasteful and disgusting. A long religious heritage has implanted in us a definite personal morality, familiar in Puritanism and in the codes of the great majority of early American pioneers. Accompanying and dominated by this religious aspect has been the legal idea of sexual morality. A middle-class tradition of private property, hence of orderly marriages legally recognized, has schooled us for centuries to approve certain moral and sexual rules: monogamic marriage, children born in wedlock, a public wedding ceremony by approved authorities, censure of sexual relations which might confuse the passage of property. Although sympathetic tolerance for foreign ways has never been an outstanding American characteristic, it is least evident in connection with divergent sexual practices. We do not remind ourselves of the utilitarian basis of a part of our own sexual codes.

Where people have economic and social backgrounds different 577
from those of Western Europe and the United States, other codes 171
will prevail. Elements which have made American moral standards 831
what they are were lacking or appeared in different form in Haiti. Instead of middle-class European tradition there was African tribal practice; instead of diffused small private properties there was slavery; instead of the Puritan notion that sex relations were in general sinful was the less rigorous view that sexual intercourse was entirely normal; instead of the example of monogamous family life constantly before the minds of children growing up, there was the example of libertinage among lofty whites and laxness among the blacks.

Nothing in the experience of the slave régime could have predis- 175
posed toward orderly marriage these people, soon to become Hai- 567
tians. Certain masters actually prohibited weddings among their 581
slaves, while most others discouraged it, since the development of family ties among the blacks would only have made for complication

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175 when slaves were to be sold. Even when whole families were brought
567 over together from Africa, it was considered discreet in Saint-
Domingue to separate the various members at the slave market, so
581 that there would be little chance of combinations and intrigues.
[794] Theoretically the Church was in favor of regular marriages between slave men and women, but even if the Africans had understood or desired the "sacrament," the opposition of the white planters would have been enough to curb missionary insistence on this point; the Jesuits had already been expelled from the colony for their too great zeal in plantation reforms.

175 As a usual thing, then, slaves simply cohabited. It was not against
567 the rules of a plantation for a slave and the woman with whom he
588 consorted to live together in a slave hut with the children born to them; but neither was it against the rules for the overseer to put
[843] other slaves into the same hut, or to sell promising slave children as if they were cattle.[1] Little was done to prevent sex relations between slaves, although masters had varying attitudes toward the results of these relations: some planters welcomed births as a stockbreeder welcomes additions to his herd; others resented the pregnancy of slave women as an obstacle to necessary field work. In the former case, a planter's capital was increased; in the latter, abortions resulted when the overseer drove pregnant women to hard work under the tropical sun.

175 The freedom of the planters with the persons of their attractive
567 female slaves likewise weakened any tendency toward monogamous
588 family life as conceived by bourgeois European society. The relationship between master and slave woman was momentary. Not often was a woman so beguiling that she could be called a concubine; still less often was she a mistress. The latter estate was the height of any female slave's worldly ambition, for not only might she then be freed, but she could live a life of leisure. In rare cases she might hope to persuade her white paramour into marriage. Almost certainly her mulatto children would be free.

175 In so far as there was any predisposition toward strict observance of
565 European marriage practices, it was most clearly exhibited by the
581 group of affranchis. As freedmen they were intent upon establishing

1. Under exceptional circumstances slaves found themselves under a benevolent,
[567] religious master who allowed them to be married by a priest and thereafter to live
[581] together as a family.

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themselves and their families economically and socially. Property was important, so they took pains to insure the legitimacy of their heirs; color was crucial, and so they regulated the marriages of their children to be sure there was no reversion to the black strain. They guarded their fortunes solicitously, provided their daughters with dowries large enough sometimes even to lure a white husband, educated their sons in Paris—behaved, in short, as if they had been pillars of society in provincial France. Like the white planters, the male affranchis often had relations with slave women, but even more rarely than whites were they seduced into marriage with women of the lower orders. 175 565 581

When the slave insurrection and its aftermath freed the half-million blacks in Saint-Domingue it was not to be expected that European middle-class morals and practices should suddenly prevail. Modern usage emerges from the womb of tradition. Neither in Africa nor in the colony had tradition taught the blacks respect for monogamy or for marriage entered into by religious ceremony. If the ex-slaves had reverted to their Dahomean, Congolese, or other African background, they might have introduced the bride price; but to pay a bride price is to assume the existence of wealth, an assumption contrary to fact among the ex-slaves in Saint-Domingue of the 1790's, and Haiti of the 1800's. In neither Dahomey nor the Congo was there much ceremony at the union of a couple; what there was consisted mostly of singing and dancing. If, on the other hand, the people went only by what they had observed in slave days, there was no tradition of binding union or strict codes, as we understand them. A man knew when to stay away from another man's woman; children remained near their mother—these two statements almost cover the situation as of 1796 among the newly freed slaves. 175 581 [583] [585] [837] [855]

Toussaint, apparently a conventional person in what concerned social behavior, wished his people to be "moral." He instituted a time of "holy masses, mystic communions, biblical psalms, and divine ecstasies"[a] for his private edification, and recommended the same for his people. He could not possibly have instilled into them a desire for Christian marriage, however; even if he could, priests would not have been available for the wholesale marrying of scores of thousands of men and women. Local records of weddings at this period are very scanty. 175 643 788 582

a. Saint-Rémy, *Pétion et Haïti*, III, 93.

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erosity and equity now gave way to malevolence and personal license: 114

Putting no restraint upon his passions, he travelled about, followed by actors, dancers, musicians, and courtesans. An indefatigable dancer, as soon as he arrived in a place he gave a ball. Under Toussaint Louverture, in order to please the Governor-General everyone approached the holy altar; under Dessalines one gained glory by dancing well. The Emperor, giving himself up to scandalous pleasures, forgot that he was head of the state. The greatest immorality reigned about him. With a gaiety sometimes grotesque, he told the ladies who frequented his court how much he admired their beauty, no matter how ugly they actually were. Following his example, his major officers of state kept concubines in every town in the empire. . . . When the emperor entered a town, the honest women were gravely disturbed, for their virtue was menaced not only by him but also by his officers of state. Many mothers kept their daughters shut up to keep them from the notice of those who were powerful enough to take them, with impunity, by violence.[3] 643 159 831

Marriage, then, looked at from the standards of any white Western country, was in a sorry state in Haiti. Continued warfare had broken up many even of the families which, though unrecognized by the white planters, had nevertheless been formed during slavery; and the camp life of soldiers roaming the countryside confirmed the casual attitude of the people toward sex. Every ex-slave was a hero, and liberty was sweet. Under Dessalines it was scarcely wise for a prominent man to marry an attractive wife, the Emperor might so soon set himself to seduce her. Above all, there was no tradition of formal marriage. This was the chief factor to bear upon future marriage and sexual customs of the Haitians; and in appraising them is the paramount fact to keep in mind. 175 831 581

Meanwhile, children were being born. Their mothers were known, but often the fathers were not, for the vast majority of infants were born out of wedlock. Dessalines, a realist except in matters which touched his vanity, saw the necessity of establishing a status for these children, not on grounds of morality but for economic expediency, to avoid future disputes over inheritance. French precedent did not serve his need, for according to French law an illegitimate child may not inherit: a parent in France is not free to leave his property as he will, but must pass it on to his legitimate heirs. 175 848 428

3. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 239.

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175 While the broad problems of marriage, inheritance, and legiti-
582 macy were not to be solved by the official act of any ruler, the efforts made, particularly those by Dessalines and Christophe, had their effect upon the development of the marital institution in Haiti.

671 "Whereas," begins the preamble of Dessalines' law of May 28,
848 1805, "it is necessary to fix in immutable order the status and rights of children born out of wedlock, and whereas it is important to reconcile what nature and society owe them with the political interests of the state," therefore it behooves the government to lay
• [581] down the specific rules which follow. Nothing in the law pushes the people toward marriage, but every provision strengthens the family, which they had known both in Africa and in the slave régime of the colony.

175 Henceforth no stigma is to attach to the fact of illegitimacy, nor is
671 there to be discrimination in favor of children born in wedlock. The
848 status of a child will depend upon recognition by its parents. If a
428 child's maternal connection is established, he has rights in her property; if the father likewise recognize his offspring, the child has rights in the paternal property; even if the recognition of a child is so long delayed that the parents die, that child who can prove his descent is to receive the name and his own share of property from the deceased. There is but one single provision in which an illegitimate child has an inferior status: should a couple decide to be legally married, they must recognize the natural offspring of either party before or during the wedding ceremony, if such children are to have full claims of inheritance; delay until after the ceremony cuts their claim to only one fourth that of children born legitimately; refusal to recognize the natural child disinherits him, unless he can prove his descent.

[422] Since the Emperor was already engaged upon his campaign to
[423] acquire lands for the state, the property rights guaranteed would refer chiefly to personal property, and only secondarily to land still owned by individuals. Both men and women owned personal property, however, and must therefore pass on this property, a definite percentage going to each son and daughter.

The law is weak in some of its details. It does not specify, for example, how an unmarried father shall leave his property—whether by name to each child he has recognized as his own, or by name to the mothers of his children. It is strong in that it is simple: property

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must pass to an illegitimate child if recognition is accorded. It is likewise strong in its harmony with actual conditions: in the absence of legal marriage among the people, it would have been manifestly unfair to favor a few fortunate children. Dessalines argued that the revolution had legitimized all Haitians; that it was unjust to prevent a child's inheriting from the person who had given him life; and that since all Haitians had come out of slavery and degradation into freedom, no new inequalities should be instituted.[4]

If this law encouraged family life, it weakened marriage both of the civil and religious kind: where was the sense in the expensive luxury of a wedding when children were just as legitimate without it? By conforming to folk practice the Emperor confirmed it. Only the aristocrats disliked his law, for it seemed to make light of one of the distinctions they cherished—the formal wedding. It irked them to have the State place a casual child upon an equal plane with one born after proper marriage.

At still another point the law accorded with living conditions at the time. During the years of fighting many men had been killed, and always the large standing army kept thousands of others away from settled farm life. Home, then, was for a child the abode of his mother—a fact recognized by the law's insistence upon maternal relationship rather than paternity. Such a word as "matriarchate" has no place here; but from the days of Dessalines to modern times, the lowly Haitian thinks of his home primarily as where his mother lives.

As if the advantages of formal wedding were not already sufficiently weakened by this law, other enactments of the empire struck at other phases of marriage. Divorce was permitted for adultery, for incompatibility of temperament or character, and by mutual consent. Such provisions not only broke away completely from Catholic practice, but made getting out of wedlock a casual matter of taking an oath. The complaint of incompatibility need be made by only one spouse; "mutual consent" as a ground for divorce was probably not allowed in 1805 in any other country of the Western World.

Dessalines did not appear to care one whit for the good opinion of white foreigners. It sufficed for him if Haiti endured, whatever Europeans thought of her. Christophe, on the other hand, was extremely sensitive to foreign disapproval. Many of his official acts can

4. According to the testimony of Madiou, op. cit., III, 116.

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175 643 648 be explained only as efforts to win outside respect for his kingdom of blacks. He was aware of the scorn in which white people held the apparent absence of all sexual morality in Haiti, and so set about introducing reforms. Even as a general he had opposed the dissoluteness of Dessalines.

175 643 582 671 581 [595] In an early pronouncement Christophe proscribes concubinage (by which he meant the unmarried unions of the people), libertinage, and "all those disorders which weaken the family." To proscribe an evil is not necessarily to put an end to it, however, and so he tried also to persuade and educate his people to the habit of full legal marriage. His steps at persuasion were various. In speeches he urged weddings upon his subjects; yet a man could see little reason for tying himself to one woman for life, assuming *legal* responsibilities at an expense, when already from experience he knew that he could have a woman's loyalty without the ceremony. Although weddings somewhat increased after 1806, Christophe's verbal campaign was a failure. He next tried force. In one town he made all the females assemble in the public square; then, separating the married from the unmarried, commanded his royal guards to advance, each to select an unmarried woman who should become his wife. At other times he selected young men and women by lot and had them married "by their King's authority." No nobleman in the kingdom could long remain unwed: indeed, Queen Victoria might have approved Christophe's solicitude for the moral uprightness of the Haitian court.

175 671 848 428 Another means by which Christophe forced his people into formal marriage was the indirect one of attacking property rights. Realizing that Dessalines' law by guaranteeing inheritance to natural children encouraged people to remain unmarried, he rescinded it by one of the first acts of his rule.[5] This act reestablished French practice, making it all but impossible for illegitimate children to inherit anything. Most persons of property found this law persuasive where words had left them cold. Madiou thought the law "excessively severe in a country where nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of the population were born out of wedlock,"[6] and he spoke of its disharmony with general practice at the time. Actually, it seems not radically to have affected the masses but only the fairly well-to-do.

5. Law of March 25, 1807.
6. Madiou, op. cit., III, 411.

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it seems not radically to have affected the masses but only the fairly well-to-do.

The *Royal Almanac* for the year 1814 touches proudly upon the moral state of the kingdom. The author of the almanac, the Comte de la Limonade, says: "Great attention is paid to morals and manners. Marriage is honored, protected, and encouraged; no Haitian who is unmarried can fill any place of distinction. Divorce is not permitted." All this was true; yet the mass of Haitians still remained unmarried. Nevertheless, the quotation indicates the extent to which Christophe had gone in his effort to reform marriage and morals among his people; to set them in the European tradition and draw them out of their African and colonial backgrounds.

While Christophe was trying to effect reforms in the North, Pétion was accepting his Southern folk as they were. Hardly a law during his twelve-year administration touches the subject of marriage. The élite colored people continued to make proper legal marriages and so insure the inheritance of their legitimate children. The common folk lived their family lives without weddings, and if property questions arose, custom ruled, backed by public opinion in their little communities.

Such are the backgrounds out of which modern Haitian sex relations have developed. From African tradition came family life, the importance of property to stabilize a union, insignificance of a wedding ceremony, familiarity with extralineal kinship and descent; from French colonial practice, formal marriage to establish a family with social ambition, casual sex relations for pleasure outside the marriage, the claim of legitimate children to all property (in contrast to folk custom, where few legitimate children were born); from Dessalines, an emphasis upon the African tradition and realism; from Christophe, an insistence upon strict French practice in marriage and in the passage of property.

From among these alternatives Haiti made a choice which is an excellent example of what Keller calls "automatic selection in the mores."[7] There was no congress to select one procedure rather than another. Because Pétion and Boyer followed a *laissez-faire* policy in social matters, the people took the path of least resistance.

7. A. G. Keller, *Societal Evolution* (revised ed., New York, 1931) chaps. IV and V.

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[p. 186]

X

HOME LIFE OF THE ÉLITE

565 ONE brief characterization of the élite might be that they are
• 581 those who carefully observe the proprieties. The proprieties are those of France, and among them is "common sense" in marriage.

175 People of privilege in colonial times, which were the fountainhead
565 of élite tradition, lived at ease and did not concern themselves with
831 manual labor. Nor were they burdened by puritanical codes of
581 sexual morality, but on the contrary enjoyed sex relations with whatever attractive women came their way. But they would have thought it sheer folly to allow momentary delight to interfere with the very practical matter of choosing a wife. Marriage meant increasing one's fortune, strengthening one's social position and connections, establishing one's children. Romance was as irrelevant to all this as to choosing a business partner. This attitude of the French planters, current even in France of the present day, was the standard for freedmen.

175 Even when wealth was most plentiful in colonial society it had
565 not been always easy to find the proper wife for an affranchi youth.
588 For a man to remain single, however, did not mean that he remained
581 celibate. He might, on the contrary, contract a fairly permanent informal union of love, while discreetly refraining from a marriage which would jeopardize his own or his family's status. Such informal unions were not generally regarded as immoral. Good taste, it was felt, was a sufficient guide in all matters of sex outside of marriage.

175 The unsettled condition of the colony between the slave insurrec-
565 tion of 1791 and the achievement of independence in 1803–4 did not
581 change the affranchi concept of suitable marriage. During the brief two-year rule of Dessalines, the ideal of propriety in marriage remained the same in spite of the Emperor's efforts to undermine the importance of legal weddings and the legitimacy of children. Pétion, upon his secession in 1806, showed himself a true member of the mulatto aristocratic group—indifferent to the morals of the masses so long as custom settled their problems for them, and content with the marriage traditions of the élite. He said publicly what was necis-

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175 565 581 sary for a president to say as to proper respect for moral principles, then left morality to take care of itself.

175 588 565 581 During Pétion's time and that of Boyer there came into common usage the convenient term "*plaçage*" to describe the extramarital unions of respectable people. "Concubinage" was a crude word, with definite overtones of disapprobation; plaçage was more indirect, and carried no connotation of disrepute. Briefly, plaçage was the union of a man and a woman for pleasure, companionship, and a measure of home life, without the assumption by either person of any legal obligations. A man might make as many of these tentative unions as his disposition, his finances, and his tact dictated. Often enough they were with women of his own social class, for Haiti had an excess of women over men; but generally they were contracted with pleasing women of the lower social orders. Young men not yet financially able to marry, younger brothers whose inheritance was too small to support a family, husbands who had married for practical purposes rather than for love, and eagerly lustful men—these were the usual participators in plaçage.

Although for a woman a church wedding might be the height of ambition, and proper parents tried to see that their daughters achieved it, there came to be a feeling that no disgrace attached to being *placée*. Certainly at the beginning a wife outranked a placée, just as in colonial New England a wife outranked an old maid; but to be placée was a far better lot in Haiti than to be a spinster in Massachusetts Bay colony. No one would have thought of calling a placée by so inaccurate a term as "mistress"; still less would anyone have assailed her moral standing. A man who had a mistress might keep his arrangements with her secret; but plaçage unions were, or came to be, quite open. The one great flaw in the arrangement was that near middle age a man might cease to care about his union with the woman. Foresight and adaptability were the only safeguards against this fate.

565 581 588 Nowhere else in the Western World has there been so little actual marriage in proportion to the population as in Haiti. Whether technically it is correct to speak of peasant unions as examples of plaçage is a matter of opinion; certainly the peasants rarely marry. Thousands of Haitian couples in all walks of life could be found at any period since 1804 living quietly together from youth to age, bringing up a family of children with as much order as do others who have had a

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wedding to consecrate their state. These unions might be called (after Anglo-Saxon usage) common-law marriages. Many such couples have, late in life, gone through the wedding ceremony at the *insistence of children aspiring to social prestige.*

Haitian writers have frequently felt it necessary to explain and justify to the outside world the practice of plaçage. Thus Saint-Rémy in 1857 wrote: "*Plaçage*, or primitive marriage, is still one of the Haitian customs. It requires no civil or religious formality. I must confess that some of these unions are more respectable than those sanctified by civil and religious law."[1] Dantès Bellegarde in 1934 implied (erroneously) that the practice had always been one limited primarily to peasants. He said:

> Haitians have been accused of immorality because they practice free unions. This reproach is unjust. Concubinage is without doubt the rule among the people [that is, the peasants and workmen]; but it constitutes a sort of *connubium injustum* (unlegal marriage) which, in many cases, has nothing immoral about it, certain "plaçages" having more solidity and seriousness than a large number of regular marriages. In order to understand the existence of this custom and its persistence in the lower classes of Haitian society, one must go back to the colonial epoch: the whites kept numerous concubines, white women being few in Saint-Domingue. (The white population of Saint-Domingue was composed in 1789 of 30,826 souls, of whom 21,166 were men and 9,660 women—not counting soldiers and sailors.) On the other hand, the Negroes did not marry each other, because they did not care at all to have wives whom the master might "abuse," to use the word of Père du Tertre; moreover, masters did not require their slaves to be married: they mated them with a view to obtaining fine "products."
>
> Concubinage tends to disappear among us, or at least to become more discreet. In the cultivated class people generally marry, and the girls in most modest condition—having passed through the primary schools—resign themselves willingly today to the diversion of their unused affections to cats and other domestic animals if no one offers to lead such girls to the altar.[2]

Nineteenth-century visitors were generally shocked by plaçage, just as middle-class people are usually shocked by sex ways which seem franker than their own. That the Haitian practice was a practical one, based upon a desire to preserve property intact within the

1. *Pétion et Haïti*, V, 66 note.
2. *Un Haïtien parle* (Port-au-Prince, 1934), pp. 30–31.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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175 family and to make only "sensible" marriages, was a fact rarely
581 glimpsed by the critics. A good example of their attitude is the state-
588 ment of the pious English Quaker, John Candler, in 1842:

[114] But few of the merchants or principal inhabitants are married men: concubinage is common, and unhappily, regarded as not dishonorable. Whenever a ball is given, or a large party invited, the invitation is equally extended to "Monsieur and Madame ——" or to "Monsieur —— and his lady"; and by this compounding of moral distinctions among the upper classes, the evil descends to the lower ranks and becomes perpetuated.[3]

[867] And later Candler accuses Haitian mothers of being "utterly dead to all moral considerations," because they do not take pains to instill (middle-class English) ideals of morality, or teach the young the evils of "wayward passion."

175 Not even Haitian authors were willing to accept plaçage as a
114 desirable practice. Beaubrun Ardouin explained that the color preju-
581 dice of colonial times was responsible for what he clearly considered
588 an evil.[4] "The aristocracy of skin" made plaçage prevail over "divine
562 law," for whites would not often in colonial times marry colored women. The same prejudice in the republic kept light-colored men from marrying darker women, but not from living with them. Ardouin believed that Haiti would gain infinitely by adopting "*les bonnes moeurs*," not on moral grounds, but for practical reasons. With regular marriage, he says, there would result a greater fixity of the conjugal state and more confidence on the part of the women, "who too often discover that they are only the satisfaction of a whim"; also the men would reflect more upon the consequence of an infidelity which, in dividing families, might separate children from father or mother and so greatly weaken the delicate relations of paternal love and filial piety. Still another consideration was political: the dispersion which resulted in the inheritance of property when many mothers and children compete. Because of plaçage unions, quite a number of estates had been reduced to almost nothing.

175 As the century progressed, the custom of plaçage prevailed from
581 the President down to the humblest peasant. The women of the
588 President were visited publicly by him; sometimes he was accom-
643 panied on his visits by a staff or selected officers of state. The critical

3. *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 24, 25.
4. *La Géographie de l'île d'Haïti*, pp. 181, 96 ff.

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175 Englishman, Sir Spenser St. John, said that he had met placées of the
581 President at dinner, and was asked to trace resemblances between
588 children and their reported father. "No one seeks to conceal it, and
643 the conversation of married ladies continually turns on this subject. One excuse for it is that many of the ladies whom you meet in society were only married after the birth of their first children. However, according to French law, that ceremony renders them all legitimate. Some of those admitted into society are not married at all, but their daughters being married, prevents notice being taken of the false position of the mother."[5]

565 In recent years the élite, although many continue to contract
581 plaçage unions, keep these arrangements quieter than formerly and tend to make them with women lower in the social scale than themselves. Formal and regular marriage is expected and approved among the upper classes of today. Indeed, one modern informant in answer to the question, "What is the primary test of membership among the élite?" replied without hesitation, "Five generations of marriage in the family."[6]

583 Formal marriage is not entered into lightly among the upper
565 classes. It is a serious business watched over by state, family, and church. The interest of the state seems to be to guard against bigamy. The possibility of bigamy is the more likely since one or the other contracting party may have formerly lived in plaçage. The interest of the family is in the wisdom of the alliance. Before a wedding can be performed both parties must have obtained the formal consent of their parents, besides having their banns published at their respective places of permanent residence. There seems to be some doubt whether the courts would uphold a father in his refusal to consent to the marriage of a son over twenty-one years old; but cases are known in which such a refusal has stopped the wedding. Of course, the daughters must always obtain parental consent to marry.

585 The civil wedding, adopted in Haiti at the beginning of her independence, is usually followed by a religious ceremony. The Church, like the State, takes precautions against clandestine marriages and bigamy. Notice of a projected union must be read from the pulpit

5. *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, I, 177–178.

[114] 6. John Lobb, in "Caste and Class in Haiti" (*American Journal of Sociology*, XLVI,
[581] No. 1 [July, 1940], 29), states that "one informant defined family status as a position
[554] resulting from the recognition that in a family the parents had, for generations, been legally married in the church."

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Another observation must be set

588 162 alongside this professional testimony: many men, both aristocrats and common folk, have more than one placée, yet there seem to be enough women for Haitian men.

595 565 Although peasants in Haiti are rarely married by formal ceremony, the family is a dominant characteristic of peasant life. This sums up the domestic situation among the masses.

When it is recalled that the Negro, from the time he was taken from Africa on slave ships, had almost no experience of the European tradition of conventional marriage, one has a partial explanation of the absence of peasant weddings. For the rest the people are realists, arguing that a man should have as many women as he needs to carry on the economy of his land holdings; the law forbids polygamy, but exerts no control over plural unions which are entered without formal ceremony. It has therefore come to be regularly accepted in the mores that practical need should determine the number of women to one man. If a peasant increases his land holdings, if he buys or inherits a second farm on the other side of the mountain, it is only common sense for him to take a second woman, raise a family by her, and thus have an overseer and a labor supply resident on each of his properties. Everyone in the community knows what women belong to what man, and custom strongly taboos any tampering with another man's spouses.

162 581 163 Only the Catholic Church has statistics to reveal the infrequency of marriages among the masses. The story was the same a century ago as now. In the important parish of Gonaïves in 1825 the proportion of marriages to births was as 1 to 62; in 1826 they were as 1 to 54.[3] Both figures include marriages and births among the élite, and Gonaïves is a town: in the countryside the proportion of marriages would be much lower. The parish priest of Carrefours, which numbers about a thousand households, stated that in 1936 there had been only ten marriages among his six or eight thousand parishioners. [848] Another parish priest estimated that only one half of one per cent of the baptisms performed were of children born to parents legally married. Even in the parish of Pétionville, home of many élite, a priest estimates that less than one child in five is born to married 595 parents. A century ago a commandant at Léogane, speaking of a high army officer, said, "He is my brother-in-law: I live with his sister." Near Port-au-Prince lived a rural police captain with six plaçage

3. Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, II, 119-120.

spouses,

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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595 spouses. In the hills more than one peasant house was surrounded, as it would have been in Dahomey, by huts in each of which lived a "wife" of the farmer. Matters are not very different nowadays, except that men have learned the wisdom of not having their women live too close to each other.

162 From the guesses of experienced observers, it is probably not far
582 wide of the mark to estimate that only one couple out of a hundred is married according to the approved mode of the Western World.

The State apparently does not care; or, to put it another way, government officials know how impossible it would be to alter a custom confirmed by long usage; one which, moreover, works well enough, since it causes practically no violence or legal cases for the
795 State to attend to. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, is eager
582 to persuade the people to observe the sacrament of holy matrimony. The priests have assiduously endeavored to explore the peasant mind in order to learn what deters the average person from formal marriage. The reasons for the indifference to weddings might be listed as follows:

● 581 1. Inertia. There is no convincing reason to vary time-honored
178 practice which works well enough, particularly since a wedding is likely to cause a great disturbance of daily routine and even a measure of jealousy on the part of those who have not made the display.

581 2. Suspicion of legal documents and civil officials. People who put
829 their names (or marks) on documents and who call the attention of governmental officials to themselves are almost sure to rue the day. A man knows what can be demanded of him by custom in his informal unions; but who can say what the law would hold him responsible for?

581 3. Expense. The civil license costs; the priest and his assistants
585 must be paid; to be married in church, one should wear shoes; if one wears shoes, one should dress up to them; a church wedding calls for a feast. At least two days must be spent away from work if the proper formalities are carried out.

581 4. Common sense in an inevitable situation. Both State and
595 Church would try to limit a man to one wife; prosperity might demand two or more. Is it sensible to discriminate against a second woman, who might be just as much help to a man as his legal wife?

581 The Church through its priests works unceasingly to answer these
794 arguments, but without notable success. Inertia is hard to overcome;

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581 794 suspicion of legal complications is well founded: the priests therefore try to concentrate their attack upon the remaining motives. Thus one priest issued a notice at a certain mountain chapel that he would perform no weddings there for persons who wore shoes; an increase in weddings followed. By such devices, and by constant sermons on the significance of the sacrament, he has persuaded many of his parishioners to be married, yet the vast majority of them continue in plaçage.[4]

581 Informally entered unions among the peasants, then, rest upon a sound, practical, economic basis. If the priests are ever to be successful in their campaign for more weddings, Haitian peasant economy must undergo a change; even then the plurality of women (if indeed it exists), now more or less absorbed by plaçage, will work against the reform.

562 565 It is confusing to speak of "status" in connection with the domestic life of hard-working people, for status implies law, and law hardly touches peasant life. Custom governs all—inevitably, since the majority of peasant women have not been legally married, and since no peasant would willingly take a case to law. Yet women have a definite status as compared with men.

In almost every detail a peasant woman's life differs from that of élite women. The rule of life in country districts is unremitting labor 462 for the female from childhood up. She cooks and makes clothes, 565 labors in the fields after the men have cleared them, does the family 443 washing in the nearest stream, carries water, does whatever housework is required. Practically every Haitian peasant woman has her experience of going to market to sell the vegetables, trinkets, or [484] other wares her family may produce, and to buy necessities. This trip to market may be short, or as long as twenty miles. One of the characteristic sights of Haiti is the seemingly endless procession of women coming down from the hills trudging, or rather swinging majestically along, with a great load on the head, or riding on the haunches of a tiny donkey loaded with bulging panniers. Arrived at

4. As a result of his campaign for more weddings he has had some unusual experiences. Once, in the midst of the wedding ceremony, a bride rushed out of the chapel and shortly gave birth to a child; when she was able to move again, the ceremony was resumed. Again, traveling into the mountains to perform a similar ceremony, he found a crowd assembled under a tree, assisting at another birth of an infant to a bride-to-be. Sometimes he encounters the argument by a peasant that he will not consent to a wedding until his spouse has proved her fecundity by bearing a certain number of children.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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608 remembrances are expected from them on birthdays or saints' days, while the young person, when older, often brings his problems to them, knowing that they will give him their most disinterested advice. A man may turn to his godparents for aid before asking it of his family, for they are regarded as truest of friends. Nor does he stand in awe of them as he does of his older relations. There is a free joking give-and-take between godparent and godchild, which reflects this attitude of warm affection. A person even stands in a special relationship to the children of his godparents, calling them "baptismal brothers" or "baptismal sisters." Among the peasants, though 608 582 not among the inhabitants of the larger centers, not only marriage but even those non-Church unions otherwise socially sanctioned are frowned upon between "baptismal brothers and sisters." And Mirebalais has it that when Church marriage is contemplated by two such individuals, special authorization from the Archbishop must first be obtained.[8]

851 Saturday is the day favored for baptisms, permitting as it 852 does the child to be brought to town on a market day. The 608 mother rarely attends, and usually the father is also absent when the godparents bring the infant to the baptismal font, where the priest gives him his name and receives him into the Church. Later in the day the parents are visited by their friends and relatives, who, if they can afford it, bring gifts for the child and partake of the drinks and refreshments that are provided.

851 Following the Church baptism at an interval which varies 852 with differing circumstances, the father and mother and the 782 godfather and godmother present the child to the family deities. Arriving at the family habitation the father says:

[539] *"Mystères-o, nou' même qui te après Grand Maître protège et delivre, moin vin' remercie nou'. Et en même temps main petite la pou' ga'dé pou' moin. Pas quitté mauvaise lawou gagné l'empi' sou' li. Ba li force, santé,*

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

595 593 671 The fact that Haitian law recognizes only monogamy introduces numerous overtones into the daily life of the people. If a church-wed wife discovers that her husband makes periodic visits to another woman, whether *placée* or not, serious quarreling between the legal wife and her husband follows. The "wife" may refuse to give food to her husband or to speak to him, and will upbraid him before their children, calling him *vagabond* — a strong word of opprobrium to the Haitian — and other terms which her facile tongue readily finds at hand. The status of the children under this dual family system is another reflection of the values it engenders. And though the account of this given in Mirebalais represents a folk-reaction rather than official procedure — for according to officials in the capital it does not exist in Haitian law — its value as a living belief which gives insight into the relevant attitudes outweighs its possible lack of validity in a legal sense.

858 In Mirebalais it is held that there are what may be spoken of as three classes of offspring. The first, which may be termed "natural" children, are those born to a man by his *placée* wife or wives before his Church marriage, or to a *placée* woman whose mating with him was later legalized by the rites of Church and State. The second class, the "legitimate" children, comprises those born to couples married in the strict legal sense of the word. Finally, a third category consists [848] of those who may be called "illegitimate" children, and includes all the offspring of any *placée* spouse of a man taken by him after his Church marriage, or children of any of his earlier *placée* wives born subsequent to this marriage. None of these classes of children are at any special social disadvantage, and all not only inherit the African deities of their father, but must also fulfill their spiritual obligations toward him after his death by wearing mourning and performing all other required rituals.

• 582 641 858 851 Legally, however, the matter is different, for only the children born to a marriage recorded by the justice of the peace

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

belong to the father, who, in turn, is the legally recognized 582
father of all the offspring of his wife unless he divorces her — 671
something which, because of Church regulations, occurs but 858
rarely. Children born outside legal marriage have no right to 851
the name of their father. Such a one is entered under his moth- 848
er's name in the record of births, though he may and often does 858
take his father's name in school or later in life, this ultimately 551
becoming the name by which he is known and which he hands
on to his children. It is in the inheritance of the father's prop- 428
erty that children born of the various types of matings are 858
said to be most strongly differentiated, though it was particu- 848
larly with this method of distributing heritable goods reported in Mirebalais that officials in the capital disagreed. The assertion is made that while the children of a "legal" wife inherit three quarters of the estate, and the other "natural" children receive one fourth, the "illegitimate" offspring have no legal right to any of the dead man's property. They must either be provided for by their father before his death or be aided on occasion by a natural brother who has inherited from their common father and feels a moral obligation toward these children of their father. Children of plural 595
wives call each other by the terms "brother" and "sister," 593
and in some instances they get on fairly well together. More [601]
generally, however, their attitudes toward one another are colored by those of their mothers, so that verbal if not physical encounters may take place when they meet.

Where, as perhaps in the majority of cases, there is a 593
monogamous union, "legal" or "*placée*," cemented by mutual affection and mutual interest in the future of the children, life goes on calmly. Each spouse performs the tasks allotted by custom, and the children are reared in an atmosphere which varies with the fortunes and temperaments of those who make up the household. Fathers are said to prefer their daughters, and mothers their sons, among their children, but for this the Haitian has no explanation other than the phrase: "This is natural."

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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[2] Mackenzie, ii, 124.
[3] St. John, 162.
[4] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 201–2.
[5] Price-Mars (I), 205, gives this as the proper age for a man of the region of Kenskoff, near Port-au-Prince, to marry.
[6] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 216.
[7] Ibid., 211–12. A facsimile of this letter is given on pp. 213–15.
[8] Ibid., 216–17.
[9] Mackenzie, i, 38.
[10] St. John, 145–6.
[11] St. John, 145.
[12] Mackenzie, i, 57. Wirkus, 222, mentions a case of polygyny on the Isle à Gonave where the wives apparently inhabited one compound with their mutual husband.

[184] [582] [595]

CHAPTER VII

[1] This seems to differ in various parts of Haiti; thus, near Port-au-Prince, the father of the girl "designates to his future son-in-law the land where his house is to be built," according to Price-Mars (I), 216.
[2] Cf. Parsons (I), 163.
[3] Among the obligations of the peasant mentioned by Price-Mars (I), 34, is "the respect due to the elders who are the repositories of tradition."

[591] [596]

CHAPTER VIII

[1] Whether or not *vodun* is a religion, a problem which Haitian writers (e.g., Price-Mars (I), 32 ff.) are prone to debate at length, need not be considered here, since to an ethnologist the answer is too patently affirmative to require discussion.
[2] St. Mery, i, 45–6.
[3] Ibid., i, 46.
[4] De Vassière, 178–9.
[5] Dorsainvil (I), 156 ff.; Price-Mars (I), 39.
[6] For a useful resumé of statements concerning Haitian serpent-worship, the grievous misunderstanding of which is an outstanding characteristic of this honest but ill-conceived work, see Williams, *passim*.
[7] Price-Mars (I), 118 ff., also records his belief that serpent-worship is far less important than it has been represented, saying: "We believe it to be well-nigh abolished." Seabrook, 310–12, also holds to this view.
[8] Parsons (I), 157, states: "There is little or no philosophic or religious expression of the theory to be

[771] [791]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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565 171 Modern usage, having borrowed the word "caste" from India, employs it loosely to mean a rigid class system of which the people are conscious.[4] In India caste was always endogamous and connected with occupation. Kroeber defines it as "an endogamous and hereditary division of an ethnic unit occupying a position of superior or inferior rank or social esteem in comparison with other such subdivisions."[5] Castes, as distinguished from social classes, "have emerged into social consciousness to the point where custom and law attempt their rigid and permanent separation from one another." By each of these criteria Haiti has castes.

565 582 [463] [461] The élite are endogamous in that they would not consider marriage into the masses. The one exception to the endogamic practice is marriage with a white foreigner. Whereas in India all members of a caste had the same general occupation, in Haiti several occupations are open to caste members; but the distinction between honorable and demeaning work is understood by all, so that no person has free choice as regards the two larger categories. Haitian law does not name the social divisions, nor does it legislate the masses into a subordinate position[6]—for the simple reason that there is no conceivable need to enact what already exists. The laws of Haiti are administered by élite officials; these men make the definitions and interpretations. The judge always knows the custom, so that (as in most countries) the same offense brings different penalties for upper- and lower-class offenders. Custom holds sway, and custom is more tyrannical than any body of law.

Inside the castes may be found social distinctions familiar in democracies and in every other kind of society. Interest in politics, business, literature, or sport draws people of like minds together and makes cliques. There are well-to-do families who outshine their neighbors, just as there are peasant landholders who dominate their rural communities. A high civil official has more prestige than a doctor with a small practice, just as among the masses a house servant for an élite family outranks a beggar.

565 511 105 185 For the majority of Haitians, life is too elemental to be concerned with artificial wants. The peasant talks, unfettered by rules of gram-

4. See also W. Lloyd Warner, "American Caste and Class," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLII, No. 2 (Sept. 1936), 234–237; and John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (New Haven, 1937), pp. 62 ff.

5. A. L. Kroeber, "Caste," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, III, 254.

6. Such efforts were made, however, in the early days of the republic. See chap. III.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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therefore plantations must be made to yield the uttermost farthing if the nobleman was to pay for the necessities of strict court etiquette. It was by no means a childish whim which prompted Christophe to call himself a king; rather an intelligent utilization of the human material the leader had to work with. Vanity was to serve an economic and a political purpose. 175 643 642 565

Christophe perceived that the defect of Dessalines' reign had been lack of security, both of person and property. Agriculture is a long-term investment and so must be hedged about by orderly rules. To this end the monarch stated his laws clearly, charged a fixed tax—one fourth of the annual crop—which would enrich the kingdom while allowing the tenant-proprietor a reasonable profit, and then guaranteed that no arbitrary demands would be made. Certainly there was no pampering of the wealthy, but there was ample prosperity resulting from regularity and security. 175 651

The ordinary citizen was, as he had been, bound to the soil as an agricultural laborer. This quasi-serfdom, however, was comparative freedom. It simply meant that the home and work of a man must be at the plantation on which he had been born. Saturday afternoons and Sundays were free, so that the laborers might make the most of their opportunities to visit the nearest market village, to buy and sell small goods, gossip, and enjoy the sociability of being part of a crowd. Being bound to the soil meant simply that they could not move, when the impulse seized them, to another plantation or another part of the country. Those whose mothers or relatives were natives of a plantation must return to that estate, being forbidden to live in towns. No person, military or other, who did not derive his living from a plantation, could marry an agricultural worker—a prohibition designed to prevent workers from leaving estates because of family ties, and particularly to prevent women, as mothers of future cultivators, from deserting agriculture. 175 566 641 466 [582]

Mediaeval serfdom itself went no further in binding people to the soil. Indeed, it did not go so far in regulating the daily life of serfs. Under Christophe the cultivators lived according to a routine as strict as that of a school. Reveille was rung as early as three o'clock to arouse women to prepare breakfasts for their menfolk; by four or four-thirty the bell was sounded for the commencement of work, which began after prayers had been led by the overseer. At nine o'clock there was a pause for luncheon, and then a resumption of 175 566 512 466

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may not have all the heart desires. Under Dessalines there had been stern discipline of the workers but no recognition of the aristocracy; now under Pétion the people went their own inefficient way, but aristocratic eminence was happily recognized. 175 671

Examples of experimental legislation abound. Some proposals succeeded but more failed. One of the partial successes was the establishment of an agricultural holiday, *la fête de l'Agriculture*, to stimulate interest in good cultivation. Two months before the day set, the commandants of departments, arrondissements, and cantons, together with the justices of these divisions, were to nominate the laborer in each parish who had done the best work of the year. A prize medal was awarded not only for the sake of honoring him but also to stimulate his fellows. Similarly the officials would choose a child between seven and ten years of age, living on the best cultivated *habitation* in the district and belonging to parents most distinguished by their conduct and fondness for work, to be brought up and educated at the expense of the state. The annual feast was celebrated for many years after Pétion's death, but the officials became too lax to make careful selections of prize-winners. The holiday was kept, therefore, but served none of its original purposes. 175 527

As a case of legislation that failed may be cited the highly moral measure encouraging, but not requiring, legitimate marriages among cultivators rather than the customary informal union without ceremony. The preamble of this law pointed out that legal marriages were 175 582 588

the only means of assuring a person of all the advantages of society; of procuring consolation, care, and help in sorrows and in sickness; of making purity of customs, so necessary for the happiness of men and the conservation of their health, reign among the people; of steadily increasing the population of each habitation; of extending agriculture and of increasing production.[30]

The mass of people, however, had had no experience of legal marriage. In the time of slavery such unions would not have been respected by an owner who wished to sell his slaves, and Dessalines had seemed to care very little whether people married or merely lived together informally. It will shortly be seen in detail how lasting was this inertia of tradition.[31]

30. Cited in Saint-Rémy, *op. cit.*, V, 29.
31. See Part III, "Sex Relations and Home Life."

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 643 659 795 [793]

to appoint, curés to the vacant parishes. His independence of action could not fail to give offense to Church authorities. One of his first appointees was a black ex-slave, Félix, who had been a drum major in the native army. Félix was made curé in the important town of Saint-Marc.

175 795 642 659

The constitution of his empire (May, 1805) indicates that Dessalines did not intend to make himself head of the Church, but rather planned a complete separation of Church and State. Article 50 reads: "The law admits no dominant religion"; while the next article grants freedom to all cults and refuses state support to any denomination or minister. No attack was made, therefore, upon Catholicism, yet the disestablishment of that Church was a serious blow to its prestige. Not in the specific provisions regarding religion was the Church most weakened, but rather in the "liberality" of articles dealing with actions upon which the Church had taken a firm moral stand. Thus Article 14 declared that "marriage is an act purely civil and authorized by the government," while Article 15 permits divorce by the state. Early laws of the empire still further undermined the position of Church doctrine. Illegitimate children were granted the same legal rights as legitimate ones—a generous provision which removed one of the strong reasons for marriage; separation of husband and wife except by divorce was forbidden, and this prohibition practically encouraged the divorce disapproved by the Church; finally, the grounds upon which divorce might be allowed were broader than those existing anywhere else in the Western World at the time: mutual consent, application from one party to the marriage, or simple allegation of incompatibility of temperament or character.

[582] [586] [848]

175 795 648 771 178

From the promulgation of this constitution in 1805 and for the next fifty-five years, Haiti was in open schism from the Roman Catholic Church. The Holy See refused to recognize either the Haitian state or the provisions of its constitution, and it declined to allow priests to enter the country. Certain Haitian presidents were friendly enough to Catholicism, and others were openly desirous of reëstablishing a state religion, but the breach once made was not healed by mere good wishes. The longer the schism endured, the farther the people grew away from the doctrines and practices of a religion in which they had never been firmly grounded. At the moment of independence, when all minds were more open to new

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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themselves and their families economically and socially. Property was important, so they took pains to insure the legitimacy of their heirs; color was crucial, and so they regulated the marriages of their children to be sure there was no reversion to the black strain. They guarded their fortunes solicitously, provided their daughters with dowries large enough sometimes even to lure a white husband, educated their sons in Paris—behaved, in short, as if they had been pillars of society in provincial France. Like the white planters, the male affranchis often had relations with slave women, but even more rarely than whites were they seduced into marriage with women of the lower orders. 175 565 581

When the slave insurrection and its aftermath freed the half-million blacks in Saint-Domingue it was not to be expected that European middle-class morals and practices should suddenly prevail. Modern usage emerges from the womb of tradition. Neither in Africa nor in the colony had tradition taught the blacks respect for monogamy or for marriage entered into by religious ceremony. If the ex-slaves had reverted to their Dahomean, Congolese, or other African background, they might have introduced the bride price; but to pay a bride price is to assume the existence of wealth, an assumption contrary to fact among the ex-slaves in Saint-Domingue of the 1790's, and Haiti of the 1800's. In neither Dahomey nor the Congo was there much ceremony at the union of a couple; what there was consisted mostly of singing and dancing. If, on the other hand, the people went only by what they had observed in slave days, there was no tradition of binding union or strict codes, as we understand them. A man knew when to stay away from another man's woman; children remained near their mother—these two statements almost cover the situation as of 1796 among the newly freed slaves. 175 581 [583] [585] [837] [855]

Toussaint, apparently a conventional person in what concerned social behavior, wished his people to be "moral." He instituted a time of "holy masses, mystic communions, biblical psalms, and divine ecstasies"[a] for his private edification, and recommended the same for his people. He could not possibly have instilled into them a desire for Christian marriage, however; even if he could, priests would not have been available for the wholesale marrying of scores of thousands of men and women. Local records of weddings at this period are very scanty. 175 643 788 582

a. Saint-Rémy, *Pétion et Haïti*, III, 93.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

The truth is, marriage and moral conditions differ from economic and political conditions in that they are not so immediate and pressing in their effect upon individual lives. If these are not attended to today, tomorrow will find our bellies empty and our state overrun by enemies. But sex relations go on willy-nilly, and children are born into families: there will still be marriage and a moral problem to attend to when order has been brought into practical affairs. Toussaint was involved in a diplomatic battle in which the participants were the best minds of France, England, and the United States. Beside these mighty problems upon which depended the economic and political future of his people, the question of a standard of sex conduct was definitely secondary.

So it must have seemed to Dessalines, the founder of the state and first "law-giver" of Haiti. By his official actions it is evident that the economy of the country was his primary concern, with defense against a return of the French a close second. In his pronouncements he bowed respectfully to religion and then postponed action until some more convenient season. He pronounced likewise some very proper sentiments on marriage and morals, calling attention to the benefits of wedlock, piously deprecating sensuality and voluptuousness. His imperial constitution of 1805 encouraged lawful unions, treating marriage as a socially virtuous state to be cultivated.

This was all words, however, and came strangely from the black general who was, as everyone knew, a notorious libertine. He lectured his people on the danger of yielding to their passions, yet showed no intention of controlling his own impulses or those of his favorites. He was, indeed, the last man in Haiti to make a gesture toward sexual morality among the people, for although he was married his daily life was a complete negation of moral precept. In every town he habitually visited he established mistresses, bestowing large sums of money upon them. He employed every sort of seduction, honor, and gift to conquer the virtue of females who valued their "respectability." Actually, he did not often need to use violence, for the prevailing moral tone was not so high but that most young and attractive women would yield to their Emperor.

The sternly upright Haitian historian, Madiou, has a formidable paragraph on the vices of Dessalines. He tries partially to excuse him on the grounds of his fury at discovering conspiracies against his authority among his colored lieutenants, asserting that his early gen-

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 While the broad problems of marriage, inheritance, and legiti-
•512 macy were not to be solved by the official act of any ruler, the efforts made, particularly those by Dessalines and Christophe, had their effect upon the development of the marital institution in Haiti.

671 "Whereas," begins the preamble of Dessalines' law of May 28,
848 1805, "it is necessary to fix in immutable order the status and rights of children born out of wedlock, and whereas it is important to reconcile what nature and society owe them with the political interests of the state," therefore it behooves the government to lay
[581] down the specific rules which follow. Nothing in the law pushes the people toward marriage, but every provision strengthens the family, which they had known both in Africa and in the slave régime of the colony.

175 Henceforth no stigma is to attach to the fact of illegitimacy, nor is
671 there to be discrimination in favor of children born in wedlock. The
848 status of a child will depend upon recognition by its parents. If a child's maternal connection is established, he has rights in her
428 property; if the father likewise recognize his offspring, the child has rights in the paternal property; even if the recognition of a child is so long delayed that the parents die, that child who can prove his descent is to receive the name and his own share of property from the deceased. There is but one single provision in which an illegitimate child has an inferior status: should a couple decide to be legally married, they must recognize the natural offspring of either party before or during the wedding ceremony, if such children are to have full claims of inheritance; delay until after the ceremony cuts their claim to only one fourth that of children born legitimately; refusal to recognize the natural child disinherits him, unless he can prove his descent.

[422] Since the Emperor was already engaged upon his campaign to
[423] acquire lands for the state, the property rights guaranteed would refer chiefly to personal property, and only secondarily to land still owned by individuals. Both men and women owned personal property, however, and must therefore pass on this property, a definite percentage going to each son and daughter.

The law is weak in some of its details. It does not specify, for example, how an unmarried father shall leave his property—whether by name to each child he has recognized as his own, or by name to the mothers of his children. It is strong in that it is simple: property

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 643 645

be explained only as efforts to win outside respect for his kingdom of blacks. He was aware of the scorn in which white people held the apparent absence of all sexual morality in Haiti, and so set about introducing reforms. Even as a general he had opposed the dissolutenes of Dessalines.

175 643 582 671 581 [595]

In an early pronouncement Christophe proscribes concubinage (by which he meant the unmarried unions of the people), libertinage, and "all those disorders which weaken the family." To proscribe an evil is not necessarily to put an end to it, however, and so he tried also to persuade and educate his people to the habit of full legal marriage. His steps at persuasion were various. In speeches he urged weddings upon his subjects; yet a man could see little reason for tying himself to one woman for life, assuming *legal* responsibilities at an expense, when already from experience he knew that he could have a woman's loyalty without the ceremony. Although weddings somewhat increased after 1806, Christophe's verbal campaign was a failure. He next tried force. In one town he made all the females assemble in the public square; then, separating the married from the unmarried, commanded his royal guards to advance, each to select an unmarried woman who should become his wife. At other times he selected young men and women by lot and had them married "by their King's authority." No nobleman in the kingdom could long remain unwed: indeed, Queen Victoria might have approved Christophe's solicitude for the moral uprightness of the Haitian court.

175 671 848 428

Another means by which Christophe forced his people into formal marriage was the indirect one of attacking property rights. Realizing that Dessalines' law by guaranteeing inheritance to natural children encouraged people to remain unmarried, he rescinded it by one of the first acts of his rule.[5] This act reestablished French practice, making it all but impossible for illegitimate children to inherit anything. Most persons of property found this law persuasive where words had left them cold. Madiou thought the law "excessively severe in a country where nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of the population were born out of wedlock,"[6] and he spoke of its disharmony with general practice at the time. Actually,

5. Law of March 25, 1807.
6. Madiou, op. cit., III, 412.

it seems not radically to have affected the matter but only the fairly well-to-do.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

585 spouses. In the hills more than one peasant house was surrounded, as it would have been in Dahomey, by huts in each of which lived a "wife" of the farmer. Matters are not very different nowadays, except that men have learned the wisdom of not having their women live too close to each other.

162 From the guesses of experienced observers, it is probably not far
582 wide of the mark to estimate that only one couple out of a hundred is married according to the approved mode of the Western World.

The State apparently does not care; or, to put it another way, government officials know how impossible it would be to alter a custom confirmed by long usage; one which, moreover, works well enough, since it causes practically no violence or legal cases for the
745 State to attend to. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, is eager
582 to persuade the people to observe the sacrament of holy matrimony. The priests have assiduously endeavored to explore the peasant mind in order to learn what deters the average person from formal marriage. The reasons for the indifference to weddings might be listed as follows:

581 1. Inertia. There is no convincing reason to vary time-honored
178 practice which works well enough, particularly since a wedding is likely to cause a great disturbance of daily routine and even a measure of jealousy on the part of those who have not made the display.

581 2. Suspicion of legal documents and civil officials. People who put
821 their names (or marks) on documents and who call the attention of governmental officials to themselves are almost sure to rue the day. A man knows what can be demanded of him by custom in his informal unions; but who can say what the law would hold him responsible for?

581 3. Expense. The civil license costs; the priest and his assistants
585 must be paid; to be married in church, one should wear shoes; if one wears shoes, one should dress up to them; a church wedding calls for a feast. At least two days must be spent away from work if the proper formalities are carried out.

581 4. Common sense in an inevitable situation. Both State and
585 Church would try to limit a man to one wife; prosperity might demand two or more. Is it sensible to discriminate against a second woman, who might be just as much help to a man as his legal wife?

581 The Church through its priests works unceasingly to answer these
764 arguments, but without notable success. Inertia is hard to overcome;

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

CHAPTER VI

MATING AND MARRIAGE

THERE are two ways in which a Haitian family may be formed. 583
The first of these is through a marriage having the sanction of the Church, in token of which a ring is thereafter worn by the wife. The second mode of establishing a family is by means of the institution known as *placage*, wherein a man and a woman who desire to live together fulfill certain obligations and perform certain ceremonies at the home of the girl's parents, after which the new household is established.[1] The distinction between the two forms has been mentioned, though not analyzed, by several of those who traveled in the island after the period of slavery. Thus, according to Mac- 184
kenzie: 583
585

> "Marriage formally solemnised is not so common as unions of another kind. . . . In the North the practice of solemnising marriages is said to be more common than in the South, owing to the preceding practice under Christophe, and the exertions of the priesthood at the Cape."[2]

Similarly, St. John speaks of not noticing "any particular ceremonies" at marriages:

> ". . . some are striving to imitate the upper classes, and have the ceremony performed in church, but the mass of the people are still not regularly married."[4]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

so that both forms must be considered by one interested in social institutions as constituting true marriage. The prestige which is derived from a Church union, however, is of appreciable significance; sufficient, indeed, to motivate weddings at which the children and even grandchildren of the principals act as attendants. A man and woman may live together as *placées* ten or fifteen years or more before they have amassed the necessary amount to pay for a legal marriage. It is only when parents of young people are prosperous enough to pay for a Church marriage that their union receives the stamp of approval of the Church, for the Church wedding involves considerable expenditure in terms of Haitian peasant economy. A "first class" wedding, for example, calls for the payment of 47.50 gourdes; a "second class" ceremony, 40 gourdes; and the least expensive, or "third class" rite costs 34 to 36 gourdes, while in addition to this, five gourdes must be paid the assistant who rings the church bells, and a fixed fee of 25 gourdes is assessed for the civil registration of the marriage. The wedding ring is, of course, indispensable; a modest one, of gold, costs 60 gourdes. Food and drinks served at the festivities following the Church service cost, conservatively, another fifty gourdes, while if an ox is slaughtered to provide a more elaborate feast, the amount is correspondingly greater. Finally, the person who reads the necessary prayers before the festivities begin and the musicians who play for the *bal* must also be compensated. It can readily be seen, therefore, how a man and woman may live together in a *placée* union for years before their resources permit a legal marriage.

Whatever the type of mating, the first steps toward betrothal are taken by the young man. Though he has courted the girl of his choice and his proposal is acceptable to her, customary procedure demands that she refer him to her parents, whereupon his parents appear before those of the girl to make their plea on his behalf. If both families reside

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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love-charm designed to insure the young girl's coming to him. He then uses all persuasion to give her a child and, this achieved, abandons her to show his contempt for the family that has formally refused to accept him as a son-in-law.

Usually, however, the visit is returned by the family of the girl, bearing a "response" of acceptance wrapped in a red silk handkerchief, "for victory." And just as the family of the young woman had known in advance of the coming of her suitor's relatives, word of the favorable verdict is now sent through indirect channels, so that the family of the young man may also be prepared to receive the emissaries who come on behalf of the girl.

With this formal acceptance of the young man's suit, the wedding waits until he has accumulated the requisites for a household. Custom dictates that even should he be prepared, the ceremony must be delayed for several months while he remains in a probationary state, to assure the family of his fiancée of his worthiness. The young woman is also under surveillance during this time, when she may be asked to help her future mother-in-law with the housework, and particularly with the washing and ironing of linens. Generally a period of from two to three years elapses before the bridegroom accumulates enough to fulfill his obligations in marriage. During this time the family of the young woman is acquiring the things she is expected to bring to her husband: linens and dishes — though in the poorer peasant families these items would not be provided her — cooking utensils, water-containers, knives, forks, and other things needed for the household. Her father also presents her with a horse, a donkey, six or seven pigs, the same number of goats, as well as chickens, guinea-hens, and turkeys.

Tokens of virginity are not demanded before the match, since Mirebalais custom requires that the girl tell before her marriage whether she has had relations with other men. She may be sent away if it is discovered that she has told an un-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

585 769 782 for the victims of smallpox. If family traditions also tell of those shot, not in war, but as prisoners, perhaps, a candle is lighted for them outside the cemetery wall. Though the couple may perform this ceremony together, each makes this request of the dead of his or her own family as the candles are lighted. This call on the dead is repeated several days after the marriage or later, when candles are again lighted.

591 583 585 769 The sole exception to the performance of these rites before the new household is begun occurs in those cases of *plaçage* where a girl continues to live at her own home. This is rare, however, for the house of a man is usually built near that of his father, and he takes his wife there. But if special circumstances dictate otherwise, the ceremony of notifying and pacifying the family deities may be deferred, though a man must eventually present every woman with whom he lives to his family gods and in turn must be presented to the gods of the woman's family. In similar fashion the dead of both families must be adequately notified.

585 [777] [796] [583] [777] Marriages rarely take place in the months of November and December, the former being disliked because it is "the month of the dead," during which All Saints' Day occurs, and the latter because it ends the year. Except for the Church wedding and less elaborate festivities to celebrate the event, the rites which mark a *plaçage* mating do not greatly differ from those which mark a legal marriage, which may be described in outline. The favorite day for Church marriages is Saturday, "the day of the Virgin," and the time for the ceremony is always early morning, before the heat of the day has set in. If the home of the girl is some distance from Mirebalais, the party come to town the preceding day, the girl spending the night with some friend. Otherwise the bridegroom, accompanied by his relatives and friends, goes to the house of the girl early Saturday morning. Before the couple leave the [782] [782] home of her parents, water must be thrown on the ground in front of them, and also sprinkled by them before the en-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

sitting at the door of the central house, with huts all 175
around in which his younger wives lived, as they could 595
not be made to dwell under the same roof. . . . The French priests attempted to alter this state of things, but they did not succeed, as the wives, surrounding the intruders, asked them what was to be their position if the husband selected one among them and abandoned the rest."[10]

Elsewhere St. John speaks of the institution of *plaçage* by [583]
name, mentioning its prevalence prior to the period of his residence in Haiti.[11] Mackenzie, though not calling it by this term, tells of a rural Negro who, in the course of a long conversation during which the name of an officer of rank in the Republic came up, made the observation "with admirable naiveté and exquisite logic, 'C'est mon beau frère, parceque je vis avec sa sœur.'"[12]

Plural marriage is no less common in the valley of Mire- 184
balais than elsewhere in Haiti. Despite the insistence of the 595
Church on monogamy, many men have two "wives," a few have three or four, while one important priest of the *vodun* cult is said to have eight. The force of the sanctions behind [177]
monogamy and Church unions, however, has undoubtedly [152]
influenced the psychological "set" of the Haitian toward polygyny, as is especially to be seen in the violent manifestations of jealousy shown by co-wives toward one another. It is primarily because of this that polygynous households, such as are mentioned in earlier writings, are not found in present-day Mirebalais, and this also explains why a man with more than one spouse sees to it that where possible his "wives" live at such distance from one another that they have but little opportunity to meet. Even then, on occasion, a newly taken *placée* will pace in front of the house of her man's other spouse, flaunting the clothes and trinkets she has received from him. Or if women who share the same mate meet in the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

428 The division of the land is said almost invariably to entail
423 lawsuits, and some litigations have been known to stretch
691 over a period of a decade and more, for, as one resident of Mirebalais remarked, " Because of a few feet of land a peasant will, if necessary, spend a thousand gourdes at court." If a woman is the heir, her husband may intervene in a dispute to protect her interests, but if the matter goes to court, only the husband of a " married " wife has a right to appear as an interested party; the mate of a *placée* may only act as a witness. When minor grandchildren inherit, their mother, whether married or *placée*, is their legal guardian and may enter suit to protect their interests.

428 The rights of a woman to the property of her father may be
423 nullified if a dowry has been given her husband at the time
583 of her " legal " marriage, though dowries are rarely given
562 among peasants. If she is a *placée*, or if a dowry had not passed at the time of her " marriage," the land she inherits from her parents is held by her for her children, who will in time inherit it from her, so that many parcels of land deemed by natives to belong to a single family group are found to be divided among people who bear different surnames. It is not without interest to note in passing that in contrast to the acrid disputes which characterize the settlement of a father's goods, the distribution of a mother's property is seldom disturbed by dissension.

42 In addition to land and money, which form the most important part of any estate, are the flocks, herds, and beasts of burden of the dead man, and his personal tools and implements. These are sometimes willed to brothers and sisters or favorite nephews. Land and money, however, may not be alienated, but must go to the man's own children or to such others as may have been legally adopted. A child can be deprived of participation in the estate only if formally disinherited by means of a sworn document attested before a
000 notary. As has been stated, daughters who have been given

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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It has been stated, daughters who have been given a dowry forfeit their share, but even when a formal *dot* has not passed, the number of animals given her when she went to her husband is mentioned and she is sometimes asked to waive a corresponding portion of her share in consideration of what she has already received. If she refuses to do this, however, there is no recourse but to allow her her full share, though public opinion would censure such greed. 428 683 626

Debts incurred by the dead must be repaid before the estate can be settled, while attempts are also made to collect all loans made by him. Where no written statement of a debt exists, a declaration by the dying man before witnesses is necessary; otherwise his heirs acknowledge their obligation at their pleasure. Conversely, if no statement attested by a notary exists to verify a loan made by him, his heirs have no means of collecting it. On the whole, lending has been found through experience to be ill-advised unless such a "paper" has been executed before a notary, and land has been pledged as collateral either before the head of the family of the borrower or before a magistrate. For though interest is not demanded by the peasants, and loans are made as a gesture of friendship, "even the people of the hills" — to use the Mirebalais idiom for the most naïve rustics — have learned that just debts are often not repaid where there is no legally enforceable claim. 428 426

A man who dies childless leaves his property to his brothers and sisters by the same father and mother. The husband of a "legally" married woman who dies childless is said to have the right to one fourth of her property, the rest going to her relatives, but most often "they drive him away," giving him nothing, and since a man is customarily too proud to contest the matter, he does not insist on receiving his due. A childless widow continues to live in her dead husband's house until her death, and she also receives one fourth of her husband's property. At her death the house passes to her husband's relatives, but the quarter of his estate which she had received goes to her family. 428 [768]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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taken to the *pret' savanne* to be blessed with holy water; in the town the Catholic priest is said to do this. In full mourning, black is worn on Sundays, Mondays, and Fridays, the days sacred to the dead, but since full mourning means that one must be dressed in one's best and it is impossible to wear these clothes all day long even in the first weeks after death, the rule is to remain at home, fully dressed, on Sundays, Mondays, and Fridays, wearing the full mourning outside the house only to Sunday mass. 765

When full mourning for a parent cannot be worn immediately following death, the fulfillment of the obligation is postponed. If this duty is not ultimately met, however, the dead take vengeance, so that a child of the one who was remiss perhaps falls ill, or some other misfortune comes to him. If the negligent one is no longer living, then the penalty for his neglect will be assessed on his children, who, on consulting a diviner, will be told that they must wear mourning not only for their own parents, but for their grandparents as well. Such is the case of a dying woman whose story is recounted, for a diviner ascertained that though she had worn mourning for her own father, he had not worn it for his parent; as soon as she put on full mourning for her grandfather, she is said to have immediately recovered. 765 775 784 [787] [755]

A widower wears mourning for a legally married wife for a year, and a widow for her husband during a similar period, and it is believed that if a man were to remarry before the year has elapsed, his second wife would die, so that a woman will not go sooner to a widower, while it is equally dangerous for a widow to take a husband before the first anniversary of the death of her spouse. Should a *placée* wife die, however, another may be taken in her stead before the year has passed, for it is only in matters where the Church is concerned that the dead take vengeance. Furthermore, a man who has more than one mate may go to his other wives at any time after the death of a spouse, and though he would, of course, not go to them 765 587 [583] [595]

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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75 580 595 583

soon after the death of one for whom he had deep affection, the matter is entirely one which concerns his own feelings. If a woman who cannot afford proper mourning clothes remarries in the Church before she has discharged the obligation to wear mourning for her dead husband, gossip will be heard, but, on the other hand, a woman who has been legally married, and who therefore may not remarry for a year after her husband's death, may be taken as *placée* by another before that period has elapsed. In this case, however, she must wear full mourning and otherwise observe all the necessary rites before the other man with safety may seek the approval of the Church for the union.

76

Though children who have lived until about twelve years of age and have been baptized are given a *dernière prière* and must not be forgotten when sacrifices are made to the family dead, there is but little mourning for them. "*'Ti moun pas gagné deuilles* — Children do not merit the wearing of mourning," it is said, and they are called "*'ti z'anges* — little angels" — for they are too young to have sinned. "It is only when one makes love that the important sins begin." Therefore, if a young person dies, not only do his parents, grandparents, and older brothers and sisters not follow his coffin to the grave, but they do not mourn for him. Only those younger brothers and sisters who were of his age — twelve or thirteen years old — wear semi-mourning.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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769 a *mangé* is given, and that evening, when the feast ends, dances
17 are held. Two or three *tonnelles* are provided, the most important of these being the one where the Martinique cycle, the social dances most beloved by the ancestors, is danced. In one of the remaining two a European *bal* is held, and in the other are the *vodun* dancers. Thus even in connection with a commemorative Church mass for the dead the *mangé morts* and the dancing of African dances are included.

595 The institution of plural marriage, which is socially recog-
177 nized though not legally sanctioned, is obviously African.
178 Though the *placée* is held in respect and her place in society
[554] carries no reproach for herself or her children because of any connotation of immorality, it is of significance for an understanding of the manner of cultural change that prestige in marriage goes with the monogamic union blessed by the Church, and that the "wife"—the woman who is addressed as "Madame"—holds definitely higher social position than the *placée*. Officially the Haitian State is in accord with the position of the Church and recognizes only the European monogamic marriage. Socially, however, African plural marriage is not only tolerated but accepted as a matter of course, and in those instances where plural marriage takes on its most exuberant form, as when men of position have as many as six or seven *placées* in addition to a legal wife, its very size tends to give such a family group, or at least its head, the enviable esteem of his fellow-citizens.

17 Within the family, the deference toward older members
[593] and the duties and attitudes toward parents-in-law are Afri-
[606] can both in form and in spirit. The exaction of guarantees
[583] from a young man before marriage, and the necessity of his proving to the family of his fiancée that he can support her, are perhaps in their generalized form universals, but as found in Haiti show once more a retention of specific aboriginal
[584] traditions. On the other hand, such aspects of marriage as the formal *lettre de demand* sent when a match is arranged, or the

● 583

[For information on the polygynous aspects of placage, as a socially acceptable form of marriage in the society, see also category 595.]

In the early years of independence, Emperor Henry Christophe in the north and President Pétion in the south tried to stem the disintegration of the magnificent plantations. Christophe's measures in the region he controlled were sometimes stern, according to legend; but the plantation system and the plantations themselves gradually fell into decay, along with the aqueducts, the warehouses, and the sugar mills. For the Haitian had returned to a tradition of landholding antedating his enslavement.

Europe's loss of the Pearl of the Antilles aroused bitter words from Frenchmen and Englishmen for the better part of the century. They accused the Negro of laziness and lack of ability, repeating endlessly that only as a colony could Haiti ever be of any use to anybody. The London *Times* deplored the Haitian's unwillingness to work for wages, speculating that he had "no desire for property strong enough to induce him to labor with sustained power." In the United States, antiabolitionist enthusiasts cited the Haitian situation as an example of what would happen to the American economy if the slaves were freed.

The Haitian's reluctance to work for wages did not reflect an aversion to owning property, however, as the London *Times* supposed. On the contrary, it was engendered by his desire for property. The land was there and waiting, only needing a house to be built upon it, and to be cleared and tilled. The typical Haitian wanted not dubious, seasonal wage work but a farm of his own. The more ambitious peasant aspired to two farms, or even three, with a homestead and a family on each.

If a man worked hard and made a success of one plot, he could put away money and eventually buy a second. The additional land might be separated by some miles from the original farm. On the new ground the man would build another house and take another wife to take care of it in his absence. Known as *plaçage*, this arrangement had complete community sanction. A man whose energies and good fortune made an extra household possible was expected to make such an arrangement. It was not a new institution bred in the chaos following the Revolution, nor was it, as some missionaries held, an evidence of moral deterioration of the Haitian character. It was simply a persisting concept of West African life.[3] The woman who occupied the second or third household was not a concubine. Like the first wife, she had enhanced prestige in her community. She had authority and responsibility. Her work, her position, and her rewards were not essentially different from those of the first wife.[4] It is true that her marriage was not consecrated by a church or civil ceremony, but, ordinarily, neither was that of the first wife. Contrary to European misconceptions, such unions were true marriages in the sense that they had full sanction of the community.

[Footnotes appear in Category 116, pp. 351-352. --Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Chapter 5: *Services for the Loa and the Family Ancestors* (pp. 41–74)

[1]Note that the houngan and the laplace are performing services normally performed by the *prêt' savane*.

[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 165.

[3]Parsons, *Spirit Cult in Haiti*.

[4]Account given by Jean Ravel Pintro.

[5]Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana.

[6]Account given by Voluska Saintvil. A. W. Cardinall notes in his book *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 69): "Trees are in most cases treated with respect. Before a man dare fell one for a canoe he must and invariably does sacrifice to its spirit and apologizes for the harm he is about to do it."

[7]The rite of *rafraîchi tête* is conducted periodically for a *maît' tête* after the original *lavé tête* ceremony. The purpose is to "refresh" the loa and make him content with his residence in the head of the devotee.

[8]Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, p. 233.

[9]It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain Negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form.

[10]Odette Menneson Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Voudoun Loa," in Appendix A of Deren, *Divine Horsemen*, p. 264.

Chapter 6: *Songs of the Peristyle* (pp. 75–94)

[1]This theme is further commented on in chap. 13. Compare with the following excerpt from a Surinam song reported by Herskovits in *Suriname Folk-Lore* (p. 689):

I have no mother there,
I have no father there,
I have no sister there,
I haven't got anybody there.

Chapter 7: *In the Mapou Tree: Magic, Demons, and Compacts* (pp. 95–104)

[1]Simpson, "Haitian Magic," *Social Forces*, October, 1940, p. 97.

[2]Note the coincidence of the term *gris-gris* or *grigri* as used in the United States, where it has the same meaning as *mojo*, or "voodoo" charm.

[3]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 503.

[4]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, p. 243.

Chapter 8: *Mardi Gras and Rara: Jugglers, Maypoles, and Kings* (pp. 105–109)

[1]Aubin, *En Haïti*, p. 42.

[2]Marionettes of this kind have been observed in both East and West Africa and are well known in the region of Senegal. I saw a phallic marionette, virtually identical with the Haitian version, in the neighborhood of Khartoum, Sudan.

Chapter 9: *Land and Work* (pp. 110–121)

[1]Franklin, *The Present State of Haiti*, p. 362.

[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 300 ff., describes Dahomean polygamous marriage in its various forms. Although Dahomean plural marriage is complex in terms of gifts, obligations, and

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Hait1 SV3

relations between the husband and the wife's family, it is nevertheless commonplace for men who can afford it to have more than one wife.

[3]Simpson, in "Sexual and Familial Institutions in Northern Haiti," *American Anthropologist*, October–December, 1942, p. 656, observes that in northern Haiti there are three distinct types of plaçage. "A *femme-caille* shares her mate's house, while a *maman pitite* is a woman who has born children for a man without living in his house. A *femme plaçée* does not live in her consort's house, and she has given him no children." Although none of these women has any legal rights of inheritance, Simpson notes, "moral claims to a man's property stand in descending order for these three classes of plaçées."

[4]Johnston, *The Negro in the New World*.

[5]UNESCO, *The Haiti Pilot Project*, p. 18.

[6]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 515.

[7]The group work patterns of Haiti show a common ancestry with Negro gang work patterns in the United States. While nothing as formalized as the coumbite persists among American Negroes, similarities are striking. The emphasis on rhythm, the swinging of hammers or picks in unison, the need for a singing leader, the responsive chorus, and the frequent use of some kind of percussion to keep time, all derive from a common concept of the nature of group work.

[8]Herskovits, "Some Aspects of Dahomean Ethnology," *Africa*, Vol. V (July, 1932), pp. 256–256.

[9]Cardinall, *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 109), observes that among the Krachi people of Togoland "no man may have sexual intercourse with a woman for seven days before he goes hunting."

[10]An Ashanti story told by Rattray in *Akan-Ashanti Folk-Tales* credits the hedgehog with owning the original hoe; according to this version, the hoe escaped across the sea to the country of the white men, who then possessed the secret. Afterward, the white men brought many hoes to Ashanti.

Chapter 11: *Dancing and Dance Drama* (*pp. 126–136*)

[1]Quoted in Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 73.

[2]Actually a banjo-like instrument of African provenience. The similarity of the word *banza* to *banjo* appears to be more than a coincidence.

[3]Saint-Méry, *De la danse*, as translated by Lillian Moore in "Moreau de Saint-Méry and 'Danse,'" *Dance Index*, October, 1946, p. 238.

[4]Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[5]Brandy or rum with gunpowder is sometimes drunk by persons possessed by the loa Ogoun, deity of war.

[6]Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[7]United Nations photograph no. 62065.

[8]Students of United States Negro life will recognize the word *coundjaille* as a variant of *coonjine*, a dance known on the lower Mississippi. According to one observer, Dr. Willis James of Spelman College, Atlanta, small Negro boys on the docks used to call to the boat passengers:

> "Throw me a nickel
> Throw me a dime
> If you want to see me
> Do the coonjine."

The term *coonjine* is still used to mean hand-loading of cotton bales on river boats. When this loading was done mainly by hand some years ago, the stevedores worked rhythmically in a line and sang. An old man from Louisiana testified that within his own memory the dockside *coonjine* was accompanied by makeshift drums and other percussion.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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114 treatment. In the absence of sufficient analytic material on the inter-
121 vening years since his book was written, a prefatory note such as this can do little more than comment on Haitian society, either in terms of its present design or in terms of the recent events that may have modified it.

121
114 The central thesis of Leyburn's book is that Haitian society is sharply divided into two segments, and that the national institutional struc-
565 ture is such that no significant alteration in that division has occurred
[178] in the entire course of Haiti's history as a sovereign nation. At the base of the society is the rural agricultural sector, making up perhaps as much as 95 per cent of the population; at the top the elite, which dominates the governmental apparatus and all national institutions. These two segments of the society differ, in Leyburn's view, in all important regards: level of income, source of income, education, language, religion, social forms, values and attitudes, and all else. By carefully describing the history of Haitian society from the eve of the revolution until the midst of the United States occupation, he reveals both the origin of this vast social cleavage and the various means employed for its perpetuation. Leyburn was so impressed by the gap which separated yeomanry and elite that he chose to label these social segments castes rather than classes. Members of the elite earn their livings as rentiers, merchants, professionals, and in government, and never engage in manual labor of any sort. They are predominantly urban in residence; their sons attend private lower schools, and then
[191] go on to higher education, usually abroad. They are French-speaking,
[197] although they also speak Creole, Haiti's national language. Elite re-
[58] ligion is Catholicism, elite forms of marriage and domestic organiza-
[59] tion are "legitimate" and "western." Elite members view themselves
[829] as a kind of aristocracy, and feel little commonality in their sharing of Haiti and of Haitian history with the yeomen.

In sharp contrast, the yeomanry is rural, poor, works the land, is
114 illiterate and Creole-speaking only, believes in *vodous* rather than in
565 orthodox Catholicism, usually marries by common law and is some-
191 times polygynous, and remains substantially isolated from the outer
771 world. Finally and importantly—though its particular significance is
583 changing—the elite differs from the rural sector in that the country-
595 man is predominantly negroid in phenotype, while members of the
144 elite are prevailingly lighter-skinned.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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themselves and their families economically and socially. Property was important, so they took pains to insure the legitimacy of their heirs; color was crucial, and so they regulated the marriages of their children to be sure there was no reversion to the black strain. They guarded their fortunes solicitously, provided their daughters with dowries large enough sometimes even to lure a white husband, educated their sons in Paris—behaved, in short, as if they had been pillars of society in provincial France. Like the white planters, the male affranchis often had relations with slave women, but even more rarely than whites were they seduced into marriage with women of the lower orders. 175 565 581

When the slave insurrection and its aftermath freed the half-million blacks in Saint-Domingue it was not to be expected that European middle-class morals and practices should suddenly prevail. Modern usage emerges from the womb of tradition. Neither in Africa nor in the colony had tradition taught the blacks respect for monogamy or for marriage entered into by religious ceremony. If the ex-slaves had reverted to their Dahomean, Congolese, or other African background, they might have introduced the bride price; but to pay a bride price is to assume the existence of wealth, an assumption contrary to fact among the ex-slaves in Saint-Domingue of the 1790's, and Haiti of the 1800's. In neither Dahomey nor the Congo was there much ceremony at the union of a couple; what there was consisted mostly of singing and dancing. If, on the other hand, the people went only by what they had observed in slave days, there was no tradition of binding union or strict codes, as we understand them. A man knew when to stay away from another man's woman; children remained near their mother—these two statements almost cover the situation as of 1796 among the newly freed slaves. 175 581 [583] [585] [837] [855]

Toussaint, apparently a conventional person in what concerned social behavior, wished his people to be "moral." He instituted a time of "holy masses, mystic communions, biblical psalms, and divine ecstasies"[2] for his private edification, and recommended the same for his people. He could not possibly have instilled into them a desire for Christian marriage, however; even if he could, priests would not have been available for the wholesale marrying of scores of thousands of men and women. Local records of weddings at this period are very scanty. 175 643 788 582

2. Saint-Rémy, *Pétion et Haïti*, III, 23.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 Englishman, Sir Spenser St. John, said that he had met placées of the
581 President at dinner, and was asked to trace resemblances between
588 children and their reported father. "No one seeks to conceal it, and
643 the conversation of married ladies continually turns on this subject. One excuse for it is that many of the ladies whom you meet in society were only married after the birth of their first children. However, according to French law, that ceremony renders them all legitimate. Some of those admitted into society are not married at all, but their daughters being married, prevents notice being taken of the false position of the mother."[5]

565 In recent years the élite, although many continue to contract
581 plaçage unions, keep these arrangements quieter than formerly and tend to make them with women lower in the social scale than themselves. Formal and regular marriage is expected and approved among the upper classes of today. Indeed, one modern informant in answer to the question, "What is the primary test of membership among the élite?" replied without hesitation, "Five generations of marriage in the family."[6]

583 Formal marriage is not entered into lightly among the upper
565 classes. It is a serious business watched over by state, family, and church. The interest of the state seems to be to guard against bigamy. The possibility of bigamy is the more likely since one or the other contracting party may have formerly lived in plaçage. The interest of the family is in the wisdom of the alliance. Before a wedding can be performed both parties must have obtained the formal consent of their parents, besides having their banns published at their respective places of permanent residence. There seems to be some doubt whether the courts would uphold a father in his refusal to consent to the marriage of a son over twenty-one years old; but cases are known in which such a refusal has stopped the wedding. Of course, the daughters must always obtain parental consent to marry.

585 The civil wedding, adopted in Haiti at the beginning of her independence, is usually followed by a religious ceremony. The Church, like the State, takes precautions against clandestine marriages and bigamy. Notice of a projected union must be read from the pulpit

5. *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, I, 177–178.

[114] 6. John Lobb, in "Caste and Class in Haiti" (*American Journal of Sociology*, XLVI,
[581] No. 1 [July, 1940], 29), states that "one informant defined family status as a position
[554] resulting from the recognition that in a family the parents had, for generations, been legally married in the church."

L: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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so that both forms must be considered by one interested in social institutions as constituting true marriage. The prestige which is derived from a Church union, however, is of appreciable significance; sufficient, indeed, to motivate weddings at which the children and even grandchildren of the principals act as attendants. A man and woman may live together as *placées* ten or fifteen years or more before they have amassed the necessary amount to pay for a legal marriage. It is only when parents of young people are prosperous enough to pay for a Church marriage that their union receives the stamp of approval of the Church, for the Church wedding involves considerable expenditure in terms of Haitian peasant economy. A "first class" wedding, for example, calls for the payment of 47.50 gourdes; a "second class" ceremony, 40 gourdes; and the least expensive, or "third class" rite costs 34 to 36 gourdes, while in addition to this, five gourdes must be paid the assistant who rings the church bells, and a fixed fee of 25 gourdes is assessed for the civil registration of the marriage. The wedding ring is, of course, indispensable; a modest one, of gold, costs 60 gourdes. Food and drinks served at the festivities following the Church service cost, conservatively, another fifty gourdes, while if an ox is slaughtered to provide a more elaborate feast, the amount is correspondingly greater. Finally, the person who reads the necessary prayers before the festivities begin and the musicians who play for the *bal* must also be compensated. It can readily be seen, therefore, how a man and woman may live together in a *placée* union for years before their resources permit a legal marriage.

Whatever the type of mating, the first steps toward betrothal are taken by the young man. Though he has courted the girl of his choice and his proposal is acceptable to her, customary procedure demands that she refer him to her parents, whereupon his parents appear before those of the girl to make their plea on his behalf. If both families reside

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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584 in the same district, the background of the young man is well enough known so that no investigation is necessary, though unfailingly a long and formal discussion of the suitor, his qualities, and his prospects ensues. If his home is some distance away, however, meticulous inquiries are made not only concerning the young man and his immediate family, but of
584 his ancestry as well. Should the suitor live near the home of
212 the young woman, as usually happens, his own parents come with a *lettre de demand*. In earlier days the "letter" was written on flowered paper with a lacy border, but today plain colored paper does very well. When presented, it is wrapped
[603] in a green silk handkerchief, "for hope" — the handkerchief
[824] costs about five gourdes, and a similar amount is given the scribe — and is usually carried by the oldest man of the family; that is to say, the paternal grandfather if living, or if he is dead, the father, accompanied by the mother and per-
[178] haps the other grandparents. Today it is said that in the valley of Mirebalais the custom of presenting these letters of request is often disregarded, but is by no means extinct.[1]

The family of the girl is always apprised of the exact time of the visit, and refreshments are on hand. No reply is given at the time of the delivery of the "letter," since the families of both the father and the mother of the girl must consent to the match before it can be finally approved. However, at the stage of the courtship which the presentation of a "letter" implies, this delayed answer is a matter of form, for if the proposal had not been acceptable, the girl would not have been allowed to see the suitor. The refusal of a "letter" has
[578] been known to occur, but this is regarded as a deadly insult, and deep enmity between the families follows. Should the family of the girl, not wishing to be abrupt, accept the "letter" and proffer refreshments to its bearers, but later return the same "letter" as a sign of rejection, even this would be
584 bitterly resented. Under such circumstances the young man
832 takes steps to obtain revenge by providing himself with a
578

1: Henkovin E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Hain SV3
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love-charm designed to insure the young girl's coming to him. He then uses all persuasion to give her a child and, this achieved, abandons her to show his contempt for the family that has formally refused to accept him as a son-in-law. [584] [832] [578]

Usually, however, the visit is returned by the family of the girl, bearing a "response" of acceptance wrapped in a red silk handkerchief, "for victory." And just as the family of the young woman had known in advance of the coming of her suitor's relatives, word of the favorable verdict is now sent through indirect channels, so that the family of the young man may also be prepared to receive the emissaries who come on behalf of the girl. [212] [322]

With this formal acceptance of the young man's suit, the wedding waits until he has accumulated the requisites for a household. Custom dictates that even should he be prepared, the ceremony must be delayed for several months while he remains in a probationary state, to assure the family of his fiancée of his worthiness. The young woman is also under surveillance during this time, when she may be asked to help her future mother-in-law with the housework, and particularly with the washing and ironing of linens. Generally a period of from two to three years elapses before the bridegroom accumulates enough to fulfill his obligations in marriage. During this time the family of the young woman is acquiring the things she is expected to bring to her husband: linens and dishes — though in the poorer peasant families these items would not be provided her — cooking utensils, water-containers, knives, forks, and other things needed for the household. Her father also presents her with a horse, a donkey, six or seven pigs, the same number of goats, as well as chickens, guinea-hens, and turkeys. [583] [584]

Tokens of virginity are not demanded before the match, since Mirebalais custom requires that the girl tell before her marriage whether she has had relations with other men. She may be sent away if it is discovered that she has told an un- [584] [836]

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584 truth, but the matter is recognized as one which concerns
891 only her husband and herself, and if he is willing to keep
836 her, it is his own affair. Consensus of opinion in Mirebalais
836 is that the percentage of girls who do not have pre-marital
328 sexual relations is relatively small, but the belief is expressed
369 that chastity is more prevalent among country women than among those of the town, where, in turn, it is more frequent than in larger centers such as Port-au-Prince. Even though
836 pre-marital relations are commonplace, however, the preg-
848 nancy of an unmarried girl is regarded as both reprehensible and unfortunate, and she is severely beaten for it by her family. In such cases, if the father of the unborn child will take the girl, his parents are sent to bring her, but where the parents of the man refuse to ask for the girl because they do not approve of her, then, if he still desires her, he must himself face the anger of her parents. Should he not wish to come for her, she may either remain with her family or seek work in another community. In any event, her child will be well cared for by her family, and no reproach will attach to it because of the circumstances of its birth.

585 Before a mating of any type is consummated, the familial
782 spirits must be notified of the approaching event so that they
776 may be well disposed toward it, for no union where this is neglected can enjoy happiness or peace. One Mirebalais woman was pointed out as an object lesson of the necessity of doing this. Though a devotee of several gods, neither she nor her husband was willing to perform the necessary rites for her gods before their marriage. She was suffering from an
[753] acute case of melancholia after the birth of her first child, and
[828] the prevailing opinion was that she was going mad because of the neglect of her duty toward her deities. Shortly before a woman goes to her husband, therefore, a *couvert sec* for the Rada deities is given both by herself and by her betrothed. If the family of either the young man or the woman possess deities of the powerful Pétro group, more inclusive offerings

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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596 help one who, for example, has run afoul of the law because
626 of attendance at a forbidden *vodun* dance and needs a certain sum to pay a fine, or who in some dispute with a neighbor has had a judgment of the court entered against him. Obviously, therefore, the family head, who holds the power of withholding family support from one in need of it, is not flouted except under great provocation.

596 Another instance of the exercise of the family head's power
584 is given when a man or woman desires to marry or to enter
626 into the relationship of *plaçage* with someone held undesirable by the elders of his group. Should this oldest member in particular indicate his disapproval of the proposed match, it is most unlikely that the mating would take place. The reasons of the elders may be based on situations quite unknown to their younger relative who proposed the match; the existence of old enmities between the families of the two young people would perhaps necessitate inflicting the humiliation of a refusal when the "letter" was presented. If the young people persist, the elders may say: "Do what you like, but we will not support you," and should they fail to heed this warning, trouble for them is believed inescapable, since it is held that the elders thus place a curse on the new family. Nevertheless, when difficulties do arise that the two cannot cope with alone, the mother of the one in trouble would do her utmost to help, despite family displeasure, and would use all her gifts of persuasion to soften the attitude of the family elders until she succeeded in having the ones who had defied the family edict taken back into the group. Some degree of estrangement would persist and, as has been seen, might cause a man to find it desirable to make his home with his wife's people. The elders may also take the initiative in arranging marriages, exerting pressure on a reluctant young man whose inclinations have directed him elsewhere, in favor of a young woman of desirable family. But should such a marriage not

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be successful, he can count on the members of his family for financial and moral support. 596 584

These are not all the rights of the older members of the family, especially of the family head, over their juniors. All elders may punish by beating, though the oldest member of the family exercises that right most freely and may chastise those who are themselves grown men and women. If there is gossip about a boy or a girl, the family head calls the culprit to reprimand him or, if he believes the case a serious one, to beat him. Among the peasants, particularly, grown men go down on their knees before their elders, when so ordered, for a beating. Such punishments may be particularly severe if the culprit does not soon ask pardon, for since all who are older have the right to beat a younger relative, it sometimes happens that the punishment administered by the head of the family is not considered adequate, and another takes up the stick when the family head has put it down, so that two or three wands may be broken over the back of a stubborn offender. If such a one were to fight back, he would become "accursed," ceasing any longer to be considered a member of the family, and even though no legal steps might be taken to disinherit him, he would lose all caste. This right to beat is accorded by custom rather than by law, but an adult beaten by one of the elders of his own family would think long before he would sue. "There is always a consultation, and a man is discouraged from going to court." 596 627 [626] [691]

Lest the impression may have been given, in considering the role of the elders and their relationship to the younger members of the family, that it is those in the father's line alone who are concerned, it must be emphasized that relatives of both parents exercise substantial control over a person. More than this, since marriage constitutes an agreement between families as well as between an individual man and woman, it follows that both paternal and maternal grand- 596 [581] [603]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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769 a *mangé* is given, and that evening, when the feast ends, dances
17 are held. Two or three *tonnelles* are provided, the most important of these being the one where the Martinique cycle, the social dances most beloved by the ancestors, is danced. In one of the remaining two a European *bal* is held, and in the other are the *vodun* dancers. Thus even in connection with a commemorative Church mass for the dead the *mangé morts* and the dancing of African dances are included.

595 The institution of plural marriage, which is socially recog-
177 nized though not legally sanctioned, is obviously African.
178 Though the *placée* is held in respect and her place in society
[554] carries no reproach for herself or her children because of any connotation of immorality, it is of significance for an understanding of the manner of cultural change that prestige in marriage goes with the monogamic union blessed by the Church, and that the "wife"—the woman who is addressed as "Madame"—holds definitely higher social position than the *placée*. Officially the Haitian State is in accord with the position of the Church and recognizes only the European monogamic marriage. Socially, however, African plural marriage is not only tolerated but accepted as a matter of course, and in those instances where plural marriage takes on its most exuberant form, as when men of position have as many as six or seven *placées* in addition to a legal wife, its very size tends to give such a family group, or at least its head, the enviable esteem of his fellow-citizens.

17 Within the family, the deference toward older members
[593] and the duties and attitudes toward parents-in-law are Afri-
[606] can both in form and in spirit. The exaction of guarantees
[583] from a young man before marriage, and the necessity of his proving to the family of his fiancée that he can support her, are perhaps in their generalized form universals, but as found in Haiti show once more a retention of specific aboriginal
[584] traditions. On the other hand, such aspects of marriage as the formal *lettre de demand* sent when a match is arranged, or the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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fact that a family will often strike out for itself, deserting [584] the parental home, show a European independence foreign to native African thought. Yet the arrangement of meal-times, [264] and the fact that a wife rarely eats with her husband, are [593] African, as are the modes of correction, especially the feeling [861] that flogging with a stick is the best disciplinary method. Indeed, the characteristic snap of the fingers employed by the [201] Haitian to indicate a beating is exactly that which is used in [681] Dahomey to signify beheading! In the attitude toward children [855] African traditions have been warped by European custom, which has introduced a certain hardness of feeling that, whatever the cost, children must be brought in line with social convention, together with a resulting harshness of treatment that is anything but African.

Another important facet of Haitian life in which the effect 17
of contact is telling includes art and recreational activities. 322
Perhaps because of the conditions of slavery, or the difficulties of life after independence had been attained, much of these forms of African tradition has been lost, not to be replaced by corresponding borrowings from European sources. Wood-carving, an outstanding element in the æsthetic life of West Africa, is almost entirely absent. Near Mirebalais lives a man who can carve a pipe in the likeness of a human face, but there is no similarity between the products of his craft and West African figurines or masks, and he is thought of as an unusual person whose carving is an interesting but not socially significant avocation. It was stated, though without adequate corroboration, that before the Marine occupation Mirebalais boasted *vodun* drums on which heads " like the ones on these pipes " had been carved. Today the only form of decorative work in wood to be seen is the scroll-work designs which act as ventilating devices over doorways. They are done with the jigsaws of the carpenters, and no fertility of conception or felicity in composition marks these artistically crude efforts.

Other African crafts, which, though essentially utilitarian

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

CHAPTER VI

MATING AND MARRIAGE

THERE are two ways in which a Haitian family may be formed. 583
The first of these is through a marriage having the sanction of the Church, in token of which a ring is thereafter worn by the wife. The second mode of establishing a family is by means of the institution known as *placage*, wherein a man and a woman who desire to live together fulfill certain obligations and perform certain ceremonies at the home of the girl's parents, after which the new household is established.[1] The distinction between the two forms has been mentioned, though not analyzed, by several of those who traveled in the island after the period of slavery. Thus, according to Mac- 184
kenzie: 583
585

> "Marriage formally solemnised is not so common as unions of another kind. . . . In the North the practice of solemnising marriages is said to be more common than in the South, owing to the preceding practice under Christophe, and the exertions of the priesthood at the Cape."[2]

Similarly, St. John speaks of not noticing "any particular ceremonies" at marriages:

> ". . . some are striving to imitate the upper classes, and have the ceremony performed in church, but the mass of the people are still not regularly married."[3]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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so that both forms must be considered by one interested in social institutions as constituting true marriage. The prestige which is derived from a Church union, however, is of appreciable significance; sufficient, indeed, to motivate weddings at which the children and even grandchildren of the principals act as attendants. A man and woman may live together as *placées* ten or fifteen years or more before they have amassed the necessary amount to pay for a legal marriage. It is only when parents of young people are prosperous enough to pay for a Church marriage that their union receives the stamp of approval of the Church, for the Church wedding involves considerable expenditure in terms of Haitian peasant economy. A "first class" wedding, for example, calls for the payment of 47.50 gourdes; a "second class" ceremony, 40 gourdes; and the least expensive, or "third class" rite costs 34 to 36 gourdes, while in addition to this, five gourdes must be paid the assistant who rings the church bells, and a fixed fee of 25 gourdes is assessed for the civil registration of the marriage. The wedding ring is, of course, indispensable; a modest one, of gold, costs 60 gourdes. Food and drinks served at the festivities following the Church service cost, conservatively, another fifty gourdes, while if an ox is slaughtered to provide a more elaborate feast, the amount is correspondingly greater. Finally, the person who reads the necessary prayers before the festivities begin and the musicians who play for the *bal* must also be compensated. It can readily be seen, therefore, how a man and woman may live together in a *placée* union for years before their resources permit a legal marriage.

Whatever the type of mating, the first steps toward betrothal are taken by the young man. Though he has courted the girl of his choice and his proposal is acceptable to her, customary procedure demands that she refer him to her parents, whereupon his parents appear before those of the girl to make their plea on his behalf. If both families reside

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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584 truth, but the matter is recognized as one which concerns
836 only her husband and herself, and if he is willing to keep
836 her, it is his own affair. Consensus of opinion in Mirebalais
369 is that the percentage of girls who do not have pre-marital sexual relations is relatively small, but the belief is expressed that chastity is more prevalent among country women than among those of the town, where, in turn, it is more frequent than in larger centers such as Port-au-Prince. Even though
836 pre-marital relations are commonplace, however, the preg-
848 nancy of an unmarried girl is regarded as both reprehensible and unfortunate, and she is severely beaten for it by her family. In such cases, if the father of the unborn child will take the girl, his parents are sent to bring her, but where the parents of the man refuse to ask for the girl because they do not approve of her, then, if he still desires her, he must himself face the anger of her parents. Should he not wish to come for her, she may either remain with her family or seek work in another community. In any event, her child will be well cared for by her family, and no reproach will attach to it because of the circumstances of its birth.

585 Before a mating of any type is consummated, the familial
782 spirits must be notified of the approaching event so that they
776 may be well disposed toward it, for no union where this is neglected can enjoy happiness or peace. One Mirebalais woman was pointed out as an object lesson of the necessity of doing this. Though a devotee of several gods, neither she nor her husband was willing to perform the necessary rites for her gods before their marriage. She was suffering from an
[753] acute case of melancholia after the birth of her first child, and
[828] the prevailing opinion was that she was going mad because of the neglect of her duty toward her deities. Shortly before a woman goes to her husband, therefore, a *couvert sec* for the Rada deities is given both by herself and by her betrothed. If the family of either the young man or the woman possess deities of the powerful Pétro group, more inclusive offerings

1: Herskovits E-4, 2 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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are necessary, and the elders of the family must see to it that these gods are instructed not to trouble the newly married pair. If either or both of them are devotees of deities such as Damballa, Erzilie, Ogun, or Aida Wedo, all of whom are known to be extremely jealous, these gods must be specially placated. 585 782 776

For the actual ceremony the couple appear each with a candle in hand, pour water on the ground in the family house of worship, and kneel and pray. The god may "come to the head" of the girl or the man or some relative of each and advise them. If it asks a gift at this time, it is either given at the moment or a promise is made to fulfill the request later. If the spirit objects to the marriage, it is wooed with offerings. Thus, for example, should the young woman be possessed by the serpent-god Damballa, who, speaking through his devotee, registered an objection to the marriage, the girl would be given such gifts as a white silk dress, white silk stockings, or some other valued object in the sacred color of the god, or some perfume which might also serve to mollify him. Or should the man's deity who registered objection be Ogun, the god of war, a fine red kerchief might be offered in honor of this god, whose color is red.* 585 782 787 [822]

The dead of both families are also notified by means of a visit to the cemetery. The days for these pilgrimages are Mondays or Fridays, and the pilgrimages must be made during either the morning or the early afternoon, since visits at night are only for evil purposes. As candles are lighted, announcement is made to the family dead of the marriage which is soon to take place, and their good offices are asked to bring it happiness. After all the family dead have been invoked, a candle is lighted before the large cross for Baron Samedi, and another behind it for Gede, the first as the ruler of cemeteries and the graves of the dead, and the second as his handy-man. Another candle is lighted for the "abandoned souls" of the family, who have died without consecration, and yet another 585 769 782 [776]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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585 769 782 for the victims of smallpox. If family traditions also tell of those shot, not in war, but as prisoners, perhaps, a candle is lighted for them outside the cemetery wall. Though the couple may perform this ceremony together, each makes this request of the dead of his or her own family as the candles are lighted. This call on the dead is repeated several days after the marriage or later, when candles are again lighted.

591 583 585 769 The sole exception to the performance of these rites before the new household is begun occurs in those cases of *plaçage* where a girl continues to live at her own home. This is rare, however, for the house of a man is usually built near that of his father, and he takes his wife there. But if special circumstances dictate otherwise, the ceremony of notifying and pacifying the family deities may be deferred, though a man must eventually present every woman with whom he lives to his family gods and in turn must be presented to the gods of the woman's family. In similar fashion the dead of both families must be adequately notified.

585 [777] [796] [583] Marriages rarely take place in the months of November and December, the former being disliked because it is "the month of the dead," during which All Saints' Day occurs, and the latter because it ends the year. Except for the Church wedding and less elaborate festivities to celebrate the event, the rites which mark a *plaçage* mating do not greatly differ from those which mark a legal marriage, which may be de-

[777] scribed in outline. The favorite day for Church marriages is Saturday, "the day of the Virgin," and the time for the ceremony is always early morning, before the heat of the day has set in. If the home of the girl is some distance from Mirebalais, the party come to town the preceding day, the girl spending the night with some friend. Otherwise the bridegroom, accompanied by his relatives and friends, goes to the house of the girl early Saturday morning. Before the couple leave the

[782] [788] home of her parents, water must be thrown on the ground in front of them, and also sprinkled by them before the en-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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trance of the house — three times if there is one door (for the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost), three times before each door if there are two entrances, and once before each door if there are three. The wedding procession goes to church on foot. The men, if they are from the countryside, are stiff, uncomfortable, and hot in their unaccustomed "best" clothing and their often painful shoes, while the women are also self-conscious in their new dresses. The elaborateness of the ceremony varies with the fee paid the priest, but at all events the clanging church bell is heard notifying the town and its environs that a marriage is being consecrated.

If the family of the bride or groom are well known in Mirebalais, a wedding reception may be given at their house for friends of the couple and of their parents, but the real festivities are held after the return to the new family home. As the procession approaches it, the "bush-priest," a functionary who, because of his knowledge of French, can read the prayers of the Church, waits at the gate with two aides, small boys or girls, each with a flag, one red and one white. He has sacred water in one hand and a lighted candle in the other, and as he pours this water on the ground three times he intones the Pater Noster, the Ave Maria, the Credo, and other prayers. These concluded, hymns are sung by all the participants, and singing, a procession is formed with the "bush-priest" in the lead, followed by the flag-bearers, the couple who have just been married, arm in arm, the "godfather" and "godmother" of the marriage, as the witnesses are called, the parents of the bride and groom, and other close relatives. As the procession reaches the door of the house, it pauses and water is thrown on the ground three times; the circuit of the house is made twice again, and each time, as the door is reached, water is thrown, until, the third tour completed, the participants solemnly enter.

There coffee, liqueurs, wine, *kola*, and cakes are served to the principals and the more important members of the com-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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585 munity. All others stay under the brush shelter which has been erected at the side of the house, where men are served the common drink of the Haitian peasant, *clairin*, raw rum. The feast, furnished by the bridegroom, includes beef, pork, and many fowls. "We do not eat badly at a wedding!" is the comment of Haitians. At the weddings of more prosperous folk there may be dancing, but no *vodun* dances are danced. "This is not a thing of *vodun*, but of the Church," is the explanation proffered.

The feasting begun, the bridal couple must submit to much speech-making. Long "lessons in morality" are pronounced by grandfathers, godfathers, and elderly male friends; in fact, anyone moved to speak expounds upon "the road to follow" for the good, the worthy life, and many a warning is given with moving examples of the fate of those who disregarded the counsel given them. The food and drinks consumed, the speech-makers silenced, and the dancers tired, the wedding guests begin to take leave, until by sundown many are gone, and soon the young couple find themselves alone.

175 That plural marriage has existed in Haiti since the time of
595 independence is evident from the available accounts. Little
567 can be learned of slave matings prior to 1804, but it may be assumed that these were in the main temporary and existed at the will of the masters; and while the practice of polygyny among the slaves must have been difficult, if only because of the greater proportion of males, the African pattern seems *to have had enough vitality to bring about the re-establish*ment of the institution as soon as slavery was abolished. Thus, writing in 1830, Makenzie notes a man "not inaptly named 'Taureau'" who "though his means were small, and his cottage still smaller . . . had a harem of no less than six wives."[9]
175 St. John, some fifty years later, also remarks on the fact that
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> "In the interior, a well-to-do black lives openly with several women as wives, and I have seen the patriarch

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 S73 Haiti SV3
[P 112-BB]
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39. *A wedding scene near Plaisance.*

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40. *Saturday night hamboche.*

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

themselves and their families economically and socially. Property was important, so they took pains to insure the legitimacy of their heirs; color was crucial, and so they regulated the marriages of their children to be sure there was no reversion to the black strain. They guarded their fortunes solicitously, provided their daughters with dowries large enough sometimes even to lure a white husband, educated their sons in Paris—behaved, in short, as if they had been pillars of society in provincial France. Like the white planters, the male affranchis often had relations with slave women, but even more rarely than whites were they seduced into marriage with women of the lower orders. 175 565 581

When the slave insurrection and its aftermath freed the half-million blacks in Saint-Domingue it was not to be expected that European middle-class morals and practices should suddenly prevail. Modern usage emerges from the womb of tradition. Neither in Africa nor in the colony had tradition taught the blacks respect for monogamy or for marriage entered into by religious ceremony. If the ex-slaves had reverted to their Dahomean, Congolese, or other African background, they might have introduced the bride price; but to pay a bride price is to assume the existence of wealth, an assumption contrary to fact among the ex-slaves in Saint-Domingue of the 1790's, and Haiti of the 1800's. In neither Dahomey nor the Congo was there much ceremony at the union of a couple; what there was consisted mostly of singing and dancing. If, on the other hand, the people went only by what they had observed in slave days, there was no tradition of binding union or strict codes, as we understand them. A man knew when to stay away from another man's woman; children remained near their mother—these two statements almost cover the situation as of 1796 among the newly freed slaves. 175 581 [583] [585] [837] [855]

Toussaint, apparently a conventional person in what concerned social behavior, wished his people to be "moral." He instituted a time of "holy masses, mystic communions, biblical psalms, and divine ecstasies"[2] for his private edification, and recommended the same for his people. He could not possibly have instilled into them a desire for Christian marriage, however; even if he could, priests would not have been available for the wholesale marrying of scores of thousands of men and women. Local records of weddings at this period are very scanty. 175 643 788 582

2. Saint-Rémy, *Pétion et Haïti*, III, 93.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

it seems not radically to have affected the masses but only the fairly well-to-do.

The *Royal Almanac* for the year 1814 touches proudly upon the moral state of the kingdom. The author of the almanac, the Comte de la Limonade, says: "Great attention is paid to morals and manners. Marriage is honored, protected, and encouraged; no Haitian who is unmarried can fill any place of distinction. Divorce is not permitted." All this was true; yet the mass of Haitians still remained unmarried. Nevertheless, the quotation indicates the extent to which Christophe had gone in his effort to reform marriage and morals among his people; to set them in the European tradition and draw them out of their African and colonial backgrounds.

While Christophe was trying to effect reforms in the North, Pétion was accepting his Southern folk as they were. Hardly a law during his twelve-year administration touches the subject of marriage. The élite colored people continued to make proper legal marriages and so insure the inheritance of their legitimate children. The common folk lived their family lives without weddings, and if property questions arose, custom ruled, backed by public opinion in their little communities.

Such are the backgrounds out of which modern Haitian sex relations have developed. From African tradition came family life, the importance of property to stabilize a union, insignificance of a wedding ceremony, familiarity with matrilineal kinship and descent; from French colonial practice, formal marriage to establish a family with social ambition, casual sex relations for pleasure outside this marriage, the claim of legitimate children to all property (in contrast to folk custom, where few legitimate children were born); from Dessalines, an emphasis upon the African tradition and realism; from Christophe, an insistence upon strict French practice in marriage and in the passage of property.

From among these alternatives Haiti made a choice which is an excellent example of what Keller calls "automatic selection in the mores."[7] There was no congress to select one procedure rather than another. Because Pétion and Boyer followed a *laissez-faire* policy in social matters, the people took the path of least resistance.

7. A. G. Keller, *Societal Evolution* (revised ed., New York, 1931), chaps. IV and V.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 Englishman, Sir Spenser St. John, said that he had met placées of the
581 President at dinner, and was asked to trace resemblances between
588 children and their reported father. "No one seeks to conceal it, and
643 the conversation of married ladies continually turns on this subject. One excuse for it is that many of the ladies whom you meet in society were only married after the birth of their first children. However, according to French law, that ceremony renders them all legitimate. Some of those admitted into society are not married at all, but their daughters being married, prevents notice being taken of the false position of the mother."[5]

565 In recent years the élite, although many continue to contract
581 plaçage unions, keep these arrangements quieter than formerly and tend to make them with women lower in the social scale than themselves. Formal and regular marriage is expected and approved among the upper classes of today. Indeed, one modern informant in answer to the question, "What is the primary test of membership among the élite?" replied without hesitation, "Five generations of marriage in the family."[6]

583 Formal marriage is not entered into lightly among the upper
565 classes. It is a serious business watched over by state, family, and church. The interest of the state seems to be to guard against bigamy. The possibility of bigamy is the more likely since one or the other contracting party may have formerly lived in plaçage. The interest of the family is in the wisdom of the alliance. Before a wedding can be performed both parties must have obtained the formal consent of their parents, besides having their banns published at their respective places of permanent residence. There seems to be some doubt whether the courts would uphold a father in his refusal to consent to the marriage of a son over twenty-one years old; but cases are known in which such a refusal has stopped the wedding. Of course, the daughters must always obtain parental consent to marry.

● 585 The civil wedding, adopted in Haiti at the beginning of her independence, is usually followed by a religious ceremony. The Church, like the State, takes precautions against clandestine marriages and bigamy. Notice of a projected union must be read from the pulpit

5. *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, I, 177–178.

[114] 6. John Lobb, in "Caste and Class in Haiti" (*American Journal of Sociology*, XLVI,
581 No. 1 [July, 1940], 26), states that "our informant defined family status as a problem
554 resulting from the recognition that in a family the parents had, for generations, been legally married in the church."

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

of the parish church to which each party belongs, and no ceremony may be performed by a priest without the presentation of the certificate of the civil marriage. 575

According to the legal code, as well as actual practice of the upper classes, woman is man's definite inferior in rights.[7] The Haitian code follows closely that of Napoleon, and both conform in general to practice common among substantial people in the Haiti and France of the early nineteenth century. Spouses equally owe to each other fidelity, succor, and assistance; the husband owes protection to his wife, the wife obedience to her husband. Although the wife must live with her husband wherever he chooses, he conversely must receive her when she comes to live with him, and must provide food for her. No wife may purchase, sell, give, or otherwise alienate property without the consent of her husband; moreover, the husband alone has the administration of goods coming in the dowry, so long as the union endures. 562

The modern movement for women's rights has hardly touched Haiti.[8] Women may not vote, nor may they hold public office. Among the élite, in theory and in practice woman's place is in the home, caring for the household and the children. One might imagine himself in provincial France as he sees the daily life of upper-class Haitian women: the ordering of meals, directing of servants, sewing, shopping, visiting, party going, occasional novel reading, driving in the family car. Different from French practice, however, is the taboo against most manual labor: this is the task of servants only. The élite housewife may cook but not sweep, sew but not launder, bargain with a huckster but not carry home her purchases. A woman of the upper classes would demean herself to enter business. Since the American Occupation, as a matter of fact, a few women have been daring enough to become secretaries and stenographers, but there seems to be nothing like a concerted movement for the "emancipation" of élite women. There are schools for girls, but these do not reach as far as the schools for boys; women are not admitted to the law school or medical school, for a woman lawyer or doctor would be unthinkable in Haitian society. [463] [871] [463]

7. See Louis Borno, *Code civil d'Haïti annoté* (Port-au-Prince, 1922), chap. VI, articles 196–201.

8. See, however, Madeleine G. Sylvain, "The Feminist Movement in Haiti," *Bulletin of the Pan-American Union*, LXXIII, No. 6 (June, 1939), 313–321. [113]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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585 spouses. In the hills more than one peasant house was surrounded, as it would have been in Dahomey, by huts in each of which lived a "wife" of the farmer. Matters are not very different nowadays, except that men have learned the wisdom of not having their women live too close to each other.

162 From the guesses of experienced observers, it is probably not far
582 wide of the mark to estimate that only one couple out of a hundred is married according to the approved mode of the Western World.

The State apparently does not care; or, to put it another way, government officials know how impossible it would be to alter a custom confirmed by long usage; one which, moreover, works well enough, since it causes practically no violence or legal cases for the
745 State to attend to. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, is eager to persuade the people to observe the sacrament of holy matrimony.
582 The priests have assiduously endeavored to explore the peasant mind in order to learn what deters the average person from formal marriage. The reasons for the indifference to weddings might be listed as follows:

581 1. Inertia. There is no convincing reason to vary time-honored
178 practice which works well enough, particularly since a wedding is likely to cause a great disturbance of daily routine and even a measure of jealousy on the part of those who have not made the display.

581 2. Suspicion of legal documents and civil officials. People who put
821 their names (or marks) on documents and who call the attention of governmental officials to themselves are almost sure to rue the day. A man knows what can be demanded of him by custom in his informal unions; but who can say what the law would hold him responsible for?

581 3. Expense. The civil license costs; the priest and his assistants
585 must be paid; to be married in church, one should wear shoes; if one wears shoes, one should dress up to them; a church wedding calls for a feast. At least two days must be spent away from work if the proper formalities are carried out.

581 4. Common sense in an inevitable situation. Both State and
585 Church would try to limit a man to one wife; prosperity might demand two or more. Is it sensible to discriminate against a second woman, who might be just as much help to a man as his legal wife?

581 The Church through its priests works unceasingly to answer these
741 arguments, but without notable success. Inertia is hard to overcome;

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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he is assured of more solicitous care from her and more deferential treatment from her children. And though when this has occurred his "legal" wife may at his death come with a justice of the peace to claim his body and his effects, this move is anticipated, so that what he has given the *placée* wife and her children is usually well out of the way. "Often they find only the four walls of the house."

A certain number of unmarried men result from this system of plural matings, some of whom remain single by preference, particularly in the cities, where the incidence of homosexuality far exceeds that found in the country. In Mirebalais itself, when the final withdrawal of the American Marines from Haiti was being celebrated, a dance called *mazurka*, significantly enough the only one held indoors, was one in which male dancers danced together in couples. The sexual problem of the younger unmarried men is more often solved by means of liaisons with married women, though this has its dangers in the countryside, where the movements of every individual are known and the least tendency to unsanctioned social behavior is soon the subject for widespread gossip. Prostitutes are found everywhere, and they are by no means visited by unmarried men alone. On the whole, sex "adventures" are more indulged in by men than women, even allowing for the tendency of some women to have affairs with youths. A belief widely held, that plural wives tend so to exhaust the virility of a man that he must seek "remedies" of a magical nature from the priests of the *podun* cult and from sorcerers, must also be mentioned. Frigidity is a principal cause for female homosexuality, and, because of a wife's reluctance to satisfy her husband, it not infrequently happens that she is sent back to her parents, where she may seek out other women. The most prevalent Haitian attitude toward homosexuality in either sex, it may be remarked, is one of derision rather than vindictiveness, as the term applied to effeminate men, *commères*, may suggest.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

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to appoint, curés to the vacant parishes. His independence of action could not fail to give offense to Church authorities. One of his first appointees was a black ex-slave, Félix, who had been a drum major in the native army. Félix was made curé in the important town of Saint-Marc.

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The constitution of his empire (May, 1805) indicates that Dessalines did not intend to make himself head of the Church, but rather planned a complete separation of Church and State. Article 50 reads: "The law admits no dominant religion"; while the next article grants freedom to all cults and refuses state support to any denomination or minister. No attack was made, therefore, upon Catholicism, yet the disestablishment of that Church was a serious blow to its prestige. Not in the specific provisions regarding religion was the Church most weakened, but rather in the "liberality" of articles dealing with actions upon which the Church had taken a firm moral stand. Thus Article 14 declared that "marriage is an act purely civil and authorized by the government," while Article 15 permits divorce by the state. Early laws of the empire still further undermined the position of Church doctrine. Illegitimate children were granted the same legal rights as legitimate ones—a generous provision which removed one of the strong reasons for marriage; separation of husband and wife except by divorce was forbidden, and this prohibition practically encouraged the divorce disapproved by the Church; finally, the grounds upon which divorce might be allowed were broader than those existing anywhere else in the Western World at the time: mutual consent, application from one party to the marriage, or simple allegation of incompatibility of temperament or character.

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From the promulgation of this constitution in 1805 and for the next fifty-five years, Haiti was in open schism from the Roman Catholic Church. The Holy See refused to recognize either the Haitian state or the provisions of its constitution, and it declined to allow priests to enter the country. Certain Haitian presidents were friendly enough to Catholicism, and others were openly desirous of reestablishing a state religion, but the breach once made was not healed by mere good wishes. The longer the schism endured, the farther the people grew away from the doctrines and practices of a religion in which they had never been firmly grounded. At the moment of independence, when all minds were more open to new

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Christophe had a great deal more to say about religion than any of the other early Haitian rulers. In a speech following the promulgation of his constitution, after severe censure of the government of Dessalines, he said:

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> It is necessary to raise again the dignity of religion, for weakened morals leave young people open to the licenses of their age. Liberty has been assailed by traitors, enemies of their fellow citizens, and sold to our cruelest enemies. It is assured to you now, have no doubt! Shortly you will see these vicious men and their criminal efforts vanish like clouds.
>
> Public education, after religion and liberty the most precious benefit mankind enjoys, will be reanimated and sustained by morality; it will again be held in honor and reverence amongst us. Divorce, that traitor among customs, is rigorously prohibited and proscribed forever.[5]

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Like Pétion, Christophe made the Catholic Church official, but he indicated the dictatorial path he intended to follow by adding that no ecclesiastical decree or law might become effective without the consent of the President.[6] He completely overturned the law of Dessalines concerning illegitimate children; his decree deprived such offspring of any claims of inheritance whatever.[7] In a country where practically no one had been legally married such a ruling was severe, but Christophe hoped that his severity would force his subjects into wedlock, and this the Catholic Church was bound to approve.

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Making the Church official did not strengthen its hold upon the people. In 1814 (seven years after he had promised "to raise again the dignity of religion") the kingdom was served by only three priests, one of whom Christophe had named archbishop. The King was preoccupied with form, and having created a nobility he needed a church to lend dignity to his realm. Consequently in 1811 he reorganized the clergy in his kingdom, establishing an archiepiscopal see and three bishoprics. The reorganization, except for the archbishop, remained a paper plan because the Pope refused to coöperate by giving the schismatic church his approval.

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All the early rulers seem to have been rather innocent in their dealings with Rome. They felt, apparently, that as heads of state they had but to express a desire in order to have His Holiness ap-

5. This speech, made on February 18, 1807, is cited in Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1848), II, 334-335.
6. See the law of March 18, 1807.
7. Law of March 25, 1807.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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must pass to an illegitimate child if recognition is accorded. It is likewise strong in its harmony with actual conditions: in the absence of legal marriage among the people, it would have been manifestly unfair to favor a few fortunate children. Dessalines argued that the revolution had legitimized all Haitians; that it was unjust to prevent a child's inheriting from the person who had given him life; and that since all Haitians had come out of slavery and degradation into freedom, no new inequalities should be instituted.[4]

If this law encouraged family life, it weakened marriage both of the civil and religious kind: where was the sense in the expensive luxury of a wedding when children were just as legitimate without it? By conforming to folk practice the Emperor confirmed it. Only the aristocrats disliked his law, for it seemed to make light of one of the distinctions they cherished—the formal wedding. It irked them to have the State place a casual child upon an equal plane with one born after proper marriage.

At still another point the law accorded with living conditions at the time. During the years of fighting many men had been killed, and always the large standing army kept thousands of others away from settled farm life. Home, then, was for a child the abode of his mother—a fact recognized by the law's insistence upon maternal relationship rather than paternity. Such a word as "matriarchate" has no place here; but from the days of Dessalines to modern times, the lowly Haitian thinks of his home primarily as where his mother lives.

As if the advantages of formal wedding were not already sufficiently weakened by this law, other enactments of the empire struck at other phases of marriage. Divorce was permitted for adultery, for incompatibility of temperament or character, and by mutual consent. Such provisions not only broke away completely from Catholic practice, but made getting out of wedlock a casual matter of taking an oath. The complaint of incompatibility need be made by only one spouse; "mutual consent" as a ground for divorce was probably not allowed in 1805 in any other country of the Western World.

Dessalines did not appear to care one whit for the good opinion of white foreigners. It sufficed for him if Haiti endured, whatever Europeans thought of her. Christophe, on the other hand, was extremely sensitive to foreign disapproval. Many of his official acts can

4. According to the testimony of Madiou, op. cit., III, 226.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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it seems not radically to have affected the manes but only the fairly well-to-do.

The *Royal Almanac* for the year 1814 touches proudly upon the moral state of the kingdom. The author of the almanac, the Comte de la Limonade, says: "Great attention is paid to morals and manners. Marriage is honored, protected, and encouraged; no Haitian who is unmarried can fill any place of distinction. Divorce is not permitted." All this was true; yet the mass of Haitians still remained unmarried. Nevertheless, the quotation indicates the extent to which Christophe had gone in his effort to reform marriage and morals among his people; to set them in the European tradition and draw them out of their African and colonial backgrounds.

While Christophe was trying to effect reforms in the North, Pétion was accepting his Southern folk as they were. Hardly a law during his twelve-year administration touches the subject of marriage. The élite colored people continued to make proper legal marriages and so insure the inheritance of their legitimate children. The common folk lived their family lives without weddings, and if property questions arose, custom ruled, backed by public opinion in their little communities.

Such are the backgrounds out of which modern Haitian sex relations have developed. From African tradition came family life, the importance of property to stabilize a union, insignificance of a wedding ceremony, familiarity with matrilineal kinship and descent; from French colonial practice, formal marriage to establish a family with social ambition, casual sex relations for pleasure outside this marriage, the claim of legitimate children to all property (in contrast to folk custom, where few legitimate children were born); from Dessalines, an emphasis upon the African tradition and realism; from Christophe, an insistence upon strict French practice in marriage and in the passage of property.

From among these alternatives Haiti made a choice which is an excellent example of what Keller calls "automatic selection in the mores."[7] There was no congress to select one procedure rather than another. Because Pétion and Boyer followed a *laissez-faire* policy in social matters, the people took the path of least resistance.

7. A. G. Keller, *Societal Evolution* (revised ed., New York, 1931), chaps. IV and V.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

562 The male, by contrast, is master in all matters, including those pertaining to home life. Obviously, he is much freer in his sexual life than is his wife.

586 Divorce is comparatively rare, thanks to the careful solicitude of all parties before formal marriage is contracted, and to the disapproval of the Catholic Church. Since the husband is not, by custom or by public opinion, bound to limit his sexual attentions to his legal wife, one of the common causes of divorce is removed. The code allows formal divorce to the husband for the wife's adultery, and to the wife for her husband's adultery "when he shall bring his concubine into the common dwelling house." Both spouses may secure divorce for excess, for injurious cruelty, for life sentences imposed by a court—"*peines afflictives et infamantes.*" A woman whose marriage has been dissolved by divorce cannot remarry before the expiration of one year, nor is she permitted to remarry her former husband. The opposition of the Church to divorce is a distinct deterrent to elite women who crave freedom, for women are generally the more devout members of the Church.

[537] [587] [562] [771]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

taken to the *pret' savanne* to be blessed with holy water; in the town the Catholic priest is said to do this. In full mourning, black is worn on Sundays, Mondays, and Fridays, the days sacred to the dead, but since full mourning means that one must be dressed in one's best and it is impossible to wear these clothes all day long even in the first weeks after death, the rule is to remain at home, fully dressed, on Sundays, Mondays, and Fridays, wearing the full mourning outside the house only to Sunday mass.

When full mourning for a parent cannot be worn immediately following death, the fulfillment of the obligation is postponed. If this duty is not ultimately met, however, the dead take vengeance, so that a child of the one who was remiss perhaps falls ill, or some other misfortune comes to him. If the negligent one is no longer living, then the penalty for his neglect will be assessed on his children, who, on consulting a diviner, will be told that they must wear mourning not only for their own parents, but for their grandparents as well. Such is the case of a dying woman whose story is recounted, for a diviner ascertained that though she had worn mourning for her own father, he had not worn it for his parent; as soon as she put on full mourning for her grandfather, she is said to have immediately recovered.

A widower wears mourning for a legally married wife for a year, and a widow for her husband during a similar period, and it is believed that if a man were to remarry before the year has elapsed, his second wife would die, so that a woman will not go sooner to a widower, while it is equally dangerous for a widow to take a husband before the first anniversary of the death of her spouse. Should a *placée* wife die, however, another may be taken in her stead before the year has passed, for it is only in matters where the Church is concerned that the dead take vengeance. Furthermore, a man who has more than one mate may go to his other wives at any time after the death of a spouse, and though he would, of course, not go to them

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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75 soon after the death of one for whom he had deep affection, the matter is entirely one which concerns his own feelings. If a woman who cannot afford proper mourning clothes remarries in the Church before she has discharged the obligation to wear mourning for her dead husband, gossip will be heard, but, on the other hand, a woman who has been legally married, and who therefore may not remarry for a year after her husband's death, may be taken as *placée* by another before that period has elapsed. In this case, however, she must wear full mourning and otherwise observe all the necessary rites before the other man with safety may seek the approval of the Church for the union.

76 Though children who have lived until about twelve years of age and have been baptized are given a *dernière prière* and must not be forgotten when sacrifices are made to the family dead, there is but little mourning for them. "*'Ti moun pa gagné deuilles* — Children do not merit the wearing of mourning," it is said, and they are called "*'ti z'anges* — little angels" — for they are too young to have sinned. "It is only when one makes love that the important sins begin." Therefore, if a young person dies, not only do his parents, grandparents, and older brothers and sisters not follow his coffin to the grave, but they do not mourn for him. Only those younger brothers and sisters who were of his age — twelve or thirteen years old — wear semi-mourning.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

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2: Courlander 3-5 (1937-1955) 1960 EV3 Haiti EV3

The importance of water in Vodoun has a fundamentally West African character. Among the Yoruba and the Ashanti and in Dahomey, for example, water rites are a significant aspect of religious ritual. Herskovits notes the frequency of religious pilgrimages to streams in West Africa.

In one instance, at Abeokuta, a bedecked procession of worshipers left a shrine atop a high hill, followed a long path to the riverside over two miles away, and returned before the ceremonies could be carried out at the shrine of the god. On one occasion, in Dahomey, the bed of the sacred stream ran dry was "filled" from nearby wells so that this water could be ritually redrawn for use in an especially important ceremony. Among the Ashanti, pilgrimages to Lake Bosumtwe and other sacred bodies of water regularly occur. And it is on such occasions that the spirit of the river or lake or sea manifests itself, by "touching the head" of the devotee and causing him to fling himself, possibly possessed, into the water.[1]

So it is also in Haiti, where possession at the river's edge may cause the devotee to leap into the river. At Saut d'Eau, possessed persons plunge into the waterfall without regard for their safety, being in the care of the loa who have mounted them.

Into this water complex the Christian rite of baptism has been easily absorbed, providing merely a new act of veneration for water and its properties. In the Haitian mind baptism is not far removed from the *lavé tête* ritual, the washing of the head, or the *rafraîchi tête*, the "refreshing" of the head, both of which are acts in propitiation of the loa.[2] So related is the baptismal concept in the Haitian mind, that the term "baptiser" is used to describe the lavé tête; it is said that the loa is being "baptized." So also are drums "baptized," not to mention yams, and even the houngan itself.

Marriage to a Loa

Although the term *hounsi* (spirit wife, or wife of the spirit) is applied to a large class of servitors of the Vodoun temple, only a small number of servitors ever pass through rites which give them a husband-wife or wife-husband relationship with a loa. Reasons for these mystic marriages vary, but usually the rituals take place upon the prescription of a cult priest who interprets the will of the deities concerned. Most of the mystic marriages of which I have heard have taken place in the general area of Port-au-Prince and the Cul-de-Sac Plain. In some other areas of Haiti it appears that no such rites have taken place locally within the memory of the older inhabitants. One aged man living near Belladère declared: "It [marriage to a loa] is impossible. People serve loa, they do not marry them. A man does not marry his barra. A loa

[1] [Herskovits, The Myth of the Negro Past, p. 233. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]
[2] [It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes towards water rites in certain areas outside the United States. Even baptism often is approached by Negroes in this old form. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

588 does not marry his horse. People marry people. Loa marry loa. A man
588 may have a compact with a loa. That is not a marriage. Some of the
184 things that are going on down there in the Plain are not right. They are not the old way. In the old days we did things differently. We did not always run to the houngan. The grand famille knew how to talk to the loa. Up here we don't do things the way they do them down below in the city. People marry people. Loa marry loa."

588 Nevertheless, the practice in the neighborhood of Port-au-Prince and
292 the Cul-de-Sac Plain is for mystic marriages to take place when deemed
184 useful, essential, or unavoidable. Foremost among the loa involved in these rites is Erzilie Wèdo, the "pure" one, the deity of love, sometimes identified with the Virgin Mary. Other loa known to have taken part in mystic marriages are Damballa, Ogoun, Ayizà, Agwé, Gèdé Nimbo or one of his brothers, Cousin Zaka, and Général Clermeil. All these loa—significantly, I think—have clearly defined personalities; much is known about their character and behavior, their likes and dislikes.

588 A man married to Erzilie has special obligations to her for the duration of his life. On certain days (especially Thursday, which is sacred to
834 this deity), the mortal "husband" may not have sexual intercourse, even though he has a human wife.

588 Circumstances leading to a mystic marriage vary widely, but in each
152 case it is a cult priest who determines whether the rites should be
993 held. Perhaps a person has been afflicted with a series of illnesses or misfortunes. He goes to his houngan, who begins a series of communications with the client's loa or with his own. Sometimes many loa are consulted before the desired information is available. Eventually it is determined that a certain deity, for reasons which may or may not be clear, wishes to have marital ties with the client. The illnesses or misfortunes that have been sent are a means of informing or warning the
953 991 person concerned.

Sometimes the houngan relies on well-established divining methods to ascertain the cause of the difficulties. He may employ the grande (a shell that slides on a string), zoèes, or small shells that are thrown on
989 the ground. Or he may rely on possession by a loa to provide the information.

If it is found that a loa is demanding marriage, arrangements are then made. The rites that follow may take place in a houmfor or at the house of the human bride or groom. Both a petit savane and a houngan officiate.

588 The person directly involved, like the loa, usually has something to
554 gain from a mystic marriage. For one thing, he can reasonably expect

3: Courlander 3-4 (1937-1938) 1960 SV3 Hebi SV3

special future help and consideration from the loa (including the cessation of the illnesses or other misfortunes that have led to the marriage). A man (or woman) united with a loa in "matrimony" is "stronger" (*plus fort*) in his relationship to his environment and to other people. For this reason, the initiative for a mystic marriage does not always come from a loa. An ambitious person may seek such a marriage to strengthen his hand, to provide protection against other deities or human enemies, or to gain wealth or position. One observer, Odette Menessson Rigaud, expresses the opinion that in such instances the marriage "is no longer a religious union of mystic love, but a magic pact."[18] The implicit element of "pact" is so evident in all mystic marriages, even when the initiative comes from the loa, that the distinction is not easily appreciated. However, persons suspected of "pushing" for a marriage with a loa are regarded as presumptuous or reckless, and often they are believed to have hidden motives. It is felt by many that the benefits of such a union can be only temporary and that catastrophe will ultimately follow.

A human party to marriage with a loa is deeply committed. He is subject to jealousy and anger on the part of his mystic mate. His behavior in the houmfor as in his daily life must be beyond the loa's reproach. He must avoid possession by other loa. And he must fulfill endless obligations. Sometimes the prospect of such binding ties is more than a man (or woman) is ready to face, and through the intercession of a strong houngan the loa may be induced to withdraw his demand for marriage. In that event, a special service is held, in the course of which the person buys his freedom with promises of special gifts and feasts for the deity.

One young man I knew was caught in a special dilemma—the houngan and the loa on one side, the Protestant Church on the other. The man, named Maurice, came from the mountains near Léogane. He was married but had no children. His wife's family, still living in Léogane, was Protestant. Maurice himself was a follower of Vodoun, and nominally a Catholic. When his wife was afflicted with a long series of headaches and earaches, Maurice consulted a houngan of Port-au-Prince. The houngan said that the loa Ayida Wèdo was demanding marriage with Maurice, and that the wife's illnesses were an indication of jealousy.

At the same time, the wife's parents came from Léogane and insisted that the girl's illnesses were brought about by God because Maurice was a follower of Vodoun. They demanded that he sever all his connections with Vodoun and become a Protestant.

After considerable anxiety, Maurice "purged" himself of Vodoun and

[18] Odette Menessson Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Vodoun Loa," in Appendix A of Deren, Divine Horsemen, p. 264 (cf. p. 251, category 11b -- Analysis)

159 joined the Protestant Church. Subsequently his wife's illnesses subsided somewhat, but she never bore children. Maurice suspected that the latter misfortune was the result of his spurning his mystic suitor.

588 The actual ceremonies by which a mystic marriage is performed carry over many of the customs and trappings of ordinary mortal marriages. [743] The prêt' savane reads prayers and officiates until the two parties are deemed wed. The loa is represented by a "stand-in," usually a person possessed by the loa and dressed in appropriate garb. Gold wedding rings are placed upon the fingers of the couple. There are wedding cakes and wedding contracts. Nothing appropriate to an ordinary wedding is omitted.

[The Vodoun Pantheon]

the earth like the carrying pad that women wear to support bundles on their heads. Whenever Apido Wédo shifted his position there were earthquakes. When the rainbow appeared after a rain it was said that Apido had come out from under the earth to drink of the fresh water. [796] [171] [321]

Dumballa Grand Chemin (Dumballa of the Highway). Another manifestation of Dumballa as a protector of those on long journeys. [484]

Dumballa Vissa. Another manifestation of Dumballa.

Dumbi Wiso. Considered to be the daughter of Dumballa. The ending of her name (-si) suggests that at one time she may have been considered a wife rather than a daughter.

Dusu Wiso. A member of Dumballa's family.

Aziko Wiso. A member of Dumballa's family. Said to be a "work lwa" who aids men with their gardens, especially in time of illness. [241]

Ezili Dede, or Dede, sometimes spelled Erzulie. One of the "big" lwa of the Dahomey pantheon, a symbol of purity, and sometimes identified with the Virgin Mary. Her color is white, and services to her include a visual emptying and sprinkling of the earth and a perfuming of the air. Food offerings to her include corn meal and eggs. Male "horses" of Ezili are sometimes bound to her by mystic marriages, and they are obligated to refrain from sexual intercourse on certain days which belong to her. There are a number of Ezilies, regarded as members of the same family or, in some cult centers, as different manifestations of the same deity. Some Haitians regard Ezili Dede as the ancestor of the Ezili family and refer to her as Grand Ezili. Note that there is a Dahomean town named Dagbe at approximately 6° 6' E., 6° 50' N. [199] [322] [782] [837] [824] [384]

Ezili Fédo, or Ezili Dumesse (Dahomey), or Ezili Fédo Dumesse. Like Ezili Dede, she is a symbol of purity and is identified with the Virgin Mary. Mystic marriages are performed with her, and her "horses" are obligated to refrain from sexual intercourse on certain days. She is also a giver of wealth. [199] [324] [784] [834]

Ezili Wiso. A sister or daughter of Ezili Dede and also related to Dumballa.

Ezili Mazou. A sister of Ezili Fédo.

Ezili Bossu. A manifestation of Ezili who is especially fond of the Bonds dance.

Ezili Hoveno (Red Eyes). A warm and hard Ezili who is often identified with Pétro rather than Dahomey rites.

Aloso Fédo. A member of the Ezili women, regarded as a market-place protector. In Dahomey, Aloso was a protector of all public gathering places. [483] [971]

Aloso Bazile[1]

Aloso Dance Beau Beau

Mabouso Mouzan. A special lwa of Ezili as princess.

Mabouso Ewemma, or Tuzema. A person mounted by this Ezili talks only Spanish.

Sosu, or Sossu. A thunder deity who hurls stones to the earth when angered. Some of the stones thrown by Sobo are regarded as the sacred residence of various lwa. Sobo (or Sogbo) is a member of the original Thunder pantheon of Dahomey. 796 171

Sosu Bosil, or Sosu Bosh, or simply Bosil. A close relative of Sobo, regarded as the protector of the lumber (bosil). In Dahomey, Bosil is sometimes referred to as the son of the deity Sobo.[2]

[See Ellis, The Ewe-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, 1890-94, and Herskovits, Dahomey, 2, 1938. Cf. p. 354 Category 116. -- Analyst]

[1] [Ellis, op. cit., p. 52. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[2] [Herskovits, op. cit., pp. 158ff. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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may not have all the heart desires. Under Dessalines there had been stern discipline of the workers but no recognition of the aristocracy; now under Pétion the people went their own inefficient way, but aristocratic eminence was happily recognized. 175 671

Examples of experimental legislation abound. Some proposals succeeded but more failed. One of the partial successes was the establishment of an agricultural holiday, *la fête de l'Agriculture*, to stimulate interest in good cultivation. Two months before the day set, the commandants of departments, arrondissements, and cantons, together with the justices of these divisions, were to nominate the laborer in each parish who had done the best work of the year. A prize medal was awarded not only for the sake of honoring him but also to stimulate his fellows. Similarly the officials would choose a child between seven and ten years of age, living on the best cultivated habitation in the district and belonging to parents most distinguished by their conduct and fondness for work, to be brought up and educated at the expense of the state. The annual feast was celebrated for many years after Pétion's death, but the officials became too lax to make careful selections of prize-winners. The holiday was kept, therefore, but served none of its original purposes. 175 527

As a case of legislation that failed may be cited the highly moral measure encouraging, but not requiring, legitimate marriages among cultivators rather than the customary informal union without ceremony. The preamble of this law pointed out that legal marriages were 175 582 588

the only means of assuring a person of all the advantages of society; of procuring consolation, care, and help in sorrows and in sickness; of making purity of customs, so necessary for the happiness of men and the conservation of their health, reign among the people; of steadily increasing the population of each habitation; of extending agriculture and of increasing production.[30]

The mass of people, however, had had no experience of legal marriage. In the time of slavery such unions would not have been tolerated by an owner who wished to sell his slaves, and Dessalines had seemed to care very little whether people married or merely lived together informally. It will shortly be seen in detail how lasting was this inertia of tradition.[31]

30. Cited in Saint-Rémy, op. cit., V, 20.
31. See Part III, "Slave Rebellions and Human Life."

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175 567 581 [794] when slaves were to be sold. Even when whole families were brought over together from Africa, it was considered discreet in Saint-Domingue to separate the various members at the slave market, so that there would be little chance of combinations and intrigues. Theoretically the Church was in favor of regular marriages between slave men and women, but even if the Africans had understood or desired the "sacrament," the opposition of the white planters would have been enough to curb missionary insistence on this point; the Jesuits had already been expelled from the colony for their too great zeal in plantation reforms.

175 567 581 [843] As a usual thing, then, slaves simply cohabited. It was not against the rules of a plantation for a slave and the woman with whom he consorted to live together in a slave hut with the children born to them; but neither was it against the rules for the overseer to put other slaves into the same hut, or to sell promising slave children as if they were cattle.[1] Little was done to prevent sex relations between slaves, although masters had varying attitudes toward the results of these relations: some planters welcomed births as a stockbreeder welcomes additions to his herd; others resented the pregnancy of slave women as an obstacle to necessary field work. In the former case, a planter's capital was increased; in the latter, abortions resulted when the overseer drove pregnant women to hard work under the tropical sun.

175 567 581 The freedom of the planters with the persons of their attractive female slaves likewise weakened any tendency toward monogamous family life as conceived by bourgeois European society. The relationship between master and slave woman was momentary. Not often was a woman so beguiling that she could be called a concubine; still less often was she a mistress. The latter estate was the height of any female slave's worldly ambition, for not only might she then be freed, but she could live a life of leisure. In rare cases she might hope to persuade her white paramour into marriage. Almost certainly her mulatto children would be free.

175 565 581 In so far as there was any predisposition toward strict observance of European marriage practices, it was most clearly exhibited by the group of affranchis. As freedmen they were intent upon establishing

1. Under exceptional circumstances slaves found themselves under a benevolent, religious master who allowed them to be married by a priest and thereafter to live together as a family. [567] [581]

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[p. 186]

X

HOME LIFE OF THE ÉLITE

565 581 ONE brief characterization of the élite might be that they are those who carefully observe the proprieties. The proprieties are those of France, and among them is "common sense" in marriage.

175 565 831 581 People of privilege in colonial times, which were the fountainhead of élite tradition, lived at ease and did not concern themselves with manual labor. Nor were they burdened by puritanical codes of sexual morality, but on the contrary enjoyed sex relations with whatever attractive women came their way. But they would have thought it sheer folly to allow momentary delight to interfere with the very practical matter of choosing a wife. Marriage meant increasing one's fortune, strengthening one's social position and connections, establishing one's children. Romance was as irrelevant to all this as to choosing a business partner. This attitude of the French planters, current even in France of the present day, was the standard for freedmen.

175 565 581 581 Even when wealth was most plentiful in colonial society it had not been always easy to find the proper wife for an affranchi youth. For a man to remain single, however, did not mean that he remained celibate. He might, on the contrary, contract a fairly permanent informal union of love, while discreetly refraining from a marriage which would jeopardize his own or his family's status. Such informal unions were not generally regarded as immoral. Good taste, it was felt, was a sufficient guide in all matters of sex outside of marriage.

175 565 581 The unsettled condition of the colony between the slave insurrection of 1791 and the achievement of independence in 1803–4 did not change the affranchi concept of suitable marriage. During the brief two-year rule of Dessalines, the ideal of propriety in marriage remained the same in spite of the Emperor's efforts to undermine the importance of legal weddings and the legitimacy of children. Pétion, upon his accession in 1806, showed himself a true member of the mulatto aristocratic group—indifferent to the morals of the masses so long as common sense solved their problems for them, and consent with the marriage traditions of the élite. He said publicly what was sensi-

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 565 581 sary for a president to say as to proper respect for moral principles, then left morality to take care of itself.

175 581 565 581 During Pétion's time and that of Boyer there came into common usage the convenient term "*plaçage*" to describe the extramarital unions of respectable people. "Concubinage" was a crude word, with definite overtones of disapprobation; plaçage was more indirect, and carried no connotation of disrepute. Briefly, plaçage was the union of a man and a woman for pleasure, companionship, and a measure of home life, without the assumption by either person of any legal obligations. A man might make as many of these tentative unions as his disposition, his finances, and his tact dictated. Often enough they were with women of his own social class, for Haiti had an excess of women over men; but generally they were contracted with pleasing women of the lower social orders. Young men not yet financially able to marry, younger brothers whose inheritance was too small to support a family, husbands who had married for practical purposes rather than for love, and eagerly lustful men—these were the usual participators in plaçage.

Although for a woman a church wedding might be the height of ambition, and proper parents tried to see that their daughters achieved it, there came to be a feeling that no disgrace attached to being *placée*. Certainly at the beginning a wife outranked a placée, just as in colonial New England a wife outranked an old maid; but to be placée was a far better lot in Haiti than to be a spinster in Massachusetts Bay colony. No one would have thought of calling a placée by so inaccurate a term as "mistress"; still less would anyone have assailed her moral standing. A man who had a mistress might keep his arrangements with her secret; but plaçage unions were, or came to be, quite open. The one great flaw in the arrangement was that near middle age a man might cease to care about his union with the woman. Foresight and adaptability were the only safeguards against this fate.

565 581 581 Nowhere else in the Western World has there been so little actual marriage in proportion to the population as in Haiti. Whether technically it is correct to speak of peasant unions as examples of plaçage is a matter of opinion; certainly the peasants rarely marry. Thousands of Haitian couples in all walks of life could be found at any period since 1804 living quietly together from youth to age, bringing up a family of children with as much order as do others who have had a

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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581 wedding to consecrate their state. These unions might be called
565 (after Anglo-Saxon usage) common-law marriages. Many such
588 couples have, late in life, gone through the wedding ceremony at the insistence of children aspiring to social prestige.

175 Haitian writers have frequently felt it necessary to explain and
114 justify to the outside world the practice of plaçage. Thus Saint-Rémy
581 in 1857 wrote: "*Plaçage*, or primitive marriage, is still one of the
588 Haitian customs. It requires no civil or religious formality. I must
565 confess that some of these unions are more respectable than those sanctified by civil and religious law."[1] Dantès Bellegarde in 1934 implied (erroneously) that the practice had always been one limited primarily to peasants. He said:

> Haitians have been accused of immorality because they practice free unions. This reproach is unjust. Concubinage is without doubt the rule among the people [that is, the peasants and workmen]; but it constitutes a sort of *connubium injustum* (unlegal marriage) which, in many cases, has nothing immoral about it, certain "plaçages" having more solidity and seriousness than a large number of regular marriages. In order to understand the existence of this custom and its persistence in the lower classes of Haitian society, one must go back to the colonial epoch: the whites kept
> [162] numerous concubines, white women being few in Saint-Domingue. (The white population of Saint-Domingue was composed in 1789 of 30,826 souls, of whom 21,166 were men and 9,660 women—not counting soldiers and sailors.) On the other hand, the Negroes did not marry each other, because they did not care at all to have wives whom the master might "abuse," to use the word of Père du Tertre; moreover, masters did not require their slaves to be married: they mated them with a view to obtaining fine "products."
>
> Concubinage tends to disappear among us, or at least to become more discreet. In the cultivated class people generally marry, and the girls in most modest condition—having passed through the primary schools—resign themselves willingly today to the diversion of their unused affections to cats and other domestic animals if no one offers to lead such girls to the altar.[2]

175 Nineteenth-century visitors were generally shocked by plaçage,
581 just as middle-class people are usually shocked by sex ways which
588 seem franker than their own. That the Haitian practice was a practical one, based upon a desire to preserve property intact within the

1. *Pétion et Haïti*, V, 66 note.
2. *Un Haïtien parle* (Port-au-Prince, 1934), pp. 30–31.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 family and to make only "sensible" marriages, was a fact rarely
581 glimpsed by the critics. A good example of their attitude is the state-
588 ment of the pious English Quaker, John Candler, in 1842:

[114] But few of the merchants or principal inhabitants are married men: concubinage is common, and unhappily, regarded as not dishonorable. Whenever a ball is given, or a large party invited, the invitation is equally extended to "Monsieur and Madame ——" or to "Monsieur —— and his lady"; and by this compounding of moral distinctions among the upper classes, the evil descends to the lower ranks and becomes perpetuated.[3]

[867] And later Candler accuses Haitian mothers of being "utterly dead to all moral considerations," because they do not take pains to instill (middle-class English) ideals of morality, or teach the young the evils of "wayward passion."

175 Not even Haitian authors were willing to accept plaçage as a
114 desirable practice. Beaubrun Ardouin explained that the color preju-
581 dice of colonial times was responsible for what he clearly considered
588 an evil.[4] "The aristocracy of skin" made plaçage prevail over "divine
563 law," for whites would not often in colonial times marry colored women. The same prejudice in the republic kept light-colored men from marrying darker women, but not from living with them. Ardouin believed that Haiti would gain infinitely by adopting "*les bonnes moeurs*," not on moral grounds, but for practical reasons. With regular marriage, he says, there would result a greater fixity of the conjugal state and more confidence on the part of the women, "who too often discover that they are only the satisfaction of a whim"; also the men would reflect more upon the consequence of an infidelity which, in dividing families, might separate children from father or mother and so greatly weaken the delicate relations of paternal love and filial piety. Still another consideration was political: the dispersion which resulted in the inheritance of property when many mothers and children compete. Because of plaçage unions, quite a number of estates had been reduced to almost nothing.

175 As the century progressed, the custom of plaçage prevailed from
581 the President down to the humblest peasant. The women of the
588 President were visited publicly by him; sometimes he was accom-
643 panied on his visits by a staff or selected officers of state. The critical

3. *Brief Notices of Haiti*, pp. 24, 25.
4. *La Géographie de l'île d'Haïti*, pp. 181, 96 ff.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 Englishman, Sir Spenser St. John, said that he had met plaçées of the
581 President at dinner, and was asked to trace resemblances between
588 children and their reported father. "No one seeks to conceal it, and
643 the conversation of married ladies continually turns on this subject. One excuse for it is that many of the ladies whom you meet in society were only married after the birth of their first children. However, according to French law, that ceremony renders them all legitimate. Some of those admitted into society are not married at all, but their daughters being married, prevents notice being taken of the false position of the mother."[5]

565 In recent years the élite, although many continue to contract
581 plaçage unions, keep these arrangements quieter than formerly and tend to make them with women lower in the social scale than themselves. Formal and regular marriage is expected and approved among the upper classes of today. Indeed, one modern informant in answer to the question, "What is the primary test of membership among the élite?" replied without hesitation, "Five generations of marriage in the family."[6]

583 Formal marriage is not entered into lightly among the upper
565 classes. It is a serious business watched over by state, family, and church. The interest of the state seems to be to guard against bigamy. The possibility of bigamy is the more likely since one or the other contracting party may have formerly lived in plaçage. The interest of the family is in the wisdom of the alliance. Before a wedding can be performed both parties must have obtained the formal consent of their parents, besides having their banns published at their respective places of permanent residence. There seems to be some doubt whether the courts would uphold a father in his refusal to consent to the marriage of a son over twenty-one years old; but cases are known in which such a refusal has stopped the wedding. Of course, the daughters must always obtain parental consent to marry.

585 The civil wedding, adopted in Haiti at the beginning of her independence, is usually followed by a religious ceremony. The Church, like the State, takes precautions against clandestine marriages and bigamy. Notice of a projected union must be read from the pulpit

[114] 5. *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, I, 177–178.
[581] 6. John Lobb, in "Caste and Class in Haiti" (*American Journal of Sociology*, XLVI, No. 1 [July, 1940], 29), states that "one informant defined family status as a position
[554] resulting from the recognition that in a family the parents had, for generations, been legally married in the church."

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Another observation must be set

588 162 alongside this professional testimony: many men, both aristocrats and common folk, have more than one placée, yet there seem to be enough women for Haitian men.

595 595 Although peasants in Haiti are rarely married by formal ceremony, the family is a dominant characteristic of peasant life. This sums up the domestic situation among the masses.

When it is recalled that the Negro, from the time he was taken from Africa on slave ships, had almost no experience of the European tradition of conventional marriage, one has a partial explanation of the absence of peasant weddings. For the rest the people are realists, arguing that a man should have as many women as he needs to carry on the economy of his land holdings; the law forbids polygamy, but exerts no control over plural unions which are entered without formal ceremony. It has therefore come to be regularly accepted in the mores that practical need should determine the number of women to one man. If a peasant increases his land holdings, if he buys or inherits a second farm on the other side of the mountain, it is only common sense for him to take a second woman, raise a family by her, and thus have an overseer and a labor supply resident on each of his properties. Everyone in the community knows what women belong to what man, and custom strongly taboos any tampering with another man's spouses.

162 581 163 Only the Catholic Church has statistics to reveal the infrequency of marriages among the masses. The story was the same a century ago as now. In the important parish of Gonaïves in 1825 the proportion of marriages to births was as 1 to 62; in 1826 they were as 1 to 54.[3] Both figures include marriages and births among the élite, and Gonaïves is a town: in the countryside the proportion of marriages would be much lower. The parish priest of Carrefours, which numbers about a thousand households, stated that in 1936 there had been only ten marriages among his six or eight thousand parishioners. [848] Another parish priest estimated that only one half of one per cent of the baptisms performed were of children born to parents legally married. Even in the parish of Pétionville, home of many élite, a priest estimates that less than one child in five is born to married parents. 595 A century ago a commandant at Léogane, speaking of a high army officer, said, "He is my brother-in-law: I live with his sister." Near Port-au-Prince lived a rural police captain with six plaçagt

3. Mackenzie, op. cit., II, 119-120.

spouses.

he is assured of more solicitous care from her and more deferential treatment from her children. And though when this has occurred his "legal" wife may at his death come with a justice of the peace to claim his body and his effects, this move is anticipated, so that what he has given the *placée* wife and her children is usually well out of the way. "Often they find only the four walls of the house."

A certain number of unmarried men result from this system of plural matings, some of whom remain single by preference, particularly in the cities, where the incidence of homosexuality far exceeds that found in the country. In Miréhalain itself, when the final withdrawal of the American Marines from Haiti was being celebrated, a dance called *mawlo*, significantly enough the only one held indoors, was one in which male dancers danced together in couples. The sexual problem of the younger unmarried men is more often solved by means of liaisons with married women, though this has its dangers in the countryside, where the movements of every individual are known and the least tendency to unsanctioned social behavior is soon the subject for widespread gossip. Prostitutes are found everywhere, and they are by no means visited by unmarried men alone. On the whole, sex "adventures" are more indulged in by men than women, even allowing for the tendency of some women to have affairs with youths. A belief widely held, that plural wives tend so to exhaust the virility of a man that he must seek "remedies" of a magical nature from the priests of the *vodun* cult and from sorcerers, must also be mentioned. Frigidity is a principal cause for female homosexuality, and, because of a wife's reluctance to satisfy her husband, it not infrequently happens that she is sent back to her parents, where she may seek out other women. The most prevalent Haitian attitude toward homosexuality in either sex, it may be remarked, is one of derision rather than vindictiveness, as the term applied to effeminate men, *commères*, may suggest.

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[For information on small scale family ceremonies, see category 78.]

Ji Hawkins E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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case certain aspects of the historical development of Haiti have doubtless tended to reinforce African custom. Reference has been made to the fact that the great proportion of traders are women, a truism in Africa as in Haiti, where by general rule men are the producers and women the distributors of goods. In Haiti, however, the fact that for many decades men were likely to be arbitrarily impressed into military service by local chieftains when they came to town — particularly in Mirebalais, which had always been one of the centers of Caco activity — discouraged them from attending the markets. Thus African usage has here been reinforced by the historical fact of Haitian political instability. The fact that the proceeds from trading belong to the woman who does the trading, and that in consequence women are encountered who, though married, command independent means and exercise full control over their resources, is a carry-over of African tradition and, as in Africa, this gives to women a position in the economic world quite foreign to conventional European practice.

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The form of the family as found in Mirebalais demonstrates that the African social grouping which comprises all those descended on one side of the family has largely disappeared there, though it is possible that at least the vestiges of it may have survived in other regions of Haiti. Yet in West Africa, though descent is legally counted on but one side of the family, psychological adherence to the families of both parents is everywhere important. Therefore it is logical to assume that this concept, reinforced by the pattern of dual descent and double familial affiliation of the French, has been retained in Haiti to the neglect of the aboriginal larger groupings, where, as has been seen, not only is relationship counted on both sides of the family, but, more significantly, the right to reprimand and punish is held and exerted by elders in both the maternal and the paternal lines. On the other hand, it is apparent that the feeling for larger relationship groups has not been entirely lost, particularly in the paternal line, when

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such matters as the passing on of the *loa* in families, the duties toward family dead, and the possible inheritance of food taboos are recalled. Like all these survivals, that of food taboos is not as clear in its expression in Haiti as in its aboriginal setting. Its determination is largely by trial and error, so that a mother, before the birth of her child, not only abstains from eating the foods harmful to her, but later carefully tries these on the child to ascertain their effect. Yet the custom, at best, is a tenuous one. Sometimes, if food uncongenial to a parent has ill effects on a person, "he goes on eating it until he becomes accustomed to it"—though this statement brought forth an emphatic dissent from another Haitian: "Not I! If a food harms me once, I am through with it."

Africanisms are particularly marked in the organization of and attitudes toward the ancestral cult. Today the fear of the power of the dead is as living in Haiti as in West Africa, despite the influence of the Catholic Church in changing concepts of the heavenly world of the dead and the role of ghosts on earth. It is quite true that the outer forms of ceremonialism taken by ancestor-worship in West Africa have disappeared; but when the meticulousness with which the rites of death are carried out, and the institution of *mangé morts* are remembered, it is seen that the spirit of African ritual observances has by no means been lost. African elements have survived even in the services for the dead, now largely taken over by the Church. On the anniversary of death a special commemorative mass is sung in the church, which the family of the dead attend in a body. Before they leave the habitation for the mass, however, animals are killed to provide meat for the feast which follows the Church service, and for the *mangé morts*, which also takes place at the same time. Immediately after the mass a reception takes place at the house of some member of the family who lives in town, or at the home of a friend, where cakes and liquors are served. At about noon, however, family and friends proceed to the habitation, where

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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114 121 treatment. In the absence of sufficient analytic material on the intervening years since his book was written, a perfatory note such as this can do little more than comment on Haitian society, either in terms of its present design or in terms of the recent events that may have modified it.

121 114 The central thesis of Leyburn's book is that Haitian society is sharply divided into two segments, and that the national institutional structure is such that no significant alteration in that division has occurred in the entire course of Haiti's history as a sovereign nation. At the base of the society is the rural agricultural sector, making up perhaps as much as 95 per cent of the population; at the top the elite, which dominates the governmental apparatus and all national institutions. These two segments of the society differ, in Leyburn's view, in all important regards: level of income, source of income, education, language, religion, social forms, values and attitudes, and all else. By carefully describing the history of Haitian society from the eve of the revolution until the midst of the United States occupation, he reveals both the origin of this vast social cleavage and the various means employed for its perpetuation. Leyburn was so impressed by the gap which separated yeomanry and elite that he chose to label these social segments castes rather than classes. Members of the elite earn their livings as rentiers, merchants, professionals, and in government, and never engage in manual labor of any sort. They are predominantly urban in residence; their sons attend private lower schools, and then go on to higher education, usually abroad. They are French-speaking, although they also speak Creole, Haiti's national language. Elite religion is Catholicism, elite forms of marriage and domestic organization are "legitimate" and "western." Elite members view themselves as a kind of aristocracy, and feel little commonality in their sharing of Haiti and of Haitian history with the yeomen.

565 [771] 191 197 581 59 529

In sharp contrast, the yeomanry is rural, poor, works the land, is illiterate and Creole-speaking only, believes in *vodoun* rather than in orthodox Catholicism, usually marries by common law and is sometimes polygynous, and remains substantially isolated from the outer world. Finally and importantly—though its particular significance is changing—the elite differs from the rural sector in that the countryman is predominantly negroid in phenotype, while members of the elite are prevailingly lighter-skinned.

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3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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000 it seems not radically to have affected the masses but only the fairly well-to-do.

671 The *Royal Almanac* for the year 1814 touches proudly upon the
581 moral state of the kingdom. The author of the almanac, the Comte
114 de la Limonade, says: "Great attention is paid to morals and manners.
175 Marriage is honored, protected, and encouraged; no Haitian who is
[584] unmarried can fill any place of distinction. Divorce is not permitted."
All this was true; yet the mass of Haitians still remained unmarried.
Nevertheless, the quotation indicates the extent to which Christophe
had gone in his effort to reform marriage and morals among his
people; to set them in the European tradition and draw them out
of their African and colonial backgrounds.

175 While Christophe was trying to effect reforms in the North,
184 Pétion was accepting his Southern folk as they were. Hardly a law
671 during his twelve-year administration touches the subject of mar-
581 riage. The élite colored people continued to make proper legal
584 marriages and so insure the inheritance of their legitimate children.
[585] The common folk lived their family lives without weddings, and if
property questions arose, custom ruled, backed by public opinion in
their little communities.

105 Such are the backgrounds out of which modern Haitian sex rela-
175 tions have developed. From African tradition came family life, the
178 importance of property to stabilize a union, insignificance of a wed-
58 ding ceremony, familiarity with matrilineal kinship and descent;
59 from French colonial practice, formal marriage to establish a family
421 with social ambition, casual sex relations for pleasure outside this
marriage, the claim of legitimate children to all property (in contrast
to folk custom, where few legitimate children were born); from
Dessalines, an emphasis upon the African tradition and realism;
from Christophe, an insistence upon strict French practice in mar-
riage and in the passage of property.

From among these alternatives Haiti made a choice which is an
excellent example of what Keller calls "automatic selection in the
mass."[7] There was no congress to select one procedure rather than
another. Because Pétion and Boyer followed a *laissez-faire* policy in
social matters, the people took the path of least resistance.

7. A. G. Keller, *Societal Evolution* (revised ed., New York, 1931), chaps. IV and V.

for the victims of smallpox. If family traditions also tell of those shot, not in war, but as prisoners, perhaps, a candle is lighted for them outside the cemetery wall. Though the couple may perform this ceremony together, each makes this request of the dead of his or her own family as the candles are lighted. This call on the dead is repeated several days after the marriage or later, when candles are again lighted.

The sole exception to the performance of these rites before the new household is begun occurs in those cases of *plaçage* where a girl continues to live at her own home. This is rare, however, for the house of a man is usually built near that of his father, and he takes his wife there. But if special circumstances dictate otherwise, the ceremony of notifying and pacifying the family deities may be deferred, though a man must eventually present every woman with whom he lives to his family gods and in turn must be presented to the gods of the woman's family. In similar fashion the dead of both families must be adequately notified.

Marriages rarely take place in the months of November and December, the former being disliked because it is "the month of the dead," during which All Saints' Day occurs, and the latter because it ends the year. Except for the Church wedding and less elaborate festivities to celebrate the event, the rites which mark a *plaçage* mating do not greatly differ from those which mark a legal marriage, which may be described in outline. The favorite day for Church marriages is Saturday, "the day of the Virgin," and the time for the ceremony is always early morning, before the heat of the day has set in. If the home of the girl is some distance from Mirebalais, the party come to town the preceding day, the girl spending the night with some friend. Otherwise the bridegroom, accompanied by his relatives and friends, goes to the house of the girl early Saturday morning. Before the couple leave the home of her parents, water must be thrown on the ground in front of them, and also sprinkled by them before the en-

today not only in Mirebalais, but, in their essential outlines, throughout the Republic.

The larger relationship grouping originates in the immediate family, and the formation of new extended families is a continuing act. Characteristically, the process begins when a man leaves the habitation of his father and, with his wife, settles on land somewhat remote from the dwellings of either his people or those of his wife. As the sons of this couple grow up and marry, they make their homes near that of their father, so that in time a group of immediate families related in the paternal line clusters about the dwelling of this original settler, forming a habitation. The continuation of the process depends upon the amount of land available to the group; in any event, given enough time, land to permit all the male descendants of the founder to support themselves and their families will be lacking, so that the younger men will repeat the process that has been described, and themselves become the founders of new habitations whose members, with the passing of generations, will eventually be lost to the original group. While land is available, a young man is given several hectares by his father when he marries, and here he establishes his household. If the family have prospered, additional land is bought as more young men grow up, so that the relationship group may become a community of considerable size.

In accordance with this rule of residence, only rarely will a man settle on the property of his wife's parents, since to do so reflects unfavorably on his personal status. When this does occur, it is probably because of a serious quarrel with his own people. In such a case, if his marriage endures, he becomes a quasi-member of his wife's family, but unless he has committed some extremely grave offense, such as publicly insulting or striking a parent or grandparent, he does not forfeit membership in his own group.[1] Similarly, the fact of his having settled away from the habitation of his family does not disinherit him, for, as will be seen, this occurs in but the

rarest of instances, and only by fixed legal procedure, since mere verbal denial of family rights cannot deprive a person of his inheritance.

Within the immediate family it is the duty of the man to procure food for his wife and children. When his fields have been harvested, the produce is taken to the house and given to the wife, who retains a portion of it for the needs of the household and sells the surplus at the market, using the money to buy clothing and other necessaries for her husband, her children, and herself. A part of the sum she receives may be used to purchase animals to be used for transport, food, or breeding purposes; and whatever money is left over is saved, particularly if a desirable plot of ground is available, or a mass and ceremony for the ancestors or promised rituals for the gods are in prospect. The woman, who is held to be more thrifty than the man, is thus the banker of the family. Her opinion is prized by her husband, and though a man has the legal right to dispose of a horse or a cow or his own land as he desires, in most households nothing would be done until the wife was consulted. It is true that quarrels often arise concerning family funds held by the wife, especially when a man questions the accounting given him, or on occasion when he wants money to bet on a cock-fight or for drinking or other personal needs whose cost he does not care to have reviewed. But for many men the problem is quite well solved by the expedient of deducting a sum from his earnings without telling his wife that she has not been given the full amount.

It is only in relatively small matters that the membership of a household acts as a self-determining unit. In affairs of greater moment the extended family must figure, for despite the informality of its organization — at least as manifested in Mirebalais — and its lack of legal sanction, its power, especially as lodged in the old folk, is none the less real. It is because of this that it is said: "The peasant consults his elders about everything he does." When a transaction of some im-

[1] Mackenzie, ii. 125.
[2] St. John, 162.
[3] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 200–2.
[4] Price-Mars (I), 203, gives this as the proper age for a man of the region of Kenscoff, near Port-au-Prince, to marry.
[5] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 216.
[6] Ibid., 210–12. A facsimile of this letter is given on pp. 213–15.
[7] Ibid., 216–17.
[8] Mackenzie, i. 58.
[9] St. John, 153–4.
[10] St. John, 155.
[11] Mackenzie, i. 53. Wirkus, 222, mentions a case of polygyny on the Isle à Gonave where the wives apparently inhabited one compound with their mutual husband.

CHAPTER VII

[1] This seems to differ in various parts of Haiti; thus, near Port-au-Prince, the father of the girl "designates to his future son-in-law the land where his house is to be built," according to Price-Mars (I), 216.
[2] Cf. Parsons (I), 165.
[3] Among the obligations of the present mentioned by Price-Mars (I), 34, is "the respect due to the elders who are the repositories of tradition."

CHAPTER VIII

[1] Whether or not voodoo is a religion, a problem which Haitian writers (e.g., Price-Mars (I), 32 ff.) are prone to debate at length, need not be considered here, since to an ethnologist the answer is too patently affirmative to require discussion.
[2] St. Mery, i. 45–6.
[3] Ibid., i. 46.
[4] De Vastière, 178–9.
[5] Dorsainvil (I), 156 ff.; Price-Mars (I), 39.
[6] For a useful resumé of statements concerning Haitian serpent-worship, the grievous misunderstanding of which is an outstanding characteristic of this honest but ill-conceived work, see Williams, passim.
[7] Price-Mars (I), 118 ff., also records his belief that serpent-worship is far less important than it has been represented, saying: "We believe it to be well-nigh abolished." Seabrook, 310–12, also holds to this view.
[8] Parsons (I), 157, states: "There is little or no philosophic or religious expression of the theory to be

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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the market, the women sit all day in the broiling sun, and in Port-au-Prince at least, sometimes sleep near by for the night, in order to complete their purchases and sales and to get their fill of companionable gossip. They are often accompanied by the youngest of their children, some of whom have to be carried. 462 565 443

Some observers profess to see evidences of a matriarchate among the peasants, for as a general rule the woman attends to the business dealings of the market place, handles the money, directs her children, and manages the household. If the man has more than one plaçée spouse, complete control of the farm is the woman's during the absence of her man. It is a superficial judgment, however, to speak of the peasant mother as a matriarch. The man owns the land, chooses his women, calls for help at the moment he pleases for preparation of the ground for planting; and when he knows his end to be near, summons all his families and disposes of his property as he sees fit. His decision is final. But he is no more a patriarch than his woman is a matriarch: they are economic partners in a struggle for existence. 562 593 592

By our standards, the woman is inferior to the man not only in rights but in being one spouse of several. He may contract several unions, while she may have only one. She does more steady, if not more actual, physical labor than the man. When he is at home, she must offer him the best of the food. As usual in simple societies, however, the issue rarely arises as to superiority or inferiority of the sexes. Customary behavior is followed without much question. 562

There is one great contrast between élite and peasant women, in the matter of childbirth. The élite mother takes as much care of herself during pregnancy and parturition as would an American woman in well-to-do circles. The peasant mother, on the contrary, cannot allow herself the luxury of medical attention, nor can she spare the time to rest quietly. Like many so-called "primitive" women, she apparently finds herself little incommoded either by pregnancy or birth. Babies are born frequently in the market place, the mother having come down from the hills only that day with her goods. It is not unusual to hear of the birth of a child in a roadside ditch or in a grove by the path to and from the market town. The care given mother and infant is primitive: the navel cord is cut with a sharp stone or a piece of broken glass; a short rest is thought sufficient before the mother resumes her task. As might be expected, the death rate from infection is high and women age prematurely. 565 844 846 [165] [145]

Fathers are generally kind to their children, so far as physical

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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512 grain in her mortar or working in her garden near by. On
[413] market days she takes the produce of the family's fields to the
[438] town to sell. If she has young children, she cares for them
[855] while she does her other work, but when they are old enough,
[857] they help her about the house if they are girls, or, if boys, go with their father to the garden. From time to time, when
[856] house repairs are needed or there are implements to be
[241] mended, the man spends a day at home getting these odd jobs done; otherwise only serious illness in the family keeps him from his fields.

512 The times for meals have not varied since the days when
264 Moreau de St. Mery described the eating-habits of the slaves.[a] In addition to the mid-morning repast, the only other meal is that eaten after the man returns from his field, this being
[562] the largest of the day. A wife does not sit down with her
[913] husband, but usually eats earlier with her small children and holds herself ready to serve him upon his return, when, if he is alone, she remains to tell him the day's gossip. Visitors are
[974] often present, for peasant etiquette demands that all comers
[976] be offered food, and, as one Haitian expressed it, "The peasant would kill you for the insult if you did not share your meal with him." Bedtime, as might be expected, is early.

512 On Sundays and on the days of festivals this routine is in-
527 terrupted, when, if the occasion is of sufficient importance
[796] and the habitation is not too far from town, the peasant and his family attend mass. On Saturday nights there is usually a *vodun* dance, when the early hour for retirement is forgotten and all-night festivities precede Sunday's rest. On such days
[264] the principal meal is eaten at three or four o'clock in the afternoon, and all the adults share it together, while at one side the children are fed from the dishes of their parents in response to the insistent repetition of the demand "*Ba'm pa'm* — give me my portion." *

* This is an example of the elision characteristic of Haitian Créole, it being abbreviated from *Ba mois part mois* or, in French, *Donnez-moi ma part.*

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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857 hide-and-seek and enjoy story-telling sessions, when the tales of 'Ti Malice and Bouki are recounted. Still older ones make drums out of jars and "arrange a dance." Little girls play with dolls made for them by the older children, while boys with sticks for horses organize themselves into "armies" with their
852 seniors as officers. When a child's teeth fall out, a minor ceremony is performed. As each tooth is detached, the child throws it on the roof of the mother's house, saying:

[539]

"Rat, rat, rat,	"Rat, rat, rat,
M'jet' yun bel' 'ti dent ba 'ou,	I give you a nice little tooth,
Ba'm yun vieille dent."	Give me an old tooth."

871 At this same time a beginning of formal education is made, especially if the child lives in the town or near enough to it to
872 allow him to reach one of the schools there. These schools are under both secular and Catholic auspices, and in them the pupil is instructed in the rudiments of European education, learning to read and write and to do simple problems in arith-
873 metic. If he shows proficiency and the means of his family permit, he may go on to a secondary school at Port-au-Prince or some other center; in the main, however, this schooling is all he ever receives, if he is permitted this much.

861 It is not to be supposed that a child is allowed to grow up
593 without learning how to conduct himself in accordance with
602 the traditional code of Haitian behavior, for the punishment that follows departures from this code is always both prompt and extremely painful, beating with sticks being the mode of correction most often employed. The mechanisms of education and control operate the more effectively because they are exercised by a fairly large group of persons, which includes not only the father and mother of the child, but also his grandparents, his uncles and aunts on both sides of the family, and
603 his older brothers, sisters, and cousins. Less restraint is exer-
593 cised before grandparents than other relations, for while there
604

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

are no customary playmate or joking relationships between grandparents and grandchildren, a man would rather go to his grandparents when in trouble than to his parents or uncles, because of the greater indulgence they show him.

At about the age of seven or eight the children's play-life is invaded by the serious work which they must increasingly assume. According to their sex, they are instructed by father or mother, each parent teaching the child the work he will be most occupied with as he matures. For some children, naturally, this education is deferred longer than for others, but, as a rule, boys of four or five may be seen playing about the field "helping" father by bringing him a leaf with which to light his cigarette, or "hoeing" in company with him, while girls are early permitted the pleasure of accompanying their mothers to market. By observing his father at work and by helping in small tasks the boy gradually learns how to do a man's work, until at about the age of fifteen he himself can cultivate a garden. Two or three years later he is given a field of his own and seed with which to sow it. The produce from it he brings to his mother to sell for him, and she keeps what money it brings, so that he will have his savings when he wishes to marry. Little girls, for whom acquaintance with the techniques of selling in the market is desirable, are given small articles to dispose of, and the proceeds belong to them, though some mothers demand an accounting from the young tradeswomen as a further measure of training. A woman also teaches her daughter to sew, to cook, and to wash and iron, instruction which is continued until a girl, ready to be given in marriage, is able to manage all of a woman's work.

If a family can afford the expense, children begin to be prepared for their first communion at eight or ten years of age; but members of poor families must wait until the money can be found — which means that some classes of candidates include grown men and women. At about the customary age for confirmation the children are informed of the family vodun

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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595 or if women who share the same market place in the
533 market place, quarreling is invariably heard; or if one of them sings *point* — derisive songs — against the other and goes so far as to name the object of derision, fighting and court action follow.

58 Though many cases of *plaçage* are the result of affairs be-
595 tween young people which result in conception, it is essential
684 in any event that the consent of the families of the man and the woman concerned be obtained to give the mating social validity. When the union is once entered upon, divorce occurs only with the abandonment or mistreatment of the woman, or her infidelity, for in these *plaçage* matches, the moral support of her family makes a man reluctant to send his wife away without ample justification. When a man does divorce a *placée* wife for reasons of infidelity, she may either go to another man or return to the home of her parents, where she supports herself. If after a period of years she has not established a household with another man, it often happens that her husband takes her back. Most frequently, however, where children have been born to a mating, a woman's infidelity is punished merely by beating; and proof that a wife is a wife whether or not she is legally "married" is offered by the Haitian man in this fact that a *placée* is beaten for this and less serious reasons as readily as a legal wife. Prompt
[754] action is taken against the adulterer, which, though it may on occasion be as drastic as murder, generally takes the form of
[842] recourse to magic charms. Women who carry on illicit relationships take all care, therefore, to guard unceasingly against the birth of offspring.

595 Many men, at least, hold that a man is often much closer
593 to a *placée* than to a legal wife, for the former is more attentive and less demanding than the wife with her legally assured status and permanence of tenure. Thus it comes about that
[454] *placée* spouses are frequently given generous money gifts, to be saved for the future of their children, while as a man grows older he may take up his residence with a *placée* wife, where

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

he is assured of more solicitous care from her and more deferential treatment from her children. And though when this has occurred his "legal" wife may at his death come with a justice of the peace to claim his body and his effects, this move is anticipated, so that what he has given the *placée* wife and her children is usually well out of the way. "Often they find only the four walls of the house."

A certain number of unmarried men result from this system of plural matings, some of whom remain single by preference, particularly in the cities, where the incidence of homosexuality far exceeds that found in the country. In Mirebalais itself, when the final withdrawal of the American Marines from Haiti was being celebrated, a dance called *manuba*, significantly enough the only one held indoors, was one in which male dancers danced together in couples. The sexual problem of the younger unmarried men is more often solved by means of liaisons with married women, though this has its dangers in the countryside, where the movements of every individual are known and the least tendency to unsanctioned social behavior is soon the subject for widespread gossip. Prostitutes are found everywhere, and they are by no means visited by unmarried men alone. On the whole, sex "adventures" are more indulged in by men than women, even allowing for the tendency of some women to have affairs with youths. A belief widely held, that plural wives tend so to exhaust the virility of a man that he must seek "remedies" of a magical nature from the priests of the *vodun* cult and from sorcerers, must also be mentioned. Frigidity is a principal cause for female homosexuality, and, because of a wife's reluctance to satisfy her husband, it not infrequently happens that she is sent back to her parents, where she may seek out other women. The most prevalent Haitian attitude toward homosexuality in either sex, it may be remarked, is one of derision rather than vindictiveness, as the term applied to effeminate men, *commères*, may suggest.

595 The fact that Haitian law recognizes only monogamy in-
593 troduces numerous overtones into the daily life of the people.
671 If a church-wed wife discovers that her husband makes periodic visits to another woman, whether *placée* or not, serious quarreling between the legal wife and her husband follows. The "wife" may refuse to give food to her husband or to speak to him, and will upbraid him before their children, calling him *vagabond* — a strong word of opprobrium to the Haitian — and other terms which her facile tongue readily finds at hand. The status of the children under this dual family system is another reflection of the values it engenders. And though the account of this given in Mirebalais represents a folk-reaction rather than official procedure — for according to officials in the capital it does not exist in Haitian law — its value as a living belief which gives insight into the relevant attitudes outweighs its possible lack of validity in a legal sense.

858 In Mirebalais it is held that there are what may be spoken of as three classes of offspring. The first, which may be termed "natural" children, are those born to a man by his *placée* wife or wives before his Church marriage, or to a *placée* woman whose mating with him was later legalized by the rites of Church and State. The second class, the "legitimate" children, comprises those born to couples married in the strict legal sense of the word. Finally, a third category consists [848] of those who may be called "illegitimate" children, and includes all the offspring of any *placée* spouse of a man taken by him after his Church marriage, or children of any of his earlier *placée* wives born subsequent to this marriage. None of these classes of children are at any special social disadvantage, and all not only inherit the African deities of their father, but must also fulfill their spiritual obligations toward him after his death by wearing mourning and performing all other required rituals.

582 Legally, however, the matter is different, for only the chil-
621 dren born to a marriage recorded by the justice of the peace
858
858
851

belong to the father, who, in turn, is the legally recognized 582
father of all the offspring of his wife unless he divorces her — 671
something which, because of Church regulations, occurs but 858
rarely. Children born outside legal marriage have no right to 851
the name of their father. Such a one is entered under his moth- 848
er's name in the record of births, though he may and often does 858
take his father's name in school or later in life, this ultimately 551
becoming the name by which he is known and which he hands
on to his children. It is in the inheritance of the father's prop- 428
erty that children born of the various types of matings are 858
said to be most strongly differentiated, though it was particu- 848
larly with this method of distributing heritable goods reported in Mirebalais that officials in the capital disagreed. The assertion is made that while the children of a "legal" wife inherit three quarters of the estate, and the other "natural" children receive one fourth, the "illegitimate" offspring have no legal right to any of the dead man's property. They must either be provided for by their father before his death or be aided on occasion by a natural brother who has inherited from their common father and feels a moral obligation toward these children of their father. Children of plural 595
wives call each other by the terms "brother" and "sister," 593
and in some instances they get on fairly well together. More [601]
generally, however, their attitudes toward one another are colored by those of their mothers, so that verbal if not physical encounters may take place when they meet.

Where, as perhaps in the majority of cases, there is a 593
monogamous union, "legal" or "*placée*," cemented by mutual affection and mutual interest in the future of the children, life goes on calmly. Each spouse performs the tasks allotted by custom, and the children are reared in an atmosphere which varies with the fortunes and temperaments of those who make up the household. Fathers are said to prefer their daughters, and mothers their sons, among their children, but for this the Haitian has no explanation other than the phrase: "This is natural."

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

591 rarest of instances, and only by fixed legal procedure, since
596 mere verbal denial of family rights cannot deprive a person
428 of his inheritance.

594 Within the immediate family it is the duty of the man to
432 procure food for his wife and children. When his fields have
434 been harvested, the produce is taken to the house and given
454 to the wife, who retains a portion of it for the needs of the household and sells the surplus at the market, using the money to buy clothing and other necessaries for her husband, her children, and herself. A part of the sum she receives may be used to purchase animals to be used for transport, food, or breeding-purposes; and whatever money is left over is saved, particularly if a desirable plot of ground is available, or a mass and ceremony for the ancestors or promised rituals for the gods are in prospect. The woman, who is held to be more thrifty than the man, is thus the banker of the family. Her opinion is prized by her husband, and though a man has the legal right to dispose of a horse or a cow or his own land as he desires, in most households nothing would be done until
• [593] the wife was consulted. It is true that quarrels often arise concerning family funds held by the wife, especially when a man questions the accounting given him, or on occasion when he wants money to bet on a cock-fight or for drinking or other personal needs whose cost he does not care to have reviewed. But for many men the problem is quite well solved by the expedient of deducting a sum from his earnings without telling his wife that she has not been given the full amount.

596 It is only in relatively small matters that the membership of a household acts as a self-determining unit. In affairs of greater moment the extended family must figure, for despite the informality of its organization — at least as manifested in Mirebalais — and its lack of legal sanction, its power, especially as lodged in the old folk, is none the less real. It is because of this that it is said: "The peasant consults his elders about everything he does." When a transaction of some im-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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796 was there. To bring him down, a *hunsi* holding water and a
787 candle at once began slowly to dance under him, fixing him
[794] with the usual unvarying stare. After some five minutes the candle and water were quickly given to those near by, and in a flash the possessed one was safely on the ground, candle in hand, pouring water before the center pole and the drums, and dancing magnificently.

796 Shortly after midnight the head of the family and his wife
793 returned to the scene of the dance, the explanation given for
787 this return revealing the native conception of the power of
593 the *hungan*. Before his arrival, it was said he had been told of the quarrel; hence on his way to the dance he passed the *barrière* of the house of the family head, though he did not stop to speak with him. Prior to leaving his home, however, he was supposed to have performed a rite which, soon after he began drumming at the dance, so affected the children of the family head that they became possessed and at once ran to the *tonnelle*. Since their children were present, the father and mother were forced to come, and this was followed by a reconciliation of those who had quarreled. To make doubly sure that the *loa* would take no offense, however, another dance which formally ended the *service* was given jointly by all members of the family several weeks later.

796 One phase of the ceremonial always encountered, but un-
787 usually frequent on this occasion, was the salutation of the assembled company by the *loa*. One woman, possessed by Ogun, greeted all present first by shaking hands with wrists crossed in the customary manner, and then kissing each person on both cheeks. Another, possessed by Ossange, took the neckerchief from about his neck and wiped the faces of all those present, paying particular attention to the drummers. The son of the family head was again possessed by Gede as at the *service*, and his greeting to the assembled company was especially dramatic. His possession took the form of a hysteri-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

769 17 a *mangé* is given, and that evening, when the feast ends, dances are held. Two or three *tonnelles* are provided, the most important of these being the one where the Martinique cycle, the social dances most beloved by the ancestors, is danced. In one of the remaining two a European *bal* is held, and in the other are the *vodun* dancers. Thus even in connection with a commemorative Church mass for the dead the *mangé morts* and the dancing of African dances are included.

595 177 178 [554] The institution of plural marriage, which is socially recognized though not legally sanctioned, is obviously African. Though the *placée* is held in respect and her place in society carries no reproach for herself or her children because of any connotation of immorality, it is of significance for an understanding of the manner of cultural change that prestige in marriage goes with the monogamic union blessed by the Church, and that the "wife"—the woman who is addressed as "Madame"—holds definitely higher social position than the *placée*. Officially the Haitian State is in accord with the position of the Church and recognizes only the European monogamic marriage. Socially, however, African plural marriage is not only tolerated but accepted as a matter of course, and in those instances where plural marriage takes on its most exuberant form, as when men of position have as many as six or seven *placées* in addition to a legal wife, its very size tends to give such a family group, or at least its head, the enviable esteem of his fellow-citizens.

17 [593] [606] [583] Within the family, the deference toward older members and the duties and attitudes toward parents-in-law are African both in form and in spirit. The exaction of guarantees from a young man before marriage, and the necessity of his proving to the family of his fiancée that he can support her, are perhaps in their generalized form universals, but as found in Haiti show once more a retention of specific aboriginal traditions. On the other hand, such aspects of marriage as the [584] formal *lettre de demand* sent when a match is arranged, or the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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fact that a family will often strike out for itself, deserting [584]
the parental home, show a European independence foreign to
native African thought. Yet the arrangement of meal-times, [864]
and the fact that a wife rarely eats with her husband, are [593]
African, as are the modes of correction, especially the feeling [861]
that flogging with a stick is the best disciplinary method. In- [201]
deed, the characteristic snap of the fingers employed by the [681]
Haitian to indicate a beating is exactly that which is used in
Dahomey to signify beheading! In the attitude toward chil- [855]
dren African traditions have been warped by European cus-
tom, which has introduced a certain hardness of feeling that,
whatever the cost, children must be brought in line with so-
cial convention, together with a resulting harshness of treat-
ment that is anything but African.

17
Another important facet of Haitian life in which the effect 322
of contact is telling includes art and recreational activities.
Perhaps because of the conditions of slavery, or the difficulties
of life after independence had been attained, much of these
forms of African tradition has been lost, not to be replaced
by corresponding borrowings from European sources. Wood-
carving, an outstanding element in the æsthetic life of West
Africa, is almost entirely absent. Near Mirebalais lives a man
who can carve a pipe in the likeness of a human face, but there
is no similarity between the products of his craft and West
African figurines or masks, and he is thought of as an un-
usual person whose carving is an interesting but not socially
significant avocation. It was stated, though without adequate
corroboration, that before the Marine occupation Mirebalais
boasted *vodun* drums on which heads "like the ones on these
pipes" had been carved. Today the only form of decorative
work in wood to be seen is the scroll-work designs which act as
ventilating devices over doorways. They are done with the
jigsaws of the carpenters, and no fertility of conception or
felicity in composition marks these artistically crude efforts.

Other African crafts, which, though essentially utilitarian 000

That friend there, he is not a friend for me! 533*
That friend there, he is not a friend for me, treason! 539*
I pass his house, he gives me a chair to sit in! 626
He goes around speaking bad words about me! 572

Or again, you may hear:

Nèg' awè, con çà ou yé, *ago-é!*
Nèg' awè, con çà ou yé!
Y'ap manjé avè ou!
Y'ap boè avè ou!
Y'ap coupé lavie ou débor! [Ex. 95]

Black man, like this you are, *ago-é!*
Black man, like this you are!
He will eat with you,
He will drink with you,
He will cut the life out of you!

A man regards his child's godfather as his closest friend outside the 608
family circle. Should either of the two friends fail to fulfill the high 626
standard of behavior demanded by their tie, the other may express dis- 533*
appointment and recrimination, as in this song: 539*

Compè à moin compè ou malhonnête!
Ou malhonnête compè compè à moin compè ou malhonnête!
Premier pitit moin fai'm ba ou batisé!
Malheur rivé'm nan bounfor ou pas vini wè moin!

My comrade, comrade, you are dishonest!
You are dishonest comrade, my comrade, comrade, you are dishonest!
I gave you my first child to baptize!
When misfortune comes to me in the bounfor, you do not come to see me!

Sometimes even the most domestic of grievances are aired in public 593
through means of song: 626
533*
539*

Iannie oh!
Ste Hélène oh!
Iannie oh!
Ste Hélène oh!
Trois paire soulettes mari'm ba moin!
Malafoè prend moin! [Ex. 96]

Iannie, oh!
St. Hélène, oh!
Iannie, oh!
St. Hélène, oh!
Three pairs of slaps my husband gave me!
This misfortune has taken me!

Yo dit'm gainyain largent séré, oh vrai!
Yo mitré coupistaille oh lì sou dos moin!
Oh yo mitré coupistaille oh lì sou dos moin!
Fai'm payé largent, *foui*
Mandé Bondieu pou' mou wè li, *mi* [Ex. 100]

Disaster descends on my yard!
If I work in the yard there
They say I have hidden money, in truth!
They plot behind my back!
Oh, they plot behind my back!
Make me pay money, *foui*
I ask God to see it.

Another theme that runs deeply through Haitian life is the need for a mother. In a society where placage is normal and where fathers frequently are transient, the mother has been the stabilizing factor in family life. A *placée* family might see the father only at certain times of the year. If he is a farmer, it will usually be when he comes to work his gardens; then he will move on to other gardens and possibly to another family elsewhere. The loss of a mother, under these conditions, is felt very deeply. Many Haitian songs, in various moods, emphasize the role of the mother in the house. Some of them are gay, like this one, with an undercurrent of sadness:

Oh dépis manman moin fai moin,	Oh, since my mother made me,
M'pas jamais wè manman moin!	I've never seen my mother!
Waille waille waille waille!	*Waille waille waille waille!* *
Waille waille waille waille!	*Waille waille waille waille!*
M'pas connè manman moin!	I do not know my mother!
Zandolite fai'm!	A *zandolite* made me!
Mabouya fai'm!	A *mabouya* made me!
Zandolite fai'm!	A *zandolite* made me!
Mabouya fai'm! [Ex. 171]	A *mabouya* made me!

The *zandolite* and *mabouya* to which the song refers are small lizards which constantly skitter about on the rocks and in the trees, as though they have no home. The metaphor is clear.

One more song on this subject stresses the importance of having a mother as compared, say, to an unreliable man:

Ma crié,
Oh qua'm perdit manman moin ma rété!
Ma rété,
Oh qua'm perdit manman moin crié!
Qua'm perd' un garçon moin jain' l'aut' oh!

* Exclamation.

2: Courlander 8-6 (1937-1951) 1960 SV3 11481 SV3

533*
539*
593

Qui'n pend' un garçon main join' l'eau' oh!
Ma rélé,
Oh qui'n perdit manman main ma crié! [Ex. 102]

I cried,
Oh, when I lost my mother I cried!
I cried,
Oh, when I lost my mother I cried!
When I lost a man I found another, oh!
When I lost a man I found another, oh!
I cried,
Oh, when I lost my mother I cried!

533*
539*
261

Protest or complaint songs are sometimes directed against no one in particular but simply call the attention of listeners to the singer's misfortunes. In many such songs the president or one of the deities is mentioned by name. The singer in this way implicitly places responsibility for help. In the following song, one complains of hunger, another theme that runs throughout Haitian folklore and Haitian life.

Rwa! President qui voyé rélé'm!
Main pas boé main pas mangé!
M'pas boé main pas mangé!
Oh m'pas boé main pas mangé!
President qui voyé rélé'm rwa!
M'pas boé main pas mangé! [Ex. 103]

Rwa! * The President sends for me!
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!
Oh, I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!
The President sends for me, *rwa!*
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!

533*
539*
521
[976]
[982]

Here the lwa Ogoun Balindjo is called upon to take note of prying, insincere people who come to a person's house, observe what is going on, and go away to gossip:

Ogoun Balindjo
Yo vini gè'é'm
Pou' y'allé voté oh!
Ogoun Balindjo
Li yé wè bouche yé oh!
Ogoun Balindjo
Pa wè yo vini gè'é main? [Ex. 104]

Ogoun Balindjo
They come to look at me

* An exclamation.

2: Courlander 8-6 (1937-1958) 1960 8V3 Haiti 8V3

533*
539*
626
578

I say it belongs to the old man! *Ciyé!* *
It's the old man's thing! *Ciyé!*
I say it's the old man's affair! *Ciyé!*
It's the old man's thing! *Ciyé!*
I say I'll look for it! *Ciyé!*
I'm going to take it! *Ciyé!*
I say it belongs to the old man, *Ciyé!*
It's the old man's thing, *Ciyé!*

533*
539*
593
626

Another burlesque of a quarrel concerns a mother who has sent her daughter down to the river to do the washing. Some question arises as to whether the girl went down to the river at all, or whether she went elsewhere. There is implicit suggestion that the girl may have been at a rendezvous. The mother and the girl argue back and forth:

Mòn wyé Lannuzi nan dlow,	I sent Lannuzi to the water,
Li pas alé!	She didn't go!
Mòn wyé Lannuzi nan dlow,	I sent Lannuzi to the water,
Li pas alé!	She didn't go!
Mòn wyé Lannuzi nan dlow,	I sent Lannuzi to the water,
Li pas alé!	She didn't go!
Mòn wyé Lannuzi nan dlow,	I sent Lannuzi to the water,
Li pas alé!	She didn't go!
Lannuzi ouù ou té yé?	Lannuzi, where are you?
Li'm té yé!	I was there!
Li'm té yé!	I was there!
Li'm té yé!	I was there!
Li'm té yé!	I was there!
Li'm! [Ex. say]	There!

533*
539*
626
831

Most of the scandal songs are fragmentary and tangent, though clear in implication, like this one:

C'est pas faute moin!
C'est pas faute moin!
C'est pas faute moin!
C'est pas faute moin!
C'est pas faute moin monnon!
C'est pas faute moin!
Gainyain monne t'ap manché dépé bien!
Ewo wayé!
Gainyain monne t'ap manché dépé bien!
Gainyain monne nin homme à,
Pwed nouvelle ch, ni! [Ex. ni!]

It wasn't my fault!
It wasn't my fault!
It wasn't my fault!

* Used as an exclamation.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

must pass to an illegitimate child if recognition is accorded. It is likewise strong in its harmony with actual conditions: in the absence of legal marriage among the people, it would have been manifestly unfair to favor a few fortunate children. Dessalines argued that the revolution had legitimized all Haitians; that it was unjust to prevent a child's inheriting from the person who had given him life; and that since all Haitians had come out of slavery and degradation into freedom, no new inequalities should be instituted.[4] 175 671 848 428

If this law encouraged family life, it weakened marriage both of the civil and religious kind: where was the sense in the expensive luxury of a wedding when children were just as legitimate without it? By conforming to folk practice the Emperor confirmed it. Only the aristocrats disliked his law, for it seemed to make light of one of the distinctions they cherished—the formal wedding. It irked them to have the State place a casual child upon an equal plane with one born after proper marriage. 175 581 671 565

At still another point the law accorded with living conditions at the time. During the years of fighting many men had been killed, and always the large standing army kept thousands of others away from settled farm life. Home, then, was for a child the abode of his mother—a fact recognized by the law's insistence upon maternal relationship rather than paternity. Such a word as "matriarchate" has no place here; but from the days of Dessalines to modern times, the lowly Haitian thinks of his home primarily as where his mother lives. 175 593 671

As if the advantages of formal wedding were not already sufficiently weakened by this law, other enactments of the empire struck at other phases of marriage. Divorce was permitted for adultery, for incompatibility of temperament or character, and by mutual consent. Such provisions not only broke away completely from Catholic practice, but made getting out of wedlock a casual matter of taking an oath. The complaint of incompatibility need be made by only one spouse; "mutual consent" as a ground for divorce was probably not allowed in 1805 in any other country of the Western World. 175 671 586

Dessalines did not appear to care one whit for the good opinion of white foreigners. It sufficed for him if Haiti endured, whatever Europeans thought of her. Christophe, on the other hand, was extremely sensitive to foreign disapproval. Many of his official acts can 175 643 648

4. According to the testimony of Madiou, op. cit., III, 216.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

the market, the women sit all day in the broiling sun, and in Port-au-Prince at least, sometimes sleep near by for the night, in order to complete their purchases and sales and to get their fill of companionable gossip. They are often accompanied by the youngest of their children, some of whom have to be carried. 462 565 443

Some observers profess to see evidences of a matriarchate among the peasants, for as a general rule the woman attends to the business dealings of the market place, handles the money, directs her children, and manages the household. If the man has more than one placée spouse, complete control of the farm is the woman's during the absence of her man. It is a superficial judgment, however, to speak of the peasant mother as a matriarch. The man owns the land, chooses his women, calls for help at the moment he pleases for preparation of the ground for planting; and when he knows his end to be near, summons all his families and disposes of his property as he sees fit. His decision is final. But he is no more a patriarch than his woman is a matriarch: they are economic partners in a struggle for existence. 562 593 592

By our standards, the woman is inferior to the man not only in rights but in being one spouse of several. He may contract several unions, while she may have only one. She does more steady, if not more actual, physical labor than the man. When he is at home, she must offer him the best of the food. As usual in simple societies, however, the issue rarely arises as to superiority or inferiority of the sexes. Customary behavior is followed without much question. 562

There is one great contrast between élite and peasant women, in the matter of childbirth. The élite mother takes as much care of herself during pregnancy and parturition as would an American woman in well-to-do circles. The peasant mother, on the contrary, cannot allow herself the luxury of medical attention, nor can she spare the time to rest quietly. Like many so-called "primitive" women, she apparently finds herself little incommoded either by pregnancy or birth. Babies are born frequently in the market place, the mother having come down from the hills only that day with her goods. It is not unusual to hear of the birth of a child in a roadside ditch or in a grove by the path to and from the market town. The care given mother and infant is primitive: the navel cord is cut with a sharp stone or a piece of broken glass; a short rest is thought sufficient before the mother resumes her task. As might be expected, the death rate from infection is high and women age prematurely. 565 844 846 [165] [145]

Parents are generally kind to their children, so far as physical

Parents are generally kind to their children, so far as physical
855 punishment is concerned. The average peasant child can hardly
861 properly be said to be "brought up": he merely grows, eats whatever
his family eats or whatever fruits he can pick up, and learns his place
152 in the community as he matures. In anger, parents are likely to use
in correction the first thing that comes to hand. There is a surprising
callousness to pain among these generally kindly people: they beat
their donkeys unmercifully, and strap harness over open sores; they
carry chickens, head down and feet tied together and mouths gaping,
for miles in the sun; they revel in gory cockfights. If, therefore, a
parent is minded to beat his child, he will probably do a thorough
[578] job of it. A peasant woman, pommeling her son with a broomstick,
replied to the protests of a white passer-by, "*Li nèguè; li pas fait li mal.*"
("He's a Negro; it won't hurt him.") The interference of a stranger
in the beating of a wife by her man, armed with a club, was resented
by both man and woman as an interference with a purely family
quarrel.

The concept of sexual continence is lacking among the peasants.
831 Sex, indeed, hardly enters the realm of morality except in connection
834 with adulterous dalliance of one man with another's woman. There
864 is no virtue in abstaining from sex relations when the sexual urge is
strong. Mothers tell love stories in all their frank details to their
young daughters, and some who care about such matters are adept
in all lore connected with stimulating and satisfying a man's desire.[5]
[342] Since huts are small and the whole family sleeps in the same room,
children have ample opportunity to observe the sexual life of their
parents. If a girl, as a result of her own experiments, has a child born
to her, there is no disgrace. Practically every peasant is "illegitimate,"
so that the term means nothing; a baby will soon be old enough to
assist in the work of the home, thus becoming an asset. It is expected
that as soon as a youth grows up he will find a mate and begin a
family of his own.

The family is as important an element of peasant life as formal
241 marriage is unimportant. It is the economic unit. Ever since the days
931 of Pétion Haitian economy has been one of small things: even the
572 crops are small subsistence crops of maize, millet, beans, rice, yams,
and frequently trees of bananas, plantains, and coffee, which require
no particular cultivation. Enough coffee has been produced in Haiti
for annual export ever since 1804, but until recent years the beans

5. See Zora Neale Hurston, *Tell My Horse*, pp. 22 ff.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

have been gathered from trees which grew wild. Both men and women labor, with the work divided according to regular custom between the sexes, the men dominating the scene only in the marketing of coffee.

Nature was opulent enough at the beginning of Haitian independence. The wars had ruined irrigation ditches, sugar refineries, and mechanical equipment, but the soil was still abundantly fertile. But generations of farming by people without knowledge of fertilization or soil conservation have worn out much of the land. Trees have been cut to provide lumber and clearings for more farms; in the rainy seasons torrents have coursed down the mountainsides, washing away soil and exposing the earth to the rays of a tropical sun. Because the country is overpopulated every available acre is put to use, and to overuse, thus still more depleting the land. It is a vicious circle, for the next generation must extract yet more from the earth and so weaken it further. Hard work is the lot of the peasant, therefore, during every month of the year except the dry season. There has never been a formal rotation of crops: a farmer continues to plant the same crop in the same field until the harvest is perceptibly smaller than before. Then he changes to another type of produce. Sooner or later he will allow the land to lie fallow for several years until, by the action of nature or the grazing over it of cattle, it has regained a measure of its fertility.

The strenuous work of clearing fields and preparing them for cultivation is man's job. Since the peasants owned their plots it has almost always been done in coöperation by the men of the neighborhood. What on the American frontier would have been called a "bee" is known in Haiti as a *coumbite*, or *combite*, often carried on as an enterprise of the local *Société Congo*, the informal neighborhood group for mutual aid and fellowship.[6]

A man who has a large job on hand announces a coumbite for any day except Sunday, always a day of rest, and whatever other week-

[6] The word "coumbite" was apparently borrowed from the Spanish part of the island, and from the Spanish word *convidar*, convoy. In Colombia "convite" means exactly what "coumbite" means in Haiti: a gathering of peasants to work in common, or else a coöperative society for mutual agricultural self-help.

Professor Herskovits (*Life in a Haitian Valley*, chap. IV) describes the Société Congo in detail. The use of the name "Congo" indicates the African tradition, and is particularly noteworthy in connection with a kind of coöperative work which Herskovits finds particularly Dahomean.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

591 596 428 rarest of instances, and only by fixed legal procedure, since mere verbal denial of family rights cannot deprive a person of his inheritance.

594 432 434 454 Within the immediate family it is the duty of the man to procure food for his wife and children. When his fields have been harvested, the produce is taken to the house and given to the wife, who retains a portion of it for the needs of the household and sells the surplus at the market, using the money to buy clothing and other necessaries for her husband, her children, and herself. A part of the sum she receives may be used to purchase animals to be used for transport, food, or breeding-purposes; and whatever money is left over is saved, particularly if a desirable plot of ground is available, or a mass and ceremony for the ancestors or promised rituals for the gods are in prospect. The woman, who is held to be more thrifty than the man, is thus the banker of the family. Her opinion is prized by her husband, and though a man has the legal right to dispose of a horse or a cow or his own land as he desires, in most households nothing would be done until [593] the wife was consulted. It is true that quarrels often arise concerning family funds held by the wife, especially when a man questions the accounting given him, or on occasion when he wants money to bet on a cock-fight or for drinking or other personal needs whose cost he does not care to have reviewed. But for many men the problem is quite well solved by the expedient of deducting a sum from his earnings without telling his wife that she has not been given the full amount.

596 It is only in relatively small matters that the membership of a household acts as a self-determining unit. In affairs of greater moment the extended family must figure, for despite the informality of its organization — at least as manifested in Mirebalais — and its lack of legal sanction, its power, especially as lodged in the old folk, is none the less real. It is because of this that it is said: "The peasant consults his elders about everything he does." When a transaction of some im-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

attitudes of these writers were in the main far from sympathetic toward Haiti, and their interests extended but little to the customs of the great masses of Haitians. That the fear of slavery was still alive in the early part of the nineteenth century is apparent from an incident related by Mackenzie;[44] that, some decades later, the sense of racial differences continued to exist is evident from folk-sayings about the characteristics of whites, mulattoes, and Negroes recorded by St. John.[45] The concept of rank seems to have maintained itself in its full flavor, with no lack of social classes in Haitian urban society and no lack of vigor in perpetuating the earlier prejudices of caste.

The majority of the population remained on the land, for by 1830 the great estates had been completely broken up, and were cultivated in the main by small concessionaires. The dress of these country inhabitants seems to have remained much as it had been under French control, and the emphasis on good manners that so marks African social intercourse had been retained to such an extent that St. John, no admirer of the Haitian people, was forced to remark upon it.[46] Markets which were conducted in African fashion had been established, and these were supplemented by itinerant peddlers. The institution of *plaçage*, a reconciliation of African plural marriage with the monogamy of European custom, of which more will be said in a later chapter, was known in the early days of independence. The rites of birth and death were marked with their special ceremonies, and in both instances it can be seen that the African elements of the cultural heritage were not being forgotten. Dancing continued as the principal form of recreation, and to the traditional dances, which still persist, were added European styles.[47]

Above all, African religious customs were being observed. *Vodun* rites continued to flourish and magic was practiced as in the days preceding independence, as is to be seen from the notorious and all too often repeated tale of the "Congo bean

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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585 munity. All others stay under the brush shelter which has been erected at the side of the house, where men are served the common drink of the Haitian peasant, *clairin,* raw rum. The feast, furnished by the bridegroom, includes beef, pork, and many fowls. "We do not eat badly at a wedding!" is the comment of Haitians. At the weddings of more prosperous folk there may be dancing, but no *vodun* dances are danced. "This is not a thing of *vodun,* but of the Church," is the explanation proffered.

The feasting begun, the bridal couple must submit to much speech-making. Long "lessons in morality" are pronounced by grandfathers, godfathers, and elderly male friends; in fact, anyone moved to speak expounds upon "the road to follow" for the good, the worthy life, and many a warning is given with moving examples of the fate of those who disregarded the counsel given them. The food and drinks consumed, the speech-makers silenced, and the dancers tired, the wedding guests begin to take leave, until by sundown many are gone, and soon the young couple find themselves alone.

175 That plural marriage has existed in Haiti since the time of
595 independence is evident from the available accounts. Little
567 can be learned of slave matings prior to 1804, but it may be assumed that these were in the main temporary and existed at the will of the masters; and while the practice of polygyny among the slaves must have been difficult, if only because of the greater proportion of males, the African pattern seems to have had enough vitality to bring about the re-establishment of the institution as soon as slavery was abolished. Thus, writing in 1830, Makenzie notes a man "not inaptly named 'Taureau'" who "though his means were small, and his cottage still smaller . . . had a harem of no less than six wives."
175 St. John, some fifty years later, also remarks on the fact that
595

> "In the interior, a well-to-do black lives openly with several women as wives, and I have seen the patriarch

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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sitting at the door of the central house, with huts all 175
around in which his younger wives lived, as they could 595
not be made to dwell under the same roof. . . . The French priests attempted to alter this state of things, but they did not succeed, as the wives, surrounding the intruders, asked them what was to be their position if the husband selected one among them and abandoned the rest."[10]

Elsewhere St. John speaks of the institution of *plaçage* by [583]
name, mentioning its prevalence prior to the period of his residence in Haiti.[11] Mackenzie, though not calling it by this term, tells of a rural Negro who, in the course of a long conversation during which the name of an officer of rank in the Republic came up, made the observation "with admirable naiveté and exquisite logic, 'C'est mon beau frère, parceque je vis avec sa sœur.'"[12]

Plural marriage is no less common in the valley of Mire- 184
balais than elsewhere in Haiti. Despite the insistence of the 595
Church on monogamy, many men have two "wives," a few have three or four, while one important priest of the *vodun* cult is said to have eight. The force of the sanctions behind [177]
monogamy and Church unions, however, has undoubtedly [152]
influenced the psychological "set" of the Haitian toward polygyny, as is especially to be seen in the violent manifestations of jealousy shown by co-wives toward one another. It is primarily because of this that polygynous households, such as are mentioned in earlier writings, are not found in present-day Mirebalais, and this also explains why a man with more than one spouse sees to it that where possible his "wives" live at such distance from one another that they have but little opportunity to meet. Even then, on occasion, a newly taken *placée* will pace in front of the house of her man's other spouse, flaunting the clothes and trinkets she has received from him. Or if women who share the same mate meet in the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

595 533 or if women who share the same mate meet in the market place, quarreling is invariably heard; or if one of them sings *point* — derisive songs — against the other and goes so far as to name the object of derision, fighting and court action follow.

58 595 684 Though many cases of *plaçage* are the result of affairs between young people which result in conception, it is essential in any event that the consent of the families of the man and the woman concerned be obtained to give the mating social validity. When the union is once entered upon, divorce occurs only with the abandonment or mistreatment of the woman, or her infidelity, for in these *plaçage* matches, the moral support of her family makes a man reluctant to send his wife away without ample justification. When a man does divorce a *placée* wife for reasons of infidelity, she may either go to another man or return to the home of her parents, where she supports herself. If after a period of years she has not established a household with another man, it often happens that her husband takes her back. Most frequently, however, where children have been born to a mating, a woman's infidelity is punished merely by beating; and proof that a wife is a wife whether or not she is legally "married" is offered by the Haitian man in this fact that a *placée* is beaten for this and less serious reasons as readily as a legal wife. Prompt [754] action is taken against the adulterer, which, though it may on occasion be as drastic as murder, generally takes the form of [848] recourse to magic charms. Women who carry on illicit relationships take all care, therefore, to guard unceasingly against the birth of offspring.

595 593 Many men, at least, hold that a man is often much closer to a *placée* than to a legal wife, for the former is more attentive and less demanding than the wife with her legally assured status and permanence of tenure. Thus it comes about that [454] *placée* spouses are frequently given generous money gifts, to be saved for the future of their children, while as a man grows older he may take up his residence with a *placée* wife, where

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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he is assured of more solicitous care from her and more deferential treatment from her children. And though when this has occurred his "legal" wife may at his death come with a justice of the peace to claim his body and his effects, this move is anticipated, so that what he has given the *placée* wife and her children is usually well out of the way. "Often they find only the four walls of the house."

A certain number of unmarried men result from this system of plural matings, some of whom remain single by preference, particularly in the cities, where the incidence of homosexuality far exceeds that found in the country. In Mirebalais itself, when the final withdrawal of the American Marines from Haiti was being celebrated, a dance called *manuba*, significantly enough the only one held indoors, was one in which male dancers danced together in couples. The sexual problem of the younger unmarried men is more often solved by means of liaisons with married women, though this has its dangers in the countryside, where the movements of every individual are known and the least tendency to unsanctioned social behavior is soon the subject for widespread gossip. Prostitutes are found everywhere, and they are by no means visited by unmarried men alone. On the whole, sex "adventures" are more indulged in by men than women, even allowing for the tendency of some women to have affairs with youths. A belief widely held, that plural wives tend so to exhaust the virility of a man that he must seek "remedies" of a magical nature from the priests of the *vodun* cult and from sorcerers, must also be mentioned. Frigidity is a principal cause for female homosexuality, and, because of a wife's reluctance to satisfy her husband, it not infrequently happens that she is sent back to her parents, where she may seek out other women. The most prevalent Haitian attitude toward homosexuality in either sex, it may be remarked, is one of derision rather than vindictiveness, as the term applied to effeminate men, *commères*, may suggest.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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595 593 671 The fact that Haitian law recognizes only monogamy introduces numerous overtones into the daily life of the people. If a church-wed wife discovers that her husband makes periodic visits to another woman, whether *placée* or not, serious quarreling between the legal wife and her husband follows. The "wife" may refuse to give food to her husband or to speak to him, and will upbraid him before their children, calling him *vagabond* — a strong word of opprobrium to the Haitian — and other terms which her facile tongue readily finds at hand. The status of the children under this dual family system is another reflection of the values it engenders. And though the account of this given in Mirebalais represents a folk-reaction rather than official procedure — for according to officials in the capital it does not exist in Haitian law — its value as a living belief which gives insight into the relevant attitudes outweighs its possible lack of validity in a legal sense.

858 In Mirebalais it is held that there are what may be spoken of as three classes of offspring. The first, which may be termed "natural" children, are those born to a man by his *placée* wife or wives before his Church marriage, or to a *placée* woman whose mating with him was later legalized by the rites of Church and State. The second class, the "legitimate" children, comprises those born to couples married in the strict legal sense of the word. Finally, a third category consists [848] of those who may be called "illegitimate" children, and includes all the offspring of any *placée* spouse of a man taken by him after his Church marriage, or children of any of his earlier *placée* wives born subsequent to this marriage. None of these classes of children are at any special social disadvantage, and all not only inherit the African deities of their father, but must also fulfill their spiritual obligations toward him after his death by wearing mourning and performing all other required rituals.

582 641 858 851 Legally, however, the matter is different, for only the children born to a marriage recorded by the justice of the peace

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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belong to the father, who, in turn, is the legally recognized 582
father of all the offspring of his wife unless he divorces her — 671
something which, because of Church regulations, occurs but 858
rarely. Children born outside legal marriage have no right to 851
the name of their father. Such a one is entered under his moth- 848
er's name in the record of births, though he may and often does 858
take his father's name in school or later in life, this ultimately 551
becoming the name by which he is known and which he hands
on to his children. It is in the inheritance of the father's prop- 428
erty that children born of the various types of matings are 858
said to be most strongly differentiated, though it was particu- 848
larly with this method of distributing heritable goods reported in Mirebalais that officials in the capital disagreed. The assertion is made that while the children of a "legal" wife inherit three quarters of the estate, and the other "natural" children receive one fourth, the "illegitimate" offspring have no legal right to any of the dead man's property. They must either be provided for by their father before his death or be aided on occasion by a natural brother who has inherited from their common father and feels a moral obligation toward these children of their father. Children of plural 595
wives call each other by the terms "brother" and "sister," 593
and in some instances they get on fairly well together. More [601]
generally, however, their attitudes toward one another are colored by those of their mothers, so that verbal if not physical encounters may take place when they meet.

Where, as perhaps in the majority of cases, there is a 593
monogamous union, "legal" or "*placée*," cemented by mutual affection and mutual interest in the future of the children, life goes on calmly. Each spouse performs the tasks allotted by custom, and the children are reared in an atmosphere which varies with the fortunes and temperaments of those who make up the household. Fathers are said to prefer their daughters, and mothers their sons, among their children, but for this the Haitian has no explanation other than the phrase: "This is natural."

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the phrase: "This is natural." Children are not spaced, for normally a man resumes intercourse with his wife the second or third month after childbirth. Except for the drinking of coconut milk and salt, which is believed to be effective in preventing conception if taken before intercourse, contraceptives are not known to women, which means that pregnancies follow in rapid succession. Families are not too large, however, despite this, those numbering seven or eight children being rare, even in the hills. The reason for this is a high incidence of infant mortality, which is obvious despite the absence of vital statistics. Abortions are usually resorted to by young women, who sustain the operation done by the uncertain skill of an old woman, in the fear that bearing a child will later stand in the way of a desirable legal marriage. Some men, however, take the precaution of placing a grain of native salt on the tongue while having intercourse during an illicit affair, believing that this will be effective in preventing conception.

A childless woman first goes to a *vodun* priest, to have him determine by divination if a co-wife has not invoked magic against her. If her question receives an affirmative answer, she acquires a "counter-charm" to offset the effect of the other woman's magic. Should such a charm be ineffective, she would offer her prayers before the shrines of the saints and make pilgrimages to such sacred places as Saut d'Eau, there phrasing her petition to the Virgin in some manner such as the prayer overheard as a woman lighted a candle and held it in her hand before placing it on a sacred rock:

> *"Vièrge Miracles, Manman, voilà, depuis six ans depuis qui moins marié; moin apé vivre seul avec pauvre malhereux moin-a. Ça fait trois fois moin vini nan pié ou. Pas 'blié mandé moin fait ou, pour charité, moin ou petit pitite. Moin va minnin li ba ou. Moin apé parti, Manman, s' ou' pli, songé ça pitite m' mandé ou.—*

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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taken to the *pret' savanne* to be blessed with holy water; in the town the Catholic priest is said to do this. In full mourning, black is worn on Sundays, Mondays, and Fridays, the days sacred to the dead, but since full mourning means that one must be dressed in one's best and it is impossible to wear these clothes all day long even in the first weeks after death, the rule is to remain at home, fully dressed, on Sundays, Mondays, and Fridays, wearing the full mourning outside the house only to Sunday mass. 765

When full mourning for a parent cannot be worn immediately following death, the fulfillment of the obligation is postponed. If this duty is not ultimately met, however, the dead take vengeance, so that a child of the one who was remiss perhaps falls ill, or some other misfortune comes to him. If the negligent one is no longer living, then the penalty for his neglect will be assessed on his children, who, on consulting a diviner, will be told that they must wear mourning not only for their own parents, but for their grandparents as well. Such is the case of a dying woman whose story is recounted, for a diviner ascertained that though she had worn mourning for her own father, he had not worn it for his parent; as soon as she put on full mourning for her grandfather, she is said to have immediately recovered. 765 775 784 [787] [755]

A widower wears mourning for a legally married wife for a year, and a widow for her husband during a similar period, and it is believed that if a man were to remarry before the year has elapsed, his second wife would die, so that a woman will not go sooner to a widower, while it is equally dangerous for a widow to take a husband before the first anniversary of the death of her spouse. Should a *placée* wife die, however, another may be taken in her stead before the year has passed, for it is only in matters where the Church is concerned that the dead take vengeance. Furthermore, a man who has more than one mate may go to his other wives at any time after the death of a spouse, and though he would, of course, not go to them 765 587 [583] [595]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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75 soon after the death of one for whom he had deep affection, the matter is entirely one which concerns his own feelings. If a woman who cannot afford proper mourning clothes remarries in the Church before she has discharged the obligation to wear mourning for her dead husband, gossip will be heard, but, on the other hand, a woman who has been legally married, and who therefore may not remarry for a year after her husband's death, may be taken as *placée* by another before that period has elapsed. In this case, however, she must wear full mourning and otherwise observe all the necessary rites before the other man with safety may seek the approval of the Church for the union.

76 Though children who have lived until about twelve years of age and have been baptized are given a *dernière prière* and must not be forgotten when sacrifices are made to the family dead, there is but little mourning for them. "*'Ti moun pas gagné deuilles* — Children do not merit the wearing of mourning," it is said, and they are called "*'ti z'anges* — little angels" — for they are too young to have sinned. "It is only when one makes love that the important sins begin." Therefore, if a young person dies, not only do his parents, grandparents, and older brothers and sisters not follow his coffin to the grave, but they do not mourn for him. Only those younger brothers and sisters who were of his age — twelve or thirteen years old — wear semi-mourning.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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769 17 a *mangé* is given, and that evening, when the feast ends, dances are held. Two or three *tonnelles* are provided, the most important of these being the one where the Martinique cycle, the social dances most beloved by the ancestors, is danced. In one of the remaining two a European *bal* is held, and in the other are the *vodun* dancers. Thus even in connection with a commemorative Church mass for the dead the *mangé morts* and the dancing of African dances are included.

●595 177 178 [554] The institution of plural marriage, which is socially recognized though not legally sanctioned, is obviously African. Though the *placée* is held in respect and her place in society carries no reproach for herself or her children because of any connotation of immorality, it is of significance for an understanding of the manner of cultural change that prestige in marriage goes with the monogamic union blessed by the Church, and that the "wife"—the woman who is addressed as "Madame"—holds definitely higher social position than the *placée*. Officially the Haitian State is in accord with the position of the Church and recognizes only the European monogamic marriage. Socially, however, African plural marriage is not only tolerated but accepted as a matter of course, and in those instances where plural marriage takes on its most exuberant form, as when men of position have as many as six or seven *placées* in addition to a legal wife, its very size tends to give such a family group, or at least its head, the enviable esteem of his fellow-citizens.

17 [593] [606] [583] Within the family, the deference toward older members and the duties and attitudes toward parents-in-law are African both in form and in spirit. The exaction of guarantees from a young man before marriage, and the necessity of his proving to the family of his fiancée that he can support her, are perhaps in their generalized form universals, but as found in Haiti show once more a retention of specific aboriginal [584] traditions. On the other hand, such aspects of marriage as the formal *lettre de demand* sent when a match is arranged, or the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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CHAPTER XV

SOME WIDER IMPLICATIONS

158 No student of Haitian institutions can elude a progressively
182 sharpened awareness of the psychological conflict that is being waged within the frame of Haitian society. And though examples of the divergent forces which lie at the root of this conflict have been set forth in the preceding chapters, some of the more important of these may be recalled here.

178 In his social relationships the Haitian is constantly exposed
182 to the demands of a code of morality which requires marriage
595 to be monogamic. Yet the African tradition of polygyny, and
158 the undoubtedly satisfactory arrangements of both an economic and a social nature that can be made under the terms
178 of plural marriage, pull him toward this form. The case is even
182 stronger in the field of religion, which in Haiti is not a thing
771 remote from life, but an intimate part of existence. On the one
158 hand, because of his inheritance of the *loa*, he must meet his obligations toward these ancestral gods of Africa who punish harshly those who fail them, so that he must either continue their traditional worship or learn to know the consequences of their anger. Yet on the other hand, the priest thunders his
[191] maledictions and threats of eternal damnation — in Mirebalais, at least, often in Créole, a language which the peasant can understand — against those of his flock, the vast majority

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

[7] Mackenzie, ii, 124.
[8] St. John, 162.
[9] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 201–2.
[10] Price-Mars (I), 205, gives this as the proper age for a man of the region of Kenskoff, near Port-au-Prince, to marry.
[11] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 216.
[12] Ibid., 211–12. A facsimile of this letter is given on pp. 213–15.
[13] Ibid., 216–17.
[14] Mackenzie, i, 38.
[15] St. John, 145–6.
[16] St. John, 145.
[17] Mackenzie, i, 57. Wirkus, 222, mentions a case of polygyny on the Isle à Gonave where the wives apparently inhabited one compound with their mutual husband.

CHAPTER VII

[1] This seems to differ in various parts of Haiti; thus, near Port-au-Prince, the father of the girl "designates to his future son-in-law the land where his house is to be built," according to Price-Mars (I), 216.
[2] Cf. Parsons (I), 163.
[3] Among the obligations of the peasant mentioned by Price-Mars (I), 34, is "the respect due to the elders who are the repositories of tradition."

CHAPTER VIII

[1] Whether or not *vodun* is a religion, a problem which Haitian writers (e.g., Price-Mars (I), 32 ff.) are prone to debate at length, need not be considered here, since to an ethnologist the answer is too patently affirmative to require discussion.
[2] St. Mery, i, 45–6.
[3] Ibid., i, 46.
[4] De Vassière, 178–9.
[5] Dorsainvil (I), 156 ff.; Price-Mars (I), 39.
[6] For a useful resumé of statements concerning Haitian serpent-worship, the grievous misunderstanding of which is an outstanding characteristic of this honest but ill-conceived work, see Williams, *passim*.
[7] Price-Mars (I), 118 ff., also records his belief that serpent-worship is far less important than it has been represented, saying: "We believe it to be well-nigh abolished." Seabrook, 310–12, also holds to this view.
[8] Parsons (I), 157, states: "There is little or no philosophic or religious expression of the theory to be

175 In the early
178 years of independence, Emperor Henry Christophe in the north and
311 President Pétion in the south tried to stem the disintegration of the
[643] magnificent plantations. Christophe's measures in the region he con-
[656] trolled were sometimes stern, according to legend; but the plantation system and the plantations themselves gradually fell into decay, along with the aqueducts, the warehouses, and the sugar mills. For the Haitian had returned to a tradition of landholding antedating his enslavement.

175 Europe's loss of the Pearl of the Antilles aroused bitter words from
648 Frenchmen and Englishmen for the better part of the century. They
181 accused the Negro of laziness and lack of ability, repeating endlessly that only as a colony could Haiti ever be of any use to anybody. The London *Times* deplored the Haitian's unwillingness to work for wages, speculating that he had "no desire for property strong enough to induce him to labor with sustained power." In the United States, antiabolitionist enthusiasts cited the Haitian situation as an example of what would happen to the American economy if the slaves were freed.

464 The Haitian's reluctance to work for wages did not reflect an aversion
423 to owning property, however, as the London *Times* supposed. On the
311 contrary, it was engendered by his desire for property. The land was there and waiting, only needing a house to be built upon it, and to be cleared and tilled. The typical Haitian wanted not dubious, seasonal wage work but a farm of his own. The more ambitious peasant aspired to two farms, or even three, with a homestead and a family on each.

423 If a man worked hard and made a success of one plot, he could put
595 away money and eventually buy a second. The additional land might be
178 separated by some miles from the original farm. On the new ground
583 the man would build another house and take another wife to take care of it in his absence. Known as *plaçage*, this arrangement had complete community sanction. A man whose energies and good fortune made an extra household possible was expected to make such an arrangement. It was not a new institution bred in the chaos following the
[997] Revolution, nor was it, as some missionaries held, an evidence of moral deterioration of the Haitian character. It was simply a persisting concept of West African life.[2] The woman who occupied the second or third household was not a concubine. Like the first wife, she had enhanced prestige in her community. She had authority and responsibility. Her work, her position, and her rewards were not essentially different from those of the first wife.[3] It is true that her marriage was not consecrated by a church or civil ceremony, but, ordinarily, neither was that of the
[581] first wife. Contrary to European misconceptions, such unions were true marriages in the sense that they had full sanction of the community.

2,3 [Footnotes appear in Category 116, pp. 351-352.
A,A --Analyst]

857 868 handle it; lighter work first, heavier work later. Small boys tend cattle and help the men in the fields.

178 51 The Haitian *habitant* (the peasant) is poorer and hungrier today than he was fifty years ago, or even twenty years ago. In 1955 I visited a number of peasant families I had known since 1932, and with hardly an exception I found them worse off than they had been before. Their tiny landholdings had shrunk. Some land that had been lush had dried [134] up and eroded. Little groves of trees had disappeared. Clothes had become shabby, and many of the men could no longer afford to wear the inexpensive traditional blue denim costume that was once so common. In the cities there is evidence that some of the elite have improved their life. But in a large part of the countryside the peasants are finding that the old system that served them for a hundred and fifty years can no longer feed them adequately.

423 178 One of the adverse forces is the shrinking of landholdings. Once a peasant family may have owned and worked fifty or seventy acres of ground. But it is traditional that on a man's death his land is divided [428] among the heirs. If a man with fifty acres of land has two sons, each son inherits approximately twenty-five acres. On their deaths, the land 423 is again subdivided. But even this is not the whole story. A UNESCO 427 survey of the Marbial Valley region in south Haiti in 1948–1949 reported:

> At the turn of the century there were numerous peasant families who lived in relatively easy circumstances, and who possessed as much as thirty to forty *carreaux* * [425] of land planted with coffee and subsistence crops. The heirs of these lands, when they found themselves in straitened circumstances, would sell some parcels of it in the hope of being able to increase their holdings again later on. In the worst cases they became the tenants of absentee landlords who lived in the cities. Nowadays, not only is the size of holdings very small, sometimes only one-eighth of a *carreau*, but they are also scattered, and most peasants are obliged to go from one place to another to cultivate their various owned, rented, or share-cropped fields.§ A

671 595 423 848 Haitian law—the civil code—does not recognize the rights of illegitimate children born after a legal marriage. But Haitian custom does. As a result, a Haitian who has a *placée* wife in addition to his "legal" wife may circumvent the law by deeding to her a portion of his gardens during his lifetime, thereby diminishing his holdings.

423 691 Furthermore, many landholdings are not clearly defined. There are few accurate surveys, and often the boundaries are vague. Titles to many of the holdings cannot be clearly established, and as a result there are constant lawsuits. To pay the expenses of defending his interests in court, a Haitian may have to sell a strip of his land.

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* A carreau is about three and a third acres.

§ A [UNESCO, The Haiti Pilot Project, p. 18. Cf P352, category 116. -- Analyst]

Yo di'm gainyain largent sèrè, oh vrai!
Yo mètè complotaille ch lè mw dos mwin!
Oh yo mètè complotaille ch lè mw dos mwin!
Fai'm payé largent, *Dieu!*
Mandé Bondieu pou' mwa wè li, *ai!* [Ex. 100]

Disaster descends on my yard!
If I work in the yard there
They say I have hidden money, in truth!
They plot behind my back!
Oh, they plot behind my back!
Make me pay money, *God!*
I ask God to see it.

Another theme that runs deeply through Haitian life is the need for a mother. In a society where plaçage is normal and where fathers frequently are transient, the mother has been the stabilizing factor in family life. A *plaçée* family might see the father only at certain times of the year. If he is a farmer, it will usually be when he comes to work his gardens; then he will move on to other gardens and possibly to another family elsewhere. The loss of a mother, under these conditions, is felt very deeply. Many Haitian songs, in various moods, emphasize the role of the mother in the house. Some of them are gay, like this one, with an undercurrent of sadness:

Oh dèpis manman mwin fai mwin,	Oh, since my mother made me,
M'pas jamais wè manman mwin!	I've never seen my mother!
Waille waille waille waille!	*Waille waille waille waille!* *
Waille waille waille waille!	*Waille waille waille waille!*
M'pas conné manman mwin!	I do not know my mother!
Zandolite fai'm!	A *zandolite* made me!
Mabouya fai'm!	A *mabouya* made me!
Zandolite fai'm!	A *zandolite* made me!
Mabouya fai'm! [Ex. 171]	A *mabouya* made me!

The *zandolite* and *mabouya* to which the song refers are small lizards which constantly skitter about on the rocks and in the trees, as though they have no home. The metaphor is clear.

One more song on this subject stresses the importance of having a mother as compared, say, to an unreliable man:

Ma crié,
Oh qua'm perdit manman mwin ma rélé!
Ma rélé,
Oh qua'm perdit manman mwin crié!
Qua'm pend' un gaçon mwin jain' l'eau' ché!

* Exclamation.

Chapter 5: *Services for the Loa and the Family Ancestors* (pp. 41-74)

[1]Note that the houngan and the laplace are performing services normally performed by the *petit ancêtre*.

[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 165.

[3]Parsons, *Spirit Cult in Haiti*.

[4]Account given by Jean Revel Pierre.

[5]Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana.

[6]Account given by Vodunko Sainvil. A. W. Cardinall notes in his book *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 69): "Trees are in most cases treated with respect. Before a man does felling one for a canoe he must and invariably does sacrifice to his spirit and apologizes for the harm he is about to do it."

[7]The rite of *rafraîchi* *ville* is conducted periodically for a *mulé* *ville* after the original *lavé* *ville* ceremony. The purpose is to "refresh" the loa and make him content with his residence in the head of the devotee.

[8]Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, p. 213.

[9]It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain Negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form.

[10]Odette Mennesson Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Vaudoux Loa," in Appendix A of Deren, *Divine Horsemen*, p. 264.

Chapter 6: *Songs of the Peristyle* (pp. 75-94)

[1]This theme is further commented on in chap. 13. Compare with the following excerpt from a Surinam song reported by Herskovits in *Suriname Folk-Lore* (p. 689):

I have no mother there,
I have no father there,
I have no sister there,
I haven't got anybody there.

Chapter 7: *In the Mapou Tree: Magic, Demons, and Compacts* (pp. 95-104)

[1]Simpson, "Haitian Magic," *Social Forces*, October, 1940, p. 87.

[2]Note the coincidence of the term *gris-gris* or *grigri* as used in the United States, where it has the same meaning as magic, or "voodoo" charm.

[3]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 393.

[4]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, p. 243.

Chapter 8: *Mardi Gras and Rara: Jugglers, Maypoles, and Kings* (pp. 105-109)

[1]Achin, *En Haïti*, p. 40.

[2]Mariennettes of this kind have been observed in both East and West Africa and are well known in the region of Senegal. I saw a phallic mariennette, virtually identical with the Haitian version, in the neighborhood of Khartoum, Sudan.

Chapter 9: *Land and Work* (pp. 110-121)

[1]Franklin, *The Present State of Haiti*, p. 360.

[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, pp. 8, describes Dahomean polygynous marriage in its various forms. Although Dahomean plural marriage is complex in terms of gifts, obligations, and

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

relations between the husband and the wife's family, it is nevertheless commonplace for men who can afford it to have more than one wife.

[3]Simpson, in "Sexual and Familial Institutions in Northern Haiti," *American Anthropologist*, October–December, 1942, p. 656, observes that in northern Haiti there are three distinct types of plaçage. "A *femme-caille* shares her mate's house, while a *maman pitite* is a woman who has born children for a man without living in his house. A *femme plaçée* does not live in her consort's house, and she has given him no children." Although none of these women has any legal rights of inheritance, Simpson notes, "moral claims to a man's property stand in descending order for these three classes of plaçées."

[4]Johnston, *The Negro in the New World*.

[5]UNESCO, *The Haiti Pilot Project*, p. 18.

[6]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 515.

[7]The group work patterns of Haiti show a common ancestry with Negro gang work patterns in the United States. While nothing as formalized as the coumbite persists among American Negroes, similarities are striking. The emphasis on rhythm, the swinging of hammers or picks in unison, the need for a singing leader, the responsive chorus, and the frequent use of some kind of percussion to keep time, all derive from a common concept of the nature of group work.

[8]Herskovits, "Some Aspects of Dahomean Ethnology," *Africa*, Vol. V (July, 1932), pp. 266–296.

[9]Cardinall, *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 109), observes that among the Krachi people of Togoland "no man may have sexual intercourse with a woman for seven days before he goes hunting."

[10]An Ashanti story told by Rattray in *Akan-Ashanti Folk-Tales* credits the hedgehog with owning the original hoe; according to this version, the hoe escaped across the sea to the country of the white men, who then possessed the secret. Afterward, the white men brought many hoes to Ashanti.

Chapter 11: *Dancing and Dance Drama* (*pp. 126–136*)

[1]Quoted in Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 73.

[2]Actually a banjo-like instrument of African provenience. The similarity of the word *banza* to *banjo* appears to be more than a coincidence.

[3]Saint-Méry, *De la danse*, as translated by Lillian Moore in "Moreau de Saint-Méry and 'Danse,'" *Dance Index*, October, 1946, p. 238.

[4]Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[5]Brandy or rum with gunpowder is sometimes drunk by persons possessed by the loa Ogoun, deity of war.

[6]Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[7]United Nations photograph no. 62065.

[8]Students of United States Negro life will recognize the word *coundjaille* as a variant of *coonjine*, a dance known on the lower Mississippi. According to one observer, Dr. Willis James of Spelman College, Atlanta, small Negro boys on the docks used to call to the boat passengers:

> "Throw me a nickel
> Throw me a dime
> If you want to see me
> Do the coonjine."

The term *coonjine* is still used to mean hand-loading of cotton bales on river boats. When this loading was done mainly by hand some years ago, the stevedores worked rhythmically in a line and sang. An old man from Louisiana testified that within his own memory the dockside *coonjine* was accompanied by makeshift drums and other percussion.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

114 treatment. In the absence of sufficient analytic material on the inter-
121 vening years since his book was written, a prefatory note such as this can do little more than comment on Haitian society, either in terms of its present design or in terms of the recent events that may have modified it.

121
114 The central thesis of Leyburn's book is that Haitian society is sharply
565 divided into two segments, and that the national institutional struc-
[178] ture is such that no significant alteration in that division has occurred in the entire course of Haiti's history as a sovereign nation. At the base of the society is the rural agricultural sector, making up perhaps as much as 95 per cent of the population; at the top the elite, which dominates the governmental apparatus and all national institutions. These two segments of the society differ, in Leyburn's view, in all important regards: level of income, source of income, education, language, religion, social forms, values and attitudes, and all else. By carefully describing the history of Haitian society from the eve of the revolution until the midst of the United States occupation, he reveals both the origin of this vast social cleavage and the various means employed for its perpetuation. Leyburn was so impressed by the gap which separated yeomanry and elite that he chose to label these social segments castes rather than classes. Members of the elite earn their livings as rentiers, merchants, professionals, and in government, and never engage in manual labor of any sort. They are predominantly urban in residence; their sons attend private lower schools, and then
[191] go on to higher education, usually abroad. They are French-speaking,
[197] although they also speak Creole, Haiti's national language. Elite re-
[58] ligion is Catholicism, elite forms of marriage and domestic organiza-
[59] tion are "legitimate" and "western." Elite members view themselves
[829] as a kind of aristocracy, and feel little commonality in their sharing of Haiti and of Haitian history with the yeomen.

114 In sharp contrast, the yeomanry is rural, poor, works the land, is
565 illiterate and Creole-speaking only, believes in *vodoun* rather than in
191 orthodox Catholicism, usually marries by common law and is some-
771 times polygynous, and remains substantially isolated from the outer
583 world. Finally and importantly—though its particular significance is
595 changing—the elite differs from the rural sector in that the country-
144 man is predominantly negroid in phenotype, while members of the elite are prevailingly lighter-skinned.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 speaking, consisted of the three groups known as *grands blancs, petits*
blancs, and *gens de couleur*.[3] Although no precise English term will
565 translate either of the first two categories, the former embraced the important whites—owners of large plantations, wealthy merchants, and high officials of the state; the latter designated all other whites of the colony—shopkeepers, artisans, small planters with only a few slaves, little people busily engaged in social climbing, and shiftless whites lazily slipping downhill. The 28,000 gens de couleur included all free persons who had African blood in their veins.

It is highly probable that without this third group there would have been no violent outbreak in 1791, no achievement of final independence in 1804, and no such caste system as exists in Haiti at the present time.

175 That there were free people of color in the colony was due to a
code of laws emanating from Louis XIV, who died in 1715, years
567 before Saint-Domingue had shown any signs of becoming prosper-
641 ous. In 1685 the Grand Monarch had issued a Code Noir to cover all
648 colonial dealings with Negro slaves. Article 59 specified that when a slave secured his liberty, either by cash purchase or by gift of his white master or parent, he was to be regarded as a full French citizen. He might own land, dispose of his wealth as he pleased, bear testimony in legal cases (even against whites), marry as he pleased, vote, bear arms, travel where he wished, embrace any career, own slaves or free them. To Louis and his ministers such provisions probably did not seem particularly magnanimous, for race prejudice was not a characteristic of the French, and it could hardly have been supposed that enough slaves would ever be freed to create much of a problem.

175 In the course of the next hundred years, however, many persons of
563 color in the colony achieved their freedom, and with it French citi-
641 zenship. The greatest number had been granted their liberty because they were the children of white masters by Negro mothers—for race mixture is always a concomitant of white ownership of black slaves.
● [595] Concubinage was so regularly practiced in Saint-Domingue that it
was considered quite normal. If many of the first freedmen were
563 mulattoes (half-white, half-Negro), by 1791 their descendants might
175 be quadroons, octoroons, or near-whites, for consciousness of skin

3. The gens de couleur were also often called *affranchis*, freedmen, a term which strictly would be inaccurate as applied to a free colored person of the second or third generation.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 took their place in the business life of the towns, sending their chil-
565 dren to parish schools. Colored youths served in the colonial constabulary and in the militia, acquiring a knowledge of arms and warfare later to be useful to them.

175 Estimates of their wealth vary. Some say that in 1791 they owned a
565 third of all the land in the colony and a fourth of all the slaves; others
423 more conservative put the figure at one fifth of each. Even this is
567 impressive enough to account for much of the growing jealousy of
162 their position. And by 1791 the whites outnumbered them only ten to seven.[5]

562 White women in general added their support to a movement in-
595 stigated by the petits blancs for discrimination against all gens de couleur. Many wives felt resentment against the colored people be-
563 cause of the frequency with which their husbands took colored mis-
175 tresses.[6] Moreover, the wealth of the colony attracted an immigration
581 of Frenchwomen with marriageable but undowered daughters—in the candid French phrase, "*de filles à marier et sans dot*"—who seem to have assumed that young planters would want white French wives, even though impecunious ones. It was a shock to quite a number of them to discover that a colonial youth might prefer a colored girl
175 who brought a dowry with her.[7]

565 Indiscreet affranchis often gave additional grounds for resentment against their group. Wishing to dissociate themselves altogether
829 from their Negro ancestry and to be assured of social eminence, some accounted for their dark complexions by reference to obscure Indian progenitors. On this ground many secured letters patent from local government officials, of course on payment of a fee, legally estab-

162 5. The census listed 40,000 whites to 28,000 colored. L. E. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description . . . de la partie française . . . de Saint-Domingue* (Philadelphia, 1797), I, 285, gave the following figures for 1790:

	Square Leagues	*Population*	*Whites*	*Affranchis*	*Slaves*
North	480	195,000	16,000	9,000	170,000
West	820	194,000	14,000	12,500	168,000
South	186	130,000	10,000	6,500	114,000
Totals	1,486	519,000	40,000	28,000	452,000

6. One governor reported to Paris that he considered sexual jealousy the greatest cause of unrest in the colony.

7. See Sir Harry H. Johnston, *The Negro in the New World* (New York, 1910), p. 141.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 643 648 be explained only as efforts to win outside respect for his kingdom of blacks. He was aware of the scorn in which white people held the apparent absence of all sexual morality in Haiti, and so set about introducing reforms. Even as a general he had opposed the dissoluteness of Dessalines.

175 643 582 671 581 [595] In an early pronouncement Christophe proscribes concubinage (by which he meant the unmarried unions of the people), libertinage, and "all those disorders which weaken the family." To proscribe an evil is not necessarily to put an end to it, however, and so he tried also to persuade and educate his people to the habit of full legal marriage. His steps at persuasion were various. In speeches he urged weddings upon his subjects; yet a man could see little reason for tying himself to one woman for life, assuming *legal* responsibilities at an expense, when already from experience he knew that he could have a woman's loyalty without the ceremony. Although weddings somewhat increased after 1806, Christophe's verbal campaign was a failure. He next tried force. In one town he made all the females assemble in the public square; then, separating the married from the unmarried, commanded his royal guards to advance, each to select an unmarried woman who should become his wife. At other times he selected young men and women by lot and had them married "by their King's authority." No nobleman in the kingdom could long remain unwed: indeed, Queen Victoria might have approved Christophe's solicitude for the moral uprightness of the Haitian court.

175 671 848 428 Another means by which Christophe forced his people into formal marriage was the indirect one of attacking property rights. Realizing that Dessalines' law by guaranteeing inheritance to natural children encouraged people to remain unmarried, he rescinded it by one of the first acts of his rule.[5] This act reëstablished French practice, making it all but impossible for illegitimate children to inherit anything. Most persons of property found this law persuasive where words had left them cold. Madiou thought the law "excessively severe in a country where nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of the population were born out of wedlock,"[6] and he spoke of its disharmony with general practice at the time. Actually,

5. Law of March 25, 1807.
6. Madiou, *op. cit.*, III, 411.

it seems not radically to have affected the masses but only the fairly well-to-do.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Another observation must be set

588 162 alongside this professional testimony: many men, both aristocrats and common folk, have more than one placée, yet there seem to be enough women for Haitian men.

●595 565 Although peasants in Haiti are rarely married by formal ceremony, the family is a dominant characteristic of peasant life. This sums up the domestic situation among the masses.

When it is recalled that the Negro, from the time he was taken from Africa on slave ships, had almost no experience of the European tradition of conventional marriage, one has a partial explanation of the absence of peasant weddings. For the rest the people are realists, arguing that a man should have as many women as he needs to carry on the economy of his land holdings; the law forbids polygamy, but exerts no control over plural unions which are entered without formal ceremony. It has therefore come to be regularly accepted in the mores that practical need should determine the number of women to one man. If a peasant increases his land holdings, if he buys or inherits a second farm on the other side of the mountain, it is only common sense for him to take a second woman, raise a family by her, and thus have an overseer and a labor supply resident on each of his properties. Everyone in the community knows what women belong to what man, and custom strongly taboos any tampering with another man's spouses.

162 581 163 Only the Catholic Church has statistics to reveal the infrequency of marriages among the masses. The story was the same a century ago as now. In the important parish of Gonaïves in 1825 the proportion of marriages to births was as 1 to 62; in 1826 they were as 1 to 54.[3] Both figures include marriages and births among the élite, and Gonaïves is a town: in the countryside the proportion of marriages would be much lower. The parish priest of Carrefours, which numbers about a thousand households, stated that in 1936 there had been only ten marriages among his six or eight thousand parishioners. [848] Another parish priest estimated that only one half of one per cent of the baptisms performed were of children born to parents legally married. Even in the parish of Pétionville, home of many élite, a priest estimates that less than one child in five is born to married 595 parents. A century ago a commandant at Léogane, speaking of a high army officer, said, "He is my brother-in-law: I live with his sister." Near Port-au-Prince lived a rural police captain with six plaçage

3. Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, II, 119–120.

spouses,

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

595 spouses. In the hills more than one peasant house was surrounded, as it would have been in Dahomey, by huts in each of which lived a "wife" of the farmer. Matters are not very different nowadays, except that men have learned the wisdom of not having their women live too close to each other.

162 From the guesses of experienced observers, it is probably not far
582 wide of the mark to estimate that only one couple out of a hundred is married according to the approved mode of the Western World.

The State apparently does not care; or, to put it another way, government officials know how impossible it would be to alter a custom confirmed by long usage; one which, moreover, works well enough, since it causes practically no violence or legal cases for the
795 State to attend to. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, is eager
582 to persuade the people to observe the sacrament of holy matrimony. The priests have assiduously endeavored to explore the peasant mind in order to learn what deters the average person from formal marriage. The reasons for the indifference to weddings might be listed as follows:

581 1. Inertia. There is no convincing reason to vary time-honored
178 practice which works well enough, particularly since a wedding is likely to cause a great disturbance of daily routine and even a measure of jealousy on the part of those who have not made the display.

581 2. Suspicion of legal documents and civil officials. People who put
829 their names (or marks) on documents and who call the attention of governmental officials to themselves are almost sure to rue the day. A man knows what can be demanded of him by custom in his informal unions; but who can say what the law would hold him responsible for?

581 3. Expense. The civil license costs; the priest and his assistants
585 must be paid; to be married in church, one should wear shoes; if one wears shoes, one should dress up to them; a church wedding calls for a feast. At least two days must be spent away from work if the proper formalities are carried out.

581 4. Common sense in an inevitable situation. Both State and
595 Church would try to limit a man to one wife; prosperity might demand two or more. Is it sensible to discriminate against a second woman, who might be just as much help to a man as his legal wife?

581 The Church through its priests works unceasingly to answer these
794 arguments, but without notable success. Inertia is hard to overcome;

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

CHAPTER VII

PROPERTY, WEALTH, AND THE FAMILY

596 THE WORD "family" as employed in Haiti can be understood only in terms of a broader meaning than is given it in Europe and America, where it describes only the most immediate relationship group. Though in Haiti this type of organization, consisting of mother, father, and children, lies at the base of its social structure, the Haitian "family" includes a wide range of relatives, direct and collateral, on the sides of both parents. The immediate family is thus but a part of a larger group, to which it is in many instances subordinate.

611 198 197 It becomes apparent, from even so brief a statement, that Haitian society has not retained that exclusive emphasis on descent in the maternal or the paternal line that characterizes most of the civilizations of Africa. And while a more detailed discussion of the manner in which African and European traditions are combined in Haitian culture must be reserved for later pages, this much may at the moment be made clear: The Africans who peopled Haiti, coming from cultures where descent is counted solely on the side of the mother or the father, and coming into contact with the French, whose custom binds children with equal strength to the families of both parents, molded both traditions into the social forms found

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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today not only in Mirebalais, but, in their essential outlines, throughout the Republic.

The larger relationship grouping originates in the immediate family, and the formation of new extended families is a continuing arc. Characteristically, the process begins when a man leaves the habitation of his father and, with his wife, settles on land somewhat remote from the dwellings of either his people or those of his wife. As the sons of this couple grow up and marry, they make their homes near that of their father, so that in time a group of immediate families related in the paternal line clusters about the dwelling of this original settler, forming a habitation. The continuation of the process depends upon the amount of land available to the group; in any event, given enough time, land to permit all the male descendants of the founder to support themselves and their families will be lacking, so that the younger men will repeat the process that has been described, and themselves become the founders of new habitations whose members, with the passing of generations, will eventually be lost to the original group. While land is available, a young man is given several hectares by his father when he marries, and here he establishes his household. If the family have prospered, additional land is bought as more young men grow up, so that the relationship group may become a community of considerable size.

In accordance with this rule of residence, only rarely will a man settle on the property of his wife's parents, since to do so reflects unfavorably on his personal status. When this does occur, it is probably because of a serious quarrel with his own people. In such a case, if his marriage endures, he becomes a quasi-member of his wife's family, but unless he has committed some extremely grave offense, such as publicly insulting or striking a parent or grandparent, he does not forfeit membership in his own group.[1] Similarly, the fact of his having settled away from the habitation of his family does not disinherit him, for, as will be seen, this occurs in but the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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591 596 428 rarest of instances, and only by fixed legal procedure, since mere verbal denial of family rights cannot deprive a person of his inheritance.

594 432 434 454 Within the immediate family it is the duty of the man to procure food for his wife and children. When his fields have been harvested, the produce is taken to the house and given to the wife, who retains a portion of it for the needs of the household and sells the surplus at the market, using the money to buy clothing and other necessaries for her husband, her children, and herself. A part of the sum she receives may be used to purchase animals to be used for transport, food, or breeding-purposes; and whatever money is left over is saved, particularly if a desirable plot of ground is available, or a mass and ceremony for the ancestors or promised rituals for the gods are in prospect. The woman, who is held to be more thrifty than the man, is thus the banker of the family. Her opinion is prized by her husband, and though a man has the legal right to dispose of a horse or a cow or his own land as he desires, in most households nothing would be done until [593] the wife was consulted. It is true that quarrels often arise concerning family funds held by the wife, especially when a man questions the accounting given him, or on occasion when he wants money to bet on a cock-fight or for drinking or other personal needs whose cost he does not care to have reviewed. But for many men the problem is quite well solved by the expedient of deducting a sum from his earnings without telling his wife that she has not been given the full amount.

596 It is only in relatively small matters that the membership of a household acts as a self-determining unit. In affairs of greater moment the extended family must figure, for despite the informality of its organization — at least as manifested in Mirebalais — and its lack of legal sanction, its power, especially as lodged in the old folk, is none the less real. It is because of this that it is said: "The peasant consults his elders about everything he does." When a transaction of some im-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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portance is being considered, particularly where the buying or selling of some land is involved, all the members of a habitation may be consulted and the opinion of the oldest man in the family, the "family head," is almost invariably followed. At the death of a man his widow inherits all his property for the duration of her lifetime or until she remarries. Her children by her dead husband, if minors, do not receive their inheritance at once, but the elders of the habitation of their father hold this property in trust for them and act as their guardians. The deities of the *vodun* cult are believed to be inherited in family lines, a tradition that gives the larger family one of its most pronouncedly African traits; while the accompanying African belief in the inheritance of the soul within the family, despite its existence in Mirebalais principally as a survival, is yet of importance in adding its sanction to help maintain the inner cohesion of the group.[2]

It may be well at this point to investigate the position, duties, and powers of the oldest male member of the group, who is the head of this informal extended family.[3] His house must be in the ancestral habitation, though he need not live in the same dwelling as his predecessor. Just as he is consulted on projects of a secular nature, his is the important voice in the worship of the ancestors and the family gods. He does not carry on the actual routine of the cult unless he is a priest, but no ceremony would be attempted without his consent and full instructions from him, and the call for the rite would be made in his name.

Examples of the exercise of his power in various circumstances are given. "He may threaten: 'Very well. If you will not listen, I am through. Do what you like.'" In such a case he will refuse "to extend his hand" when a member of his family meets some difficulty, and a man thus punished forfeits the outstanding economic advantage of belonging to his relationship group, the right to call on the members of his family for aid when he is in trouble. For otherwise all relatives

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596 626 help one who, for example, has run afoul of the law because of attendance at a forbidden *vodun* dance and needs a certain sum to pay a fine, or who in some dispute with a neighbor has had a judgment of the court entered against him. Obviously, therefore, the family head, who holds the power of withholding family support from one in need of it, is not flouted except under great provocation.

596 584 626 Another instance of the exercise of the family head's power is given when a man or woman desires to marry or to enter into the relationship of *plaçage* with someone held undesirable by the elders of his group. Should this oldest member in particular indicate his disapproval of the proposed match, it is most unlikely that the mating would take place. The reasons of the elders may be based on situations quite unknown to their younger relative who proposed the match; the existence of old enmities between the families of the two young people would perhaps necessitate inflicting the humiliation of a refusal when the "letter" was presented. If the young people persist, the elders may say: "Do what you like, but we will not support you," and should they fail to heed this warning, trouble for them is believed inescapable, since it is held that the elders thus place a curse on the new family. Nevertheless, when difficulties do arise that the two cannot cope with alone, the mother of the one in trouble would do her utmost to help, despite family displeasure, and would use all her gifts of persuasion to soften the attitude of the family elders until she succeeded in having the ones who had defied the family edict taken back into the group. Some degree of estrangement would persist and, as has been seen, might cause a man to find it desirable to make his home with his wife's people. The elders may also take the initiative in arranging marriages, exerting pressure on a reluctant young man whose inclinations have directed him elsewhere, in favor of a young woman of desirable family. But should such a marriage not

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be successful, he can count on the members of his family for financial and moral support. 596 584

These are not all the rights of the older members of the family, especially of the family head, over their juniors. All elders may punish by beating, though the oldest member of the family exercises that right most freely and may chastise those who are themselves grown men and women. If there is gossip about a boy or a girl, the family head calls the culprit to reprimand him or, if he believes the case a serious one, to beat him. Among the peasants, particularly, grown men go down on their knees before their elders, when so ordered, for a beating. Such punishments may be particularly severe if the culprit does not soon ask pardon, for since all who are older have the right to beat a younger relative, it sometimes happens that the punishment administered by the head of the family is not considered adequate, and another takes up the stick when the family head has put it down, so that two or three wands may be broken over the back of a stubborn offender. If such a one were to fight back, he would become "accursed," ceasing any longer to be considered a member of the family, and even though no legal steps might be taken to disinherit him, he would lose all caste. This right to beat is accorded by custom rather than by law, but an adult beaten by one of the elders of his own family would think long before he would sue. "There is always a consultation, and a man is discouraged from going to court." 596 627 [626] [691]

Lest the impression may have been given, in considering the role of the elders and their relationship to the younger members of the family, that it is those in the father's line alone who are concerned, it must be emphasized that relatives of both parents exercise substantial control over a person. More than this, since marriage constitutes an agreement between families as well as between an individual man and woman, it follows that both paternal and maternal grand- 596 [581] [603]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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596 [581] [603] parents are friendly toward each other, so that the conflict that might result from a division of authority rarely develops. Were it otherwise, it could easily happen that a person who had been ordered, or forbidden, to do something against his own wishes by the head of his paternal family would plead with the head of his mother's group and receive support to justify his disobedience. To most Haitians such a hypothetical incident was amusing to contemplate, for the elders are said always to work together. Rare is the occasion when one interferes with the decision of another, and never to the knowledge of the subject of such a decision.

596 888 626 A family elder who has no sons to care for him is well looked after by the other members of the group "until the grave." Fear as well as a moral obligation prompts this. "He might curse you," it is explained, or "He might say: 'Watch out for your own old age! You mistreated me in my old age, and you will suffer in yours.'" Such pronouncements are greatly dreaded, especially because of his control over the supernatural forces that aid or harm the family and its members.

428 The closeness of the tie between social institutions and economic life is most evident in the matter of inheritance. For though the prestige that accrues from the possession of wealth makes for strong competition through the exercise of individual initiative, yet supporting the struggle of an individual for the augmentation of his holdings are the forces of family sanction and family aid, while his very start in life is obtained primarily through the help of his relatives during their lifetime or the property he inherits from them at their death.

428 858 As has been suggested, all a man's children by a "legally" married wife inherit from him, or, if he has not espoused a wife by a Church wedding, the children of his *placée* wife or wives receive his property. Whether or not it is true that the 428 858 969 "legitimate" children inherit three quarters of the possessions of their father, the "natural" children one fourth, and

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One other aspect of the apportionment of the land of an estate remains to be considered, the matter of leaving land for the support of ancestral ceremonies. There is no general agreement in Mirebalais as to the customary practice. It was first stated that four or five *carreaux* of land, which a man himself had "held in trust," are added to the inheritance of the eldest son, to be similarly held by him. The "trustee" calls in the other members of the family to help work this land, and the proceeds from marketing its entire yield are devoted to the support of family rituals, or used for such other general purposes as aiding a member of the family who requires funds to save himself from disgrace, and the family from scandalous gossip.

The practice of alienating land to provide for the worship of the ancestors would appear to be common in the southern peninsula and in the plain of the Cul-de-Sac; and one person, not a native of Mirebalais, told how he found it impossible to buy some land he wished to acquire because it had been consecrated for this purpose. Certain men cited examples of land which had belonged to the "old, old people of the family," control of which was vested in the family head and could therefore never be divided or sold. But this is land where the family house of worship stands and where ceremonies for the family deities and ancestors are held, something not at all comparable with setting aside workable land to yield a yearly income for services of the dead. The closest resemblance to this found in Mirebalais is when a man or a woman during life sets aside a portion of land or other belongings, declaring: "When I die, dispose of this and with the proceeds care for the expenses of my funeral and discharge these obligations which I leave you." Other persons spoke of land, which having been in the family for a very long period of time may not be sold, since it had proved to be extremely good, and the "will of the ancients" is that it never be alienated. Those who men-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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tioned this latter instance advanced it as a possible alternative to the custom found elsewhere in Haiti, adding that it was the duty of the living to honor their ancestors, and not for the ancestors to make provision to honor themselves, particularly since the dead can enforce the discharge of this duty by sending illness, bad fortune, and death to those of their descendants who are remiss.

To a very appreciable degree, what is inherited forms the foundation of whatever wealth a man may accumulate during his lifetime. Yet there are few, among the peasants at least, who do not seek by all means to add to their heritage, for among those folk the ambition to obtain more and more land is a dominating one. To this end the peasant skimps and saves, depriving himself even of his important needs, until at the proper time some choice parcel of ground comes on the market.

How does a man go about accumulating the funds necessary to amass property? Ordinarily a young man is given a plot of ground by his father, and the produce, as mentioned, is marketed for him by his mother, who saves the proceeds for him. When he marries, his wife takes over this task, and together the two strive to extract as large earnings as possible from his plot. In addition, a man may take a *job*. Such work, always paid for by the unit rather than by the day or week, is usually that of cultivating a plot of ground for its owner, and the amount agreed upon is paid when the field has been harvested. The young man at the same time can also cultivate his own fields and participate in communal labor. Another way of adding to the earnings of his fields is to help the large landowners on their cotton plantations. This work is paid for in kind with baskets of cotton, which in turn are sold to factors who come from the coast to buy both large and small quantities. A man may also increase his income by working in the cane-fields or at the caldrons when the sirup is boiled. Each

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lighted. Chicken and rice may also be cooked for any god except Gede, while chocolate and rice with milk are favored, since it is said "the *loa* love desserts" — a commentary on the very immediate and human character of these spirits.

The actual baptism, or "washing of the head," is performed on the third day of the ceremony by a *vodun* priest or priestess who is a member of the family, though any member who has important *loa* and the necessary *connaissance* may officiate if the membership of the family includes no priest. As at any baptism, there must be a godfather and godmother, and preference is given those who are the parents of twins or are themselves twins. The officiant must be possessed at the time, since, it is said, "one *loa* baptizes another." Leaves of the basilique tree are steeped in perfumed cold water, and the hands of the one who baptizes are first immersed in the liquid; then, while songs of the *loa* and canticles of the Virgin are sung, he washes the head of the person to be baptized. Possession occurs immediately, and the new devotee lies back, half conscious, while all others kneel, seeking word from the *loa* to learn if it is satisfied. If an affirmative answer is given, all retire, the person possessed remaining in the room to sleep through the night. A "ball," but not a *vodun* dance, may celebrate the event either the next day or later, but this is not obligatory, and most often those present, after eating, quietly disperse. The following day the one who has been baptized goes to the family place of worship and greets those who have helped him. Only one further rite is necessary, and this solely when the *loa bossal* is revealed to be a hostile god. Then the *loa*, after having been baptized, is "restrained" by being placed in a jar and buried, so it cannot later emerge and trouble the family of the one to whom it has come.[13]

The ceremony of baptism, in Mirebalais, is in no sense a first step into any *vodun* hierarchy, for, as will be seen, no such hierarchy exists in this valley. One important priest there derives his power from *loa* that have never been bap-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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[2] Mackenzie, ii, 124.
[3] St. John, 162.
[4] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 201–2.
[5] Price-Mars (I), 205, gives this as the proper age for a man of the region of Kenskoff, near Port-au-Prince, to marry.
[6] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 216.
[7] Ibid., 211–12. A facsimile of this letter is given on pp. 213–15.
[8] Ibid., 216–17.
[9] Mackenzie, i, 38.
[10] St. John, 145–6.
[11] St. John, 145.
[12] Mackenzie, i, 57. Wirkus, 222, mentions a case of polygyny on the Isle à Gonave where the wives apparently inhabited one compound with their mutual husband.

CHAPTER VII

[1] This seems to differ in various parts of Haiti; thus, near Port-au-Prince, the father of the girl "designates to his future son-in-law the land where his house is to be built," according to Price-Mars (I), 216.
[2] Cf. Parsons (I), 163.
[3] Among the obligations of the peasant mentioned by Price-Mars (I), 34, is "the respect due to the elders who are the repositories of tradition."

CHAPTER VIII

[1] Whether or not *vodun* is a religion, a problem which Haitian writers (e.g., Price-Mars (I), 32 ff.) are prone to debate at length, need not be considered here, since to an ethnologist the answer is too patently affirmative to require discussion.
[2] St. Mery, i, 45–6.
[3] Ibid., i, 46.
[4] De Vassière, 178–9.
[5] Dorsainvil (I), 156 ff.; Price-Mars (I), 39.
[6] For a useful resumé of statements concerning Haitian serpent-worship, the grievous misunderstanding of which is an outstanding characteristic of this honest but ill-conceived work, see Williams, *passim*.
[7] Price-Mars (I), 118 ff., also records his belief that serpent-worship is far less important than it has been represented, saying: "We believe it to be well-nigh abolished." Seabrook, 310–12, also holds to this view.
[8] Parsons (I), 157, states: "There is little or no philosophic or religious expression of the theory to be

For many Haitians, the struggle to obtain a piece of ground and to hold onto it is the very heart of the struggle for existence. On Morne l'Hôpital in 1932 I knew a man who owned ten acres of gardens. He had it planted in bananas and plantains, yams, and cotton. He had two cows and a calf and a grove of mango trees and coconut palms. His house was clean, tidy, and by Haitian standards well furnished. Eighteen years later he had less than an acre of land, no trees, no cotton, and no cattle. His family had become impoverished. He had three grown children and virtually no land to leave to them except that on which the house stood. His troubles began with a lawsuit over his land title. He sold his cattle to raise money to pay his court expenses. He lost half of his land as a result of the lawsuit, most of it the part with the good trees. Later, he sold more land to raise "eating money," and then rented it from the new owner. He could not grow enough cash crops to pay the rent and was finally evicted. Today he has not enough ground left on which to grow food for himself and his wife the year round.

The diminution of adequate landholdings has resulted in the disappearances of many of the *lacours* (hamlets) that were a familiar sight a few decades ago. Young people traditionally built their houses near the family homesteads until there were five, six, or a dozen houses in a group. There was a natural family community which shared a common social life and the work of the fields. But as the population increased and the landholdings shrank, young people and old began to move away in search of new land, or work in the cities. Often where the lacour remains it is only as a settlement of landless house renters who work where they may for wages.

Economic refugees from rural areas seek wage work in the cities, returning to their original homes only on special festive days for family reunions. The men find employment as gardeners, servants, construction laborers, and stevedores. Some find work on the sugar and sisal plantations, others in craft industries making straw hats, baskets, shoes, chairs, and mahogany ware for export. The struggle in the big city of Port-au-Prince is for many of them worse than the poverty they left behind. There are the inevitable slums and the constant threat of hunger. It is in the big city that one hears most often the words *mein grand goat* (I am hungry), and least often the words *Bondieu bon* (God is good).

The land hunger increases, and the overflow of the mountain settlements continues to move cityward. In former years there was a trend toward emigration across the eastern border into the Dominican Republic, which has a population density roughly one third or one fourth that of Haiti. This trend was checked, temporarily at least, in 1937 by

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eight years old, and the same room until they are ten or twelve. 513
They are counted on to sleep soundly enough, but it happens
that a child sometimes awakens and, unknown to his parents,
observes them. Though brothers and sisters sometimes con-
tinue to sleep together until the age of puberty, it is said that [835]
attempts at intercourse between them rarely occur, for, ac-
cording to Haitians, the children gradually sense that this is
regarded as bad, and a boy approaching puberty who wishes to
satisfy his desire for sex play goes to find a "little neighbor."
Later, when the nubile girls are withdrawn from the com- 864
pany of the boys, the latter play with younger girls who have
not yet reached puberty, or carry on "affairs" with those
older than themselves; indeed, it is from these latter that they
obtain full knowledge of sexual procedure.

What has been said concerning the growth and training of 597
children applies mainly to those who live with their parents.
No discussion of the development of the child, however, can [184]
neglect to mention the widespread institution of a form of
quasi-adoption, found not only in Mirebalais, but in all other
parts of Haiti. By this is not meant legal adoption, though
that, too, is known and at times occurs. Quasi-adoption in-
volves children who are called "*'ti moun qui 'reté à caille
'oun*—small folk who stay at your house," or, more briefly,
'ti moun. They are the children, often of peasants, "given" to
friends who live in a town or, as is the case with some families
of Mirebalais, "given" to friends or acquaintances living in
the capital. To what extent this relationship offers a means for
the exploitation of children in other parts of Haiti cannot be
said, though tales of abuses of it, especially in Port-au-Prince,
are heard. To give a person a child in this manner is in Mire- [572]
balais regarded as a token of friendship, and such children as
were observed, though poorly clothed, were fed not much dif-
ferently from the children of the families with which they
were sent to live. When the *'ti moun* grows older, he leaves and
returns to his own home, though the relationship between

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597 foster-father and child may continue friendly if the young person has been well treated. Such a child repays the cost of keeping him by helping in the garden and by running errands. If his parents wish him to receive uninterrupted schooling in the secular or Catholic school, they must recompense the person responsible for the child for any cost this may be to him.

86 It is in a manner such as described in this chapter, then, that the children of Mirebalais and, to a large degree, of other parts of Haiti are born and live the earlier years of their lives, completing the training which equips them for participation in their culture. The boy has learned how to farm or to carry on whatever other calling he will inherit from his father, while the girl has been prepared for marriage and the work of the household. By means of their play-life both boys and girls have learned the technique of sex behavior. In the matter of attitudes toward other members of the family and toward the ancestral spirits, as well as in their relations to the saints of the Church and the gods of the *vodun* cult, they are also prepared, having in the latter case learned to sing and dance, and, if young men, to play the drums that sound the rhythms of the *vodun* rites. It is at this point in their lives, then, that these young people as adults take their proper places in their society, establishing their own families and carrying on the tradition of their people.

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belong to the father, who, in turn, is the legally recognized 582
father of all the offspring of his wife unless he divorces her — 671
something which, because of Church regulations, occurs but 858
rarely. Children born outside legal marriage have no right to 851
the name of their father. Such a one is entered under his moth- 848
er's name in the record of births, though he may and often does 858
take his father's name in school or later in life, this ultimately 551
becoming the name by which he is known and which he hands
on to his children. It is in the inheritance of the father's prop- 428
erty that children born of the various types of matings are 858
said to be most strongly differentiated, though it was particu- 848
larly with this method of distributing heritable goods reported in Mirebalais that officials in the capital disagreed. The assertion is made that while the children of a "legal" wife inherit three quarters of the estate, and the other "natural" children receive one fourth, the "illegitimate" offspring have no legal right to any of the dead man's property. They must either be provided for by their father before his death or be aided on occasion by a natural brother who has inherited from their common father and feels a moral obligation toward these children of their father. Children of plural 595
wives call each other by the terms "brother" and "sister," 593
and in some instances they get on fairly well together. More [601]
generally, however, their attitudes toward one another are colored by those of their mothers, so that verbal if not physical encounters may take place when they meet.

Where, as perhaps in the majority of cases, there is a 593
monogamous union, "legal" or "*placée*," cemented by mutual affection and mutual interest in the future of the children, life goes on calmly. Each spouse performs the tasks allotted by custom, and the children are reared in an atmosphere which varies with the fortunes and temperaments of those who make up the household. Fathers are said to prefer their daughters, and mothers their sons, among their children, but for this the Haitian has no explanation other than the phrase: "This is natural."

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857 hide-and-seek and enjoy story-telling sessions, when the tales of 'Ti Malice and Bouki are recounted. Still older ones make drums out of jars and "arrange a dance." Little girls play with dolls made for them by the older children, while boys with sticks for horses organize themselves into "armies" with their
852 seniors as officers. When a child's teeth fall out, a minor ceremony is performed. As each tooth is detached, the child throws it on the roof of the mother's house, saying:

[539]

"Rat, rat, rat,	"Rat, rat, rat,
M'jet' yun bel' 'ti dent ba 'ou,	I give you a nice little tooth,
Ba'm yun vieille dent."	Give me an old tooth."

871 At this same time a beginning of formal education is made, especially if the child lives in the town or near enough to it to
872 allow him to reach one of the schools there. These schools are under both secular and Catholic auspices, and in them the pupil is instructed in the rudiments of European education, learning to read and write and to do simple problems in arith-
873 metic. If he shows proficiency and the means of his family permit, he may go on to a secondary school at Port-au-Prince or some other center; in the main, however, this schooling is all he ever receives, if he is permitted this much.

861 It is not to be supposed that a child is allowed to grow up
593 without learning how to conduct himself in accordance with
602 the traditional code of Haitian behavior, for the punishment that follows departures from this code is always both prompt and extremely painful, beating with sticks being the mode of correction most often employed. The mechanisms of education and control operate the more effectively because they are exercised by a fairly large group of persons, which includes not only the father and mother of the child, but also his grandparents, his uncles and aunts on both sides of the family, and
603 his older brothers, sisters, and cousins. Less restraint is exer-
593 cised before grandparents than other relations, for while there
604

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602 the traditional code of Haitian behavior, for the punishment that follows departures from this code is always both prompt and extremely painful, beating with sticks being the mode of correction most often employed. The mechanisms of education and control operate the more effectively because they are exercised by a fairly large group of persons, which includes not only the father and mother of the child, but also his grandparents, his uncles and aunts on both sides of the family, and
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1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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At about the age of seven or eight the children's play-life is invaded by the serious work which they must increasingly assume. According to their sex, they are instructed by father or mother, each parent teaching the child the work he will be most occupied with as he matures. For some children, naturally, this education is deferred longer than for others, but, as a rule, boys of four or five may be seen playing about the field "helping" father by bringing him a leaf with which to light his cigarette, or "hoeing" in company with him, while girls are early permitted the pleasure of accompanying their mothers to market. By observing his father at work and by helping in small tasks the boy gradually learns how to do a man's work, until at about the age of fifteen he himself can cultivate a garden. Two or three years later he is given a field of his own and seed with which to sow it. The produce from it he brings to his mother to sell for him, and she keeps what money it brings, so that he will have his savings when he wishes to marry. Little girls, for whom acquaintance with the techniques of selling in the market is desirable, are given small articles to dispose of, and the proceeds belong to them, though some mothers demand an accounting from the young tradeswomen as a further measure of training. A woman also teaches her daughter to sew, to cook, and to wash and iron, instruction which is continued until a girl, ready to be given in marriage, is able to manage all of a woman's work.

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584 in the same district, the background of the young man is well enough known so that no investigation is necessary, though unfailingly a long and formal discussion of the suitor, his qualities, and his prospects ensues. If his home is some distance away, however, meticulous inquiries are made not only concerning the young man and his immediate family, but of
584 his ancestry as well. Should the suitor live near the home of
212 the young woman, as usually happens, his own parents come with a *lettre de demand*. In earlier days the "letter" was written on flowered paper with a lacy border, but today plain colored paper does very well. When presented, it is wrapped
[603] in a green silk handkerchief, "for hope" — the handkerchief
[822] costs about five gourdes, and a similar amount is given the scribe — and is usually carried by the oldest man of the family; that is to say, the paternal grandfather if living, or if he is dead, the father, accompanied by the mother and per-
[178] haps the other grandparents. Today it is said that in the valley of Mirebalais the custom of presenting these letters of request is often disregarded, but is by no means extinct.[7]

The family of the girl is always apprised of the exact time of the visit, and refreshments are on hand. No reply is given at the time of the delivery of the "letter," since the families of both the father and the mother of the girl must consent to the match before it can be finally approved. However, at the stage of the courtship which the presentation of a "letter" implies, this delayed answer is a matter of form, for if the proposal had not been acceptable, the girl would not have been allowed to see the suitor. The refusal of a "letter" has
[578] been known to occur, but this is regarded as a deadly insult, and deep enmity between the families follows. Should the family of the girl, not wishing to be abrupt, accept the "letter" and proffer refreshments to its bearers, but later return the same "letter" as a sign of rejection, even this would be
584 bitterly resented. Under such circumstances the young man
832 takes steps to obtain revenge by providing himself with a
578

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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be successful, he can count on the members of his family for financial and moral support. 596 534

These are not all the rights of the older members of the family, especially of the family head, over their juniors. All elders may punish by beating, though the oldest member of the family exercises that right most freely and may chastise those who are themselves grown men and women. If there is gossip about a boy or a girl, the family head calls the culprit to reprimand him or, if he believes the case a serious one, to beat him. Among the peasants, particularly, grown men go down on their knees before their elders, when so ordered, for a beating. Such punishments may be particularly severe if the culprit does not soon ask pardon, for since all who are older have the right to beat a younger relative, it sometimes happens that the punishment administered by the head of the family is not considered adequate, and another takes up the stick when the family head has put it down, so that two or three wands may be broken over the back of a stubborn offender. If such a one were to fight back, he would become "accursed," ceasing any longer to be considered a member of the family, and even though no legal steps might be taken to disinherit him, he would lose all caste. This right to beat is accorded by custom rather than by law, but an adult beaten by one of the elders of his own family would think long before he would sue. "There is always a consultation, and a man is discouraged from going to court." 596 627 [626] [691]

Lest the impression may have been given, in considering the role of the elders and their relationship to the younger members of the family, that it is those in the father's line alone who are concerned, it must be emphasized that relatives of both parents exercise substantial control over a person. More than this, since marriage constitutes an agreement between families as well as between an individual man and woman, it follows that both paternal and maternal grand- 596 [581] [603]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

596 parents are friendly toward each other, so that the conflict
[581] that might result from a division of authority rarely develops.
[603] Were it otherwise, it could easily happen that a person who had been ordered, or forbidden, to do something against his own wishes by the head of his paternal family would plead with the head of his mother's group and receive support to justify his disobedience. To most Haitians such a hypothetical incident was amusing to contemplate, for the elders are said always to work together. Rare is the occasion when one interferes with the decision of another, and never to the knowledge of the subject of such a decision.

596 A family elder who has no sons to care for him is well
888 looked after by the other members of the group "until the
626 grave." Fear as well as a moral obligation prompts this. "He might curse you," it is explained, or "He might say: 'Watch out for your own old age! You mistreated me in my old age, and you will suffer in yours.'" Such pronouncements are greatly dreaded, especially because of his control over the supernatural forces that aid or harm the family and its members.

428 The closeness of the tie between social institutions and economic life is most evident in the matter of inheritance. For though the prestige that accrues from the possession of wealth makes for strong competition through the exercise of individual initiative, yet supporting the struggle of an individual for the augmentation of his holdings are the forces of family sanction and family aid, while his very start in life is obtained primarily through the help of his relatives during their lifetime or the property he inherits from them at their death.

428 As has been suggested, all a man's children by a "legally"
858 married wife inherit from him, or, if he has not espoused a wife by a Church wedding, the children of his *placée* wife or wives receive his property. Whether or not it is true that the
428 "legitimate" children inherit three quarters of the posses-
858 sions of their father, the "natural" children one fourth, and
769

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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857 hide-and-seek and enjoy story-telling sessions, when the tales of 'Ti Malice and Bouki are recounted. Still older ones make drums out of jars and "arrange a dance." Little girls play with dolls made for them by the older children, while boys with sticks for horses organize themselves into "armies" with their
852 seniors as officers. When a child's teeth fall out, a minor ceremony is performed. As each tooth is detached, the child throws it on the roof of the mother's house, saying:

[539]

"Rat, rat, rat,	"Rat, rat, rat,
M'jet' yun bel' 'ti dent ba 'ou,	I give you a nice little tooth,
Ba'm yun vieille dent."	Give me an old tooth."

871 At this same time a beginning of formal education is made, especially if the child lives in the town or near enough to it to
872 allow him to reach one of the schools there. These schools are under both secular and Catholic auspices, and in them the pupil is instructed in the rudiments of European education, learning to read and write and to do simple problems in arith-
873 metic. If he shows proficiency and the means of his family permit, he may go on to a secondary school at Port-au-Prince or some other center; in the main, however, this schooling is all he ever receives, if he is permitted this much.

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769 17 a *mangé* is given, and that evening, when the feast ends, dances are held. Two or three *tonnelles* are provided, the most important of these being the one where the Martinique cycle, the social dances most beloved by the ancestors, is danced. In one of the remaining two a European *bal* is held, and in the other are the *vodun* dancers. Thus even in connection with a commemorative Church mass for the dead the *mangé morts* and the dancing of African dances are included.

595 177 178 [554] The institution of plural marriage, which is socially recognized though not legally sanctioned, is obviously African. Though the *placée* is held in respect and her place in society carries no reproach for herself or her children because of any connotation of immorality, it is of significance for an understanding of the manner of cultural change that prestige in marriage goes with the monogamic union blessed by the Church, and that the "wife"—the woman who is addressed as "Madame"—holds definitely higher social position than the *placée*. Officially the Haitian State is in accord with the position of the Church and recognizes only the European monogamic marriage. Socially, however, African plural marriage is not only tolerated but accepted as a matter of course, and in those instances where plural marriage takes on its most exuberant form, as when men of position have as many as six or seven *placées* in addition to a legal wife, its very size tends to give such a family group, or at least its head, the enviable esteem of his fellow-citizens.

17 [593] [606] [583] Within the family, the deference toward older members and the duties and attitudes toward parents-in-law are African both in form and in spirit. The exaction of guarantees from a young man before marriage, and the necessity of his proving to the family of his fiancée that he can support her, are perhaps in their generalized form universals, but as found in Haiti show once more a retention of specific aboriginal traditions. On the other hand, such aspects of marriage as the [584] formal *lettre de demand* sent when a match is arranged, or the

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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his fourth or fifth month, he is reprimanded for laziness if late in sitting up, and when he is taught to walk his parents call out: "Come, lazy one! Come on!" He receives no physical punishment, however, until somewhat older. Thus, for example, if after a child can crawl he is told not to go beyond the threshold, he is scolded the first two or three times he disobeys, but after this he is beaten with a small stick on the buttocks or thighs. Similar means are used to teach him at the same age not to go near the fire, to avoid the thorny cacti used to fence gardens, not to put things in his mouth, and — especially because of black magic — not to pick up anything from the ground. Training for bowel and bladder control is begun shortly after birth and is continued at every opportunity the mother may have to pick up the child, so that he is usually fairly well trained when a year old, though complete control is achieved only after two years or more. A child who wets his mat is beaten, but "not too hard."

Baptism takes place when all is in readiness for the ceremony, a matter of a month or two after birth, unless the child is seriously ill, in which case he is baptized immediately. The fee of 2.50 gourdes to the civil officer who registers the birth is paid by the father. The godfather pays a similar amount to the priest for baptizing the infant, and in adddition, if he desires and is able, he may both aid the godmother in meeting the expenses of dressing the child and give the mother a gift. The godmother furnishes the child with a shirt, a dress, a bonnet — "a pretty one" — stockings, shoes, and, if she can afford it, silk for a ribbon-trimmed coverlet. These gifts are obligatory, and even where a hasty baptism of a sick child has made it impossible to provide properly for his outfitting, if he survives, his mother is given a present of money by both godparents so she can procure this finery.

As in most Catholic countries, the godparents play an important role in the life of their godchild. Not only do they "stand in the place of father and mother" at his baptism, but

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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608 remembrances are expected from them on birthdays or saints' days, while the young person, when older, often brings his problems to them, knowing that they will give him their most disinterested advice. A man may turn to his godparents for aid before asking it of his family, for they are regarded as truest of friends. Nor does he stand in awe of them as he does of his older relations. There is a free joking give-and-take between godparent and godchild, which reflects this attitude of warm affection. A person even stands in a special relationship to the children of his godparents, calling them "baptismal brothers" or "baptismal sisters." Among the peasants, though 608 not among the inhabitants of the larger centers, not only mar- 582 riage but even those non-Church unions otherwise socially sanctioned are frowned upon between "baptismal brothers and sisters." And Mirebalais has it that when Church marriage is contemplated by two such individuals, special authorization from the Archbishop must first be obtained.[4]

851 Saturday is the day favored for baptisms, permitting as it 852 does the child to be brought to town on a market day. The 608 mother rarely attends, and usually the father is also absent when the godparents bring the infant to the baptismal font, where the priest gives him his name and receives him into the Church. Later in the day the parents are visited by their friends and relatives, who, if they can afford it, bring gifts for the child and partake of the drinks and refreshments that are provided.

851 Following the Church baptism at an interval which varies 852 with differing circumstances, the father and mother and the 782 godfather and godmother present the child to the family deities. Arriving at the family habitation the father says:

[539] *"Mystères-o, nou' même qui te après Grand Maître protège et delivre, moin vin' remercie nou'. Et en même temps main petite la pou' gè'dé pou' moin. Pas quitté mauvaise lawou gagné l'empi' sou' li. Ba li force, santé,*

1: Herskovits 2-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

lighted. Chicken and rice may also be cooked for any god except Gede, while chocolate and rice with milk are favored, since it is said "the *loa* love desserts" — a commentary on the very immediate and human character of these spirits.

The actual baptism, or "washing of the head," is performed on the third day of the ceremony by a *vodun* priest or priestess who is a member of the family, though any member who has important *loa* and the necessary connaissance may officiate if the membership of the family includes no priest. As at any baptism, there must be a godfather and godmother, and preference is given those who are the parents of twins or are themselves twins. The officiant must be possessed at the time, since, it is said, "one *loa* baptizes another." Leaves of the bastique tree are steeped in perfumed water, and the hands of the one who baptizes are first immersed in the liquid; then, while songs of the *loa* and canticles of the Virgin are sung, he washes the head of the person to be baptized. Possession occurs immediately, and the new devotee lies back, half conscious, while all others kneel, seeking word from the *loa* to learn if it is satisfied. If an affirmative answer is given, all retire, the person possessed remaining in the room to sleep through the night. A "ball," but not a *vodun* dance, may celebrate the event either the next day or later, but this is not obligatory, and most often those present, after eating, quietly disperse. The following day the one who has been baptized goes to the family place of worship and greets those who have helped him. Only one further rite is necessary, and this solely when the *loa bossal* is revealed to be a hostile god. Then the *loa*, after having been baptized, is "restrained" by being placed in a jar and buried, so it cannot later emerge and trouble the family of the one to whom it has come.[10]

The ceremony of baptism, in Mirebalais, is in no sense a first step into any *vodun* hierarchy, for, as will be seen, no such hierarchy exists in this valley. One important priest there derives his power from *loa* that have never been bap-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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cade for Damballa, a red print for Ogun, and a third, a flowered blue material, for all the other gods, were first made. They were ruffled at the bottom, with strips of the material, attached as are apron-strings, to hold them in place. Four eggs, three "native" candles, three white candles, white flour, corn flour, two cassava cakes, two biscuits, three small-sized loaves of bread, two bottles of *kola, clairin,* and holy water, were also provided for the baptism. Finally on the appointed day — a Saturday, so that the drums could afterwards be used for a *vodun* dance — the drums, drumsticks, and iron, with the dresses and the food that had been provided for the ceremony, were taken to the scene of the rite, a habitation where a *tonnelle* had been built for the accompanying dance.

The ceremony began at about five o'clock in the afternoon, the drums being dressed by their godmothers. Just as a child who is to be baptized in church must have godparents, so drums must have their godparents, and following the logic of this position, since the owner of the drums is regarded as their father, he uses the terms *compère* and *commère* for those who have "stood up" with his drums, just as he would for those who might sponsor his children. The *prêt' savanne* first called for some twigs from an orange tree and a bit of cotton, as the drums, standing on end, were covered with a clean white cloth. Grouped about them and ranged behind the officiant were the owner and godparents of the drums, holding lighted candles in their hands, with which they made the sign of the cross from time to time. As the prayers began, the participants crossed themselves, and the *prêt' savanne* sprinkled the drums with holy water, using a spray of orange-leaves. Among his prayers were the Credo, the Ave Maria, the Pater Noster, and the Salve, interspersed with hymns sung by the assembled group. After about half an hour of prayer the officiant, holding an egg in his hand, made the sign of the cross three times over each of the drumheads. Ordinarily the eggs would have been broken, their contents rubbed on the drum-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

[600] [114]

[6] Price-Mars (I), 206, note 1, and Wirkus, 215, define the term *combite*.

[7] Wirkus, 51, 288, differentiates these work-drums from other types.

[8] Wirkus, 191, has described the efficiency with which an organized Haitian work-group accomplished its task on the road.

[9] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 146–8.

[10] A good description of a Haitian market as observed in 1835 is to be found in Hanna, 53–6.

[11] Compare Mackenzie, i, 28–9.

[12] The poverty of the Haitians is often exaggerated, and especially the concept of wealth as held by the peasant is caricatured in a way that accentuates a misunderstanding of his ecopomic psychology. For an extreme instance of this see Craige, 42–3.

CHAPTER V

[852] [845] [844] [608]

[1] Price-Mars (I), 34, speaks of the need immediately after birth of "immersing the newborn infant in a lustral bath carefully concocted by the *vodun* priest who consecrates the child to the divinity that can preserve him against the evil-doing of malignant spirits, and rescue him from 'the power of supernatural ills.'"

[2] Craige, 68–9, and Wirkus, 97–9, both give accounts of wayside births in which the mothers resumed their journeys immediately after bearing their children.

[3] Price-Mars (I), 34, says: "It is forbidden to speak aloud the 'baptismal' name of a child under certain circumstances, above all during the night."

[4] Parsons (I), 174, notes that "an infant born with teeth is one whose birth has been delayed so long by the *marana* [twins] that the teeth have developed."

[5] Price-Mars (I), 235, derives the importance of the godmother from the conditions of slavery, when a child was often cared for by a foster-mother. See also St. Mery, i, 35–6, and Mackenzie, i, 273–4.

CHAPTER VI

[1] The institution of *placage* is mentioned in passing by Craige, 203–4, and, with complete lack of understanding, by Wirkus, 73 and 307.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

That friend there, he is not a friend for me! 533*
That friend there, he is not a friend for me, treason! 539*
I pass his house, he gives me a chair to sit in! 626
He goes around speaking bad words about me! 572

Or again, you may hear:

Nèg' nwè, con ça ou yé, ago-é!
Nèg' nwè, con ça ou yé!
Y'ap manjé avé ou!
Y'ap boè avé ou!
Y'ap coupé lavie ou débor! [Ex. 95]

Black man, like this you are, *ago-é!*
Black man, like this you are!
He will eat with you,
He will drink with you,
He will cut the life out of you!

A man regards his child's godfather as his closest friend outside the family circle. Should either of the two friends fail to fulfill the high standard of behavior demanded by their tie, the other may express disappointment and recrimination, as in this song: 608 626 533* 539*

Compè à moin compè ou malhonnête!
Ou malhonnête compè compè à moin compè ou malhonnête!
Premier piti moin fai'm ba ou batisé!
Malheur rivé'm nan hounfor ou pas vini wè moin!

My comrade, comrade, you are dishonest!
You are dishonest comrade, my comrade, comrade, you are dishonest!
I gave you my first child to baptize!
When misfortune comes to me in the hounfor, you do not come to see me!

Sometimes even the most domestic of grievances are aired in public through means of song: 593 626 533* 539*

Iannie oh!
Ste Hélène oh!
Iannie oh!
Ste Hélène oh!
Trois pairs soulliers mari'm ba moin!
Maladie-à pend moin! [Ex. 96]

Iannie, oh!
St. Hélène, oh!
Iannie, oh!
St. Hélène, oh!
Three pairs of shoes my husband gave me!
This misfortune has taken me!

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

489 mind dust, ruts, and a steady succession of bumps. To travel in the
[49] average hired car, driven by a Haitian, is one of the grim experiences of life. The driver speeds as if pursued by a demon, while the peasant pedestrians leap for safety into the ditches; the unfortunate passenger is moved to close his eyes to avoid seeing the inevitable crash which
[36] does not come. The most comfortable means of travel if one is going only to towns is by ship, for practically all of Haiti's towns are seaports.

162 To know the towns is still not to know Haiti, however, for two
577 million or more Haitians live in the rural regions. These are the people. And if they are ignorant and not too clean, they are nevertheless models of kindly generosity. It is the proud boast even of the élite that one may travel the length and breadth of the land in perfect safety, in no danger of life or of personal property.

105 Many homely sights linger in the mind: women washing the family clothes in the stream, laughing and gossiping with their neighbors; men and women talking in animated fashion to themselves, arguing, cajoling, explaining as they walk along; individuals carrying a single flower, simply because it is beautiful; barefoot women, gnarled of hand and lined of face, kneeling in the Catholic church at prayer; taxi drivers who cruise by, hissing in order to attract the attention of a visitor who obviously can afford to ride instead of walk; an apparently ceaseless procession of patient donkeys, always laden, sometimes ridden by women, sometimes urged along from behind; the so-called buses each with its witty or its florid name (Plaisance, Éclair, Grâce-à-Dieu, Polichinelle, Sauve-qui-peut, Montparnasse), which like glorified buckboards jostle woodenly from the town to country hamlets; the winsome, open smile and gay laughter of a peasant boy; the ingratiating charm of a sleeping baby in the noise of the market place. To know the average Haitian is to feel a warm affection for him. His life is never easy, yet he bears it all with true beauty of spirit. If *le bon Dieu* sends distress, he will also make it possible for distress to be borne.

576 The people are polite, whether to each other or to strangers. A younger person greets an older one as *compère* or *commère*—literally, godfather or godmother; to his equal he says "*frère*" or "*m'sieu*."
[367] Sometimes one sees a local patriarch instructing little children in "deportment." This courtesy extends to hospitality: a stranger is
[609] almost sure to be offered shelter and food wherever he stops.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

CHAPTER VII

PROPERTY, WEALTH, AND THE FAMILY

596 THE WORD "family" as employed in Haiti can be understood only in terms of a broader meaning than is given it in Europe and America, where it describes only the most immediate relationship group. Though in Haiti this type of organization, consisting of mother, father, and children, lies at the base of its social structure, the Haitian "family" includes a wide range of relatives, direct and collateral, on the sides of both parents. The immediate family is thus but a part of a larger group, to which it is in many instances subordinate.

611 198 197 It becomes apparent, from even so brief a statement, that Haitian society has not retained that exclusive emphasis on descent in the maternal or the paternal line that characterizes most of the civilizations of Africa. And while a more detailed discussion of the manner in which African and European traditions are combined in Haitian culture must be reserved for later pages, this much may at the moment be made clear: The Africans who peopled Haiti, coming from cultures where descent is counted solely on the side of the mother or the father, and coming into contact with the French, whose custom binds children with equal strength to the families of both parents, molded both traditions into the social forms found

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

today not only in Mirebalais, but, in their essential outlines, throughout the Republic.

The larger relationship grouping originates in the immediate family, and the formation of new extended families is a continuing arc. Characteristically, the process begins when a man leaves the habitation of his father and, with his wife, settles on land somewhat remote from the dwellings of either his people or those of his wife. As the sons of this couple grow up and marry, they make their homes near that of their father, so that in time a group of immediate families related in the paternal line clusters about the dwelling of this original settler, forming a habitation. The continuation of the process depends upon the amount of land available to the group; in any event, given enough time, land to permit all the male descendants of the founder to support themselves and their families will be lacking, so that the younger men will repeat the process that has been described, and themselves become the founders of new habitations whose members, with the passing of generations, will eventually be lost to the original group. While land is available, a young man is given several hectares by his father when he marries, and here he establishes his household. If the family have prospered, additional land is bought as more young men grow up, so that the relationship group may become a community of considerable size.

In accordance with this rule of residence, only rarely will a man settle on the property of his wife's parents, since to do so reflects unfavorably on his personal status. When this does occur, it is probably because of a serious quarrel with his own people. In such a case, if his marriage endures, he becomes a quasi-member of his wife's family, but unless he has committed some extremely grave offense, such as publicly insulting or striking a parent or grandparent, he does not forfeit membership in his own group.[1] Similarly, the fact of his having settled away from the habitation of his family does not disinherit him, for, as will be seen, this occurs in but the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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case certain aspects of the historical development of Haiti have doubtless tended to reinforce African custom. Reference has been made to the fact that the great proportion of traders are women, a truism in Africa as in Haiti, where by general rule men are the producers and women the distributors of goods. In Haiti, however, the fact that for many decades men were likely to be arbitrarily impressed into military service by local chieftains when they came to town — particularly in Mirebalais, which had always been one of the centers of Caco activity — discouraged them from attending the markets. Thus African usage has here been reinforced by the historical fact of Haitian political instability. The fact that the proceeds from trading belong to the woman who does the trading, and that in consequence women are encountered who, though married, command independent means and exercise full control over their resources, is a carry-over of African tradition and, as in Africa, this gives to women a position in the economic world quite foreign to conventional European practice.

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The form of the family as found in Mirebalais demonstrates that the African social grouping which comprises all those descended on one side of the family has largely disappeared there, though it is possible that at least the vestiges of it may have survived in other regions of Haiti. Yet in West Africa, though descent is legally counted on but one side of the family, psychological adherence to the families of both parents is everywhere important. Therefore it is logical to assume that the concept, reinforced by the pattern of dual descent and double familial affiliation of the French, has been retained in Haiti to the neglect of the aboriginal larger groupings, where, as has been seen, not only is relationship counted on both sides of the family, but, more significantly, the right to reprimand and punish is held and exerted by elders in both the maternal and the paternal lines. On the other hand, it is apparent that the feeling for larger relationship groups has not been entirely lost, particularly in the paternal line, when

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1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

such matters as the passing on of the *loa* in families, the duties toward family dead, and the possible inheritance of food taboos are recalled. Like all these survivals, that of food taboos is not as clear in its expression in Haiti as in its aboriginal setting. Its determination is largely by trial and error, so that a mother, before the birth of her child, not only abstains from eating the foods harmful to her, but later carefully tries these on the child to ascertain their effect. Yet the custom, at best, is a tenuous one. Sometimes, if food uncongenial to a parent has ill effects on a person, "he goes on eating it until he becomes accustomed to it"—though this statement brought forth an emphatic dissent from another Haitian: "Not I! If a food harms me once, I am through with it."

Africanisms are particularly marked in the organization of and attitudes toward the ancestral cult. Today the fear of the power of the dead is as living in Haiti as in West Africa, despite the influence of the Catholic Church in changing concepts of the heavenly world of the dead and the role of ghosts on earth. It is quite true that the outer forms of ceremonialism taken by ancestor-worship in West Africa have disappeared; but when the meticulousness with which the rites of death are carried out, and the institution of *mangé morts* are remembered, it is seen that the spirit of African ritual observances has by no means been lost. African elements have survived even in the services for the dead, now largely taken over by the Church. On the anniversary of death a special commemorative mass is sung in the church, which the family of the dead attend in a body. Before they leave the habitation for the mass, however, animals are killed to provide meat for the feast which follows the Church service, and for the *mangé morts*, which also takes place at the same time. Immediately after the mass a reception takes place at the house of some member of the family who lives in town, or at the home of a friend, where cakes and liquors are served. At about noon, however, family and friends proceed to the habitation, where

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Mirebalais

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2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

For many Haitians, the struggle to obtain a piece of ground and to hold onto it is the very heart of the struggle for existence. On Morne l'Hôpital in 1932 I knew a man who owned ten acres of gardens. He had it planted in bananas and plantains, yams, and cotton. He had two cows and a calf and a grove of mango trees and coconut palms. His house was clean, tidy, and by Haitian standards well furnished. Eighteen years later he had less than an acre of land, no trees, no cotton, and no cattle. His family had become impoverished. He had three grown children and virtually no land to leave to them except that on which the house stood. His troubles began with a lawsuit over his land title. He sold his cattle to raise money to pay his court expenses. He lost half of his land as a result of the lawsuit, most of it the part with the good trees. Later, he sold more land to raise "eating money," and then rented it from the new owner. He could not grow enough cash crops to pay the rent and was finally evicted. Today he has not enough ground left on which to grow food for himself and his wife the year round. 423 691 511

The diminution of adequate landholdings has resulted in the disappearances of many of the *lacours* (hamlets) that were a familiar sight a few decades ago. Young people traditionally built their houses near the family homesteads until there were five, six, or a dozen houses in a group. There was a natural family community which shared a common social life and the work of the fields. But as the population increased and the landholdings shrank, young people and old began to move away in search of new land, or work in the cities. Often where the lacour remains it is only as a settlement of landless house renters who work where they may for wages. 178 423 361 166 [596] [621]

Economic refugees from rural areas seek wage work in the cities, returning to their original homes only on special festive days for family reunions. The men find employment as gardeners, servants, construction laborers, and stevedores. Some find work on the sugar and sisal plantations, others in craft industries making straw hats, baskets, shoes, chairs, and mahogany ware for export. The struggle in the big city of Port-au-Prince is for many of them worse than the poverty they left behind. There are the inevitable slums and the constant threat of hunger. It is in the big city that one hears most often the words *moin grand gout* (I am hungry), and least often the words *Bondieu bon* (God is good). 166 464

The land hunger increases, and the overflow of the mountain settlements continues to move cityward. In former years there was a trend toward emigration across the eastern border into the Dominican Republic, which has a population density roughly one third or one fourth that of Haiti. This trend was checked, temporarily at least, in 1937 by [648] 167 195

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

In certain communities there is some continuity over a period of years, the Rara or Chariopié band remaining more or less intact. Normally it has a *mait'* Rara, also called *major* or *président,* who assumes the organizational responsibilities for the group. This means getting new costumes for the participants when required, refurbishing the old costumes and musical instruments, and recruiting special talent—perhaps a new "king." Where the same group continues from year to year, the mait' Rara actually serves as a sort of executive secretary. In some instances, however, the initiative for forming a group is undertaken by the mait' Rara himself. He chooses the costumes and *décor* of the group; he recruits the musicians and the young women and girls who form the singing and dancing chorus; and he chooses the roi Lwalwadi, who will be the group's main feature. He may decide upon the theme around which the group will be built, and may even decide upon the repertoire of songs it will sing. The mait' Rara has specific responsibilities and is obligated to provide his band with refreshments and food. 541 575 624

Expenses of the group are defrayed by collections made in the course of its "exercises." The band will stop before a crowd of spectators, or before a house, and will perform until it receives a gift known as *payé sorti* (pay to go) money. After receiving its payé sorti, the group performs an encore and then moves on. This custom of performing for gifts appears to have been known in colonial days. Eugène Aubin notes that the slaves on the plantations celebrated on New Year's Day with drums and dances.[1] At midnight they appeared before the foreman or owner of the plantation. One of the slaves would recite a speech to him, or perhaps the group would sing a song praising the master's virtues. Then, over the heads of the celebrants, a slave would extend a long bamboo pole with a beribboned basket fastened to the end. The plantation master would place his gift in the basket, after which the group would leave the house. 541 575 175

Some few groups do not have a "king" but are built around musical instruments or other features. However, the "king" is regarded as an old tradition. Aubin reported that the roi Lwalwadi dates from the time of the Emperor Soulouque in the nineteenth century. Soulouque is said to have named the first roi Lwalwadi in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. But there are reasons to suspect that these dancing virtuosi, by whatever name they were called, existed long before Soulouque entered the picture. 575 175 535

The roi Lwalwadi is a dancer of very special talents, and it is said that, though his title is not hereditary, his dances have been handed down within the family from rois of other years. Much care is given to the costume he wears. It is sometimes made of expensive satin or velvet 575 535 [292]

[1] [Aubin, En Haiti, p. 42. Cf p. 351, Category 116.--Analyst]

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North of the square stands the church, a substantial structure with rounded arches in the Roman style, roofed over, like most other buildings, with galvanized iron. Other public buildings are the town hall — the Mairie — and the "Hall of Justice"; near by are the stone walls of a public building begun some years ago as a school, but destined apparently to house what is known as the "Bureau of Contributions," a euphemism for the tax-collector's quarters. Despite the fact that Mirebalais was one of the most difficult regions for the American occupation to subdue during the Caco uprising of 1918–20,[12] it was one of the first districts where the Guarde d'Haiti was completely Haitianized, and from which all American Marine officers were withdrawn. Only a small detachment is stationed there at present. Its well-kept barracks are near the church, and the prisons form a part of the same compound, from whence issue daily the striped-suited prisoners, men and women, under guard or alone on parole, who do communal work in the town and the near-by countryside.

The town awakens at dawn to the chattering of domesticated guinea-fowl and the crowing of cocks. Occasionally a camion rumbles through the principal thoroughfare; more rarely an automobile dashes by in great clouds of dust on its way to Las Cahobas, or Hinche, or Santo Domingo City. If it is a market day, the streets are early filled with country folk on their way to dispose of their produce, and the clatter from the market place behind the church is heard everywhere until the heat of the day brings a lull to all commerce, and drowsiness once more settles over everything. By mid-afternoon during the planting season, drums can be heard over the countryside. The sounds are not those of the "throbbing" *vodun* drums — though they have more than once been mistaken for them by travelers — but they set the rhythm for the communal work of the *combites*, which perform cooperative agricultural labor. As the rapid dusk follows the disappearance of the sun behind the mountains, the voices of

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1958) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

named in the song has been dead for years does not seem to matter very much:

Mènè'm allé oh parleur!	Take me to the parlor!
Mènè'm allé!	Take me!
Mènè'm allé!	Take me!
Mènè'm allé oh parleur Borno!	Take me to Borno's parlor!
Mènè'm allé oh! [Ex. 120]	Take me, oh!

Sometimes the challenge is directed to a more lowly level of authority, such as the gendarme:

> Gendarme, mènè'm nan bureau!
> Rwo, gendarme oh! [Ex. 121]
>
> Gendarme, take me to the police station!
> Rwo, gendarme, oh!

Haitians are notable for their restraint from physical violence. During holiday celebrations it is not uncommon to see men who have drunk enough tafia to make them act up. Some of them may even be morose and bellicose. But the disturbances of the peace more often than not are verbal. So long as the first blow is not struck, the social pressures against violence operate effectively. But physical assault against an individual—a push, a blow, a slap—is an affront to personal dignity which relieves the victim of the social restraints and gives him the right to bodily revenge. I have seen waterfront rows, fierce and vocal, in which no one but the participants showed much interest. But should one man shove or strike another, the spectators would immediately interfere, for that single physical contact would have removed the barriers to the worst violence. Sometimes at carnival time a man assumes the guise of belligerence. Such a bully may roll up one trouser leg to indicate he is challenging all and sundry to a fight. Usually, passers-by move aside good-naturedly when he approaches. He is not taken seriously; but neither is he challenged, except by another man in the same frame of mind. When two men with rolled trouser legs meet, there may be a verbal encounter, possibly from opposite sides of the street, to the general entertainment of the bystanders. It is usually a serio-comic affair. Some of the folk songs memorialize occasions on which a man has publicly spoiled for a fight, real or imaginary. This song comments briefly on a man named Çalira, who looked for trouble:

> Woy woy woy!
> Woy woy woy!
> Woy woy woy!
> Çac bien arrangé corps yo!
> Mène en bataille là!

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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regime. That President Duvalier has been able to stay in power in spite of internal dissaffection, sometime hostile United States propaganda, a dire economic situation, personal ill health, and other woes, is a tribute to his political acumen, if not to his principles. None of this means, of course, that such consummate skill will continue to work; Haitian governments have a way of falling suddenly, and the Duvalier regime will probably not prove an exception. 175 642 648 643

Dr. Duvalier's success indicates that he has made certain correct assessments, not only of Haiti's social and political structure but also of United States policy with regard to Haiti. The occupation was notable for its failure to make any telling alterations in the economic structure or level of development of the country. Many beneficial changes were made, as Leyburn demonstrates, particularly in the areas of health and health services, communications, government administration, education, and transport (though the use of corvée labor on the roads led to serious abuses, and stimulated sanguinary guerilla warfare). But most significantly, the United States institutionalized the army and police forces. The ragged bands of political mercenaries of the past were dissolved; the officer-ridden army was transformed into a small, well-trained, and well-organized force. Eventual firm control by this force of weaponry, communications, and transport ended the era of presidential succession by invasion, turned the army into the major locus of nonelectoral, president-making power, and may have ended forever the possibility of an agrarian revolt against the central authority. Another political effect of the occupation was the importance it imparted to the United States ambassador, whose political opinions thereafter would matter significantly in the transmission of power at the top of the Haitian governmental system. The Duvalier regime has continuously taken full account of the consequences of United States interest; and its leaders have been able to watch the operation of that interest in the political events occurring between the fall of the Lescot government and the present. 175 648 [433] [114] [744] [20] [871] [489] 175 648 701 643 669 625

In the view of one acute observer, President Duvalier, in order to consolidate his power, had to cope with three other loci of political strength in addition to the army and the United States ambassador. The business community, located for the most part in Port-au-Prince, had strongly supported Déjoie's candidacy during the interregnum; its leaders were mainly members of the elite, and many had strong 175 643 66

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 business and personal ties with North Americans and other foreign
643 groups. Among the families of these leaders are Swiss, German, and
66 French nationals, and some Syrians and Lebanese who hold United
795 States citizenship. The business community had played a part in the downfall of the Magloire regime, and business strikes were a typical political instrument for putting pressure on presidential incumbents. In addition, the clergy—particularly the Catholic clergy—exerted political influence. Duvalier, while well aware of this, also attended to the importance of vodoun* in Haiti, and to the influence wielded by its cult leaders, particularly in the countryside and among the urban poor. Finally, the President understood the strength of groups such as the university students, the small but politically aware labor unions, and certain professional associations, whose political strength could be felt particularly in times of crisis. The Duvalier regime has displayed intelligence as well as ruthlessness in dealing with these diverse centers of political strength and potential opposition.

175 The official request for a United States Marine Corps mission to
648 "train" the Haitian Army was a brilliant political move by Duvalier,
701 apparently designed to serve several objectives simultaneously. It is
702 entirely correct that the renewed presence of the Marines in Haiti
66 created considerable rancor in some circles, but it also strengthened Duvalier's hand in his dealings with all sources of internal opposition. To some extent it apparently reassured the business community; and it turned out to have reduced, rather than to have increased, the maneuverability of the United States in developing a "corrective" or "restraining" policy toward the Duvalier regime. Perhaps most important, it helped Duvalier in his plan to build a praetorian guard to counterbalance the power of the army itself.

• 625 The *tonton macoute*—a Creole epithet for the bogeyman—is an extremely interesting variation on the security police theme. Its members wear no official uniform (though blue denim pants and felt hats
[701] are affected). Members of the "TTM" carry out acts of terrorism against groups and individuals and have seriously weakened the po-
[652] licing function and prestige of the regular army. Some calculations put the operating costs of the TTM as high as one third of the governmental budget. Though small groups of the TTM are distributed

* Or, as it is more commonly called, "voodoo." Creole words employed in this introduction are transcribed in Laubach orthography (see Hall, 1953). It was not possible to extend this transcription to the original Leyburn text, where a "Gullah" orthography is followed.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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throughout the country, the central administration remains in the capital; urban units are dispatched to the countryside at times, if any show of internal political resistance is sensed. TTM members also sometimes engage in struggles with each other over political spoils; but too little is known to analyze internal strains within this paramilitary, secret-police organization. The TTM has proved particularly useful for carrying out the murders of outspoken individual political opponents and for crushing draconically any threat of strikes in the Port-au-Prince business community. 625

Little is known of the antecedents of TTM members. While it is customary among the elite to describe these myrmidons as "trash," some of them are literate, have some education, vaunt a political ideology—a kind of nationalist-*négritude* mystique, with strong Fascist elements—and differ dramatically from the ragged, illiterate followers of the warlords of pre-1915 Haiti. In fact, the TTM lieutenants are a direct, if somewhat deformed, product of the Estimé regime, a decade of structurally unsound prosperity, a culturally nationalistic ideology, and, more remotely, of the United States occupation itself. 178 625

With regard to the army, Duvalier has followed a policy of careful attrition. While the United States Marine Corps "mission" was (probably unknowingly) serving to immobilize opposition, Duvalier began to change the character of the army general staff. In the course of less than seven years he completely revamped the leadership of the army five times; this process not only kept the colonels off balance but allowed the President to reward loyal younger followers—principally those with dark skins, it is said—with rapid promotions. 643 701

The relationship between the Duvalier regime and the Catholic clergy has been one of increasing alienation. At times members of the clergy stood high in the regime, two having even served as members of the cabinet; but not the slightest Church resistance has been tolerated. The low point in Duvalier–Church relations was the interruption of a mass by an armed TTM unit in downtown Port-au-Prince; leading members of the hierarchy later were summarily ejected from the country, and the Jesuit order was banned. Church power has waned significantly, both in the capital and in the countryside, as the regime has consolidated itself. Some observers believe that Duvalier is not so unwise as to aim at the complete elimination of the Church, but that he hopes instead to "nationalize" the clergy on some mutually agreeable basis. 642 795 661

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One of Christophe's rules was that no cultivator attached to

a plantation—and every ordinary country person was so attached 175
—might leave the estate without permission from a military officer.[10] 566
Two of the common folkways of Haitian peasant life since his time 178
have been immobility and general acceptance of orders from the [484]
military. Both characteristics had been fostered by slavery and by the régimes of Toussaint and Dessalines, and these folkways became fixed under Christophe.

Other rules introduced by the King, however, lapsed shortly after 175
his strong hand was removed. For example, the monarch required of 178
the whole population that whenever they visited the capital on feast 291
days or went to the market towns on Saturdays they be decently clad 527
in clean cloches.[11] Since the time of Christophe, neatness of appear- 183
ance has hardly been a folk characteristic, probably because of
poverty rather than lack of desire to dress well. Nor did scrupulous [441]
regularity of work in the fields continue as a folkway later, when the great plantations were broken up.

Like a father the King tried to inculcate moral standards of honesty 175
in his people. To prevent theft he had small valuables, such as watches 577
or jewelry or purses, "planted," and if the finder did not immediately 177
turn them over to the nearest Dahomet, punishment was meted out. Such a policy made honesty contagious. Thefts and depredation were soon almost unknown. The most tempting store of wealth could be left safely unlocked or in the open air. Christophe's achievement in this matter is eloquent testimony to his success as a paternal leader, for it is no small task to initiate moral ideas among people who for a generation have lacked them. Even today it is the proud boast of the Haitians that their people are honest.

As compared with the liberties of farmers in the United States of 175
the same period, the Haitian agricultural workers' freedom was 566
infinitesimally small, but by contrast with the bondage of slavery, their new status was definitely higher.

10. Christophe called his royal police force "Dahomets," after the West African kingdom, Dahomey, from which most of the men had come. They were not ordinary soldiers but especially imported and carefully selected men whose intelligence made them stand out from their fellows. Each Dahomet was given a course of training in his task as administrator before being sent out. The general consensus of foreign visitors was that these Dahomets were efficient even in small matters. [625]

11. This rule was partly an indication of Christophe's vanity, personal and national, for he was deeply desirous of the good opinion of white visitors, especially those from England. He wanted Europeans to respect Haiti as they would respect any small state, and not to praise it merely as an example of "Negro progress." [577] [186]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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114 642 175 at least a generation behind them, but rather their complete lack of any experience in self-rule. The author continues:

> In addition to the vanity of the black which was flattered by the distribution of principalities and duchies, there was the political thought which [471] wished to fortify things by words. The most important sugar manufactories were distributed, with the property title, to the principal officers and civil agents of the government. Workers were alloted to these very much as were the Indians to the first Spanish conquerors. . . . Moreover, since African blood dominated in the North [that is, since there were few mulattoes and lighter-skinned people], the feudal lords, aided by the color of their skin, could enforce obedience to a yoke which in name only was modified [from slavery].[13]

175 642 566 631 421 625 692 The social organization of Christophe's kingdom, then, was one of large properties, with all the feudalistic trappings, resting upon a solid base of wage-earning serfdom. In contrast to mediaeval feudalism, the king was here much more than *primus inter pares*. Thanks to the policy of Dessalines, most land had come into state ownership, so that the nobility received their estates by royal favor, and held them as leases only so long as the King pleased. As in the Middle Ages, the noblemen were petty monarchs within the district granted to their jurisdiction. Their freedom of action, however, was even here subject to scrutiny: detachments of Royal Dahomets[14] were stationed in every cantonment or parish, to enforce discipline, keep the King informed, and find their own subsistence without a drain on the royal treasury. In every district was set up a court of *sénéchaussée* to see that justice obtained.[15] The King's law, not the nobleman's private code, prevailed in the whole country.[16]

13. R. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1846), II, 167–168.

14. Organized after the model of the police force existing in France before 1789.

15. These courts were composed of a royally appointed seneschal and his assistant, a king's procurer, and a clerk.

[671] 16. The Code Henry was promulgated on January 30, 1812. It consisted of seven parts: Civil, Commercial, Shipping and Maritime, Civil Process, Criminal and Police Process, Agricultural, and Military. In general the Code followed French precedent, but the section on Agriculture was Christophe's own. Sir James Basket (in his *History of the Island of St. Domingo* [London, 1818], p. 413) calls this part "a thing unexampled among other nations." It reveals not only the King's absorption in the main economic enterprise of his state, but also his skill in devising an integrated functioning of a social order of nobility and serfs with a plantation economy based on money crops. This Agricultural Law regulated such diverse matters as the reciprocal duties of proprietors and cultivators, the policing of plantations, and the culture and preparation of the major crops. It set forth industry as the parent of virtue, and idleness as the source of vice.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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applicant, of his regular conduct, and his ability to maintain himself economically in the town. Land laborers might not send their children to school or have them apprenticed in a town without a certificate from the same judge. Under no pretext might a worker establish a shop or sell his produce in the countryside; certain exceptions were made of necessary articles of food and home manufacture. No laborer might build a home in rural parts except on the plantation to which he was attached. 175 671 24 566 693

An individual, once placed by the government in the category of "cultivator," might never be removed from that class except by official authorization. Even with the consent of the proprietor and the agricultural administrator of the district, he was not to quit the estate to which he was bound for more than eight days.

We may further note in the Code that coöperative enterprise among the workers is forbidden. Anticipating the possible tendency of laborers to set up what in modern times would be called a producers' coöperative, presumably to lapse thereafter into laziness, the Code requires that every worker engage himself individually by authentic contract to the service of a proprietor or lessee. Such engagements for la grande culture are not to be for less than three years, or more than nine. Penalties for infractions of these rules are fines, imprisonment, or forced labor on public works in the chief town of the commune. 175 671 474 686 566

The Code directs the management of agricultural property and grazing establishments,[39] also the making of contracts between the proprietor and his hirelings. Rural police are established, in imitation of Christophe's Dahomets, to act as inspectors of plantations and of the workers on them. 175 671 625 421

The section repressing vagrancy is very full. All persons not proprietors or lessees, yet living in rural parts without having made a contract with some producer, are classed as vagabonds, to be arrested and taken before the magistrate. This official will warn them that by law they are bound to make a contract, and that if they refuse they will be sent to prison. Should a vagabond persist in refusing to sign a contract after eight days of confinement, he is condemned to labor on public works until he agrees. Should the prisoner be a minor, he will be sent to his parents. 175 686 24

39. This latter item was inserted as an adjustment to one of the primary occupations of the Spanish end of the island.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 The result was entirely different from Boyer's expectations. As a
114 French critic graphically puts it, the Haitians
703 who had never had more than a borrowed energy—that inspired by fear of French invasion—when they saw themselves freed, by a solemn treaty, from all attack on their coasts, seemed to allow their arms to drop relaxed at their sides, saying, *Let's take a rest.* The soldier who up till now had squeezed his body into a uniform and had subjected himself to European discipline, shouldering his arms, staring straight ahead as if seeing nothing, now began to leave unbuttoned the uniform which choked him, dragged a mattress into his sentry-box so that he might sleep through his watch, and let his cross slip to the earth never to pick it up again.[44]

175 In short, the Haitian army as a disciplined force ceased to exist, and
701 with it all authority of its officers. Boyer had counted upon the
703 army to enforce the provisions of the Code Rural, but now a soldier's
671 life was a paid sinecure. By gaining political security Haiti had in-
433 advertently lost its last chance of economic prosperity through a system of forced labor.

175 Wherever the Code was put into partial operation, revenue from
423 plantations continued to decline. The price of real estate dropped
433 proportionately. It was a simple matter for workmen who had
435 signed contracts to avoid carrying out their stipulations, and just as
466 simple to evade the law requiring fifteen acres' minimum for a single holding. Practically every Haitian wanted to own a bit of land; once he had acquired his bit, however small, he had (or so he felt) earned an exemption from directed labor.

175 Only on estates near the few big towns, where government
671 officials were concentrated, was there much pretense of trying to
625 enforce the Code. Sentries at the gates of Port-au-Prince were
661 authorized to confiscate plantains, yams, or fruit brought by any worker who, in contravention of the Code, had strayed to market on a forbidden day, but sentries soon acquired the habit of not seeing countryfolk who passed the gates. Reports kept cropping up that rural policemen were robbing poor cultivators of their coffee under pretense of protecting them from the penalties for breach of the law; this suggests that the Code was used rather for graft than for the stimulation of agriculture.

175 By and large, however, the Code was merely ignored. Agents
671 could not be found who were willing to stand in any community
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44. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, Saint-Domingue, II, 181.

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175 against almost unanimous public opinion opposing enforcement. In
671 1828 it was reported that dancing, which the Code had strictly
625 limited to week ends, was a nightly diversion near the capital. One
535 of the principal dancing resorts was the house of a captain of rural
517 police, the very man who was supposed to repress such amusements.[45]

175 Boyer had done his best, and his best was merely a good piece of
178 office work. When his Code failed to operate, he could think of
24 nothing further to suggest for the economic rehabilitation of Haiti.
433 The last fifteen years of his administration witnessed a gradual lapse into that small-scale farming which was to be characteristic of Haiti for the remainder of the nineteenth century. By comparison with former standards, production and steady industry had both fallen off since Boyer came to the presidency. The testimony of visiting foreigners is unanimous on the decline of industry.

175 The British consul, Mackenzie, said in 1827 that there was very
114 little field labor then being done, and that only elderly people,
435 principally aged "Guinea Negroes" long accustomed to steady work,
461 carried on the tradition. No measures of the government could
464 induce young people born in Haiti to labor or to change from their
184 "habitual vagrancy."[46] Another Englishman, James Franklin, remarked in 1828 that land values throughout the republic had greatly declined because no one could make a profit within any moderate time. Labor was high, he writes, for ordinary wages did not attract the workers who preferred idleness. (This word is certainly unfair: it was work at their own bidding which they preferred, not idleness.) Government lands lay untilled, no one evincing the slightest desire to purchase or utilize them. Franklin continues:

114 Land also in the possession of individuals is similarly circumstanced; and
175 those who are large proprietors cannot effect a sale of any produce which
433 they may have beyond the quantity which they can consume; consequently
423 a proprietor may have an immense extent of land, and yet be quite unable
425 to derive any benefit from it by cultivation, or to convert it into money, for the want of purchasers. Thus . . . there is no individual wealth in the country, because, although a man may have very large landed possessions, still those possessions are unavailable, for they produce him nothing, as he can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them.

[534] 45. Although dancing is spoken of here as an amusement, it is highly probable that at least a part of it had connection with the Vodun religion.

[241] 46. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti* (London, 1830), I, 100. Mackenzie is clearly exaggerating, unless by "field labor" he means work on plantations, in contrast to farming on small plots.

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175 by persuasion, to do as much work as possible for his and their own
473 interests. In a few cases the success of such efforts was tolerably good;
427 but one worker disposed to be sullen or idle, or even not physically
24 strong, might throw the whole scheme into disorder. One's own
425 profits would be cut by the misdeeds of others even when one had
461 himself been industrious. This caused a decline of incentive, sometimes among a whole group of potentially good workers, because one or two of the number shirked. Probably the most patent evil of such arrangements was that every laborer realized that he did not suffer as directly for idleness or neglect as when working for himself; his fellow workers shared the consequences of his misconduct in some degree, and his employer in a still greater measure. The driving force of individual responsibility was removed.

[692] Boyer and Inginac, foreseeing just such disorder, had tried to
[686] provide against it in the Code Rural by giving summary powers to local judges to inflict penalties upon lazy or malingering workers. Quite aside, however, from the loss of time and the inconvenience to both parties in going constantly to a judge for his decision, the proprietor was afraid to act on this principle to any extent, since if he did so he might lose his laborers altogether.

175 It was a rare proprietor, then, who could hope to make much of a
473 fortune out of his plantation. More and more the landowners, having
427 subdivided their fields, grew lax in overseeing them. The workers,
24 freed from constant supervision, accustomed by long habit to living
466 in one hut, and unconsciously developing a mentality which made
425 them feel, as did American squatters on frontier lands, that they had
178 a right to the land they tilled, imperceptibly developed into peasants. The state's remaining properties, no longer under cultivation, were invaded by families of small farmers, and the government took no steps to oust them or send them back to privately owned plantations. The estates of individual aristocrats underwent the same fate if not
● [625] carefully watched. Theoretically, it was the duty of the army to drive out squatters, to force laborers back into "proper" agricultural work; but the army consisted of peasant youths who would not turn against people of their own group.

671 Legal irregularity was gradually sanctioned by the passage of
178 time, usage being a stronger guarantor of rights than unenforced laws on the statute books.

030 Haitian peasantry, to sum up, began as the unplanned, undesired

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175 643 Suddenly, without warning, he reversed what had been mistaken for docile inactivity, and assumed complete personal command of the reins of office. By means of a well-organized body of secret police, [625] he inspired his own counselors with fear not only for their positions but for their lives. Although illiterate, Soulouque never signed a bill presented to him by his ministers until he was sure he knew its essential core. The hopeful "understudies" were forcibly awakened to the realization that they were hoist on their own petard.

175 643 563 669 The colored element was particularly apprehensive at Soulouque's amazing activity, for the President was clearly setting himself against their group, both in the cabinet and out. Determining clandestinely to get rid of their puppet before he became a Frankenstein's monster to destroy his creators, they fomented a new revolution. This, however, proved to be a strategic error of the first magnitude, for the President was already much stronger than they imagined. The insurrection was quashed with massacre and attendant frightfulness. In the aftermath, as Bouzon mordantly remarks, "the republic was calm—with all the tranquillity of a tomb!" By their ineptitude, the colored group had now made themselves completely insecure.

175 565 643 642 [555] In the second year of his régime Soulouque decided to imitate Dessalines by turning the state into an empire. His coronation was extremely gaudy, as well as expensive. Calling himself Emperor Faustin I, he created a peerage drawn chiefly from among his black generals—four princes, fifty-nine dukes, and numerous counts, barons, and knights. This was merely outward pomp to gratify their craving for prestige, for they had no functions to perform, nor even the necessity of Christophe's peers to pay for their regalia. As nobles they were given no responsibilities in directing economic activity nor any increased political power over districts of the empire. The Emperor's own vanity was flattered by having a peerage. He ruled as an autocrat with blatant despotism. For ten years following the coronation Haiti had to accustom itself to costly expeditions against the Dominican Republic, nearly all ending in defeat for Haiti. The outcome of these intermittent wars was neither gain nor loss of territory by either side, but only temporary rule of occupied districts. Haiti likewise had to accustom itself to sudden executions, to the shabby grandeur of court display, and to financial trickery which would not have deceived a schoolboy. While the heads of his opponents and even his loyal counselors fell, Soulouque's infantile "empire" tottered to economic ruin.

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175 701 648 177 625 652 669 Since it was an entrenched interest, however, no responsible statesman had dared to threaten its hold. The Marines swept it out of existence, undertaking to substitute for it a trained constabulary of only 2,000 men who should combine routine military tasks with police duty in the scattered towns. Results were immediately apparent: the weighty incubus of soldiers' wages was lifted from the treasury; thousands of men were deprived of sinecures and put back into productive economic activities; the constant threat of armed revolution was removed; better order was kept by 2,000 trained men in trim uniform than by twelve times that number of ragged loafers who called themselves soldiers; and since the army was no longer the great steppingstone to political office, the élite felt more secure from assault by ambitious but uneducated army men. From 1843 to 1915 the élite had endured many lower-caste presidents because these were able to control the army; now the army had disappeared.

175 648 [743] [744] [365] [491] [45] The Marines did much that was of indisputable benefit to Haiti. This was acknowledged even by the most vocal patriots who soon began to campaign for an end of the Occupation. Where there had been no real work in public health, Americans now built hospitals, established clinics, cleaned up the sources of many diseases, laid down sewage systems, gave the towns pure water. In 1915 there were only three automobiles in the country, and no roads for them to travel; the Americans built many miles of paved roads. In 1915 there had been only one wharf, two short stretches of railroad, two lighthouses, one electric plant; the Americans undertook electrification, telephone systems, the construction of administration buildings, and other public conveniences. Whether in such visible matters or in the obscurer realms of currency, banking, and budgets hardly a phase of daily life was left untouched. And judged by the standards of civilization the Marines improved what they touched.

175 648 642 But rancor against the Americans began early and continued to the bitter end in 1934. The pride of all Haitians was deeply wounded by the Occupation. For 111 years they had governed themselves and had assumed themselves to be a sovereign nation; the Marines patroling the countryside were vivid reminders that Haiti had never been independent except by sufferance, and that white men were once more overseeing the destinies of colored and Negro men. Nevertheless, the reasons proclaimed for opposing the Occupation were not those of hurt vanity. Some of those given were entirely

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Pa[illegible]y, Randolph, and Samuel Adams as well. Madiou esti- 175
ma[illegible] there were 52,500 men in the army in 1804, when Haiti's 701
population was less than 400,000.[12]

Fear of the return of the French kept the army large, and the 175
administration of agricultural affairs under both Dessalines and 712
Christophe was in charge of it. The construction of a fortress in every 466
district put laborers under the direct influence of the military.[13] In [705]
addition to the corvée, or forced labor, required to construct these fortifications, the workers of the nation in the time of Dessalines also had to clear the hillsides and the ravines connecting valleys, and plant them with bananas, yams, plantains, and other provisions to supply the garrisons which manned the forts.

The Emperor left his army to feed and clothe itself. Occasional 175
rations were given as a part of wages, but they were irregularly 705
distributed. In the South particularly the troops began to murmur 701
and desert, stirred up by their mulatto officers who were themselves no better rewarded, and who were already beginning their plot to overthrow the Emperor. The accusation was made that the money which should have gone to the army was being used on Dessalines' mistresses. The soldiers indulged themselves in that most damaging of Haitian weapons, the witty song, full of double meanings but deadly in its thrust at public personages; by these symbolic songs the fall of Dessalines was not only predicted but actually prepared.

Christophe kept a military state, but he had learned many lessons 175
from watching affairs under Dessalines. Realizing that he could not 643
trust the preservation of his régime to the fickleness of an army which 701
had seen his rise to power and had already deserted its first com- 625
mander in chief, knowing too that there was treason even among his own guards, he made a contract with a company of foreign merchants for the transportation of twenty thousand blacks from Africa. These were to make up a military force independent of the Haitians,

12. *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 122.

13. Each general was commanded by Dessalines to build a fort on one of the mountains in his district. The design seems to have been left to the general. A few of the [712]
fortifications were truly impressive. Christophe built La Ferrière near Milot in the North; Pétion the fortress of Jean-Jacques at Grand Fond, four leagues from Port-au-Prince; Capoix called his Les Trois Pavillons, in the range of mountains back of Port-de-Paix; Cangé and Yayou together built Campan near Léogane; Magloire Ambroise constructed a fortress near Cap Rouge and called it by that name; Geffrard built Platon near Les Cayes; Férou built Mafranc near Jérémie; François began but did not finish Le Bonnet Carré near Aquin.

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643 and being the personal property of the monarch and recipients of his
701 royal favor, were to constitute the perpetual support of his throne.
●625 Only four thousand of these compulsory immigrants came, but
625 Christophe made them into very effective companies of police, whom he named the Royal Dahomets from the country of their origin. They performed the duties of a gendarmerie in all the districts of the North, drove the cultivators to their labors, watched over property and the security of the proprietors, and maintained industry and a strict subordination among all ranks of people in the kingdom.

175 Christophe's regular troops were well clothed and armed. They
701 were kept under stern discipline, no mercy or relaxation being
[703] shown them; delinquency on their part brought flagellation or a military execution. The troops received only a nominal stipend, and each soldier was required to gain his subsistence by cultivating a few acres of ground allotted to him out of the national domain. The usual quarter of this income had, of course, to be turned over as a tax to the state. Although the King's power was maintained by soldiers, he never coddled them. "The soldiers of the army as well as the laborers of the plantations lived in perpetual dread of the rod of authority," wrote Brown.[14] They seem to have developed a tradition of some special fetish power possessed by Christophe, a sort of *mana*, to use anthropological terminology. Even princes and dukes were chastised by the King's orders, and then made to do menial work by way of further punishment.

Conditions in the republic of Pétion were similar and yet different —similar in that soldiers formed the support of the government, different in that Pétion did not rule by fear. Every individual man between 16 and 60, a few cultivators excepted, was required by law to be a soldier, either in the *corps solde* (regular troops of the line), or in the *corps non solde* (national guard). The former, both under Pétion and in the early days of Boyer, had about 40,000 men distributed in strong detachments in towns and communes all over the
[914] country. Their costume, instead of being neat, uniform, and daily inspected as with Christophe's army, was ragged and mismated; they
[465] managed according to popular parlance "to find linen on every hedge." They were paid from fifty cents to a dollar a month, ac-
[541] cording to the existing solvency or exigency of the state. Each week
[512] end a parade and review was held, and then a small fatigue party was taken to do actual duty, the others being dismissed until the next

14. Op. cit., II, 209.

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175 701 [512] Saturday to use their time cultivating the soil, pursuing some mechanical craft, or acting as day laborers.

692 703 175 It must be once more emphasized that the civil was everywhere subservient to the military power. The administration of justice in tribunals was carried out only at the pleasure of the army chiefs. No person would have dared bring suit against a high officer; the only efficacious way of obtaining justice against petty offenders was through summary decision and corporal chastisement by the commanding officer.

701 625 175 By the close of Boyer's rule, during which he had kept the army up to its full numbers while pursuing a policy of economy, the outward appearance of the troops was almost ludicrous. They appeared at review wearing generally what pleased them or what they could scrape together, for they had to supply their own clothing and arms. The only effectual employment of the soldiery was as armed police, for Haiti never had to fight external powers. The soldiers drummed and fifed, mustered on parade and went through the formations, but otherwise merely stood (or sat) sentry at the doors of public offices, hunted up at the command of the magistrates *les mauvais sujets*, guarded prisons and prisoners on chain-gang duty, loitered at barriers, collected tolls, and examined permits.

175 701 [669] [703] A large army, practically idle, could easily be seduced into the support of revolutionary movements. Principles of discipline and loyalty current in European armies of the day were nonexistent in nineteenth-century Haiti. The numbers in the army varied from twenty to forty or fifty thousand. A strange estimate was made for the year 1867: 6,500 general officers and staff; 7,000 regimental officers; and only 6,500 soldiers.[15] It was said that "*tout Haïtien qui n'était pas général de division était au moins soldat.*" The higher grades became rewards for political service; the lower ranks had to be filled up by recruiting parties—when these were abroad, all men who did not desire a period of enforced leisure away from home remained in hiding.

While the army was not alone responsible for the tragedies of insurrection and mismanagement which consistently befell the country, it was never uninvolved in these misfortunes. Only the [648] radical reforms undertaken by the American Occupation saved modern Haiti from continued military domination.

15. Sir Spenser St. John, *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, p. 310.

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is under way. The size of the *combite* is judged by the number of drums and *lambi*, or conch-shell horns used, for where two or three of either are required, an especially large group of workers is usually assembled. It may be observed in passing that it is undoubtedly the sound of this *combite* drum, heard in the mountains or through the brush by travelers, that has so often been mistaken for the "mysterious booming" of the *vodun* drums.[5]

The preparation of the food is the work of the women of the household giving the *combite*, aided by their female relations and the wives of friends and neighbors. This is no small task, for goats and even a bullock may be killed to feed a large *combite*, while in addition other dishes to go with the meat must be cooked. Each woman is given charge of a great pot and does her best to see to it that an appetizing dish is ready for the men when their work is done. While the food is being cooked, the real object of the *combite*, the clearing of the field, is being pursued. A *chef d'esquade*, usually with a small group, begins the afternoon's labor, and, being a fast worker, he himself sets the pace. As more men arrive, he walks about, encouraging the constantly increasing number of men in their efforts, seeing to it that the tempo originally set is continued, and when necessary picking up a hoe to restore a lagging rhythm. Occasionally the *chef d'esquade* will stand in front of the men to make sure that all keep together, and if the lazy cannot be roused to work by direct order or through ridicule, he will drive them away.

The work progresses with incredible speed as the line moves down the field. In one case a *combite* of between fifty and seventy-five men completely cleared a field of several acres in a single afternoon, and this without undue effort or what appeared to be the expenditure of much energy. The flashing of the hoes in the brilliant sunlight accentuates the color of the scene; each implement is raised high above the head of the one who wields it, to be brought down at the proper in-

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461 The *combite* songs are distinctive in Haitian music for
476 their melodic quality. Sung in unison, as is characteristic of
533 most forms of Negro music, they contain the statement of a theme by the leader and a response from a chorus, so that the contrast between this great volume of sound from the chorus and the solo voice of the *simidor* is singularly effective. It is not the melodic qualities alone that make these songs so
476 appealing to the Haitians, however. At the *combite* a man
533 not only learns all the gossip of the day, but enjoys learning
461 and singing the songs which caustically comment on the
626 shortcomings of neighbors, or evaluate the hospitality of those
203 who have called *combites*, or detail scandal, phrased with sufficient directness to allow the reference of the song to remain clear, but warily, so as not to give the individual pilloried ground for direct recrimination. The *simidor* is thus a person to be feared, since in addition to his ability as a singer and a leader of song, he is also an outstanding improviser. As one Haitian expressed it, "The *simidor* is a journalist, and every *simidor* is a Judas!"

476 One or two examples of these songs will make clear their
533 favor among a people to whose natural love of gossip is added
539 a patterned relish for oblique public statement of individual
461 shortcomings. The first comments on a miserly *combite* host:
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À tè!	Down!
Moin dit, messieurs,	I say, messieurs,
Moin p'ralé nan combite ça-é	I went to that *combite*
Moin pas mangé.	[But] I did not eat.
Moin allé, moin pas joinne un grogue	*I went, but I found no* drink
Pour moin buè.	To drink.
Assé-a! En é!	Enough! Up!
Moin dit, messieurs,	I say, messieurs,
M'allé nan combite ça-é	I went to that *combite*

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Moin pas joinne mangé	[But] I found no food
Pou' m'mangé.	To eat.

Another song refers to a pungent bit of local gossip, which, though known to everyone, concerned an affair that precluded the mention of names. This is usually the case, for it is not ordinarily deemed wise to make specific references; yet this must not be thought of as an invariable rule, as is shown by the fact that a number of these songs were recorded where names were mentioned with great freedom. Thus in Mirebalais as elsewhere, circumstances must govern cases; the composer of the following short song did not feel it politic to do more than recall the case:

Ca va reglé,	This will be arranged,
En é, o!	Up, o!
Affai' cousine germaine	The affair of a first cousin
A'c cousin germain.	With her first cousin.

Reference is also made to an impending quarrel where a suspicion of magic practices entered:

Moin dit, Juda,	I say, Judas,
Allé l'église;	Go to the church;
Quand ou apè tourné	When you return
Ou a quitté moin tranquille, o-o;	You will leave me in peace, o-o;
Si ou allé l'église,	If you go to the church,
Ou apè quitté moin tranquille, o-o.	You will leave me in peace, o-o.

Still another song is a challenge, for in it the singer boasts that he is the equal of the man figuratively designated in it, and will cause trouble if resisted:

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À tè!	Down!
M'apé mandé qui moune	I ask what person
Qui en dedans caille là.	Is in that house.

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Compère répond':	My friend replies:
"C'e' moin qui avec cousine moin."	"It is I who am wih my cousin."
Assé-é!	Enough!
Moin en dedans déjà.	I am already inside.
En é-é-o!	Up, o!
Nan point taureau	No bull
Passé taureau.	Is better than [this] bull.
En é-o!	Up, o!

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Finally, there may be cited a composition which complains against a shirker who comes and eats, but does littlework:

Samba, é-é,	Samba, *é-é,*
Moin vé ou malhonnet,	I see that you are a dishonest man,
Tonnèrre!	*Tonnèrre!* *
Moin planté maïs moin,	I plant my maize,
L'année rive,	The year rolls round,
Moin planté mangé,	I plant food,
Ou apè managé li.	You eat it.
En é-é-o!	In the air!
Moin planté zaboca,	I plant avocados,
Ça pou' ou mangé,	They are for you to eat,
Ou malhonnet-o.	You are a dishonest man-o.
Tonnèrre!	*Tonnèrre!*

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The field cleared and hoed, the work of planting begins. This is carried on in accordance with a well-defined calendar of agriculture, which takes as its starting point the beginning of the rains. Maize, which matures quickly, is the first crop, and is planted during the latter part of March or early in April, unless the rains are delayed, when it is planted later that month. Congo peas, which mature less rapidly, are put

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* *Tonnèrre*, "thunder," is a Haitian-French oath; the original is retained because in translation its force is lost.

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may next be considered. Two types of markets exist — those in the countryside where produce is often sold at wholesale, and the town markets where retail trading takes place. In Mirebalais, as elsewhere, the principal market day is Saturday, though smaller markets are held on Thursdays, and roadside gatherings of women offering small amounts of foodstuffs or cooked foods are to be found everywhere. The country markets occur at present only on Tuesdays, though in earlier times the markets shared the days of the week in rotation. To heighten the importance of the towns, however, and to encourage the peasants to work steadily in their fields by concentrating the time spent at market, it has been officially decreed that the schedule given above be followed. Before this, the rotation of the markets in the commune of Mirebalais was as follows:

MONDAY: Yalodoun; La Civelle; Landale;
TUESDAY: Mirebalais;
WEDNESDAY: Dufailly (a fairly large country market); Labouli; Colombie (a very large market);
THURSDAY: Mirebalais;
FRIDAY: Chambo and Canarde (the most important country markets in the valley);
SATURDAY: Mirebalais.

The Mirebalais market is located near the central square not far from the confluence of the Artibonite and Tombe rivers, though until relatively recent times it was held in the *place* before the church. It occupies a large fenced-in space reserved for the purpose, which on the days of the great markets hums with activity. Each tradeswoman has her place there, which she retains by a kind of informal agreement, held to so well, for all its informality, that if a woman is compelled to be absent for a time, those who sit near by watch it for her and warn anyone who takes it that it must be relinquished when the original occupant returns. If despite this warning

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the newcomer persists in retaining the place, an informal appeal is taken to the local magistrate, who invariably settles the matter by deciding in favor of the original occupant. 443 626 629

Each woman tends to specialize in certain commodities, such as meat or cloths or notions or baskets. The venders of foodstuffs, other than meat, however, vary their offerings with the season. This latter class of sellers mainly comprises women who, living in the town, constitute a group of "middlemen," either buying produce at the country markets, or, going off with their pack animals into the back country, return with saddle-bags loaded with the purchases they have made direct from the farmer.[8] 443 442

Country women are also well represented among the traders, and as they come streaming into town on market days with their head burdens, or driving the heavily laden, slow-plodding donkeys, they fill the streets with color and movement that make up one of the most picturesque aspects of Mirebalais life. A load may consist of one type of produce only, or a woman may bring rice, maize, beans, and bananas, as well as home-made brooms and baskets. All transactions in the market are for cash, and there is no barter of any kind, for the pattern of a money economy has been too deeply lodged in Haitian tradition to allow any other mode of exchange. Prices are based on supply and demand rather than on any agreement between sellers, since contact with the capital causes the current prices paid there for all kinds of produce to be generally known. Another factor which enters into price-fixing, however, is prestige. It is regarded as a mark of incompetence for a woman, whether from country or town, to return home with unsold produce, and since the reputation of being a clever trader is highly valued, this is avoided when at all possible, and the vender adjusts her prices as the day wears on to insure that she will dispose of everything she has brought. 443 [482] [492] [436] [439] 443 435 [554] [558]

In Mirebalais, as elsewhere, the markets are best attended during harvest months, when by official count as many as 443

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he is assured of more solicitous care from her and more deferential treatment from her children. And though when this has occurred his "legal" wife may at his death come with a justice of the peace to claim his body and his effects, this move is anticipated, so that what he has given the *placée* wife and her children is usually well out of the way. "Often they find only the four walls of the house."

A certain number of unmarried men result from this system of plural matings, some of whom remain single by preference, particularly in the cities, where the incidence of homosexuality far exceeds that found in the country. In Mirebalais itself, when the final withdrawal of the American Marines from Haiti was being celebrated, a dance called *manuba*, significantly enough the only one held indoors, was one in which male dancers danced together in couples. The sexual problem of the younger unmarried men is more often solved by means of liaisons with married women, though this has its dangers in the countryside, where the movements of every individual are known and the least tendency to unsanctioned social behavior is soon the subject for widespread gossip. Prostitutes are found everywhere, and they are by no means visited by unmarried men alone. On the whole, sex "adventures" are more indulged in by men than women, even allowing for the tendency of some women to have affairs with youths. A belief widely held, that plural wives tend so to exhaust the virility of a man that he must seek "remedies" of a magical nature from the priests of the *vodun* cult and from sorcerers, must also be mentioned. Frigidity is a principal cause for female homosexuality, and, because of a wife's reluctance to satisfy her husband, it not infrequently happens that she is sent back to her parents, where she may seek out other women. The most prevalent Haitian attitude toward homosexuality in either sex, it may be remarked, is one of derision rather than vindictiveness, as the term applied to effeminate men, *commères*, may suggest.

1: Herskovits I-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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portance is being considered, particularly where the buying or selling of some land is involved, all the members of a habitation may be consulted and the opinion of the oldest man in the family, the "family head," is almost invariably followed. At the death of a man his widow inherits all his property for the duration of her lifetime or until she remarries. Her children by her dead husband, if minors, do not receive their inheritance at once, but the elders of the habitation of their father hold this property in trust for them and act as their guardians. The deities of the *vodun* cult are believed to be inherited in family lines, a tradition that gives the larger family one of its most pronouncedly African traits; while the accompanying African belief in the inheritance of the soul within the family, despite its existence in Mirebalais principally as a survival, is yet of importance in adding its sanction to help maintain the inner cohesion of the group.[3]

It may be well at this point to investigate the position, duties, and powers of the oldest male member of the group, who is the head of this informal extended family.[3] His house must be in the ancestral habitation, though he need not live in the same dwelling as his predecessor. Just as he is consulted on projects of a secular nature, his is the important voice in the worship of the ancestors and the family gods. He does not carry on the actual routine of the cult unless he is a priest, but no ceremony would be attempted without his consent and full instructions from him, and the call for the rite would be made in his name.

Examples of the exercise of his power in various circumstances are given. "He may threaten: 'Very well. If you will not listen, I am through. Do what you like.'" In such a case he will refuse "to extend his hand" when a member of his family meets some difficulty, and a man thus punished forfeits the outstanding economic advantage of belonging to his relationship group, the right to call on the members of his family for aid when he is in trouble. For otherwise all relatives

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help one who, for example, has run afoul of the law because of attendance at a forbidden *vodun* dance and needs a certain sum to pay a fine, or who in some dispute with a neighbor has had a judgment of the court entered against him. Obviously, therefore, the family head, who holds the power of withholding family support from one in need of it, is not focused except under great provocation.

Another instance of the exercise of the family head's power is given when a man or woman desires to marry or to enter into the relationship of *plaçage* with someone held undesirable by the elders of his group. Should this oldest member in particular indicate his disapproval of the proposed match, it is most unlikely that the mating would take place. The reasons of the elders may be based on situations quite unknown to their younger relative who proposed the match; the existence of old enmities between the families of the two young people would perhaps necessitate inflicting the humiliation of a refusal when the "letter" was presented. If the young people persist, the elders may say: "Do what you like, but we will not support you," and should they fail to heed this warning, trouble for them is believed inescapable, since it is held that the elders thus place a curse on the new family. Nevertheless, when difficulties do arise that the two cannot cope with alone, the mother of the one in trouble would do her utmost to help, despite family displeasure, and would use all her gifts of persuasion to soften the attitude of the family elders until she succeeded in having the ones who had defied the family edict taken back into the group. Some degree of estrangement would persist and, as has been seen, might cause a man to find it desirable to make his home with his wife's people. The elders may also take the initiative in arranging marriages, exerting pressure on a reluctant young man whose inclinations have directed him elsewhere, in favor of a young woman of desirable family. But should such a marriage not

1; Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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be successful, he can count on the members of his family for financial and moral support. 596 534

These are not all the rights of the older members of the family, especially of the family head, over their juniors. All elders may punish by beating, though the oldest member of the family exercises that right most freely and may chastise those who are themselves grown men and women. If there is gossip about a boy or a girl, the family head calls the culprit to reprimand him or, if he believes the case a serious one, to beat him. Among the peasants, particularly, grown men go down on their knees before their elders, when so ordered, for a beating. Such punishments may be particularly severe if the culprit does not soon ask pardon, for since all who are older have the right to beat a younger relative, it sometimes happens that the punishment administered by the head of the family is not considered adequate, and another takes up the stick when the family head has put it down, so that two or three wands may be broken over the back of a stubborn offender. If such a one were to fight back, he would become "accursed," ceasing any longer to be considered a member of the family, and even though no legal steps might be taken to disinherit him, he would lose all caste. This right to beat is accorded by custom rather than by law, but an adult beaten by one of the elders of his own family would think long before he would sue. "There is always a consultation, and a man is discouraged from going to court." 596 627 [626] [691]

Lest the impression may have been given, in considering the role of the elders and their relationship to the younger members of the family, that it is those in the father's line alone who are concerned, it must be emphasized that relatives of both parents exercise substantial control over a person. More than this, since marriage constitutes an agreement between families as well as between an individual man and woman, it follows that both paternal and maternal grand- 596 [581] [603]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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596 [581] [603] parents are friendly toward each other, so that the conflict that might result from a division of authority rarely develops. Were it otherwise, it could easily happen that a person who had been ordered, or forbidden, to do something against his own wishes by the head of his paternal family would plead with the head of his mother's group and receive support to justify his disobedience. To most Haitians such a hypothetical incident was amusing to contemplate, for the elders are said always to work together. Rare is the occasion when one interferes with the decision of another, and never to the knowledge of the subject of such a decision.

596 888 626 A family elder who has no sons to care for him is well looked after by the other members of the group "until the grave." Fear as well as a moral obligation prompts this. "He might curse you," it is explained, or "He might say: 'Watch out for your own old age! You mistreated me in my old age, and you will suffer in yours.'" Such pronouncements are greatly dreaded, especially because of his control over the supernatural forces that aid or harm the family and its members.

428 The closeness of the tie between social institutions and economic life is most evident in the matter of inheritance. For though the prestige that accrues from the possession of wealth makes for strong competition through the exercise of individual initiative, yet supporting the struggle of an individual for the augmentation of his holdings are the forces of family sanction and family aid, while his very start in life is obtained primarily through the help of his relatives during their lifetime or the property he inherits from them at their death.

428 858 As has been suggested, all a man's children by a "legally" married wife inherit from him, or, if he has not espoused a wife by a Church wedding, the children of his *placée* wife or wives receive his property. Whether or not it is true that the "legitimate" children inherit three quarters of the possessions of their father, the "natural" children one fourth, and

428 858 769

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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a dowry forfeit their share, but even when a formal *dot* has not passed, the number of animals given her when she went to her husband is mentioned and she is sometimes asked to waive a corresponding portion of her share in consideration of what she has already received. If she refuses to do this, however, there is no recourse but to allow her her full share, though public opinion would censure such greed.

Debts incurred by the dead must be repaid before the estate can be settled, while attempts are also made to collect all loans made by him. Where no written statement of a debt exists, a declaration by the dying man before witnesses is necessary; otherwise his heirs acknowledge their obligation at their pleasure. Conversely, if no statement attested by a notary exists to verify a loan made by him, his heirs have no means of collecting it. On the whole, lending has been found through experience to be ill-advised unless such a "paper" has been executed before a notary, and land has been pledged as collateral either before the head of the family of the borrower or before a magistrate. For though interest is not demanded by the peasants, and loans are made as a gesture of friendship, "even the people of the hills"—to use the Mirebalais idiom for the most naïve rustics—have learned that just debts are often not repaid where there is no legally enforceable claim.

A man who dies childless leaves his property to his brothers and sisters by the same father and mother. The husband of a "legally" married woman who dies childless is said to have the right to one fourth of her property, the rest going to her relatives, but most often "they drive him away," giving him nothing, and since a man is customarily too proud to contest the matter, he does not insist on receiving his due. A childless widow continues to live in her dead husband's house until her death, and she also receives one fourth of her husband's property. At her death the house passes to her husband's relatives, but the quarter of his estate which she had received goes to her family.

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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been largely lost in the peasant culture, possibly because of a prudence dictated by conditions of life wherein evidences of the possession of wealth — certainly in the case of a peasant — were an invitation to those who would despoil him. Only when a family of position gives a ceremony, or when one of its members is married or dies, is the lavishness of its preparations such as to suggest the importance of its place in the community. This does not hold for the individual. Personal ostentation is the more strongly inhibited by the belief that another's envy may bring ill fortune to the one against whom it is directed. In Mirebalais it has almost become a byword that the really substantial citizens look as though they were the poorest. This tradition in no way interferes with the preoccupation with adding to one's possessions, or with the desire to exert the power and enjoy the position that go with a command of large resources, or the will to pass on as large an inheritance as possible to children. In their origin, such drives can be ascribed neither to Europe nor to Africa, nor, for that matter, to the experiences of slavery, but rather to the interplay of two homologous patterns of culture that has produced the economic system and the economic motivations found in Haiti today.

In the matter of land tenure, and in attitudes toward private property, African tradition has disintegrated almost completely. Under the characteristic West African form of land tenure, land of a tribe is vested in the tribal head, who allots it to families for use. Trespass upon it is not permitted while it is under active cultivation, and the produce of the land is the property of the one who has worked it. Only palm trees are privately owned by those who have planted them; otherwise land that goes uncultivated for a longer period than is necessary to restore its fertility may be re-allotted. In some regions land worked by an individual is his because of his membership in a large relationship group, whose ownership derives from the power of its ancestors who had lived on this

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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land, whose bodies are buried in it, and whose spirits watch over it. As has been shown in the discussion of property, land in Haiti is owned privately, and, once title has passed, is subject to no alienation, except at the will of the owner — an attitude also held toward property of other categories, as is evidenced by the fact that most of the possessions of a man, particularly his livestock, are marked for identification, and theft is severely punished. Even the disposal of stray animals whose owners cannot be identified must follow well-defined legal procedure, in accordance with which they are held by the officers of the commune for a stated period of time before being sold at public auction. All marks on these animals are carefully noted in the records, so that title to them may be duly established.

In the organization of production and distribution an African mold, if not full content, predominates. The co-operative work-system, which is so important in maintaining agricultural production, is directly related to comparable groupings of West Africa, of which a distinctive form is the *dokpwe* of Dahomey, described when the African origins of Haitian culture were examined. The *combite*, as an instrument of co-operative labor and mutual self-help, with its tradition of giving no pecuniary reward for work done, but of making the feast which comes at the end of the day's labor adequate return — all these represent pure retentions of African practice. Even more striking is the carry-over in the attitudes which go with these outer forms — the manner in which the participants look forward with pleasant anticipation to taking part in *combites*, the enjoyment which they derive from their group work, and the verve with which the work is done are clear expressions of these attitudes. The role of the *combite*-song in exercising social control and enforcing conformity to local custom is entirely African, as is its function in stimulating work by setting a rhythm for it.

African, too, is the institution of the market, though in this

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1953) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

793 approval of the candidate's elevation is needed. He is also regarded as
[969] being on more intimate terms with the family ancestors who, likewise,
must be in accord with the proceedings. The candidate for the asson is
[783] confined within the hounfor for a number of days, during which he takes
purification baths and participates in other rituals. The rites that take
place during this period are prescribed by the elder priest who has as-
sumed responsibility. When the purification is ended, the candidate
emerges into the *peristyle* (roofed court) to participate in the general serv-
ice, and to undergo further tests.

Present during the ceremonies are all the principal houngans of the
region—men who will be friendly associates of the new priest or, pos-
sibly, unfriendly competitors. The candidate is tested on his knowledge
[789] of how to use the asson and the tiny hand bell, and in the course of the
service he is mounted by the loa who is the chief protector of the cult tem-
[782] ple. Animals are sacrificed, and all the loa sacred to the hounfor are in-
voked and asked for their approval and support. But it is not only the loa
[794] and the dead who must indicate their approval. The elder houngan polls
the hounsi kanzo on whether they will accept their new cult chief and fol-
[533] low him. He also asks the chief drummer, who polls his assistant drum-
mers. It is taken for granted that the decision is in the hands of the hounsi.
The consensus is known before the actual service, but the formality of
asking the question is observed. Should the hounsi refuse to accept the
candidate for the asson, the elevation cannot take place.

793 The city and the countryside contain many self-styled houngans and
554 bocors who are not recognized as bona fide by the community, regardless
62 of the route by which they claim to have achieved their station. Sometimes
[791] they are regarded as *pas fort* (not strong); that is, they do not have pro-
found knowledge and understanding. The Haitian is quick to detect the
difference between a houngan who knows and one who does not know.
Many are stated to be outright fakes. One man who attempted to hold
a service in Port-au-Prince aroused such contempt and disgust that a num-
ber of persons who had been drawn by genuine interest walked out with
remarks that the man should be punished. In fact, his failure to show any
[533] essential qualifications for the houngan's role was commented upon in
a song of ridicule that made its appearance at a secular dance that same
night. The song noted some of the humorous aspects of the service, such
as when the "impostor" struck himself vigorously on the head with the
flat of a machete to show his "strength" and virtually incapacitated him-
self for the rest of the evening.

346 It is easily observed that no two hounfors are exactly alike. They differ

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Bambara is walking, low hips!
Bambara is going to walk, low hips!

Damballa Wèdo, being a snake deity, "threads" or "winds" his way like a serpent, and this song describes a serpentine course taken by the dancers as Damballa (here identified as a Nago man) arrives:

Filé na fil, Damballa Wèdo vini wè moin!
Filé na fil, Nèg' Nago vini wè'm lì! [Ex. 74]

Wind, we wind, Damballa Wèdo comes to see me!
Wind, we wind, the Nago man comes to see me here!

After the dancing has been going on for a long while and the pace is fast, there may be a song of banter, such as the following from the Dahomey rites. The dancers sing *lailié, lailié!*, describing a figure of the dance in which the skirts are swirled, and note that they have worn out the drummers. They even offer to carry on their backs those dancers who are ready to fall by the wayside:

Lailié lailié!
Oh lailié lailié oh vièce'l
Tambouyé bouké!
Tambouyé bouké vièce'l
Lailié lailié oh vièce'l
Lailié lailié tambouyé bouké houngan'no!
M'pa'ni nou ouyo moin vié ne!
Tambouyé bouké yo!
Lailié lailié! [Ex. 75]

Lailié lailié!
Oh, *lailié lailié*, oh, old people!
The drummers are tired!
The drummers are tired, old people!
Lailié lailié, oh, old people!
Lailié lailié, the drummers are tired, my *houngan!*
I'll carry you on my back, old sister!
The drummers are tired there!
Lailié lailié!

Interspersed among the songs of the hounfor there are sometimes warnings or admonitions. Usually they are tangent and indirect in statement, and may be from the point of view of the loa or of the houngan. In the following pouin song, which accompanies the ritual of making magic, there is a warning to certain people who will feel the effects of the magic. The ceremony includes, among other things, the dropping of lemons, roots, and leaves by the houngan into his sacred basin or pond. The houngan sings:

Courlander B-5 (1937-1951) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Trois fil trois citron oh!
Trois fil trois citron oh!
Moin dit rwa, youn jour ou wa besoin moin!
Trois fil trois racine oh!
Moin dit oui, youn jour ou wa besoin moin!
Gainyain basin moin trois racine tombé ladans,
Quand ou wa' blié fou' remand changé! [Ex. 76]

Three leaves, three lemons, oh!
Three leaves, three lemons, oh!
I say *rwa*, one day you are going to need me!
Three leaves, three roots, oh!
I say yes, one day you are going to need me!
I have my pond into which these roots fall,
When you wish to forget you will have to remember!

In another song the houngan warns against ingratitude on the part of persons for whom special magical services have been carried out:

Ouanga ça oh ouanga chaud!
Ouanga ça ouanga chaud!
Lè pou' payé li pingo ou fâché!
Ou mandé'm ouanga li ou content!
Ou mandé'm ouanga li ou content!
Lè pou' payé li pingo ou fâché! [Ex. 77]

This ouanga, oh, hot ouanga!
This ouanga, oh, hot ouanga!
When it's time to pay for it don't be angry!
You ask me for the ouanga, you are happy!
You ask me for the ouanga, you are happy!
When it's time to pay for it don't be angry!

Somberly and in metaphor, the deity Kitta Démambré speaks of an unhappy event which occurred in the town of Léogane, and warns those concerned that it must not happen again:

Kitta Démambré, pingo ou fai'm ça 'ouve oh!
Nan Léogane ti poule-li manzé nan zé!
Nan Léogane ti poule-li manzé nan zé oh!
Kitta Démambré, pingo ou fai'm ça ouvre oh! [Ex. 78]

Kitta Démambré, take care that you don't do that to me again, oh!
In Léogane the little chicken died in its egg!
In Léogane the little chicken died in its egg!
Kitta Démambré, take care that you don't do that to me again!

An unnamed spirit warns that the moment for placation has come and suggests that calling on him after he has gone from the *peristyle* of the houngan Dorés would be of no use.

2: Coulander 8-5 (1937-1953) 1960 SV3 HaRi SV3

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M'apé rélé mein en bas pavillon los moin!
Laissé'm déroulé mein en bas pavillon ob Derés!
Jou'm allé pinga you kommain nom moin! [Ex. 79]

I will call, I am under the loa's canopy!
Let me get straightened out under Derés's canopy!
The day I am gone take care they do not call my name!

In a lighter vein, to the gayest of music, there is this admonition that a wrong cannot be righted simply by saying "excuse me":

Ibo kôl!
Ibo kôl!
Filé pied'm ou mandé'm pardon!
Filé pied'm ou mandé'm pardon!
Ça pardon-li wa fait you' moin? [Ex. 80]

Ibo kôl!
Ibo kôl!
You step on my foot and ask my pardon!
You step on my foot and ask my pardon!
The pardon, what good will it do me?

And the deity Ogoun Kénison warns those who do not speak of him with respect that he is not ready to accept such a slight as a light matter.

Ogoun Yékké Yékké ça Nig' Kénison él
Ogoun Yékké ça Nig' Kénison él
Oh tous les jours c'est pa'lé Ogoun mal!
Ogoun pas content' beaucoup! [Ex. 81]

Ogoun Yékké Yékké there, man of Kénison!
Ogoun Yékké there, man of Kénison!
Oh, constantly talking bad about Ogoun!
Ogoun doesn't like joking!

The loa Ogoun Panama, like ordinary mortals, is concerned about people who "come to look and go away to talk."

Ogoun oh m' c'est Nig' Panama él
Ogoun oh m' c'est Nig' Panama él
Yo vini ga'dé!
Yo vini pa'lé!
Oh Ogoun oh m' c'est Nig' Panama él [Ex. 82]

Ogoun, oh, I am the Panama man él
Ogoun, oh, I am the Panama man él
They come to look!
They come to look!
Oh, Ogoun, oh, I am the Panama man él

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 8V3 Haiti 8V3

The loa Aïson complains more vigorously of the bad behavior of human beings:

> Aïson Aïson!
> Dépis temps y'ap pa'lé sou moin!
> Coté ça yo gainyain?
> Bouche à yo paya paya!
> Djaule à yo pèté pèté!
> Coté ça pou' yo pa'dan ah? [Ex. 83]
>
> Aïson, Aïson!
> For a long time they have been talking about me!
> What's wrong with them?
> Their mouths go *paya paya!*
> Their jaws go *pèté pèté!*
> What is the excuse?

Even on routine business the loa are inclined to be petulant, or to protest that they have been mistreated, that their followers gossip about them, or that they are not ardent enough. Here the deity Simbi en dèz Eaux complains bitterly that she is not loved by her servitors, the "leaves in the woods," and asks a houngi named Loko for news to take to spirits of the ancestors who live "below the water":

> Fé nan bois con ça nou yé!
> Non point ninnain pas manklé quinti!
> Fé nan bois con ça nou yé!
> Non point ninnain pas manklé quinti!
> Simbi en dèz Eaux,
> Qui sorti en bas dèzo!
> Gardé ça yo fai moin!
> M'dit Loko, ba moin nouvelle pou'n ba yo! [Ex. 84]
>
> Leaves in the woods, that's the way you are!
> There is no love that does not ask to end!
> Leaves in the woods, that's the way you are!
> There is no love that does not ask to end!
> Simbi en dèz Eaux,
> Who comes from below the water!
> See what they do to me!
> I say, Loko, give me the news to give them!

But if the loa complain about the behavior of their followers, the servitors also may complain. Songs sung in the houmfor may chide the deities for antisocial deeds, for forgetting their "children," or for carelessness. In the following song the spirit Malé Grand Chimin is criticized for mounting his "horses" with such fury that they are thrown about

[P. 139]

12. Songs of Complaint, Recrimination, and Gossip

The use of the song as a weapon of social criticism is an ancient and honored tradition in Haitian life. In West Africa it is common for villagers to air their complaints against, or their praise of, their neighbors, their chiefs, and the Europeans with whom they have dealings, by means of specially composed songs. Usually an ordinary offended person will not approach an official of prestige and denounce him straightforwardly. Such behavior might involve risks, or even violate social decorum. But an acceptable and effective way to make such criticism is through singing. It carries with it the sanction of propriety, custom, and good manners. The songs of criticism seek to air situations that otherwise might remain local or private affairs, and to set in motion public opinion. Thus there are songs which complain about a person's behavior, others that protest against injuries, and still others that expose an individual to ridicule. Often the themes are expressed indirectly by parable, sometimes directly. Among the Negro cultures of America the song of social criticism remains a vital and effective instrument for alleviating a sense of hurt and bringing offending persons before the bar of public opinion. It is found throughout the New World wherever Negroes have settled, from Brazil to the West Indies and the United States. In Surinam there is a formalized presentation of protest and derision songs called *boki singi*, the function of which is to publicly embarrass and shame someone who has offended.[1] In the United States the song of criticism and complaint has survived strongly in the Negro work songs and blues, and has even infiltrated by this route into the popular "white" music of the country. Countless blues pieces complain of personal mistreatment by husbands, wives, and sweethearts; others, of hardships and injustice. Still others hold up the spotlight of ridicule. The subjects vary from sexual faithlessness to the rigors of prison.

In Haiti this tradition has remained vital and powerful. A work gang

[1] [See Herskovits and Herskovits, Surinam Folk-Lore, pp. 23-32. Cf. p. 363, Congo Folk-Lore.]

533 may sing that it is being driven too hard, or that it is unequal. A
622 president may be disparaged, a neighbor who has violated a social propriety may be ridiculed, and one who has committed an indiscretion may be exposed. Such affairs are the property of the community. They are gay or grim editorials on people and institutions. There is no special ceremonial occasion, as in Surinam, when criticism may be voiced. It can happen almost anywhere, at almost any time. Songs of ridicule or complaint may be heard at the ordinary "good time" secular dance, in the Rara festivities, or even in the middle of a Vodoun religious service. If the coumbites working in the fields are not singing songs of praise, the chances are they are singing songs of criticism. Even a lone worker may sing such songs, with the expectation that they will be heard and passed on. One woman I know, who had been abused in the market place of Port-au-Prince, composed a song of recrimination which she sang loudly all along the road to Kenskoff, some twenty miles away.

Even though the songs may be quite personal, referring to situations that affect only an individual or a small group of people, once they are performed in public they are community property. They survive or fade away according to the appeal they have for others. A song which catches on may outlive its protagonists by many decades. Such a song does not lose its moral point, if it has one, or its satirical punch. It can be revived for use on appropriate occasions—usually without change, sometimes with slight modification to give it direct and timely significance.

533 One of the recurrent themes of protest has to do with faithlessness
538 of friends. This song, couched in bitter metaphor, declares that the only
621 friends to be trusted are those who are not present:
972

> Zamis gain zamis quitté ma zamis lain zamis yo!
> Zamis gain zamis quitté ma zamis lain zamis!
> Zamis kaké quoin c'est la'gent chef!
> Zamis gain même c'est coutrau diffaud, quitté ma zamis lain zamis! [Ex. 91]

> Friends close to me, go far away from me, friends!
> Friends close to me, go far away from me, friends!
> Friends far away from me are usual money!
> Friends close to me are a two-edged knife, go far away from me, friends!

A variant of this theme goes:

> Zami ale c'est ma zami pas' zamis!
> Zami ale c'est ma zami pas' zamis tankiam!
> Mais pasé calle : I I I ba zamis chaier zamis chiam!
> L'ol pa'li zami a zamis!

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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That friend there, he is not a friend for me!
That friend there, he is not a friend for me, treason!
I pass his house, he gives me a chair to sit in!
He goes around speaking bad words about me!

Or again, you may hear:

Nèg' nwè, con ça ou yé, ago-ó!
Nèg' nwè, con ça ou yé!
Y'ap manjé avé ou!
Y'ap boè avé ou!
Y'ap ouspé lavie ou dèhors! [Ex. 95]

Black man, like this you are, ago-ó!
Black man, like this you are!
He will eat with you,
He will drink with you,
He will eat the life out of you!

A man regards his child's godfather as his closest friend outside the family circle. Should either of the two friends fail to fulfill the high standard of behavior demanded by their tie, the other may express disappointment and recrimination, as in this song:

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Compè à mwin compè ou malhonnête!
Ou malhonnête compè compè à mwin compè ou malhonnête!
Premier pitit mwin fai'm ba ou batizé!
Malheur rivé'm nan bounder ou pas vini wè mwin!

My comrade, comrade, you are dishonest!
You are dishonest comrade, my comrade, comrade, you are dishonest!
I gave you my first child to baptize!
When misfortune comes to me in the boundor, you do not come to see me!

Sometimes even the most domestic of grievances are aired in public through means of song:

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Iannier ah!
Ste Hélène ah!
Iannier ah!
Ste Hélène ah!
Trois pain soulèvre mari'm ba mwin!
Malandre-à pensé mwin! [Ex. 96]

Iannier, ah!
St. Hélène, ah!
Iannier, ah!
St. Hélène, ah!
Three pains of slope my husband gave me!
This misfortune has taken me!

533 533 [596] A protest theme that runs through many a song stems from the feeling of having been slighted or improperly received in the house of another person. The following song airs the complaint of a person who feels he has been treated shabbily. Metaphorically, he says he is used to eating from an earthern bowl but has been served food in a gourd dish, from which only the poorest of people eat.

> Mi 'kinal mangé nan bolle,
> M'pap mangé nan ennin ciyé! [Ex. 97]
>
> I'm accustomed to eating from a bowl;
> I'm not going to eat from a cut gourd!

[574] Or again, there is the story of the unwelcome voyager, a person who travels all the way from Jérémie, far out on the southern peninsula, to the distant town of Arcahaye, only to find that he is not wanted there:

Moin sort' Jérémie!	I come from Jérémie!
Moin passé Aux Cayes!	I pass through Aux Cayes!
M'rivé L'Arcahaye, mes amis!	I arrive in Arcahaye, my friends!
C'est moin mêmes'yo pas vlé wé yà,	It is me they don't wish to see here,
Moin yo wé!	It is me they see!
C'est moin mêmes yo pas vlé wé yà,	It is me they don't wish to see here,
Moin yo wé oh!	It is me they see, oh!
C'est moin mêmes yo pas vlé wé yà,	It is me they don't wish to see here,
Moin yo wé oh!	It is me they see, oh!

[461] A man complains sometimes of the work that has been foisted upon him by an employer, or by a neighbor with whom he exchanges labor:

> M'pas moulette oh moin pas moulette oh!
> Habitant passé moin pa'd coffi!
>
> I'm not a mule, oh, I'm not a mule, oh!
> The farmer takes me to carry coffee!

533 533 Even the officials of the houngfor may be publicly reproached in song for acts of injustice. In the following example the houngfoisan, the Voudoun priest's assistant, is taken to task. The song probably was first heard in the course of a ceremony at which the houngfoisan was present:

> Dumonnin y wa, houngfoisan oh!
> Dumonnin y wa, 'gfoisan é!
> Dumonnin y wa, yo foi mangé raisen manjé!
> Li monin vlé pa'd ou pas vlé monin pa'dé!
> Li monin vlé chanté ou pas vlé monin chanté lé!
> Dumonnin y wa, yo foi mangé raisen monin! [Ex. 98]
>
> Dahomey y ou,* houngfoisan, oh!
> Dahomey y ou, houngfoisan, é!
> Dahomey y ou, they do me wrong!

---

* The word Dahomey is frequently used as an exclamation.

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1950) 1960 SV3 11481 SV3

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When I want to talk you do not want me to talk!
When I want to sing you do not want me to sing!
Dahomey *y ava*, they do me wrong! *

Another note of criticism within the *houngfor* concerns a person who has been putting on airs of importance. The song states that he (or she) in reality has not even qualified for the lowest order within the cult, even though he behaves as though he were the cult chief:

Ou pave houngi oh!	You are not yet a houngi, oh!
Ou dit'm ou c'est houngan!	You tell me you are a houngan!
Ou pave houngi!	You are not yet a houngi!
Ou dit'm ou c'est houngan c'est ça!	You tell me you are a houngan, it is so!
Oh Paille à Terre!	Oh, Straw on Earth! †
Pawal ale!	Pack and go!
Oh Allada malade oh! [Ex. 99]	Oh, Allada is sick, oh! ‡

Poverty is so normal in Haitian life that a man who accumulates wealth in any form becomes conspicuous. Ordinarily he does not welcome this conspicuousness. It makes him a target of gossip and rumors, and of those who might wish to collect debts from him, borrow money, or obtain other favors. He becomes a *grou nèg'*, and finds himself increasingly cut off from the community of ordinary, poor people. Needless to say, Haitians, like other people, dream of striking it rich. Wherever poverty has been acute, whether in Europe, Asia, or America, the folklore is full of tales of finding great treasures. Haiti is no exception. Many Haitian folk tales and folk songs deal with this theme, particularly with obtaining wealth by magical or supernatural means. Sometimes riches are obtained through *engagements*, unholy compacts with devils or demons. In some stories lou facilitate the discovery of treasure, in others a powerful bocor accomplishes it through magical practices. If a man suddenly becomes well-to-do, therefore, rumors may spread in regard to how he came by his wealth. If he is suspected of dealings with devils or with a powerful bocor, his apparent success in his venture makes him a neighbor to be feared. To avoid incurring envy and hostility, people tend to play down their financial successes and pretend they have nothing in life but the clothes they wear, their houses, and their gardens. Spreading word that a poor man has hidden money is regarded as a mean and reprehensible act. Numerous folk songs protest against this injustice:

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[796]

Dahomey *wanlé* mess bonne-wè!
Si m'apé travaille li mess ceuy-wè,

* Literally: They are my slaves.
† An exclamation, the name of a certain mango.
‡ Allada, the name of a town in Dahomey, used by the name of "people of Dahomey." The line means, "Things are in a bad state of affairs."

Yo dit'm gainyain largent sèl, oh vrai!
Yo mètè complotaille ch li sou dos mwàn!
Oh yo mètè complotaille ch li sou dos mwàn!
Fai'm payé largent, *dwa!*
Mandè Bondieu pou' mwà wè li, èè! [Ex. 100]

Disaster descends on my yard!
If I work in the yard there
They say I have hidden money, in truth!
They plot behind my back!
Oh, they plot behind my back!
Make me pay money, *dwa!*
I ask God to see it.

Another theme that runs deeply through Haitian life is the need for a mother. In a society where plaçage is normal and where fathers frequently are transient, the mother has been the stabilizing factor in family life. A *plaçée* family might see the father only at certain times of the year. If he is a farmer, it will usually be when he comes to work his gardens; then he will move on to other gardens and possibly to another family elsewhere. The loss of a mother, under these conditions, is felt very deeply. Many Haitian songs, in various moods, emphasize the role of the mother in the house. Some of them are gay, like this one, with an undercurrent of sadness:

Oh dépis manman mwàn fai mwàn,
M'pas jamais wè manman mwàn!
Wailè wailè wailè wailè!
Wailè wailè wailè wailè!
M'pas conné manman mwàn!
Zandolite fai'm!
Mabouya fai'm!
Zandolite fai'm!
Mabouya fai'm! [Ex. 170]

Oh, since my mother made me,
I've never seen my mother!
Wailè wailè wailè wailè! *
Wailè wailè wailè wailè!
I do not know my mother!
A *zandolite* made me!
A *mabouya* made me!
A *zandolite* made me!
A *mabouya* made me!

The *zandolite* and *mabouya* to which the song refers are small lizards which constantly skitter about on the rocks and in the trees, as though they have no home. The metaphor is clear.

One more song on this subject stresses the importance of having a mother as compared, say, to an unreliable man:

Ma crié,
Oh qu'm gainyè manman mwàn ma rélé!
Ma rélé,
Oh qu'm gainyè manman mwàn crié!
Qu'm pèrdé ma gangan mwàn jòu' l'eau' ale!

* Exclamation.

To go away and talk, eh!
Ogoun Balindjo
The eyes see, the mouth is closed, eh!*
Ogoun Balindjo
Don't you see they come to look at me?

Or again, the lua Ogoun and Loko Attiso are invoked to witness a person's misery, though in this song the cause is not explained:

Ogoun eh gi'lé mèl!
Papa Ogoun ou wa gi'lé mèl!
Gi'lé mèl eh Lok' Attiso gi'lé mèl li yé! [Ex. 105]

Ogoun, eh, look at my misery!
Papa Ogoun, you will look at my misery!
Look at my misery, eh, Loko Attiso, look at my misery here!

The impulse to criticism most often stems from personal injuries, but on occasion songs are used as a community affair to exert social pressure on an errant member of the neighborhood:

Fè' Jean-Pierre wa quitté boè tafia!
Fè' Jean-Pierre ti manze yo tout!

Brother Jean-Pierre, stop drinking tafia!†
Brother Jean-Pierre, the little children are naked!

Although discussions of neighbors' affairs tend to have this moral tone, a vast number of songs are pure gossip and are sung for their ribald or wry humor, as the case may be. In some the objects of ridicule are named; in others the allusions are indirect, so that only those who are familiar with the situation will know the people concerned. Open quarreling often provides amusement and substance for satire. The community can scorn persistence, stupidity, and stubbornness through a confusion of charges and countercharges, and is quick to burlesque them. Thus there are public pressures against petty and needless disturbances. The following song refers to a dispute over ownership of an unwanted article.

Mais, dis c'est bagaille grand manmè Cipèl!
C'est bagaille grand manmè! Cipèl!
Mais dis c'est mèlé grand manmè! Cipèl!
C'est bagaille grand manmè! Cipèl!
Mais dis n'ap chaché li! Cipèl!
N'ap gnané li! Cipèl!
Mais dis c'est bagaille grand manmè! Cipèl!
C'est bagaille grand manmè! Cipèl! [Ex. 106]

* That is to say, the eyes should see and the mouth should be closed.
† Ironically drink.

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I say it belongs to the old man! *Ciyé!* *
It's the old man's thing! *Ciyé!*
I say it's the old man's affair! *Ciyé!*
It's the old man's thing! *Ciyé!*
I say I'll look for it! *Ciyé!*
I'm going to take it! *Ciyé!*
I say it belongs to the old man, *Ciyé!*
It's the old man's thing, *Ciyé!*

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Another burlesque of a quarrel concerns a mother who has sent her daughter down to the river to do the washing. Some question arises as to whether the girl went down to the river at all, or whether she went elsewhere. There is implicit suggestion that the girl may have been at a rendezvous. The mother and the girl argue back and forth:

Main wapé Lawuni nan dlow,	I went Lawuni to the water,
Li pas ale!	She didn't go!
Main wapé Lawuni nan dlow,	I went Lawuni to the water,
Li pas ale!	She didn't go!
Main wapé Lawuni nan dlow,	I went Lawuni to the water,
Li pas ale!	She didn't go!
Main wapé Lawuni nan dlow,	I went Lawuni to the water,
Li pas ale!	She didn't go!
Lawuni ond ou si yé?	Lawuni, where are you?
Li'm si yé!	I was there!
Li'm si yé!	I was there!
Li'm si yé!	I was there!
Li'm si yé!	I was there!
Li'mé! [Ex. say]	There!

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Most of the scandal songs are fragmentary and tangent, though clear in implication, like this one:

C'ou pas fanm mwéné
C'ou pas fanm mwéné
C'ou pas fanm mwéné
C'ou pas fanm mwéné
C'ou pas fanm mwéné mwanmwé
C'ou pas fanm mwéné
Gaiepain mwanm t'ap mwéché dépé bim!
Ewa wapé
Gaiepain mwanm t'ap mwéché dépé bim!
Gaiepain mwanm nim barwé à,
Pwané mawrdin ah, wé [Ex. wé]

Ik wann'ay fouté!
Ik wann'ay fouté!
Ik wann'ay fouté!

* Used as an exclamation.

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It wasn't my fault!
It wasn't my fault another!
It wasn't my fault!
There was a man looking for a bargain!
Rara wapal *
There was a man looking for a bargain!
There was a man in the yard,
Carry the news, oh, *ma!* †

Another scandal song, spiced with ridicule, refers tangently to a specific situation and points a moral:

Could li yé wuille-o! Could li yé wuille-o!
Could li yé wuille-o! Could li yé wuille-o!
Si ou pensé yun femme pou vié lavé pied
Ou pas konnin manklé quoi gen li yé! [Ex. say]

Now she is there, wuille-o! Now she is there, wuille-o! ‡
Now she is there, wuille-o! Now she is there, wuille-o!
If you take a woman who doesn't want to wash her feet
You don't have to ask what kind she is!

(515) The practice of washing one's feet before an intimacy enters into numerous gossip songs. In the following one, the woman asks her friend Pierre for water to wash with so that she may take advantage of Joseph's absence in the city:

Ba mwin dlous séq' mwin pou' mwin lavé pied mwin!
Manklé dlous mwin ché' Pierre pou' mwin lavé pied mwin!
Manklé dlous pou' mwin lavé pied mwin!
Joseph dangyr pas li, l'ahé lavilla ala!
Joseph dangyr pas li, l'ahé lavilla ala!

Give me water, my fellow, to wash my feet!
I ask for water, my dear Pierre, to wash my feet!
I ask for water to wash my feet!
Joseph who is dangerous is not here, he has gone to the city!
Joseph who is dangerous is not here, he has gone to the city!

Another bit of gossip with perhaps a more graphic account of the woman's deeds tells what happens in Achille's house when he isn't home:

Vié da' ché!
Oh vié da' ché!
Achilla vié da' ché!
Vié da' ché!
Oh vié da' ché!

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* Exclamatory.
† Exclamatory.
‡ Exclamatory.

2: Courlander 8-6 (1937-1939) 1960 8V3 Hold 8V3

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Achillo vini da' ahli!
A la papa vini gi'ya ennd nan chundi?
A la papa vini gi'ya ennd cahni! [Ex. 110]

Turns his back and goes!
Oh, turns his back and goes!
Achillo turns his back and goes!
Turns his back and goes!
Oh, turns his back and goes!
Achillo turns his back and goes!
When papa turns, a man goes into his room!
When papa turns, a man climbs into his bed!

But a note of sympathy for Achillo creeps into the last stanza:

Vini da' ahli!
Vini da' ahli!
Achillo ou pas nan ennce ch!

Turns his back and goes!
Turns his back and goes!
Achillo, you are not in the joke, ch!

In the following song, a young man confesses to having despoiled a girl and blemished the family's reputation, but he tells the father and mother not to worry about it.

Bonjou' bonjou' Manman Sou,
Fille ou c'est pendu.
Bonjou' bonjou' Papa Sou,
Ti fille ou c'est pendu.
Pi, ma ba ou l'a'gent.

Good evening, good evening Mother Sou,
Your daughter is ruined.
Good evening, good evening Father Sou,
Your little daughter is ruined.
Don't say a word, I will pay you for it.

An elderly gentleman named Alman fails to come out of his adventure with the same self-assurance, and the community takes full note of the details:

Alman ahli bombili,
Alman ahli bombili,
Alman ahli bombili,
Li ennn'ini pind ennd!
Pas pa'li pendu gin.
Si ou pa'li pendu gin
Gain yon grand ennnn
Qui ou fachni!

Alman went on a spree,
Alman went on a spree,
Alman went on a spree,
He came home with a broken head
Don't say a word about it.
If you say anything about it
There is an old gentleman
Who will be angry!

[P 148]

13. Comments on the Mighty: Political Songs

The African-style song of social criticism has found no worthier subjects than the historic political figures of Haiti. There is no doubt that the African slaves used this art form to express their feelings toward the white masters as they had used it to comment upon the behavior of their own chiefs and fellow tribesmen. The worthy leaders were praised in song; the unworthy were castigated and their sins, failures, and social misdemeanors publicized in folk songs. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, slavery had come to an end in Haiti. The deep democratic sense of human dignity had outlasted the colonial masters and emerged tempered and sharp. The songs of criticism became not only comments upon political figures but campaign propaganda as well. They dwelt upon the accomplishments or faults of the candidates for political office. Friendly songs sought out every virtue, and invented others, in the man or woman being praised. Unfriendly songs looked out and invented or poked biting fun at the subject, not even sparing his physical deformities.

Yet the political songs are more than statements of merit or fault. Cumulatively they are a kind of folk history of Haiti. No political aspirant ever went unsung by his peasant army, or unridiculed by his opponent's followers. The songs the people sang about their heroes and their enemies recall events and details that formal history has forgotten or ignored. The memory of the folk song is powerful and long. Some of the recollections go back more than a century.

History books tell us that in December, 1843, Major Charles Hérard died Rivière was elected to the office of the presidency, and that a new constitution was drawn up by the Constituent Assembly. The new constitution was an accomplishment of the liberal and democratic forces of the nation. It guaranteed certain civil rights to the people. It provided that judges be elected instead of appointed, abolished life terms for

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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From Colonel Déro to Private Diplaro,
They marched with fanfare, a great army of foot soldiers!
He thought that he was king!
He thought that he was king!
He thought that he was king!
The Spaniards chased him, he ran like a dog after fresh carrion!

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Forty-five years later, in 1888, there was a big political rally in Port-au-Prince. The two presidential candidates were General Séide Télémaque and Déus Légitime. Their supporters clashed near the palace, and Télémaque was killed in an exchange of gunfire. Légitime naturally was accused of having murdered his rival, though his supporters would not believe that he had committed such a crime. Evidence for a trial was entirely lacking, and Déus Légitime became president. But feeling ran high, and the followers of Télémaque began to sing:

* [533]
* [539]

Écoutez chers amis l'histoire de Légitime!
Assassin de Séide, et lui est président!
Écoutez bien l'histoire, le gens du nord marchaient
Sur Port-au-Prince un fois pou' vengé la mort de Séide!
Allez au diable, bandit Déus!
Échappez vous, ingrat Déus!
Si vous perdre le temps, Déus,
Florvil vous feura fusillé!

Listen my friends to the story of Légitime!
Assassin of Séide, and he is President!
Listen well to the story, the people of the north will march
On Port-au-Prince one day to avenge the death of Séide!
Go to the devil, bandit Déus!
Escape, ingrate Déus!
If you lose time, Déus,
Florvil will have you shot!

[669]

Légitime had this possibility clearly in his mind. And the next year, when Florvil Gélin Hippolyte marched from the north with an army of *cacos* (peasant troops who hired out to political aspirants), Légitime hurriedly boarded a steamer in the harbor and sailed for Jamaica. Séide Télémaque was considered avenged, as the army bugles still bear witness. For now when the bugle plays reveille it is supposed to be saying:

* [539]

Séide Télémaque, Légitime has fled!
Séide Télémaque, Légitime has fled!

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The new President, Florvil Hippolyte, died in office in 1896. J. N. Leger, a Haitian historian, tells soberly of Hippolyte's end in the following words.

533 539 643 named in the song has been dead for years does not seem to matter very much:

Mwf'm allé ch parkwé	Take me to the parkwé
Mwf'm allé!	Take me!
Mwf'm allé!	Take me!
Mwf'm allé ch parkwé Bwmé	Take me to Bwmé's parkwé
Mwf'm allé ché! [Ex. 120]	Take me, ché!

533 539 625 Sometimes the challenge is directed to a more lowly level of authority, such as the gendarme:

> Gendarme, mwf'm nan bwmé!
> Rwo, gendarme ché! [Ex. 121]
>
> Gendarme, take me to the police station!
> Rwo, gendarme, ché!

159 683 579 183 626 Haitians are notable for their restraint from physical violence. During holiday celebrations it is not uncommon to see men who have drunk enough tafia to make them act up. Some of them may even be morose and belligerent. But the disturbances of the peace more often than not are verbal. So long as the first blow is not struck, the social pressures against violence operate effectively. But physical assault against an individual—a push, a blow, a slap—is an affront to personal dignity which relieves the victim of the social restraints and gives him the right to bodily revenge. I have seen waterfront rows, fierce and vocal, in which no one but the participants showed much interest. But should one man shove or strike another, the spectators would immediately interfere, for that single physical contact would have removed the barriers to the worst violence. Sometimes at carnival time a man assumes the guise of belligerence. Such a bully may roll up one trouser leg to indicate he is challenging all and sundry to a fight. Usually, passers-by move aside good-naturedly when he approaches. He is not taken seriously; but neither is he challenged, except by another man in the same frame of mind. When two men with rolled trouser legs meet, there may be a verbal encounter, possibly from opposite sides of the street, to the general entertainment of the bystanders. It is usually a serio-comic affair. Some of the folk songs memorialize occasions on which a man has publicly spoiled for a fight, real or imaginary. This song comments briefly on a man named Çaliza, who looked for trouble:

533 539 683 579

> Way way way!
> Way way way!
> Way way way!
> Çac bien arranjé mwyn yo!
> Mèse on bouèlle là!

533
539 EXAMPLE 178

Oun, ah, Lèè, ah!
Oun, ah, Lèè, ah!
They take the aroun of the loa and serve evil, ah!
Let it sink!

[624] [196] (The song criticizes someone who has become a houngan and has used his powers wrongly. Oun Lèè is the loa to whom the complaint is being addressed, or he may be the one lodging the complaint.)

EXAMPLE 179

Farmer, call the loa for me, *ego-ê!*
Farmer, call the loa for me now,
Call the loa for me now,
Gèdé has engaged me!

[196] [192] (Gèdé is a loa. *Habitant* signifies "farmer" or "peasant" but could be translated as "countryman.")

EXAMPLE 180

Boulicha, I arrive,
See my misfortune!
I will cut them, I have no knife!
Boulicha Nago, I will cut them, *malosiè!*

[196] [198] (The loa Boulicha Nago announces his arrival and complains that people have mistreated him. He says he will avenge himself without a knife. *Malosiè* is ritual language.)

EXAMPLE 181

I am going to see the houmi houmie, oh,
I am going to see if they are in accord with me.
Etc.

EXAMPLE 182

I cry honor before my loa's altar,
Cry honor, and no one replies!
I cry honor before my loa's altar,
Cry honor, and no one replies!
All who speak well [of me], I am here, I will listen, oh!
All who speak evil [of me], I am here, I will listen to them!
They sign my name, Alfonso, but they do not sign my feet,
I ask where will they see me!

Li Herskovits E-4,5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

may next be considered. Two types of markets exist — those in the countryside where produce is often sold at wholesale, and the town markets where retail trading takes place. In Mirebalais, as elsewhere, the principal market day is Saturday, though smaller markets are held on Thursdays, and roadside gatherings of women offering small amounts of foodstuffs or cooked foods are to be found everywhere. The country markets occur at present only on Tuesdays, though in earlier times the markets shared the days of the week in rotation. To heighten the importance of the towns, however, and to encourage the peasants to work steadily in their fields by concentrating the time spent at market, it has been officially decreed that the schedule given above be followed. Before this, the rotation of the markets in the commune of Mirebalais was as follows:

MONDAY: Yaboukou; La Civelle; Landale;
TUESDAY: Mirebalais;
WEDNESDAY: Dufailly (a fairly large country market); Labouli; Colombie (a very large market);
THURSDAY: Mirebalais;
FRIDAY: Chambo and Camarde (the most important country markets in the valley);
SATURDAY: Mirebalais.

The Mirebalais market is located near the central square not far from the confluence of the Artibonite and Tombe rivers, though until relatively recent times it was held in the *place* before the church. It occupies a large fenced-in space reserved for the purpose, which on the days of the great markets hums with activity. Each tradeswoman has her place there, which she retains by a kind of informal agreement, held to so well, for all its informality, that if a woman is compelled to be absent for a time, those who sit near by watch it for her and warn anyone who takes it that it must be relinquished when the original occupant returns. If despite this warning

the newcomer persists in retaining the place, an informal appeal is taken to the local magistrate, who invariably settles the matter by deciding in favor of the original occupant.

Each woman tends to specialize in certain commodities, such as meat or cloths or notions or baskets. The venders of foodstuffs, other than meat, however, vary their offerings with the season. This latter class of sellers mainly comprises women who, living in the town, constitute a group of "middlemen," either buying produce at the country markets, or, going off with their pack animals into the back country, return with saddle-bags loaded with the purchases they have made direct from the farmer.[2]

Country women are also well represented among the traders, and as they come streaming into town on market days with their head burdens, or driving the heavily laden, slow-plodding donkeys, they fill the streets with color and movement that make up one of the most picturesque aspects of Mirebalais life. A load may consist of one type of produce only, or a woman may bring rice, maize, beans, and bananas, as well as home-made brooms and baskets. All transactions in the market are for cash, and there is no barter of any kind, for the pattern of a money economy has been too deeply lodged in Haitian tradition to allow any other mode of exchange. Prices are based on supply and demand rather than on any agreement between sellers, since contact with the capital causes the current prices paid there for all kinds of produce to be generally known. Another factor which enters into price-fixing, however, is prestige. It is regarded as a mark of incompetence for a woman, whether from country or town, to return home with unsold produce, and since the reputation of being a clever trader is highly valued, this is avoided when at all possible, and the vender adjusts her prices as the day wears on to insure that she will dispose of everything she has brought.

In Mirebalais, as elsewhere, the markets are best attended during harvest months, when by official count as many as

1: Hankowitz E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Hatti SV3
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be successful, he can count on the members of his family for financial and moral support. 596 584

These are not all the rights of the older members of the family, especially of the family head, over their juniors. All elders may punish by beating, though the oldest member of the family exercises that right most freely and may chastise those who are themselves grown men and women. If there is gossip about a boy or a girl, the family head calls the culprit to reprimand him or, if he believes the case a serious one, to beat him. Among the peasants, particularly, grown men go down on their knees before their elders, when so ordered, for a beating. Such punishments may be particularly severe if the culprit does not soon ask pardon, for since all who are older have the right to beat a younger relative, it sometimes happens that the punishment administered by the head of the family is not considered adequate, and another takes up the stick when the family head has put it down, so that two or three wands may be broken over the back of a stubborn offender. If such a one were to fight back, he would become "accursed," ceasing any longer to be considered a member of the family, and even though no legal steps might be taken to disinherit him, he would lose all caste. This right to beat is accorded by custom rather than by law, but an adult beaten by one of the elders of his own family would think long before he would sue. "There is always a consultation, and a man is discouraged from going to court." 596 627 [626] [691]

Lest the impression may have been given, in considering the role of the elders and their relationship to the younger members of the family, that it is those in the father's line alone who are concerned, it must be emphasized that relatives of both parents exercise substantial control over a person. More than this, since marriage constitutes an agreement between families as well as between an individual man and woman, it follows that both paternal and maternal grand- 596 [581] [603]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

44 642 175 at least a generation behind them, but rather their complete lack of any experience in self-rule. The author continues:

> In addition to the vanity of the black which was flattered by the distribution of principalities and duchies, there was the political thought which wished to fortify things by words. The most important sugar manufactories were distributed, with the property title, to the principal officers and civil agents of the government. Workers were allotted to these very much as were the Indians to the first Spanish conquerors. . . . Moreover, since African blood dominated in the North [that is, since there were few mulattoes and lighter-skinned people], the feudal lords, aided by the color of their skin, could enforce obedience to a yoke which in name only was modified [from slavery].[13]

[471]

175 642 566 631 421 625 692 The social organization of Christophe's kingdom, then, was one of large properties, with all the feudalistic trappings, resting upon a solid base of wage-earning serfdom. In contrast to mediaeval feudalism, the king was here much more than *primus inter pares*. Thanks to the policy of Dessalines, most land had come into state ownership, so that the nobility received their estates by royal favor, and held them as leases only so long as the King pleased. As in the Middle Ages, the noblemen were petty monarchs within the district granted to their jurisdiction. Their freedom of action, however, was even here subject to scrutiny: detachments of Royal Dahomeys[14] were stationed in every cantonment or pariah, to enforce discipline, keep the King informed, and find their own subsistence without a drain on the royal treasury. In every district was set up a court of *sénéchaussée* to see that justice obtained.[15] The King's law, not the nobleman's private code, prevailed in the whole country.[16]

13. R. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1846), II, 167–168.

14. Organized after the model of the police force existing in France before 1789.

15. These courts were composed of a royally appointed senechal and his assistant, a king's procurer, and a clerk.

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16. The Code Henry was promulgated on January 30, 1812. It consisted of seven parts: Civil, Commercial, Shipping and Maritime, Civil Process, Criminal and Police Process, Agricultural, and Military. In general the Code followed French precedent, but the section on Agriculture was Christophe's own. Sir James Basket (in his *History of the Island of St. Domingo* [London, 1818], p. 413) calls this part "a thing unexampled among other nations." It reveals not only the King's absorption in the main economic enterprise of his state, but also his skill in devising an integrated functioning of a social order of nobility and serfs with a plantation economy based on money crops. This Agricultural Law regulated such diverse matters as the reciprocal duties of proprietors and cultivators, the policing of plantations, and the culture and preparation of the major crops. It set forth industry as the parent of virtue, and idleness as the source of vice.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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Northern Haiti flourished magnificently under Christophe's 175
sternly benevolent rule. The King had that daring spirit of initiative 643
which was so generally lacking in later Haitian history; he had, in 642
addition, the power necessary to force through a new adjustment if 433
the old way showed defects.[17] He excited artificial wants among his leaders by making nobles of them, and then compelled them to satisfy these wants without ever slipping back to a lower standard of living. Thirteen years of enforced labor and of order kept by a rigorously effective police force gave northern Haiti the kind of prosperity [438]
she had known in colonial days. Christophe encouraged commerce [439]
and protected foreign traders. He called in all debased coinage, substituting for it sound gold and silver currency. The revenue he raised [692]
was larger than it had been since 1791, amounting to about $3,500,000 annually. Probably the most eloquent testimony to his success is the fact that at his death, when the kingdom of the North was once more united with the republic of the South, more than six million dollars found their way into the republican treasury.

The Black King's economic system worked. It was based on a 175
social division of the people, with the masses doing manual labor, 565
and the aristocrats definitely set apart and recognized as upper class. By 1820 Haiti was well on its way toward the caste system.

3. *Pétion* (*1807–1818*)

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Almost all Latin-American countries in the nineteenth century 175
exhibited one common feature: an aristocratic landowning class 631
lording it over peons. Haiti did not follow this pattern. She had aristocrats and peasants, but the aristocrats did not own most of the land, and the peasants were not peons. If later rulers had kept the organization of economic life begun by Toussaint and developed by his fellow blacks, Dessalines and Christophe, it is almost certain that Haitian social evolution would have resembled that of the rest of Latin America, for it would not have been a great change from

17. Duraciné Vaval, "Le Roi d'Haïti Henri Christophe," in *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti*, II, No. 3 (June 1931), p. 14, says that Haiti's periodic civil troubles and social misfortunes, both ending in a diminution of the state's autonomy, have been due to economic maladjustments. "Our weaknesses in political life derive from our immobility in material production." Immobility is an index of stagnation. Few rulers of Haiti have been at once powerful enough to overcome the immobility and wise enough to know what measures had to be taken. [114]

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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171 feudal holdings to absolute ownership of land by the influential. It is
175 strangely paradoxical that an aristocrat, the light-skinned Pétion,
•634 representing the cultured group in society, broke the economic power of his own aristocratic class and made the former slaves not serfs but peasants. It is doubtful whether he intended either result.

175 Alexandre Pétion was the antithesis of Haiti's three eminent blacks
643 in all but military skill. Toussaint's genius as a fighter lay in his
159 surprise moves, Dessalines' in his recklessness, Christophe's in his bulldog determination; but Pétion was a great general because he knew when to retire and so lead his enemy into an exposed position. The three Negroes had been born in slavery; Pétion, coming of a cultured and sophisticated affranchi family, grew up in France. Dessalines was a crude ruffian by comparison, while in the face of Pétion's suavity Christophe's impetuousness seemed rankly uncouth. Where they bludgeoned, Pétion persuaded; where they hacked their way through opposition in the determination to gain an end, he graciously yielded and so won new friends. Tactful at every point, he survived even such contretemps as his refusal of the hand of the Emperor's daughter.

As leader of a young nation, Pétion might almost be said to have had too broad an understanding of human nature. He was a gentle ruler over his people; when they erred he did not punish or upbraid, but excused their misdeeds by assuming the cause to be some fatal compulsion over which they momentarily had no control. He had no wish to drive the nation to "success." Neither did he care to use his position for personal aggrandizement. His mind was supple and practical, disdainful of abstractions, undeluded by resounding slogans, fertile in compromise, not finical as to means, always unsurprised, exquisitely tactful. When crises arose to dismay his ministers, Pétion's philosophic calm was undisturbed.

Cynically tolerant, he gave office to political enemies if they chanced to be able. A representative of the topmost class of society,
[648] he managed to moderate antagonisms based on color. He gave
[87] sanctuary and financial succor to the Spanish-American liberator,
[423] Simón Bolívar; he established the foundations of an educational system; he defended the state against Christophe's power; he ruled constitutionally; and he gave land to his people, even to the humblest of them. When he died, his subjects for miles around came into Port-au-Prince, where they stood weeping about his palace, refusing

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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[p. 234]

XIII

CONSTITUTIONS AND POLITICAL FORMS

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QUITE aside from its castes and the political separation of 1807–20, Haiti has always consisted of two nations, one living in and near the towns and so within reach of established government, the other rural and yet capable of ordering its own affairs by folk rules without much actual governmental machinery. It is through the former that Haiti has a political history. Indeed, one is tempted to say that more than half the people have continually got along without any government whatever of a formal sort, for being peaceably inclined they have found custom and usage [669] sufficient for their needs. These people have been rarely disturbed by the state's rulers; revolutionary chieftains alone have found it worth their while to stir up the country folk to an active interest in politics.

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In the days of Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, the government had owned vast plantations which were under the control of the military. Pétion and Boyer instituted the commune by combining numerous estates and farms into a group likewise to be controlled by soldiers. Until the American Occupation the police system of the country was military, with ordinary soldiers keeping order and making arrests when necessary. Since few people are less given to disorder than the Haitian peasants, the task of keeping order was not a serious one; indeed, soldiers were frequently stationed among their friends and relatives, who never thought of them as police. It some- [283] times happened, however, that soldiers were assigned to other parts of the country, where they swaggered about with their *coumacques* (heavy-jointed canes), using these or the flat of their swords to enforce their often arbitrary commands.

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3: Leyburn · Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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official appointed by the president—the *juge de paix*. The term has little relation to our "justice of the peace." It implies rather the function performed by the old English country squire, who often by his prestige managed to patch up differences between neighbors without allowing matters to come to an issue, but who if the issue were joined sat as judge. The decision of the judge was final in all civil matters up to fifty dollars—and the case was rare in which peasants dealt in affairs as large as this. In the more populous communes (those containing large villages or towns) the juge de paix was more impersonal. He might render decisions, subject to appeal, in cases up to a hundred dollars. All minor police cases came within the province of this official, whose judgment was final in matters up to a twelve-dollar fine or a jail sentence of five days. All criminal cases began with this judge, but those of the gravest sort were speedily sent to higher courts. 632 693

By and large rural Haiti got along with a minimum of civil government, and urban Haiti was governed much as a small provincial town of the nineteenth century. 369 64

Several communes made an arrondissement, another political subdivision with a distinct military cast. Through most of her history Haiti had an average of about twenty of these arrondissements, each of them presided over by an army officer of high rank appointed by the president. In arrondissements containing important capitals a general, in lesser ones a brigadier-general, exercised both military and civil authority. This man was the medium through which the central government made known its decisions and laws. Because life could be tedious in a dull country town, in a district full of peaceful peasants, many of the generals spent their time in reflecting upon the chances of a successful insurrection which might make them important in national affairs. As already noted, the standard of discipline in the army was never very high, so that the presiding officer of an arrondissement might have a real sinecure if he was not ambitious.[1] 631 701

1. The military arrondissement always bore the name of the principal town or village within its borders. The following list shows the important places during the time of Boyer: [631] [701] [103]

In the department of the North there were five arrondissements: Cap-Haïtien, Grande-Rivière, Marmelade, Port Liberté, Limbé.
In the Northwest, three: Port-de-Paix, Cap Nicolas Mêle, Le Borgne.
In the Artibonite, three: Saint-Marc, Gonaïves, Mirébalais.
In the West, three: Port-au-Prince, Jacmel, Léogane.
In the South, five: Les Cayes, Jérémie, Aquin, Tiburon, Nippes.

3: Leyburn Z-4.5 (no date) 1966
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• 631 [341] Overlapping these military arrondissements have been financial arrondissements, generally six in number. The capital of each of these was a port, with a customs house: Port-au-Prince and Jacmel in the West, Les Cayes and Jérémie in the South, Cap-Haïtien in the North, and Gonaïves in the Artibonite.

Finally there were the five *départements*. These seem never to have been much more than geographical divisions to which it was convenient occasionally to refer. In more recent years, as records have been kept with more accuracy, the departments have developed important clerical significance.

[162]

Département	*Capital*	*Estimated Population (1950)*
North	Cap-Haïtien	450,000
Northwest	Port-de-Paix	150,000
Artibonite	Gonaïves	475,000
West	Port-au-Prince	950,000
South	Les Cayes	650,000

According to the present constitution, the country still has its five administrative departments, but has increased its other political subdivisions. There are 27 arrondissements to attend to governmental details, and in addition, 10 prefectures overlapping the arrondissements and serving as units of police control. The arrondissements are still further subdivided into 94 communes, 43 military posts, and 551 rural sections. Each commune is administered by a communal magistrate, appointed by the secretary of the interior, and so subordinate to the central government. This magistrate is assisted by a communal council or a municipal council, composed of elected prominent citizens.[2]

692 693 Courts have existed only in the important towns, which since Boyer's presidency have varied in number from four to eight. Each of these courts has consisted of a president or *doyen*, four judges, four substitute judges, a commissioner appointed by the president of the republic to keep watch over the proceedings of the body, and various inferior clerks and secretaries. Judges are politically appointed, either by the president of the republic or by his cabinet. Civil cases which exceed fifty dollars in extent have been handled by these courts, as also all appeals from decisions of local juges de paix. To the judges were added in 1826 juries to assist in criminal cases 693 695

2. See Luc Dorsinville, *Géographie-Atlas* (Port-au-Prince, 1929), *passim*.

important point in the warfare between the northern Empire of Christophe and the southern Republic o Pétion is well known, since the boundary between the two, never definitely fixed, might be roughly considered as the Artibonite, control of which, as always, depended on also obtaining control of the strategic hills about the town.[11] It is not possible to discover more than approximate figures for the population of Mirebalais at the present time, since no census of the district has been made, and the most recent figure of 51,000 for the commune is derived from the baptismal records in the parish church.[12]

From the earliest years of settlement of the valley, the town has been the center of its life. The government of the commune is located here; here the courts sit; and here the best schools and the only church of the district are found. Yet it is a small town, numbering less than two hundred and fifty houses, and crossed by but three principal thoroughfares stretching north and south, with ten or twelve cross-lanes. The houses on the principal streets, rectangular and small, are built of wood, plastered over with clay, painted, and roofed with sheet iron. On the outskirts of the town the roofing is of straw, or banana-leaf thatch, while the walls themselves are made of twilled wythes. No house lacks its veranda, however small, where people may be seen sitting late of an afternoon and early in the evening, but the life of the women is lived chiefly in the courtyards behind those houses that line the streets, where the cookhouses are found and the storehouses, and where all work is done. The place, or town square, lies at the point where the principal route between Port-au-Prince and the Dominican border turns sharply to the east. Consisting of an acre or two of cleared land, it is overgrown with weeds except when, in preparing for festive occasions, the prisoners from the town jail may be seen spending long hours, machetes in hand, cutting the grass, a few blades at a time. North of the square stands the church, a substan-

3:_Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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195 669 ex-slave, each of whom aroused his own group to fight off the invading Spaniards and English.

These two men emerging from the maelstrom were the cultured colored general, Rigaud, and the powerful Negro, Toussaint. United in purpose in 1793, they soon began to oppose each other. Their discord foreshadowed the rift which was permanently to divide free Haiti.

175 159 669 Rigaud, born at Les Cayes in 1761,[14] had been brought up in Bordeaux, France, where he was taught the trade of a goldsmith. Like many other colored colonial youths, he went briefly to Georgia to fight on the side of the Americans in their revolution against England. Gifted with extraordinary military talent, he rose to prominence in Saint-Domingue following the slave insurrection, and played a major part in expelling the British from the colony. He was fiery, intellectual, and brilliant, but lacking in self-control and political subtlety, which put him at a disadvantage with Toussaint. Rigaud's admirers—almost the whole body of free colored people—included all the influential persons in the colony once the whites had been cowed or driven out; the South was devoted to him body and soul, and he had numerous partisans in the provinces of the North and West. But Toussaint was the idol of the half-million blacks.

Born a slave, Toussaint was fortunate in having a kindly master who permitted him the sort of work which gave him leisure for reading. He studied eagerly, devouring all accounts he could find of the military exploits of Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar. Apparently he took no part in the slave uprising; on the contrary, he helped his master escape to the United States and later regularly provided him with money. Then he himself went to the Spanish part of the island, where he made a military reputation in the Spanish colonial army. When General Laveaux sought his aid against the invaders of harassed Saint-Domingue, the ex-slave accepted his overtures. Detractors of Toussaint call him a "cunning hypocrite" for joining and then deserting the Spaniards, and for accepting high rank under a French general whom he was even then (so it is asserted) planning to supersede. His decision to return to Saint-Domingue was certainly crucial, for it began his meteoric ascent to power.

[648] Accompanied by the black troops he had captained in the Spanish

[632] [364] 14. Les Cayes, the third largest town in modern Haiti, was even in colonial times an important seaport. It is located on the southwestern peninsula.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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XIII

CONSTITUTIONS AND POLITICAL FORMS

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XII

POLITICS

TO write of the politics of one country in the language of another is almost certain to foster misconceptions. Political terminology grows out of national and local experience, so that a Liberal party may actually be reactionary, a Radical group conservative, and a Conservative bloc progressive; the names are entirely the product of time and circumstance. And to generalize upon the shades of political opinion in a country is almost surely to do violence to partisan sentiment, as well as to truth itself. If, on the other hand, one attempts to deal justly with each development of political thought, one is immediately caught in the web of tedious detail.

All these reflections apply to Haiti. Her political history is endlessly complicated, not only in the sequence of events, but in the intertwining prejudices of color, caste, sectionalism, education, heritage. Haitian writers have concerned themselves more frequently with politics than with any other subject; their diagnoses and remedies are familiar to the thought of élite citizens. Yet it is doubtful whether these authors have ever affected the political reality, except possibly in 1843. Theory and practice have consistently diverged: both form a part of the political complexion of Haiti, yet to treat either in detail would require an overbalanced discussion of political matters in a country nine tenths of whose people are normally unconcerned with politics. Let us then try to discover briefly how rulers have achieved and lost power, and how they have managed their government.

Of all the social institutions which had to find their own shape in 1804 upon the achievement of independence, the one for which the people as a whole had least preparation was government. Assuming the major institutions of a society to consist of economic life, government, religion, and marriage, one realizes the problems which faced the free Haitians in all of these categories. Satisfactory or partial, we have seen the solutions arrived at in all respects except government —solutions which modified and adapted old French colonial practice or African tradition. Neither French nor African guides would serve in politics, however. People who have just thrown off the yoke of a

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 178 64 slave system are not likely to assume it again; and the aristocrats, ever intent upon forgetting their African forebears, would certainly not turn to the Dark Continent for political inspiration.

175 642 701 643 Although the revolution had brought to the fore men of military experience and even genius, it had driven out or killed every single person of experience in civil government. The affranchis of the old régime had been denied political rights long before 1791; by 1804 few could have had any memory of active participation in government.[1] Toussaint was dead. The only authority of any significance was military. Consequently the new state was built upon army control and directed by army officers. Dessalines as commander in chief took the title of governor-general, later of emperor, but was in reality a military ruler. Fearful as he was of a new French invasion, he set his generals over the districts, organized his people as an army ready for immediate mobilization, and ruled as dictator.

175 642 This was all the Haitians had as political background: a military dictatorship. The Founding Fathers of Haiti, if so they might be called, had almost nothing to work with, nothing to build upon: neither a Magna Carta of the Blacks, nor any precedent of an independent Negro state anywhere in this white man's world; neither heritage of local responsibility and political debate to sow the seeds of democracy, nor any example of self-government in the American tropics to offer a pattern[2]—many of the known forms of government were a practical impossibility for the Haitians because of their need of continued defense against foreign enemies, their slave heritage, their inexperience in self-government, their complete lack of a middle class.

175 668 Hardly one tenth of the people in any case was capable of giving detailed thought to the form which government should take. The mass of ex-slaves had been fighting only *against* slavery, against the hated white rulers, not *for* democracy or any other abstraction. Their freedom achieved, they would not be the ones to make decisions. [642] All political choices would be made by the generals, by men of property and position, by the few whose persistent ambition made them stand out from the masses.

1. Such participation in French colonial politics would have been before the restrictive laws of 1771.

2. It must be recalled that Haiti was the second free country to be established in the Western Hemisphere, and that Liberia, in Africa, was still far in the future.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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perfectly educated, and because other matters seemed infinitely more pressing than the setting up of schools, the early Haitians, united in 1804, fell apart within a single generation. On one hand were the élite and a few other townspeople who knew at least something of the outside world; on the other the masses of toiling countryfolk to whom tiny Haitian valleys were the whole universe. The young men of these two classes coming to power could not understand each other; they could not make concessions to each other; and as they fought for what they held true, each grew suspicious of the other if not permanently hostile. The lack of common understanding might still have been repaired in any one generation, but no single president had the vision to inaugurate universal education. Aside from the expense, certain powerful élite citizens often expressed their doubts as to the educability of the peasants; as property owners they would undoubtedly have objected to the unsettling of the economic order, which was based upon the work of an ignorant mass of blacks.[16]

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Without education, the political sphere went unenriched by any flow of new blood from the people. Politics existed in a vacuum. The earthy, candid criticisms of a politically conscious folk never invigorated the discussion of national affairs. Without education, the people had no standards of comparison of Haiti with other nations, and were the easy dupes of whatever insurrectionary agitator could persuade them that their daily woes were caused by the current administration. Without education, high political office became a prerogative of the few, a contest between the Ins and the Outs, a path to personal wealth. Without education, Haiti could never be more than a dictatorship by a man or a clique, her stability endangered with the downfall of each incumbent, for dictatorships rarely provide for continuity in government.

175 871 64 66

Another great weakness was the notion that national happiness could be achieved by political means primarily. After the germinal ideas of Christophe and Pétion, which had a basis in economic behavior, hardly another important concept came out of a century of presidents. Haitian politicians have been great arrangers: they have given the country eighteen constitutions and innumerable codes, all admirable in their loving solicitude for precise detail. The common feeling of political aspirants has been, "If we are given power, all will

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16. This argument is clearly stated in Madiou, op. cit., III, 176 ff.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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[p. 234]

XIII

CONSTITUTIONS AND POLITICAL FORMS

369
•64 QUITE aside from its castes and the political separation of 1807–20, Haiti has always consisted of two nations, one living in and near the towns and so within reach of established government, the other rural and yet capable of ordering its own affairs by folk rules without much actual governmental machinery. It is through the former that Haiti has a political history. Indeed, one is tempted to say that more than half the people have continually got along without any government whatever of a formal sort, for being peaceably inclined they have found custom and usage [669] sufficient for their needs. These people have been rarely disturbed by the state's rulers; revolutionary chieftains alone have found it worth their while to stir up the country folk to an active interest in politics.

631 The formal subdivisions of Haiti have been, through most of its history, three: the *commune*, roughly corresponding to the American 177 township; the *arrondissement*, a group of communes, just as the American county is a group of townships; and the *département*, comprising several arrondissements. All three terms were borrowed from France, although their significance was altered when applied to the Haitian scene.

175 In the days of Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, the government had owned vast plantations which were under the control of 24 the military. Pétion and Boyer instituted the commune by combin- 475 ing numerous estates and farms into a group likewise to be controlled 701 by soldiers. Until the American Occupation the police system of the 632 country was military, with ordinary soldiers keeping order and making arrests when necessary. Since few people are less given to disorder than the Haitian peasants, the task of keeping order was not a serious one; indeed, soldiers were frequently stationed among their friends and relatives, who never thought of them as police. It some- [293] times happened, however, that soldiers were assigned to other parts of the country, where they swaggered about with their *cocomacaques* (heavy-jointed canes), using these or the flat of their swords to enforce their often arbitrary commands.

680 In every commune recognized by the state was an important

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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In every commune recognized by the state was an important

official appointed by the president—the *juge de paix*. The term has little relation to our "justice of the peace." It implies rather the function performed by the old English country squire, who often by his prestige managed to patch up differences between neighbors without allowing matters to come to an issue, but who if the issue were joined sat as judge. The decision of the judge was final in all civil matters up to fifty dollars—and the case was rare in which peasants dealt in affairs as large as this. In the more populous communes (those containing large villages or towns) the juge de paix was more impersonal. He might render decisions, subject to appeal, in cases up to a hundred dollars. All minor police cases came within the province of this official, whose judgment was final in matters up to a twelve-dollar fine or a jail sentence of five days. All criminal cases began with this judge, but those of the gravest sort were speedily sent to higher courts. 632 693

By and large rural Haiti got along with a minimum of civil government, and urban Haiti was governed much as a small provincial town of the nineteenth century. 369 64

Several communes made an arrondissement, another political subdivision with a distinct military cast. Through most of her history Haiti had an average of about twenty of these arrondissements, each of them presided over by an army officer of high rank appointed by the president. In arrondissements containing important capitals a general, in lesser ones a brigadier-general, exercised both military and civil authority. This man was the medium through which the central government made known its decisions and laws. Because life could be tedious in a dull country town, in a district full of peaceful peasants, many of the generals spent their time in reflecting upon the chances of a successful insurrection which might make them important in national affairs. As already noted, the standard of discipline in the army was never very high, so that the presiding officer of an arrondissement might have a real sinecure if he was not ambitious.[1] 631 701

1. The military arrondissement always bore the name of the principal town or village within its borders. The following list shows the important places during the time of Boyer: [631] [701] [103]

In the department of the North there were five arrondissements: Cap-Haïtien, Grande-Rivière, Marmelade, Fort Liberté, Limbé.
In the Northwest, three: Port-de-Paix, Cap Nicolas Môle, Le Borgne.
In the Artibonite, three: Saint-Marc, Gonaïves, Mirebalais.
In the West, three: Port-au-Prince, Jacmel, Léogane.
In the South, five: Les Cayes, Jérémie, Aquin, Tiburon, Nippes.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 speaking, consisted of the three groups known as *grands blancs, petits*
blancs, and *gens de couleur*.[3] Although no precise English term will
565 translate either of the first two categories, the former embraced the important whites—owners of large plantations, wealthy merchants, and high officials of the state; the latter designated all other whites of the colony—shopkeepers, artisans, small planters with only a few slaves, little people busily engaged in social climbing, and shiftless whites lazily slipping downhill. The 28,000 gens de couleur included all free persons who had African blood in their veins.

It is highly probable that without this third group there would have been no violent outbreak in 1791, no achievement of final independence in 1804, and no such caste system as exists in Haiti at the present time.

175 That there were free people of color in the colony was due to a
567 code of laws emanating from Louis XIV, who died in 1715, years before Saint-Domingue had shown any signs of becoming prosper-
● 641 ous. In 1685 the Grand Monarch had issued a Code Noir to cover all
648 colonial dealings with Negro slaves. Article 59 specified that when a slave secured his liberty, either by cash purchase or by gift of his white master or parent, he was to be regarded as a full French citizen. He might own land, dispose of his wealth as he pleased, bear testimony in legal cases (even against whites), marry as he pleased, vote, bear arms, travel where he wished, embrace any career, own slaves or free them. To Louis and his ministers such provisions probably did not seem particularly magnanimous, for race prejudice was not a characteristic of the French, and it could hardly have been supposed that enough slaves would ever be freed to create much of a problem.

175 In the course of the next hundred years, however, many persons of
563 color in the colony achieved their freedom, and with it French citi-
641 zenship. The greatest number had been granted their liberty because they were the children of white masters by Negro mothers—for race mixture is always a concomitant of white ownership of black slaves.
[595] Concubinage was so regularly practiced in Saint-Domingue that it was considered quite normal. If many of the first freedmen were
563 mulattoes (half-white, half-Negro), by 1791 their descendants might
175 be quadroons, octoroons, or near-whites, for consciousness of skin

3. The gens de couleur were also often called *affranchis*, freedmen, a term which strictly would be inaccurate as applied to a free colored person of the second or third generation.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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to ally himself with the ruling family. When Dessalines shortly discovered his daughter's condition, he burst into maledictions against all mulattoes, saying that they had plotted this disgrace to him and to his family. He went so far as to speak of having them all executed. 175 563 643

The Emperor's determination, and all his measures, could not quench the social ambition of his leading subjects. They bore what must be borne, conspiring meanwhile to get rid of him. They still had the advantage over the masses of a superior education, and they knew the path to eminence, once the obstacle of the Emperor was removed.

Nothing was done during the reign of Dessalines to cultivate the minds of the laboring class. Discipline backed by force was the guiding principle in dealing with them. Instead of trying to educate his people to understand their duties and to take an active part in statecraft, Dessalines—his generals and counselors, mulatto and black alike, thoroughly approving—used only compulsion. There was actually little difference between the attitude of this ruling clique toward the mass of laborers and that of their former white owners. Both looked upon them as cattle. A few of his advisers tried to persuade the Emperor to provide moral and religious education for the people so that they would not be seduced into completely evil ways, but the Emperor replied, "You are wrong: the laborers can be controlled only by fear of punishment and even death; I shall lead them only by these means; my 'morale' shall be the bayonet." 175 643 661 641 [871]

In short, between 1804 and 1806 no prominent figure in Haitian life seems even to have dreamed of "liberal" institutions. Those who had education, knowledge, and culture preserved them carefully for themselves. The wisdom, even the possibility, of enlightening the masses was doubted. Most Haitians remained in complete ignorance of what went on in the outside world. 175 565 641

Dessalines was killed by ambush near Port-au-Prince on October 17, 1806. The mulattoes were generally supposed to have planned the assassination, for it was well known that they had no cause to be fond of him. His callousness had raised up enemies in all walks of life. The cultivators were glad he was gone, because of his harshness. They were virtually slaves again in all but name; it was reported that upon his personal estates he had made unsatisfactory workers run the gauntlet between lines of soldiers armed with thorny switches, and 175 643 661

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Taxes were heavy

175 651 652 and work strenuous; but there were a sound currency, commercial and agricultural prosperity, and a full treasury.

Like many a great man he was an overweening egotist. His 175 643 159 energy and ambition, for Haiti as well as for himself, neither understood nor tolerated a lesser determination than his own. At times he seemed more intent upon the letter than upon the spirit of his laws. Probably his chief defect, a common failing of strong men, was a disregard for humble individual worth. To write of him invites the most colorful vocabulary. He is Black Majesty and the Emperor Jones. By almost any standards of leadership he would be accounted a great man. He lacked only those few final, subtle qualities which make for sheer genius. In 1820, stricken by paralysis and faced with defections in his army, he died as he had lived, dramatically, ending his life with a specially saved bullet (folklore says a silver one), in his palace of the ironic name, Sans Souci.

175 643 In no significant respect did Christophe change the feudal structure of economic organization begun by Toussaint and carried on by Dessalines. It was in administration, especially as it affected social status, that the thirteen years of Christophe were important for the [641] future of Haiti. Where the Emperor had been an unpredictable tyrant whose heavy hand inspired only terror, Christophe was a sternly just father whose well-disciplined children respected, admired, and even loved him.

175 427 415 655 566 643 The land policy of the two régimes was similar. Government estates were farmed out on five-year leases to the highest bidders among the well-to-do; large plantations belonging to the state were tilled by cultivators who might, without taking the term too harshly, be called serfs; loyal supporters and wealthy individuals were entrusted with responsibility. Like Dessalines, Christophe added wealth to power and rendered all his subjects dependent upon himself rather than on their own resources and influence—but all this with a difference.

175 643 642 565 Where the Emperor had denied the natural vanity of his aides by refusing them nobility, Christophe accepted their ambition as perfectly normal and made use of it for his own purposes. Four years after he had established his state, he changed it from a republic to a kingdom; all his important men he made dukes, barons, counts, knights. He warned them that he would expect them to live up to the dignities conferred upon them. Pomp and regalia are costly;

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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therefore plantations must be made to yield the uttermost farthing if the nobleman was to pay for the necessities of strict court etiquette. It was by no means a childish whim which prompted Christophe to call himself a king; rather an intelligent utilization of the human material the leader had to work with. Vanity was to serve an economic and a political purpose. 175 643 642 565

Christophe perceived that the defect of Dessalines' reign had been lack of security, both of person and property. Agriculture is a long-term investment and so must be hedged about by orderly rules. To this end the monarch stated his laws clearly, charged a fixed tax—one fourth of the annual crop—which would enrich the kingdom while allowing the tenant-proprietor a reasonable profit, and then guaranteed that no arbitrary demands would be made. Certainly there was no pampering of the wealthy, but there was ample prosperity resulting from regularity and security. 175 651

The ordinary citizen was, as he had been, bound to the soil as an agricultural laborer. This quasi-serfdom, however, was comparative freedom. It simply meant that the home and work of a man must be at the plantation on which he had been born. Saturday afternoons and Sundays were free, so that the laborers might make the most of their opportunities to visit the nearest market village, to buy and sell small goods, gossip, and enjoy the sociability of being part of a crowd. Being bound to the soil meant simply that they could not move, when the impulse seized them, to another plantation or another part of the country. Those whose mothers or relatives were natives of a plantation must return to that estate, being forbidden to live in towns. No person, military or other, who did not derive his living from a plantation, could marry an agricultural worker—a prohibition designed to prevent workers from leaving estates because of family ties, and particularly to prevent women, as mothers of future cultivators, from deserting agriculture. 175 566 641 466 [582]

Mediaeval serfdom itself went no further in binding people to the soil. Indeed, it did not go so far in regulating the daily life of serfs. Under Christophe the cultivators lived according to a routine as strict as that of a school. Reveille was rung as early as three o'clock to arouse women to prepare breakfasts for their menfolk; by four or four-thirty the bell was sounded for the commencement of work, which began after prayers had been led by the overseer. At nine o'clock there was a pause for luncheon, and then a resumption of 175 566 512 466

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175 In his easygoing republic Pétion saw prosperity slowly wane,
433 cultivation decline, profits give way to deficits. He issued a large
652 amount of paper currency, and continually hoped for better times
554 which did not come. The days of large fortunes were over. The economic system affected the aristocrats: although they were still landowners, so also were thousands of common folk. The criterion of rank became increasingly not wealth, but rather pursuit of a career which demanded no manual labor. Distinctions, if they are to be effective, must be made on the basis of conditions not easily achieved by all and sundry. Education and good French met this requirement; even more did a light skin color.

175 Pétion, darling of the mulattoes though he was, never drew a color
643 line. There is no suggestion in any of his actions that he gave prefer-
641 ence in his appointments to people of his own color. He suppressed
563 at least one insurrection led by men who would have liked to stir up color prejudice. He often tried by quiet irony to make his people less sensitive to their complexions. It is eloquent testimony to his fairness that the 200,000 blacks in the republic never faltered in their love for him. They had ample reason to mistrust the haughty and ambitious colored people, some of whom had lorded it over them in colonial days; but they knew that the President did not share their pretentious attitude. One look at the North, ruled by a black, was enough to convince any Southerner that his happiness was safer in the hands of a mulatto than in those of a Negro ex-slave. At Pétion's death, therefore, there was no demur at the succession to power of another light-skinned man.

175 Haitians of a later day have discussed at great length the wisdom
643 of Pétion's parceling of state lands. His supporters (and they are
642 numerous) as well as his critics generally keep the controversy on the lofty plane of ideals, intentions, and hypothetical contingencies. Pétion is praised for being generous to humble folk where all other rulers of his country had been severe; for being a realist in accepting and adjusting his measures to the limitations of the average Haitian's character; for building a patriotism upon love of one's own small plot of land; for ruling constitutionally, with his Senate, rather than dictatorially. Most especially, Pétion is the one man among the early rulers who seemed to have any realization of the human values involved. Material gain is desirable but not at the expense of liberty. Freedom means something, even in poverty.

The critics do not challenge Pétion's good intentions or integrity;

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175 ions. Intermarriages between persons of widely different color
563 became extremely rare, being regarded by many lighter Haitians
564 with actual disgust. Everyone with social pretensions wanted to be
[178] whiter. Dr. Brown stated it baldly: "The pure negro seeks to ally himself to the griffe,[59] the griffe to the mulatto, the mulatto to the quateroon, the latter to a mustif, and the mustif, having but an untraceable tinge of African blood in his organization, is uproariously indignant if he is accused of having any at all."[60] An educated young black of several generations of free parents was scornfully turned down by a lighter-skinned woman considerably his inferior in breeding and wealth because her children would be darker than herself—"*petits enfants griffes*," as she put it. The prejudices of colored people against blacks was almost as great, if not quite as intense, as the former prejudice of whites against colored people in colonial times. No one forgot that there had been black as well as colored freedmen in the colony; but it was much simpler for people of color to claim their long career as élite than for blacks to do so.

The attitude of upper-class Haitians toward whites in the midst of all this color prejudice was an interesting mixture. On the one hand, all good Haitians professed to dread a return of the whites; on the other, they welcomed white businessmen in the country. In a certain respect the whites were regarded much as were the Jews of Europe
[673] in the Middle Ages: they were wealthy—and therefore legitimate
[671] objects of pillage, necessary evils for the sake of finance. Theft from a white man by government action was a service to the state. Laws
[641] were consequently varied from time to time with the sole purpose of profiting from a foreigner's position. True, the trader might protest
[423] to his home government, but if England or the United States took a strong stand, Haiti could always retreat; if those governments did not stand firm, Haiti had gained. In the Haitian courts the whites had little show, for Article 38 of the Constitution forbade them to own real estate or to become citizens; they might not even hold a lease for more than ten years; and they might not marry Haitian women.

Nevertheless, the analogy with mediaeval Jews falls down at one vital point: whites were not viewed with contempt. Quite the con-

[192] 59. A term denoting three parts in four of Negro blood. This term as well as "mustif" goes back to colonial white society; neither was, or is, used by cultivated Haitians.

60. Brown, *op. cit.*, II, 283-284.

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Political history of the next seventy-two years is a complicated story, of which only enough need be told here to illuminate the evolution of caste and social distinctions. Even a short summary reveals the bewildering confusion. Of the twenty-two heads of state between 1843 and 1915 only one served out his prescribed term of office;[a] three died while serving, one was blown up with his palace, one presumably poisoned, and one hacked to pieces by a mob; one resigned. The other fourteen were deposed by revolution after incumbencies ranging in length from three months to twelve years. 175 643

The Revolution of 1843 brought back into national prominence the whole matter of color and caste. The young revolutionaries, mostly light-skinned, seem to have assumed that their group was permanently in control. With cavalier highhandedness they set about capturing the last stronghold of Negro eminence: the army. They soon found, however, that they had caught a Tartar; their attempt to rule was fatal to them and their clique. 175 669

In the Constitutional Assembly convened to make a new constitution for the country, they professed astonishingly democratic doctrines. Proclaiming that the fault of former governments had been reliance upon military power, they now proposed to make civil power paramount by allowing the common people to vote. Since up to this time the franchise had been strictly limited to army officers and anciens libres, such a radical departure as general suffrage makes no sense unless conceived as an attempt to break the power of the Negro-controlled army, for surely the élite had no confidence in the wisdom of the peasantry. Weight is given to this explanation by the paradoxical action of the revolutionaries in promoting to high army rank some of the strongest mulatto partisans of civil government. 175 668 646 642 641 701

The new constitution was an immediate failure. Most of the colored élite condemned the giving of voting rights to peasants and workers; the army chiefs, generally black and illiterate, some of them aging veterans of 1803, bitterly resented being made subservient to young, inexperienced civil officers; in fact, even the new mulatto president, Rivière-Hérard, had no conception of government other than by military dictatorship. 175 642 641

Not only was the constitution a failure; so was the government of the young revolutionaries. A part of their weakness lay in their 175 643

a. The presidential term varied under different constitutions; some allowed a four-year term with the right of reélection, some six years with no reélection.

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3. The unimportance of the legislature. It

646 age for the president to dispense, and has preserved the semblance of
642 republican government; but hardly half a dozen legislative sessions in all Haitian history have contributed seminal ideas in politics or initiated true reforms. How could they, indeed, when the president was consistently a dictator of policy?

666 4. The undemocratic nature of the vote. Senators are chosen by
642 the representatives, and the two groups together have generally elected the president, when he did not come to power by revolution. The only chance people have had to vote has been for local officials and representatives. In these cases, the vote has been limited to the élite and the army, with the president's henchmen counting the ballots. Since the Occupation there have been plebiscites on constitutional changes, the people having the right to vote Yes or No.

692 5. The subservience of the courts to the president. They have been
643 filled with president's men, generally astute enough to consult presi-
642 dential wishes before handing down a decision. Foreign merchants soon learned that they could expect little "justice" from the courts if their own cause conflicted with special Haitian interests. Foreign diplomats likewise learned that in crises the courts could involve the simplest issue in such verbal complexity that months of patience would be necessary to unwind the red tape.

641 6. The pliability of "constitutional rights." Freedom of speech and
661 of the press has been notably lacking, although scurrilous attacks on the administration's enemies have often been permitted. Legislators
642 have been expelled. Graft has flourished. In 1833, for example, two representatives were expelled from the House "for systematically opposing the measures of the executive, and persisting in a demand for a statement of public expenditures." A century later a senator was expelled for almost the same reasons.

701 7. Militarism. Only in this respect is any real change apparent since
178 the American Occupation. The army was always large up to 1915, and so constituted an economic drain as well as a political menace.
642 Generals had great power: they ruled each department and each
669 arrondissement, were subject only to the president, and were at the bottom of every revolutionary movement.[22] Since the Occupation

[162] 22. In 1842, when the population was still less than a million, there were in the dis-
[701] trict governments 9 generals, 63 colonels, 48 lieutenant colonels, 9 captains, 1 lieutenant, and 28 medical officers; and in the standing army 33 colonels, 95 lieutenant colonels, 825 captains, 654 lieutenants, 577 sublieutenants and ensigns, 6,815 noncommissioned officers, and 25 medical officers. The army had 28,000 soldiers and cost about $600,000 a year. See John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 86 ff.

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numbers in the army have been radically reduced; yet in that very fact there is the possibility for the only armed persons in Haiti, the present Garde d'Haiti, to effect political coups. But at least the budget is not strained by the salaries of thousands of unnecessary soldiers, as was true in pre-Occupation days.

8. The separation of the masses from government. By providing a minimum of local government, but that fairly effective, the national government has been able to keep the peasants out of all but revolutionary politics. Rural communities have ordinarily got along well enough without formal government, so that the history of Haitian political thought and the analysis of Haitian political forms would treat of affairs interesting to only a fraction of the population.

It need hardly be repeated, after a reflection upon these apparent permanencies of political life, that Haiti is not a democracy.

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exceeding the jurisdiction of the local juges, these juries to be named by the doyen and his colleagues. It was a dubious reform, often a worthless privilege; at times it was definitely harmful, for no matter how explicit the law, mere technicalities in a long, involved trial could be completely befuddling to an illiterate juror. Brown tells the tale of a certain foreman of the jury who asked a juror his opinion of a defendant's innocence; the juror replied that he could not write, whereas "you have written it all down. Let us know what you have done."[3] Innocence might easily be convicted by this system, and guilt escape. The addition of a jury to the court was even useless in many instances, for the language of the lawyers was French, and that of the jurors almost certain to be Créole. Boyer's attempt to graft English court practice upon the French system already functioning in Haiti was certainly not happy; the jury system shortly disappeared.

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Complicated forms are not for the peasant. He knew a soldier and a soldier's function in the countryside, but not the relation of the arrondissement to the national government; the juge de paix was understandable, but not the procedure of the civil courts at department capitals. The national government and its structure were remote, although the president's name might be familiar. Haiti was really organized from the top down rather than from the bottom up. The powers of the early presidents were arbitrary: they could not only order changes in the framework of any part of government, but might also shift at will the personnel.

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Carl Becker remarks: "In 1791, the French began their spectacular feat in constitution making. Between 1791 and 1875 Taine counts thirteen French constitutions adopted in relatively rapid succession. I can find only twelve, but maybe Taine is right. It doesn't really matter. The point is that for facility, speed, and endurance in constitution making, France holds the record. Yet other nations also ran."[4] Haiti was one of them: in fact the record is properly hers, although Professor Becker does not mention the little Caribbean state. In the nineteenth century Haiti lived under fifteen constitutions, to which she has added at least two more in the twentieth century. It is not always easy to say when a constitution is new: its author may

3. Jonathan Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, II, 271–272.
4. "Afterthoughts on Constitutions," *The Yale Review*, XXVII, No. 3 (Spring, 1938), 451.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 ment that two thirds of the members of either Chamber must be
642 present before a law could be voted—a stipulation making it possible
[646] for any clique to hold up legislation by absenting itself.

1874. The constitution of Domingue who, having defeated the
[643] Liberals, promulgated a constitution "profoundly modifying" the language of the 1867 document. It legally concentrated power in the hands of the president—where, indeed, it had always been in spite of constitutional declarations.

1879. Salomon's first constitution, which professed to be a re-examination of Haitian institutions, but was actually not different in essentials from the document of 1846. The line from Pétion to Riché to Salomon and his successors was the main one from which deviations, such as those of Soulouque, occurred.

1886. Salomon's second constitution, a mild revision of his first.

1889. Hyppolite, the new president, felt it necessary to have a new
[178] constitution, although like the constitution of 1886 this was little more than a revision of that of 1879. Under the 1889 document Haiti continued to function, more and more haltingly, up to the time of the American Occupation.

[648] 1918. The constitution drawn up in Washington[7] and forced through in Haiti by a farcical plebiscite. Its most debated provision
[423] was the elimination of the prohibition against ownership of land by foreign whites, thus ending the one common point in all previous constitutions since 1805. For the rest, it changed little of the actual
• [641] structure of Haitian government, but provided a great number of unaccustomed democratic rights: freedom of assembly, trial by jury in political cases, direct election of senators, submission of amendments to popular vote, freedom of the press.

1927. Although this is considered merely a revision of the 1918
[641] constitution, its changes were actually more noteworthy than many expected by the so-called new constitutions. Thirteen amendments were carried by popular vote, again so overwhelming as to be ridiculous, restricting many of the democratic liberties granted in 1918 which had proved embarrassing both to President Borno and

7. Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his campaign for the vice-presidency of the United States in 1920, claimed that he had written most of this constitution while he was Woodrow Wilson's assistant-secretary of the navy. (See the *New York Times*, August 19, 1920.) The constitution was approved in Haiti by a vote of 63,337 to 335.

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to the Americans who ruled Haiti through his office. This constitution once more increased the power of the president. 642 [641]

1932. Vincent's constitution, professing to be quite different from the two in effect during the Occupation, but actually closely resembling the 1927 revision with its concentration of power in executive hands. In 1935 an important amendment was added, making it possible for the president to be reëlected. [643]

Despite this welter of constitutions, the essential framework of Haitian government has consisted, except for brief interruptions, of a president, a legislature, and courts. The term of the presidency has varied from four to seven years (in the early days, for life) with the privilege of reëlection being now forbidden, now granted. Two presidents who tried to extend their terms, Salnave and Salomon, were deposed by revolutions for their temerity. Their distinction of being among the few to serve out the allotted term was thus marred by an ignominious end. 642 643

Regularly the president was obligated to "maintain internal peace" —a requirement few heads of state have been able to carry out, since internal peace has been most elusive. To aid him in his task he has been given wide powers: he commands the army (always large until 1915; every president except one between 1804 and 1915 was a general) and the navy (never more than a few ill-conditioned vessels, but these important in the general roadless condition of the country); most constitutions also gave him the right to issue necessary proclamations in order to deal with special crises. He "watches over" tribunals by means of appointed commissioners; by this arrangement he may obviously exert pressure for favorable judgments in cases which interest him. 643 [701] [706] [716] [742]

The one body which might conceivably check the president, namely, the legislature, has generally been composed of the president's men, for the Senate has usually been elected by the lower house from a list of candidates proposed by the president, while the representatives would hardly dare defy the man who controlled the army (which presided over such elections) and could dissolve the legislature. By most of the constitutions the president proposed to the legislature all laws except those concerning taxation; even here, since he directed the receipt and issue of public moneys, he was not really limited. Over foreign affairs the executive had effective control by 643 [644] [646]

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priations of supplies to the branches of government; the Senate did not initiate legislation. In so far as the Senate checked the president, this check consisted in the body's being in permanent session. A vacation might be voted, but even during this period a resident committee was in the capital, so that attention to presidential actions might always be called by a senator's speeches; and the Senate could reconvene suddenly at will. E46

The Chamber of Representatives, composed of men of twenty-five and over, was chosen every five years by the "electoral colleges" of the communes—men elected by the leading citizens of the commune. No law is effective "whose draft has not been proposed by the executive, discussed and adopted by the representatives, and decreed by the Senate." It might seem that the phrase, "discussed and adopted by the representatives," would give much power to a Chamber in office for five years; actually the Chamber has rarely proved obstinate, and for good reason. At the expiration of the term of the legislators, the president convokes the communal assemblies to choose new deputies or to reelect old ones; the army "keeps order" at the election, the Electoral College is hand-picked, and so the president's men have generally been chosen. Their pay has been two hundred dollars a month during the sitting, and a dollar a league for traveling expenses. [E66] [J01]

Pétion's constitution of 1816 evolved a masterpiece of deceptive generosity in stating that there should be "universal suffrage—except for women, criminals, idiots, and menials—by ballot." Although the group of criminals and idiots might be small, women were more than half the population, and "menials" was interpreted to mean not only house servants but also peasants; in other words, there was "universal suffrage" of about three per cent of the population at the outside. The élite and the army were the only potential voters. Since the elections were held under the watchful eye of the soldiers, and the ballots counted by presidential appointees, there was often extraordinary unity of public opinion. 641 [E66]

The judicial branch of the national government, as distinct from the juge de paix of the commune and the courts in the important towns, existed in part only on paper. There was generally a provision in the constitution, for example, for a High Court of Justice, which should have jurisdiction in all charges preferred by the legislative bodies against their own members, against the president of the re- 692

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Cassation at Port-au-Prince. In the event that this court confirmed the judgment of the lower courts, the defendant might still appeal from it to the president, and might apply for a new trial in the lower courts. Thus the contest would proceed ad infinitum, however clear the proof that the debt was just. 175 695

The Court of Cassation exceeded all others in the slowness of its judgments. Its judges were under the surveillance of the president, and must consult with him before deciding a case. If he disagreed, and the state was a party to the case, the judges must reconsider "to see if they have not taken a wrong view of the question at issue." Even so, the grand judge might stay execution as long as he deemed advisable after a judgment was confirmed.

Judges were rarely chosen from among trained lawyers, but were appointed by the government because of political considerations. Consequently, few people had any faith in court decisions, and in general they avoided taking their problems to law. The peasants in particular were bewildered by the whole procedure. White foreigners also often complained that unless they were willing to pay heavily they had no slightest chance of getting justice in the Haitian courts. 693 695 641

It must be emphasized that the majority of cases coming before the courts were civil rather than criminal, for it has been a universal matter of comment that the Haitian people were rarely guilty of serious crimes. Minor thefts of poultry or animals have been the commonest breaches of the peace, while murder, arson, and rape have almost never occurred. Even the bitterest critics of the republic have noted the absence of crime.[9] It is noteworthy that, despite their poverty and the hardness of their life, the Haitians are, contrary to the prevailing white man's notion of Negro unreliability, passion, and lawlessness, a tranquil folk. The absence of crime speaks volumes for the wholesomeness of a people much maligned by the stories of their "Voodoo" practices and bloody revolutions. An élite ex-president spoke to me with pride of the honesty of the country people who welcomed travelers with true hospitality and with no expectation of payment. "You might sleep safely in a country cabin with a thousand dollars on your person," he said.[10] 691 674

9. Mackenzie, British consul during a part of Boyer's regime, and young Haiti's earliest critic, said that during his whole stay he knew of only one murder, and that in this case the assassin was executed. [114] [682]

10. In times of revolution, brigandage was expected but was not considered a crime, any more than killing in warfare is called murder. [669] [684]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1968) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 148]

13. Comments on the Mighty: Political Songs

* 533 538 626 178 The African-style song of social criticism has found no worthier subjects than the historic political figures of Haiti. There is no doubt that the African slaves used this art form to express their feelings toward the white masters as they had used it to comment upon the behavior of their own chiefs and fellow tribesmen. The worthy leaders were praised in song; the unworthy were castigated and their sins, failures, and social misdemeanors publicized in folk songs. By the beginning of the [567] nineteenth century, slavery had come to an end in Haiti. The deep democratic sense of human dignity had outlasted the colonial masters and emerged tempered and sharp. The songs of criticism became not * 533 538 626 178 666 only comments upon political figures but campaign propaganda as well. They dwelt upon the accomplishments or faults of the candidates for political office. Friendly songs sought out every virtue, and invented others, in the man or woman being praised. Unfriendly songs lashed out and lacerated or poked biting fun at the subject, not even sparing his physical deformities.

* 533 538 [666] Yet the political songs are more than statements of merit or fault. Cumulatively they are a kind of folk history of Haiti. No political aspirant ever went unsung by his peasant army, or unridiculed by his opponent's followers. The songs the people sang about their heroes and [173] their enemies recall events and details that formal history has forgotten or ignored. The memory of the folk song is powerful and long. Some of the recollections go back more than a century.

175 History books tell us that in December, 1843, Major Charles Hérard 642 aîné Rivière was elected to the office of the presidency, and that a new [643] constitution was drawn up by the Constituent Assembly. The new constitution was an accomplishment of the liberal and democratic forces of the nation. It guaranteed certain civil rights to the people. It provided that judges be elected instead of appointed, abolished life terms for

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

presidents, and emphatically declared the army to be within and under the law.

The new President, finding his office without the prerogatives he had expected it to have, openly complained of the restraints imposed on him by the new constitution. He broke campaign promises he had made to the peasants in the south and stirred up antagonisms on every side. Finally, while he was on a military expedition in the Spanish part of the island, revolution broke out at home. His army was beaten by the Dominicans, too, which completely shattered his morale. He fled by ship to Jamaica, the traditional refuge of outgoing Haitian presidents. In memory of his administration the peasants sang:

Rivière Président gainyain xyeux vairon!
Li dit l'ap piyé l'armé Bélanton!
Piyé lévé trésor!
Piyé lévé trésor!
Piyé lévé trésor!
Yo voyé Lamham depuis Lowinsor!

La Constitution cé trouva Colombe
Quand yo voit pays soufri trop misère!
Li dit yo fait comme Henry!
Li dit yo fait comme Henry!
Li dit yo fait comme Henry!
Pou' fai sang coulé pou' rangé pays!

Colonel Déro soldat Diplaro
Marché fanfaron comme un grand fantin!
Li cré qui li té roi!
Li cré qui li té roi!
Li cré qui li té roi!
'Pagnol chasse li, li couri con chien qui prend frai charogne!

President Rivière was cross-eyed!
He said that he was going to pillage Belanton's army!
Loot for treasure!
Loot for treasure!
Loot for treasure!
They sent everyone from Lowinsor to Lamham!

The Constitution was founded by Columbus
When the country suffered too much misery!
He said he would do like Henry [Christophe]!
He said he would do like Henry!
He said he would do like Henry!
Make blood run to poison the countryside!

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 643 66 The course of events leading up to Duvalier's election are difficult to assess. Fignolé, whom the army had permitted to serve as president for sixteen days during the interregnum, had been denied official recognition by the United States, suggesting that this country feared the implications of his political philosophy; his attempts at passing a whole new code of far-reaching social legislation apparently frightened the army, which removed him on grounds of "maintaining order." By the time an election decree was promulgated in August 1957, Fignolé was disqualified, and Jumelle had been forced to withdraw from candidacy. By election day, September 1957, only Déjoie and Duvalier were in contention, while Jumelle had gone into hiding. An attempted general strike, probably led by Déjoieiste elements, was stopped by the army, and Dr. François Duvalier was elected to power.

175 642 66 701 643 The Duvalier regime, beyond any doubt, has added something new to the Haitian political scene. To begin with, it must be stressed that Duvalier enjoys some popular support in the countryside as well as in the urban centers. For many Haitians, Duvalier epitomizes the return of the Estimé philosophy to Haiti, and it would be a serious political error to suppose that the present regime is no more than an elite-hating dictatorship backed by machine guns. At the same time, the readiness of the Duvalieristes to use force probably exceeds that of any Haitian government in more than a century. Its excesses, moreover, appear to break certain traditions of political behavior—for instance, the unwillingness to take familial connections into account when political revenge is being carried out, the violence committed against women and adolescents regarded as political enemies, and so on. The most important break with tradition, however, has been the gradual undermining of the army as a political force—a force created in the first instance during the United States occupation.

175 642 648 643 In carrying out its plans, the Duvalier government has played more creatively upon inconsistencies in United States policy than any preceding regime. It used United States military and economic power to consolidate itself, while employing a posture of anti-North American hostility in its search for other internal sources of political support. Most strikingly, it has capitalized on the deterioration of the United States design in the Caribbean region, both to exact concessions and to enhance an international image of itself as a stalwart "democratic"

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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regime. That President Duvalier has been able to stay in power in spite of internal dissaffection, sometime hostile United States propaganda, a dire economic situation, personal ill health, and other woes, is a tribute to his political acumen, if not to his principles. None of this means, of course, that such consummate skill will continue to work; Haitian governments have a way of falling suddenly, and the Duvalier regime will probably not prove an exception.

Dr. Duvalier's success indicates that he has made certain correct assessments, not only of Haiti's social and political structure but also of United States policy with regard to Haiti. The occupation was notable for its failure to make any telling alterations in the economic structure or level of development of the country. Many beneficial changes were made, as Leyburn demonstrates, particularly in the areas of health and health services, communications, government administration, education, and transport (though the use of corvée labor on the roads led to serious abuses, and stimulated sanguinary guerilla warfare). But most significantly, the United States institutionalized the army and police forces. The ragged bands of political mercenaries of the past were dissolved; the officer-ridden army was transformed into a small, well-trained, and well-organized force. Eventual firm control by this force of weaponry, communications, and transport ended the era of presidential succession by invasion, turned the army into the major locus of nonelectoral, president-making power, and may have ended forever the possibility of an agrarian revolt against the central authority. Another political effect of the occupation was the importance it imparted to the United States ambassador, whose political opinions thereafter would matter significantly in the transmission of power at the top of the Haitian governmental system. The Duvalier regime has continuously taken full account of the consequences of United States interest; and its leaders have been able to watch the operation of that interest in the political events occurring between the fall of the Lescot government and the present.

In the view of one acute observer, President Duvalier, in order to consolidate his power, had to cope with three other loci of political strength in addition to the army and the United States ambassador. The business community, located for the most part in Port-au-Prince, had strongly supported Déjoie's candidacy during the interregnum; its leaders were mainly members of the elite, and many had strong

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throughout the country, the central administration remains in the capital; urban units are dispatched to the countryside at times, if any show of internal political resistance is sensed. TTM members also sometimes engage in struggles with each other over political spoils; but too little is known to analyze internal strains within this paramilitary, secret-police organization. The TTM has proved particularly useful for carrying out the murders of outspoken individual political opponents and for crushing draconically any threat of strikes in the Port-au-Prince business community. 625

Little is known of the antecedents of TTM members. While it is customary among the elite to describe these myrmidons as "trash," some of them are literate, have some education, vaunt a political ideology—a kind of nationalist-*négritude* mystique, with strong Fascist elements—and differ dramatically from the ragged, illiterate followers of the warlords of pre-1915 Haiti. In fact, the TTM lieutenants are a direct, if somewhat deformed, product of the Estimé regime, a decade of structurally unsound prosperity, a culturally nationalistic ideology, and, more remotely, of the United States occupation itself. 178 625

With regard to the army, Duvalier has followed a policy of careful attrition. While the United States Marine Corps "mission" was (probably unknowingly) serving to immobilize opposition, Duvalier began to change the character of the army general staff. In the course of less than seven years he completely revamped the leadership of the army five times; this process not only kept the colonels off balance but allowed the President to reward loyal younger followers—principally those with dark skins, it is said—with rapid promotions. 643 701

The relationship between the Duvalier regime and the Catholic clergy has been one of increasing alienation. At times members of the clergy stood high in the regime, two having even served as members of the cabinet; but not the slightest Church resistance has been tolerated. The low point in Duvalier–Church relations was the interruption of a mass by an armed TTM unit in downtown Port-au-Prince; leading members of the hierarchy later were summarily ejected from the country, and the Jesuit order was banned. Church power has waned significantly, both in the capital and in the countryside, as the regime has consolidated itself. Some observers believe that Duvalier is not so unwise as to aim at the complete elimination of the Church, but that he hopes instead to "nationalize" the clergy on some mutually agreeable basis. 642 795 661

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643 771 795 At the same time, the President has expressed his favorable interest in vodoun and is said to practice it; this statement, however, has overtones of malevolence that are not appropriate. Vodoun is a religion, though it lacks a centralized priestly hierarchy or administrative organization. Outside the elite, Catholicism in Haiti has always been colored by vodoun elements. The Haitian people as a whole invest no effort in distinguishing what is "really Catholic" from what is not, in their religious practices; in this regard Haitian countrymen do not really differ from folk practitioners of Catholicism anywhere. By its misreading of the piety of the Haitian masses, and its unceasing hostility to vodoun—quite different from the church policy in the so-called "Indian countries" of Latin America—the Church had failed to secure its influence over the Haitian people. In contrast, Duvalier's understanding of Haitian religious sociology has proved superior, and is consistent with the *authentique* ideology of the 1940s, though doubtless much more extreme in its implications.

●642 871 467 204 661 Finally, the Duvalier regime has invaded such institutions as the National University and the trade unions, and maintains close surveillance over any individuals it regards as politically suspicious. Loyalty oaths are required at the university; a public press no longer exists; the unions, never strong, are now entirely powerless. But it should be clear from this description of the Duvalier regime that repression is not the key to Duvalier power so much as the means for perpetuating that power under Haitian conditions. The key to Duvalier power is to be found instead in the structure of Haitian society, in the social history of the past two decades, and in the policy of the United States, weakened by its inescapable preference for "stability" over "radicalism." In his own way, President Duvalier is as radical as he can be; but he is no Castro. It is now an open secret that Haiti's support for sanctions against Cuba approved at Punta del Este was matched by economic concessions from the United States; that the Marines, knowingly or not, immobilized anti-Duvalier opposition in a period when its supporters could be picked off, driven into exile, or jailed; that the official Duvalier offer of Môle St. Nicholas to the United States as a substitute for Guantánamo, though irrelevant, was warmly reassuring to some North American political thinkers; and that Duvalier, while he employs considerable "blackmail diplomacy" in his dealings with the United States and is now out of favor, is still considered "reliable" in that most important respect.

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Nor is it sufficient to label *Duvalierisme* "pathological" or "paranoid." The roots of this ideology are to be found in Haiti, not elsewhere; its supporters are the product of Haitian times and ideas; and their social identity, while not entirely clear, would probably pose few enigmas if enough data were available.* In order to make clear these assertions, however, it is necessary to look again at Haitian society, the Haitian society Leyburn has described so well, and to reexamine the terms that have been used by him and by others to describe it.

Though the societies of the Caribbean Sea differ significantly from each other, many of them share certain general historical experiences. Unlike the colonial areas of the Old World, these islands were largely populated from abroad, and in this regard they resemble the Atlantic lowland areas of mainland America. However, the colonial history of the islands meant that they would long remain the instruments of policy formulated in foreign capitals. Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and other islands were, during most of their postconquest history, the outposts of far-flung colonial empires, and the design of their societies was conditioned by this dependence and subjugation. As "plantation islands," their agriculture, demography, mode of settlement, and social structure were attuned to metropolitan needs and objectives. Unlike most of Africa and Asia, the Antilles lost their native populations almost entirely, owing to enslavement, overwork, disease, and war, early in the era of conquest and settlement. There remained the vestiges of native traditions, assimilated into the new, growing cultures of the postconquest period. The Indians themselves, wherever they were able to survive, were also assimilated through interbreeding with Old World migrants.

The newcomers came from Europe, Africa, and Asia, bringing with them what they could of their ancestral traditions, but never able to transfer their social heritages as intact bodies of belief and behavior. Hence the cultures of the new Caribbean societies were built up out of elements originating in many different places, while their social forms took shape under conditions of colonial control. The peoples of the islands were able to maintain some continuities with

* One interpreter of the Haitian political scene (Bastien, 1960:845–48) has suggested that Leyburn's analysis of Haitian society as a "two-caste" system greatly influenced local political thinking by strengthening one idea: "the black intellectual must regain political power for the benefit of the country's majority."

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same century in which Haiti withdrew. The yeomanry of Haiti in the nineteenth century was hence able to develop a traditionalism of unusual firmness and persistence.

This traditionalism, however, has had a high price. The economic productivity of the rural cultivator has not risen; it can be argued convincingly that poor land use, erosion, and population growth have meant lower levels of consumption for the common people in 1966 than obtained a hundred years or more ago. The rural masses, though overwhelmingly consisting of landholders, have been unable to break out of a stagnation that is economic as well as cultural. Such stasis has been based to some extent on the limited responsiveness of the rural folk to outside stimulus. But also important in maintaining the past is the national institutional system that took on its characteristic shape after 1804, and under which the rural masses still live. That system, the origins of which Leyburn has examined and assessed with such care, is controlled, as we have seen, by a numerically small segment of the national population that is markedly distinct from the yeomanry itself.

The nature and internal differentiation of the elite needs much more study, though it seems clear already that it is by no means a single solidary class embracing all but the yeomen. Whatever the structure of the elite, the relationship between the yeomen on the one hand and the real holders of power on the other must be understood if one is to understand Haiti. The yeoman is defined in terms of the elite; he is dependent upon it and subject to it. This is what is meant when it is said that the yeomanry, like the elite, forms only a part-society. Yet without the yeomen, there would be no elite. The elite live by controlling and taxing the rural masses, and find their sustenance and their power in rural productivity. Elite and yeomen, then, are bound together in unequal but interdependent relationships in Haiti as they are in other less developed societies of a similar kind. In such cases, the political role of the yeomanry is usually minor, and few opportunities may arise for the expansion of its political strength. If the yeomanry fails to increase its productivity in ways that enable it to control more of its own surpluses, its role in affecting national political decisions may grow narrower rather than wider, and this ominous possibility has become a worldwide phenomenon. It becomes more intensified wherever industry and trade grow, unaccompanied by parallel growth in yeoman productivity or in new and more widely representative national institutions.

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That the separateness of yeomanry and elite had visible and socio- 565
logically important expression in physical type in Haiti was a clear 563
consequence of the history of that country. But the traditional pre- 664
ponderant light skins at the top of the structure and the preponderant 642
darkness at its base are less important than the domination of the total structure, and of the institutional means for changing it, by a mere fraction of the national population. It is the *power* of the elite which has mattered through time; its physical appearance has been only a historically derived expression of that power. Such a balance of politically weak masses against numerically sparse power holders is common, perhaps particularly in the "less developed world"; but each such case has certain special characteristics. Haiti's special nature is not simply in its being a yeoman country, and one in which a small [181]
group dominates the mass. As a rural, agrarian, unindustrialized, po- [171]
litically sovereign, and quasi-capitalistic country, Haiti shares much with other lands; but in each regard its own particularity needs to be assessed.

The rurality of Haiti is extreme, not simply because there are no 361
concentrations of population in excess of 25,000 except for Port-au- 369
Prince and Cap Haïtien but also because towns of intermediate size 489
are few in number, and the urban concentrations in the country's two cities are substantially of relatively recent rural origin. Port-au-Prince dominates the Republic in all of its economic, political, and social activities. Furthermore, the rural towns have been losing to the capital, not gaining from it. Until the United States occupation, the larger towns of the coast, such as Jérémie, Jacmel, and St. Marc, were united economically with each other, and to some extent with the capital, by a lively coastwise shipping system, and the inland towns were tributary to those of the coast. The growth of inland transport during the occupation strengthened the interior towns while coastwise shipping declined, but the capital grew even more important as the sole economic center of the Republic. Since the 1940s, the rapid deterioration of the road system has left both inland and coastal towns enfeebled; only Port-au-Prince has remained strong.

The dominion of Port-au-Prince is firm, and there is no focus of 369
power in the countryside that can counteract it. Those few foreign 473
enterprises in Haiti that base themselves outside the capital city use 504
local port facilities (e.g. Miragoâne for Reynolds Aluminum, Cap 489
Haïtien for the sisal plantations of the north) and do not affect the development of the interior transport.

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369 development of interior transport. The only passable roads in the
494 Republic run from Aux Cayes in the south to the capital, and from
646 Cap Haïtien in the north to the capital. Transport and communications simply symbolize the power that Port-au-Prince wields, since the same circumstances characterize all national institutional arrangements. Thus Haiti is an extreme example of urban domination, even though its urban population is a fraction of the national total. The consequence has been to keep most of the rural folk cut off from the apparatus that effects national decisions and shapes national policy. Haiti's national legislature, never important in limiting presidential power, is less so today than ever; at best, it had only represented the interests of provincial towns as opposed to the capital, and never the interests of the mass of country people.

701 The local military and judiciary officials possess the formal author-
692 ity vested in them by the state, and their power is very considerable.
642 Few local people would dare challenge their decisions, and the de-
369 vices for appeal against arbitrary exercise of authority are few. Admittedly, at the lowest local level the *chef de section*—who is traditionally appointed by the captain of the military in the *commune* center and is himself a yeoman—is subject to some genuine restraint by local inhabitants. Jean Comhaire-Sylvain (1955:620–24) has argued convincingly that the people of a community are capable of insisting on democratic procedure in those matters requiring decision that come to the attention of local authority. But such decisions have little or nothing to do with larger issues. The yeomanry cannot directly make its wishes felt in national politics; and national politics are conducted almost without reference to the aspirations of the rural masses. It is precisely in the separateness of local life from the mainstream of national decision-making that the political impotence of the yeomanry is demonstrated.

311 Haiti's agrarian nature cannot be expressed simply by saying it is a
423 rural and yeoman country. Haiti does not have a "land problem," as
171 that phrase is conventionally applied to Latin America. It does, it is true, suffer from land shortage, inasmuch as too little land is worked at too low a level of productivity and must feed too many mouths. But a very substantial proportion of the rural masses owns land, or has regular access to it. It is true that most land is held in small plots and without clear title. But those persons who own no land or who lack land to work are proportionally fewer than in any other Carib-

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The major effect of the North

Amer-
648 ican tenure seems to have been to make possible a much more telling
642 centralism in political control than had been operative in Haiti at any time since the fall of the Christophe regime; and the consequences of this change are still being felt.

241 Small-scale rural cultivators are famous for their tendency to con-
565 fine their consumption to culturally conventionalized levels—that is,
433 to live as their predecessors lived before them. Though they are in-
178 volved in commercial spheres larger than the communities in which
185 they live, they seek to limit that involvement and to maintain their
511 cash expenditures at a low level. It is in this sense that Haiti might be
472 called a "quasi-capitalistic" society. To put it another way, yeomen of this sort do not seek to change or to expand their production—rather, they aim to conserve a way of life set by tradition. The ideology of resistance to social and cultural change is one of the major obstacles to development; but it would be rash to damn such an ideology without reflection. In Haiti, for instance, there has long been pressure upon the rural masses to expand their production of coffee, the major export crop. However, this pressure has not been accompanied by any serious grass-roots attempt to improve coffee production or to offer genuine incentives to the cultivators. The yeomanry has no assurance at all that any expansion of effort will lead to gains *for them*; and they are little prepared to invest such effort merely be-
[439] cause they are told that it will be good for Haiti. In fact, it is likely that the production of subsistence crops has expanded in recent years at the cost of coffee production, for the yeoman knows that he can at least be sure of eating and of selling locally such crops as maize, sorghum, and yams, regardless of what may happen in Port-au-Prince or to the world coffee market. This view, combined with the yeoman's painfully acquired distrust of those who prate at length concerning his welfare, has meant a virtual stagnation of agricultural export production, even though the whole land quite literally depends on this production in order to progress.

241 The effect of this rural resistance is to create an apparent very sharp
565 difference in goals between countryman and bureaucrat. It is per-
433 fectly understandable that the countryman should fail to see the con-
185 nection between heightened coffee production and a higher level of public welfare and social services. His experiences hardly persuade him that it is his surplus-producing capacity that underlies the kind and quality of public institutions with which the state provides him.

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country. The complete enfeeblement of tourism has also led to some migration and to an accompanying decline of services and service "industries" in the capital. These losses have surely hurt Haiti and have damaged its chances for growth as well as its capacity to maintain the health, education, and morale of its people. It is not clear, however, to what extent such changes may have produced a negative political reaction to the Duvalier regime. Urban support for Dr. Duvalier appears to have come from some intellectuals, from some army officers, and from portions of the urban lower classes; but numerically most important were those low-paid but literate and aspiring wage-earners whom the Comhaire-Sylvains (1959) refer to as "Class III" members. These observers have stressed that the Class III group consisted mainly of industrial employees, those engaged in food-processing, hotel services, workshops, and the like. It was this group that the Comhaire-Sylvains credited with the Duvalier victory in 1957, pointing out in addition that "in the small country towns almost all officials, both civil and military, and traders, seemed to belong to this class" (p. 185). If the economic crisis that has gripped Haiti in recent years severely affects the position of this class, the political situation will reflect as much. But the ideology of Class III members—so far as it can be inferred at all—would suggest that one Duvalier may merely be replaced by another. At the same time, the depopulation of those groupings whose members might have led a qualitatively different kind of opposition, during the period of tenure of the United States Marine Corps Mission to Duvalier, may have indefinitely postponed the opportunity for creating a genuinely new political direction.

To state it another way, there are no signs at this time that the regime in power will be pulled down by any organized Haitian opposition. More important, since regimes resting on a narrow popular base have a way of falling without change, there is no indication that within Haiti's present national institutional structure, a genuine opposition to Duvalier-type governments can take shape. This means that even if regime should follow regime in rapid succession, there is little reason to expect that any of them could effect fundamental changes in Haitian society. If such an interpretation is correct, it presupposes an internal equilibrium or stasis so strong that no force for change in half a century has been able to make a politically significant difference.

This pessimistic view is supported by what is known at this time

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FOREWORD

THE United States, embarked upon a policy of good neighborliness toward the other countries of the Western Hemisphere, is beginning to improve its acquaintance with the republics to the south. Most of its efforts at present are directed toward an understanding of the large and important powers, such as Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina, which, because of their size and resources, are potentially our greatest allies—or, if we fail in our policies, our sources of greatest danger. There are, however, twenty republics to the south of us, many of them small. A truly good neighbor does not ignore near-by families who are lacking in wealth, even those who are known to differ among themselves. 648 171

Of the twenty Latin-American republics, the second smallest is Haiti. The United States was only twenty years old when the people of this little country (which, for all its diminutive size, had been France's wealthiest colony of the eighteenth century) fought their own war of independence, and in 1804 founded the second free state in the hemisphere. Haiti has many claims upon the attention of the United States: its war against France in 1802–3 was at least a contributing factor in Napoleon's willingness to sell Louisiana to this country; it was the first independent Negro state in the modern world; its foreign policy has long been intertwined with our own; finally, the nineteen-year American Occupation of the country has brought us into an even closer relationship with Haiti than independent factors could produce. 721 648 642

When the country was young there was a spate of books trying to answer the question whether a nation ruled by blacks could long endure. In more recent years, works on the Antillean republic have generally dealt with single phases of its life, as for example its political relations with the United States, or its "Voodoo" practices. There is, however, no connected story of the growth of its social institutions out of the backgrounds of slavery and French colonial life, or of the slow shaping of these institutions through the nineteenth century. It is this growth which the present volume undertakes to describe. Political history has been introduced only so far as necessary to provide the convenient pegs upon which most of us are accus- 114 121

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565 *caste* is the only word to describe the effective separation of aristocrats from the masses. The caste system is a vivid fact, for it regulates a person's profession, speech, religion, marriage, family life, politics, clothes, social mobility—in short, his whole life from cradle to grave.

175 Haiti won its freedom from the France of Napoleon in 1804,
648 becoming thus the second independent state in the Western Hemisphere. It had been during the eighteenth century France's most prosperous colony, its wealth depending upon slavery and the planta-
565 tion system. With the whites driven out, social distinctions which
642 actually had their roots in colonial times began immediately to develop among the people, all of whom had some proportion of African blood in their veins. During the course of the next century the criteria for aristocracy slowly assumed recognizable form, so that now even the most casual observer is aware that Haiti cannot by any stretch of the imagination be called a democratic country, with an open class system. The two castes are the élite and the masses. They are as different as day from night, as nobleman from peasant; and they are as separate as oil and water. The élite are generally reckoned
[162] to compose at the outside not more than three per cent of the population.

565 The élite do not work with their hands. This is the cardinal rule of Haitian society. Upon it rests the whole economic structure of the
463 country, and to this the course of national history has led. All the
[461] professions, most governmental and military offices, and the large business enterprises are effectively closed to young men of the masses. Indeed, so completely accepted are caste rules, so practically difficult would it be for peasant youths to acquire the money and education necessary for such careers, that at birth a boy's future place in economic life is, within narrow limits, already predetermined. For the élite, law is the most popular of the professions, partly because it is the quickest avenue of approach to high political office; government, in turn, is the only career which can make a man rich within a few years. Next in popularity to law comes medicine. Teaching is not lucrative enough to attract many promising youths, and the priests of the Roman Catholic Church are almost all white Frenchmen.[2]

793 2. An effort was once made by the Catholic Church to train native Haitian priests,
797 but the peasants would have none of them after they were ordained. They drove them out, saying, "Go away! How do you expect God to listen to you? You are not white; you don't know anything." And the Haitian priests had to be transferred as missionaries to Africa.

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At Paris the following May, therefore, the thirty-seven delegates presented themselves. Only six were admitted as deputies. And the colonial skeptics proved correct in their apprehensions: revolutionary France soon became very much interested in the state of affairs in Saint-Domingue.

There had recently been formed in Paris a humanitarian group, considered at the time to be ultra-radical, whose announced purpose was the complete abolition of Negro slavery in all French possessions. Following the principle of demanding much in order to gain something, these *Amis des Noirs* concentrated their most serious efforts on regaining for colored colonial freedmen their former political rights. The recently promulgated "Rights of Man" made it very difficult for the French National Assembly[11] to deny the proposal of the Amis;[12] moreover, at this juncture the colored landlords of Saint-Domingue sent to Paris an offer to make the new French Republic a free gift of one fifth of their wealth on condition of being no longer subject to the creole tyranny of caste.

The strategical blunder of the self-assertive white planters having now become entirely apparent to their deputies in Paris, these left no stone unturned to thwart the objective of the Amis des Noirs. By indefatigable manoeuvring they at least partially succeeded, for the National Assembly passed an ambiguous resolution which, while apparently granting political rights to colored people, nevertheless left the interpretation of the grant to already existing colonial authorities.

In the colony complete confusion reigned when news of the resolution was received. Colored people everywhere joyfully demanded their rights, only to be indignantly refused. The whites, with no intention of yielding an inch, were nevertheless undecided as to a proper course of action to pursue: one group wished to announce the colony's immediate independence from France, offering the familiar argument that only white planters knew how to manage the colony's peculiar affairs; the other group still cautiously counseled inaction and waiting for the storm to blow over. A young mulatto, Ogé, educated in France and encouraged by the Amis des

11. The National Assembly had succeeded the States-General.

12. The Assembly was finding "liberté, égalité, fraternité" as uncomfortable a motto to live up to as Americans were finding their own declaration, in 1776, of belief in the "self-evident" proposition that *all men* are created free and equal.

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Noirs, having returned to Saint-Domingue to campaign for the political rights of his group, led with his friend Chavanne a demonstration at Cap Français. The white authorities seized and executed them with notable brutality.

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This occurred in March, 1791. In May came the news that the National Assembly in France had finally yielded to pressure, and had decreed that men of mixed blood born of free parents should be admitted to representation in colonial assemblies. The chagrin and anger of the whites at this decree was so violent that the governor-general of Saint-Domingue immediately suspended its operation. The issue was now clearly drawn: free colored men knew that they would never secure their rights except by force. But before they could bring to maturity their plan of action, suddenly the calculations of both parties were completely upset. The Negro slaves revolted.

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If ever slaves had reason to rebel, the Negroes of Saint-Domingue did. The same harshness which the whites showed to free colored people marked the treatment of black slaves; and as racial antagonism deepened, white masters seemed to become utterly heartless in their treatment of the inarticulate blacks. Allowing for the exceptions which accompany most generalizations, it is clear from the record that the planters were, in the main, callous, ruthless, some of them even fiendish, in their treatment of slaves. Flogging a man to death was not uncommon; certain slaves were buried alive; pregnant women were forced to work so hard that miscarriage resulted. Some of the punishments meted out were merely brutal; others were torture; and some were sadistic, the masters relishing the pain they were causing. A certain slave in the North was nailed by his hands to a wall, and then, after standing all day in the burning sun, was made to eat his own amputated ears. A woman planter had the tongues of all her slaves cut out; another woman caused the starvation of her maid by having a gag fixed around the child's head.[13] Visitors to the colony in the 1780's often commented on the general want of self-control on the part of the planters—their violent gusts of anger and passionate outbreaks over trifles; and the victims of these outbursts

13. An officer of the court of the Negro king Christophe later wrote in two volumes a gruesome account of the treatment of slaves by French masters in the latter days of the colony. Although certainly exaggerated, it probably contains a measure of truth. See Baron de Vastey, *Réflexions politiques sur les noirs et les blancs* (Sans Souci, 1817); and *Essai sur les causes de la révolution et des guerres civiles d'Hayti* (Sans Souci, 1819).

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deftly had him promoted out of colonial office. When another group of commissioners came, he agreed in conference with them that the remaining whites should be expelled for the sake of peace; as soon as this was done, however, he effected the nomination of both the chief commissioner and General Laveaux as representatives of the colony in the French Assembly, sitting in Paris. Under guise of bestowing honors, he had got rid of every white person who had the slightest claim to rule. By 1797 Toussaint was the supreme leader in Saint-Domingue, his authority disputed only by Rigaud and the colored group. A civil war was needed to settle the issue between them, and since his forces were much more numerous than Rigaud's, Toussaint emerged victor in the brief conflict. Rigaud fled to France, the power of the mulattoes was broken, and no one was left openly to contest Toussaint's rule.

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"The First of the Blacks," as Toussaint was called, is a bewildering anomaly, and full of contradictions. He had been a slave for fifty years before the insurrection, and was to live only eleven after it. In that short period he became one of the most talked-of men in the world. His Spanish superior officer had said that "God in this terrestrial globe could not commune with a purer spirit"; the Frenchman, Lacroix, remarked, "No one approaches him without fear, and no one leaves him without respect." Even his enemies paid him homage: an English officer, as "a man, a governor, and a general"; a white Frenchman, as "a philosopher, a general, and a good citizen." When he died Wordsworth wrote a moving sonnet to him who had strengthened human faith in "man's unconquerable mind." Yet Toussaint had been a deserter and a schemer, and ruthlessly exploited his power to achieve absolute authority. His own deep conviction of his special mission to lead his people from misery to security has always for his apologists excused the more dubious aspects of his character.

To many Toussaint was a hero with elements of saintliness. In the overheated atmosphere of prejudice and hatred in Saint-Domingue he pursued a calm policy of moderation. Under him, anarchy and massacres came to an end. With an army at his beck and call, he used force only to maintain freedom for his fellow blacks and to defend the colony against foreign invasion. As nominal governor-general after 1799 he revived prosperity, inculcated discipline as an antidote to the intoxication of liberty, respected his contracts, and was a friend of law and order. On the other hand, he had moments

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of inordinate vanity, and would brook no interference. His henchmen had to endure merciless tongue-lashings. His own people's freedom, about which he was publicly so solicitous, was in many respects little better than slavery. 175 642 643

What he did is more easily told than what he was. Emerging, after a long reign of terror, as a leader in a land which had once been a paradise for whites, he checked among his people the passion and fear which had led to violence. With the restoration of peace, labor began once more on the plantations. The Negroes, though no longer slaves, were ordered back to work, and they docilely obeyed. The return of prosperity between 1799 and 1802 was amazing.

But the brilliance of Toussaint's rule was first dimmed and then completely extinguished by the rising star of Napoleon in France.[17] Haitian history between 1802 and 1804, although apparently incidental to the story of the contest between blacks and colored people which here concerns us, is nevertheless significant for an understanding of what was to transpire in Haitian social affairs. Napoleon was irritated beyond measure at the effrontery of Toussaint's seizure of power in the colony. The black leader had shown canny statesmanship in winning the friendly coöperation of the president of the United States, John Adams. The supplies and ships that Adams sent enabled Toussaint not only to defeat Rigaud but to achieve independence from France in all but name. With American assistance, Toussaint negotiated an advantageous treaty with England. Probably even more annoying to the First Consul than these political triumphs was Toussaint's audacious success in aping and even anticipating the spacious actions by which Napoleon was trying to make himself majestic in the world's eyes.[18] 175 648 669

It is possible that Napoleon might not have paid so much attention

17. It seems strange that this black, a veritable genius whatever his faults, should be so mildly honored in modern Haiti. True, he is regarded with respect, and there are a few statues of him; but the homage of the people is paid rather to his successor, General Dessalines, the antithesis of Toussaint in everything but courage. It was Dessalines, of course, who struck the final blow for Haitian freedom, but even this triumph seems to the foreigner small in comparison with the very real achievements of Toussaint. [643]

18. For example: Napoleon had given a new constitution to France after his *coup d'état* of the 18 Brumaire; similarly Toussaint, having effected his own coup in Saint-Domingue by deposing the French civil agent, citizen Roume, immediately thereafter gave *his* people a new constitution. In it he not only assumed all political power for life, but also ascribed to himself the right of naming his successor. Bonaparte was unable to take so daring a step for another year. There is ample evidence to show that meanwhile he chafed under the idea of being imitated and anticipated by a "gilded African," as he called Toussaint.

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than a hundred dollars each; wasting money, squandering men. On the other side, Dessalines and Christophe massacred every white within their reach. Rochambeau held on until November, 1803, when he surrendered with his few remaining men to the English in Jamaica. 175 648

On January 1, 1804, Dessalines proclaimed the independence of Haiti, choosing this aboriginal Indian name (meaning "mountainous") rather than the French Saint-Domingue. What the colored people had begun with their petitions to the French Assembly in 1789 had now worked itself out, but along lines entirely different from their hopes or plans. The whites were gone, but the blacks were in control. Now a struggle for precedence was to begin between the ruling blacks and the still aspiring people of color.[31] 175 642 648

31. The historical details rehearsed in this chapter are summarized from the many documented monographs and histories of the period cited in the Bibliography at the end of this volume. It seems unnecessary to quote such entry for each historical statement made in this sketch of background material. [114]

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III

THE FORMATIVE YEARS, 1804–1843

1. *Dessalines* (*1804–1806*)

175 643 159 If ever a country had an opportunity to start absolutely fresh in choosing its own social institutions, Haiti had that opportunity in 1804. Free at last, with no traditions to uphold, the first independent Negro state in the world, owing allegiance to no man or nation, the Haitians might (theoretically, at least) have invented an entirely new little world of economic, political, religious, and social life. All paths were open to them. Dessalines,[1] as head of state, had only to lead them. His mental limitations, however, were such that he could only follow where the hated French had led, and soon set the Haitians upon the road to a caste system.

175 642 643 The first part of the story of independent Haiti is to a certain extent the story of the alternative lines of action laid down by four great men, the black Dessalines and his equally black successor Christophe, the mulatto Pétion and his worshipful mulatto disciple Boyer.

On New Year's Day, 1804, Dessalines made a stirring proclamation of independence. In it were many references to *liberté* but none whatever to *égalité* or *fraternité*. The two years of his rule show clearly that he had no use for such abstractions as equality or fraternity, while liberty to him was synonymous only with freedom from French dominance. He was a tyrant whose very tyranny unwittingly prepared the way for eventual control by the colored group over the blacks.

Accompanying the proclamation of Dessalines was another signed by his generals, naming him governor-general for life, swearing "to obey blindly all laws emanating from his authority," giving him the right to make peace or war, and permitting him to name his successor. Absolutism was the order of the day. In the same paragraph in which he condemned French despotism, Dessalines said to his

1. Jean-Jacques Dessalines had been born a slave on a plantation near Grande-Rivière du Nord in the seventeen-fifties or -sixties. Unlike Toussaint, whose leading general he was, Dessalines was illiterate. The outstanding characteristic of his temperament was his violent passion.

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people: "If ever you refuse, or grumblingly accept, the laws which the genius guarding your destinies dictates to me for your happiness, you will merit the fate of ungrateful people. But perish that hideous idea!" There can be little doubt that he wished Haiti under his direction to become prosperous; but it is likewise clear that he was personally self-centred and inordinately grasping. 175 642 643

Each step Dessalines took to further his ambitions either for Haitian prosperity or for his own fortunes had its bearing upon the development of social classes in the country. Extermination of all remaining whites was one of the first tasks he set himself. On a promise of clemency he lured several hundred gullible French out of hiding, and butchered them in cold blood. His campaign of extirpation was methodical and thorough. To try to penetrate into the psychological background of this violence is to desert fact for speculation: it may have been a desire for revenge on the French, pure and simple; it may have been gloating sadism; he may have wished to warn France against any future attempts to regain possession of the country; or he may have wanted to notify his subjects of his intention to rule with severe discipline. Certainly this last aim was achieved, if any of his people did not already know, after two years of warfare, the extent of his ruthlessness. He ruled by fear and by threats, never by the cultivation of loyalties.

Apparently he was afraid that Napoleon would renew his efforts to subdue the former colony. To forestall such an attempt he ordered each of his governing subalterns to construct one great fort on the most prominent hill in their district—a scheme which led immediately to the institution of forced labor. He likewise devised a plan, not actually put into effect, for destroying all towns and plantations near the coast and moving the capital to an inland village; and so isolating Haitians from all contact with the outside world. 175 643 466 712 361

Turning to domestic policy, he faced a herculean task. The warfare of 1802–3 had left the country in chaos. Plantations and agricultural projects were almost totally ruined. All habits of steady industry had been lost. Dread of a possible new attack by the French made necessary a great army, and this in turn removed most able-bodied men from productive labor in the fields, while the construction of fortresses still further depleted the labor supply. The first census of free Haiti, in 1805 (probably not highly accurate), showed only 380,000 people, with the women outnumbering men by almost three to two. 175 643 433 701 464 712 175 162

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two. Here was a decline of about 150,000 from 1790.[2] It is a commentary on the man's forcefulness that in spite of all difficulties Dessalines established an effective economic organization. Its basis was serfdom.

Every citizen, he announced, must consider himself in one of two categories, laborer or soldier. There were to be no shirkers in the new Haiti; if a man was not in the army, he must do manual labor. Artisans who followed a craft counted as laborers. Women, since they could not join the army, must work shoulder to shoulder with their men. It was understood that direction of Haiti's new order would be carried on by state officials who were neither laborers nor soldiers, but these officials were to be so few that they would not constitute a separate third category.

This step of Dessalines' was a radical one. It proclaimed the mastery of state over individual; and even more significantly it divided the people according to economic task, rather than birth, wealth, color, or social status. At first the more ambitious citizens bore patiently with the arbitrary decree, thinking they might be able to achieve comfortable status under a lenient definition of "soldier" or else by sinecure tasks as officials. Their disillusionment was swift. Even swifter was the chagrin of the lowly folk who had been slaves, for they found themselves now in actual bondage to one of their own color.

All people except soldiers, ran the decree, must be "attached as cultivators to a plantation." This might be translated to read "bound to the soil." The vast majority of the people were forced willy-nilly into agriculture. It was "formally prohibited for a cultivator to desert the plantation to which he was assigned"; conversely, it was a crime to give asylum to a runaway cultivator, male or female.[3] If such conditions differed from slavery, they were at least close to what the mediaeval world knew as serfdom. But under this régime of forced labor the recently ravaged fields once more became productive: cotton plantations again covered the plain of the Artibonite, and sugar refineries were slowly rebuilt all over the country.

To forestall complaint from the people once again driven into

2. See, for an analysis of population figures, Placide Justin, *Histoire politique et statistique de l'île d'Haytí, Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1826), pp. 502–503.

3. A certain Mlle. Chapotin, of respectable family, was accused of having harbored a fugitive female cultivator, and, since she was unable to pay immediately the fine imposed upon her by the police at Port-au-Prince, she was condemned to serve a jail term.

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The former affranchis fully intended to keep their lands once the

175 French were driven out. They could not but be alarmed as they saw
423 the steady direction of Dessalines' moves toward a complete mo-
425 nopoly of land ownership by the state. On the very day following
471 independence, a decree proclaimed that all lands owned by France in colonial days now belonged to Haiti. Next (February 7, 1804) Dessalines canceled all sales and donations made to mulattoes and ex-slaves by fleeing French who, in a last despairing effort to salvage something from the wreckage of olden days, had "entrusted" their lands to non-whites. By these two strokes all lands owned by white men before 1803 became state property,[5] but only the second clipped the wings of socially ambitious colored people.

175 Serious uneasiness was caused by the next measure, an order for a
421 general verification of property titles. This would have been a deli-
[693] cate task at best, considering the disorder of the past thirteen years. It was made more complicated to carry out by the serious lack of men trained in law. A few like Balthasar Inginac, later an important adviser and trusted friend of two presidents, were scrupulously conscientious, but by the same token highly unpopular with those whom they deprived of newly (and shadily) acquired "estates." The majority of officials, according to report, listened to the pleading of many who had managed by hook or crook to secure a tenuous claim to vacant properties, validating their fraudulent titles for them. It has been claimed, without rebuttal, that most of these officials were not above taking bribes. When complaint was made to Dessalines of such actions he took steps to make his appointees do their duty, but each confiscation made new enemies for Dessalines.

Some of the mulattoes, citing their French paternity, claimed land formerly owned by their French fathers, even though these parents had never regarded their sons as more than bastards. Dessalines once broke out in furious answer to such a claimant: "*Et les pauvres*
175 *nègres dont les pères sont en Afrique, ils n'auront donc rien!*"
425 The state took over thousands of acres. Those Haitians, colored or
556 black, who aspired to landownership as the foundation of position,

[642] 5. The hatred of the Haitians for the French, and because of them, for white people
[648] in general, was seen not only in these confiscations but in commitments for the future. A proclamation of April 28, 1804, suppressed to "all foreigners" the right to own property in land. The first Haitian constitution, May 20, 1805, took an even more drastic step in saying that "no white man shall henceforth set foot in this country as a landowner," and that "*all* property formerly belonging to a white Frenchman" was now confiscate to the profit of the state.

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such an example of rigor might spread. The moral element of the population had long looked askance at his libertinage; his first act upon entering a town during a visit of state was regularly to have his aides select for him the most attractive females in the vicinity, with whom he would spend more time than at the business of governing. Not even his army was sorrowful over his death. He had let his loyal troops go for months without pay, and then, reviewing a group of them one day, taunted and railed at them for their ragged uniforms. "You look as naked as a bunch of old bottles!" he cried.

Dessalines had restored order to his country and had founded a state. Both achievements rested upon a display of force which inspired cringing fear and denied normal human aspirations. His entire social and economic order was based upon the subservience of the many to the few.

2. *Christophe* (*1807–1820*)

Until 1807 all Haitians had the same political background—the French colonial régime, revolution, the governorship of Toussaint, and the stern rule of Dessalines. Now the common path forked. Two avenues were opened up during the next dozen years, one by Christophe, the other by his Southern and mulatto rival, Pétion. The former was the road of discipline, hard work, and feudal control; the latter was one of persuasion, *laissez faire*, and small properties. Haiti ultimately chose the second.

The logical successor to Dessalines was his powerful Negro henchman, Christophe.[8] This black general felt so certain of his leadership that he did not even bother to attend the *Assemblée Constituante* which was to choose the new head of state. The mulattoes, however, had agreed among themselves that they had had enough of rule by ignorant ex-slaves. They consequently performed the very skillful manoeuvre of preparing a constitution which should effectively shear a new president of dictatorial power; this done, they dutifully elected Christophe to the presidential office. The wrathful general peremptorily declined to rule by virtue of so anaemic a document, and led his army southward to demand proper respect for his august

8. The name Christophe was taken from the English Caribbean island of St. Christopher, on which this black slave was born. Later in life he took as his first name Henry, spelling it in the English fashion rather than the French, as an indication of his wholehearted admiration of English people and English ways.

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person. To his evident surprise he was met not by meek submission, but by the army of the mulatto Pétion. Christophe was not defeated; neither was he victorious. He was obliged to retire in high dudgeon to his loyal supporters in the North, where he proceeded to set up a state according to his own idea of what a state should be. 175 643 642 662

The Assembly thereupon outlawed Christophe on the ground of rebellion against constituted authority, electing in his stead their great favorite Pétion, whose power as president of the Republic was to be limited by the new constitution. For the next thirteen years, from 1807 to 1820, the tiny country with its 10,000 square miles was divided, Christophe ruling in the North and in the fertile valley of the Artibonite, and Pétion governing until his death in 1818 in the West and South, the main strongholds of the colored element.

Christophe was of the stuff that myths are made of. He was indisputably Haiti's most dynamic, relentlessly effective, and dramatic ruler of the nineteenth century. Like Toussaint and Dessalines, he was a black ex-slave, and like them he had won his spurs as a military leader during the revolution. He was an ardent patriot whose love for his country did not lead to retrogressive chauvinism. Whereas Dessalines through fear and hatred of the French had excluded all white men from Haiti, Christophe had the perspicacity to see that the country could benefit from the contribution of whites. Englishmen he especially welcomed. Like his predecessors Christophe drove his people—with a tyrant's lash, many thought—but only to increase the glory of Haiti. 175 643 663

Christophe had a vaulting imagination which brought glamour even to practical expedients. He built a colossal fortress on a high mountain in the North, partly for defense, but partly to make his contemned Negro people feel that they could achieve one of the architectural and engineering marvels of the age. His exquisite palace, Sans Souci, not only satisfied his own vanity as a ruler but also provided a focal point for the imagination and loyalty of his subjects. In 1811 he had himself crowned king, Henry I, amidst pomp and circumstance—and then created a royal court, partly to reward his leaders, partly to get the fees for patents of nobility, but primarily to bind all important men in the country to himself and to the Haitian state with unbreakable personal bonds. Dramatic in almost every particular of his life and reign, he ruled for thirteen years more through force of personality than by tyranny. Taxes were heavy [712] [644]

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therefore plantations must be made to yield the uttermost farthing if the nobleman was to pay for the necessities of strict court etiquette. It was by no means a childish whim which prompted Christophe to call himself a king; rather an intelligent utilization of the human material the leader had to work with. Vanity was to serve an economic and a political purpose. 175 643 642 565

Christophe perceived that the defect of Dessalines' reign had been lack of security, both of person and property. Agriculture is a long-term investment and so must be hedged about by orderly rules. To this end the monarch stated his laws clearly, charged a fixed tax—one fourth of the annual crop—which would enrich the kingdom while allowing the tenant-proprietor a reasonable profit, and then guaranteed that no arbitrary demands would be made. Certainly there was no pampering of the wealthy, but there was ample prosperity resulting from regularity and security. 175 651

The ordinary citizen was, as he had been, bound to the soil as an agricultural laborer. This quasi-serfdom, however, was comparative freedom. It simply meant that the home and work of a man must be at the plantation on which he had been born. Saturday afternoons and Sundays were free, so that the laborers might make the most of their opportunities to visit the nearest market village, to buy and sell small goods, gossip, and enjoy the sociability of being part of a crowd. Being bound to the soil meant simply that they could not move, when the impulse seized them, to another plantation or another part of the country. Those whose mothers or relatives were natives of a plantation must return to that estate, being forbidden to live in towns. No person, military or other, who did not derive his living from a plantation, could marry an agricultural worker—a prohibition designed to prevent workers from leaving estates because of family ties, and particularly to prevent women, as mothers of future cultivators, from deserting agriculture. 175 566 641 466 [582]

Mediaeval serfdom itself went no further in binding people to the soil. Indeed, it did not go so far in regulating the daily life of serfs. Under Christophe the cultivators lived according to a routine as strict as that of a school. Reveille was rung as early as three o'clock to arouse women to prepare breakfasts for their menfolk; by four or four-thirty the bell was sounded for the commencement of work, which began after prayers had been led by the overseer. At nine o'clock there was a pause for luncheon, and then a resumption of 175 566 512 466

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vengeance but the utter extermination of that race."[12] He even ordered the execution of a mulatto woman in Gonaïves because she had prayed for the success of Pétion.

During the latter years of his reign his personal popularity waned somewhat, owing to his relentless insistence upon efficiency and to his increasing tendency to lose his temper. Defections to the South occurred almost daily. The cultivators, comparing their never-ceasing toil on Northern plantations with the reported liberty and leisure of life in the South, continually drifted away. So alluring was the paradise of ease (and poverty) of the neighboring realm that Christophe found it necessary to keep a cordon of soldiers along the borders of his kingdom to prevent desertions. His administration now embarked on actual persecution of colored people. Inflammatory pamphlets were spread abroad, designed to make the Negroes think that the mulattoes were planning to enslave them once again. Under this campaign of propaganda many light-skinned Northerners had to go into hiding.

Despite all discrimination, the important line was drawn between cultivators who formed nine tenths of the population, and aristocrats who, with the army, made up the remainder. The nobility, the directors of landed estates, and the generals directed the activities of other people, so that the colonial prejudice against manual labor was strengthened. Here lay the basis of a persistent Haitian attitude of mind: to work with one's hands is to show oneself a member of the masses; to direct others is the distinction of the upper class. Education, neglected under Dessalines altogether, was fostered by Christophe. He established a few schools, inviting as schoolmasters certain Englishmen familiar with the then popular methods of the Lancasterian system; but since the cultivators were busy on the plantations, only the children of aristocrats benefited by the limited educational system and the social distance between classes was increased.

A French commentator says that Christophe showed unusual insight in devising for his kingdom "the only organization of which an African society was capable," namely, a combination of military despotism with certain benevolent inclinations, and territorial feudalism based upon a nobility created by the King. Actually, it suited not so much the African background of the people, which lay

12. Dr. Jonathan Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo* (Philadelphia, 1837), II, 197.

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114 642 175 at least a generation behind them, but rather their complete lack of any experience in self-rule. The author continues:

> In addition to the vanity of the black which was flattered by the distribution of principalities and duchies, there was the political thought which wished to fortify things by words. The most important sugar manufactories were distributed, with the property title, to the principal officers and civil agents of the government. Workers were allotted to these very much as were the Indians to the first Spanish conquerors. . . . Moreover, since African blood dominated in the North [that is, since there were few mulattoes and lighter-skinned people], the feudal lords, aided by the color of their skin, could enforce obedience to a yoke which in name only was modified [from slavery].[13]

[471]

175 642 566 631 421 625 692 The social organization of Christophe's kingdom, then, was one of large properties, with all the feudalistic trappings, resting upon a solid base of wage-earning serfdom. In contrast to mediaeval feudalism, the king was here much more than *primus inter pares.* Thanks to the policy of Dessalines, most land had come into state ownership, so that the nobility received their estates by royal favor, and held them as leases only so long as the King pleased. As in the Middle Ages, the noblemen were petty monarchs within the district granted to their jurisdiction. Their freedom of action, however, was even here subject to scrutiny: detachments of Royal Dahomets[14] were stationed in every cantonment or parish, to enforce discipline, keep the King informed, and find their own subsistence without a drain on the royal treasury. In every district was set up a court of *sénéchaussée* to see that justice obtained.[15] The King's law, not the nobleman's private code, prevailed in the whole country.[16]

13. R. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1846), II, 167–168.

14. Organized after the model of the police force existing in France before 1789.

15. These courts were composed of a royally appointed seneschal and his assistant, a king's procurer, and a clerk.

[671]

16. The Code Henry was promulgated on January 30, 1812. It consisted of seven parts: Civil, Commercial, Shipping and Maritime, Civil Process, Criminal and Police Process, Agricultural, and Military. In general the Code followed French precedent, but the section on Agriculture was Christophe's own. Sir James Basket (in his *History of the Island of St. Domingo* [London, 1818], p. 413) calls this part "a thing unexampled among other nations." It reveals not only the King's absorption in the main economic enterprise of his state, but also his skill in devising an integrated functioning of a social order of nobility and serfs with a plantation economy based on money crops. This Agricultural Law regulated such diverse matters as the reciprocal duties of proprietors and cultivators, the policing of plantations, and the culture and preparation of the major crops. It set forth industry as the parent of virtue, and idleness as the source of vice.

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Northern Haiti flourished magnificently under Christophe's sternly benevolent rule. The King had that daring spirit of initiative which was so generally lacking in later Haitian history; he had, in addition, the power necessary to force through a new adjustment if the old way showed defects.[17] He excited artificial wants among his leaders by making nobles of them, and then compelled them to satisfy these wants without ever slipping back to a lower standard of living. Thirteen years of enforced labor and of order kept by a rigorously effective police force gave northern Haiti the kind of prosperity she had known in colonial days. Christophe encouraged commerce and protected foreign traders. He called in all debased coinage, substituting for it sound gold and silver currency. The revenue he raised was larger than it had been since 1791, amounting to about $3,500,000 annually. Probably the most eloquent testimony to his success is the fact that at his death, when the kingdom of the North was once more united with the republic of the South, more than six million dollars found their way into the republican treasury.

175 643 642 433 [438] [439] [652]

The Black King's economic system worked. It was based on a social division of the people, with the masses doing manual labor, and the aristocrats definitely set apart and recognized as upper class. By 1820 Haiti was well on its way toward the caste system.

175 565

3. *Pétion* (*1807–1818*)

171 175 631

Almost all Latin-American countries in the nineteenth century exhibited one common feature: an aristocratic landowning class lording it over peons. Haiti did not follow this pattern. She had aristocrats and peasants, but the aristocrats did not own most of the land, and the peasants were not peons. If later rulers had kept the organization of economic life begun by Toussaint and developed by his fellow blacks, Dessalines and Christophe, it is almost certain that Haitian social evolution would have resembled that of the rest of Latin America, for it would not have been a great change from

17. Duraciné Vaval, "Le Roi d'Haïti Henri Christophe," in *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti*, II, No. 3 (June 1931), p. 14, says that Haiti's periodic civil troubles and social misfortunes, both ending in a diminution of the state's autonomy, have been due to economic maladjustments. "Our weaknesses in political life derive from our immobility in material production." Immobility is an index of stagnation. Few rulers of Haiti have been at once powerful enough to overcome the immobility and wise enough to know what measures had to be taken. [114]

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175 Haitian writers sometimes praise Pétion for his democratic lean-
●642 ings, by implication criticizing Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe
178 for their feudalistic notions. If the blacks were undemocratic, at least
433 they had experience back of the system they selected for administering the land: their methods worked. Pétion's plan, on the contrary, admirable though it seemed to later "liberals," was unexpectedly disappointing. The national income declined; estates were steadily broken up and sub-leased to small farmers; sugar disappeared from the state's balance sheet, while coffee did not supply an equivalent income; discipline of the workers gave way to individualism. Although the whole legislative code favored the landlords, la grande culture crumbled. One is driven to conclude that Pétion simply tried one device after another—always the easiest he could find—to keep state economy functioning.

175 When Pétion came to power, the common folk of southern Haiti
178 were serfs with a memory of slavery; when he died, they were
565 peasants. At the beginning of his régime the mulattoes and other social aspirants felt they were struggling for very existence against the relentless policies of black rulers; as it closed they were beyond any doubt aristocrats, but by the same token progressively less well-to-do. No one any longer attacked their social pretensions; but the worldly wealth on which these pretensions were based was disappearing along with the country's prosperity, so that new criteria had to be developed.

175 As we have said, the keynote of Pétion's rule was persuasion.
671 Where Dessalines ordered, Pétion suggested; where Christophe decreed, Pétion recommended. There is not a single act one could cite during his entire presidency which had the effect of tightening up the organization of the republic. When laws were not properly observed, instead of penalties being made more severe or sure of application, the laws themselves were calmly allowed to lapse. In fact, the period from 1807 to 1818 was one of transition, of experiment, of discovering a congenial way of life. Since it was clear that the mass of citizens were peacefully disposed and unambitious, the President was inclined to let custom rule in each little community. Laws were not repealed, but they were enforced only when general public opinion was clearly in their favor. At many points the upper class would have liked more disciplinary control over the masses and said so to Pétion; yet they realized that in a less than ideal world one

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175 In his easygoing republic Pétion saw prosperity slowly wane,
433 cultivation decline, profits give way to deficits. He issued a large
652 amount of paper currency, and continually hoped for better times
554 which did not come. The days of large fortunes were over. The economic system affected the aristocrats: although they were still landowners, so also were thousands of common folk. The criterion of rank became increasingly not wealth, but rather pursuit of a career which demanded no manual labor. Distinctions, if they are to be effective, must be made on the basis of conditions not easily achieved by all and sundry. Education and good French met this requirement; even more did a light skin color.

175 Pétion, darling of the mulattoes though he was, never drew a color
643 line. There is no suggestion in any of his actions that he gave prefer-
641 ence in his appointments to people of his own color. He suppressed
563 at least one insurrection led by men who would have liked to stir up color prejudice. He often tried by quiet irony to make his people less sensitive to their complexions. It is eloquent testimony to his fairness that the 200,000 blacks in the republic never faltered in their love for him. They had ample reason to mistrust the haughty and ambitious colored people, some of whom had lorded it over them in colonial days; but they knew that the President did not share their pretentious attitude. One look at the North, ruled by a black, was enough to convince any Southerner that his happiness was safer in the hands of a mulatto than in those of a Negro ex-slave. At Pétion's death, therefore, there was no demur at the succession to power of another light-skinned man.

175 Haitians of a later day have discussed at great length the wisdom
643 of Pétion's parceling of state lands. His supporters (and they are
642 numerous) as well as his critics generally keep the controversy on the lofty plane of ideals, intentions, and hypothetical contingencies. Pétion is praised for being generous to humble folk where all other rulers of his country had been severe; for being a realist in accepting and adjusting his measures to the limitations of the average Haitian's character; for building a patriotism upon love of one's own small plot of land; for ruling constitutionally, with his Senate, rather than dictatorially. Most especially, Pétion is the one man among the early rulers who seemed to have any realization of the human values involved. Material gain is desirable but not at the expense of liberty. Freedom means something, even in poverty.

The critics do not challenge Pétion's good intentions or integrity;

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they even comment upon his unselfish generosity, which seems to have been entirely free of any desire for personal gain. They accuse him rather of taking the easiest course—that of trying to pacify every group in the republic: the masses, by giving them land and removing any external compulsion to work on it; the army, by making their enlistment profitable; the aspiring aristocrats, by validating their titles to estates and not challenging their prestige with a demand for responsibility. Strong states, the critics argue, are built on lines of discipline, not of perpetual yielding.

From an economic point of view a more valid criticism would ask the simple question: what was the practical result of his policies? Under the three previous Negro rulers agriculture had prospered, for these men kept state lands intact and forced the population to work; under Pétion, on the contrary, prosperity steadily declined with the division of land and the removal of compulsion. To expect a body of illiterate, inexperienced ex-slaves automatically to develop such economic virtues as industry, foresight, and thrift in a land which never knew any of these is not realistic, but merely quixotic. The Haitian critic Magloire implies that Pétion was either completely and cynically indifferent to common graft or else naïvely confident that men newly free would somehow be preternaturally honest. He goes into detail:

> Lands were distributed free, without order or method, each person taking what came his way and establishing himself as he could; graft and jobbery, under varied guises, governed the granting of concessions. As for properties in the towns, some people established themselves in upstairs apartments and others in ground-floor ones, without bothering to think of the lawsuits which might result from this disorder. In the sales made by the State, 50 and 100 and 200 gourdes were paid for real estate which was worth 10,000 and 20,000 and 40,000 gourdes or more. The administration put up for sale the property of towns, of communes, and of the State. Even buildings occupied in colonial days by officials, buildings whose construction had cost considerable sums, were bestowed on the people. . . .
>
> By a too great fractioning of the national domain, and carried away by the influence of false egalitarian and democratic ideas, Pétion brought about what a modern writer calls "the forcible neglect of agriculture"[32] throughout the Republic.[33]

32. J. N. Léger, *Haiti: son histoire et ses détracteurs* (New York, 1907), p. 162.
33. Auguste Magloire, *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social* (Port-au-Prince, 1909), pp. 260–263.

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175 114 433 Practically every contemporary foreign visitor contrasted the divergent policies of Christophe and Pétion to the overwhelming advantage of the former. One Englishman, intent upon defending the Negro against the charge of "natural indolence," went so far as to say that the majority of the people in the republic, although "possessed of small estates, on which they earned their living," were yet no less diligent than the forced laborers on Christophe's plantations in the North.[34] His only proof of this contention, however, was the greater volume of commerce at Port-au-Prince, capital of the republic, than at Cap-Henry (now Cap-Haïtien), capital of the kingdom.

175 433 652 642 The economic case is strongly against Pétion. The decline of large-scale agriculture, the empty treasury, governmental purchase of surpluses when prices were low, debasing the coinage[35]—by such practical proofs, the republic was vastly less efficient than the stern dictatorship of the kingdom. But Pétion's people had freedom, while Christophe's were serfs. And Pétion's republic endured, to become reunited Haiti. The kingdom perished with Christophe.

4. *The Final Effort toward Plantation Life* (*1818–1826*)

175 643 642 The mantle of Pétion fell in 1818 upon the shoulders of his meticulous secretary and minister, Jean-Pierre Boyer. Two years later, upon the death of Christophe, the kingdom of the North was once again united, without a struggle, to the South.[36] It is conceivable that the refined mulatto Boyer might have infused into his people a spirit of industry and ambition, now that tranquillity reigned after fourteen years of separation and warfare. The people of the North had had a long experience of intense activity, while those of the

34. W. W. Harvey, *Sketches of Hayti; from the Expulsion of the French, to the Death of Christophe* (London, 1827), pp. 361 ff.

[652] 35. Pétion's coins were so easily imitated that the country was inundated with counterfeit money. The government issued only five million dollars worth of this currency, but in 1818 twelve millions were in circulation, the surplus having been fabricated in Europe and the United States.

[175] [643] [642] [648] 36. In 1822–23 Boyer likewise succeeded, with little fighting, in bringing the Spanish two thirds of the island (Santo Domingo) into the republic. For the first time since 1697 the whole island was really unified under one rule. Toussaint had held it in 1801–2 and the Haitians claimed it thereafter, but real unity did not come until Boyer's time, when all the Spanish colonies in the New World were breaking away from their mother country. Santo Domingo regained its independence in 1844 shortly after the abdication of Boyer.

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South in general had the most loyal feeling toward a government which had been benevolently generous to them. A blend of the two might have been fruitful. 175 642 643

It was not any want of patriotism that caused Boyer to miss his great opportunity but rather a defect of ability. Desiring, like Pétion, to lead rather than to drive his people, he nevertheless lacked even more than his former chief the force of personality which might have persuaded them to work hard for the greater glory of Haiti. Despising the brutal compulsion exercised by Dessalines and Christophe, which he regarded as savage and too closely resembling the earlier methods of slave owners; wishing to emulate solely the gentleness of his predecessor, Boyer hoped for a number of years that his people would become industrious of their own accord. His hopes were frustrated. During his twenty-five-year presidency the mass of Haitians became so indifferent to pecuniary inducements that little work could be got from them beyond that required to produce necessary food. As commerce declined, the President was driven to fresh issues of debased currency and to the opening of mines in different parts of the country, though he knew that the richest mine Haiti possessed was its still fertile soil. 175 433 [652] [316]

For the first seven years Boyer pursued a policy based on hopeful expectation, refusing to inaugurate any of the forceful measures of his black predecessors. But by 1823 the treasury, enriched though it had been by the surplus from Christophe's exchequer, was empty; in 1824 disbursements exceeded income. Convinced in 1825 that his *laissez-faire* policy was failing to produce results, he decided to heed the insistent counsel of those (including most of the aristocratic, landholding class) who advised the reëstablishment of a coercive system of agriculture. His officials showed him that nowhere in the country were sugar plantations any longer being cultivated on a great scale—except for a few estates run by government officials who could command the forced labor of convicts. The policy of offering cultivators a fourth of the total crop of a plantation as wages was luring practically no laborers to work.[37] Even the few owners who offered the fourth plus daily wages had no success. Quite simply, the average Haitian preferred to be his own master, working only when he wished, and particularly working only for himself and his family. 175 652 24 433 466

37. This fourth in wages must not be confused with the quarter in taxes abolished by Pétion. See page 46 for a discussion of the quarter-crop wage system.

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trary; they were grudgingly respected as superior beings, arbiters of the fate of the outside world, potential destroyers of the privileges of the Haitian élite should they return to the country in force. Although white men might not legally marry Haitian women, it was not every woman who could resist the opportunity of having children lighter than herself. One indication of the ambiguous attitude toward the whites was seen in religion. In 1842 out of sixty or seventy Roman Catholic priests in the island, only one was a Haitian. Many people in the country were well educated, and certainly more than equals in point of scholarship and *savoir-faire* of the rude priests imported generally from Corsica. But a feeling was current among the peasants that "colored baptism will not stick." There is no indication that the European priests, since they were well paid for their services, attacked this particular heresy. As for the élite, they derived a certain satisfaction in being served by white priests. Aside from the churchmen, however, the only white man in any place of prominence in the country was the mayor of Saint-Marc, whose father had befriended Boyer in former times.

175 563 564 [193]

Few visitors had kind words to say of social conditions in the Haiti of Boyer. As a Frenchman put it:

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> Democracy was the rule; but what a democracy! A hodge-podge of the most heterogeneous ideas, an alliance of the most contrary principles, of American federalism with military control; the sovereignty of the people replaced by the sovereignty of a ruling clique; and finally, all the intellectual vainglory of a people young, inexperienced, and for a long time denied the legitimate manifestation of their own wishes. Added to all these inconsistencies is the antagonism of races.[61]

This antagonism was, indeed, paramount. The habitual hauteur and assumed pretensions of the lighter Haitians were a perpetual thorn in the flesh of the ambitious blacks, and thus the breach was everywhere widened and made permanent. The blacks retaliated against these distinctions by refusing to obey orders from mulattoes in office, or by petty outrages against private citizens among the colored group.

175 563

The vital lack of the country, assuming that stability is desirable, was a middle class of any sort. On the base of hundreds of thousands of peasants, illiterate, unambitious, indifferent to progress, was built

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61. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, "La République d'Haïti; ses dernières révolutions; sa situation actuelle," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, XV, No. 4 (Nov., 1845), pp. 681–682. [113]

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175 563 565 [701] [669] an ineffective government, momentarily in the hands of colored élite. Attempting to dominate politics was a numerically small group of colored people and a still smaller group of Negroes. Although prevailingly black, the army might be, and in the later nineteenth century was continually, used by whichever group offered more. A third power, a middle class, might have balanced these antagonistic factions. Lacking such a moderating influence, Haiti was the victim of recurrent revolutionary movements.

175 178 642 643 At the time of Boyer, actual democracy would have been no safeguard, for it would have meant the supremacy of ignorance. His rule was the beginning of unfortunate days for Haiti. After the auspicious opening years, the President became an impotent onlooker as his country declined. It is instructive to compare the Haiti of Dessalines and Christophe with the Haiti of 1843, only one generation later.[62]

175 178 642 433 466 The Haiti of 1806 had been a beehive of activity. Soldiers, foremen, and policemen then stood over the workers with lianes to force them to labor for the benefit of their state. Production was carefully planned, an ordered hierarchy making every person in the country responsible to another higher than himself until the ruler was reached at the pinnacle. The cardinal fault of any laborer was to shirk at his task. The year 1843, on the contrary, found Haiti in a condition of quiescence which, to those who remembered the old days, resembled torpor. The central government had ceased to drive its citizens, and its half-hearted attempts at persuasion were futile. Overseers, drivers of gangs of workers, soldiers whose duty it was to enforce labor, had disappeared from the scene. Every man was his own master.

175 178 511 The standard of living in 1806 as in 1843 was low; but in the earlier year there had been a promise of great things to come once Haiti had rebuilt what war had destroyed. The succeeding years, however, failed to inculcate into the people a desire for any higher standard of life. Country dwellers were benighted; ignorance deepened the habit

[162] [175] 62. Haiti has never had an accurate census, so that it is impossible even to estimate the total population of the country either in 1806 or in 1843. The figures of 380,000 and 800,000 given by some authors for the two years are mere guesses. Likewise, one can only deduce the proportion of people in the main economic and social categories; probably seventy-five per cent of the Haitians were serfs in 1806 and the same percentage peasants in 1843; the "aristocracy," including all who did not derive a living by manual labor or army service, could hardly have reached five per cent in either year; the army, house servants, day laborers in the towns, and petty businessmen would make up the other twenty per cent.

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Political history of the next seventy-two years is a complicated story, of which only enough need be told here to illuminate the evolution of caste and social distinctions. Even a short summary reveals the bewildering confusion. Of the twenty-two heads of state between 1843 and 1915 only one served out his prescribed term of office;[2] three died while serving, one was blown up with his palace, one presumably poisoned, and one hacked to pieces by a mob; one resigned. The other fourteen were deposed by revolution after incumbencies ranging in length from three months to twelve years. 175 643

The Revolution of 1843 brought back into national prominence the whole matter of color and caste. The young revolutionaries, mostly light-skinned, seem to have assumed that their group was permanently in control. With cavalier highhandedness they set about capturing the last stronghold of Negro eminence: the army. They soon found, however, that they had caught a Tartar; their attempt to rule was fatal to them and their clique. 175 669

In the Constitutional Assembly convened to make a new constitution for the country, they professed astonishingly democratic doctrines. Proclaiming that the fault of former governments had been reliance upon military power, they now proposed to make civil power paramount by allowing the common people to vote. Since up to this time the franchise had been strictly limited to army officers and anciens libres, such a radical departure as general suffrage makes no sense unless conceived as an attempt to break the power of the Negro-controlled army, for surely the élite had no confidence in the wisdom of the peasantry. Weight is given to this explanation by the paradoxical action of the revolutionaries in promoting to high army rank some of the strongest mulatto partisans of civil government. 175 668 646 642 641 701

The new constitution was an immediate failure. Most of the colored élite condemned the giving of voting rights to peasants and workers; the army chiefs, generally black and illiterate, some of them aging veterans of 1803, bitterly resented being made subservient to young, inexperienced civil officers; in fact, even the new mulatto president, Rivière-Hérard, had no conception of government other than by military dictatorship. 175 642 641

Not only was the constitution a failure; so was the government of the young revolutionaries. A part of their weakness lay in their 175 643

2. The presidential term varied under different constitutions; some allowed a four-year term with the right of reelection, some six years with no reelection.

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175 643 Suddenly, without warning, he reversed what had been mistaken for docile inactivity, and assumed complete personal command of the reins of office. By means of a well-organized body of secret police, [625] he inspired his own counselors with fear not only for their positions but for their lives. Although illiterate, Soulouque never signed a bill presented to him by his ministers until he was sure he knew its essential core. The hopeful "understudies" were forcibly awakened to the realization that they were hoist on their own petard.

175 643 563 669 The colored element was particularly apprehensive at Soulouque's amazing activity, for the President was clearly setting himself against their group, both in the cabinet and out. Determining clandestinely to get rid of their puppet before he became a Frankenstein's monster to destroy his creators, they fomented a new revolution. This, however, proved to be a strategic error of the first magnitude, for the President was already much stronger than they imagined. The insurrection was quashed with massacre and attendant frightfulness. In the aftermath, as Bouzon mordantly remarks, "the republic was calm—with all the tranquillity of a tomb!" By their ineptitude, the colored group had now made themselves completely insecure.

175 565 643 642 [555] In the second year of his régime Soulouque decided to imitate Dessalines by turning the state into an empire. His coronation was extremely gaudy, as well as expensive. Calling himself Emperor Faustin I, he created a peerage drawn chiefly from among his black generals—four princes, fifty-nine dukes, and numerous counts, barons, and knights. This was merely outward pomp to gratify their craving for prestige, for they had no functions to perform, nor even the necessity of Christophe's peers to pay for their regalia. As nobles they were given no responsibilities in directing economic activity nor any increased political power over districts of the empire. The Emperor's own vanity was flattered by having a peerage. He ruled as an autocrat with blatant despotism. For ten years following the coronation Haiti had to accustom itself to costly expeditions against the Dominican Republic, nearly all ending in defeat for Haiti. The outcome of these intermittent wars was neither gain nor loss of territory by either side, but only temporary rule of occupied districts. Haiti likewise had to accustom itself to sudden executions, to the shabby grandeur of court display, and to financial trickery which would not have deceived a schoolboy. While the heads of his opponents and even his loyal counselors fell, Soulouque's infantile "empire" toppered to economic ruin.

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"empire" tottered to economic ruin. Graft, default on the debt, increasing deficits, and debased currency were the order of the day, and so continued until 1859, when the accumulation of anger over the useless wars and the humiliating defeats made the Emperor so unpopular that a new and more carefully planned revolution accomplished his downfall. 175 643 652 669

Fifteen years of administration by Negro rulers had broken the political power of the colored élite. Only three light-skinned men became president thereafter until the occupation of Haiti by the American Marines in 1915; in the seventy-two years following Boyer's downfall, mulattoes ruled during only eight. The army under a black general was too powerful, a colored president too hampered by suspicion, to make the political game worth the candle. The colored élite, therefore, adapted themselves to existing conditions as best they could, controlling the business life of Haiti, filling the law offices and, because of their literacy, the secretaryships of state, and indulging in honorific cultural pursuits. 175 643 178 564

In the years after Soulouque the basic realities of Haitian life were changed hardly at all by shifting political administrations. Some of the presidents were mildly progressive, many were indifferent; still more were actually harmful; but the lives of the mass of peasants were not often touched by presidential vagaries. Politics was an affair almost wholly of townspeople, of the army, the élite, and the pseudo-élite. Revolutions, counterrevolutions, movements of reform, international tangles, financial woes, and most of the other complications to which unstable states are heir, absorbed the attention of rulers and upper-class folk who were politically inclined. 175 643 66

Constitutions were made by presidents and changed by their successors; the Senate passed contradictory laws in the same session if the chief executive so recommended; the courts were presided over by the president's men. Haitian law in the latter half of the nineteenth century was what the president's immediate strength and wish made it—or else it was folk custom, undisturbed by the rulers. 175 642 671 692

Never once, in the three quarters of a century after Boyer's time, did Haiti approach the high standard of production known in colonial days or in the early years of independence. The pattern of Haitian social and economic life became fixed in this seventy-five years. Haiti became a country of small-scale tillage by a peasant population, with only enough external trade to provide moderate 175 178 433 565 439

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V

CASTES SINCE THE AMERICAN OCCUPATION OF 1915

IN 1915 American Marines entered Haiti. One of the major reasons for their intervention may have been economic; certainly this explanation or accusation has been frequently made by opponents of American dollar diplomacy. Nevertheless, the ground was well prepared by political incompetency in Haiti in the years preceding 1915, and the reason given to the world by American statesmen to justify the Occupation was essentially a political one: Haiti was in a state of anarchy. 175 648 642

As has been abundantly shown, Haiti never had a semblance of democracy. From its beginning the country was governed either by a despot—the president, who might or might not be benevolent—or by an oligarchy. The failure of Haitian politics from 1843 onward was the inability of the titular ruler and the oligarchy to work in harmony; indeed, the oligarchy was continually divided against itself. Only three of Haiti's presidents from 1843 to 1915 were more than mediocre statesmen.[1] It is merely a question of degree, whether such phrases as "political and economic stagnation" and "social inertia" are more accurately descriptive than words like decay and degeneration. 175 642

A brief résumé of politics between 1900 and 1915 will set the stage for a view of the Occupation in relation to the development of caste. 175 643 642

1. With this judgment by a foreigner Haitians may obviously disagree. In the author's opinion the presidents Geffrard (1859–67), Salomon (1879–88), and Hyppolite (1889–96) were relatively distinguished men. To Geffrard may be credited the following: increase of educational facilities; construction of much-needed public works; an attempt to form a true middle class, even by importing Negroes from the United States; reduction of the size of the army by half; healing of a sixty-year breach with the Holy See, so that Haiti might once again have approved priests; the opening of closed ports to commerce; and improvement of agricultural methods. Salomon was an educated man with European experience; his achievements were to create a national bank, establish a sound currency, retire the public debt, lower tariffs, bring in schoolteachers from France, open rural schools, bring Haiti into the International Postal Union. Hyppolite's chief triumphs were in the field of public works—much-needed buildings, bridges, docks, telephone and telegraph lines. 175 643 65

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175 643 642 The twentieth century began inauspiciously with a succession of dull incompetents in the presidency. General Sam's administration (1896–1902) had been distinguished only by lethargic calm. Nord Alexis (1902–8), over eighty when elected, prolonged the peace by doing nothing to disturb it; he solved his financial problems by issuing paper money, while his political "policy" involved nothing more significant than the sponsoring of festivals to celebrate Haiti's hundred years of independence. The mild revolution which displaced him substituted a president more puerile than oppressive, Antoine Simon (1908–11), who is best revealed in a terse comment by a Haitian author: "When he passed by on a street or through a public square, everyone, foreigners as well as Haitians, must stand still, even stop smoking, and respectfully salute the Head of State. At any instant, without reason, the functionaries of the capital might be called to the Palace to endure his interminable and insipid discourses."[2] A revolution cut short his tedious régime.

Within the next four years six presidents rose and fell. Their administrations were worse than ephemeral; indeed, they hardly deserve the name of governments. Not one of the six had a happy time in office; the first was blown up with his palace, the second is generally thought to have been poisoned, the next three were quickly deposed by revolutions, and the last, after massacring his imprisoned political enemies, was horribly cut into small bits by an infuriated mob. Anarchy then ensued.

175 652 648 For years Haitian presidents had staved off financial collapse by heavy borrowing abroad. United States financial interests were involved in the Bank of Haiti and in a railroad company, while the American government, through its Monroe Doctrine, was disturbed by French and German threats to collect their Haitian debts by force. When President Guillaume Sam[3] was hacked to pieces by the mob, the United States landed Marines from gunboats which were conveniently just outside the harbor of Port-au-Prince. Beginning on July 28, 1915, the Occupation lasted for nineteen years.

128 648 With the question of America's justification in the matter of occupying Haiti this book cannot pretend to deal. As with most large matters of policy, convincing arguments can be offered on both sides. The important fact for this study is that the presence of white

2. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Manuel d'histoire d'Haïti*, p. 338.
3. Not to be confused with Simon Sam, who had ruled twenty years earlier.

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175 701 648 177 825 652 669 Since it was an entrenched interest, however, no responsible statesman had dared to threaten its hold. The Marines swept it out of existence, undertaking to substitute for it a trained constabulary of only 2,000 men who should combine routine military tasks with police duty in the scattered towns. Results were immediately apparent: the weighty incubus of soldiers' wages was lifted from the treasury; thousands of men were deprived of sinecures and put back into productive economic activities; the constant threat of armed revolution was removed; better order was kept by 2,000 trained men in trim uniform than by twelve times that number of ragged loafers who called themselves soldiers; and since the army was no longer the great steppingstone to political office, the élite felt more secure from assault by ambitious but uneducated army men. From 1843 to 1915 the élite had endured many lower-caste presidents because these were able to control the army; now the army had disappeared.

175 648 [743] [744] [365] [491] [45] The Marines did much that was of indisputable benefit to Haiti. This was acknowledged even by the most vocal patriots who soon began to campaign for an end of the Occupation. Where there had been no real work in public health, Americans now built hospitals, established clinics, cleaned up the sources of many diseases, laid down sewage systems, gave the towns pure water. In 1915 there were only three automobiles in the country, and no roads for them to travel; the Americans built many miles of paved roads. In 1915 there had been only one wharf, two short stretches of railroad, two lighthouses, one electric plant; the Americans undertook electrification, telephone systems, the construction of administration buildings, and other public conveniences. Whether in such visible matters or in the obscurer realms of currency, banking, and budgets hardly a phase of daily life was left untouched. And judged by the standards of civilization the Marines improved what they touched.

175 648 642 But rancor against the Americans began early and continued to the bitter end in 1934. The pride of all Haitians was deeply wounded by the Occupation. For 111 years they had governed themselves and had assumed themselves to be a sovereign nation; the Marines patroling the countryside were vivid reminders that Haiti had never been independent except by sufferance, and that white men were once more overseeing the destinies of colored and Negro men. Nevertheless, the reasons proclaimed for opposing the Occupation were not those of hurt vanity. Some of those given were entirely

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plausible, such as the race prejudice displayed by many individual Marines;[4] the unnecessary slaughter in the suppression of *caco* (guerrilla) rebellions in the North; the continued holding of offices (and salaries) by Americans too impatient to train Haitians, as by the Agreement of 1915 they were supposed to do; the fostering rather than elimination of military psychology among the people by the presence of armed Marines. 175 648 642

The campaign against the Occupation was generally on the highest level of patriotism, for it threw out one variation after another on the same theme: We Haitians are not being allowed to govern ourselves. Some realists knew that their hurt national pride was accompanied by disappointment that certain salaries were not reaching Haitian pockets, certain prestige of office not redounding to the credit of Haitian men. What if the real reason for opposition were not the openly avowed one? The Marines must go! Order had been restored and government reëstablished. It was patent that any administration which could effect the withdrawal would be immensely popular: it was equally patent that if the Americans left the country, the benefits of their efficiency and material improvement would remain as a tangible boon to Haiti. 175 648 642 668

President Sténio Vincent, elected in 1930 after a campaign in which the Americans did not interfere, began the negotiations with Washington. With President Hoover he made headway toward reforms, but President Roosevelt's attitude was more actively cooperative. In 1934 Vincent had a series of conferences with the President of the United States; the latter, in pursuit of his good-neighbor policy, persuaded the American Senate to order the Occupation at an end and turn over without cost to Haiti many buildings, supplies, and equipment used by the Marines. Vincent personally benefited from the withdrawal of 1934. He called himself Haiti's "second Liberator,"[5] and made the anniversary of the American departure a national holiday. Indirectly the élite also benefited for now, entrenched in office, they could govern without white supervision. The material equipment was there to be enjoyed by the whole people at no further expense to them. 175 648 642 [643] [159] [527] [563]

4. The United States government in the early days had sent Marines from the Southern States to Haiti, on the theory that they would, from long acquaintance with Negroes, know how to "handle" them. This stupid blunder was shortly rectified.

5. Dessalines had, of course, been the first.

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175 648 642 423 563 The Occupation had had other far-reaching consequences. It had removed from the Constitution an article which had endured from the very first—the prohibition against ownership of land by white people. Americans argued that since Haiti's greatest potential source of wealth was agricultural (sugar and coffee in particular), new methods were needed if rehabilitation were to occur. Only foreign whites had both the necessary wealth and the requisite agricultural knowledge: therefore, whites must be attracted into the country by an opportunity to establish plantations. Although the Senate of Haiti protested violently against this reversal of tradition, which struck at the people's long pride in their complete ownership of the land, the Americans yielded only on the point of requiring five years' residence of the white landlord in the country. The influx of foreign whites has not been large, but in the Plaine du Nord and Port-au-Prince the white "colonies" are considerably larger now than in 1914.

175 648 563 Up to the present moment the white element in Haiti has not exerted any noticeable pressure on the government. Its mere presence, however, is bound to be a restraining influence on politicians, for most of the whites are Americans, and the government at Washington may not always follow a good-neighbor policy. With the clannishness so usual in white colonists living among darker people, the Americans in Haiti have their private clubs and their closed social set. For the first time since 1804 the élite are socially not the highest-ranking persons in the country.

175 648 563 144 The physical presence of several hundred white Marines for nineteen years had also one unplanned but inevitable result: an increase in the amount of white blood in the population. For many decades numerous élite had rested comfortably beneath their light skins, knowing that only they, with their greater mobility in the world, had any real chance to sustain a white strain. The Occupation, however, brought white men in contact with black women; there was a steady average of 2,000 white Marines in the country for two decades. The light skin of resulting offspring suggested to many the possibility of a climb up the social ladder now that the most difficult rung had already been achieved. No figures are available on the number of children born in Haiti between 1915 and 1934 of white fathers, but it was a perceptible influx in the lower class. [554]

175 458 Haitian businessmen enjoyed a greater economic prosperity during the Occupation than they had ever known before. It is commonly

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to appoint, curés to the vacant parishes. His independence of action could not fail to give offense to Church authorities. One of his first appointees was a black ex-slave, Félix, who had been a drum major in the native army. Félix was made curé in the important town of Saint-Marc.

The constitution of his empire (May, 1805) indicates that Dessalines did not intend to make himself head of the Church, but rather planned a complete separation of Church and State. Article 50 reads: "The law admits no dominant religion"; while the next article grants freedom to all cults and refuses state support to any denomination or minister. No attack was made, therefore, upon Catholicism, yet the disestablishment of that Church was a serious blow to its prestige. Not in the specific provisions regarding religion was the Church most weakened, but rather in the "liberality" of articles dealing with actions upon which the Church had taken a firm moral stand. Thus Article 14 declared that "marriage is an act purely civil and authorized by the government," while Article 15 permits divorce by the state. Early laws of the empire still further undermined the position of Church doctrine. Illegitimate children were granted the same legal rights as legitimate ones—a generous provision which removed one of the strong reasons for marriage; separation of husband and wife except by divorce was forbidden, and this prohibition practically encouraged the divorce disapproved by the Church; finally, the grounds upon which divorce might be allowed were broader than those existing anywhere else in the Western World at the time: mutual consent, application from one party to the marriage, or simple allegation of incompatibility of temperament or character.

From the promulgation of this constitution in 1805 and for the next fifty-five years, Haiti was in open schism from the Roman Catholic Church. The Holy See refused to recognize either the Haitian state or the provisions of its constitution, and it declined to allow priests to enter the country. Certain Haitian presidents were friendly enough to Catholicism, and others were openly desirous of reestablishing a state religion, but the breach once made was not healed by mere good wishes. The longer the schism endured, the farther the people grew away from the doctrines and practices of a religion in which they had never been firmly grounded. At the moment of independence, when all minds were more open to new

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ideas than in later years, the habits of regular attention to religious duties might have been fixed; by 1860 it was too late. Religion existed during those years, but it was a strange gallimaufry of Catholicism and folk belief.

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On the whole, the rulers of young Haiti were tolerant of the Catholic Church even to the point of advancing its interests, in so far as these might benefit the state. Their pronouncements and actions, nevertheless, were not those of ardent personal believers. Pétion's constitution of the republic in 1806 once more established Catholicism as the official Church. What it gave with one hand, however, it took away with the other. Thus:

Art. 35. The Catholic, apostolic, and Roman religion being that of all Haitians, is the religion of the state. It and its ministers will be protected.

Art. 36. The law assigns to each minister of that religion the extent of his spiritual administration. These ministers may not, under any pretext, form a body within the state.

Art. 37. If in the course of time other religions are introduced, no person shall be hindered, so long as he conforms to the laws, in following the cult he has chosen.

The Catholic, then, is the state religion, but only because the Haitians have heretofore been nominal Catholics. It occupies a position of practical fact which it would lose if by the introduction of other cults Haitians should be drawn away from it. Its ministers will be carefully watched to see that they do not, as a group, try to exert political pressure. And what freedom of action is possible to a church whose ecclesiastical parishes can be limited or extended in size by the civil legislature?

Pétion no more fought religion than he fought any other conventional institution approved by civilized people; but he did little to foster it. He received certain Wesleyan missionaries with considerable hospitality, remarking that "education increases the dignity of mankind." He appeased the good Catholics by repealing the law concerning the rights of illegitimate children, substituting for it a more moderate French rule.[4] Likewise, he invited the Catholic Church to participate in the education of Haitian youth.

[848] [871]

[848] 4. The French practice allowed an illegitimate child recognized before a wedding equal rights of inheritance with legitimate offspring, while giving only quarter rights to a child recognized after marriage.

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Christophe had a great deal more to say about religion than any of the other early Haitian rulers. In a speech following the promulgation of his constitution, after severe censure of the government of Dessalines, he said:

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> It is necessary to raise again the dignity of religion, for weakened morals leave young people open to the licenses of their age. Liberty has been assailed by traitors, enemies of their fellow citizens, and sold to our cruelest enemies. It is assured to you now, have no doubt! Shortly you will see these vicious men and their criminal efforts vanish like clouds.
>
> Public education, after religion and liberty the most precious benefit mankind enjoys, will be reanimated and sustained by morality; it will again be held in honor and reverence amongst us. Divorce, that traitor among customs, is rigorously prohibited and proscribed forever.[5]

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Like Pétion, Christophe made the Catholic Church official, but he indicated the dictatorial path he intended to follow by adding that no ecclesiastical decree or law might become effective without the consent of the President.[6] He completely overturned the law of Dessalines concerning illegitimate children; his decree deprived such offspring of any claims of inheritance whatever.[7] In a country where practically no one had been legally married such a ruling was severe, but Christophe hoped that his severity would force his subjects into wedlock, and this the Catholic Church was bound to approve.

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Making the Church official did not strengthen its hold upon the people. In 1814 (seven years after he had promised "to raise again the dignity of religion") the kingdom was served by only three priests, one of whom Christophe had named archbishop. The King was preoccupied with form, and having created a nobility he needed a church to lend dignity to his realm. Consequently in 1811 he reorganized the clergy in his kingdom, establishing an archiepiscopal see and three bishoprics. The reorganization, except for the archbishop, remained a paper plan because the Pope refused to coöperate by giving the schismatic church his approval.

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All the early rulers seem to have been rather innocent in their dealings with Rome. They felt, apparently, that as heads of state they had but to express a desire in order to have His Holiness ap-

5. This speech, made on February 18, 1807, is cited in Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1848), II, 354–355.
6. See the law of March 18, 1807.
7. Law of March 25, 1807.

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175 178 64 slave system are not likely to assume it again; and the aristocrats, ever intent upon forgetting their African forebears, would certainly not turn to the Dark Continent for political inspiration.

175 642 701 643 Although the revolution had brought to the fore men of military experience and even genius, it had driven out or killed every single person of experience in civil government. The affranchis of the old régime had been denied political rights long before 1791; by 1804 few could have had any memory of active participation in government.[1] Toussaint was dead. The only authority of any significance was military. Consequently the new state was built upon army control and directed by army officers. Dessalines as commander in chief took the title of governor-general, later of emperor, but was in reality a military ruler. Fearful as he was of a new French invasion, he set his generals over the districts, organized his people as an army ready for immediate mobilization, and ruled as dictator.

175 642 This was all the Haitians had as political background: a military dictatorship. The Founding Fathers of Haiti, if so they might be called, had almost nothing to work with, nothing to build upon: neither a Magna Carta of the Blacks, nor any precedent of an independent Negro state anywhere in this white man's world; neither heritage of local responsibility and political debate to sow the seeds of democracy, nor any example of self-government in the American tropics to offer a pattern[2]—many of the known forms of government were a practical impossibility for the Haitians because of their need of continued defense against foreign enemies, their slave heritage, their inexperience in self-government, their complete lack of a middle class.

175 668 Hardly one tenth of the people in any case was capable of giving detailed thought to the form which government should take. The mass of ex-slaves had been fighting only *against* slavery, against the hated white rulers, not *for* democracy or any other abstraction. Their freedom achieved, they would not be the ones to make decisions. [642] All political choices would be made by the generals, by men of property and position, by the few whose persistent ambition made them stand out from the masses.

1. Such participation in French colonial politics would have been before the restrictive laws of 1771.

2. It must be recalled that Haiti was the second free country to be established in the Western Hemisphere, and that Liberia, in Africa, was still far in the future.

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Immediately a division of political opinion was evident, one which was to persist throughout the century. No one denied the inevitability in 1804 of making Dessalines the head of state: he was the victorious commander, clearly the most powerful man in Haiti. The division of opinion arose over the manner in which he should rule, whether as military dictator, or as a responsible president. Dessalines settled the matter peremptorily—if only for the time being—by asserting hir. self as a dictator. 175 643

The issue did not die with his decision, however, for it had deep roots. Supporting Dessalines wholeheartedly was the group of generals who were all Negroes, all ex-slaves, all practically illiterate. The three most influential of these blacks were Christophe, later to succeed his general; Chanlette, and Boisrond-Tonnère. Those who preferred a government in which the president shared power with a legislature of important men were, on the contrary, almost all affranchis of the old régime, therefore the most cultured and educated men in the country. Most of them were mulattoes or at least of a lighter complexion than the Negroes, although of course some blacks adhered to their position. The leaders of this group were Pétion, Boyer, Inginac, and Gérin. This division of opinion went back even into the decade preceding independence, when the island, free of slavery, was still technically under the rule of France, and the ex-slave Toussaint had to fight and conquer the mulatto leader Rigaud before he could establish his rule as dictator. 175 642 [643]

For a brief moment after independence, all differences were reconciled, since all had been united in a common cause against the enemy. Dessalines was then commanding in the Artibonite Valley, and Christophe in the North; two of Rigaud's former lieutenants, Pétion and Geffrard, commanded in the West and South. Apparently there was genuine respect among these men for each other. Dessalines, for example, with evident sincerity calls his colleague Pétion "that man of upright heart." The unity was short-lived, however. Not only was it evident that Dessalines meant to rule like an African despot-chief, taking advice only when he liked it; it was even more plain that through his cruelty, impetuosity, and crudeness he was bent on isolating Haiti from all contacts with the culture and polish of the outer world. Pétion and his group looked on with pained disgust as he indulged his violence against the whites who had hopefully remained in the country; the general's bloody procession throughout 175 643 642 66

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the land, leaving a trail of misery and death, was an augury of what to expect from a tyrant. They opposed his plan to destroy all coastal towns and move the people inland where, protected by their mountains, they would be immune to foreign attack and foreign ideas. They resented their loss of property by state expropriation, and could not fail to be shocked by the grim exultation of Boisrond-Tonnère: "To draw up the act of independence, we used the skin of a white man for parchment, his skull for an inkstand, his blood for ink, and a bayonet for pen!"[3]

Even without such cogent objections to Dessalines the mulattoes would have opposed his dictatorship, for as intellectuals and as social élite they wanted a real share in the government. For this they had agitated since before 1791, and it would be a grim irony if after fourteen years of intermittent conflict the successful expulsion of whites should be followed by a continued exclusion of mulattoes from the government. It would be a worse irony to throw off the white yoke only to take on a black one. When in 1805 Dessalines made himself emperor they asked for the creation of a nobility, thinking to share the rule with him; but the Emperor's curt "*Moi seul je suis noble*" dashed this hope. Although detailed proof is lacking, it is generally accepted in Haiti that the conspiracies against the Emperor's life began with this intransigent statement.

Here, then, was the issue which in half a dozen varying forms was to split political opinion for decades: rule by a single tyrant vs. rule by the cultured class. It even made two nations of one between the years 1806 and 1820.

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When Dessalines was assassinated, a Constituent Assembly was summoned to draw up a new constitution and select a new ruler. The mulattoes were in control of the Assembly which under Pétion's skilful guidance sat at the mulatto stronghold, Port-au-Prince, and there drew up a constitution assuring the limitation of the president's power by a Senate, and requiring election and reëlection of the president instead of permitting him life tenure. This achieved, the Assembly dutifully elected the black general Christophe president of Haiti. However, belonging as he did to Dessalines' school of thought —unrestricted rule by a strong man—he indignantly refused to be bound by such a constitution; when the Assembly, instead of yielding

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3. This statement is cited, with evident distaste, by Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 114.

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to his demands for revision and for his selection as president for life, retained the constitution they had written and chose Pétion president in his stead, the rupture was instant and complete. 175 642 [667]

Dictator as against restricted president, strong man as against class or group rule, Negro against mulatto, army against civil government, executive against legislature, North against South—these are the phases of the subsequent dichotomy in Haitian politics. 175 665

A good case can easily be made for the advocates of force in Haitian government, particularly in its early days. For years the majority of men had lost the habit of steady work on the land; a strong hand was needed to reëstablish in the countryside that economic order without which liberty shrivels. The people had become accustomed to taking orders from their military leaders, and these from their commanding officer. Those, moreover, were times of crisis, when France might suddenly descend again upon her former colony: few crises can be dealt with by debating societies. Looking back on the course of Haitian history, one may point out also that the country prospered under the dictatorships of Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe as it never did under the limited presidencies.[4] 175 642 433 656

In 1806, therefore, the aristocratic party got its wish, although only at the price of splitting the country in two. They established a government with a president of their own and a Senate filled with their representatives. The earliest legislation naturally enough favored their own landholding group. When prosperity did not result, Pétion began to recommend to the Senate a division of the land. More and more, although the representative form was preserved, Pétion ruled as a dictator. He was mild enough not to arouse antagonism; as is always the case when freedom of speech is curbed and summary legislation required, the plea of crisis was used to justify extraordinary measures. 175 642 665 646 643

The legislative party was firmly in the saddle by 1820 when Boyer reunited North and South, and shared his power with the Senate. 175 642 643

4. The argument for dictatorship is familiar to the modern world. A defense of "totalitarianism," published in 1816 by authority of Christophe (then King Henry I), is amusingly like certain European utterances of the nineteen-thirties: "The King has the sweet satisfaction of seeing that the cultivators [who were forced to work on the land whether they wanted to or not], being everywhere regularly paid [though the sum might be tiny], are praising the freedom they enjoy." And again: "Hayti chose a kingdom in order to shun forever that chaos, that confusion and perpetual clashing, which result from those monstrous associations known under the name of *popular bodies*." Anon., *Haytian Papers* (1816), pp. 109, 113. [829]

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175 642 643 Since he was president for twenty-five years (normal ones, as things go in Haiti), it is worth while to examine the functioning of the kind of government the upper class favored.

175 642 643 692 President Boyer's education and outlook were wholly French. He had formed his views of government principally upon French models, yet when he became head of state he could not forget his own military career. He said repeatedly that he wished to supersede the military by the civil power, but somehow never got around to it. The country was full of black generals, and it would have been difficult to retire them, primarily because they were black. He established courts to insure the rights of man, but since his newborn judiciary lacked the prestige to command respect, interpretation of the law came from the President—until before long he was himself the law. With a logic characteristic of the French, he tried to make the whole administration of the country orderly and tidy by codifying laws, laying out spheres of governmental departments, and properly ticketing matters in general. He had to be the sole judge of the intention and operation of statutes, however, and if necessary modify the nature of an act to suit his view of the public need. His honest and generally upright character perhaps made his enormous prerogatives conducive to the public good; but Boyer was a dictator in spite of his Senate, since when he found a law working badly he simply turned it from its normal course and gave it a quite contrary effect.

[646] [661] As the years of his long rule proceeded, he took more power to himself. When his Senate would not pass bills as he proposed them, he waited until they adjourned and then either neglected to execute their laws, or instructed the government printing office to change the wording. He clearly regarded the legislature as a necessary nuisance, to be kept as a sop to the élite and to preserve the appearance of republicanism before the world. Representatives from the various communes were recommended by the President, his nomination amounting almost always to election.[5]

900 Boyer was overthrown by the Revolution of 1843, by all odds the

[643] 5. The task of governing the whole island was obviously heavier than governing a fraction of it, so Boyer may have felt justified in his departures from strict constitutionality. He was always an indefatigable worker, whose intentions were uniformly laudable. He tried to rule alone, as had his illustrious predecessors. The hitch came because he was not of their calibre. He was worthy, virtuous—and mediocre. He would probably have made an excellent mayor of a French provincial town.

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Boyer was overthrown by the Revolution of 1843, by all odds the

most important of Haitian upheavals. Since its effects were to be felt for the next seventy years in the extinction of representative government and the eclipse of the élite as political rulers, it is worthy of special attention. Paradoxically, it was a revolution fomented by the élite themselves. Its background and outcome reveal the power in word, and the impotence in deed, of this group by 1843. 175 669

The constitution of 1816, devised by Pétion's henchmen, had granted the president initiative in all laws except those concerning taxation. After the agreement of 1825 with France,[6] however, Boyer, hard pressed by the need of paying the indemnity each year, began to restrict the number of officials, diminish their salaries, and veto all projects favorable to the development of public instruction and improvement which might cause further expenditure. By temperament he was an autocrat.[7] Every valuable measure must come from him alone; whatever another person proposed he would find a thousand reasons to discard. Sarcastic and vain, he did not know how to smooth ruffled feelings or make conflicting groups reconcile their differences. His personal weaknesses of character alienated the sympathies of many once-devoted officials. 175 642 643 652 661

During his long presidency Boyer also systematically ignored the younger generation, men who admired the efforts of Pétion, ardent reformers who wished to devote their energies to the improvement of Haiti. The military career had no attraction for them: the higher ranks, alone bringing sufficient salary for a congenial way of life, were too few and one could achieve them only with difficulty, for since 1825 advancement had been submitted to rigorous rules. On the other hand, the paths of administration were severely guarded by those admirable great functionaries left over from the government of Pétion—men like Inginac and Imbert. But age had slowed their activity, and still Boyer kept them on. The younger generation mocked this "gerontocracy" and supported the parliamentary opposition. 175 643 665

The youth of the élite class continued to go to France for their education, returning to Haiti to take part in the lively political discussions which made one of their chief occupations. During the first decade of Boyer's administration they generally supported him, for 175 665 871 664

6. By which France recognized the independence of Haiti in return for the payment of a large annual indemnity.

7. "In everything, he wishes to dominate," Pétion had said of him.

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175 he seemed to be leading the country to progressive action; about
665 1830, however, a group better educated and more ambitious than
664 their predecessors arose. Nourished on ideas acquired in France, they
871 were shocked on their return by the miseries and governmental inaction which prevailed in Haiti. True, when Boyer pressed them to suggest constructive measures of reform they had little to suggest. Like many other critics they were better at tearing down than at building up.

175 By the constitution of 1816 they had the right of free speech and
642 press, and made use of it to publish journals of criticism—*Le Phare, Le Télégraphe, La Feuille de Commerce*. Their sustained criticism kept
204 alive the parliamentary opposition and gave it a focus; they were at
208 least partially responsible for the Revolution of 1843. In spite of their
665 diatribes, Boyer did not suppress these newspapers. If he had done so it is possible the Revolution might have come sooner. Not every dictator-president would permit such boldness as the following paragraph which appeared in 1843 in *Le Patriote*, an adversary of Boyer's own journal *Le Temps:*

> Let one look well at the things which are happening among us and then say whether, considering our first steps along the path, our progress has not been constantly slowed up now for some time, and whether this does not lead to a state of things in our country in which the most vital part of our civilization is struck by an immobility, almost a paralysis. Haiti is stationary, is retrograde: we need no other proof of it than this frightful uncertainty about the future which so deeply disturbs all serious minds and sincere patriots.

175 In 1838 Hérard Dumesle, president of the Chamber and a leader of
665 the opposition, drew up and secured the passage of an "Address to
646 the President of the Republic," which expressed certain just ideas of
643 progress and pointed out that failure to achieve it was due to the mistakes of the administration. It was a bitterly critical and some-
664 times passionate document. Boyer was intensely angry and proceeded to violate the constitution: relying on the majority always at his disposal in the Chamber, he excluded from among the deputies those most hostile to his government.[8] But at the election of 1842 the communes of Les Cayes, Aquin, and Jérémie reëlected the expelled representatives, so confirming their criticism of the President.

8. Hérard Dumesle, Laudun, Lartigue, and David Saint-Preux.

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175 669 ary, 1843, Boyer realized that it was futile to oppose the revolution-
[643] [159] aries and departed for exile, going by way of Jamaica to Paris.

Now came the test of the revolutionary leaders.[11] The state was in their hands; their own representative, Rivière Hérard, was the new 175 president. They proceeded to concoct a ridiculously naïve constitution which by granting a popular vote alienated large bodies of their 648 mulatto support; to insult the black army leaders; and to allow the 669 defeat of Haitian forces by Dominican revolutionaries, thus losing two thirds of the island's area. Every act weakened the party favoring representative government. Within a year Rivière was ousted and a black general was ruling Haiti with a rod of iron. The Revolution of 1843 from which so much was expected had by its very success ruined the parliamentarians, for with power in their hands they showed themselves utterly inept.

175 A succession of black generals now came to the presidency. When 642 Faustin Soulouque became president in 1847, the fourth Negro within four years, and made himself emperor two years later, Haiti 643 found herself once more back at the strong-man principle. The élite were out of office, relegated to inferiority in all phases of political life.

175 In the middle of the nineteenth century the groups upholding the conflicting principles in politics became organized political parties. 665 Those favoring parliamentary rule called themselves Liberals; those 565 believing in the sole rule of a strong dictator were called Nationalists. But by no stretch of the imagination could the Liberal party be considered democratic. The noble principles expressed in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the American Declaration of Independence were uncongenial to Haiti. One of the prime tenets of the Liberals, indeed, was that men were not created equal; rather that certain men (the élite) were clearly the superiors of others. Liberty

[175] [669] 11. The revolution was almost wholly an affair of the élite caste. The mulatto Boyer was deposed, and the mulatto Rivière Hérard took his place. If anyone thought of the peasants, it was only to use them to manipulate and manoeuvre the "outs" into office. Boyer's secretary-general, deposed along with the President, appealed to his countrymen against their accusation of treason against him, saying "My last wishes will be for the prosperity of Haiti and the regeneration of the African caste, to which I have consecrated myself wholeheartedly for forty years, without ever thinking of my own interests." (Joseph Balthasar Inginac, *Message à ses compatriotes, et principalement à ceux qui ont dirigé les affaires populaires de la république depuis la fin de janvier dernier* [Port-au-Prince, March 18, 1843], p. 6). Yet if these are more than hopeful words, they refer only to the distribution of the land which made peasants of the "African caste," and to Inginac's pamphlets on how to raise coffee and other products—which none of the peasants could read.

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Pétion and Boyer had

175 suavity enough to rule constitutionally with a Senate which, since
643 class interests were being served by the executive, did not curb their
646 virtual dictatorships. Later presidents had more difficulty. Geffrard,
642 for example, elected as a Liberal after the fall of Soulouque's grim empire, had made parliamentary government a battle cry of his campaign. In office, however, he was continually at loggerheads
[669] with his Senate, until he exercised his presidential privilege of dissolving it; in the end a revolution overthrew the Liberal parliamentarian because he had become a dictator. So with his successor Salnave (1867–69), likewise a Liberal, who almost immediately upon inauguration found it impossible to work with such a group of talkers. So once more with Nissage-Saget (1870–74), who followed Salnave: a professed believer in legislative responsibility, he refused to yield to the legislature on any important matter. A black Nationalist succeeded for two years, ruling despotically. Then came the last of the Liberal presidents, Boisrond-Canal (1876–79). This man was apparently determined to allow his legislature its full constitutional rights. As a result Haiti had more talk in the capital, and less action, than in almost any régime up to that time; then, as Montague says, "convinced that the constitutional régime was a failure, Haiti's most scrupulous president resigned in disgust."[13]

175 The Liberal party virtually disappeared from the scene in 1883,
665 after two abortive coups by their leader of the moment, Boyer
669 Bazelais. The first occurred in 1879 when the retiring President,
[666] Boisrond-Canal, gave Haiti one of her very rare honest elections, resulting in the choice of the Nationalist candidate Salomon. Bazelais and his men forsook their professed principles, rising in arms to seize power. They were suppressed. Four years later when the moment again seemed auspicious Bazelais led another revolution, which the President so effectively crushed that the leader himself was killed. The leaderless Liberals were no longer effective competitors in presidential politics. From that time until the American Occupation, the élite were out of power. One president only during those thirty-five years was a mulatto: Tancrède Auguste, one of the weakest rulers in Haitian history. He died, presumably poisoned, after eight months of office.

100 The era from 1883 to 1915 was Haiti's worst, politically. Revo-

13. Ludwell L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938* (Durham, 1940), p. 18.

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The era from 1883 to 1915 was Haiti's worst, politically. Revo-

lution succeeded revolution; the country sank deep into graft and scandal; foreign powers made Haiti debase herself before them. Some of the élite, backed by foreign merchants resident in the country, went so far as to urge annexation by the United States rather than endure continued disorder in economics and degradation in social life. They felt matters had come to such a pass that only so radical a change could clean the Augean stables. This was the period of a succession of political pamphlets[14] written by élite thinkers to set forth the necessary steps of reform. Every president was a black autocrat, holding power by his control over the masses. If an occasional one was more than mediocre (Hyppolite, for example), his good qualities were sure to be more than offset by the ignorant boors (such as Nord Alexis) who followed him.

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True, even the most incompetent of the Negro presidents was obliged to employ a few élite, for literacy was necessary in the foreign office if nowhere else. The aristocrats were impotent, however, for Haitian problems had tremendously increased at the very period when they were losing control of government policy. Reforms were imperative, as every member of the élite knew; but no black president saw the need, or seeing it, had the vaguest idea how to proceed toward effecting them. Beyond the shameful disgrace of Haiti's position in the world of independent nations, the thoughtful could glimpse the anarchy which must inevitably result from continued ineffectiveness.

175 643 645 565 [648]

Reforms were not forthcoming. Rather, anarchy came, bringing international complications in its wake. The American Marines occupied the country. An era was ended.

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It had been a strange journey in political ideas from the time of Pétion and Christophe to that of the Occupation. The early leaders seemed to envision triumphs for Haiti in a world of great powers, and to see themselves as men with a mission. After Boyer the vision dimmed. We have Soulouque, whose tinsel empire was mere stage setting for the act of a neighborhood bully; the tyrant Domingue; the senile Nord Alexis; the utterly incompetent fly-by-nights in the decade before the Occupation. Even Geffrard the reformer, prob-

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14. Among the most lucid of these were: Démesvar Delorme, *La Misère au sein des richesses* (1873); Edmond Paul, *Les Causes de nos malheurs* (1889); Léonidas Laventure, *Haïti: le danger de la patrie* (1893); Alcius Charmant, *Haïti, vivra-t-elle?* (1905); and Auguste Magloire, *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social* (1909).

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175 665 208 648 whites patrolling the streets seems to have given reality to criticism which before then would have been academic. The élite were back again in the political forum. Unreflecting patriotism urged the immediate withdrawal of the Marines, but a considerable number of the legislature saw that it would be years before they left. The problem, then, they saw variously: some wished to be eloquent spokesmen for the patriotic anti-whites and did their best to embarrass the Occupation; some, feeling that the Americans were benefiting the country, tried to make things move smoothly; while others, seeing a fertile field for gain, tried to ingratiate themselves with the American authorities.

175 643 642 648 662 The twenty years between 1915 and 1934 heard many eloquent, impassioned speeches, not all of them coming to the same conclusions. The élite were divided in most issues raised by the Occupation, so that the old neat dichotomy between élite and army no longer prevailed. The President, Dartiguenave (1915–22), was for the first time since 1879 a Southerner and a mulatto; yet in 1922 when he was a candidate for reëlection it was Southern élite votes which defeated him. Executive, legislature, and judiciary all had just enough power under the Occupation to make subtle manoeuvres, and all three branches of the government displayed a real genius for the political game. They often succeeded in putting the onus of an unpopular act upon the Americans, and in taking the credit for popular measures with which they had had little to do. They prodded and pricked all the weaknesses in the logic of the American State Department. They forced numerous concessions. If at times they seem to have been overclever, playing the game of politics merely for an opportunity to display their skill, at other times many of them showed a deep understanding of realities which had to be faced.

175 648 666 642 The Occupation, ordered by that high prophet of democracy, Woodrow Wilson, professed its determination to give Haiti her first opportunity to be democratic. Yet the Marines really dictated the choice both of Dartiguenave in 1915 and of Borno in 1922 and 1926. The constitution of 1918 was prepared in Washington; it was submitted to a plebiscite, but the farcical vote—69,337 for and 335 against—was clearly the result of electioneering by the Marines. The presidents of Haiti ruled with executive councils, subject to Ameri-

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can "advice and approval," rather than with the legislature subject to popular control. Even under such restrictions the politically minded found ways of exerting pressure on the Marine authorities. 175 648 666

Out of the darkest days of military subjection by a foreign power came a changed order of politics in the country. The practically unbroken line of dull incompetents who had come into the presidency ended; instead of ignorant army leaders, educated men were once more in office; instead of Northern Negroes, élites of Port-au-Prince; instead of benighted martinets bewildered by world affairs, men who, if not great statesmen, at least had minds capable of understanding Haiti's relation to international economics and politics. 642 175 643

The élite were back in power. In the mind of every friend of Haiti arose the question whether the events between 1879 and 1915 had taught them lessons which would make their return to responsibility productive of great things for the country. Because of the abnormal situation resulting from the Occupation, the world depression, and the briefness of their new ascendancy, one cannot yet speak with assurance. Nevertheless, there are few encouraging signs. Political office is still regarded by most candidates in terms of their own advancement rather than service to Haiti. Very little has been done to extend the base of voting by developing local responsibility and education among the masses. Élite youths still receive a classical education, still disdain manual labor, still cherish the ideal of a graceful life of ease. The president still rules as an autocrat supported by the gendarmerie—substitute for the army of former days. One can see no decrease in social distinctions or in the disdain of the élite for peasant people; on the contrary, there has even been an increase of this feeling because the Occupation (through its Agricultural Service particularly) seemed to open paths of development to the peasants. Social antagonism, not social responsibility, still underlies political life.[20] 175 642 [661] [666] [565] [643] [565]

To every one of these strictures there is a plausible reply. It is no light matter to unsettle the minds of nine tenths of a population by education, to cause an economic revolution by improving agricultural techniques, to admit to political life a people unaccustomed to 178 65

20. Dr. Jean Price-Mars, in *La Vocation de l'élite* (Port-au-Prince, 1919), *passim*, especially pp. 51 ff., urges the élite to accept their responsibilities rather than rest upon the debilitating assurance of their innate superiority. [114] [565]

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178 it. Moreover, the Haitian budget is in the neighborhood of seven
65 million dollars, for which sum not much in the way of great improvement for three million people can be expected. The task of regenerating Haiti calls for self-sacrificing genius—at present the élite hardly qualify either as self-denying servants of the public or as geniuses.

175 Haitian affairs during the 1930's were under the direction of
643 President Sténio Vincent, an able man to whose credit much can be
642 said. He devoted himself to his task with assiduity, talking face to
648 face with the peasants in Créole, urging them to assist in reforestation
241 and to use wisdom in crop rotation. He settled serious disputes with the neighboring Dominican Republic in amicable fashion. It was he who carried on the delicate and successful negotiations with President Roosevelt to give Haiti control of her own affairs once more. In coffee culture, assistance to trade, financial matters, and other economic details, he often proceeded expertly, particularly in view of the world depression which began as he assumed office. On the other hand, Vincent made the legislature his servant rather than a partner. He was a dictator (fortunately a benevolent one) who changed the constitution by highhanded methods in order to gain his own reëlection. His régime rested upon his alliance with the efficient Garde d'Haïti. There were few signs of democracy or of respect for civil liberties, as Americans understand those terms, in Vincent's eleven years.

175 The spectator has a feeling that he has seen all this before, when
643 for example Geffrard was elected to assure parliamentary government, only to become an effectively benevolent dictator as soon as the legislature opposed him. Geffrard was on the whole a good president, as Vincent was; but the former did not succeed in setting Haiti upon the path of economic and social security, and one hardly dared expect it of his modern counterpart.

175 In April, 1941, Élie Lescot, former Haitian Minister to the United
643 States, was elected as the thirtieth president of the republic. Vincent
648 had refused to call a plebiscite to approve an extension of his presidential term for an additional five years, as he had done in 1935 near the end of the six-year term to which he was elected in 1930. Lescot had begun his presidency with many advantages, chiefly the friendly support of his predecessor, his acquaintance with United States officials, and a recent negotiated pact by which American aid will

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be given to Haiti for vast rubber plantings.[11] Opposition to Lescot comes chiefly from those who consider him too friendly with the Dominicans who killed hundreds of Haitian workers in 1937. Lescot having figured prominently in negotiations that led to the Dominican government's agreement to pay indemnities to Haiti for the slaughter.

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Reviewing the whole course of Haitian history, the field of politics seems to have marshaled itself behind a few regularities. In every case there have been voices raised to protest, yet the ruling clique, whatever its grouping, has effectively supported these characteristic political customs:

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1. Complete dominance of political life by the president. Strong men seem to be necessary to rule ignorant masses. Even the revolutions precipitated by parties campaigning for parliamentarianism have, when successful, become governments by the president. This concentration of power in one man's hands makes the next revolution possible, for it is easier to overthrow one man than to eliminate a party based upon wide suffrage and diffused responsibility.

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2. The inferior position of cabinet ministers. These have resembled neither European nor American secretaries of state in their responsibilities, but have been little more than clerks appointed by the president to serve as heads of a bureau. The treasurer-general, for example, during most of Haiti's history has merely received the moneys, while the president disbursed them. The secretary-general has neither originated nor conducted the details of public policy. Often as not, the minister has made a convenient whipping boy when the president has got himself involved in internal or foreign complications: by demanding the minister's resignation the president remained unscathed.

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3. The unimportance of the legislature. It has made useful patron-

11. The European War, threatening the supply of rubber coming to the United States from British Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies, has made the American government seek new sources. The Department of Agriculture established an experimental station and breeding gardens for rubber plants in Haiti, and the results were so successful that extensive areas were planted with rubber trees. Haiti and the United States in May, 1941, reached a long-term agreement for "the development of agriculture and economy"; the projects embraced under the agreement include not only rubber but the further development of Haiti's banana plantations, the planting of oil crops, drug plants, spices, fiber plants, the stimulation of handicraft industries, and the development of forestry resources peculiar to the tropics. A further extension of an additional $500,000 in credits will be made for use on highways, irrigation projects, and to provide transportation facilities for the areas to be planted to rubber trees.

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3. The unimportance of the legislature. It

 has made useful patron

646 age for the president to dispense, and has preserved the semblance of
642 republican government; but hardly half a dozen legislative sessions in all Haitian history have contributed seminal ideas in politics or initiated true reforms. How could they, indeed, when the president was consistently a dictator of policy?

666 4. The undemocratic nature of the vote. Senators are chosen by
642 the representatives, and the two groups together have generally elected the president, when he did not come to power by revolution. The only chance people have had to vote has been for local officials and representatives. In these cases, the vote has been limited to the élite and the army, with the president's henchmen counting the ballots. Since the Occupation there have been plebiscites on constitutional changes, the people having the right to vote Yes or No.

692 5. The subservience of the courts to the president. They have been
643 filled with president's men, generally astute enough to consult presi-
642 dential wishes before handing down a decision. Foreign merchants soon learned that they could expect little "justice" from the courts if their own cause conflicted with special Haitian interests. Foreign diplomats likewise learned that in crises the courts could involve the simplest issue in such verbal complexity that months of patience would be necessary to unwind the red tape.

644 6. The pliability of "constitutional rights." Freedom of speech and
661 of the press has been notably lacking, although scurrilous attacks on the administration's enemies have often been permitted. Legislators
642 have been expelled. Graft has flourished. In 1833, for example, two representatives were expelled from the House "for systematically opposing the measures of the executive, and persisting in a demand for a statement of public expenditures." A century later a senator was expelled for almost the same reasons.

701 7. Militarism. Only in this respect is any real change apparent since
178 the American Occupation. The army was always large up to 1915, and so constituted an economic drain as well as a political menace.
642 Generals had great power: they ruled each department and each
669 arrondissement, were subject only to the president, and were at the bottom of every revolutionary movement.[22] Since the Occupation

[162] [701] 22. In 1842, when the population was still less than 1 million, there were in the district governments 9 generals, 63 colonels, 48 lieutenant colonels, 9 captains, 1 lieutenant, and 28 medical officers; and in the standing army 33 colonels, 95 lieutenant colonels, 825 captains, 654 lieutenants, 577 sublieutenants and ensigns, 6,815 noncommissioned officers, and 25 medical officers. The army had 28,000 soldiers and cost about $600,000 a year. See John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 86 ff.

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numbers in the army have been radically reduced; yet in that very fact there is the possibility for the only armed persons in Haiti, the present Garde d'Haïti, to effect political coups. But at least the budget is not strained by the salaries of thousands of unnecessary soldiers, as was true in pre-Occupation days.

8. The separation of the masses from government. By providing a minimum of local government, but that fairly effective, the national government has been able to keep the peasants out of all but revolutionary politics. Rural communities have ordinarily got along well enough without formal government, so that the history of Haitian political thought and the analysis of Haitian political forms would treat of affairs interesting to only a fraction of the population.

It need hardly be repeated, after a reflection upon these apparent permanencies of political life, that Haiti is not a democracy.

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exceeding the jurisdiction of the local juges, these juries to be named by the doyen and his colleagues. It was a dubious reform, often a worthless privilege; at times it was definitely harmful, for no matter how explicit the law, mere technicalities in a long, involved trial could be completely befuddling to an illiterate juror. Brown tells the tale of a certain foreman of the jury who asked a juror his opinion of a defendant's innocence; the juror replied that he could not write, whereas "you have written it all down. Let us know what you have done."[3] Innocence might easily be convicted by this system, and guilt escape. The addition of a jury to the court was even useless in many instances, for the language of the lawyers was French, and that of the jurors almost certain to be Créole. Boyer's attempt to graft English court practice upon the French system already functioning in Haiti was certainly not happy; the jury system shortly disappeared.

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Complicated forms are not for the peasant. He knew a soldier and a soldier's function in the countryside, but not the relation of the arrondissement to the national government; the juge de paix was understandable, but not the procedure of the civil courts at department capitals. The national government and its structure were remote, although the president's name might be familiar. Haiti was really organized from the top down rather than from the bottom up. The powers of the early presidents were arbitrary: they could not only order changes in the framework of any part of government, but might also shift at will the personnel.

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Carl Becker remarks: "In 1791, the French began their spectacular feat in constitution making. Between 1791 and 1875 Taine counts thirteen French constitutions adopted in relatively rapid succession. I can find only twelve, but maybe Taine is right. It doesn't really matter. The point is that for facility, speed, and endurance in constitution making, France holds the record. Yet other nations also ran."[4] Haiti was one of them: in fact the record is properly hers, although Professor Becker does not mention the little Caribbean state. In the nineteenth century Haiti lived under fifteen constitutions, to which she has added at least two more in the twentieth century. It is not always easy to say when a constitution is new: its author may

3. Jonathan Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, II, 271–272.
4. "Afterthoughts on Constitutions," *The Yale Review*, XXVII, No. 3 (Spring, 1938), 452.

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114 consider it novel when it changes little but detail; and some of Haiti's
175 seventeen documents were too short-lived to be significant. Haiti
642 shows her Frenchness in this constitution making, this love of being
171 logical and having the details all written down in proper order.

To try to analyze the content of so many documents would be a
175 work of supererogation.[5] A brief comment upon each, however, will improve one's acquaintance with the mind of Haitian statesmen.

175 1801. Toussaint L'Ouverture's constitution, laying the framework
642 of his venture as director of the colony while still acknowledging its
466 relationship to France. In it he announced himself governor-general for life with the right to name his successor, thereby becoming the forerunner of the strong-man principle in politics. The most important part of this constitution was its detailed organization of the forced-labor system.

175 1805. Dessalines' constitution establishing the empire. In many
642 respects it did not differ from Toussaint's previous document, for the same military organization was preserved, and the same system of
563 forced labor; otherwise, there was little structure of government. One article was included which was to appear in every other constitution of Haiti up to 1918: "No white man shall set foot on this territory as master or as landowner."[6] In other respects there were sagacious provisions which did not endure. For example, the generic name of "blacks" was adopted for all Haitians, of whatever color.
175 The Emperor was trying thus to forestall the dissensions which
642 inevitably must result from the growth of social classes based on skin
[463] color. Another important provision was that every citizen who was not an ordinary cultivator must learn and practice some mechanical art. This was not merely a thrust at the aristocratic pretensions of the old affranchis, but also an endeavor to make Haiti industrious and self-sufficient. Except in the North, where Dessalines' deputy Christophe kept the requirement, the article was honored only in the breach. The social situation was touched at one other point: "No one is worthy of being a Haitian who is not a good father, a good
[428] son, a good husband, and a good soldier." Parents were forbidden to disinherit their children. Although, as has been shown, the Emperor

5. Such an analysis was made by Louis-Joseph Janvier, *Les Constitutions d'Haïti, 1801–85* (Paris, 1886).

6. He had made this declaration first on April 28, 1804; at that time the words "No white man" read "No colonist nor European."

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175 put little stress upon strictly legal marriage, he did try to foster
642 family ties and to strengthen family life.

1806. Pétion's first constitution, drawn up with his fellow mulattoes. Taking his model from the United States constitution, he [643] established a republic with a president and a legislature, although the president of Haiti had greater relative powers than the president of the United States. He might be reëlected, but was not to be a dictator.

1807. Christophe's reply to the mulattoes, establishing the "state" of Haiti which should (he hoped) overwhelm the "republic" of Haiti. His political and social systems were in few respects different from those of Toussaint and Dessalines.

1811. Christophe's second constitution, establishing his kingdom and creating a nobility, but otherwise maintaining the forced-labor system.

1816. Pétion's second constitution, the longest-lived in Haitian history. Having been several times reëlected president he now adopted the principle of a life presidency, with the right of the incumbent to name his successor. The legislature and forms of a representative republic were retained.

1843. The completely unrealistic constitution of the young revolutionaries who succeeded in overthrowing Boyer. The fight of the anti-Boyeristes had been for effective parliamentary government; to that end they provided for the direct election of the president by the people, a democratic vote, the exercise of legislative power by the Chamber of Representatives and the Senate, and the subordination of military to civil authority. Such democracy was too radical for either élite or army to endure, and this constitution was shortly superseded.

1846. Riché's return (in most respects) to the constitution of 1816. He kept the principle that the president should be elected, not appointed for life by his predecessor; but the election was by the combined Senate and Chamber, rather than by democratic vote of the people.

1849. Soulouque's constitution, founding his personal and gaudy Second Empire.

1859. Geffrard's return to the Pétion constitution of 1816, as revised by Riché in 1846, with a few details added to meet changes in social conditions in the last decade.

1867. Salnave's modifications of the constitution of 1859. The parliamentarians were in control once more, and inserted the require-

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175 ment that two thirds of the members of either Chamber must be
● 642 present before a law could be voted—a stipulation making it possible
[646] for any clique to hold up legislation by absenting itself.

1874. The constitution of Domingue who, having defeated the
[643] Liberals, promulgated a constitution "profoundly modifying" the language of the 1867 document. It legally concentrated power in the hands of the president—where, indeed, it had always been in spite of constitutional declarations.

1879. Salomon's first constitution, which professed to be a re-examination of Haitian institutions, but was actually not different in essentials from the document of 1846. The line from Pétion to Riché to Salomon and his successors was the main one from which deviations, such as those of Soulouque, occurred.

1886. Salomon's second constitution, a mild revision of his first.

1889. Hyppolite, the new president, felt it necessary to have a new
[178] constitution, although like the constitution of 1886 this was little more than a revision of that of 1879. Under the 1889 document Haiti continued to function, more and more haltingly, up to the time of the American Occupation.

[648] 1918. The constitution drawn up in Washington[7] and forced through in Haiti by a farcical plebiscite. Its most debated provision
[423] was the elimination of the prohibition against ownership of land by foreign whites, thus ending the one common point in all previous constitutions since 1805. For the rest, it changed little of the actual
[641] structure of Haitian government, but provided a great number of unaccustomed democratic rights: freedom of assembly, trial by jury in political cases, direct election of senators, submission of amendments to popular vote, freedom of the press.

1927. Although this is considered merely a revision of the 1918
[641] constitution, its changes were actually more noteworthy than many expected by the so-called new constitutions. Thirteen amendments were carried by popular vote, again so overwhelming as to be ridiculous, restricting many of the democratic liberties granted in 1918 which had proved embarrassing both to President Borno and

7. Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his campaign for the vice-presidency of the United States in 1920, claimed that he had written most of this constitution while he was Woodrow Wilson's assistant-secretary of the navy. (See the *New York Times*, August 19, 1920.) The constitution was approved in Haiti by a vote of 69,337 to 335.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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to the Americans who ruled Haiti through his office. This constitution once more increased the power of the president. 642 [641]

1932. Vincent's constitution, professing to be quite different from the two in effect during the Occupation, but actually closely resembling the 1927 revision with its concentration of power in executive hands. In 1935 an important amendment was added, making it possible for the president to be reëlected. [643]

Despite this welter of constitutions, the essential framework of Haitian government has consisted, except for brief interruptions, of a president, a legislature, and courts. The term of the presidency has varied from four to seven years (in the early days, for life) with the privilege of reëlection being now forbidden, now granted. Two presidents who tried to extend their terms, Salnave and Salomon, were deposed by revolutions for their temerity. Their distinction of being among the few to serve out the allotted term was thus marred by an ignominious end. 642 643

Regularly the president was obligated to "maintain internal peace" —a requirement few heads of state have been able to carry out, since internal peace has been most elusive. To aid him in his task he has been given wide powers: he commands the army (always large until 1915; every president except one between 1804 and 1915 was a general) and the navy (never more than a few ill-conditioned vessels, but these important in the general roadless condition of the country); most constitutions also gave him the right to issue necessary proclamations in order to deal with special crises. He "watches over" tribunals by means of appointed commissioners; by this arrangement he may obviously exert pressure for favorable judgments in cases which interest him. 643 [701] [706] [716] [792]

The one body which might conceivably check the president, namely, the legislature, has generally been composed of the president's men, for the Senate has usually been elected by the lower house from a list of candidates proposed by the president, while the representatives would hardly dare defy the man who controlled the army (which presided over such elections) and could dissolve the legislature. By most of the constitutions the president proposed to the legislature all laws except those concerning taxation; even here, since he directed the receipt and issue of public moneys, he was not really limited. Over foreign affairs the executive had effective control by 643 [646] [646]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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not find herself constantly embroiled with European states and American financial interests. The Haitian debt was funded, and a financial adviser remained in the country even after the Occupation came to an end. It is expected that by 1943 the last debt will be paid; the financial adviser, however, withdrew in 1941. Since the Occupation, although the republic has been free to manage her own affairs, she has consulted frequently with the State Department in Washington.

Nineteen years of occupation ended the century of Haitian isolation. The Americans built roads, conducted health campaigns, made their presence felt even in remote hamlets and valleys. American authors, political, romantic, and sensational, discovered the Antillean republic. Steamship companies stopped their cruises for a few hours at Cap-Haïtien to allow tourists to visit the Citadel, and at Port-au-Prince to see the sights of the capital. Every Haitian now realizes that there is a world outside.

Whatever crises have arisen in Haitian affairs, certain problems have persisted. For whom do they constitute a source of worry? Since the government has always been a dictatorship, limited or absolute, subject to no party control, the incumbents of office have never had the experience of being constantly reminded by their opponents of the misery or daily worries of the population. After a hundred years the people have learned that relief is not to be expected from politicians. Occasionally a dramatic revolutionary leader has persuaded some of the people that the officials in power were responsible for their distress, and so worked up a following; yet even when such movements succeeded, the masses never benefited. To most governments of the past century Haiti's problem has been only one: to frustrate insurrection. There is evidence that recent administrations have busied themselves assiduously with the country's internal problems, although none of them has been adequately solved. The élite, at least as a group, do not feel any apparent responsibility for the maladjustments, nor obligation to effect the necessary reforms. A few patriots, and those almost without exception not in office, know what ails the country and say so; a smaller number propose reasonable solutions. The problems remain. Of these the three outstanding are overpopulation with all its accompanying ills, health, and education.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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[p. 315]

NOTES

CHAPTER II

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The period between 1789 and 1803 may be summarized as follows:

1789–1791. Struggle for precedence between whites and free colored people, with the balance in favor of the whites. [565]

1791–1793. The slave insurrection, with consequent anarchy, and futile attempts of French commissioners to restore order. Both whites and colored people pushed into the background. [669] [563]

1793–1796. Invasion of the colony by English and Spanish; rise of the mulatto general Rigaud and the black general Toussaint. [648]

1796–1799. Consolidation of power by Toussaint; defeat and expulsion of Rigaud; emigration of whites. [643]

1799–1802. Toussaint in full power as governor-general.

1802–1803. Leclerc's expedition, with its initial successes and ultimate failure. Final achievement of Haitian independence under Dessalines and Christophe. [642]

PART III

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Various efforts were made by American abolitionists working with Haitian presidents to colonize freed American Negro slaves in Haiti in the period before the Civil War.[1] All these projects came to unfortunate ends, some even to grimly tragic ones. During Boyer's time about 13,000 American Negroes went to Haiti, the government assigning to each family a portion of land upon its arrival. Very shortly most of those who could afford it returned to this country, and within ten years hardly one was still living upon the land. An American writer, Hunt, says that during his seventeen years in Haiti (before 1860) he had known of but 13 Negroes from America who had been moderately successful; of these, 7 were merchants or traders, 4 mechanics, and 2 lawyers; and all were mulattoes. Five others were barely independent, and all the rest were day laborers or worse. In spite of this, Hunt planned another aided migration of American Negroes to Haiti. Warning them not to expect too much in the way of improvements in agriculture, he adds a significant paragraph: "Should the immigrant obtain quiet possession of unoccupied lands, and begin to use the plough instead of the hoe, his new methods of culture would be likely to draw upon him the jealousy and ill-will of his neighbors. For when new ways are too new to be accepted as an example, they are very apt to be felt and resented as a rebuke. More than one of Boyer's old immigrants have told me that they were obliged to give up agriculture and take to trading in towns, on account of annoyances of this sort. They found their fences down, or their water let off, of a morning; or evidences that cattle had been fed on their grounds over night; or the neighboring idlers, of which there are many, had stolen all their plantains and sweet potatoes, fit for the market. I do not mean to say that these Haytian cultivators are worse than any other rude people. On the contrary, I

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1. An excellent description of these projects is found in L. L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938* (Durham, 1940), chap. IV.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

remembers many of the details. But during the administration of President Louis Borno (1922–1930) there was a reënactment of the original march. There suddenly appeared in the streets of Port-au-Prince a crowd of Gèdé *mystères*—houngans "possessed" by Gèdé Nimbo and attired in Gèdé dress: tall black hats, long black tail coats, smoked glasses, black skirts over their black trousers. They carried flags, waved polka-dot kerchiefs, shook their ceremonial rattles, and paused sometimes to wipe the perspiration from one another's faces. They became the nucleus of a huge, noisy crowd moving up the hill toward the palace. Market women followed instead of going home; street gamins screamed and raced among them. Before they had arrived at the palace grounds they had taken on the semblance of a huge Mardi Gras band. They swerved through the gates of the palace grounds and along the drive, right to the steps of the palace itself. The guards, taken by surprise, waited helplessly for their officers to arrive.

At the palace door, the houngans demanded money from the president. Borno was in a dilemma. He was reputed to be sympathetic to Vodoun ritual but was only surreptitiously so. He feared the houngans, and he feared public opinion. What would the upper class of Port-au-Prince think, the Latin-culture Haitians? With Gèdé's worst manners, the Gèdé mystères cavorted on the palace steps. Finally Borno gave in. He sent the money out to them, and then the crowd of Gèdés marched out of the palace grounds, waving their flags and shaking their rattles.

Service for the Hounsi Bossale

This ritual of calling the loa to speak through the mouth of the Vodoun priest took place in the Bolosse section of Port-au-Prince. The hounfor was situated in a congested slum area of the city, but the grounds around it were spacious. The hounfor itself was small and unpretentious, and except for the adjoining tonnelle would easily have been mistaken for another small wooden house. The houngan was a heavy-set man with a black mustache. Quick to laugh and easy in his movements, he nevertheless commanded solemn respect from the hounsi and the other participants. His soft-spoken voice expressed assurance and authority.

There were a number of possessions in the course of the dancing, all more or less routine. Each time a possession occurred, the houngan came forward with his asson and bell, gave a pitcher of water and a candle to the possessed devotee, and conducted her through a ritual at the foot of the center post.

Later, one of the hounsi came and sat at the houngan's feet. She was not possessed but obviously was in a state of high tension. Other servitors brought from the hounfor a wooden washtub and set it on the ground

175 In the early
178 years of independence, Emperor Henry Christophe in the north and
311 President Pétion in the south tried to stem the disintegration of the
[643] magnificent plantations. Christophe's measures in the region he con-
[656] trolled were sometimes stern, according to legend; but the plantation system and the plantations themselves gradually fell into decay, along with the aqueducts, the warehouses, and the sugar mills. For the Haitian had returned to a tradition of landholding antedating his enslavement.

175 Europe's loss of the Pearl of the Antilles aroused bitter words from
648 Frenchmen and Englishmen for the better part of the century. They
181 accused the Negro of laziness and lack of ability, repeating endlessly that only as a colony could Haiti ever be of any use to anybody. The London *Times* deplored the Haitian's unwillingness to work for wages, speculating that he had "no desire for property strong enough to induce him to labor with sustained power." In the United States, antiabolitionist enthusiasts cited the Haitian situation as an example of what would happen to the American economy if the slaves were freed.

464 The Haitian's reluctance to work for wages did not reflect an aversion
423 to owning property, however, as the London *Times* supposed. On the
311 contrary, it was engendered by his desire for property. The land was there and waiting, only needing a house to be built upon it, and to be cleared and tilled. The typical Haitian wanted not dubious, seasonal wage work but a farm of his own. The more ambitious peasant aspired to two farms, or even three, with a homestead and a family on each.

423 If a man worked hard and made a success of one plot, he could put
595 away money and eventually buy a second. The additional land might be
178 separated by some miles from the original farm. On the new ground
583 the man would build another house and take another wife to take care of it in his absence. Known as *plaçage*, this arrangement had complete community sanction. A man whose energies and good fortune made an extra household possible was expected to make such an arrange-
[797] ment. It was not a new institution bred in the chaos following the Revolution, nor was it, as some missionaries held, an evidence of moral deterioration of the Haitian character. It was simply a persisting concept of West African life.[2] The woman who occupied the second or third household was not a concubine. Like the first wife, she had enhanced prestige in her community. She had authority and responsibility. Her work, her position, and her rewards were not essentially different from those of the first wife.[3] It is true that her marriage was not consecrated by a church or civil ceremony, but, ordinarily, neither was that of the
[581] first wife. Contrary to European misconceptions, such unions were true marriages in the sense that they had full sanction of the community.

2 3 [Footnotes appear in Category 116, pp. 351-352.
A,A --Analyst]

[P. 148]

13. Comments on the Mighty: Political Songs

* 533 538 626 178 The African-style song of social criticism has found no worthier subjects than the historic political figures of Haiti. There is no doubt that the African slaves used this art form to express their feelings toward the white masters as they had used it to comment upon the behavior of their own chiefs and fellow tribesmen. The worthy leaders were praised in song; the unworthy were castigated and their sins, failures, and social misdemeanors publicized in folk songs. By the beginning of the [567] nineteenth century, slavery had come to an end in Haiti. The deep democratic sense of human dignity had outlasted the colonial masters and emerged tempered and sharp. The songs of criticism became not * 533 538 626 178 666 only comments upon political figures but campaign propaganda as well. They dwelt upon the accomplishments or faults of the candidates for political office. Friendly songs sought out every virtue, and invented others, in the man or woman being praised. Unfriendly songs lashed out and lacerated or poked biting fun at the subject, not even sparing his physical deformities.

* 533 538 Yet the political songs are more than statements of merit or fault. Cumulatively they are a kind of folk history of Haiti. No political [666] aspirant ever went unsung by his peasant army, or unridiculed by his opponent's followers. The songs the people sang about their heroes and [173] their enemies recall events and details that formal history has forgotten or ignored. The memory of the folk song is powerful and long. Some of the recollections go back more than a century.

175 History books tell us that in December, 1843, Major Charles Hérard 642 aîné Rivière was elected to the office of the presidency, and that a new [643] constitution was drawn up by the Constituent Assembly. The new constitution was an accomplishment of the liberal and democratic forces of the nation. It guaranteed certain civil rights to the people. It provided that judges be elected instead of appointed, abolished life terms for

presidents, and emphatically declared the army to be within and under the law. 175 642

The new President, finding his office without the prerogatives he had expected it to have, openly complained of the restraints imposed on him by the new constitution. He broke campaign promises he had made to the peasants in the south and stirred up antagonisms on every side. Finally, while he was on a military expedition in the Spanish part of the island, revolution broke out at home. His army was beaten by the Dominicans, too, which completely shattered his morale. He fled by ship to Jamaica, the traditional refuge of outgoing Haitian presidents. In memory of his administration the peasants sang: 175 643 669 [548] 175 643 669 533* 539*

Rivière Président gainyain zyeux vairon!
Li dit l'ap piyé l'armé Bélanton!
Piyé lévé trésor!
Piyé lévé trésor!
Piyé lévé trésor!
Yo voyé Lambam depuis Lowinsor!

La Constitution cé trouva Colombe
Quand yo voit pays soufri trop misère!
Li dit yo fait comme Henry!
Li dit yo fait comme Henry!
Li dit yo fait comme Henry!
Pou' fai sang coulé pou' rangé pays!

Colonel Déro soldat Diplaro
Marché fanfaron comme un grand fantin!
Li cré qui li té roi!
Li cré qui li té roi!
Li cré qui li té roi!
'Pagnol chasse li, li couri con chien qui prend frai charogne!

President Rivière was cross-eyed!
He said that he was going to pillage Belanton's army!
Loot for treasure!
Loot for treasure!
Loot for treasure!
They sent everyone from Lowinsor to Lambam!

The Constitution was founded by Columbus
When the country suffered too much misery!
He said he would do like Henry [Christophe]!
He said he would do like Henry!
He said he would do like Henry!
Make blood run to poison the countryside!

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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From Colonel Déro to Private Diplaro,
They marched with fanfare, a great army of foot soldiers!
He thought that he was king!
He thought that he was king!
He thought that he was king!
The Spaniards chased him, he ran like a dog after fresh carrion!

175 Forty-five years later, in 1888, there was a big political rally in Port-
579 au-Prince. The two presidential candidates were General Séide Télé-
666 maque and Déus Légitime. Their supporters clashed near the palace,
626 and Télémaque was killed in an exchange of gunfire. Légitime naturally was accused of having murdered his rival, though his supporters would not believe that he had committed such a crime. Evidence for a trial was entirely lacking, and Déus Légitime became president. But feeling ran
[533] high, and the followers of Télémaque began to sing:
[539]

Écoutez chers amis l'histoire de Légitime!
Assassin de Séide, et lui est président!
Écoutez bien l'histoire, le gens du nord marchaient
Sur Port-au-Prince un fois pou' vengé la mort de Séide!
Allez au diable, bandit Déus!
Échappez vous, ingrat Déus!
Si vous perdre le temps, Déus,
Florvil vous feura fusillé!

Listen my friends to the story of Légitime!
Assassin of Séide, and he is President!
Listen well to the story, the people of the north will march
On Port-au-Prince one day to avenge the death of Séide!
Go to the devil, bandit Déus!
Escape, ingrate Déus!
If you lose time, Déus,
Florvil will have you shot!

Légitime had this possibility clearly in his mind. And the next year,
[669] when Florvil Gélin Hippolyte marched from the north with an army of *cacos* (peasant troops who hired out to political aspirants), Légitime hurriedly boarded a steamer in the harbor and sailed for Jamaica. Séide Télémaque was considered avenged, as the army bugles still bear witness. For now when the bugle plays reveille it is supposed to be saying:

[539]

Séide Télémaque, Légitime has fled!
Séide Télémaque, Légitime has fled!

175 The new President, Florvil Hippolyte, died in office in 1896. J. N.
643 Leger, a Haitian historian, tells soberly of Hippolyte's end in the following words.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

For some time the President, who was sixty-nine years old, had not been in good health, and disregarding the friendly warning of those who were interested in his welfare he refused to give up his hard work and to take the rest of which he was in sore need. Against the advice of his doctor he decided to undertake a long journey to Jacmel. He started on the 24th of March, 1896, at three o'clock in the morning, but before he even had time to leave Port-au-Prince, he fell from his horse dead in a fit of apoplexy, at a short distance from the executive mansion.[1] 175 643

The legend of Hippolyte's death passed on in song is not nearly so dispassionate. It is told that Hippolyte was going out on a drastic punitive trip to Jacmel, where there were rumblings of political opposition and revolution. Among other things, the President was going to seize the powerful Voloun priest Mérisier, regarded as a powerful force in the opposition. Hippolyte also had sworn to reduce Jacmel to ashes and wipe out the entire population except one male and one female to repopulate the land. As he prepared to leave on his mission, his wife and his son stood by the door to see him off. 533* 539* 173 643

Li lévé Mardi bon matin, Li fai sélé cheval à li. En montant sa cheval li, Panama li sorti tombé.	He arose early on Tuesday morning, He saddled his horse. As he climbed on his horse, His hat came off and fell.
L'Hérison rélé "Papa," Li dit'l, "Papa à moin, Panama ou sorti tombé, Cé déjà youn mauvais signal."	L'Hérison * called out, "Papa!" He said to him, "Father, Your hat has come off and fallen. That is already a bad omen."
Li répond ni, "Pitit à moin, Moin déjà met' l'armée déhors, L'armée moin déjà nan portaille. Y faudra que moin parti."	He replied to him, "My child, I have already sent the army ahead, My army is already at the city gate, I have to go."
Arrivé sou Pont Gentil, Li tombé sans connaisance. Yo voyé rélé Doctor Jules, "Vin sauver Florvil Gélin!"	Arrived at Pont Gentil, He fell unconscious. They sent for Dr. Jules, "Come to save Florvil Gélin."
Doctor Jules tomba à genoux. Li rélé Manman Ste Anne, Li rélé St. Augustin, "Vine sauver Florvil Gélin!"	Dr. Jules fell on his knees. He called Mother St. Anne, He called St. Augustin, "Come to save Florvil Gélin!"
Ste Anne dit, " 'i faut mouri." St. Augustin dit, " 'i faut mouri." Li rélé St. Jacques Majeur "Vine sauver Florvil Gélin!"	St. Anne said, "He has to die." St. Augustin said, "He has to die." He called St. Jacques Majeur, "Come to save Florvil Gélin."

* Hippolyte's son.

[1] [Léger, Haiti, Her History and Her Detractors. Cf. p. 353, Category 116. -- Analyst]

Mérisier rété Jacmel,	Mérisier waited at Jacmel.
Li souqué baksor à li.	He shook his sacred rattle.
Li conné ça qui gainyain.	He knew what was going on.
Tout ti trou déjà bouché!	All the small holes were filled.*
Victoire dit con ça,	Victoire said
Quand Florvil ta va mourit	When Florvil dies
Li tap fai youn belle soirée	She will hold a beautiful party
Avec tout ti gens la yo.	With all the young people.
CHORUS	CHORUS
En allé Dodo!	We are going to dance! †
En allé Dodo!	We are going to dance!
En allé ce soir	We are going this evening
Caille la belle Victoire!	To the house of beautiful Victoire! ‡

The legend of Hippolyte's falling hat is preserved in another folk song called "Panama'm Tombé":

Panama'm tombé,	My hat fell down,
Panama'm tombé,	My hat fell down,
Panama'm tombé; ça qui dèyè	My hat fell down; whoever is behind,
Ramassé li ba moin!	Pick it up for me!

Mérisier, the Vodoun priest whom Hippolyte regarded as an enemy, was not pleased with the rumors and talk about him that was going the rounds in the capital. His displeasure is recorded in a protest song with a familiar theme:

Mérisier yo vini ga'dé moin pou' y'allé pa'lé, wo wa é!
Mérisier yo vini ga'dé ça pou' y'allé pa'lé ça!
Kénan moin yo wè!
Kénan yo séré nan mal!
Mérisier pas là, sonné ochan wa wa é!

Mérisier [says] they come to see me to go away and talk, *wo wa é!*
Mérisier [says] they come to see it and go away to talk about it!
What is mine you see!
What is yours you evilly hide!
Mérisier isn't there, sound the salute, *wa wa é!*

Seven days after Hippolyte's death, General Simon Sam was elected to the presidency. His friends and his enemies had different things to say about him. One song makes a tart comment on Sam's administration.

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* That is, the affair was finished.
† *Allé dodo* literally means "to go to sleep," but there was a dance called Allé Dodo.
‡ Hippolyte's young wife.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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A la youn président,
C'est Tirésius Augustin Simon Sam.
Si tout té con ça,
Haiti ta fini! [Ex. 111]

There was a president,
He was Tirésius Augustin Simon Sam.
If they were all like him,
Haiti would be finished!

In 1902 General Nord Alexis became the chief executive of Haiti. His abilities and accomplishments are still being debated, but he appears to have been a rather lovable old man whom everyone called by the affectionate term Uncle. His administration was fairly stable and prosperous—as prosperity is known in Haiti—and in large measure peaceful. When his election was confirmed, the people were convinced that the nation was in for a period of law and order, and that the constant threat of cacos and brigandage would come to an end. One of the election-year songs goes:

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Nous crions vive, c'est pou' l'armé du Nord!
Tintin cila ça va fini!
Nous crions vive, c'est pou' soldats du Nord!
Tintin cila ça va fini!
Tintin cila, tintin cila, tintin cila va fini!
Bassin Vodoun, Bassin Vodoun, Bassin Vodoun c'est pou' nous! [Ex. 112]

We cry long live Nord's army!
The chaos will be ended!
We cry long live Nord's soldiers!
The chaos will be ended!
The chaos, the chaos, the chaos will be ended!
Bassin Vodoun,* Bassin Vodoun, Bassin Vodoun is for us!

One of the serious problems confronting Nord Alexis after his election was that of a disappearing national currency. Haitian paper money was circulating elsewhere in the West Indies and in South America and was becoming increasingly scarce in Haiti itself. Nord Alexis called in all the old currency and issued new, with the happy result that large quantities of money were again seen in the Republic. The common people who made the songs seem to have been very grateful:

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Alexis Nord Papa ou bon chef oh!
Ou ba nous moné, ou ba nous papier!
Alexis Nord Papa ou bon chef oh!
Ou ba nous moné, ou ba nous papier!

* Probably a place name.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Nous pas mandé ou anyien!
Nous pas mandé l'a'gent enco'!
Papa Nord ça nous ta mandé oh chef,
C'est bamboche nous mandé ou! [Ex. 113]

Alexis Nord, Papa, you are a good chief, oh!
You gave us money, you gave us paper!
Alexis Nord, Papa, you are a good chief, oh!
You gave us money, you gave us paper!
We don't ask you for anything more!
We don't ask you again for money!
Papa Nord, only one thing we are going to ask you, chief,
It is a big celebration we ask for!

643 The president's wife, Çéçé, seems to have been very proud of him
644 and very sure of his talents. When the army bugles blow a general as-
* 533 sembly call, they are supposed to be saying:
* 539

Çéçé té dit Alexis Nord grand moune nan tout corps li!
Çéçé té dit Alexis Nord grand moune nan tout corps li!
Çéçé té dit la quitté pour voir l'heure li vlé!
Çéçé té dit Tonton Nord grand moune nan tout corps li! [Ex. 114]

Çéçé said Alexis Nord is a thoroughly fine man!
Çéçé said Alexis Nord is a thoroughly fine man!
Çéçé said he will quit his office whenever he sees fit!
Çéçé said Uncle Nord is a thoroughly fine man!

Another bugle call, with words attributed to Nord's wife, contains a note of complaint:

Çéçé said *wuillel*
Çéçé said that, said that!
Çéçé said if you don't have any money you can't have a woman!
Çéçé said *wuillel*
Çéçé said that, said that!
Çéçé said we are working our guts out!
Çéçé said *wuillel*
Çéçé said that, said that!
Çéçé said Alexis Nord is president!

643 Çéçé was not the only one in Haiti who had confidence in Nord's
* 533 staying power. One popular song of the period goes:
* 539

Alexis Nord Papa,
Bondieu qui metté ou là!
Consolidé là yo
Qui vlé ba ou traka!

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

643 533* 539*

Alexis Nord, c'un bon Papa!
Ou pas metté ou pas manyien!
Pinga ou manyien, pinga ou manyien!
Pinga ou manyien Alexis Nord! [Ex. 115]

Alexis Nord, Papa,
It is God who put you there!
Take care of those
Who wish to make trouble for you!

Alexis Nord is a good papa!
You didn't put him there, you can't take him away!
Don't try to remove him, don't try to remove him!
Don't try to remove Alexis Nord!

Nord Alexis remained as president until 1909. He was then more than eighty years old, and he planned to turn the government over to General Jean-Gilles, who would carry on the policies of the administration. But Antoine Simon, an assembly delegate from the south, had other plans. He marched on Port-au-Prince with an army of three hundred cacos, who sang: 175 643 669 533* 539*

Tonton oh cher, Antoine pas nen betise oh!
L'apprend l'armée du sud, cher,
L'a fai ou marché zigzag!
Débor débor débor!
Nèg' Nord mandé fusillé!
Débor débor débor!
Nèg' Nord mandé corigé!

Dear Uncle, Antoine is not joking!
He brings the army of the south, my friend,
He will make you go zigzag.
Débor débor débor! *
Nord's men are asking for gunfire!
Débor débor débor!
Nord's men are asking for a lesson!

After Nord Alexis had vacated the palace and embarked for Jamaica, Antoine Simon became president. Historians often refer to the period that followed as the "Epoch of Ephemeral Presidents." Simon was not in the palace long before a man named Cincinnatus Leconte was successfully stirring up a new caco movement in the north, and people were singing: 533* 539*

* Probably "outlawed."

2: Coutlander B-5 (1937-1964) 1960 SV3 HaBi SV3

Antoine Simon pervé où peu' allé?
Ou pas tendé l'armée Leconte Gonaïves? [Ex. 116]

Antoine Simon, you'd better leave!
Haven't you heard Leconte's army is at Gonaïves?

In August, 1912, Leconte marched on the capital, and Antoine Simon sailed for Jamaica. General Leconte was duly elected to the presidency; but less than a year after he took office a terrific explosion wrecked the palace, killing Leconte, his son, and a number of militia. It was believed by many that this disaster was an act of vengeance by Antoine Simon:

Clairon sonnin, m'mandé ça qui gainyain
C'est Chapuzette qui débarqué encore.
Marihonnan soin li vini encore,
Ça'l vin' chaché, li vin' mandé revanche.

Nan Ouanaminthe fouill pas té tiré,
Qui raison ça pou' yo té fait pillage?
Bourriquets, mulet' jusqu'à feuilles tôle, Chapuzette,
Tout ça passé au prix de trois centimes.

Machetes Leconte pis caisse passé jokap,
C'est avec ça Chapuzette bai médicine.
Si ou vlé canné comment bai "vere-main-nez,"
Mandé Gesse avec Antoine Simon.

Antoine Simon té dit avant'l parti,
Li ta va quitté yon bomb nan mitan yo.
Lè l'éclaté, lè-là la va Kingston,
La mated rein'l pou'l ri peuple souverain.

Ann Cayes du Fond m'wendé Mapou Simon,
Nan Léogane m'wendé Mapou Dumpiine.
Lè nou rivé na wè ça qui gainyain,
Canin counti cousin, Antoine vini sou dos.

REFRAIN

Honneur à Chapuzette, St. Jean avec Delphin,
Ducasse et Cervoisier, vive Cincinatus.

The bells ring, I ask what is going on?
It is Chapuzette now who has revolted.
But Marihonnan he comes again,
What he is looking for is revenge.

In Ouanaminthe the guns are quiet,
What was the reason for this pillage?
They have carried off the donkeys, mules, and even the iron roofing,
Everything that was worth more than three centimes.

St Coutlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 HaBi SV3

Levante's soldiers are stronger than a *jalap*,*
It is with them that Chapuzette gives medicine.
If you want to know how to give the "stomach-hand-ease" †
Ask Oreste and Antoine Simon.

Antoine Simon said before he left
That he would leave a bomb in the middle of the palace.
When it went off he was already in Kingston.
He will pay for laughing at a sovereign people.

In Aux Cayes du Fond, I heard of the Mapou Simon,
In Léogane I heard of the Mapou Dauphine
When we arrive there we'll see what will happen.
Bowl carries bowl, ‡ Antoine will turn over on his back.

REFRAIN

Honor to Chapuzette, St. Juste and Delphin,
Dutrone and Corvoisier, long live Cincinnatus.

Two more presidents—Tancrede Auguste and Michele Oreste—divided the next eighteen months between them. Two caco movements to remove Oreste started simultaneously, one under the leadership of Duvilmar Théodore, the other under the Zamor brothers, Charles and Oreste. The Zamor caco first chased Théodore's army into the mountains and then marched on the capital. Oreste Zamor was elected to the presidency on a reform program, which quickly evaporated into thin air. One song describes the arrival of the President's brother Charles and his "Réform" at the gates of Port-au-Prince, where a crowd of enthusiasts had gathered:

Attention la Réform: c'est jounes jens Port-au-Prince,
C'est jounes jens Port-au-Prince, la Réform vire dos ba yo.
Ye lévé Mardi bon matin, l'habillé tout en blanc,
L'habillé tout en blanc pou' y'al ensé Charles Zamor.
Al ensem Port-au-Prince la Réform dibouté,
La Réform dibouté, la Réform vire dos ba yo.

Hail the Reform! It is the young men of Port-au-Prince,
The young men of Port-au-Prince, and the Reform turns its back on them.
They arose early Tuesday morning, dressed all in white,
They dressed all in white to meet Charles Zamor.
At the gates of Port-au-Prince the Reform reversed itself,
The Reform reversed itself and turned its back on them.

The Zamors and the reform administration held the palace less than nine months before Duvilmar Théodore's caco were marching on the capital singing the song that other presidents had heard.

* A violent purgative.
† That is, upset stomach, hard on the nose.
‡ That is, force replies in force.

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1968) 1968 SV3 Haiti SV3

Oreste Zamor, pressé pou' embarké!
Oreste Zamor, pressé pou' embarké!
Ou pas tendé l'armée Davilmar rentré pou' Gonaïves?

Oreste Zamor, you'd better embark!
Oreste Zamor, you'd better embark!
Haven't you heard Davilmar's army has entered Gonaïves?

Gonaïves seems to have been the crucial point for invading armies from the north. Whenever revolutionary troops entered this town, the president holding office prepared to leave. True to the tradition, the Zamors sailed for a foreign shore, and Davilmar Théodore became the new executive. Although his tenure was to last only three months, there was much excitement when he entered the capital:

A la théâtre, à la bamboche!
Pou' djolle musique à droit à gauche!
La ville embrouillé ça qui gainpain,
C'est Davilmar kapé rentré!
Davilmar, dur, dur!
Manchete caco pas nen betise!
Papa Da dur, dur!
Manchete Leconte pas nen betise!
Davilmar, dur, dur!

Celebrations and dancing!
Tooting horns to right and left!
The city is in an uproar,
It is Davilmar who is coming in!
Davilmar, hard, hard!
The cacos were nothing to laugh at!
Papa Da is hard, hard!
Leconte's army was nothing to laugh at!
Davilmar is hard, hard!

In 1915 came the United States intervention in Haiti, with the prime objective of freezing out German commercial and political interests. A president named Guillaume Sam had assassinated his political enemies in the prison at Port-au-Prince and had, in turn, been dragged out of the French consulate and killed. The benefits of the American occupation of Haiti are hotly debated to this day, though it is about thirty years since the United States military forces were withdrawn. Some Haitians think the occupation was a good lesson in politics, and that Haiti benefited in many ways. Others continue to look upon it as an overt expression of American diplomacy by force. One of the early assignments of the U.S. Marines in Haiti was the destruction of the

roaming bands of cacos, generally regarded as bandit elements. Caco chiefs were imprisoned or killed as outlaws, though much of their activity was directed against the American occupation rather than the civil government. Many of the injustices of the occupation were the result of inadequate understanding of the Haitian people and their way of life. There was much unspoken bitterness against the occupation forces, and in some popular songs the Marines were referred to by the peaceful peasantry as "cacos in khaki." During President Borno's administration the people in the north were singing:

> Grand Prevost ou pas tendé cacos Bayé Bouzille?
> Grand Prevost n'allé wè cacos Bayé Bouzille!
> Alo kilé nou dé nations:
> Americains dévant, cacos derrième!
>
> Grand Prevost, didn't you hear the cacos are at the Bottle Gate?
> Grand Prevost, we are going to see the cacos at the Bottle Gate!
> Now we have two species:
> The Americans are the worst, the cacos come second!

When President Borno's tenure of office came to an end, it was felt in some quarters that Madame Borno was taking the prospective change of residence very hard:

> Madame Borno ça ou gainyain ou apé crié?
> Ou té tou connné palais a parti pour' ou!
> Madame Borno ça ou gainyain ou apé crié?
> Ou té tou connné you jour pour' ou laissé!
>
> Madame Borno, what is the matter, why are you crying?
> You always knew one day you would have to leave the palace!
> Madame Borno, what is the matter, why are you crying?
> You always knew one day you'd have to give it up!

In 1930 Sténio Vincent came into office. He was a generally unpopular executive who managed to hold on to the presidency by suppressing the political opposition. When he was elected, the progressives were hopeful, and his supporters were singing: "Sténio Vincent bon garçon." But public sentiment shifted. Times were hard for the Haitian people during the Vincent administration. The darker citizens felt Vincent was "too light" to have their interests at heart. They were violently aroused, too, by his gingerly handling of the massacre of Haitians in the Dominican Republic in 1937. During his administration there were a number of abortive caco demonstrations and an unsuccessful revolt of high-ranking army officers. But in the early days a Meringue

2: Coulander 8-5 (1837-1865) 1965 SV3 Haiti SV3

But in the early days Mr. Vincent

195 ● 643 piece called "Merci Papa Vincent" was very popular. According to the
* 533 song, the noteworthy achievement of the President was the law he
* 539 sponsored to drive the "Syrians" out of the retail trades:
523
444

> Nous connê moune qui rainê peuple li,
> C'est Président Vincent!
> Nous connê moune qui rainê peuple li,
> C'est Président Vincent!
> Nous connê moune qui rainê peuple li,
> C'est Président Vincent!
> Nous connê moune qui rainê peuple,
> C'est Président Vincent!
> A nous rélé, merci Papa Vincent!
> A nous rélé, merci Papa Vincent!
> A nous crié, merci Papa Vincent!
>
> Qui moune qui bai commerce en detail li?
> C'est Président Vincent!
> Qui moune qui bai commerce en detail li?
> C'est Président Vincent!
> Qui moune qui bai commerce en detail li?
> C'est Président Vincent!
> A nous rélé, merci Papa Vincent!
> A nous rélé, merci Papa Vincent!
>
> We know the man who loves the people,
> He is President Vincent!
> We know the man who loves the people,
> He is President Vincent!
> We know the man who loves the people,
> He is President Vincent!
> We know the man who loves the people,
> He is President Vincent!
> We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!
> We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!
> We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!
>
> Who is the man who gave us the retail business?
> It is President Vincent!
> Who is the man who gave us the retail business?
> It is President Vincent!
> Who is the man who gave us the retail business?
> It is President Vincent!
> We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!
> We call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!

175 This song soon became the "official" musical theme of the President and
198 was heard in the carnival festivities, at salon dances, and at military
643 functions. But as discontent with Vincent grew, less adulatory versions
* 533
* 539

2: Courlander 8-6 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

of "Merci Papa Vincent" sprang up in the side streets of Port-au-Prince. One rendition (as translated) went: 175 178 643 533* 539*

> We know the man who loves the people,
> He is Sénéo Vincent!
> Who made my wife leave me to go to her family?
> He is Président Vincent!
> Who made my skin show through my worn out pants?
> He is Président Vincent!
> Who is the man who made my house fall down?
> He is Président Vincent!
> Oh, we call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!

So widespread did the burlesques on the original become that the tune itself became suspect. One never knew which versions were running through the minds of the listeners.

In 1950, during the administration of President Estimé, there was a new public works program which provided employment for a good many needy people in the Port-au-Prince area, and a coumbite song of the period went: 175 643 533* 539* [653]

> Président Estimé waille, oh!
> Quembé pays yà pas laguè oh!
> C'est Bondieu nans ciel là qui ba moin président!
> C'est Bondieu nans ciel là qui ba moin président cila!
> Quembé pays yà pas laguè oh!
> Port-au-Prince oh tourné Havane oh! [Ex. 117]

> President Estimé *waille*, oh!
> Hold on to the country, don't let go, oh!
> It is God in heaven who gave me this president!
> It is God in heaven who gave me this president!
> Hold on to the country, don't let go, oh!
> Port-au-Prince, oh, is turning into a Havana, oh!

When Estimé was overthrown by a military coup, the melody lingered on, but the name of the protagonist was changed. [669]

No president of Haiti has served his term of office, either for good or bad, without providing the raw materials for a folk song. His heroic deeds, his failures, and his foibles are as likely as not to be perpetuated in the music of the people. 643 533*

As for the presidency itself, it is held in the highest esteem. A rousing salute song, reminiscent of the Marseillaise, sends every new president-elect on the way to the palace: [539]*

> Président passé là,
> L'ap monté ou gouvernement!

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

● 643
* 533
* 539

Président passé là,
L'ap monté au gouvernment! [Ex. 118]

The President passes by,
He is taking over the government!
The President passes by,
He is taking over the government!

* 533 758 646 It is not only great political events that are perpetuated in songs like these; many are the comments on little people in the government, such as a legislator named Daniel Fignolé. One of Fignolé's deeds, probably apocryphal, which is recorded in folk song has to do with an act of justice in a hospital in Port-au-Prince. According to the song, Fignolé entered the hospital and found the rich patients on beds and the poor patients on mats on the floor. He promptly ordered the rich patients placed on the floor and the poor patients placed on the beds. (A few years later, after serving as president for less than three weeks, Fignolé became a political exile in the United States.) [643]

* 533 499 496 There is also an old song about a government engineer named Louis Gentil Tippenhauer—or Ti 'Benhauer (Little 'Benhauer), as he was commonly known. Tippenhauer is now an old man, but when he was young he was in charge of the construction of a section of the Haitian narrow-gauge railway. There was an accident in which a smoking locomotive jumped the tracks. Though small in stature, Tippenhauer had a forceful personality. He quickly assembled his workmen, and with chains, ropes, and crowbars they wrestled the locomotive back on the rails. The song commemorating the dramatic event was born at the height of the rescue operation. It is marked with concern for the feelings of Engineer Tippenhauer:

* [539]

Ti 'Benhauer rélé, "Porté cord pou' marré li!"
Ti 'Benhauer rélé, "Porté chaine pou' enchainé li!"
Si ou marré'l la laguè, devant Bondieu!
Pau' diab', pau' 'Benhauer, machine na deraillé!
Pau' diab', pau' 'Benhauer, machine na deraillé!

Ti 'Benhauer shouts, "Bring a rope to tie it!"
Ti 'Benhauer shouts, "Bring a chain to chain it!"
If you tie it, it unties itself, before God!
Poor devil, poor 'Benhauer, the machine is derailed!
Poor devil, poor 'Benhauer, the machine is derailed!

It is more than half a century since the affair of the derailed locomotive, and the railroad itself is not much longer for this world. But the song is still sung, and mostly by people who have no personal knowledge of the man named Tippenhauer.

[P. 163]

14. Songs of Bravado and Boasting

Among the secular songs are many which have boasting, bravado, or challenges as their central theme. Usually this kind of song is playful in tone, though sometimes there may be a serious or even an ominous undercurrent. Often the challenges are directed toward, or concern, djabs and *démons*. Just as often they involve persons of great prestige and power, perhaps the president himself. These songs say, in effect, "Who's afraid of the lou-garo?"—or of the president, or of the demon of such-and-such a mountain, as the case may be. Sometimes the bravado motif is implicit, but as often as not the singer challenges the world to take him before some feared personage, human or supernatural, and see what will happen. 533* 538

In one such song, the singer boasts that he is ready to be conducted before a fearful and malevolent deity named Jean Zombie. As though to assure the listeners that he is in his right mind, the challenger emphasizes that he has not been drinking anything intoxicating and is perfectly sober: 533* 539* 775

Rwo! Jean Zombie oh vini wè moin, conduit'm allé!
Rwo! Jean Zombie oh vini wè moin, conduit'm allé!
M'pas bwè tafia pou' nou fait tintin!
Devant hounfor moin, conduit'm allé!
Jean Zombie oh wie-wa conduit'm allé!
M'pas bwè tafia pou' nou fait tintin! [Ex. 119]

Rwo! Jean Zombie, oh, comes to see me, take me to him!
Rwo! Jean Zombie, oh, comes to see me, take me to him!
I haven't drunk tafia, I am not drunk!
I am at my hounfor, take me to him!
Jean Zombie, oh wie wa, take me to him!
I haven't drunk tafia, I am not drunk!

Another song challenges the community to take the singer to face the president—right into the president's parlor. The fact that the president 533* 539* 643●

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

named in the song has been dead for years does not seem to matter very much:

Mènè'm allé oh parleur!	Take me to the parlor!
Mènè'm allé!	Take me!
Mènè'm allé!	Take me!
Mènè'm allé oh parleur Borno!	Take me to Borno's parlor!
Mènè'm allé oh! [Ex. 120]	Take me, oh!

Sometimes the challenge is directed to a more lowly level of authority, such as the gendarme:

Gendarme, mènè'm nan bureau!
Rwo, gendarme oh! [Ex. 121]

Gendarme, take me to the police station!
Rwo, gendarme, oh!

Haitians are notable for their restraint from physical violence. During holiday celebrations it is not uncommon to see men who have drunk enough tafia to make them act up. Some of them may even be morose and bellicose. But the disturbances of the peace more often than not are verbal. So long as the first blow is not struck, the social pressures against violence operate effectively. But physical assault against an individual—a push, a blow, a slap—is an affront to personal dignity which relieves the victim of the social restraints and gives him the right to bodily revenge. I have seen waterfront rows, fierce and vocal, in which no one but the participants showed much interest. But should one man shove or strike another, the spectators would immediately interfere, for that single physical contact would have removed the barriers to the worst violence. Sometimes at carnival time a man assumes the guise of belligerence. Such a bully may roll up one trouser leg to indicate he is challenging all and sundry to a fight. Usually, passers-by move aside good-naturedly when he approaches. He is not taken seriously; but neither is he challenged, except by another man in the same frame of mind. When two men with rolled trouser legs meet, there may be a verbal encounter, possibly from opposite sides of the street, to the general entertainment of the bystanders. It is usually a serio-comic affair. Some of the folk songs memorialize occasions on which a man has publicly spoiled for a fight, real or imaginary. This song comments briefly on a man named Çalira, who looked for trouble:

Woy woy woy!
Woy woy woy!
Woy woy woy!
Çac bien arrangé corps yo!
Mène en bataille là!

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

Leyburn noted that the United States occupation affected the nature and rigidity of the barriers separating the yeomanry from the elite. For instance, he calls attention to the fact that the presidents elected during the United States occupation were light-skinned members of the elite. It seemed almost inevitable that, when the North Americans sought men through whom to prosecute their plans for "stabilizing" Haiti, they would settle on educated and worldly politicians, men who were both sufficiently trained and sufficiently pliant for the task. That these men were predominantly light-skinned was a corollary aspect of Haitian social history. In this way Washington played some part in reinforcing and expanding elite power; and herein lies a paradox with which the author of *The Haitian People* has dealt well. While the elite had been able to maintain their wealth and power in Haiti for nearly a century, the presidential succession before the United States occupation had largely been one of military chieftains, principally dark-skinned men from the north of the Republic. Michel Oreste, who had ruled for nine months in 1913–14, was the first civilian to be chosen president in Haiti's entire history up to that time; and Sudre Dartiguenave (1915–22), the North Americans' choice, was the first president since 1879 who was both a southerner and light-skinned. From the last quarter of the nineteenth century until the occupation, in other words, Haiti's presidents were almost entirely dark-skinned northern provincial leaders who literally seized power by invading Port-au-Prince and deposing their predecessors.

Hence, in describing the separation between elite and yeomanry, it is essential to notice the traditional special role of the military, with its particular overtones of color. Here was one institutional feature of Haitian society which was not directly dominated by the elite, and through which nonelite folk were able to attain special power. But in Haiti's case it is significant that the army itself was not firmly institutionalized; regional warlords, rather than a centralized officer corps, made the decisions. Leyburn cites Auguste Magloire, who enumerated *sixty-nine* "important" revolutions between 1806 and 1879; had this enumeration gone forward, it would have been much longer. Of Haiti's twenty-four chief executives between 1807 and 1915, only eight were in office for a period equal to their elected terms, and seventeen were deposed by revolution. Before the United States occupation, then, the continuing power of the elite could be seen as somewhat separate from the succession of nonelite generals who seized office over the years.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

elite and the yeomanry. For instance, he calls attention to one unanticipated (but inevitable) result of the occupation in this connection: the large number of children whose fathers were United States Marines, and whose mothers were members of the Haitian rural masses. In this way the occupation contributed to the growth of the physically intermediate population of Haiti, especially among rural folk, and thus perhaps to some bridging of the gap between yeomen and elite. Much more important, by its contributions to a broadening of the educational system, the occupation enabled talented black-skinned youths to improve themselves and to acquire new aspirations.

Recent economic and political developments in Haiti, through the period 1941–57, have contributed grounds for modification of the Leyburn interpretation. Though Leyburn predicted that "for the present and near future it is safe to say that there will be no more black non-élite presidents" (p. 101), subsequent developments soon proved him wrong. In January 1946, the government of elite member Elie Lescot fell under military pressure. A junta consisting of Franck Lavaud, Antoine Levelt, and Paul Magloire facilitated the installation of Dumarsais Estimé as president. Estimé was a dark-skinned man from the countryside (the village of Verettes, near St. Marc, in west-central Haiti), who had received a good education, served as a minister in the Vincent cabinet and, as a deputy, married a lighter-skinned woman whose family's elite membership was secure. Estimé might well be considered a self-made member of the elite, but he was not born into it, and his accession to power was the political expression of new possibilities in Haitian life.

The changes Estimé's regime symbolized were rooted in the intellectual resistance to the United States occupation and in the search for a Haitian identity in the face of that occupation. The strangely easy domination that the United States wielded over Haitian society for several decades, and the relatively unexploitative but patronizing administration it provided, ended forever a fantasy that had gripped Haitian intellectuals for more than a century. The world of 1804, when a bloodied but defiant Haiti could bar by force of arms Napoleon's dreams of a New World empire (and assist indirectly thereby in the territorial expansion of a still weak United States) had vanished. The time when a Pétion could aid, protect, and politically influence a sick and tired Simón Bolívar was long gone. The world had changed, while Haiti, the Haitians learned under their North

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

American masters, had nearly stood still. For almost a century, Haiti's elite had taken justifiable pride in their ancestors' triumph over Napoleonic France, even while they remained enthralled by French culture. This strange ambivalence would no longer do. In effect, the United States occupation compelled Haitian scholars to rediscover what it meant to be Haitian.

As the writing of Jean Price-Mars (1928) expressed that identity culturally, so the regime of Dumarsais Estimé began to express it politically. For the first time, Africa, and not simply France, became an important part of the nationalist dialogue. The Creole language began to be studied in its own right, and a program to end illiteracy through education in Creole was launched. Folkloristic studies, emphasizing the African component in Haitian rural life, especially as expressed in religion, came into vogue. Haitians began to explore their own society as a synthesis that was as much African as it was French—and as a synthesis, rather than as a mechanical alignment of two distinct traditions. The term *authentique* was employed to express what was "truly Haitian," and Haiti herself was viewed as a unique and original blending of two pasts. Under Estimé, rural folk of promise—and they were, in the nature of things, predominantly dark-skinned—were given greater opportunities, especially to be educated and to enter government service. Moreover, these developments took place at a time when Haiti's economic situation was relatively good, and Estimé enjoyed a measure of popular support rare in Haiti's entire history.

Furthermore, it was during the Estimé regime that Haitian cultural life reached some sort of climax. In the 1920s young Haitian intellectuals had been deeply shaken by the United States occupation and had begun to formulate their own answers to the questions it raised. Not only did Africa come into view as the wellspring of much that was Haitian but Haiti's status as an occupied though once-sovereign power dramatized the need for a social and political philosophy that fitted with hemispheric and international realities. French intellectual currents figured importantly in Haitian political thinking, both because the intellectuals of the French Antilles of the time were inspired by Haitian history and interested in Haiti, and because those islands and Haiti shared a curious affinity in their "Gallo-African" cultures. Anticolonial and Marxist points of view were espoused by a few Haitians, but these perspectives were complicated by changing

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 These newcomers in the class structure enjoyed regular urban em-
565 ployment, were mostly literate and legally married, and harbored strong ambitions for the education of their children. Such persons were certainly not elite members, and their behavior (as, for instance, in their preference for speaking Creole rather than French) showed it; yet they were not part of the rural masses, nor merely an example of Marx's *Lumpenproletariat*. Yet significance of this new group for the Leyburn "caste" theory of the elite is considerable. Even today, if such persons lapse into poverty, their ideology will continue to matter politically. Estimé's regime also loosed new political trends, [467] since at first some encouragement was given to labor unions, and the [362] construction of urban low-cost housing was undertaken. We are unable to measure the long-term effects of these changes, but their reality raises some questions about the rigidity that Leyburn's analysis imputed to Haitian social structure.

175 In May 1950, after an unsuccessful bid to extend his term of office
669 illegally, Estimé's regime was toppled, again by a military junta. To
643 power came Paul Magloire, the first military figure to become chief
159 executive since the start of the United States occupation. Like Estimé before him, Magloire symbolized certain effects of the occupation upon Haiti's social and political structure and the way that structure was continuing to change. Magloire's origins were not within the elite, to judge by the traditional criteria. He was a black man, and from the north; born in Quartier Morin, he associated himself with the elite of the north coast port of Cap Haïtien, Haiti's second largest city. By marriage to a "Capoise," whose family status was much higher than his own, and by a successful career in the military during the occupation, Magloire penetrated elite circles. As commander of the Palace Guard, he had been a member of the junta that ousted Lescot in 1946, replacing him with Estimé. In 1950, when Magloire became president, after the army had forcibly discharged both houses of the legislature, he apparently had the support of the elite and of the business class, if not of the popular forces that had backed Estimé.

175 Magloire may be said to have moderated considerably the intensity
643 of Haitian politics, and his administration was not marked by so sharp an ideological concern with the relative roles of elite and coun-
[433] tryman. Times were good, and levels of life, both in the countryside and in the capital, were probably as high as they had been at any time in Haitian history. Certain economic gains were made in the tourist

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industry, in the processing of essential oils, in extractive operations (bauxite, copper), and in the manufacture of a few essential commodities. The official attitude toward private investment, even by foreigners, was unusually benign; and coffee, the big export crop, enjoyed a boom. Again, however, little effect could be seen in the basic economic structure. By 1956–57, when the Magloire regime was toppled, the era of apparent prosperity had come to an end.

Magloire's tenure ended as had his predecessor's; after a vain attempt to prolong his regime by forcing through new laws, he was brought down by the army and was succeeded by a series of juntas. The politics of the brief interregnum preceding the accession of François Duvalier was complicated by the rival claims of four presidential aspirants: Clément Jumelle, Daniel Fignolé, Louis Déjoie, and François Duvalier. These four men represented significantly different trends in Haitian thinking and were supported by different social groups. Jumelle, although regarded as the spiritual inheritor of the Magloire administration, won the support of many Haitian intellectuals; his appeal was partly grounded in his experience as finance minister in the Magloire cabinet, but the scandalous graft of the Magloire administration worked against him. Fignolé, too, had been a cabinet minister, but his antecedents and political philosophy differed sharply from Jumelle's. An eloquent, intense man of rural lower-class origins, Fignolé was regarded by many as a dangerous demagogue. His support came largely from the poorer urban classes, and his reputation as a union leader and as a "self-made" former minister of education gave him special strength among urban groups. Déjoie, considered to be the candidate of most of the business community and of the elite, was a highly successful agronomist and businessman who had done much to build rural industry; it is also generally believed that Déjoie was the "unofficial candidate" of the United States. Duvalier, trained as a doctor of medicine and for long an enthusiastic amateur ethnologist, had been a political enemy of the Magloire regime and, as a former minister in the Estimé cabinet, saw himself as the ideological descendant of Estimé. Duvalier appears eventually to have become the army's choice, ostensibly because he was considered "manageable"; at any rate, it was Duvalier who finally emerged as president, ending the uneasy interim which followed Magloire's ejection.*

* Probably the most penetrating analysis of Haitian politics of the time is that provided by Maingot, 1964, to which this interpretation owes much.

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175 643 66 The course of events leading up to Duvalier's election are difficult to assess. Fignolé, whom the army had permitted to serve as president for sixteen days during the interregnum, had been denied official recognition by the United States, suggesting that this country feared the implications of his political philosophy; his attempts at passing a whole new code of far-reaching social legislation apparently frightened the army, which removed him on grounds of "maintaining order." By the time an election decree was promulgated in August 1957, Fignolé was disqualified, and Jumelle had been forced to withdraw from candidacy. By election day, September 1957, only Déjoie and Duvalier were in contention, while Jumelle had gone into hiding. An attempted general strike, probably led by Déjoieiste elements, was stopped by the army, and Dr. François Duvalier was elected to power.

175 642 66 701 643 The Duvalier regime, beyond any doubt, has added something new to the Haitian political scene. To begin with, it must be stressed that Duvalier enjoys some popular support in the countryside as well as in the urban centers. For many Haitians, Duvalier epitomizes the return of the Estimé philosophy to Haiti, and it would be a serious political error to suppose that the present regime is no more than an elite-hating dictatorship backed by machine guns. At the same time, the readiness of the Duvalieristes to use force probably exceeds that of any Haitian government in more than a century. Its excesses, moreover, appear to break certain traditions of political behavior—for instance, the unwillingness to take familial connections into account when political revenge is being carried out, the violence committed against women and adolescents regarded as political enemies, and so on. The most important break with tradition, however, has been the gradual undermining of the army as a political force—a force created in the first instance during the United States occupation.

175 642 648 643 In carrying out its plans, the Duvalier government has played more creatively upon inconsistencies in United States policy than any preceding regime. It used United States military and economic power to consolidate itself, while employing a posture of anti-North American hostility in its search for other internal sources of political support. Most strikingly, it has capitalized on the deterioration of the United States design in the Caribbean region, both to exact concessions and to enhance an international image of itself as a stalwart "democratic"

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regime. That President Duvalier has been able to stay in power in spite of internal dissaffection, sometime hostile United States propaganda, a dire economic situation, personal ill health, and other woes, is a tribute to his political acumen, if not to his principles. None of this means, of course, that such consummate skill will continue to work; Haitian governments have a way of falling suddenly, and the Duvalier regime will probably not prove an exception.

Dr. Duvalier's success indicates that he has made certain correct assessments, not only of Haiti's social and political structure but also of United States policy with regard to Haiti. The occupation was notable for its failure to make any telling alterations in the economic structure or level of development of the country. Many beneficial changes were made, as Leyburn demonstrates, particularly in the areas of health and health services, communications, government administration, education, and transport (though the use of corvée labor on the roads led to serious abuses, and stimulated sanguinary guerilla warfare). But most significantly, the United States institutionalized the army and police forces. The ragged bands of political mercenaries of the past were dissolved; the officer-ridden army was transformed into a small, well-trained, and well-organized force. Eventual firm control by this force of weaponry, communications, and transport ended the era of presidential succession by invasion, turned the army into the major locus of nonelectoral, president-making power, and may have ended forever the possibility of an agrarian revolt against the central authority. Another political effect of the occupation was the importance it imparted to the United States ambassador, whose political opinions thereafter would matter significantly in the transmission of power at the top of the Haitian governmental system. The Duvalier regime has continuously taken full account of the consequences of United States interest; and its leaders have been able to watch the operation of that interest in the political events occurring between the fall of the Lescot government and the present.

In the view of one acute observer, President Duvalier, in order to consolidate his power, had to cope with three other loci of political strength in addition to the army and the United States ambassador. The business community, located for the most part in Port-au-Prince, had strongly supported Déjoie's candidacy during the interregnum; its leaders were mainly members of the elite, and many had strong

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175 business and personal ties with North Americans and other foreign
●643 groups. Among the families of these leaders are Swiss, German, and
66 French nationals, and some Syrians and Lebanese who hold United
795 States citizenship. The business community had played a part in the downfall of the Magloire regime, and business strikes were a typical political instrument for putting pressure on presidential incumbents. In addition, the clergy—particularly the Catholic clergy—exerted political influence. Duvalier, while well aware of this, also attended to the importance of vodoun* in Haiti, and to the influence wielded by its cult leaders, particularly in the countryside and among the urban poor. Finally, the President understood the strength of groups such as the university students, the small but politically aware labor unions, and certain professional associations, whose political strength could be felt particularly in times of crisis. The Duvalier regime has displayed intelligence as well as ruthlessness in dealing with these diverse centers of political strength and potential opposition.

175 The official request for a United States Marine Corps mission to
648 "train" the Haitian Army was a brilliant political move by Duvalier,
701 apparently designed to serve several objectives simultaneously. It is
702 entirely correct that the renewed presence of the Marines in Haiti
66 created considerable rancor in some circles, but it also strengthened Duvalier's hand in his dealings with all sources of internal opposition. To some extent it apparently reassured the business community; and it turned out to have reduced, rather than to have increased, the maneuverability of the United States in developing a "corrective" or "restraining" policy toward the Duvalier regime. Perhaps most important, it helped Duvalier in his plan to build a praetorian guard to counterbalance the power of the army itself.

625 The *tonton macoute*—a Creole epithet for the bogeyman—is an extremely interesting variation on the security police theme. Its members wear no official uniform (though blue denim pants and felt hats
[701] are affected). Members of the "TTM" carry out acts of terrorism against groups and individuals and have seriously weakened the po-
[652] licing function and prestige of the regular army. Some calculations put the operating costs of the TTM as high as one third of the governmental budget. Though small groups of the TTM are distributed

* Or, as it is more commonly called, "voodoo." Creole words employed in this introduction are transcribed in Laubach orthography (see Hall, 1953). It was not possible to extend this transcription to the original Leyburn text, where a "Gallic" orthography is followed.

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throughout the country, the central administration remains in the capital; urban units are dispatched to the countryside at times, if any show of internal political resistance is sensed. TTM members also sometimes engage in struggles with each other over political spoils; but too little is known to analyze internal strains within this paramilitary, secret-police organization. The TTM has proved particularly useful for carrying out the murders of outspoken individual political opponents and for crushing draconically any threat of strikes in the Port-au-Prince business community. 625

Little is known of the antecedents of TTM members. While it is customary among the elite to describe these myrmidons as "trash," some of them are literate, have some education, vaunt a political ideology—a kind of nationalist-*négritude* mystique, with strong Fascist elements—and differ dramatically from the ragged, illiterate followers of the warlords of pre-1915 Haiti. In fact, the TTM lieutenants are a direct, if somewhat deformed, product of the Estimé regime, a decade of structurally unsound prosperity, a culturally nationalistic ideology, and, more remotely, of the United States occupation itself. 178 625

With regard to the army, Duvalier has followed a policy of careful attrition. While the United States Marine Corps "mission" was (probably unknowingly) serving to immobilize opposition, Duvalier began to change the character of the army general staff. In the course of less than seven years he completely revamped the leadership of the army five times; this process not only kept the colonels off balance but allowed the President to reward loyal younger followers—principally those with dark skins, it is said—with rapid promotions. 643 701

The relationship between the Duvalier regime and the Catholic clergy has been one of increasing alienation. At times members of the clergy stood high in the regime, two having even served as members of the cabinet; but not the slightest Church resistance has been tolerated. The low point in Duvalier–Church relations was the interruption of a mass by an armed TTM unit in downtown Port-au-Prince; leading members of the hierarchy later were summarily ejected from the country, and the Jesuit order was banned. Church power has waned significantly, both in the capital and in the countryside, as the regime has consolidated itself. Some observers believe that Duvalier is not so unwise as to aim at the complete elimination of the Church, but that he hopes instead to "nationalize" the clergy on some mutually agreeable basis. 642 795 661

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643 At the same time, the President has expressed his favorable interest
771 in vodoun and is said to practice it; this statement, however, has
795 overtones of malevolence that are not appropriate. Vodoun is a religion, though it lacks a centralized priestly hierarchy or administrative organization. Outside the elite, Catholicism in Haiti has always been colored by vodoun elements. The Haitian people as a whole invest no effort in distinguishing what is "really Catholic" from what is not, in their religious practices; in this regard Haitian countrymen do not really differ from folk practitioners of Catholicism anywhere. By its misreading of the piety of the Haitian masses, and its unceasing hostility to vodoun—quite different from the church policy in the so-called "Indian countries" of Latin America—the Church had failed to secure its influence over the Haitian people. In contrast, Duvalier's understanding of Haitian religious sociology has proved superior, and is consistent with the *authentique* ideology of the 1940s, though doubtless much more extreme in its implications.

642 Finally, the Duvalier regime has invaded such institutions as the
871 National University and the trade unions, and maintains close sur-
467 veillance over any individuals it regards as politically suspicious. Loy-
204 alty oaths are required at the university; a public press no longer ex-
661 ists; the unions, never strong, are now entirely powerless. But it should be clear from this description of the Duvalier regime that repression is not the key to Duvalier power so much as the means for perpetuating that power under Haitian conditions. The key to Du-
642 valier power is to be found instead in the structure of Haitian society,
648 in the social history of the past two decades, and in the policy of the United States, weakened by its inescapable preference for "stability" over "radicalism." In his own way, President Duvalier is as radical as he can be; but he is no Castro. It is now an open secret that Haiti's support for sanctions against Cuba approved at Punta del Este was matched by economic concessions from the United States; that the Marines, knowingly or not, immobilized anti-Duvalier opposition in a period when its supporters could be picked off, driven into exile, or jailed; that the official Duvalier offer of Môle St. Nicholas to the United States as a substitute for Guantánamo, though irrelevant, was warmly reassuring to some North American political thinkers; and that Duvalier, while he employs considerable "blackmail diplomacy" in his dealings with the United States and is now out of favor, is still considered "reliable" in that most important respect.

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deftly had him promoted out of colonial office. When another group of commissioners came, he agreed in conference with them that the remaining whites should be expelled for the sake of peace; as soon as this was done, however, he effected the nomination of both the chief commissioner and General Laveaux as representatives of the colony in the French Assembly, sitting in Paris. Under guise of bestowing honors, he had got rid of every white person who had the slightest claim to rule. By 1797 Toussaint was the supreme leader in Saint-Domingue, his authority disputed only by Rigaud and the colored group. A civil war was needed to settle the issue between them, and since his forces were much more numerous than Rigaud's, Toussaint emerged victor in the brief conflict. Rigaud fled to France, the power of the mulattoes was broken, and no one was left openly to contest Toussaint's rule.

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"The First of the Blacks," as Toussaint was called, is a bewildering anomaly, and full of contradictions. He had been a slave for fifty years before the insurrection, and was to live only eleven after it. In that short period he became one of the most talked-of men in the world. His Spanish superior officer had said that "God in this terrestrial globe could not commune with a purer spirit"; the Frenchman, Lacroix, remarked, "No one approaches him without fear, and no one leaves him without respect." Even his enemies paid him homage: an English officer, as "a man, a governor, and a general"; a white Frenchman, as "a philosopher, a general, and a good citizen." When he died Wordsworth wrote a moving sonnet to him who had strengthened human faith in "man's unconquerable mind." Yet Toussaint had been a deserter and a schemer, and ruthlessly exploited his power to achieve absolute authority. His own deep conviction of his special mission to lead his people from misery to security has always for his apologists excused the more dubious aspects of his character.

To many Toussaint was a hero with elements of saintliness. In the overheated atmosphere of prejudice and hatred in Saint-Domingue he pursued a calm policy of moderation. Under him, anarchy and massacres came to an end. With an army at his beck and call, he used force only to maintain freedom for his fellow blacks and to defend the colony against foreign invasion. As nominal governor-general after 1799 he revived prosperity, inculcated discipline as an antidote to the intoxication of liberty, respected his contracts, and was a friend of law and order. On the other hand, he had moments

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of inordinate vanity, and would brook no interference. His henchmen had to endure merciless tongue-lashings. His own people's freedom, about which he was publicly so solicitous, was in many respects little better than slavery. 175 642 643

What he did is more easily told than what he was. Emerging, after a long reign of terror, as a leader in a land which had once been a paradise for whites, he checked among his people the passion and fear which had led to violence. With the restoration of peace, labor began once more on the plantations. The Negroes, though no longer slaves, were ordered back to work, and they docilely obeyed. The return of prosperity between 1799 and 1802 was amazing.

But the brilliance of Toussaint's rule was first dimmed and then completely extinguished by the rising star of Napoleon in France.[17] Haitian history between 1802 and 1804, although apparently incidental to the story of the contest between blacks and colored people which here concerns us, is nevertheless significant for an understanding of what was to transpire in Haitian social affairs. Napoleon was irritated beyond measure at the effrontery of Toussaint's seizure of power in the colony. The black leader had shown canny statesmanship in winning the friendly coöperation of the president of the United States, John Adams. The supplies and ships that Adams sent enabled Toussaint not only to defeat Rigaud but to achieve independence from France in all but name. With American assistance, Toussaint negotiated an advantageous treaty with England. Probably even more annoying to the First Consul than these political triumphs was Toussaint's audacious success in spying and even anticipating the spacious actions by which Napoleon was trying to make himself majestic in the world's eyes.[18] 175 648 669

It is possible that Napoleon might not have paid so much attention

17. It seems strange that this black, a veritable genius whatever his faults, should be so mildly honored in modern Haiti. True, he is regarded with respect, and there are a few statues of him; but the homage of the people is paid rather to his successor, General Dessalines, the antithesis of Toussaint in everything but courage. It was Dessalines, of course, who struck the final blow for Haitian freedom, but even this triumph seems to the foreigner small in comparison with the very real achievements of Toussaint. [643]

18. For example: Napoleon had given a new constitution to France after his *coup d'état* of the 18 Brumaire; similarly Toussaint, having effected his own coup in Saint-Domingue by deposing the French civil agent, citizen Roume, immediately thereafter gave his people a new constitution. In it he not only assumed all political power for life, but also ascribed to himself the right of naming his successor. Bonaparte was unable to take so daring a step for another year. There is ample evidence to show that meanwhile he chafed under the idea of being imitated and anticipated by a "gilded African," as he called Toussaint.

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III

THE FORMATIVE YEARS, 1804–1843

1. *Dessalines (1804–1806)*

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If ever a country had an opportunity to start absolutely fresh in choosing its own social institutions, Haiti had that opportunity in 1804. Free at last, with no traditions to uphold, the first independent Negro state in the world, owing allegiance to no man or nation, the Haitians might (theoretically, at least) have invented an entirely new little world of economic, political, religious, and social life. All paths were open to them. Dessalines,[1] as head of state, had only to lead them. His mental limitations, however, were such that he could only follow where the hated French had led, and soon set the Haitians upon the road to a caste system.

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The first part of the story of independent Haiti is to a certain extent the story of the alternative lines of action laid down by four great men, the black Dessalines and his equally black successor Christophe, the mulatto Pétion and his worshipful mulatto disciple Boyer.

On New Year's Day, 1804, Dessalines made a stirring proclamation of independence. In it were many references to *liberté* but none whatever to *égalité* or *fraternité*. The two years of his rule show clearly that he had no use for such abstractions as equality or fraternity, while liberty to him was synonymous only with freedom from French dominance. He was a tyrant whose very tyranny unwittingly prepared the way for eventual control by the colored group over the blacks.

Accompanying the proclamation of Dessalines was another signed by his generals, naming him governor-general for life, swearing "to obey blindly all laws emanating from his authority," giving him the right to make peace or war, and permitting him to name his successor. Absolutism was the order of the day. In the same paragraph in which he condemned French despotism, Dessalines said to his

1. Jean-Jacques Dessalines had been born a slave on a plantation near Grande-Rivière du Nord in the seventeen-fifties or -sixties. Unlike Toussaint, whose leading general he was, Dessalines was illiterate. The outstanding characteristic of his temperament was his violent passion.

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people: "If ever you refuse, or grumblingly accept, the laws which the genius guarding your destinies dictates to me for your happiness, you will merit the fate of ungrateful people. But perish that hideous idea!" There can be little doubt that he wished Haiti under his direction to become prosperous; but it is likewise clear that he was personally self-centred and inordinately grasping. 175 642 643

Each step Dessalines took to further his ambitions either for Haitian prosperity or for his own fortunes had its bearing upon the development of social classes in the country. Extermination of all remaining whites was one of the first tasks he set himself. On a promise of clemency he lured several hundred gullible French out of hiding, and butchered them in cold blood. His campaign of extirpation was methodical and thorough. To try to penetrate into the psychological background of this violence is to desert fact for speculation: it may have been a desire for revenge on the French, pure and simple; it may have been glossing sadism; he may have wished to warn France against any future attempts to regain possession of the country; or he may have wanted to notify his subjects of his intention to rule with severe discipline. Certainly this last aim was achieved, if any of his people did not already know, after two years of warfare, the extent of his ruthlessness. He ruled by fear and by threats, never by the cultivation of loyalties.

Apparently he was afraid that Napoleon would renew his efforts to subdue the former colony. To forestall such an attempt he ordered each of his governing subalterns to construct one great fort on the most prominent hill in their district—a scheme which led immediately to the institution of forced labor. He likewise devised a plan, not actually put into effect, for destroying all towns and plantations near the coast and moving the capital to an inland village; and so isolating Haitians from all contact with the outside world. 175 643 466 712 361

Turning to domestic policy, he faced a herculean task. The warfare of 1802–3 had left the country in chaos. Plantations and agricultural projects were almost totally ruined. All habits of steady industry had been lost. Dread of a possible new attack by the French made necessary a great army, and this in turn removed most able-bodied men from productive labor in the fields, while the construction of fortresses still further depleted the labor supply. The first census of free Haiti, in 1805 (probably not highly accurate), showed only 380,000 people, with the women outnumbering men by almost three to two. 175 643 433 701 464 712 175 162

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tion: Here again, the decision of a leader fixed the direction of Haitian life for decades to come. It is agreed by commentators that overmilitarization was the bane of nineteenth-century Haiti. One tenth of all able-bodied men were constantly in active army service. Moreover, all the male cultivators on plantations must hold themselves in readiness to obey the government's call to arms; ammunition and arms were stored in every parish. A military mentality was nourished, the people early learning the lesson (apparently unchallenged by any liberal) that the army should rule and the people obey. 175 701 [162] [181]

Although the common soldiers were ex-slaves who, upon dismissal from service, would return to the ranks of agricultural workers, their officers had a higher status. Noncommissioned officers had a long road to travel to eminence, but like the overseers they had at least a glimpse of the promised land of distinction. Captains and generals had this vision within their grasp: they were already of the élite.

In the subcategory of "artisans" were included all the townspeople who carried on crafts or trades. It must be remembered that Haiti had no cities, and that its two largest towns then numbered probably no more than 10,000 people each, so that artisans were not numerous. Since there was a distinction in the arduousness of various pursuits as well as in their financial return there existed in this category, as in the official and military, some chance for social prestige. 175 463 361

The only persons remaining outside the categories mentioned were colored landowners who had held estates in the colonial period. Dessalines took active steps to gain control of most of the land in the country, but at his death in 1806 there were still many of the old proprietors left who were, in the main, determined to hold their land and preserve their dignity as non-laborers. 175 471 423 425

Assassination by his political foes ended the career of Dessalines only two years after he assumed power. In 1805 he had had himself crowned emperor in imitation of Napoleon, but unlike Napoleon he permitted no nobility. "*Moi seul, je suis noble!*" he replied to ambitious henchmen who asked for the establishment of a peerage. It was the Emperor's tactless handling of the social situation which caused his murder, for he touched sensitive nerves on the raw in attacking property rights, inherited privilege, color distinctions, and social aspirations. The cultivators grumblingly accepted his decrees; the ambitious upper group did not. 175 643

The former affranchis fully intended to keep their lands once the

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prestige, and the normal fulfillment of dignity, were thus frustrated in their efforts. They began to see that the Emperor intended to withhold from them freedom, room for the exercise of ability or power, fullness of life in whatever form. Not only was there little opportunity for achieving prestige; the repressive and contemptuous attitude of Dessalines denied them even ordinary negative respect, without which dignity of life is impossible.

By confiscation of vacant and falsely claimed estates, Dessalines created a vast public domain. He did not hesitate to secure other lands which he considered valuable, resorting to arbitrary and often cruel means—even, it is said, to forgery and murder—to dispossess those who stood firm in their claims. This attack on private property added other dissidents to his enemies—men who felt themselves clearly in the right legally and morally, men who with clear consciences joined the movement to put down a tyrant. The land thus acquired was leased in parcels at an annual rent to the highest bidders.[6]

The Emperor was blind to the normal human needs of the better elements of the population. He deprived them of property in land, the only basis they knew for wealth and independence; he forbade enterprises undertaken by individual initiative; he continually wounded delicate sensibilities. The Emperor was not a man to spare people's feelings, and he dared use the frank but dangerous words Negro and mulatto. He once shouted to a group of pleaders for position: "*Prenez garde à vous, nègres et mulâtres! Nous avons tous combattu contre les blancs; les biens que nous avons conquis en versant notre sang, appartiennent à nous tous; j'entends qu'ils soient partagés avec équité!*" It was not only Dessalines' idea of "equity" which aroused the *anciens libres* but his use of the descriptive nouns they hated.

The colored people were well aware of the hostility of Dessalines to their group. He was inferior to them in learning, and knew it. He was certainly, by the world's judgment, inferior to them in birth. His very deficiencies by comparison with his colored subjects made him hate them more: for example, he was passionately fond of dancing, preferring compliments on his grace to praise of his statesmanship; yet his awkwardness on the ballroom floor even

6. Although there are no records extant to show the exact amount of land which Dessalines succeeded in bringing into state ownership, it is estimated that more than two-thirds of all the productive plantations in Haiti in 1806 were in the hands of the government. Other estimates range as high as ninety per cent.

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175 beside other ex-slaves was too evident to avert ridicule, which
● 643 Dessalines quickly noted. Few opportunities escaped the Emperor,
563 therefore, of making the light-skinned Haitians quake in their boots.
661 He wrote to Pétion (August 24, 1804), leader of the colored people, that in his slaughter of white Frenchmen he had often been "unable" to distinguish between whites and light-colored Haitians. Pétion and his friends knew that Dessalines did not regret his inability to make the distinction.[7]

175 Possibly Dessalines was clear-sighted enough to realize that the old
563 distinctions of color, if allowed to continue in the new state as in-
643 dicative of social prestige, might cause endless strife within the nation. Possibly, on the other hand, he wished to make the lighter-skinned Haitians realize that he, a Negro, was more than their equal. Whatever his underlying motives, he was impatient with the struggle for prestige. The steps he took to eradicate distinctions based upon color were characterized by his usual blunt tactlessness. In 1805 he informed Pétion, the outstanding mulatto general, that a union of black and colored people was essential to the happiness of the Empire; he said he wanted the Haitian people to become *bronzed* by this union, so that there would be no longer any important difference of skin color. All this was preface to a proposal that Pétion, as the ablest of the mulattoes, should marry the Emperor's black daughter, Céliméne. Pétion, refined, highly educated, and gently cynical, was considerably perturbed and frankly embarrassed by the suddenness of this radical suggestion. His reply, that he was not inclined to marry at all, offended Dessalines and made him suspect a slight, but he dismissed Pétion with the pointed suggestion that he "think the matter over." Pétion knew, as the Emperor did not, that one of his aides-de-camp, Chancy, was not only in love with Céliméne but had already got her with child. It is entirely possible, too, that he was aware of the growing underground opposition to Dessalines and that, as the Emperor's star was beginning to decline, he did not wish

[721] 7. It must be said to the credit of the black masses that they did not relish the systematic slaughter of the whites which so pleased Dessalines. Negro cultivators frequently collected potential victims, hiding them and aiding their escape from the country. The repugnance of the masses for such massacre was so evident that their generals had at times to drive them at bayonet's point. "The blacks of the plain behaved very well," said an exile in a letter (June 1, 1804) written from Jamaica to Moreau de Saint-Méry. Madiou says that after the massacre of the whites some Haitian blacks abandoned their country and went to join former masters in a foreign land.

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to ally himself with the ruling family. When Dessalines shortly 175
discovered his daughter's condition, he burst into maledictions 563
against all mulattoes, saying that they had plotted this disgrace to 643
him and to his family. He went so far as to speak of having them all executed.

The Emperor's determination, and all his measures, could not quench the social ambition of his leading subjects. They bore what must be borne, conspiring meanwhile to get rid of him. They still had the advantage over the masses of a superior education, and they knew the path to eminence, once the obstacle of the Emperor was removed.

Nothing was done during the reign of Dessalines to cultivate the 175
minds of the laboring class. Discipline backed by force was the 643
guiding principle in dealing with them. Instead of trying to educate 661
his people to understand their duties and to take an active part in 641
statecraft, Dessalines—his generals and counselors, mulatto and black 871
alike, thoroughly approving—used only compulsion. There was actually little difference between the attitude of this ruling clique toward the mass of laborers and that of their former white owners. Both looked upon them as cattle. A few of his advisers tried to persuade the Emperor to provide moral and religious education for the people so that they would not be seduced into completely evil ways, but the Emperor replied, "You are wrong: the laborers can be controlled only by fear of punishment and even death; I shall lead them only by these means; my 'morale' shall be the bayonet."

In short, between 1804 and 1806 no prominent figure in Haitian 175
life seems even to have dreamed of "liberal" institutions. Those who 525
had education, knowledge, and culture preserved them carefully for 641
themselves. The wisdom, even the possibility, of enlightening the masses was doubted. Most Haitians remained in complete ignorance of what went on in the outside world.

Dessalines was killed by ambush near Port-au-Prince on Octo- 175
ber 17, 1806. The mulattoes were generally supposed to have planned 643
the assassination, for it was well known that they had no cause to be 661
fond of him. His callousness had raised up enemies in all walks of life. The cultivators were glad he was gone, because of his harshness. They were virtually slaves again in all but name; it was reported that upon his personal estates he had made unsatisfactory workers run the gauntlet between lines of soldiers armed with thorny switches, and

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such an example of rigor might spread. The moral element of the population had long looked askance at his libertinage; his first act upon entering a town during a visit of state was regularly to have his aides select for him the most attractive females in the vicinity, with whom he would spend more time than at the business of governing. Not even his army was sorrowful over his death. He had let his loyal troops go for months without pay, and then, reviewing a group of them one day, taunted and railed at them for their ragged uniforms. "You look as naked as a bunch of old bottles!" he cried.

Dessalines had restored order to his country and had founded a state. Both achievements rested upon a display of force which inspired cringing fear and denied normal human aspirations. His entire social and economic order was based upon the subservience of the many to the few.

2. *Christophe* (1807–1820)

Until 1807 all Haitians had the same political background—the French colonial régime, revolution, the governorship of Toussaint, and the stern rule of Dessalines. Now the common path forked. Two avenues were opened up during the next dozen years, one by Christophe, the other by his Southern and mulatto rival, Pétion. The former was the road of discipline, hard work, and feudal control; the latter was one of persuasion, *laissez faire*, and small properties. Haiti ultimately chose the second.

The logical successor to Dessalines was his powerful Negro henchman, Christophe.[8] This black general felt so certain of his leadership that he did not even bother to attend the *Assemblée Constituante* which was to choose the new head of state. The mulattoes, however, had agreed among themselves that they had had enough of rule by ignorant ex-slaves. They consequently performed the very skillful manœuvre of preparing a constitution which should effectively shear a new president of dictatorial power; this done, they dutifully elected Christophe to the presidential office. The wrathful general peremptorily declined to rule by virtue of so anaemic a document, and led his army southward to demand proper respect for his august

8. The name Christophe was taken from the English Caribbean island of St. Christopher, on which this black slave was born. Later in life he took as his first name Henry, spelling it in the English fashion rather than the French, as an indication of his wholehearted admiration of English people and English ways.

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person. To his evident surprise he was met not by meek submission, but by the army of the mulatto Pétion. Christophe was not defeated; neither was he victorious. He was obliged to retire in high dudgeon to his loyal supporters in the North, where he proceeded to set up a state according to his own idea of what a state should be. 175 643 642 662

The Assembly thereupon outlawed Christophe on the ground of rebellion against constituted authority, electing in his stead their great favorite Pétion, whose power as president of the Republic was to be limited by the new constitution. For the next thirteen years, from 1807 to 1820, the tiny country with its 10,000 square miles was divided, Christophe ruling in the North and in the fertile valley of the Artibonite, and Pétion governing until his death in 1818 in the West and South, the main strongholds of the colored element.

Christophe was of the stuff that myths are made of. He was indisputably Haiti's most dynamic, relentlessly effective, and dramatic ruler of the nineteenth century. Like Toussaint and Dessalines, he was a black ex-slave, and like them he had won his spurs as a military leader during the revolution. He was an ardent patriot whose love for his country did not lead to retrogressive chauvinism. Whereas Dessalines through fear and hatred of the French had excluded all white men from Haiti, Christophe had the perspicacity to see that the country could benefit from the contribution of whites. Englishmen he especially welcomed. Like his predecessors Christophe drove his people—with a tyrant's lash, many thought—but only to increase the glory of Haiti. 175 643 663

Christophe had a vaulting imagination which brought glamour even to practical expedients. He built a colossal fortress on a high mountain in the North, partly for defense, but partly to make his contemned Negro people feel that they could achieve one of the architectural and engineering marvels of the age. His exquisite palace, Sans Souci, not only satisfied his own vanity as a ruler but also provided a focal point for the imagination and loyalty of his subjects. In 1811 he had himself crowned king, Henry I, amidst pomp and circumstance—and then created a royal court, partly to reward his leaders, partly to get the fees for patents of nobility, but primarily to bind all important men in the country to himself and to the Haitian state with unbreakable personal bonds. Dramatic in almost every particular of his life and reign, he ruled for thirteen years more through force of personality than by tyranny. Taxes were heavy [712] [644]

Taxes were heavy

175 and work strenuous; but there were a sound currency, commercial
651 and agricultural prosperity, and a full treasury.
652

Like many a great man he was an overweening egotist. His
175 energy and ambition, for Haiti as well as for himself, neither under-
643 stood nor tolerated a lesser determination than his own. At times he
159 seemed more intent upon the letter than upon the spirit of his laws. Probably his chief defect, a common failing of strong men, was a disregard for humble individual worth. To write of him invites the most colorful vocabulary. He is Black Majesty and the Emperor Jones. By almost any standards of leadership he would be accounted a great man. He lacked only those few final, subtle qualities which make for sheer genius. In 1820, stricken by paralysis and faced with defections in his army, he died as he had lived, dramatically, ending his life with a specially saved bullet (folklore says a silver one), in his palace of the ironic name, Sans Souci.

175 In no significant respect did Christophe change the feudal structure
643 of economic organization begun by Toussaint and carried on by Dessalines. It was in administration, especially as it affected social status, that the thirteen years of Christophe were important for the
[641] future of Haiti. Where the Emperor had been an unpredictable tyrant whose heavy hand inspired only terror, Christophe was a sternly just father whose well-disciplined children respected, admired, and even loved him.

The land policy of the two régimes was similar. Government
175 estates were farmed out on five-year leases to the highest bidders
427 among the well-to-do; large plantations belonging to the state were
475 tilled by cultivators who might, without taking the term too harshly,
655 be called serfs; loyal supporters and wealthy individuals were en-
546 trusted with responsibility. Like Dessalines, Christophe added wealth
643 to power and rendered all his subjects dependent upon himself rather than on their own resources and influence—but all this with a difference.

Where the Emperor had denied the natural vanity of his aides by
175 refusing them nobility, Christophe accepted their ambition as per-
643 fectly normal and made use of it for his own purposes. Four years
642 after he had established his state, he changed it from a republic to a
565 kingdom; all his important men he made dukes, barons, counts, knights. He warned them that he would expect them to live up to the dignities conferred upon them. Pomp and regalia are costly;

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therefore plantations must be made to yield the uttermost farthing if the nobleman was to pay for the necessities of strict court etiquette. It was by no means a childish whim which prompted Christophe to call himself a king; rather an intelligent utilization of the human material the leader had to work with. Vanity was to serve an economic and a political purpose. 175 643 642 565

Christophe perceived that the defect of Dessalines' reign had been lack of security, both of person and property. Agriculture is a long-term investment and so must be hedged about by orderly rules. To this end the monarch stated his laws clearly, charged a fixed tax—one fourth of the annual crop—which would enrich the kingdom while allowing the tenant-proprietor a reasonable profit, and then guaranteed that no arbitrary demands would be made. Certainly there was no pampering of the wealthy, but there was ample prosperity resulting from regularity and security. 175 657

The ordinary citizen was, as he had been, bound to the soil as an agricultural laborer. This quasi-serfdom, however, was comparative freedom. It simply meant that the home and work of a man must be at the plantation on which he had been born. Saturday afternoons and Sundays were free, so that the laborers might make the most of their opportunities to visit the nearest market village, to buy and sell small goods, gossip, and enjoy the sociability of being part of a crowd. Being bound to the soil meant simply that they could not move, when the impulse seized them, to another plantation or another part of the country. Those whose mothers or relatives were natives of a plantation must return to that estate, being forbidden to live in towns. No person, military or other, who did not derive his living from a plantation, could marry an agricultural worker—a prohibition designed to prevent workers from leaving estates because of family ties, and particularly to prevent women, as mothers of future cultivators, from deserting agriculture. 175 566 641 466 [582]

Mediaeval serfdom itself went no further in binding people to the soil. Indeed, it did not go so far in regulating the daily life of serfs. Under Christophe the cultivators lived according to a routine as strict as that of a school. Reveille was rung as early as three o'clock to arouse women to prepare breakfasts for their menfolk; by four or four-thirty the bell was sounded for the commencement of work, which began after prayers had been led by the overseer. At nine o'clock there was a pause for luncheon, and then a resumption of 175 566 512 466

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their new status was definitely higher. Mild serfdom might be thought of as the first intermediate step toward freedom. Democracy was still far off, there being no real middle class upon which to build it. Only the artisans of the towns and the ex-soldiers or the cultivators who had managed to lease small estates could be considered middle class. Christophe forced every dweller in villages or towns to have a manual skill. The only alternative was field work on a plantation.

The "aristocrats" of the kingdom were prevailingly black rather than colored. It was not to be expected that a vain man would soon forget the trick by which the mulattoes had frustrated him in his expectation of becoming the ruler of all Haiti. To say that the intermittent civil war between Christophe's kingdom of the North and Pétion's republic of the South was a struggle between blacks and colored people would not do great violence to the essential truth. Christophe's suspicion of gens de couleur was so well known that few were surprised at the high death rate of mulatto generals in the North. The murder of General Clervaux was definitely laid at Christophe's door.

The fact remains that among the nobility were men of all degrees of color. The King liked to say that he neither accepted nor yet took exception to the color of a man's epidermis—that in this matter he was *vert* (green), which is to say, neutral and indifferent. When he was angry his wrath fell indiscriminately upon the offender of whatever complexion. Similarly, when he found a light-skinned man who faithfully supervised a leased estate, thus proving his loyalty, the man was rewarded and promoted. Nevertheless, an underlying prejudice remained in his breast, bursting out occasionally at crises, and having ultimately a serious effect upon the loyalty of many of his people. When some of his subjects, enticed by the easy-going régime of the South, ran away to Pétion's republic, Christophe was angry enough to renew the war against Pétion (1811). The South won the encounter, thereby adding fuel to Christophe's rage. Three hundred prisoners he had captured he ordered tortured, and the angry King abused and insulted his own officers and executed several soldiers for having lost the battle. These actions caused more defections, renewed punishments, and a more abiding rancor. As one writer put it, the King "now regarded the mulattoes with a hatred so deep and fiendlike, that nothing would satisfy the direness of his

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vengeance but the utter extermination of that race."[12] He even ordered the execution of a mulatto woman in Gonaives because she had prayed for the success of Pétion.

During the latter years of his reign his personal popularity waned somewhat, owing to his relentless insistence upon efficiency and to his increasing tendency to lose his temper. Defections to the South occurred almost daily. The cultivators, comparing their never-ceasing toil on Northern plantations with the reported liberty and leisure of life in the South, continually drifted away. So alluring was the paradise of ease (and poverty) of the neighboring realm that Christophe found it necessary to keep a cordon of soldiers along the borders of his kingdom to prevent desertions. His administration now embarked on actual persecution of colored people. Inflammatory pamphlets were spread abroad, designed to make the Negroes think that the mulattoes were planning to enslave them once again. Under this campaign of propaganda many light-skinned Northerners had to go into hiding.

Despite all discrimination, the important line was drawn between cultivators who formed nine tenths of the population, and aristocrats who, with the army, made up the remainder. The nobility, the directors of landed estates, and the generals directed the activities of other people, so that the colonial prejudice against manual labor was strengthened. Here lay the basis of a persistent Haitian attitude of mind: to work with one's hands is to show oneself a member of the masses; to direct others is the distinction of the upper class. Education, neglected under Dessalines altogether, was fostered by Christophe. He established a few schools, inviting as schoolmasters certain Englishmen familiar with the then popular methods of the Lancasterian system; but since the cultivators were busy on the plantations, only the children of aristocrats benefited by the limited educational system and the social distance between classes was increased.

A French commentator says that Christophe showed unusual insight in devising for his kingdom "the only organization of which an African society was capable," namely, a combination of military despotism with certain benevolent inclinations, and territorial feudalism based upon a nobility created by the King. Actually, it suited not so much the African background of the people, which lay

12. Dr. Jonathan Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo* (Philadelphia, 1837), II, 191.

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Northern Haiti flourished magnificently under Christophe's sternly benevolent rule. The King had that daring spirit of initiative which was so generally lacking in later Haitian history; he had, in addition, the power necessary to force through a new adjustment if the old way showed defects.[17] He excited artificial wants among his leaders by making nobles of them, and then compelled them to satisfy these wants without ever slipping back to a lower standard of living. Thirteen years of enforced labor and of order kept by a rigorously effective police force gave northern Haiti the kind of prosperity she had known in colonial days. Christophe encouraged commerce and protected foreign traders. He called in all debased coinage, substituting for it sound gold and silver currency. The revenue he raised was larger than it had been since 1791, amounting to about $3,500,000 annually. Probably the most eloquent testimony to his success is the fact that at his death, when the kingdom of the North was once more united with the republic of the South, more than six million dollars found their way into the republican treasury.

The Black King's economic system worked. It was based on a social division of the people, with the masses doing manual labor, and the aristocrats definitely set apart and recognized as upper class. By 1820 Haiti was well on its way toward the caste system.

3. *Pétion* (*1807–1818*)

Almost all Latin-American countries in the nineteenth century exhibited one common feature: an aristocratic landowning class lording it over peons. Haiti did not follow this pattern. She had aristocrats and peasants, but the aristocrats did not own most of the land, and the peasants were not peons. If later rulers had kept the organization of economic life begun by Toussaint and developed by his fellow blacks, Dessalines and Christophe, it is almost certain that Haitian social evolution would have resembled that of the rest of Latin America, for it would not have been a great change from

17. Dantès Vieval, "Le Roi d'Haïti Henri Christophe," in *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti*, II, No. 3 (June 1931), p. 14, says that Haiti's periodic civil troubles and social unfortunate, both ending in a destruction of the state's economy, have been due to economic maladjustments. "Our weakness in political life derives from our immobility in material production." Immobility is an index of stagnation. Few rulers of Haiti have been at once powerful enough to overcome the immobility and wise enough to know what measures had to be taken.

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171 feudal holdings to absolute ownership of land by the influential. It is
175 strangely paradoxical that an aristocrat, the light-skinned Pétion,
631 representing the cultured group in society, broke the economic power of his own aristocratic class and made the former slaves not serfs but peasants. It is doubtful whether he intended either result.

175 Alexandre Pétion was the antithesis of Haiti's three eminent blacks
●643 in all but military skill. Toussaint's genius as a fighter lay in his
159 surprise moves, Dessalines' in his recklessness, Christophe's in his bulldog determination; but Pétion was a great general because he knew when to retire and so lead his enemy into an exposed position. The three Negroes had been born in slavery; Pétion, coming of a cultured and sophisticated affranchi family, grew up in France. Dessalines was a crude ruffian by comparison, while in the face of Pétion's suavity Christophe's impetuousness seemed rankly uncouth. Where they bludgeoned, Pétion persuaded; where they hacked their way through opposition in the determination to gain an end, he graciously yielded and so won new friends. Tactful at every point, he survived even such contretemps as his refusal of the hand of the Emperor's daughter.

As leader of a young nation, Pétion might almost be said to have had too broad an understanding of human nature. He was a gentle ruler over his people; when they erred he did not punish or upbraid, but excused their misdeeds by assuming the cause to be some fatal compulsion over which they momentarily had no control. He had no wish to drive the nation to "success." Neither did he care to use his position for personal aggrandizement. His mind was supple and practical, disdainful of abstractions, undeluded by resounding slogans, fertile in compromise, not finical as to means, always unsurprised, exquisitely tactful. When crises arose to dismay his ministers, Pétion's philosophic calm was undisturbed.

Cynically tolerant, he gave office to political enemies if they chanced to be able. A representative of the topmost class of society,
[648] he managed to moderate antagonisms based on color. He gave
[671] sanctuary and financial succor to the Spanish-American liberator, Simón Bolívar; he established the foundations of an educational
[423] system; he defended the state against Christophe's power; he ruled constitutionally; and he gave land to his people, even to the humblest of them. When he died, his subjects for miles around came into Port-au-Prince, where they stood weeping about his palace, refusing

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to be comforted. They had lost their best friend and their "*petit père*." 175

Dessalines would be emperor and Christophe king, but Pétion 643
was content to remain a simple president. He was an anomaly—as if 159
a Parisian of delicate sensibilities and mellow tolerance had somehow come to power with a darker skin in an alien land.

He has been highly praised and is worthy of eulogy. The fact remains that his country was rich when he came to power and poor when he died; united in 1806 and divided in 1818. Candor compels his admirers to admit that many of the calamities of the social and economic history of Haiti can be traced back to Pétion's administration.

The crucial act of Pétion was to parcel the land. From that policy 175
flowed the enduring consequences which became the predominant 223
socio-economic characteristics of Haiti. 421

Until Pétion's time the island had never known small properties. 178
Large estates had been the mark of social distinction in the French colony; Toussaint had kept the plantations large,[18] while Dessalines and Christophe had absorbed more and more land for the state, leasing it out in great blocks. The constitution of 1806[19] gave no indication of impending change, for it specifically declared all land to be the property of the Haitian nation. Within three years, however, the process of dividing and giving away the state's lands was well under way.

It would be illuminating to know what mental process in Pétion moved him to make so radical an about-face in land policy. The reasons he gave were, first, that the people had ably defended their country and so deserved a reward; second, that he wanted all the people to have a vital interest in the actual soil itself.[20] These may have been his only reasons. Others suggest themselves: the republic owed wages to its large standing army, which were more easily paid in land, of which the state had much, than in cash, of which it had little and progressively less; it would be much easier to keep peace in a country where men were free than where they were serfs; and the example of free ownership in the South would seem alluring enough

18. He permitted the leasing of plantations as small as fifty acres if the soil were especially rich. [427]

19. December 27. This document was largely the handiwork of Pétion.

20. The former explanation he consistently gave in his various messages to the Senate proposing progressive parcelings of the land; the latter he wrote to a friend, saying that he wished to "remember dans mes l'amour de sol."

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to Christophe's serfs in the North to cause defections ultimately sufficient to win the civil war for the republic.[20]

Those who would read into Pétion's democratization of land tenure the liberal convictions of a far-sighted statesman must ignore the evidence of his earliest land acts. For two or three years nothing was so apparent as that Pétion wished to please his friends, the mulatto aristocrats. He not only had the Senate restore to their former owners all lands of which Dessalines had despoiled them, but he also agreed to a law authorizing a cash payment up to the full value of crops planted and then lost during the last year of the Emperor's rule.[21] By these concessions the President immediately wiped out the rancor left behind him by Dessalines, reversed that ruler's whole land policy, gained the support of thousands of aspirants for social position, and bound in personal loyalty to his régime all the colored leaders.

He went further. Insecurity of tenure under Dessalines had worried landlords who were not actually mulcted of their estates, and so the President undertook to guarantee security. Thereafter all sales of land were to be registered by government deed, and so confirmed to the purchaser in perpetuity; government courts would be empowered to settle disputes over payment of rents; proof of the death of the testator must be forthcoming before wills could be probated. Not even the single limitation on ownership—that if the proprietor of an estate should remain away from Haiti the state might lease his property and receive the income from it—disturbed them, for they were patriots enough, and poor enough, to feel that Haitians should live at home.

As if this were not enough to please the landed gentry, the tax

20. Saint-Rémy, *Pétion et Haïti* (Paris, 1854–57), V, 165–166, suggests another reason, namely, that people will always be more ready to defend land they actually own than for an impersonal state. This sounds logical, but certainly the Negroes had fought ardently enough to drive out the French in 1803, landless though they were. Saint-Rémy continues: "And moreover, was it not time to dismember the enormous plantations which still bore the names of those colonists whose mother country might still at any moment descend to reclaim their heritage? And could this dismemberment be achieved otherwise than by giving the people an honorable title to it?"

21. Two successive laws, February 9 and March 16, 1807, achieved these ends. The former specified that all persons who, by purchase or gift or legacy, had acquired land before November 1, 1803 (when Rochambeau surrendered) or since February 7, 1804 (when Dessalines had ordered a confirmation of all titles) should be newly assured of their rights to such holdings. There was a single, possibly unimportant, limitation: the acquisition must have been by Haitians *from* Haitians.

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175 In his easygoing republic Pétion saw prosperity slowly wane,
433 cultivation decline, profits give way to deficits. He issued a large
652 amount of paper currency, and continually hoped for better times
534 which did not come. The days of large fortunes were over. The economic system affected the aristocrats: although they were still landowners, so also were thousands of common folk. The criterion of rank became increasingly not wealth, but rather pursuit of a career which demanded no manual labor. Distinctions, if they are to be effective, must be made on the basis of conditions not easily achieved by all and sundry. Education and good French met this requirement; even more did a light skin color.

175 Pétion, darling of the mulattoes though he was, never drew a color
643 line. There is no suggestion in any of his actions that he gave prefer-
641 ence in his appointments to people of his own color. He suppressed
563 at least one insurrection led by men who would have liked to stir up color prejudice. He often tried by quiet irony to make his people less sensitive to their complexions. It is eloquent testimony to his fairness that the 200,000 blacks in the republic never faltered in their love for him. They had ample reason to mistrust the haughty and ambitious colored people, some of whom had lorded it over them in colonial days; but they knew that the President did not share their pretentious attitude. One look at the North, ruled by a black, was enough to convince any Southerner that his happiness was safer in the hands of a mulatto than in those of a Negro ex-slave. At Pétion's death, therefore, there was no demur at the succession to power of another light-skinned man.

175 Haitians of a later day have discussed at great length the wisdom
643 of Pétion's parceling of state lands. His supporters (and they are
642 numerous) as well as his critics generally keep the controversy on the lofty plane of ideals, intentions, and hypothetical contingencies. Pétion is praised for being generous to humble folk where all other rulers of his country had been severe; for being a realist in accepting and adjusting his measures to the limitations of the average Haitian's character; for building a patriotism upon love of one's own small plot of land; for ruling constitutionally, with his Senate, rather than dictatorially. Most especially, Pétion is the one man among the early rulers who seemed to have any realization of the human values involved. Material gain is desirable but not at the expense of liberty. Freedom means something, even in poverty.

The critics do not challenge Pétion's good intentions or integrity;

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they even comment upon his unselfish generosity, which seems to have been entirely free of any desire for personal gain. They accuse him rather of taking the easiest course—that of trying to pacify every group in the republic: the masses, by giving them land and removing any external compulsion to work on it; the army, by making their enlistment profitable; the aspiring aristocrats, by validating their titles to estates and not challenging their prestige with a demand for responsibility. Strong states, the critics argue, are built on lines of discipline, not of perpetual yielding.

From an economic point of view a more valid criticism would ask the simple question: what was the practical result of his policies? Under the three previous Negro rulers agriculture had prospered, for these men kept state lands intact and forced the population to work; under Pétion, on the contrary, prosperity steadily declined with the division of land and the removal of compulsion. To expect a body of illiterate, inexperienced ex-slaves automatically to develop such economic virtues as industry, foresight, and thrift in a land which never knew any of these is not realistic, but merely quixotic. The Haitian critic Magloire implies that Pétion was either completely and cynically indifferent to common graft or else naively confident that men newly free would somehow be preternaturally honest. He goes into detail:

> Lands were distributed free, without order or method, each person taking what came his way and establishing himself as he could; graft and jobbery, under varied guises, governed the granting of concessions. As for properties in the towns, some people established themselves in upstairs apartments and others in ground-floor ones, without bothering to think of the lawsuits which might result from this disorder. In the sales made by the State, 50 and 100 and 200 gourdes were paid for real estate which was worth 10,000 and 20,000 and 40,000 gourdes or more. The administration put up for sale the property of towns, of communes, and of the State. Even buildings occupied in colonial days by officials, buildings whose construction had cost considerable sums, were bestowed on the people. . . .
>
> By a too great fractioning of the national domain, and carried away by the influence of false egalitarian and democratic ideas, Pétion brought about what a modern writer calls "the forcible neglect of agriculture" throughout the Republic.[32]

32. J. N. Léger, *Haïti: son histoire et ses détracteurs* (New York, 1907), p. 162.
33. Auguste Magloire, *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état actuel* (Port-au-Prince, 1904), pp. 180–181.

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175 Practically every contemporary foreign visitor contrasted the
114 divergent policies of Christophe and Pétion to the overwhelming
433 advantage of the former. One Englishman, intent upon defending the Negro against the charge of "natural indolence," went so far as to say that the majority of the people in the republic, although "possessed of small estates, on which they earned their living," were yet no less diligent than the forced laborers on Christophe's plantations in the North.[34] His only proof of this contention, however, was the greater volume of commerce at Port-au-Prince, capital of the republic, than at Cap-Henry (now Cap-Haïtien), capital of the kingdom.

175 The economic case is strongly against Pétion. The decline of
433 large-scale agriculture, the empty treasury, governmental purchase
652 of surpluses when prices were low, debasing the coinage[35]—by such
642 practical proofs, the republic was vastly less efficient than the stern dictatorship of the kingdom. But Pétion's people had freedom, while Christophe's were serfs. And Pétion's republic endured, to become reunited Haiti. The kingdom perished with Christophe.

4. *The Final Effort toward Plantation Life (1818–1826)*

175 The mantle of Pétion fell in 1818 upon the shoulders of his
643 meticulous secretary and minister, Jean-Pierre Boyer. Two years
642 later, upon the death of Christophe, the kingdom of the North was once again united, without a struggle, to the South.[36] It is conceivable that the refined mulatto Boyer might have infused into his people a spirit of industry and ambition, now that tranquillity reigned after fourteen years of separation and warfare. The people of the North had had a long experience of intense activity, while those of the

34. W. W. Harvey, *Sketches of Haiti, from the Expulsion of the French, to the Death of Christophe* (London, 1827), pp. 361 ff.

[652] 35. Pétion's coins were so easily imitated that the country was inundated with counterfeit money. The government issued only five million dollars worth of this currency, but in 1818 twelve millions were in circulation, the surplus having been fabricated in Europe and the United States.

[175] [643] [642] [648] 36. In 1822–23 Boyer likewise succeeded, with little fighting, in bringing the Spanish two-thirds of the island (Santo Domingo) into the republic. For the first time since 1697 the whole island was really unified under one rule. Toussaint had held it in 1801–2 and the Haitians claimed it thereafter, but real unity did not come until Boyer's time, when all the Spanish colonies in the New World were breaking away from their mother country. Santo Domingo regained its independence in 1844 shortly after the abdication of Boyer.

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South in general had the most loyal feeling toward a government which had been benevolently generous to them. A blend of the two might have been fruitful. 175 642 643

It was not any want of patriotism that caused Boyer to miss his great opportunity but rather a defect of ability. Desiring, like Pétion, to lead rather than to drive his people, he nevertheless lacked even more than his former chief the force of personality which might have persuaded them to work hard for the greater glory of Haiti. Despising the brutal compulsion exercised by Dessalines and Christophe, which he regarded as savage and too closely resembling the earlier methods of slave owners; wishing to emulate solely the gentleness of his predecessor, Boyer hoped for a number of years that his people would become industrious of their own accord. His hopes were frustrated. During his twenty-five-year presidency the mass of Haitians became so indifferent to pecuniary inducements that little work could be got from them beyond that required to produce necessary food. As commerce declined, the President was driven to fresh issues of debased currency and to the opening of mines in different parts of the country, though he knew that the richest mine Haiti possessed was its still fertile soil. 175 433 [652] [316]

For the first seven years Boyer pursued a policy based on hopeful expectation, refusing to inaugurate any of the forceful measures of his black predecessors. But by 1823 the treasury, enriched though it had been by the surplus from Christophe's exchequer, was empty; in 1824 disbursements exceeded income. Convinced in 1825 that his *laissez-faire* policy was failing to produce results, he decided to heed the insistent counsel of those (including most of the aristocratic, landholding class) who advised the reestablishment of a coercive system of agriculture. His officials showed him that nowhere in the country were sugar plantations any longer being cultivated on a great scale—except for a few estates run by government officials who could command the forced labor of convicts. The policy of offering cultivators a fourth of the total crop of a plantation as wages was having practically no laborers to work.[37] Even the few owners who offered the fourth plus daily wages had no success. Quite simply, the average Haitian preferred to be his own master, working only when he wished, and particularly working only for himself and his family. 175 652 24 433 466

37. This fourth in wages must not be confused with the quarter in taxes abolished by Pétion. See page 46 for a discussion of the quarter-crop wage system.

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175 Convinced at last that the easygoing policy was a failure, Boyer
24 devised by way of remedy a new set of agricultural laws. Where his
671 predecessors in the North had forced action first and then issued
643 simple laws to fix the practice, Boyer, always cerebral rather than active, planned a complete Code which was designed to call forth action. On May 1, 1826, following an address by the President, the Senate issued the Code Rural, an ingenious attempt of Boyer and his secretary-general, Inginac, to reorder the agricultural life of Haiti.

Never again in the history of the country was so detailed a scheme worked out. It was an attempt on a grand scale to order the life of all people for common prosperity. In addition to its own broad scope and elaborate detail, it was fortified by almost unanimous support among the aristocracy, not only the ex-peers of Christophe's defunct kingdom, but also the large landowners of the republic who under Pétion had never known large incomes. In considering the Code, one cannot restrain a certain admiration of Boyer's ingenious mind. Yet it marked the end rather than the beginning of plantation agriculture, for it utterly failed of its purpose. It was the impressive monument over the tomb of state control.

To examine it further, we must desert the world of men for one of pure economic device. The journey is hardly one of discovery, for Boyer and his aides were simply attempting to freshen up for use the methods which had served colonial Saint-Domingue and feudal Haiti. For all the tedium of a voyage through the mazes of an economic plan which came to naught, the Code will be found significant as marking the end of a way of life, even when the way which succeeded it had already begun to take form.

175 The dominating principle of the Code was the Haitian's "obligation" to work on the land. To this end, the worker was once more
671 legally attached to the soil. Every individual who was not a public
24 functionary, and who had not private means or a profession—in plain
566 English, every Haitian except the aristocrat, the official, the artisan,
693 and the soldier—was bound to the land, with no right to separate himself from it except in case of imminent danger. An agricultural worker might apply to the local *juge de paix*[38] for permission to quit the countryside to live in a town or village, but the judge was not to give the permission without being assured of the morality of the

38. A functionary who combined the offices of local judge, justice of the peace, and notary.

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175 423 up so many of these, there was no way short of a revolution to reconstitute the now parceled estates. Obviously the Code did not envisage the control of serfs by small property owners, yet there were more small owners than large.

175 184 466 In the third place, the Spanish-speaking masses of the eastern part of the island had never experienced the kind of forced labor with which most Haitians had been at one time or another familiar. Their noncoöperation made enforcement difficult.

175 647 Finally, the administration of so detailed a plan called for the establishment, at once and yet in complete order, of a fully trained corps of bureaucrats, perfectly coöperating with each other, most of them educated, and all incorruptibly honest. If every literate person in the state had been drafted for service, Boyer could not have filled all the offices required by the Code.

175 465 434 After brief and piecemeal experience with the law in operation, moreover, even the few remaining large landholders turned against it. While they approved the provisions for forced labor, they discovered that to turn over to the workers a quarter or half of the annual crop, in a falling world market, gave too slim a profit.[42] Without the support even of its original sponsors, failure of the law was inevitable.

175 648 652 These factors alone would have been enough to kill the Code; but its real death blow came from an entirely different quarter. The year before the agricultural laws were passed, Boyer had achieved what he considered to be a political master stroke. He had made a financial settlement with France whereby Haiti, in return for a large sum in cash and regular annual payments for sixty years thereafter, should receive full recognition of independence from France; also the former mother country would renounce all claims to any properties in the country. Boyer had felt that the chief debilitating influence on the political and economic life of his people was the constant dread that France might one day return to claim her lost colony. To rid the nation of that incubus, therefore, seemed to him a high feat of statesmanship, no matter what the financial cost.[43]

[433] [24] 42. Coffee, now the staple crop of Haiti, was meeting competition from the other coffee-producing countries of the world. To put the sugar manufacturing into working condition again called for more money than was available.

[643] [644] 43. Boyer's hand was forced to a certain extent by France, which had been exerting diplomatic pressure upon Haiti; the President, however, seemed to regard the settlement as a distinct coup.

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Color prejudice, in so far as a mass of people is concerned, is generally one-sided, directed by the upper group at the lower. The ordinary illiterate worker between 1820 and 1840 was inclined to accept without much question the superiority of the lighter-skinned Haitians. Resentment was often present, and envy, but hardly prejudice. The real contest developed between the colored élite and the blacks of ambition. The latter had reason to feel proud of their rise from slavery; many had shown ability, and felt themselves the mental and moral equals of the mulattoes; the men who had broken the power of the French, ended slavery, and founded the state were Negroes—and now Haiti was being ruled by mulattoes. The contest between the two groups was the obverse side of prejudice. The envied minority, jealously guarding their distinction, were generally conscious of prejudices which they rationalized with pronouncements about superior mentality and innate qualities. They would concede the difference between an educated black and a mere peasant, but would still cling to the feeling that all the culture in the world would not make the educated Negro a peer of the mulatto.

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Government documents of the period can hardly be expected to call attention to color prejudice and its concomitant resentments. To foreign observers, however, it was immediately apparent and noteworthy as a dominant characteristic of the country. Testimony is unanimous as to its existence; more important, the commentators all agreed that it was growing. An acute Frenchman called Boyer "the slow martyr of his color,"[56] being a mulatto in a republic of blacks: his color made Boyer suspect, so that the President had to spend most of his time and energy trying to avoid conflicts on this issue. It is entirely possible that Boyer's dearest schemes, particularly the enforcement of the Code Rural, failed primarily because the army was controlled by Negroes, whom the President dared not drive too hard; while only the army could have enforced faithful performance by the black laborers. An American doctor stated in 1838 that "the mulattoes, to preserve the sceptre of power in the possession of their caste, are driven to compliances which a negro president would feel himself empowered to spurn from him as the basest infringement on his dignity."[57]

56. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, I, 211. This observation is much more to the point than the spurious remarks which follow, attributing Boyer's inactivity partly to the enervating effects of the tropical climate.

57. Brown, op. cit., II, 239.

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175 563 565 [701] [669] an ineffective government, momentarily in the hands of colored élite. Attempting to dominate politics was a numerically small group of colored people and a still smaller group of Negroes. Although prevailingly black, the army might be, and in the later nineteenth century was continually, used by whichever group offered more. A third power, a middle class, might have balanced these antagonistic factions. Lacking such a moderating influence, Haiti was the victim of recurrent revolutionary movements.

175 178 642 643 At the time of Boyer, actual democracy would have been no safeguard, for it would have meant the supremacy of ignorance. His rule was the beginning of unfortunate days for Haiti. After the auspicious opening years, the President became an impotent onlooker as his country declined. It is instructive to compare the Haiti of Dessalines and Christophe with the Haiti of 1843, only one generation later.[62]

175 178 642 433 466 The Haiti of 1806 had been a beehive of activity. Soldiers, foremen, and policemen then stood over the workers with lianes to force them to labor for the benefit of their state. Production was carefully planned, an ordered hierarchy making every person in the country responsible to another higher than himself until the ruler was reached at the pinnacle. The cardinal fault of any laborer was to shirk at his task. The year 1843, on the contrary, found Haiti in a condition of quiescence which, to those who remembered the old days, resembled torpor. The central government had ceased to drive its citizens, and its half-hearted attempts at persuasion were futile. Overseers, drivers of gangs of workers, soldiers whose duty it was to enforce labor, had disappeared from the scene. Every man was his own master.

175 178 511 The standard of living in 1806 as in 1843 was low; but in the earlier year there had been a promise of great things to come once Haiti had rebuilt what war had destroyed. The succeeding years, however, failed to inculcate into the people a desire for any higher standard of life. Country dwellers were benighted; ignorance deepened the habit

[162] [175] 62. Haiti has never had an accurate census, so that it is impossible even to estimate the total population of the country either in 1806 or in 1843. The figures of 380,000 and 800,000 given by some authors for the two years are mere guesses. Likewise, one can only deduce the proportion of people in the main economic and social categories; probably seventy-five per cent of the Haitians were serfs in 1806 and the same percentage peasants in 1843; the "aristocracy," including all who did not derive a living by manual labor or army service, could hardly have reached five per cent in either year; the army, house servants, day laborers in the towns, and petty businessmen would make up the other twenty per cent.

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[p. 88]

IV

CASTE LINES BECOME PERMANENT

175 178 THE contrast between the golden days of forced labor and the stagnating mediocrity of Boyer's Haiti was as vivid to thinking Haitian aristocrats as it was to foreign whites. Particularly the young "intellectuals" of the 'thirties who knew something of the progress taking place in the rest of the Western World felt that the time had come to stem the wave of economic disintegration at home. In a series of pronouncements they pointed out that the advancement of Haiti had "been constantly slowed up for some time. . . . Haiti is stationary, is retrograde: we need no other proof of it than this frightful uncertainty about the future which so deeply disturbs all serious minds and sincere patriots." One may discount the phrase 175 668 about "sincere patriots," for peasants were patriots even though undisturbed by the economic stagnation. The agitation for reform won a wide following among all the élite who cherished a glowing recollection of earlier days.

Leaders of the young men called upon Boyer in 1838 to introduce stronger methods of forced labor; but Boyer, remembering the fate of his Code Rural in which he had tried to do precisely this, could think of no effective way of tinkering again with the economic system. From the young men he received the most contradictory advice as to specific methods. The result of the appeal was therefore merely continued inaction by the government. The agitators, ex- 175 cellent critics if poor reformers, accordingly persisted in their cam- 668 paign, adding new converts to their cause until the movement pro- 669 duced a crisis. Revolution broke out in January 1843 at Torbeck in the South, and rapidly spread toward the capital; within two months ●643 Boyer and his faithful secretary-general, Inginac, had departed for exile.[1]

[643] [159] 1. Boyer went first to Jamaica, and then to Paris. In the latter capital King Louis-Philippe gave him an audience and called him "prince." Boyer replied, "Sire, I am no prince. I have merely been the head of a small republic." The King of France thereupon affectionately pressed Boyer's hand, remarking, "When one has governed a million people for twenty-five years, he is raised to the rank of princes." . . . Boyer died in Paris in 1850.

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Political history of the next seventy-two years is a complicated story, of which only enough need be told here to illuminate the evolution of caste and social distinctions. Even a short summary reveals the bewildering confusion. Of the twenty-two heads of state between 1843 and 1915 only one served out his prescribed term of office;[2] three died while serving, one was blown up with his palace, one presumably poisoned, and one hacked to pieces by a mob; one resigned. The other fourteen were deposed by revolution after incumbencies ranging in length from three months to twelve years. 175 643

The Revolution of 1843 brought back into national prominence the whole matter of color and caste. The young revolutionaries, mostly light-skinned, seem to have assumed that their group was permanently in control. With cavalier highhandedness they set about capturing the last stronghold of Negro eminence: the army. They soon found, however, that they had caught a Tartar; their attempt to rule was fatal to them and their clique. 175 669

In the Constitutional Assembly convened to make a new constitution for the country, they professed astonishingly democratic doctrines. Proclaiming that the fault of former governments had been reliance upon military power, they now proposed to make civil power paramount by allowing the common people to vote. Since up to this time the franchise had been strictly limited to army officers and anciens libres, such a radical departure as general suffrage makes no sense unless conceived as an attempt to break the power of the Negro-controlled army, for surely the élite had no confidence in the wisdom of the peasantry. Weight is given to this explanation by the paradoxical action of the revolutionaries in promoting to high army rank some of the strongest mulatto partisans of civil government. 175 668 646 642 641 701

The new constitution was an immediate failure. Most of the colored élite condemned the giving of voting rights to peasants and workers; the army chiefs, generally black and illiterate, some of them aging veterans of 1803, bitterly resented being made subservient to young, inexperienced civil officers; in fact, even the new mulatto president, Rivière-Hérard, had no conception of government other than by military dictatorship. 175 642 641

Not only was the constitution a failure; so was the government of the young revolutionaries. A part of their weakness lay in their 175 643

2. The presidential term varied under different constitutions; some allowed a four-year term with the right of reflection, some six years with no reflection.

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175 choice of a leader. Not gifted with administrative ability, Hérard
•643 blundered first by imprisoning one of the most popular Negro leaders in the country, thereby turning much of the population of the South against him. Next, learning of conspiracies in the Spanish
[669] end of the island, he tried to stamp out revolt by exile and jail sentences, only to precipitate there a real revolution for independence. In his fight against the Dominican separatists he was roundly defeated, and his prestige sank rapidly to the vanishing point. Within two months after his inauguration, he had only one third of the island left over which to attempt to rule. Within a year he was out of power altogether and with him the colored people.

175 The Revolution of 1844, although supported by certain old friends
669 of Boyer, was chiefly a movement of Negroes—followers of the imprisoned black, Salomon; peasants from the South who had been promised much by the previous year's revolutionaries and had got nothing; and particularly the Negro army clique. The significant part of the new revolution was its announced purpose, to lessen the influence of the colored group in government, to have a black president, and to dispossess certain reputedly well-to-do citizens by
[643] dividing their estates among the people. Quickly successful, the insurgents promoted to the presidency the illiterate octogenarian black general, Guerrier, who in Christophe's kingdom had been Duke of Marmalade[3] and Duke of Avancé.

175 For the first time in a quarter-century the Negro element was again in the saddle, where it was to remain for the next fifteen years.
643 Everyone recognized Guerrier's personal courage and admired the
662 common sense which made him prefer conciliation to unnecessary violence as a method of government, but the colored people were shocked at having to live under the rule of another black ex-slave. The idea evoked grim memories. Knowing Guerrier's addiction to drink, the colored faction managed to make him a tool for their own use, so that his brief administration, ending with his death in 1845, was generally known as a "government of understudies." Guerrier was followed in the presidency by another black, likewise an octo-
175 genarian: Louis Pierrot, the handsome brother-in-law of King
643 Christophe. But Pierrot was even more ignorant than Guerrier and

[554] 3. This title generally evokes amusement among non-Haitians. Christophe had merely named his peers after districts whose names had been given by French planters in the eighteenth century. Another of his noblemen was a Count of Limonade.

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already showed signs of senile dementia; his tyrannical crotchets speedily raised up a revolt against him, and in 1846 he gave way to still another black, General Riché. Like his two predecessors, Riché was aged and illiterate. Nevertheless, he began his rule auspiciously by putting an end to dictatorship and surrounding himself with wise counselors. In 1847, just when the country was beginning to appreciate his good qualities, he died a victim of drugs taken to increase his vigor.

These four presidents, who had among them ruled less than four years, did not appreciably alter the social situation, for they had all been preoccupied with the suppression of revolutions. But Haiti was still in a position to take some definite step toward economic progress, education of the people, conciliation of the antagonistic colored and black elements. Because of a stupid whim, the country was precipitated down exactly the opposite path. The Senate gathered to select Riché's successor found itself unable to rally a majority vote for any candidate; whereupon one Senator proposed the name of an ignorant, entirely unillusterious, black general, Faustin Soulouque. The chamber immediately gave him a majority, for the supporters of each candidate saw in this complete nonentity a chance for another "government by understudies," in which they themselves would actually rule. When the Senatorial delegation arrived to inform Soulouque of his election, that unimpressive Negro, lying stretched out in his hammock, refused at first to take it seriously. He had more than once been the victim of practical jokes, and this looked like a particularly malicious one.[4] It took persuasion to convince him that he was indeed the new president of Haiti.

Soulouque's accession to power marked the beginning of a twelve-year nightmare for Haiti. During his first year of office the new president walked warily over the unfamiliar terrain. Those who had named him for their own ends felt justified in their scheme, for each opposing group still looked forward to controlling the government with Soulouque as a front. Meanwhile, however, the President had been carefully observing everything that went on around him, arriving at his own judgment of men and measures.

4. Many years before, Boyer had prophesied a period of disorder in Haiti and is reported to have said that in such a time "any man in Haiti might become president, even that stupid Negro over there," indicating Soulouque. It is told that Soulouque mumbled, "Please, Mr. President, don't make a fool of me."

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175 643 Suddenly, without warning, he reversed what had been mistaken for docile inactivity, and assumed complete personal command of the reins of office. By means of a well-organized body of secret police, [625] he inspired his own counselors with fear not only for their positions but for their lives. Although illiterate, Soulouque never signed a bill presented to him by his ministers until he was sure he knew its essential core. The hopeful "understudies" were forcibly awakened to the realization that they were hoist on their own petard.

175 643 563 669 The colored element was particularly apprehensive at Soulouque's amazing activity, for the President was clearly setting himself against their group, both in the cabinet and out. Determining clandestinely to get rid of their puppet before he became a Frankenstein's monster to destroy his creators, they fomented a new revolution. This, however, proved to be a strategic error of the first magnitude, for the President was already much stronger than they imagined. The insurrection was quashed with massacre and attendant frightfulness. In the aftermath, as Bouzon mordantly remarks, "the republic was calm—with all the tranquillity of a tomb!" By their ineptitude, the colored group had now made themselves completely insecure.

175 565 643 642 [555] In the second year of his régime Soulouque decided to imitate Dessalines by turning the state into an empire. His coronation was extremely gaudy, as well as expensive. Calling himself Emperor Faustin I, he created a peerage drawn chiefly from among his black generals—four princes, fifty-nine dukes, and numerous counts, barons, and knights. This was merely outward pomp to gratify their craving for prestige, for they had no functions to perform, nor even the necessity of Christophe's peers to pay for their regalia. As nobles they were given no responsibilities in directing economic activity nor any increased political power over districts of the empire. The Emperor's own vanity was flattered by having a peerage. He ruled as an autocrat with blatant despotism. For ten years following the 175 643 721 648 728 coronation Haiti had to accustom itself to costly expeditions against the Dominican Republic, nearly all ending in defeat for Haiti. The outcome of these intermittent wars was neither gain nor loss of territory by either side, but only temporary rule of occupied districts. Haiti likewise had to accustom itself to sudden executions, to the shabby grandeur of court display, and to financial trickery which would not have deceived a schoolboy. While the heads of his opponents and even his loyal counselors fell, Soulouque's infantile "empire" tottered to economic ruin.

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"empire" tottered to economic ruin. Graft, default on the debt, increasing deficits, and debased currency were the order of the day, and so continued until 1859, when the accumulation of anger over the useless wars and the humiliating defeats made the Emperor so unpopular that a new and more carefully planned revolution accomplished his downfall. 175 643 652 669

Fifteen years of administration by Negro rulers had broken the political power of the colored élite. Only three light-skinned men became president thereafter until the occupation of Haiti by the American Marines in 1915; in the seventy-two years following Boyer's downfall, mulattoes ruled during only eight. The army under a black general was too powerful, a colored president too hampered by suspicion, to make the political game worth the candle. The colored élite, therefore, adapted themselves to existing conditions as best they could, controlling the business life of Haiti, filling the law offices and, because of their literacy, the secretaryships of state, and indulging in honorific cultural pursuits. 175 643 178 564

In the years after Soulouque the basic realities of Haitian life were changed hardly at all by shifting political administrations. Some of the presidents were mildly progressive, many were indifferent; still more were actually harmful; but the lives of the mass of peasants were not often touched by presidential vagaries. Politics was an affair almost wholly of townspeople, of the army, the élite, and the pseudo-élite. Revolutions, counterrevolutions, movements of reform, international tangles, financial woes, and most of the other complications to which unstable states are heir, absorbed the attention of rulers and upper-class folk who were politically inclined. 175 643 66

Constitutions were made by presidents and changed by their successors; the Senate passed contradictory laws in the same session if the chief executive so recommended; the courts were presided over by the president's men. Haitian law in the latter half of the nineteenth century was what the president's immediate strength and wish made it—or else it was folk custom, undisturbed by the rulers. 175 642 671 692

Never once, in the three quarters of a century after Boyer's time, did Haiti approach the high standard of production known in colonial days or in the early years of independence. The pattern of Haitian social and economic life became fixed in this seventy-five years. Haiti became a country of small-scale tillage by a peasant population, with only enough external trade to provide moderate 175 178 433 565 439

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175 fortunes, that is, a few thousands of dollars, for a small number of
178 élite, and to make the presidency a position economically rewarding
565 enough to justify revolutionary conspiracies. The growth of a
433 peasantry set in train during the long régime of Boyer continued,
439 unbroken even by the numerous insurrections, until fixed in the
[423] mores. Land owned by the countryfolk was divided and redivided
[428] among their heirs, so that even holdings of moderate size became smaller.

Not one of the twenty-two rulers following Boyer made the
175 slightest effort to return the country to the forced labor system of
643 Dessalines and Christophe. They seemed to recognize the inevita-
566 bility of a peasant way of life, or at least the impossibility of luring
423 the people back to directed labor after a long experience of freedom. On the contrary, several presidents still further parceled the land.

President Guerrier, for example, the very year after Boyer was
175 deposed, put on sale at moderate prices those state lands in the North
648 not reserved for public use.[5] If the revolutionaries of 1843 had hoped
423 to bring back Christophe's system of forced labor, their hopes were doomed to disappointment because of the state's need of immediate income. Christophe's state land areas were now broken up in the one part of the country where a few large plantations still existed.

President Geffrard in 1862 gave his blessing to small ownership, the
175 basis of peasantry. Whereas Pétion's laws had prohibited sales of land
649 in parcels less than fifteen acres, Geffrard's law regularized the leasing
421 and sale of national property in lots of fifteen acres *at most*. Geffrard
423 was the first president openly to admit that many government lands had been lost to citizens by squatting. In an endeavor to give legality to land held by squatters' rights, his law demanded that squatters register their claims, announcing that within a short time there would be no further dismemberment of the national patrimony except by grants and sales.[6] Few registrations were made, however, for the Haitian peasant had already acquired a suspicion of legal documents he could not read or understand, and he could see no reason for legalizing a status in which, with the squatter's tenacity and inertia, he already felt himself secure.

900 Haiti was in constant financial straits. Money had to be borrowed

5. By a law of September 23, 1844.
6. Law of August 14, 1862. The articles cited here are 2 and 4.

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Haiti was in constant financial straits. Money had to be borrowed

abroad; them paid back at the promised time or a foreign warship would appear at some Haitian port. The steady drain of annual indemnity payments to France,[7] the cost of subduing revolutionary movements, and the large sum eaten up even in times of peace by wages to the army made successive presidents continue to yield government land for small sums of ready cash, in spite of Geffrard's announcement that no more state lands would be alienated. Nissage Saget, coming to power by a successful revolution, paid out fifteen acres to each soldier who fought in his campaign in the South.[8] The strain of the government resembled those of the Continental Congress in America during the Revolution. 175 652 [171]

Another impulse to parcel the land came during the administration of President Lysius Salomon (1879–88). The debt to France had finally, after half a century, been paid off; that incubus removed, Salomon instituted numerous reforms, financial, military, educational. On February 26, 1883, he signed a law by which every citizen of Haiti might conceivably become a landowner even if he lacked money to buy land. Upon receipt of a written agreement to cultivate certain tropical crops—specifically, sugar, coffee, cotton, cacao, and tobacco—the government would grant provisional title to a portion of fifteen to twenty-five acres of land taken from the public domain. The grant became final if, after a period of from two to five years, three quarters of the land had been effectively cultivated. 175 643 671 423 [648]

Five hundred requests were made in 1884 for such grants, and twelve hundred in the following year.[9] Thereafter one finds no records of applications for land; the peasants had discovered the hidden trap in this apparent generosity. How could a peasant with a tiny farm lacking implements and tools, not to mention ready cash, be expected to cultivate important crops on fifteen or twenty acres of land? He would have to cut down trees, uproot wild plants, fertilize the ground, purchase equipment and seeds, and then wait several years for a crop. As Thoby says, "And even then he was not a

7. See above, pp. 70–71.

8. Law of July 12, 1870. In August of the same year, Nissage required an inventory to be taken of state lands remaining.

9. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Manuel d'histoire d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1934), p. 317, cites these figures. They are contested by Dr. F. Dalencour, *Le Sauvetage national par le retour à la terre*, p. 31, who maintains that only 800 applications came in altogether. Here, as elsewhere, Haitian records are incomplete. [114] [423]

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proprietor in the true sense of the word, for he might not change his crops and cultivate bananas, potatoes, yams, peas, or other foodstuffs."[12] Critics of Salomon point out that these conditional grants were designed to make of the peasant a simple fiscal workman for the state, to force him once more to labor for the public rather than for himself. The legislators of 1883 were preoccupied not with the welfare of the peasant, but solely with the increase of production and of fiscal revenue.

The law of 1883, then, like the Code Rural of 1826, fell into desuetude. The peasant was canny enough to see that passing a law did not change realities: he might still squat on government land and yet not be thrown off by the government. Both Boyer's Code and Salomon's law, although of entirely different inspiration, tried to regiment the Haitian peasant in agricultural lines beneficial to state finances but uncongenial to himself.

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Up to the time of the American Occupation of 1915, there were no other measures of much influence upon the status of the peasant. The whole impulse of the common people seemed to be toward the acquisition of plots of land for themselves. By the indifference or impotence of the state, they were allowed to install themselves upon government lands, there to found families and pass on the property upon which they had settled. Thus occurred what might be called a "natural"—certainly unplanned and automatic—development of small property. At first it came at the expense of the great domains; next, through allowing state leases to expire and be given cheaply into the hands of small farmers; finally there were the grants and sales at low prices to thousands of soldiers.

Time validated the peasants' claims, but the state has never formally done so. Legally it might be argued that only a small fraction of the population of Haiti has an indisputable right to the land on which it lives. By strict interpretation most of the peasants are still squatters whom the government might dispossess. The American Occupation, in view of this confusion, tried in businesslike fashion to survey the land and establish property rights. The task proved so extremely difficult that it was soon given up. It met with the stubborn refusal of the peasants to state their claims or take any interest in legalizing their rights. No administration has been foolhardy enough

12. Armand Thoby, *La Question agraire en Haïti*, p. 43.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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V

CASTES SINCE THE AMERICAN OCCUPATION OF 1915

IN 1915 American Marines entered Haiti. One of the major reasons for their intervention may have been economic; certainly this explanation or accusation has been frequently made by opponents of American dollar diplomacy. Nevertheless, the ground was well prepared by political incompetency in Haiti in the years preceding 1915, and the reason given to the world by American statesmen to justify the Occupation was essentially a political one: Haiti was in a state of anarchy. 175 648 642

As has been abundantly shown, Haiti never had a semblance of democracy. From its beginning the country was governed either by a despot—the president, who might or might not be benevolent—or by an oligarchy. The failure of Haitian politics from 1843 onward was the inability of the similar ruler and the oligarchy to work in harmony; indeed, the oligarchy was continually divided against itself. Only three of Haiti's presidents from 1843 to 1915 were more than mediocre statesmen.[1] It is merely a question of degree, whether such phrases as "political and economic stagnation" and "social inertia" are more accurately descriptive than words like decay and degeneration. 175 642

A brief résumé of politics between 1910 and 1915 will set the stage for a view of the Occupation in relation to the development of caste. 175 643 642

1. With this judgment by a foreigner Haitians may obviously disagree. In the author's opinion the presidents Geffrard (1859–67), Salomon (1879–88), and Hyppolite (1889–96) were relatively distinguished men. To Geffrard may be credited the following: increase of educational facilities; construction of much-needed public works; an attempt to form a true middle class, even by importing Negroes from the United States; reduction of the size of the army by half; healing of a sixty-year breach with the Holy See, so that Haiti might once again have approved priests; the opening of closed ports to commerce; and improvement of agricultural methods. Salomon was an educated man with European experience; his achievements were to create a national bank, establish a sound currency, retire the public debt, lower tariffs, bring in schoolteachers from France, open rural schools, bring Haiti into the International Postal Union. Hyppolite's chief triumphs were in the field of public works—much-needed buildings, bridges, docks, telephone and telegraph lines. 175 643 65

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175 The twentieth century began inauspiciously with a succession of dull
643 incompetents in the presidency. General Sam's administration (1896-
642 1902) had been distinguished only by lethargic calm. Nord Alexis (1902-8), over eighty when elected, prolonged the peace by doing nothing to disturb it; he solved his financial problems by issuing paper money, while his political "policy" involved nothing more significant than the sponsoring of festivals to celebrate Hait's hundred years of independence. The mild revolution which displaced him substituted a president more puerile than oppressive, Antoine Simon (1908-11), who is best revealed in a terse comment by a Haitian author: "When he passed by on a street or through a public square, everyone, foreigners as well as Haitians, must stand still, even stop smoking, and respectfully salute the Head of State. At any instant, without reason, the functionaries of the capital might be called to the Palace to endure his interminable and insipid discourses."[2] A revolution cut short his tedious régime.

Within the next four years six presidents rose and fell. Their administrations were worse than ephemeral; indeed, they hardly deserve the name of governments. Not one of the six had a happy time in office; the first was blown up with his palace, the second is generally thought to have been poisoned, the next three were quickly deposed by revolutions, and the last, after massacring his imprisoned political enemies, was horribly cut into small bits by an infuriated mob. Anarchy then ensued.

175 For years Haitian presidents had staved off financial collapse by
652 heavy borrowing abroad. United States financial interests were in-
648 volved in the Bank of Haiti and in a railroad company, while the American government, through its Monroe Doctrine, was disturbed by French and German threats to collect their Haitian debts by force. When President Guillaume Sam[3] was hacked to pieces by the mob, the United States landed Marines from gunboats which were conveniently just outside the harbor of Port-au-Prince. Beginning on July 28, 1915, the Occupation lasted for nineteen years.

128 With the question of America's justification in the matter of
648 occupying Haiti this book cannot pretend to deal. As with most large matters of policy, convincing arguments can be offered on both sides. The important fact for this study is that the presence of white

2. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Manuel d'histoire d'Haïti*, p. 338.
3. Not to be confused with Simon Sam, who had ruled twenty years earlier.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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American Marines in Haiti during the next two decades had definite effects upon the social life of the country.

One of the most immediately observable results was the termination of the long political domination by the blacks, and reestablishment of the colored élite in government control. The four presidents since 1915, Dartiguenave (1915–22), Borno (1922–30), Roy (1930), and Vincent (1930–41), have all been light-skinned. The United States forces had a definite hand in the election of the first two of these men. America's concern was certainly not to return the government to the colored group, but rather to have as titular heads of state men who were educated, temperate of mind, civil in manners—and, of course, mentally "supple" enough to carry out policies agreeable to the State Department at Washington. Since education had for long been a perquisite of the élite only, and since colored élite outnumbered black élite, the chances were good that the choice should fall upon a colored man in 1915 and 1922. Even so, it may have been pure coincidence that the Americans supported mulattoes rather than Negroes; it can hardly be coincidence that the mulatto presidents since 1915 have filled the key offices with colored men. They would assuredly maintain that they had tried to select persons best fitted for office. The fact remains that there are few blacks in the important ministries.

This return to political power of the colored element was one of the most sweeping transformations effected by the Marines, for once again, as in the golden days of Pétion and Boyer, political prestige accompanied and fortified social position. Since 1843 one black or almost black general had succeeded another as president of the republic, and the élite class had perforce to endure them. Socially tolerated these parvenu generals had been, but accepted never. When the Marines arranged the election of President Dartiguenave they effectively reversed the tradition of a century. Since 1915 there have been several Negro candidates for the presidency; in coming elections there are sure to be others; for the present and the near future it is safe to say there will be no more black non-élite presidents.

Such a prophecy is made with a certain assurance because of another result of the Occupation: reform of the army. All true friends of Haiti knew, as most Haitian statesmen had understood for a hundred years, that the huge standing army was an unmitigated burden to the economic, political, and social stability of the country.

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plausible, such as the race prejudice displayed by many individual Marines;[4] the unnecessary slaughter in the suppression of *cacos* (guerrilla) rebellions in the North; the continued holding of offices (and salaries) by Americans too impatient to train Haitians, as by the Agreement of 1915 they were supposed to do; the fostering rather than elimination of military psychology among the people by the presence of armed Marines. 175 648 642

The campaign against the Occupation was generally on the highest level of patriotism, for it threw out one variation after another on the same theme: We Haitians are not being allowed to govern ourselves. Some realists knew that their hurt national pride was accompanied by disappointment that certain salaries were not reaching Haitian pockets, certain prestige of office not redounding to the credit of Haitian men. What if the real reason for opposition were not the openly avowed one? The Marines must go! Order had been restored and government reëstablished. It was patent that any administration which could effect the withdrawal would be immensely popular: it was equally patent that if the Americans left the country, the benefits of their efficiency and material improvement would remain as a tangible boon to Haiti. 175 648 642 668

President Sténio Vincent, elected in 1930 after a campaign in which the Americans did not interfere, began the negotiations with Washington. With President Hoover he made headway toward reforms, but President Roosevelt's attitude was more actively cooperative. In 1934 Vincent had a series of conferences with the President of the United States; the latter, in pursuit of his good-neighbor policy, persuaded the American Senate to order the Occupation at an end and turn over without cost to Haiti many buildings, supplies, and equipment used by the Marines. Vincent personally benefited from the withdrawal of 1934. He called himself Haiti's "second Liberator,"[5] and made the anniversary of the American departure a national holiday. Indirectly the élite also benefited for now, entrenched in office, they could govern without white supervision. The material equipment was there to be enjoyed by the whole people at no further expense to them. 175 648 642 643 [illegible] 527 563

4. The United States government in the early days had sent Marines from the Southern States to Haiti, on the theory that they would, from long acquaintance with Negroes, know how to "handle" them. This stupid blunder was shortly rectified.

5. Dessalines had, of course, been the first.

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revolt of the slaves (1791). Priests fled or went into hiding with the other whites, so that Masses lapsed or were said by religious but unordained mulattoes. Upon his accession to power in Haiti Toussaint L'Ouverture made several attempts to rehabilitate religion in the country, for the Church he felt was a stable institution which might help in giving order to the turbulent land. He tried to accomplish the return of priests to the island parishes and churches. There are indications that Toussaint was not himself deeply religious; his pronouncements are formal, but one cannot say that they appear to be deeply felt. In his proclamation of October 10, 1798, announcing the expulsion of the English, he orders thanks to the God of Hosts, recommends to his chiefs of corps that the soldiers pray morning and evening and faithfully attend Mass on Sundays. In a public address he enjoins upon parents the duty of teaching the catechism to their children.

The use of Catholicism as an aid to statecraft is apparent in his official dealings with the Church. His constitution of May 9, 1801, states that "the Catholic religion, apostolic and Roman, is the sole religion publicly professed." To obtain priests he besought the return of many who had fled the slave insurrection; he likewise turned to France, but France at this time was less than ardent in religion; nor were French priests likely to wish to come to an island ruled by blacks, particularly one which Napoleon was quite obviously planning to subdue. Toussaint addressed himself, therefore, to a schismatic abbé, Grégoire by name, in whom he saw a friend. Whether Grégoire might have helped him to establish the Catholic Church firmly as a part of Haitian life, with only a handful of repatriated colonial priests, we cannot know, for in 1802 the final war of independence began and the island, in convulsion, had no time for spiritual matters.

2. *Catholicism in Independent Haiti*

Dessalines, the passionate, violent, and licentious founder of the new state, although not an enemy of the Church was not its active friend. In his slaughter of whites he spared several priests who had come to the country under Toussaint's persuasion, either because these clerics were obviously inoffensive or might later prove useful to him. Just as he controlled every other detail of Haitian life, he was determined to direct church affairs. He reserved to himself the right to fix the limits of jurisdiction of each priest and to nominate, even

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to appoint, curés to the vacant parishes. His independence of action could not fail to give offense to Church authorities. One of his first appointees was a black ex-slave, Félix, who had been a drum major in the native army. Félix was made curé in the important town of Saint-Marc.

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The constitution of his empire (May, 1805) indicates that Dessalines did not intend to make himself head of the Church, but rather planned a complete separation of Church and State. Article 50 reads: "The law admits no dominant religion"; while the next article grants freedom to all cults and refuses state support to any denomination or minister. No attack was made, therefore, upon Catholicism, yet the disestablishment of that Church was a serious blow to its prestige. Not in the specific provisions regarding religion was the Church most weakened, but rather in the "liberality" of articles dealing with actions upon which the Church had taken a firm moral stand. Thus Article 14 declared that "marriage is an act purely civil and authorized by the government," while Article 15 permits divorce by the state. Early laws of the empire still further undermined the position of Church doctrine. Illegitimate children were granted the same legal rights as legitimate ones—a generous provision which removed one of the strong reasons for marriage; separation of husband and wife except by divorce was forbidden, and this prohibition practically encouraged the divorce disapproved by the Church; finally, the grounds upon which divorce might be allowed were broader than those existing anywhere else in the Western World at the time: mutual consent, application from one party to the marriage, or simple allegation of incompatibility of temperament or character.

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From the promulgation of this constitution in 1805 and for the next fifty-five years, Haiti was in open schism from the Roman Catholic Church. The Holy See refused to recognize either the Haitian state or the provisions of its constitution, and it declined to allow priests to enter the country. Certain Haitian presidents were friendly enough to Catholicism, and others were openly desirous of reestablishing a state religion, but the breach once made was not healed by mere good wishes. The longer the schism endured, the farther the people grew away from the doctrines and practices of a religion in which they had never been firmly grounded. At the moment of independence, when all minds were more open to new

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ideas than in later years, the habits of regular attention to religious duties might have been fixed; by 1860 it was too late. Religion existed during these years, but it was a strange gallimaufry of Catholicism and folk belief.

On the whole, the rulers of young Haiti were tolerant of the Catholic Church even to the point of advancing its interests, in so far as these might benefit the state. Their pronouncements and actions, nevertheless, were not those of ardent personal believers. Pétion's constitution of the republic in 1806 once more established Catholicism as the official Church. What it gave with one hand, however, it took away with the other. Thus:

> *Art. 35.* The Catholic, apostolic, and Roman religion being that of all Haitians, is the religion of the state. It and its ministers will be protected.
>
> *Art. 36.* The law assigns to each minister of that religion the extent of his spiritual administration. These ministers may not, under any pretext, form a body within the state.
>
> *Art. 37.* If in the course of time other religions are introduced, no person shall be hindered, so long as he conforms to the laws, in following the cult he has chosen.

The Catholic, then, is the state religion, but only because the Haitians have heretofore been nominal Catholics. It occupies a position of practical fact which it would lose if by the introduction of other cults Haitians should be drawn away from it. Its ministers will be carefully watched to see that they do not, as a group, try to exert political pressure. And what freedom of action is possible to a church whose ecclesiastical parishes can be limited or extended in size by the civil legislature?

Pétion no more fought religion than he fought any other conventional institution approved by civilized people; but he did little to foster it. He received certain Wesleyan missionaries with considerable hospitality, remarking that "education increases the dignity of mankind." He appeased the good Catholics by repealing the law concerning the rights of illegitimate children, substituting for it a more moderate French rule.[4] Likewise, he invited the Catholic Church to participate in the education of Haitian youth.

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4. The French practice allowed an illegitimate child recognized before a wedding equal rights of inheritance with legitimate offspring, while giving only quarter rights to a child recognized after marriage.

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Christophe had a great deal more to say about religion than any of the other early Haitian rulers. In a speech following the promulgation of his constitution, after severe censure of the government of Dessalines, he said:

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It is necessary to raise again the dignity of religion, for weakened morals leave young people open to the licentiousness of their age. Liberty has been sullied by traitors, enemies of their fellow citizens, and sold to our cruelest enemies. It is assured to you now, have no doubt! Shortly you will see these vicious men and their criminal efforts vanish like clouds.

Public education, after religion and liberty the most precious benefit mankind enjoys, will be reanimated and sustained by morality; it will again be held in honor and reverence amongst us. Divorce, that traitor among customs, is rigorously prohibited and proscribed forever.[5]

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Like Pétion, Christophe made the Catholic Church official, but he indicated the dictatorial path he intended to follow by adding that "no ecclesiastical decree or law might become effective without the consent of the President.[6] He completely overturned the law of Dessalines concerning illegitimate children; his decree deprived such offspring of any claims of inheritance whatever.[7] In a country where practically no one had been legally married such a ruling was severe, but Christophe hoped that his severity would force his subjects into wedlock, and this the Catholic Church was bound to approve.

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Making the Church official did not strengthen its hold upon the people. In 1814 (seven years after he had promised "to raise again the dignity of religion") the kingdom was served by only three priests, one of whom Christophe had named archbishop. The King was preoccupied with form, and having created a nobility he needed a church to lend dignity to his realm. Consequently in 1811 he reorganized the clergy in his kingdom, establishing an archiepiscopal see and three bishoprics. The reorganization, except for the archbishop, remained a paper plan because the Pope refused to coöperate by giving the schismatic church his approval.

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All the early rulers seem to have been rather innocent in their dealings with Rome. They felt, apparently, that as heads of state they had but to express a desire in order to have His Holiness ap-

5. This speech, made on February 18, 1807, is cited in Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1848), II, 354-355.
6. See the law of March 18, 1807.
7. Law of March 25, 1807.

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religion was never at a lower ebb in Haiti than toward the middle of the nineteenth century, as whole generations of citizens were growing up who had never known the proper forms of ritual, and had no real religious training. The outward shell of the Church covered steadily more "superstition," more homely beliefs and practices, and the long divorce from Rome permitted the growth of a native religion which later could not be eradicated, no matter how assiduous the labors of Catholic priests. 175 795 771

During Boyer's quarter-century the once Roman and Catholic Church remained the official religion of the state, but its head was now the President. Organization simplified as orthodoxy declined. By 1840 there was only one order of priesthood; no archbishop, bishops, canons, curés, or other titled dignitaries, but only "priests." The people were not taxed to maintain the state Church; there were no tithes or forced contributions for the support of public worship or the repair of parish churches, no heavy list of clergy living from levies on the people. However, if the Haitians were not burdened by imposed religious fees, they were still through their own fears subject to steady tolls for services by the degraded men who then called themselves priests. 175 795 771 659 643

Every effort of the state failing to provide proper religious leadership, Boyer resigned himself to permitting those who professed to be priests to practice in the republic. There were seventy so-called priests in the country in 1840. Some of them had once been in holy orders but were now unfrocked: they found in Haiti not only a haven but a fertile field for gain. In addition to these religious renegades came adventurers who knew just enough of ritual and theology to use the priestly garb as a cover for easy graft. Both groups encouraged crude superstition with a view to making money. They baptized houses, boats, and doorposts, and blessed fetish charms or amulets, all for a fee. Immorality was flagrant, and many of the "priests" had mistresses and children. The debauchery of some was so notorious that Secretary-General Inginac had publicly to rebuke them and even to banish a few from the country. A visiting Quaker, benignantly tolerant of most of what he saw in Haiti, was scandalized by the religious situation. He said that the sole aim of most of the clergy was to secure gold and silver "as quickly as they can, to send to Europe for investment." Excepting a very few (notably the priests at Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, and Jacmel), he 175 795 793 [114]

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The men seldom or never go to mass, except on the days particularly set apart by the government as public fêtes. On these occasions the president and all the officers of Hayti go in procession, but the idea of devotion, I believe, never enters their contemplation. Such days are merely set aside for celebrating some particular event, which it is wished should be handed down to posterity. These occasions present only the external symbol of religion, the whole people being either ignorant or careless of its real character. Their manner and appearance during the celebration of the mass shew that they have no inward feelings of piety or devotion.[13]

Catholicism in Haiti, then, had fallen on evil days; Protestantism, on the other hand, was unable to gain any foothold. Boyer, indifferent to all religion, did not even care to tolerate Wesleyan missionaries as Pétion had done, for when certain of them arrived and were met with "persecution and stoning by a mob," it required persuasion to gain his assent to freeing those the police had taken into custody. He forbade any further meetings of Wesleyans, on the ground that they stirred up riots. At the close of Boyer's administration it was estimated that there were only about 1,200 Protestants in the country, mostly Methodists and Baptists, and these primarily Negroes who had come from the United States to settle in the republic.

Although the Haitian government probably derived a certain satisfaction from controlling a state Church, Boyer was impelled both by circumstance and his own temperament to obtain the approval of the Holy See. His own tepid spiritual zeal had nothing to do with the case; Haitian public order would benefit by a superior group of priests, and Haitian prestige would rise, he thought, with recognition by Rome. Having already in 1826 settled the conflict between France and Haiti in the political sphere, Boyer tried assiduously to end the schism from Rome. His propositions were examined with benevolence by the Pope, who conferred upon the primate of the Indies, archbishop of Santo Domingo, the title of archbishop of Haiti. This personage, however, was a Spaniard already established in the comfortable city of Santo Domingo amidst people of his own nationality. He could not be persuaded to move to Port-au-Prince. The failure of Boyer's efforts is due more to this ecclesiastic than to uncoöperativeness on the part of Rome. From 1834 to 1860 the Court of Rome had official representatives in Haiti, but they cannot have been very effective men, for conditions in

13. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 394–395.

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religious life were not improved and the schism endured. The archbishop of Haiti seemed to regard his new title as applying vaguely to the island, not the country, of Haiti, and since all his vicars were Spaniards unable to speak either French or the Créole dialect, they did nothing for religion in the Haitian republic.

Ties broken by a single radical action may require endless patience and persistence to knit together their severed threads. The impetuosity of Dessalines caused the rupture; it was prolonged by indifference to religion, absorption in economic and political matters, fear that France might use to her profit any *rapprochement* with Rome, and a certain complacency in subordinating Church to state. Inertia, however, was the real obstacle in the way of healing the breach. It is much less trouble to let conditions remain as they are than to make a change whose results no one can foretell. But the longer the rupture, the less understanding the people had of steps necessary to reëstablish the Church.

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When in 1847 Faustin Soulouque, the ignorant, became president, the horizon had never seemed darker for organized religion. The black general, suddenly impelled by a quirk of fortune into high office, was a man of the people in his religious attitudes. All their belief in magic, in the mystical power of certain rites, in charms and spells—all their "superstition" as the Catholics called it—Soulouque shared. For the first time in Haitian history one is aware that the folk beliefs brought over from Africa had become welded into a recognizable form, under the name of Vodun. To colonial writers "Vaudoux" had been primarily a name for certain dances; to the early Haitian élite it seems to have connoted either occult rites or vulgar claptrap compounded of gibberish, old wives' remedies, and sensual dances. But in the long and deepening twilight of Catholicism, the various elements were fused, until by Soulouque's time the Haitian was familiar with the general beliefs, rites, and "priesthood" of Vodun. As Soulouque had broken with the tradition of presidents who wished Haiti to be recognized as one of the community of civilized Western nations, so he allowed the traditional respect for Catholicism to die. As an emperor he was a transplanted African chief; as a believer he was a follower of Vodun. The rites were practiced and the sacrifices made openly now. Men in high places dared to reveal their belief in native tenets. For twelve years Vodun flourished with official approval.

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The depths to which Haiti descended under Soulouque made the task of his successor relatively simple. It would prove wise and generally popular to reverse the Emperor's action, in whatever respect. President Geffrard was the more successful as an antidote to the Emperor because of his practical intelligence. The best time to strike for the revival of Catholicism would be immediately after the heyday of Vodun. In 1859, the first year of his incumbency, Geffrard consequently undertook negotiations with the Holy See, sending two plenipotentiaries for the discussions. Because the Haitian delegates persuasively depicted the sorry state of religion in their country, because they showed themselves and their President willing to defer to papal wishes, and because the new Pope was filled with missionary zeal to reclaim Haiti for the Faith, all problems were overcome. An early agreement was reached, and the Concordat, signed in Rome on March 28, 1860, was approved by the Haitian Senate on the first of April. A commission was dispatched to Haiti immediately, one which did thoroughly and well its task of delimiting the boundaries of dioceses, allocating bishops and other clergy, and founding a seminary. An archbishop of Port-au-Prince was consecrated, and the Catholic Church, Roman and apostolic, at long last became officially established once more in the republic. The breach of fifty-five years was healed. 175 795 648 159 643

In one sense the reform had come too late. All the peasants were by this time thoroughly imbued with the ideas of Vodun, as were the lower orders in the towns. Most of the élite either clandestinely practiced Vodun or ignored religion altogether. On the other hand, practically no Haitian was opposed to Catholicism, not even the most ardent devotee of the obscurer cult. The native faith had grown up quietly enough, making its adjustments to the outward forms of Catholicism which still existed in the country. To every Vodun worshiper there were simply two hierarchies of spiritual beings, each with its own powers; to believe in one was not to deny the other. The new Catholic priests, then, met no hostility; what they had to deal with was an ineradicable folk religion which accepted everything and rejected little in the spiritual realm. 175 771

The Archbishop, his band of forty priests, and a small group of Brothers and Sisters set to work with fervor. Nearly everything had to be rebuilt from the ground. Church buildings were in such disrepair that it was considered more economical to erect new ones than 175 795 [346]

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Vodun, then, was both widespread and powerful enough to be turned to most effective ends in 1791. Contemporary accounts of it still saw it as a meeting ground of superstitions. The French naturalist, Descourtilz, for example, was primarily struck by the use of the occult in connection with Vodun; he especially describes a woman who, under the seizure of her god, took a live coal in her hand without being burnt; a husband who by the use of magic struck his inconstant wife with a languorous malady, effective for half a year; and the knowledge of poison which was combined with the practice of magic. He mentions but one of the Vodun gods by name but implies the existence of many others.[10]

Madiou, Haiti's first historian, likewise always spoke of Vodun as a savage survival; he says of a native general, "Lamour Dérance, plunged in gross errors, put his faith in *sorcery*, in the prophecy of *papas*, or priests of *African fetishism*."[11] In his scornful distaste for the vulgar he clearly indicated by his own italics some conspicuous elements of the developing religion: magic, the use of fetishes, and a Vodun priesthood. His illustration of Dérance's error was his making soldiers believe that bullets could not wound them:

> When he marched to combat he was preceded by bands of Congos, Aradas, Ibos, Nabos, Mandingues, Haoussas, who threw themselves against the French battalions with a prodigious intrepidity, crying that the bullets were but dust. But this courage which *superstition* fed was shattered against the ramparts of . . . the Europeans' square formations.

It is noteworthy that the first three black rulers set themselves against Vodun because of its potentialities for sedition. The plots to overthrow the old régime had come to fruition at apparently innocent Vodun dances. Although the ingenuous aspect of the dance gathering had deceived the white masters, Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe knew the meaning of the assemblies. All three had to drive their people hard and knew that resentment would be an inevitable consequence; it must not have an opportunity to burgeon at nightly gatherings. Toussaint was the strictest of the three, for he forbade all dances and nocturnal assemblage.[12] The other two singled

10. M. E. Descourtilz, *Voyages d'un naturaliste en Haïti, 1799–1803* (Paris, 1935 ed.), pp. 116–118.
11. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, p. 33.
12. In an order of January 4, 1800.

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The other two singled

175 out Vodun dances for their bans, permitting the purely social dances.
643 On the eve of the first anniversary of independence, "as soon as
794 retreat was sounded, African dances of all kinds began in the tents
796 and open fields; the Vaudoux dance alone was proscribed; the noise
671 of the drums did not quiet down until morning."[13] Dessalines was
659 more suspicious of Vodun than the other two for, being a superstitious man himself, he feared that some of his growing number of
798 enemies might use sorcery upon him; consequently whenever his
771 active police reported meetings of Vodun worshipers he had the offenders shot if they could be caught. Practically all Haitians knew how to distinguish the rhythms of Vodun drumbeats from those of other dances, so that it was not particularly difficult to track down the meeting places. What Christophe really believed, no one could say. He paid outward homage to Roman Catholicism, of course, but rumor persisted of his great faith in magic and the power of African fetishes.[14]

175 The élite mulatto presidents, Pétion and Boyer, did not deign to
643 dignify Vodun by prohibiting it. No revelation of their attitude
794 toward it survives, but we may note that no law of their thirty-six-
659 year tenure of the presidency mentions it. From their other opinions
798 one concludes that they regarded it as merely another of the people's innocent and harmless aberrations. Not one of the foreigners whose curiosity about the Negro republic led them to report on Haitian
796 life of this period gives an intelligent account of Vodun as it then
771 was. Macaulay, writing in 1831, for example, describes the annual
114 celebration at the source of Grande Rivière de l'Artibonite; he mentions the festive dances (not Vodun) and singing, then says: "Morning ceremonies consisted of a solemn sacrifice at which the blood of victims immolated for the feast were offered, and libations of wine were poured on the spring."[15] This was clearly a Vodun sacrifice. Brown, in 1837, writes as a religious man:

> No race is, more than the African, given to religious feelings, though these being but mere sensations entirely independent of thought and reason, manifest themselves in a display of idle fooleries, or dark and hideous terrors of the imagination. They intermix the legitimate ritual of the Catholic faith with the mysterious adoration paid to their national Fetishes, and the

13. Madiou, *op. cit.*, III, 186.
14. See Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti*, pp. 90–91.
15. Zachary Macaulay, *Haiti* (Paris, 1835), pp. 90–91.

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themselves and their families economically and socially. Property was important, so they took pains to insure the legitimacy of their heirs; color was crucial, and so they regulated the marriages of their children to be sure there was no reversion to the black strain. They guarded their fortunes solicitously, provided their daughters with dowries large enough sometimes even to lure a white husband, educated their sons in Paris—behaved, in short, as if they had been pillars of society in provincial France. Like the white planters, the male affranchis often had relations with slave women, but even more rarely than whites were they seduced into marriage with women of the lower orders. 175 565 581

When the slave insurrection and its aftermath freed the half-million blacks in Saint-Domingue it was not to be expected that European middle-class morals and practices should suddenly prevail. Modern usage emerges from the womb of tradition. Neither in Africa nor in the colony had tradition taught the blacks respect for monogamy or for marriage entered into by religious ceremony. If the ex-slaves had reverted to their Dahomean, Congolese, or other African background, they might have introduced the bride price; but to pay a bride price is to assume the existence of wealth, an assumption contrary to fact among the ex-slaves in Saint-Domingue of the 1790's, and Haiti of the 1800's. In neither Dahomey nor the Congo was there much ceremony at the union of a couple; what there was consisted mostly of singing and dancing. If, on the other hand, the people went only by what they had observed in slave days, there was no tradition of binding union or strict codes, as we understand them. A man knew when to stay away from another man's woman; children remained near their mother—these two statements almost cover the situation as of 1796 among the newly freed slaves. 175 581 [583] [585] [837] [855]

Toussaint, apparently a conventional person in what concerned social behavior, wished his people to be "moral." He instituted a time of "holy masses, mystic communions, biblical psalms, and divine ecstasies"[2] for his private edification, and recommended the same for his people. He could not possibly have instilled into them a desire for Christian marriage, however; even if he could, priests would not have been available for the wholesale marrying of scores of thousands of men and women. Local records of weddings at this period are very scanty. 175 643 788 582

2. Saint-Méry, *Pétion et Haïti*, III, 93.

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The truth is, marriage and moral conditions differ from economic and political conditions in that they are not so immediate and pressing in their effect upon individual lives. If these are not attended to today, tomorrow will find our bellies empty and our state overrun by enemies. But sex relations go on willy-nilly, and children are born into families: there will still be marriage and a moral problem to attend to when order has been brought into practical affairs. Toussaint was involved in a diplomatic battle in which the participants were the best minds of France, England, and the United States. Beside these mighty problems upon which depended the economic and political future of his people, the question of a standard of sex conduct was definitely secondary.

So it must have seemed to Dessalines, the founder of the state and first "law-giver" of Haiti. By his official actions it is evident that the economy of the country was his primary concern, with defense against a return of the French a close second. In his pronouncements he bowed respectfully to religion and then postponed action until some more convenient season. He pronounced likewise some very proper sentiments on marriage and morals, calling attention to the benefits of wedlock, piously deprecating sensuality and voluptuousness. His imperial constitution of 1805 encouraged lawful unions, treating marriage as a socially virtuous state to be cultivated.

This was all words, however, and came strangely from the black general who was, as everyone knew, a notorious libertine. He lectured his people on the danger of yielding to their passions, yet showed no intention of controlling his own impulses or those of his favorites. He was, indeed, the last man in Haiti to make a gesture toward sexual morality among the people, for although he was married his daily life was a complete negation of moral precept. In every town he habitually visited he established mistresses, bestowing large sums of money upon them. He employed every sort of seduction, honor, and gift to conquer the virtue of females who valued their "respectability." Actually, he did not often need to use violence, for the prevailing moral tone was not so high but that most young and attractive women would yield to their Emperor.

The sternly upright Haitian historian, Madiou, has a formidable paragraph on the vices of Dessalines. He tries partially to excuse him on the grounds of his fury at discovering conspiracies against his authority among his colored lieutenants, asserting that his early gen-

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erosity and equity now gave way to malevolence and personal license: 114

Putting no restraint upon his passions, he travelled about, followed by actors, dancers, musicians, and courtesans. An indefatigable dancer, as soon as he arrived in a place he gave a ball. Under Toussaint Louverture, in order to please the Governor-General everyone approached the holy altar; under Dessalines one gained glory by dancing well. The Emperor, giving himself up to scandalous pleasures, forgot that he was head of the state. The greatest immorality reigned about him. With a gaiety sometimes grotesque, he told the ladies who frequented his court how much he admired their beauty, no matter how ugly they actually were. Following his example, his major officers of state kept concubines in every town in the empire. . . . When the emperor entered a town, the honest women were gravely disturbed, for their virtue was menaced not only by him but also by his officers of state. Many mothers kept their daughters shut up to keep them from the notice of those who were powerful enough to take them, with impunity, by violence.[3] 643 159 831

Marriage, then, looked at from the standards of any white Western country, was in a sorry state in Haiti. Continued warfare had broken up many even of the families which, though unrecognized by the white planters, had nevertheless been formed during slavery; and the camp life of soldiers roaming the countryside confirmed the casual attitude of the people toward sex. Every ex-slave was a hero, and liberty was sweet. Under Dessalines it was scarcely wise for a prominent man to marry an attractive wife, the Emperor might so soon set himself to seduce her. Above all, there was no tradition of formal marriage. This was the chief factor to bear upon future marriage and sexual customs of the Haitians; and in appraising them is the paramount fact to keep in mind. 175 831 581

Meanwhile, children were being born. Their mothers were known, but often the fathers were not, for the vast majority of infants were born out of wedlock. Dessalines, a realist except in matters which touched his vanity, saw the necessity of establishing a status for these children, not on grounds of morality but for economic expediency, to avoid future disputes over inheritance. French precedent did not serve his need, for according to French law an illegitimate child may not inherit: a parent in France is not free to leave his property as he will, but must pass it on to his legitimate heirs. 175 848 428

3. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 239.

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must pass to an illegitimate child if recognition is accorded. It is likewise strong in its harmony with actual conditions: in the absence of legal marriage among the people, it would have been manifestly unfair to favor a few fortunate children. Dessalines argued that the revolution had legitimized all Haitians; that it was unjust to prevent a child's inheriting from the person who had given him life; and that since all Haitians had come out of slavery and degradation into freedom, no new inequalities should be instituted.[4]

If this law encouraged family life, it weakened marriage both of the civil and religious kind: where was the sense in the expensive luxury of a wedding when children were just as legitimate without it? By conforming to folk practice the Emperor confirmed it. Only the aristocrats disliked his law, for it seemed to make light of one of the distinctions they cherished—the formal wedding. It irked them to have the State place a casual child upon an equal plane with one born after proper marriage.

At still another point the law accorded with living conditions at the time. During the years of fighting many men had been killed, and always the large standing army kept thousands of others away from settled farm life. Home, then, was for a child the abode of his mother—a fact recognized by the law's insistence upon maternal relationship rather than paternity. Such a word as "matriarchate" has no place here; but from the days of Dessalines to modern times, the lowly Haitian thinks of his home primarily as where his mother lives.

As if the advantages of formal wedding were not already sufficiently weakened by this law, other enactments of the empire struck at other phases of marriage. Divorce was permitted for adultery, for incompatibility of temperament or character, and by mutual consent. Such provisions not only broke away completely from Catholic practice, but made getting out of wedlock a casual matter of taking an oath. The complaint of incompatibility need be made by only one spouse; "mutual consent" as a ground for divorce was probably not allowed in 1805 in any other country of the Western World.

Dessalines did not appear to care one whit for the good opinion of white foreigners. It sufficed for him if Haiti endured, whatever Europeans thought of her. Christophe, on the other hand, was extremely sensitive to foreign disapproval. Many of his official acts can

4. According to the testimony of Madiou, *op. cit.*, III, 216.

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175 643 648

be explained only as efforts to win outside respect for his kingdom of blacks. He was aware of the scorn in which white people held the apparent absence of all sexual morality in Haiti, and so set about introducing reforms. Even as a general he had opposed the dissoluteness of Dessalines.

175 643 582 671 581 [595]

In an early pronouncement Christophe proscribes concubinage (by which he meant the unmarried unions of the people), libertinage, and "all those disorders which weaken the family." To proscribe an evil is not necessarily to put an end to it, however, and so he tried also to persuade and educate his people to the habit of full legal marriage. His steps at persuasion were various. In speeches he urged weddings upon his subjects; yet a man could see little reason for tying himself to one woman for life, assuming *legal* responsibilities at an expense, when already from experience he knew that he could have a woman's loyalty without the ceremony. Although weddings somewhat increased after 1806, Christophe's verbal campaign was a failure. He next tried force. In one town he made all the females assemble in the public square; then, separating the married from the unmarried, commanded his royal guards to advance, each to select an unmarried woman who should become his wife. At other times he selected young men and women by lot and had them married "by their King's authority." No nobleman in the kingdom could long remain unwed: indeed, Queen Victoria might have approved Christophe's solicitude for the moral uprightness of the Haitian court.

175 671 848 428

Another means by which Christophe forced his people into formal marriage was the indirect one of attacking property rights. Realizing that Dessalines' law by guaranteeing inheritance to natural children encouraged people to remain unmarried, he rescinded it by one of the first acts of his rule.[5] This act reëstablished French practice, making it all but impossible for illegitimate children to inherit anything. Most persons of property found this law persuasive where words had left them cold. Madiou thought the law "excessively severe in a country where nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of the population were born out of wedlock,"[6] and he spoke of its disharmony with general practice at the time. Actually,

5. Law of March 25, 1807.
6. Madiou, op. cit., III, 411.

it seems not radically to have affected the masses but only the fairly well-to-do,

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175 family and to make only "sensible" marriages, was a fact rarely
581 glimpsed by the critics. A good example of their attitude is the state-
588 ment of the pious English Quaker, John Candler, in 1842:

[114] But few of the merchants or principal inhabitants are married men: concubinage is common, and unhappily, regarded as not dishonorable. Whenever a ball is given, or a large party invited, the invitation is equally extended to "Monsieur and Madame ——" or to "Monsieur —— and his lady"; and by this compounding of moral distinctions among the upper classes, the evil descends to the lower ranks and becomes perpetuated.[3]

[867] And later Candler accuses Haitian mothers of being "utterly dead to all moral considerations," because they do not take pains to instill (middle-class English) ideals of morality, or teach the young the evils of "wayward passion."

175 Not even Haitian authors were willing to accept plaçage as a
114 desirable practice. Beaubrun Ardouin explained that the color preju-
581 dice of colonial times was responsible for what he clearly considered
588 an evil.[4] "The aristocracy of skin" made plaçage prevail over "divine
563 law," for whites would not often in colonial times marry colored women. The same prejudice in the republic kept light-colored men from marrying darker women, but not from living with them. Ardouin believed that Haiti would gain infinitely by adopting "*les bonnes moeurs*," not on moral grounds, but for practical reasons. With regular marriage, he says, there would result a greater fixity of the conjugal state and more confidence on the part of the women, "who too often discover that they are only the satisfaction of a whim"; also the men would reflect more upon the consequence of an infidelity which, in dividing families, might separate children from father or mother and so greatly weaken the delicate relations of paternal love and filial piety. Still another consideration was political: the dispersion which resulted in the inheritance of property when many mothers and children compete. Because of plaçage unions, quite a number of estates had been reduced to almost nothing.

175 As the century progressed, the custom of plaçage prevailed from
581 the President down to the humblest peasant. The women of the
588 President were visited publicly by him; sometimes he was accom-
643 panied on his visits by a staff or selected officers of state. The critical

3. *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 24, 25.
4. *La Géographie de l'Ile d'Haïti*, pp. 181, 96 ff.

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175 Englishman, Sir Spenser St. John, said that he had met placées of the
581 President at dinner, and was asked to trace resemblances between
588 children and their reported father. "No one seeks to conceal it, and
643 the conversation of married ladies continually turns on this subject. One excuse for it is that many of the ladies whom you meet in society were only married after the birth of their first children. However, according to French law, that ceremony renders them all legitimate. Some of those admitted into society are not married at all, but their daughters being married, prevents notice being taken of the false position of the mother."[5]

565 In recent years the élite, although many continue to contract
581 plaçage unions, keep these arrangements quieter than formerly and tend to make them with women lower in the social scale than themselves. Formal and regular marriage is expected and approved among the upper classes of today. Indeed, one modern informant in answer to the question, "What is the primary test of membership among the élite?" replied without hesitation, "Five generations of marriage in the family."[6]

583 Formal marriage is not entered into lightly among the upper
565 classes. It is a serious business watched over by state, family, and church. The interest of the state seems to be to guard against bigamy. The possibility of bigamy is the more likely since one or the other contracting party may have formerly lived in plaçage. The interest of the family is in the wisdom of the alliance. Before a wedding can be performed both parties must have obtained the formal consent of their parents, besides having their banns published at their respective places of permanent residence. There seems to be some doubt whether the courts would uphold a father in his refusal to consent to the marriage of a son over twenty-one years old; but cases are known in which such a refusal has stopped the wedding. Of course, the daughters must always obtain parental consent to marry.

585 The civil wedding, adopted in Haiti at the beginning of her independence, is usually followed by a religious ceremony. The Church, like the State, takes precautions against clandestine marriages and bigamy. Notice of a projected union must be read from the pulpit

[114] 5. *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, I, 177–178.
[581] 6. John Lobb, in "Caste and Class in Haiti" (*American Journal of Sociology*, XLVI, No. 1 [July, 1940], 29), states that "one informant defined family status as a position
[554] resulting from the recognition that in a family the parents had, for generations, been legally married in the church."

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175 178 64 slave system are not likely to assume it again; and the aristocrats, ever intent upon forgetting their African forebears, would certainly not turn to the Dark Continent for political inspiration.

175 642 701 643 Although the revolution had brought to the fore men of military experience and even genius, it had driven out or killed every single person of experience in civil government. The affranchis of the old régime had been denied political rights long before 1791; by 1804 few could have had any memory of active participation in government.[1] Toussaint was dead. The only authority of any significance was military. Consequently the new state was built upon army control and directed by army officers. Dessalines as commander in chief took the title of governor-general, later of emperor, but was in reality a military ruler. Fearful as he was of a new French invasion, he set his generals over the districts, organized his people as an army ready for immediate mobilization, and ruled as dictator.

175 642 This was all the Haitians had as political background: a military dictatorship. The Founding Fathers of Haiti, if so they might be called, had almost nothing to work with, nothing to build upon: neither a Magna Carta of the Blacks, nor any precedent of an independent Negro state anywhere in this white man's world; neither heritage of local responsibility and political debate to sow the seeds of democracy, nor any example of self-government in the American tropics to offer a pattern[2]—many of the known forms of government were a practical impossibility for the Haitians because of their need of continued defense against foreign enemies, their slave heritage, their inexperience in self-government, their complete lack of a middle class.

175 668 Hardly one tenth of the people in any case was capable of giving detailed thought to the form which government should take. The mass of ex-slaves had been fighting only *against* slavery, against the hated white rulers, not *for* democracy or any other abstraction. Their freedom achieved, they would not be the ones to make decisions. [642] All political choices would be made by the generals, by men of property and position, by the few whose persistent ambition made them stand out from the masses.

1. Such participation in French colonial politics would have been before the restrictive laws of 1771.

2. It must be recalled that Haiti was the second free country to be established in the Western Hemisphere, and that Liberia, in Africa, was still far in the future.

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Immediately a division of political opinion was evident, one which was to persist throughout the century. No one denied the inevitability in 1804 of making Dessalines the head of state: he was the victorious commander, clearly the most powerful man in Haiti. The division of opinion arose over the manner in which he should rule, whether as military dictator, or as a responsible president. Dessalines settled the matter peremptorily—if only for the time being—by asserting hir self as a dictator. 175 643

The issue did not die with his decision, however, for it had deep roots. Supporting Dessalines wholeheartedly was the group of generals who were all Negroes, all ex-slaves, all practically illiterate. The three most influential of these blacks were Christophe, later to succeed his general; Chanlette, and Boisrond-Tonnère. Those who preferred a government in which the president shared power with a legislature of important men were, on the contrary, almost all affranchis of the old régime, therefore the most cultured and educated men in the country. Most of them were mulattoes or at least of a lighter complexion than the Negroes, although of course some blacks adhered to their position. The leaders of this group were Pétion, Boyer, Inginac, and Gérin. This division of opinion went back even into the decade preceding independence, when the island, free of slavery, was still technically under the rule of France, and the ex-slave Toussaint had to fight and conquer the mulatto leader Rigaud before he could establish his rule as dictator. 175 642 [643]

For a brief moment after independence, all differences were reconciled, since all had been united in a common cause against the enemy. Dessalines was then commanding in the Artibonite Valley, and Christophe in the North; two of Rigaud's former lieutenants, Pétion and Geffrard, commanded in the West and South. Apparently there was genuine respect among these men for each other. Dessalines, for example, with evident sincerity calls his colleague Pétion "that man of upright heart." The unity was short-lived, however. Not only was it evident that Dessalines meant to rule like an African despot-chief, taking advice only when he liked it; it was even more plain that through his cruelty, impetuosity, and crudeness he was bent on isolating Haiti from all contacts with the culture and polish of the outer world. Pétion and his group looked on with pained disgust as he indulged his violence against the whites who had hopefully remained in the country; the general's bloody procession throughout 175 643 642 66

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175 the land, leaving a trail of misery and death, was an augury of what
643 to expect from a tyrant. They opposed his plan to destroy all coastal
642 towns and move the people inland where, protected by their mountains, they would be immune to foreign attack and foreign ideas.
66 They resented their loss of property by state expropriation, and could not fail to be shocked by the grim exultation of Boisrond-Tonnère: "To draw up the act of independence, we used the skin of a white man for parchment, his skull for an inkstand, his blood for ink, and a bayonet for pen!"[3]

Even without such cogent objections to Dessalines the mulattoes would have opposed his dictatorship, for as intellectuals and as social élite they wanted a real share in the government. For this they had agitated since before 1791, and it would be a grim irony if after fourteen years of intermittent conflict the successful expulsion of whites should be followed by a continued exclusion of mulattoes from the government. It would be a worse irony to throw off the white yoke only to take on a black one. When in 1805 Dessalines made himself emperor they asked for the creation of a nobility, thinking to share the rule with him; but the Emperor's curt "*Moi seul je suis noble*" dashed this hope. Although detailed proof is lacking, it is generally accepted in Haiti that the conspiracies against the Emperor's life began with this intransigent statement.

Here, then, was the issue which in half a dozen varying forms was to split political opinion for decades: rule by a single tyrant vs. rule by the cultured class. It even made two nations of one between the years 1806 and 1820.

175 When Dessalines was assassinated, a Constituent Assembly was
642 summoned to draw up a new constitution and select a new ruler. The mulattoes were in control of the Assembly which under Pétion's skilful guidance sat at the mulatto stronghold, Port-au-Prince, and there drew up a constitution assuring the limitation of the president's power by a Senate, and requiring election and reëlection of the
[667] president instead of permitting him life tenure. This achieved, the Assembly dutifully elected the black general Christophe president of Haiti. However, belonging as he did to Dessalines' school of thought —unrestricted rule by a strong man—he indignantly refused to be bound by such a constitution; when the Assembly, instead of yielding

3. This statement is cited, with evident distaste, by Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 114.

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to his demands for revision and for his selection as president for life, 175
retained the constitution they had written and chose Pétion president 642
in his stead, the rupture was instant and complete. [667]

Dictator as against restricted president, strong man as against class
or group rule, Negro against mulatto, army against civil govern- 175
ment, executive against legislature, North against South—these are 665
the phases of the subsequent dichotomy in Haitian politics.

A good case can easily be made for the advocates of force in
Haitian government, particularly in its early days. For years the 175
majority of men had lost the habit of steady work on the land; a 642
strong hand was needed to reëstablish in the countryside that eco- 433
nomic order without which liberty shrivels. The people had become
accustomed to taking orders from their military leaders, and these 656
from their commanding officer. Those, moreover, were times of
crisis, when France might suddenly descend again upon her former
colony: few crises can be dealt with by debating societies. Looking
back on the course of Haitian history, one may point out also that
the country prospered under the dictatorships of Toussaint, Des-
salines, and Christophe as it never did under the limited presidencies.[4]

In 1806, therefore, the aristocratic party got its wish, although only 175
at the price of splitting the country in two. They established a 642
government with a president of their own and a Senate filled with 665
their representatives. The earliest legislation naturally enough fav- 646
ored their own landholding group. When prosperity did not result,
Pétion began to recommend to the Senate a division of the land. 643
More and more, although the representative form was preserved,
Pétion ruled as a dictator. He was mild enough not to arouse an-
tagonism; as is always the case when freedom of speech is curbed
and summary legislation required, the plea of crisis was used to
justify extraordinary measures.

The legislative party was firmly in the saddle by 1820 when Boyer 175
reunited North and South, and shared his power with the Senate. 642
643

4. The argument for dictatorship is familiar to the modern world. A defense of "totaliarianism," published in 1816 by authority of Christophe (then King Henry I), is amazingly like certain European utterances of the nineteen-thirties: "The King has the sweet satisfaction of seeing that the cultivators [who were forced to work on the land whether they wanted to or not], being everywhere regularly paid [though the sum might be tiny], are praising the freedom they enjoy." And again: "Hayti chose a kingdom in order to shun forever that chaos, that confusion and perpetual clashing, which result from those monstrous associations known under the name of *peuples libres*." Anon., *Haytian Papers* (1816), pp. 109, 113. [829]

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175 642 643 Since he was president for twenty-five years (normal ones, as things go in Haiti), it is worth while to examine the functioning of the kind of government the upper class favored.

175 642 643 692 President Boyer's education and outlook were wholly French. He had formed his views of government principally upon French models, yet when he became head of state he could not forget his own military career. He said repeatedly that he wished to supersede the military by the civil power, but somehow never got around to it. The country was full of black generals, and it would have been difficult to retire them, primarily because they were black. He established courts to insure the rights of man, but since his newborn judiciary lacked the prestige to command respect, interpretation of the law came from the President—until before long he was himself the law. With a logic characteristic of the French, he tried to make the whole administration of the country orderly and tidy by codifying laws, laying out spheres of governmental departments, and properly ticketing matters in general. He had to be the sole judge of the intention and operation of statutes, however, and if necessary modify the nature of an act to suit his view of the public need. His honest and generally upright character perhaps made his enormous prerogatives conducive to the public good; but Boyer was a dictator in spite of his Senate, since when he found a law working badly he simply turned it from its normal course and gave it a quite contrary effect.

[646] [661] As the years of his long rule proceeded, he took more power to himself. When his Senate would not pass bills as he proposed them, he waited until they adjourned and then either neglected to execute their laws, or instructed the government printing office to change the wording. He clearly regarded the legislature as a necessary nuisance, to be kept as a sop to the élite and to preserve the appearance of republicanism before the world. Representatives from the various communes were recommended by the President, his nomination amounting almost always to election.[5]

600 Boyer was overthrown by the Revolution of 1843, by all odds the

[643] 5. The task of governing the whole island was obviously heavier than governing a fraction of it, so Boyer may have felt justified in his departures from strict constitutionality. He was always an indefatigable worker, whose intentions were uniformly laudable. He tried to rule alone, as had his illustrious predecessor. The hitch came because he was not of their caliber. He was worthy, virtuous—and mediocre. He would probably have made an excellent mayor of a French provincial town.

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Boyer was overthrown by the Revolution of 1843, by all odds the

most important of Haitian upheavals. Since its effects were to be felt for the next seventy years in the extinction of representative government and the eclipse of the élite as political rulers, it is worthy of special attention. Paradoxically, it was a revolution fomented by the élite themselves. Its background and outcome reveal the power in word, and the impotence in deed, of this group by 1843.

The constitution of 1816, devised by Pétion's henchmen, had granted the president initiative in all laws except those concerning taxation. After the agreement of 1825 with France,[6] however, Boyer, hard pressed by the need of paying the indemnity each year, began to restrict the number of officials, diminish their salaries, and veto all projects favorable to the development of public instruction and improvement which might cause further expenditure. By temperament he was an autocrat.[7] Every valuable measure must come from him alone; whatever another person proposed he would find a thousand reasons to discard. Sarcastic and vain, he did not know how to smooth ruffled feelings or make conflicting groups reconcile their differences. His personal weaknesses of character alienated the sympathies of many once-devoted officials.

During his long presidency Boyer also systematically ignored the younger generation, men who admired the efforts of Pétion, ardent reformers who wished to devote their energies to the improvement of Haiti. The military career had no attraction for them: the higher ranks, alone bringing sufficient salary for a congenial way of life, were too few and one could achieve them only with difficulty, for since 1825 advancement had been submitted to rigorous rules. On the other hand, the paths of administration were severely guarded by those admirable great functionaries left over from the government of Pétion—men like Inginac and Imbert. But age had slowed their activity, and still Boyer kept them on. The younger generation mocked this "gerontocracy" and supported the parliamentary opposition.

The youth of the élite class continued to go to France for their education, returning to Haiti to take part in the lively political discussions which made one of their chief occupations. During the first decade of Boyer's administration they generally supported him, for

6. By which France recognized the independence of Haiti in return for the payment of a large annual indemnity.

7. "In everything, he wishes to dominate," Pétion had said of him.

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175 he seemed to be leading the country to progressive action; about
665 1830, however, a group better educated and more ambitious than
664 their predecessors arose. Nourished on ideas acquired in France, they
871 were shocked on their return by the miseries and governmental inaction which prevailed in Haiti. True, when Boyer pressed them to suggest constructive measures of reform they had little to suggest. Like many other critics they were better at tearing down than at building up.

175 By the constitution of 1816 they had the right of free speech and
642 press, and made use of it to publish journals of criticism—*Le Phare*,
204 *Le Télégraphe*, *La Feuille de Commerce*. Their sustained criticism kept
208 alive the parliamentary opposition and gave it a focus; they were at
665 least partially responsible for the Revolution of 1843. In spite of their diatribes, Boyer did not suppress these newspapers. If he had done so it is possible the Revolution might have come sooner. Not every dictator-president would permit such boldness as the following paragraph which appeared in 1843 in *Le Patriote*, an adversary of Boyer's own journal *Le Temps*:

> Let one look well at the things which are happening among us and then say whether, considering our first steps along the path, our progress has not been constantly slowed up now for some time, and whether this does not lead to a state of things in our country in which the most vital part of our civilization is struck by an immobility, almost a paralysis. Haiti is stationary, is retrograde: we need no other proof of it than this frightful uncertainty about the future which so deeply disturbs all serious minds and sincere patriots.

175 In 1838 Hérard Dumesle, president of the Chamber and a leader of
665 the opposition, drew up and secured the passage of an "Address to
646 the President of the Republic," which expressed certain just ideas of
643 progress and pointed out that failure to achieve it was due to the mistakes of the administration. It was a bitterly critical and some-
664 times passionate document. Boyer was intensely angry and proceeded to violate the constitution: relying on the majority always at his disposal in the Chamber, he excluded from among the deputies those most hostile to his government.[8] But at the election of 1842 the communes of Les Cayes, Aquin, and Jérémie reëlected the expelled representatives, so confirming their criticism of the President.

8. Hérard Dumesle, Lasalle, Lespinasse, and David Saint-Preux.

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When the Chamber of 1842 assembled Boyer once more forced the elimination of these men and several of their political friends.[9] The majority in the Chamber was so agitated over this expulsion that only twenty-eight out of seventy-two deputies thereafter appeared at any session. A dozen communes, among them the most important in the country (Port-au-Prince, Les Cayes, Gonaïves, Santo Domingo), had no representation. The deputies of the South avenged themselves by instituting a series of "patriotic banquets." At the plantations of adversaries of the government dinners were given for dozens of guests; the meals were followed by vibrant speeches, full of criticisms of the government. Thanks to the talent of these orators, the opposition likewise gradually filtered its way into the mass of the people, slowly but implacably undermining Boyer's government.

The President also had bad luck to contend with. During his presidency many catastrophies saddened the country. The arsenal blew up in 1827, burning the state warehouses and causing a loss of 5,000,000 piastres. A cyclone in 1831 desolated the South. Fires in 1832 and 1843 practically wiped out Port-au-Prince. An earthquake in 1842 shook the whole island, destroyed Santiago and Port-de-Paix, and transformed Cap-Haïtien into a mass of ruins; the fire which broke out in consequence was accompanied by pillaging which went on for several days. The parliamentary opposition to Boyer made use of these natural calamities to sharpen displeasure at the government.

In August, 1842, a secret association, The Society of the Rights of Man and of Citizen, was formed at Les Cayes to exploit this discontent and prepare the fall of Boyer. It circulated clandestinely throughout the South the ringing Manifesto by Praslin, a résumé of the charges of the opposition which was soon covered with signatures. When adherents of the society were numerous enough, an executive committee was formed with the commandant Rivière Hérard as president. At the end of January, 1843, an uprising occurred on the Praslin plantation.[10] General Borgella, head of the department of the South, proved irresolute; the insurrection, fostered by this indecision, spread rapidly among the troops, even generals joining in. By Febru-

9. The most important of the excluded deputies were Dupuy Lespinasse, Covin Aîné, Dominique, Benoît, Pouthieux, Dumainville Dantonx.
10. At Torbeck, in the department of the South.

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175 669 ary, 1843, Boyer realized that it was futile to oppose the revolution-
[643] aries and departed for exile, going by way of Jamaica to Paris.
[159]

Now came the test of the revolutionary leaders.[11] The state was in
175 their hands; their own representative, Rivière Hérard, was the new
642 president. They proceeded to concoct a ridiculously naïve constitu-
648 tion which by granting a popular vote alienated large bodies of their
669 mulatto support; to insult the black army leaders; and to allow the defeat of Haitian forces by Dominican revolutionaries, thus losing two thirds of the island's area. Every act weakened the party favoring representative government. Within a year Rivière was ousted and a black general was ruling Haiti with a rod of iron. The Revolution of 1843 from which so much was expected had by its very success ruined the parliamentarians, for with power in their hands they showed themselves utterly inept.

175 A succession of black generals now came to the presidency. When
642 Faustin Soulouque became president in 1847, the fourth Negro
643 within four years, and made himself emperor two years later, Haiti found herself once more back at the strong-man principle. The élite were out of office, relegated to inferiority in all phases of political life.

175 In the middle of the nineteenth century the groups upholding the
665 conflicting principles in politics became organized political parties.
565 Those favoring parliamentary rule called themselves Liberals; those believing in the sole rule of a strong dictator were called Nationalists. But by no stretch of the imagination could the Liberal party be considered democratic. The noble principles expressed in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the American Declaration of Independence were uncongenial to Haiti. One of the prime tenets of the Liberals, indeed, was that men were not created equal; rather that certain men (the élite) were clearly the superiors of others. Liberty

[175] [669] 11. The revolution was almost wholly an affair of the élite caste. The mulatto Boyer was deposed, and the mulatto Rivière Hérard took his place. If anyone thought of the peasants, it was only to use them to manipulate and manoeuvre the "outs" into office. Boyer's secretary-general, deposed along with the President, appealed to his countrymen against their accusation of treason against him, saying "My last wishes will be for the prosperity of Haiti and the regeneration of the African caste, to which I have consecrated myself wholeheartedly for forty years, without ever thinking of my own interests." (Joseph Balthasar Inginac, *Message à ses compatriotes, et principalement à ceux qui ont dirigé les affaires populaires de la république depuis la fin de janvier dernier* [Port-au-Prince, March 18, 1843], p. 6). Yet if these are more than hopeful words, they refer only to the distribution of the land which made peasants of the "African caste," and to Inginac's pamphlets on how to raise coffee and other products—which none of the peasants could read.

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was well enough, but all upper-class landlords wanted the privilege 175
of living in leisure on an income derived from the menial labor of 665
black workers. Fraternity was a principle ridiculous to a group whose 565
never-ceasing struggle was to confirm the separation of castes. The term "Liberal," then, was borrowed not from the revolutionary documents of the late eighteenth century, but from the parliamentary parties of the nineteenth—those who saw more opportunity for themselves and their group if the power of tyrants and kings could be curbed by legislatures. The idea was particularly congenial to the Haitian intelligentsia for the simple reason that the powerful rulers of Haiti, past and present, were Negroes who did not share the aims and ideals of the social upper class.[12]

By holding such "liberal" views, the mulatto élite saw their one 175
opportunity not only for curbing the strong men among the Negroes 565
who again and again tried to rule Haiti as if it were a native African 646
state and themselves the supreme chieftains, but also for indulging 665
their own special penchants. A Senate filled with élite politicians 664
suited the talents of the educated aristocrats. They liked constitutions and codes; the law was their favorite profession; they were adepts at drawing neat distinctions between this and that in an academic issue; polished oratory, skilful argument, fluent speech were knacks peculiar to them by temperament, position, education. Boyer had been the beau-ideal of the academic "liberals," with his talkative Senate, his complete set of Codes and national system of courts; the mid-century party members came to realize what they had lost by driving him out.

Every time the Nationalists came to power the colored élite 175
suffered. Under Dessalines they lost greatly in property and position; 661
Christophe had hated and hounded them; Soulouque put many of 565
their leaders to death. The only monarchs Haiti ever had were 643
blacks, and the two most tyrranical presidents in the first seventy-five years after independence were Nationalists (Pierrot, 1845–46, and Domingue, 1874–76).

The experience of the Liberal presidents with parliamentary insti- 175
tutions was not entirely a happy one, however. Pétion and Boyer had 643

12. It must be recalled that no parliaments of England, France, or the United States in the early nineteenth century had true democratic representation. Property qualifications for voting, rotten boroughs, and the persistence of privilege assured that only the "classes" should have full representation, and so rule the masses. [646] [171]

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Pétion and Boyer had

175 suavity enough to rule constitutionally with a Senate which, since
643 class interests were being served by the executive, did not curb their
646 virtual dictatorships. Later presidents had more difficulty. Geffrard,
642 for example, elected as a Liberal after the fall of Soulouque's grim empire, had made parliamentary government a battle cry of his campaign. In office, however, he was continually at loggerheads
[669] with his Senate, until he exercised his presidential privilege of dissolving it; in the end a revolution overthrew the Liberal parliamentarian because he had become a dictator. So with his successor Salnave (1867–69), likewise a Liberal, who almost immediately upon inauguration found it impossible to work with such a group of talkers. So once more with Nissage-Saget (1870–74), who followed Salnave: a professed believer in legislative responsibility, he refused to yield to the legislature on any important matter. A black Nationalist succeeded for two years, ruling despotically. Then came the last of the Liberal presidents, Boisrond-Canal (1876–79). This man was apparently determined to allow his legislature its full constitutional rights. As a result Haiti had more talk in the capital, and less action, than in almost any régime up to that time; then, as Montague says, "convinced that the constitutional régime was a failure, Haiti's most scrupulous president resigned in disgust."[13]

175 The Liberal party virtually disappeared from the scene in 1883,
665 after two abortive coups by their leader of the moment, Boyer
669 Bazelais. The first occurred in 1879 when the retiring President,
[666] Boisrond-Canal, gave Haiti one of her very rare honest elections, resulting in the choice of the Nationalist candidate Salomon. Bazelais and his men forsook their professed principles, rising in arms to seize power. They were suppressed. Four years later when the moment again seemed auspicious Bazelais led another revolution, which the President so effectively crushed that the leader himself was killed. The leaderless Liberals were no longer effective competitors in presidential politics. From that time until the American Occupation, the élite were out of power. One president only during those thirty-five years was a mulatto: Tancrède Auguste, one of the weakest rulers in Haitian history. He died, presumably poisoned, after eight months of office.

100 The era from 1883 to 1915 was Haiti's worst, politically. Revo-

13. Ludwell L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938* (Durham, 1940), p. 18.

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The era from 1883 to 1915 was Haiti's worst, politically. Revo-

lution succeeded revolution; the country sank deep into graft and scandal; foreign powers made Haiti debase herself before them. Some of the élite, backed by foreign merchants resident in the country, went so far as to urge annexation by the United States rather than endure continued disorder in economics and degradation in social life. They felt matters had come to such a pass that only so radical a change could clean the Augean stables. This was the period of a succession of political pamphlets[14] written by élite thinkers to set forth the necessary steps of reform. Every president was a black autocrat, holding power by his control over the masses. If an occasional one was more than mediocre (Hyppolite, for example), his good qualities were sure to be more than offset by the ignorant boors (such as Nord Alexis) who followed him.

175 669 668 648 642 643

True, even the most incompetent of the Negro presidents was obliged to employ a few élite, for literacy was necessary in the foreign office if nowhere else. The aristocrats were impotent, however, for Haitian problems had tremendously increased at the very period when they were losing control of government policy. Reforms were imperative, as every member of the élite knew; but no black president saw the need, or seeing it, had the vaguest idea how to proceed toward effecting them. Beyond the shameful disgrace of Haiti's position in the world of independent nations, the thoughtful could glimpse the anarchy which must inevitably result from continued ineffectiveness.

175 643 645 565 [648]

Reforms were not forthcoming. Rather, anarchy came, bringing international complications in its wake. The American Marines occupied the country. An era was ended.

175 642 648

It had been a strange journey in political ideas from the time of Pétion and Christophe to that of the Occupation. The early leaders seemed to envision triumphs for Haiti in a world of great powers, and to see themselves as men with a mission. After Boyer the vision dimmed. We have Soulouque, whose tinsel empire was mere stage setting for the act of a neighborhood bully; the tyrant Domingue; the senile Nord Alexis; the utterly incompetent fly-by-nights in the decade before the Occupation. Even Geffrard the reformer, prob-

175 643

14. Among the most lucid of these were: Démesvar Delorme, *La Misère au sein des richesses* (1873); Edmond Paul, *Les Causes de nos malheurs* (1889); Léonidas Laventure, *Haïti: le danger de la patrie* (1893); Alcius Charmant, *Haïti, vivre-t-elle?* (1905); and Auguste Magloire, *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social* (1909).

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Even Geffrard the reformer,

175 643 661 ably the ablest president in the second half-century, who was pledged to reduce the expenses of government (a promise which, since he was accustomed to a life of penury, should have been easy to fulfill), increased his own salary to $50,000 a year, and allowed himself $20,000 more annually for secret service and a similar sum "for the encouragement of arts and sciences." He bought two estates with government money; the meat bill of his family was charged to the budget of his bodyguard, and the family champagne bill to a hospital. After Geffrard, the presidency was openly regarded as the juiciest financial plum in Haiti which, if one could pluck it, would justify the necessary expenditures for a revolution. It seems from contemporary comment, indeed, that Geffrard's actions aroused not censure but rather envy, as if every ambitious Haitian would have welcomed the opportunity to do likewise. The bitingly critical Englishman, Sir Spenser St. John, railed with some justice, "Every Haitian appears fully persuaded that his countrymen never seek office except for the purpose of improving their private fortunes."[15]

175 643 646 The legislature was never a real check upon the President. It was useful to him at times when he wished to delay action on some embarrassing imbroglio with a foreign power, for by referring a measure to the Senate he could stall it in tedious debate. Almost without exception, however, the legislature consisted of the President's men. Its halls were palaces of idle oratory. One whole session was devoted to a discussion of fitting the hall with cushioned seats; another to the propriety of appointing an interpreter for representatives who understood only Créole and not French. To make a man a Senator was a satisfactory way of paying a political debt. To be a Senator was to have social prominence, a salary of $1,600 (decidedly a competence in nineteenth-century Haiti), an opportunity to speak before an audience—and no real responsibility.

178 One may grant without debate the difficulties facing this small and poor country, a Negro state with great white neighbors who regarded it with something less than deference. Yet Haiti in its early days had real promise. Wherein lay its defects? Haitian thinkers knew the answers, and frequently indicted themselves.

175 871 565 658 The want of education was a basic weakness. Those who believe in democracy need no rehearsal of the benefits of popular enlightenment. Because the great Negro heads of state were themselves im-

15. *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, p. 185.

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175 665 208 648 whites patrolling the streets seems to have given reality to criticism which before then would have been academic. The élite were back again in the political forum. Unreflecting patriotism urged the immediate withdrawal of the Marines, but a considerable number of the legislature saw that it would be years before they left. The problem, then, they saw variously: some wished to be eloquent spokesmen for the patriotic anti-whites and did their best to embarrass the Occupation; some, feeling that the Americans were benefiting the country, tried to make things move smoothly; while others, seeing a fertile field for gain, tried to ingratiate themselves with the American authorities.

175 643 642 648 662 The twenty years between 1915 and 1934 heard many eloquent, impassioned speeches, not all of them coming to the same conclusions. The élite were divided in most issues raised by the Occupation, so that the old neat dichotomy between élite and army no longer prevailed. The President, Dartiguenave (1915–22), was for the first time since 1879 a Southerner and a mulatto; yet in 1922 when he was a candidate for reëlection it was Southern élite votes which defeated him. Executive, legislature, and judiciary all had just enough power under the Occupation to make subtle manoeuvres, and all three branches of the government displayed a real genius for the political game. They often succeeded in putting the onus of an unpopular act upon the Americans, and in taking the credit for popular measures with which they had had little to do. They prodded and pricked all the weaknesses in the logic of the American State Department. They forced numerous concessions. If at times they seem to have been overclever, playing the game of politics merely for an opportunity to display their skill, at other times many of them showed a deep understanding of realities which had to be faced.

175 648 666 642 The Occupation, ordered by that high prophet of democracy, Woodrow Wilson, professed its determination to give Haiti her first opportunity to be democratic. Yet the Marines really dictated the choice both of Dartiguenave in 1915 and of Borno in 1922 and 1926. The constitution of 1918 was prepared in Washington; it was submitted to a plebiscite, but the farcical vote—69,337 for and 335 against—was clearly the result of electioneering by the Marines. The presidents of Haiti ruled with executive councils, subject to Ameri-

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can "advice and approval," rather than with the legislature subject to popular control. Even under such restrictions the politically minded found ways of exerting pressure on the Marine authorities. 175 648 666

Out of the darkest days of military subjection by a foreign power came a changed order of politics in the country. The practically unbroken line of dull incompetents who had come into the presidency ended; instead of ignorant army leaders, educated men were once more in office; instead of Northern Negroes, élites of Port-au-Prince; instead of benighted martinets bewildered by world affairs, men who, if not great statesmen, at least had minds capable of understanding Haiti's relation to international economics and politics. 642 175 643

The élite were back in power. In the mind of every friend of Haiti arose the question whether the events between 1879 and 1915 had taught them lessons which would make their return to responsibility productive of great things for the country. Because of the abnormal situation resulting from the Occupation, the world depression, and the briefness of their new ascendancy, one cannot yet speak with assurance. Nevertheless, there are few encouraging signs. Political office is still regarded by most candidates in terms of their own advancement rather than service to Haiti. Very little has been done to extend the base of voting by developing local responsibility and education among the masses. Élite youths still receive a classical education, still disdain manual labor, still cherish the ideal of a graceful life of ease. The president still rules as an autocrat supported by the gendarmerie—substitute for the army of former days. One can see no decrease in social distinctions or in the disdain of the élite for peasant people; on the contrary, there has even been an increase of this feeling because the Occupation (through its Agricultural Service particularly) seemed to open paths of development to the peasants. Social antagonism, not social responsibility, still underlies political life.[20] 175 642 [661] [666] [565] [643] [565]

To every one of these strictures there is a plausible reply. It is no light matter to unsettle the minds of nine tenths of a population by education, to cause an economic revolution by improving agricultural techniques, to admit to political life a people unaccustomed to 178 65

20. Dr. Jean Price-Mars, in *La Vocation de l'élite* (Port-au-Prince, 1919), *passim*, especially pp. 51 ff., urges the élite to accept their responsibilities rather than rest upon the debilitating assurance of their innate superiority. [114] [565]

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178 it. Moreover, the Haitian budget is in the neighborhood of seven
65 million dollars, for which sum not much in the way of great improvement for three million people can be expected. The task of regenerating Haiti calls for self-sacrificing genius—at present the élite hardly qualify either as self-denying servants of the public or as geniuses.

175 Haitian affairs during the 1930's were under the direction of
643 President Sténio Vincent, an able man to whose credit much can be
642 said. He devoted himself to his task with assiduity, talking face to
648 face with the peasants in Créole, urging them to assist in reforestation
241 and to use wisdom in crop rotation. He settled serious disputes with the neighboring Dominican Republic in amicable fashion. It was he who carried on the delicate and successful negotiations with President Roosevelt to give Haiti control of her own affairs once more. In coffee culture, assistance to trade, financial matters, and other economic details, he often proceeded expertly, particularly in view of the world depression which began as he assumed office. On the other hand, Vincent made the legislature his servant rather than a partner. He was a dictator (fortunately a benevolent one) who changed the constitution by highhanded methods in order to gain his own reëlection. His régime rested upon his alliance with the efficient Garde d'Haïti. There were few signs of democracy or of respect for civil liberties, as Americans understand those terms, in Vincent's eleven years.

175 The spectator has a feeling that he has seen all this before, when
643 for example Geffrard was elected to assure parliamentary government, only to become an effectively benevolent dictator as soon as the legislature opposed him. Geffrard was on the whole a good president, as Vincent was; but the former did not succeed in setting Haiti upon the path of economic and social security, and one hardly dared expect it of his modern counterpart.

175 In April, 1941, Élie Lescot, former Haitian Minister to the United
643 States, was elected as the thirtieth president of the republic. Vincent
648 had refused to call a plebiscite to approve an extension of his presidential term for an additional five years, as he had done in 1935 near the end of the six-year term to which he was elected in 1930. Lescot had begun his presidency with many advantages, chiefly the friendly support of his predecessor, his acquaintance with United States officials, and a recent negotiated pact by which American aid will

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175

be given to Haiti for vast rubber plantings.[21] Opposition to Lescot comes chiefly from those who consider him too friendly with the Dominicans who killed hundreds of Haitian workers in 1937, Lescot having figured prominently in negotiations that led to the Dominican government's agreement to pay indemnities to Haiti for the slaughter. 643 648

Reviewing the whole course of Haitian history, the field of politics seems to have marshaled itself behind a few regularities. In every case there have been voices raised to protest, yet the ruling clique, whatever its grouping, has effectively supported these characteristic political customs: 642 105

1. Complete dominance of political life by the president. Strong men seem to be necessary to rule ignorant masses. Even the revolutions precipitated by parties campaigning for parliamentarianism have, when successful, become governments by the president. This concentration of power in one man's hands makes the next revolution possible, for it is easier to overthrow one man than to eliminate a party based upon wide suffrage and diffused responsibility. 643 642

2. The inferior position of cabinet ministers. These have resembled neither European nor American secretaries of state in their responsibilities, but have been little more than clerks appointed by the president to serve as heads of a bureau. The treasurer-general, for example, during most of Haiti's history has merely received the moneys, while the president disbursed them. The secretary-general has neither originated nor conducted the details of public policy. Often as not, the minister has made a convenient whipping boy when the president has got himself involved in internal or foreign complications: by demanding the minister's resignation the president remained unscathed. 645 642

3. The unimportance of the legislature. It has made useful patron-

21. The European War, threatening the supply of rubber coming to the United States from British Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies, has made the American government seek new sources. The Department of Agriculture established an experimental station and breeding gardens for rubber plants in Haiti, and the results were so successful that extensive areas were planted with rubber trees. Haiti and the United States in May, 1941, reached a long-term agreement for "the development of agriculture and economy"; the projects embraced under the agreement include not only rubber but the further development of Haiti's banana plantations, the planting of oil crops, drug plants, spices, fiber plants, the stimulation of handicraft industries, and the development of forestry resources peculiar to the tropics. A further extension of an additional $500,000 in credits will be made for use on highways, irrigation projects, and to provide transportation facilities for the areas to be planted to rubber trees. 249 433 654 648 [312] [491]

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3. The unimportance of the legislature. It has made useful patron

646 age for the president to dispense, and has preserved the semblance of
642 republican government; but hardly half a dozen legislative sessions in all Haitian history have contributed seminal ideas in politics or initiated true reforms. How could they, indeed, when the president was consistently a dictator of policy?

666 4. The undemocratic nature of the vote. Senators are chosen by
642 the representatives, and the two groups together have generally elected the president, when he did not come to power by revolution. The only chance people have had to vote has been for local officials and representatives. In these cases, the vote has been limited to the élite and the army, with the president's henchmen counting the ballots. Since the Occupation there have been plebiscites on constitutional changes, the people having the right to vote Yes or No.

692 5. The subservience of the courts to the president. They have been
643 filled with president's men, generally astute enough to consult presi-
642 dential wishes before handing down a decision. Foreign merchants soon learned that they could expect little "justice" from the courts if their own cause conflicted with special Haitian interests. Foreign diplomats likewise learned that in crises the courts could involve the simplest issue in such verbal complexity that months of patience would be necessary to unwind the red tape.

641 6. The pliability of "constitutional rights." Freedom of speech and
661 of the press has been notably lacking, although scurrilous attacks on the administration's enemies have often been permitted. Legislators
642 have been expelled. Graft has flourished. In 1833, for example, two representatives were expelled from the House "for systematically opposing the measures of the executive, and persisting in a demand for a statement of public expenditures." A century later a senator was expelled for almost the same reasons.

701 7. Militarism. Only in this respect is any real change apparent since
178 the American Occupation. The army was always large up to 1915, and so constituted an economic drain as well as a political menace.
642 Generals had great power: they ruled each department and each
669 arrondissement, were subject only to the president, and were at the bottom of every revolutionary movement.[22] Since the Occupation

[162] 22. In 1842, when the population was still less than a million, there were in the dis-
[701] trict governments 9 generals, 63 colonels, 48 lieutenant colonels, 9 captains, 1 lieutenant, and 28 medical officers; and in the standing army 33 colonels, 95 lieutenant colonels, 825 captains, 654 lieutenants, 577 sublieutenants and ensigns, 6,815 noncommissioned officers, and 25 medical officers. The army had 28,000 soldiers and cost about $600,000 a year. See John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 86 ff.

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175 642 put little stress upon strictly legal marriage, he did try to foster family ties and to strengthen family life.

1806. Pétion's first constitution, drawn up with his fellow mulattoes. Taking his model from the United States constitution, he established a republic with a president and a legislature, although the president of Haiti had greater relative powers than the president of the United States. He might be reëlected, but was not to be a dictator.

[643]

1807. Christophe's reply to the mulattoes, establishing the "state" of Haiti which should (he hoped) overwhelm the "republic" of Haiti. His political and social systems were in few respects different from those of Toussaint and Dessalines.

1811. Christophe's second constitution, establishing his kingdom and creating a nobility, but otherwise maintaining the forced-labor system.

1816. Pétion's second constitution, the longest-lived in Haitian history. Having been several times reëlected president he now adopted the principle of a life presidency, with the right of the incumbent to name his successor. The legislature and forms of a representative republic were retained.

1843. The completely unrealistic constitution of the young revolutionaries who succeeded in overthrowing Boyer. The fight of the anti-Boyeristes had been for effective parliamentary government; to that end they provided for the direct election of the president by the people, a democratic vote, the exercise of legislative power by the Chamber of Representatives and the Senate, and the subordination of military to civil authority. Such democracy was too radical for either élite or army to endure, and this constitution was shortly superseded.

1846. Riché's return (in most respects) to the constitution of 1816. He kept the principle that the president should be elected, not appointed for life by his predecessor; but the election was by the combined Senate and Chamber, rather than by democratic vote of the people.

1849. Soulouque's constitution, founding his personal and gaudy Second Empire.

1859. Geffrard's return to the Pétion constitution of 1816, as revised by Riché in 1846, with a few details added to meet changes in social conditions in the last decade.

1867. Salnave's modifications of the constitution of 1859. The parliamentarians were in control once more, and inserted the require-

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 ment that two thirds of the members of either Chamber must be
642 present before a law could be voted—a stipulation making it possible
[646] for any clique to hold up legislation by absenting itself.

1874. The constitution of Domingue who, having defeated the
[643] Liberals, promulgated a constitution "profoundly modifying" the language of the 1867 document. It legally concentrated power in the hands of the president—where, indeed, it had always been in spite of constitutional declarations.

1879. Salomon's first constitution, which professed to be a re-examination of Haitian institutions, but was actually not different in essentials from the document of 1846. The line from Pétion to Riché to Salomon and his successors was the main one from which deviations, such as those of Soulouque, occurred.

1886. Salomon's second constitution, a mild revision of his first.

[178] 1889. Hyppolite, the new president, felt it necessary to have a new constitution, although like the constitution of 1886 this was little more than a revision of that of 1879. Under the 1889 document Haiti continued to function, more and more haltingly, up to the time of the American Occupation.

[648] 1918. The constitution drawn up in Washington[7] and forced through in Haiti by a farcical plebiscite. Its most debated provision
[423] was the elimination of the prohibition against ownership of land by foreign whites, thus ending the one common point in all previous constitutions since 1805. For the rest, it changed little of the actual
[641] structure of Haitian government, but provided a great number of unaccustomed democratic rights: freedom of assembly, trial by jury in political cases, direct election of senators, submission of amendments to popular vote, freedom of the press.

1927. Although this is considered merely a revision of the 1918
[641] constitution, its changes were actually more noteworthy than many expected by the so-called new constitutions. Thirteen amendments were carried by popular vote, again so overwhelming as to be ridiculous, restricting many of the democratic liberties granted in 1918 which had proved embarrassing both to President Borno and

7. Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his campaign for the vice-presidency of the United States in 1920, claimed that he had written most of this constitution while he was Woodrow Wilson's assistant-secretary of the navy. (See the *New York Times*, August 19, 1920.) The constitution was approved in Haiti by a vote of 69,337 to 335.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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to the Americans who ruled Haiti through his office. This constitution once more increased the power of the president. 642 [641]

1932. Vincent's constitution, professing to be quite different from the two in effect during the Occupation, but actually closely resembling the 1927 revision with its concentration of power in executive hands. In 1935 an important amendment was added, making it possible for the president to be reëlected. [643]

Despite this welter of constitutions, the essential framework of Haitian government has consisted, except for brief interruptions, of a president, a legislature, and courts. The term of the presidency has varied from four to seven years (in the early days, for life) with the privilege of reëlection being now forbidden, now granted. Two presidents who tried to extend their terms, Salnave and Salomon, were deposed by revolutions for their temerity. Their distinction of being among the few to serve out the allotted term was thus marred by an ignominious end. 642 643

Regularly the president was obligated to "maintain internal peace" —a requirement few heads of state have been able to carry out, since internal peace has been most elusive. To aid him in his task he has been given wide powers: he commands the army (always large until 1915; every president except one between 1804 and 1915 was a general) and the navy (never more than a few ill-conditioned vessels, but these important in the general roadless condition of the country); most constitutions also gave him the right to issue necessary proclamations in order to deal with special crises. He "watches over" tribunals by means of appointed commissioners; by this arrangement he may obviously exert pressure for favorable judgments in cases which interest him. 643 [701] [706] [716] [792]

The one body which might conceivably check the president, namely, the legislature, has generally been composed of the president's men, for the Senate has usually been elected by the lower house from a list of candidates proposed by the president, while the representatives would hardly dare defy the man who controlled the army (which presided over such elections) and could dissolve the legislature. By most of the constitutions the president proposed to the legislature all laws except those concerning taxation; even here, since he directed the receipt and issue of public moneys, he was not really limited. Over foreign affairs the executive had effective control by 643 [646] [646]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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643 reason of his power to name agents accredited to foreign governments; with the approval of the Senate he made treaties and wars. In cases of malversation, or gross corruption, the president might be denounced by the Senate (his own nominees), and the High Court of Justice (his own appointees) would sit in judgment on him; matters [669] have never reached this pass, however, for the Haitian method of checking a president's "malversation" has been the more direct one of revolution.

643 At a salary generally set in the neighborhood of thirty or forty thousand dollars the president could live luxuriously, the highest- [465] paid person in Haiti. The salary combined with the prestige and [661] perquisites of office was enough to explain the eagerness with which men sought the position. "Perquisites" often enough included graft.

645 Details of administration have been in the hands of various departments of state, their number depending upon the constitution then in force. As has been said, the president generally regarded his cabinet members as little more than clerks to attend to details. Only a few in the whole nineteenth century stand out prominently as directors of policy—Boyer as Pétion's secretary-general; Inginac, holding the same position under Boyer; Anténor Firmin, Hyppolite's foreign secretary; and a handful of others. During the four years, 1843–47, of "ephemeral governments" the cabinet ministers sometimes managed to rule their offices, and under the succession of ignorant Negro generals at the end of the century, if the educated élite secretaries had not taken charge of affairs no one would have handled them. Constitutional language made the cabinet officers seem more important than they were, however, for the actual position of a minister was usually that of head clerk, chief errand boy and handy man for the president, and convenient scapegoat when crises arose in foreign affairs, finances, public works, or other spheres.

646 The legislative body has ordinarily consisted of two chambers, the Senate and the Chamber of Representatives. Senators must be thirty years old. They have ordinarily served a nine-year term, being available for reëlection only after three years out of office. The method of choice curbed their power: the lower house selected each senator from a list of three nominated by the president for each vacancy. For a salary of sixteen hundred dollars and freedom from arrest in civil cases, all the senator had to do was to correspond with the president and lower house on public affairs, and decree appro-

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Patrick Henry, Randolph, and Samuel Adams as well. Madiou estimates that there were 52,500 men in the army in 1804, when Haiti's population was less than 400,000.[12]

Fear of the return of the French kept the army large, and the administration of agricultural affairs under both Dessalines and Christophe was in charge of it. The construction of a fortress in every district put laborers under the direct influence of the military.[13] In addition to the corvée, or forced labor, required to construct these fortifications, the workers of the nation in the time of Dessalines also had to clear the hillsides and the ravines connecting valleys, and plant them with bananas, yams, plantains, and other provisions to supply the garrisons which manned the forts.

The Emperor left his army to feed and clothe itself. Occasional rations were given as a part of wages, but they were irregularly distributed. In the South particularly the troops began to murmur and desert, stirred up by their mulatto officers who were themselves no better rewarded, and who were already beginning their plot to overthrow the Emperor. The accusation was made that the money which should have gone to the army was being used on Dessalines' mistresses. The soldiers indulged themselves in that most damaging of Haitian weapons, the witty song, full of double meanings but deadly in its thrust at public personages; by these symbolic songs the fall of Dessalines was not only predicted but actually prepared.

Christophe kept a military state, but he had learned many lessons from watching affairs under Dessalines. Realizing that he could not trust the preservation of his régime to the fickleness of an army which had seen his rise to power and had already deserted its first commander in chief, knowing too that there was treason even among his own guards, he made a contract with a company of foreign merchants for the transportation of twenty thousand blacks from Africa. These were to make up a military force independent of the Haitians,

12. *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 122.

13. Each general was commanded by Dessalines to build a fort on one of the mountains in his district. The design seems to have been left to the general. A few of the fortifications were truly impressive. Christophe built La Ferrière near Milot in the North; Pétion the fortress of Jean-Jacques at Grand Fond, four leagues from Port-au-Prince; Capoix called his Les Trois Pavillons, in the range of mountains back of Port-de-Paix; Cangé and Yayou together built Campan near Léogane; Magloire Ambroise constructed a fortress near Cap Rouge and called it by that name; Geffrard built Platon near Les Cayes; Férou built Mafranc near Jérémie; François began but did not finish Le Bonnet Carré near Aquin.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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643 and being the personal property of the monarch and recipients of his
701 royal favor, were to constitute the perpetual support of his throne.
625 Only four thousand of these compulsory immigrants came, but
625 Christophe made them into very effective companies of police, whom he named the Royal Dahomets from the country of their origin. They performed the duties of a gendarmerie in all the districts of the North, drove the cultivators to their labors, watched over property and the security of the proprietors, and maintained industry and a strict subordination among all ranks of people in the kingdom.

175 Christophe's regular troops were well clothed and armed. They
701 were kept under stern discipline, no mercy or relaxation being
[703] shown them; delinquency on their part brought flagellation or a military execution. The troops received only a nominal stipend, and each soldier was required to gain his subsistence by cultivating a few acres of ground allotted to him out of the national domain. The usual quarter of this income had, of course, to be turned over as a tax to the state. Although the King's power was maintained by soldiers, he never coddled them. "The soldiers of the army as well as the laborers of the plantations lived in perpetual dread of the rod of authority," wrote Brown.[14] They seem to have developed a tradition of some special fetish power possessed by Christophe, a sort of *mana*, to use anthropological terminology. Even princes and dukes were chastised by the King's orders, and then made to do menial work by way of further punishment.

Conditions in the republic of Pétion were similar and yet different —similar in that soldiers formed the support of the government, different in that Pétion did not rule by fear. Every individual man between 16 and 60, a few cultivators excepted, was required by law to be a soldier, either in the *corps solde* (regular troops of the line), or in the *corps non solde* (national guard). The former, both under Pétion and in the early days of Boyer, had about 40,000 men distributed in strong detachments in towns and communes all over the
[914] country. Their costume, instead of being neat, uniform, and daily inspected as with Christophe's army, was ragged and mismated; they
[465] managed according to popular parlance "to find linen on every hedge." They were paid from fifty cents to a dollar a month, ac-
[541] cording to the existing solvency or exigency of the state. Each week
[512] end a parade and review was held, and then a small fatigue party was taken to do actual duty, the others being dismissed until the next

14. *Op. cit.*, II, 209.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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policy of encouraging trade with his friends and prohibiting it with his enemies—both arbitrarily. The variation of Pétion was a sort of mercantilism, with set high tariffs.

What Dessalines planned was in terms of Western statecraft so weird that white onlookers felt they were restrained in calling Dessalines a transplanted African tribal chieftain. So passionately intense was the fury of that general against all whites that he took every precaution he could devise to prevent face-to-face dealings between his Haitians and foreigners. By deceit, treachery, and ingenious cruelty he conducted a massacre which deserves comparison with that of Saint Bartholomew: this effectively rid the country of white residents. Since for a time Haiti would have to depend for economic survival upon trade with foreigners, Dessalines next conceived a project whereby the whole population would be gathered in the centre of the island, in the most protected valleys and the gorges of the highest mountains. In these fastnesses the people would never see a white but would work on the land, producing sugar and coffee and cotton for export without ever leaving their local habitations. On the seacoast would be established certain "counters" over which a few incorruptible Haitians, chosen by the Emperor himself, would sell local products and buy the necessary imported goods. Impregnable fortresses were to guard access to the interior,[2] which would be reached by new roads from the seacoast "counters." Every seaport was to be destroyed as soon as new towns could be built in the back country. Already when his death intervened Dessalines had moved his capital from the Cape (that is, Cap-Haïtien, formerly Cap Français) to the inland village of Marchand (in the department of the Artibonite; now renamed Dessalines), and his next plan was to transfer Port-au-Prince eight leagues inland to the plantation Dérance, among the mountains.

Dessalines has been thought absurd, childish, barbaric. But there is something poignant, even tragic, in this fiery determination of the black chieftain, bitter over the cruelties and indignity to which his people had been subject for decades, to use this alien island as best he could and preserve his people at any cost from such another domination.

Despite his scheme for ultimate isolation of the people, Dessalines kept everyone steadily at work by the forced-labor system instituted

2. See p. 247 and note 13. under Toussaint.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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175 441 Justice in the courts was administered by Haitians whose narrow patriotism biased their decisions.

439 648 5. A temperamental tariff policy. Not only were imports subject to a tariff which might be changed at the whim of any president, but 175 exports also were taxed. When an administration was in need of 651 funds it might suddenly, without warning, raise the tax on coffee 489 exports and so disrupt a merchant's business plans. The customs-houses were in charge of Haitians who steadily became more inefficient and grasping as the century progressed, until many foreign merchants felt that the only way of getting business dispatched was by means of bribes. Examinations at customs were long drawn out, often there was open thievery, and erroneous valuations were common.

175 6. The burden of the indemnity to France. Contracted by Boyer 657 in 1825, this annual payment for sixty years was an incubus to every [648] administration, leaving no surplus in the treasury for public works, education, or any internal development; likewise, it made the threat of foreign interference all the more imminent.

7. A debased currency. Pétion was the first president to devalue money, and his example was frequently followed thereafter. Counterfeiting was general. When a country's monetary system is unstable, its officials accustomed to bribery and graft,[17] and its financial structure almost nonexistent, there is little chance for sound economic development.

175 8. Dependence upon a single crop. Haitian economy was tied to 245 the staple coffee, grown with indifferent care, prepared for the market in outmoded fashion, and sold in competition with coffee from more scientifically run plantations in other tropical countries.

175 9. Political instability. The recurrent revolutions in Haiti made 439 foreigners chary of participating in the country's business, since the 66 government which made a contract might be out of office before the ink was dry.

175 10. Indifference of the élite to economic pursuits. What profits 439 were obtainable went into the pockets of foreign merchants, not 565 those of Haitian businessmen. In 1842 the comparative exports of the

[643] 17. Sir Spenser St. John, always a bitter critic of Haiti, remarked (*Hayti, or The* [159] *Black Republic*, p. 88) sardonically that "Boyer had the rare quality of being honest, [661] and left in the treasury, on his departure, the sum of £200,000, the first and last chief who was ever guilty of so unaccountable a weakness."

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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[p. 315]

NOTES

CHAPTER II

The period between 1789 and 1803 may be summarized as follows: 175

1789–1791. Struggle for precedence between whites and free colored people, with the balance in favor of the whites. [565]

1791–1793. The slave insurrection, with consequent anarchy, and futile attempts of French commissioners to restore order. Both whites and colored people pushed into the background. [669] [563]

1793–1796. Invasion of the colony by English and Spanish; rise of the mulatto general Rigaud and the black general Toussaint. [648]

1796–1799. Consolidation of power by Toussaint; defeat and expulsion of Rigaud; emigration of whites. [643]

1799–1802. Toussaint in full power as governor-general.

1802–1803. Leclerc's expedition, with its initial successes and ultimate failure. Final achievement of Haitian independence under Dessalines and Christophe. [642]

PART III

Various efforts were made by American abolitionists working with Haitian presidents to colonize freed American Negro slaves in Haiti in the period before the Civil War.[1] All these projects came to unfortunate ends, some even to grimly tragic ones. During Boyer's time about 13,000 American Negroes went to Haiti, the government assigning to each family a portion of land upon its arrival. Very shortly most of those who could afford it returned to this country, and within ten years hardly one was still living upon the land. An American writer, Hunt, says that during his seventeen years in Haiti (before 1860) he had known of but 13 Negroes from America who had been moderately successful; of these, 7 were merchants or traders, 4 mechanics, and 2 lawyers; and all were mulattoes. Five others were barely independent, and all the rest were day laborers or worse. In spite of this, Hunt planned another aided migration of American Negroes to Haiti. Warning them not to expect too much in the way of improvements in agriculture, he adds a significant paragraph: "Should the immigrant obtain quiet possession of unoccupied lands, and begin to use the plough instead of the hoe, his new methods of culture would be likely to draw upon him the jealousy and ill-will of his neighbors. For when new ways are too new to be accepted as an example, they are very apt to be felt and resented as a rebuke. More than one of Boyer's old immigrants have told me that they were obliged to give up agriculture and take to trading in towns, on account of annoyances of this sort. They found their fences down, or their water let off, of a morning; or evidences that cattle had been fed on their grounds over night; or the neighboring idlers, of which there are many, had stolen all their plantains and sweet potatoes, for sale in the market. I do not mean to say that here Haitian cultivators are worse than any other rude people. On the contrary, I

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1. An excellent description of these projects is found in L. L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938* (Durham, 1940), chap. IV.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 563 believe they are less bad than many others in like circumstances. For not having great strength of character, they have neither great virtues nor great vices. The English farmers, Birkbeck and Flower, encountered similar troubles, and worse, when, forty years ago [that is, between 1820 and 1830], they brought over their English habits, and settled down with them among our farmers in Illinois."[2]

Montague sums up the general fate of American Negroes who migrated to Haiti by saying that some were exploited by the élite (who treated their own blacks in the same fashion), others persecuted by resentful peasant neighbors, and still others, who had expected manna to fall from the Haitian heaven, simply disillusioned at having to work, and so lost heart.[3]

CHAPTER XII

175 ●643 The following table of the presidents of Haiti summarizes in general the shifting political fortunes of the country. Those presidents who belonged to the élite caste are designated with an asterisk (*). It will be noted that the presidency has generally been in the hands of men from three departments: the North, where Negroes are predominant even among the leaders; the South, always a stronghold of the mulattoes; and the West, where the capital, Port-au-Prince, is located. The Department of the Northwest has never had a president, and the Artibonite only three. The color of the presidents is indicated.

Heads of State	*Color*	*Dates*	*Department*
1. Dessalines	Black	1804–6	North
{2. Christophe	Black	1807–20	North
{2. *Pétion	Light	1807–18	West
3. *Boyer	Light	1818–43	West
4. *Rivière-Hérard	Light	1843–44	South
5. Guerrier	Black	1844–45	Artibonite
6. Pierrot	Black	1845–46	North
7. Riché	Black	1847–47	North
8. Soulouque	Black	1847–59	West
9. *Geffrard	Dark	1859–67	South
10. *Salnave	Dark	1867–69	North
11. *Nissage-Saget	Light	1870–74	Artibonite
*12. Domingue	Dark	1874–76	South
13. *Boisrond-Canal	Light	1876–79	South
14. Salomon	Black	1879–88	South
15. Légitime	Black	1888–89	South
16. *Hyppolite	Black	1889–96	North
17. Simon Sam	Black	1896–1902	North
18. Nord Alexis	Black	1902–8	North
19. Simon	Black	1908–11	South
20. Leconte	Dark	1911–12	North

2. Benjamin S. Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans*, pp. 14, 11.
3. Op. cit., pp. 71–72.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Heads of State	*Color*	*Dates*	*Department*
21. Auguste	Light	1912–13	North
22. Oreste	Dark	1913–14	West
23. Zamor	Dark	1914	Artibonite
24. Théodore	Black	1914–15	North
25. Guillaume Sam	Black	1915	North
26. *Dartiguenave	Light	1915–22	South
27. *Borno	Light	1922–30	West
28. *Roy	Light	1930	West
29. *Vincent	Light	1930–41	West
30. *Lescot	Light	1941–	North

Summarizing this table, it can be seen that of the 31 heads of state only 13 have definitely belonged to the élite group. A few of the others might, by stretching the category, be regarded as members of this group. These 13, however, have governed for a total of 87 years, as compared with a rule of only 64 years by the representatives of the army clique. (It will be remembered that from 1807 to 1820 Haiti was separated and so had two heads of state.)

There have been 14 Negro rulers, 11 mulatto presidents, and 6 presidents who had at least a slight degree of white blood.

Of the 31, 13 represented the North (Christophe is included in this number, although he was born on the island of St. Christopher, from which he took his name); 8 came from the South; 7 from the West; 3 from the Artibonite; and none from the Northwest. The Northerners were in control of the government for 42 years; Southerners for 32 years; Westerners for 69 years; and the Artibonite presidents for less than 6 years.

CHAPTER XIV

1. *Taxation*

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The formative period of Haitian history, it is now evident, was between 1807 and 1820, when the young country was offered two sets of policies, generally opposed, to choose between: Pétion's and Christophe's. It is likewise clear that, since Pétion's required less discipline and self-restraint, and the country became reunited under Pétion's adoring secretary, Boyer, the easier path of Pétion was the one generally followed.

This choice is abundantly clear in the matter of taxation. Although the civil war between the two rulers was draining his treasury, Pétion either did not care or did not dare to tax his people. He relied rather upon heavy duties on trade in his ports, thus embarrassing commerce and taking away much of the profit from coffee. Christophe, on the other hand, without a scruple got millions by a tax on production amounting to one quarter of the annual crops of his kingdom;[4] consequently commerce in the North was free and that part of the island busy with prosperous trade. Christophe also taxed his nobles, charging a heavy fee for a patent of nobility, and also receiving annually a fourth of the crops raised upon their estates.

4. Copied from the practice of Toussaint and Dessalines.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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3. *Pétion, Boyer, and Inginac as Administrators*

Pétion lived very simply in the South, like a plain republican magistrate. He sat on his piazza, accessible to all his people. He had a quiet way of answering his opponents which did not make enemies of them. He made his secretary answer every letter that arrived, no matter how small; many were simply inquiries about the President's health. Yet the wars between Pétion and Christophe dragged on from 1807 to 1812,[8] draining the finances of the republic. Not only the crops declined: so also did most of the public improvements instituted by the colonial planters; so did trade; so did habits of industry. Everything seemed to conspire against hard work. The rich plains of the Cul-de-Sac and the Artibonite Valley were ravaged by fire and warfare; necessary equipment for sugar making was destroyed, the money for new machines and buildings was unavailable; and the men were drawn away from their land by military duties.

Inginac, Boyer's secretary of state, after the Revolution of 1843 had got rid of both the President and his secretary, wrote his memoirs. There are some revealing passages. Inginac reports that Pétion told him only forty days before his death that Boyer was a man of probity and delicacy, "but unhappily he is petulant; he is too set in his ways to conciliate those who might assist him. In everything *he* wants to dominate, and he will bring unhappiness to the country if he does not change." Inginac cites cases to show that Pétion's prophecy was correct. Boyer in 1820 repealed the most unpopular laws, particularly those requiring personal corvée and the repair of public roads; but instead of taking advice from his cabinet on important economic matters, he frequently announced that he was president and would not be run by anybody. Consequently, according to Inginac, he made mistakes which might have been avoided.[9] Defending himself, the former secretary offers a clue to the failure of the régime—possibly unavoidable—by showing that the administration merely suggested, did not require, action:

"Have I not constantly, not only preached and corresponded about the necessity of making agriculture prosperous, but also given work at as high wages as the treasury could afford? Have I not created habitations on lands formerly totally uncultivated, putting formerly idle men to work? Have I not published at my own expense, although I directed the National Printery, methods for cultivating tobacco and coffee plants, of which I distributed gratis several thousand copies?"[10]

In spite of all encouragement which the administration could offer, agricultural production continued to decline, while expenses increased, and external trade fell off from a third to a half. The government had to borrow from the banking firm of Lafitte in Paris to find even the interest for

8. Hostilities between the two parts of Haiti ceased about 1812 because of the mutual fear on the part of Christophe and Pétion of Napoleon's ascendancy, and the threat which this constituted to the whole former colony. Their war had ravaged the plantations and removed laborers from the soil. Then came the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain, cutting off many of the supplies which Haiti drew from both countries. There was accordingly an unwritten truce, with no further hostilities. A neutral territory of ten leagues between the boundaries of the two states was tacitly agreed upon: neither army was to enter it. This was the rich plain of Boucassin, once the garden of the island, now a wilderness.

9. Joseph Balthazar Inginac, *Memoirs* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1843), pp. 32, 34, 38.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

payments due to the French government.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Nous pas mandé ou anyien!
Nous pas mandé l'a'gent enco'!
Papa Nord ça nous ta mandé oh chef,
C'est bamboche nous mandé ou! [Ex. 113]

Alexis Nord, Papa, you are a good chief, oh!
You gave us money, you gave us paper!
Alexis Nord, Papa, you are a good chief, oh!
You gave us money, you gave us paper!
We don't ask you for anything more!
We don't ask you again for money!
Papa Nord, only one thing we are going to ask you, chief,
It is a big celebration we ask for!

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The president's wife, Çéçé, seems to have been very proud of him and very sure of his talents. When the army bugles blow a general assembly call, they are supposed to be saying:

Çéçé té dit Alexis Nord grand moune nan tout corps li!
Çéçé té dit Alexis Nord grand moune nan tout corps li!
Çéçé té dit la quitté pour voir l'heure li vlé!
Çéçé té dit Tonton Nord grand moune nan tout corps li! [Ex. 114]

Çéçé said Alexis Nord is a thoroughly fine man!
Çéçé said Alexis Nord is a thoroughly fine man!
Çéçé said he will quit his office whenever he sees fit!
Çéçé said Uncle Nord is a thoroughly fine man!

Another bugle call, with words attributed to Nord's wife, contains a note of complaint:

Çéçé said *waille!*
Çéçé said that, said that!
Çéçé said if you don't have any money you can't have a woman!
Çéçé said *waille!*
Çéçé said that, said that!
Çéçé said we are working our guts out!
Çéçé said *waille!*
Çéçé said that, said that!
Çéçé said Alexis Nord is president!

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Çéçé was not the only one in Haiti who had confidence in Nord's staying power. One popular song of the period goes:

Alexis Nord Papa,
Bondieu qui metté ou là!
Consolidé là yo
Qui vlé ba ou traka!

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

roaming bands of cacos, generally regarded as bandit elements. Caco chiefs were imprisoned or killed as outlaws, though much of their activity was directed against the American occupation rather than the civil government. Many of the injustices of the occupation were the result of inadequate understanding of the Haitian people and their way of life. There was much unspoken bitterness against the occupation forces, and in some popular songs the Marines were referred to by the peaceful peasantry as "cacos in khaki." During President Borno's administration the people in the north were singing:

175 648 175 648 533* 539* 643

Grand Prevost ou pas tendé cacos Bayé Bouteille?
Grand Prevost n'allé wè cacos Bayé Bouteille!
Ala kilé nen dé nations:
Americains dévant, cacos deuxieme!

Grand Prevost, didn't you hear the cacos are at the Bottle Gate?
Grand Prevost, we are going to see the cacos at the Bottle Gate!
Now we have two species:
The Americans are the worst, the cacos come second!

When President Borno's tenure of office came to an end, it was felt in some quarters that Madame Borno was taking the prospective change of residence very hard:

175 643 644 533* 539*

Madame Borno ça ou gainyain ou apé crié?
Ou té tou conné palais a parti pou' ou!
Madame Borno ça ou gainyain ou apé crié?
Ou té tou conné yun jour pou' oté laissé!

Madame Borno, what is the matter, why are you crying?
You always knew one day you would have to leave the palace!
Madame Borno, what is the matter, why are you crying?
You always knew one day you'd have to give it up!

In 1930 Sténio Vincent came into office. He was a generally unpopular executive who managed to hold on to the presidency by suppressing the political opposition. When he was elected, the progressives were hopeful, and his supporters were singing: "Sténio Vincent bon garçon." But public sentiment shifted. Times were hard for the Haitian people during the Vincent administration. The darker citizens felt Vincent was "too light" to have their interests at heart. They were violently aroused, too, by his gingerly handling of the massacre of Haitians in the Dominican Republic in 1937. During his administration there were a number of abortive caco demonstrations and an unsuccessful revolt of high-ranking army officers. But in the early days a Meringue

175 643 669

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

person. To his evident surprise he was met not by meek submission, 175
but by the army of the mulatto Pétion. Christophe was not defeated; 643
neither was he victorious. He was obliged to retire in high dudgeon 642
to his loyal supporters in the North, where he proceeded to set up a 662
state according to his own idea of what a state should be.

The Assembly thereupon outlawed Christophe on the ground of rebellion against constituted authority, electing in his stead their great favorite Pétion, whose power as president of the Republic was to be limited by the new constitution. For the next thirteen years, from 1807 to 1820, the tiny country with its 10,000 square miles was divided, Christophe ruling in the North and in the fertile valley of the Artibonite, and Pétion governing until his death in 1818 in the West and South, the main strongholds of the colored element.

Christophe was of the stuff that myths are made of. He was in- 175
disputably Haiti's most dynamic, relentlessly effective, and dramatic
ruler of the nineteenth century. Like Toussaint and Dessalines, he 643
was a black ex-slave, and like them he had won his spurs as a military 663
leader during the revolution. He was an ardent patriot whose love for his country did not lead to retrogressive chauvinism. Whereas Dessalines through fear and hatred of the French had excluded all white men from Haiti, Christophe had the perspicacity to see that the country could benefit from the contribution of whites. Englishmen he especially welcomed. Like his predecessors Christophe drove his people—with a tyrant's lash, many thought—but only to increase the glory of Haiti.

Christophe had a vaulting imagination which brought glamour [712]
even to practical expedients. He built a colossal fortress on a high mountain in the North, partly for defense, but partly to make his contemned Negro people feel that they could achieve one of the architectural and engineering marvels of the age. His exquisite [644]
palace, Sans Souci, not only satisfied his own vanity as a ruler but also provided a focal point for the imagination and loyalty of his subjects. In 1811 he had himself crowned king, Henry I, amidst pomp and circumstance—and then created a royal court, partly to reward his leaders, partly to get the fees for patents of nobility, but primarily to bind all important men in the country to himself and to the Haitian state with unbreakable personal bonds. Dramatic in almost every particular of his life and reign, he ruled for thirteen years more through force of personality than by tyranny. Taxes were heavy

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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There are sections, particularly in the capital, in which shanties more resembling chicken coops than dwellings house whole families under leaky roofs of crude thatch. Privacy, cleanliness, sanitation, are not to be thought of. That the sun is warm in Haiti is a blessing, for cold would creep through the gaping walls. Where the shanty dwellers go in the rain, where they get their food, what relieves the dreary round of daily monotony the important people of Haiti do not know, nor do many of them seem to care. President Vincent undertook to clear away a section of the most abject slums in Port-au-Prince, erected in their place a series of two-room (likewise two-family) houses about a central square. Compared with the hovels they replaced the new houses are palatial; compared with houses Americans would consider adequate, they look more like unimaginative garages. With what rapidity an epidemic of serious nature might sweep the lower sections of the city, which are but one vast slum, is a thought too harrowing to entertain. 362

In the whole city there are hardly half a dozen buildings which would detain the lover of architecture. The president's palace is a gleaming white structure, somewhat resembling the White House in Washington. With its background of lofty mountains it makes an impressive picture, although it stands naked in the vast public square of the city. Young palm trees are now growing in the square, and may before many years provide for the palace the setting it deserves. Inside the palace one's chief impression is of emptiness. Other government buildings range from plain white edifices which fulfill their practical function without any suggestion of aesthetic graciousness, down through the inferior grades to wooden structures which one passes without a second glance. The cathedral, placed upon an eminence, is unattractive both in its exterior and in the glaring interior. Upon one of its finger towers at night gleams a light to guide ships into the harbor. The clubs and a few of the villas are pleasant to look at; the colleges of the lay brothers are impressively large, but bespeak the provincial town. 344 644 344 346 [349]

Indeed, one wanders up and down the country in search of man-made beauty and finds only two examples, both partially ruined, and both in the North: Christophe's magnificent citadel, La Ferrière, and the shattered shell of his charming palace, Sans Souci. 712 344

The citadel is breath-taking. Astride a great peak the huge edifice resembles the mighty beak of a ship about to soar off into the atmosphere. Inside one can wander through endless vaults, gaze from 712

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

712 the battlements far off across the tortuous mass of mountains and
[713] green valleys, admire the sheer strength of will which made His Majesty's subjects bear four hundred cannon up the steep and rocky path—not to mention thousands of cannon balls now rusting away after a century of disuse, or the powder and shot which once filled
[173] the magazines. It is said that five thousand soldiers could be housed in the fortress at once. If this is hyperbole, one hardly dare challenge
[703] it, for the whole Citadel belittles the individual man. It is likewise said that Christophe once made a battalion of soldiers march off the cliff to their death merely to demonstrate his absolute control over
[766] them. Such stories grow up around His Black Majesty. He lies entombed in his useless but still superb fortress—and lives in the memory of the Northerners, one of whom said proudly: "We of the North have a great heritage, and you will find that we are all dominated by *une psychologie citadelienne.*"

Dungeons, secret passages, royal apartments, separate rooms for each of the old Dutch, Spanish, French, and English cannon, some of them dating back to the seventeenth century—all the paraphernalia of the storybook fortress is present. From a bastion one gazes, as from an alp, for miles in any direction, and feels that La Ferrière is certainly one of the most impressive, and one of the most futile, edifices in the world. If the silent cannon had ever been fired, their balls would have rumbled harmlessly down the mountainside. The suspicion grows that Christophe achieved his architectural miracle not primarily as a defense against the French, but to make his subjects proud of what a nation of despised ex-slaves could accomplish.

344 Five miles away, at the foot of the mountain, is the village of
• 644 Milot, with the ruins of the palace of Sans Souci. Of yellow stone, it spreads out spaciously like a French château. Its rooms must have been magnificent. The palace is so situated that one may look out across the northern plains to the sea, or up the valleys to mountain peaks. In Sans Souci Christophe shot himself in 1820 when he knew that only *souci* would remain to him if he lived.

489 Transportation from one part of the country to another is far from
[496] easy. There are no railroads—unless one counts the short line running north a few miles from Port-au-Prince to nowhere in particular, and the equally short line coming west into Cap-Haïtien from the fields
[491] of the northern plain. Roads built by the American Marines make automobile travel between the main towns possible, if one does not

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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The era from 1883 to 1915 was Haiti's worst, politically. Revo-

lution succeeded revolution; the country sank deep into graft and scandal; foreign powers made Haiti debase herself before them. Some of the élite, backed by foreign merchants resident in the country, went so far as to urge annexation by the United States rather than endure continued disorder in economics and degradation in social life. They felt matters had come to such a pass that only so radical a change could clean the Augean stables. This was the period of a succession of political pamphlets[14] written by élite thinkers to set forth the necessary steps of reform. Every president was a black autocrat, holding power by his control over the masses. If an occasional one was more than mediocre (Hyppolite, for example), his good qualities were sure to be more than offset by the ignorant boors (such as Nord Alexis) who followed him.

175 669 668 648 642 643

True, even the most incompetent of the Negro presidents was obliged to employ a few élite, for literacy was necessary in the foreign office if nowhere else. The aristocrats were impotent, however, for Haitian problems had tremendously increased at the very period when they were losing control of government policy. Reforms were imperative, as every member of the élite knew; but no black president saw the need, or seeing it, had the vaguest idea how to proceed toward effecting them. Beyond the shameful disgrace of Haiti's position in the world of independent nations, the thoughtful could glimpse the anarchy which must inevitably result from continued ineffectiveness.

175 643 645 565 [648]

Reforms were not forthcoming. Rather, anarchy came, bringing international complications in its wake. The American Marines occupied the country. An era was ended.

175 642 648

It had been a strange journey in political ideas from the time of Pétion and Christophe to that of the Occupation. The early leaders seemed to envision triumphs for Haiti in a world of great powers, and to see themselves as men with a mission. After Boyer the vision dimmed. We have Soulouque, whose tinsel empire was mere stage setting for the act of a neighborhood bully; the tyrant Domingue; the senile Nord Alexis; the utterly incompetent fly-by-nights in the decade before the Occupation. Even Geffrard the reformer, prob-

175 643 000

14. Among the most lucid of these were: Démesvar Delorme, *La Misère au sein des richesses* (1873); Edmond Paul, *Les Causes de nos malheurs* (1889); Léonidas Laventure, *Haïti: le danger de la patrie* (1893); Alcius Charmant, *Haïti, vivra-t-elle?* (1905); and Auguste Magloire, *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social* (1909).

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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be given to Haiti for vast rubber plantings.[21] Opposition to Lescot comes chiefly from those who consider him too friendly with the Dominicans who killed hundreds of Haitian workers in 1937, Lescot having figured prominently in negotiations that led to the Dominican government's agreement to pay indemnities to Haiti for the slaughter.

Reviewing the whole course of Haitian history, the field of politics seems to have marshaled itself behind a few regularities. In every case there have been voices raised to protest, yet the ruling clique, whatever its grouping, has effectively supported these characteristic political customs:

1. Complete dominance of political life by the president. Strong men seem to be necessary to rule ignorant masses. Even the revolutions precipitated by parties campaigning for parliamentarianism have, when successful, become governments by the president. This concentration of power in one man's hands makes the next revolution possible, for it is easier to overthrow one man than to eliminate a party based upon wide suffrage and diffused responsibility.

2. The inferior position of cabinet ministers. These have resembled neither European nor American secretaries of state in their responsibilities, but have been little more than clerks appointed by the president to serve as heads of a bureau. The treasurer-general, for example, during most of Haiti's history has merely received the moneys, while the president disbursed them. The secretary-general has neither originated nor conducted the details of public policy. Often as not, the minister has made a convenient whipping boy when the president has got himself involved in internal or foreign complications: by demanding the minister's resignation the president remained unscathed.

3. The unimportance of the legislature. It has made useful patron-

21. The European War, threatening the supply of rubber coming to the United States from British Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies, has made the American government seek new sources. The Department of Agriculture established an experimental station and breeding gardens for rubber plants in Haiti, and the results were so successful that extensive areas were planted with rubber trees. Haiti and the United States in May, 1941, reached a long-term agreement for "the development of agriculture and economy"; the projects embraced under the agreement include not only rubber but the further development of Haiti's banana plantations, the planting of oil crops, drug plants, spices, fiber plants, the stimulation of handicraft industries, and the development of forestry resources peculiar to the tropics. A further extension of an additional $500,000 in credits will be made for use on highways, irrigation projects, and to provide transportation facilities for the areas to be planted to rubber trees.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

643 reason of his power to name agents accredited to foreign governments; with the approval of the Senate he made treaties and wars. In cases of malversation, or gross corruption, the president might be denounced by the Senate (his own nominees), and the High Court of Justice (his own appointees) would sit in judgment on him; matters [669] have never reached this pass, however, for the Haitian method of checking a president's "malversation" has been the more direct one of revolution.

643 At a salary generally set in the neighborhood of thirty or forty thousand dollars the president could live luxuriously, the highest- [465] paid person in Haiti. The salary combined with the prestige and [661] perquisites of office was enough to explain the eagerness with which men sought the position. "Perquisites" often enough included graft.

645 Details of administration have been in the hands of various departments of state, their number depending upon the constitution then in force. As has been said, the president generally regarded his cabinet members as little more than clerks to attend to details. Only a few in the whole nineteenth century stand out prominently as directors of policy—Boyer as Pétion's secretary-general; Inginac, holding the same position under Boyer; Anténor Firmin, Hyppolite's foreign secretary; and a handful of others. During the four years, 1843–47, of "ephemeral governments" the cabinet ministers sometimes managed to rule their offices, and under the succession of ignorant Negro generals at the end of the century, if the educated élite secretaries had not taken charge of affairs no one would have handled them. Constitutional language made the cabinet officers seem more important than they were, however, for the actual position of a minister was usually that of head clerk, chief errand boy and handy man for the president, and convenient scapegoat when crises arose in foreign affairs, finances, public works, or other spheres.

646 The legislative body has ordinarily consisted of two chambers, the Senate and the Chamber of Representatives. Senators must be thirty years old. They have ordinarily served a nine-year term, being available for reëlection only after three years out of office. The method of choice curbed their power: the lower house selected each senator from a list of three nominated by the president for each vacancy. For a salary of sixteen hundred dollars and freedom from arrest in civil cases, all the senator had to do was to correspond with the president and lower house on public affairs, and decree appro-

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

643
*533
*539

Président passé là,
L'ap monté au gouvernment! [Ex. 118]

The President passes by,
He is taking over the government!
The President passes by,
He is taking over the government!

*533 758 ●646 It is not only great political events that are perpetuated in songs like these; many are the comments on little people in the government, such as a legislator named Daniel Fignolé. One of Fignolé's deeds, probably apocryphal, which is recorded in folk song has to do with an act of justice in a hospital in Port-au-Prince. According to the song, Fignolé entered the hospital and found the rich patients on beds and the poor patients on mats on the floor. He promptly ordered the rich patients placed on the floor and the poor patients placed on the beds. (A few [643] years later, after serving as president for less than three weeks, Fignolé became a political exile in the United States.)

*533 499 496 There is also an old song about a government engineer named Louis Gentil Tippenhauer—or Ti 'Benhauer (Little 'Benhauer), as he was commonly known. Tippenhauer is now an old man, but when he was young he was in charge of the construction of a section of the Haitian narrow-gauge railway. There was an accident in which a smoking locomotive jumped the tracks. Though small in stature, Tippenhauer had a forceful personality. He quickly assembled his workmen, and with chains, ropes, and crowbars they wrestled the locomotive back on the rails. The song commemorating the dramatic event was born at the height of the rescue operation. It is marked with concern for the feelings of Engineer Tippenhauer:

*[539]

Ti 'Benhauer *rélé*, "Porté cord pou' marré li!"
Ti 'Benhauer *rélé*, "Porté chaine pou' enchainé li!"
Si ou marré'l la laguè, devant Bondieu!
Pau' diab', pau' 'Benhauer, machine na derailé!
Pau' diab', pau' 'Benhauer, machine na derailé!

Ti 'Benhauer shouts, "Bring a rope to tie it!"
Ti 'Benhauer shouts, "Bring a chain to chain it!"
If you tie it, it unties itself, before God!
Poor devil, poor 'Benhauer, the machine is derailed!
Poor devil, poor 'Benhauer, the machine is derailed!

It is more than half a century since the affair of the derailed locomotive, and the railroad itself is not much longer for this world. But the song is still sung, and mostly by people who have no personal knowledge of the man named Tippenhauer.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

369 development of interior transport. The only passable roads in the
494 Republic run from Aux Cayes in the south to the capital, and from
Cap Haïtien in the north to the capital. Transport and communica-
646 tions simply symbolize the power that Port-au-Prince wields, since the same circumstances characterize all national institutional arrangements. Thus Haiti is an extreme example of urban domination, even though its urban population is a fraction of the national total. The consequence has been to keep most of the rural folk cut off from the apparatus that effects national decisions and shapes national policy. Haiti's national legislature, never important in limiting presidential power, is less so today than ever; at best, it had only represented the interests of provincial towns as opposed to the capital, and never the interests of the mass of country people.

701 The local military and judiciary officials possess the formal author-
692 ity vested in them by the state, and their power is very considerable.
642 Few local people would dare challenge their decisions, and the de-
369 vices for appeal against arbitrary exercise of authority are few. Admittedly, at the lowest local level the *chef de section*—who is traditionally appointed by the captain of the military in the *commune* center and is himself a yeoman—is subject to some genuine restraint by local inhabitants. Jean Comhaire-Sylvain (1955:620–24) has argued convincingly that the people of a community are capable of insisting on democratic procedure in those matters requiring decision that come to the attention of local authority. But such decisions have little or nothing to do with larger issues. The yeomanry cannot directly make its wishes felt in national politics; and national politics are conducted almost without reference to the aspirations of the rural masses. It is precisely in the separateness of local life from the mainstream of national decision-making that the political impotence of the yeomanry is demonstrated.

311 Haiti's agrarian nature cannot be expressed simply by saying it is a
423 rural and yeoman country. Haiti does not have a "land problem," as
171 that phrase is conventionally applied to Latin America. It does, it is true, suffer from land shortage, inasmuch as too little land is worked at too low a level of productivity and must feed too many mouths. But a very substantial proportion of the rural masses owns land, or has regular access to it. It is true that most land is held in small plots and without clear title. But those persons who own no land or who lack land to work are proportionally fewer than in any other Carib-

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 nature.[9] Colored women were forbidden in 1768 to marry white
563 men. In 1779 began a series of laws designed to humiliate the colored
565 person in public: his clothes must be of a different material and cut
671 from the white person's; he must be indoors by nine o'clock in the evening; he might not sit in the same section of churches and theatres with whites.[10]

175 Just at the moment when prejudice and hatred seem to have
648 reached their most menacing proportions, when even moderate
829 white planters began to feel that such passions had been aroused
[669] among both white and colored folk that only brutal severity could
[565] hold them in check, the Revolution began in France. Both sides in the colony hoped to make use of it. The whites saw in the mother country's confusion an opportunity to win self-government for the colony—with themselves, of course, as the untrammeled rulers. The gens de couleur, taking to heart the noble Declaration of the Rights of Man, hoped to regain their full rights as French citizens, guaranteed to them in Louis XIV's Code, but now in abeyance.

175 During the fateful years 1788 to 1793 colonial affairs were inter-
646 twined with developments in France. Men and messages went back
648 and forth between Cap Français and Paris, following the startling
671 announcement that after a lapse of 150 years the States-General would be convoked in May, 1789. At a meeting of the colonial assembly in September, 1788, called to nominate delegates, the group of grands blancs who controlled colonial affairs decided on two daring steps, which later proved to be blunders: first, they named thirty-seven deputies to represent Saint-Domingue; second, they drew up a *Cahier des Doléances*—a list of grievances whose sole palliation, it was implied, would be the granting of permission to the white planters to govern the colony without interference from France. These two decisions, be it said, were not unanimously approved in the assembly at Cap Français; cautious minds warned against pretentious demands which might do nothing more than attract concentrated attention to the state of affairs in Saint-Domingue: it might be wiser, they argued, to let sleeping dogs lie, and ignore the convocation of the States-General. The cautious were outvoted.

[565] 9. A colored lawyer might win a case against a white man; a colored priest might
[829] have to hear the confession of a white woman.

[565] 10. When certain mulattoes arrived at church in Cap Français wearing clothes of the same texture as the whites', constables tore the garments from the backs of male and female alike, leaving them "with no other veil than their shame."

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Political history of the next seventy-two years is a complicated story, of which only enough need be told here to illuminate the evolution of caste and social distinctions. Even a short summary reveals the bewildering confusion. Of the twenty-two heads of state between 1843 and 1915 only one served out his prescribed term of office;[a] three died while serving, one was blown up with his palace, one presumably poisoned, and one hacked to pieces by a mob; one resigned. The other fourteen were deposed by revolution after incumbencies ranging in length from three months to twelve years. 175 643

The Revolution of 1843 brought back into national prominence the whole matter of color and caste. The young revolutionaries, mostly light-skinned, seem to have assumed that their group was permanently in control. With cavalier highhandedness they set about capturing the last stronghold of Negro eminence: the army. They soon found, however, that they had caught a Tartar; their attempt to rule was fatal to them and their clique. 175 669

In the Constitutional Assembly convened to make a new constitution for the country, they professed astonishingly democratic doctrines. Proclaiming that the fault of former governments had been reliance upon military power, they now proposed to make civil power paramount by allowing the common people to vote. Since up to this time the franchise had been strictly limited to army officers and anciens libres, such a radical departure as general suffrage makes no sense unless conceived as an attempt to break the power of the Negro-controlled army, for surely the élite had no confidence in the wisdom of the peasantry. Weight is given to this explanation by the paradoxical action of the revolutionaries in promoting to high army rank some of the strongest mulatto partisans of civil government. 175 668 646 642 641 701

The new constitution was an immediate failure. Most of the colored élite condemned the giving of voting rights to peasants and workers; the army chiefs, generally black and illiterate, some of them aging veterans of 1803, bitterly resented being made subservient to young, inexperienced civil officers; in fact, even the new mulatto president, Rivière-Hérard, had no conception of government other than by military dictatorship. 175 642 641

Not only was the constitution a failure; so was the government of the young revolutionaries. A part of their weakness lay in their 175 643

a. The presidential term varied under different constitutions; some allowed a four-year term with the right of reélection, some six years with no reélection.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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to his demands for revision and for his selection as president for life, retained the constitution they had written and chose Pétion president in his stead, the rupture was instant and complete. 175 642 [667]

Dictator as against restricted president, strong man as against class or group rule, Negro against mulatto, army against civil government, executive against legislature, North against South—these are the phases of the subsequent dichotomy in Haitian politics. 175 665

A good case can easily be made for the advocates of force in Haitian government, particularly in its early days. For years the majority of men had lost the habit of steady work on the land; a strong hand was needed to reëstablish in the countryside that economic order without which liberty shrivels. The people had become accustomed to taking orders from their military leaders, and these from their commanding officer. Those, moreover, were times of crisis, when France might suddenly descend again upon her former colony: few crises can be dealt with by debating societies. Looking back on the course of Haitian history, one may point out also that the country prospered under the dictatorships of Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe as it never did under the limited presidencies.[4] 175 642 433 656

In 1806, therefore, the aristocratic party got its wish, although only at the price of splitting the country in two. They established a government with a president of their own and a Senate filled with their representatives. The earliest legislation naturally enough favored their own landholding group. When prosperity did not result, Pétion began to recommend to the Senate a division of the land. More and more, although the representative form was preserved, Pétion ruled as a dictator. He was mild enough not to arouse antagonism; as is always the case when freedom of speech is curbed and summary legislation required, the plea of crisis was used to justify extraordinary measures. 175 642 665 646 643

The legislative party was firmly in the saddle by 1820 when Boyer reunited North and South, and shared his power with the Senate. 175 642 643

4. The argument for dictatorship is familiar to the modern world. A defense of "totalitarianism," published in 1816 by authority of Christophe (then King Henry I), is amusingly like certain European utterances of the nineteen-thirties: "The King has the sweet satisfaction of seeing that the cultivators [who were forced to work on the land whether they wanted to or not], being everywhere regularly paid [though the sum might be tiny], are praising the freedom they enjoy." And again: "Hayti chose a kingdom in order to shun forever that chaos, that confusion and perpetual clashing, which result from those monstrous associations known under the name of *popular bodies*." Anon., *Haytian Papers* (1816), pp. 109, 113. [829]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 642 643 Since he was president for twenty-five years (normal ones, as things go in Haiti), it is worth while to examine the functioning of the kind of government the upper class favored.

175 642 643 692 President Boyer's education and outlook were wholly French. He had formed his views of government principally upon French models, yet when he became head of state he could not forget his own military career. He said repeatedly that he wished to supersede the military by the civil power, but somehow never got around to it. The country was full of black generals, and it would have been difficult to retire them, primarily because they were black. He established courts to insure the rights of man, but since his newborn judiciary lacked the prestige to command respect, interpretation of the law came from the President—until before long he was himself the law. With a logic characteristic of the French, he tried to make the whole administration of the country orderly and tidy by codifying laws, laying out spheres of governmental departments, and properly ticketing matters in general. He had to be the sole judge of the intention and operation of statutes, however, and if necessary modify the nature of an act to suit his view of the public need. His honest and generally upright character perhaps made his enormous prerogatives conducive to the public good; but Boyer was a dictator in spite of his Senate, since when he found a law working badly he simply turned it from its normal course and gave it a quite contrary effect.

[646] [661] As the years of his long rule proceeded, he took more power to himself. When his Senate would not pass bills as he proposed them, he waited until they adjourned and then either neglected to execute their laws, or instructed the government printing office to change the wording. He clearly regarded the legislature as a necessary nuisance, to be kept as a sop to the élite and to preserve the appearance of republicanism before the world. Representatives from the various communes were recommended by the President, his nomination amounting almost always to election.[5]

900 Boyer was overthrown by the Revolution of 1843, by all odds the

[643] 5. The task of governing the whole island was obviously heavier than governing a fraction of it, so Boyer may have felt justified in his departures from strict constitutionality. He was always an indefatigable worker, whose intentions were uniformly laudable. He tried to rule alone, as had his illustrious predecessors. The hitch came because he was not of their calibre. He was worthy, virtuous—and mediocre. He would probably have made an excellent mayor of a French provincial town.

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175 he seemed to be leading the country to progressive action; about
665 1830, however, a group better educated and more ambitious than
664 their predecessors arose. Nourished on ideas acquired in France, they
871 were shocked on their return by the miseries and governmental inaction which prevailed in Haiti. True, when Boyer pressed them to suggest constructive measures of reform they had little to suggest. Like many other critics they were better at tearing down than at building up.

175 By the constitution of 1816 they had the right of free speech and
642 press, and made use of it to publish journals of criticism—*Le Phare*,
204 *Le Télégraphe*, *La Feuille de Commerce*. Their sustained criticism kept
208 alive the parliamentary opposition and gave it a focus; they were at
665 least partially responsible for the Revolution of 1843. In spite of their diatribes, Boyer did not suppress these newspapers. If he had done so it is possible the Revolution might have come sooner. Not every dictator-president would permit such boldness as the following paragraph which appeared in 1843 in *Le Patriote*, an adversary of Boyer's own journal *Le Temps*:

> Let one look well at the things which are happening among us and then say whether, considering our first steps along the path, our progress has not been constantly slowed up now for some time, and whether this does not lead to a state of things in our country in which the most vital part of our civilization is struck by an immobility, almost a paralysis. Haiti is stationary, is retrograde: we need no other proof of it than this frightful uncertainty about the future which so deeply disturbs all serious minds and sincere patriots.

175 In 1838 Hérard Dumesle, president of the Chamber and a leader of
665 the opposition, drew up and secured the passage of an "Address to
646 the President of the Republic," which expressed certain just ideas of
643 progress and pointed out that failure to achieve it was due to the
664 mistakes of the administration. It was a bitterly critical and sometimes passionate document. Boyer was intensely angry and proceeded to violate the constitution: relying on the majority always at his disposal in the Chamber, he excluded from among the deputies those most hostile to his government.[8] But at the election of 1842 the communes of Les Cayes, Aquin, and Jérémie reëlected the expelled representatives, so confirming their criticism of the President.

8. Hérard Dumesle, Landon, Lartigue, and David Saint-Preux.

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When the Chamber of 1842 assembled Boyer once more forced the elimination of these men and several of their political friends.[9] The majority in the Chamber was so agitated over this expulsion that only twenty-eight out of seventy-two deputies thereafter appeared at any session. A dozen communes, among them the most important in the country (Port-au-Prince, Les Cayes, Gonaives, Santo Domingo), had no representation. The deputies of the South avenged themselves by instituting a series of "patriotic banquets." At the plantations of adversaries of the government dinners were given for dozens of guests; the meals were followed by vibrant speeches, full of criticisms of the government. Thanks to the talent of these orators, the opposition likewise gradually filtered its way into the mass of the people, slowly but implacably undermining Boyer's government. 175 643 665 646

The President also had bad luck to contend with. During his presidency many catastrophies saddened the country. The arsenal blew up in 1827, burning the state warehouses and causing a loss of 5,000,000 piastres. A cyclone in 1831 desolated the South. Fires in 1832 and 1843 practically wiped out Port-au-Prince. An earthquake in 1842 shook the whole island, destroyed Santiago and Port-de-Paix, and transformed Cap-Haitien into a mass of ruins; the fire which broke out in consequence was accompanied by pillaging which went on for several days. The parliamentary opposition to Boyer made use of these natural calamities to sharpen displeasure at the government. 175 731 [664]

In August, 1842, a secret association, The Society of the Rights of Man and of Citizen, was formed at Les Cayes to exploit this discontent and prepare the fall of Boyer. It circulated clandestinely throughout the South the ringing Manifesto by Praslin, a résumé of the charges of the opposition which was soon covered with signatures. When adherents of the society were numerous enough, an executive committee was formed with the commandant Rivière Hérard as president. At the end of January, 1843, an uprising occurred on the Praslin plantation.[10] General Borgella, head of the department of the South, proved irresolute; the insurrection, fostered by this indecision, spread rapidly among the troops, even generals joining in. By Febru- 175 668 175 669

9. The most important of the excluded deputies were Duquet Lespinasse, Covin Aîné, Dominique, Beauvais, Pontbriand, Desmarville Dautant.
10. At Torbeck, in the department of the South.

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was well enough, but all upper-class landlords wanted the privilege of living in leisure on an income derived from the menial labor of black workers. Fraternity was a principle ridiculous to a group whose never-ceasing struggle was to confirm the separation of castes. The term "Liberal," then, was borrowed not from the revolutionary documents of the late eighteenth century, but from the parliamentary parties of the nineteenth—those who saw more opportunity for themselves and their group if the power of tyrants and kings could be curbed by legislatures. The idea was particularly congenial to the Haitian intelligentsia for the simple reason that the powerful rulers of Haiti, past and present, were Negroes who did not share the aims and ideals of the social upper class.[12]

By holding such "liberal" views, the mulatto élite saw their one opportunity not only for curbing the strong men among the Negroes who again and again tried to rule Haiti as if it were a native African state and themselves the supreme chieftains, but also for indulging their own special penchants. A Senate filled with élite politicians suited the talents of the educated aristocrats. They liked constitutions and codes; the law was their favorite profession; they were adepts at drawing neat distinctions between this and that in an academic issue; polished oratory, skilful argument, fluent speech were knacks peculiar to them by temperament, position, education. Boyer had been the beau-ideal of the academic "liberals," with his talkative Senate, his complete set of Codes and national system of courts; the mid-century party members came to realize what they had lost by driving him out.

Every time the Nationalists came to power the colored élite suffered. Under Dessalines they lost greatly in property and position; Christophe had hated and hounded them; Soulouque put many of their leaders to death. The only monarchs Haiti ever had were blacks, and the two most tyrannical presidents in the first seventy-five years after independence were Nationalists (Pierrot, 1845–46, and Domingue, 1874–76).

The experience of the Liberal presidents with parliamentary institutions was not entirely a happy one, however. Pétion and Boyer had

12. It must be recalled that no parliaments of England, France, or the United States in the early nineteenth century had true democratic representation. Property qualifications for voting, rotten boroughs, and the persistence of privilege assured that only the "classes" should have full representation, and so rule the masses.

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Pétion and Boyer had

175 suavity enough to rule constitutionally with a Senate which, since
643 class interests were being served by the executive, did not curb their
646 virtual dictatorships. Later presidents had more difficulty. Geffrard,
642 for example, elected as a Liberal after the fall of Soulouque's grim empire, had made parliamentary government a battle cry of his campaign. In office, however, he was continually at loggerheads
[669] with his Senate, until he exercised his presidential privilege of dissolving it; in the end a revolution overthrew the Liberal parliamentarian because he had become a dictator. So with his successor Salnave (1867–69), likewise a Liberal, who almost immediately upon inauguration found it impossible to work with such a group of talkers. So once more with Nissage-Saget (1870–74), who followed Salnave: a professed believer in legislative responsibility, he refused to yield to the legislature on any important matter. A black Nationalist succeeded for two years, ruling despotically. Then came the last of the Liberal presidents, Boisrond-Canal (1876–79). This man was apparently determined to allow his legislature its full constitutional rights. As a result Haiti had more talk in the capital, and less action, than in almost any régime up to that time; then, as Montague says, "convinced that the constitutional régime was a failure, Haiti's most scrupulous president resigned in disgust."[13]

175 The Liberal party virtually disappeared from the scene in 1883,
665 after two abortive coups by their leader of the moment, Boyer
669 Bazelais. The first occurred in 1879 when the retiring President,
[666] Boisrond-Canal, gave Haiti one of her very rare honest elections, resulting in the choice of the Nationalist candidate Salomon. Bazelais and his men forsook their professed principles, rising in arms to seize power. They were suppressed. Four years later when the moment again seemed auspicious Bazelais led another revolution, which the President so effectively crushed that the leader himself was killed. The leaderless Liberals were no longer effective competitors in presidential politics. From that time until the American Occupation, the élite were out of power. One president only during those thirty-five years was a mulatto: Tancrède Auguste, one of the weakest rulers in Haitian history. He died, presumably poisoned, after eight months of office.

100 The era from 1883 to 1915 was Haiti's worst, politically. Revo-

13. Ludwell L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938* (Durham, 1940), p. 18.

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Even Geffrard the reformer,

175 643 661 ably the ablest president in the second half-century, who was pledged to reduce the expenses of government (a promise which, since he was accustomed to a life of penury, should have been easy to fulfill), increased his own salary to $50,000 a year, and allowed himself $20,000 more annually for secret service and a similar sum "for the encouragement of arts and sciences." He bought two estates with government money; the meat bill of his family was charged to the budget of his bodyguard, and the family champagne bill to a hospital. After Geffrard, the presidency was openly regarded as the juiciest financial plum in Haiti which, if one could pluck it, would justify the necessary expenditures for a revolution. It seems from contemporary comment, indeed, that Geffrard's actions aroused not censure but rather envy, as if every ambitious Haitian would have welcomed the opportunity to do likewise. The bitingly critical Englishman, Sir Spenser St. John, railed with some justice, "Every Haitian appears fully persuaded that his countrymen never seek office except for the purpose of improving their private fortunes."[15]

175 643 646 The legislature was never a real check upon the President. It was useful to him at times when he wished to delay action on some embarrassing imbroglio with a foreign power, for by referring a measure to the Senate he could stall it in tedious debate. Almost without exception, however, the legislature consisted of the President's men. Its halls were palaces of idle oratory. One whole session was devoted to a discussion of fitting the hall with cushioned seats; another to the propriety of appointing an interpreter for representatives who understood only Créole and not French. To make a man a Senator was a satisfactory way of paying a political debt. To be a Senator was to have social prominence, a salary of $1,600 (decidedly a competence in nineteenth-century Haiti), an opportunity to speak before an audience—and no real responsibility.

178 One may grant without debate the difficulties facing this small and poor country, a Negro state with great white neighbors who regarded it with something less than deference. Yet Haiti in its early days had real promise. Wherein lay its defects? Haitian thinkers knew the answers, and frequently indicted themselves.

175 871 565 658 The want of education was a basic weakness. Those who believe in democracy need no rehearsal of the benefits of popular enlightenment. Because the great Negro heads of state were themselves im-

15. *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, p. 185.

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3. The unimportance of the legislature. It

 has made useful patron

646 age for the president to dispense, and has preserved the semblance of
642 republican government; but hardly half a dozen legislative sessions in all Haitian history have contributed seminal ideas in politics or initiated true reforms. How could they, indeed, when the president was consistently a dictator of policy?

666 4. The undemocratic nature of the vote. Senators are chosen by the representatives, and the two groups together have generally
642 elected the president, when he did not come to power by revolution. The only chance people have had to vote has been for local officials and representatives. In these cases, the vote has been limited to the élite and the army, with the president's henchmen counting the ballots. Since the Occupation there have been plebiscites on constitutional changes, the people having the right to vote Yes or No.

692 5. The subservience of the courts to the president. They have been
643 filled with president's men, generally astute enough to consult presi-
642 dential wishes before handing down a decision. Foreign merchants soon learned that they could expect little "justice" from the courts if their own cause conflicted with special Haitian interests. Foreign diplomats likewise learned that in crises the courts could involve the simplest issue in such verbal complexity that months of patience would be necessary to unwind the red tape.

641 6. The pliability of "constitutional rights." Freedom of speech and
661 of the press has been notably lacking, although scurrilous attacks on the administration's enemies have often been permitted. Legislators
642 have been expelled. Graft has flourished. In 1833, for example, two representatives were expelled from the House "for systematically opposing the measures of the executive, and persisting in a demand for a statement of public expenditures." A century later a senator was expelled for almost the same reasons.

701 7. Militarism. Only in this respect is any real change apparent since
178 the American Occupation. The army was always large up to 1915, and so constituted an economic drain as well as a political menace.
642 Generals had great power: they ruled each department and each
669 arrondissement, were subject only to the president, and were at the bottom of every revolutionary movement.[22] Since the Occupation

[162] 22. In 1842, when the population was still less than a million, there were in the dis-
[701] trict governments 9 generals, 63 colonels, 48 lieutenant colonels, 9 captains, 1 lieutenant, and 28 medical officers; and in the standing army 33 colonels, 95 lieutenant colonels, 825 captains, 654 lieutenants, 577 sublieutenants and ensigns, 6,815 noncommissioned officers, and 25 medical officers. The army had 28,000 soldiers and cost about $600,000 a year. See John Candler, *Brief Notes of Hayti*, pp. 86 ff.

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175 ment that two thirds of the members of either Chamber must be
642 present before a law could be voted—a stipulation making it possible
[646] for any clique to hold up legislation by absenting itself.

1874. The constitution of Domingue who, having defeated the
[643] Liberals, promulgated a constitution "profoundly modifying" the language of the 1867 document. It legally concentrated power in the hands of the president—where, indeed, it had always been in spite of constitutional declarations.

1879. Salomon's first constitution, which professed to be a re-examination of Haitian institutions, but was actually not different in essentials from the document of 1846. The line from Pétion to Riché to Salomon and his successors was the main one from which deviations, such as those of Soulouque, occurred.

1886. Salomon's second constitution, a mild revision of his first.

1889. Hyppolite, the new president, felt it necessary to have a new
[178] constitution, although like the constitution of 1886 this was little more than a revision of that of 1879. Under the 1889 document Haiti continued to function, more and more haltingly, up to the time of the American Occupation.

[648] 1918. The constitution drawn up in Washington[7] and forced through in Haiti by a farcical plebiscite. Its most debated provision
[423] was the elimination of the prohibition against ownership of land by foreign whites, thus ending the one common point in all previous constitutions since 1805. For the rest, it changed little of the actual
[641] structure of Haitian government, but provided a great number of unaccustomed democratic rights: freedom of assembly, trial by jury in political cases, direct election of senators, submission of amendments to popular vote, freedom of the press.

1927. Although this is considered merely a revision of the 1918
[641] constitution, its changes were actually more noteworthy than many expected by the so-called new constitutions. Thirteen amendments were carried by popular vote, again so overwhelming as to be ridiculous, restricting many of the democratic liberties granted in 1918 which had proved embarrassing both to President Borno and

7. Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his campaign for the vice-presidency of the United States in 1920, claimed that he had written most of this constitution while he was Woodrow Wilson's assistant-secretary of the navy. (See the *New York Times*, August 19, 1920.) The constitution was approved in Haiti by a vote of 69,337 to 335.

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to the Americans who ruled Haiti through his office. This constitution once more increased the power of the president. 642 [641]

1932. Vincent's constitution, professing to be quite different from the two in effect during the Occupation, but actually closely resembling the 1927 revision with its concentration of power in executive hands. In 1935 an important amendment was added, making it possible for the president to be reëlected. [643]

Despite this welter of constitutions, the essential framework of Haitian government has consisted, except for brief interruptions, of a president, a legislature, and courts. The term of the presidency has varied from four to seven years (in the early days, for life) with the privilege of reëlection being now forbidden, now granted. Two presidents who tried to extend their terms, Salnave and Salomon, were deposed by revolutions for their temerity. Their distinction of being among the few to serve out the allotted term was thus marred by an ignominious end. 642 643

Regularly the president was obligated to "maintain internal peace" —a requirement few heads of state have been able to carry out, since internal peace has been most elusive. To aid him in his task he has been given wide powers: he commands the army (always large until 1915; every president except one between 1804 and 1915 was a general) and the navy (never more than a few ill-conditioned vessels, but these important in the general roadless condition of the country); most constitutions also gave him the right to issue necessary proclamations in order to deal with special crises. He "watches over" tribunals by means of appointed commissioners; by this arrangement he may obviously exert pressure for favorable judgments in cases which interest him. 643 [701] [706] [716] [792]

The one body which might conceivably check the president, namely, the legislature, has generally been composed of the president's men, for the Senate has usually been elected by the lower house from a list of candidates proposed by the president, while the representatives would hardly dare defy the man who controlled the army (which presided over such elections) and could dissolve the legislature. By most of the constitutions the president proposed to the legislature all laws except those concerning taxation; even here, since he directed the receipt and issue of public moneys, he was not really limited. Over foreign affairs the executive had effective control by 643 [646] [646]

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643 reason of his power to name agents accredited to foreign governments; with the approval of the Senate he made treaties and wars. In cases of malversation, or gross corruption, the president might be denounced by the Senate (his own nominees), and the High Court of Justice (his own appointees) would sit in judgment on him; matters [669] have never reached this pass, however, for the Haitian method of checking a president's "malversation" has been the more direct one of revolution.

643 At a salary generally set in the neighborhood of thirty or forty thousand dollars the president could live luxuriously, the highest- [465] paid person in Haiti. The salary combined with the prestige and [661] perquisites of office was enough to explain the eagerness with which men sought the position. "Perquisites" often enough included graft.

645 Details of administration have been in the hands of various departments of state, their number depending upon the constitution then in force. As has been said, the president generally regarded his cabinet members as little more than clerks to attend to details. Only a few in the whole nineteenth century stand out prominently as directors of policy—Boyer as Pétion's secretary-general; Inginac, holding the same position under Boyer; Anténor Firmin, Hyppolite's foreign secretary; and a handful of others. During the four years, 1843–47, of "ephemeral governments" the cabinet ministers sometimes managed to rule their offices, and under the succession of ignorant Negro generals at the end of the century, if the educated élite secretaries had not taken charge of affairs no one would have handled them. Constitutional language made the cabinet officers seem more important than they were, however, for the actual position of a minister was usually that of head clerk, chief errand boy and handy man for the president, and convenient scapegoat when crises arose in foreign affairs, finances, public works, or other spheres.

646 The legislative body has ordinarily consisted of two chambers, the Senate and the Chamber of Representatives. Senators must be thirty years old. They have ordinarily served a nine-year term, being available for reëlection only after three years out of office. The method of choice curbed their power: the lower house selected each senator from a list of three nominated by the president for each vacancy. For a salary of sixteen hundred dollars and freedom from arrest in civil cases, all the senator had to do was to correspond with the president and lower house on public affairs, and decree appro-

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priations of supplies to the branches of government; the Senate did not initiate legislation. In so far as the Senate checked the president, this check consisted in the body's being in permanent session. A vacation might be voted, but even during this period a resident committee was in the capital, so that attention to presidential actions might always be called by a senator's speeches; and the Senate could reconvene suddenly at will. 646

The Chamber of Representatives, composed of men of twenty-five and over, was chosen every five years by the "electoral colleges" of the communes—men elected by the leading citizens of the commune. No law is effective "whose draft has not been proposed by the executive, discussed and adopted by the representatives, and decreed by the Senate." It might seem that the phrase, "discussed and adopted by the representatives," would give much power to a Chamber in office for five years; actually the Chamber has rarely proved obstinate, and for good reason. At the expiration of the term of the legislators, the president convokes the communal assemblies to choose new deputies or to reëlect old ones; the army "keeps order" at the election, the Electoral College is hand-picked, and so the president's men have generally been chosen. Their pay has been two hundred dollars a month during the sitting, and a dollar a league for traveling expenses. [666] [701]

Pétion's constitution of 1816 evolved a masterpiece of deceptive generosity in stating that there should be "universal suffrage—except for women, criminals, idiots, and menials—by ballot." Although the group of criminals and idiots might be small, women were more than half the population, and "menials" was interpreted to mean not only house servants but also peasants; in other words, there was "universal suffrage" of about three per cent of the population at the outside. The élite and the army were the only potential voters. Since the elections were held under the watchful eye of the soldiers, and the ballots counted by presidential appointees, there was often extraordinary unity of public opinion. 641 [666]

The judicial branch of the national government, as distinct from the juge de paix of the commune and the courts in the important towns, existed in part only on paper. There was generally a provision in the constitution, for example, for a High Court of Justice, which should have jurisdiction in all charges preferred by the legislative bodies against their own members, against the president of the re- 692

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attitudes toward French culture in all of its expressions, and by a new feeling of kinship for the peoples and cultures of Africa.

The variety of views expressed by Haitian intellectuals was colored by differences no more subtle than those characteristic of the intellectuals of any other country in the Caribbean region—even though North American observers unfortunately persist in treating such differences as politically irrelevant. There were those spokesmen who continued to embrace French culture and to reject "Africanism," only deploring the North American presence in Haiti. Others embodied their views in a staunchly Haitian nationalism and, as they began to view their country in a new light, invested the Haitian folk with an unrealistically romantic picturesqueness. Still others fastened upon the African theme with special intensity, and thereby gave a strong racist tinge to their nationalism.

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Not surprisingly, perhaps, anthropology came to be seen as an important means for giving Haitians an accurate—that is, an "inside"—picture of their own society; a number of young ethnologists, mainly self-trained, began to publish works on Haitian culture. Soon anthropology was pressed into a political mold, anticipating similar developments in other "colonial" countries. The first novels purporting to deal with the common people, though sometimes tinged with idealized preconceptions of rural society, were published; and an impressive number of competent young poets devoted themselves to aesthetic explorations of the Haitian spirit. Haitian cultural and intellectual life, in short, was taken up with the rediscovery of Haiti and its people.

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But the Estimé regime did not produce changes in the economic structure of Haitian society of importance proportionate to the national cultural renascence. Even those modifications in the class structure for which Estimé is sometimes given credit might not have occurred, were it not for educational reforms that had begun in the 1920s and the beneficial effects of Haiti's prosperity of the mid-1940s. What Estimé could do was to open the ranks of an inefficiently large bureaucracy to able, if sometimes inadequately trained, newcomers of poor rural antecedents.

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At the same time, as the Comhaire-Sylvains have suggested (1959: 179–89), a qualitatively different class group was beginning to emerge in Port-au-Prince during Estimé's presidency, and the presence of such a group suggests that new economic forces were feebly stirring.

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175 were abolished; with such concessions the people must be satisfied.
566 Dessalines tacitly confessed his inability to follow any course but the French colonial system, with modifications introduced by Toussaint.

167 Many of the blacks, having tasted a moment's freedom, were not
175 inclined to give it up. Before the new order of Dessalines was firmly established, therefore, they ran away with their families into the hills, where they escaped official notice. As squatters they lived out their lives unmolested. By the time they were officially rediscovered, all Haiti had become a land of peasants.

175 At the other end of the ladder from the laborers were the officials,
463 who might be great men or small clerks, members of the entourage of the governor-general or merely overseers of a plantation. In order
555 to keep the vast agricultural economy functioning smoothly it was
647 necessary to have hundreds of agents, directors, clerks, and overseers,
565 each of whom must report to a superior. In this official class there was at least a possibility of realizing an ambition for oneself; there was a basis of comparison; more important, there was some possibility of attracting favorable attention of persons in high places and so of gaining promotion. Inevitably something of the colonial state of mind must have carried over into the new era, so that an ex-slave would consider himself as having risen in the world to be now performing a task which only white men used to do—to be spared field labor and to direct the work of others. Out of this group of petty agents rose a few men of ambition who were later to belong to the élite.

175 Higher officers of state were in a much more favorable position to
565 achieve social eminence. Not only did they perform no manual
647 labor; they were twice removed from that life, since they directed the men who directed the workers. They handled funds. They came
[212] into contact with Dessalines himself. Many former gens de couleur filled these important posts, for the number of Haitians who could read and write was woefully limited.

175 The army was the great power in the country, for the new state
701 was a military one. Since fear of a return of the French required the maintenance of a large standing army,[4] Dessalines made a virtue of this apparent necessity, using his soldiers to enforce discipline among the cultivators. On whom else could he rely for his local administra-
tion.

4. Humboldt estimated that the army of Dessalines numbered 37,300, which would be one tenth of the total population. Other estimates run as low as 15,000. Even this figure would be about a tenth of the male population.

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175 their districts, principally during the working hours of the day. They
675 were held responsible for all consequences of their own negligence.
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This whole flow of legislation was designed primarily for the
175 protection of the great landed proprietors, yet there were other laws
671 which aided the masses. In former days workers had been coerced
466 through corporal punishment. This was by law now abolished. Temporary assignments of garden plots were required for each family of laborers; medical care must be provided at the expense of the planter; the aged and infirm must be guaranteed the right to keep their homes and gardens even though no longer able to work. Expectant mothers in the fourth month of pregnancy must be relieved of field work, with no limitation of their right to share in the estate's income; mothers of nursing children must be permitted to remain at home until the weaning of their infants.

175 A great concession to the workers was made by abolishing the
647 office of "inspector of cultures." In the days of Toussaint and Des-
241 salines each district of the country had had its inspector, whose duty it was to see that crop cultivation proceeded according to schedule.[27] This man's disapproval of conditions resulted in fines and personal chastisement. By abolishing the office Pétion effected a great saving in salaries, for there had been thousands of these inspectors; on the other hand, the watchfulness of the inspectors had kept agricultural production at a high level. With no officials to dog the footsteps of the workers, crops immediately fell off.

175 Pétion clearly expected la grande culture to be the prevailing mode
466 of agriculture in the republic. He fostered all kinds of legislation
24 regulating it, even aside from that already mentioned. For example, a complete schedule was prepared for the division of income of the
656 estate.[28] But the entire system was too neatly worked out and artificial to be effective, particularly since it was not backed up with force. The threat of punishment removed, most workers began gradually, often deliberately, to sabotage the system. It was much more pleasant

27. Christophe followed his predecessors in keeping the district inspectors.

[466] 28. This could be very complicated. A tenant farmer might hire workers, and so
[465] have to share his half of the income with them. In such cases, the division of the money crops was to be made in kind or in money, at current prices, in the presence of the local justice, his assessors, and an officer of the *gendarmerie*. The workers' "fourth" was divided into portions of which three went to the first foreman, two to each of the skilled workers, one and a half to each male or female worker, and one half to each child laborer between ten and fourteen years of age.

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175 423 up so many of these, there was no way short of a revolution to reconstitute the now parceled estates. Obviously the Code did not envisage the control of serfs by small property owners, yet there were more small owners than large.

175 184 466 In the third place, the Spanish-speaking masses of the eastern part of the island had never experienced the kind of forced labor with which most Haitians had been at one time or another familiar. Their noncoöperation made enforcement difficult.

175 647 Finally, the administration of so detailed a plan called for the establishment, at once and yet in complete order, of a fully trained corps of bureaucrats, perfectly coöperating with each other, most of them educated, and all incorruptibly honest. If every literate person in the state had been drafted for service, Boyer could not have filled all the offices required by the Code.

175 465 434 After brief and piecemeal experience with the law in operation, moreover, even the few remaining large landholders turned against it. While they approved the provisions for forced labor, they discovered that to turn over to the workers a quarter or half of the annual crop, in a falling world market, gave too slim a profit.[42] Without the support even of its original sponsors, failure of the law was inevitable.

175 648 652 These factors alone would have been enough to kill the Code; but its real death blow came from an entirely different quarter. The year before the agricultural laws were passed, Boyer had achieved what he considered to be a political master stroke. He had made a financial settlement with France whereby Haiti, in return for a large sum in cash and regular annual payments for sixty years thereafter, should receive full recognition of independence from France; also the former mother country would renounce all claims to any properties in the country. Boyer had felt that the chief debilitating influence on the political and economic life of his people was the constant dread that France might one day return to claim her lost colony. To rid the nation of that incubus, therefore, seemed to him a high feat of statesmanship, no matter what the financial cost.[43]

[433] [24] 42. Coffee, now the staple crop of Haiti, was meeting competition from the other coffee-producing countries of the world. To put the sugar manufactories into working condition again called for more money than was available.

[643] [648] 43. Boyer's hand was forced to a certain extent by France, which had been exerting diplomatic pressure upon Haiti; the President, however, seemed to regard the settlement as a distinct coup.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

unplanned, undesired

Haitian peasantry, to sum up, began as the result of two policies intended to achieve ends quite different; first, presidential gifts of land, the chief purpose of which had been to pay the soldiers of the republic; and second, the crop-sharing system adopted by landlords after the failure of Boyer's Code. 175 421 24 463 178

6. *The Drawing of Caste Lines (1820–1843)*

Almost every major presidential aim of Boyer came to grief. His tranquil quarter-century rule, the unified island, the financial surplus with which his presidency began, the peace with France after 1825—all these advantages combined with his good intentions did not save his projects from shipwreck. Near the beginning of his régime he announced that, like his revered predecessor Pétion, he felt the safety of Haiti to lie in the abolition of all color distinctions and prejudices. Just as his great Code Rural proved a complete failure, however, so did his efforts to do away with the color line. On the contrary, it was during Boyer's time that class distinctions became fixed, in large part although not wholly, on the basis of color. 175 178 565

Stating that the policy of his government was to put an end, as far as possible, to jealousies of caste, he consistently for a few years promoted a black every time a promotion had been given to a mulatto or other light-skinned person. This procedure soon met an insuperable obstacle. Government posts in general required literacy, and only a very small number of blacks were educated, so that the supply of Negroes was not sufficient to furnish him with candidates. Since one of the few roads to lucrative success lay in official positions, ambitious young colored men sought eagerly for government office, and Boyer soon had no alternative but to advance men of his own complexion. In the army, on the other hand, literacy was not necessary for promotion. Ambitious Negro youths, therefore, frequently chose this career which, while not very profitable in monetary rewards, at least gave a man a certain social status and economic security. 175 647 563 212 555 175 701 555 563

Because of the state of education in the republic, consequently, an ugly situation developed, with the civil arm of government almost wholly in control of the colored element and the military force dominated by blacks. Fortunately for the country no crisis developed during the 1820's and 1830's which made an open breach between army and state. 175 647 701 [563]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

Next to the agricultural system, the state of education in the republic probably had as much to do as anything with fixing the caste system upon Haiti. So long as the mass of people were not only black but illiterate as well, they would have no means of reaching a social status beyond the one in which they existed. Certainly the aspiring Negroes would not wish to enlighten them, for to stir up the whole people would destroy the very possibility of distinction. As W. S. Gilbert puts it, "When everyone is somebody, then no one's anybody." Public education, consequently, hardly advanced a step during Boyer's twenty-five years. It had had a feeble enough beginning under Pétion and remained, as it had been, a prerogative of the well-to-do.[58]

175 871 563 564 178

Under the complaisant rule of Boyer, accordingly, the people of color came to regard themselves as the unquestioned élite. Their claim was shared, though not always acknowledged, by a small number of blacks (mostly from the North) who had been anciens libres in colonial Saint-Domingue or noblemen under Christophe; who were literate, or whose wealth and ambition attracted attention. Boyer's boast that "all the feelings and prejudices, either of olden times or of national origin, have been superseded by an intense patriotism" was pure buncombe, as he certainly knew.

If only the best brains of the colored group had been content to serve the government, Haiti might have profited from her situation; but lesser government offices were merely springboards for foreign trade in coffee and mahogany, or for the manipulation of business deals. Not "intense patriotism," as Boyer liked to think, but financial gain was the motivating force of the élite, as it had been from colonial times. The man who could amass a modest fortune, so that his children might be educated and their security assured, had done his duty, and he would have been regarded as quixotic to renounce business opportunities for the dubious honor of minor political office. As a consequence of this natural search for gain, the government during Boyer's administration became less and less efficient. Relatives of élite businessmen were given posts because the President could not afford to offend important families. These minor officials then performed their duties awkwardly, or neglected them, in "the unfailing obliquity of dullness."

175 555 662 661 178 [647]

Skin color became the obsession of high society. Those who had no other merit of which to boast could still revel in their complex-

175 563 564

58. See chap. XVI.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Granted these obvious difficulties, there is still little to be said for the zeal or integrity of churchmen in Saint-Domingue. Father Cabon cites a report to Rome in 1794, which, he remarks, "was not designed to be made public, and does not bear the earmarks of passion," and which flatly states that "since the expulsion of the Jesuits, the curés have for the most part led lives so indecent . . . that the citizens and Negroes have lost all the sentiments of religion which the Jesuits gave them."[3] There had been distinguished churchmen in Saint-Domingue before 1750, authors, scientists, teachers of some note, but none appeared thereafter. The rich French colony was not a bright star in the Catholic crown.

175 193 192

Undeterred by those who might have been their spiritual guides, the white people followed the easy path of self-indulgence. The universal testimony of visitors is that, with a few notable exceptions, immorality and cruelty were daily commonplaces. To make a fortune was the prime ambition of every white man, since money made possible the luxurious enjoyment of this world's goods. Protest against money-making or soft living would have been futile. Administrative agents turned public office to their own profit; judges sold justice to the highest bidder; planters drove their slaves to death; and priests dispensed religious solace for a tidy sum.

175 556 185 647 661 693 466 193

The freedmen, who in everything patterned their lives after social leaders in the white planter class, had no more concern for religion than their models. They attended Mass occasionally as a social event, where they might see and be seen. When in the latter days of the colony discriminatory legislation required that colored persons sit in separate parts of the church, most of the affranchis simply refrained from attending Mass: their religious zeal was not so great as to make them submit to the public shame of segregation. In their daily lives, likewise, they followed the example of the white planters in pursuing pleasure rather than sobriety, "culture" rather than religious zeal. Like the whites, they were often licentious in their conduct. When it came their turn to direct affairs of state in free Haiti, there was little interest in spiritual matters among them. The intellectuals of the group paid homage to the liberal philosophers of the century rather than to religious thinkers.

175 771 184

If religion was at a low ebb in the prosperous days of the colony, it almost disappeared in the excitement of the years following the revolt of the slaves (1791).

175 771

3. Ibid., p. 33.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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674 Soldiers, then, had no great difficulty policing town and country-
369 side, for there was little more crime in the towns than in rural regions. A person arrested would be haled before the nearest juge de
696 paix who would, if necessary, sentence him to jail—which meant
697 sending him to one of the larger towns. This was rather a severe penalty, for the jails were filthy; moreover, only about ten cents a week was ordinarily allotted to each prisoner for food with the result that if a prisoner's family did not supply him, he was likely to be near starvation. Extra work was required for extra fare. Haiti was probably no worse off in respect to its jails than most European and American countries at the time, for this was before the era of prison reform. Inmates of jails were likely to be only petty thieves.

697 During certain régimes the presidents or their generals managed to have numbers of convicts sentenced to hard work, in order to have forced labor on their private estates or projects dear to them. Under any administration there were likely to be a few convicts who performed repair work on streets and roads. It was the usual practice to chain or rope them together by pairs, three yards apart; accompanied by soldiers with loaded muskets, the convicts labored from daylight to sunset, with an hour and a half for a meal at noon. The government pretended to provide for them, but in order to save expense two of the criminals accompanied by two soldiers with fixed bayonets were sent about the neighborhood to beg for the group. The result was that the wretches went ill fed and half naked. They slept in jail on beds which were little more than boards.

701 The final and most persistent branch of government has been the
175 army.[11] Owing to the overmilitarization of Haiti, generals were perennially participating in the civil government—or engaged in overthrowing it. It was to be expected that following the revolution the new independent state formed in 1804 should have a military cast. Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, Geffrard, Boyer, Cangé, Yayou, Magloire Ambroise, Férou, François, Capoix, Rigaud—these were the great generals and the only important statesmen. It was as if in America not only Washington had been a military leader, but also Adams, Jefferson, Franklin, Jay, Hamilton, Madison, Pinckney,

[647] 11. In most governments there has been a body which, although connected with the legislature, had functions pertaining to the law. This was the Chamber of Accounts, a body of five men who examined into and reported to the president upon every branch of expenditure and collection of revenues. It might recommend to him certain financial reforms or improvements, but had no power to enforce its suggestions.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 Boyer carried on Pétion's policy of no taxation. It was not until the American
657 Occupation that Haitians could be said to be taxed. Ninety per cent of the state's
income between 1900 and 1915 regularly came from tariffs, and only ten per cent
[652] from internal taxes. Even the efforts of the Americans, resulting in the laws of 1924 and 1928, were on the whole restricted to a few excise taxes. A land tax was hopeless, due to the utter confusion of titles and the stubborn impassivity of peasant squatters.[5]

2. *Monetary Policy of Pétion and Boyer*

175 The monetary situation in Haiti was chaotic in its early days. The gold money
652 of France, Spain, England, and the United States circulated, as did small French coins, and the coins and paper money created by the Haitian rulers, who had complete control over money. For example, Pétion decreed[6] an increase in the value of the *gourde d'Espagne* from 8 livres 5 sols, to 9 livres; of the French *écu* of 6 francs from 9 livres to 9 livres 15 sols; and the 5 franc écu from 7 livres 10 sols to 8 livres 5 sols; this almost doubled the value of money in circulation. He also struck small coins to replace the pieces of 30, 24, 15, 12, and 6 sols of France. His small coins were merely token money.[7] The paper currency created by Pétion and so easily counterfeited has been mentioned.

[433] Boyer was continually in financial perplexities. Production was declining while expenditures had to be radically increased on account of the settlement with France in 1825. Boyer's budget was not a large one judged by modern standards, the average expenditure each year being about $5,000,000. To meet this, customs duties on imports and exports brought in about $2,200,000 annually; territorial duties on produce, houses, patents or licenses, market fees, and the like, a similar
[316] sum; but some half-million dollars had to be borrowed each year. The government hoped to get something from developing mines in the Spanish part of the island,
[425] but this hope failed. It was thought also that the sale of government lands might bring in some revenue, but few people wanted to invest money, when they had it,
[454] in land, with agricultural affairs developing as they were and no way of making people work: investment in trade was more promising. The national treasury was
[465] so empty that both the civil and military officials were poorly paid. It was frequently said that almost all administrators and persons in authority were open to
[661] bribery. Meantime the number of civil servants was increasing: there was a swarm
[647] of hirelings and subalterns in every commune, like a host of vampires. By their lack of honesty, conscientiousness, and efficiency, immense sums were lost annually to the treasury.

5. See the *Report of the American High Commissioner* (1929), p. 19.

6. May 4, 1808.

7. *Pétion voyant s'échapper de ses États les gourdes qu'effrayaient ses démêlés avec Christophe, eut pour les retenir l'ingénieuse idée d'y pratiquer une trouée. Ce moyen était trop efficace pour ne pas réussir, et il était trop simple pour que l'emploi n'en fut pas généralisé au moins par un équivalent. Ainsi, lorsqu'il en vint à battre monnaie, le chef de l'état du Sud descendit le titre de sa gourde à peu près au titre de la gourde espagnole taxée par son emporte-pièce. Il lui donne 858 millièmes de fin.*" Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, II, 194.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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possible to gain a historical perspective of the valley in which our interest centers. As late as 1708, he tells us, only a few individuals were settled there, and these were mainly hunters and herders, since the policy of that day, based on the official belief that the future of the valley lay in using to the full its grazing resources rather than in the development of agriculture, caused all agricultural activity to be prohibited. Two decades later, however, when the cultivation of indigo had been successfully introduced, agricultural development proceeded apace. In 1730, in addition to more than a score of indigo-production centers, the valley boasted of numerous coffee, cotton, and cocoa plantations, and by 1789 was a recognized agricultural region.

But for the fact that the great plantations are no longer there, this aspect of life in Mirebalais has been little changed by revolutions and the abolition of slavery. Indigo, of course, has lost its place as an important product, while maize is now among the most significant crops, as might be looked for in the change from a plantation system to one of small individual ownership which was brought about by Haitian independence. But cotton and sugar-cane are still major crops, and coffee, which grows well on the mountainsides, is largely cultivated.

Moreau de St. Mery, writing in 1789, speaks of the French who peopled the valley as "still showing the traits which marked the early colonials. They are good, frank, brave, and opposed to all coercion." In 1723 "they marched with others from the district of the Artibonite" in an uprising against the arbitrary policies of the French West Indies Company, which Charlevoix, one of the first historians of Haiti, so vividly described.[2] In 1729 and 1736 the folk of Mirebalais defended their eastern frontier against attacks by the neighboring Spaniards; eleven years later one hundred and ten of them helped with the defense of the town of St. Louis, which was menaced by the hostile maneuvers of the British admiral

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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175 648 Davers. In 1768 and 1769 they were "but tranquil spectators of the troubles caused by the re-establishment of the militia," the local military forces numbering at this time 260 whites and 291 *affranchis*, or free men of color.[3]

175 167 This white population was made up chiefly of those who came directly from France or were born in the colony, but also included were the Acadians, one of the most interesting groups who settled in Mirebalais. Fleeing from Newfoundland, they were brought to Haiti before they were sent to Louisiana, and in the course of this migration left some of their number in the valley. It is recorded that on the 26th day of October 1764, in consequence of "a Memorial presented by the Chamber of Agriculture of Port-au-Prince, which stressed the healthfulness of Mirebalais,"[4] each of a number of these Acadian families was allotted a plot of eight hundred square paces, not far from the town. The ending of this episode, however, was not happy, for, transported into a tropical climate that failed to measure up to the claims made for it, the Acadians paid so heavy a toll that soon all trace of them vanished.

175 569 But facts such as these tell little of the fundamental social and economic conditions of pre-Revolutionary Haiti, where Negro slavery constituted the foundation upon which the whole structure of life was erected. That Mirebalais was no exception to the prevailing economic regime is shown by Moreau de St. Mery's figures for the district, yet what stresses existed between the masters, the free persons of color, and the slaves, no record remains to show. Despite the fact that slaves and free men of color were accepted in the armed militia, the

175 569 229 situation was far from tranquil. When, after the French Revolution, there were signs that the decree[5] which accorded to the free men of color political rights equal to those of the whites was in danger of being nullified in practice, it was at Mirebalais that the colored men assembled to insist on the enforcement of this order.[6] Together with some slaves they freed, they formed the nucleus of an army "that under the leader-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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North of the square stands the church, a substan-
tial structure with rounded arches in the Roman style, roofed
over, like most other buildings, with galvanized iron. Other
public buildings are the town hall — the Mairie — and the
"Hall of Justice"; near by are the stone walls of a public
building begun some years ago as a school, but destined ap-
parently to house what is known as the "Bureau of Contribu-
tions," a euphemism for the tax-collector's quarters. Despite
the fact that Mirebalais was one of the most difficult regions
for the American occupation to subdue during the Caco up-
rising of 1918–20,[10] it was one of the first districts where the
Guarde d'Haiti was completely Haitianized, and from which
all American Marine officers were withdrawn. Only a small
detachment is stationed there at present. Its well-kept bar-
racks are near the church, and the prisons form a part of the
same compound, from whence issue daily the striped-suited
prisoners, men and women, under guard or alone on parole,
who do communal work in the town and the near-by country-
side.

The town awakens at dawn to the chattering of domesti-
cated guinea-fowl and the crowing of cocks. Occasionally a
camion rumbles through the principal thoroughfare; more
rarely an automobile dashes by in great clouds of dust on its
way to Las Cahobas, or Hinche, or Santo Domingo City. If
it is a market day, the streets are early filled with country folk
on their way to dispose of their produce, and the clatter from
the market place behind the church is heard everywhere until
the heat of the day brings a lull to all commerce, and drowsi-
ness once more settles over everything. By mid-afternoon
during the planting season, drums can be heard over the
countryside. The sounds are not those of the "throbbing"
yodus drums — though they have more than once been mis-
taken for them by travelers — but they set the rhythm for
the communal work of the *combites*, which perform co-
operative agricultural labor. As the rapid dusk follows the
disappearance of the sun behind the mountains, the voices of

L: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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about the square that precedes the principal mass of the day. 796 188
These processions, however, are as a mere rehearsal for the great procession held during the festival of St. Louis, the patron saint of the town. At that time the statue of the saint, carried by the faithful — among whom can be seen more than one perspiring *vodun* priest and *bocor* — is taken triumphantly through the streets to insure a good year. The nearness of the valley to the village of Ville Bonheur makes the 796 [184]
great religious festival of Saut d'Eau, where the "miracle of the Virgin" is believed to have occurred, almost a local matter. And though Saut d'Eau lies well over the mountains, July 15 finds most of the population of Mirebalais away from home celebrating the miraculous revelation with folk from other parts of Haiti. May Day is celebrated as the "Fête de 527
l'Agriculture," and two years ago a new day of rejoicing was added to the calendar of festivals. This is known as the "Festival of the Second Independence," the anniversary of the departure of the American Marines from Haiti, and is marked by the "illumination" of all houses the night before and a solemn discourse from the mayor after a Te Deum has been sung in the church.

Thus life in the valley of Mirebalais continues the course 175
it has followed for the past two hundred years. Though its [178]
history, as we can reconstruct it, has been marked by turbulent periods, these have been far from the rule. It is true that because of its position it has always been a point to be defended, and often, both before and after the time of Haitian independence, it has been a region where decisive encounters with those who controlled the Spanish portion of the island have taken place. Not for many years, however, until the Caco 175
uprising against the American Marines, did Mirebalais ex- 648
perience military activities on any considerable scale. After the death of Charlemagne Perrault, when his successor selected the valley as a strategic point to be defended, a large force of Marines was encamped near the confluence of the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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Artibonite and Tombe rivers just outside the town. Today Cacos who went through this campaign will tell how sniping was carried on from the "English fort" on the heights to the east of the town and will recount how dangerous it was made for Marines to go unguarded even to the river-banks to draw water. Yet after two or three years the overthrow of the Caco forces brought peace once more to Mirebalais. And while the intervention of the United States has caused significant changes in the larger aspects of Haitian economy and in the political life of the Republic as a whole, yet as concerns the inner life of the people of this valley it seems to have passed without any discernible effect.

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Today in the *place* are found three records of its past. The first of these, in the middle of the square, is a tall palm tree, which in Haiti is the emblem of its attainment of freedom and independence, and near it a rostrum symbolizing the authority of the central government. The second is the tomb of an overlord of Mirebalais when independent Haiti was not a republic. In florid lettering can be read the tribute engraved on its top:

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764

Ici
Dort de l'éternel sommeil
Pierre Cazimir de Vincent
décédé le 13 Août 1856, à l'âge de 71 ans
de son vivant Duc de Mirebalais
et
Commandant de la 4ème Division
Militaire de la Province de
l'Ouest

"Passant, si tu admires les vertus militaires;
Revère les cendres de celui que repose en ce lieu."

De la part de son amie
Delphonnaise Delva.

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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refusal to accord Church burial to certain faithful followers because of the inability of their surviving relations to pay for their funeral masses. As expressed most clearly, it is felt that the Church is expensive, exacting fees for baptisms, marriage ceremonies, and funerals, while *vodun* worship, on the other hand, costs but little: a bit of *clairin*, the animals one must sacrifice — only, however, to insure the help of the *loa* in causing the remaining ones to increase in number — and the "presents" to be given the gods, costs the less oppressive because they are usually shared by all members of one's family. Another source of discontent is said to be the failure of the Church to adhere to its agreement in the Concordat to "Haitianize" the clergy. This has been emphasized in Mirebalais because the priest of its church is one of the relatively few in Haiti who is himself a Haitian. One of the sentiments about the Church most frequently heard during this field-work, coming as it did just at the end of the American occupation, was: "The *Garde* has finally been Haitianized. Now it is the turn of the Church."

The attitude of the Church toward *vodun* is one of intransigent hostility. The anger with which the priest preached his sermon on the Sunday morning following a *vodun* dance held close enough to town so that the sound of the drums, plainly audible, "disturbed" him the night long, clearly indicates how deeply the priests of the Church resent the worship of the African gods. In Mirebalais they tell how, at the instance of the Church, *vodun* rites were unmercifully suppressed by the Americans during the occupation, to whom it was represented as a potential focus for revolt. In the *place* huge bonfires were made of *vodun* drums painted and "dressed" in elaborate manner. Everything found in the *humforts* and the private houses of worship was confiscated, and the "thunder stones," necklaces of the devotees, and other sacred objects that would not burn were thrown into the Artibonite River. Today the Church takes full advantage

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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776 [821] rainbow, and this is called an *arc d'alliance* between him and Aida Wedo, his wife, whose characteristic dress is blue and [171] white. Sobo, who in Dahomey is the god of thunder, is also believed in Haiti to give thunder, though he is not thought to live in the sky. As in Africa, his symbol is the ram. Aizan lives in the water, and is a favored deity because he gives his devotees the power of healing and of divining.

Erzilie, a *loa* of considerable importance, is envisaged as a pale, trembling woman who also inhabits the water. She constantly changes her dresses, of which she has many. All agree that she is a fabulously wealthy woman, who wears golden chains about her neck and has many rings, a characterization derived from her identification with Mater Dolorosa, whose chromolithographs depict her with many rich ornaments. As a Rada *loa* she "eats" the same food as Damballa, and wears white, like this other god, but has Friday as her sacred day. In her less pleasant manifestation of Erzilie Gé Rouge, the red-eyed one, she is a member of the Pétro "squad," and is held to be the wife of Simbi d'l'eau, with whom she is believed to get on especially well, since they "eat" different foods. Simbi, who is worshipped on Tuesdays and inhabits the mango and calabash trees, is said to drink heavily, however, and occasionally becomes so boistrous in his cups that he destroys the furniture and otherwise makes himself so objectionable that Erzilie is forced to leave him until he becomes sober.

[171] Ogun, in Haiti as in Nigeria, is the god of war. The Nigerian Shango is also found, though the Haitians conceive Shango as a *loa* who acts as the servant of the Ogun deities, [782] particularly Ogun Badagri and Ogun Batala. Ogun "eats" [822] red cocks and red beans mixed with rice, and his color, red, is [114] worn by his devotees. To this fact may be referred the custom of the Caco warriors who fought against the American Ma- [648] rines in 1918–20 to wear red as their distinguishing color, something referred to by Wirkus (pp. 22 ff.), though he

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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combines an explanation having an element of correctness — "a charm against harm" — with entire misunderstanding when he speaks of the color as symbolizing a "declaration of a holy war against wrong and oppression." Some, but not all of the Ogun *loa* drink Haitian rum. Ogun himself is identified with St. James the Elder, and his sacred day is Wednesday. This *loa* is a *Nèg' défence* and protects his worshippers from bullets or wounds inflicted by weapons. Ogun Balandjo guards travelers, though he is not as strong as such others of the Ogun group as Ogun Badagri and Ogun Batala, with whom he shares the bamboo tree as a habitation. The former gives *connaissance* — knowledge — which permits those he possesses to prohesy; the latter endows with the ability to prepare healing baths. The Ogun *loa* Erzilie and Damballa are jealous gods. On the day sacred to each, a devotee puts fresh linen on his bed, places powder, soap, and a comb near by, and sleeps alone. If the devotee is a woman, her husband sleeps elsewhere; if a man, his wife must seek another place; otherwise the transgressor would die.

Agwe Woyo is god of the sea, but, as might be expected, neither he nor his son and daughter, Agweto and Agweta Woyo, figures as importantly in Mirebalais as in coastal areas. For the folk of Mirebalais the river-gods, particularly the spirit of the Artibonite River, are of much greater importance. This last-mentioned *loa*, named Clairmé, a Pétro deity like his wife and daughter, Mme. Clairmé and Clairmézine, lives in the deepest part of the stream with the other members of his "family." Similarly, the deepest parts, or *bassins*, of tributary streams hold the spirits of those waters. And since all these tributaries flow into the Artibonite, and the Artibonite empties into the ocean, it is said that when the river is in flood, Clairmé is engaged in inspecting his domain, being greeted by the spirits of all the smaller rivers as he passes their mouths. At this time the flow of the water in each tributary is arrested until he has gone by, when, in a great swirl,

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

rather starve than work. An Englishman, James Franklin, wrote in 1828, for example:

> Experiments may be tried, laws may be enacted, and encouragement given, but nothing short of coercion and want will impel the Haytian to labour; and I have my doubts as to the practicability of enforcing labour in Hayti until the people have been better instructed, and their characters become changed.

As Franklin summarized it: "Nature is too generous to the Haytian; he never wants, and so never works for hire, as do free labourers in other countries."

The early nineteenth century saw a flood of such bitter comments about the remains of the once rich and flourishing French colony of St. Domingue. The vast productivity of Haiti under French rule had made that colony one of the richest in the New World. The country was dotted with sugar mills, brick-covered wells, and warehouses; and carefully built brick aqueducts, irrigation canals, locks, and dams assured water for the plantations. In 1790, under the slave system, Haiti had exported 163,000,000 pounds of sugar. In 1826, a quarter of a century after the revolution, it was reported to have exported 33,000 pounds.

This falling off in production and exports doubtless had many causes, but one of the most significant was the Haitian's revolt not only against slavery but also against continuing the same kind of work he had performed as a slave. He saw not too much difference between forced, unpaid labor and working for any large landholder at subsistence wages. To the Haitian slave the inspiring battle cry of the French Revolution did not mean that all men would work together on another's man plantation and receive the same wages. It meant that every man would have his own garden to work for himself as he chose; every man would be a full citizen, with land of his own, free to come and go, to plant what he wished, to sell what he could. Despite long years under a colonial slave system, the Haitian still remembered a different way of life in Africa, where mass production for export was not the primary objective of labor.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the population of Haiti was not much more than half a million—less than one sixth of what it is today. There was plenty of land, and much of it had not yet been wasted by constant tilling and erosion. When the French were driven out, the Haitian peasant re-created an economic world of his own liking. The plantation system which had poured out sugar and coffee and indigo for Europe faded away, and in its place there sprang up an agrarian system which has continued until the present day. In the early

[Franklin, The Present State of Hayti, p. 362. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

175 178 311 [643] [656] In the early years of independence, Emperor Henry Christophe in the north and President Pétion in the south tried to stem the disintegration of the magnificent plantations. Christophe's measures in the region he controlled were sometimes stern, according to legend; but the plantation system and the plantations themselves gradually fell into decay, along with the aqueducts, the warehouses, and the sugar mills. For the Haitian had returned to a tradition of landholding antedating his enslavement.

175 648 181 Europe's loss of the Pearl of the Antilles aroused bitter words from Frenchmen and Englishmen for the better part of the century. They accused the Negro of laziness and lack of ability, repeating endlessly that only as a colony could Haiti ever be of any use to anybody. The London *Times* deplored the Haitian's unwillingness to work for wages, speculating that he had "no desire for property strong enough to induce him to labor with sustained power." In the United States, antiabolitionist enthusiasts cited the Haitian situation as an example of what would happen to the American economy if the slaves were freed.

464 423 311 The Haitian's reluctance to work for wages did not reflect an aversion to owning property, however, as the London *Times* supposed. On the contrary, it was engendered by his desire for property. The land was there and waiting, only needing a house to be built upon it, and to be cleared and tilled. The typical Haitian wanted not dubious, seasonal wage work but a farm of his own. The more ambitious peasant aspired to two farms, or even three, with a homestead and a family on each.

423 595 178 583 If a man worked hard and made a success of one plot, he could put away money and eventually buy a second. The additional land might be separated by some miles from the original farm. On the new ground the man would build another house and take another wife to take care of it in his absence. Known as *plaçage*, this arrangement had complete community sanction. A man whose energies and good fortune made an extra household possible was expected to make such an arrangement. It was not a new institution bred in the chaos following the [997] Revolution, nor was it, as some missionaries held, an evidence of moral deterioration of the Haitian character. It was simply a persisting concept of West African life.[2] The woman who occupied the second or third household was not a concubine. Like the first wife, she had enhanced prestige in her community. She had authority and responsibility. Her work, her position, and her rewards were not essentially different from those of the first wife.[3] It is true that her marriage was not consecrated by a church or civil ceremony, but, ordinarily, neither was that of the [581] first wife. Contrary to European misconceptions, such unions were true marriages in the sense that they had full sanction of the community.

2,3 [Footnotes appear in Category 116, pp. 351-352. --Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

For many Haitians, the struggle to obtain a piece of ground and to hold onto it is the very heart of the struggle for existence. On Morne l'Hôpital in 1932 I knew a man who owned ten acres of gardens. He had it planted in bananas and plantains, yams, and cotton. He had two cows and a calf and a grove of mango trees and coconut palms. His house was clean, tidy, and by Haitian standards well furnished. Eighteen years later he had less than an acre of land, no trees, no cotton, and no cattle. His family had become impoverished. He had three grown children and virtually no land to leave to them except that on which the house stood. His troubles began with a lawsuit over his land title. He sold his cattle to raise money to pay his court expenses. He lost half of his land as a result of the lawsuit, most of it the part with the good trees. Later, he sold more land to raise "eating money," and then rented it from the new owner. He could not grow enough cash crops to pay the rent and was finally evicted. Today he has not enough ground left on which to grow food for himself and his wife the year round. 423 691 511

The diminution of adequate landholdings has resulted in the disappearances of many of the *lacours* (hamlets) that were a familiar sight a few decades ago. Young people traditionally built their houses near the family homesteads until there were five, six, or a dozen houses in a group. There was a natural family community which shared a common social life and the work of the fields. But as the population increased and the landholdings shrank, young people and old began to move away in search of new land, or work in the cities. Often where the lacour remains it is only as a settlement of landless house renters who work where they may for wages. 178 423 361 166 [596] [621]

Economic refugees from rural areas seek wage work in the cities, returning to their original homes only on special festive days for family reunions. The men find employment as gardeners, servants, construction laborers, and stevedores. Some find work on the sugar and sisal plantations, others in craft industries making straw hats, baskets, shoes, chairs, and mahogany ware for export. The struggle in the big city of Port-au-Prince is for many of them worse than the poverty they left behind. There are the inevitable slums and the constant threat of hunger. It is in the big city that one hears most often the words *moin grand gout* (I am hungry), and least often the words *Bondieu bon* (God is good). 166 464

The land hunger increases, and the overflow of the mountain settlements continues to move cityward. In former years there was a trend toward emigration across the eastern border into the Dominican Republic, which has a population density roughly one third or one fourth that of Haiti. This trend was checked, temporarily at least, in 1937 by [648] 167 195

2; Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

167 175 [648] a massacre in the western part of the Dominican Republic which took the lives of an estimated five thousand to fifteen thousand Haitians. The survivors fled homeward, and many were settled in frontier areas by the government. Even so, today there are believed to be some sixty or seventy thousand Haitians still living east of the border. Large numbers of Haitians, particularly men, migrated to Cuba in the years following World War I, in search of better wages in the cane fields. By 1931 there were more than eighty thousand Haitians in that country.* But resentment by local Cuban labor and the onset of the depression combined to force the repatriation of great numbers of them. Thirty thousand Haitians came home from Cuba in the years 1936 and 1937 alone.

16 [842] Solution of Haiti's problem of overpopulation does not seem imminent. The obvious answers would seem to be birth control, emigration, wiser use of natural resources, and industrialization. Since the country is predominantly Catholic, and since much social value is placed on children, birth control seems unlikely. And as health facilities become more widespread and infant mortality drops, the pressure will become more acute. Emigration seems to offer no hope, since neighboring islands and countries on the mainland give no encouragement. The Haitian may yet learn to conserve his land and to get more out of it, to stock his lakes with fish, and to bring more fish in from the sea. But this will not suffice. Nothing is left but industrialization, and that seems to be a thing of the far-distant future.

[311] [47]

181 167 461 Nevertheless, the character of Haitian life remains essentially agrarian. The displaced peasant, whether he is now a hotel "houseboy," a taxi driver, or a cane cutter, dreams of returning to the land some day and growing bananas, coffee, and cotton that will make him independent. In far-off places such as Havana and New York, Haitians work and save money with the expectation that one day they will come home, buy fifteen or twenty acres of ground, build a new house, and live out their lives as decently prosperous *habitants*. The traditions of the agricultural society, along with Vodoun, continue to play a significant role in the life of the people.

[128]

476 241 One such tradition is the institution of the *coumbite*, a loosely knit coöperative work party of neighbors and friends. The word itself probably comes from the Spanish *convide*, or *convite*, meaning "to invite." A member of the group holds a coumbite by notifying his fellow members that on such-and-such a day his fields will require clearing or hoeing. There are several variants of the work gathering. One, called *carré* or *corvée*, meets at irregular intervals and only on special invitation. There are no regular reciprocal obligations in the *corvée*; the workers are

* [Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," Journal of Negro History, October, 1940, p. 515. Cf. p. 352, Category 116. --Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

And when the revolution came he produced for the Haitian armies knives, gun parts, and wheels to transport cannon. By the tens of thousands he made ingeniously devised metal objects to be thrown on the roads, before the French cavalry troops—objects so shaped that, no matter how they fell, a single sharp point stood erect to cripple the enemy horses. Yet knowledge of the West African uses of iron did not altogether disappear, and during the first century of independence the Haitian blacksmith created many old-style knives, spears, and ritual objects for the cult temple.

Even today, some of this old-style work is to be found in hounfors in the southwestern peninsula. One may see simple or ornate iron standards, made to support ceremonial offerings or candles, strikingly similar to standards in ancestral shrines in Dahomey. There are iron bells, both single and double, made in pure West African style; ornate ritual swords and sabers which are the crests of certain deities; coiled and uncoiled iron serpents representing the gods Damballa and Ayida; and stylized or semirealistic portraits of the deities. Many of these old pieces are nineteenth-century survivals; others have been forged within the past decade.

An over-all impression of Haitian material culture is that artistic decoration is almost entirely absent and that the prime emphasis is on utility. Wooden cooking spoons are efficient in form, but missing from them is the delicate decorative carving often found in West Africa. The long wooden washing bowl, or *gamelle*, and the wooden mortar in which grain is pulverized are likewise clean-cut but stark and plainly utilitarian. Clay bowls, bottles, and storage jars are usually of simple, uniform design, with only accidental variations; there is little use of glazes, and the clay is often heavy and thick. Should there be a wari gameboard in the peasant hut, the chances are that it is roughly made, without legs or carved designs. Dugout canoes are usually crude in appearance, heavy and thick-walled, and irregular in form.

Yet there are many evidences—though one must seek them out—that esthetic impulses are quite alive. The gay peasant straw knapsack, or *alfor*, without which no mountain man makes a journey, has a charm and grace that is not diminished by familiarity and cheapness. Decorated with sisal braid and tassels, and colored with green and magenta dyes, each *alfor* on close inspection appears to be unique. In some communities in the south and southwest, burlap squares also are painted with these traditional dyes. About forty inches across, and made of sugar bags, these paintings swarm with geometric patterns and sometimes with figures of flowers and animals. They are purely decorative, being

[See plates 42-51, pp. 112-DD—112-FF.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

presidents, and emphatically declared the army to be within and under the law. 175 642

The new President, finding his office without the prerogatives he had expected it to have, openly complained of the restraints imposed on him by the new constitution. He broke campaign promises he had made to the peasants in the south and stirred up antagonisms on every side. Finally, while he was on a military expedition in the Spanish part of the island, revolution broke out at home. His army was beaten by the Dominicans, too, which completely shattered his morale. He fled by ship to Jamaica, the traditional refuge of outgoing Haitian presidents. In memory of his administration the peasants sang: 175 643 669 [648] 175 643 669 533* 539*

Rivière Président gainyain zyeux vairon!
Li dit l'ap piyé l'armé Bélanton!
Piyé lévé trésor!
Piyé lévé trésor!
Piyé lévé trésor!
Yo voyé Lambam depuis Lowinsor!

La Constitution cé trouva Colombe
Quand yo voit pays soufri trop misère!
Li dit yo fait comme Henry!
Li dit yo fait comme Henry!
Li dit yo fait comme Henry!
Pou' fai sang coulé pou' rangé pays!

Colonel Déto soldat Diplaro
Marché fanfaron comme un grand fantin!
Li cré qui li té roi!
Li cré qui li té roi!
Li cré qui li té roi!
Pagnol chasse li, li couri con chien qui prend frai charogne!

President Rivière was cross-eyed!
He said that he was going to pillage Belanton's army!
Loot for treasure!
Loot for treasure!
Loot for treasure!
They sent everyone from Lowinsor to Lambam!

The Constitution was founded by Columbus
When the country suffered too much misery!
He said he would do like Henry [Christophe]!
He said he would do like Henry!
He said he would do like Henry!
Make blood run to poison the countryside!

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Oreste Zamor, pressé pou' embarké!
Oreste Zamor, pressé pou' embarké!
Ou pas tendé l'armée Davilmar rentré pou' Gonaïves?

Oreste Zamor, you'd better embark!
Oreste Zamor, you'd better embark!
Haven't you heard Davilmar's army has entered Gonaïves?

Gonaïves seems to have been the crucial point for invading armies from the north. Whenever revolutionary troops entered this town, the president holding office prepared to leave. True to the tradition, the Zamors sailed for a foreign shore, and Davilmar Théodore became the new executive. Although his tenure was to last only three months, there was much excitement when he entered the capital:

A la théatre, à la bamboche!
Pou' djolle musique à droit à gauche!
La ville embrende ça qui gainyain,
C'est Davilmar kapé rentré!
Davilmar, dur, dur!
Manchete caco pas nen betise!
Papa Da dur, dur!
Manchete Leconte pas nen betise!
Davilmar, dur, dur!

Celebrations and dancing!
Tooting horns to right and left!
The city is in an uproar,
It is Davilmar who is coming in!
Davilmar, hard, hard!
The cacos were nothing to laugh at!
Papa Da is hard, hard!
Leconte's army was nothing to laugh at!
Davilmar is hard, hard!

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[662]

In 1915 came the United States intervention in Haiti, with the prime objective of freezing out German commercial and political interests. A president named Guillaume Sam had assassinated his political enemies in the prison at Port-au-Prince and had, in turn, been dragged out of the French consulate and killed. The benefits of the American occupation of Haiti are hotly debated to this day, though it is about thirty years since the United States military forces were withdrawn. Some Haitians think the occupation was a good lesson in politics, and that Haiti benefited in many ways. Others continue to look upon it as an overt expression of American diplomacy by force. One of the early assignments of the U.S. Marines in Haiti was the destruction of the

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

roaming bands of cacos, generally regarded as bandit elements. Caco chiefs were imprisoned or killed as outlaws, though much of their activity was directed against the American occupation rather than the civil government. Many of the injustices of the occupation were the result of inadequate understanding of the Haitian people and their way of life. There was much unspoken bitterness against the occupation forces, and in some popular songs the Marines were referred to by the peaceful peasantry as "cacos in khaki." During President Borno's administration the people in the north were singing:

> Grand Prevost ou pas tendé cacos Bayé Bouteille?
> Grand Prevost n'allé wè cacos Bayé Bouteille!
> Ala kilé nen dé nations:
> Americains dévant, cacos deuxieme!
>
> Grand Prevost, didn't you hear the cacos are at the Bottle Gate?
> Grand Prevost, we are going to see the cacos at the Bottle Gate!
> Now we have two species:
> The Americans are the worst, the cacos come second!

When President Borno's tenure of office came to an end, it was felt in some quarters that Madame Borno was taking the prospective change of residence very hard:

> Madame Borno ça ou gainyain ou apé crié?
> Ou té tou conné palais a parti pou' ou!
> Madame Borno ça ou gainyain ou apé crié?
> Ou té tou conné yun jour pou' oté laissé!
>
> Madame Borno, what is the matter, why are you crying?
> You always knew one day you would have to leave the palace!
> Madame Borno, what is the matter, why are you crying?
> You always knew one day you'd have to give it up!

In 1930 Sténio Vincent came into office. He was a generally unpopular executive who managed to hold on to the presidency by suppressing the political opposition. When he was elected, the progressives were hopeful, and his supporters were singing: "Sténio Vincent bon garçon." But public sentiment shifted. Times were hard for the Haitian people during the Vincent administration. The darker citizens felt Vincent was "too light" to have their interests at heart. They were violently aroused, too, by his gingerly handling of the massacre of Haitians in the Dominican Republic in 1937. During his administration there were a number of abortive caco demonstrations and an unsuccessful revolt of high-ranking army officers. But in the early days a Meringue

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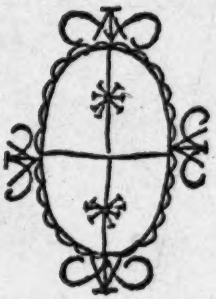

15. Secret-Society Songs

575 171 Secret societies were once common in Haiti, as they were in other parts of the New World where West Africans settled in large numbers. The institution of the secret society was strong in various parts of West Africa from which the slaves came. The tradition was particularly notable among the tribes of Nigeria.[1] In the New World it offered to slaves and to freed Negroes an opportunity for social organization and fraternal relationships which otherwise had been pretty well shattered by the nature of slavery and the profuse admixture of cultures. A number of elderly Haitians have [648] suggested that it was the Haitian secret societies rather than the Vodoun and Congo cults which fomented underground resistance and slave revolts against the French in the last years of the eighteenth century.

174 178 575 [476] At this late date it is difficult to reconstruct much of the secret-society picture. Such groups as may have survived until recently did so in vitiated and changed form. They have been supplanted in large measure by the *société*, a kind of mutual-aid association with both economic and recreational functions. It is exclusive, but not irrevocably so, and it is not secret. The société often corresponds roughly with the membership of a hounfor, or cult temple.

575 178 266 173 Old people still talk about true secret societies, however. There was a Moundongue secret society, separate from the Moundongue cult, whose members were recruited from the survivors of the Moundongue tribe and their descendants. Other secret societies were not based on tribal affiliation but were recruited from the population at large. One such group was the Vinbindingue, also known as the Blinbindingue and the Balbindingue. Its practices were feared. According to tradition, the Vinbindingue was predatory and held cannibalistic rites, as did other groups such as the Moundongue Society, the Cochon Rouge (the Red Pig Society), the Zeaubeaups, the Cochon Gris (the Gray Pig Society), and the Calinda 000 Society. How much of their reputation for cannibalism was deserved is

[1] [Herskovits, Dahomey, I, p. 256. Cf. p. 353, Category 116. -- Analyst]

534 322 [412] The craft of drum making is a very skilled one, but the tools are simple: chisels, machetes, and fire. The core of the log is removed by burning and gouging, and the outside is shaped with a machete, or sometimes a hachet. The wood is selected and processed carefully. Firing of the core of the log depends a good deal on how dry the wood is, for the wood must burn slowly. It is believed that wood cut at the right stage of growth and at the right phase of the moon is resistant to the ever-present powder-post beetles. Mahogany was once favored because [824] it was durable and beetle resistant, even though it was heavy. But in recent decades mahogany has become scarce, and modern drums are made of lighter woods.

534 798 [531] [071] Drums made in the nineteenth century not only conformed to the patterns of certain West African prototypes but were also carved and decorated. Some of these old drums are still to be seen, but there are not many left. An ancient carved assotor drum (previously cited) has fortunately been preserved by the Bureau d'Ethnologie. But between the ravages of the powder-post beetles, age, and the periodic orgies of drum burning by the church and misguided public officials, most of these [648] ancient works of art have long since disappeared. During the American occupation of Haiti—from World War I to 1932—American military personnel also contributed to the mania for drum burning. And as late as 1941 there was a massive, cleric-inspired drive to wipe out these instruments as remnants of *sauvage* elements in Haitian life.

534 178 531 The effect of this war against the drum was only to improve the business of the professional drum maker. Drums had become expendable, hence they were made simpler. The carved decorations disappeared. Paint was substituted, and less attention was given to detail. The important thing was to produce a good functional instrument. But the creative instincts of the drum makers sometimes still take over, and many of the modern drums are beautifully proportioned, with delicate geometric patterns carved around the base, or foot. Among certain categories of drums the painted decorations consist solely of the name of the loa to whom the instruments have been dedicated—St. Jacques perhaps, or Papa Pierre, or Èzilie.

534 171 794 796 534 Drums differ in design according to the use for which they are intended. The Arada or Vodoun drums are used primarily in connection with the dances and rituals of the Vodoun cult—the cult built around the gods and rites of Arada and Yoruba theology. They resemble closely drums which are used today in Dahomey, Nigeria, and Togoland. They usually come in sets of three. The largest, the *manman* (also called *hountor* or *hountogri*), may be three to four feet high. The middle-sized drum, or *second* (also called *grondé* or *moyen*), is about two feet

[Text continues on p. 193]

534 [177] the Haitian word for "twins." They are used primarily for secular music of the Cuban type, and may in fact be an importation from Cuba. The marassa is one of the few drums on which a finger technique is used; that is, striking with individual fingers rather than with grouped fingers. Marassas are often played in concert with guitars and marimbas.

The *basse* is the shallow finger drum resembling what in the United States is called the tambourine. Constructed in the pattern of an African prototype, its head is usually fifteen or eighteen inches in diameter and made of goatskin. Small metal disks sometimes are inserted in the frame [314] to act as rattles. The head is kept well coated with resin or beeswax and [237] is tapped and rubbed with the fingers. The *basse* is used only for secular music, except in the rare instances when it is used in Congo services. Some Haitians believe that the name of the instrument comes from the word *Basque*.

534 202 It is reported that signal drums were still in use a decade ago in remote sections of the southwestern peninsula. One of these instruments, according to description, is distinguished mainly by its large belly and small mouth; like the Juba drum, it is played on its side. Another style of signal drum has a slit in the side and is played erect, much like an African slit-log drum standing on end.

534 [171] Another percussion instrument is the bamboo stamping tube, called the *ganbo* or *ti kanmbo*. It is African in origin and probably takes its name from the Loango term for the same device, *dikanmbo*.[2] The stamping tube is simply a length of bamboo, open at one end and closed at the other by a natural joint membrane. The closed end is struck sharply upon the ground, and the tone comes from the open top. The device works like an inverted drum, the closed end functioning like a drumhead. A battery of four or five ganbos may provide the percussion music otherwise played by drums. The musician corresponding to the *bulatier* of the drum orchestra plays two small stamping tubes, one in each hand. The other musicians have one each, thicker and longer than the bulatier's and producing deeper tones. Cupped hands are manipulated over the open ends for varying the sounds. This instrument [171] has survived in various parts of the New World where Africans were settled, particularly other West Indian islands, Brazil, and Venezuela. In Venezuela the stamping tubes are called *quitiplas*.[3] They have recently been reported from various areas of West Africa, including French Equatorial Africa.[4]

534 648 798 The ganbos had a singular burst of popularity in Haiti during the United States military occupation of the country after the first World War, when drums were often seized and destroyed. Drums could not [115]

[2] [Informant: Joseph Lengo, Brazzaville. Cf. P 354, Category 116. --Analyst]

[3] [Library of Congress album, Folk Music of Venezuela. Cf P 354 Category 116.--Analyst]

[4] [Pamphlet accompanying recording, Music of Equatorial Africa (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1950). Cf. P 354, cat. 116.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

easily be hidden, but the ganbos were simply slipped into the straw roofs and thus put out of sight. Moreover, by some strange process of reasoning, military authorities regarded the bamboos as "harmless," though they were used for the same purposes as the contraband drums. 534 648 798

There are numerous other kinds of simple percussion devices. One such instrument, now less commonly seen than previously, is a length of open bamboo laid in the crotches of two Y-shaped sticks set in the ground. Like other *catas*, the bamboo is beaten with two sticks. Some Haitians believe that in former days such bamboos were played in batteries like a xylophone. 534

Sometimes a light-weight wooden cylinder, or perhaps a drum denuded of its playing head, is carried by the timekeeper of a coumbite. It, also, is played on the side with sticks. [461] [476]

Wooden mortars for pulverizing grain take on the character of musical instruments when used in combination with voices. When two or more mortars are used, with two men or women wielding the long polelike pestles in each mortar, the rhythmic effects can become fairly complicated. 534 533 412

The *claves* or *palos* (small hardwood sticks) are used primarily in connection with secular dances of a Cuban type, or to accompany such instruments as the guitar and the marimba. One stick is held loosely in the natural fold of the hand, so that it is free to vibrate, and is struck sharply with the second stick. The tone is almost metallic because of the hardness of the wood, usually lignum vitae. The name of the instrument is recognizable as a form of *clavar*, or *clavo*, Spanish for "peg" or "nail." It is thought that wooden shipbuilding pegs provided the name for this device, which has equivalents in West Africa. 534 535 [177] [824] [171]

Among the folk instruments there are various kinds of horns and trumpets. Cows' horns are played musically in some parts of the southern peninsula, though usually they are used as ritual instruments and signaling devices. Wooden trumpets called *pistons* are carved from the stems of the papaya tree. Conch-shell trumpets, known as *lambis*, are commonly used as signaling devices by fishermen. They are also to be found among the coumbites, in Rara festivities, and occasionally in rituals, where they are usually identified with sea deities. In carnival times the old fashioned phonograph horn makes its appearance as a combined trumpet and voice amplifier. 534 184 [824] [202] [541] [216]

Probably the most important of the trumpets is the one made of bamboo. It is called a *vaccine* or *bois bourrique*. Both names have interesting origins. The cow's horn was at one time used for magico-medical purposes. The leaf doctor used it as an "applicator" of powders and potions. A small opening was made in the point of the horn, and 534 755 [237]

[See plate 8, P. 112-F. -- Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

very favorable reception by Haitian scholars and intellectuals. As its author and others have pointed out, few countries in modern times have received as bad a press at the hands of foreign observers as Haiti. A small, rugged nation, born of an exhausting and destructive revolution, its people poor, disease-ridden, illiterate, and erratically led, independent Haiti gives the impression of having drifted aimlessly for more than a century. Observers from "more developed" lands have had a field day—and still have—bemoaning the evil consequences of a mass of African slaves having turned on their French masters to destroy them and their works. It is still fashionable to allude to Haiti in deploring independence movements, racial desegregation, indigenous political leadership, and economic sovereignty. But too little scholarship has since been invested, as Leyburn invested it, in delineating the national and international forces which have operated to keep Haiti poor and backward. Nor has contemporary research led to sufficiently revealing comparisons between the social history of Haiti and that of her more colonial neighbors in the Caribbean area. Leyburn's work enhanced the possibilities for such comparisons and drew some morals which Haiti's detractors often ignore; but in making his case, the author carefully avoids lapsing into romanticism, or into the inaccuracy born of uncritical sympathy.

The book was published as the final steps were being taken to end the official United States presence in Haiti. The occupation had begun in 1915, ostensibly to restore order in a situation marked by political chaos. Haitian defaulting on debts to the French and Germans had raised the specter of foreign—that is, European—occupation, which created considerable North American anxiety; and there were large Haitian debts outstanding to United States banks as well. When the United States decided to move militarily, the abstract issue of justice was ignored, to be raised for contemplation only after the occupation itself was a fact. Military occupation continued for nineteen years, and the complete termination of United States controls over the national affairs of Haiti did not come until 1946, long after Leyburn's book had appeared. Twenty-five years have now elapsed since Leyburn wrote, and the events of these years are relevant to any retrospective view of the author's interpretations.

Much, indeed, has happened in Haiti since 1941: the United States withdrawal and the fading of the effects, both good and bad, of the occupation; the positive economic consequences for Haiti of World

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Leyburn noted that the United States occupation affected the nature and rigidity of the barriers separating the yeomanry from the elite. For instance, he calls attention to the fact that the presidents elected during the United States occupation were light-skinned members of the elite. It seemed almost inevitable that, when the North Americans sought men through whom to prosecute their plans for "stabilizing" Haiti, they would settle on educated and worldly politicians, men who were both sufficiently trained and sufficiently pliant for the task. That these men were predominantly light-skinned was a corollary aspect of Haitian social history. In this way Washington played some part in reinforcing and expanding elite power; and herein lies a paradox with which the author of *The Haitian People* has dealt well. While the elite had been able to maintain their wealth and power in Haiti for nearly a century, the presidential succession before the United States occupation had largely been one of military chieftains, principally dark-skinned men from the north of the Republic. Michel Oreste, who had ruled for nine months in 1913–14, was the first civilian to be chosen president in Haiti's entire history up to that time; and Sudre Dartiguenave (1915–22), the North Americans' choice, was the first president since 1879 who was both a southerner and light-skinned. From the last quarter of the nineteenth century until the occupation, in other words, Haiti's presidents were almost entirely dark-skinned northern provincial leaders who literally seized power by invading Port-au-Prince and deposing their predecessors.

Hence, in describing the separation between elite and yeomanry, it is essential to notice the traditional special role of the military, with its particular overtones of color. Here was one institutional feature of Haitian society which was not directly dominated by the elite, and through which nonelite folk were able to attain special power. But in Haiti's case it is significant that the army itself was not firmly institutionalized; regional warlords, rather than a centralized officer corps, made the decisions. Leyburn cites Auguste Magloire, who enumerated *sixty-nine* "important" revolutions between 1806 and 1879; had this enumeration gone forward, it would have been much longer. Of Haiti's twenty-four chief executives between 1807 and 1915, only eight were in office for a period equal to their elected terms, and seventeen were deposed by revolution. Before the United States occupation, then, the continuing power of the elite could be seen as somewhat separate from the succession of nonelite generals who seized office over the years.

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648 The financing of these many revolutions was usually provided by
669 foreign merchants, bent upon installing a government that would
565 grant them special economic concessions (Munro, 1964:326–31). The
701 United States occupation ended this doleful succession of regimes
439 and, by throwing its weight to the elite, by suppressing military activity in the countryside, and by reforming the army, the United States gave a new meaning to the separation of the elite and the yeomanry. Leyburn's interpretation is consistent with these events; yet some Haitian scholars have differed with Leyburn's analysis.

114 In a lengthy review article, the dean of Haitian historians, Dr. Jean
564 Price-Mars (1942:1–50), questions the applicability of the term
563 "caste" to the social groupings of Haitian society. He notes that
671 Haitian law after the revolution never legitimized any distinction on
144 grounds of physical type, unlike a society such as the United States—that in fact, the very basis of Haitian polity was the absence of such distinctions. Furthermore, Leyburn's interpretation is qualified by the fact that the elite and the rural masses are not entirely distinctive physically. In some parts of rural Haiti, particularly in the southern peninsula, there are many light-skinned people; and many individuals who qualify as members of the elite on all other counts are very dark in appearance. The fact that being "Negro" or "white" in Haiti is viewed as a matter of degree, rather than of kind, complicated by all the other criteria of social position employed in drawing distinctions, has important implications for the way social barriers have operated in that country.*

114 Leyburn did not contend that all the effects of the United States
565 occupation were in the direction of increasing the gap between the ELITE AND THE YEOMANRY.

563 * In this regard, Haiti is aligned with most of Latin America, in contradistinction to the
564 United States, where many persons believe that "one drop of Negro blood" [sic] makes a
"Negro." The failure of North Americans to distinguish between sociological and genetic
171 categories of physical type has led to considerable confusion in their dealings with Latin America and in their understanding of Latin American societies. North American race prejudice at
144 its most extreme uses color as the primary basis for social ranking, and no individual accomplishment (for instance, in terms of economic or intellectual success) can overshadow the inferior status unalterably bestowed by certain physical traits. Haitian—and generally all Latin American—social distinctions do not rest solely on considerations of physical type; a black skin does not "doom" an individual if his attainments make him otherwise the equal of his lighter-skinned fellow citizens. Hence, it might be argued that the term "caste" would be more appropriate when applied to the Negro people of the United States (regardless of phenotype, and including those "Negroes" who are sociologically identified with the Negro people even if their physical appearance is demonstrably Caucasian) than when applied to the peoples of Latin America.

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elite and the yeomanry. For instance, he calls attention to one unanticipated (but inevitable) result of the occupation in this connection: the large number of children whose fathers were United States Marines, and whose mothers were members of the Haitian rural masses. In this way the occupation contributed to the growth of the physically intermediate population of Haiti, especially among rural folk, and thus perhaps to some bridging of the gap between yeomen and elite. Much more important, by its contributions to a broadening of the educational system, the occupation enabled talented black-skinned youths to improve themselves and to acquire new aspirations.

Recent economic and political developments in Haiti, through the period 1941–57, have contributed grounds for modification of the Leyburn interpretation. Though Leyburn predicted that "for the present and near future it is safe to say that there will be no more black non-élite presidents" (p. 101), subsequent developments soon proved him wrong. In January 1946, the government of elite member Elie Lescot fell under military pressure. A junta consisting of Franck Lavaud, Antoine Levelt, and Paul Magloire facilitated the installation of Dumarsais Estimé as president. Estimé was a dark-skinned man from the countryside (the village of Verettes, near St. Marc, in west-central Haiti), who had received a good education, served as a minister in the Vincent cabinet and, as a deputy, married a lighter-skinned woman whose family's elite membership was secure. Estimé might well be considered a self-made member of the elite, but he was not born into it, and his accession to power was the political expression of new possibilities in Haitian life.

The changes Estimé's regime symbolized were rooted in the intellectual resistance to the United States occupation and in the search for a Haitian identity in the face of that occupation. The strangely easy domination that the United States wielded over Haitian society for several decades, and the relatively unexploitative but patronizing administration it provided, ended forever a fantasy that had gripped Haitian intellectuals for more than a century. The world of 1804, when a bloodied but defiant Haiti could bar by force of arms Napoleon's dreams of a New World empire (and assist indirectly thereby in the territorial expansion of a still weak United States) had vanished. The time when a Pétion could aid, protect, and politically influence a sick and tired Simón Bolívar was long gone. The world had changed, while Haiti, the Haitians learned under their North

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American masters, had nearly stood still. For almost a century, Haiti's elite had taken justifiable pride in their ancestors' triumph over Napoleonic France, even while they remained enthralled by French culture. This strange ambivalence would no longer do. In effect, the United States occupation compelled Haitian scholars to rediscover what it meant to be Haitian.

As the writing of Jean Price-Mars (1928) expressed that identity culturally, so the regime of Dumarsais Estimé began to express it politically. For the first time, Africa, and not simply France, became an important part of the nationalist dialogue. The Creole language began to be studied in its own right, and a program to end illiteracy through education in Creole was launched. Folkloristic studies, emphasizing the African component in Haitian rural life, especially as expressed in religion, came into vogue. Haitians began to explore their own society as a synthesis that was as much African as it was French—and as a synthesis, rather than as a mechanical alignment of two distinct traditions. The term *authentique* was employed to express what was "truly Haitian," and Haiti herself was viewed as a unique and original blending of two pasts. Under Estimé, rural folk of promise—and they were, in the nature of things, predominantly dark-skinned—were given greater opportunities, especially to be educated and to enter government service. Moreover, these developments took place at a time when Haiti's economic situation was relatively good, and Estimé enjoyed a measure of popular support rare in Haiti's entire history.

Furthermore, it was during the Estimé regime that Haitian cultural life reached some sort of climax. In the 1920s young Haitian intellectuals had been deeply shaken by the United States occupation and had begun to formulate their own answers to the questions it raised. Not only did Africa come into view as the wellspring of much that was Haitian but Haiti's status as an occupied though once-sovereign power dramatized the need for a social and political philosophy that fitted with hemispheric and international realities. French intellectual currents figured importantly in Haitian political thinking, both because the intellectuals of the French Antilles of the time were inspired by Haitian history and interested in Haiti, and because those islands and Haiti shared a curious affinity in their "Gallo-African" cultures. Anticolonial and Marxist points of view were espoused by a few Haitians, but these perspectives were complicated by changing

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175 643 66 The course of events leading up to Duvalier's election are difficult to assess. Fignolé, whom the army had permitted to serve as president for sixteen days during the interregnum, had been denied official recognition by the United States, suggesting that this country feared the implications of his political philosophy; his attempts at passing a whole new code of far-reaching social legislation apparently frightened the army, which removed him on grounds of "maintaining order." By the time an election decree was promulgated in August 1957, Fignolé was disqualified, and Jumelle had been forced to withdraw from candidacy. By election day, September 1957, only Déjoie and Duvalier were in contention, while Jumelle had gone into hiding. An attempted general strike, probably led by Déjoieiste elements, was stopped by the army, and Dr. François Duvalier was elected to power.

175 642 66 701 643 The Duvalier régime, beyond any doubt, has added something new to the Haitian political scene. To begin with, it must be stressed that Duvalier enjoys some popular support in the countryside as well as in the urban centers. For many Haitians, Duvalier epitomizes the return of the Estimé philosophy to Haiti, and it would be a serious political error to suppose that the present regime is no more than an elite-hating dictatorship backed by machine guns. At the same time, the readiness of the Duvalieristes to use force probably exceeds that of any Haitian government in more than a century. Its excesses, moreover, appear to break certain traditions of political behavior—for instance, the unwillingness to take familial connections into account when political revenge is being carried out, the violence committed against women and adolescents regarded as political enemies, and so on. The most important break with tradition, however, has been the gradual undermining of the army as a political force—a force created in the first instance during the United States occupation.

175 642 649 643 In carrying out its plans, the Duvalier government has played more creatively upon inconsistencies in United States policy than any preceding regime. It used United States military and economic power to consolidate itself, while employing a posture of anti-North American hostility in its search for other internal sources of political support. Most strikingly, it has capitalized on the deterioration of the United States design in the Caribbean region, both to exact concessions and to enhance an international image of itself as a stalwart "democratic"

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regime. That President Duvalier has been able to stay in power in spite of internal dissaffection, sometime hostile United States propaganda, a dire economic situation, personal ill health, and other woes, is a tribute to his political acumen, if not to his principles. None of this means, of course, that such consummate skill will continue to work; Haitian governments have a way of falling suddenly, and the Duvalier regime will probably not prove an exception. 175 642 648 643

Dr. Duvalier's success indicates that he has made certain correct assessments, not only of Haiti's social and political structure but also of United States policy with regard to Haiti. The occupation was notable for its failure to make any telling alterations in the economic structure or level of development of the country. Many beneficial changes were made, as Leyburn demonstrates, particularly in the areas of health and health services, communications, government administration, education, and transport (though the use of corvée labor on the roads led to serious abuses, and stimulated sanguinary guerilla warfare). But most significantly, the United States institutionalized the army and police forces. The ragged bands of political mercenaries of the past were dissolved; the officer-ridden army was transformed into a small, well-trained, and well-organized force. Eventual firm control by this force of weaponry, communications, and transport ended the era of presidential succession by invasion, turned the army into the major locus of nonelectoral, president-making power, and may have ended forever the possibility of an agrarian revolt against the central authority. Another political effect of the occupation was the importance it imparted to the United States ambassador, whose political opinions thereafter would matter significantly in the transmission of power at the top of the Haitian governmental system. The Duvalier regime has continuously taken full account of the consequences of United States interest; and its leaders have been able to watch the operation of that interest in the political events occurring between the fall of the Lescot government and the present. 175 648 433 114 744 20 871 489 175 648 701 643 669 625

In the view of one acute observer, President Duvalier, in order to consolidate his power, had to cope with three other loci of political strength in addition to the army and the United States ambassador. The business community, located for the most part in Port-au-Prince, had strongly supported Déjoie's candidacy during the interregnum; its leaders were mainly members of the elite, and many had strong 175 643 66

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175 business and personal ties with North Americans and other foreign
643 groups. Among the families of these leaders are Swiss, German, and
66 French nationals, and some Syrians and Lebanese who hold United
795 States citizenship. The business community had played a part in the downfall of the Magloire regime, and business strikes were a typical political instrument for putting pressure on presidential incumbents. In addition, the clergy—particularly the Catholic clergy—exerted political influence. Duvalier, while well aware of this, also attended to the importance of vodoun* in Haiti, and to the influence wielded by its cult leaders, particularly in the countryside and among the urban poor. Finally, the President understood the strength of groups such as the university students, the small but politically aware labor unions, and certain professional associations, whose political strength could be felt particularly in times of crisis. The Duvalier regime has displayed intelligence as well as ruthlessness in dealing with these diverse centers of political strength and potential opposition.

175 The official request for a United States Marine Corps mission to
● 648 "train" the Haitian Army was a brilliant political move by Duvalier,
701 apparently designed to serve several objectives simultaneously. It is
702 entirely correct that the renewed presence of the Marines in Haiti
66 created considerable rancor in some circles, but it also strengthened Duvalier's hand in his dealings with all sources of internal opposition. To some extent it apparently reassured the business community; and it turned out to have reduced, rather than to have increased, the maneuverability of the United States in developing a "corrective" or "restraining" policy toward the Duvalier regime. Perhaps most important, it helped Duvalier in his plan to build a praetorian guard to counterbalance the power of the army itself.

625 The *tonton macoute*—a Creole epithet for the bogeyman—is an extremely interesting variation on the security police theme. Its members wear no official uniform (though blue denim pants and felt hats
[701] are affected). Members of the "TTM" carry out acts of terrorism against groups and individuals and have seriously weakened the po-
[652] licing function and prestige of the regular army. Some calculations put the operating costs of the TTM as high as one third of the governmental budget. Though small groups of the TTM are distributed

* Or, as it is more commonly called, "voodoo." Creole words employed in this introduction are transcribed in Laubach orthography (see Hall, 1953). It was not possible to extend this transcription to the original Leyburn text, where a "Gallic" orthography is followed.

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643 At the same time, the President has expressed his favorable interest
771 in vodoun and is said to practice it; this statement, however, has
795 overtones of malevolence that are not appropriate. Vodoun is a religion, though it lacks a centralized priestly hierarchy or administrative organization. Outside the elite, Catholicism in Haiti has always been colored by vodoun elements. The Haitian people as a whole invest no effort in distinguishing what is "really Catholic" from what is not, in their religious practices; in this regard Haitian countrymen do not really differ from folk practitioners of Catholicism anywhere. By its misreading of the piety of the Haitian masses, and its unceasing hostility to vodoun—quite different from the church policy in the so-called "Indian countries" of Latin America—the Church had failed to secure its influence over the Haitian people. In contrast, Duvalier's understanding of Haitian religious sociology has proved superior, and is consistent with the *authentique* ideology of the 1940s, though doubtless much more extreme in its implications.

642 Finally, the Duvalier regime has invaded such institutions as the
871 National University and the trade unions, and maintains close sur-
467 veillance over any individuals it regards as politically suspicious. Loy-
204 alty oaths are required at the university; a public press no longer ex-
661 ists; the unions, never strong, are now entirely powerless. But it should be clear from this description of the Duvalier regime that repression is not the key to Duvalier power so much as the means for perpetuating that power under Haitian conditions. The key to Du-
642 valier power is to be found instead in the structure of Haitian society,
•648 in the social history of the past two decades, and in the policy of the United States, weakened by its inescapable preference for "stability" over "radicalism." In his own way, President Duvalier is as radical as he can be; but he is no Castro. It is now an open secret that Haiti's support for sanctions against Cuba approved at Punta del Este was matched by economic concessions from the United States; that the Marines, knowingly or not, immobilized anti-Duvalier opposition in a period when its supporters could be picked off, driven into exile, or jailed; that the official Duvalier offer of Môle St. Nicholas to the United States as a substitute for Guantánamo, though irrelevant, was warmly reassuring to some North American political thinkers; and that Duvalier, while he employs considerable "blackmail diplomacy" in his dealings with the United States and is now out of favor, is still considered "reliable" in that most important respect.

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Nor is it sufficient to label *Duvalierisme* "pathological" or "paranoid." The roots of this ideology are to be found in Haiti, not elsewhere; its supporters are the product of Haitian times and ideas; and their social identity, while not entirely clear, would probably pose few enigmas if enough data were available.* In order to make clear these assertions, however, it is necessary to look again at Haitian society, the Haitian society Leyburn has described so well, and to reexamine the terms that have been used by him and by others to describe it.

Though the societies of the Caribbean Sea differ significantly from each other, many of them share certain general historical experiences. Unlike the colonial areas of the Old World, these islands were largely populated from abroad, and in this regard they resemble the Atlantic lowland areas of mainland America. However, the colonial history of the islands meant that they would long remain the instruments of policy formulated in foreign capitals. Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and other islands were, during most of their postconquest history, the outposts of far-flung colonial empires, and the design of their societies was conditioned by this dependence and subjugation. As "plantation islands," their agriculture, demography, mode of settlement, and social structure were attuned to metropolitan needs and objectives. Unlike most of Africa and Asia, the Antilles lost their native populations almost entirely, owing to enslavement, overwork, disease, and war, early in the era of conquest and settlement. There remained the vestiges of native traditions, assimilated into the new, growing cultures of the postconquest period. The Indians themselves, wherever they were able to survive, were also assimilated through interbreeding with Old World migrants.

The newcomers came from Europe, Africa, and Asia, bringing with them what they could of their ancestral traditions, but never able to transfer their social heritages as intact bodies of belief and behavior. Hence the cultures of the new Caribbean societies were built up out of elements originating in many different places, while their social forms took shape under conditions of colonial control. The peoples of the islands were able to maintain some continuities with

* One interpreter of the Haitian political scene (Bastien, 1960:145–48) has suggested that Leyburn's analysis of Haitian society as a "two-caste" system greatly influenced local political thinking by strengthening one idea: "the black intellectual must regain political power for the benefit of the country's majority."

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342 322 178 unchanged from an earlier era. The prevailing quality of Haitian rural and craft industry, then, is one of great stability and conservatism.

493 463 At the same time, of course, major events since the revolution have left their imprint on this part of life. Hardly a roadside village in Haiti today, for instance, lacks an automobile mechanic, even though these men are mostly self-educated and work with hardly any tools. Their skills became part of Haitian culture in this century and are often of a simple order no longer typical of more developed areas. Tire 383 177 tubes, for instance, are "vulcanized" by the use of an ingenious device made from a board and an old piston, kerosene providing the heat to make the seal; this technique, along with the sewing of damaged truck tires, was almost certainly introduced and diffused by the United States Marines.

47 31 178 But these quaint additions do not alter the fact that shop and factory industry are nearly absent, and extractive industry virtually nonexistent. Haiti's one alumina extraction enterprise, foreign-owned, is now shut down. There is but one flour mill, and that is foreign-[258] owned as well. One or two textile mills and sugar factories, estab-[339] lished with foreign capital, still function, as do a modern cement factory and a few other small plants established in the 1950s. These [464] industries, scanty as they are, were of great importance to Haiti, since they represented substantial investments, held out the promise of reduced dependence on imports in significant categories, and contributed to the beginnings of an industrial proletariat. However, they involved only a tiny fraction of the national labor force, and they have not proved entirely successful. As a result, Haiti lacks any reserve of labor acquainted with modern industry, even though many people, both urban and rural, work at tasks that might be considered more industrial than agricultural.

- 47 433 - 178 171 Most important for the present discussion, the minor developments in Haitian industry have not led to an expanded market and have not resulted in any firm increase in productivity. Industrial growth, in the sense in which it has occurred in countries such as those of Western Europe—or for that matter in Mexico or Argentina—is entirely lacking. The absence of such growth is perhaps especially significant if Haiti be compared with a neighbor such as Jamaica or Puerto Rico. [648] These countries, one now independent, the other a North American dependency—have both gained real increments from the investment activities of outsiders,

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activities of outsiders; Haiti has experienced few such increments, even as a result of the United States occupation. Its citizens cannot readily migrate anywhere; its educational system cannot prepare its people adequately for the modern world; its civil service has proved neither stable nor reliable; its labor force has limited experience with the factory system; and even two decades of active North American intervention did nothing to remake the economic and political structure of the nation. In more recent years, some of the "development projects" foisted on the people of a sovereign Haiti by foreigners working with Haitian officials would not have been tolerated by the colonial representatives of any foreign power obligated to report its activities before the United Nations Trusteeship Council. In view of these things, one is tempted to claim that Haiti has suffered from all the disadvantages of political sovereignty while enjoying none of its advantages.

Unlike those colonial dependencies that were able, over time, to develop internal political ideologies through which to face the pressures imposed by the colonial powers, Haiti was tested by hardly any challenge but its own lack of development. In this sense only can it be said that the freedom Haiti had won in an incredible revolution against powerful enemies came to be a punishment. The struggle brought the Haitian people justified admiration in many quarters, but its price has been isolation and virtual abandonment.

It was the United States occupation that made a lie of Haitian sovereignty, and even of the invincibility of its people. The Haitian "bandits," variously estimated to have numbered from 2,000 to 6,000, who died in what is probably best described as a war of resistance against the North Americans, were barely able to maintain even a brief local conflict against several well-armed companies of United States Marines. Yet that occupation gave Haiti little in return for its denial of the claim of national sovereignty. The public works and reform programs instituted by the United States, designed to give the country roads, schools, hospitals, a disciplined army, a "legitimate" government, and a schooled civil service, hardly endured longer than the occupation itself, since nothing had been done to transform the social and economic base of the society. Within a decade of the North American withdrawal, the gleaming superstructure the occupation created had begun to decay. The major effect of North Amer-

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The major effect of the North

648 American tenure seems to have been to make possible a much more telling
642 centralism in political control than had been operative in Haiti at any time since the fall of the Christophe regime; and the consequences of this change are still being felt.

241 Small-scale rural cultivators are famous for their tendency to con-
565 fine their consumption to culturally conventionalized levels—that is,
433 to live as their predecessors lived before them. Though they are in-
178 volved in commercial spheres larger than the communities in which
185 they live, they seek to limit that involvement and to maintain their
511 cash expenditures at a low level. It is in this sense that Haiti might be
472 called a "quasi-capitalistic" society. To put it another way, yeomen of this sort do not seek to change or to expand their production—rather, they aim to conserve a way of life set by tradition. The ideology of resistance to social and cultural change is one of the major obstacles to development; but it would be rash to damn such an ideology without reflection. In Haiti, for instance, there has long been pressure upon the rural masses to expand their production of coffee, the major export crop. However, this pressure has not been accompanied by any serious grass-roots attempt to improve coffee production or to offer genuine incentives to the cultivators. The yeomanry has no assurance at all that any expansion of effort will lead to gains *for them*; and they are little prepared to invest such effort merely because they are told that it will be good for Haiti. In fact, it is likely
[439] that the production of subsistence crops has expanded in recent years at the cost of coffee production, for the yeoman knows that he can at least be sure of eating and of selling locally such crops as maize, sorghum, and yams, regardless of what may happen in Port-au-Prince or to the world coffee market. This view, combined with the yeoman's painfully acquired distrust of those who prate at length concerning his welfare, has meant a virtual stagnation of agricultural export production, even though the whole land quite literally depends on this production in order to progress.

241 The effect of this rural resistance is to create an apparent very sharp
565 difference in goals between countryman and bureaucrat. It is per-
433 fectly understandable that the countryman should fail to see the con-
185 nection between heightened coffee production and a higher level of public welfare and social services. His experiences hardly persuade him that it is his surplus-producing capacity that underlies the kind and quality of public institutions with which the state provides him.

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241 Nor does his effort in producing more and better cash crops translate
565 itself directly into higher consumption, since he has no say in setting
185 the price for his coffee. Under the circumstances, it is naïve to sup-
433 pose that "education" alone can make the yeoman's role in economic or political development a more active one. The disposition to maintain a habitual level of consumption, rather than to believe that an increase in productivity will result in expanding services or improved consumption, is difficult to change; and the quasi-capitalistic quality of Haitian agricultural production is merely one way of saying as much. Economic change, in this sense, has to depend partly on changes in attitudes toward production. Until an agricultural extension service worthy of the name is able to make a massive attack on the shortcomings of yeoman cultivation in Haiti, this conservatism will perpetuate itself. And agricultural extension will not be able to wage this battle for change—even when its services become adequate in quality and quantity—unless the promises of greater economic rewards or of improved social services for the rural masses are occasionally honored.

47 The term "quasi-capitalistic" has much less force, of course, when
433 applied to urban enterprise. But there, too, economic activity has a
565 curiously static quality when compared to enterprise in more devel-
178 oped countries. The Port-au-Prince capitalist is famous for "playing it safe." Import–export trade, tourist hotels, guided tours, gas stations, and urban slum real estate are more rewarding spheres of investment than shops or commercial farms. A small but economically important Syrian–Lebanese–Italian group limits its local investment accordingly, as do most of those "native" Haitians who carry on their businesses in the towns and cities. Elite families consist largely of siblings who interlock their economic activities with government, the military, agricultural processing and exporting, consumer-goods importing, tourist-connected services, and the professions. A slum block, a post in the ministry of tourism, a colonelcy, or a tour agency, can be a lucrative investment; few indeed are the Haitians prepared to take the risks needed to develop highly productive farms, to produce improved strains of poultry, or to introduce industrial skills through a modern machine shop. And the reasons for this lack of verve and daring are easy to find. Governmental instability, excessive
[648] taxation, lack of access to markets, and the absence of roads, communication, small-scale credit facilities, and the like mean that special

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intrepidity in enterprise is required. It is striking that those foreign captains of industry—mainly from the United States—who invest in Haiti, expect (and often get) governmental guarantees of a sort they could not dream of in their own countries; in this regard, they merely conform to Haitian expectations.

Haiti's problems, then, are not simply those that face any less developed country, vast though such problems may be. Nor is it intelligent to lay Haiti's problems at the feet of the nation's present rulers. The structure of the national economy has not changed significantly during the past twenty-five years—except that boom years could provide a temporary aura of prosperity—regardless of the philosophy or popularity of the regime in power. If nothing else, the present nadir of Haiti's fortunes demonstrates that United States aid averaging twelve and a half million dollars yearly over more than a decade has produced no enduring improvements of any kind. It may further demonstrate that, shockingly poor as the country is, it emphatically does not depend on such aid. As of 1964, the regime in power was operating on a monthly budget of $1,800,000, only $400,000 of which went for purposes other than salaries. In other words, the ministries do little more than perpetuate themselves unchanged. The yeomanry, living near subsistence level, continues to produce most of what it needs, while restricting its cash expenditures even more severely than in the past. The risks—in terms, say, of public health—of running a society under these circumstances are great; but there is no reason to suppose that regimes of the Haitian sort will be destroyed or improved by a show of popular unrest originating in the countryside. Difficult as life is for the Haitian countryman, and no people in Latin America lives more poorly, the real pinch is probably being experienced more acutely among the city folk than among their rural fellow citizens. It matters politically, therefore, who these city folk are and what they do.

To begin with, there has been a significant loss of professional people, almost all of whom were urban, through migration and exile, especially since 1958. Haitian doctors, dentists, and other professionals are widely scattered today, both in the developed and the less developed countries of the world. Former army officers, journalists, diplomats, businessmen, and academicians have fled political repression, perhaps with the hope of eventually returning to their own country.

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about Haitian society.* It does not, however, take note of the remarkable failure of foreign experts to make any adequate assessment of the potentialities of that society, or of its most-needed changes. Some of the problems of development, remarked on by Leyburn in 1941, have never even been explored adequately: the advisability of primary education in Creole; the need for an effective agricultural extension; the relationship of nutrition to work habits; and the like. Even basic sociological studies of a sort that could provide data for planned change are lacking—"of the process of socialization . . . of the motivating forces, the dominant wishes, the attitudes and social values of the masses . . . of social mobility" (pp. 308–09). Foreign-inspired development projects have been, for the most part, crash projects, designed to satisfy Haitian political goals, rather than economic or social goals. A productive relationship between foreign development agency representatives and government officials has never been achieved, nor have the failures ever been subjected to analysis or reflection. Emphasis has been put on large-scale schemes, rather than on more modest, long-term programs which would require actual cooperation with the rural masses on the local level (cf. Erasmus, 1952; Friedmann, 1955; De Young, 1958). Many—probably most—foreign planners who have worked in Haiti have never even bothered to learn the national language, let alone the fundamentals of the culture of the Haitian people.

In these terms, it is not enough merely to bemoan the feeble institutional structure of Haiti. Some attention, at least, should be given to the striking incapacity of outsiders to deal with that structure creatively. Leyburn's book exacts our respect precisely because its author, unlike most foreign visitors, makes plain that he takes Haiti, and the needs of the Haitian people, seriously.

* Some observers are less pessimistic than the writer. The sons of the elite, many of them educated abroad, elements of a Social Christian progressive movement, and possibly a few "Castro-left" radicals, may eventually coalesce into a successful opposition, it has been argued. The writer, however, remains unconvinced. Structural changes of the sort wrought by the Castro regime in Cuba were predicated on the existence of mass political opposition to Batista-type governments, and on the existence of industrial and rural proletarian sectors organized into large-scale movements. These "preconditions," as I see them, are entirely lacking in Haiti of today.

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FOREWORD

The United States, embarked upon a policy of good neighborliness toward the other countries of the Western Hemisphere, is beginning to improve its acquaintance with the republics to the south. Most of its efforts at present are directed toward an understanding of the large and important powers, such as Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina, which, because of their size and resources, are potentially our greatest allies—or, if we fail in our policies, our sources of greatest danger. There are, however, twenty republics to the south of us, many of them small. A truly good neighbor does not ignore near-by families who are lacking in wealth, even those who are known to differ among themselves. 648 171

Of the twenty Latin-American republics, the second smallest is Haiti. The United States was only twenty years old when the people of this little country (which, for all its diminutive size, had been France's wealthiest colony of the eighteenth century) fought their own war of independence, and in 1804 founded the second free state in the hemisphere. Haiti has many claims upon the attention of the United States: its war against France in 1802–3 was at least a contributing factor in Napoleon's willingness to sell Louisiana to this country; it was the first independent Negro state in the modern world; its foreign policy has long been intertwined with our own; finally, the nineteen-year American Occupation of the country has brought us into an even closer relationship with Haiti than independent factors could produce. 721 648 642

When the country was young there was a spate of books trying to answer the question whether a nation ruled by blacks could long endure. In more recent years, works on the Antillean republic have generally dealt with single phases of its life, as for example its political relations with the United States, or its "Voodoo" practices. There is, however, no connected story of the growth of its social institutions out of the backgrounds of slavery and French colonial life, or of the slow shaping of these institutions through the nineteenth century. It is this growth which the present volume undertakes to describe. Political history has been introduced only so far as necessary to provide the convenient pegs upon which most of us are accus- 114 121

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565 *caste* is the only word to describe the effective separation of aristocrats from the masses. The caste system is a vivid fact, for it regulates a person's profession, speech, religion, marriage, family life, politics, clothes, social mobility—in short, his whole life from cradle to grave.

175 Haiti won its freedom from the France of Napoleon in 1804, becoming thus the second independent state in the Western Hemi-
648 sphere. It had been during the eighteenth century France's most prosperous colony, its wealth depending upon slavery and the planta-
565 tion system. With the whites driven out, social distinctions which
642 actually had their roots in colonial times began immediately to develop among the people, all of whom had some proportion of African blood in their veins. During the course of the next century, the criteria for aristocracy slowly assumed recognizable form, so that now even the most casual observer is aware that Haiti cannot by any stretch of the imagination be called a democratic country, with an open class system. The two castes are the élite and the masses. They are as different as day from night, as nobleman from peasant; and they are as separate as oil and water. The élite are generally reckoned
[162] to compose at the outside not more than three per cent of the population.

565 The élite do not work with their hands. This is the cardinal rule of Haitian society. Upon it rests the whole economic structure of the
463 country, and to this the course of national history has led. All the
[461] professions, most governmental and military offices, and the large business enterprises are effectively closed to young men of the masses. Indeed, so completely accepted are caste rules, so practically difficult would it be for peasant youths to acquire the money and education necessary for such careers, that at birth a boy's future place in economic life is, within narrow limits, already predetermined. For the élite, law is the most popular of the professions, partly because it is the quickest avenue of approach to high political office; government, in turn, is the only career which can make a man rich within a few years. Next in popularity to law comes medicine. Teaching is not lucrative enough to attract many promising youths, and the priests of the Roman Catholic Church are almost all white Frenchmen.[2]

793 2. An effort was once made by the Catholic Church to train native Haitian priests,
797 but the peasants would have none of them after they were ordained. They drove them out, saying, "Go away! How do you expect God to listen to you? You are not white; you don't know anything." And the Haitian priests had to be transferred as missionaries to Africa.

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II

FRENCH COLONIAL ORIGINS

175 648 FRANCE'S wealthiest colony in 1791 was, and had been for decades, the small territory of Saint-Domingue, as Haiti was known at that time. It had belonged to France for less than a century. French freebooters and buccaneers of the seventeenth century actually presented the colony to their mother country, for these sea rovers, harrying the Spanish Main, used as a base for their predatory raids the small island of Tortuga (La Tortue, The Turtle) off the northern coast of Haiti. They often came over to the western part of the large Spanish island of Santo Domingo (Haiti), then almost deserted, to shoot wild cattle for food; then they would hasten back to Tortuga for safety. At first Tortuga had been shared by English, Dutch, and French buccaneers, but gradually the French came to outnumber the others, so that when the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697 concluded the War of the Grand Alliance, France claimed and Spain ceded the western third of the island of Santo Domingo. The English and Dutch were meanwhile picking up other Caribbean fragments of the decaying Spanish Empire.

175 563 24 The early years of this new French colony were unimpressive, the majority of its residents being former buccaneers, who could hardly have regarded agricultural life as other than dull, and who certainly did not make successful farmers. Only when new immigrants from France in the seventeen-twenties demonstrated that steady profits could be made by raising indigo, sugar, coffee, and cocoa, all of which flourished in the region, did the era of prosperity begin. [464] [439] Plantations were soon staked out all over Saint-Domingue. The great problem was to find adequate labor for the fields. Whoever had crops to sell was sure of a ready market, but crops would not grow 175 24 567 without cultivation. Since there were no natives in Saint-Domingue for the French planters to exploit, the colonizers chose the other favorite alternative of the eighteenth century: Negro slavery. In the 1730's Saint-Domingue began to compete with England's North American colonies for the cargo of the steady stream of slave ships from Africa. There is no indication that the supply of blacks ever

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175 equaled the demand for them; in 1791 the census listed half a million
24 then living, but no writer seems to have even a vague idea of how
567 many millions were imported during the sixty years of the colony's heyday.

Production, particularly of sugar and coffee, steadily increased
175 until the tiny colony ranked among the wealthiest regions of the
245 world. The Spanish Indies were declining, so that Saint-Domingue
249 alone far outranked them all combined between 1766 and 1791.
433 Splendid roads were built, extensive irrigation projects developed,
511 and stately mansions erected. Life moved along with ceremony and
565 display—for the planters; attended by their black lackeys, the white French masters entertained royally or were driven like lords in their coaches to make formal visits to neighbors. Many of these well-to-do colonials spent half their time in Paris, ostentatiously spending their riches. To be "wealthy as a Creole" came to be a common expression in France.[1] Perhaps nowhere in the Americas was existence at once so delightful and so ornamental as it was for the wealthy planters among the 36,000 whites of Saint-Domingue in 1791.

For the mother country, too, this small bit of tropical land was
175 profitable during the latter days of Bourbon royalty. Neither Mar-
439 tinique nor Guadeloupe could compare with it in value. In 1789
505 nearly two thirds of the foreign commercial interests of France
● 648 centred in Saint-Domingue; its combined exports and imports were valued at more than $140,000,000; its sugar, coffee, indigo, and cotton supplied the home market and employed in prosperous years more than 700 ocean-going vessels, with as many as 80,000 seamen.[2]

Where wealth exists, social distinctions generally develop. In
175 Saint-Domingue the evolving class system produced such discord
565 that sparks from the French Revolution eventually set off an explo-
669 sion in the colony. Casual surveys of Haitian history generally record that in 1791 the slaves revolted, and that out of this insurrection grew the war of independence. This is true; but it was not the resentment of slaves against their masters which caused the final explosion; the
175 slaves were tinder used by others to keep the conflagration burning.
565 Negro slaves, of course, did not figure in the "class" system; they
[567] were below the classes of colonial society. The class system, properly

[101] 1. The word "Creole" means only "colonial born"; there is no connotation of race mixture in the term.

2. Pamphile de Lacroix, *Mémoires*, II, 277.

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175 speaking, consisted of the three groups known as *grands blancs, petits*
565 *blancs*, and *gens de couleur*.[3] Although no precise English term will translate either of the first two categories, the former embraced the important whites—owners of large plantations, wealthy merchants, and high officials of the state; the latter designated all other whites of the colony—shopkeepers, artisans, small planters with only a few slaves, little people busily engaged in social climbing, and shiftless whites lazily slipping downhill. The 28,000 gens de couleur included all free persons who had African blood in their veins.

It is highly probable that without this third group there would have been no violent outbreak in 1791, no achievement of final independence in 1804, and no such caste system as exists in Haiti at the present time.

175 That there were free people of color in the colony was due to a
567 code of laws emanating from Louis XIV, who died in 1715, years
641 before Saint-Domingue had shown any signs of becoming prosper-
648 ous. In 1685 the Grand Monarch had issued a Code Noir to cover all colonial dealings with Negro slaves. Article 59 specified that when a slave secured his liberty, either by cash purchase or by gift of his white master or parent, he was to be regarded as a full French citizen. He might own land, dispose of his wealth as he pleased, bear testimony in legal cases (even against whites), marry as he pleased, vote, bear arms, travel where he wished, embrace any career, own slaves or free them. To Louis and his ministers such provisions probably did not seem particularly magnanimous, for race prejudice was not a characteristic of the French, and it could hardly have been supposed that enough slaves would ever be freed to create much of a problem.

175 In the course of the next hundred years, however, many persons of
563 color in the colony achieved their freedom, and with it French citi-
641 zenship. The greatest number had been granted their liberty because they were the children of white masters by Negro mothers—for race mixture is always a concomitant of white ownership of black slaves.
[585] Concubinage was so regularly practiced in Saint-Domingue that it was considered quite normal. If many of the first freedmen were
563 mulattoes (half-white, half-Negro), by 1791 their descendants might
175 be quadroons, octoroons, or near-whites, for consciousness of skin

3. The gens de couleur were also often called *affranchis*, freedmen, a term which strictly would be inaccurate as applied to a free colored person of the second or third generation.

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lishing their freedom from the taint of any black admixture. Having entered white society by such means, and further diluted their Negro blood by judicious marriages, these social climbers frequently became the most pitiless masters of slaves in the colony, the most rigid sticklers for a color line, ruthless enemies of recent freedmen and of those who acknowledged the dark strain in their blood; and having now "passed over" as whites, they snubbed the petits blancs. 175 565 829 [556]

The rising tide of color prejudice became apparent in the passage of discriminatory laws. The first of any importance was enacted by the representative Council of the colony, sitting at the capital, Cap Français, in 1758. It prohibited all colored people, except police and militiamen, from carrying swords, sabres, or other side arms—thus denying them one of the outward marks of gentlemen. Four years later the prohibition was extended to the bearing of all firearms, except in service, while in 1767 the sale of munitions to colored persons was forbidden unless ordered by a white officer. Obviously the instigators of prejudice had by this time won a number of ruling grands blancs to the notion that the presence of numerous people of color might constitute a menace to the physical safety of the whites. 175 671 565

Louis XV, the reigning monarch, took no steps to enforce the liberal provisions of the Code Noir of his grandfather; on the contrary, he seems to have favored the passage of discriminatory laws. He made it difficult for colored planters to travel freely in France. The colonial perpetrators of indignities to the gens de couleur, seeing the success of their first efforts, began to propose increasingly severe restrictions, and were gratified by Louis XV's official "Instructions to Administrators" (1771), which stressed the necessity of maintaining a line between the two races which colored people and their descendants might never cross. 175 648 563 671

For the next two decades the affranchi had to face openly avowed discrimination. One by one his rights in the Code were abrogated. He might not fill any responsible office either in the courts or the militia, for that would elevate him above white persons. Certain careers, such as goldsmithing, were closed to him, because they brought wealth; others, notably medicine and the apothecary's art, were forbidden on the ground that whites might be poisoned;[8] law and religion were barred to him because of their public and honorific 175 565 563 671

8. It was a common belief in slave colonies that all persons with Negro blood had some "instinctive" knowledge of the science and art of poisoning. [829]

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nature.[9] Colored women were forbidden in 1768 to marry white men. In 1779 began a series of laws designed to humiliate the colored person in public: his clothes must be of a different material and cut from the white person's; he must be indoors by nine o'clock in the evening; he might not sit in the same section of churches and theatres with whites.[10]

Just at the moment when prejudice and hatred seem to have reached their most menacing proportions, when even moderate white planters began to feel that such passions had been aroused among both white and colored folk that only brutal severity could hold them in check, the Revolution began in France. Both sides in the colony hoped to make use of it. The whites saw in the mother country's confusion an opportunity to win self-government for the colony—with themselves, of course, as the unrammeled rulers. The gens de couleur, taking to heart the noble Declaration of the Rights of Man, hoped to regain their full rights as French citizens, guaranteed to them in Louis XIV's Code, but now in abeyance.

During the fateful years 1788 to 1793 colonial affairs were intertwined with developments in France. Men and messages went back and forth between Cap Français and Paris, following the startling announcement that after a lapse of 150 years the States-General would be convoked in May, 1789. At a meeting of the colonial assembly in September, 1788, called to nominate delegates, the group of grands blancs who controlled colonial affairs decided on two daring steps, which later proved to be blunders: first, they named thirty-seven deputies to represent Saint-Domingue; second, they drew up a *Cahier des Doléances*—a list of grievances whose sole palliation, it was implied, would be the granting of permission to the white planters to govern the colony without interference from France. These two decisions, be it said, were not unanimously approved in the assembly at Cap Français; cautious minds warned against pretentious demands which might do nothing more than attract concentrated attention to the state of affairs in Saint-Domingue: it might be wiser, they argued, to let sleeping dogs lie, and ignore the convocation of the States-General. The cautious were outvoted.

9. A colored lawyer might win a case against a white man; a colored priest might have to hear the confession of a white woman.

10. When certain mulattoes arrived at church in Cap Français wearing clothes of the same texture as the whites', crowdlike tore the garments from the backs of male and female alike, leaving them "with no other veil than their shame."

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At Paris the following May, therefore, the thirty-seven delegates presented themselves. Only six were admitted as deputies. And the colonial skeptics proved correct in their apprehensions: revolutionary France soon became very much interested in the state of affairs in Saint-Domingue. 175 648

There had recently been formed in Paris a humanitarian group, considered at the time to be ultra-radical, whose announced purpose was the complete abolition of Negro slavery in all French possessions. Following the principle of demanding much in order to gain something, these *Amis des Noirs* concentrated their most serious efforts on regaining for colored colonial freedmen their former political rights. The recently promulgated "Rights of Man" made it very difficult for the French National Assembly[11] to deny the proposal of the Amis;[12] moreover, at this juncture the colored landlords of Saint-Domingue sent to Paris an offer to make the new French Republic a free gift of one fifth of their wealth on condition of being no longer subject to the creole tyranny of caste. 175 648 567 648

The strategical blunder of the self-assertive white planters having now become entirely apparent to their deputies in Paris, these left no stone unturned to thwart the objective of the Amis des Noirs. By indefatigable manoeuvring they at least partially succeeded, for the National Assembly passed an ambiguous resolution which, while apparently granting political rights to colored people, nevertheless left the interpretation of the grant to already existing colonial authorities. 175 642 648

In the colony complete confusion reigned when news of the resolution was received. Colored people everywhere joyfully demanded their rights, only to be indignantly refused. The whites, with no intention of yielding an inch, were nevertheless undecided as to a proper course of action to pursue: one group wished to announce the colony's immediate independence from France, offering the familiar argument that only white planters knew how to manage the colony's peculiar affairs; the other group still cautiously counseled inaction and waiting for the storm to blow over. A young mulatto, Ogé, educated in France and encouraged by the Amis des

11. The National Assembly had succeeded the States-General.

12. The Assembly was finding "liberté, égalité, fraternité" an uncomfortable a motto to live up to as Americans were finding their own declaration, in 1776, of belief in the "self-evident" proposition that all men are created free and equal.

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Noirs, having returned to Saint-Domingue to campaign for the political rights of his group, led with his friend Chavanne a demonstration at Cap Français. The white authorities seized and executed them with notable brutality.

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This occurred in March, 1791. In May came the news that the National Assembly in France had finally yielded to pressure, and had decreed that men of mixed blood born of free parents should be admitted to representation in colonial assemblies. The chagrin and anger of the whites at this decree was so violent that the governor-general of Saint-Domingue immediately suspended its operation.

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The issue was now clearly drawn: free colored men knew that they would never secure their rights except by force. But before they could bring to maturity their plan of action, suddenly the calculations of both parties were completely upset. The Negro slaves revolted.

If ever slaves had reason to rebel, the Negroes of Saint-Domingue did. The same harshness which the whites showed to free colored people marked the treatment of black slaves; and as racial antagonism deepened, white masters seemed to become utterly heartless in their treatment of the inarticulate blacks. Allowing for the exceptions which accompany most generalizations, it is clear from the record that the planters were, in the main, callous, ruthless, some of them even fiendish, in their treatment of slaves. Flogging a man to death was not uncommon; certain slaves were buried alive; pregnant women were forced to work so hard that miscarriage resulted. Some of the punishments meted out were merely brutal; others were torture; and some were sadistic, the masters relishing the pain they were causing. A certain slave in the North was nailed by his hands to a wall, and then, after standing all day in the burning sun, was made to eat his own amputated ears. A woman planter had the tongues of all her slaves cut out; another woman caused the starvation of her maid by having a gag fixed around the child's head.[13] Visitors to the colony in the 1780's often commented on the general want of self-control on the part of the planters—their violent gusts of anger and passionate outbreaks over trifles; and the victims of these outbursts

13. An officer of the court of the Negro king Christophe later wrote in two volumes a gruesome account of the treatment of slaves by French masters in the latter days of the colony. Although certainly exaggerated, it probably contains a measure of truth. See Baron de Vastey, *Réflexions politiques sur les noirs et les blancs* (Sans Souci, 1817); and *Essai sur les causes de la révolution et des guerres civiles d'Haïti* (Sans Souci, 1819).

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were the slaves. Most of the blacks accordingly needed only leadership to arouse them and direct their vengeance. 175

Very little of the background of the insurrection is known. The certain facts are these: on the night of August 14, 1791, at a pretended Vodun ceremony in the woods of the Turpin plantation, during a violent storm, several wily and powerful slaves laid plans for a general uprising. Their intentions were communicated, apparently by drum signals, to neighboring plantations. Six days later the attack began, the blacks in that section of the North indiscriminately slaughtering every white man, woman, and child on whom they could lay their hands. From this centre the massacre spread, accompanied by general arson, until practically every plantation in the fertile northern plain was a shambles. The whites who had escaped destruction cowered in the capital city. 567 669

The insurrection of 1791 returned measure for measure to the planters for their previous cruelties. Whether one reads accounts written by Haitian patriots or by white apologists, the story is the same: the ferocities on both sides were almost incredible. Blacks gutted children and raped women, whites broke captured Negroes on the wheel, poured boiling oil in their ears, and flayed them alive. The Reign of Terror in France was decorous by comparison. The pent-up hatred of decades was working itself out.

Against half a million riotous blacks the handful of whites had no chance. All who could leave the country fled precipitately. The gens de couleur, on the contrary, although at first alarmed, soon discovered that the revolting slaves were inclined to be friendly to them. They accordingly tried to turn the insurrection to their own purpose, to seize the rule of the colony now being depopulated of whites. France, herself in turmoil, sent over various commissioners whose thankless duty it was to try to restore order; but they were incompetent, often worked at odds with each other, and sometimes engaged in actual treachery. Matters were, if anything, complicated by their ministrations. 175 669 [648]

In addition, Spain and England, always ready to harass the French, sent troops into Saint-Domingue on the pretext of trying to put down the slave insurrection lest it spread to their neighboring colonies of Santo Domingo and Jamaica. The French general in the colony, Laveaux, would shortly have been defeated if help had not come from two natives, one a well-to-do mulatto, the other a black [648]

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175 669 ex-slave, each of whom aroused his own group to fight off the invading Spaniards and English.

These two men emerging from the maelstrom were the cultured colored general, Rigaud, and the powerful Negro, Toussaint. United in purpose in 1793, they soon began to oppose each other. Their dissent foreshadowed the rift which was permanently to divide free Haiti.

175 159 669 Rigaud, born at Les Cayes in 1761,[14] had been brought up in Bordeaux, France, where he was taught the trade of a goldsmith. Like many other colored colonial youths, he went briefly to Georgia to fight on the side of the Americans in their revolution against England. Gifted with extraordinary military talent, he rose to prominence in Saint-Domingue following the slave insurrection, and played a major part in expelling the British from the colony. He was fiery, intellectual, and brilliant, but lacking in self-control and political subtlety, which put him at a disadvantage with Toussaint. Rigaud's admirers—almost the whole body of free colored people—included all the influential persons in the colony once the whites had been cowed or driven out; the South was devoted to him body and soul, and he had numerous partisans in the provinces of the North and West. But Toussaint was the idol of the half-million blacks.

Born a slave, Toussaint was fortunate in having a kindly master who permitted him the sort of work which gave him leisure for reading. He studied eagerly, devouring all accounts he could find of the military exploits of Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar. Apparently he took no part in the slave uprising; on the contrary, he helped his master escape to the United States and later regularly provided him with money. Then he himself went to the Spanish part of the island, where he made a military reputation in the Spanish colonial army. When General Laveaux sought his aid against the invaders of harassed Saint-Domingue, the ex-slave accepted his overtures. Detractors of Toussaint call him a "cunning hypocrite" for joining and then deserting the Spaniards, and for accepting high rank under a French general whom he was even then (so it is asserted) planning to supersede. His decision to return to Saint-Domingue was certainly crucial, for it began his meteoric ascent to power.

[648] Accompanied by the black troops he had captained in the Spanish

[632] 364 14. Les Cayes, the third largest town in modern Haiti, was even in colonial times an important seaport. It is located on the south-western peninsula.

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colony, he fought engagements with several Spanish detachments on the way back to Saint-Domingue, and soon achieved the return to France of all the territory Spain had recently won from her. Seeing that his ineffectively trained black troops were as yet no match for the disciplined British, he temporarily withdrew from public sight in order to build his army into a coördinated, smoothly functioning machine. Then he not only defeated the British, but forced their complete withdrawal from the island. He freed General Laveaux, whom they had imprisoned in Cap Français, thereby putting his own commanding officer under personal obligation to him. By 1796 Toussaint was the undisputed hero of his soldiers and, through their praise, of the mass of black ex-slaves; moreover, the French commander trusted and respected him; even the whites of the former régime looked to him with hope, for they had grudgingly to concede that, black though he was, he alone had the power to restore peace and order in the colony.

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Only the colored group looked askance at him. They had welcomed the insurrection of the slaves in 1791 as an invaluable, if bloody, aid in their struggle for equality with the whites; but they were not inclined to be ruled by an ex-slave whose eminence was already a threat to the social order they wished to establish. When, in 1793, the French commissioners had abolished slavery in Saint-Domingue,[15] the action had been as distasteful to the free colored people as it was to the whites; both groups wanted to continue to own slaves; the gens de couleur merely wanted their share also in governing the colony. In their opinion, the struggle was getting out of hand. They gave their allegiance, consequently, not to Toussaint, but to their own man, Rigaud.

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The black general now began to show himself as astute a politician as he had been a skilful soldier. He had a romantic streak, which made him assume the prophetic surname Louverture;[16] but beneath the romanticism was a peculiar diplomatic realism. When a newly arrived governor-general tried to stir up dissension between blacks and colored people, on the principle of divide and rule, Toussaint

15. In order to pacify the blacks and to win their support against the invading armies of Spain and England.

16. The name Louverture, now generally written L'Ouverture, is ordinarily conceded to imply Toussaint's conviction that he would provide the opening through which his fellow blacks might achieve freedom. According to another account the name was given him because of his ability to make a breach in the ranks of the enemy; still another explanation refers to his missing front teeth.

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of inordinate vanity, and would brook no interference. His henchmen had to endure merciless tongue-lashings. His own people's freedom, about which he was publicly so solicitous, was in many respects little better than slavery. 175 642 643

What he did is more easily told than what he was. Emerging, after a long reign of terror, as a leader in a land which had once been a paradise for whites, he checked among his people the passion and fear which had led to violence. With the restoration of peace, labor began once more on the plantations. The Negroes, though no longer slaves, were ordered back to work, and they docilely obeyed. The return of prosperity between 1799 and 1802 was amazing.

But the brilliance of Toussaint's rule was first dimmed and then completely extinguished by the rising star of Napoleon in France.[17] Haitian history between 1802 and 1804, although apparently incidental to the story of the contest between blacks and colored people which here concerns us, is nevertheless significant for an understanding of what was to transpire in Haitian social affairs. Napoleon was irritated beyond measure at the effrontery of Toussaint's seizure of power in the colony. The black leader had shown canny statesmanship in winning the friendly coöperation of the president of the United States, John Adams. The supplies and ships that Adams sent enabled Toussaint not only to defeat Rigaud but to achieve independence from France in all but name. With American assistance, Toussaint negotiated an advantageous treaty with England. Probably even more annoying to the First Consul than these political triumphs was Toussaint's audacious success in aping and even anticipating the spacious actions by which Napoleon was trying to make himself majestic in the world's eyes.[18] 175 648 669

It is possible that Napoleon might not have paid so much attention

17. It seems strange that this black, a veritable genius whatever his faults, should be so mildly honored in modern Haiti. True, he is regarded with respect, and there are a few statues of him; but the homage of the people is paid rather to his successor, General Dessalines, the antithesis of Toussaint in everything but courage. It was Dessalines, of course, who struck the final blow for Haitian freedom, but even this triumph seems to the foreigner small in comparison with the very real achievements of Toussaint. [643]

18. For example: Napoleon had given a new constitution to France after his *coup d'état* of the 18 Brumaire; similarly Toussaint, having effected his own coup in Saint-Domingue by deposing the French civil agent, citizen Roume, immediately thereafter gave his people a new constitution. In it he not only assumed all political power for life, but also ascribed to himself the right of naming his successor. Bonaparte was unable to take so daring a step for another year. There is ample evidence to show that meanwhile he chafed under the idea of being imitated and anticipated by a "gilded African," as he called Toussaint.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 to Toussaint if Saint-Domingue had been merely a colony like
648 Martinique, and not the single centre from which measures for
669 rebuilding the French colonial system could radiate. France was once more taking over Louisiana from Spain; but before Bonaparte could effectively reach Louisiana to establish his New World empire, he must make sure of Saint-Domingue. The very real power of Toussaint had to be crushed, and through the whole of 1801 Napoleon was making preparations for the annihilation of the black governor.[19]

175 The plans were as follows: to send his brother-in-law, Leclerc,
648 with a formidable French army to "succeed" Toussaint as governor;
721 to try to persuade the blacks that the new régime was entirely benevolent to their race, so that no armed resistance would be offered; if persuasion and diplomacy failed, to fight and conquer the Negroes, subduing them once more to slavery; and, above all, to capture Toussaint with all his black counselors and send them as prisoners to France. Napoleon undertook to prepare the way for Leclerc by writing personally to Toussaint: "Assist the Captain-General [Leclerc] with your counsels, your influence, and your talents. What can you desire?—the liberty of the blacks? You know that in all the countries where we have been, we have given it to the people who had it not." He repeated this assurance in his message a week later to the French legislature (November 22, 1801): "At Saint-Domingue and at Guadeloupe there are no more slaves. All are free there; all will remain free." Still further, the proclamation he drew up for Leclerc to publish upon his arrival, as a reassurance to the blacks, ran: "If you are told that these forces are destined to ravish your liberty, answer: The Republic has given us liberty, the Republic will not suffer it to be taken from us!"

Leclerc with his army arrived at Cap Français late in January, 1802. He hoped to be received at the capital as a friend, but Christophe, the black general in charge of the city, repulsed his advances. Leclerc was obliged to attack; on February 5 Christophe set fire to the city and withdrew to the neighboring hills. The war of independence had begun.

19. The part played by Toussaint for a brief moment in the history of the United States is full of significance. Certain historians are of the opinion that if Napoleon had been successful in the reconquest of Saint-Domingue he would have turned his attention to America rather than to Europe, for he had great colonial schemes. His failure in the colony, according to this theory, made him try to withdraw gracefully from the New World by selling Louisiana to the United States.

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For three months Toussaint's vigorous fighting broke the force of the French attack; one white army was swept away. But Toussaint made two fatal errors of judgment: he relied upon his trained army with its Negro generals, instead of arming his half-million Negroes for guerrilla warfare; and he trusted the pledged word of honor of Leclerc. His army fought bravely enough against the French legions, but the consensus of military experts is that Toussaint's officers, jealous of his domination and feeling that eventually France must win, treacherously gave over their posts and forces to Leclerc. Christophe surrendered on April 26, and Toussaint had no alternative but to put himself in Leclerc's hands. 175 648 726 728

Napoleon's private orders to Leclerc were positive and precise: "Follow your instructions exactly, and the moment you have rid yourself of Toussaint, Christophe, Dessalines, and the principal brigands, and the masses of the blacks have been disarmed, send over to the continent all the blacks and mulattoes who have played a rôle in the civil troubles. . . . Rid us of these gilded Africans, and we shall have nothing more to wish." Leclerc set himself methodically to carry out these instructions; by April, 1802, he had disarmed the blacks and received Christophe's surrender; the next task was to rid himself of Toussaint. By an apparently innocent invitation to dine and discuss the affairs of the colony, he lured Toussaint into his headquarters on June 10.[20] In the course of the meal Toussaint was seized, bound, and hurried on board a waiting ship. Haiti never saw him again; within a year he died of cold and starvation in a dungeon high in the Jura Mountains of southeastern France. 175 648

With Toussaint out of the way, it was now in order to proceed to the second part of Napoleon's plan—the reëstablishment of slavery. Leclerc was to use his own discretion as to the precise moment and manner of announcing this. His instructions from the Minister of Marine, Decrès (June 14, 1802), read in part: 175 648 727 567

As regards the return of the blacks to the old régime, the bloody struggle out of which you have just come victorious with glory commands us to use the utmost caution. Perhaps we should only entangle ourselves in it anew if we wished precipitately to break that idol of liberty in whose name so much blood has already flowed. For some time yet vigilance, order, a discipline at once rural and military, must take the place of the positive and pronounced slavery of the colored people of your colony. Especially the

20. There is evidence to show that Christophe suggested this stratagem to Leclerc.

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175 master's good usage must re-attach them to his rule. When they shall have
648 felt by comparison the difference between a usurping and tyrannical yoke
727 [apparently he means such a yoke as Toussaint's] and that of the legitimate
567 proprietor interested in their preservation, then the moment will have arrived for making them return to their original condition, from which it was so disastrous to draw them.

175 The plan to reëstablish slavery, however, was never carried out,
648 nor was its scheduled sequel, the occupation of Louisiana. The French
727 soldiers in Saint-Domingue began to succumb to an invisible assailant —yellow fever. The first French army of 17,000 men had been largely consumed in the task of conquering Toussaint's armies; the second was now being swept away by disease. Leclerc's letters to Napoleon pleading for reinforcements soon became frantic in their despair. Fever was weakening the army at the very moment when rumors of impending reënslavement were strengthening the number of active antagonists to the French. The black generals who had deserted Toussaint for Leclerc now swung back again to the opposition. Then Leclerc himself fell ill of the fever. Apparently all-conquering in June, 1802, by November he was dead.

175 This was the turning point in Napoleon's whole American policy.
727 The war had ruined Saint-Domingue economically; it had destroyed
721 plantations, paralyzed labor, and reduced the population to bar-
648 barism. To resume the conquest would have cost France heavily; the army dreaded service in a region where death was almost certain; the financial expense had been frightful: one year of war had consumed 50,000 men and several million dollars, yet at least as many men and as much money would still be needed before any return could be expected. Consequently, Napoleon decided to withdraw from his whole American experiment, saving face as far as possible. He appointed the brave but incompetent Rochambeau to succeed Leclerc, promised him reënforcements—and then broke the Peace of Amiens, so that France became embroiled in a European war. Affairs in Saint-Domingue (including the troops promised to Rochambeau) were conveniently forgotten after March, 1803; and the whole Louisiana territory was sold to the United States.

175 The end of French control in Saint-Domingue came shortly.
648 Rochambeau, as well as he could, waged desultory warfare, hanging, shooting, drowning, burning all the Negroes he could catch; hunting them with fifteen hundred bloodhounds bought in Jamaica for more

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than a hundred dollars each; wasting money, squandering men. On the other side, Dessalines and Christophe massacred every white within their reach. Rochambeau held on until November, 1803, when he surrendered with his few remaining men to the English in Jamaica. 175 648

On January 1, 1804, Dessalines proclaimed the independence of Haiti, choosing this aboriginal Indian name (meaning "mountainous") rather than the French Saint-Domingue. What the colored people had begun with their petitions to the French Assembly in 1789 had now worked itself out, but along lines entirely different from their hopes or plans. The whites were gone, but the blacks were in control. Now a struggle for precedence was to begin between the ruling blacks and the still aspiring people of color.[21] 175 642 648

21. The historical details rehearsed in this chapter are summarized from the many documented monographs and histories of the period cited in the Bibliography at the end of this volume. It seems unnecessary to quote such entry for each historical statement made in this sketch of background material. [114]

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The former affranchis fully intended to keep

 their lands once the

175 French were driven out. They could not but be alarmed as they saw
423 the steady direction of Dessalines' moves toward a complete mo-
425 nopoly of land ownership by the state. On the very day following
471 independence, a decree proclaimed that all lands owned by France in colonial days now belonged to Haiti. Next (February 7, 1804) Dessalines canceled all sales and donations made to mulattoes and ex-slaves by fleeing French who, in a last despairing effort to salvage something from the wreckage of olden days, had "entrusted" their lands to non-whites. By these two strokes all lands owned by white men before 1803 became state property,[5] but only the second clipped the wings of socially ambitious colored people.

175 Serious uneasiness was caused by the next measure, an order for a
421 general verification of property titles. This would have been a deli-
[693] cate task at best, considering the disorder of the past thirteen years. It was made more complicated to carry out by the serious lack of men trained in law. A few like Balthasar Inginac, later an important adviser and trusted friend of two presidents, were scrupulously conscientious, but by the same token highly unpopular with those whom they deprived of newly (and shadily) acquired "estates." The majority of officials, according to report, listened to the pleading of many who had managed by hook or crook to secure a tenuous claim to vacant properties, validating their fraudulent titles for them. It has been claimed, without rebuttal, that most of these officials were not above taking bribes. When complaint was made to Dessalines of such actions he took steps to make his appointees do their duty, but each confiscation made new enemies for Dessalines.

Some of the mulattoes, citing their French paternity, claimed land formerly owned by their French fathers, even though these parents had never regarded their sons as more than bastards. Dessalines once broke out in furious answer to such a claimant: "*Et les pauvres*
175 *nègres dont les pères sont en Afrique, ils n'auront donc rien!*"
485 The state took over thousands of acres. Those Haitians, colored or
556 black, who aspired to landownership as the foundation of position,

[642] 5. The hatred of the Haitians for the French, and because of them, for white people
[641] in general, was seen not only in these confiscations but in commitments for the future. A proclamation of April 28, 1804, suppressed to "all foreigners" the right to own property in land. The first Haitian constitution, May 20, 1805, took an even more drastic step in saying that "no white man shall henceforth set foot in this country as a landowner," and that "*all* property formerly belonging to a white Frenchman" was now confiscate to the people of the state.

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171 feudal holdings to absolute ownership of land by the influential. It is
175 strangely paradoxical that an aristocrat, the light-skinned Pétion,
631 representing the cultured group in society, broke the economic power of his own aristocratic class and made the former slaves not serfs but peasants. It is doubtful whether he intended either result.

175 Alexandre Pétion was the antithesis of Haiti's three eminent blacks
643 in all but military skill. Toussaint's genius as a fighter lay in his
159 surprise moves, Dessalines' in his recklessness, Christophe's in his bulldog determination; but Pétion was a great general because he knew when to retire and so lead his enemy into an exposed position. The three Negroes had been born in slavery; Pétion, coming of a cultured and sophisticated affranchi family, grew up in France. Dessalines was a crude ruffian by comparison, while in the face of Pétion's suavity Christophe's impetuousness seemed rankly uncouth. Where they bludgeoned, Pétion persuaded; where they hacked their way through opposition in the determination to gain an end, he graciously yielded and so won new friends. Tactful at every point, he survived even such contretemps as his refusal of the hand of the Emperor's daughter.

As leader of a young nation, Pétion might almost be said to have had too broad an understanding of human nature. He was a gentle ruler over his people; when they erred he did not punish or upbraid, but excused their misdeeds by assuming the cause to be some fatal compulsion over which they momentarily had no control. He had no wish to drive the nation to "success." Neither did he care to use his position for personal aggrandizement. His mind was supple and practical, disdainful of abstractions, undeluded by resounding slogans, fertile in compromise, not finical as to means, always unsurprised, exquisitely tactful. When crises arose to dismay his ministers, Pétion's philosophic calm was undisturbed.

Cynically tolerant, he gave office to political enemies if they chanced to be able. A representative of the topmost class of society,
• [648] he managed to moderate antagonisms based on color. He gave
[87] sanctuary and financial succor to the Spanish-American liberator,
Simón Bolívar; he established the foundations of an educational
[423] system; he defended the state against Christophe's power; he ruled constitutionally; and he gave land to his people, even to the humblest of them. When he died, his subjects for miles around came into Port-au-Prince, where they stood weeping about his palace, refusing

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175 Practically every contemporary foreign visitor contrasted the
114 divergent policies of Christophe and Pétion to the overwhelming
433 advantage of the former. One Englishman, intent upon defending the Negro against the charge of "natural indolence," went so far as to say that the majority of the people in the republic, although "possessed of small estates, on which they earned their living," were yet no less diligent than the forced laborers on Christophe's plantations in the North.[34] His only proof of this contention, however, was the greater volume of commerce at Port-au-Prince, capital of the republic, than at Cap-Henry (now Cap-Haïtien), capital of the kingdom.

175 The economic case is strongly against Pétion. The decline of
433 large-scale agriculture, the empty treasury, governmental purchase
652 of surpluses when prices were low, debasing the coinage[35]—by such
642 practical proofs, the republic was vastly less efficient than the stern dictatorship of the kingdom. But Pétion's people had freedom, while Christophe's were serfs. And Pétion's republic endured, to become reunited Haiti. The kingdom perished with Christophe.

4. *The Final Effort toward Plantation Life* (1818–1826)

175 The mantle of Pétion fell in 1818 upon the shoulders of his
643 meticulous secretary and minister, Jean-Pierre Boyer. Two years
642 later, upon the death of Christophe, the kingdom of the North was once again united, without a struggle, to the South.[36] It is conceivable that the refined mulatto Boyer might have infused into his people a spirit of industry and ambition, now that tranquillity reigned after fourteen years of separation and warfare. The people of the North had had a long experience of intense activity, while those of the

34. W. W. Harvey, *Sketches of Hayti: from the Expulsion of the French, to the Death of Christophe* (London, 1827), pp. 364 ff.

[652] 35. Pétion's coins were so easily imitated that the country was inundated with counterfeit money. The government issued only few million dollars worth of this currency, but in 1818 twelve millions were in circulation, the surplus having been fabricated in Europe and the United States.

[175] [643] [642] [648] 36. In 1822–23 Boyer likewise succeeded, with little fighting, in bringing the Spanish two-thirds of the island (Santo Domingo) into the republic. For the first time since 1697 the whole island was really unified under one rule. Toussaint had held it in 1801–2 and the Haitians claimed it thereafter, but real unity did not come until Boyer's time, when all the Spanish colonies in the New World were breaking away from their mother country. Santo Domingo regained its independence in 1844 shortly after the abdication of Boyer.

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175 423 up so many of these, there was no way short of a revolution to reconstitute the now parceled estates. Obviously the Code did not envisage the control of serfs by small property owners, yet there were more small owners than large.

175 184 466 In the third place, the Spanish-speaking masses of the eastern part of the island had never experienced the kind of forced labor with which most Haitians had been at one time or another familiar. Their noncoöperation made enforcement difficult.

175 647 Finally, the administration of so detailed a plan called for the establishment, at once and yet in complete order, of a fully trained corps of bureaucrats, perfectly coöperating with each other, most of them educated, and all incorruptibly honest. If every literate person in the state had been drafted for service, Boyer could not have filled all the offices required by the Code.

175 465 434 After brief and piecemeal experience with the law in operation, moreover, even the few remaining large landholders turned against it. While they approved the provisions for forced labor, they discovered that to turn over to the workers a quarter or half of the annual crop, in a falling world market, gave too slim a profit.[42] Without the support even of its original sponsors, failure of the law was inevitable.

175 648 652 These factors alone would have been enough to kill the Code; but its real death blow came from an entirely different quarter. The year before the agricultural laws were passed, Boyer had achieved what he considered to be a political master stroke. He had made a financial settlement with France whereby Haiti, in return for a large sum in cash and regular annual payments for sixty years thereafter, should receive full recognition of independence from France; also the former mother country would renounce all claims to any properties in the country. Boyer had felt that the chief debilitating influence on the political and economic life of his people was the constant dread that France might one day return to claim her lost colony. To rid the nation of that incubus, therefore, seemed to him a high feat of statesmanship, no matter what the financial cost.[43]

[433] [24] 42. Coffee, now the staple crop of Haiti, was meeting competition from the other coffee-producing countries of the world. To put the sugar manufacturies into working condition again called for more money than was available.

[643] [644] 43. Boyer's hand was forced to a certain extent by France, which had been exerting diplomatic pressure upon Haiti; the President, however, seemed to regard the settlement as a distinct coup.

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175 643 Suddenly, without warning, he reversed what had been mistaken for docile inactivity, and assumed complete personal command of the reins of office. By means of a well-organized body of secret police, [625] he inspired his own counselors with fear not only for their positions but for their lives. Although illiterate, Soulouque never signed a bill presented to him by his ministers until he was sure he knew its essential core. The hopeful "understudies" were forcibly awakened to the realization that they were hoist on their own petard.

175 643 563 669 The colored element was particularly apprehensive at Soulouque's amazing activity, for the President was clearly setting himself against their group, both in the cabinet and out. Determining clandestinely to get rid of their puppet before he became a Frankenstein's monster to destroy his creators, they fomented a new revolution. This, however, proved to be a strategic error of the first magnitude, for the President was already much stronger than they imagined. The insurrection was quashed with massacre and attendant frightfulness. In the aftermath, as Bouzon mordantly remarks, "the republic was calm—with all the tranquillity of a tomb!" By their ineptitude, the colored group had now made themselves completely insecure.

175 565 643 642 [555] In the second year of his régime Soulouque decided to imitate Dessalines by turning the state into an empire. His coronation was extremely gaudy, as well as expensive. Calling himself Emperor Faustin I, he created a peerage drawn chiefly from among his black generals—four princes, fifty-nine dukes, and numerous counts, barons, and knights. This was merely outward pomp to gratify their craving for prestige, for they had no functions to perform, nor even the necessity of Christophe's peers to pay for their regalia. As nobles they were given no responsibilities in directing economic activity nor any increased political power over districts of the empire. The Emperor's own vanity was flattered by having a peerage. He ruled as an autocrat with blatant despotism. For ten years following the 175 643 721 648 728 coronation Haiti had to accustom itself to costly expeditions against the Dominican Republic, nearly all ending in defeat for Haiti. The outcome of these intermittent wars was neither gain nor loss of territory by either side, but only temporary rule of occupied districts. Haiti likewise had to accustom itself to sudden executions, to the shabby grandeur of court display, and to financial trickery which would not have deceived a schoolboy. While the heads of his opponents and even his loyal counselors fell, Soulouque's infantile "empire" toppered to economic ruin.

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Haiti was in constant financial straits. Money had to be borrowed

abroad; then paid back at the promised time or a foreign warship would appear at some Haitian port. The steady drain of annual indemnity payments to France,[7] the cost of subduing revolutionary movements, and the large sum eaten up even in times of peace by wages to the army made successive presidents continue to yield government land for small sums of ready cash, in spite of Geffrard's announcement that no more state lands would be alienated. Nissage Saget, coming to power by a successful revolution, paid out fifteen acres to each soldier who fought in his campaign in the South.[8] The straits of the government resembled those of the Continental Congress in America during the Revolution.

Another impulse to parcel the land came during the administration of President Lysius Salomon (1879–88). The debt to France had finally, after half a century, been paid off; that incubus removed, Salomon instituted numerous reforms, financial, military, educational. On February 26, 1883, he signed a law by which every citizen of Haiti might conceivably become a landowner even if he lacked money to buy land. Upon receipt of a written agreement to cultivate certain tropical crops—specifically, sugar, coffee, cotton, cacao, and tobacco—the government would grant provisional title to a portion of fifteen to twenty-five acres of land taken from the public domain. The grant became final if, after a period of from two to five years, three quarters of the land had been effectively cultivated.

Five hundred requests were made in 1884 for such grants and twelve hundred in the following year.[9] Thereafter one finds no records of applications for land; the peasants had discovered the hidden trap in this apparent generosity. How could a peasant with a tiny farm lacking implements and tools, not to mention ready cash, be expected to cultivate important crops on fifteen or twenty acres of land? He would have to cut down trees, uproot wild plants, fertilize the ground, purchase equipment and seeds, and then wait several years for a crop. As Thoby says, "And even then he was not a

7. See above, pp. 70–71.

8. Law of July 12, 1870. In August of the same year, Nissage required an inventory to be taken of state lands remaining.

9. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Manuel d'Histoire d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1934), p. 317, cites these figures. They are contested by Dr. F. Duvalier, *Le Sauvage national par le noir à la mer*, p. 31, who maintains that only five applications came in throughout. Here, as elsewhere, Haitian records are incomplete.

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[p. 99]

V

CASTES SINCE THE AMERICAN OCCUPATION OF 1915

IN 1915 American Marines entered Haiti. One of the major reasons for their intervention may have been economic; certainly this explanation or accusation has been frequently made by opponents of American dollar diplomacy. Nevertheless, the ground was well prepared by political incompetency in Haiti in the years preceding 1915, and the reason given to the world by American statesmen to justify the Occupation was essentially a political one: Haiti was in a state of anarchy.

As has been abundantly shown, Haiti never had a semblance of democracy. From its beginning the country was governed either by a despot—the president, who might or might not be benevolent—or by an oligarchy. The failure of Haitian politics from 1843 onward was the inability of the titular ruler and the oligarchy to work in harmony; indeed, the oligarchy was continually divided against itself. Only three of Haiti's presidents from 1843 to 1915 were more than mediocre statesmen.[1] It is merely a question of degree, whether such phrases as "political and economic stagnation" and "social inertia" are more accurately descriptive than words like decay and degeneration.

A brief résumé of politics between 1900 and 1915 will set the stage for a view of the Occupation in relation to the development of caste.

1. With this judgment by a foreigner Haitians may obviously disagree. In the author's opinion the presidents Geffrard (1859–67), Salomon (1879–88), and Hyppolite (1889–96) were relatively distinguished men. To Geffrard may be credited the following: increase of educational facilities; construction of much-needed public works; an attempt to form a true middle class, even by importing Negroes from the United States; reduction of the size of the army by half; healing of a sixty-year breach with the Holy See, so that Haiti might once again have approved priests; the opening of closed ports to commerce; and improvement of agricultural methods. Salomon was an educated man with European experience; his achievements were to create a national bank, establish a sound currency, revise the public debt, lower tariffs, bring in schoolteachers from France, open rural schools, bring Haiti into the International Postal Union. Hyppolite's chief achievements were in the field of public works—much-needed buildings, bridges, docks, telephone and telegraph lines.

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175 The twentieth century began inauspiciously with a succession of dull
643 incompetents in the presidency. General Sam's administration (1896–
642 1902) had been distinguished only by lethargic calm. Nord Alexis (1902–8), over eighty when elected, prolonged the peace by doing nothing to disturb it; he solved his financial problems by issuing paper money, while his political "policy" involved nothing more significant than the sponsoring of festivals to celebrate Haiti's hundred years of independence. The mild revolution which displaced him substituted a president more puerile than oppressive, Antoine Simon (1908–11), who is best revealed in a terse comment by a Haitian author: "When he passed by on a street or through a public square, everyone, foreigners as well as Haitians, must stand still, even stop smoking, and respectfully salute the Head of State. At any instant, without reason, the functionaries of the capital might be called to the Palace to endure his interminable and insipid discourses."[2] A revolution cut short his tedious régime.

Within the next four years six presidents rose and fell. Their administrations were worse than ephemeral; indeed, they hardly deserve the name of governments. Not one of the six had a happy time in office; the first was blown up with his palace, the second is generally thought to have been poisoned, the next three were quickly deposed by revolutions, and the last, after massacring his imprisoned political enemies, was horribly cut into small bits by an infuriated mob. Anarchy then ensued.

175 For years Haitian presidents had staved off financial collapse by
652 heavy borrowing abroad. United States financial interests were in-
•648 volved in the Bank of Haiti and in a railroad company, while the American government, through its Monroe Doctrine, was disturbed by French and German threats to collect their Haitian debts by force. When President Guillaume Sam[3] was hacked to pieces by the mob, the United States landed Marines from gunboats which were conveniently just outside the harbor of Port-au-Prince. Beginning on July 28, 1915, the Occupation lasted for nineteen years.

125 With the question of America's justification in the matter of
648 occupying Haiti this book cannot pretend to deal. As with most large matters of policy, convincing arguments can be offered on both sides. The important fact for this study is that the presence of white

2. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Manuel d'Histoire d'Haïti*, p. 318.
3. Not to be confused with Simon Sam, who had ruled twenty years earlier.

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American Marines in Haiti during the next two decades had definite effects upon the social life of the country.

One of the most immediately observable results was the termination of the long political domination by the blacks, and reestablishment of the colored élite in government control. The four presidents since 1915, Dartiguenave (1915–22), Borno (1922–30), Roy (1930), and Vincent (1930–41), have all been light-skinned. The United States forces had a definite hand in the election of the first two of these men. America's concern was certainly not to return the government to the colored group, but rather to have as titular heads of state men who were educated, temperate of mind, civil in manners—and, of course, mentally "supple" enough to carry out policies agreeable to the State Department at Washington. Since education had for long been a perquisite of the élite only, and since colored élite outnumbered black élite, the chances were good that the choice should fall upon a colored man in 1915 and 1922. Even so, it may have been pure coincidence that the Americans supported mulattoes rather than Negroes; it can hardly be coincidence that the mulatto presidents since 1915 have filled the key offices with colored men. They would assuredly maintain that they had tried to select persons best fitted for office. The fact remains that there are few blacks in the important ministries.

This return to political power of the colored element was one of the most sweeping transformations effected by the Marines, for once again, as in the golden days of Pétion and Boyer, political prestige accompanied and fortified social position. Since 1843 one black or almost black general had succeeded another as president of the republic, and the élite class had perforce to endure them. Socially tolerated these parvenu generals had been, but accepted never. When the Marines arranged the election of President Dartiguenave they effectively reversed the tradition of a century. Since 1915 there have been several Negro candidates for the presidency; in coming elections there are sure to be others; for the present and the near future it is safe to say there will be no more black non-élite presidents.

Such a prophecy is made with a certain assurance because of another result of the Occupation: reform of the army. All true friends of Haiti knew, as most Haitian statesmen had understood for a hundred years, that the huge standing army was an unmitigated burden to the economic, political, and social stability of the country.

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175 701 648 1177 825 652 669 Since it was an entrenched interest, however, no responsible statesman had dared to threaten its hold. The Marines swept it out of existence, undertaking to substitute for it a trained constabulary of only 2,000 men who should combine routine military tasks with police duty in the scattered towns. Results were immediately apparent: the weighty incubus of soldiers' wages was lifted from the treasury; thousands of men were deprived of sinecures and put back into productive economic activities; the constant threat of armed revolution was removed; better order was kept by 2,000 trained men in trim uniform than by twelve times that number of ragged loafers who called themselves soldiers; and since the army was no longer the great steppingstone to political office, the élite felt more secure from assault by ambitious but uneducated army men. From 1843 to 1915 the élite had endured many lower-caste presidents because these were able to control the army; now the army had disappeared.

175 648 [943] [944] [365] [491] [45] The Marines did much that was of indisputable benefit to Haiti. This was acknowledged even by the most vocal patriots who soon began to campaign for an end of the Occupation. Where there had been no real work in public health, Americans now built hospitals, established clinics, cleaned up the sources of many diseases, laid down sewage systems, gave the towns pure water. In 1915 there were only three automobiles in the country, and no roads for them to travel; the Americans built many miles of paved roads. In 1915 there had been only one wharf, two short stretches of railroad, two lighthouses, one electric plant; the Americans undertook electrification, telephone systems, the construction of administration buildings, and other public conveniences. Whether in such visible matters or in the obscurer realms of currency, banking, and budgets hardly a phase of daily life was left untouched. And judged by the standards of civilization the Marines improved what they touched.

175 648 642 But rancor against the Americans began early and continued to the bitter end in 1934. The pride of all Haitians was deeply wounded by the Occupation. For 111 years they had governed themselves and had assumed themselves to be a sovereign nation; the Marines patrolling the countryside were vivid reminders that Haiti had never been independent except by sufferance, and that white men were once more overseeing the destinies of colored and Negro men. Nevertheless, the reasons proclaimed for opposing the Occupation were not those of hurt vanity. Some of those given were entirely

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plausible, such as the race prejudice displayed by many individual Marines;[4] the unnecessary slaughter in the suppression of *cacos* (guerrilla) rebellions in the North; the continued holding of offices (and salaries) by Americans too impatient to train Haitians, as by the Agreement of 1915 they were supposed to do; the fostering rather than elimination of military psychology among the people by the presence of armed Marines. 175 648 642

The campaign against the Occupation was generally on the highest level of patriotism, for it threw out one variation after another on the same theme: We Haitians are not being allowed to govern ourselves. Some realists knew that their hurt national pride was accompanied by disappointment that certain salaries were not reaching Haitian pockets, certain prestige of office not redounding to the credit of Haitian men. What if the real reason for opposition were not the openly avowed one? The Marines must go! Order had been restored and government rehabilitated. It was patent that any administration which could effect the withdrawal would be immensely popular: it was equally patent that if the Americans left the country, the benefits of their efficiency and material improvement would remain as a tangible boon to Haiti. 175 648 642 668

President Sténio Vincent, elected in 1930 after a campaign in which the Americans did not interfere, began the negotiations with Washington. With President Hoover he made headway toward reforms, but President Roosevelt's attitude was more actively cooperative. In 1934 Vincent had a series of conferences with the President of the United States; the latter, in pursuit of his good-neighbor policy, persuaded the American Senate to order the Occupation at an end and turn over without cost to Haiti many buildings, supplies, and equipment used by the Marines. Vincent personally benefited from the withdrawal of 1934. He called himself Haiti's "second Liberator,"[5] and made the anniversary of the American departure a national holiday. Indirectly the élite also benefited for now, entrenched in office, they could govern without white supervision. The material equipment was there to be enjoyed by the whole people at no further expense to them. 175 648 642 [643] [139] [52] [563]

4. The United States government in the early days had sent Marines from the Southern States to Haiti, on the theory that they would, from long acquaintance with Negroes, know how to "handle" them. This stupid blunder was shortly rectified.

5. Dessalines had, of course, been the first.

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175 The Occupation had had other far-reaching consequences. It had
648 removed from the Constitution an article which had endured from
642 the very first—the prohibition against ownership of land by white
423 people. Americans argued that since Haiti's greatest potential source
563 of wealth was agricultural (sugar and coffee in particular), new methods were needed if rehabilitation were to occur. Only foreign whites had both the necessary wealth and the requisite agricultural knowledge: therefore, whites must be attracted into the country by an opportunity to establish plantations. Although the Senate of Haiti protested violently against this reversal of tradition, which struck at the people's long pride in their complete ownership of the land, the Americans yielded only on the point of requiring five years' residence of the white landlord in the country. The influx of foreign whites has not been large, but in the Plaine du Nord and Port-au-Prince the white "colonies" are considerably larger now than in 1914.

175 Up to the present moment the white element in Haiti has not
648 exerted any noticeable pressure on the government. Its mere pres-
563 ence, however, is bound to be a restraining influence on politicians, for most of the whites are Americans, and the government at Washington may not always follow a good-neighbor policy. With the clannishness so usual in white colonists living among darker people, the Americans in Haiti have their private clubs and their closed social set. For the first time since 1804 the élite are socially not the highest-ranking persons in the country.

175 The physical presence of several hundred white Marines for nine-
648 teen years had also one unplanned but inevitable result: an increase in
563 the amount of white blood in the population. For many decades
144 numerous élite had rested comfortably beneath their light skins, knowing that only they, with their greater mobility in the world, had any real chance to sustain a white strain. The Occupation, however, brought white men in contact with black women; there was a steady average of 2,000 white Marines in the country for two decades. The light skin of resulting offspring suggested to many the
[554] possibility of a climb up the social ladder now that the most difficult rung had already been achieved. No figures are available on the number of children born in Haiti between 1915 and 1934 of white fathers, but it was a perceptible influx in the lower class.

175 Haitian businessmen enjoyed a greater economic prosperity during
458 the Occupation than they had ever known before. It is commonly

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reported in Haiti that although they joined patriotically in the cheering when the Marines embarked in 1934, many of them shed tears to see the departure of 2,000 monthly salaries, most of which had been enriching the local tills. Indeed, the country came much closer to establishing a mercantile middle class during the Occupation than ever before. The only real control left behind by the Americans was an overseer of the national budget, destined to leave as soon as Haiti's external debt was finally paid off. To that end the government saved rather than spent, so that businessmen found no comfort in the state of economic affairs, particularly during a decade of world depression and European disturbance. Nationalist economic theories in Europe have upset Haitian markets, so that the élite thriftily save their pennies against hard times instead of spending them freely on present luxuries. The American overseer of the budget withdrew in 1941.

175 458 [648] [652]

At many points the forces of the Occupation touched unwittingly upon deep-rooted prejudices of the Haitian people. In order to secure laborers for road construction the Marines revived an old corvée law of Christophe's time, requiring forced labor on public works at the need of the government. Many of the ill-nourished peasants were taxed beyond their physical powers by work on the roads, so that an armed revolt by caco guerrillas broke out. Its suppression required months of time and cost many lives, leaving in its train a great deal of ill will.

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The efficient Americans also came to grief when they attempted to make Haitians orderly in the American way. Land titles were in chaos, as we have noted. American experts wished to find a basis for internal taxation, so that economic reform might be effective and permanent. The effort to have people declare their claims so that these might be properly registered had to be given up after a few weeks, for the peasant owners knew without written deeds their local boundaries, and among the squatters those who realized their title might not stand under strict investigation were understandably averse to having questions of property tenure raised by the authorities of an alien and interfering government.

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Wherever Marine barracks were located, there were centres of a cultural dissemination which was bound in the long run to affect Haitian ideas and practices. Automobiles, radios, amusements, even the daily conversation of the Marines, all left their mark upon a people who had been effectively isolated from the world for more than a century.

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sive mood, will speak of the peasant and his contributions to Haiti; he thinks only in terms of his own caste.[8] Upper-class Haitians dread the sight of tourists taking pictures of native scenes, fearing that the travelers will return to their own country and label these pictures, "Typical Haitian Scenes," when, as anyone should know, typical Haiti is upper-class Haiti.[9]

The American Occupation failed of many of its ends because it did not recognize the social situation and its implications; or, realizing them, did not consider them worthy of attention. Roads, telephones, mail service, and improved agricultural methods seemed patently desirable to progressive Americans; to install them for the Haitians seemed generously wise. Yet many well-meant efforts came to grief, for the mass of people, lacking a tradition of orderly free government, did not always understand what the Americans were about, while the élite saw in the activities of the Marines a threat to their own dominance as rulers of the country.[10]

The antiquated, but prevalent, notion of the superior mentality of the white race also flourishes in certain quarters among the élite. Many of them say that the Negro can never originate a civilization, and that with the best of education he remains an inferior man, utterly unfitted for government, utterly incapable of making prog-

8. Witness Marthe Ouldé's paragraph (*Les Antilles, filles de France* [Paris, 1935], p. 254): "My amiable host (a member of the *élite*) was triumphant at my surprise and enchantment. 'You did not expect to find a civilized country. What have the spiteful wits told you? That the Haitians worshipped serpents and made human sacrifices? True, the peasants on the mountain-sides are still very primitive and ignorant, but in the cities you will find many families like ours, cultivated in letters and music, careful and proud of their French culture, and absolutely set against American de-civilization.'"

9. "Should you like a European to take pictures of the slums of your American cities and of the most degraded of your share-croppers, and then circulate these photographs as typical American scenes?" asked one sensitive Haitian.

10. See the *Report of the Forbes Commission to Haiti*, 1930, pp. 18–19. "Illiteracy keeps the peasant masses politically inarticulate, except in case of mobs or bandit gangs, which formerly infested the countryside and often furnished the forces of revolution. These bandit gangs have been broken up and have disappeared under American rule, but the social forces that created them still remain—poverty, ignorance, and the lack of a tradition or desire for orderly free government. It has been the aim of the American Occupation to try to broaden the base of the articulate proletariat and thus make for a sounder democracy and ultimately provide for a more representative government in Haiti. Hence its work in education, in sanitation, in agencies of communication such as roads, telephones, telegraph lines, and regular mail routes. These things naturally are deemed of secondary importance by the Elite, who see in the rise of a middle class a threat to the continuation of their own leadership."

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to appoint curés to the vacant parishes. His independence of action could not fail to give offense to Church authorities. One of his first appointees was a black ex-slave, Félix, who had been a drum major in the native army. Félix was made curé in the important town of Saint-Marc.

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The constitution of his empire (May, 1805) indicates that Dessalines did not intend to make himself head of the Church, but rather planned a complete separation of Church and State. Article 50 reads: "The law admits no dominant religion"; while the next article grants freedom to all cults and refuses state support to any denomination or minister. No attack was made, therefore, upon Catholicism, yet the disestablishment of that Church was a serious blow to its prestige. Not in the specific provisions regarding religion was the Church most weakened, but rather in the "liberality" of articles dealing with actions upon which the Church had taken a firm moral stand. Thus Article 14 declared that "marriage is an act purely civil and authorized by the government," while Article 15 permits divorce by the state. Early laws of the empire still further undermined the position of Church doctrine. Illegitimate children were granted the same legal rights as legitimate ones—a generous provision which removed one of the strong reasons for marriage; separation of husband and wife except by divorce was forbidden, and this prohibition practically encouraged the divorce disapproved by the Church; finally, the grounds upon which divorce might be allowed were broader than those existing anywhere else in the Western World at the time: mutual consent, application from one party to the marriage, or simple allegation of incompatibility of temperament or character.

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From the promulgation of this constitution in 1805 and for the next fifty-five years, Haiti was in open schism from the Roman Catholic Church. The Holy See refused to recognize either the Haitian state or the provisions of its constitution, and it declined to allow priests to enter the country. Certain Haitian presidents were friendly enough to Catholicism, and others were openly desirous of reestablishing a state religion, but the breach once made was not healed by mere good wishes. The longer the schism endured, the farther the people grew away from the doctrines and practices of a religion in which they had never been firmly grounded. At the moment of independence, when all minds were more open to new

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ideas than in later years, the habits of regular attention to religious duties might have been fixed; by 1860 it was too late. Religion existed during these years, but it was a strange gallimaufry of Catholicism and folk belief.

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On the whole, the rulers of young Haiti were tolerant of the Catholic Church even to the point of advancing its interests, in so far as these might benefit the state. Their pronouncements and actions, nevertheless, were not those of ardent personal believers. Pétion's constitution of the republic in 1806 once more established Catholicism as the official Church. What it gave with one hand, however, it took away with the other. Thus:

> *Art.* 35. The Catholic, apostolic, and Roman religion being that of all Haitians, is the religion of the state. It and its ministers will be protected.
>
> *Art.* 36. The law assigns to each minister of that religion the extent of his spiritual administration. These ministers may not, under any pretext, form a body within the state.
>
> *Art.* 37. If in the course of time other religions are introduced, no person shall be hindered, so long as he conforms to the laws, in following the cult he has chosen.

The Catholic, then, is the state religion, but only because the Haitians have heretofore been nominal Catholics. It occupies a position of practical fact which it would lose if by the introduction of other cults Haitians should be drawn away from it. Its ministers will be carefully watched to see that they do not, as a group, try to exert political pressure. And what freedom of action is possible to a church whose ecclesiastical parishes can be limited or extended in size by the civil legislature?

Pétion no more fought religion than he fought any other conventional institution approved by civilized people; but he did little to foster it. He received certain Wesleyan missionaries with considerable hospitality, remarking that "education increases the dignity of mankind." He appeased the good Catholics by repealing the law concerning the rights of illegitimate children, substituting for it a more moderate French rule.[4] Likewise, he invited the Catholic Church to participate in the education of Haitian youth.

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[848] 4. The French practice allowed an illegitimate child recognized before a wedding equal rights of inheritance with legitimate offspring, while giving only quarter rights to a child recognized after marriage.

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Christophe had a great deal more to say about religion than any of the other early Haitian rulers. In a speech following the promulgation of his constitution, after severe censure of the government of Dessalines, he said:

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It is necessary to raise again the dignity of religion, for weakened morals leave young people open to the licenses of their age. Liberty has been assailed by traitors, enemies of their fellow citizens, and sold to our cruelest enemies. It is assured to you now, have no doubt! Shortly you will see these vicious men and their criminal efforts vanish like clouds.

Public education, after religion and liberty the most precious benefit mankind enjoys, will be reanimated and sustained by morality; it will again be held in honor and reverence amongst us. Divorce, that traitor among customs, is rigorously prohibited and proscribed forever.[5]

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Like Pétion, Christophe made the Catholic Church official, but he indicated the dictatorial path he intended to follow by adding that no ecclesiastical decree or law might become effective without the consent of the President.[6] He completely overturned the law of Dessalines concerning illegitimate children; his decree deprived such offspring of any claims of inheritance whatever.[7] In a country where practically no one had been legally married such a ruling was severe, but Christophe hoped that his severity would force his subjects into wedlock, and this the Catholic Church was bound to approve.

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Making the Church official did not strengthen its hold upon the people. In 1814 (seven years after he had promised "to raise again the dignity of religion") the kingdom was served by only three priests, one of whom Christophe had named archbishop. The King was preoccupied with form, and having created a nobility he needed a church to lend dignity to his realm. Consequently in 1811 he reorganized the clergy in his kingdom, establishing an archiepiscopal see and three bishoprics. The reorganization, except for the archbishop, remained a paper plan because the Pope refused to coöperate by giving the schismatic church his approval.

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All the early rulers seem to have been rather innocent in their dealings with Rome. They felt, apparently, that as heads of state they had but to express a desire in order to have His Holiness ap-

5. This speech, made on February 18, 1807, is cited in Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1848), II, 354–355.
6. See the law of March 18, 1807.
7. Law of March 25, 1807.

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prove. Dessalines had sent a small number of Negro youths to Rome to receive consecration and ordination from the Pope, so that they might return to initiate a black priesthood for the black state. Pius VII (through the interference of Napoleon, it was held by the Haitians) refused to consecrate the aspirants to holy orders, and they had to return as they had come. Christophe thought to avoid such a snub by presenting His Holiness with a *fait accompli*. Having in his kingdom a Spanish Capuchin named Brelle who had formerly anointed Dessalines emperor, Christophe made this friar head of his reorganized church as "archbishop of Haiti and grand almoner to the King," giving him a "palace" and a yearly income derived from the revenues of his "see." This achieved he asked papal approval, but had sorrowfully to announce, "*Le roi d'Haïti eut la douleur de ne pas même recevoir une réponse de Sa Sainteté et passa outre.*"

Pétion's legislators were even more naïve. Their constitution of 1816 (of course, really the President's) granted to the President the right to have a bishop come to Port-au-Prince "to elevate to the priesthood those young Haitians who feel called to embrace the ecclesiastical state."[8] It was apparently assumed that without the approval of the Pope any bishop could come in and forthwith "make" priests. The insertion of this article in the constitution confesses the disadvantages of schism. The last surviving priests of the old régime, those few who had remained in spite of the breach with Rome, were dying off; no new priests were being sent in; therefore, if the Catholic Church was to endure in the republic, it must have Haitian priests. Certain clerics fleeing political revolutions in South America came to Haiti, but since they spoke French badly, did not improve the religious situation. It was impossible to get sympathetic priests from France, in view of the relations of the two countries at the time. The provision of the 1816 constitution, however childish, was at least an effort to perpetuate the church in Haiti.

It is nowhere recorded that either Pétion or Boyer had any opportunity to persuade a bishop to come and consecrate the desired priests. Deprived of support by the Papal See, in open schism, the Haitian republic was forced to make all regulations governing religious affairs. Boyer carried on various negotiations with Rome looking toward rapprochement, but the schism endured. Organized

8. Article 30 of the 1816 constitution.

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The men seldom or never go to mass, except on the days particularly set apart by the government as public fêtes. On these occasions the president and all the officers of Hayti go in procession, but the idea of devotion, I believe, never enters their contemplation. Such days are merely set aside for celebrating some particular event, which it is wished should be handed down to posterity. These occasions persist only the external symbol of religion, the whole people being either ignorant or careless of its real character. Their manner and appearance during the celebration of the mass shew that they have no inward feelings of piety or devotion.[13]

Catholicism in Haiti, then, had fallen on evil days; Protestantism, on the other hand, was unable to gain any foothold. Boyer, indifferent to all religion, did not even care to tolerate Wesleyan missionaries as Pétion had done, for when certain of them arrived and were met with "persecution and stoning by a mob," it required persuasion to gain his assent to freeing those the police had taken into custody. He forbade any further meetings of Wesleyans, on the ground that they stirred up riots. At the close of Boyer's administration it was estimated that there were only about 1,200 Protestants in the country, mostly Methodists and Baptists, and these primarily Negroes who had come from the United States to settle in the republic.

Although the Haitian government probably derived a certain satisfaction from controlling a state Church, Boyer was impelled both by circumstance and his own temperament to obtain the approval of the Holy See. His own tepid spiritual zeal had nothing to do with the case; Haitian public order would benefit by a superior group of priests, and Haitian prestige would rise, he thought, with recognition by Rome. Having already in 1826 settled the conflict between France and Haiti in the political sphere, Boyer tried assiduously to end the schism from Rome. His propositions were examined with benevolence by the Pope, who conferred upon the primate of the Indies, archbishop of Santo Domingo, the title of archbishop of Haiti. This personage, however, was a Spaniard already established in the comfortable city of Santo Domingo amidst people of his own nationality. He could not be persuaded to move to Port-au-Prince. The failure of Boyer's efforts is due more to this ecclesiastic than to uncoöperativeness on the part of Rome. From 1834 to 1860 the Court of Rome had official representatives in Haiti, but they cannot have been very effective men, for conditions in

13. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 394–395.

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religious life were not improved and the schism endured. The archbishop of Haiti seemed to regard his new title as applying vaguely to the island, not the country, of Haiti, and since all his vicars were Spaniards unable to speak either French or the Créole dialect, they did nothing for religion in the Haitian republic.

Ties broken by a single radical action may require endless patience and persistence to knit together their severed threads. The impetuosity of Dessalines caused the rupture; it was prolonged by indifference to religion, absorption in economic and political matters, fear that France might use to her profit any *rapprochement* with Rome, and a certain complacency in subordinating Church to state. Inertia, however, was the real obstacle in the way of healing the breach. It is much less trouble to let conditions remain as they are than to make a change whose results no one can foretell. But the longer the rupture, the less understanding the people had of steps necessary to reestablish the Church.

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When in 1847 Faustin Soulouque, the ignorant, became president, the horizon had never seemed darker for organized religion. The black general, suddenly impelled by a quirk of fortune into high office, was a man of the people in his religious attitudes. All their belief in magic, in the mystical power of certain rites, in charms and spells—all their "superstition" as the Catholics called it—Soulouque shared. For the first time in Haitian history one is aware that the folk beliefs brought over from Africa had become welded into a recognizable form, under the name of Vodun. To colonial writers "Vaudoux" had been primarily a name for certain dances; to the early Haitian élite it seems to have connoted either occult rites or vulgar claptrap compounded of gibberish, old wives' remedies, and sensual dances. But in the long and deepening twilight of Catholicism, the various elements were fused, until by Soulouque's time the Haitian was familiar with the general beliefs, rites, and "priesthood" of Vodun. As Soulouque had broken with the tradition of presidents who wished Haiti to be recognized as one of the community of civilized Western nations, so he allowed the traditional respect for Catholicism to die. As an emperor he was a transplanted African chief; as a believer he was a follower of Vodun. The rites were practiced and the sacrifices made openly now. Men in high places dared to reveal their belief in native tenets. For twelve years Vodun flourished with official approval.

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The depths to which Haiti descended under Soulouque made the task of his successor relatively simple. It would prove wise and generally popular to reverse the Emperor's action, in whatever respect. President Geffrard was the more successful as an antidote to the Emperor because of his practical intelligence. The best time to strike for the revival of Catholicism would be immediately after the heyday of Vodun. In 1859, the first year of his incumbency, Geffrard consequently undertook negotiations with the Holy See, sending two plenipotentiaries for the discussions. Because the Haitian delegates persuasively depicted the sorry state of religion in their country, because they showed themselves and their President willing to defer to papal wishes, and because the new Pope was filled with missionary zeal to reclaim Haiti for the Faith, all problems were overcome. An early agreement was reached, and the Concordat, signed in Rome on March 28, 1860, was approved by the Haitian Senate on the first of April. A commission was dispatched to Haiti immediately, one which did thoroughly and well its task of delimiting the boundaries of dioceses, allocating bishops and other clergy, and founding a seminary. An archbishop of Port-au-Prince was consecrated, and the Catholic Church, Roman and apostolic, at long last became officially established once more in the republic. The breach of fifty-five years was healed.

In one sense the reform had come too late. All the peasants were by this time thoroughly imbued with the ideas of Vodun, as were the lower orders in the towns. Most of the élite either clandestinely practiced Vodun or ignored religion altogether. On the other hand, practically no Haitian was opposed to Catholicism, not even the most ardent devotee of the obscurer cult. The native faith had grown up quietly enough, making its adjustments to the outward forms of Catholicism which still existed in the country. To every Vodun worshiper there were simply two hierarchies of spiritual beings, each with its own powers; to believe in one was not to deny the other. The new Catholic priests, then, met no hostility; what they had to deal with was an ineradicable folk religion which accepted everything and rejected little in the spiritual realm.

The Archbishop, his band of forty priests, and a small group of Brothers and Sisters set to work with fervor. Nearly everything had to be rebuilt from the ground. Church buildings were in such disrepair that it was considered more economical to erect new ones than

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The truth is, marriage and moral conditions differ from economic and political conditions in that they are not so immediate and pressing in their effect upon individual lives. If these are not attended to today, tomorrow will find our bellies empty and our state overrun by enemies. But sex relations go on willy-nilly, and children are born into families: there will still be marriage and a moral problem to attend to when order has been brought into practical affairs. Toussaint was involved in a diplomatic battle in which the participants were the best minds of France, England, and the United States. Beside these mighty problems upon which depended the economic and political future of his people, the question of a standard of sex conduct was definitely secondary.

So it must have seemed to Dessalines, the founder of the state and first "law-giver" of Haiti. By his official actions it is evident that the economy of the country was his primary concern, with defense against a return of the French a close second. In his pronouncements he bowed respectfully to religion and then postponed action until some more convenient season. He pronounced likewise some very proper sentiments on marriage and morals, calling attention to the benefits of wedlock, piously deprecating sensuality and voluptuousness. His imperial constitution of 1805 encouraged lawful unions, treating marriage as a socially virtuous state to be cultivated.

This was all words, however, and came strangely from the black general who was, as everyone knew, a notorious libertine. He lectured his people on the danger of yielding to their passions, yet showed no intention of controlling his own impulses or those of his favorites. He was, indeed, the last man in Haiti to make a gesture toward sexual morality among the people, for although he was married his daily life was a complete negation of moral precept. In every town he habitually visited he established mistresses, bestowing large sums of money upon them. He employed every sort of seduction, honor, and gift to conquer the virtue of females who valued their "respectability." Actually, he did not often need to use violence, for the prevailing moral tone was not so high but that most young and attractive women would yield to their Emperor.

The sternly upright Haitian historian, Madiou, has a formidable paragraph on the vices of Dessalines. He tries partially to excuse him on the grounds of his fury at discovering conspiracies against his authority among his colored lieutenants, asserting that his early gen-

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must pass to an illegitimate child if recognition is accorded. It is likewise strong in its harmony with actual conditions: in the absence of legal marriage among the people, it would have been manifestly unfair to favor a few fortunate children. Dessalines argued that the revolution had legitimized all Haitians; that it was unjust to prevent a child's inheriting from the person who had given him life; and that since all Haitians had come out of slavery and degradation into freedom, no new inequalities should be instituted.[4] 175 671 848 428

If this law encouraged family life, it weakened marriage both of the civil and religious kind: where was the sense in the expensive luxury of a wedding when children were just as legitimate without it? By conforming to folk practice the Emperor confirmed it. Only the aristocrats disliked his law, for it seemed to make light of one of the distinctions they cherished—the formal wedding. It irked them to have the State place a casual child upon an equal plane with one born after proper marriage. 175 581 671 565

At still another point the law accorded with living conditions at the time. During the years of fighting many men had been killed, and always the large standing army kept thousands of others away from settled farm life. Home, then, was for a child the abode of his mother—a fact recognized by the law's insistence upon maternal relationship rather than paternity. Such a word as "matriarchate" has no place here; but from the days of Dessalines to modern times, the lowly Haitian thinks of his home primarily as where his mother lives. 175 593 671

As if the advantages of formal wedding were not already sufficiently weakened by this law, other enactments of the empire struck at other phases of marriage. Divorce was permitted for adultery, for incompatibility of temperament or character, and by mutual consent. Such provisions not only broke away completely from Catholic practice, but made getting out of wedlock a casual matter of taking an oath. The complaint of incompatibility need be made by only one spouse; "mutual consent" as a ground for divorce was probably not allowed in 1805 in any other country of the Western World. 175 671 586

Dessalines did not appear to care one whit for the good opinion of white foreigners. It sufficed for him if Haiti endured, whatever Europeans thought of her. Christophe, on the other hand, was extremely sensitive to foreign disapproval. Many of his official acts can 175 643 648

4. According to the testimony of Madiou, op. cit., III, 116.

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be explained only as efforts to win outside respect for his kingdom et blacks. He was aware of the scorn in which white people held the apparent absence of all sexual morality in Haiti, and so set about introducing reforms. Even as a general he had opposed the dissolutions of Dessalines.

175 643 582 671 581 [595]

In an early pronouncement Christophe proscribes concubinage (by which he meant the unmarried unions of the people), libertinage, and "all those disorders which weaken the family." To proscribe an evil is not necessarily to put an end to it, however, and so he tried also to persuade and educate his people to the habit of full legal marriage. His steps at persuasion were various. In speeches he urged weddings upon his subjects; yet a man could see little reason for tying himself to one woman for life, assuming *legal* responsibilities at an expense, when already from experience he knew that he could have a woman's loyalty without the ceremony. Although weddings somewhat increased after 1806, Christophe's verbal campaign was a failure. He next tried force. In one town he made all the females assemble in the public square; then, separating the married from the unmarried, commanded his royal guards to advance, each to select an unmarried woman who should become his wife. At other times he selected young men and women by lot and had them married "by their King's authority." No nobleman in the kingdom could long remain unwed: indeed, Queen Victoria might have approved Christophe's solicitude for the moral uprightness of the Haitian court.

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Another means by which Christophe forced his people into formal marriage was the indirect one of attacking property rights. Realizing that Dessalines' law by guaranteeing inheritance to natural children encouraged people to remain unmarried, he rescinded it by one of the first acts of his rule.[5] This act reestablished French practice, making it all but impossible for illegitimate children to inherit anything. Most persons of property found this law persuasive where words had left them cold. Madiou thought the law "excessively severe in a country where nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of the population were born out of wedlock,"[6] and he spoke of its disharmony with general practice at the time. Actually,

5. Law of March 25, 1809.
6. Madiou, op. cit., III, 411.

it seems not radically to have affected the masses but only the fairly well-to-do.

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175 669 ary, 1843, Boyer realized that it was futile to oppose the revolutionaries and departed for exile, going by way of Jamaica to Paris.

[645] [159] Now came the test of the revolutionary leaders.[11] The state was in their hands; their own representative, Rivière Hérard, was the new president. They proceeded to concoct a ridiculously naive constitution which by granting a popular vote alienated large bodies of their mulatto support; to insult the black army leaders; and to allow the defeat of Haitian forces by Dominican revolutionaries, thus losing two thirds of the island's area. Every act weakened the party favoring representative government. Within a year Rivière was ousted and a black general was ruling Haiti with a rod of iron. The Revolution of 1843 from which so much was expected had by its very success ruined the parliamentarians, for with power in their hands they showed themselves utterly inept.

175 642 643 A succession of black generals now came to the presidency. When Faustin Soulouque became president in 1847, the fourth Negro within four years, and made himself emperor two years later, Haiti found herself once more back at the strong-man principle. The *élite* were out of office, relegated to inferiority in all phases of political life.

175 665 565 In the middle of the nineteenth century the groups upholding the conflicting principles in politics became organized political parties. Those favoring parliamentary rule called themselves Liberals; those believing in the sole rule of a strong dictator were called Nationalists. But by no stretch of the imagination could the Liberal party be considered democratic. The noble principles expressed in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the American Declaration of Independence were uncongenial to Haiti. One of the prime tenets of the Liberals, indeed, was that men were not created equal; rather that certain men (the *élite*) were clearly the superiors of others. Liberty

[175] [669] 11. The revolution was almost wholly an affair of the *élite* caste. The mulatto Boyer was deposed, and the mulatto Rivière Hérard took his place. If anyone thought of the peasants, it was only to use them to manipulate and manoeuvre the "oust" into office. Boyer's secretary-general, deposed along with the President, appealed to his countrymen against their accusation of treason against him, saying "My last wishes will be for the prosperity of Haiti and the regeneration of the African caste, to which I have consecrated myself wholeheartedly for forty years, without ever thinking of my own interests." (Joseph Balthazar Inginac, *Message à ses compatriotes, et principalement à ceux qui ont dirigé les affaires populaires de la république depuis la fin de janvier dernier* [Port-au-Prince, March 18, 1843], p. 6). Yet if these are more than hopeful words, they refer only to the distribution of the land which made peasants of the "African caste," and to Inginac's pamphlets on how to raise coffee and other products—which none of the peasants could read.

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The era from 1883 to 1915 was Haiti's worst, politically. Revo-

lution succeeded revolution; the country sank deep into graft and scandal; foreign powers made Haiti debase herself before them. Some of the élite, backed by foreign merchants resident in the country, went so far as to urge annexation by the United States rather than endure continued disorder in economics and degradation in social life. They felt matters had come to such a pass that only so radical a change could clean the Augean stables. This was the period of a succession of political pamphlets[14] written by élite thinkers to set forth the necessary steps of reform. Every president was a black autocrat, holding power by his control over the masses. If an occasional one was more than mediocre (Hyppolite, for example), his good qualities were sure to be more than offset by the ignorant boors (such as Nord Alexis) who followed him.

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True, even the most incompetent of the Negro presidents was obliged to employ a few élite, for literacy was necessary in the foreign office if nowhere else. The aristocrats were impotent, however, for Haitian problems had tremendously increased at the very period when they were losing control of government policy. Reforms were imperative, as every member of the élite knew; but no black president saw the need, or seeing it, had the vaguest idea how to proceed toward effecting them. Beyond the shameful disgrace of Haiti's position in the world of independent nations, the thoughtful could glimpse the anarchy which must inevitably result from continued ineffectiveness.

175 643 645 565 [648]

Reforms were not forthcoming. Rather, anarchy came, bringing international complications in its wake. The American Marines occupied the country. An era was ended.

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It had been a strange journey in political ideas from the time of Pétion and Christophe to that of the Occupation. The early leaders seemed to envision triumphs for Haiti in a world of great powers, and to see themselves as men with a mission. After Boyer the vision dimmed. We have Soulouque, whose tinsel empire was mere stage setting for the act of a neighborhood bully; the tyrant Domingue; the senile Nord Alexis; the utterly incompetent fly-by-nights in the decade before the Occupation. Even Geffrard the reformer, prob-

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14. Among the most lucid of these were: Démesvar Delorme, *La Misère au sein des richesses* (1872); Edmond Paul, *Les Causes de nos malheurs* (1889); Léonidas Lavertujon, *Haïti: le danger de la patrie* (1893); Alcius Chazmann, *Haïti, vivre-et-vivre* (1905); and Auguste Magloire, *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social* (1909).

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A revolution directed by a general of real ambition was likely to
involve an appeal to foreign powers. Haiti being almost roadless, 175
ships were important for moving troops and blockading seaports. 669
Many a chieftain has purchased six or eight ships abroad, and with 649
this "navy" won his fight. Financial intrigue was frequent. By bor- 457
rowing money from France, Germany, or England, with the promise [491]
to reshape Haitian financial policy to the benefit of the creditor [505]
country, several revolutionaries have secured funds for arms and the necessary soldiers to effect a coup. Sooner or later also one might expect to see the Môle Saint Nicolas, which guards the Windward Passage pathway between Cuba and Haiti, come into the picture. Cession of the Môle has frequently been held out as bait for foreign support, but popular opposition to white ownership of any Haitian land has always stopped actual cession. When Haiti's debt to Germany was due, she borrowed from France to pay it, and then later borrowed from the United States to pay France. All such appeals to foreign powers have merely drawn attention to the defenseless position of the country; many a successful revolutionary chief has lived to regret his appeal for aid.[19]

The one time between 1804 and 1915 when political opinion was 175
vocal and truly significant was in the latter years of Boyer's administration. Then it took pains to attack specific evils with steady per- 665
sistence, even though the cures suggested were vague. Yet after the 208
successful elimination of Boyer, politicians who had worked so brilliantly in the opposition showed themselves even more incapable. Political thought, at a low ebb for the next forty years, revived only when, after 1883, the Liberals were eliminated from politics. Their complete defeat seems to have given élite thinkers time for sober reflection upon the plight of their country. Before 1843 the critics had been in a position to make their words effective; after 1883 they wrote—soberly, brilliantly, persuasively—but their books and pamphlets were read only by a small group of fellow aristocrats who already thought as they did, or disagreed with them in print. Political homilies made no impression upon the minds of the peasants left uneducated by all the élite presidents of Haiti.

In the crucial days of the American Occupation, once again political [648]
debate rose to brilliant heights. The rude shock of seeing foreign

19. See, on this whole subject of Haiti's foreign relations, an excellent chapter in Montague, op. cit., chap. IX.

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175 whites patrolling the streets seems to have given reality to criticism
665 which before then would have been academic. The élite were back
208 again in the political forum. Unreflecting patriotism urged the
648 immediate withdrawal of the Marines, but a considerable number of the legislature saw that it would be years before they left. The problem, then, they saw variously: some wished to be eloquent spokesmen for the patriotic anti-whites and did their best to embarrass the Occupation; some, feeling that the Americans were benefiting the country, tried to make things move smoothly; while others, seeing a fertile field for gain, tried to ingratiate themselves with the American authorities.

175 The twenty years between 1915 and 1934 heard many eloquent,
643 impassioned speeches, not all of them coming to the same conclu-
642 sions. The élite were divided in most issues raised by the Occupation,
648 so that the old neat dichotomy between élite and army no longer
662 prevailed. The President, Dartiguenave (1915–22), was for the first time since 1879 a Southerner and a mulatto; yet in 1922 when he was a candidate for reélection it was Southern élite votes which defeated him. Executive, legislature, and judiciary all had just enough power under the Occupation to make subtle manoeuvres, and all three branches of the government displayed a real genius for the political game. They often succeeded in putting the onus of an unpopular act upon the Americans, and in taking the credit for popular measures with which they had had little to do. They prodded and pricked all the weaknesses in the logic of the American State Department. They forced numerous concessions. If at times they seem to have been overclever, playing the game of politics merely for an opportunity to display their skill, at other times many of them showed a deep understanding of realities which had to be faced.

175 The Occupation, ordered by that high prophet of democracy,
648 Woodrow Wilson, professed its determination to give Haiti her
666 first opportunity to be democratic. Yet the Marines really dictated
642 the choice both of Dartiguenave in 1915 and of Borno in 1922 and 1926. The constitution of 1918 was prepared in Washington; it was submitted to a plebiscite, but the farcical vote—69,337 for and 335 against—was clearly the result of electioneering by the Marines. The presidents of Haiti ruled with executive councils, subject to Ameri-

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can "advice and approval," rather than with the legislature subject to popular control. Even under such restrictions the politically minded found ways of exerting pressure on the Marine authorities. 175 641 666

One of the darkest days of military subjection by a foreign power came a changed order of politics in the country. The practically unbroken line of dull incompetents who had come into the presidency ended; instead of ignorant army leaders, educated men were once more in office; instead of Northern Negroes, élites of Port-au-Prince; instead of benighted marines bewildered by world affairs, men who, if not great statesmen, at least had minds capable of understanding Haiti's relation to international economics and politics. 642 175 643

The élite were back in power. In the mind of every friend of Haiti arose the question whether the events between 1879 and 1915 had taught them lessons which would make their return to responsibility productive of great things for the country. Because of the abnormal situation resulting from the Occupation, the world depression, and the briefness of their new ascendancy, one cannot yet speak with assurance. Nevertheless, there are few encouraging signs. Political office is still regarded by most candidates in terms of their own advancement rather than service to Haiti. Very little has been done to extend the base of voting by developing local responsibility and education among the masses. Élite youths still receive a classical education, still disdain manual labor, still cherish the ideal of a graceful life of ease. The president still rules as an autocrat supported by the gendarmerie—substitute for the army of former days. One can see no decrease in social distinctions or in the disdain of the élite for peasant people; on the contrary, there has even been an increase of this feeling because the Occupation (through its Agricultural Service particularly) seemed to open paths of development to the peasants. Social antagonism, not social responsibility, still underlies political life.[22] 175 642 [641] [666] [565] [643] [565]

To every one of these strictures there is a plausible reply. It is no light matter to unsettle the minds of nine tenths of a population by education, to cause an economic revolution by improving agricultural techniques, to admit to political life a people unaccustomed to 178 65

22. Dr. Jean Price-Mars, in *La Vocation de l'élite* (Port-au-Prince, 1919), *passim*, especially pp. 51 ff., urges the élite to accept their responsibilities rather than rest upon the debilitating assurance of their innate superiority. [114] [565]

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178 it. Moreover, the Haitian budget is in the neighborhood of seven
65 million dollars, for which sum not much in the way of great improvement for three million people can be expected. The task of regenerating Haiti calls for self-sacrificing genius—at present the élite hardly qualify either as self-denying servants of the public or as geniuses.

175 Haitian affairs during the 1930's were under the direction of
693 President Sténio Vincent, an able man to whose credit much can be
642 said. He devoted himself to his task with assiduity, talking face to
648 face with the peasants in Créole, urging them to assist in reforestation
241 and to use wisdom in crop rotation. He settled serious disputes with the neighboring Dominican Republic in amicable fashion. It was he who carried on the delicate and successful negotiations with President Roosevelt to give Haiti control of her own affairs once more. In coffee culture, assistance to trade, financial matters, and other economic details, he often proceeded expertly, particularly in view of the world depression which began as he assumed office. On the other hand, Vincent made the legislature his servant rather than a partner. He was a dictator (fortunately a benevolent one) who changed the constitution by highhanded methods in order to gain his own reelection. His régime rested upon his alliance with the efficient Garde d'Haïti. There were few signs of democracy or of respect for civil liberties, as Americans understand those terms, in Vincent's eleven years.

175 The spectator has a feeling that he has seen all this before, when
643 for example Geffrard was elected to assure parliamentary government, only to become an effectively benevolent dictator as soon as the legislature opposed him. Geffrard was on the whole a good president, as Vincent was; but the former did not succeed in setting Haiti upon the path of economic and social security, and one hardly dared expect it of his modern counterpart.

175 In April, 1941, Élie Lescot, former Haitian Minister to the United
643 States, was elected as the thirtieth president of the republic. Vincent
648 had refused to call a plebiscite to approve an extension of his presidential term for an additional five years, as he had done in 1935 near the end of the six-year term to which he was elected in 1930. Lescot had begun his presidency with many advantages, chiefly the friendly support of his predecessor, his acquaintance with United States officials, and a recent negotiated pact by which American aid will

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be given to Haiti for war rubber plantings.[21] Opposition to Lescot comes chiefly from those who consider him too friendly with the Dominicans who killed hundreds of Haitian workers in 1937. Lescot having figured prominently in negotiations that led to the Dominican government's agreement to pay indemnities to Haiti for the slaughter.

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Reviewing the whole course of Haitian history, the field of politics seems to have marshaled itself behind a few regularities. In every case there have been voices raised to protest, yet the ruling clique, whatever its grouping, has effectively supported these characteristic political customs:

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1. Complete dominance of political life by the president. Strong men seem to be necessary to rule ignorant masses. Even the revolutions precipitated by parties campaigning for parliamentarianism have, when successful, become governments by the president. This concentration of power in one man's hands makes the next revolution possible, for it is easier to overthrow one man than to eliminate a party based upon wide suffrage and diffused responsibility.

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2. The inferior position of cabinet ministers. These have resembled neither European nor American secretaries of state in their responsibilities, but have been little more than clerks appointed by the president to serve as heads of a bureau. The treasurer-general, for example, during most of Haiti's history has merely received the moneys, while the president disbursed them. The secretary-general has neither originated nor conducted the details of public policy. Often as not, the minister has made a convenient whipping boy when the president has got himself involved in internal or foreign complications: by demanding the minister's resignation the president remained unscathed.

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3. The unimportance of the legislature. It has made useful patron-

21. The European War, threatening the supply of rubber coming to the United States from British Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies, has made the American government seek new sources. The Department of Agriculture established an experimental station and breeding gardens for rubber plants in Haiti, and the results were so successful that extensive areas were planted with rubber trees. Haiti and the United States in May, 1941, reached a long-term agreement for "the development of agriculture and economy"; the projects embraced under the agreement include not only rubber but the further development of Haiti's banana plantations, the planting of oil crops, drug plants, spices, fiber plants, the stimulation of handicraft industries, and the development of forestry resources peculiar to the tropics. A further extension of an additional $500,000 in credits will be made for use on highways, irrigation projects, and to provide transportation facilities for the areas to be planted to rubber trees.

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175 ment that two thirds of the members of either Chamber must be
642 present before a law could be voted—a stipulation making it possible
[646] for any clique to hold up legislation by absenting itself.

1874. The constitution of Domingue who, having defeated the
[643] Liberals, promulgated a constitution "profoundly modifying" the language of the 1867 document. It legally concentrated power in the hands of the president—where, indeed, it had always been in spite of constitutional declarations.

1879. Salomon's first constitution, which professed to be a reexamination of Haitian institutions, but was actually not different in essentials from the document of 1846. The line from Pétion to Riché to Salomon and his successors was the main one from which deviations, such as those of Soulouque, occurred.

1886. Salomon's second constitution, a mild revision of his first.

1889. Hyppolite, the new president, felt it necessary to have a new
[178] constitution, although like the constitution of 1886 this was little more than a revision of that of 1879. Under the 1889 document Haiti continued to function, more and more haltingly, up to the time of the American Occupation.

1918. The constitution drawn up in Washington[7] and forced
[648] through in Haiti by a farcical plebiscite. Its most debated provision
[423] was the elimination of the prohibition against ownership of land by foreign whites, thus ending the one common point in all previous constitutions since 1805. For the rest, it changed little of the actual
[641] structure of Haitian government, but provided a great number of unaccustomed democratic rights: freedom of assembly, trial by jury in political cases, direct election of senators, submission of amendments to popular vote, freedom of the press.

1927. Although this is considered merely a revision of the 1918
[641] constitution, its changes were actually more noteworthy than many expected by the so-called new constitutions. Thirteen amendments were carried by popular vote, again so overwhelming as to be ridiculous, restricting many of the democratic liberties granted in 1918 which had proved embarrassing both to President Borno and

7. Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his campaign for the vice-presidency of the United States in 1920, claimed that he had written most of this constitution while he was Woodrow Wilson's assistant-secretary of the navy. (See the *New York Times*, August 19, 1920.) The constitution was approved in Haiti by a vote of 69,337 to 335.

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175 701 [512] Saturday to use their time cultivating the soil, pursuing some mechanical craft, or acting as day laborers.

692 703 175 It must be once more emphasized that the civil was everywhere subservient to the military power. The administration of justice in tribunals was carried out only at the pleasure of the army chiefs. No person would have dared bring suit against a high officer; the only efficacious way of obtaining justice against petty offenders was through summary decision and corporal chastisement by the commanding officer.

701 625 175 By the close of Boyer's rule, during which he had kept the army up to its full numbers while pursuing a policy of economy, the outward appearance of the troops was almost ludicrous. They appeared at review wearing generally what pleased them or what they could scrape together, for they had to supply their own clothing and arms. The only effectual employment of the soldiery was as armed police, for Haiti never had to fight external powers. The soldiers drummed and fifed, mustered on parade and went through the formations, but otherwise merely stood (or sat) sentry at the doors of public offices, hunted up at the command of the magistrates *les mauvais sujets*, guarded prisons and prisoners on chain-gang duty, loitered at barriers, collected tolls, and examined permits.

175 701 [668] [703] A large army, practically idle, could easily be seduced into the support of revolutionary movements. Principles of discipline and loyalty current in European armies of the day were nonexistent in nineteenth-century Haiti. The numbers in the army varied from twenty to forty or fifty thousand. A strange estimate was made for the year 1867: 6,500 general officers and staff; 7,000 regimental officers; and only 6,500 soldiers.[15] It was said that "*tout Haïtien qui n'était pas général de division était au moins soldat.*" The higher grades became rewards for political service; the lower ranks had to be filled up by recruiting parties—when these were abroad, all men who did not desire a period of enforced leisure away from home remained in hiding.

While the army was not alone responsible for the tragedies of insurrection and mismanagement which consistently befell the country, it was never uninvolved in these misfortunes. Only the [648] radical reforms undertaken by the American Occupation saved modern Haiti from continued military domination.

15. Sir Spenser St. John, *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, p. 310.

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175 Haiti under Dessalines seemed to be flourishing, although it was
433 less productive than under the French colonial régime. This was partly because the material damage of the wars had been too great to be quickly repaired; partly it was because many of the free Haitians had discovered ways of disappearing into the remote valleys, there to live the life of independent squatters, safe from the blows of Dessalines' overseers. Tables of exports showed that sugar production was rapidly declining, and that coffee was now becoming the principal crop of the country.[4] Many cane fields, indeed, were turning into rugged thickets, their mills and refineries falling to ruins beside the clogged irrigation ditches.

175 It was a bewildering "system," then, this instituted by Dessalines:
466 intense activity of serfs on government plantations, but an increasing
439 number of deserting squatters; foreign trade encouraged, yet run by
579 principles of local favoritism. Even the old-fashioned practice of piracy was reëstablished, for the Emperor gave letters of marque to some of his subjects who owned ships, allowing them to pursue French and Spanish vessels as the rightful prey of an enemy country. Sometimes these Haitian corsairs even disturbed smaller English merchant ships. Finally, it was Dessalines who said to his favorites, "*Plumez la poule* [that is, the Haitian people], *mais prenez garde qu'elle ne crie pas.*"

175 Christophe, upon his accession to power in the North, completely
439 abandoned the fantastic schemes of Dessalines for putting an end to all contact between Haitians and foreigners. Among his earliest acts
437 were efforts to undo the economic measures of the Emperor. In his first address he proclaimed certain free ports, announcing that the flags of all nations would be respected and property protected.[5] Next he abolished the consignment system of trading, allowing all foreign traders free access to Haitian merchants. This open system did away with the need of smuggling.

175 Because Christophe was almost pathetically anxious to make a
439 good impression upon Great Britain, he was scrupulous in living up
648 to his promises of security of property and justice in commercial dealings—to British merchants. The United States fared ill at the King's hands, for it was a young republic which had by refusing

4. See note on this chapter, p. 320, section 4.
5. His constitution of 1807 likewise makes this promise: "The government solemnly guarantees to foreign merchants the security of their persons and property."

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175 recognition to the kingdom specifically failed to pay him proper
439 respect. Moreover he seized the property of American merchants in
648 his kingdom to make good a sum of $123,955.19 he could not recover from a Baltimore firm.[6] Agriculture flourished in the North, but the English were not yet certain whether Haitian credit could be trusted. The demand of the traders for cash was allowed, and so with almost no risk British dealers supplied the steady demand for staple trade goods,[7] taking in return either coffee and sugar or the equivalent in cash.

175 Christophe was chary of publishing any specific figures on the
439 economic life of his kingdom: we have no way, therefore, of estimating either the annual production or the annual income. One of his statesmen, Baron de Vastey, affirmed that in 1817 more than 150 ships were supplied with cargoes of coffee and sugar at the Cape alone.[8] This number is equal to that which sailed from the port during its most peaceful and prosperous periods in colonial times; one suspects the baron of exaggerating. We know, however, that Christophe was the chief merchant in his kingdom, setting his own prices and disposing of his own goods before others could sell; we know, too, that he left a large fortune in his coffers when he died.

175 Like Dessalines, King Henry Christophe had his pirates, and re-
579 doubtable ones. But he warned them to prey only on French ships
439 bound for ports in Pétion's republic in the South; he did not wish his trade interfered with in the North.

The policies of Dessalines and Christophe were personal, based upon their subjective prejudices and preferences; those of Pétion were more in accord with the practice of other civilized nations of the time. They had to be, perforce, in view of the economic and political position of his republic.

175 Southern Haiti had never, even in colonial times, been so intensely
439 cultivated as the North. Foreign traders were accustomed to deal at
648 the Cape, now the capital of Christophe's dominion. while Port-au-Prince was but a secondary market. After the civil war Christophe had practically allied himself with Great Britain. If this coup were to be counterbalanced, Pétion would have to choose for allies among

6. See Ludwell L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938*, p. 48.

7. Christophe did not encourage his people to purchase any of the extravagantly rich manufactures of Europe, but rather to keep their wants simple.

8. Formerly Cap François, then Cap-Haïtien, but under Christophe renamed in his
[103] honor Cap-Henry; it is now Cap-Haïtien.

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the still weak United States, France—the traditional enemy of Haitians, and moribund Spain, who was in fact shortly to lose most of her empire in the New World. Since he did not mean to drive his people to work, he resolved to exploit to the full the benefits of foreign trade in the hope that profits from exports would stimulate production. As for allies, he cultivated the friendship of the United States, but also sought to wean British merchants from the Northern ports. To this end, although he levied duties of twelve per cent on goods of other nations, he reduced duties on English goods to five per cent.[9]

Pétion, content to govern without an impressive court, gave the greatest encouragement possible to trade; he sheared expenses and managed to balance his budget. In 1818, for example, his revenues were $2,646,000 and his expenses $2,144,000, giving the republic a respectable surplus of $502,000.

Because Boyer was Pétion's disciple he followed in his predecessor's footsteps, thus fixing in his quarter-century administration the pattern of foreign trade under a tariff system. The Haitian élite seem never to have taken to commercial enterprise, nor has the country ever developed an economist even of fifth rank. Haitian thought, so eloquently articulate along political lines, has simply never turned its attention in any solid and serious way to economic problems. Nearly the whole of the foreign commerce of the republic from the earliest days was conducted by foreign merchants resident in Haiti. This was partly because the credit of the Haitians was not so generally established as to inspire confidence, but mostly it was due to lack of interest of the people in foreign trade.

In the eighteenth century Saint-Domingue had been almost the only colony producing such tropical products as sugar and coffee on a large scale; the absence of effective competition accounted for most of the prosperity of the French colony. In the nineteenth century, however, competition developed rapidly; and at this very time the laws and court decisions of Haiti began to hamper the business of the foreign merchants dealing there. By Article 21 of Boyer's Law of Patents, all persons engaging in any trade or profession except that of cultivation of the soil must be provided with a license or patent; all foreigners admitted as merchants into the republic must first secure the president's permission to acquire a patent; and when

9 See the Arrêté of October 15, 1814.

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175 If contemporary testimony can be credited, the complete indifference of the Haitian élite to business was matched by their ignorance of finance when this was anything more complicated than cash payment transactions or face-to-face exchange. They seem to have been wholly unfamiliar with the uses of commercial paper, the meaning of overdrafts, or bills of exchange. Individual credit was not understood, nor was a signature enough to start a flow of business. As one person from France put it in 1846, "It takes 10,000 francs of money to do 10,000 francs of business."[14] If a merchant doing a good business found his purse empty and needed only to borrow in order to purchase other goods, that circumstance offered to his mind "a redoubtable extremity enveloped in profound mystery; and it is a rule of loyalty and of honor to which Haitian commerce is never false, that the paper on which a man has placed his signature should remain, until the day the loan is paid back, impenetrably shut up in the portfolio of the lender."

[426] Interest, if money could be borrowed at all, was at the rate of one per cent a day, three per cent a month, and from sixteen per cent to twenty per cent a year. Thus letters of credit and promissory notes never moved the slightest business transaction in the country. To seek credit was to confess one's financial embarrassment.

175 The economic ills which harassed Haiti under Boyer were, to a greater or less degree, the same that bedeviled the country for the rest of the century. It seems worth while to list them, for they reveal the mentality of the ruling clique and caste—a mentality which could see no reason for altering of these basic matters, and which during administration after administration devoted itself to superficialities. Haiti's weaknesses were not entirely due to folly and clumsiness, however, but to a perfectly natural ignorance. There was no background for economic thinking: how should ex-slaves with a handful of old freedmen be familiar with credit, banking, overdrafts, and the like? Even education in France would not necessarily offer enlightenment on these matters. "Culture" meant literature, not economics.

These, then, have been the major economic defects of Haiti, 1806 to 1915, due partly to ineptitude, partly to imperfect education:

175 1. The exclusion of all foreign or white investment, industry, and capital. One article in every constitution was given over to this

14. R. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, Saint-Domingue, II, 187.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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quarantine: "Haiti for the Haitians." At first the prohibition on white ownership of land and financial investment in the country was attributable to a fear of reënslavement; then to a fear that financial commitments (which no Haitian really understood) would somehow lead to political subjection; and always the feeling of pride, combined with a desperate need of self-justification, made the Haitians want to keep their country entirely under control of their own people. It is, of course, possible that if white people had been allowed free access to the country, they might have destroyed the "Black Republic"; excluding white men altogether, however, seriously curtailed economic activity.

2. Overmilitarization. The army, numerous out of all proportion to the population, took the ablest men out of production, drained the treasury, and was a constant source of revolutionary activity.

3. Poor methods of agriculture. Critics often complained that Haiti ought to return to the system of large estates and forced labor; it apparently occurred to no one to suggest that education of the peasants might have made the land productive once more, by teaching the people new methods. Dividing up the land was an inevitable necessity unless every ruler were as willing as Christophe to be a dictator and as capable; but to keep the peasants in ignorance was not a necessity. Peasant landowners in Europe frequently tend their acres with skill, while in Haiti, with neither experience nor instruction in methods of tillage on small farms, the people developed steadily more destructive ways of farming.

4. Inefficient marketing. Assuming Haiti's dependence upon the staple crop of coffee and the handling of this crop by foreign merchants, every government seemed intent upon putting obstacles in the path of efficient marketing procedure.[15] The white trader could deal only with Haitians (who were ignorant in matters of international trade); although the foreigner had to pay a huge license fee in order to deal at all in Haitian products, he got no security in return, for he might not own land or obtain a lien on the real property of a citizen.[16] Banking and exchange facilities were wholly lacking.

15. In 1833 Boyer thought to "encourage" Haitians to commercial effort by gradually expelling foreign traders, refusing to grant them any new licenses to trade. His scheme failed, for the élite were not interested. Indeed, the actual effect of his plan was to disrupt the steady flow of exports and increase discontent with Boyer on the part of the élite plantation owners whose small profits were momentarily interrupted.

16. See James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 374 ff.

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175 441 439 648 Justice in the courts was administered by Haitians whose narrow patriotism biased their decisions.

5. A temperamental tariff policy. Not only were imports subject to a tariff which might be changed at the whim of any president, but exports also were taxed. When an administration was in need of funds it might suddenly, without warning, raise the tax on coffee exports and so disrupt a merchant's business plans. The customs-houses were in charge of Haitians who steadily became more inefficient and grasping as the century progressed, until many foreign merchants felt that the only way of getting business dispatched was by means of bribes. Examinations at customs were long drawn out, often there was open thievery, and erroneous valuations were common.

175 651 [648] 6. The burden of the indemnity to France. Contracted by Boyer in 1825, this annual payment for sixty years was an incubus to every administration, leaving no surplus in the treasury for public works, education, or any internal development; likewise, it made the threat of foreign interference all the more imminent.

7. A debased currency. Pétion was the first president to devalue money, and his example was frequently followed thereafter. Counterfeiting was general. When a country's monetary system is unstable, its officials accustomed to bribery and graft,[17] and its financial structure almost nonexistent, there is little chance for sound economic development.

175 245 8. Dependence upon a single crop. Haitian economy was tied to the staple coffee, grown with indifferent care, prepared for the market in outmoded fashion, and sold in competition with coffee from more scientifically run plantations in other tropical countries.

175 439 66 9. Political instability. The recurrent revolutions in Haiti made foreigners chary of participating in the country's business, since the government which made a contract might be out of office before the ink was dry.

175 439 565 10. Indifference of the élite to economic pursuits. What profits were obtainable went into the pockets of foreign merchants, not those of Haitian businessmen. In 1842 the comparative exports of the

[643] [159] [661] 17. Sir Spenser St. John, always a bitter critic of Haiti, remarked (*Hayti, or The Black Republic*, p. 88) sardonically that "Boyer had the rare quality of being honest, and left in the treasury, on his departure, the sum of £200,000, the first and last chief who was ever guilty of so unaccountable a weakness."

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United Kingdom, the United States, and Haiti, in proportion to population, were 185, 165, and 125,[18] yet Haiti had no carrying trade while the other two countries had, and so the profits were drained from the land.[19]

In short, as Haiti became accustomed to managing her own affairs, she became content with—or at least, reconciled to—little things. Inertia and tradition worked in their persistent fashion, with no effective stimulation from outside to combat them. From tradition and seclusion springs prejudice, and this became obvious whenever a change was proposed, particularly one which suggested bringing white people back to the country. To the élite it might mean the end of their social supremacy; to the masses, the end of their independence of daily action. The prejudice against sugar making was rooted in the same kind of suspicion. When a large landowner tried to institute a sugar mill on his estate, he met an adamant refusal of his hired workers to labor in it: "*Moué pas esclave!*" (I'm no slave!) The Negroes even disliked a bell to ring them to work on a plantation, for it suggested the slavery of the old régime.

Just before the Civil War in the United States a humanitarian gentleman developed a project of conducting numerous free American Negroes to Haiti in a planned migration. He displayed in a pamphlet[20] all the possible trades which might flourish in that country, if the migrants were to assume the position of a middle class; but his list is significantly small—sixteen occupations, on the order of tailoring, coopering, and blacksmithing, were all he could think of.[21] He made three comments which he hoped would attract the Negro Americans, as to a virgin field of opportunity: that in the

18. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 111–113, cites these figures, and says: "[Thus] Hayti, poor, and despised as she is, has a commerce, *in native produce*, nearly three-fourths as large, *in proportion to her population*, as our own United Kingdom, which is the great manufacturing part of the world; and seven-eighths as large as that of the United States, where the staple exports are produced by the labour of 3,000,000 slaves!"

19. Mackenzie (*Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti*, Document V) reports that in 1825 exports were valued at $5,793,758, and imports at $4,660,174; the trading was carried on in 552 *foreign* ships, of which 374 were American, 78 British, and 65 French. No Haitian ship traded abroad.

20. Benjamin S. Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans*. See particularly pp. 3–9.

21. His complete list is: tailor, shoemaker, baker, cabinetmaker, carpenter, mason, lime-burner, distiller, cooper, wheelwright, saddler, blacksmith, tinner, hatter, small-boat maker, potter.

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towns there was a surplus of shopkeepers, but nothing like enough producers of goods; that in the country few Haitians of intelligence and capital paid any attention to agriculture; and that Haiti needed more than anything else people of brains, not afraid of physical activity, and people with capital. The author had observed well. His characterization of the Haiti of 1860 was still true fifty years later.

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[p.265]

XV

HAITIAN PROBLEMS

FOR a citizen of the United States or a European country, national problems have to do with external as well as internal affairs. Foreign relations, armaments, international trade, treaties and commitments, loom as large as do unemployment, business depression, labor troubles, and social maladjustment. Political parties rise and fall with their promises or failures to deal successfully with matters arising from the country's position relative to world movements. In Haiti such generalizations do not hold. Her international relations have been and are comparatively minor, while her internal problems have been of a different order from those which trouble most of the rest of the Western World. This is not meant to imply that a world depression leaves Haiti unscathed, or that the country does not suffer when its trade in coffee is interrupted, but rather that its persistent problems would continue to exist whatever the state of world politics and economics. 178 66 648

Contacts of the Haitian people with the outside world between 1804 and 1915 were meagre. The slaughter of whites by Dessalines, the economic decline of the country, unwillingness of white nations to treat with a Negro state, the schism in the Catholic Church, restrictive legislation against white foreigners, general illiteracy of the people—all these shut Haiti off from the world. Christophe, it is true, invited in a few English schoolmasters and agricultural experts, but these remained only a short while and had little influence even among the élite. For a century Haiti saw no foreigners except the few traders at seaports, an occasional Wesleyan missionary, a limited number of consuls and ministers, certain travelers interested in odd corners of the earth, and, after 1860, Catholic priests and sisters. For the peasants there ceased to be any knowledge of the world outside of Haiti; for the élite France once more became the centre of the social universe, as it had been for the affranchis in colonial times. From Boyer's time onward élite youths went to Paris for an education, if they could afford it; the "culture" they acquired there had little relationship to Haitian problems. 175 648 [871] [242] [797] [871]

Foreign relations, in the political sense, revolved during most of

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Foreign relations, in the political sense, revolved during most of

175 648 the nineteenth century about loans and insurrections. Haiti maintained legations in those countries to which she exported most of her coffee and from which she might obtain credit. Revolutionary leaders sometimes promised as a bait for foreign assistance either tariff preferences or the cession of Môle Saint Nicolas for a naval base; if successful, they might fulfill the first promise but, because of the Monroe Doctrine and the watchful jealousy of the big powers, the Môle was never ceded. The United States had varied dealings with Haiti. Before the Civil War there was more than one movement to transplant freed slaves from this country to Haiti; after the war the United States came very near annexing Haiti; and negotiations over the cession of the Môle did not end until America acquired Guantanamo Bay, across the Windward Passage in Cuba, as a naval base to guard the entrance to the Caribbean.[1]

It was finally the combination of complicated economic affairs and political collapse which produced the Occupation of 1915. In the 175 preceding year both France and Germany threatened to send war- 652 ships to collect loans due them, and were stopped only by the out- 457 break of the World War. An American bank held as its subsidiary the Bank of Haiti, in which the government deposited its funds; when in 1914–15 the presidents followed each other in rapid succession, the bank on instructions from New York refused to allow the government to withdraw its funds. Haiti in retaliation threatened to seize its deposits by force, but the New York bank persuaded the United States government to send a ship to transfer the gold from Port-au-Prince to New York. There were other financial complications, particularly those relating to defaulted payments to a railroad 175 company. What finally precipitated the Occupation, however, was 648 anarchy. When, in July, 1915, President Sam slaughtered 168 politi- [579] cal prisoners and was himself mobbed and murdered, the American government ordered the landing of its Marines from a warship conveniently anchored in the harbor near Port-au-Prince.[2]

From 1915 to 1934 the foreign affairs of Haiti were under the direction of the United States, whose main concern was to order the economic relations of the country in such fashion that Haiti should

1. The foreign relations of Haiti with the United States have been clearly treated in Ludwell L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States*, 1714–1938.

2. One of the best accounts of the events leading up to the Occupation is that of H. P. Davis, *Black Democracy*.

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not find herself constantly embroiled with European states and American financial interests. The Haitian debt was funded, and a financial adviser remained in the country even after the Occupation came to an end. It is expected that by 1943 the last debt will be paid; the financial adviser, however, withdrew in 1941. Since the Occupation, although the republic has been free to manage her own affairs, she has consulted frequently with the State Department in Washington.

Nineteen years of occupation ended the century of Haitian isolation. The Americans built roads, conducted health campaigns, made their presence felt even in remote hamlets and valleys. American authors, political, romantic, and sensational, discovered the Antillean republic. Steamship companies stopped their cruises for a few hours at Cap-Haïtien to allow tourists to visit the Citadel, and at Port-au-Prince to see the sights of the capital. Every Haitian now realizes that there is a world outside.

Whatever crises have arisen in Haitian affairs, certain problems have persisted. For whom do they constitute a source of worry? Since the government has always been a dictatorship, limited or absolute, subject to no party control, the incumbents of office have never had the experience of being constantly reminded by their opponents of the misery or daily worries of the population. After a hundred years the people have learned that relief is not to be expected from politicians. Occasionally a dramatic revolutionary leader has persuaded some of the people that the officials in power were responsible for their distress, and so worked up a following; yet even when such movements succeeded, the masses never benefited. To most governments of the past century Haiti's problem has been only one: to frustrate insurrection. There is evidence that recent administrations have busied themselves assiduously with the country's internal problems, although none of them has been adequately solved. The élite, at least as a group, do not feel any apparent responsibility for the maladjustments, nor obligation to effect the necessary reforms. A few patriots, and those almost without exception not in office, know what ails the country and say so; a smaller number propose reasonable solutions. The problems remain. Of these the three outstanding are overpopulation with all its accompanying ills, health, and education.

To grasp the import of Haiti's problem of 270 over-population one

THE HAITIAN PEOPLE

161 should imagine the number of Vermonters sextupled, working with
433 hand tools and using methods which their great-grandfathers would
171 have considered antiquated; imagine the state with only a hundred
511 miles of paved roads, with no harnessed water power, no substantial fortunes, no middle class; imagine the farms gullied and worn out; ninety-five per cent of the people illiterate and undernourished; the state having no industry and practically no goods imported from New York, Massachusetts, or any other part of the United States. Under such conditions the low standard of living would be readily understandable.

Haiti might also be compared with Mississippi. Less than a quarter the size of that American state, it nevertheless has a larger population. Both Haiti and Mississippi are agricultural, with few towns, although no part of Haiti now has land as richly fertile as that of the Yazoo Delta. The low standard of living of the Mississippi share-cropper, whether Negro or white, is notorious—yet he has access to a few of the perquisites of civilization, whether these be elementary schools or moving pictures; the Haitian peasant lacks even these. In America the undercurrent of feeling is that something should be, probably eventually will be, done to improve the lot of the share-cropper. Certainly there is wealth enough in the country at large to alleviate conditions where they are deemed to be socially unhealthy. Not so in Haiti: the land is poorer, the numbers even greater, the area much smaller; and there is no wealth in the country, nor enough social vision among the upper classes to deal with the relentless increase of numbers.

168 How conceivably might this problem be dealt with? The first answer which would occur to many Americans, namely, birth control, is out of the question at present. Expense would stand in the way of its use by people who hardly ever see money; the peasants, unable to read, suspicious of new-fangled ways, untouched by all efforts to "uplift" them, and with no educational agencies, could hardly be converted to the use of contraceptives; while the Catholic
[795] Church, which until now has not had to raise its voice against birth control in Haiti, would fight any proposal to introduce it as it fought the campaign in Puerto Rico.

167 Another possible answer is migration. This solution many Haitians
●648 have tried without prompting. With little money available for

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travel, the peasants are limited in their migrations to near-by countries; specifically Cuba, which can be reached by sailing vessels, and the Dominican Republic. For many years there was a seasonal migration from Haiti to each of these neighboring countries, where wages on the sugar plantations, although low, have been better than nothing. Native Cubans and Dominicans, however, have quite understandably resented the influx of cheap labor which throws them out of work, depresses the wage scale, and thwarts efforts to improve working conditions; as the tide of Haitian immigration to the two adjacent countries increased during the 'twenties and the depression period of the 'thirties, resentment flamed into action. Murders occurred; ships to Cuba were not allowed to land; workmen were beaten and otherwise persecuted. In 1937 the Cuban dictator, Batista, expelled thousands of Haitians from the island. But the climax was reached in the autumn of the same year when the news gradually leaked out that in the Dominican Republic thousands of Haitians had been murdered in cold blood. It was estimated at that time that as many as 60,000 Haitians were living across the border; of these, certainly as many as 5,000 were butchered or drowned, and it is likely that 20,000 would be a more accurate figure if the whole truth were known.[4] In the world at the present time there seems to be no haven for penniless migrants, particularly illiterate blacks.

Even if Haiti could devise within her tiny budget a way to finance a whole series of public works, the problem of overpopulation would not be solved. Expenditures for internal improvements would merely lessen unemployment for the time being; it would not prevent the people from having large families of undernourished children.

It is easy enough to say that the problem of overpopulation could be solved by a combination of birth control, education, improvement of the soil and of agricultural techniques, introduction of manufacture, and public works projects. Each of these "solutions" is a major problem in itself, considering the limitations of the country.

4. This massacre was protested with all diplomatic vigor by Haiti. The gendarmerie, since the American Occupation the only military force in the country, numbered only 2,500 men and was no match for the military power of the Dominican Republic, so that diplomatic protest to the American nations was the only course open to President Vincent. A joint commission of the United States, Mexico, and Cuba investigated and awarded Haiti damages of $750,000, of which the Dominican government (meaning Trujillo) immediately paid $250,000, promising the rest in installments.

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These figures seem moderately impressive by comparison with those of 1875; but a government report of 1931 states[22] that of the 361 rural schools visited by investigators, 89 had no seats for their pupils, and 157 had only from one to three benches; 122 had neither desks nor tables upon which the pupils might work; 341 had no maps. Of the total number of 977 benches found in all the rural schools, 303 were almost unusable, and of the 26 maps in existence, 13 were entirely beyond use. Of the 355 teachers examined, 257 could not read, and 278 could not add, subtract, multiply, or divide. The average monthly salary was 32.07 gourdes, or $6.21. Of the 17,679 pupils enrolled in rural schools, only 4,022 attended. In this same report President Vincent claims to have made a radical reform in all these matters. His rural teachers are trained, many of them at the government agricultural school at Damien; school equipment has been distributed; salaries have been raised to 65 gourdes, or $13.

The American Occupation showed itself keen to assist education, but unintentionally the measures taken by the whites ran afoul of politics to a serious degree. The excellent agricultural experiment school at Damien was filled with élite students who attended it, in the opinion of many, chiefly in order to receive the scholarships offered; moreover, the class question was raised and bitterly argued: Should peasant students live and study with the élite, and should the curriculum be the same for both? Finally, education was one of the few matters not specifically included in the treaty between Haiti and the United States as under American direction. The result was unhappy: the Occupation was accused of setting up a rival educational "system" to that of the government. Even Bellegarde, most of whose ideas the Americans were trying to carry out, found himself in opposition, chiefly as a result of methods and political implications involved.

If only the budget of the country could be increased, one feels that the rural educational problem might be dealt with, for more and more people are aware of what education might do for the country. Even so, there are still many élite who betray their fear that with education the masses will desert the land and cease to be subservient.

That the élite, who in fact control the country, should receive a training which would fit them for technical skills is a proposal often

22. "L'Œuvre d'éducation rurale du gouvernement du Président Vincent" (Imprimerie de l'État, Port-au-Prince, 1934).

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197 a language into their daily speech. What the Americans have done to English, the Haitians in general have done to Créole. It is pertinent briefly to review the early history of Créole in order to comprehend the distinctly Haitian contributions to the language.

175 579 Through most of the seventeenth century Caribbean waters were full of pirates and buccaneers preying upon Spanish shipping. The effective monopoly which lordly Spain held in the preceding century over the trade of Europe with her rich Mexican and South American colonies began, in the early years of the new century, to crumble before the ingenious, speedy, and daring assaults of non-Spanish raiders. French, Dutch, and English sailors were all ready to try their hand at capturing laden Spanish ships. The rich cargoes of gold, silver, and merchandise were alluring enough to make the risk seem worth taking. And indeed the risk was not too great, for Spain's stately galleons were antiquated and cumbersome, generally no match for the flyboats[1] which had speed and much greater manageability. More and more Spanish control over the Caribbean, the Spanish Main, declined as the freebooters increased.

175 579 642 French sailors were among the most numerous and reckless of the gadflies who made life miserable for the Spanish traders. Drawn from the northern and northwestern provinces of France, these men had been seafarers all their lives. Harrying Spanish shipping was the most lucrative career for French sailors, and as the seventeenth century wore on their numbers in the Caribbean increased. By 1660 they had established a raiding base on La Tortue, an island off the northern coast of Haiti, where they developed a characteristic way of life —economic, political, and social—between raids.[2] Their presence near Haiti gave France a claim, in the Treaty of Ryswick (1697), to the western part of the island. For the next hundred years this region was to be known as Saint-Domingue.

175 579 197 Créole was born of buccaneering. In the seventeenth century the French of Ile-de-France had not yet supplanted the dialects of the French districts; the buccaneers consequently spoke their native speech, and since Norman sailors far outnumbered the others

[165] [192] 1. Origin of "filibuster," "flibustier," and "freebooter."

2. It was here that they came to be called "buccaneers." They raided the relatively deserted main island of Haiti (then still under Spanish control) for cattle roaming wild. These cattle they cooked over an open fire, with a certain kind of wood; the process was called "boucaning," and they themselves "boucaniers." They imported wives from the seaport towns of Normandy, and families began to be raised on La Tortue.

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a whole people. The Negroes, as distinct from the people of lighter color, are genial or kindly or lighthearted, as white authors have often said American Negroes were. But are they? If so, how does it happen that people of a certain skin color have distinct mental traits? If the generalizations are false, how does it happen that the same characteristics have been attributed to Negroes in both countries? Are the distinctive temperaments of people in different nations merely imagined, or are they real? And if real, are they taken on as a part of culture or inherent in the blood? 157

The United States is gradually beginning to be aware of the republics which lie to the south of her. Haiti is not as large or important as her neighboring states, but more than many others her future depends upon this country. The sociologist will find her three million citizens worthy of study. 648

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NOTES

CHAPTER II

The period between 1789 and 1803 may be summarized as follows: 175

1789–1791. Struggle for precedence between whites and free colored people, with the balance in favor of the whites. [565]

1791–1793. The slave insurrection, with consequent anarchy, and futile attempts of French commissioners to restore order. Both whites and colored people pushed into the background. [669] [563]

1793–1796. Invasion of the colony by English and Spanish; rise of the mulatto general Rigaud and the black general Toussaint. [648]

1796–1799. Consolidation of power by Toussaint; defeat and expulsion of Rigaud; emigration of whites. [643]

1799–1802. Toussaint in full power as governor-general.

1802–1803. Leclerc's expedition, with its initial successes and ultimate failure. Final achievement of Haitian independence under Dessalines and Christophe. [642]

PART III

Various efforts were made by American abolitionists working with Haitian presidents to colonize freed American Negro slaves in Haiti in the period before the Civil War.[1] All these projects came to unfortunate ends, some even to grimly tragic ones. During Boyer's time about 13,000 American Negroes went to Haiti, the government assigning to each family a portion of land upon its arrival. Very shortly most of those who could afford it returned to this country, and within ten years hardly one was still living upon the land. An American writer, Hunt, 1871 that during his seventeen years in Haiti (before 1860) he had known of but 13 Negroes from America who had been moderately successful; of these, 7 were merchants or traders, 4 mechanics, and 2 lawyers; and all were mulattoes. Five others were barely independent, and all the rest were day laborers or worse. In spite of this, Hunt planned another aided migration of American Negroes to Haiti. Warning them not to expect too much in the way of improvements in agriculture, he adds a significant paragraph: "Should the immigrants obtain quiet possession of unoccupied lands, and begin to use the plough instead of the hoe, his new methods of culture would be likely to draw upon him the jealousy and ill-will of his neighbors. For when new ways are *too* new to be accepted as an example, they are very apt to be felt and resented as a rebuke. More than one of Boyer's old immigrants have told me that they were obliged to give up agriculture and take to trading in towns, on account of annoyances of this sort. They found their fences down, or their water let off, of a morning; or evidences that cattle had been fed on their grounds over night; or the neighboring idlers, of which there are many, had stolen all their plantains and sweet potatoes, for the market. I do not mean to say that these Haytian cultivators are worse than any other rude people. On the contrary, I

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1. An excellent description of these projects is found in L. L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938* (Durham, 1940), chap. IV.

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3. Pétion, Boyer, and Inginac as Administrators

Pétion lived very simply in the South, like a plain republican magistrate. He sat on his piazza, accessible to all his people. He had a quiet way of answering his opponents which did not make enemies of them. He made his secretary answer every letter that arrived, no matter how small; many were simply inquiries about the President's health. Yet the wars between Pétion and Christophe dragged on from 1807 to 1812,[8] draining the finances of the republic. Not only the crops declined: so also did most of the public improvements instituted by the colonial planters; so did trade; so did habits of industry. Everything seemed to conspire against hard work. The rich plains of the Cul-de-Sac and the Artibonite Valley were ravaged by fire and warfare; necessary equipment for sugar making was destroyed, the money for new machines and buildings was unavailable; and the men were drawn away from their land by military duties.

Inginac, Boyer's secretary of state, after the Revolution of 1843 had got rid of both the President and his secretary, wrote his memoirs. There are some revealing passages. Inginac reports that Pétion told him only forty days before his death that Boyer was a man of probity and delicacy, "but unhappily he is petulant; he is too set in his ways to conciliate those who might assist him. In everything *he* wants to dominate, and he will bring unhappiness to the country if he does not change." Inginac cites cases to show that Pétion's prophecy was correct. Boyer in 1820 repealed the most unpopular laws, particularly those requiring personal corvée and the repair of public roads; but instead of taking advice from his cabinet on important economic matters, he frequently announced that he was president and would not be run by anybody. Consequently, according to Inginac, he made mistakes which might have been avoided.[9] Defending himself, the former secretary offers a clue to the failure of the régime—possibly unavoidable—by showing that the administration merely suggested, did not require, action:

"Have I not constantly, not only preached and corresponded about the necessity of making agriculture prosperous, but also given work at as high wages as the treasury could afford? Have I not created habitations on lands formerly totally uncultivated, putting formerly idle men to work? Have I not published at my own expense, although I directed the National Printery, methods for cultivating tobacco and coffee plants, of which I distributed gratis several thousand copies?"[10]

In spite of all encouragement which the administration could offer, agricultural production continued to decline, while expenses increased, and external trade fell off from a third to a half. The government had to borrow from the banking firm of Laffite in Paris to find even the interest for

8. Hostilities between the two parts of Haiti ceased about 1812 because of the mutual fear on the part of Christophe and Pétion of Napoleon's ascendancy, and the threat which this constituted to the whole former colony. Their war had ravaged the plantations and removed laborers from the soil. Then came the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain, cutting off many of the supplies which Haiti drew from both countries. There was accordingly an unwritten truce, with no further hostilities. A neutral territory of ten leagues between the boundaries of the two states was tacitly agreed upon: neither army was to enter it. This was the rich plain of Boucassin, once the garden of the island, now a wilderness.

9. Joseph Balthazar Inginac, *Mémoires* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1843), pp. 32, 34, 38.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

payments due to the French government.

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

[p. 99]

V

CASTES SINCE THE AMERICAN OCCUPATION OF 1915

IN 1915 American Marines entered Haiti. One of the major reasons for their intervention may have been economic; certainly this explanation or accusation has been frequently made by opponents of American dollar diplomacy. Nevertheless, the ground was well prepared by political incompetency in Haiti in the years preceding 1915, and the reason given to the world by American statesmen to justify the Occupation was essentially a political one: Haiti was in a state of anarchy. 175 648 642

As has been abundantly shown, Haiti never had a semblance of democracy. From its beginning the country was governed either by a despot—the president, who might or might not be benevolent—or by an oligarchy. The failure of Haitian politics from 1843 onward was the inability of the titular ruler and the oligarchy to work in harmony; indeed, the oligarchy was continually divided against itself. Only three of Haiti's presidents from 1843 to 1915 were more than mediocre statesmen.[1] It is merely a question of degree, whether such phrases as "political and economic stagnation" and "social inertia" are more accurately descriptive than words like decay and degeneration. 175 642

A brief résumé of politics between 1900 and 1915 will set the stage for a view of the Occupation in relation to the development of caste. 175 643 642

1. With this judgment by a foreigner Haitians may obviously disagree. In the author's opinion the presidents Geffrard (1859–67), Salomon (1879–88), and Hyppolite (1889–96) were relatively distinguished men. To Geffrard may be credited the following: increase of educational facilities; construction of much-needed public works; an attempt to form a true middle class, even by importing Negroes from the United States; reduction of the size of the army by half; healing of a sixty-year breach with the Holy See, so that Haiti might once again have approved priests; the opening of closed ports to commerce; and improvement of agricultural methods. Salomon was an educated man with European experience; his achievements were to create a national bank, establish a sound currency, retire the public debt, lower tariffs, bring in schoolteachers from France, open rural schools, bring Haiti into the International Postal Union. Hyppolite's chief triumphs were in the field of public works—much-needed buildings, bridges, docks, telephone and telegraph lines. 175 643 65

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

can "advice and approval," rather than with the legislature subject to popular control. Even under such restrictions the politically minded found ways of exerting pressure on the Marine authorities. 175 648 666

Out of the darkest days of military subjection by a foreign power came a changed order of politics in the country. The practically unbroken line of dull incompetents who had come into the presidency ended; instead of ignorant army leaders, educated men were once more in office; instead of Northern Negroes, élites of Port-au-Prince; instead of benighted martinets bewildered by world affairs, men who, if not great statesmen, at least had minds capable of understanding Haiti's relation to international economics and politics. 642 175 643

The élite were back in power. In the mind of every friend of Haiti arose the question whether the events between 1879 and 1915 had taught them lessons which would make their return to responsibility productive of great things for the country. Because of the abnormal situation resulting from the Occupation, the world depression, and the briefness of their new ascendancy, one cannot yet speak with assurance. Nevertheless, there are few encouraging signs. Political office is still regarded by most candidates in terms of their own advancement rather than service to Haiti. Very little has been done to extend the base of voting by developing local responsibility and education among the masses. Élite youths still receive a classical education, still disdain manual labor, still cherish the ideal of a graceful life of ease. The president still rules as an autocrat supported by the gendarmerie—substitute for the army of former days. One can see no decrease in social distinctions or in the disdain of the élite for peasant people; on the contrary, there has even been an increase of this feeling because the Occupation (through its Agricultural Service particularly) seemed to open paths of development to the peasants. Social antagonism, not social responsibility, still underlies political life.[20] 175 642 [661] [666] [565] [643] [565]

To every one of these strictures there is a plausible reply. It is no light matter to unsettle the minds of nine tenths of a population by education, to cause an economic revolution by improving agricultural techniques, to admit to political life a people unaccustomed to 178 65

20. Dr. Jean Price-Mars, in *La Vocation de l'élite* (Port-au-Prince, 1919), *passim*, especially pp. 51 ff., urges the élite to accept their responsibilities rather than rest upon the debilitating assurance of their innate superiority. [114] [565]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

178 it. Moreover, the Haitian budget is in the neighborhood of seven
65 million dollars, for which sum not much in the way of great improvement for three million people can be expected. The task of regenerating Haiti calls for self-sacrificing genius—at present the élite hardly qualify either as self-denying servants of the public or as geniuses.

175 Haitian affairs during the 1930's were under the direction of
643 President Sténio Vincent, an able man to whose credit much can be
642 said. He devoted himself to his task with assiduity, talking face to
648 face with the peasants in Créole, urging them to assist in reforestation
241 and to use wisdom in crop rotation. He settled serious disputes with the neighboring Dominican Republic in amicable fashion. It was he who carried on the delicate and successful negotiations with President Roosevelt to give Haiti control of her own affairs once more. In coffee culture, assistance to trade, financial matters, and other economic details, he often proceeded expertly, particularly in view of the world depression which began as he assumed office. On the other hand, Vincent made the legislature his servant rather than a partner. He was a dictator (fortunately a benevolent one) who changed the constitution by highhanded methods in order to gain his own reëlection. His régime rested upon his alliance with the efficient Garde d'Haïti. There were few signs of democracy or of respect for civil liberties, as Americans understand those terms, in Vincent's eleven years.

175 The spectator has a feeling that he has seen all this before, when
643 for example Geffrard was elected to assure parliamentary government, only to become an effectively benevolent dictator as soon as the legislature opposed him. Geffrard was on the whole a good president, as Vincent was; but the former did not succeed in setting Haiti upon the path of economic and social security, and one hardly dared expect it of his modern counterpart.

175 In April, 1941, Élie Lescot, former Haitian Minister to the United
643 States, was elected as the thirtieth president of the republic. Vincent
648 had refused to call a plebiscite to approve an extension of his presidential term for an additional five years, as he had done in 1935 near the end of the six-year term to which he was elected in 1930. Lescot had begun his presidency with many advantages, chiefly the friendly support of his predecessor, his acquaintance with United States officials, and a recent negotiated pact by which American aid will

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

not find herself constantly embroiled with European states and American financial interests. The Haitian debt was funded, and a financial adviser remained in the country even after the Occupation came to an end. It is expected that by 1943 the last debt will be paid; the financial adviser, however, withdrew in 1941. Since the Occupation, although the republic has been free to manage her own affairs, she has consulted frequently with the State Department in Washington.

Nineteen years of occupation ended the century of Haitian isolation. The Americans built roads, conducted health campaigns, made their presence felt even in remote hamlets and valleys. American authors, political, romantic, and sensational, discovered the Antillean republic. Steamship companies stopped their cruises for a few hours at Cap-Haïtien to allow tourists to visit the Citadel, and at Port-au-Prince to see the sights of the capital. Every Haitian now realizes that there is a world outside.

Whatever crises have arisen in Haitian affairs, certain problems have persisted. For whom do they constitute a source of worry? Since the government has always been a dictatorship, limited or absolute, subject to no party control, the incumbents of office have never had the experience of being constantly reminded by their opponents of the misery or daily worries of the population. After a hundred years the people have learned that relief is not to be expected from politicians. Occasionally a dramatic revolutionary leader has persuaded some of the people that the officials in power were responsible for their distress, and so worked up a following; yet even when such movements succeeded, the masses never benefited. To most governments of the past century Haiti's problem has been only one: to frustrate insurrection. There is evidence that recent administrations have busied themselves assiduously with the country's internal problems, although none of them has been adequately solved. The élite, at least as a group, do not feel any apparent responsibility for the maladjustments, nor obligation to effect the necessary reforms. A few patriots, and those almost without exception not in office, know what ails the country and say so; a smaller number propose reasonable solutions. The problems remain. Of these the three outstanding are overpopulation with all its accompanying ills, health, and education.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

443 eleven hundred and fifty sellers offer their wares in the course
443 of a single day. A careful tally is kept of these, since a fee for
651 the right of entry into the market is collected from all those who sell. Local tradespeople pay ten centimes each market day, but if they are sellers of meat they must pay five centimes a day for the right of entry, in addition to an annual license fee of 11.35 gourdes. A peddler of notions who goes about from one market center to another must, on coming to Mirebalais, either present a license costing 11.35 gourdes which grants the right to do business in any market of Haiti, or pay fifty centimes for permission to sell on any given market day. Other taxes collected for the upkeep of the market are particularly concerned with the transportation and sale of livestock. A fee of 3.50 gourdes is assessed when a cow is transported from one region to another or taken to the market for sale; one gourde must be paid the local tax-collector if a live animal is sold, the seller paying the tax; while if neither party to the sale knows how to write, a notary fee of two gourdes is assessed for drawing up a certificate of ownership. A fee of 3.25 gourdes is collected when a cow or bullock is butchered to be sold; for the slaughtering of a goat or pig, fees of two and one and a half gourdes, respectively, are collected.

443 A word must be said regarding the ubiquitous "small markets" that consist of a few women gathered at crossroads or at strategic points in towns on days when there is no large market, or wherever people gather. In Mirebalais such venders sit near the dispensary when it is open on Tuesdays. At cock-
[265] fights and dances or at communal celebrations a small group of women is invariably found who sell drinks, bread, sweets, and other articles of food. At these "markets," too, such cooking aids as lard are sold, which both for these small markets and the larger ones is remelted and poured into little bottles selling for five centimes each. The returns from this petty trade are very small, yet in the aggregate they probably bulk at some figure that is not insignificant in the local economy.

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

his fourth or fifth month, he is reprimanded for laziness if 856
late in sitting up, and when he is taught to walk his parents 861
call out: "Come, lazy one! Come on!" He receives no physical punishment, however, until somewhat older. Thus, for example, if after a child can crawl he is told not to go beyond the threshold, he is scolded the first two or three times he disobeys, but after this he is beaten with a small stick on the buttocks or thighs. Similar means are used to teach him at the same age not to go near the fire, to avoid the thorny cacti used to fence gardens, not to put things in his mouth, and — especially because of black magic — not to pick up anything from the ground. Training for bowel and bladder control is begun 863
shortly after birth and is continued at every opportunity the mother may have to pick up the child, so that he is usually fairly well trained when a year old, though complete control is achieved only after two years or more. A child who wets his mat is beaten, but "not too hard."

Baptism takes place when all is in readiness for the cere- 851
mony, a matter of a month or two after birth, unless the child 852
is seriously ill, in which case he is baptized immediately. The 608
fee of 2.50 gourdes to the civil officer who registers the birth [651]
is paid by the father. The godfather pays a similar amount to the priest for baptizing the infant, and in adddition, if he desires and is able, he may both aid the godmother in meeting the expenses of dressing the child and give the mother a gift. The godmother furnishes the child with a shirt, a dress, a [431]
bonnet — "a pretty one" — stockings, shoes, and, if she can afford it, silk for a ribbon-trimmed coverlet. These gifts are obligatory, and even where a hasty baptism of a sick child has made it impossible to provide properly for his outfitting, if he survives, his mother is given a present of money by both godparents so she can procure this finery.

As in most Catholic countries, the godparents play an im- 608
portant role in the life of their godchild. Not only do they "stand in the place of father and mother" at his baptism, but

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

increasingly arid as its altitude decreases. Next to the Plaine du Nord, the best-watered part of Haiti is the southwestern peninsula, which projects far beyond the shelter of the mountains in the rest of the island. 132

When one subtracts from the 10,000 square miles all the sterile wastes of cactus, the salt marshes and brackish lakes, and the rock barrens, one realizes the inevitability of a low standard of living for the mass of the people. Other nations buy little from Haiti, local industries never reach even the proportions familiar to small-town Americans, and the total national budget is less than seven million dollars a year. Not even the élite are well-to-do by American small-town standards; it is only by comparison with the masses that they can be said to constitute a favored economic class. They rule the country, however, and what benefits accrue to Haiti rarely get beyond their pockets. 433 [439] [651] [565]

The resident of Haiti can never lose sight of the social distinctions between the two castes, for they permeate every phase of Haitian life. It has been so since the first hours of the republic. Indeed, the origins of the caste system lie in the French colonial days of the eighteenth century. 565 175 178

Taxes were heavy

175 651 652 and work strenuous; but there were a sound currency, commercial and agricultural prosperity, and a full treasury.

175 643 159 Like many a great man he was an overweening egotist. His energy and ambition, for Haiti as well as for himself, neither understood nor tolerated a lesser determination than his own. At times he seemed more intent upon the letter than upon the spirit of his laws. Probably his chief defect, a common failing of strong men, was a disregard for humble individual worth. To write of him invites the most colorful vocabulary. He is Black Majesty and the Emperor Jones. By almost any standards of leadership he would be accounted a great man. He lacked only those few final, subtle qualities which make for sheer genius. In 1820, stricken by paralysis and faced with defections in his army, he died as he had lived, dramatically, ending his life with a specially saved bullet (folklore says a silver one), in his palace of the ironic name, Sans Souci.

175 643 In no significant respect did Christophe change the feudal structure of economic organization begun by Toussaint and carried on by Dessalines. It was in administration, especially as it affected social status, that the thirteen years of Christophe were important for the [641] future of Haiti. Where the Emperor had been an unpredictable tyrant whose heavy hand inspired only terror, Christophe was a sternly just father whose well-disciplined children respected, admired, and even loved him.

175 427 475 655 566 643 The land policy of the two régimes was similar. Government estates were farmed out on five-year leases to the highest bidders among the well-to-do; large plantations belonging to the state were tilled by cultivators who might, without taking the term too harshly, be called serfs; loyal supporters and wealthy individuals were entrusted with responsibility. Like Dessalines, Christophe added wealth to power and rendered all his subjects dependent upon himself rather than on their own resources and influence—but all this with a difference.

175 643 642 565 Where the Emperor had denied the natural vanity of his aides by refusing them nobility, Christophe accepted their ambition as perfectly normal and made use of it for his own purposes. Four years after he had established his state, he changed it from a republic to a kingdom; all his important men he made dukes, barons, counts, knights. He warned them that he would expect them to live up to the dignities conferred upon them. Pomp and regalia are costly;

3: Leyburn Z-4, ! (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

therefore plantations must be made to yield the uttermost farthing if the nobleman was to pay for the necessities of strict court etiquette. It was by no means a childish whim which prompted Christophe to call himself a king; rather an intelligent utilization of the human material the leader had to work with. Vanity was to serve an economic and a political purpose. 175 643 642 565

Christophe perceived that the defect of Dessalines' reign had been lack of security, both of person and property. Agriculture is a long-term investment and so must be hedged about by orderly rules. To this end the monarch stated his laws clearly, charged a fixed tax—one fourth of the annual crop—which would enrich the kingdom while allowing the tenant-proprietor a reasonable profit, and then guaranteed that no arbitrary demands would be made. Certainly there was no pampering of the wealthy, but there was ample prosperity resulting from regularity and security. 175 651

The ordinary citizen was, as he had been, bound to the soil as an agricultural laborer. This quasi-serfdom, however, was comparative freedom. It simply meant that the home and work of a man must be at the plantation on which he had been born. Saturday afternoons and Sundays were free, so that the laborers might make the most of their opportunities to visit the nearest market village, to buy and sell small goods, gossip, and enjoy the sociability of being part of a crowd. Being bound to the soil meant simply that they could not move, when the impulse seized them, to another plantation or another part of the country. Those whose mothers or relatives were natives of a plantation must return to that estate, being forbidden to live in towns. No person, military or other, who did not derive his living from a plantation, could marry an agricultural worker—a prohibition designed to prevent workers from leaving estates because of family ties, and particularly to prevent women, as mothers of future cultivators, from deserting agriculture. 175 566 641 466 [582]

Mediaeval serfdom itself went no further in binding people to the soil. Indeed, it did not go so far in regulating the daily life of serfs. Under Christophe the cultivators lived according to a routine as strict as that of a school. Reveille was rung as early as three o'clock to arouse women to prepare breakfasts for their menfolk; by four or four-thirty the bell was sounded for the commencement of work, which began after prayers had been led by the overseer. At nine o'clock there was a pause for luncheon, and then a resumption of 175 566 512 466

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

As if this were not enough to please the landed gentry,

the tax

of one quarter of the crop was abolished.[23] This tax worked moderately well on great plantations with hundreds of workers and a large annual budget, but it bore heavily, sometimes unfairly, on smaller farms. To give up the government's fourth meant a tremendous drop in state revenues, but this was to be compensated by a new tax of ten *gourdes* (a gourde was then worth about five cents) on every thousand pounds of coffee sold in the country, and by an export tax on coffee. A man might raise sugar or make syrup, tafia (raw rum), and distilled rum, without paying any tax at all. Coffee culture required little careful cultivation, while sugar required a great deal; removing the tax from sugar would, it was hoped, encourage the cultivation of cane. The President was putting into practice the then novel idea of Adam Smith that the more freedom an enterpriser is allowed, the more he will produce, so that by pursuing his own self-interest he unintentionally benefits the state. To know definitely what taxes will be imposed, reasoned Pétion, is more of an inducement to a landlord than to face the double fluctuation of crop prices and the state's quarter. Small proprietors and sugar planters were now, like the larger landholders, attracted to Pétion's régime. 175 651 471

His final boon to proprietors, and one which Adam Smith would not have approved, was that of governmental subsidies in bad years. When prices of coffee and sugar were low, the state bought large quantities of these crops for the purpose of raising their price. The result was to increase the debt and to make the people feel that the state was responsible for individual economic success, rather than their own efforts. 175 652

These first concessions were all made to the important people of the South—to the mulattoes, families of the old régime, persons who desired economic prominence in order to bolster social position. The small folk of the Republic came next. The President recommended to the Senate the abolition of the law dating back to Toussaint's time which prohibited the holding of plantations of less than a minimum acreage. The Senate accordingly[24] reduced the minimum holding to thirty acres.[25] Actually this legislation did not bring 175 423

23. By a law of March 9, 1807. This tax was instituted by Toussaint and continued in effect by Dessalines and Christophe.

24. On April 21, 1807.

25. Or ten *carreaux*. Toussaint's law had allowed properties of fifty acres only in cases of exceptional fertility of land. See Note 18.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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the still weak United States, France—the traditional enemy of Haitians, and moribund Spain, who was in fact shortly to lose most of her empire in the New World. Since he did not mean to drive his people to work, he resolved to exploit to the full the benefits of foreign trade in the hope that profits from exports would stimulate production. As for allies, he cultivated the friendship of the United States, but also sought to wean British merchants from the Northern ports. To this end, although he levied duties of twelve per cent on goods of other nations, he reduced duties on English goods to five per cent.[9]

Pétion, content to govern without an impressive court, gave the greatest encouragement possible to trade; he sheared expenses and managed to balance his budget. In 1818, for example, his revenues were $2,646,000 and his expenses $2,144,000, giving the republic a respectable surplus of $502,000.

Because Boyer was Pétion's disciple he followed in his predecessor's footsteps, thus fixing in his quarter-century administration the pattern of foreign trade under a tariff system. The Haitian élite seem never to have taken to commercial enterprise, nor has the country ever developed an economist even of fifth rank. Haitian thought, so eloquently articulate along political lines, has simply never turned its attention in any solid and serious way to economic problems. Nearly the whole of the foreign commerce of the republic from the earliest days was conducted by foreign merchants resident in Haiti. This was partly because the credit of the Haitians was not so generally established as to inspire confidence, but mostly it was due to lack of interest of the people in foreign trade.

In the eighteenth century Saint-Domingue had been almost the only colony producing such tropical products as sugar and coffee on a large scale; the absence of effective competition accounted for most of the prosperity of the French colony. In the nineteenth century, however, competition developed rapidly; and at this very time the laws and court decisions of Haiti began to hamper the business of the foreign merchants dealing there. By Article 21 of Boyer's Law of Patents, all persons engaging in any trade or profession except that of cultivation of the soil must be provided with a license or patent; all foreigners admitted as merchants into the republic must first secure the president's permission to acquire a patent; and when

9 See the Arrêté of October 15, 1814.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 441 Justice in the courts was administered by Haitians whose narrow
439 patriotism biased their decisions.
648 5. A temperamental tariff policy. Not only were imports subject
175 to a tariff which might be changed at the whim of any president, but
651 exports also were taxed. When an administration was in need of
489 funds it might suddenly, without warning, raise the tax on coffee exports and so disrupt a merchant's business plans. The customs-houses were in charge of Haitians who steadily became more inefficient and grasping as the century progressed, until many foreign merchants felt that the only way of getting business dispatched was by means of bribes. Examinations at customs were long drawn out, often there was open thievery, and erroneous valuations were common.

175 6. The burden of the indemnity to France. Contracted by Boyer
652 in 1825, this annual payment for sixty years was an incubus to every
[648] administration, leaving no surplus in the treasury for public works, education, or any internal development; likewise, it made the threat of foreign interference all the more imminent.

7. A debased currency. Pétion was the first president to devalue money, and his example was frequently followed thereafter. Counterfeiting was general. When a country's monetary system is unstable, its officials accustomed to bribery and graft,[17] and its financial structure almost nonexistent, there is little chance for sound economic development.

175 8. Dependence upon a single crop. Haitian economy was tied to
245 the staple coffee, grown with indifferent care, prepared for the market in outmoded fashion, and sold in competition with coffee from more scientifically run plantations in other tropical countries.

175 9. Political instability. The recurrent revolutions in Haiti made
439 foreigners chary of participating in the country's business, since the
66 government which made a contract might be out of office before the ink was dry.

175 10. Indifference of the élite to economic pursuits. What profits
439 were obtainable went into the pockets of foreign merchants, not
565 those of Haitian businessmen. In 1842 the comparative exports of the

[643] 17. Sir Spenser St. John, always a bitter critic of Haiti, remarked (*Hayti, or The*
[159] *Black Republic*, p. 88) sardonically that "Boyer had the rare quality of being honest,
[661] and left in the treasury, on his departure, the sum of £200,000, the first and last chief who was ever guilty of so unaccountable a weakness."

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

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Heads of State	*Color*	*Dates*	*Department*
21. Auguste	Light	1912–13	North
22. Oreste	Dark	1913–14	West
23. Zamor	Dark	1914	Artibonite
24. Théodore	Black	1914–15	North
25. Guillaume Sam	Black	1915	North
26. *Dartiguenave	Light	1915–22	South
27. *Borno	Light	1922–30	West
28. *Roy	Light	1930	West
29. *Vincent	Light	1930–41	West
30. *Lescot	Light	1941–	North

Summarizing this table, it can be seen that of the 31 heads of state only 13 have definitely belonged to the élite group. A few of the others might, by stretching the category, be regarded as members of this group. These 13, however, have governed for a total of 87 years, as compared with a rule of only 64 years by the representatives of the army clique. (It will be remembered that from 1807 to 1820 Haiti was separated and so had two heads of state.)

There have been 14 Negro rulers, 11 mulatto presidents, and 6 presidents who had at least a slight degree of white blood.

Of the 31, 13 represented the North (Christophe is included in this number, although he was born on the island of St. Christopher, from which he took his name); 8 came from the South; 7 from the West; 3 from the Artibonite; and none from the Northwest. The Northerners were in control of the government for 42 years; Southerners for 32 years; Westerners for 69 years; and the Artibonite presidents for less than 6 years.

CHAPTER XIV

1. *Taxation*

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The formative period of Haitian history, it is now evident, was between 1807 and 1820, when the young country was offered two sets of policies, generally opposed, to choose between: Pétion's and Christophe's. It is likewise clear that, since Pétion's required less discipline and self-restraint, and the country became reunited under Pétion's adoring secretary, Boyer, the easier path of Pétion was the one generally followed.

This choice is abundantly clear in the matter of taxation. Although the civil war between the two rulers was draining his treasury, Pétion either did not care or did not dare to tax his people. He relied rather upon heavy duties on trade in his ports, thus embarrassing commerce and taking away much of the profit from coffee. Christophe, on the other hand, without a scruple got millions by a tax on production amounting to one quarter of the annual crops of his kingdom;[4] consequently commerce in the North was free and that part of the island busy with prosperous trade. Christophe also taxed his nobles, charging a heavy fee for a patent of nobility, and also receiving annually a fourth of the crops raised upon their estates.

4. Copied from the practice of Toussaint and Dessalines.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 Boyer carried on Pétion's policy of no taxation. It was not until the American
● 651 Occupation that Haitians could be said to be taxed. Ninety per cent of the state's
income between 1900 and 1915 regularly came from tariffs, and only ten per cent
[652] from internal taxes. Even the efforts of the Americans, resulting in the laws of 1924 and 1928, were on the whole restricted to a few excise taxes. A land tax was hopeless, due to the utter confusion of titles and the stubborn impassivity of peasant squatters.[5]

2. *Monetary Policy of Pétion and Boyer*

175 The monetary situation in Haiti was chaotic in its early days. The gold money
652 of France, Spain, England, and the United States circulated, as did small French coins, and the coins and paper money created by the Haitian rulers, who had complete control over money. For example, Pétion decreed[6] an increase in the value of the *gourde d'Espagne* from 8 livres 5 sols, to 9 livres; of the French écu of 6 francs from 9 livres to 9 livres 15 sols; and the 5 franc écu from 7 livres 10 sols to 8 livres 5 sols; this almost doubled the value of money in circulation. He also struck small coins to replace the pieces of 30, 24, 15, 12, and 6 sols of France. His small coins were merely token money.[7] The paper currency created by Pétion and so easily counterfeited has been mentioned.

[433] Boyer was continually in financial perplexities. Production was declining while expenditures had to be radically increased on account of the settlement with France in 1825. Boyer's budget was not a large one judged by modern standards, the average expenditure each year being about $5,000,000. To meet this, customs duties on imports and exports brought in about $2,200,000 annually; territorial duties on produce, houses, patents or licenses, market fees, and the like, a similar
[316] sum; but some half-million dollars had to be borrowed each year. The government hoped to get something from developing mines in the Spanish part of the island,
[425] but this hope failed. It was thought also that the sale of government lands might bring in some revenue, but few people wanted to invest money, when they had it,
[454] in land, with agricultural affairs developing as they were and no way of making
[465] people work: investment in trade was more promising. The national treasury was so empty that both the civil and military officials were poorly paid. It was fre-
[661] quently said that almost all administrators and persons in authority were open to bribery. Meantime the number of civil servants was increasing: there was a swarm
[647] of hirelings and subalterns in every commune, like a host of vampires. By their lack of honesty, conscientiousness, and efficiency, immense sums were lost annually to the treasury.

5. See the *Report of the American High Commissioner* (1929), p. 19.
6. May 4, 1808.
7. *Pétion voyant s'échapper de ses États les gourdes qu'effrayaient ses démêlés avec Christophe, eut pour les retenir l'ingénieuse idée d'y pratiquer une trouée. Ce moyen était trop efficace pour ne pas réussir, et il était trop simple pour que l'emploi n'en fut pas généralisé au moins par un équivalent. Ainsi, lorsqu'il en vint à battre monnaie, le chef de l'état du Sud descendit le titre de sa gourde à peu près au titre de la gourde espagnole tarée par son emporte-pièce. Il lui donne 858 millièmes de fin.*" Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, II, 194.

2: Courlander 3-5 (1937-1938) 1960 8V3 HaBi 8V3

A la youn président,
C'est Tirésius Augustin Simon Sam.
Si tout té con ça,
Haiti ta fini! [Ex. 111]

There was a president,
He was Tirésius Augustin Simon Sam.
If they were all like him,
Haiti would be finished!

In 1902 General Nord Alexis became the chief executive of Haiti. His abilities and accomplishments are still being debated, but he appears to have been a rather lovable old man whom everyone called by the affectionate term Uncle. His administration was fairly stable and prosperous—as prosperity is known in Haiti—and in large measure peaceful. When his election was confirmed, the people were convinced that the nation was in for a period of law and order, and that the constant threat of cacos and brigandage would come to an end. One of the election-year songs goes:

Nous crions vive, c'est pou' l'armé du Nord!
Tintin cila ça va fini!
Nous crions vive, c'est pou' soldats du Nord!
Tintin cila ça va fini!
Tintin cila, tintin cila, tintin cila va fini!
Bassin Vodoun, Bassin Vodoun, Bassin Vodoun c'est pou' nous! [Ex. 112]

We cry long live Nord's army!
The chaos will be ended!
We cry long live Nord's soldiers!
The chaos will be ended!
The chaos, the chaos, the chaos will be ended!
Bassin Vodoun,* Bassin Vodoun, Bassin Vodoun is for us!

One of the serious problems confronting Nord Alexis after his election was that of a disappearing national currency. Haitian paper money was circulating elsewhere in the West Indies and in South America and was becoming increasingly scarce in Haiti itself. Nord Alexis called in all the old currency and issued new, with the happy result that large quantities of money were again seen in the Republic. The common people who made the songs seem to have been very grateful:

Alexis Nord Papa ou bon chef oh!
Ou ba nous monê, ou ba nous papier!
Alexis Nord Papa ou bon chef oh!
Ou ba nous monê, ou ba nous papier!

* Probably a place name.

195
643
● 652
* 533
* 539

Nous pas mandé ou anyien!
Nous pas mandé l'a'grat enco'!
Papa Nord ça nous ta mandé oh chef,
C'est bambeche nous mandé ou! [Ex. 113]

Alexis Nord, Papa, you are a good chief, oh!
You gave us money, you gave us paper!
Alexis Nord, Papa, you are a good chief, oh!
You gave us money, you gave us paper!
We don't ask you for anything more!
We don't ask you again for money!
Papa Nord, only one thing we are going to ask you, chief,
It is a big celebration we ask for!

643 The president's wife, Çéçé, seems to have been very proud of him
644 and very sure of his talents. When the army bugles blow a general as-
* 533 sembly call, they are supposed to be saying:
* 539

Çéçé té dit Alexis Nord grand moune nan tout corps li!
Çéçé té dit Alexis Nord grand moune nan tout corps li!
Çéçé té dit la quitté pour voir l'heure li vié!
Çéçé té dit Tonton Nord grand moune nan tout corps li! [Ex. 114]

Çéçé said Alexis Nord is a thoroughly fine man!
Çéçé said Alexis Nord is a thoroughly fine man!
Çéçé said he will quit his office whenever he sees fit!
Çéçé said Uncle Nord is a thoroughly fine man!

Another bugle call, with words attributed to Nord's wife, contains a note of complaint:

Çéçé said *assez!*
Çéçé said that, said that!
Çéçé said if you don't have any money you can't have a woman!
Çéçé said *assez!*
Çéçé said that, said that!
Çéçé said we are working our guts out!
Çéçé said *assez!*
Çéçé said that, said that!
Çéçé said Alexis Nord is president!

643 Çéçé was not the only one in Haiti who had confidence in Nord's
* 533 staying power. One popular song of the period goes:
* 539

Alexis Nord Papa,
Bondieu qui metté ou là!
Consolidé là yo
Qui vié ba ou traka!

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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very favorable reception by Haitian scholars and intellectuals. As its author and others have pointed out, few countries in modern times have received as bad a press at the hands of foreign observers as Haiti. A small, rugged nation, born of an exhausting and destructive revolution, its people poor, disease-ridden, illiterate, and erratically led, independent Haiti gives the impression of having drifted aimlessly for more than a century. Observers from "more developed" lands have had a field day—and still have—bemoaning the evil consequences of a mass of African slaves having turned on their French masters to destroy them and their works. It is still fashionable to allude to Haiti in deploring independence movements, racial desegregation, indigenous political leadership, and economic sovereignty. But too little scholarship has since been invested, as Leyburn invested it, in delineating the national and international forces which have operated to keep Haiti poor and backward. Nor has contemporary research led to sufficiently revealing comparisons between the social history of Haiti and that of her more colonial neighbors in the Caribbean area. Leyburn's work enhanced the possibilities for such comparisons and drew some morals which Haiti's detractors often ignore; but in making his case, the author carefully avoids lapsing into romanticism, or into the inaccuracy born of uncritical sympathy.

The book was published as the final steps were being taken to end the official United States presence in Haiti. The occupation had begun in 1915, ostensibly to restore order in a situation marked by political chaos. Haitian defaulting on debts to the French and Germans had raised the specter of foreign—that is, European—occupation, which created considerable North American anxiety; and there were large Haitian debts outstanding to United States banks as well. When the United States decided to move militarily, the abstract issue of justice was ignored, to be raised for contemplation only after the occupation itself was a fact. Military occupation continued for nineteen years, and the complete termination of United States controls over the national affairs of Haiti did not come until 1946, long after Leyburn's book had appeared. Twenty-five years have now elapsed since Leyburn wrote, and the events of these years are relevant to any retrospective view of the author's interpretations.

Much, indeed, has happened in Haiti since 1941: the United States withdrawal and the fading of the effects, both good and bad, of the occupation; the positive economic consequences for Haiti of World

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175 business and personal ties with North Americans and other foreign
643 groups. Among the families of these leaders are Swiss, German, and
66 French nationals, and some Syrians and Lebanese who hold United
795 States citizenship. The business community had played a part in the downfall of the Magloire regime, and business strikes were a typical political instrument for putting pressure on presidential incumbents. In addition, the clergy—particularly the Catholic clergy—exerted political influence. Duvalier, while well aware of this, also attended to the importance of vodoun* in Haiti, and to the influence wielded by its cult leaders, particularly in the countryside and among the urban poor. Finally, the President understood the strength of groups such as the university students, the small but politically aware labor unions, and certain professional associations, whose political strength could be felt particularly in times of crisis. The Duvalier regime has displayed intelligence as well as ruthlessness in dealing with these diverse centers of political strength and potential opposition.

175 The official request for a United States Marine Corps mission to
648 "train" the Haitian Army was a brilliant political move by Duvalier,
701 apparently designed to serve several objectives simultaneously. It is
702 entirely correct that the renewed presence of the Marines in Haiti
66 created considerable rancor in some circles, but it also strengthened Duvalier's hand in his dealings with all sources of internal opposition. To some extent it apparently reassured the business community; and it turned out to have reduced, rather than to have increased, the maneuverability of the United States in developing a "corrective" or "restraining" policy toward the Duvalier regime. Perhaps most important, it helped Duvalier in his plan to build a praetorian guard to counterbalance the power of the army itself.

625 The *tonton macoute*—a Creole epithet for the bogeyman—is an extremely interesting variation on the security police theme. Its members wear no official uniform (though blue denim pants and felt hats
[701] are affected). Members of the "TTM" carry out acts of terrorism against groups and individuals and have seriously weakened the po-
[652] licing function and prestige of the regular army. Some calculations put the operating costs of the TTM as high as one third of the governmental budget. Though small groups of the TTM are distributed

* Or, as it is more commonly called, "voodoo." Creole words employed in this introduction are transcribed in Laubach orthography (see Hall, 1953). It was not possible to extend this transcription to the original Leyburn text, where a "Gallic" orthography is followed.

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intrepidity in enterprise is required. It is striking that those foreign captains of industry—mainly from the United States—who invest in Haiti, expect (and often get) governmental guarantees of a sort they could not dream of in their own countries; in this regard, they merely conform to Haitian expectations.

Haiti's problems, then, are not simply those that face any less developed country, vast though such problems may be. Nor is it intelligent to lay Haiti's problems at the feet of the nation's present rulers. The structure of the national economy has not changed significantly during the past twenty-five years—except that boom years could provide a temporary aura of prosperity—regardless of the philosophy or popularity of the regime in power. If nothing else, the present nadir of Haiti's fortunes demonstrates that United States aid averaging twelve and a half million dollars yearly over more than a decade has produced no enduring improvements of any kind. It may further demonstrate that, shockingly poor as the country is, it emphatically does not depend on such aid. As of 1964, the regime in power was operating on a monthly budget of $1,800,000, only $400,000 of which went for purposes other than salaries. In other words, the ministries do little more than perpetuate themselves unchanged. The yeomanry, living near subsistence level, continues to produce most of what it needs, while restricting its cash expenditures even more severely than in the past. The risks—in terms, say, of public health—of running a society under these circumstances are great; but there is no reason to suppose that regimes of the Haitian sort will be destroyed or improved by a show of popular unrest originating in the countryside. Difficult as life is for the Haitian countryman, and no people in Latin America lives more poorly, the real pinch is probably being experienced more acutely among the city folk than among their rural fellow citizens. It matters politically, therefore, who these city folk are and what they do.

To begin with, there has been a significant loss of professional people, almost all of whom were urban, through migration and exile, especially since 1958. Haitian doctors, dentists, and other professionals are widely scattered today, both in the developed and the less developed countries of the world. Former army officers, journalists, diplomats, businessmen, and academicians have fled political repression, perhaps with the hope of eventually returning to their own country.

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Taxes were heavy

175 651 652 and work strenuous; but there were a sound currency, commercial and agricultural prosperity, and a full treasury.

Like many a great man he was an overweening egotist. His 175 643 159 energy and ambition, for Haiti as well as for himself, neither understood nor tolerated a lesser determination than his own. At times he seemed more intent upon the letter than upon the spirit of his laws. Probably his chief defect, a common failing of strong men, was a disregard for humble individual worth. To write of him invites the most colorful vocabulary. He is Black Majesty and the Emperor Jones. By almost any standards of leadership he would be accounted a great man. He lacked only those few final, subtle qualities which make for sheer genius. In 1820, stricken by paralysis and faced with defections in his army, he died as he had lived, dramatically, ending his life with a specially saved bullet (folklore says a silver one), in his palace of the ironic name, Sans Souci.

175 643 In no significant respect did Christophe change the feudal structure of economic organization begun by Toussaint and carried on by Dessalines. It was in administration, especially as it affected social status, that the thirteen years of Christophe were important for the [641] future of Haiti. Where the Emperor had been an unpredictable tyrant whose heavy hand inspired only terror, Christophe was a sternly just father whose well-disciplined children respected, admired, and even loved him.

175 427 475 655 566 643 The land policy of the two régimes was similar. Government estates were farmed out on five-year leases to the highest bidders among the well-to-do; large plantations belonging to the state were tilled by cultivators who might, without taking the term too harshly, be called serfs; loyal supporters and wealthy individuals were entrusted with responsibility. Like Dessalines, Christophe added wealth to power and rendered all his subjects dependent upon himself rather than on their own resources and influence—but all this with a difference.

175 643 642 565 Where the Emperor had denied the natural vanity of his aides by refusing them nobility, Christophe accepted their ambition as perfectly normal and made use of it for his own purposes. Four years after he had established his state, he changed it from a republic to a kingdom; all his important men he made dukes, barons, counts, knights. He warned them that he would expect them to live up to the dignities conferred upon them. Pomp and regalia are costly;

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Northern Haiti flourished magnificently under Christophe's sternly benevolent rule. The King had that daring spirit of initiative which was so generally lacking in later Haitian history; he had, in addition, the power necessary to force through a new adjustment if the old way showed defects.[17] He excited artificial wants among his leaders by making nobles of them, and then compelled them to satisfy these wants without ever slipping back to a lower standard of living. Thirteen years of enforced labor and of order kept by a rigorously effective police force gave northern Haiti the kind of prosperity she had known in colonial days. Christophe encouraged commerce and protected foreign traders. He called in all debased coinage, substituting for it sound gold and silver currency. The revenue he raised was larger than it had been since 1791, amounting to about $3,500,000 annually. Probably the most eloquent testimony to his success is the fact that at his death, when the kingdom of the North was once more united with the republic of the South, more than six million dollars found their way into the republican treasury.

175 643 642 433 [438] [439] [692]

The Black King's economic system worked. It was based on a social division of the people, with the masses doing manual labor, and the aristocrats definitely set apart and recognized as upper class. By 1820 Haiti was well on its way toward the caste system.

175 565

3. *Pétion* (*1807–1818*)

171 175 631

Almost all Latin-American countries in the nineteenth century exhibited one common feature: an aristocratic landowning class lording it over peons. Haiti did not follow this pattern. She had aristocrats and peasants, but the aristocrats did not own most of the land, and the peasants were not peons. If later rulers had kept the organization of economic life begun by Toussaint and developed by his fellow blacks, Dessalines and Christophe, it is almost certain that Haitian social evolution would have resembled that of the rest of Latin America, for it would not have been a great change from

17. Duraciné Vaval, "Le Roi d'Haïti Henri Christophe," in *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti*, II, No. 3 (June 1931), p. 14, says that Haiti's periodic civil troubles and social misfortunes, both ending in a diminution of the state's autonomy, have been due to economic maladjustments. "Our weaknesses in political life derive from our immobility in material production." Immobility is an index of stagnation. Few rulers of Haiti have been at once powerful enough to overcome the immobility and wise enough to know what measures had to be taken.

[114]

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As if this were not enough to please the landed gentry,

of one quarter of the crop was abolished.[23] This tax worked moderately well on great plantations with hundreds of workers and a large annual budget, but it bore heavily, sometimes unfairly, on smaller farms. To give up the government's fourth meant a tremendous drop in state revenues, but this was to be compensated by a new tax of ten *gourdes* (a gourde was then worth about five cents) on every thousand pounds of coffee sold in the country, and by an export tax on coffee. A man might raise sugar or make syrup, tafia (raw rum), and distilled rum, without paying any tax at all. Coffee culture required little careful cultivation, while sugar required a great deal; removing the tax from sugar would, it was hoped, encourage the cultivation of cane. The President was putting into practice the then novel idea of Adam Smith that the more freedom an enterpriser is allowed, the more he will produce, so that by pursuing his own self-interest he unintentionally benefits the state. To know definitely what taxes will be imposed, reasoned Pétion, is more of an inducement to a landlord than to face the double fluctuation of crop prices and the state's quarter. Small proprietors and sugar planters were now, like the larger landholders, attracted to Pétion's régime.

His final boon to proprietors, and one which Adam Smith would not have approved, was that of governmental subsidies in bad years. When prices of coffee and sugar were low, the state bought large quantities of these crops for the purpose of raising their price. The result was to increase the debt and to make the people feel that the state was responsible for individual economic success, rather than their own efforts.

These first concessions were all made to the important people of the South—to the mulattoes, families of the old régime, persons who desired economic prominence in order to bolster social position. The small folk of the Republic came next. The President recommended to the Senate the abolition of the law dating back to Toussaint's time which prohibited the holding of plantations of less than a minimum acreage. The Senate accordingly[24] reduced the minimum holding to thirty acres.[25] Actually this legislation did not bring

23. By a law of March 9, 1807. This tax was instituted by Toussaint and continued in effect by Dessalines and Christophe.

24. On April 21, 1807.

25. Or ten *carreaux*. Toussaint's law had allowed properties of fifty acres only in cases of exceptional fertility of land. See Note 18.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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175 In his easygoing republic Pétion saw prosperity slowly wane,
433 cultivation decline, profits give way to deficits. He issued a large
652 amount of paper currency, and continually hoped for better times
534 which did not come. The days of large fortunes were over. The economic system affected the aristocrats: although they were still landowners, so also were thousands of common folk. The criterion of rank became increasingly not wealth, but rather pursuit of a career which demanded no manual labor. Distinctions, if they are to be effective, must be made on the basis of conditions not easily achieved by all and sundry. Education and good French met this requirement; even more did a light skin color.

175 Pétion, darling of the mulattoes though he was, never drew a color
643 line. There is no suggestion in any of his actions that he gave prefer-
641 ence in his appointments to people of his own color. He suppressed
563 at least one insurrection led by men who would have liked to stir up color prejudice. He often tried by quiet irony to make his people less sensitive to their complexions. It is eloquent testimony to his fairness that the 200,000 blacks in the republic never faltered in their love for him. They had ample reason to mistrust the haughty and ambitious colored people, some of whom had lorded it over them in colonial days; but they knew that the President did not share their pretentious attitude. One look at the North, ruled by a black, was enough to convince any Southerner that his happiness was safer in the hands of a mulatto than in those of a Negro ex-slave. At Pétion's death, therefore, there was no demur at the succession to power of another light-skinned man.

175 Haitians of a later day have discussed at great length the wisdom
643 of Pétion's parceling of state lands. His supporters (and they are
642 numerous) as well as his critics generally keep the controversy on the lofty plane of ideals, intentions, and hypothetical contingencies. Pétion is praised for being generous to humble folk where all other rulers of his country had been severe; for being a realist in accepting and adjusting his measures to the limitations of the average Haitian's character; for building a patriotism upon love of one's own small plot of land; for ruling constitutionally, with his Senate, rather than dictatorially. Most especially, Pétion is the one man among the early rulers who seemed to have any realization of the human values involved. Material gain is desirable but not at the expense of liberty. Freedom means something, even in poverty.

The critics do not challenge Pétion's good intentions or integrity;

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175 Practically every contemporary foreign visitor contrasted the
114 divergent policies of Christophe and Pétion to the overwhelming
433 advantage of the former. One Englishman, intent upon defending the Negro against the charge of "natural indolence," went so far as to say that the majority of the people in the republic, although "possessed of small estates, on which they earned their living," were yet no less diligent than the forced laborers on Christophe's plantations in the North.[34] His only proof of this contention, however, was the greater volume of commerce at Port-au-Prince, capital of the republic, than at Cap-Henry (now Cap-Haïtien), capital of the kingdom.

175 The economic case is strongly against Pétion. The decline of
433 large-scale agriculture, the empty treasury, governmental purchase of surpluses when prices were low, debasing the coinage[35]—by such
652 practical proofs, the republic was vastly less efficient than the stern
642 dictatorship of the kingdom. But Pétion's people had freedom, while Christophe's were serfs. And Pétion's republic endured, to become reunited Haiti. The kingdom perished with Christophe.

4. *The Final Effort toward Plantation Life* (*1818–1826*)

175 The mantle of Pétion fell in 1818 upon the shoulders of his
643 meticulous secretary and minister, Jean-Pierre Boyer. Two years
642 later, upon the death of Christophe, the kingdom of the North was once again united, without a struggle, to the South.[36] It is conceivable that the refined mulatto Boyer might have infused into his people a spirit of industry and ambition, now that tranquillity reigned after fourteen years of separation and warfare. The people of the North had had a long experience of intense activity, while those of the

34. W. W. Harvey, *Sketches of Hayti; from the Expulsion of the French, to the Death of Christophe* (London, 1827), pp. 361 ff.

[652] 35. Pétion's coins were so easily imitated that the country was inundated with counterfeit money. The government issued only five million dollars worth of this currency, but in 1818 twelve millions were in circulation, the surplus having been fabricated in Europe and the United States.

[175] [643] [642] [648] 36. In 1822–23 Boyer likewise succeeded, with little fighting, in bringing the Spanish two thirds of the island (Santo Domingo) into the republic. For the first time since 1697 the whole island was really unified under one rule. Toussaint had held it in 1801–2 and the Haitians claimed it thereafter, but real unity did not come until Boyer's time, when all the Spanish colonies in the New World were breaking away from their mother country. Santo Domingo regained its independence in 1844 shortly after the abdication of Boyer.

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South in general had the most loyal feeling toward a government which had been benevolently generous to them. A blend of the two might have been fruitful. 175 642 643

It was not any want of patriotism that caused Boyer to miss his great opportunity but rather a defect of ability. Desiring, like Pétion, to lead rather than to drive his people, he nevertheless lacked even more than his former chief the force of personality which might have persuaded them to work hard for the greater glory of Haiti. Despising the brutal compulsion exercised by Dessalines and Christophe, which he regarded as savage and too closely resembling the earlier methods of slave owners; wishing to emulate solely the gentleness of his predecessor, Boyer hoped for a number of years that his people would become industrious of their own accord. His hopes were frustrated. During his twenty-five-year presidency the mass of Haitians became so indifferent to pecuniary inducements that little work could be got from them beyond that required to produce necessary food. As commerce declined, the President was driven to fresh issues of debased currency and to the opening of mines in different parts of the country, though he knew that the richest mine Haiti possessed was its still fertile soil. 175 433 [652] [316]

For the first seven years Boyer pursued a policy based on hopeful expectation, refusing to inaugurate any of the forceful measures of his black predecessors. But by 1823 the treasury, enriched though it had been by the surplus from Christophe's exchequer, was empty; in 1824 disbursements exceeded income. Convinced in 1825 that his *laissez-faire* policy was failing to produce results, he decided to heed the insistent counsel of those (including most of the aristocratic, landholding class) who advised the reëstablishment of a coercive system of agriculture. His officials showed him that nowhere in the country were sugar plantations any longer being cultivated on a great scale—except for a few estates run by government officials who could command the forced labor of convicts. The policy of offering cultivators a fourth of the total crop of a plantation as wages was luring practically no laborers to work.[37] Even the few owners who offered the fourth plus daily wages had no success. Quite simply, the average Haitian preferred to be his own master, working only when he wished, and particularly working only for himself and his family. 175 652 24 433 466

37. This fourth in wages must not be confused with the quarter in taxes abolished by Pétion. See page 46 for a discussion of the quarter-crop wage system.

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175 423 up so many of these, there was no way short of a revolution to reconstitute the now parceled estates. Obviously the Code did not envisage the control of serfs by small property owners, yet there were more small owners than large.

175 184 466 In the third place, the Spanish-speaking masses of the eastern part of the island had never experienced the kind of forced labor with which most Haitians had been at one time or another familiar. Their noncoöperation made enforcement difficult.

175 647 Finally, the administration of so detailed a plan called for the establishment, at once and yet in complete order, of a fully trained corps of bureaucrats, perfectly coöperating with each other, most of them educated, and all incorruptibly honest. If every literate person in the state had been drafted for service, Boyer could not have filled all the offices required by the Code.

175 465 434 After brief and piecemeal experience with the law in operation, moreover, even the few remaining large landholders turned against it. While they approved the provisions for forced labor, they discovered that to turn over to the workers a quarter or half of the annual crop, in a falling world market, gave too slim a profit.[42] Without the support even of its original sponsors, failure of the law was inevitable.

175 648 652 These factors alone would have been enough to kill the Code; but its real death blow came from an entirely different quarter. The year before the agricultural laws were passed, Boyer had achieved what he considered to be a political master stroke. He had made a financial settlement with France whereby Haiti, in return for a large sum in cash and regular annual payments for sixty years thereafter, should receive full recognition of independence from France; also the former mother country would renounce all claims to any properties in the country. Boyer had felt that the chief debilitating influence on the political and economic life of his people was the constant dread that France might one day return to claim her lost colony. To rid the nation of that incubus, therefore, seemed to him a high feat of statesmanship, no matter what the financial cost.[43]

[433] [24] 42. Coffee, now the staple crop of Haiti, was meeting competition from the other coffee-producing countries of the world. To put the sugar manufactories into working condition again called for more money than was available.

[643] [648] 43. Boyer's hand was forced to a certain extent by France, which had been exerting diplomatic pressure upon Haiti; the President, however, seemed to regard the settlement as a distinct coup.

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"empire" tottered to economic ruin. Graft, default on the debt, increasing deficits, and debased currency were the order of the day, and so continued until 1859, when the accumulation of anger over the useless wars and the humiliating defeats made the Emperor so unpopular that a new and more carefully planned revolution accomplished his downfall. 175 643 652 669

Fifteen years of administration by Negro rulers had broken the political power of the colored élite. Only three light-skinned men became president thereafter until the occupation of Haiti by the American Marines in 1915; in the seventy-two years following Boyer's downfall, mulattoes ruled during only eight. The army under a black general was too powerful, a colored president too hampered by suspicion, to make the political game worth the candle. The colored élite, therefore, adapted themselves to existing conditions as best they could, controlling the business life of Haiti, filling the law offices and, because of their literacy, the secretaryships of state, and indulging in honorific cultural pursuits. 175 643 178 564

In the years after Soulouque the basic realities of Haitian life were changed hardly at all by shifting political administrations. Some of the presidents were mildly progressive, many were indifferent; still more were actually harmful; but the lives of the mass of peasants were not often touched by presidential vagaries. Politics was an affair almost wholly of townspeople, of the army, the élite, and the pseudo-élite. Revolutions, counterrevolutions, movements of reform, international tangles, financial woes, and most of the other complications to which unstable states are heir, absorbed the attention of rulers and upper-class folk who were politically inclined. 175 643 66

Constitutions were made by presidents and changed by their successors; the Senate passed contradictory laws in the same session if the chief executive so recommended; the courts were presided over by the president's men. Haitian law in the latter half of the nineteenth century was what the president's immediate strength and wish made it—or else it was folk custom, undisturbed by the rulers. 175 642 671 692

Never once, in the three quarters of a century after Boyer's time, did Haiti approach the high standard of production known in colonial days or in the early years of independence. The pattern of Haitian social and economic life became fixed in this seventy-five years. Haiti became a country of small-scale tillage by a peasant population, with only enough external trade to provide moderate 175 178 433 565 439

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Haiti was in constant financial straits. Money had to be borrowed

abroad; then paid back at the promised time or a foreign warship would appear at some Haitian port. The steady drain of annual indemnity payments to France,[7] the cost of subduing revolutionary movements, and the large sum eaten up even in times of peace by wages to the army made successive presidents continue to yield government land for small sums of ready cash, in spite of Geffrard's announcement that no more state lands would be alienated. Nissage Saget, coming to power by a successful revolution, paid out fifteen acres to each soldier who fought in his campaign in the South.[8] The straits of the government resembled those of the Continental Congress in America during the Revolution. 175 652 [171]

Another impulse to parcel the land came during the administration of President Lysius Salomon (1879–88). The debt to France had finally, after half a century, been paid off; that incubus removed, Salomon instituted numerous reforms, financial, military, educational. On February 26, 1883, he signed a law by which every citizen of Haiti might conceivably become a landowner even if he lacked money to buy land. Upon receipt of a written agreement to cultivate certain tropical crops—specifically, sugar, coffee, cotton, cacao, and tobacco—the government would grant provisional title to a portion of fifteen to twenty-five acres of land taken from the public domain. The grant became final if, after a period of from two to five years, three quarters of the land had been effectively cultivated. 175 643 671 423 [648]

Five hundred requests were made in 1884 for such grants, and twelve hundred in the following year.[9] Thereafter one finds no records of applications for land; the peasants had discovered the hidden trap in this apparent generosity. How could a peasant with a tiny farm lacking implements and tools, not to mention ready cash, be expected to cultivate important crops on fifteen or twenty acres of land? He would have to cut down trees, uproot wild plants, fertilize the ground, purchase equipment and seeds, and then wait several years for a crop. As Thoby says, "And even then he was not a

7. See above, pp. 70–71.

8. Law of July 12, 1870. In August of the same year, Nissage required an inventory to be taken of state lands remaining.

9. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Manuel d'histoire d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1934), p. 317, cites these figures. They are contested by Dr. F. Dalencour, *Le Sauvetage national par le retour à la terre*, p. 31, who maintains that only 800 applications came in altogether. Here, as elsewhere, Haitian records are incomplete. [114] [423]

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175 643 642 The twentieth century began inauspiciously with a succession of dull incompetents in the presidency. General Sam's administration (1896–1902) had been distinguished only by lethargic calm. Nord Alexis (1902–8), over eighty when elected, prolonged the peace by doing nothing to disturb it; he solved his financial problems by issuing paper money, while his political "policy" involved nothing more significant than the sponsoring of festivals to celebrate Haiti's hundred years of independence. The mild revolution which displaced him substituted a president more puerile than oppressive, Antoine Simon (1908–11), who is best revealed in a terse comment by a Haitian author: "When he passed by on a street or through a public square, everyone, foreigners as well as Haitians, must stand still, even stop smoking, and respectfully salute the Head of State. At any instant, without reason, the functionaries of the capital might be called to the Palace to endure his interminable and insipid discourses."[2] A revolution cut short his tedious régime.

Within the next four years six presidents rose and fell. Their administrations were worse than ephemeral; indeed, they hardly deserve the name of governments. Not one of the six had a happy time in office; the first was blown up with his palace, the second is generally thought to have been poisoned, the next three were quickly deposed by revolutions, and the last, after massacring his imprisoned political enemies, was horribly cut into small bits by an infuriated mob. Anarchy then ensued.

175 652 648 For years Haitian presidents had staved off financial collapse by heavy borrowing abroad. United States financial interests were involved in the Bank of Haiti and in a railroad company, while the American government, through its Monroe Doctrine, was disturbed by French and German threats to collect their Haitian debts by force. When President Guillaume Sam[3] was hacked to pieces by the mob, the United States landed Marines from gunboats which were conveniently just outside the harbor of Port-au-Prince. Beginning on July 28, 1915, the Occupation lasted for nineteen years.

128 648 With the question of America's justification in the matter of occupying Haiti this book cannot pretend to deal. As with most large matters of policy, convincing arguments can be offered on both sides. The important fact for this study is that the presence of white

2. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Manuel d'histoire d'Haïti*, p. 338.
3. Not to be confused with Simon Sam, who had ruled twenty years earlier.

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701 Since it was an entrenched interest, however, no responsible states-
648 man had dared to threaten its hold. The Marines swept it out of
177 existence, undertaking to substitute for it a trained constabulary of
625 only 2,000 men who should combine routine military tasks with
652 police duty in the scattered towns. Results were immediately ap-
669 parent: the weighty incubus of soldiers' wages was lifted from the treasury; thousands of men were deprived of sinecures and put back into productive economic activities; the constant threat of armed revolution was removed; better order was kept by 2,000 trained men in trim uniform than by twelve times that number of ragged loafers who called themselves soldiers; and since the army was no longer the great steppingstone to political office, the élite felt more secure from assault by ambitious but uneducated army men. From 1843 to 1915 the élite had endured many lower-caste presidents because these were able to control the army; now the army had disappeared.

175 The Marines did much that was of indisputable benefit to Haiti.
648 This was acknowledged even by the most vocal patriots who soon
[743] began to campaign for an end of the Occupation. Where there had been no real work in public health, Americans now built hospitals,
[744] established clinics, cleaned up the sources of many diseases, laid down sewage systems, gave the towns pure water. In 1915 there were only
[365] three automobiles in the country, and no roads for them to travel;
[491] the Americans built many miles of paved roads. In 1915 there had been only one wharf, two short stretches of railroad, two lighthouses,
[45] one electric plant; the Americans undertook electrification, telephone systems, the construction of administration buildings, and other public conveniences. Whether in such visible matters or in the obscurer realms of currency, banking, and budgets hardly a phase of daily life was left untouched. And judged by the standards of civilization the Marines improved what they touched.

175 But rancor against the Americans began early and continued to
648 the bitter end in 1934. The pride of all Haitians was deeply wounded
642 by the Occupation. For 111 years they had governed themselves and had assumed themselves to be a sovereign nation; the Marines patroling the countryside were vivid reminders that Haiti had never been independent except by sufferance, and that white men were once more overseeing the destinies of colored and Negro men. Nevertheless, the reasons proclaimed for opposing the Occupation were not those of hurt vanity. Some of those given were entirely

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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reported in Haiti that although they joined patriotically in the cheering when the Marines embarked in 1934, many of them shed tears to see the departure of 2,000 monthly salaries, most of which had been enriching the local tills. Indeed, the country came much closer to establishing a mercantile middle class during the Occupation than ever before. The only real control left behind by the Americans was an overseer of the national budget, destined to leave as soon as Haiti's external debt was finally paid off. To that end the government saved rather than spent, so that businessmen found no comfort in the state of economic affairs, particularly during a decade of world depression and European disturbance. Nationalist economic theories in Europe have upset Haitian markets, so that the élite thriftily save their pennies against hard times instead of spending them freely on present luxuries. The American overseer of the budget withdrew in 1941.

175 458 [648] [652]

At many points the forces of the Occupation touched unwittingly upon deep-rooted prejudices of the Haitian people. In order to secure laborers for road construction the Marines revived an old corvée law of Christophe's time, requiring forced labor on public works at the need of the government. Many of the ill-nourished peasants were taxed beyond their physical powers by work on the roads, so that an armed revolt by caco guerrillas broke out. Its suppression required months of time and cost many lives, leaving in its train a great deal of ill will.

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The efficient Americans also came to grief when they attempted to make Haitians orderly in the American way. Land titles were in chaos, as we have noted. American experts wished to find a basis for internal taxation, so that economic reform might be effective and permanent. The effort to have people declare their claims so that these might be properly registered had to be given up after a few weeks, for the peasant owners knew without written deeds their local boundaries, and among the squatters those who realized their title might not stand under strict investigation were understandably averse to having questions of property tenure raised by the authorities of an alien and interfering government.

175 648 423

Wherever Marine barracks were located, there were centres of a cultural dissemination which was bound in the long run to affect Haitian ideas and practices. Automobiles, radios, amusements, even the daily conversation of the Marines, all left their mark upon a people who had been effectively isolated from the world for more than a century.

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Boyer was overthrown by the Revolution of 1843, by all odds the

most important of Haitian upheavals. Since its effects were to be felt for the next seventy years in the extinction of representative government and the eclipse of the élite as political rulers, it is worthy of special attention. Paradoxically, it was a revolution fomented by the élite themselves. Its background and outcome reveal the power in word, and the impotence in deed, of this group by 1843. 175 669

The constitution of 1816, devised by Pétion's henchmen, had granted the president initiative in all laws except those concerning taxation. After the agreement of 1825 with France,[6] however, Boyer, hard pressed by the need of paying the indemnity each year, began to restrict the number of officials, diminish their salaries, and veto all projects favorable to the development of public instruction and improvement which might cause further expenditure. By temperament he was an autocrat.[7] Every valuable measure must come from him alone; whatever another person proposed he would find a thousand reasons to discard. Sarcastic and vain, he did not know how to smooth ruffled feelings or make conflicting groups reconcile their differences. His personal weaknesses of character alienated the sympathies of many once-devoted officials. 175 642 643 652 661

During his long presidency Boyer also systematically ignored the younger generation, men who admired the efforts of Pétion, ardent reformers who wished to devote their energies to the improvement of Haiti. The military career had no attraction for them: the higher ranks, alone bringing sufficient salary for a congenial way of life, were too few and one could achieve them only with difficulty, for since 1825 advancement had been submitted to rigorous rules. On the other hand, the paths of administration were severely guarded by those admirable great functionaries left over from the government of Pétion—men like Inginac and Imbert. But age had slowed their activity, and still Boyer kept them on. The younger generation mocked this "gerontocracy" and supported the parliamentary opposition. 175 643 665

The youth of the élite class continued to go to France for their education, returning to Haiti to take part in the lively political discussions which made one of their chief occupations. During the first decade of Boyer's administration they generally supported him, for 175 665 871 664

6. By which France recognized the independence of Haiti in return for the payment of a large annual indemnity.

7. "In everything, he wishes to dominate," Pétion had said of him.

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the still weak United States, France—the traditional enemy of Haitians, and moribund Spain, who was in fact shortly to lose most of her empire in the New World. Since he did not mean to drive his people to work, he resolved to exploit to the full the benefits of foreign trade in the hope that profits from exports would stimulate production. As for allies, he cultivated the friendship of the United States, but also sought to wean British merchants from the Northern ports. To this end, although he levied duties of twelve per cent on goods of other nations, he reduced duties on English goods to five per cent.[9]

Pétion, content to govern without an impressive court, gave the greatest encouragement possible to trade; he sheared expenses and managed to balance his budget. In 1818, for example, his revenues were $2,646,000 and his expenses $2,144,000, giving the republic a respectable surplus of $502,000.

Because Boyer was Pétion's disciple he followed in his predecessor's footsteps, thus fixing in his quarter-century administration the pattern of foreign trade under a tariff system. The Haitian élite seem never to have taken to commercial enterprise, nor has the country ever developed an economist even of fifth rank. Haitian thought, so eloquently articulate along political lines, has simply never turned its attention in any solid and serious way to economic problems. Nearly the whole of the foreign commerce of the republic from the earliest days was conducted by foreign merchants resident in Haiti. This was partly because the credit of the Haitians was not so generally established as to inspire confidence, but mostly it was due to lack of interest of the people in foreign trade.

In the eighteenth century Saint-Domingue had been almost the only colony producing such tropical products as sugar and coffee on a large scale; the absence of effective competition accounted for most of the prosperity of the French colony. In the nineteenth century, however, competition developed rapidly; and at this very time the laws and court decisions of Haiti began to hamper the business of the foreign merchants dealing there. By Article 21 of Boyer's Law of Patents, all persons engaging in any trade or profession except that of cultivation of the soil must be provided with a license or patent; all foreigners admitted as merchants into the republic must first secure the president's permission to acquire a patent; and when

9 See the Arrêté of October 15, 1814.

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175 441 Justice in the courts was administered by Haitians whose narrow patriotism biased their decisions.

439 648 5. A temperamental tariff policy. Not only were imports subject to a tariff which might be changed at the whim of any president, but 175 exports also were taxed. When an administration was in need of 651 funds it might suddenly, without warning, raise the tax on coffee 489 exports and so disrupt a merchant's business plans. The customs-houses were in charge of Haitians who steadily became more inefficient and grasping as the century progressed, until many foreign merchants felt that the only way of getting business dispatched was by means of bribes. Examinations at customs were long drawn out, often there was open thievery, and erroneous valuations were common.

175 6. The burden of the indemnity to France. Contracted by Boyer 657 in 1825, this annual payment for sixty years was an incubus to every [648] administration, leaving no surplus in the treasury for public works, education, or any internal development; likewise, it made the threat of foreign interference all the more imminent.

7. A debased currency. Pétion was the first president to devalue money, and his example was frequently followed thereafter. Counterfeiting was general. When a country's monetary system is unstable, its officials accustomed to bribery and graft,[17] and its financial structure almost nonexistent, there is little chance for sound economic development.

175 8. Dependence upon a single crop. Haitian economy was tied to 245 the staple coffee, grown with indifferent care, prepared for the market in outmoded fashion, and sold in competition with coffee from more scientifically run plantations in other tropical countries.

175 9. Political instability. The recurrent revolutions in Haiti made 439 foreigners chary of participating in the country's business, since the 66 government which made a contract might be out of office before the ink was dry.

175 10. Indifference of the élite to economic pursuits. What profits 439 were obtainable went into the pockets of foreign merchants, not 565 those of Haitian businessmen. In 1842 the comparative exports of the

[643] 17. Sir Spenser St. John, always a bitter critic of Haiti, remarked (*Hayti, or The* [159] *Black Republic*, p. 88) sardonically that "Boyer had the rare quality of being honest, [661] and left in the treasury, on his departure, the sum of £200,000, the first and last chief who was ever guilty of so unaccountable a weakness."

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Foreign relations, in the political sense, revolved during most of

175 the nineteenth century about loans and insurrections. Haiti main-
648 tained legations in those countries to which she exported most of her coffee and from which she might obtain credit. Revolutionary leaders sometimes promised as a bait for foreign assistance either tariff preferences or the cession of Môle Saint Nicolas for a naval base; if successful, they might fulfill the first promise but, because of the Monroe Doctrine and the watchful jealousy of the big powers, the Môle was never ceded. The United States had varied dealings with Haiti. Before the Civil War there was more than one movement to transplant freed slaves from this country to Haiti; after the war the United States came very near annexing Haiti; and negotiations over the cession of the Môle did not end until America acquired Guantanamo Bay, across the Windward Passage in Cuba, as a naval base to guard the entrance to the Caribbean.[1]

It was finally the combination of complicated economic affairs and political collapse which produced the Occupation of 1915. In the
175 preceding year both France and Germany threatened to send war-
652 ships to collect loans due them, and were stopped only by the out-
457 break of the World War. An American bank held as its subsidiary the Bank of Haiti, in which the government deposited its funds; when in 1914–15 the presidents followed each other in rapid succession, the bank on instructions from New York refused to allow the government to withdraw its funds. Haiti in retaliation threatened to seize its deposits by force, but the New York bank persuaded the United States government to send a ship to transfer the gold from Port-au-Prince to New York. There were other financial complications, particularly those relating to defaulted payments to a railroad
175 company. What finally precipitated the Occupation, however, was
648 anarchy. When, in July, 1915, President Sam slaughtered 168 politi-
[579] cal prisoners and was himself mobbed and murdered, the American government ordered the landing of its Marines from a warship conveniently anchored in the harbor near Port-au-Prince.[2]

From 1915 to 1934 the foreign affairs of Haiti were under the direction of the United States, whose main concern was to order the economic relations of the country in such fashion that Haiti should

1. The foreign relations of Haiti with the United States have been clearly treated in Ludwell L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States*, 1714–1938.

2. One of the best accounts of the events leading up to the Occupation is that of H. P. Davis, *Black Democracy*.

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Besides the figures given above must be set there of the government

budget, which is annually in the neighborhood of $7,000,000, and of 652
its annual imports and exports, neither of which generally exceeds [439]
$10,000,000 a year. Chicago, with its population of three million, has an annual budget of about $275,000,000, aside from state and federal services.

To care for all the needs of three million people in Haiti there is a sum of money less than that available annually to several of our American universities. Out of the seven million dollars must come all salaries of officials, legislators, judges, policemen, schoolteachers; the wages of all janitors and day laborers employed by the government; the upkeep of all schools, roads, lighthouses, experiment stations; the maintenance of such important public services as health, sanitation, education, soil development, reforestation. Since there [369]
are few towns, practically every improvement which takes place must be paid for by the central government.

Haiti's growth in population is not a new thing. It has been in- 161
creasing steadily since 1804 while the soil of the country was being [134]
worn out and foreign trade grew stagnant. The country is entirely [439]
agricultural, there being absolutely no manufacturing industry worth the name. The people consequently live upon a subsistence economy. 433
The soil is still fertile enough to preserve life in the teeming popula- 164
tion, though undernourishment is general. Most of the people have [134]
no "artificial" wants and could not satisfy them under present con- [511]
ditions even if they had.

Assuming the census of Dessalines in 1805 to be even approxi- 161
mately accurate, the population is now eight times what it was then. 433
The working of the Law of Population[3] is implacable: if population 176
increases while economic efficiency remains static or declines, either there will be an increasing death rate or the standard of living must sink—or both. In the case of Haiti, economic efficiency is certainly [165]
not what it was under the forced-labor system of Dessalines: the [511]
death rate has been continuously high; it is the standard of living which has suffered.

To grasp the import of Haiti's problem of overpopulation one

3. "Population tends to increase up to the limit of the supporting power of the land, relative to the economic efficiency and to the standard of living of the people at the time." (For an amplification of this discussion on overpopulation, see the note on p. 320.) The law of population as stated here is a modification of that given by Sumner and Keller, *The Science of Society*, I, 46; their statement, in turn, is that of Malthus with the added cultural items of economic efficiency and the standard of living. [114]

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175 Boyer carried on Pétion's policy of no taxation. It was not until the American
657 Occupation that Haitians could be said to be taxed. Ninety per cent of the state's
income between 1900 and 1915 regularly came from tariffs, and only ten per cent
[652] from internal taxes. Even the efforts of the Americans, resulting in the laws of 1924
and 1928, were on the whole restricted to a few excise taxes. A land tax was hopeless, due to the utter confusion of titles and the stubborn impassivity of peasant squatters.[5]

2. *Monetary Policy of Pétion and Boyer*

175 The monetary situation in Haiti was chaotic in its early days. The gold money
652 of France, Spain, England, and the United States circulated, as did small French coins, and the coins and paper money created by the Haitian rulers, who had complete control over money. For example, Pétion decreed[6] an increase in the value of the *gourde d'Espagne* from 8 livres 5 sols, to 9 livres; of the French *écu* of 6 francs from 9 livres to 9 livres 15 sols; and the 5 franc écu from 7 livres 10 sols to 8 livres 5 sols; this almost doubled the value of money in circulation. He also struck small coins to replace the pieces of 30, 24, 15, 12, and 6 sols of France. His small coins were merely token money.[7] The paper currency created by Pétion and so easily counterfeited has been mentioned.

[433] Boyer was continually in financial perplexities. Production was declining while expenditures had to be radically increased on account of the settlement with France in 1825. Boyer's budget was not a large one judged by modern standards, the average expenditure each year being about $5,000,000. To meet this, customs duties on imports and exports brought in about $2,200,000 annually; territorial duties on produce, houses, patents or licenses, market fees, and the like, a similar
[316] sum; but some half-million dollars had to be borrowed each year. The government hoped to get something from developing mines in the Spanish part of the island,
[425] but this hope failed. It was thought also that the sale of government lands might bring in some revenue, but few people wanted to invest money, when they had it,
[454] in land, with agricultural affairs developing as they were and no way of making
[465] people work: investment in trade was more promising. The national treasury was so empty that both the civil and military officials were poorly paid. It was fre-
[661] quently said that almost all administrations and persons in authority were open to bribery. Meantime the number of civil servants was increasing: there was a swarm
[647] of hirelings and subalterns in every commune, like a host of vampires. By their lack of honesty, conscientiousness, and efficiency, immense sums were lost annually to the treasury.

5. See the *Report of the American High Commissioner* (1929), p. 19.
6. May 4, 1808.
7. *Pétion voyant s'échapper de ses États les gourdes qu'effrayaient ses démêlés avec Christophe, eut pour les retenir l'ingénieuse idée d'y pratiquer une trouée. Ce moyen était trop efficace pour ne pas réussir, et il était trop simple pour que l'emploi n'en fût pas généralisé au moins par son équivalent. Ainsi, lorsqu'il en vint à battre monnaie, le chef de l'État du Sud descendit le titre de ses gourdes à peu près au titre de la gourde espagnole tarée par son compatriote. Il lui donna 638 millièmes de fin.*" Leyburier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, II, 194.

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3. Pétion, Boyer, and Inginac as Administrators

Pétion lived very simply in the South, like a plain republican magistrate. He sat on his piazza, accessible to all his people. He had a quiet way of answering his opponents which did not make enemies of them. He made his secretary answer every letter that arrived, no matter how small; many were simply inquiries about the President's health. Yet the wars between Pétion and Christophe dragged on from 1807 to 1812,[8] draining the finances of the republic. Not only the crops declined; so also did most of the public improvements instituted by the colonial planters; so did trade; so did habits of industry. Everything seemed to conspire against hard work. The rich plains of the Cul-de-Sac and the Artibonite Valley were ravaged by fire and warfare; necessary equipment for sugar making was destroyed, the money for new machines and buildings was unavailable; and the men were drawn away from their land by military duties.

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Inginac, Boyer's secretary of state, after the Revolution of 1843 had got rid of both the President and his secretary, wrote his memoirs. There are some revealing passages. Inginac reports that Pétion told him only forty days before his death that Boyer was a man of probity and delicacy, "but unhappily he is petulant; he is too set in his ways to conciliate those who might assist him. In everything he wants to dominate, and he will bring unhappiness to the country if he does not change." Inginac cites cases to show that Pétion's prophecy was correct. Boyer in 1820 repealed the most unpopular laws, particularly those requiring personal corvée and the repair of public roads; but instead of taking advice from his cabinet on important economic matters, he frequently announced that he was president and would not be run by anybody. Consequently, according to Inginac, he made mistakes which might have been avoided.[9] Defending himself, the former secretary offers a clue to the failure of the régime—possibly unavoidable—by showing that the administration merely suggested, did not require, action:

[466]

"Have I not constantly, not only preached and corresponded about the necessity of making agriculture prosperous, but also given work at as high wages as the treasury could afford: Have I not created habitations on lands formerly totally uncultivated, putting formerly idle men to work: Have I not published at my own expense, although I directed the National Printery, methods for cultivating tobacco and coffee plants, of which I distributed gratis several thousand copies?"[10]

[464]
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In spite of all encouragement which the administration could offer, agricultural production continued to decline, while expenses increased, and external trade fell off from a third to a half. The government had to borrow from the banking firm of Lafitte in Paris to find even the interest for

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8. Hostilities between the two parts of Haiti ceased about 1812 because of the mutual fear on the part of Christophe and Pétion of Napoleon's ascendency, and the threat which this constituted to the whole former colony. Their war had ravaged the plantations and removed laborers from the soil. Then came the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain, cutting off many of the supplies which Haiti drew from both countries. There was accordingly an unwritten truce, with no further hostilities. A neutral territory of ten leagues between the boundaries of the two states was tacitly agreed upon: neither army was to enter it. This was the rich plain of Boucassin, once the garden of the island, now a wilderness.

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9. Joseph Balthazar Inginac, *Memoirs* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1843), pp. 32, 34, 38.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

payments due to the French government.

of "Merci Papa Vincent" sprang up in the side streets of Port-au-Prince. One rendition (as translated) went: 175 178 643 533* 539*

> We know the man who loves the people,
> He is Sténio Vincent!
> Who made my wife leave me to go to her family?
> He is Président Vincent!
> Who made my skin show through my worn out pants?
> He is Président Vincent!
> Who is the man who made my house fall down?
> He is Président Vincent!
> Oh, we call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!

So widespread did the burlesques on the original become that the tune itself became suspect. One never knew which versions were running through the minds of the listeners.

In 1950, during the administration of President Estimé, there was a new public works program which provided employment for a good many needy people in the Port-au-Prince area, and a coumbite song of the period went: 175 643 533* 539* [653]

> Président Estimé waille, oh!
> Quembé peys yà pas laguè oh!
> C'est Bondieu nans ciel là qui ba moin président!
> C'est Bondieu nans ciel là qui ba moin président cila!
> Quembé peys yà pas laguè oh!
> Port-au-Prince oh tourné Havane oh! [Ex. 117]

> President Estimé wailk, oh!
> Hold on to the country, don't let go, oh!
> It is God in heaven who gave me this president!
> It is God in heaven who gave me this president!
> Hold on to the country, don't let go, oh!
> Port-au-Prince, oh, is turning into a Havana, oh!

When Estimé was overthrown by a military coup, the melody lingered on, but the name of the protagonist was changed. [669]

No president of Haiti has served his term of office, either for good or bad, without providing the raw materials for a folk song. His heroic deeds, his failures, and his foibles are as likely as not to be perpetuated in the music of the people. 643 533*

As for the presidency itself, it is held in the highest esteem. A rousing salute song, reminiscent of the Marseillaise, sends every new president-elect on the way to the palace: [539]*

> Président passé là,
> L'ap monté au gouvernement!

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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reported in Haiti that although they joined patriotically in the cheering when the Marines embarked in 1934, many of them shed tears to see the departure of 2,000 monthly salaries, most of which had been enriching the local tills. Indeed, the country came much closer to establishing a mercantile middle class during the Occupation than ever before. The only real control left behind by the Americans was an overseer of the national budget, destined to leave as soon as Haiti's external debt was finally paid off. To that end the government saved rather than spent, so that businessmen found no comfort in the state of economic affairs, particularly during a decade of world depression and European disturbance. Nationalist economic theories in Europe have upset Haitian markets, so that the élite thriftily save their pennies against hard times instead of spending them freely on present luxuries. The American overseer of the budget withdrew in 1941.

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At many points the forces of the Occupation touched unwittingly upon deep-rooted prejudices of the Haitian people. In order to secure laborers for road construction the Marines revived an old corvée law of Christophe's time, requiring forced labor on public works at the need of the government. Many of the ill-nourished peasants were taxed beyond their physical powers by work on the roads, so that an armed revolt by caco guerrillas broke out. Its suppression required months of time and cost many lives, leaving in its train a great deal of ill will.

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The efficient Americans also came to grief when they attempted to make Haitians orderly in the American way. Land titles were in chaos, as we have noted. American experts wished to find a basis for internal taxation, so that economic reform might be effective and permanent. The effort to have people declare their claims so that these might be properly registered had to be given up after a few weeks, for the peasant owners knew without written deeds their local boundaries, and among the squatters those who realized their title might not stand under strict investigation were understandably averse to having questions of property tenure raised by the authorities of an alien and interfering government.

175 648 423

Wherever Marine barracks were located, there were centres of a cultural dissemination which was bound in the long run to affect Haitian ideas and practices. Automobiles, radios, amusements, even the daily conversation of the Marines, all left their mark upon a people who had been effectively isolated from the world for more than a century.

175 648 177

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

two rooms to house the whole family. "In these huts, filth and every species of uncleanliness prevail, for the people give themselves up to their indolent and lazy habits. It is common to see the pigs and poultry herding with the family."[19]

The furnishings in the huts were as simple as the construction. Rarely was there more than one bed, if that; the children of the family used mats for sleeping. A table, a stool, a couple of patched chairs, calabash bowls, an iron pot or two (and in later days, discarded gasoline tins), comprise the household equipment.

The fine roads of the French régime became rutted and washed, were overgrown with weeds, and soon reverted to wasteland or became nothing more than paths. Carriages ceased to be of any use, and there were few wagons; donkeys and horses became the regular means of transportation, and this was true until the Americans began to build roads again in 1916. The colonial régime had left a legacy of bridges, public buildings, parks, irrigation ditches; practically every improvement of this nature crumbled in slow decay and was not replaced. The temperate Dr. Brown closed his account of the Haiti of 1836 with the following paragraph:

> To sum up all that might be said upon the actual condition of Hayti, poverty and degradation stare one in the face wherever he goes—and the state of the whole island will be fully understood in the United States when it is bluntly asserted, that the country is one continuous negro village, built of mud cabins, and unfurnished with the usual comforts of life. The population is, with small exceptions, an indolent, naked multitude, without sustenance or a disposition to make exertions to obtain it; without enormous vices, but petty and insignificant in every thing relating to human character, and not many removes from the tribes upon the Niger in point of civilization. The fact is indisputable, that as a nation the blacks of Saint Domingo are in a retrograde movement as regards intellectual improvement, and no obstacle seems to exist to prevent this descent to barbarism. The government and institutions of the country must for the present remain unstable, and it is difficult to pronounce what the changes involved in the future will produce.[20]

Progress, as Westerners understand it, comes through contacts and competition, both of which were lacking to Haiti in large measure throughout the whole of the nineteenth century. While externally

19. Franklin, op. cit., p. 356.
20. Op. cit., II, 288-289.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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be given to Haiti for vast rubber plantings.[21] Opposition to Lescot comes chiefly from those who consider him too friendly with the Dominicans who killed hundreds of Haitian workers in 1937, Lescot having figured prominently in negotiations that led to the Dominican government's agreement to pay indemnities to Haiti for the slaughter.

Reviewing the whole course of Haitian history, the field of politics seems to have marshaled itself behind a few regularities. In every case there have been voices raised to protest, yet the ruling clique, whatever its grouping, has effectively supported these characteristic political customs:

1. Complete dominance of political life by the president. Strong men seem to be necessary to rule ignorant masses. Even the revolutions precipitated by parties campaigning for parliamentarianism have, when successful, become governments by the president. This concentration of power in one man's hands makes the next revolution possible, for it is easier to overthrow one man than to eliminate a party based upon wide suffrage and diffused responsibility.

2. The inferior position of cabinet ministers. These have resembled neither European nor American secretaries of state in their responsibilities, but have been little more than clerks appointed by the president to serve as heads of a bureau. The treasurer-general, for example, during most of Haiti's history has merely received the moneys, while the president disbursed them. The secretary-general has neither originated nor conducted the details of public policy. Often as not, the minister has made a convenient whipping boy when the president has got himself involved in internal or foreign complications: by demanding the minister's resignation the president remained unscathed.

3. The unimportance of the legislature. It has made useful patron-

21. The European War, threatening the supply of rubber coming to the United States from British Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies, has made the American government seek new sources. The Department of Agriculture established an experimental station and breeding gardens for rubber plants in Haiti, and the results were so successful that extensive areas were planted with rubber trees. Haiti and the United States in May, 1941, reached a long-term agreement for "the development of agriculture and economy"; the projects embraced under the agreement include not only rubber but the further development of Haiti's banana plantations, the planting of oil crops, drug plants, spices, fiber plants, the stimulation of handicraft industries, and the development of forestry resources peculiar to the tropics. A further extension of an additional $500,000 in credits will be made for use on highways, irrigation projects, and to provide transportation facilities for the areas to be planted to rubber trees.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Taxes were heavy

175 651 652 and work strenuous; but there were a sound currency, commercial and agricultural prosperity, and a full treasury.

Like many a great man he was an overweening egotist. His 175 643 159 energy and ambition, for Haiti as well as for himself, neither understood nor tolerated a lesser determination than his own. At times he seemed more intent upon the letter than upon the spirit of his laws. Probably his chief defect, a common failing of strong men, was a disregard for humble individual worth. To write of him invites the most colorful vocabulary. He is Black Majesty and the Emperor Jones. By almost any standards of leadership he would be accounted a great man. He lacked only those few final, subtle qualities which make for sheer genius. In 1820, stricken by paralysis and faced with defections in his army, he died as he had lived, dramatically, ending his life with a specially saved bullet (folklore says a silver one), in his palace of the ironic name, Sans Souci.

175 643 In no significant respect did Christophe change the feudal structure of economic organization begun by Toussaint and carried on by Dessalines. It was in administration, especially as it affected social status, that the thirteen years of Christophe were important for the [641] future of Haiti. Where the Emperor had been an unpredictable tyrant whose heavy hand inspired only terror, Christophe was a sternly just father whose well-disciplined children respected, admired, and even loved him.

175 427 475 655 566 643 The land policy of the two régimes was similar. Government estates were farmed out on five-year leases to the highest bidders among the well-to-do; large plantations belonging to the state were tilled by cultivators who might, without taking the term too harshly, be called serfs; loyal supporters and wealthy individuals were entrusted with responsibility. Like Dessalines, Christophe added wealth to power and rendered all his subjects dependent upon himself rather than on their own resources and influence—but all this with a difference.

175 643 642 565 Where the Emperor had denied the natural vanity of his aides by refusing them nobility, Christophe accepted their ambition as perfectly normal and made use of it for his own purposes. Four years after he had established his state, he changed it from a republic to a kingdom; all his important men he made dukes, barons, counts, knights. He warned them that he would expect them to live up to the dignities conferred upon them. Pomp and regalia are costly;

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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policy of encouraging trade with his friends and prohibiting it with his enemies—both arbitrarily. The variation of Pétion was a sort of mercantilism, with set high tariffs.

What Dessalines planned was in terms of Western statecraft so weird that white onlookers felt they were restrained in calling Dessalines a transplanted African tribal chieftain. So passionately intense was the fury of that general against all whites that he took every precaution he could devise to prevent face-to-face dealings between his Haitians and foreigners. By deceit, treachery, and ingenious cruelty he conducted a massacre which deserves comparison with that of Saint Bartholomew: this effectively rid the country of white residents. Since for a time Haiti would have to depend for economic survival upon trade with foreigners, Dessalines next conceived a project whereby the whole population would be gathered in the centre of the island, in the most protected valleys and the gorges of the highest mountains. In these fastnesses the people would never see a white but would work on the land, producing sugar and coffee and cotton for export without ever leaving their local habitations. On the seacoast would be established certain "counters" over which a few incorruptible Haitians, chosen by the Emperor himself, would sell local products and buy the necessary imported goods. Impregnable fortresses were to guard access to the interior,[2] which would be reached by new roads from the seacoast "counters." Every seaport was to be destroyed as soon as new towns could be built in the back country. Already when his death intervened Dessalines had moved his capital from the Cape (that is, Cap-Haïtien, formerly Cap Français) to the inland village of Marchand (in the department of the Artibonite; now renamed Dessalines), and his next plan was to transfer Port-au-Prince eight leagues inland to the plantation Dérance, among the mountains.

Dessalines has been thought absurd, childish, barbaric. But there is something poignant, even tragic, in this fiery determination of the black chieftain, bitter over the cruelties and indignity to which his people had been subject for decades, to use this alien island as best he could and preserve his people at any cost from such another domination.

Despite his scheme for ultimate isolation of the people, Dessalines kept everyone steadily at work by the forced-labor system instituted

2. See p. 247 and note 13. under Toussaint.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

512 [264] neighbors paying friendly visits and of playing children gradually become stilled. It is the time for the evening meal. By nine o'clock at the latest all is quiet and Mirebalais, man and beast, is asleep.

796 527 The *vodun* drums are heard only on Saturday nights, and then the dance must be sufficiently close to the town, and the wind in the right direction, for the sound to be audible. [656] Permits for these dances must be obtained, and are regularly given by the police officials — or were in 1934 — and word is passed on that on a given Saturday certain households will give *vodun* dances. If the dances are held in the foothills to the west, the Tombe River must be forded, and the existence of such a barrier between the village and the site of the dance makes this a favorite region in which to hold them, even though they may have official sanction. During the rainy season [484] [501] attendance at dances on the opposite bank of the Artibonite River depends on the height of the stream, for when it is in flood not even the dugout canoes of the Haitians can cross it, while the ferry which Moreau de St. Mery speaks of as having been established in 1749 does not even exist in local tradition.[14] Yet no dance lacks participants or spectators, for these occasions furnish the principal opportunity for recreation even as they fill their proper religious function. Early in [798] the week discussions can be heard of the dances to be held, and though the official frown of the Catholic priest is always to be reckoned with, the importance of these dances, and the numbers who attend them, do not seem markedly lessened by [554] this fact. Those whose social position in the community makes them more sensitive to such criticism merely take the precaution to slip quietly out of town after dark.

796 When occasions of local or national significance and church holidays are celebrated, the town is full of country folk and [788] visitors from the cities. Christmas and New Year's, Mardi Gras and Easter are all periods for such celebrations, while the first Sunday of every month witnesses a religious procession

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

Saturday nights. This is not because of the especially sacred character of the day, but rather because the Haitian government, in order to assure a continuous working week, refuses permits for other days. The occasions for the dances are varied, as is evident from those given during the course of this field-work. One of these was that of a *hungan* as a compliment to visitors " who knew Dahomey " and was conducted as a serious rite in the worship of the *loa*. Two dances marked the end of *services* for family gods, and were variously interpreted as tributes to the family dead and the twins, who must not be neglected in any religious observance, and as celebrations offered in praise of the gods who were to protect the families, giving the dances, to mark the " restraining " of the evil spirits responsible for their troubles. Two other dances celebrated the " baptism " and initial use of new sets of drums. As has been pointed out, there are also non-religious occasions on which *vodun* dances are given. On days of secular celebrations, such as the anniversary of the declaration of Haitian independence, or the withdrawal of the Marines, the *vodun* dancing is purely social, though the ritual drums are used, the sacred songs are sung, and the steps of the dances are those seen at any Saturday-night gathering. Added to the fact that no possessions or other manifestations of serious worship of the *loa* occur, the " secular " *vodun* dances differ from the others in that they are held away from any family shrine, taking place within towns or cities, something never permitted in their non-social, religious counterparts.

The *vodun* dance — and in the remainder of this chapter only the dance which has significance in the worship of the *loa* will be considered — is patterned like all other ceremonies of the cult.[1] It is held at a family habitation, under an open brush shelter known as a *tonnelle*, constructed for the occasion next to the family *maison de servitude*. If the habitation at which the dance is given is not the one where this house of worship is found, the shelter is built near a hut so that those possessed will have a place to retire.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

mâché carriage or on papier-mâché horses, make their appearance during Rara as well as on the Day of the Kings (*Les Rois*). 541 536

Among the traditional paraphernalia carried by Rara groups are cocomacaque sticks, cha-cha rattles, metal rattles called *tchancy*, a set of rattles on a tall thin pole (called *jouconjou*), candelabra bearing candles or oil lamps (*lampions*), banners and flags, and such miscellaneous musical instruments as the *grage* scraper, bamboo scraping devices, the *basse* finger drum, *assots* (beating boards), and various kinds of secular drums. 541 575 534

The general tone of Rara is nonreligious. The dancing is free from the decorous restraints which characterize most religious ritual, and some early observers of the festival were shocked by what they saw. Some of them went so far as to attribute Haiti's dense population to the "licentious activities" and reckless abandon of the spring carnival. The Catholic Church and some political administrators have sporadically sought to suppress Rara, along with Vodoun ritual. And even today in Port-au-Prince the foreign visitor often is urged to watch the elite Mardi Gras with its floats and mulatto queens as a substitute. 541 [535] [795] [656]

Although Rara has an over-all tone of secular abandon, it has links with both Catholic and Vodoun ritual. Good Friday is given over in good measure to miming the story of Jesus and Judas. A perambulating band may carry an effigy of Judas hanging from a pole. Another will burn the Judas effigy, or drag it in the dust as the crowd moves along the road. In another group a man playing the part of Judas may crawl on his hands and knees along the trail, while Jesus' avengers pursue him with long, cracking whips. 541 179 536

Tying in with Vodoun ritual, virtually all Rara drums and other paraphernalia are "dedicated" or "rededicated" before Lent in special hounfor services. And on the last day of Rara, usually late in the night, prayers are said, the loa are called upon, and some of the festive paraphernalia is thrown into a fire to be consumed. 541 796 534 [778]

175 In the early
178 years of independence, Emperor Henry Christophe in the north and
311 President Pétion in the south tried to stem the disintegration of the
[643] magnificent plantations. Christophe's measures in the region he con-
[656] trolled were sometimes stern, according to legend; but the plantation system and the plantations themselves gradually fell into decay, along with the aqueducts, the warehouses, and the sugar mills. For the Haitian had returned to a tradition of landholding antedating his enslavement.

175 Europe's loss of the Pearl of the Antilles aroused bitter words from
643 Frenchmen and Englishmen for the better part of the century. They
181 accused the Negro of laziness and lack of ability, repeating endlessly that only as a colony could Haiti ever be of any use to anybody. The London *Times* deplored the Haitian's unwillingness to work for wages, speculating that he had "no desire for property strong enough to induce him to labor with sustained power." In the United States, antiabolitionist enthusiasts cited the Haitian situation as an example of what would happen to the American economy if the slaves were freed.

464 The Haitian's reluctance to work for wages did not reflect an aversion
423 to owning property, however, as the London *Times* supposed. On the
311 contrary, it was engendered by his desire for property. The land was there and waiting, only needing a house to be built upon it, and to be cleared and tilled. The typical Haitian wanted not dubious, seasonal wage work but a farm of his own. The more ambitious peasant aspired to two farms, or even three, with a homestead and a family on each.

423 If a man worked hard and made a success of one plot, he could put
595 away money and eventually buy a second. The additional land might be
178 separated by some miles from the original farm. On the new ground
583 the man would build another house and take another wife to take care of it in his absence. Known as *plaçage*, this arrangement had complete community sanction. A man whose energies and good fortune made an extra household possible was expected to make such an arrangement. It was not a new institution bred in the chaos following the
[997] Revolution, nor was it, as some missionaries held, an evidence of moral deterioration of the Haitian character. It was simply a persisting concept of West African life.[2,3] The woman who occupied the second or third household was not a concubine. Like the first wife, she had enhanced prestige in her community. She had authority and responsibility. Her work, her position, and her rewards were not essentially different from those of the first wife.[2,3] It is true that her marriage was not consecrated by a church or civil ceremony, but, ordinarily, neither was that of the
[581] first wife. Contrary to European misconceptions, such unions were true marriages in the sense that they had full sanction of the community.

[2,3] [Footnotes appear in Category 116, pp. 351-352. -- Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

two. Here was a decline of about 150,000 from 1790.[2] It is a commentary on the man's forcefulness that in spite of all difficulties Dessalines established an effective economic organization. Its basis was serfdom.

Every citizen, he announced, must consider himself in one of two categories, laborer or soldier. There were to be no shirkers in the new Haiti; if a man was not in the army, he must do manual labor. Artisans who followed a craft counted as laborers. Women, since they could not join the army, must work shoulder to shoulder with their men. It was understood that direction of Haiti's new order would be carried on by state officials who were neither laborers nor soldiers, but these officials were to be so few that they would not constitute a separate third category.

This step of Dessalines' was a radical one. It proclaimed the mastery of state over individual; and even more significantly it divided the people according to economic task, rather than birth, wealth, color, or social status. At first the more ambitious citizens bore patiently with the arbitrary decree, thinking they might be able to achieve comfortable status under a lenient definition of "soldier" or else by sinecure tasks as officials. Their disillusionment was swift. Even swifter was the chagrin of the lowly folk who had been slaves, for they found themselves now in actual bondage to one of their own color.

All people except soldiers, ran the decree, must be "attached as cultivators to a plantation." This might be translated to read "bound to the soil." The vast majority of the people were forced willy-nilly into agriculture. It was "formally prohibited for a cultivator to desert the plantation to which he was assigned"; conversely, it was a crime to give asylum to a runaway cultivator, male or female.[3] If such conditions differed from slavery, they were at least close to what the mediaeval world knew as serfdom. But under this régime of forced labor the recently ravaged fields once more became productive: cotton plantations again covered the plain of the Artibonite, and sugar refineries were slowly rebuilt all over the country.

To forestall complaint from the people once again driven into

2. See, for an analysis of population figures, Placide Justin, *Histoire politique et statistique de l'île d'Hayti, Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1826), pp. 502–503.

3. A certain Mlle. Chapotin, of respectable family, was accused of having harbored a fugitive female cultivator, and, since she was unable to pay immediately the fine imposed upon her by the police at Port-au-Prince, she was condemned to serve a jail term.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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their districts, principally during the working hours of the day. They were held responsible for all consequences of their own negligence.

This whole flow of legislation was designed primarily for the protection of the great landed proprietors, yet there were other laws which aided the masses. In former days workers had been coerced through corporal punishment. This was by law now abolished. Temporary assignments of garden plots were required for each family of laborers; medical care must be provided at the expense of the planter; the aged and infirm must be guaranteed the right to keep their homes and gardens even though no longer able to work. Expectant mothers in the fourth month of pregnancy must be relieved of field work, with no limitation of their right to share in the estate's income; mothers of nursing children must be permitted to remain at home until the weaning of their infants.

A great concession to the workers was made by abolishing the office of "inspector of cultures." In the days of Toussaint and Dessalines each district of the country had had its inspector, whose duty it was to see that crop cultivation proceeded according to schedule.[27] This man's disapproval of conditions resulted in fines and personal chastisement. By abolishing the office Pétion effected a great saving in salaries, for there had been thousands of these inspectors; on the other hand, the watchfulness of the inspectors had kept agricultural production at a high level. With no officials to dog the footsteps of the workers, crops immediately fell off.

Pétion clearly expected la grande culture to be the prevailing mode of agriculture in the republic. He fostered all kinds of legislation regulating it, even aside from that already mentioned. For example, a complete schedule was prepared for the division of income of the estate.[28] But the entire system was too neatly worked out and artificial to be effective, particularly since it was not backed up with force. The threat of punishment removed, most workers began gradually, often deliberately, to sabotage the system. It was much more pleasant

27. Christophe followed his predecessors in keeping the district inspectors.

28. This could be very complicated. A tenant farmer might hire workers, and so have to share his half of the income with them. In such cases, the division of the money crops was to be made in kind or in money, at current prices, in the presence of the local justice, his assessors, and an officer of the *gendarmerie*. The workers' "fourth" was divided into portions of which three went to the first foreman, two to each of the skilled workers, one and a half to each male or female worker, and one half to each child laborer between ten and fourteen years of age.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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to spend one's time in the allotted garden patch than to cultivate sugar cane steadily in the heat of the day. In a garden there was more variety to the work, and more independent decision; in a cane field all must work in unison to be effective. Moreover, the yield from the garden was a daily thing, while that of the cane fields came but once a year. Less and less were the overseers able to get the tenants away from their gardens and into the fields. 175 466 24 656

Not all the sabotage came from the common folk. Landowners had their normal share of profit motive. The complex system of social security and benevolent stewardship ate away much of the income of the estate.[29] More important, the owners had had no experience of plantation management other than by directing forced labor. Corporal punishment was now abolished, but to the owner it was still unthinkable that there should be no coercion in plantation work. The laws protecting labor therefore left them bewildered, and they did not hold up their part of the system. Finding it expensive to maintain sugar machinery, impossible to engage docile workers, and necessary to finance social security, most of the "aristocrats" simply took the easier path of leasing their estates in small subdivisions, getting out of them what they could. 175 466 471 24

Another unexpected result of Pétion's general policy was to shift the main produce of the republic from sugar to coffee. Sugar had for decades been the staple crop of southern Haiti; but its cultivation requires scrupulous care and expensive machinery. Coffee, on the other hand, grows wild both in the lowlands and at heights of three thousand feet. It is "wild" in the sense that plants spring from seeds dropped by parent trees, without careful planting. When it became obvious that the workers were not to be persuaded to regular work in the cane fields, the landlords broke up the large plantations so necessary to sugar cultivation. Each tenant farmer was almost sure to find coffee trees on his rented plot of land. He would harvest the berries but would do little or nothing to tend and improve the plants, as he did not own them. In French days coffee trees had been pruned, fertilized, grafted; the new Haitian farmer simply let nature take its course. Pétion's careful planning resulted consequently in an entirely unplanned, accidental, and automatic adjustment to new conditions of life. 175 433 245 249

29. That the landlords did not too vigorously protest this system of care for the workers was due to their familiarity with similar care in slave days. [466]

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Any foray into possible psychological reason is guesswork. It
461 might be hazarded that the men felt they had fought for freedom and so deserved to enjoy its benefits; or that agriculture smacked of the old days of slavery and should be avoided by the superior male; or that since ambition for progress was not a Haitian characteristic, and the work of women produced enough food, there was no reason to change a routine which did very well. One cannot speak with definiteness on these matters. And it was upper-class Haitians and foreigners who adjudged peasant men lazy; slaves and "forced" laborers always appear lazy to their masters.

462 In modern times at least, male peasants toil strenuously, although not so continuously as their females. The preparation of the ground for planting is hard work, and is done entirely by men. Harvesting, housebuilding, marketing the coffee (one form of marketing not beneath a man's dignity)—these are men's major contributions to economic life.

177 People who live in isolation commonly tend to slide back in such
178 externalities as clothes, manners, neatness of person and of dwelling, speech, and social ritual. Almost from the very beginning of Haitian history, most of the people were effectively isolated from the rest of the world, so that the superficial aspects of daily life exhibited to all visitors the spectacle of retrogression.

175 Christophe, who had frequent English visitors in his kingdom,
● 656 forced his subjects to dress neatly. After his time no ruler made
291 regulations for dress. The men commonly wore a pair of cotton trousers and an abbreviated shirt, while women's dress was a loose-fitting garment which might be called a Mother Hubbard. Children could, and can now, be seen up to the age of four or five without
[369] any clothes at all. The nearer the countrypeople live to towns, where the example of the élite is before them, the better their dress is likely to be.

342 Slave cabins on the former plantations were inhabited by the free Haitians until decay set in and the cabins fell down. They were ordinarily superseded by huts which could be constructed of withes
[333] and thatch. The British Minister during the eighteen-twenties saw a man near Plaisance building his house, "plastering the wattling, of which the walls were composed, with a mixture of mud and ashes," using his hand as a trowel.[18] Almost never did a hut have more than

18. Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, I, 150.

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to his demands for revision and for his selection as president for life, retained the constitution they had written and chose Pétion president in his stead, the rupture was instant and complete. 175 642 [667]

Dictator as against restricted president, strong man as against class or group rule, Negro against mulatto, army against civil government, executive against legislature, North against South—these are the phases of the subsequent dichotomy in Haitian politics. 175 665

A good case can easily be made for the advocates of force in Haitian government, particularly in its early days. For years the majority of men had lost the habit of steady work on the land; a strong hand was needed to reëstablish in the countryside that economic order without which liberty shrivels. The people had become accustomed to taking orders from their military leaders, and these from their commanding officer. Those, moreover, were times of crisis, when France might suddenly descend again upon her former colony: few crises can be dealt with by debating societies. Looking back on the course of Haitian history, one may point out also that the country prospered under the dictatorships of Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe as it never did under the limited presidencies.[4] 175 642 433 656

In 1806, therefore, the aristocratic party got its wish, although only at the price of splitting the country in two. They established a government with a president of their own and a Senate filled with their representatives. The earliest legislation naturally enough favored their own landholding group. When prosperity did not result, Pétion began to recommend to the Senate a division of the land. More and more, although the representative form was preserved, Pétion ruled as a dictator. He was mild enough not to arouse antagonism; as is always the case when freedom of speech is curbed and summary legislation required, the plea of crisis was used to justify extraordinary measures. 175 642 665 646 643

The legislative party was firmly in the saddle by 1820 when Boyer reunited North and South, and shared his power with the Senate. 175 642 643

4. The argument for dictatorship is familiar to the modern world. A defense of "totalitarianism," published in 1816 by authority of Christophe (then King Henry I), is amusingly like certain European utterances of the nineteen-thirties: "The King has the sweet satisfaction of seeing that the cultivators [who were forced to work on the land whether they wanted to or not], being everywhere regularly paid [though the sum might be tiny], are praising the freedom they enjoy." And again: "Hayti chose a kingdom in order to shun forever that chaos, that confusion and perpetual clashing, which result from those monstrous associations known under the name of *popular bodies*." Anon., *Haytian Papers* (1816), pp. 109, 113. [829]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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the still weak United States, France—the traditional enemy of Haitians, and moribund Spain, who was in fact shortly to lose most of her empire in the New World. Since he did not mean to drive his people to work, he resolved to exploit to the full the benefits of foreign trade in the hope that profits from exports would stimulate production. As for allies, he cultivated the friendship of the United States, but also sought to wean British merchants from the Northern ports. To this end, although he levied duties of twelve per cent on goods of other nations, he reduced duties on English goods to five per cent.[9]

Pétion, content to govern without an impressive court, gave the greatest encouragement possible to trade; he sheared expenses and managed to balance his budget. In 1818, for example, his revenues were $2,646,000 and his expenses $2,144,000, giving the republic a respectable surplus of $502,000.

Because Boyer was Pétion's disciple he followed in his predecessor's footsteps, thus fixing in his quarter-century administration the pattern of foreign trade under a tariff system. The Haitian élite seem never to have taken to commercial enterprise, nor has the country ever developed an economist even of fifth rank. Haitian thought, so eloquently articulate along political lines, has simply never turned its attention in any solid and serious way to economic problems. Nearly the whole of the foreign commerce of the republic from the earliest days was conducted by foreign merchants resident in Haiti. This was partly because the credit of the Haitians was not so generally established as to inspire confidence, but mostly it was due to lack of interest of the people in foreign trade.

In the eighteenth century Saint-Domingue had been almost the only colony producing such tropical products as sugar and coffee on a large scale; the absence of effective competition accounted for most of the prosperity of the French colony. In the nineteenth century, however, competition developed rapidly; and at this very time the laws and court decisions of Haiti began to hamper the business of the foreign merchants dealing there. By Article 21 of Boyer's Law of Patents, all persons engaging in any trade or profession except that of cultivation of the soil must be provided with a license or patent; all foreigners admitted as merchants into the republic must first secure the president's permission to acquire a patent; and when

9 See the Acrisi of October 15, 1814.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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finally the license was obtained, it authorized the foreigner to carry on only a wholesale business—not with other foreign traders or with any resident aliens, but with Haitians in the six open ports.[10] The minimum of goods to be sold in any deal was fixed, so that no foreigner could inadvertently enter the retail business. Such licenses cost between $1,600 and $2,000, sums so large that few foreigners were drawn to the island.

Quite obviously the government sought to keep the external trade of Haiti under its control; it is equally obvious that under the licensing system, with its high fees and strict surveillance, only a small number of dealers were attracted, who consequently monopolized what little trade there was. Retail business being prohibited to them, their imports had to be sold by Haitians.

Not even this necessity created a middle class in the country, for the purchasing power of the peasants and other lower-caste Haitians was small; also the total sum of imports and exports was not large enough to support a middle class. The retail trade was chiefly in the hands of town women. These *marchandes*, as they were called, employed a number of hucksters—likewise women—to traverse the countryside surrounding the open ports, attend the markets, and report either every evening, or every week or month, depending upon their findings. The white man let his marchande know how much coffee he required, and this information was passed on to the local speculator who, at a very moderate profit, collected the coffee beans from the peasants in his neighborhood. Imports were distributed in like manner over the countryside. In its small way this system worked well enough, for the good faith of respectable marchandes could be counted upon both by the white trader and by the local dealers. A few European and American traders found it profitable to set up as marchandes the women with whom they cohabited, for this arrangement brought them nearer to the retail trade.

During Boyer's long administration the staple export was coffee, still cultivated on a few remaining plantations but mostly picked from plants growing wild, and sold by the peasants as their one source of money income. Sugar disappeared almost wholly from the

10. Namely, Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, Gonaïves, Jacmel, Les Cayes, and Jérémie; from 1822 to 1844 there were also two open ports in the Spanish part of the island which, during those years, was a part of Haiti.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Even Geffrard the reformer,

175 643 661 ably the ablest president in the second half-century, who was pledged to reduce the expenses of government (a promise which, since he was accustomed to a life of penury, should have been easy to fulfill), increased his own salary to $50,000 a year, and allowed himself $20,000 more annually for secret service and a similar sum "for the encouragement of arts and sciences." He bought two estates with government money; the meat bill of his family was charged to the budget of his bodyguard, and the family champagne bill to a hospital. After Geffrard, the presidency was openly regarded as the juiciest financial plum in Haiti which, if one could pluck it, would justify the necessary expenditures for a revolution. It seems from contemporary comment, indeed, that Geffrard's actions aroused not censure but rather envy, as if every ambitious Haitian would have welcomed the opportunity to do likewise. The bitingly critical Englishman, Sir Spenser St. John, railed with some justice, "Every Haitian appears fully persuaded that his countrymen never seek office except for the purpose of improving their private fortunes."[15]

175 643 646 The legislature was never a real check upon the President. It was useful to him at times when he wished to delay action on some embarrassing imbroglio with a foreign power, for by referring a measure to the Senate he could stall it in tedious debate. Almost without exception, however, the legislature consisted of the President's men. Its halls were palaces of idle oratory. One whole session was devoted to a discussion of fitting the hall with cushioned seats; another to the propriety of appointing an interpreter for representatives who understood only Créole and not French. To make a man a Senator was a satisfactory way of paying a political debt. To be a Senator was to have social prominence, a salary of $1,600 (decidedly a competence in nineteenth-century Haiti), an opportunity to speak before an audience—and no real responsibility.

175 One may grant without debate the difficulties facing this small and poor country, a Negro state with great white neighbors who regarded it with something less than deference. Yet Haiti in its early days had real promise. Wherein lay its defects? Haitian thinkers knew the answers, and frequently indicted themselves.

175 871 565 658 The want of education was a basic weakness. Those who believe in democracy need no rehearsal of the benefits of popular enlightenment. Because the great Negro heads of state were themselves im-

15. *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, p. 185.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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perfectly educated, and because other matters seemed infinitely more pressing than the setting up of schools, the early Haitians, united in 1804, fell apart within a single generation. On one hand were the élite and a few other townspeople who knew at least something of the outside world; on the other the masses of toiling countryfolk to whom tiny Haitian valleys were the whole universe. The young men of these two classes coming to power could not understand each other; they could not make concessions to each other; and as they fought for what they held true, each grew suspicious of the other if not permanently hostile. The lack of common understanding might still have been repaired in any one generation, but no single president had the vision to inaugurate universal education. Aside from the expense, certain powerful élite citizens often expressed their doubts as to the educability of the peasants; as property owners they would undoubtedly have objected to the unsettling of the economic order, which was based upon the work of an ignorant mass of blacks.[16]

Without education, the political sphere went unenriched by any flow of new blood from the people. Politics existed in a vacuum. The earthy, candid criticisms of a politically conscious folk never invigorated the discussion of national affairs. Without education, the people had no standards of comparison of Haiti with other nations, and were the easy dupes of whatever insurrectionary agitator could persuade them that their daily woes were caused by the current administration. Without education, high political office became a prerogative of the few, a contest between the Ins and the Outs, a path to personal wealth. Without education, Haiti could never be more than a dictatorship by a man or a clique, her stability endangered with the downfall of each incumbent, for dictatorships rarely provide for continuity in government.

Another great weakness was the notion that national happiness could be achieved by political means primarily. After the germinal ideas of Christophe and Pétion, which had a basis in economic behavior, hardly another important concept came out of a century of presidents. Haitian politicians have been great arrangers: they have given the country eighteen constitutions and innumerable codes, all admirable in their loving solicitude for precise detail. The common feeling of political aspirants has been, "If we are given power, all will

16. This argument is clearly stated in Madiou, op. cit., III, 176 ff.

In Haiti the possession takes many forms, according to the nature of the deity who has entered the body, and depending on whether the possessed person has learned to "control" that deity. The possessing, or "mounting," of the possessed individual is manifest proof of the loa's existence and his constant proximity. Vodoun is built upon the premise of the existence of loa, and the possession is the instrument of direct contact and of constant proof of the loa's imminence.

Although much of Vodoun is cast in the Dahomean mold, it is no longer what it was originally in Dahomey. Many of the original deities of the Dahomean Earth pantheon, the Sky pantheon, and the Thunder pantheon have survived. Others have been forgotten, but in their place there has grown a vast array of loa, recruited partly from the Yoruba deities and perhaps from deities of other West African tribes. By far the largest group has come into existence in Haiti—loa whose names, at least, probably would go unrecognized in West Africa.

There have been prolific intrusions into Vodoun from the rites of the Catholic Church, though they have not affected the general framework of the system. The original Dahomean supreme being, Nananbuluku, is nearly forgotten; in her place the Christian God is named in many a Vodoun service. Yet, though God is the supreme creator, giver, and taker, it is the loa who must be supplicated and mollified. Most important Vodoun rituals are begun under the supervision of the *prêt' savane,* or "bush priest," who leads off with brief prayers from the Catholic rites. While the Catholic Church itself rejects any direct part in Vodoun, the self-tutored prêt' savane, unordained and unsponsored by the Church, brings elements of its theology into the hounfor. The origins of the prêt' savane are not clear. But there is little doubt that his place in Haitian life became assured during the years of conflict between postrevolutionary governments and the Church of Rome. After the slave revolts of 1791, the priests of the French colony fled from the scene or went into hiding along with the other white colonists. From the date of Haitian independence throughout the following half century, Haiti was "in open schism from the Roman Catholic Church."[1] Some Haitian presidents were friendly toward the Catholic Church; others even had the objective of making Catholicism a state religion with the president at its head. Henry Christophe, for example, made the Catholic Church official but stipulated that ecclesiastical decrees must be approved by the president. Alexandre Pétion's constitution for southern Haiti (the country was divided) also established the Church as official but laid upon it strong restrictions.

Leyburn points out that in 1814 there were in Christophe's kingdom only three priests, one of whom Christophe had named archbishop. Dur-

[1] Leyburn, The Haitian People, p. 119. Cf. p. 349, Category 116. -- Analyst

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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ing Boyer's administration, 1818–1843, Catholicism was the state religion but the president was its chief. Leyburn notes:

> Every effort of the state failing to provide proper religious leadership, Boyer resigned himself to permitting those who professed to be priests to practice in the republic. There were seventy so-called priests in the country in 1840. Some of them had once been in the holy orders but had been unfrocked: they found in Haiti not only a haven but a fertile field for gain. In addition to these religious renegades came adventurers who knew just enough of ritual and theology to use the priestly garb as a cover for easy graft. . . . They baptized houses, boats, and doorposts, and blessed fetish charms or amulets, all for a fee.[8]

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It was not until 1860, after the death of the "Emperor" Soulouque, that Haiti signed a concordat with the Roman Church.

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The role of the prêt' savane became defined after the slave revolts of 1791. His cue was taken from the activities of freebooting Europeans who apparently needed neither religious orders nor profound Catholic knowledge for their pseudo-clerical work. And the long period without a responsible priesthood gave the "bush priest" an opportunity to flourish.

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The prêt' savane of today has a respected place in the community, though his prestige is not so great as that of the houngan on the one hand or the Catholic priest on the other. His place is guaranteed by his ability to bring to the Vodoun service elements of a competing system which the houngan, operating within the framework of African tradition, does not provide. Acceptance of these Catholic elements as a peripheral part of Vodoun is characteristic of much West African religious thinking, in which new deities and rituals may be added to the old when circumstances require.

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The prêt' savane opens many Vodoun services with an *action de grâce*, reads prayers when a death has occurred, participates in marriage rites, and "baptizes" the hounfor, the cult drums, and the sacred rattles—not to mention the loa themselves! But it is the houngan's powers that are paramount. The "bush priest" is in a sense performing a service for the Vodoun priest, whose rituals and administrations are regarded as the effective and vital ones. The prêt' savane is a cultural afterthought.

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In certain remote and isolated mountain places the prêt' savane is virtually unknown. But there is no sense of deprivation, for the cult priests —even the poorest and the most rustic—have their own way of dealing with the saints, God, and the forces of nature. An aged houngan of the Morne la Selle region explained it this way:

"In everything that is done, God's permission is asked first. Most houngans in the mountains do not know how to read, and they don't know how to pray. But they know many things. They know where the sun rises,

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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revolt of the slaves (1791). Priests fled or went into hiding with the other whites, so that Masses lapsed or were said by religious but unordained mulattoes. Upon his accession to power in Haiti Toussaint L'Ouverture made several attempts to rehabilitate religion in the country, for the Church he felt was a stable institution which might help in giving order to the turbulent land. He tried to accomplish the return of priests to the island parishes and churches. There are indications that Toussaint was not himself deeply religious; his pronouncements are formal, but one cannot say that they appear to be deeply felt. In his proclamation of October 10, 1798, announcing the expulsion of the English, he orders thanks to the God of Hosts, recommends to his chiefs of corps that the soldiers pray morning and evening and faithfully attend Mass on Sundays. In a public address he enjoins upon parents the duty of teaching the catechism to their children.

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The use of Catholicism as an aid to statecraft is apparent in his official dealings with the Church. His constitution of May 9, 1801, states that "the Catholic religion, apostolic and Roman, is the sole religion publicly professed." To obtain priests he besought the return of many who had fled the slave insurrection; he likewise turned to France, but France at this time was less than ardent in religion; nor were French priests likely to wish to come to an island ruled by blacks, particularly one which Napoleon was quite obviously planning to subdue. Toussaint addressed himself, therefore, to a schismatic abbé, Grégoire by name, in whom he saw a friend. Whether Grégoire might have helped him to establish the Catholic Church firmly as a part of Haitian life, with only a handful of repatriated colonial priests, we cannot know, for in 1802 the final war of independence began and the island, in convulsion, had no time for spiritual matters.

2. *Catholicism in Independent Haiti*

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Dessalines, the passionate, violent, and licentious founder of the new state, although not an enemy of the Church was not its active friend. In his slaughter of whites he spared several priests who had come to the country under Toussaint's persuasion, either because these clerics were obviously inoffensive or might later prove useful to him. Just as he controlled every other detail of Haitian life, he was determined to direct church affairs. He reserved to himself the right to fix the limits of jurisdiction of each priest and to nominate, even

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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to appoint, curés to the vacant parishes. His independence of action could not fail to give offense to Church authorities. One of his first appointees was a black ex-slave, Félix, who had been a drum major in the native army. Félix was made curé in the important town of Saint-Marc.

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The constitution of his empire (May, 1805) indicates that Dessalines did not intend to make himself head of the Church, but rather planned a complete separation of Church and State. Article 50 reads: "The law admits no dominant religion"; while the next article grants freedom to all cults and refuses state support to any denomination or minister. No attack was made, therefore, upon Catholicism, yet the disestablishment of that Church was a serious blow to its prestige. Not in the specific provisions regarding religion was the Church most weakened, but rather in the "liberality" of articles dealing with actions upon which the Church had taken a firm moral stand. Thus Article 14 declared that "marriage is an act purely civil and authorized by the government," while Article 15 permits divorce by the state. Early laws of the empire still further undermined the position of Church doctrine. Illegitimate children were granted the same legal rights as legitimate ones—a generous provision which removed one of the strong reasons for marriage; separation of husband and wife except by divorce was forbidden, and this prohibition practically encouraged the divorce disapproved by the Church; finally, the grounds upon which divorce might be allowed were broader than those existing anywhere else in the Western World at the time: mutual consent, application from one party to the marriage, or simple allegation of incompatibility of temperament or character.

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From the promulgation of this constitution in 1805 and for the next fifty-five years, Haiti was in open schism from the Roman Catholic Church. The Holy See refused to recognize either the Haitian state or the provisions of its constitution, and it declined to allow priests to enter the country. Certain Haitian presidents were friendly enough to Catholicism, and others were openly desirous of reestablishing a state religion, but the breach once made was not healed by mere good wishes. The longer the schism endured, the farther the people grew away from the doctrines and practices of a religion in which they had never been firmly grounded. At the moment of independence, when all minds were more open to new

3: .Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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ideas than in later years, the habits of regular attention to religious duties might have been fixed; by 1860 it was too late. Religion existed during those years, but it was a strange gallimaufry of Catholicism and folk belief.

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On the whole, the rulers of young Haiti were tolerant of the Catholic Church even to the point of advancing its interests, in so far as these might benefit the state. Their pronouncements and actions, nevertheless, were not those of ardent personal believers. Pétion's constitution of the republic in 1806 once more established Catholicism as the official Church. What it gave with one hand, however, it took away with the other. Thus:

Art. 35. The Catholic, apostolic, and Roman religion being that of all Haitians, is the religion of the state. It and its ministers will be protected.

Art. 36. The law assigns to each minister of that religion the extent of his spiritual administration. These ministers may not, under any pretext, form a body within the state.

Art. 37. If in the course of time other religions are introduced, no person shall be hindered, so long as he conforms to the laws, in following the cult he has chosen.

The Catholic, then, is the state religion, but only because the Haitians have heretofore been nominal Catholics. It occupies a position of practical fact which it would lose if by the introduction of other cults Haitians should be drawn away from it. Its ministers will be carefully watched to see that they do not, as a group, try to exert political pressure. And what freedom of action is possible to a church whose ecclesiastical parishes can be limited or extended in size by the civil legislature?

Pétion no more fought religion than he fought any other conventional institution approved by civilized people; but he did little to foster it. He received certain Wesleyan missionaries with considerable hospitality, remarking that "education increases the dignity of mankind." He appeased the good Catholics by repealing the law concerning the rights of illegitimate children, substituting for it a more moderate French rule.[4] Likewise, he invited the Catholic Church to participate in the education of Haitian youth.

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4. The French practice allowed an illegitimate child recognized before a wedding equal rights of inheritance with legitimate offspring, while giving only quarter rights to a child recognized after marriage.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Christophe had a great deal more to say about religion than any of the other early Haitian rulers. In a speech following the promulgation of his constitution, after severe censure of the government of Dessalines, he said:

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> It is necessary to raise again the dignity of religion, for weakened morals leave young people open to the licenses of their age. Liberty has been assailed by traitors, enemies of their fellow citizens, and sold to our cruelest enemies. It is assured to you now, have no doubt! Shortly you will see these vicious men and their criminal efforts vanish like clouds.
>
> Public education, after religion and liberty the most precious benefit mankind enjoys, will be reanimated and sustained by morality; it will again be held in honor and reverence amongst us. Divorce, that traitor among customs, is rigorously prohibited and proscribed forever.[5]

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Like Pétion, Christophe made the Catholic Church official, but he indicated the dictatorial path he intended to follow by adding that no ecclesiastical decree or law might become effective without the consent of the President.[6] He completely overturned the law of Dessalines concerning illegitimate children; his decree deprived such offspring of any claims of inheritance whatever.[7] In a country where practically no one had been legally married such a ruling was severe, but Christophe hoped that his severity would force his subjects into wedlock, and this the Catholic Church was bound to approve.

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Making the Church official did not strengthen its hold upon the people. In 1814 (seven years after he had promised "to raise again the dignity of religion") the kingdom was served by only three priests, one of whom Christophe had named archbishop. The King was preoccupied with form, and having created a nobility he needed a church to lend dignity to his realm. Consequently in 1811 he reorganized the clergy in his kingdom, establishing an archiepiscopal see and three bishoprics. The reorganization, except for the archbishop, remained a paper plan because the Pope refused to coöperate by giving the schismatic church his approval.

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All the early rulers seem to have been rather innocent in their dealings with Rome. They felt, apparently, that as heads of state they had but to express a desire in order to have His Holiness ap-

5. This speech, made on February 18, 1807, is cited in Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1848), II, 354–355.
6. See the law of March 18, 1807.
7. Law of March 25, 1807.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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prove. Dessalines had sent a small number of Negro youths to Rome to receive consecration and ordination from the Pope, so that they might return to initiate a black priesthood for the black state. Pius VII (through the interference of Napoleon, it was held by the Haitians) refused to consecrate the aspirants to holy orders, and they had to return as they had come. Christophe thought to avoid such a snub by presenting His Holiness with a *fait accompli*. Having in his kingdom a Spanish Capuchin named Brelle who had formerly anointed Dessalines emperor, Christophe made this friar head of his reorganized church as "archbishop of Haiti and grand almoner to the King," giving him a "palace" and a yearly income derived from the revenues of his "see." This achieved he asked papal approval, but had sorrowfully to announce, "*Le roi d'Haïti eut la douleur de ne pas même recevoir une réponse de Sa Sainteté et passa outre.*"

Pétion's legislators were even more naïve. Their constitution of 1816 (of course, really the President's) granted to the President the right to have a bishop come to Port-au-Prince "to elevate to the priesthood those young Haitians who feel called to embrace the ecclesiastical state."[8] It was apparently assumed that without the approval of the Pope any bishop could come in and forthwith "make" priests. The insertion of this article in the constitution confesses the disadvantages of schism. The last surviving priests of the old régime, those few who had remained in spite of the breach with Rome, were dying off; no new priests were being sent in; therefore, if the Catholic Church was to endure in the republic, it must have Haitian priests. Certain clerics fleeing political revolutions in South America came to Haiti, but since they spoke French badly, did not improve the religious situation. It was impossible to get sympathetic priests from France, in view of the relations of the two countries at the time. The provision of the 1816 constitution, however childish, was at least an effort to perpetuate the church in Haiti.

It is nowhere recorded that either Pétion or Boyer had any opportunity to persuade a bishop to come and consecrate the desired priests. Deprived of support by the Papal See, in open schism, the Haitian republic was forced to make all regulations governing religious affairs. Boyer carried on various negotiations with Rome looking toward rapprochement, but the schism endured. Organized

8. Article 50 of the 1816 constitution.

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Organized

religion was never at a lower ebb in Haiti than toward the middle of the nineteenth century, as whole generations of citizens were growing up who had never known the proper forms of ritual, and had no real religious training. The outward shell of the Church covered steadily more "superstition," more homely beliefs and practices, and the long divorce from Rome permitted the growth of a native religion which later could not be eradicated, no matter how assiduous the labors of Catholic priests. 175 795 771

During Boyer's quarter-century the once Roman and Catholic Church remained the official religion of the state, but its head was now the President. Organization simplified as orthodoxy declined. By 1840 there was only one order of priesthood; no archbishop, bishops, canons, curés, or other titled dignitaries, but only "priests." The people were not taxed to maintain the state Church; there were no tithes or forced contributions for the support of public worship or the repair of parish churches, no heavy list of clergy living from levies on the people. However, if the Haitians were not burdened by imposed religious fees, they were still through their own fears subject to steady tolls for services by the degraded men who then called themselves priests. 175 195 171 659 643

Every effort of the state failing to provide proper religious leadership, Boyer resigned himself to permitting those who professed to be priests to practice in the republic. There were seventy so-called priests in the country in 1840. Some of them had once been in holy orders but were now unfrocked: they found in Haiti not only a haven but a fertile field for gain. In addition to these religious renegades came adventurers who knew just enough of ritual and theology to use the priestly garb as a cover for easy graft. Both groups encouraged crude superstition with a view to making money. They baptized houses, boats, and doorposts, and blessed fetish charms or amulets, all for a fee. Immorality was flagrant, and many of the "priests" had mistresses and children. The debauchery of some was so notorious that Secretary-General Inginac had publicly to rebuke them and even to banish a few from the country. A visiting Quaker, benignantly tolerant of most of what he saw in Haiti, was scandalized by the religious situation. He said that the sole aim of most of the clergy was to secure gold and silver "as quickly as they can, to send to Europe for investment." Excepting a very few (notably the priests at Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, and Jacmel), he 175 795 793 [114]

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175 concludes: "With regard to the ecclesiastical institutions of the
793 republic we may safely say . . . that if the standing army be one cause
795 of the degradation of the people, the Church is surely another; and
[114] the sooner it can be reformed, the better for religion, for morals, and for the physical well-being of the community."[9]

175 Eventually the state felt it necessary to protect the people from
793 these predatory priests. True, people paid for what they considered
795 to be services performed, but the legislators could not permit unlimited graft in the name of religion. An act of 1840,[10] therefore, set
● 659 a fee of half a dollar for each baptism;[11] $8 for a marriage with Mass, $4 for one without a Mass; an ordinary Mass, 37 cents; a High Mass, service, or funeral "of the first class" (that is, with choir, sacristan, acolytes, and churchwarden), $60; funerals of the second class, $20; funerals of the third class, $10. Articles of the act specify what shall constitute the three classes of service, and it is then stated, "Neither rectors nor vicars shall receive anything for offices at which they do not assist in person, except in cases of illness." The Haitians were not receiving true religious instruction, but at least their government tried to prevent their being mulcted by the spurious churchmen.

175 Since Haiti had no schools except the few attended by children of
the élite, religious instruction of youth was almost nonexistent. The
771 average élite man was openly an unbeliever, for it required little
184 acumen to show him that if the priests represented religion there was nothing to commend it. Hunt in 1860 said: "Many of the educated are about where the French were when they left the island. They believe in Voltaire, whom I have not unfrequently heard them
[562] characterize as the greatest man who ever lived."[12] In contrast to the
[114] men, the women made more of a show of being devout and attentive to the formal duties of religion, but according to Franklin they

are not actuated by any religious feeling. Going to church is a mere matter of parade with them, the sabbath being a day of festivities, and not set aside for religious devotion. The female congregations which frequent the churches in Hayti appear better prepared for an opera, or some other public amusement, than for the sacred duties of offering up their prayers in adoration of the Deity.

9. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 98 ff.
10. Chap. IV, articles 28–31.
11. The figures cited in the Act are in gourdes.
12. Benjamin S. Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans* (Philadelphia, 1860), p. 18.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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The men seldom or never go to mass, except on the days particularly set apart by the government as public fêtes. On these occasions the president and all the officers of Hayti go in procession, but the idea of devotion, I believe, never enters their contemplation. Such days are merely set aside for celebrating some particular event, which it is wished should be handed down to posterity. These occasions present only the external symbol of religion, the whole people being either ignorant or careless of its real character. Their manner and appearance during the celebration of the mass shew that they have no inward feelings of piety or devotion.[13]

Catholicism in Haiti, then, had fallen on evil days; Protestantism, on the other hand, was unable to gain any foothold. Boyer, indifferent to all religion, did not even care to tolerate Wesleyan missionaries as Pétion had done, for when certain of them arrived and were met with "persecution and stoning by a mob," it required persuasion to gain his assent to freeing those the police had taken into custody. He forbade any further meetings of Wesleyans, on the ground that they stirred up riots. At the close of Boyer's administration it was estimated that there were only about 1,200 Protestants in the country, mostly Methodists and Baptists, and these primarily Negroes who had come from the United States to settle in the republic.

Although the Haitian government probably derived a certain satisfaction from controlling a state Church, Boyer was impelled both by circumstance and his own temperament to obtain the approval of the Holy See. His own tepid spiritual zeal had nothing to do with the case; Haitian public order would benefit by a superior group of priests, and Haitian prestige would rise, he thought, with recognition by Rome. Having already in 1826 settled the conflict between France and Haiti in the political sphere, Boyer tried assiduously to end the schism from Rome. His propositions were examined with benevolence by the Pope, who conferred upon the primate of the Indies, archbishop of Santo Domingo, the title of archbishop of Haiti. This personage, however, was a Spaniard already established in the comfortable city of Santo Domingo amidst people of his own nationality. He could not be persuaded to move to Port-au-Prince. The failure of Boyer's efforts is due more to this ecclesiastic than to uncoöperativeness on the part of Rome. From 1834 to 1860 the Court of Rome had official representatives in Haiti, but they cannot have been very effective men, for conditions in

13. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 394–395.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 religious life were not improved and the schism endured. The arch-
795 bishop of Haiti seemed to regard his new title as applying vaguely to
648 the island, not the country, of Haiti, and since all his vicars were
●659 Spaniards unable to speak either French or the Créole dialect, they
643 did nothing for religion in the Haitian republic.
[193]

Ties broken by a single radical action may require endless patience and persistence to knit together their severed threads. The impetuosity of Dessalines caused the rupture; it was prolonged by indifference to religion, absorption in economic and political matters, fear that France might use to her profit any *rapprochement* with Rome, and a certain complacency in subordinating Church to state. Inertia, however, was the real obstacle in the way of healing the breach. It is much less trouble to let conditions remain as they are than to make a change whose results no one can foretell. But the longer the rupture, the less understanding the people had of steps necessary to reëstablish the Church.

175 When in 1847 Faustin Soulouque, the ignorant, became president,
771 the horizon had never seemed darker for organized religion. The black general, suddenly impelled by a quirk of fortune into high office, was a man of the people in his religious attitudes. All their belief in magic, in the mystical power of certain rites, in charms and spells—all their "superstition" as the Catholics called it—Soulouque shared. For the first time in Haitian history one is aware that the folk beliefs brought over from Africa had become welded into a recognizable form, under the name of Vodun. To colonial writers "Vaudoux" had been primarily a name for certain dances; to the early Haitian élite it seems to have connoted either occult rites or vulgar claptrap compounded of gibberish, old wives' remedies, and sensual dances. But in the long and deepening twilight of Catholicism, the various elements were fused, until by Soulouque's time the Haitian was familiar with the general beliefs, rites, and "priesthood" of Vodun. As Soulouque had broken with the tradition of presidents who wished Haiti to be recognized as one of the community of civilized Western nations, so he allowed the traditional respect for Catholicism to die. As an emperor he was a transplanted African chief; as a believer he was a follower of Vodun. The rites were practiced and the sacrifices made openly now. Men in high places dared to reveal their belief in native tenets. For twelve years Vodun flourished with official approval.

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The depths to which Haiti descended under Soulouque made the task of his successor relatively simple. It would prove wise and generally popular to reverse the Emperor's action, in whatever respect. President Geffrard was the more successful as an antidote to the Emperor because of his practical intelligence. The best time to strike for the revival of Catholicism would be immediately after the heyday of Vodun. In 1859, the first year of his incumbency, Geffrard consequently undertook negotiations with the Holy See, sending two plenipotentiaries for the discussions. Because the Haitian delegates persuasively depicted the sorry state of religion in their country, because they showed themselves and their President willing to defer to papal wishes, and because the new Pope was filled with missionary zeal to reclaim Haiti for the Faith, all problems were overcome. An early agreement was reached, and the Concordat, signed in Rome on March 28, 1860, was approved by the Haitian Senate on the first of April. A commission was dispatched to Haiti immediately, one which did thoroughly and well its task of delimiting the boundaries of dioceses, allocating bishops and other clergy, and founding a seminary. An archbishop of Port-au-Prince was consecrated, and the Catholic Church, Roman and apostolic, at long last became officially established once more in the republic. The breach of fifty-five years was healed. 175 795 648 659 643

In one sense the reform had come too late. All the peasants were by this time thoroughly imbued with the ideas of Vodun, as were the lower orders in the towns. Most of the élite either clandestinely practiced Vodun or ignored religion altogether. On the other hand, practically no Haitian was opposed to Catholicism, not even the most ardent devotee of the obscurer cult. The native faith had grown up quietly enough, making its adjustments to the outward forms of Catholicism which still existed in the country. To every Vodun worshiper there were simply two hierarchies of spiritual beings, each with its own powers; to believe in one was not to deny the other. The new Catholic priests, then, met no hostility; what they had to deal with was an ineradicable folk religion which accepted everything and rejected little in the spiritual realm. 175 771

The Archbishop, his band of forty priests, and a small group of Brothers and Sisters set to work with fervor. Nearly everything had to be rebuilt from the ground. Church buildings were in such disrepair that it was considered more economical to erect new ones than 175 795 [346]

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Vodun, then, was both widespread and powerful enough to be turned to most effective ends in 1791. Contemporary accounts of it still saw it as a meeting ground of superstitions. The French naturalist, Descourtilz, for example, was primarily struck by the use of the occult in connection with Vodun; he especially describes a woman who, under the seizure of her god, took a live coal in her hand without being burnt; a husband who by the use of magic struck his inconstant wife with a languorous malady, effective for half a year; and the knowledge of poison which was combined with the practice of magic. He mentions but one of the Vodun gods by name but implies the existence of many others.[10]

Madiou, Haiti's first historian, likewise always spoke of Vodun as a savage survival; he says of a native general, "Lamour Dérance, plunged in gross errors, put his faith in *sorcery*, in the prophecy of *papas*, or priests of *African fetishism*."[11] In his scornful distaste for the vulgar he clearly indicated by his own italics some conspicuous elements of the developing religion: magic, the use of fetishes, and a Vodun priesthood. His illustration of Dérance's error was his making soldiers believe that bullets could not wound them:

> When he marched to combat he was preceded by bands of Congos, Aradas, Ibos, Nabos, Mandingues, Haoussas, who threw themselves against the French battalions with a prodigious intrepidity, crying that the bullets were but dust. But this courage which *superstition* fed was shattered against the ramparts of . . . the Europeans' square formations.

It is noteworthy that the first three black rulers set themselves against Vodun because of its potentialities for sedition. The plots to overthrow the old régime had come to fruition at apparently innocent Vodun dances. Although the ingenuous aspect of the dance gathering had deceived the white masters, Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe knew the meaning of the assemblies. All three had to drive their people hard and knew that resentment would be an inevitable consequence; it must not have an opportunity to burgeon at nightly gatherings. Toussaint was the strictest of the three, for he forbade all dances and nocturnal assemblage.[12] The other two singled

10. M. E. Descourtilz, *Voyages d'un naturaliste en Haïti, 1799–1803* (Paris, 1935 ed.), pp. 116–118.
11. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, p. 33.
12. In an order of January 4, 1800.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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The other two singled

175 out Vodun dances for their bans, permitting the purely social dances.
643 On the eve of the first anniversary of independence, "as soon as
794 retreat was sounded, African dances of all kinds began in the tents
796 and open fields; the Vaudoux dance alone was proscribed; the noise
671 of the drums did not quiet down until morning."[13] Dessalines was
more suspicious of Vodun than the other two for, being a superstitious man himself, he feared that some of his growing number of
659 enemies might use sorcery upon him; consequently whenever his
798 active police reported meetings of Vodun worshipers he had the
771 offenders shot if they could be caught. Practically all Haitians knew how to distinguish the rhythms of Vodun drumbeats from those of other dances, so that it was not particularly difficult to track down the meeting places. What Christophe really believed, no one could say. He paid outward homage to Roman Catholicism, of course, but rumor persisted of his great faith in magic and the power of African fetishes.[14]

175 The élite mulatto presidents, Pétion and Boyer, did not deign to
643 dignify Vodun by prohibiting it. No revelation of their attitude
794 toward it survives, but we may note that no law of their thirty-six-
659 year tenure of the presidency mentions it. From their other opinions
798 one concludes that they regarded it as merely another of the people's innocent and harmless aberrations. Not one of the foreigners whose curiosity about the Negro republic led them to report on Haitian
796 life of this period gives an intelligent account of Vodun as it then
771 was. Macaulay, writing in 1831, for example, describes the annual
114 celebration at the source of Grande Rivière de l'Artibonite; he mentions the festive dances (not Vodun) and singing, then says: "Morning ceremonies consisted of a solemn sacrifice at which the blood of victims immolated for the feast were offered, and libations of wine were poured on the spring."[15] This was clearly a Vodun sacrifice. Brown, in 1837, writes as a religious man:

> No race is, more than the African, given to religious feelings, though these being but mere sensations entirely independent of thought and reason, manifest themselves in a display of idle fooleries, or dark and hideous terrors of the imagination. They intermix the legitimate ritual of the Catholic faith with the mysterious adoration paid to their national Fetishes, and the

13. Madiou, *op. cit.*, III, 186.
14. See Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti*, pp. 90–91.
15. Zachary Macaulay, *Haiti* (Paris, 1835), pp. 90–91.

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[p. 193]

XI

DOMESTIC LIFE OF THE PEASANTS

HAITI apparently has more women than men. This is not merely the casual impression of visitors, but a general conviction among local scholars and priests who know the country intimately. There is no census, of course, so that an investigator lacks means of confirming an unusual biological situation in which, it is said, there are five women to four men, in which many more girls than boys are born, and in which the death rate is higher for females than for males. 162 [69] [163] [165]

During slavery, more men than women were imported into the colony, but the slaughters of the insurrection and the revolution more than balanced the two sexes. The colonial census of 1790, probably inaccurate, showed 452,000 blacks and 28,000 affranchis who had some degree of Negro blood; a census of 1805, which certainly could not have been more than an estimate based on reports of plantation overseers and army officers, reported only 380,000 Haitians. This would indicate a staggering loss of 100,000 within fifteen years. Even with a reasonable juggling of the figures, it is obvious that deaths increased during the troubled years, and obviously males rather than females met their death on battlefields. Commentators on Haiti under Dessalines already speak of the preponderance of women. Other writers during the nineteenth century expressed the opinion that women outnumbered men, but the only figures offered were those in one parish for 1821–26—possibly atypical even if the figures are accurate—showing that 1,305 girls were born as compared with 1,209 boys.[1] 175 162

Certain physicians whose practice takes them into country districts and also certain priests have stated their belief that the number of females born exceeds the number of males. Although these men are in a good position to judge, the statement remains an opinion not yet validated by statistics; if it should prove true, it would be an extraordinary biological freak.[2] Another observation must be set 163 [114]

1. These are the figures of Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Haiti*, II, 118.

2. One physician thinks that the rate would be as high as five girls to three boys in a few parishes; and a priest recounts his experiences in baptizing girls named "Assez-fille" (Girls-enough), so called by their parents to indicate to deity that the next child should by rights be a boy. Professional observations such as these merely corroborate the general opinion as to the excess of females in the population. [114] [163] [55]

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Some of these charges may be reviewed. One, frequently met with and already mentioned, concerns the general lack of cleanliness and sanitation that marks the cities. As has been shown, this stems directly from the patterns of life which prevailed under French control. The matter of personal morals is also often discussed with anything but praise for Haitian custom. Quite aside from the polygamous tradition of Africa, the influence of which will be discussed later, it is only necessary to recall the example set for these slaves by the sex customs of the Créoles and other Europeans with whom they came into contact to see how the ideal of monogamic union would not be entirely convincing as one to be followed in all its implications. The failure of the Catholic Church to stamp out the African cults in Haiti, and the skepticism with which, as will be pointed out, the motivation of the priests is regarded by the Haitians must have been strengthened by the tradition of the misbehavior of those who were in charge of the religion into which baptism was mandatory, before the days of freedom.

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The instability of Haitian political life, and the venality of judges and other officials have been stressed again and again in the writings of those who have passed judgment on Haiti. Yet one need but read of the readiness of the white colonists to revolt against the authority set over them by the mother country,[38] and of the manner in which during the French Revolution attempts to alleviate the position of the colored and Negro portions of the population were thwarted by the illegal political activities of the plantation slave-owners,[39] to understand at least some of the sources from which direct political action derives its sanctions. One need similarly but read comments in letters and books of the time concerning the corruption of the officials of the colony [40] to conclude that, since her independence, Haiti has in such respects but continued a tradition set by the rulers who governed the country before the Republic was established. Thus if the life of the Haitian

1; Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Negro peasant of today presents aspects of harshness or instability, it would seem proper to ask how much of this might be ascribed to the examples which these Negroes were set by their masters, rather than unequivocally to assume inherent racial tendencies to account for them, as is so often done. 17 66 105

This, of course, is far from the whole story. For just as there were large numbers of colonists who were men of integrity and lived in accordance with the best traditions of their French heritage, so among the Negroes were many who sensed these deficiencies in the regime to which they had been enslaved, and held tenaciously to their African traditions, not only in religion, but in social, economic, and political phases, so that, when the time was ripe, these might in some measure be re-established. To approach the matter realistically, it must be recognized that just as the Africans in the islands represented numerous tribes having varying customs, and individual members of these groups possessed varying degrees of integrity and worth, so the French who came to live there and whose slaves learned of French culture from them represented not necessarily the flower of that culture, but were in the main derived from the extremes of French society, the unadjusted and maladjusted lower classes and the aristocrats. What was bequeathed by them to the Haitians, therefore, were those aspects of French civilization which, to the extent that they were accepted by the Negroes, are partially responsible not only for the graciousness, the hospitality, and the generosity of the Haitian of today, but also for the less pleasant aspects of the culture that have resulted from his historical development since independence. 178 105

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 643 66 The course of events leading up to Duvalier's election are difficult to assess. Fignolé, whom the army had permitted to serve as president for sixteen days during the interregnum, had been denied official recognition by the United States, suggesting that this country feared the implications of his political philosophy; his attempts at passing a whole new code of far-reaching social legislation apparently frightened the army, which removed him on grounds of "maintaining order." By the time an election decree was promulgated in August 1957, Fignolé was disqualified, and Jumelle had been forced to withdraw from candidacy. By election day, September 1957, only Déjoie and Duvalier were in contention, while Jumelle had gone into hiding. An attempted general strike, probably led by Déjoieiste elements, was stopped by the army, and Dr. François Duvalier was elected to power.

175 642 66 701 643 The Duvalier regime, beyond any doubt, has added something new to the Haitian political scene. To begin with, it must be stressed that Duvalier enjoys some popular support in the countryside as well as in the urban centers. For many Haitians, Duvalier epitomizes the return of the Estimé philosophy to Haiti, and it would be a serious political error to suppose that the present regime is no more than an elite-hating dictatorship backed by machine guns. At the same time, the readiness of the Duvalieristes to use force probably exceeds that of any Haitian government in more than a century. Its excesses, moreover, appear to break certain traditions of political behavior—for instance, the unwillingness to take familial connections into account when political revenge is being carried out, the violence committed against women and adolescents regarded as political enemies, and so on. The most important break with tradition, however, has been the gradual undermining of the army as a political force—a force created in the first instance during the United States occupation.

175 642 643 643 In carrying out its plans, the Duvalier government has played more creatively upon inconsistencies in United States policy than any preceding regime. It used United States military and economic power to consolidate itself, while employing a posture of anti-North American hostility in its search for other internal sources of political support. Most strikingly, it has capitalized on the deterioration of the United States design in the Caribbean region, both to exact concessions and to enhance an international image of itself as a stalwart "democratic"

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regime. That President Duvalier has been able to stay in power in spite of internal dissaffection, sometime hostile United States propaganda, a dire economic situation, personal ill health, and other woes, is a tribute to his political acumen, if not to his principles. None of this means, of course, that such consummate skill will continue to work; Haitian governments have a way of falling suddenly, and the Duvalier regime will probably not prove an exception.

Dr. Duvalier's success indicates that he has made certain correct assessments, not only of Haiti's social and political structure but also of United States policy with regard to Haiti. The occupation was notable for its failure to make any telling alterations in the economic structure or level of development of the country. Many beneficial changes were made, as Leyburn demonstrates, particularly in the areas of health and health services, communications, government administration, education, and transport (though the use of corvée labor on the roads led to serious abuses, and stimulated sanguinary guerilla warfare). But most significantly, the United States institutionalized the army and police forces. The ragged bands of political mercenaries of the past were dissolved; the officer-ridden army was transformed into a small, well-trained, and well-organized force. Eventual firm control by this force of weaponry, communications, and transport ended the era of presidential succession by invasion, turned the army into the major locus of nonelectoral, president-making power, and may have ended forever the possibility of an agrarian revolt against the central authority. Another political effect of the occupation was the importance it imparted to the United States ambassador, whose political opinions thereafter would matter significantly in the transmission of power at the top of the Haitian governmental system. The Duvalier regime has continuously taken full account of the consequences of United States interest; and its leaders have been able to watch the operation of that interest in the political events occurring between the fall of the Lescot government and the present.

In the view of one acute observer, President Duvalier, in order to consolidate his power, had to cope with three other loci of political strength in addition to the army and the United States ambassador. The business community, located for the most part in Port-au-Prince, had strongly supported Déjoie's candidacy during the interregnum; its leaders were mainly members of the elite, and many had strong

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175 business and personal ties with North Americans and other foreign
643 groups. Among the families of these leaders are Swiss, German, and French nationals, and some Syrians and Lebanese who hold United
• 66 States citizenship. The business community had played a part in the
795 downfall of the Magloire regime, and business strikes were a typical political instrument for putting pressure on presidential incumbents. In addition, the clergy—particularly the Catholic clergy—exerted political influence. Duvalier, while well aware of this, also attended to the importance of vodoun* in Haiti, and to the influence wielded by its cult leaders, particularly in the countryside and among the urban poor. Finally, the President understood the strength of groups such as the university students, the small but politically aware labor unions, and certain professional associations, whose political strength could be felt particularly in times of crisis. The Duvalier regime has displayed intelligence as well as ruthlessness in dealing with these diverse centers of political strength and potential opposition.

176 The official request for a United States Marine Corps mission to
648 "train" the Haitian Army was a brilliant political move by Duvalier, apparently designed to serve several objectives simultaneously. It is
701 entirely correct that the renewed presence of the Marines in Haiti
702 created considerable rancor in some circles, but it also strengthened
66 Duvalier's hand in his dealings with all sources of internal opposition. To some extent it apparently reassured the business community; and it turned out to have reduced, rather than to have increased, the maneuverability of the United States in developing a "corrective" or "restraining" policy toward the Duvalier regime. Perhaps most important, it helped Duvalier in his plan to build a praetorian guard to counterbalance the power of the army itself.

625 The *tonton macoute*—a Creole epithet for the bogeyman—is an extremely interesting variation on the security police theme. Its members wear no official uniform (though blue denim pants and felt hats
[701] are affected). Members of the "TTM" carry out acts of terrorism against groups and individuals and have seriously weakened the po-
[652] licing function and prestige of the regular army. Some calculations put the operating costs of the TTM as high as one third of the governmental budget. Though small groups of the TTM are distributed

* Or, as it is more commonly called, "voodoo." Creole words employed in this introduction are transcribed in Lenbach orthography (see Hall, 1953). It was not possible to extend this transcription to the original Leyburn text, where a "Gallic" orthography is followed.

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country. The complete enfeeblement of tourism has also led to some migration and to an accompanying decline of services and service "industries" in the capital. These losses have surely hurt Haiti and have damaged its chances for growth as well as its capacity to maintain the health, education, and morale of its people. It is not clear, however, to what extent such changes may have produced a negative political reaction to the Duvalier regime. Urban support for Dr. Duvalier appears to have come from some intellectuals, from some army officers, and from portions of the urban lower classes; but numerically most important were those low-paid but literate and aspiring wage-earners whom the Comhaire-Sylvains (1959) refer to as "Class III" members. These observers have stressed that the Class III group consisted mainly of industrial employees, those engaged in food-processing, hotel services, workshops, and the like. It was this group that the Comhaire-Sylvains credited with the Duvalier victory in 1957, pointing out in addition that "in the small country towns almost all officials, both civil and military, and traders, seemed to belong to this class" (p. 185). If the economic crisis that has gripped Haiti in recent years severely affects the position of this class, the political situation will reflect as much. But the ideology of Class III members—so far as it can be inferred at all—would suggest that one Duvalier may merely be replaced by another. At the same time, the depopulation of those groupings whose members might have led a qualitatively different kind of opposition, during the period of tenure of the United States Marine Corps Mission to Duvalier, may have indefinitely postponed the opportunity for creating a genuinely new political direction.

To state it another way, there are no signs at this time that the regime in power will be pulled down by any organized Haitian opposition. More important, since regimes resting on a narrow popular base have a way of falling without change, there is no indication that within Haiti's present national institutional structure, a genuine opposition to Duvalier-type governments can take shape. This means that even if regime should follow regime in rapid succession, there is little reason to expect that any of them could effect fundamental changes in Haitian society. If such an interpretation is correct, it presupposes an internal equilibrium or stasis so strong that no force for change in half a century has been able to make a politically significant difference.

This pessimistic view is supported by what is known at this time

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"empire" tottered to economic ruin. Graft, default on the debt, 175
increasing deficits, and debased currency were the order of the day, 643
and so continued until 1859, when the accumulation of anger over 652
the useless wars and the humiliating defeats made the Emperor so 669
unpopular that a new and more carefully planned revolution accomplished his downfall.

Fifteen years of administration by Negro rulers had broken the 175
political power of the colored élite. Only three light-skinned men 643
became president thereafter until the occupation of Haiti by the 178
American Marines in 1915; in the seventy-two years following 564
Boyer's downfall, mulattoes ruled during only eight. The army under a black general was too powerful, a colored president too hampered by suspicion, to make the political game worth the candle. The colored élite, therefore, adapted themselves to existing conditions as best they could, controlling the business life of Haiti, filling the law offices and, because of their literacy, the secretaryships of state, and indulging in honorific cultural pursuits.

In the years after Soulouque the basic realities of Haitian life were 175
changed hardly at all by shifting political administrations. Some of the 643
presidents were mildly progressive, many were indifferent; still more 66
were actually harmful; but the lives of the mass of peasants were not often touched by presidential vagaries. Politics was an affair almost wholly of townspeople, of the army, the élite, and the pseudo-élite. Revolutions, counterrevolutions, movements of reform, international tangles, financial woes, and most of the other complications to which unstable states are heir, absorbed the attention of rulers and upper-class folk who were politically inclined.

Constitutions were made by presidents and changed by their suc- 175
cessors; the Senate passed contradictory laws in the same session if 642
the chief executive so recommended; the courts were presided over 671
by the president's men. Haitian law in the latter half of the nineteenth 692
century was what the president's immediate strength and wish made it—or else it was folk custom, undisturbed by the rulers.

Never once, in the three quarters of a century after Boyer's time, 175
did Haiti approach the high standard of production known in 178
colonial days or in the early years of independence. The pattern of 433
Haitian social and economic life became fixed in this seventy-five 565
years. Haiti became a country of small-scale tillage by a peasant 439
population, with only enough external trade to provide moderate

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Immediately a division of political opinion was evident, one which was to persist throughout the century. No one denied the inevitability in 1804 of making Dessalines the head of state: he was the victorious commander, clearly the most powerful man in Haiti. The division of opinion arose over the manner in which he should rule, whether as military dictator, or as a responsible president. Dessalines settled the matter peremptorily—if only for the time being—by asserting his self as a dictator. 175 643

The issue did not die with his decision, however, for it had deep roots. Supporting Dessalines wholeheartedly was the group of generals who were all Negroes, all ex-slaves, all practically illiterate. The three most influential of these blacks were Christophe, later to succeed his general; Clairlette, and Boisrond-Tonnère. Those who preferred a government in which the president shared power with a legislature of important men were, on the contrary, almost all affranchis of the old régime, therefore the most cultured and educated men in the country. Most of them were mulattoes or at least of a lighter complexion than the Negroes, although of course some blacks adhered to their position. The leaders of this group were Pétion, Boyer, Inginac, and Gérin. This division of opinion went back even into the decade preceding independence, when the island, free of slavery, was still technically under the rule of France, and the ex-slave Toussaint had to fight and conquer the mulatto leader Rigaud before he could establish his rule as dictator. 175 642 [643]

For a brief moment after independence, all differences were reconciled, since all had been united in a common cause against the enemy. Dessalines was then commanding in the Artibonite Valley, and Christophe in the North; two of Rigaud's former lieutenants, Pétion and Geffrard, commanded in the West and South. Apparently there was genuine respect among these men for each other. Dessalines, for example, with evident sincerity calls his colleague Pétion "that man of upright heart." The unity was short-lived, however. Not only was it evident that Dessalines meant to rule like an African despot-chief, taking advice only when he liked it; it was even more plain that through his cruelty, impetuosity, and crudeness he was bent on isolating Haiti from all contacts with the culture and polish of the outer world. Pétion and his group looked on with pained disgust as he indulged his violence against the whites who had hopefully remained in the country; the general's bloody procession throughout 175 643 642 66

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175 643 642 66 the land, leaving a trail of misery and death, was an augury of what to expect from a tyrant. They opposed his plan to destroy all coastal towns and move the people inland where, protected by their mountains, they would be immune to foreign attack and foreign ideas. They resented their loss of property by state expropriation, and could not fail to be shocked by the grim exultation of Boisrond-Tonnère: "To draw up the act of independence, we used the skin of a white man for parchment, his skull for an inkstand, his blood for ink, and a bayonet for pen!"[3]

Even without such cogent objections to Dessalines the mulattoes would have opposed his dictatorship, for as intellectuals and as social élite they wanted a real share in the government. For this they had agitated since before 1791, and it would be a grim irony if after fourteen years of intermittent conflict the successful expulsion of whites should be followed by a continued exclusion of mulattoes from the government. It would be a worse irony to throw off the white yoke only to take on a black one. When in 1805 Dessalines made himself emperor they asked for the creation of a nobility, thinking to share the rule with him; but the Emperor's curt "*Moi seul je suis noble*" dashed this hope. Although detailed proof is lacking, it is generally accepted in Haiti that the conspiracies against the Emperor's life began with this intransigent statement.

Here, then, was the issue which in half a dozen varying forms was to split political opinion for decades: rule by a single tyrant vs. rule by the cultured class. It even made two nations of one between the years 1806 and 1820.

175 642 When Dessalines was assassinated, a Constituent Assembly was summoned to draw up a new constitution and select a new ruler. The mulattoes were in control of the Assembly which under Pétion's skilful guidance sat at the mulatto stronghold, Port-au-Prince, and there drew up a constitution assuring the limitation of the president's power by a Senate, and requiring election and reëlection of the [667] president instead of permitting him life tenure. This achieved, the Assembly dutifully elected the black general Christophe president of Haiti. However, belonging as he did to Dessalines' school of thought —unrestricted rule by a strong man—he indignantly refused to be bound by such a constitution; when the Assembly, instead of yielding

3. This statement is cited, with evident distaste, by Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 114.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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perfectly educated, and because other matters seemed infinitely more pressing than the setting up of schools, the early Haitians, united in 1804, fell apart within a single generation. On one hand were the élite and a few other townspeople who knew at least something of the outside world; on the other the masses of toiling countryfolk to whom tiny Haitian valleys were the whole universe. The young men of these two classes coming to power could not understand each other; they could not make concessions to each other; and as they fought for what they held true, each grew suspicious of the other if not permanently hostile. The lack of common understanding might still have been repaired in any one generation, but no single president had the vision to inaugurate universal education. Aside from the expense, certain powerful élite citizens often expressed their doubts as to the educability of the peasants; as property owners they would undoubtedly have objected to the unsettling of the economic order, which was based upon the work of an ignorant mass of blacks.[16]

175 871 565 658

Without education, the political sphere went unenriched by any flow of new blood from the people. Politics existed in a vacuum. The earthy, candid criticisms of a politically conscious folk never invigorated the discussion of national affairs. Without education, the people had no standards of comparison of Haiti with other nations, and were the easy dupes of whatever insurrectionary agitator could persuade them that their daily woes were caused by the current administration. Without education, high political office became a prerogative of the few, a contest between the Ins and the Outs, a path to personal wealth. Without education, Haiti could never be more than a dictatorship by a man or a clique, her stability endangered with the downfall of each incumbent, for dictatorships rarely provide for continuity in government.

175 871 64 66

Another great weakness was the notion that national happiness could be achieved by political means primarily. After the germinal ideas of Christophe and Pétion, which had a basis in economic behavior, hardly another important concept came out of a century of presidents. Haitian politicians have been great arrangers: they have given the country eighteen constitutions and innumerable codes, all admirable in their loving solicitude for precise detail. The common feeling of political aspirants has been, "If we are given power, all will

175 181 178

16. This argument is clearly stated in Madiou, op. cit., III, 176 ff.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 441 439 648 Justice in the courts was administered by Haitians whose narrow patriotism biased their decisions.

175 651 489 5. A temperamental tariff policy. Not only were imports subject to a tariff which might be changed at the whim of any president, but exports also were taxed. When an administration was in need of funds it might suddenly, without warning, raise the tax on coffee exports and so disrupt a merchant's business plans. The customs-houses were in charge of Haitians who steadily became more inefficient and grasping as the century progressed, until many foreign merchants felt that the only way of getting business dispatched was by means of bribes. Examinations at customs were long drawn out, often there was open thievery, and erroneous valuations were common.

175 652 [648] 6. The burden of the indemnity to France. Contracted by Boyer in 1825, this annual payment for sixty years was an incubus to every administration, leaving no surplus in the treasury for public works, education, or any internal development; likewise, it made the threat of foreign interference all the more imminent.

7. A debased currency. Pétion was the first president to devalue money, and his example was frequently followed thereafter. Counterfeiting was general. When a country's monetary system is unstable, its officials accustomed to bribery and graft,[17] and its financial structure almost nonexistent, there is little chance for sound economic development.

175 245 8. Dependence upon a single crop. Haitian economy was tied to the staple coffee, grown with indifferent care, prepared for the market in outmoded fashion, and sold in competition with coffee from more scientifically run plantations in other tropical countries.

175 439 66 9. Political instability. The recurrent revolutions in Haiti made foreigners chary of participating in the country's business, since the government which made a contract might be out of office before the ink was dry.

175 439 565 10. Indifference of the élite to economic pursuits. What profits were obtainable went into the pockets of foreign merchants, not those of Haitian businessmen. In 1842 the comparative exports of the

[643] [159] [661] 17. Sir Spenser St. John, always a bitter critic of Haiti, remarked (*Hayti, or The Black Republic*, p. 88) sardonically that "Boyer had the rare quality of being honest, and left in the treasury, on his departure, the sum of £200,000, the first and last chief who was ever guilty of so unaccountable a weakness."

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[p.265]

XV

HAITIAN PROBLEMS

FOR a citizen of the United States or a European country, national problems have to do with external as well as internal affairs. Foreign relations, armaments, international trade, treaties and commitments, loom as large as do unemployment, business depression, labor troubles, and social maladjustment. Political parties rise and fall with their promises or failures to deal successfully with matters arising from the country's position relative to world movements. In Haiti such generalizations do not hold. Her international relations have been and are comparatively minor, while her internal problems have been of a different order from those which trouble most of the rest of the Western World. This is not meant to imply that a world depression leaves Haiti unscathed, or that the country does not suffer when its trade in coffee is interrupted, but rather that its persistent problems would continue to exist whatever the state of world politics and economics. 178 66 648

Contacts of the Haitian people with the outside world between 1804 and 1915 were meagre. The slaughter of whites by Dessalines, the economic decline of the country, unwillingness of white nations to treat with a Negro state, the schism in the Catholic Church, restrictive legislation against white foreigners, general illiteracy of the people—all these shut Haiti off from the world. Christophe, it is true, invited in a few English schoolmasters and agricultural experts, but these remained only a short while and had little influence even among the élite. For a century Haiti saw no foreigners except the few traders at seaports, an occasional Wesleyan missionary, a limited number of consuls and ministers, certain travelers interested in odd corners of the earth, and, after 1860, Catholic priests and sisters. For the peasants there ceased to be any knowledge of the world outside of Haiti; for the élite France once more became the centre of the social universe, as it had been for the affranchis in colonial times. From Boyer's time onward élite youths went to Paris for an education, if they could afford it; the "culture" they acquired there had little relationship to Haitian problems. 175 648 [871] [242] [797] [871]

Foreign relations, in the political sense, revolved during most of

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throughout the country, the central administration remains in the capital; urban units are dispatched to the countryside at times, if any show of internal political resistance is sensed. TTM members also sometimes engage in struggles with each other over political spoils; but too little is known to analyze internal strains within this paramilitary, secret-police organization. The TTM has proved particularly useful for carrying out the murders of outspoken individual political opponents and for crushing draconically any threat of strikes in the Port-au-Prince business community. 625

Little is known of the antecedents of TTM members. While it is customary among the elite to describe these myrmidons as "trash," some of them are literate, have some education, vaunt a political ideology—a kind of nationalist-*négritude* mystique, with strong Fascist elements—and differ dramatically from the ragged, illiterate followers of the warlords of pre-1915 Haiti. In fact, the TTM lieutenants are a direct, if somewhat deformed, product of the Estimé regime, a decade of structurally unsound prosperity, a culturally nationalistic ideology, and, more remotely, of the United States occupation itself. 178 625

With regard to the army, Duvalier has followed a policy of careful attrition. While the United States Marine Corps "mission" was (probably unknowingly) serving to immobilize opposition, Duvalier began to change the character of the army general staff. In the course of less than seven years he completely revamped the leadership of the army five times; this process not only kept the colonels off balance but allowed the President to reward loyal younger followers—principally those with dark skins, it is said—with rapid promotions. 643 701

The relationship between the Duvalier regime and the Catholic clergy has been one of increasing alienation. At times members of the clergy stood high in the regime, two having even served as members of the cabinet; but not the slightest Church resistance has been tolerated. The low point in Duvalier–Church relations was the interruption of a mass by an armed TTM unit in downtown Port-au-Prince; leading members of the hierarchy later were summarily ejected from the country, and the Jesuit order was banned. Church power has waned significantly, both in the capital and in the countryside, as the regime has consolidated itself. Some observers believe that Duvalier is not so unwise as to aim at the complete elimination of the Church, but that he hopes instead to "nationalize" the clergy on some mutually agreeable basis. 642 795 661

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643 At the same time, the President has expressed his favorable interest
771 in vodoun and is said to practice it; this statement, however, has
795 overtones of malevolence that are not appropriate. Vodoun is a religion, though it lacks a centralized priestly hierarchy or administrative organization. Outside the elite, Catholicism in Haiti has always been colored by vodoun elements. The Haitian people as a whole invest no effort in distinguishing what is "really Catholic" from what is not, in their religious practices; in this regard Haitian countrymen do not really differ from folk practitioners of Catholicism anywhere. By its misreading of the piety of the Haitian masses, and its unceasing hostility to vodoun—quite different from the church policy in the so-called "Indian countries" of Latin America—the Church had failed to secure its influence over the Haitian people. In contrast, Duvalier's understanding of Haitian religious sociology has proved superior, and is consistent with the *authentique* ideology of the 1940s, though doubtless much more extreme in its implications.

642 Finally, the Duvalier regime has invaded such institutions as the
871 National University and the trade unions, and maintains close sur-
467 veillance over any individuals it regards as politically suspicious. Loy-
204 alty oaths are required at the university; a public press no longer ex-
661 ists; the unions, never strong, are now entirely powerless. But it should be clear from this description of the Duvalier regime that repression is not the key to Duvalier power so much as the means for perpetuating that power under Haitian conditions. The key to Du-
642 valier power is to be found instead in the structure of Haitian society,
648 in the social history of the past two decades, and in the policy of the United States, weakened by its inescapable preference for "stability" over "radicalism." In his own way, President Duvalier is as radical as he can be; but he is no Castro. It is now an open secret that Haiti's support for sanctions against Cuba approved at Punta del Este was matched by economic concessions from the United States; that the Marines, knowingly or not, immobilized anti-Duvalier opposition in a period when its supporters could be picked off, driven into exile, or jailed; that the official Duvalier offer of Môle St. Nicholas to the United States as a substitute for Guantánamo, though irrelevant, was warmly reassuring to some North American political thinkers; and that Duvalier, while he employs considerable "blackmail diplomacy" in his dealings with the United States and is now out of favor, is still considered "reliable" in that most important respect.

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prestige, and the normal fulfillment of dignity, were thus frustrated in their efforts. They began to see that the Emperor intended to withhold from them freedom, room for the exercise of ability or power, fullness of life in whatever form. Not only was there little opportunity for achieving prestige; the repressive and contemptuous attitude of Dessalines denied them even ordinary negative respect, without which dignity of life is impossible.

By confiscation of vacant and falsely claimed estates, Dessalines created a vast public domain. He did not hesitate to secure other lands which he considered valuable, resorting to arbitrary and often cruel means—even, it is said, to forgery and murder—to dispossess those who stood firm in their claims. This attack on private property added other dissidents to his enemies—men who felt themselves clearly in the right legally and morally, men who with clear consciences joined the movement to put down a tyrant. The land thus acquired was leased in parcels at an annual rent to the highest bidders.[6]

The Emperor was blind to the normal human needs of the better elements of the population. He deprived them of property in land, the only basis they knew for wealth and independence; he forbade enterprises undertaken by individual initiative; he continually wounded delicate sensibilities. The Emperor was not a man to spare people's feelings, and he dared use the frank but dangerous words Negro and mulatto. He once shouted to a group of pleaders for position: "*Prenez garde à vous, nègres et mulâtres! Nous avons tous combattu contre les blancs; les biens que nous avons conquis en versant notre sang, appartiennent à nous tous; j'entends qu'ils soient partagés avec équité!*" It was not only Dessalines' idea of "equity" which aroused the *anciens libres* but his use of the descriptive nouns they hated.

The colored people were well aware of the hostility of Dessalines to their group. He was inferior to them in learning, and knew it. He was certainly, by the world's judgment, inferior to them in birth. His very deficiencies by comparison with his colored subjects made him hate them more: for example, he was passionately fond of dancing, preferring compliments on his grace to praise of his statesmanship; yet his awkwardness on the ballroom floor even

6. Although there are no records extant to show the exact amount of land which Dessalines succeeded in bringing into state ownership, it is estimated that more than two thirds of all the productive plantations in Haiti in 1806 were in the hands of the government. Other estimates range as high as ninety per cent.

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175 beside other ex-slaves was too evident to avert ridicule, which
643 Dessalines quickly noted. Few opportunities escaped the Emperor,
563 therefore, of making the light-skinned Haitians quake in their boots.
● 661 He wrote to Pétion (August 24, 1804), leader of the colored people, that in his slaughter of white Frenchmen he had often been "unable" to distinguish between whites and light-colored Haitians. Pétion and his friends knew that Dessalines did not regret his inability to make the distinction.[7]

175 Possibly Dessalines was clear-sighted enough to realize that the old
563 distinctions of color, if allowed to continue in the new state as in-
643 dicative of social prestige, might cause endless strife within the nation. Possibly, on the other hand, he wished to make the lighter-skinned Haitians realize that he, a Negro, was more than their equal. Whatever his underlying motives, he was impatient with the struggle for prestige. The steps he took to eradicate distinctions based upon color were characterized by his usual blunt tactlessness. In 1805 he informed Pétion, the outstanding mulatto general, that a union of black and colored people was essential to the happiness of the Empire; he said he wanted the Haitian people to become *bronzed* by this union, so that there would be no longer any important difference of skin color. All this was preface to a proposal that Pétion, as the ablest of the mulattoes, should marry the Emperor's black daughter, Célimène. Pétion, refined, highly educated, and gently cynical, was considerably perturbed and frankly embarrassed by the suddenness of this radical suggestion. His reply, that he was not inclined to marry at all, offended Dessalines and made him suspect a slight, but he dismissed Pétion with the pointed suggestion that he "think the matter over." Pétion knew, as the Emperor did not, that one of his aides-de-camp, Chancy, was not only in love with Célimène but had already got her with child. It is entirely possible, too, that he was aware of the growing underground opposition to Dessalines and that, as the Emperor's star was beginning to decline, he did not wish

[721] 7. It must be said to the credit of the black masses that they did not relish the systematic slaughter of the whites which so pleased Dessalines. Negro cultivators frequently collected potential victims, hiding them and aiding their escape from the country. The repugnance of the masses for such massacre was so evident that their generals had at times to drive them at bayonet's point. "The blacks of the plain behaved very well," said an exile in a letter (June 1, 1804) written from Jamaica to Moreau de Saint-Méry. Madiou says that after the massacre of the whites some Haitian blacks abandoned their country and went to join former masters in a foreign land.

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to ally himself with the ruling family. When Dessalines shortly discovered his daughter's condition, he burst into maledictions against all mulattoes, saying that they had plotted this disgrace to him and to his family. He went so far as to speak of having them all executed. 175 563 643

The Emperor's determination, and all his measures, could not quench the social ambition of his leading subjects. They bore what must be borne, conspiring meanwhile to get rid of him. They still had the advantage over the masses of a superior education, and they knew the path to eminence, once the obstacle of the Emperor was removed.

Nothing was done during the reign of Dessalines to cultivate the minds of the laboring class. Discipline backed by force was the guiding principle in dealing with them. Instead of trying to educate his people to understand their duties and to take an active part in statecraft, Dessalines—his generals and counselors, mulatto and black alike, thoroughly approving—used only compulsion. There was actually little difference between the attitude of this ruling clique toward the mass of laborers and that of their former white owners. Both looked upon them as cattle. A few of his advisers tried to persuade the Emperor to provide moral and religious education for the people so that they would not be seduced into completely evil ways, but the Emperor replied, "You are wrong: the laborers can be controlled only by fear of punishment and even death; I shall lead them only by these means; my 'morale' shall be the bayonet." 175 643 661 641 [871]

In short, between 1804 and 1806 no prominent figure in Haitian life seems even to have dreamed of "liberal" institutions. Those who had education, knowledge, and culture preserved them carefully for themselves. The wisdom, even the possibility, of enlightening the masses was doubted. Most Haitians remained in complete ignorance of what went on in the outside world. 175 565 641

Dessalines was killed by ambush near Port-au-Prince on October 17, 1806. The mulattoes were generally supposed to have planned the assassination, for it was well known that they had no cause to be fond of him. His callousness had raised up enemies in all walks of life. The cultivators were glad he was gone, because of his harshness. They were virtually slaves again in all but name; it was reported that upon his personal estates he had made unsatisfactory workers run the gauntlet between lines of soldiers armed with thorny switches, and 175 643 661

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175 such an example of rigor might spread. The moral element of the
643 population had long looked askance at his libertinage; his first act
661 upon entering a town during a visit of state was regularly to have his aides select for him the most attractive females in the vicinity, with whom he would spend more time than at the business of governing.
[703] Not even his army was sorrowful over his death. He had let his loyal troops go for months without pay, and then, reviewing a group of the one day, taunted and railed at them for their ragged uniforms. "You look as naked as a bunch of old bottles!" he cried.

Dessalines had restored order to his country and had founded a state. Both achievements rested upon a display of force which inspired cringing fear and denied normal human aspirations. His entire social and economic order was based upon the subservience of the many to the few.

2. *Christophe* (*1807–1820*)

175 Until 1807 all Haitians had the same political background—the
178 French colonial régime, revolution, the governorship of Toussaint, and the stern rule of Dessalines. Now the common path forked. Two avenues were opened up during the next dozen years, one by Christophe, the other by his Southern and mulatto rival, Pétion. The former was the road of discipline, hard work, and feudal control; the latter was one of persuasion, *laissez faire*, and small properties. Haiti ultimately chose the second.

175 The logical successor to Dessalines was his powerful Negro hench-
643 man, Christophe.[8] This black general felt so certain of his leadership that he did not even bother to attend the *Assemblée Constituante*
642 which was to choose the new head of state. The mulattoes, however, had agreed among themselves that they had had enough of rule by
662 ignorant ex-slaves. They consequently performed the very skillful manoeuvre of preparing a constitution which should effectively shear a new president of dictatorial power; this done, they dutifully elected Christophe to the presidential office. The wrathful general peremptorily declined to rule by virtue of so anaemic a document, and led his army southward to demand proper respect for his august

8. The name Christophe was taken from the English Caribbean island of St. Christopher, on which this black slave was born. Later in life he took as his first name Henry, spelling it in the English fashion rather than the French, as an indication of his wholehearted admiration of English people and English ways.

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175 The result was entirely different from Boyer's expectations. As a
114 French critic graphically puts it, the Haitians
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> who had never had more than a borrowed energy—that inspired by fear of French invasion—when they saw themselves freed, by a solemn treaty, from all attack on their coasts, seemed to allow their arms to drop relaxed at their sides, saying, *Let's take a rest.* The soldier who up till now had squeezed his body into a uniform and had subjected himself to European discipline, shouldering his arms, staring straight ahead as if seeing nothing, now began to leave unbuttoned the uniform which choked him, dragged a mattress into his sentry-box so that he might sleep through his watch, and let his cross slip to the earth never to pick it up again.[44]

175 In short, the Haitian army as a disciplined force ceased to exist, and
701 with it all authority of its officers. Boyer had counted upon the
703 army to enforce the provisions of the Code Rural, but now a soldier's
671 life was a paid sinecure. By gaining political security Haiti had in-
433 advertently lost its last chance of economic prosperity through a system of forced labor.

175 Wherever the Code was put into partial operation, revenue from
423 plantations continued to decline. The price of real estate dropped
433 proportionately. It was a simple matter for workmen who had
435 signed contracts to avoid carrying out their stipulations, and just as
436 simple to evade the law requiring fifteen acres' minimum for a single holding. Practically every Haitian wanted to own a bit of land; once he had acquired his bit, however small, he had (or so he felt) earned an exemption from directed labor.

175 Only on estates near the few big towns, where government
671 officials were concentrated, was there much pretense of trying to
625 enforce the Code. Sentries at the gates of Port-au-Prince were
661 authorized to confiscate plantains, yams, or fruit brought by any worker who, in contravention of the Code, had strayed to market on a forbidden day, but sentries soon acquired the habit of not seeing countryfolk who passed the gates. Reports kept cropping up that rural policemen were robbing poor cultivators of their coffee under pretense of protecting them from the penalties for breach of the law; this suggests that the Code was used rather for graft than for the stimulation of agriculture.

175 By and large, however, the Code was merely ignored. Agents
671 could not be found who were willing to stand in any community
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44. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, II, 181.

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Next to the agricultural system, the state of education in the republic probably had as much to do as anything with fixing the caste system upon Haiti. So long as the mass of people were not only black but illiterate as well, they would have no means of reaching a social status beyond the one in which they existed. Certainly the aspiring Negroes would not wish to enlighten them, for to stir up the whole people would destroy the very possibility of distinction. As W. S. Gilbert puts it, "When everyone is somebody, then no one's anybody." Public education, consequently, hardly advanced a step during Boyer's twenty-five years. It had had a feeble enough beginning under Pétion and remained, as it had been, a prerogative of the well-to-do.[38]

175 871 563 564 178

Under the complaisant rule of Boyer, accordingly, the people of color came to regard themselves as the unquestioned élite. Their claim was shared, though not always acknowledged, by a small number of blacks (mostly from the North) who had been anciens libres in colonial Saint-Domingue or noblemen under Christophe; who were literate, or whose wealth and ambition attracted attention. Boyer's boast that "all the feelings and prejudices, either of olden times or of national origin, have been superseded by an intense patriotism" was pure buncombe, as he certainly knew.

If only the best brains of the colored group had been content to serve the government, Haiti might have profited from her situation; but lesser government offices were merely springboards for foreign trade in coffee and mahogany, or for the manipulation of business deals. Not "intense patriotism," as Boyer liked to think, but financial gain was the motivating force of the élite, as it had been from colonial times. *The man who could amass a modest fortune, so that* his children might be educated and their security assured, had done his duty, and he would have been regarded as quixotic to renounce business opportunities for the dubious honor of minor political office. As a consequence of this natural search for gain, the government during Boyer's administration became less and less efficient. Relatives of élite businessmen were given posts because the President could not afford to offend important families. These minor officials then performed their duties awkwardly, or neglected them, in "the unfailing obliquity of dullness."

175 555 662 661 178 [47]

Skin color became the obsession of high society. Those who had no other merit of which to boast could still revel in their complex-

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38. See chap. XVI.

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Granted these obvious difficulties, there is still little to be said for the zeal or integrity of churchmen in Saint-Domingue. Father Cabon cites a report to Rome in 1794, which, he remarks, "was not designed to be made public, and does not bear the earmarks of passion," and which flatly states that "since the expulsion of the Jesuits, the curés have for the most part led lives so indecent . . . that the citizens and Negroes have lost all the sentiments of religion which the Jesuits gave them."[2] There had been distinguished churchmen in Saint-Domingue before 1750, authors, scientists, teachers of some note, but none appeared thereafter. The rich French colony was not a bright star in the Catholic crown.

Undeterred by those who might have been their spiritual guides, the white people followed the easy path of self-indulgence. The universal testimony of visitors is that, with a few notable exceptions, immorality and cruelty were daily commonplaces. To make a fortune was the prime ambition of every white man, since money made possible the luxurious enjoyment of this world's goods. Protest against money-making or soft living would have been futile. Administrative agents turned public office to their own profit; judges sold justice to the highest bidder; planters drove their slaves to death; and priests dispensed religious solace for a tidy sum.

The freedmen, who in everything patterned their lives after social leaders in the white planter class, had no more concern for religion than their models. They attended Mass occasionally as a social event, where they might set and be seen. When in the latter days of the colony discriminatory legislation required that colored persons sit in separate parts of the church, most of the affranchis simply refrained *from attending Mass: their religious zeal was not so great as to make* them submit to the public shame of segregation. In their daily lives, likewise, they followed the example of the white planters in pursuing pleasure rather than sobriety, "culture" rather than religious zeal. Like the whites, they were often licentious in their conduct. When it came their turn to direct affairs of state in free Haiti, there was little interest in spiritual matters among them. The intellectuals of the group paid homage to the liberal philosophers of the century rather than to religious thinkers.

If religion was at a low ebb in the prosperous days of the colony, it almost disappeared in the excitement of the years following the

2. Ibid., p. 33. revolt of the slaves (1791).

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175 642 643 Since he was president for twenty-five years (normal ones, as things go in Haiti), it is worth while to examine the functioning of the kind of government the upper class favored.

175 642 643 692 President Boyer's education and outlook were wholly French. He had formed his views of government principally upon French models, yet when he became head of state he could not forget his own military career. He said repeatedly that he wished to supersede the military by the civil power, but somehow never got around to it. The country was full of black generals, and it would have been difficult to retire them, primarily because they were black. He established courts to insure the rights of man, but since his newborn judiciary lacked the prestige to command respect, interpretation of the law came from the President—until before long he was himself the law. With a logic characteristic of the French, he tried to make the whole administration of the country orderly and tidy by codifying laws, laying out spheres of governmental departments, and properly ticketing matters in general. He had to be the sole judge of the intention and operation of statutes, however, and if necessary modify the nature of an act to suit his view of the public need. His honest and generally upright character perhaps made his enormous prerogatives conducive to the public good; but Boyer was a dictator in spite of his Senate, since when he found a law working badly he simply turned it from its normal course and gave it a quite contrary effect.

[646] [661] As the years of his long rule proceeded, he took more power to himself. When his Senate would not pass bills as he proposed them, he waited until they adjourned and then either neglected to execute their laws, or instructed the government printing office to change the wording. He clearly regarded the legislature as a necessary nuisance, to be kept as a sop to the élite and to preserve the appearance of republicanism before the world. Representatives from the various communes were recommended by the President, his nomination amounting almost always to election.[5]

800 Boyer was overthrown by the Revolution of 1843, by all odds the

[643] 5. The task of governing the whole island was obviously heavier than governing a fraction of it, so Boyer may have felt justified in his departures from strict constitutionality. He was always an indefatigable worker, whose intentions were uniformly laudable. He tried to rule alone, as had his illustrious predecessors. The hitch came because he was not of their calibre. He was worthy, virtuous—and mediocre. He would probably have made an excellent mayor of a French provincial town.

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Boyer was overthrown by the Revolution of 1843, by all odds the

most important of Haitian upheavals. Since its effects were to be felt for the next seventy years in the extinction of representative government and the eclipse of the élite as political rulers, it is worthy of special attention. Paradoxically, it was a revolution fomented by the élite themselves. Its background and outcome reveal the power in word, and the impotence in deed, of this group by 1843. 175 669

The constitution of 1816, devised by Pétion's henchmen, had granted the president initiative in all laws except those concerning taxation. After the agreement of 1825 with France,[6] however, Boyer, hard pressed by the need of paying the indemnity each year, began to restrict the number of officials, diminish their salaries, and veto all projects favorable to the development of public instruction and improvement which might cause further expenditure. By temperament he was an autocrat.[7] Every valuable measure must come from him alone; whatever another person proposed he would find a thousand reasons to discard. Sarcastic and vain, he did not know how to smooth ruffled feelings or make conflicting groups reconcile their differences. His personal weaknesses of character alienated the sympathies of many once-devoted officials. 175 642 643 652 661

During his long presidency Boyer also systematically ignored the younger generation, men who admired the efforts of Pétion, ardent reformers who wished to devote their energies to the improvement of Haiti. The military career had no attraction for them: the higher ranks, alone bringing sufficient salary for a congenial way of life, were too few and one could achieve them only with difficulty, for since 1825 advancement had been submitted to rigorous rules. On the other hand, the paths of administration were severely guarded by those admirable great functionaries left over from the government of Pétion—men like Inginac and Imbert. But age had slowed their activity, and still Boyer kept them on. The younger generation mocked this "gerontocracy" and supported the parliamentary opposition. 175 643 665

The youth of the élite class continued to go to France for their education, returning to Haiti to take part in the lively political discussions which made one of their chief occupations. During the first decade of Boyer's administration they generally supported him, too 175 665 871 664

6. By which France recognized the independence of Haiti in return for the payment of a large annual indemnity.

7. "In everything, he wishes to dominate," Pétion had said of him.

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was well enough, but all upper-class landlords wanted the privilege of living in leisure on an income derived from the menial labor of black workers. Fraternity was a principle ridiculous to a group whose never-ceasing struggle was to confirm the separation of castes. The term "Liberal," then, was borrowed not from the revolutionary documents of the late eighteenth century, but from the parliamentary parties of the nineteenth—those who saw more opportunity for themselves and their group if the power of tyrants and kings could be curbed by legislatures. The idea was particularly congenial to the Haitian intelligentsia for the simple reason that the powerful rulers of Haiti, past and present, were Negroes who did not share the aims and ideals of the social upper class.[11]

By holding such "liberal" views, the mulatto élite saw their one opportunity not only for curbing the strong men among the Negroes who again and again tried to rule Haiti as if it were a native African state and themselves the supreme chieftains, but also for indulging their own special penchants. A Senate filled with élite politicians suited the talents of the educated aristocrats. They liked constitutions and codes; the law was their favorite profession; they were adepts at drawing neat distinctions between this and that in an academic issue; polished oratory, skilful argument, fluent speech were knacks peculiar to them by temperament, position, education. Boyer had been the beau-ideal of the academic "liberals," with his talkative Senate, his complete set of Codes and national system of courts; the mid-century party members came to realize what they had lost by driving him out.

Every time the Nationalists came to power the colored élite suffered. Under Dessalines they lost greatly in property and position; Christophe had hated and hounded them; Soulouque put many of their leaders to death. The only monarchs Haiti ever had were blacks, and the two most tyrannical presidents in the first seventy-five years after independence were Nationalists (Pierrot, 1845–46, and Domingue, 1874–76).

The experience of the Liberal presidents with parliamentary institutions was not entirely a happy one, however. Pétion and Boyer had

11. It must be recalled that no parliaments of England, France, or the United States in the early nineteenth century had true democratic representation. Property qualifications for voting, rotten boroughs, and the persistence of privilege ensured that only the "classes" should have full representation, and so rule the masses.

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Even Geffrard the reformer,

175 643 661 ably the ablest president in the second half-century, who was pledged to reduce the expenses of government (a promise which, since he was accustomed to a life of penury, should have been easy to fulfill), increased his own salary to $50,000 a year, and allowed himself $20,000 more annually for secret service and a similar sum "for the encouragement of arts and sciences." He bought two estates with government money; the meat bill of his family was charged to the budget of his bodyguard, and the family champagne bill to a hospital. After Geffrard, the presidency was openly regarded as the juiciest financial plum in Haiti which, if one could pluck it, would justify the necessary expenditures for a revolution. It seems from contemporary comment, indeed, that Geffrard's actions aroused not censure but rather envy, as if every ambitious Haitian would have welcomed the opportunity to do likewise. The bitingly critical Englishman, Sir Spenser St. John, railed with some justice, "Every Haitian appears fully persuaded that his countrymen never seek office except for the purpose of improving their private fortunes."[15]

175 643 646 The legislature was never a real check upon the President. It was useful to him at times when he wished to delay action on some embarrassing imbroglio with a foreign power, for by referring a measure to the Senate he could stall it in tedious debate. Almost without exception, however, the legislature consisted of the President's men. Its halls were palaces of idle oratory. One whole session was devoted to a discussion of fitting the hall with cushioned seats; another to the propriety of appointing an interpreter for representatives who understood only Créole and not French. To make a man a Senator was a satisfactory way of paying a political debt. To be a Senator was to have social prominence, a salary of $1,600 (decidedly a competence in nineteenth-century Haiti), an opportunity to speak before an audience—and no real responsibility.

175 One may grant without debate the difficulties facing this small and poor country, a Negro state with great white neighbors who regarded it with something less than deference. Yet Haiti in its early days had real promise. Wherein lay its defects? Haitian thinkers knew the answers, and frequently indicted themselves.

175 871 565 658 The want of education was a basic weakness. Those who believe in democracy need no rehearsal of the benefits of popular enlightenment. Because the great Negro heads of state were themselves im-

15. *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, p. 283.

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can "advice and approval," rather than with the legislature subject to popular control. Even under such restrictions the politically minded found ways of exerting pressure on the Marine authorities.

Out of the darkest days of military subjection by a foreign power came a changed order of politics in the country. The practically unbroken line of dull incompetents who had come into the presidency ended; instead of ignorant army leaders, educated men were once more in office; instead of Northern Negroes, élites of Port-au-Prince; instead of benighted martinets bewildered by world affairs, men who, if not great statesmen, at least had minds capable of understanding Haiti's relation to international economics and politics.

The élite were back in power. In the mind of every friend of Haiti arose the question whether the events between 1879 and 1915 had taught them lessons which would make their return to responsibility productive of great things for the country. Because of the abnormal situation resulting from the Occupation, the world depression, and the briefness of their new ascendancy, one cannot yet speak with assurance. Nevertheless, there are few encouraging signs. Political office is still regarded by most candidates in terms of their own advancement rather than service to Haiti. Very little has been done to extend the base of voting by developing local responsibility and education among the masses. Élite youths still receive a classical education, still disdain manual labor, still cherish the ideal of a graceful life of ease. The president still rules as an autocrat supported by the gendarmerie—substitute for the army of former days. One can see no decrease in social distinctions or in the disdain of the élite for peasant people; on the contrary, there has even been an increase of this feeling because the Occupation (through its Agricultural Service particularly) seemed to open paths of development to the peasants. Social antagonism, not social responsibility, still underlies political life.[20]

To every one of these strictures there is a plausible reply. It is no light matter to unsettle the minds of nine tenths of a population by education, to cause an economic revolution by improving agricultural techniques, to admit to political life a people unaccustomed to

20. Dr. Jean Price-Mars, in *La Vocation de l'élite* (Port-au-Prince, 1919), *passim*, especially pp. 51 ff., urges the élite to accept their responsibilities rather than rest upon the debilitating assurance of their innate superiority.

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3. The unimportance of the legislature. It has made useful patron

646 age for the president to dispense, and has preserved the semblance of
642 republican government; but hardly half a dozen legislative sessions in all Haitian history have contributed seminal ideas in politics or initiated true reforms. How could they, indeed, when the president was consistently a dictator of policy?

666 4. The undemocratic nature of the vote. Senators are chosen by
642 the representatives, and the two groups together have generally elected the president, when he did not come to power by revolution. The only chance people have had to vote has been for local officials and representatives. In these cases, the vote has been limited to the élite and the army, with the president's henchmen counting the ballots. Since the Occupation there have been plebiscites on constitutional changes, the people having the right to vote Yes or No.

692 5. The subservience of the courts to the president. They have been
643 filled with president's men, generally astute enough to consult presi-
642 dential wishes before handing down a decision. Foreign merchants soon learned that they could expect little "justice" from the courts if their own cause conflicted with special Haitian interests. Foreign diplomats likewise learned that in crises the courts could involve the simplest issue in such verbal complexity that months of patience would be necessary to unwind the red tape.

644 6. The pliability of "constitutional rights." Freedom of speech and
661 of the press has been notably lacking, although scurrilous attacks on the administration's enemies have often been permitted. Legislators
642 have been expelled. Graft has flourished. In 1833, for example, two representatives were expelled from the House "for systematically opposing the measures of the executive, and persisting in a demand for a statement of public expenditures." A century later a senator was expelled for almost the same reasons.

701 7. Militarism. Only in this respect is any real change apparent since
178 the American Occupation. The army was always large up to 1915, and so constituted an economic drain as well as a political menace.
642 Generals had great power: they ruled each department and each
669 arrondissement, were subject only to the president, and were at the bottom of every revolutionary movement.[22] Since the Occupation

[162] 22. In 1842, when the population was still less than a million, there were in the district governments 9 generals, 63 colonels, 48 lieutenant colonels, 9 captains, 1 lieutenant, and 28 medical officers; and in the standing army 33 colonels, 95 lieutenant
[701] colonels, 825 captains, 654 lieutenants, 377 sublieutenants and ensigns, 6,815 noncommissioned officers, and 25 medical officers. The army had 28,000 soldiers and cost about $600,000 a year. See John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 86 ff.

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643 reason of his power to name agents accredited to foreign governments; with the approval of the Senate he made treaties and wars. In cases of malversation, or gross corruption, the president might be denounced by the Senate (his own nominees), and the High Court of Justice (his own appointees) would sit in judgment on him; matters [669] have never reached this pass, however, for the Haitian method of checking a president's "malversation" has been the more direct one of revolution.

643 At a salary generally set in the neighborhood of thirty or forty thousand dollars the president could live luxuriously, the highest-[465] paid person in Haiti. The salary combined with the prestige and [661] perquisites of office was enough to explain the eagerness with which men sought the position. "Perquisites" often enough included graft.

645 Details of administration have been in the hands of various departments of state, their number depending upon the constitution then in force. As has been said, the president generally regarded his cabinet members as little more than clerks to attend to details. Only a few in the whole nineteenth century stand out prominently as directors of policy—Boyer as Pétion's secretary-general; Inginac, holding the same position under Boyer; Anténor Firmin, Hyppolite's foreign secretary; and a handful of others. During the four years, 1843–47, of "ephemeral governments" the cabinet ministers sometimes managed to rule their offices, and under the succession of ignorant Negro generals at the end of the century, if the educated élite secretaries had not taken charge of affairs no one would have handled them. Constitutional language made the cabinet officers seem more important than they were, however, for the actual position of a minister was usually that of head clerk, chief errand boy and handy man for the president, and convenient scapegoat when crises arose in foreign affairs, finances, public works, or other spheres.

646 The legislative body has ordinarily consisted of two chambers, the Senate and the Chamber of Representatives. Senators must be thirty years old. They have ordinarily served a nine-year term, being available for reelection only after three years out of office. The method of choice curbed their power: the lower house selected each senator from a list of three nominated by the president for each vacancy. For a salary of sixteen hundred dollars and freedom from arrest in civil cases, all the senator had to do was to correspond with the president and lower house on public affairs, and decree appro-

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Justice in the courts was administered by Haitians whose narrow patriotism biased their decisions.

5. A temperamental tariff policy. Not only were imports subject to a tariff which might be changed at the whim of any president, but exports also were taxed. When an administration was in need of funds it might suddenly, without warning, raise the tax on coffee exports and so disrupt a merchant's business plans. The customs-houses were in charge of Haitians who steadily became more inefficient and grasping as the century progressed, until many foreign merchants felt that the only way of getting business dispatched was by means of bribes. Examinations at customs were long drawn out, often there was open thievery, and erroneous valuations were common.

6. The burden of the indemnity to France. Contracted by Boyer in 1825, this annual payment for sixty years was an incubus to every administration, leaving no surplus in the treasury for public works, education, or any internal development; likewise, it made the threat of foreign interference all the more imminent.

7. A debased currency. Pétion was the first president to devalue money, and his example was frequently followed thereafter. Counterfeiting was general. When a country's monetary system is unstable, its officials accustomed to bribery and graft,[17] and its financial structure almost nonexistent, there is little chance for sound economic development.

8. Dependence upon a single crop. Haitian economy was tied to the staple coffee, grown with indifferent care, prepared for the market in outmoded fashion, and sold in competition with coffee from more scientifically run plantations in other tropical countries.

9. Political instability. The recurrent revolutions in Haiti made foreigners chary of participating in the country's business, since the government which made a contract might be out of office before the ink was dry.

10. Indifference of the élite to economic pursuits. What profits were obtainable went into the pockets of foreign merchants, not those of Haitian businessmen. In 1842 the comparative exports of the

17. Sir Spenser St. John, always a bitter critic of Haiti, remarked (*Hayti, or The Black Republic*, p. 88) sardonically that "Boyer had the rare quality of being honest, and left in the treasury, on his departure, the sum of £200,000, the first and last chief who was ever guilty of so unaccountable a weakness."

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175 Boyer carried on Pétion's policy of no taxation. It was not until the American
651 Occupation that Haitians could be said to be taxed. Ninety per cent of the state's
[652] income between 1900 and 1915 regularly came from tariffs, and only ten per cent from internal taxes. Even the efforts of the Americans, resulting in the laws of 1924 and 1928, were on the whole restricted to a few excise taxes. A land tax was hopeless, due to the utter confusion of titles and the stubborn impassivity of peasant squatters.[5]

2. *Monetary Policy of Pétion and Boyer*

175 The monetary situation in Haiti was chaotic in its early days. The gold money
652 of France, Spain, England, and the United States circulated, as did small French coins, and the coins and paper money created by the Haitian rulers, who had complete control over money. For example, Pétion decreed[6] an increase in the value of the *gourde d'Espagne* from 8 livres 5 sols, to 9 livres; of the French *écu* of 6 francs from 9 livres to 9 livres 15 sols; and the 5 franc écu from 7 livres 10 sols to 8 livres 5 sols; this almost doubled the value of money in circulation. He also struck small coins to replace the pieces of 30, 24, 15, 12, and 6 sols of France. His small coins were merely token money.[7] The paper currency created by Pétion and so easily counterfeited has been mentioned.

[433] Boyer was continually in financial perplexities. Production was declining while expenditures had to be radically increased on account of the settlement with France in 1825. Boyer's budget was not a large one judged by modern standards, the average expenditure each year being about $5,000,000. To meet this, customs duties on imports and exports brought in about $2,200,000 annually; territorial duties on produce, houses, patents or licenses, market fees, and the like, a similar
[316] sum; but some half-million dollars had to be borrowed each year. The government
[425] hoped to get something from developing mines in the Spanish part of the island, but this hope failed. It was thought also that the sale of government lands might
[454] bring in some revenue, but few people wanted to invest money, when they had it, in land, with agricultural affairs developing as they were and no way of making
[465] people work: investment in trade was more promising. The national treasury was so empty that both the civil and military officials were poorly paid. It was fre-
[661] quently said that almost all administrators and persons in authority were open to bribery. Meantime the number of civil servants was increasing: there was a swarm
[647] of hirelings and subalterns in every commune, like a host of vampires. By their lack of honesty, conscientiousness, and efficiency, immense sums were lost annually to the treasury.

5. See the *Report of the American High Commissioner* (1929), p. 19.
6. May 4, 1808.
7. *Pétion voyant l'échapper de ses États les gourdes qu'effrayaient ses démêlés avec Christophe, eut pour les retenir l'ingénieuse idée d'y pratiquer une trouée. Ce moyen était trop efficace pour ne pas réussir, et il était trop simple pour que l'emploi n'en fût pas généralisé au moins par un équivalent. Ainsi, lorsqu'il en vint à battre monnaie, le chef de l'état du Sud décumula le titre de sa gourde à peu près au titre de la gourde espagnole taxée par son empereur-pape. Il lui donna 23½ millièmes de fin.*" Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, II, 194.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Oreste Zamor, pressé pou' embarké!
Oreste Zamor, pressé pou' embarké!
Ou pas tendé l'armée Davilmar rentré pou' Gonaïves?

Oreste Zamor, you'd better embark!
Oreste Zamor, you'd better embark!
Haven't you heard Davilmar's army has entered Gonaïves?

Gonaïves seems to have been the crucial point for invading armies from the north. Whenever revolutionary troops entered this town, the president holding office prepared to leave. True to the tradition, the Zamors sailed for a foreign shore, and Davilmar Théodore became the new executive. Although his tenure was to last only three months, there was much excitement when he entered the capital:

A la théâtre, à la bamboche!
Pou' djolie musique à droit à gauche!
La ville embrouilé ça qui gainyain,
C'est Davilmar kapé rentré!
Davilmar, dur, dur!
Manchette cacos pas nen betise!
Papa Do dur, dur!
Manchette Lecoste pas nen betise!
Davilmar, dur, dur!

Celebrations and dancing!
Tooting horns to right and left!
The city is in an uproar,
It is Davilmar who is coming in!
Davilmar, hard, hard!
The cacos were nothing to laugh at!
Papa Do is hard, hard!
Lecoste's army was nothing to laugh at!
Davilmar is hard, hard!

In 1915 came the United States intervention in Haiti, with the prime objective of freezing out German commercial and political interests. A president named Guillaume Sam had assassinated his political enemies in the prison at Port-au-Prince and had, in turn, been dragged out of the French consulate and killed. The benefits of the American occupation of Haiti are hotly debated to this day, though it is about thirty years since the United States military forces were withdrawn. Some Haitians think the occupation was a good lesson in politics, and that Haiti benefited in many ways. Others continue to look upon it as an overt expression of American diplomacy by force. One of the early assignments of the U.S. Marines in Haiti was the destruction of the

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 643 661 such an example of rigor might spread. The moral element of the population had long looked askance at his libertinage; his first act upon entering a town during a visit of state was regularly to have his aides select for him the most attractive females in the vicinity, with whom he would spend more time than at the business of governing. [703] Not even his army was sorrowful over his death. He had let his loyal troops go for months without pay, and then, reviewing a group of them one day, taunted and railed at them for their ragged uniforms. "You look as naked as a bunch of old bottles!" he cried.

Dessalines had restored order to his country and had founded a state. Both achievements rested upon a display of force which inspired cringing fear and denied normal human aspirations. His entire social and economic order was based upon the subservience of the many to the few.

2. *Christophe* (*1807–1820*)

175 178 Until 1807 all Haitians had the same political background—the French colonial régime, revolution, the governorship of Toussaint, and the stern rule of Dessalines. Now the common path forked. Two avenues were opened up during the next dozen years, one by Christophe, the other by his Southern and mulatto rival, Pétion. The former was the road of discipline, hard work, and feudal control; the latter was one of persuasion, *laissez faire*, and small properties. Haiti ultimately chose the second.

175 643 642 662 The logical successor to Dessalines was his powerful Negro henchman, Christophe.[8] This black general felt so certain of his leadership that he did not even bother to attend the *Assemblée Constituante* which was to choose the new head of state. The mulattoes, however, had agreed among themselves that they had had enough of rule by ignorant ex-slaves. They consequently performed the very skillful manoeuvre of preparing a constitution which should effectively shear a new president of dictatorial power; this done, they dutifully elected Christophe to the presidential office. The wrathful general peremptorily declined to rule by virtue of so anaemic a document, and led his army southward to demand proper respect for his august

8. The name Christophe was taken from the English Caribbean island of St. Christopher, on which this black slave was born. Later in life he took as his first name Henry, spelling it in the English fashion rather than the French, as an indication of his wholehearted admiration of English people and English ways.

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person. To his evident surprise he was met not by meek submission, but by the army of the mulatto Pétion. Christophe was not defeated; neither was he victorious. He was obliged to retire in high dudgeon to his loyal supporters in the North, where he proceeded to set up a state according to his own idea of what a state should be. 175 643 642 662

The Assembly thereupon outlawed Christophe on the ground of rebellion against constituted authority, electing in his stead their great favorite Pétion, whose power as president of the Republic was to be limited by the new constitution. For the next thirteen years, from 1807 to 1820, the tiny country with its 10,000 square miles was divided, Christophe ruling in the North and in the fertile valley of the Artibonite, and Pétion governing until his death in 1818 in the West and South, the main strongholds of the colored element.

Christophe was of the stuff that myths are made of. He was indisputably Haiti's most dynamic, relentlessly effective, and dramatic ruler of the nineteenth century. Like Toussaint and Dessalines, he was a black ex-slave, and like them he had won his spurs as a military leader during the revolution. He was an ardent patriot whose love for his country did not lead to retrogressive chauvinism. Whereas Dessalines through fear and hatred of the French had excluded all white men from Haiti, Christophe had the perspicacity to see that the country could benefit from the contribution of whites. Englishmen he especially welcomed. Like his predecessors Christophe drove his people—with a tyrant's lash, many thought—but only to increase the glory of Haiti. 175 643 663

Christophe had a vaulting imagination which brought glamour even to practical expedients. He built a colossal fortress on a high mountain in the North, partly for defense, but partly to make his contemned Negro people feel that they could achieve one of the architectural and engineering marvels of the age. His exquisite palace, Sans Souci, not only satisfied his own vanity as a ruler but also provided a focal point for the imagination and loyalty of his subjects. In 1811 he had himself crowned king, Henry I, amidst pomp and circumstance—and then created a royal court, partly to reward his leaders, partly to get the fees for patents of nobility, but primarily to bind all important men in the country to himself and to the Haitian state with unbreakable personal bonds. Dramatic in almost every particular of his life and reign, he ruled for thirteen years more through force of personality than by tyranny. Taxes were heavy [772] [644]

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Next to the agricultural system, the state of education in the republic probably had as much to do as anything with fixing the caste system upon Haiti. So long as the mass of people were not only black but illiterate as well, they would have no means of reaching a social status beyond the one in which they existed. Certainly the aspiring Negroes would not wish to enlighten them, for to stir up the whole people would destroy the very possibility of distinction. As W. S. Gilbert puts it, "When everyone is somebody, then no one's anybody." Public education, consequently, hardly advanced a step during Boyer's twenty-five years. It had had a feeble enough beginning under Pétion and remained, as it had been, a prerogative of the well-to-do.[58]

Under the complaisant rule of Boyer, accordingly, the people of color came to regard themselves as the unquestioned élite. Their claim was shared, though not always acknowledged, by a small number of blacks (mostly from the North) who had been anciens libres in colonial Saint-Domingue or noblemen under Christophe; who were literate, or whose wealth and ambition attracted attention. Boyer's boast that "all the feelings and prejudices, either of olden times or of national origin, have been superseded by an intense patriotism" was pure buncombe, as he certainly knew.

If only the best brains of the colored group had been content to serve the government, Haiti might have profited from her situation; but lesser government offices were merely springboards for foreign trade in coffee and mahogany, or for the manipulation of business deals. Not "intense patriotism," as Boyer liked to think, but financial gain was the motivating force of the élite, as it had been from colonial times. The man who could amass a modest fortune, so that his children might be educated and their security assured, had done his duty, and he would have been regarded as quixotic to renounce business opportunities for the dubious honor of minor political office. As a consequence of this natural search for gain, the government during Boyer's administration became less and less efficient. Relatives of élite businessmen were given posts because the President could not afford to offend important families. These minor officials then performed their duties awkwardly, or neglected them, in "the unfailing obliquity of dullness."

Skin color became the obsession of high society. Those who had no other merit of which to boast could still revel in their complex-

58. See chap. XVI.

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175 choice of a leader. Not gifted with administrative ability, Hérard
643 blundered first by imprisoning one of the most popular Negro leaders in the country, thereby turning much of the population of the South against him. Next, learning of conspiracies in the Spanish
[669] end of the island, he tried to stamp out revolt by exile and jail sentences, only to precipitate there a real revolution for independence. In his fight against the Dominican separatists he was roundly defeated, and his prestige sank rapidly to the vanishing point. Within two months after his inauguration, he had only one third of the island left over which to attempt to rule. Within a year he was out of power altogether and with him the colored people.

175 The Revolution of 1844, although supported by certain old friends
669 of Boyer, was chiefly a movement of Negroes—followers of the imprisoned black, Salomon; peasants from the South who had been promised much by the previous year's revolutionaries and had got nothing; and particularly the Negro army clique. The significant part of the new revolution was its announced purpose, to lessen the influence of the colored group in government, to have a black president, and to dispossess certain reputedly well-to-do citizens by
[643] dividing their estates among the people. Quickly successful, the insurgents promoted to the presidency the illiterate octogenarian black general, Guerrier, who in Christophe's kingdom had been Duke of Marmalade[3] and Duke of Avancé.

175 For the first time in a quarter-century the Negro element was
643 again in the saddle, where it was to remain for the next fifteen years. Everyone recognized Guerrier's personal courage and admired the
• 662 common sense which made him prefer conciliation to unnecessary violence as a method of government, but the colored people were shocked at having to live under the rule of another black ex-slave. The idea evoked grim memories. Knowing Guerrier's addiction to drink, the colored faction managed to make him a tool for their own use, so that his brief administration, ending with his death in 1845, was generally known as a "government of understudies." Guerrier was followed in the presidency by another black, likewise an octo-
175 genarian: Louis Pierrot, the handsome brother-in-law of King
643 Christophe. But Pierrot was even more ignorant than Guerrier and

[554] 3. This title generally evokes amusement among non-Haitians. Christophe had merely named his peers after districts whose names had been given by French planters in the eighteenth century. Another of his noblemen was a Count of Limonade.

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175 material—Frenchmen who lived "in a deplorable state of morals,
111 too often recalling those of the freebooters and buccaneers" who were their ancestors and predecessors. Even when the calibre of the colonists improved, religion was a minor concern, business and pleasure pushing it well into the background.

There was no great antagonism toward the fathers; indeed, not enough attention was paid to the priests and their work to warrant any very strong feeling. It was indifference and insolence the fathers had to face, or, if they showed too great an interest in the welfare of slaves upon a plantation, suspicion and peremptory curbs. By the old
[671] Code Noir under which the colony theoretically operated, masters were obligated to send their slaves to Mass on Sundays and feast days under penalty of heavy fines; the Code likewise prescribed the baptism of all blacks and their instruction in the Catholic faith. But just as the colonists ignored all parts of the Code antagonistic to their own economic interests, so specifically did they disregard the sections dealing with their religious obligations.

Some priests were in any case not too zealous. It was much more
175 agreeable to attend only to external forms, and so participate in the
793 charming life of high society, than to stand firm against laxity. If a
662 priest showed enthusiasm for his duties to his African charges he was
567 almost certain to be accused by the planters of stirring up the slaves
[792] and undermining the foundations of colonial society. This was, in fact, the very accusation leveled at the Jesuits to bring about their expulsion from the colony in 1764. The example was not lost upon other priests.

"The safety of the whites demands that the Negroes be kept in
175 profound ignorance," said one of the later governors in a message to
111 France. This sentiment, perfectly expressing the conviction of the
563 majority of planters, not only prevented any secular education of the blacks, but actually kept many of them from instruction in catechism, creed, or any part of the Catholic faith. If instruction is forbidden, few of the sacraments can be administered, for how can a person be confirmed, confess, do penance, if he know not even the first principles of the faith? Few masters objected to the baptism of slave children; on the other hand, they soundly disapproved of the sacrament of marriage for their blacks, since this might place an obstacle in the way of slave sales, and even open the way for assimilation of blacks and whites in the colony.

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175 whites patrolling the streets seems to have given reality to criticism
665 which before then would have been academic. The élite were back
208 again in the political forum. Unreflecting patriotism urged the
648 immediate withdrawal of the Marines, but a considerable number of the legislature saw that it would be years before they left. The problem, then, they saw variously: some wished to be eloquent spokesmen for the patriotic anti-whites and did their best to embarrass the Occupation; some, feeling that the Americans were benefiting the country, tried to make things move smoothly; while others, seeing a fertile field for gain, tried to ingratiate themselves with the American authorities.

175 The twenty years between 1915 and 1934 heard many eloquent,
643 impassioned speeches, not all of them coming to the same conclu-
642 sions. The élite were divided in most issues raised by the Occupation,
648 so that the old neat dichotomy between élite and army no longer
662 prevailed. The President, Dartiguenave (1915–22), was for the first time since 1879 a Southerner and a mulatto; yet in 1922 when he was a candidate for réélection it was Southern élite votes which defeated him. Executive, legislature, and judiciary all had just enough power under the Occupation to make subtle manoeuvres, and all three branches of the government displayed a real genius for the political game. They often succeeded in putting the onus of an unpopular act upon the Americans, and in taking the credit for popular measures with which they had had little to do. They prodded and pricked all the weaknesses in the logic of the American State Department. They forced numerous concessions. If at times they seem to have been overclever, playing the game of politics merely for an opportunity to display their skill, at other times many of them showed a deep understanding of realities which had to be faced.

175 The Occupation, ordered by that high prophet of democracy,
648 Woodrow Wilson, profused its determination to give Haiti her
666 first opportunity to be democratic. Yet the Marines really dictated
642 the choice both of Dartiguenave in 1915 and of Borno in 1922 and 1926. The constitution of 1918 was prepared in Washington; it was submitted to a plebiscite, but the farcical vote—69,337 for and 335 against—was clearly the result of electioneering by the Marines. The presidents of Haiti ruled with executive councils, subject to Ameri-

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person. To his evident surprise he was met not by meek submission, but by the army of the mulatto Pétion. Christophe was not defeated; neither was he victorious. He was obliged to retire in high dudgeon to his loyal supporters in the North, where he proceeded to set up a state according to his own idea of what a state should be. 175 643 642 662

The Assembly thereupon outlawed Christophe on the ground of rebellion against constituted authority, electing in his stead their great favorite Pétion, whose power as president of the Republic was to be limited by the new constitution. For the next thirteen years, from 1807 to 1820, the tiny country with its 10,000 square miles was divided, Christophe ruling in the North and in the fertile valley of the Artibonite, and Pétion governing until his death in 1818 in the West and South, the main strongholds of the colored element.

Christophe was of the stuff that myths are made of. He was indisputably Haiti's most dynamic, relentlessly effective, and dramatic ruler of the nineteenth century. Like Toussaint and Dessalines, he was a black ex-slave, and like them he had won his spurs as a military leader during the revolution. He was an ardent patriot whose love for his country did not lead to retrogressive chauvinism. Whereas Dessalines through fear and hatred of the French had excluded all white men from Haiti, Christophe had the perspicacity to see that the country could benefit from the contribution of whites. Englishmen he especially welcomed. Like his predecessors Christophe drove his people—with a tyrant's lash, many thoughts—but only to increase the glory of Haiti. 175 643 663

Christophe had a vaulting imagination which brought glamour even to practical expedients. He built a colossal fortress on a high mountain in the North, partly for defense, but partly to make his contemned Negro people feel that they could achieve one of the architectural and engineering marvels of the age. His exquisite palace, Sans Souci, not only satisfied his own vanity as a ruler but also provided a focal point for the imagination and loyalty of his subjects. In 1811 he had himself crowned king, Henry I, amidst pomp and circumstance—and then created a royal court, partly to reward his leaders, partly to get the fees for patents of nobility, but primarily to bind all important men in the country to himself and to the Haitian state with unbreakable personal bonds. Dramatic in almost every particular of his life and reign, he ruled for thirteen years more through force of personality than by tyranny. Taxes were heavy [772] [644]

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to Christophe's serfs in the North to cause defections ultimately sufficient to win the civil war for the republic.[22]

Those who would read into Pétion's democratization of land tenure the liberal convictions of a far-sighted statesman must ignore the evidence of his earliest land acts. For two or three years nothing was so apparent as that Pétion wished to please his friends, the mulatto aristocrats. He not only had the Senate restore to their former owners all lands of which Dessalines had despoiled them, but he also agreed to a law authorizing a cash payment up to the full value of crops planted and then lost during the last year of the Emperor's rule.[23] By these concessions the President immediately wiped out the rancor left behind him by Dessalines, reversed that ruler's whole land policy, gained the support of thousands of aspirants for social position, and bound in personal loyalty to his régime all the colored leaders.

He went further. Insecurity of tenure under Dessalines had worried landlords who were not actually mulcted of their estates, and so the President undertook to guarantee security. Thereafter all sales of land were to be registered by government deed, and so confirmed to the purchaser in perpetuity; government courts would be empowered to settle disputes over payment of rents; proof of the death of the testator must be forthcoming before wills could be probated. Not even the single limitation on ownership—that if the proprietor of an estate should remain away from Haiti the state might lease his property and receive the income from it—disturbed them, for they were patriots enough, and poor enough, to feel that Haitians should live at home.

As if this were not enough to please the landed gentry, the tax

22. Saint-Rémy, *Pétion et Haïti* (Paris, 1854–57), V, 163–166, suggests another reason, namely, that people will always be more ready to defend land they actually own than for an impersonal state. This sounds logical, but certainly the Negroes had fought ardently enough to drive out the French in 1803, landless though they were. Saint-Rémy continues: "And moreover, was it not time to dismember the enormous plantations which still bore the names of those colonists whose mother country might still at any moment descend to reclaim their heritage? And could this dismemberment be achieved otherwise than by giving the people an honorable title to it?"

23. Two successive laws, February 9 and March 16, 1807, achieved these ends. The former specified that all persons who, by purchase or gift or legacy, had acquired land before November 1, 1803 (when Rochambeau surrendered) or since February 7, 1804 (when Dessalines had ordered a confirmation of all titles) should be newly assured of their rights to such holdings. There was a single, possibly unimportant, limitation: the acquisition must have been by Haitians *from* Haitians.

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Immediately a division of political opinion was evident, one which was to persist throughout the century. No one denied the inevitability in 1804 of making Dessalines the head of state: he was the victorious commander, clearly the most powerful man in Haiti. The division of opinion arose over the manner in which he should rule, whether as military dictator, or as a responsible president. Dessalines settled the matter peremptorily—if only for the time being—by asserting his self as a dictator. 175 643

The issue did not die with his decision, however, for it had deep roots. Supporting Dessalines wholeheartedly was the group of generals who were all Negroes, all ex-slaves, all practically illiterate. The three most influential of these blacks were Christophe, later to succeed his general; Clanlette, and Boisrond-Tonnère. Those who preferred a government in which the president shared power with a legislature of important men were, on the contrary, almost all affranchis of the old régime, therefore the most cultured and educated men in the country. Most of them were mulattoes or at least of a lighter complexion than the Negroes, although of course some blacks adhered to their position. The leaders of this group were Pétion, Boyer, Inginac, and Gérin. This division of opinion went back even into the decade preceding independence, when the island, free of slavery, was still technically under the rule of France, and the ex-slave Toussaint had to fight and conquer the mulatto leader Rigaud before he could establish his rule as dictator. 175 642 [643]

For a brief moment after independence, all differences were reconciled, since all had been united in a common cause against the enemy. Dessalines was then commanding in the Artibonite Valley, and Christophe in the North; two of Rigaud's former lieutenants, Pétion and Geffrard, commanded in the West and South. Apparently there was genuine respect among these men for each other. Dessalines, for example, with evident sincerity calls his colleague Pétion "that man of upright heart." The unity was short-lived, however. Not only was it evident that Dessalines meant to rule like an African despot-chief, taking advice only when he liked it; it was even more plain that through his cruelty, impetuosity, and crudeness he was bent on isolating Haiti from all contacts with the culture and polish of the outer world. Pétion and his group looked on with pained disgust as he indulged his violence against the whites who had hopefully remained in the country; the general's bloody procession throughout 175 643 642 66

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175 same century in which Haiti withdrew. The yeomanry of Haiti in
177 the nineteenth century was hence able to develop a traditionalism of
178 unusual firmness and persistence.

171 This traditionalism, however, has had a high price. The economic productivity of the rural cultivator has not risen; it can be argued
433 convincingly that poor land use, erosion, and population growth
311 have meant lower levels of consumption for the common people in
161 1966 than obtained a hundred years or more ago. The rural masses,
565 though overwhelmingly consisting of landholders, have been unable
-178 to break out of a stagnation that is economic as well as cultural. Such
-175 stasis has been based to some extent on the limited responsiveness of the rural folk to outside stimulus. But also important in maintaining
114 the past is the national institutional system that took on its character-
511 istic shape after 1804, and under which the rural masses still live. That system, the origins of which Leyburn has examined and assessed with such care, is controlled, as we have seen, by a numerically small segment of the national population that is markedly distinct from the yeomanry itself.

-565 The nature and internal differentiation of the elite needs much more study, though it seems clear already that it is by no means a single solidary class embracing all but the yeomen. Whatever the structure of the elite, the relationship between the yeomen on the one hand and the real holders of power on the other must be understood if one is to understand Haiti. The yeoman is defined in terms of the elite; he is dependent upon it and subject to it. This is what is meant when it is said that the yeomanry, like the elite, forms only a part-society. Yet without the yeomen, there would be no elite. The elite live by controlling and taxing the rural masses, and find their sustenance and their power in rural productivity. Elite and yeomen, then, are bound together in unequal but interdependent relationships in Haiti as they are in other less developed societies of a similar kind. In such cases, the political role of the yeomanry is usually minor, and few opportunities may arise for the expansion of its political strength.

565 If the yeomanry fails to increase its productivity in ways that enable it
-433 to control more of its own surpluses, its role in affecting national po-
● 664 litical decisions may grow narrower rather than wider, and this om-
642 nious possibility has become a worldwide phenomenon. It becomes more intensified wherever industry and trade grow, unaccompanied by parallel growth in yeoman productivity or in new and more widely representative national institutions.

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That the separateness of yeomanry and elite had visible and sociologically important expression in physical type in Haiti was a clear consequence of the history of that country. But the traditional preponderant light skins at the top of the structure and the preponderant darkness at its base are less important than the domination of the total structure, and of the institutional means for changing it, by a mere fraction of the national population. It is the *power* of the elite which has mattered through time; its physical appearance has been only a historically derived expression of that power. Such a balance of politically weak masses against numerically sparse power holders is common, perhaps particularly in the "less developed world"; but each such case has certain special characteristics. Haiti's special nature is not simply in its being a yeoman country, and one in which a small group dominates the mass. As a rural, agrarian, unindustrialized, politically sovereign, and quasi-capitalistic country, Haiti shares much with other lands; but in each regard its own particularity needs to be assessed.

The rurality of Haiti is extreme, not simply because there are no concentrations of population in excess of 25,000 except for Port-au-Prince and Cap Haïtien but also because towns of intermediate size are few in number, and the urban concentrations in the country's two cities are substantially of relatively recent rural origin. Port-au-Prince dominates the Republic in all of its economic, political, and social activities. Furthermore, the rural towns have been losing to the capital, not gaining from it. Until the United States occupation, the larger towns of the coast, such as Jérémie, Jacmel, and St. Marc, were united economically with each other, and to some extent with the capital, by a lively coastwise shipping system, and the inland towns were tributary to those of the coast. The growth of inland transport during the occupation strengthened the interior towns while coastwise shipping declined, but the capital grew even more important as the sole economic center of the Republic. Since the 1940s, the rapid deterioration of the road system has left both inland and coastal towns enfeebled; only Port-au-Prince has remained strong.

The dominion of Port-au-Prince is firm, and there is no focus of power in the countryside that can counteract it. Those few foreign enterprises in Haiti that base themselves outside the capital city use local port facilities (e.g. Miragoâne for Reynolds Aluminum, Cap Haïtien for the sisal plantations of the north) and do not affect the development of the interior transport.

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most important of Haitian upheavals. Since its effects were to be felt for the next seventy years in the extinction of representative government and the eclipse of the élite as political rulers, it is worthy of special attention. Paradoxically, it was a revolution fomented by the élite themselves. Its background and outcome reveal the power in word, and the impotence in deed, of this group by 1843.

The constitution of 1816, devised by Pétion's henchmen, had granted the president initiative in all laws except those concerning taxation. After the agreement of 1825 with France,[6] however, Boyer, hard pressed by the need of paying the indemnity each year, began to restrict the number of officials, diminish their salaries, and veto all projects favorable to the development of public instruction and improvement which might cause further expenditure. By temperament he was an autocrat.[7] Every valuable measure must come from him alone; whatever another person proposed he would find a thousand reasons to discard. Sarcastic and vain, he did not know how to smooth ruffled feelings or make conflicting groups reconcile their differences. His personal weaknesses of character alienated the sympathies of many once-devoted officials.

During his long presidency Boyer also systematically ignored the younger generation, men who admired the efforts of Pétion, ardent reformers who wished to devote their energies to the improvement of Haiti. The military career had no attraction for them: the higher ranks, alone bringing sufficient salary for a congenial way of life, were too few and one could achieve them only with difficulty, for since 1825 advancement had been submitted to rigorous rules. On the other hand, the paths of administration were severely guarded by those admirable great functionaries left over from the government of Pétion—men like Inginac and Imbert. But age had slowed their activity, and still Boyer kept them on. The younger generation mocked this "gerontocracy" and supported the parliamentary opposition.

The youth of the élite class continued to go to France for their education, returning to Haiti to take part in the lively political discussions which made one of their chief occupations. During the first decade of Boyer's administration they generally supported him, for

6. By which France recognized the independence of Haiti in return for the payment of a large annual indemnity.

7. "In everything, he wishes to dominate," Pétion had said of him.

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175 665 664 871

he seemed to be leading the country to progressive action; about 1830, however, a group better educated and more ambitious than their predecessors arose. Nourished on ideas acquired in France, they were shocked on their return by the miseries and governmental inaction which prevailed in Haiti. True, when Boyer pressed them to suggest constructive measures of reform they had little to suggest. Like many other critics they were better at tearing down than at building up.

175 642 204 208 665

By the constitution of 1816 they had the right of free speech and press, and made use of it to publish journals of criticism—*Le Phare*, *Le Télégraphe*, *La Feuille de Commerce*. Their sustained criticism kept alive the parliamentary opposition and gave it a focus; they were at least partially responsible for the Revolution of 1843. In spite of their diatribes, Boyer did not suppress these newspapers. If he had done so it is possible the Revolution might have come sooner. Not every dictator-president would permit such boldness as the following paragraph which appeared in 1843 in *Le Patriote*, an adversary of Boyer's own journal *Le Temps*:

> Let one look well at the things which are happening among us and then say whether, considering our first steps along the path, our progress has not been constantly slowed up now for some time, and whether this does not lead to a state of things in our country in which the most vital part of our civilization is struck by an immobility, almost a paralysis. Haiti is stationary, is retrograde: we need no other proof of it than this frightful uncertainty about the future which so deeply disturbs all serious minds and sincere patriots.

175 665 646 643 664

In 1838 Hérard Dumesle, president of the Chamber and a leader of the opposition, drew up and secured the passage of an "Address to the President of the Republic," which expressed certain just ideas of progress and pointed out that failure to achieve it was due to the mistakes of the administration. It was a bitterly critical and sometimes passionate document. Boyer was intensely angry and proceeded to violate the constitution: relying on the majority always at his disposal in the Chamber, he excluded from among the deputies those most hostile to his government.[8] But at the election of 1842 the communes of Les Cayes, Aquin, and Jérémie reëlected the expelled representatives, so confirming their criticism of the President.

8. Hérard Dumesle, Laudun, Lartigue, and David Saint-Preux.

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When the Chamber of 1842 assembled Boyer once more forced the elimination of these men and several of their political friends.[9] The majority in the Chamber was so agitated over this expulsion that only twenty-eight out of seventy-two deputies thereafter appeared at any session. A dozen communes, among them the most important in the country (Port-au-Prince, Les Cayes, Gonaïves, Santo Domingo), had no representation. The deputies of the South avenged themselves by instituting a series of "patriotic banquets." At the plantations of adversaries of the government dinners were given for dozens of guests; the meals were followed by vibrant speeches, full of criticisms of the government. Thanks to the talent of these orators, the opposition likewise gradually filtered its way into the mass of the people, slowly but implacably undermining Boyer's government.

The President also had bad luck to contend with. During his presidency many catastrophies saddened the country. The arsenal blew up in 1827, burning the state warehouses and causing a loss of 5,000,000 piastres. A cyclone in 1831 desolated the South. Fires in 1832 and 1843 practically wiped out Port-au-Prince. An earthquake in 1842 shook the whole island, destroyed Santiago and Port-de-Paix, and transformed Cap-Haïtien into a mass of ruins; the fire which broke out in consequence was accompanied by pillaging which went on for several days. The parliamentary opposition to Boyer made use of these natural calamities to sharpen displeasure at the government.

In August, 1842, a secret association, The Society of the Rights of Man and of Citizen, was formed at Les Cayes to exploit this discontent and prepare the fall of Boyer. It circulated clandestinely throughout the South the ringing Manifesto by Praslin, a résumé of the charges of the opposition which was soon covered with signatures. When adherents of the society were numerous enough, an executive committee was formed with the commandant Rivière Hérard as president. At the end of January, 1843, an uprising occurred on the Praslin plantation.[10] General Borgella, head of the department of the South, proved irresolute; the insurrection, fostered by this indecision, spread rapidly among the troops, even generals joining in. By Febru-

9. The most important of the excluded deputies were Dupuy Lespinasse, Covin Aîné, Dominique, Benoît, Ponthieux, Dorsainville Dessaux.
10. At Torbeck, in the department of the South.

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was well enough, but all upper-class landlords wanted the privilege of living in leisure on an income derived from the menial labor of black workers. Fraternity was a principle ridiculous to a group whose never-ceasing struggle was to confirm the separation of castes. The term "Liberal," then, was borrowed not from the revolutionary documents of the late eighteenth century, but from the parliamentary parties of the nineteenth—those who saw more opportunity for themselves and their group if the power of tyrants and kings could be curbed by legislatures. The idea was particularly congenial to the Haitian intelligentsia for the simple reason that the powerful rulers of Haiti, past and present, were Negroes who did not share the aims and ideals of the social upper class.[12]

By holding such "liberal" views, the mulatto élite saw their one opportunity not only for curbing the strong men among the Negroes who again and again tried to rule Haiti as if it were a native African state and themselves the supreme chieftains, but also for indulging their own special penchants. A Senate filled with élite politicians suited the talents of the educated aristocrats. They liked constitutions and codes; the law was their favorite profession; they were adepts at drawing neat distinctions between this and that in an academic issue; polished oratory, skilful argument, fluent speech were knacks peculiar to them by temperament, position, education. Boyer had been the beau-ideal of the academic "liberals," with his talkative Senate, his complete set of Codes and national system of courts; the mid-century party members came to realize what they had lost by driving him out.

Every time the Nationalists came to power the colored élite suffered. Under Dessalines they lost greatly in property and position; Christophe had hated and hounded them; Soulouque put many of their leaders to death. The only monarchs Haiti ever had were blacks, and the two most tyrannical presidents in the first seventy-five years after independence were Nationalists (Pierrot, 1845–46, and Domingue, 1874–76).

The experience of the Liberal presidents with parliamentary institutions was not entirely a happy one, however. Pétion and Boyer had

12. It must be recalled that no parliaments of England, France, or the United States in the early nineteenth century had true democratic representation. Property qualifications for voting, rotten boroughs, and the persistence of privilege secured that only the "classes" should have full representation, and so rule the masses.

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industry, in the processing of essential oils, in extractive operations (bauxite, copper), and in the manufacture of a few essential commodities. The official attitude toward private investment, even by foreigners, was unusually benign; and coffee, the big export crop, enjoyed a boom. Again, however, little effect could be seen in the basic economic structure. By 1956–57, when the Magloire regime was toppled, the era of apparent prosperity had come to an end.

Magloire's tenure ended as had his predecessor's; after a vain attempt to prolong his regime by forcing through new laws, he was brought down by the army and was succeeded by a series of juntas. The politics of the brief interregnum preceding the accession of François Duvalier was complicated by the rival claims of four presidential aspirants: Clément Jumelle, Daniel Fignolé, Louis Déjoie, and François Duvalier. These four men represented significantly different trends in Haitian thinking and were supported by different social groups. Jumelle, although regarded as the spiritual inheritor of the Magloire administration, won the support of many Haitian intellectuals; his appeal was partly grounded in his experience as finance minister in the Magloire cabinet, but the scandalous graft of the Magloire administration worked against him. Fignolé, too, had been a cabinet minister, but his antecedents and political philosophy differed sharply from Jumelle's. An eloquent, intense man of rural lower-class origins, Fignolé was regarded by many as a dangerous demagogue. His support came largely from the poorer urban classes, and his reputation as a union leader and as a "self-made" former minister of education gave him special strength among urban groups. Déjoie, considered to be the candidate of most of the business community and of the elite, was a highly successful agronomist and businessman who had done much to build rural industry; it is also generally believed that Déjoie was the "unofficial candidate" of the United States. Duvalier, trained as a doctor of medicine and for long an enthusiastic amateur ethnologist, had been a political enemy of the Magloire regime and, as a former minister in the Estimé cabinet, saw himself as the ideological descendant of Estimé. Duvalier appears eventually to have become the army's choice, ostensibly because he was considered "manageable"; at any rate, it was Duvalier who finally emerged as president, ending the uneasy interim which followed Magloire's ejection.*

* Probably the most penetrating analysis of Haitian politics of the time is that provided by Maugat, 1964, to which this interpretation owes much.

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to his demands for revision and for his selection as president for life, retained the constitution they had written and chose Pétion president in his stead, the rupture was instant and complete.

Dictator as against restricted president, strong man as against class or group rule, Negro against mulatto, army against civil government, executive against legislature, North against South—these are the phases of the subsequent dichotomy in Haitian politics.

A good case can easily be made for the advocates of force in Haitian government, particularly in its early days. For years the majority of men had lost the habit of steady work on the land; a strong hand was needed to reëstablish in the countryside that economic order without which liberty shrivels. The people had become accustomed to taking orders from their military leaders, and these from their commanding officer. Those, moreover, were times of crisis, when France might suddenly descend again upon her former colony: few crises can be dealt with by debating societies. Looking back on the course of Haitian history, one may point out also that the country prospered under the dictatorships of Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe as it never did under the limited presidencies.[4]

In 1806, therefore, the aristocratic party got its wish, although only at the price of splitting the country in two. They established a government with a president of their own and a Senate filled with their representatives. The earliest legislation naturally enough favored their own landholding group. When prosperity did not result, Pétion began to recommend to the Senate a division of the land. More and more, although the representative form was preserved, Pétion ruled as a dictator. He was mild enough not to arouse antagonism; as is always the case when freedom of speech is curbed and summary legislation required, the plea of crisis was used to justify extraordinary measures.

The legislative party was firmly in the saddle by 1820 when Boyer reunited North and South, and shared his power with the Senate.

4. The argument for dictatorship is familiar to the modern world. A defense of "totalitarianism," published in 1816 by authority of Christophe (then King Henry I), is amazingly like certain European utterances of the nineteen-thirties: "The King has the sweet satisfaction of seeing that the cultivators [who were forced to work on the land whether they wanted to or not], being everywhere regularly paid [though the sum might be tiny], are praising the freedom they enjoy." And again: "Hayti chose a kingdom in order to shun forever that chaos, that confusion and perpetual clashing, which result from those monstrous associations known under the name of *popular bodies*." Anon., *Haytian Papers* (1816), pp. 109, 113.

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The constitution of 1816, devised by Pétion's henchmen, had granted the president initiative in all laws except those concerning taxation. After the agreement of 1825 with France,[6] however, Boyer, hard pressed by the need of paying the indemnity each year, began to restrict the number of officials, diminish their salaries, and veto all projects favorable to the development of public instruction and improvement which might cause further expenditure. By temperament he was an autocrat.[7] Every valuable measure must come from him alone; whatever another person proposed he would find a thousand reasons to discard. Sarcastic and vain, he did not know how to smooth ruffled feelings or make conflicting groups reconcile their differences. His personal weaknesses of character alienated the sympathies of many once-devoted officials.

During his long presidency Boyer also systematically ignored the younger generation, men who admired the efforts of Pétion, ardent reformers who wished to devote their energies to the improvement of Haiti. The military career had no attraction for them: the higher ranks, alone bringing sufficient salary for a congenial way of life, were too few and one could achieve them only with difficulty, for since 1825 advancement had been submitted to rigorous rules. On the other hand, the paths of administration were severely guarded by those admirable great functionaries left over from the government of Pétion—men like Inginac and Imbert. But age had slowed their activity, and still Boyer kept them on. The younger generation mocked this "gerontocracy" and supported the parliamentary opposition.

The youth of the élite class continued to go to France for their education, returning to Haiti to take part in the lively political discussions which made one of their chief occupations. During the first decade of Boyer's administration they generally supported him, for

6. By which France recognized the independence of Haiti in return for the payment of a large annual indemnity.

7. "In everything, he wishes to dominate," Pétion had said of him.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 he seemed to be leading the country to progressive action; about
●665 1830, however, a group better educated and more ambitious than
664 their predecessors arose. Nourished on ideas acquired in France, they
871 were shocked on their return by the miseries and governmental inaction which prevailed in Haiti. True, when Boyer pressed them to suggest constructive measures of reform they had little to suggest. Like many other critics they were better at tearing down than at building up.

175 By the constitution of 1816 they had the right of free speech and
642 press, and made use of it to publish journals of criticism—*Le Phare*,
204 *Le Télégraphe*, *La Feuille de Commerce*. Their sustained criticism kept
208 alive the parliamentary opposition and gave it a focus; they were at
665 least partially responsible for the Revolution of 1843. In spite of their diatribes, Boyer did not suppress these newspapers. If he had done so it is possible the Revolution might have come sooner. Not every dictator-president would permit such boldness as the following paragraph which appeared in 1843 in *Le Patriote*, an adversary of Boyer's own journal *Le Temps*:

> Let one look well at the things which are happening among us and then say whether, considering our first steps along the path, our progress has not been constantly slowed up now for some time, and whether this does not lead to a state of things in our country in which the most vital part of our civilization is struck by an immobility, almost a paralysis. Haiti is stationary, is retrograde: we need no other proof of it than this frightful uncertainty about the future which so deeply disturbs all serious minds and sincere patriots.

175 In 1838 Hérard Dumesle, president of the Chamber and a leader of
665 the opposition, drew up and secured the passage of an "Address to
646 the President of the Republic," which expressed certain just ideas of
643 progress and pointed out that failure to achieve it was due to the
664 mistakes of the administration. It was a bitterly critical and sometimes passionate document. Boyer was intensely angry and proceeded to violate the constitution: relying on the majority always at his disposal in the Chamber, he excluded from among the deputies those most hostile to his government.[8] But at the election of 1842 the communes of Les Cayes, Aquin, and Jérémie reëlected the expelled representatives, so confirming their criticism of the President.

8. Hérard Dumesle, Loudun, Lerigne, and David Saint-Preux.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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When the Chamber of 1842 assembled Boyer once more forced the elimination of these men and several of their political friends.[9] The majority in the Chamber was so agitated over this expulsion that only twenty-eight out of seventy-two deputies thereafter appeared at any session. A dozen communes, among them the most important in the country (Port-au-Prince, Les Cayes, Gonaïves, Santo Domingo), had no representation. The deputies of the South avenged themselves by instituting a series of "patriotic banquets." At the plantations of adversaries of the government dinners were given for dozens of guests; the meals were followed by vibrant speeches, full of criticisms of the government. Thanks to the talent of these orators, the opposition likewise gradually filtered its way into the mass of the people, slowly but implacably undermining Boyer's government.

The President also had bad luck to contend with. During his presidency many catastrophies saddened the country. The arsenal blew up in 1827, burning the state warehouses and causing a loss of 5,000,000 piastres. A cyclone in 1831 desolated the South. Fires in 1832 and 1843 practically wiped out Port-au-Prince. An earthquake in 1842 shook the whole island, destroyed Santiago and Port-de-Paix, and transformed Cap-Haïtien into a mass of ruins; the fire which broke out in consequence was accompanied by pillaging which went on for several days. The parliamentary opposition to Boyer made use of these natural calamities to sharpen displeasure at the government.

In August, 1842, a secret association, The Society of the Rights of Man and of Citizen, was formed at Les Cayes to exploit this discontent and prepare the fall of Boyer. It circulated clandestinely throughout the South the ringing Manifesto by Praslin, a résumé of the charges of the opposition which was soon covered with signatures. When adherents of the society were numerous enough, an executive committee was formed with the commandant Rivière Hérard as president. At the end of January, 1843, an uprising occurred on the Praslin plantation.[10] General Borgella, head of the department of the South, proved irresolute; the insurrection, fostered by this indecision, spread rapidly among the troops, even generals joining in. By Febru-

9. The most important of the excluded deputies were Dumai Lespinasse, Covin Aîné, Dominique, Benoît, Pontheieux, Dessainville Dautant.
10. At Torbeck, in the department of the South.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 669 [643] [159]

ary, 1843, Boyer realized that it was futile to oppose the revolutionaries and departed for exile, going by way of Jamaica to Paris.

Now came the test of the revolutionary leaders.[11] The state was in their hands; their own representative, Rivière Hérard, was the new president. They proceeded to concoct a ridiculously naïve constitution which by granting a popular vote alienated large bodies of their mulatto support; to insult the black army leaders; and to allow the defeat of Haitian forces by Dominican revolutionaries, thus losing two thirds of the island's area. Every act weakened the party favoring representative government. Within a year Rivière was ousted and a black general was ruling Haiti with a rod of iron. The Revolution of 1843 from which so much was expected had by its very success ruined the parliamentarians, for with power in their hands they showed themselves utterly inept.

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A succession of black generals now came to the presidency. When Faustin Soulouque became president in 1847, the fourth Negro within four years, and made himself emperor two years later, Haiti found herself once more back at the strong-man principle. The élite were out of office, relegated to inferiority in all phases of political life.

175 665 565

In the middle of the nineteenth century the groups upholding the conflicting principles in politics became organized political parties. Those favoring parliamentary rule called themselves Liberals; those believing in the sole rule of a strong dictator were called Nationalists. But by no stretch of the imagination could the Liberal party be considered democratic. The noble principles expressed in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the American Declaration of Independence were uncongenial to Haiti. One of the prime tenets of the Liberals, indeed, was that men were not created equal; rather that certain men (the élite) were clearly the superiors of others. Liberty

[175] [669]

11. The revolution was almost wholly an affair of the élite caste. The mulatto Boyer was deposed, and the mulatto Rivière Hérard took his place. If anyone thought of the peasants, it was only to use them to manipulate and manoeuvre the "outs" into office. Boyer's secretary-general, deposed along with the President, appealed to his countrymen against their accusation of treason against him, saying "My last wishes will be for the prosperity of Haiti and the regeneration of the African caste, to which I have consecrated myself wholeheartedly for forty years, without ever thinking of my own interests." (Joseph Balthasar Inginac, *Message à ses compatriotes, et principalement à ceux qui ont dirigé les affaires populaires de la république depuis la fin de janvier dernier* [Port-au-Prince, March 18, 1843], p. 6). Yet if these are more than hopeful words, they refer only to the distribution of the land which made peasants of the "African caste," and to Inginac's pamphlets on how to raise coffee and other products—which none of the peasants could read.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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was well enough, but all upper-class landlords wanted the privilege of living in leisure on an income derived from the menial labor of black workers. Fraternity was a principle ridiculous to a group whose never-ceasing struggle was to confirm the separation of castes. The term "Liberal," then, was borrowed not from the revolutionary documents of the late eighteenth century, but from the parliamentary parties of the nineteenth—those who saw more opportunity for themselves and their group if the power of tyrants and kings could be curbed by legislatures. The idea was particularly congenial to the Haitian intelligentsia for the simple reason that the powerful rulers of Haiti, past and present, were Negroes who did not share the aims and ideals of the social upper class.[12]

By holding such "liberal" views, the mulatto élite saw their one opportunity not only for curbing the strong men among the Negroes who again and again tried to rule Haiti as if it were a native African state and themselves the supreme chieftains, but also for indulging their own special penchants. A Senate filled with élite politicians suited the talents of the educated aristocrats. They liked constitutions and codes; the law was their favorite profession; they were adepts at drawing neat distinctions between this and that in an academic issue; polished oratory, skilful argument, fluent speech were knacks peculiar to them by temperament, position, education. Boyer had been the beau-ideal of the academic "liberals," with his talkative Senate, his complete set of Codes and national system of courts; the mid-century party members came to realize what they had lost by driving him out.

Every time the Nationalists came to power the colored élite suffered. Under Dessalines they lost greatly in property and position; Christophe had hated and hounded them; Soulouque put many of their leaders to death. The only monarchs Haiti ever had were blacks, and the two most tyrannical presidents in the first seventy-five years after independence were Nationalists (Pierrot, 1845–46, and Domingue, 1874–76).

The experience of the Liberal presidents with parliamentary institutions was not entirely a happy one, however. Pétion and Boyer had

12. It must be recalled that no parliaments of England, France, or the United States in the early nineteenth century had true democratic representation. Property qualifications for voting, rotten boroughs, and the persistence of privilege assured that only the "classes" should have full representation, and so rule the masses.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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175 suavity enough to rule constitutionally with a Senate which, since
643 class interests were being served by the executive, did not curb their
646 virtual dictatorships. Later presidents had more difficulty. Geffrard,
642 for example, elected as a Liberal after the fall of Soulouque's grim empire, had made parliamentary government a battle cry of his campaign. In office, however, he was continually at loggerheads
[669] with his Senate, until he exercised his presidential privilege of dissolving it; in the end a revolution overthrew the Liberal parliamentarian because he had become a dictator. So with his successor Salnave (1867–69), likewise a Liberal, who almost immediately upon inauguration found it impossible to work with such a group of talkers. So once more with Nissage-Saget (1870–74), who followed Salnave: a professed believer in legislative responsibility, he refused to yield to the legislature on any important matter. A black Nationalist succeeded for two years, ruling despotically. Then came the last of the Liberal presidents, Boisrond-Canal (1876–79). This man was apparently determined to allow his legislature its full constitutional rights. As a result Haiti had more talk in the capital, and less action, than in almost any régime up to that time; then, as Montague says, "convinced that the constitutional régime was a failure, Haiti's most scrupulous president resigned in disgust."[13]

175 The Liberal party virtually disappeared from the scene in 1883,
● 665 after two abortive coups by their leader of the moment, Boyer
669 Bazelais. The first occurred in 1879 when the retiring President,
[666] Boisrond-Canal, gave Haiti one of her very rare honest elections, resulting in the choice of the Nationalist candidate Salomon. Bazelais and his men forsook their professed principles, rising in arms to seize power. They were suppressed. Four years later when the moment again seemed auspicious Bazelais led another revolution, which the President so effectively crushed that the leader himself was killed. The leaderless Liberals were no longer effective competitors in presidential politics. From that time until the American Occupation, the élite were out of power. One president only during those thirty-five years was a mulatto: Tancrède Auguste, one of the weakest rulers in Haitian history. He died, presumably poisoned, after eight months of office.

400 The era from 1883 to 1915 was Haiti's worst, politically. Revo-

13. Ludwell L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938* (Durham, 1940), p. 18.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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A revolution directed by a general of real political sense, likely to involve an appeal to foreign powers. Haiti being almost roadless, ships were important for moving troops and blockading seaports. Many a chieftain has purchased six or eight ships abroad, and with this "navy" won his fight. Financial intrigue was frequent. By borrowing money from France, Germany, or England, with the promise to reshape Haitian financial policy to the benefit of the creditor country, several revolutionaries have secured funds for arms and the necessary soldiers to effect a coup. Sooner or later also one might expect to see the Môle Saint Nicolas, which guards the Windward Passage pathway between Cuba and Haiti, come into the picture. Cession of the Môle has frequently been held out as bait for foreign support, but popular opposition to white ownership of any Haitian land has always stopped actual cession. When Haiti's debt to Germany was due, she borrowed from France to pay it, and then later borrowed from the United States to pay France. All such appeals to foreign powers have merely drawn attention to the defenseless position of the country; many a successful revolutionary chief has lived to regret his appeal for aid.[19]

175 669 648 457 [441] [505]

The one time between 1804 and 1915 when political opinion was vocal and truly significant was in the latter years of Boyer's administration. Then it took pains to attack specific evils with steady persistence, even though the cures suggested were vague. Yet after the successful elimination of Boyer, politicians who had worked so brilliantly in the opposition showed themselves even more incapable. Political thought, at a low ebb for the next forty years, revived only when, after 1883, the Liberals were eliminated from politics. Their complete defeat seems to have given élite thinkers time for sober reflection upon the plight of their country. Before 1843 the critics had been in a position to make their words effective; after 1883 they wrote—soberly, brilliantly, persuasively—but their books and pamphlets were read only by a small group of fellow aristocrats who already thought as they did, or disagreed with them in print. Political homilies made no impression upon the minds of the peasants left uneducated by all the élite presidents of Haiti.

175 665 208

In the crucial days of the American Occupation, once again political debate rose to brilliant heights. The rude shock of seeing foreign [648]

19. See, on this whole subject of Haiti's foreign relations, an excellent chapter in Montague, op. cit., chap. IX.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 whites patrolling the streets seems to have given reality to criticism
665 which before then would have been academic. The élite were back
208 again in the political forum. Unreflecting patriotism urged the
648 immediate withdrawal of the Marines, but a considerable number of the legislature saw that it would be years before they left. The problem, then, they saw variously: some wished to be eloquent spokesmen for the patriotic anti-whites and did their best to embarrass the Occupation; some, feeling that the Americans were benefiting the country, tried to make things move smoothly; while others, seeing a fertile field for gain, tried to ingratiate themselves with the American authorities.

175 The twenty years between 1915 and 1934 heard many eloquent,
643 impassioned speeches, not all of them coming to the same conclu-
642 sions. The élite were divided in most issues raised by the Occupation,
648 so that the old neat dichotomy between élite and army no longer
662 prevailed. The President, Dartiguenave (1915–22), was for the first time since 1879 a Southerner and a mulatto; yet in 1922 when he was a candidate for reelection it was Southern élite votes which defeated him. Executive, legislature, and judiciary all had just enough power under the Occupation to make subtle manoeuvres, and all three branches of the government displayed a real genius for the political game. They often succeeded in putting the onus of an unpopular act upon the Americans, and in taking the credit for popular measures with which they had had little to do. They prodded and pricked all the weaknesses in the logic of the American State Department. They forced numerous concessions. If at times they seem to have been overclever, playing the game of politics merely for an opportunity to display their skill, at other times many of them showed a deep understanding of realities which had to be faced.

175 The Occupation, ordered by that high prophet of democracy,
648 Woodrow Wilson, professed its determination to give Haiti her
666 first opportunity to be democratic. Yet the Marines really dictated
642 the choice both of Dartiguenave in 1915 and of Borno in 1922 and 1926. The constitution of 1918 was prepared in Washington; it was submitted to a plebiscite, but the farcical vote—69,337 for and 335 against—was clearly the result of electioneering by the Marines. The presidents of Haiti ruled with executive councils, subject to Ameri-

[P.148]

13. Comments on the Mighty: Political Songs

*533 538 626 178 The African-style song of social criticism has found no worthier subjects than the historic political figures of Haiti. There is no doubt that the African slaves used this art form to express their feelings toward the white masters as they had used it to comment upon the behavior of their own chiefs and fellow tribesmen. The worthy leaders were praised in song; the unworthy were castigated and their sins, failures, and social misdemeanors publicized in folk songs. By the beginning of the [569] nineteenth century, slavery had come to an end in Haiti. The deep democratic sense of human dignity had outlasted the colonial masters and emerged tempered and sharp. The songs of criticism became not *533 538 626 178 only comments upon political figures but campaign propaganda as well. They dwelt upon the accomplishments or faults of the candidates for political office. Friendly songs sought out every virtue, and invented others, in the man or woman being praised. Unfriendly songs lashed ●666 out and lacerated or poked biting fun at the subject, not even sparing his physical deformities.

*533 538 [666] [173] Yet the political songs are more than statements of merit or fault. Cumulatively they are a kind of folk history of Haiti. No political aspirant ever went unsung by his peasant army, or unridiculed by his opponent's followers. The songs the people sang about their heroes and their enemies recall events and details that formal history has forgotten or ignored. The memory of the folk song is powerful and long. Some of the recollections go back more than a century.

175 412 [243] History books tell us that in December, 1843, Major Charles Hérard aîné Rivière was elected to the office of the presidency, and that a new constitution was drawn up by the Constituent Assembly. The new constitution was an accomplishment of the liberal and democratic forces of the nation. It guaranteed certain civil rights to the people. It provided that judges be elected instead of appointed, abolished life terms for

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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From Colonel Déro to Private Diplaro,
They marched with fanfare, a great army of foot soldiers!
He thought that he was king!
He thought that he was king!
He thought that he was king!
The Spaniards chased him, he ran like a dog after fresh carrion!

175 Forty-five years later, in 1888, there was a big political rally in Port-
509 au-Prince. The two presidential candidates were General Séide Télé-
● 666 maque and Déus Légitime. Their supporters clashed near the palace,
686 and Télémaque was killed in an exchange of gunfire. Légitime naturally was accused of having murdered his rival, though his supporters would not believe that he had committed such a crime. Evidence for a trial was entirely lacking, and Déus Légitime became president. But feeling ran
* [533] high, and the followers of Télémaque began to sing:
* [539]

Écoutez chers amis l'histoire de Légitime!
Assassin de Séide, et lui est président!
Écoutez bien l'histoire, le gens du nord marchaient
Sur Port-au-Prince un fois pou' vengé la mort de Séide!
Allez au diable, bandit Déus!
Échappez vous, ingrat Déus!
Si vous perdre le temps, Déus,
Florvil vous fcura fusillé!

Listen my friends to the story of Légitime!
Assassin of Séide, and he is President!
Listen well to the story, the people of the north will march
On Port-au-Prince one day to avenge the death of Séide!
Go to the devil, bandit Déus!
Escape, ingrate Déus!
If you lose time, Déus,
Florvil will have you shot!

Légitime had this possibility clearly in his mind. And the next year,
[669] when Florvil Gélin Hippolyte marched from the north with an army of *cacos* (peasant troops who hired out to political aspirants), Légitime hurriedly boarded a steamer in the harbor and sailed for Jamaica. Séide Télémaque was considered avenged, as the army bugles still bear witness. For now when the bugle plays reveille it is supposed to be saying:

* [539]

Séide Télémaque, Légitime has fled!
Séide Télémaque, Légitime has fled!

175 The new President, Florvil Hippolyte, died in office in 1896. J. N.
643 Leger, a Haitian historian, tells soberly of Hippolyte's end in the following words.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Pétion and Boyer had

175 643 646 642 [669]

suavity enough to rule constitutionally with a Senate which, since class interests were being served by the executive, did not curb their virtual dictatorships. Later presidents had more difficulty. Geffrard, for example, elected as a Liberal after the fall of Soulouque's grim empire, had made parliamentary government a battle cry of his campaign. In office, however, he was continually at loggerheads with his Senate, until he exercised his presidential privilege of dissolving it; in the end a revolution overthrew the Liberal parliamentarian because he had become a dictator. So with his successor Salnave (1867–69), likewise a Liberal, who almost immediately upon inauguration found it impossible to work with such a group of talkers. So once more with Nissage-Saget (1870–74), who followed Salnave: a professed believer in legislative responsibility, he refused to yield to the legislature on any important matter. A black Nationalist succeeded for two years, ruling despotically. Then came the last of the Liberal presidents, Boisrond-Canal (1876–79). This man was apparently determined to allow his legislature its full constitutional rights. As a result Haiti had more talk in the capital, and less action, than in almost any régime up to that time; then, as Montague says, "convinced that the constitutional régime was a failure, Haiti's most scrupulous president resigned in disgust."[13]

175 665 669 [666]

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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can "advice and approval," rather than with the legislature subject to popular control. Even under such restrictions the politically minded found ways of exerting pressure on the Marine authorities. 175 648 666

Out of the darkest days of military subjection by a foreign power came a changed order of politics in the country. The practically unbroken line of dull incompetents who had come into the presidency ended; instead of ignorant army leaders, educated men were once more in office; instead of Northern Negroes, élites of Port-au-Prince; instead of benighted martinets bewildered by world affairs, men who, if not great statesmen, at least had minds capable of understanding Haiti's relation to international economics and politics. 642 175 643

The élite were back in power. In the mind of every friend of Haiti arose the question whether the events between 1879 and 1915 had taught them lessons which would make their return to responsibility productive of great things for the country. Because of the abnormal situation resulting from the Occupation, the world depression, and the briefness of their new ascendancy, one cannot yet speak with assurance. Nevertheless, there are few encouraging signs. Political office is still regarded by most candidates in terms of their own advancement rather than service to Haiti. Very little has been done to extend the base of voting by developing local responsibility and education among the masses. Élite youths still receive a classical education, still disdain manual labor, still cherish the ideal of a graceful life of ease. The president still rules as an autocrat supported by the gendarmerie—substitute for the army of former days. One can see no decrease in social distinctions or in the disdain of the élite for peasant people; on the contrary, there has even been an increase of this feeling because the Occupation (through its Agricultural Service particularly) seemed to open paths of development to the peasants. Social antagonism, not social responsibility, still underlies political life.[20] 175 642 [661] [666] [565] [643] [565]

To every one of these strictures there is a plausible reply. It is no light matter to unsettle the minds of nine tenths of a population by education, to cause an economic revolution by improving agricultural techniques, to admit to political life a people unaccustomed to 178 65

20. Dr. Jean Price-Mars, in *La Vocation de l'élite* (Port-au-Prince, 1919), *passim*, especially pp. 51 ff., urges the élite to accept their responsibilities rather than rest upon the debilitating assurance of their innate superiority. [114] [565]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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3. The unimportance of the legislature. It has made useful patron

646 age for the president to dispense, and has preserved the semblance of
642 republican government; but hardly half a dozen legislative sessions in all Haitian history have contributed seminal ideas in politics or initiated true reforms. How could they, indeed, when the president was consistently a dictator of policy?

666 4. The undemocratic nature of the vote. Senators are chosen by
642 the representatives, and the two groups together have generally elected the president, when he did not come to power by revolution. The only chance people have had to vote has been for local officials and representatives. In these cases, the vote has been limited to the élite and the army, with the president's henchmen counting the ballots. Since the Occupation there have been plebiscites on constitutional changes, the people having the right to vote Yes or No.

692 5. The subservience of the courts to the president. They have been
643 filled with president's men, generally astute enough to consult presi-
642 dential wishes before handing down a decision. Foreign merchants soon learned that they could expect little "justice" from the courts if their own cause conflicted with special Haitian interests. Foreign diplomats likewise learned that in crises the courts could involve the simplest issue in such verbal complexity that months of patience would be necessary to unwind the red tape.

641 6. The pliability of "constitutional rights." Freedom of speech and
661 of the press has been notably lacking, although scurrilous attacks on the administration's enemies have often been permitted. Legislators
642 have been expelled. Graft has flourished. In 1833, for example, two representatives were expelled from the House "for systematically opposing the measures of the executive, and persisting in a demand for a statement of public expenditures." A century later a senator was expelled for almost the same reasons.

701 7. Militarism. Only in this respect is any real change apparent since
178 the American Occupation. The army was always large up to 1915, and so constituted an economic drain as well as a political menace.
642 Generals had great power: they ruled each department and each
669 arrondissement, were subject only to the president, and were at the bottom of every revolutionary movement.[22] Since the Occupation

[162] 22. In 1842, when the population was still less than a million, there were in the dis-
[701] trict governments 9 generals, 63 colonels, 48 lieutenant colonels, 9 captains, 1 lieutenant, and 28 medical officers; and in the standing army 33 colonels, 95 lieutenant colonels, 825 captains, 654 lieutenants, 577 sublieutenants and ensigns, 6,815 noncommissioned officers, and 25 medical officers. The army had 28,000 soldiers and cost about $600,000 a year. See John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 86 ff.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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priations of supplies to the branches of government; the Senate did not initiate legislation. In so far as the Senate checked the president, this check consisted in the body's being in permanent session. A vacation might be voted, but even during this period a resident committee was in the capital, so that attention to presidential actions might always be called by a senator's speeches; and the Senate could reconvene suddenly at will. 646

The Chamber of Representatives, composed of men of twenty-five and over, was chosen every five years by the "electoral colleges" of the communes—men elected by the leading citizens of the commune. No law is effective "whose draft has not been proposed by the executive, discussed and adopted by the representatives, and decreed by the Senate." It might seem that the phrase, "discussed and adopted by the representatives," would give much power to a Chamber in office for five years; actually the Chamber has rarely proved obstinate, and for good reason. At the expiration of the term of the legislators, the president convokes the communal assemblies to choose new deputies or to reëlect old ones; the army "keeps order" at the election, the Electoral College is hand-picked, and so the president's men have generally been chosen. Their pay has been two hundred dollars a month during the sitting, and a dollar a league for traveling expenses. [666] [701]

Pétion's constitution of 1816 evolved a masterpiece of deceptive generosity in stating that there should be "universal suffrage—except for women, criminals, idiots, and menials—by ballot." Although the group of criminals and idiots might be small, women were more than half the population, and "menials" was interpreted to mean not only house servants but also peasants; in other words, there was "universal suffrage" of about three per cent of the population at the outside. The élite and the army were the only potential voters. Since the elections were held under the watchful eye of the soldiers, and the ballots counted by presidential appointees, there was often extraordinary unity of public opinion. 641 [666]

The judicial branch of the national government, as distinct from the juge de paix of the commune and the courts in the important towns, existed in part only on paper. There was generally a provision in the constitution, for example, for a High Court of Justice, which should have jurisdiction in all charges preferred by the legislative bodies against their own members, against the president of the re- 692

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 643 642 66 the land, leaving a trail of misery and death, was an augury of what to expect from a tyrant. They opposed his plan to destroy all coastal towns and move the people inland where, protected by their mountains, they would be immune to foreign attack and foreign ideas. They resented their loss of property by state expropriation, and could not fail to be shocked by the grim exultation of Boisrond-Tonnère: "To draw up the act of independence, we used the skin of a white man for parchment, his skull for an inkstand, his blood for ink, and a bayonet for pen!"[3]

Even without such cogent objections to Dessalines the mulattoes would have opposed his dictatorship, for as intellectuals and as social élite they wanted a real share in the government. For this they had agitated since before 1791, and it would be a grim irony if after fourteen years of intermittent conflict the successful expulsion of whites should be followed by a continued exclusion of mulattoes from the government. It would be a worse irony to throw off the white yoke only to take on a black one. When in 1805 Dessalines made himself emperor they asked for the creation of a nobility, thinking to share the rule with him; but the Emperor's curt "*Moi seul je suis noble*" dashed this hope. Although detailed proof is lacking, it is generally accepted in Haiti that the conspiracies against the Emperor's life began with this intransigent statement.

Here, then, was the issue which in half a dozen varying forms was to split political opinion for decades: rule by a single tyrant vs. rule by the cultured class. It even made two nations of one between the years 1806 and 1820.

175 642 When Dessalines was assassinated, a Constituent Assembly was summoned to draw up a new constitution and select a new ruler. The mulattoes were in control of the Assembly which under Pétion's skilful guidance sat at the mulatto stronghold, Port-au-Prince, and there drew up a constitution assuring the limitation of the president's power by a Senate, and requiring election and reëlection of the [667] president instead of permitting him life tenure. This achieved, the Assembly dutifully elected the black general Christophe president of Haiti. However, belonging as he did to Dessalines' school of thought —unrestricted rule by a strong man—he indignantly refused to be bound by such a constitution; when the Assembly, instead of yielding

3. This statement is cited, with evident distaste, by Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 114.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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to his demands for revision and for his selection as president for life, retained the constitution they had written and chose Pétion president in his stead, the rupture was instant and complete. 175 642 [667]

Dictator as against restricted president, strong man as against class or group rule, Negro against mulatto, army against civil government, executive against legislature, North against South—these are the phases of the subsequent dichotomy in Haitian politics. 175 665

A good case can easily be made for the advocates of force in Haitian government, particularly in its early days. For years the majority of men had lost the habit of steady work on the land; a strong hand was needed to reëstablish in the countryside that economic order without which liberty shrivels. The people had become accustomed to taking orders from their military leaders, and these from their commanding officer. Those, moreover, were times of crisis, when France might suddenly descend again upon her former colony: few crises can be dealt with by debating societies. Looking back on the course of Haitian history, one may point out also that the country prospered under the dictatorships of Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe as it never did under the limited presidencies.[4] 175 642 433 656

In 1806, therefore, the aristocratic party got its wish, although only at the price of splitting the country in two. They established a government with a president of their own and a Senate filled with their representatives. The earliest legislation naturally enough favored their own landholding group. When prosperity did not result, Pétion began to recommend to the Senate a division of the land. More and more, although the representative form was preserved, Pétion ruled as a dictator. He was mild enough not to arouse antagonism; as is always the case when freedom of speech is curbed and summary legislation required, the plea of crisis was used to justify extraordinary measures. 175 642 665 646 643

The legislative party was firmly in the saddle by 1820 when Boyer reunited North and South, and shared his power with the Senate. 175 642 643

4. The argument for dictatorship is familiar to the modern world. A defense of "totalitarianism," published in 1816 by authority of Christophe (then King Henry I), is amusingly like certain European utterances of the nineteen-thirties: "The King has the sweet satisfaction of seeing that the cultivators [who were forced to work on the land whether they wanted to or not], being everywhere regularly paid [though the sum might be tiny], are praising the freedom they enjoy." And again: "Hayti chose a kingdom in order to shun forever that chaos, that confusion and perpetual clashing, which result from those monstrous associations known under the name of *popular bodies*." Anon., *Haytian Papers* (1816), pp. 109, 113. [829]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Levoute's soldiers are stronger than a *jalap*.*
It is with them that Chapuzette gives medicine.
If you want to know how to give the "stomach-hand-nose" †
Ask Oreste and Antoine Simon.

Antoine Simon said before he left
That he would leave a bomb in the middle of the palace.
When it went off he was already in Kingston.
He will pay for laughing at a sovereign people.

In Aux Cayes du Fond, I heard of the Mapou Simon,
In Léogane I heard of the Mapou Dampise
When we arrive there we'll see what will happen.
Bowl covers bowl, ‡ Antoine will turn over on his back.

REFRAIN

Honor to Chapuzette, St. Juste and Delphin,
Ducasse and Corvoisier, long live Cincinnatus.

Two more presidents—Tancrede Auguste and Michele Oreste—divided the next eighteen months between them. Two caco movements to remove Oreste started simultaneously, one under the leadership of Davilmar Théodore, the other under the Zamor brothers, Charles and Oreste. The Zamor cacos first chased Théodore's army into the mountains and then marched on the capital. Oreste Zamor was elected to the presidency on a reform program, which quickly evaporated into thin air. One song describes the arrival of the President's brother Charles and his "Réform" at the gates of Port-au-Prince, where a crowd of enthusiasts had gathered:

Attention la Réform c'est jeunes jens Port-au-Prince,
C'est jeunes jens Port-au-Prince, la Réform viré dos ba yo.
Yo lèvé Mardi bon matin, l'habillé tout en blanc,
L'habillé tout en blanc pou' y'al entré Charles Zamor.
Al entren Port-au-Prince la Réform débordé,
La Réform débordé, la Réform viré dos ba yo.

Hail the Reform! It is the young men of Port-au-Prince,
The young men of Port-au-Prince, and the Reform turns its back on them.
They arose early Tuesday morning, dressed all in white,
They dressed all in white to meet Charles Zamor.
At the gates of Port-au-Prince the Reform reversed itself,
The Reform reversed itself and turned its back on them.

The Zamors and the reform administration held the palace less than nine months before Davilmar Théodore's cacos were marching on the capital singing the song that other presidents had heard.

* A violent purgative.
† That is, upset stomach, hand on the nose.
‡ That is, force replies to force.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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country. The complete enfeeblement of tourism has also led to some migration and to an accompanying decline of services and service "industries" in the capital. These losses have surely hurt Haiti and have damaged its chances for growth as well as its capacity to maintain the health, education, and morale of its people. It is not clear, however, to what extent such changes may have produced a negative political reaction to the Duvalier regime. Urban support for Dr. Duvalier appears to have come from some intellectuals, from some army officers, and from portions of the urban lower classes; but numerically most important were those low-paid but literate and aspiring wage-earners whom the Comhaire-Sylvains (1959) refer to as "Class III" members. These observers have stressed that the Class III group consisted mainly of industrial employees, those engaged in food-processing, hotel services, workshops, and the like. It was this group that the Comhaire-Sylvains credited with the Duvalier victory in 1957, pointing out in addition that "in the small country towns almost all officials, both civil and military, and traders, seemed to belong to this class" (p. 185). If the economic crisis that has gripped Haiti in recent years severely affects the position of this class, the political situation will reflect as much. But the ideology of Class III members—so far as it can be inferred at all—would suggest that one Duvalier may merely be replaced by another. At the same time, the depopulation of those groupings whose members might have led a qualitatively different kind of opposition, during the period of tenure of the United States Marine Corps Mission to Duvalier, may have indefinitely postponed the opportunity for creating a genuinely new political direction.

To state it another way, there are no signs at this time that the regime in power will be pulled down by any organized Haitian opposition. More important, since regimes resting on a narrow popular base have a way of falling without change, there is no indication that within Haiti's present national institutional structure, a genuine opposition to Duvalier-type governments can take shape. This means that even if regime should follow regime in rapid succession, there is little reason to expect that any of them could effect fundamental changes in Haitian society. If such an interpretation is correct, it presupposes an internal equilibrium or stasis so strong that no force for change in half a century has been able to make a politically significant difference.

This pessimistic view is supported by what is known at this time

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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about Haitian society.* It does not, however, take note of the remarkable failure of foreign experts to make any adequate assessment of the potentialities of that society, or of its most-needed changes. Some of the problems of development, remarked on by Leyburn in 1941, have never even been explored adequately: the advisability of primary education in Creole; the need for an effective agricultural extension; the relationship of nutrition to work habits; and the like. Even basic sociological studies of a sort that could provide data for planned change are lacking—"of the process of socialization . . . of the motivating forces, the dominant wishes, the attitudes and social values of the masses . . . of social mobility" (pp. 308–09). Foreign-inspired development projects have been, for the most part, crash projects, designed to satisfy Haitian political goals, rather than economic or social goals. A productive relationship between foreign development agency representatives and government officials has never been achieved, nor have the failures ever been subjected to analysis or reflection. Emphasis has been put on large-scale schemes, rather than on more modest, long-term programs which would require actual cooperation with the rural masses on the local level (cf. Erasmus, 1952; Friedmann, 1955; De Young, 1958). Many—probably most—foreign planners who have worked in Haiti have never even bothered to learn the national language, let alone the fundamentals of the culture of the Haitian people.

In these terms, it is not enough merely to bemoan the feeble institutional structure of Haiti. Some attention, at least, should be given to the striking incapacity of outsiders to deal with that structure creatively. Leyburn's book exacts our respect precisely because its author, unlike most foreign visitors, makes plain that he takes Haiti, and the needs of the Haitian people, seriously.

* Some observers are less pessimistic than the writer. The sons of the elite, many of them educated abroad, elements of a Social Christian progressive movement, and possibly a few "Castro-left" radicals, may eventually coalesce into a successful opposition, it has been argued. The writer, however, remains unconvinced. Structural changes of the sort wrought by the Castro regime in Cuba were predicated on the existence of mass political opposition to Batista-type governments, and on the existence of industrial and rural proletarian sectors organized into large-scale movements. These "preconditions," as I see them, are entirely lacking in Haiti of today.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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At Paris the following May, therefore, the thirty-seven delegates presented themselves. Only six were admitted as deputies. And the colonial skeptics proved correct in their apprehensions: revolutionary France soon became very much interested in the state of affairs in Saint-Domingue.

There had recently been formed in Paris a humanitarian group, considered at the time to be ultra-radical, whose announced purpose was the complete abolition of Negro slavery in all French possessions. Following the principle of demanding much in order to gain something, these *Amis des Noirs* concentrated their most serious efforts on regaining for colored colonial freedmen their former political rights. The recently promulgated "Rights of Man" made it very difficult for the French National Assembly[11] to deny the proposal of the Amis;[12] moreover, at this juncture the colored landlords of Saint-Domingue sent to Paris an offer to make the new French Republic a free gift of one fifth of their wealth on condition of being no longer subject to the creole tyranny of caste.

The strategical blunder of the self-assertive white planters having now become entirely apparent to their deputies in Paris, these left no stone unturned to thwart the objective of the Amis des Noirs. By indefatigable manoeuvring they at least partially succeeded, for the National Assembly passed an ambiguous resolution which, while apparently granting political rights to colored people, nevertheless left the interpretation of the grant to already existing colonial authorities.

In the colony complete confusion reigned when news of the resolution was received. Colored people everywhere joyfully demanded their rights, only to be indignantly refused. The whites, with no intention of yielding an inch, were nevertheless undecided as to a proper course of action to pursue: one group wished to announce the colony's immediate independence from France, offering the familiar argument that only white planters knew how to manage the colony's peculiar affairs; the other group still cautiously counseled inaction and waiting for the storm to blow over. A young mulatto, Ogé, educated in France and encouraged by the Amis des

11. The National Assembly had succeeded the States-General.

12. The Assembly was finding "liberté, égalité, fraternité" as uncomfortable a motto to live up to as Americans were finding their own declaration, in 1776, of belief in the "self-evident" proposition that *all* men are created free and equal.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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[p. 88]

IV

CASTE LINES BECOME PERMANENT

175 178 THE contrast between the golden days of forced labor and the stagnating mediocrity of Boyer's Haiti was as vivid to thinking Haitian aristocrats as it was to foreign whites. Particularly the young "intellectuals" of the 'thirties who knew something of the progress taking place in the rest of the Western World felt that the time had come to stem the wave of economic disintegration at home. In a series of pronouncements they pointed out that the advancement of Haiti had "been constantly slowed up for some time. . . . Haiti is stationary, is retrograde: we need no other proof of it than this frightful uncertainty about the future which so deeply disturbs all serious minds and sincere patriots." One may discount the phrase 175 about "sincere patriots," for peasants were patriots even though ●668 undisturbed by the economic stagnation. The agitation for reform won a wide following among all the élite who cherished a glowing recollection of earlier days.

Leaders of the young men called upon Boyer in 1838 to introduce stronger methods of forced labor; but Boyer, remembering the fate of his Code Rural in which he had tried to do precisely this, could think of no effective way of tinkering again with the economic system. From the young men he received the most contradictory advice as to specific methods. The result of the appeal was therefore merely continued inaction by the government. The agitators, ex- 175 cellent critics if poor reformers, accordingly persisted in their cam- 668 paign, adding new converts to their cause until the movement pro- 669 duced a crisis. Revolution broke out in January 1843 at Torbeck in the South, and rapidly spread toward the capital; within two months 643 Boyer and his faithful secretary-general, Inginac, had departed for exile.[1]

[643] [159] 1. Boyer went first to Jamaica, and then to Paris. In the latter capital King Louis-Philippe gave him an audience and called him "prince." Boyer replied, "Sire, I am no prince. I have merely been the head of a small republic." The King of France thereupon affectionately pressed Boyer's hand, remarking, "When one has governed a million people for twenty-five years, he is raised to the rank of princes." . . . Boyer died in Paris in 1850.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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Political history of the next seventy-two years is a complicated story, of which only enough need be told here to illuminate the evolution of caste and social distinctions. Even a short summary reveals the bewildering confusion. Of the twenty-two heads of state between 1843 and 1915 only one served out his prescribed term of office;[2] three died while serving, one was blown up with his palace, one presumably poisoned, and one hacked to pieces by a mob; one resigned. The other fourteen were deposed by revolution after incumbencies ranging in length from three months to twelve years. 175 643

The Revolution of 1843 brought back into national prominence the whole matter of color and caste. The young revolutionaries, mostly light-skinned, seem to have assumed that their group was permanently in control. With cavalier highhandedness they set about capturing the last stronghold of Negro eminence: the army. They soon found, however, that they had caught a Tartar; their attempt to rule was fatal to them and their clique. 175 669

In the Constitutional Assembly convened to make a new constitution for the country, they professed astonishingly democratic doctrines. Proclaiming that the fault of former governments had been reliance upon military power, they now proposed to make civil power paramount by allowing the common people to vote. Since up to this time the franchise had been strictly limited to army officers and anciens libres, such a radical departure as general suffrage makes no sense unless conceived as an attempt to break the power of the Negro-controlled army, for surely the élite had no confidence in the wisdom of the peasantry. Weight is given to this explanation by the paradoxical action of the revolutionaries in promoting to high army rank some of the strongest mulatto partisans of civil government. 175 668 646 642 641 701

The new constitution was an immediate failure. Most of the colored élite condemned the giving of voting rights to peasants and workers; the army chiefs, generally black and illiterate, some of them aging veterans of 1803, bitterly resented being made subservient to young, inexperienced civil officers; in fact, even the new mulatto president, Rivière-Hérard, had no conception of government other than by military dictatorship. 175 642 641

Not only was the constitution a failure; so was the government of the young revolutionaries. A part of their weakness lay in their 175 643

2. The presidential term varied under different constitutions; some allowed a four-year term with the right of reelection, some six years with no reelection.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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plausible, such as the race prejudice displayed by many individual Marines;[4] the unnecessary slaughter in the suppression of *cacos* (guerrilla) rebellions in the North; the continued holding of offices (and salaries) by Americans too impatient to train Haitians, as by the Agreement of 1915 they were supposed to do; the fostering rather than elimination of military psychology among the people by the presence of armed Marines. 175 648 642

The campaign against the Occupation was generally on the highest level of patriotism, for it threw out one variation after another on the same theme: We Haitians are not being allowed to govern ourselves. Some realists knew that their hurt national pride was accompanied by disappointment that certain salaries were not reaching Haitian pockets, certain prestige of office not redounding to the credit of Haitian men. What if the real reason for opposition were not the openly avowed one: The Marines must go! Order had been restored and government reëstablished. It was patent that any administration which could effect the withdrawal would be immensely popular: it was equally patent that if the Americans left the country, the benefits of their efficiency and material improvement would remain as a tangible boon to Haiti. 175 648 642 668

President Sténio Vincent, elected in 1930 after a campaign in which the Americans did not interfere, began the negotiations with Washington. With President Hoover he made headway toward reforms, but President Roosevelt's attitude was more actively cooperative. In 1934 Vincent had a series of conferences with the President of the United States; the latter, in pursuit of his good-neighbor policy, persuaded the American Senate to order the Occupation at an end and turn over without cost to Haiti many buildings, supplies, and equipment used by the Marines. Vincent personally benefited from the withdrawal of 1934. He called himself Haiti's "second Liberator,"[5] and made the anniversary of the American departure a national holiday. Indirectly the élite also benefited for now, entrenched in office, they could govern without white supervision. The material equipment was there to be enjoyed by the whole people at no further expense to them. 175 648 642 [643] [59] [52] [563]

4. The United States government in the early days had sent Marines from the Southern States to Haiti, on the theory that they would, from long acquaintance with Negroes, know how to "handle" them. This stupid blunder was shortly rectified.
5. Dessalines had, of course, been the first.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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learn the properties of plants, both for healing and for poison. Except for the belief in spiritual beings, this folk knowledge would hardly have been classed as religious, for it was useful in every phase of daily life; the classification is that of the anthropologist, not of the simple black.

If Dahomean beliefs prevailed over others of African origin, it was chiefly because of the numerical preponderance of Dahomeans in the colony, together with the popularity of their religious dances. The Dahomean spirits or gods were Vodun; the dance in which the worshiper sought the inspiration of the spirits was a Vodun dance. Like all but the highly organized religions, this one recognized the validity of other beliefs. Its practitioners were not bigots. No hierarchy existed to keep out new accretions. Imperceptibly these were added to the original basic form: here an Arada spirit, there a Congolese prayer, and in many instances a Catholic saint, until the composite Vodun religion began to take shape.

There is no evidence that during colonial times Vodun was ever considered important by the white ruling class—certainly not as a faith. To most planters the word was the name for a vigorous dance. Judging from Moreau de Saint-Méry's description it was held openly enough, at times being witnessed by the whites as a sort of nocturnal diversion. Moreau knew, as did other whites, that there were "superstitious beliefs" connected with it, yet the offhand use of the word "superstition" was indication enough that the beliefs were not regarded as important. We have seen, however, what profitable use the slaves were able to make of the apparent innocence of their dances. When the idea of revolt began to germinate among them, gathering on each plantation at least once a week they had ample opportunity to hatch their plans. It is known that the campaign for revolt was developed partly under the stimulus of the Negro Boukman, a *houngan* or priest of Vodun. By means of drumbeats, which to the whites merely pounded out the rhythm for dancing but had for centuries been a means of communication at long distance in parts of West Africa, that ripening plot was telegraphed from one plantation to another. Even more important, perhaps, was the unity of feeling made possible, despite all incoherence of tradition and language, by the Vodun background.

The revolt of half a million slaves was a success. This fact has been rather too calmly accepted by historians of Saint-Domingue, who

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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have explained it chiefly by the surprise element of the uprising. But when else in modern history have slaves successfully revolted against their armed masters and become permanently free? Successful revolutions even of people not in bodily slavery have had acknowledged leadership, whereas in Haiti no real leader appeared for the insurgents. Boukman's influence, indeed, at its widest never reached beyond a part of the northern plain; he had about the same range of power as a ward boss in the United States. On the plantations Hallaou, Hyacinthe, Lafortune, and others whose names are unimportant or unknown, Vodun houngans likewise welded slave opinion within their narrow districts. But no single great leader appeared. As the conflict was developed, without plan or unity under the divided and contradictory action of numerous blacks, what held the people together was, negatively, their hatred of the white masters; positively, their Vodun beliefs. Only later in the decade did a true leader, Toussaint L'Ouverture, emerge to consolidate their victory.

As often happens among unsophisticated people convinced of the rightness of their cause, the local Vodun leaders were sure of their own invulnerability through the protection of one or another of the spirits.[8] They convinced their followers as well, to such a degree that when an invulnerable chief fell there were dozens of reasons to explain the unexpected death rather than any disillusion. Usually, failure to follow the rigorous propitiation requirements of the protecting god offered the key to the misfortune. Various ones of them were known to be exacting and troublesome. The leader at Trou-Coffi, Romaine by name, had absorbed enough of the Roman Catholicism in Vodun to feel that the Virgin Mary was his especial patroness.[9] Beyond this specific belief in invulnerability was the general trust that Vodun spirits would lead their devotees to success, would give them a happy issue out of all their distress.

8. A parallel case of belief in invulnerability because of divine protection was that of the North American Indians both at the time of Tecumseh and later in the Sioux outbreaks at the climax of the Ghost-Dance Religion. See James Mooney, *The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890* (Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, 1892–93 [Washington, 1896]), chap. X.

9. The importance of Vodun beliefs in connection with the slave revolt is stressed by Dr. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Vodou et Névrose* (Port-au-Prince, 1931), pp. 33–34. He says of many of the chiefs: "The belief in their invulnerability was not at all the result of calculation, but was a true state of mind, a sort of autosuggestion which explains very well the chronic heroism of certain leaders of the revolution in Saint-Domingue and of the war of independence of 1802–3."

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 178 64 slave system are not likely to assume it again; and the aristocrats, ever intent upon forgetting their African forebears, would certainly not turn to the Dark Continent for political inspiration.

175 642 701 643 Although the revolution had brought to the fore men of military experience and even genius, it had driven out or killed every single person of experience in civil government. The affranchis of the old régime had been denied political rights long before 1791; by 1804 few could have had any memory of active participation in government.[1] Toussaint was dead. The only authority of any significance was military. Consequently the new state was built upon army control and directed by army officers. Dessalines as commander in chief took the title of governor-general, later of emperor, but was in reality a military ruler. Fearful as he was of a new French invasion, he set his generals over the districts, organized his people as an army ready for immediate mobilization, and ruled as dictator.

175 642 This was all the Haitians had as political background: a military dictatorship. The Founding Fathers of Haiti, if so they might be called, had almost nothing to work with, nothing to build upon: neither a Magna Carta of the Blacks, nor any precedent of an independent Negro state anywhere in this white man's world; neither heritage of local responsibility and political debate to sow the seeds of democracy, nor any example of self-government in the American tropics to offer a pattern[2]—many of the known forms of government were a practical impossibility for the Haitians because of their need of continued defense against foreign enemies, their slave heritage, their inexperience in self-government, their complete lack of a middle class.

175 668 Hardly one tenth of the people in any case was capable of giving detailed thought to the form which government should take. The mass of ex-slaves had been fighting only *against* slavery, against the hated white rulers, not *for* democracy or any other abstraction. Their freedom achieved, they would not be the ones to make decisions. [642] All political choices would be made by the generals, by men of property and position, by the few whose persistent ambition made them stand out from the masses.

1. Such participation in French colonial politics would have been before the restrictive laws of 1772.

2. It must be recalled that Haiti was the second free country to be established in the Western Hemisphere, and that Liberia, in Africa, was still far in the future.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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When the Chamber of 1842 assembled Boyer once more forced the elimination of these men and several of their political friends.[9] The majority in the Chamber was so agitated over this expulsion that only twenty-eight out of seventy-two deputies thereafter appeared at any session. A dozen communes, among them the most important in the country (Port-au-Prince, Les Cayes, Gonaïves, Santo Domingo), had no representation. The deputies of the South avenged themselves by instituting a series of "patriotic banquets." At the plantations of adversaries of the government dinners were given for dozens of guests; the meals were followed by vibrant speeches, full of criticisms of the government. Thanks to the talent of these orators, the opposition likewise gradually filtered its way into the mass of the people, slowly but implacably undermining Boyer's government. 175 643 665 646

The President also had bad luck to contend with. During his presidency many catastrophies saddened the country. The arsenal blew up in 1827, burning the state warehouses and causing a loss of 5,000,000 piastres. A cyclone in 1831 desolated the South. Fires in 1832 and 1843 practically wiped out Port-au-Prince. An earthquake in 1842 shook the whole island, destroyed Santiago and Port-de-Paix, and transformed Cap-Haïtien into a mass of ruins; the fire which broke out in consequence was accompanied by pillaging which went on for several days. The parliamentary opposition to Boyer made use of these natural calamities to sharpen displeasure at the government. 175 731 [664]

In August, 1842, a secret association, The Society of the Rights of Man and of Citizen, was formed at Les Cayes to exploit this discontent and prepare the fall of Boyer. It circulated clandestinely throughout the South the ringing Manifesto by Praslin, a résumé of the charges of the opposition which was soon covered with signatures. When adherents of the society were numerous enough, an executive committee was formed with the commandant Rivière Hérard as president. At the end of January, 1843, an uprising occurred on the Praslin plantation.[10] General Borgella, head of the department of the South, proved irresolute; the insurrection, fostered by this indecision, spread rapidly among the troops, even generals joining in. By Febru- 175 668 175 669

9. The most important of the excluded deputies were Dumai Lespinasse, Covin Aîné, Dominique, Benoît, Posthieux, Dorsainville Dautant.
10. At Torbeck, in the department of the South.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

The era from 1883 to 1915 was Haiti's worst, politically. Revo-

lution succeeded revolution; the country sank deep into graft and scandal; foreign powers made Haiti debase herself before them. Some of the élite, backed by foreign merchants resident in the country, went so far as to urge annexation by the United States rather than endure continued disorder in economics and degradation in social life. They felt matters had come to such a pass that only so radical a change could clean the Augean stables. This was the period of a succession of political pamphlets[14] written by élite thinkers to set forth the necessary steps of reform. Every president was a black autocrat, holding power by his control over the masses. If an occasional one was more than mediocre (Hyppolite, for example), his good qualities were sure to be more than offset by the ignorant boors (such as Nord Alexis) who followed him.

175 669 668 648 642 643

True, even the most incompetent of the Negro presidents was obliged to employ a few élite, for literacy was necessary in the foreign office if nowhere else. The aristocrats were impotent, however, for Haitian problems had tremendously increased at the very period when they were losing control of government policy. Reforms were imperative, as every member of the élite knew; but no black president saw the need, or seeing it, had the vaguest idea how to proceed toward effecting them. Beyond the shameful disgrace of Haiti's position in the world of independent nations, the thoughtful could glimpse the anarchy which must inevitably result from continued ineffectiveness.

175 643 645 565 [648]

Reforms were not forthcoming. Rather, anarchy came, bringing international complications in its wake. The American Marines occupied the country. An era was ended.

175 642 648

It had been a strange journey in political ideas from the time of Pétion and Christophe to that of the Occupation. The early leaders seemed to envision triumphs for Haiti in a world of great powers, and to see themselves as men with a mission. After Boyer the vision dimmed. We have Soulouque, whose tinsel empire was mere stage setting for the act of a neighborhood bully; the tyrant Domingue; the senile Nord Alexis; the utterly incompetent fly-by-nights in the decade before the Occupation. Even Geffrard the reformer, prob-

175 643 000

14. Among the most lucid of these were: Démesvar Delorme, *La Misère au sein des richesses* (1873); Edmond Paul, *Les Causes de nos malheurs* (1889); Léonidas Laventure, *Haïti: le danger de la patrie* (1893); Alcius Charmant, *Haïti, vivre-à-ellet* (1905); and Auguste Magloire, *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social* (1909).

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

175 648 Davers. In 1768 and 1769 they were " but tranquil spectators of the troubles caused by the re-establishment of the militia," the local military forces numbering at this time 260 whites and 291 *affranchis*, or free men of color.[3]

175 167 This white population was made up chiefly of those who came directly from France or were born in the colony, but also included were the Acadians, one of the most interesting groups who settled in Mirebalais. Fleeing from Newfoundland, they were brought to Haiti before they were sent to Louisiana, and in the course of this migration left some of their number in the valley. It is recorded that on the 26th day of October 1764, in consequence of " a Memorial presented by the Chamber of Agriculture of Port-au-Prince, which stressed the healthfulness of Mirebalais,"[4] each of a number of these Acadian families was allotted a plot of eight hundred square paces, not far from the town. The ending of this episode, however, was not happy, for, transported into a tropical climate that failed to measure up to the claims made for it, the Acadians paid so heavy a toll that soon all trace of them vanished.

175 569 But facts such as these tell little of the fundamental social and economic conditions of pre-Revolutionary Haiti, where Negro slavery constituted the foundation upon which the whole structure of life was erected. That Mirebalais was no exception to the prevailing economic regime is shown by Moreau de St. Mery's figures for the district, yet what stresses existed between the masters, the free persons of color, and the slaves, no record remains to show. Despite the fact that slaves and free men of color were accepted in the armed militia, the 175 situation was far from tranquil. When, after the French Revo- 567 lution, there were signs that the decree[5] which accorded to the 669 free men of color political rights equal to those of the whites was in danger of being nullified in practice, it was at Mirebalais that the colored men assembled to insist on the enforcement of this order.[6] Together with some slaves they freed, they formed the nucleus of an army " that under the leader-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

ship of a very intelligent mulatto named Bauvais" gained some successes "over the undisciplined forces in Port-au-Prince" and forced the inhabitants of the capital to recognize the power of this group by entering into a definite treaty with them.[7]

There are other indications that life in the valley did not fail to reflect the discontent of the black slaves. Writing in 1830, Mackenzie, who was the first British Consul-General to the Haitian Republic, remarked:

> "It is said by some of the best informed Haitians, that among the mountains that stretch from the neighbourhood of Mirebalais to the coast on the east of Jacmel, there is an extensive association of the descendants of the Maroon negroes, whose independence had been recognised long before the revolution by the then existing government."[8]

It is thus apparent that the institution of *marronage*, whereby runaway slaves established themselves in the mountains, in many instances living for years beyond the reach of capture and free from attack, was known in Mirebalais as it was elsewhere. Mirebalais was also not without contact with the great heroes of Haitian history. Toussaint L'Ouverture conquered and lost the town several times before it became a strategic point "from which his lieutenants, Dessalines and Christophe, menaced Arcahaie and the plain of the Cul-de-Sac."[9]

If but little has been recorded concerning Mirebalais before Haitian independence, even less is known of its later history. Mackenzie, reporting the population of Haiti district by district, gives that of Mirebalais in 1802 as 53,649; but in 1825 as only 16,037.[10] Whether the region included under the term "Mirebalais" differed at the two periods, or whether the hardships resulting from the internal strife that racked Haiti after independence had been gained took a toll of the size suggested by these figures cannot be said. That Mirebalais was an

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

important point in the warfare between the northern Empire of Christophe and the southern Republic of Pétion is well known, since the boundary between the two, never definitely fixed, might be roughly considered as the Artibonite, control of which, as always, depended on also obtaining control of the strategic hills about the town.[11] It is not possible to discover more than approximate figures for the population of Mirebalais at the present time, since no census of the district has been made, and the most recent figure of 51,000 for the commune is derived from the baptismal records in the parish church.[12]

From the earliest years of settlement of the valley, the town has been the center of its life. The government of the commune is located here; here the courts sit; and here the best schools and the only church of the district are found. Yet it is a small town, numbering less then two hundred and fifty houses, and crossed by but three principal thoroughfares stretching north and south, with ten or twelve cross-lanes. The houses on the principal streets, rectangular and small, are built of wood, plastered over with clay, painted, and roofed with sheet iron. On the outskirts of the town the roofing is of straw, or banana-leaf thatch, while the walls themselves are made of twilled wythes. No house lacks its veranda, however small, where people may be seen sitting late of an afternoon and early in the evening, but the life of the women is lived chiefly in the courtyards behind these houses that line the streets, where the cookhouses are found and the storehouses, and where all work is done. The *place,* or town square, lies at the point where the principal route between Port-au-Prince and the Dominican border turns sharply to the east. Consisting of an acre or two of cleared land, it is overgrown with weeds except when, in preparing for festive occasions, the prisoners from the town jail may be seen spending long hours, machetes in hand, cutting the grass, a few blades at a time. North of the square stands the church, a substan-

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

the baptism of their converts was followed by serious lapses from the faith, especially under conditions of stress.[79]

One of the most revolting aspects of the institution of slavery, wherever found, is the cruelty with which the suppression of human individuality is prosecuted. In this the French colony of Santo Domingo was no exception, as the list of more ingenious punishments, aside from the more usual ones such as whipping, which were devised to keep the slaves in line, demonstrates.[80] What is more important here are the defenses the Negroes built up against them. Recourse to suicide was especially common, and though the popularly accepted explanations for this range between the desire of the slave to destroy himself because he knew he was valuable property of his master, and the conviction that suicide was one way of achieving his return to the African homeland,[81] there is no reason to assume that, following African tradition, the belief that the ghost of a helpless slave could through suicide become powerful for evil and thus wreak his vengeance did not also figure.[82] But equally widespread in all the New World were the allied weapons of revolt and escape.

Both in the experience of the individual slaves and in the history of New World slavery this tendency to revolt began early. In the former case, many tales are told of how on the march to the African coast, or in the slave barracoons, or on board the slave-ship, the possibility of a desperate dash for freedom had always to be guarded against.[83] Concerning the latter, it is not generally known how early in the history of Negro slaving revolts did occur. The Negro slave-trade began with shipments of slaves to Haiti in 1510; the first slave uprising in Haiti, in 1522, thus took place only twelve years after the commencement of the traffic.[84] In the New World possessions of Spain eleven other rebellions are recorded between the years 1522 and 1553, of which those of 1533, 1537, and 1548 occurred in Santo Domingo.[85] During the following century two revolts took place, one at Port de Paix in 1679

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

175 and another in 1691. The object of this latter rebellion was
567 to massacre all the whites in the district, but it was discovered
669 before the uprising could be effective, and its leaders were executed. Still another incipient revolt in the region of Cap Français was put down in 1704.[26]

In the main, however, there were too few opportunities for united action on the part of the slaves from any considerable area to permit the idea of a general revolt to germinate and grow into action; such rebellions as occurred in the years that followed were local affairs, and were principally the result of specific abuses. Yet the fear of them was always with
[194] the planters, and of this fear the *vodun* cult, characterized by St. Mery as being potentially "a terrible weapon" in the hands of the leaders of the cult, was the symbol and crystallizing agent.[27] That there was no lack of realization of the danger to the colonists from slave uprisings is made clear in letters of the period written to France; as early as 1685 M. de Cussy, reporting to the Minister of Colonies in Paris, stated: "In the Negroes we possess a formidable domestic enemy," while a hundred years later an officer of the armies of the King who was also a plantation-owner in Haiti expressed the opinion that "a colony of slaves is a city under constant threat of assault; there one walks on barrels of powder."[28]

175 More frequently, however, the expression of protest took
567 the form of *marronage*, of running away to the hills, a phenomenon not restricted to Haiti, since in other regions of the New World, notably Jamaica and Dutch Guiana, the runaways maintained themselves so successfully that they were accorded their independence by formal recognition, as was also done in Haiti in 1784.[29] Figures on the extent to which slaves made off into the mountains tell the measure of their desperation; in 1720 alone, a thousand Negroes gained their freedom in this manner; in 1751, at least 3,500. Some of the leaders of these bands were men of great ability, and the depredations they engaged in caused serious losses to the planters

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

in the regions where they operated. The most renowned was Macandal, a "Guinea" Negro, who was finally apprehended and executed in 1758.[40] His name lives today in Haitian peasant tradition, where folkloristic versions of his exploits as one of the earliest of the liberators are still recounted. The pages in St. Mery which tell how the strength of the bands in the mountains behind Croix-des-Bouquets necessitated a constant augmentation of the militia on duty there, is additional evidence of the success of these runaways. The same author's description of a group operating in the parish of Jacmel, found in 1785 to number among its members men more than fifty years of age who had been born in the freedom of the mountains, shows how long the escaped Negroes were able to maintain themselves without capture.[41]

The very tradition of *marronage* was important. Psychologically, it held out to the slaves a hope, more than ephemeral, of escaping their servitude, and in consequence allowed them to maintain an attitude of mind that kept many of them from becoming a prey to despair. From the point of view of the growth of Haitian culture, moreover, the groups of runaway slaves offered a ready means for the continuation of African traditions and patterns of behavior. Though but few descriptions of the manner of life led by the fugitives in their mountain encampments are to be had, it is apparent that in order to maintain confidence in their own powers of resisting capture and re-enslavement the runaways guarded assiduously all memory of African belief and practice, while even in the material aspects of their existence they tended to revert to aboriginal modes of life. Finally, however, and most important for the future course of Haitian history, was the training of these runaways obtained in the ways of warfare, and the continuation of the warrior tradition among the Negroes. This is one of the reasons why in 1791, when Boukman and his followers stirred the first general slave revolt in the north, the blacks were ready; also when in the course of

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

175 the development of European history the French Revolution
569 sharpened the latent antagonisms between the various classes
669 of whites in the colony, between the whites and the free persons of color, and between masters and slaves, the way had been prepared for the operations of the great military geniuses, Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, through whose leadership the freedom of Haiti was finally achieved.

175 It is not necessary here to give, even in outline, the course of Haitian history during this period of rebellion and afterwards, when Haiti was welded into a single Republic, for this has been often recounted.[48] Nor is it of importance here to continue the well-known political history of the Republic, with its many rebellions, and its wars with the Spanish portion of the island that finally resulted in the formation of the Republic of Santo Domingo; with the brief existence of the "empire" of Faustin I; and with the culmination of this history in what has been called a period of anarchy that brought about the occupation, so recently terminated, of Haiti by the American Marines.[49] Other questions, which concern the social history of independent Haiti, have been given less attention, and only tantalizing hints of their answers appear in the writings of those who have treated of the developing country. How were the impulses toward the mingling of Haitian and French aspects of culture, set in motion during the period of slavery, working out during this time? What influences dominated the scene, once the whites had been finally eliminated? What mechanisms permitted the African traditions brought by the slaves to hold their vitality? It is as through a haze that one glimpses the inner development of Haitian culture after independence; and the glimpses are the dimmer when comparison is made with the many clear and detailed descriptions of the earlier life of the island.

175 It is only by a close reading of the works of such travelers
117 and foreign officials as Hanna, Mackenzie, St. John, and Hazard, that any information of this kind can be obtained. The

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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775 gatory on those who are possessed by *loa* who go unharmed in fire, it is said: " It is the *loa* that go into the fire. The soul is another thing."

All agree that the dead do not possess folk in the manner of the *loa*, as might be expected from the fact that the most important rituals in the cult of the dead are not only dominated by the Church, but carried out by its priest. In the matter of consulting the dead when questions of importance for the family are involved, however, there is no consensus of opinion. The most widespread point of view holds that only those dead whose *loa* have not been removed from their heads can be summoned, and that this is done only to permit them to " go to God," so their souls may be at rest. Otherwise, " when the dead are called, it is a matter of magic, for the dead are never good and one always must fear them." And though a 785 Mait' 'Bitation that is an old, old ancestor may " mount the 775 head " of a member of the family, he would never be specially called and in most cases, if he did come, would be " restrained." On the other hand, it was recounted how during [669] the Caco rebellion the soul of Dessalines was brought into a jar and asked for his counsel. It is said, however, that he was so angered at the consistent defeats sustained by the Haitians that he struck everyone to earth and roundly scolded them for having lost the liberty with which he endowed them, departing without giving the desired advice. And since the spirits of Christophe and Toussaint are believed to be even stronger, no one had sufficient courage to summon them!

765 The immediate nature of the relation between the dead and the living is best seen in the conventions and attitudes surrounding the wearing of mourning, which is required of all children of the deceased, whether " legitimate " or other- [822] wise. Black is worn twelve months for a father, eighteen months for a mother; and half-mourning — black and white — is worn for a sister, brother, cousin, uncle, or aunt. In the country, before full mourning is put on, the black cloth is

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

presidents, and emphatically declared the army to be within and under the law. 175 642

The new President, finding his office without the prerogatives he had expected it to have, openly complained of the restraints imposed on him by the new constitution. He broke campaign promises he had made to the peasants in the south and stirred up antagonisms on every side. Finally, while he was on a military expedition in the Spanish part of the island, revolution broke out at home. His army was beaten by the Dominicans, too, which completely shattered his morale. He fled by ship to Jamaica, the traditional refuge of outgoing Haitian presidents. In memory of his administration the peasants sang: 175 643 669 [648] 175 643 669 533* 539*

Rivière Président gainyain zyeux vairon!
Li dit l'ap piyé l'armé Bélanton!
Piyé lévé trésor!
Piyé lévé trésor!
Piyé lévé trésor!
Yo voyé Lambam depuis Lowinsor!

La Constitution cé trouva Colombe
Quand yo voit pays soufri trop misère!
Li dit yo fait comme Henry!
Li dit yo fait comme Henry!
Li dit yo fait comme Henry!
Pou' fai sang coulé pou' rangé pays!

Colonel Déro soldat Diplaro
Marché fanfaron comme un grand fantin!
Li cré qui li té roi!
Li cré qui li té roi!
Li cré qui li té roi!
'Pagnol chasse li, li couri con chien qui prend frai charogne!

President Rivière was cross-eyed!
He said that he was going to pillage Belanton's army!
Loot for treasure!
Loot for treasure!
Loot for treasure!
They sent everyone from Lowinsor to Lambam!

The Constitution was founded by Columbus
When the country suffered too much misery!
He said he would do like Henry [Christophe]!
He said he would do like Henry!
He said he would do like Henry!
Make blood run to poison the countryside!

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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From Colonel Déro to Private Diplaro,
They marched with fanfare, a great army of foot soldiers!
He thought that he was king!
He thought that he was king!
He thought that he was king!
The Spaniards chased him, he ran like a dog after fresh carrion!

175 Forty-five years later, in 1888, there was a big political rally in Port-
579 au-Prince. The two presidential candidates were General Séide Télé-
666 maque and Déus Légitime. Their supporters clashed near the palace,
626 and Télémaque was killed in an exchange of gunfire. Légitime naturally was accused of having murdered his rival, though his supporters would not believe that he had committed such a crime. Evidence for a trial was entirely lacking, and Déus Légitime became president. But feeling ran
*[533] high, and the followers of Télémaque began to sing:
*[539]

Écoutez chers amis l'histoire de Légitime!
Assassin de Séide, et lui est président!
Écoutez bien l'histoire, le gens du nord marchaient
Sur Port-au-Prince un fois pou' vengé la mort de Séide!
Allez au diable, bandit Déus!
Échappez vous, ingrat Déus!
Si vous perdre le temps, Déus,
Florvil vous feura fusillé!

Listen my friends to the story of Légitime!
Assassin of Séide, and he is President!
Listen well to the story, the people of the north will march
On Port-au-Prince one day to avenge the death of Séide!
Go to the devil, bandit Déus!
Escape, ingrate Déus!
If you lose time, Déus,
Florvil will have you shot!

Légitime had this possibility clearly in his mind. And the next year,
[669] when Florvil Gélin Hippolyte marched from the north with an army of *cacos* (peasant troops who hired out to political aspirants), Légitime hurriedly boarded a steamer in the harbor and sailed for Jamaica. Séide Télémaque was considered avenged, as the army bugles still bear witness. For now when the bugle plays reveille it is supposed to be saying:

*[539]

Séide Télémaque, Légitime has fled!
Séide Télémaque, Légitime has fled!

175, The new President, Florvil Hippolyte, died in office in 1896. J. N.
643 Leger, a Haitian historian, tells soberly of Hippolyte's end in the following words.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Alexis Nord, c'un bon Papa!
Ou pas metté ou pas manyien!
Pinga ou manyien, pinga ou manyien!
Pinga ou manyien Alexis Nord! [Ex. 115]

Alexis Nord, Papa,
It is God who put you there!
Take care of those
Who wish to make trouble for you!

Alexis Nord is a good papa!
You didn't put him there, you can't take him away!
Don't try to remove him, don't try to remove him!
Don't try to remove Alexis Nord!

Nord Alexis remained as president until 1909. He was then more than 175
eighty years old, and he planned to turn the government over to General 643
Jean-Gilles, who would carry on the policies of the administration. But 669
Antoine Simon, an assembly delegate from the south, had other plans.
He marched on Port-au-Prince with an army of three hundred cacos,
who sang: [533]* [539]*

Tonton oh cher, Antoine pas nen betise oh!
L'apprend l'armée du sud, cher,
L'a fai ou marché zigzag!
Débor débor débor!
Nèg' Nord mandé fusillé!
Débor débor débor!
Nég' Nord mandé corigé!

Dear Uncle, Antoine is not joking!
He brings the army of the south, my friend,
He will make you go zigzag.
Débor débor débor! *
Nord's men are asking for gunfire!
Débor débor débor!
Nord's men are asking for a lesson!

After Nord Alexis had vacated the palace and embarked for Jamaica,
Antoine Simon became president. Historians often refer to the period
that followed as the "Epoch of Ephemeral Presidents." Simon was not
in the palace long before a man named Cincinnatus Leconte was suc- [533]*
cessfully stirring up a new caco movement in the north, and people [539]*
were singing:

* Probably "outfoxed."

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Antoine Simon pressé oh pou' allé!
Ou pas tendé l'armée Leconte Gonaïves? [Ex. 116]

Antoine Simon, you'd better leave!
Haven't you heard Leconte's army is at Gonaïves?

In August, 1912, Leconte marched on the capital, and Antoine Simon sailed for Jamaica. General Leconte was duly elected to the presidency; but less than a year after he took office a terrific explosion wrecked the palace, killing Leconte, his son, and a number of militia. It was believed by many that this disaster was an act of vengeance by Antoine Simon:

Clairon sonnin, m'mandé ça qui gainyain
C'est Chapuzette qui débordé encore.
Maribaroux min li vini encore,
Ça'l vin' chaché, li vin' mandé revanche.

Nan Ouanaminthe fusil pas té tiré,
Qui raison ça pou' yo té fait pillage?
Bourriques, mulet' jusqu'à feuilles tôle, Chapuzette,
Tout ça passé au prix de trois centimes.

Machetes Leconte pis raide passé jalap,
C'est avec ça Chapuzette bai médicine.
Si ou vlé conné comment bai "vent-main-nez,"
Mandé Oreste avec Antoine Simon.

Antoine Simon té dit avant'l parti,
Li ta va quitté yun bomb nan mitan yo.
Lè l'éclatté, lè-à la va Kingston,
La marré rein'l pou'l ri peuple souvrain.

Aux Cayes du Fond m'tendé Mapou Simon,
Nan Léogane m'tendé Mapou Danpisse.
Lè nou rivé na wè ça qui gainyain,
Couis couvri couis, Antoine viré sou dos.

REFRAIN

Honneur à Chapuzette, St. Juste avec Delphin,
Ducasse et Corvoisier, vive Cincinattus.

The bells ring, I ask what is going on?
It is Chapuzette now who has revolted.
But Maribaroux he comes again,
What he is looking for is revenge.

In Ouanaminthe the guns are quiet,
What was the reason for this pillage?
They have carried off the donkeys, mules, and even the iron roofing,
Everything that was worth more than three centimes.

2: Courlander B-6 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Lecomte's soldiers are stronger than a *jalap*.*
It is with them that Chapuzette gives medicine.
If you want to know how to give the "stomach-hand-nose" †
Ask Oreste and Antoine Simon.

Antoine Simon said before he left
That he would leave a bomb in the middle of the palace.
When it went off he was already in Kingston.
He will pay for laughing at a sovereign people.

In Aux Cayes du Fond, I heard of the Mapou Simon,
In Léogane I heard of the Mapou Danpisse
When we arrive there we'll see what will happen.
Bowl covers bowl, ‡ Anteine will turn over on his back.

REFRAIN

Honor to Chapuzette, St. Juste and Delphin,
Ducasse and Corvoisier, long live Cincinnatus.

Two more presidents—Tancrede Auguste and Michele Oreste—divided the next eighteen months between them. Two caco movements to remove Oreste started simultaneously, one under the leadership of Davilmar Théodore, the other under the Zamor brothers, Charles and Oreste. The Zamor cacos first chased Théodore's army into the mountains and then marched on the capital. Oreste Zamor was elected to the presidency on a reform program, which quickly evaporated into thin air. One song describes the arrival of the President's brother Charles and his "Réform" at the gates of Port-au-Prince, where a crowd of enthusiasts had gathered:

Attention la Réform c'est jeunes jens Port-au-Prince,
C'est jeunes jens Port-au-Prince, la Réform viré dos ha yo.
Yo lèvé Mardi bon matin, l'habillé tout en blanc,
L'habillé tout en blanc pou' y'al entré Charles Zamor.
Al entren Port-au-Prince la Réform débordé,
La Réform débordé, la Réform viré dos ha yo.

Hail the Reform! It is the young men of Port-au-Prince,
The young men of Port-au-Prince, and the Reform turns its back on them.
They arose early Tuesday morning, dressed all in white,
They dressed all in white to meet Charles Zamor.
At the gates of Port-au-Prince the Reform reversed itself,
The Reform reversed itself and turned its back on them.

The Zamors and the reform administration held the palace less than nine months before Davilmar Théodore's cacos were marching on the capital singing the song that other presidents had heard.

* A violent purgative.
† That is, upset stomach, hand on the nose.
‡ That is, force replies to force.

2: Courtesider B-5 (1837-1915) 1960 SV3 Hait SV3

Oreste Zamor, pressé pou' embarkél
Oreste Zamor, pressé pou' embarkél
Ou pas tendé l'armée Davilmar rentré pou' Gonaïves?

Oreste Zamor, you'd better embark!
Oreste Zamor, you'd better embark!
Haven't you heard Davilmar's army has entered Gonaïves?

Gonaïves seems to have been the crucial point for invading armies from the north. Whenever revolutionary troops entered this town, the president holding office prepared to leave. True to the tradition, the Zamors sailed for a foreign shore, and Davilmar Théodore became the new executive. Although his tenure was to last only three months, there was much excitement when he entered the capital:

A la théatre, à la bamboche!
Pou' djolle musique à droit à gauche!
La ville embrende ça qui gainyain,
C'est Davilmar kapé rentré!
Davilmar, dur, dur!
Manchete caco pas nen betise!
Papa Da dur, dur!
Manchete Leconte pas nen betise!
Davilmar, dur, dur!

Celebrations and dancing!
Tooting horns to right and left!
The city is in an uproar,
It is Davilmar who is coming in!
Davilmar, hard, hard!
The cacos were nothing to laugh at!
Papa Da is hard, hard!
Leconte's army was nothing to laugh at!
Davilmar is hard, hard!

In 1915 came the United States intervention in Haiti, with the prime objective of freezing out German commercial and political interests. A president named Guillaume Sam had assassinated his political enemies in the prison at Port-au-Prince and had, in turn, been dragged out of the French consulate and killed. The benefits of the American occupation of Haiti are hotly debated to this day, though it is about thirty years since the United States military forces were withdrawn. Some Haitians think the occupation was a good lesson in politics, and that Haiti benefited in many ways. Others continue to look upon it as an overt expression of American diplomacy by force. One of the early assignments of the U.S. Marines in Haiti was the destruction of the

2: Courlander 9-5 (1937-1965) 1969 8V3 Haiti 8V3

roaming bands of cacos, generally regarded as bandit elements. Caco chiefs were imprisoned or killed as outlaws, though much of their activity was directed against the American occupation rather than the civil government. Many of the injustices of the occupation were the result of inadequate understanding of the Haitian people and their way of life. There was much unspoken bitterness against the occupation forces, and in some popular songs the Marines were referred to by the peaceful peasantry as "cacos in khaki." During President Borno's administration the people in the north were singing:

> Grand Prevost ou pas tendé cacos Bayé Bouteille?
> Grand Prevost n'allé wè cacos Bayé Bouteille!
> Ala kilé nen dé nations:
> Americains dévant, cacos deuxième!
>
> Grand Prevost, didn't you hear the cacos are at the Bottle Gate?
> Grand Prevost, we are going to see the cacos at the Bottle Gate!
> Now we have two species:
> The Americans are the worst, the cacos come second!

When President Borno's tenure of office came to an end, it was felt in some quarters that Madame Borno was taking the prospective change of residence very hard:

> Madame Borno ça ou gainyain ou apé crié?
> Ou té tou conné palais a parti pou' ou!
> Madame Borno ça ou gainyain ou apé crié?
> Ou té tou conné yun jour pou' oté laissé!
>
> Madame Borno, what is the matter, why are you crying?
> You always knew one day you would have to leave the palace!
> Madame Borno, what is the matter, why are you crying?
> You always knew one day you'd have to give it up!

In 1930 Sténio Vincent came into office. He was a generally unpopular executive who managed to hold on to the presidency by suppressing the political opposition. When he was elected, the progressives were hopeful, and his supporters were singing: "Sténio Vincent bon garçon." But public sentiment shifted. Times were hard for the Haitian people during the Vincent administration. The darker citizens felt Vincent was "too light" to have their interests at heart. They were violently aroused, too, by his gingerly handling of the massacre of Haitians in the Dominican Republic in 1937. During his administration there were a number of abortive caco demonstrations and an unsuccessful revolt of high-ranking army officers. But in the early days a Meringue

2: Courlander 9-6 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 HaEl SV3

of "Merci Papa Vincent" sprang up in the side streets of Port-au-Prince. One rendition (as translated) went: 175 178 643 533* 539*

> We know the man who loves the people,
> He is Sténio Vincent!
> Who made my wife leave me to go to her family?
> He is Président Vincent!
> Who made my skin show through my worn out pants?
> He is Président Vincent!
> Who is the man who made my house fall down?
> He is Président Vincent!
> Oh, we call out, thank you, Papa Vincent!

So widespread did the burlesques on the original become that the tune itself became suspect. One never knew which versions were running through the minds of the listeners.

In 1950, during the administration of President Estimé, there was a new public works program which provided employment for a good many needy people in the Port-au-Prince area, and a coumbite song of the period went: 175 643 533* 539* [653]

> Président Estimé waille, oh!
> Quembé pays yà pas laguè oh!
> C'est Bondieu nans ciel là qui ba moin *président*!
> C'est Bondieu nans ciel là qui ba moin président cila!
> Quembé pays yà pas laguè oh!
> Port-au-Prince oh tourné Havane oh! [Ex. 117]

> President Estimé *waille*, oh!
> Hold on to the country, don't let go, oh!
> It is God in heaven who gave me this president!
> It is God in heaven who gave me this president!
> Hold on to the country, don't let go, oh!
> Port-au-Prince, oh, is turning into a Havana, oh!

When Estimé was overthrown by a military coup, the melody lingered on, but the name of the protagonist was changed. [669]

No president of Haiti has served his term of office, either for good or bad, without providing the raw materials for a folk song. His heroic deeds, his failures, and his foibles are as likely as not to be perpetuated in the music of the people. 643 533*

As for the presidency itself, it is held in the highest esteem. A rousing salute song, reminiscent of the Marseillaise, sends every new president-elect on the way to the palace: [539]*

> Président passé là,
> L'ap monté ou gouvernement!

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

Leyburn noted that the United States occupation affected the nature and rigidity of the barriers separating the yeomanry from the elite. For instance, he calls attention to the fact that the presidents elected during the United States occupation were light-skinned members of the elite. It seemed almost inevitable that, when the North Americans sought men through whom to prosecute their plans for "stabilizing" Haiti, they would settle on educated and worldly politicians, men who were both sufficiently trained and sufficiently pliant for the task. That these men were predominantly light-skinned was a corollary aspect of Haitian social history. In this way Washington played some part in reinforcing and expanding elite power; and herein lies a paradox with which the author of *The Haitian People* has dealt well. While the elite had been able to maintain their wealth and power in Haiti for nearly a century, the presidential succession before the United States occupation had largely been one of military chieftains, principally dark-skinned men from the north of the Republic. Michel Oreste, who had ruled for nine months in 1913–14, was the first civilian to be chosen president in Haiti's entire history up to that time; and Sudre Dartiguenave (1915–22), the North Americans' choice, was the first president since 1879 who was both a southerner and light-skinned. From the last quarter of the nineteenth century until the occupation, in other words, Haiti's presidents were almost entirely dark-skinned northern provincial leaders who literally seized power by invading Port-au-Prince and deposing their predecessors.

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Hence, in describing the separation between elite and yeomanry, it is essential to notice the traditional special role of the military, with its particular overtones of color. Here was one institutional feature of Haitian society which was not directly dominated by the elite, and through which nonelite folk were able to attain special power. But in Haiti's case it is significant that the army itself was not firmly institutionalized; regional warlords, rather than a centralized officer corps, made the decisions. Leyburn cites Auguste Magloire, who enumerated *sixty-nine* "important" revolutions between 1806 and 1879; had this enumeration gone forward, it would have been much longer. Of Haiti's twenty-four chief executives between 1807 and 1915, only eight were in office for a period equal to their elected terms, and seventeen were deposed by revolution. Before the United States occupation, then, the continuing power of the elite could be seen as somewhat separate from the succession of nonelite generals who seized office over the years.

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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648 The financing of these many revolutions was usually provided by
669 foreign merchants, bent upon installing a government that would
565 grant them special economic concessions (Munro, 1964:326–31). The
701 United States occupation ended this doleful succession of regimes
439 and, by throwing its weight to the elite, by suppressing military activity in the countryside, and by reforming the army, the United States gave a new meaning to the separation of the elite and the yeomanry. Leyburn's interpretation is consistent with these events; yet some Haitian scholars have differed with Leyburn's analysis.

114 In a lengthy review article, the dean of Haitian historians, Dr. Jean
564 Price-Mars (1942:1–50), questions the applicability of the term
563 "caste" to the social groupings of Haitian society. He notes that
671 Haitian law after the revolution never legitimized any distinction on
144 grounds of physical type, unlike a society such as the United States—that in fact, the very basis of Haitian polity was the absence of such distinctions. Furthermore, Leyburn's interpretation is qualified by the fact that the elite and the rural masses are not entirely distinctive physically. In some parts of rural Haiti, particularly in the southern peninsula, there are many light-skinned people; and many individuals who qualify as members of the elite on all other counts are very dark in appearance. The fact that being "Negro" or "white" in Haiti is viewed as a matter of degree, rather than of kind, complicated by all the other criteria of social position employed in drawing distinctions, has important implications for the way social barriers have operated in that country.*

114 Leyburn did not contend that all the effects of the United States
565 occupation were in the direction of increasing the gap between the
ELITE AND THE YEOMANRY.

563 * In this regard, Haiti is aligned with most of Latin America, in contradistinction to the
564 United States, where many persons believe that "one drop of Negro blood" [sic] makes a
171 "Negro." The failure of North Americans to distinguish between sociological and genetic
144 categories of physical type has led to considerable confusion in their dealings with Latin America and in their understanding of Latin American societies. North American race prejudice at its most extreme sees color as the primary basis for social ranking, and no individual accomplishment (for instance, in terms of economic or intellectual success) can overshadow the inferior status unalterably bestowed by certain physical traits. Haitian—and generally all Latin American—social distinctions do not rest solely on considerations of physical type; a black skin does not "doom" an individual if his attainments make him otherwise the equal of his lighter-skinned fellow citizens. Hence, it might be argued that the term "caste" would be more appropriate when applied to the Negro people of the United States (regardless of phenotype, and including those "Negroes" who are sociologically identified with the Negro people even if their physical appearance is demonstrically Caucasian) than when applied to the peoples of Latin America.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 565 These newcomers in the class structure enjoyed regular urban employment, were mostly literate and legally married, and harbored strong ambitions for the education of their children. Such persons were certainly not elite members, and their behavior (as, for instance, in their preference for speaking Creole rather than French) showed it; yet they were not part of the rural masses, nor merely an example of Marx's *Lumpenproletariat*. Yet significance of this new group for the Leyburn "caste" theory of the elite is considerable. Even today, if such persons lapse into poverty, their ideology will continue to matter politically. Estimé's regime also loosed new political trends, since at first some encouragement was given to labor unions, and the construction of urban low-cost housing was undertaken. We are unable to measure the long-term effects of these changes, but their reality raises some questions about the rigidity that Leyburn's analysis imputed to Haitian social structure.

[467] [362]

175 669 643 159 In May 1950, after an unsuccessful bid to extend his term of office illegally, Estimé's regime was toppled, again by a military junta. To power came Paul Magloire, the first military figure to become chief executive since the start of the United States occupation. Like Estimé before him, Magloire symbolized certain effects of the occupation upon Haiti's social and political structure and the way that structure was continuing to change. Magloire's origins were not within the elite, to judge by the traditional criteria. He was a black man, and from the north; born in Quartier Morin, he associated himself with the elite of the north coast port of Cap Haïtien, Haiti's second largest city. By marriage to a "Capoise," whose family status was much higher than his own, and by a successful career in the military during the occupation, Magloire penetrated elite circles. As commander of the Palace Guard, he had been a member of the junta that ousted Lescot in 1946, replacing him with Estimé. In 1950, when Magloire became president, after the army had forcibly discharged both houses of the legislature, he apparently had the support of the elite and of the business class, if not of the popular forces that had backed Estimé.

175 643 Magloire may be said to have moderated considerably the intensity of Haitian politics, and his administration was not marked by so sharp an ideological concern with the relative roles of elite and countryman. Times were good, and levels of life, both in the countryside and in the capital, were probably as high as they had been at any time in Haitian history. Certain economic gains were made in the tourist

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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industry, in the processing of essential oils, in extractive operations (bauxite, copper), and in the manufacture of a few essential commodities. The official attitude toward private investment, even by foreigners, was unusually benign; and coffee, the big export crop, enjoyed a boom. Again, however, little effect could be seen in the basic economic structure. By 1956–57, when the Magloire regime was toppled, the era of apparent prosperity had come to an end.

Magloire's tenure ended as had his predecessor's; after a vain attempt to prolong his regime by forcing through new laws, he was brought down by the army and was succeeded by a series of juntas. The politics of the brief interregnum preceding the accession of François Duvalier was complicated by the rival claims of four presidential aspirants: Clément Jumelle, Daniel Fignolé, Louis Déjoie, and François Duvalier. These four men represented significantly different trends in Haitian thinking and were supported by different social groups. Jumelle, although regarded as the spiritual inheritor of the Magloire administration, won the support of many Haitian intellectuals; his appeal was partly grounded in his experience as finance minister in the Magloire cabinet, but the scandalous graft of the Magloire administration worked against him. Fignolé, too, had been a cabinet minister, but his antecedents and political philosophy differed sharply from Jumelle's. An eloquent, intense man of rural lower-class origins, Fignolé was regarded by many as a dangerous demagogue. His support came largely from the poorer urban classes, and his reputation as a union leader and as a "self-made" former minister of education gave him special strength among urban groups. Déjoie, considered to be the candidate of most of the business community and of the elite, was a highly successful agronomist and businessman who had done much to build rural industry; it is also generally believed that Déjoie was the "unofficial candidate" of the United States. Duvalier, trained as a doctor of medicine and for long an enthusiastic amateur ethnologist, had been a political enemy of the Magloire regime and, as a former minister in the Estimé cabinet, saw himself as the ideological descendant of Estimé. Duvalier appears eventually to have become the army's choice, ostensibly because he was considered "manageable"; at any rate, it was Duvalier who finally emerged as president, ending the uneasy interim which followed Magloire's ejection.*

* Probably the most penetrating analysis of Haitian politics of the time is that provided by Manigat, 1964, to which this interpretation owes much.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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regime. That President Duvalier has been able to stay in power in spite of internal dissaffection, sometime hostile United States propaganda, a dire economic situation, personal ill health, and other woes, is a tribute to his political acumen, if not to his principles. None of this means, of course, that such consummate skill will continue to work; Haitian governments have a way of falling suddenly, and the Duvalier regime will probably not prove an exception. 175 642 648 643

Dr. Duvalier's success indicates that he has made certain correct assessments, not only of Haiti's social and political structure but also of United States policy with regard to Haiti. The occupation was notable for its failure to make any telling alterations in the economic structure or level of development of the country. Many beneficial changes were made, as Leyburn demonstrates, particularly in the areas of health and health services, communications, government administration, education, and transport (though the use of corvée labor on the roads led to serious abuses, and stimulated sanguinary guerilla warfare). But most significantly, the United States institutionalized the army and police forces. The ragged bands of political mercenaries of the past were dissolved; the officer-ridden army was transformed into a small, well-trained, and well-organized force. Eventual firm control by this force of weaponry, communications, and transport ended the era of presidential succession by invasion, turned the army into the major locus of nonelectoral, president-making power, and may have ended forever the possibility of an agrarian revolt against the central authority. Another political effect of the occupation was the importance it imparted to the United States ambassador, whose political opinions thereafter would matter significantly in the transmission of power at the top of the Haitian governmental system. The Duvalier regime has continuously taken full account of the consequences of United States interest; and its leaders have been able to watch the operation of that interest in the political events occurring between the fall of the Lescot government and the present. 175 648 433 114 744 20 871 489 175 648 701 643 669 625

In the view of one acute observer, President Duvalier, in order to consolidate his power, had to cope with three other loci of political strength in addition to the army and the United States ambassador. The business community, located for the most part in Port-au-Prince, had strongly supported Déjoie's candidacy during the interregnum; its leaders were mainly members of the elite, and many had strong 175 643 66

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 equaled the demand for them; in 1791 the census listed half a million
24 then living, but no writer seems to have even a vague idea of how
567 many millions were imported during the sixty years of the colony's heyday.

175 Production, particularly of sugar and coffee, steadily increased until the tiny colony ranked among the wealthiest regions of the
245 world. The Spanish Indies were declining, so that Saint-Domingue
249 alone far outranked them all combined between 1766 and 1791.
433 Splendid roads were built, extensive irrigation projects developed,
511 and stately mansions erected. Life moved along with ceremony and
565 display—for the planters; attended by their black lackeys, the white French masters entertained royally or were driven like lords in their coaches to make formal visits to neighbors. Many of these well-to-do colonials spent half their time in Paris, ostentatiously spending their riches. To be "wealthy as a Creole" came to be a common expression in France.[1] Perhaps nowhere in the Americas was existence at once so delightful and so ornamental as it was for the wealthy planters among the 36,000 whites of Saint-Domingue in 1791.

175 For the mother country, too, this small bit of tropical land was profitable during the latter days of Bourbon royalty. Neither Mar-
439 tinique nor Guadeloupe could compare with it in value. In 1789
505 nearly two thirds of the foreign commercial interests of France
648 centred in Saint-Domingue; its combined exports and imports were valued at more than $140,000,000; its sugar, coffee, indigo, and cotton supplied the home market and employed in prosperous years more than 700 ocean-going vessels, with as many as 80,000 seamen.[2]

175 Where wealth exists, social distinctions generally develop. In Saint-Domingue the evolving class system produced such discord
565 that sparks from the French Revolution eventually set off an explo-
669 sion in the colony. Casual surveys of Haitian history generally record that in 1791 the slaves revolted, and that out of this insurrection grew the war of independence. This is true; but it was not the resentment of slaves against their masters which caused the final explosion; the
175 slaves were tinder used by others to keep the conflagration burning.
565 Negro slaves, of course, did not figure in the "class" system; they
[567] were below the classes of colonial society. The class system, properly

[101] 1. The word "creole" means only "colonial born"; there is no connotation of race mixture in the term.

2. Pamphile de Lacroix, *Mémoires*, II, 277.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 563 565 671 nature.[9] Colored women were forbidden in 1768 to marry white men. In 1779 began a series of laws designed to humiliate the colored person in public: his clothes must be of a different material and cut from the white person's; he must be indoors by nine o'clock in the evening; he might not sit in the same section of churches and theatres with whites.[10]

175 648 829 [669] [565] Just at the moment when prejudice and hatred seem to have reached their most menacing proportions, when even moderate white planters began to feel that such passions had been aroused among both white and colored folk that only brutal severity could hold them in check, the Revolution began in France. Both sides in the colony hoped to make use of it. The whites saw in the mother country's confusion an opportunity to win self-government for the colony—with themselves, of course, as the untrammeled rulers. The gens de couleur, taking to heart the noble Declaration of the Rights of Man, hoped to regain their full rights as French citizens, guaranteed to them in Louis XIV's Code, but now in abeyance.

175 646 648 671 During the fateful years 1788 to 1793 colonial affairs were intertwined with developments in France. Men and messages went back and forth between Cap Français and Paris, following the startling announcement that after a lapse of 150 years the States-General would be convoked in May, 1789. At a meeting of the colonial assembly in September, 1788, called to nominate delegates, the group of grands blancs who controlled colonial affairs decided on two daring steps, which later proved to be blunders: first, they named thirty-seven deputies to represent Saint-Domingue; second, they drew up a *Cahier des Doléances*—a list of grievances whose sole palliation, it was implied, would be the granting of permission to the white planters to govern the colony without interference from France. These two decisions, be it said, were not unanimously approved in the assembly at Cap Français; cautious minds warned against pretentious demands which might do nothing more than attract concentrated attention to the state of affairs in Saint-Domingue: it might be wiser, they argued, to let sleeping dogs lie, and ignore the convocation of the States-General. The cautious were outvoted.

[565] [829] 9. A colored lawyer might win a case against a white man; a colored priest might have to hear the confession of a white woman.

[565] 10. When certain mulattoes arrived at church in Cap Français wearing clothes of the same texture as the whites', constables tore the garments from the backs of male and female alike, leaving them "with no other veil than their shame."

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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Noirs, having returned to Saint-Domingue to campaign for the political rights of his group, led with his friend Chavanne a demonstration at Cap Français. The white authorities seized and executed them with notable brutality.

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This occurred in March, 1791. In May came the news that the National Assembly in France had finally yielded to pressure, and had decreed that men of mixed blood born of free parents should be admitted to representation in colonial assemblies. The chagrin and anger of the whites at this decree was so violent that the governor-general of Saint-Domingue immediately suspended its operation.

175 567 669

The issue was now clearly drawn: free colored men knew that they would never secure their rights except by force. But before they could bring to maturity their plan of action, suddenly the calculations of both parties were completely upset. The Negro slaves revolted.

If ever slaves had reason to rebel, the Negroes of Saint-Domingue did. The same harshness which the whites showed to free colored people marked the treatment of black slaves; and as racial antagonism deepened, white masters seemed to become utterly heartless in their treatment of the inarticulate blacks. Allowing for the exceptions which accompany most generalizations, it is clear from the record that the planters were, in the main, callous, ruthless, some of them even fiendish, in their treatment of slaves. Flogging a man to death was not uncommon; certain slaves were buried alive; pregnant women were forced to work so hard that miscarriage resulted. Some of the punishments meted out were merely brutal; others were torture; and some were sadistic, the masters relishing the pain they were causing. A certain slave in the North was nailed by his hands to a wall, and then, after standing all day in the burning sun, was made to eat his own amputated ears. A woman planter had the tongues of all her slaves cut out; another woman caused the starvation of her maid by having a gag fixed around the child's head.[13] Visitors to the colony in the 1780's often commented on the general want of self-control on the part of the planters—their violent gusts of anger and passionate outbreaks over trifles; and the victims of these outbursts

13. An officer of the court of the Negro king Christophe later wrote in two volumes a gruesome account of the treatment of slaves by French masters in the latter days of the colony. Although certainly exaggerated, it probably contains a measure of truth. See Baron de Vastey, *Réflexions politiques sur les noirs et les blancs* (Sans Souci, 1817); and *Essai sur les causes de la révolution et des guerres civiles d'Haïti* (Sans Souci, 1819).

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

were the slaves. Most of the blacks accordingly needed only leadership to arouse them and direct their vengeance. 175 567 669

Very little of the background of the insurrection is known. The certain facts are these: on the night of August 14, 1791, at a pretended Vodun ceremony in the woods of the Turpin plantation, during a violent storm, several wily and powerful slaves laid plans for a general uprising. Their intentions were communicated, apparently by drum signals, to neighboring plantations. Six days later the attack began, the blacks in that section of the North indiscriminately slaughtering every white man, woman, and child on whom they could lay their hands. From this centre the massacre spread, accompanied by general arson, until practically every plantation in the fertile northern plain was a shambles. The whites who had escaped destruction cowered in the capital city.

The insurrection of 1791 returned measure for measure to the planters for their previous cruelties. Whether one reads accounts written by Haitian patriots or by white apologists, the story is the same: the ferocities on both sides were almost incredible. Blacks gutted children and raped women, whites broke captured Negroes on the wheel, poured boiling oil in their ears, and flayed them alive. The Reign of Terror in France was decorous by comparison. The pent-up hatred of decades was working itself out.

Against half a million riotous blacks the handful of whites had no chance. All who could leave the country fled precipitately. The gens de couleur, on the contrary, although at first alarmed, soon discovered that the revolting slaves were inclined to be friendly to them. They accordingly tried to turn the insurrection to their own purpose, to seize the rule of the colony now being depopulated of whites. France, herself in turmoil, sent over various commissioners whose thankless duty it was to try to restore order; but they were incompetent, often worked at odds with each other, and sometimes engaged in actual treachery. Matters were, if anything, complicated by their ministrations. 175 669 [648]

In addition, Spain and England, always ready to harass the French, sent troops into Saint-Domingue on the pretext of trying to put down the slave insurrection lest it spread to their neighboring colonies of Santo Domingo and Jamaica. The French general in the colony, Laveaux, would shortly have been defeated if help had not come from two natives, one a well-to-do mulatto, the other a black [648]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 ex-slave, each of whom aroused his own group to fight off the
669 invading Spaniards and English.

These two men emerging from the maelstrom were the cultured colored general, Rigaud, and the powerful Negro, Toussaint. United in purpose in 1793, they soon began to oppose each other. Their dissent foreshadowed the rift which was permanently to divide free Haiti.

175 Rigaud, born at Les Cayes in 1761,[14] had been brought up in
159 Bordeaux, France, where he was taught the trade of a goldsmith.
669 Like many other colored colonial youths, he went briefly to Georgia to fight on the side of the Americans in their revolution against England. Gifted with extraordinary military talent, he rose to prominence in Saint-Domingue following the slave insurrection, and played a major part in expelling the British from the colony. He was fiery, intellectual, and brilliant, but lacking in self-control and political subtlety, which put him at a disadvantage with Toussaint. Rigaud's admirers—almost the whole body of free colored people—included all the influential persons in the colony once the whites had been cowed or driven out; the South was devoted to him body and soul, and he had numerous partisans in the provinces of the North and West. But Toussaint was the idol of the half-million blacks.

Born a slave, Toussaint was fortunate in having a kindly master who permitted him the sort of work which gave him leisure for reading. He studied eagerly, devouring all accounts he could find of the military exploits of Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar. Apparently he took no part in the slave uprising; on the contrary, he helped his master escape to the United States and later regularly provided him with money. Then he himself went to the Spanish part of the island, where he made a military reputation in the Spanish colonial army. When General Laveaux sought his aid against the invaders of harassed Saint-Domingue, the ex-slave accepted his overtures. Detractors of Toussaint call him a "cunning hypocrite" for joining and then deserting the Spaniards, and for accepting high rank under a French general whom he was even then (so it is asserted) planning to supersede. His decision to return to Saint-Domingue was certainly crucial, for it began his meteoric ascent
[648] to power.

Accompanied by the black troops he had captained in the Spanish

[632] 14. Les Cayes, the third largest town in modern Haiti, was even in colonial times an
[361] important seaport. It is located on the southwestern peninsula.

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colony, he fought engagements with several Spanish detachments on the way back to Saint-Domingue, and soon achieved the return to France of all the territory Spain had recently won from her. Seeing that his ineffectively trained black troops were as yet no match for the disciplined British, he temporarily withdrew from public sight in order to build his army into a coördinated, smoothly functioning machine. Then he not only defeated the British, but forced their complete withdrawal from the island. He freed General Laveaux, whom they had imprisoned in Cap Français, thereby putting his own commanding officer under personal obligation to him. By 1796 Toussaint was the undisputed hero of his soldiers and, through their praise, of the mass of black ex-slaves; moreover, the French commander trusted and respected him; even the whites of the former régime looked to him with hope, for they had grudgingly to concede that, black though he was, he alone had the power to restore peace and order in the colony.

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Only the colored group looked askance at him. They had welcomed the insurrection of the slaves in 1791 as an invaluable, if bloody, aid in their struggle for equality with the whites; but they were not inclined to be ruled by an ex-slave whose eminence was already a threat to the social order they wished to establish. When, in 1793, the French commissioners had abolished slavery in Saint-Domingue,[15] the action had been as distasteful to the free colored people as it was to the whites; both groups wanted to continue to own slaves; the gens de couleur merely wanted their share also in governing the colony. In their opinion, the struggle was getting out of hand. They gave their allegiance, consequently, not to Toussaint, but to their own man, Rigaud.

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The black general now began to show himself as astute a politician as he had been a skilful soldier. He had a romantic streak, which made him assume the prophetic surname Louverture;[16] but beneath the romanticism was a peculiar diplomatic realism. When a newly arrived governor-general tried to stir up dissension between blacks and colored people, on the principle of divide and rule, Toussaint

15. In order to pacify the blacks and to win their support against the invading armies of Spain and England.

16. The name Louverture, now generally written L'Ouverture, is ordinarily conceded to imply Toussaint's conviction that he would provide the opening through which his fellow blacks might achieve freedom. According to another account the name was given him because of his ability to make a breach in the ranks of the enemy; still another explanation refers to his missing front teeth.

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deftly had him promoted out of colonial office. When another group of commissioners came, he agreed in conference with them that the remaining whites should be expelled for the sake of peace; as soon as this was done, however, he effected the nomination of both the chief commissioner and General Laveaux as representatives of the colony in the French Assembly, sitting in Paris. Under guise of bestowing honors, he had got rid of every white person who had the slightest claim to rule. By 1797 Toussaint was the supreme leader in Saint-Domingue, his authority disputed only by Rigaud and the colored group. A civil war was needed to settle the issue between them, and since his forces were much more numerous than Rigaud's, Toussaint emerged victor in the brief conflict. Rigaud fled to France, the power of the mulattoes was broken, and no one was left openly to contest Toussaint's rule.

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"The First of the Blacks," as Toussaint was called, is a bewildering anomaly, and full of contradictions. He had been a slave for fifty years before the insurrection, and was to live only eleven after it. In that short period he became one of the most talked-of men in the world. His Spanish superior officer had said that "God in this terrestrial globe could not commune with a purer spirit"; the Frenchman, Lacroix, remarked, "No one approaches him without fear, and no one leaves him without respect." Even his enemies paid him homage: an English officer, as "a man, a governor, and a general"; a white Frenchman, as "a philosopher, a general, and a good citizen." When he died Wordsworth wrote a moving sonnet to him who had strengthened human faith in "man's unconquerable mind." Yet Toussaint had been a deserter and a schemer, and ruthlessly exploited his power to achieve absolute authority. His own deep conviction of his special mission to lead his people from misery to security has always for his apologists excused the more dubious aspects of his character.

To many Toussaint was a hero with elements of saintliness. In the overheated atmosphere of prejudice and hatred in Saint-Domingue he pursued a calm policy of moderation. Under him, anarchy and massacres came to an end. With an army at his beck and call, he used force only to maintain freedom for his fellow blacks and to defend the colony against foreign invasion. As nominal governor-general after 1799 he revived prosperity, inculcated discipline as an antidote to the intoxication of liberty, respected his contracts, and was a friend of law and order. On the other hand, he had moments

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of inordinate vanity, and would brook no interference. His henchmen had to endure merciless tongue-lashings. His own people's freedom, about which he was publicly so solicitous, was in many respects little better than slavery. 175 642 643

What he did is more easily told than what he was. Emerging, after a long reign of terror, as a leader in a land which had once been a paradise for whites, he checked among his people the passion and fear which had led to violence. With the restoration of peace, labor began once more on the plantations. The Negroes, though no longer slaves, were ordered back to work, and they docilely obeyed. The return of prosperity between 1799 and 1802 was amazing.

But the brilliance of Toussaint's rule was first dimmed and then completely extinguished by the rising star of Napoleon in France.[17] Haitian history between 1802 and 1804, although apparently incidental to the story of the contest between blacks and colored people which here concerns us, is nevertheless significant for an understanding of what was to transpire in Haitian social affairs. Napoleon was irritated beyond measure at the effrontery of Toussaint's seizure of power in the colony. The black leader had shown canny statesmanship in winning the friendly coöperation of the president of the United States, John Adams. The supplies and ships that Adams sent enabled Toussaint not only to defeat Rigaud but to achieve independence from France in all but name. With American assistance, Toussaint negotiated an advantageous treaty with England. Probably even more annoying to the First Consul than these political triumphs was Toussaint's audacious success in aping and even anticipating the spacious actions by which Napoleon was trying to make himself majestic in the world's eyes.[18] 175 648 669

It is possible that Napoleon might not have paid so much attention

17. It seems strange that this black, a veritable genius whatever his faults, should be so mildly honored in modern Haiti. True, he is regarded with respect, and there are a few statues of him; but the homage of the people is paid rather to his successor, General Dessalines, the antithesis of Toussaint in everything but courage. It was Dessalines, of course, who struck the final blow for Haitian freedom, but even this triumph seems to the foreigner small in comparison with the very real achievements of Toussaint. [643]

18. For example: Napoleon had given a new constitution to France after his *coup d'état* of the 18 Brumaire; similarly Toussaint, having effected his own coup in Saint-Domingue by deposing the French civil agent, citizen Roume, immediately thereafter gave *his* people a new constitution. In it he not only assumed all political power for life, but also ascribed to himself the right of naming his successor. Bonaparte was unable to take so daring a step for another year. There is ample evidence to show that meanwhile he chafed under the idea of being imitated and anticipated by a "gilded African," as he called Toussaint.

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175 to Toussaint if Saint-Domingue had been merely a colony like
648 Martinique, and not the single centre from which measures for rebuilding the French colonial system could radiate. France was once
● 669 more taking over Louisiana from Spain; but before Bonaparte could effectively reach Louisiana to establish his New World empire, he must make sure of Saint-Domingue. The very real power of Toussaint had to be crushed, and through the whole of 1801 Napoleon was making preparations for the annihilation of the black governor."

175 The plans were as follows: to send his brother-in-law, Leclerc,
648 with a formidable French army to "succeed" Toussaint as governor;
721 to try to persuade the blacks that the new régime was entirely benevolent to their race, so that no armed resistance would be offered; if persuasion and diplomacy failed, to fight and conquer the Negroes, subduing them once more to slavery; and, above all, to capture Toussaint with all his black counselors and send them as prisoners to France. Napoleon undertook to prepare the way for Leclerc by writing personally to Toussaint: "Assist the Captain-General [Leclerc] with your counsels, your influence, and your talents. What can you desire?—the liberty of the blacks? You know that in all the countries where we have been, we have given it to the people who had it not." He repeated this assurance in his message a week later to the French legislature (November 22, 1801): "At Saint-Domingue and at Guadeloupe there are no more slaves. All are free there; all will remain free." Still further, the proclamation he drew up for Leclerc to publish upon his arrival, as a reassurance to the blacks, ran: "If you are told that these forces are destined to ravish your liberty, answer: The Republic has given us liberty, the Republic will not suffer it to be taken from us!"

Leclerc with his army arrived at Cap Français late in January, 1802. He hoped to be received at the capital as a friend, but Christophe, the black general in charge of the city, repulsed his advances. Leclerc was obliged to attack; on February 5 Christophe set fire to the city and withdrew to the neighboring hills. The war of independence had begun.

19. The part played by Toussaint for a brief moment in the history of the United States is full of significance. Certain historians are of the opinion that if Napoleon had been successful in the reconquest of Saint-Domingue he would have turned his attention to America rather than to Europe, for he had great colonial schemes. His failure in the colony, according to this theory, made him try to withdraw gracefully from the New World by selling Louisiana to the United States.

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000 their new status was definitely higher. Mild serfdom might be
175 thought of as the first intermediate step toward freedom. Democracy
565 was still far off, there being no real middle class upon which to build
566 it. Only the artisans of the towns and the ex-soldiers or the cultivators who had managed to lease small estates could be considered middle class. Christophe forced every dweller in villages or towns to have a manual skill. The only alternative was field work on a plantation.

The "aristocrats" of the kingdom were prevailingly black rather than colored. It was not to be expected that a vain man would soon forget the trick by which the mulattoes had frustrated him in his
175 expectation of becoming the ruler of all Haiti. To say that the intermittent civil war between Christophe's kingdom of the North and
● 669 Pétion's republic of the South was a struggle between blacks and
643 colored people would not do great violence to the essential truth.
563 Christophe's suspicion of gens de couleur was so well known that few were surprised at the high death rate of mulatto generals in the North. The murder of General Clervaux was definitely laid at Christophe's door.

The fact remains that among the nobility were men of all degrees of color. The King liked to say that he neither accepted nor yet took exception to the color of a man's epidermis—that in this matter he was *vert* (green), which is to say, neutral and indifferent. When he was angry his wrath fell indiscriminately upon the offender of whatever complexion. Similarly, when he found a light-skinned man who faithfully supervised a leased estate, thus proving his
175 loyalty, the man was rewarded and promoted. Nevertheless, an
643 underlying prejudice remained in his breast, bursting out occasionally
721 at crises, and having ultimately a serious effect upon the loyalty of
563 many of his people. When some of his subjects, enticed by the easy-going régime of the South, ran away to Pétion's republic, Christophe was angry enough to renew the war against Pétion (1811). The South won the encounter, thereby adding fuel to Christophe's rage.
[727] Three hundred prisoners he had captured he ordered tortured, and the angry King abused and insulted his own officers and executed several soldiers for having lost the battle. These actions caused more defections, renewed punishments, and a more abiding rancor. As one writer put it, the King "now regarded the mulattoes with a hatred so deep and fiendlike, that nothing would satisfy the direness of his

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175 563 565 [701] [669] an ineffective government, momentarily in the hands of colored élite. Attempting to dominate politics was a numerically small group of colored people and a still smaller group of Negroes. Although prevailingly black, the army might be, and in the later nineteenth century was continually, used by whichever group offered more. A third power, a middle class, might have balanced these antagonistic factions. Lacking such a moderating influence, Haiti was the victim of recurrent revolutionary movements.

175 178 642 643 At the time of Boyer, actual democracy would have been no safeguard, for it would have meant the supremacy of ignorance. His rule was the beginning of unfortunate days for Haiti. After the auspicious opening years, the President became an impotent onlooker as his country declined. It is instructive to compare the Haiti of Dessalines and Christophe with the Haiti of 1843, only one generation later.[62]

175 178 642 433 466 The Haiti of 1806 had been a beehive of activity. Soldiers, foremen, and policemen then stood over the workers with lianes to force them to labor for the benefit of their state. Production was carefully planned, an ordered hierarchy making every person in the country responsible to another higher than himself until the ruler was reached at the pinnacle. The cardinal fault of any laborer was to shirk at his task. The year 1843, on the contrary, found Haiti in a condition of quiescence which, to those who remembered the old days, resembled torpor. The central government had ceased to drive its citizens, and its half-hearted attempts at persuasion were futile. Overseers, drivers of gangs of workers, soldiers whose duty it was to enforce labor, had disappeared from the scene. Every man was his own master.

175 178 511 The standard of living in 1806 as in 1843 was low; but in the earlier year there had been a promise of great things to come once Haiti had rebuilt what war had destroyed. The succeeding years, however, failed to inculcate into the people a desire for any higher standard of life. Country dwellers were benighted; ignorance deepened the habit

[162] [175] 62. Haiti has never had an accurate census, so that it is impossible even to estimate the total population of the country either in 1806 or in 1843. The figures of 380,000 and 800,000 given by some authors for the two years are mere guesses. Likewise, one can only deduce the proportion of people in the main economic and social categories; probably seventy-five per cent of the Haitians were serfs in 1806 and the same percentage peasants in 1843; the "aristocracy," including all who did not derive a living by manual labor or army service, could hardly have reached five per cent in either year; the army, house servants, day laborers in the towns, and petty businessmen would make up the other twenty per cent.

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[p. 88]

IV

CASTE LINES BECOME PERMANENT

175 178 THE contrast between the golden days of forced labor and the stagnating mediocrity of Boyer's Haiti was as vivid to thinking Haitian aristocrats as it was to foreign whites. Particularly the young "intellectuals" of the 'thirties who knew something of the progress taking place in the rest of the Western World felt that the time had come to stem the wave of economic disintegration at home. In a series of pronouncements they pointed out that the advancement of Haiti had "been constantly slowed up for some time. . . . Haiti is stationary, is retrograde: we need no other proof of it than this frightful uncertainty about the future which so deeply disturbs all serious minds and sincere patriots." One may discount the phrase 175 668 about "sincere patriots," for peasants were patriots even though undisturbed by the economic stagnation. The agitation for reform won a wide following among all the élite who cherished a glowing recollection of earlier days.

Leaders of the young men called upon Boyer in 1838 to introduce stronger methods of forced labor; but Boyer, remembering the fate of his Code Rural in which he had tried to do precisely this, could think of no effective way of tinkering again with the economic system. From the young men he received the most contradictory advice as to specific methods. The result of the appeal was therefore merely continued inaction by the government. The agitators, ex- 175 cellent critics if poor reformers, accordingly persisted in their cam- 668 paign, adding new converts to their cause until the movement pro- 669 duced a crisis. Revolution broke out in January 1843 at Torbeck in the South, and rapidly spread toward the capital; within two months 643 Boyer and his faithful secretary-general, Inginac, had departed for exile.[1]

[643] [159] 1. Boyer went first to Jamaica, and then to Paris. In the latter capital King Louis-Philippe gave him an audience and called him "prince." Boyer replied, "Sire, I am no prince. I have merely been the head of a small republic." The King of France thereupon affectionately pressed Boyer's hand, remarking, "When one has governed a million people for twenty-five years, he is raised to the rank of princes." . . . Boyer died in Paris in 1850.

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Political history of the next seventy-two years is a complicated story, of which only enough need be told here to illuminate the evolution of caste and social distinctions. Even a short summary reveals the bewildering confusion. Of the twenty-two heads of state between 1843 and 1915 only one served out his prescribed term of office;[2] three died while serving, one was blown up with his palace, one presumably poisoned, and one hacked to pieces by a mob; one resigned. The other fourteen were deposed by revolution after incumbencies ranging in length from three months to twelve years. 175 643

The Revolution of 1843 brought back into national prominence the whole matter of color and caste. The young revolutionaries, mostly light-skinned, seem to have assumed that their group was permanently in control. With cavalier highhandedness they set about capturing the last stronghold of Negro eminence: the army. They soon found, however, that they had caught a Tartar; their attempt to rule was fatal to them and their clique. 175 669

In the Constitutional Assembly convened to make a new constitution for the country, they professed astonishingly democratic doctrines. Proclaiming that the fault of former governments had been reliance upon military power, they now proposed to make civil power paramount by allowing the common people to vote. Since up to this time the franchise had been strictly limited to army officers and anciens libres, such a radical departure as general suffrage makes no sense unless conceived as an attempt to break the power of the Negro-controlled army, for surely the élite had no confidence in the wisdom of the peasantry. Weight is given to this explanation by the paradoxical action of the revolutionaries in promoting to high army rank some of the strongest mulatto partisans of civil government. 175 668 646 642 641 701

The new constitution was an immediate failure. Most of the colored élite condemned the giving of voting rights to peasants and workers; the army chiefs, generally black and illiterate, some of them aging veterans of 1803, bitterly resented being made subservient to young, inexperienced civil officers; in fact, even the new mulatto president, Rivière-Hérard, had no conception of government other than by military dictatorship. 175 642 641

Not only was the constitution a failure; so was the government of the young revolutionaries. A part of their weakness lay in their 175 643

2. The presidential term varied under different constitutions; some allowed a four-year term with the right of reflection, some six years with no reflection.

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175 choice of a leader. Not gifted with administrative ability, Hérard
643 blundered first by imprisoning one of the most popular Negro leaders in the country, thereby turning much of the population of the South against him. Next, learning of conspiracies in the Spanish
• [669] end of the island, he tried to stamp out revolt by exile and jail sentences, only to precipitate there a real revolution for independence. In his fight against the Dominican separatists he was roundly defeated, and his prestige sank rapidly to the vanishing point. Within two months after his inauguration, he had only one third of the island left over which to attempt to rule. Within a year he was out of power altogether and with him the colored people.

175 The Revolution of 1844, although supported by certain old friends
669 of Boyer, was chiefly a movement of Negroes—followers of the imprisoned black, Salomon; peasants from the South who had been promised much by the previous year's revolutionaries and had got nothing; and particularly the Negro army clique. The significant part of the new revolution was its announced purpose, to lessen the influence of the colored group in government, to have a black president, and to dispossess certain reputedly well-to-do citizens by
[643] dividing their estates among the people. Quickly successful, the insurgents promoted to the presidency the illiterate octogenarian black general, Guerrier, who in Christophe's kingdom had been Duke of Marmalade[3] and Duke of Avancé.

175 For the first time in a quarter-century the Negro element was
again in the saddle, where it was to remain for the next fifteen years.
643 Everyone recognized Guerrier's personal courage and admired the
662 common sense which made him prefer conciliation to unnecessary violence as a method of government, but the colored people were shocked at having to live under the rule of another black ex-slave. The idea evoked grim memories. Knowing Guerrier's addiction to drink, the colored faction managed to make him a tool for their own use, so that his brief administration, ending with his death in 1845, was generally known as a "government of understudies." Guerrier was followed in the presidency by another black, likewise an octo-
175 genarian: Louis Pierrot, the handsome brother-in-law of King
643 Christophe. But Pierrot was even more ignorant than Guerrier and

[554] 3. This title generally evokes amusement among non-Haitians. Christophe had merely named his peers after districts whose names had been given by French planters in the eighteenth century. Another of his noblemen was a Count of Limonade.

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175 643 Suddenly, without warning, he reversed what had been mistaken for docile inactivity, and assumed complete personal command of the reins of office. By means of a well-organized body of secret police, [625] he inspired his own counselors with fear not only for their positions but for their lives. Although illiterate, Soulouque never signed a bill presented to him by his ministers until he was sure he knew its essential core. The hopeful "understudies" were forcibly awakened to the realization that they were hoist on their own petard.

175 643 563 ●669 The colored element was particularly apprehensive at Soulouque's amazing activity, for the President was clearly setting himself against their group, both in the cabinet and out. Determining clandestinely to get rid of their puppet before he became a Frankenstein's monster to destroy his creators, they fomented a new revolution. This, however, proved to be a strategic error of the first magnitude, for the President was already much stronger than they imagined. The insurrection was quashed with massacre and attendant frightfulness. In the aftermath, as Bouzon mordantly remarks, "the republic was calm—with all the tranquillity of a tomb!" By their ineptitude, the colored group had now made themselves completely insecure.

175 565 643 642 [555] In the second year of his régime Soulouque decided to imitate Dessalines by turning the state into an empire. His coronation was extremely gaudy, as well as expensive. Calling himself Emperor Faustin I, he created a peerage drawn chiefly from among his black generals—four princes, fifty-nine dukes, and numerous counts, barons, and knights. This was merely outward pomp to gratify their craving for prestige, for they had no functions to perform, nor even the necessity of Christophe's peers to pay for their regalia. As nobles they were given no responsibilities in directing economic activity nor any increased political power over districts of the empire. The Emperor's own vanity was flattered by having a peerage. He ruled as an autocrat with blatant despotism. For ten years following the 175 643 721 648 728 coronation Haiti had to accustom itself to costly expeditions against the Dominican Republic, nearly all ending in defeat for Haiti. The outcome of these intermittent wars was neither gain nor loss of territory by either side, but only temporary rule of occupied districts. Haiti likewise had to accustom itself to sudden executions, to the shabby grandeur of court display, and to financial trickery which would not have deceived a schoolboy. While the heads of his opponents and even his loyal counselors fell, Soulouque's infantile "empire" tottered to economic ruin.

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"empire" tottered to economic ruin. Graft, default on the debt, increasing deficits, and debased currency were the order of the day, and so continued until 1859, when the accumulation of anger over the useless wars and the humiliating defeats made the Emperor so unpopular that a new and more carefully planned revolution accomplished his downfall. 175 643 652 669

Fifteen years of administration by Negro rulers had broken the political power of the colored élite. Only three light-skinned men became president thereafter until the occupation of Haiti by the American Marines in 1915; in the seventy-two years following Boyer's downfall, mulattoes ruled during only eight. The army under a black general was too powerful, a colored president too hampered by suspicion, to make the political game worth the candle. The colored élite, therefore, adapted themselves to existing conditions as best they could, controlling the business life of Haiti, filling the law offices and, because of their literacy, the secretaryships of state, and indulging in honorific cultural pursuits. 175 643 178 564

In the years after Soulouque the basic realities of Haitian life were changed hardly at all by shifting political administrations. Some of the presidents were mildly progressive, many were indifferent; still more were actually harmful; but the lives of the mass of peasants were not often touched by presidential vagaries. Politics was an affair almost wholly of townspeople, of the army, the élite, and the pseudo-élite. Revolutions, counterrevolutions, movements of reform, international tangles, financial woes, and most of the other complications to which unstable states are heir, absorbed the attention of rulers and upper-class folk who were politically inclined. 175 643 66

Constitutions were made by presidents and changed by their successors; the Senate passed contradictory laws in the same session if the chief executive so recommended; the courts were presided over by the president's men. Haitian law in the latter half of the nineteenth century was what the president's immediate strength and wish made it—or else it was folk custom, undisturbed by the rulers. 175 642 671 692

Never once, in the three quarters of a century after Boyer's time, did Haiti approach the high standard of production known in colonial days or in the early years of independence. The pattern of Haitian social and economic life became fixed in this seventy-five years. Haiti became a country of small-scale tillage by a peasant population, with only enough external trade to provide moderate 175 178 433 565 439

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175 701 648 177 625 652 669 Since it was an entrenched interest, however, no responsible statesman had dared to threaten its hold. The Marines swept it out of existence, undertaking to substitute for it a trained constabulary of only 2,000 men who should combine routine military tasks with police duty in the scattered towns. Results were immediately apparent: the weighty incubus of soldiers' wages was lifted from the treasury; thousands of men were deprived of sinecures and put back into productive economic activities; the constant threat of armed revolution was removed; better order was kept by 2,000 trained men in trim uniform than by twelve times that number of ragged loafers who called themselves soldiers; and since the army was no longer the great steppingstone to political office, the élite felt more secure from assault by ambitious but uneducated army men. From 1843 to 1915 the élite had endured many lower-caste presidents because these were able to control the army; now the army had disappeared.

175 648 [743] [744] [365] [491] [45] The Marines did much that was of indisputable benefit to Haiti. This was acknowledged even by the most vocal patriots who soon began to campaign for an end of the Occupation. Where there had been no real work in public health, Americans now built hospitals, established clinics, cleaned up the sources of many diseases, laid down sewage systems, gave the towns pure water. In 1915 there were only three automobiles in the country, and no roads for them to travel; the Americans built many miles of paved roads. In 1915 there had been only one wharf, two short stretches of railroad, two lighthouses, one electric plant; the Americans undertook electrification, telephone systems, the construction of administration buildings, and other public conveniences. Whether in such visible matters or in the obscurer realms of currency, banking, and budgets hardly a phase of daily life was left untouched. And judged by the standards of civilization the Marines improved what they touched.

175 648 642 But rancor against the Americans began early and continued to the bitter end in 1934. The pride of all Haitians was deeply wounded by the Occupation. For 111 years they had governed themselves and had assumed themselves to be a sovereign nation; the Marines patroling the countryside were vivid reminders that Haiti had never been independent except by sufferance, and that white men were once more overseeing the destinies of colored and Negro men. Nevertheless, the reasons proclaimed for opposing the Occupation were not those of hurt vanity. Some of those given were entirely

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reported in Haiti that although they joined patriotically in the cheering when the Marines embarked in 1934, many of them shed tears to see the departure of 2,000 monthly salaries, most of which had been enriching the local tills. Indeed, the country came much closer to establishing a mercantile middle class during the Occupation than ever before. The only real control left behind by the Americans was an overseer of the national budget, destined to leave as soon as Haiti's external debt was finally paid off. To that end the government saved rather than spent, so that businessmen found no comfort in the state of economic affairs, particularly during a decade of world depression and European disturbance. Nationalist economic theories in Europe have upset Haitian markets, so that the élite thriftily save their pennies against hard times instead of spending them freely on present luxuries. The American overseer of the budget withdrew in 1941.

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At many points the forces of the Occupation touched unwittingly upon deep-rooted prejudices of the Haitian people. In order to secure laborers for road construction the Marines revived an old corvée law of Christophe's time, requiring forced labor on public works at the need of the government. Many of the ill-nourished peasants were taxed beyond their physical powers by work on the roads, so that an armed revolt by caco guerrillas broke out. Its suppression required months of time and cost many lives, leaving in its train a great deal of ill will.

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The efficient Americans also came to grief when they attempted to make Haitians orderly in the American way. Land titles were in chaos, as we have noted. American experts wished to find a basis for internal taxation, so that economic reform might be effective and permanent. The effort to have people declare their claims so that these might be properly registered had to be given up after a few weeks, for the peasant owners knew without written deeds their local boundaries, and among the squatters those who realized their title might not stand under strict investigation were understandably averse to having questions of property tenure raised by the authorities of an alien and interfering government.

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Wherever Marine barracks were located, there were centres of a cultural dissemination which was bound in the long run to affect Haitian ideas and practices. Automobiles, radios, amusements, even the daily conversation of the Marines, all left their mark upon a people who had been effectively isolated from the world for more than a century.

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learn the properties of plants, both for healing and for poison. Except for the belief in spiritual beings, this folk knowledge would hardly have been classed as religious, for it was useful in every phase of daily life; the classification is that of the anthropologist, not of the simple black.

If Dahomean beliefs prevailed over others of African origin, it was chiefly because of the numerical preponderance of Dahomeans in the colony, together with the popularity of their religious dances. The Dahomean spirits or gods were Vodun; the dance in which the worshiper sought the inspiration of the spirits was a Vodun dance. Like all but the highly organized religions, this one recognized the validity of other beliefs. Its practitioners were not bigots. No hierarchy existed to keep out new accretions. Imperceptibly these were added to the original basic form: here an Arada spirit, there a Congolese prayer, and in many instances a Catholic saint, until the composite Vodun religion began to take shape.

There is no evidence that during colonial times Vodun was ever considered important by the white ruling class—certainly not as a faith. To most planters the word was the name for a vigorous dance. Judging from Moreau de Saint-Méry's description it was held openly enough, at times being witnessed by the whites as a sort of nocturnal diversion. Moreau knew, as did other whites, that there were "superstitious beliefs" connected with it, yet the offhand use of the word "superstition" was indication enough that the beliefs were not regarded as important. We have seen, however, what profitable use the slaves were able to make of the apparent innocence of their dances. When the idea of revolt began to germinate among them, gathering on each plantation at least once a week they had ample opportunity to hatch their plans. It is known that the campaign for revolt was developed partly under the stimulus of the Negro Boukman, a *houngan* or priest of Vodun. By means of drumbeats, which to the whites merely pounded out the rhythm for dancing but had for centuries been a means of communication at long distance in parts of West Africa, that ripening plot was telegraphed from one plantation to another. Even more important, perhaps, was the unity of feeling made possible, despite all incoherence of tradition and language, by the Vodun background.

The revolt of half a million slaves was a success. This fact has been rather too calmly accepted by historians of Saint-Domingue, who

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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have explained it chiefly by the surprise element of the uprising. But when else in modern history have slaves successfully revolted against their armed masters and become permanently free? Successful revolutions even of people not in bodily slavery have had acknowledged leadership, whereas in Haiti no real leader appeared for the insurgents. Boukman's influence, indeed, at its widest never reached beyond a part of the northern plain; he had about the same range of power as a ward boss in the United States. On the plantations Hallaou, Hyacinthe, Lafortune, and others whose names are unimportant or unknown, Vodun houngans likewise welded slave opinion within their narrow districts. But no single great leader appeared. As the conflict was developed, without plan or unity under the divided and contradictory action of numerous blacks, what held the people together was, negatively, their hatred of the white masters; positively, their Vodun beliefs. Only later in the decade did a true leader, Toussaint L'Ouverture, emerge to consolidate their victory.

As often happens among unsophisticated people convinced of the rightness of their cause, the local Vodun leaders were sure of their own invulnerability through the protection of one or another of the spirits.[8] They convinced their followers as well, to such a degree that when an invulnerable chief fell there were dozens of reasons to explain the unexpected death rather than any disillusion. Usually, failure to follow the rigorous propitiation requirements of the protecting god offered the key to the misfortune. Various ones of them were known to be exacting and troublesome. The leader at Trou-Coffi, Romaine by name, had absorbed enough of the Roman Catholicism in Vodun to feel that the Virgin Mary was his especial patroness.[9] Beyond this specific belief in invulnerability was the general trust that Vodun spirits would lead their devotees to success, would give them a happy issue out of all their distress.

8. A parallel case of belief in invulnerability because of divine protection was that of the North American Indians both at the time of Tecumseh and later in the Sioux outbreaks at the climax of the Ghost-Dance Religion. See James Mooney, *The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890* (Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, 1892–93 [Washington, 1896]), chap. X.

9. The importance of Vodun beliefs in connection with the slave revolt is stressed by Dr. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Vodou et Névrose* (Port-au-Prince, 1931), pp. 33–34. He says of many of the chiefs: "The belief in their invulnerability was not at all the result of calculation, but was a true state of mind, a sort of autosuggestion which explains very well the chronic heroism of certain leaders of the revolution in Saint-Domingue and of the war of independence of 1802–3."

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Vodun, then, was both widespread and powerful enough to be turned to most effective ends in 1791. Contemporary accounts of it still saw it as a meeting ground of superstitions. The French naturalist, Descourtilz, for example, was primarily struck by the use of the occult in connection with Vodun; he especially describes a woman who, under the seizure of her god, took a live coal in her hand without being burnt; a husband who by the use of magic struck his inconstant wife with a languorous malady, effective for half a year; and the knowledge of poison which was combined with the practice of magic. He mentions but one of the Vodun gods by name but implies the existence of many others.[10]

Madiou, Haiti's first historian, likewise always spoke of Vodun as a savage survival; he says of a native general, "Lamour Dérance, plunged in gross errors, put his faith in *sorcery*, in the prophecy of *papas*, or priests of *African fetishism*."[11] In his scornful distaste for the vulgar he clearly indicated by his own italics some conspicuous elements of the developing religion: magic, the use of fetishes, and a Vodun priesthood. His illustration of Dérance's error was his making soldiers believe that bullets could not wound them:

> When he marched to combat he was preceded by bands of Congos, Aradas, Ibos, Nabos, Mandingues, Haoussas, who threw themselves against the French battalions with a prodigious intrepidity, crying that the bullets were but dust. But this courage which *superstition* fed was shattered against the ramparts of . . . the Europeans' square formations.

It is noteworthy that the first three black rulers set themselves against Vodun because of its potentialities for sedition. The plots to overthrow the old régime had come to fruition at apparently innocent Vodun dances. Although the ingenuous aspect of the dance gathering had deceived the white masters, Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe knew the meaning of the assemblies. All three had to drive their people hard and knew that resentment would be an inevitable consequence; it must not have an opportunity to burgeon at nightly gatherings. Toussaint was the strictest of the three, for he forbade all dances and nocturnal assemblage.[12] The other two singled

10. M. E. Descourtilz, *Voyages d'un naturaliste en Haïti, 1799–1803* (Paris, 1935 ed.), pp. 116–118.
11. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, p. 33.
12. In an order of January 4, 1800.

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Boyer was overthrown by the Revolution of 1843, by all odds the

most important of Haitian upheavals. Since its effects were to be felt for the next seventy years in the extinction of representative government and the eclipse of the élite as political rulers, it is worthy of special attention. Paradoxically, it was a revolution fomented by the élite themselves. Its background and outcome reveal the power in word, and the impotence in deed, of this group by 1843.

The constitution of 1816, devised by Pétion's henchmen, had granted the president initiative in all laws except those concerning taxation. After the agreement of 1825 with France,[6] however, Boyer, hard pressed by the need of paying the indemnity each year, began to restrict the number of officials, diminish their salaries, and veto all projects favorable to the development of public instruction and improvement which might cause further expenditure. By temperament he was an autocrat.[7] Every valuable measure must come from him alone; whatever another person proposed he would find a thousand reasons to discard. Sarcastic and vain, he did not know how to smooth ruffled feelings or make conflicting groups reconcile their differences. His personal weaknesses of character alienated the sympathies of many once-devoted officials.

During his long presidency Boyer also systematically ignored the younger generation, men who admired the efforts of Pétion, ardent reformers who wished to devote their energies to the improvement of Haiti. The military career had no attraction for them: the higher ranks, alone bringing sufficient salary for a congenial way of life, were too few and one could achieve them only with difficulty, for since 1825 advancement had been submitted to rigorous rules. On the other hand, the paths of administration were severely guarded by those admirable great functionaries left over from the government of Pétion—men like Inginac and Imbert. But age had slowed their activity, and still Boyer kept them on. The younger generation mocked this "gerontocracy" and supported the parliamentary opposition.

The youth of the élite class continued to go to France for their education, returning to Haiti to take part in the lively political discussions which made one of their chief occupations. During the first decade of Boyer's administration they generally supported him, for

6. By which France recognized the independence of Haiti in return for the payment of a large annual indemnity.

7. "In everything, he wishes to dominate," Pétion had said of him.

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When the Chamber of 1842 assembled Boyer once more forced the elimination of these men and several of their political friends.[9] The majority in the Chamber was so agitated over this expulsion that only twenty-eight out of seventy-two deputies thereafter appeared at any session. A dozen communes, among them the most important in the country (Port-au-Prince, Les Cayes, Gonaïves, Santo Domingo), had no representation. The deputies of the South avenged themselves by instituting a series of "patriotic banquets." At the plantations of adversaries of the government dinners were given for dozens of guests; the meals were followed by vibrant speeches, full of criticisms of the government. Thanks to the talent of these orators, the opposition likewise gradually filtered its way into the mass of the people, slowly but implacably undermining Boyer's government. 175 643 665 646

The President also had bad luck to contend with. During his presidency many catastrophies saddened the country. The arsenal blew up in 1827, burning the state warehouses and causing a loss of 5,000,000 piastres. A cyclone in 1831 desolated the South. Fires in 1832 and 1843 practically wiped out Port-au-Prince. An earthquake in 1842 shook the whole island, destroyed Santiago and Port-de-Paix, and transformed Cap-Haïtien into a mass of ruins; the fire which broke out in consequence was accompanied by pillaging which went on for several days. The parliamentary opposition to Boyer made use of these natural calamities to sharpen displeasure at the government. 175 731 [664]

In August, 1842, a secret association, The Society of the Rights of Man and of Citizen, was formed at Les Cayes to exploit this discontent and prepare the fall of Boyer. It circulated clandestinely throughout the South the ringing Manifesto by Praslin, a résumé of the charges of the opposition which was soon covered with signatures. When adherents of the society were numerous enough, an executive committee was formed with the commandant Rivière Hérard as president. At the end of January, 1843, an uprising occurred on the Praslin plantation.[10] General Borgella, head of the department of the South, proved irresolute; the insurrection, fostered by this indecision, spread rapidly among the troops, even generals joining in. By Febru- 175 668 175 669

9. The most important of the excluded deputies were Dumai Lespinasse, Covin Aîné, Dominique, Benoît, Pouthieux, Dorsainville Dautant.
10. At Torbeck, in the department of the South.

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175 669 [643] [159]

ary, 1843, Boyer realized that it was futile to oppose the revolutionaries and departed for exile, going by way of Jamaica to Paris.

Now came the test of the revolutionary leaders.[11] The state was in their hands; their own representative, Rivière Hérard, was the new president. They proceeded to concoct a ridiculously naïve constitution which by granting a popular vote alienated large bodies of their mulatto support; to insult the black army leaders; and to allow the defeat of Haitian forces by Dominican revolutionaries, thus losing two thirds of the island's area. Every act weakened the party favoring representative government. Within a year Rivière was ousted and a black general was ruling Haiti with a rod of iron. The Revolution of 1843 from which so much was expected had by its very success ruined the parliamentarians, for with power in their hands they showed themselves utterly inept.

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A succession of black generals now came to the presidency. When Faustin Soulouque became president in 1847, the fourth Negro within four years, and made himself emperor two years later, Haiti found herself once more back at the strong-man principle. The élite were out of office, relegated to inferiority in all phases of political life.

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In the middle of the nineteenth century the groups upholding the conflicting principles in politics became organized political parties. Those favoring parliamentary rule called themselves Liberals; those believing in the sole rule of a strong dictator were called Nationalists. But by no stretch of the imagination could the Liberal party be considered democratic. The noble principles expressed in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the American Declaration of Independence were uncongenial to Haiti. One of the prime tenets of the Liberals, indeed, was that men were not created equal; rather that certain men (the élite) were clearly the superiors of others. Liberty

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[175] [669]

11. The revolution was almost wholly an affair of the élite caste. The mulatto Boyer was deposed, and the mulatto Rivière Hérard took his place. If anyone thought of the peasants, it was only to use them to manipulate and manoeuvre the "outs" into office. Boyer's secretary-general, deposed along with the President, appealed to his countrymen against their accusation of treason against him, saying "My last wishes will be for the prosperity of Haiti and the regeneration of the African caste, to which I have consecrated myself wholeheartedly for forty years, without ever thinking of my own interests." (Joseph Balthasar Inginac, *Message à ses compatriotes, et principalement à ceux qui ont dirigé les affaires populaires de la république depuis la fin de janvier dernier* [Port-au-Prince, March 18, 1843], p. 6). Yet if these are more than hopeful words, they refer only to the distribution of the land which made peasants of the "African caste," and to Inginac's pamphlets on how to raise coffee and other products—which none of the peasants could read.

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Pétion and Boyer had

175 suavity enough to rule constitutionally with a Senate which, since
643 class interests were being served by the executive, did not curb their
646 virtual dictatorships. Later presidents had more difficulty. Geffrard,
642 for example, elected as a Liberal after the fall of Soulouque's grim empire, had made parliamentary government a battle cry of his campaign. In office, however, he was continually at loggerheads
•[669] with his Senate, until he exercised his presidential privilege of dissolving it; in the end a revolution overthrew the Liberal parliamentarian because he had become a dictator. So with his successor Salnave (1867–69), likewise a Liberal, who almost immediately upon inauguration found it impossible to work with such a group of talkers. So once more with Nissage-Saget (1870–74), who followed Salnave: a professed believer in legislative responsibility, he refused to yield to the legislature on any important matter. A black Nationalist succeeded for two years, ruling despotically. Then came the last of the Liberal presidents, Boisrond-Canal (1876–79). This man was apparently determined to allow his legislature its full constitutional rights. As a result Haiti had more talk in the capital, and less action, than in almost any régime up to that time; then, as Montague says, "convinced that the constitutional régime was a failure, Haiti's most scrupulous president resigned in disgust."[13]

175 The Liberal party virtually disappeared from the scene in 1883,
665 after two abortive coups by their leader of the moment, Boyer
669 Bazelais. The first occurred in 1879 when the retiring President,
[666] Boisrond-Canal, gave Haiti one of her very rare honest elections, resulting in the choice of the Nationalist candidate Salomon. Bazelais and his men forsook their professed principles, rising in arms to seize power. They were suppressed. Four years later when the moment again seemed auspicious Bazelais led another revolution, which the President so effectively crushed that the leader himself was killed. The leaderless Liberals were no longer effective competitors in presidential politics. From that time until the American Occupation, the élite were out of power. One president only during those thirty-five years was a mulatto: Tancrède Auguste, one of the weakest rulers in Haitian history. He died, presumably poisoned, after eight months of office.

100 The era from 1883 to 1915 was Haiti's worst, politically. Revo-

13. Ludwell L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938* (Durham, 1940), p. 18.

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The era from 1883 to 1915 was Haiti's worst, politically. Revo-

175 lution succeeded revolution; the country sank deep into graft and 669 scandal; foreign powers made Haiti debase herself before them. Some 668 of the élite, backed by foreign merchants resident in the country, 648 went so far as to urge annexation by the United States rather than 642 endure continued disorder in economics and degradation in social 643 life. They felt matters had come to such a pass that only so radical a change could clean the Augean stables. This was the period of a succession of political pamphlets[14] written by élite thinkers to set forth the necessary steps of reform. Every president was a black autocrat, holding power by his control over the masses. If an occasional one was more than mediocre (Hyppolite, for example), his good qualities were sure to be more than offset by the ignorant boors (such as Nord Alexis) who followed him.

175 True, even the most incompetent of the Negro presidents was 643 obliged to employ a few élite, for literacy was necessary in the foreign 645 office if nowhere else. The aristocrats were impotent, however, for 565 Haitian problems had tremendously increased at the very period when they were losing control of government policy. Reforms were imperative, as every member of the élite knew; but no black president saw the need, or seeing it, had the vaguest idea how to proceed [648] toward effecting them. Beyond the shameful disgrace of Haiti's position in the world of independent nations, the thoughtful could glimpse the anarchy which must inevitably result from continued ineffectiveness.

175 Reforms were not forthcoming. Rather, anarchy came, bringing 642 international complications in its wake. The American Marines 648 occupied the country. An era was ended.

175 It had been a strange journey in political ideas from the time of 643 Pétion and Christophe to that of the Occupation. The early leaders seemed to envision triumphs for Haiti in a world of great powers, and to see themselves as men with a mission. After Boyer the vision dimmed. We have Soulouque, whose tinsel empire was mere stage setting for the act of a neighborhood bully; the tyrant Domingue; the senile Nord Alexis; the utterly incompetent fly-by-nights in the decade before the Occupation. Even Geffrard the reformer, prob-

14. Among the most lucid of these were: Démesvar Delorme, *La Misère au sein des richesses* (1873); Edmond Paul, *Les Causes de nos malheurs* (1889); Léonidas Laventure, *Haiti: le danger de la patrie* (1893); Alcius Charmant, *Haiti, vivre-à-elle!* (1905); and Auguste Magloire, *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social* (1909).

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175 178 181 prosper." Yet every change of administration saw merely a new embroidery on the old theme of sterility.[17]

175 565 The further weakness of social or class consciousness has already been treated at length. It kept the whole nation divided from top to bottom, setting black against colored, North against South, countryside against town. It meant a perennial civil war, latent at times, but constantly breaking out in new insurrections.

175 669 701 Some day a diligent scholar may try to catalogue the revolutions which Haiti has undergone. Magloire discusses sixty-nine "important" ones between 1806 and 1879;[18] but the latter date was merely the threshold of renewed revolutionary activity. There seems to have been very little pattern in these uprisings, except that almost never were they a spontaneous revolt of the masses, as the Slave Insurrection of 1791 had been. The peasants were constantly being impressed into service with the army of a general who had presidential ambitions. From the middle years of the nineteenth century certain peasants found fighting a more profitable trade than any other, and began to hire themselves out as mercenaries. In the North these professional guerrilla warriors were known as *cacos*, in the South as *piquets*. Their methods were those of terror and rapine. They were a constant menace to the peace, and their suppression was one of the announced purposes of the American Occupation, for every revolutionary chief felt it necessary to hire their services.

175 369 669 Another recognized procedure of revolution was incendiarism. Haitian politics is almost wholly the affair of townsmen, and more narrowly of the men of the six important towns—Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, Jérémie, Les Cayes, Gonaïves, and Saint-Marc. Except for their principal buildings and villas, these towns are constructed of wood or other inflammable material. Leaders of insurrections therefore have habitually set fire to the poorer sections of the towns, and as frequently as not this threat has won over the populace, who preferred overthrowing the government to having their homes burned. Support of the insurrection becomes a form of fire insurance. Such a state of affairs is eloquent testimony to the cynical attitude of the political leaders toward the masses.

660 A revolution directed by a general of real ambition was likely to

17. Auguste Magloire, *Histoire d'Haïti d'après un plan nouveau* (Port-au-Prince, 1909), I, 230, 243, 250–251, develops this theme at length.
18. *Ibid.*, Vol. II.

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A revolution directed by a general of real ambition was likely to
involve an appeal to foreign powers. Haiti being almost roadless, 175
ships were important for moving troops and blockading seaports. 669
Many a chieftain has purchased six or eight ships abroad, and with 648
this "navy" won his fight. Financial intrigue was frequent. By bor- 457
rowing money from France, Germany, or England, with the promise [491]
to reshape Haitian financial policy to the benefit of the creditor [505]
country, several revolutionaries have secured funds for arms and the necessary soldiers to effect a coup. Sooner or later also one might expect to see the Môle Saint Nicolas, which guards the Windward Passage pathway between Cuba and Haiti, come into the picture. Cession of the Mole has frequently been held out as bait for foreign support, but popular opposition to white ownership of any Haitian land has always stopped actual cession. When Haiti's debt to Germany was due, she borrowed from France to pay it, and then later borrowed from the United States to pay France. All such appeals to foreign powers have merely drawn attention to the defenseless position of the country; many a successful revolutionary chief has lived to regret his appeal for aid.[19]

The one time between 1804 and 1915 when political opinion was 175
vocal and truly significant was in the latter years of Boyer's adminis- 665
tration. Then it took pains to attack specific evils with steady per- 208
sistence, even though the cures suggested were vague. Yet after the successful elimination of Boyer, politicians who had worked so brilliantly in the opposition showed themselves even more incapable. Political thought, at a low ebb for the next forty years, revived only when, after 1883, the Liberals were eliminated from politics. Their complete defeat seems to have given élite thinkers time for sober reflection upon the plight of their country. Before 1843 the critics had been in a position to make their words effective; after 1883 they wrote—soberly, brilliantly, persuasively—but their books and pamphlets were read only by a small group of fellow aristocrats who already thought as they did, or disagreed with them in print. Political homilies made no impression upon the minds of the peasants left uneducated by all the élite presidents of Haiti.

In the crucial days of the American Occupation, once again political [648]
debate rose to brilliant heights. The rude shock of seeing foreign

19. See, on this whole subject of Haiti's foreign relations, an excellent chapter in Montague, *op. cit.*, chap. IX.

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3. The unimportance of the legislature. It has made useful patron

646 age for the president to dispense, and has preserved the semblance of
642 republican government; but hardly half a dozen legislative sessions in all Haitian history have contributed seminal ideas in politics or initiated true reforms. How could they, indeed, when the president was consistently a dictator of policy?

666 4. The undemocratic nature of the vote. Senators are chosen by
642 the representatives, and the two groups together have generally elected the president, when he did not come to power by revolution. The only chance people have had to vote has been for local officials and representatives. In these cases, the vote has been limited to the élite and the army, with the president's henchmen counting the ballots. Since the Occupation there have been plebiscites on constitutional changes, the people having the right to vote Yes or No.

692 5. The subservience of the courts to the president. They have been
643 filled with president's men, generally astute enough to consult presi-
642 dential wishes before handing down a decision. Foreign merchants soon learned that they could expect little "justice" from the courts if their own cause conflicted with special Haitian interests. Foreign diplomats likewise learned that in crises the courts could involve the simplest issue in such verbal complexity that months of patience would be necessary to unwind the red tape.

641 6. The pliability of "constitutional rights." Freedom of speech and
661 of the press has been notably lacking, although scurrilous attacks on the administration's enemies have often been permitted. Legislators
642 have been expelled. Graft has flourished. In 1833, for example, two representatives were expelled from the House "for systematically opposing the measures of the executive, and persisting in a demand for a statement of public expenditures." A century later a senator was expelled for almost the same reasons.

701 7. Militarism. Only in this respect is any real change apparent since
178 the American Occupation. The army was always large up to 1915, and so constituted an economic drain as well as a political menace.
642 Generals had great power: they ruled each department and each
669 arrondissement, were subject only to the president, and were at the bottom of every revolutionary movement.[22] Since the Occupation

[162] 22. In 1842, when the population was still less than a million, there were in the dis-
[701] trict governments 9 generals, 63 colonels, 48 lieutenant colonels, 9 captains, 1 lieutenant, and 28 medical officers; and in the standing army 33 colonels, 95 lieutenant colonels, 825 captains, 654 lieutenants, 577 sublieutenants and ensigns, 6,815 noncommissioned officers, and 25 medical officers. The army had 28,000 soldiers and cost about $600,000 a year. See John Candler, *Brief Notes of Hayti*, pp. 66 ff.

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numbers in the army have been radically reduced; yet in that very fact there is the possibility for the only armed persons in Haiti, the present Garde d'Haïti, to effect political coups. But at least the budget is not strained by the salaries of thousands of unnecessary soldiers, as was true in pre-Occupation days.

8. The separation of the masses from government. By providing a minimum of local government, but that fairly effective, the national government has been able to keep the peasants out of all but revolutionary politics. Rural communities have ordinarily got along well enough without formal government, so that the history of Haitian political thought and the analysis of Haitian political forms would treat of affairs interesting to only a fraction of the population.

It need hardly be repeated, after a reflection upon these apparent permanencies of political life, that Haiti is not a democracy.

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[p. 234]

XIII

CONSTITUTIONS AND POLITICAL FORMS

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QUITE aside from its castes and the political separation of 1807–20, Haiti has always consisted of two nations, one living in and near the towns and so within reach of established government, the other rural and yet capable of ordering its own affairs by folk rules without much actual governmental machinery. It is through the former that Haiti has a political history. Indeed, one is tempted to say that more than half the people have continually got along without any government whatever of a formal sort, for being peaceably inclined they have found custom and usage [669] sufficient for their needs. These people have been rarely disturbed by the state's rulers; revolutionary chieftains alone have found it worth their while to stir up the country folk to an active interest in politics.

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The formal subdivisions of Haiti have been, through most of its history, three: the *commune*, roughly corresponding to the American township; the *arrondissement*, a group of communes, just as the American county is a group of townships; and the *département*, comprising several arrondissements. All three terms were borrowed from France, although their significance was altered when applied to the Haitian scene.

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In the days of Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, the government had owned vast plantations which were under the control of the military. Pétion and Boyer instituted the commune by combining numerous estates and farms into a group likewise to be controlled by soldiers. Until the American Occupation the police system of the country was military, with ordinary soldiers keeping order and making arrests when necessary. Since few people are less given to disorder than the Haitian peasants, the task of keeping order was not a serious one; indeed, soldiers were frequently stationed among their friends and relatives, who never thought of them as police. It some- [293] times happened, however, that soldiers were assigned to other parts of the country, where they swaggered about with their *cocomacaques* (heavy-jointed canes), using these or the flat of their swords to enforce their often arbitrary commands.

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In every commune recognized by the state was an important

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643 reason of his power to name agents accredited to foreign governments; with the approval of the Senate he made treaties and wars. In cases of malversation, or gross corruption, the president might be denounced by the Senate (his own nominees), and the High Court of Justice (his own appointees) would sit in judgment on him; matters [669] have never reached this pass, however, for the Haitian method of checking a president's "malversation" has been the more direct one of revolution.

643 At a salary generally set in the neighborhood of thirty or forty thousand dollars the president could live luxuriously, the highest-[465] paid person in Haiti. The salary combined with the prestige and [661] perquisites of office was enough to explain the eagerness with which men sought the position. "Perquisites" often enough included graft.

645 Details of administration have been in the hands of various departments of state, their number depending upon the constitution then in force. As has been said, the president generally regarded his cabinet members as little more than clerks to attend to details. Only a few in the whole nineteenth century stand out prominently as directors of policy—Boyer as Pétion's secretary-general; Inginac, holding the same position under Boyer; Anténor Firmin, Hyppolite's foreign secretary; and a handful of others. During the four years, 1843–47, of "ephemeral governments" the cabinet ministers sometimes managed to rule their offices, and under the succession of ignorant Negro generals at the end of the century, if the educated élite secretaries had not taken charge of affairs no one would have handled them. Constitutional language made the cabinet officers seem more important than they were, however, for the actual position of a minister was usually that of head clerk, chief errand boy and handy man for the president, and convenient scapegoat when crises arose in foreign affairs, finances, public works, or other spheres.

646 The legislative body has ordinarily consisted of two chambers, the Senate and the Chamber of Representatives. Senators must be thirty years old. They have ordinarily served a nine-year term, being available for reëlection only after three years out of office. The method of choice curbed their power: the lower house selected each senator from a list of three nominated by the president for each vacancy. For a salary of sixteen hundred dollars and freedom from arrest in civil cases, all the senator had to do was to correspond with the president and lower house on public affairs, and decree appro-

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Cassation at Port-au-Prince. In the event that this court confirmed the judgment of the lower courts, the defendant might still appeal from it to the president, and might apply for a new trial in the lower courts. Thus the contest would proceed ad infinitum, however clear the proof that the debt was just. 175 695

The Court of Cassation exceeded all others in the slowness of its judgments. Its judges were under the surveillance of the president, and must consult with him before deciding a case. If he disagreed, and the state was a party to the case, the judges must reconsider "to see if they have not taken a wrong view of the question at issue." Even so, the grand judge might stay execution as long as he deemed advisable after a judgment was confirmed.

Judges were rarely chosen from among trained lawyers, but were appointed by the government because of political considerations. Consequently, few people had any faith in court decisions, and in general they avoided taking their problems to law. The peasants in particular were bewildered by the whole procedure. White foreigners also often complained that unless they were willing to pay heavily they had no slightest chance of getting justice in the Haitian courts. 693 695 641

It must be emphasized that the majority of cases coming before the courts were civil rather than criminal, for it has been a universal matter of comment that the Haitian people were rarely guilty of serious crimes. Minor thefts of poultry or animals have been the commonest breaches of the peace, while murder, arson, and rape have almost never occurred. Even the bitterest critics of the republic have noted the absence of crime.[9] It is noteworthy that, despite their poverty and the hardness of their life, the Haitians are, contrary to the prevailing white man's notion of Negro unreliability, passion, and lawlessness, a tranquil folk. The absence of crime speaks volumes for the wholesomeness of a people much maligned by the stories of their "Voodoo" practices and bloody revolutions. An élite ex-president spoke to me with pride of the honesty of the country people who welcomed travelers with true hospitality and with no expectation of payment. "You might sleep safely in a country cabin with a thousand dollars on your person," he said.[10] 691 674

9. Mackenzie, British consul during a part of Boyer's régime, and young Haiti's fiercest critic, said that during his whole stay he knew of only one murder, and that in this case the assassin was executed. [114] [682]

10. In times of revolution, brigandage was expected but was not accounted a crime, any more than killing in warfare is called murder. [669] [685]

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175 701 [512] Saturday to use their time cultivating the soil, pursuing some mechanical craft, or acting as day laborers.

692 703 175 It must be once more emphasized that the civil was everywhere subservient to the military power. The administration of justice in tribunals was carried out only at the pleasure of the army chiefs. No person would have dared bring suit against a high officer; the only efficacious way of obtaining justice against petty offenders was through summary decision and corporal chastisement by the commanding officer.

701 625 175 By the close of Boyer's rule, during which he had kept the army up to its full numbers while pursuing a policy of economy, the outward appearance of the troops was almost ludicrous. They appeared at review wearing generally what pleased them or what they could scrape together, for they had to supply their own clothing and arms. The only effectual employment of the soldiery was as armed police, for Haiti never had to fight external powers. The soldiers drummed and fifed, mustered on parade and went through the formations, but otherwise merely stood (or sat) sentry at the doors of public offices, hunted up at the command of the magistrates *les mauvais sujets*, guarded prisons and prisoners on chain-gang duty, loitered at barriers, collected tolls, and examined permits.

175 701 [669] [703] A large army, practically idle, could easily be seduced into the support of revolutionary movements. Principles of discipline and loyalty current in European armies of the day were nonexistent in nineteenth-century Haiti. The numbers in the army varied from twenty to forty or fifty thousand. A strange estimate was made for the year 1867: 6,500 general officers and staff; 7,000 regimental officers; and only 6,500 soldiers.[15] It was said that "*tout Haïtien qui n'était pas général de division était au moins soldat.*" The higher grades became rewards for political service; the lower ranks had to be filled up by recruiting parties—when these were abroad, all men who did not desire a period of enforced leisure away from home remained in hiding.

While the army was not alone responsible for the tragedies of insurrection and mismanagement which consistently befell the country, it was never uninvolved in these misfortunes. Only the [648] radical reforms undertaken by the American Occupation saved modern Haiti from continued military domination.

15. Sir Spenser St. John, *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, p. 310.

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quarantine: "Haiti for the Haitians." At first the prohibition on white ownership of land and financial investment in the country was attributable to a fear of reënslavement; then to a fear that financial commitments (which no Haitian really understood) would somehow lead to political subjection; and always the feeling of pride, combined with a desperate need of self-justification, made the Haitians want to keep their country entirely under control of their own people. It is, of course, possible that if white people had been allowed free access to the country, they might have destroyed the "Black Republic"; excluding white men altogether, however, seriously curtailed economic activity.

2. Overmilitarization. The army, numerous out of all proportion to the population, took the ablest men out of production, drained the treasury, and was a constant source of revolutionary activity.

3. Poor methods of agriculture. Critics often complained that Haiti ought to return to the system of large estates and forced labor; it apparently occurred to no one to suggest that education of the peasants might have made the land productive once more, by teaching the people new methods. Dividing up the land was an inevitable necessity unless every ruler were as willing as Christophe to be a dictator and as capable; but to keep the peasants in ignorance was not a necessity. Peasant landowners in Europe frequently tend their acres with skill, while in Haiti, with neither experience nor instruction in methods of tillage on small farms, the people developed steadily more destructive ways of farming.

4. Inefficient marketing. Assuming Haiti's dependence upon the staple crop of coffee and the handling of this crop by foreign merchants, every government seemed intent upon putting obstacles in the path of efficient marketing procedure.[15] The white trader could deal only with Haitians (who were ignorant in matters of international trade); although the foreigner had to pay a huge license fee in order to deal at all in Haitian products, he got no security in return, for he might not own land or obtain a lien on the real property of a citizen.[16] Banking and exchange facilities were wholly lacking.

15. In 1833 Boyer thought to "encourage" Haitians to commercial effort by gradually expelling foreign traders, refusing to grant them any new licenses to trade. His scheme failed, for the élite were not interested. Indeed, the actual effect of his plan was to disrupt the steady flow of exports and increase discontent with Boyer on the part of the élite plantation owners whose small profits were momentarily interrupted.

16. See James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 374 ff.

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not find herself constantly embroiled with European states and American financial interests. The Haitian debt was funded, and a financial adviser remained in the country even after the Occupation came to an end. It is expected that by 1943 the last debt will be paid; the financial adviser, however, withdrew in 1941. Since the Occupation, although the republic has been free to manage her own affairs, she has consulted frequently with the State Department in Washington.

Nineteen years of occupation ended the century of Haitian isolation. The Americans built roads, conducted health campaigns, made their presence felt even in remote hamlets and valleys. American authors, political, romantic, and sensational, discovered the Antillean republic. Steamship companies stopped their cruises for a few hours at Cap-Haïtien to allow tourists to visit the Citadel, and at Port-au-Prince to see the sights of the capital. Every Haitian now realizes that there is a world outside.

Whatever crises have arisen in Haitian affairs, certain problems have persisted. For whom do they constitute a source of worry? Since the government has always been a dictatorship, limited or absolute, subject to no party control, the incumbents of office have never had the experience of being constantly reminded by their opponents of the misery or daily worries of the population. After a hundred years the people have learned that relief is not to be expected from politicians. Occasionally a dramatic revolutionary leader has persuaded some of the people that the officials in power were responsible for their distress, and so worked up a following; yet even when such movements succeeded, the masses never benefited. To most governments of the past century Haiti's problem has been only one: to frustrate insurrection. There is evidence that recent administrations have busied themselves assiduously with the country's internal problems, although none of them has been adequately solved. The élite, at least as a group, do not feel any apparent responsibility for the maladjustments, nor obligation to effect the necessary reforms. A few patriots, and those almost without exception not in office, know what ails the country and say so; a smaller number propose reasonable solutions. The problems remain. Of these the three outstanding are overpopulation with all its accompanying ills, health, and education.

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[p. 315]

NOTES

CHAPTER II

The period between 1789 and 1803 may be summarized as follows: 175

1789–1791. Struggle for precedence between whites and free colored people, with the balance in favor of the whites. [585]

1791–1793. The slave insurrection, with consequent anarchy, and futile attempts of French commissioners to restore order. Both whites and colored people pushed into the background. [669] [563]

1793–1796. Invasion of the colony by English and Spanish; rise of the mulatto general Rigaud and the black general Toussaint. [648]

1796–1799. Consolidation of power by Toussaint; defeat and expulsion of Rigaud; emigration of whites. [643]

1799–1802. Toussaint in full power as governor-general.

1802–1803. Leclerc's expedition, with its initial successes and ultimate failure. Final achievement of Haitian independence under Dessalines and Christophe. [642]

PART III

Various efforts were made by American abolitionists working with Haitian presidents to colonize freed American Negro slaves in Haiti in the period before the Civil War.[1] All these projects came to unfortunate ends, some even to grimly tragic ones. During Boyer's time about 13,000 American Negroes went to Haiti, the government assigning to each family a portion of land upon its arrival. Very shortly most of those who could afford it returned to this country, and within ten years hardly one was still living upon the land. An American writer, Hunt, says that during his seventeen years in Haiti (before 1860) he had known of but 13 Negroes from America who had been moderately successful; of these, 7 were merchants or traders, 4 mechanics, and 2 lawyers; and all were mulattoes. Five others were barely independent, and all the rest were day laborers or worse. In spite of this, Hunt planned another aided migration of American Negroes to Haiti. Warning them not to expect too much in the way of improvements in agriculture, he adds a significant paragraph: "Should the immigrant obtain quiet possession of unoccupied lands, and begin to use the plough instead of the hoe, his new methods of culture would be likely to draw upon him the jealousy and ill-will of his neighbors. For when new ways are too new to be accepted as an example, they are very apt to be felt and resented as a rebuke. More than one of Boyer's old immigrants have told me that they were obliged to give up agriculture and take to trading in towns, on account of annoyances of this sort. They found their fences down, or their water let off, of a morning; or evidences that cattle had been fed on their grounds over night; or the neighboring idlers, of which there are many, had stolen all their plantains and sweet potatoes, fit for the market. I do not mean to say that here Haytian cultivators are worse than any other rude people. On the contrary, I 175 563

1. An excellent description of these projects is found in L. L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938* (Durham, 1940), chap. IV.

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3. *Pétion, Boyer, and Inginac as Administrators*

Pétion lived very simply in the South, like a plain republican magistrate. He sat on his piazza, accessible to all his people. He had a quiet way of answering his opponents which did not make enemies of them. He made his secretary answer every letter that arrived, no matter how small; many were simply inquiries about the President's health. Yet the wars between Pétion and Christophe dragged on from 1807 to 1812,[8] draining the finances of the republic. Not only the crops declined: so also did most of the public improvements instituted by the colonial planters; so did trade; so did habits of industry. Everything seemed to conspire against hard work. The rich plains of the Cul-de-Sac and the Artibonite Valley were ravaged by fire and warfare; necessary equipment for sugar making was destroyed, the money for new machines and buildings was unavailable; and the men were drawn away from their land by military duties.

Inginac, Boyer's secretary of state, after the Revolution of 1843 had got rid of both the President and his secretary, wrote his memoirs. There are some revealing passages. Inginac reports that Pétion told him only forty days before his death that Boyer was a man of probity and delicacy, "but unhappily he is petulant; he is too set in his ways to conciliate those who might assist him. In everything *he* wants to dominate, and he will bring unhappiness to the country if he does not change." Inginac cites cases to show that Pétion's prophecy was correct. Boyer in 1820 repealed the most unpopular laws, particularly those requiring personal corvée and the repair of public roads; but instead of taking advice from his cabinet on important economic matters, he frequently announced that he was president and would not be run by anybody. Consequently, according to Inginac, he made mistakes which might have been avoided.[9] Defending himself, the former secretary offers a clue to the failure of the régime—possibly unavoidable—by showing that the administration merely suggested, did not require, action:

"Have I not constantly, not only preached and corresponded about the necessity of making agriculture prosperous, but also given work at as high wages as the treasury could afford? Have I not created habitations on lands formerly totally uncultivated, putting formerly idle men to work? Have I not published at my own expense, although I directed the National Printery, methods for cultivating tobacco and coffee plants, of which I distributed gratis several thousand copies?"[10]

In spite of all encouragement which the administration could offer, agricultural production continued to decline, while expenses increased, and external trade fell off from a third to a half. The government had to borrow from the banking firm of Lafitte in Paris to find even the interest for payments due to the French government.

8. Hostilities between the two parts of Haiti ceased about 1812 because of the mutual fear on the part of Christophe and Pétion of Napoleon's ascendancy, and the threat which this constituted to the whole former colony. Their war had ravaged the plantations and removed laborers from the soil. Then came the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain, cutting off many of the supplies which Haiti drew from both countries. There was accordingly an unwritten truce, with no further hostilities. A neutral territory of ten leagues between the boundaries of the two states was tacitly agreed upon: neither army was to enter it. This was the rich plain of Borgne, once the garden of the island, now a wilderness.

9. Joseph Balthazar Inginac, *Mémoire* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1843), pp. 32, 34, 38.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

595 The fact that Haitian law recognizes only monogamy in-
593 troduces numerous overtones into the daily life of the people.
671 If a church-wed wife discovers that her husband makes peri-
odic visits to another woman, whether *placée* or not, serious quarreling between the legal wife and her husband follows. The "wife" may refuse to give food to her husband or to speak to him, and will upbraid him before their children, calling him *vagabond* — a strong word of opprobrium to the Haitian — and other terms which her facile tongue readily finds at hand. The status of the children under this dual family system is another reflection of the values it engenders. And though the account of this given in Mirebalais represents a folk-reaction rather than official procedure — for according to officials in the capital it does not exist in Haitian law — its value as a living belief which gives insight into the relevant attitudes outweighs its possible lack of validity in a legal sense.

858 In Mirebalais it is held that there are what may be spoken of as three classes of offspring. The first, which may be termed "natural" children, are those born to a man by his *placée* wife or wives before his Church marriage, or to a *placée* woman whose mating with him was later legalized by the rites of Church and State. The second class, the "legitimate" children, comprises those born to couples married in the strict legal sense of the word. Finally, a third category consists
[898] of those who may be called "illegitimate" children, and includes all the offspring of any *placée* spouse of a man taken by him after his Church marriage, or children of any of his earlier *placée* wives born subsequent to this marriage. None of these classes of children are at any special social disadvantage, and all not only inherit the African deities of their father, but must also fulfill their spiritual obligations toward him after his death by wearing mourning and performing all other required rituals.

582 Legally, however, the matter is different, for only the chil-
621 dren born to a marriage recorded by the justice of the peace
658
651

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

belong to the father, who, in turn, is the legally recognized 582
father of all the offspring of his wife unless he divorces her — 671
something which, because of Church regulations, occurs but 858
rarely. Children born outside legal marriage have no right to 851
the name of their father. Such a one is entered under his moth- 848
er's name in the record of births, though he may and often does 858
take his father's name in school or later in life, this ultimately 551
becoming the name by which he is known and which he hands
on to his children. It is in the inheritance of the father's prop- 428
erty that children born of the various types of matings are 858
said to be most strongly differentiated, though it was particu- 848
larly with this method of distributing heritable goods re-
ported in Mirebalais that officials in the capital disagreed.
The assertion is made that while the children of a "legal"
wife inherit three quarters of the estate, and the other "nat-
ural" children receive one fourth, the "illegitimate" off-
spring have no legal right to any of the dead man's property.
They must either be provided for by their father before his
death or be aided on occasion by a natural brother who has
inherited from their common father and feels a moral obliga-
tion toward these children of their father. Children of plural 595
wives call each other by the terms "brother" and "sister," 593
and in some instances they get on fairly well together. More [601]
generally, however, their attitudes toward one another are
colored by those of their mothers, so that verbal if not physical
encounters may take place when they meet.

Where, as perhaps in the majority of cases, there is a 593
monogamous union, "legal" or "*placée*," cemented by
mutual affection and mutual interest in the future of the
children, life goes on calmly. Each spouse performs the tasks
allotted by custom, and the children are reared in an atmos-
phere which varies with the fortunes and temperaments of
those who make up the household. Fathers are said to prefer
their daughters, and mothers their sons, among their children,
but for this the Haitian has no explanation other than
the phrase: "This is natural."

857 868 handle it; lighter work first, heavier work later. Small boys tend cattle and help the men in the fields.

178 51 The Haitian *habitant* (the peasant) is poorer and hungrier today than he was fifty years ago, or even twenty years ago. In 1955 I visited a number of peasant families I had known since 1932, and with hardly an exception I found them worse off than they had been before. Their [134] tiny landholdings had shrunk. Some land that had been lush had dried up and eroded. Little groves of trees had disappeared. Clothes had become shabby, and many of the men could no longer afford to wear the inexpensive traditional blue denim costume that was once so common. In the cities there is evidence that some of the elite have improved their life. But in a large part of the countryside the peasants are finding that the old system that served them for a hundred and fifty years can no longer feed them adequately.

423 178 One of the adverse forces is the shrinking of landholdings. Once a peasant family may have owned and worked fifty or seventy acres of ground. But it is traditional that on a man's death his land is divided [428] among the heirs. If a man with fifty acres of land has two sons, each son inherits approximately twenty-five acres. On their deaths, the land 423 is again subdivided. But even this is not the whole story. A UNESCO 427 survey of the Marbial Valley region in south Haiti in 1948–1949 reported:

> At the turn of the century there were numerous peasant families who lived in relatively easy circumstances, and who possessed as much as thirty to forty *carreaux* * [425] of land planted with coffee and subsistence crops. The heirs of these lands, when they found themselves in straitened circumstances, would sell some parcels of it in the hope of being able to increase their holdings again later on. In the worst cases they became the tenants of absentee landlords who lived in the cities. Nowadays, not only is the size of holdings very small, sometimes only one-eighth of a *carreau*, but they are also scattered, and most peasants are obliged to go from one place to another to cultivate their various owned, rented, or share-cropped fields.[8] A

671 595 423 848 Haitian law—the civil code—does not recognize the rights of illegitimate children born after a legal marriage. But Haitian custom does. As a result, a Haitian who has a *placée* wife in addition to his "legal" wife may circumvent the law by deeding to her a portion of his gardens during his lifetime, thereby diminishing his holdings.

423 691 Furthermore, many landholdings are not clearly defined. There are few accurate surveys, and often the boundaries are vague. Titles to many of the holdings cannot be clearly established, and as a result there are constant lawsuits. To pay the expenses of defending his interests in court, a Haitian may have to sell a strip of his land.

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* A carreau is about three and a third acres.

[8] [UNESCO, The Haiti Pilot Project, p. 18. Cf. P352, category 116. -- Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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648 The financing of these many revolutions was usually provided by
669 foreign merchants, bent upon installing a government that would
565 grant them special economic concessions (Munro, 1964:326–31). The
701 United States occupation ended this doleful succession of regimes
439 and, by throwing its weight to the elite, by suppressing military activity in the countryside, and by reforming the army, the United States gave a new meaning to the separation of the elite and the yeomanry. Leyburn's interpretation is consistent with these events; yet some Haitian scholars have differed with Leyburn's analysis.

114 In a lengthy review article, the dean of Haitian historians, Dr. Jean
564 Price-Mars (1942:1–50), questions the applicability of the term
563 "caste" to the social groupings of Haitian society. He notes that Haitian law after the revolution never legitimized any distinction on
● 671 grounds of physical type, unlike a society such as the United States—
144 that in fact, the very basis of Haitian polity was the absence of such distinctions. Furthermore, Leyburn's interpretation is qualified by the fact that the elite and the rural masses are not entirely distinctive physically. In some parts of rural Haiti, particularly in the southern peninsula, there are many light-skinned people; and many individuals who qualify as members of the elite on all other counts are very dark in appearance. The fact that being "Negro" or "white" in Haiti is viewed as a matter of degree, rather than of kind, complicated by all the other criteria of social position employed in drawing distinctions, has important implications for the way social barriers have operated in that country.*

114 Leyburn did not contend that all the effects of the United States
565 occupation were in the direction of increasing the gap between the
ELITE AND THE YEOMANRY.

563 * In this regard, Haiti is aligned with most of Latin America, in contradistinction to the
564 United States, where many persons believe that "one drop of Negro blood" [sic] makes a
171 "Negro." The failure of North Americans to distinguish between sociological and genetic
144 categories of physical type has led to considerable confusion in their dealings with Latin America and in their understanding of Latin American societies. North American race prejudice at its most extreme sees color as the primary basis for social ranking, and no individual accomplishment (for instance, in terms of economic or intellectual success) can overshadow the inferior status unalterably bestowed by certain physical traits. Haitian—and generally all Latin American—social distinctions do not rest solely on considerations of physical type; a black skin does not "doom" an individual if his attainments make him otherwise the equal of his lighter-skinned fellow citizens. Hence, it might be argued that the term "caste" would be more appropriate when applied to the Negro people of the United States (regardless of phenotype, and including those "Negroes" who are *sociologically* identified with the Negro people even if their physical appearance is dramatically Caucasian) than when applied to the peoples of Latin America.

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lishing their freedom from the taint of any black admixture. Having entered white society by such means, and further diluted their Negro blood by judicious marriages, these social climbers frequently became the most pitiless masters of slaves in the colony, the most rigid sticklers for a color line, ruthless enemies of recent freedmen and of those who acknowledged the dark strain in their blood; and having now "passed over" as whites, they snubbed the petits blancs. 175 565 829 [556]

The rising tide of color prejudice became apparent in the passage of discriminatory laws. The first of any importance was enacted by the representative Council of the colony, sitting at the capital, Cap Français, in 1758. It prohibited all colored people, except police and militiamen, from carrying swords, sabres, or other side arms—thus denying them one of the outward marks of gentlemen. Four years later the prohibition was extended to the bearing of all firearms, except in service, while in 1767 the sale of munitions to colored persons was forbidden unless ordered by a white officer. Obviously the instigators of prejudice had by this time won a number of ruling grands blancs to the notion that the presence of numerous people of color might constitute a menace to the physical safety of the whites. 175 671 565

Louis XV, the reigning monarch, took no steps to enforce the liberal provisions of the Code Noir of his grandfather; on the contrary, he seems to have favored the passage of discriminatory laws. He made it difficult for colored planters to travel freely in France. The colonial perpetrators of indignities to the gens de couleur, seeing the success of their first efforts, began to propose increasingly severe restrictions, and were gratified by Louis XV's official "Instructions to Administrators" (1771), which stressed the necessity of maintaining a line between the two races which colored people and their descendants might never cross. 175 648 563 671

For the next two decades the affranchi had to face openly avowed discrimination. One by one his rights in the Code were abrogated. He might not fill any responsible office either in the courts or the militia, for that would elevate him above white persons. Certain careers, such as goldsmithing, were closed to him, because they brought wealth; others, notably medicine and the apothecary's art, were forbidden on the ground that whites might be poisoned;[8] law and religion were barred to him because of their public and honorific 175 565 563 671

8. It was a common belief in slave colonies that all persons with Negro blood had some "instinctive" knowledge of the science and art of poisoning. [829]

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175 nature.[9] Colored women were forbidden in 1768 to marry white
563 men. In 1779 began a series of laws designed to humiliate the colored
565 person in public: his clothes must be of a different material and cut
671 from the white person's; he must be indoors by nine o'clock in the evening; he might not sit in the same section of churches and theatres with whites.[10]

175 Just at the moment when prejudice and hatred seem to have
648 reached their most menacing proportions, when even moderate
829 white planters began to feel that such passions had been aroused
[669] among both white and colored folk that only brutal severity could
[565] hold them in check, the Revolution began in France. Both sides in the colony hoped to make use of it. The whites saw in the mother country's confusion an opportunity to win self-government for the colony—with themselves, of course, as the untrammeled rulers. The gens de couleur, taking to heart the noble Declaration of the Rights of Man, hoped to regain their full rights as French citizens, guaranteed to them in Louis XIV's Code, but now in abeyance.

175 During the fateful years 1788 to 1793 colonial affairs were inter-
646 twined with developments in France. Men and messages went back
648 and forth between Cap Français and Paris, following the startling
671 announcement that after a lapse of 150 years the States-General would be convoked in May, 1789. At a meeting of the colonial assembly in September, 1788, called to nominate delegates, the group of grands blancs who controlled colonial affairs decided on two daring steps, which later proved to be blunders: first, they named thirty-seven deputies to represent Saint-Domingue; second, they drew up a *Cahier des Doléances*—a list of grievances whose sole palliation, it was implied, would be the granting of permission to the white planters to govern the colony without interference from France. These two decisions, be it said, were not unanimously approved in the assembly at Cap Français; cautious minds warned against pretentious demands which might do nothing more than attract concentrated attention to the state of affairs in Saint-Domingue: it might be wiser, they argued, to let sleeping dogs lie, and ignore the convocation of the States-General. The cautious were outvoted.

[565] 9. A colored lawyer might win a case against a white man; a colored priest might
[829] have to hear the confession of a white woman.

[565] 10. When certain mulattoes arrived at church in Cap Français wearing clothes of the same texture as the whites', constables tore the garments from the backs of male and female alike, leaving them "with no other veil than their shame."

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114 642 175 at least a generation behind them, but rather their complete lack of any experience in self-rule. The author continues:

> In addition to the vanity of the black which was flattered by the distribution of principalities and duchies, there was the political thought which wished to fortify things by words. The most important sugar manufactories were distributed, with the property title, to the principal officers and civil agents of the government. Workers were allotted to these very much as were the Indians to the first Spanish conquerors. . . . Moreover, since African blood dominated in the North [that is, since there were few mulattoes and lighter-skinned people], the feudal lords, aided by the color of their skin, could enforce obedience to a yoke which in name only was modified [from slavery].[13]

[471]

175 642 566 631 421 625 692 The social organization of Christophe's kingdom, then, was one of large properties, with all the feudalistic trappings, resting upon a solid base of wage-earning serfdom. In contrast to mediaeval feudalism, the king was here much more than *primus inter pares.* Thanks to the policy of Dessalines, most land had come into state ownership, so that the nobility received their estates by royal favor, and held them as leases only so long as the King pleased. As in the Middle Age, the noblemen were petty monarchs within the district granted to their jurisdiction. Their freedom of action, however, was even here subject to scrutiny: detachments of Royal Dahomets[14] were stationed in every cantonment or parish, to enforce discipline, keep the King informed, and find their own subsistence without a drain on the royal treasury. In every district was set up a court of *sénéchaussée* to see that justice obtained.[15] The King's law, not the nobleman's private code, prevailed in the whole country.[16]

13. R. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1846), II, 167–168.

14. Organized after the model of the police force existing in France before 1789.

15. These courts were composed of a royally appointed seneschal and his assistant, a king's procurer, and a clerk.

[671] 16. The Code Henry was promulgated on January 30, 1812. It consisted of seven parts: Civil, Commercial, Shipping and Maritime, Civil Process, Criminal and Police Process, Agricultural, and Military. In general the Code followed French precedent, but the section on Agriculture was Christophe's own. Sir James Basket (in his *History of the Island of St. Domingo* [London, 1818], p. 413) calls this part "a thing unexampled among other nations." It reveals not only the King's absorption in the main economic enterprise of his state, but also his skill in devising an integrated functioning of a social order of nobility and serfs with a plantation economy based on money crops. This Agricultural Law regulated such diverse matters as the reciprocal duties of proprietors and cultivators, the policing of plantations, and the culture and preparation of the major crops. It set forth industry as the parent of virtue, and idleness as the source of vice.

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175 their districts, principally during the working hours of the day. They
675 were held responsible for all consequences of their own negligence.
692

This whole flow of legislation was designed primarily for the
175 protection of the great landed proprietors, yet there were other laws
671 which aided the masses. In former days workers had been coerced
466 through corporal punishment. This was by law now abolished. Temporary assignments of garden plots were required for each family of laborers; medical care must be provided at the expense of the planter; the aged and infirm must be guaranteed the right to keep their homes and gardens even though no longer able to work. Expectant mothers in the fourth month of pregnancy must be relieved of field work, with no limitation of their right to share in the estate's income; mothers of nursing children must be permitted to remain at home until the weaning of their infants.

175 A great concession to the workers was made by abolishing the
647 office of "inspector of cultures." In the days of Toussaint and Des-
241 salines each district of the country had had its inspector, whose duty it was to see that crop cultivation proceeded according to schedule.[27] This man's disapproval of conditions resulted in fines and personal chastisement. By abolishing the office Pétion effected a great saving in salaries, for there had been thousands of these inspectors; on the other hand, the watchfulness of the inspectors had kept agricultural production at a high level. With no officials to dog the footsteps of the workers, crops immediately fell off.

175 Pétion clearly expected la grande culture to be the prevailing mode
466 of agriculture in the republic. He fostered all kinds of legislation
24 regulating it, even aside from that already mentioned. For example, a complete schedule was prepared for the division of income of the
656 estate.[28] But the entire system was too neatly worked out and artificial to be effective, particularly since it was not backed up with force. The threat of punishment removed, most workers began gradually, often deliberately, to sabotage the system. It was much more pleasant

27. Christophe followed his predecessors in keeping the district inspectors.

[466] [465] 28. This could be very complicated. A tenant farmer might hire workers, and so have to share his half of the income with them. In such cases, the division of the money crops was to be made in kind or in money, at current prices, in the presence of the local justice, his assessors, and an officer of the *gendarmerie*. The workers' "fourth" was divided into portions of which three went to the first foreman, two to each of the skilled workers, one and a half to each male or female worker, and one half to each child laborer between ten and fourteen years of age.

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175 Haitian writers sometimes praise Pétion for his democratic lean-
642 ings, by implication criticizing Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe
178 for their feudalistic notions. If the blacks were undemocratic, at least
433 they had experience back of the system they selected for administering the land: their methods worked. Pétion's plan, on the contrary, admirable though it seemed to later "liberals," was unexpectedly disappointing. The national income declined; estates were steadily broken up and sub-leased to small farmers; sugar disappeared from the state's balance sheet, while coffee did not supply an equivalent income; discipline of the workers gave way to individualism. Although the whole legislative code favored the landlords, la grande culture crumbled. One is driven to conclude that Pétion simply tried one device after another—always the easiest he could find—to keep state economy functioning.

175 When Pétion came to power, the common folk of southern Haiti
178 were serfs with a memory of slavery; when he died, they were
565 peasants. At the beginning of his régime the mulattoes and other social aspirants felt they were struggling for very existence against the relentless policies of black rulers; as it closed they were beyond any doubt aristocrats, but by the same token progressively less well-to-do. No one any longer attacked their social pretensions; but the worldly wealth on which these pretensions were based was disappearing along with the country's prosperity, so that new criteria had to be developed.

175 As we have said, the keynote of Pétion's rule was persuasion.
● 671 Where Dessalines ordered, Pétion suggested; where Christophe decreed, Pétion recommended. There is not a single act one could cite during his entire presidency which had the effect of tightening up the organization of the republic. When laws were not properly observed, instead of penalties being made more severe or sure of application, the laws themselves were calmly allowed to lapse. In fact, the period from 1807 to 1818 was one of transition, of experiment, of discovering a congenial way of life. Since it was clear that the mass of citizens were peacefully disposed and unambitious, the President was inclined to let custom rule in each little community. Laws were not repealed, but they were enforced only when general public opinion was clearly in their favor. At many points the upper class would have liked more disciplinary control over the masses and said so to Pétion; yet they realized that in a less than ideal world one

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may not have all the heart desires. Under Dessalines there had been stern discipline of the workers but no recognition of the aristocracy; now under Pétion the people went their own inefficient way, but aristocratic eminence was happily recognized. 175 671

Examples of experimental legislation abound. Some proposals succeeded but more failed. One of the partial successes was the establishment of an agricultural holiday, *la fête de l'Agriculture*, to stimulate interest in good cultivation. Two months before the day set, the commandants of departments, arrondissements, and cantons, together with the justices of these divisions, were to nominate the laborer in each parish who had done the best work of the year. A prize medal was awarded not only for the sake of honoring him but also to stimulate his fellows. Similarly the officials would choose a child between seven and ten years of age, living on the best cultivated *habitation* in the district and belonging to parents most distinguished by their conduct and fondness for work, to be brought up and educated at the expense of the state. The annual feast was celebrated for many years after Pétion's death, but the officials became too lax to make careful selections of prize-winners. The holiday was kept, therefore, but served none of its original purposes. 175 527

As a case of legislation that failed may be cited the highly moral measure encouraging, but not requiring, legitimate marriages among cultivators rather than the customary informal union without ceremony. The preamble of this law pointed out that legal marriages were 175 582 588

> the only means of assuring a person of all the advantages of society; of procuring consolation, care, and help in sorrows and in sickness; of making purity of customs, so necessary for the happiness of men and the conservation of their health, reign among the people; of steadily increasing the population of each habitation; of extending agriculture and of increasing production.[30]

The mass of people, however, had had no experience of legal marriage. In the time of slavery such unions would not have been respected by an owner who wished to sell his slaves, and Dessalines had seemed to care very little whether people married or merely lived together informally. It will shortly be seen in detail how lasting was this inertia of tradition.[31]

30. Cited in Saint-Rémy, *op. cit.*, V, 29.
31. See Part III, "Sex Relations and Home Life."

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175 24 671 643 Convinced at last that the easygoing policy was a failure, Boyer devised by way of remedy a new set of agricultural laws. Where his predecessors in the North had forced action first and then issued simple laws to fix the practice, Boyer, always cerebral rather than active, planned a complete Code which was designed to call forth action. On May 1, 1826, following an address by the President, the Senate issued the Code Rural, an ingenious attempt of Boyer and his secretary-general, Inginac, to reorder the agricultural life of Haiti.

Never again in the history of the country was so detailed a scheme worked out. It was an attempt on a grand scale to order the life of all people for common prosperity. In addition to its own broad scope and elaborate detail, it was fortified by almost unanimous support among the aristocracy, not only the ex-peers of Christophe's defunct kingdom, but also the large landowners of the republic who under Pétion had never known large incomes. In considering the Code, one cannot restrain a certain admiration of Boyer's ingenious mind. Yet it marked the end rather than the beginning of plantation agriculture, for it utterly failed of its purpose. It was the impressive monument over the tomb of state control.

To examine it further, we must desert the world of men for one of pure economic device. The journey is hardly one of discovery, for Boyer and his aides were simply attempting to freshen up for use the methods which had served colonial Saint-Domingue and feudal Haiti. For all the tedium of a voyage through the mazes of an economic plan which came to naught, the Code will be found significant as marking the end of a way of life, even when the way which succeeded it had already begun to take form.

175 671 24 566 693 The dominating principle of the Code was the Haitian's "obligation" to work on the land. To this end, the worker was once more legally attached to the soil. Every individual who was not a public functionary, and who had not private means or a profession—in plain English, every Haitian except the aristocrat, the official, the artisan, and the soldier—was bound to the land, with no right to separate himself from it except in case of imminent danger. An agricultural worker might apply to the local *juge de paix*[38] for permission to quit the countryside to live in a town or village, but the judge was not to give the permission without being assured of the morality of the

38. A functionary who combined the offices of local judge, justice of the peace, and recorder.

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applicant, of his regular conduct, and his ability to maintain himself 175
economically in the town. Land laborers might not send their chil- 671
dren to school or have them apprenticed in a town without a certifi- 24
cate from the same judge. Under no pretext might a worker establish 566
a shop or sell his produce in the countryside; certain exceptions were 693
made of necessary articles of food and home manufacture. No laborer might build a home in rural parts except on the plantation to which he was attached.

An individual, once placed by the government in the category of "cultivator," might never be removed from that class except by official authorization. Even with the consent of the proprietor and the agricultural administrator of the district, he was not to quit the estate to which he was bound for more than eight days.

We may further note in the Code that coöperative enterprise 175
among the workers is forbidden. Anticipating the possible tendency 671
of laborers to set up what in modern times would be called a pro- 474
ducers' coöperative, presumably to lapse thereafter into laziness, the 686
Code requires that every worker engage himself individually by 566
authentic contract to the service of a proprietor or lessee. Such engagements for la grande culture are not to be for less than three years, or more than nine. Penalties for infractions of these rules are fines, imprisonment, or forced labor on public works in the chief town of the commune.

The Code directs the management of agricultural property and 175
grazing establishments,[39] also the making of contracts between the 671
proprietor and his hirelings. Rural police are established, in imitation 625
of Christophe's Dahomets, to act as inspectors of plantations and of 421
the workers on them.

The section repressing vagrancy is very full. All persons not 175
proprietors or lessees, yet living in rural parts without having made 686
a contract with some producer, are classed as vagabonds, to be 24
arrested and taken before the magistrate. This official will warn them that by law they are bound to make a contract, and that if they refuse they will be sent to prison. Should a vagabond persist in refusing to sign a contract after eight days of confinement, he is condemned to labor on public works until he agrees. Should the prisoner be a minor, he will be sent to his parents.

39. This latter item was inserted as an adjustment to one of the primary occupations of the Spanish end of the island.

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[1804-1843]

175 A cultivator who loafs on his assigned job shall spend twenty-four
566 hours in jail for his first offense and lose his wages; for a second
671 offense he must work on public projects. Field labor shall be regu-
24 larly carried on from Monday morning until Friday evening, except for legal holidays; work begins at dawn, continues except for a half-hour at breakfast until noon, stops then for two hours, and is
[943] once more resumed until sunset. Pregnant females are to be assigned to light work only, and after the fourth month of pregnancy need
[846] do no field work. Four months after delivery, a mother is to return to field work, but with three hours a day less than before, until she has weaned her child. Disobedience and insult to overseers are punishable by imprisonment. Since Saturdays, Sundays, and holi-
[527] days are free, there is to be no dancing or any other festivity by night or day from Monday through Friday.

175 On each estate is to be a hierarchy of directors, all of whom the
671 workers shall obey. In ascending order, these men are drivers (or
473 squad foremen),[40] jobbers, sublessees, lessees, proprietors and man-
24 agers, overseers of districts, and police.

In establishing a system of remuneration Boyer kept the accus-
175 tomed method of allotting a proportion of the marketed crop to the
465 workers in lieu of hourly or daily wages. In any season from a
24 quarter to a half of the gross receipts of the estates was to go to the laborers, the exact proportion in any year to be determined by the government. It was assumed by Boyer and Inginac that there would be an added inducement to work if the laborers' share were distributed not equally, but rather in proportion to the merit and worth of the individual, these evaluations to be made by the recommendation of overseers.

175 Enforcement of the Code was placed in the hands of local justices
692 and the army. Soldiers were to be assigned to each plantation, re-
24 ceiving their living from it, in return preserving order and routine. Although the whip was once more prohibited, steady labor might still be enforced by other means; the law definitely stated that soldiers were to discipline the lazy, the lawless, and the vagrant. Local justices were to deal with any civil difficulties arising in the execution

[192] 40. The word "driver" was commonly used in West Indian slave colonies with no other meaning than that attached to the word when one speaks of a man "driving" his horses. It is not necessary to beat a horse to make it go properly; a word of direction may suffice.

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of contracts. It is worthy of note that soldiers assigned to estates were responsible for their actions not to any civil authority but only to their military superiors. 175 692 24

On paper, at least, the Code meant for the worker a return to the serfdom instituted by Toussaint and continued by his black successors.[41] Boyer's new system was richer in detail than Christophe's, but it clearly owed much to that monarch's practical scheme. There is a vital difference, however: serfdom under the Negro rulers worked because discipline was enforced; Boyer's effort to reintroduce it was an abject failure. 175 566 671

Many commentators have praised the Code as able and intelligent. Since the effort to revive familiar practice did not succeed, it is important to understand the reasons for failure of an almost perfect paper plan; one similar to the system which had functioned in all Haiti from 1798 to 1806, and in northern Haiti until 1820.

To begin with—and this was in great measure its final downfall—the workers simply ignored it. When Toussaint had first introduced serfdom, many Negroes quietly moved up into remote hills where they would be out of sight; a good number had remained away from surveillance, raising children who cherished their own independence of action. The influence of this group gradually spread. Moreover, for nineteen years in the South, ever since Pétion had first become president, the masses had had increasing experience of economic freedom. There is no doubt that the majority of the people preferred a low standard of living with liberty to great national prosperity depending on personal compulsion. Northern "cultivators" had known force and efficiency under Christophe, but they, too, preferred their five-year experience of easygoing life in reunited Haiti. Such complete, antagonistic inertia toward the law made its enforcement impossible. Individual cases of sabotage might be dealt with, but not wholesale refusal of the group to sign contracts.

Aside from this, too much land had already been given away throughout at least half the country to make possible a fair and efficient functioning of the Code. Any forced-labor system would have had to depend on large plantations. Since Pétion had divided 175 423

41. R. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, "La République d'Haïti: ses dernières révolutions; sa situation actuelle," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, XV, No. 4 (Nov., 1845), p. 15, called it "*l'inféodation à la glèbe*," which it certainly was. The whole Code was designed to prevent any further parceling of the land and any further lapse into idleness on the part of the workers. [114]

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175 The result was entirely different from Boyer's expectations. As a
114 French critic graphically puts it, the Haitians
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> who had never had more than a borrowed energy—that inspired by fear of French invasion—when they saw themselves freed, by a solemn treaty, from all attack on their coasts, seemed to allow their arms to drop relaxed at their sides, saying, *Let's take a rest.* The soldier who up till now had squeezed his body into a uniform and had subjected himself to European discipline, shouldering his arms, staring straight ahead as if seeing nothing, now began to leave unbuttoned the uniform which choked him, dragged a mattress into his sentry-box so that he might sleep through his watch, and let his cross slip to the earth never to pick it up again.[44]

175 In short, the Haitian army as a disciplined force ceased to exist, and
701 with it all authority of its officers. Boyer had counted upon the
703 army to enforce the provisions of the Code Rural, but now a soldier's
671 life was a paid sinecure. By gaining political security Haiti had in-
433 advertently lost its last chance of economic prosperity through a system of forced labor.

175 Wherever the Code was put into partial operation, revenue from
423 plantations continued to decline. The price of real estate dropped
433 proportionately. It was a simple matter for workmen who had
435 signed contracts to avoid carrying out their stipulations, and just as
466 simple to evade the law requiring fifteen acres' minimum for a single holding. Practically every Haitian wanted to own a bit of land; once he had acquired his bit, however small, he had (or so he felt) earned an exemption from directed labor.

175 Only on estates near the few big towns, where government
671 officials were concentrated, was there much pretense of trying to
625 enforce the Code. Sentries at the gates of Port-au-Prince were
661 authorized to confiscate plantains, yams, or fruit brought by any worker who, in contravention of the Code, had strayed to market on a forbidden day, but sentries soon acquired the habit of not seeing countryfolk who passed the gates. Reports kept cropping up that rural policemen were robbing poor cultivators of their coffee under pretense of protecting them from the penalties for breach of the law; this suggests that the Code was used rather for graft than for the stimulation of agriculture.

175 By and large, however, the Code was merely ignored. Agents
671 could not be found who were willing to stand in any community
625 44. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, II, 181.
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175 against almost unanimous public opinion opposing enforcement. In
671 1828 it was reported that dancing, which the Code had strictly
625 limited to week ends, was a nightly diversion near the capital. One
535 of the principal dancing resorts was the house of a captain of rural
517 police, the very man who was supposed to repress such amusements.[45]

Boyer had done his best, and his best was merely a good piece of
175 office work. When his Code failed to operate, he could think of
178 nothing further to suggest for the economic rehabilitation of Haiti.
24 The last fifteen years of his administration witnessed a gradual lapse
433 into that small-scale farming which was to be characteristic of Haiti for the remainder of the nineteenth century. By comparison with former standards, production and steady industry had both fallen off since Boyer came to the presidency. The testimony of visiting foreigners is unanimous on the decline of industry.

175 The British consul, Mackenzie, said in 1827 that there was very
114 little field labor then being done, and that only elderly people,
435 principally aged "Guinea Negroes" long accustomed to steady work,
461 carried on the tradition. No measures of the government could
464 induce young people born in Haiti to labor or to change from their
184 "habitual vagrancy."[46] Another Englishman, James Franklin, remarked in 1828 that land values throughout the republic had greatly declined because no one could make a profit within any moderate time. Labor was high, he writes, for ordinary wages did not attract the workers who preferred idleness. (This word is certainly unfair: it was work at their own bidding which they preferred, not idleness.) Government lands lay untilled, no one evincing the slightest desire to purchase or utilize them. Franklin continues:

> 114 Land also in the possession of individuals is similarly circumstanced; and
> 175 those who are large proprietors cannot effect a sale of any produce which
> 433 they may have beyond the quantity which they can consume; consequently
> 423 a proprietor may have an immense extent of land, and yet be quite unable
> 425 to derive any benefit from it by cultivation, or to convert it into money, for the want of purchasers. Thus . . . there is no individual wealth in the country, because, although a man may have very large landed possessions, still those possessions are unavailable, for they produce him nothing, as he can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them.

[534] 45. Although dancing is spoken of here as an amusement, it is highly probable that at least a part of it had connection with the Vodun religion.

[241] 46. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti* (London, 1830), I, 100. Mackenzie is clearly exaggerating, unless by "field labor" he means work on plantations, in contrast to farming on small plots.

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can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them. There are some instances of proprietors leasing their lands to persons who undertake to cultivate them, for which they receive about one-third of the produce; but this is far from being general, and I imagine can only be accomplished by military men who have the command of troops, and who are thereby enabled to till them by working parties daily sent out for that purpose.[47]

An interesting side light is provided by a Quaker visitor, Candler, who in 1842 wrote that he was struck by the entire equality which seemed to exist between servant and master. Every workman was addressed in courteous manner, as "*mon fils*."[48] On inquiry, Candler was told that the profits of planting were good that year, laborers were scarce, and it was therefore "necessary to conciliate all by kindness, or no work would be done."

A particularly grim account of the state of cultivation near the close of Boyer's administration (1842) is given by a Frenchman:

> The fields of Haiti are dead. There where under slavery thousands of tons of sugar were made, now one sees only a few crops and a little syrup to turn into raw rum. Lively growths of cactus cover with thorns the acres of cane, of fields, of pastures deserted by the hand of man; the cactus invades the towns, coming even up to the heart of the cities, flourishing in the midst of ruins, as if to insult the inhabitants. . . . On the one hand, no one cultivates with regularity, because everyone is discouraged by the thefts of cane and fruit by people without any moral discipline, and in a country without police; while on the other hand, people complain of being poor, and of not being able to devote enough money to indispensable improvements. . . . And if the proprietors cannot even make work progress, imagine the condition of the poor![49]

As the people grew individually poorer, the value of the land sank until it was useless for an owner to try to prevent squatting on his estate. Holdings grew smaller and smaller, in spite of the prohibition on sales of real estate in parcels less than fifteen acres. Good land might be had in every part of the island quite cheaply, much of it even from the government which had enacted the restrictive law. Any man not satisfied with his condition as a paid laborer might, if

47. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti (Saint Domingo)*, (London, 1828), p. 313.
48. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti* (London, 1842), p. 37.
49. V. Schoelcher, *Colonies étrangères et Haïti: résultats de l'émancipation anglaise* (Paris, 1842), II, 263 ff.

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recognized that the really important characteristics peculiar to the peasant are his sentiments and attitudes, the intense attachment to his native soil and family tradition, which, even in the economic sphere, take precedence over the desire for individual advancement and gain."[31]

Haiti in 1804 was still a country of large estates, and Dessalines and Christophe strove to keep it so. Under the active generosity of Pétion and the passive indifference of Boyer after his Code Rural had failed, few great plantations were left intact. The recorded donations of these two presidents to their generals, civil functionaries, and lesser officers, are as follows:[32]

134 grants of 150 carreaux (about 450 acres).		Total:	59,300 acres.
176	35	105	18,480
639	30	90	57,510
711	25	75	54,325
2,322	20	60	139,320
8,000	5	15	120,000
		Grand total:	448,935 acres.

Haiti followed French law rather than British, so that the rule of primogeniture did not prevail. It requires only a moment's reflection to see that even within a single generation the thousands of small properties noted in the table would be subdivided many times, since a father apportioned his land to all his sons. By 1842 it is probable that not a single plantation of the size common in colonial times was still intact.[33] On the testimony of numerous government officials and commandants of arrondissements, it was estimated in that year that 46,610 small landed properties were under fair cultivation.[34] If the population at that time be estimated at 800,000, seven eighths of whom were engaged in agriculture, there would accordingly be about fifteen people (including children) to each rural property. But

A large number of small estates are left out of this account, which are said to be *badly* cultivated, or neglected. Taking the number of each separate

31. C. von Dietze, "Peasantry," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, XII, 30.

32. This table is compiled from figures cited in Armand Thoby, *Le Question agraire en Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1888), passim, and Dr. F. Dalencour, *Le Sauvetage national par le retour à la terre* (Port-au-Prince, 1923), p. 18.

33. See Raymond Renaud, *Le Régime foncier en Haïti* (Paris, 1934), pp. 42–45.

34. Candler, op. cit., p. 122.

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175 by persuasion, to do as much work as possible for his and their own
473 interests. In a few cases the success of such efforts was tolerably good;
427 but one worker disposed to be sullen or idle, or even not physically
24 strong, might throw the whole scheme into disorder. One's own
425 profits would be cut by the misdeeds of others even when one had
461 himself been industrious. This caused a decline of incentive, sometimes among a whole group of potentially good workers, because one or two of the number shirked. Probably the most patent evil of such arrangements was that every laborer realized that he did not suffer as directly for idleness or neglect as when working for himself; his fellow workers shared the consequences of his misconduct in some degree, and his employer in a still greater measure. The driving force of individual responsibility was removed.

[692] Boyer and Inginac, foreseeing just such disorder, had tried to
[686] provide against it in the Code Rural by giving summary powers to local judges to inflict penalties upon lazy or malingering workers. Quite aside, however, from the loss of time and the inconvenience to both parties in going constantly to a judge for his decision, the proprietor was afraid to act on this principle to any extent, since if he did so he might lose his laborers altogether.

175 It was a rare proprietor, then, who could hope to make much of a
473 fortune out of his plantation. More and more the landowners, having
427 subdivided their fields, grew lax in overseeing them. The workers,
24 freed from constant supervision, accustomed by long habit to living
466 in one hut, and unconsciously developing a mentality which made
425 them feel, as did American squatters on frontier lands, that they had
178 a right to the land they tilled, imperceptibly developed into peasants. The state's remaining properties, no longer under cultivation, were invaded by families of small farmers, and the government took no steps to oust them or send them back to privately owned plantations. The estates of individual aristocrats underwent the same fate if not
[625] carefully watched. Theoretically, it was the duty of the army to drive out squatters, to force laborers back into "proper" agricultural work; but the army consisted of peasant youths who would not turn against people of their own group.

671 Legal irregularity was gradually sanctioned by the passage of
178 time, usage being a stronger guarantor of rights than unenforced laws on the statute books.

180 Haitian peasantry, to sum up, began as the unplanned, undesired

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Color prejudice, in so far as a mass of people is concerned, is generally one-sided, directed by the upper group at the lower. The ordinary illiterate worker between 1820 and 1840 was inclined to accept without much question the superiority of the lighter-skinned Haitians. Resentment was often present, and envy, but hardly prejudice. The real contest developed between the colored élite and the blacks of ambition. The latter had reason to feel proud of their rise from slavery; many had shown ability, and felt themselves the mental and moral equals of the mulattoes; the men who had broken the power of the French, ended slavery, and founded the state were Negroes—and now Haiti was being ruled by mulattoes. The contest between the two groups was the obverse side of prejudice. The envied minority, jealously guarding their distinction, were generally conscious of prejudices which they rationalized with pronouncements about superior mentality and innate qualities. They would concede the difference between an educated black and a mere peasant, but would still cling to the feeling that all the culture in the world would not make the educated Negro a peer of the mulatto.

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Government documents of the period can hardly be expected to call attention to color prejudice and its concomitant resentments. To foreign observers, however, it was immediately apparent and noteworthy as a dominant characteristic of the country. Testimony is unanimous as to its existence; more important, the commentators all agreed that it was growing. An acute Frenchman called Boyer "the slow martyr of his color,"[56] being a mulatto in a republic of blacks: his color made Boyer suspect, so that the President had to spend most of his time and energy trying to avoid conflicts on this issue. It is entirely possible that Boyer's dearest schemes, particularly the enforcement of the Code Rural, failed primarily because the army was controlled by Negroes, whom the President dared not drive too hard; while only the army could have enforced faithful performance by the black laborers. An American doctor stated in 1838 that "the mulattoes, to preserve the sceptre of power in the possession of their caste, are driven to compliances which a negro president would feel himself empowered to spurn from him as the basest infringement on his dignity."[57]

56. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, I, 211. This observation is much more to the point than the specious remarks which follow, attributing Boyer's inactivity partly to the enervating effects of the tropical climate.

57. Brown, *op. cit.*, II, 250.

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175 563 564 [19] ions. Intermarriages between persons of widely different color became extremely rare, being regarded by many lighter Haitians with actual disgust. Everyone with social pretensions wanted to be whiter. Dr. Brown stated it baldly: "The pure negro seeks to ally himself to the griffe,[59] the griffe to the mulatto, the mulatto to the quateroon, the latter to a mustif, and the mustif, having but an untraceable tinge of African blood in his organization, is uproariously indignant if he is accused of having any at all."[60] An educated young black of several generations of free parents was scornfully turned down by a lighter-skinned woman considerably his inferior in breeding and wealth because her children would be darker than herself—"*petits enfants griffes*," as she put it. The prejudices of colored people against blacks was almost as great, if not quite as intense, as the former prejudice of whites against colored people in colonial times. No one forgot that there had been black as well as colored freedmen in the colony; but it was much simpler for people of color to claim their long career as élite than for blacks to do so.

The attitude of upper-class Haitians toward whites in the midst of all this color prejudice was an interesting mixture. On the one hand, all good Haitians professed to dread a return of the whites; on the other, they welcomed white businessmen in the country. In a certain respect the whites were regarded much as were the Jews of Europe in the Middle Ages: they were wealthy—and therefore legitimate [673] objects of pillage, necessary evils for the sake of finance. Theft from a [671] white man by government action was a service to the state. Laws [641] were consequently varied from time to time with the sole purpose of profiting from a foreigner's position. True, the trader might protest [423] to his home government, but if England or the United States took a strong stand, Haiti could always retreat; if those governments did not stand firm, Haiti had gained. In the Haitian courts the whites had little show, for Article 38 of the Constitution forbade them to own real estate or to become citizens; they might not even hold a lease for more than ten years; and they might not marry Haitian women.

Nevertheless, the analogy with mediaeval Jews falls down at one vital point: whites were not viewed with contempt. Quite the con-

[192] 59. A term denoting three parts in four of Negro blood. This term as well as "mustif" goes back to colonial white society; neither was, or is, used by cultivated Haitians.

60. Brown, op. cit., II, 283-284.

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"empire" tottered to economic ruin. Graft, default on the debt, 175
increasing deficits, and debased currency were the order of the day, 643
and so continued until 1859, when the accumulation of anger over 652
the useless wars and the humiliating defeats made the Emperor so 669
unpopular that a new and more carefully planned revolution accomplished his downfall.

Fifteen years of administration by Negro rulers had broken the 175
political power of the colored élite. Only three light-skinned men 643
became president thereafter until the occupation of Haiti by the 178
American Marines in 1915; in the seventy-two years following 564
Boyer's downfall, mulattoes ruled during only eight. The army under a black general was too powerful, a colored president too hampered by suspicion, to make the political game worth the candle. The colored élite, therefore, adapted themselves to existing conditions as best they could, controlling the business life of Haiti, filling the law offices and, because of their literacy, the secretaryships of state, and indulging in honorific cultural pursuits.

In the years after Soulouque the basic realities of Haitian life were 175
changed hardly at all by shifting political administrations. Some of the 643
presidents were mildly progressive, many were indifferent; still more 66
were actually harmful; but the lives of the mass of peasants were not often touched by presidential vagaries. Politics was an affair almost wholly of townspeople, of the army, the élite, and the pseudo-élite. Revolutions, counterrevolutions, movements of reform, international tangles, financial woes, and most of the other complications to which unstable states are heir, absorbed the attention of rulers and upper-class folk who were politically inclined.

Constitutions were made by presidents and changed by their suc- 175
cessors; the Senate passed contradictory laws in the same session if 642
the chief executive so recommended; the courts were presided over 671
by the president's men. Haitian law in the latter half of the nineteenth 692
century was what the president's immediate strength and wish made it—or else it was folk custom, undisturbed by the rulers.

Never once, in the three quarters of a century after Boyer's time, 175
did Haiti approach the high standard of production known in 178
colonial days or in the early years of independence. The pattern of 433
Haitian social and economic life became fixed in this seventy-five 565
years. Haiti became a country of small-scale tillage by a peasant 439
population, with only enough external trade to provide moderate

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Haiti was in constant financial straits. Money had to be borrowed

abroad; then paid back at the promised time or a foreign warship would appear at some Haitian port. The steady drain of annual indemnity payments to France,[7] the cost of subduing revolutionary movements, and the large sum eaten up even in times of peace by wages to the army made successive presidents continue to yield government land for small sums of ready cash, in spite of Geffrard's announcement that no more state lands would be alienated. Nissage Saget, coming to power by a successful revolution, paid out fifteen acres to each soldier who fought in his campaign in the South.[8] The straits of the government resembled those of the Continental Congress in America during the Revolution. 175 652 [171]

Another impulse to parcel the land came during the administration of President Lysius Salomon (1879–88). The debt to France had finally, after half a century, been paid off; that incubus removed, Salomon instituted numerous reforms, financial, military, educational. On February 26, 1883, he signed a law by which every citizen of Haiti might conceivably become a landowner even if he lacked money to buy land. Upon receipt of a written agreement to cultivate certain tropical crops—specifically, sugar, coffee, cotton, cacao, and tobacco—the government would grant provisional title to a portion of fifteen to twenty-five acres of land taken from the public domain. The grant became final if, after a period of from two to five years, three quarters of the land had been effectively cultivated. 175 643 671 423 [648]

Five hundred requests were made in 1884 for such grants, and twelve hundred in the following year.[9] Thereafter one finds no records of applications for land; the peasants had discovered the hidden trap in this apparent generosity. How could a peasant with a tiny farm lacking implements and tools, not to mention ready cash, be expected to cultivate important crops on fifteen or twenty acres of land? He would have to cut down trees, uproot wild plants, fertilize the ground, purchase equipment and seeds, and then wait several years for a crop. As Thoby says, "And even then he was not a

7. See above, pp. 70–71.

8. Law of July 12, 1870. In August of the same year, Nissage required an inventory to be taken of state lands remaining.

9. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Manuel d'histoire d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1934), p. 317, cites these figures. They are contested by Dr. F. Dalencour, *Le Souvenir national par le retour à la terre*, p. 31, who maintains that only 800 applications came in altogether. Here, as elsewhere, Haitian records are incomplete. [114] [423]

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175 proprietor in the true sense of the word, for he might not change his
643 crops and cultivate bananas, potatoes, yams, peas, or other food-
671 stuffs."[10] Critics of Salomon point out that these conditional grants
423 were designed to make of the peasant a simple fiscal workman for the state, to force him once more to labor for the public rather than for himself. The legislators of 1883 were preoccupied not with the welfare of the peasant, but solely with the increase of production and of fiscal revenue.

The law of 1883, then, like the Code Rural of 1826, fell into desuetude. The peasant was canny enough to see that passing a law did not change realities: he might still squat on government land and yet not be thrown off by the government. Both Boyer's Code and Salomon's law, although of entirely different inspiration, tried to regiment the Haitian peasant in agricultural lines beneficial to state finances but uncongenial to himself.

175 Up to the time of the American Occupation of 1915, there were
423 no other measures of much influence upon the status of the peasant. The whole impulse of the common people seemed to be toward the acquisition of plots of land for themselves. By the indifference or impotence of the state, they were allowed to install themselves upon government lands, there to found families and pass on the property upon which they had settled. Thus occurred what might be called a "natural"—certainly unplanned and automatic—development of small property. At first it came at the expense of the great domains; next, through allowing state leases to expire and be given cheaply into the hands of small farmers; finally there were the grants and sales at low prices to thousands of soldiers.

Time validated the peasants' claims, but the state has never formally done so. Legally it might be argued that only a small fraction of the population of Haiti has an indisputable right to the land on which it lives. By strict interpretation most of the peasants are still squatters whom the government might dispossess. The American Occupation, in view of this confusion, tried in businesslike fashion to survey the land and establish property rights. The task proved so extremely difficult that it was soon given up. It met with the stubborn refusal of the peasants to state their claims or take any interest in legalizing their rights. No administration has been foolhardy enough

10. Armand Thoby, *La Question agraire en Haïti*, p. 45.

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175 material—Frenchmen who lived "in a deplorable state of morals,
171 too often recalling those of the freebooters and buccaneers" who were their ancestors and predecessors. Even when the calibre of the colonists improved, religion was a minor concern, business and pleasure pushing it well into the background.

There was no great antagonism toward the fathers; indeed, not enough attention was paid to the priests and their work to warrant any very strong feeling. It was indifference and insolence the fathers had to face, or, if they showed too great an interest in the welfare of slaves upon a plantation, suspicion and peremptory curbs. By the old
• [671] Code Noir under which the colony theoretically operated, masters were obligated to send their slaves to Mass on Sundays and feast days under penalty of heavy fines; the Code likewise prescribed the baptism of all blacks and their instruction in the Catholic faith. But just as the colonists ignored all parts of the Code antagonistic to their own economic interests, so specifically did they disregard the sections dealing with their religious obligations.

175 Some priests were in any case not too zealous. It was much more
193 agreeable to attend only to external forms, and so participate in the charming life of high society, than to stand firm against laxity. If a
662 priest showed enthusiasm for his duties to his African charges he was
567 almost certain to be accused by the planters of stirring up the slaves
[792] and undermining the foundations of colonial society. This was, in fact, the very accusation leveled at the Jesuits to bring about their expulsion from the colony in 1764. The example was not lost upon other priests.

175 "The safety of the whites demands that the Negroes be kept in
171 profound ignorance," said one of the later governors in a message to France. This sentiment, perfectly expressing the conviction of the
563 majority of planters, not only prevented any secular education of the blacks, but actually kept many of them from instruction in catechism, creed, or any part of the Catholic faith. If instruction is forbidden, few of the sacraments can be administered, for how can a person be confirmed, confess, do penance, if he know not even the first principles of the faith? Few masters objected to the baptism of slave children; on the other hand, they roundly disapproved of the sacrament of marriage for their blacks, since this might place an obstacle in the way of slave sales, and even open the way for assimilation of blacks and whites in the colony.

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Vodun, then, was both widespread and powerful enough to be turned to most effective ends in 1791. Contemporary accounts of it still saw it as a meeting ground of superstitions. The French naturalist, Descourtilz, for example, was primarily struck by the use of the occult in connection with Vodun; he especially describes a woman who, under the seizure of her god, took a live coal in her hand without being burnt; a husband who by the use of magic struck his inconstant wife with a languorous malady, effective for half a year; and the knowledge of poison which was combined with the practice of magic. He mentions but one of the Vodun gods by name but implies the existence of many others.[10]

Madiou, Haiti's first historian, likewise always spoke of Vodun as a savage survival; he says of a native general, "Lamour Dérance, plunged in gross errors, put his faith in *sorcery*, in the prophecy of *papas*, or priests of *African fetishism*."[11] In his scornful distaste for the vulgar he clearly indicated by his own italics some conspicuous elements of the developing religion: magic, the use of fetishes, and a Vodun priesthood. His illustration of Dérance's error was his making soldiers believe that bullets could not wound them:

> When he marched to combat he was preceded by bands of Congos, Aradas, Ibos, Naboa, Mandingues, Haoussas, who threw themselves against the French battalions with a prodigious intrepidity, crying that the bullets were but dust. But this courage which *superstition* fed was shattered against the ramparts of . . . the Europeans' square formations.

It is noteworthy that the first three black rulers set themselves against Vodun because of its potentialities for sedition. The plots to overthrow the old régime had come to fruition at apparently innocent Vodun dances. Although the ingenuous aspect of the dance gathering had deceived the white masters, Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe knew the meaning of the assemblies. All three had to drive their people hard and knew that resentment would be an inevitable consequence; it must not have an opportunity to burgeon at nightly gatherings. Toussaint was the strictest of the three, for he forbade all dances and nocturnal assemblage.[12] The other two singled

10. M. E. Descourtilz, *Voyages d'un naturaliste en Haïti, 1799–1803* (Paris, 1935 ed.), pp. 116–118.
11. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, p. 33.
12. In an order of January 6, 1800.

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The other two singled

175 out Vodun dances for their bans, permitting the purely social dances.
643 On the eve of the first anniversary of independence, "as soon as
794 retreat was sounded, African dances of all kinds began in the tents
796 and open fields; the Vaudoux dance alone was proscribed; the noise
of the drums did not quiet down until morning."[13] Dessalines was
671 more suspicious of Vodun than the other two for, being a superstitious man himself, he feared that some of his growing number of
659 enemies might use sorcery upon him; consequently whenever his
798 active police reported meetings of Vodun worshipers he had the
771 offenders shot if they could be caught. Practically all Haitians knew how to distinguish the rhythms of Vodun drumbeats from those of other dances, so that it was not particularly difficult to track down the meeting places. What Christophe really believed, no one could say. He paid outward homage to Roman Catholicism, of course, but rumor persisted of his great faith in magic and the power of African fetishes.[14]

175 The élite mulatto presidents, Pétion and Boyer, did not deign to
643 dignify Vodun by prohibiting it. No revelation of their attitude
794 toward it survives, but we may note that no law of their thirty-six-
659 year tenure of the presidency mentions it. From their other opinions one concludes that they regarded it as merely another of the people's
798 innocent and harmless aberrations. Not one of the foreigners whose curiosity about the Negro republic led them to report on Haitian
796 life of this period gives an intelligent account of Vodun as it then
771 was. Macaulay, writing in 1831, for example, describes the annual
114 celebration at the source of Grande Rivière de l'Artibonite; he mentions the festive dances (not Vodun) and singing, then says: "Morning ceremonies consisted of a solemn sacrifice at which the blood of victims immolated for the feast were offered, and libations of wine were poured on the spring."[15] This was clearly a Vodun sacrifice. Brown, in 1837, writes as a religious man:

> No race is, more than the African, given to religious feelings, though these being but mere sensations entirely independent of thought and reason, manifest themselves in a display of idle fooleries, or dark and hideous terrors of the imagination. They intermix the legitimate ritual of the Catholic faith with the mysterious adoration paid to their national Fetishes, and the

13. Madiou, *op. cit.*, III, 186.
14. See Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Haiti*, pp. 90–91.
15. Zachary Macaulay, *Haiti* (Paris, 1833), pp. 90–91.

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175 While the broad problems of marriage, inheritance, and legiti-
512 macy were not to be solved by the official act of any ruler, the efforts made, particularly those by Dessalines and Christophe, had their effect upon the development of the marital institution in Haiti.

● 671 "Whereas," begins the preamble of Dessalines' law of May 28,
848 1805, "it is necessary to fix in immutable order the status and rights of children born out of wedlock, and whereas it is important to reconcile what nature and society owe them with the political interests of the state," therefore it behooves the government to lay
[581] down the specific rules which follow. Nothing in the law pushes the people toward marriage, but every provision strengthens the family, which they had known both in Africa and in the slave régime of the colony.

175 Henceforth no stigma is to attach to the fact of illegitimacy, nor is
671 there to be discrimination in favor of children born in wedlock. The
848 status of a child will depend upon recognition by its parents. If a
428 child's maternal connection is established, he has rights in her property; if the father likewise recognize his offspring, the child has rights in the paternal property; even if the recognition of a child is so long delayed that the parents die, that child who can prove his descent is to receive the name and his own share of property from the deceased. There is but one single provision in which an illegitimate child has an inferior status: should a couple decide to be legally married, they must recognize the natural offspring of either party before or during the wedding ceremony, if such children are to have full claims of inheritance; delay until after the ceremony cuts their claim to only one fourth that of children born legitimately; refusal to recognize the natural child disinherits him, unless he can prove his descent.

[422] Since the Emperor was already engaged upon his campaign to
[423] acquire lands for the state, the property rights guaranteed would refer chiefly to personal property, and only secondarily to land still owned by individuals. Both men and women owned personal property, however, and must therefore pass on this property, a definite percentage going to each son and daughter.

The law is weak in some of its details. It does not specify, for example, how an unmarried father shall leave his property—whether by name to each child he has recognized as his own, or by name to the mothers of his children. It is strong in that it is simple: property

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must pass to an illegitimate child if recognition is accorded. It is likewise strong in its harmony with actual conditions: in the absence of legal marriage among the people, it would have been manifestly unfair to favor a few fortunate children. Dessalines argued that the revolution had legitimized all Haitians; that it was unjust to prevent a child's inheriting from the person who had given him life; and that since all Haitians had come out of slavery and degradation into freedom, no new inequalities should be instituted.[4]

If this law encouraged family life, it weakened marriage both of the civil and religious kind: where was the sense in the expensive luxury of a wedding when children were just as legitimate without it? By conforming to folk practice the Emperor confirmed it. Only the aristocrats disliked his law, for it seemed to make light of one of the distinctions they cherished—the formal wedding. It irked them to have the State place a casual child upon an equal plane with one born after proper marriage.

At still another point the law accorded with living conditions at the time. During the years of fighting many men had been killed, and always the large standing army kept thousands of others away from settled farm life. Home, then, was for a child the abode of his mother—a fact recognized by the law's insistence upon maternal relationship rather than paternity. Such a word as "matriarchate" has no place here; but from the days of Dessalines to modern times, the lowly Haitian thinks of his home primarily as where his mother lives.

As if the advantages of formal wedding were not already sufficiently weakened by this law, other enactments of the empire struck at other phases of marriage. Divorce was permitted for adultery, for incompatibility of temperament or character, and by mutual consent. Such provisions not only broke away completely from Catholic practice, but made getting out of wedlock a casual matter of taking an oath. The complaint of incompatibility need be made by only one spouse; "mutual consent" as a ground for divorce was probably not allowed in 1805 in any other country of the Western World.

Dessalines did not appear to care one whit for the good opinion of white foreigners. It sufficed for him if Haiti endured, whatever Europeans thought of her. Christophe, on the other hand, was extremely sensitive to foreign disapproval. Many of his official acts can

4. According to the testimony of Madiou, op. cit., III, 216.

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175 643 648 be explained only as efforts to win outside respect for his kingdom of blacks. He was aware of the scorn in which white people held the apparent absence of all sexual morality in Haiti, and so set about introducing reforms. Even as a general he had opposed the dissoluteness of Dessalines.

175 643 582 671 581 [595] In an early pronouncement Christophe proscribes concubinage (by which he meant the unmarried unions of the people), libertinage, and "all those disorders which weaken the family." To proscribe an evil is not necessarily to put an end to it, however, and so he tried also to persuade and educate his people to the habit of full legal marriage. His steps at persuasion were various. In speeches he urged weddings upon his subjects; yet a man could see little reason for tying himself to one woman for life, assuming *legal* responsibilities at an expense, when already from experience he knew that he could have a woman's loyalty without the ceremony. Although weddings somewhat increased after 1806, Christophe's verbal campaign was a failure. He next tried force. In one town he made all the females assemble in the public square; then, separating the married from the unmarried, commanded his royal guards to advance, each to select an unmarried woman who should become his wife. At other times he selected young men and women by lot and had them married "by their King's authority." No nobleman in the kingdom could long remain unwed: indeed, Queen Victoria might have approved Christophe's solicitude for the moral uprightness of the Haitian court.

175 671 848 428 Another means by which Christophe forced his people into formal marriage was the indirect one of attacking property rights. Realizing that Dessalines' law by guaranteeing inheritance to natural children encouraged people to remain unmarried, he rescinded it by one of the first acts of his rule.[5] This act reëstablished French practice, making it all but impossible for illegitimate children to inherit anything. Most persons of property found this law persuasive where words had left them cold. Madiou thought the law "excessively severe in a country where nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of the population were born out of wedlock,"[6] and he spoke of its disharmony with general practice at the time. Actually,

5. Law of March 25, 1807.
6. Madiou, op. cit., III, 411.

it seems not radically to have affected the masses but only the fairly well-to-do.

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The *Royal Almanac* for the year 1814 touches proudly upon the moral state of the kingdom. The author of the almanac, the Comte de la Limonade, says: "Great attention is paid to morals and manners. Marriage is honored, protected, and encouraged; no Haitian who is unmarried can fill any place of distinction. Divorce is not permitted." All this was true; yet the mass of Haitians still remained unmarried. Nevertheless, the quotation indicates the extent to which Christophe had gone in his effort to reform marriage and morals among his people; to set them in the European tradition and draw them out of their African and colonial backgrounds.

While Christophe was trying to effect reforms in the North, Pétion was accepting his Southern folk as they were. Hardly a law during his twelve-year administration touches the subject of marriage. The élite colored people continued to make proper legal marriages and so insure the inheritance of their legitimate children. The common folk lived their family lives without weddings, and if property questions arose, custom ruled, backed by public opinion in their little communities.

Such are the backgrounds out of which modern Haitian sex relations have developed. From African tradition came family life, the importance of property to stabilize a union, insignificance of a wedding ceremony, familiarity with matrilineal kinship and descent; from French colonial practice, formal marriage to establish a family with social ambition, casual sex relations for pleasure outside this marriage, the claim of legitimate children to all property (in contrast to folk custom, where few legitimate children were born); from Dessalines, an emphasis upon the African tradition and realism; from Christophe, an insistence upon strict French practice in marriage and in the passage of property.

From among these alternatives Haiti made a choice which is an excellent example of what Keller calls "automatic selection in the mores."[7] There was no congress to select one procedure rather than another. Because Pétion and Boyer followed a *laissez-faire* policy in social matters, the people took the path of least resistance.

7. A. G. Keller, *Societal Evolution* (revised ed., New York, 1931), chaps. IV and V.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

today not only in Mirebalais, but, in their essential outlines, throughout the Republic.

The larger relationship grouping originates in the immediate family, and the formation of new extended families is a continuing arc. Characteristically, the process begins when a man leaves the habitation of his father and, with his wife, settles on land somewhat remote from the dwellings of either his people or those of his wife. As the sons of this couple grow up and marry, they make their homes near that of their father, so that in time a group of immediate families related in the paternal line clusters about the dwelling of this original settler, forming a habitation. The continuation of the process depends upon the amount of land available to the group; in any event, given enough time, land to permit all the male descendants of the founder to support themselves and their families will be lacking, so that the younger men will repeat the process that has been described, and themselves become the founders of new habitations whose members, with the passing of generations, will eventually be lost to the original group. While land is available, a young man is given several hectares by his father when he marries, and here he establishes his household. If the family have prospered, additional land is bought as more young men grow up, so that the relationship group may become a community of considerable size.

In accordance with this rule of residence, only rarely will a man settle on the property of his wife's parents, since to do so reflects unfavorably on his personal status. When this does occur, it is probably because of a serious quarrel with his own people. In such a case, if his marriage endures, he becomes a quasi-member of his wife's family, but unless he has committed some extremely grave offense, such as publicly insulting or striking a parent or grandparent, he does not forfeit membership in his own group.[1] Similarly, the fact of his having settled away from the habitation of his family does not disinherit him, for, as will be seen, this occurs in but the

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175 ions. Intermarriages between persons of widely different color
563 became extremely rare, being regarded by many lighter Haitians
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[19] whiter. Dr. Brown stated it baldly: "The pure negro seeks to ally himself to the griffe,[59] the griffe to the mulatto, the mulatto to the quateroon, the latter to a mustif, and the mustif, having but an untraceable tinge of African blood in his organization, is uproariously indignant if he is accused of having any at all."[60] An educated young black of several generations of free parents was scornfully turned down by a lighter-skinned woman considerably his inferior in breeding and wealth because her children would be darker than herself—"*petits enfants griffes,*" as she put it. The prejudices of colored people against blacks was almost as great, if not quite as intense, as the former prejudice of whites against colored people in colonial times. No one forgot that there had been black as well as colored freedmen in the colony; but it was much simpler for people of color to claim their long career as élite than for blacks to do so.

The attitude of upper-class Haitians toward whites in the midst of all this color prejudice was an interesting mixture. On the one hand, all good Haitians professed to dread a return of the whites; on the other, they welcomed white businessmen in the country. In a certain respect the whites were regarded much as were the Jews of Europe
[673] in the Middle Ages: they were wealthy—and therefore legitimate
[671] objects of pillage, necessary evils for the sake of finance. Theft from a
[641] white man by government action was a service to the state. Laws were consequently varied from time to time with the sole purpose of profiting from a foreigner's position. True, the trader might protest
[423] to his home government, but if England or the United States took a strong stand, Haiti could always retreat; if those governments did not stand firm, Haiti had gained. In the Haitian courts the whites had little show, for Article 38 of the Constitution forbade them to own real estate or to become citizens; they might not even hold a lease for more than ten years; and they might not marry Haitian women.

Nevertheless, the analogy with mediaeval Jews falls down at one vital point: whites were not viewed with contempt. Quite the con-

[192] 59. A term denoting three parts in four of Negro blood. This term as well as "mustif" goes back to colonial white society; neither was, or is, used by cultivated Haitians.

60. Brown, op. cit., II, 283–284.

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can seldom find persons disposed either to occupy or purchase them. There are some instances of proprietors leasing their lands to persons who undertake to cultivate them, for which they receive about one-third of the produce; but this is far from being general, and I imagine can only be accomplished by military men who have the command of troops, and who are thereby enabled to till them by working parties daily sent out for that purpose.[47]

An interesting side light is provided by a Quaker visitor, Candler, who in 1842 wrote that he was struck by the entire equality which seemed to exist between servant and master. Every workman was addressed in courteous manner, as "*mon fils*."[48] On inquiry, Candler was told that the profits of planting were good that year, laborers were scarce, and it was therefore "necessary to conciliate all by kindness, or no work would be done."

A particularly grim account of the state of cultivation near the close of Boyer's administration (1842) is given by a Frenchman:

> The fields of Haiti are dead. There where under slavery thousands of tons of sugar were made, now one sees only a few crops and a little syrup to turn into raw rum. Lively growths of cactus cover with thorns the acres of cane, of fields, of pastures deserted by the hand of man; the cactus invades the towns, coming even up to the heart of the cities, flourishing in the midst of ruins, as if to insult the inhabitants. . . . On the one hand, no one cultivates with regularity, because everyone is discouraged by the thefts of cane and fruit by people without any moral discipline, and in a country without police; while on the other hand, people complain of being poor, and of not being able to devote enough money to indispensable improvements. . . . And if the proprietors cannot even make work progress, imagine the condition of the poor![49]

As the people grew individually poorer, the value of the land sank until it was useless for an owner to try to prevent squatting on his estate. Holdings grew smaller and smaller, in spite of the prohibition on sales of real estate in parcels less than fifteen acres. Good land might be had in every part of the island quite cheaply, much of it even from the government which had enacted the restrictive law. Any man not satisfied with his condition as a paid laborer might, if

47. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti* (*Saint Domingo*), (London, 1828), p. 313.
48. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti* (London, 1842), p. 37.
49. V. Schoelcher, *Colonies étrangères et Haïti: résultats de l'émancipation anglaise* (Paris, 1842), II, 263 ff.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

Cassation at Port-au-Prince. In the event that this court confirmed the judgment of the lower courts, the defendant might still appeal from it to the president, and might apply for a new trial in the lower courts. Thus the contest would proceed ad infinitum, however clear the proof that the debt was just. 175 695

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9. Mackenzie, British consul during a part of Boyer's régime, and young Haiti's fiercest critic, said that during his whole stay he knew of only one murder, and that in his case the assassin was executed. [114] [682]

10. In times of revolution, brigandage was expected but was not accounted a crime, any more than killing in warfare is called murder. [669] [672]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

674 Soldiers, then, had no great difficulty policing town and country-
369 side, for there was little more crime in the towns than in rural regions. A person arrested would be haled before the nearest juge de
696 paix who would, if necessary, sentence him to jail—which meant
697 sending him to one of the larger towns. This was rather a severe penalty, for the jails were filthy; moreover, only about ten cents a week was ordinarily allotted to each prisoner for food with the result that if a prisoner's family did not supply him, he was likely to be near starvation. Extra work was required for extra fare. Haiti was probably no worse off in respect to its jails than most European and American countries at the time, for this was before the era of prison reform. Inmates of jails were likely to be only petty thieves.

697 During certain régimes the presidents or their generals managed to have numbers of convicts sentenced to hard work, in order to have forced labor on their private estates or projects dear to them. Under any administration there were likely to be a few convicts who performed repair work on streets and roads. It was the usual practice to chain or rope them together by pairs, three yards apart; accompanied by soldiers with loaded muskets, the convicts labored from daylight to sunset, with an hour and a half for a meal at noon. The government pretended to provide for them, but in order to save expense two of the criminals accompanied by two soldiers with fixed bayonets were sent about the neighborhood to beg for the group. The result was that the wretches went ill fed and half naked. They slept in jail on beds which were little more than boards.

701 The final and most persistent branch of government has been the
175 army.[11] Owing to the overmilitarization of Haiti, generals were perennially participating in the civil government—or engaged in overthrowing it. It was to be expected that following the revolution the new independent state formed in 1804 should have a military cast. Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, Geffrard, Boyer, Cangé, Yayou, Magloire Ambroise, Férou, François, Capoix, Rigaud—these were the great generals and the only important statesmen. It was as if in America not only Washington had been a military leader, but also Adams, Jefferson, Franklin, Jay, Hamilton, Madison, Pinckney,

[647] 11. In most governments there has been a body which, although connected with the legislature, had functions pertaining to the law. This was the Chamber of Accounts, a body of five men who examined into and reported to the president upon every branch of expenditure and collection of revenues. It might recommend to him certain financial reforms or improvements, but had no power to enforce its suggestions.

D. Courlander 9-5 (1927-1954) 1960 993 Haiti 993

never were again, and after a prêt' savane had read prayers over the spring the people again drew water from it.

Baka more often change themselves into gray or red pigs, but one ingenious baka was said to have transformed himself into a bicycle, which was seen traveling alone at night on the road from Port-au-Prince to Léogane.

Some people wear charms against the baka's malevolence; but the most effective weapon is the cocomacaque stick. The cocomacaque, or monkey palm, is a palm tree that grows only a few feet high. It has magical powers to drive off not only baka but other evil beings as well. When the tree is growing in its natural state, it is said, you must never mention its name in its own presence. Should you say within its hearing, for example, "Look at the cocomacaque," it will wilt and fall over, losing all its vital powers. The trunk of this midget palm is a favorite material for fashioning a walking stick or a short baton. A man going on a long journey into strange country may carry a cocomacaque stick with him to brandish at the crossroads where baka lurk, or to drive off strange animals that may be baka in disguise.

In their relationships with human beings, the baka are not always random. Sometimes, for a terrible price, they will undertake to make a man rich or to "eat" his enemies for him.

In some parts of Haiti, baka seemingly have found their way into the ranks of the loa. In the Congo-Guinée pantheon there is a deity called Bakula Baka, or Bakuku Baka. He is a malevolent spirit who "eats" people in the best baka tradition, and he lives, significantly, in the mapou tree, which is shunned by all good loa.

The *engagements*, or compacts, in which baka sometimes figure are usually made with another sort of creature, the *djab*, or devil. A djab is a manlike being but is superhuman, ferocious, and terrible. Some djab are small, some large, some innocent in appearance, some grotesque. They are supernatural sorcerers who deal out riches in exchange for human beings. A frustrated or desperate man may go to a djab and ask for a favor, which will usually be granted for a heart-rending price. *Persons who appear to gain wealth suddenly may be suspected of having* entered into an *engagement* with a powerful djab.

One story is about a man of Port-au-Prince who, needing a large sum of money, went to a famous djab who lives in a cave known as Trou Fourban. This powerful djab agreed to provide all the money required, but only on condition that the man deliver to him each year one of his children. The man suddenly came into a large fortune. But when the anniversary of his compact arrived, he did not go to Trou Fourban

1: Courlander 8-4 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

with one of his children as he had agreed. That night his oldest child died. The next year to the day, his second child died. And the third year, the third child died. On the fourth anniversary, the man's wife died. On the fifth, he himself died. The djab of Trou Fourban had collected his debt.

Another great djab lives on the northern mountain called Morne Ronde. A man of Cap Haitien was said to have made a compact with him for wealth. One day there was a great hubbub in front of the man's house. A crowd gathered and stood peering inside his door. What they saw was a rain of money falling down from the rafters. The floor was covered with ten-gourde bills. When the *gendarmerie* came to investigate, they stood at the doorway in awe, watching the money float to the floor. The man finally closed the door. That night he moved away, and no one in Cap Haitien ever saw him again.

The djab are insatiable. For their favors—which range from providing wealth and political position to destroying one's enemies—they always demand more in return than the recipient has counted on. Catholic ritual is called upon in some instances to break the djab's chain of demands.

Some tales are told in which human beings outwit the djab, particularly the lesser ones; but more often than not, the djab have the last laugh. During the big hurricane which hit Haiti in 1954, a huge landslide occurred near the place called Bayè Roche in the La Selle Mountains. An entire village was wiped out, covered by the falling rocks. Throughout this region the disaster was attributed to the action of a djab reputed to live in one of the nearby caves. Many lost cattle were found wandering near Bayè Roche, and they were believed to be people whom the malevolent djab had transformed into animals.

The height of bravado is to demand to be confronted with a big djab face to face. There is a song which goes:

> Conduit'm allé oh!
> Conduit'm allé djab nan Trou Fourban!
> Conduit'm allé! [Ex. 9c]
>
> Take me, oh!
> Take me to the djab in Trou Fourban!
> Take me!

There are still other supernatural creatures in Haitian lore who must be guarded against, such as the *djablesse*, the *revenant*, and the *lutin*. The *djablesse* is a female ghost who must live in the woods for a number of years before she can enter heaven, as a punishment for the crime of

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

to command the forced labor of serfs, had to develop a new technique for securing manual labor. Legislation soon recognized the new state of affairs by enactments which kept distinct *la grande culture* and *la petite culture*. The former had to do with the production of sugar and coffee, from which the republic derived its wealth; the latter with small farming. *La petite culture* was simple cultivation of whatever the small owner wished to raise. Large-scale culture, on the other hand, became rather complicated. 175 471 24

Owners of great estates had to guide them only their experience of slave days and of serfdom under Toussaint and Dessalines. Now that both were gone, few planters were wealthy enough to pay wages for day labor; a new variation was needed. It was forthcoming in the *métayer* system—a crop-sharing arrangement with tenants closely resembling that which prevails today in some parts of the United States. The owner leased his estate in large or small plots to tenants. Half the income went to the landlord and half to the tenant; but the landlord must furnish the sugar mill and other necessary machinery where cane was raised. Laws were passed to give a measure of security to the proprietor. The contract between him and the tenant (*fermier*)[26] must be signed before a civil official; the engagement must extend through the harvesting of one crop; tenants even then might not abandon their contracts except after notice of three months, with a declaration to the local official. 175 427 471 [675]

Punishments were stipulated for the breaking of contracts. A tenant who had made an agreement and then abandoned the *habitation*, even for a visit elsewhere, without a certificate attesting his regularity, might be imprisoned for eight days the first time, a month the second, and three months the third, such imprisonment to be spent in hard labor on public works. Any disputes arising between plantation owners and tenants were to be taken before the local justice. If they threatened to develop into serious cases, the justice was to notify the commandant of the nearest important town. A person who fomented disturbance of such agreements (the Haitian equivalent of "labor agitators," style 1810) might be imprisoned for a year, as also his accomplices. Commandants of each arrondissement must put down disorder as soon as requested by landlords, tenant farmers, or overseers. They must likewise make frequent patrols of 175 675 686 692

26. The word "fermier" must not be translated simply as "farmer"; the idea of a contract and a rental fee is implicit in the French word. [192]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 their districts, principally during the working hours of the day. They 692 were held responsible for all consequences of their own negligence.

This whole flow of legislation was designed primarily for the 175 protection of the great landed proprietors, yet there were other laws 671 which aided the masses. In former days workers had been coerced 466 through corporal punishment. This was by law now abolished. Temporary assignments of garden plots were required for each family of laborers; medical care must be provided at the expense of the planter; the aged and infirm must be guaranteed the right to keep their homes and gardens even though no longer able to work. Expectant mothers in the fourth month of pregnancy must be relieved of field work, with no limitation of their right to share in the estate's income; mothers of nursing children must be permitted to remain at home until the weaning of their infants.

175 A great concession to the workers was made by abolishing the 647 office of "inspector of cultures."[27] In the days of Toussaint and Des- 241 salines each district of the country had had its inspector, whose duty it was to see that crop cultivation proceeded according to schedule.[27] This man's disapproval of conditions resulted in fines and personal chastisement. By abolishing the office Pétion effected a great saving in salaries, for there had been thousands of these inspectors; on the other hand, the watchfulness of the inspectors had kept agricultural production at a high level. With no officials to dog the footsteps of the workers, crops immediately fell off.

175 Pétion clearly expected la grande culture to be the prevailing mode 466 of agriculture in the republic. He fostered all kinds of legislation 24 regulating it, even aside from that already mentioned. For example, a complete schedule was prepared for the division of income of the 656 estate.[28] But the entire system was too neatly worked out and artificial to be effective, particularly since it was not backed up with force. The threat of punishment removed, most workers began gradually, often deliberately, to sabotage the system. It was much more pleasant

27. Christophe followed his predecessors in keeping the district inspectors.

[466] [465] 28. This could be very complicated. A tenant farmer might hire workers, and so have to share his half of the income with them. In such case, the division of the money crops was to be made in kind or in money, at current prices, in the presence of the local justice, his assessors, and an officer of the *gendarmerie*. The workers' "fourth" was divided into portions of which three went to the first foreman, two to each of the skilled workers, one and a half to each male or female worker, and one half to each child laborer between ten and fourteen years of age.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

17
fact that a family will often strike out for itself, deserting [584]
the parental home, show a European independence foreign to
native African thought. Yet the arrangement of meal-times, [264]
and the fact that a wife rarely eats with her husband, are [593]
African, as are the modes of correction, especially the feeling [84]
that flogging with a stick is the best disciplinary method. In- [201]
deed, the characteristic map of the fingers employed by the [681]
Haitian to indicate a beating is exactly that which is used in
Dahomey to signify beheading! In the attitude toward chil- [855]
dren African traditions have been warped by European cus-
tom, which has introduced a certain hardness of feeling that,
whatever the cost, children must be brought in line with so-
cial convention, together with a resulting harshness of treat-
ment that is anything but African.

17
Another important facet of Haitian life in which the effect
of contact is telling includes art and recreational activities. 322
Perhaps because of the conditions of slavery, or the difficulties
of life after independence had been attained, much of these
forms of African tradition has been lost, not to be replaced
by corresponding borrowings from European sources. Wood-
carving, an outstanding element in the æsthetic life of West
Africa, is almost entirely absent. Near Mirebalais lives a man
who can carve a pipe in the likeness of a human face, but there
is no similarity between the products of his craft and West
African figurines or masks, and he is thought of as an un-
usual person whose carving is an interesting but not socially
significant avocation. It was stated, though without adequate
corroboration, that before the Marine occupation Mirebalais
boasted *vodun* drums on which heads "like the ones on these
pipes" had been carved. Today the only form of decorative
work in wood to be seen is the scroll-work designs which act as
ventilating devices over doorways. They are done with the
jigsaws of the carpenters, and no fertility of conception or
felicity in composition marks these artistically crude efforts.

Other African crafts, which, though essentially utilitarian

2: Courlander 9-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

beyond the obvious fear of contagion. In his study of Dahomey, Herskovits notes: 766 [171]

> . . . Smallpox is believed to be sent as a punishment for grave offenses in the eyes of these [the Sagbata] deities, and it is taken to indicate that either the dead person himself or a member of his family has committed some heinous crime such as the practice of black magic. A person who dies of smallpox may only be buried after permission has been given by the chief priest of the Earth cult.[20]

Thus, in Haiti, though the connections with the past are clouded, it is clear that victims of lightning and smallpox are treated as a special class of criminals or malefactors. 174 153 763 766

Ordinary malefactors such as malevolent criminals and murderers—until recent years, at least—were not buried in the common graveyard. They, too, were segregated at the periphery of the cemetery or buried at the edge of a trail or road where the traffic would not permit them to rest and where their graves would be under constant surveillance. The roadside grave sometimes was also the fate of a person killed by lightning. 766

That these special burials are related to the Dahomean and Yoruban concepts of retribution for crimes against the deities is supported by the similarity of treatment accorded victims of lightning and disease and common criminals. In Haiti, Herskovits observes: "Those who die of smallpox or leprosy, suicides, or persons shot as a punishment for crime are not buried in the communal cemetery, but in special sections of the graveyard," the suicides and criminals being set apart from the others.[21] 761 753 763 [174] [171] [381] [762]

Graves found near the seashore, lake shores, or riverbanks frequently are declared to belong to persons who died of drowning. 766

Approximately nine days after a person's death, the "last prayers" are said, and the soul of the deceased is presumed to have departed from the house. Once more, under the tonnelle outside there are games, storytelling, and singing. On this night, however, there is also drumming and dancing of a special kind. Usually it is the Juba, or Martinique, dance, which is believed to be specially enjoyed by the dead, and it is the older people, rather than the young, who participate. These festivities are believed to give cheer to the deceased and to "encourage" him on his way. On the next night comes the mangé mort, the feast for the family dead, a ritual which continues periodically through the years. 765 53 [795] [524] [769]

Sometimes in Haiti you may come upon an old tomb or grave before which a dish of specially prepared food has been set. This is part of the mangé mort ritual. 764 769

A man may make provision in advance of his death for the rites which follow his burial. He may designate special animals to be killed, leave 763 764

[20] [Ibid., pp. 397–398. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.—Analyst]

[21] [Herskovits, Life in a Haitian Valley, p. 214. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.—Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 771 [682] these four men and four women began on February 4, 1864, arousing all Port-au-Prince, the local population as well as the foreign legations and consulates. The guilt of the accused was soon evident; following their complete confessions they were declared guilty of sorcery, cruelty, and murder, and all eight were condemned to death. They were executed on February 13, only six weeks after the crime. What these fanatics had done seemed as horrible to the Haitians as a similar crime would seem to Americans.

Much publicity was given the trial by foreign journalists who, with their flair for making the most of a dramatic tale, added whatever they could pick up by hearsay of the beliefs which had prompted the human sacrifice. The reading public, uncritical and uninformed about Haiti itself, if they gave the lurid accounts a second thought seem to have assumed that such actions were "what one might expect of Negroes." The incident would shortly have passed into that oblivion which awaits sensational news from obscure parts of the world, if it had not been kept alive by the British Minister, who was also an author.

114 771 In the 'eighties, after retirement from diplomatic service, Sir Spencer St. John wrote a two-volume work called *Hayti, or The Black Republic*. It was probably no more egregious in its dramatic account than were scores of other books by Englishmen who, in the latter years of the Victorian era, were discovering darkest Africa, holding dominion over palm and pine, and taking up the white man's burden all over the "heathen" world; but it possessed the literary qualities which made people buy it and discuss with avidity its horrendous details. The adjective "black" in its title seemed almost to refer to the moral characteristics of the people rather than to their skin color. Sir Spencer made a great many accurate, if somewhat one-sided, observations on the customs of the people, giving the public the first readable book in decades about the Haitians. The grisly climax of his story, however, is the *Affair de Bizoton*. He amassed an astonishing collection of tales, practically all at second-hand, to prove that Vodun (Voodooism, he called it) was the real religion of the Haitians (which it was), and that it was compounded of the vilest superstitions and most fiendish practices, of which the most essential was human sacrifice of "the goat without horns" followed by a cannibalistic communion. Which, needless to say, it was not.

This is the sort of dramatic tale uncritical readers seem to like to

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

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2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1945) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

533 533 643 named in the song has been dead for years does not seem to matter very much:

Mènè'm allé ch parleur!	Take me to the parlor!
Mènè'm allé!	Take me!
Mènè'm allé!	Take me!
Mènè'm allé ch parleur Bernal	Take me to Bernal's parlor!
Mènè'm allé ch! [Ex. 120]	Take me, ch!

533 533 625 Sometimes the challenge is directed to a more lowly level of authority, such as the gendarme:

> Gendarme, mènè'm nan bureau!
> Rwo, gendarme ch! [Ex. 121]
>
> Gendarme, take me to the police station!
> Rwo, gendarme, ch!

159 683 579 [183] [626] Haitians are notable for their restraint from physical violence. During holiday celebrations it is not uncommon to see men who have drunk enough tafia to make them act up. Some of them may even be morose and bellicose. But the disturbances of the peace more often than not are verbal. So long as the first blow is not struck, the social pressures against violence operate effectively. But physical assault against an individual—a push, a blow, a slap—is an affront to personal dignity which relieves the victim of the social restraints and gives him the right to bodily revenge. I have seen waterfront rows, fierce and vocal, in which no one but the participants showed much interest. But should one man shove or strike another, the spectators would immediately interfere, for that single physical contact would have removed the barriers to the worst violence. Sometimes at carnival time a man assumes the guise of belligerence. Such a bully may roll up one trouser leg to indicate he is challenging all and sundry to a fight. Usually, passers-by move aside good-naturedly when he approaches. He is not taken seriously; but neither is he challenged, except by another man in the same frame of mind. When two men with rolled trouser legs meet, there may be a verbal encounter, possibly from opposite sides of the street, to the general entertainment of the bystanders. It is usually a serio-comic affair. Some of the folk songs memorialize occasions on which a man has publicly spoiled for a fight, real or imaginary. This song comments briefly on a man named Çalirz, who looked for trouble:

533 533 783 683 579

> Way way way!
> Way way way!
> Way way way!
> Çac bèn mangé mayo yo!
> Mèsw on bastèlle là!

533*
534*
683
579

Çalies Çalies ça!
Mène en bataille lì!
Ça qui fin strongé coupe yo!
Mène en bataille lì! [Ex. 122]

Way way way!
Way way way!
Way way way!
Those who can't fight, take care of yourselves!
Take me into the battle!
Çalies, this Çalies!
Take me into the battle!
Those who are delicate, take care of yourselves!
Take me into the battle!

Another battle cry in song goes:

C'est mon mème, c'est mon mème!
C'est mon mème, c'est mon mème!
Pas wè'm déjà gros Nèg' rèse!
Ma maintain djab lì!

It is me myself, it is me myself!
It is me myself, it is me myself!
Don't you see I am a big man, rese?
I will hold that devil!

In the following song an aggrieved man declares he is strong as a bull, and warns his enemy to beware.

Anou mayain tè glissé mon c'est bèf ah!
Anou mayain tè glissé mon c'est bèf ah!

I'll fix you, treacherous fellow,* I am a bull, ah!
I'll fix you, treacherous fellow, I am a bull, ah!

Even a successful game of dice is the subject of bragging:

533*
534*
524

Pasé fini,
Oh pasé belle,
Pasé un beauté!
Pasé fini,
Oh pasé belle,
Pasé un beauté!
Yr è mèr frappé mon,
Mon fè mèn beauté! [Ex. 123]

More than sweet,
Oh, more than handsome,
More than a beauty!
More than sweet,
Oh, more than handsome,
More than a beauty!
Last night I played dice,
I made them sweet!

* *Tè glissé*, literally "slippery earth," means a person who is treacherous.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

[illegible] market place, quarreling is invariably heard; or if one of them sings *point* — derisive songs — against the other and goes so far as to name the object of derision, fighting and court action follow.

Though many cases of *plaçage* are the result of affairs between young people which result in conception, it is essential in any event that the consent of the families of the man and the woman concerned be obtained to give the mating social validity. When the union is once entered upon, divorce occurs only with the abandonment or mistreatment of the woman, or her infidelity, for in these *plaçage* matches, the moral support of her family makes a man reluctant to send his wife away without ample justification. When a man does divorce a *placée* wife for reasons of infidelity, she may either go to another man or return to the home of her parents, where she supports herself. If after a period of years she has not established a household with another man, it often happens that her husband takes her back. Most frequently, however, where children have been born to a mating, a woman's infidelity is punished merely by beating; and proof that a wife is a wife whether or not she is legally "married" is offered by the Haitian man in this fact that a *placée* is beaten for this and less serious reasons as readily as a legal wife. Prompt action is taken against the adulterer, which, though it may on occasion be as drastic as murder, generally takes the form of recourse to magic charms. Women who carry on illicit relationships take all care, therefore, to guard unceasingly against the birth of offspring.

Many men, at least, hold that a man is often much closer to a *placée* than to a legal wife, for the former is more attentive and less demanding than the wife with her legally assured status and permanence of tenure. Thus it comes about that *placée* spouses are frequently given generous money gifts, to be saved for the future of their children, while as a man grows older he may take up his residence with a *placée* wife, where

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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points — or oblique designations — makes clear the distinction between the two, for the *bocor* invariably and certain *hungans* on occasion are called *nèg' mazi maza*, "Negro who wears his back to the front," or, again, those who "serve with both hands." Though by no means shunning the services of the practitioner, the Haitians of Mirebalais nevertheless look upon the working of magic with a cynicism that is reflected in the gossip about happenings that befall all who practice it, in any form, and particularly those who work evil magic. It is said: "The *hungan* often dies an evil death, and the *bocor* who makes *wanga* almost always. These people kill each other by magic"; or one hears of a woman who one day went to the cemetery to obtain materials needed for her unsavory work and was struck and killed by the thunderbolts which are believed to smite sorcerers.

To keep his reputation, a practitioner of magic, good or evil, must make continual demonstration of his powers. For example, in prescribing a magical cure, it is incumbent upon the *hungan* or *mambu* to foresee all eventualities, even where the directions are not followed, a prescription which is regarded as a strong check on the charlatan and is the reason why a practitioner is prudent in refusing to accept a case beyond his power to aid, since persistent failure to achieve cures will lose a *hungan* his reputation and his practice. Naturally, certain practitioners do not fail on occasion to turn the anxiety of a family over a serious illness to their own account, but inasmuch as the cures made by a man are the most adequate proof of his power, the feeling is that his clients have an unquestioned safeguard against chicanery. This point of view, it may be noted, is of undoubted importance in perpetuating a living faith in magic.

An example of how rapidly a practitioner of magic can lose prestige when some mishap occurs to him was encountered when an important *gangan* of the valley was brought into court charged with the theft of a pig which he claimed was

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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given him by a third party for whom he had done what was euphemistically called "a piece of work." The evidence clearly showed that the animal, which he had killed to feed a *combite*, had been stolen, and since this *gangan* could not establish his defense that he was an innocent receiver of stolen goods, he was convicted and sentenced to three months in prison, and to pay the owner of the pig the exorbitant sum—sixty-five gourdes—asked as damages. Sympathy was very generally with the *gangan*, but the opinion most often heard expressed was that his power had obviously been lessened by his misuse of the *connaissance* the gods had given him, or they would not have permitted even his arrest, much less his conviction. To reinforce the point, specific reference was repeatedly made to the *hungan* most popular in the valley at the time, about whom it was said that, for example, were he accused before a court, the officers might even enter his house in search of him while he was present, but they would still be unable to see that he was before them.

Other attitudes held toward workers of magic developed in connection with this case. The popular *hungan* was often called on, it was said, because his work was well done and his fees were not too high; it was pointed out that there were renowned *vodou* priests who charged five hundred gourdes for a *service* which this man directed effectively for but little over one hundred; moreover, such men often failed to remove the evil deities which were troubling the family that employed them, but would instead add more, so that their clients would soon have need of them again. Practices such as these, especially that of overcharging, are frowned upon by the *loa*, and if persisted in they "spoil" the power of the priest. This was one of the reasons why, in the opinion of many individuals, the *gangan* in question had been convicted. "He was once a remarkable *gangan*, but he has spoiled his *loa* by using them for evil, and by asking too much money for what he was employed

3: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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land, whose bodies are buried in it, and whose spirits watch over it. As has been shown in the discussion of property, land in Haiti is owned privately, and, once title has passed, is subject to no alienation, except at the will of the owner — an attitude also held toward property of other categories, as is evidenced by the fact that most of the possessions of a man, particularly his livestock, are marked for identification, and theft is severely punished. Even the disposal of stray animals whose owners cannot be identified must follow well-defined legal procedure, in accordance with which they are held by the officers of the commune for a stated period of time before being sold at public auction. All marks on these animals are carefully noted in the records, so that title to them may be duly established.

In the organization of production and distribution an African mold, if not full consent, predominates. The co-operative work-system, which is so important in maintaining agricultural production, is directly related to comparable groupings of West Africa, of which a distinctive form is the *dokpwe* of Dahomey, described when the African origins of Haitian culture were examined. The *combite*, as an instrument of co-operative labor and mutual self-help, with its tradition of giving no pecuniary reward for work done, but of making the feast which comes at the end of the day's labor adequate return — all these represent pure retentions of African practice. Even more striking is the carry-over in the attitudes which go with these outer forms — the manner in which the participants look forward with pleasant anticipation to taking part in *combites*, the enjoyment which they derive from their group work, and the verve with which the work is done are clear expressions of these attitudes. The role of the *combite*-song in exercising social control and enforcing conformity to local custom is entirely African, as is its function in stimulating work by setting a rhythm for it.

African, too, is the institution of the market, though in this

D: Courlander 8-4 (1937-1938) 1964 EV3 Haiti EV3

house. A round, polished Indian stone is occasionally used as a *garde hakinton*. And old people speak of a very powerful charm known as a *gros arrête* which in former times was placed on the trail to protect entire villages or valleys. 789

Still another potent defensive charm is the *pouin*, which is the product of ritual magic within the cult temple. A pouin may be an actual bundle containing a formula of special ingredients; more often, it is invisible, consisting of magical forces unleashed into space by the houngan. There are many ceremonies in the hounfor devoted to the projecting of these magical forces. They are called *cérémonie pouin* or *cérémonie magie* and are dramatized by special cult songs and dances. Sometimes the magic ceremony is woven into a more generalized cult ritual. The powers of the pouin are regarded as wider and more potent than those of the arrête. Pouins are said to protect an individual or a group not only against other magic but also against natural phenomena and accident. A pouin may ward off lightning, for example, or protect one from falling trees or from shipwreck or drowning. But it is not solely defensive magic. It may bring success in fishing, or produce a good crop in one's garden, or aid human fertility. 789 784 796 [777] [342]

Since the crops and the garden are the substance of life, much attention is given to their protection. An enemy may attack a man or his household through garden magic. He may bury a ouanga in the earth, to bring sickness or ruin. He may poison a tree by performing a special rite at its foot, and its fruits will then carry disease or death to the one who eats them. Or he may make a compact with the earth so that it will dry up and refuse to produce for the one who tills it. Against all these malevolent possibilities, as well as against common thieves, the Haitian peasant has many magical and practical resources. Some people are said to employ zombies as watchmen. These fearsome creatures will capture a trespasser and hold him for the owner of the field.[3] Or perhaps the owner will place special arrêtes in his garden. Occasionally a man will protect his fields by planting *piquette* in the earth. The *piquette* is a piece of sharpened bamboo or hard wood. Its point is dipped into poison, and it is placed in the ground, sharpened end up. An unwary intruder who steps on a *piquette* may die of his wound. 789 [754] [775]

To counteract the *malèfick*, or evil eye, a man may procure from a houngan a special shirt made of wide strips of red, white, and blue cloth sewed together. This shirt, called a *maye* or *mayo*, is worn for seven days if the *malèfick* is a rather ordinary one. If the evil force is a particularly virulent one, however, the *maye* will be worn as long as twenty-one 754 789 791

3 [Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy" Journal of Negro History October, 1940, p. 503. Cf. p. 39, category 116. -- Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

to command the forced labor of serfs, had to develop a new technique for securing manual labor. Legislation soon recognized the new state of affairs by enactments which kept distinct *la grande culture* and *la petite culture*. The former had to do with the production of sugar and coffee, from which the republic derived its wealth; the latter with small farming. *La petite culture* was simple cultivation of whatever the small owner wished to raise. Large-scale culture, on the other hand, became rather complicated.

Owners of great estates had to guide them only their experience of slave days and of serfdom under Toussaint and Dessalines. Now that both were gone, few planters were wealthy enough to pay wages for day labor; a new variation was needed. It was forthcoming in the *métayer* system—a crop-sharing arrangement with tenants closely resembling that which prevails today in some parts of the United States. The owner leased his estate in large or small plots to tenants. Half the income went to the landlord and half to the tenant; but the landlord must furnish the sugar mill and other necessary machinery where cane was raised. Laws were passed to give a measure of security to the proprietor. The contract between him and the tenant (*fermier*)[26] must be sig[illegible] before a civil official; the engagement must extend through the [illegible]vesting of one crop; tenants even then might not abandon their contracts except after notice of three months, with a declaration to the local official.

Punishments were stipulated for the breaking of contracts. A tenant who had made an agreement and then abandoned the *habitation*, even for a visit elsewhere, without a certificate attesting his regularity, might be imprisoned for eight days the first time, a month the second, and three months the third, such imprisonment to be spent in hard labor on public works. Any disputes arising between plantation owners and tenants were to be taken before the local justice. If they threatened to develop into serious cases, the justice was to notify the commandant of the nearest important town. A person who fomented disturbance of such agreements (the Haitian equivalent of "labor agitators," style 1810) might be imprisoned for a year, as also his accomplices. Commandants of each arrondissement must put down disorder as soon as requested by landlords, tenant farmers, or overseers. They must likewise make frequent patrols of

26. The word "fermier" must not be translated simply as "farmer"; the idea of a contract and a rental fee is implicit in the French word.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 their districts, principally during the working hours of the day. They
175 were held responsible for all consequences of their own negligence.
692

This whole flow of legislation was designed primarily for the
175 protection of the great landed proprietors, yet there were other laws
671 which aided the masses. In former days workers had been coerced
466 through corporal punishment. This was by law now abolished. Temporary assignments of garden plots were required for each family of laborers; medical care must be provided at the expense of the planter; the aged and infirm must be guaranteed the right to keep their homes and gardens even though no longer able to work. Expectant mothers in the fourth month of pregnancy must be relieved of field work, with no limitation of their right to share in the estate's income; mothers of nursing children must be permitted to remain at home until the weaning of their infants.

175 A great concession to the workers was made by abolishing the
647 office of "inspector of cultures." In the days of Toussaint and Des-
241 salines each district of the country had had its inspector, whose duty it was to see that crop cultivation proceeded according to schedule.[27] This man's disapproval of conditions resulted in fines and personal chastisement. By abolishing the office Pétion effected a great saving in salaries, for there had been thousands of these inspectors; on the other hand, the watchfulness of the inspectors had kept agricultural production at a high level. With no officials to dog the footsteps of the workers, crops immediately fell off.

175 Pétion clearly expected la grande culture to be the prevailing mode
466 of agriculture in the republic. He fostered all kinds of legislation
24 regulating it, even aside from that already mentioned. For example,
656 a complete schedule was prepared for the division of income of the estate.[28] But the entire system was too neatly worked out and artificial to be effective, particularly since it was not backed up with force. The threat of punishment removed, most workers began gradually, often deliberately, to sabotage the system. It was much more pleasant

27. Christophe followed his predecessors in keeping the district inspectors.

[466] 28. This could be very complicated. A tenant farmer might hire workers, and so
[465] have to share his half of the income with them. In such cases, the division of the money crops was to be made in kind or in money, at current prices, in the presence of the local justice, his assessors, and an officer of the gendarmerie. The workers' "fourth" was divided into portions of which three went to the first foreman, two to each of the skilled workers, one and a half to each male or female worker, and one half to each child laborer between ten and fourteen years of age.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

applicant, of his regular conduct, and his ability to maintain himself economically in the town. Land laborers might not send their children to school or have them apprenticed in a town without a certificate from the same judge. Under no pretext might a worker establish a shop or sell his produce in the countryside; certain exceptions were made of necessary articles of food and home manufacture. No laborer might build a home in rural parts except on the plantation to which he was attached. 175 671 24 566 693

An individual, once placed by the government in the category of "cultivator," might never be removed from that class except by official authorization. Even with the consent of the proprietor and the agricultural administrator of the district, he was not to quit the estate to which he was bound for more than eight days.

We may further note in the Code that coöperative enterprise among the workers is forbidden. Anticipating the possible tendency of laborers to set up what in modern times would be called a producers' coöperative, presumably to lapse thereafter into laziness, the Code requires that every worker engage himself individually by authentic contract to the service of a proprietor or lessee. Such engagements for la grande culture are not to be for less than three years, or more than nine. Penalties for infractions of these rules are fines, imprisonment, or forced labor on public works in the chief town of the commune. 175 671 474 686 566

The Code directs the management of agricultural property and grazing establishments,[39] also the making of contracts between the proprietor and his hirelings. Rural police are established, in imitation of Christophe's Dahomets, to act as inspectors of plantations and of the workers on them. 175 671 625 421

The section repressing vagrancy is very full. All persons not proprietors or lessees, yet living in rural parts without having made a contract with some producer, are classed as vagabonds, to be arrested and taken before the magistrate. This official will warn them that by law they are bound to make a contract, and that if they refuse they will be sent to prison. Should a vagabond persist in refusing to sign a contract after eight days of confinement, he is condemned to labor on public works until he agrees. Should the prisoner be a minor, he will be sent to his parents. 175 686 24

39. This latter item was inserted as an adjustment to one of the primary occupations of the Spanish end of the island.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

by persuasion, to do as much work as possible for his and their own interests. In a few cases the success of such efforts was tolerably good; but one worker disposed to be sullen or idle, or even not physically strong, might throw the whole scheme into disorder. One's own profits would be cut by the misdeeds of others even when one had himself been industrious. This caused a decline of incentive, sometimes among a whole group of potentially good workers, because one or two of the number shirked. Probably the most patent evil of such arrangements was that every laborer realized that he did not suffer as directly for idleness or neglect as when working for himself; his fellow workers shared the consequences of his misconduct in some degree, and his employer in a still greater measure. The driving force of individual responsibility was removed.

Boyer and Inginac, foreseeing just such disorder, had tried to provide against it in the Code Rural by giving summary powers to local judges to inflict penalties upon lazy or malingering workers. Quite aside, however, from the loss of time and the inconvenience to both parties in going constantly to a judge for his decision, the proprietor was afraid to act on this principle to any extent, since if he did so he might lose his laborers altogether.

It was a rare proprietor, then, who could hope to make much of a fortune out of his plantation. More and more the landowners, having subdivided their fields, grew lax in overseeing them. The workers, freed from constant supervision, accustomed by long habit to living in one hut, and unconsciously developing a mentality which made them feel, as did American squatters on frontier lands, that they had a right to the land they tilled, imperceptibly developed into peasants. The state's remaining properties, no longer under cultivation, were invaded by families of small farmers, and the government took no steps to oust them or send them back to privately owned plantations. The estates of individual aristocrats underwent the same fate if not carefully watched. Theoretically, it was the duty of the army to drive out squatters, to force laborers back into "proper" agricultural work; but the army consisted of peasant youths who would not turn against people of their own group.

Legal irregularity was gradually sanctioned by the passage of time, usage being a stronger guarantor of rights than unenforced laws on the statute books.

Haitian peasantry, to sum up, began as the unplanned, undesired

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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under Toussaint. The ravages of warfare were partially repaired, so that commerce once again appeared at the seaports. English, American, Danish, Swedish, and German vessels now shared what once the French had monopolized. Toussaint's export duties of ten per cent on sugar, coffee, cotton, and cacao were kept by Dessalines, and import duties likewise remained just about the same as formerly: twelve per cent.

A strange stopgap trading scheme was devised. Dessalines named the specific ports at which foreign ships might enter, then established a number of Haitian "consignees" at each of these ports. Numbers were given to each of these men. The first ship which entered the harbor was consigned to the shop of the trader having Number 1, the second to Number 2, and so on until each consignee had dealt with a foreigner, when Number 1 would receive the right to a second ship's cargo.[3] The captain of a vessel sent to Haiti did not know until his arrival in port who would be his consignee. If the probity of the Haitian merchant to whom fate assigned the captain did not inspire confidence, he was not obliged to sell goods to him—but was prohibited from selling them thereafter anywhere else in the country.

In this system there was room for every sort of irregularity and graft. More often than not Dessalines gave the assignments to his favorites, this to a military leader, that to an administrative officer, the other to some simple citizen whom he wished to reward. Often two ships would appear on the horizon at the same time: a consignee would then rush to the officer of the port and promise him half or a quarter of his commission if he would assign the more important of the vessels to his own number; the officer would then order the richer vessel in first.

Violent discontent arose over this system, which meant great profit to the beneficiaries of the monopoly and nothing to those excluded from it. As usual under a rigid system, means were found to evade the monopoly. Foreign ship captains found it well worth their while to sell clandestinely to individuals not high in the favor of the Emperor. This smuggling increased, the captains being both ingenious and adaptable to the needs of their dealers; sometimes the trade was wholesale, sometimes retail. Naturally enough, the Emperor imposed heavy fines on the smuggling operations when detected, but the illicit trade did not cease.

3. This mode of consignment was sanctioned by a decree of Dessalines on September 6, 1805.

Ic Hawkins 3-4,5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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of its status as the only recognized religious organization in Haiti to dictate the official position of government toward vodun. Permission for *vodun* dances and for *services* must be obtained from the officer commanding the local detachment of the Garde d'Haiti, and this is not always granted. Penalties for illicit dances and ceremonies are severe, and because gossip is ubiquitous and no man lacks enemies, apprehension is prompt. Thus in the instance of one *service*, a misunderstanding regarding the permit was sufficient to cause the detention for some hours of the one responsible for the rite.

Is it possible, then, for a person to be a communicant of the Church and partake of the sacrament without feeling this weight of spiritual and official disapprobation? More particularly, is it possible for him to omit from his confession all allusion to his worship of "false" gods? It is here that one encounters a singularly tenacious survival of African traditional belief. In Africa the conquest of one people by another meant the mutual interchange and acceptance of the respective deities. The conquerors added to their own pantheons the gods of those whom they had overcome so that these forces might not wreak a supernatural vengeance upon them; while to the conquered the power of the gods of those who had defeated them was self-evident. If the worship of the Christian God and of the saints of the Church intruded on the aboriginal religious patterns of the Negroes brought to Haiti, the acceptance of such worship did not imply rejection of the old gods. Nor does membership in the Church today mean such complete acquiescence in its doctrines and pronouncements that the worshipper of the *loa* will offer himself for the malediction of the priest by confessing his adherence to their cult. The situation somewhat parallels that in Africa itself, where the first effort of Protestant missionaries is directed toward inducing their converts to abjure polygyny. This dictum is complied with readily enough on the surface, so that a man will have but one wife — in one village! In Haiti the

1: Hamilton E-4, 5 (1934) 1927 SV3 Hall SV3
Mirabelais

be successful, he can count on the members of his family for financial and moral support. 596 584

These are not all the rights of the older members of the family, especially of the family head, over their juniors. All elders may punish by beating, though the oldest member of the family exercises that right most freely and may chastise those who are themselves grown men and women. If there is gossip about a boy or a girl, the family head calls the culprit to reprimand him or, if he believes the case a serious one, to beat him. Among the peasants, particularly, grown men go down on their knees before their elders, when so ordered, for a beating. Such punishments may be particularly severe if the culprit does not soon ask pardon, for since all who are older have the right to beat a younger relative, it sometimes happens that the punishment administered by the head of the family is not considered adequate, and another takes up the stick when the family head has put it down, so that two or three wands may be broken over the back of a stubborn offender. If such a one were to fight back, he would become "accursed," ceasing any longer to be considered a member of the family, and even though no legal steps might be taken to disinherit him, he would lose all caste. This right to beat is accorded by custom rather than by law, but an adult beaten by one of the elders of his own family would think long before he would sue. "There is always a consultation, and a man is discouraged from going to court." 596 627 [626] [691]

Lest the impression may have been given, in considering the role of the elders and their relationship to the younger members of the family, that it is those in the father's line alone who are concerned, it must be emphasized that relatives of both parents exercise substantial control over a person. More than this, since marriage constitutes an agreement between families as well as between an individual man and woman, it follows that both paternal and maternal grand- 596 [581] [603]

L: Herskovits E-4.5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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The division of the land is said almost invariably to entail lawsuits, and some litigations have been known to stretch over a period of a decade and more, for, as one resident of Mirebalais remarked, "Because of a few feet of land a peasant will, if necessary, spend a thousand gourdes at court." If a woman is the heir, her husband may intervene in a dispute to protect her interests, but if the matter goes to court, only the husband of a "married" wife has a right to appear as an interested party; the mate of a *placée* may only act as a witness. When minor grandchildren inherit, their mother, whether married or *placée*, is their legal guardian and may enter suit to protect their interests.

The rights of a woman to the property of her father may be nullified if a dowry has been given her husband at the time of her "legal" marriage, though dowries are rarely given among peasants. If she is a *placée*, or if a dowry had not passed at the time of her "marriage," the land she inherits from her parents is held by her for her children, who will in time inherit it from her, so that many parcels of land deemed by natives to belong to a single family group are found to be divided among people who bear different surnames. It is not without interest to note in passing that in contrast to the acrid disputes which characterize the settlement of a father's goods, the distribution of a mother's property is seldom disturbed by dissension.

In addition to land and money, which form the most important part of any estate, are the flocks, herds, and beasts of burden of the dead man, and his personal tools and implements. These are sometimes willed to brothers and sisters or favorite nephews. Land and money, however, may not be alienated, but must go to the man's own children or to such others as may have been legally adopted. A child can be deprived of participation in the estate only if formally disinherited by means of a sworn document attested before a notary. As has been stated, daughters who have been given

857 handle it; lighter work first, heavier work later. Small boys tend cattle
868 and help the men in the fields.

178 The Haitian *habitant* (the peasant) is poorer and hungrier today than
511 he was fifty years ago, or even twenty years ago. In 1955 I visited a number of peasant families I had known since 1932, and with hardly an exception I found them worse off than they had been before. Their
[134] tiny landholdings had shrunk. Some land that had been lush had dried up and eroded. Little groves of trees had disappeared. Clothes had become shabby, and many of the men could no longer afford to wear the inexpensive traditional blue denim costume that was once so common. In the cities there is evidence that some of the elite have improved their life. But in a large part of the countryside the peasants are finding that the old system that served them for a hundred and fifty years can no longer feed them adequately.

423 One of the adverse forces is the shrinking of landholdings. Once a
178 peasant family may have owned and worked fifty or seventy acres of ground. But it is traditional that on a man's death his land is divided
[428] among the heirs. If a man with fifty acres of land has two sons, each son inherits approximately twenty-five acres. On their deaths, the land
423 is again subdivided. But even this is not the whole story. A UNESCO
429 survey of the Marbial Valley region in south Haiti in 1948–1949 reported:

> At the turn of the century there were numerous peasant families who lived in relatively easy circumstances, and who possessed as much as thirty to forty *carreaux* * of land planted with coffee and subsistence crops. The heirs of these lands, when they
> [425] found themselves in straitened circumstances, would sell some parcels of it in the hope of being able to increase their holdings again later on. In the worst cases they became the tenants of absentee landlords who lived in the cities. Nowadays, not only is the size of holdings very small, sometimes only one-eighth of a *carreau*, but they are also scattered, and most peasants are obliged to go from one place to another to cultivate their various owned, rented, or share-cropped fields.[§]

691 Haitian law—the civil code—does not recognize the rights of illegiti-
695 mate children born after a legal marriage. But Haitian custom does.
423 As a result, a Haitian who has a *plaiti wife* in addition to his "legal"
848 wife may circumvent the law by deeding to her a portion of his gardens during his lifetime, thereby diminishing his holdings.

423 Furthermore, many landholdings are not clearly defined. There are
691 few accurate surveys, and often the boundaries are vague. Titles to many of the holdings cannot be clearly established, and as a result there are constant lawsuits. To pay the expenses of defending his interests in court, a Haitian may have to sell a strip of his land.

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* A *carreau* is about three and a third acres.

§ [UNESCO, The Haiti Pilot Project, p. 18. Cf. P352, category 116. -- Analyst]

For many Haitians, the struggle to obtain a piece of ground and to hold onto it is the very heart of the struggle for existence. On Morne l'Hôpital in 1951 I knew a man who owned ten acres of gardens. He had it planted in bananas and plantains, yams, and cotton. He had two cows and a calf and a grove of mango trees and coconut palms. His house was clean, tidy, and by Haitian standards well furnished. Eighteen years later he had less than an acre of land, no trees, no cotton, and no cattle. His family had become impoverished. He had three grown children and virtually no land to leave to them except that on which the house stood. His troubles began with a lawsuit over his land title. He sold his cattle to raise money to pay his court expenses. He lost half of his land as a result of the lawsuit, most of it the part with the good trees. Later, he sold more land to raise "easing money," and then rented it from the new owner. He could not grow enough cash crops to pay the rent and was finally evicted. Today he has not enough ground left on which to grow food for himself and his wife the year round.

The diminution of adequate landholdings has resulted in the disappearances of many of the *lacours* (hamlets) that were a familiar sight a few decades ago. Young people traditionally built their houses near the family homestead until there were five, six, or a dozen houses in a group. There was a natural family community which shared a common social life and the work of the fields. But as the population increased and the landholdings shrank, young people and old began to move away in search of new land, or work in the cities. Often where the lacour remains it is only as a settlement of landless house renters who work where they may for wages.

Economic refugees from rural areas seek wage work in the cities, returning to their original homes only on special festive days for family reunions. The men find employment as gardeners, servants, construction laborers, and stevedores. Some find work on the sugar and sisal plantations, others in craft industries making straw hats, baskets, shoes, chairs, and mahogany ware for export. The struggle in the big city of Port-au-Prince is for many of them worse than the poverty they left behind. There are the inevitable slums and the constant threat of hunger. It is in the big city that one hears most often the words *mein grand goat* (I am hungry), and least often the words *Bondieu bon* (God is good).

The land hunger increases, and the overflow of the mountain settlements continues to move cityward. In former years there was a trend toward emigration across the eastern border into the Dominican Republic, which has a population density roughly one third or one fourth that of Haiti. This trend was checked, temporarily at least, in 1937 by

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Cassation at Port-au-Prince. In the event that this court confirmed the judgment of the lower courts, the defendant might still appeal from it to the president, and might apply for a new trial in the lower courts. Thus the contest would proceed ad infinitum, however clear the proof that the debt was just. 175 695

The Court of Cassation exceeded all others in the slowness of its judgments. Its judges were under the surveillance of the president, and must confer with him before deciding a case. If he disagreed, and the state was a party to the case, the judges must reconsider "to see if they have not taken a wrong view of the question at issue." Even so, the grand judge might stay execution as long as he deemed advisable after a judgment was confirmed.

Judges were rarely chosen from among trained lawyers, but were appointed by the government because of political considerations. Consequently, few people had any faith in court decisions, and in general they avoided taking their problems to law. The peasants in particular were bewildered by the whole procedure. White foreigners also often complained that unless they were willing to pay heavily they had no slightest chance of getting justice in the Haitian courts. 693 695 641

It must be emphasized that the majority of cases coming before the courts were civil rather than criminal, for it has been a universal matter of comment that the Haitian people were rarely guilty of serious crimes. Minor thefts of poultry or animals have been the commonest breaches of the peace, while murder, arson, and rape have almost never occurred. Even the bitterest critics of the republic have noted the absence of crime.[9] It is noteworthy that, despite their poverty and the hardness of their life, the Haitians are, contrary to the prevailing white man's notion of Negro unreliability, passion, and lawlessness, a tranquil folk. The absence of crime speaks volumes for the wholesomeness of a people much maligned by the stories of their "Voodoo" practices and bloody revolutions. An élite ex-president spoke to me with pride of the honesty of the country people who welcomed travelers with true hospitality and with no expectation of payment. "You might sleep safely in a country cabin with a thousand dollars on your person," he said.[10] 691 674

9. Mackenzie, British consul during a part of Boyer's régime, and young Haiti's severest critic, said that during his whole stay he knew of only one murder, and that in this case the assassin was executed. [114] [682]

10. In times of revolution, brigandage was expected but was not accounted a crime, any more than killing in warfare is called murder. [669] [682]

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369 development of interior transport. The only passable roads in the
494 Republic run from Aux Cayes in the south to the capital, and from
646 Cap Haïtien in the north to the capital. Transport and communications simply symbolize the power that Port-au-Prince wields, since the same circumstances characterize all national institutional arrangements. Thus Haiti is an extreme example of urban domination, even though its urban population is a fraction of the national total. The consequence has been to keep most of the rural folk cut off from the apparatus that effects national decisions and shapes national policy. Haiti's national legislature, never important in limiting presidential power, is less so today than ever; at best, it had only represented the interests of provincial towns as opposed to the capital, and never the interests of the mass of country people.

701 The local military and judiciary officials possess the formal author-
692 ity vested in them by the state, and their power is very considerable.
642 Few local people would dare challenge their decisions, and the de-
369 vices for appeal against arbitrary exercise of authority are few. Admittedly, at the lowest local level the *chef de section*—who is traditionally appointed by the captain of the military in the *commune* center and is himself a yeoman—is subject to some genuine restraint by local inhabitants. Jean Comhaire-Sylvain (1955:620–24) has argued convincingly that the people of a community are capable of insisting on democratic procedure in those matters requiring decision that come to the attention of local authority. But such decisions have little or nothing to do with larger issues. The yeomanry cannot directly make its wishes felt in national politics; and national politics are conducted almost without reference to the aspirations of the rural masses. It is precisely in the separateness of local life from the mainstream of national decision-making that the political impotence of the yeomanry is demonstrated.

311 Haiti's agrarian nature cannot be expressed simply by saying it is a
423 rural and yeoman country. Haiti does not have a "land problem," as
171 that phrase is conventionally applied to Latin America. It does, it is true, suffer from land shortage, inasmuch as too little land is worked at too low a level of productivity and must feed too many mouths. But a very substantial proportion of the rural masses owns land, or has regular access to it. It is true that most land is held in small plots and without clear title. But those persons who own no land or who lack land to work are proportionally fewer than in any other Carib-

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at least a generation behind them, but rather their complete lack of any experience in self-rule. The author concludes:

> In addition to the vanity of the black which was fanned by the distribution of principalities and duchies, there was the political thought which wished to fortify things by words. The most important sugar manufactories were distributed, with the property title, to the principal officers and civil agents of the government. Workers were allotted to those very much as were the Indians to the first Spanish conquerors. . . . Moreover, since African blood dominated in the North [that is, since there were few mulattoes and lighter-skinned people], the feudal lords, aided by the color of their skin, could enforce obedience to a yoke which in name only was modified [from slavery].[13]

The social organization of Christophe's kingdom, then, was one of large properties, with all the feudalistic trappings, resting upon a solid base of wage-earning serfdom. In contrast to mediaeval feudalism, the king was here much more than *primus inter pares*. Thanks to the policy of Dessalines, most land had come into state ownership, so that the nobility received their estates by royal favor, and held them as leases only so long as the King pleased. As in the Middle Ages, the noblemen were petty monarchs within the district granted to their jurisdiction. Their freedom of action, however, was even here subject to scrutiny: detachments of Royal Dahomeys[14] were stationed in every cantonment or parish, to enforce discipline, keep the King informed, and find their own subsistence without a drain on the royal treasury. In every district was set up a court of *sénéchaussée* to see that justice obtained.[15] The King's law, not the nobleman's private code, prevailed in the whole country.[16]

13. R. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1846), II, 167–168.

14. Organized after the model of the police force existing in France before 1789.

15. These courts were composed of a royally appointed seneschal and his assistant, a king's procurer, and a clerk.

16. The Code Henry was promulgated on January 30, 1812. It consisted of seven parts: Civil, Commercial, Shipping and Maritime, Civil Procedure, Criminal and Police Procedure, Agricultural, and Military. In general the Code followed French precedent, but the section on Agriculture was Christophe's own. Sir James Basket (in his *History of the Island of St. Domingo* [London, 1818], p. 413) calls this part "a thing unexampled among other nations." It reveals not only the King's absorption in the main economic enterprise of his state, but also his skill in devising an integrated functioning of a social order of nobility and serfs with a plantation economy based on money crops. This Agricultural Law regulated such diverse matters as the reciprocal duties of proprietors and cultivators, the policing of plantations, and the culture and preparation of the major crops. It set forth industry as the parent of virtue, and idleness as the source of vice.

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to command the forced labor of serfs, had to develop a new technique for securing manual labor. Legislation soon recognized the new state of affairs by enactments which kept distinct *la grande culture* and *la petite culture*. The former had to do with the production of sugar and coffee, from which the republic derived its wealth; the latter with small farming. *La petite culture* was simple cultivation of whatever the small owner wished to raise. Large-scale culture, on the other hand, became rather complicated.

Owners of great estates had to guide them only their experience of slave days and of serfdom under Toussaint and Dessalines. Now that both were gone, few planters were wealthy enough to pay wages for day labor; a new variation was needed. It was forthcoming in the *métayer* system—a crop-sharing arrangement with tenants closely resembling that which prevails today in some parts of the United States. The owner leased his estate in large or small plots to tenants. Half the income went to the landlord and half to the tenant; but the landlord must furnish the sugar mill and other necessary machinery where cane was raised. Laws were passed to give a measure of security to the proprietor. The contract between him and the tenant (*fermier*)[26] must be signed before a civil official; the engagement must extend through the harvesting of one crop; tenants even then might not abandon their contracts except after notice of three months, with a declaration to the local official.

Punishments were stipulated for the breaking of contracts. A tenant who had made an agreement and then abandoned the habitation, even for a visit elsewhere, without a certificate attesting his regularity, might be imprisoned for eight days the first time, a month the second, and three months the third, such imprisonment to be spent in hard labor on public works. Any disputes arising between plantation owners and tenants were to be taken before the local justice. If they threatened to develop into serious cases, the justice was to notify the commandant of the nearest important town. A person who fomented disturbance of such agreements (the Haitian equivalent of "labor agitators," style 1810) might be imprisoned for a year, as also his accomplices. Commandants of each arrondissement must put down disorder as soon as requested by landlords, tenant farmers, or overseers. They must likewise make frequent patrols of

26. The word "fermier" must not be translated simply as "farmer"; the idea of a contract and a rental fee is implicit in the French word.

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their districts, principally during the working hours of the day. They were held responsible for all consequences of their own negligence.

This whole flow of legislation was designed primarily for the protection of the great landed proprietors, yet there were other laws which aided the masses. In former days workers had been coerced through corporal punishment. This was by law now abolished. Temporary assignments of garden plots were required for each family of laborers; medical care must be provided at the expense of the planter; the aged and infirm must be guaranteed the right to keep their homes and gardens even though no longer able to work. Expectant mothers in the fourth month of pregnancy must be relieved of field work, with no limitation of their right to share in the estate's income; mothers of nursing children must be permitted to remain at home until the weaning of their infants.

A great concession to the workers was made by abolishing the office of "inspector of cultures." In the days of Toussaint and Dessalines each district of the country had had an inspector, whose duty it was to see that crop cultivation proceeded according to schedule.[27] This man's disapproval of conditions resulted in fines and personal chastisement. By abolishing the office Pétion effected a great saving in salaries, for there had been thousands of these inspectors; on the other hand, the watchfulness of the inspectors had kept agricultural production at a high level. With no officials to dog the footsteps of the workers, crops immediately fell off.

Pétion clearly expected la grande culture to be the prevailing mode of agriculture in the republic. He fostered all kinds of legislation regulating it, even aside from that already mentioned. For example, a complete schedule was prepared for the division of income of the estate.[28] But the entire system was too neatly worked out and artificial to be effective, particularly since it was not backed up with force. The threat of punishment removed, most workers began gradually, often deliberately, to sabotage the system. It was much more pleasant

27. Christophe followed his predecessors in keeping the district inspectors.

28. This could be very complicated. A tenant farmer might hire workers, and so have to share his half of the income with them. In such cases, the division of the money crops was to be made in kind or in money, at current prices, in the presence of the local justice, his assessors, and an officer of the *gendarmerie*. The workers' "fourth" was divided into portions of which three went to the first foreman, two to each of the skilled workers, one and a half to each male or female worker, and one half to each child laborer between ten and fourteen years of age.

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[1804-1843]

175 A cultivator who loafs on his assigned job shall spend twenty-four
566 hours in jail for his first offense and lose his wages; for a second
671 offense he must work on public projects. Field labor shall be regu-
24 larly carried on from Monday morning until Friday evening, except
for legal holidays; work begins at dawn, continues except for a
half-hour at breakfast until noon, stops then for two hours, and is
[843] once more resumed until sunset. Pregnant females are to be assigned
to light work only, and after the fourth month of pregnancy need
[144] do no field work. Four months after delivery, a mother is to return
to field work, but with three hours a day less than before, until she
has weaned her child. Disobedience and insult to overseers are
[98] punishable by imprisonment. Since Saturdays, Sundays, and holi-
days are free, there is to be no dancing or any other festivity by
night or day from Monday through Friday.

175 On each estate is to be a hierarchy of directors, all of whom the
671 workers shall obey. In ascending order, these men are drivers (or
913 squad foremen),[40] jobbers, sublessees, lessees, proprietors and man-
24 agers, overseers of districts, and police.

In establishing a system of remuneration Boyer kept the accus-
175 tomed method of allotting a proportion of the marketed crop to the
95 workers in lieu of hourly or daily wages. In any season from a
24 quarter to a half of the gross receipts of the estates was to go to the
laborers, the exact proportion in any year to be determined by the
government. It was assumed by Boyer and Inginac that there would
be an added inducement to work if the laborers' share were dis-
tributed not equally, but rather in proportion to the merit and worth
of the individual, these evaluations to be made by the recommenda-
tion of overseers.

175 Enforcement of the Code was placed in the hands of local justices
and the army. Soldiers were to be assigned to each plantation, re-
● 692 ceiving their living from it, in return preserving order and routine.
24 Although the whip was once more prohibited, steady labor might
still be enforced by other means; the law definitely stated that soldiers
were to discipline the lazy, the lawless, and the vagrant. Local
justices were to deal with any civil difficulties arising in the execution

[192] 40. The word "driver" was commonly used in West Indian slave colonies with no other meaning than that attached to the word when one speaks of a man "driving" his horses. It is not necessary to beat a horse to make it go properly; a word of direction may suffice.

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of contracts. It is worthy of note that soldiers assigned to estates were responsible for their actions not to any civil authority but only to their military superiors. 175 692 24

On paper, at least, the Code meant for the worker a return to the serfdom instituted by Toussaint and continued by his black successors.[41] Boyer's new system was richer in detail than Christophe's, but it clearly owed much to that monarch's practical scheme. There is a vital difference, however: serfdom under the Negro rulers worked because discipline was enforced; Boyer's effort to reintroduce it was an abject failure. 175 566 671

Many commentators have praised the Code as able and intelligent. Since the effort to revive familiar practice did not succeed, it is important to understand the reasons for failure of an almost perfect paper plan; one similar to the system which had functioned in all Haiti from 1798 to 1806, and in northern Haiti until 1820.

To begin with—and this was in great measure its final downfall—the workers simply ignored it. When Toussaint had first introduced serfdom, many Negroes quietly moved up into remote hills where they would be out of sight; a good number had remained away from surveillance, raising children who cherished their own independence of action. The influence of this group gradually spread. Moreover, for nineteen years in the South, ever since Pétion had first become president, the masses had had increasing experience of economic freedom. There is no doubt that the majority of the people preferred a low standard of living with liberty to great national prosperity depending on personal compulsion. Northern "cultivators" had known force and efficiency under Christophe, but they, too, preferred their five-year experience of easygoing life in reunited Haiti. Such complete, antagonistic inertia toward the law made its enforcement impossible. Individual cases of sabotage might be dealt with, but not wholesale refusal of the group to sign contracts.

Aside from this, too much land had already been given away throughout at least half the country to make possible a fair and efficient functioning of the Code. Any forced-labor system would have had to depend on large plantations. Since Pétion had divided 175 423

41. R. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, "La République d'Haïti: ses dernières révolutions; sa situation actuelle," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, XV, No. 4 (Nov., 1845), p. 15, called it "*l'infféodation à la glèbe*," which it certainly was. The whole Code was designed to prevent any further parcelling of the land and any further lapse into idleness on the part of the workers. [114]

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175 by persuasion, to do as much work as possible for his and their own
473 interests. In a few cases the success of such efforts was tolerably good;
427 but one worker disposed to be sullen or idle, or even not physically
24 strong, might throw the whole scheme into disorder. One's own
425 profits would be cut by the misdeeds of others even when one had
461 himself been industrious. This caused a decline of incentive, sometimes among a whole group of potentially good workers, because one or two of the number shirked. Probably the most patent evil of such arrangements was that every laborer realized that he did not suffer as directly for idleness or neglect as when working for himself; his fellow workers shared the consequences of his misconduct in some degree, and his employer in a still greater measure. The driving force of individual responsibility was removed.

[692] Boyer and Inginac, foreseeing just such disorder, had tried to
[686] provide against it in the Code Rural by giving summary powers to local judges to inflict penalties upon lazy or malingering workers. Quite aside, however, from the loss of time and the inconvenience to both parties in going constantly to a judge for his decision, the proprietor was afraid to act on this principle to any extent, since if he did so he might lose his laborers altogether.

175 It was a rare proprietor, then, who could hope to make much of a
473 fortune out of his plantation. More and more the landowners, having
427 subdivided their fields, grew lax in overseeing them. The workers,
24 freed from constant supervision, accustomed by long habit to living
466 in one hut, and unconsciously developing a mentality which made them feel, as did American squatters on frontier lands, that they had
425 a right to the land they tilled, imperceptibly developed into peasants.
178 The state's remaining properties, no longer under cultivation, were invaded by families of small farmers, and the government took no steps to oust them or send them back to privately owned plantations. The estates of individual aristocrats underwent the same fate if not
[625] carefully watched. Theoretically, it was the duty of the army to drive out squatters, to force laborers back into "proper" agricultural work; but the army consisted of peasant youths who would not turn against people of their own group.

671 Legal irregularity was gradually sanctioned by the passage of
178 time, usage being a stronger guarantor of rights than unenforced laws on the statute books.

680 Haitian peasantry, to sum up, began as the unplanned, undesired

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"empire" tottered to economic ruin. Graft, default on the debt, increasing deficits, and debased currency were the order of the day, and so continued until 1859, when the accumulation of anger over the useless wars and the humiliating defeats made the Emperor so unpopular that a new and more carefully planned revolution accomplished his downfall. 175 643 652 669

Fifteen years of administration by Negro rulers had broken the political power of the colored élite. Only three light-skinned men became president thereafter until the occupation of Haiti by the American Marines in 1915; in the seventy-two years following Boyer's downfall, mulattoes ruled during only eight. The army under a black general was too powerful, a colored president too hampered by suspicion, to make the political game worth the candle. The colored élite, therefore, adapted themselves to existing conditions as best they could, controlling the business life of Haiti, filling the law offices and, because of their literacy, the secretaryships of state, and indulging in honorific cultural pursuits. 175 643 178 564

In the years after Soulouque the basic realities of Haitian life were changed hardly at all by shifting political administrations. Some of the presidents were mildly progressive, many were indifferent; still more were actually harmful; but the lives of the mass of peasants were not often touched by presidential vagaries. Politics was an affair almost wholly of townspeople, of the army, the élite, and the pseudo-élite. Revolutions, counterrevolutions, movements of reform, international tangles, financial woes, and most of the other complications to which unstable states are heir, absorbed the attention of rulers and upper-class folk who were politically inclined. 175 643 66

Constitutions were made by presidents and changed by their successors; the Senate passed contradictory laws in the same session if the chief executive so recommended; the courts were presided over by the president's men. Haitian law in the latter half of the nineteenth century was what the president's immediate strength and wish made it—or else it was folk custom, undisturbed by the rulers. 175 642 671 692

Never once, in the three quarters of a century after Boyer's time, did Haiti approach the high standard of production known in colonial days or in the early years of independence. The pattern of Haitian social and economic life became fixed in this seventy-five years. Haiti became a country of small-scale tillage by a peasant population, with only enough external trade to provide moderate 175 178 433 565 439

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175 642 643 Since he was president for twenty-five years (normal ones, as things go in Haiti), it is worth while to examine the functioning of the kind of government the upper class favored.

175 642 643 692 President Boyer's education and outlook were wholly French. He had formed his views of government principally upon French models, yet when he became head of state he could not forget his own military career. He said repeatedly that he wished to supersede the military by the civil power, but somehow never got around to it. The country was full of black generals, and it would have been difficult to retire them, primarily because they were black. He established courts to insure the rights of man, but since his newborn judiciary lacked the prestige to command respect, interpretation of the law came from the President—until before long he was himself the law. With a logic characteristic of the French, he tried to make the whole administration of the country orderly and tidy by codifying laws, laying out spheres of governmental departments, and properly ticketing matters in general. He had to be the sole judge of the intention and operation of statutes, however, and if necessary modify the nature of an act to suit his view of the public need. His honest and generally upright character perhaps made his enormous prerogatives conducive to the public good; but Boyer was a dictator in spite of his Senate, since when he found a law working badly he simply turned it from its normal course and gave it a quite contrary effect.

[646] [661] As the years of his long rule proceeded, he took more power to himself. When his Senate would not pass bills as he proposed them, he waited until they adjourned and then either neglected to execute their laws, or instructed the government printing office to change the wording. He clearly regarded the legislature as a necessary nuisance, to be kept as a sop to the élite and to preserve the appearance of republicanism before the world. Representatives from the various communes were recommended by the President, his nomination amounting almost always to election.[5]

800 Boyer was overthrown by the Revolution of 1843, by all odds the

[643] 5. The task of governing the whole island was obviously heavier than governing a fraction of it, so Boyer may have felt justified in his departures from strict constitutionality. He was always an indefatigable worker, whose intentions were uniformly laudable. He tried to rule alone, as had his illustrious predecessors. The hitch came because he was not of their calibre. He was worthy, virtuous—and mediocre. He would probably have made an excellent mayor of a French provincial town.

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3. The unimportance of the legislature. It has made useful patron

646 age for the president to dispense, and has preserved the semblance of
642 republican government; but hardly half a dozen legislative sessions in all Haitian history have contributed seminal ideas in politics or initiated true reforms. How could they, indeed, when the president was consistently a dictator of policy?

666 4. The undemocratic nature of the vote. Senators are chosen by
642 the representatives, and the two groups together have generally elected the president, when he did not come to power by revolution. The only chance people have had to vote has been for local officials and representatives. In these cases, the vote has been limited to the élite and the army, with the president's henchmen counting the ballots. Since the Occupation there have been plebiscites on constitutional changes, the people having the right to vote Yes or No.

692 5. The subservience of the courts to the president. They have been
643 filled with president's men, generally astute enough to consult presi-
642 dential wishes before handing down a decision. Foreign merchants soon learned that they could expect little "justice" from the courts if their own cause conflicted with special Haitian interests. Foreign diplomats likewise learned that in crises the courts could involve the simplest issue in such verbal complexity that months of patience would be necessary to unwind the red tape.

641 6. The pliability of "constitutional rights." Freedom of speech and
661 of the press has been notably lacking, although scurrilous attacks on the administration's enemies have often been permitted. Legislators
642 have been expelled. Graft has flourished. In 1833, for example, two representatives were expelled from the House "for systematically opposing the measures of the executive, and persisting in a demand for a statement of public expenditures." A century later a senator was expelled for almost the same reasons.

701 7. Militarism. Only in this respect is any real change apparent since
178 the American Occupation. The army was always large up to 1915, and so constituted an economic drain as well as a political menace.
642 Generals had great power: they ruled each department and each
669 arrondissement, were subject only to the president, and were at the bottom of every revolutionary movement.[22] Since the Occupation

[162] [701] 22. In 1842, when the population was still less than a million, there were in the district governments 9 generals, 63 colonels, 48 lieutenant colonels, 9 captains, 1 lieutenant, and 28 medical officers; and in the standing army 33 colonels, 95 lieutenant colonels, 825 captains, 654 lieutenants, 577 sublieutenants and ensigns, 6,815 noncommissioned officers, and 25 medical officers. The army had 28,000 soldiers and cost about $600,000 a year. See John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 86 ff.

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631 [361] Overlapping these military arrondissements have been financial arrondissements, generally six in number. The capital of each of these was a port, with a customs house: Port-au-Prince and Jacmel in the West, Les Cayes and Jérémie in the South, Cap-Haïtien in the North, and Gonaïves in the Artibonite.

Finally there were the five *départements*. These seem never to have been much more than geographical divisions to which it was convenient occasionally to refer. In more recent years, as records have been kept with more accuracy, the departments have developed important clerical significance.

[162]

Département	*Capital*	*Estimated Population (1930)*
North	Cap-Haïtien	450,000
Northwest	Port-de-Paix	150,000
Artibonite	Gonaïves	475,000
West	Port-au-Prince	950,000
South	Les Cayes	650,000

According to the present constitution, the country still has its five administrative departments, but has increased its other political subdivisions. There are 27 arrondissements to attend to governmental details, and in addition, 10 prefectures overlapping the arrondissements and serving as units of police control. The arrondissements are still further subdivided into 94 communes, 43 military posts, and 551 rural sections. Each commune is administered by a communal magistrate, appointed by the secretary of the interior, and so subordinate to the central government. This magistrate is assisted by a communal council or a municipal council, composed of elected prominent citizens.[2]

692 693 Courts have existed only in the important towns, which since Boyer's presidency have varied in number from four to eight. Each of these courts has consisted of a president or *doyen*, four judges, four substitute judges, a commissioner appointed by the president of the republic to keep watch over the proceedings of the body, and various inferior clerks and secretaries. Judges are politically appointed, either by the president of the republic or by his cabinet. Civil cases which exceed fifty dollars in extent have been handled by these courts, as also all appeals from decisions of local juges de paix. To the judges were added in 1826 juries to assist in criminal cases

693 695

2. See Luc Dorsinville, *Géographie-Atlas* (Port-au-Prince, 1929), *passim*.

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priations of supplies to the branches of government; the Senate did not initiate legislation. In so far as the Senate checked the president, this check consisted in the body's being in permanent session. A vacation might be voted, but even during this period a resident committee was in the capital, so that attention to presidential actions might always be called by a senator's speeches; and the Senate could reconvene suddenly at will. 646

The Chamber of Representatives, composed of men of twenty-five and over, was chosen every five years by the "electoral colleges" of the communes—men elected by the leading citizens of the commune. No law is effective "whose draft has not been proposed by the executive, discussed and adopted by the representatives, and decreed by the Senate." It might seem that the phrase, "discussed and adopted by the representatives," would give much power to a Chamber in office for five years; actually the Chamber has rarely proved obstinate, and for good reason. At the expiration of the term of the legislators, the president convokes the communal assemblies to choose new deputies or to reëlect old ones; the army "keeps order" at the election, the Electoral College is hand-picked, and so the president's men have generally been chosen. Their pay has been two hundred dollars a month during the sitting, and a dollar a league for traveling expenses. [666] [701]

Pétion's constitution of 1816 evolved a masterpiece of deceptive generosity in stating that there should be "universal suffrage—except for women, criminals, idiots, and menials—by ballot." Although the group of criminals and idiots might be small, women were more than half the population, and "menials" was interpreted to mean not only house servants but also peasants; in other words, there was "universal suffrage" of about three per cent of the population at the outside. The élite and the army were the only potential voters. Since the elections were held under the watchful eye of the soldiers, and the ballots counted by presidential appointees, there was often extraordinary unity of public opinion. 641 [666]

The judicial branch of the national government, as distinct from the juge de paix of the commune and the courts in the important towns, existed in part only on paper. There was generally a provision in the constitution, for example, for a High Court of Justice, which should have jurisdiction in all charges preferred by the legislative bodies against their own members, against the president of the re- 692

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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692 public, or against any of the secretaries of state or other important officials; but if this court was ever convoked, records of its actions are lacking.[8]

The most important actually functioning court was that of Cassation. In American terminology this would be called the Court of Appeals, reviewing cases coming up from the civil and criminal courts of the important towns. It sat at Port-au-Prince, and consisted of fourteen judges appointed by the president and his cabinet.

[177] Boyer had borrowed most of the forms of important Haitian courts from France, but he could not transfer to his country the spirit and tradition which made those courts function in France. The High Court of Justice remained a mere plan; the national Court of Cassation and the so-called department courts in the four to eight large towns operated under close presidential scrutiny; only the juges de paix, dealing with small and homely cases, had comparative freedom.

175 695 693 It was generally acknowledged throughout the nineteenth century that Haitian judges, whether of the Court of Cassation or of the department courts, could be influenced by pecuniary and political considerations. The odds were heavy in favor of any suitor who was liberal in his bribes to the judges; "justice" could be bought, and

175 693 was. By French tradition of justice, the prisoner was assumed to be guilty until he was proved innocent. In Haiti he was bullied, cajoled, and cross-questioned in order to force a confession, and to make him state in open court what he was said to have admitted in his preliminary examination. Confessions were obtained by beatings, and prisoners were occasionally even tortured to death.

175 695 Another characteristic of the nineteenth-century courts—and not in Haiti alone—was the tardiness of their procedure. Consider the civil case in one of the department courts. If a creditor instituted a suit against a debtor in one department and obtained a favorable verdict, the defendant was permitted to appeal from the sentence to the court of an adjoining department, and so on in succession throughout the whole series; if the last court confirmed the judgment of the first, the defendant could then move it into the Court of

[692] 8. This Supreme Court would, according to the constitution, be formed only by proclamation of the Senate (and therefore under the ultimate control of the president), and might not hold its sessions in a spot more than twelve leagues from the seat of the Senate. Consisting of fifteen judges to be chosen by lot from the tribunals of the five Haitian departments, a two-thirds majority would be necessary for conviction, and no appeal might be made from its decisions.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 701 [512] Saturday to use their time cultivating the soil, pursuing some mechanical craft, or acting as day laborers.

692 703 175 It must be once more emphasized that the civil was everywhere subservient to the military power. The administration of justice in tribunals was carried out only at the pleasure of the army chiefs. No person would have dared bring suit against a high officer; the only efficacious way of obtaining justice against petty offenders was through summary decision and corporal chastisement by the commanding officer.

701 625 175 By the close of Boyer's rule, during which he had kept the army up to its full numbers while pursuing a policy of economy, the outward appearance of the troops was almost ludicrous. They appeared at review wearing generally what pleased them or what they could scrape together, for they had to supply their own clothing and arms. The only effectual employment of the soldiery was as armed police, for Haiti never had to fight external powers. The soldiers drummed and fifed, mustered on parade and went through the formations, but otherwise merely stood (or sat) sentry at the doors of public offices, hunted up at the command of the magistrates *les mauvais sujets*, guarded prisons and prisoners on chain-gang duty, loitered at barriers, collected tolls, and examined permits.

175 701 [669] [703] A large army, practically idle, could easily be seduced into the support of revolutionary movements. Principles of discipline and loyalty current in European armies of the day were nonexistent in nineteenth-century Haiti. The numbers in the army varied from twenty to forty or fifty thousand. A strange estimate was made for the year 1867: 6,500 general officers and staff; 7,000 regimental officers; and only 6,500 soldiers.[15] It was said that "*tout Haïtien qui n'était pas général de division était au moins soldat.*" The higher grades became rewards for political service; the lower ranks had to be filled up by recruiting parties—when these were abroad, all men who did not desire a period of enforced leisure away from home remained in hiding.

While the army was not alone responsible for the tragedies of insurrection and mismanagement which consistently befell the country, it was never uninvolved in these misfortunes. Only the [648] radical reforms undertaken by the American Occupation saved modern Haiti from continued military domination.

15. Sir Spenser St. John, *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, p. 310.

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The former affranchis fully intended to keep their lands once the

175 French were driven out. They could not but be alarmed as they saw
423 the steady direction of Dessalines' moves toward a complete mo-
425 nopoly of land ownership by the state. On the very day following
471 independence, a decree proclaimed that all lands owned by France in colonial days now belonged to Haiti. Next (February 7, 1804) Dessalines canceled all sales and donations made to mulattoes and ex-slaves by fleeing French who, in a last despairing effort to salvage something from the wreckage of olden days, had "entrusted" their lands to non-whites. By these two strokes all lands owned by white men before 1803 became state property,[5] but only the second clipped the wings of socially ambitious colored people.

175 Serious uneasiness was caused by the next measure, an order for a
421 general verification of property titles. This would have been a deli-
[693] cate task at best, considering the disorder of the past thirteen years. It was made more complicated to carry out by the serious lack of men trained in law. A few like Balthasar Inginac, later an important adviser and trusted friend of two presidents, were scrupulously conscientious, but by the same token highly unpopular with those whom they deprived of newly (and shadily) acquired "estates." The majority of officials, according to report, listened to the pleading of many who had managed by hook or crook to secure a tenuous claim to vacant properties, validating their fraudulent titles for them. It has been claimed, without rebuttal, that most of these officials were not above taking bribes. When complaint was made to Dessalines of such actions he took steps to make his appointees do their duty, but each confiscation made new enemies for Dessalines.

Some of the mulattoes, citing their French paternity, claimed land formerly owned by their French fathers, even though these parents had never regarded their sons as more than bastards. Dessalines once broke out in furious answer to such a claimant: "*Et les pauvres*
175 *nègres dont les pères sont en Afrique, ils n'auront donc rien!*"
425 The state took over thousands of acres. Those Haitians, colored or
556 black, who aspired to landownership as the foundation of position,

[642] [648] 5. The hatred of the Haitians for the French, and because of them, for white people in general, was seen not only in these confiscations but in commitments for the future. A proclamation of April 28, 1804, suppressed to "all foreigners" the right to own property in land. The first Haitian constitution, May 20, 1805, took an even more drastic step in saying that "no white man shall henceforth set foot in this country as a landowner," and that "*all* property formerly belonging to a white Frenchman" was now confiscate to the profit of the state.

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175 Convinced at last that the easygoing policy was a failure, Boyer
24 devised by way of remedy a new set of agricultural laws. Where his
671 predecessors in the North had forced action first and then issued
643 simple laws to fix the practice, Boyer, always cerebral rather than active, planned a complete Code which was designed to call forth action. On May 1, 1826, following an address by the President, the Senate issued the Code Rural, an ingenious attempt of Boyer and his secretary-general, Inginac, to reorder the agricultural life of Haiti.

Never again in the history of the country was so detailed a scheme worked out. It was an attempt on a grand scale to order the life of all people for common prosperity. In addition to its own broad scope and elaborate detail, it was fortified by almost unanimous support among the aristocracy, not only the ex-peers of Christophe's defunct kingdom, but also the large landowners of the republic who under Pétion had never known large incomes. In considering the Code, one cannot restrain a certain admiration of Boyer's ingenious mind. Yet it marked the end rather than the beginning of plantation agriculture, for it utterly failed of its purpose. It was the impressive monument over the tomb of state control.

To examine it further, we must desert the world of men for one of pure economic device. The journey is hardly one of discovery, for Boyer and his aides were simply attempting to freshen up for use the methods which had served colonial Saint-Domingue and feudal Haiti. For all the tedium of a voyage through the mazes of an economic plan which came to naught, the Code will be found significant as marking the end of a way of life, even when the way which succeeded it had already begun to take form.

175 The dominating principle of the Code was the Haitian's "obliga-
671 tion" to work on the land. To this end, the worker was once more
24 legally attached to the soil. Every individual who was not a public
566 functionary, and who had not private means or a profession—in plain English, every Haitian except the aristocrat, the official, the artisan,
●693 and the soldier—was bound to the land, with no right to separate himself from it except in case of imminent danger. An agricultural worker might apply to the local *juge de paix*[38] for permission to quit the countryside to live in a town or village, but the judge was not to give the permission without being assured of the morality of the

38. A functionary who combined the offices of local judge, justice of the peace, and recorder.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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applicant, of his regular conduct, and his ability to maintain himself economically in the town. Land laborers might not send their children to school or have them apprenticed in a town without a certificate from the same judge. Under no pretext might a worker establish a shop or sell his produce in the countryside; certain exceptions were made of necessary articles of food and home manufacture. No laborer might build a home in rural parts except on the plantation to which he was attached. 175 671 24 566 693

An individual, once placed by the government in the category of "cultivator," might never be removed from that class except by official authorization. Even with the consent of the proprietor and the agricultural administrator of the district, he was not to quit the estate to which he was bound for more than eight days.

We may further note in the Code that coöperative enterprise among the workers is forbidden. Anticipating the possible tendency of laborers to set up what in modern times would be called a producers' coöperative, presumably to lapse thereafter into laziness, the Code requires that every worker engage himself individually by authentic contract to the service of a proprietor or lessee. Such engagements for la grande culture are not to be for less than three years, or more than nine. Penalties for infractions of these rules are fines, imprisonment, or forced labor on public works in the chief town of the commune. 175 671 474 686 566

The Code directs the management of agricultural property and grazing establishments,[39] also the making of contracts between the proprietor and his hirelings. Rural police are established, in imitation of Christophe's Dahomets, to act as inspectors of plantations and of the workers on them. 175 671 625 421

The section repressing vagrancy is very full. All persons not proprietors or lessees, yet living in rural parts without having made a contract with some producer, are classed as vagabonds, to be arrested and taken before the magistrate. This official will warn them that by law they are bound to make a contract, and that if they refuse they will be sent to prison. Should a vagabond persist in refusing to sign a contract after eight days of confinement, he is condemned to labor on public works until he agrees. Should the prisoner be a minor, he will be sent to his parents. 175 686 24

39. This latter item was inserted as an adjustment to one of the primary occupations of the Spanish end of the island.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Granted these obvious difficulties, there is still little to be said for the zeal or integrity of churchmen in Saint-Domingue. Father Cabon cites a report to Rome in 1794, which, he remarks, "was not designed to be made public, and does not bear the earmarks of passion," and which flatly states that "since the expulsion of the Jesuits, the curés have for the most part led lives so indecent . . . that the citizens and Negroes have lost all the sentiments of religion which the Jesuits gave them."[3] There had been distinguished churchmen in Saint-Domingue before 1750, authors, scientists, teachers of some note, but none appeared thereafter. The rich French colony was not a bright star in the Catholic crown.

Undeterred by those who might have been their spiritual guides, the white people followed the easy path of self-indulgence. The universal testimony of visitors is that, with a few notable exceptions, immorality and cruelty were daily commonplaces. To make a fortune was the prime ambition of every white man, since money made possible the luxurious enjoyment of this world's goods. Protest against money-making or soft living would have been futile. Administrative agents turned public office to their own profit; judges sold justice to the highest bidder; planters drove their slaves to death; and priests dispensed religious solace for a tidy sum.

The freedmen, who in everything patterned their lives after social leaders in the white planter class, had no more concern for religion than their models. They attended Mass occasionally as a social event, where they might see and be seen. When in the latter days of the colony discriminatory legislation required that colored persons sit in separate parts of the church, most of the affranchis simply refrained from attending Mass: their religious zeal was not so great as to make them submit to the public shame of segregation. In their daily lives, likewise, they followed the example of the white planters in pursuing pleasure rather than sobriety, "culture" rather than religious zeal. Like the whites, they were often licentious in their conduct. When it came their turn to direct affairs of state in free Haiti, there was little interest in spiritual matters among them. The intellectuals of the group paid homage to the liberal philosophers of the century rather than to religious thinkers.

If religion was at a low ebb in the prosperous days of the colony, it almost disappeared in the excitement of the years following the revolt of the slaves (1791).

3. Ibid., p. 33.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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In every commune recognized by the state was an important

official appointed by the president—the *juge de paix*. The term has little relation to our "justice of the peace." It implies rather the function performed by the old English country squire, who often by his prestige managed to patch up differences between neighbors without allowing matters to come to an issue, but who if the issue were joined sat as judge. The decision of the judge was final in all civil matters up to fifty dollars—and the case was rare in which peasants dealt in affairs as large as this. In the more populous communes (those containing large villages or towns) the juge de paix was more impersonal. He might render decisions, subject to appeal, in cases up to a hundred dollars. All minor police cases came within the province of this official, whose judgment was final in matters up to a twelve-dollar fine or a jail sentence of five days. All criminal cases began with this judge, but those of the gravest sort were speedily sent to higher courts. 632 693

By and large rural Haiti got along with a minimum of civil government, and urban Haiti was governed much as a small provincial town of the nineteenth century. 369 64

Several communes made an arrondissement, another political subdivision with a distinct military cast. Through most of her history Haiti had an average of about twenty of these arrondissements, each of them presided over by an army officer of high rank appointed by the president. In arrondissements containing important capitals a general, in lesser ones a brigadier-general, exercised both military and civil authority. This man was the medium through which the central government made known its decisions and laws. Because life could be tedious in a dull country town, in a district full of peaceful peasants, many of the generals spent their time in reflecting upon the chances of a successful insurrection which might make them important in national affairs. As already noted, the standard of discipline in the army was never very high, so that the presiding officer of an arrondissement might have a real sinecure if he was not ambitious.[1] 631 701

1. The military arrondissement always bore the name of the principal town or village within its borders. The following list shows the important places during the time of Boyer: [631] [701] [103]

In the department of the North there were five arrondissements: Cap-Haïtien, Grande-Rivière, Marmelade, Fort Liberté, Limbé.
In the Northwest, three: Port-de-Paix, Cap Nicolas Môle, Le Borgne.
In the Artibonite, three: Saint-Marc, Gonaïves, Mirebalais.
In the West, three: Port-au-Prince, Jacmel, Léogane.
In the South, five: Les Cayes, Jérémie, Aquin, Tiburon, Nippes.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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631 [361] Overlapping these military arrondissements have been financial arrondissements, generally six in number. The capital of each of these was a port, with a customs house: Port-au-Prince and Jacmel in the West, Les Cayes and Jérémie in the South, Cap-Haïtien in the North, and Gonaïves in the Artibonite.

Finally there were the five *départements*. These seem never to have been much more than geographical divisions to which it was convenient occasionally to refer. In more recent years, as records have been kept with more accuracy, the departments have developed important clerical significance.

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Département	*Capital*	*Estimated Population (1930)*
North	Cap-Haïtien	450,000
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According to the present constitution, the country still has its five administrative departments, but has increased its other political subdivisions. There are 27 arrondissements to attend to governmental details, and in addition, 10 prefectures overlapping the arrondissements and serving as units of police control. The arrondissements are still further subdivided into 94 communes, 43 military posts, and 551 rural sections. Each commune is administered by a communal magistrate, appointed by the secretary of the interior, and so subordinate to the central government. This magistrate is assisted by a communal council or a municipal council, composed of elected prominent citizens.[2]

692 Courts have existed only in the important towns, which since Boyer's presidency have varied in number from four to eight. Each
• 693 of these courts has consisted of a president or *doyen*, four judges, four substitute judges, a commissioner appointed by the president of the republic to keep watch over the proceedings of the body, and various inferior clerks and secretaries. Judges are politically appointed, either by the president of the republic or by his cabinet. Civil cases which exceed fifty dollars in extent have been handled by these
693 courts, as also all appeals from decisions of local juges de paix. To
695 the judges were added in 1826 juries to assist in criminal cases

2. See Luc Dorsinville, *Géographie-Atlas* (Port-au-Prince, 1929), *passim*.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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exceeding the jurisdiction of the local juges, these juries to be named by the doyen and his colleagues. It was a dubious reform, often a worthless privilege; at times it was definitely harmful, for no matter how explicit the law, mere technicalities in a long, involved trial could be completely befuddling to an illiterate juror. Brown tells the tale of a certain foreman of the jury who asked a juror his opinion of a defendant's innocence; the juror replied that he could not write, whereas "you have written it all down. Let us know what you have done."[3] Innocence might easily be convicted by this system, and guilt escape. The addition of a jury to the court was even useless in many instances, for the language of the lawyers was French, and that of the jurors almost certain to be Créole. Boyer's attempt to graft English court practice upon the French system already functioning in Haiti was certainly not happy; the jury system shortly disappeared.

Complicated forms are not for the peasant. He knew a soldier and a soldier's function in the countryside, but not the relation of the arrondissement to the national government; the juge de paix was understandable, but not the procedure of the civil courts at department capitals. The national government and its structure were remote, although the president's name might be familiar. Haiti was really organized from the top down rather than from the bottom up. The powers of the early presidents were arbitrary: they could not only order changes in the framework of any part of government, but might also shift at will the personnel.

Carl Becker remarks: "In 1791, the French began their spectacular feat in constitution making. Between 1791 and 1875 Taine counts thirteen French constitutions adopted in relatively rapid succession. I can find only twelve, but maybe Taine is right. It doesn't really matter. The point is that for facility, speed, and endurance in constitution making, France holds the record. Yet other nations also ran."[4] Haiti was one of them: in fact the record is properly hers, although Professor Becker does not mention the little Caribbean state. In the nineteenth century Haiti lived under fifteen constitutions, to which she has added at least two more in the twentieth century. It is not always easy to say when a constitution is new: its author may

3. Jonathan Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, II, 271-272.
4. "Afterthoughts on Constitutions," *The Yale Review*, XXVII, No. 3 (Spring, 1938), 451.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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Cassation at Port-au-Prince. In the event that this court confirmed the judgment of the lower courts, the defendant might still appeal from it to the president, and might apply for a new trial in the lower courts. Thus the contest would proceed ad infinitum, however clear the proof that the debt was just. 175 695

The Court of Cassation exceeded all others in the slowness of its judgments. Its judges were under the surveillance of the president, and must consult with him before deciding a case. If he disagreed, and the state was a party to the case, the judges must reconsider "to see if they have not taken a wrong view of the question at issue." Even so, the grand judge might stay execution as long as he deemed advisable after a judgment was confirmed.

Judges were rarely chosen from among trained lawyers, but were appointed by the government because of political considerations. Consequently, few people had any faith in court decisions, and in general they avoided taking their problems to law. The peasants in particular were bewildered by the whole procedure. White foreigners also often complained that unless they were willing to pay heavily they had no slightest chance of getting justice in the Haitian courts. 693 695 641

It must be emphasized that the majority of cases coming before the courts were civil rather than criminal, for it has been a universal matter of comment that the Haitian people were rarely guilty of serious crimes. Minor thefts of poultry or animals have been the commonest breaches of the peace, while murder, arson, and rape have almost never occurred. Even the bitterest critics of the republic have noted the absence of crime.[9] It is noteworthy that, despite their poverty and the hardness of their life, the Haitians are, contrary to the prevailing white man's notion of Negro unreliability, passion, and lawlessness, a tranquil folk. The absence of crime speaks volumes for the wholesomeness of a people much maligned by the stories of their "Voodoo" practices and bloody revolutions. An élite ex-president spoke to me with pride of the honesty of the country people who welcomed travelers with true hospitality and with no expectation of payment. "You might sleep safely in a country cabin with a thousand dollars on your person," he said.[10] 691 674

9. Mackenzie, British consul during a part of Boyer's régime, and young Haiti's strongest critic, said that during his whole stay he knew of only one murder, and that in this case the assassin was executed. [117] [682]

10. In times of revolution, brigandage was expected but was not accounted a crime, any more than killing in warfare is called murder. [669] [685]

Z: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

days, according to the bocor's prescription. It is also employed to protect an individual against various forms of the ouanga.

Against poisons, the usual protection is the *drogue*, prepared by a bocor or a leaf doctor who specializes in such things. After having drunk a drogue, a man is regarded as immune to poison. Should a man be a "horse" of the loa Ogoun Balindjo, however, no drogue is necessary, for Balindjo's people are regarded as immune even without such precautions.

Foretelling the future and divination take two general forms. In one variety, a bocor or *divineur*, using ritual paraphernalia such as cards, flour, or ashes, takes personal responsibility for the divination. In the other form, the divineur functions only when possessed by a loa, and it is the deity himself who foretells and foresees. An account of this kind of divination is given in chapter 6. "Horses" of the loa Mâit' David when possessed are given packs of cards, for they are reputed to be able to divine the future.

Certain houngans use the instrument known as the *gembo* as a divining device. This is a small shell about the size of a lemon, through which a long cord is passed. When there is no tension on the cord, the shell can easily be slid back and forth. When the cord is taut, the shell will not slide. The houngan holds one end of the cord under his foot, the other end with his hand above it. He starts his divination with the shell at the top and the cord taut. Shaking his asson with the other hand, he talks *langage* and asks questions. To indicate a "yes" answer he relaxes the tension on the cord and the shell slips downward an inch or so. The typical gembo is decorated with beads, old coins, religious medals, snake bones, and a fragment of mirror.

There are several ceremonies for locating a thief or other guilty person. One is called *passage d'alliance*. A ring suspended on a string is held over a person's head. If it moves in a regular pendulous way, the person is innocent; but if it swings in a circle, his guilt is established. Another method is the use of a long stick. The stick is pointed at one man, then another, and when the end vibrates in a circular manner the guilty party has been located. This technique is known as *jugement de baguette*. A third method is the one known as *passé balai*. A man sits in a low chair and small branches and leaves of the *balai* (broom) tree are placed under the chair and fastened to its uprights. A guilty person sitting in this chair will cause the *balai* branches to vibrate and close in on him.

The role of the *docteur fé*—the leaf doctor—straddles the field of magic and pharmacology. Many of his potions are of a mystical and

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South	Les Cayes	650,000

According to the present constitution, the country still has its five administrative departments, but has increased its other political subdivisions. There are 27 arrondissements to attend to governmental details, and in addition, 10 prefectures overlapping the arrondissements and serving as units of police control. The arrondissements are still further subdivided into 94 communes, 43 military posts, and 551 rural sections. Each commune is administered by a communal magistrate, appointed by the secretary of the interior, and so subordinate to the central government. This magistrate is assisted by a communal council or a municipal council, composed of elected prominent citizens.[2]

692 693 Courts have existed only in the important towns, which since Boyer's presidency have varied in number from four to eight. Each of these courts has consisted of a president or *doyen*, four judges, four substitute judges, a commissioner appointed by the president of the republic to keep watch over the proceedings of the body, and various inferior clerks and secretaries. Judges are politically appointed, either by the president of the republic or by his cabinet. Civil cases which exceed fifty dollars in extent have been handled by these 693 courts, as also all appeals from decisions of local juges de paix. To 695 the judges were added in 1826 juries to assist in criminal cases

2. See Luc Dorsinville, *Géographie-Atlas* (Port-au-Prince, 1929), *passim*.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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exceeding the jurisdiction of the local juges, these juries to be named by the doyen and his colleagues. It was a dubious reform, often a worthless privilege; at times it was definitely harmful, for no matter how explicit the law, mere technicalities in a long, involved trial could be completely befuddling to an illiterate juror. Brown tells the tale of a certain foreman of the jury who asked a juror his opinion of a defendant's innocence; the juror replied that he could not write, whereas "you have written it all down. Let us know what you have done."[3] Innocence might easily be convicted by this system, and guilt escape. The addition of a jury to the court was even useless in many instances, for the language of the lawyers was French, and that of the jurors almost certain to be Créole. Boyer's attempt to graft English court practice upon the French system already functioning in Haiti was certainly not happy; the jury system shortly disappeared.

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Complicated forms are not for the peasant. He knew a soldier and a soldier's function in the countryside, but not the relation of the arrondissement to the national government; the juge de paix was understandable, but not the procedure of the civil courts at department capitals. The national government and its structure were remote, although the president's name might be familiar. Haiti was really organized from the top down rather than from the bottom up. The powers of the early presidents were arbitrary: they could not only order changes in the framework of any part of government, but might also shift at will the personnel.

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Carl Becker remarks: "In 1791, the French began their spectacular feat in constitution making. Between 1791 and 1875 Taine counts thirteen French constitutions adopted in relatively rapid succession. I can find only twelve, but maybe Taine is right. It doesn't really matter. The point is that for facility, speed, and endurance in constitution making, France holds the record. Yet other nations also ran."[4] Haiti was one of them: in fact the record is properly hers, although Professor Becker does not mention the little Caribbean state. In the nineteenth century Haiti lived under fifteen constitutions, to which she has added at least two more in the twentieth century. It is not always easy to say when a constitution is new: its author may

3. Jonathan Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, II, 271–272.
4. "Afterthoughts on Constitutions," *The Yale Review*, XXVII, No. 3 (Spring, 1938), 451.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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692 public, or against any of the secretaries of state or other important officials; but if this court was ever convoked, records of its actions are lacking.[8]

The most important actually functioning court was that of Cassation. In American terminology this would be called the Court of Appeals, reviewing cases coming up from the civil and criminal courts of the important towns. It sat at Port-au-Prince, and consisted of fourteen judges appointed by the president and his cabinet.

[177] Boyer had borrowed most of the forms of important Haitian courts from France, but he could not transfer to his country the spirit and tradition which made those courts function in France. The High Court of Justice remained a mere plan; the national Court of Cassation and the so-called department courts in the four to eight large towns operated under close presidential scrutiny; only the juges de paix, dealing with small and homely cases, had comparative freedom.

175 It was generally acknowledged throughout the nineteenth century
695 that Haitian judges, whether of the Court of Cassation or of the
693 department courts, could be influenced by pecuniary and political considerations. The odds were heavy in favor of any suitor who was liberal in his bribes to the judges; "justice" could be bought, and
175 was. By French tradition of justice, the prisoner was assumed to be
693 guilty until he was proved innocent. In Haiti he was bullied, cajoled, and cross-questioned in order to force a confession, and to make him state in open court what he was said to have admitted in his preliminary examination. Confessions were obtained by beatings, and prisoners were occasionally even tortured to death.

175 Another characteristic of the nineteenth-century courts—and not
695 in Haiti alone—was the tardiness of their procedure. Consider the civil case in one of the department courts. If a creditor instituted a suit against a debtor in one department and obtained a favorable verdict, the defendant was permitted to appeal from the sentence to the court of an adjoining department, and so on in succession throughout the whole series; if the last court confirmed the judgment of the first, the defendant could then move it into the Court of

[692] 8. This Supreme Court would, according to the constitution, be formed only by proclamation of the Senate (and therefore under the ultimate control of the president), and might not hold its sessions in a spot more than twelve leagues from the seat of the Senate. Consisting of fifteen judges to be chosen by lot from the tribunals of the five Haitian departments, a two-thirds majority would be necessary for conviction, and no appeal might be made from its decisions.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Cassation at Port-au-Prince. In the event that this court confirmed the judgment of the lower courts, the defendant might still appeal from it to the president, and might apply for a new trial in the lower courts. Thus the contest would proceed ad infinitum, however clear the proof that the debt was just. 175 695

The Court of Cassation exceeded all others in the slowness of its judgments. Its judges were under the surveillance of the president, and must consult with him before deciding a case. If he disagreed, and the state was a party to the case, the judges must reconsider "to see if they have not taken a wrong view of the question at issue." Even so, the grand judge might stay execution as long as he deemed advisable after a judgment was confirmed.

Judges were rarely chosen from among trained lawyers, but were appointed by the government because of political considerations. Consequently, few people had any faith in court decisions, and in general they avoided taking their problems to law. The peasants in particular were bewildered by the whole procedure. White foreigners also often complained that unless they were willing to pay heavily they had no slightest chance of getting justice in the Haitian courts. 693 695 641

It must be emphasized that the majority of cases coming before the courts were civil rather than criminal, for it has been a universal matter of comment that the Haitian people were rarely guilty of serious crimes. Minor thefts of poultry or animals have been the commonest breaches of the peace, while murder, arson, and rape have almost never occurred. Even the bitterest critics of the republic have noted the absence of crime.[9] It is noteworthy that, despite their poverty and the hardness of their life, the Haitians are, contrary to the prevailing white man's notion of Negro unreliability, passion, and lawlessness, a tranquil folk. The absence of crime speaks volumes for the wholesomeness of a people much maligned by the stories of their "Voodoo" practices and bloody revolutions. An élite ex-president spoke to me with pride of the honesty of the country people who welcomed travelers with true hospitality and with no expectation of payment. "You might sleep safely in a country cabin with a thousand dollars on your person," he said.[10] 691 674

9. Mackenzie, British consul during a part of Boyer's régime, and young Haiti's sternest critic, said that during his whole stay he knew of only one murder, and that in this case the assassin was executed. [114] [682]

10. In times of revolution, brigandage was expected but was not accounted a crime, any more than killing in warfare is called murder. [669] [682]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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674 Soldiers, then, had no great difficulty policing town and country-
369 side, for there was little more crime in the towns than in rural regions. A person arrested would be haled before the nearest juge de
•696 paix who would, if necessary, sentence him to jail—which meant
697 sending him to one of the larger towns. This was rather a severe penalty, for the jails were filthy; moreover, only about ten cents a week was ordinarily allotted to each prisoner for food with the result that if a prisoner's family did not supply him, he was likely to be near starvation. Extra work was required for extra fare. Haiti was probably no worse off in respect to its jails than most European and American countries at the time, for this was before the era of prison reform. Inmates of jails were likely to be only petty thieves.

697 During certain régimes the presidents or their generals managed to have numbers of convicts sentenced to hard work, in order to have forced labor on their private estates or projects dear to them. Under any administration there were likely to be a few convicts who performed repair work on streets and roads. It was the usual practice to chain or rope them together by pairs, three yards apart; accompanied by soldiers with loaded muskets, the convicts labored from daylight to sunset, with an hour and a half for a meal at noon. The government pretended to provide for them, but in order to save expense two of the criminals accompanied by two soldiers with fixed bayonets were sent about the neighborhood to beg for the group. The result was that the wretches went ill fed and half naked. They slept in jail on beds which were little more than boards.

701 The final and most persistent branch of government has been the
175 army.[11] Owing to the overmilitarization of Haiti, generals were perennially participating in the civil government—or engaged in overthrowing it. It was to be expected that following the revolution the new independent state formed in 1804 should have a military cast. Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, Geffrard, Boyer, Cangé, Yayou, Magloire Ambroise, Férou, François, Capoix, Rigaud—these were the great generals and the only important statesmen. It was as if in America not only Washington had been a military leader, but also Adams, Jefferson, Franklin, Jay, Hamilton, Madison, Pinckney,

[647] 11. In most governments there has been a body which, although connected with the legislature, had functions pertaining to the law. This was the Chamber of Accounts, a body of five men who examined into and reported to the president upon every branch of expenditure and collection of revenues. It might recommend to him certain financial reforms or improvements, but had no power to enforce its suggestions.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

important point in the warfare between the northern Empire of Christophe and the southern Republic of Pétion is well known, since the boundary between the two, never definitely fixed, might be roughly considered as the Artibonite, control of which, as always, depended on also obtaining control of the strategic hills about the town.[11] It is not possible to discover more than approximate figures for the population of Mirebalais at the present time, since no census of the district has been made, and the most recent figure of 51,000 for the commune is derived from the baptismal records in the parish church.[12]

From the earliest years of settlement of the valley, the town has been the center of its life. The government of the commune is located here; here the courts sit; and here the best schools and the only church of the district are found. Yet it is a small town, numbering less then two hundred and fifty houses, and crossed by but three principal thoroughfares stretching north and south, with ten or twelve cross-lanes. The houses on the principal streets, rectangular and small, are built of wood, plastered over with clay, painted, and roofed with sheet iron. On the outskirts of the town the roofing is of straw, or banana-leaf thatch, while the walls themselves are made of twilled wythes. No house lacks its veranda, however small, where people may be seen sitting late of an afternoon and early in the evening, but the life of the women is lived chiefly in the courtyards behind these houses that line the streets, where the cookhouses are found and the storehouses, and where all work is done. The *place*, or town square, lies at the point where the principal route between Port-au-Prince and the Dominican border turns sharply to the east. Consisting of an acre or two of cleared land, it is overgrown with weeds except when, in preparing for festive occasions, the prisoners from the town jail may be seen spending long hours, machetes in hand, cutting the grass, a few blades at a time. North of the square stands the church, a substan-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 197 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

North of the square stands the church, a substan-
tial structure with rounded arches in the Roman style, roofed
over, like most other buildings, withgalvanized iron. Other
public buildings are the town hall — the Mairie — and the
"Hall of Justice"; near by are the stone walls of a public
building begun some years ago as a school, but destined ap-
parently to house what is known as the "Bureau of Contribu-
tions," a euphemism for the tax-colector's quarters. Despite
the fact that Mirebalais was one of the most difficult regions
for the American occupation to subdue during the Caco up-
rising of 1918–20,[12] it was one of the first districts where the
Guarde d'Haiti was completely Haitianized, and from which
all American Marine officers were withdrawn. Only a small
detachment is stationed there at present. Its well-kept bar-
racks are near the church, and the prisons form a part of the
same compound, from whence issue daily the striped-suited
prisoners, men and women, under guard or alone on parole,
who do communal work in the townand the near-by country-
side.

The town awakens at dawn to the chattering of domesti-
cated guinea-fowl and the crowing of cocks. Occasionally a
camion rumbles through the principal thoroughfare; more
rarely an automobile dashes by in great clouds of dust on its
way to Las Cahobas, or Hinche, or Santo Domingo City. If
it is a market day, the streets are early filled with country folk
on their way to dispose of their produce, and the clatter from
the market place behind the church is heard everywhere until
the heat of the day brings a lull to all commerce, and drowsi-
ness once more settles over everything. By mid-afternoon
during the planting season, drums can be heard over the
countryside. The sounds are not those of the "throbbing"
vodun drums — though they have more than once been mis-
taken for them by travelers — but they set the rhythm for
the communal work of the *combites*, which perform co-
operative agricultural labor. As the rapid dusk follows the
disappearance of the sun behind the mountains, the voices of

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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369 side, for there was little more crime in the towns than in rural regions. A person arrested would be haled before the nearest juge de
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3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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Leyburn noted that the United States occupation affected the nature and rigidity of the barriers separating the yeomanry from the elite. For instance, he calls attention to the fact that the presidents elected during the United States occupation were light-skinned members of the elite. It seemed almost inevitable that, when the North Americans sought men through whom to prosecute their plans for "stabilizing" Haiti, they would settle on educated and worldly politicians, men who were both sufficiently trained and sufficiently pliant for the task. That these men were predominantly light-skinned was a corollary aspect of Haitian social history. In this way Washington played some part in reinforcing and expanding elite power; and herein lies a paradox with which the author of *The Haitian People* has dealt well. While the elite had been able to maintain their wealth and power in Haiti for nearly a century, the presidential succession before the United States occupation had largely been one of military chieftains, principally dark-skinned men from the north of the Republic. Michel Oreste, who had ruled for nine months in 1913–14, was the first civilian to be chosen president in Haiti's entire history up to that time; and Sudre Dartiguenave (1915–22), the North Americans' choice, was the first president since 1879 who was both a southerner and light-skinned. From the last quarter of the nineteenth century until the occupation, in other words, Haiti's presidents were almost entirely dark-skinned northern provincial leaders who literally seized power by invading Port-au-Prince and deposing their predecessors.

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Hence, in describing the separation between elite and yeomanry, it is essential to notice the traditional special role of the military, with its particular overtones of color. Here was one institutional feature of Haitian society which was not directly dominated by the elite, and through which nonelite folk were able to attain special power. But in Haiti's case it is significant that the army itself was not firmly institutionalized; regional warlords, rather than a centralized officer corps, made the decisions. Leyburn cites Auguste Magloire, who enumerated *sixty-nine* "important" revolutions between 1806 and 1879; had this enumeration gone forward, it would have been much longer. Of Haiti's twenty-four chief executives between 1807 and 1915, only eight were in office for a period equal to their elected terms, and seventeen were deposed by revolution. Before the United States occupation, then, the continuing power of the elite could be seen as somewhat separate from the succession of nonelite generals who seized office over the years.

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648 The financing of these many revolutions was usually provided by
669 foreign merchants, bent upon installing a government that would
565 grant them special economic concessions (Munro, 1964:326–31). The
701 United States occupation ended this doleful succession of regimes
439 and, by throwing its weight to the elite, by suppressing military activity in the countryside, and by reforming the army, the United States gave a new meaning to the separation of the elite and the yeomanry. Leyburn's interpretation is consistent with these events; yet some Haitian scholars have differed with Leyburn's analysis.

114 In a lengthy review article, the dean of Haitian historians, Dr. Jean
564 Price-Mars (1942:1–50), questions the applicability of the term
563 "caste" to the social groupings of Haitian society. He notes that
671 Haitian law after the revolution never legitimized any distinction on
144 grounds of physical type, unlike a society such as the United States—that in fact, the very basis of Haitian polity was the absence of such distinctions. Furthermore, Leyburn's interpretation is qualified by the fact that the elite and the rural masses are not entirely distinctive physically. In some parts of rural Haiti, particularly in the southern peninsula, there are many light-skinned people; and many individuals who qualify as members of the elite on all other counts are very dark in appearance. The fact that being "Negro" or "white" in Haiti is viewed as a matter of degree, rather than of kind, complicated by all the other criteria of social position employed in drawing distinctions, has important implications for the way social barriers have operated in that country.*

114 Leyburn did not contend that all the effects of the United States
565 occupation were in the direction of increasing the gap between the
ELITE AND THE YEOMANRY.

563 * In this regard, Haiti is aligned with most of Latin America, in contradistinction to the
564 United States, where many persons believe that "one drop of Negro blood" [sic] makes a
171 "Negro." The failure of North Americans to distinguish between sociological and genetic
144 categories of physical type has led to considerable confusion in their dealings with Latin America and in their understanding of Latin American societies. North American race prejudice at its most extreme sees color as the primary basis for social ranking, and no individual accomplishment (for instance, in terms of economic or intellectual success) can overshadow the inferior status unalterably bestowed by certain physical traits. Haitian—and generally all Latin American—social distinctions do not rest solely on considerations of physical type; a black skin does not "doom" an individual if his attainments make him otherwise the equal of his lighter-skinned fellow citizens. Hence, it might be argued that the term "caste" would be more appropriate when applied to the Negro people of the United States (regardless of phenotype, and including those "Negroes" who are *sociologically* identified with the Negro people even if their physical appearance is dramatically Caucasian) than when applied to the peoples of Latin America.

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175 643 66 The course of events leading up to Duvalier's election are difficult to assess. Fignolé, whom the army had permitted to serve as president for sixteen days during the interregnum, had been denied official recognition by the United States, suggesting that this country feared the implications of his political philosophy; his attempts at passing a whole new code of far-reaching social legislation apparently frightened the army, which removed him on grounds of "maintaining order." By the time an election decree was promulgated in August 1957, Fignolé was disqualified, and Jumelle had been forced to withdraw from candidacy. By election day, September 1957, only Déjoie and Duvalier were in contention, while Jumelle had gone into hiding. An attempted general strike, probably led by Déjoieiste elements, was stopped by the army, and Dr. François Duvalier was elected to power.

175 642 66 701 643 The Duvalier regime, beyond any doubt, has added something new to the Haitian political scene. To begin with, it must be stressed that Duvalier enjoys some popular support in the countryside as well as in the urban centers. For many Haitians, Duvalier epitomizes the return of the Estimé philosophy to Haiti, and it would be a serious political error to suppose that the present regime is no more than an elite-hating dictatorship backed by machine guns. At the same time, the readiness of the Duvalieristes to use force probably exceeds that of any Haitian government in more than a century. Its excesses, moreover, appear to break certain traditions of political behavior—for instance, the unwillingness to take familial connections into account when political revenge is being carried out, the violence committed against women and adolescents regarded as political enemies, and so on. The most important break with tradition, however, has been the gradual undermining of the army as a political force—a force created in the first instance during the United States occupation.

175 642 648 643 In carrying out its plans, the Duvalier government has played more creatively upon inconsistencies in United States policy than any preceding regime. It used United States military and economic power to consolidate itself, while employing a posture of anti-North American hostility in its search for other internal sources of political support. Most strikingly, it has capitalized on the deterioration of the United States design in the Caribbean region, both to exact concessions and to enhance an international image of itself as a stalwart "democratic"

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regime. That President Duvalier has been able to stay in power in spite of internal dissaffection, sometime hostile United States propaganda, a dire economic situation, personal ill health, and other woes, is a tribute to his political acumen, if not to his principles. None of this means, of course, that such consummate skill will continue to work; Haitian governments have a way of falling suddenly, and the Duvalier regime will probably not prove an exception.

Dr. Duvalier's success indicates that he has made certain correct assessments, not only of Haiti's social and political structure but also of United States policy with regard to Haiti. The occupation was notable for its failure to make any telling alterations in the economic structure or level of development of the country. Many beneficial changes were made, as Leyburn demonstrates, particularly in the areas of health and health services, communications, government administration, education, and transport (though the use of corvée labor on the roads led to serious abuses, and stimulated sanguinary guerilla warfare). But most significantly, the United States institutionalized the army and police forces. The ragged bands of political mercenaries of the past were dissolved; the officer-ridden army was transformed into a small, well-trained, and well-organized force. Eventual firm control by this force of weaponry, communications, and transport ended the era of presidential succession by invasion, turned the army into the major locus of nonelectoral, president-making power, and may have ended forever the possibility of an agrarian revolt against the central authority. Another political effect of the occupation was the importance it imparted to the United States ambassador, whose political opinions thereafter would matter significantly in the transmission of power at the top of the Haitian governmental system. The Duvalier regime has continuously taken full account of the consequences of United States interest; and its leaders have been able to watch the operation of that interest in the political events occurring between the fall of the Lescot government and the present.

In the view of one acute observer, President Duvalier, in order to consolidate his power, had to cope with three other loci of political strength in addition to the army and the United States ambassador. The business community, located for the most part in Port-au-Prince, had strongly supported Déjoie's candidacy during the interregnum; its leaders were mainly members of the elite, and many had strong

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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175 business and personal ties with North Americans and other foreign
643 groups. Among the families of these leaders are Swiss, German, and
66 French nationals, and some Syrians and Lebanese who hold United
795 States citizenship. The business community had played a part in the downfall of the Magloire regime, and business strikes were a typical political instrument for putting pressure on presidential incumbents. In addition, the clergy—particularly the Catholic clergy—exerted political influence. Duvalier, while well aware of this, also attended to the importance of vodoun* in Haiti, and to the influence wielded by its cult leaders, particularly in the countryside and among the urban poor. Finally, the President understood the strength of groups such as the university students, the small but politically aware labor unions, and certain professional associations, whose political strength could be felt particularly in times of crisis. The Duvalier regime has displayed intelligence as well as ruthlessness in dealing with these diverse centers of political strength and potential opposition.

175 The official request for a United States Marine Corps mission to
648 "train" the Haitian Army was a brilliant political move by Duvalier,
701 apparently designed to serve several objectives simultaneously. It is
702 entirely correct that the renewed presence of the Marines in Haiti
66 created considerable rancor in some circles, but it also strengthened Duvalier's hand in his dealings with all sources of internal opposition. To some extent it apparently reassured the business community; and it turned out to have reduced, rather than to have increased, the maneuverability of the United States in developing a "corrective" or "restraining" policy toward the Duvalier regime. Perhaps most important, it helped Duvalier in his plan to build a praetorian guard to counterbalance the power of the army itself.

625 The *tonton macoute*—a Creole epithet for the bogeyman—is an extremely interesting variation on the security police theme. Its members wear no official uniform (though blue denim pants and felt hats
[701] are affected). Members of the "TTM" carry out acts of terrorism against groups and individuals and have seriously weakened the po-
[652] licing function and prestige of the regular army. Some calculations put the operating costs of the TTM as high as one third of the governmental budget. Though small groups of the TTM are distributed

* Or, as it is more commonly called, "voodoo." Creole words employed in this introduction are transcribed in Laubach orthography (see Hall, 1953). It was not possible to extend this transcription to the original Leyburn text, where a "Gallic" orthography is followed.

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throughout the country, the central administration remains in the capital; urban units are dispatched to the countryside at times, if any show of internal political resistance is sensed. TTM members also sometimes engage in struggles with each other over political spoils; but too little is known to analyze internal strains within this paramilitary, secret-police organization. The TTM has proved particularly useful for carrying out the murders of outspoken individual political opponents and for crushing draconically any threat of strikes in the Port-au-Prince business community. 625

Little is known of the antecedents of TTM members. While it is customary among the elite to describe these myrmidons as "trash," some of them are literate, have some education, vaunt a political ideology—a kind of nationalist-*négritude* mystique, with strong Fascist elements—and differ dramatically from the ragged, illiterate followers of the warlords of pre-1915 Haiti. In fact, the TTM lieutenants are a direct, if somewhat deformed, product of the Estimé regime, a decade of structurally unsound prosperity, a culturally nationalistic ideology, and, more remotely, of the United States occupation itself. 178 625

With regard to the army, Duvalier has followed a policy of careful attrition. While the United States Marine Corps "mission" was (probably unknowingly) serving to immobilize opposition, Duvalier began to change the character of the army general staff. In the course of less than seven years he completely revamped the leadership of the army five times; this process not only kept the colonels off balance but allowed the President to reward loyal younger followers—principally those with dark skins, it is said—with rapid promotions. 643 701

The relationship between the Duvalier regime and the Catholic clergy has been one of increasing alienation. At times members of the clergy stood high in the regime, two having even served as members of the cabinet; but not the slightest Church resistance has been tolerated. The low point in Duvalier–Church relations was the interruption of a mass by an armed TTM unit in downtown Port-au-Prince; leading members of the hierarchy later were summarily ejected from the country, and the Jesuit order was banned. Church power has waned significantly, both in the capital and in the countryside, as the regime has consolidated itself. Some observers believe that Duvalier is not so unwise as to aim at the complete elimination of the Church, but that he hopes instead to "nationalize" the clergy on some mutually agreeable basis. 642 795 661

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369 development of interior transport. The only passable roads in the
494 Republic run from Aux Cayes in the south to the capital, and from
646 Cap Haïtien in the north to the capital. Transport and communications simply symbolize the power that Port-au-Prince wields, since the same circumstances characterize all national institutional arrangements. Thus Haiti is an extreme example of urban domination, even though its urban population is a fraction of the national total. The consequence has been to keep most of the rural folk cut off from the apparatus that effects national decisions and shapes national policy. Haiti's national legislature, never important in limiting presidential power, is less so today than ever; at best, it had only represented the interests of provincial towns as opposed to the capital, and never the interests of the mass of country people.

701 The local military and judiciary officials possess the formal authority vested in them by the state, and their power is very considerable.
692 Few local people would dare challenge their decisions, and the de-
642 vices for appeal against arbitrary exercise of authority are few. Admit-
369 tedly, at the lowest local level the *chef de section*—who is traditionally appointed by the captain of the military in the *commune* center and is himself a yeoman—is subject to some genuine restraint by local inhabitants. Jean Comhaire-Sylvain (1955:620–24) has argued convincingly that the people of a community are capable of insisting on democratic procedure in those matters requiring decision that come to the attention of local authority. But such decisions have little or nothing to do with larger issues. The yeomanry cannot directly make its wishes felt in national politics; and national politics are conducted almost without reference to the aspirations of the rural masses. It is precisely in the separateness of local life from the mainstream of national decision-making that the political impotence of the yeomanry is demonstrated.

311 Haiti's agrarian nature cannot be expressed simply by saying it is a
423 rural and yeoman country. Haiti does not have a "land problem," as
171 that phrase is conventionally applied to Latin America. It does, it is true, suffer from land shortage, inasmuch as too little land is worked at too low a level of productivity and must feed too many mouths. But a very substantial proportion of the rural masses owns land, or has regular access to it. It is true that most land is held in small plots and without clear title. But those persons who own no land or who lack land to work are proportionally fewer than in any other Carib-

3: Leyburn Z-4.5 (no date) 1966
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people: "If ever you refuse, or grumblingly accept, the laws which the genius guarding your destinies dictates to me for your happiness, you will merit the fate of ungrateful people. But perish that hideous idea!" There can be little doubt that he wished Haiti under his direction to become prosperous; but it is likewise clear that he was personally self-centred and inordinately grasping. 175 642 643

Each step Dessalines took to further his ambitions either for Haitian prosperity or for his own fortunes had its bearing upon the development of social classes in the country. Extermination of all remaining whites was one of the first tasks he set himself. On a promise of clemency he lured several hundred gullible French out of hiding, and butchered them in cold blood. His campaign of extirpation was methodical and thorough. To try to penetrate into the psychological background of this violence is to desert fact for speculation: it may have been a desire for revenge on the French, pure and simple; it may have been gloating sadism; he may have wished to warn France against any future attempts to regain possession of the country; or he may have wanted to notify his subjects of his intention to rule with severe discipline. Certainly this last aim was achieved, if any of his people did not already know, after two years of warfare, the extent of his ruthlessness. He ruled by fear and by threats, never by the cultivation of loyalties.

Apparently he was afraid that Napoleon would renew his efforts to subdue the former colony. To forestall such an attempt he ordered each of his governing subalterns to construct one great fort on the most prominent hill in their district—a scheme which led immediately to the institution of forced labor. He likewise devised a plan, not actually put into effect, for destroying all towns and plantations near the coast and moving the capital to an inland village; and so isolating Haitians from all contact with the outside world. 175 643 466 712 361

Turning to domestic policy, he faced a herculean task. The warfare of 1802–3 had left the country in chaos. Plantations and agricultural projects were almost totally ruined. All habits of steady industry had been lost. Dread of a possible new attack by the French made necessary a great army, and this in turn removed most able-bodied men from productive labor in the fields, while the construction of fortresses still further depleted the labor supply. The first census of free Haiti, in 1805 (probably not highly accurate), showed only 380,000 people, with the women outnumbering men by almost three to two. 175 643 433 701 464 712 175 162

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 were abolished; with such concessions the people must be satisfied.
566 Dessalines tacitly confessed his inability to follow any course but the French colonial system, with modifications introduced by Toussaint.

167 Many of the blacks, having tasted a moment's freedom, were not
175 inclined to give it up. Before the new order of Dessalines was firmly established, therefore, they ran away with their families into the hills, where they escaped official notice. As squatters they lived out their lives unmolested. By the time they were officially rediscovered, all Haiti had become a land of peasants.

175 At the other end of the ladder from the laborers were the officials,
463 who might be great men or small clerks, members of the entourage of the governor-general or merely overseers of a plantation. In order
555 to keep the vast agricultural economy functioning smoothly it was
647 necessary to have hundreds of agents, directors, clerks, and overseers,
565 each of whom must report to a superior. In this official class there was at least a possibility of realizing an ambition for oneself; there was a basis of comparison; more important, there was some possibility of attracting favorable attention of persons in high places and so of gaining promotion. Inevitably something of the colonial state of mind must have carried over into the new era, so that an ex-slave would consider himself as having risen in the world to be now performing a task which only white men used to do—to be spared field labor and to direct the work of others. Out of this group of petty agents rose a few men of ambition who were later to belong to the élite.

175 Higher officers of state were in a much more favorable position to
565 achieve social eminence. Not only did they perform no manual
647 labor; they were twice removed from that life, since they directed the men who directed the workers. They handled funds. They came
[212] into contact with Dessalines himself. Many former gens de couleur filled these important posts, for the number of Haitians who could read and write was woefully limited.

175 The army was the great power in the country, for the new state
701 was a military one. Since fear of a return of the French required the maintenance of a large standing army,[4] Dessalines made a virtue of this apparent necessity, using his soldiers to enforce discipline among the cultivators. On whom else could he rely for his local administra-

4. Humboldt estimated that the army of Dessalines numbered 37,500, which would be one tenth of the total population. Other estimates run as low as 15,000. Even this figure would be about a tenth of the male population.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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tion? Here again, the decision of a leader fixed the direction of Haitian life for decades to come. It is agreed by commentators that overmilitarization was the bane of nineteenth-century Haiti. One tenth of all able-bodied men were constantly in active army service. Moreover, all the male cultivators on plantations must hold themselves in readiness to obey the government's call to arms; ammunition and arms were stored in every parish. A military mentality was nourished, the people early learning the lesson (apparently unchallenged by any liberal) that the army should rule and the people obey.

Although the common soldiers were ex-slaves who, upon dismissal from service, would return to the ranks of agricultural workers, their officers had a higher status. Noncommissioned officers had a long road to travel to eminence, but like the overseers they had at least a glimpse of the promised land of distinction. Captains and generals had this vision within their grasp: they were already of the élite.

In the subcategory of "artisans" were included all the townspeople who carried on crafts or trades. It must be remembered that Haiti had no cities, and that its two largest towns then numbered probably no more than 10,000 people each, so that artisans were not numerous. Since there was a distinction in the arduousness of various pursuits as well as in their financial return there existed in this category, as in the official and military, some chance for social prestige.

The only persons remaining outside the categories mentioned were colored landowners who had held estates in the colonial period. Dessalines took active steps to gain control of most of the land in the country, but at his death in 1806 there were still many of the old proprietors left who were, in the main, determined to hold their land and preserve their dignity as non-laborers.

Assassination by his political foes ended the career of Dessalines only two years after he assumed power. In 1805 he had had himself crowned emperor in imitation of Napoleon, but unlike Napoleon he permitted no nobility. "*Moi seul, je suis noble!*" he replied to ambitious henchmen who asked for the establishment of a peerage. It was the Emperor's tactless handling of the social situation which caused his murder, for he touched sensitive nerves on the raw in attacking property rights, inherited privilege, color distinctions, and social aspirations. The cultivators grumblingly accepted his decrees; the ambitious upper group did not.

The former affranchis fully intended to keep their lands once the

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 The result was entirely different from Boyer's expectations. As a
114 French critic graphically puts it, the Haitians

703 who had never had more than a borrowed energy—that inspired by fear of French invasion—when they saw themselves freed, by a solemn treaty, from all attack on their coasts, seemed to allow their arms to drop relaxed at their sides, saying, *Let's take a rest.* The soldier who up till now had squeezed his body into a uniform and had subjected himself to European discipline, shouldering his arms, staring straight ahead as if seeing nothing, now began to leave unbuttoned the uniform which choked him, dragged a mattress into his sentry-box so that he might sleep through his watch, and let his cross slip to the earth never to pick it up again.[44]

175 In short, the Haitian army as a disciplined force ceased to exist, and
701 with it all authority of its officers. Boyer had counted upon the
703 army to enforce the provisions of the Code Rural, but now a soldier's
671 life was a paid sinecure. By gaining political security Haiti had in-
433 advertently lost its last chance of economic prosperity through a system of forced labor.

175 Wherever the Code was put into partial operation, revenue from
423 plantations continued to decline. The price of real estate dropped
433 proportionately. It was a simple matter for workmen who had
435 signed contracts to avoid carrying out their stipulations, and just as
446 simple to evade the law requiring fifteen acres' minimum for a single holding. Practically every Haitian wanted to own a bit of land; once he had acquired his bit, however small, he had (or so he felt) earned an exemption from directed labor.

175 Only on estates near the few big towns, where government
671 officials were concentrated, was there much pretense of trying to
625 enforce the Code. Sentries at the gates of Port-au-Prince were
661 authorized to confiscate plantains, yams, or fruit brought by any worker who, in contravention of the Code, had strayed to market on a forbidden day, but sentries soon acquired the habit of not seeing countryfolk who passed the gates. Reports kept cropping up that rural policemen were robbing poor cultivators of their coffee under pretense of protecting them from the penalties for breach of the law; this suggests that the Code was used rather for graft than for the stimulation of agriculture.

175 By and large, however, the Code was merely ignored. Agents
671 could not be found who were willing to stand in any community

625 44. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, II, 181.
535
517

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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unplanned, undesired

Haitian peasantry, to sum up, began as the 175
result of two policies intended to achieve ends quite different; first, 421
presidential gifts of land, the chief purpose of which had been to pay 24
the soldiers of the republic; and second, the crop-sharing system 463
adopted by landlords after the failure of Boyer's Code. 178

6. *The Drawing of Caste Lines* (*1820–1843*)

Almost every major presidential aim of Boyer came to grief. His 175
tranquil quarter-century rule, the unified island, the financial surplus 178
with which his presidency began, the peace with France after 1825— 565
all these advantages combined with his good intentions did not save his projects from shipwreck. Near the beginning of his régime he announced that, like his revered predecessor Pétion, he felt the safety of Haiti to lie in the abolition of all color distinctions and prejudices. Just as his great Code Rural proved a complete failure, however, so did his efforts to do away with the color line. On the contrary, it was during Boyer's time that class distinctions became fixed, in large part although not wholly, on the basis of color.

Stating that the policy of his government was to put an end, as far 175
as possible, to jealousies of caste, he consistently for a few years 647
promoted a black every time a promotion had been given to a 563
mulatto or other light-skinned person. This procedure soon met an 212
insuperable obstacle. Government posts in general required literacy, 555
and only a very small number of blacks were educated, so that the supply of Negroes was not sufficient to furnish him with candidates. Since one of the few roads to lucrative success lay in official positions, ambitious young colored men sought eagerly for government office, and Boyer soon had no alternative but to advance men of his own complexion. In the army, on the other hand, literacy was not 175
necessary for promotion. Ambitious Negro youths, therefore, fre- 701
quently chose this career which, while not very profitable in mone- 555
tary rewards, at least gave a man a certain social status and economic 563
security.

Because of the state of education in the republic, consequently, an 175
ugly situation developed, with the civil arm of government almost 647
wholly in control of the colored element and the military force 701
dominated by blacks. Fortunately for the country no crisis developed
during the 1820's and 1830's which made an open breach between [563]
army and state.

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175 563 565 [701] [669] an ineffective government, momentarily in the hands of colored élite. Attempting to dominate politics was a numerically small group of colored people and a still smaller group of Negroes. Although prevailingly black, the army might be, and in the later nineteenth century was continually, used by whichever group offered more. A third power, a middle class, might have balanced these antagonistic factions. Lacking such a moderating influence, Haiti was the victim of recurrent revolutionary movements.

175 178 642 643 At the time of Boyer, actual democracy would have been no safeguard, for it would have meant the supremacy of ignorance. His rule was the beginning of unfortunate days for Haiti. After the auspicious opening years, the President became an impotent onlooker as his country declined. It is instructive to compare the Haiti of Dessalines and Christophe with the Haiti of 1843, only one generation later.[62]

175 178 642 433 466 The Haiti of 1806 had been a beehive of activity. Soldiers, foremen, and policemen then stood over the workers with lianes to force them to labor for the benefit of their state. Production was carefully planned, an ordered hierarchy making every person in the country responsible to another higher than himself until the ruler was reached at the pinnacle. The cardinal fault of any laborer was to shirk at his task. The year 1843, on the contrary, found Haiti in a condition of quiescence which, to those who remembered the old days, resembled torpor. The central government had ceased to drive its citizens, and its half-hearted attempts at persuasion were futile. Overseers, drivers of gangs of workers, soldiers whose duty it was to enforce labor, had disappeared from the scene. Every man was his own master.

175 178 511 The standard of living in 1806 as in 1843 was low; but in the earlier year there had been a promise of great things to come once Haiti had rebuilt what war had destroyed. The succeeding years, however, failed to inculcate into the people a desire for any higher standard of life. Country dwellers were benighted; ignorance deepened the habit

[162] [175] 62. Haiti has never had an accurate census, so that it is impossible even to estimate the total population of the country either in 1806 or in 1843. The figures of 380,000 and 800,000 given by some authors for the two years are mere guesses. Likewise, one can only deduce the proportion of people in the main economic and social categories; probably seventy-five per cent of the Haitians were serfs in 1806 and the same percentage peasants in 1843; the "aristocracy," including all who did not derive a living by manual labor or army service, could hardly have reached five per cent in either year; the army, house servants, day laborers in the towns, and petty businessmen would make up the other twenty per cent.

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Political history of the next seventy-two years is a complicated story, of which only enough need be told here to illuminate the evolution of caste and social distinctions. Even a short summary reveals the bewildering confusion. Of the twenty-two heads of state between 1843 and 1915 only one served out his prescribed term of office;[2] three died while serving, one was blown up with his palace, one presumably poisoned, and one hacked to pieces by a mob; one resigned. The other fourteen were deposed by revolution after incumbencies ranging in length from three months to twelve years. 175 643

The Revolution of 1843 brought back into national prominence the whole matter of color and caste. The young revolutionaries, mostly light-skinned, seem to have assumed that their group was permanently in control. With cavalier highhandedness they set about capturing the last stronghold of Negro eminence: the army. They soon found, however, that they had caught a Tartar; their attempt to rule was fatal to them and their clique. 175 669

In the Constitutional Assembly convened to make a new constitution for the country, they professed astonishingly democratic doctrines. Proclaiming that the fault of former governments had been reliance upon military power, they now proposed to make civil power paramount by allowing the common people to vote. Since up to this time the franchise had been strictly limited to army officers and anciens libres, such a radical departure as general suffrage makes no sense unless conceived as an attempt to break the power of the Negro-controlled army, for surely the élite had no confidence in the wisdom of the peasantry. Weight is given to this explanation by the paradoxical action of the revolutionaries in promoting to high army rank some of the strongest mulatto partisans of civil government. 175 668 646 642 641 701

The new constitution was an immediate failure. Most of the colored élite condemned the giving of voting rights to peasants and workers; the army chiefs, generally black and illiterate, some of them aging veterans of 1803, bitterly resented being made subservient to young, inexperienced civil officers; in fact, even the new mulatto president, Rivière-Hérard, had no conception of government other than by military dictatorship. 175 642 641

Not only was the constitution a failure; so was the government of the young revolutionaries. A part of their weakness lay in their 175 643

2. The presidential term varied under different constitutions; some allowed a four-year term with the right of reélection, some six years with no reélection.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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American Marines in Haiti during the next two decades had definite effects upon the social life of the country. 128 648

One of the most immediately observable results was the termination of the long political domination by the blacks, and reëstablishment of the colored élite in government control. The four presidents since 1915, Dartiguenave (1915–22), Borno (1922–30), Roy (1930), and Vincent (1930–41), have all been light-skinned. The United States forces had a definite hand in the election of the first two of these men. America's concern was certainly not to return the government to the colored group, but rather to have as titular heads of state men who were educated, temperate of mind, civil in manners—and, of course, mentally "supple" enough to carry out policies agreeable to the State Department at Washington. Since education had for long been a perquisite of the élite only, and since colored élite outnumbered black élite, the chances were good that the choice should fall upon a colored man in 1915 and 1922. Even so, it may have been pure coincidence that the Americans supported mulattoes rather than Negroes; it can hardly be coincidence that the mulatto presidents since 1915 have filled the key offices with colored men. They would assuredly maintain that they had tried to select persons best fitted for office. The fact remains that there are few blacks in the important ministries. 175 648 643 563

This return to political power of the colored element was one of the most sweeping transformations effected by the Marines, for once again, as in the golden days of Pétion and Boyer, political prestige accompanied and fortified social position. Since 1843 one black or almost black general had succeeded another as president of the republic, and the élite class had perforce to endure them. Socially tolerated these parvenu generals had been, but accepted never. When the Marines arranged the election of President Dartiguenave they effectively reversed the tradition of a century. Since 1915 there have been several Negro candidates for the presidency; in coming elections there are sure to be others; for the present and the near future it is safe to say there will be no more black non-élite presidents.

Such a prophecy is made with a certain assurance because of another result of the Occupation: reform of the army. All true friends of Haiti knew, as most Haitian statesmen had understood for a hundred years, that the huge standing army was an unmitigated burden to the economic, political, and social stability of the country. 175 701 648 177

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175 701 648 177 625 652 669 Since it was an entrenched interest, however, no responsible statesman had dared to threaten its hold. The Marines swept it out of existence, undertaking to substitute for it a trained constabulary of only 2,000 men who should combine routine military tasks with police duty in the scattered towns. Results were immediately apparent: the weighty incubus of soldiers' wages was lifted from the treasury; thousands of men were deprived of sinecures and put back into productive economic activities; the constant threat of armed revolution was removed; better order was kept by 2,000 trained men in trim uniform than by twelve times that number of ragged loafers who called themselves soldiers; and since the army was no longer the great steppingstone to political office, the élite felt more secure from assault by ambitious but uneducated army men. From 1843 to 1915 the élite had endured many lower-caste presidents because these were able to control the army; now the army had disappeared.

175 648 [743] [744] [365] [491] [45] The Marines did much that was of indisputable benefit to Haiti. This was acknowledged even by the most vocal patriots who soon began to campaign for an end of the Occupation. Where there had been no real work in public health, Americans now built hospitals, established clinics, cleaned up the sources of many diseases, laid down sewage systems, gave the towns pure water. In 1915 there were only three automobiles in the country, and no roads for them to travel; the Americans built many miles of paved roads. In 1915 there had been only one wharf, two short stretches of railroad, two lighthouses, one electric plant; the Americans undertook electrification, telephone systems, the construction of administration buildings, and other public conveniences. Whether in such visible matters or in the obscurer realms of currency, banking, and budgets hardly a phase of daily life was left untouched. And judged by the standards of civilization the Marines improved what they touched.

175 648 642 But rancor against the Americans began early and continued to the bitter end in 1934. The pride of all Haitians was deeply wounded by the Occupation. For 111 years they had governed themselves and had assumed themselves to be a sovereign nation; the Marines patroling the countryside were vivid reminders that Haiti had never been independent except by sufferance, and that white men were once more overseeing the destinies of colored and Negro men. Nevertheless, the reasons proclaimed for opposing the Occupation were not those of hurt vanity. Some of those given were entirely

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remains is the verbal handing down of recollections, one of the most natural things in the world and one congenial to Haitian peasants. Every region, every village, has its accomplished storytellers. The phenomenal resemblances in detail of the coumbite to Dahomean coöperative work may be due therefore to this verbal tradition. 174 241 574 476 538

Once the men have cleared and prepared the field, the care of the crop devolves upon the women. For this there has been a long background of tradition. In African agricultural regions, in the plantations of Saint-Domingue during slave days, under the forced labor régimes of Toussaint and his successors, women had been field workers. They had never known anything else. We have seen that many of the present-day practices of Haiti go back to the times of Pétion and Boyer: during this period women did field work, not by decree of government but by force of circumstance. Their men were constantly taken away from the farms for service in the large army; if crops were to be raised, women must do the work. Sometimes soldiers were stationed near their own homes, and could help in production; but they could be called on to march, at short notice and in peacetime, anywhere in the country. Many of the later presidents made it a definite policy frequently to change the station of regiments, so as to prevent revolutionary projects and guard against the soldiers' being tampered with by the disaffected in any single community. 241 175 462 701

Sir Harry Johnston records his observations on the Haiti of 1910 as follows: 114

The women are the best part of the nation. They are splendid, unremitting toilers. In the face of all discouragements with which a bad Government clouds their existence the women of Haiti remind one of certain patient types of ant or termite, who, as fast as you destroy their labour of months or days, hasten to repair it with unslackening energy. The market-women that descend from the country farms to the Haitian towns know that on their way to the market-place, and in that market-place, they will be robbed by soldiers and officers until the margin of profit on the sale of their wares has practically disappeared. Yet they continue to toil, to raise poultry and cattle, till the fields, see to their gardens, make pottery and mats. They cannot stop to reason, but must go on working from three years old to the end of their lives. Such industry (which is almost equally supplemented by that of the peasant husbands) protected should make Haiti one of the richest countries in the world for its size and population; but so long 114 462 461 [701]

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114 461 462 as it is cursed by the present military despotism, the utmost that the women of Haiti can do is to keep their country just above the waters of bankruptcy and their households from complete despair.[9]

701 175 Since 1910 the military has been reformed, and the women are not mulcted by soldiers and officers; Sir Harry's prophecy regarding the material benefits of removing the curse of military despotism was overly optimistic.

441 443 175 Rounding out the economic life of the peasant is the market, which provides an outlet for whatever surplus is produced, a source of needed supplies and a modicum of money, as well as an almost imperative diversion for hard-working women. The origin of Haitian markets may have been either French or West African, for both regions had them. They were certainly in existence by 1803 in Saint-Domingue, for Madiou speaks of the trade of the plainsmen of the Cul-de-Sac with the holders of what then was called Port Républicain (now Port-au-Prince), adding: "Each Sunday at Croix-des-Bouquets a market was held which brought together more than 4,000 cultivators, male and female, with the permission of the overseers or proprietors."[10] That so large a number came to the market is an indication of the social as well as the economic nature of this institution. Similarly, in the North in 1803, "Rochambeau, now master at the Cape, set about attending to the market established at Petit-Anse in July. After having suppressed all the markets which existed around the Cape, he opened a single and general one, 13th August, at Petit-Anse, one league from the city." The French general was making use of a familiar economic device to carry forward the economic life of the colony during the trying period of the wars.

175 441 462 466 702 In independent Haiti it was an almost immediate development that the women generally should do the marketing, the men being either required to work on the land or busy at military duty. It came to be accepted quite simply that going to market was a woman's work. From 1843 on through most of the century there was an additional reason why peasant men would not go to the market towns: recruits were needed, both for the army and whatever revolutionary coup might be brewing; a man who did not relish fighting did better to stay out of sight in the hills. In fact, this has even been called the chief

9. *The Negro in the New World*, pp. 196–197.
10. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haiti*, III, 24, 34.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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the men as well as the women work arduously. It seems justifiable to conclude that industry has not always been a characteristic of the Haitian male; and to ask why. 114 461

One valid reason is, of course, political. As we have seen, until the American Occupation Haiti was greatly overmilitarized. Almost every able-bodied male was at one time or another during his prime a soldier in the army. Since the bane of the country from 1804 to 1915 was its revolutions, there was room for a man to serve either in the regular army or, lured by future promises, in the guerrilla forces of a scheming general. To be drawn away from the land at the very moment of physical maturity was to predispose a youth against humdrum field work. As a soldier he traveled, knew excitement, was fed and clothed, and could loaf, except during battle. So schooled, upon retirement from the army a man was hardly disposed to settle down to steady labor. Even if as a young man he remained upon his farm, he might at any moment be called away to service, just when he was most needed for the crop. If Haiti was to be fed, the women, who alone were exempt from army service, provided the only available regular workers. 175 701 461

Tradition offers another explanation for masculine independence of hard work. The African background of female agricultural labor has been cited. In slavery the men had been degraded by being forced to do work of this sort, while the lot of women hardly differed from what it had been in the old country. Under Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, with their large armies, women, already numerically preponderant, formed the vast majority of field workers. Independent small farming hardly changed the picture. African tradition, moreover, made the man master of his property and wives, the rôle of woman being that of man's inferior and useful servant. 174 462 562 567

Disease is another partial explanation. Until recently no one seems to have been aware of the prevalence in Haiti of such diseases as hookworm, malaria, and tuberculosis which, without necessarily affecting a person outwardly, may nevertheless sap his vitality, leaving him listless and worn out by even slight exertion. Obviously much of what was called laziness was due to disease. But the flaw in this reasoning is that illness makes no discrimination between the sexes. If men were disease-ridden, so were women: yet the latter were steadily industrious. 164 461

Any foray into possible psychological reasons is guesswork. It

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175 178 64 slave system are not likely to assume it again; and the aristocrats, ever intent upon forgetting their African forebears, would certainly not turn to the Dark Continent for political inspiration.

175 642 701 643 Although the revolution had brought to the fore men of military experience and even genius, it had driven out or killed every single person of experience in civil government. The affranchis of the old régime had been denied political rights long before 1791; by 1804 few could have had any memory of active participation in government.[1] Toussaint was dead. The only authority of any significance was military. Consequently the new state was built upon army control and directed by army officers. Dessalines as commander in chief took the title of governor-general, later of emperor, but was in reality a military ruler. Fearful as he was of a new French invasion, he set his generals over the districts, organized his people as an army ready for immediate mobilization, and ruled as dictator.

175 642 This was all the Haitians had as political background: a military dictatorship. The Founding Fathers of Haiti, if so they might be called, had almost nothing to work with, nothing to build upon: neither a Magna Carta of the Blacks, nor any precedent of an independent Negro state anywhere in this white man's world; neither heritage of local responsibility and political debate to sow the seeds of democracy, nor any example of self-government in the American tropics to offer a pattern[2]—many of the known forms of government were a practical impossibility for the Haitians because of their need of continued defense against foreign enemies, their slave heritage, their inexperience in self-government, their complete lack of a middle class.

175 668 Hardly one tenth of the people in any case was capable of giving detailed thought to the form which government should take. The mass of ex-slaves had been fighting only *against* slavery, against the hated white rulers, not *for* democracy or any other abstraction. Their freedom achieved, they would not be the ones to make decisions. [642] All political choices would be made by the generals, by men of property and position, by the few whose persistent ambition made them stand out from the masses.

1. Such participation in French colonial politics would have been before the restrictive laws of 1771.

2. It must be recalled that Haiti was the second free country to be established in the Western Hemisphere, and that Liberia, in Africa, was still far in the future.

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prosper." Yet every change of administration saw merely a new embroidery on the old theme of sterility.[17]

The further weakness of social or class consciousness has already been treated at length. It kept the whole nation divided from top to bottom, setting black against colored, North against South, countryside against town. It meant a perennial civil war, latent at times, but constantly breaking out in new insurrections.

Some day a diligent scholar may try to catalogue the revolutions which Haiti has undergone. Magloire discusses sixty-nine "important" ones between 1806 and 1879;[18] but the latter date was merely the threshold of renewed revolutionary activity. There seems to have been very little pattern in these uprisings, except that almost never were they a spontaneous revolt of the masses, as the Slave Insurrection of 1791 had been. The peasants were constantly being impressed into service with the army of a general who had presidential ambitions. From the middle years of the nineteenth century certain peasants found fighting a more profitable trade than any other, and began to hire themselves out as mercenaries. In the North these professional guerrilla warriors were known as *cacos*, in the South as *piquets*. Their methods were those of terror and rapine. They were a constant menace to the peace, and their suppression was one of the announced purposes of the American Occupation, for every revolutionary chief felt it necessary to hire their services.

Another recognized procedure of revolution was incendiarism. Haitian politics is almost wholly the affair of townsmen, and more narrowly of the men of the six important towns—Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, Jérémie, Les Cayes, Gonaïves, and Saint-Marc. Except for their principal buildings and villas, these towns are constructed of wood or other inflammable material. Leaders of insurrections therefore have habitually set fire to the poorer sections of the towns, and as frequently as not this threat has won over the populace, who preferred overthrowing the government to having their homes burned. Support of the insurrection becomes a form of fire insurance. Such a state of affairs is eloquent testimony to the cynical attitude of the political leaders toward the masses.

A revolution directed by a general of real ambition was likely to

17. Auguste Magloire, *Histoire d'Haïti d'après un plan nouveau* (Port-au-Prince, 1909), I, 230, 243, 250–251, develops this theme at length.
18. *Ibid.*, Vol. II.

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3. The unimportance of the legislature. It

646 age for the president to dispense, and has preserved the semblance of
642 republican government; but hardly half a dozen legislative sessions in all Haitian history have contributed seminal ideas in politics or initiated true reforms. How could they, indeed, when the president was consistently a dictator of policy?

666 4. The undemocratic nature of the vote. Senators are chosen by
642 the representatives, and the two groups together have generally elected the president, when he did not come to power by revolution. The only chance people have had to vote has been for local officials and representatives. In these cases, the vote has been limited to the élite and the army, with the president's henchmen counting the ballots. Since the Occupation there have been plebiscites on constitutional changes, the people having the right to vote Yes or No.

692 5. The subservience of the courts to the president. They have been
643 filled with president's men, generally astute enough to consult presi-
642 dential wishes before handing down a decision. Foreign merchants soon learned that they could expect little "justice" from the courts if their own cause conflicted with special Haitian interests. Foreign diplomats likewise learned that in crises the courts could involve the simplest issue in such verbal complexity that months of patience would be necessary to unwind the red tape.

641 6. The pliability of "constitutional rights." Freedom of speech and
661 of the press has been notably lacking, although scurrilous attacks on the administration's enemies have often been permitted. Legislators
642 have been expelled. Graft has flourished. In 1833, for example, two representatives were expelled from the House "for systematically opposing the measures of the executive, and persisting in a demand for a statement of public expenditures." A century later a senator was expelled for almost the same reasons.

● 701 7. Militarism. Only in this respect is any real change apparent since
178 the American Occupation. The army was always large up to 1915, and so constituted an economic drain as well as a political menace.
642 Generals had great power: they ruled each department and each
669 arrondissement, were subject only to the president, and were at the bottom of every revolutionary movement.[22] Since the Occupation

[162] [701] 22. In 1842, when the population was still less than a million, there were in the district governments 9 generals, 63 colonels, 48 lieutenant colonels, 9 captains, 1 lieutenant, and 28 medical officers; and in the standing army 33 colonels, 95 lieutenant colonels, 825 captains, 654 lieutenants, 577 sublieutenants and ensigns, 6,815 noncommissioned officers, and 25 medical officers. The army had 28,000 soldiers and cost about $600,000 a year. See John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 86 ff.

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numbers in the army have been radically reduced; yet in that very fact there is the possibility for the only armed persons in Haiti, the present Garde d'Haïti, to effect political coups. But at least the budget is not strained by the salaries of thousands of unnecessary soldiers, as was true in pre-Occupation days.

8. The separation of the masses from government. By providing a minimum of local government, but that fairly effective, the national government has been able to keep the peasants out of all but revolutionary politics. Rural communities have ordinarily got along well enough without formal government, so that the history of Haitian political thought and the analysis of Haitian political forms would treat of affairs interesting to only a fraction of the population.

It need hardly be repeated, after a reflection upon these apparent permanencies of political life, that Haiti is not a democracy.

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[p. 234]

XIII

CONSTITUTIONS AND POLITICAL FORMS

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QUITE aside from its castes and the political separation of 1807–20, Haiti has always consisted of two nations, one living in and near the towns and so within reach of established government, the other rural and yet capable of ordering its own affairs by folk rules without much actual governmental machinery. It is through the former that Haiti has a political history. Indeed, one is tempted to say that more than half the people have continually got along without any government whatever of a formal sort, for being peaceably inclined they have found custom and usage [669] sufficient for their needs. These people have been rarely disturbed by the state's rulers; revolutionary chieftains alone have found it worth their while to stir up the country folk to an active interest in politics.

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The formal subdivisions of Haiti have been, through most of its history, three: the *commune*, roughly corresponding to the American township; the *arrondissement*, a group of communes, just as the American county is a group of townships; and the *département*, comprising several arrondissements. All three terms were borrowed from France, although their significance was altered when applied to the Haitian scene.

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In the days of Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe, the government had owned vast plantations which were under the control of the military. Pétion and Boyer instituted the commune by combining numerous estates and farms into a group likewise to be controlled by soldiers. Until the American Occupation the police system of the country was military, with ordinary soldiers keeping order and making arrests when necessary. Since few people are less given to disorder than the Haitian peasants, the task of keeping order was not a serious one; indeed, soldiers were frequently stationed among their friends and relatives, who never thought of them as police. It some- [293] times happened, however, that soldiers were assigned to other parts of the country, where they swaggered about with their *cocomacaques* (heavy-jointed canes), using these or the flat of their swords to enforce their often arbitrary commands.

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In every commune recognized by the state was an important

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In every commune recognized by the state was an important

official appointed by the president—the *juge de paix*. The term has little relation to our "justice of the peace." It implies rather the function performed by the old English country squire, who often by his prestige managed to patch up differences between neighbors without allowing matters to come to an issue, but who if the issue were joined sat as judge. The decision of the judge was final in all civil matters up to fifty dollars—and the case was rare in which peasants dealt in affairs as large as this. In the more populous communes (those containing large villages or towns) the juge de paix was more impersonal. He might render decisions, subject to appeal, in cases up to a hundred dollars. All minor police cases came within the province of this official, whose judgment was final in matters up to a twelve-dollar fine or a jail sentence of five days. All criminal cases began with this judge, but those of the gravest sort were speedily sent to higher courts. 632 693

By and large rural Haiti got along with a minimum of civil government, and urban Haiti was governed much as a small provincial town of the nineteenth century. 369 64

Several communes made an arrondissement, another political subdivision with a distinct military cast. Through most of her history Haiti had an average of about twenty of these arrondissements, each of them presided over by an army officer of high rank appointed by the president. In arrondissements containing important capitals a general, in lesser ones a brigadier-general, exercised both military and civil authority. This man was the medium through which the central government made known its decisions and laws. Because life could be tedious in a dull country town, in a district full of peaceful peasants, many of the generals spent their time in reflecting upon the chances of a successful insurrection which might make them important in national affairs. As already noted, the standard of discipline in the army was never very high, so that the presiding officer of an arrondissement might have a real sinecure if he was not ambitious.[1] 631 701

1. The military arrondissement always bore the name of the principal town or village within its borders. The following list shows the important places during the time of Boyer: [631] [701]

In the department of the North there were five arrondissements: Cap-Haïtien, Grande-Rivière, Marmelade, Fort Liberté, Limbé. [103]
In the Northwest, three: Port-de-Paix, Cap Nicolas Môle, Le Borgne.
In the Artibonite, three: Saint-Marc, Gonaïves, Mirebalais.
In the West, three: Port-au-Prince, Jacmel, Léogane.
In the South, five: Les Cayes, Jérémie, Aquin, Tiburon, Nippes.

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to the Americans who ruled Haiti through his office. This constitution once more increased the power of the president. 642 [641]

1932. Vincent's constitution, professing to be quite different from the two in effect during the Occupation, but actually closely resembling the 1927 revision with its concentration of power in executive hands. In 1935 an important amendment was added, making it possible for the president to be reëlected. [643]

Despite this welter of constitutions, the essential framework of Haitian government has consisted, except for brief interruptions, of a president, a legislature, and courts. The term of the presidency has varied from four to seven years (in the early days, for life) with the privilege of reëlection being now forbidden, now granted. Two presidents who tried to extend their terms, Salnave and Salomon, were deposed by revolutions for their temerity. Their distinction of being among the few to serve out the allotted term was thus marred by an ignominious end. 642 643

Regularly the president was obligated to "maintain internal peace" —a requirement few heads of state have been able to carry out, since internal peace has been most elusive. To aid him in his task he has been given wide powers: he commands the army (always large until 1915; every president except one between 1804 and 1915 was a general) and the navy (never more than a few ill-conditioned vessels, but these important in the general roadless condition of the country); most constitutions also gave him the right to issue necessary proclamations in order to deal with special crises. He "watches over" tribunals by means of appointed commissioners; by this arrangement he may obviously exert pressure for favorable judgments in cases which interest him. 643 [701] [706] [716] [792]

The one body which might conceivably check the president, namely, the legislature, has generally been composed of the president's men, for the Senate has usually been elected by the lower house from a list of candidates proposed by the president, while the representatives would hardly dare defy the man who controlled the army (which presided over such elections) and could dissolve the legislature. By most of the constitutions the president proposed to the legislature all laws except those concerning taxation; even here, since he directed the receipt and issue of public moneys, he was not really limited. Over foreign affairs the executive had effective control by 643 [646] [646]

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priations of supplies to the branches of government; the Senate did not initiate legislation. In so far as the Senate checked the president, this check consisted in the body's being in permanent session. A vacation might be voted, but even during this period a resident committee was in the capital, so that attention to presidential actions might always be called by a senator's speeches; and the Senate could reconvene suddenly at will. 646

The Chamber of Representatives, composed of men of twenty-five and over, was chosen every five years by the "electoral colleges" of the communes—men elected by the leading citizens of the commune. No law is effective "whose draft has not been proposed by the executive, discussed and adopted by the representatives, and decreed by the Senate." It might seem that the phrase, "discussed and adopted by the representatives," would give much power to a Chamber in office for five years; actually the Chamber has rarely proved obstinate, and for good reason. At the expiration of the term of the legislators, the president convokes the communal assemblies to choose new deputies or to reëlect old ones; the army "keeps order" at the election, the Electoral College is hand-picked, and so the president's men have generally been chosen. Their pay has been two hundred dollars a month during the sitting, and a dollar a league for traveling expenses. [666] [701]

Pétion's constitution of 1816 evolved a masterpiece of deceptive generosity in stating that there should be "universal suffrage—except for women, criminals, idiots, and menials—by ballot." Although the group of criminals and idiots might be small, women were more than half the population, and "menials" was interpreted to mean not only house servants but also peasants; in other words, there was "universal suffrage" of about three per cent of the population at the outside. The élite and the army were the only potential voters. Since the elections were held under the watchful eye of the soldiers, and the ballots counted by presidential appointees, there was often extraordinary unity of public opinion. 641 [666]

The judicial branch of the national government, as distinct from the juge de paix of the commune and the courts in the important towns, existed in part only on paper. There was generally a provision in the constitution, for example, for a High Court of Justice, which should have jurisdiction in all charges preferred by the legislative bodies against their own members, against the president of the re- 692

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674 Soldiers, then, had no great difficulty policing town and country-
369 side, for there was little more crime in the towns than in rural regions. A person arrested would be haled before the nearest juge de
696 paix who would, if necessary, sentence him to jail—which meant
697 sending him to one of the larger towns. This was rather a severe penalty, for the jails were filthy; moreover, only about ten cents a week was ordinarily allotted to each prisoner for food with the result that if a prisoner's family did not supply him, he was likely to be near starvation. Extra work was required for extra fare. Haiti was probably no worse off in respect to its jails than most European and American countries at the time, for this was before the era of prison reform. Inmates of jails were likely to be only petty thieves.

697 During certain régimes the presidents or their generals managed to have numbers of convicts sentenced to hard work, in order to have forced labor on their private estates or projects dear to them. Under any administration there were likely to be a few convicts who performed repair work on streets and roads. It was the usual practice to chain or rope them together by pairs, three yards apart; accompanied by soldiers with loaded muskets, the convicts labored from daylight to sunset, with an hour and a half for a meal at noon. The government pretended to provide for them, but in order to save expense two of the criminals accompanied by two soldiers with fixed bayonets were sent about the neighborhood to beg for the group. The result was that the wretches went ill fed and half naked. They slept in jail on beds which were little more than boards.

701 The final and most persistent branch of government has been the
175 army.[11] Owing to the overmilitarization of Haiti, generals were perennially participating in the civil government—or engaged in overthrowing it. It was to be expected that following the revolution the new independent state formed in 1804 should have a military cast. Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, Geffrard, Boyer, Cangé, Yayou, Magloire Ambroise, Férou, François, Capoix, Rigaud—these were the great generals and the only important statesmen. It was as if in America not only Washington had been a military leader, but also Adams, Jefferson, Franklin, Jay, Hamilton, Madison, Pinckney,

[647] 11. In most governments there has been a body which, although connected with the legislature, had functions pertaining to the law. This was the Chamber of Accounts, a body of five men who examined into and reported to the president upon every branch of expenditure and collection of revenues. It might recommend to him certain financial reforms or improvements, but had no power to enforce its suggestions.

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Patrick Henry, Randolph, and Samuel Adams as well. Madiou estimates that there were 52,500 men in the army in 1804, when Haiti's population was less than 400,000.[12] 175 701

Fear of the return of the French kept the army large, and the administration of agricultural affairs under both Dessalines and Christophe was in charge of it. The construction of a fortress in every district put laborers under the direct influence of the military.[13] In addition to the corvée, or forced labor, required to construct these fortifications, the workers of the nation in the time of Dessalines also had to clear the hillsides and the ravines connecting valleys, and plant them with bananas, yams, plantains, and other provisions to supply the garrisons which manned the forts. 175 712 466 [705]

The Emperor left his army to feed and clothe itself. Occasional rations were given as a part of wages, but they were irregularly distributed. In the South particularly the troops began to murmur and desert, stirred up by their mulatto officers who were themselves no better rewarded, and who were already beginning their plot to overthrow the Emperor. The accusation was made that the money which should have gone to the army was being used on Dessalines' mistresses. The soldiers indulged themselves in that most damaging of Haitian weapons, the witty song, full of double meanings but deadly in its thrust at public personages; by these symbolic songs the fall of Dessalines was not only predicted but actually prepared. 175 705 701

Christophe kept a military state, but he had learned many lessons from watching affairs under Dessalines. Realizing that he could not trust the preservation of his régime to the fickleness of an army which had seen his rise to power and had already deserted its first commander in chief, knowing too that there was treason even among his own guards, he made a contract with a company of foreign merchants for the transportation of twenty thousand blacks from Africa. These were to make up a military force independent of the Haitians, 175 643 701 625

12. *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 122.

13. Each general was commanded by Dessalines to build a fort on one of the mountains in his district. The design seems to have been left to the general. A few of the fortifications were truly impressive. Christophe built La Ferrière near Milot in the North; Pétion the fortress of Jean-Jacques at Grand Fond, four leagues from Port-au-Prince; Capoix called his Les Trois Pavillons, in the range of mountains back of Port-de-Paix; Cangé and Yayou together built Campan near Léogane; Magloire Ambroise constructed a fortress near Cap Rouge and called it by that name; Geffrard built Pharon near Les Cayes; Pérou built Madrane near Jérémie; François began but did not finish Le Bonnet Carré near Aquin. [712]

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643 and being the personal property of the monarch and recipients of his
701 royal favor, were to constitute the perpetual support of his throne.
625 Only four thousand of these compulsory immigrants came, but
625 Christophe made them into very effective companies of police, whom he named the Royal Dahomets from the country of their origin. They performed the duties of a gendarmerie in all the districts of the North, drove the cultivators to their labors, watched over property and the security of the proprietors, and maintained industry and a strict subordination among all ranks of people in the kingdom.

175 Christophe's regular troops were well clothed and armed. They
701 were kept under stern discipline, no mercy or relaxation being
[703] shown them; delinquency on their part brought flagellation or a military execution. The troops received only a nominal stipend, and each soldier was required to gain his subsistence by cultivating a few acres of ground allotted to him out of the national domain. The usual quarter of this income had, of course, to be turned over as a tax to the state. Although the King's power was maintained by soldiers, he never coddled them. "The soldiers of the army as well as the laborers of the plantations lived in perpetual dread of the rod of authority," wrote Brown.[14] They seem to have developed a tradition of some special fetish power possessed by Christophe, a sort of *mana*, to use anthropological terminology. Even princes and dukes were chastised by the King's orders, and then made to do menial work by way of further punishment.

Conditions in the republic of Pétion were similar and yet different —similar in that soldiers formed the support of the government, different in that Pétion did not rule by fear. Every individual man between 16 and 60, a few cultivators excepted, was required by law to be a soldier, either in the *corps solde* (regular troops of the line), or in the *corps non solde* (national guard). The former, both under Pétion and in the early days of Boyer, had about 40,000 men distributed in strong detachments in towns and communes all over the
[914] country. Their costume, instead of being neat, uniform, and daily inspected as with Christophe's army, was ragged and mismated; they managed according to popular parlance "to find linen on every
[465] hedge." They were paid from fifty cents to a dollar a month, ac-
[541] cording to the existing solvency or exigency of the state. Each week
[512] end a parade and review was held, and then a small fatigue party was taken to do actual duty, the others being dismissed until the next

14. Op. cit., II, 209.

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175 701 [512] Saturday to use their time cultivating the soil, pursuing some mechanical craft, or acting as day laborers.

697 703 175 It must be once more emphasized that the civil was everywhere subservient to the military power. The administration of justice in tribunals was carried out only at the pleasure of the army chiefs. No person would have dared bring suit against a high officer; the only efficacious way of obtaining justice against petty offenders was through summary decision and corporal chastisement by the commanding officer.

701 625 175 By the close of Boyer's rule, during which he had kept the army up to its full numbers while pursuing a policy of economy, the outward appearance of the troops was almost ludicrous. They appeared at review wearing generally what pleased them or what they could scrape together, for they had to supply their own clothing and arms. The only effectual employment of the soldiery was as armed police, for Haiti never had to fight external powers. The soldiers drummed and fifed, mustered on parade and went through the formations, but otherwise merely stood (or sat) sentry at the doors of public offices, hunted up at the command of the magistrates *les mauvais sujets*, guarded prisons and prisoners on chain-gang duty, loitered at barriers, collected tolls, and examined permits.

175 701 [664] [703] A large army, practically idle, could easily be seduced into the support of revolutionary movements. Principles of discipline and loyalty current in European armies of the day were nonexistent in nineteenth-century Haiti. The numbers in the army varied from twenty to forty or fifty thousand. A strange estimate was made for the year 1867: 6,500 general officers and staff; 7,000 regimental officers; and only 6,500 soldiers.[15] It was said that "*tout Haïtien qui n'était pas général de division était au moins soldat.*" The higher grades became rewards for political service; the lower ranks had to be filled up by recruiting parties—when these were abroad, all men who did not desire a period of enforced leisure away from home remained in hiding.

While the army was not alone responsible for the tragedies of insurrection and mismanagement which consistently befell the country, it was never uninvolved in these misfortunes. Only the [648] radical reforms undertaken by the American Occupation saved modern Haiti from continued military domination.

15. Sir Spenser St. John, *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, p. 310.

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quarantine: "Haiti for the Haitians." At first the prohibition on white ownership of land and financial investment in the country was attributable to a fear of reënslavement; then to a fear that financial commitments (which no Haitian really understood) would somehow lead to political subjection; and always the feeling of pride, combined with a desperate need of self-justification, made the Haitians want to keep their country entirely under control of their own people. It is, of course, possible that if white people had been allowed free access to the country, they might have destroyed the "Black Republic"; excluding white men altogether, however, seriously curtailed economic activity.

2. Overmilitarization. The army, numerous out of all proportion to the population, took the ablest men out of production, drained the treasury, and was a constant source of revolutionary activity.

3. Poor methods of agriculture. Critics often complained that Haiti ought to return to the system of large estates and forced labor; it apparently occurred to no one to suggest that education of the peasants might have made the land productive once more, by teaching the people new methods. Dividing up the land was an inevitable necessity unless every ruler were as willing as Christophe to be a dictator and as capable; but to keep the peasants in ignorance was not a necessity. Peasant landowners in Europe frequently tend their acres with skill, while in Haiti, with neither experience nor instruction in methods of tillage on small farms, the people developed steadily more destructive ways of farming.

4. Inefficient marketing. Assuming Haiti's dependence upon the staple crop of coffee and the handling of this crop by foreign merchants, every government seemed intent upon putting obstacles in the path of efficient marketing procedure.[15] The white trader could deal only with Haitians (who were ignorant in matters of international trade); although the foreigner had to pay a huge license fee in order to deal at all in Haitian products, he got no security in return, for he might not own land or obtain a lien on the real property of a citizen.[16] Banking and exchange facilities were wholly lacking.

15. In 1833 Boyer thought to "encourage" Haitians to commercial effort by gradually expelling foreign traders, refusing to grant them any new licenses to trade. His scheme failed, for the élite were not interested. Indeed, the actual effect of his plan was to disrupt the steady flow of exports and increase discontent with Boyer on the part of the élite plantation owners whose small profits were momentarily interrupted.

16. See James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 374 ff.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

443 171 178 case certain aspects of the historical development of Haiti have doubtless tended to reinforce African custom. Reference has been made to the fact that the great proportion of traders are women, a truism in Africa as in Haiti, where by general rule men are the producers and women the distributors of goods. In Haiti, however, the fact that for many decades men [102] were likely to be arbitrarily impressed into military service by local chieftains when they came to town — particularly in Mirebalais, which had always been one of the centers of Caco activity — discouraged them from attending the markets. Thus African usage has here been reinforced by the historical fact of Haitian political instability. The fact that the proceeds 443 434 562 178 171 from trading belong to the woman who does the trading, and that in consequence women are encountered who, though married, command independent means and exercise full control over their resources, is a carry-over of African tradition and, as in Africa, this gives to women a position in the economic world quite foreign to conventional European practice.

59 611 178 The form of the family as found in Mirebalais demonstrates that the African social grouping which comprises all those descended on one side of the family has largely disappeared there, though it is possible that at least the vestiges of it may [171] have survived in other regions of Haiti. Yet in West Africa, though descent is legally counted on but one side of the family, psychological adherence to the families of both parents is everywhere important. Therefore it is logical to assume [177] that this concept, reinforced by the pattern of dual descent and double familial affiliation of the French, has been retained in Haiti to the neglect of the aboriginal larger groupings, where, as has been seen, not only is relationship counted on both sides of the family, but, more significantly, the right to reprimand and punish is held and exerted by elders in both the maternal and the paternal lines. On the other hand, it is apparent that the feeling for larger relationship groups has not been entirely lost, particularly in the paternal line, when

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175 business and personal ties with North Americans and other foreign
643 groups. Among the families of these leaders are Swiss, German, and
66 French nationals, and some Syrians and Lebanese who hold United
795 States citizenship. The business community had played a part in the downfall of the Magloire regime, and business strikes were a typical political instrument for putting pressure on presidential incumbents. In addition, the clergy—particularly the Catholic clergy—exerted political influence. Duvalier, while well aware of this, also attended to the importance of vodoun* in Haiti, and to the influence wielded by its cult leaders, particularly in the countryside and among the urban poor. Finally, the President understood the strength of groups such as the university students, the small but politically aware labor unions, and certain professional associations, whose political strength could be felt particularly in times of crisis. The Duvalier regime has displayed intelligence as well as ruthlessness in dealing with these diverse centers of political strength and potential opposition.

175 The official request for a United States Marine Corps mission to
648 "train" the Haitian Army was a brilliant political move by Duvalier,
701 apparently designed to serve several objectives simultaneously. It is entirely correct that the renewed presence of the Marines in Haiti
● 702 created considerable rancor in some circles, but it also strengthened
66 Duvalier's hand in his dealings with all sources of internal opposition. To some extent it apparently reassured the business community; and it turned out to have reduced, rather than to have increased, the maneuverability of the United States in developing a "corrective" or "restraining" policy toward the Duvalier regime. Perhaps most important, it helped Duvalier in his plan to build a praetorian guard to counterbalance the power of the army itself.

625 The *tonton macoute*—a Creole epithet for the bogeyman—is an extremely interesting variation on the security police theme. Its members wear no official uniform (though blue denim pants and felt hats
[701] are affected). Members of the "TTM" carry out acts of terrorism against groups and individuals and have seriously weakened the po-
[652] licing function and prestige of the regular army. Some calculations put the operating costs of the TTM as high as one third of the governmental budget. Though small groups of the TTM are distributed

* Or, as it is more commonly called, "voodoo." Creole words employed in this introduction are transcribed in Laubach orthography (see Hall, 1953). It was not possible to extend this transcription to the original Leyburn text, where a "Gallic" orthography is followed.

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114 461 462 as it is cursed by the present military despotism, the utmost that the women of Haiti can do is to keep their country just above the waters of bankruptcy and their households from complete despair.[9]

701 175 Since 1910 the military has been reformed, and the women are not mulcted by soldiers and officers; Sir Harry's prophecy regarding the material benefits of removing the curse of military despotism was overly optimistic.

441 443 175 Rounding out the economic life of the peasant is the market, which provides an outlet for whatever surplus is produced, a source of needed supplies and a modicum of money, as well as an almost imperative diversion for hard-working women. The origin of Haitian markets may have been either French or West African, for both regions had them. They were certainly in existence by 1803 in Saint-Domingue, for Madiou speaks of the trade of the plainsmen of the Cul-de-Sac with the holders of what then was called Port Républicain (now Port-au-Prince), adding: "Each Sunday at Croix-des-Bouquets a market was held which brought together more than 4,000 cultivators, male and female, with the permission of the overseers or proprietors."[10] That so large a number came to the market is an indication of the social as well as the economic nature of this institution. Similarly, in the North in 1803, "Rochambeau, now master at the Cape, set about attending to the market established at Petit-Anse in July. After having suppressed all the markets which existed around the Cape, he opened a single and general one, 13th August, at Petit-Anse, one league from the city." The French general was making use of a familiar economic device to carry forward the economic life of the colony during the trying period of the wars.

175 441 462 466 702 In independent Haiti it was an almost immediate development that the women generally should do the marketing, the men being either required to work on the land or busy at military duty. It came to be accepted quite simply that going to market was a woman's work. From 1843 on through most of the century there was an additional reason why peasant men would not go to the market towns: recruits were needed, both for the army and whatever revolutionary coup might be brewing; a man who did not relish fighting did better to stay out of sight in the hills. In fact, this has even been called the chief

9. *The Negro in the New World*, pp. 196–197.
10. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 24, 34.

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reason for which women assumed a larger part of the agricultural work than in the early days of the century: to keep their husbands indoors during the hours of daylight.

Haitian markets seemed to fascinate foreign visitors a hundred years ago as they do today. One Englishman, describing the markets at Cap-Haïtien and Gonaïves, said that riding one morning to market in the latter small town he passed 465 persons and all sorts of animals. "The women as usual were decently dressed; and the men were more respectable than any we had seen on our route: they were evidently small cultivators who live on their own freeholds. . . . All were cheerful and happy."[11]

Ever since force was withdrawn from the economic life of the Haitians—that is, since 1820—a steady round of criticism has been leveled at the "laziness" of the average male. Much of this can be discounted as coming from unsympathetic white foreigners who visited Haiti to find proof of Negro inferiority; some of it again is not significant, since it is the product of élite essayists who cherished the prepossession that the black was born to menial labor, and that if he did not work he had small reason for existence. The fact remains that not even friendly authors have been able to refrain from comment upon the inertia of the Haitian man, whether of the 1830's or, indeed, the present day. It is worth selecting half a dozen of the earlier criticisms, ranging from 1826 to 1860—two by Haitians, two by Englishmen, and two by Americans. Impressionistic, they nevertheless establish a basis from which to gauge the accuracy or inaccuracy of the charge.

In 1826, Placide Justin, drawing most of his material from the notes of the British agent in the Antilles, wrote: "The Haitian man is characterized by an almost unbelievable inertia. He is practically without ambition in political as well as in private life. No one seems to worry about tomorrow."[12] Two years later the Englishman, James Franklin, compared the régimes of Christophe in the North and of Pétion and Boyer in the South; with the former he was entirely sympathetic, but in 1828

the state of ignorance prevailing among the people in the mountains and the interior parts is almost inconceivable. It appears as if the work of civilization had not commenced, and that the people had not taken one

11. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 25, 26.
12. *Histoire politique et statistique de l'île d'Haïti*, p. 536.

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175 such an example of rigor might spread. The moral element of the
643 population had long looked askance at his libertinage; his first act
661 upon entering a town during a visit of state was regularly to have his aides select for him the most attractive females in the vicinity, with whom he would spend more time than at the business of governing.
● [703] Not even his army was sorrowful over his death. He had let his loyal troops go for months without pay, and then, reviewing a group of them one day, taunted and railed at them for their ragged uniforms. "You look as naked as a bunch of old bottles!" he cried.

Dessalines had restored order to his country and had founded a state. Both achievements rested upon a display of force which inspired cringing fear and denied normal human aspirations. His entire social and economic order was based upon the subservience of the many to the few.

2. *Christophe* (*1807–1820*)

175 Until 1807 all Haitians had the same political background—the French colonial régime, revolution, the governorship of Toussaint,
178 and the stern rule of Dessalines. Now the common path forked. Two avenues were opened up during the next dozen years, one by Christophe, the other by his Southern and mulatto rival, Pétion. The former was the road of discipline, hard work, and feudal control; the latter was one of persuasion, *laissez faire*, and small properties. Haiti ultimately chose the second.

175 The logical successor to Dessalines was his powerful Negro hench-
643 man, Christophe.[8] This black general felt so certain of his leadership that he did not even bother to attend the *Assemblée Constituante*
642 which was to choose the new head of state. The mulattoes, however, had agreed among themselves that they had had enough of rule by
662 ignorant ex-slaves. They consequently performed the very skillful manoeuvre of preparing a constitution which should effectively shear a new president of dictatorial power; this done, they dutifully elected Christophe to the presidential office. The wrathful general peremptorily declined to rule by virtue of so anaemic a document, and led his army southward to demand proper respect for his august

8. The name Christophe was taken from the English Caribbean island of St. Christopher, on which this black slave was born. Later in life he took as his first name Henry, spelling it in the English fashion rather than the French, as an indication of his wholehearted admiration of English people and English ways.

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175 The result was entirely different from Boyer's expectations. As a
114 French critic graphically puts it, the Haitians
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> who had never had more than a borrowed energy—that inspired by fear of French invasion—when they saw themselves freed, by a solemn treaty, from all attack on their coasts, seemed to allow their arms to drop relaxed at their sides, saying, *Let's take a rest.* The soldier who up till now had squeezed his body into a uniform and had subjected himself to European discipline, shouldering his arms, staring straight ahead as if seeing nothing, now began to leave unbuttoned the uniform which choked him, dragged a mattress into his sentry-box so that he might sleep through his watch, and let his cross slip to the earth never to pick it up again.[44]

175 In short, the Haitian army as a disciplined force ceased to exist, and
701 with it all authority of its officers. Boyer had counted upon the
703 army to enforce the provisions of the Code Rural, but now a soldier's
671 life was a paid sinecure. By gaining political security Haiti had in-
433 advertently lost its last chance of economic prosperity through a system of forced labor.

175 Wherever the Code was put into partial operation, revenue from
423 plantations continued to decline. The price of real estate dropped
433 proportionately. It was a simple matter for workmen who had
435 signed contracts to avoid carrying out their stipulations, and just as
466 simple to evade the law requiring fifteen acres' minimum for a single holding. Practically every Haitian wanted to own a bit of land; once he had acquired his bit, however small, he had (or so he felt) earned an exemption from directed labor.

175 Only on estates near the few big towns, where government
671 officials were concentrated, was there much pretense of trying to
625 enforce the Code. Sentries at the gates of Port-au-Prince were
661 authorized to confiscate plantains, yams, or fruit brought by any worker who, in contravention of the Code, had strayed to market on a forbidden day, but sentries soon acquired the habit of not seeing countryfolk who passed the gates. Reports kept cropping up that rural policemen were robbing poor cultivators of their coffee under pretense of protecting them from the penalties for breach of the law; this suggests that the Code was used rather for graft than for the stimulation of agriculture.

175 By and large, however, the Code was merely ignored. Agents
671 could not be found who were willing to stand in any community
625 44. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, *Saint-Domingue*, II, 181.
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643 and being the personal property of the monarch and recipients of his
701 royal favor, were to constitute the perpetual support of his throne.
625 Only four thousand of these compulsory immigrants came, but
625 Christophe made them into very effective companies of police, whom he named the Royal Dahomets from the country of their origin. They performed the duties of a gendarmerie in all the districts of the North, drove the cultivators to their labors, watched over property and the security of the proprietors, and maintained industry and a strict subordination among all ranks of people in the kingdom.

175 Christophe's regular troops were well clothed and armed. They
701 were kept under stern discipline, no mercy or relaxation being
[703] shown them; delinquency on their part brought flagellation or a military execution. The troops received only a nominal stipend, and each soldier was required to gain his subsistence by cultivating a few acres of ground allotted to him out of the national domain. The usual quarter of this income had, of course, to be turned over as a tax to the state. Although the King's power was maintained by soldiers, he never coddled them. "The soldiers of the army as well as the laborers of the plantations lived in perpetual dread of the rod of authority," wrote Brown.[14] They seem to have developed a tradition of some special fetish power possessed by Christophe, a sort of *mana*, to use anthropological terminology. Even princes and dukes were chastised by the King's orders, and then made to do menial work by way of further punishment.

Conditions in the republic of Pétion were similar and yet different —similar in that soldiers formed the support of the government, different in that Pétion did not rule by fear. Every individual man between 16 and 60, a few cultivators excepted, was required by law to be a soldier, either in the *corps solde* (regular troops of the line), or in the *corps non solde* (national guard). The former, both under Pétion and in the early days of Boyer, had about 40,000 men distributed in strong detachments in towns and communes all over the
[914] country. Their costume, instead of being neat, uniform, and daily inspected as with Christophe's army, was ragged and mismated; they
[465] managed according to popular parlance "to find linen on every hedge." They were paid from fifty cents to a dollar a month, ac-
[541] cording to the existing solvency or exigency of the state. Each week
[512] end a parade and review was held, and then a small fatigue party was taken to do actual duty, the others being dismissed until the next

14. *Op. cit.*, II, 209.

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175 701 [512] Saturday to use their time cultivating the soil, pursuing some mechanical craft, or acting as day laborers.

692 703 175 It must be once more emphasized that the civil was everywhere subservient to the military power. The administration of justice in tribunals was carried out only at the pleasure of the army chiefs. No person would have dared bring suit against a high officer; the only efficacious way of obtaining justice against petty offenders was through summary decision and corporal chastisement by the commanding officer.

701 625 175 By the close of Boyer's rule, during which he had kept the army up to its full numbers while pursuing a policy of economy, the outward appearance of the troops was almost ludicrous. They appeared at review wearing generally what pleased them or what they could scrape together, for they had to supply their own clothing and arms. The only effectual employment of the soldiery was as armed police, for Haiti never had to fight external powers. The soldiers drummed and fifed, mustered on parade and went through the formations, but otherwise merely stood (or sat) sentry at the doors of public offices, hunted up at the command of the magistrates *les mauvais sujets,* guarded prisons and prisoners on chain-gang duty, loitered at barriers, collected tolls, and examined permits.

175 701 [669] [703] A large army, practically idle, could easily be seduced into the support of revolutionary movements. Principles of discipline and loyalty current in European armies of the day were nonexistent in nineteenth-century Haiti. The numbers in the army varied from twenty to forty or fifty thousand. A strange estimate was made for the year 1867: 6,500 general officers and staff; 7,000 regimental officers; and only 6,500 soldiers.[15] It was said that "*tout Haïtien qui n'était pas général de division était au moins soldat.*" The higher grades became rewards for political service; the lower ranks had to be filled up by recruiting parties—when these were abroad, all men who did not desire a period of enforced leisure away from home remained in hiding.

While the army was not alone responsible for the tragedies of insurrection and mismanagement which consistently befell the country, it was never uninvolved in these misfortunes. Only the [648] radical reforms undertaken by the American Occupation saved modern Haiti from continued military domination.

15. Sir Spenser St. John, *Hayti, or the Black Republic,* p. 310.

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712 the battlements far off across the tortuous mass of mountains and
[713] green valleys, admire the sheer strength of will which made His Majesty's subjects bear four hundred cannon up the steep and rocky path—not to mention thousands of cannon balls now rusting away after a century of disuse, or the powder and shot which once filled
[173] the magazines. It is said that five thousand soldiers could be housed in the fortress at once. If this is hyperbole, one hardly dare challenge
[703] it, for the whole Citadel belittles the individual man. It is likewise said that Christophe once made a battalion of soldiers march off the cliff to their death merely to demonstrate his absolute control over
[766] them. Such stories grow up around His Black Majesty. He lies entombed in his useless but still superb fortress—and lives in the memory of the Northerners, one of whom said proudly: "We of the North have a great heritage, and you will find that we are all dominated by *une psychologie citadelienne*."

Dungeons, secret passages, royal apartments, separate rooms for each of the old Dutch, Spanish, French, and English cannon, some of them dating back to the seventeenth century—all the paraphernalia of the storybook fortress is present. From a bastion one gazes, as from an alp, for miles in any direction, and feels that La Ferrière is certainly one of the most impressive, and one of the most futile, edifices in the world. If the silent cannon had ever been fired, their balls would have rumbled harmlessly down the mountainside. The suspicion grows that Christophe achieved his architectural miracle not primarily as a defense against the French, but to make his subjects proud of what a nation of despised ex-slaves could accomplish.

344 Five miles away, at the foot of the mountain, is the village of
644 Milot, with the ruins of the palace of Sans Souci. Of yellow stone, it spreads out spaciously like a French château. Its rooms must have been magnificent. The palace is so situated that one may look out across the northern plains to the sea, or up the valleys to mountain peaks. In Sans Souci Christophe shot himself in 1820 when he knew that only *souci* would remain to him if he lived.

489 Transportation from one part of the country to another is far from
[496] easy. There are no railroads—unless one counts the short line running north a few miles from Port-au-Prince to nowhere in particular, and the equally short line coming west into Cap-Haïtien from the fields
[491] of the northern plain. Roads built by the American Marines make automobile travel between the main towns possible, if one does not

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Patrick Henry, Randolph, and Samuel Adams as well. Madiou estimates that there were 52,500 men in the army in 1804, when Haiti's population was less than 400,000.[12]

Fear of the return of the French kept the army large, and the administration of agricultural affairs under both Dessalines and Christophe was in charge of it. The construction of a fortress in every district put laborers under the direct influence of the military.[13] In addition to the corvée, or forced labor, required to construct these fortifications, the workers of the nation in the time of Dessalines also had to clear the hillsides and the ravines connecting valleys, and plant them with bananas, yams, plantains, and other provisions to supply the garrisons which manned the forts.

The Emperor left his army to feed and clothe itself. Occasional rations were given as a part of wages, but they were irregularly distributed. In the South particularly the troops began to murmur and desert, stirred up by their mulatto officers who were themselves no better rewarded, and who were already beginning their plot to overthrow the Emperor. The accusation was made that the money which should have gone to the army was being used on Dessalines' mistresses. The soldiers indulged themselves in that most damaging of Haitian weapons, the witty song, full of double meanings but deadly in its thrust at public personages; by these symbolic songs the fall of Dessalines was not only predicted but actually prepared.

Christophe kept a military state, but he had learned many lessons from watching affairs under Dessalines. Realizing that he could not trust the preservation of his régime to the fickleness of an army which had seen his rise to power and had already deserted its first commander in chief, knowing too that there was treason even among his own guards, he made a contract with a company of foreign merchants for the transportation of twenty thousand blacks from Africa. These were to make up a military force independent of the Haitians,

12. *Histoire d'Haiti*, III, 122.

13. Each general was commanded by Dessalines to build a fort on one of the mountains in his district. The design seems to have been left to the general. A few of the fortifications were truly impressive. Christophe built La Ferrière near Milot in the North; Pétion the fortress of Jean-Jacques at Grand Fond, four leagues from Port-au-Prince; Capoix called his Les Trois Pavillons, in the range of mountains back of Port-de-Paix; Cangé and Ysyou together built Campan near Léogane; Magloire Ambroise constructed a fortress near Cap Rouge and called it by that name; Geffrard built Platon near Les Cayes; Férou built Mafranc near Jérémie; François began but did not finish Le Bonnet Carré near Aquin.

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to the Americans who ruled Haiti through his office. This constitution once more increased the power of the president. 642 [641]

1932. Vincent's constitution, professing to be quite different from the two in effect during the Occupation, but actually closely resembling the 1927 revision with its concentration of power in executive hands. In 1935 an important amendment was added, making it possible for the president to be reëlected. [643]

Despite this welter of constitutions, the essential framework of Haitian government has consisted, except for brief interruptions, of a president, a legislature, and courts. The term of the presidency has varied from four to seven years (in the early days, for life) with the privilege of reëlection being now forbidden, now granted. Two presidents who tried to extend their terms, Salnave and Salomon, were deposed by revolutions for their temerity. Their distinction of being among the few to serve out the allotted term was thus marred by an ignominious end. 642 643

Regularly the president was obligated to "maintain internal peace" —a requirement few heads of state have been able to carry out, since internal peace has been most elusive. To aid him in his task he has been given wide powers: he commands the army (always large until 1915; every president except one between 1804 and 1915 was a general) and the navy (never more than a few ill-conditioned vessels, but these important in the general roadless condition of the country); most constitutions also gave him the right to issue necessary proclamations in order to deal with special crises. He "watches over" tribunals by means of appointed commissioners; by this arrangement he may obviously exert pressure for favorable judgments in cases which interest him. 643 [701] [706] [716] [792]

The one body which might conceivably check the president, namely, the legislature, has generally been composed of the president's men, for the Senate has usually been elected by the lower house from a list of candidates proposed by the president, while the representatives would hardly dare defy the man who controlled the army (which presided over such elections) and could dissolve the legislature. By most of the constitutions the president proposed to the legislature all laws except those concerning taxation; even here, since he directed the receipt and issue of public moneys, he was not really limited. Over foreign affairs the executive had effective control by 643 [646] [646]

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people: "If ever you refuse, or grumblingly accept, the laws which the genius guarding your destinies dictates to me for your happiness, you will merit the fate of ungrateful people. But perish that hideous idea!" There can be little doubt that he wished Haiti under his direction to become prosperous; but it is likewise clear that he was personally self-centred and inordinately grasping. 175 642 645

Each step Dessalines took to further his ambitions either for Haitian prosperity or for his own fortunes had its bearing upon the development of social classes in the country. Extermination of all remaining whites was one of the first tasks he set himself. On a promise of clemency he lured several hundred gullible French out of hiding, and butchered them in cold blood. His campaign of extirpation was methodical and thorough. To try to penetrate into the psychological background of this violence is to desert fact for speculation: it may have been a desire for revenge on the French, pure and simple; it may have been gloating sadism; he may have wished to warn France against any future attempts to regain possession of the country; or he may have wanted to notify his subjects of his intention to rule with severe discipline. Certainly this last aim was achieved, if any of his people did not already know, after two years of warfare, the extent of his ruthlessness. He ruled by fear and by threats, never by the cultivation of loyalties.

Apparently he was afraid that Napoleon would renew his efforts to subdue the former colony. To forestall such an attempt he ordered each of his governing subalterns to construct one great fort on the most prominent hill in their district—a scheme which led immediately to the institution of forced labor. He likewise devised a plan, not actually put into effect, for destroying all towns and plantations near the coast and moving the capital to an inland village; and so isolating Haitians from all contact with the outside world. 175 643 466 712 361

Turning to domestic policy, he faced a herculean task. The warfare of 1802–3 had left the country in chaos. Plantations and agricultural projects were almost totally ruined. All habits of steady industry had been lost. Dread of a possible new attack by the French made necessary a great army, and this in turn removed most able-bodied men from productive labor in the fields, while the construction of fortresses still further depleted the labor supply. The first census of free Haiti, in 1805 (probably not highly accurate), showed only 380,000 people, with the women outnumbering men by almost three to two. 175 643 433 701 464 712 175 162

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person. To his evident surprise he was met not by meek submission, but by the army of the mulatto Pétion. Christophe was not defeated; neither was he victorious. He was obliged to retire in high dudgeon to his loyal supporters in the North, where he proceeded to set up a state according to his own idea of what a state should be. 175 643 642 662

The Assembly thereupon outlawed Christophe on the ground of rebellion against constituted authority, electing in his stead their great favorite Pétion, whose power as president of the Republic was to be limited by the new constitution. For the next thirteen years, from 1807 to 1820, the tiny country with its 10,000 square miles was divided, Christophe ruling in the North and in the fertile valley of the Artibonite, and Pétion governing until his death in 1818 in the West and South, the main strongholds of the colored element.

Christophe was of the stuff that myths are made of. He was indisputably Haiti's most dynamic, relentlessly effective, and dramatic ruler of the nineteenth century. Like Toussaint and Dessalines, he was a black ex-slave, and like them he had won his spurs as a military leader during the revolution. He was an ardent patriot whose love for his country did not lead to retrogressive chauvinism. Whereas Dessalines through fear and hatred of the French had excluded all white men from Haiti, Christophe had the perspicacity to see that the country could benefit from the contribution of whites. Englishmen he especially welcomed. Like his predecessors Christophe drove his people—with a tyrant's lash, many thought—but only to increase the glory of Haiti. 175 643 663

Christophe had a vaulting imagination which brought glamour even to practical expedients. He built a colossal fortress on a high mountain in the North, partly for defense, but partly to make his contemned Negro people feel that they could achieve one of the architectural and engineering marvels of the age. His exquisite palace, Sans Souci, not only satisfied his own vanity as a ruler but also provided a focal point for the imagination and loyalty of his subjects. In 1811 he had himself crowned king, Henry I, amidst pomp and circumstance—and then created a royal court, partly to reward his leaders, partly to get the fees for patents of nobility, but primarily to bind all important men in the country to himself and to the Haitian state with unbreakable personal bonds. Dramatic in almost every particular of his life and reign, he ruled for thirteen years more through force of personality than by tyranny. Taxes were heavy [712] [644]

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policy of encouraging trade with his friends and prohibiting it with his enemies—both arbitrarily. The variation of Pétion was a sort of mercantilism, with set high tariffs.

What Dessalines planned was in terms of Western statecraft so weird that white onlookers felt they were restrained in calling Dessalines a transplanted African tribal chieftain. So passionately intense was the fury of that general against all whites that he took every precaution he could devise to prevent face-to-face dealings between his Haitians and foreigners. By deceit, treachery, and ingenious cruelty he conducted a massacre which deserves comparison with that of Saint Bartholomew: this effectively rid the country of white residents. Since for a time Haiti would have to depend for economic survival upon trade with foreigners, Dessalines next conceived a project whereby the whole population would be gathered in the centre of the island, in the most protected valleys and the gorges of the highest mountains. In these fastnesses the people would never see a white but would work on the land, producing sugar and coffee and cotton for export without ever leaving their local habitations. On the seacoast would be established certain "counters" over which a few incorruptible Haitians, chosen by the Emperor himself, would sell local products and buy the necessary imported goods. Impregnable fortresses were to guard access to the interior,[2] which would be reached by new roads from the seacoast "counters." Every seaport was to be destroyed as soon as new towns could be built in the back country. Already when his death intervened Dessalines had moved his capital from the Cape (that is, Cap-Haïtien, formerly Cap Français) to the inland village of Marchand (in the department of the Artibonite; now renamed Dessalines), and his next plan was to transfer Port-au-Prince eight leagues inland to the plantation Dérance, among the mountains.

Dessalines has been thought absurd, childish, barbaric. But there is something poignant, even tragic, in this fiery determination of the black chieftain, bitter over the cruelties and indignity to which his people had been subject for decades, to use this alien island as best he could and preserve his people at any cost from such another domination.

Despite his scheme for ultimate isolation of the people, Dessalines kept everyone steadily at work by the forced-labor system instituted

2. See p. 247 and note 13. under Toussaint.

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There are sections, particularly in the capital, in which shanties more resembling chicken coops than dwellings house whole families under leaky roofs of crude thatch. Privacy, cleanliness, sanitation, are not to be thought of. That the sun is warm in Haiti is a blessing, for cold would creep through the gaping walls. Where the shanty dwellers go in the rain, where they get their food, what relieves the dreary round of daily monotony the important people of Haiti do not know, nor do many of them seem to care. President Vincent undertook to clear away a section of the most abject slums in Port-au-Prince, erected in their place a series of two-room (likewise two-family) houses about a central square. Compared with the hovels they replaced the new houses are palatial; compared with houses Americans would consider adequate, they look more like unimaginative garages. With what rapidity an epidemic of serious nature might sweep the lower sections of the city, which are but one vast slum, is a thought too harrowing to entertain. 362

In the whole city there are hardly half a dozen buildings which would detain the lover of architecture. The president's palace is a gleaming white structure, somewhat resembling the White House in Washington. With its background of lofty mountains it makes an impressive picture, although it stands naked in the vast public square of the city. Young palm trees are now growing in the square, and may before many years provide for the palace the setting it deserves. Inside the palace one's chief impression is of emptiness. Other government buildings range from plain white edifices which fulfill their practical function without any suggestion of aesthetic graciousness, down through the inferior grades to wooden structures which one passes without a second glance. The cathedral, placed upon an eminence, is unattractive both in its exterior and in the glaring interior. Upon one of its finger towers at night gleams a light to guide ships into the harbor. The clubs and a few of the villas are pleasant to look at; the colleges of the lay brothers are impressively large, but bespeak the provincial town. 344 644 344 346 [349]

Indeed, one wanders up and down the country in search of man-made beauty and finds only two examples, both partially ruined, and both in the North: Christophe's magnificent citadel, La Ferrière, and the shattered shell of his charming palace, Sans Souci. 712 349

The citadel is breath-taking. Astride a great peak the huge edifice resembles the mighty beak of a ship about to soar off into the atmosphere. Inside one can wander through endless vaults, gaze from 712

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712 the battlements far off across the tortuous mass of mountains and
[713] green valleys, admire the sheer strength of will which made His Majesty's subjects bear four hundred cannon up the steep and rocky path—not to mention thousands of cannon balls now rusting away after a century of disuse, or the powder and shot which once filled
[173] the magazines. It is said that five thousand soldiers could be housed in the fortress at once. If this is hyperbole, one hardly dare challenge
[703] it, for the whole Citadel belittles the individual man. It is likewise said that Christophe once made a battalion of soldiers march off the cliff to their death merely to demonstrate his absolute control over
[766] them. Such stories grow up around His Black Majesty. He lies entombed in his useless but still superb fortress—and lives in the memory of the Northerners, one of whom said proudly: "We of the North have a great heritage, and you will find that we are all dominated by *une psychologie citadelienne*."

Dungeons, secret passages, royal apartments, separate rooms for each of the old Dutch, Spanish, French, and English cannon, some of them dating back to the seventeenth century—all the paraphernalia of the storybook fortress is present. From a bastion one gazes, as from an alp, for miles in any direction, and feels that La Ferrière is certainly one of the most impressive, and one of the most futile, edifices in the world. If the silent cannon had ever been fired, their balls would have rumbled harmlessly down the mountainside. The suspicion grows that Christophe achieved his architectural miracle not primarily as a defense against the French, but to make his subjects proud of what a nation of despised ex-slaves could accomplish.

344 Five miles away, at the foot of the mountain, is the village of
644 Milot, with the ruins of the palace of Sans Souci. Of yellow stone, it spreads out spaciously like a French château. Its rooms must have been magnificent. The palace is so situated that one may look out across the northern plains to the sea, or up the valleys to mountain peaks. In Sans Souci Christophe shot himself in 1820 when he knew that only *souci* would remain to him if he lived.

489 Transportation from one part of the country to another is far from
[496] easy. There are no railroads—unless one counts the short line running north a few miles from Port-au-Prince to nowhere in particular, and the equally short line coming west into Cap-Haïtien from the fields
[491] of the northern plain. Roads built by the American Marines make automobile travel between the main towns possible, if one does not

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643 and being the personal property of the monarch and recipients of his
701 royal favor, were to constitute the perpetual support of his throne.
625 Only four thousand of these compulsory immigrants came, but
625 Christophe made them into very effective companies of police, whom he named the Royal Dahomets from the country of their origin. They performed the duties of a gendarmerie in all the districts of the North, drove the cultivators to their labors, watched over property and the security of the proprietors, and maintained industry and a strict subordination among all ranks of people in the kingdom.

175 Christophe's regular troops were well clothed and armed. They
701 were kept under stern discipline, no mercy or relaxation being
[703] shown them; delinquency on their part brought flagellation or a military execution. The troops received only a nominal stipend, and each soldier was required to gain his subsistence by cultivating a few acres of ground allotted to him out of the national domain. The usual quarter of this income had, of course, to be turned over as a tax to the state. Although the King's power was maintained by soldiers, he never coddled them. "The soldiers of the army as well as the laborers of the plantations lived in perpetual dread of the rod of authority," wrote Brown.[14] They seem to have developed a tradition of some special fetish power possessed by Christophe, a sort of *mana*, to use anthropological terminology. Even princes and dukes were chastised by the King's orders, and then made to do menial work by way of further punishment.

Conditions in the republic of Pétion were similar and yet different —similar in that soldiers formed the support of the government, different in that Pétion did not rule by fear. Every individual man between 16 and 60, a few cultivators excepted, was required by law to be a soldier, either in the *corps solde* (regular troops of the line), or in the *corps non solde* (national guard). The former, both under Pétion and in the early days of Boyer, had about 40,000 men distributed in strong detachments in towns and communes all over the
[914] country. Their costume, instead of being neat, uniform, and daily inspected as with Christophe's army, was ragged and mismated; they
[465] managed according to popular parlance "to find linen on every hedge." They were paid from fifty cents to a dollar a month, ac-
[541] cording to the existing solvency or exigency of the state. Each week
[512] end a parade and review was held, and then a small fatigue party was taken to do actual duty, the others being dismissed until the next

14. *Op. cit.*, II, 209.

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 175

to the Americans who ruled Haiti through his office. This constitution once more increased the power of the president. 642 [641]

1932. Vincent's constitution, professing to be quite different from the two in effect during the Occupation, but actually closely resembling the 1927 revision with its concentration of power in executive hands. In 1935 an important amendment was added, making it possible for the president to be reëlected. [643]

Despite this welter of constitutions, the essential framework of Haitian government has consisted, except for brief interruptions, of a president, a legislature, and courts. The term of the presidency has varied from four to seven years (in the early days, for life) with the privilege of reëlection being now forbidden, now granted. Two presidents who tried to extend their terms, Salnave and Salomon, were deposed by revolutions for their temerity. Their distinction of being among the few to serve out the allotted term was thus marred by an ignominious end. 642 643

Regularly the president was obligated to "maintain internal peace" —a requirement few heads of state have been able to carry out, since internal peace has been most elusive. To aid him in his task he has been given wide powers: he commands the army (always large until 1915; every president except one between 1804 and 1915 was a general) and the navy (never more than a few ill-conditioned vessels, but these important in the general roadless condition of the country); most constitutions also gave him the right to issue necessary proclamations in order to deal with special crises. He "watches over" tribunals by means of appointed commissioners; by this arrangement he may obviously exert pressure for favorable judgments in cases which interest him. 643 [701] [706] [716] [792]

The one body which might conceivably check the president, namely, the legislature, has generally been composed of the president's men, for the Senate has usually been elected by the lower house from a list of candidates proposed by the president, while the representatives would hardly dare defy the man who controlled the army (which presided over such elections) and could dissolve the legislature. By most of the constitutions the president proposed to the legislature all laws except those concerning taxation; even here, since he directed the receipt and issue of public moneys, he was not really limited. Over foreign affairs the executive had effective control by 643 [646] [646]

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activities of outsiders; Haiti has experienced few such increments, even as a result of the United States occupation. Its citizens cannot readily migrate anywhere; its educational system cannot prepare its people adequately for the modern world; its civil service has proved neither stable nor reliable; its labor force has limited experience with the factory system; and even two decades of active North American intervention did nothing to remake the economic and political structure of the nation. In more recent years, some of the "development projects" foisted on the people of a sovereign Haiti by foreigners working with Haitian officials would not have been tolerated by the colonial representatives of any foreign power obligated to report its activities before the United Nations Trusteeship Council. In view of these things, one is tempted to claim that Haiti has suffered from all the disadvantages of political sovereignty while enjoying none of its advantages.

Unlike those colonial dependencies that were able, over time, to develop internal political ideologies through which to face the pressures imposed by the colonial powers, Haiti was tested by hardly any challenge but its own lack of development. In this sense only can it be said that the freedom Haiti had won in an incredible revolution against powerful enemies came to be a punishment. The struggle brought the Haitian people justified admiration in many quarters, but its price has been isolation and virtual abandonment.

It was the United States occupation that made a lie of Haitian sovereignty, and even of the invincibility of its people. The Haitian "bandits," variously estimated to have numbered from 2,000 to 6,000, who died in what is probably best described as a war of resistance against the North Americans, were barely able to maintain even a brief local conflict against several well-armed companies of United States Marines. Yet that occupation gave Haiti little in return for its denial of the claim of national sovereignty. The public works and reform programs instituted by the United States, designed to give the country roads, schools, hospitals, a disciplined army, a "legitimate" government, and a schooled civil service, hardly endured longer than the occupation itself, since nothing had been done to transform the social and economic base of the society. Within a decade of the North American withdrawal, the gleaming superstructure the occupation created had begun to decay. The major effect of North Amer-

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FOREWORD

THE United States, embarked upon a policy of good neighborliness toward the other countries of the Western Hemisphere, is beginning to improve its acquaintance with the republics to the south. Most of its efforts at present are directed toward an understanding of the large and important powers, such as Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina, which, because of their size and resources, are potentially our greatest allies—or, if we fail in our policies, our sources of greatest danger. There are, however, twenty republics to the south of us, many of them small. A truly good neighbor does not ignore near-by families who are lacking in wealth, even those who are known to differ among themselves.

Of the twenty Latin-American republics, the second smallest is Haiti. The United States was only twenty years old when the people of this little country (which, for all its diminutive size, had been France's wealthiest colony of the eighteenth century) fought their own war of independence, and in 1804 founded the second free state in the hemisphere. Haiti has many claims upon the attention of the United States: its war against France in 1802–3 was at least a contributing factor in Napoleon's willingness to sell Louisiana to this country; it was the first independent Negro state in the modern world; its foreign policy has long been intertwined with our own; finally, the nineteen-year American Occupation of the country has brought us into an even closer relationship with Haiti than independent factors could produce.

When the country was young there was a spate of books trying to answer the question whether a nation ruled by blacks could long endure. In more recent years, works on the Antillean republic have generally dealt with single phases of its life, as for example its political relations with the United States, or its "Voodoo" practices. There is, however, no connected story of the growth of its social institutions out of the backgrounds of slavery and French colonial life, or of the slow shaping of these institutions through the nineteenth century. It is this growth which the present volume undertakes to describe. Political history has been introduced only so far as necessary to provide the convenient pegs upon which most of us are accus-

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175 to Toussaint if Saint-Domingue had been merely a colony like
648 Martinique, and not the single centre from which measures for rebuilding the French colonial system could radiate. France was once
669 more taking over Louisiana from Spain; but before Bonaparte could effectively reach Louisiana to establish his New World empire, he must make sure of Saint-Domingue. The very real power of Toussaint had to be crushed, and through the whole of 1801 Napoleon was making preparations for the annihilation of the black governor."

175 The plans were as follows: to send his brother-in-law, Leclerc,
648 with a formidable French army to "succeed" Toussaint as governor;
721 to try to persuade the blacks that the new régime was entirely benevolent to their race, so that no armed resistance would be offered; if persuasion and diplomacy failed, to fight and conquer the Negroes, subduing them once more to slavery; and, above all, to capture Toussaint with all his black counselors and send them as prisoners to France. Napoleon undertook to prepare the way for Leclerc by writing personally to Toussaint: "Assist the Captain-General [Leclerc] with your counsels, your influence, and your talents. What can you desire?—the liberty of the blacks? You know that in all the countries where we have been, we have given it to the people who had it not." He repeated this assurance in his message a week later to the French legislature (November 22, 1801): "At Saint-Domingue and at Guadeloupe there are no more slaves. All are free there; all will remain free." Still further, the proclamation he drew up for Leclerc to publish upon his arrival, as a reassurance to the blacks, ran: "If you are told that these forces are destined to ravish your liberty, answer: The Republic has given us liberty, the Republic will not suffer it to be taken from us!"

Leclerc with his army arrived at Cap Français late in January, 1802. He hoped to be received at the capital as a friend, but Christophe, the black general in charge of the city, repulsed his advances. Leclerc was obliged to attack; on February 5 Christophe set fire to the city and withdrew to the neighboring hills. The war of independence had begun.

19. The part played by Toussaint for a brief moment in the history of the United States is full of significance. Certain historians are of the opinion that if Napoleon had been successful in the reconquest of Saint-Domingue he would have turned his attention to America rather than to Europe, for he had great colonial schemes. His failure in the colony, according to this theory, made him try to withdraw gracefully from the New World by selling Louisiana to the United States.

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175 master's good usage must re-attach them to his rule. When they shall have
648 felt by comparison the difference between a usurping and tyrannical yoke
727 [apparently he means such a yoke as Toussaint's] and that of the legitimate
567 proprietor interested in their preservation, then the moment will have arrived for making them return to their original condition, from which it was so disastrous to draw them.

175 The plan to reëstablish slavery, however, was never carried out,
648 nor was its scheduled sequel, the occupation of Louisiana. The French
727 soldiers in Saint-Domingue began to succumb to an invisible assailant —yellow fever. The first French army of 17,000 men had been largely consumed in the task of conquering Toussaint's armies; the second was now being swept away by disease. Leclerc's letters to Napoleon pleading for reinforcements soon became frantic in their despair. Fever was weakening the army at the very moment when rumors of impending reënslavement were strengthening the number of active antagonists to the French. The black generals who had deserted Toussaint for Leclerc now swung back again to the opposition. Then Leclerc himself fell ill of the fever. Apparently all-conquering in June, 1802, by November he was dead.

175 This was the turning point in Napoleon's whole American policy.
727 The war had ruined Saint-Domingue economically; it had destroyed
721 plantations, paralyzed labor, and reduced the population to barbarism. To resume the conquest would have cost France heavily; the
648 army dreaded service in a region where death was almost certain; the financial expense had been frightful: one year of war had consumed 50,000 men and several million dollars, yet at least as many men and as much money would still be needed before any return could be expected. Consequently, Napoleon decided to withdraw from his whole American experiment, saving face as far as possible. He appointed the brave but incompetent Rochambeau to succeed Leclerc, promised him reënforcements—and then broke the Peace of Amiens, so that France became embroiled in a European war. Affairs in Saint-Domingue (including the troops promised to Rochambeau) were conveniently forgotten after March, 1803; and the whole Louisiana territory was sold to the United States.

175 The end of French control in Saint-Domingue came shortly.
648 Rochambeau, as well as he could, waged desultory warfare, hanging, shooting, drowning, burning all the Negroes he could catch; hunting them with fifteen hundred bloodhounds bought in Jamaica for more

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175 beside other ex-slaves was too evident to avert ridicule, which
643 Dessalines quickly noted. Few opportunities escaped the Emperor,
563 therefore, of making the light-skinned Haitians quake in their boots.
661 He wrote to Pétion (August 24, 1804), leader of the colored people, that in his slaughter of white Frenchmen he had often been "unable" to distinguish between whites and light-colored Haitians. Pétion and his friends knew that Dessalines did not regret his inability to make the distinction.[7]

175 Possibly Dessalines was clear-sighted enough to realize that the old
563 distinctions of color, if allowed to continue in the new state as in-
643 dicative of social prestige, might cause endless strife within the nation. Possibly, on the other hand, he wished to make the lighter-skinned Haitians realize that he, a Negro, was more than their equal. Whatever his underlying motives, he was impatient with the struggle for prestige. The steps he took to eradicate distinctions based upon color were characterized by his usual blunt tactlessness. In 1805 he informed Pétion, the outstanding mulatto general, that a union of black and colored people was essential to the happiness of the Empire; he said he wanted the Haitian people to become *bronzed* by this union, so that there would be no longer any important difference of skin color. All this was preface to a proposal that Pétion, as the ablest of the mulattoes, should marry the Emperor's black daughter, Célimène. Pétion, refined, highly educated, and gently cynical, was considerably perturbed and frankly embarrassed by the suddenness of this radical suggestion. His reply, that he was not inclined to marry at all, offended Dessalines and made him suspect a slight, but he dismissed Pétion with the pointed suggestion that he "think the matter over." Pétion knew, as the Emperor did not, that one of his aides-de-camp, Chancy, was not only in love with Célimène but had already got her with child. It is entirely possible, too, that he was aware of the growing underground opposition to Dessalines and that, as the Emperor's star was beginning to decline, he did not wish

[721] 7. It must be said to the credit of the black masses that they did not relish the systematic slaughter of the whites which so pleased Dessalines. Negro cultivators frequently collected potential victims, hiding them and aiding their escape from the country. The repugnance of the masses for such massacre was so evident that their generals had at times to drive them at bayonet's point. "The blacks of the plain behaved very well," said an exile in a letter (June 1, 1804) written from Jamaica to Moreau de Saint-Méry. Madiou says that after the massacre of the whites some Haitian blacks abandoned their country and went to join former masters in a foreign land.

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000 their new status was definitely higher. Mild serfdom might be
175 thought of as the first intermediate step toward freedom. Democracy
565 was still far off, there being no real middle class upon which to build
566 it. Only the artisans of the towns and the ex-soldiers or the cultivators who had managed to lease small estates could be considered middle class. Christophe forced every dweller in villages or towns to have a manual skill. The only alternative was field work on a plantation.

The "aristocrats" of the kingdom were prevailingly black rather than colored. It was not to be expected that a vain man would soon forget the trick by which the mulattoes had frustrated him in his
175 expectation of becoming the ruler of all Haiti. To say that the intermittent civil war between Christophe's kingdom of the North and
669 Pétion's republic of the South was a struggle between blacks and
643 colored people would not do great violence to the essential truth.
563 Christophe's suspicion of gens de couleur was so well known that few were surprised at the high death rate of mulatto generals in the North. The murder of General Clervaux was definitely laid at Christophe's door.

The fact remains that among the nobility were men of all degrees of color. The King liked to say that he neither accepted nor yet took exception to the color of a man's epidermis—that in this matter he was *vert* (green), which is to say, neutral and indifferent. When he was angry his wrath fell indiscriminately upon the offender of whatever complexion. Similarly, when he found a light-skinned man who faithfully supervised a leased estate, thus proving his
175 loyalty, the man was rewarded and promoted. Nevertheless, an
643 underlying prejudice remained in his breast, bursting out occasionally
● 721 at crises, and having ultimately a serious effect upon the loyalty of many of his people. When some of his subjects, enticed by the easy-
563 going régime of the South, ran away to Pétion's republic, Christophe was angry enough to renew the war against Pétion (1811). The South won the encounter, thereby adding fuel to Christophe's rage.
[727] Three hundred prisoners he had captured he ordered tortured, and the angry King abused and insulted his own officers and executed several soldiers for having lost the battle. These actions caused more defections, renewed punishments, and a more abiding rancor. As one writer put it, the King "now regarded the mulattoes with a hatred so deep and fiendlike, that nothing would satisfy the direness of his

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vengeance but the utter extermination of that race."[12] He even ordered the execution of a mulatto woman in Gonaïves because she had prayed for the success of Pétion.

During the latter years of his reign his personal popularity waned somewhat, owing to his relentless insistence upon efficiency and to his increasing tendency to lose his temper. Defections to the South occurred almost daily. The cultivators, comparing their never-ceasing toil on Northern plantations with the reported liberty and leisure of life in the South, continually drifted away. So alluring was the paradise of ease (and poverty) of the neighboring realm that Christophe found it necessary to keep a cordon of soldiers along the borders of his kingdom to prevent desertions. His administration now embarked on actual persecution of colored people. Inflammatory pamphlets were spread abroad, designed to make the Negroes think that the mulattoes were planning to enslave them once again. Under this campaign of propaganda many light-skinned Northerners had to go into hiding.

Despite all discrimination, the important line was drawn between cultivators who formed nine tenths of the population, and aristocrats who, with the army, made up the remainder. The nobility, the directors of landed estates, and the generals directed the activities of other people, so that the colonial prejudice against manual labor was strengthened. Here lay the basis of a persistent Haitian attitude of mind: to work with one's hands is to show oneself a member of the masses; to direct others is the distinction of the upper class. Education, neglected under Dessalines altogether, was fostered by Christophe. He established a few schools, inviting as schoolmasters certain Englishmen familiar with the then popular methods of the Lancasterian system; but since the cultivators were busy on the plantations, only the children of aristocrats benefited by the limited educational system and the social distance between classes was increased.

A French commentator says that Christophe showed unusual insight in devising for his kingdom "the only organization of which an African society was capable," namely, a combination of military despotism with certain benevolent inclinations, and territorial feudalism based upon a nobility created by the King. Actually, it suited not so much the African background of the people, which lay

12. Dr. Jonathan Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo* (Philadelphia, 1837), II, 197.

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175 643 Suddenly, without warning, he reversed what had been mistaken for docile inactivity, and assumed complete personal command of the reins of office. By means of a well-organized body of secret police, [625] he inspired his own counselors with fear not only for their positions but for their lives. Although illiterate, Soulouque never signed a bill presented to him by his ministers until he was sure he knew its essential core. The hopeful "understudies" were forcibly awakened to the realization that they were hoist on their own petard.

175 643 563 669 The colored element was particularly apprehensive at Soulouque's amazing activity, for the President was clearly setting himself against their group, both in the cabinet and out. Determining clandestinely to get rid of their puppet before he became a Frankenstein's monster to destroy his creators, they fomented a new revolution. This, however, proved to be a strategic error of the first magnitude, for the President was already much stronger than they imagined. The insurrection was quashed with massacre and attendant frightfulness. In the aftermath, as Bouzon mordantly remarks, "the republic was calm—with all the tranquillity of a tomb!" By their ineptitude, the colored group had now made themselves completely insecure.

175 565 643 642 [555] In the second year of his régime Soulouque decided to imitate Dessalines by turning the state into an empire. His coronation was extremely gaudy, as well as expensive. Calling himself Emperor Faustin I, he created a peerage drawn chiefly from among his black generals—four princes, fifty-nine dukes, and numerous counts, barons, and knights. This was merely outward pomp to gratify their craving for prestige, for they had no functions to perform, nor even the necessity of Christophe's peers to pay for their regalia. As nobles they were given no responsibilities in directing economic activity nor any increased political power over districts of the empire. The Emperor's own vanity was flattered by having a peerage. He ruled as an autocrat with blatant despotism. For ten years following the coronation Haiti had to accustom itself to costly expeditions against the Dominican Republic, nearly all ending in defeat for Haiti. The 175 643 721 648 728 outcome of these intermittent wars was neither gain nor loss of territory by either side, but only temporary rule of occupied districts. Haiti likewise had to accustom itself to sudden executions, to the shabby grandeur of court display, and to financial trickery which would not have deceived a schoolboy. While the heads of his opponents and even his loyal counselors fell, Soulouque's infantile "empire" followed to economic ruin.

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For three months Toussaint's vigorous fighting broke the force of the French attack; one white army was swept away. But Toussaint made two fatal errors of judgment: he relied upon his trained army with its Negro generals, instead of arming his half-million Negroes for guerrilla warfare; and he trusted the pledged word of honor of Leclerc. His army fought bravely enough against the French legions, but the consensus of military experts is that Toussaint's officers, jealous of his domination and feeling that eventually France must win, treacherously gave over their posts and forces to Leclerc. Christophe surrendered on April 26, and Toussaint had no alternative but to put himself in Leclerc's hands. 175 648 726 728

Napoleon's private orders to Leclerc were positive and precise: "Follow your instructions exactly, and the moment you have rid yourself of Toussaint, Christophe, Dessalines, and the principal brigands, and the masses of the blacks have been disarmed, send over to the continent all the blacks and mulattoes who have played a rôle in the civil troubles. . . . Rid us of these gilded Africans, and we shall have nothing more to wish." Leclerc set himself methodically to carry out these instructions; by April, 1802, he had disarmed the blacks and received Christophe's surrender; the next task was to rid himself of Toussaint. By an apparently innocent invitation to dine and discuss the affairs of the colony, he lured Toussaint into his headquarters on June 10.[20] In the course of the meal Toussaint was seized, bound, and hurried on board a waiting ship. Haiti never saw him again; within a year he died of cold and starvation in a dungeon high in the Jura Mountains of southeastern France. 175 648

With Toussaint out of the way, it was now in order to proceed to the second part of Napoleon's plan—the reëstablishment of slavery. Leclerc was to use his own discretion as to the precise moment and manner of announcing this. His instructions from the Minister of Marine, Decrès (June 14, 1802), read in part: 175 648 727 567

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

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175 master's good usage must re-attach them to his rule. When they shall have
648 felt by comparison the difference between a usurping and tyrannical yoke
727 [apparently he means such a yoke as Toussaint's] and that of the legitimate
567 proprietor interested in their preservation, then the moment will have arrived for making them return to their original condition, from which it was so disastrous to draw them.

175 The plan to reëstablish slavery, however, was never carried out,
648 nor was its scheduled sequel, the occupation of Louisiana. The French soldiers in Saint-Domingue began to succumb to an invisible assailant
727 —yellow fever. The first French army of 17,000 men had been largely consumed in the task of conquering Toussaint's armies; the second was now being swept away by disease. Leclerc's letters to Napoleon pleading for reinforcements soon became frantic in their despair. Fever was weakening the army at the very moment when rumors of impending reënslavement were strengthening the number of active antagonists to the French. The black generals who had deserted Toussaint for Leclerc now swung back again to the opposition. Then Leclerc himself fell ill of the fever. Apparently all-conquering in June, 1802, by November he was dead.

175 This was the turning point in Napoleon's whole American policy.
727 The war had ruined Saint-Domingue economically; it had destroyed
721 plantations, paralyzed labor, and reduced the population to bar-
648 barism. To resume the conquest would have cost France heavily; the army dreaded service in a region where death was almost certain; the financial expense had been frightful: one year of war had consumed 50,000 men and several million dollars, yet at least as many men and as much money would still be needed before any return could be expected. Consequently, Napoleon decided to withdraw from his whole American experiment, saving face as far as possible. He appointed the brave but incompetent Rochambeau to succeed Leclerc, promised him reënforcements—and then broke the Peace of Amiens, so that France became embroiled in a European war. Affairs in Saint-Domingue (including the troops promised to Rochambeau) were conveniently forgotten after March, 1803; and the whole Louisiana territory was sold to the United States.

175 The end of French control in Saint-Domingue came shortly.
648 Rochambeau, as well as he could, waged desultory warfare, hanging, shooting, drowning, burning all the Negroes he could catch; hunting them with fifteen hundred bloodhounds bought in Jamaica for more

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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000 their new status was definitely higher. Mild serfdom might be
175 thought of as the first intermediate step toward freedom. Democracy
565 was still far off, there being no real middle class upon which to build
566 it. Only the artisans of the towns and the ex-soldiers or the cultivators who had managed to lease small estates could be considered middle class. Christophe forced every dweller in villages or towns to have a manual skill. The only alternative was field work on a plantation.

The "aristocrats" of the kingdom were prevailingly black rather than colored. It was not to be expected that a vain man would soon forget the trick by which the mulattoes had frustrated him in his
175 expectation of becoming the ruler of all Haiti. To say that the intermittent civil war between Christophe's kingdom of the North and
669 Pétion's republic of the South was a struggle between blacks and
643 colored people would not do great violence to the essential truth.
563 Christophe's suspicion of gens de couleur was so well known that few were surprised at the high death rate of mulatto generals in the North. The murder of General Clervaux was definitely laid at Christophe's door.

The fact remains that among the nobility were men of all degrees of color. The King liked to say that he neither accepted nor yet took exception to the color of a man's epidermis—that in this matter he was *vert* (green), which is to say, neutral and indifferent. When he was angry his wrath fell indiscriminately upon the offender of whatever complexion. Similarly, when he found a light-skinned man who faithfully supervised a leased estate, thus proving his
175 loyalty, the man was rewarded and promoted. Nevertheless, an
643 underlying prejudice remained in his breast, bursting out occasionally
721 at crises, and having ultimately a serious effect upon the loyalty of
563 many of his people. When some of his subjects, enticed by the easy-going régime of the South, ran away to Pétion's republic, Christophe was angry enough to renew the war against Pétion (1811). The South won the encounter, thereby adding fuel to Christophe's rage.
[727] Three hundred prisoners he had captured he ordered tortured, and the angry King abused and insulted his own officers and executed several soldiers for having lost the battle. These actions caused more defections, renewed punishments, and a more abiding rancor. As one writer put it, the King "now regarded the mulattoes with a hatred so deep and fiendlike, that nothing would satisfy the direness of his

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175 643 Suddenly, without warning, he reversed what had been mistaken for docile inactivity, and assumed complete personal command of the reins of office. By means of a well-organized body of secret police, [625] he inspired his own counselors with fear not only for their positions but for their lives. Although illiterate, Soulouque never signed a bill presented to him by his ministers until he was sure he knew its essential core. The hopeful "understudies" were forcibly awakened to the realization that they were hoist on their own petard.

175 643 563 669 The colored element was particularly apprehensive at Soulouque's amazing activity, for the President was clearly setting himself against their group, both in the cabinet and out. Determining clandestinely to get rid of their puppet before he became a Frankenstein's monster to destroy his creators, they fomented a new revolution. This, however, proved to be a strategic error of the first magnitude, for the President was already much stronger than they imagined. The insurrection was quashed with massacre and attendant frightfulness. In the aftermath, as Bouzon mordantly remarks, "the republic was calm—with all the tranquillity of a tomb!" By their ineptitude, the colored group had now made themselves completely insecure.

175 565 643 642 [555] In the second year of his régime Soulouque decided to imitate Dessalines by turning the state into an empire. His coronation was extremely gaudy, as well as expensive. Calling himself Emperor Faustin I, he created a peerage drawn chiefly from among his black generals—four princes, fifty-nine dukes, and numerous counts, barons, and knights. This was merely outward pomp to gratify their craving for prestige, for they had no functions to perform, nor even the necessity of Christophe's peers to pay for their regalia. As nobles they were given no responsibilities in directing economic activity nor any increased political power over districts of the empire. The Emperor's own vanity was flattered by having a peerage. He ruled

175 643 721 648 728 as an autocrat with blatant despotism. For ten years following the coronation Haiti had to accustom itself to costly expeditions against the Dominican Republic, nearly all ending in defeat for Haiti. The outcome of these intermittent wars was neither gain nor loss of territory by either side, but only temporary rule of occupied districts. Haiti likewise had to accustom itself to sudden executions, to the shabby grandeur of court display, and to financial trickery which would not have deceived a schoolboy. While the heads of his opponents and even his loyal counselors fell, Soulouque's infantile "empire" tottered to economic ruin.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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3. *Pétion, Boyer, and Inginac as Administrators*

Pétion lived very simply in the South, like a plain republican magistrate. He sat on his piazza, accessible to all his people. He had a quiet way of answering his opponents which did not make enemies of them. He made his secretary answer every letter that arrived, no matter how small; many were simply inquiries about the President's health. Yet the wars between Pétion and Christophe dragged on from 1807 to 1812,[8] draining the finances of the republic. Not only the crops declined: so also did most of the public improvements instituted by the colonial planters; so did trade; so did habits of industry. Everything seemed to conspire against hard work. The rich plains of the Cul-de-Sac and the Artibonite Valley were ravaged by fire and warfare; necessary equipment for sugar making was destroyed, the money for new machines and buildings was unavailable; and the men were drawn away from their land by military duties.

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Inginac, Boyer's secretary of state, after the Revolution of 1843 had got rid of both the President and his secretary, wrote his memoirs. There are some revealing passages. Inginac reports that Pétion told him only forty days before his death that Boyer was a man of probity and delicacy, "but unhappily he is petulant; he is too set in his ways to conciliate those who might assist him. In everything *he* wants to dominate, and he will bring unhappiness to the country if he does not change." Inginac cites cases to show that Pétion's prophecy was correct. Boyer in 1820 repealed the most unpopular laws, particularly those requiring personal corvée and the repair of public roads; but instead of taking advice from his cabinet on important economic matters, he frequently announced that he was president and would not be run by anybody. Consequently, according to Inginac, he made mistakes which might have been avoided.[9] Defending himself, the former secretary offers a clue to the failure of the régime—possibly unavoidable—by showing that the administration merely suggested, did not require, action:

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"Have I not constantly, not only preached and corresponded about the necessity of making agriculture prosperous, but also given work at as high wages as the treasury could afford? Have I not created habitations on lands formerly totally uncultivated, putting formerly idle men to work? Have I not published at my own expense, although I directed the National Printery, methods for cultivating tobacco and coffee plants, of which I distributed gratis several thousand copies?"[10]

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In spite of all encouragement which the administration could offer, agricultural production continued to decline, while expenses increased, and external trade fell off from a third to a half. The government had to borrow from the banking firm of Lafitte in Paris to find even the interest for payments due to the French government.

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8. Hostilities between the two parts of Haiti ceased about 1812 because of the mutual fear on the part of Christophe and Pétion of Napoleon's ascendancy, and the threat which this constituted to the whole former colony. Their war had ravaged the plantations and removed laborers from the soil. Then came the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain, cutting off many of the supplies which Haiti drew from both countries. There was accordingly an unwritten truce, with no further hostilities. A neutral territory of ten leagues between the boundaries of the two states was tacitly agreed upon: neither army was to enter it. This was the rich plain of Boucassin, once the garden of the island, now a wilderness.

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9. Joseph Balthazar Inginac, *Mémoires* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1843), pp. 32, 34, 38.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

turned to leave, word came that his house had burned and nothing in it was saved. Later he suffered a paralytic stroke from which he never recovered. Some say that the American captain became ill and was sent to the States "as a punishment for what he had done." Several days later the sergeant was found mad, wandering in the woods. Since he had fired under orders, however, his punishment was but temporary, and on being cured he returned to Ville-Bonheur to ask pardon of the Virgin. Today he lives in Mirebalais. When they saw the American ill, the priest paralyzed, the sergeant mad, and the presbytery burned, "public clamor" became so strong that both St. John and En bas Palmes were reopened.[11]

In 1932 a cyclone at St. John tore down trees and houses and hurt but did not kill the worshippers who had gathered there. An eyewitness insisted he had seen the enormous whirling cloud rise from the sacred place. He had no time to reach his house, for with a noise like a cannon-shot the whirlwind came, and an enormous oak tree fell just behind him — "I saw death staring at me." Today he carries two scapularies to the Virgin to protect him.

The third sacred spot is at the falls themselves, where the grandeur and beauty of the scene is such as to induce the religious thrill almost unaided, and where great numbers go in the course of their pilgrimage to Ville-Bonheur. There are two falls, situated at a distance of several miles from the village, one for Damballa and one for Aida Wedo, and it is believed that those who bathe in the sacred streams become possessed. It is said that the palms near by are sacred to the Virgin, but others hold that they are for Damballa. Many visit the falls on the day preceding the fête, but the largest throng hurries there immediately after the principal mass, when the greatest number of possessions and the most violent seizures by the *loa* occur. The falls, therefore, in association

132 fires in their houses at night to keep out the damp cold that sweeps
[374] through the passes. And a man on the trail before dawn may wear a
[291] blanket over his head and carry a glowing ember with him for warmth.

132 On the south coast there are sometimes hurricanes and tidal waves, and
133 many a small fishing boat and grass-covered house has been washed away
[131] in these storms. But the great mountains of the southern range deflect the winds, so that to the north their full fury is never known.

226 In the great Bay of Gonaïves the fishing boats sail out at night with the
133 friendly winds that carry them to the fishing grounds of the island of La
172 Gonave, and they return to the shore with their catches in the morning, or in the afternoon with the setting sun. The sailing boats from the tiny fishing village called Ville Matelot each day pass the deserted islet named Isle à Cabrit, where four Indian camps once stood. Today Isle à Cabrit is only a waterless, denuded place, a hunting ground for Carib and Arawak pottery and carved stone images.

136 In the frontier lakes of the Cul-de-Sac Plain there are wild ducks and
[224] alligators. Here the villagers fish with nets from rafts and dugout canoes.
[501] Now and then an iguana is seen, but there is little other game, because the edible wildlife of the country was long ago eaten by hungry people.

137 For the things that grow wild the Haitian is grateful—the avocado,
[241] the mango, the cashew, and the cotton which once planted produces again and again each year. He is grateful for the coconut palms, the calabash tree, the gourd vines, and the medicinal herbs that grow on every side. But
[313] the gifts of nature are not prolific. Most of the great stands of timber—
[134] lignum vitae, mahogany, dyewood and pine—have been cut away. Once fertile garden spots have dried up, and the soil that produces the yams, the pumpkins, the kaffir, and the rice is tired.

181 But the Haitian himself is not tired. He has suffered from malaria,
164 yaws, and chronic hunger; yet out of the great old mountains of Haiti he has fashioned a way of life and a nation.

105 The Haitian of today was created out of the fabric of three continents—
181 Africa, America, and Europe. He was shaped out of the plains and hills of Nigeria, Dahomey, and the Congo; the summers and winters of Europe; and the mountains and mountain mists of Haiti itself. He is the synthesis of the folk beliefs of the French and Spanish peasants, the Yoruba and the Arada of West Africa, and perhaps of the Carib Indians with whom he had close contact during his first days in the New World. He has brought into affinity the religious practices of Africa and the beliefs of the Church of Rome. He is outwardly simple and poor, but inwardly he is a complicated and rich man. He is rich in music, in the capacity for spiritual expression, in tradition, in folklore, and in memories. He has been able

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

to "eat" people; that is, to destroy them. To do this he employs such means as disease, insanity, and destruction of crops. If a man serves Pinga Maza well, the loa protects him in return; but for those who anger him, Pinga is a menacing and vengeful creature. People often say, "Pinga, c'est djab" (Pinga is a devil).

The Pinga hounfor in Port-au-Prince is called the *Société de la Belle Jeune Fleur*. Its peristyle is simple and is hardly distinguishable from those of other small hounfors. Around the base of the center pole is a three-foot-high wall of masonry, decorated with simple cult symbols. The outer room of the hounfor proper also resembles many another. The familiar pot têtes containing loa stand on a wooden altar, and there are Catholic lithographs on the walls. But the inner room belongs exclusively to Pinga Maza. Here are all the accoutrements and objects sacred to the deity. Everything is red. Pinga's clothing and kerchiefs are red. On the walls are painted esoteric designs—hands, skulls, and crosses—all in red. The bottles, magic bundles, and govis on the altar are decorated with red cloth, ribbons, or paint. In the middle of the earthen floor is embedded a heavy wooden cross. On each end of the crossbeam hangs a large calabash resembling a bulbous hand. And on top of the upright is affixed a human skull. The total impression of this hounfor is that of a bizarre aberration, calculated to intimidate and terrify. The houngan himself is relatively young, literate, and city wise. His personality is smooth and sharp, and he lacks the air of sincerity and easy simplicity which most often characterizes the houngan of the mountains.

In this inner room, before the skull and the cross, there took place a small service for a client, to determine what kind of magic was needed to fend off malevolent actions of an enemy. On the day of the divining session, there hung from the rafters of the tonnelle a long rope, which extended into a deep hole in the earth near the door. Hanging on the rope, down inside the hole, were two gray dolls tightly bound together. Hanging still farther down were a knife, a fork, and other, unidentifiable objects. This cluster of magic paraphernalia was an *expédition* at work; it was an elaborate pouin, which was working against an enemy who lived far away.

Before entering the hounfor, the houngan took a long rope whip from the wall and cracked it seven times before the door. This process, known as *frete cache*, was to "wake up" the loa within. The houngan then entered, followed by the client who was seeking help. They paused briefly in the outer room, where the houngan took up his asson and bell and made a small vèvè on the ground. He spoke briefly in *langage* and then passed on through the door to the inner room. There the

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

with one of his children as he had agreed. That night his oldest child died. The next year to the day, his second child died. And the third year, the third child died. On the fourth anniversary, the man's wife died. On the fifth, he himself died. The djab of Trou Fourban had collected his debt.

Another great djab lives on the northern mountain called Morne Ronde. A man of Cap Haitien was said to have made a compact with him for wealth. One day there was a great hubbub in front of the man's house. A crowd gathered and stood peering inside his door. What they saw was a rain of money falling down from the rafters. The floor was covered with ten-gourde bills. When the *gendarmerie* came to investigate, they stood at the doorway in awe, watching the money float to the floor. The man finally closed the door. That night he moved away, and no one in Cap Haitien ever saw him again.

The djab are insatiable. For their favors—which range from providing wealth and political position to destroying one's enemies—they always demand more in return than the recipient has counted on. Catholic ritual is called upon in some instances to break the djab's chain of demands.

Some tales are told in which human beings outwit the djab, particularly the lesser ones; but more often than not, the djab have the last laugh. During the big hurricane which hit Haiti in 1954, a huge landslide occurred near the place called Bayè Roche in the La Selle Mountains. An entire village was wiped out, covered by the falling rocks. Throughout this region the disaster was attributed to the action of a djab reputed to live in one of the nearby caves. Many lost cattle were found wandering near Bayè Roche, and they were believed to be people whom the malevolent djab had transformed into animals.

The height of bravado is to demand to be confronted with a big djab face to face. There is a song which goes:

> Conduit'm allé oh!
> Conduit'm allé djab nan Trou Fourban!
> Conduit'm allé! [Ex. 91]
>
> Take me, oh!
> Take me to the djab in Trou Fourban!
> Take me!

There are still other supernatural creatures in Haitian lore who must be guarded against, such as the *djablesse*, the *revenant*, and the *lutin*. The *djablesse* is a female ghost who must live in the woods for a number of years before she can enter heaven, as a punishment for the crime of

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Haiti under Dessalines still had many building

175 of French con-
178 struction, both plantation mansions and slave quarters. With forced
331 labor available these had been kept in a measure of repair. Christophe, not content with leftovers from colonial days, had sponsored architectural activity all over his kingdom; if his citadel is the most noteworthy example, there are also to his credit lesser palaces and government warehouses. Almost no building was done by Pétion and Boyer, however, and by the 1840's the constructions of the French [731] had fallen into serious disrepair. Severe earthquakes and fires quickly ruined what time had already weakened. By the middle of the century one saw, instead of trim slave quarters near great mansions, a few straggling towns of one-story houses, the hillsides dotted with ramshackle huts, and the plains with daubed shacks.

175 From great estates to tiny plots; from carefully tilled fields to
178 small gardens in a wilderness; from financial prosperity to debt;
181 from directed enterprise to sloth; from an attitude of hopeful de-
433 termination to one of tolerance for things as they are—these are the striking contrasts of the two periods. It could hardly have been imagined in Christophe's day that the smart, disciplined Dahomet would be succeeded by casual ragamuffins who dozed on their tilted chairs while on sentry duty. Christophe had liked his subjects to be well dressed, and insisted on it; but the British consul in Boyer's time wrote that "the laborers are, generally speaking, nearly naked; in fact, adults only wearing what is barely necessary to prevent indecent exposure, while the children of both sexes run about without covering of any kind."[64]

175 It was the parceling of landed estates combined with the disap-
178 pearance of forced labor which initiated the transition from serfdom
433 to peasantry. Personalities as dynamic as Christophe's or as brutal as
[466] Dessalines' would have been required to keep the people in a servile
[483] condition in a land of tropical fertility. Contemporary foreign judg-
[461] ment was almost unanimous in placing the blame for declining
[164] prosperity upon indolence (the word is continually repeated, generally preceded by the adjective "natural"). It may be noted in passing that no one at the time seems to have realized how widespread were the debilitating diseases of hookworm and malaria, which can make apparently husky men prefer rest to work. Responsibility for economic failure rests as much upon the governing class,

64. Charles Mackenzie, *Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti* (1829), p. 86.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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When the Chamber of 1842 assembled Boyer once more forced the elimination of these men and several of their political friends.[9] The majority in the Chamber was so agitated over this expulsion that only twenty-eight out of seventy-two deputies thereafter appeared at any session. A dozen communes, among them the most important in the country (Port-au-Prince, Les Cayes, Gonaïves, Santo Domingo), had no representation. The deputies of the South avenged themselves by instituting a series of "patriotic banquets." At the plantations of adversaries of the government dinners were given for dozens of guests; the meals were followed by vibrant speeches, full of criticisms of the government. Thanks to the talent of these orators, the opposition likewise gradually filtered its way into the mass of the people, slowly but implacably undermining Boyer's government.

The President also had bad luck to contend with. During his presidency many catastrophies saddened the country. The arsenal blew up in 1827, burning the state warehouses and causing a loss of 5,000,000 piastres. A cyclone in 1831 desolated the South. Fires in 1832 and 1843 practically wiped out Port-au-Prince. An earthquake in 1842 shook the whole island, destroyed Santiago and Port-de-Paix, and transformed Cap-Haïtien into a mass of ruins; the fire which broke out in consequence was accompanied by pillaging which went on for several days. The parliamentary opposition to Boyer made use of these natural calamities to sharpen displeasure at the government.

In August, 1842, a secret association, The Society of the Rights of Man and of Citizen, was formed at Les Cayes to exploit this discontent and prepare the fall of Boyer. It circulated clandestinely throughout the South the ringing Manifesto by Praslin, a résumé of the charges of the opposition which was soon covered with signatures. When adherents of the society were numerous enough, an executive committee was formed with the commandant Rivière Hérard as president. At the end of January, 1843, an uprising occurred on the Praslin plantation.[10] General Borgella, head of the department of the South, proved irresolute; the insurrection, fostered by this indecision, spread rapidly among the troops, even generals joining in. By Febru-

9. The most important of the excluded deputies were Dupuy Lespinasse, Covin Aîné, Dominique, Benoît, Ponthieux, Dorsainville Dustant.
10. At Torbeck, in the department of the South.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[p. 95]

7. In the Mapou Tree: Magic, Demons, and Compacts

It is said by many Haitians that the loa are inclined to shun the mapou tree, for it is the secret rendezvous of countless kinds of demons. On certain nights, they say, you may see a chink of light showing through the trunk of the great mapou, indicating that the demons are in macabre session. 776 778 824

Sometimes it is the baka who meet there to feast and discuss their blood-curdling plans. The baka are described as small and evil creatures, human in form, with red eyes, and legs or arms covered with skin but no flesh. They change into animals at will and may roam the countryside as cats, dogs, or cattle. The baka are notorious sorcerers, and they perform only malevolent acts. They are reputed to "eat people," literally as well as figuratively. Stories are heard of such-and-such a man or child who disappeared and was presumed to have been eaten at a feast in the mapou tree. One man who passed a mapou in the dark of night reported that he heard muffled singing coming from within its trunk, accompanied by the pounding of mortars in which a gruesome feast was being pulverized. But the baka "eat" people also in the sense that they destroy them. It is said sometimes that a person with a withered arm or leg has been "eaten" by a baka. Perhaps he was an innocent victim; possibly he struck a horse or dog which was really a baka; or perhaps he simply brushed against a baka in the market place. Sometimes the baka directs his evil in the most indiscriminate sort of way, "eating" whatever human being he meets. Animals which behave strangely are suspected of being baka in disguise, and they are given wide berth. 776 [732] 776 825

A cow once found within an old brick-covered spring was taken to be a baka because no cow could have passed through the small doorway of the spring. It was assumed that she had entered as a small baka and had then changed to her animal form. The spring went unused for days, until some children reported that the baka had vanished. The cow was

When I want to talk you do not want me to talk!
When I want to sing you do not want me to sing!
[Dahomey *y ava*, they do me wrong! *

Another note of criticism within the houngfor concerns a person who has been putting on airs of importance. The song states that he (or she) in reality has not even qualified for the lowest order within the cult, even though he behaves as though he were the cult chief:

Ou pas houngi ah!	You are not yet a houngi, ah!
Ou dit'm ou c'est houngan!	You tell me you are a houngan!
Ou pas houngi!	You are not yet a houngi!
Ou dit'm ou c'est houngan c'est qui	You tell me you are a houngan, it is us!
Oh Pulle à Terre!	Oh, Straw on Earth! †
Pusse! allé!	Push and go!
Oh Allada malade ah! [Ex. 99]	Oh, Allada is sick, ah! ‡

Poverty is so normal in Haitian life that a man who accumulates wealth in any form becomes conspicuous. Ordinarily he does not welcome this conspicuousness. It makes him a target of gossip and rumors, and of those who might wish to collect debts from him, borrow money, or obtain other favors. He becomes a *grosse zèbe*, and finds himself increasingly cut off from the community of ordinary, poor people. Needless to say, Haitians, like other people, dream of striking it rich. Wherever poverty has been acute, whether in Europe, Asia, or America, the folklore is full of tales of finding great treasures. Haiti is no exception. Many Haitian folk tales and folk songs deal with this theme, particularly with obtaining wealth by magical or supernatural means. Sometimes riches are obtained through *engagements*, unholy compacts with devils or demons. In some stories luck facilitates the discovery of treasure, in others a powerful houngfor accomplishes it through magical practices. If a man suddenly becomes well-to-do, therefore, rumors may spread in regard to how he came by his wealth. If he is suspected of dealings with devils or with a powerful houngfor, his apparent success in his venture makes him a neighbor to be feared. To avoid incurring envy and hostility, people tend to play down their financial successes and pretend they have nothing in life but the clothes they wear, their houses, and their gardens. Spreading word that a poor man has hidden money is regarded as a mean and reprehensible act. Numerous folk songs protest against this injustice:

Dimanche tombé nous lamour-wè!
Si m'apé travaille li nous cour-wè,

* Literally: They eat my rights.
† An exclamation, the name of a certain message.
‡ Allada, the name of a town in Dahomey, used in the sense of "people of Dahomey." The line means, "Things are in a bad state of affairs."

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

baby: when she does she substitutes a mode of feeding on fruits and solids which favors digestive disturbance and nutritive diseases in the infant. 853

At the age when children of the élite would be starting to school, peasant children are beginning work in the fields, hoeing, weeding, and carrying, always under the tropical sun. Cuts and bruises, sometimes serious, are improperly treated when they occur and so lead to tetanus or to enormous ulcers. 857 752 184 164

Hard work and a simple mode of outdoor life prove, in Haiti at least, not to be the keys to good health which a romantic might fancy them. Haiti has been one of the unhealthiest places in the world. One feels that it has been lucky to escape such scourges as typhus, cholera, and bubonic plague; that smallpox has not been violent in its epidemics, and that the people developed an immunity to yellow fever. It has, indeed, been luck rather than cleanliness and proper medical care which has protected the people in these instances. 164

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From 1804 to 1860, then, there was practically no proper care for sick people. In the latter years of the century a few trained physicians, with sadly deficient equipment, practiced in the towns. Not until after the Occupation was the rural mass of the population even touched by the medical knowledge which had been developing all over the civilized world for decades. Clinics, wholesale vaccinations and inoculations, and campaigns of enlightenment have in the past twenty years worked wonders. The Vodun practitioner, however, still is the "expert" who treats most illnesses, and healing remains one of his major functions. 744 759 756

11. Geffrard established schools of law, music, painting, and navigation. The latter two collapsed. The same president founded the high schools of Port-au-Prince, Jacmel, and Gonaïves. [873]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 701 648 177 625 652 669 Since it was an entrenched interest, however, no responsible statesman had dared to threaten its hold. The Marines swept it out of existence, undertaking to substitute for it a trained constabulary of only 2,000 men who should combine routine military tasks with police duty in the scattered towns. Results were immediately apparent: the weighty incubus of soldiers' wages was lifted from the treasury; thousands of men were deprived of sinecures and put back into productive economic activities; the constant threat of armed revolution was removed; better order was kept by 2,000 trained men in trim uniform than by twelve times that number of ragged loafers who called themselves soldiers; and since the army was no longer the great steppingstone to political office, the élite felt more secure from assault by ambitious but uneducated army men. From 1843 to 1915 the élite had endured many lower-caste presidents because these were able to control the army; now the army had disappeared.

175 648 [743] [744] [365] [491] [45] The Marines did much that was of indisputable benefit to Haiti. This was acknowledged even by the most vocal patriots who soon began to campaign for an end of the Occupation. Where there had been no real work in public health, Americans now built hospitals, established clinics, cleaned up the sources of many diseases, laid down sewage systems, gave the towns pure water. In 1915 there were only three automobiles in the country, and no roads for them to travel; the Americans built many miles of paved roads. In 1915 there had been only one wharf, two short stretches of railroad, two lighthouses, one electric plant; the Americans undertook electrification, telephone systems, the construction of administration buildings, and other public conveniences. Whether in such visible matters or in the obscurer realms of currency, banking, and budgets hardly a phase of daily life was left untouched. And judged by the standards of civilization the Marines improved what they touched.

175 648 642 But rancor against the Americans began early and continued to the bitter end in 1934. The pride of all Haitians was deeply wounded by the Occupation. For 111 years they had governed themselves and had assumed themselves to be a sovereign nation; the Marines patroling the countryside were vivid reminders that Haiti had never been independent except by sufferance, and that white men were once more overseeing the destinies of colored and Negro men. Nevertheless, the reasons proclaimed for opposing the Occupation were not those of hurt vanity. Some of those given were entirely

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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2. *Health*

Historians who seek to explain the rise and fall of nations in terms of a single cause might do worse than hit upon health and disease as the all-important explanation. Unless spectacular epidemics have appeared in a country's history, the average person is rarely aware of how diet may affect a people, or of how backwardness in achievement is often directly related to disease. It may well be that the development of *medical* history will yet cause a radical revision of certain philosophies of history.

146 "The diet of the Haitian peasants has not improved since the slavery period," says Dr. Camille Lhérisson.[5] When people are 164 hungry in Haiti, they eat (if they can find food) until their hunger has been appeased; but what they eat, though it may fill their stomachs, is often decidedly deficient in the proper nourishment. Mangoes, yams, and beans are common enough so that few people actually go hungry; eggs, milk, meat, and many other essentials of a balanced diet, on the contrary, are scarce. People do not die of hunger, but rather of the diseases which accompany malnutrition. It is said that many peasants allow the fires in their homes to die out when the mangoes begin to ripen, subsisting almost wholly upon this fruit for weeks. One sees nearly naked children whose distended [261] bellies are testimony to faulty diet. There are frequent cases of geophagy (eating of dirt) both by children and by adults in their unreasoned craving for certain dietetic elements; one result of the practice is the swallowing of eggs and larvae of intestinal parasites.

178 Scientific progress in medicine during the nineteenth century and 743 the first years of the twentieth passed Haiti by completely. There 759 were during the whole history of the country until 1915 hardly a score of reputable physicians; even had there been doctors, hospital facilities and equipment were lacking. Dr. Robert P. Parsons de- 174 scribes Haiti in 1915 as "an unspeakable hotbed of diseases, ranking 164 second to none in the world in downright rottenness." He further described the "mass of three million people, sick, suffering beyond all power of words to describe, crippled, and weakened from the ravages of a host of diseases (for the most part preventable and curable), pitifully helpless and hopelessly resigned to their lot."[6]

5. "Diseases of the Peasants of Haiti," *American Journal of Public Health*, XXV, No. 8 (August, 1935), 924.
6. *History of Haitian Medicine* (New York, 1930), pp. 4-5.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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regime. That President Duvalier has been able to stay in power in spite of internal dissaffection, sometime hostile United States propaganda, a dire economic situation, personal ill health, and other woes, is a tribute to his political acumen, if not to his principles. None of this means, of course, that such consummate skill will continue to work; Haitian governments have a way of falling suddenly, and the Duvalier regime will probably not prove an exception.

Dr. Duvalier's success indicates that he has made certain correct assessments, not only of Haiti's social and political structure but also of United States policy with regard to Haiti. The occupation was notable for its failure to make any telling alterations in the economic structure or level of development of the country. Many beneficial changes were made, as Leyburn demonstrates, particularly in the areas of health and health services, communications, government administration, education, and transport (though the use of corvée labor on the roads led to serious abuses, and stimulated sanguinary guerilla warfare). But most significantly, the United States institutionalized the army and police forces. The ragged bands of political mercenaries of the past were dissolved; the officer-ridden army was transformed into a small, well-trained, and well-organized force. Eventual firm control by this force of weaponry, communications, and transport ended the era of presidential succession by invasion, turned the army into the major locus of nonelectoral, president-making power, and may have ended forever the possibility of an agrarian revolt against the central authority. Another political effect of the occupation was the importance it imparted to the United States ambassador, whose political opinions thereafter would matter significantly in the transmission of power at the top of the Haitian governmental system. The Duvalier regime has continuously taken full account of the consequences of United States interest; and its leaders have been able to watch the operation of that interest in the political events occurring between the fall of the Lescot government and the present.

In the view of one acute observer, President Duvalier, in order to consolidate his power, had to cope with three other loci of political strength in addition to the army and the United States ambassador. The business community, located for the most part in Port-au-Prince, had strongly supported Déjoie's candidacy during the interregnum; its leaders were mainly members of the elite, and many had strong

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not find herself constantly embroiled with European states and American financial interests. The Haitian debt was funded, and a financial adviser remained in the country even after the Occupation came to an end. It is expected that by 1943 the last debt will be paid; the financial adviser, however, withdrew in 1941. Since the Occupation, although the republic has been free to manage her own affairs, she has consulted frequently with the State Department in Washington.

Nineteen years of occupation ended the century of Haitian isolation. The Americans built roads, conducted health campaigns, made their presence felt even in remote hamlets and valleys. American authors, political, romantic, and sensational, discovered the Antillean republic. Steamship companies stopped their cruises for a few hours at Cap-Haïtien to allow tourists to visit the Citadel, and at Port-au-Prince to see the sights of the capital. Every Haitian now realizes that there is a world outside.

Whatever crises have arisen in Haitian affairs, certain problems have persisted. For whom do they constitute a source of worry? Since the government has always been a dictatorship, limited or absolute, subject to no party control, the incumbents of office have never had the experience of being constantly reminded by their opponents of the misery or daily worries of the population. After a hundred years the people have learned that relief is not to be expected from politicians. Occasionally a dramatic revolutionary leader has persuaded some of the people that the officials in power were responsible for their distress, and so worked up a following; yet even when such movements succeeded, the masses never benefited. To most governments of the past century Haiti's problem has been only one: to frustrate insurrection. There is evidence that recent administrations have busied themselves assiduously with the country's internal problems, although none of them has been adequately solved. The élite, at least as a group, do not feel any apparent responsibility for the maladjustments, nor obligation to effect the necessary reforms. A few patriots, and those almost without exception not in office, know what ails the country and say so; a smaller number propose reasonable solutions. The problems remain. Of these the three outstanding are overpopulation with all its accompanying ills, health, and education.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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apparently hale and hearty, but lassitude sapping all energy. A group of doctors from the Rockefeller Foundation discovered that among 4,439 persons examined in various surveys two decades ago sixty-seven per cent showed malarial parasites in the blood. Since the American Occupation steps have been taken to control the disease and much progress has resulted: some of the towns are now practically free of it. But the battle against malaria will never be won so long as the anopheles mosquito breeds in the island; it means an endless war of constant vigilance as well as education—one which must be carried on simultaneously in the neighboring Dominican Republic.

Hookworm, like malaria, is also ordinarily quite undramatic in its symptoms. There is no specific pain, but rather a progressive inertia. Since practically every country person goes barefoot it would be miraculous if hookworm were not widespread, for sanitation is entirely lacking in peasant communities. Dr. Lhérisson reported in 1935 that twenty-six per cent of the mass of Haitian people examined up to that time had been found infested by hookworms. The final figure will probably be revised upward, for the persons most easily examined are townspeople who have better sanitation and more shoes. Only the Cul-de-Sac plain, extending east from Port-au-Prince, is free of the disease, for the larvae do not develop in salty ground. Hookworm attacks not only the barefoot, but likewise the well shod. Poor sanitation and geophagy suggest themselves as two explanations of this fact.

Like malaria, hookworm has been accepted calmly enough as one of the normal burdens of life. In slave days and for some time thereafter it was called "stomach trouble," and since it was common, was not even a case for the Vodun practitioner. It was not until 1924 that the Rockefeller Foundation through its Payne mission revealed the significance of the disease and began to establish dispensaries in country districts and undertake a campaign of sanitation. If every Haitian were to wear shoes the incidence of the disease would, of course, decidedly decrease; but the advice to wear shoes is a counsel of perfection, for large peasant families are no more able to afford this luxury than all American families are able to buy champagne and caviar. Progress has been made along the lines of hygiene and sanitation, but hookworm continues to undermine the energy of the people.

Yaws is, of the morbid triad, the most virulent and the common-

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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est. It was brought over from Africa apparently as early as 1509.[7] Oviedo describes it in 1526 as "a terrible pustular disease."[8] It so closely resembles syphilis that it has often been mistaken for that malady.[9] Untreated or wrongly treated it ravages the bodies of its victims, making them loathesome to behold. In the neighborhood of Port-au-Prince the Rockefeller staff found, out of 2,564 persons examined, 78 per cent affected with yaws. What is even more disturbing is that the young are afflicted. Dr. Lhérisson's investigations in one district revealed that 61.1 per cent of the cases were of children under ten. 164

An American, Dr. Paul Wilson, in 1922 first called yaws the primary physical curse of Haiti. He insisted "that the first need of rural Haiti was soap, salvarsan, and sunshine, and that the good Lord would furnish the sunshine."[10] The Haitian government immediately began to spend large sums to combat the disease. In the Jacmel region in one year (1925–26) 167,267 cases of yaws were treated; in 1926 over 200,000 injections of arsenicals against the disease were administered throughout the republic; and by 1931 the Public Health Service had given in twelve years 2,655,386 injections. Progress has been swift, but the fight against yaws is one which has to be waged continually. 164 744

It would probably be not far from the truth to say that for two centuries the majority of Haitian Negroes have been afflicted to a greater or less degree with malaria, hookworm, and yaws, either singly or together. Next to these dire diseases comes a group which seems to have affected from a tenth to one half the population: tuberculosis, dysentery, enteritis, and granular conjunctivitis. Tuberculosis progresses rapidly when it appears. The people have never developed a specific immunity to it, and promiscuous sex relations play their part in spreading the disease by contagion. In seven hundred autopsies performed in one year at the General Hospital of Port-au-Prince, twenty-six per cent of the deaths were due to tuberculosis. Spring water in the country districts is frequently pol- 164 [836] [837] [165]

7. M. G. Levacher, *Guide médical des Antilles* (Paris, 1847), p. 280.

8. Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdés, *La Historia natural y general de las Indias* (Madrid, 1552).

9. Dr. Pierson, *History of Haitian Medicine*, p. xviii, speaks of it as "blood brother of European syphilis, if not the same disease modified by age incidence, social environment, and racial differences."

10. *Ibid.*, p. xviii.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

baby: when she does she substitutes a mode of feeding on fruits and solids which favors digestive disturbance and nutritive diseases in the infant. 853

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1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

CHAPTER V

BIRTH, CHILDHOOD, AND ADOLESCENCE

842 THE LOVE of children, and the prestige which a man gains as head of a large family, are factors that go far to explain the desire for a numerous progeny. In this not only is he aided by his own sophistication in matters of sex — for in Haitian peasant culture, one encounters no such conventionalized naïveté as the ignorance of physiological paternity found in certain other, non-African societies — but his desire is furthered as well by the absence of contraceptives, and the emphasis laid by Church, State, and African tradition on the desirability of
843 [847] many offspring. Though situations do arise when, because of illicit relations between a man and woman that result in conception, an abortion is held necessary, usually as soon as a woman discovers that she has conceived, she proceeds to take the necessary protective measures. First she goes to the old women of her own family, who give her herbs for the "three baths" she must take on each of the three succeeding days.
[951] This accomplished, she next visits a priest or priestess of the *vodun* cult who has the confidence of her family or of her husband's, and procures other herbs also for the purpose of preparing baths, and, in addition, a magic charm to wear about her neck or about her waist. This charm protects both herself and the child in her womb against the evil eye or any

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

other evil spirit or evil magic that may be directed against her. If she is a worshipper of the African deities of the *vodun* cult, she may also ask the *vodun* priest to determine by divination what spirit will protect the child, and what her own deity asks to insure his aid. During all her pregnancy she is particularly careful to avoid eating those foods which are "hateful" to her — that is, which cause her to become ill — though in Mirebalais, at least, it is not necessary that she refrain from partaking of the foods "hateful" to her husband. A pregnant woman has privileges and powers not shared with other women, as was evidenced when a Haitian man once appeared with his eye half shut, explaining that the sty was a punishment for his refusal to buy something his pregnant spouse had coveted. "They do not always know they are sending you a sty, but it is a power they have," he made clear.

Shortly before parturition is expected, both the pregnant woman and her husband invoke the aid of the family deities and make them offerings of a *couvert sec*.* The rite is an informal one that need not necessarily take place in the familial house of worship; if it is more convenient, it may be performed inside their own house or in the courtyard. After repeating the Pater Noster and the Ave Maria, a prayer such as the following is pronounced by the woman:

> "*Toutes mystères, tant pour papa que manman, du même de côté mari moin: m'ap mandé ou pou' moin fait un heureuse accouchement, pou' l'ouv'i chemin ba moin.* — All the gods, both of my father and of my mother, as well as those of my husband: I ask that you cause me to have a good delivery, that you open the road for me."

At the same time the family ancestors are not overlooked:

> "*Moin mandé nou' tous pou' nou' vini délivré moin, pou' nou' l'ouvri chemin pou' moin, pou' pas quitté*

* The various types of offerings will be discussed in the next section of this book.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

789 generally through no wish of their own, have the uncanny ability to cause evil simply by a glance. One look is enough to do the damage. Although theory is a bit vague on this point, it appears that certain irritable spirits use the agency of the human eye to vent their spleen on mortals who are fortunate: good looks and strokes of luck act, consequently, as lodestones to the fateful glance. And where the [175] glance falls ill luck may spread, harming all within reach. In the days [304] of slavery people had such a fear of the evil eye that they did not hesitate to disfigure infants who at birth seemed to be particularly handsome and so likely to attract attention. Nowadays the practice 777 is to avert the glance by making an *arrêt*. This "halt" may be either a 789 special charm worn on the person or else the mark of a half-moon done with a caustic vegetable substance on the cheek. As with Europeans who believe in the evil eye, certain specialists ply a lucrative trade through their reputation for effective charms against the maldioque.

Other charms may be mentioned. There is the *garde* which protects its wearer against evil of any variety—the near relative of the good-luck charm worn by thousands of "civilized" people. There is the *ouanga*, or *wanga*, compounded to achieve a special end, generally an evil one. Faine remarks that ouanga is

[192] A Créole word of African origin [signifying] a philtre or simple of a special kind, compounded by an *houngan* out of such diverse ingredients as a dead chicken, some grains of indigo and maize, [illegible], pieces of money, asafoetida, etc., the whole contained in a half-calabash. . . . The Ouanga, placed in the home of an enemy, is designed to bring him bad luck even to the extent of giving him elephantiasis ("gros pied") when he has inadvertently stepped on the ouanga.[22]

The ouanga is the Haitian equivalent of the hoodoo, for through its influence one may (or so he believes) bring illness, misfortune, or death to an enemy. For every ouanga there is a garde, for every evil a cure. The art lies in finding out the nature of the ouanga causing harm, and then knowing exactly what to do to fend it off.

751 Historically the most interesting garde is that called a *drogue*, 789 which is thought to insulate one against wound by weapons or bullets. Reference has already been made to the utter abandon with which the Negroes, both at the time of the insurrection and later in

[22] Jules Faine, *Philologie Créole* (Port-au-Prince, 1937), p. 319.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

the struggle for independence, threw themselves against the formidable weapons of the whites. Whenever in spite of the drogue a man was wounded, there was always the explanation of other potent magic, never a surrender of the belief in drogues. Tradition has it that Christophe wore a drogue giving him immunity against all but silver bullets, and that he kept a silver bullet for suicide in case the need should arise—as it did. Drogues were worn by the caco guerrillas, active from 1919 to 1922, who harassed the Marines during the Occupation of the country. 789 751

Such forms of magic are found among practically every known folk. There are traces of charms in the folklore of most "civilized" people, as well as in actual, if secret, use by many apparent sophisticates.

The next commonest application of magic has to do with disease. Haiti is a poor and prevailingly illiterate country in which there are not enough trained medical doctors to serve adequately even the small population of the towns. People who live in the secluded valleys and on the mountainsides receive practically no medical attention. The disease rate if accurate figures could be obtained would certainly be shockingly high, with hookworm and malaria all but universal, and yaws, elephantiasis, and tuberculosis common. In the case of disease and its treatment, it is fair to say that the Haitian peasant is typically primitive. 759 164 758

Sickness is thought to be caused either as a punishment or a warning by one of the loa, or by evil magic wrought by one's enemies. When a man falls ill, therefore, he sends for the specialist, whether houngan, bocor, or caplata, to discover the responsible loa; next, he must learn whether the loa is angry with him, and if so, for what reason; if it is found that the loa is acting through magical compulsion of an enemy, the treatment of the disease will be different from the case of a loa acting without human compulsion. An angry spirit can be appeased by proper sacrifices; a spirit acting as an agent of evil magic must be fought by another spirit, compelled by the countermagic of the patient's specialist. Sometimes the countermagic is simple exorcism by spells and incantations. At other times it is highly involved and dangerous, requiring exotic plants, continuous attention, even illegal practices such as mutilating a corpse. Casual observation might fail to detect the magical element in some of the operations, for they resemble merely the brews or applications of old wives' tales. 753 755

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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baby: when she does she substitutes a mode of feeding on fruits and solids which favors digestive disturbance and nutritive diseases in the infant. 853

At the age when children of the élite would be starting to school, peasant children are beginning work in the fields, hoeing, weeding, and carrying, always under the tropical sun. Cuts and bruises, sometimes serious, are improperly treated when they occur and so lead to tetanus or to enormous ulcers. 857 752 184 164

Hard work and a simple mode of outdoor life prove, in Haiti at least, not to be the keys to good health which a romantic might fancy them. Haiti has been one of the unhealthiest places in the world. One feels that it has been lucky to escape such scourges as typhus, cholera, and bubonic plague; that smallpox has not been violent in its epidemics, and that the people developed an immunity to yellow fever. It has, indeed, been luck rather than cleanliness and proper medical care which has protected the people in these instances. 164

In 1838 Boyer founded a hospital school at Port-au-Prince, giving it the name of The National School of Medicine. It did not function as a school, however, until 1860 when Geffrard reorganized it and gave it life. Geffrard also sent young men to Europe to study, installed laboratories of physics and chemistry in the upper schools of the capital, and made possible the appearance of an intellectual élite.[11] 874

The next burst of energy in matters of hygiene came around 1890 when, under the influence of Dr. Léon Audain, the first health records were kept, and the spirit of scientific research reached Haitian medicine. 744 742

From 1804 to 1860, then, there was practically no proper care for sick people. In the latter years of the century a few trained physicians, with sadly deficient equipment, practiced in the towns. Not until after the Occupation was the rural mass of the population even touched by the medical knowledge which had been developing all over the civilized world for decades. Clinics, wholesale vaccinations and inoculations, and campaigns of enlightenment have in the past twenty years worked wonders. The Vodun practitioner, however, still is the "expert" who treats most illnesses, and healing remains one of his major functions. 744 759 756

11. Geffrard established schools of law, music, painting, and navigation. The latter two collapsed. The same president founded the high schools of Port-au-Prince, Jeanel, and Gonaïves. [173]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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other evil spirit or evil magic that may be directed against her. If she is a worshipper of the African deities of the *vodun* cult, she may also ask the *vodun* priest to determine by divination what spirit will protect the child, and what her own deity asks to insure his aid. During all her pregnancy she is particularly careful to avoid eating those foods which are "hateful" to her — that is, which cause her to become ill — though in Mirebalais, at least, it is not necessary that she refrain from partaking of the foods "hateful" to her husband. A pregnant woman has privileges and powers not shared with other women, as was evidenced when a Haitian man once appeared with his eye half shut, explaining that the sty was a punishment for his refusal to buy something his pregnant spouse had coveted. "They do not always know they are sending you a sty, but it is a power they have," he made clear.

Shortly before parturition is expected, both the pregnant woman and her husband invoke the aid of the family deities and make them offerings of a *couvert sec*.* The rite is an informal one that need not necessarily take place in the familial house of worship; if it is more convenient, it may be performed inside their own house or in the courtyard. After repeating the Pater Noster and the Ave Maria, a prayer such as the following is pronounced by the woman:

> "*Toutes mystères, tant pour papa que manman, du même de côté mari moin: m'ap mandé ou pou' moin fait un heureuse accouchement, pou' l'ouv'i chemin be moin.* — All the gods, both of my father and of my mother, as well as those of my husband: I ask that you cause me to have a good delivery, that you open the road for me."

At the same time the family ancestors are not overlooked:

> "*Moin mandé nou' tous pou' nou' vini délivré moin, pou' nou' l'ouvri chemin pou' moin, pou' pas quitté*

* The various types of offerings will be discussed in the next section of this book.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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584 truth, but the matter is recognized as one which concerns
836 only her husband and herself, and if he is willing to keep
836 her, it is his own affair. Consensus of opinion in Mirebalais
368 is that the percentage of girls who do not have pre-marital sexual relations is relatively small, but the belief is expressed that chastity is more prevalent among country women than among those of the town, where, in turn, it is more frequent than in larger centers such as Port-au-Prince. Even though
836 pre-marital relations are commonplace, however, the preg-
848 nancy of an unmarried girl is regarded as both reprehensible and unfortunate, and she is severely beaten for it by her family. In such cases, if the father of the unborn child will take the girl, his parents are sent to bring her, but where the parents of the man refuse to ask for the girl because they do not approve of her, then, if he still desires her, he must himself face the anger of her parents. Should he not wish to come for her, she may either remain with her family or seek work in another community. In any event, her child will be well cared for by her family, and no reproach will attach to it because of the circumstances of its birth.

585 Before a mating of any type is consummated, the familial
782 spirits must be notified of the approaching event so that they
796 may be well disposed toward it, for no union where this is neglected can enjoy happiness or peace. One Mirebalais woman was pointed out as an object lesson of the necessity of doing this. Though a devotee of several gods, neither she nor her husband was willing to perform the necessary rites for her gods before their marriage. She was suffering from an
[953] acute case of melancholia after the birth of her first child, and
[828] the prevailing opinion was that she was going mad because of the neglect of her duty toward her deities. Shortly before a woman goes to her husband, therefore, a *couvert sec* for the Rada deities is given both by herself and by her betrothed. If the family of either the young man or the woman possess deities of the powerful Péro group, more inclusive offerings

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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cattle and all other animals when the river floods. Rituals involving these larger sacrifices, however, are held only on the rarest of occasions, and are thus much less common than the ceremony which, typical of those witnessed, may now be described.

This *service* was held in a habitation southwest of Mirebalais, across the Tombe River in the foothills of the mountains. It was said to be the first ceremony of its kind given by this family, and would not have to be repeated for a generation or more. The immediate cause was the occurrence of numerous illnesses and deaths. When members independently consulted their *hungans* to discover the reason for these misfortunes, they were informed that the family *loa* demanded such a rite. Finally one priest, more powerful than the others, became possessed and described in great detail the type of ceremony that was desired: of how many days' duration, the number and kind of sacrifices, what gods were to be called, which troublesome ones must be "sent away" or "restrained," and those of the friendly *loa* who were to be fed.

The entire ritual was conducted out of doors, and at about half past four in the afternoon of Thursday, 5 July, 1934, when first seen, the *action de grâce* had already begun. It was being chanted by the *prêt' savanne*, a bespectacled, middle-aged man, who read from an old prayerbook, while the *hungan* sat quietly by. The officiant was standing in a cleared space with his back toward a grove of trees, facing the "altar." Opposite was a grassy slope, which was separated from this grove by a brook where the Malt' Source lives who watches over the habitation of the family. A white banner hung high in one of the trees a little behind the altar.

This altar, called the *trône*, was a table covered with a white cloth, spread over a frame to form a canopy sheltering its sides and back. A black cloth was beneath the white covering. Under the table a wooden bowl — a *gamelle* — contained water in which sacred leaves had been steeped; near it was a

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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845 ample, long before ordinary folk.[8] If promised offerings in the
[illegible] event of an ample harvest, their aid in bringing about this
782 desired end is even more fruitful than that of the *loa* or the
769 dead, who are therefore appealed to only indirectly.

Twins, however, are capricious beings, ready to do harm if they are not humored. Consequently, twins must be given anything they ask for, and it is especially important to provide them with the clothes they covet, when giving a *mangé maraua*. If their father fails to provide these new clothes, they
153 will *kembé* (seize) him, and he may at once have an attack of fever or a bad toothache or earache; or, more likely still, he will be seriously constipated, since this is the punishment particularly favored by the *maraua*, just as the *loa* most frequently send dysentery, and the dead cause headaches. If lack
845 of resources makes it impossible to provide what they demand,
[illegible] a painstaking explanation must be given them or they will
828 drive a person mad in the manner recounted in the following *maraua* myth:

> There were once twins, one good and one evil. They were working a field with another brother, but the evil one refused to help. The other two, therefore, said they would not give him any food. Because of this the evil twin drove the third brother insane. After they had long prayed that he reconsider, he finally agreed to restore sanity to his brother, but insisted on inflicting deafness as a punishment, so that this brother was deaf until he died.

845 At the birth of twins, special "twin plates" are provided
778 when their birth is announced to the *loa* — either before or
769 after their Church baptism — where offerings to the spirits of twins are placed. Usually paired, the plates may be three in number, in which case the third is for the *dosu*, the child born after twins, who is believed to be even more powerful than twins themselves and is thus an important figure in the cult.

2: Courlander 5-5 (1937-1948) 1960 SV3 Hahl SV3

776 Another factor that may explain some of the confusion over which rites a loa is attached to is the concept of the *escorte*, a kind of army or association of loa which may include deities of different nations. In discussing the loa Wanilé, for example, one Haitian noted:

"Wanilé is neither Rada nor Dahomé, but Pétro. She is an escorte, and she walks with Dahomé. In the escorte, Dahomé and Pétro walk together. A big loa—a loa with a big name—has many other loa who walk with him. In an escorte there are twenty-one in all. The escorte has a chief, and under the chief there are soldiers—that is, smaller loa who must do what the chief says.

776 754 "For example, a man goes to a houngan and gets him to send a strong loa against you to hurt you in some way—to make you sick or lose your crop. Your own loa may be a strong one, but the houngan has sent a still stronger one against you, and so your own loa can't really protect you. So he will go away and send in his place one of his escorte. This smaller loa is not as strong perhaps as the one he is replacing, but he is stronger in that the houngan did not calculate on him. He has certain abilities which he can use to help you. And it isn't suspected that he is your protector. So in this way he is in a better position than your own loa.

776 "The smaller loa go together in an escorte. Many people may have a certain loa, and he is busy all the time. If someone needs him and he can't go, he will send one of his escorte, the next one below him.

776 753 754 "If you are made sick by a loa, there are so many in his escorte you don't know which one made you sick, so you can't do anything about it. It is difficult sometimes to identify the loa that is hurting you. You really have to dig to find out who he is. You have to give a *mangé*. There is a big ceremony, and you have to be bought back from the loa. But some loa who are persecuting you won't sell you back. They won't go away. Rather than leave you alone they would see you die. Perhaps the person who sent this loa against you sent him to kill. If your own loa can't protect you he will send one of his escorte to do it. *Gainyain connain passé connain* [There is knowledge that surpasses knowledge]. *Si fer pas coupé fer, machoquette pas gainyain travaille* [If iron didn't cut iron, the blacksmith would have no work to do]."

776 This concept of the escorte, some of whose members may be Rada and some Pétro, helps to explain why certain deities are identified with rites [801] of different "nations." For the Haitian himself it provides a way of accounting for "families" that have grown beyond the ritual number seven. Yet there are some Haitians who declare that every member of an escorte is simply a different manifestation of a single deity.

800 The loa, like the rites, vary somewhat according to region and to the

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1953) 1960 SV3 HaRi SV3

beyond the obvious fear of contagion. In his study of Dahomey, Herskovits notes: 766 [171]

> . . . Small-pox is believed to be sent as a punishment for grave offenses in the eyes of these [the Sagbata] deities, and it is taken to indicate that either the dead person himself or a member of his family has committed some heinous crime such as the practice of black magic. A person who dies of small-pox may only be buried after permission has been given by the chief priest of the Earth cult.[20]

Thus, in Haiti, though the connections with the past are clouded, it is clear that victims of lightning and smallpox are treated as a special class of criminals or malefactors. 174 753 767 766

Ordinary malefactors such as malevolent criminals and murderers—until recent years, at least—were not buried in the common graveyard. They, too, were segregated at the periphery of the cemetery or buried at the edge of a trail or road where the traffic would not permit them to rest and where their graves would be under constant surveillance. The roadside grave sometimes was also the fate of a person killed by lightning. 766

That these special burials are related to the Dahomean and Yoruban concepts of retribution for crimes against the deities is supported by the similarity of treatment accorded victims of lightning and disease and common criminals. In Haiti, Herskovits observes: "Those who die of small-pox or leprosy, suicides, or persons shot as a punishment for crime are not buried in the communal cemetery, but in special sections of the graveyard," the suicides and criminals being set apart from the others.[21] 761 753 767 [174] [171] 781 [762]

Graves found near the seashore, lake shores, or riverbanks frequently are declared to belong to persons who died of drowning. 766

Approximately nine days after a person's death, the "last prayers" are said, and the soul of the deceased is presumed to have departed from the house. Once more, under the tonnelle outside there are games, storytelling, and singing. On this night, however, there is also drumming and dancing of a special kind. Usually it is the Juba, or Martinique, dance, which is believed to be specially enjoyed by the dead, and it is the older people, rather than the young, who participate. These festivities are believed to give cheer to the deceased and to "encourage" him on his way. On the next night comes the mangé mort, the feast for the family dead, a ritual which continues periodically through the years. 765 53 [775] [524] [769]

Sometimes in Haiti you may come upon an old tomb or grave before which a dish of specially prepared food has been set. This is part of the mangé mort ritual. 764 769

A man may make provision in advance of his death for the rites which follow his burial. He may designate special animals to be killed, leave 763 764

[20] [Ibid., pp. 397–398. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.—Analyst]

[21] [Herskovits, Life in a Haitian Valley, p. 214. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.—Analyst]

Z: Courlander B-6 (1937-1945) 1968 SV2 Haiti SV3

to "eat" people; that is, to destroy them. To do this he employs such means as disease, insanity, and destruction of crops. If a man serves Pinga Maza well, the loa protects him in return; but for those who anger him, Pinga is a menacing and vengeful creature. People often say, "Pinga, c'est djab" (Pinga is a devil).

The Pinga hounfor in Port-au-Prince is called the *Société de la Belle Jeune Fleur*. Its peristyle is simple and is hardly distinguishable from those of other small hounfors. Around the base of the center pole is a three-foot-high wall of masonry, decorated with simple cult symbols. The outer room of the hounfor proper also resembles many another. The familiar pot têtes containing loa stand on a wooden altar, and there are Catholic lithographs on the walls. But the inner room belongs exclusively to Pinga Maza. Here are all the accoutrements and objects sacred to the deity. Everything is red. Pinga's clothing and kerchiefs are red. On the walls are painted esoteric designs—hands, skulls, and crosses—all in red. The bottles, magic bundles, and govis on the altar are decorated with red cloth, ribbons, or paint. In the middle of the earthen floor is embedded a heavy wooden cross. On each end of the crossbeam hangs a large calabash resembling a bulbous hand. And on top of the upright is affixed a human skull. The total impression of this hounfor is that of a bizarre aberration, calculated to intimidate and terrify. The houngan himself is relatively young, literate, and city wise. His personality is smooth and sharp, and he lacks the air of sincerity and easy simplicity which most often characterizes the houngan of the mountains.

In this inner room, before the skull and the cross, there took place a small service for a client, to determine what kind of magic was needed to fend off malevolent actions of an enemy. On the day of the divining session, there hung from the rafters of the tonnelle a long rope, which extended into a deep hole in the earth near the door. Hanging on the rope, down inside the hole, were two gray dolls tightly bound together. Hanging still farther down were a knife, a fork, and other, unidentifiable objects. This cluster of magic paraphernalia was an *expédition* at work; it was an elaborate pouin, which was working against an enemy who lived far away.

Before entering the hounfor, the houngan took a long rope whip from the wall and cracked it seven times before the door. This process, known as *frete cache*, was to "wake up" the loa within. The houngan then entered, followed by the client who was seeking help. They paused briefly in the outer room, where the houngan took up his asson and bell and made a small vèvè on the ground. He spoke briefly in *langage* and then passed on through the door to the inner room. There the

does not marry his horse. People marry people. Loa marry loa. A man may have a compact with a loa. That is not a marriage. Some of the things that are going on down there in the Plain are not right. They are not the old way. In the old days we did things differently. We did not always run to the houngan. The grand famille knew how to talk to the loa. Up here we don't do things the way they do them down below in the city. People marry people. Loa marry loa."

Nevertheless, the practice in the neighborhood of Port-au-Prince and the Cul-de-Sac Plain is for mystic marriages to take place when deemed useful, essential, or unavoidable. Foremost among the loa involved in these rites is Èzilie Wèdo, the "pure" one, the deity of love, sometimes identified with the Virgin Mary. Other loa known to have taken part in mystic marriages are Damballa, Ogoun, Ayida, Agwé, Gèdé Nimbo or one of his brothers, Ossain Zaka, and Général Clermeil. All these loa—significantly, I think—have clearly defined personalities; much is known about their character and behavior, their likes and dislikes.

A man married to Èzilie has special obligations to her for the duration of his life. On certain days (especially Thursday, which is sacred to this deity), the mortal "husband" may not have sexual intercourse, even though he has a human wife.

Circumstances leading to a mystic marriage vary widely, but in each case it is a cult priest who determines whether the rites should be held. Perhaps a person has been afflicted with a series of illnesses or misfortunes. He goes to his houngan, who begins a series of communications with the client's loa or with his own. Sometimes many loa are consulted before the desired information is available. Eventually it is determined that a certain deity, for reasons which may or may not be clear, wishes to have nuptial ties with the client. The illnesses or misfortunes that have been sent are a means of informing or warning the person concerned.

Sometimes the houngan relies on well-established divining methods to ascertain the cause of the difficulties. He may employ the *gramb* (a shell that slides on a string), ashes, or small shells that are thrown on the ground. Or he may rely on possession by a loa to provide the information.

If it is found that a loa is demanding marriage, arrangements are then made. The rites that follow may take place in a hounfor or at the house of the human bride or groom. Both a prêt' savane and a houngan officiate.

The person directly involved, like the loa, usually has something to gain from a mystic marriage. For one thing, he can reasonably expect

2: Courlander 8-4 (1937-1953) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

special future help and consideration from the loa (including the cessation of the illnesses or other misfortunes that have led to the marriage). A man (or woman) united with a loa in "matrimony" is "stronger" (*plus fort*) in his relationship to his environment and to other people. For this reason, the initiative for a mystic marriage does not always come from a loa. An ambitious person may seek such a marriage to strengthen his hand, to provide protection against other deities or human enemies, or to gain wealth or position. One observer, Odette Mennesson Rigaud, expresses the opinion that in such instances the marriage "is no longer a religious union of mystic love, but a magic pact."[10] The implicit element of "pact" is so evident in all mystic marriages, even when the initiative comes from the loa, that the distinction is not easily appreciated. However, persons suspected of "pushing" for a marriage with a loa are regarded as presumptuous or reckless, and often they are believed to have hidden motives. It is felt by many that the benefits of such a union can be only temporary and that catastrophe will ultimately follow. 588 554

A human party to marriage with a loa is deeply committed. He is subject to jealousy and anger on the part of his mystic mate. His behavior in the hounfor as in his daily life must be beyond the loa's reproach. He must avoid possession by other loa. And he must fulfill endless obligations. Sometimes the prospect of such binding ties is more than a man (or woman) is ready to face, and through the intercession of a strong houngan the loa may be induced to withdraw his demand for marriage. In that event, a special service is held, in the course of which the person buys his freedom with promises of special gifts and feasts for the deity. 588 782 787

One young man I knew was caught in a special dilemma—the houngan and the loa on one side, the Protestant Church on the other. The man, named Maurice, came from the mountains near Léogane. He was married but had no children. His wife's family, still living in Léogane, was Protestant. Maurice himself was a follower of Vodoun, and nominally a Catholic. When his wife was afflicted with a long series of headaches and earaches, Maurice consulted a houngan of Port-au-Prince. The houngan said that the loa Ayida Wèdo was demanding marriage with Maurice, and that the wife's illnesses were an indication of jealousy. 159 588 753

At the same time, the wife's parents came from Léogane and insisted that the girl's illnesses were brought about by God because Maurice was a follower of Vodoun. They demanded that he sever all his connections with Vodoun and become a Protestant.

After considerable anxiety, Maurice "purged" himself of Vodoun and [783]

[10] [Odette Mennesson Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Voudoun Loa", in Appendix A of Deren, Divine Horsemen, p. 264. Cf. p. 351, category 116. -- Analyst]

159 joined the Protestant Church. Subsequently his wife's illnesses subsided somewhat, but she never bore children. Maurice suspected that the latter misfortune was the result of his spurning his mystic suitor.

588 The actual ceremonies by which a mystic marriage is performed carry over many of the customs and trappings of ordinary mortal marriages. (1973) The petit savane reads prayers and officiates until the two parties are deemed wed. The loa is represented by a "stand-in," usually a person possessed by the loa and dressed in appropriate garb. Gold wedding rings are placed upon the fingers of the couple. There are wedding cakes and wedding contracts. Nothing appropriate to an ordinary wedding is omitted.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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the struggle for independence, threw themselves against the formidable weapons of the whites. Whenever in spite of the drogue a man was wounded, there was always the explanation of other potent magic, never a surrender of the belief in drogues. Tradition has it that Christophe wore a drogue giving him immunity against all but silver bullets, and that he kept a silver bullet for suicide in case the need should arise—as it did. Drogues were worn by the caco guerrillas, active from 1919 to 1922, who harassed the Marines during the Occupation of the country. 789 751

Such forms of magic are found among practically every known folk. There are traces of charms in the folklore of most "civilized" people, as well as in actual, if secret, use by many apparent sophisticates.

The next commonest application of magic has to do with disease. Haiti is a poor and prevailingly illiterate country in which there are not enough trained medical doctors to serve adequately even the small population of the towns. People who live in the secluded valleys and on the mountainsides receive practically no medical attention. The disease rate if accurate figures could be obtained would certainly be shockingly high, with hookworm and malaria all but universal, and yaws, elephantiasis, and tuberculosis common. In the case of disease and its treatment, it is fair to say that the Haitian peasant is typically primitive. 759 164 758

Sickness is thought to be caused either as a punishment or a warning by one of the loa, or by evil magic wrought by one's enemies. When a man falls ill, therefore, he sends for the specialist, whether houngan, bocor, or caplata, to discover the responsible loa; next, he must learn whether the loa is angry with him, and if so, for what reason; if it is found that the loa is acting through magical compulsion of an enemy, the treatment of the disease will be different from the case of a loa acting without human compulsion. An angry spirit can be appeased by proper sacrifices; a spirit acting as an agent of evil magic must be fought by another spirit, compelled by the countermagic of the patient's specialist. Sometimes the countermagic is simple exorcism by spells and incantations. At other times it is highly involved and dangerous, requiring exotic plants, continuous attention, even illegal practices such as mutilating a corpse. Casual observation might fail to detect the magical element in some of the operations, for they resemble merely the brews or applications of old wives' tales. 753 755

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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So it had been with the subject peoples of the island ever since its discovery. The Spaniards introduced a wide variety of European diseases to Española (an epidemic of smallpox in 1500 was estimated to have killed 200,000 Indians in the island) which did not disappear as the Indians gave way to Negroes. Three centuries of the slave trade brought blacks from many parts of Africa, and with them most of the deadliest plagues of that continent. During the flourishing days of French control over Saint-Domingue, Negro slaves were afflicted by a wide variety of diseases, the commonest being yaws, tetanus, intestinal worms, malaria, leprosy, smallpox, and scrofula, although others were certainly not absent. Only to yellow fever, probably brought with them from Africa, did the blacks seem to develop a certain immunity. Most plantations had a doctor in attendance, but medical skill during the eighteenth century was not advanced enough to cope successfully with scourges whose cause was then unknown.

After freedom there were fewer doctors than ever, less sanitation, and a worse diet. When a person was ill, his one alternative to suffering the disease to take its course was to consult the Vodun priest, for the commonly accepted explanation of disease was a spiritual one. If God (that is, the Christian God) had sent the illness, nothing could be done except to bear it, for God's will was unalterable; if it were the result of magic worked by some enemy, the identity of that enemy and the magical means used must be ferreted out so that countermagic might be employed. Vodun practitioners were, indeed, quite as important in their rôle of healing as in performing strictly religious rites. In the course of their efforts to cure disease they often stumbled upon homely but effective cures; no doubt also the mental effect of the patient's faith sometimes helped him to recover, even when the medicines administered had no specific value.

The "triple threat" to Haitian health is the morbid group: malaria, hookworm, and yaws. The first two are familiar enough in parts of the United States, and require only short comment. For centuries malaria has sapped the vitality of people in southern lands, giving them a reputation for indolence which is not wholly deserved. Haitian peasants were during the entire nineteenth century accused of laziness; when a strapping man lay all day in the shade of a tree, it was logical enough for a white visitor to suppose that he was willfully loafing. The critics might have been more temperate if they had known what it was to be perpetually full of malaria, with a body

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a mat or a cloth, supported in a reclining position with pillows 844
and cloths, or on a covered box standing about a foot from the ground, with her legs drawn up. No fire is built in the house, all doors and windows are tightly shut, and covers are provided against a chill. A candle stands lighted at the threshold, [788]
and holy water is poured beside it; a candle is also often [782]
lighted in the church before the statue of the saint who corresponds to the *vodun* deity under whose protection the woman in labor is thought to be. In the room with her is the midwife and as many as six, seven, eight, or nine older women belonging to the families of the woman and her husband. The hands of the woman are made to rest on her knees, but where labor is prolonged, her arms are supported above her head to afford relief. She is three times given very hot tea or a drink made of [759]
the stewed leaves of the mango tree and of the *bois lait*. The midwife, with palm oil on her hands, watches the rhythm of labor and presses on the abdomen to facilitate delivery.

If it becomes evident that this will be difficult, a *vodun* 845
priest is at once called to determine by divination whether or 793
not the deities who have been propitiated are satisfied. If the 787
answer is a negative one, he promises future sacrifices or gives 782
minor offerings immediately. Care is also taken to ascertain [775]
whether the trouble is due to the discontent of the family dead who may have been angered by neglect to wear mourning for them, or because sacrifices or a *service* due them have been delayed too long. Inquiries are similarly made to determine whether the spirits of twins might not be displeased, [754]
while the possibility that evil magic may have been invoked is not overlooked, especially if the husband has several wives. If the inquiry shows that the magic of a co-wife was responsible, a strong counter-charm is made at once. Should the woman in 845
labor eventually die, however, her death is not considered to 766
be the result of any act of infidelity on her part, and does not, as in other Negro cultures, prevent the usual burial and mourning customs being carried out.

L: Herskovits E-4,5 (1930) 1937 EV3 Hdd EV3
Mimeograph

curred during the night, they wait for daylight. Salt is added to the hole, "so that the evil eye cannot take it (for magic purposes); for with salt it spoils very quickly." Neither the hole nor its contents are held to be of future importance, and though the child may be shown where the cord and placenta were buried, by that time nothing will remain of it which might be of use to a maker of charms. After three or four days the cord falls off and muscat powder is applied to heal the wound cleanly. The bit of cord is saved, and if the child becomes ill, this is boiled and the water given as a drink. Occasionally an entire umbilical cord is dried and retained; and one woman spoke of the cord of her mother as still being in existence.

The mother is also bathed in water in which calabash leaves and other ingredients have been steeped, and after being carefully dried, a band is tightly tied about her abdomen to give her support. A cloth is placed to cover the vagina, which is not cleaned until the following day, though after that the vaginal region is washed twice daily for some forty days. Red wine is given to women immediately after delivery to sustain them until food can be prepared. Bananas, salt fish, milk, chocolate, and a dish of stew made of chicken and rice are offered, and in most instances the women eat heartily.

The cloths used during childbirth are carefully guarded, the woman herself or a trusted member of her family seeing to the task of washing them, so as to prevent their being used for evil magic. If a miscarriage occurs, the fetus is buried in a hole dug in the floor of the woman's house while the woman herself is bathed and otherwise cared for as in the case of a normal delivery.

A woman is usually up and about three or four days after the birth of her child, or sooner if there is no one to help her with her household duties, in which case she may even be obliged to perform the heavy work of going to the river for water within the week, though she is careful not to bend down

L: Herskovits B-4,8 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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846 or to get her feet wet. When possible, however, she waits for from fifteen to twenty days before doing this kind of work, and, in any event, she will not bathe in cold water until more than a month has passed. A week or two after giving birth she may resume her selling in the market, and two months after her child is born she will take up work in her garden.[8]

852 [851] During this period of the mother's recovery the child is ritually introduced to his world and to the spirits which govern it. Three or four days after the cord drops, the midwife, water and a candle in hand, presents the child to the sun and the four corners of the earth, speaking an invocation which none but women of this profession may know or hear spoken. The child is then carried into the courtyard before the house, though he may not be taken elsewhere for as many as three weeks. When he is taken across the threshold for the first time, he is cradled in the left arm of the one who carries him; in the left hand water is held, while the right hand holds a lighted candle. Water is thrown in three directions, outward from the door and to each side of it, as the child is taken about the outside of the house. This rite is repeated by everyone present at the time, but water is "thrown" only once.

854 [189] Though it is said by some that a child is not given a charm immediately after birth unless it is ill, it is nevertheless customary to place a cord about the neck of an infant on the day it is born, to remain there until some three or four years later, when it wears out and is lost. There is no difference of opinion, however, on the point that if a baby falls ill soon after birth, steps must be taken to give it spiritual protection. A [193] [194] vodun priest is called to make a charm for it to wear, while, in addition, another charm is placed in the house to guard its inhabitants against "all bad things," such as the evil eye—since this tends to give babies convulsions—demons, were-854 [154] wolves, or the "little folk" who bring bad magic. A *jok* against harm resulting from even unconscious envy is also provided, since an individual who admires a baby because of

L: Hambartin E-4, 6 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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its good health or good looks or some other attribute may unwittingly bring harm to it. For such reasons the child is often burned slightly on the cheek, a ritual carried out by the *vodun* priest in order that the scar may "give one with evil intentions toward the child an 'occupation' to divert his attention, that would otherwise be devoted to carrying out some evil design."

There is some question as to whether, as in so many Negro cultures, the child is given a special name at birth which is regarded as sacred and a thing to be concealed. In one instance it was stated that while one's "real" name was that given at the time of the Church baptism, everyone has a "nickname" (*petit nom*) that is known to the father and mother alone until the child is old enough to guard its secret character. This name is never spoken aloud, for if an enemy came to know it, he might use it for purposes of black magic against its owner. However, no agreement exists in Mirebalais as to this practice, which may represent a survival of a widespread West African custom.[5]

A child born with a caul is believed to be "strong" in combating all evil spirits. The caul is dried and reduced to powder, and the infant is given some of the powder in water two or three days after birth. If a child is born with the navel cord wrapped about his throat, he is believed by some to be destined for leadership, though others do not hold this to be a significant omen. A child born feet-foremost is regarded with distaste, so that where possible, he is turned about in the womb to facilitate a head presentation. If this cannot be done, the child when he grows up is reproached: "You came like a demon." More often, however, if a child with breech presentation is not stillborn, it is not believed that he will long survive. All such occurrences are attributed to bad magic, and the husband does not delay to seek out a diviner to discover for him what supernatural forces had caused the evil.

Breast-feeding begins on the third day, but if the milk does

not come, the mother goes to a woman specialist who knows the herbs which are believed to induce the flow. When the mother is ill or tubercular, the infant is given to a wet-nurse. Once he has begun to nurse, he is fed whenever he cries, and as soon as he can sit up he is given the same food as the mother eats. For the first two or three months after the birth of her child a woman refrains from eating egg-plant, fresh fish — although she may eat salt fish — white beans or any others larger than Congo peas, pork, lard, and all fruit. The ears of a female child are pierced when she is about a month old for the gold ear-rings which are worn by girls and women of all ages. If the parents cannot afford them at the time, however, thread is placed in the holes until a sum sufficient to provide this important trinket has been accumulated.

A child is taught to sit up beginning with the end of the third or fourth month, and by the time he is six or seven months old he can sit quite well; girls are believed to be more precocious than boys in acquiring this skill. When about ten months old, or sooner, an older sister, a little girl, or the father or mother takes the child by the hand and teaches him to walk, later allowing him to hold one end of a stick for support. A child is never left alone, for fear of the evil eye or of werewolves, so that a mother does not even cross the threshold of her house without taking her baby with her, while if for some reason she cannot avoid leaving her child while she is in the yard, an empty bottle is placed near its pillow as a protective device. Teething is a matter of importance, since the attitudes of the parents toward a child may be determined by the first teeth to appear. If these are cut in the upper jaw, it is said that the child's mother will survive his father, and when this occurs, the mother takes every precaution to conceal the fact from her husband, so he will not hate the child. Others hold, however, that the appearance of an upper tooth first denotes that either the father or the mother is soon to die.*

Instruction starts early in the life of a child. Beginning with

L: Herskovits E-4, 8 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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[595 593] market place, quarreling is invariably heard; or if one of them sings *point* — derisive songs — against the other and goes so far as to name the object of derision, fighting and court action follow.

[595 594] Though many cases of *plaçage* are the result of affairs between young people which result in conception, it is essential in any event that the consent of the families of the man and the woman concerned be obtained to give the mating social validity. When the union is once entered upon, divorce occurs only with the abandonment or mistreatment of the woman, or her infidelity, for in these *plaçage* matches, the moral support of her family makes a man reluctant to send his wife away without ample justification. When a man does divorce a *placée* wife for reasons of infidelity, she may either go to another man or return to the home of her parents, where she supports herself. If after a period of years she has not established a household with another man, it often happens that her husband takes her back. Most frequently, however, where children have been born to a mating, a woman's infidelity is punished merely by beating; and proof that a wife is a wife whether or not she is legally "married" is offered by the Haitian man in this fact that a *placée* is beaten for this and less serious reasons as readily as a legal wife. Prompt [1154] action is taken against the adulterer, which, though it may on occasion be as drastic as murder, generally takes the form of [848] recourse to magic charms. Women who carry on illicit relationships take all care, therefore, to guard unceasingly against the birth of offspring.

[595 593] Many men, at least, hold that a man is often much closer to a *placée* than to a legal wife, for the former is more attentive and less demanding than the wife with her legally assured status and permanence of tenure. Thus it comes about that [454] *placée* spouses are frequently given generous money gifts, to be saved for the future of their children, while as a man grows older he may take up his residence with a *placée* wife, where

Li Herskovits 8-4, 8 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the phrase: "This is natural." Children are not spaced, for normally a man resumes intercourse with his wife the second or third month after childbirth. Except for the drinking of coconut milk and salt, which is believed to be effective in preventing conception if taken before intercourse, contraceptives are not known to women, which means that pregnancies follow in rapid succession. Families are not too large, however, despite this, those numbering seven or eight children being rare, even in the hills. The reason for this is a high incidence of infant mortality, which is obvious despite the absence of vital statistics. Abortions are usually resorted to by young women, who sustain the operation done by the uncertain skill of an old woman, in the fear that bearing a child will later stand in the way of a desirable legal marriage. Some men, however, take the precaution of placing a grain of native salt on the tongue while having intercourse during an illicit affair, believing that this will be effective in preventing conception.

A childless woman first goes to a vodun priest, to have him determine by divination if a co-wife has not invoked magic against her. If her question receives an affirmative answer, she acquires a "counter-charm" to offset the effect of the other woman's magic. Should such a charm be ineffective, she would offer her prayers before the shrines of the saints and make pilgrimages to such sacred places as Saut d'Eau, there phrasing her petition to the Virgin in some manner such as the prayer overheard as a woman lighted a candle and held it in her hand before placing it on a sacred rock:

> *"Vièrge Miracles, Manman, voilà, depuis six ans depuis qui moins marié; moin apé vivre seul avec pauvre malheureux moin-a. Ça fait trois fois moin vini nan pié ou. Pas 'blié mandé moin fait ou, pour charité, moin ou petit pitite. Moin us minnin li ba ou. Moin apé parti, Manman, s' ou' pli, songé ça pitite m' mandé ou.—*

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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The cult of the dead [a] is to be differentiated from the worship of the *loa* and from the twin cult in that its African form has been modified to a far greater extent than these others by the influence of the Catholic Church. Yet, though the modes in which respect is shown the dead are principally those of the Church, the attitudes and beliefs which underlie the cult —the meticulousness with which the tranquillity of the dead is insured, the fear in which they are held, and, above all, their close association with magic as an important sanction behind this force—all these take on a distinctly African tinge. Perhaps the point of view taken toward the dead, and the manner in which the living cope with their power, can best be set forth at the outset by giving a sketch of the pattern of funerary and post-funeral rites, since these form the basis of the entire cult. 769 177

Wailing by all present begins with the approach of death. There are cries such as: "*Adieù, bon Dieu, Manman ma-o, wai, wai! Jodi-a tel-ei-tel quitté mouwi! Côté m'ap wé li enco'?* —Good-by, O good God, O my mother, *wai, wai!* Today such-and-such a one has died! Where will I see him again?" The members of the family tie white or black kerchiefs about their waists, while others present use kerchiefs of any color at hand. The doors of any *humfort* or *maison de servitude* in the habitation are closed, and thorny acacia branches are placed in front of them, so that the dead, who are believed to go about everywhere, cannot "spoil" the sacred place by entering it. 763 764 [346]

The body is laid in a shallow trench dug in the floor of the room, and there washed and prepared for the funeral by a professional *baigneur des morts*—man or woman according to the sex of the dead—and his assistants. Some member of the family watches them to see that the "three drops" of moisture believed to be in every dead person's mouth are not caught on a cloth when the body is turned over, for they are held to have great potency for the working of black magic, and a sorcerer would give a great deal for them. Cold water, 764 [194]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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764 to which orange leaves and alcohol have been added, and soap are used to bathe the corpse, though limes are substituted for orange leaves if the dead was tubercular.[4] In earlier days cao-
[198] lin (white lime) — sacred in Africa — was mixed with the water, but this is no longer done. The corpse is turned on its face to permit the washing of side and back, and the body is dried with a towel, while the soiled water is either thrown into a small ravine or into a hole dug for the purpose.

764 The corpse is next dressed in new clothing, unless the one
775 who died owned a wardrobe which included black garments. No buttons or pins are used on new clothes, which are sewn into place, and if the body is dressed in clothing he wore while alive, the pockets are torn so that nothing can be
[198] carried away in them. Shoes were at one time put into the coffin — or sandals in the country — beside the dead, rather than on his feet, so that he would not be tempted to walk, but today in Mirebalais and the surrounding country the dead are buried barefoot or in stocking feet, since, as it was explained, "otherwise they make too much noise as they go about." Black stockings are always used. In the coffin are placed a rosary, a scapulary, soap, a comb, a handkerchief, a pipe (if the dead had been a smoker), and face powder; but no strong drink is included because, were the spirit of the dead person to become drunk, this would be dangerous; and no money, for if so much as a single sou were given the dead, he would return and take the rest of the family wealth. Similarly no food is put in the coffin, for otherwise it is believed that the ghost would be so busy eating he would never find the route to the sky. Pins are carefully excluded, because if the dead were given sharp objects, he would return to prick
764 the family. If it is suspected that death had been caused by
775 sorcery, and the soul of the dead may later be taken to aid in
● 754 working black magic, some plants of the type called *hoholi*
824 are placed in the coffin with the body. These plants are said to contain so many seeds that since one who comes to take the

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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dead must first count them, he can never accomplish this before daylight. From these precautions, it is evident that for the Haitian the reality of existence after death is no fictional one, as is even more vividly illustrated in the answer given to the question whether or not a flute, such as young boys play, would be placed in the coffin of a lad: "What! And have the dead going about all the time blowing it?"

When dressed, the body is placed on a mat or mattress or in a hammock and covered with a clean cloth. A *bande de machoire*, which goes under the chin and over the head to hold the jaw in place, in earlier days, as today in remote sections of the valley, served the double purpose of making possible the identification of a ghost as such, and of keeping the moisture inside the mouth. At present, however, it is usually removed when the body is placed in the coffin. In earlier times also, as today among the peasants in the hills, the nostrils and ears were plugged with cotton. The body and head are shaved of all hair, and the finger- and toe-nails clipped; hair and clippings are later placed in the coffin and buried with the body. The eyes usually close naturally; it is a bad sign if they do not, indicating, as it does, that magic has caused death. Putrefaction, or any unusual sign connected with death such as when a cadaver swells, or a body remains warm and perspires, or, as mentioned, when the eyes remain open, is held to be an indication that the soul has been taken by a sorcerer and the person "sold"—all signalling a "bad" death and requiring that a dagger be struck into the body and burial take place immediately.

Some time later, the *prêt savanne* comes to read prayers if the death has occurred in the countryside, or the priest of the local Catholic church if in the town or near it. After the prayers have been said and relatives and friends have addressed the dead and "given him commissions," such as "Say good-day to my mother," "Ask my father to help us, for the weather has been bad this year for the crops . . ." the body is

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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789 from its ill effects after the evil has been exorcised, must also
know the forces they are combating if they are to achieve any
789 measure of success. By the same token, practitioners of black
791 magic must know what steps may be taken to counteract their
793 *wangas* so that, if necessary, they can in turn call forth super-
754 natural emissaries to strengthen the evil impulses originally
756 set in motion. In this sense, therefore, the *hungan*, the *gan-gan*, the *bocor*, and the *caplata* employ essentially the same techniques and operate with the same forces, the difference between them being one of degree rather than of kind. "*Hungan, c'est magazin. Gaigné un pile marchandise* — The *hungan* is like a shop. He has a lot of merchandise," says the
[538] Haitian, quoting a well-known proverb as he makes the point.

In the main, it can be said that though the *hungan* and the *gangan* practice magic, their main preoccupation is with the *loa* — the maladies they send to affect a man and his possessions — while the *bocor* is concerned almost exclusively with setting in motion the agents that actuate black magic, and the
789 *caplata* dabbles in anything that is wanted. One important
776 means whereby the sorcerer obtains his powers is the evil *loa*,
791 but there is this essential difference between them: the gods
793 of the *hungan* are family gods who come to him through the
754 natural course of inheritance, endowing him with the *connais-*
776 *sance* that gives him his control over the supernatural world,
425 while the *bocor* buys his gods. And when a god is bought, it is always acquired so as to enhance the position of its owner at all costs, despite the knowledge that the power thus purchased is dearly bought, bringing its own eventual punishment. Sometimes an ambitious *hungan* adds to his familial *loa* other "purchased" gods, but this is resented by the deities who have given him his powers, so that in time these benevolent powers take all means to humble and crush him. Furthermore, gods acquired in this way pass on to unwilling members of their owner's family and, after a generation or two of mischief-
000 making, must be "restrained" or "banished." A number of

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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points — or oblique designations — makes clear the distinction between the two, for the *bocor* invariably and certain *hungans* on occasion are called *nèg' mazi maza*, "Negro who wears his back to the front," or, again, those who "serve with both hands." Though by no means shunning the services of the practitioner, the Haitians of Mirebalais nevertheless look upon the working of magic with a cynicism that is reflected in the gossip about happenings that befall all who practice it, in any form, and particularly those who work evil magic. It is said: "The *hungan* often dies an evil death, and the *bocor* who makes *wanga* almost always. These people kill each other by magic"; or one hears of a woman who one day went to the cemetery to obtain materials needed for her unsavory work and was struck and killed by the thunderbolts which are believed to smite sorcerers.

To keep his reputation, a practitioner of magic, good or evil, must make continual demonstration of his powers. For example, in prescribing a magical cure, it is incumbent upon the *hungan* or *mambu* to foresee all eventualities, even where the directions are not followed, a prescription which is regarded as a strong check on the charlatan and is the reason why a practitioner is prudent in refusing to accept a case beyond his power to aid, since persistent failure to achieve cures will lose a *hungan* his reputation and his practice. Naturally, certain practitioners do not fail on occasion to turn the anxiety of a family over a serious illness to their own account, but inasmuch as the cures made by a man are the most adequate proof of his power, the feeling is that his clients have an unquestioned safeguard against chicanery. This point of view, it may be noted, is of undoubted importance in perpetuating a living faith in magic.

An example of how rapidly a practitioner of magic can lose prestige when some mishap occurs to him was encountered when an important *gangan* of the valley was brought into court charged with the theft of a pig which he claimed was

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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it possible for the owner to go to war without being harmed. 789
Even were the possessor of such a *drogue* to be struck by a bullet, the wound would be a minor one; while the thrust of a machete or saber would leave him unscathed, poison placed in drink or food would be impotent, and a trap set against the warrior would be ineffective. Some *drogues*, it is held, allow the owner to disappear when trapped by enemies. For such an [784] important *drogue* a special day, designated by its maker, is [834] set aside for the observance of certain taboos, the most important being the requirement of sexual abstinence on that day.[8] Some men possess as many as seven of these *drogues*, in which case one day every seventh week is reserved for each. Said a man who had taken part in the rebellion of 1918–20 against the Marine occupation: "I have a small, small *drogue*. I had it in the Caco fighting. I have need of a big one." When it was observed that there is no more fighting in Haiti, the reply came promptly: "A man must be prepared. Nobody knows what will come."

The grandfather of this man was said by him to have owned 789
a *drogue* which came from Guinée. He knew how to resuscitate 754
those who had met their death from unnatural — magical — causes; he had only to come to the *barrière* before the house where the body lay, call the name of the victim, and the dead would arise. He was once attacked when he was returning home with a purse filled with money he had won at cards, and his assailants beat him to death and threw him into a well. The next morning, when he was found, he revived in a few moments and asked to be buried beside the well. The following day one of the men who had assaulted him died; the next day another died, and so for five days, until all of them were dead.

Love-charms form an important category of good magic, as 832
also charms to aid in selling in the markets or in keeping a job or to hold the affection of a spouse. Old men are believed 789
to have important magical powers for good, and one such 888

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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[789 [888] person of great experience was pointed out who was believed able to stop a runaway horse without putting a finger on him. One widely spread type of charm is an *arrêt* against the *mal jok*, or evil eye. Mention has been made of protective charms when the measures taken to guard growing crops were discussed, and also in connection with safeguarding the well-being of infants. The power in this latter type of *garde* often is made to reside in a seed on a string or chain, or a cross of beads sewed on cloth, to represent the four corners of the earth.

789 793 Because charms are the outer symbols of magic, detailed examples of their making will give insight into the nature of charms in general. The first of these which may be described [829] was a *garde*, made by a *mambu*, to relieve a pregnant woman [787] whose milk had begun to flow before the birth of her child [954] — a sign that an evil spirit had been sent her by an enemy, and that her delivery would therefore be fraught with danger. [787] During the séance the *mambu* was continuously possessed by her god, Ogun, whose identity was shown by her whistling. Before the *mambu* as she commenced her incantation were some *clairin*, lighted red candles, a new piece of soap, incense, sulphur, garlic, light brown shoemaker's thread, an empty bottle, a bottle filled with a green, evil-smelling lotion called *baigne de mambu*, a chick, and three iron nails. As she tied the cord in knots she muttered her spell; then, taking the empty bottle, she put in it a bit of the incense, sulphur, garlic, some soap, some *clairin*, and some *baigne de mambu*. With the knotted cord she tied a cross made of two nails to the neck of the bottle, repeating her formula before she put it down. Instructing the pregnant woman to take the bottle, she said: "Speak into it and say everything you wish."

[825] She then took the chick, opened its beak, and wrote on it with a pencil, continuing the incantation the while. With the pencil she also made marks on the thighs, the wings, the upper joints, and the leg joints before she handed it to her client

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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789 177 esoteric African survivals they have been blinded to the European elements.[8] It was, as a matter of fact, well-nigh impossible to discuss magic, whether good or evil, with a native for any length of time without hearing the names of three pamphlets published in Paris, *Le Grand Albert*, *Le Petit Albert*, and *La Poule Noire*. So portentous do the folk of Mirebalais hold the information contained in these works — though actually, when read, their contents are found to include nothing more dangerous than names of the proper roots and herbs with which to concoct a love-potion, or, far more frequently, magic for preventing wine from turning to vinegar, or for enabling one to gentle a wild colt — that their importation into Haiti is said to be prohibited by law, a statement which was not checked except in so far as inquiries for the pamphlets in Port-au-Prince bookstores proved in vain. The contents of these works on magic differ but little from those of a document written in Créole, said by Seabrook, who reprinted it, to have come from the files of the Marine Corps, where it was deposited after having been taken during the rebellion of 1918–20 from the body of a fallen Caco chief known to have been a *bocor*.[9] The source of inspiration of a large number of these formulas and of many of their objectives is obviously in such European pamphlets.[10]

789 954 Turning now from the more passive, protective, and socially desirable forms of magic, a similar analysis may be made of its aggressive, destructive, and antisocial manifestations. That magic of this latter sort is much feared is a truism; yet that the fear of it goes as far or is as constant as most accounts of its workings state may be marked as gross exaggeration. For just as the practitioner of good magic knows how to bring about evil, so for every force that harms there is a cure, and for every *wanga* there is a *garde*.

954 777 177 The malignant powers in the world of the Haitian are, like other phases of his life, of both European and African derivation. From Europe he has taken the *démon* and the associated

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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term *loup-garou*, or werewolf. From Africa has come the concept of the *baka*, though this he has merged with that of the *démon*, and all operate through the power of Lucifer and the Devil, conceived as two separate beings. In addition, as will be seen, the cult of the dead also contributes to this system, since the *loa* who rule the cemeteries are indispensable for the practice of magic, as it bears especially on the concept of *zombi*, concerning which so much has been made in recent years.

The evil *loups-garous* are women whose real nature is revealed by their red eyes, though some hold that they have a black spot in the corner of the eye. Another word less frequently heard to designate the *loup-garou* is the Dahomean term *azeto*, employed in Africa for witches and vampires, a concept which in Haiti has become merged with that of the werewolf.[8] The *loup-garou*, with her male counterpart, the *démon*, is empowered by the *bocor*. As might be expected, she is greatly feared, and should an old woman suspected of being one of them come to a house, someone will see to it that in an adjoining room two brooms are crossed as the woman's name is pronounced three times, so that if she is actually a *loup-garou*, she cannot escape.[9] Children in particular carry counter-charms both against these women and against demons; one such, for a woman with child, has been mentioned in an earlier chapter,[10] and the making of another *garde* of this type has just been described. With a charm of this kind "you can leave at midnight for Port-au-Prince [instead of waiting for dawn] and fear nothing. You may meet a band of horned demons carrying candles in their hands, but they will stand aside and let you pass."

In Mirebalais, *baka* are usually mentioned when these evil beings are discussed, particularly since it is in connection with them that the term *engagement* is most often heard. An *engagement*, which is more feared than a *wanga*, the word usually encountered in the literature when evil magic is under discussion, designates a pledge made by a person, usually to

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"give" a collateral member of his own family to an evil spirit in return for some important gain to himself. The spirit, however, is insatiable, and never rests content with a single victim. Thus it happens that when one member of a family dies and then another, and another, the *hungans* who are consulted declare such an *engagement* to exist. As soon as this is revealed, all other members take steps to safeguard their houses spiritually — perhaps in the manner of those whose *service* was described in an earlier chapter, which, it will be remembered, was motivated by just such a discovery. Unfailingly, however, the *baka* is there at the appointed hour, clamoring for his due, and proceeds to satisfy himself by turning upon the one who has made the *engagement*, killing his own wife and children, and finally himself.

Why, knowing this, do people enter into such compacts? The answer is usually a shrug of the shoulders, or the statement that human beings are at times driven to such desperation that nothing will restrain them. "A man may even pledge half his own life." Often the reason for such a compact is a craving to advance the status of his children, and that is why when a man who has been consistently unfortunate in worldly matters suddenly becomes affluent, gossip of an *engagement* is heard. But such wealth, it is believed, "passes like the wind."

There are several types of *baka*.[11] Some go about "devouring" men — the term *mangé moun*, in Haiti as in Africa, is idiomatic for sending fatal illness or bringing about an accidental death — while others, who stay in the house of their master, go forth only to procure him riches. These latter are jealous spirits and "make their conditions" — which means that they will ultimately destroy the members of their master's family, particularly his children, or, should a man repent of his bargain and dismiss them, they will return to kill him. To bring wealth to their master, they rob others. Some believe that *baka* are *loa* who change into these creatures from time to

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time, or are animals given power as *baka* by these *loa*. The "squad" of the *baka* includes the following: 776 787 754

Ti Kita Demembré	Simbi Proméné
Ti Jean Pié Sèche	Simbi en Deux Eaux
Erzilie Gé Rouge	Simbi Troi' Z'ilé

Baka appear as small bearded human-like figures with flaming eyes, or as cattle, horses, asses, goats, bears(?), and dogs. Sheep never become *baka* because the sheep, as represented on the chromolithographs, is the animal of the Virgin and therefore cannot be a creature of evil. The mule also is never a *baka* for reasons given in the myth explaining how it came to be accursed. 776 825 [773]

> One day Jesus came down a path astride a mule. When he came to a crossroads a snake so frightened the mule that he reared on his hind legs, throwing Jesus to the ground. Jesus became angry and cursed him, saying that from that day onward mules would never bear offspring. He also cursed the snake, saying that thereafter it must forever go about on its belly.

Whether because of this or because of its long, alert ears, the mule is favored for night travel, for this animal is held able to sense these creatures of evil and give his rider warning of them. A black cat can become a *baka*, but there are also good black cats that drive away evil spirits. Even if a black cat-*baka* is sent away, nothing happens to its owner.

A *baka* named Babako, sometimes called Bakuba Baka, is believed to live in the *mapou* tree, where he is "fed" in December. "He is the chief of [evil] magic, is magic itself," it is said, and "*C'est baggai diabolique, gros baka*—he is a thing of the Devil, a great *baka*." For this reason the *mapou* tree is greatly feared, and that is why those who "serve" the gods of the *mapou* do it in secret and are dealt with circumspectly. 776 824

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Some *baka* are believed to be "doubles" of sorcerers who take animal form and roam at night doing evil. Pigs encountered at night are especially dreaded because of this, and those of a gray color, held to be more potent for evil than those of any other shade, are sedulously avoided. The tale is told of a man who, having encountered a gray pig at midnight which passed between his legs at great speed, was ill for months afterwards. It is also recounted how several men of uncommon bravery waited for one such pig and beat it, and how the next morning an old woman was found on whose bent back wounds inflicted by sticks could be seen. It is because of stories such as this that it is held important to worship the good *loa*. For if the devotee of a *loa* meets a *baka* at night, the *loa* comes to his head and the *baka* flees in terror. An autobiographical incident was related to make this point. When a lad, the man who told the tale joined his playmates in an escapade which had as its aim to frighten some young women returning home late from a *vodun* dance. Draped in white sheets they stationed themselves near a bridge, turning about before lighted candles in the ground. The young women were possessed by their *loa* the instant they caught sight of these apparitions, who promptly fled the scene to avoid capture by those who came running in reply to the songs and cries emitted by the protecting gods!

Baka are often employed to guard buried money." In this country, when you find money buried in jars, it is an affair of *baka*. There is never one jar, but always two or three, and you must call a *hungan* to find out which one you may take and which you must not touch. Generally the finder is allowed to take half of the treasure, for if he took all, he would be tormented by the *baka* who had been left as guardian." Such jars, it is said, are usually found with human bones beside them or under them, and tradition has it that the slave-owners who are believed to have been strong in magic customarily killed the most evil slave on a plantation that his spirit might keep watch over the jars. If the owner never returned, the spirit of the

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slave, as a "sold *baka*," remained to wreak vengeance upon anyone who dared disturb his charge. 776 454

The reality of the *baka* to the Haitian was made dramatically vivid by an incident involving an old blind and deaf horse. It occurred one night on the principal streets of the town of Mirebalais itself. The horse was first noticed as the sun set, groping his way along, and finally circling the turn of the road. Though people shouted at the animal, he would not give way. As darkness came and doors and windows were barred, the horse blundered into the small veranda of a house inhabited by an elderly woman, her daughter, and her grandchildren. The younger woman cried out with fright when, timidly peering about the side of the house, she saw their visitor, but the older woman, whose age made her fearless in the face of this supernatural danger, opened a window and vigorously attacked the animal with a heavy stick, while he unhurriedly tried to get clear of the blows and finally moved on to the next veranda, and so from house to house down the street. On this night the habitual tranquillity did not settle over the town, and all of the next day and many days thereafter there was quiet talk of the danger that had been abroad, and much speculation of its intended destination. 776 825

The *baka* are sometimes confused with the *démons*, as is seen in the fragmentary information that was obtained about the existence of secret societies, so feared by Mirebalais folk because of their reputation for working all kinds of evil that it was with difficulty that even the names of two of them could be learned — the "Bissago," whose members appear at night wearing horns and holding candles, and "Les Cochons sans Poils." The former, termed *démons*, are believed to be able to change into animals when they do their evil work, a feat which would seem to make them *baka*. The societies all meet in the open country at night, and each has a small drum. They are called together by the beating of one rock against another in a manner reminiscent of the Zangbeto society of Porto Novo, Dahomey. 754 776 575 [202] [171]

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754 Novo, Dahomey. The members are, of course, not known, but
776 there is always gossip, and occasionally a man, when quarrel-
575 ing, says: "Take care! You don't know who I am. . . ."

776 *Baka, loupo-garous,* and *démons* are not the only supernatural beings that a person may encounter from time to time. Though not all are creatures of magic, and not all are evil, all of them are treated with due caution. Such are the "river [193] people" — children with six fingers, who are believed to belong to the Malt' Source, the Master of the Stream, and are destined to become *hungans* — this being an example of the good that may come from such supernatural association — or persons with light hair. Those with light hair are more dangerous, however, since occasionally such folk are taken for a time under the water, the men by female spirits and the women by males. One person in Mirebalais told of a distant cousin who disappeared as she went to the river to draw water. She was mourned as dead, but returned after a year and was welcomed home. As she began to recount her adventures, however, she was struck dumb, and never recovered her speech. Another spoke of his experience as a boy with such a water-spirit, a *Maîtresse d'Eaux.* With a companion, he was walking along the bank of the Tombe River, when a woman was seen sitting on a rock combing her long light-colored hair. The other lad was invited to help her and went nearer, step by step, until, as he almost touched the comb, he turned and ran. Some time later he died.

754 Another category of spirits, already referred to in discussing
764 the cult of the dead, are *zombi.* To understand their nature,
775 however, the use of magic to bring about death or its simulacre, and the measures taken to guard against this, must be first considered. In the preceding chapter it was observed how *hoholi* seeds are placed in the coffin of one suspected of an "unnatural" death to prevent the sorcerer from reaping the [199] fruits of his deed. A cross of pine-wood, made by the *hungan* and empowered by him to repel evil, is frequently also put

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with it, or the body is made to lie face downwards in the coffin, since the discomfort of this position causes the spirit of the dead to avenge itself on the sorcerer who caused the death. When a man has been killed by magic, his surviving relatives go to a *hungan* or a *bocor* to discover the culprit. The names of those suspected of the deed are called. Before the diviner stands a pottery jar filled with magically treated water. When the unwilling image of the guilty one finally appears, the *hungan* plunges his knife into it, and as the water turns red, those watching know that when the specified number of days have passed, the guilty one will be dead.[12] Should a suspect be innocent, the image of the Virgin Mary or of St. John is sometimes seen when he is called; but if one known to be guilty does not appear, it is proof that his magic is stronger than that used to call him. Recourse is then had to a powerful *wanga*, or poison, or to the spirit of someone dead, an *âme abandonée* who has led a life of evil and himself been a murderer. "They would certainly not send the spirit of the one just killed. He is too green" — to bring death to the killer. If none of these measures prevail, no further acts of revenge are attempted against the suspect, the feeling being that he has supplied himself with too powerful magic to allow effective revenge to be taken.

On occasion, an apparent death is felt not to be a real death, but rather the simulacre of death brought about by the machination of a sorcerer. The corpse is thereupon given poison or stabbed with a dagger, to make certain that an apparent death becomes an actual one, but the person who stabs the body must stand behind it in order that the corpse as slave of the sorcerer may not reveal who had stabbed him when summoned, and thus make of the one who had robbed him of his prey a substitute victim. If poison has not been administered to the corpse, or if the body was not stabbed, after the funeral the sorcerer recovers the body, which, deprived of its soul, works for him as a *zombi*, only returning to the grave when the time decreed by God for his natural death is reached, or if he is accidentally fed salt.

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he is accidentally fed salt. Though the concept has been presented in recent years with unjustifiable sensationalism to the reading public,[55] it is indisputably a living one. One aspect of it has been responsible for much of the conviction with which positive statements are made of personal knowledge of cannibalism in Haiti, as has been shown most clearly by Dr. Parsons:

> "A *gauge* who keeps a *zombi* may transform him into a stone, perhaps in front of his house, or into any kind of animal. Transforming him into a pig or sheep or cow, he may kill him and sell him in the market. In this belief we have the basis of the gossip and court testimony about human flesh sold in the market. It is *zombi* flesh, not human flesh, that is so disposed of. But foreigners know nothing about *zombi*, nor do the native witnesses explain in court what they have in mind when they are testifying to purchases of meat from the cemetery. 'People does *eat* people at Aux Cayes, I *know* it,' said Sam, as he told of human fingernails found on pigs' feet, explaining *to my question* that the pig had been a *zombi*. Had I not followed up his first statement and learned that he had never heard of anybody killed directly for marketing, an idea which amazed him at that, I would certainly have been left with an impression of cannibalism totally misleading."[56]

Precisely the same concept exists in Mirebalais as in Jacmel, where the foregoing material was collected, except that in its elaboration it underscores the point made in the quotation just given. *Zombi* meat can be recognized by the fact that it rapidly spoils, and when cooked, brings much white foam to the top of the stew, while such meat, sold as beef, turns white like veal; all this warns against eating it, and shows the active distaste with which it is regarded. Indeed, one of the duties of a person's *loa* is said to be that of warning him when he is

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about to eat such food, for he feels a shudder pass through his body, and his arm becomes heavy, as was the case with a woman who three times dropped a piece of "beef" she was about to place in her mouth, before she realized the warning. 775 [776]

It can readily be seen how varied are the manifestations of evil magic. What are the forces behind them? What gives them power? What makes their unsavory ends possible of attainment? Their power comes from God, for, according to belief, everything comes from God, in the sense that God made the world as it exists. Therefore all beings are free to do anything they can contrive to do, though once dead they are called to account for their deeds. "Good and evil are two brothers; life and death are two brothers. All four come from God. They do not come from the *loa*." 754 771 776

But more immediately this power comes in great measure from the dead. Before a *bocor* makes a *wanga*, he asks permission of God, the Devil, Malt' Carrefour, Malt' Cimitière, Malt' Gran Bra, and Malt' d'l'Eau. Baron Samedi, perhaps the most important figure among those who aid in working black magic, lives in the cemetery. Though he is a *loa* and may possess those who appeal to him to work evil, this role is subordinate to his role as the power behind magic that kills. He controls the souls of those whose end has come as a result of magic, and when he is called at midnight, the sound of the clanking of chains is heard as he comes. He is envisaged as a dwarf. After his approval has been purchased for a projected deed, appeal is then made to Gede, for especially where it is a question of killing, though everything may have been made ready with Baron, Gede must "dig the grave." Herein lies the importance of Gede, for he is the court of last resort, the final power in matters of death. 754 776 [791]

Gede, however, is just, and even though Baron has marked a victim, Gede can refuse to concur in his decision. "If you do not merit death, Gede will refuse it," say the Haitians. It therefore sometimes comes about that though all preparations have

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been made to kill through the use of black magic. Gede refuses to "dig the grave," no matter what measures the *bocor* may take. In such a case the victim may be desperately ill, but will not die. When a *hungan* divines the cause, offerings are made to Gede for having saved him from the *magie* of Baron. For, in the final analysis, "if Gede is in accord with Baron, death can come, but if the two are not in accord, the man against whom a *wanga* has been sent will only suffer."

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culture) is used not only to point morals for the young but as an expression of the characteristically oblique forms of Negro expression in a quarrel, or in sounding a warning, or in commenting acidly on some social situation. A famous proverb, quoted from the earliest days, is today heard often in Mirebalais: "*Zafai' mouton pas zafai' cabrit*—The affairs of the sheep are not the affairs of the goat"—an injunction against gossip. When a person boasts that no one can harm him, the reply may come: "It is on a narrow path that one has to deal with a difficult horse." Should a man dismiss an experience as of but little consequence to him, he may hear the comment: "Often one pays an ox for a goat." When one person does harm to another, his victim may warn him with the phrase: "Behind the mountains are other mountains." If a man whose fortunes are flourishing attempts to console another who has suffered misfortune, or a rich man jibes at a poor one, the retort may be: "The rock under the water doesn't know how the rock in the sun suffers." To such an extent do proverbs comment on all aspects of life that almost no extended conversation occurs without them. Some of these are of European origin, but both numerically and in their use their character is preponderantly African, as is shown by their specific correspondence to proverbs used today in the regions from which the Negroes of Haiti were derived.*

In the practice of magic, and more especially of black magic, it has been noted that African and European traditions have combined into an integrated cultural unit. The outward expression of magic in the charm or "fetish" as an aspect of African life is so obvious that it has been commented on by all observers. In Haiti, though the charms are not prominently displayed and personal charms especially are worn beneath the clothing, this concept of their importance in coping with life has been retained. Yet, as has been seen, Haitian magic is not African alone. For while the forces behind protective magic are primarily the *loa*, and those behind black magic are

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789 the powers that control the souls of the dead and those creatures of evil whose powers come from Satan — all this being African enough, in the sense that evil magic exists in Africa as elsewhere — the point, which bears repetition, is that the primary sanctions for evil magic have been reinforced by the books of magic handed down from medieval Europe.

789 In this system, however, not only do European books of magic figure, but the Church also has its place. "The things of the Church are always affairs of magic," remarked one Haitian, meaning that they are best adapted to this purpose and are used when the opportunity is had. It is for this reason that great care is taken to keep all sacred objects in churches from the hands of unauthorized persons. To have something that has come from a church, such as a bit of a priest's robe or a few splinters from the statue of a saint, enlists the power of these on behalf of any objective that the maker of magic has in view, and invests any *garde* made with these with the power of God Himself. Thus the twofold meaning of the proverbs [539] "*Vrai waré corde, vrai wanga, c'est l'Eglise* — The real tying of the cord, the true *wanga*, is the Church," or, similarly: "*Vrai hungan c'est l'Église* — The true *hungan* is the [754] Church." However, whether it be through such African-like practices as the use of colored cloth, or caolin, or the tying of knots, or whether objects filched from the sanctuary of the church be employed, evil magic, derived alike from African and European sources, continues as a potent force of Haitian peasant life. For perhaps in magic more than in any other aspect of his culture has the peasant achieved a synthesis of the two currents that have contributed to his civilization. He has taken from both, and inasmuch as both adhere to a more general pattern which marks all the Old World, neither tradition has had to give way to the other.

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Vodoun is clearly more than ritual of the cult temple. It is an integrated system of concepts concerning human behavior, the relation of mankind to those who have lived before, and to the natural and supernatural forces of the universe. It relates the living to the dead and to those not yet born. It "explains" unpredictable events by showing them to be consistent with established principles. In short, it is a true religion which attempts to tie the unknown to the known and thus create order where chaos existed before. 771

As in Dahomey, it is not a system imposed from above but one which pushes out from below. It is bred and nurtured in the family, in the towns, and in the fields. It is common law, with deep roots in an unbroken and continuous past. The priests of Vodoun do not control it and direct its course. They, like the least fortunate peasant, simply move about within it and make use of its resources. They are its servants and its interpreters. In their cult centers, the principles of Vodoun are brought into sharp focus and dramatized. Vodoun is democratic in concept. Any man or woman may have direct contact with the deities or dead ancestors without the intervention of the cult priest. There is no place or situation beyond the influence of the loa or beyond the limits of Vodoun. At every crossroads is the spirit of the crossroads guardian, Legba, and on every long trail is the spirit of the Master of the Highway. 771 793 794 776

The cult priest nevertheless plays a significant and essential role. He translates beliefs that otherwise might tend to become amorphous into formalized action. He is a teacher, a repository of cult learning, and a vital catalyst. He gives form to abstraction, and practical meaning to symbols. He is the intellectualizing agency of a tremendous emotional force. Through his knowledge of the substance and forms of Vodoun, his experience in dealing with the loa, and in some instances his capacity to set magical forces into action, the cult priest is a dynamic power within his community. 793 182

Though the making of *pouins* and *magic* (ritual magic) and *ouangas* (aggressive magic directed against individuals) is within the realm of the cult priest's activities, these things are part of Vodoun only in a subsidiary sense. Magic lurks on the periphery of Vodoun. It has little or no place in the placating of the deities or the dead. It concerns the relationship of the living with each other and with *loa-garos* (*loups-garous*) and *boka* (demons). Although cult rituals include various pouin and magic ceremonies, the cult priest draws upon magic as he draws upon other mystic arts and fields of learning—leaf doctoring, divination, Catholic ritual, and Masonic symbolism. He attempts to bring together all thinking that widens the scope of Vodoun, in order to strengthen his hand to deal with 793 789 754 771

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

all aspects of the natural and supernatural. But the reputable cult priest does not dabble in "black" magic—the kind that maims or destroys human beings. One who does so is said to "work with two hands": one for the loa and one for evil. (The expression *servi dé main*—"serving with two hands"—is also applied to a cult chief who deals with deities of more than one "nation.") Many a cult priest in making his ritual flour drawings on the earth holds his left hand behind his back and draws with his right, giving testimony that he "works with one hand" only.

Each cult priest maintains his own cult temple, or *hounfor*. There are no cult officials above him, as there is no formal religious organization beyond the hounfor itself. Within his own special community he is therefore the chief religious functionary, the apex of an intratemple social organization. Under the cult priest, ordinarily, there are two grades of assistants, and below them two classes of servitors.

The cult priest is usually referred to as a *houngan*, a Fon (Dahomean) title signifying "spirit chief." Sometimes he is called *gangan* (a Bantu word meaning "conjuror" or "doctor")[2] or *capla*. He also is known by the title *bocó* or *bocor*, which seems to be derived from *bocono*, the diviner or priest of the Dahomean Fa cult.[3] The bocor is, in fact, sometimes referred to as a *divineur*, and he is regarded by some Haitians as a clairvoyant and a practitioner of magic. As in Dahomey, the bocor in Haiti foretells fate through the throwing of shells or chips, much in the manner of the secular game *mayamba*. He also reads destiny with small sticks or ashes. In earlier days the cult priest was sometimes known by the Yoruba name *babalao*, a title which has been corrupted to *papaloi*. A female cult leader is known as a *mambo*. She is presumed to have, in a general way, the same powers as the houngan, though in some quarters her *connaissance*, or "understanding," is not regarded so highly, and her status is believed to be somewhat lower.

Directly under the houngan is his chief assistant, the *laplace*, and perhaps a little below him on the ladder, the *mambo caille*. The laplace is regarded as the vice-houngan, and he assumes responsibility for running the hounfor in the absence of his chief. The mambo caille, a woman, runs the cult center in the absence of both the houngan and the laplace. One step farther down the ladder is the *houngénicon*, who acts as a sort of chief of the main body of devotees. These high-ranking assistants to the houngan are sometimes called *hadjicans*, or keepers of the altar.

The servitors of the cult are known as *hounsi*, or "spirit wives," a name that was given to certain categories of cult servants in Dahomey.[4] There are two main groups of hounsi: *kanzo* (those who have passed through a ritual fire test) and *bossale* (those whose loa are wild or untamed). The

[2] [Footnote appears on p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]
[3] [Gorer, Africa Dances, p. 129; Herskovits, Dahomey, I, 208 ff. Cf. p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]
[4] [Foot note appears on p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]

776 Another factor that may explain some of the confusion over which rites a loa is attached to is the concept of the *escorte*, a kind of army or association of loa which may include deities of different nations. In discussing the loa Wanilé, for example, one Haitian noted:

"Wanilé is neither Rada nor Dahomé, but Pétro. She is an escorte, and she walks with Dahomé. In the escorte, Dahomé and Pétro walk together. A big loa—a loa with a big name—has many other loa who walk with him. In an escorte there are twenty-one in all. The escorte has a chief, and under the chief there are soldiers—that is, smaller loa who must do what the chief says.

776 "For example, a man goes to a houngan and gets him to send a strong
● 754 loa against you to hurt you in some way—to make you sick or lose your crop. Your own loa may be a strong one, but the houngan has sent a still stronger one against you, and so your own loa can't really protect you. So he will go away and send in his place one of his escorte. This smaller loa is not as strong perhaps as the one he is replacing, but he is stronger in that the houngan did not calculate on him. He has certain abilities which he can use to help you. And it isn't suspected that he is your protector. So in this way he is in a better position than your own loa.

776 "The smaller loa go together in an escorte. Many people may have a certain loa, and he is busy all the time. If someone needs him and he can't go, he will send one of his escorte, the next one below him.

776 "If you are made sick by a loa, there are so many in his escorte you don't
753 know which one made you sick, so you can't do anything about it. It is
754 difficult sometimes to identify the loa that is hurting you. You really have to dig to find out who he is. You have to give a *mangé*. There is a big ceremony, and you have to be bought back from the loa. But some loa who are persecuting you won't sell you back. They won't go away. Rather than leave you alone they would see you die. Perhaps the person who sent this loa against you sent him to kill. If your own loa can't protect you he will send one of his escorte to do it. *Gainyain connain passé connain* [There is knowledge that surpasses knowledge]. *Si fer pas coupé fer, machoquette pas gainyain travaille* [If iron didn't cut iron, the blacksmith would have no work to do]."

776 This concept of the escorte, some of whose members may be Rada and some Pétro, helps to explain why certain deities are identified with rites
[801] of different "nations." For the Haitian himself it provides a way of accounting for "families" that have grown beyond the ritual number seven. Yet there are some Haitians who declare that every member of an escorte is simply a different manifestation of a single deity.

880 The loa, like the rites, vary somewhat according to region and to the

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

to "eat" people; that is, to destroy them. To do this he employs such means as disease, insanity, and destruction of crops. If a man serves Pinga Maza well, the loa protects him in return; but for those who anger him, Pinga is a menacing and vengeful creature. People often say, "Pinga, c'est djab" (Pinga is a devil).

The Pinga hounfor in Port-au-Prince is called the *Société de la Belle Jeune Fleur*. Its peristyle is simple and is hardly distinguishable from those of other small hounfors. Around the base of the center pole is a three-foot-high wall of masonry, decorated with simple cult symbols. The outer room of the hounfor proper also resembles many another. The familiar pot têtes containing loa stand on a wooden altar, and there are Catholic lithographs on the walls. But the inner room belongs exclusively to Pinga Maza. Here are all the accoutrements and objects sacred to the deity. Everything is red. Pinga's clothing and kerchiefs are red. On the walls are painted esoteric designs—hands, skulls, and crosses—all in red. The bottles, magic bundles, and govis on the altar are decorated with red cloth, ribbons, or paint. In the middle of the earthen floor is embedded a heavy wooden cross. On each end of the crossbeam hangs a large calabash resembling a bulbous hand. And on top of the upright is affixed a human skull. The total impression of this hounfor is that of a bizarre aberration, calculated to intimidate and terrify. The houngan himself is relatively young, literate, and city wise. His personality is smooth and sharp, and he lacks the air of sincerity and easy simplicity which most often characterizes the houngan of the mountains.

In this inner room, before the skull and the cross, there took place a small service for a client, to determine what kind of magic was needed to fend off malevolent actions of an enemy. On the day of the divining session, there hung from the rafters of the tonnelle a long rope, which extended into a deep hole in the earth near the door. Hanging on the rope, down inside the hole, were two gray dolls tightly bound together. Hanging still farther down were a knife, a fork, and other, unidentifiable objects. This cluster of magic paraphernalia was an *expédition* at work; it was an elaborate pouin, which was working against an enemy who lived far away.

Before entering the hounfor, the houngan took a long rope whip from the wall and cracked it seven times before the door. This process, known as *frete cache*, was to "wake up" the loa within. The houngan then entered, followed by the client who was seeking help. They paused briefly in the outer room, where the houngan took up his asson and bell and made a small vèvè on the ground. He spoke briefly in *langage* and then passed on through the door to the inner room. There the

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never seen again, and after a prêt' savane had read prayers over the spring the people again drew water from it.

Baka more often change themselves into gray or red pigs, but one ingenious baka was said to have transformed himself into a bicycle, which was seen traveling alone at night on the road from Port-au-Prince to Léogane.

Some people wear charms against the baka's malevolence; but the most effective weapon is the cocomacaque stick. The cocomacaque, or monkey palm, is a palm tree that grows only a few feet high. It has magical powers to drive off not only baka but other evil beings as well. When the tree is growing in its natural state, it is said, you must never mention its name in its own presence. Should you say within its hearing, for example, "Look at the cocomacaque," it will wilt and fall over, losing all its vital powers. The trunk of this midget palm is a favorite material for fashioning a walking stick or a short baton. A man going on a long journey into strange country may carry a cococmacaque stick with him to brandish at the crossroads where baka lurk, or to drive off strange animals that may be baka in disguise.

In their relationships with human beings, the baka are not always random. Sometimes, for a terrible price, they will undertake to make a man rich or to "eat" his enemies for him.

In some parts of Haiti, baka seemingly have found their way into the ranks of the loa. In the Congo-Guinée pantheon there is a deity called Bakulu Baka, or Babaku Baka. He is a malevolent spirit who "eats" people in the best baka tradition, and he lives, significantly, in the mapou tree, which is shunned by all good loa.

The *engagements*, or compacts, in which baka sometimes figure are usually made with another sort of creature, the *djab*, or devil. A djab is a manlike being but is superhuman, ferocious, and terrible. Some djab are small, some large, some innocent in appearance, some grotesque. They are supernatural sorcerers who deal out riches in exchange for human beings. A frustrated or desperate man may go to a djab and ask for a favor, which will usually be granted for a heart-rending price. Persons who appear to gain wealth suddenly may be suspected of having entered into an *engagement* with a powerful djab.

One story is about a man of Port-au-Prince who, needing a large sum of money, went to a famous djab who lives in a cave known as Trou Fourban. This powerful djab agreed to provide all the money required, but only on condition that the man deliver to him each year one of his children. The man suddenly came into a large fortune. But when the anniversary of his compact arrived, he did not go to Trou Fourban

775 having died a virgin. The *lutin* is the spirit of a child who died before baptism.[1] The *revenant* is a spirit of a dead person who feels he has been mistreated, and who returns to the world of the living to plague their families or their enemies.

776 754 The *lou-garo* (*loupgarou*) is a being of another kind, a vampire. She is human in form but sheds her skin and assumes animal forms at night when she roams the countryside seeking a victim. Salt is her nemesis. Should her human skin be found and salt sprinkled inside it, she would not be able to put it back on and would be destroyed.

776 778 A special form of the lou-garo is the *bizango*, a kind of enormous dog that runs in packs at night seeking people to eat. Also related to the lou-garo is the *démon*, a male creature of amorphous personality and character who can convert himself into an animal at will. There are sociétés of démons which, like those of the baka, meet in the dark of night in their assembly hall inside the mapou tree. Haitians who are conversant with such matters agree that there are many such trees, but that the most notorious of them are Mapou Miteppe in Miragoane, Mapou Simon in Aux Cayes, and Mapou Danpisse at Léogane.

Other fearsome beings such as the *zeaubeaups*—human cannibals—also gather in the mapou to conduct their affairs.

789 [776] Against all these creatures, and against black magic in general, there are many magical protections, the most common of which is the *garde corps* (protect the body), or simply the *garde*. It is usually obtained from a bocor and consists of a small bag of mysterious ingredients. The owner wears it around his waist or around his neck. Sometimes it is merely a cord with a number of ritually made knots. The garde corps is made to prescription and protects the wearer against specific things such as a lou-garo, poison, or death from a bullet or knife. In describing a garde corps he had prepared for a client, a bocor revealed that it contained dried chicken blood, extract of *wari* bean, and *gris-gris* powder, among "a thousand and one" ingredients. The *gris-gris* powder is made from a dried *gris-gris* bird.[2]

There is another form of protective magic, broader in scope, called the *arrête*. It is used to protect not merely an individual but an entire household, or even a group of households. In addition to warding off [754] supernatural creatures and protecting people against assassins, the arrête is a neutralizing agent against various forms of black magic such as the ouanga and the *makanda*. The arrête bundle or object is hung in the house or in a nearby tree, or it is buried somewhere on the grounds. Sometimes it is nothing more than a pointed stick placed in a certain way before a door or gate, or at one side of the trail leading to the

[1] [Simpson, "Haitian Magic," Social Forces, October, 1940, p. 97. Cf. p. 351, category 116.--Analyst]

[2] [For footnote, see category 116, p. 351.--Analyst]

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house. A round, polished Indian stone is occasionally used as a *garde habitation*. And old people speak of a very powerful charm known as a *gros arrête* which in former times was placed on the trail to protect entire villages or valleys. 789

Still another potent defensive charm is the *pouin*, which is the product of ritual magic within the cult temple. A pouin may be an actual bundle containing a formula of special ingredients; more often, it is invisible, consisting of magical forces unleashed into space by the houngan. There are many ceremonies in the hounfor devoted to the projecting of these magical forces. They are called *cérémonie pouin* or *cérémonie magie* and are dramatized by special cult songs and dances. Sometimes the magie ceremony is woven into a more generalized cult ritual. The powers of the pouin are regarded as wider and more potent than those of the arrête. Pouins are said to protect an individual or a group not only against other magic but also against natural phenomena and accident. A pouin may ward off lightning, for example, or protect one from falling trees or from shipwreck or drowning. But it is not solely defensive magic. It may bring success in fishing, or produce a good crop in one's garden, or aid human fertility. 789 794 796 [777] [842]

Since the crops and the garden are the substance of life, much attention is given to their protection. An enemy may attack a man or his household through garden magic. He may bury a ouanga in the earth, to bring sickness or ruin. He may poison a tree by performing a special rite at its foot, and its fruits will then carry disease or death to the one who eats them. Or he may make a compact with the earth so that it will dry up and refuse to produce for the one who tills it. Against all these malevolent possibilities, as well as against common thieves, the Haitian peasant has many magical and practical resources. Some people are said to employ zombies as watchmen. These fearsome creatures will capture a trespasser and hold him for the owner of the field.[3] Or perhaps the owner will place special arrêtes in his garden. Occasionally a man will protect his fields by planting *piquettes* in the earth. The *piquette* is a piece of sharpened bamboo or hard wood. Its point is dipped into poison, and it is placed in the ground, sharpened end up. An unwary intruder who steps on a piquette may die of his wound. 789 685 [754] [795]

To counteract the *maljok*, or evil eye, a man may procure from a bocor a special shirt made of wide strips of red, white, and blue cloth sewed together. This shirt, called a *mayo* or *manyo*, is worn for seven days if the *maljok* is a rather ordinary one. If the evil force is a particularly virulent one, however, the *mayo* will be worn as long as twenty-one 754 789 791

3 [Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy" Journal of Negro History, October, 1940, p. 503. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

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days, according to the bocor's prescription. It is also employed to protect an individual against various forms of the ouanga.

Against poisons, the usual protection is the *drogue*, prepared by a bocor or a leaf doctor who specializes in such things. After having drunk a drogue, a man is regarded as immune to poison. Should a man be a "horse" of the loa Ogoun Balindjo, however, no drogue is necessary, for Balindjo's people are regarded as immune even without such precautions.

Foretelling the future and divination take two general forms. In one variety, a bocor or *divineur*, using ritual paraphernalia such as cards, flour, or ashes, takes personal responsibility for the divination. In the other form, the divineur functions only when possessed by a loa, and it is the deity himself who foretells and foresees. An account of this kind of divination is given in chapter 6. "Horses" of the loa Mâit' David when possessed are given packs of cards, for they are reputed to be able to divine the future.

Certain houngans use the instrument known as the *gembo* as a divining device. This is a small shell about the size of a lemon, through which a long cord is passed. When there is no tension on the cord, the shell can easily be slid back and forth. When the cord is taut, the shell will not slide. The houngan holds one end of the cord under his foot, the other end with his hand above it. He starts his divination with the shell at the top and the cord taut. Shaking his asson with the other hand, he talks *langage* and asks questions. To indicate a "yes" answer he relaxes the tension on the cord and the shell slips downward an inch or so. The typical gembo is decorated with beads, old coins, religious medals, snake bones, and a fragment of mirror.

There are several ceremonies for locating a thief or other guilty person. One is called *passage d'alliance*. A ring suspended on a string is held over a person's head. If it moves in a regular pendulous way, the person is innocent; but if it swings in a circle, his guilt is established. Another method is the use of a long stick. The stick is pointed at one man, then another, and when the end vibrates in a circular manner the guilty party has been located. This technique is known as *jugement de baguette*. A third method is the one known as *passé balai*. A man sits in a low chair and small branches and leaves of the *balai* (broom) tree are placed under the chair and fastened to its uprights. A guilty person sitting in this chair will cause the *balai* branches to vibrate and close in on him.

The role of the *docteur fé*—the leaf doctor—straddles the field of magic and pharmacology. Many of his potions are of a mystical and

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Many of his potions are of a mystical and
semiritual nature; yet from roots and leaves he brews specific medicines 759
for specific illnesses, such as rheumatism, fevers, malaria, worms, and 755
yaws. Sometimes his cures are effective, sometimes they fail. The leaf 757
doctor is consulted for poisons and their antidotes, though many poisons, such as that in the wari bean, may be gathered and dispensed by anyone.

One of the macabre figures in Haitian folk belief is the *zombie*. In 775
the most general sense, the name designates the bland soul of a person who died without the distinction of having a loa in his head. The soul or spirit has no special will. It cannot affect the living in any way, unlike the lutin, the djablesse, and those who were buried possessed of mystéres. It does not harass enemies or importune its descendants. It is an undynamic, simple, otherworldly spirit, a sort of negative afterimage. It does not need to be placated or feared.

But the word *zombie* has another, more popular meaning, signifying 775
a human being who has "died" and been resurrected from the graveyard 789
by members of the Zeaubeaup Society, by a wicked sorcerer, or by some 754
other person who has realized the "power" to perform this act.

The Haitian countryside is full of tales about fresh graves that have been robbed of their bodies by practitioners of this special form of black magic. By a secret formula these soulless "dead" are revived and given a semblance of life. They lack only the power of will. Without that, they are at the complete command of the sorcerer who has disinterred them. They are presumed to be spirited away and put to work at drudgery in some remote place. Stories are told of plantations in the mountains whose entire labor force is made up of zombies, the animated dead. You can tell a zombie when you see him. His eyes are dull and glazed, he gives no sign of recognition to people he once knew, he moves slowly and ploddingly at his tasks, and he takes orders only from his master. He neither sings nor dances, and he eats and drinks without interest. His facial expression never changes. He is emotionally and mentally dead. Neither the rites of the Church nor those of Vodoun can help him. There is only one formula for breaking the spell. If he eats [263] salt he will either regain full life or die a merciful death. The master therefore takes great care that his zombies never have salt.

Haitians have many explanations of this mystical phenomenon. Some [184] hold that the sorcerer has the unique power to revive the dead. Others believe that the victim is not really dead but has succumbed to a virulent poison which numbs all the senses and stops bodily functions but does not truly kill. Upon disinterment, the victim is given an antidote which restores most physical processes but leaves the mind in an inert state, without will or the power to resist.

171 The connection between the Haitian zombie and certain soulless beings
775 of West Africa is quite apparent. Herskovits has observed that in
754 Dahomey there are tales of persons thought to be dead who were found wandering in far-off places. These individuals had no memories of their former lives. "They were soulless beings, whose death was not real, but resulted from the machinations of sorcerers who made them appear as dead, and then, when buried, removed them from their graves and sold them into servitude in some far-away land."*

764 According to stories told by some Haitians, in ceremonies for the
775 dead where there is suspicion that the deceased was the victim of this particular kind of poisoning a close relative stabs the body with a knife before burial to assure that it will not become a zombie. In other instances, close guard is kept over the grave for a number of days and nights, so that the body cannot be stolen.

775 Some members of the elite publicly dismiss the whole business as
789 savage fantasy but privately say something like: "I don't believe in this
184 sort of thing, but how can you explain the case of Marie Zambam in Cap Haitien?" And then they will tell of curious events of which they have firsthand knowledge.

538 There are numerous legends of persons who died and were buried,
775 only to reappear perhaps years later in some mountain village, or in the
789 big city of Port-au-Prince. An educated man in Port-au-Prince declared
754 that a dead cousin of his reappeared one day in the city ten years after her burial. He tried to speak with her, but she answered only haltingly and gave no sign of recognition. After this one appearance, he said, she was never seen again. Another Haitian from the north told of a graveyard watch in his village to prevent disinterment of the grave of a young girl who had just died. The two watchers dozed fitfully, and suddenly awoke to see a man removing the girl's body. When they jumped to their feet and went after him he escaped into the shadows. But the girl staggered about, fell to the ground, and gave birth to a baby. Both the girl and her newborn child were taken to the village and given salt to eat. Both of them recovered.

One villager from the southern mountains reported that in his travels he came upon a coffee plantation on the sparsely populated mountain called Morne la Selle, and found all the laborers to be zombies. They did not sing as they worked, their movements were slow and cumbersome, and they did not sweat in the hot sun. When he asked for a drink of water, no one replied. While he stood trying to converse, the master of the plantation came with a hard leather whip and angrily ordered him to leave.

* [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, p. 243. Cf p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

When they are not working, it is said, zombies are tied with special ropes made from the leaves of the banana tree. One popular song goes:

> Nans Léogane
> Yo marré zombie nans paille fig-banane!
> Abobo wye-oh!
>
> In Léogane
> They tie the zombie with banana straw!
> That is all, *wye-oh!*

Some Haitians tell you they know there are zombies because they have seen them. Not too many years ago a visiting writer stoutly declared that she, too, knew there were zombies because she had seen one—in the mental hospital at Pont Beudet. Although her reasoning was not quite airtight, the possibility that mental defectives are sometimes mistaken for zombies is worth considering.

Houngans who "work with two hands" are reputed to be able to gain permanent control over persons by means of a formula known as *tuyé-lèvé* (kill and raise). Either for himself or a client, the houngan gains power over the victim by "killing" him through special magic and then "removing the soul" (*retiré n'âme*). The victim, presumed to be normally dead, is buried by his family; the houngan then retrieves the body and "restores the soul" (*metté n'âme*). With his soul restored, the victim has, in effect, become a slave of the houngan, who can do with him as he wishes. He differs from a zombie in that he has a soul, whereas the zombie has none.

Some Haitians believe that even one who has died a nonmagic death may be raised from the dead. To accomplish this, the houngan or bocor stands over the body, goes through a specified ritual, and calls out the dead person's name: "Albert Moreau! Albert Moreau! Albert Moreau! Lèvé non! Lèvé non! Lèvé non!" ("Get up! Get up! Get up!") Then, it is said, the dead man may awaken.

It is believed that a houngan may also command the souls of dead persons to perform services for him against an enemy. The souls at his disposal for this work are those which he keeps in earthern jars in his hounfor. Should he wish to plague an enemy, he will send one of these souls to the man's house to make him sick, or lazy, or insane. Usually, the man does not know what is happening to him; but if he becomes aware that a dead soul is working on him, he attempts to find out which houngan has sent it. Perhaps the houngan can be bought off. If not, another houngan may provide relief.

While some believe in the reality of the various demons and specters,

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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755 Specialists in the magic of healing sometimes hit upon remarkable remedies, just as those who concentrate upon causing ailments learn the most effective ways of poisoning a victim's body or, by suggestion, of ruining his peace of mind. In the soil of infinite belief in spiritual powers the seeds of suspicion take firm root.

754 776 From the realm of recognized magic in which most natives at one time or another indulge, one crosses the threshold into a world of sorcery, perversion, and evil mystery. Here no normal person walks, for it is perilous ground. Here is no illumination from any loa or saint, but a grisly darkness coming down by tradition through centuries of whispered fear. From European folklore by way of French storytellers the Haitian peasant has taken the idea of the werewolf, whom he conceives always to be feminine. The male counterpart is the demon. These creatures are men and women who have a passion for eating human flesh and drinking human blood; cannibalism being abhorrent to normal persons, these abnormal ones through the blackest of magic are believed to be able to transform themselves into werewolves and demons, in which shape they glut themselves before effecting the change once more into human form. One does well to beware of persons with red eyes or black spots in the corner of the eye: these are the telltale marks of the cannibalistically inclined. No accredited ethnographer has ever received a direct report of encounter with werewolves or demons, but the haunting fear is present among the people. There is always an old man who lives in the next valley who has definite knowledge of them, and there are bocors who are "well known" to be able to give this vile power of lycanthropy to people. A person particularly afraid of werewolves will wear a special garde to ward off this evil.

754 776 From Africa comes the belief in the *baka*, an evil spirit who has a family resemblance to former Christian notions of the devil. The baka will make a bargain with a man, giving him some special power or greatly desired boon in return for the life of a member of his family. The bargain seems always to be cumulative, so that the mortal is never out of debt. When first one member of a family dies, and then a second and a third, the family is sure to consult a houngan in order to discover whether such an engagement exists. The knowledge apparently does little good, for the baka is always there at the appointed hour, mowing down one member after another until finally the bargainer himself is killed. One might wonder, since it is

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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generally believed that the compact always results fatally for the man who makes it, why anyone should enter into such an engagement. Craving for money or some other immediate form of power, however, bedims the reason; in the face of all-consuming desire, more than one man has been willing to ignore future pain for present reward.

It would be possible to conjure up a whole phantasmagoria of weird belief in connection with magic, although this would be unjust to the character of the Haitians. These people have their share of dire concepts, but no more than might be expected of a simple folk. One final magical belief must be treated, however, for it has reached the ears of the outside world in grim detail. This is the belief in the *zombi*. The word, as Faine explains, comes from the Bonda language of Africa (*zumbi* there), and was probably transmitted to Haiti by Portuguese slave traders. Faine continues:

> Zombi . . . designates in general a revenant, a phantom, an otherworldly spirit. In popular belief, certain sorcerers have the power, by means of charms and spells, to cause apparent death to individuals and then to bring them back to life again, even after they have been buried. These resuscitated persons, only half-conscious, are then, isolated in distant parts of the country, utilized for field work. Nourished on food from which salt is rigorously excluded, they are thought to be able to regain their natural senses and all their mental faculties if they taste the least grain of this substance. Such legends, circumstantially garbed and presented as actual facts by certain unscrupulous authors, have served as the theme of books which have made a great commotion in foreign countries. Taking advantage of the credulity of a public avid for exotic matters, for mysteries, for the supernatural, these writers have gained, in certain cases, the greatest success of publicity.[38]

Three attitudes are taken in regard to the zombi. There are skeptics who deny the existence of zombis altogether, setting down as fable most of the ideas current about them, and as mistaken diagnosis all the remainder. There are the credulous (including practically every peasant) who believe in and quite directly fear this potential fate. And there are those who believe that certain bocors know how to administer a subtle poison to intended victims which will cause suspended animation and give the appearance of death. Men in the prime of life suddenly sicken and die for no apparent reason. Once these pseudo-corpses are safely buried, the sinister person who has

38. *Ibid.*, p. 303.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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754 arranged the "death" will hasten to the graveyard and dig up the body; giving the proper antidote to the poison, he restores the body to activity but the mind only to semiconsciousness. In this subnormal state the victim is taken off to some remote valley where, in company with other zombis, he is made to work as a slave. Physical strength is there, but no mind with which to rebel, to ask for pay, to recognize the full extent of his sorry state.[39]

114 754 Zora Neale Hurston is the only foreigner who states that she has definitely seen a zombi. In her book, *Tell My Horse*, she describes the woman who had been a zombi and includes a picture of her.[40] The reader cannot suppress a query as to whether the supposed zombi might not have suffered simply from a special kind of insanity. Miss Hurston tells very graphically the peasant tales of "dead" persons made into zombis: of parents, husbands, and wives who have seen and clung to their recent relatives without the slightest responding sign of recognition, of men who are known to have zombis in their employ.

754 766 When a person has died a sudden death without apparent cause, a houngan will very likely be called to try to discover the malefactor, although it is not believed that he will be able to bring back to life the "dead" person. In cases where sudden death is regarded as suspicious, the survivors often see to it that the apparent corpse becomes a real one by plunging a knife into the heart or by cutting out some vital part, in order to spare the corpse the degradation of a zombi's slavery. Or families lacking the courage to mutilate a corpse will watch at the grave until it is certain that the body has begun to putrefy and real death has succeeded to the simulation. Once actual death has come, of course, the malefactor is thwarted and prevented from capitalizing on his evil work.

754 In a mental atmosphere of credulity, coincidence often makes magic seem to work. Belief gives power to the charm or rite. A person aware that a spell is cast upon him will sicken and die because he believes so firmly in the efficacy of the magic. A curse will be

[114] 39. In support of this theory of a poison which produces stupor, Seabrook, *op. cit.*, p. 335, cites the French text of the Code Pénal, Article 249, as follows: "*Est aussi qualifié attentat à la vie d'une personne, l'emploi qui sera fait contre elle de substances qui, sans donner la mort, produisent un effet léthargique plus ou moins prolongé, de quelque manière que ces substances aient administrés, quelles qu'en aient été les suites. Si par suite de cet état léthargique la personne a été inhumée, l'attentat sera qualifié assassinat.*"

40. Pp. 189–209.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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pronounced; later the lightning will strike, the disease will come, the child will die: the connection between curse and calamity will seem too obvious for contradiction. About certain persons is a look (some call it an aura) of evil which is almost palpable: folk belief has an explanation. For much of the mysterious coincidence in life a sophisticate will simply shrug his shoulders and attempt no explanation; he accepts his doctor's diagnosis or his lawyer's advice, and when these betray him falls back upon the many insurances of civilization. The Haitian needs an explanation for his ills, for he lacks doctors, lawyers, insurance: the explanation of magic may be incorrect, but it is the only one he has and it is backed up by events often enough to seem true. 754

Life is full of mishaps. The Haitian's loa are as real to him as the mountains and trees of his country. It is not to be wondered, therefore, that the peasant thinks his loa directly responsible for much of the evil that befalls. In this explanation the Haitian is not different from millions of other people, even Christians. It would, however, be a great mistake to emphasize the fear in Vodun faith and in the magic which proceeds from it to such an extent that the bright side is forgotten. The gods are likewise responsible for the good luck of mankind. If a man deeply desires to attain a specific good, there is room in both religion and magic for that also. It may be the love of a girl, money to pay a debt, a propitious day for holding a *coumbite* (or coöperative working bee), the birth of a son instead of a daughter: religion and magic avail for all of these, more with some individuals than with others. When an entire community holds a belief, the magic has a double chance of working. It is easier for a man to win his wife if she knows he is working magic to that end, than to persuade her without magic. This kind of magic is also easier to work than that which depends wholly upon the complaisance of the loa, as when rain is needed for crops at the proper time. 776 789 771

Religion, with its sister magic, is not for the Haitian a matter of special days, vague abstractions, or formal propriety. It is a daily strength for daily needs. 771

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

843 782 539 *malin esprit barré chemin qu'en moment delivrance moin apé rivé. Nou' toutes Invisibles, les Saints, les Morts, Marassa, vini assisté moin jou'-a.*— I ask you all to come deliver me, that you open the way for me, that you do not allow evil spirits to bar my path when the time of the delivery approaches. May you all, Invisible Beings, the Saints, the Dead, Twins, come to my aid on that day."

843 782 776 Should one of the couple be a devotee of Damballa or Erzilie, both of them jealous gods, a chicken or two is added to the customary offerings, and some gift pleasing to the god, such as a dress or suit of his sacred color, is made him. Normally no further precautions need be taken. If, however, the 843 789 pregnant woman has had one or two miscarriages, she and her [793] husband go to a *vodun* priest, preferably a woman, and obtain a "medicine" to be used in bathing the abdominal and vaginal areas as a precaution against *mauvaises aires*, the werewolves believed to consume children in the womb. If the preg- [755] nancy this time terminates successfully, some of the same [793] medicine is rubbed on the child shortly after birth and several times during the ensuing weeks, but should the infant later fall ill, the *vodun* priest brings herbs and makes a smoke-fire to drive away the werewolves that are believed still to be hovering about.

844 782 At the onset of labor, if either the father or the mother of the unborn child is vowed to Damballa, another sacrifice is made to this god and to the spirits of twins, giving a *couvert sec* and one or two chickens and pigeons to each. If a *vodun* priest has determined what deity protects the child, a sacrifice is also given this spirit, and prayers are said to the spirits of twins, the dead of the families of both the man and the woman, and all other supernatural beings, saints of the Church and *vodun* gods alike.

844 Meanwhile the woman has been placed on the ground on

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a stream, there to remain until, becoming impatient, it demands to be taken out. A ceremony then brings back the tortured soul and makes of it a "*loa nan canarie*—a *loa* in a jar"—which thereafter acts as a guard for its family.

There is little agreement as to the place of residence of the *loa*. In general, it is believed that they come from Guinée each time they are called, returning when they have, in the native idiom, "descended from the heads of their horses"—that is, when the possession of their devotees has ceased. Those "under the water," however, being Haitians, remain in Haiti for seven years until the ceremony just mentioned, of putting them *nan canarie*, has been performed, when they, like the other *loa*, return to Guinée. At the same time, all recognize the African character of the *loa*, whether they be gods brought from Africa or the Créole *loa* from Haiti itself.

Worship of the *loa* is directed by priests of the cult. The terms *papaloi* and *mamaloi* as designations for male and female priests, almost universally employed by non-Haitian writers, are practically unknown in Mirebalais, where, as in most regions of Haiti, a priest is called a *hungan*, a priestess a *mambu*.[24] Besides the *hungan* (or *mambu*), and the *gangan*, a term applied to a *hungan* of renown, is the *bocor*, a practitioner of magic, not a member of any *vodun* priesthood, but a man who has acquired his power by the purchase of spirits. He is particularly differentiated from the *hungan* and *mambu* by the fact that the *loa* of their own accord are believed to have given "*connaissance*"—the knowledge of healing and helping, to these latter.[25] Not all gods can endow their devotees with this *connaissance*. Some of the Rada deities, in addition to those of the Ogun group who give it, are Legba, Damballa, Aizan, Bosu, St. Jean, and Agwe Woyo; among the Pétro gods it is conferred by Bosú Trois Cornes, Simbi d'leau, Gede, Ossange, Malt' Gran' Bois, and Malt' Calfou (Carrefour). Simbi en Deux Eaux and Simbi Proméné both give magic power, the former conferring knowledge of excellent protectives against

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793 werewolves as well as of the ingredients to concoct healing
776 baths. Certain priests worship and control a large number of
755 deities, as is shown by those which comprise the personal pantheon of a *gangan* from the valley of Mirebalais: Gedenibo, Erzilie Gé Rouge; 'Ti Kita Demembré; Simbi en Deux Eaux; Bumba Trois Île; Legba; St. Jacques; Ogun Ferraille, Ogun Balandjo, Ogun Ashade; Lemba; Aizan Keleké, Aizan Wedo, Aida Wedo, Damballa Wedo; Baron Samedi, Bosu Trois Cornes; Congo Wangol, Malt' Mapou; Agasu; Agwe, Agweto Woyo; Kadia-Bosu; Sobo Gran'; l'Afrique Guinée. Whatever his ability, the *hungan* can cure only diseases "sent by man" — that is, those caused by magic — and by the *loa*, since against illness sent by God he can do nothing. Gossip
[521] disapprovingly whispers how in more than one instance a *hungan* took advantage of his position and the trust of his clients, falsely to represent himself as able to cure an illness "sent by God" through stating it was due to magic.

793 An important function of the *hungan* or *mambu* is to fore-
787 tell the future, and it is as a diviner that the *vodun* priest or priestess is most often employed. No major rite would be considered by a family unless divination were resorted to, but consultation is made for a far wider range of affairs than those of a purely religious nature, and no proposed undertaking of any importance in the secular field is begun without visiting a diviner to discover whether or not the fates are propitious. When divining, the priest is usually under possession by his gods, but other methods, such as gazing into a crystal or basin of water, may also be employed. Several divining séances were visited, but no description of them need be given here, since a number of accounts, including an especially full one by Parsons, are available.[20]

793 Though a certain hierarchy seems to exist among the *vodun*
184 priests in other districts of Haiti, in Mirebalais the organiza-
[755] tion of the cult is informal to an extreme degree.[21] In the
[787] minds of the cult members, various priests in the same region

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are differentiated according to the types of healing in which they have had the greatest success, and the "miracles" to their credit, such as a *hungan* who had achieved a wide reputation for being able to resuscitate dead children. One *hungan* of the valley is spoken of as having powers which rank him with the greatest in the land, but now that he is old, a nephew of his is being called upon to act in his place. In a relatively short time, say his friendly clients, he will take his place even among great *hungans* elsewhere.

Under the *hungan* and *mambu* are assistants called *hunsi*, or sometimes, in the case of men, termed *adjanikon*. In some parts of Haiti, particularly in the plain of the Cul-de-Sac and the southern peninsula, there are degrees of initiation for the *hunsi*, which include the ordeal by fire that makes them *hunsi kanzo*.[10] In Mirebalais, however, the *kanzo* rite, though known by name, is neither required nor performed. The *hunsi* and *adjanikon* know the rituals in a general way, hold and wave the banners used to salute the gods, sing the songs for the *loa*, aid in bringing the possessed dancers out of their possessions, and perform such other ritual tasks as helping the officiating *hungan*. Some members of the cult group have special ability to sing large numbers of the ritual songs for any *loa* which may be called, while others perform the animal sacrifices. It is among these male assistants that the most expert drummers are found.

This, then, constitutes an outline of that system of belief included under the term *vodun*. Once more, in summary, it may be emphasized that *vodun* is neither the practice of black magic, nor the unorganized pathological hysteria it is so often represented to be. The gods are known to their worshippers, and the duties owed them are equally well understood. The reward for the performance of these duties is good health, good harvests, and the goodwill of fellow-men; the punishment for neglect is corresponding ill fortune. On this basis of belief is erected the ceremonial of worship.

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taken to the *pret' savanne* to be blessed with holy water; in the town the Catholic priest is said to do this. In full mourning, black is worn on Sundays, Mondays, and Fridays, the days sacred to the dead, but since full mourning means that one must be dressed in one's best and it is impossible to wear these clothes all day long even in the first weeks after death, the rule is to remain at home, fully dressed, on Sundays, Mondays, and Fridays, wearing the full mourning outside the house only to Sunday mass. 765

When full mourning for a parent cannot be worn immediately following death, the fulfillment of the obligation is postponed. If this duty is not ultimately met, however, the dead take vengeance, so that a child of the one who was remiss perhaps falls ill, or some other misfortune comes to him. If the negligent one is no longer living, then the penalty for his neglect will be assessed on his children, who, on consulting a diviner, will be told that they must wear mourning not only for their own parents, but for their grandparents as well. Such is the case of a dying woman whose story is recounted, for a diviner ascertained that though she had worn mourning for her own father, he had not worn it for his parent; as soon as she put on full mourning for her grandfather, she is said to have immediately recovered. 765 775 784 [787] [755]

A widower wears mourning for a legally married wife for a year, and a widow for her husband during a similar period, and it is believed that if a man were to remarry before the year has elapsed, his second wife would die, so that a woman will not go sooner to a widower, while it is equally dangerous for a widow to take a husband before the first anniversary of the death of her spouse. Should a *placée* wife die, however, another may be taken in her stead before the year has passed, for it is only in matters where the Church is concerned that the dead take vengeance. Furthermore, a man who has more than one mate may go to his other wives at any time after the death of a spouse, and though he would, of course, not go to them 765 587 [583] [595]

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The falls, therefore, in association with the purely Catholic rituals carried on at the village church, are seen to hold an important if unofficial place in the complex of rites known in the Haitian Church calendar as the Fête of Saut d'Eau.

During the two or three days preceding the fête and on the fifteenth of July itself, an air of great gayety not unlike the carnival spirit accompanying European Church festivals pervades the surrounding country. Camions traverse the almost impassable side road, bringing crowds of people from Port-au-Prince, from the Dominican border, and even from the north, who throng the streets and the shrines and tramp the miles from the village to the waterfalls or visit the nearer sacred sites of St. John's Wood and En bas Palmes, to light candles and ask the satisfaction of their needs. Like the falls themselves, these spots by their very beauty awaken a sense of emotional awareness, and it is not strange that here, as at the falls, many possessions occur. At night, in particular, the great trees with their interlacing serpent-like roots, the gaping earth which at En bas Palmes is witness to the uprooting of the palm trees where the miracle occurred, and the stream of sacred water, all make a scene of indescribable eeriness, heightened by the flickering candles given as offerings, and the open lamps of those who stay the night here to fulfill their vows.

In the town itself gambling and other games go on, and dances of all kinds are held at night, among them *vodun* and *bal*, though at these public dances no possessions are countenanced. One of the most colorful aspects of the scene is the *penitants*, wearing clothing of varied colors in fulfillment of a request by the *loa* they worship or an obligation to them. Such folk are not permitted in church unless the clothing which marks them is covered by ordinary dress, but they walk the streets, often possessed and often using their power to heal those whom they encounter. Possesions by Ogun, by Gede, by Baron Samedi, by Damballa, by Erzilie and other *vodun* deities were observed, particularly at the shrines, where their devotees prophesied and healed the sick.

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to "eat" people; that is, to destroy them. To do this he employs such means as disease, insanity, and destruction of crops. If a man serves Pinga Maza well, the loa protects him in return; but for those who anger him, Pinga is a menacing and vengeful creature. People often say, "Pinga, c'est djab" (Pinga is a devil).

The Pinga hounfor in Port-au-Prince is called the *Société de la Belle Jeune Fleur*. Its peristyle is simple and is hardly distinguishable from those of other small hounfors. Around the base of the center pole is a three-foot-high wall of masonry, decorated with simple cult symbols. The outer room of the hounfor proper also resembles many another. The familiar pot têtes containing loa stand on a wooden altar, and there are Catholic lithographs on the walls. But the inner room belongs exclusively to Pinga Maza. Here are all the accoutrements and objects sacred to the deity. Everything is red. Pinga's clothing and kerchiefs are red. On the walls are painted esoteric designs—hands, skulls, and crosses—all in red. The bottles, magic bundles, and govis on the altar are decorated with red cloth, ribbons, or paint. In the middle of the earthen floor is embedded a heavy wooden cross. On each end of the crossbeam hangs a large calabash resembling a bulbous hand. And on top of the upright is affixed a human skull. The total impression of this hounfor is that of a bizarre aberration, calculated to intimidate and terrify. The houngan himself is relatively young, literate, and city wise. His personality is smooth and sharp, and he lacks the air of sincerity and easy simplicity which most often characterizes the houngan of the mountains.

In this inner room, before the skull and the cross, there took place a small service for a client, to determine what kind of magic was needed to fend off malevolent actions of an enemy. On the day of the divining session, there hung from the rafters of the tonnelle a long rope, which extended into a deep hole in the earth near the door. Hanging on the rope, down inside the hole, were two gray dolls tightly bound together. Hanging still farther down were a knife, a fork, and other, unidentifiable objects. This cluster of magic paraphernalia was an *expédition* at work; it was an elaborate pouin, which was working against an enemy who lived far away.

Before entering the hounfor, the houngan took a long rope whip from the wall and cracked it seven times before the door. This process, known as *frete cache*, was to "wake up" the loa within. The houngan then entered, followed by the client who was seeking help. They paused briefly in the outer room, where the houngan took up his asson and bell and made a small vèvè on the ground. He spoke briefly in *langage* and then passed on through the door to the inner room. There the

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houngan took his place before the small altar and the cross surmounted by the skull. Again he spoke *langage* and rattled his asson. He took from the altar a small-necked bottle containing a white alcoholic liquid and a tight-fitting iron cross. The presence of the iron cross inside the bottle was represented as a magical phenomenon. The houngan took a mouthful of the white liquid and sprayed it out in a fine mist over the skull. Twice more he sprayed the mist, in different directions. Then he poured a little of the liquid directly on the skull. The room was filled with the smell of alcohol. The houngan lighted a candle and sat in a low chair facing the altar. He shook his asson rhythmically and spoke *langage* to Pinga Maza. Suddenly Pinga Maza entered the houngan's head. The houngan became violent. He jerked this way and that, making strange noises in his throat. He seized a machete from the altar, waved it around, and struck the flat of it against his head. He continued for a while to beat his head fiercely with the machete. Gradually he became quiet. His assistants placed Pinga's red jacket on him. Now he spoke in the tired voice of an old man. He complained that he was hungry, that he had not eaten for a long while. His assistant handed him a razor blade. He placed it in his mouth, chewed it up, and swallowed it, washing it down with more of the white liquid in the bottle. He asked for more, and they gave him a second blade to eat. He demanded a third, and ate that, too, spitting out small fragments of steel that caught in his teeth.

His assistant told him there was a man present seeking advice about a pouin. The possessed houngan looked around with half-closed eyes. He asked the man his name, and what he wanted. After hearing the client's story, the houngan took out a deck of cards and placed them one at a time, face up, on a winnowing tray. After studying the cards he said: "You are strong, but not strong enough. You already have some protections, but they do not protect you from the dangers coming your way. You have powerful enemies. You must have a new pouin." The man said yes, he wanted a new pouin, but how much would it cost? Pinga replied through the mouth of the houngan: "Twenty-five dollars." The man said: "I will get the money and return." He went out after placing five gourdes on the winnowing tray with the cards. Pinga became drowsy. The houngan's head fell forward on his chest and he slept. The divining session was ended.

The Water Road

The land where the loa live, the place "below the water," is not thought of as being in the water itself. It is dry and airy, like the countryside of Haiti. But the route to it is through water.

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588 does not marry his horse. People marry people. Loa marry loa. A man
588 may have a compact with a loa. That is not a marriage. Some of the
184 things that are going on down there in the Plain are not right. They are not the old way. In the old days we did things differently. We did not always run to the houngan. The grand famille knew how to talk to the loa. Up here we don't do things the way they do them down below in the city. People marry people. Loa marry loa."

588 Nevertheless, the practice in the neighborhood of Port-au-Prince and
276 the Cul-de-Sac Plain is for mystic marriages to take place when deemed
[184] useful, essential, or unavoidable. Foremost among the loa involved in these rites is Ezilie Wèdo, the "pure" one, the deity of love, sometimes identified with the Virgin Mary. Other loa known to have taken part in mystic marriages are Damballa, Ogoun, Ayida, Agwé, Gèdé Nimbo or one of his brothers, Cousin Zaka, and Général Clermeil. All these loa—significantly, I think—have clearly defined personalities; much is known about their character and behavior, their likes and dislikes.

588 A man married to Ezilie has special obligations to her for the dura-
[834] tion of his life. On certain days (especially Thursday, which is sacred to this deity), the mortal "husband" may not have sexual intercourse, even though he has a human wife.

588 Circumstances leading to a mystic marriage vary widely, but in each
755 case it is a cult priest who determines whether the rites should be
793 held. Perhaps a person has been afflicted with a series of illnesses or mis-
776 fortunes. He goes to his houngan, who begins a series of communications with the client's loa or with his own. Sometimes many loa are consulted before the desired information is available. Eventually it is determined that a certain deity, for reasons which may or may not
[753] be clear, wishes to have nuptial ties with the client. The illnesses or mis-
[777] fortunes that have been sent are a means of informing or warning the person concerned.

Sometimes the houngan relies on well-established divining methods to ascertain the cause of the difficulties. He may employ the *gembo* (a shell that slides on a string), ashes, or small shells that are thrown on
[787] the ground. Or he may rely on possession by a loa to provide the information.

If it is found that a loa is demanding marriage, arrangements are then made. The rites that follow may take place in a hounfor or at the house of the human bride or groom. Both a prêt' savane and a houngan officiate.

588 The person directly involved, like the loa, usually has something to
554 gain from a mystic marriage. For one thing, he can reasonably expect

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533 539 776 782 787

violently. The hounsi complain that Maît' Grand Chimin treats them as though they were flour being ground in a mill:

Temp' changé nouvelle allé!
Bonjou' Papa bonjou' Roi Grand Chimin!
M'mandé Papa ça'm fai!
Temp' changé nouvelle allé!
Bonjou' Papa bonjou' Roi Grand Chimin!
M'mandé Papa ça'm fai!
Papa m'pas maïs moulin!
Nou dit na bougit moin!
Papa m'pas maïs moulin!
Nou dit na bougit moin! [Ex. 85]

Times change, the news goes out!
Good day, Papa, good day, Roi Grand Chimin!
I ask you, Papa, what did I do?
Times change, the news goes out!
Good day, Papa, good day, Roi Grand Chimin!
I ask you, Papa, what did I do?
Papa, I am not corn flour!
You say you will grind me!
Papa, I am not corn flour!
You say you will grind me!

533 539 794 755

When there is sickness within the société there may be songs for the absent ones. Here is a song for an ailing hounsi:

Moin allé wè là, hounsi malade oh!
Moin allé wè ça, hounsi malade oh!
Moin allé wè houngan, hounsi malade oh! [Ex. 86]

I am going to see there, the hounsi is sick, oh!
I am going to see it, the hounsi is sick, oh!
I am going to see, houngan, the hounsi is sick, oh!

Again, the members of the société call upon Ogoun, or St. Jacques, to help one of their number who is sick:

St. Jacques marré chwal li,
Li pas dit personne oh,
Véyé li pou' moin!
Li met gainyain verre,
Li met gainyain maline nan dos,
St. Jacques oh!
Ba li lavie pou' moin! [Ex. 87]

St. Jacques ties his horse,
He tells no one, oh,
Take care of him for me!
He may have worms,
He may have sores on his back,
St. Jacques, oh!
Protect him for me!

796 776 273

Ogoun is the dispenser of rum, and in virtually all Ogoun rituals rum is at some time or another in evidence. Sometimes rum is poured into a hot iron pot and bursts into flame. The iron pot is described as Ogoun's

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Many of his potions are of a mystical and 759
semiritual nature; yet from roots and leaves he brews specific medicines 755
for specific illnesses, such as rheumatism, fevers, malaria, worms, and 757
yaws. Sometimes his cures are effective, sometimes they fail. The leaf doctor is consulted for poisons and their antidotes, though many poisons, such as that in the wari bean, may be gathered and dispensed by anyone.

One of the macabre figures in Haitian folk belief is the *zombie*. In 775
the most general sense, the name designates the bland soul of a person who died without the distinction of having a loa in his head. The soul or spirit has no special will. It cannot affect the living in any way, unlike the lutin, the djablesse, and those who were buried possessed of mystéres. It does not harass enemies or importune its descendants. It is an undynamic, simple, otherworldly spirit, a sort of negative afterimage. It does not need to be placated or feared.

But the word *zombie* has another, more popular meaning, signifying 775
a human being who has "died" and been resurrected from the graveyard 789
by members of the Zeaubeaup Society, by a wicked sorcerer, or by some 754
other person who has realized the "power" to perform this act.

The Haitian countryside is full of tales about fresh graves that have been robbed of their bodies by practitioners of this special form of black magic. By a secret formula these soulless "dead" are revived and given a semblance of life. They lack only the power of will. Without that, they are at the complete command of the sorcerer who has disinterred them. They are presumed to be spirited away and put to work at drudgery in some remote place. Stories are told of plantations in the mountains whose entire labor force is made up of zombies, the animated dead. You can tell a zombie when you see him. His eyes are dull and glazed, he gives no sign of recognition to people he once knew, he moves slowly and ploddingly at his tasks, and he takes orders only from his master. He neither sings nor dances, and he eats and drinks without interest. His facial expression never changes. He is emotionally and mentally dead. Neither the rites of the Church nor those of Vodoun can help him. There is only one formula for breaking the spell. If he eats [263] salt he will either regain full life or die a merciful death. The master therefore takes great care that his zombies never have salt.

Haitians have many explanations of this mystical phenomenon. Some [184] hold that the sorcerer has the unique power to revive the dead. Others believe that the victim is not really dead but has succumbed to a virulent poison which numbs all the senses and stops bodily functions but does not truly kill. Upon disinterment, the victim is given an antidote which restores most physical processes but leaves the mind in an inert state, without will or the power to resist.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

easily be hidden, but the ganbos were simply slipped into the straw 534
roofs and thus put out of sight. Moreover, by some strange process of 648
reasoning, military authorities regarded the bamboos as "harmless," 798
though they were used for the same purposes as the contraband drums.

There are numerous other kinds of simple percussion devices. One 534
such instrument, now less commonly seen than previously, is a length of open bamboo laid in the crotches of two Y-shaped sticks set in the ground. Like other *catas*, the bamboo is beaten with two sticks. Some Haitians believe that in former days such bamboos were played in batteries like a xylophone.

Sometimes a light-weight wooden cylinder, or perhaps a drum de- [461]
nuded of its playing head, is carried by the timekeeper of a coumbite. [476]
It, also, is played on the side with sticks.

Wooden mortars for pulverizing grain take on the character of musical 534
instruments when used in combination with voices. When two or more 533
mortars are used, with two men or women wielding the long polelike 412
pestles in each mortar, the rhythmic effects can become fairly complicated.

The *claves* or *palos* (small hardwood sticks) are used primarily in 534
connection with secular dances of a Cuban type, or to accompany such 535
instruments as the guitar and the marimba. One stick is held loosely in [177]
the natural fold of the hand, so that it is free to vibrate, and is struck
sharply with the second stick. The tone is almost metallic because of [824]
the hardness of the wood, usually lignum vitae. The name of the instrument is recognizable as a form of *clavar*, or *clavo*, Spanish for "peg"
or "nail." It is thought that wooden shipbuilding pegs provided the [171]
name for this device, which has equivalents in West Africa.

Among the folk instruments there are various kinds of horns and 534
trumpets. Cows' horns are played musically in some parts of the southern 184
peninsula, though usually they are used as ritual instruments and signaling devices. Wooden trumpets called *pistons* are carved from the stems [824]
of the papaya tree. Conch-shell trumpets, known as *lambis*, are com- [202]
monly used as signaling devices by fishermen. They are also to be found among the coumbites, in Rara festivities, and occasionally in
rituals, where they are usually identified with sea deities. In carnival [541]
times the old fashioned phonograph horn makes its appearance as a com- [216]
bined trumpet and voice amplifier.

Probably the most important of the trumpets is the one made of 534
bamboo. It is called a *vaccine* or *bois bourrique*. Both names have in- 755
teresting origins. The cow's horn was at one time used for magico- [237]
medical purposes. The leaf doctor used it as an "applicator" of powders and potions. A small opening was made in the point of the horn, and

[See plate 8, P. 112-F. -- Analyst]

534 the horn itself was filled with the magico-medical preparation, which
755 was called *vaccine*. The point of the horn was applied to parts of the body which needed treatment, and the powers of the potion were thus transmitted to the affected areas. In time, the cow's horn itself came to be known as a *vaccine*. Eventually the horn used for musical purposes took over the name, which was then transferred to the bamboo trumpet. The other name by which the bamboo trumpet is known, *bois bourrique*, means burro wood. But it probably is a corruption of *voix bourrique*, meaning "donkey's voice," an accurate description of the sound it makes.

534 The vaccine consists of a length of bamboo, with a joint membrane at
533 one end cut into a mouthpiece. Trumpets of different sizes give different tones, and three to five of them together constitute a vaccine orchestra. Vaccines are employed by the coumbites in the fields, and they are heard in the towns and cities primarily during the pre-Easter festivities. In the Rara festivals the vaccine players march together, blowing and tapping their trumpets with sticks, followed by a crowd of dancers. Traditionally, the bamboo trumpet is not employed in religious music, although in recent years it has made its appearance occasionally in Congo-Guinée rites.

534 There are two kinds of musical scrapers. The one more often seen is the *grage*, a piece of sheet metal perforated in the fashion of our common kitchen grater. It is "played" by scraping a piece of wire or a nail across its rough surface. Found in secular rather than religious settings, the grage is likely to be used in combination with such instruments as the *tambourine*, marimba, claves, and basse. The second form of scraper is the *dentlé*, or *dentli*, a notched stick played with a bamboo scraping blade. The free end of the stick is sometimes braced against a bench or a plank, which acts as a sounding board. Some Haitians reported that in the old days gourds were used as sounding chambers.

534 The scraper in one form or another appears to have both Indian and
17 West African precedents. Its relationship to the washboard as used in Negro folk music in the United States is obvious. The notched gourd
[177] called the *guiro*, found in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and other West Indian islands, appears to be present in Haiti only as an imported instrument.

534 Rattles of various types are used in religious and secular dances, in
535 the invocation of deities, and as accompaniment for solo singing. The most common of the rattles is the simple cha-cha, or *kwa-kwa*. It is a small gourd with a wooden handle, with seeds inside. It is usually played by the singing leader as a device to keep time. Sometimes the long dry seed pods of the cha-cha tree are used as a substitute.

000 In the Rara season two special rattles are used. One of them is made

[The Congo and Pétro Pantheons]

 776

WANGOL (King of Angola). He also appears in other rites.

YAOMBÉ, or MAYAOMBÉ. This name is a tribal designation, referring to the Mayaombés of the Congo region.

WANGOL DLEAU (Wangol of the Water)

MOUNDONGUE. Often considered to be a "hard" loa. Ritual service to him includes, on special occasions, the cutting off of dogs' ears and tails. He is fond of dogs and is benevolent toward them. The name derives from that of a tribe of the upper Congo region. [182]

TI MOUNDONGUE. Said to be a "son" of Moundongue.

MOUNDONGUE MOUSAILLE. A member of Moundongue's family.

BAIACOU, or BÈLÈCOU. A loa identified with the morning star, also called Baiacou. There is also a town in Dahomey by this name.

GANDA, or BAGANDA, also called Nèg' Ganda. A deity taking the name of the Ganda people of Uganda.

CONGO YAMINGAN. A benevolent loa associated with curing and protecting the sick. Certain curative medicine bundles are called *yamingans*. [155]

MACAYA BUMBA, sometimes called Caya. He takes his name from the Bumba people of the upper Congo River region. The Bumbas are near neighbors of the Moundongues.

MANYO BUMBA. One of the Bumba family.

MARIANI MOUNDONGUE. One of the Moundongue family.

ROI LOANGUE (King of Loango). Refers to the old African kingdom of that name.

NANCHOU. A warrior deity.

AVÉLÉKÉTÉ. Known primarily in northern Haiti. [184]

DAN PÉTRO. A rather malevolent loa, from whom the Pétro cult takes its name. The mangé for Dan Pétro is a pig. Early observers speculated that Dan Pétro was originally a powerful houngan of prerevolutionary days.[23] [182] [173]

AVIDA PÉTRO. A Pétro version of the Vodoun Ayida Wèdo.

BAKULU BAKA, known in some regions by the name Pinga Maza. He is a malevolent spirit who "eats"—i.e., destroys—people. Some informants are inclined to believe that Bakulu and Pinga are separate loa, both of a variety akin to baka or démons.

BAKULU BARAK. Related to Bakulu Baka.

BAMBARRA TAIBA. He is visualized as a sea crab. *Taille bas* in Creole means "low hips" and is used to describe a dance posture. The surname Taiba therefore may describe the movements of this loa as he moves about like a crab. [192]

BOLISI BOLISA

BRISÉ GÉNÉRAL, or GÉNÉRAL BRISÉ. He is enormously large and ferocious in appearance. A special loa of the country people. Although stern, he is fond of children. He is symbolized as an owl; his home is in the chardette tree. His physical description suggests that he may be a deification of the epic folklore character Brise Montaigne, or Break Mountains.

CHANGANAN

CONGO JÉROUGE (Congo Red Eyes). A malevolent male spirit. Loa with red eyes are always of bad character.

CONGO MAPIONNE, or MAPIONGLE. A malevolent spirit.

CONGO SAVANE, or CONGO ZANDOR (Congo of the Plains). Malevolent, fierce, and

23 [Saint-Méry, De la danse, p. 48. Cf p. 354, Cot 116. --Analyst]

3: Leyburn · Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Worship of the loa is directed by priests and priestesses. They grow into their positions by a kind of tolerant apprenticeship. Young men and women discover their abilities in dealing with loa or their desire to participate actively in serving them; they assist the officiating priests; they listen carefully to the lore of their elders, keeping their eyes open meanwhile. The priest is generally called a houngan, or sometimes a *papaloi;* the priestess a *mambu* or a *mamaloi.*[33] No ceremony marks the progression of a novice through any set stages to final priesthood; rather, the people in the community simply recognize growing expertness. The more effective and capable a houngan, the greater his prestige and the wider his reputation. There is nothing even vaguely resembling the ordered hierarchy of priests in the Catholic Church, nor is there any control of one houngan over another. No holy robes adorn the officiants, although they occasionally wear certain colors or ornaments to please the loa. Most of the Vodun priests and priestesses are simple peasants, working in the fields and going about the daily round of life. When they are called to perform a ritual, an offering is taken up in the early part of the service to recompense them for their offices.

Actually, the Vodun houngan and mambu correspond much more closely to the primitive medicine man or shaman than to the Catholic priest. They are thought to have power, through certain Rada and Pétro loa, to cure illnesses caused either by adverse magic of one's enemies or by a loa; they are not able, however, to cure sickness sent by the Christian God. Likewise they can remedy or avert misfortune whose origin is magic or the loa. One of their highly important functions is foretelling the future: no important service would be contemplated by a family without previous resort to divination to determine the propitiousness of the time, nor would it be sensible to undertake a secular business of importance without preliminary reassurance by this means. To see into the future effectively, the priest must be possessed by the loa.[34]

33. The second of these names in each case derives from "papa" and "mama," or master and mistress; and from the familiar loa or god. It is not implied that the officiants dominate the loa but only that they deal expertly with them.

34. In addition to the houngans and mambu, there are also *bocors* who specialize in magic without conducting regular religious rites. These bocors probably deserve the name of sorcerers.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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the struggle for independence, threw themselves against the formidable weapons of the whites. Whenever in spite of the drogue a man was wounded, there was always the explanation of other potent magic, never a surrender of the belief in drogues. Tradition has it that Christophe wore a drogue giving him immunity against all but silver bullets, and that he kept a silver bullet for suicide in case the need should arise—as it did. Drogues were worn by the caco guerrillas, active from 1919 to 1922, who harassed the Marines during the Occupation of the country. 789 751

Such forms of magic are found among practically every known folk. There are traces of charms in the folklore of most "civilized" people, as well as in actual, if secret, use by many apparent sophisticates.

The next commonest application of magic has to do with disease. Haiti is a poor and prevailingly illiterate country in which there are not enough trained medical doctors to serve adequately even the small population of the towns. People who live in the secluded valleys and on the mountainsides receive practically no medical attention. The disease rate if accurate figures could be obtained would certainly be shockingly high, with hookworm and malaria all but universal, and yaws, elephantiasis, and tuberculosis common. In the case of disease and its treatment, it is fair to say that the Haitian peasant is typically primitive. 759 164 758

Sickness is thought to be caused either as a punishment or a warning by one of the loa, or by evil magic wrought by one's enemies. When a man falls ill, therefore, he sends for the specialist, whether houngan, bocor, or caplata, to discover the responsible loa; next, he must learn whether the loa is angry with him, and if so, for what reason; if it is found that the loa is acting through magical compulsion of an enemy, the treatment of the disease will be different from the case of a loa acting without human compulsion. An angry spirit can be appeased by proper sacrifices; a spirit acting as an agent of evil magic must be fought by another spirit, compelled by the countermagic of the patient's specialist. Sometimes the countermagic is simple exorcism by spells and incantations. At other times it is highly involved and dangerous, requiring exotic plants, continuous attention, even illegal practices such as mutilating a corpse. Casual observation might fail to detect the magical element in some of the operations, for they resemble merely the brews or applications of old wives' tales. 753 755

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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●755 Specialists in the magic of healing sometimes hit upon remarkable remedies, just as those who concentrate upon causing ailments learn the most effective ways of poisoning a victim's body or, by suggestion, of ruining his peace of mind. In the soil of infinite belief in spiritual powers the seeds of suspicion take firm root.

754 776 From the realm of recognized magic in which most natives at one time or another indulge, one crosses the threshold into a world of sorcery, perversion, and evil mystery. Here no normal person walks, for it is perilous ground. Here is no illumination from any loa or saint, but a grisly darkness coming down by tradition through centuries of whispered fear. From European folklore by way of French storytellers the Haitian peasant has taken the idea of the werewolf, whom he conceives always to be feminine. The male counterpart is [R66] the demon. These creatures are men and women who have a passion for eating human flesh and drinking human blood; cannibalism being abhorrent to normal persons, these abnormal ones through the blackest of magic are believed to be able to transform themselves into werewolves and demons, in which shape they glut themselves before effecting the change once more into human form. One does well to beware of persons with red eyes or black spots in the corner of the eye: these are the telltale marks of the cannibalistically inclined. No accredited ethnographer has ever received a direct report of encounter with werewolves or demons, but the haunting fear is present among the people. There is always an old man who lives in the next valley who has definite knowledge of them, and there are bocors who are "well known" to be able to give this vile power of lycanthropy to people. A person particularly afraid of werewolves will wear a special garde to ward off this evil.

754 776 From Africa comes the belief in the *baka*, an evil spirit who has a family resemblance to former Christian notions of the devil. The baka will make a bargain with a man, giving him some special power or greatly desired boon in return for the life of a member of his family. The bargain seems always to be cumulative, so that the mortal is never out of debt. When first one member of a family dies, and then a second and a third, the family is sure to consult a houngan in order to discover whether such an engagement exists. The knowledge apparently does little good, for the baka is always there at the appointed hour, mowing down one member after another until finally the bargainer himself is killed. One might wonder, since it is

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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So it had been with the subject peoples of the island ever since its discovery. The Spaniards introduced a wide variety of European diseases to Española (an epidemic of smallpox in 1500 was estimated to have killed 200,000 Indians in the island) which did not disappear as the Indians gave way to Negroes. Three centuries of the slave trade brought blacks from many parts of Africa, and with them most of the deadliest plagues of that continent. During the flourishing days of French control over Saint-Domingue, Negro slaves were afflicted by a wide variety of diseases, the commonest being yaws, tetanus, intestinal worms, malaria, leprosy, smallpox, and scrofula, although others were certainly not absent. Only to yellow fever, probably brought with them from Africa, did the blacks seem to develop a certain immunity. Most plantations had a doctor in attendance, but medical skill during the eighteenth century was not advanced enough to cope successfully with scourges whose cause was then unknown.

After freedom there were fewer doctors than ever, less sanitation, and a worse diet. When a person was ill, his one alternative to suffering the disease to take its course was to consult the Vodun priest, for the commonly accepted explanation of disease was a spiritual one. If God (that is, the Christian God) had sent the illness, nothing could be done except to bear it, for God's will was unalterable; if it were the result of magic worked by some enemy, the identity of that enemy and the magical means used must be ferreted out so that countermagic might be employed. Vodun practitioners were, indeed, quite as important in their rôle of healing as in performing strictly religious rites. In the course of their efforts to cure disease they often stumbled upon homely but effective cures; no doubt also the mental effect of the patient's faith sometimes helped him to recover, even when the medicines administered had no specific value.

The "triple threat" to Haitian health is the morbid group: malaria, hookworm, and yaws. The first two are familiar enough in parts of the United States, and require only short comment. For centuries malaria has sapped the vitality of people in southern lands, giving them a reputation for indolence which is not wholly deserved. Haitian peasants were during the entire nineteenth century accused of laziness; when a strapping man lay all day in the shade of a tree, it was logical enough for a white visitor to suppose that he was willfully loafing. The critics might have been more temperate if they had known what it was to be perpetually full of malaria, with a body

1: Herskovits SV3 Haiti SV3

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[For information on the curing and magical functions of the hungan, see also category 793.]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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from its ill effects after the evil has been exorcised, must also know the forces they are combating if they are to achieve any measure of success. By the same token, practitioners of black magic must know what steps may be taken to counteract their *wangas* so that, if necessary, they can in turn call forth supernatural emissaries to strengthen the evil impulses originally set in motion. In this sense, therefore, the *hungan*, the *gangan*, the *bocor*, and the *caplata* employ essentially the same techniques and operate with the same forces, the difference between them being one of degree rather than of kind. "*Hungan, c'est magazin. Gaigné un pile marchandise* — The *hungan* is like a shop. He has a lot of merchandise," says the Haitian, quoting a well-known proverb as he makes the point.

In the main, it can be said that though the *hungan* and the *gangan* practice magic, their main preoccupation is with the *loa* — the maladies they send to affect a man and his possessions — while the *bocor* is concerned almost exclusively with setting in motion the agents that actuate black magic, and the *caplata* dabbles in anything that is wanted. One important means whereby the sorcerer obtains his powers is the evil *loa*, but there is this essential difference between them: the gods of the *hungan* are family gods who come to him through the natural course of inheritance, endowing him with the *connaissance* that gives him his control over the supernatural world, while the *bocor* buys his gods. And when a god is bought, it is always acquired so as to enhance the position of its owner at all costs, despite the knowledge that the power thus purchased is dearly bought, bringing its own eventual punishment. Sometimes an ambitious *hungan* adds to his familial *loa* other "purchased" gods, but this is resented by the deities who have given him his powers, so that in time these benevolent powers take all means to humble and crush him. Furthermore, gods acquired in this way pass on to unwilling members of their owner's family and, after a generation or two of mischief-making, must be "restrained" or "banished." A number of

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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points — or oblique designations — makes clear the distinction between the two, for the *bocor* invariably and certain *hungans* on occasion are called *nèg' mazi maza*, "Negro who wears his back to the front," or, again, those who "serve with both hands." Though by no means shunning the services of the practitioner, the Haitians of Mirebalais nevertheless look upon the working of magic with a cynicism that is reflected in the gossip about happenings that befall all who practice it, in any form, and particularly those who work evil magic. It is said: "The *hungan* often dies an evil death, and the *bocor* who makes *wanga* almost always. These people kill each other by magic"; or one hears of a woman who one day went to the cemetery to obtain materials needed for her unsavory work and was struck and killed by the thunderbolts which are believed to smite sorcerers.

To keep his reputation, a practitioner of magic, good or evil, must make continual demonstration of his powers. For example, in prescribing a magical cure, it is incumbent upon the *hungan* or *mambu* to foresee all eventualities, even where the directions are not followed, a prescription which is regarded as a strong check on the charlatan and is the reason why a practitioner is prudent in refusing to accept a case beyond his power to aid, since persistent failure to achieve cures will lose a *hungan* his reputation and his practice. Naturally, certain practitioners do not fail on occasion to turn the anxiety of a family over a serious illness to their own account, but inasmuch as the cures made by a man are the most adequate proof of his power, the feeling is that his clients have an unquestioned safeguard against chicanery. This point of view, it may be noted, is of undoubted importance in perpetuating a living faith in magic.

An example of how rapidly a practitioner of magic can lose prestige when some mishap occurs to him was encountered when an important *gangan* of the valley was brought into court charged with the theft of a pig which he claimed was

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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baby: when she does she substitutes a mode of feeding on fruits and solids which favors digestive disturbance and nutritive diseases in the infant. 863

At the age when children of the élite would be starting to school, peasant children are beginning work in the fields, hoeing, weeding, and carrying, always under the tropical sun. Cuts and bruises, sometimes serious, are improperly treated when they occur and so lead to tetanus or to enormous ulcers. 857 752 184 164

Hard work and a simple mode of outdoor life prove, in Haiti at least, not to be the keys to good health which a romantic might fancy them. Haiti has been one of the unhealthiest places in the world. One feels that it has been lucky to escape such scourges as typhus, cholera, and bubonic plague; that smallpox has not been violent in its epidemics, and that the people developed an immunity to yellow fever. It has, indeed, been luck rather than cleanliness and proper medical care which has protected the people in these instances. 164

In 1838 Boyer founded a hospital school at Port-au-Prince, giving it the name of The National School of Medicine. It did not function as a school, however, until 1860 when Geffrard reorganized it and gave it life. Geffrard also sent young men to Europe to study, installed laboratories of physics and chemistry in the upper schools of the capital, and made possible the appearance of an intellectual élite.[11] The next burst of energy in matters of hygiene came around 1890 when, under the influence of Dr. Léon Audain, the first health records were kept, and the spirit of scientific research reached Haitian medicine. 874 744 742

From 1804 to 1860, then, there was practically no proper care for sick people. In the latter years of the century a few trained physicians, with sadly deficient equipment, practiced in the towns. Not until after the Occupation was the rural mass of the population even touched by the medical knowledge which had been developing all over the civilized world for decades. Clinics, wholesale vaccinations and inoculations, and campaigns of enlightenment have in the past twenty years worked wonders. The Vodun practitioner, however, still is the "expert" who treats most illnesses, and healing remains one of his major functions. 744 759 756

11. Geffrard established schools of law, music, painting, and navigation. The latter two collapsed. The same president founded the high schools of Port-au-Prince, Jérémie, and Gonaïves. [373]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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a mat or a cloth, supported in a reclining position with pillows 844
and cloths, or on a covered box standing about a foot from the ground, with her legs drawn up. No fire is built in the house, all doors and windows are tightly shut, and covers are provided against a chill. A candle stands lighted at the threshold, [788]
and holy water is poured beside it; a candle is also often [782]
lighted in the church before the statue of the saint who corresponds to the *vodun* deity under whose protection the woman in labor is thought to be. In the room with her is the midwife and as many as six, seven, eight, or nine older women belonging to the families of the woman and her husband. The hands of the woman are made to rest on her knees, but where labor is prolonged, her arms are supported above her head to afford relief. She is three times given very hot tea or a drink made of [757]
the stewed leaves of the mango tree and of the *bois lait*. The midwife, with palm oil on her hands, watches the rhythm of labor and presses on the abdomen to facilitate delivery.

If it becomes evident that this will be difficult, a *vodun* 845
priest is at once called to determine by divination whether or 743
not the deities who have been propitiated are satisfied. If the 787
answer is a negative one, he promises future sacrifices or gives 782
minor offerings immediately. Care is also taken to ascertain [775]
whether the trouble is due to the discontent of the family dead who may have been angered by neglect to wear mourning for them, or because sacrifices or a *service* due them have been delayed too long. Inquiries are similarly made to determine whether the spirits of twins might not be displeased, [754]
while the possibility that evil magic may have been invoked is not overlooked, especially if the husband has several wives. If the inquiry shows that the magic of a co-wife was responsible, a strong counter-charm is made at once. Should the woman in 845
labor eventually die, however, her death is not considered to 766
be the result of any act of infidelity on her part, and does not, as in other Negro cultures, prevent the usual burial and mourning customs being carried out.

1: Herskovits E-4, 8 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

carried during the night, they wait for daylight. Salt is added to the hole, "so that the evil eye cannot take it (for magic purposes), for with salt it spoils very quickly." Neither the hole nor its contents are held to be of future importance, and though the child may be shown where the cord and placenta were buried, by that time nothing will remain of it which might be of use to a maker of charms. After three or four days the cord falls off and muscat powder is applied to heal the wound cleanly. The bit of cord is saved, and if the child becomes ill, this is boiled and the water given as a drink. Occasionally an entire umbilical cord is dried and retained; and one woman spoke of the cord of her mother as still being in existence.

The mother is also bathed in water in which calabash leaves and other ingredients have been steeped, and after being carefully dried, a band is tightly tied about her abdomen to give her support. A cloth is placed to cover the vagina, which is not cleansed until the following day, though after that the vaginal region is washed twice daily for some forty days. Red wine is given to women immediately after delivery to sustain them until food can be prepared. Bananas, salt fish, milk, chocolate, and a dish of stew made of chicken and rice are offered, and in most instances the women eat heartily.

The cloths used during childbirth are carefully guarded, the woman herself or a trusted member of her family seeing to the task of washing them, so as to prevent their being used for evil magic. If a miscarriage occurs, the fetus is buried in a hole dug in the floor of the woman's house while the woman herself is bathed and otherwise cared for as in the case of a normal delivery.

A woman is usually up and about three or four days after the birth of her child, or sooner if there is no one to help her with her household duties, in which case she may even be obliged to perform the heavy work of going to the river for water within the week, though she is careful not to bend down

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1968) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

days, according to the bocor's prescription. It is also employed to protect an individual against various forms of the ouanga.

Against poisons, the usual protection is the *drogue*, prepared by a bocor or a leaf doctor who specializes in such things. After having drunk a drogue, a man is regarded as immune to poison. Should a man be a "horse" of the loa Ogoun Balindjo, however, no drogue is necessary, for Balindjo's people are regarded as immune even without such precautions.

Foretelling the future and divination take two general forms. In one variety, a bocor or *divineur*, using ritual paraphernalia such as cards, flour, or ashes, takes personal responsibility for the divination. In the other form, the divineur functions only when possessed by a loa, and it is the deity himself who foretells and foresees. An account of this kind of divination is given in chapter 6. "Horses" of the loa Mâit' David when possessed are given packs of cards, for they are reputed to be able to divine the future.

Certain houngans use the instrument known as the *gembo* as a divining device. This is a small shell about the size of a lemon, through which a long cord is passed. When there is no tension on the cord, the shell can easily be slid back and forth. When the cord is taut, the shell will not slide. The houngan holds one end of the cord under his foot, the other end with his hand above it. He starts his divination with the shell at the top and the cord taut. Shaking his asson with the other hand, he talks *langage* and asks questions. To indicate a "yes" answer he relaxes the tension on the cord and the shell slips downward an inch or so. The typical gembo is decorated with beads, old coins, religious medals, snake bones, and a fragment of mirror.

There are several ceremonies for locating a thief or other guilty person. One is called *passage d'alliance*. A ring suspended on a string is held over a person's head. If it moves in a regular pendulous way, the person is innocent; but if it swings in a circle, his guilt is established. Another method is the use of a long stick. The stick is pointed at one man, then another, and when the end vibrates in a circular manner the guilty party has been located. This technique is known as *jugement de baguette*. A third method is the one known as *passé balai*. A man sits in a low chair and small branches and leaves of the *balai* (broom) tree are placed under the chair and fastened to its uprights. A guilty person sitting in this chair will cause the *balai* branches to vibrate and close in on him.

The role of the *docteur fè*—the leaf doctor—straddles the field of magic and pharmacology. Many of his potions are of a mystical and

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Many of his potions are of a mystical and
semiritual nature; yet from roots and leaves he brews specific medicines 759
for specific illnesses, such as rheumatism, fevers, malaria, worms, and 755
yaws. Sometimes his cures are effective, sometimes they fail. The leaf 757
doctor is consulted for poisons and their antidotes, though many poisons, such as that in the wari bean, may be gathered and dispensed by anyone.

One of the macabre figures in Haitian folk belief is the *zombie*. In 775
the most general sense, the name designates the bland soul of a person who died without the distinction of having a loa in his head. The soul or spirit has no special will. It cannot affect the living in any way, unlike the lutin, the djablesse, and those who were buried possessed of mystéres. It does not harass enemies or importune its descendants. It is an undynamic, simple, otherworldly spirit, a sort of negative afterimage. It does not need to be placated or feared.

But the word *zombie* has another, more popular meaning, signifying 775
a human being who has "died" and been resurrected from the graveyard 789
by members of the Zeaubeaup Society, by a wicked sorcerer, or by some 754
other person who has realized the "power" to perform this act.

The Haitian countryside is full of tales about fresh graves that have been robbed of their bodies by practitioners of this special form of black magic. By a secret formula these soulless "dead" are revived and given a semblance of life. They lack only the power of will. Without that, they are at the complete command of the sorcerer who has disinterred them. They are presumed to be spirited away and put to work at drudgery in some remote place. Stories are told of plantations in the mountains whose entire labor force is made up of zombies, the animated dead. You can tell a zombie when you see him. His eyes are dull and glazed, he gives no sign of recognition to people he once knew, he moves slowly and ploddingly at his tasks, and he takes orders only from his master. He neither sings nor dances, and he eats and drinks without interest. His facial expression never changes. He is emotionally and mentally dead. Neither the rites of the Church nor those of Vodoun can help him. There is only one formula for breaking the spell. If he eats [263] salt he will either regain full life or die a merciful death. The master therefore takes great care that his zombies never have salt.

Haitians have many explanations of this mystical phenomenon. Some [184] hold that the sorcerer has the unique power to revive the dead. Others believe that the victim is not really dead but has succumbed to a virulent poison which numbs all the senses and stops bodily functions but does not truly kill. Upon disinterment, the victim is given an antidote which restores most physical processes but leaves the mind in an inert state, without will or the power to resist.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Président passé là,
L'ap monté au gouvernment! [Ex. 118]

The President passes by,
He is taking over the government!
The President passes by,
He is taking over the government!

*533 ●758 646 It is not only great political events that are perpetuated in songs like these; many are the comments on little people in the government, such as a legislator named Daniel Fignolé. One of Fignolé's deeds, probably apocryphal, which is recorded in folk song has to do with an act of justice in a hospital in Port-au-Prince. According to the song, Fignolé entered the hospital and found the rich patients on beds and the poor patients on mats on the floor. He promptly ordered the rich patients placed on the floor and the poor patients placed on the beds. (A few [643] years later, after serving as president for less than three weeks, Fignolé became a political exile in the United States.)

*533 499 496 There is also an old song about a government engineer named Louis Gentil Tippenhauer—or Ti 'Benhauer (Little 'Benhauer), as he was commonly known. Tippenhauer is now an old man, but when he was young he was in charge of the construction of a section of the Haitian narrow-gauge railway. There was an accident in which a smoking locomotive jumped the tracks. Though small in stature, Tippenhauer had a forceful personality. He quickly assembled his workmen, and with chains, ropes, and crowbars they wrestled the locomotive back on the rails. The song commemorating the dramatic event was born at the height of the rescue operation. It is marked with concern for the feelings of Engineer Tippenhauer:

*[539]

Ti 'Benhauer rélé, "Porté cord pou' marré li!"
Ti 'Benhauer rélé, "Porté chaine pou' enchainé li!"
Si ou marré'l la laguè, devant Bondieu!
Pau' diab', pau' 'Benhauer, machine na deraillé!
Pau' diab', pau' 'Benhauer, machine na deraillé!

Ti 'Benhauer shouts, "Bring a rope to tie it!"
Ti 'Benhauer shouts, "Bring a chain to chain it!"
If you tie it, it unties itself, before God!
Poor devil, poor 'Benhauer, the machine is derailed!
Poor devil, poor 'Benhauer, the machine is derailed!

It is more than half a century since the affair of the derailed locomotive, and the railroad itself is not much longer for this world. But the song is still sung, and mostly by people who have no personal knowledge of the man named Tippenhauer.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

the struggle for independence, threw themselves against the formidable weapons of the whites. Whenever in spite of the drogue a man was wounded, there was always the explanation of other potent magic, never a surrender of the belief in drogues. Tradition has it that Christophe wore a drogue giving him immunity against all but silver bullets, and that he kept a silver bullet for suicide in case the need should arise—as it did. Drogues were worn by the caco guerrillas, active from 1919 to 1922, who harassed the Marines during the Occupation of the country.

Such forms of magic are found among practically every known folk. There are traces of charms in the folklore of most "civilized" people, as well as in actual, if secret, use by many apparent sophisticates.

The next commonest application of magic has to do with disease. Haiti is a poor and prevailingly illiterate country in which there are not enough trained medical doctors to serve adequately even the small population of the towns. People who live in the secluded valleys and on the mountainsides receive practically no medical attention. The disease rate if accurate figures could be obtained would certainly be shockingly high, with hookworm and malaria all but universal, and yaws, elephantiasis, and tuberculosis common. In the case of disease and its treatment, it is fair to say that the Haitian peasant is typically primitive.

Sickness is thought to be caused either as a punishment or a warning by one of the loa, or by evil magic wrought by one's enemies. When a man falls ill, therefore, he sends for the specialist, whether houngan, bocor, or caplata, to discover the responsible loa; next, he must learn whether the loa is angry with him, and if so, for what reason; if it is found that the loa is acting through magical compulsion of an enemy, the treatment of the disease will be different from the case of a loa acting without human compulsion. An angry spirit can be appeased by proper sacrifices; a spirit acting as an agent of evil magic must be fought by another spirit, compelled by the countermagic of the patient's specialist. Sometimes the countermagic is simple exorcism by spells and incantations. At other times it is highly involved and dangerous, requiring exotic plants, continuous attention, even illegal practices such as mutilating a corpse. Casual observation might fail to detect the magical element in some of the operations, for they resemble merely the brews or applications of old wives' tales.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

853 Breast-feeding begins on the third day, but if the milk does
[789] not come, the mother goes to a woman "specialist" who
[854] knows the herbs which are believed to induce the flow. When the mother is ill or tubercular, the infant is given to a wet-nurse. Once he has begun to nurse, he is fed whenever he cries, and as soon as he can sit up he is given the same food as
846 the mother eats. For the first two or three months after the
262 birth of her child a woman refrains from eating egg-plant, fresh fish — although she may eat salt fish — white beans or any others larger than Congo peas, pork, lard, and all fruit.
304 The ears of a female child are pierced when she is about a
30 month old for the gold ear-rings which are worn by girls and women of all ages. If the parents cannot afford them at the time, however, thread is placed in the holes until a sum sufficient to provide this important trinket has been accumulated.

856 A child is taught to sit up beginning with the end of the
854 third or fourth month, and by the time he is six or seven months old he can sit quite well; girls are believed to be more precocious than boys in acquiring this skill. When about ten months old, or sooner, an older sister, a little girl, or the father or mother takes the child by the hand and teaches him to walk, later allowing him to hold one end of a stick for sup-
[754] port. A child is never left alone, for fear of the evil eye or of
[789] werewolves, so that a mother does not even cross the threshold of her house without taking her baby with her, while if for some reason she cannot avoid leaving her child while she is in the yard, an empty bottle is placed near its pillow as a pro-
856 tective device. Teething is a matter of importance, since the
855 attitudes of the parents toward a child may be determined by
763 the first teeth to appear. If these are cut in the upper jaw, it is said that the child's mother will survive his father, and when this occurs, the mother takes every precaution to conceal the fact from her husband, so he will not hate the child. Others hold, however, that the appearance of an upper tooth first denotes that either the father or the mother is soon to die.*

856 Instruction starts early in the life of a child. Beginning with
861

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

days, according to the bocor's prescription. It is also employed to protect an individual against various forms of the ouanga.

Against poisons, the usual protection is the *drogue*, prepared by a bocor or a leaf doctor who specializes in such things. After having drunk a drogue, a man is regarded as immune to poison. Should a man be a "horse" of the loa Ogoun Balindjo, however, no drogue is necessary, for Balindjo's people are regarded as immune even without such precautions.

Foretelling the future and divination take two general forms. In one variety, a bocor or *divineur*, using ritual paraphernalia such as cards, flour, or ashes, takes personal responsibility for the divination. In the other form, the divineur functions only when possessed by a loa, and it is the deity himself who foretells and foresees. An account of this kind of divination is given in chapter 6. "Horses" of the loa Mâit' David when possessed are given packs of cards, for they are reputed to be able to divine the future.

Certain houngans use the instrument known as the *gembo* as a divining device. This is a small shell about the size of a lemon, through which a long cord is passed. When there is no tension on the cord, the shell can easily be slid back and forth. When the cord is taut, the shell will not slide. The houngan holds one end of the cord under his foot, the other end with his hand above it. He starts his divination with the shell at the top and the cord taut. Shaking his asson with the other hand, he talks *langage* and asks questions. To indicate a "yes" answer he relaxes the tension on the cord and the shell slips downward an inch or so. The typical gembo is decorated with beads, old coins, religious medals, snake bones, and a fragment of mirror.

There are several ceremonies for locating a thief or other guilty person. One is called *passage d'alliance*. A ring suspended on a string is held over a person's head. If it moves in a regular pendulous way, the person is innocent; but if it swings in a circle, his guilt is established. Another method is the use of a long stick. The stick is pointed at one man, then another, and when the end vibrates in a circular manner the guilty party has been located. This technique is known as *jugement de baguette*. A third method is the one known as *passé balai*. A man sits in a low chair and small branches and leaves of the *balai* (broom) tree are placed under the chair and fastened to its uprights. A guilty person sitting in this chair will cause the *balai* branches to vibrate and close in on him.

The role of the *docteur fè*—the leaf doctor—straddles the field of magic and pharmacology. Many of his potions are of a mystical and

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Many of his potions are of a mystical and 759
semiritual nature; yet from roots and leaves he brews specific medicines 755
for specific illnesses, such as rheumatism, fevers, malaria, worms, and 757
yaws. Sometimes his cures are effective, sometimes they fail. The leaf doctor is consulted for poisons and their antidotes, though many poisons, such as that in the wari bean, may be gathered and dispensed by anyone.

One of the macabre figures in Haitian folk belief is the *zombie*. In 775
the most general sense, the name designates the bland soul of a person who died without the distinction of having a loa in his head. The soul or spirit has no special will. It cannot affect the living in any way, unlike the lutin, the djablesse, and those who were buried possessed of mystéres. It does not harass enemies or importune its descendants. It is an undynamic, simple, otherworldly spirit, a sort of negative afterimage. It does not need to be placated or feared.

But the word *zombie* has another, more popular meaning, signifying 775
a human being who has "died" and been resurrected from the graveyard 789
by members of the Zeaubeaup Society, by a wicked sorcerer, or by some 754
other person who has realized the "power" to perform this act.

The Haitian countryside is full of tales about fresh graves that have been robbed of their bodies by practitioners of this special form of black magic. By a secret formula these soulless "dead" are revived and given a semblance of life. They lack only the power of will. Without that, they are at the complete command of the sorcerer who has disinterred them. They are presumed to be spirited away and put to work at drudgery in some remote place. Stories are told of plantations in the mountains whose entire labor force is made up of zombies, the animated dead. You can tell a zombie when you see him. His eyes are dull and glazed, he gives no sign of recognition to people he once knew, he moves slowly and ploddingly at his tasks, and he takes orders only from his master. He neither sings nor dances, and he eats and drinks without interest. His facial expression never changes. He is emotionally and mentally dead. Neither the rites of the Church nor those of Vodoun can help him. There is only one formula for breaking the spell. If he eats [263] salt he will either regain full life or die a merciful death. The master therefore takes great care that his zombies never have salt.

Haitians have many explanations of this mystical phenomenon. Some [184] hold that the sorcerer has the unique power to revive the dead. Others believe that the victim is not really dead but has succumbed to a virulent poison which numbs all the senses and stops bodily functions but does not truly kill. Upon disinterment, the victim is given an antidote which restores most physical processes but leaves the mind in an inert state, without will or the power to resist.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

2. *Health*

Historians who seek to explain the rise and fall of nations in terms of a single cause might do worse than hit upon health and disease as the all-important explanation. Unless spectacular epidemics have appeared in a country's history, the average person is rarely aware of how diet may affect a people, or of how backwardness in achievement is often directly related to disease. It may well be that the development of *medical* history will yet cause a radical revision of certain philosophies of history.

146 "The diet of the Haitian peasants has not improved since the slavery period," says Dr. Camille Lhérisson.[5] When people are 164 hungry in Haiti, they eat (if they can find food) until their hunger has been appeased; but what they eat, though it may fill their stomachs, is often decidedly deficient in the proper nourishment. Mangoes, yams, and beans are common enough so that few people actually go hungry; eggs, milk, meat, and many other essentials of a balanced diet, on the contrary, are scarce. People do not die of hunger, but rather of the diseases which accompany malnutrition. It is said that many peasants allow the fires in their homes to die out when the mangoes begin to ripen, subsisting almost wholly upon this fruit for weeks. One sees nearly naked children whose distended [261] bellies are testimony to faulty diet. There are frequent cases of geophagy (eating of dirt) both by children and by adults in their unreasoned craving for certain dietetic elements; one result of the practice is the swallowing of eggs and larvae of intestinal parasites.

178 Scientific progress in medicine during the nineteenth century and 743 the first years of the twentieth passed Haiti by completely. There 759 were during the whole history of the country until 1915 hardly a score of reputable physicians; even had there been doctors, hospital facilities and equipment were lacking. Dr. Robert P. Parsons de- 114 scribes Haiti in 1915 as "an unspeakable hotbed of diseases, ranking 164 second to none in the world in downright rottenness." He further described the "mass of three million people, sick, suffering beyond all power of words to describe, crippled, and weakened from the ravages of a host of diseases (for the most part preventable and curable), pitifully helpless and hopelessly resigned to their lot."[6]

5. "Diseases of the Peasants of Haiti," *American Journal of Public Health*, XXV, No. 8 (August, 1935), 924.
6. *History of Haitian Medicine* (New York, 1930), pp. 4–5.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

So it had been with the subject peoples of the island ever since its discovery. The Spaniards introduced a wide variety of European diseases to Española (an epidemic of smallpox in 1500 was estimated to have killed 200,000 Indians in the island) which did not disappear as the Indians gave way to Negroes. Three centuries of the slave trade brought blacks from many parts of Africa, and with them most of the deadliest plagues of that continent. During the flourishing days of French control over Saint-Domingue, Negro slaves were afflicted by a wide variety of diseases, the commonest being yaws, tetanus, intestinal worms, malaria, leprosy, smallpox, and scrofula, although others were certainly not absent. Only to yellow fever, probably brought with them from Africa, did the blacks seem to develop a certain immunity. Most plantations had a doctor in attendance, but medical skill during the eighteenth century was not advanced enough to cope successfully with scourges whose cause was then unknown.

After freedom there were fewer doctors than ever, less sanitation, and a worse diet. When a person was ill, his one alternative to suffering the disease to take its course was to consult the Vodun priest, for the commonly accepted explanation of disease was a spiritual one. If God (that is, the Christian God) had sent the illness, nothing could be done except to bear it, for God's will was unalterable; if it were the result of magic worked by some enemy, the identity of that enemy and the magical means used must be ferreted out so that countermagic might be employed. Vodun practitioners were, indeed, quite as important in their rôle of healing as in performing strictly religious rites. In the course of their efforts to cure disease they often stumbled upon homely but effective cures; no doubt also the mental effect of the patient's faith sometimes helped him to recover, even when the medicines administered had no specific value.

The "triple threat" to Haitian health is the morbid group: malaria, hookworm, and yaws. The first two are familiar enough in parts of the United States, and require only short comment. For centuries malaria has sapped the vitality of people in southern lands, giving them a reputation for indolence which is not wholly deserved. Haitian peasants were during the entire nineteenth century accused of laziness; when a strapping man lay all day in the shade of a tree, it was logical enough for a white visitor to suppose that he was willfully loafing. The critics might have been more temperate if they had known what it was to be perpetually full of malaria, with a body

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

baby: when she does she substitutes a mode of feeding on fruits and solids which favors digestive disturbance and nutritive diseases in the infant. 853

At the age when children of the élite would be starting to school, peasant children are beginning work in the fields, hoeing, weeding, and carrying, always under the tropical sun. Cuts and bruises, sometimes serious, are improperly treated when they occur and so lead to tetanus or to enormous ulcers. 857 752 184 164

Hard work and a simple mode of outdoor life prove, in Haiti at least, not to be the keys to good health which a romantic might fancy them. Haiti has been one of the unhealthiest places in the world. One feels that it has been lucky to escape such scourges as typhus, cholera, and bubonic plague; that smallpox has not been violent in its epidemics, and that the people developed an immunity to yellow fever. It has, indeed, been luck rather than cleanliness and proper medical care which has protected the people in these instances. 164

In 1838 Boyer founded a hospital school at Port-au-Prince, giving it the name of The National School of Medicine. It did not function as a school, however, until 1860 when Geffrard reorganized it and gave it life. Geffrard also sent young men to Europe to study, installed laboratories of physics and chemistry in the upper schools of the capital, and made possible the appearance of an intellectual élite.[11] The next burst of energy in matters of hygiene came around 1890 when, under the influence of Dr. Léon Audain, the first health records were kept, and the spirit of scientific research reached Haitian medicine. 874 744 742

From 1804 to 1860, then, there was practically no proper care for sick people. In the latter years of the century a few trained physicians, with sadly deficient equipment, practiced in the towns. Not until after the Occupation was the rural mass of the population even touched by the medical knowledge which had been developing all over the civilized world for decades. Clinics, wholesale vaccinations and inoculations, and campaigns of enlightenment have in the past twenty years worked wonders. The Vodun practitioner, however, still is the "expert" who treats most illnesses, and healing remains one of his major functions. 744 759 756

11. Geffrard established schools of law, music, painting, and navigation. The latter two collapsed. The same president founded the high schools of Port-au-Prince, Jacmel, and Gonaïves. [873]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

older relatives participate in the rites as at any death; moreover, the rule *gran' moun pas sui' 'ti moun* holds only where a father, mother, grandparent, or older sister or brother is concerned.*

Unless the dead was known to be a sorcerer his house is not abandoned. If, unlike most of his kind, a reputed sorcerer is survived by children, they continue to live in his house, and though no gesture of marked social disapprobation is made, few persons attend the funeral and fewer still put foot inside the house afterwards, which means there is little of the habitual calling on the survivors. An abandoned house of this type is called *caille yun moun lou' gawou*—the house of a werewolf. If a stranger were to buy such a house, he would first have to "restrain" the evil spirits who continued there. Generally, however, a man will not buy land unless a diviner ascertains that no evil beings have ever been associated with it.

Such, in outline, are the principal rites for the dead and the outer manifestations of the sanctions which validate the cult for its followers. Fundamentally, these derive from the power which the dead wield in the world of the living—power that is held to come directly from God, who has not only given the dead all the rights of the living, but also the right to return to earth as ghosts. There are several types of dead, two of these being the *vien-viens* and the *zombi*. The *vien-viens* are ordinary ghosts; the latter, who will be discussed in the next chapter, are those whose souls have been "sold" by sorcerers and are therefore doomed to wander the earth until their destined time arrives to return to God. Still another type of dead are the ghosts of children who die before baptism, called *lutins*, who ride young horses, so that when a wild colt with a tangled mane is seen, it is said that a *lutin* has been on his back. The souls of the dead are held first to go to God in the sky, where they are condemned to purgatory or hell or permitted to remain in paradise; "It is God who creates, therefore when someone dies, he returns to Him." And as for the effect of pur-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

75 [1595] [583]

soon after the death of one for whom he had deep affection, the matter is entirely one which concerns his own feelings. If a woman who cannot afford proper mourning clothes remarries in the Church before she has discharged the obligation to wear mourning for her dead husband, gossip will be heard, but, on the other hand, a woman who has been legally married, and who therefore may not remarry for a year after her husband's death, may be taken as *placée* by another before that period has elapsed. In this case, however, she must wear full mourning and otherwise observe all the necessary rites before the other man with safety may seek the approval of the Church for the union.

76

Though children who have lived until about twelve years of age and have been baptized are given a *dernière prière* and must not be forgotten when sacrifices are made to the family dead, there is but little mourning for them. "*'Ti moun pas gagné deuilles* — Children do not merit the wearing of mourning," it is said, and they are called "*'ti z'anges* — little angels" — for they are too young to have sinned. "It is only when one makes love that the important sins begin." Therefore, if a young person dies, not only do his parents, grandparents, and older brothers and sisters not follow his coffin to the grave, but they do not mourn for him. Only those younger brothers and sisters who were of his age — twelve or thirteen years old — wear semi-mourning.

L: Hamburg E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Halti SV3
Mbebaiah

with it, or the body is made to lie face downwards in the coffin, since the discomfort of this position causes the spirit of the dead to avenge itself on the sorcerer who caused the death. When a man has been killed by magic, his surviving relatives go to a *kungan* or a *bocor* to discover the culprit. The names of those suspected of the deed are called. Before the diviner stands a pottery jar filled with magically treated water. When the unwilling image of the guilty one finally appears, the *kungan* plunges his knife into it, and as the water turns red, those watching know that when the specified number of days have passed, the guilty one will be dead.[10] Should a suspect be innocent, the image of the Virgin Mary or of St. John is sometimes seen when he is called; but if one known to be guilty does not appear, it is proof that his magic is stronger than that used to call him. Recourse is then had to a powerful *wanga*, or poison, or to the spirit of someone dead, an *âme abandonée* who has led a life of evil and himself been a murderer. "They would certainly not send the spirit of the one just killed. He is too green" — to bring death to the killer. If none of these measures prevail, no further acts of revenge are attempted against the suspect, the feeling being that he has supplied himself with too powerful magic to allow effective revenge to be taken.

On occasion, an apparent death is felt not to be a real death, but rather the simulacre of death brought about by the machination of a sorcerer. The corpse is thereupon given poison or stabbed with a dagger, to make certain that an apparent death becomes an actual one, but the person who stabs the body must stand behind it in order that the corpse as slave of the sorcerer may not reveal who had stabbed him when summoned, and thus make of the one who had robbed him of his prey a substitute victim. If poison has not been administered to the corpse, or if the body was not stabbed, after the funeral the sorcerer recovers the body, which, deprived of its soul, works for him as a *zombi*, only returning to the grave when the time decreed by God for his natural death is reached, or if he is accidentally fed salt.

764 invoked the loa, the pallbearers brought the body forward as though to go straight ahead, but then they began to lurch and sway as though an invisible force were pushing them around. They veered as though to take the right turn, and again they lurched and staggered. At last they turned toward the left, and in this direction they found the road clear. The houngan thanked the Master of the Crossroads, the widow took her place at the head of the procession, and it proceeded on its way to the cemetery.

793 In the services for a dead houngan described by Simpson, the body is 794 placed in a coffin, which is carried to all the places sacred to the loa of the 795 houmfor before being taken to the cemetery. First it is taken to the sacred trees where the loa reside, then to the sacred spring "whose waters have cured many sicknesses which physicians had pronounced incurable . . . (823) The bearers of the coffin circle the spring several times. The coffin is swung [toward] each of the four cardinal points." Afterward the procession continues its way to the burial ground.[12]

766 But the treatment given to the dead may vary according to the manner 794 in which they died. Leyburn notes, for example, that "a person struck by 761 lightning . . . would have no ceremonies at all, for lightning is an act of God."[13] It may well be that the Haitian rationale for not holding ceremonies for an individual killed by lightning is that God has already held the final ceremony. But in the Haitian mind all deaths are, in the last analysis, acts of God, even though magic, poison, or accident may have played an immediate part. Why, then, should the corpse struck by light-794 ning be treated so differently? The answer would appear to lie in a custom 766 of the Yoruba of dispensing with all burial rites for persons killed by 761 lightning, such persons being considered enemies of the lightning deity (794) Chango. In Dahomey, Herskovits reports, the same attitude prevails in regard to persons killed by lightning:

> If a person is killed by lightning he . . . stands convicted by this fact of some grave crime which has incurred the displeasure of the god of the Thunder Pantheon (Xevioso). A person so killed is never buried by his family, but the body is turned over to the chief priest and cult-members of these deities. It is believed that a man killed in this fashion remains upright until the chief priest questions him and forces him to confess the crimes he had committed to be so punished. No one touches any (768) of the belongings of such a man, not even his money. The house in which he lived (784) is allowed to go to ruin, an *enso* of palm fronds being placed around it to guard (824) against anyone entering it. The moveable property of such a man, his clothes, his stools, and his dishes, are thrown away at the crossroads . . .[14]

766 The burial of a Haitian who dies of smallpox likewise differs from that of one who dies a "normal" death. The victim of smallpox is buried without a coffin in a segregated part of the cemetery. The reason for this lies

12 [Simpson, op. cit., p. 161. Cf. p. 350 Category 116. -- Analyst]
13 [Leyburn, The Haitian People, p. 156. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]
14 [Herskovits, Dahomey, I, 318. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-3 (1937-1968) 1968 SV3 Haiti SV3

beyond the obvious fear of contagion. In his study of Dahomey, Herskovits notes: 766 [971]

> . . . Small-pox is believed to be sent as a punishment for grave offenses in the eyes of these [the Sagbata] deities, and it is taken to indicate that either the dead person himself or a member of his family has committed some heinous crime such as the practice of black magic. A person who dies of small-pox may only be buried after permission has been given by the chief priest of the Earth cult.[20]

Thus, in Haiti, though the connections with the past are clouded, it is clear that victims of lightning and smallpox are treated as a special class of criminals or malefactors. 174 753 762

Ordinary malefactors such as malevolent criminals and murderers—until recent years, at least—were not buried in the common graveyard. They, too, were segregated at the periphery of the cemetery or buried at the edge of a trail or road where the traffic would not permit them to rest and where their graves would be under constant surveillance. The roadside grave sometimes was also the fate of a person killed by lightning. 766

That these special burials are related to the Dahomean and Yoruban concepts of retribution for crimes against the deities is supported by the similarity of treatment accorded victims of lightning and disease and common criminals. In Haiti, Herskovits observes: "Those who die of smallpox or leprosy, suicides, or persons shot as a punishment for crime are not buried in the communal cemetery, but in special sections of the graveyard," the suicides and criminals being set apart from the others.[21] 761 753 766 [174] [371] [681] [762]

Graves found near the seashore, lake shores, or riverbanks frequently are declared to belong to persons who died of drowning. 766

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[20] [Ibid., pp. 397–398. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.—Analyst]

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2: Courlander 3-5 (1937-1953) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

763 special funds to defray expenses, or even set a day for the "last prayers";
764 and it is said that misfortune is likely to overtake his family if his wishes are not carried out. Métraux cites a story of a man who had told his wife
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They held the burial in the afternoon. As they began the prayers on Wednesday, the last prayer finished on Wednesday week. But as Brother Lédan had always said they should hold his last prayer on a Tuesday, his wife was quite willing to hold it Tuesday. One Tuesday when everyone knew that the last prayer was being held, his wife heard her brother-in-law who told her that wasn't customarily done [that is, shortening the period of prayers]. Then she put off the last prayer.

Thereupon, according to the story, two strangers appeared in the house. They were offered chairs and they sat down. Suddenly, one of the men arose and said that the woman had announced that a last prayer was to be said that day. She said she had put it off. Then the other man got up and said: "Wasn't it today I ordered you to hold the last prayer?" The woman asked, "Who are you?" But both men disappeared. The woman fell unconscious, and died three days later.

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[Hall and others, op. cit., p. 193. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

He was the center of all eyes. Most of the time he danced alone, gyrating recklessly. Sometimes he danced with his houngénicon. Those who watched clapped hands and uttered sounds imitating drums, for drums were not being used in this service. The houngan carried the inevitable *clochette*, or tiny hand bell.

When newcomers arrived, Gèdé greeted them by shaking both their hands downward, vigorously, three times. Then he wiped their faces with his kerchief, a ceremony which he repeated from time to time. He danced with each of them a kind of Jenvalo step, simple, restrained, and dignified. One of the visitors fell to his knees to converse with him.

The entire evening was built around the houngan's representation of Gèdé. Properly speaking, the houngan was not in a trance. He was in full possession of all his normal faculties and was conscious of the slightest inconveniences and disturbances. Several times the clay bowl of his pipe fell from the reed stem, scattering hot ashes on the ground, and each time he paused to allow the houngénicon to clear them away. Yet he was carried away by his certainty that he was Gèdé. The obvious conviction of those who watched seemed to fortify him in his role. As the evening wore on, he became more and more detached from his normal personality. His psychic condition was not that of one who had been "mounted" by a loa; it was, rather, a continuously progressive ecstasy.

Gèdé is, in fact, more than a loa of the cemetery; he is a personification of death in all its macabre, humorous, and unpredictable aspects. Death is not merely a thing dying; it is an entity, a positive force in nature. Death is Gèdé Nimbo. I believe that when the houngan became Gèdé, all who had crowded into his hut felt themselves to be in the presence of death itself. Death, a dynamic, aggressive force, danced and pirouetted among them, talking the language of the dead and of old Africa.

Gèdé is often stern, austere, and forbidding, but he has other aspects. Haitians take amused pleasure at the terror he can strike into the hearts of the mighty. An old Gèdé song goes:

Papa Gèdé bel gè'çon!	Papa Gèdé is a handsome fellow!
Papa Gèdé bel gè'çon!	Papa Gèdé is a handsome fellow!
L'habillé tout en noi'!	He is dressed all in black
Pou'l monté ou palais!	For he is going up to the palace!
L'habillé tout en blanc	When he's dressed all in white
Li semblé yon deputé!	He looks like a deputy!
L'habillé tout en noi'!	When he's dressed all in black
Li semblé yon senateur!	He resembles a senator!

According to tradition, the song had its origin in a march on the capital by some houngans many years ago. The story is very old and no one remembers many of the details.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

have explained it chiefly by the surprise element of the uprising. But when else in modern history have slaves successfully revolted against their armed masters and become permanently free? Successful revolutions even of people not in bodily slavery have had acknowledged leadership, whereas in Haiti no real leader appeared for the insurgents. Boukman's influence, indeed, at its widest never reached beyond a part of the northern plain; he had about the same range of power as a ward boss in the United States. On the plantations Hallaou, Hyacinthe, Lafortune, and others whose names are unimportant or unknown, Vodun houngans likewise welded slave opinion within their narrow districts. But no single great leader appeared. As the conflict was developed, without plan or unity under the divided and contradictory action of numerous blacks, what held the people together was, negatively, their hatred of the white masters; positively, their Vodun beliefs. Only later in the decade did a true leader, Toussaint L'Ouverture, emerge to consolidate their victory.

As often happens among unsophisticated people convinced of the rightness of their cause, the local Vodun leaders were sure of their own invulnerability through the protection of one or another of the spirits.[8] They convinced their followers as well, to such a degree that when an invulnerable chief fell there were dozens of reasons to explain the unexpected death rather than any disillusion. Usually, failure to follow the rigorous propitiation requirements of the protecting god offered the key to the misfortune. Various ones of them were known to be exacting and troublesome. The leader at Trou-Coffi, Romaine by name, had absorbed enough of the Roman Catholicism in Vodun to feel that the Virgin Mary was his especial patroness.[9] Beyond this specific belief in invulnerability was the general trust that Vodun spirits would lead their devotees to success, would give them a happy issue out of all their distress.

8. A parallel case of belief in invulnerability because of divine protection was that of the North American Indians both at the time of Tecumseh and later in the Sioux outbreaks at the climax of the Ghost-Dance Religion. See James Mooney, *The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890* (Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, 1892–93 [Washington, 1896]), chap. X.

9. The importance of Vodun beliefs in connection with the slave revolt is stressed by Dr. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Vodou et Névrose* (Port-au-Prince, 1931), pp. 33–34. He says of many of the chiefs: "The belief in their invulnerability was not at all the result of calculation, but was a true state of mind, a sort of autosuggestion which explains very well the chronic heroism of certain leaders of the revolution in Saint-Domingue and of the war of independence of 1803–3."

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

and set apart on special plates in a separate room for them; in the afternoon the family eats the food. If the twins to whom homage is being offered are still alive, they must wear special clothes at the sacrifice.

"I believe in the careful cult of the dead . . ." Once more it is necessary to renew one's acquaintance with primitive and folk belief to grasp the Haitian attitude. Life is desirable, death is dreaded; both death and the dead are feared. In the actual world, any excursion from the comfortably familiar countryside of one's home leads to confusion and bewilderment. Except in the company of his fellows (on a religious pilgrimage to the waterfalls at Ville-Bonheur, for example), a Haitian almost never leaves his valley or mountainside and market town. Sophisticated people view the unknown with pleasurable excitement, for they have learned by experience that the unfamiliar is not necessarily frightful; it is quite the contrary with simple folk, whose meagre experience with the unfamiliar has been at least somewhat alarming.

Death is the ultimate unknown. The fearsomeness the imagination conceives to lie beyond death seems to exist in almost direct proportion to people's ignorance of the material world. The fear of ghosts is a commonplace among primitive folk, as among the uneducated in the "civilized" world. Where ghosts are considered powerful, one part of any comprehensive cult will certainly deal with the dead.

In Haitian Vodun the teachings of the Catholic Church have exerted more influence upon the cult of the dead than upon any other part of the religion. The preparation of the corpse for burial shows no traces of African practice; the watch (or wake) and wailing over the deceased is familiar; the funeral itself is conducted by a Catholic priest, with burial in consecrated ground. Thereafter, the continual efforts to secure the tranquil repose of the departed bear the earmarks of faithful Catholic practice; it is at this point, however, that the cult begins to assume distinctive features, for it is firmly believed that the dead exert tremendous power in the world of the living. This power comes from God—the Christian God. The case has been put succinctly by Sumner and Keller: "The relation between man and ghost resolves itself . . . into a relation of rights and duties, with all the rights on one side and all the duties on the other."[30] God gives

30. W. G. Sumner and A. G. Keller, *The Science of Society* (New Haven, 1927), II, 129.

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

which one does not find often enough even among civilized peoples."

Not all of the Mohammedan slaves, however, had the desirable qualities of the Senegalese. The Bambara, for example, were depicted as insolent and not always to be trusted, as the designations "those who steal turkeys" and "those who steal sheep" would seem to indicate.

The people between Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast were known as a hardy group prone to revolt and desertion; they were not held desirable as slaves, and thus it is not strange that few of them were found in the colony. A similar appraisal was made of the Gold Coast Negroes, for while they were described as generally well made and intelligent, they were also assessed as unreliable, deceitful, lazy, given to flattery, great consumers of food, drunkards, and wantons. And as for the Fanti and the Mina, they were spoken of as "extremely proud, waging constant warfare, capricious, and ready at any time to commit suicide."

The Negroes of the Slave Coast were favorites in Santo Domingo. Their characteristic lighter skin-color, to be observed at the present time in their peculiar yellowish or reddish hue, confirms their provenience. They were thought intelligent but avaricious, and were designated as "eaters of dogs." The Ardra women, "continuous talkers," and quarrelsome, were rarely employed as domestics, since the Negroes from the region of Dahomey apparently learned French with the greatest of difficulty, so that to understand their speech was considered to be the greatest test "for those who flatter themselves that they have command of Créole."

The Ibos were found excellent for work in the fields, yet difficult to manage, for the slightest fault-finding or ridicule caused them to commit suicide,

"the idea of which, far from terrifying them, seems to hold an attraction for them, for they believe in the trans-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

> migration of souls. Too often it has come about that the *Ibos* of a given plantation have agreed all to hang themselves, in order to return to their country."

So well recognized was this tendency of the Ibo slaves to commit suicide, that they were described in Créole by the formula: "*Ibos pend' cor' a yo* — The Ibos (are those who) hang themselves." None the less, many slaves from this tribe were acquired. Their strong communal and tribal ties made it advantageous for those who owned them to obtain more of them, since newcomers "were accorded help, care, and instruction by those who had preceded them."

According to St. Mery, the Negroes most common in the colony came from the Congo coast and Angola, and were known by the generic term *Congos*. The *Franc-Congos*, who came from the kingdoms of Congo and Angola, were

> "of a docility and gayety that makes them much desired. Loving song, dance, and ornaments, they make excellent domestics, while their intelligence, their facility in speaking a pure Créole, their jovial countenances without markings . . . cause people to prefer them for house-servants; they also make good laborers and good fishermen."

That the large numbers of Congo Negroes imported into Haiti have left no more of the elements of their culture in the island than are found is perhaps due to this very devotion to their masters, for a lively tradition of the present tells how, during the slave revolts, the Congo Negroes most often remained on the side of their masters and most often betrayed their fellows.

Not all the Negroes from the Congo area were as amiable as these just mentioned. The *Mondongos* had "the most execrable excess of eating their fellows." This quotation gains special significance because of the prominence which it has

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

the baptism of their converts was followed by serious lapses from the faith, especially under conditions of stress.[29]

One of the most revolting aspects of the institution of slavery, wherever found, is the cruelty with which the suppression of human individuality is prosecuted. In this the French colony of Santo Domingo was no exception, as the list of more ingenious punishments, aside from the more usual ones such as whipping, which were devised to keep the slaves in line, demonstrates.[30] What is more important here are the defenses the Negroes built up against them. Recourse to suicide was especially common, and though the popularly accepted explanations for this range between the desire of the slave to destroy himself because he knew he was valuable property of his master, and the conviction that suicide was one way of achieving his return to the African homeland,[31] there is no reason to assume that, following African tradition, the belief that the ghost of a helpless slave could through suicide become powerful for evil and thus wreak his vengeance did not also figure.[32] But equally widespread in all the New World were the allied weapons of revolt and escape.

Both in the experience of the individual slaves and in the history of New World slavery this tendency to revolt began early. In the former case, many tales are told of how on the march to the African coast, or in the slave barracoons, or on board the slave-ship, the possibility of a desperate dash for freedom had always to be guarded against.[33] Concerning the latter, it is not generally known how early in the history of Negro slaving revolts did occur. The Negro slave-trade began with shipments of slaves to Haiti in 1510; the first slave uprising in Haiti, in 1522, thus took place only twelve years after the commencement of the traffic.[34] In the New World possessions of Spain eleven other rebellions are recorded between the years 1522 and 1553, of which those of 1533, 1537, and 1548 occurred in Santo Domingo.[35] During the following century two revolts took place, one at Port de Paix in 1679

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

The family then take the other con-
tainer to a crossroad, where it is deposited as an offering for 769
Legba, and its contents are eaten by the dogs, who signifi- [782]
cantly, in Dahomey are the animals sacred to this deity. Following this, the adults enter the closed room, to feast at the laden table.

Several days after the funeral two gourdes are paid a priest [793]
— "a real one," not a *prêt' savanne* — to chant a *libera* at the [765]
grave, a rite that must be repeated each year on All Saints' Day. Each year, also, food is given the dead, though "not so much as following a funeral." Chickens, beans, rice, and coffee are the principal part of such an offering, for which no priest need be called, as the ceremony is merely to let the dead know that they are not forgotten. Every three or five years, however, [535]
a large *mangé* must be given for all the family dead, and if held on the family habitation, there is social dancing, where such favorites of the ancestors as the *martinique*, the *banda*, the *calebasse*, and the *zesse* are danced.[8]

Differences in procedure mark various modes of death. 766
When a person is killed by lightning, a justice of the peace must be called and the burial is performed at once. Such a one has no "last prayer," because, death by lightning being a punishment of God, it is felt that the dead probably made an oath which he subsequently violated. Those killed by light- [171]
ning or who die of smallpox are not mourned, but no explanation could be obtained for this obvious survival of African custom. If a leper has concealed his disease, mourning is worn for him, though if the cause of death is generally known this is forgone. There is customarily no mourning for suicides, [762]
and never where the regulations of the Church are rigorously applied.

If the dead person was a *vodun* priest or otherwise had 764
strong *connaissance*, steps are taken before his death to "re- 766
move the *loa* from his head" so that his soul will not go under 776
the water, for, as has been explained, such souls are held to 775
be powerful spirits which may cause their family much harm

beyond the obvious fear of contagion. In his study of Dahomey, Herskovits notes: 766 [171]

> . . . Small-pox is believed to be sent as a punishment for grave offenses in the eyes of these [the Sagbata] deities, and it is taken to indicate that either the dead person himself or a member of his family has committed some heinous crime such as the practice of black magic. A person who dies of small-pox may only be buried after permission has been given by the chief priest of the Earth cult.[20]

Thus, in Haiti, though the connections with the past are clouded, it is clear that victims of lightning and smallpox are treated as a special class of criminals or malefactors. 174 753 761 766

Ordinary malefactors such as malevolent criminals and murderers—until recent years, at least—were not buried in the common graveyard. They, too, were segregated at the periphery of the cemetery or buried at the edge of a trail or road where the traffic would not permit them to rest and where their graves would be under constant surveillance. The roadside grave sometimes was also the fate of a person killed by lightning. 766

That these special burials are related to the Dahomean and Yoruban concepts of retribution for crimes against the deities is supported by the similarity of treatment accorded victims of lightning and disease and common criminals. In Haiti, Herskovits observes: "Those who die of small-pox or leprosy, suicides, or persons shot as a punishment for crime are not buried in the communal cemetery, but in special sections of the graveyard," the suicides and criminals being set apart from the others.[21] 761 753 762 [174] [171] [681] [762]

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1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

853 Breast-feeding begins on the third day, but if the milk does
[797] not come, the mother goes to a woman "specialist" who
[854] knows the herbs which are believed to induce the flow. When the mother is ill or tubercular, the infant is given to a wet-nurse. Once he has begun to nurse, he is fed whenever he cries, and as soon as he can sit up he is given the same food as
846 the mother eats. For the first two or three months after the
262 birth of her child a woman refrains from eating egg-plant, fresh fish — although she may eat salt fish — white beans or any others larger than Congo peas, pork, lard, and all fruit.
304 The ears of a female child are pierced when she is about a
301 month old for the gold ear-rings which are worn by girls and women of all ages. If the parents cannot afford them at the time, however, thread is placed in the holes until a sum sufficient to provide this important trinket has been accumulated.

856 A child is taught to sit up beginning with the end of the
854 third or fourth month, and by the time he is six or seven months old he can sit quite well; girls are believed to be more precocious than boys in acquiring this skill. When about ten months old, or sooner, an older sister, a little girl, or the father or mother takes the child by the hand and teaches him to walk, later allowing him to hold one end of a stick for sup-
[754] port. A child is never left alone, for fear of the evil eye or of
[789] werewolves, so that a mother does not even cross the threshold of her house without taking her baby with her, while if for some reason she cannot avoid leaving her child while she is in the yard, an empty bottle is placed near its pillow as a pro-
856 tective device. Teething is a matter of importance, since the
855 attitudes of the parents toward a child may be determined by
763 the first teeth to appear. If these are cut in the upper jaw, it is said that the child's mother will survive his father, and when this occurs, the mother takes every precaution to conceal the fact from her husband, so he will not hate the child. Others hold, however, that the appearance of an upper tooth first denotes that either the father or the mother is soon to die.[4]

856 Instruction starts early in the life of a child. Beginning with
861

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

The cult of the dead[a] is to be differentiated from the worship of the *loa* and from the twin cult in that its African form has been modified to a far greater extent than these others by the influence of the Catholic Church. Yet, though the modes in which respect is shown the dead are principally those of the Church, the attitudes and beliefs which underlie the cult — the meticulousness with which the tranquillity of the dead is insured, the fear in which they are held, and, above all, their close association with magic as an important sanction behind this force — all these take on a distinctly African tinge. Perhaps the point of view taken toward the dead, and the manner in which the living cope with their power, can best be set forth at the outset by giving a sketch of the pattern of funerary and post-funeral rites, since these form the basis of the entire cult. 769 177

Wailing by all present begins with the approach of death. There are cries such as: "*Adieù, bon Dieu, Manman ma-o, wai, wai! Jodi-a tel-ei-tel quitté mouwi! Côté m'ap wé li enco'?* — Good-by, O good God, O my mother, *wai, wai!* Today such-and-such a one has died! Where will I see him again?" The members of the family tie white or black kerchiefs about their waists, while others present use kerchiefs of any color at hand. The doors of any *humfort* or *maison de servitude* in the habitation are closed, and thorny acacia branches are placed in front of them, so that the dead, who are believed to go about everywhere, cannot "spoil" the sacred place by entering it. 763 764 [346]

The body is laid in a shallow trench dug in the floor of the room, and there washed and prepared for the funeral by a professional *baigneur des morts* — man or woman according to the sex of the dead — and his assistants. Some member of the family watches them to see that the "three drops" of moisture believed to be in every dead person's mouth are not caught on a cloth when the body is turned over, for they are held to have great potency for the working of black magic, and a sorcerer would give a great deal for them. Cold water, 764 [754]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Thereupon, according to the story, two strangers appeared in the house. They were offered chairs and they sat down. Suddenly, one of the men arose and said that the woman had announced that a last prayer was to be said that day. She said she had put it off. Then the other man got up and said: "Wasn't it today I ordered you to hold the last prayer?" The woman asked, "Who are you?" But both men disappeared. The woman fell unconscious, and died three days later.[22]

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1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

175 648 Artibonite and Tombe rivers just outside the town. Today Cacos who went through this campaign will tell how sniping was carried on from the "English fort" on the heights to the east of the town and will recount how dangerous it was made for Marines to go unguarded even to the river-banks to draw water. Yet after two or three years the overthrow of the Caco forces brought peace once more to Mirebalais. And while the intervention of the United States has caused significant changes in the larger aspects of Haitian economy and in the political life of the Republic as a whole, yet as concerns the inner life of the people of this valley it seems to have passed without any discernible effect.

175 211 Today in the *place* are found three records of its past. The first of these, in the middle of the square, is a tall palm tree, which in Haiti is the emblem of its attainment of freedom and independence, and near it a rostrum symbolizing the authority of the central government. The second is the tomb of an 211 175 overlord of Mirebalais when independent Haiti was not a 764 republic. In florid lettering can be read the tribute engraved on its top:

Ici
Dort de l'éternel sommeil
Pierre Cazimir de Vincent
décédé le 13 Août 1856, à l'âge de 71 ans
de son vivant Duc de Mirebalais
et
Commandant de la 4ème Division
Militaire de la Province de
l'Ouest

"Passant, si tu admires les vertus militaires;
Revère les cendres de celui que repose en ce lieu."

De la part de son amie
Delphonnaise Delva.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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et preserve li cont'e tout mal. Ba li counaille pou' moin. Yun jou', c'est li-même qui allé remplacé nou' pou' servi nou' quan' nou' pas pè la. — O spirits, you who after the Great Master protect and deliver, I come to thank you. At the same time here is the child [you are] to protect for me. Do not let werewolves gain power over him. Grant him strength, health, and preserve him against all evil. Give him courage for me. One day he himself will replace us to serve you when we are no longer here." 851 852 539 782

Inasmuch as it is always necessary to invoke all three categories of supernatural beings, a similar invocation is pronounced for the dead and the spirits of twins. The rite, however, may be even simpler than this. If the family house of worship is near by, and the relationship group is one which numbers important members of the *vodun* cult, the child may be taken into this house, water thrown on the ground three times, and a candle lighted. In such cases no invocation is pronounced. 851 852 782 [964]

Most mothers nurse their infants until they are about eighteen months old, though children may be weaned when as young as a year. Weaning is accomplished in a day or two. On the day selected, a bitter plant called *lalai* is spread on the mother's breasts, and when the child asks and is given the breast and refuses it because of the bitter taste, his favorite food is at once offered as a substitute. So efficacious is this method that one day's training is ordinarily enough. As a further precaution the child is not allowed to sleep with his mother for three or four nights after being weaned, so that he cannot take the breast at night, and is only given a place in the mother's bed after her milk has ceased to flow. 862 [324]

The earlier years of a child are in the main free from care, and, with due allowance for the differences in individual temperaments and family traditions, he is given much his own way. Young children make "mud food" and build play-houses. When somewhat older, they organize games of 859 [865]

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tized at all, but merely respond to an innate ability to control them. To have a baptized *loa*, then, merely means that the worship of the *loa* is thereafter carried on in regular form. The worshipper learns how to *marré*, or "tie,"[14] his spirit, so as to enjoy the social aspects of a *vodun* dance without fear that his *loa* will come unbidden. He gives it small offerings from time to time, and if it becomes insistent, or if his family is being troubled by its gods, he takes full part in the rituals that are staged.[15]

In native idiom, a person when possessed is "mounted" by his god, and thereafter becomes his *ch'wal*, or "horse." A devotee may come under the influence of a number of spirits during a single ceremony or dance, one *loa* succeeding another. The first deity that ever came to a person, however, for him constitutes the chief of his gods — his *maît' tête* — and the leader of any deities which may subsequently possess him. It is this *loa* alone that is "baptized," and this one alone "taken from his head" at his death; and, as far as he is concerned, all his other gods are under the control of this *maît' tête*, so that any agreement which he may enter into with this principal spirit must be respected by all the others.

Fundamentally, to be possessed by a *loa* means that an individual's spirit is literally dispossessed by that of the god. Personalities undergo radical change in accordance with the nature of the deity,[16] while even the sex of the one possessed is disregarded if it differs from that of the god, so that, for example, a woman "mounted" by Ogun is always addressed as Papa Ogun.[17] One wears the colors of the god and the ornaments he likes, eating and drinking those things he prefers, and otherwise manifesting his peculiar characteristics — rolling on the earth, if possessed by Damballa or chattering incessantly if by Gede.[18]

Not everyone, by any means, is subject to states of possession. If the existence of individual differences in the capacity for religious expression be recognized, it becomes apparent

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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for though some gods are feared far more than others, and some generally regarded with affection, even these latter bring great harm to a neglectful devotee, while the gods whose power validates the most malignant magic may, in certain situations, work for the good of their worshippers. Especially has there been great confusion in discussions of the so-called Dom Pédro worship. Whether or not the origin of the term as given by St. Mery is correct — that it derives from the name of its founder, a Spanish Negro from Petit-Goâve[22] — the statements that have been made concerning it are in the main misleading.[23] Thus, it is not true that the Pétro gods are unqualifiedly evil and the Rada deities unqualifiedly good; nor that blood sacrifices are made exclusively at Pétro ceremonies, while the services for other gods are innocent of such sacrificial offerings. The impression gathered in Mirebalais concerning the Pétro gods is that they are principally, though not exclusively, derived from the process of deification of powerful ancestors, which in Africa exists in forms that clearly explain the essential tradition that offers a basis for this custom as found in Haiti. This is reinforced by statements to the effect that most of the Pétro "squad" are Créole or native gods as against the Guinée deities in the other groupings. One member of the *vodun* cult, indeed, made the concept of deifying the powerful dead explicit, saying that Pétro was a great and evil *vodun* priest who had died with the *loa* not "taken from his head." For while a general principle in the cult of the dead is that in the normal course of events those who die deliver up their souls to God, making the care for these souls primarily a concern of the Church, it is recognized that there are others such as this Dom Pedro who become *loa*. This occurs when an individual, usually a priest or priestess of the *vodun* cult, who during his lifetime was known to possess great supernatural power, dies without having had his *loa* "withdrawn from his head." Burdened by these spirits, and therefore unable to get to God, his soul goes to the bottom of

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The cult of the dead[8] is to be differentiated from the worship of the *loa* and from the twin cult in that its African form has been modified to a far greater extent than these others by the influence of the Catholic Church. Yet, though the modes in which respect is shown the dead are principally those of the Church, the attitudes and beliefs which underlie the cult —the meticulousness with which the tranquillity of the dead is insured, the fear in which they are held, and, above all, their close association with magic as an important sanction behind this force—all these take on a distinctly African tinge. Perhaps the point of view taken toward the dead, and the manner in which the living cope with their power, can best be set forth at the outset by giving a sketch of the pattern of funerary and post-funeral rites, since these form the basis of the entire cult. 769 177

Wailing by all present begins with the approach of death. There are cries such as: "*Adieù, bon Dieu, Manman ma-o, wai, wai! Jodi-a tel-ei-tel quitté mouwi! Côté m'ap wé li enco'?* —Good-by, O good God, O my mother, wai, wai! Today such-and-such a one has died! Where will I see him again?" The members of the family tie white or black kerchiefs about their waists, while others present use kerchiefs of any color at hand. The doors of any *humfort* or *maison de servitude* in the habitation are closed, and thorny acacia branches are placed in front of them, so that the dead, who are believed to go about everywhere, cannot "spoil" the sacred place by entering it. 763 764 [346]

The body is laid in a shallow trench dug in the floor of the room, and there washed and prepared for the funeral by a professional *baigneur des morts*—man or woman according to the sex of the dead—and his assistants. Some member of the family watches them to see that the "three drops" of moisture believed to be in every dead person's mouth are not caught on a cloth when the body is turned over, for they are held to have great potency for the working of black magic, and a sorcerer would give a great deal for them. Cold water, 764 [194]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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764 to which orange leaves and alcohol have been added, and soap are used to bathe the corpse, though limes are substituted for orange leaves if the dead was tubercular.[6] In earlier days caolin (white lime) — sacred in Africa — was mixed with the water, but this is no longer done. The corpse is turned on its face to permit the washing of side and back, and the body is dried with a towel, while the soiled water is either thrown into a small ravine or into a hole dug for the purpose.

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764 715 The corpse is next dressed in new clothing, unless the one who died owned a wardrobe which included black garments. No buttons or pins are used on new clothes, which are sewn into place, and if the body is dressed in clothing he wore while alive, the pockets are torn so that nothing can be carried away in them. Shoes were at one time put into the coffin — or sandals in the country — beside the dead, rather than on his feet, so that he would not be tempted to walk, but today in Mirebalais and the surrounding country the dead are buried barefoot or in stocking feet, since, as it was explained, "otherwise they make too much noise as they go about." Black stockings are always used. In the coffin are placed a rosary, a scapulary, soap, a comb, a handkerchief, a pipe (if the dead had been a smoker), and face powder; but no strong drink is included because, were the spirit of the dead person to become drunk, this would be dangerous; and no money, for if so much as a single sou were given the dead, he would return and take the rest of the family wealth. Similarly no food is put in the coffin, for otherwise it is believed that the ghost would be so busy eating he would never find the route to the sky. Pins are carefully excluded, because if the dead were given sharp objects, he would return to prick the family. If it is suspected that death had been caused by sorcery, and the soul of the dead may later be taken to aid in working black magic, some plants of the type called *koholi* are placed in the coffin with the body. These plants are said to contain so many seeds that since one who comes to take the

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dead must first count them, he can never accomplish this before daylight. From these precautions, it is evident that for the Haitian the reality of existence after death is no fictional one, as is even more vividly illustrated in the answer given to the question whether or not a flute, such as young boys play, would be placed in the coffin of a lad: "What! And have the dead going about all the time blowing it?"[4]

When dressed, the body is placed on a mat or mattress or in a hammock and covered with a clean cloth. A *bande de machoire*, which goes under the chin and over the head to hold the jaw in place, in earlier days, as today in remote sections of the valley, served the double purpose of making possible the identification of a ghost as such, and of keeping the moisture inside the mouth. At present, however, it is usually removed when the body is placed in the coffin. In earlier times also, as today among the peasants in the hills, the nostrils and ears were plugged with cotton. The body and head are shaved of all hair, and the finger- and toe-nails clipped; hair and clippings are later placed in the coffin and buried with the body. The eyes usually close naturally; it is a bad sign if they do not, indicating, as it does, that magic has caused death. Putrefaction, or any unusual sign connected with death such as when a cadaver swells, or a body remains warm and perspires, or, as mentioned, when the eyes remain open, is held to be an indication that the soul has been taken by a sorcerer and the person "sold"—all signalling a "bad" death and requiring that a dagger be struck into the body and burial take place immediately.

Some time later, the *prêt' savanne* comes to read prayers if the death has occurred in the countryside, or the priest of the local Catholic church if in the town or near it. After the prayers have been said and relatives and friends have addressed the dead and "given him commissions," such as "Say good-day to my mother," "Ask my father to help us, for the weather has been bad this year for the crops . . ." the body is

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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764 placed in the coffin, which must always be used for burial. Even if a person is poor, "he can always borrow a plank from a neighbor, for people are charitable in matters of death," or, if a family cannot immediately afford to have carpenters make the coffin, they are paid later, a few gourdes at a time. This also holds for the professional bather of corpses, who receives three to five gourdes in the countryside, fifteen gourdes in Mirebalais, and, it is said, perhaps fifty in Port-au-Prince. A pig or a goat is killed to feed those who dig the grave and carry the coffin, "so they can do their work well." Otherwise these men receive no payment, for "people do such things for each other."

The wake,* which takes place on the night of death, is one of the most important ceremonies in the cycle of rites for the dead. Wakes are held for all dead, even for very young children if they have been baptized, though if a baby dies before baptism, it is buried without ceremony in a little box in the courtyard of the habitation. During the wake the body lies in the second room of the house, the long white candle used at the deceased's first communion standing lighted at his feet. If the dead was not a communicant, newly bought candles are placed at his head and feet. The wife and children either stay with the corpse or are near by with friends. The one who bathed the corpse remains constantly at its side as the members of the family come and go, since the body must never remain alone. Wailing goes on all night, and as more relatives arrive, those already there echo their cries.

On a table in another room a white cloth is spread, and a crucifix, images of the saints, flowers, lighted candles, and a lamp of oil are placed on it. The singers bring their songbooks, since the canticles of the Church are almost the only songs heard. At times songs are specially composed for the occasion, but these always concern themselves with death. Those who stand before the table, principally women, lead the singing, the others acting as a chorus. People come and go

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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People come and go

and, wearying of the singing, join the group outside the house, where those playing games and the story-tellers are gathered. One popular game is "forfeits," and a forfeit, if reclaimed by a girl, requires the singing of a *chanson de romance*, or if by a man, calls for the recitation of a poem or a humorous folk-tale. Before a forfeit is returned, all sing to a hand-clapping accompaniment:

C'est bien bon,	It is very good.
C'est bien bon,	It is very good,
Aha!	Aha!

Card-games, such as *mariai* (marriage), *trois-sept*, and *bezique*, are also played. All these games are entered into with zest, for an important purpose in holding the wake is to amuse the dead, whose body lies near by, and thus send him away in good humor. When drinks are passed, the recipients must make three libations before drinking, one explanation holding that this is in accordance with the formula Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, another that the offering is for the *loa*, the dead, and the *marassa*. At about five o'clock in the morning the angelus closes the wake, after which most of those present leave, and only close friends and relatives remain to help with preparations for the funeral. This must take place the day following death, not only because of a legal requirement, but because of the fact that were a body to remain unburied for two nights, the expense of two wakes would have to be met. Before the ceremony of burial takes place, small children are often passed over the coffin three times, in leave-taking, that the spirit of the dead may not return for them.

The funeral itself is held in accordance with the rites of the Church, the difference between funerals consisting principally in the elaborateness of the ritual and the length of time the church bells are tolled, which in turn is determined by the ability of the family of the dead to meet the varying fees. Thus at the funeral of the mother of the *député* from Mire-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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764 balais the setting was most elaborate, in striking contrast to the bareness of the rites for a young man who was a *'ti moun* in a town family and came from poor peasant folk in the hills. Whatever the type of funeral, the coffin, carried by four men, leaves the house of death preceded by the priest and his acolytes. After mass has been sung, the priest and mourners walk in procession to the graveyard, where the body is placed in a tomb if one has been prepared for it, or interred underground, awaiting the building of a tomb. Before his death, should a person in a quarrel decree that certain others must never touch his coffin, and should these for the sake of public opinion attempt to carry it, it is believed that the coffin will fall to the ground. Such occurrences are extremely rare and cause a great deal of gossip. Following the funeral, friends sometimes remain with the mourners for several days, caring for the house and doing the cooking; otherwise the women of the household are obliged to take up their work at once. The trench which held the body during the washing is filled in as soon as the corpse is taken from the house, and a smudge of orange leaves is made "to take away the odor of death." Objects employed in the last illness, such as the mat on which the body lay and the towel used to dry the corpse, are taken to a large river and washed, after which they may be used by the heirs, provided death did not result from a contagious disease. Work in the fields is also resumed a few days after the funeral, for custom does not dictate when the mourners may again take up their tasks.

765 Next in the cycle of the rituals of death is the *dernière prière*, which ends a novena.[9] It was stated that the novena must begin on the Saturday after burial, so that it might end on a Sunday night, but one such ceremony actually occurred on a Friday night, which would be in accordance with the assertion that the *dernière prière* may take place on Monday, Friday, or Saturday nights. Others, however, maintained that this is only town custom, and that in the countryside this rite

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The family then takes the other con-
tainer to a crossroad, where it is deposited as an offering for 769
Legba, and its contents are eaten by the dogs, who significantly, in Dahomey are the animals sacred to this deity. Following this, the adults enter the closed room, to feast at the laden table.

Several days after the funeral two gourdes are paid a priest [793]
— "a real one," not a *prêt' savanne* — to chant a *libera* at the [765]
grave, a rite that must be repeated each year on All Saints' Day. Each year, also, food is given the dead, though "not so much as following a funeral." Chickens, beans, rice, and coffee are the principal part of such an offering, for which no priest need be called, as the ceremony is merely to let the dead know that they are not forgotten. Every three or five years, however, a large *mangé* must be given for all the family dead, and if held [535]
on the family habitation, there is social dancing, where such favorites of the ancestors as the *martinique*, the *banda*, the *calebasse*, and the *zesse* are danced.[8]

Differences in procedure mark various modes of death. 766
When a person is killed by lightning, a justice of the peace must be called and the burial is performed at once. Such a one has no "last prayer," because, death by lightning being a punishment of God, it is felt that the dead probably made an oath which he subsequently violated. Those killed by lightning or who die of smallpox are not mourned, but no explana- [171]
tion could be obtained for this obvious survival of African custom. If a leper has concealed his disease, mourning is worn for him, though if the cause of death is generally known this is forgone. There is customarily no mourning for suicides, [762]
and never where the regulations of the Church are rigorously applied.

If the dead person was a *vodun* priest or otherwise had 764
strong *connaissance*, steps are taken before his death to "re- 769
move the *loa* from his head" so that his soul will not go under 796
the water, for, as has been explained, such souls are held to 775
be powerful spirits which may cause their family much harm

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764 766 776 775 if, after a time, an expensive and troublesome ceremony is not performed to bring them out and lodge them in a jar. The *hungan* who performs the rite of removing these *loa* is 764 766 776 793 preferably himself a member of the family and is usually left alone with one or two assistants and an elderly relative of the dead, but if the family includes no *hungan*, the one who is called, even though greatly trusted, is most carefully watched, because a strange priest might take for himself the valued gods of the dead, leaving only the weak ones. The *hungan* stands in place and calls the name of the dead. He puts some of the hair of the dead in the jar or in a calabash, with which the *loa* is supposed to go, and, unless another member of the family, nominated to receive the *connaissance* of the dead, is present, the jar or calabash is sealed until these spirits can be "given" to a successor.

766 No special purification is needed for a house where death [764] has occurred except when the deceased was tubercular or a [783] leper, when everything except his money is buried or thrown in some unfrequented place. The body of one who has died of smallpox, though washed, is buried as soon after death as possible without being enclosed in a coffin. Those who die of smallpox or leprosy, suicides, or persons shot as a punishment for crime are not buried in the communal cemetery, but in special sections of the graveyard, the lepers and victims of smallpox being separated from the others, for the Church declares these have died of the plague. One who drowns is buried at the riverside where his body is recovered, though if the corpse is not too badly decomposed, the authorities give permission, and the family of the dead can afford the expense of transportation, the body may be brought home. Children are [561] buried in the cemetery, but, on the principle that "the young [171] must serve their elders," the funeral of a child is attended only by those relations who are younger than the dead; for in Haiti, as in Africa, it is not held seemly that the young should be followed to the grave by their elders. At the house, however,

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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754 776 575 Novo, Dahomey. The members are, of course, not known, but there is always gossip, and occasionally a man, when quarreling, says: "Take care! You don't know who I am. . . ."

776 *Baka, loups-garous,* and *démons* are not the only supernatural beings that a person may encounter from time to time. Though not all are creatures of magic, and not all are evil, all of them are treated with due caution. Such are the "river [793] people" — children with six fingers, who are believed to belong to the Mait' Source, the Master of the Stream, and are destined to become *hungans* — this being an example of the good that may come from such supernatural association — or persons with light hair. Those with light hair are more dangerous, however, since occasionally such folk are taken for a time under the water, the men by female spirits and the women by males. One person in Mirebalais told of a distant cousin who disappeared as she went to the river to draw water. She was mourned as dead, but returned after a year and was welcomed home. As she began to recount her adventures, however, she was struck dumb, and never recovered her speech. Another spoke of his experience as a boy with such a water-spirit, a *Maîtresse d'Eaux.* With a companion, he was walking along the bank of the Tombe River, when a woman was seen sitting on a rock combing her long light-colored hair. The other lad was invited to help her and went nearer, step by step, until, as he almost touched the comb, he turned and ran. Some time later he died.

754 ●764 775 Another category of spirits, already referred to in discussing the cult of the dead, are *zombi.* To understand their nature, however, the use of magic to bring about death or its simulacre, and the measures taken to guard against this, must be first considered. In the preceding chapter it was observed how *hoholi* seeds are placed in the coffin of one suspected of an "unnatural" death to prevent the sorcerer from reaping the [789] fruits of his deed. A cross of pine-wood, made by the *hungan* and empowered by him to repel evil, is frequently also put

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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with it, or the body is made to lie face downwards in the coffin, since the discomfort of this position causes the spirit of the dead to avenge itself on the sorcerer who caused the death. When a man has been killed by magic, his surviving relatives go to a *hungan* or a *bocor* to discover the culprit. The names of those suspected of the deed are called. Before the diviner stands a pottery jar filled with magically treated water. When the unwilling image of the guilty one finally appears, the *hungan* plunges his knife into it, and as the water turns red, those watching know that when the specified number of days have passed, the guilty one will be dead.[13] Should a suspect be innocent, the image of the Virgin Mary or of St. John is sometimes seen when he is called; but if one known to be guilty does not appear, it is proof that his magic is stronger than that used to call him. Recourse is then had to a powerful *wanga*, or poison, or to the spirit of someone dead, an *âme abandonée* who has led a life of evil and himself been a murderer. "They would certainly not send the spirit of the one just killed. He is too green" — to bring death to the killer. If none of these measures prevail, no further acts of revenge are attempted against the suspect, the feeling being that he has supplied himself with too powerful magic to allow effective revenge to be taken.

On occasion, an apparent death is felt not to be a real death, but rather the simulacre of death brought about by the machination of a sorcerer. The corpse is thereupon given poison or stabbed with a dagger, to make certain that an apparent death becomes an actual one, but the person who stabs the body must stand behind it in order that the corpse as slave of the sorcerer may not reveal who had stabbed him when summoned, and thus make of the one who had robbed him of his prey a substitute victim. If poison has not been administered to the corpse, or if the body was not stabbed, after the funeral the sorcerer recovers the body, which, deprived of its soul, works for him as a *zombi*, only returning to the grave when the time decreed by God for his natural death is reached, or if

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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CHAPTER XI

[1] Compare Parsons (I), 173–4, where the cult of twins is discussed and some of its rites described.

[2] Price-Mars (I), 35, mentions this as a power believed to be held by twins.

[3] The phrase "cult of the dead" as employed here must be sharply differentiated from its misuse by Seabrook (82 ff.).

[4] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 34.

[5] Price-Mars (I), 34, speaks of the custom of always burying charms with the dead.

[6] Wakes have been described by Seabrook, 89–91, and others, but in such a manner that it is difficult to dissect out the reality of what was witnessed from the imaginative elements.

[7] Cf. Wirkus, 221–3. The custom of giving the dead food at the grave, which he describes, is not followed when burial occurs in the Mirebalais town cemetery, nor, seemingly, elsewhere in the valley.

[8] See the description of a commemorative rite for the dead in Price-Mars (I) 148–50.

[9] This is a rule followed in West African practice.

CHAPTER XII

[1] An interesting attempt to account for this is found in St. John, 230–1, where he speaks of the "two Vaudoux sects," one good and one evil.

[2] St. Mery, i, 36. The term *garde* is almost entirely absent in later writings, the more sensational *wanga* (*ouanga*) being preferred.

[3] Léger, 55, note 34.

[4] Cf. Dorsainvil (I), 171.

[5] No better summary of this could be had than that in Parsons (I), 179, written after a single séance with a *gangan*.

[6] Pp. 324–31.

[7] Mr. J. C. Trevor informs me that during a recent field-trip to the Virgin Islands he discovered books of magic in common use, obtained from a Chicago dealer.

[8] It is not without interest to note that in the case reported in a Port-au-Prince newspaper and reproduced in facsimile by Seabrook, 334, concerning a woman from the commune of Mirebalais accused of sorcery, the name of the woman was *Azéman*.

[9] Cf. Parsons (II), 596.

[10] See above, pp. 94–5.

[11] The closest correspondence

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

one. Sometimes a loa who is making life too hard for a devotee will be retired without a replacement. The "washing of the head" must be accompanied by ritual safeguards, and all possible circumstances must be taken into account by the officiating cult priest. There are many stories of people who became mentally deranged as a result of the removal of their loa from their heads.

The mait' tête must also be removed from the head of a person who dies. Should this not be done, the spirit of the deceased will go to reside "below the water" and may cause trouble for the family. This loa is usually transferred to a special jar as a temporary resting place, and later perhaps into the head of another member of the family.

Though the loa is a powerful ruling force in the life of the individual, the human "horse" has controls over his deity too. He may reproach or admonish his loa for bad behavior or for failing to protect him. He may expose the loa's irresponsibility in public through the use of songs in religious rites. And though the loa is frequently encouraged to "enter," steps may be taken to restrain him from possession. This is called *marré loa* —"tying the loa." A woman may "tie" her loa by fixing a hairpin in her hair in a special way. A man may do it by placing his hands in cold water.[3]

Nevertheless, the loa are always lurking in the background. They are a constant and dramatic element in the religious life of the people. They may sometimes be controlled by the houngan, but they are an authority stronger than the priesthood. They give advice, courage, consolation, and status to their followers. They add much to an otherwise hard and ungenerous environment and evoke remembrances of Africa from which the Haitians' ancestors were uprooted. They can also cause concern and anxiety; for the loa are not always benevolent, and they are frequently unpredictable.

Many of the loa are ancient deities, sib-founders and ancestors who loom out of a misty, half-forgotten past. Nananbouclou, Legba, and Ayida Wèdo have been known for many lifetimes in Dahomey. Chango, Ogoun, and Loko were old spirits in Nigeria before the first slave ships sailed from Africa to the New World. Their names and many others in present-day Haiti come from an ancient lore. They recall places, tribes, and old kingdoms from Senegal in northwestern Africa to the heart of the Congo. They are a bond which holds the people of Haiti to Africa. In the mountains people sometimes say, "Haiti is the child of Dahomey," or "Haiti is the child of Guinée." The gods divide their time between their Haitian and their African children.

Yet in some respects the Haitians' concept of their loa is no longer purely African. The African religious patterns have been infiltrated by the lore

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769 The dead twins are offered food in special earthen or gourd bowls. In any
845 market place where pottery is sold you will find the joined marassa double or triple bowls. The annual rites for the marassas are routine, but once every five years there is a *grande service* for them.

It is not merely the twins of one's immediate family that are served, but twins—that is, the spirit of twins—in general. They are supplicated even when a family knows of no incidence of twins. In part, this precaution is a recognition that there may have been twins among ancestors long dead and forgotten. It is also recognition of a twin spirit as a separate force affecting all people. The twin spirit has been personified in the loa named Marassa. The child born after twins is believed by many Haitians to be even "stronger" and more to be placated than twins themselves. He is
[776] known as a *doçu* if a boy, *doça* if a girl. Their patron loa are known as Marassa Doçu and Marassa Doça. The patron loa of triplets is Marassa Trois. Triplets are regarded as a special category of twins. Some Haitians, in fact, believe that the twins are merely a partial manifestation of the group of three, which is completed on the birth of the doçu or doça. In the marassa feast, triplets are served in the triple clover-leaf bowl, as are twins in combination with their doçu or doça. It is also believed by some that the child born before twins is "weak" both in physical vitality and psychic powers, because his strength has been sapped by the marassas who have followed him.

776 For some Haitians the loa Marassa is the most potent of forces to be
768 placated at the time of death. They hold that he is only incidentally the
769 patron of twins and triplets. His significance is said to lie in the fact that
[184] he is the spirit of the first of all human children who died. And as the child precedes the man, Marassa is the first and foremost of all loa. When a service is held for Marassa, he is given foods and beverages that all children love.

769 Rites for the dead continue endlessly for the living. Before a child is witness to a death in his own family he may observe many rituals for the family ancestors, twins, and the unknown dead. For those who are a part of Vodoun, the cycle is a perpetual one in an endless system of integration and continuity.

775 Special rites are held to remove the loa from the head of a deceased per-
776 son. It is believed that the spirit of a person who has not had his loa re-
764 moved will be restive and perhaps will even cause difficulties for his family and his descendants. And there is also the matter of the loa's welfare. The *malt' tête* is, in a sense, a captive in the head of the person who has died. The head is his home. But should the corpse be taken to the graveyard without the loa's having been removed, the loa would refuse to be buried

with the corpse. He wants nothing to do with the domain of the Gèdés. 775
He liberates himself from the corpse at the cemetery and retires "below the 776
water." He is no longer a friend and benefactor of the family. He cannot 764
be inherited by the children of the deceased. Such controls as the deceased once exercised over him are dissipated. He may, in fact, be angered at the treatment he has received and return only to harass the family. Thus, if a family fails to have the mait' tête of one of its members properly removed at death, it may be persecuted afterward by the "spirit" of the dead ancestor and the loa as well.

The rite of dispossessing a deceased person of his loa is called *déssounin*, 764
or *déssouné*. The essence of it is the transference of the mait' tête from the 776
head of the dead person into a special receptacle, an earthen jar called a *govi* or *pot tête*. Sometimes it is transferred to the head of a child in the family, though usually this comes later.

There have been many descriptions of this ritual, and they seem to show that, though the tradition is a constant one, the specific patterns of the services are variable. Different regions, different cult centers, and different houngans conduct the rites in different ways.

Eugene Aubin wrote, for example:

On the day of death, the deceased is placed standing up; the *papaloi* [houngan] [793]
conducts the rites which retire the *mystère* [loa] from the body and introduce it
into a jar, which is then carefully sealed. On the ninth day, after the feast for the [765]
dead, the jar is broken and liberty given to the *loa*.¶

Melville Herskovits reported:

If the dead person was a Vodun priest or otherwise had strong *connaissance*, steps [766]
are taken . . . "to remove the *loa* from his head" so that his soul will not go under [775]
the water, for, as has been explained, such souls are held to be powerful spirits which
may cause the family much harm if, after a time, an expensive and troublesome cere-
mony is not performed to bring them out and lodge them in a jar. . . . The *houngan* [793]
stands in place and calls the *name* of the dead. He puts some of the hair of the dead
in the jar or in a calabash, into which the *loa* is supposed to go, and, unless another
member of the family, nominated to receive the *connaissance* of the dead, is present,
the jar or calabash is sealed until these spirits can be "given" to a successor.♠

As Herskovits understands it, it is the "soul" of the dead person that 114
would go to live "under the water," rather than the loa. This would appear 764
to be a fusion of two separate elements—the wandering, troublesome 775
"spirit" of a dead person and the malt' tête who retires "under the water." 776
Actually, Haitians are not always consistent in their explanations of what happens, or of the difference between loa and souls. On the hounfor altar there may be some govis that contain "souls" or "spirits" and others that contain loa; though the distinction is readily appreciated, Haitians are

¶ [translated from The French of Aubin, En Haiti, P. 212
Cf. P. 350, category 116. -- Analyst]
♠ [Herskovits, Life in a Haitian Valley, pp. 213-214
Cf. P. 350, category 116. -- Analyst]

114 764 765 776 sometimes hard put to explain the similarity of treatment of these two categories.

Another investigator, Alfred Métraux, has provided a vivid description 764 776 given by a Haitian of a ceremony of removing the loa. In this instance the corpse was not placed in an upright position as described by Aubin but was laid on a specially prepared bed. Attending the body were the houngan, his hounsi, and a child of the dead man who was to receive the liberated loa.

> The child . . . grasps in his hand a black-and-white or a white cock. On the ground in front of the bed they arrange a fine white napkin. On top of it there are syrup, candles . . . , *tafia*, and other things. After they have finished sprinkling water, clapping their hands, singing to the *loa*, they all go around the bed of the dead person. The child, with the cock in his hand, makes the rounds with the *houngan*. They wave the rooster, they wave it back and forth two, three, four, five, six times over the dead person's head. During this time all those present get possessed by the *loa*, sing, clap their hands. The dead person's bed begins to creak. The *houngan* climbs [793] on the bed and grabs the dead person's two arms. . . . He pulls him to a sitting position. The child (into whose head the *loa* is to be transferred) strikes the chicken three times on the head of the dead person. He lets go the chicken, and the chicken flies up and starts to run all around the room, smashing pots and vessels. They grab the chicken and let it go in the air three times, shouting: *Ai bobo loa là!* Immediately the *loa* goes into the head of the dead person's child.

764 776 793 The houngan cited by Métraux is described as pulling the corpse to a sitting position, but more commonly it is believed that the houngan has the power to make the body sit up by itself. A man from Jérémie explained it this way:

> "The body is laid out on a mat. The houngan shakes his asson over the dead man, and talks to the loa in the head. He calls the loa's name: 'Changogolo! Changogolo! Changogolo!' He calls, calls, calls. He doesn't call the dead man's name, he calls the maît' tête. 'Changogolo! Changogolo! Get up! Wake up! Sit up!' The corpse sits up. It even talks. Then the houngan says, 'Lie down!' And the corpse lies down. But it is not the dead man who sits up. The dead man is dead. It is the maît' tête who has forced the body to sit up. After this the houngan takes the loa from the head and puts it in a pot tête. Then the body can be buried. And afterward the loa can be put in the head of someone else or freed. Or the houngan may keep the loa in the pot tête and sell it to someone who needs a loa to work for him. If they buried the corpse without a *déssounin*, the loa would resent it and go away below the water."

764 766 776 793 George Eaton Simpson has written an excellent description of a ceremony for removal of the loa from the head of a deceased houngan.* The

[Hall and others, Haitian Creole, American Anthropological Association, Memoir No. 54, pp. 188-189. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

*[Simpson, "Four Vodun Ceremonies" Journal of American Folklore, April-June, 1946, pp. 155-162. Cf. p. 350, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]

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rites took place in the region of Plaisance in northern Haiti. Such a ceremony, Simpson notes, may be attended by several houngans other than the Vodoun priest who is officially in charge. They "share the obligation and pleasure of conducting this service for their colleague, their former rival, and perhaps their former enemy." In a room of the deceased houngan's house is the body, attended by the family, relatives, close friends, and the officiating houngan and his assistants.

. . . Near the body, which is covered by a sheet, are placed a jug and a new canari (a large earthen jar). The officiating houngan makes the sign of the cross, mumbles a few ritual formulas, and taking a spoon puts some "manger les morts" (special food for the dead) in the canari: plantains, yams, bananas, tairauts, sweet potatoes, corn meal, roasted corn, bread, cakes, rice, millet, meat, chicken, pistachio, chopped coconut, and other kinds of food. He then adds some water and stirs this mixture. . . . The other houngans perform the same rite. The family, friends, and others in the room imitate the acts of the houngans with the green branches which they hold in their hands. In a grave voice and with solemn gestures the officiant then appeals to the *loas* with songs and prayers. He invites them to come to the aid of their faithful servant, to protect him in the other world as they have protected him in this world. Following the songs and prayers the leader pronounces these words:

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"Innocent! A good man has left us!
The mother of the children weeps.
Weep, console yourselves.
Boss Accelon, he was here.
He died.
Master Pierre Jean-Baptiste, he was here.
He died.
General Baptiste, he was here.
He died.
Marius who was left,
He died.
But Brother Joseph survives,
We will cry, we will console ourselves."[9]

The weeping and the cries redouble, but the *père-savane* [père' savane] and the houngan carry on. In the other room the *père-savane* solemnly intones:

"I have only one soul
Which must be saved.
By the eternal flame,
I must preserve it."[10]

The officiating houngan speaks directly to the dead man: "Boss Marius, here is a canari that your heirs have especially prepared for you so that in the future you will not have any trouble and demand other sacrifices of them. You others, the dead, are always unreasonable. Because you have peace you forget that the times are hard and that on this earth we unfortunate men are crushed by suffering. Leave your family in peace after this service, Boss Marius. Do not torment them, and do not send illnesses to their children or misery to their older people. You were always a good

9 [As translated by Courlander from Simpson's Creole text, ibid., p. 156. The preceding paragraph is from p. 155. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

10 [Translated by Courlander from the Creole of Simpson's text. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

764 766 793 796 [539] father when you were living. Continue to protect your family after death. If you need other services give abundantly to your heirs in order to obtain satisfaction. Oh, good father, good servant, good parent, good friend! Good-bye! Do not forget us as we shall not forget you."[11] A

Then the houngan goes to the canarie, strikes it three times with a piece of palm bark, and chants an invocation to the loa and to God, while members of the family dance where they stand, shaking the green branches they hold. There follows an invocation to twins. After a number of loa [787] have "entered" the service, as manifested by possessions, the houngan undertakes to find out how death came to the deceased man. An assistant brings the sacred divining shells[12] A of the dead man, and the officiating houngan throws them on the floor, pours tafia three times, and lights a candle. The shells are then consulted. Three times he goes through the procedure of casting the shells and consulting them. Later he announces that "the death of Boss Marius is not the death of an ordinary man, that [795] he is now resting in La Ville-au-Camp (capital of the loas which is 'under the water'), and that the loas will continue to protect his descendants provided that they show themselves worthy of protection."[13] A There is more singing and ritual, and then the canarie is covered. The loa from the head of Marius has found a temporary resting place. A little later in the service "the houngan raises the canari as high as possible, almost as high as his face, as he repeats the last line: 'Where may I find refuge?' With a quick movement the canari is shattered. The food is scattered, the loas are satisfied, and the crowd breaks into disorderly flight. . . ."[14] A A few hours later the body of the deceased is buried.

764 184 796 It is obvious that these rituals vary a good deal according to regional practices and according to the importance of the persons for whom they are conducted. Furthermore, there is a good deal of difference of opinion among Haitians as to what actually takes place when the mak' tête is taken from the head of the deceased man.

793 764 184 Although the prêt' savane (bush priest) is subsidiary to the houngan at death rites, his is nevertheless a conspicuous presence. He may begin the services with prayers for the dead, in which the family joins, while the houngan remains in the background. Later, the houngan takes over. In certain regions, however, the prêt' savane is dispensed with altogther, his function being absorbed by the houngan.

764 As reported by Herskovits, the wake for the dead is one of the most important ceremonies in the death rites. He says:

[766] Wakes are held for all dead, even for very young children if they have been baptized, though if a baby dies before baptism, it is buried without ceremony in a little box in the courtyard of the habitation. . . . The wife and the children either stay

11 A [This and the preceding paragraph are from Simpson, Op. Cit., P. 156. Cf. P. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]
12 A [For footnote, see Category 116, P. 350. --Analyst]
13 A [Simpson, Op. Cit., P. 159. Cf. P. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]
14 A [Ibid., P. 161. Cf. P. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]

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with the corpse or are nearby with friends. The one who bathed the corpse remains constantly at its side as members of the family come and go, since the body must never be alone.[15] 764

But outside the house another kind of activity goes on. There the young people usually gather to sing gay songs, to play games, and to listen to stories. A professional storyteller, or a nonprofessional of repute, is called upon to entertain the children. He may give an entire night to Bouki and Malice stories, or to *contes* with interspersed songs in which the audience participates. Special singing games, stick games, and card games are played. But the drums are silent, both in the dead person's house and in the countryside at large. Rhythms for the game songs are provided by hand-clapping, or by vocal sounds which simulate percussion instruments. 764 564 53

Burial ceremonies vary according to local tradition and the status of the deceased person. Near the little fishing village of Petit Goave in southwestern Haiti, I witnessed a funeral cortege which might have been seen almost anywhere in the country. It was led by the widow of the dead man. She rode on a white horse, followed by four men carrying the dead body on a biter made of plain planks. There was no coffin, the body being covered only by its white shroud.[16] Behind the corpse plodded a group of twelve or fifteen peasants, friends and relatives of the dead man. Some of them had just come in from the fields and still carried their machetes in their hands. Others carried short *cocomacaque* sticks, which are believed useful for warding off boka and other demons who lurk along the path of the traveler. 764 [184]

The woman on the horse lamented loudly. When she came to where other peasants stood respectfully at the road's edge, she stopped her horse and faced them, raising her voice to an anguished pitch, calling on them to take note of her bereavement and of the fine virtues of the dead man. Some of the spectators whom she addressed, standing with their hats in hand, nodded and tried to say consoling words, such as "Oui Manman, li grand moune" (Yes, Mama, he was a fine man), or "Quand Bondieu vlé ou li prend" (When God wants you he takes you). A market woman with a load on her head suddenly became possessed by a loa as the cortege passed her. This seemed to increase the anguish of the widow, who lamented with increased vigor.

The four men carrying the corpse sometimes moved in a zigzag course, first to one side of the road, then to the other. When the procession came to a crossroad it stopped momentarily. The houngan, scarcely distinguishable from the other peasants in blue denim, came forward and stood in the center of the crossroads shaking his tiny hand bell and calling upon Malé' Kalfu (Master of the Crossroads) to grant safe passage. While he [193] [176]

[15] [Herskovits, op. cit., p. 208. Cf. p 350, Category 116. --Analyst]
[16] [For footnote, see Category 116, p. 350. --Analyst]

764 invoked the loa, the pallbearers brought the body forward as though to go straight ahead, but then they began to lurch and sway as though an invisible force were pushing them around. They veered as though to take the right turn, and again they lurched and staggered. At last they turned toward the left, and in this direction they found the road clear. The houngan thanked the Master of the Crossroads, the widow took her place at the head of the procession, and it proceeded on its way to the cemetery.

793 In the services for a dead houngan described by Simpson, the body is 794 placed in a coffin, which is carried to all the places sacred to the loa of the 795 houmfor before being taken to the cemetery. First it is taken to the sacred trees where the loa reside, then to the sacred spring "whose waters have cured many sicknesses which physicians had pronounced incurable . . . (823) The bearers of the coffin circle the spring several times. The coffin is swung [toward] each of the four cardinal points." Afterward the procession continues its way to the burial ground.[12]

766 But the treatment given to the dead may vary according to the manner 794 in which they died. Leyburn notes, for example, that "a person struck by 795 lightning . . . would have no ceremonies at all, for lightning is an act of God."[13] It may well be that the Haitian rationale for not holding ceremonies for an individual killed by lightning is that God has already held the final ceremony. But in the Haitian mind all deaths are, in the last analysis, acts of God, even though magic, poison, or accident may have played an immediate part. Why, then, should the corpse struck by lightning be treated so differently? The answer would appear to lie in a custom 794 of the Yoruba of dispensing with all burial rites for persons killed by 795 lightning, such persons being considered enemies of the lightning deity (794) Changó. In Dahomey, Herskovits reports, the same attitude prevails in regard to persons killed by lightning:

> If a person is killed by lightning he . . . stands convicted by this fact of some grave crime which has incurred the displeasure of the god of the Thunder Pantheon (Xevioso). A person so killed is never buried by his family, but the body is turned over to the chief priest and sub-members of these divisions. It is believed that a man killed in this fashion remains upright until the chief priest questions him and forces him to confess the crimes he had committed to be so punished. No one touches any of the belongings of such a man, not even his master. The house in which he lived (768) is allowed to go to ruin, an arbor of palm fronds being placed around it to guard (784) against anyone entering it. The moveable property of such a man, his clothes, his (824) stools, and his dishes, are thrown away at the crossroads . . .[14]

766 The burial of a Haitian who dies of smallpox likewise differs from that of one who dies a "normal" death. The victim of smallpox is buried without a coffin in a segregated part of the cemetery. The reason for this lies

[12] [Simpson, op. cit., p. 161. Cf. p. 350 Category 116. -- Analysis]
[13] [Leyburn, The Haitian People, p. 156. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analysis]
[14] [Herskovits, Dahomey, I, 398. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analysis]

beyond the obvious fear of contagion. In his study of Dahomey, Herskovits notes:

> . . . Smallpox is believed to be sent as a punishment for grave offenses in the eyes of these [the Singbwo] deities, and it is taken to indicate that either the dead person himself or a member of his family has committed some heinous crime such as the practice of black magic. A person who dies of smallpox may only be buried after permission has been given by the chief priest of the Earth cult.[20]

Thus, in Haiti, though the connections with the past are clouded, it is clear that victims of lightning and smallpox are treated as a special class of criminals or malefactors.

Ordinary malefactors such as malevolent criminals and murderers—until recent years, at least—were not buried in the common graveyard. They, too, were segregated at the periphery of the cemetery or buried at the edge of a trail or road where the traffic would not permit them to rest and where their graves would be under constant surveillance. The roadside grave sometimes was also the fate of a person killed by lightning.

That these special burials are related to the Dahomean and Yoruban concepts of retribution for crimes against the deities is supported by the similarity of treatment accorded victims of lightning and disease and common criminals. In Haiti, Herskovits observes: "Those who die of smallpox or leprosy, suicides, or persons shot as a punishment for crime are not buried in the communal cemetery, but in special sections of the graveyard," the suicides and criminals being set apart from the others.[21]

Graves found near the seashore, lake shores, or riverbanks frequently are declared to belong to persons who died of drowning.

Approximately nine days after a person's death, the "last prayers" are said, and the soul of the deceased is presumed to have departed from the house. Once more, under the tonnelle outside there are games, storytelling, and singing. On this night, however, there is also drumming and dancing of a special kind. Usually it is the Juba, or Martinique, dance, which is believed to be specially enjoyed by the dead, and it is the older people, rather than the young, who participate. These festivities are believed to give cheer to the deceased and to "encourage" him on his way. On the next night comes the manger mort, the feast for the family dead, a ritual which continues periodically through the years.

Sometimes in Haiti you may come upon an old tomb or grave before which a dish of specially prepared food has been set. This is part of the manger mort ritual.

A man may make provision in advance of his death for the rites which follow his burial. He may designate special animals to be killed, have

[20] [Ibid., pp. 397–398. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.—Analyst]
[21] [Herskovits, Life in a Haitian Valley, p. 214. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.—Analyst]

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263 special funds to defray expenses, or even set a day for the "last prayers";
264 and it is said that misfortune is likely to overtake his family if his wishes are not carried out. Métraux cites a story of a man who had told his wife
263 that if he should happen to die on a Sunday she should hold "last prayers"
264 for him on a Tuesday. It happened to be a Tuesday when the man died.
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They held the burial in the afternoon. As they began the prayers on Wednesday, the last prayer finished on Wednesday work. But as Brother Lélan had always said they should hold his last prayer on a Tuesday, his wife was quite willing to hold it Tuesday. One Tuesday when everyone knew that the last prayer was being held, his wife heard her brother-in-law who told her that wasn't customarily done [that is, shortening the period of prayers]. Then she put off the last prayer.

Thereupon, according to the story, two strangers appeared in the house. They were offered chairs and they sat down. Suddenly, one of the men arose and said that the woman had announced that a last prayer was to be said that day. She said she had put it off. Then the other man got up and said: "Wasn't it today I ordered you to hold the last prayer?" The woman asked, "Who are you?" But both men disappeared. The woman fell unconscious, and died three days later.

969 The cycle of honoring, encouraging, and placating the spirits of the dead moves continuously. There is no beginning and no end. Although those who have died are no longer seen, they are part of the great community which encompasses those whose names are remembered and those who are forgotten, including ancestors who never left the shores
[961] of Africa. Death is merely another aspect of life, and its forces are ever present.

[Hall and others, op. cit., p. 193. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. — Analyst]

2: Courlander B-3 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

171 The connection between the Haitian zombie and certain soulless beings
715 of West Africa is quite apparent. Herskovits has observed that in
754 Dahomey there are tales of persons thought to be dead who were found wandering in far-off places. These individuals had no memories of their former lives. "They were soulless beings, whose death was not real, but resulted from the machinations of sorcerers who made them appear as dead, and then, when buried, removed them from their graves and sold them into servitude in some far-away land."*

764 According to stories told by some Haitians, in ceremonies for the
715 dead where there is suspicion that the deceased was the victim of this particular kind of poisoning a close relative stabs the body with a knife before burial to assure that it will not become a zombie. In other instances, close guard is kept over the grave for a number of days and nights, so that the body cannot be stolen.

715 Some members of the elite publicly dismiss the whole business as
789 savage fantasy but privately say something like: "I don't believe in this
184 sort of thing, but how can you explain the case of Marie Zamham in Cap Haitien?" And then they will tell of curious events of which they have firsthand knowledge.

538 There are numerous legends of persons who died and were buried,
715 only to reappear perhaps years later in some mountain village, or in the
789 big city of Port-au-Prince. An educated man in Port-au-Prince declared
754 that a dead cousin of his reappeared one day in the city ten years after her burial. He tried to speak with her, but she answered only haltingly and gave no sign of recognition. After this one appearance, he said, she was never seen again. Another Haitian from the north told of a graveyard watch in his village to prevent disinterment of the grave of a young girl who had just died. The two watchers dozed fitfully, and suddenly awoke to see a man removing the girl's body. When they jumped to their feet and went after him he escaped into the shadows. But the girl staggered about, fell to the ground, and gave birth to a baby. Both the girl and her newborn child were taken to the village and given salt to eat. Both of them recovered.

One villager from the southern mountains reported that in his travels he came upon a coffee plantation on the sparsely populated mountain called Morne la Selle, and found all the laborers to be zombies. They did not sing as they worked, their movements were slow and cumbersome, and they did not sweat in the hot sun. When he asked for a drink of water, no one replied. While he stood trying to converse, the master of the plantation came with a hard leather whip and angrily ordered him to leave.

* [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, p. 243. Cf p. 351, category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-AA]

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[783] 37. *A small graveyard in the mountains at Furcy. The little alcoves in the tombs are for food offerings on special anniversaries.*

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[776] 38. *Stone and brick covering of spring on Morne l'Hôpital believed to have been constructed in colonial times. Many persons have testified that here the voices of the lwa have been heard bubbling up with the water.*

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rites to break the tension. The name appears to have come from the word "Caribbean." 535

Magic: A dance accompanying a magic-making ritual.
Pwain: A dance accompanying the making of a pwain. [964]
Calebasse: A dance accompanying the calabash ritual, for the dead.
Dahomé: One of the principal dances of the Vodoun group, named after Dahomey.
Rombache: Another rest dance, from northern Haiti. Carried over into secular dancing, it has become the commonplace Rombache.
Boulevarse: From northern Haiti.
Mamba, or Mamba: A dance associated with Dahomey rites, accompanied by percussion music played on small drums hung around the neck.
Assotor: A dance accompanying rites for the assotor drum.

Dances Connected with Congo and Petro Ritual

Petro, or Don Petro: The principal dance of the Petro cult.
Kitas Mouillé: The "Wet Kitas," danced for the Simbi family of loa, patrons of rain and the spring. Sometimes called Danse Simbi. On rare occasions the Kitas Mouillé is accepted as Vodoun rather than Petro.
Kitas Cèche, or Sèche: The "Dry Kitas," danced for loa of the Kitas group other than the patrons of the spring. Sometimes identified with Vodoun rites rather than with the Petro.
Rumba, or Limba: Named after Congo tribes.
Mamdongue: A dance for the loa Mamdongue. Named after a tribe in the northern Congo.
Salongo, or Kinzo: From southwestern Haiti. Salongo is the name of a tribe in Angola.
Bambara: Named after the Bambaras of northwestern Africa.
Congo Lounger, or Congo Franc: Named after Lounga in the Congo.
Congo Maçonne: The "Masonic" Congo dance, known also as Congo Lanse and Congo Créole. Some informants believe the dance originated in a lounder called Société La Rose, from which it derives one of its names.
Pastorel: A Congo rest dance.
Mouvondi: A battle dance.
Mouvèlèlèl: A dance of northern Haiti for paying a debt to a loa.
Mapoya: This dance is nearly extinct.
Mamman Petro: The "Masonic" dance of the Petro rites.

Dances on the Periphery of the Vodoun Group

Ibo: Named after the Ibo people of Nigeria and used in rites for the Ibo family of loa.
Kongo or Capitine: Named after West African tribes.

Dances of the Juba Group

Juba, or Martinique: Danced on the occasion of Last Prayers, when the spirit of a newly deceased person has been sent on its way. It is also danced on various ceremonial occasions, and sometimes at the special request of a loa or an ancestor. [964] [975]

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 (Haiti SV3

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17. Children's World: Gage Songs and Games

On the night of last prayers for a deceased person, and on other party occasions, children while away the hours until bedtime with special songs and games. Sometimes the games are led by an older member of the family. More often, left to their own devices, the children play unsupervised. It is regarded as fitting that the youngest members of the community should be enjoying themselves while the last rites are being held for one who has recently died. This view is held not merely in regard to children; older people, too, engage in gay activities, such as dancing the Juba. 533 524 764 [535]

Many children's games are known throughout the country, others have only a regional popularity. The games mentioned here are among those played in southern Haiti, mainly in the neighborhood of the capital, Port-au-Prince. 184 524

One favorite is known as Balancé Yaya. The children—as few as four or as many as ten or twelve—crouch on the ground in a circle. Each of them has a stone in his hand, which he strikes rhythmically on the earth as they sing together: 524 [533] [539]

> Jésus, Marie, Joseph oh,
> Rat li mangé pigeon moin.
> Jésus, Marie, Joseph oh,
> Rat li mangé pigeon moin.
> Rat passé, Rabinette passé,
> Pal' si Marie marché, alé li. . . . [Ex. 129]

> Jesus, Mary, Joseph, oh,
> The rat has eaten my pigeon.
> Jesus, Mary, Joseph, oh,
> The rat has eaten my pigeon.
> The rat goes by, Rabinette goes by,
> Make little Mary walk, go there. . . .

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

as *houngfor*, *houssi*, *houngfaicon*, *houstor*, etc. *Mystère* is of obvious French origin. *Loa* is probably from the Fanon, but it could be from the Yoruba.

[7]Various methods and formulas are employed in "tying" a loa. Sometimes making the sign of the cross is regarded as adequate, or the saying of a prayer. In "The Voduu Service in Northern Haiti" (*American Anthropologist*, XLII, 242-243), George Eaton Simpson reports that the "tying" of a loa sometimes results in a contest between the individual concerned and his houngan. If the houngan wants the *mait' tête* to come ill, he must neutralize the ritual barriers the "horse" has put in the way. "One procedure for bringing on possession in a servant who has tried to 'tie' his chief goal is for the priest to stand in front of the person whom he suspects, make the sign of the cross, and strike him on the forehead three times with a sacrificial stone. Usually these blows are hard enough to make blood spurt. The servant then begs the pardon of the angry god, and as soon as possible he unties the knots in his handkerchief [the method he has used for 'tying' his loa]."

[8]Herskovits, *Dahomey*.

CHAPTER 41: *Death Rites* (*pp. 30–40*)

[1]Maurice Delafosse, *L'âme nègre*. Translation from *Free France*, special issue No. 4. French Press and Information Service, New York, June, 1945.

[2]Leo A. Verwilghen, in booklet describing peoples of the Kwango region, accompanying *Music of the Western Congo*, recordings issued by the Ethnic Folkways Library.

[3]Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu*, pp. 88–89.

[4]W. M. Eiselen and I. Schapera, "Religious Beliefs and Practices," in Schapera, *The Bantu-speaking Tribes of South Africa*, p. 250.

[5]Translated from the French of Aphin, *En Haiti*, p. 212.

[6]Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, pp. 213–214.

[7]Hall and others, *Haitian Creole*, American Anthropological Association, Memoir No. 54, pp. 188–189.

[8]Simpson, "Four Voduu Ceremonies," *Journal of American Folklore*, April-June, 1946, pp. 155–162.

[9]As translated by Courlander from Simpson's Creole text, *ibid.*, p. 156. The preceding paragraph is from p. 155.

[10]Translated by Courlander from the Creole of Simpson's text.

[11]This and the preceding paragraph are from Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

[12]These shells, as indicated elsewhere, are part of the paraphernalia of the Voduu priest and appear to be an inheritance from the priests of the Fa cult of Dahomey. The divining shells are usually thrown on the ground in fours, and the readings depend upon combinations of "heads and tails." The manner of throwing the shells, as well as the number used, corresponds closely with the Haitian secular gambling game *mayanbe* (see Appendix 2), though the purpose is obviously different. In some priestly circles in Haiti, cubes rather than the customary shells are used for divining.

[13]Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

[14]*Ibid.*, p. 161.

[15]Herskovits, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

[16]Herskovits (*ibid.*) notes that persons who die of smallpox, lightning, and certain other phenomena are not buried in coffins. Some of my informants indicated this to be their understanding also, but they said that the dead are buried without coffins for strictly economic reasons as well.

[17]Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

[18]Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. 156.

[19]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 398.

[20]*Ibid.*, pp. 397–398.

[21]Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, p. 214.

[22]Hall and others, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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and set apart on special plates in a separate room for them; in the afternoon the family eats the food. If the twins to whom homage is being offered are still alive, they must wear special clothes at the sacrifice.

"I believe in the careful cult of the dead . . ." Once more it is necessary to renew one's acquaintance with primitive and folk belief to grasp the Haitian attitude. Life is desirable, death is dreaded; both death and the dead are feared. In the actual world, any excursion from the comfortably familiar countryside of one's home leads to confusion and bewilderment. Except in the company of his fellows (on a religious pilgrimage to the waterfalls at Ville-Bonheur, for example), a Haitian almost never leaves his valley or mountainside and market town. Sophisticated people view the unknown with pleasurable excitement, for they have learned by experience that the unfamiliar is not necessarily frightful; it is quite the contrary with simple folk, whose meagre experience with the unfamiliar has been at least somewhat alarming.

Death is the ultimate unknown. The fearsomeness the imagination conceives to lie beyond death seems to exist in almost direct proportion to people's ignorance of the material world. The fear of ghosts is a commonplace among primitive folk, as among the uneducated in the "civilized" world. Where ghosts are considered powerful, one part of any comprehensive cult will certainly deal with the dead.

In Haitian Vodun the teachings of the Catholic Church have exerted more influence upon the cult of the dead than upon any other part of the religion. The preparation of the corpse for burial shows no traces of African practice; the watch (or wake) and wailing over the deceased is familiar; the funeral itself is conducted by a Catholic priest, with burial in consecrated ground. Thereafter, the continual efforts to secure the tranquil repose of the departed bear the earmarks of faithful Catholic practice; it is at this point, however, that the cult begins to assume distinctive features, for it is firmly believed that the dead exert tremendous power in the world of the living. This power comes from God—the Christian God. The case has been put succinctly by Sumner and Keller: "The relation between man and ghost resolves itself . . . into a relation of rights and duties, with all the rights on one side and all the duties on the other."[30] God gives

30. W. G. Sumner and A. G. Keller, *The Science of Society* (New Haven, 1927), II, 1[illegible].

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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some termed his "Haitianization." There were those who expressed surprise at the occurrence, but the majority held that though this man had himself been a devout follower of the Church, and his parents before him, Damballa was a *loa* of his family, and therefore it was reasonable that it should come to him when called at a dance.

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Another "unauthorized" possession, that of a woman in mourning, was also witnessed. Like the *service* of one night's duration, which this dance followed, it was but poorly organized and provided for, and in this it reflected the status of the family, which had but few resources, since its head had recently come into the valley and therefore lacked the backing which only his own relationship group could give him. Here there was no *maison de servitude*, and the *tonnelle* had been erected in an open field where the only shelter was offered by a crude hut near by. The *hungan* did not appear until late, while the host lived up to his reputation by drinking more *clairin* than was good for him. None the less, one violent possession by a *loa bossal* occurred relatively early in the evening, though the *loa* concerned did not "announce himself" through the song of the one he had possessed.

The woman in mourning sang continuously as she sat among the spectators, and since she was not supposed to dance, she executed dance movements in place. As the drumming became more and more *chaud* — "hot" — she became correspondingly more excited until, suddenly leaping from her seat, she began a frenzied dance. She refused the water and candle, however, and when finished with her dancing, she fell exhausted into her chair, where she remained in a coma during the next hour. She roused herself later and again joined the singing, but though she was near possession, this never came on. Her *loa*, like the other *loa bossal* that came earlier in the evening, did not "announce itself," and since it was her first — and not unwelcome — possession, she stated that at the termination of her period of mourning she would

1: Herskovits E-4, 8 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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have a *hungan* divine its identity so that she might thereafter worship it and be under its protection. As in the other case discussed, the personality involved here is not without interest. The woman was one of the shrewdest traders in the Mirebalais market, and noted for her hardness. Underneath this, however, the presence of much vital energy could be felt as well as a passionate desire for gayety and attention from members of the other sex. That the essential lack of satisfaction of these drives in her life, as discussed and observed, figured in bringing on her possession cannot be doubted, and, as such, throws significant light on the nature of the psychological aspects of the phenomenon.

These instances, however, must not be thought of as a regular part of the ritual of the dances. Though a dance was attended almost every Saturday night during the course of an entire summer, and a number of *services* and other *vodun* rites in addition, these were the only occasions when a *loa bossal* appeared. In order, therefore, to document the pattern of the *vodun* dance that has already been given, some of the dances witnessed may be described in outline.

The first of these is a dance which, originally intended as the culmination of the *service* described in the preceding chapter, failed to fulfill its end because of a quarrel between two important members of the family. None the less, it proved to be one of the most spirited and typical dances witnessed. The habitation, when reached shortly after six o'clock, was deserted, except for a few people who seemed to be waiting disconsolately. Among them were several *houssi* in white, and two who carried banners, while the three drums, each "dressed" in its skirt-like covering, stood before the entrance, the drumsticks and the *ogan* lying on the *barrière* itself. Since the *hungan* had not arrived, one or two of the men present took charge as darkness came on. Before this dance began, it was necessary to introduce the drums ceremonially into the compound, and as this was the first *vodun* dance after the es-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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764 balais the setting was most elaborate, in striking contrast to the bareness of the rites for a young man who was a *'ti moun* in a town family and came from poor peasant folk in the hills. Whatever the type of funeral, the coffin, carried by four men, leaves the house of death preceded by the priest and his acolytes. After mass has been sung, the priest and mourners walk in procession to the graveyard, where the body is placed in a tomb if one has been prepared for it, or interred underground, awaiting the building of a tomb. Before his death, should a person in a quarrel decree that certain others must never touch his coffin, and should these for the sake of public opinion attempt to carry it, it is believed that the coffin will fall to the ground. Such occurrences are extremely rare and cause a great deal of gossip. Following the funeral, friends sometimes remain with the mourners for several days, caring for the house and doing the cooking; otherwise the women of the household are obliged to take up their work at once. The trench which held the body during the washing is filled in as soon as the corpse is taken from the house, and a smudge of orange leaves is made "to take away the odor of death." Objects employed in the last illness, such as the mat on which the body lay and the towel used to dry the corpse, are taken to a large river and washed, after which they may be used by the heirs, provided death did not result from a contagious disease. Work in the fields is also resumed a few days after the funeral, for custom does not dictate when the mourners may again take up their tasks.

765 Next in the cycle of the rituals of death is the *dernière prière*, which ends a novena.[9] It was stated that the novena must begin on the Saturday after burial, so that it might end on a Sunday night, but one such ceremony actually occurred on a Friday night, which would be in accordance with the assertion that the *dernière prière* may take place on Monday, Friday, or Saturday nights. Others, however, maintained that this is only town custom, and that in the countryside this rite

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1827 SV3 Haiti SV3
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always takes place on a Sunday. The prayers of the novena, whatever week-day they may begin, are recited either by the priest, if in town, or by a *prêt' savanne*. The family and a few friends, who gather to hear the prayers and to sing hymns, take their places about a table covered with a white cloth, on which are placed *images* of the saints, a crucifix, two candles which must burn for the nine days, and two bouquets of flowers. A lamp of oil in a glass with a floating wick must also burn day and night. Each session of the novena lasts some two hours, and no refreshments are served those who attend.

On the day of the *dernière prière* those invited come to help cover the walls of the room with white sheets — sometimes the ceiling is also covered — and hang white curtains over doors and windows. Wreaths are placed on the table and attached to the sheets on the walls, and *images* of the saints are pinned to the white table-cloth as it hangs down. Liquor, cakes, *kola*, *clairin* and other refreshments are made ready, according to the family means, these being held so essential that if the family lacks the funds at the moment to provide them, the novena may be stopped on the eighth day, and the *dernière prière* postponed for a month or even two. The same type of song is sung at this rite as at wakes, and the mourners wail once again, though not so loudly as just after the occurrence of death. At about eleven o'clock, after having recited the last prayer of the novena, a *libera* is sung to "drive the dead from the house," since now they are through with him — followed by an *adoration* for the *prêt' savanne*. Since, unlike the custom at vodun ceremonies, these coins are his entire fee for the novena as well as for this evening's ceremony, he sees to it that the song which marks it continues until all members of the family have donated a sum that he regards adequate. The *adoration* over, the refreshments are passed, so that the *dernière prière* most often ends at midnight, though those in attendance sometimes remain until morning, playing games, telling stories, and singing canticles as at wakes.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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775 gatory on those who are possessed by *loa* who go unharmed in fire, it is said: "It is the *loa* that go into the fire. The soul is another thing."

All agree that the dead do not possess folk in the manner of the *loa*, as might be expected from the fact that the most important rituals in the cult of the dead are not only dominated by the Church, but carried out by its priest. In the matter of consulting the dead when questions of importance for the family are involved, however, there is no consensus of opinion. The most widespread point of view holds that only those dead whose *loa* have not been removed from their heads can be summoned, and that this is done only to permit them to "go to God," so their souls may be at rest. Otherwise, "when the dead are called, it is a matter of magic, for the dead are never good and one always must fear them." And though a Malt' 'Bitation that is an old, old ancestor may "mount the head" of a member of the family, he would never be specially called and in most cases, if he did come, would be "restrained." On the other hand, it was recounted how during the Caco rebellion the soul of Dessalines was brought into a jar and asked for his counsel. It is said, however, that he was so angered at the consistent defeats sustained by the Haitians that he struck everyone to earth and roundly scolded them for having lost the liberty with which he endowed them, departing without giving the desired advice. And since the spirits of Christophe and Toussaint are believed to be even stronger, no one had sufficient courage to summon them!

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The immediate nature of the relation between the dead and the living is best seen in the conventions and attitudes surrounding the wearing of mourning, which is required of all children of the deceased, whether "legitimate" or otherwise. Black is worn twelve months for a father, eighteen months for a mother; and half-mourning — black and white — is worn for a sister, brother, cousin, uncle, or aunt. In the country, before full mourning is put on, the black cloth is

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1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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taken to the *pret' savanne* to be blessed with holy water; in the town the Catholic priest is said to do this. In full mourning, black is worn on Sundays, Mondays, and Fridays, the days sacred to the dead, but since full mourning means that one must be dressed in one's best and it is impossible to wear these clothes all day long even in the first weeks after death, the rule is to remain at home, fully dressed, on Sundays, Mondays, and Fridays, wearing the full mourning outside the house only to Sunday mass. 765

When full mourning for a parent cannot be worn immediately following death, the fulfillment of the obligation is postponed. If this duty is not ultimately met, however, the dead take vengeance, so that a child of the one who was remiss perhaps falls ill, or some other misfortune comes to him. If the negligent one is no longer living, then the penalty for his neglect will be assessed on his children, who, on consulting a diviner, will be told that they must wear mourning not only for their own parents, but for their grandparents as well. Such is the case of a dying woman whose story is recounted, for a diviner ascertained that though she had worn mourning for her own father, he had not worn it for his parent; as soon as she put on full mourning for her grandfather, she is said to have immediately recovered. 765 784 [787] [788]

A widower wears mourning for a legally married wife for a year, and a widow for her husband during a similar period, and it is believed that if a man were to remarry before the year has elapsed, his second wife would die, so that a woman will not go sooner to a widower, while it is equally dangerous for a widow to take a husband before the first anniversary of the death of her spouse. Should a *placée* wife die, however, another may be taken in her stead before the year has passed, for it is only in matters where the Church is concerned that the dead take vengeance. Furthermore, a man who has more than one mate may go to his other wives at any time after the death of a spouse, and though he would, of course, not go to them 765 589 [583] [595]

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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75 soon after the death of one for whom he had deep affection, the matter is entirely one which concerns his own feelings. If a woman who cannot afford proper mourning clothes remarries in the Church before she has discharged the obligation to wear mourning for her dead husband, gossip will be heard, but, on the other hand, a woman who has been legally married, and who therefore may not remarry for a year after her husband's death, may be taken as *placée* by another before that period has elapsed. In this case, however, she must wear full mourning and otherwise observe all the necessary rites before the other man with safety may seek the approval of the Church for the union.

76 Though children who have lived until about twelve years of age and have been baptized are given a *dernière prière* and must not be forgotten when sacrifices are made to the family dead, there is but little mourning for them. "*'Ti moun pas gagné deuilles* — Children do not merit the wearing of mourning," it is said, and they are called "*'ti z'anges* — little angels" — for they are too young to have sinned. "It is only when one makes love that the important sins begin." Therefore, if a young person dies, not only do his parents, grandparents, and older brothers and sisters not follow his coffin to the grave, but they do not mourn for him. Only those younger brothers and sisters who were of his age — twelve or thirteen years old — wear semi-mourning.

Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

with the corpse. He wants nothing to do with the domain of the Gèdés. He liberates himself from the corpse at the cemetery and retires "below the water." He is no longer a friend and benefactor of the family. He cannot be inherited by the children of the deceased. Such controls as the deceased once exercised over him are dissipated. He may, in fact, be angered at the treatment he has received and return only to harass the family. Thus, if a family fails to have the mait' tête of one of its members properly removed at death, it may be persecuted afterward by the "spirit" of the dead ancestor and the loa as well.

The rite of dispossessing a deceased person of his loa is called *détroumin*, or *détroumé*. The essence of it is the transference of the mait' tête from the head of the dead person into a special receptacle, an earthen jar called a *goui* or *pot tête*. Sometimes it is transferred to the head of a child in the family, though usually this comes later.

There have been many descriptions of this ritual, and they seem to show that, though the tradition is a constant one, the specific patterns of the services are variable. Different regions, different cult centers, and different houngans conduct the rites in different ways.

Eugene Aubin wrote, for example:

> On the day of death, the deceased is placed standing up; the *papalói* [houngan] conducts the rites which retire the *mystère* [loa] from the body and introduce it into a jar, which is then carefully sealed. On the ninth day, after the feast for the dead, the jar is broken and liberty given to the *loa*.[1]

Melville Herskovits reported:

> If the dead person was a Vodun priest or otherwise had strong consciousness, steps are taken . . . "to remove the *loa* from his head" so that his soul will not go under the water, for, as has been explained, such souls are held to be powerful spirits which may cause the family much harm if, after a time, an expensive and troublesome ceremony is not performed to bring them out and lodge them in a jar. . . . The *houngan* stands in place and calls the name of the dead. He puts some of the hair of the dead in the jar or in a calabash, into which the *loa* is supposed to go, and, unless another member of the family, consecrated to receive the consciousness of the dead, is present, the jar or calabash is sealed until these spirits can be "given" to a successor.[2]

As Herskovits understands it, it is the "soul" of the dead person that would go to live "under the water," rather than the loa. This would appear to be a fusion of two separate elements—the wandering, troublesome "spirit" of a dead person and the mait' tête who retires "under the water." Actually, Haitians are not always consistent in their explanations of what happens, or of the difference between loa and souls. On the boundary altar there may be some gouis that contain "souls" or "spirits" and others that contain loa; though the distinction is readily appreciated, Haitians are

[1] [translated from The French of Aubin, En Haïti, p. 212
Cf. p. 350, category 116. --Analyst]
[2] [Herskovits, Life in a Haitian Valley, pp. 213-214
Cf. p. 350, category 116. --Analyst]

2: Courlander 3-4 (1927-1955) 1960 SV3 HaBI SV3

beyond the obvious fear of contagion. In his study of Dahomey, Herskovits notes:

> . . . Smallpox is believed to be sent as a punishment for grave offenses in the eyes of these [the Sagbata] deities, and it is taken to indicate that either the dead person himself or a member of his family has committed some heinous crime such as the practice of black magic. A person who dies of smallpox may only be buried after permission has been given by the chief priest of the Earth cult.[20]

Thus, in Haiti, though the connections with the past are clouded, it is clear that victims of lightning and smallpox are treated as a special class of criminals or malefactors.

Ordinary malefactors such as malevolent criminals and murderers—until recent years, at least—were not buried in the common graveyard. They, too, were segregated at the periphery of the cemetery or buried at the edge of a trail or road where the traffic would not permit them to rest and where their graves would be under constant surveillance. The roadside grave sometimes was also the fate of a person killed by lightning.

That these special burials are related to the Dahomean and Yoruban concepts of retribution for crimes against the deities is supported by the similarity of treatment accorded victims of lightning and disease and common criminals. In Haiti, Herskovits observes: "Those who die of smallpox or leprosy, suicides, or persons shot as a punishment for crime are not buried in the communal cemetery, but in special sections of the graveyard," the suicides and criminals being set apart from the others.[21]

Graves found near the seashore, lake shores, or riverbanks frequently are declared to belong to persons who died of drowning.

Approximately nine days after a person's death, the "last prayers" are said, and the soul of the deceased is presumed to have departed from the house. Once more, under the tonnelle outside there are games, storytelling, and singing. On this night, however, there is also drumming and dancing of a special kind. Usually it is the Juba, or Martinique, dance, which is believed to be specially enjoyed by the dead, and it is the older people, rather than the young, who participate. These festivities are believed to give cheer to the deceased and to "encourage" him on his way. On the next night comes the manger mort, the feast for the family dead, a ritual which continues periodically through the years.

Sometimes in Haiti you may come upon an old tomb or grave before which a dish of specially prepared food has been set. This is part of the manger mort ritual.

A man may make provision in advance of his death for the rites which follow his burial. He may designate special animals to be killed, have

[20] [Ibid., pp. 397-398. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]
[21] [Herskovits, Life in a Haitian Valley, p. 214. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

114 776 769 the dead a right to whatever their survivors possess, and moreover gives them the right to return to earth as ghosts.[31]

769 Strict rules of mourning prevail, both as regards clothing and behavior. The slightest lapse in the observation of these rules would • 765 cause resentment on the part of the dead; fear of retribution would 775 be quite enough to ensure conformity even if public opinion did not. 782 Ghosts have the power to possess mortals, not as the loa do at a Vodun service or dance, but in the manner understood by American Negroes who say they have been "ha'nted," and so, continually thinking of the dead, live in nervous fear of a streak of bad luck. Such possession is a form of persecution, with continual consequent bad luck until the survivor has carried out all his obligations. It is especially significant, however, that a departed spirit takes vengeance only in matters thought by the Haitian to concern the Church. The ghost is not whimsical in his possession of mortals, and cannot resent treatment which is his due. The kind of treatment given a corpse depends upon the kind of death he died: a person struck by lightning, for example, would have no ceremonies at all, for lightning is an act of God.

787 Where the cult of the dead departs entirely from the teachings of 775 the Church is in the matter of magic, a topic shortly to be treated. It 789 may be briefly stated here that ghosts can be summoned back by special adepts for purposes of divination; that certain corpses are thought to be revivified by evil persons who use these soulless, pathetic automata as slaves (these are the notorious *zombis*); and that black magic—that is, powerful influence for evil—can be worked by sorcerers who know how to command ghosts.

771 All other articles of the Vodun creed not already discussed, except 788 one, come under the heading of magic. That exception is the statement: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." The fact is as simple as the affirmation. If the Catholic priests fight Vodun, preaching frequently against its beliefs and practices, that is unfortunate, think the peasants: Vodun does not retaliate by fighting Catholicism. God and the saints have their province, and the loa theirs. The mind of the Haitian is simple enough to accept both sets of spiritual beings, and not philosophical enough to worry over the contradiction. Practically every Vodun worshiper thinks of himself as a Catholic.[32]

31. See Herskovits, op. cit., p. 215.

32. In this sketch of the Vodun creed, it has been constantly emphasized that each locality has its own variations both in belief and practice. The reader who is interested in pursuing the subject further should consult the works of Price-Mars, Herskovits, Deren, Metraux, Hurston, et al. See Bibliography.

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a mat or a cloth, supported in a reclining position with pillows and cloths, or on a covered box standing about a foot from the ground, with her legs drawn up. No fire is built in the house, all doors and windows are tightly shut, and covers are provided against a chill. A candle stands lighted at the threshold, and holy water is poured beside it; a candle is also often lighted in the church before the statue of the saint who corresponds to the *vodun* deity under whose protection the woman in labor is thought to be. In the room with her is the midwife and as many as six, seven, eight, or nine older women belonging to the families of the woman and her husband. The hands of the woman are made to rest on her knees, but where labor is prolonged, her arms are supported above her head to afford relief. She is three times given very hot tea or a drink made of the stewed leaves of the mango tree and of the *bois lait*. The midwife, with palm oil on her hands, watches the rhythm of labor and presses on the abdomen to facilitate delivery.

If it becomes evident that this will be difficult, a *vodun* priest is at once called to determine by divination whether or not the deities who have been propitiated are satisfied. If the answer is a negative one, he promises future sacrifices or gives minor offerings immediately. Care is also taken to ascertain whether the trouble is due to the discontent of the family dead who may have been angered by neglect to wear mourning for them, or because sacrifices or a *service* due them have been delayed too long. Inquiries are similarly made to determine whether the spirits of twins might not be displeased, while the possibility that evil magic may have been invoked is not overlooked, especially if the husband has several wives. If the inquiry shows that the magic of a co-wife was responsible, a strong counter-charm is made at once. Should the woman in labor eventually die, however, her death is not considered to be the result of any act of infidelity on her part, and does not, as in other Negro cultures, prevent the usual burial and mourning customs being carried out.

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may perhaps be said to have come to this: Adherents of the African cults refrain from killing the snake, and should they do so by accident, the African custom of giving ceremonial burial to any creature having supernatural importance is followed as an atonement. Where this is omitted, difficulties of so serious a nature are felt to threaten that to prevent them a priest of the cult is called upon to offer up a sacrifice and to beg forgiveness even after the little ceremony of burial has been performed.[1]

Inasmuch as *vodun* flourishes in Mirebalais despite the minor role of serpent-worship, it is evident that in seeking to understand its nature and its philosophy other aspects must be considered. Two historical facts must be kept constantly in mind in making this analysis, for without them, what follows would be meaningless. The first is that *vodun* derives from a background of African theology and ceremonialism. The second is that the Negroes have continuously been subjected to the influence of Catholicism during the centuries that have passed since their introduction into the island.

Yet another point may prove suggestive in providing a useful point of view for an analysis of the *vodun* cult. This bears upon a difficulty impossible and happily unnecessary to resolve in the field study of religion, which arises out of the degree of variation in answers to questions dealing with the same point. These answers differ not only according to the status of the individual in the cult, since layman and priest have understandably different concepts of the functions of deities based on unequal degrees of expert knowledge, but the extent to which an individual has religious interests or is indifferent to them influences the nature of his responses. A fundamental fallacy results from the fact that except where there is an officially sanctioned theology — which makes for dogma, and cribs for perfunctory worship, in contrast with the living dynamic nature of Haitian peasant belief and ritual — there are no "real" answers to questions in the field of religion. The

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764 placed in the coffin, which must always be used for burial. Even if a person is poor, "he can always borrow a plank from a neighbor, for people are charitable in matters of death," or, if a family cannot immediately afford to have carpenters make the coffin, they are paid later, a few gourdes at a time. This [567] also holds for the profesional bather of corpses, who receives three to five gourdes in the countryside, fifteen gourdes in Mirebalais, and, it is said, perhaps fifty in Port-au-Prince. A pig or a goat is killed to feed those who dig the grave and carry the coffin, "so they can do their work well." Otherwise these men receive no payment, for "people do such things for each other."

The wake,* which takes place on the night of death, is one of the most important ceremonies in the cycle of rites for the dead. Wakes are held for all dead, even for very young children if they have been baptized, though if a baby dies before [766] [851] baptism, it is buried without ceremony in a little box in the courtyard of the habitation. During the wake the body lies in the second room of the house, the long white candle used at the deceased's first communion standing lighted at his feet. If the dead was not a communicant, newly bought candles are placed at his head and feet. The wife and children either stay with the corpse or are near by with friends. The one who bathed the corpse remains constantly at its side as the members of the family come and go, since the body must never remain alone. Wailing goes on all night, and as more relatives arrive, those already there echo their cries.

On a table in another room a white cloth is spread, and a crucifix, images of the saints, flowers, lighted candles, and a lamp of oil are placed on it. The singers bring their song- [533] books, since the canticles of the Church are almost the only songs heard. At times songs are specially composed for the occasion, but these always concern themselves with death. Those who stand before the table, principally women, lead 770 the singing, the others acting as a chorus. People come and go

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tainer to a crossroad, where it is deposited as an offering for Legba, and its contents are eaten by the dogs, who significantly, in Dahomey are the animals sacred to this deity. Following this, the adults enter the closed room, to feast at the laden table.

Several days after the funeral two gourdes are paid a priest — "a real one," not a *prêt' savanne* — to chant a *libera* at the grave, a rite that must be repeated each year on All Saints' Day. Each year, also, food is given the dead, though "not so much as following a funeral." Chickens, beans, rice, and coffee are the principal part of such an offering, for which no priest need be called, as the ceremony is merely to let the dead know that they are not forgotten. Every three or five years, however, a large *mangé* must be given for all the family dead, and if held on the family habitation, there is social dancing, where such favorites of the ancestors as the *martinique*, the *banda*, the *calebasse*, and the *zesse* are danced.[9]

Differences in procedure mark various modes of death. When a person is killed by lightning, a justice of the peace must be called and the burial is performed at once. Such a one has no "last prayer," because, death by lightning being a punishment of God, it is felt that the dead probably made an oath which he subsequently violated. Those killed by lightning or who die of smallpox are not mourned, but no explanation could be obtained for this obvious survival of African custom. If a leper has concealed his disease, mourning is worn for him, though if the cause of death is generally known this is forgone. There is customarily no mourning for suicides, and never where the regulations of the Church are rigorously applied.

If the dead person was a *vodun* priest or otherwise had strong *connaissance*, steps are taken before his death to "remove the *loa* from his head" so that his soul will not go under the water, for, as has been explained, such souls are held to be powerful spirits which may cause their family much harm

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764 766 776 775 764 766 776 793 if, after a time, an expensive and troublesome ceremony is not performed to bring them out and lodge them in a jar. The *hungan* who performs the rite of removing these *loa* is preferably himself a member of the family and is usually left alone with one or two assistants and an elderly relative of the dead, but if the family includes no *hungan*, the one who is called, even though greatly trusted, is most carefully watched, because a strange priest might take for himself the valued gods of the dead, leaving only the weak ones. The *hungan* stands in place and calls the name of the dead. He puts some of the hair of the dead in the jar or in a calabash, with which the *loa* is supposed to go, and, unless another member of the family, nominated to receive the *connaissance* of the dead, is present, the jar or calabash is sealed until these spirits can be "given" to a successor.

766 [764] [775] No special purification is needed for a house where death has occurred except when the deceased was tubercular or a leper, when everything except his money is buried or thrown in some unfrequented place. The body of one who has died of smallpox, though washed, is buried as soon after death as possible without being enclosed in a coffin. Those who die of smallpox or leprosy, suicides, or persons shot as a punishment for crime are not buried in the communal cemetery, but in special sections of the graveyard, the lepers and victims of smallpox being separated from the others, for the Church declares these have died of the plague. One who drowns is buried at the riverside where his body is recovered, though if the corpse is not too badly decomposed, the authorities give permission, and the family of the dead can afford the expense of transportation, the body may be brought home. Children are [561] buried in the cemetery, but, on the principle that "the young [171] must serve their elders," the funeral of a child is attended only by those relations who are younger than the dead; for in Haiti, as in Africa, it is not held seemly that the young should be followed to the grave by their elders. At the house, however,

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older relatives participate in the rites as at any death; moreover, the rule *gran' moun pas sui' 'ti moun* holds only where a father, mother, grandparent, or older sister or brother is concerned.[8]

Unless the dead was known to be a sorcerer his house is not abandoned. If, unlike most of his kind, a reputed sorcerer is survived by children, they continue to live in his house, and though no gesture of marked social disapprobation is made, few persons attend the funeral and fewer still put foot inside the house afterwards, which means there is little of the habitual calling on the survivors. An abandoned house of this type is called *caille yun moun lou' gawou* — the house of a werewolf. If a stranger were to buy such a house, he would first have to "restrain" the evil spirits who continued there. Generally, however, a man will not buy land unless a diviner ascertains that no evil beings have ever been associated with it.

Such, in outline, are the principal rites for the dead and the outer manifestations of the sanctions which validate the cult for its followers. Fundamentally, these derive from the power which the dead wield in the world of the living — power that is held to come directly from God, who has not only given the dead all the rights of the living, but also the right to return to earth as ghosts. There are several types of dead, two of these being the *vien-viens* and the *zombi*. The *vien-viens* are ordinary ghosts; the latter, who will be discussed in the next chapter, are those whose souls have been "sold" by sorcerers and are therefore doomed to wander the earth until their destined time arrives to return to God. Still another type of dead are the ghosts of children who die before baptism, called *lutins*, who ride young horses, so that when a wild colt with a tangled mane is seen, it is said that a *lutin* has been on his back. The souls of the dead are held first to go to God in the sky, where they are condemned to purgatory or hell or permitted to remain in paradise; "It is God who creates, therefore when someone dies, he returns to Him." And as for the effect of pur-

with the corpse. He wants nothing to do with the domain of the Gèdè. 775
He liberates himself from the corpse at the cemetery and retires "below the 776
water." He is no longer a friend and benefactor of the family. He cannot 764
be inherited by the children of the deceased. Such controls as the deceased once exercised over him are dissipated. He may, in fact, be angered at the treatment he has received and return only to harass the family. Thus, if a family fails to have the mait' tête of one of its members properly removed at death, it may be persecuted afterward by the "spirit" of the dead ancestor and the loa as well.

The rite of dispossessing a deceased person of his loa is called *déssounin*, 764
or *désound*. The essence of it is the transference of the mait' tête from the 776
head of the dead person into a special receptacle, an earthen jar called a *goui* or *pot tête*. Sometimes it is transferred to the head of a child in the family, though usually this comes later.

There have been many descriptions of this ritual, and they seem to show that, though the tradition is a constant one, the specific patterns of the services are variable. Different regions, different cult centers, and different houngans conduct the rites in different ways.

Eugene Aubin wrote, for example:

On the day of death, the deceased is placed standing up; the *papalói* [houngan] [793]
conducts the rites which retire the *mystère* [loa] from the body and introduce it
into a jar, which is then carefully sealed. On the ninth day, after the feast for the [765]
dead, the jar is broken and liberty given to the *loa*.[§]

Melville Herskovits reported:

If the dead person was a Vodun priest or otherwise had strong *connaissance*, steps [766]
are taken . . . "to remove the *loa* from his head" so that his soul will not go under [775]
the water, for, as has been explained, such souls are held to be powerful spirits which
may cause the family much harm if, after a time, an expensive and troublesome cere-
mony is not performed to bring them out and lodge them in a jar. . . . The *houngan* [793]
stands in place and calls the name of the dead. He puts some of the hair of the dead
in the jar or in a calabash, into which the *loa* is supposed to go, and, unless another
member of the family, nominated to receive the *connaissance* of the dead, is present,
the jar or calabash is sealed until these spirits can be "given" to a successor.[&]

As Herskovits understands it, it is the "soul" of the dead person that 114
would go to live "under the water," rather than the loa. This would appear 764
to be a fusion of two separate elements—the wandering, troublesome 775
"spirit" of a dead person and the mait' tête who retires "under the water." 776
Actually, Haitians are not always consistent in their explanations of what happens, or of the difference between loa and souls. On the hounfor altar there may be some govis that contain "souls" or "spirits" and others that contain loa; though the distinction is readily appreciated, Haitians are

§ [Translated from the French of Aubin, En Haïti, P. 212
Cf. P. 350, Category 116. — Analyst]
& [Herskovits, Life in a Haitian Valley, PP. 213-214
Cf. P. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

114 764 795 796 sometimes hard put to explain the similarity of treatment of these two categories.

Another investigator, Alfred Métraux, has provided a vivid description 764 796 given by a Haitian of a ceremony of removing the loa. In this instance the corpse was not placed in an upright position as described by Aubin but was laid on a specially prepared bed. Attending the body were the houngan, his hounsi, and a child of the dead man who was to receive the liberated loa.

> The child . . . grasps in his hand a black-and-white or a white cock. On the ground in front of the bed they arrange a fine white napkin. On top of it there are syrup, candles . . . , *sofa*, and other things. After they have finished sprinkling water, clapping their hands, singing to the *loa*, they all go around the bed of the dead person. The child, with the cock in his hand, makes the rounds with the *houngan*. They wave the rooster, they wave it back and forth two, three, four, five, six times over the dead person's head. During this time all those present get possessed by the *loa*, sing, clap their hands. The dead person's bed begins to creak. The *houngan* climbs [793] on the bed and grabs the dead person's two arms. . . . He pulls him to a sitting position. The child (into whose head the *loa* is to be transferred) strikes the chicken three times on the head of the dead person. He lets go the chicken, and the chicken flies up and starts to run all around the room, smashing pots and vessels. They grab the chicken and let it go in the air three times, shouting: *Ai bobo loa li!* Immediately the *loa* goes into the head of the dead person's child.

764 796 793 The houngan cited by Métraux is described as pulling the corpse to a sitting position, but more commonly it is believed that the houngan has the power to make the body sit up by itself. A man from Jérémie explained it this way:

> "The body is laid out on a mat. The houngan shakes his asson over the dead man, and talks to the loa in the head. He calls the loa's name: 'Changogolo! Changogolo! Changogolo!' He calls, calls, calls. He doesn't call the dead man's name, he calls the mait' tête. 'Changogolo! Changogolo! Get up! Wake up! Sit up!' The corpse sits up. It even talks. Then the houngan says, 'Lie down!' And the corpse lies down. But it is not the dead man who sits up. The dead man is dead. It is the mait' tête who has forced the body to sit up. After this the houngan takes the loa from the head and puts it in a pot tête. Then the body can be buried. And afterward the loa can be put in the head of someone else or freed. Or the houngan may keep the loa in the pot tête and sell it to someone who needs a loa to work for him. If they buried the corpse without a *désounin*, the loa would resent it and go away below the water."

764 766 796 793 George Eaton Simpson has written an excellent description of a ceremony for removal of the loa from the head of a deceased houngan.[1] The

[1] [Hall and others, Haitian Creole, American Anthropological Association, Memoir No. 64, pp. 188-189. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[1] [Simpson, "Four Vodun Ceremonies" Journal of American Folklore, April-June, 1946, pp. 155-162. Cf. p. 350, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]

rites took place in the region of Plaisance in northern Haiti. Such a ceremony, Simpson notes, may be attended by several houngans other than the Vodoun priest who is officially in charge. They "share the obligation and pleasure of conducting this service for their colleague, their former rival, and perhaps their former enemy." In a room of the deceased houngan's house is the body, attended by the family, relatives, close friends, and the officiating houngan and his assistants.

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. . . Near the body, which is covered by a sheet, are placed a jug and a new canari (a large earthen jar). The officiating houngan makes the sign of the cross, mumbles a few ritual formulas, and taking a spoon puts some "manger les morts" (special food for the dead) in the canari: plantains, yams, bonnetas, taiaouts, sweet potatoes, corn meal, roasted corn, bread, cakes, rice, millet, meat, chicken, pistachio, chopped coconut, and other kinds of food. He then adds some water and stirs this mixture. . . . The other houngans perform the same rite. The family, friends, and others in the room imitate the acts of the houngans with the green branches which they hold in their hands. In a grave voice and with solemn gestures the officiant then appeals to the *loas* with songs and prayers. He invites them to come to the aid of their faithful servant, to protect him in the other world as they have protected him in this world. Following the songs and prayers the leader pronounces these words:

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"Innocent! A good man has left us!
The mother of the children weeps.
Weep, consoler yourselves.
Bon Accident, he was born.
He died.
Master Pierre Jean-Baptiste, he was born.
He died.
General Baptiste, he was born.
He died.
Marius who was left,
He died.
But Brother Joseph survives,
We will cry, we will console ourselves."[9]

The weeping and the cries redouble, but the *plèr-ceremoni* [pèrk' ceremo] and the houngan carry on. In the other room the *plèr-ceremoni* solemnly intones:

"I have only one soul
Which must be saved.
By the eternal flame,
I must preserve it."[10]

The officiating houngan speaks directly to the dead man: "Bon Marius, here is a canari that your heirs have especially prepared for you so that in the future you will not have any trouble and demand other sacrifices of them. You others, the dead, are always unreasonable. Because you have peace you forget that the times are hard and that on this earth we unfortunate men are crushed by suffering. Leave your family in peace after this service, Bon Marius. Do not torment them, and do not send illnesses to their children or misery to their older people. You were always a good

9 [As translated by Courlander from Simpson's Creole text, ibid., p. 156. The preceding paragraph is from p. 155. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

10 [Translated by Courlander from the Creole of Simpson's text. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

764 [illegible] father where you were living. Continue to protect your family after death. If you need other services give abundantly to your heirs in order to obtain satisfaction. Oh, good father, good servant, good parent, good friend! Good-bye! Do not forget us as we shall not forget you."[11]
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Then the houngan goes to the canarie, strikes it three times with a piece of palm bark, and chants an invocation to the loa and to God, while members of the family dance where they stand, shaking the green branches they hold. There follows an invocation to twins. After a number of loa have "entered" the service, as manifested by possessions, the houngan undertakes to find out how death came to the deceased man. An assistant brings the sacred divining shells[12] of the dead man, and the officiating houngan throws them on the floor, pours tafia three times, and lights a candle. The shells are then consulted. Three times he goes through the procedure of casting the shells and consulting them. Later he announces that "the death of Bois Marius is not the death of an ordinary man, that he is now resting in La Ville-au-Camp (capital of the loas which is 'under the water'), and that the loas will continue to protect his descendants provided that they show themselves worthy of protection."[13] There is more singing and ritual, and then the canarie is covered. The loa from the head of Marius has found a temporary resting place. A little later in the service "the houngan raises the canari as high as possible, almost as high as his face, as he repeats the last line: 'Where may I find refuge?' With a quick movement the canari is shattered. The food is scattered, the loas are satisfied, and the crowd breaks into disorderly flight. . . ."[14] A few hours later the body of the deceased is buried.
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764 It is obvious that these rituals vary a good deal according to regional
184 practices and according to the importance of the persons for whom they
796 are conducted. Furthermore, there is a good deal of difference of opinion among Haitians as to what actually takes place when the mak' tête is taken from the head of the deceased man.

793 Although the prêt' savane (bush priest) is subsidiary to the houngan at
764 death rites, his is nevertheless a conspicuous presence. He may begin the
184 services with prayers for the dead, in which the family joins, while the houngan remains in the background. Later, the houngan takes over. In certain regions, however, the prêt' savane is dispensed with altogether, his function being absorbed by the houngan.

764 As reported by Herskovits, the wake for the dead is one of the most important ceremonies in the death rites. He says:

(166) Wakes are held for all dead, even for very young children if they have been baptized, though if a baby dies before baptism, it is buried without ceremony in a little box in the courtyard of the habitation. . . . The wife and the children either stay

11 A [This and the preceding paragraph are from Simpson, Op. Cit., P. 156. Cf. P. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]
12 A [For footnote, See Category 116, P. 350. --Analyst]
13 A [Simpson, Op. Cit. P. 159, Cf. P. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]
14 A [Ibid, P. 161. Cf. P. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]

764 invoked the loa, the pallbearers brought the body forward as though to go straight ahead, but then they began to lurch and sway as though an invisible force were pushing them around. They veered as though to take the right turn, and again they lurched and staggered. At last they turned toward the left, and in this direction they found the road clear. The houngan thanked the Master of the Crossroads, the widow took her place at the head of the procession, and it proceeded on its way to the cemetery.

793 In the services for a dead houngan described by Simpson, the body is 764 placed in a coffin, which is carried to all the places sacred to the loa of the 762 houngan before being taken to the cemetery. First it is taken to the sacred trees where the loa reside, then to the sacred spring "whose waters have cured many sicknesses which physicians had pronounced incurable . . . (823) The bearers of the coffin circle the spring several times. The coffin is swung [toward] each of the four cardinal points." Afterward the procession continues its way to the burial ground.[19]

766 But the treatment given to the dead may vary according to the manner 174 in which they died. Leyburn notes, for example, that "a person struck by 761 lightning . . . would have no ceremonies at all, for lightning is an act of God."[20] It may well be that the Haitian rationale for not holding ceremonies for an individual killed by lightning is that God has already held the final ceremony. But in the Haitian mind all deaths are, in the last analysis, acts of God, even though magic, poison, or accident may have played an immediate part. Why, then, should the corpse struck by light-174 ning be treated so differently? The answer would appear to lie in a custom 766 of the Yoruba of dispensing with all burial rites for persons killed by 761 lightning, such persons being considered enemies of the lightning deity (174) Chango. In Dahomey, Herskovits reports, the same attitude pervails in regard to persons killed by lightning:

> If a person is killed by lightning he . . . stands convicted by this fact of some grave crime which has incurred the displeasure of the god of the Thunder Pantheon (Xevioso). A person so killed is never buried by his family, but the body is turned over to the chief priest and cult-members of these deities. It is believed that a man killed in this fashion remains upright until the chief priest questions him and forces him to confess the crimes he had committed to be so punished. No one touches any (768) of the belongings of such a man, not even his money. The house in which he lived (784) is allowed to go to ruin, an *aseu* of palm fronds being placed around it to guard (824) against anyone entering it. The movable property of such a man, his clothes, his stools, and his dishes, are thrown away at the crossroads . . .[21]

766 The burial of a Haitian who dies of smallpox likewise differs from that of one who dies a "normal" death. The victim of smallpox is buried without a coffin in a segregated part of the cemetery. The reason for this lies

19 [Simpson, Op. Cit., p. 161. Cf. P. 350 Category 116. -- Analyst]
20 [Leyburn, The Haitian People, p. 156. Cf. P. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]
21 [Herskovits, Dahomey, I, 398. Cf. P. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

beyond the obvious fear of contagion. In his study of Dahomey, Herskovits notes:

> . . . Smallpox is believed to be sent as a punishment for grave offenses in the eyes of these [the Sogbota] deities, and it is taken to indicate that either the dead person himself or a member of his family has committed some heinous crime such as the practice of black magic. A person who dies of smallpox may only be buried after permission has been given by the chief priest of the Earth cult.[20]

Thus, in Haiti, though the connections with the past are clouded, it is clear that victims of lightning and smallpox are treated as a special class of criminals or malefactors.

Ordinary malefactors such as malevolent criminals and murderers—until recent years, at least—were not buried in the common graveyard. They, too, were segregated at the periphery of the cemetery or buried at the edge of a trail or road where the traffic would not permit them to rest and where their graves would be under constant surveillance. The roadside grave sometimes was also the fate of a person killed by lightning.

That these special burials are related to the Dahomean and Yoruban concepts of retribution for crimes against the deities is supported by the similarity of treatment accorded victims of lightning and disease and common criminals. In Haiti, Herskovits observes: "Those who die of smallpox or leprosy, suicides, or persons shot as a punishment for crime are not buried in the communal cemetery, but in special sections of the graveyard," the suicides and criminals being set apart from the others.[21]

Graves found near the seashore, lake shores, or riverbanks frequently are declared to belong to persons who died of drowning.

Approximately nine days after a person's death, the "last prayers" are said, and the soul of the deceased is presumed to have departed from the house. Once more, under the tonnelle outside there are games, storytelling, and singing. On this night, however, there is also drumming and dancing of a special kind. Usually it is the Juba, or Martinique, dance, which is believed to be specially enjoyed by the dead, and it is the older people, rather than the young, who participate. These festivities are believed to give cheer to the deceased and to "encourage" him on his way. On the next night comes the mangé mort, the feast for the family dead, a ritual which continues periodically through the years.

Sometimes in Haiti you may come upon an old tomb or grave before which a dish of specially prepared food has been set. This is part of the mangé mort ritual.

A man may make provision in advance of his death for the rites which follow his burial. He may designate special animals to be killed, leave

[20] [Ibid., pp. 397–398. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.--Analyst]
[21] [Herskovits, Life in a Haitian Valley, p. 214. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.--Analyst]

[The Vodoun Pantheon]

796 Aizaid Tonnerre, also pronounced Aizaid Tonnerre. Another thunder loa. Abomey (or Agbomé) is the name of an ancient capital of Dahomey.

Brédia. The wife of Sobo Badé.

So Nonvivo, also called Sogo Nonvivo, or simply So. A thunder loa of Dahomean origin. In Dahomey he is regarded as an offspring of Mawu and Lisa, and a member of the Sky pantheon. [171]

Kévioso, or Kévioso. A thunder loa who, like Sobo, hurls stones to the earth. In Dahomey he is known as Xevioso and is thought to be the same deity as So. In Haiti, persons killed by lightning are thought to be enemies of Kévioso and are given special treatment in burial. [171] [166]

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796 Aziri Wedo, known also as Cosso Nan-Kéto. He is a loa of the sea; thunder and lightning over the ocean are thought to be Agué showing his cousins. He is usually symbolized in pictures by a sailing or steam vessel. His colors are blue and white, and the primary sacrificial animal for him is a male goat. High ceremonies for Agué are begun in the boundary and consummated in a sailing boat on the open sea, from which is launched a highly decorated and stylized miniature ship containing food for the deity. This tiny craft is known as the *Bateau d'Agué*. Houngans honoring this spirit usually have a small boat hanging from the rafters. In Dahomey, Agué is also a sea deity and a member of the Thunder pantheon. 982 [321] [322] [171]

796 Aziri Wedo. She is thought to be Agué Wedo's wife, though in Dahomey she was considered to be his daughter. [171]

Aziri Wondor. Said to be the son of Agué.

La Sirène. Another deity of the sea, a lamenter visualized as a mermaid. La Sirène is usually thought of as belonging to a separate family, though she is frequently served along with Agué. Some saints do not recognize her at all.

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796 Nanamburucu, or Nanan Bourokou. A loa of herbs and medicines. In Dahomey this spirit was considered the grandparent of all deities, the progenitor of Mawu and Lisa from whom all demigods are descended.[5] She is still remembered in the Dahomey cults of Cuba. 197

Loua or Louza. Probably the Lisa of Dahomey, child of Nanbouchou.

Attibon Legba, or Legba Sé. One of the most important of Haitian loa, frequently the first one invoked in any service. He is the guardian of the gateway, the crossroads, and the highway. Cocks and male goats are his favorite foods, as in West Africa. In Dahomean tradition, Legba is the youngest offspring of Mawu and Lisa, the progenitors of all Dahomean deities. He is a divine trickster who is both feared and loved, a force that is capriciously malevolent or benevolent. Today, as in earlier times in Dahomey, the image of Legba, made of clay, stands or sits before the entrance to many villages. Sometimes the image is nothing more than a mound or column of earth symbolizing a phallus. Legba's mischief and tricks are directed against the other deities and human beings. In Haiti, as in Dahomey, Legba is not a personal deity. As Herskovits points out, Legba has no "character" and cannot be relied on. He is the intervener between mankind and the deities. It is in this sense that he "opens the gate," providing a channel of communication between man and loa; and it is for this reason that he is often supplicated first in religious ritual. In Dahomean lore, Legba's mischief is often in the realm of sex. In ritual dances for [982] [978] [989]

5 [Ibid., pp. 101 ff. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Anchist]

[The Vodoun Pantheon]

dressed in a black frock coat, black top hat, and black trousers or a blue, white polka-dotted skirt. He carries a cane and smokes a pipe or a cigarette, according to which manifestation of Gédé he represents. He talks with a strong nasal accent, which is acquired by anyone mounted by him. Gédé Nimbo is always asking for money. Persons possessed by him may rub hot peppers on their tongues or in their eyes. In some parts of Haiti, Gédé is thought to be identical with Baron Samedi. In a Vodoun service, no other loa cares to enter while a Gédé is present; and Gédé delights in appearing suddenly, uninvited, and obstructing the orderly progress of a ritual. Although Herskovits points out that Gedemenu, or Gédé, is a Dahomean [171] [illegible] it is worth noting that in Haiti the Gédé clan are often regarded as belonging to the Nago "nation."

Gédé Nimbo Mazaka. A Gédé brother.

Gédé Ochwo. A Gédé brother.

Gédé L'Orage. A thunder god among Gédé. Like the other Gédés, he is closely associated with death, and he is considered more of a malefactor than most. He is repulsive in appearance, with a dwarfish stature.

Gédé Mèdème. A Gédé brother.

Gédé Nèmèz. A Gédé brother.

Gédé Nèmèzèmè. A Gédé brother.

Gédé Vi. Said to be a son of Gédé Nimbo, though some Haitians regard this loa as a female, possibly Gédé Nimbo's wife.

Gédé Zèclè. A loa of lightning, thought to be responsible for death by lightning, violent death in general, and destruction of cattle and other property by natural forces. He seems to be a Gédé version of Kèbèsa or Sèbo.

Jean Zombie. One of the Gédé brothers, a "dead" spirit.

Gédé Ti Pòm (Gédé Little Flea)

Gédé Rèzèd (Gédé Tear Off)

Gédé Jèrèzèl (Happy Gédé)

Twèwè Gédé, or Gédé Twèwè Pèzèrè. This Gédé is one that makes mischief as he enters a Vodoun service.

Gédé Zèd (Gédé of the Island)

Gédé Yèzèrè

Gédé Yèzèrè

Cèrèdèpèyèrè Gédé (The Gédé Who Mows Down)

Jèwèzèr Bèrèzèr. A loa who works with the Gédé family, one of Gédé Nimbo's graveyard assistants. He is described as having a white skin, suggesting that his surname is a corruption of "British."

Mèrèz Gédé. A sister of the Gédé brothers.

Balèbèzèd. One of the Gédé brothers. His name means to "sweep and sprinkle," a ritual activity characteristic of certain Vodoun ceremonies.

Mèrèz Bèrèzèr, or Mèrèzèr Bèrèzèr. The mother of the Gédé brothers.

Mèly' Sèmèn. One of the Gédé escorts.

Bèrèz Sèmèn. One of a group of Barons who march with the Gédés. They are so closely identified that some Haitians feel that Baron Samedi is merely another name for Gédé Nimbo. Persons possessed in cemeteries are thought to be mounted by Baron Samedi or one of his brothers. Like the Gédés, the Barons are spoken of as "dead" spirits.

Bèrèz Pèpèrèz. The loa in charge of grave digging.

[illegible] Herskovits, Life in a Haitian Valley, p. 267, cf. p. 354, Category 116. — Analyst]

2: Courlander 8-6 (1937-1962) 1960 913 Haiti 913

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as bouteiller, bouteil, bouteyllerie, bouteiler, etc. Mystère is of obvious French origin. Loa is probably from the Fonns, but it could be from the Yorubas.

[8]Various methods and formulas are employed in "tying" a loa. Sometimes making the sign of the cross is regarded as adequate, or the saying of a prayer. In "The Voodoo Service in Northern Haiti" (*American Anthropologist*, XLII, 247-253), George Eaton Simpson reports that the "tying" of a loa sometimes results in a contest between the individual concerned and his lwangan. If the lwangan wants the *moût* ally to come in, he must neutralize the ritual barriers that "have" been put in the way. "One procedure for bringing on possession in a servant who has tried to 'tie' his chief god is for the priest to stand in front of the person whom he suspects, make the sign of the cross, and strike him on the forehead three times with a varnished stone. Usually these blows are hard enough to make blood spurt. The servant then begs the pardon of the angry god, and as soon as possible he unties the knots in his handkerchief [the method he has used for 'tying' his loa]."

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[9]Herskovits, *Dahomey*.

Chapter 4: *Death Rites* (pp. 37-47)

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[1]Maurice Delafosse, *L'âme noire*. Translation from *Peer Pomme*, special issue No. 4. French Press and Information Service, New York, June, 1918.

[2]Leo A. Verwilghen, in booklet describing peoples of the Kwango region, accompanying *Music of the Western Congo*, recordings issued by the Ethnic Folkways Library.

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[3]Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu*, pp. 88-89.

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[4]W. M. Hoover and I. Schapera, "Religious Beliefs and Practices," in Schapera, *The Bantu-speaking Tribes of South Africa*, p. 250.

[5]Translated from the French of Antoine, *En Haiti*, p. 212.

[6]Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, pp. 213-214.

[7]Hall and others, *Haitian Creole*, American Anthropological Association, Memoir No. 54, pp. 188-189.

[8]Simpson, "Four Voodoo Ceremonies," *Journal of American Folklore*, April-June, 1946, pp. 159-162.

[9]As translated by Courlander from Simpson's Creole text, *ibid.*, p. 156. The preceding paragraph is from p. 155.

[10]Translated by Courlander from the Creole of Simpson's text.

[11]This and the preceding paragraph are from Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

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[12]These shells, as indicated elsewhere, are part of the paraphernalia of the Voodoo priest and appear to be an inheritance from the priests of the Fa cult of Dahomey. The divining shells are usually thrown on the ground in fours, and the readings depend upon combinations of "heads and tails." The manner of throwing the shells, as well as the number used, corresponds closely with the Haitian secular gambling game *mapanbo* (see Appendix 2), though the purpose is obviously different. In some priestly rites in Haiti, cubes rather than the customary shells are used for divining.

[13]Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

[14]*Ibid.*, p. 161.

[15]Herskovits, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

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[16]Herskovits (*ibid.*) notes that persons who die of smallpox, lightning, and certain other phenomena are not buried in coffins. Some of my informants indicated this to be their understanding also, but they said that the dead are buried without coffins for strictly economic reasons as well.

[17]Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

[18]Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. 156.

[19]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 398.

[20]*Ibid.*, pp. 397-398.

[21]Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, p. 214.

[22]Hall and others, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

B: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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754 arranged the "death" will hasten to the graveyard and dig up the body; giving the proper antidote to the poison, he restores the body to activity but the mind only to semiconsciousness. In this subnormal state the victim is taken off to some remote valley where, in company with other zombis, he is made to work as a slave. Physical strength is there, but no mind with which to rebel, to ask for pay, to recognize the full extent of his sorry state.[39]

Zora Neale Hurston is the only foreigner who states that she has 114 definitely seen a zombi. In her book, *Tell My Horse*, she describes 754 the woman who had been a zombi and includes a picture of her.[40] The reader cannot suppress a query as to whether the supposed zombi might not have suffered simply from a special kind of insanity. Miss Hurston tells very graphically the peasant tales of "dead" persons made into zombis: of parents, husbands, and wives who have seen and clung to their recent relatives without the slightest responding sign of recognition, of men who are known to have zombis in their employ.

754 When a person has died a sudden death without apparent cause, a 766 houngan will very likely be called to try to discover the malefactor, although it is not believed that he will be able to bring back to life the "dead" person. In cases where sudden death is regarded as suspicious, the survivors often see to it that the apparent corpse becomes a real one by plunging a knife into the heart or by cutting out some vital part, in order to spare the corpse the degradation of a zombi's slavery. Or families lacking the courage to mutilate a corpse will watch at the grave until it is certain that the body has begun to putrefy and real death has succeeded to the simulation. Once actual death has come, of course, the malefactor is thwarted and prevented from capitalizing on his evil work.

754 In a mental atmosphere of credulity, coincidence often makes magic seem to work. Belief gives power to the charm or rite. A person aware that a spell is cast upon him will sicken and die because he believes so firmly in the efficacy of the magic. A curse will be

[114] 39. In support of this theory of a poison which produces stupor, Seabrook, *op. cit.*, p. 335, cites the French text of the Code Pénal, Article 249, as follows: "*Est aussi qualifié attentat à la vie d'une personne, l'emploi qui sera fait contre elle de substances qui, sans donner la mort, produiraient un effet léthargique plus ou moins prolongé, de quelque manière que ces substances aient administrées, quelles qu'en aient été les suites. Si par suite de cet état léthargique la personne a été inhumée, l'attentat sera qualifié assassinat.*"

40. Pp. 189–209.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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712 the battlements far off across the tortuous mass of mountains and
[713] green valleys, admire the sheer strength of will which made His Majesty's subjects bear four hundred cannon up the steep and rocky path—not to mention thousands of cannon balls now rusting away after a century of disuse, or the powder and shot which once filled
[173] the magazines. It is said that five thousand soldiers could be housed in the fortress at once. If this is hyperbole, one hardly dare challenge
[703] it, for the whole Citadel belittles the individual man. It is likewise said that Christophe once made a battalion of soldiers march off the cliff to their death merely to demonstrate his absolute control over
• [566] them. Such stories grow up around His Black Majesty. He lies entombed in his useless but still superb fortress—and lives in the memory of the Northerners, one of whom said proudly: "We of the North have a great heritage, and you will find that we are all dominated by *une psychologie citadelleuse*."

Dungeons, secret passages, royal apartments, separate rooms for each of the old Dutch, Spanish, French, and English cannon, some of them dating back to the seventeenth century—all the paraphernalia of the storybook fortress is present. From a bastion one gazes, as from an alp, for miles in any direction, and feels that La Ferrière is certainly one of the most impressive, and one of the most futile, edifices in the world. If the silent cannon had ever been fired, their balls would have rumbled harmlessly down the mountainside. The suspicion grows that Christophe achieved his architectural miracle not primarily as a defense against the French, but to make his subjects proud of what a nation of despised ex-slaves could accomplish.

344 Five miles away, at the foot of the mountain, is the village of
644 Milot, with the ruins of the palace of Sans Souci. Of yellow stone, it spreads out spaciously like a French château. Its rooms must have been magnificent. The palace is so situated that one may look out across the northern plains to the sea, or up the valleys to mountain peaks. In Sans Souci Christophe shot himself in 1820 when he knew that only *souci* would remain to him if he lived.

489 Transportation from one part of the country to another is far from
[496] easy. There are no railroads—unless one counts the short line running north a few miles from Port-au-Prince to nowhere in particular, and the equally short line coming west into Cap-Haïtien from the fields
[491] of the northern plain. Roads built by the American Marines make automobile travel between the main towns possible, if one does not

964 placed in the coffin, which must always be used for burial. Even if a person is poor, "he can always borrow a plank from a neighbor, for people are charitable in matters of death," or, if a family cannot immediately afford to have carpenters make the coffin, they are paid later, a few gourdes at a time. This also holds for the professional bather of corpses, who receives [567] three to five gourdes in the countryside, fifteen gourdes in Mirebalais, and, it is said, perhaps fifty in Port-au-Prince. A pig or a goat is killed to feed those who dig the grave and carry the coffin, "so they can do their work well." Otherwise these men receive no payment, for "people do such things for each other."

The wake,* which takes place on the night of death, is one of the most important ceremonies in the cycle of rites for the dead. Wakes are held for all dead, even for very young children if they have been baptized, though if a baby dies before [164] [851] baptism, it is buried without ceremony in a little box in the courtyard of the habitation. During the wake the body lies in the second room of the house, the long white candle used at the deceased's first communion standing lighted at his feet. If the dead was not a communicant, newly bought candles are placed at his head and feet. The wife and children either stay with the corpse or are near by with friends. The one who bathed the corpse remains constantly at its side as the members of the family come and go, since the body must never remain alone. Wailing goes on all night, and as more relatives arrive, those already there echo their cries.

On a table in another room a white cloth is spread, and a crucifix, images of the saints, flowers, lighted candles, and a lamp of oil are placed on it. The singers bring their song- [533] books, since the canticles of the Church are almost the only songs heard. At times songs are specially composed for the occasion, but these always concern themselves with death. Those who stand before the table, principally women, lead the singing, the others acting as a chorus. People come and go

a dowry forfeit their share, but even when a formal dot has not passed, the number of animals given her when she went to her husband is mentioned and she is sometimes asked to waive a corresponding portion of her share in consideration of what she has already received. If she refuses to do this, however, there is no recourse but to allow her her full share, though public opinion would censure such greed.

Debts incurred by the dead must be repaid before the estate can be settled, while attempts are also made to collect all loans made by him. Where no written statement of a debt exists, a declaration by the dying man before witnesses is necessary; otherwise his heirs acknowledge their obligation at their pleasure. Conversely, if no statement attested by a notary exists to verify a loan made by him, his heirs have no means of collecting it. On the whole, lending has been found through experience to be ill-advised unless such a "paper" has been executed before a notary, and land has been pledged as collateral either before the head of the family of the borrower or before a magistrate. For though interest is not demanded by the peasants, and loans are made as a gesture of friendship, "even the people of the hills" — to use the Mirebalais idiom for the most naive rustics — have learned that just debts are often not repaid where there is no legally enforceable claim.

A man who dies childless leaves his property to his brothers and sisters by the same father and mother. The husband of a "legally" married woman who dies childless is said to have the right to one fourth of her property, the rest going to her relatives, but most often "they drive him away," giving him nothing, and since a man is customarily too proud to contest the matter, he does not insist on receiving his due. A childless widow continues to live in her dead husband's house until her death, and she also receives one fourth of her husband's property. At her death the house passes to her husband's relatives, but the quarter of his estate which she had received goes to her family.

764 knocked the loa, the pallbearers brought the body forward as though to go straight ahead, but then they began to lurch and sway as though an invisible force were pushing them around. They veered as though to take the right turn; and again they lurched and staggered. At last they turned toward the left, and in this direction they found the road clear. The houngan thanked the Master of the Crossroads, the widow took her place at the head of the procession, and it proceeded on its way to the cemetery.

293 In the services for a dead houngan described by Simpson, the body is 294 placed in a coffin, which is carried to all the places sacred to the loa of the 295 houngan before being taken to the cemetery. First it is taken to the sacred trees where the loa reside, then to the sacred spring "whose waters have cured many sicknesses which physicians had pronounced incurable . . . (823) The bearers of the coffin circle the spring several times. The coffin is swung [toward] each of the four cardinal points." Afterward the procession continues its way to the burial ground.[17]

766 But the treatment given to the dead may vary according to the manner 134 in which they died. Leyburn notes, for example, that "a person struck by 761 lightning . . . would have no ceremonies at all, for lightning is an act of God."[18] It may well be that the Haitian rationale for not holding ceremonies for an individual killed by lightning is that God has already held the final ceremony. But in the Haitian mind all deaths are, in the last analysis, acts of God, even though magic, poison, or accident may have played an immediate part. Why, then, should the corpse struck by lightning be treated so differently? The answer would appear to lie in a custom 171 of the Yoruba of dispensing with all burial rites for persons killed by 267 lightning, such persons being considered enemies of the lightning deity (1794) Changa. In Dahomey, Herskovits reports, the same attitude prevails in regard to persons killed by lightning:

> If a person is killed by lightning he . . . stands convicted by this fact of some great crime which has incurred the displeasure of the god of the Thunder Pantheon (Xevioso). A person so killed is never buried by his family, but the body is turned over to the chief priest and sub-members of these deities. It is believed that a man killed in this fashion remains upright until the chief priest questions him and forces him to confess the crimes he had committed to be so punished. No one touches any (768) of the belongings of such a man, not even his money. The house in which he lived (784) is allowed to go to ruin, an area of palm fronds being placed around it to guard (824) against anyone entering it. The moveable property of such a man, his clothes, his stools, and his dishes, are thrown away at the crossroads . . .[19]

766 The burial of a Haitian who dies of smallpox likewise differs from that of one who dies a "normal" death. The victim of smallpox is buried without a coffin in a segregated part of the cemetery. The reason for this lies

17 [Simpson, OP. Cit., P. 161. Cf. P 350 Category 116. -- Analyst]
18 [Leyburn, The Haitian People, P. 156. Cf. P 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]
19 [Herskovits, Dahomey, I, 398. Cf. P 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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are necessary, and the elders of the family must see to it that these gods are instructed not to trouble the newly married pair. If either or both of them are devotees of deities such as Damballa, Erzilie, Ogun, or Aida Wedo, all of whom are known to be extremely jealous, these gods must be specially placated. 585 782 776

For the actual ceremony the couple appear each with a candle in hand, pour water on the ground in the family house of worship, and kneel and pray. The god may "come to the head" of the girl or the man or some relative of each and advise them. If it asks a gift at this time, it is either given at the moment or a promise is made to fulfill the request later. If the spirit objects to the marriage, it is wooed with offerings. Thus, for example, should the young woman be possessed by the serpent-god Damballa, who, speaking through his devotee, registered an objection to the marriage, the girl would be given such gifts as a white silk dress, white silk stockings, or some other valued object in the sacred color of the god, or some perfume which might also serve to mollify him. Or should the man's deity who registered objection be Ogun, the god of war, a fine red kerchief might be offered in honor of this god, whose color is red.[8] 585 782 787 [822]

The dead of both families are also notified by means of a visit to the cemetery. The days for these pilgrimages are Mondays or Fridays, and the pilgrimages must be made during either the morning or the early afternoon, since visits at night are only for evil purposes. As candles are lighted, announcement is made to the family dead of the marriage which is soon to take place, and their good offices are asked to bring it happiness. After all the family dead have been invoked, a candle is lighted before the large cross for Baron Samedi, and another behind it for Gede, the first as the ruler of cemeteries and the graves of the dead, and the second as his handy-man. Another candle is lighted for the "abandoned souls" of the family, who have died without consecration, and yet another 585 769 782 [776]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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585 769 782 for the victims of smallpox. If family traditions also tell of those shot, not in war, but as prisoners, perhaps, a candle is lighted for them outside the cemetery wall. Though the couple may perform this ceremony together, each makes this request of the dead of his or her own family as the candles are lighted. This call on the dead is repeated several days after the marriage or later, when candles are again lighted.

591 583 585 769 The sole exception to the performance of these rites before the new household is begun occurs in those cases of *plaçage* where a girl continues to live at her own home. This is rare, however, for the house of a man is usually built near that of his father, and he takes his wife there. But if special circumstances dictate otherwise, the ceremony of notifying and pacifying the family deities may be deferred, though a man must eventually present every woman with whom he lives to his family gods and in turn must be presented to the gods of the woman's family. In similar fashion the dead of both families must be adequately notified.

585 [797] [796] [583] Marriages rarely take place in the months of November and December, the former being disliked because it is "the month of the dead," during which All Saints' Day occurs, and the latter because it ends the year. Except for the Church wedding and less elaborate festivities to celebrate the event, the rites which mark a *plaçage* mating do not greatly differ from those which mark a legal marriage, which may be de- [777] scribed in outline. The favorite day for Church marriages is Saturday, "the day of the Virgin," and the time for the ceremony is always early morning, before the heat of the day has set in. If the home of the girl is some distance from Mirebalais, the party come to town the preceding day, the girl spending the night with some friend. Otherwise the bridegroom, accompanied by his relatives and friends, goes to the house of the girl early Saturday morning. Before the couple leave the [782] [788] home of her parents, water must be thrown on the ground in front of them, and also sprinkled by them before the en-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

596 [581] [603] parents are friendly toward each other, so that the conflict that might result from a division of authority rarely develops. Were it otherwise, it could easily happen that a person who had been ordered, or forbidden, to do something against his own wishes by the head of his paternal family would plead with the head of his mother's group and receive support to justify his disobedience. To most Haitians such a hypothetical incident was amusing to contemplate, for the elders are said always to work together. Rare is the occasion when one interferes with the decision of another, and never to the knowledge of the subject of such a decision.

596 888 626 A family elder who has no sons to care for him is well looked after by the other members of the group "until the grave." Fear as well as a moral obligation prompts this. "He might curse you," it is explained, or "He might say: 'Watch out for your own old age! You mistreated me in my old age, and you will suffer in yours.'" Such pronouncements are greatly dreaded, especially because of his control over the supernatural forces that aid or harm the family and its members.

428 The closeness of the tie between social institutions and economic life is most evident in the matter of inheritance. For though the prestige that accrues from the possession of wealth makes for strong competition through the exercise of individual initiative, yet supporting the struggle of an individual for the augmentation of his holdings are the forces of family sanction and family aid, while his very start in life is obtained primarily through the help of his relatives during their lifetime or the property he inherits from them at their death.

428 858 As has been suggested, all a man's children by a "legally" married wife inherit from him, or, if he has not espoused a wife by a Church wedding, the children of his *placée* wife or wives receive his property. Whether or not it is true that the 428 858 769 "legitimate" children inherit three quarters of the possessions of their father, the "natural" children one fourth, and

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the "illegitimate" none, it would seem that the children of the legal marriage have a "social duty" to care for those of a *placée* wife who receive nothing, a moral obligation which is met because of a far stronger sanction than the fear of gossip. The belief holds that the dead will deeply resent an injustice to any of his children and will cause misfortune to befall a man who does not fulfill his duty toward those who should have shared in the property of their father.

Those who do inherit divide the land, flocks, herds, and all other possessions of the deceased equally, regardless of age or sex. If a man is wealthy, he may draw up a will providing for the disposal of such items of his property as under Haitian law it is not mandatory to apportion among his children. Where there is not enough land to permit each of the survivors to work an individual plot, this may be sold and the money distributed, or those who retain the land may buy an equivalent acreage elsewhere for the others, so that some of the members of the family leave the habitation to make new homes of their own in the manner already described. Similarly, though in dividing the land it is customary to allot a good parcel to the son who has worked it, if the other land is much worse and the division is disputed, an arrangement paralleling the one described may be made to allow of a fairer division. When an heir who, for instance, has taken up permanent residence in Port-au-Prince wishes to dispose of his share instead of returning to work it or of having it cultivated for him, he sells it to his brothers and sisters, or, rarely, to a stranger, for all effort is made to retain ancestral land within the family. Similarly, a part of the property of the dead may be sold to meet claims on his estate—debts or funeral costs or the expense of erecting a tomb. This would be particularly true if these expenses had been met by one of the heirs, in which case he must be compensated before the estate may be divided. Consultation with the family elders always precedes such action, however.

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One other aspect of the apportionment of the land of an estate remains to be considered, the matter of leaving land for the support of ancestral ceremonies. There is no general agreement in Mirebalais as to the customary practice. It was first stated that four or five *carreaux* of land, which a man himself had "held in trust," are added to the inheritance of the eldest son, to be similarly held by him. The "trustee" calls in the other members of the family to help work this land, and the proceeds from marketing its entire yield are devoted to the support of family rituals, or used for such other general purposes as aiding a member of the family who requires funds to save himself from disgrace, and the family from scandalous gossip.

The practice of alienating land to provide for the worship of the ancestors would appear to be common in the southern peninsula and in the plain of the Cul-de-Sac; and one person, not a native of Mirebalais, told how he found it impossible to buy some land he wished to acquire because it had been consecrated for this purpose. Certain men cited examples of land which had belonged to the "old, old people of the family," control of which was vested in the family head and could therefore never be divided or sold. But this is land where the family house of worship stands and where ceremonies for the family deities and ancestors are held, something not at all comparable with setting aside workable land to yield a yearly income for services of the dead. The closest resemblance to this found in Mirebalais is when a man or a woman during life sets aside a portion of land or other belongings, declaring: "When I die, dispose of this and with the proceeds care for the expenses of my funeral and discharge these obligations which I leave you." Other persons spoke of land, which having been in the family for a very long period of time may not be sold, since it had proved to be extremely good, and the "will of the ancients" is that it never be alienated. Those who men-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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tioned this latter instance advanced it as a possible alternative to the custom found elsewhere in Haiti, adding that it was the duty of the living to honor their ancestors, and not for the ancestors to make provision to honor themselves, particularly since the dead can enforce the discharge of this duty by sending illness, bad fortune, and death to those of their descendants who are remiss.

To a very appreciable degree, what is inherited forms the foundation of whatever wealth a man may accumulate during his lifetime. Yet there are few, among the peasants at least, who do not seek by all means to add to their heritage, for among those folk the ambition to obtain more and more land is a dominating one. To this end the peasant skimps and saves, depriving himself even of his important needs, until at the proper time some choice parcel of ground comes on the market.

How does a man go about accumulating the funds necessary to amass property? Ordinarily a young man is given a plot of ground by his father, and the produce, as mentioned, is marketed for him by his mother, who saves the proceeds for him. When he marries, his wife takes over this task, and together the two strive to extract as large earnings as possible from his plot. In addition, a man may take a *job*. Such work, always paid for by the unit rather than by the day or week, is usually that of cultivating a plot of ground for its owner, and the amount agreed upon is paid when the field has been harvested. The young man at the same time can also cultivate his own fields and participate in communal labor. Another way of adding to the earnings of his fields is to help the large landowners on their cotton plantations. This work is paid for in kind with baskets of cotton, which in turn are sold to factors who come from the coast to buy both large and small quantities. A man may also increase his income by working in the cane-fields or at the caldrons when the sirup is boiled. Each

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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for though some gods are feared far more than others, and some generally regarded with affection, even these latter bring great harm to a neglectful devotee, while the gods whose power validates the most malignant magic may, in certain situations, work for the good of their worshippers. Especially has there been great confusion in discussions of the so-called Dom Pédro worship. Whether or not the origin of the term as given by St. Mery is correct — that it derives from the name of its founder, a Spanish Negro from Petit-Goâve [22] — the statements that have been made concerning it are in the main misleading.[23] Thus, it is not true that the Pétro gods are unqualifiedly evil and the Rada deities unqualifiedly good; nor that blood sacrifices are made exclusively at Pétro ceremonies, while the services for other gods are innocent of such sacrificial offerings. The impression gathered in Mirebalais concerning the Pétro gods is that they are principally, though not exclusively, derived from the process of deification of powerful ancestors, which in Africa exists in forms that clearly explain the essential tradition that offers a basis for this custom as found in Haiti. This is reinforced by statements to the effect that most of the Pétro "squad" are Créole or native gods as against the Guinée deities in the other groupings. One member of the *vodun* cult, indeed, made the concept of deifying the powerful dead explicit, saying that Pétro was a great and evil *vodun* priest who had died with the *loa* not "taken from his head." For while a general principle in the cult of the dead is that in the normal course of events those who die deliver up their souls to God, making the care for these souls primarily a concern of the Church, it is recognized that there are others such as this Dom Pedro who become *loa*. This occurs when an individual, usually a priest or priestess of the *vodun* cult, who during his lifetime was known to possess great supernatural power, dies without having had his *loa* "withdrawn from his head." Burdened by these spirits, and therefore unable to get to God, his soul goes to the bottom of

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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a stream, there to remain until, becoming impatient, it demands to be taken out. A ceremony then brings back the tortured soul and makes of it a "*loa nan canarie*—a *loa* in a jar"—which thereafter acts as a guard for its family.

There is little agreement as to the place of residence of the *loa*. In general, it is believed that they come from Guinée each time they are called, returning when they have, in the native idiom, "descended from the heads of their horses"—that is, when the possession of their devotees has ceased. Those "under the water," however, being Haitians, remain in Haiti for seven years until the ceremony just mentioned, of putting them *nan canarie*, has been performed, when they, like the other *loa*, return to Guinée. At the same time, all recognize the African character of the *loa*, whether they be gods brought from Africa or the Créole *loa* from Haiti itself.

Worship of the *loa* is directed by priests of the cult. The terms *papaloi* and *mamaloi* as designations for male and female priests, almost universally employed by non-Haitian writers, are practically unknown in Mirebalais, where, as in most regions of Haiti, a priest is called a *hungan*, a priestess a *mambu*.[24] Besides the *hungan* (or *mambu*), and the *gangan*, a term applied to a *hungan* of renown, is the *bocor*, a practitioner of magic, not a member of any *vodun* priesthood, but a man who has acquired his power by the purchase of spirits. He is particularly differentiated from the *hungan* and *mambu* by the fact that the *loa* of their own accord are believed to have given "*connaissance*"—the knowledge of healing and helping, to these latter.[25] Not all gods can endow their devotees with this *connaissance*. Some of the Rada deities, in addition to those of the Ogun group who give it, are Legba, Damballa, Aizan, Bosu, St. Jean, and Agwe Woyo; among the Pétro gods it is conferred by Bosu Trois Cornes, Simbi d'leau, Gede, Ossange, Malt' Gran' Bois, and Malt' Calfou (Carrefour). Simbi en Deux Eaux and Simbi Proméné both give magic power, the former conferring knowledge of excellent protectives against

1: Herskovits E-4, 6 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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CHAPTER XI

THE CULT OF TWINS AND OF THE DEAD

SHARING powers and prerogatives with the *loa* in the supernatural world are the souls of the dead, the spirits of twins, and, in a specialized sense, magic, all working parts of a universe the ultimate force in which is God, who is sometimes spoken of as its Gran' Maît'. Their relative importance, however, is not easy to determine; and much less the manner in which the supernatural personalities in these divisions are linked with one another. Therefore, when such problems are presented to a group of Haitians, as whether or not the dead become *loa*, or the spirits of twins are related to those of the dead, or whether twins are the equivalent of the *loa*, or what the role of all these in magic may be, different opinions will always be heard.

One of these matters was explained by an elderly *hunsi* as follows: "*Marassa gagné morts longtemps, li deviennent loa* — Twins who have been dead a long time become *loa*," and "*Gagné gran' moun morts longtemps, deviennent loa* — There are those long dead who become *loa*," and she added: "But how this happens, I do not know." Despite a flat contradiction of this opinion by a man who was present, and a heated discussion between them, she persisted in maintaining the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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correctness of her view, while making an honest avowal of her inability to explain how this came about. On another occasion discussion turned upon the manner in which the powers of these supernatural beings are conceived in various parts of Haiti. Said one *hungan:* " Twins are stronger than the saints (the *loa*) . The *marassa* are the mothers of the saints. So it is said at Arcahaie." The reply came: " In Mirebalais they say the saints are stronger."

During a lively discussion of the point by a group of active voduists the suggestion was made by one that the relative power of the *loa*, the dead, and the twins might be determined if the numerical strength of the following of each cult could be roughly ascertained. Since all give sacrifices for the dead — even strict Church members — and all who worship the *loa* give for the *loa* and the dead, while only some of this latter group give for the *loa*, the twins, and the dead, the person who had suggested this line of inquiry concluded that the dead were therefore strongest, because no one dared ignore them. Still another opinion, though in agreement with this, was based rather on the fact that the *loa* always exhibit fear before manifestations of death, as at dances where persons possessed by Damballa or Aida Wedo avoid those possessed by Gede, since he stands so close to the dead. However, it was pointed out by others in Mirebalais that the most costly and elaborate offerings are for the *loa*, that those for the dead are smaller, and those given the twins are least impressive, which was evidence enough for them that the *loa* are the most powerful of these three categories. All agreed, however, in ascribing to the twins the least power of the three, though what the *marassa* do for good or evil they do with intensity and dispatch.

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There is ample justification, on both theological and historical grounds, for placing twins and the dead in a single general category. For, as one educated Haitian put it in pointing out that both twins and dead are worshipped on the same day, "*Marassa et morts font une chapitre pour nous* — The twins and the dead make a single chapter for us."

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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twins and the dead make a single chapter for us." This point of view is supported by a study of the twin cult as found in that part of West Africa from which so much of Haitian culture came, where a single category of the supernatural world, comprising all ancestors, includes both twins and the dead, as well as all others "who have passed through the womb of a woman." As might be expected, the concept is more elaborated in West Africa than in Haiti; but the important point is that in Haiti, though less explicitly formulated, it has persisted.

To worship twins it is not necessary either for a family to number them among its members of this generation, or to have included them within the memory of those living, for it is sufficient if a tradition exists that twins had once been born to some member of the family. If the twins are alive or lived in recent times, sacrifices are given both at Christmas and at harvest time; otherwise only at Christmas. Some families, indeed, worship twins because a *hungan* has divined that their unknown ancestors in "Guinée" had included them. There are still others who decide to worship the *marassa* without the advice of a diviner, because certain benefits are believed to come to those who worship twins, because of their power for good or evil.[1]

The source of this power is vague; one characteristic answer to a question concerning it was: "Their power comes from God. Do we ourselves know how twins are made?" It is agreed, however, that St. Nicholas is their spiritual father — an opinion based on the tale of this saint, held to have been a sorcerer who, in very early times, killed three *marassa* (the twins themselves and the *doru*, or child after twins) and salted them away in a barrel. The mother of the children came to him to offer up her prayers, and, touched by her sorrow, he resuscitated them, since when he has been their "father." The power of twins, whatever its source, is very real to the Haitians. They are believed to be able to predict rain, for ex-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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845 ample, long before ordinary folk.[2] If promised offerings in the
[889] event of an ample harvest, their aid in bringing about this
[782] desired end is even more fruitful than that of the *loa* or the
[169] dead, who are therefore appealed to only indirectly.

Twins, however, are capricious beings, ready to do harm if they are not humored. Consequently, twins must be given anything they ask for, and it is especially important to provide them with the clothes they covet, when giving a *mangé marassa*. If their father fails to provide these new clothes, they
[753] will *kembé* (seize) him, and he may at once have an attack of fever or a bad toothache or earache; or, more likely still, he will be seriously constipated, since this is the punishment particularly favored by the *marassa*, just as the *loa* most frequently send dysentery, and the dead cause headaches. If lack
845 of resources makes it impossible to provide what they demand,
539 a painstaking explanation must be given them or they will
828 drive a person mad in the manner recounted in the following *marassa* myth:

> There were once twins, one good and one evil. They were working a field with another brother, but the evil one refused to help. The other two, therefore, said they would not give him any food. Because of this the evil twin drove the third brother insane. After they had long prayed that he reconsider, he finally agreed to restore sanity to his brother, but insisted on inflicting deafness as a punishment, so that this brother was deaf until he died.

845 At the birth of twins, special "twin plates" are provided
778 when their birth is announced to the *loa* — either before or
169 after their Church baptism — where offerings to the spirits of twins are placed. Usually paired, the plates may be three in number, in which case the third is for the *dosu*, the child born after twins, who is believed to be even more powerful than twins themselves and is thus an important figure in the cult.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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Preferably, these cult objects are made of pottery, joined by a ligature in twos or threes, as required. The plates rest in a box or on a small table which stands in a corner of an inner room of the house. If the family worshipping the twins is a poor one, joined calabashes or wooden plates are acceptable, and such are found more often in the valley of Mirebalais than pottery plates. The "altar" made by the plates is completed by an *image* — a chromolithograph — of the twin saints, Comas and Damien, placed on the wall above them.

The principal rite of the twin cult is the *mangé marasa*. A minor ceremony, if the family has living twins or twins recently dead, it is held, as has already been said, at Christmas and at harvest time; otherwise only at Christmas. Yams and salt fish are separately cooked, and a dish of beans mixed with olive oil is provided. In the morning this food is taken to a closed room, where it is deposited both in the *marasa* plates and in ordinary containers placed for those who attend the rite. As the offering is made, songs such as the following are sung:

Marasa, m'a pé mandé,	Spirit of twins, I ask,
Ça wé la si 'ou content?	Are you content with what you see there?
Ago-e-e.	*Ago-e-e.*
Adoré nan pié Damballa,	Worship at the tree of Damballa,
Ago-e-e.	*Ago-e-e.*
Marasa bra,	Twins of the forest,
Marasa carrefour,	Twins of the crossroad,
M'a pé mandé,	I ask,
Ça wé la si 'ou content?	Are you content with what you see there?
Adoré nan pié humfort,	Worship at the *humfort*,
Azuré-e, ago!	Care for us, ago!
Marasa dé, trois, quatre,	Twins two, three, four,

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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845 [164] [533] [539]

M'a pé mandé, I ask,
Ça wé la si 'ou content? Are you content with what you see there?

The food is eaten the same afternoon. If the twins are actually alive, everything they wear must be new and they must have identical clothes. At the sacrifice of the January harvest, native rice, cakes, okra, bananas, and one, two, or three chickens, designated by the twins themselves, are offered. The food is put in place, and as songs are sung it is left until the following day, when it is eaten. The worship of [184] twins differs markedly in various parts of Haiti. In Leogane, for example, some have such a ceremony only at harvest time, and have a greater *mangé manasa* every five years, when a goat and a chicken are killed and offered with the usual non-animal foods.

845 Twins stand in a peculiarly intimate relation to each other, [171] as might be expected from the traditional African belief that [184] twins share a single soul, which, as far as could be determined, only survives in attitude in Mirebalais. Should one die, the [769] living twin must put aside a bit of all food he eats, or a small part of any gift given him, for the other. If the twins are both girls, the attempt is usually made to have them betrothed and married at about the same time. If the female twin of a pair is married, she must give a present to her twin brother, and similarly her husband sees to it that his wife's male twin also receives a substantial gift from him as a peace offering, for it is dangerous to wait until the other decides on some overt mischief. The perplexing factor in dealing with twins is that they themselves often do not consciously will the trouble they bring. For example, should the twin of a married woman not feel friendly toward his sister's husband, though he might make a conscious effort to overcome this dislike, his spirit might proceed to use its full power to harass the man in such a way as to trouble the relationship of the couple.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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The cult of the dead[8] is to be differentiated from the worship of the *loa* and from the twin cult in that its African form has been modified to a far greater extent than these others by the influence of the Catholic Church. Yet, though the modes in which respect is shown the dead are principally those of the Church, the attitudes and beliefs which underlie the cult — the meticulousness with which the tranquillity of the dead is insured, the fear in which they are held, and, above all, their close association with magic as an important sanction behind this force — all these take on a distinctly African tinge. Perhaps the point of view taken toward the dead, and the manner in which the living cope with their power, can best be set forth at the outset by giving a sketch of the pattern of funerary and post-funeral rites, since these form the basis of the entire cult. 969 199

Wailing by all present begins with the approach of death. There are cries such as: "*Adieù, bon Dieu, Manman ma-o, wai, wai! Jodi-a tel-et-tel quitté mouwi! Côté m'ap wé li enco'?* — Good-by, O good God, O my mother, *wai, wai!* Today such-and-such a one has died! Where will I see him again?" The members of the family tie white or black kerchiefs about their waists, while others present use kerchiefs of any color at hand. The doors of any *humfort* or *maison de servitude* in the habitation are closed, and thorny acacia branches are placed in front of them, so that the dead, who are believed to go about everywhere, cannot "spoil" the sacred place by entering it. 963 964 [346]

The body is laid in a shallow trench dug in the floor of the room, and there washed and prepared for the funeral by a professional *baigneur des morts* — man or woman according to the sex of the dead — and his assistants. Some member of the family watches them to see that the "three drops" of moisture believed to be in every dead person's mouth are not caught on a cloth when the body is turned over, for they are held to have great potency for the working of black magic, and a sorcerer would give a great deal for them. Cold water, 964 [194]

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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969 On the following night the *mangé mort* is held, when sacrifices are given the recent and earlier dead of the family. The day is used for preparing the food, after which a table is set as for a dinner, with plates, knives, forks, salt and pepper; and sometimes chairs are placed, though this is not necessary, since it is felt that the dead prefer to eat standing. Chicken, rice, and many other types of dishes are provided, so that the tastes of all the dead may be satisfied. A stew of maize, red beans, salt beef, and pigs' feet cooked with peppers and spices are included for the *morts Guinée*. Under the table are two wooden food-containers, one for the children of the family, the other for the dogs of the household.

Shortly after darkness has fallen, the room containing the table is locked, to remain closed for some two hours, while the family, a few friends, and the *prêt' savanne* pray and sing canticles as they wait for the dead to do their feasting. Before the prayers an announcement is made for whom the food is being given; the known dead of the family are called by name, while "those drowned, those shot," and "those who come from the four corners of the earth" are also summoned. When it is judged that the dead have finished their meal, the *prêt' savanne* or an elder of the family knocks three times on the closed door before he enters and takes up a cup of sacred water and a sprig of orange leaves, with which he blesses the table by sprinkling it. He then carries one of the wooden containers to the gateway and, turning to the children, asks them three times: "*Nous content?*—Are you satisfied?" to which the answer: "*Oui!*" is given. The priest makes a motion as though to place the container on the ground, but instead raises it again, repeating this maneuver for each of the four corners of the earth before he finally puts it down, whereupon all the children rush forward, each striving to obtain as much food as he can. When the children have finished eating, they wipe
[976] their hands on the hair of the mistress of the house, saying: "*Grâce mist'corde.*" The family then take the other con-

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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tainer to a crossroad, where it is deposited as an offering for Legba, and its contents are eaten by the dogs, who significantly, in Dahomey are the animals sacred to this deity. Following this, the adults enter the closed room, to feast at the laden table.

Several days after the funeral two gourdes are paid a priest — "a real one," not a *prêt' savanne* — to chant a *libera* at the grave, a rite that must be repeated each year on All Saints' Day. Each year, also, food is given the dead, though "not so much as following a funeral." Chickens, beans, rice, and coffee are the principal part of such an offering, for which no priest need be called, as the ceremony is merely to let the dead know that they are not forgotten. Every three or five years, however, a large *mangé* must be given for all the family dead, and if held on the family habitation, there is social dancing, where such favorites of the ancestors as the *martinique*, the *banda*, the *calebasse*, and the *sesse* are danced.[8]

Differences in procedure mark various modes of death. When a person is killed by lightning, a justice of the peace must be called and the burial is performed at once. Such a one has no "last prayer," because, death by lightning being a punishment of God, it is felt that the dead probably made an oath which he subsequently violated. Those killed by lightning or who die of smallpox are not mourned, but no explanation could be obtained for this obvious survival of African custom. If a leper has concealed his disease, mourning is worn for him, though if the cause of death is generally known this is forgone. There is customarily no mourning for suicides, and never where the regulations of the Church are rigorously applied.

If the dead person was a *vodun* priest or otherwise had strong *connaissance*, steps are taken before his death to "remove the *loa* from his head" so that his soul will not go under the water, for, as has been explained, such souls are held to be powerful spirits which may cause their family much harm

1: Herskovits E-4,8 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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such matters as the passing on of the *loa* in families, the duties toward family dead, and the possible inheritance of food taboos are recalled. Like all these survivals, that of food taboos is not as clear in its expression in Haiti as in its aboriginal setting. Its determination is largely by trial and error, so that a mother, before the birth of her child, not only abstains from eating the foods harmful to her, but later carefully tries these on the child to ascertain their effect. Yet the custom, at best, is a tenuous one. Sometimes, if food uncongenial to a parent has ill effects on a person, "he goes on eating it until he becomes accustomed to it"—though this statement brought forth an emphatic dissent from another Haitian: "Not I! If a food harms me once, I am through with it."

Africanisms are particularly marked in the organization of and attitudes toward the ancestral cult. Today the fear of the power of the dead is as living in Haiti as in West Africa, despite the influence of the Catholic Church in changing concepts of the heavenly world of the dead and the role of ghosts on earth. It is quite true that the outer forms of ceremonialism taken by ancestor-worship in West Africa have disappeared; but when the meticulousness with which the rites of death are carried out, and the institution of *mangé morts* are remembered, it is seen that the spirit of African ritual observances has by no means been lost. African elements have survived even in the services for the dead, now largely taken over by the Church. On the anniversary of death a special commemorative mass is sung in the church, which the family of the dead attend in a body. Before they leave the habitation for the mass, however, animals are killed to provide meat for the feast which follows the Church service, and for the *mangé morts*, which also takes place at the same time. Immediately after the mass a reception takes place at the house of some member of the family who lives in town, or at the home of a friend, where cakes and liquors are served. At about noon, however, family and friends proceed to the habitation, where

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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769 17 a *mangé* is given, and that evening, when the feast ends, dances are held. Two or three *tonnelles* are provided, the most important of these being the one where the Martinique cycle, the social dances most beloved by the ancestors, is danced. In one of the remaining two a European *bal* is held, and in the other are the *vodun* dancers. Thus even in connection with a commemorative Church mass for the dead the *mangé morts* and the dancing of African dances are included.

595 177 178 [554] The institution of plural marriage, which is socially recognized though not legally sanctioned, is obviously African. Though the *placée* is held in respect and her place in society carries no reproach for herself or her children because of any connotation of immorality, it is of significance for an understanding of the manner of cultural change that prestige in marriage goes with the monogamic union blessed by the Church, and that the "wife"—the woman who is addressed as "Madame"—holds definitely higher social position than the *placée*. Officially the Haitian State is in accord with the position of the Church and recognizes only the European monogamic marriage. Socially, however, African plural marriage is not only tolerated but accepted as a matter of course, and in those instances where plural marriage takes on its most exuberant form, as when men of position have as many as six or seven *placées* in addition to a legal wife, its very size tends to give such a family group, or at least its head, the enviable esteem of his fellow-citizens.

17 [593] [606] [583] Within the family, the deference toward older members and the duties and attitudes toward parents-in-law are African both in form and in spirit. The exaction of guarantees from a young man before marriage, and the necessity of his proving to the family of his fiancée that he can support her, are perhaps in their generalized form universals, but as found in Haiti show once more a retention of specific aboriginal [584] traditions. On the other hand, such aspects of marriage as the formal *lettre de demand* sent when a match is arranged, or the

1: Herskovits I-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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d'Angole) is obviously Angola, while the designations Ibo and Congo speak for themselves. Simbi is a Congo deity, as are Bumba and Lemba. Finally, in the categories of gods important in the regions of Haiti other than Mirebalais are the Loa Sénégal, and the Loa Mondong, both of which are names of African tribes mentioned in the early literature as contributing to the Haitian slave population. But all recognition of geographical names as such has disappeared, and they have been transmuted into designations of gods.

Outstanding here is the word *vodun* itself, already indicated as Dahomean, where it is a general term for "deity," though in Haiti its use has become more restricted and the symbol for deity has become the word *loa*, or *mystère*. The origin of the designation *loa*, which has been claimed to be a corruption of the French *roi*, is debatable. It is true that in West Africa certain deities are regarded as kings, yet this derivation is not convincing in view of the fact that in the *vodun* cult as found in Haiti at present or as described in earlier sources the *loa* are never generally referred to as kings, something that tends to strengthen statements that have been made to the effect that the word comes from the language of a Congo tribe.[1] The source of the root *hun-*, which figures in the terms *hungan*, *hunsi*, and *humfort*, is clear, for in Dahomey it is a synonym for the word *vodun*. *Hungan* and *hunsi* are even more definitely traceable than *humfort*, since the ending *-gan*, the Dahomean word for chief, designates the priest as the chief of the spirits, and *-si*, "wife," is employed in the sense of "wife of the god" or his devotee, in Africa as in Haiti. The female counterpart of *hungan*, *mambu*, cannot be definitely assigned, but may be of Bantu derivation, and is certainly an African word.

Other uncontaminated Africanisms can be discerned in the attitude of the Haitians toward the *loa* and in the ceremonies for them. One of the most characteristic is the inheritance of *loa* in families, a direct survival of the belief which not only

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

makes for deification of the family dead, but constitutes the oldest ancestor of a relationship group one of the great gods and thus causes families to give primary allegiance to a restricted number of deities. The most striking aspect of this tradition preserved in Haiti is that all ceremonies must be given by family groups, and at them only members of the family may with propriety become possessed. Possession itself, and the elements which constitute the possession complex — the use of the drums, the rhythms associated with particular gods, the importance of songs in calling the spirits, the mode of worship through specific dances for specific deities — these make up another series of Africanisms. In the dance itself the use of iron to sound basic rhythms for the drums, the outer form and function of the rattle, and the fact that the circle of participants always rotates in a counter-clockwise direction, are equally African. The modes of behavior to be observed as possession comes on and the psychological release that follows it both derive from the same source, as do the beliefs that rituals must be held on the days sacred to the particular god being worshipped.

Another retention of African tradition is a belief in the importance of sacrifice. It will be remembered that it is held to be more essential to "feed" the gods than to dance for them. This is also the tradition of all peoples of the region from which the slaves were derived, and in a sense reflects the very immediate relationship that obtains between Africans, or Haitians, and their gods. Since in both regions each deity performs the double role of doing good for those who worship it properly and harassing those who neglect it, the importance of giving adequate sacrifices to avert evil is evident. In both Haiti and Africa, however, these may differ with the wealth of the individual giving the offering, with the number of persons who contribute toward the ceremony where offerings are given, or with the seriousness of the situation which the deity is being asked to remedy. That the gods permit such varia-

1: Herskovits E-4, 3 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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CHAPTER XI

[1] Compare Parsons (I), 173–4, where the cult of twins is discussed and some of its rites described.

[2] Price-Mars (I), 35, mentions this as a power believed to be held by twins.

[3] The phrase "cult of the dead" as employed here must be sharply differentiated from its misuse by Seabrook (82 ff.).

[4] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 34.

[5] Price-Mars (I), 34, speaks of the custom of always burying charms with the dead.

[6] Wakes have been described by Seabrook, 89–91, and others, but in such a manner that it is difficult to dissect out the reality of what was witnessed from the imaginative elements.

[7] Cf. Wirkus, 221–3. The custom of giving the dead food at the grave, which he describes, is not followed when burial occurs in the Mirebalais town cemetery, nor, seemingly, elsewhere in the valley.

[8] See the description of a commemorative rite for the dead in Price-Mars (I) 148–50.

[9] This is a rule followed in West African practice.

CHAPTER XII

[1] An interesting attempt to account for this is found in St. John, 230–1, where he speaks of the "two Vaudoux sects," one good and one evil.

[2] St. Mery, i, 36. The term *garde* is almost entirely absent in later writings, the more sensational *wanga* (*ouanga*) being preferred.

[3] Léger, 55, note 34.

[4] Cf. Dorsainvil (I), 171.

[5] No better summary of this could be had than that in Parsons (I), 179, written after a single séance with a *gangan*.

[6] Pp. 324–31.

[7] Mr. J. C. Trevor informs me that during a recent field-trip to the Virgin Islands he discovered books of magic in common use, obtained from a Chicago dealer.

[8] It is not without interest to note that in the case reported in a Port-au-Prince newspaper and reproduced in facsimile by Seabrook, 334, concerning a woman from the commune of Mirebalais accused of sorcery, the name of the woman was *Azéman*.

[9] Cf. Parsons (II), 596.

[10] See above, pp. 94–5.

[11] The closest correspondence

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. vii]
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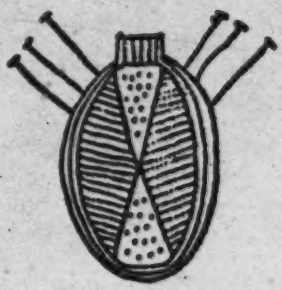

Preface

Every student of Haitian life is soon impressed by the richness of the materials spread out before him and the necessity of limiting his field of investigation. A study of Haitian religious practices, for example, draws one deeper and deeper into profusion, variation, and contradiction. One finds little difficulty in drawing a generalized picture with swift, bold lines; but when he descends into detail he discovers that the broad generalizations of the religious system contain within them many shifting and even warring motifs, and that what in one region is held to be true is not so regarded in another. The gods of *Vodoun* that are revered in one village are given only perfunctory treatment in another. Rites for the dead have a common denominator everywhere in the country, but each community brings to them something of its own or emphasizes traditions that elsewhere are forgotten. So it is also with music and dancing. A traditional drum rhythm may have one name in the north and another in the south, or a certain rhythm may be called by different names. There are diverse opinions about which dances are preferred by certain deities. The meaning of a song can be interpreted differently by different people. It is therefore no wonder that competent works on Haiti do not completely agree with one another in many respects, or that they seem, now and then, to be saying different or even contradictory things. Yet in many instances the seeming inconsistencies are in reality only minor variants within an overall scheme.

The purpose of this book is to present a broad view of certain aspects of Haitian culture and wherever possible to extract some of the flavor of Haitian thinking as well as its sense. It is easy to be fooled in regard to both. I remember seeing an old bearded man in the mountains beyond Furcy walking around his freshly hoed garden breaking a ripe tomato into small juicy bits which he scattered on the ground. It was about as primitive a method of planting as I had ever seen, and I wondered if even

793 approval of the candidate's elevation is needed. He is also regarded as
[769] being on more intimate terms with the family ancestors who, likewise,
must be in accord with the proceedings. The candidate for the asson is
[783] confined within the hounfor for a number of days, during which he takes purification baths and participates in other rituals. The rites that take place during this period are prescribed by the elder priest who has assumed responsibility. When the purification is ended, the candidate emerges into the *peristyle* (roofed court) to participate in the general service, and to undergo further tests.

Present during the ceremonies are all the principal houngans of the region—men who will be friendly associates of the new priest or, possibly, unfriendly competitors. The candidate is tested on his knowledge
[789] of how to use the asson and the tiny hand bell, and in the course of the service he is mounted by the loa who is the chief protector of the cult tem-
[782] ple. Animals are sacrificed, and all the loa sacred to the hounfor are invoked and asked for their approval and support. But it is not only the loa
[794] and the dead who must indicate their approval. The elder houngan polls the hounsi kanzo on whether they will accept their new cult chief and fol-
[533] low him. He also asks the chief drummer, who polls his assistant drummers. It is taken for granted that the decision is in the hands of the hounsi. The consensus is known before the actual service, but the formality of asking the question is observed. Should the hounsi refuse to accept the candidate for the asson, the elevation cannot take place.

793 The city and the countryside contain many self-styled houngans and
554 bocors who are not recognized as bona fide by the community, regardless
62 of the route by which they claim to have achieved their station. Sometimes
[791] they are regarded as *pas fort* (not strong); that is, they do not have profound knowledge and understanding. The Haitian is quick to detect the difference between a houngan who knows and one who does not know. Many are stated to be outright fakes. One man who attempted to hold a service in Port-au-Prince aroused such contempt and disgust that a number of persons who had been drawn by genuine interest walked out with remarks that the man should be punished. In fact, his failure to show any
[533] essential qualifications for the houngan's role was commented upon in a song of ridicule that made its appearance at a secular dance that same night. The song noted some of the humorous aspects of the service, such as when the "impostor" struck himself vigorously on the head with the flat of a machete to show his "strength" and virtually incapacitated himself for the rest of the evening.

346 It is easily observed that no two hounfors are exactly alike. They differ

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1958) 1960 SV3-Haiti SV3

[P.30]

4. Death Rites

775 776 The community of the Haitian is one that extends far beyond his immediate family and his village, for it takes in not only the various loa but multitudinous dead relatives and ancestors. Some Haitians believe that the dead live in close proximity to the loa, in a place called "Under the Water." Others hold that the dead have no special residing place. But it is the view of many that a dead person may eventually become a loa in his own right. How this happens is not entirely clear. Under certain circumstances the spirits of the newly dead do not go quietly on their way but [769] remain behind to annoy and harass the living. They must be buried with suitable ritual and properly placated throughout the years; otherwise their activities and influences will be unpredictable. Many of them, under special conditions, become almost indistinguishable from loa. And a few, in the course of time, become minor deities in the pantheons. The main loa of the Pétro cult, Dan Pétro, formerly was believed by some Haitians to be a houngan of the eighteenth century who had been buried without having [171] his own loa removed from his head. There are African precedents for deified ancestors' becoming deities. Indeed, some of the great *vodounns* and *orisha* of the Dahomean and Yoruban pantheons in West Africa are believed to be deified clan ancestors or great kings.

775 171 Whether they achieve the status of loa or not, the spirits of the dead must forever be coped with. This Haitian view of the dead is essentially that held in many parts of West Africa. Speaking of West African belief in general, Maurice Delafosse noted:

> After a creature dies, only his spirit remains. It survives with the same character, the same personality, affections and hatreds as during his lifetime, but it can no longer command the vital breath. It becomes all the more powerful on escaping from the confines of its material envelope, since it no longer needs to direct and control the functions of the body, and is not itself regulated by the vital breath. . . . These spirits are all of the same nature. They are invisible but can see and judge everything that happens. They are easily angered and mete out severe punishment to anyone

offending them. They are also vain and capricious, can be conciliated by prayers and gifts, and propitiated by sacrifices. This animistic religion . . . includes many variants of the worship of countless spirits of men's ancestors and innumerable spirits of nature, all ranking as gods.[1] 775 171

Another observer, speaking of the Bapindi, the Babunda, and other related tribes of the western Congo draws quite similar conclusions:

The people of these tribes recognize a supreme deity, Nzambi, creator of all things. But this supreme spirit is too distant from men to enlist active worship on their part. The basic worship is to the ancestors of the clan. The clan is in effect a community consisting of all the living and the dead descended from a common ancestor. Towards the dead it is necessary to make offerings as a mark of deference when one wishes to consult them on problems. The dead are spoken to through the chief, who uses a special drum for this purpose. The dead have the responsibility of protecting their descendants.[2]

Among the Bantu people of South Africa, also, the worship of ancestors is based upon the belief that when a man dies he continues to influence the lives of his relatives remaining on earth. He is as interested as ever in descendants who remain "outside on the earth," but indifferent to members of other communities unless they bear them some grudge. The characters of people who die are not changed by death. They are as prone to jealousy in death as in life, and as rancorous toward descendants who wound their vanity, flout their wishes, squander their bequests, or infringe the ancient laws and customs of their clans; but they are also as willing as ever to help those of their lineage who treat them with becoming respect and obedience.[3] The affairs of mankind in general do not concern them; they are exclusively interested in their own family and tribe, and without their help and guidance their living descendants cannot hope to flourish. As long as the moral code is strictly followed, they confer blessings and abundance; but if offended by any breach of custom, they can also send drought, cattle plague, tribal or personal disaster, sickness, or death.[4] 171 769 775

This deeply rooted concept of the relationship of the family to its ancestors continues to motivate the Haitian in his observance of services for the dead. 769 775

In addition to the ordinary dead with whom the Haitian has to deal, there are the spirits of twins, known as *marassas*. As there are feasts for the ordinary family dead, the mangé morts, so there are feasts for living and dead twins, the mangé marassas. Twins are believed to have special powers, and even when alive they are given more than usual consideration. The spirits of dead twins are especially willful and capricious, and unless properly placated they may cause illness and misfortune. Once each year, on dates fixed by local custom, special services are held for the marassas. 769 775 845

[1,2] [Footnotes appear on p. 350, Category 116.--Analyst]
[3] [Willoughby, The Soul of The Bantu, pp. 88-89. Cf. p. 350 Category 116.--Analyst]
[4] [Footnote appears on p. 350, Category 116.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

769 845 The dead twins are offered food in special earthen or gourd bowls. In any market place where pottery is sold you will find the joined marassa double or triple bowls. The annual rites for the marassas are routine, but once every five years there is a *grande service* for them.

It is not merely the twins of one's immediate family that are served, but twins—that is, the spirit of twins—in general. They are supplicated even when a family knows of no incidence of twins. In part, this precaution is a recognition that there may have been twins among ancestors long dead and forgotten. It is also recognition of a twin spirit as a separate force affecting all people. The twin spirit has been personified in the loa named Marassa. The child born after twins is believed by many Haitians to be even "stronger" and more to be placated than twins themselves. He is known as a *doçu* if a boy, *doça* if a girl. Their patron loa are known as [776] Marassa Doçu and Marassa Doça. The patron loa of triplets is Marassa Trois. Triplets are regarded as a special category of twins. Some Haitians, in fact, believe that the twins are merely a partial manifestation of the group of three, which is completed on the birth of the doçu or doça. In the marassa feast, triplets are served in the triple clover-leaf bowl, as are twins in combination with their doçu or doça. It is also believed by some that the child born before twins is "weak" both in physical vitality and psychic powers, because his strength has been sapped by the marassas who have followed him.

776 768 [184] For some Haitians the loa Marassa is the most potent of forces to be placated at the time of death. They hold that he is only incidentally the patron of twins and triplets. His significance is said to lie in the fact that he is the spirit of the first of all human children who died. And as the child precedes the man, Marassa is the first and foremost of all loa. When a service is held for Marassa, he is given foods and beverages that all children love.

769 Rites for the dead continue endlessly for the living. Before a child is witness to a death in his own family he may observe many rituals for the family ancestors, twins, and the unknown dead. For those who are a part of Vodoun, the cycle is a perpetual one in an endless system of integration and continuity.

775 776 764 Special rites are held to remove the loa from the head of a deceased person. It is believed that the spirit of a person who has not had his loa removed will be restive and perhaps will even cause difficulties for his family and his descendants. And there is also the matter of the loa's welfare. The *malt' tête* is, in a sense, a captive in the head of the person who has died. The head is his home. But should the corpse be taken to the graveyard without the loa's having been removed, the loa would refuse to be buried

beyond the obvious fear of contagion. In his study of Dahomey, Herskovits notes: 766 [171]

> . . . Small-pox is believed to be sent as a punishment for grave offenses in the eyes of these [the Sagbata] deities, and it is taken to indicate that either the dead person himself or a member of his family has committed some heinous crime such as the practice of black magic. A person who dies of small-pox may only be buried after permission has been given by the chief priest of the Earth cult.[20]

Thus, in Haiti, though the connections with the past are clouded, it is clear that victims of lightning and smallpox are treated as a special class of criminals or malefactors. 174 753 761 766

Ordinary malefactors such as malevolent criminals and murderers—until recent years, at least—were not buried in the common graveyard. They, too, were segregated at the periphery of the cemetery or buried at the edge of a trail or road where the traffic would not permit them to rest and where their graves would be under constant surveillance. The roadside grave sometimes was also the fate of a person killed by lightning. 766

That these special burials are related to the Dahomean and Yoruban concepts of retribution for crimes against the deities is supported by the similarity of treatment accorded victims of lightning and disease and common criminals. In Haiti, Herskovits observes: "Those who die of small-pox or leprosy, suicides, or persons shot as a punishment for crime are not buried in the communal cemetery, but in special sections of the graveyard," the suicides and criminals being set apart from the others.[21] 761 753 766 [174] [121] [681] [762]

Graves found near the seashore, lake shores, or riverbanks frequently are declared to belong to persons who died of drowning. 766

Approximately nine days after a person's death, the "last prayers" are said, and the soul of the deceased is presumed to have departed from the house. Once more, under the tonnelle outside there are games, storytelling, and singing. On this night, however, there is also drumming and dancing of a special kind. Usually it is the Juba, or Martinique, dance, which is believed to be specially enjoyed by the dead, and it is the older people, rather than the young, who participate. These festivities are believed to give cheer to the deceased and to "encourage" him on his way. On the next night comes the mangé mort, the feast for the family dead, a ritual which continues periodically through the years. 765 53 [775] [524] [769]

Sometimes in Haiti you may come upon an old tomb or grave before which a dish of specially prepared food has been set. This is part of the mangé mort ritual. 764 769

A man may make provision in advance of his death for the rites which follow his burial. He may designate special animals to be killed, leave 763 764

[20] [Ibid., pp. 397–398. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.--Analyst]

[21] [Herskovits, Life in a Haitian Valley, p. 214. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.--Analyst]

763 764 special funds to defray expenses, or even set a day for the "last prayers"; and it is said that misfortune is likely to overtake his family if his wishes are not carried out. Métraux cites a story of a man who had told his wife that if he should happen to die on a Sunday she should hold "last prayers" for him on a Tuesday. It happened to be a Tuesday when the man died.

763 764 784

They held the burial in the afternoon. As they began the prayers on Wednesday, the last prayer finished on Wednesday week. But as Brother Lédan had always said they should hold his last prayer on a Tuesday, his wife was quite willing to hold it Tuesday. One Tuesday when everyone knew that the last prayer was being held, his wife heard her brother-in-law who told her that wasn't customarily done [that is, shortening the period of prayers]. Then she put off the last prayer.

Thereupon, according to the story, two strangers appeared in the house. They were offered chairs and they sat down. Suddenly, one of the men arose and said that the woman had announced that a last prayer was to be said that day. She said she had put it off. Then the other man got up and said: "Wasn't it today I ordered you to hold the last prayer?" The woman asked, "Who are you?" But both men disappeared. The woman fell unconscious, and died three days later.

769 The cycle of honoring, encouraging, and placating the spirits of the dead moves continuously. There is no beginning and no end. Although those who have died are no longer seen, they are part of the great community which encompasses those whose names are remembered and those who are forgotten, including ancestors who never left the shores of Africa. Death is merely another aspect of life, and its forces are ever present.

[761]

22 [Hall and others, op. cit., p. 173. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

794 in a circle around the two boiling pots. On the seventh circuit of the
787 course, the laplace stopped him at the first pot. The houngan grasped the
789 man's free hand and, bending down, dipped it into the boiling oil. There
796 was no visible indication of pain. They moved to the second pot, and the
793 man's hand was dipped again. They proceeded again to the first pot, where the dipping was repeated, then back again to the second pot. The neophyte's hand entered the boiling oil seven times in all. He made no sound, showed no resistance, no reflexes. Then the hounsi took him back to the hounfor. It was all over. After three days of isolation, they said, he would be kanzo.

The houngan peeled an orange, while everyone crowded close to watch. In it he found a two-gourde note. He peeled another orange and found in it a slip of paper with the name of a woman on it. She came forward, and everyone laughed. She was an old woman, the oldest of the hounsi. The houngan held the two-gourde note between his teeth. The old woman took the other end of the note in her teeth, but she had to kiss the houngan before he would let go.

796 The ritual of brulé zin, or kanzo, is of unmistakable West African ori-
794 gin. Herskovits has described a ceremony in Dahomey which in many
171 details could easily have taken place in Haiti. The Dahomean rite was in honor of the gods of the Thunder pantheon. Here, too, we find a pot of boiling palm oil, in which are the sacred dumplings: "When the fire had finally subsided and only a faint column of smoke issued from the pot, the initiate came dancing toward it, thrust her hand into the boiling oil, and lifted out a dumpling. . . ."[8]

Family Rites at Léogane

● 769 These services for family ancestors took place in the mountains above
796 Léogane at the ancestral home of my friend Libera Borderau. They were
787 conducted on the grounds of his grandmother's house. The ritual began
778 with dancing. Against the wall of the house sat the three drummers with their Arada drums. Near them, leaning against the wall, were the flags of the family loa. Also near by was a long high table serving as a makeshift altar called the *jé*. In the very center of the table in a clean white dish lay eight loa stones—old Carib artifacts. The stones were identical in shape, all of them perfectly symmetrical, resembling small, pointed cigars. In the *pierre-loas* lived the family deities, and much of the ceremony was built around them. The stones had been bathed and polished in oil for the occasion. Set around the plate of stones were numerous small *criches* (French, *cruches*—clay water jugs), glass bottles, and earthenware jars which also contained loa. On the low bench before the table, seven dishes

[8] [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 165. Cf. P 351, Cat. 116.—Author]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

were set out in a row, and before them four *conis*, the half-gourd bowls used in services to the marassa, the twin spirits.

In the house, at the center of the floor, was a round flat stone about ten inches in diameter and about two inches thick, resembling a millstone. This was the *pierre-manman*, the mother stone responsible for the coming of the other loa stones and who cared for them in the absence of the family. In this stone, they said, was the spirit of the old loa Nananbouclou. On a mat in the corner of the room two children slept.

Outside, on a chair, his back against the wall of the house, the houngan sat, his rattle and bell in hand. He had come several miles to conduct the service. Most of those who danced were his own hounsi. The houngan was "strong" and well known in the region; people said he had worked for high government officials, including the president himself.

After several rounds of Arada dancing in which children as well as adults took part, the drums stopped. The houngan and his laplace moved up to the building which served for the night as the hounfor. It was up a steep slope, about a hundred feet from the dance court. There they prepared for the sacrifice to Chébo Profiel, the honored loa of the evening. Passing in and out among the spectators was a woman who would be possessed by Papa Chébo; since he was the guest of the service, she (or the loa in her head) was free to come and go as she chose, to speak as she pleased, and to do what she wished. Mostly she shook hands with people, a ceremony which continued throughout the night. First she would offer the right hand, then the left; or perhaps both at once, in which case the hands would be shaken downward vigorously three or four times. Someone ignorantly said, "Bon soir, Madame!" and she turned on him to reprimand his insolence. She was not "Madame," she was *l'Autorité*, the Authority.

During the course of the evening the conviction became stronger and stronger in her that she was Chébo Profiel. From the time we first saw her until the end of the evening her personality underwent marked changes. She "became" Papa Chébo.

The houngan sat before a small hole, possibly a foot deep and ten inches in diameter, in front of the hounfor. The fresh earth was piled neatly to the side, and an enameled plate was set on top of it. Around the hole were the various dishes to be offered to Chébo Profiel. The laplace prayed in Latin, a short Catholic service. Then the houngan, shaking his beaded rattle and tinkling his bell, called for Chébo to "enter." He made a small maize-flour drawing around the hole, and then began the feeding of the loa. The plates arranged for the feast contained roasted maize, roasted peanuts, bread, cassava, rice, and other foods. There were bottles of rum,

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1953) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

kola (a soft drink), *clairin*, and syrup. The houngan, entreating Chébo to accept, poured a little *clairin* into the hole. The loa seemed to accept, for the *clairin* was quickly absorbed in the ground. The houngan took rice from the plate with his fingers, about the amount he might place in his own mouth, and put it gently into the hole. He was feeding Papa Chébo, literally placing the food in his mouth. After the rice, which was dry, the houngan poured in a little more *clairin* to moisten it. He ordered the laplace to break up the bread, and then he placed a small piece in the hole and washed it down with a little rum. The houngan seemed to understand that Papa Chébo Profiel was hungry, and that he was also an epicure. He allowed him to taste the roasted corn, and then washed it down with a trickle of kola. Then he gave him a taste of the roasted peanuts, and another morsel of bread. Once Chébo got his mouth too full in his zest for the meal, and the assemblage had to wait for him to finish "coughing." Then the houngan gave him a long drink of kola to clear his windpipe. After that the houngan was more careful in the way he fed him—a little cassava, a drink, a little bread. As the houngan fed the loa, some of the spectators reached over and placed small coins in the empty dish by the hole. These too were for Chébo. Finally, Chébo was through eating. The food was gone.

The houngan, shaking his rattle and his bell, blew two sharp notes on his whistle. At the door of the hounfor appeared l'Autorité, the hounsi possessed by Papa Chébo. More than ever she resembled the loa, and less than ever she resembled herself. In one hand she held a saber. Her bodily movements were spasmodic, as though she was being forced to do things to which she was not accustomed. She moved slowly into the circle, her eyes almost closed; she leaned backward, then twisted grotesquely around, jerked this way and that, buffeted by the loa. Suddenly she began to whirl. The houngan called "Tambouyé!" and the drummers beat a slow complicated rhythm, a salute to Chébo. The loa had really "entered" now. There was no mistaking the jerky, irresponsible movements of the hounsi's head and shoulders. She leaned backward as though about to fall, incredibly kept her balance, rolled forward as though she were going to plunge to the ground, and twisted herself upright once more. The saber passed close to the faces of the spectators, even scratched some of them and cut their clothing. Her movements had a definitely masculine character. Chébo Profiel was a man.

She reached over to seize a chicken that was held out to her. Grasping its legs with her free hand, she continued her spinning, twisting, lurching dance. Then she cradled the chicken, rocking it back and forth until it was in a hypnotic trance. She placed it on the ground before a tiny pile

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

of ground maize prepared by the laplace. The chicken, released, sat motionless, making no effort to escape. All watched attentively, the houngan shaking his rattle and bell. Suddenly the chicken cocked its head and, seeming to see the corn for the first time, reached out and pecked at it. This was the loa receiving the sacrifice—a difficult conception if one thinks of the chicken itself as the sacrifice. "Chébo," l'Autorité, snatched the chicken up, danced violently about, the loa in full possession of her body. With a swift movement of the saber, she cut the chicken's throat and caused the first drop of blood to fall into the hole. When the chicken stopped struggling, it was left there, head downward. L'Autorité took up a cock which was given her, cradled him, and set him before the ground maize. When he pecked at it, she picked him up and danced, around and around, jerking, lunging, never quite falling. She took his comb between her teeth, supporting his body gently with her hands, and spun around and around. Then she released him, cut his throat, and placed him in the hole with the chicken.

At the side of the hounfor, waiting, was a goat (called by the ritual name Dogwé). He had a fine silky white coat and a long beard. He was brought in to the place of sacrifice, and l'Autorité dropped to her knees to embrace his neck with her arms. She remained there a moment, her cheek against his, talking to him. Then she arose, a machete in hand instead of a saber, and began to pirouette while three men threw the goat on his side. Then she cut with the machete, and the goat's blood, too, began to run into the hole. For the first time her dance became unquestionably frenzied. She swung strong, full blows of the machete at the goat's neck, finally severing the head. From the hindquarters she cut a piece of red meat and placed it in her mouth.

At a signal from the houngan, three men carried the goat's body away to be dressed and cooked, and a woman came forward to wipe the blood from Papa Chébo's face.

The drums began again, a Dahomé dance, and the people relaxed. Many joined in the dancing while l'Autorité strutted about shaking hands and talking *langage*. She also danced, with gestures and movements wholly masculine. At one point she briefly advanced on another woman, making sexual gestures.

The houngan and his houngénicon retired to the front room of the hut. A new mat had been placed there for the houngénicon. She lay down on it, and the houngan sat in a chair against the wall. This was the beginning of the ceremony of calling *les morts en bas dleau* (the dead below the water).

Meanwhile, before the hounfor, the laplace and a hounsi were building

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

769 the *card*, a hogan-like structure made of bent saplings covered with cotton
793 cloth.
794 Rain had been threatening all evening, and now it began. Some people
796 crowded into the hut where the goat was being barbecued. Others came
[346] into the hut where the houngénicon lay; in the back room, with the pé, Chébo, l'Autorité, strutted and shook hands with the visitors. The straw roof leaked a little, but no one minded very much. The houngan and his houngénicon, who had been under a strain, relaxed. The rain would mark the length of the intermission. Except for the sound of the rain and "Chébo's" *langage*, there was no noise. No one spoke. Then the houngan,
769 his eyes closed, began to sing an Ibo song.
793
796
539

Ibo Lazile oh, éya!
Grand gout manqué tuyé moin!
A la yun an six mois m' sous la mer,
Grand gout manqué tuyé moin!

Ibo Lazile, oh, éya!
Hunger has not killed me!
One year and six months I have been under the sea,
Hunger has not killed me!

The others sang responsively:

Ibo Lazile, oh, Ibo!
Ibo grand gout pas tuyé'm, Ibo!

Ibo Lazile, oh, Ibo!
Ibo, hunger has not killed me, Ibo!

After a while the houngan called "Abobo!"—which was the signal to conclude. The rain was still coming down, and he called "Abobo!" for the rain to cease also. But it did not stop, and everyone laughed. He began another song, also Ibo:

Ianman Ibo lélé!
Ianman Ibo lélé!
Pilet pied'm mandé pardon,
Ça pardon wa fai pou moin?
Ça ou gainyan con ça? [Ex. 80]

Ianman Ibo lélé!
Ianman Ibo lélé!
Step on my foot and ask my pardon,
What will the pardon do for me?
What do you have [what are you doing] like that?

And the others came in, spiritedly:

Ianman, oh, un hunh!
Ianman, con ça'm dansé Ibo!
Ianman, oh, un hunh!

Ianman, oh, un hunh!
Ianman, like this I dance, Ibo!
Ianman, oh, un hunh!

While those in the front room were singing, l'Autorité, in the inner room, was suddenly thrown about violently by her possession. She raced into one wall of the hut, striking her head, flung herself back against the opposite wall, kicking, trembling, calling out strange *langage*. She crashed into the pé, upsetting the dishes, and then fell across the mat where the children were lying half asleep. One of them, a boy of about four, became hysterical. He knew the woman, but he had never seen her like this. His mother carried him to the front room, where she finally quieted his crying. L'Autorité, spent for the moment, lay across the mat. No one touched her. Later, when the singing was resumed, she got to her feet and made the rounds once more, shaking hands again and again. She was now smoking a pipe.

When the houngan heard the rain subsiding, he again called out "Abobo!" as though he were giving the order to cease, and everyone, himself included, laughed again. When it had definitely stopped, someone went out to shake the water from the canopy. The drums were brought out of their shelter, and although the ground was sticky with mud, the dancing was resumed. The houngan asked for a fast Nago dance, and the front room of the hut was once more emptied of everyone except the houngan and his houngénicon.

The laplace and his assistant went up the hill to put the finishing touches to the *card*, the temporary structure in which the houngan was going to receive the loa and the dead. From a small chest of chinaware, the houngénicon set a "table" for the loa on the ground where she sat. The sacrifice had been for a single loa, Chébo; the rest of the service was for all the loa served by the family. The houngan, sitting next to the houngénicon, sounded his rattle and spoke *langage*. He sang quietly, a song which only the houngénicon could hear, watching her intently. A large basket of dishes, bottles, and various other paraphernelia was brought by a hounsi. Candles were lighted and set on the ground. The houngan gave a signal, and the hounsi brought a large square of white cotton cloth, which they stretched tight over the houngénicon like a canopy. The candle flame and the silhouette of the houngénicon could be seen through the cloth, but the details of the service were not visible. Sometimes, the houngan, his bell and rattle in hand, would go under the cloth to assist in the calling of the loa. Then, without warning, things began to happen very rapidly.

One of the hounsi who sat before the door began to quiver and make strange noises in her throat: "Ka, ka, k-k-k-k-k-k-a!" Her body shook violently, and her head rolled on her shoulders. Almost simultaneously something began to happen under the cloth where the houngénicon was, and the members of the family crowded up to the *card* by the hounfor. The houngénicon lay stiffly, her eyes closed, the white cloth removed. The

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1945) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

769 houngan carried out the large round basket in which lay the bottles and
793 the pierre-loas. The hounsi gathered around it, ten of them, to carry it to
794 the *card*. In the bottles were *les morts en bas dlean* (the spirits of the dead
796 from below the water). Carrying the flags, three hounsi danced, singing,
787 up to the *card*. After them the laplace came, carrying in his left hand a plate of maize flour from which he made vèvès in the line of advance, simple marks symbolizing the crossroads. The drums were beating a special salute to the loa. The ten hounsi carrying the basket danced and sang. As they moved up the hill, they rotated, so that the basket revolved like the
[535] hub of a wheel. Their progress was not smooth, however; they jerked forward and backward as they rotated. Arriving before the *card*, first one, then a second, was entered by her loa. They fell, jerked, and stumbled. This was all a very good omen. The houngan called "Abobo!" for them to resist such possession, and the hounsi all sat down on the ground. The houngan placed the basket inside the *card* and entered after it. He called for his little bell, which the laplace passed in to him. The laplace closed the flap down tight, from the outside, and placed the flags against it.

Upon a signal given from within, the hounsi began a song:

[539]

La famille semblé,
Oh semblé nous!
La famille semblé,
Oh nous semblé pou nou pa'lé parole nous là!
La famille semblé!

The family gathers,
Oh, we gather!
The family gathers,
Oh, we gather to speak our words here!
The family gathers!

769 The laplace took his position, his back to the *card*, while inside, because
796 of the candle burning there, the houngan could be seen setting out the
787 contents of the basket. The candle went out, and in the *card* the little bell
[794] began to tinkle. The singing stopped. The houngan was beginning to
[793] talk to the dead below the water. First he talked *langage*. Then his voice was heard through the constant sound of the tiny bell, supplicating Papa Loko to talk a little bit with his "children." A faint, tremulous voice, that of a tired old grandfather, was heard to answer. Papa Loko was stirring himself out of a long silence. He talked a long while to the houngan. Sometimes they both spoke at once. Faintly he was heard to say that he had come a long way to see his children, and that he was very tired. But as he talked his strength returned to him, and, asking the houngan to wait, he spoke directly to his "children," who sat, respectfully and awed,

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1938) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

around the *cord*. Here everyone participated. This was why they had come. Benevolently Papa Loko greeted them: "Bonjou, ti moune moin yo, c'est Papa Loko" (Good day, all my children, this is Papa Loko). Together they all answered eagerly: "Bon soir, Papa!" "Bon soir, Grand!" "Bon soir, cher Papa!" "Bon soir, cher Loko!" Papa Loko told them about his journey, and persons long dead whom he had seen below the water, and he passed on the news from the island below the sea. Then he began to address them singly, asking questions, giving news of dead relatives, and showing a vital interest in the problems of his "children." They answered him. "Oui, Papa," and "Non, Papa Loko," and took deeply to heart anything he said, whether praise or criticism:

Bon jour, Télisman!	Good day, Télisman!
Bon soir, Papa!	Good evening, Papa!
Comment nou yé, Télisman?	How are you, Télisman?
Tout bien, Papa Loko!	Everything is fine, Papa Loko!
C'est ou même qui travaille tres dit?	Are you one who works very hard?
Oui, Papa, moin travaille an pile.	Yes, Papa, I work a great deal.
Ou travaille pou' vié maman ou?	You care for your old mother?
Oui, Papa.	Yes, Papa.
Télisman, pitit moin, faut ou planté jardin ou encore. Graine, li pas bon.	Télisman, my child, you will have to plant your garden again. The seeds you planted are no good.
Merci, cher Loko!	Thank you, dear Loko!
Ou poco blié'm, Télisman.	You do not forget me, Télisman.
Non, cher Loko.	No, dear Loko.
Yo dit ou praillé travaille en ville.	They say you are going to work in the city.
Lé'm capab', Papa.	When I can, Papa.
Pas blié moune morne ça yo, Télisman.	Do not forget the people of the hills, Télisman.
Non, cher Loko, m' pas blié yo.	No, dear Loko, I will not forget them.
Papa ou dit'm ba ou bon soir pou'li.	Your father asked me to say good evening to you for him.
Merci, Papa.	Thank you, Papa.
Papa Loko fini pa'lé ou, Télisman.	Papa Loko is through talking to you, Télisman.
Merci, Papa.	Thank you, Papa.
Chongé 'm, Télisman.	Remember me, Télisman.

Papa Loko talked in turn to everyone in the family who was present, and inquired, sometimes suspiciously, after those who were absent. After many minutes, Papa Loko said regretfully that he had to go away, and bade them au revoir. They were all sorry he was leaving, because he was well loved. He spoke a few words with the houngan, and then his voice faded away. Only the tinkling of the little bell remained.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1953) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

769 796 787

Then, faintly, came the broken voice of an old woman who was crying. The houngan said her children were waiting to see her, and asked her to enter. Moyise had been dead many generations already, but she was still crying over the circumstances of her death, and because she had left her children behind her. The houngan, speaking gently, asked her to try to stop crying because her children were waiting. Little by little she controlled herself. She greeted them all and talked with each member of the family in turn. She showed a special interest in the women and children and was concerned about family problems.

After Moyise went away, Docile, Moyise' daughter, came. She greeted them all and then complained that when she had died she had been buried in a grave near that of a thief; now she wished for her body to be moved. Alixe, on whose place the grave was situated, promised to take care of the matter, and Docile became placated. Her voice faded away. Inside the *cord*, the houngan talked *langage* and rang his bell.

After Docile came Joseph and his son Jougleau. Joseph and Jougleau timed their entrance badly and came in together, both talking at once. The houngan tried to straighten out the situation, and for a moment the three of them were conversing simultaneously. Then Jougleau withdrew and returned when his father was through. After Jougleau came still later generations, represented by Ti Perci and her children, Na and Bernicia. Bernicia came crying bitterly about something. The houngan asked her to stop, because he could not bear to hear women crying. Everyone laughed, and Bernicia controlled herself.

[776] Then Damballa Wèdo, the ancient loa, came, speaking with an aged and broken voice. Feebly he sang his song in "African" language:

[539]

Ago! Damballa Wèdo!
Oh Damballa Wèdo kian kian!
Oh Damballa Wèdo kian kian!
Oh ha ha ha Damballa Wèdo kian kian!
Oh Damballa Wèdo kian kian! [Ex. 39]

[776] Later, Damballa sang again, calling on Legba to act as witness to his words:

[539]

Ago-é Attibon Legba oh é!
Oh Damballa Wèdo é kélé manyan!
Oh gainyain jou' ya chongé moin là kélé manyan!
Oh Damballa Wèdo é kélé manyan!
Oh Ayida Wèdo é kélé manyan!
Oh gainyain jou' pou' chongé moin là kélé manyan! [Ex. 40]

Ago-é Attibon Legba *oh é!*
Oh, Damballa Wèdo *é, kélé manyan!*

Oh, a day will come when they will remember me here, *kfil manyan!*
Oh, Dumballa Wèdo *é, kfil manyan.*
Oh, Ayida Wèdo *é, kfil manyan!*
Oh, a day will come for you to remember me here, *kfil manyan!*

During the evening about twenty loa and ancestors came into the *cord* to talk. When the last had finished speaking the hills were already light, and the service was over.

Service for Èzèlie Frèna and St. Jacques Majeur

This service took place not in the open but under a tonnelle surrounded by four walls, adjoining the hounfor of Alexis Stephan on the west fringes of Port-au-Prince. Separate from the hounfor and dance court was a shrine to the "dead" loa Gèdé Nimbo. The shrine was a small shed open on one side. Within, lighted by flickering oil lamps, was a life-size effigy of Gèdé, a scarecrow-like figure dressed in the loa's traditional attire—black tail coat and trousers, and a tall opera hat. On the otherwise blank face of the figure were smoked glasses with white rims.

The dancing was progressing under the supervision of the houngan's adjutant, the laplace. He wandered among the drummers and dancers, encouraged the singing, and issued orders here and there. No one seemed to take him very seriously. There was a good deal of joking, and the gathering seemed very much like an old-fashioned family reunion. There were perhaps a hundred dancers and spectators—friends, relatives, and devotees of Stephan's hounfor. Everyone was watching with affection an old woman who could not be restrained from dancing. She executed old classical steps and postures with a skill that called for running comment all around her. As each piece came to an end someone would step up to her and say something like: "Woy, Manman, mais ou passé mwé!" (Oh, Mother, you are better than me!). Then they would attempt to get her to sit down again, but she would only shake them off and urge the drummers to get going if they were not too tired.

Eventually, the houngan, Stephan, made a casual entrance through the door of his adjoining hounfor. He held the usual ritual rattle and bell in his hand, and sauntered around to chat with his friends.

Gradually, almost imperceptibly, the dancing became more serious. Soon, only the hounsi, the female servitors, were dancing. The drums played a salute to Legba, the first loa to be called upon in a Vodoun service. For it is Legba who opens all gates and all highways, and who paves the way for communication with other deities. Though he is not the greatest of the loa, he is one of the most ancient. The houngan spilled water on the ground as a libation, and the dancing continued.

2: Courlander 8-4 (1937-1960) 1964 993 Haiti 993

The yam 244 121 192

itself was transplanted from Africa, where in old times as well as in modern it was a staff of life among those who lived by agriculture. The word "yam" is known throughout large parts of Africa, crossing language lines and forests. It signifies the big root on which the African is so dependent, and it also has the general meaning of "eat." In Senegal it is called *nyami*, while across the width of Africa and in the upper Nile region it is called *nyam*.

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In Haiti the yam is a tie with the past and a symbol of fertility. When the yams are plentiful, there is food for the winter months and a sense of well-being. When the yam crop is poor, there is insecurity and even hunger. Whatever occurs, lurking in the background is the shadow of the family ancestors, for it is they who have the power to enhance the crops or blight them. This is the concept around which the mangé yam is built.

244 796 769 184

The annual harvest feast, on the twenty-fifth of November, is rooted in the need for placating the ancestors, so that the dead will insure the fertility of the fields. Before the feast, no yams may be eaten, for the crop must be "baptized" first. Should this rule be violated the yams will spoil and those who eat them will become sick. The precise form of the mangé yam varies from region to region. Sometimes it is held on the premises of the cult chief for the community at large. More traditionally it is held on the family *habitation*, with a houngan in attendance. It is felt that an important obligation rests upon those who have wandered away from the homestead to return for the occasion. For the fate of the family depends to a large degree upon the successful appeal to the vast host of the ancestral dead, and the solidarity of the living in this effort is regarded as vital. Even if one belongs to a Christian sect which proscribes Vodoun, he is obligated and ready to come, for the welfare of the family is paramount. Catholics, Adventists, and Protestants alike participate. As the Haitians say, it is an affair for all who eat yams, and that means all Haitians.

244 796 769

Yams are washed and prepared for eating during the service. They are cut in small portions, placed in dishes or calabash bowls, and offered to the dead, who have prime rights. All categories of the dead are fed—those who are remembered, those who can be recalled only by name, and those whose names are forgotten. The dead of Haiti are invoked, then the dead of Africa. The marassa dead are fed from separate gourds or bowls, and a special table is set for the ancient dead who move slowly because of their age or infirmities, and who may take a long while to arrive at the mangé. A share of the yams is offered to the family loa. Then the members of the family receive symbolic portions. There is singing, drumming, and dancing, and sometimes ritual baths are taken. Afterward, when the yam feast is ended, the crops may be gathered, stored, and eaten.

2: Courlander 9-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

243 In the Artibonite Valley, where much rice is grown, a similar ceremony
197 takes place before the rice is gathered from the fields. In this ceremony it
198 is rice that is shared with the family ancestors, who have first rights, and
269 with close friends who have aided with the planting. This feast is called
[252] *mangé diri*, or sometimes *gouté diri*, the tasting of the rice. Small amounts of rice are taken from the fields, cooked with red beans or Congo beans, or perhaps made into dumplings. The farmer's friends and relatives gather
[524] while the food is still cooking, and play games such as *wari* and *trois-sept*.
[538] The children play *gage* games and sing songs, and sometimes a *malt' cinte*—a storyteller—comes to entertain them.

When the food is finally ready, the family ancestors are given their share. The farmer takes a calabash bowl of the rice and walks around the house grounds calling upon his immediate ancestors to accept their share. He drops a little food on the ground for the remembered dead, for the unknown dead who preceded them, for the Haitian dead, and for the dead of Africa. He also drops small portions for the dead twins, the dead albinos, the deformed dead, and the dead who have lost limbs, and for the distressed dead who have been improperly buried, or who may not have received the feasts that were due them. Afterward, he offers food to those who died of drowning, or who were lost at sea and never heard of again.

Each course is shared with the ancestors. The farmer takes a pitcher of water, spilling a little here and a little there until the dead have quenched their thirst. He also gives a little of everything to the family loa. Then the calabashes are set out on a bench or table reserved for the dead, and this food is not disturbed. Food for the marassas is set out separately on the ground in three small *couis*, or gourd dishes.

The family ancestors whose good will has made the harvest possible having been taken care of, the food is now shared among the extended family and the friends who helped in the fields. Later there are prayers
[188] to the loa, the saints, and God, led by the houngan or a prêt' savane. To
116 finish the affair, there may be Juba-type dances for the older people, while
[536] the children watch or play *gage* games.
[524]

Only after this service are the farmer and his family and his *coumbite* (mutual labor group), if he belongs to one, free to go out and harvest the rice.[4]

243 These feasts of the rice and yam harvests are not of New World origin.
243 Similar harvest festivals for yams or rice are held over a wide area of West
196 Africa. There, as in Haiti, the fundamental concern is with the family
269 ancestors, whose good will must be constantly nourished so that the rains
171 continue to fall, the crops flourish, and human beings remain fertile. Among the Ashanti of Ghana, for example, the yam and rice harvests are

[4 Account given by Jean Ravel Pintro. Cf. P. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

celebrated with elaborate rituals for the dead. As in Haiti, great importance is laid on the presence of all living descendants, whose numbers are calculated to influence the ancestors' behavior. And as in Haiti, the first yams and the first rice are offered to the dead, and only after the family ritual does the family divide the crop.[5]

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Service for the Assotor Drum

The *assotor* drum is the largest and most sacred of all Haitian drums. Around it is built an impressive and elaborate service known as the *mangé assotor*, which, according to local traditions and circumstances, may be held as often as every three years or as infrequently as every twenty-one years. The period between mangés always consists of an odd number of years. A houngan from Jérémie declared the service might properly be held every three, five, or seven years. Another cult priest in the Cul-de-Sac Plain said it could be held every seven, seventeen, or twenty-one years. The assotor is known as the *plus grand moune* (the most venerable "man") of the hounfor. However, few cult centers possess an assotor. "Assotor c'est fort bagaille, c'est pas zaffai tout moune" (The assotor is powerful, it isn't everybody's affair), Haitians say. This is what a man from Jérémie tells about it:

534 796 778

"The assotor is the greatest of all things in the hounfor. The Rada drums are only for the Dahomey nation. The Congo drums are for the Congo nation. The assotor is a man of Dahomey, but he is for all nations. It is for all loa—Pétro, Congo, Bumba, Dahomey. The assotor belongs to Dahomey, but when there is a great service the assotor is the host to the loa of every rite, the loa of Haiti and of Africa. When the assotor is played, the loa are awakened everywhere. Loa who have been forgotten by the Creoles (Haitians) will come to the service and mount people, and when the loa have gone, many people don't know what loa has been riding them. Some ancient spirits from far away come only to the assotor service, and when it is over they aren't heard of again.

534 796 778 184 787 [116]

"The assotor drum is not for small things, it is for great occasions. For some people there are no occasions in their whole lives great enough for an assotor service. When all other things have failed, it is only then that the assotor is called upon.

534 796 778 787

"If a big houngan should have an assotor drum, he can have only one, and it is the chief of the hounfor. All other drums are its servants. You can make an assotor, but it is not necessarily an assotor. It may look like an assotor and not be an assotor. To be an assotor it must not only have the shape of an assotor but it must be accepted by the loa. There was a houngan near Jérémie who made an assotor and held a great service with it,

[5] [Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana. Cf. p. 351, category 116. — Analyst] [115]

2: Courlander B-3 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

comes quietly. Pié Cassé comes crawling because of his broken feet. Each loa comes in his own way. 534 796

"First there is dancing for the Congo and Pétro loa. There is dancing for the Kanga and Ibo nation. Last of all is Dahomé, for the assotor belongs to the Dahomé nation, and Dahomé is the host. 778 776 [184]

"The assotor service is the biggest of all services. It last fifteen days. Old people say that once there were services lasting more than twenty days. Every day, animals are killed—bulls, goats, pigs, chickens, turkeys—all according to the loa who are there to be fed. When Moundongue is fed, a dog's ears are clipped in his honor, because Moundongue is fond of dogs. More happens in the assotor mangé than all the rest of the year. Dahomé is host to the other nations, so the Rada service comes last. But the assotor drum is the host even to Dahomé, and it is fed last of all. [782]

"The assotor drum is dressed in the finest of clothing and kerchiefs during the mangé. It is the king of everything.

"When the mangé assotor is ended, when the drum has been fed, there is an immediate Mass held in church for the souls in purgatory. You don't need to have any special reason, but you must hold the Mass for all the dead. You serve coffee, sandwiches, cake, and other refreshments for all the people. 534 796 769.

"When there is no mangé going on, the assotor is kept in a special place in the hounfor. Every seven or nine months the houngan has a special *rappel* beaten for it on the Rada drums, and rum is spilled on the ground for it. It is a great responsibility to own an assotor. But it does great things for the houngan who owns it." 534 778 796

Service for Mait' Grand Bois at Anse-à-Veau

Orthodox tradition in the region of Anse-à-Veau places the loa Mait' Grand Bois as the most potent and venerable of deities. He is the supreme mystère, whose good will or eccentric whim determines the fortunes of all men. Somewhat subsidiary to Grand Bois, but served within the same rites, are two other non-Dahomé loa—Moundongue (of Congo origin) and Ibo. Older people of Anse-à-Veau regard this trilogy, along with Femme Grand Bois (the wife of Mait' Grand Bois), as the core of "Guinée" ritual. There is also a second group of deities, consisting primarily of Ogoun Feraille, Ezilie, and Fréda Dahomé; these loa are of the Dahomey family and are regarded as somewhat less important. Should services for any of them be held, they follow rites for the Grand Bois constellation. People in this region hold that there is only one Ibo loa, one Moundongue, one Ogoun, and one Ezilie, each of them with many names or manifestations. Legba, the Dahomean spirit of procreation, 184 776

[For foot note, see Category 116, P. 351. --Analyst]

[P. 75]

6. Songs of the Peristyle

The songs that are sung in the peristyle are virtually numberless and have a wide range of themes. In general, they are in the spirit of supplication or placation. Preponderantly they relate in some way to the deities. A loa may be described, invoked, or called upon to perform certain deeds. He may be cajoled, joked with, and even criticized. But it is all a family affair. The servitors and the *fidèles* are the loa's "children," his "horses," his "leaves in the woods." The loa, the spirits of the dead, and the living members of the cult are all members of the same "nation." Whether supplication or admonition, the songs of the peristyle and the hounfor all have an intimate character. The affairs of the loa are the affairs of the société. What concerns one individual concerns all. 533 782 794 776 [769]

The themes of the songs have to do with the drama of the cult ritual, the coming and going of the deities, sickness and death, the welfare of the dead, and the behavior of the living. 533 794 796 776

The cult service is a dramatic presentation which synchronizes and brings into sharp focus the heritage of religious and folk beliefs. The songs describe and evaluate what is going on. Sometimes they are cryptic and tangent, but to those participating and those watching they are clues. As the action is usually related and progressive, so are the songs. Each song has its own place and its own meaning. One song is not readily interchangeable with another. Each service has its appropriate music. So does each developing phase of the hounfor ritual.

Some of the songs are addressed to the loa; others seem to be the words of the loa themselves. In many of the songs there is an implicit dialogue between one or more loa and the singers. This dialogue is not rendered in a form which is immediately understandable to a stranger. There is a constantly shifting point of view, so that sometimes the words are third-person comments about the loa or the situation,

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

776 as *hounfor*, *hounsi*, *houngénicon*, *hountor*, etc. *Mystère* is of obvious French origin. *Loa*
192 is probably from the Bantu, but it could be from the Yoruba.

[2]Various methods and formulas are employed in "tying" a loa. Sometimes making the sign of the cross is regarded as adequate, or the saying of a prayer. In "The Vodun Service in Northern Haiti" (*American Anthropologist*, XLII, 242–243), George Eaton Simpson reports that the "tying" of a loa sometimes results in a contest between the individual concerned and his houngan. If the houngan wants the *maît' tête* to come in, he must neutralize the ritual barriers the "horse" has put in the way. "One procedure for bringing on possession in a servant who has tried to 'tie' his chief god is for the priest to stand in front of the person whom he suspects, make the sign of the cross, and strike him on the forehead three times with a sacrificial stone. Usually these blows are hard enough to make blood spurt. The servant then begs the pardon of the angry god, and as soon as possible he unties the knots in his handkerchief [the method he has used for 'tying' his loa]."

000 [3]Herskovits, *Dahomey*.

CHAPTER 4: *Death Rites* (*pp. 30–40*)

775 [1]Maurice Delafosse, *L'Ame nègre*. Translation from *Free France*, special issue No. 4,
171 French Press and Information Service, New York, June, 1945.

113 [2]Leo A. Verwilghen, in booklet describing peoples of the Kwango region, accompanying *Music of the Western Congo*, recordings issued by the Ethnic Folkways Library.

000 [3]Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu*, pp. 88–89.

[171] [4]W. M. Eiselen and I. Schapera, "Religious Beliefs and Practices," in Schapera, *The*
769 *Bantu-speaking Tribes of South Africa*, p. 250.

[775] [5]Translated from the French of Aubin, *En Haiti*, p. 212.

[113] [6]Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, pp. 213–214.

[7]Hall and others, *Haitian Creole*, American Anthropological Association, Memoir No. 54, pp. 188–189.

[8]Simpson, "Four Vodun Ceremonies," *Journal of American Folklore*, April–June, 1946, pp. 155–162.

[9]As translated by Courlander from Simpson's Creole text, *ibid.*, p. 156. The preceding paragraph is from p. 155.

[10]Translated by Courlander from the Creole of Simpson's text.

[11]This and the preceding paragraph are from Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

[764] [12]These shells, as indicated elsewhere, are part of the paraphernalia of the Vodoun priest
766 and appear to be an inheritance from the priests of the Fa cult of Dahomey. The divining
793 shells are usually thrown on the ground in fours, and the readings depend upon combina-
776 tions of "heads and tails." The manner of throwing the shells, as well as the number used,
787 corresponds closely with the Haitian secular gambling game *mayamba* (see Appendix 2),
525 though the purpose is obviously different. In some priestly rites in Haiti, ashes rather than the customary shells are used for divining.

[13]Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

[14]*Ibid.*, p. 161.

[15]Herskovits, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

[764] [16]Herskovits (*ibid.*) notes that persons who die of smallpox, lightning, and certain
766 other phenomena are not buried in coffins. Some of my informants indicated this to be
114 their understanding also, but they said that the dead are buried without coffins for strictly economic reasons as well.

[17]Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

[18]Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. 156.

[19]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 398.

[20]*Ibid.*, pp. 397–398.

[21]Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, p. 214.

[22]Hall and others, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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and set apart on special plates in a separate room for them; in the afternoon the family eats the food. If the twins to whom homage is being offered are still alive, they must wear special clothes at the sacrifice.

"I believe in the careful cult of the dead . . ." Once more it is necessary to renew one's acquaintance with primitive and folk belief to grasp the Haitian attitude. Life is desirable, death is dreaded; both death and the dead are feared. In the actual world, any excursion from the comfortably familiar countryside of one's home leads to confusion and bewilderment. Except in the company of his fellows (on a religious pilgrimage to the waterfalls at Ville-Bonheur, for example), a Haitian almost never leaves his valley or mountainside and market town. Sophisticated people view the unknown with pleasurable excitement, for they have learned by experience that the unfamiliar is not necessarily frightful; it is quite the contrary with simple folk, whose meagre experience with the unfamiliar has been at least somewhat alarming.

Death is the ultimate unknown. The fearsomeness the imagination conceives to lie beyond death seems to exist in almost direct proportion to people's ignorance of the material world. The fear of ghosts is a commonplace among primitive folk, as among the uneducated in the "civilized" world. Where ghosts are considered powerful, one part of any comprehensive cult will certainly deal with the dead.

In Haitian Vodun the teachings of the Catholic Church have exerted more influence upon the cult of the dead than upon any other part of the religion. The preparation of the corpse for burial shows no traces of African practice; the watch (or wake) and wailing over the deceased is familiar; the funeral itself is conducted by a Catholic priest, with burial in consecrated ground. Thereafter, the continual efforts to secure the tranquil repose of the departed bear the earmarks of faithful Catholic practice; it is at this point, however, that the cult begins to assume distinctive features, for it is firmly believed that the dead exert tremendous power in the world of the living. This power comes from God—the Christian God. The case has been put succinctly by Sumner and Keller: "The relation between man and ghost resolves itself . . . into a relation of rights and duties, with all the rights on one side and all the duties on the other."[30] God gives

30. W. G. Sumner and A. G. Keller, *The Science of Society* (New Haven, 1927), II, 829.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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114 776 769 the dead a right to whatever their survivors possess, and moreover gives them the right to return to earth as ghosts.[31]

769 Strict rules of mourning prevail, both as regards clothing and behavior. The slightest lapse in the observation of these rules would 765 cause resentment on the part of the dead; fear of retribution would 775 be quite enough to ensure conformity even if public opinion did not. 782 Ghosts have the power to possess mortals, not as the loa do at a Vodun service or dance, but in the manner understood by American Negroes who say they have been "ha'nted," and so, continually thinking of the dead, live in nervous fear of a streak of bad luck. Such possession is a form of persecution, with continual consequent bad luck until the survivor has carried out all his obligations. It is especially significant, however, that a departed spirit takes vengeance only in matters thought by the Haitian to concern the Church. The ghost is not whimsical in his possession of mortals, and cannot resent treatment which is his due. The kind of treatment given a corpse depends upon the kind of death he died: a person struck by lightning, for example, would have no ceremonies at all, for lightning is an act of God.

787 Where the cult of the dead departs entirely from the teachings of 775 the Church is in the matter of magic, a topic shortly to be treated. It 789 may be briefly stated here that ghosts can be summoned back by special adepts for purposes of divination; that certain corpses are thought to be revivified by evil persons who use these soulless, pathetic automata as slaves (these are the notorious *zombis*); and that black magic—that is, powerful influence for evil—can be worked by sorcerers who know how to command ghosts.

771 All other articles of the Vodun creed not already discussed, except 798 one, come under the heading of magic. That exception is the statement: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." The fact is as simple as the affirmation. If the Catholic priests fight Vodun, preaching frequently against its beliefs and practices, that is unfortunate, think the peasants: Vodun does not retaliate by fighting Catholicism. God and the saints have their province, and the loa theirs. The mind of the Haitian is simple enough to accept both sets of spiritual beings, and not philosophical enough to worry over the contradiction. Practically every Vodun worshiper thinks of himself as a Catholic.[32]

31. See Herskovits, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

32. In this sketch of the Vodun creed, it has been constantly emphasized that each locality has its own variations both in belief and practice. The reader who is interested in pursuing the subject further should consult the works of Price-Mars, Herskovits, Dorsainvil, Parsons, Hurston, et al. See Bibliography.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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portance is being considered, particularly where the buying or selling of some land is involved, all the members of a habitation may be consulted and the opinion of the oldest man in the family, the "family head," is almost invariably followed. At the death of a man his widow inherits all his property for the duration of her lifetime or until she remarries. Her children by her dead husband, if minors, do not receive their inheritance at once, but the elders of the habitation of their father hold this property in trust for them and act as their guardians. The deities of the *vodun* cult are believed to be inherited in family lines, a tradition that gives the larger family one of its most pronouncedly African traits; while the accompanying African belief in the inheritance of the soul within the family, despite its existence in Mirebalais principally as a survival, is yet of importance in adding its sanction to help maintain the inner cohesion of the group.[2]

It may be well at this point to investigate the position, duties, and powers of the oldest male member of the group, who is the head of this informal extended family.[3] His house must be in the ancestral habitation, though he need not live in the same dwelling as his predecessor. Just as he is consulted on projects of a secular nature, his is the important voice in the worship of the ancestors and the family gods. He does not carry on the actual routine of the cult unless he is a priest, but no ceremony would be attempted without his consent and full instructions from him, and the call for the rite would be made in his name.

Examples of the exercise of his power in various circumstances are given. "He may threaten: 'Very well. If you will not listen, I am through. Do what you like.'" In such a case he will refuse "to extend his hand" when a member of his family meets some difficulty, and a man thus punished forfeits the outstanding economic advantage of belonging to his relationship group, the right to call on the members of his family for aid when he is in trouble. For otherwise all relatives

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-M]

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19. *Vodoun altar of the hounfor "Caille Agwé" in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. On the wall behind the altar are names of favored loa. On the altar are jars containing loa and souls of dead persons. Painted on its front wall, against which swords and flags are leaning, is the ship of Loa Agwé.*

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

171 Despite the influence of Mohammedanism in the north,
171 there are certain similarities in religion to be found every-
567 where. Even among the Mohammedans, magic is as potent as it ever was, and as St. Mery correctly observed for his time regarding the Mohammedan slaves, the aboriginal gods have by no means been forgotten. On the west coast and in the Congo, however, pagan religions having a degree of complexity which accords with the complexity of the other aspects of these civilizations are found everywhere. Magic constitutes only one aspect of these systems in which pantheons of deities, each pantheon and each member of each pantheon with its special function, are held to control the destinies of the world and of man. The ancestral cult is another important aspect of West African belief, with the spirits of the dead envisaged as living on in another world, yet alert to manifest power for good or evil among their descendants. Not only in cosmology, but in ceremonialism as well are there patterns that characterize all West Africa. The worship of the gods through the dance, and the phenomenon of possession of devotees by their deities; the place of song in worship, and the special character of this music; the use of drums and other percussion instruments such as the rattle and iron gong in religious rites; these again are elements which all slaves in Haiti, no matter what their tribal affiliations, had in common.

171 Nevertheless, as one studies Haitian folk-custom and folk-
174 belief today, recognizable survivals of traits from the cultures of all the tribes that have been named are not to be found in anything approaching a comparable degree. Little of Sene-
[567] galese practice is to be seen at present, while similarly, at least in the valley of Mirebalais, far less Congo derivatives can be discerned than would be expected when the vast number of Congo slaves imported into Haiti are recalled. Practically no traces of Gold Coast or Ivory Coast custom and belief are discoverable; the word "Ibo" appears from time to time, and several Ibo gods are worshipped; Nago deities, as will be seen,

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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175 merous contemporary accounts, and most present-day works,
105 give both texts and illustrations which make the economy of
563 the plantation clear.[32] Though many stories of the magnifi-
567 cence of plantation life are found in current works, writers
342 of the period seem to agree that but little attention was paid
175 to convenience. Inventories of the contents of houses show
105 that furnishings were at a minimum; a few chairs and small
563 tables in the sitting- and reception-rooms, beds and minor ac-
352 cessories in the way of furniture in the bedrooms, dining-room tables and chairs and a cabinet for dishes. These pieces were usually built in the colony and made of native hard woods; substantial, they were essentially plain. As Baron Wimpffen remarked, "Taste, Sir, is still Creolian at Saint Domingo; and, unfortunately, the Creolian is not the right taste, — it smells too much of the *Boucan*."[33]

175 The table set was not distinguished. Meat, though the most
105 important dish at the principal meals, was poor, but, on the
567 other hand, fish, game, and wild fowl were excellent, and the
563 best of French wines were available.[34] Whatever the fare, how-
262 ever, it was served in the grand manner, often on plate rather
[262] than chinaware, and by the many liveried house-servants which every great establishment could boast. An account of the mode of service has been preserved in the reminiscences of one who, writing some years later of a repast served him in 1787, says: "There were many more of these domestics of both sexes than there were diners. I could but admire their attention to the smallest details of the service, the whiteness of their clothing, and the beautiful kerchiefs in the Créole manner elegantly arranged about the heads of the women. . . . But
[291] all of them moved about on bare feet; this was the distinctive sign of slavery."[35]

175 As portrayed in contemporary works, Haitian white life is
181 seen to have been lived entirely in terms of material goods and
105 of display. Just as there was little intellectual life, so religion
● 77 was but a matter of form. One M. de Larnage, writing from
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1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Petit-Goave on 25 June 1743, complains that it is unbelievable "what indifference the people of these districts have toward spiritual matters." [86] So little attention was paid to the rites of the Church that when the baptism of an infant was to be performed, it often proved difficult to find a godfather who had taken the sacrament, and many children were therefore never baptized. As might be expected, the churches were in a bad state, often having no more than earthen walls and floors, roofed with thatch, and being used as threshing-floors as well as places of worship. The description which Père Labat has given us of a church at Cap Français,[87] and of the manner in which the communicants conducted themselves during such services as were held, shows the decadence of the one religion that had any place among the white inhabitants. The clergy, too, reflected this same decadence. For though the early libertines who posed as priests were later replaced by members of such orders as the Jacobins, the Jesuits, and the Capucins, even this did not end the scandals that, from the first days of the establishment of the Catholic Church on the island, marked its ministrations.

What impression must the Negroes have obtained from their opportunities to observe the life of their masters? What patterns of behavior, what moral codes, what concepts of the way in which the Europeans regulated their own lives and, as officials, regulated the lives of others, must have been stamped on the minds of these Africans? That the present emphasis on the importance of wealth, or that a love of and demand for display, should characterize Haitian life of the cities today is not strange. Nor is it difficult to comprehend how certain other aspects of Haitian life that have so been underscored in the last half-century by those who have written of the Haitians should have developed from this initial stimulus — not to the extent to which this emphasis would lead one to believe, to be sure, but enough to give a basis for the exaggerations which have been published.[88]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

attitudes of these writers were in the main far from sympathetic toward Haiti, and their interests extended but little to the customs of the great masses of Haitians. That the fear of slavery was still alive in the early part of the nineteenth century is apparent from an incident related by Mackenzie; [44] that, some decades later, the sense of racial differences continued to exist is evident from folk-sayings about the characteristics of whites, mulattoes, and Negroes recorded by St. John.[45] The concept of rank seems to have maintained itself in its full flavor, with no lack of social classes in Haitian urban society and no lack of vigor in perpetuating the earlier prejudices of caste.

The majority of the population remained on the land, for by 1830 the great estates had been completely broken up, and were cultivated in the main by small concessionaires. The dress of these country inhabitants seems to have remained much as it had been under French control, and the emphasis on good manners that so marks African social intercourse had been retained to such an extent that St. John, no admirer of the Haitian people, was forced to remark upon it.[46] Markets which were conducted in African fashion had been established, and these were supplemented by itinerant peddlers. The institution of *plaçage*, a reconciliation of African plural marriage with the monogamy of European custom, of which more will be said in a later chapter, was known in the early days of independence. The rites of birth and death were marked with their special ceremonies, and in both instances it can be seen that the African elements of the cultural heritage were not being forgotten. Dancing continued as the principal form of recreation, and to the traditional dances, which still persist, were added European styles.[47]

Above all, African religious customs were being observed. *Vodun* rites continued to flourish and magic was practiced as in the days preceding independence, as is to be seen from the notorious and all too often repeated tale of the "Congo bean

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

175 178 771 [789] 175 178 779 795

stew," which has continued current from the time of its publication by St. John until today.[48] Yet African religious practices were being constantly combated by the Catholic Church, for even in the period of revolt the priests had remained largely unharmed, and when Christophe was elevated to the throne, he appointed two archbishops. After the establishment of the Republic, Catholicism continued as the State religion, so that by the early nineteenth century, as Mackenzie mentions, thirty-eight clergy were active in Haiti, all under the control of the Bishop of Santo Domingo, and all presumably nominated and paid by the President of Haiti.[49] Though for a period there was an attempt to develop a national Church, the missionary work done during the colonial days left too strong a tradition of Catholicism to be overcome, and consequently a Concordat was signed with Rome in 1860, which has remained in effect ever since.[50]

178 Though the story of the cultural history of Haiti between 1804 and the present cannot thus be more than sketched, yet the background is known, and enough can be gathered from accounts of Haitian life during this interval to enable us to see that the varied cultural impulses were shaping the lives of the people throughout these years. With some understanding of the roots of the resulting culture in French and African [121] traditions, then, let us once more turn to the valley of Mirebalais and consider the life of the Haitian peasant as it is lived today.

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planted at other times will spoil. Similarly, millet and maize must not be harvested during these periods, or small insects will eat the grain. "No crop whose root is used for food may be planted during the forbidden phases of the moon," say the educated cultivators also, citing experiences of their own or of their neighbors who, being skeptical, planted their potatoes or other tubers during the wrong phase of the moon, only to have them completely spoil. In some instances not only the phases of the moon, but entire months are held unpropitious for planting. Thus July is regarded as a "weak" month for planting potatoes and plantains, while April, May, June, and August are preferred ones.

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As in all Negro cultures, the Haitians dare not ignore the supernatural powers that rule the universe, where the question of getting a living is concerned. In the valley of Mirebalais, if the land where a field is to be made has a stream, a cock must be sacrificed to the spirit that resides in it, together with oil, peas, and some non-intoxicating drink. In making the offering, protection is asked against those who might steal from the field or injure it:

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> "*Maître Source, moin mandé pou' ou gadé jardin moin vini fait ici. Cé pas pou' ou laissé méchant, malfaiteur contrarié tout ça moin mété nan terr'a. Si moin bien récolté, moin va bà ou un pile mangé.* — Master of the Stream, I pray you to protect the garden I have just made here. Do not permit any evil designing person to harm all that I have put into the ground. If I harvest well, I will give you much food."

An invocation such as the following might also be pronounced on this occasion:

> "*Jesu Christ, les Saints, Marassa, les Morts: M'ap' travaillé; m'ap' planté graines-là. Pou' fai'l donné pou' moin, pou' m' join, pou' m' bai' Mystères, les Saintes, les Marassa, les Morts.* — Jesus Christ, Saints, Twins, the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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CHAPTER VIII

WHAT IS "VOODOO"?

MORE than any other single term, the word "voodoo" is called to mind whenever mention is made of Haiti. Conceived as a grim system of African practices, it has come to be identified with fantastic and cruel rites and to serve as a symbol of daring excursions into the esoteric. Not only has emphasis been placed on its frenzied rites and the cannibalism supposed on occasion to accompany them, but its dark mysteries of magic and "zombis" have been so stressed that it has become customary to think of the Haitians as living in a universe of psychological terror. 771

What, then, is "voodoo"? "Voodoo," or *vodun*, as it will be termed here, following native pronunciation, is a complex of African belief and ritual governing in large measure the religious life of the Haitian peasantry.[1] It also has an even more restricted meaning in Mirebalais, where the word often simply denotes a form of sacred dance accompanied by spirit-possession or merely a dance which on occasion may take its place along with the *calenda*, the *martinique*, the *zesse*, and other social dances at public celebrations, where an occurrence of possession would be rare and in questionable taste. This latter meaning was recognized by St. Mery: 184 771 635 787

"The Calenda and the Chica are not the only dances in the colony which have come from Africa. There is an- 171 771 535

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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171 other one which has been known there for many years,
771 principally in the west, which bears the name of *Vau-*
535 *doux*. . . . But it is not only as a dance that the *Vaudoux* merits consideration, for it occurs under circumstances which assign to it a place among the institutions where superstition and bizarre practices play a considerable part." [3]

171 In Dahomey, whence the term has come, *vodun*, as has al-
771 ready been stated, signifies "god" and is a general name for
776 all deities. This source of the word has likewise long been
[192] known, as a reading of St. Mery shows:

> "According to the Arada Negroes, the real followers of *Vaudoux* in the colony . . . *Vaudoux* signifies an all-powerful and supernatural being on which depend all the events that come to pass on this globe." [3]

171 Similarly, de Vassière [4] quotes with approval a parallel defini-
771 tion from Peytraud, while modern Haitian writers also em-
776 phasize its Dahomean origin.[5] This meaning of the word had,
192 however, undergone a change in its new home even during
138 pre-Revolutionary times, for, according to St. Mery, the "all-
825 powerful and supernatural being" had come to be a non-venomous serpent that stood as a symbol "for all those who
184 professed this same doctrine." Today in Mirebalais even this
771 identification is a thing of the past, though the prominence
776 given serpent-worship in Haiti by most writers [6] would make
825 it reasonable to suppose that elsewhere in the island serpents are maintained by priests of the *vodun* cult and play an important role in the rites at which the gods are worshipped. Indeed, one priest from Arcahaie encountered in Mirebalais mentioned the fact that in his own temple he kept such a snake. Yet in our valley no worship of serpents as such was encountered, and there were even those who declared that they had no hesitation in killing any snake, though these brave assertions could not be tested. Serpent-worship in Mirebalais

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may perhaps be said to have come to this: Adherents of the African cults refrain from killing the snake, and should they do so by accident, the African custom of giving ceremonial burial to any creature having supernatural importance is followed as an atonement. Where this is omitted, difficulties of so serious a nature are felt to threaten that to prevent them a priest of the cult is called upon to offer up a sacrifice and to beg forgiveness even after the little ceremony of burial has been performed.[7]

Inasmuch as *vodun* flourishes in Mirebalais despite the minor role of serpent-worship, it is evident that in seeking to understand its nature and its philosophy other aspects must be considered. Two historical facts must be kept constantly in mind in making this analysis, for without them, what follows would be meaningless. The first is that *vodun* derives from a background of African theology and ceremonialism. The second is that the Negroes have continuously been subjected to the influence of Catholicism during the centuries that have passed since their introduction into the island.

Yet another point may prove suggestive in providing a useful point of view for an analysis of the *vodun* cult. This bears upon a difficulty impossible and happily unnecessary to resolve in the field study of religion, which arises out of the degree of variation in answers to questions dealing with the same point. These answers differ not only according to the status of the individual in the cult, since layman and priest have understandably different concepts of the functions of deities based on unequal degrees of expert knowledge, but the extent to which an individual has religious interests or is indifferent to them influences the nature of his responses. A fundamental fallacy results from the fact that except where there is an officially sanctioned theology — which makes for dogma, and often for perfunctory worship, in contrast with the living dynamic nature of Haitian peasant belief and ritual — there are no "real" answers to questions in the field of religion. The

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184 student pursuing the "correct" statement will find that no
771 matter how painstaking his method and how extensive his precautions, the versions of different persons can never be entirely reconciled, unless a false appearance of truth is given to his findings.[8]

178 If the underlying philosophy of the universe held by the
771 Haitian is summarized, as it can be abstracted from his expres-
776 sions of belief and from his observed behavior, this philosophy might be phrased somewhat as follows: The ruler of the universe is God, its Creator, who shares this task with His son Jesus, the saints of the Church, and the Holy Ghost. Man has been endowed with a soul, and the soul, which has come from God, returns to God for judgment and, if necessary, for punishment at the end of its sojourn on earth. From Africa — *Guinée* — the Negroes brought other deities, termed variously *loa*, *mystères*, or *saints*,[9] and these deities have been inherited through succeeding generations by the descendants of those who brought them to Haiti. The specific function of the African spirits in the Haitian system was given in the following terms by one of their devotees: "The *loa* are occupied with men, their task is to cure. They can make a person work better than he otherwise would. When the *loa* possess people, they give helpful advice. But they cannot do the things that God does. They can protect a garden, but they cannot make a garden grow, for streams, rain, and thunder come from God." Another statement clearly shows the same concept: "God made the *loa*, but did not make them so they might do evil.
[424 When a man purchases a *loa* for money, that spirit will do
425] evil as well as good, but God becomes angry and will not accept these bad spirits into the sky, and He drives them away."

776 In the ordering of his daily life, however, the forces which are foremost in the consciousness of the Haitian make up the triad expressed in the phrase "*les mystères, les morts, et les marans* — the *loa*, the dead, and the twins." Because of their special character, an examination of the twin cult and the cult

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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are differentiated according to the types of healing in which they have had the greatest success, and the "miracles" to their credit, such as a *hungan* who had achieved a wide reputation for being able to resuscitate dead children. One *hungan* of the valley is spoken of as having powers which rank him with the greatest in the land, but now that he is old, a nephew of his is being called upon to act in his place. In a relatively short time, say his friendly clients, he will take his place even among great *hungans* elsewhere.

Under the *hungan* and *mambu* are assistants called *hunsi*, or sometimes, in the case of men, termed *adjanikon*. In some parts of Haiti, particularly in the plain of the Cul-de-Sac and the southern peninsula, there are degrees of initiation for the *hunsi*, which include the ordeal by fire that makes them *hunsi kanzo*.[20] In Mirebalais, however, the *kanzo* rite, though known by name, is neither required nor performed. The *hunsi* and *adjanikon* know the rituals in a general way, hold and wave the banners used to salute the gods, sing the songs for the *loa*, aid in bringing the possessed dancers out of their possessions, and perform such other ritual tasks as helping the officiating *hungan*. Some members of the cult group have special ability to sing large numbers of the ritual songs for any *loa* which may be called, while others perform the animal sacrifices. It is among these male assistants that the most expert drummers are found.

This, then, constitutes an outline of that system of belief included under the term *vodun*. Once more, in summary, it may be emphasized that *vodun* is neither the practice of black magic, nor the unorganized pathological hysteria it is so often represented to be. The gods are known to their worshippers, and the duties owed them are equally well understood. The reward for the performance of these duties is good health, good harvests, and the goodwill of fellow-men; the punishment for neglect is corresponding ill fortune. On this basis of belief is erected the ceremonial of worship.

1: Herskovits E-4, 6 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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CHAPTER XI

THE CULT OF TWINS AND OF THE DEAD

SHARING powers and prerogatives with the *loa* in the supernatural world are the souls of the dead, the spirits of twins, and, in a specialized sense, magic, all working parts of a universe the ultimate force in which is God, who is sometimes spoken of as its Gran' Maît'. Their relative importance, however, is not easy to determine; and much less the manner in which the supernatural personalities in these divisions are linked with one another. Therefore, when such problems are presented to a group of Haitians, as whether or not the dead become *loa*, or the spirits of twins are related to those of the dead, or whether twins are the equivalent of the *loa*, or what the role of all these in magic may be, different opinions will always be heard.

One of these matters was explained by an elderly *hunsi* as follows: "*Marassa gagné morts longtemps, li deviennent loa* — Twins who have been dead a long time become *loa*," and "*Gagné gran' moun morts longtemps, deviennent loa* — There are those long dead who become *loa*," and she added: "But how this happens, I do not know." Despite a flat contradiction of this opinion by a man who was present, and a heated discussion between them, she persisted in maintaining the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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CHAPTER XII

MAGIC, GOOD AND BAD

In opening any discussion of Haitian magic, the fact must be stressed that magic, though but one of the forces active in the universe, is a system in itself. As such, it is a thing apart from the *vodun* cult, a point which must also be emphasized, for although most writers draw a perfunctory distinction between magic and *vodun*, this distinction, once stated, is too often promptly lost sight of.[1] At the same time, the differences between the worship of the *loa* and the practice of magic must not be so juxtaposed as to name the second as the antibody of the first. For, though some of the *loa* can work harm, and some of them, indeed, are primary forces behind the working of evil rather than beneficial magic, the good and bad they do is general in nature. Magic, on the other hand, whether good or bad, always operates in very specific instances: to cause a given woman to love a given man, or to make a certain field of a certain enemy yield poorly.

Yet these distinctions, when drawn, are found in practice to be neither as sharp nor as consistent as the foregoing statements might imply, especially since the system of magic is empowered and validated by many of the *loa*, as well as being closely affiliated with the cult of the dead. The phenomenon dealt with here, and its not illogical contradictions, arise, however, from the fact that the realistic African world view has by

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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no means given way to that separation of the categories of good and evil that governs much of European thinking. A *loa* that helps a man when friendly toward him may, if slighted or vexed, set about to do him harm, or, at best, merely remain passive when danger is to be averted. For the *loa,* like human beings, are creatures of mood and may take umbrage at some act which had created no displeasure before. Similarly, not all uses of magic are necessarily reprehensible, something at once evident when it is pointed out that much of Haitian folk-medicine derives its psychic force from its magical basis. In short, Haitian belief, of which magic forms a part, does not allow a world view drawn only in blacks and whites. All tones of gray are found, and these merge one into another almost imperceptibly, as the fortunes of a man wax and wane during his lifetime.

That the Haitian envisages his universe in terms other than those of warring and changeless powers of good and evil should not be taken for a moment to mean that he fails to draw a clear distinction between the benevolent and malevolent forces behind the magic employed in specific instances. This realization is reflected in the terminology he gives the charms that are the outer symbols of these supernatural powers, the *garde, arrêt,* and *drogue* protecting him against harm, the *wanga* being the carrier of dark magic, and the antisocial agent. The actuating forces behind these charms come from all important members of all groups of *loa,* to say nothing of God and the saints of the Church; but the charm itself is a thing which results from the control of these by man himself: "*Wanga, moun qui fait ça* — It is men who make *wangas.*"

One other point may here be clarified, since it has made for confusion: namely, the fact that when the Haitian employs the term *magie* he does not mean what the European signifies when using the word "magic." To the student, the vast body of Haitian magico-medical practices, prescribed and administered by both those who know how to manipulate the super-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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about to eat such food, for he feels a shudder pass through his body, and his arm becomes heavy, as was the case with a woman who three times dropped a piece of "beef" she was about to place in her mouth, before she realized the warning. 775 [776]

It can readily be seen how varied are the manifestations of evil magic. What are the forces behind them? What gives them power? What makes their unsavory ends possible of attainment? Their power comes from God, for, according to belief, everything comes from God, in the sense that God made the world as it exists. Therefore all beings are free to do anything they can contrive to do, though once dead they are called to account for their deeds. "Good and evil are two brothers; life and death are two brothers. All four come from God. They do not come from the *loa*." 754 771 776

But more immediately this power comes in great measure from the dead. Before a *bocor* makes a *wanga*, he asks permission of God, the Devil, Maît' Carrefour, Maît' Cimitière, Maît' Gran Bra, and Maît' d'l'Eau. Baron Samedi, perhaps the most important figure among those who aid in working black magic, lives in the cemetery. Though he is a *loa* and may possess those who appeal to him to work evil, this role is subordinate to his role as the power behind magic that kills. He controls the souls of those whose end has come as a result of magic, and when he is called at midnight, the sound of the clanking of chains is heard as he comes. He is envisaged as a dwarf. After his approval has been purchased for a projected deed, appeal is then made to Gede, for especially where it is a question of killing, though everything may have been made ready with Baron, Gede must "dig the grave." Herein lies the importance of Gede, for he is the court of last resort, the final power in matters of death. 754 776 [791]

Gede, however, is just, and even though Baron has marked a victim, Gede can refuse to concur in his decision. "If you do not merit death, Gede will refuse it," say the Haitians. It therefore sometimes comes about that though all preparations have

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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CHAPTER XIV

CATHOLICISM AND VODUN

In considering the origins of Haitian religious belief and ritual, those African elements which have been retained in their aboriginal purity may be first presented. The importance of the Dahomean and Nigerian elements in the *vodun* cult are self-evident when the deities derived from the peoples of these areas are detailed. It has been stated that the name of one of the important "companies" of gods, Rada, is a contraction of the word *Arada*, which is the name of the Dahomean town Allada. This group includes Damballa Wedo, Aida Wedo, Aizan, Legba, Agwe Woyo, Agweto, Sobo, and Sobo-Bade, which come directly from Dahomey, where they are members of the heavenly pantheons; and Agasu, Siligbo, and Loko, who are sacred ancestors of Dahomean relationship groups. The term *Dahomey* itself also figures in the name of such *loa* as Erzilie Freda Dahomey, where Freda with all consistency represents a corruption of the name of Whydah, a Dahomean seaport. The Nago, or Yoruban peoples of Nigeria, have a religious system which parallels that of Dahomey, so that many Rada gods, such as 'Batala, the Yoruban "great god," or Ogun, the Yoruban deity of war, or Shango, the god of thunder, are of Nago origin; Badagri, on the other hand, is the name of a Nigerian town. A prominent *loa* derived from this general area not found to be exclusive to the Rada group is Gedeonsu, or Gede, a Dahomean totem. Of the Pétro group, Wangol (Roi

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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171 178 782 tion is a further comment both upon the human traits ascribed to them, and upon the realism with which they take cognizance — as only African gods can — of the financial position of their devotees!

171 178 776 778 It is not only in the immediacy of the Haitian gods to their worshippers and in their human qualities, however, that these beings have retained African traits, for in the full reciprocity that must prevail in the relationship between deities and their followers is to be seen a point of view that is entirely non-European. Between man and the gods the rule of *quid pro quo* must always be in operation; and this rule may only be regarded as but another contribution of Africa toward Haitian religious ideology. While this reciprocal giving flavors all aspects of worship whether it be of the *loa*, the dead, or the twins, it takes a yet more prominent, and more familiar place in the field of magic, since here the *engagement* owes much to European belief, though the element of reciprocity is much more emphasized than was ever the case in medieval European diabolism.

178 776 794 The psychological values of the *vodun* cult, especially the general tone found in the feeling toward the terms *Guinée* or *Rada*, perhaps most convincingly show the attitudes that aided in the retention of things recognizably African. For while the [184] Pétro gods are by no means viewed as altogether bad, or are always held unwelcome, the fact that in Mirebalais, as in Haiti generally, the Rada gods are those least feared, most desired, and in connection with whose cult wrongdoing is most rarely present, is of the greatest significance, especially when the related fact is recalled that the Pétro gods are the more powerful in the matter of evil magic, while the Rada deities are said to exert their power to protect their devotees from the dark forces that may be set in motion against them.

178 776 776 In attitudes toward the gods, then, in the names of the gods themselves, in the manner in which they function in the lives of Haitians, and in the importance of the ceremonial con-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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nected with them, much of African tradition which has carried over into Haitian religious life has been retained in pure form. Yet the intrusion of Catholic custom into these African patterns — often noted, though generally in passing — also must be studied if the significance of the forms of Haitian folk-religion is to be grasped. That this aspect of *vodun* has received the scant attention it has had is probably to be ascribed to two causes.[2] The first takes the Catholic element for granted, so that even where a particularly dramatic element of Catholic practice is seen in an African setting, such as a crucifix or the portraits of the saints on a *vodun* altar, specific mention is made of this without attempting to dissect its historic or psychological role. The second reason for the comparative disregard of Catholic influence is that for Europeans it is a commonplace. Spirit possession and sacrifices, African song and drum rhythms are more "exciting" than prayers or hymns of the Church. Underlying both these causes is the deep-rooted and unquestioned assumption that, in contact with any non-European culture, the patterns that govern European behavior must prevail. Consequently, is it not in the nature of things that Catholicism should have taken root in the *vodun* cult? Is not rather the matter to be stressed that African traditions should have been retained at all? That the process should actually have been one of amalgamation rather than of dominance is rarely taken into account. Yet to go deeper into the significance of this process in Haitian life is to open far-reaching vistas.

An outstanding sanction taken by the *vodun* cult from Catholicism is that of the baptismal rites. Though ceremonies of consecration are a commonplace in Africa, and the African ritual of washing the head — *lavé tête*, as it is termed — has not been forgotten, in Mirebalais the importance of baptism as a means whereby human beings obtain their place in this world and in the next has been carried over and applied to all matters of ceremonial significance. Thus just as in the lives of

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the saints of the Church the sacrament of baptism was a crucial rite, so the *loa* must be baptized before they become forces which act in a recognized and predictable manner. Just as the objects used in the rituals of the Church must be sanctified by being blessed and sprinkled with holy water, so in the *vodun* cult a *humfort*, the drums, the iron, and the rattle must all undergo a similar sanctification, not only that they may possess proper supernatural power, but more importantly that they may perform their functions in the very serious and African matter of calling the *loa* and placating the supernatural beings of the *vodun* cult.

Herein lies the importance of the *prêt' savanne*. Since the official representatives of the Church not only have nothing to do with the *vodun* cult, but excoriate it on all occasions, the *prêt' savanne*, as a man who can read the prayers of the Church, plays an indispensable role and to that extent is to be regarded as a functioning member of the *vodun* cult, despite the fact that he has no control over the *loa* and, as far as was observed, does not participate actively in their worship. At the same time, it must not be inferred that in borrowing "baptism" from the Church this rite has been elevated to the most important place in the ritual of the *vodun* cult, for though the *prêt' savanne* must read prayers "from the book" and sprinkle his holy water, the actual "baptizing" is carried out by the *hungan*. In sanctifying a *humfort*, the end in view is to induce the *loa* to come after the baptism and to insure that no unaccountable or untoward deeds may come to pass within it. Similarly, though drums must be baptized with Church prayers and holy water that they may perform their allotted tasks, without the concomitant ritual of the *hungan* they would be no more empowered to call the gods than they were before the prayers of the Church were read over them. An analogous comparison can be made between the role of the *prêt' savanne* and that of the *hungan* in the *service*. Since the world

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overturn his memory, overturn his thought, overturn his house, overturn for me my enemies visible and invisible; cause the thunder and the tempest to break them into pieces. And in honor of St. Bouleversé, three Paters and three Ave Marias. . . .[8]

Thus it is seen how Catholicism invades the beliefs and rites of the *vodun* cult. In an analogous fashion *vodun* has not failed to make itself felt in certain festivals of the Church,[9] for while elements of *vodun*, rigidly suppressed inside the Catholic churches, are absent except in so far as they can be carried on surreptitiously, they are nevertheless integral parts of these fêtes in the minds of the folk who make pilgrimages to them. So arresting is the resulting mingling of practices, and so significant for the amalgamation of cultures that has taken place in Haiti, that a detailed discussion will be given of the most prominent instance of this type, the festival in honor of the Virgin of the Palms, which takes place each year on July fifteenth at Ville-Bonheur, or, as it is better known, at Saut d'Eau. The festival of 1926 has been described by Price-Mars;[10] here certain observations made during the fête of 1934 may be given, especially as they have to do with those aspects of the mythology which validate the festival, and as they illustrate the non-Catholic, voduistic phases of the celebration, of importance for the points being considered in this chapter.

Beside the church, Ville-Bonheur has three especially sacred spots, St. John, En bas Palmes, and Saut d'Eau — the falls themselves. At St. John is a large *campêche* tree surrounded by many palms, from beneath which flow streams of water. St. John is said to have appeared here, carrying his scepter as in the chromolithographs, and at that time water began to flow in the sacred springs, and except for one short period has continued ever since as holy water, being used for drinking and bathing, but never for purposes of cooking. The priests

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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000 796 782 776 797 devotees prophesied and healed the sick. Even at the church, however, where all go to offer the prayers that are the central observance of the fête, the many candles placed on the rocks at the entrance are usually for St. Anthony; that same St. Anthony who, it will be recalled, is the *loa* named Legba, the guardian of all entrances.

791 797 It is obvious, from the examples given, that the world view held by the Haitian and the motivations which underlie Haitian life cannot be understood unless both the Catholic and the *vodun* contributions to them are held in mind. But certain further questions bearing upon the effect of these two influences present themselves. What proportion of Haitians hold membership in the Church, and how many are affiliated with the *vodun* sect? What attitudes are manifested toward the Church and its priests as contrasted with their attitude toward the *loa* and their ministrants? How does the Church meet the challenge of *vodun*? And how does the Haitian peasant, in his inner life, reconcile these two conflicting forces?

The impression gained from reading available works on Haiti is that voduists and Catholics constitute two distinct [184] groups. While this may obtain in some parts of the Republic, it is not true either in Mirebalais or in those other portions of Haiti which came under direct though brief observation in the course of this study. All discussions with natives that began with the assumption of the existence of two such separate groups led to confusion, and statements which had seemed evasions were not clarified until the incorrectness of such an assumption became apparent. Thus when it was stated that in all Haiti the Pater Noster was one of the first things taught every child, the question: " Is this not true for Catholic families only? " was met with a vigorous denial that was slowly justified as the realization grew that, if not true for all Haitians, such an assertion was certainly valid for the vast majority of them in Mirebalais and probably elsewhere.[18] The identity of membership in the two groups became apparent from ob-

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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servation when, for example, the baptismal rites which received into the Church the children of known active participants in *vodun* ceremonies were witnessed. It became even more convincing when experience taught that the best place to encounter an elusive *hungan* or *mambu* was at early Sunday-morning mass. Only when it was realized that no dichotomy exists in Mirebalais between Catholicism and *vodun*, but that both are necessary if all the supernatural beings that control man and man's destiny are properly to be worshipped, was a true perspective obtained.[13]

There are certain Protestant sects which have been increasingly successful in making converts among the Haitian people, particularly in the north, whose adherents stand in strong hostility to *vodun*. A type of Protestantism that has had the best reception is one comparable to the "shouting" sects of the United States and the British West Indies, where the appeal through patterns of possession, dancing, and other aspects of ritual close to the familiar African forms of behavior is evident and relatively little psychological shift is needed to make membership in such a church acceptable.[14] The Protestant church in Mirebalais, however, is more sober. It commands only a very small proportion of the townspeople, and draws even fewer from the surrounding countryside, while the Catholic voduists look upon it with a scorn that is exemplified in the answer to a question about the ritual of Protestant funerals: "*Moun chita, chanté zhymnes*—People sit, and sing hymns!" Two or three well-substantiated cases of conversion to Protestantism came about because, despite the sacrifices made to the inherited *loa* and the prayers to the saints, these individuals continued to experience ill fortune, until in desperation the Protestant minister had been called to banish the family *loa*, to cut down the sacred trees on the family habitation, and to destroy the house of worship, with the objects in it. These deeds of "desecration" were, however, followed by no renewed disasters, and while from the point of view of

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the voduists this is not regarded as decisive proof of the power of Protestantism, for those immediately concerned it is held sufficient.[13]

What, then, of the attitudes held by voduists toward the Catholic Church? The correlation of Catholic ritual with *vodun* practice made by Haitians is of utmost significance in this connection. In discussing the Church service, it was pointed out that church bells announce mass or any other rite, and this, it was explained, is for Legba — "*Toute cloche c'est pou' Legba, même l'église, oui* — All sounding of bells is for Legba, even in church," for he must be notified so that he can "open the gate" for God, Jesus Christ, and the saints. "*Nou' même nou' connai' ça. C'est Bon Dieu crée tout* — You yourself know that. It is God who created everything." It was also recounted how when the priest preaches, he is possessed by the *mystères* of the sacred Trinity, for does he not gesticulate and become excited like any other possessed person?

Furthermore, it is believed that Gede, Ogun, and Damballa "are always at the church," often insisting that their worshippers take communion. Indeed, occasionally the *loa* of a woman may demand a Church marriage from a man to whom she is a *placée*. The sacraments of baptism, first communion, marriage, confession, and extreme unction are received by members of the *vodun* cult, though, as will be seen, when voduists confess, they say nothing of their *loa*. The *hungans* themselves "are most often at the sacred table to take communion," and one particular *hungan* not only attended mass, but was seen continually employing his rosary in the *vodun* ceremonies at which he officiated. While Haitians from the southern peninsula stated that the *hungans* there do not go to church, it was pointed out at the same time that all other voduists attend regularly.

The principal resentment held by Mirebalais voduists against the Church is for the cost of Church rites, and for the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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797 Today the Church takes full advantage
798 of its status as the only recognized religious organization in Haiti to dictate the official position of government toward *vodun*. Permission for *vodun* dances and for *services* must be obtained from the officer commanding the local detachment of the Garde d'Haiti, and this is not always granted. Penalties
[688] for illicit dances and ceremonies are severe, and because gossip is ubiquitous and no man lacks enemies, apprehension is prompt. Thus in the instance of one *service*, a misunderstanding regarding the permit was sufficient to cause the detention for some hours of the one responsible for the rite.

•171 Is it possible, then, for a person to be a communicant of the
178 Church and partake of the sacrament without feeling this
179 weight of spiritual and official disapprobation? More particularly, is it possible for him to omit from his confession all allusion to his worship of "false" gods? It is here that one encounters a singularly tenacious survival of African traditional belief. In Africa the conquest of one people by another meant the mutual interchange and acceptance of the respective deities. The conquerors added to their own pantheons the gods of those whom they had overcome so that these forces might not wreak a supernatural vengeance upon them; while to the conquered the power of the gods of those who had defeated them was self-evident. If the worship of the Christian God and of the saints of the Church intruded on the aboriginal religious patterns of the Negroes brought to Haiti, the acceptance of such worship did not imply rejection of the old gods. Nor does membership in the Church today mean such complete acquiescence in its doctrines and pronouncements that the worshipper of the *loa* will offer himself for the malediction of the priest by confessing his adherence to their cult. The situation somewhat parallels that in Africa itself, where the first effort of Protestant missionaries is directed toward inducing their converts to abjure polygyny. This dictum is complied with readily enough on the surface, so that a man will have but one wife — in one village! In Haiti the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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problem of confession is met in the manner explained by a woman who is a devotee of the *loa:* "The *loa* are not the things of the priest. Why should I tell him about them? If I come and take this book of yours, it isn't mine, and I am a thief. If the priest tells me I must not worship my *loa*, they are not his *loa*, and he cannot take them from me. Does anyone expect me to come and tell him that my father, my mother, my sisters and brothers, and all my family serve the *loa*?"

For the Haitian, therefore, the forces of the universe are under dual control. And though, as has been stated when the cosmology of the system of *vodun* worship was discussed, he may reconcile this duality, yet in practice he must observe the rites of his *loa* separately; he must pray to God and the saints apart. His reconciliations he keeps to himself, and in his everyday life both the African beliefs and those of the Church have their place. No better illustration of this could be had than in the incident of the white cock named for the serpent-god Damballa, that had been spared until the final day of this field-work when, as the last of a large brood, his time had come to be killed for the table of his owner. On this afternoon, when he was "to meet his destiny," the cook took him up quietly. A number of feathers were plucked from him, and then, as the sharp knife, describing a cross, ended his life, the whispered phrase could just be heard: "*Damballa, je crois en Dieu* — Damballa, I believe in God."

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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CHAPTER XV

SOME WIDER IMPLICATIONS

158 No student of Haitian institutions can elude a progressively
182 sharpened awareness of the psychological conflict that is being waged within the frame of Haitian society. And though examples of the divergent forces which lie at the root of this conflict have been set forth in the preceding chapters, some of the more important of these may be recalled here.

178 In his social relationships the Haitian is constantly exposed
182 to the demands of a code of morality which requires marriage
595 to be monogamic. Yet the African tradition of polygyny, and
158 the undoubtedly satisfactory arrangements of both an economic and a social nature that can be made under the terms
178 of plural marriage, pull him toward this form. The case is even
182 stronger in the field of religion, which in Haiti is not a thing
771 remote from life, but an intimate part of existence. On the one
158 hand, because of his inheritance of the *loa*, he must meet his obligations toward these ancestral gods of Africa who punish harshly those who fail them, so that he must either continue their traditional worship or learn to know the consequences of their anger. Yet on the other hand, the priest thunders his
[197] maledictions and threats of eternal damnation — in Mirebalais, at least, often in Créole, a language which the peasant can understand — against those of his flock, the vast majority

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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of whom are sincere practicing voduists as they are sincere practicing Catholics, who do not put an end to the worship of false gods.

The absence of graphic and plastic arts in Haitian culture, commented upon in a preceding chapter, must also be regarded as a case in point in laying bare the anatomy of this inner conflict of tradition, since it is important to recognize that the suppression of these forms of the prevalent African tradition would seem to have lost to the Haitian an important outlet for the resolution of inner tensions caused by pent-up drives. Even more revealing is the substitution of games of chance for those games of skill which in most African and New World Negro societies are played for their own sake alone—that is, for the prestige accruing to the skillful player. The strain that accompanies this play for stakes, often of no inconsiderable value in terms of the resources of the players, is patent to the most casual observer. The question here arises whether or not the craving for excitement of this kind may not in Haiti be traceable to the inhibition, under slavery, of some of the more gracious forms of African life which there make for social equilibrium. Might it not represent a kind of compensation for the thwarted psychic ease with which a culturally undisturbed people approach their own existence—a state of being which, in contrast, is quite lacking in Haiti?

A singularly illuminating comment upon these manifestations of instability in Haitian life has been made by Dr. J. C. Dorsainvil, who in drawing his conclusion called both upon his own medical training and on his experience of many years as a profound student of his own people. "It has perhaps been insufficiently remarked to what an astonishing degree the Haitian people live on their nerves."[1] As might be expected, he advances a number of possible explanations of the causes that underlie this state of "living on nerves." The wear and tear of life in the tropics is given as one reason; another is the excitement of the *vodun* dances with their frenzy of possession;

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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[2] Mackenzie, ii, 124.
[3] St. John, 162.
[4] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 201–2.
[5] Price-Mars (I), 205, gives this as the proper age for a man of the region of Kenskoff, near Port-au-Prince, to marry.
[6] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 216.
[7] Ibid., 211–12. A facsimile of this letter is given on pp. 213–15.
[8] Ibid., 216–17.
[9] Mackenzie, i, 38.
[10] St. John, 145–6.
[11] St. John, 145.
[12] Mackenzie, i, 57. Wirkus, 222, mentions a case of polygyny on the Isle à Gonave where the wives apparently inhabited one compound with their mutual husband. [184] [582] [595]

CHAPTER VII

[1] This seems to differ in various parts of Haiti; thus, near Port-au-Prince, the father of the girl "designates to his future son-in-law the land where his house is to be built," according to Price-Mars (I), 216.
[2] Cf. Parsons (I), 163. [591]
[3] Among the obligations of the peasant mentioned by Price-Mars (I), 34, is "the respect due to the elders who are the repositories of tradition." [596]

CHAPTER VIII

[1] Whether or not *vodun* is a religion, a problem which Haitian writers (e.g., Price-Mars (I), 32 ff.) are prone to debate at length, need not be considered here, since to an ethnologist the answer is too patently affirmative to require discussion.
[2] St. Mery, i, 45–6.
[3] Ibid., i, 46.
[4] De Vassière, 178–9.
[5] Dorsainvil (I), 156 ff.; Price-Mars (I), 39.
[6] For a useful resumé of statements concerning Haitian serpent-worship, the grievous misunderstanding of which is an outstanding characteristic of this honest but ill-conceived work, see Williams, *passim*. [791]
[7] Price-Mars (I), 118 ff., also records his belief that serpent-worship is far less important than it has been represented, saying: "We believe it to be well-nigh abolished." Seabrook, 310–12, also holds to this view.
[8] Parsons (I), 157, states: "There is little or no philosophic or religious expression of the theory to be [791]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

heard in Haiti, but descriptive details of the practice abound." Elsewhere (p. 158) she speaks of "this higglety pigglety pantheon" of *loa*, whose traits "none . . . [were] . . . able to describe . . . at all systematically." Price-Mars (I), 32, however, mentions the existence of a theology based on African beliefs not unlike that described here.

[9] Cf. Parsons (I), 168.

[10] Nowhere is the confusion with which writers on Haiti have approached and presented *vodun* theological concepts better exemplified than in the passage found in Craige, 98–9; or 71, where a charm for working evil magic is spoken of as "something having to do with voodoo."

[11] Despite the importance of possession, one would hesitate before accepting in its entirety the somewhat simplistic approach of Dorsainvil that "*le vôdou se ramène à l'idée de la possession,*" (I), 113.

[12] St. Mery, i, 35.

[13] Parsons (I), 169, note 2, speaks of baptism, but states "*loi* Pétrou is one you do not baptise, as you do other *loi* when they come . . ." — a custom at variance with Mirebalais procedure.

[14] Cf. Parsons (I), 163, however, where the meaning of *marré* is given "to get the spirit."

[15] See Parsons (I), 164–5, for a description of a "shrine" of a worshipper of the *loa*.

[16] Cf. Dorsainvil (I), 115 ff.

[17] This is undoubtedly the explanation of Seabrook's "hermaphroditic god" called Papa Nebo (Gedenibo), which he shows on pp. 9 and 10 of the plates of his book. As is indicated elsewhere in this volume, Gede, who does not partake of this characteristic in the least, has thus been woefully misunderstood by Seabrook.

[18] Dorsainvil (I), 72–4, describes possession at a *vodun* ceremony, and Wirkus, 173 ff., also gives a description of a possession scene, but his account is pitched so hysterically as materially to lessen its usefulness for serious comparisons.

[19] (I) *passim*, but especially 18–19, 58–61, 86–7, 111–12. A definition of *vodun* more acceptable to those who approach social phenomena from an ethnological and historical point of view is to be found on page 130. Price-Mars (I), 123 ff., gives an extended criticism of Dorsainvil's hypothesis, though from quite a different point of

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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[10] (I), 169 ff.

[11] The tale of the priest's paralysis is also told in Price-Mars (I), 172.

[12] According to Price-Mars (I), 171, there are three classes of religionists in Haiti: Catholics, voduists, and those who hold simultaneously to both forms.

[13] Cf. Dorsainvil (I), 40-2.

[14] See Price-Mars (I), 198-9, for a description of the services in a "shouting" American Negro church he visited in Washington, D.C., which makes the point brought forward here.

[15] Compare Dorsainvil (I), 18-19.

CHAPTER XV

[1] (I), 60.

[2] Herskovits, M. and F. (III), and Herskovits (III).

[3] Herskovits (I).

one seed from that tomato would ever take root under the hot sun. Some time later, when I knew this man well, I talked to him about the care with which seeds must be planted if they are to grow properly. I told him how *we* grew *our* tomatoes. He listened carefully, nodding his head. When I had finished he said: "Yes, that must be a good way to do things in your country. But here in this valley God is good. He does not forget his children. From the broken tomato many plants will sprout. When God is good to you, you do not have to count the seeds." I suggested that perhaps one should not waste any of the precious seeds that God had provided; and to this he replied: "How is there waste? My garden is made to flourish by Zaka [the country man's special deity]. Some people give Zaka a feast every year, but between times they forget. Zaka helps me in my work, and I don't forget him. When I break the tomato and put it on the ground that way, it is a little taste for Zaka. Whatever I plant, I give him some. He is good to me, I am good to him."

What I learned from many incidents like this one was that the eye does not always see correctly. The old man was not just planting tomatoes, nor was he performing a conventionalized ritual act. It was a highly personalized act of faith in nature and confidence in the deity who shaped his work.

A large part of this book deals with Vodoun, the religious practices based on West African traditions. One soon discovers that the songs and dances of Vodoun ritual are not merely music and motion supplementing and decorating more serious affairs. Virtually every aspect of Vodoun ritual is placative or invocational. The songs that are sung and the dances that are danced are direct supplication of various supernatural forces.

Undoubtedly, a number of principles which are put forward in this study do not apply equally to every region of Haiti; but they are, I think, true in general terms. Not until one has accepted the fact that different explanations exist for given phenomena, that the same rites are performed in different fashion in different places, and that the cult priests themselves do not agree on many details, may one begin to work toward a general view of the Haitian scene.

All of Haitian life is not Vodoun. And there are of course some Haitians who are relatively outside the central circle of its influence. But the inner meanings of Vodoun and its relationship to the total view of life permeate the entire scene. Music, too, binds together practically the entire fabric of Haitian existence. It is essential not only to the cult temple but to countless workaday activities. Agrarian work groups often perform their tasks to the accompaniment of a drum. And in the cult temple, the iron hoe of the fields often serves as a percussion instrument.

The Drum and the Hoe is the result of studies made over a period of

[p. 8]

2. Man and the Universe: Vodoun

175 When the African slaves stepped ashore in the New World they brought
179 with them highly developed religious beliefs and attitudes toward life.
191 But Africa was a continent of many cultures and nations, and its belief systems varied. The Congo African did not have the same view of the natural and supernatural as the Senegalese, for example; and even neighboring peoples such as the Ibos, the Yorubas, and the Mahis did not have common religious traditions. Yet in the strange new land that was Haiti, the common elements in their religious beliefs were accented. In time a new composite religious system emerged. It was called Vodoun.

175 The preponderance of Africans in Haiti came from the region of Da-
179 homey, Togoland, Nigeria, and the Congo River basin. Among them the
191 Dahomeans were the most numerous, and it was they who provided the framework for the Afro-Haitian religious system.

The word Vodoun itself is Dahomean in origin. Among the Fon-speak-
192 ing people of West Africa it signified "spirit," or "deity." In Haiti the word came to be applied in a general sense to all the activities of cult life, from the ritual of the "temple" to the songs and dances, though in some old songs it still applies specifically to the idea of a supernatural spirit. However, the Congo word *loa* came to be used to designate the deities.[1]

191 In a literal sense, Vodoun in Haiti consists of the rites, beliefs, and prac-
194 tices of the Vodoun cult, built around the similar religious systems of the
197 Dahomeans and the Nagos. In a wider sense it applies to similar but distinct ritual activities of other cults. The Ibo-Kanga rites and dances are in a specific sense "not quite" Vodoun. The rites in the Congo-Guinée cult group—made up of Congo, Bambarra, "Guinée," and miscellaneous elements—have separate practices and deities of their own, and are often regarded as not Vodoun at all. Yet the term Vodoun is used in a generic sense to include all these rites, and examination of the beliefs and activities of these cult groups shows that they have drawn in considerable measure upon a common inheritance.

[1] [See Courlander, Haiti Singing, p. 7. Cf. P349, Category 116.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Vodoun is clearly more than ritual of the cult temple. It is an integrated system of concepts concerning human behavior, the relation of mankind to those who have lived before, and to the natural and supernatural forces of the universe. It relates the living to the dead and to those not yet born. It "explains" unpredictable events by showing them to be consistent with established principles. In short, it is a true religion which attempts to tie the unknown to the known and thus create order where chaos existed before.

As in Dahomey, it is not a system imposed from above but one which pushes out from below. It is bred and nurtured in the family, in the towns, and in the fields. It is common law, with deep roots in an unbroken and continuous past. The priests of Vodoun do not control it and direct its course. They, like the least fortunate peasant, simply move about within it and make use of its resources. They are its servants and its interpreters. In their cult centers, the principles of Vodoun are brought into sharp focus and dramatized. Vodoun is democratic in concept. Any man or woman may have direct contact with the deities or dead ancestors without the intervention of the cult priest. There is no place or situation beyond the influence of the loa or beyond the limits of Vodoun. At every crossroads is the spirit of the crossroads guardian, Legba, and on every long trail is the spirit of the Master of the Highway.

The cult priest nevertheless plays a significant and essential role. He translates beliefs that otherwise might tend to become amorphous into formalized action. He is a teacher, a repository of cult learning, and a vital catalyst. He gives form to abstraction, and practical meaning to symbols. He is the intellectualizing agency of a tremendous emotional force. Through his knowledge of the substance and forms of Vodoun, his experience in dealing with the loa, and in some instances his capacity to set magical forces into action, the cult priest is a dynamic power within his community.

Though the making of *pouins* and *magie* (ritual magic) and *ouawgar* (aggressive magic directed against individuals) is within the realm of the cult priest's activities, these things are part of Vodoun only in a subsidiary sense. Magic lurks on the periphery of Vodoun. It has little or no place in the placating of the deities or the dead. It concerns the relationship of the living with each other and with *loa-garou* (*loups-garous*) and *baka* (demons). Although cult rituals include various pouin and magie ceremonies, the cult priest draws upon magic as he draws upon other mystic arts and fields of learning—leaf doctoring, divination, Catholic ritual, and Masonic symbolism. He attempts to bring together all thinking that widens the scope of Vodoun, in order to strengthen his hand to deal with

all aspects of the natural and supernatural. But the reputable cult priest does not dabble in "black" magic—the kind that maims or destroys human beings. One who does so is said to "work with two hands": one for the loa and one for evil. (The expression *servi dé main*—"serving with two hands"—is also applied to a cult chief who deals with deities of more than one "nation.") Many a cult priest in making his ritual flour drawings on the earth holds his left hand behind his back and draws with his right, giving testimony that he "works with one hand" only.

Each cult priest maintains his own cult temple, or *hounfor*. There are no cult officials above him, as there is no formal religious organization beyond the hounfor itself. Within his own special community he is therefore the chief religious functionary, the apex of an intratemple social organization. Under the cult priest, ordinarily, there are two grades of assistants, and below them two classes of servitors.

The cult priest is usually referred to as a *houngan*, a Fon (Dahomean) title signifying "spirit chief." Sometimes he is called *gangan* (a Bantu word meaning "conjuror" or "doctor")[2] or *capla*. He also is known by the title *bocó* or *bocor*, which seems to be derived from *bocono*, the diviner or priest of the Dahomean Fa cult.[3] The bocor is, in fact, sometimes referred to as a *divineur*, and he is regarded by some Haitians as a clairvoyant and a practitioner of magic. As in Dahomey, the bocor in Haiti foretells fate through the throwing of shells or chips, much in the manner of the secular game *mayamba*. He also reads destiny with small sticks or ashes. In earlier days the cult priest was sometimes known by the Yoruba name *babalao*, a title which has been corrupted to *papalai*. A female cult leader is known as a *mambo*. She is presumed to have, in a general way, the same powers as the houngan, though in some quarters her *connaissance*, or "understanding," is not regarded so highly, and her status is believed to be somewhat lower.

Directly under the houngan is his chief assistant, the *laplace*, and perhaps a little below him on the ladder, the *mambo caille*. The laplace is regarded as the vice-houngan, and he assumes responsibility for running the hounfor in the absence of his chief. The mambo caille, a woman, runs the cult center in the absence of both the houngan and the laplace. One step farther down the ladder is the *houngénicon*, who acts as a sort of chief of the main body of devotees. These high-ranking assistants to the houngan are sometimes called *badjicans*, or keepers of the altar.

The servitors of the cult are known as *hounsi*, or "spirit wives," a name that was given to certain categories of cult servants in Dahomey.[4] There are two main groups of hounsi: *kanzo* (those who have passed through a ritual fire test) and *hounsi* (those whose loa are wild or untamed). The

[2] [Footnote appears on p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]
[3] [Gover, Africa Dances, p. 129; Herskovits, Dahomey, I, 208 ff. Cf. p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]
[4] [Foot note appears on p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]

In Haiti the possession takes many forms, according to the nature of the deity who has entered the body, and depending on whether the possessed person has learned to "control" that deity. The possessing, or "mounting," of the possessed individual is manifest proof of the loa's existence and his constant proximity. Vodoun is built upon the premise of the existence of loa, and the possession is the instrument of direct contact and of constant proof of the loa's imminence.

Although much of Vodoun is cast in the Dahomean mold, it is no longer what it was originally in Dahomey. Many of the original deities of the Dahomean Earth pantheon, the Sky pantheon, and the Thunder pantheon have survived. Others have been forgotten, but in their place there has grown a vast array of loa, recruited partly from the Yoruba deities and perhaps from deities of other West African tribes. By far the largest group has come into existence in Haiti—loa whose names, at least, probably would go unrecognized in West Africa.

There have been prolific intrusions into Vodoun from the rites of the Catholic Church, though they have not affected the general framework of the system. The original Dahomean supreme being, Nananbuluku, is nearly forgotten; in her place the Christian God is named in many a Vodoun service. Yet, though God is the supreme creator, giver, and taker, it is the loa who must be supplicated and mollified. Most important Vodoun rituals are begun under the supervision of the *prêt' savane*, or "bush priest," who leads off with brief prayers from the Catholic rites. While the Catholic Church itself rejects any direct part in Vodoun, the self-tutored prêt' savane, unordained and unsponsored by the Church, brings elements of its theology into the hounfor. The origins of the prêt' savane are not clear. But there is little doubt that his place in Haitian life became assured during the years of conflict between postrevolutionary governments and the Church of Rome. After the slave revolts of 1791, the priests of the French colony fled from the scene or went into hiding along with the other white colonists. From the date of Haitian independence throughout the following half century, Haiti was "in open schism from the Roman Catholic Church."[1] Some Haitian presidents were friendly toward the Catholic Church; others even had the objective of making Catholicism a state religion with the president at its head. Henry Christophe, for example, made the Catholic Church official but stipulated that ecclesiastical decrees must be approved by the president. Alexandre Pétion's constitution for southern Haiti (the country was divided) also established the Church as official but laid upon it strong restrictions.

Leyburn points out that in 1814 there were in Christophe's kingdom only three priests, one of whom Christophe had named archbishop. Dur-

[1] Leyburn, The Haitian People, p. 119. Cf. p. 349, Category 116. -- Analyst

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

of the Catholic Church and fused with old folk beliefs of Europe. In Dahomey, which was the wellspring for much of Haiti's culture, there was no supreme deity quite like the one introduced to the slaves by the missionaries. There was a pantheon of gods with Mawu and Lisa at the top. They were children of a common parent, Nananbuluku. None of these deities was strictly comparable to our idea of a supreme being. Nananbuluku survives in Haiti as Nananbouclou or Nananbélécou, one of many loa. Among the neighboring Yoruba the high god was Olorun. Like the Dahomean Mawu and Lisa, Olorun was quite remote from the lives of men. The gods who were invoked and placated were the several hundred *orisha* created by Olorun. The nearby Ashanti people had a simpler pantheon, with the sky god Nyame supreme among them.

In the present Haitian concept of the supernatural, God is at the very apex of the pantheon, though he is distinctly of another order. His power as the supreme source of all things is fully recognized. A Haitian song, associated with Vodoun ritual but of probable recent origin, goes:

> C'est Bondieu qui voyé moin, quand li vlé moin l'apprend. [Ex. 37]
>
> It is God who sent me, when he wants me he'll take me.

Another song, from the Guinée service, goes:

> Oh, Kitta, oh so'ti nan dleau, li tout mouillé!
> Oh, nen point houngan passé Bondieu nan pays-ya! [Ex. 36]
>
> Oh, Kitta comes out of the water, he is dripping wet!
> Oh, there is no houngan in this country greater than God!

Although it is recognized, or at least stated, that God is a supreme force, God is not regarded as the entire supernatural force of the world. In many Vodoun services the houngan may invoke, as separate categories of the unseen, the loa, the dead, the *marassas* (twin spirits), and God. Haitians do not have a consistent schematized picture of the supernatural world. God comes first, but (as in West Africa) he is less immediate than the loa. He is identified with destiny; yet within the framework of that destiny man's lot can be bettered or worsened through dealings with the dead, the baka and lou-garos (demons and vampires), and the cult priests.

In many of the folk tales of Haiti, God appears as another character in a cast which may include as protagonists animals, loa, Christian saints, and ordinary men and women. One such tale is about a visit which all the dogs decided to pay to God. They started off through the woods together, but one of them was distracted by the smell of carrion. He left his friends for a brief time, found the carrion, and ate some of it. Then he hurriedly joined his companions again. Together they came to God's house and were admitted to the parlor, where they sat around making polite conver-

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

The importance of water in Vodoun has a fundamentally West African character. Among the Yoruba and the Ashanti and in Dahomey, for example, water rites are a significant aspect of religious ritual. Herskovits notes the frequency of religious pilgrimages to streams in West Africa. 171 771 823 796 778

In one instance, at Abeokuta, a bedecked procession of worshipers left a shrine atop a high hill, followed a long path to the riverside over two miles away, and returned before the ceremonies could be carried out at the shrine of the god. On one occasion, in Dahomey, the bed of the sacred stream run dry was "filled" from nearby wells so that this water could be ritually redrawn for use in an especially important ceremony. Among the Ashanti, pilgrimages to Lake Bosumtwe and other sacred bodies of water regularly occur. And it is on such occasions that the spirit of the river or lake or sea manifests itself, by "entering the head" of the devotee and causing him to fling himself, possibly possessed, into the water.[8]

So it is also in Haiti, where possession at the river's edge may cause the devotee to leap into the river. At Saut d'Eau, possessed persons plunge into the waterfall without regard for their safety, being in the care of the loa who have mounted them. 823 787 778

Into this water complex the Christian rite of baptism has been easily absorbed, providing merely a new act of veneration for water and its properties. In the Haitian mind baptism is not far removed from the *lavé tête* ritual, the washing of the head, or the *rafraîchi tête*, the "refreshing" of the head, both of which are acts in propitiation of the loa.[9] So related is the baptismal concept in the Haitian mind, that the term "baptize" is used to describe the lavé tête; it is said that the loa is being "baptized." So also are drums "baptized," not to menton yams, and even the hounfor itself. 177 797 823 778 782 795 851

Marriage to a Loa

Although the term *hounsi* (spirit wife, or wife of the spirit) is applied to a large class of servitors of the Vodoun temple, only a small number of servitors ever pass through rites which give them a husband-wife or wife-husband relationship with a loa. Reasons for these mystic marriages vary, but usually the rituals take place upon the prescription of a cult priest who interprets the will of the deities concerned. Most of the mystic marriages of which I have heard have taken place in the general area of Port-au-Prince and the Cul-de-Sac Plain. In some other areas of Haiti it appears that no such rites have taken place locally within the memory of the elder inhabitants. One aged man living near Belladère declared: "It [marriage to a loa] is impossible. People serve loa, they do not marry them. A man does not marry his burro. A loa 588 [794]

8 [Herskovits, The Myth of the Negro Past, p. 233. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

9 [It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-8 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[p. 349]

Notes

Chapter 1: *The Making of the Haitian* (pp. 1-7)

[1]The name Ganda survives in Haiti as the name of a deity.

[2]Herskovits, in *The Myth of the Negro Past* (p. 47), provides a tabulation of raw data found in the manifests recorded for slaves shipped to Virginia between 1710 and 1769: 20,564 slaves were reported shipped from "Africa," 3,652 from Gambia, 6,777 from "Guinea," 9,224 from Calabar, 3,860 from Angola, and 1,011 from Madagascar. Of those shipped from the island of Madagascar, 473 were listed as coming from Mozambique.

[3]Bartolomé de Las Casas.

Chapter 2: *Man and the Universe: Vodoun* (pp. 8-18)

[1]See Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 7.

[2]Schweinfurth in *The Heart of Africa*, II, 31, says: "In Loango all exorcists and conjurors are called *ganga*." Leo Wiener, in *Africa and the Discovery of America* (Philadelphia: Innes and Sons, 1922), III, 32, reports: "Forms of *ganga* have in Bantu the meaning 'medicine' but also 'magic'—such as Nyika *ganga* and Kongo *nganga*."

[3]Goret, *Africa Dances*, p. 120; Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 208 ff.

[4]From the Fon *houn-so* or *houn-su*. Among the Arada of Dahomey a *houn-su* was regarded as a spiritual wife of the deity. She was a servant of the cult temple, and in some instances a wife of the cult priest.

[5]Translated from the French of Aubin, *En Haiti*, pp. 57-59.

[6]Deren, in her *Divine Horsemen* (pp. 119 ff.), gives an excellent report of a service for Agwé in a boat at sea. Aubin (*op. cit.*, p. 108) seems to have given the first description of this service at sea for the loa Agwé.

[7]Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. 119.

[8]*Ibid.*, p. 123. Leyburn advances the theory that Vodoun developed during this period as a result of the vacuum left by the Church. Although the Church did in effect leave the field to the African cults, one must assume that the Arada, Congo, and other cults were already organized and possessed of great vitality before the Haitian revolution. Implicit evidence points to a continuity of cult life from the earliest days of the African on Haitian soil. There are no statistics to reveal the extent of cult membership at the end of the eighteenth century, but the content and form of Vodoun today are so overwhelmingly African that it is difficult to think of Haitian cult activity as the product of a renaissance.

Chapter 3: *The Loa: Gods of the Haitian Mountains* (pp. 19-29)

[1]The term *vodoun*, used in this precise sense, conforms to the original Fon (Dahomean) usage. The term *hounsi*, also of Fon origin, signifies "spirit" and belongs to the same root

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

114 treatment. In the absence of sufficient analytic material on the inter-
121 vening years since his book was written, a prefatory note such as this can do little more than comment on Haitian society, either in terms of its present design or in terms of the recent events that may have modified it.

121
114 The central thesis of Leyburn's book is that Haitian society is sharply
565 divided into two segments, and that the national institutional struc-
[178] ture is such that no significant alteration in that division has occurred in the entire course of Haiti's history as a sovereign nation. At the base of the society is the rural agricultural sector, making up perhaps as much as 95 per cent of the population; at the top the elite, which dominates the governmental apparatus and all national institutions. These two segments of the society differ, in Leyburn's view, in all important regards: level of income, source of income, education, language, religion, social forms, values and attitudes, and all else. By carefully describing the history of Haitian society from the eve of the revolution until the midst of the United States occupation, he reveals both the origin of this vast social cleavage and the various means employed for its perpetuation. Leyburn was so impressed by the gap which separated yeomanry and elite that he chose to label these social segments castes rather than classes. Members of the elite earn their livings as rentiers, merchants, professionals, and in government, and never engage in manual labor of any sort. They are predominantly urban in residence; their sons attend private lower schools, and then
[191] go on to higher education, usually abroad. They are French-speaking,
[197] although they also speak Creole, Haiti's national language. Elite re-
[58] ligion is Catholicism, elite forms of marriage and domestic organiza-
[59] tion are "legitimate" and "western." Elite members view themselves
[829] as a kind of aristocracy, and feel little commonality in their sharing of Haiti and of Haitian history with the yeomen.

114 In sharp contrast, the yeomanry is rural, poor, works the land, is
565 illiterate and Creole-speaking only, believes in *vodoun* rather than in
191 orthodox Catholicism, usually marries by common law and is some-
771 times polygynous, and remains substantially isolated from the outer
583 world. Finally and importantly—though its particular significance is
595 changing—the elite differs from the rural sector in that the country-
144 man is predominantly negroid in phenotype, while members of the elite are prevailingly lighter-skinned.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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643 At the same time, the President has expressed his favorable interest
771 in vodoun and is said to practice it; this statement, however, has
795 overtones of malevolence that are not appropriate. Vodoun is a religion, though it lacks a centralized priestly hierarchy or administrative organization. Outside the elite, Catholicism in Haiti has always been colored by vodoun elements. The Haitian people as a whole invest no effort in distinguishing what is "really Catholic" from what is not, in their religious practices; in this regard Haitian countrymen do not really differ from folk practitioners of Catholicism anywhere. By its misreading of the piety of the Haitian masses, and its unceasing hostility to vodoun—quite different from the church policy in the so-called "Indian countries" of Latin America—the Church had failed to secure its influence over the Haitian people. In contrast, Duvalier's understanding of Haitian religious sociology has proved superior, and is consistent with the *authentique* ideology of the 1940s, though doubtless much more extreme in its implications.

642 Finally, the Duvalier regime has invaded such institutions as the
871 National University and the trade unions, and maintains close sur-
467 veillance over any individuals it regards as politically suspicious. Loy-
204 alty oaths are required at the university; a public press no longer ex-
661 ists; the unions, never strong, are now entirely powerless. But it should be clear from this description of the Duvalier regime that repression is not the key to Duvalier power so much as the means for perpetuating that power under Haitian conditions. The key to Du-
642 valier power is to be found instead in the structure of Haitian society,
648 in the social history of the past two decades, and in the policy of the United States, weakened by its inescapable preference for "stability" over "radicalism." In his own way, President Duvalier is as radical as he can be; but he is no Castro. It is now an open secret that Haiti's support for sanctions against Cuba approved at Punta del Este was matched by economic concessions from the United States; that the Marines, knowingly or not, immobilized anti-Duvalier opposition in a period when its supporters could be picked off, driven into exile, or jailed; that the official Duvalier offer of Môle St. Nicholas to the United States as a substitute for Guantánamo, though irrelevant, was warmly reassuring to some North American political thinkers; and that Duvalier, while he employs considerable "blackmail diplomacy" in his dealings with the United States and is now out of favor, is still considered "reliable" in that most important respect.

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The people of the islands were able to maintain some continuities with
177 the past, even while the new setting and changing conditions led to the development of certain innovations in society and culture. In a few Caribbean societies, Haiti included, freedom brought with it the opportunity to create a yeomanry—an independent, landholding class of agriculturists who produced most of their own consumption needs and also produced commodities for sale. These were "reconstituted yeomen," whose ways of life combined elements from the African and American Indian past, as well as considerable European and Asian influences, in new cultural constellations.

177 Haitian country folk are a particularly good example of such a
231 historical process. The crops Haitian yeomen cultivate include the
241 maize, sweet potatoes, and manioc of the indigenous American Indian
412 (Taino) people, and other cultigens such as papaya and avocado which had been domesticated in mainland aboriginal America; and items like taro and mangoes from Oceania, sesame and sugarcane which originated in the Middle East and India, and vegetables from Europe. Their domestic animals, including cattle, swine, and fowls, are nearly all from the Old World. The chief agricultural tools—hoe, billhook, and dibble, which are well adapted to Haiti's shallow topsoil and hilly terrain—may be European or African in origin; the practice of burning off weeds before planting may be African or American Indian. In the case of each trait—crop, tool, practice—one is confronted by the diverse and entangled culture history of the
177 Haitian people. What is true of agriculture is true of all else. The re-
● 771 ligion of Haiti is at once two religions rather than one: Catholicism
19 *and* vodoun. Yet these two belief systems form a single ideology for most Haitians, particularly in the rural areas and among those of the urban lower classes. The Creole language is similarly complex in origin. While its lexicon is predominantly derived from French, parts of its syntax are not of Romance origin. For instance, the use of postpositive nominalizing particles and the absence of gender typify Haitian Creole, and are decidedly not Romance in character. Terminology shows much the same; for example, animal names and anatomical terms are mainly French in origin, but some cooked foods carry names of African provenience.

177 The "mixing" of various elements of culture from different tradi-
174 tions is, of course, neither uniquely Caribbean nor uniquely Haitian. All cultures are growths out of the past, and change by losing and gaining traits and by combining and recombining their substance in

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several generations of ancestors, there can be little question of its high social position. 565 581

Religion affords still another distinction between high and low. Haiti has a folk religion which American tourists call Voodoo (a name which makes them think immediately of superstitious emotionalism or some kind of occult balderdash), but which is more properly called Vodun. It is a true religion in that it answers for the native the questions arising in the world he knows, while giving him confidence to face the crises of life. Vodun is African in origin, Créole in its language, and homely in its creed and practice; none of these makes it any less a religion. The official religion of the country, on the other hand, is Roman Catholicism. Few members of the élite, however their hearts may yearn for the consoling securities of Vodun, dare openly either to acknowledge their "atavism" or to participate in the cult. They must be Catholics or agnostics. It is often remarked that below the surface many a professing Catholic aristocrat cherishes Vodun beliefs; the important fact is that he keeps his folk worship secret. Because the outside world ridicules Vodun as superstition, and because the approved Catholic Church fights it, government restrictions effectively keep its ritual out of the public gaze. All the discriminatory laws, however, have not weakened its hold upon the masses. It is because Vodun is a *folk* religion that the élite cannot permit themselves to adhere to it openly. 565 771

The final and most complicated distinction between the two castes is skin color. Any generalization on this matter is open to numerous exceptions; moreover, the whole question of color in Haiti touches the most sensitive nerves of the upper classes. One must begin by such casual observations as these: the vast majority of the lower orders are definitely dark or even black; the lighter the skin, the more likely a person is to belong to the élite. It is true that there are black aristocrats, and it is equally true that numbers of peasants have light complexions. At almost any function in high society, however, the proportion of dark-skinned persons is decidedly small. Among the youth, the tendency is always to select a spouse whose skin color is light; marriages are often made between aristocrats and white foreigners resident in Haiti, so that the children may lighten the family complexion. While it is therefore inaccurate to assert that no full-blooded Negroes belong to the élite, it is also clear that lighter persons tend to have social advantages. 565 829 581 144

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565 rights of people of Negro blood. As a distinguished Haitian re-
484 marked, "It is from France that we draw our culture, our language,
our literature, our attitudes of mind: why should we not love her?"
177 The more time the élite spend in France, the less kinship they feel
186 with the masses. There is not necessarily any conscious snobbery in this increasing discrepancy; it simply results from a life spent in entirely different environments. The Boston Brahmin, for example, may be kindhearted and yet feel little kinship with a Mississippi share-cropper.

564 Inside the castes one may find social distinctions familiar in democracies. There are well-to-do élite who set the standards of manners and entertainment, and there are peasant landholders who through force of personality dominate their rural neighborhoods. The intellectual man of the upper classes stands somewhat apart from the social whirl of "high society." An important government official has more prestige among the leisured classes than a small businessman, just as a powerful religious adept is more honored among the peasants than a happy-go-lucky ragamuffin. It is obvious, however, that within the élite caste social discrimination occurs more frequently and is more accurately observed than among the country people.

[184] Such phrases as "Haitian religion" or "Haitian public opinion"
[171] are accurate only in so far as the person who uses them defines the
[208] adjective "Haitian." One might describe truly a phenomenon characteristic of ninety-five out of a hundred Haitians and yet, in the opinion of those who dominate the economic, political, and social life, do injustice to Haiti.

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[p. 113]

INTRODUCTION

If the visitor to Haiti is first struck by the wide separation between the élite and the peasant masses, the person who knows Haiti only through books is sure to think of it as a country of Voodoo. There is no error of fact here, for Voodoo is characteristic of Haiti. Nevertheless, what the American conjures up in his mind when he uses the word is almost certain to be misleading. In spite of detailed reports of anthropologists the average American clings firmly to his notion that Voodoo is Negro superstition chiefly concerned with charms or spells to "hoodoo" (a variation of the same word) an enemy. Scientists rarely succeed in correcting long-held but incorrect or one-sided impressions of the meaning of terms; they end rather by inventing a new word, or else continue the generally losing fight for precise usage, and so preserve the confusion.[1] 771

Since there is small likelihood of eradicating the inexact connotations of "Voodoo," many recent anthropologists have adopted such spellings as Vodun, Vodou, Vodoun, Vaudou, and Vodûn, all renditions of local pronunciation of the same term. *Vodun* (pronounced Vo-doon) has been chosen for use in this work, in the hope that readers will bear in mind that the folk religion is not mere idle superstition. A grasp of the real and distinctive religious beliefs and cult practices of the Haitian is very necessary to an understanding of the social picture. [104]

Like its caste system, the religious life of Haiti presents far-reaching contrasts. The only approved religion of the country is Roman Catholicism. To this faith all the élite who are religiously inclined, or wish to pay formal homage to the institution of religion, belong. No Protestant sect has ever gained a real foothold in Haiti. Catholic churches are among the imposing edifices in every town; Catholic priests are an everyday sight as they go about their parishes; Catholic brothers and sisters, with state support and approval, direct much of the higher education in the country. 771 195 184 [346] [793] [871]

1. Witness in anthropology the contrast between the popular and the scholarly meaning of *culture*, *race*, *taboo*, and *fetish*; in chemistry of *reaction* (as when a man is asked his "reaction" to an opinion); in psychology of *instinct*, *innate*, and *inherent*; and in sociology of *caste*, *institution*, and *social*.

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Paralleling the accepted form and existing at the same time, is the Vodun religion. To this faith practically every member of the lower caste adheres; but no casual visitor ever sees a Vodun "temple," or would recognize one if he saw it. Vodun "priests" likewise have no characteristic dress to set them apart from their barefoot country neighbors. The state gives absolutely no support to this folk religion, which has no seminaries, no orders, no publishing house, nor even any orthodoxy. One is not a member of the Vodun religion or church; rather one believes and practices Vodun.

The paradox of the religious situation in Haiti lies in the fact that although the masses are Vodun worshipers, most of them are likewise Catholics; that although the élite formally disapprove of Vodun, many of them are profoundly interested in it; that although the state supports the Catholic Church and officially frowns on Vodun, it does not, cannot, and apparently would not if it could, suppress it altogether. The result of these contradictions is a strange intermixture of creed and ritual, mental struggles among certain of the élite, supersensitiveness to foreign opinion in connection with "Voodoo," and a clandestine air which adds to the mystery most strangers are determined to find in Vodun.

An understanding of these religious ambiguities must depend to some degree upon a knowledge of Haitian history, for both Catholicism and Vodun have colonial origins, together with local peculiarities and historical developments, which make them characteristically Haitian.

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VI

ROMAN CATHOLICISM

1. *French Colonial Backgrounds*

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WHEN France was first establishing a foothold in the New World, religion was one of the consuming passions of the French people. Priests accompanied early explorers, missionaries consecrated their lives to conversion of the Indians; monks, nuns, and parish priests were a vital part of the pioneer settlements of New France. Every family in the mother country hoped that at least one of its sons would devote himself to the service of the Church. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were, par excellence, missionary centuries.

By the time the colony of Saint-Domingue was acquired, however, this religious zeal was on the wane, and just when the colony was becoming prosperous and populous France was entering the phase of her history known as The Enlightenment. Although the growth of the colony is impressive from many points of view, religion is not one of them, for planters intent upon money-making and luxurious living in an exploitative tropical colony gave little energy to spiritual development.[1] The Roman Catholic Church, being the official church of France, was naturally the only important religious organization of the colony; the congregations authorized to send clergy to Saint-Domingue—Carmelites, Capuchins, Dominicans, and Jesuits—divided the territory and work between them. [192]

No doubt the fathers did some assiduous work. Official historians of the Roman Church in Haiti give the definite impression that their task was arduous and not very rewarding.[2] The torrid heat, diseases (especially yellow fever), the long distances and poor means of transportation were discouraging enough; until the middle of the eighteenth century there was the added difficulty of the poor human

1. It is revealing to see what characteristics of the culture of their mother country colonists bring with them to a new region. French Canadians, in contrast to French colonists in Saint-Domingue, kept many more customs of old France. See J. G. Leyburn, *Frontier Folkways* (New Haven, 1935), pp. 54–57. [114] [171] [178]

2. A good account of the inertia of religious life in colonial Saint-Domingue is given in P. A. Cabon, *Notes sur l'histoire religieuse d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1933), chap. I. [114]

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175 material—Frenchmen who lived "in a deplorable state of morals,
• 171 too often recalling those of the freebooters and buccaneers" who were their ancestors and predecessors. Even when the calibre of the colonists improved, religion was a minor concern, business and pleasure pushing it well into the background.

There was no great antagonism toward the fathers; indeed, not enough attention was paid to the priests and their work to warrant any very strong feeling. It was indifference and insolence the fathers had to face, or, if they showed too great an interest in the welfare of slaves upon a plantation, suspicion and peremptory curbs. By the old
[671] Code Noir under which the colony theoretically operated, masters were obligated to send their slaves to Mass on Sundays and feast days under penalty of heavy fines; the Code likewise prescribed the baptism of all blacks and their instruction in the Catholic faith. But just as the colonists ignored all parts of the Code antagonistic to their own economic interests, so specifically did they disregard the sections dealing with their religious obligations.

175 Some priests were in any case not too zealous. It was much more
793 agreeable to attend only to external forms, and so participate in the charming life of high society, than to stand firm against laxity. If a
662 priest showed enthusiasm for his duties to his African charges he was
567 almost certain to be accused by the planters of stirring up the slaves
[792] and undermining the foundations of colonial society. This was, in fact, the very accusation leveled at the Jesuits to bring about their expulsion from the colony in 1764. The example was not lost upon other priests.

175 "The safety of the whites demands that the Negroes be kept in
771 profound ignorance," said one of the later governors in a message to France. This sentiment, perfectly expressing the conviction of the
563 majority of planters, not only prevented any secular education of the blacks, but actually kept many of them from instruction in catechism, creed, or any part of the Catholic faith. If instruction is forbidden, few of the sacraments can be administered, for how can a person be confirmed, confess, do penance, if he know not even the first principles of the faith? Few masters objected to the baptism of slave children; on the other hand, they roundly disapproved of the sacrament of marriage for their blacks, since this might place an obstacle in the way of slave sales, and even open the way for assimilation of blacks and whites in the colony.

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Granted these obvious difficulties, there is still little to be said for the zeal or integrity of churchmen in Saint-Domingue. Father Cabon cites a report to Rome in 1794, which, he remarks, "was not designed to be made public, and does not bear the earmarks of passion," and which flatly states that "since the expulsion of the Jesuits, the curés have for the most part led lives so indecent . . . that the citizens and Negroes have lost all the sentiments of religion which the Jesuits gave them."[3] There had been distinguished churchmen in Saint-Domingue before 1750, authors, scientists, teachers of some note, but none appeared thereafter. The rich French colony was not a bright star in the Catholic crown.

Undeterred by those who might have been their spiritual guides, the white people followed the easy path of self-indulgence. The universal testimony of visitors is that, with a few notable exceptions, immorality and cruelty were daily commonplaces. To make a fortune was the prime ambition of every white man, since money made possible the luxurious enjoyment of this world's goods. Protest against money-making or soft living would have been futile. Administrative agents turned public office to their own profit; judges sold justice to the highest bidder; planters drove their slaves to death; and priests dispensed religious solace for a tidy sum.

The freedmen, who in everything patterned their lives after social leaders in the white planter class, had no more concern for religion than their models. They attended Mass occasionally as a social event, where they might see and be seen. When in the latter days of the colony discriminatory legislation required that colored persons sit in separate parts of the church, most of the affranchis simply refrained from attending Mass: their religious zeal was not so great as to make them submit to the public shame of segregation. In their daily lives, likewise, they followed the example of the white planters in pursuing pleasure rather than sobriety, "culture" rather than religious zeal. Like the whites, they were often licentious in their conduct. When it came their turn to direct affairs of state in free Haiti, there was little interest in spiritual matters among them. The intellectuals of the group paid homage to the liberal philosophers of the century rather than to religious thinkers.

If religion was at a low ebb in the prosperous days of the colony, it almost disappeared in the excitement of the years following the

3. Ibid., p. 33. revolt of the slaves (1791).

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175 771 643 659 revolt of the slaves (1791). Priests fled or went into hiding with the other whites, so that Masses lapsed or were said by religious but unordained mulattoes. Upon his accession to power in Haiti Toussaint L'Ouverture made several attempts to rehabilitate religion in the country, for the Church he felt was a stable institution which might help in giving order to the turbulent land. He tried to accomplish the return of priests to the island parishes and churches. There are indications that Toussaint was not himself deeply religious; his pronouncements are formal, but one cannot say that they appear to be deeply felt. In his proclamation of October 10, 1798, announcing the expulsion of the English, he orders thanks to the God of Hosts, recommends to his chiefs of corps that the soldiers pray morning and evening and faithfully attend Mass on Sundays. In a public address he enjoins upon parents the duty of teaching the catechism to their children.

175 659 795 The use of Catholicism as an aid to statecraft is apparent in his official dealings with the Church. His constitution of May 9, 1801, states that "the Catholic religion, apostolic and Roman, is the sole religion publicly professed." To obtain priests he besought the return of many who had fled the slave insurrection; he likewise turned to France, but France at this time was less than ardent in religion; nor were French priests likely to wish to come to an island ruled by blacks, particularly one which Napoleon was quite obviously planning to subdue. Toussaint addressed himself, therefore, to a schismatic abbé, Grégoire by name, in whom he saw a friend. Whether Grégoire might have helped him to establish the Catholic Church firmly as a part of Haitian life, with only a handful of repatriated colonial priests, we cannot know, for in 1802 the final war of independence began and the island, in convulsion, had no time for spiritual matters.

2. *Catholicism in Independent Haiti*

175 643 659 795 Dessalines, the passionate, violent, and licentious founder of the new state, although not an enemy of the Church was not its active friend. In his slaughter of whites he spared several priests who had come to the country under Toussaint's persuasion, either because these clerics were obviously inoffensive or might later prove useful to him. Just as he controlled every other detail of Haitian life, he was determined to direct church affairs. He reserved to himself the right to fix the limits of jurisdiction of each priest and to nominate, even

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175 643 659 795 [793]

to appoint, curés to the vacant parishes. His independence of action could not fail to give offense to Church authorities. One of his first appointees was a black ex-slave, Félix, who had been a drum major in the native army. Félix was made curé in the important town of Saint-Marc.

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The constitution of his empire (May, 1805) indicates that Dessalines did not intend to make himself head of the Church, but rather planned a complete separation of Church and State. Article 50 reads: "The law admits no dominant religion"; while the next article grants freedom to all cults and refuses state support to any denomination or minister. No attack was made, therefore, upon Catholicism, yet the disestablishment of that Church was a serious blow to its prestige. Not in the specific provisions regarding religion was the Church most weakened, but rather in the "liberality" of articles dealing with actions upon which the Church had taken a firm moral stand. Thus Article 14 declared that "marriage is an act purely civil [582] and authorized by the government," while Article 15 permits [586] divorce by the state. Early laws of the empire still further undermined the position of Church doctrine. Illegitimate children were [848] granted the same legal rights as legitimate ones—a generous provision which removed one of the strong reasons for marriage; separation of husband and wife except by divorce was forbidden, and this prohibition practically encouraged the divorce disapproved by the Church; finally, the grounds upon which divorce might be allowed were broader than those existing anywhere else in the Western World at the time: mutual consent, application from one party to the marriage, or simple allegation of incompatibility of temperament or character.

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From the promulgation of this constitution in 1805 and for the next fifty-five years, Haiti was in open schism from the Roman Catholic Church. The Holy See refused to recognize either the Haitian state or the provisions of its constitution, and it declined to allow priests to enter the country. Certain Haitian presidents were friendly enough to Catholicism, and others were openly desirous of reëstablishing a state religion, but the breach once made was not healed by mere good wishes. The longer the schism endured, the farther the people grew away from the doctrines and practices of a religion in which they had never been firmly grounded. At the moment of independence, when all minds were more open to new

3: .Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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ideas than in later years, the habits of regular attention to religious duties might have been fixed; by 1860 it was too late. Religion existed during those years, but it was a strange gallimaufry of Catholicism and folk belief.

On the whole, the rulers of young Haiti were tolerant of the Catholic Church even to the point of advancing its interests, in so far as these might benefit the state. Their pronouncements and actions, nevertheless, were not those of ardent personal believers. Pétion's constitution of the republic in 1806 once more established Catholicism as the official Church. What it gave with one hand, however, it took away with the other. Thus:

Art. 35. The Catholic, apostolic, and Roman religion being that of all Haitians, is the religion of the state. It and its ministers will be protected.

Art. 36. The law assigns to each minister of that religion the extent of his spiritual administration. These ministers may not, under any pretext, form a body within the state.

Art. 37. If in the course of time other religions are introduced, no person shall be hindered, so long as he conforms to the laws, in following the cult he has chosen.

The Catholic, then, is the state religion, but only because the Haitians have heretofore been nominal Catholics. It occupies a position of practical fact which it would lose if by the introduction of other cults Haitians should be drawn away from it. Its ministers will be carefully watched to see that they do not, as a group, try to exert political pressure. And what freedom of action is possible to a church whose ecclesiastical parishes can be limited or extended in size by the civil legislature?

Pétion no more fought religion than he fought any other conventional institution approved by civilized people; but he did little to foster it. He received certain Wesleyan missionaries with considerable hospitality, remarking that "education increases the dignity of mankind." He appeased the good Catholics by repealing the law concerning the rights of illegitimate children, substituting for it a more moderate French rule.[4] Likewise, he invited the Catholic Church to participate in the education of Haitian youth.

[848] [871]

[848] 4. The French practice allowed an illegitimate child recognized before a wedding equal rights of inheritance with legitimate offspring, while giving only quarter rights to a child recognized after marriage.

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Organized

religion was never at a lower ebb in Haiti than toward the middle of the nineteenth century, as whole generations of citizens were growing up who had never known the proper forms of ritual, and had no real religious training. The outward shell of the Church covered steadily more "superstition," more homely beliefs and practices, and the long divorce from Rome permitted the growth of a native religion which later could not be eradicated, no matter how assiduous the labors of Catholic priests. 175 795 771

During Boyer's quarter-century the once Roman and Catholic Church remained the official religion of the state, but its head was now the President. Organization simplified as orthodoxy declined. By 1840 there was only one order of priesthood; no archbishop, bishops, canons, curés, or other titled dignitaries, but only "priests." The people were not taxed to maintain the state Church; there were no tithes or forced contributions for the support of public worship or the repair of parish churches, no heavy list of clergy living from levies on the people. However, if the Haitians were not burdened by imposed religious fees, they were still through their own fears subject to steady tolls for services by the degraded men who then called themselves priests. 175 795 771 659 643

Every effort of the state failing to provide proper religious leadership, Boyer resigned himself to permitting those who professed to be priests to practice in the republic. There were seventy so-called priests in the country in 1840. Some of them had once been in holy orders but were now unfrocked: they found in Haiti not only a haven but a fertile field for gain. In addition to these religious renegades came adventurers who knew just enough of ritual and theology to use the priestly garb as a cover for easy graft. Both groups encouraged crude superstition with a view to making money. They baptized houses, boats, and doorposts, and blessed fetish charms or amulets, all for a fee. Immorality was flagrant, and many of the "priests" had mistresses and children. The debauchery of some was so notorious that Secretary-General Inginac had publicly to rebuke them and even to banish a few from the country. A visiting Quaker, benignantly tolerant of most of what he saw in Haiti, was scandalized by the religious situation. He said that the sole aim of most of the clergy was to secure gold and silver "as quickly as they can, to send to Europe for investment." Excepting a very few (notably the priests at Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, and Jacmel), he 175 795 793 [114]

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175 793 795 [114] concludes: "With regard to the ecclesiastical institutions of the republic we may safely say . . . that if the standing army be one cause of the degradation of the people, the Church is surely another; and the sooner it can be reformed, the better for religion, for morals, and for the physical well-being of the community."[9]

175 793 795 691 Eventually the state felt it necessary to protect the people from these predatory priests. True, people paid for what they considered to be services performed, but the legislators could not permit unlimited graft in the name of religion. An act of 1840,[10] therefore, set a fee of half a dollar for each baptism;[11] $8 for a marriage with Mass, $4 for one without a Mass; an ordinary Mass, 37 cents; a High Mass, service, or funeral "of the first class" (that is, with choir, sacristan, acolytes, and churchwarden), $60; funerals of the second class, $20; funerals of the third class, $10. Articles of the act specify what shall constitute the three classes of service, and it is then stated, "Neither rectors nor vicars shall receive anything for offices at which they do not assist in person, except in cases of illness." The Haitians were not receiving true religious instruction, but at least their government tried to prevent their being mulcted by the spurious churchmen.

175 771 184 Since Haiti had no schools except the few attended by children of the élite, religious instruction of youth was almost nonexistent. The average élite man was openly an unbeliever, for it required little acumen to show him that if the priests represented religion there was nothing to commend it. Hunt in 1860 said: "Many of the educated are about where the French were when they left the island. They believe in Voltaire, whom I have not unfrequently heard them characterize as the greatest man who ever lived."[12] In contrast to the men, the women made more of a show of being devout and attentive to the formal duties of religion, but according to Franklin they [502] [114]

are not actuated by any religious feeling. Going to church is a mere matter of parade with them, the sabbath being a day of festivities, and not set aside for religious devotion. The female congregations which frequent the churches in Hayti appear better prepared for an opera, or some other public amusement, than for the sacred duties of offering up their prayers in adoration of the Deity.

9. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 98 ff.
10. Chap. [illegible], articles 28–31.
11. The figures cited in the Act are in gourdes.
12. Benjamin S. Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afro-Americans* (Philadelphia, 1860), p. 18.

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The men seldom or never go to mass, except on the days particularly set apart by the government as public fêtes. On these occasions the president and all the officers of Hayti go in procession, but the idea of devotion, I believe, never enters their contemplation. Such days are merely set aside for celebrating some particular event, which it is wished should be handed down to posterity. These occasions present only the external symbol of religion, the whole people being either ignorant or careless of its real character. Their manner and appearance during the celebration of the mass shew that they have no inward feelings of piety or devotion.[13]

Catholicism in Haiti, then, had fallen on evil days; Protestantism, on the other hand, was unable to gain any foothold. Boyer, indifferent to all religion, did not even care to tolerate Wesleyan missionaries as Pétion had done, for when certain of them arrived and were met with "persecution and stoning by a mob," it required persuasion to gain his assent to freeing those the police had taken into custody. He forbade any further meetings of Wesleyans, on the ground that they stirred up riots. At the close of Boyer's administration it was estimated that there were only about 1,200 Protestants in the country, mostly Methodists and Baptists, and these primarily Negroes who had come from the United States to settle in the republic.

Although the Haitian government probably derived a certain satisfaction from controlling a state Church, Boyer was impelled both by circumstance and his own temperament to obtain the approval of the Holy See. His own tepid spiritual zeal had nothing to do with the case; Haitian public order would benefit by a superior group of priests, and Haitian prestige would rise, he thought, with recognition by Rome. Having already in 1826 settled the conflict between France and Haiti in the political sphere, Boyer tried assiduously to end the schism from Rome. His propositions were examined with benevolence by the Pope, who conferred upon the primate of the Indies, archbishop of Santo Domingo, the title of archbishop of Haiti. This personage, however, was a Spaniard already established in the comfortable city of Santo Domingo amidst people of his own nationality. He could not be persuaded to move to Port-au-Prince. The failure of Boyer's efforts is due more to this ecclesiastic than to uncoöperativeness on the part of Rome. From 1834 to 1860 the Court of Rome had official representatives in Haiti, but they cannot have been very effective men, for conditions in

13. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 394-395.

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175 religious life were not improved and the schism endured. The arch-
795 bishop of Haiti seemed to regard his new title as applying vaguely to
648 the island, not the country, of Haiti, and since all his vicars were
659 Spaniards unable to speak either French or the Créole dialect, they
643 did nothing for religion in the Haitian republic.
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Ties broken by a single radical action may require endless patience and persistence to knit together their severed threads. The impetuosity of Dessalines caused the rupture; it was prolonged by indifference to religion, absorption in economic and political matters, fear that France might use to her profit any *rapprochement* with Rome, and a certain complacency in subordinating Church to state. Inertia, however, was the real obstacle in the way of healing the breach. It is much less trouble to let conditions remain as they are than to make a change whose results no one can foretell. But the longer the rupture, the less understanding the people had of steps necessary to reestablish the Church.

175 When in 1847 Faustin Soulouque, the ignorant, became president,
•771 the horizon had never seemed darker for organized religion. The black general, suddenly impelled by a quirk of fortune into high office, was a man of the people in his religious attitudes. All their belief in magic, in the mystical power of certain rites, in charms and spells—all their "superstition" as the Catholics called it—Soulouque shared. For the first time in Haitian history one is aware that the folk beliefs brought over from Africa had become welded into a recognizable form, under the name of Vodun. To colonial writers "Vaudoux" had been primarily a name for certain dances; to the early Haitian élite it seems to have connoted either occult rites or vulgar claptrap compounded of gibberish, old wives' remedies, and sensual dances. But in the long and deepening twilight of Catholicism, the various elements were fused, until by Soulouque's time the Haitian was familiar with the general beliefs, rites, and "priesthood" of Vodun. As Soulouque had broken with the tradition of presidents who wished Haiti to be recognized as one of the community of civilized Western nations, so he allowed the traditional respect for Catholicism to die. As an emperor he was a transplanted African chief; as a believer he was a follower of Vodun. The rites were practiced and the sacrifices made openly now. Men in high places dared to reveal their belief in native tenets. For twelve years Vodun flourished with official approval.

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The depths to which Haiti descended under Soulouque made the task of his successor relatively simple. It would prove wise and generally popular to reverse the Emperor's action, in whatever respect. President Geffrard was the more successful as an antidote to the Emperor because of his practical intelligence. The best time to strike for the revival of Catholicism would be immediately after the heyday of Vodun. In 1859, the first year of his incumbency, Geffrard consequently undertook negotiations with the Holy See, sending two plenipotentiaries for the discussions. Because the Haitian delegates persuasively depicted the sorry state of religion in their country, because they showed themselves and their President willing to defer to papal wishes, and because the new Pope was filled with missionary zeal to reclaim Haiti for the Faith, all problems were overcome. An early agreement was reached, and the Concordat, signed in Rome on March 28, 1860, was approved by the Haitian Senate on the first of April. A commission was dispatched to Haiti immediately, one which did thoroughly and well its task of delimiting the boundaries of dioceses, allocating bishops and other clergy, and founding a seminary. An archbishop of Port-au-Prince was consecrated, and the Catholic Church, Roman and apostolic, at long last became officially established once more in the republic. The breach of fifty-five years was healed.

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In one sense the reform had come too late. All the peasants were by this time thoroughly imbued with the ideas of Vodun, as were the lower orders in the towns. Most of the élite either clandestinely practiced Vodun or ignored religion altogether. On the other hand, practically no Haitian was opposed to Catholicism, not even the most ardent devotee of the obscurer cult. The native faith had grown up quietly enough, making its adjustments to the outward forms of Catholicism which still existed in the country. To every Vodun worshiper there were simply two hierarchies of spiritual beings, each with its own powers; to believe in one was not to deny the other. The new Catholic priests, then, met no hostility; what they had to deal with was an ineradicable folk religion which accepted everything and rejected little in the spiritual realm.

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The Archbishop, his band of forty priests, and a small group of Brothers and Sisters set to work with fervor. Nearly everything had to be rebuilt from the ground. Church buildings were in such disrepair that it was considered more economical to erect new ones than

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Any casual attempt to assess the importance of religion

in the daily

lives of the people is sure to prove erroneous, for in no phase of life are outward appearances so deceptive. What the unsophisticated peasant believes can be ascertained on the whole more accurately than the beliefs of the intelligent élite. To the foreign observer, Roman Catholicism seems to play as large and as small a part in the thinking of the Haitian upper classes as among members of upper-class French society. Outwardly, the élite are professing Catholics or not religious at all. It is considered proper to attend Mass and otherwise to pay respect to religious forms; actually one loses nothing in prestige if he is not a practicing Christian. Society seems to exert no pressure in the matter. Only if a member of the upper class fears for the security of his social position, or knows that rumors are afloat of his addiction to Vodun, does he feel impelled to become assiduous in his open attentions to the Church.

The national sensitiveness to skin color is apparent in the priestly complexions. Since the old tradition lingers that "baptism by a black will not stick," not even the peasants welcome native Catholic priests. The God and saints of Christianity need the intercession of white men, just as the Vodun spirits need that of natives. In the early days peasants stoned Negro priests who tried to administer the Catholic sacraments. Such an attitude toward a black clergy falls in well with the preferences of the élite. If there were Haitian priests, they would probably be drawn from the élite class since this is the educated group; but it might happen that some devout peasant would rise to the priesthood and so have the care of a parish including élite—a contingency unthinkable to the aristocrat. Snobbishness, indeed, affects the usefulness of the town priests, for the élite members of the congregation insist on having sermons in French, a language which only the small minority understand, rather than in the Créole which is the speech of everyone, intelligible to gentry and humble alike. The Mass is consequently celebrated for the people at large in unknown tongues, Latin for the ritual, French for the sermon; the benefit they derive from it must be wholly from their inner communion stimulated by the actions of the service. The town priests are often willing enough to accede to élite pressure in the matter of language, for they know French as their mother tongue and would have to learn Créole; although some of the more devoted priests become adept in native speech, using it in their personal

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VII
VODUN

1. *Misconceptions*

THE second religion of Haiti is Vodun. It is not mentioned by 771
officials as one of the spiritual assets of the country; its priests wear no regular habit; it has no town churches. Yet it is the living religion of the masses. Catholicism may have official and social sanction; indeed, most peasants do consider themselves as belonging to that faith, yet it is doubtful whether in any other Western country there is so universal an adherence to a common religion as in Haiti to Vodun.

If there had been a paid campaign of propagandist misinformation, 114
it is unlikely that more untruths and half-truths could have been put 771
into circulation about this faith of the Haitian people. Moreau de Saint-Méry describes something of it in his classic work on colonial matters, although most of what he tells concerns the dances, which he considered primarily a form of recreation. Pious visitors to Haiti in the early years of independence labeled it simply as a form of superstition and did not bother either to understand or misrepresent it. By the time of Soulouque it was known as a rather definite folk religion, but only after 1863 did what was really a simple set of religious beliefs and practices suddenly become notorious, making Haiti the object of macabre curiosity and of reports whose chief characteristic was gruesomeness.

In 1863 occurred the *Affaire de Bizoton*, and it may as well be 175
recounted forthwith as the prime origin of all misunderstanding 771
which has pursued Haitian religion—although to emphasize it is like giving an account of Christianity with all the emphasis on witch burnings, torture of heretics, and excesses of bigotry.

On December 27, 1863, a little girl of Bizoton named Claircine disappeared from home during the absence of her mother. Search for her was futile until after several days it was discovered that she had been killed and used as part of a sinister sacrifice by religious fanatics. An inquest, discreetly managed, resulted in the arrest of fifteen people, of whom eight were longer detained. The trial of

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175 these four men and four women began on February 4, 1864, arousing
● 771 all Port-au-Prince, the local population as well as the foreign lega-
[682] tions and consulates. The guilt of the accused was soon evident; following their complete confessions they were declared guilty of sorcery, cruelty, and murder, and all eight were condemned to death. They were executed on February 13, only six weeks after the crime. What these fanatics had done seemed as horrible to the Haitians as a similar crime would seem to Americans.

Much publicity was given the trial by foreign journalists who, with their flair for making the most of a dramatic tale, added whatever they could pick up by hearsay of the beliefs which had prompted the human sacrifice. The reading public, uncritical and uninformed about Haiti itself, if they gave the lurid accounts a second thought seem to have assumed that such actions were "what one might expect of Negroes." The incident would shortly have passed into that oblivion which awaits sensational news from obscure parts of the world, if it had not been kept alive by the British Minister, who was also an author.

114 In the 'eighties, after retirement from diplomatic service, Sir
771 Spenser St. John wrote a two-volume work called *Hayti, or The Black Republic*. It was probably no more egregious in its dramatic account than were scores of other books by Englishmen who, in the latter years of the Victorian era, were discovering darkest Africa, holding dominion over palm and pine, and taking up the white man's burden all over the "heathen" world; but it possessed the literary qualities which made people buy it and discuss with avidity its horrendous details. The adjective "black" in its title seemed almost to refer to the moral characteristics of the people rather than to their skin color. Sir Spenser made a great many accurate, if somewhat one-sided, observations on the customs of the people, giving the public the first readable book in decades about the Haitians. The grisly climax of his story, however, is the *Affaire de Bizoton*. He amassed an astonishing collection of tales, practically all at second-hand, to prove that Vodun (Voodooism, he called it) was the real religion of the Haitians (which it was), and that it was compounded of the vilest superstitions and most fiendish practices, of which the most essential was human sacrifice of "the goat without horns" followed by a cannibalistic communion. Which, needless to say, it was not.

This is the sort of dramatic tale uncritical readers seem to like to

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believe. It stuck in people's minds. Since Sir Spenser's time tourists to Haiti have habitually spent a few hours ashore, heard drumbeats from the hills, and shuddered deliciously as they conjured up images of weird goings-on—black magic, licentious dances, and frenetic orgies. Novelists during the past half-century have spun their tales full of local color, while "serious" authors have made small fortunes out of pseudo-scientific books with just enough fact mingled with their lush imaginings to give "an air of similitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative." Their language runs into such purple phrases as "blood-maddened, sex-maddened, god-maddened,"[1] to describe the religious exaltation of the people at a Vodun service. Under this constant rain of misrepresentation, Haitians who care for the good opinion of other nations have become extremely sensitive on the subject of the folk religion. Many of them deny its existence; others speak of it as something beneath their attention. The more they try to cover it over, however, with silence and professed contempt, the more mysteriously fascinating it becomes to the foreign visitor. The tourist who goes to Paris expects to see the Eiffel Tower, whatever its aesthetic faults; the tourist in Haiti wishes to see, without quite knowing what he means by the term, "a Voodoo dance." No amount of scientific writing about the real character of Vodun will change the popular misconception. For every reader of accurate ethnographical or anthropological treatises on Vodun[2] there are hundreds who feast morbidly on sensational books.

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Haitian Vodun is not the same as the hoodoo of American Negroes.[3] The word is etymologically the same, whether American Voodoo, Haitian Vodun, French Vaudoux, or Spanish judu (whence our "hoodoo"): all derive from a Dahomean (West African) word signifying "god" or "spirit."[4] It is the generic term for all deities.

1. This phrase is taken from W. B. Seabrook, *The Magic Island* (New York, 1929), p. 42, but might easily have come from half a dozen other journalistic descriptions. [114]

2. Particularly recommended are Melville J. Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley* (New York, 1937), and Dr. Jean Price-Mars, *Ainsi parla l'oncle* (Port-au-Prince, 1928). [113]

3. See Herskovits, *op. cit.*, pp. 139 ff.

4. The *Encyclopædia Britannica*, in a surprisingly superficial and brief article, gives a singular etymology to "Voodoo," tracing it to the Swiss canton of Vaud, where in the Middle Ages a heterodox faith sprang up which had to be practiced in secret. The implication is that any secret religion might be called "Vaud-ois," or "Voodoo." Evidently the author of the encyclopædia article had made no serious investigation of the subject; most modern dictionaries, on the other hand, indicate the Dahomean etymology. [192]

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114 This was recognized in colonial times by Moreau de Saint-Méry, 771 who wrote: "According to the Arada Negroes, the real followers of *Vaudoux* in the colony, . . . *Vaudoux* signifies an all-powerful and supernatural being on whom depend all the events which come to pass on this earth."[5]

771 Vodun is a true religion, in the same sense that Mohammedanism, Buddhism, or Christianity are all true religions. That is to say, it is a set of beliefs and practices which claim to deal with the spiritual forces of the universe, and attempt to keep the individual in harmonious relation with them as they affect his life. The word "superstition" is relative. It is a subjective term, being generally applied to beliefs which we consider ourselves too wise, too advanced, to cling to. The sophisticated skeptic calls the belief in miracles superstition; the Christian regards the reverence for certain animals in India superstition: it is all a matter of view. Using the greatest number of criteria available for the definition of religion as distinct from vague superstition, religion may be said to be a set of beliefs about spirits or gods and their nature, about the origin of the world, about good and evil, about man's relation to the universe he knows; it includes a set of practices of worship; it is an attempt to ward off misfortune and to get good; it treats of what happens after death; it is a system of seeking security, solace, and support in the face of a supposed supernatural.[6]

Vodun is all of these.

771 Like any other vital religion which has spread from its original 177 centre, endured through the years, and come into contact with other faiths, Vodun is not at the present what it was in its early days. Like others it has unconsciously borrowed—and in borrowing, transformed—ideas, concepts, practices, rites.[7] The greatest single influence exerted upon it has been that of the Roman Catholic Church with which the people have had continuous dealings, increasing in recent years, for more than a century and a half. Many aspects of

5. In his *Description . . . de la partie française de . . . Saint-Domingue*, I, 46.

6. This alliterative phrase was suggested as a partial definition of religion by Prof. Raymond Kennedy.

7. It need hardly be pointed out that Christianity is no longer the simple faith taught by Jesus, but a composite of that faith with scholarly theology, absorbed local practices, mysteries which flourished in the Roman Empire, secular philosophy—and, to put it briefly, the accretions of changing time. Similarly, Buddhism is more than the doctrines of Gautama, and Mohammedanism more (and less) than Mohammed taught.

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Vodun, therefore, show the Catholic influence, exerted in the main unconsciously. 771 171

Unlike the great religions, Vodun lacks a formal theology. As has been said, no seminary exists for the training of priests and priestesses, no congress or college of fathers states or amends the creed; there is no church court to discipline the individual enthusiast, or catechism for the young; no scriptures or sermons are printed or read to strengthen the faith. Vodun is an informal religion of action, not a formal one of reason. It flourishes because it is malleable, adaptive, suited to the needs of a people living close to nature and without education. To give a single lucid description of this Haitian folk religion, created as it is by everybody and by nobody, is about as possible as to give one description of home life, which varies according to the couple. We may, however, outline the common elements of creed and practice. 794 771

2. *Formative Days*

To say casually that Vodun is African in origin is to say little more than that it does not stem from the great world religions. There is no unity in Africa today; there was still less in the eighteenth century when slaves were being imported into Haiti. At that period it was possible to find a new dialect and a different set of folkways every few miles along the western seacoast. Two slaves from one geographical region (the Gold Coast, for example) might not understand each other or have the slightest predisposition to sympathize with each other's customs. 771 174

Colonial planters experimented with slaves from various regions in Africa, just as they might compare breeds of horses; setting tractability off against originality, brute strength against skill, intelligence against health. In this quest for a perfect slave, Negroes were imported from all parts of the Dark Continent, from Senegal in the northwest around the five thousand miles of seacoast to Mozambique and Madagascar in the east. Partly because trading conditions were more favorable in the Dahomey and Congo regions, and partly because the qualities of Dahomean and Congolese were preferred, Negroes from these two sections soon came to predominate over others in the colony. Whereas "Congo" was merely a geographical term, implying no community of feeling among the natives living 175 567

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175 567 along that river, Dahomey was the name of a powerful kingdom under a political administration which embraced a fair amount of interchange of ideas and similarity of social institutions, including religion.

175 567 178 Discretion made the planters separate slaves who knew each other, in order to minimize opportunities for revolt among them. This policy, although it prevented the rapid growth of "slave" customs, at the same time dispersed Dahomeans all over the colony; beliefs and practices held in common among the slaves were likely to take on a Dahomean cast. Since their work was directed, their freedom of movement limited, and their family life broken up, there was practically no opportunity for the outcropping of *any* African ideas relating to economic life, government, property, education, or 175 marriage. The one sphere in which it was possible for Old World 178 beliefs to continue was the religious. No slave dealer could penetrate 796 the minds of his workers or silence their folk tales and folk songs in 771 the evening when work was done; even the strictest plantation 535 owners allowed dances in the slave quarters on Saturday nights and Sunday. It is the dance, a vital part of Dahomean religion, which seems to have formed the nucleus around which the diverse beliefs of African tribesmen grouped themselves, for it was a form of action which need not involve anything more than amusement or emotional release, if the participant were not religiously inclined. In the beginning, as Goethe observes, was the Act. To this simple Act of dancing, the Word, with thought behind it, could easily be added later. Practically all African tribesmen danced; and the numerous Dahomeans had a dance which was ostensibly for diversion but could be turned to a religious purpose as well.

771 171 174 Here, then, was the skeleton of a slave religion. Although every single African tribe had its own beliefs and ritual, each (so far as we know) had common elements with every other one. For example, all slaves, whether Senegalese or Angolese, believed in a multiplicity of spiritual beings, some of whom controlled the aspects of nature—lightning and storms, the sea, the sky. They thought that disease and other ill fortune came from spirits who must be placated in order to win back health and well-being. All felt that the normal course of events could be altered by magical spells, formulae, or charms; that one could bring misfortune to an enemy, luck to oneself, or ward off otherwise inevitable fate. Most of them had been accustomed to

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learn the properties of plants, both for healing and for poison. Except for the belief in spiritual beings, this folk knowledge would hardly have been classed as religious, for it was useful in every phase of daily life; the classification is that of the anthropologist, not of the simple black.

If Dahomean beliefs prevailed over others of African origin, it was chiefly because of the numerical preponderance of Dahomeans in the colony, together with the popularity of their religious dances. The Dahomean spirits or gods were Vodun; the dance in which the worshiper sought the inspiration of the spirits was a Vodun dance. Like all but the highly organized religions, this one recognized the validity of other beliefs. Its practitioners were not bigots. No hierarchy existed to keep out new accretions. Imperceptibly these were added to the original basic form: here an Arada spirit, there a Congolese prayer, and in many instances a Catholic saint, until the composite Vodun religion began to take shape.

There is no evidence that during colonial times Vodun was ever considered important by the white ruling class—certainly not as a faith. To most planters the word was the name for a vigorous dance. Judging from Moreau de Saint-Méry's description it was held openly enough, at times being witnessed by the whites as a sort of nocturnal diversion. Moreau knew, as did other whites, that there were "superstitious beliefs" connected with it, yet the offhand use of the word "superstition" was indication enough that the beliefs were not regarded as important. We have seen, however, what profitable use the slaves were able to make of the apparent innocence of their dances. When the idea of revolt began to germinate among them, gathering on each plantation at least once a week they had ample opportunity to hatch their plans. It is known that the campaign for revolt was developed partly under the stimulus of the Negro Boukman, a *houngan* or priest of Vodun. By means of drumbeats, which to the whites merely pounded out the rhythm for dancing but had for centuries been a means of communication at long distance in parts of West Africa, that ripening plot was telegraphed from one plantation to another. Even more important, perhaps, was the unity of feeling made possible, despite all incoherence of tradition and language, by the Vodun background.

The revolt of half a million slaves was a success. This fact has been rather too calmly accepted by historians of Saint-Domingue, who

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Vodun, then, was both widespread and powerful enough to be turned to most effective ends in 1791. Contemporary accounts of it still saw it as a meeting ground of superstitions. The French naturalist, Descourtilz, for example, was primarily struck by the use of the occult in connection with Vodun; he especially describes a woman who, under the seizure of her god, took a live coal in her hand without being burnt; a husband who by the use of magic struck his inconstant wife with a languorous malady, effective for half a year; and the knowledge of poison which was combined with the practice of magic. He mentions but one of the Vodun gods by name but implies the existence of many others.[10]

Madiou, Haiti's first historian, likewise always spoke of Vodun as a savage survival; he says of a native general, "Lamour Dérance, plunged in gross errors, put his faith in *sorcery*, in the prophecy of *papas*, or priests of *African fetishism*."[11] In his scornful distaste for the vulgar he clearly indicated by his own italics some conspicuous elements of the developing religion: magic, the use of fetishes, and a Vodun priesthood. His illustration of Dérance's error was his making soldiers believe that bullets could not wound them:

> When he marched to combat he was preceded by bands of Congos, Aradas, Ibos, Nabos, Mandingues, Haoussas, who threw themselves against the French battalions with a prodigious intrepidity, crying that the bullets were but dust. But this courage which *superstition* fed was shattered against the ramparts of . . . the Europeans' square formations.

It is noteworthy that the first three black rulers set themselves against Vodun because of its potentialities for sedition. The plots to overthrow the old régime had come to fruition at apparently innocent Vodun dances. Although the ingenuous aspect of the dance gathering had deceived the white masters, Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe knew the meaning of the assemblies. All three had to drive their people hard and knew that resentment would be an inevitable consequence; it must not have an opportunity to burgeon at nightly gatherings. Toussaint was the strictest of the three, for he forbade all dances and nocturnal assemblage.[12] The other two singled

10. M. E. Descourtilz, *Voyages d'un naturaliste en Haïti, 1799–1803* (Paris, 1935 ed.), pp. 116–118.
11. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, p. 33.
12. In an order of January 4, 1800.

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The other two singled

175 out Vodun dances for their bans, permitting the purely social dances.
643 On the eve of the first anniversary of independence, "as soon as
794 retreat was sounded, African dances of all kinds began in the tents
796 and open fields; the Vaudoux dance alone was proscribed; the noise
671 of the drums did not quiet down until morning."[13] Dessalines was
659 more suspicious of Vodun than the other two for, being a superstitious man himself, he feared that some of his growing number of
798 enemies might use sorcery upon him; consequently whenever his
771 active police reported meetings of Vodun worshipers he had the offenders shot if they could be caught. Practically all Haitians knew how to distinguish the rhythms of Vodun drumbeats from those of other dances, so that it was not particularly difficult to track down the meeting places. What Christophe really believed, no one could say. He paid outward homage to Roman Catholicism, of course, but rumor persisted of his great faith in magic and the power of African fetishes.[14]

175 The élite mulatto presidents, Pétion and Boyer, did not deign to
643 dignify Vodun by prohibiting it. No revelation of their attitude
794 toward it survives, but we may note that no law of their thirty-six-
659 year tenure of the presidency mentions it. From their other opinions one concludes that they regarded it as merely another of the people's
798 innocent and harmless aberrations. Not one of the foreigners whose curiosity about the Negro republic led them to report on Haitian
796 life of this period gives an intelligent account of Vodun as it then
771 was. Macaulay, writing in 1831, for example, describes the annual
114 celebration at the source of Grande Rivière de l'Artibonite; he mentions the festive dances (not Vodun) and singing, then says: "Morning ceremonies consisted of a solemn sacrifice at which the blood of victims immolated for the feast were offered, and libations of wine were poured on the spring."[15] This was clearly a Vodun sacrifice. Brown, in 1837, writes as a religious man:

> No race is, more than the African, given to religious feelings, though these being but mere sensations entirely independent of thought and reason, manifest themselves in a display of idle fooleries, or dark and hideous terrors of the imagination. They intermix the legitimate ritual of the Catholic faith with the mysterious adoration paid to their national Fetishes, and the

13. Madiou, *op. cit.*, III, 186.
14. See Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti*, pp. 90–91.
15. Zachary Macaulay, *Haiti* (Paris, 1835), pp. 90–91.

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African obi and the Catholic priest both come in for a share of their respect and homage.[16]

This is the usual tone of the comment on native religion, as when Candler in 1842 speaks of funerals in country places "with the *rites of heathenism*, such as are practised to this day in the heart of Africa."[17] Of these conventional criticisms of Vodun, one of the more thoughtful is Bonneau's:

> The shocking phantasmagorias of fetishism paralyzed the intellectual development of the African race for six thousand years; superstition is in some sort inherent in its nature. The [Haitian] people need to break with their past. Catholicism has been prodigiously patient and courageous, but it does not possess the necessary corrective for extirpating the fetishism which immobilizes the black population. The Catholic Church, by fractioning the religious sentiment, by forcing thought to diffuse itself in order to take in a thousand secondary details, by imposing on the people practices without number which tend to materialize the cult, by placing as intermediaries between God and men a multitude of saints and genies, encourages and fortifies the tendencies, even the most deplorable ones, of the black race, whose intellect has been shrouded in mist for centuries precisely because it can grasp only with difficulty the relationships between things and ideas, tending rather to lose itself in details than to rise to general and synthetic conceptions.[18]

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If the fixing of periods has any clarifying value, one might set the stages of the development of Vodun as follows:

1730–1790, its Emergence, when the importation of slaves was steadily increasing, with a gradual ascendancy of Dahomean ideas;

1790–1800, its practical Testing in the fires of revolt when, out of apparent innocence and enforced secrecy, Vodun effectively united the slaves in their action for freedom;

1800–1815, its Suppression under the black rulers;

1815–1850, its quiet Diffusion to all the people and assumption of the form it now exhibits.

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The middle of the nineteenth century was the turning point. Before then it had been so to speak in gestation; under Soulouque, then ruling, it publicly emerged. Until the mid-century élite people had

16. Dr. J. Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, II, 273.
17. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, p. 166.
18. A. Bonneau, *Haïti: ses progrès—son avenir*, pp. 24–25.

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175 ignored when they did not frown upon it. As we have seen, the
• 771 aristocratic Madiou spoke of Vaudoux as "the sorcerers of our coun-
794 try districts," and President Riché in 1846 whenever he heard a suspect drum, went himself to silence it. Under Soulouque, on the other hand, the élite did not dare to show contempt for practices so dear to His Imperial (if benighted) Highness; indeed, one priestess of Vodun then boasted, "If I were to beat the sacred drums and march through the city, not one from the Emperor downwards but would humbly follow me."

175 For at least a century Vodun had developed with no real obstacles
771 beyond the twenty-year prohibition of the Three Great Blacks. The
794 white planters in the colonial era had been too indifferent and imper-
798 ceptive to stop it, while the élite of the republic were too proud to concern themselves. The Catholic Church, which might have been its most effective enemy, was too lax and too much hampered in colonial times to curb "slave superstition," while from 1805 until 1860 because of the schism no real Catholic priesthood labored in the country. All this changed after Soulouque: the schism was healed; priests of true missionary spirit came to Haiti; the *Affaire de Bizoton* gave the enemies of Vodun a focal point of attack. Since 1860 the Catholic Church has not ceased its war against the folk religion. Occasionally, as in the days of Toussaint, a ruler has suppressed it. Such executives have probably known, however, that it was much too late to eradicate Vodun. It had decades in which to send down its roots. Efforts against it have about the same effect as the persecution of the early Christians—a strengthening of the faith of believers, an outward submission to restrictive rules but increased devotion to rites now performed secretly, and in the case of Vodun at least, an added attraction to the cult because of this very secrecy. At least one president has been known to be an ardent worshiper. Today, much as the élite turn up their noses at Vodun, there are many who look to it in their hour of need, when the Catholic faith seems to fail or medicine proves helpless.

3. *Vodun Belief*

771 The sincere Vodun worshiper is generally an illiterate peasant or humble laborer who would never bother his mind to formulate a definite statement of his beliefs. Because there is no clearing-house

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for Vodun theology, nor any established order for the service, variety is one of its chief characteristics. Impossible as it is to cite a definitive list of Vodun beliefs, those most generally held might be combined into a Creed, which would run about as follows:

I believe in scores of gods and spirits, guardians of earth and sky, and of all things visible and invisible;

I believe that all these vodun (who are called "loa" or "mystères") are potent, although less majestic than *le bon Dieu* of the Christians; that some of them came with our ancestors from our former home in Africa, while others we have learned about in our Haitian fatherland; that these loa have power to possess us, their worshipers, informing us by inspiration of their needs and desires, which we must faithfully satisfy; that these loa, like us, are capable of good and evil, gentleness and anger, mercy and revenge;

I believe in the efficacy of sacrifice; in the pleasures of living; in respect due to twins; in the careful cult of the dead, who may return to our abodes; in the spiritual causation of diseases and misfortune; in the dance through which we may be "mounted" by our loa; in the possibility of interfering with the normal flow of events by means of magic; in the efficacy of charms and spells; and in the Holy Catholic Church.

Those who conceive of religion in terms of a rigid orthodoxy, monotheism, sin, a moral law, eternal rewards or punishments, will not understand Haitian Vodun. It is as hospitable to new spiritual conceptions as any faith could be, requiring only that the additions be applicable to life as it is lived in the Haitian hills and valleys, and that they adapt their shape and terminology to the native penchant. Monotheism is rarely the practical belief of simple people, but rather of prophets and scholars. It is easy enough to believe in an all-powerful god but much more difficult to arrive at a conception of a unique God. In Dahomey the people had reached some such stage of belief in omnipotence but not of uniqueness. When later, in slavery, transplanted Africans heard the Catholic doctrine of a god who ruled creation by the fiat of his conquering will, they assimilated the idea with a significant change: the Christian God became the Great Master of the other gods. The slaves very simply placed Him at the head of their pantheon. Even today, the first words of a Vodun service are the request for permission from the Great Master to go on with the service. As Dorsainvil says:

This term chosen to designate the supreme God was imposed on them by their environment. The colonist, the master, incarnated for the slave the

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114 highest idea of power and action. Logically, he could not conceive of the
178 unique God of the Christians, by analogy and by inspiration, except in
776 terms of the sentiment of fear mingled with the awe which the colonist inspired in him. Once this first step was taken, the rest was only the work of time. In the degree that the holy beings of Catholicism were unfolded to them, the creole Negroes everywhere identified these with the *vodun* (spirits) of the Dahomean cult.[19]

● 771 The Christian God could not stop the "deifying" process, for Vodun
776 must have simple spiritual explanations for daily occurrences. How could a god who ruled the earth clutter his mind with such small details as the mango crop or one's private aches? There was room of necessity for more, and lesser, gods.

771 Orthodoxy and monotheism, then, are alien to Vodun; so likewise
781 are the notions of sin and a moral law. These also are refined ideas. The Catholic priests do their best to instill into the minds of the people the Church doctrine on these points, but gluttony, envy, sloth, and other deadly sins are not easy to explain to a people whose worldly goods are pitifully few, whose bellies are never full, and who must work hard to live at all. Just how the simple Haitian interprets the fulminations of the fathers against sin a foreigner can hardly tell, and the priests are not at liberty to reveal the secrets of the confessional.[20] A peasant loves life. His pleasures are simple enough, partly because he lacks money for expensive ones. Puritanical self-searching is alien to the normal Haitian. The touchstone is infallible: so long as life moves along smoothly one need not worry; if misfortune comes, one of the spirits is angry or out of sorts and his worshipers must propitiate him. What spirit could mind a man's dancing, drinking clairin, watching a cockfight, or otherwise indulging himself?

771 Vodun does not conceive life to be a struggle between good and
776 evil. Its conception of spirits is anthropomorphic. No man is wholly good or wholly evil, nor is any god; human beings can generally be persuaded into any mood, and so can the gods; as there is variety in human personality, so likewise the gods are not immutable. Some are more to be feared than others, some may be regarded with tender affection, but all are capable of working both weal and woe.

19. Dumainvil, op. cit., p. 36.

[783] 20. A priest once told me that a young Haitian girl in sorrow confessed, as her most heinous sin, that she had given food to a dog. Apparently her idea was that food was too precious to be given away to animals; hence she had sinned.

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A gentle spirit may cause great harm to a person who neglects his commands, while a spirit whose power makes possible the most malignant magic may bring good fortune to his devotee. By conceiving his spirits as in manner and desires resembling himself, the Haitian can understand his little universe without subjecting himself to the bewilderment which faces a simple Christian trying to reconcile an all-loving Father with the obvious evil He allows on earth. 771 776

One must approach Vodun without the religious preconceptions of Christianity or Judaism. Suspending our notions of orthodoxy, monotheism, sin, heaven, and hell, we may examine more closely the creed suggested above, in an endeavor to round out its real meaning to the Haitian.

"I believe in gods and spirits . . ." The white man would recognize most easily among the Haitian's multiple gods the God of Christianity whom every Vodun worshiper confesses. It is this God who is meant in the homely expression of native acceptance of one's lot: "*Bon Dieu bon*"—the good God is really good, however remote. Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are likewise acknowledged, although it seems probable that they do not touch the hearts of people as much as the Great Master. The Blessed Virgin, on the other hand, is very real and near—so real, in fact, that she is sometimes actually merged with a spirit of African origin who has many of the Virgin's storied characteristics. Certain angels and a select group of Christian saints have made a special appeal and so found their niche in Vodun; others are not denied but merely ignored because the Haitian is not well acquainted with them.

To the spirits (one hesitates to use such misleading words as "gods" or "divinities") not drawn from Christianity the name "loa" is applied. There seem in general to be two classes of these: those who have an African origin, and those with a Haitian background only. The former group is called "Rada," the latter "Pétro." The word Rada is derived from the principality of Allada in Dahomey, and would seem thus to indicate that all the Rada loa were Dahomean; this, however, is definitely not the case. Numerous loa can be traced to the Congo region and others to the smaller West African districts, yet all of these are indiscriminately called Rada. In current usage, accordingly, the word has lost its strict geographical significance. The term Pétro is explained in an illuminating paragraph by the Haitian savant, Dr. Dorsainvil: 776 174 192 [192 114]

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796 steadying his attention, he practically hypnotizes him back into full
535 consciousness. As soon as the possessed is normal again, water out of
787 the calabash is poured at the central post and a sign of the cross is made with the candle before it.

796 Contrary to the expectation of thrill-seeking white visitors, the
535 Vodun dance does not merit the name of an orgy. True, the dancers
786 wear their old clothes, for they are going to have violent exercise; true also, those who are possessed give the impression of losing some of their inhibitions. But the dancers do not embrace each other as at a white man's dance; the drinking which occurs is hardly ever excessive; and the climax of a successful dance is a religious experience.
[831] The Haitian is no more obsessed by sex than is the American; indeed, living simply and without many of the artificial restraints of "civilization," he is probably less so. What white visitors sometimes see, under the impression that they are witnessing a Vodun dance, is nothing more than a secular Saturday night social dance. It, too, has drum rhythms instead of an orchestra, musical instruments being rare in Haiti; but the dance has no more religious (or "Voodoo") significance than a barn dance in the United States.

771 Creed and practice go hand in hand in Haiti. The Vodun wor-
776 shiper believes in the loa of his faith and does the things necessary to get in touch with them. These conceptions are the major part of his creed, as the corresponding actions form the bulk of his religious activity.

171 A few articles of the creed remain. "I believe in respect to twins
845 ..." Hundreds of so-called primitive peoples see in twins some special
787 significance, now fortunate, now tragic. Many of the tribes along the Atlantic coast of Africa thought of twins as an omen, so that the presence of ritual regard for them in Haiti is hardly surprising. It is probably incorrect to speak of the worship, or the cult, of twins, for they are not deified, nor is there a common ritual for them: thousands of persons pay them no homage whatever. One family has a high regard for twins because it has numbered them among its ancestors or recent relatives; another family pays respect to all twins because a priest has advised seeking the good luck which comes from *marassa* (twins). There seems to be some confusion of thought about
[782] this aspect of religion: twins are not gods, but merely omens from the gods; yet sacrifices are made to them. Christmas and harvest are the usual seasons for the offering. Food is prepared in the morning

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the dead a right to whatever their survivors possess, and moreover gives them the right to return to earth as ghosts."

Strict rules of mourning prevail, both as regards clothing and behavior. The slightest lapse in the observation of these rules would cause resentment on the part of the dead; fear of retribution would be quite enough to ensure conformity even if public opinion did not. Ghosts have the power to possess mortals, not as the loa do at a Vodun service or dance, but in the manner understood by American Negroes who say they have been "ha'nted," and so, continually thinking of the dead, live in nervous fear of a streak of bad luck. Such possession is a form of persecution, with continual consequent bad luck until the survivor has carried out all his obligations. It is especially significant, however, that a departed spirit takes vengeance only in matters thought by the Haitian to concern the Church. The ghost is not whimsical in his possession of mortals, and cannot resent treatment which is his due. The kind of treatment given a corpse depends upon the kind of death he died: a person struck by lightning, for example, would have no ceremonies at all, for lightning is an act of God.

Where the cult of the dead departs entirely from the teachings of the Church is in the matter of magic, a topic shortly to be treated. It may be briefly stated here that ghosts can be summoned back by special adepts for purposes of divination; that certain corpses are thought to be revivified by evil persons who use these soulless, pathetic automata as slaves (these are the notorious *zombis*); and that black magic—that is, powerful influence for evil—can be worked by sorcerers who know how to command ghosts.

All other articles of the Vodun creed not already discussed, except one, come under the heading of magic. That exception is the statement: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." The fact is as simple as the affirmation. If the Catholic priests fight Vodun, preaching frequently against its beliefs and practices, that is unfortunate, think the peasants: Vodun does not retaliate by fighting Catholicism. God and the saints have their province, and the loa theirs. The mind of the Haitian is simple enough to accept both sets of spiritual beings, and not philosophical enough to worry over the contradiction. Practically every Vodun worshiper thinks of himself as a Catholic.[32]

31. See Herskovits, op. cit., p. 215.

32. In this sketch of the Vodun creed, it has been constantly emphasized that each locality has its own variations both in belief and practice. The reader who is interested in pursuing the subject further should consult the works of Price-Mars, Herskovits, Deslandes, Parsons, Hurston, et al. See Bibliography.

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4. *Magic*

• 771 It is difficult enough to make a distinction between religion and superstition; it is practically impossible, in dealing with a people who in their closeness to nature are not accustomed to the refinements of "civilized" thinking, to make one between magic and certain aspects of religion. Underlying both is belief in the supernatural; characteristic of both is a faith which recognizes a higher order of cause and effect operating with the lower one familiar in commonplace matters. Anthropologists hold various theories about magic, some saying that it is the set of practices out of which religion evolved, others that it exists for personal and practical ends and has little to do with religion; still others that it is a development out of religion, paralleling and complementing it.[35]

771 One element which distinguishes religious practice from magic is
789 the attitude toward spirits. In religion, the worshiper pays homage
782 and humbly petitions, preserving meanwhile an attitude of humility to spirits or gods who must be propitiated; in magic, the human being, by coercive words and actions, commands the services of spirits who (if the magical rites have been properly performed) must obey. The distinction is not between good and evil, for a god may have both characteristics and be entirely capable of working harm to mortals. As already noted, in the Haitian system the gods are like men in being mixtures of both principles.

771 Another difference between religion and magic concerns time.
789 Religion is social, open to all worshipers or at least to all of a group
796 or social rank. Its rites are continually and repeatedly performed. Magic, on the contrary, though sometimes public and social, is generally private and, since it is for a specific purpose, is performed only when the need arises. A man who was thoroughly conversant with magic might go through his whole life without ever feeling the need of employing it or having to exert himself to fend it off. One turns to magic as a sophisticated man might turn to medicine. Either may be done without; both may be used to excess.

789 In Haitian Vodun, magic interweaves itself with the general faith.
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35. See, for example, Ruth Benedict, "Magic," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, X, 39–44; A. Goldenweiser, *Early Civilization* (New York, 1922), chaps. X–XI; J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (London, 1907–15), *passim*; R. R. Marett, *The Threshold of Religion* (New York, 1914), *passim*; and Sumner and Keller, *op. cit.*, II, chaps. XXIX–XXXI.

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pronounced; later the lightning will strike, the disease will come, the child will die: the connection between curse and calamity will seem too obvious for contradiction. About certain persons is a look (some call it an aura) of evil which is almost palpable: folk belief has an explanation. For much of the mysterious coincidence in life a sophisticate will simply shrug his shoulders and attempt no explanation; he accepts his doctor's diagnosis or his lawyer's advice, and when these betray him falls back upon the many insurances of civilization. The Haitian needs an explanation for his ills, for he lacks doctors, lawyers, insurance: the explanation of magic may be incorrect, but it is the only one he has and it is backed up by events often enough to seem true.

Life is full of mishaps. The Haitian's loa are as real to him as the mountains and trees of his country. It is not to be wondered, therefore, that the peasant thinks his loa directly responsible for much of the evil that befalls. In this explanation the Haitian is not different from millions of other people, even Christians. It would, however, be a great mistake to emphasize the fear in Vodun faith and in the magic which proceeds from it to such an extent that the bright side is forgotten. The gods are likewise responsible for the good luck of mankind. If a man deeply desires to attain a specific good, there is room in both religion and magic for that also. It may be the love of a girl, money to pay a debt, a propitious day for holding a *coumbite* (or coöperative working bee), the birth of a son instead of a daughter: religion and magic avail for all of these, more with some individuals than with others. When an entire community holds a belief, the magic has a double chance of working. It is easier for a man to win his wife if she knows he is working magic to that end, than to persuade her without magic. This kind of magic is also easier to work than that which depends wholly upon the complaisance of the loa, as when rain is needed for crops at the proper time.

Religion, with its sister magic, is not for the Haitian a matter of special days, vague abstractions, or formal propriety. It is a daily strength for daily needs.

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VIII

RELIGIOUS BORROWINGS

•771 ROMAN Catholicism in Haiti is, as we have seen, the officially approved, socially proper, and outwardly recognized religion. Vodun, on the contrary, is legislated against and driven into the background by the élite who are ashamed to have foreigners see the power in their country of a folk religion which has its crude side. These two are Haiti's faiths.

794 No one takes a census in Haiti, for the peasants have their suspicions of officials who pry into personal affairs. There is consequently no way of knowing precisely how many Haitians regard themselves as "belonging" to the Catholic Church. The priests list the whole population of a diocese as Catholic. In so doing they are probably not far wrong, for although not every person gets to confession each year or attends to his other religious duties, certainly nineteen out of twenty Haitians, élite and common folk alike, would claim to be Catholics. On the whole, it may be that the simple people are more sincere in this, for they are not touched with skepticism where things spiritual are concerned.

771 171 In the United States censuses of religious bodies, if an individual is listed as a member of one denomination he cannot be listed as a member of another. We are trained to religious exclusiveness: we are either Baptists *or* Methodists, Jews *or* Catholics. Not every people, however, has schooled itself to such sharp distinctions. The Japanese Buddhist may regard himself as a worshiper of Shinto as well; the Chinese can be Taoist and Confucian at the same time. By our rigidity we deny ourselves a great deal of inner comfort: I may like the earnest fervor of the Missionary Baptists but like as well the stately ritual of Anglo-Catholicism; I must accept one or the other, however, for if I am a member of the former sect I cannot at the same time be admitted to all the rights and privileges of the latter. There is probably a spiritual compensation resulting from such single-minded allegiance, but we are frequently forced to deny

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validity to forms and ideas which we know, in our hearts, might sustain us.[1]

The Haitian peasant is not interested in making formal distinctions. If he is critical, it is only of results, rarely of the means used to obtain those results. If he cannot gain his ends in one way he is not too proud to try another, and still a third. Nineteen out of twenty Haitians, then, being Roman Catholics in religion, are likewise worshipers of Vodun. There is so much mystery in the world, so much misfortune, beauty, sorrow, and joy that it would be unthinkable to deny God or the gods: mankind has worship enough for them all, and need enough of them all. There is to the peasant no conflict between Vodun and Catholicism; the two are complementary, even if sometimes the Catholic priests make coöperation impossible.

Let us recall for a moment the earlier history of the country. In the days of slavery one may imagine the Church would have found it difficult, even if its priests and planters had been willing, to train all the blacks as thorough Catholics. Some concepts took root, some rites immediately appealed. Below the surface, however, the African ideas of the preponderant Dahomeans were spreading through the plantations. In the crucial early days of independence, when the customs and social institutions of the Haitians (as Haitians, not as expatriate slaves) were in process of formation, the country's rulers were not deeply religious; moreover the State was in open schism from the Church. For fifty-five years no approved churchman was at work with the people. The seventy men whom some historians mention as priests were on the whole venal and self-seeking, even vicious. Their least concern was to wean the people away from their superstitions, for precisely in these folk beliefs lay the greatest source of gain. By the time the breach between State and Church was healed it was too late to make single-minded Catholics of the Haitian peasants. They would accept what the new and active priests taught them, but not to the exclusion of what they had believed for a century.

With the élite the Church has had more success; assiduous teach-

1. This either-or dichotomy is not limited to religion: we divide our lives similarly, in politics, family life, residence, and so on. If I am a Lutheran, a Republican, a married man with a home in New York, I cannot at the same time be an Episcopalian, a Democrat, and a voter in Chicago with a second spouse and family there. What is impossible and ridiculous for Americans, however, is in some ways the normal course of life for the Haitian.

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565 ing since 1860 has had its effect upon the children of the upper classes.
● 771 Two hundred churchmen working with a population of more than two million cannot distribute their benefits equally. Teachers must devote themselves to those whose minds are educable, who have access to schools, and who can afford time for daily classes. An element of social snobbishness entered as well. Catholicism was socially accepted in the Western World whose approval the élite coveted, where Vodun if known at all was regarded as a mere superstition. To prove his separation from the peasant black, the élite person was therefore Catholic or nothing.

[777] It would have required many times two hundred teaching brothers and sisters, all with the zeal of fanatics and the energy of dynamos, to convert the masses away from Vodun. In acquainting the peasants with Church forms and certain beliefs the priests have been entirely successful; in making exclusive Catholics of them they have had no success at all.

771 Every vital social institution is continually in a process of change.
177 Vodun, a very living faith, has steadily borrowed more and more from Catholicism, the only other religion with which the people come in close contact. When one can go from a Saturday night Vodun sacrifice and dance to a Sunday morning Catholic Mass with no feeling of incongruity, it is obvious that the minds of the worshipers are actively predisposed to assimilation of creed and ritual.

796 We have suggested in a previous chapter some traces of the Catholic Mass in Vodun ceremony. The Vodun service regularly begins with a long ritual which the observer who knows both the Créole language and the Catholic liturgy recognizes as being almost entirely Roman. While the Vodun houngan sits quietly by, a special officiant known as the *prêt' savanne* (bush priest) reads or pretends to read from the Catholic prayer book. For the Pater Noster, the creed, the Ave Maria, the Salve Regina, and the prayers, the worshipers kneel or stand as they would in church. Candles burn, water is sprinkled, the sign of the cross is made, the chants are sung. When the benediction completes this part of the service, the houngan takes over to conduct the purely African rites; yet his first words are, "*Grâce mize'-cordé*," and many Catholic interpolations appear even in this second part of the service.

[778] The Vodun ritual is conducted before an altar, in Haitian Créole
[192] called a "trône," which is a perfect marriage between Vodun and

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marvelously aided in distress. The priest, not willing to allow even this "delusion," tried to cut down the tree but was wounded by his own machete. Eventually, however, the tree was destroyed by natural causes, and a church erected on the site. Fire destroyed the church. Each successive church building has likewise been destroyed, by fire or by lightning. No longer now does the Catholic Church combat the sanctity of Saut d'Eau: after all, it was the Virgin who appeared, not a loa. The great celebrations on every fifteenth of July draw pilgrims from all over Haiti. Although the Church now grudgingly approves the feast it is still recognizably Vodun in character, for devout souls who bathe in the water are "mounted" by loa. The Church has a hard battle ahead of it to win this festival for Catholicism.

Three factors work in favor of the Catholic struggle to win Haitians completely away from Vodun: the world-wide organization of the Church, which can always throw trained reserves into the battle; the superior intellectual equipment of the priests, enabling them to plan their campaign and use psychological weapons; and the plasticity of Vodun itself, which is a conglomeration of human feelings, ideas, and traditions rather than a rigid sect with an inflexible ritual.[1] Even with these advantages, it is still the battle of a few dozen men on one side with the Haitian masses (more than two million) on the other. So far as one is ever justified in prophecy, it seems safe to assume that Vodun will continue to assimilate more and more fragments of Catholicism; that its appeal will remain so long as education and medicine are not extended to the whole countryside; that eventually—it may be centuries hence—Vodun rites may sink back into the status of living folklore, to which the simple turn in their deepest need.

One of the strongest missionary advantages of the Roman Catholic Church has been the breadth given it by two thousand years of experience. In so long a life it has had to be all things to all men; out of necessity it has developed around the central core so wide a variety of belief, doctrine, form, and traditional practice, that there is something for every believer, whether scholarly or untutored, powerfully important or humbly obscure. What the cultivated

1. The absence of any written formulation of Vodun must certainly be a factor in its flexibility. Recorded tradition and written history tend to create definiteness of pattern.

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WHAT THE CULTIVATED

[177] member of the Haitian élite takes from Catholicism is quite different
177 probably from what the peasant absorbs: the point is that the peasant
[184] does not find the faith either incomprehensible, or uncongenial to his own tradition and penchants—as he might find the tenets of, say, Unitarianism or Presbyterianism. It is easy to fit the Trinity, the Virgin, the saints, the Mass, holy water, Lent, and practically every other external aspect of belief and ritual into his mental set. He makes his own selection and his own reconciliations. It seems the most natural thing in the world to him to light a candle and make the sign of the cross as he baptizes a new drum for use in the Vodun dance. The Haitian peasant, in fact, makes a tranquil unity of his two religions, to match the obvious oneness of his universe.

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562 The male, by contrast, is master in all matters, including those pertaining to home life. Obviously, he is much freer in his sexual life than is his wife.

586 Divorce is comparatively rare, thanks to the careful solicitude of all parties before formal marriage is contracted, and to the disapproval of the Catholic Church. Since the husband is not, by custom or by public opinion, bound to limit his sexual attentions to his legal wife, one of the common causes of divorce is removed. The code [837] allows formal divorce to the husband for the wife's adultery, and to the wife for her husband's adultery "when he shall bring his concubine into the common dwelling house." Both spouses may secure divorce for excess, for injurious cruelty, for life sentences imposed by [587] a court—"*peines afflictives et infamantes.*" A woman whose marriage has been dissolved by divorce cannot remarry before the expiration of one year, nor is she permitted to remarry her former husband. [562] The opposition of the Church to divorce is a distinct deterrent to [771] women who crave freedom, for women are generally the more devout members of the Church.

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minister or an outstanding intellectual. Variations are frequently (some even say generally) mere casual accidents, surprising inspirations of the moment. The changes which have come over the face of the Vodun religion are examples: in almost no instance can the additions or emendations be traced back to their originators, yet Vodun is clearly different now from what it was in Boyer's time. Just as no one knows who initiates a change in the folkway of language, coining a slang phrase, modifying a pronunciation, so the makers of most variations in folkways and mores are anonymous.

Given infinite time and patience, one might compile a list of mores in any country, beginning first with those which require absolute conformity from all persons, and running down to those which express social ideals but which may nevertheless be honored in the breach. In our own country, the mores condemning incest and cannibalism are not only our rules but our unanimous practice; and if a person breaks either we punish him severely. At the other end of our list are those mores requiring truthfulness and honor. In calling these American mores we pay homage to an ideal—and then tell our white lies as a part of the observance of social amenities, or make our "shrewd" business deals in order to get on in the world. For neither of these breaches of the mores is there any concerted social punishment; on the contrary, we have been known to praise those who broke them. In describing the culture of a society, therefore, it is necessary to report both the mores as ideal and the mores as practice.

The larger and more complex a society becomes, the fewer the mores shared in common by all members of that society. In a small colonial American village, isolated from much contact with strangers, the whole population was bound by scores of mores touching all phases of life. In modern America, on the contrary, if one should consider American society as a whole it would probably be difficult to find a dozen mores shared commonly by us all, or if shared, exerting the same force to conformity. We have had to develop a measure of tolerance with our 130 million neighbors, a live-and-let-live principle which has been aptly called "antagonistic coöperation."

Each district in Haiti, in the effective isolation of illiteracy and sedentary life, has developed its own characteristic mores, of which a limited number correspond with those of other Haitian districts. It is these general correspondences which have been treated in this book. Within each district, likewise, there is the usual hierarchy of rules

[P.19]

3. The Loa: Gods of the Haitian Mountains

The supernatural world of the common people of Haiti is a vast, rich, and unexplored world. It is peopled with thousands of gods who may at any time come down a rocky mountain trail, or up from the bottom of the sea, or out of the springs where people drink, to enter the houn*for* of the Vodoun priest or the humblest of thatched huts. The gods—variously called *loa, mystère, houmaïd, or vodoun*,[1]—may come at strange, unexpected moments to the unlikeliest places. Yet whenever they come they are recognized for what they are. The things they say and do bear the mark of their character and their special powers, and usually there is little disagreement over their identity. 776

The Haitians tell you that the loa live "in Africa," or on "the island below the sea," or "beneath the water," or in a mythological city called La Ville-aux-Camps. The loa are believed to share this residing place with the spirits of certain categories of the dead. What goes on in the land of the loa is no man's knowledge and every man's conjecture. They say that a few privileged people have been able to go down "below the water" and return. 776 772 787

In the region of Gros Morne there is a legend of a woman named Madame Ste Ile who went under the water and returned after seven years. There is another widespread tale of a man near La Bai Mountique who, in full public view, walked into the bay and disappeared, and returned in a few hours bearing a cake in his hands—a gift from the loa below the water. And in the hills near Aux Cayes in the south a story is told about a loa named *Général* Clermeil, who drove up in a fine carriage and carried off a woman to his place below the water. 776 787

On certain occasions the loa come to pass the time among their "children" in Haiti. When a loa comes to the people he enters the body of one or another of them, or he enters many of them at the same time. In cult terminology, these people are his "horses." The loa mounts his horses, as

[1] [For footnote, see category 116, pp. 349-350 - Author]

2: Courlander 8-5 (1927-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

houngan took his place before the small altar and the cross surmounted by the skull. Again he spoke *langage* and rattled his asson. He took from the altar a small-necked bottle containing a white alcoholic liquid and a tight-fitting iron cross. The presence of the iron cross inside the bottle was represented as a magical phenomenon. The houngan took a mouthful of the white liquid and sprayed it out in a fine mist over the skull. Twice more he sprayed the mist, in different directions. Then he poured a little of the liquid directly on the skull. The room was filled with the smell of alcohol. The houngan lighted a candle and sat in a low chair facing the altar. He shook his asson rhythmically and spoke *langage* to Pinga Maza. Suddenly Pinga Maza entered the houngan's head. The houngan became violent. He jerked this way and that, making strange noises in his throat. He seized a machete from the altar, waved it around, and struck the flat of it against his head. He continued for a while to beat his head fiercely with the machete. Gradually he became quiet. His assistants placed Pinga's red jacket on him. Now he spoke in the tired voice of an old man. He complained that he was hungry, that he had not eaten for a long while. His assistant handed him a razor blade. He placed it in his mouth, chewed it up, and swallowed it, washing it down with more of the white liquid in the bottle. He asked for more, and they gave him a second blade to eat. He demanded a third, and ate that, too, spitting out small fragments of steel that caught in his teeth.

His assistant told him there was a man present seeking advice about a pouin. The possessed houngan looked around with half-closed eyes. He asked the man his name, and what he wanted. After hearing the client's story, the houngan took out a deck of cards and placed them one at a time, face up, on a winnowing tray. After studying the cards he said: "You are strong, but not strong enough. You already have some protections, but they do not protect you from the dangers coming your way. You have powerful enemies. You must have a new pouin." The man said yes, he wanted a new pouin, but how much would it cost? Pinga replied through the mouth of the houngan: "Twenty-five dollars." The man said: "I will get the money and return." He went out after placing five gourdes on the winnowing tray with the cards. Pinga became drowsy. The houngan's head fell forward on his chest and he slept. The divining session was ended.

The Water Loas

The land where the loa live, the place "below the water," is not thought of as being in the water itself. It is dry and airy, like the countryside of Haiti. But the route to it is through water.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1948) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

of Haiti. But the route to it is through water. When the Haitians say "under the water" they do not mean under the sea. The ocean is regarded as the special domain of Agwé, La Sirène, and a few related deities, but it has nothing to do with most loa. "Under the water" specifically means under the springs, the rivers, and the fresh-water lakes. Fresh water has the greatest of significance in relation to most of the Vodoun deities.

When a loa comes to visit his Haitian children he comes by way of the *chimin dlean* (the water road)—that is to say, by way of the river, the waterfall, or the spring. Because the spring is the primary source of fresh water, it is the most direct means of contact with the land of the loa. Tales are heard everywhere of persons who, drawing water from the spring at night, heard the voices of loa or the sound of singing and drumming coming up from somewhere below. And virtually all the tales about human beings who visited the land of the loa describe them as descending into a river or disappearing into a waterfall.

The loa are accustomed to traveling by the "water road." And in all aspects of the Vodoun service, this "water road" is refreshed and replenished. When the road is dry, contact with the loa is diminished. When it is moist, the loa travel easily.

Thus, the houngan constantly uses water to entice and invite the deities. He holds a glass or pitcher of water at the center pole of his peristyle. He extends it toward the four cardinal points. He spills water at the foot of the center pole. He spills water in the hounfor at the foot of the *pé*, or altar. He sets a pitcher of water at the gateway of his *habitation*. And often, during a service, he pours a pathway of water in the dust from his gateway into his peristyle. Within nearly every hounfor there is at least one *bassin*, or pool, dedicated to the loa who is the *maît' caille*, the master of the house. These pools are carefully filled with water drawn from the springs. They are places of rest and refreshment for the deities whose names or portraits are inscribed on the walls above.

Sometimes rites and services are held at the site of the spring, the houngan and his entourage marching down to it from the hounfor for the occasion. So, too, there are annual pilgrimages to waterfalls such as Saut d'Eau, where the loa mount their "horses" in profusion.

Within the hounfor, during a service, the cult priest and the servitors pour "libations" of water on the earth, so that the loa may be refreshed. And virtually without end, the hounfor is the scene of ritual ceremonies in which the loa is bathed and thus "renewed" in the heads of his servitors.[2]

[2 [For footnote, See category 16, P. 351 -- Analyst]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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twins and the dead make a single chapter for us." This point of view is supported by a study of the twin cult as found in that part of West Africa from which so much of Haitian culture came, where a single category of the supernatural world, comprising all ancestors, includes both twins and the dead, as well as all others "who have passed through the womb of a woman." As might be expected, the concept is more elaborated in West Africa than in Haiti; but the important point is that in Haiti, though less explicitly formulated, it has persisted.

To worship twins it is not necessary either for a family to number them among its members of this generation, or to have included them within the memory of those living, for it is sufficient if a tradition exists that twins had once been born to some member of the family. If the twins are alive or lived in recent times, sacrifices are given both at Christmas and at harvest time; otherwise only at Christmas. Some families, indeed, worship twins because a *houngan* has divined that their unknown ancestors in "Guinée" had included them. There are still others who decide to worship the *marasa* without the advice of a diviner, because certain benefits are believed to come to those who worship twins, because of their power for good or evil.[1]

The source of this power is vague; one characteristic answer to a question concerning it was: "Their power comes from God. Do we ourselves know how twins are made?" It is agreed, however, that St. Nicholas is their spiritual father—an opinion based on the tale of this saint, held to have been a sorcerer who, in very early times, killed three *marasa* (the twins themselves and the *dosu*, or child after twins) and salted them away in a barrel. The mother of the children came to him to offer up her prayers, and, touched by her sorrow, he resuscitated them, since when he has been their "father." The power of twins, whatever its source, is very real to the Haitians. They are believed to be able to predict rain, for ex-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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time, or are animals given power as *baka* by these *loa*. The "squad" of the *baka* includes the following: 776 787 754

'Ti Kita Demembré	Simbi Proméné
'Ti Jean Pié Sèche	Simbi en Deux Eaux
Erzilie Gé Rouge	Simbi 'Troi' Z'ilé

Baka appear as small bearded human-like figures with flaming eyes, or as cattle, horses, asses, goats, bears(?), and dogs. Sheep never become *baka* because the sheep, as represented on the chromolithographs, is the animal of the Virgin and therefore cannot be a creature of evil. The mule also is never a *baka* for reasons given in the myth explaining how it came to be accursed. 776 825

[773]

> One day Jesus came down a path astride a mule. When he came to a crossroads a snake so frightened the mule that he reared on his hind legs, throwing Jesus to the ground. Jesus became angry and cursed him, saying that from that day onward mules would never bear offspring. He also cursed the snake, saying that thereafter it must forever go about on its belly.

Whether because of this or because of its long, alert ears, the mule is favored for night travel, for this animal is held able to sense these creatures of evil and give his rider warning of them. A black cat can become a *baka*, but there are also good black cats that drive away evil spirits. Even if a black cat-*baka* is sent away, nothing happens to its owner.

A *baka* named Bakuko, sometimes called Bakuba Baka, is believed to live in the *mapou* tree, where he is "fed" in December. "He is the chief of [evil] magic, is magic itself," it is said, and "*C'est baggui diabolique, gros baka* — he is a thing of the Devil, a great *baka*." For this reason the *mapou* tree is greatly feared, and that is why those who "serve" the gods of the *mapou* do it in secret and are dealt with circumspectly. 776 824

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1939) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

When they are not working, it is said, zombies are tied with special ropes made from the leaves of the banana tree. One popular song goes:

> Nous Lôgnone
> Yo mawé zombie nous pailla fig-banane!
> Abolou wye-oh!
>
> In Lôgnone
> They tie the zombie with banana straw!
> That is all, *wye-oh!*

Some Haitians tell you they know there are zombies because they have seen them. Not too many years ago a visiting writer stoutly declared that she, too, knew there were zombies because she had seen one—in the mental hospital at Pont Beudet. Although her reasoning was not quite airtight, the possibility that mental defectives are sometimes mistaken for zombies is worth considering.

Houngans who "work with two hands" are reputed to be able to gain permanent control over persons by means of a formula known as *tuyé-lévé* (kill and raise). Either for himself or a client, the houngan gains power over the victim by "killing" him through special magic and then "removing the soul" (*retiré n'âme*). The victim, presumed to be normally dead, is buried by his family; the houngan then retrieves the body and "restores the soul" (*mettré n'âme*). With his soul restored, the victim has, in effect, become a slave of the houngan, who can do with him as he wishes. He differs from a zombie in that he has a soul, whereas the zombie has none.

Some Haitians believe that even one who has died a nonmagic death may be raised from the dead. To accomplish this, the houngan or bocor stands over the body, goes through a specified ritual, and calls out the dead person's name: "Albert Marcus! Albert Marcus! Albert Marcus! Lévé non! Lévé non! Lévé non!" ("Get up! Get up! Get up!") Then, it is said, the dead man may awaken.

It is believed that a houngan may also command the souls of dead persons to perform services for him against an enemy. The souls at his disposal for this work are those which he keeps in earthern jars in his houmfor. Should he wish to plague an enemy, he will send one of these souls to the man's house to make him sick, or lazy, or insane. Usually, the man does not know what is happening to him; but if he becomes aware that a dead soul is working on him, he attempts to find out which houngan has sent it. Perhaps the houngan can be bought off. If not, another houngan may provide relief.

While some believe in the reality of the various demons and spectres,

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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a mat or a cloth, supported in a reclining position with pillows and cloths, or on a covered box standing about a foot from the ground, with her legs drawn up. No fire is built in the house, all doors and windows are tightly shut, and covers are provided against a chill. A candle stands lighted at the threshold, and holy water is poured beside it; a candle is also often lighted in the church before the statue of the saint who corresponds to the *vodun* deity under whose protection the woman in labor is thought to be. In the room with her is the midwife and as many as six, seven, eight, or nine older women belonging to the families of the woman and her husband. The hands of the woman are made to rest on her knees, but where labor is prolonged, her arms are supported above her head to afford relief. She is three times given very hot tea or a drink made of the stewed leaves of the mango tree and of the *bois lait*. The midwife, with palm oil on her hands, watches the rhythm of labor and presses on the abdomen to facilitate delivery.

If it becomes evident that this will be difficult, a *vodun* priest is at once called to determine by divination whether or not the deities who have been propitiated are satisfied. If the answer is a negative one, he promises future sacrifices or gives minor offerings immediately. Care is also taken to ascertain whether the trouble is due to the discontent of the family dead who may have been angered by neglect to wear mourning for them, or because sacrifices or a service due them have been delayed too long. Inquiries are similarly made to determine whether the spirits of twins might not be displeased, while the possibility that evil magic may have been invoked is not overlooked, especially if the husband has several wives. If the inquiry shows that the magic of a co-wife was responsible, a strong counter-charm is made at once. Should the woman in labor eventually die, however, her death is not considered to be the result of any act of infidelity on her part, and does not, as in other Negro cultures, prevent the usual burial and mourning customs being carried out.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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for though some gods are feared far more than others, and some generally regarded with affection, even these latter bring great harm to a neglectful devotee, while the gods whose power validates the most malignant magic may, in certain situations, work for the good of their worshippers. Especially has there been great confusion in discussions of the so-called Dom Pétro worship. Whether or not the origin of the term as given by St. Mery is correct — that it derives from the name of its founder, a Spanish Negro from Petit-Goâve[18] — the statements that have been made concerning it are in the main misleading.[19] Thus, it is not true that the Pétro gods are unqualifiedly evil and the Rada deities unqualifiedly good; nor that blood sacrifices are made exclusively at Pétro ceremonies, while the services for other gods are innocent of such sacrificial offerings. The impression gathered in Mirebalais concerning the Pétro gods is that they are principally, though not exclusively, derived from the process of deification of powerful ancestors, which in Africa exists in forms that clearly explain the essential tradition that offers a basis for this custom as found in Haiti. This is reinforced by statements to the effect that most of the Pétro "squad" are Créole or native gods as against the Guinde deities in the other groupings. One member of the *vodun* cult, indeed, made the concept of deifying the powerful dead explicit, saying that Pétro was a great and evil *vodun* priest who had died with the *loa* not "taken from his head." For while a general principle in the cult of the dead is that in the normal course of events those who die deliver up their souls to God, making the care for these souls primarily a concern of the Church, it is recognized that there are others such as this Dom Pedro who become *loa*. This occurs when an individual, usually a priest or priestess of the *vodun* cult, who during his lifetime was known to possess great supernatural power, dies without having had his *loa* "withdrawn from his head." Burdened by these spirits, and therefore unable to get to God, his soul goes to the bottom of

L: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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a stream, there to remain until, becoming impatient, it demands to be taken out. A ceremony then brings back the tortured soul and makes of it a "*loa nan canarie* — a *loa* in a jar" — which thereafter acts as a guard for its family.

There is little agreement as to the place of residence of the *loa*. In general, it is believed that they come from Guinée each time they are called, returning when they have, in the native idiom, "descended from the heads of their horses" — that is, when the possession of their devotees has ceased. Those "under the water," however, being Haitians, remain in Haiti for seven years until the ceremony just mentioned, of putting them *nan canarie*, has been performed, when they, like the other *loa*, return to Guinée. At the same time, all recognize the African character of the *loa*, whether they be gods brought from Africa or the Créole *loa* from Haiti itself.

Worship of the *loa* is directed by priests of the cult. The terms *papaloi* and *mamaloi* as designations for male and female priests, almost universally employed by non-Haitian writers, are practically unknown in Mirebalais, where, as in most regions of Haiti, a priest is called a *hungan*, a priestess a *mambu*.[20] Besides the *hungan* (or *mambu*), and the *gangan*, a term applied to a *hungan* of renown, is the *bocor*, a practitioner of magic, not a member of any *vodun* priesthood, but a man who has acquired his power by the purchase of spirits. He is particularly differentiated from the *hungan* and *mambu* by the fact that the *loa* of their own accord are believed to have given "*connaissance*" — the knowledge of healing and helping, to these latter.[20] Not all gods can endow their devotees with this *connaissance*. Some of the Rada deities, in addition to those of the Ogun group who give it, are Legba, Dumballa, Aizan, Bosu, St. Jean, and Agwe Woyo; among the Pétro gods it is conferred by Bosu Trois Cornes, Simbi d'Eau, Gede, Osange, Malt' Gran' Bois, and Malt' Calfou (Carrefour). Simbi en Deux Eaux and Simbi Pressédé both give magic power, the former conferring knowledge of excellent preventives against

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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764 to which orange leaves and alcohol have been added, and soap are used to bathe the corpse, though limes are substituted for
[198] orange leaves if the dead was tubercular.[4] In earlier days caolin (white lime) — sacred in Africa — was mixed with the water, but this is no longer done. The corpse is turned on its face to permit the washing of side and back, and the body is dried with a towel, while the soiled water is either thrown into a small ravine or into a hole dug for the purpose.

764 The corpse is next dressed in new clothing, unless the one
775 who died owned a wardrobe which included black garments. No buttons or pins are used on new clothes, which are sewn into place, and if the body is dressed in clothing he wore while alive, the pockets are torn so that nothing can be
[198] carried away in them. Shoes were at one time put into the coffin — or sandals in the country — beside the dead, rather than on his feet, so that he would not be tempted to walk, but today in Mirebalais and the surrounding country the dead are buried barefoot or in stocking feet, since, as it was explained, "otherwise they make too much noise as they go about." Black stockings are always used. In the coffin are placed a rosary, a scapulary, soap, a comb, a handkerchief, a pipe (if the dead had been a smoker), and face powder; but no strong drink is included because, were the spirit of the dead person to become drunk, this would be dangerous; and no money, for if so much as a single sou were given the dead, he would return and take the rest of the family wealth. Similarly no food is put in the coffin, for otherwise it is believed that the ghost would be so busy eating he would never find the route to the sky. Pins are carefully excluded, because if the dead were given sharp objects, he would return to prick
764 the family. If it is suspected that death had been caused by
775 sorcery, and the soul of the dead may later be taken to aid in
754 working black magic, some plants of the type called *boboli*
824 are placed in the coffin with the body. These plants are said to contain so many seeds that since one who comes to take the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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dead must first count them, he can never accomplish this before daylight. From these precautions, it is evident that for the Haitian the reality of existence after death is no fictional one, as is even more vividly illustrated in the answer given to the question whether or not a flute, such as young boys play, would be placed in the coffin of a lad: "What! And have the dead going about all the time blowing it?"[4]

764 775 [759] [824]

When dressed, the body is placed on a mat or mattress or in a hammock and covered with a clean cloth. A *bande de machoire*, which goes under the chin and over the head to hold the jaw in place, in earlier days, as today in remote sections of the valley, served the double purpose of making possible the identification of a ghost as such, and of keeping the moisture inside the mouth. At present, however, it is usually removed when the body is placed in the coffin. In earlier times also, as today among the peasants in the hills, the nostrils and ears were plugged with cotton. The body and head are shaved of all hair, and the finger- and toe-nails clipped; hair and clippings are later placed in the coffin and buried with the body. The eyes usually close naturally; it is a bad sign if they do not, indicating, as it does, that magic has caused death. Putrefaction, or any unusual sign connected with death such as when a cadaver swells, or a body remains warm and perspires, or, as mentioned, when the eyes remain open, is held to be an indication that the soul has been taken by a sorcerer and the person "sold"—all signalling a "bad" death and requiring that a dagger be struck into the body and burial take place immediately.

764 [302] [826] [789] [754]

Some time later, the *prêt' savanne* comes to read prayers if the death has occurred in the countryside, or the priest of the local Catholic church if in the town or near it. After the prayers have been said and relatives and friends have addressed the dead and "given him commissions," such as "Say good-day to my mother," "Ask my father to help us, for the weather has been bad this year for the crops . . ." the body is

[793]

L: Herskovits E-4,6 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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and, wearying of the singing, join the group outside the hoûc, where those playing games and the story-tellers are gathered. One popular game is "forfeits," and a forfeit, if reclaimed by a girl, requires the singing of a *chanson de romance*, or if by a man, calls for the recitation of a poem or a humorous folk-tale. Before a forfeit is returned, all sing to a hand-clapping accompaniment:

C'est bien bon,	It is very good.
C'est bien bon,	It is very good.
Aha!	Aha!

Card-games, such as *mariai* (marriage), *trois-sept*, and *bezique*, are also played. All these games are entered into with zest, for an important purpose in holding the wake is to amuse the dead, whose body lies near by, and thus send him away in good humor. When drinks are passed, the recipients must make three libations before drinking, one explanation holding that this is in accordance with the formula Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, another that the offering is for the *loa*, the dead, and the *maroue*. At about five o'clock in the morning the angelus closes the wake, after which most of those present leave, and only close friends and relatives remain to help with preparations for the funeral. This must take place the day following death, not only because of a legal requirement, but because of the fact that were a body to remain unburied for two nights, the expense of two wakes would have to be met. Before the ceremony of burial takes place, small children are often passed over the coffin three times, in leave-taking, that the spirit of the dead may not return for them.

The funeral itself is held in accordance with the rites of the Church, the difference between funerals consisting principally in the elaborateness of the ritual and the length of time the church bells are tolled, which in turn is determined by the ability of the family of the dead to meet the varying fees. Thus at the funeral of the mother of the *député* from Mire-

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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tainer to a crossroad, where it is deposited as an offering for Legba, and its contents are eaten by the dogs, who significantly, in Dahomey are the animals sacred to this deity. Following this, the adults enter the closed room, to feast at the laden table.

Several days after the funeral two gourdes are paid a priest — "a real one," not a *petit' sèmune* — to chant a *libera* at the grave, a rite that must be repeated each year on All Saints' Day. Each year, also, food is given the dead, though "not so much as following a funeral." Chickens, beans, rice, and coffee are the principal part of such an offering, for which no priest need be called, as the ceremony is merely to let the dead know that they are not forgotten. Every three or five years, however, a large *mangé* must be given for all the family dead, and if held on the family habitation, there is social dancing, where such favorites of the ancestors as the *martinique*, the *banda*, the *calebasse*, and the *zèse* are danced.[4]

Differences in procedure mark various modes of death. When a person is killed by lightning, a justice of the peace must be called and the burial is performed at once. Such a one has no "last prayer," because, death by lightning being a punishment of God, it is felt that the dead probably made an oath which he subsequently violated. Those killed by lightning or who die of smallpox are not mourned, but no explanation could be obtained for this obvious survival of African custom. If a leper has concealed his disease, mourning is worn for him, though if the cause of death is generally known this is forgone. There is customarily no mourning for suicides, and never where the regulations of the Church are rigorously applied.

If the dead person was a *vodun* priest or otherwise had strong *connaissance*, steps are taken before his death to "remove the *loa* from his head" so that his soul will not go under the water, for, as has been explained, such souls are held to be powerful spirits which may cause their family much harm

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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764 766 786 775 764 766 786 793

if, after a time, an expensive and troublesome ceremony is not performed to bring them out and lodge them in a jar. The *hungan* who performs the rite of removing these *loa* is preferably himself a member of the family and is usually left alone with one or two assistants and an elderly relative of the dead, but if the family includes no *hungan*, the one who is called, even though greatly trusted, is most carefully watched, because a strange priest might take for himself the valued gods of the dead, leaving only the weak ones. The *hungan* stands in place and calls the name of the dead. He puts some of the hair of the dead in the jar or in a calabash, with which the *loa* is supposed to go, and, unless another member of the family, nominated to receive the *connaissance* of the dead, is present, the jar or calabash is sealed until these spirits can be "given" to a successor.

766 [764] [793]

No special purification is needed for a house where death has occurred except when the deceased was tubercular or a leper, when everything except his money is buried or thrown in some unfrequented place. The body of one who has died of smallpox, though washed, is buried as soon after death as possible without being enclosed in a coffin. Those who die of smallpox or leprosy, suicides, or persons shot as a punishment for crime are not buried in the communal cemetery, but in special sections of the graveyard, the lepers and victims of smallpox being separated from the others, for the Church declares these have died of the plague. One who drowns is buried at the riverside where his body is recovered, though if the corpse is not too badly decomposed, the authorities give permission, and the family of the dead can afford the expense of transportation, the body may be brought home. Children are buried in the cemetery, but, on the principle that "the young must serve their elders," the funeral of a child is attended only by those relations who are younger than the dead; for in Haiti, as in Africa, it is not held seemly that the young should be followed to the grave by their elders. At the house, however,

[561] [791]

L: Hamlowitz E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3-Haiti SV3
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older relatives participate in the rites as at any death; moreover, the rule *gran' moun pas sui' 'ti moun* holds only where a father, mother, grandparent, or older sister or brother is concerned.* 96

Unless the dead was known to be a sorcerer his house is not abandoned. If, unlike most of his kind, a reputed sorcerer is survived by children, they continue to live in his house; and though no gesture of marked social disapprobation is made, few persons attend the funeral and fewer still put foot inside the house afterwards, which means there is little of the habitual calling on the survivors. An abandoned house of this type is called *caille yun moun loa' gawou* — the house of a werewolf. If a stranger were to buy such a house, he would first have to "restrain" the evil spirits who continued there. Generally, however, a man will not buy land unless a diviner ascertains that no evil beings have ever been associated with it. [925] [987]

Such, in outline, are the principal rites for the dead and the outer manifestations of the sanctions which validate the cult for its followers. Fundamentally, these derive from the power which the dead wield in the world of the living — power that is held to come directly from God, who has not only given the dead all the rights of the living, but also the right to return to earth as ghosts. There are several types of dead, two of these being the *vien-viens* and the *zombi*. The *vien-viens* are ordinary ghosts; the latter, who will be discussed in the next chapter, are those whose souls have been "sold" by sorcerers and are therefore doomed to wander the earth until their destined time arrives to return to God. Still another type of dead are the ghosts of children who die before baptism, called *lutins*, who ride young horses, so that when a wild colt with a tangled mane is seen, it is said that a *lutin* has been on his back. The souls of the dead are held first to go to God in the sky, where they are condemned to purgatory or hell or permitted to remain in paradise; "It is God who creates, therefore when someone dies, he returns to Him." And as for the effect of pur- 995

J: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

775 gatory on those who are possessed by *loa* who go unharmed in fire, it is said: "It is the *loa* that go into the fire. The soul is another thing."

All agree that the dead do not possess folk in the manner of the *loa*, as might be expected from the fact that the most important rituals in the cult of the dead are not only dominated by the Church, but carried out by its priest. In the matter of consulting the dead when questions of importance for the family are involved, however, there is no consensus of opinion. The most widespread point of view holds that only those dead whose *loa* have not been removed from their heads can be summoned, and that this is done only to permit them to "go to God," so their souls may be at rest. Otherwise, "when the dead are called, it is a matter of magic, for the dead are never good and one always must fear them." And though a 787 Malt' 'Bitation that is an old, old ancestor may "mount the 775 head" of a member of the family, he would never be specially called and in most cases, if he did come, would be "re-[669] strained." On the other hand, it was recounted how during the Caco rebellion the soul of Dessalines was brought into a jar and asked for his counsel. It is said, however, that he was so angered at the consistent defeats sustained by the Haitians that he struck everyone to earth and roundly scolded them for having lost the liberty with which he endowed them, departing without giving the desired advice. And since the spirits of Christophe and Toussaint are believed to be even stronger, no one had sufficient courage to summon them!

765 The immediate nature of the relation between the dead and the living is best seen in the conventions and attitudes surrounding the wearing of mourning, which is required of all children of the deceased, whether "legitimate" or other-[822] wise. Black is worn twelve months for a father, eighteen months for a mother; and half-mourning — black and white — is worn for a sister, brother, cousin, uncle, or aunt. In the country, before full mourning is put on, the black cloth is

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taken to the *pret' savanne* to be blessed with holy water; in the town the Catholic priest is said to do this. In full mourning, black is worn on Sundays, Mondays, and Fridays, the days sacred to the dead, but since full mourning means that one must be dressed in one's best and it is impossible to wear these clothes all day long even in the first weeks after death, the rule is to remain at home, fully dressed, on Sundays, Mondays, and Fridays, wearing the full mourning outside the house only to Sunday mass. 765

When full mourning for a parent cannot be worn immediately following death, the fulfillment of the obligation is postponed. If this duty is not ultimately met, however, the dead take vengeance, so that a child of the one who was remiss perhaps falls ill, or some other misfortune comes to him. If the negligent one is no longer living, then the penalty for his neglect will be assessed on his children, who, on consulting a diviner, will be told that they must wear mourning not only for their own parents, but for their grandparents as well. Such is the case of a dying woman whose story is recounted, for a diviner ascertained that though she had worn mourning for her own father, he had not worn it for his parent; as soon as she put on full mourning for her grandfather, she is said to have immediately recovered. 765 765 784 [787] [785]

A widower wears mourning for a legally married wife for a year, and a widow for her husband during a similar period, and it is believed that if a man were to remarry before the year has elapsed, his second wife would die, so that a woman will not go sooner to a widower, while it is equally dangerous for a widow to take a husband before the first anniversary of the death of her spouse. Should a *placée* wife die, however, another may be taken in her stead before the year has passed, for it is only in matters where the Church is concerned that the dead take vengeance. Furthermore, a man who has more than one mate may go to his other wives at any time after the death of a spouse, and though he would, of course, not go to them 765 587 [583] [595]

L: Herskovits I-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

term *loup-garou*, or werewolf. From Africa has come the concept of the *baka*, though this he has merged with that of the *démon*, and all operate through the power of Lucifer and the Devil, conceived as two separate beings. In addition, as will be seen, the cult of the dead also contributes to this system, since the *loa* who rule the cemeteries are indispensable for the practice of magic, as it bears especially on the concept of *zombi*, concerning which so much has been made in recent years.

The evil *loup-garous* are women whose real nature is revealed by their red eyes, though some hold that they have a black spot in the corner of the eye. Another word less frequently heard to designate the *loup-garou* is the Dahomean term *azeto*, employed in Africa for witches and vampires, a concept which in Haiti has become merged with that of the werewolf.[8] The *loup-garou*, with her male counterpart, the *démon*, is empowered by the *bocor*. As might be expected, she is greatly feared, and should an old woman suspected of being one of them come to a house, someone will see to it that in an adjoining room two brooms are crossed as the woman's name is pronounced three times, so that if she is actually a *loup-garou*, she cannot escape.[9] Children in particular carry counter-charms both against these women and against demons; one such, for a woman with child, has been mentioned in an earlier chapter,[10] and the making of another *garde* of this type has just been described. With a charm of this kind "you can leave at midnight for Port-au-Prince [instead of waiting for dawn] and fear nothing. You may meet a band of horned demons carrying candles in their hands, but they will stand aside and let you pass."

In Mirebalais, *baka* are usually mentioned when these evil beings are discussed, particularly since it is in connection with them that the term *engagement* is most often heard. An *engagement*, which is more feared than a *wanga*, the word usually encountered in the literature when evil magic is under discussion, designates a pledge made by a person, usually to

Ia Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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754 Nono, Dahomey. The members are, of course, not known, but
776 there is always gossip, and occasionally a man, when quarrel-
575 ing, says: "Take care! You don't know who I am. . . ."

776 *Baka*, *loup-garous*, and *démons* are not the only supernatural beings that a person may encounter from time to time. Though not all are creatures of magic, and not all are evil, all of them are treated with due caution. Such are the "river [773] people" — children with six fingers, who are believed to belong to the Malt' Source, the Master of the Stream, and are destined to become *hungans* — this being an example of the good that may come from such supernatural association — or persons with light hair. Those with light hair are more dangerous, however, since occasionally such folk are taken for a time under the water, the men by female spirits and the women by males. One person in Mirebalais told of a distant cousin who disappeared as she went to the river to draw water. She was mourned as dead, but returned after a year and was welcomed home. As she began to recount her adventures, however, she was struck dumb, and never recovered her speech. Another spoke of his experience as a boy with such a water-spirit, a *Maîtresse d'Eaux*. With a companion, he was walking along the bank of the Tombe River, when a woman was seen sitting on a rock combing her long light-colored hair. The other lad was invited to help her and went nearer, step by step, until, as he almost touched the comb, he turned and ran. Some time later he died.

754 Another category of spirits, already referred to in discussing
764 the cult of the dead, are *zombi*. To understand their nature,
775 however, the use of magic to bring about death or its simu-
lacre, and the measures taken to guard against this, must be first considered. In the preceding chapter it was observed how *hoholi* seeds are placed in the coffin of one suspected of an "unnatural" death to prevent the sorcerer from reaping the [779] fruits of his deed. A cross of pine-wood, made by the *hungan* and empowered by him to repel evil, is frequently also put

L: Herskovits E-4,6 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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with it, or the body is made to lie face downwards in the coffin, since the discomfort of this position causes the spirit of the dead to avenge itself on the sorcerer who caused the death. When a man has been killed by magic, his surviving relatives go to a *hungan* or a *bocor* to discover the culprit. The names of those suspected of the deed are called. Before the diviner stands a pottery jar filled with magically treated water. When the unwilling image of the guilty one finally appears, the *hungan* plunges his knife into it, and as the water turns red, those watching know that when the specified number of days have passed, the guilty one will be dead.[10] Should a suspect be innocent, the image of the Virgin Mary or of St. John is sometimes seen when he is called; but if one known to be guilty does not appear, it is proof that his magic is stronger than that used to call him. Recourse is then had to a powerful *wanga*, or poison, or to the spirit of someone dead, an *âme abandonée* who has led a life of evil and himself been a murderer. "They would certainly not send the spirit of the one just killed. He is too green" — to bring death to the killer. If none of these measures prevail, no further acts of revenge are attempted against the suspect, the feeling being that he has supplied himself with too powerful magic to allow effective revenge to be taken.

On occasion, an apparent death is felt not to be a real death, but rather the simulacre of death brought about by the machination of a sorcerer. The corpse is thereupon given poison or stabbed with a dagger, to make certain that an apparent death becomes an actual one, but the person who stabs the body must stand behind it in order that the corpse as slave of the sorcerer may not reveal who had stabbed him when summoned, and thus make of the one who had robbed him of his prey a substitute victim. If poison has not been administered to the corpse, or if the body was not stabbed, after the funeral the sorcerer recovers the body, which, deprived of its soul, works for him as a *zombi*, only returning to the grave when the time decreed by God for his natural death is reached, or if

he is accidentally fed salt.

2: Hardcover 8-4, 8 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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he is accidentally fed salt. Though the concept has been presented in recent years with unjustifiable sensationalism to the reading public,[10] it is indisputably a living one. One aspect of it has been responsible for much of the conviction with which positive statements are made of personal knowledge of cannibalism in Haiti, as has been shown most clearly by Dr. Parsons:

> "A gangs who keeps a *zombi* may transform him into a stone, perhaps in front of his house, or into any kind of animal. Transforming him into a pig or sheep or cow, he may kill him and sell him in the market. In this belief we have the basis of the gossip and court testimony about human flesh sold in the market. It is *zombi* flesh, not human flesh, that is so disposed of. But foreigners know nothing about *zombi*, nor do the native witnesses explain in court what they have in mind when they are testifying to purchases of meat from the cemetery. 'People does *eat* people at Aux Cayes, I *know* it,' said Sam, as he told of human fingernails found on pigs' feet, explaining to my question that the pig had been a *zombi*. Had I not followed up his first statement and learned that he had never heard of anybody killed directly for marketing, an idea which amazed him at that, I would certainly have been left with an impression of cannibalism totally misleading."[11]

Precisely the same concept exists in Mirebalais as in Jacmel, where the foregoing material was collected, except that in its elaboration it underscores the point made in the quotation just given. *Zombi* meat can be recognized by the fact that it rapidly spoils, and when cooked, brings much white foam to the top of the stew, while such meat, sold as beef, turns white like veal; all this warns against eating it, and shows the active distaste with which it is regarded. Indeed, one of the duties of a person's *loa* is said to be that of warning him when he is

about to eat such food, for he feels a shudder pass through his body, and his arm becomes heavy, as was the case with a woman who three times dropped a piece of "beef" she was about to place in her mouth, before she realized the warning. 975 [976]

It can readily be seen how varied are the manifestations of evil magic. What are the forces behind them? What gives them power? What makes their unsavory ends possible of attainment? Their power comes from God, for, according to belief, everything comes from God, in the sense that God made the world as it exists. Therefore all beings are free to do anything they can contrive to do, though once dead they are called to account for their deeds. "Good and evil are two brothers; life and death are two brothers. All four come from God. They do not come from the *loa*." 954 971 976

But more immediately this power comes in great measure from the dead. Before a *bocor* makes a *wanga*, he asks permission of God, the Devil, Malt' Carrefour, Malt' Cimitière, Malt' Gran Bra, and Malt' d'l'Eau. Baron Samedi, perhaps the most important figure among those who aid in working black magic, lives in the cemetery. Though he is a *loa* and may possess those who appeal to him to work evil, this role is subordinate to his role as the power behind magic that kills. He controls the souls of those whose end has come as a result of magic, and when he is called at midnight, the sound of the clanking of chains is heard as he comes. He is envisaged as a dwarf. After his approval has been purchased for a projected deed, appeal is then made to Gede, for especially where it is a question of killing, though everything may have been made ready with Baron, Gede must "dig the grave." Herein lies the importance of Gede, for he is the court of last resort, the final power in matters of death. 954 976 [991]

Gede, however, is just, and even though Baron has marked a victim, Gede can refuse to concur in his decision. "If you do not merit death, Gede will refuse it," say the Haitians. It therefore sometimes comes about that though all preparations have

one. Sometimes a loa who is making life too hard for a devotee will be retired without a replacement. The "washing of the head" must be accompanied by ritual safeguards, and all possible circumstances must be taken into account by the officiating cult priest. There are many stories of people who became mentally deranged as a result of the removal of their loa from their heads.

The *mèt' tête* must also be removed from the head of a person who dies. Should this not be done, the spirit of the deceased will go to reside "below the water" and may cause trouble for the family. This loa is usually transferred to a special jar as a temporary resting place, and later perhaps into the head of another member of the family.

Though the loa is a powerful ruling force in the life of the individual, the human "horse" has controls over his deity too. He may reproach or admonish his loa for bad behavior or for failing to protect him. He may expose the loa's irresponsibility in public through the use of songs in religious rites. And though the loa is frequently encouraged to "enter," steps may be taken to restrain him from possession. This is called *mawé loa* —"tying the loa." A woman may "tie" her loa by fixing a hairpin in her hair in a special way. A man may do it by placing his hands in cold water.[8]

Nevertheless, the loa are always lurking in the background. They are a constant and dramatic element in the religious life of the people. They may sometimes be controlled by the houngan, but they are an authority stronger than the priesthood. They give advice, courage, consolation, and status to their followers. They add much to an otherwise hard and ungenerous environment and evoke remembrances of Africa from which the Haitians' ancestors were uprooted. They can also cause concern and anxiety; for the loa are not always benevolent, and they are frequently unpredictable.

Many of the loa are ancient deities, sib-founders and ancestors who loom out of a misty, half-forgotten past. Nanaboucles, Legba, and Ayida Wèdo have been known for many lifetimes in Dahomey. Changó, Ogoun, and Loko were old spirits in Nigeria before the first slave ships sailed from Africa to the New World. Their names and many others in present-day Haiti come from an ancient lore. They recall places, tribes, and old kingdoms from Senegal in northwestern Africa to the heart of the Congo. They are a bond which holds the people of Haiti to Africa. In the mountains people sometimes say, "Haiti is the child of Dahomey," or "Haiti is the child of Guinée." The gods divide their time between their Haitian and their African children.

Yet in some respects the Haitians' concept of their loa is no longer purely African. The African religious patterns have been infiltrated by the lore

[P. 30]

4. Death Rites

The community of the Haitian is one that extends far beyond his immediate family and his village, for it takes in not only the various loa but multitudinous dead relatives and ancestors. Some Haitians believe that the dead live in close proximity to the loa, in a place called "Under the Water." Others hold that the dead have no special residing place. But it is the view of many that a dead person may eventually become a loa in his own right. How this happens is not entirely clear. Under certain circumstances the spirits of the newly dead do not go quietly on their way but remain behind to annoy and harass the living. They must be buried with suitable ritual and properly placated throughout the years; otherwise their activities and influences will be unpredictable. Many of them, under special conditions, become almost indistinguishable from loa. And a few, in the course of time, become minor deities in the pantheons. The main loa of the Pétro cult, Dan Pétro, formerly was believed by some Haitians to be a houngan of the eighteenth century who had been buried without having his own loa removed from his head. There are African precedents for deified ancestors' becoming deities. Indeed, some of the great *vodounsi* and *orisha* of the Dahomean and Yoruban pantheons in West Africa are believed to be deified clan ancestors or great kings.

Whether they achieve the status of loa or not, the spirits of the dead must forever be coped with. This Haitian view of the dead is essentially that held in many parts of West Africa. Speaking of West African belief in general, Maurice Delafosse noted:

> After a creature dies, only his spirit remains. It survives with the same character, the same personality, affections and hatreds as during his lifetime, but it can no longer command the vital breath. It becomes all the more powerful on escaping from the confines of its material envelope, since it no longer needs to direct and control the functions of the body, and is not itself regulated by the vital breath. . . . These spirits are all of the same nature. They are invisible but can see and judge everything that happens. They are easily angered and mete out severe punishment to anyone

offending them. They are also vain and capricious, can be conciliated by prayers and gifts, and propitiated by sacrifices. This animistic religion . . . includes many vestiges of the worship of countless spirits of men's ancestors and innumerable spirits of nature, all ranking as gods.[1] 795 191

Another observer, speaking of the Bapindi, the Babunda, and other related tribes of the western Congo drawn quite similar conclusions:

The people of these tribes recognize a supreme deity, Nzambi, creator of all things. But this supreme spirit is too distant from man to make active worship on their part. The basic worship is to the ancestors of the clan. The clan is in effect a community consisting of all the living and the dead descended from a common ancestor. Towards the dead it is necessary to make offerings as a mark of deference when one wishes to consult them on problems. The dead are spoken to through the chief, who uses a special drum for this purpose. The dead have the responsibility of protecting their descendants.[2]

Among the Bantu people of South Africa, also, the worship of ancestors is based upon the belief that when a man dies he continues to influence the lives of his relatives remaining on earth. He is as interested as ever in descendants who remain "outside on the earth," but indifferent to members of other communities unless they bear them some grudge. The characters of people who die are not changed by death. They are as prone to jealousy in death as in life, and as rancorous toward descendants who wound their vanity, flout their wishes, squander their bequests, or infringe the ancient laws and customs of their clans; but they are also as willing as ever to help those of their lineage who treat them with becoming respect and obedience.[3] The affairs of mankind in general do not concern them; they are exclusively interested in their own family and tribe, and without their help and guidance their living descendants cannot hope to flourish. As long as the moral code is strictly followed, they confer blessings and abundance; but if offended by any breach of custom, they can also send drought, cattle plague, tribal or personal disaster, sickness, or death.[4] 191 964 795

This deeply rooted concept of the relationship of the family to its ancestors continues to motivate the Haitian in his observance of services for the dead. 769 795

In addition to the ordinary dead with whom the Haitian has to deal, there are the spirits of twins, known as *marassas*. As there are feasts for the ordinary family dead, the *mangé morts*, so there are feasts for living and dead twins, the *mangé marassas*. Twins are believed to have special powers, and even when alive they are given more than usual consideration. The spirits of dead twins are especially willful and capricious, and unless properly placated they may cause illness and misfortune. Once each year, on dates fixed by local custom, special services are held for the marassas. 769 795 845

[1, 2] [Footnotes appear on p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[3] [Willoughby, The Soul of The Bantu, pp. 88-89. Cf. p. 352 Category 116. -- Analyst]

[4] [Footnote appears on p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

The dead twins are offered food in special earthen or gourd bowls. In any market place where pottery is sold you will find the joined marassa double or triple bowls. The annual rites for the marassas are routine, but once every five years there is a *grande service* for them.

It is not merely the twins of one's immediate family that are served, but twins—that is, the spirit of twins—in general. They are supplicated even when a family knows of no incidence of twins. In part, this precaution is a recognition that there may have been twins among ancestors long dead and forgotten. It is also recognition of a twin spirit as a separate force affecting all people. The twin spirit has been personified in the loa named Marassa. The child born after twins is believed by many Haitians to be even "stronger" and more to be placated than twins themselves. He is known as a *dagw* if a boy, *daya* if a girl. Their patron loa are known as Marassa Dagw and Marassa Daya. The patron loa of triplets is Marassa Trois. Triplets are regarded as a special category of twins. Some Haitians, in fact, believe that the twins are merely a partial manifestation of the group of three, which is completed on the birth of the dagw or daya. In the marassa feast, triplets are served in the triple clover-leaf bowl, as are twins in combination with their dagw or daya. It is also believed by some that the child born before twins is "weak" both in physical vitality and psychic powers, because his strength has been sapped by the marassas who have followed him.

For some Haitians the loa Marassa is the most potent of forces to be placated at the time of death. They hold that he is only incidentally the patron of twins and triplets. His significance is said to lie in the fact that he is the spirit of the first of all human children who died. And as the child precedes the man, Marassa is the first and foremost of all loa. When a service is held for Marassa, he is given foods and beverages that all children love.

Rites for the dead continue endlessly for the living. Before a child is witness to a death in his own family he may observe many rituals for the family ancestors, twins, and the unknown dead. For those who are a part of Vodoun, the cycle is a perpetual one in an endless system of integration and continuity.

Special rites are held to remove the loa from the head of a deceased person. It is believed that the spirit of a person who has not had his loa removed will be restive and perhaps will even cause difficulties for his family and his descendants. And there is also the matter of the loa's welfare. The *mait' tête* is, in a sense, a captive in the head of the person who has died. The head is his home. But should the corpse be taken to the graveyard without the loa's having been removed, the loa would refuse to be buried

with the corpse. He wants nothing to do with the domain of the Gédé. 975
He liberates himself from the corpse at the cemetery and retires "below the 976
water." He is no longer a friend and benefactor of the family. He cannot 964
be inherited by the children of the deceased. Such controls as the deceased once exercised over him are dissipated. He may, in fact, be angered at the treatment he has received and return only to harass the family. Thus, if a family fails to have the *mulâ'* site of one of its members properly removed at death, it may be persecuted afterward by the "spirit" of the dead someone and the loa as well.

The rite of dispossessing a deceased person of his loa is called *Ditowonie*, 964
or *Ditowond*. The essence of it is the transference of the *mulâ'* site from the 976
head of the dead person into a special receptacle, an earthen jar called a *gwô* or *pot site*. Sometimes it is transferred to the head of a child in the family, though usually this comes later.

There have been many descriptions of this ritual, and they seem to show that, though the tradition is a constant one, the specific patterns of the services are variable. Different regions, different cult centers, and different houngans conduct the rites in different ways.

Eugene Aubin wrote, for example:

> On the day of death, the deceased is placed standing up; the *papalo* [houngan] [993]
> conducts the rites which retire the *mystère* [loa] from the body and introduce it
> into a jar, which is then carefully sealed. On the ninth day, after the feast for the [965]
> dead, the jar is broken and liberty given to the *loa*.[§]

Melville Herskovits reported:

> If the dead person was a Vodun priest or otherwise had strong consciousness, steps [966]
> are taken . . . "to remove the *loa* from his head" so that his soul will not go under [975]
> the water, for, as has been explained, such souls are held to be powerful spirits which
> may cause the family much harm if, after a time, an expensive and troublesome cere-
> mony is not performed to bring them out and lodge them in a jar. . . . The *houngan* [993]
> stands in place and calls the name of the dead. He puts some of the hair of the dead
> in the jar or in a calabash, into which the *loa* is supposed to go, and, unless another
> member of the family, nominated to receive the consciousness of the dead, is present
> the jar or calabash is sealed until these spirits can be "given" to a successor.[&]

As Herskovits understands it, it is the "soul" of the dead person that 114
would go to live "under the water," rather than the loa. This would appear 975
to be a fusion of two separate elements—the wandering, troublesome 976
"spirit" of a dead person and the *mulâ'* site who retires "under the water." Actually, Haitians are not always consistent in their explanations of what happens, or of the difference between loa and souls. On the houngfor altar there may be some gwôs that contain "souls" or "spirits" and others that contain loa; though the distinction is readily appreciated, Haitians are

§ [Translated from The French of Aubin, En Haïti, P. 212
cf. P. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]
& [Herskovits, Life in a Haitian Valley, PP. 213-214
cf. P. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

114 764 795 796 sometimes hard put to explain the similarity of treatment of these two categories.

Another investigator, Alfred Métraux, has provided a vivid description 764 796 given by a Haitian of a ceremony of removing the loa. In this instance the corpse was not placed in an upright position as described by Aubin but was laid on a specially prepared bed. Attending the body were the houngan, his hounsi, and a child of the dead man who was to receive the liberated loa.

> The child . . . grasps in his hand a black-and-white or a white cock. On the ground in front of the bed they arrange a fine white napkin. On top of it there are syrup, candles . . . , *sofia*, and other things. After they have finished sprinkling water, clapping their hands, singing to the *loa*, they all go around the bed of the dead person. The child, with the cock in his hand, makes the rounds with the *houngan*. They wave the rooster, they wave it back and forth two, three, four, five, six times over the dead person's head. During this time all those present get possessed by the *loa*, sing, clap their hands. The dead person's bed begins to creak. The *houngan* climbs [793] on the bed and grabs the dead person's two arms. . . . He pulls him to a sitting position. The child (into whose head the *loa* is to be transferred) strikes the chicken three times on the head of the dead person. He lets go the chicken, and the chicken flies up and starts to run all around the room, smashing pots and vessels. They grab the chicken and let it go in the air three times, shouting: *Ai bobo loa ol* Immediately the *loa* goes into the head of the dead person's child.[1]

764 796 The houngan cited by Métraux is described as pulling the corpse to a 793 sitting position, but more commonly it is believed that the houngan has the power to make the body sit up by itself. A man from Jérémie explained it this way:

> "The body is laid out on a mat. The houngan shakes his asson over the dead man, and talks to the loa in the head. He calls the loa's name: 'Changogolo! Changogolo! Changogolo!' He calls, calls, calls. He doesn't call the dead man's name, he calls the mait' tête. 'Changogolo! Changogolo! Get up! Wake up! Sit up!' The corpse sits up. It even talks. Then the houngan says, 'Lie down!' And the corpse lies down. But it is not the dead man who sits up. The dead man is dead. It is the mait' tête who has forced the body to sit up. After this the houngan takes the loa from the head and puts it in a pot tête. Then the body can be buried. And afterward the loa can be put in the head of someone else or freed. Or the houngan may keep the loa in the pot tête and sell it to someone who needs a loa to work for him. If they buried the corpse without a *désroquis*, the loa would resent it and go away below the water."

764 George Eaton Simpson has written an excellent description of a cere- 766 mony for removal of the loa from the head of a deceased houngan.[2] The 796 [1] [Hall and others, Haitian Creole, American Anthropological 793 Association, Memoir No. 54, pp. 188-189. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[2] [Simpson, "Four Haitian Ceremonies" Journal of American Folklore, April-June, 1946, pp. 155-162. Cf. p. 350, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]

764 786 793 776 father when you were living. Continue to protect your family after death. If you need other services give abundantly to your heirs in order to obtain satisfaction. Oh, good father, good servant, good parent, good friend! Good-bye! Do not forget us as we shall not forget you."[11] A

[539] Then the houngan goes to the canarie, strikes it three times with a piece of palm bark, and chants an invocation to the loa and to God, while members of the family dance where they stand, shaking the green branches they hold. There follows an invocation to twins. After a number of loa [787] have "entered" the service, as manifested by possessions, the houngan undertakes to find out how death came to the deceased man. An assistant brings the sacred divining shells[12] A of the dead man, and the officiating houngan throws them on the floor, pours tafia three times, and lights a candle. The shells are then consulted. Three times he goes through the procedure of casting the shells and consulting them. Later he announces that "the death of Boss Marius is not the death of an ordinary man, that [775] he is now resting in La Ville-au-Camp (capital of the loas which is 'under the water'), and that the loas will continue to protect his descendants provided that they show themselves worthy of protection."[13] A There is more singing and ritual, and then the canarie is covered. The loa from the head of Marius has found a temporary resting place. A little later in the service "the houngan raises the canari as high as possible, almost as high as his face, as he repeats the last line: 'Where may I find refuge?' With a quick movement the canari is shattered. The food is scattered, the loas are satisfied, and the crowd breaks into disorderly flight. . . ."[14] A A few hours later the body of the deceased is buried.

764 184 776 It is obvious that these rituals vary a good deal according to regional practices and according to the importance of the persons for whom they are conducted. Furthermore, there is a good deal of difference of opinion among Haitians as to what actually takes place when the malt' tête is taken from the head of the deceased man.

793 764 184 Although the prêt' savane (bush priest) is subsidiary to the houngan at death rites, his is nevertheless a conspicuous presence. He may begin the services with prayers for the dead, in which the family joins, while the houngan remains in the background. Later, the houngan takes over. In certain regions, however, the prêt' savane is dispensed with altogther, his function being absorbed by the houngan.

764 As reported by Herskovits, the wake for the dead is one of the most important ceremonies in the death rites. He says:

[766] Wakes are held for all dead, even for very young children if they have been baptised, though if a baby dies before baptism, it is buried without ceremony in a little box in the courtyard of the habitation. . . . The wife and the children either stay

11 A [This and the preceding paragraph are from Simpson, Op. Cit., P. 156. Cf. P. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]
12 A [For footnote, see Category 116, P. 350. --Analyst]
13 A [Simpson, Op. Cit., P. 159. Cf. P. 350 Category 116. --Analyst]
14 A [Ibid., P. 161. Cf. P. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]

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beyond the obvious fear of contagion. In his study of Dahomey, Herskovits notes: 766 [171]

> . . . Small-pox is believed to be sent as a punishment for grave offenses in the eyes of these [the Saghata] deities, and it is taken to indicate that either the dead person himself or a member of his family has committed some heinous crime such as the practice of black magic. A person who dies of small-pox may only be buried after permission has been given by the chief priest of the Earth cult.[20]

Thus, in Haiti, though the connections with the past are clouded, it is clear that victims of lightning and smallpox are treated as a special class of criminals or malefactors. 174 753 761 762

Ordinary malefactors such as malevolent criminals and murderers—until recent years, at least—were not buried in the common graveyard. They, too, were segregated at the periphery of the cemetery or buried at the edge of a trail or road where the traffic would not permit them to rest and where their graves would be under constant surveillance. The roadside grave sometimes was also the fate of a person killed by lightning. 766

That these special burials are related to the Dahomean and Yoruban concepts of retribution for crimes against the deities is supported by the similarity of treatment accorded victims of lightning and disease and common criminals. In Haiti, Herskovits observes: "Those who die of small-pox or leprosy, suicides, or persons shot as a punishment for crime are not buried in the communal cemetery, but in special sections of the graveyard," the suicides and criminals being set apart from the others.[21] 761 753 766 [174] [171] [681] [762]

Graves found near the seashore, lake shores, or riverbanks frequently are declared to belong to persons who died of drowning. 766

Approximately nine days after a person's death, the "last prayers" are said, and the soul of the deceased is presumed to have departed from the house. Once more, under the tonnelle outside there are games, storytelling, and singing. On this night, however, there is also drumming and dancing of a special kind. Usually it is the Juba, or Martinique, dance, which is believed to be specially enjoyed by the dead, and it is the older people, rather than the young, who participate. These festivities are believed to give cheer to the deceased and to "encourage" him on his way. On the next night comes the mangé mort, the feast for the family dead, a ritual which continues periodically through the years. 765 53 [775] [524] [769]

Sometimes in Haiti you may come upon an old tomb or grave before which a dish of specially prepared food has been set. This is part of the mangé mort ritual. 764 769

A man may make provision in advance of his death for the rites which follow his burial. He may designate special animals to be killed, leave 763 769

[20] [Ibid., pp. 397–398. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.—Analyst]

[21] [Herskovits, Life in a Haitian Valley, p. 214. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.—Analyst]

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with one of his children as he had agreed. That night his oldest child died. The next year to the day, his second child died. And the third year, the third child died. On the fourth anniversary, the man's wife died. On the fifth, he himself died. The djab of Trou Fourban had collected his debt.

Another great djab lives on the northern mountain called Morne Ronde. A man of Cap Haitien was said to have made a compact with him for wealth. One day there was a great hubbub in front of the man's house. A crowd gathered and stood peering inside his door. What they saw was a rain of money falling down from the rafters. The floor was covered with ten-gourde bills. When the *gendarmerie* came to investigate, they stood at the doorway in awe, watching the money float to the floor. The man finally closed the door. That night he moved away, and no one in Cap Haitien ever saw him again.

The djab are insatiable. For their favors—which range from providing wealth and political position to destroying one's enemies—they always demand more in return than the recipient has counted on. Catholic ritual is called upon in some instances to break the djab's chain of demands.

Some tales are told in which human beings outwit the djab, particularly the lesser ones; but more often than not, the djab have the last laugh. During the big hurricane which hit Haiti in 1954, a huge landslide occurred near the place called Bayè Roche in the La Selle Mountains. An entire village was wiped out, covered by the falling rocks. Throughout this region the disaster was attributed to the action of a djab reputed to live in one of the nearby caves. Many lost cattle were found wandering near Bayè Roche, and they were believed to be people whom the malevolent djab had transformed into animals.

The height of bravado is to demand to be confronted with a big djab face to face. There is a song which goes:

> Conduit'm allé oh!
> Conduit'm allé djab nan Trou Fourban!
> Conduit'm allé! [Ex. 91]
>
> Take me, oh!
> Take me to the djab in Trou Fourban!
> Take me!

There are still other supernatural creatures in Haitian lore who must be guarded against, such as the *djablesse*, the *revenant*, and the *lutin*. The *djablesse* is a female ghost who must live in the woods for a number of years before she can enter heaven, as a punishment for the crime of

775 having died a virgin. The *lutin* is the spirit of a child who died before baptism.[1] The *revenant* is a spirit of a dead person who feels he has been mistreated, and who returns to the world of the living to plague their families or their enemies.

776 754 The *lou-garo* (*loup-garou*) is a being of another kind, a vampire. She is human in form but sheds her skin and assumes animal forms at night when she roams the countryside seeking a victim. Salt is her nemesis. Should her human skin be found and salt sprinkled inside it, she would not be able to put it back on and would be destroyed.

776 778 A special form of the lou-garo is the *bizango*, a kind of enormous dog that runs in packs at night seeking people to eat. Also related to the lou-garo is the *démon*, a male creature of amorphous personality and character who can convert himself into an animal at will. There are sociétés of démons which, like those of the baka, meet in the dark of night in their assembly hall inside the mapou tree. Haitians who are conversant with such matters agree that there are many such trees, but that the most notorious of them are Mapou Miteppe in Miragoane, Mapou Simon in Aux Cayes, and Mapou Danpisse at Léogane.

Other fearsome beings such as the *zeanbeaups*—human cannibals—also gather in the mapou to conduct their affairs.

789 [776] Against all these creatures, and against black magic in general, there are many magical protections, the most common of which is the *garde corps* (protect the body), or simply the *garde*. It is usually obtained from a bocor and consists of a small bag of mysterious ingredients. The owner wears it around his waist or around his neck. Sometimes it is merely a cord with a number of ritually made knots. The garde corps is made to prescription and protects the wearer against specific things such as a lou-garo, poison, or death from a bullet or knife. In describing a garde corps he had prepared for a client, a bocor revealed that it contained dried chicken blood, extract of *wari* bean, and *gris-gris* powder, among "a thousand and one" ingredients. The *gris-gris* powder is made from a dried *gris-gris* bird.[2]

There is another form of protective magic, broader in scope, called the *arrête*. It is used to protect not merely an individual but an entire [754] household, or even a group of households. In addition to warding off supernatural creatures and protecting people against assassins, the arrête is a neutralizing agent against various forms of black magic such as the ouanga and the *makanda*. The arrête bundle or object is hung in the house or in a nearby tree, or it is buried somewhere on the grounds. Sometimes it is nothing more than a pointed stick placed in a certain way before a door or gate, or at one side of the trail leading to the

[1] [Simpson, "Haitian Magic," Social Forces, October, 1940, p. 97. Cf. p. 351, category 116. --Analyst]
[2] [For footnote, see category 116, p. 351. --Analyst]

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house. A round, polished Indian stone is occasionally used as a *garde habitation*. And old people speak of a very powerful charm known as a *gros arrête* which in former times was placed on the trail to protect entire villages or valleys. 789

Still another potent defensive charm is the *pouin*, which is the product of ritual magic within the cult temple. A pouin may be an actual bundle containing a formula of special ingredients; more often, it is invisible, consisting of magical forces unleashed into space by the houngan. There are many ceremonies in the hounfor devoted to the projecting of these magical forces. They are called *cérémonie pouin* or *cérémonie magie* and are dramatized by special cult songs and dances. Sometimes the magie ceremony is woven into a more generalized cult ritual. The powers of the pouin are regarded as wider and more potent than those of the arrête. Pouins are said to protect an individual or a group not only against other magic but also against natural phenomena and accident. A pouin may ward off lightning, for example, or protect one from falling trees or from shipwreck or drowning. But it is not solely defensive magic. It may bring success in fishing, or produce a good crop in one's garden, or aid human fertility. 789 794 796 [777] [842]

Since the crops and the garden are the substance of life, much attention is given to their protection. An enemy may attack a man or his household through garden magic. He may bury a ouanga in the earth, to bring sickness or ruin. He may poison a tree by performing a special rite at its foot, and its fruits will then carry disease or death to the one who eats them. Or he may make a compact with the earth so that it will dry up and refuse to produce for the one who tills it. Against all these malevolent possibilities, as well as against common thieves, the Haitian peasant has many magical and practical resources. Some people are said to employ zombies as watchmen. These fearsome creatures will capture a trespasser and hold him for the owner of the field.[3] Or perhaps the owner will place special arrêtes in his garden. Occasionally a man will protect his fields by planting *piquettes* in the earth. The *piquette* is a piece of sharpened bamboo or hard wood. Its point is dipped into poison, and it is placed in the ground, sharpened end up. An unwary intruder who steps on a piquette may die of his wound. 789 685 [754] [775]

To counteract the *maljok*, or evil eye, a man may procure from a bocor a special shirt made of wide strips of red, white, and blue cloth sewed together. This shirt, called a *mayo* or *manyo*, is worn for seven days if the *maljok* is a rather ordinary one. If the evil force is a particularly virulent one, however, the *mayo* will be worn as long as twenty-one 754 789 791

3 [Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy" Journal of Negro History, October, 1940, p. 503. Cf. p. 351, category 116. -- Analist]

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Many of his potions are of a mystical and 759
semiritual nature; yet from roots and leaves he brews specific medicines 755
for specific illnesses, such as rheumatism, fevers, malaria, worms, and 757
yaws. Sometimes his cures are effective, sometimes they fail. The leaf doctor is consulted for poisons and their antidotes, though many poisons, such as that in the wari bean, may be gathered and dispensed by anyone.

One of the macabre figures in Haitian folk belief is the *zombie*. In 775
the most general sense, the name designates the bland soul of a person who died without the distinction of having a loa in his head. The soul or spirit has no special will. It cannot affect the living in any way, unlike the lutin, the djablesse, and those who were buried possessed of mystéres. It does not harass enemies or importune its descendants. It is an undynamic, simple, otherworldly spirit, a sort of negative afterimage. It does not need to be placated or feared.

But the word *zombie* has another, more popular meaning, signifying 775
a human being who has "died" and been resurrected from the graveyard 789
by members of the Zeaubeaup Society, by a wicked sorcerer, or by some 754
other person who has realized the "power" to perform this act.

The Haitian countryside is full of tales about fresh graves that have been robbed of their bodies by practitioners of this special form of black magic. By a secret formula these soulless "dead" are revived and given a semblance of life. They lack only the power of will. Without that, they are at the complete command of the sorcerer who has disinterred them. They are presumed to be spirited away and put to work at drudgery in some remote place. Stories are told of plantations in the mountains whose entire labor force is made up of zombies, the animated dead. You can tell a zombie when you see him. His eyes are dull and glazed, he gives no sign of recognition to people he once knew, he moves slowly and ploddingly at his tasks, and he takes orders only from his master. He neither sings nor dances, and he eats and drinks without interest. His facial expression never changes. He is emotionally and mentally dead. Neither the rites of the Church nor those of Vodoun can help him. There is only one formula for breaking the spell. If he eats [263] salt he will either regain full life or die a merciful death. The master therefore takes great care that his zombies never have salt.

Haitians have many explanations of this mystical phenomenon. Some [184] hold that the sorcerer has the unique power to revive the dead. Others believe that the victim is not really dead but has succumbed to a virulent poison which numbs all the senses and stops bodily functions but does not truly kill. Upon disinterment, the victim is given an antidote which restores most physical processes but leaves the mind in an inert state, without will or the power to resist.

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171 The connection between the Haitian zombie and certain soulless beings
775 of West Africa is quite apparent. Herskovits has observed that in
754 Dahomey there are tales of persons thought to be dead who were found wandering in far-off places. These individuals had no memories of their former lives. "They were soulless beings, whose death was not real, but resulted from the machinations of sorcerers who made them appear as dead, and then, when buried, removed them from their graves and sold them into servitude in some far-away land."*

764 According to stories told by some Haitians, in ceremonies for the
775 dead where there is suspicion that the deceased was the victim of this particular kind of poisoning a close relative stabs the body with a knife before burial to assure that it will not become a zombie. In other instances, close guard is kept over the grave for a number of days and nights, so that the body cannot be stolen.

775 Some members of the elite publicly dismiss the whole business as
789 savage fantasy but privately say something like: "I don't believe in this
184 sort of thing, but how can you explain the case of Marie Zambam in Cap Haitien?" And then they will tell of curious events of which they have firsthand knowledge.

538 There are numerous legends of persons who died and were buried,
775 only to reappear perhaps years later in some mountain village, or in the
789 big city of Port-au-Prince. An educated man in Port-au-Prince declared
754 that a dead cousin of his reappeared one day in the city ten years after her burial. He tried to speak with her, but she answered only haltingly and gave no sign of recognition. After this one appearance, he said, she was never seen again. Another Haitian from the north told of a graveyard watch in his village to prevent disinterment of the grave of a young girl who had just died. The two watchers dozed fitfully, and suddenly awoke to see a man removing the girl's body. When they jumped to their feet and went after him he escaped into the shadows. But the girl staggered about, fell to the ground, and gave birth to a baby. Both the girl and her newborn child were taken to the village and given salt to eat. Both of them recovered.

One villager from the southern mountains reported that in his travels he came upon a coffee plantation on the sparsely populated mountain called Morne la Selle, and found all the laborers to be zombies. They did not sing as they worked, their movements were slow and cumbersome, and they did not sweat in the hot sun. When he asked for a drink of water, no one replied. While he stood trying to converse, the master of the plantation came with a hard leather whip and angrily ordered him to leave.

* [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, p. 243. Cf p. 351, category 116. -- Analyst]

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When they are not working, it is said, zombies are tied with special ropes made from the leaves of the banana tree. One popular song goes:

> Nans Léogane
> Yo marré zombie nans paille fig-banane!
> Abobo wye-oh!
>
> In Léogane
> They tie the zombie with banana straw!
> That is all, *wye-oh!*

Some Haitians tell you they know there are zombies because they have seen them. Not too many years ago a visiting writer stoutly declared that she, too, knew there were zombies because she had seen one—in the mental hospital at Pont Beudet. Although her reasoning was not quite airtight, the possibility that mental defectives are sometimes mistaken for zombies is worth considering.

Houngans who "work with two hands" are reputed to be able to gain permanent control over persons by means of a formula known as *tuyé-lèvé* (kill and raise). Either for himself or a client, the houngan gains power over the victim by "killing" him through special magic and then "removing the soul" (*retiré n'âme*). The victim, presumed to be normally dead, is buried by his family; the houngan then retrieves the body and "restores the soul" (*metté n'âme*). With his soul restored, the victim has, in effect, become a slave of the houngan, who can do with him as he wishes. He differs from a zombie in that he has a soul, whereas the zombie has none.

Some Haitians believe that even one who has died a nonmagic death may be raised from the dead. To accomplish this, the houngan or bocor stands over the body, goes through a specified ritual, and calls out the dead person's name: "Albert Moreau! Albert Moreau! Albert Moreau! Lèvé non! Lèvé non! Lèvé non!" ("Get up! Get up! Get up!") Then, it is said, the dead man may awaken.

It is believed that a houngan may also command the souls of dead persons to perform services for him against an enemy. The souls at his disposal for this work are those which he keeps in earthern jars in his hounfor. Should he wish to plague an enemy, he will send one of these souls to the man's house to make him sick, or lazy, or insane. Usually, the man does not know what is happening to him; but if he becomes aware that a dead soul is working on him, he attempts to find out which houngan has sent it. Perhaps the houngan can be bought off. If not, another houngan may provide relief.

While some believe in the reality of the various demons and specters,

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others only half believe, and many look upon these creatures as imaginary but exciting to talk about.

The zombie finds a favored place in the tales children make up to tell one another, and the traditional song played by children on the earth bow or mosquito drum goes:

Maringouin pinga zombie oh, Bobo Maria!
Maringouin pinga zombie!
Maringouin pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie!
Maringouin pinga zombie! [Ex. 92]

Mosquito beware the zombie, oh, Bobo Maria!
Mosquito beware the zombie!
Mosquito beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie!
Mosquito beware the zombie!

Or they may sing with great bravado, to the clapping of hands.

Chaingadaing, nou pral mangé zombie!
Chaingadaing, teau teau!
Chaingadaing, nou pral mangé zombie!
Chaingadaing, colocotol
Chaingadaing, nou pral mangé zombie!
Chaingadaing, kalainkainsaing! [Ex. 93]

Chaingadaing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingadaing, teau teau!
Chaingadaing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingadaing, colocotol
Chaingadaing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingadaing, kalainkainsaing!

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rites to break the tension. The name appears to have come from the word "Caribbean." 535

Magic: A dance accompanying a magic-making ritual.

Pouin: A dance accompanying the making of a pouin.

Calebasse: A dance accompanying the calabash ritual, for the dead. [964]

Dahomé: One of the principal dances of the Vodoun group, named after Dahomey.

Bamboche: Another rest dance, from northern Haiti. Carried over into secular dancing, it has become the commonplace Bamboche.

Boulevere: From northern Haiti.

Mazube, or Maniba: A dance associated with Dahomey rites, accompanied by percussion music played on small drums hung around the neck.

Assoto: A dance accompanying rites for the assoto drum.

Dances Connected with Congo and Pétro Ritual

Pétro, or Don Pétro: The principal dance of the Pétro cult.

Kitta Mouillé: The "Wet Kitta," danced for the Simbi family of loa, patrons of rain and the spring. Sometimes called Danse Simbi. On rare occasions the Kitta Mouillé is accepted as Vodoun rather than Pétro.

Kitta Chèche, or Sèche: The "Dry Kitta," danced for loa of the Kitta group other than the patrons of the spring. Sometimes identified with Vodoun rites rather than with the Pétro.

Bumba, or Limba: Named after Congo tribes.

Moundongue: A dance for the loa Moundongue. Named after a tribe in the northern Congo.

Salongo, or Kinen: From southwestern Haiti. Salongo is the name of a tribe in Angola.

Bambarra: Named after the Bambarras of northwestern Africa.

Congo Loangue, or Congo Franc: Named after Loango in the Congo.

Congo Maçonne: The "Masonic" Congo dance, known also as Congo Larose and Congo Créole. Some informants believe the dance originated in a hounfor called Société La Rose, from which it derives one of its names.

Pastorel: A Congo rest dance.

Monondi: A battle dance.

Mouchdichd: A dance of northern Haiti for paying a debt to a loa.

Mayoye: This dance is nearly extinct.

Maçonne Pétro: The "Masonic" dance of the Pétro rites.

Dances on the Periphery of the Vodoun Group

Ibo: Named after the Ibo people of Nigeria and used in rites for the Ibo family of loa.

Kouga or Cepilou: Named after West African tribes.

Dances of the Juba Group

Juba, or Martinique: Danced on the occasion of Last Prayers, when the spirit of a newly deceased person has been sent on its way. It is also danced on various coumbite occasions, and sometimes at the special request of a loa or an ancestor. [964] [975]

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14. Songs of Bravado and Boasting

Among the secular songs are many which have boasting, bravado, or challenges as their central theme. Usually this kind of song is playful in tone, though sometimes there may be a serious or even an ominous undercurrent. Often the challenges are directed toward, or concern, djabs and *démons*. Just as often they involve persons of great prestige and power, perhaps the president himself. These songs say, in effect, "Who's afraid of the lou-garo?"—or of the president, or of the demon of such-and-such a mountain, as the case may be. Sometimes the bravado motif is implicit, but as often as not the singer challenges the world to take him before some feared personage, human or supernatural, and see what will happen. 533* 538

In one such song, the singer boasts that he is ready to be conducted before a fearful and malevolent deity named Jean Zombie. As though to assure the listeners that he is in his right mind, the challenger emphasizes that he has not been drinking anything intoxicating and is perfectly sober: 533* 539* 775

> Rwo! Jean Zombie oh vini wè moin, conduit'm allé!
> Rwo! Jean Zombie oh vini wè moin, conduit'm allé!
> M'pas bwè tafia pou' nou fait tintin!
> Devant houmfor moin conduit'm allé!
> Jean Zombie oh wie wa conduit'm allé!
> M'pas bwè tafia pou' nou fait tintin! [Ex. 119]

> Rwo! Jean Zombie, oh, comes to see me, take me to him!
> Rwo! Jean Zombie, oh, comes to see me, take me to him!
> I haven't drunk tafia, I am not drunk!
> I am at my houmfor, take me to him!
> Jean Zombie, oh wie wa, take me to him!
> I haven't drunk tafia, I am not drunk!

Another song challenges the community to take the singer to face the president—right into the president's parlor. The fact that the president 533* 539* 643

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A brief song identifies by name a man who has participated in a Vinbindingue affair: 533* 539* 266 575

Y'r é soi' Cimila mangé ti moune yo!
Y'r é soi' Cimila mangé ti moune yo! [Ex. 127]

Last night Cimila ate little children!
Last night Cimila ate little children!

A Calinda song speaks more tangently of its business. It refers to doing "washing," a very special kind of washing that requires no bluing: 533* 539* 575

Waille waille waille, savonné sans métté 'digo!
Waille waille waille, savonné sans métté 'digo! [Ex. 128]

Waille waille waille, wash without bluing!
Waille waille waille, wash without bluing!

And a Zeaubeaup song complains that a ouanga (a black-magic bundle) has been swallowed by a snake. It seems to specify that some of the members of the group are zombies, the animated dead: 533* 539* 575 375 775

L'Arcahaye nous là nous là!
L'Arcahaye nous là nous là!
L'Arcahaye, coulève valé ouanga moin!
Ti ga'çons mes zeaubeaups, waille waille mes zeaubeaups!
Ti ga'çons mes zeaubeaups, waille waille mes zeaubeaups!
Ti ga'çons mes zeaubeaups, waille waille mes zombies!

Arcahaye I was there I was there!
Arcahaye I was there I was there!
At Arcahaye a snake swallowed my *ouanga!*
Young men, my zeaubeaups, *waille waille* my zeaubeaups!
Young men, my zeaubeaups, *waille waille* my zeaubeaups!
Young men, my zeaubeaups, *waille waille* my zombies!

[The Vodoun Pantheon]

[196] Azaxin Lacroix, or Baron Lacroix. Spoken of as "chief" of the cemetery, the one who plants the cross over the grave.
Baron Poussi, or Poussi (Baron Dust)
Baron Sal. (Baron Earth, or Dirty Baron)
Baron Cheta. The Baron who sits on the graves.
Baron Tikalé

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[195] [191] Azaka Mèdé, or Zaka Mèdé. Herskovits reports that Azaka Mèdé is the name of the stream which Dahomeans believe all the dead must cross.[15]
Cousin Zaka. The peasant Zaka, special patron of the country farmer and the people of the mountains. He is always portrayed as wearing the blue denim costume of the peasant, carrying the woven peasant knapsack called an *alfor cousou* and a [187] coconacaque stick, and smoking a clay pipe. Persons possessed by Cousin Zaka are dressed in this way, and they speak in the manner of the mountain man, a style that is heard only in the most remote communities.
Minisi Zaka, or Ministre Zaka. An aspect of Cousin Zaka. Ministre Zaka is a sort of Minister of Agriculture and a patron of peasant farmers.
Si Azaka. The wife of Ministre Zaka.
Azaka Tonnerre, or Tonnè. The Azaka who brings thunder and rain.
Azaka Baiso Baiso. One of the Azaka family.

Marassa. The loa of twins. The Marassa family of deities are in a special category, somewhat apart from other spirits. In an important Vodoun service, for example, there are invocations to the loa in general, to the Marassas, to the family ancestors, and to God.
Marassa Doçu. Patron of the first child after twins if it is a boy.
Marassa Doça. Patron of the first child after twins if it is a girl.
Marassa Blanc. Patron of white twins.
Marassa Trois. Patron of triplets.
Marassa Guinée. Patron of twins when one is a boy and one a girl.
Marassa Quat'. Patron of quadruplets, or of two consecutive sets of twins.
Marassa Bois (Marassa of the Woods). He is considered an "unbaptized" or "untamed" loa, and very savage. He likes sweets and never eats salt.
Marassa Dousé, or Marassa Cinq. Patron of consecutive twins and triplets.
Marassa Caillé (Marassa of the House). This one eats salt.

Loko Attisso. He is usually pictured as the protector of the hounfor, or cult [191] temple, and as the keeper of the altar (*pé*). In Dahomey, Loko is a deity of the Sky pantheon and a son of the divine Mawu and Lisa.[16] He is still remembered in the Azara (Dahomey) cults of Cuba. He is also called Sindé or Singé.
Loko Attisogué. Said to be Loko Attisso's wife.
Loko Adaïco, or Dâico. A member of Loko Attisso's family.
Loko Dâiyak. A brother of Loko Adaïco (Dâico + *frère*).
Loko Dâiyeto
Loko Tokamirwizo
Loko Dahomé
Loko Bassiyé
Tou Loko

[15 [Ibid, p. 280. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. --Analyst]
[16 [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 108-109. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. --Analyst]

Maly' Grand Chemin (Master of the Highway). Probably Legba.

Makanda. Believed to be the spirit of the famous houngan Makandal, who lived during the revolutionary period. He is symbolized as a snake which lives in the ground. Some informants think he is a Pétro rather than a Dahomé loa.

Mambo Caça

Tijean Dantor (Ancient Tijean)

Whydah Wala. Whydah is the name of a seacoast town in Dahomey.

Zo. A fire deity of clear Dahomean origin.[22]

Okesha

Ossi, or Ossaim. Known also among the Lucumí cults of Cuba. May be any one of the Oxangos mentioned by Herskovits.

Oxangu Lélé

Ossojabà

Papa Dahomé

Pierre Basico. This loa is sometimes identified with St. Peter.

Pierre Damballa, Damballa, or Damballa. Sometimes identified with St. Peter.

Pierre Wala. Related to Whydah Wala.

Poula, or Foula. This name is probably a tribal designation.

Sabata. Described as a loa of ancient times. Sabata or Sagbata is the so-called smallpox group of deities of Dahomey.

Sala. A female deity, thought by some to belong to the Ezilie Fréda family.

Silibo Gwèto. In Dahomey, according to Herskovits, Silibo is an ancient silfounder.

Silidja

Taureau

Ti Chak. This is a "false name"; this loa keeps his real name a secret.

THE AMBIVALENT SIMBI FAMILY

This group of loa in certain regions has attached itself to the Vodoun pantheon, elsewhere to the Congo-Guinée pantheon; but it has not maintained any kind of independent or semi-independent status. The deity Simbi and his family are of Congo origin.

Simba. A male deity, patron of rain and drinking water. Said to be the father of the Simbi brothers.

Simbi Dlèau. The best known of the Simbi family. Like his father, he is the patron of fresh water, is associated with the spring, and usually is symbolized as a snake. The color sacred to him is white. Altars to Simbi Dlèau usually are found at the spring or the well. Sometimes ponds are constructed for him within the hounfor.

Simbi Kitta

Simbi Yendzo, or Simbi Nan Dé Zaux (Simbi in Two Waters). Symbolized as a water snake who lives in the "upper" waters and the "lower" waters.

Grand Simba. The parent of Simba, and ancestor of the entire family of water loa.

Simbi Trois Zilé (Simbi of Three Islands)

Simbi Macaya

Simbi Grand Bois (Simbi of the Forest)

[22] [Ellis, The Ewe-speaking Peoples, pp. 71-74. Cf. p. 354, category 116.--Analyst]

2: Courlander 9-5 (1907-1968) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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as *houngfor*, *houngi*, *houngfoison*, *houngor*, etc. *Mystère* is of obvious French origin. *Loa* is probably from the Bantu, but it could be from the Yoruba.

[8]Various methods and formulas are employed in "tying" a loa. Sometimes making the sign of the cross is regarded as adequate, or the saying of a prayer. In "The Voduu Service in Northern Haiti" (*American Anthropologist*, XLII, 241-245), George Eaton Simpson reports that the "tying" of a loa sometimes results in a contest between the individual concerned and his houngan. If the houngan wants the *mait' tête* to come in, he must neutralize the ritual barriers the "horse" has put in the way. "One procedure for bringing on possession in a servant who has tried to 'tie' his chief god is for the priest to stand in front of the person whom he suspects, make the sign of the cross, and strike him on the forehead three times with a sacrificial stone. Usually these blows are hard enough to make blood spurt. The servant then begs the pardon of the angry god, and as soon as possible he unties the knots in his handkerchief [the method he has used for 'tying' his loa]."

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[9]Herskovits, *Dahomey*.

Chapter 4: *Death Rites* (*pp. 30-40*)

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[1]Maurice Delafosse, *L'Ame nègre*. Translation from *Free France*, special issue No. 4, French Press and Information Service, New York, June, 1945.

[2]Leo A. Verwilghen, in booklet describing peoples of the Kwango region, accompanying *Music of the Western Congo*, recordings issued by the Ethnic Folkways Library.

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[3]Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu*, pp. 88-89.

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[4]W. M. Eiselen and I. Schapera, "Religious Beliefs and Practices," in Schapera, *The Bantu-speaking Tribes of South Africa*, p. 250.

[5]Translated from the French of Aubin, *En Haiti*, p. 212.

[6]Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, pp. 213-214.

[7]Hall and others, *Haitian Creole*, American Anthropological Association, Memoir No. 54, pp. 188-189.

[8]Simpson, "Four Voduu Ceremonies," *Journal of American Folklore*, April-June, 1946, pp. 155-162.

[9]As translated by Courlander from Simpson's Creole text, *ibid.*, p. 156. The preceding paragraph is from p. 155.

[10]Translated by Courlander from the Creole of Simpson's text.

[11]This and the preceding paragraph are from Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

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[12]These shells, as indicated elsewhere, are part of the paraphernalia of the Voduu priest and appear to be an inheritance from the priests of the Fa cult of Dahomey. The divining shells are usually thrown on the ground in fours, and the readings depend upon combinations of "heads and tails." The manner of throwing the shells, as well as the number used, corresponds closely with the Haitian secular gambling game *mayombe* (see Appendix 2), though the purpose is obviously different. In some priestly rites in Haiti, ashes rather than the customary shells are used for divining.

[13]Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

[14]*Ibid.*, p. 161.

[15]Herskovits, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

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[16]Herskovits (*ibid.*) notes that persons who die of smallpox, lightning, and certain other phenomena are not buried in coffins. Some of my informants indicated this to be their understanding also, but they said that the dead are buried without coffins for strictly economic reasons as well.

[17]Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

[18]Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. 156.

[19]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 398.

[20]*Ibid.*, pp. 397-398.

[21]Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, p. 214.

[22]Hall and others, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

114 776 769 the dead a right to whatever their survivors possess, and moreover gives them the right to return to earth as ghosts.[31]

769 765 775 782 Strict rules of mourning prevail, both as regards clothing and behavior. The slightest lapse in the observation of these rules would cause resentment on the part of the dead; fear of retribution would be quite enough to ensure conformity even if public opinion did not. Ghosts have the power to possess mortals, not as the loa do at a Vodun service or dance, but in the manner understood by American Negroes who say they have been "ha'nted," and so, continually thinking of the dead, live in nervous fear of a streak of bad luck. Such possession is a form of persecution, with continual consequent bad luck until the survivor has carried out all his obligations. It is especially significant, however, that a departed spirit takes vengeance only in matters thought by the Haitian to concern the Church. The ghost is not whimsical in his possession of mortals, and cannot resent treatment which is his due. The kind of treatment given a corpse depends upon the kind of death he died: a person struck by lightning, for example, would have no ceremonies at all, for lightning is an act of God.

787 775 789 Where the cult of the dead departs entirely from the teachings of the Church is in the matter of magic, a topic shortly to be treated. It may be briefly stated here that ghosts can be summoned back by special adepts for purposes of divination; that certain corpses are thought to be revivified by evil persons who use these soulless, pathetic automata as slaves (these are the notorious *zombis*); and that black magic—that is, powerful influence for evil—can be worked by sorcerers who know how to command ghosts.

771 798 All other articles of the Vodun creed not already discussed, except one, come under the heading of magic. That exception is the statement: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." The fact is as simple as the affirmation. If the Catholic priests fight Vodun, preaching frequently against its beliefs and practices, that is unfortunate, think the peasants: Vodun does not retaliate by fighting Catholicism. God and the saints have their province, and the loa theirs. The mind of the Haitian is simple enough to accept both sets of spiritual beings, and not philosophical enough to worry over the contradiction. Practically every Vodun worshiper thinks of himself as a Catholic.[32]

31. See Herskovits, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

32. In this sketch of the Vodun creed, it has been constantly emphasized that each locality has its own variations both in belief and practice. The reader who is interested in pursuing the subject further should consult the works of Price-Mars, Herskovits, Dorsainvil, Parsons, Hurston, et al. See Bibliography.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

to speak the special "languages" of their particular cults. One aspect of this initiation,[3] which has been carried over almost unchanged into some parts of Haiti (though not into Mirebalais) is the ordeal by fire, in which the novitiate must plunge his hand into a pot of boiling cornmeal and rest his foot on the red-hot stones which support the pot.

The role of the family deities has already been given; of the third category, that of the personal forces, one finds first of all the soul, of which each individual is conceived as having three. More important is the cult of Fa, or Destiny, which came to Dahomey from the Yoruba, and is a part of a widely spread system of discovering the destiny of a man that characterizes not only West Africa and the remainder of the continent, but most of the Old World. In Dahomey today this end is carried out by assessing the significance of the various permutations and combinations of sixteen palm kernels "thrown" by the diviner. In addition there exist traditionally earlier and less "official" methods of divining, which in the main are those which have survived in the New World. Intimately associated with both the soul and the destiny of man is the deity who is at once a member of the great pantheons and one of the most personal of all the gods, Legba, whose African importance is attested by the extent to which he is today worshipped in many parts of the New World, and by his universality in Haiti. From the point of view of Dahomean philosophy Legba may be regarded as the god of accident, who gives to man a "way out" in a world ruled by an otherwise inexorable fate. Gross in his appetites and capricious, he is, nevertheless, beloved by the Dahomeans, and though his name is usually erroneously translated by the European term "devil," no appellation could be farther from reality. Of particular significance for his role in Haitian life as guardian of the crossroads and of the *barrière* is his place in Dahomean theology, since it is said: "Before the gods can

[3] [i.e., The initiation of devotees by priests into the religious cults of Dahomey - trans]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

est, Legba must be fed" — in other words, Legba is interlocutor between man and gods.

Another figure in this category of personal deities is Dã. Briefly, it would seem that Dã is an abstraction, used to designate anything sinuous, which moves silently, undulates, and cannot be controlled. It is the principle of movement, of energy, of life itself, and, by extension, of fortune. Often spoken of as a serpent, Dã is nevertheless but the principle of mobility. If not cared for, it will weaken, be preyed upon by others of its kind, and a man's fortune will disappear. Why, then, has this Dahomean serpent cult in its Haitian form been given so important a place in the writings on Haitian religion? In the first place, the principle represented by Dã is symbolized by serpents. Again, a myth describes the rainbow serpent to be one of a pair of great snakes, the other of which lies coiled beneath the earth to support its weight, that it may not fall into the sea. But most important of all is the regard for the snake in Whydah, where it is believed to be the mythical animal ancestor of the large relationship group whose center is that coastal city. The rainbow serpent is Dã Aido Wedo, sometimes known as Damballa Wedo, whose importance as a Haitian deity is mentioned in all works which treat of Haitian religion, while Dangbe, so often found in the literature on Haiti, is, however, this Whydah totem which with time has also been adopted more widely. Thus much that has been written of serpent-worship in this region of West Africa — the place of origin of the patterns of most of the religious cults found in Haiti today — is the result of misconception resulting from a failure to analyse this belief to its ultimate significance.

It remains but to speak of magic. Magic in West Africa is not an isolated phenomenon, but is closely integrated with the other aspects of religion. In Dahomey magic charms are sold by professional workers of magic, but the derivation of the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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843 782 539 *malin esprit barré chemin qu'en moment delivrance moin apé rivé. Nou' toutes Invisibles, les Saints, les Morts, Marassa, vini assisté moin jou'-a.*— I ask you all to come deliver me, that you open the way for me, that you do not allow evil spirits to bar my path when the time of the delivery approaches. May you all, Invisible Beings, the Saints, the Dead, Twins, come to my aid on that day."

843 782 776 Should one of the couple be a devotee of Damballa or Erzilie, both of them jealous gods, a chicken or two is added to the customary offerings, and some gift pleasing to the god, such as a dress or suit of his sacred color, is made him. Normally no further precautions need be taken. If, however, the 843 789 pregnant woman has had one or two miscarriages, she and her 793 husband go to a *vodun* priest, preferably a woman, and obtain a "medicine" to be used in bathing the abdominal and vaginal areas as a precaution against *mauvaises aires*, the werewolves believed to consume children in the womb. If the preg- 755 nancy this time terminates successfully, some of the same 793 medicine is rubbed on the child shortly after birth and several times during the ensuing weeks, but should the infant later fall ill, the *vodun* priest brings herbs and makes a smoke-fire to drive away the werewolves that are believed still to be hovering about.

844 782 At the onset of labor, if either the father or the mother of the unborn child is vowed to Damballa, another sacrifice is made to this god and to the spirits of twins, giving a *couveri sec* and one or two chickens and pigeons to each. If a *vodun* priest has determined what deity protects the child, a sacrifice is also given this spirit, and prayers are said to the spirits of twins, the dead of the families of both the man and the woman, and all other supernatural beings, saints of the Church and *vodun* gods alike.

844 Meanwhile the woman has been placed on the ground on

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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584 truth, but the matter is recognized as one which concerns
836 only her husband and herself, and if he is willing to keep
836 her, it is his own affair. Consensus of opinion in Mirebalais
369 is that the percentage of girls who do not have pre-marital sexual relations is relatively small, but the belief is expressed that chastity is more prevalent among country women than among those of the town, where, in turn, it is more frequent than in larger centers such as Port-au-Prince. Even though
836 pre-marital relations are commonplace, however, the preg-
848 nancy of an unmarried girl is regarded as both reprehensible and unfortunate, and she is severely beaten for it by her family. In such cases, if the father of the unborn child will take the girl, his parents are sent to bring her, but where the parents of the man refuse to ask for the girl because they do not approve of her, then, if he still desires her, he must himself face the anger of her parents. Should he not wish to come for her, she may either remain with her family or seek work in another community. In any event, her child will be well cared for by her family, and no reproach will attach to it because of the circumstances of its birth.

585 Before a mating of any type is consummated, the familial
782 spirits must be notified of the approaching event so that they
776 may be well disposed toward it, for no union where this is neglected can enjoy happiness or peace. One Mirebalais woman was pointed out as an object lesson of the necessity of doing this. Though a devotee of several gods, neither she nor her husband was willing to perform the necessary rites for her gods before their marriage. She was suffering from an
[753] acute case of melancholia after the birth of her first child, and
[828] the prevailing opinion was that she was going mad because of the neglect of her duty toward her deities. Shortly before a woman goes to her husband, therefore, a *couvert sec* for the Rada deities is given both by herself and by her betrothed. If the family of either the young man or the woman possess deities of the powerful Pétro group, more inclusive offerings

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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are necessary, and the elders of the family must see to it that these gods are instructed not to trouble the newly married pair. If either or both of them are devotees of deities such as Damballa, Erzilie, Ogun, or Aida Wedo, all of whom are known to be extremely jealous, these gods must be specially placated. 585 782 796

For the actual ceremony the couple appear each with a candle in hand, pour water on the ground in the family house of worship, and kneel and pray. The god may "come to the head" of the girl or the man or some relative of each and advise them. If it asks a gift at this time, it is either given at the moment or a promise is made to fulfill the request later. If the spirit objects to the marriage, it is wooed with offerings. Thus, for example, should the young woman be possessed by the serpent-god Damballa, who, speaking through his devotee, registered an objection to the marriage, the girl would be given such gifts as a white silk dress, white silk stockings, or some other valued object in the sacred color of the god, or some perfume which might also serve to mollify him. Or should the man's deity who registered objection be Ogun, the god of war, a fine red kerchief might be offered in honor of this god, whose color is red.[a] 585 782 787 [822]

The dead of both families are also notified by means of a visit to the cemetery. The days for these pilgrimages are Mondays or Fridays, and the pilgrimages must be made during either the morning or the early afternoon, since visits at night are only for evil purposes. As candles are lighted, announcement is made to the family dead of the marriage which is soon to take place, and their good offices are asked to bring it happiness. After all the family dead have been invoked, a candle is lighted before the large cross for Baron Samedi, and another behind it for Gede, the first as the ruler of cemeteries and the graves of the dead, and the second as his handy-man. Another candle is lighted for the "abandoned souls" of the family, who have died without consecration, and yet another 585 769 782 [796]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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171 other one which has been known there for many years,
771 principally in the west, which bears the name of *Vau-*
535 *doux*. . . . But it is not only as a dance that the *Vaudoux* merits consideration, for it occurs under circumstances which assign to it a place among the institutions where superstition and bizarre practices play a considerable part."[2]

171 In Dahomey, whence the term has come, *vodun*, as has al-
771 ready been stated, signifies "god" and is a general name for
776 all deities. This source of the word has likewise long been
[192] known, as a reading of St. Mery shows:

> "According to the Arada Negroes, the real followers of *Vaudoux* in the colony . . . *Vaudoux* signifies an all-powerful and supernatural being on which depend all the events that come to pass on this globe."[3]

171 Similarly, de Vassière[4] quotes with approval a parallel defini-
771 tion from Peytraud, while modern Haitian writers also em-
776 phasize its Dahomean origin.[5] This meaning of the word had,
192 however, undergone a change in its new home even during
178 pre-Revolutionary times, for, according to St. Mery, the "all-
825 powerful and supernatural being" had come to be a non-venomous serpent that stood as a symbol "for all those who
184 professed this same doctrine." Today in Mirebalais even this
771 identification is a thing of the past, though the prominence
776 given serpent-worship in Haiti by most writers[6] would make
825 it reasonable to suppose that elsewhere in the island serpents are maintained by priests of the *vodun* cult and play an important role in the rites at which the gods are worshipped. Indeed, one priest from Arcahaie encountered in Mirebalais mentioned the fact that in his own temple he kept such a snake. Yet in our valley no worship of serpents as such was encountered, and there were even those who declared that they had no hesitation in killing any snake, though these brave assertions could not be tested. Serpent-worship in Mirebalais

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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Serpent-worship in Mirebalais

may perhaps be said to have come to this: Adherents of the African cults refrain from killing the snake, and should they do so by accident, the African custom of giving ceremonial burial to any creature having supernatural importance is followed as an atonement. Where this is omitted, difficulties of so serious a nature are felt to threaten that to prevent them a priest of the cult is called upon to offer up a sacrifice and to beg forgiveness even after the little ceremony of burial has been performed.[7]

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Inasmuch as *vodun* flourishes in Mirebalais despite the minor role of serpent-worship, it is evident that in seeking to understand its nature and its philosophy other aspects must be considered. Two historical facts must be kept constantly in mind in making this analysis, for without them, what follows would be meaningless. The first is that *vodun* derives from a background of African theology and ceremonialism. The second is that the Negroes have continuously been subjected to the influence of Catholicism during the centuries that have passed since their introduction into the island.

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Yet another point may prove suggestive in providing a useful point of view for an analysis of the *vodun* cult. This bears upon a difficulty impossible and happily unnecessary to resolve in the field study of religion, which arises out of the degree of variation in answers to questions dealing with the same point. These answers differ not only according to the status of the individual in the cult, since layman and priest have understandably different concepts of the functions of deities based on unequal degrees of expert knowledge, but the extent to which an individual has religious interests or is indifferent to them influences the nature of his responses. A fundamental fallacy results from the fact that except where there is an officially sanctioned theology — which makes for dogma, and often for perfunctory worship, in contrast with the living dynamic nature of Haitian peasant belief and ritual — there are no "real" answers to questions in the field of religion. The

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1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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184 771 student pursuing the "correct" statement will find that no matter how painstaking his method and how extensive his precautions, the versions of different persons can never be entirely reconciled, unless a false appearance of truth is given to his findings.[8]

178 771 776 If the underlying philosophy of the universe held by the Haitian is summarized, as it can be abstracted from his expressions of belief and from his observed behavior, this philosophy might be phrased somewhat as follows: The ruler of the universe is God, its Creator, who shares this task with His son Jesus, the saints of the Church, and the Holy Ghost. Man has been endowed with a soul, and the soul, which has come from God, returns to God for judgment and, if necessary, for punishment at the end of its sojourn on earth. From Africa — *Guinée* — the Negroes brought other deities, termed variously *loa, mystères,* or *saints,*[9] and these deities have been inherited through succeeding generations by the descendants of those who brought them to Haiti. The specific function of the African spirits in the Haitian system was given in the following terms by one of their devotees: "The *loa* are occupied with men, their task is to cure. They can make a person work better than he otherwise would. When the *loa* possess people, they give helpful advice. But they cannot do the things that God does. They can protect a garden, but they cannot make a garden grow, for streams, rain, and thunder come from God." Another statement clearly shows the same concept: "God made the *loa,* but did not make them so they might do evil. [424] [425] When a man purchases a *loa* for money, that spirit will do evil as well as good, but God becomes angry and will not accept these bad spirits into the sky, and He drives them away."

776 In the ordering of his daily life, however, the forces which are foremost in the consciousness of the Haitian make up the triad expressed in the phrase "*les mystères, les morts, et les marassa* — the *loa,* the dead, and the twins." Because of their special character, an examination of the twin cult and the cult

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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of the dead must be deferred for a later chapter. Similarly, the discussion of the final element in Haitian religion, the belief in magic, must also be reserved for later pages, stressing here only its separate identity from the worship of the *loa*, with which it has been too often confused.[20]

The most striking element in the *vodun* cult is the manner in which the gods possess their devotees. Despite the fact that this is the aspect of Haitian religion that seems to the casual observer its least restrained and least disciplined, possession occurs according to well-defined rules and under specifically defined circumstances. And since it is through an analysis of possession that the clearest understanding can be reached of the meaning of the *loa* to those who worship them, the manner in which they influence the lives of their devotees and exert their powers for good or evil, possession may be treated at some length.[21]

When a person is possessed for the first time, the spirit which is said to animate him is known as a *loa bossal*, an "untamed" god. The word *bossal*, which in the early days was applied to newly arrived Africans,[22] has always been a term of contumely, and today the same feeling-tone is continued through the belief that since all things in the universe are subject to observable regulation, and animals and plants and human beings must all live according to these rules, the *loa*, as members of society, may not manifest the unrestrained and often dangerous traits of unpredictable behavior which characterize them before they have been "baptized" and thus brought under proper control.

Baptism of a deity most often occurs when a boy or girl is possessed by a family *loa*, especially if it is one which gives that knowledge of healing and divination meant by the word *connaissance*. Sometimes, though not always, this possession is violent, and the prospective devotee rages about the house, destroying whatever comes to hand. On occasion, since custom frowns on possession at a ceremony not given by the family of

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the one possessed, possessions of this kind mean either that the *loa* needs baptism; or that, being baptized, its devotee has been negligent in serving the god.

No actual rite of baptism of a *loa* — or, as it is also termed, of *lavé tête,* "washing the head" — was witnessed, but the account of the ceremony given here, obtained independently from several persons, represents an adequate exposition of the rite as performed in Mirebalais. A room is prepared where the person whose *loa* is to be baptized must remain for three days. The mat or bed on which the neophyte rests is covered with fresh sheets and pillow-cases, and three changes of clothing are made ready, one of which must be entirely new for the last day of the ceremony. These are in the color of the god being "baptized"; that is, if the *loa* were revealed to be such a one as Damballa, Aida Wedo, or Gran' Erzilie, everything would be white, but if it were Gran' Siligbo, the colors would be blue and white; if Ogun, everything would be red; if Ossange, blue; where the god is one of the Pétro suite, such as 'Ti Kita or Bosu, everything would be black.*

During the three days' "retreat" the one whose *loa* is being consecrated lies alone. All day long the men and women of the family sit in the next room or outside the house, singing and praying, though at night they sleep, since "this is not a wake." They not only sing the songs sacred to the *loa* being baptized, but also the canticles of the Virgin, while prayers of the Church are recited under the leadership of the *prêt' savanne,* the "bush-priest" whose ability to read the prayers makes him an essential figure in all *vodun* rites. They may from time to time have "a little procession" about the room where the novitiate lies, when small banners in the color of the god are carried. Soft drinks and a *mangé sec* — a "dry" offering — are given the god, and white tapers and an oil lamp are

* A detailed listing of the names, attributes, and powers of the more widely worshipped *loa,* the colors, days, and trees or other places sacred to them, and the "squads" into which they are conceived to be formed, will be found in an appendix at the end of this book.

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lighted. Chicken and rice may also be cooked for any god except Gede, while chocolate and rice with milk are favored, since it is said "the *loa* love desserts" — a commentary on the very immediate and human character of these spirits.

The actual baptism, or "washing of the head," is performed on the third day of the ceremony by a *vodun* priest or priestess who is a member of the family, though any member who has important *loa* and the necessary *connaissance* may officiate if the membership of the family includes no priest. As at any baptism, there must be a godfather and godmother, and preference is given those who are the parents of twins or are themselves twins. The officiant must be possessed at the time, since, it is said, "one *loa* baptizes another." Leaves of the basilique tree are steeped in perfumed cold water, and the hands of the one who baptizes are first immersed in the liquid; then, while songs of the *loa* and canticles of the Virgin are sung, he washes the head of the person to be baptized. Possession occurs immediately, and the new devotee lies back, half conscious, while all others kneel, seeking word from the *loa* to learn if it is satisfied. If an affirmative answer is given, all retire, the person possessed remaining in the room to sleep through the night. A "ball," but not a *vodun* dance, may celebrate the event either the next day or later, but this is not obligatory, and most often those present, after eating, quietly disperse. The following day the one who has been baptized goes to the family place of worship and greets those who have helped him. Only one further rite is necessary, and this solely when the *loa bossal* is revealed to be a hostile god. Then the *loa*, after having been baptized, is "restrained" by being placed in a jar and buried, so it cannot later emerge and trouble the family of the one to whom it has come.[18]

The ceremony of baptism, in Mirebalais, is in no sense a first step into any *vodun* hierarchy, for, as will be seen, no such hierarchy exists in this valley. One important priest there derives his power from *loa* that have never been bap-

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tized at all, but merely respond to an innate ability to control them. To have a baptized *loa,* then, merely means that the worship of the *loa* is thereafter carried on in regular form. The worshipper learns how to *marré,* or "tie,"[14] his spirit, so as to enjoy the social aspects of a *vodun* dance without fear that his *loa* will come unbidden. He gives it small offerings from time to time, and if it becomes insistent, or if his family is being troubled by its gods, he takes full part in the rituals that are staged.[15]

In native idiom, a person when possessed is "mounted" by his god, and thereafter becomes his *ch'wal,* or "horse." A devotee may come under the influence of a number of spirits during a single ceremony or dance, one *loa* succeeding another. The first deity that ever came to a person, however, for him constitutes the chief of his gods — his *mait' tête* — and the leader of any deities which may subsequently possess him. It is this *loa* alone that is "baptized," and this one alone "taken from his head" at his death; and, as far as he is concerned, all his other gods are under the control of this *mait' tête,* so that any agreement which he may enter into with this principal spirit must be respected by all the others.

Fundamentally, to be possessed by a *loa* means that an individual's spirit is literally dispossessed by that of the god. Personalities undergo radical change in accordance with the nature of the deity,[16] while even the sex of the one possessed is disregarded if it differs from that of the god, so that, for example, a woman "mounted" by Ogun is always addressed as Papa Ogun.[17] One wears the colors of the god and the ornaments he likes, eating and drinking those things he prefers, and otherwise manifesting his peculiar characteristics — rolling on the earth, if possessed by Damballa or chattering incessantly if by Gede.[18]

Not everyone, by any means, is subject to states of possession. If the existence of individual differences in the capacity for religious expression be recognized, it becomes apparent

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steps to "feed" his *loa* in order to satisfy it, for it is more important to give offerings to the spirits than to dance for them. He therefore either quietly prepares a sacrifice of cereals and liquor in his own room or sends money home so that his *loa* may be "fed" at the family habitation, and his absence explained to it.[21]

When *vodun* deities are discussed in Mirebalais, most often two "companies" of them are mentioned, the Rada and the Pétro "squads." In one list of gods that was obtained, the word *Rada,* derived from the name of the ancient principality of Allada in Dahomey, called forth the explanation "*qui veut dire Dahomey* — which is to say, Dahomey," though it should be made clear that neither the words *Rada* nor *Dahomey* are any longer recognized in Haiti as place-names, being today simply qualifying designations of *loa.* There are regional differences in the number and ranking of other categories of gods that hold no important place in Mirebalais. The existence of these other categories is, of course, well known, and one person referred to "the seventeen and twenty-one classes of *loa,*" of which, however, only the following were named: Rada, Pétro, Dahomey, Guinée, Congo, Nago, Ibo, and Wangol. Of these the Congo and the Ibo gods are well known, though their worship is chiefly restricted to individual families, while the Nago and Dahomey categories, though significant from the point of view of indicating African origins, are most commonly grouped under the term *Rada.* Guinée also occasionally figures in worship as carried on in individual families, but this term is more often understood as a general designation for all *loa* outside the Rada, Nago, Congo, and Ibo groupings and for certain Pétro gods. Wangol derives from the geographical entity Angola.

From comparatively early times the impression has been given that certain of these classes of gods perform only good, and others evil. Nothing could be further from the truth than this attempt to read European concept into Haitian ideology,

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for though some gods are feared far more than others, and some generally regarded with affection, even these latter bring great harm to a neglectful devotee, while the gods whose power validates the most malignant magic may, in certain situations, work for the good of their worshippers. Especially has there been great confusion in discussions of the so-called Dom Pédro worship. Whether or not the origin of the term as given by St. Mery is correct — that it derives from the name of its founder, a Spanish Negro from Petit-Goâve [22] — the statements that have been made concerning it are in the main misleading.[23] Thus, it is not true that the Pétro gods are unqualifiedly evil and the Rada deities unqualifiedly good; nor that blood sacrifices are made exclusively at Pétro ceremonies, while the services for other gods are innocent of such sacrificial offerings. The impression gathered in Mirebalais concerning the Pétro gods is that they are principally, though not exclusively, derived from the process of deification of powerful ancestors, which in Africa exists in forms that clearly explain the essential tradition that offers a basis for this custom as found in Haiti. This is reinforced by statements to the effect that most of the Pétro "squad" are Créole or native gods as against the Guinée deities in the other groupings. One member of the *vodun* cult, indeed, made the concept of deifying the powerful dead explicit, saying that Pétro was a great and evil *vodun* priest who had died with the *loa* not "taken from his head." For while a general principle in the cult of the dead is that in the normal course of events those who die deliver up their souls to God, making the care for these souls primarily a concern of the Church, it is recognized that there are others such as this Dom Pedro who become *loa*. This occurs when an individual, usually a priest or priestess of the *vodun* cult, who during his lifetime was known to possess great supernatural power, dies without having had his *loa* "withdrawn from his head." Burdened by these spirits, and therefore unable to get to God, his soul goes to the bottom of

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a stream, there to remain until, becoming impatient, it demands to be taken out. A ceremony then brings back the tortured soul and makes of it a "*loa nan canarie*—a *loa* in a jar"—which thereafter acts as a guard for its family.

There is little agreement as to the place of residence of the *loa*. In general, it is believed that they come from Guinée each time they are called, returning when they have, in the native idiom, "descended from the heads of their horses"—that is, when the possession of their devotees has ceased. Those "under the water," however, being Haitians, remain in Haiti for seven years until the ceremony just mentioned, of putting them *nan canarie*, has been performed, when they, like the other *loa*, return to Guinée. At the same time, all recognize the African character of the *loa*, whether they be gods brought from Africa or the Créole *loa* from Haiti itself.

Worship of the *loa* is directed by priests of the cult. The terms *papaloi* and *mamaloi* as designations for male and female priests, almost universally employed by non-Haitian writers, are practically unknown in Mirebalais, where, as in most regions of Haiti, a priest is called a *hungan*, a priestess a *mambu*.[24] Besides the *hungan* (or *mambu*), and the *gangan*, a term applied to a *hungan* of renown, is the *bocor*, a practitioner of magic, not a member of any *vodun* priesthood, but a man who has acquired his power by the purchase of spirits. He is particularly differentiated from the *hungan* and *mambu* by the fact that the *loa* of their own accord are believed to have given "*connaissance*"—the knowledge of healing and helping, to these latter.[25] Not all gods can endow their devotees with this *connaissance*. Some of the Rada deities, in addition to those of the Ogun group who give it, are Legba, Damballa, Aizan, Bosu, St. Jean, and Agwe Woyo; among the Pétro gods it is conferred by Bosu Trois Cornes, Simbi d'leau, Gede, Ossange, Malt' Gran' Bois, and Malt' Calfou (Carrefour). Simbi en Deux Eaux and Simbi Proméné both give magic power, the former conferring knowledge of excellent protectives against

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793 776 755 werewolves as well as of the ingredients to concoct healing baths. Certain priests worship and control a large number of deities, as is shown by those which comprise the personal pantheon of a *gangan* from the valley of Mirebalais: Gedenibo, Erzilie Gé Rouge; 'Ti Kita Demembré; Simbi en Deux Eaux; Bumba Trois Îlé; Legba; St. Jacques; Ogun Ferraille, Ogun Balandjo, Ogun Ashade; Lemba; Aizan Keleké, Aizan Wedo, Aida Wedo, Damballa Wedo; Baron Samedi, Bosu Trois Cornes; Congo Wangol, Maît' Mapou; Agasu; Agwe, Agweto Woyo; Kadia-Bosu; Sobo Gran'; l'Afrique Guinée. Whatever his ability, the *hungan* can cure only diseases " sent by man " — that is, those caused by magic — and by the *loa*, since against illness sent by God he can do nothing. Gossip [521] disapprovingly whispers how in more than one instance a *hungan* took advantage of his position and the trust of his clients, falsely to represent himself as able to cure an illness " sent by God " through stating it was due to magic.

793 787 An important function of the *hungan* or *mambu* is to foretell the future, and it is as a diviner that the *vodun* priest or priestess is most often employed. No major rite would be considered by a family unless divination were resorted to, but consultation is made for a far wider range of affairs than those of a purely religious nature, and no proposed undertaking of any importance in the secular field is begun without visiting a diviner to discover whether or not the fates are propitious. When divining, the priest is usually under possession by his gods, but other methods, such as gazing into a crystal or basin of water, may also be employed. Several divining séances were visited, but no description of them need be given here, since a number of accounts, including an especially full one by Parsons, are available.[26]

793 184 Though a certain hierarchy seems to exist among the *vodun* priests in other districts of Haiti, in Mirebalais the organization of the cult is informal to an extreme degree.[27] In the [755] [784] minds of the cult members, various priests in the same region

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CHAPTER IX

VODUN WORSHIP: THE SERVICE

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THE *loa* make known their desires by means of possessing their devotees and speaking through them, or by divination, and if these desires are not gratified, they will mildly harass the family of their devotees, until, thoroughly angered, they will seek full vengeance for this neglect.[1] Fortunately, the wants of many of the gods are modest, and they are satisfied if a candle is occasionally lighted, some water "thrown away" in the place of worship, and they are kept informed of family happenings. But when the *loa* finally clamor for a sacrifice, the time when it is to be made is deferred until the necessary preparations can be completed, for the attitude of the Haitians toward the gods in such matters, as one explained it, is that "*Mystère c'est 'ti moun, faut les derigé*—The *loa* are like children, and must be told what to do," and "If the *loa* are promised a sacrifice, they must accept the date set by the one who serves them." But when that date arrives, the ceremony must be held or the *loa* will cause their worshippers much trouble. This does not mean that a poor person, or one who has met with reverses, may not plead with his god and count on being permitted to defer the offering if he is unable to provide what is asked.

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Simple annual rites are held for the gods in January, each family giving small offerings in its house of worship to its own deities. These minor ceremonies are not to be confused with the extended rituals which a family may perform but once in a decade or a generation. Because of the extensive preparation and large outlay these entail, such rites are often postponed from year to year. According to some, this postponement is sought through an *action de grâce,* based on Church ritual, while others maintain that it is but necessary on his special day to appeal to the deity who is troubling the family, give a small offering — a *mangé sec* — and ask for the desired respite. This may be done several times, until crop failures, sudden deaths, and the loss of valuable property begin to afflict the family, whereupon the family head seeks out a *hungan,* who by divination determines the supernatural forces that are responsible for these misfortunes; and when his statement that the gods have reached the end of their patience is confirmed independently by several other priests who are consulted, active preparations for the major rite are finally set in motion.

Any such important ceremony must be held on the ancestral habitation, and centers in the *maison de servitude,* the family house of service for the gods. The house itself, to be differentiated from the *humfort,* or "temple" of the *vodun* priest, may be elaborate or simple in accordance with the status of family members in the *vodun* cult.[2] At one end of the sacred house is a platform about two and one half feet high on which are placed calabash plates for the *loa,* six for the Créole deities, three for the Mystères Guinée, and a white plate with a "thunder stone," or Neolithic celt, and a necklace for Damballa. Not all *cailles mystères* are painted, but some, it is said, are green "for hope," and some red "for victory," while one was said to have designs of flowers and snakes painted on the wall above the platform.[3] These houses usually have two rectangular rooms, each with a separate entrance and each having its platform at the narrow end facing the doorway. One of

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the rooms is consecrated to the *loa*, the other to the spirits of twins and the family dead. If the house is a large one with three rooms, the third will be for the Congo *loa*. It was also said that occasionally such places of worship reserve one room for the Rada deities, a second for the Pétro *loa*, and the third for the Congo gods, the dead and twins being worshipped elsewhere. For the Ibo gods, however, it is agreed in Mirebalais that there is never a separate room. But whether the gods are worshipped in a single-room thatched shelter or a more impressive "temple" with a metal roof, none of the major categories of supernatural powers are neglected.

In the main, large ceremonies are concerned with the task of restraining, or less often of pacifying, deities that have been molesting a family, and of making content those who have been demonstrating their goodwill toward the group. Such rites must be sharply differentiated from the ordinary *vodun* dance which, coming after the family ritual, forms but a part of this complex, and serves to express joy at the dangers averted and gratitude for the good that the friendly *loa* are to bring. At the ceremony drums may or may not be employed; at *vodun* dances they are indispensable. Possession is induced at the ceremony by the *hungan's* invocations; at the dance by the rhythm of the drums. The ceremony is attended only by members of the family and those who are specially invited; invitations to the *vodun* dance are broadcast over the countryside, and all take part in the social phases of the evening. For the ceremony, sacrifices not alone of cereals and drinks but also of the blood of animals are provided; at the *vodun* dance only minor offerings are given. And while both types of ritual are a part of a single functioning religious system, it is at the first where the most important end is achieved, that of obtaining protection from hostile gods and gaining the favor of those who are friendly.

The pattern of the ceremony — called a *service loa* — is sufficiently definite to allow a generalized version to be given,

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based on the rituals that were observed. In every case at least two major officiants are necessary, the *prêt' savanne* and the *hungan*, though the role of the latter is the all-important one. Last-minute preparations are made during the final morning, but what is needed will have been accumulated over a period of many months. Tables to hold offerings — sometimes two, sometimes more — are arranged at the sacred places on the family habitation, usually near streams or great trees where the gods reside. Eggs, cereals, drinks, and cornmeal — the food of the gods — are brought, and the animals to be sacrificed are tethered near by. Early in the afternoon the family, dressed in white, assemble, while the *vodun* priest with cornmeal describes on the ground the cabalistic designs called *verver*, and he sees to it that all has its proper place on the altar, whether it be the ever-present crucifix, or the chromolithographs of the saints, or the bottles of "drink" — usually non-alcoholic — or cereals and flour of various kinds. Consecrated water must be on hand, particularly at the big "altar," as the table covered by a canopy to protect the sacred objects is called.

The first part of the ceremony is an *action de grâce*, which in Mirebalais requires an hour or more, but which is said to last two or three hours in southern Haiti. This ritual, entirely derived from the litany of the Church, must always precede any *vodun* ceremony of the kind being considered here. Its purpose is said "to set the *loa* in movement" and to notify them of the rites that are to come, but psychologically it also serves to assure the participants that they are not proceeding to the worship of African gods without having paid friendly homage to God, the ruler of the universe, and the saints. The songs and prayers are brought to a close by an *adoration*, when offerings of money are made by members of the family to pay the officiant. At this point the songs change to a more African rhythm, and the *vodun* priest takes active charge.

As darkness falls, on the first day of the rite, he summons the

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78 79 776 *loa* troubling the family, or, if it is the second, those which have helped them, to tell whether or not they are willing to receive the sacrificial animals. The omen which indicates their acceptability to the gods is their nibbling at leaves or pecking at grains of corn and other cereals offered them, after which the gods themselves come, possessing their servitors. At midnight or later, as the violence of the possession recedes, the sacrifices are offered. In Mirebalais, at least, the hysteria said to mark the moment "when the blood flows" is not present. The actual killing of the animals, witnessed in numerous instances, is one of the more routine aspects of the ritual.[4]

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After the animals have been killed, a long period of quiet ensues while the work of dressing and cooking them takes place, the ceremony beginning anew when this is done. If evil deities are to be banished or "restrained," they are called once more, and the priest may have to battle with those possessed by them, for these gods have no desire to be driven away, or incarcerated where they cannot escape. Most of the food given such gods is placed in large pots and buried in the earth with them, but, with characteristic human perversity, if the sacrifices have been for good *loa*, these are only allowed to have small portions. The ceremony closes with the coming of day.[5]

78 796 794 776 184 This pattern varies in details, and to the Haitian these differences are important. This is shown by the response of a person in whose company two similar rites were observed, to the question whether the second would resemble the first. The answer was decisive. "No, the ceremony will not be the same. In the first one the most important spirit lived in a mango tree; in the second, it is in a bamboo." The Pétro gods receive black or gray-colored animal offerings, the Rada deities white, red, and vari-colored ones. Only Bosu Trois Cornes, Pelicon, and Pelib are given bullocks, the first because he, like this animal, is horned; the second because he is even more dangerous than Bosu; and Pelib because as a water-god he will otherwise take

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cattle and all other animals when the river floods. Rituals involving these larger sacrifices, however, are held only on the rarest of occasions, and are thus much less common than the ceremony which, typical of those witnessed, may now be described.

This *service* was held in a habitation southwest of Mirebalais, across the Tombe River in the foothills of the mountains. It was said to be the first ceremony of its kind given by this family, and would not have to be repeated for a generation or more. The immediate cause was the occurrence of numerous illnesses and deaths. When members independently consulted their *hungans* to discover the reason for these misfortunes, they were informed that the family *loa* demanded such a rite. Finally one priest, more powerful than the others, became possessed and described in great detail the type of ceremony that was desired: of how many days' duration, the number and kind of sacrifices, what gods were to be called, which troublesome ones must be "sent away" or "restrained," and those of the friendly *loa* who were to be fed.

The entire ritual was conducted out of doors, and at about half past four in the afternoon of Thursday, 5 July, 1934, when first seen, the *action de grâce* had already begun. It was being chanted by the *prêt' savanne*, a bespectacled, middle-aged man, who read from an old prayerbook, while the *hungan* sat quietly by. The officiant was standing in a cleared space with his back toward a grove of trees, facing the "altar." Opposite was a grassy slope, which was separated from this grove by a brook where the Malt' Source lives who watches over the habitation of the family. A white banner hung high in one of the trees a little behind the altar.

This altar, called the *trône*, was a table covered with a white cloth, spread over a frame to form a canopy sheltering its sides and back. A black cloth was beneath the white covering. Under the table a wooden bowl — a *gamelle* — contained water in which sacred leaves had been steeped; near it was a

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calabash filled with bananas, millet, rice, beans, egg-plant, and squash. On the table, under the canopy, were a crucifix and holy water, lighted white candles, a lamp of palm oil in a drinking-glass with a floating wick, food — rice cooked in milk, a stew of rice and beans, cooked chicken — and sweetened drinks — *kola*, and orange drinks among the rest, together with small drinking-glasses containing coffee. In addition, roasted and grilled corn, pineapples, fig-bananas, cassava, and sirup could be seen. Fastened to the inside of the canopy were *images*, chromolithographs depicting the saints, there being represented, among others, the Mater Dolorosa (for Erzilie, in honor of those long dead), Our Mother of Perpetual Aid, St. James and St. Anthony. Some thirty feet away, under a palm tree, was another table, for Simbi, without a canopy, on which also stood various cooked and uncooked foods. Still farther away was the "first" table, the most important in the ceremony, for Bosu. It likewise held food and drink; while near it was a large fire, the all-important *boucan* for Legba. The sacrifices, tethered to trees not far from the *trône*, consisted of animals and fowls: one very large black boar, two smaller black pigs, and a black goat, a black turkey, a guinea-hen, two white pigeons, and several chickens, including a black one with ruffled feathers and a number of varicolored ones.

During the Catholic-like ritual the singing, led by the *prêt' savanne*, was desultory. The members of the family, some twenty-five persons, were gathered directly in front of the *trône*. From time to time the leader, holding a lighted candle in his hand, would pour water into a small depression that had been dug directly in front of the altar. All knelt for the prayers, the Pater Noster, the Credo, the Ave Maria, and for the long *adoration* and benediction. Throughout this *action de grâce* and much of the rest of the ceremony, two women *hunsi* in white, members of the family, waved red and white banners before the *trône* or later before the table where rit-

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uals were being performed. If they failed to wave their banners vigorously or often enough, the one in charge chided them for their lack of zeal, whereupon their movements would become a kind of dance. During the *adoration* each member of the family was called upon to give coins or candles, the first for the *prêt' savanne,* though this was not his entire fee.

With the benediction, the *action de grâce* came to an end, and the solemn, tired voice of the *prêt' savanne* was heard intoning a hymn, which, in the usual fashion, was repeated by the assembled group until, without interlude, without even a pause, the interpolations of the chorus gradually changed, so that the rhythm became African, and, with the transition, the *vodun* priest took over the leadership. The *hungan* began by repeating several times the phrase which throughout the entire ceremony was to punctuate all its climaxes, "*Grâce* [*et*] *mise'corde,*" and the family murmured it in response. He then ordered each member of the family to address himself to the *loa,* telling what troubles had befallen him and what favors he desired. An assistant now took six candles from the *trône.* Proceeding in a counter-clockwise direction, he described a large circle about that part of the meadow where the ceremony was to take place, fixing a candle in the ground at intervals. Four of these were for the four corners of the earth, one was for Mait' 'Bitation — the deity termed Master of the Habitation — and one for the Mait' Source — the Master of the Stream. When the members of the family, each holding a lighted candle, had formed in a line, they were bidden to place these candles in the earth within the area described by the six already there, and as they scattered over the sacred ground, little flickering flames dotted the hillside and the grassy meadow behind the *trône* in the deepening dusk.

Then all returned to the altar, and the *hungan,* taking the first of three plates made ready for him, began to describe *veve.* One plate held white cornmeal flour, one was filled with gray ashes, called Guinea flour, and the third contained

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sented with the leaves on a branch of the sacred tree. All the animals ate, a favorable omen. 78 79

This ceremony was held during the rainy season, but the usual afternoon rains had held off. At this time, however — about eight o'clock — threatening clouds came up and soon the tropical downpour began. The heavy rain continued for more than an hour and the subsequent drizzle did not end until almost midnight, but this was not permitted to interfere with the proceedings. Now the participants took places before the "first" table, for Bosu, again with their offerings. Inasmuch as Bosu was the deity who had shown the greatest ill will toward the family, those present awaited the decision with heightened tenseness as the goat, frightened by the many people gathered about, hesitated long before he nibbled at the leaves held out to him by the *hungan*. But eventually all the animals ate, meeting this paramount test, and as each partook of the food the *hungan* several times called out "*Grâce mise'corde,*" the family echoing their response with emotion. Now two men who had strong Bosu gods knelt before the table, and the fowls were again and again touched to their heads and passed over their bodies in gestures that described the sign of the cross, in order to induce their gods to come to them.

As the singing became louder and more rhythmical, various [533] members of the family became possessed. The deities who responded to the calls were, in the order of their appearance, [176] Kita, Erzilie, Simbi, Bosu, Damballa, and finally Gede (Papa Gedenibo). The possessions took their characteristic African form, with some of the possessed running about, jumping into the fire for Legba, and stamping on the embers with their bare feet, others reeling with arms waving, still others rolling on the ground, which, as the rain continued, soon became very muddy. Most of those under possession were women, but about nine-thirty one man became possessed by Simbi, and [176] later another by Gede. As the *loa* "came" in ever greater

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78 number, exclamations of pleasure were heard that the gods
79 were responding. Outwardly, the ritual seemed completely
776 disorganized, the "*loa*" and the spectators moving, mud-bespattered, tense, from the table for Bosu to that for Simbi, and back, or to the *trône*.

533 The singing went on without interruption to the accom-
539 paniment of the bell and occasional blasts of the whistle.
78 Among the songs heard during this period of possession were:
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[534]

Bosu li join' qui chose a tè,	Bosu found something on the ground,
Pas remassé li.	Do not pick it up.
Bosu ma'ché,	Bosu goes about,
Li join qui chose a tè',	He found something on the ground,
Pas remassé li.	Do not pick it up.
Un va entrave	You will come to harm
Si ou ramassé li.	If you pick it up.
Va enragé Bosu.	You will anger Bosu.
Simbi en Deux Eaux,	Simbi en Deux Eaux
M'we fé p'ou,	I do for you,
F'e p'moin,	Do for me,
Fi-a, Congo;	Help, O Congo,
Congo Zandor.	Congo Zandor.
Simbi Kita Kita, travaille pour nous,	Simbi Kita Kita, work for us,
Jodi-a pour nous,	Today for us,
Demain pou' zott'.	Tomorrow for others.
Erzilie, o Lemba,	Erzilie, o Lemba,
M'ap' mandé coté Erzilie ye.	I ask, where is Erzilie.
Mangé a'paré.	The food is ready.
Gedenibo, derrière la croix, Gede;	Gedenibo, behind the cross, Gede.

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Devant Baron, Gede,	Before Baron, Gede,
Derrière la croix, Gede,	Behind the cross, Gede,
Jodi-a m'p' nan sang m'we,	Today I am troubled,
Gedevi, rhele Gede, ça Gede,	Gedevi, call Gede, this Gede,
Jodi-a m'pas nan sang moin.	Today I am troubled.
Balai, rousé, cerclé, quitté.	Cease to sweep, sprinkle, hoe.
Moin pas nan sang, Baron Samedi.	I am troubled, Baron Samedi.

Shortly after eleven o'clock the *hungan* intervened to calm those possessed, for the time was at hand to give the sacrifices. Summoning the family to assemble again before the *trône* with the offerings, he commenced a long ritual in which each creature was prepared by being carefully washed and combed, while the boar for Bosu was also fastidiously perfumed and powdered. At the direction of the *hungan*, the fowls were first offered, the killing taking place at a distance of some thirty or forty feet behind the *trône*. The chickens were held with the two wings and the head in the left hand, so that the neck was exposed. The knife was passed twice over the neck to describe a cross, after which each fowl was cleanly and skillfully dispatched. One of the assistants of the *hungan* held a small calabash in which some of the blood of each animal was caught, and another, knife in hand, sang with him that they were offering this *koklo* to the deity for whom it was intended. As the last of the chickens was being killed, the *hungan* left the *trône* and quietly strangled the pigeons for Damballa.

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All possessions had ceased, except that of a man "mounted" by Gede and a woman by Simbi. The man particularly attracted much attention, for Gede is known as a gossip, and so diverting were his revelations of family scandal that all were too absorbed listening to him to show any interest in the sacrifice of the animals.

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chicken for cleaning and cooking; the larger animals were given to the men, who carried them some distance behind the *trône* to dress them. For a time Gede continued to possess the young man, who went about talking nasally, demanding gifts and distributing rum, but all others sat quietly about, talking as they worked.

After the food was cooked, preparations were made for the concluding part of the night's ceremony, when the *loa* who had been troubling the family were to be *renvoyé* (sent away) or *borné* (restrained). Those thus "sent away" and buried were Erzilie Gé Rouge, Bosu Trois Cornes, 'Ti Kita Demembré, and 'Ti Jean Pié Sèche, while Lemba and Simbi djo (Simbi nan d'leau) were "restrained." The head, feet, intestines, heart, liver, kidneys, and some meat of each beast and fowl having been separately prepared, they were placed in proper receptacles, large jars or baskets, each of which also contained a number of needles with broken eyes, and thread. This was to give these undesirable spirits an *occupation*. For the *loa*, when buried, is told that before it may again come to harass the family it must thread the needles, and since it can never insert the thread in an eyeless needle, it can never reappear.

Preparations over, the troublesome *loa* were called to the table for Simbi, and as each entered the head of a devotee, the possessed one fought with the *hungan*, for the *loa*, not wishing to be restrained, offered stubborn resistance. "If the *hungan* had not been masterful, much evil could have happened at this time, because he had to fight three strong *loa*." When they had at last been subdued, the *hungan*, bearing a large wooden cross, walked to a place outside the habitation, where first he made *verver* and then caused a hole to be dug, in which he placed the baskets of food. As he did this he formally announced that this food was for the family's *loa* for whom there was no further need; that having given this food, the family had no further obligation toward them; and they must there-

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fore never return to trouble the living. As witness to this, he was now putting the cross in place, "which causes everything that is evil to flee," to remain until it rotted away.

Simbi djo was "restrained" where the *trône* had been; Lemba under the mango tree near the place of the table for Bosu. Some of the meat of the pigs was buried in these places with all other kinds of cooked food, and the gods were told that they were to repose there for from seven to seventeen years, after which they would again be fed. A cross of iron was buried with the cooked meat, and as each jar, both now and earlier, was put in place, this song was sung:

Poussé allé,	Get you gone,
Poussé allé,	Get you gone,
Icit pas pays ou.	This is not your country.
Ça lan Guinée,	It is Guinée,
Qui pays ou.	That is your country.

A violent rain-storm not only made it impossible to reach the place of the ceremony the following day, but also made it necessary for the family to defer all but a few of the more essential rites. The second day's ritual was thereupon put over to Saturday, when according to original intentions the *vodun* dance that had been planned to close this complex of ceremonies was to have occurred, but which in consequence was postponed until some weeks later.

The ritual of the second day of this *cérémonie* began much earlier than that of the first, for by about one-thirty in the afternoon the *action de grâce* was almost completed. As one approached, a newly dug mound of earth with a cross over it where the troublesome deities had been buried was to be seen just outside the land belonging to the family. The cross was draped with a black cloth, and was itself painted blue and white, while a rosary and a magic *garde* of native twine were suspended from it.

On this afternoon the ritual was performed in two places, a

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spot somewhat farther down the stream than the site of the earlier ceremony, and later at the family habitation on the hill. There was one table arranged as a *trône* and under its canopy, beside the *images*, the candles, and the crucifix, were white foods such as rice and white beans. Instead of Pétro *loa*, this time the ceremony was to bring Rada gods who were to be asked for children, good health, and good fortune. The *trône* was just below the confluence of two brooks, near some great palm trees. Near by was a weir, while in the larger stream, below the point of juncture, were two small natural pools.

When the *action de grâce*, which did not differ from that witnessed earlier, was ended, the *hungan* again made his *verver*, and these were yet richer in design than on the previous occasion. As he finished he took a number of the women of the family by the right hand, spinning each in turn several times to induce possession. The *loa* Damballa Siligwe "came" almost at once, possessing a woman who threw herself into the stream, threshing about as a "serpent." No one troubled himself to attend to her, however, as she emerged and walked about in her wet clothes behind the *trône* and in front of it, so that, according to the *hungan*, the *loa* became angry and would not come, thus making it necessary to sing many more songs of praise and entreaty. As he sang, the *hungan* seized one member of the family after another by the hand, spinning them about and making them kneel before the *trône* to bring the *loa*.

Moin dit Gran',	I say, Gran',
Bonjou', Gran',	Good-day, Gran',
Bonjou', bonjou'.	Good-day, good-day.
Enfants, la yo, Gran',	It is their children, Gran',
Qui ap mandé coumen nous ye-e,	Who ask how you are,
Enfants yo	Their children
Qui ap dit bonjou'.	Who say good-day.

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skin, are played in batteries of three, the largest being called *manman*,[3] the middle the *seconde*, and the smallest the *bula*.[4] To be used in dances, the drums, like the *loa* of the worshippers, must be "baptized," as will be seen when an account of their making and consecration is given in a later chapter. The iron, or *ogan*, usually consists of the blade of a hoe struck by a large spike, and the rattle, *açon*, in the form most often encountered, is a rounded calabash, containing seeds or pebbles. The iron and the rattles set the basic, steady beat about which the complex drum rhythms play. The smallest drum first takes the time after the iron and the rattles have begun, the notes being played with an accessory figure by means of two thin sticks. The medium-sized drum is next heard, while the *manman*, ritually the most important of the three, comes in last. The *seconde* also has two sticks, one short, thick, and straight, the other a small bow, which gives an added resilience to the notes of the drums' subsidiary rhythms. In playing the great drum, the single crooked stick, called a *baguette*, is held in the right hand, while the left strikes the drumhead with heel or fingers according to the quality of tone desired. The drumstick itself is wielded either against the skin head or against its wooden side, thus permitting a further variation in tone.

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When "salutes" to the gods are called for by the drums, it is the voice of the *manman* that signals the sweeping circular movements of the dancers, dictating with its beat the dips and semi-prostrations of this figure in the ritual dancing, called *asagwe*. The drum rhythms are always distinctive for each type of *loa*, and every devotee knows the rhythms which call his god.

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The drums and iron are the focus of all activity of the dance, especially since those who are possessed dance facing the drums, in whose beat is heard the voice of the gods. Hence the spectators cluster most closely about them, for anything of significance which happens must happen here. The players of the rattles — it is but rarely that more than one rattle is not

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796 A candle was attached to a peg of each drum, which, [354] with the lantern that hung near the central post, gave unusu- [187] ally good light. However, as possessions began, the candles on the drums were extinguished as those possessed fell against them, and no more than one could be kept lighted.

793 With the arrival of the *hungan* at about half past nine, the 796 dancing became even more animated, and Ogun "came" as 539 soon as he took over the *manman* drum, but despite this, the 796 *hungan* continued the ritual invocation to call all the *loa:*

Moin rhelé Papa Legba, St. Jo,	I call Papa Legba, St. Joseph,
Moin rhelé Damballa papa,	I call Papa Damballa,
Moin rhelé Papa Damballa, St. Jo,	I call Papa Damballa, St. Joseph,
Moin rhelé Loko Atinsu, St. Jo.	I call Loko Atinsu, St. Joseph.
La vie nan mains Bon Dieu,	Life is in the hands of God,
Seigneur, moin rhelé Ogun Ferraille, St. Jo.	Master, I call Ogun Ferraille, St. Joseph.
Moin rhelé Damballa Wedo,	I call Damballa Wedo,
Moin rhelé Aida Wedo, Seigneur.	I call Aida Wedo, Master.
La vie nan mains Bon Dieu.	Life is in the hands of God.
Moin rhelé Papa Agasu, St. Jo, Dokwe Agwe,	I call Papa Agasu, St. Joseph, Dokwe Agwe,
Moin rhelé Malt' Ossange,	I call Master Ossange,
Moin rhelé Malt' St. Jean,	I call Master St. John,
Moin rhelé Gran' Siligbo,	I call Gran' Siligbo,
Moin rhelé Agwe Woyo,	I call Agwe Woyo,
Moin rhelé Loa 'Bitation,	I call the *loa* of the habitation,

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Moin rhelé Aizan,	I call Aizan,
Moin rhelé Sobo, St. Jo, Dokwe Agwe,	I call Sobo, St. Joseph, Dokwe Agwe,
Moin rhelé Papa Gede,	I call Papa Gede,
Moin rhelé toutes mystères.	I call all the gods.

When he had ended his song a number of the "salutes" were played on the drums, to which all danced backward in circles, ending the figure in bows before the drums, which were rolling out the call. In the course of the evening a large number of gods were summoned, but, as would be expected, only the *loa* of the family came to this ceremony. Possessions were observed for Legba, Damballa, Ogun Balandjo, Ogun Galloné, Ogun Ferraille, Gede, and Kadya Bosu. St. John, Ossange, Aizan, Ashadé Bokor, Gran' Bosu, Magie, Jean Pétro, Congo, Guinée, Sobo, Bade, and Agwe Woyo, were the *loa* who refused their summons. Though no deity held the center of the stage for too long a time, the evening was notable because it was marked by an unusually large number of Ogun and Damballa possessions, which seemed constantly to alternate. Damballa being the stronger *loa,* his appearance when Ogun was present necessitated the retirement of the latter; but since the possession of Ogun by one woman was particularly persistent, this god returned again and again. As at a number of dances, the *haut chant* for Ogun Galloné, the French marching-song that salutes the "general," was among the songs heard, when those possessed by the god skipped from one end of the *tonnelle* to the other before the drums.

One particularly striking Damballa possession came on suddenly. As a tall, strong man was seized by the god, he gave a great shout and grasped the beams of the *tonnelle,* disappearing upward through the thatch. For a moment it did not seem that he had climbed on the roof of the *tonnelle,* until a head and arms which appeared between the palm fronds showed he

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many as seven or eight were possessed at once. During the night of this dance the following thirty-one *loa* "came" in the order named:

Ossange Damballa Wedo	Papa Loko Dahomey
Sobo	Ogun Batala
Bumba	Ogun Batagri
Congo	Ogun Balandjo
Si Adaman	Ogun Shango
Simbi Djo	Maît' Ogun
Agasu Tèmèré	Ogun Ferraille
Damballa	Ogun Ashadé
Odansil Yewe	Ibo Lélé
Ogun Ferraille	Ossange
Bosu Trois Cornes	Agau (Maît' Woyo)
Bosu d'l'eau	Maît' Aizan
Simbi (nan d'l'eau)	Shango
Damballa Wedo	Damballa
Simbi Kita	Simbi en Deux Eaux
	Bosu

The only deity that was called but failed to respond was Gran' Bra. And it is to be noted that both Rada and Pétro gods "came" in response to the summons, though *loa* of the two categories were not present under the *tonnelle* at the same time. Each person possessed was looked after very carefully, women's ear-rings being taken off so that they would not be lost, the contents of men's pockets being emptied, and knives always being removed from their sheaths. When one man was violently possessed by Papa Loko Dahomey and danced "strongly," attempts were made to wrest from him the walking-stick he carried. They were not successful, however, and all dodged him as he brandished it. The *hungan* host was always present to take the possessed one inside the house which formed one side of the *tonnelle*, to "treat" him.

A number of comments on the possessions by several of the

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gods may be made. Si Adaman, known as a *loa* Dominicaine, possessed a woman who, with another possessed by Sobo, came to greet the white visitors and ask for *kola*, a non-alcoholic drink much desired by Rada gods. The woman possessed by Agasu Tèmèré was also at one time or another during this dance "mounted" by ten other *loa*. On one occasion, when possessed by this Rada deity, she went to the *barrière* because under the *tonnelle* they were dancing for Simbi—"who is not of my family." Asking another dancer to whom Sobo had come to accompany her, she sang "Saddle and bridle my mount for me," and "Sobo goes with Agasu; he stays in my house." Historically this is significant, since Agasu is the deified ancestor of the royal Dahomean sib, and Sobo the Dahomean god of thunder.

Bosu Trois Cornes came violently to a young girl dressed in red. She was taken inside the house against which the *tonnelle* had been erected, and while a number of men held her, the *hungan* worked over her. She was in a dangerous state, for 'Ti Kita Demembré, who is much feared, often goes with Bosu, and in this instance of what was said to be a first possession was believed to be "not far away" because of the rigidity with which the arms of the girl were held, in positions almost to dislocate them. The *hungan* scolded the *loa*—"Be off! You are not wanted here!" After the girl had been brought far enough through her possession to pour water and take a candle before the drums, she was sent home, carefully attended. It was held absolutely essential that there be no delay before baptizing her *loa* and sending away its harmful companions; otherwise, when possession next occurred, she might do harm to herself.

Early in the morning one of the several visiting *hungans* became possessed by Damballa, and, imitating the serpent, climbed through the roof of the *tonnelle*. The priest who was host, after bringing him down, danced with him, carrying his guest, still possessed, about the dancing-space on his back as

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CHAPTER XI

THE CULT OF TWINS AND OF THE DEAD

SHARING powers and prerogatives with the *loa* in the supernatural world are the souls of the dead, the spirits of twins, and, in a specialized sense, magic, all working parts of a universe the ultimate force in which is God, who is sometimes spoken of as its Gran' Mait'. Their relative importance, however, is not easy to determine; and much less the manner in which the supernatural personalities in these divisions are linked with one another. Therefore, when such problems are presented to a group of Haitians, as whether or not the dead become *loa*, or the spirits of twins are related to those of the dead, or whether twins are the equivalent of the *loa*, or what the role of all these in magic may be, different opinions will always be heard.

One of these matters was explained by an elderly *hunsi* as follows: "*Marassa gagné morts longtemps, li deviennent loa* — Twins who have been dead a long time become *loa*," and "*Gagné gran' moun morts longtemps, deviennent loa* — There are those long dead who become *loa*," and she added: "But how this happens, I do not know." Despite a flat contradiction of this opinion by a man who was present, and a heated discussion between them, she persisted in maintaining the

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776 769 845 184 correctness of her view, while making an honest avowal of her inability to explain how this came about. On another occasion discussion turned upon the manner in which the powers of these supernatural beings are conceived in various parts of Haiti. Said one *hungan:* "Twins are stronger than the saints (the *loa*). The *marassa* are the mothers of the saints. So it is said at Arcahaie." The reply came: "In Mirebalais they say the saints are stronger."

During a lively discussion of the point by a group of active voduists the suggestion was made by one that the relative power of the *loa,* the dead, and the twins might be determined if the numerical strength of the following of each cult could be roughly ascertained. Since all give sacrifices for the dead — even strict Church members — and all who worship the *loa* give for the *loa* and the dead, while only some of this latter group give for the *loa,* the twins, and the dead, the person who had suggested this line of inquiry concluded that the dead were therefore strongest, because no one dared ignore them. Still another opinion, though in agreement with this, was based rather on the fact that the *loa* always exhibit fear before manifestations of death, as at dances where persons possessed by Damballa or Aida Wedo avoid those possessed by Gede, since he stands so close to the dead. However, it was pointed out by others in Mirebalais that the most costly and elaborate offerings are for the *loa,* that those for the dead are smaller, and those given the twins are least impressive, which was evidence enough for them that the *loa* are the most powerful of these three categories. All agreed, however, in ascribing to the twins the least power of the three, though what the *marassa* do for good or evil they do with intensity and dispatch.

174 776 769 845 There is ample justification, on both theological and historical grounds, for placing twins and the dead in a single general category. For, as one educated Haitian put it in pointing out that both twins and dead are worshipped on the same day, "*Marassa et morts font une chapitre pour nous* — The twins and the dead make a single chapter for us."

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twins and the dead make a single chapter for us." This point of view is supported by a study of the twin cult as found in that part of West Africa from which so much of Haitian culture came, where a single category of the supernatural world, comprising all ancestors, includes both twins and the dead, as well as all others "who have passed through the womb of a woman." As might be expected, the concept is more elaborated in West Africa than in Haiti; but the important point is that in Haiti, though less explicitly formulated, it has persisted.

To worship twins it is not necessary either for a family to number them among its members of this generation, or to have included them within the memory of those living, for it is sufficient if a tradition exists that twins had once been born to some member of the family. If the twins are alive or lived in recent times, sacrifices are given both at Christmas and at harvest time; otherwise only at Christmas. Some families, indeed, worship twins because a *hungan* has divined that their unknown ancestors in "Guinée" had included them. There are still others who decide to worship the *marassa* without the advice of a diviner, because certain benefits are believed to come to those who worship twins, because of their power for good or evil.[1]

The source of this power is vague; one characteristic answer to a question concerning it was: "Their power comes from God. Do we ourselves know how twins are made?" It is agreed, however, that St. Nicholas is their spiritual father —an opinion based on the tale of this saint, held to have been a sorcerer who, in very early times, killed three *marassa* (the twins themselves and the *dosu*, or child after twins) and salted them away in a barrel. The mother of the children came to him to offer up her prayers, and, touched by her sorrow, he resuscitated them, since when he has been their "father." The power of twins, whatever its source, is very real to the Haitians. They are believed to be able to predict rain, for ex-

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Preferably, these cult objects are made of pottery, joined by a ligature in twos or threes, as required. The plates rest in a box or on a small table which stands in a corner of an inner room of the house. If the family worshipping the twins is a poor one, joined calabashes or wooden plates are acceptable, and such are found more often in the valley of Mirebalais than pottery plates. The "altar" made by the plates is completed by an *image* — a chromolithograph — of the twin saints, Comas and Damien, placed on the wall above them.

The principal rite of the twin cult is the *mangé marassa*. A minor ceremony, if the family has living twins or twins recently dead, it is held, as has already been said, at Christmas and at harvest time; otherwise only at Christmas. Yams and salt fish are separately cooked, and a dish of beans mixed with olive oil is provided. In the morning this food is taken to a closed room, where it is deposited both in the *marassa* plates and in ordinary containers placed for those who attend the rite. As the offering is made, songs such as the following are sung:

Marassa, m'a pé mandé,	Spirit of twins, I ask,
Ça wé la si 'ou content?	Are you content with what you see there?
Ago-e-e.	*Ago-e-e.*
Adoré nan pié Damballa,	Worship at the tree of Damballa,
Ago-e-e.	*Ago-e-e.*
Marassa bra,	Twins of the forest,
Marassa carrefour,	Twins of the crossroad,
M'a pé mandé,	I ask,
Ça wé la si 'ou content?	Are you content with what you see there?
Adoré nan pié humfort,	Worship at the *humfort*,
Assuré-e, ago!	Care for us, *ago!*
Marassa dé, trois, quatre,	Twins two, three, four,

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The family then take the offer co-
tainer to a crossroad, where it is deposited as an offering for 769
Legba, and its contents are eaten by the dogs, who significantly, in Dahomey are the animals sacred to this deity. Following this, the adults enter the closed room, to feast at the laden table. [782]

Several days after the funeral two gourdes are paid a priest [793]
— "a real one," not a *prêt' savanne* — to chant a *libera* at the [765]
grave, a rite that must be repeated each year on All Saints' Day. Each year, also, food is given the dead, though "not so much as following a funeral." Chickens, beans, rice, and coffee are the principal part of such an offering, for which no priest need be called, as the ceremony is merely to let the dead know that they are not forgotten. Every three or five years, however, [535]
a large *mangé* must be given for all the family dead, and if held on the family habitation, there is social dancing, where such favorites of the ancestors as the *martinique*, the *banda*, the *calebasse*, and the *zesse* are danced.[8]

Differences in procedure mark various modes of death. 766
When a person is killed by lightning, a justice of the peace must be called and the burial is performed at once. Such a one has no "last prayer," because, death by lightning being a punishment of God, it is felt that the dead probably made an oath which he subsequently violated. Those killed by light- [171]
ning or who die of smallpox are not mourned, but no explanation could be obtained for this obvious survival of African custom. If a leper has concealed his disease, mourning is worn for him, though if the cause of death is generally known this is forgone. There is customarily no mourning for suicides, [762]
and never where the regulations of the Church are rigorously applied.

If the dead person was a *vodun* priest or otherwise had 764
strong *connaissance*, steps are taken before his death to "re- 766
move the *loa* from his head" so that his soul will not go under 776
the water, for, as has been explained, such souls are held to 775
be powerful spirits which may cause their family much harm

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764 if, after a time, an expensive and troublesome ceremony is
766 not performed to bring them out and lodge them in a jar.
796 The *hungan* who performs the rite of removing these *loa* is
775 preferably himself a member of the family and is usually left
764 alone with one or two assistants and an elderly relative of the
766 dead, but if the family includes no *hungan*, the one who is
796 called, even though greatly trusted, is most carefully watched,
793 because a strange priest might take for himself the valued gods of the dead, leaving only the weak ones. The *hungan* stands in place and calls the name of the dead. He puts some of the hair of the dead in the jar or in a calabash, with which the *loa* is supposed to go, and, unless another member of the family, nominated to receive the *connaissance* of the dead, is present, the jar or calabash is sealed until these spirits can be "given" to a successor.

766 No special purification is needed for a house where death
[764] has occurred except when the deceased was tubercular or a
[783] leper, when everything except his money is buried or thrown in some unfrequented place. The body of one who has died of smallpox, though washed, is buried as soon after death as possible without being enclosed in a coffin. Those who die of smallpox or leprosy, suicides, or persons shot as a punishment for crime are not buried in the communal cemetery, but in special sections of the graveyard, the lepers and victims of smallpox being separated from the others, for the Church declares these have died of the plague. One who drowns is buried at the riverside where his body is recovered, though if the corpse is not too badly decomposed, the authorities give permission, and the family of the dead can afford the expense of transportation, the body may be brought home. Children are
[561] buried in the cemetery, but, on the principle that "the young
[791] must serve their elders," the funeral of a child is attended only by those relations who are younger than the dead; for in Haiti, as in Africa, it is not held seemly that the young should be followed to the grave by their elders. At the house, however,

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CHAPTER XII

MAGIC, GOOD AND BAD

In opening any discussion of Haitian magic, the fact must be stressed that magic, though but one of the forces active in the universe, is a system in itself. As such, it is a thing apart from the *vodun* cult, a point which must also be emphasized, for although most writers draw a perfunctory distinction between magic and *vodun*, this distinction, once stated, is too often promptly lost sight of.[1] At the same time, the differences between the worship of the *loa* and the practice of magic must not be so juxtaposed as to name the second as the antibody of the first. For, though some of the *loa* can work harm, and some of them, indeed, are primary forces behind the working of evil rather than beneficial magic, the good and bad they do is general in nature. Magic, on the other hand, whether good or bad, always operates in very specific instances: to cause a given woman to love a given man, or to make a certain field of a certain enemy yield poorly.

Yet these distinctions, when drawn, are found in practice to be neither as sharp nor as consistent as the foregoing statements might imply, especially since the system of magic is empowered and validated by many of the *loa*, as well as being closely affiliated with the cult of the dead. The phenomenon dealt with here, and its not illogical contradictions, arise, however, from the fact that the realistic African world view has by

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no means given way to that separation of the categories of good and evil that governs much of European thinking. A *loa* that helps a man when friendly toward him may, if slighted or vexed, set about to do him harm, or, at best, merely remain passive when danger is to be averted. For the *loa*, like human beings, are creatures of mood and may take umbrage at some act which had created no displeasure before. Similarly, not all uses of magic are necessarily reprehensible, something at once evident when it is pointed out that much of Haitian folk-medicine derives its psychic force from its magical basis. In short, Haitian belief, of which magic forms a part, does not allow a world view drawn only in blacks and whites. All tones of gray are found, and these merge one into another almost imperceptibly, as the fortunes of a man wax and wane during his lifetime.

That the Haitian envisages his universe in terms other than those of warring and changeless powers of good and evil should not be taken for a moment to mean that he fails to draw a clear distinction between the benevolent and malevolent forces behind the magic employed in specific instances. This realization is reflected in the terminology he gives the charms that are the outer symbols of these supernatural powers, the *garde*, *arrêt*, and *drogue* protecting him against harm, the *wanga* being the carrier of dark magic, and the antisocial agent. The actuating forces behind these charms come from all important members of all groups of *loa*, to say nothing of God and the saints of the Church; but the charm itself is a thing which results from the control of these by man himself: "*Wanga, moun qui fait ça* — It is men who make *wangas*."

One other point may here be clarified, since it has made for confusion: namely, the fact that when the Haitian employs the term *magie* he does not mean what the European signifies when using the word "magic." To the student, the vast body of Haitian magico-medical practices, prescribed and administered by both those who know how to manipulate the super-

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789 from its ill effects after the evil has been exorcised, must also
know the forces they are combating if they are to achieve any
789 measure of success. By the same token, practitioners of black
791 magic must know what steps may be taken to counteract their
793 *wangas* so that, if necessary, they can in turn call forth super-
794 natural emissaries to strengthen the evil impulses originally
796 set in motion. In this sense, therefore, the *hungan*, the *gan-*
gan, the *bocor*, and the *caplata* employ essentially the same
techniques and operate with the same forces, the difference be-
tween them being one of degree rather than of kind. "*Hun-*
gan, c'est magazin. Gaigné un pile marchandise — The *hun-*
[538] *gan* is like a shop. He has a lot of merchandise," says the
Haitian, quoting a well-known proverb as he makes the point.

In the main, it can be said that though the *hungan* and the
gangan practice magic, their main preoccupation is with the
loa — the maladies they send to affect a man and his posses-
sions — while the *bocor* is concerned almost exclusively with
setting in motion the agents that actuate black magic, and the
789 *caplata* dabbles in anything that is wanted. One important
791 means whereby the sorcerer obtains his powers is the evil *loa*,
791 but there is this essential difference between them: the gods
793 of the *hungan* are family gods who come to him through the
794 natural course of inheritance, endowing him with the *connais-*
sance that gives him his control over the supernatural world,
795 while the *bocor* buys his gods. And when a god is bought, it
is always acquired so as to enhance the position of its owner at
all costs, despite the knowledge that the power thus purchased
is dearly bought, bringing its own eventual punishment.
Sometimes an ambitious *hungan* adds to his familial *loa* other
"purchased" gods, but this is resented by the deities who have
given him his powers, so that in time these benevolent powers
take all means to humble and crush him. Furthermore, gods
acquired in this way pass on to unwilling members of their
owner's family and, after a generation or two of mischief-
800 making, must be "restrained" or "banished." A number of

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558 given him by a third party for whom he had done what was
793 euphemistically called "a piece of work." The evidence
685 clearly showed that the animal, which he had killed to feed a *combite*, had been stolen, and since this *gangan* could not establish his defense that he was an innocent receiver of stolen goods, he was convicted and sentenced to three months in prison, and to pay the owner of the pig the exorbitant sum — sixty-five gourdes — asked as damages. Sympathy was very generally with the *gangan*, but the opinion most often heard expressed was that his power had obviously been lessened by his misuse of the *connaissance* the gods had given him, or they would not have permitted even his arrest, much less his conviction. To reinforce the point, specific reference was repeatedly made to the *hungan* most popular in the valley at the time, about whom it was said that, for example, were he accused before a court, the officers might even enter his house in search of him while he was present, but they would still be unable to see that he was before them.

793 Other attitudes held toward workers of magic developed in
435 connection with this case. The popular *hungan* was often
554 called on, it was said, because his work was well done and his fees were not too high; it was pointed out that there were renowned *vodun* priests who charged five hundred gourdes for a *service* which this man directed effectively for but little over one hundred; moreover, such men often failed to remove the evil deities which were troubling the family that employed them, but would instead add more, so that their clients would
793 soon have need of them again. Practices such as these, espe-
435 cially that of overcharging, are frowned upon by the *loa*, and
776 if persisted in they "spoil" the power of the priest. This was
784 one of the reasons why, in the opinion of many individuals, the *gangan* in question had been convicted. "He was once a remarkable *gangan*, but he has spoiled his *loa* by using them for evil, and by asking too much money for what he was employed

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to do. The *loa* would come, but they wouldn't give him the same commissance."

One of the most important of the forces behind all magic is the *Malt' Carrefour*, the Master of the Crossroads. The possible identity of this *loa* with Legba, who guards the entrance to houses and is also thought of as a guardian of the highways, was a question that could not be satisfactorily resolved, though it seems most likely that the two are quite distinct, since Legba is but rarely called upon when magic is being performed. One Haitian versed in magic stated:

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> "The *Malt' Carrefour* is like the president. Legba is like a minister. God sent the *Malt' Carrefour*. He commands Baron Samedi. Before going to the cemetery to perform [black] magic you must pass the crossroads, and therefore he is able to restrain you if he is not properly worshipped. He commands Damballa. He commands the Rada and Pétro gods. He commands all the saints because all of these must pass the crossroads. Therefore when one has a *garde carrefour*, a person will die a death sent by God [that is, a natural death] and not one caused by *magic* or the *mystères*."

The *Malt' Carrefour* must be "paid" each year on All Saints' Day, when seven cents in copper coins are given and a white chicken is killed, cooked, and placed in a wooden container with rice, biscuits, cassava, potatoes, bananas, and other kinds of food, both cooked and uncooked, to be deposited at a crossroad with the statement: "Here is food; thank you for having cared for me. If evil *loa* wish to harm me, *Malt' Carrefour*, restrain them." As this is said, a candle is lighted and an invocation pronounced:

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> "*Au nom de Malt' Carrefou'; au nom de Malt' Grand Bois; au nom de Baron Cimitière! Jodia, premier la* [539]

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•776 782 [539] *Toussaint, voici un couvert moin porté ba ou. Ou gardé vot' enfant, comme vot' père et vot' mère dans la maison.* —In the name of the Master of the Crossroads; in the name of the Master of the Great Forest; in the name of Baron Cemetery! Today, the first of All Saints' Day, here are offerings I bring you. Guard your child as your father and your mother in the house."

[788] *Clairin* is thrown three times at each fork of the crossroads, and some is also sprinkled in the center and at each corner of the container of food. Three bits of earth are finally lifted from the corners of the crossroads and taken to the home of the worshipper. Here they are put in a plate with *clairin,* which is first lighted and then extinguished, so that the members of the family can anoint themselves with it and receive strength with which to face the new year.

789 821 Good magic has many expressions. Thus there is said to be secret knowledge, transmitted in certain families from generation to generation, of how to control the rains. Those who have control of magic of this sort are to be recognized when they are seen to be completely dry while walking in a downpour. Generally such powers are used to insure a rainless day for a *combite* or *service,* or to cause rain to fall the day after a *combite* has made the field ready for hoeing, or when the proper time for planting is at hand. Eventually, it is said, in response to a temptation too great to be resisted, the possessor [784] of such magic will put it to other, evil ends. Then sooner or later the punishment for this abuse of his knowledge is visited upon him, so that in the end he meets his death by being struck by the avenging lightning.

789 The most powerful type of protective magic is known as a *drogue.* One of the most potent of these —of the type referred to by Léger in commenting on the ox-tail carried by Hyacinthe, or such a one as tradition holds Christophe possessed, which gave him immunity from all but silver bullets —makes

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In addition, the maker of the charm brought a candle with him, and, more importantly, earth from the four corners of a crossroad. 789

All shutters and doors of the house where the ritual was performed were closed and barred so that no passer-by might report the performance to the authorities, inasmuch as the practice of magic in any form is severely punished and the house was in the town itself. This constituted a departure from the usual practice, for in ordinary cases the rite would have been carried out at a crossroad in the countryside, where chances of detection would be slight.

The maker of the charm began by kneading the earth he had taken from a crossroad into the form of a small pear, about the size of a child's fist. Then taking seven plus seven measures of thread, he first burned the ends and then passed the resulting bundle of fourteen strands repeatedly over one of the native beeswax candles, twisting and doubling it so that it made a length of substantial cord. When completed, he put it to one side and made another like it, saying as he did so: [539]

Au nom de St. Garde,	In the name of St. Garde,
Aujourd'hui, Lundi, nous cordé votre garde.	Today, Monday, we twine your *garde.*
Au nom de Malt' Carrefu',	In the name of the Master of the Crossroads,
Au nom de prière garde,	In the name of the prayer of charms,
Au nom Marie Shango,	In the name of Marie Shango,
Au nom de Gran' Malolu,	In the name of Gran' Malolu,
Qui marche accompagné Malt' Calfu'.	Who goes together with the Master of the Crossroads.

The purpose of this invocation was to summon both the Master of the Crossroads and his wife, Malolu, and the name of [176]

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789 [176] the *loa* was pronounced as the cord was actually finished. *Clairin* was then poured in three places on the threshold and drunk by all present.

Seated on a mat, the dealer in magic next placed the molded earth near by and put a dish of cassava bread, cake, and corn and a bottle of *kola* beside it, with the seven coppers and the red cotton, while he placed a candle on an empty white plate and lighted it. From his pocket he took a thick white candle of his own, and a razor, with which he cut it into three pieces. He then removed his shoes. After two pieces of the candle had been placed upright against the plate, the red cloth was torn in half and one portion of it, folded once, was laid on the white plate, the molded earth being set down in the center of this piece of cloth with the thread near by, as the officiant intoned:

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Au nom Dieu de Tè'	In the name of the God of the Earth,
Au nom Dieu dit Fils,	In the name of God called the Son,
Au nom Dieu du Cièl,	In the name of God of the Sky,
Au nom de Ste. Vierge,	In the name of the Holy Virgin,
Au nom de St. Louis,	In the name of St. Louis,*
Au nom de Vierge de Ca'mel,	In the name of the Virgin of Carmel,
Voici poin' garde	Here is a *point garde*
Qui pr' allé marré ce soir, Lundi.	Which I am tying this evening, Monday.

He thereupon poured *clairin* on the four corners of the cloth and on the earth, "since the soul of Malt' Carrefour is in the earth."

Taking up the red cloth with the earth in it, he tied it with

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* The patron saint of Mirebalais.

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789 177 esoteric African survivals they have been blinded to the European elements.[8] It was, as a matter of fact, well-nigh impossible to discuss magic, whether good or evil, with a native for any length of time without hearing the names of three pamphlets published in Paris, *Le Grand Albert*, *Le Petit Albert*, and *La Poule Noire*. So portentous do the folk of Mirebalais hold the information contained in these works — though actually, when read, their contents are found to include nothing more dangerous than names of the proper roots and herbs with which to concoct a love-potion, or, far more frequently, magic for preventing wine from turning to vinegar, or for enabling one to gentle a wild colt — that their importation into Haiti is said to be prohibited by law, a statement which was not checked except in so far as inquiries for the pamphlets in Port-au-Prince bookstores proved in vain. The contents of these works on magic differ but little from those of a document written in Créole, said by Seabrook, who reprinted it, to have come from the files of the Marine Corps, where it was deposited after having been taken during the rebellion of 1918–20 from the body of a fallen Caco chief known to have been a *bocor*.[9] The source of inspiration of a large number of these formulas and of many of their objectives is obviously in such European pamphlets.[7]

789 954 Turning now from the more passive, protective, and socially desirable forms of magic, a similar analysis may be made of its aggressive, destructive, and antisocial manifestations. That magic of this latter sort is much feared is a truism; yet that the fear of it goes as far or is as constant as most accounts of its workings state may be marked as gross exaggeration. For just as the practitioner of good magic knows how to bring about evil, so for every force that harms there is a cure, and for every *wanga* there is a *garde*.

754 776 177 The malignant powers in the world of the Haitian are, like other phases of his life, of both European and African derivation. From Europe he has taken the *démon* and the associated

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term *loup-garou*, or werewolf. From Africa has come the concept of the *baka*, though this he has merged with that of the *démon*, and all operate through the power of Lucifer and the Devil, conceived as two separate beings. In addition, as will be seen, the cult of the dead also contributes to this system, since the *loa* who rule the cemeteries are indispensable for the practice of magic, as it bears especially on the concept of *zombi*, concerning which so much has been made in recent years.

The evil *loups-garous* are women whose real nature is revealed by their red eyes, though some hold that they have a black spot in the corner of the eye. Another word less frequently heard to designate the *loup-garou* is the Dahomean term *azeto*, employed in Africa for witches and vampires, a concept which in Haiti has become merged with that of the werewolf.[8] The *loup-garou*, with her male counterpart, the *démon*, is empowered by the *bocor*. As might be expected, she is greatly feared, and should an old woman suspected of being one of them come to a house, someone will see to it that in an adjoining room two brooms are crossed as the woman's name is pronounced three times, so that if she is actually a *loup-garou*, she cannot escape.[9] Children in particular carry counter-charms both against these women and against demons; one such, for a woman with child, has been mentioned in an earlier chapter,[10] and the making of another *garde* of this type has just been described. With a charm of this kind "you can leave at midnight for Port-au-Prince [instead of waiting for dawn] and fear nothing. You may meet a band of horned demons carrying candles in their hands, but they will stand aside and let you pass."

In Mirebalais, *baka* are usually mentioned when these evil beings are discussed, particularly since it is in connection with them that the term *engagement* is most often heard. An *engagement*, which is more feared than a *wanga*, the word usually encountered in the literature when evil magic is under discussion, designates a pledge made by a person, usually to

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"give" a collateral member of his own family to an evil spirit in return for some important gain to himself. The spirit, however, is insatiable, and never rests content with a single victim. Thus it happens that when one member of a family dies and then another, and another, the *hungans* who are consulted declare such an *engagement* to exist. As soon as this is revealed, all other members take steps to safeguard their houses spiritually — perhaps in the manner of those whose *service* was described in an earlier chapter, which, it will be remembered, was motivated by just such a discovery. Unfailingly, however, the *baka* is there at the appointed hour, clamoring for his due, and proceeds to satisfy himself by turning upon the one who has made the *engagement*, killing his own wife and children, and finally himself.

Why, knowing this, do people enter into such compacts? The answer is usually a shrug of the shoulders, or the statement that human beings are at times driven to such desperation that nothing will restrain them. "A man may even pledge half his own life." Often the reason for such a compact is a craving to advance the status of his children, and that is why when a man who has been consistently unfortunate in worldly matters suddenly becomes affluent, gossip of an *engagement* is heard. But such wealth, it is believed, "passes like the wind."

There are several types of *baka*.[11] Some go about "devouring" men — the term *mangé moun*, in Haiti as in Africa, is idiomatic for sending fatal illness or bringing about an accidental death — while others, who stay in the house of their master, go forth only to procure him riches. These latter are jealous spirits and "make their conditions" — which means that they will ultimately destroy the members of their master's family, particularly his children, or, should a man repent of his bargain and dismiss them, they will return to kill him. To bring wealth to their master, they rob others. Some believe that *baka* are *loa* who change into these creatures from time to

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time, or are animals given power as *baka* by these *loa*. The "squad" of the *baka* includes the following: 776 787 754

'Ti Kita Demembré	Simbi Proméné
'Ti Jean Pié Sèche	Simbi en Deux Eaux
Erzilie Gé Rouge	Simbi 'Troi' Z'ilé

Baka appear as small bearded human-like figures with flaming eyes, or as cattle, horses, asses, goats, bears(?), and dogs. Sheep never become *baka* because the sheep, as represented on the chromolithographs, is the animal of the Virgin and therefore cannot be a creature of evil. The mule also is never a *baka* for reasons given in the myth explaining how it came to be accursed. 776 825

[773]

> One day Jesus came down a path astride a mule. When he came to a crossroads a snake so frightened the mule that he reared on his hind legs, throwing Jesus to the ground. Jesus became angry and cursed him, saying that from that day onward mules would never bear offspring. He also cursed the snake, saying that thereafter it must forever go about on its belly.

Whether because of this or because of its long, alert ears, the mule is favored for night travel, for this animal is held able to sense these creatures of evil and give his rider warning of them. A black cat can become a *baka*, but there are also good black cats that drive away evil spirits. Even if a black cat-*baka* is sent away, nothing happens to its owner.

A *baka* named Babako, sometimes called Bakuba Baka, is believed to live in the *mapou* tree, where he is "fed" in December. "He is the chief of [evil] magic, is magic itself," it is said, and "*C'est baggai diabolique, gros baka*—he is a thing of the Devil, a great *baka*." For this reason the *mapou* tree is greatly feared, and that is why those who "serve" the gods of the *mapou* do it in secret and are dealt with circumspectly. 776 824

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754 Some *baka* are believed to be " doubles " of sorcerers who take
776 animal form and roam at night doing evil. Pigs encountered
825 at night are especially dreaded because of this, and those of a gray color, held to be more potent for evil than those of any other shade, are sedulously avoided. The tale is told of a man who, having encountered a gray pig at midnight which passed between his legs at great speed, was ill for months afterwards. It is also recounted how several men of uncommon bravery waited for one such pig and beat it, and how the next morning an old woman was found on whose bent back wounds inflicted
776 by sticks could be seen. It is because of stories such as this that it is held important to worship the good *loa*. For if the devotee of a *loa* meets a *baka* at night, the *loa* comes to his head and the *baka* flees in terror. An autobiographical incident was related to make this point. When a lad, the man who told the tale joined his playmates in an escapade which had as its aim to frighten some young women returning home late from a *vodun* dance. Draped in white sheets they stationed themselves near a bridge, turning about before lighted candles in the ground. The young women were possessed by their *loa* the instant they caught sight of these apparitions, who promptly fled the scene to avoid capture by those who came running in reply to the songs and cries emitted by the protecting gods!

776 *Baka* are often employed to guard buried money. " In this
454 country, when you find money buried in jars, it is an affair of *baka*. There is never one jar, but always two or three, and you must call a *hungan* to find out which one you may take and which you must not touch. Generally the finder is allowed to take half of the treasure, for if he took all, he would be tormented by the *baka* who had been left as guardian." Such jars, it is said, are usually found with human bones beside them or under them, and tradition has it that the slave-owners who are believed to have been strong in magic customarily killed the most evil slave on a plantation that his spirit might keep watch over the jars. If the owner never returned, the spirit of the

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slave, as a "sold *baka*," remained to wreak vengeance upon anyone who dared disturb his charge. 776 454

The reality of the *baka* to the Haitian was made dramatically vivid by an incident involving an old blind and deaf horse. It occurred one night on the principal streets of the town of Mirebalais itself. The horse was first noticed as the sun set, groping his way along, and finally circling the turn of the road. Though people shouted at the animal, he would not give way. As darkness came and doors and windows were barred, the horse blundered into the small veranda of a house inhabited by an elderly woman, her daughter, and her grandchildren. The younger woman cried out with fright when, timidly peering about the side of the house, she saw their visitor, but the older woman, whose age made her fearless in the face of this supernatural danger, opened a window and vigorously attacked the animal with a heavy stick, while he unhurriedly tried to get clear of the blows and finally moved on to the next veranda, and so from house to house down the street. On this night the habitual tranquillity did not settle over the town, and all of the next day and many days thereafter there was quiet talk of the danger that had been abroad, and much speculation of its intended destination. 776 825

The *baka* are sometimes confused with the *démons*, as is seen in the fragmentary information that was obtained about the existence of secret societies, so feared by Mirebalais folk because of their reputation for working all kinds of evil that it was with difficulty that even the names of two of them could be learned — the "Bissago," whose members appear at night wearing horns and holding candles, and "Les Cochons sans Poils." The former, termed *démons*, are believed to be able to change into animals when they do their evil work, a feat which would seem to make them *baka*. The societies all meet in the open country at night, and each has a small drum. They are called together by the beating of one rock against another in a manner reminiscent of the Zangbeto society of Porto Novo, Dahomey. 754 776 575 [202] [171]

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

754 776 575 Novo, Dahomey. The members are, of course, not known, but there is always gossip, and occasionally a man, when quarreling, says: "Take care! You don't know who I am. . . ."

776 *Baka, loups-garous,* and *démons* are not the only supernatural beings that a person may encounter from time to time. Though not all are creatures of magic, and not all are evil, all of them are treated with due caution. Such are the "river [793] people" — children with six fingers, who are believed to belong to the Maît' Source, the Master of the Stream, and are destined to become *hungans* — this being an example of the good that may come from such supernatural association — or persons with light hair. Those with light hair are more dangerous, however, since occasionally such folk are taken for a time under the water, the men by female spirits and the women by males. One person in Mirebalais told of a distant cousin who disappeared as she went to the river to draw water. She was mourned as dead, but returned after a year and was welcomed home. As she began to recount her adventures, however, she was struck dumb, and never recovered her speech. Another spoke of his experience as a boy with such a water-spirit, a *Maîtresse d'Eaux.* With a companion, he was walking along the bank of the Tombe River, when a woman was seen sitting on a rock combing her long light-colored hair. The other lad was invited to help her and went nearer, step by step, until, as he almost touched the comb, he turned and ran. Some time later he died.

754 764 775 Another category of spirits, already referred to in discussing the cult of the dead, are *zombi.* To understand their nature, however, the use of magic to bring about death or its simulacre, and the measures taken to guard against this, must be first considered. In the preceding chapter it was observed how *hoholi* seeds are placed in the coffin of one suspected of an "unnatural" death to prevent the sorcerer from reaping the [789] fruits of his deed. A cross of pine-wood, made by the *hungan* and empowered by him to repel evil, is frequently also put

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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he is accidentally fed salt. Though the concept has been presented in recent years with unjustifiable sensationalism to the reading public,[13] it is indisputably a living one. One aspect of it has been responsible for much of the conviction with which positive statements are made of personal knowledge of cannibalism in Haiti, as has been shown most clearly by Dr. Parsons:

> "A *ganga* who keeps a *zombi* may transform him into a stone, perhaps in front of his house, or into any kind of animal. Transforming him into a pig or sheep or cow, he may kill him and sell him in the market. In this belief we have the basis of the gossip and court testimony about human flesh sold in the market. It is *zombi* flesh, not human flesh, that is so disposed of. But foreigners know nothing about *zombi,* nor do the native witnesses explain in court what they have in mind when they are testifying to purchases of meat from the cemetery. 'People does *eat* people at Aux Cayes, I *know* it,' said Sam, as he told of human fingernails found on pigs' feet, explaining *to my question* that the pig had been a *zombi.* Had I not followed up his first statement and learned that he had never heard of anybody killed directly for marketing, an idea which amazed him at that, I would certainly have been left with an impression of cannibalism totally misleading."[14]

Precisely the same concept exists in Mirebalais as in Jacmel, where the foregoing material was collected, except that in its elaboration it underscores the point made in the quotation just given. *Zombi* meat can be recognized by the fact that it rapidly spoils, and when cooked, brings much white foam to the top of the stew, while such meat, sold as beef, turns white like veal; all this warns against eating it, and shows the active distaste with which it is regarded. Indeed, one of the duties of a person's *loa* is said to be that of warning him when he is

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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about to eat such food, for he feels a shudder pass through his body, and his arm becomes heavy, as was the case with a woman who three times dropped a piece of "beef" she was about to place in her mouth, before she realized the warning. 775 [776]

It can readily be seen how varied are the manifestations of evil magic. What are the forces behind them? What gives them power? What makes their unsavory ends possible of attainment? Their power comes from God, for, according to belief, everything comes from God, in the sense that God made the world as it exists. Therefore all beings are free to do anything they can contrive to do, though once dead they are called to account for their deeds. "Good and evil are two brothers; life and death are two brothers. All four come from God. They do not come from the *loa*." 754 771 776

But more immediately this power comes in great measure from the dead. Before a *bocor* makes a *wanga*, he asks permission of God, the Devil, Maît' Carrefour, Maît' Cimitière, Maît' Gran Bra, and Maît' d'l'Eau. Baron Samedi, perhaps the most important figure among those who aid in working black magic, lives in the cemetery. Though he is a *loa* and may possess those who appeal to him to work evil, this role is subordinate to his role as the power behind magic that kills. He controls the souls of those whose end has come as a result of magic, and when he is called at midnight, the sound of the clanking of chains is heard as he comes. He is envisaged as a dwarf. After his approval has been purchased for a projected deed, appeal is then made to Gede, for especially where it is a question of killing, though everything may have been made ready with Baron, Gede must "dig the grave." Herein lies the importance of Gede, for he is the court of last resort, the final power in matters of death. 754 776 [791]

Gede, however, is just, and even though Baron has marked a victim, Gede can refuse to concur in his decision. "If you do not merit death, Gede will refuse it," say the Haitians. It therefore sometimes comes about that though all preparations have

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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been made to kill through the use of black magic, Gede refuses to "dig the grave," no matter what measures the *bocor* may take. In such a case the victim may be desperately ill, but will not die. When a *hungan* divines the cause, offerings are made to Gede for having saved him from the *magie* of Baron. For, in the final analysis, "if Gede is in accord with Baron, death can come, but if the two are not in accord, the man against whom a *wanga* has been sent will only suffer."

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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352 177 European straight chair, and if peasants often sleep on mats laid on the ground in African fashion, this is only because their resources do not permit them the luxury of beds. The 342 accessory field-house is called an *ajupa*, a designation which represents one of the few recognizable contributions of the aboriginal inhabitants of the island to its present-day culture, since, according to Charlevoix,[2] it was first applied to the huts of the buccaneers, called by them *aioupas*, a name taken over from the Spaniards, who themselves had adapted it from the native Indian term.

291 177 Clothing is also of European style. The men, who wear shirt and trousers, long ago discarded the West African loincloth and the covering great-cloth worn toga-fashion, while the hats they wear are of course equally of European type. The absence of shoes, though characteristic of Africa, is not necessarily of significance, for shoes are not only an accepted article of dress, but are symbols of worldliness, and when lacking from the costume, indicate only an inability to purchase them. The dress of women is no less European, though only the old women continue the fashions of the days of St. John, who reported that "the females generally keep to a long white chemise, covered over with a blue cotton dress that reaches to their bare feet, and is drawn in around the waist."[3] As in his time, white is favored for days of festivity, and the head-kerchief is also seen, even if it is less omnipresent than in his day. The younger women who count themselves sophisticated scorn the kerchiefs and wear hats, but elderly women wind white kerchiefs about their heads in the West [793] African manner. The invariable mark of the *mambu*, in addition to her jeweled fingers, is the white kerchief with a very large straw hat worn over it.

292 177 One special form of dress that represents a complex merging of European and African secular and religious customs is the 996 *rade de pénitence*. For men this takes the form of a multicolored shirt, for women a dress whose colors are dictated by

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the *loa*. In one instance a man wore a red shirt with black crosses appliquéd on it; dresses of this type worn by women or children are made of cotton cloth, pieced together patchwork-quilt fashion, of either three, seven, seventeen, or twenty-one different colors or patterns, with reds, blues, and white predominating. These garments are worn for a specified time, also named by the *loa*. The term *pénitence* has been taken from Church terminology, and the motivating sanction derives equally from African and Christian concepts;[4] for example, the wearing of the garment is a compliment to the African deities represented by the colors, while the various rules about abstinence during its term of wearing is the European pattern of "penitence."

The elaborate cicatrizations, or raised designs made by scarifying the body, which marked the slaves newly arrived from Africa have quite disappeared, but a few scars can be discerned on the body or arms of a man by a practiced eye. These represent an African carry-over in the form of a *garde* applied by the injection of some magically endowed substance into a cut which thereafter gives what may be thought of as a kind of spiritual inoculation. African fashions of hair-tying have been retained by the women almost unchanged, and, as in Africa, hair-braiding is a highly developed art, so that the styles in which hair can be braided seem innumerable. This is particularly true of dressing the hair of small girls, whose heads are decorated with braids going the length of the skull, or dividing the scalp into small squares, each with its tuft of hair, or by a part in the middle with lines going at right angles from it across the head. These styles of braiding are not named as in other parts of the New World and in Africa, but the tradition of intricate braiding has lost none of its vigor.

The implements of the Haitian are both of European and African derivation. The ubiquitous machete, a saber-like tool employed in all manner of ways, from chopping down trees

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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CHAPTER XIV

CATHOLICISM AND VODUN

In considering the origins of Haitian religious belief and ritual, those African elements which have been retained in their aboriginal purity may be first presented. The importance of the Dahomean and Nigerian elements in the *vodun* cult are self-evident when the deities derived from the peoples of these areas are detailed. It has been stated that the name of one of the important "companies" of gods, Rada, is a contraction of the word *Arada,* which is the name of the Dahomean town Allada. This group includes Damballa Wedo, Aida Wedo, Aizan, Legba, Agwe Woyo, Agweto, Sobo, and Sobo-Bade, which come directly from Dahomey, where they are members of the heavenly pantheons; and Agasu, Siligbo, and Loko, who are sacred ancestors of Dahomean relationship groups. The term *Dahomey* itself also figures in the name of such *loa* as Erzilie Freda Dahomey, where Freda with all consistency represents a corruption of the name of Whydah, a Dahomean seaport. The Nago, or Yoruban peoples of Nigeria, have a religious system which parallels that of Dahomey, so that many Rada gods, such as 'Batala, the Yoruban "great god," or Ogun, the Yoruban deity of war, or Shango, the god of thunder, are of Nago origin; Badagri, on the other hand, is the name of a Nigerian town. A prominent *loa* derived from this general area not found to be exclusive to the Rada group is Gedeonsu, or Gede, a Dahomean totem. Of the Pétro group, Wangol (Roi

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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776 171 [162] d'Angole) is obviously Angola, while the designations Ibo and Congo speak for themselves. Simbi is a Congo deity, as are Bumba and Lemba. Finally, in the categories of gods important in the regions of Haiti other than Mirebalais are the Loa Sénégal, and the Loa Mondong, both of which are names of African tribes mentioned in the early literature as contributing to the Haitian slave population. But all recognition of geographical names as such has disappeared, and they have been transmuted into designations of gods.

192 199 Outstanding here is the word *vodun* itself, already indicated as Dahomean, where it is a general term for "deity," though in Haiti its use has become more restricted and the symbol for deity has become the word *loa, or mystère*. The origin of the designation *loa*, which has been claimed to be a corruption of the French *roi*, is debatable. It is true that in West Africa certain deities are regarded as kings, yet this derivation is not convincing in view of the fact that in the *vodun* cult as found in Haiti at present or as described in earlier sources the *loa* are never generally referred to as kings, something that tends to strengthen statements that have been made to the effect that the word comes from the language of a Congo tribe.[1] The source of the root *hun-*, which figures in the terms *hungan*, *hunsi*, and *humfort*, is clear, for in Dahomey it is a synonym for the word *vodun*. *Hungan* and *hunsi* are even more definitely traceable than *humfort*, since the ending *-gan*, the Dahomean word for chief, designates the priest as the chief of the spirits, and *-si*, "wife," is employed in the sense of "wife of the god" or his devotee, in Africa as in Haiti. The female counterpart of *hungan*, *mambu*, cannot be definitely assigned, but may be of Bantu derivation, and is certainly an African word.

776 171 178 [174] 769 Other uncontaminated Africanisms can be discerned in the attitude of the Haitians toward the *loa* and in the ceremonies for them. One of the most characteristic is the inheritance of *loa* in families, a direct survival of the belief which not only

1: Herskovits E-4, 6 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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makes for deification of the family dead, but constitutes the oldest ancestor of a relationship group one of the great gods and thus causes families to give primary allegiance to a restricted number of deities. The most striking aspect of this tradition preserved in Haiti is that all ceremonies must be given by family groups, and at them only members of the family may with propriety become possessed. Possession itself, and the elements which constitute the possession complex — the use of the drums, the rhythms associated with particular gods, the importance of songs in calling the spirits, the mode of worship through specific dances for specific deities — these make up another series of Africanisms. In the dance itself the use of iron to sound basic rhythms for the drums, the outer form and function of the rattle, and the fact that the circle of participants always rotates in a counter-clockwise direction, are equally African. The modes of behavior to be observed as possession comes on and the psychological release that follows it both derive from the same source, as do the beliefs that rituals must be held on the days sacred to the particular god being worshipped.

Another retention of African tradition is a belief in the importance of sacrifice. It will be remembered that it is held to be more essential to "feed" the gods than to dance for them. This is also the tradition of all peoples of the region from which the slaves were derived, and in a sense reflects the very immediate relationship that obtains between Africans, or Haitians, and their gods. Since in both regions each deity performs the double role of doing good for those who worship it properly and harassing those who neglect it, the importance of giving adequate sacrifices to avert evil is evident. In both Haiti and Africa, however, these may differ with the wealth of the individual giving the offering, with the number of persons who contribute toward the ceremony where offerings are given, or with the seriousness of the situation which the deity is being asked to remedy. That the gods permit such varia-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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tion is a further comment both upon the human traits ascribed to them, and upon the realism with which they take cognizance — as only African gods can — of the financial position of their devotees!

It is not only in the immediacy of the Haitian gods to their worshippers and in their human qualities, however, that these beings have retained African traits, for in the full reciprocity that must prevail in the relationship between deities and their followers is to be seen a point of view that is entirely non-European. Between man and the gods the rule of *quid pro quo* must always be in operation; and this rule may only be regarded as but another contribution of Africa toward Haitian religious ideology. While this reciprocal giving flavors all aspects of worship whether it be of the *loa*, the dead, or the twins, it takes a yet more prominent, and more familiar place in the field of magic, since here the *engagement* owes much to European belief, though the element of reciprocity is much more emphasized than was ever the case in medieval European diabolism.

The psychological values of the *vodun* cult, especially the general tone found in the feeling toward the terms *Guinée* or *Rada*, perhaps most convincingly show the attitudes that aided in the retention of things recognizably African. For while the [184] Pétro gods are by no means viewed as altogether bad, or are always held unwelcome, the fact that in Mirebalais, as in Haiti generally, the Rada gods are those least feared, most desired, and in connection with whose cult wrongdoing is most rarely present, is of the greatest significance, especially when the related fact is recalled that the Pétro gods are the more powerful in the matter of evil magic, while the Rada deities are said to exert their power to protect their devotees from the dark forces that may be set in motion against them.

In attitudes toward the gods, then, in the names of the gods themselves, in the manner in which they function in the lives of Haitians, and in the importance of the ceremonial con-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

nected with them, much of African tradition which has carried over into Haitian religious life has been retained in pure form. Yet the intrusion of Catholic custom into these African patterns — often noted, though generally in passing — also must be studied if the significance of the forms of Haitian folk-religion is to be grasped. That this aspect of *vodun* has received the scant attention it has had is probably to be ascribed to two causes.[8] The first takes the Catholic element for granted, so that even where a particularly dramatic element of Catholic practice is seen in an African setting, such as a crucifix or the portraits of the saints on a *vodun* altar, specific mention is made of this without attempting to dissect its historic or psychological role. The second reason for the comparative disregard of Catholic influence is that for Europeans it is a commonplace. Spirit possession and sacrifices, African song and drum rhythms are more "exciting" than prayers or hymns of the Church. Underlying both these causes is the deep-rooted and unquestioned assumption that, in contact with any non-European culture, the patterns that govern European behavior must prevail. Consequently, is it not in the nature of things that Catholicism should have taken root in the *vodun* cult? Is not rather the matter to be stressed that African traditions should have been retained at all? That the process should actually have been one of amalgamation rather than of dominance is rarely taken into account. Yet to go deeper into the significance of this process in Haitian life is to open far-reaching vistas.

An outstanding sanction taken by the *vodun* cult from Catholicism is that of the baptismal rites. Though ceremonies of consecration are a commonplace in Africa, and the African ritual of washing the head — *lavé tête*, as it is termed — has not been forgotten, in Mirebalais the importance of baptism as a means whereby human beings obtain their place in this world and in the next has been carried over and applied to all matters of ceremonial significance. Thus just as in the lives of

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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for all uses to which those of their type are put. During their making and after their completion they had been sanctified by rites that vividly illustrate the merging of traditions in Haitian religion: by means of offerings to the African gods, and through baptism by the rites of the Church.[3]

The *action de grâce* is another integral part of *vodun* ceremonialism that is essentially Catholic, since its lengthy service is composed entirely of prayers and hymns of the Church. As has been shown, the *action de grâce*, which precedes a *vodun service*, takes place before an "altar" which, important both then and at the later, more African rites, in itself documents in no small measure the combining of Catholicism and *vodun*. One, employed at a *service* not described in the earlier chapters, was covered with a red and white checked table-cloth, on top of which a smaller white cloth was spread.* Pinned to the canopy and to the front of the table-cloth were various chromolithographs of the saints; St. Michael attacking the Devil, Mater Dolorosa, St. James, the Virgin Mary and Jesus (the Assumption), and St. Expeditius. In front of the representation of St. James stood a crucifix with the figure of Jesus, in accordance with the custom of never omitting to have one of these at any *vodun* ceremonial. The table bore many offerings; at the back were four bottles of soft drinks, with cups; while also to be seen were several hard rolls, an ear of corn, a dish containing eggs, and another holding, among other things, rice. One of the containers on the table held holy water, while candles for use both in the *action de grâce* and in the later *vodun* rituals lay beside this. Thus crucifix, candles, pictures of the saints, and holy water were combined in this ceremony with offerings of food and drink to be given the gods that the ancestors had brought from Africa.[4] The songs sung at the voduistic portions of these *services* also reflect the psychological unity of Catholic and African elements in *vodun* worship. One of these declares:

* This altar is shown in the illustration facing p. 290.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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Je crois en Dieu,	I believe in God,
Oui, Santa Maria.	Yes, St. Mary.
Santa Maria,	St. Mary,
Qui sorte nan Guinée.	Who came from Guinea.
Je crois en Dieu,	I believe in God,
Oui, Santa Maria.	Yes, St. Mary.

Another for the Virgin of Allada, sung in Leogane, is as follows:

Santa Maria la Madaleine,	St. Mary Magdalene
Prié pou' loa yo.	Pray for their *loa.*
O Allada-e,	O Allada-e,
Sonné une sonne pou' moin,	Ring a bell for me,
Pour m'allé.	So I may go.
M'dit, Allada-o,	I say, Allada-o,
Sonné une sonne	Ring a bell
Pou' les pitites nagé.	For the drowned children.

Of these elements, the portraits of the saints, or *images,* offer one of the most vivid instances of the mingling of African and European elements in Haitian belief, for they are the outward symbol of the psychological reconciliation that has been effected between the saints of the Church and the African deities. This is nothing peculiar to Haiti alone. In West Africa, wherever Catholicism has obtained something of a foothold, certain pagan deities are regularly identified with saints of the Church, and the same phenomenon is found in Cuba[8] and Brazil.[9] This identification of saints with the *loa,* whether initiated as a ruse against the detection of African worship or emanating from a reasoned analogy, would seem in Haiti, at least, to act as a device to achieve an adjustment between two conflicting systems by emphasizing the resemblance between Catholic saints and African nature deities. The importance of the *images* as symbolizing the reconcilia-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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tion is consequently of the first order, while the presence of these chromolithographs in every Haitian hut and on the altars of *vodun* ceremonies indicates how deeply the acceptance of this identification has gone. In the house occupied in Mirebalais during this investigation, the following *images* were found on the wall:

Moses	St. Augustine	Our Lady of Mount Carmel
St. Peter the Apostle	St. Michael	St. Clara
Baptism of Christ	Peter and Paul	

It is perhaps worth mentioning that the owner of the house, when renting it, stipulated that these *images* were to remain in place, for their power kept the house, its contents and occupants from harm.

No greater concurrence of opinion is had in the designations of saints given to corresponding *loa* than in any other facet of Haitian belief. Those here listed were obtained in two ways: either the equivalents of *loa* were named in the course of discussions with priests and other members of the *vodun* cult, or the *images* themselves were shown to members of the cult, and the names of the corresponding *loa* were recorded. Mater Dolorosa is held by most persons to be Gran' Erzilie, but in one instance this figure was equated with Erzilie Freda Dahomey with the insistent qualification that the two were not the same *loa*. The saint is represented as richly clothed, wearing many rings and necklaces and surrounded by other evidences of great wealth, so that the correspondence arises from the fact that Erzilie is held to be the richest of the *loa*. Notre Dame d'Alta Gracia is related to the *loa* Kpanyol, or the Spanish *loa*, while Notre Dame de Grâce is the water-goddess

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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known as La Sirène. St. Anne and St. Philomena are also regarded as water-deities, the first being Adamisil Wedo, the second the *loa* Christalline, a strong evil spirit dwelling in the sea. With one exception, Legba was held the equivalent of St. Anthony; in this other instance his similarity to St. Peter was stressed. St. Peter is held by most persons to be the *loa* St. Pierre, though this again is disputed, *loa* St. Pierre being believed by some to be the spirit who validates the sacred polished stone axes which in Haiti, as in Africa, are called "thunder stones." The identity of St. Andrew was also disputed, some saying he is Simbi, others that he is Azaka Mede, a river god whose name is clearly derived from that of the stream across which, it is believed in Dahomey, all dead must pass. One person identified Aizan with Christ, but this would seem to be a conclusion personal to him.

Of the Ogun *loa*, St. James is conceived as Ogun Ferraille. St. Joseph is identified with Ogun Balandjo, because this *loa* is a healer, and St. Joseph is shown holding a child, his hand upraised in blessing. St. Patrick, on whose *image* serpents appear, is correlated with Damballa Wedo Tokan, or simply the rainbow serpent Damballa Wedo, while Moses, because of the miracle he performed before Pharaoh, is held to be the father of Damballa. St. Expeditius is Agwe, and St. Anthony the Hermit either 'Ti Jean Pétro or Simbi en Deux Eaux. St. Louis, the patron saint of Mirebalais, is a *loa* Wangol, as are two of the kings who figure in the adoration of the Christ-child, Balthazar and Gaspar. The *marassa*, logically enough, are believed the same as the twin saints, Comas and Damien, while the "protector of the *marassa*" is St. Nicholas, because the several children on his *image* are interpreted as *marassa*, *dosu*, and their succeeding siblings.[7]

The Haitian often carries this matter further, either conceiving saints as themselves powerful *loa*, or creating "saints" for himself out of the forces of nature or other powers in the universe. The most outstanding example in the former cate-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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gory is St. John the Baptist, worshipped as *loa* St. Jean Baptiste, who sends the thunder and lightning. The power and irresponsibility which characterize him contrast strangely with the gentle child holding a lamb, shown on the *image*. The connection becomes apparent in the light of African mythology, however, where the ram is the emblem of the god of thunder, while following this same belief lambs are sacrificed to St. Jean Baptiste in Haiti. The following myth is told of him: [539]

> On a given day of the year God permits each saint to have control over the universe. St. John the Baptist, however, is so irresponsible, and his rage so violent, that God fears the consequences if he were allowed to exert his power on his day. By plying him with drink the day before, he is therefore made so drunk that when he falls asleep he does not awaken for five days. When he is told his day has already passed, his rage is so terrible that great storms flay the earth, and it is a commonplace in Mirebalais that this day is marked by thunder and lightning storms of almost hurricane proportions. Though he can do some damage, his power is now limited, however, to his own sphere.

In the second category are the forces of nature personified and worshipped as saints. Among those specifically named were St. Soleil (St. Sun), St. la Lune (St. Moon), Sts. Étoiles (St. Stars), and St. la Terre (St. Earth). Even more striking is the concept that the power capable of bringing reverses is to be worshipped, as a copy of an *oraison* to St. Bouleversé which was obtained clearly shows: [821]

> St. Bouleversé, you who have the power to overturn the earth, you are a saint and I am a sinner. I invoke you, and I take you for my patron from today onward. I send you to seek out such-and-such a one; overturn his head,

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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overturn his memory, overturn his thought, overturn his house, overturn for me my enemies visible and invisible; cause the thunder and the tempest to break them into pieces. And in honor of St. Bouleversé, three Paters and three Ave Marias. . . .[8]

Thus it is seen how Catholicism invades the beliefs and rites of the *vodun* cult. In an analogous fashion *vodun* has not failed to make itself felt in certain festivals of the Church,[9] for while elements of *vodun*, rigidly suppressed inside the Catholic churches, are absent except in so far as they can be carried on surreptitiously, they are nevertheless integral parts of these fêtes in the minds of the folk who make pilgrimages to them. So arresting is the resulting mingling of practices, and so significant for the amalgamation of cultures that has taken place in Haiti, that a detailed discussion will be given of the most prominent instance of this type, the festival in honor of the Virgin of the Palms, which takes place each year on July fifteenth at Ville-Bonheur, or, as it is better known, at Saut d'Eau. The festival of 1926 has been described by Price-Mars;[10] here certain observations made during the fête of 1934 may be given, especially as they have to do with those aspects of the mythology which validate the festival, and as they illustrate the non-Catholic, voduistic phases of the celebration, of importance for the points being considered in this chapter.

Beside the church, Ville-Bonheur has three especially sacred spots, St. John, En bas Palmes, and Saut d'Eau — the falls themselves. At St. John is a large *campêche* tree surrounded by many palms, from beneath which flow streams of water. St. John is said to have appeared here, carrying his scepter as in the chromolithographs, and at that time water began to flow in the sacred springs, and except for one short period has continued ever since as holy water, being used for drinking and bathing, but never for purposes of cooking. The priests

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stationed near by did not at first believe in this miracle, until after several appearances of the saint the higher authorities of the Church gave the fête their sanction. Many tales are recounted of skeptics who, though coming to scoff, became filled with awe when they put foot in the holy place and — significantly for the merging of the two religions — were possessed by *loa* for the first time. A church which has since burned and a small chapel were erected at the site which now is the entrance to the enclosure before the present church. This is the old calvary enlarged, and here the statue of the Virgin, saved when the earlier church burned, is found. Next to this church are the uncompleted walls of the structure which is to be a new and larger church. It is said, however, that this edifice has given much trouble, for each time the walls reach a certain height they fall. The people say: "The Virgin does not like this place," and believe that a simpler church should be built where the old one stood.

The vision of the Virgin at En bas Palmes is believed to have occurred several times, most recently as placed by a lively tradition in the days of the American Marine occupation, when a priest is said to have caused both St. John and En bas Palmes to be closed for several years because, as at present, many who prayed at the church also took occasion to worship their *loa*.

During the fête, however, the tale goes, the Virgin appeared on a palm tree. The people, on their knees worshipping, sent to the priest to come and pray. He declared it merely superstition, however, and called an American Marine captain stationed at Mirebalais to help him suppress this worship. The captain ordered a Haitian sergeant to shoot the vision, but the Virgin merely moved to another tree; another shot, and she moved again. They cut down the tree, and those who looked on with terror saw the vision slowly ascend to the sky. As the priest

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turned to leave, word came that his house had burned and nothing in it was saved. Later he suffered a paralytic stroke from which he never recovered. Some say that the American captain became ill and was sent to the States "as a punishment for what he had done." Several days later the sergeant was found mad, wandering in the woods. Since he had fired under orders, however, his punishment was but temporary, and on being cured he returned to Ville-Bonheur to ask pardon of the Virgin. Today he lives in Mirebalais. When they saw the American ill, the priest paralyzed, the sergeant mad, and the presbytery burned, "public clamor" became so strong that both St. John and En bas Palmes were reopened.[11]

In 1932 a cyclone at St. John tore down trees and houses and hurt but did not kill the worshippers who had gathered there. An eyewitness insisted he had seen the enormous whirling cloud rise from the sacred place. He had no time to reach his house, for with a noise like a cannon-shot the whirlwind came, and an enormous oak tree fell just behind him — "I saw death staring at me." Today he carries two scapularies to the Virgin to protect him.

The third sacred spot is at the falls themselves, where the grandeur and beauty of the scene is such as to induce the religious thrill almost unaided, and where great numbers go in the course of their pilgrimage to Ville-Bonheur. There are two falls, situated at a distance of several miles from the village, one for Damballa and one for Aida Wedo, and it is believed that those who bathe in the sacred streams become possessed. It is said that the palms near by are sacred to the Virgin, but others hold that they are for Damballa. Many visit the falls on the day preceding the fête, but the largest throng hurries there immediately after the principal mass, when the greatest number of possessions and the most violent seizures by the *loa* occur. The falls, therefore, in association

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devotees prophesied and healed the sick. Even at the church, however, where all go to offer the prayers that are the central observance of the fête, the many candles placed on the rocks at the entrance are usually for St. Anthony; that same St. Anthony who, it will be recalled, is the *loa* named Legba, the guardian of all entrances.

It is obvious, from the examples given, that the world view held by the Haitian and the motivations which underlie Haitian life cannot be understood unless both the Catholic and the *vodun* contributions to them are held in mind. But certain further questions bearing upon the effect of these two influences present themselves. What proportion of Haitians hold membership in the Church, and how many are affiliated with the *vodun* sect? What attitudes are manifested toward the Church and its priests as contrasted with their attitude toward the *loa* and their ministrants? How does the Church meet the challenge of *vodun*? And how does the Haitian peasant, in his inner life, reconcile these two conflicting forces?

The impression gained from reading available works on Haiti is that voduists and Catholics constitute two distinct groups. While this may obtain in some parts of the Republic, it is not true either in Mirebalais or in those other portions of Haiti which came under direct though brief observation in the course of this study. All discussions with natives that began with the assumption of the existence of two such separate groups led to confusion, and statements which had seemed evasions were not clarified until the incorrectness of such an assumption became apparent. Thus when it was stated that in all Haiti the Pater Noster was one of the first things taught every child, the question: "Is this not true for Catholic families only?" was met with a vigorous denial that was slowly justified as the realization grew that, if not true for all Haitians, such an assertion was certainly valid for the vast majority of them in Mirebalais and probably elsewhere.[13] The identity of membership in the two groups became apparent from ob-

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APPENDIX I

THE GODS OF THE VODUN PANTHEON

ONE of the most impressive facts about studies of Haitian peasant belief is the absence of any attempt at systematic treatment of the deities of the *vodun* cult, as concerns either their attributes, their functions, or their relationship to one another. Indeed, there are but two exceptions to this statement; Dorsainvil (I, pp. 174–5) has published a list of the names of gods, placing them in categories according to their African derivations, and Parsons (I, *passim*) has made available her notes on the characteristics of the deities of which she was told while working in the island. Otherwise, one reads merely of "the serpent-god Damballa," or of "Papa Ogun," or some other isolated designation. It therefore seemed of capital importance in making this study to obtain both names of deities and as much information concerning these gods as possible, and the resulting data are presented here.

One reason why perhaps not more of such "systematic theology" of *vodun* as exists has been made available is the great degree of individual variation which confronts the student seeking this kind of information, since differences of opinion are invariably encountered. Even priests do not by any means agree, for these men and women are supreme individualists, each being the worshipper of particular deities and exploiting special skills, with the result that the frame of reference within

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which a given priest operates differs from that of his colleagues — though, of course, always within the limitations set by the general pattern of the cult.

This range of opinion cannot be better illustrated than by giving, at the outset, three of the lists of *vodun* deities that were obtained, since here only so simple a matter is involved as names of gods. These lists, it must be remarked, were given by people living in the same valley; were they to be compared with lists collected from other parts of the island even greater disparities would appear, as will be evident if the collection of names of *loa* given by Dorsainvil is consulted. Certain deities, whose names recur below and are also to be found in Dorsainvil's list and in Parsons' notes would be included in any enumeration of gods of the cult, since their worship prevails throughout Haiti. Such would be Legba, Damballa, Aida Wedo, Aizan, Ogun, Agwe, Loko, Shango, Ossange, Bosu, Simbi, Wangol, Baron Samedi, Gede, and Erzilie. Others, though not enjoying as widespread a following, are worshipped over large areas. A number, however, either are gods that have resulted from the process of deifying the souls of those who, in a given locality, were renowned for their spiritual power, or represent survivals of regional African deities that have been preserved in certain large family groups.

Turning now to the lists themselves, the first of these was obtained from a woman functionary of the cult. A single asterisk after a name indicates that its exact counterpart is found in the second list presented here, while two asterisks show the precise name was included in the third listing.

Rada	*Pétro*
Damballa Wedo**	Pétro
Aizan Damballa**	Bosu Trois Cornes*
Aida Wedo	Bosu Djo
Ogun Galloné	Gedeonsu*
Ogun Ferraille* **	'Ti Kita Demembré*
Ogun Balandjo* **	'Ti Jean pié sèche*

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Ogun Sabaho
Legba Avardra
Mon Loa
Solugui
Azao Comble (*or* Coumbe)
Azao Pemba*
Ashade Bokor
Agasu Wedo
Agasu Djeme
Shango
Nago Shango
Acque Fer
Golimé
Agwe Woyo*
Agwesi (*his son*)
Agweta (*his daughter*)
Kadia Bosu
Sobo
Taureau

Congo Zandor* **
Congo Savanne
Congo Wangol
Congo Guinée
Erzilie Mapiangle*
Erzilie Gé rouge* **
Simbi Proméné*
Simbi troi' zilé*
Simbi Wangol
Simbi en Deux Eaux* **
Simbi Galloné
Bakala Baka (*or* Babako Baka)
Lemba Zahou
Bumba*
Gran' Alouba
Gran' Agersi
Gran' Siligbo**
Maît' d'habitation
Maît' Carrefour** (*called* Louis di' fils)
Mari boben
Nangovi
Nangozên
Pélécon*
Ossange Batagri
Ossange Batala
Maît' Mapou (*called* Garçon Mgampé)
Maît' des Eaux
Clairmé
Mme. Clairmé
Clairmézine
Maît' Baleine (Cong' la Mè')

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The second list was given by a woman prominent in the worship of the *loa;* the deities in the preceding list whose names were also included in this (that is, those that were marked with a single asterisk) are not given here, but a double asterisk indicates, as before, that they are also found in the third list.

Rada	*Pétro*
Damballa-Aida-Wedo**	Jean Pétro
Maît' Damballa	Bosu d'l'eaux
Maît' Aizan	Maît' Bosu
Ogun Batagri**	Gedenibo**
Général Ogun	Gedeou
Legba grand-chemin	Maît' Clairmé
Legba nan barrière	Fille Clairmé
Legba Maît' 'bitation	Lemba**
Maît' Azaou	Seli-ho
Maît Ashade	
Maît' Bokor	
Maît' Agasu	
Agweta Woyo	
Sobo-Bade	
Papa Pierre	
Gran' Alouba	
Gran' Aguera	
Gran' nan Canari (*or* Gosen)	
Général Malugué	
Lt. Général Jean Baptiste	
Gran' Erzilie	
Erzilie Freda Dahomey	
Maît' Ossange**	
Maît' Batala	

The third list is that given by a minor functionary of the *vodun* cult, known for his ability as a leader of songs. In ad-

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dition to the *loa* marked with doubled asterisks above, the deities he named were:

Rada	*Pétro*
Aizan	Kita
Aizan Marché	Erzilie
Aizan Marché loko	Papa Simbi
Ogun d'l'eaux	Simbi Gran' Bois
Ogun Batala	Simbi Cimitière
Ogun Ashade	Simbi caille moin
Papa Ogun	Simbi Carrefour
Papa Agasu	Simbi Kita
Agasu Tèmèré	Simbi Magie
Siligbo en bas d'l'eaux	Simbi Pétro
Siligbo Vavou	Simbi Macaya
Loko Kisigwé	Gran' Bois
Loko Yai	Baron Samedi
Pa Loko	Gran' Siligbo
Marassa Nundé	
Loa Créole	
Dahomey Freda	

Some of the inconsistencies and individual variations in the naming of the gods as demonstrated in these lists may be specified. Outstanding are the differences found in the manner of naming a single god, as when Général Ogun is called Ogun Galloné or Papa Ogun, or when Aizan Damballa is listed as two *loa*, Maît' Damballa and Maît' Aizan. Lack of agreement, however, is manifested in other ways. Though Taureau is given as a Rada god, during one *vodun* dance for the Rada deities, when a man was possessed by this *loa*, he was quickly led away and brought out of his possession, since Taureau, regarded by the group giving the dance as a Pétro deity, could not properly come to a rite for gods of another "company." Or again, whereas the second list names Maît' Ossange and Maît' Batala as Rada *loa*, the first list places them

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776 794 184 in the Pétro group. The Erzilie gods are put in both categories, while Grun' Siligbo, designated in the first list as Pétro, was assigned to both " companies " by the person who gave the third list, and named as a Rada deity by the one who gave the second. Furthermore, the third list, that of the singer, comprises *loa* whose " names " are undoubtedly the result of the acceptance by this man of certain phrases from his songs as valid designations of gods, especially such names as " Aizan Marché Loko " or " Loko Kisigwé." It is not without interest to speculate on this as a possible mechanism by means of which new names are added to the *vodun* pantheon.

Only one of the lists specifically assigned gods to other than the Rada and Pétro categories. One of these was termed *Guinée* and included the following names of deities:

Kaplaou	Congo
Enwizo	Loa Sinegal
Wangol	Cangaron

The other was the Ibo group, accorded two names, the Loa Mondongue and a *loa* named Ibo Lélé.

776 More variable, however, than classifications of the *loa* are accounts of attributes and interrelationships, and details of their worship. Yet certain traits and functions of the gods and aspects of their ritual can be set forth. One way in which [533] the Haitians determine such matters is by reference to the songs sung in honor of the gods. Again and again the texts of such songs were cited as authority, suggesting that they are the " holy word " of *vodun* theology and an important device in stabilizing the details of belief. The attributes of the gods which follow are the result of extended discussions with folk who possessed all degrees of knowledge of the details of the cult and who were all active participants in it.

Legba, guardian of the crossroads, the highway, and the *barrière*, the entrance to every house, yard, or garden, is one of the most important *vodun* deities. He is generally conceived

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as a limping old man, clad in tatters, but in his several manifestations has more specific characteristics. Thus Legba Pié Cassé is described as having paralyzed legs, with arms held stiff and crooked before him, and Legba Avardra is spoken of as a *vagabond* who continually wanders the principal highways. Legba must first be summoned before any ceremony may begin, and when it was asked how Legba could be expected to come when called simultaneously to three or four or twenty or fifty places, the parallel given was that of the multiple manifestations of which God or Christ or a saint is capable. Legba, identified with St. Anthony, has Tuesday as his sacred day, and the plum tree is reserved for him. He "eats" a varicolored type of cock known as *poule zinga,* marked like a guinea-fowl, and in this differs from other gods who must indicate through a possessed devotee or a diviner what specific offering among the things they favor is wanted on the occasion of each sacrifice. Though in southern Haiti the smallest chick from each hatching is reserved for Legba, and at least once during his lifetime a man puts aside a bullock or a male goat as a sacrifice for this god, these customs do not prevail in Mirebalais. Here, when an offering to the gods is in prospect, Legba is included among the *loa* to whom a certain animal is promised, and, as in the case of other deities, this animal is thereafter under his protection. But this is the nearest approach to any special offerings for this god.

Damballa, an important Rada god whose symbol is the serpent, is said to bring rain because they sing "*Damballa ivan l'eau*—Damballa in the water." The sacred color of this deity, worn by devotees under possession, is white, and the full initiates wear white necklaces as well as white clothing. This god, identified with St. Patrick, is especially worshipped on Thursdays, and shares the white fig tree with Erzilie and Gran' Siligbo. Damballa "eats" sacrifices of white chickens and pigeons, rice, milk, eggs, pineapples, and fig-bananas; and "drinks" *kola* and sweetened coffee. Damballa forms the

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[776] [821] rainbow, and this is called an *arc d'alliance* between him and Aida Wedo, his wife, whose characteristic dress is blue and [171] white. Sobo, who in Dahomey is the god of thunder, is also believed in Haiti to give thunder, though he is not thought to live in the sky. As in Africa, his symbol is the ram. Aizan lives in the water, and is a favored deity because he gives his devotees the power of healing and of divining.

Erzilie, a *loa* of considerable importance, is envisaged as a pale, trembling woman who also inhabits the water. She constantly changes her dresses, of which she has many. All agree that she is a fabulously wealthy woman, who wears golden chains about her neck and has many rings, a characterization derived from her identification with Mater Dolorosa, whose chromolithographs depict her with many rich ornaments. As a Rada *loa* she "eats" the same food as Damballa, and wears white, like this other god, but has Friday as her sacred day. In her less pleasant manifestation of Erzilie Gé Rouge, the red-eyed one, she is a member of the Pétro "squad," and is held to be the wife of Simbi d'l'eau, with whom she is believed to get on especially well, since they "eat" different foods. Simbi, who is worshipped on Tuesdays and inhabits the mango and calabash trees, is said to drink heavily, however, and occasionally becomes so boistrous in his cups that he destroys the furniture and otherwise makes himself so objectionable that Erzilie is forced to leave him until he becomes sober.

[171] Ogun, in Haiti as in Nigeria, is the god of war. The Nigerian Shango is also found, though the Haitians conceive Shango as a *loa* who acts as the servant of the Ogun deities, [782] particularly Ogun Badagri and Ogun Batala. Ogun "eats" [822] red cocks and red beans mixed with rice, and his color, red, is worn by his devotees. To this fact may be referred the custom [714] of the Caco warriors who fought against the American Ma- [648] rines in 1918–20 to wear red as their distinguishing color, something referred to by Wirkus (pp. 22 ff.), though he

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combines an explanation having an element of correctness — "a charm against harm" — with entire misunderstanding when he speaks of the color as symbolizing a "declaration of a holy war against wrong and oppression." Some, but not all of the Ogun *loa* drink Haitian rum. Ogun himself is identified with St. James the Elder, and his sacred day is Wednesday. This *loa* is a *Nèg' défence* and protects his worshippers from bullets or wounds inflicted by weapons. Ogun Balandjo guards travelers, though he is not as strong as such others of the Ogun group as Ogun Badagri and Ogun Batala, with whom he shares the bamboo tree as a habitation. The former gives *connaissance* — knowledge — which permits those he possesses to prohesy; the latter endows with the ability to prepare healing baths. The Ogun *loa* Erzilie and Damballa are jealous gods. On the day sacred to each, a devotee puts fresh linen on his bed, places powder, soap, and a comb near by, and sleeps alone. If the devotee is a woman, her husband sleeps elsewhere; if a man, his wife must seek another place; otherwise the transgressor would die.

Agwe Woyo is god of the sea, but, as might be expected, neither he nor his son and daughter, Agweto and Agweta Woyo, figures as importantly in Mirebalais as in coastal areas. For the folk of Mirebalais the river-gods, particularly the spirit of the Artibonite River, are of much greater importance. This last-mentioned *loa*, named Clairmé, a Pétro deity like his wife and daughter, Mme. Clairmé and Clairmézine, lives in the deepest part of the stream with the other members of his "family." Similarly, the deepest parts, or *bassins*, of tributary streams hold the spirits of those waters. And since all these tributaries flow into the Artibonite, and the Artibonite empties into the ocean, it is said that when the river is in flood, Clairmé is engaged in inspecting his domain, being greeted by the spirits of all the smaller rivers as he passes their mouths. At this time the flow of the water in each tributary is arrested until he has gone by, when, in a great swirl,

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it joins the flooded Artibonite as its master accompanies Clairmé on his way to consult with the great ruler of the sea, Agwe. Actually, at the height of the rainy season the force of the light colored muddy water of the major stream holds back the darker colored flow of its tributaries in a manner which accords with the legend, so that, observing the Tombe River at one such time, the Haitians who were present said: "The Tombe is waiting for its master to pass."

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Gede, a deity who figures in both the Rada and the Pétro groups as chief functionary under Baron Samedi, ruler of cemeteries, is tolerated rather than favored, though his rewards to his devotees include the refusal to dig a premature grave for them. When Gede possesses a devotee at a dance, Dumballa, Ogun, and the other Rada gods "leave" at once, and those who are possessed by them come out of their possessions. For though Gede is no less a *loa* than other gods, "He is a *zombi* and is fed apart"; as the Haitians say: "The *loa* are like human beings. They will not mingle with the dead, and Gede is of the dead." His color is black, and Saturday is his sacred day. He "eats" salt herring, hot peppers, cassava, roasted corn, roasted bananas, and other roasted foods. He drinks *clairin* — much of it — and at great ceremonies a black goat and chickens are killed for him, as well as those chickens with ruffled feathers called *djakati*, which in all the New World, as in Africa, are believed to discover and dig up magic charms set against their owners. He lives in the cemetery, "behind the cross." There are a number of deities whose names are compounded with the name of Gede — Gedenibo, Gedeonsu, Gedehun — and hence the question whether or not this is a generic term or a specific designation is pertinent. There is no agreement on this point, and it could only be established that those *loa* who bear the same name, such as all Ogun or Bosu or Simbi deities, are brothers; but who the parents of these groups may have been is not known.

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Associated with Simbi and Gede in the Pétro "squad" are

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the various forms of Bosu and 'Ti Kita. Some hold that Bosu lives in the mountains and the cemeteries, but not in the water; others state that he does not live in the mountains, but in the water and on the plain. As a matter of fact, there is a Bosu of the water, and there would also seem to be one of the plain, of the crossroads, and of the mountains, each with its own name. 'Ti Kita, conceived as a woman, is also associated with the cult of magic and the dead. She is "fed" a goat, which is almost invariably referred to as Maria Louisa, or Louisa.

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heard in Haiti, but descriptive details of the practice abound." Elsewhere (p. 158) she speaks of "this higgledy piggledy pantheon" of *loa*, whose traitè "none . . . [were] . . . able to describe . . . at all systematically." Price-Mars (I), 32, however, mentions the existence of a theology based on African beliefs not unlike that described here.

[9] Cf. Parsons (I), 168.

[10] Nowhere is the confusion with which writers on Haiti have approached and presented *vodun* theological concepts better exemplified than in the passage found in Craige, 98–9; or 71, where a charm for working evil magic is spoken of as "something having to do with voodoo."

[11] Despite the importance of possession, one would hesitate before accepting in its entirety the somewhat simplistic approach of Dorsainvil that "*le vôdou se ramène à l'idée de la possession*," (I), 113.

[12] St. Mery, i, 35.

[13] Parsons (I), 169, note 2, speaks of baptism, but states "*loi* Pétrou is one you do not baptise, as you do other *loi* when they come . . ." — a custom at variance with Mirebalais procedure.

[14] Cf. Parsons (I), 165, however, where the meaning of *marré* is given "to get the spirit."

[15] See Parsons (I), 164–5, for a description of a "shrine" of a worshipper of the *loa*.

[16] Cf. Dorsainvil (I), 115 ff.

[17] This is undoubtedly the explanation of Seabrook's "hermaphroditic god" called Papa Nebo (Gede-nibo), which he shows on pp. 9 and 10 of the plates of his book. As is indicated elsewhere in this volume, Gede, who does not partake of this characteristic in the least, has thus been woefully misunderstood by Seabrook.

[18] Dorsainvil (I), 72–4, describes possession at a *vodun* ceremony, and Wirkus, 173 ff., also gives a description of a possession scene, but his account is pitched so hysterically as materially to lessen its usefulness for serious comparisons.

[19] (I) *passim*, but especially 18–19, 58–61, 86–7, 111–12. A definition of *vodun* more acceptable to those who approach social phenomena from an ethnological and historical point of view is to be found on page 130. Price-Mars (I), 123 ff., gives an extended criticism of Dorsainvil's hypothesis, though from quite a different point of

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CHAPTER XI

[1] Compare Parsons (I), 173–4, where the cult of twins is discussed and some of its rites described.

[2] Price-Mars (I), 35, mentions this as a power believed to be held by twins.

[3] The phrase "cult of the dead" as employed here must be sharply differentiated from its misuse by Seabrook (82 ff.).

[4] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 34.

[5] Price-Mars (I), 34, speaks of the custom of always burying charms with the dead.

[6] Wakes have been described by Seabrook, 89–91, and others, but in such a manner that it is difficult to disect out the reality of what was witnessed from the imaginative elements.

[7] Cf. Wirkus, 221–3. The custom of giving the dead food at the grave, which he describes, is not followed when burial occurs in the Mirebalais town cemetery, nor, seemingly, elsewhere in the valley.

[8] See the description of a commemorative rite for the dead in Price-Mars (I) 148–50.

[9] This is a rule followed in West African practice.

CHAPTER XII

[1] An interesting attempt to account for this is found in St. John, 250–1, where he speaks of the "two Vaudoux sects," one good and one evil.

[2] St. Mery, i, 56. The term *garde* is almost entirely absent in later writings, the more sensational *wanga* (*ouanga*) being preferred.

[3] Léger, 55, note 54.

[4] Cf. Dorsainvil (I), 171.

[5] No better summary of this could be had than that in Parsons (I), 179, written after a single séance with a *gangan*.

[6] Pp. 324–31.

[7] Mr. J. C. Trevor informs me that during a recent field-trip to the Virgin Islands he discovered books of magic in common use, obtained from a Chicago dealer.

[8] It is not without interest to note that in the case reported in a Port-au-Prince newspaper and reproduced in facsimile by Seabrook, 334, concerning a woman from the commune of Mirebalais accused of sorcery, the name of the woman was *Aziéman*.

[9] Cf. Parsons (II), 396.

[10] See above, pp. 94–5.

[11] The closest correspondence

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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to the Haitian *baka* found in the New World are the *bakru* of Dutch Guiana, who in turn derive from the "little folk" of West African belief, beings that are always important in making magic. See Herskovits, M. and F. (IV), 105–7.

[10] Dorsainvil (I), 150, mentions this rite.

[11] Notably by Seabrook, 92 ff., who made great capital of the concept and purported actually to have seen these beings! Parsons (II), ii, 592. Tale 77, I, reproduces a Haitian's account in Créole of how a Sorcerer goes about ensnaring a victim to make of him a *zombi*.

[12] Parsons (I), 178–9.

CHAPTER XIII

[1] Price-Mars (II), 96 ff., gives a detailed description of the peasant house. The beehive-shaped hut mentioned by Craige, 36, is not found in Mirebalais, though the valley is but a short distance from Hinche, of which he was writing. Seabrook, 18, also describes the interior of a peasant house.

[2] Charlevoix, ii, 42.

[3] St. John, 153.

[4] Seabrook, 104 ff., devotes some space to a discussion of *pénitence*, but so changes its meaning to the Haitians that it is quite useless in making a serious comparison of data.

[5] See the discussion in Dorsainvil (I), 150, concerning other retentions of African motor behavior in Haiti.

[6] Craige, Seabrook, and Wirkus, all give lively accounts of cock-fights.

[7] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 1–15, for accounts of the manner in which stories are told in Haiti. It is to be noted that the African belief that a tale must not be told during the daytime persists there.

[8] A large collection of Haitian folk-tales has been published recently by Parsons (II), ii, 470–596.

[9] Audain has published what is perhaps the largest collection of Créole proverbs; his work, however, is unfortunately out of print.

CHAPTER XIV

[1] Dorsainvil (I), 158.

[2] Exceptions to this statement must be made in the case of the careful study of the relationship between Catholicism and *vodun* by Price-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

Mars (I), 163 ff., and to the briefer discussions of this point in Dorsainvil (I), 35–7, and Parsons (I), *passim*, but especially p. 179. Some consideration is also given to this mingling of religious beliefs in Wirkus, 20, 22, 177, 179, and in Seabrook, 17–20, though in this latter citation the distortion of native belief usually found in Seabrook's book is not absent.

[5] Wirkus, 288–9, describes the baptism of Rada drums, though certain details in his account appear somewhat unlikely.

[6] Compare Parsons (I), 165, 175.

[7] Cf. Ortiz, *passim*.

[8] Cf. Ramos, Ch. V; Ignace; Nina-Rodrigues, *passim*.

[9] Price-Mars (I), 180–1, gives the following correspondences between *vodun*-cult deities and saints of the Church:

Legba:	St. Anthony
Ogun Balandjo:	St. James the Elder
Agoussou Tonnerre:	St. John the Baptist
Daguy Bologuay:	St. Joseph
Roi d'Aoubessu:	St. Louis (King of France)
Grande Mambo Batala:	St. Anne
Maitresse Ersulie:	the Holy Virgin (especially the Holy Virgin of the Nativity)
La Sirène:	the Assumption
Pierre D'Ambala:	St. Peter

Seabrook, 15, speaks of "Maîtresse Erilée . . . the mild blessed Virgin Mary," and Wirkus, 178–9, correlates Damballa with St. Patrick, and Legba with St. Peter.

[10] The original of the part of this *oraison* given here is reproduced in facsimile by Seabrook, 309, and quoted in full by Price-Mars (I), 183–4; the latter also gives, 182–3, another of these *oraisons populaires*, to Ste. Radegonde, who is regarded in it as an associate of Baron Samedi in the cemetery. For *oraisons* used in the fetish cult of Cuba, see Ortiz, 90 ff.

[11] Price-Mars (I), 32, speaks of "*le catholicisme hybride de nos masses populaires*," as later, 38, he denominates *vodun* as an African religion "*altérée par sa juxtaposition plus que séculaire à la réligion catholique. . . .*" See also p. 122. The points of resemblance between Catholicism and *vodun* which encouraged the resulting synthesis are tellingly numbered on pp. 164–5.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[p. vii]
[p. vi is blank]

Preface

Every student of Haitian life is soon impressed by the richness of the materials spread out before him and the necessity of limiting his field of investigation. A study of Haitian religious practices, for example, draws one deeper and deeper into profusion, variation, and contradiction. One finds little difficulty in drawing a generalized picture with swift, bold lines; but when he descends into detail he discovers that the broad generalizations of the religious system contain within them many shifting and even warring motifs, and that what in one region is held to be true is not so regarded in another. The gods of *Vodoun* that are revered in one village are given only perfunctory treatment in another. Rites for the dead have a common denominator everywhere in the country, but each community brings to them something of its own or emphasizes traditions that elsewhere are forgotten. So it is also with music and dancing. A traditional drum rhythm may have one name in the north and another in the south, or a certain rhythm may be called by different names. There are diverse opinions about which dances are preferred by certain deities. The meaning of a song can be interpreted differently by different people. It is therefore no wonder that competent works on Haiti do not completely agree with one another in many respects, or that they seem, now and then, to be saying different or even contradictory things. Yet in many instances the seeming inconsistencies are in reality only minor variants within an overall scheme.

The purpose of this book is to present a broad view of certain aspects of Haitian culture and wherever possible to extract some of the flavor of Haitian thinking as well as its sense. It is easy to be fooled in regard to both. I remember seeing an old bearded man in the mountains beyond Furcy walking around his freshly hoed garden breaking a ripe tomato into small juicy bits which he scattered on the ground. It was about as primitive a method of planting as I had ever seen, and I wondered if even

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one seed from that tomato would ever take root under the hot sun. Some time later, when I knew this man well, I talked to him about the care with which seeds must be planted if they are to grow properly. I told him how *we* grew *our* tomatoes. He listened carefully, nodding his head. When I had finished he said: "Yes, that must be a good way to do things in your country. But here in this valley God is good. He does not forget his children. From the broken tomato many plants will sprout. When God is good to you, you do not have to count the seeds." I suggested that perhaps one should not waste any of the precious seeds that God had provided; and to this he replied: "How is there waste? My garden is made to flourish by Zaka [the country man's special deity]. Some people give Zaka a feast every year, but between times they forget. Zaka helps me in my work, and I don't forget him. When I break the tomato and put it on the ground that way, it is a little taste for Zaka. Whatever I plant, I give him some. He is good to me, I am good to him."

What I learned from many incidents like this one was that the eye does not always see correctly. The old man was not just planting tomatoes, nor was he performing a conventionalized ritual act. It was a highly personalized act of faith in nature and confidence in the deity who shared his work.

A large part of this book deals with Vodoun, the religious practices based on West African traditions. One soon discovers that the songs and dances of Vodoun ritual are not merely music and motion supplementing and decorating more serious affairs. Virtually every aspect of Vodoun ritual is placative or invocational. The songs that are sung and the dances that are danced are direct supplication of various supernatural forces.

Undoubtedly, a number of principles which are put forward in this study do not apply equally to every region of Haiti; but they are, I think, true in general terms. Not until one has accepted the fact that different explanations exist for given phenomena, that the same rites are performed in different fashion in different places, and that the cult priests themselves do not agree on many details, may one begin to work toward a general view of the Haitian scene.

All of Haitian life is not Vodoun. And there are of course some Haitians who are relatively outside the central circle of its influence. But the inner meanings of Vodoun and its relationship to the total view of life permeate the entire scene. Music, too, binds together practically the entire fabric of Haitian existence. It is essential not only to the cult temple but to countless workaday activities. Agrarian work groups often perform their tasks to the accompaniment of a drum. And in the cult temple, the iron hoe of the fields often serves as a percussion instrument.

The Drum and the Hoe is the result of studies made over a period of

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Vodoun is clearly more than ritual of the cult temple. It is an integrated system of concepts concerning human behavior, the relation of mankind to those who have lived before, and to the natural and supernatural forces of the universe. It relates the living to the dead and to those not yet born. It "explains" unpredictable events by showing them to be consistent with established principles. In short, it is a true religion which attempts to tie the unknown to the known and thus create order where chaos existed before. 771

As in Dahomey, it is not a system imposed from above but one which pushes out from below. It is bred and nurtured in the family, in the towns, and in the fields. It is common law, with deep roots in an unbroken and continuous past. The priests of Vodoun do not control it and direct its course. They, like the least fortunate peasant, simply move about within it and make use of its resources. They are its servants and its interpreters. In their cult centers, the principles of Vodoun are brought into sharp focus and dramatized. Vodoun is democratic in concept. Any man or woman may have direct contact with the deities or dead ancestors without the intervention of the cult priest. There is no place or situation beyond the influence of the loa or beyond the limits of Vodoun. At every crossroads is the spirit of the crossroads guardian, Legba, and on every long trail is the spirit of the Master of the Highway. 791 793 794 776

The cult priest nevertheless plays a significant and essential role. He translates beliefs that otherwise might tend to become amorphous into formalized action. He is a teacher, a repository of cult learning, and a vital catalyst. He gives form to abstraction, and practical meaning to symbols. He is the intellectualizing agency of a tremendous emotional force. Through his knowledge of the substance and forms of Vodoun, his experience in dealing with the loa, and in some instances his capacity to set magical forces into action, the cult priest is a dynamic power within his community. 793 182

Though the making of *pouins* and *magie* (ritual magic) and *ouangas* (aggressive magic directed against individuals) is within the realm of the cult priest's activities, these things are part of Vodoun only in a subsidiary sense. Magic lurks on the periphery of Vodoun. It has little or no place in the placating of the deities or the dead. It concerns the relationship of the living with each other and with *lou-garos* (*loups-garous*) and *baka* (demons). Although cult rituals include various pouin and magie ceremonies, the cult priest draws upon magic as he draws upon other mystic arts and fields of learning—leaf doctoring, divination, Catholic ritual, and Masonic symbolism. He attempts to bring together all thinking that widens the scope of Vodoun, in order to strengthen his hand to deal with 793 789 754 771

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loa makes his appearance in Vodoun ritual by possessing ("mounting") one or more of the participants. When these possessions first occur, the possessed persons lapse into a kind of frenzy without controls or direction. They may stagger, fall, and go into convulsions. The deity must be controlled so that he will not harm the person whose body he takes over. The houngan eventually establishes a conditioned, formalized response to possession; and once this is achieved, the loa is regarded as having been tamed. The *hounsi bossale* then becomes eligible for elevation to the status of kanzo. The term *kanzo* means "to tie fire"; that is, to conquer or show mastery over fire. Demonstrations of supremacy of possessed persons over flames, hot coals, and red-hot metal characterize many Vodoun rituals. In the kanzo ritual the initiate must undergo the test of boiling oil.

The hierarchy of the cult temple, in general, looks like this:

Houngan (or *Mambo*)—chief of the hounfor
Laplace—first assistant to the houngan
Mambo caille—"mistress of the house"
Houngénicon—topmost of all the hounsi
Hounsi kanzo—the highest grade of hounsi
Hounsi bossale—the lowest grade of hounsi

Among the hounsi there are some who have special duties or functions. There is the *reine silence,* for example, whose job is to maintain order. The one assigned to cook the various sacrifices is called the *hounsi cuisinière,* and so on.

There is no single, clear-cut process for becoming a Vodoun priest. A man with special talents may rise from the rank of hounsi and eventually become a houngan by succession. Or a person with a strong *connaissance* may simply feel the call—sometimes in a dream—and establish himself as a houngan or bocor. If such a man demonstrates that he is "strong," a following will gather around him to constitute his *société.*

When a houngan dies, his cult center may be abandoned, or it may be taken over by another established houngan or by the deceased man's protégé. Frequently the laplace will inherit the cult temple and all that goes with it. Acquisition of a cult center by inheritance is looked upon as a means of keeping an established hounfor intact. The man who wishes to achieve the rank of houngan applies to the oldest and most venerable cult priest in the district and announces that he wishes to receive the *asson* (the ritual rattle) that is, to become a houngan. If the elder priest approves and wishes to sponsor the younger man's elevation, he consults other reputable houngans and arranges for a *grand service* for purification and investiture. The elder cult priest conducts the ceremonies. He is regarded as especially wise because of his age and long experience in dealing with the loa, whose

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in many details. But, in general, the cult establishment consists of a central building of one or more rooms with an adjoining court, or peristyle, over which there is a covering—usually a straw roof. The covering, called the *tonnelle,* is supported by a number of poles, one of which is placed squarely in the center of the court. This center pole—the *po'teau mitan* or *po'teau planté*—is the focus of most of the ritual activities. The loa who descend upon the service enter by way of this pole. The ritual *vèvès,* or flour paintings, are made at its foot. Around it all the dancing takes place. On certain rare occasions when rituals are held in the open, a carefully selected tree becomes the center post—though it is by no means certain that the po'teau mitan is not, in fact, a symbolic tree.

The building adjoining the peristyle contains the inner sanctum. Here are deposited the paraphernalia of the cult, such as ritual bottles and jars, flags of the société, and the iron kettles used in various ceremonies. On the walls there may be primitive paintings of the special loa of the hounfor, or perhaps of his symbol. The loa of the sea, Agwé, may be represented by a ship. Damballa, the serpent-rainbow loa, may be represented by a snake or a rainbow. Usually there are colored lithographs of Catholic saints, who have both Catholic and African names. And there are hand-beaten iron crosses, dishes containing Indian celts in which loa are believed to reside, gourd bowls, and carved wooden double and triple bowls used for services to dead twins and triplets. Upon the altar place, called *badji,* there are the *criches* or *govis,* earthen jars or bottles in which rest the loa removed from the heads of people who have died. Sometimes special niches are built on the hounfor grounds for the deities. Each cult priest designs his hounfor in his own way.

A hounfor belonging to a mambo near the town of Croix des Missions gave the appearance of having a large and prosperous société. Under the tonnelle eight beautifully carved Arada drums were suspended from a single peg. At a respectable distance hung a Martinique drum used only for dances on the occasion of a Nine Night. Inside the hounfor was an impressive display of sacred objects and decorations. One corner of the room was reserved for Symbi Yendézo, a patron loa of drinking water and rainfall. He was portrayed on the wall as a long, thin snake crawling in a maze of crosses. On the ground beneath the picture was a small concrete pool, in which two water snakes swam. Another corner was reserved for Agwé, and on his wall was a picture of a steamship. Along the back of the altar was an impressive array of govis, containing the spirits removed from the heads of deceased persons. There was a large plate of loa stones, and various protective charms stood near by. Flags and sabres

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346 794 353 778 were stacked against the wall, and set about in various places were several assons, iron crosses, Catholic lithographs, chains and iron bars for the loa Ogoun, candles set in bottles, and an old forged double bell of African design.

346 353 Some of the hounfors found elsewhere are more elaborate and reflect the richer resources of the immediate community, or the creative impulses of the houngan and his helpers, or the pressure of competition. Some cult temples are prolific with painted designs and symbolic representations of the deities. Others are unpretentious, simple, and even Spartan.

346 [113] In his book *En Haiti*, written approximately fifty years ago, Eugene Aubin describes a hounfor in the Cul-de-Sac Plain, a few miles from Port-au-Prince, as he saw it in 1906:

346 353 794 778 [The] *hounfor* is fronted by a *peristyle*, which is used for the Vodoun dances and services; it is a large area, with a floor of beaten earth, covered with a straw roof. On three sides the walls rise to support the roof; on the fourth there is the inscription:

Société la Fleur de Guinée
Roi d'Engole
[*Flower of Africa Society*
King of Angola]

indicating the name of the patron of the society [the loa Roi Angole, or Wangol], over which the *houngan* presides. The *hounfor* is an ordinary house, a little larger than average. The sanctuary contains a principal *pé* [altar], running the whole length of the room on one side, and another altar, a little smaller, in one of the corners. These *pés* are altars largely made of brick, in which the under part is decorated with hearts and stars in relief; above, draperies hang from the ceiling. The lateral *pé* is divided into three compartments. There are, therefore, four sections in [116] all, consecrated to each of the *loa* served in the *hounfor:* Aguay Aoyo [Agwé Woyo], Damballa, Ogoun Badagry, and Loco [Loko], Nago King. Maître Aguay is represented by the customary little boat; a medallion is consecrated to Monsieur Damballa, shown holding two snakes in his hand; a figure on horseback represents Ogoun Badagry, with a woman at one side holding a flag; Papa Loco is pictured in full uniform, smoking a pipe and fanning himself. The walls are covered with religious paintings [Catholic lithographs]. The back of the altar is occupied by numerous carafes in baked clay, called *canaris*, which contain the . . . *mystères* [spirits taken from the heads of the dead] gathered in the *hounfor;* in front are bottles of wine, liqueurs and vermouth presented to them in homage; then the plates, the cups for the *mangers-marassas* [feasts for the twin spirit], crucifixes, hand bells, *assons* for directing the dance or calling the *loa;* plates filled with polished stones [celts] inherited from the Indians—"thunder stones," symbols of Damballa, which Saugo [Sobo] the god of lightning hurls from the sky into the enclosure of his favorite *papalai* [*houngan*]. Beside these miraculous stones are many coins of copper or silver [property of the *loa*]. The *loa* . . . possess coins of Joseph Bonaparte, King of Spain, minted in 1811; of Frederick VII of Denmark, 1859; of Charles IV of Spain, 1783, and of President Boyer, dated year 27 and year 30 of Haitian Independence. On the ground there is placed a coconut-oil lamp; in the corner, the flags of the *hounfor* and the saber of [the] *houngan*, the man who acts as master of ceremonies in the services.

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in the services. In the court, the bases of four sacred trees . . . are surrounded by circles of masonry [low brick walls]. These *reposoirs* are inhabited by the *loa* Legba, Ogoun, Loco and Saugo.[5]

There is little in Aubin's description to suggest that hounfors were much different a half century ago from what they are today. He errs in identifying the "thunder stones" solely with Damballa. But his eye for detail was acute. In 1950 a mambo in the neighborhood of this hounfor described by Aubin affirmed that some of the loa stones and old coins which he mentioned are still to be found among the properties of a hounfor in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. Others were lost in one of the cleric-inspired raids which despoiled cult temples of drums and other paraphernalia about fifteen years ago.

Many services are held outside the hounfor and the peristyle. Some rituals, such as animal sacrifices and "talking to the loa below the water," may take place some distance from the cult buildings. Indeed, various Vodoun ceremonies may be held at waterfalls, at the seashore, in sacred groves, in ordinary homes, in a boat at sea,[6] or under a sacred tree.

The rites of the hounfor are almost without number. They are associated with the supplication or conciliation of virtually countless deities, each of which has his own special service. There are services in multitudinous combinations and permutations for the dead, for twins, for albinos, and for unborn children. There are ceremonies for the elevation of hounsi and for initiation, smoke and fire ordeals, and tests of other kinds. There are *mangé loa* (feasts for the deities) and *mangé morts* (feasts for the dead). There are services for the sick, for the crops, and for the harvest. In one context or another, Vodoun relates to nearly every aspect and phase of life—and its counterpart death. Since every region, every locality, and, in fact, almost every hounfor has developed its own ritual out of the common materials, it is possible to see hundreds of ceremonies without ever seeing precisely the same one twice. Yet the common elements bind them all together.

One such prime element is the possession, the "mounting" of the human body by one of the deities. Possession is a psychological phenomenon common to the rites of many cults throughout the world. It is known in Asia, Africa, Europe, and America. It is not the unique property of the African and his Haitian descendant. In the United States it is a commonplace not only among certain Negro cults but certain white cults as well. The United States Negro had ample West African inspiration for his seizures in the church and at the baptism. The intellectual meaning of these seizures has changed, as have their outward forms to a measurable extent, but their emotional content has not altered.

5 Translated from the French of Aubin, En Haiti, pp. 57-59. Cf. p. 349 Category 116.--Analyst

6 [Footnote appears on p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]

787 In Haiti the possession takes many forms, according to the nature of the deity who has entered the body, and depending on whether the possessed person has learned to "control" that deity. The possessing, or "mounting," of the possessed individual is manifest proof of the loa's existence and his constant proximity. Vodoun is built upon the premise [771] of the existence of loa, and the possession is the instrument of direct con- [776] tact and of constant proof of the loa's imminence.

Although much of Vodoun is cast in the Dahomean mold, it is no longer what it was originally in Dahomey. Many of the original deities of the Dahomean Earth pantheon, the Sky pantheon, and the Thunder pantheon have survived. Others have been forgotten, but in their place there has grown a vast array of loa, recruited partly from the Yoruba deities and perhaps from deities of other West African tribes. By far the largest group has come into existence in Haiti—loa whose names, at least, probably would go unrecognized in West Africa.

There have been prolific intrusions into Vodoun from the rites of the Catholic Church, though they have not affected the general framework of the system. The original Dahomean supreme being, Nananbuluku, is nearly forgotten; in her place the Christian God is named in many a Vodoun service. Yet, though God is the supreme creator, giver, and taker, it is the loa who must be supplicated and mollified. Most important Vodoun rituals are begun under the supervision of the *prêt' savane,* or "bush priest," who leads off with brief prayers from the Catholic rites. While the Catholic Church itself rejects any direct part in Vodoun, the self-tutored prêt' savane, unordained and unsponsored by the Church, brings elements of its theology into the hounfor. The origins of the prêt' savane are not clear. But there is little doubt that his place in Haitian life became assured during the years of conflict between postrevolutionary governments and the Church of Rome. After the slave revolts of 1791, the priests of the French colony fled from the scene or went into hiding along with the other white colonists. From the date of Haitian independence throughout the following half century, Haiti was "in open schism from the Roman Catholic Church." Some Haitian presidents were friendly toward the Catholic Church; others even had the objective of making [659] Catholicism a state religion with the president at its head. Henry Christophe, for example, made the Catholic Church official but stipulated that ecclesiastical decrees must be approved by the president. Alexandre Pétion's constitution for southern Haiti (the country was divided) also established the Church as official but laid upon it strong restrictions.

Leyburn points out that in 1814 there were in Christophe's kingdom only three priests, one of whom Christophe had named archbishop. Dur-

[Leyburn, The Haitian People, p. 119. Cf. p. 349, Category 116. -- Analyst]

They know where the sun rises,

793 78 [177] [176] 794 184 78

and they address St. Nicholas, who opens the day, and they know the wish of God. In the name of St. Nicholas they raise a glass of water and ask God for the power to do."

In ordinary usage the Haitian refers to the various cults or "nations" as though they were quite separate and mutually exclusive. He speaks of the *service* Pétro, or *rite* Nago, or the *nanchon* Ibo. Yet in practice the cults are usually bound together into two or three major groups.

The "nations" belonging to the Vodoun (or Dahomey) group include the Arada or Dahomé, the Anago, the Mahi, the Amine, and the Ibo. There is ample evidence that the cults of these "nations" were once separate and apart. Even today in isolated regions of Haiti there are cult centers devoted exclusively to Nago deities. Elsewhere, Mahi or Ibo services are held without the intrusion of "foreign" rites and deities. Some cult centers have several hounfors—one for Dahomé, one for Nago, one for Ibo, and so on, with a separate building for the "dead" spirit Gèdé. More often, however, one finds a single hounfor containing separate altars. Of all the "nations" within the Vodoun group, the Ibo perhaps has the most independent status, and in some regions it is tied in with Pétro rather than Vodoun rites.

The Pétro group also includes numerous "nations," some completely absorbed, others more loosely affiliated. Within this group, which for convenience may be called the Congo-Guinée family, are the Pétro, Bumba, Moundongue, Bambarra, Congo Loangue (Loango), and other "nations." In certain regions the Congo cult, like the Ibo, is regarded as separate and apart. Sometimes the Pétro service is kept distinct from the others, though it has drawn so heavily on them for its roster of deities that the distinction is not easily seen. In places such as Port-au-Prince where the cults have deeply infiltrated one another, major differences between the Vodoun and Congo-Guinée rites have disappeared, and altars to both Pétro and Dahomé deities may be found within the same hounfor.

It is not difficult to detect a certain pattern of regional grouping within the Vodoun and Congo-Guinée families. Within the Vodoun family are gathered "nations" from Dahomey, Togoland, and Nigeria, while in the Congo-Guinée cycle are "nations" from Central Africa, miscellaneous "nations" such as the Bambarra, and the Pétro cult which is regarded as "Haitian" rather than "African," but whose rites and loa have been recruited in large measure from other services.

One often hears of Kitta services, or Chango services, or Legba rites. These are not separate cults but simply rituals for specific loa.

[P.19]

3. The Loa: Gods of the Haitian Mountains

The supernatural world of the common people of Haiti is a vast, rich, and unexplored world. It is peopled with thousands of gods who may at any time come down a rocky mountain trail, or up from the bottom of the sea, or out of the springs where people drink, to enter the hounfor of the Vodoun priest or the humblest of thatched huts. The gods—variously called *loa, mystère, hounaié,* or *vodoun*[1]—may come at strange, unexpected moments to the unlikeliest places. Yet whenever they come they are recognized for what they are. The things they say and do bear the mark of their character and their special powers, and usually there is little disagreement over their identity. 776

The Haitians tell you that the loa live "in Africa," or on "the island below the sea," or "beneath the water," or in a mythological city called La Ville-aux-Camps. The loa are believed to share this residing place with the spirits of certain categories of the dead. What goes on in the land of the loa is no man's knowledge and every man's conjecture. They say that a few privileged people have been able to go down "below the water" and return. 776 777 787

In the region of Gros Morne there is a legend of a woman named Madame Ste Ile who went under the water and returned after seven years. There is another widespread tale of a man near La Bai Moustique who, in full public view, walked into the bay and disappeared, and returned in a few hours bearing a cake in his hands—a gift from the loa below the water. And in the hills near Aux Cayes in the south a story is told about a loa named Général Clermeil, who drove up in a fine carriage and carried off a woman to his place below the water. 776 787

On certain occasions the loa come to pass the time among their "children" in Haiti. When a loa comes to the people he enters the body of one or another of them, or he enters many of them at the same time. In cult terminology, these people are his "horses." The loa mounts his horses, as

[1] [For footnote, see category 116, pp. 349-350.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

776 they say, and "rides" them. What the possessed persons do then depends
787 upon the personality and whim of the loa. Generally they take on the special personal characteristics of the loa. Their voices and manners change and their postures and attitudes undergo transfiguration. They may talk about the "island below the water," about community ancestors, about intimate affairs of the community, or about how things are going back in Africa. Sometimes they utter words or phrases recognized as "African language." And on occasion possessed persons talking *langage* are said to be speaking Greek, Arabic, Hebrew, or Spanish. At the moment of first impact, when the loa enter their heads, they stagger, jerk, and tremble, often falling on the ground. Then, soon afterward, their behavior begins to move in a groove of conventionalized activity.

[346] Most commonly the loa arrive during religious rituals or dances. They
[178] come by way of the *po'teau mitan*, the center pole which supports the roof
[182] of the peristyle. It is around this pole that the sacred vèvès, or flour drawings, are made. At the foot of the pole sacrifices are offered and libations are poured.

787 Yet possession may occur anywhere and at any time. The sound of a
793 certain drumbeat may be the signal for it, or a sudden fright, or an emo-
[533] tional crisis, or any situation to which possession has been conditioned. The houngan or the mambo may facilitate possession, control it, and terminate it. The cult priest is acutely sensitive to the conditions favorable to possession. He knows how to heighten emotional tension and how to soften it. A competent houngan "plays" his service as though it were a delicate instrument. He takes everything in, issues instructions to his servitors from time to time, orders the drum tempo increased or diminished, knows how to change pace. Sometimes he hovers in the background unobtrusively, encouraging the singing and dancing like a benevolent father. At other times he comes to the center of the activities and takes command. He becomes the focus of all eyes. His slightest action is watched with intensity. He may take the hand of one of the servitors, pirouette him about, and compel the loa to enter. When the servitor is "mounted," the houngan may conduct him through ritual activity. At the right moment the houngan may help the loa to leave.

776 The spectators who observe possession in others are usually aware of the
787 identity of the loa who has entered. When the ancient loa Damballa Wèdo comes in, his "horse" falls to the ground, wriggles like a snake, and makes what are considered to be snakelike sounds in his throat. For Damballa is the venerable deity identified with the rainbow, which in ancient Dahomean lore was thought to be the great serpent come out from the underworld to drink after a rain. When the loa Ogoun Chango enters,

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

his "horse" may trample in glowing coals, plunge his hands in boiling oil, 776 ●
or play with red-hot iron bars. For Ogoun Chango is a fire-eater—a deity 787
of the forge and of battle. The deity Legba is characterized as a limping old man. A "horse" possessed by Legba may cavort about on a kind of cane-crutch called a Legba stick. Each loa has his distinctive mark. As the Haitians say, "you learn about the loa by watching his horses."

In addition to having homes in Africa or below the water, most loa 776
have special residing places in Haiti, such as stones, caves, trees, waterfalls, 778
or springs. One may come across a boulder or a bamboo grove sacred to [782]
a certain loa, and food offerings are likely to be seen there. Many loa are identified with some specific variety of tree and will "inhabit" all such trees throughout the country. Loa Calbassie, for example, lives in the calabash tree, and Loa Général Brisé in the chardette tree. Offerings to [782]
these deities are set out underneath the tree or hung in its branches, and services may be held around the trunk.

Loa also live in the old Carib and Arawak celts which are found from time to time. These "loa stones," as they are called, are identified by their forms and their ability to pass certain tests. Some Haitians declare the stones must be able to "whistle," to perspire when blown upon, and to "talk." The loa stones ordinarily are passed on from one generation to another, in the hounfor and in the peasant hut alike. In this way the loa who inhabit them are inherited. Sometimes, but rarely, stones are sold; [432]
disposing of a loa stone requires an elaborate ceremony to guarantee that [782]
the seller will not be injured by the loa, who is likely to feel "wounded." In such a ceremony the loa is fed and placated and asked to go his way in peace. The loa stones are sometimes called "thunder stones," in the belief that they were hurled to earth by the deities Kebiou, Sobo, and Chango [171]
(all of whom had similar functions among the Arada and Yoruba peoples of West Africa). The stones are cared for by their owners with the greatest reverence.

Loa are acquired by individuals in various ways Many Haitians hold 776
that every infant is born with a *mait' tête*—a spirit who is "master of the head." In this light, no individual is without a loa, although the deity may never manifest interest in the individual by an act of possession. A man may acquire a loa in the course of his life, although in that event the original mait' tête must be retired from his head. The "inherited" loa are usually not the personal deities but the special protectors of the household or the hounfor and are known as "loa of the house" or "family loa."

Should a man acquire a new loa to replace the old as his mait' tête, he 776
must undergo a ceremony known as *lavé tête*—the "washing of the head." 789
The old loa is retired and sent away, leaving the field clear for the new

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

one. Sometimes a loa who is making life too hard for a devotee will be retired without a replacement. The "washing of the head" must be accompanied by ritual safeguards, and all possible circumstances must be taken into account by the officiating cult priest. There are many stories of people who became mentally deranged as a result of the removal of their loa from their heads.

The mait' tête must also be removed from the head of a person who dies. Should this not be done, the spirit of the deceased will go to reside "below the water" and may cause trouble for the family. This loa is usually transferred to a special jar as a temporary resting place, and later perhaps into the head of another member of the family.

Though the loa is a powerful ruling force in the life of the individual, the human "horse" has controls over his deity too. He may reproach or admonish his loa for bad behavior or for failing to protect him. He may expose the loa's irresponsibility in public through the use of songs in religious rites. And though the loa is frequently encouraged to "enter," steps may be taken to restrain him from possession. This is called *marré loa* —"tying the loa." A woman may "tie" her loa by fixing a hairpin in her hair in a special way. A man may do it by placing his hands in cold water.[3]

Nevertheless, the loa are always lurking in the background. They are a constant and dramatic element in the religious life of the people. They may sometimes be controlled by the houngan, but they are an authority stronger than the priesthood. They give advice, courage, consolation, and status to their followers. They add much to an otherwise hard and ungenerous environment and evoke remembrances of Africa from which the Haitians' ancestors were uprooted. They can also cause concern and anxiety; for the loa are not always benevolent, and they are frequently unpredictable.

Many of the loa are ancient deities, sib-founders and ancestors who loom out of a misty, half-forgotten past. Nananbouclou, Legba, and Ayida Wèdo have been known for many lifetimes in Dahomey. Chango, Ogoun, and Loko were old spirits in Nigeria before the first slave ships sailed from Africa to the New World. Their names and many others in present-day Haiti come from an ancient lore. They recall places, tribes, and old kingdoms from Senegal in northwestern Africa to the heart of the Congo. They are a bond which holds the people of Haiti to Africa. In the mountains people sometimes say, "Haiti is the child of Dahomey," or "Haiti is the child of Guinée." The gods divide their time between their Haitian and their African children.

Yet in some respects the Haitians' concept of their loa is no longer purely African. The African religious patterns have been infiltrated by the lore

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

of the Catholic Church and fused with old folk beliefs of Europe. In Dahomey, which was the wellspring for much of Haiti's culture, there was no supreme deity quite like the one introduced to the slaves by the missionaries. There was a pantheon of gods with Mawu and Lisa at the top. They were children of a common parent, Nananbuluku. None of these deities was strictly comparable to our idea of a supreme being. Nananbuluku survives in Haiti as Nananbouclou or Nananbélécou, one of many loa. Among the neighboring Yoruba the high god was Olorun. Like the Dahomean Mawu and Lisa, Olorun was quite remote from the lives of men. The gods who were invoked and placated were the several hundred *orisha* created by Olorun. The nearby Ashanti people had a simpler pantheon, with the sky god Nyame supreme among them.

In the present Haitian concept of the supernatural, God is at the very apex of the pantheon, though he is distinctly of another order. His power as the supreme source of all things is fully recognized. A Haitian song, associated with Vodoun ritual but of probable recent origin, goes:

> C'est Bondieu qui voyé moin, quand li vlé moin l'append. [Ex. 37]
>
> It is God who sent me, when he wants me he'll take me.

Another song, from the Guinée service, goes:

> Oh, Kitta, oh so'ti nan dlesu, li tout mouillé!
> Oh, nen point houngan passé Bondieu nan pays-ya! [Ex. 36]
>
> Oh, Kitta comes out of the water, he is dripping wet!
> Oh, there is no houngan in this country greater than God!

Although it is recognized, or at least stated, that God is a supreme force, God is not regarded as the entire supernatural force of the world. In many Vodoun services the houngan may invoke, as separate categories of the unseen, the loa, the dead, the *marassas* (twin spirits), and God. Haitians do not have a consistent schematized picture of the supernatural world. God comes first, but (as in West Africa) he is less immediate than the loa. He is identified with destiny; yet within the framework of that destiny man's lot can be bettered or worsened through dealings with the dead, the baka and loa-garos (demons and vampires), and the cult priests.

In many of the folk tales of Haiti, God appears as another character in a cast which may include as protagonists animals, loa, Christian saints, and ordinary men and women. One such tale is about a visit which all the dogs decided to pay to God. They started off through the woods together, but one of them was distracted by the smell of carrion. He left his friends for a brief time, found the carrion, and ate some of it. Then he hurriedly joined his companions again. Together they came to God's house and were admitted to the parlor, where they sat around making polite conver-

2: Courlander 2-6 (1927-1963) 1960 SV3 1963 SV3

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sation with Gol and one another. But after a while Gol caught the scent of the carrion which was still smeared on the nose of the dog who had eaten it. He sniffed the air several times to test the unpleasant odor. Misjudging it, he concluded that one of the dogs had befouled his parlor, and he demanded to know who had done this impolite thing. The dogs were deeply concerned that one of their party had desecrated Gol's house. They immediately began to run around smelling each other to determine who the culprit was. But they never found the evidence, because it was on a dog's nose. The dogs still, to this day, are trying to discover who committed a deed that never actually happened.

In some of the tales Gol competes in the real world with other supernatural and natural forces. One story tells how he was overcome by a Voodoun priest:

A houngan named Bocor Zandolite once held a great ritual service. People came from the whole countryside. It was a long service, scheduled to last for seven weeks. Chickens, goats, and bulls were sacrificed. The finest drummers in the country were drumming. Everyone danced, and the celebration went on day after day, night after night, without stopping. The noise was deafening. Gol heard it. It kept him from sleeping at night, and in the daytime he could not concentrate on his work. Finally, Gol decided he would have to put a stop to it. So he called St. John and instructed him to go down and order Bocor Zandolite to bring the service to an end. St. John went down and approached the gate of Bocor Zandolite's hounfor. Bocor Zandolite met him at the gate. He took St. John by the hand. St. John sang:

> Fatimonaire ouv'il hayt pou' mein passil!
> Guard, open the gate for me to pass!

And Bocor Zandolite replied by singing:

> Wa wa ilé bondja bondja!
> Bocor Zandolite wa wa ilé bondja bondja! [Ex. 38]

[This is supposed to represent the houngan talking *langage*.] Then he shook St. John's hands three times and pirouetted him around, first to the left and then to the right. Suddenly St. John staggered and began to talk *langage*. He grasped the center pole of the dance court and twirled round and round it. Then Bocor Zandolite gave him a lighted candle and a glass of water, and St. John spilled a bit of the water on the ground in honor of the loa who had entered his head.

When a week went by and St. John didn't come back, Gol became angry. The noise of the drumming and singing was getting worse. So he

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called St. Patrick and sent him down to stop the ceremony. St. Patrick approached the houmfor and sang:

> *Factionnaire ouvi! hayé pou' moin passé!*

And again Bozor Zandolite came to the gate and sang:

> Wa wa *lé* bendja bendja!
> Bozor Zandolite wa wa *lé* bendja bendja!

He took St. Patrick by the hands, pirouetted him around, and a loa came into St. Patrick's head, too.

Another week went by, and when St. Patrick didn't return, God sent St. Michael. The same thing happened to St. Michael. God then sent St. Anthony, and later he sent St. Peter. But when St. Peter didn't return, God became very angry indeed. He hadn't slept for weeks. So he decided to go down himself and put an end to the affair. He approached the houmfor singing "Factionnaire ouvi! hayé pou' moin passé!" And Bozor Zandolite replied as he had before. He took God by the hands to greet him. He shook hands downward three times, then he pirouetted God to the right and to the left. God suddenly staggered and reeled from one end of the habitation to the other. The drummers beat a special salute, and the singers sang loudly and clapped their hands, for God had a loa in his head.

This tale appears to relish the superiority of the loa over God. Yet there is no sense of sacrilege. Although the Haitian concept of God is that of a supreme force, and a source of good, the Christian deity also has some of the attributes of paramount gods in certain West African religious systems which make him less remote and even, on occasion, somewhat fallible. He figures in Haitian lore very much like the Ashanti sky god, Nyankonpon, who has dealings with animals and human beings and is sometimes outwitted by them. Although Nyankonpon has the power to dispense favors, justice, and punishment to mortals, he himself lives within, rather than superior to, a well-established physical system. His marvelous deeds are only slightly superior to those of other, lesser gods, or of sorcerers, or of the trickster Anansi. In fact, in one Ashanti tale Nyankonpon finds himself very much in the same situation as God in the Haitian tale, being forced to dance to the music of the trickster's drum.

The Christian saints, too, have been incorporated into the Haitian system, and they also have been syncretized with Vodoun elements. They have become identified with various loa according to their most obvious characteristics. St. Patrick, because he is always pictured with snakes, has become one with Dumballa and Ayida, who are also symbolized by snakes. Erzulie Frédo, the female loa characterized by purity, has become

2: Courlander 8-6 (1937-1968) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

one with the Holy Virgin. St. Jacques has become one with Ogoun, St. George with Linglessou, St. Anthony and St. Christopher with Legba, guardian of the highway, and St. Nicholas with Marassa Trois. In northern Haiti the word *ange* (from the French, *les anges*—the angels) sometimes is used synonymously with loa or mystère. As for the saints, they are sometimes identified with one loa, sometimes with another.

No one in Haiti knows all the loa. Some of them are so ancient as to be nearly forgotten. Others are spontaneous creations or revelations on the part of a possessed person. Some loa names may be the result of a devotee's seizing upon a word or phrase in a religious song and imparting to it the concept of a loa. Sometimes a word in a phrase of *langage* is taken to be a loa's name, and sometimes agglutinated Creole words become the name of a loa.

The possibility of frequent additions to the list of loa is heightened still further by the general illiteracy of the Haitian people and the lack of a stabilizing influence in the written word. The Creole language has marked regional differences. Furthermore, change of consonants or vowels is a commonplace occurrence, so that a single loa's name may have several forms. One may well wonder whether Aza, Adja, and Akadja were not originally a single individual. Nevertheless, in the Haitian scheme they are now different personalities.

There is one more complicating factor in identifying loa or compiling a comprehensive roster—the use of multiple names. In addition to the names by which they are generally known, many of the deities have a variety of nicknames. Some of these nicknames are in Creole, some appear to be of West African provenience. The deity Agwé, for example, is frequently called Coqui-nan-Mer—Coqui-in-the-Sea. A loa may have four, five, or even more such nicknames. Sometimes short forms are used. Damballa may be called Da, Sobo may be called So, Azaka may be called Za. In addition, some deities have "secret" names, which theoretically are known only to the priesthood and the inner circle of servitors. Multiple naming and the reservation of certain names for special occasions appear to have West African precedents.

In the naming of the loa no neat and methodical system is apparent at any point. The "surname," or what may be in some cases a generic designation, may appear first or last. One may hear Ogoun Chango or Chango Ogoun, *Général Brisé* or *Brisé Général*, Congo Savane or Savane Congo. (This is characteristic of everyday speech. A former president of Haiti, Nord Alexis, is often called Alexis Nord.) The "surname" can be a description of "tribal" or "national" affiliation, regional provenience, character and temperament, or an indication of function. Thus we find

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Boulicha Nago, or Boulicha of the Nagos; Èzilie Wèdo and Èzilie Doba, possibly from Wèdo and Doba in Dahomey; Tijean Piod Chèche (Tijean Dry Feet), a loa of bad character, "dry feet" signifying malevolence; and Legba Grand Chimin, or Legba of the Highway. 776 121 552

Identification of loa is often made difficult by the use of the generic or family title only. The term Nago covers all the loa associated with this "nation" (Nago Piment, Amine Nago, Boulicha Nago, etc.), but in a song or service any one of them is as likely as not to be referred to simply as Nago, with no clue to his exact identity. Each listener takes the name to designate the Nago loa with whom he is most familiar, unless possession occurs and the loa is otherwise identified by the behavior of his "horse." 776 552

On the whole, it appears that there was in the beginning a strong awareness of regional origins. There are names among the cult pantheons which indicate Senegal, Dahomey, Nigeria, Congo, and Angola origins. Many loa bear the names of African towns. Among the Ogoun family of loa, for example, are such regional designations as Badagry and Jèkkè, the first being a town in Nigeria and the second in Dahomey. It is clear that a detailed geographical knowledge of certain West African regions would considerably illuminate a study of Haitian loa. 776 174 552

Local shrines, too, doubtless enter into the naming system. Badagry is the name of a town in Nigeria, and it is also a Dahomean word designating the structure in which young men used to be circumcised and initiated into the secrets of warriors. In this particular light, the loa Ogoun Badagry might be regarded as the deity of that particular ritual center. 346 174 776 552

In discussing the complicated relationship of their loa, Haitians sometimes say: "There are seven of everything. There are seven Marassas, seven Ogouns, seven Èzilies. There are seven brothers and sisters in every family of loa." Or they say something such as: "There is only one Legba, but there are seven. There is only one Ogoun, but he has many moods and names. There is only one Èzilie, but she has seven faces." This concept is also held by the Arara (Arada) cult of Cuba. It is interesting to note the extent to which duplications and new generations of loa have been set up into family households in the most literal sense. Those families are still growing. In the Gèdé family I have counted more than thirty seemingly distinct individuals (see Appendix I); Herskovits mentions a number of others, and still more have been cited by other writers on the subject. When I pointed out to some Haitians that the Gèdé family numbered far more than seven individuals, they were unable to account for the situation. Other Haitians took the vast army of Gèdés as a matter of course. The Ogoun family, too, is large and growing. Twenty-seven Ogouns are listed in the compilation in Appendix I. Still more have been recorded elsewhere. 776 801

Z A [See p. 319 ff., Category 116. -- Analyst]

S: Courlander B-4 (1937-1938) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Another factor that may explain some of the confusion over which rites a loa is attached to is the concept of the *escorte*, a kind of army or association of loa which may include deities of different nations. In discussing the loa Wanilé, for example, one Haitian noted:

"Wanilé is neither Rada nor Dahomé, but Pétro. She is an escorte, and she walks with Dahomé. In the escorte, Dahomé and Pétro walk together. A big loa—a loa with a big name—has many other loa who walk with him. In an escorte there are twenty-one in all. The escorte has a chief, and under the chief there are soldiers—that is, smaller loa who must do what the chief says.

"For example, a man goes to a houngan and gets him to send a strong loa against you to hurt you in some way—to make you sick or lose your crop. Your own loa may be a strong one, but the houngan has sent a still stronger one against you, and so your own loa can't really protect you. So he will go away and send in his place one of his escorte. This smaller loa is not as strong perhaps as the one he is replacing, but he is stronger in that the houngan did not calculate on him. He has certain abilities which he can use to help you. And it isn't suspected that he is your protector. So in this way he is in a better position than your own loa.

"The smaller loa go together in an escorte. Many people may have a certain loa, and he is busy all the time. If someone needs him and he can't go, he will send one of his escorte, the next one below him.

"If you are made sick by a loa, there are so many in his escorte you don't know which one made you sick, so you can't do anything about it. It is difficult sometimes to identify the loa that is hurting you. You really have to dig to find out who he is. You have to give a *mangé*. There is a big ceremony, and you have to be bought back from the loa. But some loa who are persecuting you won't sell you back. They won't go away. Rather than leave you alone they would see you die. Perhaps the person who sent this loa against you sent him to kill. If your own loa can't protect you he will send one of his escorte to do it. *Gainyain connain pasé connain* [There is knowledge that surpasses knowledge]. *Si fer pas coupé fer, machoquette pas gainyain travaille* [If iron didn't cut iron, the blacksmith would have no work to do]."

This concept of the escorte, some of whose members may be Rada and some Pétro, helps to explain why certain deities are identified with rites of different "nations." For the Haitian himself it provides a way of accounting for "families" that have grown beyond the ritual number seven. Yet there are some Haitians who declare that every member of an escorte is simply a different manifestation of a single deity.

The loa, like the rites, vary somewhat according to region and to the

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

The loa, like the rites, vary somewhat according to region and to the practices of the individual cult priests. New concepts spring up, and they thrive in one locality while remaining unheard of in another. Yet many new concepts travel from hounfor to hounfor. As in the old days in Dahomey, the Vodoun priests sometimes make journeys to visit other cult centers. At one service near Jacmel, on the south coast, I met a houngan from Dondon in the far north and heard him discuss with the local cult chief the appropriate behavior of a loa who had mounted a servitor. The Dondon houngan declared that in the north the loa conducted himself differently. The Jacmel houngan parried with the remark that a loa's behavior is consistent. He said there were only two possibilities concerning the possession as described by the cult chief from Dondon: either the loa had been mistakenly identified, or another deity had attempted to impersonate him. Such exchanges hasten the spread of developing theology from one area to another. They also raise contradictions which remain forever insoluble.

That confusions and contradictions are not merely of Haitian making is made clear by Herskovits' voluminous study of the pantheons of Dahomey.[3] Each of the great cults—the sky cult, the earth cult, and the thunder cult—has its own explanations of the origins and functions of the deities; and even within one cult there are contradicting explanations. The Haitians have taken over, built upon, and diverged from a Dahomean system that contained its own contradictions. In adding to it the system of the Yoruba, with its parallelisms and similarities, they have made the whole picture more complex than ever.

3 [Herskovits, Dahomey. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. — Analyst]

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1958) 1960 SV3-Haiti SV3

[P 30]

4. Death Rites

775 776 The community of the Haitian is one that extends far beyond his immediate family and his village, for it takes in not only the various loa but multitudinous dead relatives and ancestors. Some Haitians believe that the dead live in close proximity to the loa, in a place called "Under the Water." Others hold that the dead have no special residing place. But it is the view of many that a dead person may eventually become a loa in his own right. How this happens is not entirely clear. Under certain circumstances the spirits of the newly dead do not go quietly on their way but [969] remain behind to annoy and harass the living. They must be buried with suitable ritual and properly placated throughout the years; otherwise their activities and influences will be unpredictable. Many of them, under special conditions, become almost indistinguishable from loa. And a few, in the course of time, become minor deities in the pantheons. The main loa of the Pétro cult, Dan Pétro, formerly was believed by some Haitians to be a houngan of the eighteenth century who had been buried without having [171] his own loa removed from his head. There are African precedents for deified ancestors' becoming deities. Indeed, some of the great *vodowns* and *orisha* of the Dahomean and Yoruban pantheons in West Africa are believed to be deified clan ancestors or great kings.

775 777 Whether they achieve the status of loa or not, the spirits of the dead must forever be coped with. This Haitian view of the dead is essentially that held in many parts of West Africa. Speaking of West African belief in general, Maurice Delafosse noted:

> After a creature dies, only his spirit remains. It survives with the same character, the same personality, affections and hatreds as during his lifetime, but it can no longer command the vital breath. It becomes all the more powerful on escaping from the confines of its material envelope, since it no longer needs to direct and control the functions of the body, and is not itself regulated by the vital breath. . . . These spirits are all of the same nature. They are invisible but can see and judge everything that happens. They are easily angered and mete out severe punishment to anyone

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

769 845 The dead twins are offered food in special earthen or gourd bowls. In any market place where pottery is sold you will find the joined marassa double or triple bowls. The annual rites for the marassas are routine, but once every five years there is a *grande service* for them.

It is not merely the twins of one's immediate family that are served, but twins—that is, the spirit of twins—in general. They are supplicated even when a family knows of no incidence of twins. In part, this precaution is a recognition that there may have been twins among ancestors long dead and forgotten. It is also recognition of a twin spirit as a separate force affecting all people. The twin spirit has been personified in the loa named Marassa. The child born after twins is believed by many Haitians to be even "stronger" and more to be placated than twins themselves. He is known as a *doçu* if a boy, *doça* if a girl. Their patron loa are known as [776] Marassa Doçu and Marassa Doça. The patron loa of triplets is Marassa Trois. Triplets are regarded as a special category of twins. Some Haitians, in fact, believe that the twins are merely a partial manifestation of the group of three, which is completed on the birth of the doçu or doça. In the marassa feast, triplets are served in the triple clover-leaf bowl, as are twins in combination with their doçu or doça. It is also believed by some that the child born before twins is "weak" both in physical vitality and psychic powers, because his strength has been sapped by the marassas who have followed him.

776 778 768 [184] For some Haitians the loa Marassa is the most potent of forces to be placated at the time of death. They hold that he is only incidentally the patron of twins and triplets. His significance is said to lie in the fact that he is the spirit of the first of all human children who died. And as the child precedes the man, Marassa is the first and foremost of all loa. When a service is held for Marassa, he is given foods and beverages that all children love.

769 Rites for the dead continue endlessly for the living. Before a child is witness to a death in his own family he may observe many rituals for the family ancestors, twins, and the unknown dead. For those who are a part of Vodoun, the cycle is a perpetual one in an endless system of integration and continuity.

795 776 764 Special rites are held to remove the loa from the head of a deceased person. It is believed that the spirit of a person who has not had his loa removed will be restive and perhaps will even cause difficulties for his family and his descendants. And there is also the matter of the loa's welfare. The *mait' tête* is, in a sense, a captive in the head of the person who has died. The head is his home. But should the corpse be taken to the graveyard without the loa's having been removed, the loa would refuse to be buried

with the corpse. He wants nothing to do with the domain of the Gèdés. 775
He liberates himself from the corpse at the cemetery and retires "below the 776
water." He is no longer a friend and benefactor of the family. He cannot 764
be inherited by the children of the deceased. Such controls as the deceased once exercised over him are dissipated. He may, in fact, be angered at the treatment he has received and return only to harass the family. Thus, if a family fails to have the mait' tête of one of its members properly removed at death, it may be persecuted afterward by the "spirit" of the dead ancestor and the loa as well.

The rite of dispossessing a deceased person of his loa is called *déssounin*, 764
or *déssouné*. The essence of it is the transference of the mait' tête from the 776
head of the dead person into a special receptacle, an earthen jar called a *gavi* or *pot tête*. Sometimes it is transferred to the head of a child in the family, though usually this comes later.

There have been many descriptions of this ritual, and they seem to show that, though the tradition is a constant one, the specific patterns of the services are variable. Different regions, different cult centers, and different houngans conduct the rites in different ways.

Eugene Aubin wrote, for example:

On the day of death, the deceased is placed standing up; the *papalói* [houngan] [793]
conducts the rites which retire the *mystère* [loa] from the body and introduce it into a jar, which is then carefully sealed. On the ninth day, after the feast for the [765]
dead, the jar is broken and liberty given to the *loa*.[§]

Melville Herskovits reported:

If the dead person was a Vodun priest or otherwise had strong consciousness, steps [766]
are taken . . . "to remove the *loa* from his head" so that his soul will not go under [775]
the water, for, as has been explained, such souls are held to be powerful spirits which may cause the family much harm if, after a time, an expensive and troublesome ceremony is not performed to bring them out and lodge them in a jar. . . . The *houngan* [793]
stands in place and calls the name of the dead. He puts some of the hair of the dead in the jar or in a calabash, into which the *loa* is supposed to go, and, unless another member of the family, nominated to receive the consciousness of the dead, is present, the jar or calabash is sealed until these spirits can be "given" to a successor.[‡]

As Herskovits understands it, it is the "soul" of the dead person that 114
would go to live "under the water," rather than the loa. This would appear 764
to be a fusion of two separate elements—the wandering, troublesome 775
"spirit" of a dead person and the mait' tête who retires "under the water." 776
Actually, Haitians are not always consistent in their explanations of what happens, or of the difference between loa and souls. On the houngfor altar there may be some gavis that contain "souls" or "spirits" and others that contain loa; though the distinction is readily appreciated, Haitians are

§ [translated from The French of Aubin, En Haïti, P. 212
cf. P. 350, category 116. Analyst]
‡ [Herskovits, Life in a Haitian Valley, pp. 213-214
cf. P. 350, category 116. -- Analyst]

764 sometimes hard put to explain the similarity of treatment of these two
795 categories.
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Another investigator, Alfred Métraux, has provided a vivid description
764 given by a Haitian of a ceremony of removing the loa. In this instance
796 the corpse was not placed in an upright position as described by Aubin but was laid on a specially prepared bed. Attending the body were the houngan, his hounsi, and a child of the dead man who was to receive the liberated loa.

> The child . . . grasps in his hand a black-and-white or a white cock. On the ground in front of the bed they arrange a fine white napkin. On top of it there are syrup, candles . . . , *tafia*, and other things. After they have finished sprinkling water, clapping their hands, singing to the *loa*, they all go around the bed of the dead person. The child, with the cock in his hand, makes the rounds with the *houngan*. They wave the rooster, they wave it back and forth two, three, four, five, six times over the dead person's head. During this time all those present get possessed by the *loa*, sing, clap their hands. The dead person's bed begins to creak. The *houngan* climbs
[793] on the bed and grabs the dead person's two arms. . . . He pulls him to a sitting position. The child (into whose head the *loa* is to be transferred) strikes the chicken three times on the head of the dead person. He lets go the chicken, and the chicken flies up and starts to run all around the room, smashing pots and vessels. They grab the chicken and let it go in the air three times, shouting: *Ai bobo loa li!* Immediately the *loa* goes into the head of the dead person's child.[1]

764 The houngan cited by Métraux is described as pulling the corpse to a
796 sitting position, but more commonly it is believed that the houngan has
793 the power to make the body sit up by itself. A man from Jérémie explained it this way:

> "The body is laid out on a mat. The houngan shakes his asson over the dead man, and talks to the loa in the head. He calls the loa's name: 'Changogolo! Changogolo! Changogolo!' He calls, calls, calls. He doesn't call the dead man's name, he calls the mait' tête. 'Changogolo! Changogolo! Get up! Wake up! Sit up!' The corpse sits up. It even talks. Then the houngan says, 'Lie down!' And the corpse lies down. But it is not the dead man who sits up. The dead man is dead. It is the mait' tête who has forced the body to sit up. After this the houngan takes the loa from the head and puts it in a pot tête. Then the body can be buried. And afterward the loa can be put in the head of someone else or freed. Or the houngan may keep the loa in the pot tête and sell it to someone who needs a loa to work for him. If they buried the corpse without a *désounain*, the loa would resent it and go away below the water."

764 George Eaton Simpson has written an excellent description of a cere-
796 mony for removal of the loa from the head of a deceased houngan.[2] The
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[1] [Hall and others, Haitian Creole, American Anthropological Association, Memoir No. 64, pp. 188-189. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[2] [Simpson, "Four Haitian Ceremonies" Journal of American Folklore, April-June, 1946, pp. 155-162. Cf. p. 350, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]

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rites took place in the region of Plaisance in northern Haiti. Such a ceremony, Simpson notes, may be attended by several houngans other than the Vodoun priest who is officially in charge. They "share the obligation and pleasure of conducting this service for their colleague, their former rival, and perhaps their former enemy." In a room of the deceased houngan's house is the body, attended by the family, relatives, close friends, and the officiating houngan and his assistants.

. . . Near the body, which is covered by a sheet, are placed a jug and a new canari (a large earthen jar). The officiating houngan makes the sign of the cross, mumbles a few ritual formulas, and taking a spoon puts some "manger les morts" (special food for the dead) in the canari: plantains, yams, bananas, tairauts, sweet potatoes, corn meal, roasted corn, bread, cakes, rice, millet, meat, chicken, pistachio, chopped coconut, and other kinds of food. He then adds some water and stirs this mixture. . . . The other houngans perform the same rite. The family, friends, and others in the room imitate the acts of the houngans with the green branches which they hold in their hands. In a grave voice and with solemn gestures the officiant then appeals to the loas with songs and prayers. He invites them to come to the aid of their faithful servant, to protect him in the other world as they have protected him in this world. Following the songs and prayers the leader pronounces these words:

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"Innocent! A good man has left us!
The mother of the children weeps.
Weep, console yourselves.
Bon Accolon, he was here.
He died.
Master Pierre Jean-Baptiste, he was here.
He died.
General Baptiste, he was here.
He died.
Marius who was left,
He died.
But Brother Joseph survives,
We will cry, we will console ourselves."[9]

The weeping and the cries redouble, but the *pèe-savanne* [pèl' savanne] and the houngan carry on. In the other room the *pèe-savanne* solemnly intones:

"I have only one soul
Which must be saved.
By the eternal flame,
I must preserve it."[10]

The officiating houngan speaks directly to the dead man: "Bon Marius, here is a canari that your heirs have especially prepared for you so that in the future you will not have any trouble and demand other sacrifices of them. You others, the dead, are always unmanageable. Because you have peace you forget that the times are hard and that on this earth we underfortunate men are crushed by suffering. Leave your family in peace after this service, Bon Marius. Do not torment them, and do not send illnesses to their children or misery to their older people. You were always a good

[9] [translated by Courlander from Simpson's Creole text, ibid., p. 156. The preceding paragraph is from p. 155. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[10] [translated by Courlander from The Creole of Simpson's text. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

764 father when you were living. Continue to protect your family after death. If you
766 need other services give abundantly to your heirs in order to obtain satisfaction. Oh,
793 good father, good servant, good parent, good friend! Good-bye! Do not forget us as
776 we shall not forget you."[11] A
[539]

Then the houngan goes to the canarie, strikes it three times with a piece of palm bark, and chants an invocation to the loa and to God, while members of the family dance where they stand, shaking the green branches they hold. There follows an invocation to twins. After a number of loa [787] have "entered" the service, as manifested by possessions, the houngan undertakes to find out how death came to the deceased man. An assistant brings the sacred divining shells[12] A of the dead man, and the officiating houngan throws them on the floor, pours tafia three times, and lights a candle. The shells are then consulted. Three times he goes through the procedure of casting the shells and consulting them. Later he announces that "the death of Bosu Marius is not the death of an ordinary man, that [795] he is now resting in La Ville-au-Camp (capital of the loas which is 'under the water'), and that the loas will continue to protect his descendants provided that they show themselves worthy of protection."[13] A There is more singing and ritual, and then the canarie is covered. The [illegible] from the head of Marius has found a temporary resting place. A little later in the service "the houngan raises the canari as high as possible, almost as high as his face, as he repeats the last line: 'Where may I find refuge?' With a quick movement the canari is shattered. The food is scattered, the loas are satisfied, and the crowd breaks into disorderly flight. . . ."[14] A A few hours later the body of the deceased is buried.

764 It is obvious that these rituals vary a good deal according to regional
184 practices and according to the importance of the persons for whom they
776 are conducted. Furthermore, there is a good deal of difference of opinion among Haitians as to what actually takes place when the malt' tête is taken from the head of the deceased man.

793 Although the prêt' savane (bush priest) is subsidiary to the houngan at
764 death rites, his is nevertheless a conspicuous presence. He may begin the
184 services with prayers for the dead, in which the family joins, while the houngan remains in the background. Later, the houngan takes over. In certain regions, however, the prêt' savane is dispensed with altogether, his function being absorbed by the houngan.

764 As reported by Herskovits, the wake for the dead is one of the most important ceremonies in the death rites. He says:

[766] Wakes are held for all dead, even for very young children if they have been baptized, though if a baby dies before baptism, it is buried without ceremony in a little box in the courtyard of the habitation. . . . The wife and the children either say

11 A [This and the preceding paragraph are from Simpson, Op. Cit., P. 156. Cf. P. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]
12 A [For footnote, see Category 116, P. 350. -- Analyst]
13 A [Simpson, Op. Cit. P. 159. Cf. P. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]
14 A [Ibid., P. 161. Cf. P. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

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with the corpse or are nearby with friends. The one who bathed the corpse remains constantly at its side as members of the family come and go, since the body must never be alone.[15] 764

But outside the house another kind of activity goes on. There the young people usually gather to sing gay songs, to play games, and to listen to stories. A professional storyteller, or a nonprofessional of repute, is called upon to entertain the children. He may give an entire night to Bouki and Malice stories, or to *contes* with interspersed songs in which the audience participates. Special singing games, stick games, and card games are played. But the drums are silent, both in the dead person's house and in the countryside at large. Rhythms for the game songs are provided by hand-clapping, or by vocal sounds which simulate percussion instruments. 764 525 53

Burial ceremonies vary according to local tradition and the status of the deceased person. Near the little fishing village of Petit Goave in southwestern Haiti, I witnessed a funeral cortege which might have been seen almost anywhere in the country. It was led by the widow of the dead man. She rode on a white horse, followed by four men carrying the dead body on a litter made of plain planks. There was no coffin, the body being covered only by its white shroud.[16] Behind the corpse plodded a group of twelve or fifteen peasants, friends and relatives of the dead man. Some of them had just come in from the fields and still carried their machetes in their hands. Others carried short *cocomacaque* sticks, which are believed useful for warding off baka and other demons who lurk along the path of the traveler. 764 [184]

The woman on the horse lamented loudly. When she came to where other peasants stood respectfully at the road's edge, she stopped her horse and faced them, raising her voice to an anguished pitch, calling on them to take note of her bereavement and of the fine virtues of the dead man. Some of the spectators whom she addressed, standing with their hats in hand, nodded and tried to say consoling words, such as "Oui Maman, li grand moune" (Yes, Mama, he was a fine man), or "Quand Bondieu vlé ou li prend" (When God wants you he takes you). A market woman with a load on her head suddenly became possessed by a loa as the cortege passed her. This seemed to increase the anguish of the widow, who lamented with increased vigor.

The four men carrying the corpse sometimes moved in a zigzag course, first to one side of the road, then to the other. When the procession came to a crossroad it stopped momentarily. The houngan, scarcely distinguishable from the other peasants in blue denim, came forward and stood in the center of the crossroads shaking his tiny hand bell and calling upon Maît' Kalfu (Master of the Crossroads) to grant safe passage. While he [193] [196]

[15] [Herskovits, op. cit., p. 208. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.—Analyst]
[16] [For footnote, see Category 116, p. 350.—Analyst]

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769 796 787 Then, faintly, came the broken voice of an old woman who was crying. The houngan said her children were waiting to see her, and asked her to enter. Moyise had been dead many generations already, but she was still crying over the circumstances of her death, and because she had left her children behind her. The houngan, speaking gently, asked her to try to stop crying because her children were waiting. Little by little she controlled herself. She greeted them all and talked with each member of the family in turn. She showed a special interest in the women and children and was concerned about family problems.

After Moyise went away, Docile, Moyise' daughter, came. She greeted them all and then complained that when she had died she had been buried in a grave near that of a thief; now she wished for her body to be moved. Alixe, on whose place the grave was situated, promised to take care of the matter, and Docile became placated. Her voice faded away. Inside the *cord*, the houngan talked *langage* and rang his bell.

After Docile came Joseph and his son Jouglesu. Joseph and Jouglesu timed their entrance badly and came in together, both talking at once. The houngan tried to straighten out the situation, and for a moment the three of them were conversing simultaneously. Then Jouglesu withdrew and returned when his father was through. After Jouglesu came still later generations, represented by Ti Perci and her children, Na and Bernicia. Bernicia came crying bitterly about something. The houngan asked her to stop, because he could not bear to hear women crying. Everyone laughed, and Bernicia controlled herself.

Then Dambulla Wèdo, the ancient loa, came, speaking with an aged and broken voice. Feebly he sang his song in "African" language:

[116] [539]

Ago! Dambulla Wèdo!
Oh Dambulla Wèdo kiss kiss!
Oh Dambulla Wèdo kiss kiss!
Oh ha ha ha Dambulla Wèdo kiss kiss!
Oh Dambulla Wèdo kiss kiss! [Ex. 39]

[116] Later, Dambulla sang again, calling on Legba to act as witness to his words:

[539]

Ago! Ardiboa Legba oh ê!
Oh Dambulla Wèdo é kôlé mesyou!
Oh guinyain jou' yo changé mein li kôlé mesyou!
Oh Dambulla Wèdo é kôlé mesyou!
Oh Apido Wèdo é kôlé mesyou!
Oh guinyain jou' pou' changé mein li kôlé mesyou! [Ex. 40]

Ago! Ardiboa Legba oh ê!
Oh, Dambulla Wèdo é, kôlé mesyou!

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Oh, a day will come when they will remember me here, *kèlé manyan!*
Oh, Dumballa Wèdo *é, kèlé manyan.*
Oh, Ayida Wèdo *é, kèlé manyan!*
Oh, a day will come for you to remember me here, *kèlé manyan!*

During the evening about twenty loa and ancestors came into the *cord* to talk. When the last had finished speaking the hills were already light, and the service was over.

Service for Ezilie Freda and St. Jacques Majeur

This service took place not in the open but under a tonnelle surrounded by four walls, adjoining the hounfor of Alexis Stephan on the west fringes of Port-au-Prince. Separate from the hounfor and dance court was a shrine to the "dead" loa Gèdé Nimbo. The shrine was a small shed open on one side. Within, lighted by flickering oil lamps, was a life-size effigy of Gèdé, a scarecrow-like figure dressed in the loa's traditional attire—black tail coat and trousers, and a tall opera hat. On the otherwise blank face of the figure were smoked glasses with white rims.

The dancing was progressing under the supervision of the houngan's adjutant, the laplace. He wandered among the drummers and dancers, encouraged the singing, and issued orders here and there. No one seemed to take him very seriously. There was a good deal of joking, and the gathering seemed very much like an old-fashioned family reunion. There were perhaps a hundred dancers and spectators—friends, relatives, and devotees of Stephan's hounfor. Everyone was watching with affection an old woman who could not be restrained from dancing. She executed old classical steps and postures with a skill that called for running comment all around her. As each piece came to an end someone would step up to her and say something like: "Woy, Manman, main ou pasé mwé!" (Oh, Mother, you are better than me!). Then they would attempt to get her to sit down again, but she would only shake them off and urge the drummers to get going if they were not too tired.

Eventually, the houngan, Stephan, made a casual entrance through the door of his adjoining hounfor. He held the usual ritual rattle and bell in his hand, and sauntered around to chat with his friends.

Gradually, almost imperceptibly, the dancing became more serious. Soon, only the hounsi, the female servitors, were dancing. The drums played a salute to Legba, the first loa to be called upon in a Vodoun service. For it is Legba who opens all gates and all highways, and who paves the way for communication with other deities. Though he is not the greatest of the loa, he is one of the most ancient. The houngan spilled water on the ground as a libation, and the dancing continued.

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796 Then a well-dressed young man entered, and the drummers swiftly
793 changed to the salute reserved for guests of distinction. The hounsi sang,
[594] "Président passe là, l'ap monté au gouvernment!" and waved paper flags
[702] and kerchiefs. The young man was a distant relative of Stephan's; he also was a houngan.

After a while Stephan brought from his hounfor a second asson, or ritual rattle, and another small hand bell, both of which he handed to the
[916] young man. He was extending the courtesy of his hounfor, sharing his instruments of authority and religious power with his fellow houngan. Then followed an exhibition between the two houngans that was half duel and half ballet. They stood face to face, each of them holding the asson in one hand and the tiny bell in the other. Stephan was "testing" the young houngan for the edification of all present. Each tiny move made by Stephan was duplicated simultaneously by his guest, as though he were a mirrored reflection.

Every posture Stephan made was duplicated instantly by his guest. The assons and the bells were agitated constantly. The rattle in the young man's hand did precisely what Stephan's did. The two men looked into each other's eyes with intensity, as though this bound their movements together and unified them. When Stephan twisted to the left, the other houngan twisted to the right. Every contortion of the young man was an exact replica of Stephan's movements. The two assons rattled out the same rhythms and the same signals; so did the bells. The backdrop for this "test" was provided by the drummers. The faces of the two men broke into a sweat from the intense nervous effort. At last it came to an end. A woman came forward and wiped their faces with a colored kerchief. The "testing" ceremony was over. The visiting houngan had been proved.

796 Stephan then made a ritual vèvè, or maize-flour ritual drawing on the
793 ground. Afterward there was more singing and dancing by the hounsi.
787 They sang several songs for Ezilie Frèdà, the "pure" loa. And Alexis
[532] Stephan went into a trance. It was unexpected. The servitors had not
794 prepared for it. In this emergency the visiting houngan took over. He
[776] seemed a little anxious. He was unfamiliar with the particular psychological factors at play in this particular hounfor. He was not certain of the character of Stephan's possession. But he took over grimly. The houngfrèsen, an older woman, stepped forward to help. While the young houngan wielded the asson and bell, the woman issued instructions. Stephan, his head hanging back, his eyes closed, was supported by two of the hounsi. Other servitors hurriedly brought out a white sheet and spread it on the ground. A chair and a table were set upon the sheet, and Stephan was placed in the chair, where he now sat with his head hanging limply on his chest.

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Stephan had been mounted by Ezilie Fréda, the deity of whiteness and purity. That was why he was protected from the earth by the white sheet beneath him. While the drums continued to beat, the hounsi placed upon the table a bottle of wine, a clean glass, and a white plate with boiled maize meal, topped by a whole egg. Then they held over Stephan—who had become, for the time being, Ezilie—a second white sheet. The possessed houngan began to bend forward and back with great rapidity, toward the surface of the table and back to an upright position, his arms hanging quietly downward. The hounsi fluttered the covering sheet in such a way that the spectators could not see what was going on beneath it. In less than a minute, Stephan's movements ceased. The sheet was removed. Stephan sat limply, talking *langage*. In the white dish only the broken shells of the egg and a small portion of the meal remained. Some of the wine was gone from the upright bottle. The glass still had a little wine in the bottom. Ezilie had accepted the sacrifice. Not once had Stephan's hands changed from their hanging position or approached the table. The eggshells themselves were clean, but a tiny trickle of liquid yolk ran from the corner of Stephan's mouth. The visiting houngan rattled his asson before Stephan, who arose wearily, with the help of the hounsi, and followed him through the door into the hounfor.

Again there was dancing, and a little while later Stephan emerged from the hounfor in a bizarre military costume of red velvet, wearing black glasses, a blue military cap with a red feather, and a sword. He was almost as weird as the effigy of Gôlé that stood outside. The houngan had now become St. Jacques Majeur, or Ogoun, the loa of war and the forge. His personality had undergone a dramatic change. Strictly speaking, Stephan was not in a trance as he had been a little earlier. He was in control of his movements, which were completely conscious, and yet he was certainly not in a "normal" state of mind. Previously Stephan had been in a state of possession; now, one might say, he was in a state of obsession. He had identified himself with St. Jacques. He strode and swaggered like St. Jacques. His bearing was regal, military, and awesome. His costume should have seemed funny, like similar costumes seen during Mardi Gras days, but instead it was unworldly and impressive.

He carried a rum bottle in his hand, and he moved through the gathering making people drink from it. Those who drank from the bottle were sharing with St. Jacques. Stephan poured more rum into an iron pot on the ground and set it afire. The hounsi kanzo, the servitors of the higher order who had been through the fire ordeal, came forward and washed their hands and arms with the burning rum, so that at times their whole arms were aflame, until they quickly snuffed the fire out. Some of the hounsi brought their children forward and washed their arms in the burn-

796 ing rum also, as a foretaste of the kanzo rites they might one day go
787 through.
793 There was dancing again for others besides the hounsi. The tension had
[794] passed. The ceremony was over, and the rest of the night was simply for pleasure.

Gèdé Nimbo, the "Dead" Loa

796 Gèdé Nimbo, also known as Baron Samedi, is one of the most powerful deities of the Haitian pantheon. He guards the cemetery and protects the graves, especially those of children. But Gèdé Nimbo is not simply another loa, he is a personification of death. Like death, he is given to whim. He is an intruder. He forces his way into services being held for other deities, behaves badly, and has to be wheedled to depart. He indulges in ribald humor when the mood strikes him, and the most solemn occasions are likely to be disturbed by his pranks. Gèdé Nimbo can be formidable when aroused, as he can be gentle and forbearing when it suits him.

Gèdé is always dressed in black, usually with a tail coat and top hat. He is always represented in this attire in the shrines where effigies of him are to be found. Elsie Clews Parsons, a number of years ago, reported this Haitian description of Gèdé:

> He is a *grande diable*. He makes all kinds of motions to make you laugh, but you must not laugh at him, for if you do he makes you "stop laughing" . . . Anything you touch, he takes and never returns, and you have to give him more and more. He smokes cigarettes, not cigars. He wears a coat and a hat, and carries a stick. He can make himself short or . . . as tall as a mast.[8]

The kind of motions Gèdé makes would in certain other cultures be regarded as obscenities. In Haiti they are merely public violations of social restraints and taboos, things no Haitian would think of doing in public view. But Gèdé, the loa of the graveyard, has special prerogatives. He does not fear criticism. He flouts propriety at will, he embarrasses, provokes, and insults with impunity.

796 At a Nago ceremony which I witnessed near Port-au-Prince, the stronghold of the Gèdé cult, Gèdé Nimbo entered with such gusto that he virtu-
787 ally made a shambles of the service. The first person to be mounted by the
796 loa was the laplace, the houngan's understudy. He stiffened, twisted, jerked, and thrashed about. As the more violent phase of his possession wore off, he began to make lascivious loin movements, as though copulating with the center post. Afterward, he moved about, shaking hands and greeting various persons with insulting remarks calculated to make others laugh at the indignities. Stopping before a distinguished-looking spectator, Gèdé made a few loin movements in his direction. Grasping another man by the hands, he greeted him vigorously and inquired whether it was

[8] [Parsons, Spirit Cult in Haiti. Cf. p. 351 Gédé—Baron]

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his *zozo* (penis) to which his glasses were affixed. As the dance progressed, the possessions came rapidly. The possessed persons, men and women alike, leaped about the tonnelle, mimicking copulation. They broke drinking glasses on the ground, threw themselves upon the drummers, and careened and crashed into spectators and dancers. In the course of the service there were nearly twenty possessions—all of them noteworthy for their portrayal of Gèdé Nimbe as a loa who has contempt for proprieties. For he is the spirit of the cemetery, the one who laughs last and best. 796 787 796

Near the mountain town of Kenskoff I saw another service for Gèdé, which showed a different aspect of the loa of the graveyard. It took place inside the hut of a rural houngan, who was conducting the affair for his own immediate family and a few close friends. The hut itself was small. Its single room had been partitioned into two by hanging a sheet in the middle. On one side of the sheet a young child was lying on a mat next to the carefully stored Arada drums. On the other side the ceremony was taking place. Great bouquets of red flowers were arranged in a corner; above them hung a colored lithograph of the Christ child; below, on the floor, was a crude oil lamp with a floating wick. The floor area was no more than seven feet square, but at least twelve persons were crowded there, and others clustered in the doorway. Ritual flags leaned against the wall, one of red silk with a gold fringe, another of white silk with blue polka dots. A tiny space remained in the center of the floor for the houngan, whose "possession" by Gèdé was the feature of the service. [793]

The houngan was dressed in a black stovepipe hat, a blue blouse with white polka dots, and a black skirt over black trousers. In his hand he carried a walking stick. He smoked a pipe constantly, a variation of the customary cigarette. In the tiny space in the center of the room, the houngan—or, more properly, Gèdé Nimbo—danced. The houngan's personality had changed—his voice, his posture, all his mannerisms. He spoke only through his nose, for that is the way Gèdé talks, as though he had a cleft palate. 796 787 796 793

He whirled around and around, singing and talking *language* in turn. His family sang: [539]

> Gèdé-ei yo wè ago-ê!
> Gèdé-ei yo wè!
> Papa Gèdé s'ère loa!
>
> Ie le Gèdé-ei dary ère, ago-ê! *
> Ie le Gèdé-ei dary ère!
> Papa Gèdé le a loa!

---

* *Ago*: exclamation, signifying "I am here."

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

He was the center of all eyes. Most of the time he danced alone, gyrating recklessly. Sometimes he danced with his houngénicon. Those who watched clapped hands and uttered sounds imitating drums, for drums were not being used in this service. The houngan carried the inevitable *clochette*, or tiny hand bell.

When newcomers arrived, Gèdé greeted them by shaking both their hands downward, vigorously, three times. Then he wiped their faces with his kerchief, a ceremony which he repeated from time to time. He danced with each of them a kind of Jenvalo step, simple, restrained, and dignified. One of the visitors fell to his knees to converse with him.

The entire evening was built around the houngan's representation of Gèdé. Properly speaking, the houngan was not in a trance. He was in full possession of all his normal faculties and was conscious of the slightest inconveniences and disturbances. Several times the clay bowl of his pipe fell from the reed stem, scattering hot ashes on the ground, and each time he paused to allow the houngénicon to clear them away. Yet he was carried away by his certainty that he was Gèdé. The obvious conviction of those who watched seemed to fortify him in his role. As the evening wore on, he became more and more detached from his normal personality. His psychic condition was not that of one who had been "mounted" by a loa; it was, rather, a continuously progressive ecstasy.

Gèdé is, in fact, more than a loa of the cemetery; he is a personification of death in all its macabre, humorous, and unpredictable aspects. Death is not merely a thing dying; it is an entity, a positive force in nature. Death is Gèdé Nimbo. I believe that when the houngan became Gèdé, all who had crowded into his hut felt themselves to be in the presence of death itself. Death, a dynamic, aggressive force, danced and pirouetted among them, talking the language of the dead and of old Africa.

Gèdé is often stern, austere, and forbidding, but he has other aspects. Haitians take amused pleasure at the terror he can strike into the hearts of the mighty. An old Gèdé song goes:

Papa Gèdé bel ga'çon!
Papa Gèdé bel ga'çon!
L'habillé tout en noir!
Pou'l monté ou palais!

L'habillé tout en blanc
Li semblé yon deputé!
L'habillé tout en noir!
Li semblé yon femme!

Papa Gèdé is a handsome fellow!
Papa Gèdé is a handsome fellow!
He is dressed all in black
For he is going up to the palace!

When he's dressed all in white
He looks like a deputy!
When he's dressed all in black
He resembles a woman!

According to tradition, the song had its origin in a march on the capital by some houngans many years ago. The story is very old and no one remembers many of the details.

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1950) 1960 SV3 HaHi SV3

remembers many of the details. But during the administration of President Louis Borno (1922–1930) there was a reenactment of the original march. There suddenly appeared in the streets of Port-au-Prince a crowd of Gèdé *mystères*—houngans "possessed" by Gèdé Nimbo and attired in Gèdé dress: tall black hats, long black tail coats, smoked glasses, black skirts over their black trousers. They carried flags, waved polka-dot kerchiefs, shook their ceremonial rattles, and paused sometimes to wipe the perspiration from one another's faces. They became the nucleus of a huge, noisy crowd moving up the hill toward the palace. Market women followed instead of going home; street gamins screamed and raced among them. Before they had arrived at the palace grounds they had taken on the semblance of a huge Mardi Gras band. They swerved through the gates of the palace grounds and along the drive, right to the steps of the palace itself. The guards, taken by surprise, waited helplessly for their officers to arrive.

At the palace door, the houngans demanded money from the president. Borno was in a dilemma. He was reputed to be sympathetic to Vodoun ritual but was only surreptitiously so. He feared the houngans, and he feared public opinion. What would the upper class of Port-au-Prince think, the Latin-culture Haitians? With Gèdé's worst manners, the Gèdé mystères cavorted on the palace steps. Finally Borno gave in. He sent the money out to them, and then the crowd of Gèdé's marched out of the palace grounds, waving their flags and shaking their rattles.

Services for the Hounsi Bossale

This ritual of calling the loa to speak through the mouth of the Vodoun priest took place in the Bolosse section of Port-au-Prince. The hounfor was situated in a congested slum area of the city, but the grounds around it were spacious. The hounfor itself was small and unpretentious, and except for the adjoining tonnelle would easily have been mistaken for another small wooden house. The houngan was a heavy-set man with a black mustache. Quick to laugh and easy in his movements, he nevertheless commanded solemn respect from the hounsi and the other participants. His soft-spoken voice expressed assurance and authority.

There were a number of possessions in the course of the dancing, all more or less routine. Each time a possession occurred, the houngan came forward with his asson and bell, gave a pitcher of water and a candle to the possessed devotee, and conducted her through a ritual at the foot of the center post.

Later, one of the hounsi came and sat at the houngan's feet. She was not possessed but obviously was in a state of high tension. Other servitors brought from the hounfor a wooden washtub and set it on the ground

2: Courlander 8-6 (1937-1953) 1960 SV3 Hait SV3

243 In the Artibonite Valley, where much rice is grown, a similar ceremony
243 takes place before the rice is gathered from the fields. In this ceremony it
108 is rice that is shared with the family ancestors, who have first rights, and
109 with close friends who have aided with the planting. This feast is called
[252] *mangé diri*, or sometimes *goûté diri*, the tasting of the rice. Small amounts
of rice are taken from the fields, cooked with red beans or Congo beans,
or perhaps made into dumplings. The farmer's friends and relatives gather
[524] while the food is still cooking, and play games such as *ouari* and *trois-arpe*.
[538] The children play *gage* games and sing songs, and sometimes a *maît'*
conte—a storyteller—comes to entertain them.

When the food is finally ready, the family ancestors are given their share. The farmer takes a calabash bowl of the rice and walks around the house grounds calling upon his immediate ancestors to accept their share. He drops a little food on the ground for the remembered dead, for the unknown dead who preceded them, for the Haitian dead, and for the dead of Africa. He also drops small portions for the dead twins, the dead albinos, the deformed dead, and the dead who have lost limbs, and for the distressed dead who have been improperly buried, or who may not have received the feasts that were due them. Afterward, he offers food to those who died of drowning, or who were lost at sea and never heard of again.

Each course is shared with the ancestors. The farmer takes a pitcher of water, spilling a little here and a little there until the dead have quenched their thirst. He also gives a little of everything to the family loa. Then the calabashes are set out on a bench or table reserved for the dead, and this food is not disturbed. Food for the marassas is set out separately on the ground in three small *coui*, or gourd dishes.

The family ancestors whose good will has made the harvest possible having been taken care of, the food is now shared among the extended family and the friends who helped in the fields. Later there are prayers
[182] to the loa, the saints, and God, led by the houngan or a petit' ansane. To
[176] finish the affair, there may be Juba-type dances for the older people, while
[535] the children watch or play gage games.
[524]

Only after this service are the farmer and his family and his coumbite (mutual labor group), if he belongs to one, free to go out and harvest the rice.[2]

243 These feasts of the rice and yam harvests are not of New World origin.
243 Similar harvest festivals for yams or rice are held over a wide area of West
176 Africa. There, as in Haiti, the fundamental concern is with the family
176 ancestors, whose good will must be constantly nourished so that the rains
109 continue to fall, the crops flourish, and human beings remain fertile.
171 Among the Ashanti of Ghana, for example, the yam and rice harvests are

[2 Account given by Jean Ravel Pinto. CG P.351, Category 116.--- Analysis]

celebrated with elaborate rituals for the dead. As in Haiti, great importance is laid on the presence of all living descendants, whose numbers are calculated to influence the ancestors' behavior. And as in Haiti, the first yams and the first rice are offered to the dead, and only after the family ritual does the family divide the crop.[5]

Service for the Ancestor Drum

The *ancestor* drum is the largest and most sacred of all Haitian drums. Around it is built an impressive and elaborate service known as the *mangé ancestor*, which, according to local traditions and circumstances, may be held as often as every three years or as infrequently as every twenty-one years. The period between mangés always consists of an odd number of years. A houngan from Jérémie declared the service might properly be held every three, five, or seven years. Another cult priest in the Cul-de-Sac Plain said it could be held every seven, seventeen, or twenty-one years. The ancestor is known as the *plus grand mesanc* (the most venerable "man") of the houmfor. However, few cult centers possess an ancestor. "Ancestor c'est fort bagaille, c'est pas zaffai tout moune" (The ancestor is powerful, it isn't everybody's affair), Haitians say. This is what a man from Jérémie tells about it:

"The ancestor is the greatest of all things in the houmfor. The Rada drums are only for the Dahomey nation. The Congo drums are for the Congo nation. The ancestor is a man of Dahomey, but he is for all nations. It is for all loa—Petro, Congo, Bumba, Dahomey. The ancestor belongs to Dahomey, but when there is a great service the ancestor is the host to the loa of every rite, the loa of Haiti and of Africa. When the ancestor is played, the loa are awakened everywhere. Loa who have been forgotten by the Creoles (Haitians) will come to the service and mount people, and when the loa have gone, many people don't know what loa has been riding them. Some ancient spirits from far away come only to the ancestor service, and when it is over they aren't heard of again.

"The ancestor drum is not for small things, it is for great occasions. For some people there are no occasions in their whole lives great enough for an ancestor service. When all other things have failed, it is only then that the ancestor is called upon.

"If a big houngan should have an ancestor drum, he can have only one, and it is the chief of the houmfor. All other drums are its servants. You can make an ancestor, but it is not necessarily an ancestor. It may look like an ancestor and not be an ancestor. To be an ancestor it must not only have the shape of an ancestor but it must be accepted by the loa. There was a houngan near Jérémie who made an ancestor and held a great service with it,

[5] Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana. Cf. p. 351, category 116. — Analyst]

3: Courlander 3-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

but it wasn't a genuine assotor and the loa didn't come. The drummer beat the assotor, but none of the loa came. As he played, the stick kept falling out of his hand. This was a bad signal (omen). None of the people got loa in their heads. The houngan was in a great sweat, but nothing happened. Another houngan came after the third day and told him to bring the service to an end. He did that. They threw the false assotor away and no one would touch it.

"To make an assotor, there is first a service. The houngan goes into the woods to find a great tree that is suitable. The trunk must be big enough so that the drum is at least as tall as a man. Most assotors are six feet high or more. The houngan must buy the tree from Malt' Grand Bois, the loa who is Master of the Forest. There is a service under the tree, a goat or a bull is killed, and the houngan places money on the ground for Malt' Grand Bois. Then Malt' Grand Bois mounts his horses. He enters the head of the houngénicon or the laplace. Sometimes he rides the houngan himself. He is very rough with his horses. But if he accepts the money, the houngan has the tree cut down, and he has an assotor drum made. When the drum is finished, a special stick must be made to beat it. Again they go to the woods. They carry the great assotor drum with them. There is singing but no dancing or drumming. They find a tree from which they will cut the drumstick, and there is a service. The houngan must buy the branch from which the drumstick will be made. He offers money to Malt' Grand Bois, the same as before. He spills a little water on the ground for Malt' Grand Bois. He holds a candle in his hand. They sing to Malt' Grand Bois to let them have the stick. Malt' Grand Bois is the master of all the trees, but he is thinking also of the other loa and how they feel about it. On the Island Below the Water he consults with them. If he agrees to give the stick, he makes it known by mounting some of the hounsi, or the houngan, or maybe the man who will be the special assotor drummer. Then they cut down the branch and make the drumstick.

"The assotor drum is not dedicated to Ogoun or Erilie or any other single loa. If it is baptized, it is given its own name, Assotor. The spirit of the assotor is multiple, for it is the *rappel* for all loa everywhere. The spirit of the assotor is called Assotor, and it is a kind of loa, but it is not one loa but all loa.

"In the assotor service, all loa come. Ogoun, Dumballa, Legba, Tijean Pétro, Don Pétro, Gédé, Malt' Cimitière, they all come. The big loa come and the little loa, the chiefs and their escortes. Every big loa has an escorte of twenty-one smaller loa. Some of the smaller loa have their own escortes. Dumballa comes crawling like a snake. Makanda comes crawling like a snake. Ogoun comes fighting, chewing on nails or anything iron. Badé

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comes quietly. Pié Cassé comes crawling because of his broken feet. Each loa comes in his own way. 534 776 778 776

"First there is dancing for the Congo and Pétro loa. There is dancing for the Kanga and Ibo nation. Last of all is Dahomé, for the assotor belongs to the Dahomé nation, and Dahomé is the host. [184]

"The assotor service is the biggest of all services. It last fifteen days. Old people say that once there were services lasting more than twenty days. Every day, animals are killed—bulls, goats, pigs, chickens, turkeys—all according to the loa who are there to be fed. When Mounklongue is fed, a dog's ears are clipped in his honor, because Moundongue is fond of dogs. More happens in the assotor mangé than all the rest of the year. Dahomé is host to the other nations, so the Rada service comes last. But the assotor drum is the host even to Dahomé, and it is fed last of all. [782]

"The assotor drum is dressed in the finest of clothing and kerchiefs during the mangé. It is the king of everything.

"When the mangé assotor is ended, when the drum has been fed, there is an immediate Mass held in church for the souls in purgatory. You don't need to have any special reason, but you must hold the Mass for all the dead. You serve coffee, sandwiches, cake, and other refreshments for all the people. 534 776 769.

"When there is no mangé going on, the assotor is kept in a special place in the hounfor. Every seven or nine months the houngan has a special *rappel* beaten for it on the Rada drums, and rum is spilled on the ground for it. It is a great responsibility to own an assotor. But it does great things for the houngan who owns it."[6] 534 778 776

Service for Mait' Grand Bois at Anse-à-Veau

Orthodox tradition in the region of Anse-à-Veau places the loa Mait' Grand Bois as the most potent and venerable of deities. He is the supreme mystère, whose good will or eccentric whim determines the fortunes of all men. Somewhat subsidiary to Grand Bois, but served within the same rites, are two other non-Dahomé loa—Moundongue (of Congo origin) and Ibo. Older people of Anse-à-Veau regard this trilogy, along with Femme Grand Bois (the wife of Mait' Grand Bois), as the core of "Guinée" ritual. There is also a second group of deities, consisting primarily of Ogoun Feraille, Ezilie, and Fréda Dahomé; these loa are of the Dahomey family and are regarded as somewhat less important. Should services for any of them be held, they follow rites for the Grand Bois constellation. People in this region hold that there is only one Ibo loa, one Moundongue, one Ogoun, and one Ezilie, each of them with many names or manifestations. Legba, the Dahomean spirit of procreation, 184 776

[6] [For footnote, see Category 116, p. 351. --Analyst]

184 the gate, and the crossroads, is not regarded in the same light as the other
796 loa but as a messenger and intercesser, and as the crossroads protector. He it is who helps in the placation of the major gods, and who guards people against accident, chance, and evil spirits on the highway.

796 In traditional form, services for Maît' Grand Bois and Femme Grand
782 Bois are conducted by the family without the aid of a houngan, under
786 the direction of the oldest male member of the family. The rites begin on a Thursday. With a tiny bell in his hand, the elder who directs the service (he is called *grand famille*) calls upon Maît' Grand Bois to come and receive his feast. The procedures are solemn. The grand [789] famille and the family sing. At last Grand Bois enters the head of the old man who is conducting the rites. Then the sacrificial animals are brought forward and killed, and the women take the meat and begin the cooking of the mangé. While the food is cooking, the family sits and waits. Sometimes the grand famille begins a song, in which others join. The cooking takes a long while. Sometime during the night, when the food is ready, it is placed in two baskets—one for Maît' Grand Bois and one for his wife, Femme Grand Bois. Into each basket goes meat, corn meal, rice, bread, cookies, peanut cakes, cassava, and other delicacies. The two baskets are hung by ropes from the roof of the tonnelle, or from the branch of a tree. During the entire night, none of the family eats. Maît' Grand Bois and his wife partake of the feast as they please. At six o'clock in the morning, the baskets are taken down, and the family is free to eat what the loa have left for them.

When the food is gone, the bones that are left are carried to a nearby stream and washed until they are white and shining. The bones are then placed in a large calabash bowl. Sweet-scented leaves from special trees are placed in the bowl with the bones, and water is added. The [783] mixture becomes a ritual lotion, or "bath." The entire family kneels before the liquid, which they rub on their faces, heads, arms, hands, legs, and feet. When the ritual bathing is over, they sing:

[539]

La famille vin' payé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
La famille vin' payé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
Cérémonie là c'est fini! [Ex. 41]	The ceremony is finished!

Afterward, each member of the family places a small coin in the calabash dish with the bones and leaves, and the residue is then buried in a deep hole at a crossroads. A heavy post (*borne*) is erected at the site, with [211] markings to indicate the date of the service, and the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, each representing a year. Every year one of the numbers is checked off, and at the end of four years another service for Maît' Grand Bois and Femme Grand Bois is held.

If it should happen that on the appointed day four years later the family is unable to hold the regular feast for Grand Bois, the grand famille goes to the tree sacred to the loa, with a bottle *of aire'* and other taken gifts. He explains the difficulties of the family; he tells the loa that it has been a bad year, that the crops have been poor, and that the family has not been able to accumulate enough money to buy sacrificial animals. He asks Grand Bois for a six-month postponement. The loa agrees to the postponement, making his intentions clear through various signs when the grand famille is possessed. "Grand Bois is a good loa," people say, "but if you fail to meet your obligations to him he will be very stern. If you don't keep your promise to him, he may seize you [i.e., kill you]."

When the rites for Malt' Grand Bois are finished, services for Ogoun and the Dahomé deities may be held, beginning on Friday and running through the week end. The Ogoun service is a festive affair. There is much singing and dancing, and early on Saturday morning the sacrificial bull is dressed and decorated with red and blue kerchiefs. Red and blue ribbons are tied to his horns, and he is led on a grand tour to various places, including Ogoun's tree. The drummers walk behind him, and after them members of the family, some dancing, some singing, and some mounted by the loa Ogoun. The procession passes three times around the cemetery, then heads back toward the family *habitation*. When the participants reach the tree sacred to Legba, they sing to this loa, invoking him to "ouvri bayè pou' moin" (open the gate for me). Finally, when the procession reaches the *habitation*, the sacrificial bull is killed. After Ogoun has been served his mangé, the rites are terminated with an *action de grâce*.

Near Anse-à-Veau there is a dried-up spring. It is said that many years ago during a big service for Malt' Grand Bois a man mounted by this loa rushed to the foot of a large tree and began clawing at the ground. He dug a hole there with his hands, and when it was only a few feet deep, water began to flow. The members of the société later enlarged the hole and lined it with stone. It was discovered that a giant crab was living in this water. One year, a service to Malt' Grand Bois was missed. The crab disappeared from the spring, and soon the water stopped flowing. "Grand Bois gives," the people say, "but if he is not remembered he also takes back."

Possession by the Loa Pinga Maza

On the outskirts of Port-au-Prince there is a hounfor dedicated to the loa Pinga Maza, also known by the name Bakulu Baka. He is a ferocious and fearsome spirit of the Pétro family who is known for his propensity

to "eat" people; that is, to destroy them. To do this he employs such means as disease, insanity, and destruction of crops. If a man serves Pinga Maza well, the loa protects him in return; but for those who anger him, Pinga is a menacing and vengeful creature. People often say, "Pinga, c'est djab" (Pinga is a devil).

The Pinga hounfor in Port-au-Prince is called the *Société de la Belle Jeune Fleur*. Its peristyle is simple and is hardly distinguishable from those of other small hounfors. Around the base of the center pole is a three-foot-high wall of masonry, decorated with simple cult symbols. The outer room of the hounfor proper also resembles many another. The familiar pot têtes containing loa stand on a wooden altar, and there are Catholic lithographs on the walls. But the inner room belongs exclusively to Pinga Maza. Here are all the accoutrements and objects sacred to the deity. Everything is red. Pinga's clothing and kerchiefs are red. On the walls are painted esoteric designs—hands, skulls, and crosses—all in red. The bottles, magic bundles, and govis on the altar are decorated with red cloth, ribbons, or paint. In the middle of the earthen floor is embedded a heavy wooden cross. On each end of the crossbeam hangs a large calabash resembling a bulbous hand. And on top of the upright is affixed a human skull. The total impression of this hounfor is that of a bizarre aberration, calculated to intimidate and terrify. The houngan himself is relatively young, literate, and city wise. His personality is smooth and sharp, and he lacks the air of sincerity and easy simplicity which most often characterizes the houngan of the mountains.

In this inner room, before the skull and the cross, there took place a small service for a client, to determine what kind of magic was needed to fend off malevolent actions of an enemy. On the day of the divining session, there hung from the rafters of the tonnelle a long rope, which extended into a deep hole in the earth near the door. Hanging on the rope, down inside the hole, were two gray dolls tightly bound together. Hanging still farther down were a knife, a fork, and other, unidentifiable objects. This cluster of magic paraphernalia was an *expédition* at work; it was an elaborate pouin, which was working against an enemy who lived far away.

Before entering the hounfor, the houngan took a long rope whip from the wall and cracked it seven times before the door. This process, known as *frote cache*, was to "wake up" the loa within. The houngan then entered, followed by the client who was seeking help. They paused briefly in the outer room, where the houngan took up his asson and bell and made a small vèvè on the ground. He spoke briefly in *langage* and then passed on through the door to the inner room. There the

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houngan took his place before the small altar and the cross surmounted by the skull. Again he spoke *langage* and rattled his asson. He took from the altar a small-necked bottle containing a white alcoholic liquid and a tight-fitting iron cross. The presence of the iron cross inside the bottle was represented as a magical phenomenon. The houngan took a mouthful of the white liquid and sprayed it out in a fine mist over the skull. Twice more he sprayed the mist, in different directions. Then he poured a little of the liquid directly on the skull. The room was filled with the smell of alcohol. The houngan lighted a candle and sat in a low chair facing the altar. He shook his asson rhythmically and spoke *langage* to Pinga Maza. Suddenly Pinga Maza entered the houngan's head. The houngan became violent. He jerked this way and that, making strange noises in his throat. He seized a machete from the altar, waved it around, and struck the flat of it against his head. He continued for a while to beat his head fiercely with the machete. Gradually he became quiet. His assistants placed Pinga's red jacket on him. Now he spoke in the tired voice of an old man. He complained that he was hungry, that he had not eaten for a long while. His assistant handed him a razor blade. He placed it in his mouth, chewed it up, and swallowed it, washing it down with more of the white liquid in the bottle. He asked for more, and they gave him a second blade to eat. He demanded a third, and ate that, too, spitting out small fragments of steel that caught in his teeth.

His assistant told him there was a man present seeking advice about a pouin. The possessed houngan looked around with half-closed eyes. He asked the man his name, and what he wanted. After hearing the client's story, the houngan took out a deck of cards and placed them one at a time, face up, on a winnowing tray. After studying the cards he said: "You are strong, but not strong enough. You already have some protections, but they do not protect you from the dangers coming your way. You have powerful enemies. You must have a new pouin." The man said yes, he wanted a new pouin, but how much would it cost? Pinga replied through the mouth of the houngan: "Twenty-five dollars." The man said: "I will get the money and return." He went out after placing five gourdes on the winnowing tray with the cards. Pinga became drowsy. The houngan's head fell forward on his chest and he slept. The divining session was ended.

The Water Road

The land where the loa live, the place "below the water," is not thought of as being in the water itself. It is dry and airy, like the countryside of Haiti. But the route to it is through water.

of Haiti. But the route to it is through water. When the Haitians say "under the water" they do not mean under the sea. The ocean is regarded as the special domain of Agwé, La Sirène, and a few related deities, but it has nothing to do with most loa. "Under the water" specifically means under the springs, the rivers, and the fresh-water lakes. Fresh water has the greatest of significance in relation to most of the Vodoun deities.

When a loa comes to visit his Haitian children he comes by way of the *chimin dlèw* (the water road)—that is to say, by way of the river, the waterfall, or the spring. Because the spring is the primary source of fresh water, it is the most direct means of contact with the land of the loa. Tales are heard everywhere of persons who, drawing water from the spring at night, heard the voices of loa or the sound of singing and drumming coming up from somewhere below. And virtually all the tales about human beings who visited the land of the loa describe them as descending into a river or disappearing into a waterfall.

The loa are accustomed to traveling by the "water road." And in all aspects of the Vodoun service, this "water road" is refreshed and replenished. When the road is dry, contact with the loa is diminished. When it is moist, the loa travel easily.

Thus, the houngan constantly uses water to entice and invite the deities. He holds a glass or pitcher of water at the center pole of his peristyle. He extends it toward the four cardinal points. He spills water at the foot of the center pole. He spills water in the hounfor at the foot of the *pé*, or altar. He sets a pitcher of water at the gateway of his habitation. And often, during a service, he pours a pathway of water in the dust from his gateway into his peristyle. Within nearly every hounfor there is at least one *bassin*, or pool, dedicated to the loa who is the *maît' caille*, the master of the house. These pools are carefully filled with water drawn from the springs. They are places of rest and refreshment for the deities whose names or portraits are inscribed on the walls above.

Sometimes rites and services are held at the site of the spring, the houngan and his entourage marching down to it from the hounfor for the occasion. So, too, there are annual pilgrimages to waterfalls such as Saut d'Eau, where the loa mount their "horses" in profusion.

Within the hounfor, during a service, the cult priest and the servitors pour "libations" of water on the earth, so that the loa may be refreshed. And virtually without end, the hounfor is the scene of ritual ceremonies in which the loa is bathed and thus "renewed" in the heads of his servitors.[1]

[1] [For footnote, see category 116, P. 351.--Analyst]

588 does not marry his horse. People marry people. Loa marry loa. A man
588 may have a compact with a loa. That is not a marriage. Some of the
184 things that are going on down there in the Plain are not right. They are not the old way. In the old days we did things differently. We did not always run to the houngan. The grand famille knew how to talk to the loa. Up here we don't do things the way they do them down below in the city. People marry people. Loa marry loa."

588 Nevertheless, the practice in the neighborhood of Port-au-Prince and
297 the Cul-de-Sac Plain is for mystic marriages to take place when deemed
184 useful, essential, or unavoidable. Foremost among the loa involved in these rites is Erzilie Wèdo, the "pure" one, the deity of love, sometimes identified with the Virgin Mary. Other loa known to have taken part in mystic marriages are Damballa, Ogoun, Ayida, Agwé, Gédé Nimbo or one of his brothers, Cousin Zaka, and Général Clermeil. All these loa—significantly, I think—have clearly defined personalities; much is known about their character and behavior, their likes and dislikes.

588 A man married to Erzilie has special obligations to her for the dura-
834 tion of his life. On certain days (especially Thursday, which is sacred to this deity), the mortal "husband" may not have sexual intercourse, even though he has a human wife.

588 Circumstances leading to a mystic marriage vary widely, but in each
155 case it is a cult priest who determines whether the rites should be
993 held. Perhaps a person has been afflicted with a series of illnesses or mis-
996 fortunes. He goes to his houngan, who begins a series of communications with the client's loa or with his own. Sometimes many loa are consulted before the desired information is available. Eventually it is determined that a certain deity, for reasons which may or may not be clear, wishes to have marital ties with the client. The illnesses or mis-
953 fortunes that have been sent are a means of informing or warning the
977 person concerned.

Sometimes the houngan relies on well-established divining methods to ascertain the cause of the difficulties. He may employ the *grouto* (a shell that slides on a string), ashes, or small shells that are thrown on
1187 the ground. Or he may rely on possession by a loa to provide the information.

If it is found that a loa is demanding marriage, arrangements are then made. The rites that follow may take place in a *hounfor* or at the house of the human bride or groom. Both a prêt' savane and a houngan officiate.

588 The person directly involved, like the loa, usually has something to
554 gain from a mystic marriage. For one thing, he can reasonably expect

2: Courlander B-6 (1937-1952) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 95]

6. Songs of the Peristyle

The songs that are sung in the peristyle are virtually numberless and have a wide range of themes. In general, they are in the spirit of supplication or placation. Preponderantly they relate in some way to the deities. A loa may be described, invoked, or called upon to perform certain deeds. He may be cajoled, joked with, and even criticized. But it is all a family affair. The servitors and the *fidèles* are the loa's "children," his "horses," his "leaves in the woods." The loa, the spirits of the dead, and the living members of the cult are all members of the same "nation." Whether supplication or admonition, the songs of the peristyle and the hounfor all have an intimate character. The affairs of the loa are the affairs of the société. What concerns one individual concerns all.

The themes of the songs have to do with the drama of the cult ritual, the coming and going of the deities, sickness and death, the welfare of the dead, and the behavior of the living.

The cult service is a dramatic presentation which synchronizes and brings into sharp focus the heritage of religious and folk beliefs. The songs describe and evaluate what is going on. Sometimes they are cryptic and tangent, but to those participating and those watching they are clues. As the action is usually related and progressive, so are the songs. Each song has its own place and its own meaning. One song is not readily interchangeable with another. Each service has its appropriate music. So does each developing phase of the hounfor ritual.

Some of the songs are addressed to the loa; others seem to be the words of the loa themselves. In many of the songs there is an implicit dialogue between one or more loa and the singers. This dialogue is not rendered in a form which is immediately understandable to a stranger. There is a constantly shifting point of view, so that sometimes the words are third-person comments about the loa or the situation,

533 sometimes they are the words of the deity, sometimes words addressed
794 to the deity. The name of the loa may appear anywhere in the song, as
796 both an invocational word and a rhythmic device, with the result that
796 unless one is aware of the song structure he may lose the sense and
intent of the words. In these two lines, for example:

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> Master Agwé comes from the sea,
> My cannon is loaded.

796 The first line describes what happens, from the standpoint of a third person; the second line is a statement by the loa Agwé. Or, take this single line:

> Marie Louise oh, we are mixed up!

Here Marie Louise seems to be the person addressed, but in fact it is Marie Louise who is talking. Again:

> I don't see my blood, Master Ogoun!

It is not Ogoun who is addressed; the words are his own.

As in nonreligious songs, there is a pattern stanza which is repeated over and over again. As the song goes on, there may be variations for interest and certain embellishments, but by and large the form remains constant. In religious singing there are relatively few examples of songs which progress from one idea to another. When the theme has been stated, that is the song.

533 One of the preliminary songs in many ritual services is a greeting to
539 the men and women of the société who are present. It is an *achan*, or
794 salute of welcome, and comes before the loa themselves are addressed:
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Messieurs-dames bonsoir!	Gentlemen and ladies, good evening!
M'apé mandé nou!	I ask you!
Messieurs-dames bonsoir!	Gentlemen and ladies, good evening!
M'apé mandé nou	I ask you
Qui gran moun yé! [Ex. 42]	What people are we?

The answer to the question is implicit, for they are the people of the société, members of the Arada "nation" or Anago "nation," as the case may be.

782 In almost any service of the Dahomey "nation" the first supplicatory
796 song is addressed to Legba, the keeper of the gate, the guardian of the
533 crossroads, and the "go-between" who intercedes with other loa in the
794 affairs of men. The first appeal to Legba is to open the gate, over which he is master, so that the voices of supplication may be heard and understood. The open gate also provides access for other loa to the service.

2: Courlander 8-6 (1937-1939) 1960 893 1440 893

Atibon Legba ouvri bayè pou' mwin ago!
Ou wè Atibon Legba ouvri bayè pou' mwin ouvri bayè!
M'apè ouvrè quand me tourné,
Mo wèse lwa yo!

Atibon Legba, open the gate for me, ago!
You see, Atibon Legba, open the gate for me, open the gate!
I will enter when I return,
I salute the lwa!

After this appeal, or sometimes while it is being sung, the houngan spills a little water on the earth at the base of the po'teau mitan. It is an inducement for the lwa to "enter," for the lwa reside "below the water" and their passage into the hounfor is made easier by water. The houngan may spill his water in a long path from the entrance of the peristyle to the po'teau mitan, or extend his pitcher invitingly to the four points of the tonnpaw. Then, perhaps, another song is sung to Legba:

Papa Legba ouvre hounfor mwin!
Papa Legba ouvre hounfor mwin!
Papa Legba ouvre hounfor mwin!
Ou wèse qui porté drapeau,
C'est ou wèse ka pané soleil pou' lwa yo!
Papa Legba, Papa Legba!

Papa Legba is in my hounfor!
Papa Legba is in my hounfor!
Papa Legba is in my hounfor!
You who carry the flag,
It is you who shade the lwa from the sun!
Papa Legba, Papa Legba!

As the ritual gets under way, there may be a general song of welcome to all the lwa of the cult, such as this one:

Bonjou' oh bonjou' bonjou' bonjou' bonjou'!
Bonjou' oh bonjou' bonjou' bonjou' bonjou'!
Oh bonjou' oh bonjou' lwa mwin! [Ex. 43]

Good day, oh, good day, good day, good day, good day!
Good day, oh, good day, good day, good day, good day!
Oh, good day, oh, good day my lwa!

When the service is well in progress, the songs may describe the qualities of the deities—their character, behavior and needs. If it is Balindjo, for example, the song may advertise that persons with this lwa in their heads are immune to poison:

Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh Ogoun ah!

Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh, Ogoun, ah!

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Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh Ogoun oh!
C'est pas manqué manqué
Bal nagé chwal manné! [Ex. 44]

Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh, Ogoun, oh!
There is no poisoned food
That will kill my horse!

Ogoun Ifé, known also by the Christian name St. Jacques, is the deity of war, and this song describes his courage and valor:

St. Jacques Majeur a voyé di'm ga'ges déjà!
St. Jacques oh voyé di'm ga'ges déjà!
St. Jacques Majeur a voyé di'm ga'ges la-guè!
St. Jacques oh voyé di'm ga'ges la-guè! [Ex. 45]

Major St. Jacques sent to tell me he is already a man!
St. Jacques, oh, sent to tell me he is already a man!
Major St. Jacques sent to tell me he is a man of war!
St. Jacques, oh, sent to tell me he is a man of war!

Should the service be to the lwa Dumballa Wèdo, symbolized as a rainbow and a great serpent, this song might be sung, commenting that he cannot be drowned in the water:

Papa Dumballa ou c'est couleuve oh!
Pourquoi pas néyé?
Pourquoi pas néyé?
Dumballa pourquoi pas néyé nan dlouo? [Ex. 46]

Papa Dumballa you are a snake, oh!
Why don't you drown?
Why don't you drown?
Dumballa, why don't you drown in the water?

[1998] [523] Dumballa, the rainbow, is in fact the source of the water that bubbles from the earth in springs. He is a patron of the spring, and there he often lives in the form of a water snake. In many a houmfor where Dumballa is specially revered there is a *bassin*, or pool, dedicated to him. [532] On the wall behind the pool there is usually a painting of Dumballa and Ayida, depicted as great serpents, sometimes with a feathered headdress. The pool is kept filled with fresh water from the spring, and [231] here one or more small snakes—symbols of Dumballa and Ayida—reside:

Ala lwa manbé nan dlouo
C'est Dumballa!
Ala lwa manbé nan dlouo
C'est Dumballa!
Papa Dumballa c'est vrai i dlouo!
Papa Dumballa c'est vrai i dlouo!

There is a lwa who lives in the water,
It is Dumballa!

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There is a lou who lives in the water,
It is Dumballa!
Papa Dumballa is the spring!
Papa Dumballa is the spring!

Ayida Wèdo, another aspect of Dumballa, is also known as a snake and a rainbow. A song describing Ayida's attributes goes:

Ayida c'ut ses-ses-ciel ah!
Ou ap' vini lui coulèvre!
Ayida c'ut ses-ses-ciel!
Pas wè n'ap lui coulèvre? [Ex. 47]

Ayida is a rainbow, ah!
You will come in like a snake!
Ayida is a rainbow!
Don't you see I come in as a snake?

Agwé Weyo, one of the major deities of the sea, is believed to be responsible for thunder over the ocean, which is described as the sound of his cannon shooting:

Malè' Agwé m'ki ses la mer,
Canon'm chargé-é!
Malè' Agwé m'ki ses la mer,
Canon'm chargé!
Malè' Agwé m'ki ses la mer,
Canon'm chargé ah!
Canon'm chargé pou'm tiré Malè' A'Weyo! [Ex. 48]

Master Agwé comes from the sea,
My cannon is loaded!
Master Agwé comes from the sea,
My cannon is loaded!
Master Agwé comes from the sea,
My cannon is loaded, ah!
My cannon is loaded to fire, Master Agwé Weyo!

The lou Kitza, or Simbi Kitza, of the Guinée pantheon is one of the water deities. He is described as coming out of the water dripping wet:

Kitza oh m'ki ses dlous li tou' mouillé!
Oh Kitza oh m'ki ses dlous li tou' mouillé!
Oh Kitza m'ki ses dlous li tou' mouillé!
Oh nou pèsé lougan pasé Bondieu ses yeyeyé! [Ex. 37]

Kitza, oh, comes out of the water, he is all wet!
Oh, Kitza, oh, comes out of the water, he is all wet!
Oh, Kitza comes out of the water, he is all wet!
Oh, there is no lougan in this country greater than God!

Tijean Pèto of the Pèto "nation" is small, and agile even though he has only one foot. (Some people say that Tijean Pèto has no feet at all.) This somewhat malevolent deity hides in the leaves of the coconut palm, and from there he sometimes preys on passers-by, particularly children. Persons mounted by Tijean Pèto may move about as though

THEY HAVE NO FEET AND CLIMB INTO THE "HEAVEST" PALM TREE. [787]

they have no feet and climb into the nearest palm tree. This song comments on Tipzan's ability to climb with his single foot. (Haitians do not "skinny" up trees, but walk up, bracing the soles of the feet against the trunk.)

Tipzan ou pas gainyain pieds,
Tipzan ou pas gainyain pieds,
Comment ou fai monté cocoyé?
Lanse bapé ou Loglo, Jean Pèwo,
Lanse bapé ou!

Tipzan, you have no feet,
Tipzan, you have no feet,
How do you climb the coconut tree?
By using Loglo's gaff, Jean Pèwo,
By using the gaff!

When the lwa begin to arrive in the houmfor to participate in the ceremonies, there is usually a song taking note of their coming. Sometimes the words describing the action are the deity's own account of what is happening, as in this song to the lwa Sobo:

C'ou passé n'ap passé là!
C'ou passé ou passé là!
Ê houmi houmfo é yo houmain nom main!
Yo houmain nom main yo houmain nom main!
Yo rélé houmi kanzo!
Yo rélé Dahomain!
Yo rélé mwê! [Ex. 31]

I am passing through, I am passing through!
I am passing, I am passing here!
Ê, the houmi houmfo call my name!
They are calling for me, they are calling for me!
The houmi kanzo are calling!
Dahomey is calling!
They are calling me!

In another rite one might hear this song about the arrival of the deity Simbo, from the point of view of the servitors rather than of the lwa:

Simbo Kitza vini wè main, oh!
Oh Simbo wa vini wè main là, oh saints yè! [Ex. 32]

Simbo Kitza comes to see me, oh!
Oh, Simbo will come to see me here, oh saints!

When the deity Boulicha Nago comes in, there is a call for the drums to be played:

Nago 'rivé-é,
Boulicha Nago 'rivé-é!
Nago 'rivé-é,
Boulicha Nago 'rivé-é!
Li là li tempo batu là!
Li là li tempo batu là!
Nago 'rivé jodi-à, oh ouèl! [Ex. 32]

Nago arrives,
Boulicha Nago arrives!
Nago arrives,
Boulicha Nago arrives!
It is time, beat the drums!
It is time, beat the drums!
Nago comes today, oh, *ouèl!*

Sobo, too, demands his drums as he arrives, as well as all the other paraphernalia for his ritual:

Cool yo cool yo? — Where are they, where are they?
Sobo mandé bonsoi 'Lindo! — Sobo asks for his Allado bonsoi!
Cool yo cool yo? — Where are they, where are they?

Cool yo cool yo? — Where are they, where are they?
Sobo mandé tambour' Rada! — Sobo asks for his Arada drums!
Cool yo cool yo? — Where are they, where are they?

Cool yo cool yo? — Where are they, where are they?
Sobo mandé pouin Allado! — Sobo asks for his Allado magic!
Cool yo cool yo? [Ex. 53] — Where are they, where are they?

When more than one loa comes into the service at the same time there is confusion. Each loa is supposed to await his turn, so that the ritual and the dance may be conducted in an orderly way. Sometimes, however, two or more deities come in at once, throwing the orderly process out of gear. This song takes note of the simultaneous arrival of the loa Adja, Loko, Sobo, Sodje, and others.

Adja non mêlé, oh Adja oh!
Adja non mêlé!
Non mêlé Papa Loko, non mêlé jodi-à!

Adja non mêlé, oh Adja oh!
Adja non mêlé!
Non mêlé Sodje assez non mêlé jodi-à!

Adja non mêlé, oh Adja oh!
Adja non mêlé!
Non mêlé kilé ouéé Nèg' Sobo non mêlé jodi-à! [Ex. 54]

Adja we are mixed, oh, Adja, oh!
Adja we are mixed!
We are mixed Papa Loko, we are mixed up today!

Adja we are mixed, oh, Adja, oh!
Adja we are mixed!
We are mixed Sodje, enough, we are mixed up today!

Adja we are mixed, oh, Adja, oh!
Adja we are mixed!
We are mixed all the time, Nèg' Sobo, we are mixed up today!

When the loa come in en masse this way, some are asked to retire so that the service can proceed smoothly. In a similar instance, the deity Marie Louise is willing to withdraw from the scene but demands that a present or sacrifice be given to her first.

Marie Louise oh nim ôôôô!	Marie Louise, oh, we are mixed up!
Marie Louise oh nam mêêê!	Marie Louise, oh, we are mixed up!
Gnê yo ne ba mwin pou'm ale?	Where is my gift so that I can go?

Often, when it is time to leave the service, the deity announces through the medium of the song that he has other affairs to attend to elsewhere. Ogoun Achalé, for example, makes a swift departure:

Ogoun wôô!	Ogoun flee!
Ayaaga!	Ayaaga!
Ogoun wôô Achalé!	Ogoun flee Achalé!
Ayaaga Papa! [Ex. 55]	Ayaaga Papa!

As the deity Général Brisé departs, he tells his servitors that he is "going to God," and that he turns responsibility for their affairs over to them:

Général Brisé pays ya nan main ah!
Aga-é! Aga-é-é!
Général Brisé pays ya nan main ah!
Pays ya nan main
M'pral Bondieu djah ah! [Ex. 56]

General Brisé, the country is in your hands, oh!
Aga-é! Aga-é-é!
General Brisé, the country is in your hands, oh!
The country is in your hands,
I am going to God, oh!

The loa Bumba, in reply to a query, declares that he must go because he has work to do in his fields:

Bumba qui ceto pralé?	Bumba, where are you going?
Bumba qui ceto pralé?	Bumba, where are you going?
Bumba qui ceto pralé?	Bumba, where are you going?
Bumba qui ceto pralé?	Bumba, where are you going?
M'planté manga!	I am planting mangos!
Planté patate!	Planting potatoes!
Planté joumoum!	Planting pumpkins!
Planté banane!	Planting plantains!
Waille Bumba qui ceto pralé? [Ex. 57]	*Waille* Bumba, where are you going?

The deities Malt' Bois and Malt' Dieru declare as they depart that they are on their way to Africa, and leave the impression that things are pretty nice over there:

Malt' Dieru qui m'li nans dlesu!	Malt' Dieru who comes out of the water!
Malt' Bois qui m'li nans bois!	Malt' Bois who comes out of the woods!
Nan Guinée plaisi-à belle ah!	In Africa pleasure is beautiful, oh!
A n'allé wè yo! [Ex. 58]	We are going to see!

As the loa Mambo Ayida of the Guinée pantheon leaves the boundor to return to Africa, her "children" ask her not to stay there too long. And they ask her to bring back to Haiti win her some good magic for use in the boundor:

> Mambo Ayida *ô*
> Prol nan Guinée-à, pingo ou mèd-à o'mèdi!
> Si ou joind bon manjo wa pa'ô!
> Si ou joind bon laiton wa pa'ô! [Ex.59]
>
> Mambo Ayida *ô*
> Go to Africa, take care not to stay, I am waiting!
> If you find a good manger, bring it!
> If you find a good laiton, bring it!

Giving food to the loa is a focal point in religious rituals. Many songs describe the sacrifice, signify that the loa are waiting for their food, or otherwise dramatize this significant activity. In the following song the deity Damballa asks for the goat with which he is to be fed.

> Damballa Wèdo oh c'est sang-ô!
> Damballa mandé'ybo cabrit,
> C'est sang li mandé!
> Damballa Wèdo oh c'est sang-ô!
> Damballa mandé'ybo cabrit,
> C'est sang li mandé!
> Damballa Wèdo oh c'est sang li mandé!
> Oh aseré! [Ex. 60]
>
> Damballa Wèdo, oh, it is blood *ô*!
> Damballa asks for the head of the goat,
> It is blood he asks for!
> Damballa Wèdo, oh, it is blood *ô*!
> Damballa asks for the head of the goat,
> It is blood he asks for!
> Damballa Wèdo, oh, it is blood he asks for!
> Oh, enough!

For Ogoun they sometimes sing:

> Papa Ogoun qui gain' yon manjé
> Tout moune pas manjé li!
> *Enlé enlé*, oh! [Ex. 61]
>
> It is Papa Ogoun who has a feast,
> Not everyone may eat it!
> *Enlé enlé*, oh!

But sometimes Ogoun is dissatisfied that there is no feast ready for him, and he complains.

Ogwen é ah mwin bhwell — Ogwen é, ah, I am hurt!
Ogwen é ah mwin bhwell — Ogwen é, ah, I am hurt!
A pen m'bhwel Pemé, — Now I am hurt, Pemé,
M'pen wé mang mwin! — I don't see my blood!
M'pen wé mang'm Mah Ogwen, — I don't see my blood, Master Ogwen,
Mwin pen wé mang mwin! — I don't see my blood!
M'pen wé mang'm Bedigry, — I don't see my blood, Bedigry
Mwin pen wé mang mwin lé! [Ex. 61] — I don't see my blood here!

The lea Mmembengue, like Dambella, likes goat meat, and it can be cooked in two ways:

Yi yé yé!
Mmembengue ohé
Oh Mmembengue oh yé yé yé!
Mmembengue mangé cobrée bendé,
Mmembengue mangé cobrée bemmell! [Ex. 63]

Yi yé yé!
Mmembengue, ohé
Oh, Mmembengue, oh, yé yé yé!
Mmembengue ceu bolled goat,
Mmembengue ceu roasted goat!

Or again, the servitors may sing:

Ceu pané ne ba'ne mangé, oh Ti Mmembengue ohé!
Ceu pané ne ba'ne mangé, Mmembengue ohé! [Ex. 64]

Whoever you are, we give you food, oh, Ti Mmembengue there!
Whoever you are, we give you food, Mmembengue there!

The lea Adja also has animal sacrifices and special dishes for his mangé, but sometimes he—and the "horses" he mounts—will eat broken glass:

Oh Adja mangé bounda dhwijoné
Adja vlee' vlee'!
Adja mangé bounda dhwijoné
Adja vlee' vlee'! [Ex. 65]

Oh, Adja eats the bottom of a bottle!
Adja, ohé ee, ohé ee!
Adja eats the bottom of a bottle!
Adja, ohé ee, ohé ee!

For the lea Ianman Ilo the proper sacrifice is a rooster, and the deity declares:

Nanchan Ilo m'a mangé gree ceq oh nanchan Ilo!
Nanchan Ilo m'a mangé gree ceq!
Nanchan Ilo m'a mangé gree ceq oh nanchan Ilo!
Walle walle walle! [Ex. 66]

Ilo ouéme, I am going to eat a large crab, oh, Ilo ouéme!
Ilo ouéme, I am going to eat a large crab!
Ilo ouéme, I am going to eat a large crab, oh, Ilo ouéme!
Wanlo wanlo wanlo!

The Ilo service is often a strictly family affair rather than a broad community ritual. The family replies to the Ilo loa in the following song.

La famille viv' payé sang,
Viv' payé sang!
La famille viv' payé sang,
Ilo Lonlo voloonté! [Ex. 41]

The family comes to pay blood,
Comes to pay blood!
The family comes to pay blood,
It is Ilo Lonlo's wish!

The loa Nago frankly tells the people that if they want to come to his house (his shrine, or the houmfor) they will have to pay something for the privilege:

Si nous wé cond'n dessoud,
Si nous wé cond'n dessoud,
Fou'n payé bonbon pou' gé!
Anago Nago!
Viv' wé cond'n dessoud! [Ex. 69]

If you are where I live,
If you are where I live,
You have to give candies for that!
Anago Nago!
Come are where I live!

The "dead" spirit Gédé Nimbo, the guardian or master of the cemetery, who often engages in bizarre activities which poke fun at the codes of social behavior, is sometimes regarded as a special protector of children. Precisely because he is overlord of all that has to do with the grave, his good will is sought, particularly in behalf of the young; and in many services of the Nago rites his protection is bought by money gifts:

Gédé mein la'gent,
M'apé ba ou la'gent la'gent,
M'apé ba ou la'gent pou' gé'dé moinen la yé!
M'apé ba ou la'gent pou' gé'dé moinen la yé!

Gédé, take the money,
I will give you money, money,
I will give you money to guard the children!
I will give you money to guard the children!

In the course of the ceremonies when, from time to time, the honored loa of the occasion enters into the head of one of the servitors, the houngan will place in the hands of the mounted person a lighted candle and a pitcher of water. The possessed servitor approaches the sacred center post and spills a little water on the ground for the deity. After certain other rituals, the houngan, or one of his assistants, conducts the mounted "horse" into the houmfor to the altar. In the following song, as the possession comes on, there is a call for a lighted candle.

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Simbi non wè oh!
Simbi djab non wè!
Oh Simbi non wè oh!
Simbi non wè oh!
Simbi wa lumé chandelle pou' clairé moin! [Ex. 68]

Simbi doesn't see, oh!
Stern Simbi doesn't see!
Oh, Simbi doesn't see, oh!
Simbi doesn't see, oh!
Simbi [says] you will light the candle so I can see!

Some of the songs refer to the dancing of the loa who enter the bodies of the servitors. The deity Loko asks for his hounsi, through whom he will dance:

Coté pitits moin yo,
Mainain'm nan hounfor, m'ap djaillé!
Na pas Loko,
Coté pitits moin yo! [Ex. 69]

Where are my children,
Take me into the hounfor, I will *djaillé!*
Now, Loko,
Where are my children!

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Another deity, who is not expressly named, tells his "leaves in the woods"—that is, his hounsi—that he has danced since he was a child:

Fé nan bois hélé moin!
Oh dépi'm pitit m'ap dansé!
Fé nan bois'hé-é!
Fé nan bois hélé moin oh!
Oh fé nan bois hélé moin oh!
Dépi'm pitit m'ap dansé!
Fé nan bois hélé moin! [Ex. 70]

Leaves in the woods call me!
Oh, since I was small I have danced!
Leaves in the woods *hé-é!*
Leaves in the woods call me, oh!
Oh, leaves in the woods call me, oh!
Since I was small I have danced!
Leaves in the woods call me!

In the following song the loa Macaya Bumba is called upon by the hounsi to hurry up and get on with his dancing.

Macaya Bumba Bumba!
Lévé dansé!
Macaya Bumba!
Bumba mon cher vini dansé! [Ex. 71]

Macaya Bumba Bumba!
Get up and dance!
Macaya Bumba!
Bumba my dear, come and dance!

A song for the deity Ianman in the course of the Ibo dancing and ritual goes:

Ibo lélé!
Ibo lélé!
Nanchon Ibo ça ou gainyain ou ça Ibo lélé!

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Ianman con ça, con ça!
Ianman con ça'm danse Ibo!
Ianman con ça, con ça!
Ianman con ça'm danse Ibo!
Ianman con ça, con ça!
Ianman *é-wa é-wa é-wa!* [Ex. 72]

Ibo *Hill*
Ibo *Hill*
Ibo Nation, what are you doing there, Ibo *Hill*
Ianman, like that, like that!
Ianman, like that I dance the Ibo!
Ianman, like that, like that!
Ianman, like that I dance the Ibo!
Ianman, like that, like that!
Ianman *é-wa é-wa é-wa!*

Another song containing the same zestful appreciation of dancing is for the loa Kitta. The words "my mother isn't dead" and "my father isn't dead" are simply expressions of good fortune and happiness which embellish the command to do the Kitta steps:

Ai ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!

Maman pas mouri ba'm pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!

M'dit pitit ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!

Papa pas mouri ba'm pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta! [Ex. 73]

Ai, little man, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps!

My mother is not dead, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps!

I say little man, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps!

My father is not dead, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps! ¹/₂

A song for the loa Bamburra describes the movements of his dance. Bamburra is symbolized by the crab, and the dance posture with "low hips" is regarded as characteristic of the crab's movements: [535]

Bamburra kap promené, taille bas!
Bamburra ollé promené, taille bas!

¹/₂ [For footnote, see category 116, p. 351. --Analyst]

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Bamburra is walking, low hips!
Bamburra is going to walk, low hips!

Damballa Wèdo, being a snake deity, "threads" or "winds" his way like a serpent, and this song describes a serpentine course taken by the dancers as Damballa (here identified as a Nago man) arrives:

Filé na filé, Damballa Wèdo vini wè moin!
Filé na filé, Nèg' Nago vini wè'm là! [Ex. 74]

Wind, we wind, Damballa Wèdo comes to see me!
Wind, we wind, the Nago man comes to see me here!

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After the dancing has been going on for a long while and the pace is fast, there may be a song of banter, such as the following from the Dahomey rites. The dancers sing *laillé, laillé!* describing a figure of the dance in which the skirts are swirled, and note that they have worn out the drummers. They even offer to carry on their backs those dancers who are ready to fall by the wayside:

Laillé laillé!
Oh laillé laillé oh viéco'!
Tambouyé bouké!
Tambouyé bouké viéco'!
Laillé laillé oh viéco'!
Laillé laillé tambouyé bouké houngan'm!
M'pè'té sou corps moin vié sor!
Tambouyé bouké ça!
Laillé laillé! [Ex. 75]

Laillé laillé!
Oh, *laillé laillé*, oh, old people!
The drummers are tired!
The drummers are tired, old people!
Laillé laillé, oh, old people!
Laillé laillé, the drummers are tired, my *houngan!*
I'll carry you on my back, old sister!
The drummers are tired there!
Laillé laillé!

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Interspersed among the songs of the hounfor there are sometimes warnings or admonitions. Usually they are tangent and indirect in statement, and may be from the point of view of the loa or of the houngan. In the following pouin song, which accompanies the ritual of making magic, there is a warning to certain people who will feel the effects of the magic. The ceremony includes, among other things, the dropping of lemons, roots, and leaves by the houngan into his sacred basin or pond. The houngan sings:

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Trois fé trois citron oh!
Trois fé trois citron oh!
Moin dit rwo, youn jour ou wa besoin moin!
Trois fé trois racine oh!
Moin dit oui, youn jour ou wa besoin moin!
Gainysin bassin moin trois racine tombé ladans,
Quand ou wa' blié fou' ramassé chongé! [Ex. 76]

Three leaves, three lemons, oh!
Three leaves, three lemons, oh!
I say *rwo*, one day you are going to need me!
Three leaves, three roots, oh!
I say yes, one day you are going to need me!
I have my pond into which three roots fall,
When you wish to forget you will have to remember!

In another song the houngan warns against ingratitude on the part of persons for whom special magical services have been carried out:

Ouanga ça oh ouanga chaud!
Ouanga ça ouanga chaud!
Lè pou' payé li pinga ou fachè!
Ou mandé'm ouanga là ou content!
Ou mandé'm ouanga là ou content!
Lè pou' payé li pinga ou fachè! [Ex. 77]

This ouanga, oh, hot ouanga!
This ouanga, oh, hot ouanga!
When it's time to pay for it don't be angry!
You ask me for the ouanga, you are happy!
You ask me for the ouanga, you are happy!
When it's time to pay for it don't be angry!

Somberly and in metaphor, the deity Kitta Démambré speaks of an unhappy event which occurred in the town of Léogane, and warns those concerned that it must not happen again:

Kitta Démambré, pinga ou fai'm ça 'core oh!
Nan Léogane ti poule-là mouri nan zé!
Nan Léogane ti poule-là mouri nan zé oh!
Kitta Démambré, pinga ou fai'm ça encore oh! [Ex. 78]

Kitta Démambré, take care that you don't do that to me again, oh!
In Léogane the little chicken died in its egg!
In Léogane the little chicken died in its egg!
Kitta Démambré, take care that you don't do that to me again!

An unnamed spirit warns that the moment for placation has come and suggests that calling on him after he has gone from the *pavillon* of the houngan Derés would be of no use.

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M'apé rélé moin en bas pavillon lou moin!
Laissé'm démélé moin en bas pavillon oh Derés!
Jou'm allé pinga you lommain nom moin! [Ex. 79]

I will call, I am under the lou's canopy!
Let me get straightened out under Derés's canopy!
The day I am gone take care they do not call my name!

In a lighter vein, to the gayest of music, there is this admonition that a wrong cannot be righted simply by saying "excuse me":

Iho lélé!
Iho lélé!
Pilé pied'm ou mandé'm pardon!
Pilé pied'm ou mandé'm pardon!
Ça pardon-là wa fait pou' moin? [Ex. 80]

Iho *lélé!*
Iho *lélé!*
You step on my foot and ask my pardon!
You step on my foot and ask my pardon!
The pardon, what good will it do me?

And the deity Ogoun Kénison warns those who do not speak of him with respect that he is not ready to accept such a slight as a light matter.

Ogoun Yèkkè Yèkkè ça Nèg' Kénison é!
Ogoun Yèkkè ça Nèg' Kénison é!
Oh tous les jours c'est pa'lé Ogoun mal!
Ogoun pas conn' betisé! [Ex. 81]

Ogoun Yèkkè Yèkkè there, man of Kénison!
Ogoun Yèkkè there, man of Kénison!
Oh, constantly talking bad about Ogoun!
Ogoun doesn't like joking!

The loa Ogoun Panama, like ordinary mortals, is concerned about people who "come to look and go away to talk."

Ogoun oh m' c'est Nèg' Panama é!
Ogoun oh m' c'est Nèg' Panama é!
Yo vini ga'dé!
Yo vini pa'lé!
Oh Ogoun oh m' c'est Nèg' Panama é! [Ex. 82]

Ogoun, oh, I am the Panama man *é!*
Ogoun, oh, I am the Panama man *é!*
They come to look!
They come to look!
Oh, Ogoun, oh, I am the Panama man *é!*

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The loa Aïson complains more vigorously of the bad behavior of human beings:

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Aïson Aïson!
Dipis temps y'ap pa'lé sou moin!
Coté ça yo gainyain?
Bouche à yo paya paya!
Djaule à yo pènè pènè!
Coté ça pou' yo pa'don oh? [Ex. 83]

Aïson, Aïson!
For a long time they have been talking about me!
What's wrong with them?
Their mouths go *paya paya!*
Their jaws go *pènè pènè!*
What is the excuse?

Even on routine business the loa are inclined to be petulant, or to protest that they have been mistreated, that their followers gossip about them, or that they are not ardent enough. Here the deity Simbi en des Eaux complains bitterly that she is not loved by her servitors, the "leaves in the woods," and asks a hounsi named Lolo for news to take to spirits of the ancestors who live "below the water":

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Fé nan bois con ça nou yé!
Nen point raimain pas mandé quinté!
Fé nan bois con ça nou yé!
Nen point raimain pas mandé quinté!
Simbi en des Eaux,
Qui sorti en bas dleau!
Gardé ça yo fai moin!
M'dit Lolo, ba moin nouvelle pou'm ba yo! [Ex. 84]

Leaves in the woods, that's the way you are!
There is no love that does not ask to end!
Leaves in the woods, that's the way you are!
There is no love that does not ask to end!
Simbi en des Eaux,
Who comes from below the water!
See what they do to me!
I say, Lolo, give me the news to give them!

But if the loa complain about the behavior of their followers, the servitors also may complain. Songs sung in the hounfor may chide the deities for antisocial deeds, for forgetting their "children," or for carelessness. In the following song the spirit Malt' Grand Chimin is criticized for mounting his "horses" with such fury that they are thrown about

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violently. The hounsi complain that Malt' Grand Chimin treats them as though they were flour being ground in a mill:

Temp' changé nouvelle allé!
Bonjou' Papa bonjou' Roi Grand Chimin!
M'mandé Papa ça'm fail
Temp' changé nouvelle allé!
Bonjou' Papa bonjou' Roi Grand Chimin!
M'mandé Papa ça'm fail
Papa m'pas maïs moulin!
Nou dit na bougit moin!
Papa m'pas maïs moulin!
Nou dit na bougit main! [Ex. 85]

Times change, the news goes out!
Good day, Papa, good day, Roi Grand Chimin!
I ask you, Papa, what did I do?
Times change, the news goes out!
Good day, Papa, good day, Roi Grand Chimin!
I ask you, Papa, what did I do?
Papa, I am not corn flour!
You say you will grind me!
Papa, I am not corn flour!
You say you will grind me!

When there is sickness within the société there may be songs for the absent ones. Here is a song for an ailing hounsi:

Moin allé wè là, hounsi malade oh!
Moin allé wè ça, hounsi malade oh!
Moin allé wè houngan, hounsi malade oh! [Ex. 86]

I am going to see there, the hounsi is sick, oh!
I am going to see it, the hounsi is sick, oh!
I am going to see, houngan, the hounsi is sick, oh!

Again, the members of the société call upon Ogoun, or St. Jacques, to help one of their number who is sick:

St. Jacques *marré* chwal li,
Li pas dit personne oh,
Véyé li pou' moin!
Li met gainyain verre,
Li met gainyain maline nan dos,
St. Jacques oh!
Ba li lavie pou' moin! [Ex. 87]

St. Jacques ties his horse,
He tells no one, oh,
Take care of him for me!
He may have worms,
He may have sores on his back,
St. Jacques, oh!
Protect him for me!

Ogoun is the dispenser of rum, and in virtually all Ogoun rituals rum is at some time or another in evidence. Sometimes rum is poured into a hot iron pot and bursts into flame. The iron pot is described as Ogoun's

house, which is on fire. But there is no grief, because Ogoun is the master of fire:

Pierre, Pierre Narcisse oh!	Pierre, Pierre Narcisse, oh!
Yago moula-é!	*Yago moula-é!*
Caille Ogoun boulé!	Ogoun's house is burning!
Gilklive Ogoun bel Di	Ogoun's distillery is beautiful!
Na consolé! [Ex. 88]	We console ourselves!

Some of the ritual songs that have persisted through the years have lost their explicit meaning but continue to survive because of beautiful melodies and perhaps the strange images they evoke. Such a song is this one to the loa Atti Daï, from the Dahomey service:

Atti Daï oh!	Atti Daï, oh!
Yo voyé dit moin	They sent to tell me
Min soleil malade! *	The sun was sick!
Quan'm té rivé	When I arrived
Moin joind soleil mouri!	I found the sun had died!
Quan'm té rivé	When I arrived
Moin joind soleil mouri!	I found the sun had died!
C'est regrettant ça	What grief it was
Pou'm enterré soleil! [Ex. 89]	For me to bury the sun!

One of the truly lovely songs of the Dahomey rites, both in melody and in lyrics, is the following one to the deity Êzilie. It shows clear evidence of Catholic ritual influence in both its text and its music. Êzilie Fréda, who seems to be speaking most of the lines, is identified with the Virgin Mary, and the tone of this piece casts her more in her Catholic role than her African. The deity is speaking from Yagaza, a place described as being "on the other side of the water." In form the song is atypical in that it has more than one movement and progresses from one idea to another.

Êzilie Nainain oh!
Êzilie Nainain oh!
Êzilie oh, c'est moin Yagaza!

Êzilie n'ap marché n'ap couté n'ap parlé pou' temps y'ap parlé parole moin!
Êzilie n'ap marché n'ap couté pou' temps y'ap parlé parole mwé!
Êzilie Nainain oh!
Êzilie Préda oh Nainain oh!
Êzilie Préda oh, c'est moin Yagaza!

Mesdames nà yo chita nan caille là yo vlé djaillé oh tout temps soleil pas lévé!
Mesdames yo pasé yo tombé tè à génoux y'apé plainnine le mort yo!

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* Some Haitian informants vouched that *soleil* meant "sun." Others felt that this word in the song was really Solé, a diminutive of Aziouli, another name for Atti Daï.

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Ezilie Nainain oh!
Ezilie Nainain oh!
Ezilie oh ho' c'est moin Yagaza!

Larouzé fai bandi tout temps soleil pas lévé!
Larouzé fai bandi tout temps soleil pas lévé!
Ezilie Nainain oh!
Ezilie Nainain oh!
Ezilie Fréda oh, coté moin ho' Yagaza!

Ezilie Fréda Nèg' Sobo Nèg' Grand Chimin Nèg' Balairouzé Cercléquitté abobo ça!
Ezilie Nainain oh!
Ezilie Nainain oh!
Ezilie Fréda coté ou yé? Moin là Yagaza! [Ex. 90]

Grandmother Ezilie, oh!
Grandmother Ezilie, oh!
It is I Ezilie, Yagaza!

Ezilie we are walking, we are listening, we are speaking, they are speaking my words now!
Ezilie we are walking, we are listening, they are speaking my words now!
Grandmother Ezilie, oh!
Ezilie Fréda, oh, Grandmother, oh!
Ezilie Fréda, oh, it is I, Yagaza!

The women sitting in the house there, they want to have a good time, oh, until the sun comes up!
The women go by, they fall on the earth on their knees, they complain about their troubles!
Grandmother Ezilie, oh!
Grandmother Ezilie, oh!
Ezilie, oh, it is I on Yagaza side!

The dew glistens until the sun comes up!
The dew glistens until the sun comes up!
Grandmother Ezilie, oh!
Grandmother Ezilie, oh!
Ezilie Fréda, oh, I am on Yagaza side!

Ezilie Fréda, Nèg' Sobo, Nèg' Grand Chimin, Nèg' Balairouzé, Cercléquitté, finish there! *
Grandmother Ezilie, oh!
Grandmother Ezilie, oh!
Ezilie Fréda, where are you? I am on Yagaza side!

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* These various lwa are being called upon here to withdraw and not to intrude upon the scene while Ezilie is present.

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7. In the Mapou Tree: Magic, Demons, and Compacts

It is said by many Haitians that the loa are inclined to shun the mapou tree, for it is the secret rendezvous of countless kinds of demons. On certain nights, they say, you may see a chink of light showing through the trunk of the great mapou, indicating that the demons are in macabre session. 796 778 824

Sometimes it is the baka who meet there to feast and discuss their blood-curdling plans. The baka are described as small and evil creatures, human in form, with red eyes, and legs or arms covered with skin but no flesh. They change into animals at will and may roam the countryside as cats, dogs, or cattle. The baka are notorious sorcerers, and they perform only malevolent acts. They are reputed to "eat people," literally as well as figuratively. Stories are heard of such-and-such a man or child who disappeared and was presumed to have been eaten at a feast in the mapou tree. One man who passed a mapou in the dark of night reported that he heard muffled singing coming from within its trunk, accompanied by the pounding of mortars in which a gruesome feast was being pulverized. But the baka "eat" people also in the sense that they destroy them. It is said sometimes that a person with a withered arm or leg has been "eaten" by a baka. Perhaps he was an innocent victim; possibly he struck a horse or dog which was really a baka; or perhaps he simply brushed against a baka in the market place. Sometimes the baka directs his evil in the most indiscriminate sort of way, "eating" whatever human being he meets. Animals which behave strangely are suspected of being baka in disguise, and they are given wide berth. 776 [732] 776 825

A cow once found within an old brick-covered spring was taken to be a baka because no cow could have passed through the small doorway of the spring. It was assumed that she had entered as a small baka and had then changed to her animal form. The spring went unused for days, until some children reported that the baka had vanished. The cow was

never seen again, and after a pèt' savane had read prayers over the spring the people again drew water from it.

Baka more often change themselves into gray or red pigs, but one ingenious baka was said to have transformed himself into a bicycle, which was seen traveling alone at night on the road from Port-au-Prince to Léogane.

Some people wear charms against the baka's malevolence; but the most effective weapon is the cocomacaque stick. The cocomacaque, or monkey palm, is a palm tree that grows only a few feet high. It has magical powers to drive off not only baka but other evil beings as well. When the tree is growing in its natural state, it is said, you must never mention its name in its own presence. Should you say within its hearing, for example, "Look at the cocomacaque," it will wilt and fall over, losing all its vital powers. The trunk of this midget palm is a favorite material for fashioning a walking stick or a short baton. A man going on a long journey into strange country may carry a cocomacaque stick with him to brandish at the crossroads where baka lurk, or to drive off strange animals that may be baka in disguise.

In their relationships with human beings, the baka are not always random. Sometimes, for a terrible price, they will undertake to make a man rich or to "eat" his enemies for him.

In some parts of Haiti, baka seemingly have found their way into the ranks of the loa. In the Congo-Guinée pantheon there is a deity called Bakulu Baka, or Babaku Baka. He is a malevolent spirit who "eats" people in the best baka tradition, and he lives, significantly, in the mapou tree, which is shunned by all good loa.

The *engagements*, or compacts, in which baka sometimes figure are usually made with another sort of creature, the *djab*, or devil. A djab is a manlike being but is superhuman, ferocious, and terrible. Some djab are small, some large, some innocent in appearance, some grotesque. They are supernatural sorcerers who deal out riches in exchange for human beings. A frustrated or desperate man may go to a djab and ask for a favor, which will usually be granted for a heart-rending price. Persons who appear to gain wealth suddenly may be suspected of having entered into an *engagement* with a powerful djab.

One story is about a man of Port-au-Prince who, needing a large sum of money, went to a famous djab who lives in a cave known as Trou Fourban. This powerful djab agreed to provide all the money required, but only on condition that the man deliver to him each year one of his children. The man suddenly came into a large fortune. But when the anniversary of his compact arrived, he did not go to Trou Fourban

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with one of his children as he had agreed. That night his oldest child died. The next year to the day, his second child died. And the third year, the third child died. On the fourth anniversary, the man's wife died. On the fifth, he himself died. The djab of Trou Fourban had collected his debt.

Another great djab lives on the northern mountain called Morne Ronde. A man of Cap Haitien was said to have made a compact with him for wealth. One day there was a great hubbub in front of the man's house. A crowd gathered and stood peering inside his door. What they saw was a rain of money falling down from the rafters. The floor was covered with ten-gourde bills. When the *gendarmerie* came to investigate, they stood at the doorway in awe, watching the money float to the floor. The man finally closed the door. That night he moved away, and no one in Cap Haitien ever saw him again.

The djab are insatiable. For their favors—which range from providing wealth and political position to destroying one's enemies—they always demand more in return than the recipient has counted on. Catholic ritual is called upon in some instances to break the djab's chain of demands.

Some tales are told in which human beings outwit the djab, particularly the lesser ones; but more often than not, the djab have the last laugh. During the big hurricane which hit Haiti in 1954, a huge landslide occurred near the place called Bayè Roche in the La Selle Mountains. An entire village was wiped out, covered by the falling rocks. Throughout this region the disaster was attributed to the action of a djab reputed to live in one of the nearby caves. Many lost cattle were found wandering near Bayè Roche, and they were believed to be people whom the malevolent djab had transformed into animals.

The height of bravado is to demand to be confronted with a big djab face to face. There is a song which goes:

> Conduit'm allé oh!
> Conduit'm allé djab nan Trou Fourban!
> Conduit'm allé! [Ex. 91]
>
> Take me, oh!
> Take me to the djab in Trou Fourban!
> Take me!

There are still other supernatural creatures in Haitian lore who must be guarded against, such as the *djablesse*, the *revenant*, and the *lutin*. The *djablesse* is a female ghost who must live in the woods for a number of years before she can enter heaven, as a punishment for the crime of

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775 having died a virgin. The *lutin* is the spirit of a child who died before baptism.[1] The *revenant* is a spirit of a dead person who feels he has been mistreated, and who returns to the world of the living to plague their families or their enemies.

776 754 The *lou-garo* (*loup-garou*) is a being of another kind, a vampire. She is human in form but sheds her skin and assumes animal forms at night when she roams the countryside seeking a victim. Salt is her nemesis. Should her human skin be found and salt sprinkled inside it, she would not be able to put it back on and would be destroyed.

776 778 A special form of the lou-garo is the *bizango*, a kind of enormous dog that runs in packs at night seeking people to eat. Also related to the lou-garo is the *démon*, a male creature of amorphous personality and character who can convert himself into an animal at will. There are sociétés of démons which, like those of the baka, meet in the dark of night in their assembly hall inside the mapou tree. Haitians who are conversant with such matters agree that there are many such trees, but that the most notorious of them are Mapou Miteppe in Miragoane, Mapou Simon in Aux Cayes, and Mapou Danpisse at Léogane.

Other fearsome beings such as the *zeaubeaups*—human cannibals—also gather in the mapou to conduct their affairs.

789 [776] Against all these creatures, and against black magic in general, there are many magical protections, the most common of which is the *garde corps* (protect the body), or simply the *garde*. It is usually obtained from a bocor and consists of a small bag of mysterious ingredients. The owner wears it around his waist or around his neck. Sometimes it is merely a cord with a number of ritually made knots. The garde corps is made to prescription and protects the wearer against specific things such as a lou-garo, poison, or death from a bullet or knife. In describing a garde corps he had prepared for a client, a bocor revealed that it contained dried chicken blood, extract of *wari* bean, and *gris-gris* powder, among "a thousand and one" ingredients. The *gris-gris* powder is made from a dried *gris-gris* bird.[2]

There is another form of protective magic, broader in scope, called the *arrête*. It is used to protect not merely an individual but an entire household, or even a group of households. In addition to warding off [754] supernatural creatures and protecting people against assassins, the arrête is a neutralizing agent against various forms of black magic such as the ouanga and the *makanda*. The arrête bundle or object is hung in the house or in a nearby tree, or it is buried somewhere on the grounds. Sometimes it is nothing more than a pointed stick placed in a certain way before a door or gate, or at one side of the trail leading to the

[1] [Simpson, "Haitian Magic," Social Forces, October, 1940, p. 97. Cf. p. 351, category 116. --Analyst]
[2] [For footnote, see category 116, p. 351. --Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1953) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

When they are not working, it is said, zombies are tied with special ropes made from the leaves of the banana tree. One popular song goes:

> Nans Léogane
> Yo marré zombie nans paille fig-banane!
> Abolo wye-oh!
>
> In Léogane
> They tie the zombie with banana straw!
> That is all, *wye-oh!*

Some Haitians tell you they know there are zombies because they have seen them. Not too many years ago a visiting writer stoutly declared that she, too, knew there were zombies because she had seen one—in the mental hospital at Pont Beudet. Although her reasoning was not quite airtight, the possibility that mental defectives are sometimes mistaken for zombies is worth considering.

Houngans who "work with two hands" are reputed to be able to gain permanent control over persons by means of a formula known as *tuyé-lèvé* (kill and raise). Either for himself or a client, the houngan gains power over the victim by "killing" him through special magic and then "removing the soul" (*retiré n'âme*). The victim, presumed to be normally dead, is buried by his family; the houngan then retrieves the body and "restores the soul" (*metté n'âme*). With his soul restored, the victim has, in effect, become a slave of the houngan, who can do with him as he wishes. He differs from a zombie in that he has a soul, whereas the zombie has none.

Some Haitians believe that even one who has died a nonmagic death may be raised from the dead. To accomplish this, the houngan or bocor stands over the body, goes through a specified ritual, and calls out the dead person's name: "Albert Moreau! Albert Moreau! Albert Moreau! Lèvé non! Lèvé non! Lèvé non!" ("Get up! Get up! Get up!") Then, it is said, the dead man may awaken.

It is believed that a houngan may also command the souls of dead persons to perform services for him against an enemy. The souls at his disposal for this work are those which he keeps in earthern jars in his hounfor. Should he wish to plague an enemy, he will send one of these souls to the man's house to make him sick, or lazy, or insane. Usually, the man does not know what is happening to him; but if he becomes aware that a dead soul is working on him, he attempts to find out which houngan has sent it. Perhaps the houngan can be bought off. If not, another houngan may provide relief.

While some believe in the reality of the various demons and specters,

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

others only half believe, and many look upon these creatures as imaginary but exciting to talk about.

The zombie finds a favored place in the tales children make up to tell one another, and the traditional song played by children on the earth bow or mosquito drum goes:

Maringouin pinga zombie oh, Bobo Maria!
Maringouin pinga zombie!
Maringouin pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie!
Maringouin pinga zombie! [Ex. 92]

Mosquito beware the zombie, oh, Bobo Maria!
Mosquito beware the zombie!
Mosquito beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie!
Mosquito beware the zombie!

Or they may sing with great bravado, to the clapping of hands.

Chaingadaing, nou pral mangé zombie!
Chaingadaing, teau teau!
Chaingadaing, nou pral mangé zombie!
Chaingadaing, colocoto!
Chaingadaing, nou pral mangé zombie!
Chaingadaing, kalainkaintaing! [Ex. 93]

Chaingadaing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingadaing, teau teau!
Chaingadaing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingadaing, colocoto!
Chaingadaing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingadaing, kalainkaintaing!

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-AA]

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[782] 37. *A small graveyard in the mountains at Furcy. The little alcoves in the tombs are for food offerings on special anniversaries.*

312

[776] 38. *Stone and brick covering of spring on Morne l'Hôpital believed to have been constructed in colonial times. Many persons have testified that here the voices of the loa have been heard bubbling up with the water.*

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998
[B76]

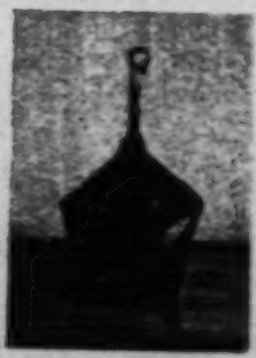
42. *Forged iron "saber" of the loa Damballa, from a houmfor near Léogane. Height, 32 inches.*

43. *Forged iron standard for holding ritual objects, from a houmfor in the region of Léogane. Height, 18 inches.*

[532]
[B76]

[534]

44. *Ancient iron figure of the loa Quimpon Fer, from a houmfor near Léogane. Height, 12 inches.*



45. *Old iron ritual bell, or ogan, from a houmfor in southern Haiti. Height, 21 inches.*

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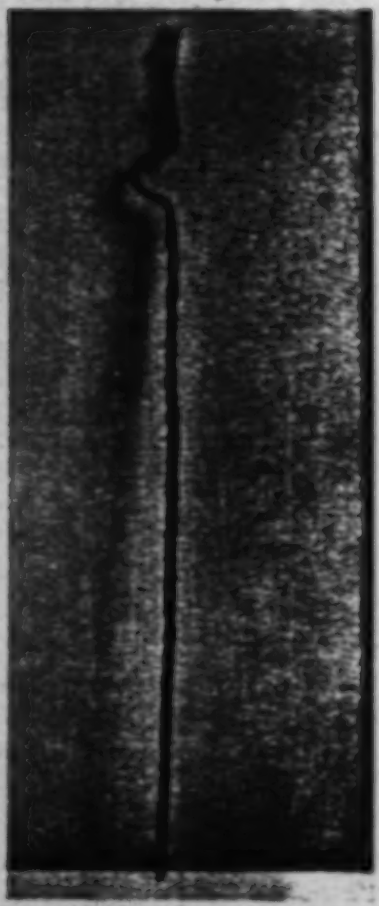

46. Forged iron rod in the stylized form of a snake, representing the loa Dumballa, from southern Haiti. Height, 34 inches.

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47. Iron sculpture on a Nago altar of a houngfor near Gonaives, representing a bird sitting on a tree.

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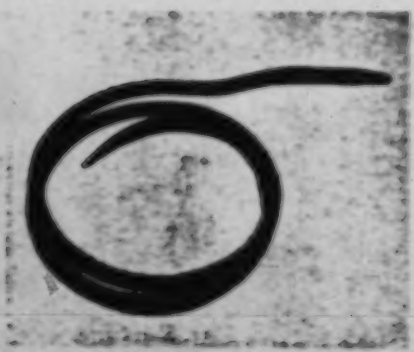
48. A sculptured iron standard in a houngfor in the Cul-de-Sac Plain.



49. Forged snake, representing Dumballa, from southern Haiti. Length in coiled form, 9 inches.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-FF]

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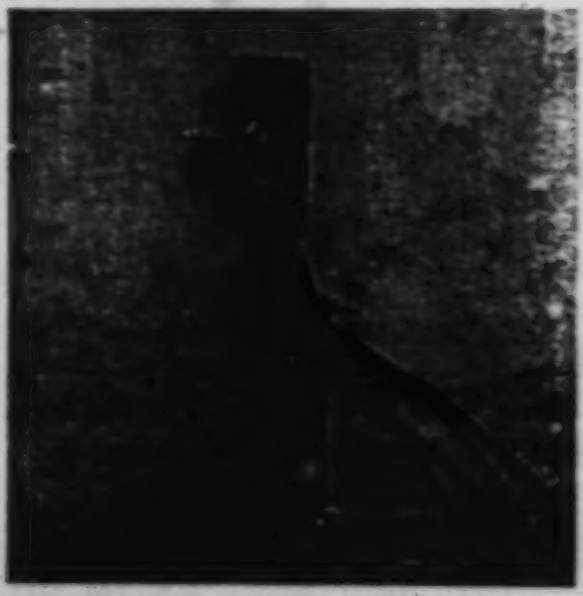
50. *Representation of the loa La Sirène, made by a contemporary blacksmith.*



51. *Representation of the loa St. Jacques by the same blacksmith.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-GG]
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52 and 53. *Wall paintings representing loa, in a small house for an Morne l'Hôpital.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-HH]

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54. Inside surface of a calabash bowl used in rituals of the houngfor, painted in black and white. The figure represents the graveyard loa, Baron Samedi, with a pick, shovel, and tombstone. Length, 15 inches.

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55. An alfor cousin, the traditional peasant knapsack.

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56. Wari board cut from a mahogany log. Length, 29 inches.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-II]

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57. *Old wood carving of an unidentified deity, from a hounfor near Léogane. It is startlingly similar to the African carving shown in no. 58.*

58. *A wood carving from the Bembala tribe, western Belgian Congo. (Collection of Segy Gallery.)*

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59. *Carvings of more recent date, representing the loa of twins, from a hounfor in southern Haiti. Height, 12 and 14 inches.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-JJ]

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[178]
[776]
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60. *A carved cane head from the southwestern mountains.*

61. *Detail of a wood carving made about 1930 in the region of Port-au-Prince, representing the loa Loko. Work of this kind in mahogany has in the past thirty years deteriorated into neo-"African" carvings made for the tourist trade.*

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→

62. *A cayambouque. Cut from a single calabash, the two parts fit together tightly to form a single container. Some cayambouques are a foot or more tall. Height, 8 inches.*

63. *Terra-cotta figurines from the Cap Haitien region.*

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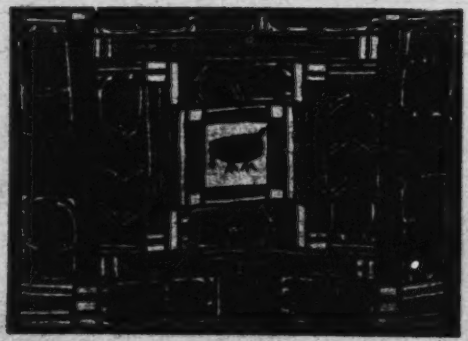

64. *Detail of a dye-painted burlap cloth. Animal and flower figures and geometric designs are used interchangeably.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 112-N]

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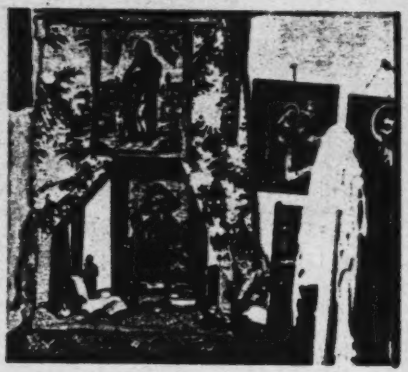
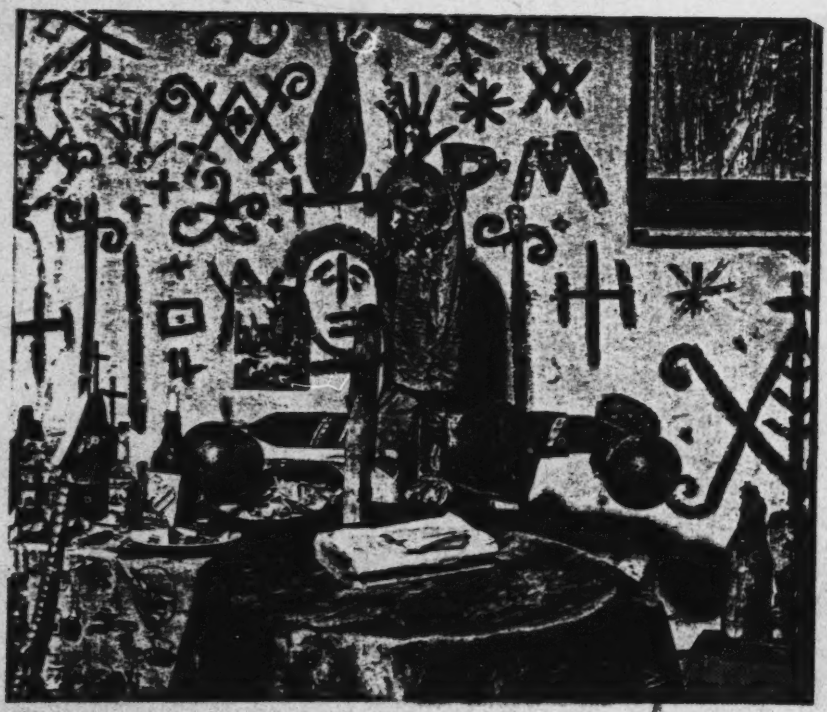


20. *A Vodoun altar in northern Haiti, scarcely distinguishable from a Catholic shrine. Hounfors range from the simple to the complex, from the poor to the rich, from the primitive to the sophisticated, and from the bizarre to the artistic.*

[794]
[776]

21. *Altar in the hounfor "Société de le Belle Jeune Fleur" in Port-au-Prince dedicated to the loa Pinga Maza. The cross surmounted by the skull represents the deity. Behind the table, leaning against the cross, is the pestle with which this loa "grinds" his enemies. On the other table are razor blades for Pinga Maza to eat.*



2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 112-Q]

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[534]

36. Service for the loa Aguué in a boat at sea. In the center, two houngs hold the society's flags. Between them and the houngan is the bedecked barque d'Aguué, a rafthke miniature vessel which will be set adrift. An ogan and a drum are at the lower right.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 112-V]

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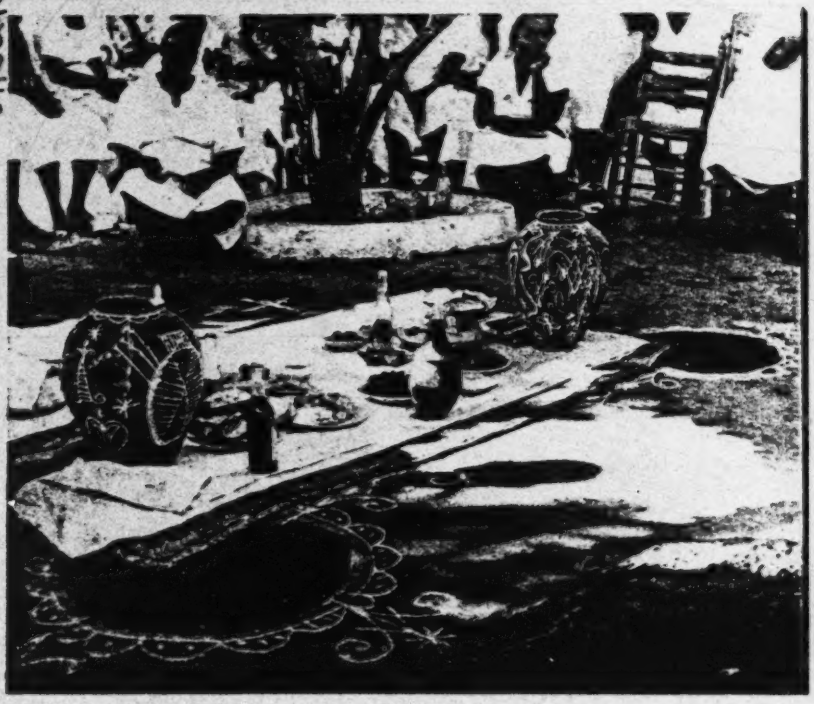
31. *An Ibo service in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. Laid out on the mat is a feast for the Ibo loa. The houngan ritually feeds the deities by placing food in the holes at each end of the mat. Designs on the pots are the symbolic patterns found generally in vèvès. The tree in the background, surrounded by a low curbing, is sacred to the loa.*



2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-W]

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776

32. *Maize-flour drawing, or vèvè, for the lou Simbi.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-Z]
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776
787

36. Possessed by the lwa Gèdé Nimbo, two women dance the deity's favorite step, the Banda.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

And when the revolution came he produced for the Haitian armies 175
knives, gun parts, and wheels to transport cannon. By the tens of thou- 178
sands he made ingeniously devised metal objects to be thrown on the 326
roads, before the French cavalry troops—objects so shaped that, no 648
matter how they fell, a single sharp point stood erect to cripple the enemy horses. Yet knowledge of the West African uses of iron did not altogether disappear, and during the first century of independence the Haitian blacksmith created many old-style knives, spears, and ritual objects for the cult temple.

Even today, some of this old-style work is to be found in hounfors in 326
the southwestern peninsula. One may see simple or ornate iron standards, 178
made to support ceremonial offerings or candles, strikingly similar to 178
standards in ancestral shrines in Dahomey. There are iron bells, both [184]
single and double, made in pure West African style; ornate ritual swords [534]
and sabers which are the crests of certain deities; coiled and uncoiled [171]
iron serpents representing the gods Damballa and Ayida; and stylized [776]
or semirealistic portraits of the deities. Many of these old pieces are nineteenth-century survivals; others have been forged within the past decade. ?

An over-all impression of Haitian material culture is that artistic 322
decoration is almost entirely absent and that the prime emphasis is 531
on utility. Wooden cooking spoons are efficient in form, but missing from them is the delicate decorative carving often found in West Africa. The long wooden washing bowl, or *gamelle*, and the wooden mortar in which grain is pulverized are likewise clean-cut but stark and plainly utilitarian. Clay bowls, bottles, and storage jars are usually of simple, 323
uniform design, with only accidental variations; there is little use of glazes, and the clay is often heavy and thick. Should there be a wari 524
gameboard in the peasant hut, the chances are that it is roughly made, 322
without legs or carved designs. Dugout canoes are usually crude in ap- 501
pearance, heavy and thick-walled, and irregular in form.

Yet there are many evidences—though one must seek them out—that 531
esthetic impulses are quite alive. The gay peasant straw knapsack, or [517]
alfor, without which no mountain man makes a journey, has a charm [482]
and grace that is not diminished by familiarity and cheapness. Dec- [285]
orated with sisal braid and tassels, and colored with green and magenta [386]
dyes, each *alfor* on close inspection appears to be unique. In some com- 531
munities in the south and southwest, burlap squares also are painted 353
with these traditional dyes. About forty inches across, and made of sugar [184]
bags, these paintings swarm with geometric patterns and sometimes with figures of flowers and animals. They are purely decorative, being

? [See plates 42-51, pp. 112-DD—112-FF.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

533*
539*
794
626

When I want to talk you do not want me to talk!
When I want to sing you do not want me to sing!
Dahomey *y nw*, they do me wrong! *

Another note of criticism within the hounfor concerns a person who has been putting on airs of importance. The song states that he (or she) in reality has not even qualified for the lowest order within the cult, even though he behaves as though he were the cult chief:

Ou poco hounsi oh!	You are not yet a hounsi, oh!
Ou dit'm ou c'est houngan!	You tell me you are a houngan!
Ou poco hounsi!	You are not yet a hounsi!
Ou dit'm ou c'est houngan c'est ça!	You tell me you are a houngan, it is so!
Oh Paille à Terre!	Oh, Straw on Earth! †
Poussé allé!	Push and go!
Oh Allada malade oh! [Ex. 99]	Oh, Allada is sick, oh! ‡

Poverty is so normal in Haitian life that a man who accumulates wealth in any form becomes conspicuous. Ordinarily he does not welcome this conspicuousness. It makes him a target of gossip and rumors, and of those who might wish to collect debts from him, borrow money, or obtain other favors. He becomes a *gros nèg'*, and finds himself increasingly cut off from the community of ordinary, poor people. Needless to say, Haitians, like other people, dream of striking it rich. Wherever poverty has been acute, whether in Europe, Asia, or America, the folklore is full of tales of finding great treasures. Haiti is no exception. Many Haitian folk tales and folk songs deal with this theme, particularly with obtaining wealth by magical or supernatural means. Sometimes riches are obtained through *engagements*, unholy compacts with devils or demons. In some stories loa facilitate the discovery of treasure, in others a powerful bocor accomplishes it through magical practices. If a man suddenly becomes well-to-do, therefore, rumors may spread in regard to how he came by his wealth. If he is suspected of dealings with devils or with a powerful bocor, his apparent success in his venture makes him a neighbor to be feared. To avoid incurring envy and hostility, people tend to play down their financial successes and pretend they have nothing in life but the clothes they wear, their houses, and their gardens. Spreading word that a poor man has hidden money is regarded as a mean and reprehensible act. Numerous folk songs protest against this injustice:

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533*
539*
[735]
[787]
[706]

Désastre tombé nans lacour-wà!
Si m'apé travaille là nans cour-wà,

* Literally: They eat my rights.
† An exclamation, the name of a certain ouanga.
‡ Allada, the name of a town in Dahomey, used in the sense of "people of Dahomey." The line means, "Things are in a bad state of affairs."

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV: Haiti SV3

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539*
593

Qua'm perd' un garçon moin join' l'aut' oh!
Ma rélé,
Oh qua'm perdit manman moin ma crié! [Ex. 102]

I cried,
Oh, when I lost my mother I cried!
I cried,
Oh, when I lost my mother I cried!
When I lost a man I found another, oh!
When I lost a man I found another, oh!
I cried,
Oh, when I lost my mother I cried!

533*
539*
261

Protest or complaint songs are sometimes directed against no one in particular but simply call the attention of listeners to the singer's misfortunes. In many such songs the president or one of the deities is mentioned by name. The singer in this way implicitly places responsibility for help. In the following song, one complains of hunger, another theme that runs throughout Haitian folklore and Haitian life.

Rwo! President qui voyé rélé'm!
Moin pas bwè moin pas mangé!
M'pas bwè moin pas mangé!
Oh m'pas bwè moin pas mangé!
President qui voyé rélé'm rwo!
M'pas bwè moin pas mangé! [Ex. 103]

Rwo! * The President sends for me!
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!
Oh, I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!
The President sends for me, *rwo!*
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!

533*
539*
521
[176]
[182]

Here the loa Ogoun Balindjo is called upon to take note of prying, insincere people who come to a person's house, observe what is going on, and go away to gossip:

Ogoun Balindjo
Yo vini ga'dé'm
Pou' y'allé valé oh!
Ogoun Balindjo
Li yé wè bouche pé oh!
Ogoun Balindjo
Pas wè yo vini ga'dé moin? [Ex. 104]

Ogoun Balindjo
They come to look at me

* An exclamation.

[P. 317]
[P. 316 is blank]

1. The Pantheons

Most of the loa of Haiti appear to belong to two major cult groupings: the Vodoun (dominated by Dahomé rites and traditions) and the Congo-Guinée (dominated mainly by the Pétro deities). In the Vodoun pantheon one finds deities of Dahomean and Yoruban origin, and others whose names seem to identify them with West African peoples such as the Mahis, the Amines, the Adjas, the Foulas, the Sousous, and the Haoussas. The so-called Congo-Guinée group, in addition to the Pétro escorte, appears to have absorbed many loa from Central Africa. Among the Congo-Guinée loa are such names as Mayombé, Loango, Bumba, Moundongue, Mousondi, Angole, Congo, Baganda, and Solongo, all of them designations of regions or tribes of the Congo area. Also in this pantheon are loa bearing the names Bambarra and Siningal (Senegal), from northwestern Africa. 776 794 184

It is not possible to group the loa in such a way that the system will reflect accurately the tradition and usage in all parts of the country. Had all the old cults or "nations" survived intact, the pantheons might have resembled the following:

Arada or Dahomey loa
Anago or Yoruba loa
Mahi loa
Congo loa (including the Moundongue, the Solongo, the Bumba, etc.)
Ibo loa
Kanga loa
Pétro loa
Etc.

In certain parts of Haiti, in scattered and isolated places, one finds Congo, Ibo, and Nago cults that have resisted absorption; but this pattern does not hold for most of the country. In general, Congo and Pétro tend to "march" together; Anago has become a "nation" within

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

776 184 794 a "nation" in the Dahomé rites; and the Ibo group, though still distinct, is frequently allied with the Dahomé rites or the Guinée rites.

The following list does not pretend to include all the loa known in Haiti. It is doubtful that a complete list could ever be compiled, in view of the continual generation of new deities and the constant cross-fertilization between "nations." The loa are grouped here according to most widespread usage. There are contradictions from which there is no possible escape, and these general groupings will not necessarily correspond to the concepts and practices of any specific locality. It is intended here to give a broad and generalized view. [128]

128 776 794 Under "The Vodoun Pantheon" I have placed constellations of deities of Dahomean and Yoruban origin, along with others that are clearly identified with Vodoun rites. Under "The Congo and Pétro Pantheons" I have listed the Congo-Guinée loa—consisting mainly of deities associated with Central Africa and deities affiliated with the Pétro rites. Ibo and Kanga loa are grouped together, because in many regions of Haiti the two pantheons appear to be interlocked. A separate listing is given for the Simbi family of water deities in view of their ambivalence; they are sometimes found in the Pétro group and sometimes in the Dahomé, according to local practice.

THE VODOUN PANTHEON

776 171 DAMBALLA WÈDO, or DAN WÈDO. One of the most venerable of Haitian loa. He is generally recognized as the husband of Ayida Wèdo, though occasionally the two deities are merged in a personality called Damballa-Ayida. The concept of a single identity for Damballa and Ayida conforms to Dahomean belief. In both Haiti and West Africa, Damballa is identified with the rainbow and is symbolized as a snake.[h] In Haiti he is associated also with rainfall, springs, and fertility. He is sometimes [782] described as "white," and the proper food offering to him is a white chicken. Persons [187] possessed by Damballa usually take on stylized characteristics of snakes. Along with [177] many other important loa, he has become identified with characters in Christian religious belief. There are, in fact, "two" Damballa Wèdos. One, identified with Moses, comes in talking; the other, identified with St. Patrick, never talks. Food [782] offerings for the St. Patrick version of Damballa consist of eggs, flour, sugar, and almond syrup. Damballa remains one of the chief gods of the Dahomey cult in Cuba, and he survived into the last century in New Orleans under the name Danny.

[822] AYIDA WÈDO. Generally regarded in Haiti as the wife of Damballa, Ayida is also symbolized by snake and rainbow, and her color, like Damballa's, is "white." In Dahomey and Nigeria, Ayida is known as a male rather than a female spirit and is regarded there as the same divinity as Damballa, or Dji. In Dahomey, Ayida Wèdo was the great serpent who held up the world. According to one myth, the Creator of the World assigned to Ayida the task of holding up the earth to keep it from falling into the sea. The great serpent coiled himself, tail in mouth, and lay below

h [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 245 ff. Cf. P.354, Category 116. --Analyst]

[The Vodoun Pantheon]

the earth like the carrying pad that women wear to support bundles on their heads. 776
Whenever Ayida Wèdo shifted his position there were earthquakes.[2] When the rain- 171
bow appeared after a rain it was said that Ayida had come out from under the 821
earth to drink of the fresh water.

DAMBALLA GRAND CHIMIN (Damballa of the Highway). Another manifestation 484
of Damballa as a protector of those on long journeys.

DAMBALLA VERRE. Another manifestation of Damballa.

DOMICI WÈDO. Considered to be the daughter of Damballa. The ending of her name (*-ci*) suggests that at one time she may have been considered a wife rather than a daughter.

DOKI WÈDO. A member of Damballa's family.

AGÃO WÈDO. A member of Damballa's family. Said to be a "work loa" who aids 241
men with their gardens, especially in time of illness.

ÉZILIE DOBA, or DOGBA, sometimes spelled EZULIE. One of the "big" loa of the 177
Dahomé pantheon, a symbol of purity, and sometimes identified with the Virgin 822
Mary. Her color is white, and services to her include a ritual sweeping and sprin- 782
kling of the earth and a perfuming of the air. Food offerings to her include corn 787
meal and eggs. Male "horses" of Ézilie are sometimes bound to her by mystic 834
marriages, and they are obligated to refrain from sexual intercourse on certain 588
days which belong to her. There are a number of Ézilies, regarded as members of the same family or, in some cult centers, as different manifestations of the same deity. Some Haitians regard Ézilie Doba as the ancestor of the Ézilie family and refer to her as Grand Ézilie. Note that there is a Dahomean town named Dogba at approximately 0° 6′ E., 6° 50′ N.

ÉZILIE FRÉDA, or ÉZILIE DAHOMAIN (Dahomé), or ÉZILIE FRÉDA DAHOMAIN. Like 177
Ézilie Doba, she is a symbol of purity and is identified with the Virgin Mary. 588
Mystic marriages are performed with her, and her "horses" are obligated to re- 787
frain from sexual intercourse on certain days. She is also a giver of wealth. 834

ÉZILIE WÈDO. A sister or daughter of Ézilie Doba and also related to Damballa.

ÉZILIE MAISOL. A sister of Ézilie Fréda.

ÉZILIE BANDA. A manifestation of Ézilie who is especially fond of the Banda dance.

ÉZILIE JÉROUDE (Red Eyes). A stern and hard Ézilie who is often identified with Pétro rather than Dahomé rites.

AÏSON FRÉDA. A member of the Ézilie escorte, regarded as a market-place protector. 443
In Dahomey, Aïson was a protector of all public gathering places.[3] 171

AÏSON BELÉKÉTÉ

AÏSON DLEAU BOLO BOSU

MAÎTRESSE MAMBO. A special form of Ézilie as priestess.

MAÎTRESSE ESPAGNOLE, or 'PAGNOLE. A person mounted by this Ézilie talks only 787
Spanish. 191

SOBO, or SOGBO. A thunder deity who hurls stones to the earth when angered. 776
Some of the stones thrown by Sobo are regarded as the sacred residence of various 171
loa. Sobo (or Sogbo) is a member of the original Thunder pantheon of Dahomey.

SOBO BADÉ, or SOGBO BADÉ, or simply BADÉ. A close relative of Sobo, regarded as the protector of the hounfor (*badé*). In Dahomey, Badé is sometimes referred to as the son of the deity Sobo.[4]

[2] [See Ellis, The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, pp. 47-49; and Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 245ff. Cf. p. 354 Category 116. -- Analyst]

[3] [Ellis, op. cit., p. 52. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[4] [Herskovits, op. cit., pp. 152ff. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]

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776 Agomé Tonnerre, also pronounced Abomé Tonnerre. Another thunder loa. Abomé (or Agbomé) is the name of an ancient capital of Dahomey.

Badé. The wife of Sobo Badé.

So Narcisse, also called Sogo Narcisse, or simply So. A thunder loa of Dahomean origin. In Dahomey he is regarded as an offspring of Mawu and Lisa, and a member of the Sky pantheon. [171]

Kébiosu, or Kébioso. A thunder loa who, like Sobo, hurls stones to the earth. In Dahomey he is known as Xevioso and is thought to be the same deity as So. In Haiti, persons killed by lightning are thought to be enemies of Kébiosu and are given special treatment in burial. [171] [166]

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776 782 821 822 Agwé Woyo, known also as Coqui-Nan-Mer. He is a loa of the sea; thunder and lightning over the ocean are thought to be Agwé shooting his cannon. He is usually symbolized in pictures by a sailing or steam vessel. His colors are blue and white, and the primary sacrificial animal for him is a male goat. High ceremonies for Agwé are begun in the hounfor and consummated in a sailing boat on the open sea, from which is launched a highly decorated and stylized miniature ship containing food for the deity. This tiny craft is known as the *barque d'Agwé*. Hounfors honoring this spirit usually have a small boat hanging from the rafters. In Dahomey, Agwé is also a sea deity and a member of the Thunder pantheon. [171]

776 171 Agwètta Woyo. She is thought to be Agwé Woyo's wife, though in Dahomey she was considered to be his daughter.

Agwètau Wandjou. Said to be the son of Agwé.

La Sirène. Another deity of the sea, a latecomer visualized as a mermaid. La Sirène is usually thought of as belonging to a separate family, though she is frequently served along with Agwé. Some sociétés do not recognize her at all.

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776 171 Nananbouclou, or Nanan Bouloucou. A loa of herbs and medicines. In Dahomey this spirit was considered the grandparent of all deities, the progenitor of Mawu and Lisa from whom all demigods are descended.[5] She is still remembered in the Dahomey cults of Cuba.

Lissa or Lisha. Probably the Lisa of Dahomey, child of Nanbouclou.

Attibon Legba, or Legba Sé. One of the most important of Haitian loa, frequently the first one invoked in any service. He is the guardian of the gateway, the crossroads, and the highway. Cocks and male goats are his favorite foods, as in West Africa. In Dahomean tradition, Legba is the youngest offspring of Mawu and Lisa, the progenitors of all Dahomean deities. He is a divine trickster who is both feared and loved, a force that is capriciously malevolent or benevolent. Today, as in earlier times in Dahomey, the image of Legba, made of clay, stands or sits before the entrance to many villages. Sometimes the image is nothing more than a mound or column of earth symbolizing a phallus. Legba's mischief and tricks are directed against the other deities and human beings. In Haiti, as in Dahomey, Legba is not a personal deity. As Herskovits points out, Legba has no "character" and cannot be relied on. He is the intervener between mankind and the deities. It is in this sense that he "opens the gate," providing a channel of communication between man and loa; and it is for this reason that he is often supplicated first in religious ritual. In Dahomean lore, Legba's mischief is often in the realm of sex. In ritual dances for [182] [198] [187]

5 [Ibid, pp. 101 ff. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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776 171 [831]

Legba in Dahomey, the performers hold a carved phallus between their legs and perform copulating movements. The Haitian Legba is depicted as an aged limping loa, and the carved phallus has become a grotesque crutch-cane that fits into the crotch of the legs. The Dahomean Legba is remembered elsewhere in the New World, notably in Dutch Guiana, Brazil, and Cuba. Until relatively recent times he was known among the Negroes of Louisiana by the name Papa Lebat.[9]

Legba Grand Chimin (Legba of the Highway). A special manifestation of Legba who guards the highway.

Legba Kalfu (Legba of the Crossroads). A special manifestation of Legba who guards the crossroads.

Legba Malt' 'Bitation (Legba Master of the Household). The Legba who protects the house and its grounds.

Legba Lapleurondé. One of the Legba family.

Legba Kéré. One of the Legba family.

Legba Aquator. Said to be a "Nago" deity.

Attibon Kéké. One of the Legba family.

Attibon Samardi. One of the Legba family.

Azombelo Kipi. One of the Legba family.

Ogoun Feraille, often referred to as Malt' Ogoun. The chief and ancestor of a large family of loa whose activities have to do with blacksmithing and war, which are closely related. Ogoun Feraille is a patron of warriors and the forge; his symbol is a piece of forged iron, such as a machete, a hoe blade, a saber, or a piece of iron chain. In West Africa, Ogoun is considered a patron of hunters as well.[9] He was widely known by various peoples in Dahomey and Nigeria. In Dahomey he was considered a child of the divine Mawu and Lisa,[9] and among the Yoruba of Nigeria he was regarded as a brother of Chango and Dada,[9] two spirits who survive in the Haitian pantheon. An altar to Ogoun Feraille, like that of the loa Chango, may consist of a pile of iron scrap, perhaps a broken sugar vat. In Cuba, Ogoun Feraille is a prominent deity in both the Arara (Dahomey) and the Lucumí (Yoruba) cults. Although absorbed exclusively into the Dahomé family of rites in Haiti, Ogoun Feraille and his entire family and escorte are designated as belonging to the Nago "nation." Their color, like that of heated iron, is red. Ogoun Feraille survived until recent times in Louisiana as Joe Feraille.[10] [822] 776

Ogoun Fer (Ogoun Iron). He is sometimes called Ogoun St. Jacques, St. Jacques Majeur, or simply St. Jacques, being identified with the saint of that name.

Ogoun Mashoquette (Ogoun Blacksmith).

Ogoun Bakala. One of the Ogoun brothers.

Ogoun Baltaza Misho. One of the Ogoun brothers.

Ogoun Jénison, or Jérison. One of the Ogoun brothers.

Ogoun Badagry, or Batagri. Said to be a "grandson" of Malt' Ogoun. He is a "work" loa, as well as an ironworker and a warrior, and helps in the fields, especially in time of sickness. Badagry is the name of a town near the mouth of the Ogoun River in western Nigeria. According to a priest of the Cuban Dahomé cult, the word *batagri* was used to designate the circumcision house in Dahomey. Ogoun Badagry thus may have been associated with that shrine. 776 171

Chango, or Ogoun Chango. A member of the Ogoun family and, like most of his brothers, a warrior and ironworker. Chango's altar is usually a pile of scrap iron, or

[9] [Ibid., pp. 201ff. Cf. p. 354 Category 116. -- Analyst]
[9] [Ellis, The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, p. 67. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst]
[9] [Herskovits, Op. Cit., pp. 105ff. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]
[9] [Ellis, The Yoruba-speaking Peoples, pp. 45, 67ff. Cf. p. 354 Cat. 116. -- Analyst]
[10] [Library of Congress Recording, No. 101. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]

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776 171 any iron object, such as a sugar vat. In West Africa, Chango (or Shango) and Ogoun were considered separate deities. In Nigeria, according to Ellis, they were brothers, closely associated with each other. Among the Yoruba, Chango was a thunder-and-lightning god and he is believed to have been one of the early kings of Oyo. The African Chango, like the Haitian, is identified with fire, a corollary of lightning, and persons possessed by him may carry pots of fire on their heads and perform other fire tests.[11]

Chango Gold. Another manifestation of Ogoun Chango.

Ogoun Bachango. Possibly the same as Ogoun Chango, or he may be named after the Bachangos, a Congo tribe. A warrior and ironworker.

Ogoun Balizai. One of the Ogoun family.

Nimbo Nimbo. One of the Ogoun family.

Archardé, Achardé, Chardé, or Chadé. One of the Ogoun escorte, sometimes called Ogoun Chadé, or Chadé Bocor.

Ogoun Yemsin. One of the Ogoun brothers.

Obatala, or Batala. A loa of war. Among the Yoruba people of Nigeria, Obatala was a sky deity and protector of the town gates. He was thought to form children in the womb and was therefore believed responsible for albinism and congenital deformities.[12] Obatala and Chango are among the main Lucumí (Yoruba) deities in Cuba.

Ogoun Bayé. An aspect of Ogoun who functions as a gateway guardian.

Ogoun Blanc (White Ogoun). He does not drink rum, which is a favorite beverage of his brothers.

Ogoun Jerba

Ogoun Jèkka, Jèkkè, or Yèkkè. A warrior and ironworker. Jèkkè may have been a shrine or regional designation.

Ogoun Kèrèk

Ogoun Kénbon

Yalodé, or Ogoun Lodé. Brother of Ogoun Badagry and the other Ogouns. Yalodé is clearly of Dahomean origin.[13]

Ogoun Panama, or Ogoun Palama. Guardian against sunstroke, or spirit responsible for sunstroke. A brother of Ogoun Badagry. He is usually seen wearing a Panama hat.

Ogoun Pierre Narcisse

Ogoun Jérouge (Ogoun Red Eyes). A malevolent Ogoun brother, red eyes being a mark of bad behavior. Some people feel that he is a member of the Pétro rather than the Vodoun pantheon.

Nago Piment. A member of the Ogoun escorte. He eats hot peppers.

Boulicha Nago

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776 346 [184] Gèdé Nimbo, or Nibo, also called Brave Gèdé. One of the powerful deities of the Vodoun pantheon, particularly in the region of Port-au-Prince, where many hounfors cater extensively to him. Gèdé Nimbo, along with his numerous brothers and his vast escorte, is a "dead" loa, a spirit of the graveyard, a sexual rascal, and a violator [198] of propriety. He is served apart from the other loa, and usually he has a separate altar or shrine outside the central hounfor. Cult centers for Gèdé are often near graveyards, though not necessarily so. Gèdé services abound around the main cemetery of Port-au-Prince. Gèdé Nimbo has various manifestations, but he is usually 776

[11] [Ellis, The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples, p. 47; W. R. Bascom, in Introduction to record album Drums of the Yoruba of Nigeria (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1950). Cf. p. 354, Category 116, -- Analyst]

[12] Ellis, The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples p. 38 ff. Cf. p. 354 (cat. 116. -- Analyst)

[13] Ellis, The Ewe-Speaking Peoples, pp. 71-74; Herskovits, op. cit. I, 37 Cf. p. 354, cat. 116, -- Analyst]

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dressed in a black frock coat, black top hat, and black trousers or a blue, white polka-dotted skirt. He carries a cane and smokes a pipe or a cigarette, according to which manifestation of Gèdé he represents. He talks with a strong nasal accent, which is acquired by anyone mounted by him. Gèdé Nimbo is always asking for money. Persons possessed by him may rub hot peppers on their tongues or in their eyes. In some parts of Haiti, Gèdé is thought to be identical with Baron Samedi. In a Vodoun service, no other loa cares to enter while a Gèdé is present; and Gèdé delights in appearing suddenly, uninvited, and obstructing the orderly progress of a ritual. Although Herskovits points out that Gedeonsu, or Gèdé, is a Dahomean totem,[1] it is worth noticing that in Haiti the Gèdé rites are often regarded as belonging to the Nago "nation." [176] [187] [191]

Gèdé Nimbo Mazaka. A Gèdé brother.

Gèdé Ouèsou. A Gèdé brother.

Gèdé L'Oraille. A thunder or storm Gèdé. Like the other Gèdés, he is closely associated with death, and he is considered more of a malefactor than most. He is repulsive in appearance, with a dwarflike stature.

Gèdé Mivèvou. A Gèdé brother.

Gèdé Nansou. A Gèdé brother.

Gèdé Nouvavou. A Gèdé brother.

Gèdé Vi. Said to be a son of Gèdé Nimbo, though some Haitians regard this loa as a female, possibly Gèdé Nimbo's wife.

Gèdé Zeclai. A loa of lightning, thought to be responsible for death by lightning, violent death in general, and destruction of cattle and other property by natural forces. He seems to be a Gèdé version of Kébioso or Sobo. [166]

Jean Zombie. One of the Gèdé brothers, a "dead" spirit.

Gèdé Ti Puce (Gèdé Little Flea)

Gèdé Raché (Gèdé Tear Off)

Gèdé Joyeuse (Happy Gèdé)

Tiwawè Gèdé, or Gèdé Tiwawè Pancié. This Gèdé is one that makes mischief as he enters a hounfor service.

Gèdé Zilé (Gèdé of the Island)

Gèdé Yalovi

Gèdé Yabofé

Circlèquitté Gèdé (The Gèdé Who Mows Down)

Jensiman Brittisse. A loa who works with the Gèdé family, one of Gèdé Nimbo's graveyard assistants. He is described as having a white skin, suggesting that his surname is a corruption of "British."

Marie Gèdé. A sister of the Gèdé brothers.

Balérouzé. One of the Gèdé brothers. His name means to "sweep and sprinkle," a ritual activity characteristic of certain Vodoun ceremonies.

Manzè Bridgit, or Manman Bridgit. The mother of the Gèdé brothers.

Malt' Samsan. One of the Gèdé escorte.

Baron Samedi. One of a group of Barons who march with the Gèdés. They are so closely identified that some Haitians feel that Baron Samedi is merely another name for Gèdé Nimbo. Persons possessed in cemeteries are thought to be mounted by Baron Samedi or one of his brothers. Like the Gèdés, the Barons are spoken of as "dead" spirits. [187]

Baron Piquante. The loa in charge of grave digging.

[1] [Herskovits, Life in a Haitian Valley, p. 267, cf. p. 354, Category 116. — Analyst]

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● 176 Azaïon Lacroix, or Baron Lacroix. Spoken of as "chief" of the cemetery, the one who plants the cross over the grave.

Baron Poussi, or Poussi (Baron Dust)

Baron Sal (Baron Earth, or Dirty Baron)

Baron Chita. The Baron who sits on the graves.

Baron Tikalé

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[175] [171] Azaka Mínó, or Zaká Mínó. Herskovits reports that Azaka Mólé is the name of the stream which Dahomeans believe all the dead must cross.[15]

Cousin Zaka. The peasant Zaka, special patron of the country farmer and the people of the mountains. He is always portrayed as wearing the blue denim costume of the peasant, carrying the woven peasant knapsack called an *alfor cousin* and a [187] cocomacaque stick, and smoking a clay pipe. Persons possessed by Cousin Zaka are dressed in this way, and they speak in the manner of the mountain man, a style that is heard only in the most remote communities.

Minise Zaka, or Ministre Zaka. An aspect of Cousin Zaka. Ministre Zaka is a sort of Minister of Agriculture and a patron of peasant farmers.

Si Azaka. The wife of Ministre Zaka.

Azaka Tonnerre, or Tonnè. The Azaka who brings thunder and rain.

Azaka Bouno Baing. One of the Azaka family.

Marassa. The loa of twins. The Marassa family of deities are in a special category, somewhat apart from other spirits. In an important Vodoun service, for example, there are invocations to the loa in general, to the Marassas, to the family ancestors, and to God.

Marassa Doçu. Patron of the first child after twins if it is a boy.

Marassa Doça. Patron of the first child after twins if it is a girl.

Marassa Blanc. Patron of white twins.

Marassa Trois. Patron of triplets.

Marassa Guinée. Patron of twins when one is a boy and one a girl.

Marassa Quat'. Patron of quadruplets, or of two consecutive sets of twins.

Marassa Bois (Marassa of the Woods). He is considered an "unbaptized" or "untamed" loa, and very savage. He likes sweets and never eats salt.

Marassa Douiné, or Marassa Cinq. Patron of consecutive twins and triplets.

Marassa Caille (Marassa of the House). This one eats salt.

Loko Attisso. He is usually pictured as the protector of the hounfor, or cult [171] temple, and as the keeper of the altar (*pó*). In Dahomey, Loko is a deity of the Sky pantheon and a son of the divine Mawu and Lisa.[16] He is still remembered in the Arara (Dahomey) cults of Cuba. He is also called Sindé or Singé.

Loko Attisoué. Said to be Loko Attisso's wife.

Loko Adäico, or Däico. A member of Loko Attisso's family.

Loko Däiyak. A brother of Loko Adäico (Däico + *frère*).

Loko Däinzo

Loko Tokamiwizo

Loko Daisosé

Loko Bassiyé

Tos Loko

[15 [Ibid, p. 280. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. --Analyst]

[16 [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 108-109. Cf. p. 354, cat. 116. --Analyst]

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Aziò Loko Bark. A crossroads protector of the Loko family.
Loko Dis Pié

Danh Ogou. Among the Tshi-speaking people of West Africa there was a spirit called Adanó, a malignant giantess.[171]
Ogou Jassim
Sogbedo Yhasim

Zoucha
Madosbra
Madosbra Espaka

Amina. An aged female loa. Sacrifices to her consist of rice, sugar cane, lima beans, and eggs. As in services for the deity Fazilie, perfumes are used during services for her. [182]
Amina Gatoal Laplanbo. A member of the Amine family. Amine is the name of a tribe of Dahomey.
Amina Naun. Another member of the Amine family.

Général Clermeil, or Président Clermeil. He is said to be the "father" and patron of all light children born to dark parents. Stories are sometimes heard of men who wrongly accused their wives of infidelity because of the lightness of their children, and who were finally mounted and punished by Clermeil. [187]
Clermeilème. The light-skinned daughter of the dark Général Clermeil.

The family relationships or escortes of the following deities are not clear. Some of them may belong to one or another of the foregoing groups, or to still unclad families.

Adja. A female loa associated with the arts of pharmacy. The Yoruba of Nigeria had a spirit named Adja who carried men and women off into the forest to teach them about the medicinal properties of roots and herbs.[18] In Haiti, Adja's mangé consists of cookies and chicken. Persons possessed by her sometimes eat broken glass. [191] [182] [187]
Adja Bouc, Akadja Bouc, or Kadja Bouc. This deity is also known in Dahomey. [191]
Ahanhan. A male deity characterized as a *sandalier*, a small lizard capable of changing colors. A person mounted by Agannan sometimes climbs trees or posts. Some Haitians contend that a person possessed by this loa will change color, from dark to light. [187]
Agasu. In Dahomey, according to Herskovits, Agasu is the name of the panther fetish.[19] Dahomeans regard this deity as of special significance to the royal family. He was remembered among Negroes in Louisiana under the name Agoussou. [191]
Agasu Yemadi. Related to Agasu.
Dadal. Among the Yoruba, Dadal was a brother of Ogoun and Chango, and was a patron of vegetables.[20]
Attibon, also known as St. Soleil. Persons mounted as a result of exposure to the sun are thought to be possessed by this loa. The association of Aziondé with the sun may be a syncretism. [189]
Azondadi
Aza. A loa who likes the Juba dance.

[18] (Ellis, The Tshi-Speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa, p. 68. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. — Analyst)
[19] (Ellis, The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples, pp. 79-80. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. — Analyst)
[20] (Herskovits, Dahomey, I, 66. Cf. Ellis, The Ewe-Speaking Peoples, p. 83. "Dadi" is a deity very important in the Ewe of Togoland. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. — Analyst)
[21] (Ellis, The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples, pp. 45, 76. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. — Analyst)

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● 796 ABEL. A snake deity.

BABOULE. A loa who likes the Baboule dance.

CALABASSE. Loa of the calabash tree.

CHÉBO PHOTILE. An ancient male deity. Herskovits suggests that he may represent the leopard, *zébo* being the Fon word for that animal. The wildness of the attack on the sacrificial animal by persons possessed by Chébo supports this conjecture. A deity called Dada Sogbo is prominent in the Rada Cult of Trinidad.

[114] [191]

SIMALO. A male loa who is believed responsible for fine physical proportions and bodily strength in men.

COQUI-NAN-DLAU. Probably the same as Coqui-Nan-Mer (Agwé).

[191] AHADJA. This loa may well be the King Agadja of Dahomey who was said to be responsible for the coming of *vodu* (loa) into that country. Herskovits tells a legend about a woman named Hwandjile who prevailed upon the king to bring the *vodu* from the kingdom of Adja.[21] Hwandjile herself survives in Haiti under the name

WANDJÉ, or HOUANDJÉ

[321] [989] LINGLESSOU. A rainbow loa. Persons mounted in sight of a rainbow are thought to be possessed by this deity.

BLEKLEWOU. "Marches" with Linglessou.

WANGUE, also called ALOVI WANGUE (King of Angola). This loa appears to be an interpolation from the Congo rites.

[989] ALOVI, or GADOLOVI. A masculine, dwarflike spirit who likes to disarrange things and play practical jokes. Persons possessed by Alovi may break up gatherings, discommode spectators and dancers, and generally make a nuisance of themselves. Some Haitians regard this loa as belonging more to the Pétro pantheon than to the Dahomé.

MALÈ' BOIS (Master of the Woods). May be an interpolation of Mah' Grand Bois of the Congo-Guinée pantheon.

MALÈ' DLAU (Master of the Water). May refer to the loa Simbi.

DAN WÉDO, or WÉDO. A loa known in the Artibonite region. The name is possibly a corruption of Dan Wèdo.

DJA KÉKÉ

FON, or NÈG' FON. The name is that of a tribe on the Calabar coast of West Africa.

FADO PIERRE. Said to be the son of Pierre Basien.

GÉNÉRAL YEMBATHOS, or JEAN BAPTISTE. Probably the Christian name of some Dahomé loa.

GRAND LEMBRENE. An aged, dwarflike loa, guardian and protector of children.

GRAND ALADA, or ALOUDA

GRAND ALOUMANDJA, or MAMMAN ALOUMANDJA. Believed to be a loa who was mak' zbo of the Emperor Dessalines. Some informants consider this spirit to be a démon or loup-garou rather than a loa.

HOUNTOR. The spirit of the Arada drums. There is a difference of opinion on whether Hountor is a loa in the precise sense or merely a drum spirit. The term is sometimes used to designate the largest drum of the Arada trio.

[184] JEAN BATEAU. A loa well known in the region of Léogane. When he "enters," the possessed persons talk *langage* into a *canarie* (clay water vessel).

[187] MALÈ' DAVID. This loa always talks immaculate French, and persons possessed by him read cards and tell fortunes.

21 [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 104. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116.--Analyst]

Maly' Grand Chemin (Master of the Highway). Probably Legba. 176

Makandal. Believed to be the spirit of the famous houngan Makandal, who lived during the revolutionary period. He is symbolized as a snake which lives in the ground. Some informants think he is a Pétro rather than a Dahomé loa. [175]

Maesso Çaça

Tijean Dantor (Ancient Tijean)

Whydah Walo. Whydah is the name of a seacoast town in Dahomey.

Zo. A fire deity of clear Dahomean origin.[22]

Olorisa

Ogal, or Olange. Known also among the Lucumí cults of Cuba. May be any one of the Ounges mentioned by Herskovits. [171]

Olange Léléé

Oodjaré

Papa Dahomé

Pierre Basico. This loa is sometimes identified with St. Peter. [177]

Pierre Damballa, Dambarra, or Dambada. Sometimes identified with St. Peter.

Pierre Walo. Related to Whydah Walo.

Poula, or Foula. This name is probably a tribal designation.

Sabata. Described as a loa of ancient times. Sabata or Sagbata is the so-called smallpox group of deities of Dahomey.

Sïfla. A female deity, thought by some to belong to the Exilie Fréda family.

Silibo Gwlto. In Dahomey, according to Herskovits, Silibo is an ancient sib-founder. [171]

Silibja

Taureau

Ti Chab. This is a "false name"; this loa keeps his real name a secret.

THE AMBIVALENT SIMBI FAMILY

This group of loa in certain regions has attached itself to the Vodoun pantheon, elsewhere to the Congo-Guinée pantheon; but it has not maintained any kind of independent or semi-independent status. The deity Simbi and his family are of Congo origin. [171]

Simba. A male deity, patron of rain and drinking water. Said to be the father of the Simbi brothers.

Simbi Dileau. The best known of the Simbi family. Like his father, he is the patron of fresh water, is associated with the spring, and usually is symbolized as a snake. The color sacred to him is white. Altars to Simbi Dileau usually are found at the spring or the well. Sometimes ponds are constructed for him within the houmfor. [823] [822] [178]

Simbi Kitya

Simbi Yewéro, or Simbi Nan Dé Zaeux (Simbi in Two Waters). Symbolized as a water snake who lives in the "upper" waters and the "lower" waters.

Grand Simba. The parent of Simbi, and ancestor of the entire family of water loa.

Simbi Trois Zaé (Simbi of Three Islands)

Simbi Macaya

Simbi Grand Bois (Simbi of the Forest)

22 [Ellis, The Ewe-Speaking Peoples, pp. 71-74. Cf. p. 354, category 116.--Analyst]

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[776] Simbi Wangol
Simbi Yenpaka
Simbi Larouzé (The Dew Simbi)
Simbi Devant Bondilu (Simbi Before God)
Simbi Trois Fé (Simbi Three Leaves—the name of a pouin)
Simbi Trois Racines (Simbi Three Roots—the name of a pouin)

THE IBO AND KANGA PANTHEONS

Caplãou. A Kanga loa. His name appears to be a survival of the Caplãou tribe. Some persons feel he is a member of the Pétro group.

Ibo Foula. An Ibo loa. Note that both Ibo and Foula are tribal designations.

Ibo Mariani, or Mariané. An Ibo loa.

Ibo Héquoiké. An Ibo loa.

[782] Ibo Jérouge (Ibo Red Eyes). A malevolent spirit. Food offerings to her consist mainly of pigs and cocks.

Ibo Lazile. An Ibo loa. The food offering to this loa is a goat.

Ibo Lélé, or Ianman Ibo. An Ibo loa.

Kanga. A Kanga loa. A "hard" or "stern" spirit, thought by some people to be the [787] same as Caplãou. Persons mounted by him play with fire and eat hot peppers.

Kanga Trois. A Kanga loa.

Legba Ibo. The Ibo form of the Vodoun Legba.

Mardi Kama, or Ibo Kama. An Ibo loa.

Marie Louise. An Ibo loa.

Nègèsse Ibo. An Ibo loa.

Ibo Suament. An Ibo loa.

Ibo Wanème. An Ibo loa.

Nomination. An Ibo loa.

Toument. An Ibo loa.

Barak. An Ibo loa.

Un Pied Un Main Un Jé (One Foot, One Hand, One Eye). An Ibo loa.

Akoupi. An Ibo loa.

De L'Air. An Ibo loa.

Papa Zao. A Kanga loa.

Zao Langé. A Kanga loa.

Kanga Langa. A Kanga loa.

Ça Ou Mangé Con Ça (What Do You Eat Like That). An Ibo loa.

Takwa, or Saint Akwa. An Ibo loa. When he comes in he speaks "unknown" languages.

THE CONGO AND PÉTRO PANTHEONS

Malt' Grand Bois (Master of the Woods). In Congo rites this loa is regarded as one of the most important of deities, holding a place equivalent to that of Damballa in the Dahomé service. When he "comes in" he makes a great din and racket.

Femme Grand Bois. The wife of Malt' Grand Bois.

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WANGOL (King of Angola). He also appears in other rites.

YAOMBÉ, or MAYAOMBÉ. This name is a tribal designation, referring to the Mayaombés of the Congo region.

WANGOL DLEAU (Wangol of the Water)

MOUNDONGUE. Often considered to be a "hard" loa. Ritual service to him includes, on special occasions, the cutting off of dogs' ears and tails. He is fond of dogs and is benevolent toward them. The name derives from that of a tribe of the upper Congo region. [782]

TI MOUNDONGUE. Said to be a "son" of Moundongue.

MOUNDONGUE MOUSAILLE. A member of Moundongue's family.

BAIACOU, or BÈLÈCOU. A loa identified with the morning star, also called Baiacou. There is also a town in Dahomey by this name.

GANDA, or BAGANDA, also called Nèg' Ganda. A deity taking the name of the Ganda people of Uganda.

CONGO YAMINGAN. A benevolent loa associated with curing and protecting the sick. Certain curative medicine bundles are called *yamingans*. [755]

MACAYA BUMBA, sometimes called Caya. He takes his name from the Bumba people of the upper Congo River region. The Bumbas are near neighbors of the Moundongues.

MANYO BUMBA. One of the Bumba family.

MARIANI MOUNDONGUE. One of the Moundongue family.

ROI LOANGUE (King of Loango). Refers to the old African kingdom of that name.

NANCHOU. A warrior deity.

AVÉLÉKÉTÉ. Known primarily in northern Haiti. [784]

DAN PÉTRO. A rather malevolent loa, from whom the Pétro cult takes its name. The mangé for Dan Pétro is a pig. Early observers speculated that Dan Pétro was originally a powerful houngan of prerevolutionary days.[23] [782] [783]

AYIDA PÉTRO. A Pétro version of the Vodoun Ayida Wèdo.

BAKULU BAKA, known in some regions by the name Pinga Maza. He is a malevolent spirit who "eats"—i.e., destroys—people. Some informants are inclined to believe that Bakulu and Pinga are separate loa, both of a variety akin to baka or démons.

BAKULU BARAK. Related to Bakulu Baka.

BAMBARRA TAIBA. He is visualized as a sea crab. *Taille bas* in Creole means "low hips" and is used to describe a dance posture. The surname Taiba therefore may describe the movements of this loa as he moves about like a crab. [792]

BOLISH BOLISA

BRISÉ GÉNÉRAL, or GÉNÉRAL BRISÉ. He is enormously large and ferocious in appearance. A special loa of the country people. Although stern, he is fond of children. He is symbolized as an owl; his home is in the chardette tree. His physical description suggests that he may be a deification of the epic folklore character Brise Montaigne, or Break Mountains.

CHANGANAN

CONGO JÉROCOE (Congo Red Eyes). A malevolent male spirit. Loa with red eyes are always of bad character.

CONGO MAPIOCHE, or MAPIOCHE. A malevolent spirit.

CONGO SAVANE, or CONGO ZANNOR (Congo of the Plains). Malevolent, fierce, and

23 [Saint-Méry, De la danse, p. 48. Cf p. 354, Cat. 116. —Analyst]

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strong, he is a man-eater; constant reference is made to his mortar in which he grinds people. His ritual color is white; some people believe that his skin is also white. The grinding of a person in a mortar is an African symbolism. A bas-relief in Dahomey reported by Gorer[24] shows King Glele pounding a vanquished king's head in a mortar.

Bosu Trois Cornes

Bosu Yèmain

Bosu Swi Yèmain Yèmain

Dada Ézilie

Ézilie Boucan

Ézilie Un Main Un Pied Un Jé (Ézilie One Hand, One Foot, One Eye)

Ézilie Balianne

Ézilie Dankéké

Ézilie Jérouge (Ézilie Red Eyes). A malevolent spirit.[25]

Ézilie Mapionne, or Mapiongle. A malevolent spirit.

Ézilie Femme Pétro

Ézilie Acoupi

Grand Assonglo

Jean Pierre Pounguè

Limba Zão. A deity of Congo origin.

Damballa Laflambeau

Malt' Pimba. Said to be father of Zão Pimba.

Mambo Ayida (Priestess Ayida). A Pétro version of the Vodoun Ayida.

Marinette Congo. A malevolent female loa.

Marinette Pied Chêche (Marinette Dry Feet). Sister to Marinette Bras Chêche, and equally malevolent.

Ogoun Jérouge (Ogoun Red Eyes). A malevolent spirit. A Pétro form of the Vodoun deity, with a different character.

Ogoun Dleau (Ogoun of the Water). Brother of Ogoun Jérouge.

Ogoun Laflambeau. A fire loa. When he comes in he plays with hot coals, hot iron, and flames.

Ogoun Pétro. He is malevolent and "eats" men.

Pimba, or Pemba

Quançon Fer (Iron Pants)

Kitta Banda (Chic Kitta)

Kitta Bayè (Kitta of the Gate). A gateway guardian.

Kitta Congo

Kitta Kanga

Kitta Legba. Possibly the same as Kitta Bayè.

Racine

Rigal. A brother to Général Brisé. A benevolent loa.

Roi Grand Chimin (King of the Highway). May refer to Legba or to another highway loa.

Sililiwo Boquoimé

Taureau Pétro. A Pétro version of the Vodoun Taureau.

Tijean Pétro. A malevolent loa who preys on children from the foliage of the coconut palm.

Tijean Pied Fin (Tijean No Feet). Brother to Tijean Pétro.

24 [Gorer, Africa Dances, P. 188. Cf. P.354, Cat. 116, --Analyst]

25 [For footnote, See Cat. 116, P.354. --Analyst]

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Tijean Pied Chèche (Tijean Dry Feet). One of the malevolent Tijean brothers.
Tikitta Démambré, or Kitta Démambré. Thought to be the son of Kitta Bayè.
Yaroyé Limba. A deity of Congo origin.
Zão Pimba
Zaka Tonnerre (Zaka Thunder)
Zaka Groli
Zaka L'Oraille (Zaka Storm)
Yaki Bossan
Goungoun
Matédénosa
Siningal (Senegal). When this loa enters, the mounted person talks "Arabic." [787 91]

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5. Translations of Songs in Chapter 19

533 539 Many of the Creole song texts included with the music in chapter 19 are translated and explained in earlier chapters. The following examples are translations of song texts in chapter 19 to which there is no reference elsewhere in the book.

EXAMPLE 133

Ezilie Wèdo, *ago*, oh!
The Creoles say like this,
I am not in Africa any more,
I shall do as I please!
The Creoles say like this,
I am not in Africa any more,
I shall do as I please, oh!
I bring myself,
I take myself away,
I do what I please, oh!

[196] [192] (Ezilie Wèdo is the name of a loa. She boasts that she comes to Haiti and returns to Africa whenever she wishes. The word *ago* is exclamatory and means something like "I am here.")

EXAMPLE 134

The Forty Days [Lent], three women, three virgins,
Prayers for the saints, prayers for the walking saints!
Prayers for the loa Saint Antoine, oh, we ask your pardon!

EXAMPLE 135

In Africa are loa, oh!
Evo evo, hounsi kanzo!
Evo evo, hounsi kanzo!
In Africa are loa, *aboboi*

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Cousin, oh, cousin, oh,
Cousin, don't take cousin, oh, cousin!

[436] (A *gourdain* is one-quarter of a gourde, or the equivalent of five cents in United States money. *Dé gourdain* is ten cents.)

[198] EXAMPLE 141 consists entirely of ritual language.

EXAMPLE 142

Call Damballa, call Domici, call Damballa Wèdo,
Damballa, call Damballa Wèdo, Damballa.

[196] (Damballa and Domici are the names of loa.)

EXAMPLE 143

Ibo, I am a big man, oh!
Ibo, I am a big man, oh!
Ibo, I am the patriarch, oh, I am the patriarch, oh,
I am the chief of my house!

[196] (Ibo is the name of a loa, from whose point of view the song is being sung. Ibo is stating his seniority in his house, or family, for there are other loa related to him. The word *grand* in Creole, as used here, is [192] difficult to translate. It means good or elder, or both. A *grand famille* is the oldest in the extended family, and usually carries the connotation of head or chief.)

EXAMPLE 144

Ibo Ibo é, Samardi Kama!
Etc.

[196] (Samardi Kama is the name of a loa of the Ibo family. The song consists of a repetition of his name, with variations.)

EXAMPLE 145

Ibo Ibo é, Marianni é!
Etc., with variations.

[196] (This is a song to the loa Marianni, of the Ibo family. Except for his name, in various combinations, there are no words.)

[198] [189] EXAMPLE 146 is a song for the making of magic. It is entirely in ritual language.

EXAMPLE 147

Call Osange, call Labosan in the water!
Osange, oh, call Osange in the water!
Osange, oh, call Osange in the water!

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(A song for the loa Osange. Literally, the song specifies Osange "in the water," but the sense is "under the water," where the loa reside. 533 539 [192]

EXAMPLE 148

Yabofé my dear, they don't need me!
I will see [enter through] the center post if they *djaguvé!*
Yabofé my dear, they don't need me!
I will see the center post if they *djaguvé!*
Ferei doesn't see me any more!
I will see the center post if they *djaguvé!*

(Yabofé and Ferei are the names of loa. Even though addressed as "Yabofé my dear," it is Yabofé who is speaking. If one thinks of it as "Dear Yabofé says," the shifting point of view becomes less confusing. The term *djaguvé* indicates a kind of tension and excitement which builds up before possessions take place. Yabofé says that if the people *djaguvé* he is prepared to enter through the center post.) [176]

EXAMPLE 149

Take me (to go), oh!
To the house, oh!

EXAMPLE 150

Damballa! Damballa!
Damballa Wèdo Damballa!
Damballa, *enhé!*
Sacred Damballa! Damballa!

(The song is an invocation to the loa Damballa. The word *enhé* is exclamatory.) [182] [192]

EXAMPLE 151

Ibo Lélé, oh!

(Ibo Lélé is the name of a loa.)

EXAMPLE 152

We thread our way [like a snake],
Damballa Wèdo is a snake, oh!

(The "threading" is a description of conventionalized dance movements suggesting the crawling of a snake. The loa Damballa is identified as a snake.) [535] [176]

EXAMPLE 153

Loko Sindé asks for wind, é!

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Wind, wind, wind, Loko Sindé asks for wind!
Wind, wind, wind!

[176] (The loa Loko Sindé calls for wind to make the sailboat move.)

EXAMPLE 154

Innocent, don't you see I'm innocent!
It is God in heaven who will judge me!
Innocent, don't you see I'm innocent!
It is God in heaven who will judge me!
Ferei's goat here looks for the water road!
The goat of the saints seeks the road to the house!
In Africa everyone is sick, oh!
Papa, I will save them!

EXAMPLE 155

Marianni, oh!
Adié, Moundongue!
Marianni!
To the other side I am passing!
I am leaving here!

[176] (This is a song to the loa Marianni Moundongue. He says he is leaving the hounfor to return to the other side—that is, Africa.)

EXAMPLE 156

Azui, oh, I am a snake, oh!
Azui Papa, I am a snake, oh!
Azui, oh, I am a snake, oh!
Azui Papa, I am a snake, oh!
Don't you see the pouin there is spoiled?
Don't you see the pouin there is spoiled?
It has rolled into the mud!
I sound my asson!

[176] (Azui is a loa characterized as a snake. The second part of the song is topical. It appears that a pouin, or magic bundle, has fallen into the mud and been soiled. The last line represents words of the houngan, who shakes his ritual rattle.)

EXAMPLE 157

Ah! It is I, it is I, it is I!
It is I, oh, it is Mademoiselle Ayida, it is I!
Sitting by the boat there they speak ill of us (me), oh!
It is I, oh, it is I, centerpost, it is I!

[176] (Mademoiselle Ayida is the loa Ayida Wèdo.)

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539 EXAMPLE 178

Osan, oh, Lèlè, oh!
Osan, ah, Lèlè, oh!
They take the asson of the loa and serve evil, oh!
Let it sink!

[626] (The song criticizes someone who has become a houngan and has used his
[176] powers wrongly. Osan Lèlè is the loa to whom the complaint is being addressed, or he may be the one lodging the complaint.)

EXAMPLE 179

Farmer, call the loa for me, *ago-é!*
Farmer, call the loa for me now,
Call the loa for me now,
Gèdé has engaged me!

[176] (Gèdé is a loa. *Habitant* signifies "farmer" or "peasant" but could be trans-
[192] lated as "countryman.")

EXAMPLE 180

Boulicha, I arrive,
See my misfortune!
I will cut them, I have no knife!
Boulicha Nago, I will cut them, *malovié!*

[176] (The loa Boulicha Nago announces his arrival and complains that people
[198] have mistreated him. He says he will avenge himself without a knife. *Malovié* is ritual language.)

EXAMPLE 181

I am going to see the hounsi bossale, oh,
I am going to see if they are in accord with me.
Etc.

EXAMPLE 182

I cry honor before my loa's altar,
Cry honor, and no one replies!
I cry honor before my loa's altar,
Cry honor, and no one replies!
All who speak well [of me], I am here, I will listen, oh!
All who speak evil [of me], I am here, I will listen to them!
They sign my name, Allada, but they do not sign my feet,
I ask where will they see me!

[P. 349]

Notes

Chapter 1: *The Making of the Haitian* (pp. 1–7)

[1]The name Ganda survives in Haiti as the name of a deity.

[2]Herskovits, in *The Myth of the Negro Past* (p. 47), provides a tabulation of raw data found in the manifests recorded for slaves shipped to Virginia between 1710 and 1769: 20,564 slaves were reported shipped from "Africa," 3,652 from Gambia, 6,777 from "Guinea," 9,224 from Calabar, 3,860 from Angola, and 1,011 from Madagascar. Of those shipped from the island of Madagascar, 473 were listed as coming from Mozambique.

[3]Bartolomé de Las Casas.

Chapter 2: *Man and the Universe: Vodoun* (pp. 8–18)

[1]See Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 7.

[2]Schweinfurth in *The Heart of Africa*, II, 31, says: "In Loango all exorcists and conjurors are called *ganga*." Leo Wiener, in *Africa and the Discovery of America* (Philadelphia: Innes and Sons, 1922), III, 32, reports: "Forms of *ganga* have in Bantu the meaning 'medicine' but also 'magic'—such as Nyika *ganga* and Kongo *nganga*."

[3]Gorer, *Africa Dances*, p. 120; Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 208 ff.

[4]From the Fon *houn-so* or *houn-su*. Among the Arada of Dahomey a *houn-su* was regarded as a spiritual wife of the deity. She was a servant of the cult temple, and in some instances a wife of the cult priest.

[5]Translated from the French of Aubin, *En Haiti*, pp. 57–59.

[6]Deren, in her *Divine Horsemen* (pp. 119 ff.), gives an excellent report of a service for Agwé in a boat at sea. Aubin (*op. cit.*, p. 108) seems to have given the first description of this service at sea for the loa Agwé.

[7]Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. 119.

[8]*Ibid.*, p. 123. Leyburn advances the theory that Vodoun developed during this period as a result of the vacuum left by the Church. Although the Church did in effect leave the field to the African cults, one must assume that the Arada, Congo, and other cults were already organized and possessed of great vitality before the Haitian revolution. Implicit evidence points to a continuity of cult life from the earliest days of the African on Haitian soil. There are no statistics to reveal the extent of cult membership at the end of the eighteenth century, but the content and form of Vodoun today are so overwhelmingly African that it is difficult to think of Haitian cult activity as the product of a renaissance.

Chapter 3: *The Loa: Gods of the Haitian Mountains* (pp. 19–29)

[1]The term *vodoun*, used in this precise sense, conforms to the original Fon (Dahomean) usage. The term *hounsi*, also of Fon origin, signifies "spirit" and belongs to the same root

776 192 as *houngfor, hounsi, houngénicon, hounfor*, etc. *Mystère* is of obvious French origin. *Loa* is probably from the Bantu, but it could be from the Yoruba.

[2]Various methods and formulas are employed in "tying" a loa. Sometimes making the sign of the cross is regarded as adequate, or the saying of a prayer. In "The Vodun Service in Northern Haiti" (*American Anthropologist*, XLII, 242–243), George Eaton Simpson reports that the "tying" of a loa sometimes results in a contest between the individual concerned and his houngan. If the houngan wants the *mait' tête* to come in, he must neutralize the ritual barriers the "horse" has put in the way. "One procedure for bringing on possession in a servant who has tried to 'tie' his chief god is for the priest to stand in front of the person whom he suspects, make the sign of the cross, and strike him on the forehead three times with a sacrificial stone. Usually these blows are hard enough to make blood spurt. The servant then begs the pardon of the angry god, and as soon as possible he unties the knots in his handkerchief [the method he has used for 'tying' his loa]."

000 [3]Herskovits, *Dahomey*.

CHAPTER 4: *Death Rites* (*pp. 30–40*)

775 171 113 [1]Maurice Delafosse, *L'Ame nègre*. Translation from *Free France*, special issue No. 4, French Press and Information Service, New York, June, 1945.

[2]Leo A. Verwilghen, in booklet describing peoples of the Kwango region, accompanying *Music of the Western Congo*, recordings issued by the Ethnic Folkways Library.

000 [3]Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu*, pp. 88–89.

[191] 769 775 113 [4]W. M. Eiselen and I. Schapera, "Religious Beliefs and Practices," in Schapera, *The Bantu-speaking Tribes of South Africa*, p. 250.

[5]Translated from the French of Aubin, *En Haiti*, p. 212.

[6]Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, pp. 213–214.

[7]Hall and others, *Haitian Creole*, American Anthropological Association, Memoir No. 54, pp. 188–189.

[8]Simpson, "Four Vodun Ceremonies," *Journal of American Folklore*, April–June, 1946, pp. 155–162.

[9]As translated by Courlander from Simpson's Creole text, *ibid.*, p. 156. The preceding paragraph is from p. 155.

[10]Translated by Courlander from the Creole of Simpson's text.

[11]This and the preceding paragraph are from Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

764 766 793 776 787 525 [12]These shells, as indicated elsewhere, are part of the paraphernalia of the Vodoun priest and appear to be an inheritance from the priests of the Fa cult of Dahomey. The divining shells are usually thrown on the ground in fours, and the readings depend upon combinations of "heads and tails." The manner of throwing the shells, as well as the number used, corresponds closely with the Haitian secular gambling game *mayamba* (see Appendix 2), though the purpose is obviously different. In some priestly rites in Haiti, ashes rather than the customary shells are used for divining.

[13]Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

[14]*Ibid.*, p. 161.

[15]Herskovits, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

764 766 114 [16]Herskovits (*ibid.*) notes that persons who die of smallpox, lightning, and certain other phenomena are not buried in coffins. Some of my informants indicated this to be their understanding also, but they said that the dead are buried without coffins for strictly economic reasons as well.

[17]Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

[18]Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. 156.

[19]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 398.

[20]*Ibid.*, pp. 397–398.

[21]Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, p. 214.

[22]Hall and others, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

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Chapter 5: *Services for the Loa and the Family Ancestors* (*pp. 41–74*)

[1]Note that the houngan and the laplace are performing services normally performed by the *petit serviteur*.

[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 165.

[3]Parsons, *Spirit Cult in Hayti*.

[4]Account given by Jean Ravel Pintro.

[5]Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana.

[6]Account given by Voluska Saintvil. A. W. Cardinall notes in his book *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 69): "Trees are in most cases treated with respect. Before a man dare fell one for a canoe he must and invariably does sacrifice to its spirit and apologizes for the harm he is about to do it."

[7]The rite of *rafraîchi tête* is conducted periodically for a *maît' tête* after the original *levé tête* ceremony. The purpose is to "refresh" the loa and make him content with his residence in the head of the devotee.

[8]Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, p. 233.

[9]It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain Negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form.

[10]Odette Mennesson Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Voudoun Loa," in Appendix A of Deren, *Divine Horsemen*, p. 264.

Chapter 6: *Songs of the Peristyle* (*pp. 75–94*)

[1]This theme is further commented on in chap. 13. Compare with the following excerpt from a Surinam song reported by Herskovits in *Suriname Folk-Lore* (p. 689):

> I have no mother there,
> I have no father there,
> I have no sister there,
> I haven't got anybody there.

Chapter 7: *In the Mapou Tree: Magic, Demons, and Compacts* (*pp. 95–104*)

[1]Simpson, "Haitian Magic," *Social Forces*, October, 1940, p. 97.

[2]Note the coincidence of the term *gris-gris* or *grigri* as used in the United States, where it has the same meaning as *mojo*, or "voodoo" charm.

[3]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 503.

[4]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, p. 243.

Chapter 8: *Mardi Gras and Rara: Jugglers, Maypoles, and Kings* (*pp. 105–109*)

[1]Aubin, *En Haïti*, p. 42.

[2]Marionettes of this kind have been observed in both East and West Africa and are well known in the region of Senegal. I saw a phallic marionette, virtually identical with the Haitian version, in the neighborhood of Khartoum, Sudan.

Chapter 9: *Land and Work* (*pp. 110–121*)

[1]Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, p. 362.

[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 300 ff., describes Dahomean polygamous marriage in its various forms. Although Dahomean plural marriage is complex in terms of gifts, obligations, and

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Halt SV3

Chapter 18: *Musical Instruments* (*pp. 189–202*)

[1]Herskovits and Herskovits, *Suriname Folk-Lore*, p. 87. The stick is also known in Surinam.

[2]Informant: Joseph Lengo, Brazzaville.

[3]Library of Congress album, *Folk Music of Venezuela*.

[4]Pamphlet accompanying recordings, *Music of Equatorial Africa* (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1950).

[5]See Courlander, "Musical Instruments of Cuba," *Musical Quarterly*, April, 1942, pp. 233–234.

[6]Cambaire Sylvain, *Les Contes haïtiens*, pp. 97–98.

[7]Curt Sachs, *Geist und Werden der Musikinstrumente* (Berlin, 1929), pp. 60–61.

[8]Schweinfurth, *The Heart of Africa*, I, 287.

[9]Informant: Solihas Toré, Bamako.

[10]See Courlander, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

Appendix 1: *The Pantheons* (*pp. 335–349*)

[1]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 245 ff.

[2]See Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa*, pp. 47–49; and Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 245 ff.

[3]Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

[4]Herskovits, *op. cit.*, pp. 152 ff.

[5]*Ibid.*, pp. 101 ff.

[6]*Ibid.*, pp. 201 ff.

[7]Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa*, p. 67.

[8]Herskovits, *op. cit.*, pp. 105 ff.

[9]Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, pp. 45, 67 ff.

[10]Library of Congress Recording No. 101.

[11]Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, p. 47; W. R. Bascom, in Introduction to record album *Drums of the Yoruba of Nigeria* (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1950).

[12]Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, pp. 38 ff.

[13]Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples*, pp. 71–74; Herskovits, *op. cit.*, I, 37.

[14]Herskovits, *Life In a Haitian Valley*, p. 267.

[15]*Ibid.*, p. 280.

[16]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 108–109.

[17]Ellis, *The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa*, p. 68.

[18]Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, pp. 79–80.

[19]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 165 ff. Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples*, p. 83, says that this deity was especially important in the town of Agbome.

[20]Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, pp. 45, 76.

[21]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 104.

[22]Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples*, pp. 71–74.

[23]Saint-Méry, *De la danse*, p. 48.

[24]Glorer, *Africa Dances*, p. 188.

[25]Red eyes as a symbol of malevolence appear in the folklore of many Negro cultures. Our own American ballad about the gambler Stackalee states:

> "The judge says, 'Stackalee, I would spare your life,
> But I know you're a bad man, I can see it in your red eyes.' "

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learn the properties of plants, both for healing and for poison. Except for the belief in spiritual beings, this folk knowledge would hardly have been classed as religious, for it was useful in every phase of daily life; the classification is that of the anthropologist, not of the simple black.

If Dahomean beliefs prevailed over others of African origin, it was chiefly because of the numerical preponderance of Dahomeans in the colony, together with the popularity of their religious dances. The Dahomean spirits or gods were Vodun; the dance in which the worshiper sought the inspiration of the spirits was a Vodun dance. Like all but the highly organized religions, this one recognized the validity of other beliefs. Its practitioners were not bigots. No hierarchy existed to keep out new accretions. Imperceptibly these were added to the original basic form: here an Arada spirit, there a Congolese prayer, and in many instances a Catholic saint, until the composite Vodun religion began to take shape.

There is no evidence that during colonial times Vodun was ever considered important by the white ruling class—certainly not as a faith. To most planters the word was the name for a vigorous dance. Judging from Moreau de Saint-Méry's description it was held openly enough, at times being witnessed by the whites as a sort of nocturnal diversion. Moreau knew, as did other whites, that there were "superstitious beliefs" connected with it, yet the offhand use of the word "superstition" was indication enough that the beliefs were not regarded as important. We have seen, however, what profitable use the slaves were able to make of the apparent innocence of their dances. When the idea of revolt began to germinate among them, gathering on each plantation at least once a week they had ample opportunity to hatch their plans. It is known that the campaign for revolt was developed partly under the stimulus of the Negro Boukman, a *houngan* or priest of Vodun. By means of drumbeats, which to the whites merely pounded out the rhythm for dancing but had for centuries been a means of communication at long distance in parts of West Africa, that ripening plot was telegraphed from one plantation to another. Even more important, perhaps, was the unity of feeling made possible, despite all incoherence of tradition and language, by the Vodun background.

The revolt of half a million slaves was a success. This fact has been rather too calmly accepted by historians of Saint-Domingue, who

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114 175 669 668 have explained it chiefly by the surprise element of the uprising. But when else in modern history have slaves successfully revolted against their armed masters and become permanently free? Successful revolutions even of people not in bodily slavery have had acknowledged leadership, whereas in Haiti no real leader appeared for the insurgents. Boukman's influence, indeed, at its widest never reached beyond a part of the northern plain; he had about the same range of power as a [793] ward boss in the United States. On the plantations Hallaou, Hyacinthe, Lafortune, and others whose names are unimportant or unknown, Vodun houngans likewise welded slave opinion within their narrow districts. But no single great leader appeared. As the conflict was developed, without plan or unity under the divided and contradictory action of numerous blacks, what held the people together was, negatively, their hatred of the white masters; positively, their Vodun beliefs. Only later in the decade did a true leader, Toussaint L'Ouverture, emerge to consolidate their victory.

776 793 761 782 781 As often happens among unsophisticated people convinced of the rightness of their cause, the local Vodun leaders were sure of their own invulnerability through the protection of one or another of the spirits.[8] They convinced their followers as well, to such a degree that when an invulnerable chief fell there were dozens of reasons to explain the unexpected death rather than any disillusion. Usually, failure to follow the rigorous propitiation requirements of the protecting god offered the key to the misfortune. Various ones of them were known to be exacting and troublesome. The leader at Trou-Coffi, Romaine by name, had absorbed enough of the Roman Catholicism in Vodun to feel that the Virgin Mary was his especial [789] patroness.[9] Beyond this specific belief in invulnerability was the general trust that Vodun spirits would lead their devotees to success, would give them a happy issue out of all their distress.

[171] [781] 8. A parallel case of belief in invulnerability because of divine protection was that of the North American Indians both at the time of Tecumseh and later in the Sioux outbreaks at the climax of the Ghost-Dance Religion. See James Mooney, *The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890* (Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, 1892–93 [Washington, 1896]), chap. X.

[114] [781] 9. The importance of Vodun beliefs in connection with the slave revolt is stressed by Dr. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Vodou et Névrose* (Port-au-Prince, 1931), pp. 33–34. He says of many of the chiefs: "The belief in their invulnerability was not at all the result of calculation, but was a true state of mind, a sort of autosuggestion which explains very well the chronic heroism of certain leaders of the revolution in Saint-Domingue and of the war of independence of 1802–3."

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for Vodun theology, nor any established order for the service, 771
variety is one of its chief characteristics. Impossible as it is to cite a definitive list of Vodun beliefs, those most generally held might be combined into a Creed, which would run about as follows:

I believe in scores of gods and spirits, guardians of earth and sky, and of all things visible and invisible;

I believe that all these vodun (who are called "loa" or "mystères") are potent, although less majestic than *le bon Dieu* of the Christians; that some of them came with our ancestors from our former home in Africa, while others we have learned about in our Haitian fatherland; that these loa have power to possess us, their worshipers, informing us by inspiration of their needs and desires, which we must faithfully satisfy; that these loa, like us, are capable of good and evil, gentleness and anger, mercy and revenge;

I believe in the efficacy of sacrifice; in the pleasures of living; in respect due to twins; in the careful cult of the dead, who may return to our abodes; in the spiritual causation of diseases and misfortune; in the dance through which we may be "mounted" by our loa; in the possibility of interfering with the normal flow of events by means of magic; in the efficacy of charms and spells; and in the Holy Catholic Church.

Those who conceive of religion in terms of a rigid orthodoxy, 771
monotheism, sin, a moral law, eternal rewards or punishments, will 177
not understand Haitian Vodun. It is as hospitable to new spiritual 776
conceptions as any faith could be, requiring only that the additions be applicable to life as it is lived in the Haitian hills and valleys, and that they adapt their shape and terminology to the native penchant. Monotheism is rarely the practical belief of simple people, but rather of prophets and scholars. It is easy enough to believe in an all-powerful god but much more difficult to arrive at a conception of a unique God. In Dahomey the people had reached some such stage of belief in omnipotence but not of uniqueness. When later, in slavery, transplanted Africans heard the Catholic doctrine of a god who ruled creation by the fiat of his conquering will, they assimilated the idea with a significant change: the Christian God became the Great Master of the other gods. The slaves very simply placed Him at the head of their pantheon. Even today, the first words of a Vodun [796]
service are the request for permission from the Great Master to go on 114
with the service. As Dorsainvil says: 178

This term chosen to designate the supreme God was imposed on them by 776
their environment. The colonist, the master, incarnated for the slave the

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114 highest idea of power and action. Logically, he could not conceive of the
178 unique God of the Christians, by analogy and by inspiration, except in
776 terms of the sentiment of fear mingled with the awe which the colonist inspired in him. Once this first step was taken, the rest was only the work of time. In the degree that the holy beings of Catholicism were unfolded to them, the creole Negroes everywhere identified these with the *vodun* (spirits) of the Dahomean cult.[19]

771 The Christian God could not stop the "deifying" process, for Vodun
776 must have simple spiritual explanations for daily occurrences. How could a god who ruled the earth clutter his mind with such small details as the mango crop or one's private aches? There was room of necessity for more, and lesser, gods.

771 Orthodoxy and monotheism, then, are alien to Vodun; so likewise
781 are the notions of sin and a moral law. These also are refined ideas. The Catholic priests do their best to instill into the minds of the people the Church doctrine on these points, but gluttony, envy, sloth, and other deadly sins are not easy to explain to a people whose worldly goods are pitifully few, whose bellies are never full, and who must work hard to live at all. Just how the simple Haitian interprets the fulminations of the fathers against sin a foreigner can hardly tell, and the priests are not at liberty to reveal the secrets of the confessional.[20] A peasant loves life. His pleasures are simple enough, partly because he lacks money for expensive ones. Puritanical self-searching is alien to the normal Haitian. The touchstone is infallible: so long as life moves along smoothly one need not worry; if misfortune comes, one of the spirits is angry or out of sorts and his worshipers must propitiate him. What spirit could mind a man's dancing, drinking clairin, watching a cockfight, or otherwise indulging himself?

771 Vodun does not conceive life to be a struggle between good and
776 evil. Its conception of spirits is anthropomorphic. No man is wholly good or wholly evil, nor is any god; human beings can generally be persuaded into any mood, and so can the gods; as there is variety in human personality, so likewise the gods are not immutable. Some are more to be feared than others, some may be regarded with tender affection, but all are capable of working both weal and woe.

19. Dorsainvil, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

[783] 20. A priest once told me that a young Haitian girl in sorrow confessed, as her most heinous sin, that she had given food to a dog. Apparently her idea was that food was too precious to be given away to animals; hence she had sinned.

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A gentle spirit may cause great harm to a person who neglects his commands, while a spirit whose power makes possible the most malignant magic may bring good fortune to his devotee. By conceiving his spirits as in manner and desires resembling himself, the Haitian can understand his little universe without subjecting himself to the bewilderment which faces a simple Christian trying to reconcile an all-loving Father with the obvious evil He allows on earth.

One must approach Vodun without the religious preconceptions of Christianity or Judaism. Suspending our notions of orthodoxy, monotheism, sin, heaven, and hell, we may examine more closely the creed suggested above, in an endeavor to round out its real meaning to the Haitian.

"I believe in gods and spirits . . ." The white man would recognize most easily among the Haitian's multiple gods the God of Christianity whom every Vodun worshiper confesses. It is this God who is meant in the homely expression of native acceptance of one's lot: "*Bon Dieu bon*"—the good God is really good, however remote. Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are likewise acknowledged, although it seems probable that they do not touch the hearts of people as much as the Great Master. The Blessed Virgin, on the other hand, is very real and near—so real, in fact, that she is sometimes actually merged with a spirit of African origin who has many of the Virgin's storied characteristics. Certain angels and a select group of Christian saints have made a special appeal and so found their niche in Vodun; others are not denied but merely ignored because the Haitian is not well acquainted with them.

To the spirits (one hesitates to use such misleading words as "gods" or "divinities") not drawn from Christianity the name "loa" is applied. There seem in general to be two classes of these: those who have an African origin, and those with a Haitian background only. The former group is called "Rada," the latter "Pétro." The word Rada is derived from the principality of Allada in Dahomey, and would seem thus to indicate that all the Rada loa were Dahomean; this, however, is definitely not the case. Numerous loa can be traced to the Congo region and others to the smaller West African districts, yet all of these are indiscriminately called Rada. In current usage, accordingly, the word has lost its strict geographical significance. The term Pétro is explained in an illuminating paragraph by the Haitian savant, Dr. Dorsainvil:

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114 The common people of Haiti are continually creating [his phrase is much
196 more revealing: "en gestation de"] *loa*, or new Vodoun "saints." Popular
174 tradition, long before independence, refers to a certain Don Pédro, a being
776 of flesh and blood who from the Spanish end of the island had come at a certain period to live in the mountains of the commune of Petit-Goâve. This Don Pédro was the man who introduced into Haiti that violent dance which, by corruption, the people call "the pétro." Upon his death, Don Pédro came to occupy an honorable place in the Vodoun pantheon, bringing in his train a whole group of progeny, such as Jean-Philippe Pétro, Criminel Pétro, etc.[20]

174 As might be logically deduced, certain powerful ancestors become
776 deified as Pétro loa.

It would require field trips into every district of Haiti to compile a
184 full list of the various loa who receive homage from Haitians; some
776 appear to have only a local following, others are honored over a wide district, and a few are reverenced throughout the country. If Vodun ever reached the stage of founding a seminary of sacred theology—a highly improbable event—one of its most imperative functions would be the collection, classification, and explanation of the attributes of the hundreds of loa, specifying whether they are Haitian or African in origin, Pétro or Rada, powerful or complaisant, inclined prevailingly to benevolence or to malice. Lacking such a proper catalogue, it will suffice to mention only the most commonly accepted figures. In reflecting upon the characteristics of these gods, the well-informed reader will be struck by the numerous parallels to divinities of other faiths so remote that Haitians could not possibly have known of them; similar emotional needs seem to produce similar deities to satisfy them.[21]

776 Legba is the name of the loa most frequently invoked, not because he is the most powerful, but because he is the interlocutor between man and his gods. Before any ceremony may begin, Legba is addressed: "*Papa Legba, ouvri barrière pour nous.*" If he is not first worshiped, the other deities may not come to possess the people. Legba guards every door and gate, every highway and crossroads. He is still an important god in modern Dahomey, where his attributes are much the same as in Haiti. The people feel no necessity of

20. Dorsainvil, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

21. Classical anthropologists might have called this phenomenon "parallelism"; the word is accurate enough if only similarity, not identity, be understood.

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making Legba (or any of their other loa) unusually handsome or admirable; he is, on the contrary, honored none the less because he is a lame old man who wanders about clothed in rags. His homely aspect seems to be a part of his comfortable nature: the "Papa" with which his invocation is prefaced, though not unusual in addressing loa, seems generally to be spoken with overtones of real affection, with the same feeling of kindliness one has for a benevolent uncle in the neighborhood. In parts of Haiti Legba is associated with the Catholic Saint Anthony.[29] As with other loa, there are special attributes, sacrifices, places, and traditions pertaining to him which are characteristic only of limited localities. 776

Ermlie is the most generally acknowledged female loa. She is especially interesting because of her resemblances to the Virgin Mary. Although she is Dahomean in origin, she is conceived as pale, almost white, probably by the influence of countless lithographs of the Virgin circulated in Haiti as in any other Catholic country. Ermlie is very wealthy, possessing many different dresses and much jewelry. In these aspects she is unique among the loa. It is quite possible that there is a causal connection between the conception of lightness of color and that of wealth, for the only women who possess jewelry and large wardrobes in Haiti are the light-skinned élite; on the other hand, many pictures of the Virgin depict her in queenly robes and adorned with gems, so that the idea may have been derived principally from her. Ermlie is a trembling woman inhabiting the water. She seems to have no one specific function in connection with which she is worshiped, as with Legba, who guards thresholds; rather, she is approachable in a confidential way, as an understanding mistress might be. Her favorite color being white, all animals sacrificed to her are white, whether turkeys, chickens, or goats. [554]

In somewhat the same manner as Christians conceive of their God in diverse manifestations—Christ as priest or king, God as father or judge—so the Haitians in a more direct, illogical, and naïve way, think of their loa in different manifestations. Maîtresse Ermlie, for example, seems to change her major characteristics altogether when she is Ermlie Gé-rouge (that is, the Red-eyed); then she is Pétro, not Rada; boisterous and rather hearty, not trembling.

The third loa, Damballa, is so prominent that some of the early

29. Price-Mars, op. cit., p. 180.

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• 776 commentators thought him the most important Vodun god.[24] There are two plausible reasons for this emphasis: Damballa is the bringer of rain, a necessity for good crops but a menace resulting in desolating floods when it is too copious; second, his symbol is the serpent. To Christians this is a symbol of such long standing that it is easy to assume in connection with its appearance in Vodun the guile, diabolism, or occult force which it has at times represented in Christian tradition. Damballa, however, is certainly not evil in the same way as Satan; he is not even generally baleful. To honor him is quite fitting, and this attitude is at poles removed from the diabolism [136] of the Middle Ages. There are practically no snakes in Haiti. Because of Damballa's symbol he is quite naturally associated with Saint Patrick.[25] Like Maîtresse Erzulie, all his sacrificial animals must be white, for this is his color. Like her, too, he is Dahomean in origin and therefore Rada.

These three, Legba, Erzulie, and Damballa, can by no means be conceived as a trinity. On the contrary, it would be easily possible to select an entirely different group from the commonest loa, justifying inclusions and eliminations. There is, for example, Ogun, the god of war, who derives from Nigeria in Africa. Ogun can, if properly persuaded, protect his petitioners against bullets and weapon wounds. Like blood, he is red. This is also his favorite color, and so he prefers sacrifices of red cocks and food offerings of red beans with rice. There are likewise Damballa's wife, Ayida Oueddo, whose symbol is the rainbow; Agwé, god of the sea; Baron Samedi, patron spirit watching over cemeteries; Simbi, who lives in mango and calabash trees and is a bit too fond of drink. In any one country district, certain other loa might far outshine any of those mentioned. The longer one lives among the people, the more clearly he sees the validity of the first article of the creed: "I believe in gods and spirits."

787 "I believe that these loa have power to possess their worshipers . . ." It is more difficult to make intelligible to "civilized" people the phenomenon of possession than any other part of Vodun religion. Centuries of training in self-control have made us unwilling to give public vent to our emotions, whether religious or, indeed, of any sort. Not only does our tradition of good manners inhibit such ex-

24. See, for example, Bonneau, *op. cit.*, pp. 25–26 n.

[776] 25. He is sometimes also associated with Moses, who "lifted up the serpent in the wilderness."

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796 steadying his attention, he practically hypnotizes him back into full
535 consciousness. As soon as the possessed is normal again, water out of
787 the calabash is poured at the central post and a sign of the cross is made with the candle before it.

796 Contrary to the expectation of thrill-seeking white visitors, the
535 Vodun dance does not merit the name of an orgy. True, the dancers
786 wear their old clothes, for they are going to have violent exercise; true also, those who are possessed give the impression of losing some of their inhibitions. But the dancers do not embrace each other as at a white man's dance; the drinking which occurs is hardly ever excessive; and the climax of a successful dance is a religious experience.
[831] The Haitian is no more obsessed by sex than is the American; indeed, living simply and without many of the artificial restraints of "civilization," he is probably less so. What white visitors sometimes see, under the impression that they are witnessing a Vodun dance, is nothing more than a secular Saturday night social dance. It, too, has drum rhythms instead of an orchestra, musical instruments being rare in Haiti; but the dance has no more religious (or "Voodoo") significance than a barn dance in the United States.

771 Creed and practice go hand in hand in Haiti. The Vodun wor-
• 776 shiper believes in the loa of his faith and does the things necessary to get in touch with them. These conceptions are the major part of his creed, as the corresponding actions form the bulk of his religious activity.

171 A few articles of the creed remain. "I believe in respect to twins
845 ..." Hundreds of so-called primitive peoples see in twins some special
787 significance, now fortunate, now tragic. Many of the tribes along the Atlantic coast of Africa thought of twins as an omen, so that the presence of ritual regard for them in Haiti is hardly surprising. It is probably incorrect to speak of the worship, or the cult, of twins, for they are not deified, nor is there a common ritual for them: thousands of persons pay them no homage whatever. One family has a high regard for twins because it has numbered them among its ancestors or recent relatives; another family pays respect to all twins because a priest has advised seeking the good luck which comes from *marasse* (twins). There seems to be some confusion of thought about
[782] this aspect of religion: twins are not gods, but merely omens from the gods; yet sacrifices are made to them. Christmas and harvest are the usual seasons for the offering. Food is prepared in the morning

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and set apart on special plates in a separate room for them; in the afternoon the family eats the food. If the twins to whom homage is being offered are still alive, they must wear special clothes at the sacrifice.

"I believe in the careful cult of the dead . . ." Once more it is necessary to renew one's acquaintance with primitive and folk belief to grasp the Haitian attitude. Life is desirable, death is dreaded; both death and the dead are feared. In the actual world, any excursion from the comfortably familiar countryside of one's home leads to confusion and bewilderment. Except in the company of his fellows (on a religious pilgrimage to the waterfalls at Ville-Bonheur, for example), a Haitian almost never leaves his valley or mountainside and market town. Sophisticated people view the unknown with pleasurable excitement, for they have learned by experience that the unfamiliar is not necessarily frightful; it is quite the contrary with simple folk, whose meagre experience with the unfamiliar has been at least somewhat alarming.

Death is the ultimate unknown. The fearsomeness the imagination conceives to lie beyond death seems to exist in almost direct proportion to people's ignorance of the material world. The fear of ghosts is a commonplace among primitive folk, as among the uneducated in the "civilized" world. Where ghosts are considered powerful, one part of any comprehensive cult will certainly deal with the dead.

In Haitian Vodun the teachings of the Catholic Church have exerted more influence upon the cult of the dead than upon any other part of the religion. The preparation of the corpse for burial shows no traces of African practice; the watch (or wake) and wailing over the deceased is familiar; the funeral itself is conducted by a Catholic priest, with burial in consecrated ground. Thereafter, the continual efforts to secure the tranquil repose of the departed bear the earmarks of faithful Catholic practice; it is at this point, however, that the cult begins to assume distinctive features, for it is firmly believed that the dead exert tremendous power in the world of the living. This power comes from God—the Christian God. The case has been put succinctly by Sumner and Keller: "The relation between man and ghost resolves itself . . . into a relation of rights and duties, with all the rights on one side and all the duties on the other."[30] God gives

30. W. G. Sumner and A. G. Keller, *The Science of Society* (New Haven, 1927), II, 829.

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114 776 769 the dead a right to whatever their survivors possess, and moreover gives them the right to return to earth as ghosts.[31]

769 Strict rules of mourning prevail, both as regards clothing and behavior. The slightest lapse in the observation of these rules would 765 cause resentment on the part of the dead; fear of retribution would 775 be quite enough to ensure conformity even if public opinion did not. 782 Ghosts have the power to possess mortals, not as the loa do at a Vodun service or dance, but in the manner understood by American Negroes who say they have been "ha'nted," and so, continually thinking of the dead, live in nervous fear of a streak of bad luck. Such possession is a form of persecution, with continual consequent bad luck until the survivor has carried out all his obligations. It is especially significant, however, that a departed spirit takes vengeance only in matters thought by the Haitian to concern the Church. The ghost is not whimsical in his possession of mortals, and cannot resent treatment which is his due. The kind of treatment given a corpse depends upon the kind of death he died: a person struck by lightning, for example, would have no ceremonies at all, for lightning is an act of God.

787 Where the cult of the dead departs entirely from the teachings of 775 the Church is in the matter of magic, a topic shortly to be treated. It 789 may be briefly stated here that ghosts can be summoned back by special adepts for purposes of divination; that certain corpses are thought to be revivified by evil persons who use these soulless, pathetic automata as slaves (these are the notorious *zombis*); and that black magic—that is, powerful influence for evil—can be worked by sorcerers who know how to command ghosts.

771 All other articles of the Vodun creed not already discussed, except 798 one, come under the heading of magic. That exception is the statement: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." The fact is as simple as the affirmation. If the Catholic priests fight Vodun, preaching frequently against its beliefs and practices, that is unfortunate, think the peasants: Vodun does not retaliate by fighting Catholicism. God and the saints have their province, and the loa theirs. The mind of the Haitian is simple enough to accept both sets of spiritual beings, and not philosophical enough to worry over the contradiction. Practically every Vodun worshiper thinks of himself as a Catholic.[32]

31. See Herskovits, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

32. In this sketch of the Vodun creed, it has been constantly emphasized that each locality has its own variations both in belief and practice. The reader who is interested in pursuing the subject further should consult the works of Price-Mars, Herskovits, Dorsainvil, Parsons, Hurston, et al. See Bibliography.

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755 Specialists in the magic of healing sometimes hit upon remarkable remedies, just as those who concentrate upon causing ailments learn the most effective ways of poisoning a victim's body or, by suggestion, of ruining his peace of mind. In the soil of infinite belief in spiritual powers the seeds of suspicion take firm root.

754 776 From the realm of recognized magic in which most natives at one time or another indulge, one crosses the threshold into a world of sorcery, perversion, and evil mystery. Here no normal person walks, for it is perilous ground. Here is no illumination from any loa or saint, but a grisly darkness coming down by tradition through centuries of whispered fear. From European folklore by way of French storytellers the Haitian peasant has taken the idea of the werewolf, whom he conceives always to be feminine. The male counterpart is the demon. These creatures are men and women who have a passion for eating human flesh and drinking human blood; cannibalism being abhorrent to normal persons, these abnormal ones through the blackest of magic are believed to be able to transform themselves into werewolves and demons, in which shape they glut themselves before effecting the change once more into human form. One does well to beware of persons with red eyes or black spots in the corner of the eye: these are the telltale marks of the cannibalistically inclined. No accredited ethnographer has ever received a direct report of encounter with werewolves or demons, but the haunting fear is present among the people. There is always an old man who lives in the next valley who has definite knowledge of them, and there are bocors who are "well known" to be able to give this vile power of lycanthropy to people. A person particularly afraid of werewolves will wear a special garde to ward off this evil.

754 776 From Africa comes the belief in the *baka*, an evil spirit who has a family resemblance to former Christian notions of the devil. The baka will make a bargain with a man, giving him some special power or greatly desired boon in return for the life of a member of his family. The bargain seems always to be cumulative, so that the mortal is never out of debt. When first one member of a family dies, and then a second and a third, the family is sure to consult a houngan in order to discover whether such an engagement exists. The knowledge apparently does little good, for the baka is always there at the appointed hour, mowing down one member after another until finally the bargainer himself is killed. One might wonder, since it is

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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generally believed that the compact always results fatally for the man 754
who makes it, why anyone should enter into such an engagement. 776
Craving for money or some other immediate form of power, however, bedims the reason; in the face of all-consuming desire, more than one man has been willing to ignore future pain for present reward.

It would be possible to conjure up a whole phantasmagoria of 789
weird belief in connection with magic, although this would be unjust to the character of the Haitians. These people have their share of dire concepts, but no more than might be expected of a simple folk. One final magical belief must be treated, however, for it has reached the ears of the outside world in grim detail. This is the belief [114]
in the *zombi*. The word, as Faine explains, comes from the Bonda [192]
language of Africa (*zumbi* there), and was probably transmitted to Haiti by Portuguese slave traders. Faine continues:

Zombi . . . designates in general a revenant, a phantom, an otherworldly 114
spirit. In popular belief, certain sorcerers have the power, by means of 754
charms and spells, to cause apparent death to individuals and then to bring them back to life again, even after they have been buried. These resuscitated persons, only half-conscious, are then, isolated in distant parts of the country, utilized for field work. Nourished on food from which salt is rigorously excluded, they are thought to be able to regain their natural senses and all their mental faculties if they taste the least grain of this substance. Such legends, circumstantially garbed and presented as actual facts by certain unscrupulous authors, have served as the theme of books which have made a great commotion in foreign countries. Taking advantage of the credulity of a public avid for exotic matters, for mysteries, for the supernatural, these writers have gained, in certain cases, the greatest success of publicity.[38]

Three attitudes are taken in regard to the zombi. There are skep- 754
tics who deny the existence of zombis altogether, setting down as fable most of the ideas current about them, and as mistaken diagnosis all the remainder. There are the credulous (including practically every peasant) who believe in and quite directly fear this potential fate. And there are those who believe that certain bocors know how to administer a subtle poison to intended victims which will cause suspended animation and give the appearance of death. Men in the prime of life suddenly sicken and die for no apparent reason. Once these pseudo-corpses are safely buried, the sinister person who has

38. *Ibid.*, p. 303.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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pronounced; later the lightning will strike, the disease will come, the child will die: the connection between curse and calamity will seem too obvious for contradiction. About certain persons is a look (some call it an aura) of evil which is almost palpable: folk belief has an explanation. For much of the mysterious coincidence in life a sophisticate will simply shrug his shoulders and attempt no explanation; he accepts his doctor's diagnosis or his lawyer's advice, and when these betray him falls back upon the many insurances of civilization. The Haitian needs an explanation for his ills, for he lacks doctors, lawyers, insurance: the explanation of magic may be incorrect, but it is the only one he has and it is backed up by events often enough to seem true. 754

Life is full of mishaps. The Haitian's loa are as real to him as the mountains and trees of his country. It is not to be wondered, therefore, that the peasant thinks his loa directly responsible for much of the evil that befalls. In this explanation the Haitian is not different from millions of other people, even Christians. It would, however, be a great mistake to emphasize the fear in Vodun faith and in the magic which proceeds from it to such an extent that the bright side is forgotten. The gods are likewise responsible for the good luck of mankind. If a man deeply desires to attain a specific good, there is room in both religion and magic for that also. It may be the love of a girl, money to pay a debt, a propitious day for holding a *coumbite* (or coöperative working bee), the birth of a son instead of a daughter: religion and magic avail for all of these, more with some individuals than with others. When an entire community holds a belief, the magic has a double chance of working. It is easier for a man to win his wife if she knows he is working magic to that end, than to persuade her without magic. This kind of magic is also easier to work than that which depends wholly upon the complaisance of the loa, as when rain is needed for crops at the proper time. 776 789 771

Religion, with its sister magic, is not for the Haitian a matter of special days, vague abstractions, or formal propriety. It is a daily strength for daily needs. 771

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Catholicism. I have seen such an altar, with its adjacent table, bearing a crucifix, candles, (holy) water, lithographs of the "Assumption of the Virgin," "St. George and the Dragon," the "Adoration of the Kings," and certain unrecognized but distinctly European saints; in addition to these objects, however, were such unecclesiastical articles as bananas, rice, beans, squash, various bottles of drinks, and plates of food. Near by were the sacrificial animals. 796 [778] [192]

Vodun makes use frequently of one sacrament of the Church—baptism. Needless to say, this rite is not a monopoly of Christianity, and its use in the folk religion may very well have come from Africa. Constant witnessing of the rite in church must nevertheless have influenced its adoption for all important Vodun ceremonials. The drums used in the dance are baptized; so also is the first loa to possess a devotee; at many other special times the rite is likewise performed, generally with a set of prayers which invoke Catholic saints and Vodun loa alike. [177]

Mention has already been made of the identification of Rada and Pétro loa with certain saints and martyrs of the Church. Such identifications are not uniform, but vary in different parts of the country. Legba is generally associated with Saint Anthony, but often (and to the Christian, more understandably) with Saint Peter who traditionally guards the gates of heaven; the Virgin Mary quite obviously is related, whether as Queen of Heaven, as the Sorrowing Mother, or as the innocent Virgin, with numerous manifestations of Maîtresse Erzulie; Damballa, whose symbol is the serpent, is sometimes Moses (whose brother's rod became a serpent consuming other serpents, and who by lifting up a serpent in the wilderness cured the people of their snake bites) and sometimes Saint Patrick (whose association with snakes is well known). Other identifications are numerous, showing the penchant of the people for combining what they know of both religions.[2] 776 177 [184]

Many of the loa have, like the Catholic saints, their symbols, their special days, colors, and other associations. Some like white, some red; the serpent, the rainbow, the crossroads are among the symbols; sacred days occur weekly, Tuesday being Legba's, Wednesday Ogun's, Friday Erzulie's, and Saturday Baron Samedi's. It may be

2. The distinguished Haitian ethnographer, sociologist, and historian, Dr. Jean Price-Mars, has made a list of some of these identifications in his *Ainsi parla l'oncle*, pp. 180–181.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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that Catholic practice in these matters did no more than to fortify an African tendency already in evidence; indeed, it is a common tendency of folk religions anywhere to associate days and colors with their honored spirits. The very similarity of conventions indicates the ease with which borrowing of religious ideas might occur.

Every Catholic priest is well aware of the hold Vodun has upon the people, just as all desire to see the ultimate triumph of the Church. The battle is unending, but the method of attack varies. Open firmness is the approach favored by some priests, subtle indirection by others. Sermons against Vodun do little good apparently, for the faith of the worshipers is sufficient to maintain in their own minds the validity of what the preachers inveigh against. When zealous clerics cut down trees sacred to Damballa or try otherwise to eradicate signs and symbols of the loa, the people have rarely tried to stop them; but when the slightest bad luck comes to the iconoclasts—and misfortune comes to every man sooner or later—the people are quick to interpret the stroke as the loa's punishment for the desecration of holy things. On one occasion a shrine was destroyed, the priest calling in an American officer to shoot at a supposed apparition of the Virgin: shortly thereafter the priest's house was burned to the ground, the priest himself suffered a paralytic stroke from which he never recovered, and the captain was ordered back to the United States, "as a punishment for what he had done," said the people. *Post hoc ergo propter hoc*—what followed was a direct consequence of what had gone before; this has been the basis of belief from time immemorial. Who shall say it was not cause and effect? Similar cases have been numerous. One concludes that the method of direct assault will never achieve its purpose.

Subtlety of attack, on the other hand, requires infinite patience, infinite willingness to compromise for the present. Both are qualities which the Catholic Church has amply demonstrated in times past. Certain of the priests whose parishes include country districts are masters in the art of patient indirection, willing to accept apparent failure in their lifetime in the hope of ultimate victory for the Church. Their method is to discover which Vodun practices are of prime importance and, ignoring minor beliefs and practices, slowly lure—not intellectually persuade—the people away from them. This process may be clearly illustrated by a service in the hills in 1937.

A Catholic chapel had been erected in recent years upon a hilltop

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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585 769 782 for the victims of smallpox. If family traditions also tell of those shot, not in war, but as prisoners, perhaps, a candle is lighted for them outside the cemetery wall. Though the couple may perform this ceremony together, each makes this request of the dead of his or her own family as the candles are lighted. This call on the dead is repeated several days after the marriage or later, when candles are again lighted.

591 583 585 769 The sole exception to the performance of these rites before the new household is begun occurs in those cases of *plaçage* where a girl continues to live at her own home. This is rare, however, for the house of a man is usually built near that of his father, and he takes his wife there. But if special circumstances dictate otherwise, the ceremony of notifying and pacifying the family deities may be deferred, though a man must eventually present every woman with whom he lives to his family gods and in turn must be presented to the gods of the woman's family. In similar fashion the dead of both families must be adequately notified.

585 [777] [796] [583] [777] Marriages rarely take place in the months of November and December, the former being disliked because it is "the month of the dead," during which All Saints' Day occurs, and the latter because it ends the year. Except for the Church wedding and less elaborate festivities to celebrate the event, the rites which mark a *plaçage* mating do not greatly differ from those which mark a legal marriage, which may be described in outline. The favorite day for Church marriages is Saturday, "the day of the Virgin," and the time for the ceremony is always early morning, before the heat of the day has set in. If the home of the girl is some distance from Mirebalais, the party come to town the preceding day, the girl spending the night with some friend. Otherwise the bridegroom, accompanied by his relatives and friends, goes to the house of the girl early Saturday morning. Before the couple leave the [782] [788] home of her parents, water must be thrown on the ground in front of them, and also sprinkled by them before the en-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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been largely lost in the peasant culture, possibly because of a prudence dictated by conditions of life wherein evidences of the possession of wealth — certainly in the case of a peasant — were an invitation to those who would despoil him. Only when a family of position gives a ceremony, or when one of its members is married or dies, is the lavishness of its preparations such as to suggest the importance of its place in the community. This does not hold for the individual. Personal ostentation is the more strongly inhibited by the belief that another's envy may bring ill fortune to the one against whom it is directed. In Mirebalais it has almost become a byword that the really substantial citizens look as though they were the poorest. This tradition in no way interferes with the preoccupation with adding to one's possessions, or with the desire to exert the power and enjoy the position that go with a command of large resources, or the will to pass on as large an inheritance as possible to children. In their origin, such drives can be ascribed neither to Europe nor to Africa, nor, for that matter, to the experiences of slavery, but rather to the interplay of two homologous patterns of culture that has produced the economic system and the economic motivations found in Haiti today.

In the matter of land tenure, and in attitudes toward private property, African tradition has disintegrated almost completely. Under the characteristic West African form of land tenure, land of a tribe is vested in the tribal head, who allots it to families for use. Trespass upon it is not permitted while it is under active cultivation, and the produce of the land is the property of the one who has worked it. Only palm trees are privately owned by those who have planted them; otherwise land that goes uncultivated for a longer period than is necessary to restore its fertility may be re-allotted. In some regions land worked by an individual is his because of his membership in a large relationship group, whose ownership derives from the power of its ancestors who had lived on this

588 does not marry his horse. People marry people. Loa marry loa. A man
588 may have a compact with a loa. That is not a marriage. Some of the
184 things that are going on down there in the Plain are not right. They are not the old way. In the old days we did things differently. We did not always run to the houngan. The grand famille knew how to talk to the loa. Up here we don't do things the way they do them down below in the city. People marry people. Loa marry loa."

588 Nevertheless, the practice in the neighborhood of Port-au-Prince and
776 the Cul-de-Sac Plain is for mystic marriages to take place when deemed
[184] useful, essential, or unavoidable. Foremost among the loa involved in these rites is Èzilie Wèdo, the "pure" one, the deity of love, sometimes identified with the Virgin Mary. Other loa known to have taken part in mystic marriages are Damballa, Ogoun, Ayida, Agwé, Gèdé Nimbo or one of his brothers, Cousin Zaka, and Général Clermeil. All these loa—significantly, I think—have clearly defined personalities; much is known about their character and behavior, their likes and dislikes.

588 A man married to Èzilie has special obligations to her for the dura-
[834] tion of his life. On certain days (especially Thursday, which is sacred to this deity), the mortal "husband" may not have sexual intercourse, even though he has a human wife.

588 Circumstances leading to a mystic marriage vary widely, but in each
755 case it is a cult priest who determines whether the rites should be
793 held. Perhaps a person has been afflicted with a series of illnesses or mis-
776 fortunes. He goes to his houngan, who begins a series of communications with the client's loa or with his own. Sometimes many loa are consulted before the desired information is available. Eventually it is determined that a certain deity, for reasons which may or may not be clear, wishes to have nuptial ties with the client. The illnesses or mis-
[753] fortunes that have been sent are a means of informing or warning the
[777] person concerned.

Sometimes the houngan relies on well-established divining methods to ascertain the cause of the difficulties. He may employ the *gembo* (a shell that slides on a string), ashes, or small shells that are thrown on
[787] the ground. Or he may rely on possession by a loa to provide the information.

If it is found that a loa is demanding marriage, arrangements are then made. The rites that follow may take place in a hounfor or at the house of the human bride or groom. Both a prêt' savane and a houngan officiate.

588 The person directly involved, like the loa, usually has something to
554 gain from a mystic marriage. For one thing, he can reasonably expect

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

house. A round, polished Indian stone is occasionally used as a *garde habitation*. And old people speak of a very powerful charm known as a *gros arrête* which in former times was placed on the trail to protect entire villages or valleys. 789

Still another potent defensive charm is the *pouin*, which is the product of ritual magic within the cult temple. A pouin may be an actual bundle containing a formula of special ingredients; more often, it is invisible, consisting of magical forces unleashed into space by the houngan. There are many ceremonies in the hounfor devoted to the projecting of these magical forces. They are called *cérémonie pouin* or *cérémonie magie* and are dramatized by special cult songs and dances. Sometimes the magie ceremony is woven into a more generalized cult ritual. The powers of the pouin are regarded as wider and more potent than those of the arrête. Pouins are said to protect an individual or a group not only against other magic but also against natural phenomena and accident. A pouin may ward off lightning, for example, or protect one from falling trees or from shipwreck or drowning. But it is not solely defensive magic. It may bring success in fishing, or produce a good crop in one's garden, or aid human fertility, 789 794 796 [777] [842]

Since the crops and the garden are the substance of life, much attention is given to their protection. An enemy may attack a man or his household through garden magic. He may bury a ouanga in the earth, to bring sickness or ruin. He may poison a tree by performing a special rite at its foot, and its fruits will then carry disease or death to the one who eats them. Or he may make a compact with the earth so that it will dry up and refuse to produce for the one who tills it. Against all these malevolent possibilities, as well as against common thieves, the Haitian peasant has many magical and practical resources. Some people are said to employ zombies as watchmen. These fearsome creatures will capture a trespasser and hold him for the owner of the field.[3] Or perhaps the owner will place special arrêtes in his garden. Occasionally a man will protect his fields by planting *piquettes* in the earth. The *piquette* is a piece of sharpened bamboo or hard wood. Its point is dipped into poison, and it is placed in the ground, sharpened end up. An unwary intruder who steps on a piquette may die of his wound. 789 685 [754] [775]

To counteract the *maljok*, or evil eye, a man may procure from a bocor a special shirt made of wide strips of red, white, and blue cloth sewed together. This shirt, called a *mayo* or *manyo*, is worn for seven days if the *maljok* is a rather ordinary one. If the evil force is a particularly virulent one, however, the *mayo* will be worn as long as twenty-one 754 789 791

3 [Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy" Journal of Negro History, October, 1940, p. 503. Cf. p. 351, category 116.-- Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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789 generally through no wish of their own, have the uncanny ability to cause evil simply by a glance. One look is enough to do the damage. Although theory is a bit vague on this point, it appears that certain irritable spirits use the agency of the human eye to vent their spleen on mortals who are fortunate: good looks and strokes of luck act, consequently, as lodestones to the fateful glance. And where the [175] glance falls ill luck may spread, harming all within reach. In the days [304] of slavery people had such a fear of the evil eye that they did not hesitate to disfigure infants who at birth seemed to be particularly handsome and so likely to attract attention. Nowadays the practice 777 is to avert the glance by making an *arrêt*. This "halt" may be either a 789 special charm worn on the person or else the mark of a half-moon done with a caustic vegetable substance on the cheek. As with Europeans who believe in the evil eye, certain specialists ply a lucrative trade through their reputation for effective charms against the maldioque.

Other charms may be mentioned. There is the *garde* which protects its wearer against evil of any variety—the near relative of the good-luck charm worn by thousands of "civilized" people. There is the *ouanga*, or *wanga*, compounded to achieve a special end, generally an evil one. Faine remarks that ouanga is

[192] A Créole word of African origin [signifying] a philtre or simple of a special kind, compounded by an *houngan* out of such diverse ingredients as a dead chicken, some grains of indigo and maize, amulets, pieces of money, asafoetida, etc., the whole contained in a half-calabash. . . . The Ouanga, placed in the home of an enemy, is designed to bring him bad luck even to the extent of giving him elephantiasis ("gros pied") when he has inadvertently stepped on the ouanga.[37]

The ouanga is the Haitian equivalent of the hoodoo, for through its influence one may (or so he believes) bring illness, misfortune, or death to an enemy. For every ouanga there is a garde, for every evil a cure. The art lies in finding out the nature of the ouanga causing harm, and then knowing exactly what to do to fend it off.

751 Historically the most interesting garde is that called a *drogue*, 789 which is thought to insulate one against wound by weapons or bullets. Reference has already been made to the utter abandon with which the Negroes, both at the time of the insurrection and later in

37. Jules Faine, *Philologie Créole* (Port-au-Prince, 1937), p. 319.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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241 782 The first of the rice-harvest is pounded in a mortar. A chicken is killed, or, if the farmer is a man of some means, he may offer two chickens, which are stewed together with red beans. The rice, cooked separately, is put on one platter or in a calabash and the stew in another, and these are taken to the field, where they are cast to the four quarters of the earth. Some of this is also given to the spirit residing in any stream which may be on the property. In addition, sacred trees are [178] [824] rewarded for their care over the field with some of this food placed at the foot of each, but only after they have demonstrated their merit by a successful yield. A prayer of thanks, [539] couched in terms such as these, is next pronounced:

> *"Tout ça quitté. Aidé moin à travailler durant l'année, quitté ba moin force, courage. Moin bien content jodi-a, main ça moin porté ba-ou, c'e pou' ca toujou' bon. Ba moin force l'année pou' moin travaille plus l'année prochain. Merci.* — All this remains [here for you]. Help me to work during the year, give me strength and courage. Today I am well satisfied; here is what I bring you that all may always be well with me. Give me strength this year that I may work more next year. Thank you."

The family and their friends who may be present then return to the house and eat the remaining food.

241 782 262 It is also held dangerous to eat yams until the spirits are given the first of the new crop that comes to hand.[1] This is true even though a person may not himself be a farmer, but purchases his yams in the market. Unless this is done: *"Cap' malade, cap' tué même. Marassa kèmbé 'ou, morts, too, et mystères.* — You can become ill, you can even die. Twins will seize (molest) you; the dead, too, and the *mystères.*" The ceremony occurs during November or December, and in addition to the "Guinea" yams — for this ceremony is not performed for the great coarse yams — it is necessary to have imported dried salt fish, fish from Haitian waters which are dried

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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trance of the house — three times if there is one door (for the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost), three times before each door if there are two entrances, and once before each door if there are three. The wedding procession goes to church on foot. The men, if they are from the countryside, are stiff, uncomfortable, and hot in their unaccustomed "best" clothing and their often painful shoes, while the women are also self-conscious in their new dresses. The elaborateness of the ceremony varies with the fee paid the priest, but at all events the clanging church bell is heard notifying the town and its environs that a marriage is being consecrated.

If the family of the bride or groom are well known in Mirebalais, a wedding reception may be given at their house for friends of the couple and of their parents, but the real festivities are held after the return to the new family home. As the procession approaches it, the "bush-priest," a functionary who, because of his knowledge of French, can read the prayers of the Church, waits at the gate with two aides, small boys or girls, each with a flag, one red and one white. He has sacred water in one hand and a lighted candle in the other, and as he pours this water on the ground three times he intones the Pater Noster, the Ave Maria, the Credo, and other prayers. These concluded, hymns are sung by all the participants, and singing, a procession is formed with the "bush-priest" in the lead, followed by the flag-bearers, the couple who have just been married, arm in arm, the "godfather" and "godmother" of the marriage, as the witnesses are called, the parents of the bride and groom, and other close relatives. As the procession reaches the door of the house, it pauses and water is thrown on the ground three times; the circuit of the house is made twice again, and each time, as the door is reached, water is thrown, until, the third tour completed, the participants solemnly enter.

There coffee, liqueurs, wine, *kola*, and cakes are served to the principals and the more important members of the com-

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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Simple annual rites are held for the gods in January, each family giving small offerings in its house of worship to its own deities. These minor ceremonies are not to be confused with the extended rituals which a family may perform but once in a decade or a generation. Because of the extensive preparation and large outlay these entail, such rites are often postponed from year to year. According to some, this postponement is sought through an *action de grâce*, based on Church ritual, while others maintain that it is but necessary on his special day to appeal to the deity who is troubling the family, give a small offering — a *mangé sec* — and ask for the desired respite. This may be done several times, until crop failures, sudden deaths, and the loss of valuable property begin to afflict the family, whereupon the family head seeks out a *hungan*, who by divination determines the supernatural forces that are responsible for these misfortunes; and when his statement that the gods have reached the end of their patience is confirmed independently by several other priests who are consulted, active preparations for the major rite are finally set in motion.

Any such important ceremony must be held on the ancestral habitation, and centers in the *maison de servitude*, the family house of service for the gods. The house itself, to be differentiated from the *humfort*, or "temple" of the *vodun* priest, may be elaborate or simple in accordance with the status of family members in the *vodun* cult.[3] At one end of the sacred house is a platform about two and one half feet high on which are placed calabash plates for the *loa*, six for the Créole deities, three for the Mystères Guinée, and a white plate with a "thunder stone," or Neolithic celt, and a necklace for Damballa. Not all *cailles mystères* are painted, but some, it is said, are green "for hope," and some red "for victory," while one was said to have designs of flowers and snakes painted on the wall above the platform.[4] These houses usually have two rectangular rooms, each with a separate entrance and each having its platform at the narrow end facing the doorway. One of

1: Herskovits E-4, 6 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the rooms is consecrated to the *loa*, the other to the spirits of twins and the family dead. If the house is a large one with three rooms, the third will be for the Congo *loa*. It was also said that occasionally such places of worship reserve one room for the Rada deities, a second for the Pétro *loa*, and the third for the Congo gods, the dead and twins being worshipped elsewhere. For the Ibo gods, however, it is agreed in Mirebalais that there is never a separate room. But whether the gods are worshipped in a single-room thatched shelter or a more impressive "temple" with a metal roof, none of the major categories of supernatural powers are neglected.

In the main, large ceremonies are concerned with the task of restraining, or less often of pacifying, deities that have been molesting a family, and of making content those who have been demonstrating their goodwill toward the group. Such rites must be sharply differentiated from the ordinary *vodun* dance which, coming after the family ritual, forms but a part of this complex, and serves to express joy at the dangers averted and gratitude for the good that the friendly *loa* are to bring. At the ceremony drums may or may not be employed; at *vodun* dances they are indispensable. Possession is induced at the ceremony by the *houngan's* invocations; at the dance by the rhythm of the drums. The ceremony is attended only by members of the family and those who are specially invited; invitations to the *vodun* dance are broadcast over the countryside, and all take part in the social phases of the evening. For the ceremony, sacrifices not alone of cereals and drinks but also of the blood of animals are provided; at the *vodun* dance only minor offerings are given. And while both types of ritual are a part of a single functioning religious system, it is at the first where the most important end is achieved, that of obtaining protection from hostile gods and gaining the favor of those who are friendly.

The pattern of the ceremony — called a *service loa* — is sufficiently definite to allow a generalized version to be given.

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based on the rituals that were observed. In every case at least two major officiants are necessary, the *petit savanne* and the *houngan*, though the role of the latter is the all-important one. Last-minute preparations are made during the final morning, but what is needed will have been accumulated over a period of many months. Tables to hold offerings — sometimes two, sometimes more — are arranged at the sacred places on the family habitation, usually near streams or great trees where the gods reside. Eggs, cereals, drinks, and cornmeal — the food of the gods — are brought, and the animals to be sacrificed are tethered near by. Early in the afternoon the family, dressed in white, assemble, while the *vodun* priest with cornmeal describes on the ground the cabalistic designs called *veve*, and he sees to it that all has its proper place on the altar, whether it be the ever-present crucifix, or the chromolithographs of the saints, or the bottles of "drink" — usually non-alcoholic — or cereals and flour of various kinds. Consecrated water must be on hand, particularly at the big "altar," as the table covered by a canopy to protect the sacred objects is called.

The first part of the ceremony is an *action de grâce*, which in Mirebalais requires an hour or more, but which is said to last two or three hours in southern Haiti. This ritual, entirely derived from the litany of the Church, must always precede any *vodun* ceremony of the kind being considered here. Its purpose is said "to set the *loa* in movement" and to notify them of the rites that are to come, but psychologically it also serves to assure the participants that they are not proceeding to the worship of African gods without having paid friendly homage to God, the ruler of the universe, and the saints. The songs and prayers are brought to a close by an *adoration*, when offerings of money are made by members of the family to pay the officiant. At this point the songs change to a more African rhythm, and the *vodun* priest takes active charge.

As darkness falls, on the first day of the rite, he summons the

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cattle and all other animals when the river floods. Rituals involving these larger sacrifices, however, are held only on the rarest of occasions, and are thus much less common than the ceremony which, typical of those witnessed, may now be described.

This *service* was held in a habitation southwest of Mirebalais, across the Tombe River in the foothills of the mountains. It was said to be the first ceremony of its kind given by this family, and would not have to be repeated for a generation or more. The immediate cause was the occurrence of numerous illnesses and deaths. When members independently consulted their *hungans* to discover the reason for these misfortunes, they were informed that the family *loa* demanded such a rite. Finally one priest, more powerful than the others, became possessed and described in great detail the type of ceremony that was desired: of how many days' duration, the number and kind of sacrifices, what gods were to be called, which troublesome ones must be "sent away" or "restrained," and those of the friendly *loa* who were to be fed.

The entire ritual was conducted out of doors, and at about half past four in the afternoon of Thursday, 5 July, 1934, when first seen, the *action de grâce* had already begun. It was being chanted by the *prêt' savanne*, a bespectacled, middle-aged man, who read from an old prayerbook, while the *hungan* sat quietly by. The officiant was standing in a cleared space with his back toward a grove of trees, facing the "altar." Opposite was a grassy slope, which was separated from this grove by a brook where the Malt' Source lives who watches over the habitation of the family. A white banner hung high in one of the trees a little behind the altar.

This altar, called the *trône*, was a table covered with a white cloth, spread over a frame to form a canopy sheltering its sides and back. A black cloth was beneath the white covering. Under the table a wooden bowl — a *gamelle* — contained water in which sacred leaves had been steeped; near it was a

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calabash filled with bananas, millet, rice, beans, egg-plant, and squash. On the table, under the canopy, were a crucifix and holy water, lighted white candles, a lamp of palm oil in a drinking-glass with a floating wick, food — rice cooked in milk, a stew of rice and beans, cooked chicken — and sweetened drinks — *kola*, and orange drinks among the rest, together with small drinking-glasses containing coffee. In addition, roasted and grilled corn, pineapples, fig-bananas, cassava, and sirup could be seen. Fastened to the inside of the canopy were *images*, chromolithographs depicting the saints, there being represented, among others, the Mater Dolorosa (for Erzilie, in honor of those long dead), Our Mother of Perpetual Aid, St. James and St. Anthony. Some thirty feet away, under a palm tree, was another table, for Simbi, without a canopy, on which also stood various cooked and uncooked foods. Still farther away was the "first" table, the most important in the ceremony, for Bosu. It likewise held food and drink; while near it was a large fire, the all-important *boucan* for Legba. The sacrifices, tethered to trees not far from the *trône*, consisted of animals and fowls: one very large black boar, two smaller black pigs, and a black goat, a black turkey, a guinea-hen, two white pigeons, and several chickens, including a black one with ruffled feathers and a number of varicolored ones.

During the Catholic-like ritual the singing, led by the *prêt savanne*, was desultory. The members of the family, some twenty-five persons, were gathered directly in front of the *trône*. From time to time the leader, holding a lighted candle in his hand, would pour water into a small depression that had been dug directly in front of the altar. All knelt for the prayers, the Pater Noster, the Credo, the Ave Maria, and for the long *adoration* and benediction. Throughout this *action de grâce* and much of the rest of the ceremony, two women *hunsi* in white, members of the family, waved red and white banners before the *trône* or later before the table where rit-

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ABOVE, *An* action de grâce *preceding a* vodun *service, when prayers of the Church are read by the* prêt' savanne.

BELOW, *As the* vodun *priest takes over, he twirls a member of the family to bring on possession.*

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ABOVE, *The possessed woman offering a candle and pouring sanctified water before the altar.*

BELOW, *The* vodun *priest exhorting the possessed woman.*

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[facing P.161]

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fore never return to trouble the living. As witness to this, he was now putting the cross in place, "which causes everything that is evil to flee," to remain until it rotted away.

Simbi djo was "restrained" where the *trône* had been; Lemba under the mango tree near the place of the table for Bosu. Some of the meat of the pigs was buried in these places with all other kinds of cooked food, and the gods were told that they were to repose there for from seven to seventeen years, after which they would again be fed. A cross of iron was buried with the cooked meat, and as each jar, both now and earlier, was put in place, this song was sung:

Poussé allé,	Get you gone,
Poussé allé,	Get you gone,
Icit pas pays ou.	This is not your country.
Ça lan Guinée,	It is Guinée,
Qui pays ou.	That is your country.

A violent rain-storm not only made it impossible to reach the place of the ceremony the following day, but also made it necessary for the family to defer all but a few of the more essential rites. The second day's ritual was thereupon put over to Saturday, when according to original intentions the *vodun* dance that had been planned to close this complex of ceremonies was to have occurred, but which in consequence was postponed until some weeks later.

The ritual of the second day of this *cérémonie* began much earlier than that of the first, for by about one-thirty in the afternoon the *action de grâce* was almost completed. As one approached, a newly dug mound of earth with a cross over it where the troublesome deities had been buried was to be seen just outside the land belonging to the family. The cross was draped with a black cloth, and was itself painted blue and white, while a rosary and a magic *garde* of native twine were suspended from it.

On this afternoon the ritual was performed in two places, a

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spot somewhat farther down the stream than the site of the earlier ceremony, and later at the family habitation on the hill. There was one table arranged as a *trône* and under its canopy, beside the *images*, the candles, and the crucifix, were white foods such as rice and white beans. Instead of Pétro *loa*, this time the ceremony was to bring Rada gods who were to be asked for children, good health, and good fortune. The *trône* was just below the confluence of two brooks, near some great palm trees. Near by was a weir, while in the larger stream, below the point of juncture, were two small natural pools.

When the *action de grâce*, which did not differ from that witnessed earlier, was ended, the *hungan* again made his *verver*, and these were yet richer in design than on the previous occasion. As he finished he took a number of the women of the family by the right hand, spinning each in turn several times to induce possession. The *loa* Damballa Siligwe "came" almost at once, possessing a woman who threw herself into the stream, threshing about as a "serpent." No one troubled himself to attend to her, however, as she emerged and walked about in her wet clothes behind the *trône* and in front of it, so that, according to the *hungan*, the *loa* became angry and would not come, thus making it necessary to sing many more songs of praise and entreaty. As he sang, the *hungan* seized one member of the family after another by the hand, spinning them about and making them kneel before the *trône* to bring the *loa*.

Moin dit Gran',	I say, Gran',
Bonjou', Gran',	Good-day, Gran',
Bonjou', bonjou'.	Good-day, good-day.
Enfants, la yo, Gran',	It is their children, Gran',
Qui ap mandé coumen nous ye-e,	Who ask how you are,
Enfants yo	Their children
Qui ap dit bonjou'.	Who say good-day.

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796 skin, are played in batteries of three, the largest being called
534 *manman*,[3] the middle the *seconde*, and the smallest the *bula*.[4]
533 To be used in dances, the drums, like the *loa* of the worship-
[798] pers, must be "baptized," as will be seen when an account of their making and consecration is given in a later chapter. The iron, or *ogan*, usually consists of the blade of a hoe struck by a large spike, and the rattle, *açon*, in the form most often encountered, is a rounded calabash, containing seeds or pebbles. The iron and the rattles set the basic, steady beat about which the complex drum rhythms play. The smallest drum first takes the time after the iron and the rattles have begun, the notes being played with an accessory figure by means of two thin sticks. The medium-sized drum is next heard, while the *manman*, ritually the most important of the three, comes in last. The *seconde* also has two sticks, one short, thick, and straight, the other a small bow, which gives an added resilience to the notes of the drums' subsidiary rhythms. In playing the great drum, the single crooked stick, called a *baguette*, is held in the right hand, while the left strikes the drumhead with heel or fingers according to the quality of tone desired. The drumstick itself is wielded either against the skin head or against its wooden side, thus permitting a further variation in tone.
796 When "salutes" to the gods are called for by the drums, it is
796 the voice of the *manman* that signals the sweeping circular
533 movements of the dancers, dictating with its beat the dips and semi-prostrations of this figure in the ritual dancing, called *asagwé*. The drum rhythms are always distinctive for each type of *loa*, and every devotee knows the rhythms which call his god.

796 The drums and iron are the focus of all activity of the dance,
534 especially since those who are possessed dance facing the
[787] drums, in whose beat is heard the voice of the gods. Hence the spectators cluster most closely about them, for anything of significance which happens must happen here. The players of the rattles—it is but rarely that more than one rattle is not

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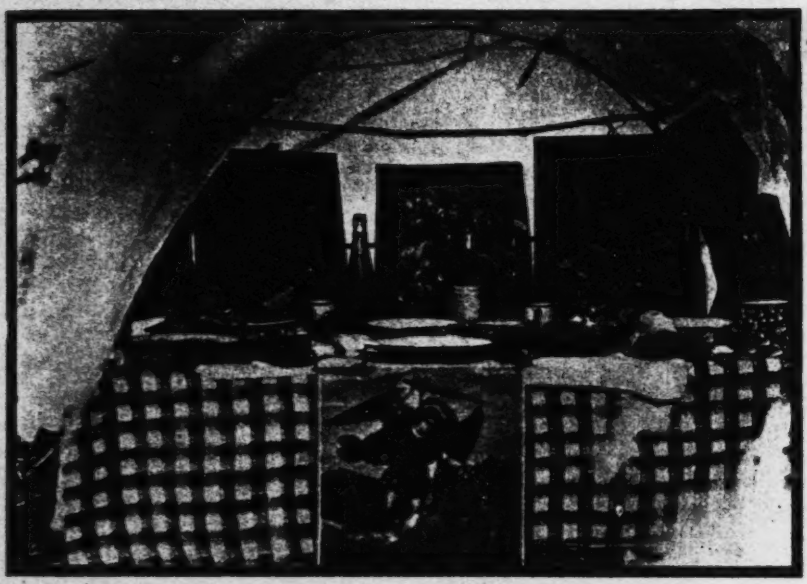

ABOVE, *A* vodun *altar: both Catholic and African religious symbols are to be seen.*
BELOW, *Mystical designs traced in cornmeal on the ground about a shrine.*

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[facing P. 192]

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845 ample, long before ordinary folk.[2] If promised offerings in the
[989] event of an ample harvest, their aid in bringing about this
[782] desired end is even more fruitful than that of the *loa* or the
[769] dead, who are therefore appealed to only indirectly.

Twins, however, are capricious beings, ready to do harm if they are not humored. Consequently, twins must be given anything they ask for, and it is especially important to provide them with the clothes they covet, when giving a *mangé marassa*. If their father fails to provide these new clothes, they
[753] will *kembé* (seize) him, and he may at once have an attack of fever or a bad toothache or earache; or, more likely still, he will be seriously constipated, since this is the punishment particularly favored by the *marassa*, just as the *loa* most frequently send dysentery, and the dead cause headaches. If lack
845 of resources makes it impossible to provide what they demand,
599 a painstaking explanation must be given them or they will
828 drive a person mad in the manner recounted in the following *marassa* myth:

> There were once twins, one good and one evil. They were working a field with another brother, but the evil one refused to help. The other two, therefore, said they would not give him any food. Because of this the evil twin drove the third brother insane. After they had long prayed that he reconsider, he finally agreed to restore sanity to his brother, but insisted on inflicting deafness as a punishment, so that this brother was deaf until he died.

845 At the birth of twins, special "twin plates" are provided
• 778 when their birth is announced to the *loa* — either before or
[769] after their Church baptism — where offerings to the spirits of twins are placed. Usually paired, the plates may be three in number, in which case the third is for the *dosu*, the child born after twins, who is believed to be even more powerful than twins themselves and is thus an important figure in the cult.

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Preferably, these cult objects are made of pottery, joined by a ligature in twos or threes, as required. The plates rest in a box or on a small table which stands in a corner of an inner room of the house. If the family worshipping the twins is a poor one, joined calabashes or wooden plates are acceptable, and such are found more often in the valley of Mirebalais than pottery plates. The "altar" made by the plates is completed by an *image* — a chromolithograph — of the twin saints, Comas and Damien, placed on the wall above them.

The principal rite of the twin cult is the *mangé marassa*. A minor ceremony, if the family has living twins or twins recently dead, it is held, as has already been said, at Christmas and at harvest time; otherwise only at Christmas. Yams and salt fish are separately cooked, and a dish of beans mixed with olive oil is provided. In the morning this food is taken to a closed room, where it is deposited both in the *marassa* plates and in ordinary containers placed for those who attend the rite. As the offering is made, songs such as the following are sung:

Marassa, m'a pé mandé,	Spirit of twins, I ask,
Ça wé la si 'ou content?	Are you content with what you see there?
Ago-e-e.	*Ago-e-e.*
Adoré nan pié Damballa,	Worship at the tree of Damballa,
Ago-e-e.	*Ago-e-e.*
Marassa bra,	Twins of the forest,
Marassa carrefour,	Twins of the crossroad,
M'a pé mandé,	I ask,
Ça wé la si 'ou content?	Are you content with what you see there?
Adoré nan pié humfort,	Worship at the *humfort*,
Assuré-e, ago!	Care for us, *ago!*
Marassa dé, trois, quatre,	Twins two, three, four,

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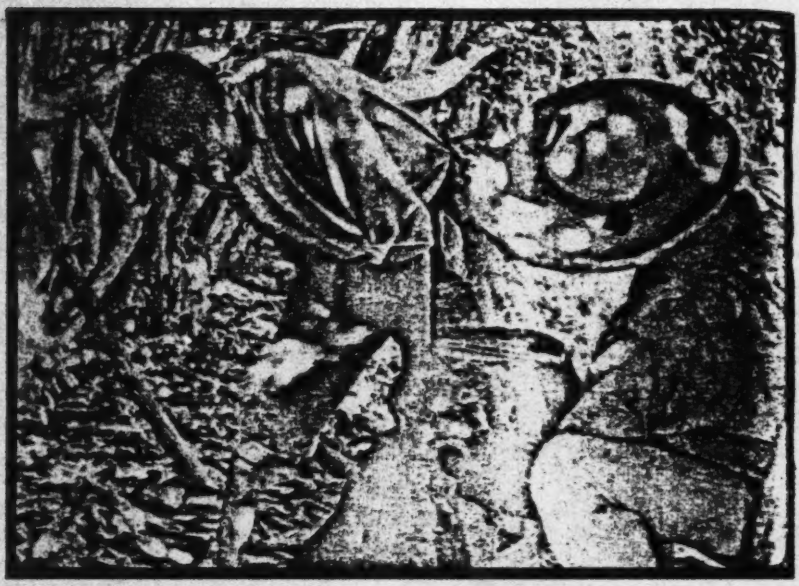

ABOVE, *Making the* vodun *drum: stretching the cow-hide heads.*

BELOW, *Consecrating the drums: they must be "dressed," like anyone who is baptized.*

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nected with them, much of African tradition which has carried over into Haitian religious life has been retained in pure form. Yet the intrusion of Catholic custom into these African patterns — often noted, though generally in passing — also must be studied if the significance of the forms of Haitian folk-religion is to be grasped. That this aspect of *vodun* has received the scant attention it has had is probably to be ascribed to two causes.[3] The first takes the Catholic element for granted, so that even where a particularly dramatic element of Catholic practice is seen in an African setting, such as a crucifix or the portraits of the saints on a *vodun* altar, specific mention is made of this without attempting to dissect its historic or psychological role. The second reason for the comparative disregard of Catholic influence is that for Europeans it is a commonplace. Spirit possession and sacrifices, African song and drum rhythms are more "exciting" than prayers or hymns of the Church. Underlying both these causes is the deep-rooted and unquestioned assumption that, in contact with any non-European culture, the patterns that govern European behavior must prevail. Consequently, is it not in the nature of things that Catholicism should have taken root in the *vodun* cult? Is not rather the matter to be stressed that African traditions should have been retained at all? That the process should actually have been one of amalgamation rather than of dominance is rarely taken into account. Yet to go deeper into the significance of this process in Haitian life is to open far-reaching vistas.

An outstanding sanction taken by the *vodun* cult from Catholicism is that of the baptismal rites. Though ceremonies of consecration are a commonplace in Africa, and the African ritual of washing the head — *lavè tête*, as it is termed — has not been forgotten, in Mirebalais the importance of baptism as a means whereby human beings obtain their place in this world and in the next has been carried over and applied to all matters of ceremonial significance. Thus just as in the lives of

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the saints of the Church the sacrament of baptism was a crucial rite, so the *loa* must be baptized before they become forces which act in a recognized and predictable manner. Just as the objects used in the rituals of the Church must be sanctified by being blessed and sprinkled with holy water, so in the *vodun* cult a *humfort*, the drums, the iron, and the rattle must all undergo a similar sanctification, not only that they may possess proper supernatural power, but more importantly that they may perform their functions in the very serious and African matter of calling the *loa* and placating the supernatural beings of the *vodun* cult.

Herein lies the importance of the *prêt' savanne*. Since the official representatives of the Church not only have nothing to do with the *vodun* cult, but excoriate it on all occasions, the *prêt' savanne*, as a man who can read the prayers of the Church, plays an indispensable role and to that extent is to be regarded as a functioning member of the *vodun* cult, despite the fact that he has no control over the *loa* and, as far as was observed, does not participate actively in their worship. At the same time, it must not be inferred that in borrowing "baptism" from the Church this rite has been elevated to the most important place in the ritual of the *vodun* cult, for though the *prêt' savanne* must read prayers "from the book" and sprinkle his holy water, the actual "baptizing" is carried out by the *hungan*. In sanctifying a *humfort*, the end in view is to induce the *loa* to come after the baptism and to insure that no unaccountable or untoward deeds may come to pass within it. Similarly, though drums must be baptized with Church prayers and holy water that they may perform their allotted tasks, without the concomitant ritual of the *hungan* they would be no more empowered to call the gods than they were before the prayers of the Church were read over them. An analogous comparison can be made between the role of the *prêt' savanne* and that of the *hungan* in the *service*. Since the world

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is ruled by God, it is necessary to invoke God with the ritual of His Church before the rites to placate the *loa* may begin. But the important business of the occasion is to placate the *loa*, and it is only when the *hungan* takes over from the *prêt' savanne* that the series of rituals commence which, for the Haitian, hold emotional force and psychological value.

In the description of the baptism of a *loa* given in a preceding chapter, the use of Church ritual in bringing the African spirits under control will be remembered. No clearer illustration can be given of this merging of traditions than in a detailed account of the manner of making and validating *vodun* drums. These drums are of the characteristic African hollow-log type, with skin heads held in place and tuned by means of pegs, which are tied fast about the drumhead with cord. Before the tree which furnished the bodies was cut, an invocation was pronounced by their maker and an offering — a *mangé sec* — was made, that all the gods might come when called by the finished drums. A candle was lighted and *verver* described about the base of the tree. Eggs, broken against the trunk, were rubbed on the bark; while both soft and alcoholic drinks were given as libations, since not all the gods desire the same refreshment. After the tree had been felled and that part of the trunk that was needed for the drums was cut off, the maker was free to proceed with shaping the bodies of the drums by first gouging out the inside of the trunk, then stripping the bark, and finally carving the characteristic foot at the base. Before the next step of boring the holes for the pegs was taken, *clairin* was poured inside each drum, at the entrance to the habitation of the maker, and toward the man's cornfield. The first hole bored in each drum was carefully marked, for this was the significant *manman*. Here the first peg is inserted; the skin head is first attached here; and here the cord about the head is first knotted; while it is the peg in this hole that must always be first struck when the completed drum is tuned.

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534 782 778 The drumheads were cut from a large ox-hide, purchased in the market place. In the early morning sunlight another "little ceremony" was performed before they were attached. Placing the three unheaded bodies of the drums in a row, with the iron in its place, the maker poured *clairin* before each, and having cut a native candle in three pieces, he took them in his left hand as he crossed himself, saying: "*Au nom d' Père, au nom d' Fils, au nom d' Saint Esprit.*" He then [788] lighted the three wicks, and taking each lighted candle in turn in his right hand, he made the sign of the cross with it and attached it to the "mother peg" of each drum. There the flames were allowed to flicker for a moment before the work of heading the drums began.

534 The hide was first attached to the "mother peg," then to the one opposite, and then to the two at right angles to the first pair. This is hard work, for to obtain the proper degree of initial tautness several men must strain at the resistant hide, and that is why four cuts are made where a peg is to go instead of the three that are needed, for frequently a strip breaks and the extra hole is used to re-thread the peg. The great drum has nine pegs, the one of medium size seven, and the small one six, not five, "because the *boula* is a thief, taking the beat away from the iron." The head was cut away from the rest of the great ox-hide only after it was in place. The final step was to knot the cord — braided the day before, of native sisal — to the *manman* peg of each drum, and then to twine it eight, six, or five times about their bodies.

534 778 788 The drums, now finished, were then put aside for a week to allow the damp heads to dry, awaiting the final sanctification. During this period they could not be played. It was held unwise to do more than tap them lightly with the finger-nail to test their resonance and the extent to which the heads were dry. Meanwhile preparations were being made for the baptism. Drums, like human beings, must be clothed when they [292] appear in public, and *rades*, apron-like garments, a white bro-

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cade for Damballa, a red print for Ogun, and a third, a flowered blue material, for all the other gods, were first made. They were ruffled at the bottom, with strips of the material, attached as are apron-strings, to hold them in place. Four eggs, three "native" candles, three white candles, white flour, corn flour, two cassava cakes, two biscuits, three small-sized loaves of bread, two bottles of *kola, clairin,* and holy water, were also provided for the baptism. Finally on the appointed day — a Saturday, so that the drums could afterwards be used for a *vodun* dance — the drums, drumsticks, and iron, with the dresses and the food that had been provided for the ceremony, were taken to the scene of the rite, a habitation where a *tonnelle* had been built for the accompanying dance.

The ceremony began at about five o'clock in the afternoon, the drums being dressed by their godmothers. Just as a child who is to be baptized in church must have godparents, so drums must have their godparents, and following the logic of this position, since the owner of the drums is regarded as their father, he uses the terms *compère* and *commère* for those who have "stood up" with his drums, just as he would for those who might sponsor his children. The *prêt' savanne* first called for some twigs from an orange tree and a bit of cotton, as the drums, standing on end, were covered with a clean white cloth. Grouped about them and ranged behind the officiant were the owner and godparents of the drums, holding lighted candles in their hands, with which they made the sign of the cross from time to time. As the prayers began, the participants crossed themselves, and the *prêt' savanne* sprinkled the drums with holy water, using a spray of orange-leaves. Among his prayers were the Credo, the Ave Maria, the Pater Noster, and the Salve, interspersed with hymns sung by the assembled group. After about half an hour of prayer the officiant, holding an egg in his hand, made the sign of the cross three times over each of the drumheads. Ordinarily the eggs would have been broken, their contents rubbed on the drum-

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534 heads, and *clairin* poured over these, but on this occasion the
778 rite was postponed, for the eggs would have dampened the
788 drumheads so they could not have been played for the evening's dance. Yet this deviation from the strict ritual did not permit any laxity in meeting the obligation when promised — that is, the day following the dance.

534 The *hungan* took charge as soon as the prayers were fin-
778 ished. Placing the drums to form a triangle on the ground,
788 with the iron, rattles, and sticks near by, he put the offerings
793 inside the space enclosed by the bodies, and with white cornmeal made *verver* about them, while at the foot of each drum he placed an egg; then, covering the drums with a clean cloth, he threw parched corn on it. From time to time he interrupted his silent invocations by ringing a bell held in one hand, until the arrival of the time for the vehement haggling over the price of his services, which interrupted the ritual. [552] This matter settled, he asked for the names to be given the drums, and proceeded to "christen" the small one Gran' Siligbo, the middle-sized Damballa, and the great drum Ogun Shango. At this point, were the owner desirous of having special powers given his drums, as is frequently the case, the *hungan* would endow them with a *n'âme,* or soul, at the same time instructing the spirit of the drums, called *huntôr,* in what was desired of it, and prescribing what must be given the drums by their owner to make their powers effective. But in this case no such *n'âme* was asked, and the ceremony continued.

Summoning the gods, he lifted the cloth over the drums and instructed the "father" to pour water in three places between them, to set the drums on end, and to beat one of them. This was the *seconde,* called Damballa, and its having been initially struck indicated that the god after whom it was
534 named was most important for this set. This ended the cere-
778 mony of baptism, and the drummers took charge so that the
788 evening's dance might begin, for now the drums were ready

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for all uses to which those of their type are put. During their making and after their completion they had been sanctified by rites that vividly illustrate the merging of traditions in Haitian religion: by means of offerings to the African gods, and through baptism by the rites of the Church.[8]

The *action de grâce* is another integral part of *vodun* ceremonialism that is essentially Catholic, since its lengthy service is composed entirely of prayers and hymns of the Church. As has been shown, the *action de grâce*, which precedes a *vodun service*, takes place before an "altar" which, important both then and at the later, more African rites, in itself documents in no small measure the combining of Catholicism and *vodun*. One, employed at a *service* not described in the earlier chapters, was covered with a red and white checked table-cloth, on top of which a smaller white cloth was spread.* Pinned to the canopy and to the front of the table-cloth were various chromolithographs of the saints; St. Michael attacking the Devil, Mater Dolorosa, St. James, the Virgin Mary and Jesus (the Assumption), and St. Expeditius. In front of the representation of St. James stood a crucifix with the figure of Jesus, in accordance with the custom of never omitting to have one of these at any *vodun* ceremonial. The table bore many offerings; at the back were four bottles of soft drinks, with cups; while also to be seen were several hard rolls, an ear of corn, a dish containing eggs, and another holding, among other things, rice. One of the containers on the table held holy water, while candles for use both in the *action de grâce* and in the later *vodun* rituals lay beside this. Thus crucifix, candles, pictures of the saints, and holy water were combined in this ceremony with offerings of food and drink to be given the gods that the ancestors had brought from Africa.[9] The songs sung at the voduistic portions of these *services* also reflect the psychological unity of Catholic and African elements in *vodun* worship. One of these declares:

* This altar is shown in the illustration facing p. 192.

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Je crois en Dieu,	I believe in God,
Oui, Santa Maria.	Yes, St. Mary.
Santa Maria,	St. Mary,
Qui sorte nan Guinée.	Who came from Guinea.
Je crois en Dieu,	I believe in God,
Oui, Santa Maria.	Yes, St. Mary.

Another for the Virgin of Allada, sung in Leogane, is as follows:

Santa Maria la Madaleine,	St. Mary Magdalene
Prié pou' loa yo.	Pray for their *loa.*
O Allada-e,	O Allada-e,
Sonné une sonne pou' moin,	Ring a bell for me,
Pour m'allé.	So I may go.
M'dit, Allada-o,	I say, Allada-o,
Sonné une sonne	Ring a bell
Pou' les pitites nagé.	For the drowned children.

Of these elements, the portraits of the saints, or *images,* offer one of the most vivid instances of the mingling of African and European elements in Haitian belief, for they are the outward symbol of the psychological reconciliation that has been effected between the saints of the Church and the African deities. This is nothing peculiar to Haiti alone. In West Africa, wherever Catholicism has obtained something of a foothold, certain pagan deities are regularly identified with saints of the Church, and the same phenomenon is found in Cuba[a] and Brazil.[a] This identification of saints with the *loa,* whether initiated as a ruse against the detection of African worship or emanating from a reasoned analogy, would seem in Haiti, at least, to act as a device to achieve an adjustment between two conflicting systems by emphasizing the resemblance between Catholic saints and African nature deities. The importance of the *images* as symbolizing the reconcilia-

tion is consequently of the first order, while the presence of these chromolithographs in every Haitian hut and on the altars of *vodun* ceremonies indicates how deeply the acceptance of this identification has gone. In the house occupied in Mirebalais during this investigation, the following *images* were found on the wall:

Moses St. Augustine Our Lady of Mount Carmel

St. Peter the Apostle St. Michael St. Clara

Baptism of Christ Peter and Paul

It is perhaps worth mentioning that the owner of the house, when renting it, stipulated that these *images* were to remain in place, for their power kept the house, its contents and occupants from harm.

No greater concurrence of opinion is had in the designations of saints given to corresponding *loa* than in any other facet of Haitian belief. Those here listed were obtained in two ways: either the equivalents of *loa* were named in the course of discussions with priests and other members of the *vodun* cult, or the *images* themselves were shown to members of the cult, and the names of the corresponding *loa* were recorded. Mater Dolorosa is held by most persons to be Gran' Ezilie, but in one instance this figure was equated with Ezilie Freda Dahomey with the insistent qualification that the two were not the same *loa*. The saint is represented as richly clothed, wearing many rings and necklaces and surrounded by other evidences of great wealth, so that the correspondence arises from the fact that Ezilie is held to be the richest of the *loa*. Notre Dame d'Alta Gracia is related to the *loa* Kpanyol, or the Spanish *loa*, while Notre Dame de Grâce is the water-goddess

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overturn his memory, overturn his thought, overturn his house, overturn for me my enemies visible and invisible; cause the thunder and the tempest to break them into pieces. And in honor of St. Bouleversé, three Paters and three Ave Marias. . . .[8]

Thus it is seen how Catholicism invades the beliefs and rites of the *vodun* cult. In an analogous fashion *vodun* has not failed to make itself felt in certain festivals of the Church,[9] for while elements of *vodun*, rigidly suppressed inside the Catholic churches, are absent except in so far as they can be carried on surreptitiously, they are nevertheless integral parts of these fêtes in the minds of the folk who make pilgrimages to them. So arresting is the resulting mingling of practices, and so significant for the amalgamation of cultures that has taken place in Haiti, that a detailed discussion will be given of the most prominent instance of this type, the festival in honor of the Virgin of the Palms, which takes place each year on July fifteenth at Ville-Bonheur, or, as it is better known, at Saut d'Eau. The festival of 1926 has been described by Price-Mars;[10] here certain observations made during the fête of 1934 may be given, especially as they have to do with those aspects of the mythology which validate the festival, and as they illustrate the non-Catholic, voduistic phases of the celebration, of importance for the points being considered in this chapter.

Beside the church, Ville-Bonheur has three especially sacred spots, St. John, En bas Palmes, and Saut d'Eau—the falls themselves. At St. John is a large *campêche* tree surrounded by many palms, from beneath which flow streams of water. St. John is said to have appeared here, carrying his scepter as in the chromolithographs, and at that time water began to flow in the sacred springs, and except for one short period has continued ever since as holy water, being used for drinking and bathing, but never for purposes of cooking. The priests

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ABOVE, *Consecrating the drums: the "godfathers" and "godmothers" standing by with lighted candles as prayers of the Church are recited.*

BELOW, *The vodun priest employing African rites to complete the consecration of the drums.*

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[facing P. 282]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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stationed near by did not at first believe in this miracle, until after several appearances of the saint the higher authorities of the Church gave the fête their sanction. Many tales are recounted of skeptics who, though coming to scoff, became filled with awe when they put foot in the holy place and — significantly for the merging of the two religions — were possessed by *loa* for the first time. A church which has since burned and a small chapel were erected at the site which now is the entrance to the enclosure before the present church. This is the old calvary enlarged, and here the statue of the Virgin, saved when the earlier church burned, is found. Next to this church are the uncompleted walls of the structure which is to be a new and larger church. It is said, however, that this edifice has given much trouble, for each time the walls reach a certain height they fall. The people say: "The Virgin does not like this place," and believe that a simpler church should be built where the old one stood.

The vision of the Virgin at En bas Palmes is believed to have occurred several times, most recently as placed by a lively tradition in the days of the American Marine occupation, when a priest is said to have caused both St. John and En bas Palmes to be closed for several years because, as at present, many who prayed at the church also took occasion to worship their *loa*.

During the fête, however, the tale goes, the Virgin appeared on a palm tree. The people, on their knees worshipping, sent to the priest to come and pray. He declared it merely superstition, however, and called an American Marine captain stationed at Mirebalais to help him suppress this worship. The captain ordered a Haitian sergeant to shoot the vision, but the Virgin merely moved to another tree; another shot, and she moved again. They cut down the tree, and those who looked on with terror saw the vision slowly ascend to the sky. As the priest

1: Herskovits E-4, 6 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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turned to leave, word came that his house had burned and nothing in it was saved. Later he suffered a paralytic stroke from which he never recovered. Some say that the American captain became ill and was sent to the States "as a punishment for what he had done." Several days later the sergeant was found mad, wandering in the woods. Since he had fired under orders, however, his punishment was but temporary, and on being cured he returned to Ville-Bonheur to ask pardon of the Virgin. Today he lives in Mirebalais. When they saw the American ill, the priest paralyzed, the sergeant mad, and the presbytery burned, "public clamor" became so strong that both St. John and En has Palmes were reopened.[11]

In 1932 a cyclone at St. John tore down trees and houses and hurt but did not kill the worshippers who had gathered there. An eyewitness insisted he had seen the enormous whirling cloud rise from the sacred place. He had no time to reach his house, for with a noise like a cannon-shot the whirlwind came, and an enormous oak tree fell just behind him—"I saw death staring at me." Today he carries two scapularies to the Virgin to protect him.

The third sacred spot is at the falls themselves, where the grandeur and beauty of the scene is such as to induce the religious thrill almost unaided, and where great numbers go in the course of their pilgrimage to Ville-Bonheur. There are two falls, situated at a distance of several miles from the village, one for Damballa and one for Aida Wedo, and it is believed that those who bathe in the sacred streams become possessed. It is said that the palms near by are sacred to the Virgin, but others hold that they are for Damballa. Many visit the falls on the day preceding the fête, but the largest throng hurries there immediately after the principal mass, when the greatest number of possessions and the most violent seizures by the *loa* occur. The falls, therefore, in association

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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The falls, therefore, in association with the purely Catholic rituals carried on at the village church, are seen to hold an important if unofficial place in the complex of rites known in the Haitian Church calendar as the Fête of Saut d'Eau.

During the two or three days preceding the fête and on the fifteenth of July itself, an air of great gayety not unlike the carnival spirit accompanying European Church festivals pervades the surrounding country. Camions traverse the almost impassable side road, bringing crowds of people from Port-au-Prince, from the Dominican border, and even from the north, who throng the streets and the shrines and tramp the miles from the village to the waterfalls or visit the nearer sacred sites of St. John's Wood and En bas Palmes, to light candles and ask the satisfaction of their needs. Like the falls themselves, these spots by their very beauty awaken a sense of emotional awareness, and it is not strange that here, as at the falls, many possessions occur. At night, in particular, the great trees with their interlacing serpent-like roots, the gaping earth which at En bas Palmes is witness to the uprooting of the palm trees where the miracle occurred, and the stream of sacred water, all make a scene of indescribable eeriness, heightened by the flickering candles given as offerings, and the open lamps of those who stay the night here to fulfill their vows.

In the town itself gambling and other games go on, and dances of all kinds are held at night, among them *vodun* and *bal*, though at these public dances no possessions are countenanced. One of the most colorful aspects of the scene is the *penitants*, wearing clothing of varied colors in fulfillment of a request by the *loa* they worship or an obligation to them. Such folk are not permitted in church unless the clothing which marks them is covered by ordinary dress, but they walk the streets, often possessed and often using their power to heal those whom they encounter. Possessions by Ogun, by Gede, by Baron Samedi, by Damballa, by Erzilie and other *vodun* deities were observed, particularly at the shrines, where their devotees prophesied and healed the sick.

2: Courlander B-8 (1937-1958) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

in many details. But, in general, the cult establishment consists of a central building of one or more rooms with an adjoining court, or peristyle, over which there is a covering—usually a straw roof. The covering, called the *tonnelle*, is supported by a number of poles, one of which is placed squarely in the center of the court. This center pole—the *po'teau mitan* or *po'teau planté*—is the focus of most of the ritual activities. The loa who descend upon the service enter by way of this pole. The ritual *vèvès*, or flour paintings, are made at its foot. Around it all the dancing takes place. On certain rare occasions when rituals are held in the open, a carefully selected tree becomes the center post—though it is by no means certain that the po'teau mitan is not, in fact, a symbolic tree.

The building adjoining the peristyle contains the inner sanctum. Here are deposited the paraphernalia of the cult, such as ritual bottles and jars, flags of the société, and the iron kettles used in various ceremonies. On the walls there may be primitive paintings of the special loa of the hounfor, or perhaps of his symbol. The loa of the sea, Agwé, may be represented by a ship. Damballa, the serpent-rainbow loa, may be represented by a snake or a rainbow. Usually there are colored lithographs of Catholic saints, who have both Catholic and African names. And there are hand-beaten iron crosses, dishes containing Indian celts in which loa are believed to reside, gourd bowls, and carved wooden double and triple bowls used for services to dead twins and triplets. Upon the altar place, called *badji*, there are the *crichas* or *govis*, earthen jars or bottles in which rest the loa removed from the heads of people who have died. Sometimes special niches are built on the hounfor grounds for the deities. Each cult priest designs his hounfor in his own way.

A hounfor belonging to a mambo near the town of Croix des Missions gave the appearance of having a large and prosperous société. Under the tonnelle eight beautifully carved Arada drums were suspended from a single peg. At a respectable distance hung a Martinique drum used only for dances on the occasion of a Nine Night. Inside the hounfor was an impressive display of sacred objects and decorations. One corner of the room was reserved for Symbi Yendézo, a patron loa of drinking water and rainfall. He was portrayed on the wall as a long, thin snake crawling in a maze of crosses. On the ground beneath the picture was a small concrete pool, in which two water snakes swam. Another corner was reserved for Agwé, and on his wall was a picture of a steamship. Along the back of the altar was an impressive array of govis, containing the spirits removed from the heads of deceased persons. There was a large plate of loa stones, and various protective charms stood near by. Flags and sabres

2: Courlander 5-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

346 794 353 778 were stacked against the wall, and set about in various places were several assons, iron crosses, Catholic lithographs, chains and iron bars for the loa Ogoun, candles set in bottles, and an old forged double bell of African design.

346 353 Some of the hounfors found elsewhere are more elaborate and reflect the richer resources of the immediate community, or the creative impulses of the houngan and his helpers, or the pressure of competition. Some cult temples are prolific with painted designs and symbolic representations of the deities. Others are unpretentious, simple, and even Spartan.

346 [113] In his book *En Haiti*, written approximately fifty years ago, Eugene Aubin describes a hounfor in the Cul-de-Sac Plain, a few miles from Port-au-Prince, as he saw it in 1906:

346 353 794 778 [The] *hounfor* is fronted by a *peristyle*, which is used for the Vodoun dances and services; it is a large area, with a floor of beaten earth, covered with a *straw roof*. On three sides the walls rise to support the *roof*; on the fourth there is the inscription:

Société la Fleur de Guinée
Roi d'Engole
[*Flower of Africa Society*
King of Angola]

indicating the name of the patron of the society [the loa Roi Angole, or Wangol], over which the *houngan* presides. The *hounfor* is an ordinary house, a little larger than average. The sanctuary contains a principal *pé* [altar], running the whole length of the room on one side, and another altar, a little smaller, in one of the corners. These *pés* are altars largely made of brick, in which the under part is decorated with hearts and stars in relief; above, draperies hang from the ceiling. The [M6] lateral *pé* is divided into three compartments. There are, therefore, four sections in all, consecrated to each of the *loa* served in the *hounfor:* Aguay Aoyo [Agwé Woyo], Damballa, Ogoun Badagry, and Loco [Loko], Nago King. Maître Aguay is represented by the customary little boat; a medallion is consecrated to Monsieur Damballa, shown holding two snakes in his hand; a figure on horseback represents Ogoun Badagry, with a woman at one side holding a flag; Papa Loco is pictured in full uniform, smoking a pipe and fanning himself. The walls are covered with religious paintings [Catholic lithographs]. The back of the altar is occupied by numerous carafes in baked clay, called *canaris*, which contain the . . . *mystères* [spirits taken from the heads of the dead] gathered in the *hounfor;* in front are bottles of wine, liqueurs and vermouth presented to them in homage; then the plates, the cups for the *mangers-marasses* [feasts for the twin spirit], crucifixes, hand bells, *assons* for directing the dance or calling the *loa;* plates filled with polished stones [celts] inherited from the Indians—"thunder stones," symbols of Damballa, which Saugo [Sobo] the god of lightning hurls from the sky into the enclosure of his favorite *papaloi* [*houngan*]. Beside these miraculous stones are many coins of copper or silver [property of the *loa*]. The *loa* . . . possess coins of Joseph Bonaparte, King of Spain, minted in 1811; of Frederick VII of Denmark, 1859; of Charles IV of Spain, 1783, and of President Boyer, dated year 27 and year 30 of Haitian Independence. On the ground there is placed a coconut-oil lamp; in the corner, the flags of the *hounfor* and the saber of [the] *laplace*, the man who acts as master of ceremonies in the services.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

in the services. In the court, the bases of four sacred trees . . . are surrounded by circles of masonry [low brick walls]. These *reposoirs* are inhabited by the *loa* Legba, Ogoun, Loco and Saugo.[5]

There is little in Aubin's description to suggest that hounfors were much different a half century ago from what they are today. He errs in identifying the "thunder stones" solely with Damballa. But his eye for detail was acute. In 1950 a mambo in the neighborhood of this hounfor described by Aubin affirmed that some of the loa stones and old coins which he mentioned are still to be found among the properties of a hounfor in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. Others were lost in one of the cleric-inspired raids which despoiled cult temples of drums and other paraphernalia about fifteen years ago.

Many services are held outside the hounfor and the peristyle. Some rituals, such as animal sacrifices and "talking to the loa below the water," may take place some distance from the cult buildings. Indeed, various Vodoun ceremonies may be held at waterfalls, at the seashore, in sacred groves, in ordinary homes, in a boat at sea,[6] or under a sacred tree.

The rites of the hounfor are almost without number. They are associated with the supplication or conciliation of virtually countless deities, each of which has his own special service. There are services in multitudinous combinations and permutations for the dead, for twins, for albinos, and for unborn children. There are ceremonies for the elevation of hounsi and for initiation, smoke and fire ordeals, and tests of other kinds. There are *mangé loa* (feasts for the deities) and *mangé morts* (feasts for the dead). There are services for the sick, for the crops, and for the harvest. In one context or another, Vodoun relates to nearly every aspect and phase of life—and its counterpart, death. Since every region, every locality, and, in fact, almost every hounfor has developed its own ritual out of the common materials, it is possible to see hundreds of ceremonies without ever seeing precisely the same one twice. Yet the common elements bind them all together.

One such prime element is the possession, the "mounting" of the human body by one of the deities. Possession is a psychological phenomenon common to the rites of many cults throughout the world. It is known in Asia, Africa, Europe, and America. It is not the unique property of the African and his Haitian descendant. In the United States it is a commonplace not only among certain Negro cults but certain white cults as well. The United States Negro had ample West African inspiration for his seizures in the church and at the baptism. The intellectual meaning of these seizures has changed, as have their outward forms to a measurable extent, but their emotional content has not altered.

5 [Translated from the French of Aubin, En Haiti, pp. 59-59. Cf. P. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]

6 [Footnote appears on P. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]

2; Courlander B-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

776 they say, and "rides" them. What the possessed persons do then depends
787 upon the personality and whim of the loa. Generally they take on the special personal characteristics of the loa. Their voices and manners change and their postures and attitudes undergo transfiguration. They may talk about the "island below the water," about community ancestors, about intimate affairs of the community, or about how things are going back in Africa. Sometimes they utter words or phrases recognized as "African language." And on occasion possessed persons talking *langage* are said to be speaking Greek, Arabic, Hebrew, or Spanish. At the moment of first impact, when the loa enter their heads, they stagger, jerk, and tremble, often falling on the ground. Then, soon afterward, their behavior begins to move in a groove of conventionalized activity.

[346] Most commonly the loa arrive during religious rituals or dances. They
come by way of the *po'teau mitan*, the center pole which supports the roof
[178] of the peristyle. It is around this pole that the sacred vèvès, or flour draw-
[182] ings, are made. At the foot of the pole sacrifices are offered and libations are poured.

787 Yet possession may occur anywhere and at any time. The sound of a
793 certain drumbeat may be the signal for it, or a sudden fright, or an emo-
[533] tional crisis, or any situation to which possession has been conditioned. The houngan or the mambo may facilitate possession, control it, and terminate it. The cult priest is acutely sensitive to the conditions favorable to possession. He knows how to heighten emotional tension and how to soften it. A competent houngan "plays" his service as though it were a delicate instrument. He takes everything in, issues instructions to his servitors from time to time, orders the drum tempo increased or diminished, knows how to change pace. Sometimes he hovers in the background unobtrusively, encouraging the singing and dancing like a benevolent father. At other times he comes to the center of the activities and takes command. He becomes the focus of all eyes. His slightest action is watched with intensity. He may take the hand of one of the servitors, pirouette him about, and compel the loa to enter. When the servitor is "mounted," the houngan may conduct him through ritual activity. At the right moment the houngan may help the loa to leave.

776 The spectators who observe possession in others are usually aware of the
787 identity of the loa who has entered. When the ancient loa Damballa Wèdo comes in, his "horse" falls to the ground, wriggles like a snake, and makes what are considered to be snakelike sounds in his throat. For Damballa is the venerable deity identified with the rainbow, which in ancient Dahomean lore was thought to be the great serpent come out from the underworld to drink after a rain. When the loa Ogoun Chango enters,

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his "horse" may trample in glowing coals, plunge his hands in boiling oil, or play with red-hot iron bars. For Ogoun Chango is a fire-eater—a deity of the forge and of battle. The deity Legba is characterized as a limping old man. A "horse" possessed by Legba may cavort about on a kind of cane-crutch called a Legba stick. Each loa has his distinctive mark. As the Haitians say, "you learn about the loa by watching his horses."

In addition to having homes in Africa or below the water, most loa have special residing places in Haiti, such as stones, caves, trees, waterfalls, or springs. One may come across a boulder or a bamboo grove sacred to a certain loa, and food offerings are likely to be seen there. Many loa are identified with some specific variety of tree and will "inhabit" all such trees throughout the country. Loa Calbassie, for example, lives in the calabash tree, and Loa Général Brisé in the chardette tree. Offerings to these deities are set out underneath the tree or hung in its branches, and services may be held around the trunk.

Loa also live in the old Carib and Arawak celts which are found from time to time. These "loa stones," as they are called, are identified by their forms and their ability to pass certain tests. Some Haitians declare the stones must be able to "whistle," to perspire when blown upon, and to "talk." The loa stones ordinarily are passed on from one generation to another, in the hounfor and in the peasant hut alike. In this way the loa who inhabit them are inherited. Sometimes, but rarely, stones are sold; disposing of a loa stone requires an elaborate ceremony to guarantee that the seller will not be injured by the loa, who is likely to feel "wounded." In such a ceremony the loa is fed and placated and asked to go his way in peace. The loa stones are sometimes called "thunder stones," in the belief that they were hurled to earth by the deities Kebiosu, Sobo, and Chango (all of whom had similar functions among the Arada and Yoruba peoples of West Africa). The stones are cared for by their owners with the greatest reverence.

Loa are acquired by individuals in various ways. Many Haitians hold that every infant is born with a *maît' tête*—a spirit who is "master of the head." In this light, no individual is without a loa, although the deity may never manifest interest in the individual by an act of possession. A man may acquire a loa in the course of his life, although in that event the original maît' tête must be retired from his head. The "inherited" loa are usually not the personal deities but the special protectors of the household or the hounfor and are known as "loa of the house" or "family loa."

Should a man acquire a new loa to replace the old as his maît' tête, he must undergo a ceremony known as *lavé tête*—the "washing of the head." The old loa is retired and sent away, leaving the field clear for the new

794 in a circle around the two boiling pots. On the seventh circuit of the
787 course, the laplace stopped him at the first pot. The houngan grasped the
789 man's free hand and, bending down, dipped it into the boiling oil. There
796 was no visible indication of pain. They moved to the second pot, and the
793 man's hand was dipped again. They proceeded again to the first pot, where the dipping was repeated, then back again to the second pot. The neophyte's hand entered the boiling oil seven times in all. He made no sound, showed no resistance, no reflexes. Then the hounsi took him back to the hounfor. It was all over. After three days of isolation, they said, he would be kanzo.

The houngan peeled an orange, while everyone crowded close to watch. In it he found a two-gourde note. He peeled another orange and found in it a slip of paper with the name of a woman on it. She came forward, and everyone laughed. She was an old woman, the oldest of the hounsi. The houngan held the two-gourde note between his teeth. The old woman took the other end of the note in her teeth, but she had to kiss the houngan before he would let go.

796 The ritual of brulé zin, or kanzo, is of unmistakable West African ori-
794 gin. Herskovits has described a ceremony in Dahomey which in many
171 details could easily have taken place in Haiti. The Dahomean rite was in honor of the gods of the Thunder pantheon. Here, too, we find a pot of boiling palm oil, in which are the sacred dumplings: "When the fire had finally subsided and only a faint column of smoke issued from the pot, the initiate came dancing toward it, thrust her hand into the boiling oil, and lifted out a dumplingg. . . ."

Family Rites at Léogane

769 These services for family ancestors took place in the mountains above
796 Léogane at the ancestral home of my friend Libera Borderau. They were
787 conducted on the grounds of his grandmother's house. The ritual began
778 with dancing. Against the wall of the house sat the three drummers with their Arada drums. Near them, leaning against the wall, were the flags of the family loa. Also near by was a long high table serving as a makeshift altar called the *pé*. In the very center of the table in a clean white dish lay eight loa stones—old Carib artifacts. The stones were identical in shape, all of them perfectly symmetrical, resembling small, pointed cigars. In the *pierre-loas* lived the family deities, and much of the ceremony was built around them. The stones had been bathed and polished in oil for the occasion. Set around the plate of stones were numerous small *criches* (French, *cruches*—clay water jugs), glass bottles, and earthenware jars which also contained loa. On the low bench before the table, seven dishes

[Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 165. Cf. P 351, Cat. 116.—Ashkist]

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were set out in a row, and before them four *coui*, the half-gourd bowls used in services to the marassas, the twin spirits.

In the house, at the center of the floor, was a round flat stone about ten inches in diameter and about two inches thick, resembling a millstone. This was the *pierre-manman*, the mother stone responsible for the coming of the other loa stones and who cared for them in the absence of the family. In this stone, they said, was the spirit of the old loa Nananbouclou. On a mat in the corner of the room two children slept.

Outside, on a chair, his back against the wall of the house, the houngan sat, his rattle and bell in hand. He had come several miles to conduct the service. Most of those who danced were his own hounsi. The houngan was "strong" and well known in the region; people said he had worked for high government officials, including the president himself.

After several rounds of Arada dancing in which children as well as adults took part, the drums stopped. The houngan and his laplace moved up to the building which served for the night as the hounfor. It was up a steep slope, about a hundred feet from the dance court. There they prepared for the sacrifice to Chébo Profiel, the honored loa of the evening. Passing in and out among the spectators was a woman who would be possessed by Papa Chébo; since he was the guest of the service, she (or the loa in her head) was free to come and go as she chose, to speak as she pleased, and to do what she wished. Mostly she shook hands with people, a ceremony which continued throughout the night. First she would offer the right hand, then the left; or perhaps both at once, in which case the hands would be shaken downward vigorously three or four times. Someone ignorantly said, "Bon soir, Madame!" and she turned on him to reprimand his insolence. She was not "Madame," she was *l'Autorité*, the Authority.

During the course of the evening the conviction became stronger and stronger in her that she was Chébo Profiel. From the time we first saw her until the end of the evening her personality underwent marked changes. She "became" Papa Chébo.

The houngan sat before a small hole, possibly a foot deep and ten inches in diameter, in front of the hounfor. The fresh earth was piled neatly to the side, and an enameled plate was set on top of it. Around the hole were the various dishes to be offered to Chébo Profiel. The laplace prayed in Latin, a short Catholic service. Then the houngan, shaking his beaded rattle and tinkling his bell, called for Chébo to "enter." He made a small maize-flour drawing around the hole, and then began the feeding of the loa. The plates arranged for the feast contained roasted maize, roasted peanuts, bread, cassava, rice, and other foods. There were bottles of rum,

celebrated with elaborate rituals for the dead. As in Haiti, great importance is laid on the presence of all living descendants, whose numbers are calculated to influence the ancestors' behavior. And as in Haiti, the first yams and the first rice are offered to the dead, and only after the family ritual does the family divide the crop.[5] 243 244 796 769 171

Service for the Assotor Drum

The *assotor* drum is the largest and most sacred of all Haitian drums. Around it is built an impressive and elaborate service known as the *mangé assotor*, which, according to local traditions and circumstances, may be held as often as every three years or as infrequently as every twenty-one years. The period between mangés always consists of an odd number of years. A houngan from Jérémie declared the service might properly be held every three, five, or seven years. Another cult priest in the Cul-de-Sac Plain said it could be held every seven, seventeen, or twenty-one years. The assotor is known as the *plus grand moune* (the most venerable "man") of the hounfor. However, few cult centers possess an assotor. "Assotor c'est fort bagaille, c'est pas zaffai tout moune" (The assotor is powerful, it isn't everybody's affair), Haitians say. This is what a man from Jérémie tells about it: 534 796 778

"The assotor is the greatest of all things in the hounfor. The Rada drums are only for the Dahomey nation. The Congo drums are for the Congo nation. The assotor is a man of Dahomey, but he is for all nations. It is for all loa—Pétro, Congo, Bumba, Dahomey. The assotor belongs to Dahomey, but when there is a great service the assotor is the host to the loa of every rite, the loa of Haiti and of Africa. When the assotor is played, the loa are awakened everywhere. Loa who have been forgotten by the Creoles (Haitians) will come to the service and mount people, and when the loa have gone, many people don't know what loa has been riding them. Some ancient spirits from far away come only to the assotor service, and when it is over they aren't heard of again. 534 796 778 184 787 [976]

"The assotor drum is not for small things, it is for great occasions. For some people there are no occasions in their whole lives great enough for an assotor service. When all other things have failed, it is only then that the assotor is called upon. 534 796 778 787

"If a big houngan should have an assotor drum, he can have only one, and it is the chief of the hounfor. All other drums are its servants. You can make an assotor, but it is not necessarily an assotor. It may look like an assotor and not be an assotor. To be an assotor it must not only have the shape of an assotor but it must be accepted by the loa. There was a houngan near Jérémie who made an assotor and held a great service with it,

[5] [Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana. Cf. p. 351, category 116. -- Analyst] [115]

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534 796 778 787 but it wasn't a genuine assotor and the loa didn't come. The drummer beat the assotor, but none of the loa came. As he played, the stick kept falling out of his hand. This was a bad signal (omen). None of the people got loa in their heads. The houngan was in a great sweat, but nothing happened. Another houngan came after the third day and told him to bring the service to an end. He did that. They threw the false assotor away and no one would touch it.

534 796 778 782 787 [796] "To make an assotor, there is first a service. The houngan goes into the woods to find a great tree that is suitable. The trunk must be big enough so that the drum is at least as tall as a man. Most assotors are six feet high or more. The houngan must buy the tree from Maît' Grand Bois, the loa who is Master of the Forest. There is a service under the tree, a goat or a bull is killed, and the houngan places money on the ground for Maît' Grand Bois. Then Maît' Grand Bois mounts his horses. He enters the head of the houngénicon or the laplace. Sometimes he rides the houngan himself. He is very rough with his horses. But if he accepts the money, the houngan has the tree cut down, and he has an assotor drum made. When the drum is finished, a special stick must be made to beat it. Again they go to the woods. They carry the great assotor drum with them. There is singing but no dancing or drumming. They find a tree from which they will cut the drumstick, and there is a service. The houngan must buy the branch from which the drumstick will be made. He offers money to Maît' Grand Bois, the same as before. He spills a little water on the ground for Maît' Grand Bois. He holds a candle in his hand. They sing to Maît' Grand Bois to let them have the stick. Maît' Grand Bois is the master of all the trees, but he is thinking also of the other loa and how they feel about it. On the Island Below the Water he consults with them. If he agrees to give the stick, he makes it known by mounting some of the hounsi, or the houngan, or maybe the man who will be the special assotor drummer. Then they cut down the branch and make the drumstick.

534 778 796 The assotor drum is not dedicated to Ogoun or Êzilie or any other single loa. If it is baptized, it is given its own name, Assotor. The spirit of the assotor is multiple, for it is the *rappel* for all loa everywhere. The spirit of the assotor is called Assotor, and it is a kind of loa, but it is not one loa but all loa.

534 796 778 796 "In the assotor service, all loa come. Ogoun, Damballa, Legba, Tijean Pétro, Dan Pétro, Gèdé, Maît' Cimitière, they all come. The big loa come and the little loa, the chiefs and their escortes. Every big loa has an escorte of twenty-one smaller loa. Some of the smaller loa have their own escortes. Damballa comes crawling like a snake. Makanda comes crawling like a snake. Ogoun comes fighting, chewing on nails or anything iron. Badé

comes quietly. Pié Cassé comes crawling because of his broken feet. Each loa comes in his own way. 534 796 778

"First there is dancing for the Congo and Pétro loa. There is dancing for the Kanga and Ibo nation. Last of all is Dahomé, for the assotor belongs to the Dahomé nation, and Dahomé is the host. 776 [184]

"The assotor service is the biggest of all services. It last fifteen days. Old people say that once there were services lasting more than twenty days. Every day, animals are killed—bulls, goats, pigs, chickens, turkeys—all according to the loa who are there to be fed. When Moundongue is fed, a dog's ears are clipped in his honor, because Moundongue is fond of dogs. More happens in the assotor mangé than all the rest of the year. Dahomé is host to the other nations, so the Rada service comes last. But the assotor drum is the host even to Dahomé, and it is fed last of all. [782]

"The assotor drum is dressed in the finest of clothing and kerchiefs during the mangé. It is the king of everything.

"When the mangé assotor is ended, when the drum has been fed, there is an immediate Mass held in church for the souls in purgatory. You don't need to have any special reason, but you must hold the Mass for all the dead. You serve coffee, sandwiches, cake, and other refreshments for all the people. 534 796 769.

"When there is no mangé going on, the assotor is kept in a special place in the hounfor. Every seven or nine months the houngan has a special *rappel* beaten for it on the Rada drums, and rum is spilled on the ground for it. It is a great responsibility to own an assotor. But it does great things for the houngan who owns it."[6] 534 778 796

Service for Mait' Grand Bois at Anse-à-Veau

Orthodox tradition in the region of Anse-à-Veau places the loa Mait' Grand Bois as the most potent and venerable of deities. He is the supreme mystère, whose good will or eccentric whim determines the fortunes of all men. Somewhat subsidiary to Grand Bois, but served within the same rites, are two other non-Dahomé loa—Moundongue (of Congo origin) and Ibo. Older people of Anse-à-Veau regard this trilogy, along with Femme Grand Bois (the wife of Mait' Grand Bois), as the core of "Guinée" ritual. There is also a second group of deities, consisting primarily of Ogoun Feraille, Êzilie, and Fréda Dahomé; these loa are of the Dahomey family and are regarded as somewhat less important. Should services for any of them be held, they follow rites for the Grand Bois constellation. People in this region hold that there is only one Ibo loa, one Moundongue, one Ogoun, and one Êzilie, each of them with many names or manifestations. Legba, the Dahomean spirit of procreation, 184. 776

[6] [For footnote, see Category 116, p. 351. --Analyst]

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If it should happen that on the appointed day four years later the family is unable to hold the regular feast for Grand Bois, the grand famille goes to the tree sacred to the loa, with a bottle of *siro'* and other token gifts. He explains the difficulties of the family; he tells the loa that it has been a bad year, that the crops have been poor, and that the family has not been able to accumulate enough money to buy sacrificial animals. He asks Grand Bois for a six-month postponement. The loa agrees to the postponement, making his intentions clear through various signs when the grand famille is possessed. "Grand Bois is a good loa," people say, "but if you fail to meet your obligations to him he will be very stern. If you don't keep your promise to him, he may seize you [i.e., kill you]."

When the rites for Mait' Grand Bois are finished, services for Ogoun and the Dahomé deities may be held, beginning on Friday and running through the week end. The Ogoun service is a festive affair. There is much singing and dancing, and early on Saturday morning the sacrificial bull is dressed and decorated with red and blue kerchiefs. Red and blue ribbons are tied to his horns, and he is led on a grand tour to various places, including Ogoun's tree. The drummers walk behind him, and after them members of the family, some dancing, some singing, and some mounted by the loa Ogoun. The procession passes three times around the cemetery, then heads back toward the family *habitation*. When the participants reach the tree sacred to Legba, they sing to this loa, invoking him to "ouvri bayè pou' moin" (open the gate for me). Finally, when the procession reaches the *habitation*, the sacrificial bull is killed. After Ogoun has been served his mangé, the rites are terminated with an *action de grâce*.

Near Anse-à-Veau there is a dried-up spring. It is said that many years ago during a big service for Mait' Grand Bois a man mounted by this loa rushed to the foot of a large tree and began clawing at the ground. He dug a hole there with his hands, and when it was only a few feet deep, water began to flow. The members of the société later enlarged the hole and lined it with stone. It was discovered that a giant crab was living in this water. One year, a service to Mait' Grand Bois was missed. The crab disappeared from the spring, and soon the water stopped flowing. "Grand Bois gives," the people say, "but if he is not remembered he also takes back."

Possession by the Loa Pinga Maza

On the outskirts of Port-au-Prince there is a hounfor dedicated to the loa Pinga Maza, also known by the name Bakulu Baka. He is a ferocious and fearsome spirit of the Pétro family who is known for his propensity

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

776 to "eat" people; that is, to destroy them. To do this he employs such
753 means as disease, insanity, and destruction of crops. If a man serves
828 Pinga Maza well, the loa protects him in return; but for those who anger
731 him, Pinga is a menacing and vengeful creature. People often say, "Pinga, c'est djab" (Pinga is a devil).

346 The Pinga hounfor in Port-au-Prince is called the *Société de la Belle*
353 *Jeune Fleur*. Its peristyle is simple and is hardly distinguishable from
794 those of other small hounfors. Around the base of the center pole is
● 778 a three-foot-high wall of masonry, decorated with simple cult symbols. The outer room of the hounfor proper also resembles many another. The familiar pot têtes containing loa stand on a wooden altar, and there are Catholic lithographs on the walls. But the inner room belongs exclusively to Pinga Maza. Here are all the accoutrements and objects sacred to the deity. Everything is red. Pinga's clothing and kerchiefs are red. On the walls are painted esoteric designs—hands, skulls, and crosses—all in red. The bottles, magic bundles, and govis on the altar are decorated with red cloth, ribbons, or paint. In the middle of the earthen floor is embedded a heavy wooden cross. On each end of the crossbeam hangs a large calabash resembling a bulbous hand. And on top of the upright is affixed a human skull. The total impression of this hounfor is that of a bizarre aberration, calculated to intimidate and terrify. The houngan himself is relatively young, literate, and city wise. His personality is smooth and sharp, and he lacks the air of sincerity and easy simplicity which most often characterizes the houngan of the mountains.

353 In this inner room, before the skull and the cross, there took place a
754 small service for a client, to determine what kind of magic was needed
755 to fend off malevolent actions of an enemy. On the day of the divining session, there hung from the rafters of the tonnelle a long rope, which extended into a deep hole in the earth near the door. Hanging on the rope, down inside the hole, were two gray dolls tightly bound together. Hanging still farther down were a knife, a fork, and other, unidentifiable objects. This cluster of magic paraphernalia was an *expédition* at work; it was an elaborate pouin, which was working against an enemy who lived far away.

793 Before entering the hounfor, the houngan took a long rope whip
755 from the wall and cracked it seven times before the door. This process, known as *frete cache*, was to "wake up" the loa within. The houngan then entered, followed by the client who was seeking help. They paused briefly in the outer room, where the houngan took up his asson and bell and made a small vèvè on the ground. He spoke briefly in *langage* and then passed on through the door to the inner room. There the

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of Haiti. But the route to it is through water. When the Haitians say "under the water" they do not mean under the sea. The ocean is regarded as the special domain of Agwé, La Sirène, and a few related deities, but it has nothing to do with most loa. "Under the water" specifically means under the springs, the rivers, and the fresh-water lakes. Fresh water has the greatest of significance in relation to most of the Vodoun deities.

When a loa comes to visit his Haitian children he comes by way of the *chimin dleau* (the water road)—that is to say, by way of the river, the waterfall, or the spring. Because the spring is the primary source of fresh water, it is the most direct means of contact with the land of the loa. Tales are heard everywhere of persons who, drawing water from the spring at night, heard the voices of loa or the sound of singing and drumming coming up from somewhere below. And virtually all the tales about human beings who visited the land of the loa describe them as descending into a river or disappearing into a waterfall.

The loa are accustomed to traveling by the "water road." And in all aspects of the Vodoun service, this "water road" is refreshed and replenished. When the road is dry, contact with the loa is diminished. When it is moist, the loa travel easily.

Thus, the houngan constantly uses water to entice and invite the deities. He holds a glass or pitcher of water at the center pole of his peristyle. He extends it toward the four cardinal points. He spills water at the foot of the center pole. He spills water in the hounfor at the foot of the *pé*, or altar. He sets a pitcher of water at the gateway of his *habitation*. And often, during a service, he pours a pathway of water in the dust from his gateway into his peristyle. Within nearly every hounfor there is at least one *bassin*, or pool, dedicated to the loa who is the *maît' caille*, the master of the house. These pools are carefully filled with water drawn from the springs. They are places of rest and refreshment for the deities whose names or portraits are inscribed on the walls above.

Sometimes rites and services are held at the site of the spring, the houngan and his entourage marching down to it from the hounfor for the occasion. So, too, there are annual pilgrimages to waterfalls such as Saut d'Eau, where the loa mount their "horses" in profusion.

Within the hounfor, during a service, the cult priest and the servitors pour "libations" of water on the earth, so that the loa may be refreshed. And virtually without end, the hounfor is the scene of ritual ceremonies in which the loa is bathed and thus "renewed" in the heads of his servitors.*

*[For footnote, see category 116, P. 351.--Analyst]

The importance of water in Vodoun has a fundamentally West African character. Among the Yoruba and the Ashanti and in Dahomey, for example, water rites are a significant aspect of religious ritual. Herskovits notes the frequency of religious pilgrimages to streams in West Africa.

In one instance, at Abeokuta, a bedecked procession of worshipers left a shrine atop a high hill, followed a long path to the riverside over two miles away, and returned before the ceremonies could be carried out at the shrine of the god. On one occasion, in Dahomey, the bed of the sacred stream run dry was "filled" from nearby wells so that this water could be ritually redrawn for use in an especially important ceremony. Among the Ashanti, pilgrimages to Lake Bosumtwe and other sacred bodies of water regularly occur. And it is on such occasions that the spirit of the river or lake or sea manifests itself, by "entering the head" of the devotee and causing him to fling himself, possibly possessed, into the water.[8]

So it is also in Haiti, where possession at the river's edge may cause the devotee to leap into the river. At Saut d'Eau, possessed persons plunge into the waterfall without regard for their safety, being in the care of the loa who have mounted them.

Into this water complex the Christian rite of baptism has been easily absorbed, providing merely a new act of veneration for water and its properties. In the Haitian mind baptism is not far removed from the *lavé tête* ritual, the washing of the head, or the *rafraîchi tête*, the "refreshing" of the head, both of which are acts in propitiation of the loa.[9] So related is the baptismal concept in the Haitian mind, that the term "baptize" is used to describe the lavé tête; it is said that the loa is being "baptized." So also are drums "baptized," not to mention yams, and even the hounfor itself.

Marriage to a Loa

Although the term *hounsi* (spirit wife, or wife of the spirit) is applied to a large class of servitors of the Vodoun temple, only a small number of servitors ever pass through rites which give them a husband-wife or wife-husband relationship with a loa. Reasons for these mystic marriages vary, but usually the rituals take place upon the prescription of a cult priest who interprets the will of the deities concerned. Most of the mystic marriages of which I have heard have taken place in the general area of Port-au-Prince and the Cul-de-Sac Plain. In some other areas of Haiti it appears that no such rites have taken place locally within the memory of the elder inhabitants. One aged man living near Belladère declared: "It [marriage to a loa] is impossible. People serve loa, they do not marry them. A man does not marry his burro. A loa

[8] [Herskovits, The Myth of the Negro Past, p. 233. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[9] [It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in similar form. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

Atibon Legba ouvri bayè pou' moin ago!
Ou wè Atibon Legba ouvri bayè pou' moin ouvri bayè!
M'apè rentré quand ma tourné,
Ma salue loa yo!

Atibon Legba, open the gate for me, *ago!*
You see, Atibon Legba, open the gate for me, open the gate!
I will enter when I return,
I salute the loa!

After this appeal, or sometimes while it is being sung, the houngan spills a little water on the earth at the base of the po'teau mitan. It is an inducement for the loa to "enter," for the loa reside "below the water" and their passage into the hounfor is made easier by water. The houngan may spill his water in a long path from the entrance of the peristyle to the po'teau mitan, or extend his pitcher invitingly to the four points of the compass. Then, perhaps, another song is sung to Legba:

Papa Legba nan hounfor moin!
Papa Legba nan hounfor moin!
Papa Legba nan hounfor moin!
Ou mètre qui porté drapeau,
C'est ou mètre ka pané soleil pou' loa yo!
Papa Legba, Papa Legba!

Papa Legba is in my hounfor!
Papa Legba is in my hounfor!
Papa Legba is in my hounfor!
You who carry the flag,
It is you who shade the loa from the sun!
Papa Legba, Papa Legba!

As the ritual gets under way, there may be a general song of welcome to all the loa of the cult, such as this one:

Bonjou' ah bonjou' bonjou' bonjou' bonjou'!
Bonjou' ah bonjou' bonjou' bonjou' bonjou'!
Oh bonjou' ah bonjou' loa moin! [Ex. 43]

Good day, ah, good day, good day, good day, good day!
Good day, ah, good day, good day, good day, good day!
Oh, good day, ah, good day my loa!

When the service is well in progress, the songs may describe the qualities of the deities—their character, behavior and needs. If it is Balindjo, for example, the song may advertise that persons with this loa in their heads are immune to poison:

Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh Ogoun ah!

Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh, Ogoun, ah!

Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh Ogoun ah!
C'est pas manqé manqé
Poul tapé chwal manié! [Ex. 41]

Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh, Ogoun, ah!
There is no poisoned food
That will kill my horse!

Ogoun Fai, known also by the Christian name St. Jacques, is the deity of war, and this song describes his courage and valor:

St. Jacques Majeur a vapé dit'm ga'pas déjà!
St. Jacques ah vapé dit'm ga'pas déjà!
St. Jacques Majeur a vapé dit'm ga'pas la-guè!
St. Jacques ah vapé dit'm ga'pas la-guè! [Ex. 42]

Major St. Jacques sent to tell me he is already a man!
St. Jacques, oh, sent to tell me he is already a man!
Major St. Jacques sent to tell me he is a man of war!
St. Jacques, oh, sent to tell me he is a man of war!

Should the service be to the lou Dumballa Wèdo, symbolized as a rainbow and a great serpent, this song might be sung, commenting that he cannot be drowned in the water:

Papa Dumballa ou c'est couleuvre ah!
Pourquoi pas ndyé?
Pourquoi pas ndyé?
Dumballa pourquoi pas ndyé nan dlouo? [Ex. 43]

Papa Dumballa you are a snake, ah!
Why don't you drown?
Why don't you drown?
Dumballa, why don't you drown in the water?

Dumballa, the rainbow, is in fact the source of the water that bubbles from the earth in springs. He is a patron of the spring, and there he often lives in the form of a water snake. In many a houmfor where Dumballa is specially revered there is a *basin*, or pool, dedicated to him. On the wall behind the pool there is usually a painting of Dumballa and Ayida, depicted as great serpents, sometimes with a feathered headdress. The pool is kept filled with fresh water from the spring, and here one or more small snakes—symbols of Dumballa and Ayida—reside:

Ala lou manbé nan dlouo
C'est Dumballa!
Ala lou manbé nan dlouo
C'est Dumballa!
Papa Dumballa c'est ou à dlouo!
Papa Dumballa c'est ou à dlouo!

There is a lou who lives in the water,
It is Dumballa!

[P 95]

7. In the Mapou Tree: Magic, Demons, and Compacts

It is said by many Haitians that the loa are inclined to shun the mapou tree, for it is the secret rendezvous of countless kinds of demons. On certain nights, they say, you may see a chink of light showing through the trunk of the great mapou, indicating that the demons are in macabre session. 796 778 824

Sometimes it is the baka who meet there to feast and discuss their blood-curdling plans. The baka are described as small and evil creatures, human in form, with red eyes, and legs or arms covered with skin but no flesh. They change into animals at will and may roam the countryside as cats, dogs, or cattle. The baka are notorious sorcerers, and they perform only malevolent acts. They are reputed to "eat people," literally as well as figuratively. Stories are heard of such-and-such a man or child who disappeared and was presumed to have been eaten at a feast in the mapou tree. One man who passed a mapou in the dark of night reported that he heard muffled singing coming from within its trunk, accompanied by the pounding of mortars in which a gruesome feast was being pulverized. But the baka "eat" people also in the sense that they destroy them. It is said sometimes that a person with a withered arm or leg has been "eaten" by a baka. Perhaps he was an innocent victim; possibly he struck a horse or dog which was really a baka; or perhaps he simply brushed against a baka in the market place. Sometimes the baka directs his evil in the most indiscriminate sort of way, "eating" whatever human being he meets. Animals which behave strangely are suspected of being baka in disguise, and they are given wide berth. 776 [732] 796 825

A cow once found within an old brick-covered spring was taken to be a baka because no cow could have passed through the small doorway of the spring. It was assumed that she had entered as a small baka and had then changed to her animal form. The spring were unused for days, until some children reported that the baka had vanished. The cow was

 The Cow was

776 never seen again, and after a prêt' savane had read prayers over the
825 spring the people again drew water from it.
[783]
[493] Baka more often change themselves into gray or red pigs, but one ingenious baka was said to have transformed himself into a bicycle, which was seen traveling alone at night on the road from Port-au-Prince to Léogane.

776 Some people wear charms against the baka's malevolence; but the
789 most effective weapon is the cocomacaque stick. The cocomacaque, or
824 monkey palm, is a palm tree that grows only a few feet high. It has magical powers to drive off not only baka but other evil beings as well. When the tree is growing in its natural state, it is said, you must never mention its name in its own presence. Should you say within its hearing, for example, "Look at the cocomacaque," it will wilt and fall over, losing all its vital powers. The trunk of this midget palm is a favorite material for fashioning a walking stick or a short baton. A man going on a long journey into strange country may carry a cococmacaque stick with him to brandish at the crossroads where baka lurk, or to drive off strange animals that may be baka in disguise.

776 In their relationships with human beings, the baka are not always
789 random. Sometimes, for a terrible price, they will undertake to make a
754 man rich or to "eat" his enemies for him.

184 In some parts of Haiti, baka seemingly have found their way into the
776 ranks of the loa. In the Congo-Guinée pantheon there is a deity called
778 Bakulu Baka, or Babaku Baka. He is a malevolent spirit who "eats" people in the best baka tradition, and he lives, significantly, in the mapou tree, which is shunned by all good loa.

776 The *engagements*, or compacts, in which baka sometimes figure are
789 usually made with another sort of creature, the *djab*, or devil. A djab
787 is a manlike being but is superhuman, ferocious, and terrible. Some
675 djab are small, some large, some innocent in appearance, some grotesque. They are supernatural sorcerers who deal out riches in exchange for human beings. A frustrated or desperate man may go to a djab and ask for a favor, which will usually be granted for a heart-rending price. Persons who appear to gain wealth suddenly may be suspected of having entered into an *engagement* with a powerful djab.

538 One story is about a man of Port-au-Prince who, needing a large sum
776 of money, went to a famous djab who lives in a cave known as Trou
789 Fourban. This powerful djab agreed to provide all the money required,
787 but only on condition that the man deliver to him each year one of
675 his children. The man suddenly came into a large fortune. But when the anniversary of his compact arrived, he did not go to Trou Fourban

2: Courlander 2-5 (1937-1938) 1960 SV3 Hait SV3

having died a virgin. The *latin* is the spirit of a child who died before baptism. The *revenant* is a spirit of a dead person who feels he has been mistreated, and who returns to the world of the living to plague their families or their enemies.

The *lou-garo* (*loup-garou*) is a being of another kind, a vampire. She is human in form but sheds her skin and assumes animal forms at night when she roams the countryside seeking a victim. Salt is her nemesis. Should her human skin be found and salt sprinkled inside it, she would not be able to put it back on and would be destroyed.

A special form of the lou-garo is the *bizango*, a kind of enormous dog that runs in packs at night seeking people to eat. Also related to the lou-garo is the *démon*, a male creature of amorphous personality and character who can convert himself into an animal at will. There are sociétés of démons which, like those of the baka, meet in the dark of night in their assembly hall inside the mapou tree. Haitians who are conversant with such matters agree that there are many such trees, but that the most notorious of them are Mapou Miteppe in Miragoane, Mapou Simon in Aux Cayes, and Mapou Danpisse at Léogane.

Other fearsome beings such as the *zombeanpo*—human cannibals—also gather in the mapou to conduct their affairs.

Against all these creatures, and against black magic in general, there are many magical protections, the most common of which is the *garde corps* (protect the body), or simply the *garde*. It is usually obtained from a bocor and consists of a small bag of mysterious ingredients. The owner wears it around his waist or around his neck. Sometimes it is merely a cord with a number of ritually made knots. The garde corps is made to prescription and protects the wearer against specific things such as a lou-garo, poison, or death from a bullet or knife. In describing a garde corps he had prepared for a client, a bocor revealed that it contained dried chicken blood, extract of *avari* bean, and *gris-gris* powder, among "a thousand and one" ingredients. The *gris-gris* powder is made from a dried *gris-gris* bird.

There is another form of protective magic, broader in scope, called the *arrête*. It is used to protect not merely an individual but an entire household, or even a group of households. In addition to warding off supernatural creatures and protecting people against assassins, the arrête is a neutralizing agent against various forms of black magic such as the *ouanga* and the *makanda*. The arrête bundle or object is hung in the house or in a nearby tree, or it is buried somewhere on the grounds. Sometimes it is nothing more than a pointed stick placed in a certain way before a door or gate, or at one side of the trail leading to the

[Simpson, "Haitian Magic," Social Forces, October, 1940, p. 97. Cf. p. 351, category 116. --Analyst]
[For footnote, see category 116, p. 351 --Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1938) 1960 SV3 HAIT SV3

mâché carriage or on papier-mâché horses, make their appearance during Rara as well as on the Day of the Kings (*Les Rois*). 541 536

Among the traditional paraphernalia carried by Rara groups are cocomacaque sticks, cha-cha rattles, metal rattles called *ochaliry*, a set of rattles on a tall thin pole (called *jouroujou*), candelabra bearing candles or oil lamps (*lampions*), banners and flags, and such miscellaneous musical instruments as the *grage* scraper, bamboo scraping devices, the *kasse* finger drum, *assots* (beating boards), and various kinds of secular drums. 541 575 534

The general tone of Rara is nonreligious. The dancing is free from the decorous restraints which characterize most religious ritual, and some early observers of the festival were shocked by what they saw. Some of them went so far as to attribute Haiti's dense population to the "licentious activities" and reckless abandon of the spring carnival. The Catholic Church and some political administrators have sporadically sought to suppress Rara, along with Vodoun ritual. And even today in Port-au-Prince the foreign visitor often is urged to watch the elite Mardi Gras with its floats and mulatto queens as a substitute. 541 [535] [795] [656]

Although Rara has an over-all tone of secular abandon, it has links with both Catholic and Vodoun ritual. Good Friday is given over in good measure to mirning the story of Jesus and Judas. A perambulating band may carry an effigy of Judas hanging from a pole. Another will burn the Judas effigy, or drag it in the dust as the crowd moves along the road. In another group a man playing the part of Judas may crawl on his hands and knees along the trail, while Jesus' avengers pursue him with long, cracking whips. 541 179 536

Tying in with Vodoun ritual, virtually all Rara drums and other paraphernalia are "dedicated" or "rededicated" before Lent in special *hounfor* services. And on the last day of Rara, usually late in the night, prayers are said, the *loa* are called upon, and some of the festive paraphernalia is thrown into a fire to be consumed. 541 [79] 534 [178]

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42. *Forged iron "saber" of the loa Damballa, from a houmfor near Léogane. Height, 32 inches.*

43. *Forged iron standard for holding ritual objects, from a houmfor in the region of Léogane. Height, 18 inches.*

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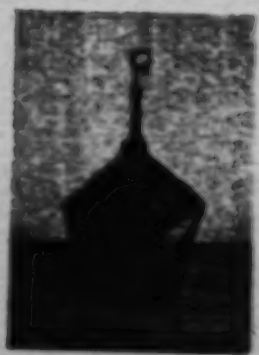
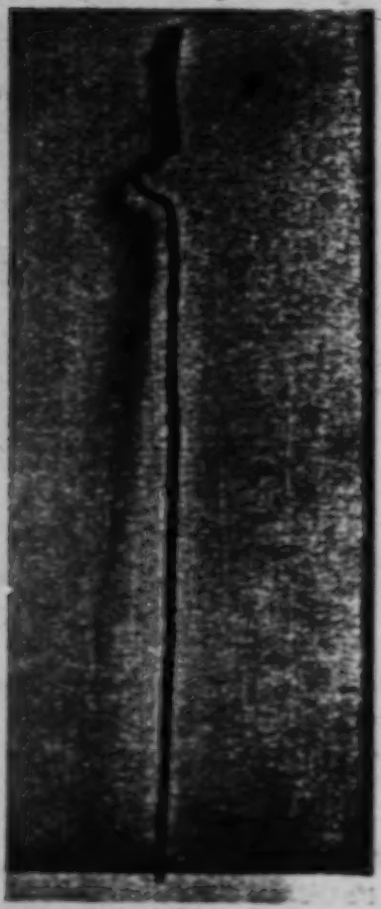
44. *Ancient iron figure of the loa Quinçon Fer, from a houmfor near Léogane. Height, 12 inches.*



45. *Old iron ritual bell, or agan, from a houmfor in southern Haiti. Height, 21 inches.*

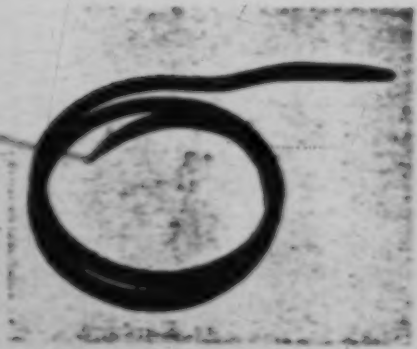
2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-EE]



46. Forged iron rod in the stylized form of a snake, representing the loa Damballa, from southern Haiti. Height, 34 inches.

47. Iron sculpture on a Nago altar of a houngfor near Gonaives, representing a bird sitting on a tree.

48. A sculptured iron standard in a houngfor in the Cul-de-Sac Plain.



49. Forged snake, representing Damballa, from southern Haiti. Length in coiled form, 9 inches.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-FF]
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50. *Representation of the loa La Sirène, made by a contemporary blacksmith.*

51. *Representation of the loa St. Jacques by the same blacksmith.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-HH]

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54. Inside surface of a calabash bowl used in rituals of the houngfor, painted in black and white. The figure represents the graveyard loa, Baron Samedi, with a pick, shovel, and tombstone. Length, 15 inches.

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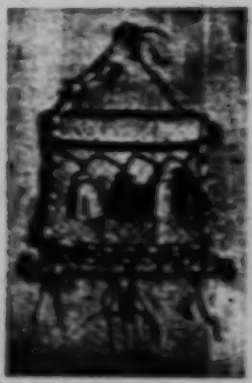

55. An ajor cousin, the traditional peasant knapsack.

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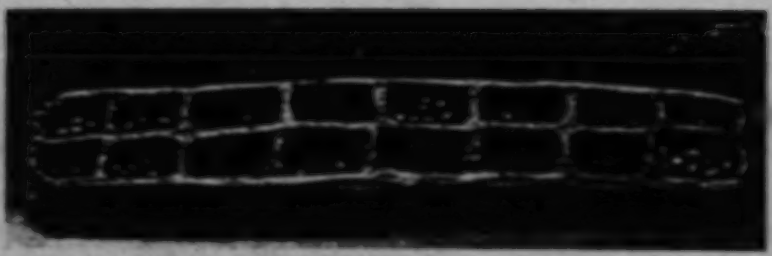

56. Wari board cut from a mahogany log. Length, 29 inches.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P.112-N]

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20. A Vodoun altar in northern Haiti, scarcely distinguishable from a Catholic shrine. Houmfors range from the simple to the complex, from the poor to the rich, from the primitive to the sophisticated, and from the bizarre to the artistic.

21. Altar in the houmfor "Société de la Belle Jeune Fleur" in Port-au-Prince dedicated to the loa Pinga Maza. The cross surmounted by the skull represents the deity. Behind the table, leaning against the cross, is the pestle with which this loa "grinds" his enemies. On the other table are razor blades for Pinga Maza to eat.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P.112-0]

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22. *An assortment of stones (Indian artifacts) from the altar of a houngfor in the mountains above Jacmel. All are regarded as thunder stones thrown to earth by the loa Sobo and Kébiosu, or as stones containing the essence of other deities.*

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23. *A houngan of southern Haiti divining with the aid of his asson, bell, and (right) gourde.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 112-V]

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31. An Ibo arrêtre in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. Laid out on the mat is a feast for the Ibo lua. The houngan ritually feeds the deities by placing food in the baler at each end of the mat. Designs on the pots are the symbolic patterns found generally in vèvès. The tree in the background, surrounded by a low curbing, is sacred to the lua.

[P.112-VV]

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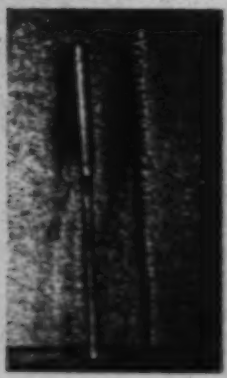

86. *The denté, or notched scraping stick.*

87. *Sacred calebash rattle from northern Haiti.*

88. *The tchancy, a metal rattle used chiefly for secular music.*

[1178]

89. *A houngan's aizan, showing network of beads and snake bones.*

90. *A lo drum, showing method of lacing and the sliding rope tighteners.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-X]

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33. *An ancient assotor drum, believed to have been made early in the nineteenth century. Seen faintly on the painted surface are a guinea hen and a palm tree.*

34. *An assotor drum in full regalia for a service in the Cul-de-Sac Plain.*

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2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

And when the revolution came he produced for the Haitian armies knives, gun parts, and wheels to transport cannon. By the tens of thousands he made ingeniously devised metal objects to be thrown on the roads, before the French cavalry troops—objects so shaped that, no matter how they fell, a single sharp point stood erect to cripple the enemy horses. Yet knowledge of the West African uses of iron did not altogether disappear, and during the first century of independence the Haitian blacksmith created many old-style knives, spears, and ritual objects for the cult temple.

Even today, some of this old-style work is to be found in hounfors in the southwestern peninsula. One may see simple or ornate iron standards, made to support ceremonial offerings or candles, strikingly similar to standards in ancestral shrines in Dahomey. There are iron bells, both single and double, made in pure West African style; ornate ritual swords and sabers which are the crests of certain deities; coiled and uncoiled iron serpents representing the gods Damballa and Ayida; and stylized or semirealistic portraits of the deities. Many of these old pieces are nineteenth-century survivals; others have been forged within the past decade.

An over-all impression of Haitian material culture is that artistic decoration is almost entirely absent and that the prime emphasis is on utility. Wooden cooking spoons are efficient in form, but missing from them is the delicate decorative carving often found in West Africa. The long wooden washing bowl, or *gamelle*, and the wooden mortar in which grain is pulverized are likewise clean-cut but stark and plainly utilitarian. Clay bowls, bottles, and storage jars are usually of simple, uniform design, with only accidental variations; there is little use of glazes, and the clay is often heavy and thick. Should there be a warri gameboard in the peasant hut, the chances are that it is roughly made, without legs or carved designs. Dugout canoes are usually crude in appearance, heavy and thick-walled, and irregular in form.

Yet there are many evidences—though one must seek them out—that esthetic impulses are quite alive. The gay peasant straw knapsack, or *sifter*, without which no mountain man makes a journey, has a charm and grace that is not diminished by familiarity and cheapness. Decorated with sisal braid and tassels, and colored with green and magenta dyes, each *sifter* on close inspection appears to be unique. In some communities in the south and southwest, burlap squares also are painted with these traditional dyes. About forty inches across, and made of sugar bags, these paintings swarm with geometric patterns and sometimes with figures of flowers and animals. They are purely decorative, being

[See plates 42-51, pp. 112-DD—112-FF.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

used for wall hangings much as appliquéd cloths are used in Dahomey. Near Cap Haitien, in the north, ceramic workers make crude clay figurines of roosters, pigs, dogs, cows, and people. The "purpose" of these figurines is obscure, but it is likely that they are intended for use in Vodoun ritual, a number of them having been observed in hounfors in the vicinity of the town of Grande Rivière du Nord. In some mountain villages, canes carved with animal and human heads are commonly seen. Nor is the tradition of carving gourds and calabashes, popular in various regions of West Africa, altogether forgotten. The *cayambouque*, a divided calabash with the top ingeniously cut to fit into the lower part so as to form a sealed container, is sometimes covered with carved geometric designs, usually crude and haphazard but on occasion meticulous. Until recent years the common *cha-cha*, or gourd rattle, was similarly carved.

Most of the visible traditional art is to be found in the environs of the cult temple. The inner walls of many hounfors are covered with ritual designs and symbols and portraits of the deities. On the altar, sometimes, crude wood carvings of deities are seen, along with forged iron objects, carved maraca bowls, and grotesquely shaped drumsticks known as *baguettes guinée*. All the wooden objects are characterized by a plainness that relegates them to the category of purely functional and expendable things. The wood carving of a deity is not an image, it is a representation; it can be sold or otherwise disposed of, even thrown away if infested with beetles, and another object can be used to replace it. The only concern of the cult priest in this matter is that the deity concerned should understand the situation properly and not take offense. Thus there is no strong feeling that the wood carving should be a realistic representation or that it should be "beautiful." One relatively antique wood carving, completely West African in style, was found some years ago in a hounfor near Léogane and is now in the collection of the Musée du Peuple Haitien in Port-au-Prince (see fig. 57).

One of the most flourishing arts of the hounfor is the *vèvè*, or ritual drawing made on the earth in the course of a service. Most commonly these beautiful and ornate designs are made with white meal or flour, and in a few of the cults, primarily the Pétro, lampblack and red brick dust are also used. The vèvè is made by the houngan or the mambo. With sure, practiced movements, the cult priest allows the meal to trickle through his fingertips onto the ground where the rites are taking place, usually in the peristyle of the hounfor itself. The drawings he makes are composed of a multiplicity of cabalistic symbols—heart shapes, stars, interlocked V's, flags, abstract phallic forms, crosses, swords,

2: Courlander B-S (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Rara season two special rattles are used. One of them is made of metal and resembles a tin can with a wooden handle. The metal sometimes is perforated with numerous small holes, and inside are *hakoli* seeds, which act as rattlers. This instrument, known as a *tchancy*, is usually decorated with colorful ribbons when in use. (In northern Haiti the term *tchancy* is used to designate metal wrist rattles worn by drummers.) The other Rara rattle, called *jouroujou* or *jourjou*, is made of three gourds carried on a long pole. One of the gourds is affixed to the end of the pole, and the others are fastened to the terminals of a short crossbar, giving the effect of a cross with bulbous ends. Since many of the Rara processions are dramatizations of the Christ epic, the instrument could be interpreted as a Christian symbol, though its conversion into a noisemaker appears to be an African conception. The *jouroujou* may be a variant of the small rattle-cross which is used by the Abakwa secret society in Cuba.[a]

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The sacred gourd rattle of the cult priest is called *asson* or *hakpor*. It is pear-shaped and covered with a network of beads which act as external strikers. It is used by the houngan to summon the spirits of the dead, to praise or call upon the deities, and to accompany the performance of magic. The asson is of West African derivation, and its counterparts are to be found among the cults of Martinique, Trinidad, Cuba, Brazil, Venezuela, and elsewhere where African traditions have left their mark. The gourds from which the assons are made are grown in a special grove sacred to the loa.

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A large calabash rattle has been reported from several isolated regions of Haiti, primarily from the north. Some rattles of this kind have been described as more than twenty inches in height and covered by a network of external strikers, usually wari beans. The calabash rattles are used in groups of three. They are shaken and thumped against the palm of the hand, producing both deep and high-pitched sounds. These oversize rattles are employed without drums and are said to be associated with Arada-Nago rites. They appear to be a survival of the instrument known among the Yoruba as the *shékéré* and are found in Cuba in both Dahomey and Lucumi (Yoruba) cult centers.

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Probably one of the oldest of Haitian folk instruments is the earth bow, known as the *zandoor mariegonin*, or mosquito drum. Traditionally the mosquito drum is made in the following way:

A hole is dug in the earth, perhaps a foot or more deep. It is covered with palm or banana bark, which is pegged firmly all around. A cord is attached to the center of the bark membrane and drawn taut to a bent green sapling, one end of which is buried in the ground at a slight angle. The cord is plucked and stopped with the fingers of one hand, while

a [See Courlander, "Musical Instruments of Cuba," Musical Quarterly, April, 1942, pp. 233-24
Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst)

[The Vodoun Pantheon]

776 Aiaoué Tonnerre, also pronounced Awoué Tonnerre. Another thunder lwa. Abomé (or Agbomé) is the name of an ancient capital of Dahomey.

Hwéso. The wife of Sobo Badé.

So Nancoor, also called Sogo Nancine, or simply So. A thunder lwa of Dahomean
[171] origin. In Dahomey he is regarded as an offspring of Mawu and Lisa, and a member of the Sky pantheon.

Kéwéné, or Kéwéno. A thunder lwa who, like Sobo, hurls stones to the earth.
[171] In Dahomey he is known as Xevioso and is thought to be the same deity as So. In
[166] Haiti, persons killed by lightning are thought to be enemies of Kéwéno and are given special treatment in burial.

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776 Agué Woto, known also as Coqui-Nan-Mia. He is a lwa of the sea; thunder and
782 lightning over the ocean are thought to be Agué shooting his cannon. He is usually
[321] symbolized in pictures by a sailing or steam vessel. His colors are blue and white,
[322] and the primary sacrificial animal for him is a male goat. High ceremonies for Agué are begun in the houmfor and consummated in a sailing boat on the open sea, from which is launched a highly decorated and stylized miniature ship containing food for the deity. This tiny craft is known as the *bateau d'Agué*. Houmfors housing this spirit usually have a small boat hanging from the rafters. In Dahomey,
[171] Agué is also a sea deity and a member of the Thunder pantheon.

776 Aouéto Woto. She is thought to be Agué Woto's wife, though in Dahomey
[171] she was considered to be his daughter.

Aouéto Wawéno. Said to be the son of Agué.

La Sirène. Another deity of the sea, a lwa-mer visualized as a mermaid. La Sirène is usually thought of as belonging to a separate family, though she is frequently served along with Agué. Some sacristés do not recognize her as lwa.

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776 Nanamacoor, or Nanan Bourokoum. A lwa of herbs and medicines. In Dahomey
171 this spirit was considered the grandparent of all deities, the progenitor of Mawu and Lisa from whom all demigods are descended.[8] She is still remembered in the Dahomey cults of Cuba.

Lisa or Loua. Probably the Lisa of Dahomey, child of Nanamacoor.

Attibon Legba, or Legba Sé. One of the most important of Haitian lwa, frequently the first one invoked in any service. He is the guardian of the gateway, the
[782] crossroads, and the highway. Corks and male goats are his favorite foods, as in West Africa. In Dahomean tradition, Legba is the youngest offspring of Mawu and Lisa, the progenitors of all Dahomean deities. He is a divine trickster who is both feared
[778] and loved, a force that is capriciously malevolent or benevolent. Today, as in earlier times in Dahomey, the image of Legba, made of clay, stands or sits before the entrance to many villages. Sometimes the image is nothing more than a mound or column of earth symbolizing a phallus. Legba's mischief and tricks are directed against the other deities and human beings. In Haiti, as in Dahomey, Legba is not a personal deity. As Herskovits points out, Legba has no "character" and cannot be
[989] relied on. He is the intermediary between mankind and the deities. It is in this sense that he "opens the gate," providing a channel of communication between man and lwa; and it is for this reason that he is often supplicated first in religious ritual. In Dahomean lore, Legba's mischief is often in the realm of sex. In ritual dances for

[Ibid, pp. 101 ff. Cf. P. 354, Category 16. --Ann 1957]

[The Vodoun Pantheon]

any iron object, such as a sugar vat. In West Africa, Chango (or Shango) and Ogoun were considered separate deities. In Nigeria, according to Ellis, they were brothers, closely associated with each other. Among the Yoruba, Chango was a thunder-and-lightning god and he is believed to have been one of the early kings of Oyo. The African Chango, like the Haitian, is identified with fire, a corollary of lightning, and persons possessed by him may carry pots of fire on their heads and perform other fire tests.[12]

Chango Gnan. Another manifestation of Ogoun Chango.

Ogoun Bachanon. Possibly the same as Ogoun Chango, or he may be named after the Bachangos, a Congo tribe. A warrior and ironworker.

Ogoun Balizo. One of the Ogoun family.

Nizzo Nizzo. One of the Ogoun family.

Arcissié, Acissié, Cissié, or Cissé. One of the Ogoun escorts, sometimes called Ogoun Cissé, or Cissé Boco.

Ogoun Yanvin. One of the Ogoun brothers.

Ogozila, or Bayala. A god of war. Among the Yoruba people of Nigeria, Ogozila was a sky deity and protector of the town gates. He was thought to form children in the womb and was therefore believed responsible for albinism and congenital deformities.[13] Ogozila and Chango are among the main Lucumi (Yoruba) deities in Cuba.

Ogoun Ferraillé. An aspect of Ogoun who functions as a gateway guardian.

Ogoun Blanc (White Ogoun). He does not drink rum, which is a favorite beverage of his brothers.

Ogoun Jean.

Ogoun Jiraé, Jiraé, or Yiraé. A warrior and ironworker. Jiraé may have been a shrine or regional designation.

Ogoun Kloda.

Ogoun Kiwoso.

Yalowé, or Ogoun Lowé. Brother of Ogoun Badagry and the other Ogouns. Yalowé is clearly of Dahomean origin.[14]

Ogoun Panama, or Ogoun Palama. Guardian against sorcerer, or spirit responsible for sorcerer. A brother of Ogoun Badagry. He is usually seen wearing a Panama hat.

Ogoun Pierre Noirsot.

Ogoun Herzen (Ogoun Red Eyes). A malevolent Ogoun brother, red eyes being a mark of bad behavior. Some people feel that he is a member of the Petro rather than the Vodoun pantheon.

Nazo Pierre. A member of the Ogoun escorts. He eats hot peppers.

Boulanto Nazo

Gédé Nimbo, or Nimbo, also called Baron Gédé. One of the powerful deities of the Vodoun pantheon, particularly in the region of Port-au-Prince, where many boundary stones are consecrated to him. Gédé Nimbo, along with his numerous brothers and his vast escorts, is a "dead" lwa, a spirit of the graveyard, a sexual rascal, and a violator of propriety. He is served apart from the other lwa, and usually he has a separate altar or shrine outside the central houmfor. Cult centers for Gédé are often near graveyards, though not necessarily so. Gédé services abound around the main cemetery of Port-au-Prince. Gédé Nimbo has various manifestations, but he is usually

[12] Ellis, The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples, p. 47; cf. R. Bascom, in Introduction to Frobe's African Kingdoms of the Yoruba, Nigeria (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1960). Cf. p. 356 Category 116. -- Analysis

[13] Ellis, The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples p. 55 ff. Cf. p. 359 of K. Analysis

[14] Ellis, The Ewe-Speaking Peoples, [illegible], Analysis of CT-1, 39 Cf. p. 304 Cat. [illegible] Analysis

2: Confander 8-5 (1937-1950) 1960 SV3 HaRI SV3

Mafi' Gbaso Cosson (Master of the Highway). Probably Legba.

Makasso. Believed to be the spirit of the famous hougan Makandal, who lived during the revolutionary period. He is symbolized as a snake which lives in the ground. Some informants think he is a Petro rather than a Dahomé loa.

Masso Ça'ça

Tipian Dayen (Ancient Tipian)

Wuthau Wala. Whydah is the name of a seacoast town in Dahomey.

Zo. A fire deity of clear Dahomean origin.

Ghetis

Ghe, or Ghesis. Known also among the Lucumí cults of Cuba. May be any one of the Ongpo mentioned by Herskovits.

Ghesis Lifá

Ongpaá

Papa Dumond

Pierre Bonnon. This loa is sometimes identified with St. Peter.

Pierre Dahomella, Dahomasa, or Dumasa. Sometimes identified with St. Peter.

Pierre Wala. Related to Whydah Wida.

Pueta, or Fueta. This name is probably a tribal designation.

Sabata. Described as a loa of ancient times. Sabata or Sagbata is the so-called smallpox group of deities of Dahomey.

Sida. A female deity, thought by some to belong to the Exile Fidda family.

Sidbo Gwlvo. In Dahomey, according to Herskovits, Sibbo is an ancient ship-founder.

Sidoya

Tabeau

Ti Cala. This is a "false name"; this loa keeps his real name a secret.

THE AMBIVALENT SIMBI FAMILY

This group of loa in certain regions has attached itself to the Vodoun pantheon, elsewhere to the Congo-Guinée pantheon; but it has not maintained any kind of independent or semi-independent status. The deity Simbi and his family are of Congo origin.

Simbo. A male deity, patron of rain and drinking water. Said to be the father of the Simbi brothers.

Simbi Dlaze. The best known of the Simbi family. Like his father, he is the patron of fresh water, is associated with the spring, and usually is symbolized as a snake. The color sacred to him is white. Altars to Simbi Dlaze usually are found at the spring or the well. Sometimes parade are constructed for him within the houmfor.

Simbi Kotra

Simbi Trendlo, or Simbi Nan Dé Zaou (Simbi in Two Waters). Symbolized as a water snake who lives in the "upper" waters and the "lower" waters.

Gnome Simbo. The parent of Simbo, and ancestor of the entire family of water loa.

Simbi Tonn Ezil (Simbi of Three Islands)

Simbi Makets

Simbi Gnome Bois (Simbi of the Forest)

[Elis, The Ewe-Speaking Peoples, pp. 91-94. Cf. p. 354, Category 116.--Analyst]

Chapter 5: *Services for the Loa and the Family Ancestors* (pp. 47-74)

[1]Note that the houngan and the hounsi are performing services normally performed by the *petit serviteur*.

[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 169.

[3]Parsons, *Spirit Cult in Haiti*.

[4]Account given by Jean Revel Pierre.

[5]Informant: Albert Kofi Pecoquah, Ghana.

[6]Account given by Velonika Salomill. A. W. Cardinall notes in his book *Tales Told in Tongaland* (p. 62): "Trees are in most cases treated with respect. Before a man does his work he goes for a course he must and invariably does sacrifice to the spirit and apologizes for the trees he is about to do it."

[7]The rite of *vajahdi* rite is conducted periodically for a *mulé* rite after the original *lord rite* ceremony. The purpose is to "refresh" the loa and make him content with his residence in the head of the devotee.

[8]Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, p. 113.

[9]It is of interest to note the persistence of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain Negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by outside witnesses in familiar form.

[10]Odette Mennesson Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Vaudoux Loa," in Appendix A of Deren, *Divine Horsemen*, p. 284.

Chapter 6: *Songs of the Peristyle* (pp. 75-94)

[1]This theme is further commented on in chap. 13. Compare with the following message from a Surinam song reported by Herskovits in *Suriname Folk Lore* (p. 682):

> I have no mother there,
> I have no father there,
> I have no sister there,
> I haven't got anybody there.

Chapter 7: *In the Mapou Tree: Magic, Demons, and Computs* (pp. 95-104)

[1]Simpson, "Haitian Magic," *Social Forces*, October, 1940, p. 96.

[2]Note the coincidence of the term *gris-gris* or *grigri* as used in the United States, where it has the same meaning as magic, or "voodoo" charm.

[3]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 393.

[4]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, p. 245.

Chapter 8: *Mardi Gras and Rara: Jugglers, Mayoulas, and Kings* (pp. 105-115)

[1]Leiris, *La Hadi*, p. 40.

[2]Mechanisms of this kind have been observed in both East and West Africa and are well known in the region of Senegal. I saw a similar mechanism, virtually identical with the Haitian version, in the neighborhood of Khartoum, Sudan.

Chapter 9: *Land and Work* (pp. 116-126)

[1]Franklin, *The Present State of Haiti*, p. 360.

[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, pp. 8, describes Dahomean polygamous marriage in its various forms. Although Dahomean plural marriage is complex in terms of gifts, obligations, and

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787 proper control, as they should be. If an unwanted god persists in
114 mounting an individual, the pertinacious one is commanded to go away or the victim himself is sent home until he can recover his own personality. Many people strongly resist possession when it is imminent. Judged by our own standards, possession of the Vodun variety could certainly not be called normal; judged by Haitian standards, however, it would be absurd to call abnormal an experience known and approved by the majority of the community.[29]

796 Possession occurs either at the service or at the dance. Here again
535 the white man has nothing in his religious experience to enable him
787 to comprehend the pattern of Haitian religion. The service corresponds nearly enough to the Catholic Mass or to more realistic sacrifices in ancient Jewish rites, but neither of these faiths nor any other the white man knows well has dancing for religion's sake. In Vodun, however, the dance is of equal importance with the service.

0776 In the tiny *hounfort* (also spelled *houmfort*) of the priest, which is
356 little more than a hut with earthen floor, the service begins. To call
796 this structure a temple is at once to make it too imposing and to confuse the white man in his attempt to understand the scene; it is no more of a temple than was a tiny primitive early Christian church. Most houmforts in Haiti would be crowded if twenty people were present. At one end is an altar, more or less resembling the high altar in a Catholic chapel; on it are placed a crucifix, flowers, candles, fruit and food, wine, lithographs of Catholic saints, and whatever other objects, Catholic or Vodun, local practice may dictate and individual taste prefer. Upon the floor are traced formal cabalistic patterns, generally in corn meal, both to fend off evil influences and as required by the particular loa. The officiants may be male or female or both. To the service ordinarily come only the members of the family and their specifically invited guests; neighbors and friends will attend the subsequent dance.

796 A student of Catholicism would find in the first part of the service
788 a great deal of ritual borrowed from the Church. The blessing,
777 genuflections, making the sign of the cross, responses, and the like,
782 all clearly show a Catholic background which accords well with
787 certain objects upon the altar. Imperceptibly the strictly Vodun element obtrudes itself. The loa are asked whether they will accept

29. The statements of the two sides of this controversy may be found in Dorsainvil, op. cit., throughout, and in Herskovits, op. cit., particularly pp. 146–147.

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565 ing since 1860 has had its effect upon the children of the upper classes.
711 Two hundred churchmen working with a population of more than two million cannot distribute their benefits equally. Teachers must devote themselves to those whose minds are educable, who have access to schools, and who can afford time for daily classes. An element of social snobbishness entered as well. Catholicism was socially accepted in the Western World whose approval the élite coveted, where Vodun if known at all was regarded as a mere superstition. To prove his separation from the peasant black, the élite person was therefore Catholic or nothing.

[747] It would have required many times two hundred teaching brothers and sisters, all with the zeal of fanatics and the energy of dynamos, to convert the masses away from Vodun. In acquainting the peasants with Church forms and certain beliefs the priests have been entirely successful; in making exclusive Catholics of them they have had no success at all.

711 Every vital social institution is continually in a process of change.
177 Vodun, a very living faith, has steadily borrowed more and more from Catholicism, the only other religion with which the people come in close contact. When one can go from a Saturday night Vodun sacrifice and dance to a Sunday morning Catholic Mass with no feeling of incongruity, it is obvious that the minds of the worshipers are actively predisposed to assimilation of creed and ritual.

746 We have suggested in a previous chapter some traces of the Catholic Mass in Vodun ceremony. The Vodun service regularly begins with a long ritual which the observer who knows both the Créole language and the Catholic liturgy recognizes as being almost entirely Roman. While the Vodun houngan sits quietly by, a special officiant known as the *prêt' savanne* (bush priest) reads or pretends to read from the Catholic prayer book. For the Pater Noster, the creed, the Ave Maria, the Salve Regina, and the prayers, the worshipers kneel or stand as they would in church. Candles burn, water is sprinkled, the sign of the cross is made, the chants are sung. When the benediction completes this part of the service, the houngan takes over to conduct the purely African rites; yet his first words are, "*Grâce mise'-cordé*," and many Catholic interpolations appear even in this second part of the service.

[778] The Vodun ritual is conducted before an altar, in Haitian Créole
[192] called a "reposoir," which is a perfect marriage between Vodun and

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Catholicism. I have seen such an altar, with its adjacent table, bearing a crucifix, candles, (holy) water, lithographs of the "Assumption of the Virgin," "St. George and the Dragon," the "Adoration of the Kings," and certain unrecognized but distinctly European saints; in addition to these objects, however, were such unecclesiastical articles as bananas, rice, beans, squash, various bottles of drinks, and plates of food. Near by were the sacrificial animals. 176 [178] [192]

Vodun makes use frequently of one sacrament of the Church—baptism. Needless to say, this rite is not a monopoly of Christianity, and its use in the folk religion may very well have come from Africa. Constant witnessing of the rite in church must nevertheless have influenced its adoption for all important Vodun ceremonials. The drums used in the dance are baptized; so also is the first loa to possess a devotee; at many other special times the rite is likewise performed, generally with a set of prayers which invoke Catholic saints and Vodun loa alike. [177]

Mention has already been made of the identification of Rada and Pétro loa with certain saints and martyrs of the Church. Such identifications are not uniform, but vary in different parts of the country. Legba is generally associated with Saint Anthony, but often (and to the Christian, more understandably) with Saint Peter who traditionally guards the gates of heaven; the Virgin Mary quite obviously is related, whether as Queen of Heaven, as the Sorrowing Mother, or as the innocent Virgin, with numerous manifestations of Maîtresse Erzulie; Damballa, whose symbol is the serpent, is sometimes Moses (whose brother's rod became a serpent consuming other serpents, and who by lifting up a serpent in the wilderness cured the people of their snake bites) and sometimes Saint Patrick (whose association with snakes is well known). Other identifications are numerous, showing the penchant of the people for combining what they know of both religions.[2] 176 177 [184]

Many of the loa have, like the Catholic saints, their symbols, their special days, colors, and other associations. Some like white, some red; the serpent, the rainbow, the crossroads are among the symbols; sacred days occur weekly, Tuesday being Legba's, Wednesday Ogun's, Friday Erzulie's, and Saturday Baron Samedi's. It may be

2. The distinguished Haitian ethnographer, sociologist, and historian, Dr. Jean Price-Mars, has made a list of some of these identifications in his *Ainsi parla l'oncle*, pp. 180–181.

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798 chapel, wended their way down the hill and across to a clearing
796 among the trees. On the way many of the women stopped beside
177 the path to pluck a handful of long grass or reached up to break twigs from the smaller trees. At the clearing, primitively decorated with colored cloth, the priest made a short discourse; then he intoned three times, "Notre Dame d'Alta Gracia," and the worshipers, raising their wisps of greenery above their heads, rustled the twigs until the air was filled with a sound like the hissing of many serpents. "*Priez pour nous!*" they responded each time to the rustling accompaniment. The Virgin of Alta Gracia is the miraculous saint of Higuey, as much renowned among Haitians as among the Spanish-speaking Dominicans farther east. The supplication to the Virgin is proper enough to a Catholic feast, but the hissing, reminiscent of Damballa, is an intimation that the Vodun loa is not yet forgotten on his holy hill.

This festival of Notre Dame d'Alta Gracia shows not only the adaptability of Catholicism to Vodun, but likewise that of Vodun to Catholicism. Not even with the will to preserve their faith and practice pure can most men resist the infiltration of surrounding beliefs; in Haiti, the will to resist is itself lacking. This the Church knows, and counts upon for ultimate victory. In other words, there is to be not precisely a conversion of worshipers away from Vodun, but a slow transformation of Vodun itself into a true Catholic faith within the hearts of the people.

In its long experience in adaptability, the Church has in many a country learned to establish a ground of common understanding with lowly folk, while keeping its touch with aristocrats. Following the principle that where a belief or rite is apparently ineradicable it is advisable to turn it to Catholic uses, the Church in Haiti has often made this kind of adjustment, just as in earlier times with the Aztecs, Mayans, and other continental American Indians. An example of it may be observed at Saut d'Eau, near Ville-Bonheur.

787 Here, near the centre of Haiti, in 1884 there appeared in a palm
778 tree the vision of a beautiful Virgin blessing the people. She re-
798 mained so long that according to tradition the whole countryside saw her. The parish priest, unwilling to permit this obsession of the people to continue, came to drive away the apparition. The Virgin departed, apparently of her own will. People saw her no more, but many came to the palm tree and were miraculously cured and

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marvelously aided in distress. The priest, not willing to allow even this "delusion," tried to cut down the tree but was wounded by his own machete. Eventually, however, the tree was destroyed by natural causes, and a church erected on the site. Fire destroyed the church. Each successive church building has likewise been destroyed, by fire or by lightning. No longer now does the Catholic Church combat the sanctity of Saut d'Eau: after all, it was the Virgin who appeared, not a loa. The great celebrations on every fifteenth of July draw pilgrims from all over Haiti. Although the Church now grudgingly approves the feast it is still recognizably Vodun in character, for devout souls who bathe in the water are "mounted" by loa. The Church has a hard battle ahead of it to win this festival for Catholicism.

Three factors work in favor of the Catholic struggle to win Haitians completely away from Vodun: the world-wide organization of the Church, which can always throw trained reserves into the battle; the superior intellectual equipment of the priests, enabling them to plan their campaign and use psychological weapons; and the plasticity of Vodun itself, which is a conglomeration of human feelings, ideas, and traditions rather than a rigid sect with an inflexible ritual.[3] Even with these advantages, it is still the battle of a few dozen men on one side with the Haitian masses (more than two million) on the other. So far as one is ever justified in prophecy, it seems safe to assume that Vodun will continue to assimilate more and more fragments of Catholicism; that its appeal will remain so long as education and medicine are not extended to the whole countryside; that eventually—it may be centuries hence—Vodun rites may sink back into the status of living folklore, to which the simple turn in their deepest need.

One of the strongest missionary advantages of the Roman Catholic Church has been the breadth given it by two thousand years of experience. In so long a life it has had to be all things to all men; out of necessity it has developed around the central core so wide a variety of belief, doctrine, form, and traditional practice, that there is something for every believer, whether scholarly or untutored, powerfully important or humbly obscure. What the cultivated

3. The absence of any written formulation of Vodun must certainly be a factor in its flexibility. Recorded tradition and written history tend to create definiteness of pattern.

175 178 221 [189] 175 178 179 195

new," which has continued current from the time of its publication by St. John until today.[48] Yet African religious practices were being constantly combated by the Catholic Church, for even in the period of revolt the priests had remained largely unharmed, and when Christophe was elevated to the throne, he appointed two archbishops. After the establishment of the Republic, Catholicism continued as the State religion, so that by the early nineteenth century, as Mackenzie mentions, thirty-eight clergy were active in Haiti, all under the control of the Bishop of Santo Domingo, and all presumably nominated and paid by the President of Haiti.[49] Though for a period there was an attempt to develop a national Church, the missionary work done during the colonial days left too strong a tradition of Catholicism to be overcome, and consequently a Concordat was signed with Rome in 1860, which has remained in effect ever since.[50]

178 Though the story of the cultural history of Haiti between 1804 and the present cannot thus be more than sketched, yet the background is known, and enough can be gathered from accounts of Haitian life during this interval to enable us to see that the varied cultural impulses were shaping the lives of the people throughout these years. With some understanding of the roots of the resulting culture in French and African traditions, then, let us once more turn to the valley of Mirebalais and consider the life of the Haitian peasant as it is lived today.

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the voduists this is not regarded as decisive proof of the power of Protestantism, for those immediately concerned it is held sufficient.[10]

What, then, of the attitudes held by voduists toward the Catholic Church? The correlation of Catholic ritual with *vodun* practice made by Haitians is of utmost significance in this connection. In discussing the Church service, it was pointed out that church bells announce mass or any other rite, and this, it was explained, is for Legba — "*Toute cloche c'est pou' Legba, même l'église, oui* — All sounding of bells is for Legba, even in church," for he must be notified so that he can "open the gate" for God, Jesus Christ, and the saints. "*Nou' même nou' connaî' ça. C'est Bon Dieu crée tout* — You yourself know that. It is God who created everything." It was also recounted how when the priest preaches, he is possessed by the *mystères* of the sacred Trinity, for does he not gesticulate and become excited like any other possessed person?

Furthermore, it is believed that Gede, Ogun, and Damballa "are always at the church," often insisting that their worshippers take communion. Indeed, occasionally the *loa* of a woman may demand a Church marriage from a man to whom she is a *placée*. The sacraments of baptism, first communion, marriage, confession, and extreme unction are received by members of the *vodun* cult, though, as will be seen, when voduists confess, they say nothing of their *loa*. The *hungans* themselves "are most often at the sacred table to take communion," and one particular *hungan* not only attended mass, but was seen continually employing his rosary in the *vodun* ceremonies at which he officiated. While Haitians from the southern peninsula stated that the *hungans* there do not go to church, it was pointed out at the same time that all other voduists attend regularly.

The principal resentment held by Mirebalais voduists against the Church is for the cost of Church rites, and for the

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refusal to accord Church burial to certain faithful followers because of the inability of their surviving relations to pay for their funeral masses. As expressed most clearly, it is felt that the Church is expensive, exacting fees for baptisms, marriage ceremonies, and funerals, while *vodun* worship, on the other hand, costs but little: a bit of *clairin*, the animals one must sacrifice—only, however, to insure the help of the *loa* in causing the remaining ones to increase in number—and the "presents" to be given the gods, costs the less oppressive because they are usually shared by all members of one's family. Another source of discontent is said to be the failure of the Church to adhere to its agreement in the Concordat to "Haitianize" the clergy. This has been emphasized in Mirebalais because the priest of its church is one of the relatively few in Haiti who is himself a Haitian. One of the sentiments about the Church most frequently heard during this field-work, coming as it did just at the end of the American occupation, was: "The *Garde* has finally been Haitianized. Now it is the turn of the Church."

The attitude of the Church toward *vodun* is one of intransigent hostility. The anger with which the priest preached his sermon on the Sunday morning following a *vodun* dance held close enough to town so that the sound of the drums, plainly audible, "disturbed" him the night long, clearly indicates how deeply the priests of the Church resent the worship of the African gods. In Mirebalais they tell how, at the instance of the Church, *vodun* rites were unmercifully suppressed by the Americans during the occupation, to whom it was represented as a potential focus for revolt. In the *place* huge bonfires were made of *vodun* drums painted and "dressed" in elaborate manner. Everything found in the *humfofts* and the private houses of worship was confiscated, and the "thunder stones," necklaces of the devotees, and other sacred objects that would not burn were thrown into the Artibonite River. Today the Church takes full advantage

L: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Microfilm

of its status as the only recognized religious organization in Haiti to dictate the official position of government toward *vodun*. Permission for *vodun* dances and for *services* must be obtained from the officer commanding the local detachment of the Garde d'Haiti, and this is not always granted. Penalties for illicit dances and ceremonies are severe, and because gossip is ubiquitous and no man lacks enemies, apprehension is prompt. Thus in the instance of one *service*, a misunderstanding regarding the permit was sufficient to cause the detention for some hours of the one responsible for the rite.

Is it possible, then, for a person to be a communicant of the Church and partake of the sacrament without feeling this weight of spiritual and official disapprobation? More particularly, is it possible for him to omit from his confession all allusion to his worship of "false" gods? It is here that one encounters a singularly tenacious survival of African traditional belief. In Africa the conquest of one people by another meant the mutual interchange and acceptance of the respective deities. The conquerors added to their own pantheons the gods of those whom they had overcome so that these forces might not wreak a supernatural vengeance upon them; while to the conquered the power of the gods of those who had defeated them was self-evident. If the worship of the Christian God and of the saints of the Church intruded on the aboriginal religious patterns of the Negroes brought to Haiti, the acceptance of such worship did not imply rejection of the old gods. Nor does membership in the Church today mean such complete acquiescence in its doctrines and pronouncements that the worshipper of the *loa* will offer himself for the malediction of the priest by confessing his adherence to their cult. The situation somewhat parallels that in Africa itself, where the first effort of Protestant missionaries is directed toward inducing their converts to abjure polygyny. This dictum is complied with readily enough on the surface, so that a man will have but one wife — in one village! In Haiti the

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Simple annual rites are held for the gods in January, each family giving small offerings in its house of worship to its own deities. These minor ceremonies are not to be confused with the extended rituals which a family may perform but once in a decade or a generation. Because of the extensive preparation and large outlay these entail, such rites are often postponed from year to year. According to some, this postponement is sought through an *action de grâce*, based on Church ritual, while others maintain that it is but necessary on his special day to appeal to the deity who is troubling the family, give a small offering — a *mangé sec* — and ask for the desired respite. This may be done several times, until crop failures, sudden deaths, and the loss of valuable property begin to afflict the family, whereupon the family head seeks out a *hungan*, who by divination determines the supernatural forces that are responsible for these misfortunes; and when his statement that the gods have reached the end of their patience is confirmed independently by several other priests who are consulted, active preparations for the major rite are finally set in motion.

Any such important ceremony must be held on the ancestral habitation, and centers in the *maison de servitude*, the family house of service for the gods. The house itself, to be differentiated from the *humfort*, or "temple" of the *vodun* priest, may be elaborate or simple in accordance with the status of family members in the *vodun* cult.[8] At one end of the sacred house is a platform about two and one half feet high on which are placed calabash plates for the *loa*, six for the Créole deities, three for the Mystères Guinée, and a white plate with a "thunder stone," or Neolithic celt, and a necklace for Damballa. Not all *cailles mystères* are painted, but some, it is said, are green "for hope," and some red "for victory," while one was said to have designs of flowers and snakes painted on the wall above the platform.[9] These houses usually have two rectangular rooms, each with a separate entrance and each having its platform at the narrow end facing the doorway. One of

the rooms is consecrated to the *loa*, the other to the spirits of twins and the family dead. If the house is a large one with three rooms, the third will be for the Congo *loa*. It was also said that occasionally such places of worship reserve one room for the Rada deities, a second for the Pèzro *loa*, and the third for the Congo gods, the dead and twins being worshipped elsewhere. For the Ibo gods, however, it is agreed in Mirebalais that there is never a separate room. But whether the gods are worshipped in a single-room thatched shelter or a more impressive "temple" with a metal roof, none of the major categories of supernatural powers are neglected.

In the main, large ceremonies are concerned with the task of restraining, or less often of pacifying, deities that have been molesting a family, and of making content those who have been demonstrating their goodwill toward the group. Such rites must be sharply differentiated from the ordinary *vodun* dance which, coming after the family ritual, forms but a part of this complex, and serves to express joy at the dangers averted and gratitude for the good that the friendly *loa* are to bring. At the ceremony drums may or may not be employed; at *vodun* dances they are indispensable. Possession is induced at the ceremony by the *houngan's* invocations; at the dance by the rhythm of the drums. The ceremony is attended only by members of the family and those who are specially invited; invitations to the *vodun* dance are broadcast over the countryside, and all take part in the social phases of the evening. For the ceremony, sacrifices not alone of cereals and drinks but also of the blood of animals are provided; at the *vodun* dance only minor offerings are given. And while both types of ritual are a part of a single functioning religious system, it is at the first where the most important end is achieved, that of obtaining protection from hostile gods and gaining the favor of those who are friendly.

The pattern of the ceremony—called a *service loa*—is sufficiently definite to allow a generalized version to be given.

based on the rituals that were observed. In every case at least two major officiants are necessary, the *petit saouane* and the *houngan*, though the role of the latter is the all-important one. Last-minute preparations are made during the final morning, but what is needed will have been accumulated over a period of many months. Tables to hold offerings — sometimes two, sometimes more — are arranged at the sacred places on the family habitation, usually near streams or great trees where the gods reside. Eggs, cereals, drinks, and cornmeal — the food of the gods — are brought, and the animals to be sacrificed are tethered near by. Early in the afternoon the family, dressed in white, assemble, while the *vodun* priest with cornmeal describes on the ground the cabalistic designs called *veves*, and he sees to it that all has its proper place on the altar, whether it be the ever-present crucifix, or the chromolithographs of the saints, or the bottles of "drink" — usually non-alcoholic — or cereals and flour of various kinds. Consecrated water must be on hand, particularly at the big "altar," as the table covered by a canopy to protect the sacred objects is called.

The first part of the ceremony is an *action de grâce*, which in Mirebalais requires an hour or more, but which is said to last two or three hours in southern Haiti. This ritual, entirely derived from the litany of the Church, must always precede any *vodun* ceremony of the kind being considered here. Its purpose is said "to set the *loa* in movement" and to notify them of the rites that are to come, but psychologically it also serves to assure the participants that they are not proceeding to the worship of African gods without having paid friendly homage to God, the ruler of the universe, and the saints. The songs and prayers are brought to a close by an *adoration*, when offerings of money are made by members of the family to pay the officiant. At this point the songs change to a more African rhythm, and the *vodun* priest takes active charge.

As darkness falls, on the first day of the rite, he summons the

78 79 76 *loa* troubling the family, or, if it is the second, those which have helped them, to tell whether or not they are willing to receive the sacrificial animals. The omen which indicates their acceptability to the gods is their nibbling at leaves or pecking at grains of corn and other cereals offered them, after which the gods themselves come, possessing their servitors. At midnight or later, as the violence of the possession recedes, the sacrifices are offered. In Mirebalais, at least, the hysteria said to mark the moment "when the blood flows" is not present. The actual killing of the animals, witnessed in numerous instances, is one of the more routine aspects of the ritual.[8]

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After the animals have been killed, a long period of quiet ensues while the work of dressing and cooking them takes place, the ceremony beginning anew when this is done. If evil deities are to be banished or "restrained," they are called once more; and the priest may have to battle with those possessed by them, for these gods have no desire to be driven away, or incarcerated where they cannot escape. Most of the food given such gods is placed in large pots and buried in the earth with them, but, with characteristic human perversity, if the sacrifices have been for good *loa*, these are only allowed to have small portions. The ceremony closes with the coming of day.[9]

78 79 79 76 184 This pattern varies in details, and to the Haitian these differences are important. This is shown by the response of a person in whose company two similar rites were observed, to the question whether the second would resemble the first. The answer was decisive. "No, the ceremony will not be the same. In the first one the most important spirit lived in a mango tree; in the second, it is in a bamboo." The Pétro gods receive black or gray-colored animal offerings, the Rada deities white, red, and vari-colored ones. Only Bosu Trois Cornes, Pelicon, and Pelib are given bullocks, the first because he, like this animal, is horned; the second because he is even more dangerous than Bosu; and Pelib because as a water-god he will otherwise take

78 79 79 76

cattle and all other animals when the river floods. Rituals involving these larger sacrifices, however, are held only on the rarest of occasions, and are thus much less common than the ceremony which, typical of those witnessed, may now be described.

This *service* was held in a habitation southwest of Mirebalais, across the Tombe River in the foothills of the mountains. It was said to be the first ceremony of its kind given by this family, and would not have to be repeated for a generation or more. The immediate cause was the occurrence of numerous illnesses and deaths. When members independently consulted their *hungans* to discover the reason for these misfortunes, they were informed that the family *loa* demanded such a rite. Finally one priest, more powerful than the others, became possessed and described in great detail the type of ceremony that was desired: of how many days' duration, the number and kind of sacrifices, what gods were to be called, which troublesome ones must be "sent away" or "restrained," and those of the friendly *loa* who were to be fed.

The entire ritual was conducted out of doors, and at about half past four in the afternoon of Thursday, 5 July, 1934, when first seen, the *action de grâce* had already begun. It was being chanted by the *prêt' savanne*, a bespectacled, middle-aged man, who read from an old prayerbook, while the *hungan* sat quietly by. The officiant was standing in a cleared space with his back toward a grove of trees, facing the "altar." Opposite was a grassy slope, which was separated from this grove by a brook where the Malt' Source lives who watches over the habitation of the family. A white banner hung high in one of the trees a little behind the altar.

This altar, called the *trône*, was a table covered with a white cloth, spread over a frame to form a canopy sheltering its sides and back. A black cloth was beneath the white covering. Under the table a wooden bowl — a *gamelle* — contained water in which sacred leaves had been steeped; near it was a

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calabash filled with bananas, millet, rice, beans, egg-plant, and squash. On the table, under the canopy, were a crucifix and holy water, lighted white candles, a lamp of palm oil in a drinking-glass with a floating wick, food — rice cooked in milk, a stew of rice and beans, cooked chicken — and sweetened drinks — *kola*, and orange drinks among the rest, together with small drinking-glasses containing coffee. In addition, roasted and grilled corn, pineapples, fig-bananas, cassava, and sirup could be seen. Fastened to the inside of the canopy were *images*, chromolithographs depicting the saints, there being represented, among others, the Mater Dolorosa (for Ernilie, in honor of those long dead), Our Mother of Perpetual Aid, St. James and St. Anthony. Some thirty feet away, under a palm tree, was another table, for Simbi, without a canopy, on which also stood various cooked and uncooked foods. Still farther away was the "first" table, the most important in the ceremony, for Bosu. It likewise held food and drink; while near it was a large fire, the all-important *boucan* for Legba. The sacrifices, tethered to trees not far from the *trône*, consisted of animals and fowls: one very large black boar, two smaller black pigs, and a black goat, a black turkey, a guinea-hen, two white pigeons, and several chickens, including a black one with ruffled feathers and a number of varicolored ones.

During the Catholic-like ritual the singing, led by the *prêt' savanne*, was desultory. The members of the family, some twenty-five persons, were gathered directly in front of the *trône*. From time to time the leader, holding a lighted candle in his hand, would pour water into a small depression that had been dug directly in front of the altar. All knelt for the prayers, the Pater Noster, the Credo, the Ave Maria, and for the long *adoration* and benediction. Throughout this *action de grâce* and much of the rest of the ceremony, two women *hunsi* in white, members of the family, waved red and white banners before the *trône* or later before the table where rit-

ABOVE, *An action de grâce preceding a vodun service, when prayers of the Church are read by the petit' savanne.*

BELOW, *As the vodun priest takes over, he twirls a member of the family to bring on possession.*

[facing P. 160]

[illegible]

ABOVE. The possessed woman offering a candle and pouring sanctified water before the altar.

BELOW. The voodoo priest exhorting the possessed woman.

[facing P. 161]

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uals were being performed. If they failed to wave their banners vigorously or often enough, the one in charge chided them for their lack of zeal, whereupon their movements would become a kind of dance. During the adoration each member of the family was called upon to give coins or candles, the first for the *petit' ounsour*, though this was not his entire fee.

With the benediction, the *action de grâce* came to an end, and the solemn, tired voice of the *petit' ounsour* was heard intoning a hymn, which, in the usual fashion, was repeated by the assembled group until, without interlude, without even a pause, the interpolations of the chorus gradually changed, so that the rhythm became African, and, with the transition, the *vodun* priest took over the leadership. The *hungan* began by repeating several times the phrase which throughout the entire ceremony was to punctuate all its climaxes, "*Gnire [et] nine'cordo*," and the family murmured it in response. He then ordered each member of the family to address himself to the *loa*, telling what troubles had befallen him and what favors he desired. An assistant now took six candles from the *tròne*. Proceeding in a counter-clockwise direction, he described a large circle about that part of the meadow where the ceremony was to take place, fixing a candle in the ground at intervals. Four of these were for the four corners of the earth, one was for Malt' 'Bitation — the deity termed Master of the Habitation — and one for the Malt' Source — the Master of the Stream. When the members of the family, each holding a lighted candle, had formed in a line, they were bidden to place these candles in the earth within the area described by the six already there, and as they scattered over the sacred ground, little flickering flames dotted the hillside and the grassy meadow behind the *tròne* in the deepening dusk.

Then all returned to the altar, and the *hungan*, taking the first of three plates made ready for him, began to describe *verser*. One plate held white cornmeal flour, one was filled with gray ashes, called Guinea flour, and the third contained

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78 a black powder of ground, roasted coffee beans. Starting at the
793 tree near the "first" table for Bosu, he traced a white line
796 that, passing the second table and the trees for Simbi, con-
532 tinued to the *trône,* to which subsidiary motifs were then added in gray and black, making of the designs an intricate geometric composition.

78 With bell in hand and a small whistle in his mouth, both of
79 which later were entrusted to his assistants, the *hungan* went about, blowing the whistle at intervals to call the *loa.* Singing,
[533] he directed that a wooden boat-shaped basin containing water be placed in front and a little to the left of the *trône* for washing the feet of the sacrificial animals. Though all the family were present, they were again ritually summoned in song to come with the sacrifices and were ordered to stand near by with lighted candles while the animals were bathed. As they gathered, the *hungan* became possessed by Simbi, who took it upon himself to set the fee for conducting this ceremony at 117.10 gourdes. When he announced this sum, loud pleas of poverty were heard from the family, while speaking through the priest, the god bargained with them until the sum of 110 gourdes was finally agreed upon.

[533] The *hungan* now sang a long invocation, inviting the gods of all those places where Africans live to come. First the feet of the fowl were washed, then those of the pigs, and finally of the goat. Each fowl was passed over the body and head of every
[822] member of the family as it was presented with the requisite song to the proper *loa* — the red and black cock for Legba, the black fowl for Gede, the red one for Ogun, the white for Damballa, and the fowl with ruffled plumage for Congo Zandor. Then each was placed on the ground in front of three small piles of food taken from the *trône.* They were watched with anxiety by all present, for the pecking at the food is a signal that the god accepts the animal given him. The small pigs for Ti Kita Demembré, and the boar for Bosu, were offered the same food as the fowls; the goat for Erzilie Gé Rouge was pre-

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sented with the leaves on a branch of the sacred tree. All the animals ate, a favorable omen. 78 79

This ceremony was held during the rainy season, but the usual afternoon rains had held off. At this time, however — about eight o'clock — threatening clouds came up and soon the tropical downpour began. The heavy rain continued for more than an hour and the subsequent drizzle did not end until almost midnight, but this was not permitted to interfere with the proceedings. Now the participants took places before the "first" table, for Bosu, again with their offerings. Inasmuch as Bosu was the deity who had shown the greatest ill will toward the family, those present awaited the decision with heightened tenseness as the goat, frightened by the many people gathered about, hesitated long before he nibbled at the leaves held out to him by the *hungan*. But eventually all the animals ate, meeting this paramount test, and as each partook of the food the *hungan* several times called out "*Grâce mise'corde*," the family echoing their response with emotion. Now two men who had strong Bosu gods knelt before the table, and the fowls were again and again touched to their heads and passed over their bodies in gestures that described the sign of the cross, in order to induce their gods to come to them.

As the singing became louder and more rhythmical, various [533] members of the family became possessed. The deities who responded to the calls were, in the order of their appearance, [176] Kita, Erzilie, Simbi, Bosu, Damballa, and finally Gede (Papa Gedenibo). The possessions took their characteristic African form, with some of the possessed running about, jumping into the fire for Legba, and stamping on the embers with their bare feet, others reeling with arms waving, still others rolling on the ground, which, as the rain continued, soon became very muddy. Most of those under possession were women, but about nine-thirty one man became possessed by Simbi, and [176] later another by Gede. As the *loa* "came" in ever greater

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number, exclamations of pleasure were heard that the gods were responding. Outwardly, the ritual seemed completely disorganized, the "*loa*" and the spectators moving, mud-bespattered, tense, from the table for Bosu to that for Simbi, and back, or to the *trône*.

The singing went on without interruption to the accompaniment of the bell and occasional blasts of the whistle. Among the songs heard during this period of possession were:

Bosu li join' qui chose a tè,	Bosu found something on the ground,
Pas remassé li.	Do not pick it up.
Bosu ma'ché,	Bosu goes about,
Li join qui chose a tè',	He found something on the ground,
Pas remassé li.	Do not pick it up.
Un va entrave	You will come to harm
Si ou ramassé li.	If you pick it up.
Va enragé Bosu.	You will anger Bosu.
Simbi en Deux Eaux,	Simbi en Deux Eaux
M'we fé p'ou,	I do for you,
F'e p'moin,	Do for me,
Fi-a, Congo;	Help, O Congo,
Congo Zandor.	Congo Zandor.
Simbi Kita Kita, travaille pour nous,	Simbi Kita Kita, work for us,
Jodi-a pour nous,	Today for us,
Demain pou' zott'.	Tomorrow for others.
Erzilie, o Lemba,	Erzilie, o Lemba,
M'ap' mandé coté Erzilie ye.	I ask, where is Erzilie.
Mangé a'paré.	The food is ready.
Gedenibo, derrière la croix, Gede,	Gedenibo, behind the cross, Gede.

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Devant Baron, Gede,	Before Baron, Gede,
Derrière la croix, Gede,	Behind the cross, Gede,
Jodi-a m'p' nan sang m'we,	Today I am troubled,
Gedevi, rhele Gede, ça Gede,	Gedevi, call Gede, this Gede,
Jodi-a m'pas nan sang moin.	Today I am troubled.
Balai, rousé, cerclé, quitté.	Cease to sweep, sprinkle, hoe.
Moin pas nan sang, Baron Samedi.	I am troubled, Baron Samedi.

Shortly after eleven o'clock the *hungan* intervened to calm those possessed, for the time was at hand to give the sacrifices. Summoning the family to assemble again before the *trône* with the offerings, he commenced a long ritual in which each creature was prepared by being carefully washed and combed, while the boar for Bosu was also fastidiously perfumed and powdered. At the direction of the *hungan,* the fowls were first offered, the killing taking place at a distance of some thirty or forty feet behind the *trône.* The chickens were held with the two wings and the head in the left hand, so that the neck was exposed. The knife was passed twice over the neck to describe a cross, after which each fowl was cleanly and skillfully dispatched. One of the assistants of the *hungan* held a small calabash in which some of the blood of each animal was caught, and another, knife in hand, sang with him that they were offering this *koklo* to the deity for whom it was intended. As the last of the chickens was being killed, the *hungan* left the *trône* and quietly strangled the pigeons for Damballa.

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All possessions had ceased, except that of a man "mounted" by Gede and a woman by Simbi. The man particularly attracted much attention, for Gede is known as a gossip, and so diverting were his revelations of family scandal that all were too absorbed listening to him to show any interest in the sacrifice of the animals.

[176]
[521]

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78 79 533 fice of the animals. At one point the *adjanikon* holding the calabash in which the blood was caught threw it on the ground in anger, declaring that animals should not be killed for people who were too indifferent to come and sing the songs that accompany the giving of offerings. Some of those present thereupon detached themselves and came to watch the killing of the two small pigs, as the song, repeated over and over, changed to:

[539]

O minmin, moin couteau la,	Oh, here, here is my knife,
Soso na pé tué, soso,	A pig is to be killed, a pig,
Jodi-a.	Today.

78 79 At this point several other men joined in handling the larger animals, for now the one killing the sacrifices could only hold the mouth of each beast before he cut its throat. And when the boar was to be sacrificed, even more assistance was needed, and a line of rope had to be fastened about his snout before he could be handled at all. The killing was ended when the [533] sacrificial goat was slaughtered, to the accompaniment of the [539] song:

Ma'ze Louisa,	Miss Louisa,
M'ap' tué ou jodi-a,	I kill you today,
Pour Erzilie, 'Ti Kita,	For Erzilie, 'Ti Kita,
Gé Rouge, Pié Sèche.	Gé Rouge, Pié Sèche.

The calabash containing the blood was now placed on the *trône,* while the carcasses were gathered in an orderly pile in front of it. The *hungan* described a circle about the massed bodies with cornmeal, also making two white lines in the form of a cross over them. He then began to sing the *adoration* that [465] follows every killing, while the family and all others present threw coins for him into the dish that rested on the bodies, only a few sous of which he gave to his assistants. This rite ended as the women came to him one by one, each to take a

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chicken for cleaning and cooking; the larger animals were given to the men, who carried them some distance behind the *trône* to dress them. For a time Gede continued to possess the young man, who went about talking nasally, demanding gifts and distributing rum, but all others sat quietly about, talking as they worked.

After the food was cooked, preparations were made for the concluding part of the night's ceremony, when the *loa* who had been troubling the family were to be *renvoyé* (sent away) or *borné* (restrained). Those thus "sent away" and buried were Erzilie Gé Rouge, Bosu Trois Cornes, 'Ti Kita Demembré, and 'Ti Jean Pié Sèche, while Lemba and Simbi djo (Simbi nan d'leau) were "restrained." The head, feet, intestines, heart, liver, kidneys, and some meat of each beast and fowl having been separately prepared, they were placed in proper receptacles, large jars or baskets, each of which also contained a number of needles with broken eyes, and thread. This was to give these undesirable spirits an *occupation*. For the *loa*, when buried, is told that before it may again come to harass the family it must thread the needles, and since it can never insert the thread in an eyeless needle, it can never reappear.

Preparations over, the troublesome *loa* were called to the table for Simbi, and as each entered the head of a devotee, the possessed one fought with the *hungan*, for the *loa*, not wishing to be restrained, offered stubborn resistance. "If the *hungan* had not been masterful, much evil could have happened at this time, because he had to fight three strong *loa*." When they had at last been subdued, the *hungan*, bearing a large wooden cross, walked to a place outside the habitation, where first he made *verver* and then caused a hole to be dug, in which he placed the baskets of food. As he did this he formally announced that this food was for the family's *loa* for whom there was no further need; that having given this food, the family had no further obligation toward them; and they must there-

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fore never return to trouble the living. As witness to this, he was now putting the cross in place, "which causes everything that is evil to flee," to remain until it rotted away.

Simbi djo was "restrained" where the *trône* had been; Lemba under the mango tree near the place of the table for Bosu. Some of the meat of the pigs was buried in these places with all other kinds of cooked food, and the gods were told that they were to repose there for from seven to seventeen years, after which they would again be fed. A cross of iron was buried with the cooked meat, and as each jar, both now and earlier, was put in place, this song was sung:

Poussé allé,	Get you gone,
Poussé allé,	Get you gone,
Icit pas pays ou.	This is not your country.
Ça lan Guinée,	It is Guinée,
Qui pays ou.	That is your country.

A violent rain-storm not only made it impossible to reach the place of the ceremony the following day, but also made it necessary for the family to defer all but a few of the more essential rites. The second day's ritual was thereupon put over to Saturday, when according to original intentions the *vodun* dance that had been planned to close this complex of ceremonies was to have occurred, but which in consequence was postponed until some weeks later.

The ritual of the second day of this *cérémonie* began much earlier than that of the first, for by about one-thirty in the afternoon the *action de grâce* was almost completed. As one approached, a newly dug mound of earth with a cross over it where the troublesome deities had been buried was to be seen just outside the land belonging to the family. The cross was draped with a black cloth, and was itself painted blue and white, while a rosary and a magic *garde* of native twine were suspended from it.

On this afternoon the ritual was performed in two places, a

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spot somewhat farther down the stream than the site of the earlier ceremony, and later at the family habitation on the hill. There was one table arranged as a *trône* and under its canopy, beside the *images*, the candles, and the crucifix, were white foods such as rice and white beans. Instead of Pétro *loa*, this time the ceremony was to bring Rada gods who were to be asked for children, good health, and good fortune. The *trône* was just below the confluence of two brooks, near some great palm trees. Near by was a weir, while in the larger stream, below the point of juncture, were two small natural pools.

When the *action de grâce*, which did not differ from that witnessed earlier, was ended, the *hungan* again made his *verver*, and these were yet richer in design than on the previous occasion. As he finished he took a number of the women of the family by the right hand, spinning each in turn several times to induce possession. The *loa* Damballa Siligwe "came" almost at once, possessing a woman who threw herself into the stream, threshing about as a "serpent." No one troubled himself to attend to her, however, as she emerged and walked about in her wet clothes behind the *trône* and in front of it, so that, according to the *hungan*, the *loa* became angry and would not come, thus making it necessary to sing many more songs of praise and entreaty. As he sang, the *hungan* seized one member of the family after another by the hand, spinning them about and making them kneel before the *trône* to bring the *loa*.

Moin dit Gran',	I say, Gran',
Bonjou', Gran',	Good-day, Gran',
Bonjou', bonjou'.	Good-day, good-day.
Enfants, la yo, Gran',	It is their children, Gran',
Qui ap mandé coumen nous ye-e,	Who ask how you are,
Enfants yo	Their children
Qui ap dit bonjou'.	Who say good-day.

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Damballa Wedo,	Damballa Wedo,
Papa, nan pié boi',	Papa, in the tree,
Moin pa' pe' monté.	I cannot climb.
Papa ou c'é' coulev',	Papa, you are a serpent,
Papa ou c'é' Dagowe.	Papa, you are Dagowe.
Damballa Siligwe, Anvalou,	Damballa Siligwe, Anvalou,
Nous salué ou.	We salute you.
Ça nous dit,	What do you say,
Alada Sisigwe?	Alada Sisigwe?
Papa Damballa moin,	Papa Damballa mine,
Signalé nous,	Show us,
Signalé nous Dahomey.	Show us Dahomey.
Nous acé! Nous acé!	We are here! We are here!
Papa Ogun qui met' pié	Papa Ogun who enters
Nan humfort.	The *humfort*
Ago, ago-e!	*Ago, ago-e!*
Kadia Bosu,	Kadia Bosu,
Nous acé,	We are here,
Kadia Bosu.	Kadia Bosu.

These songs failed to bring the gods, and the mother of the girl who had been possessed was sternly commanded to take her up the hill to the house and dress her in clean dry clothes. Before she could return, another young woman who, it was later learned, was a member of the family from the region of Grand Bois, some distance away, came running down the hill possessed by Damballa. Crying out for more room, she ordered those sitting near the *trône* to move on as she roughly pulled others toward her. Now the *loa* came rapidly, with six or seven immediate possessions; and even one reluctant girl who stood by nervously, hesitating to soil the fresh white dress trimmed in blue which she, like the other women of the family, was wearing, was soon "mounted" by her *loa*.

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Once again the *hungan* made *verver* and, as he did so, the woman possessed by Damballa, leaping across the brook, climbed into a calabash tree, holding to the near-by palm fronds for support as she shook the tree to punctuate her shouted directions and demands. As she climbed higher and higher, the *hungan* pleaded: "Go no further, Papa. Climb no further," but to no avail. By this time it was after four o'clock, and since this day the rains did not delay, the *hungan* entreated her to descend from the tree, to permit him and the others assembled there to go up the hill out of the downpour. Wooing the "*loa*" with song, he urged:

Verver ci mè' a tè,	Here is *verver* on the ground,
Pinga cé'émonie moin,	Take heed of my ceremony,
Shango, ago-e!	Shango, *ago-e!*

While he sang, he made *verver* about the base of the tree on which the woman was standing and along the bank of the stream. But he still had no success, for she persisted with much violence to recount the wrong that had been done by the family to provoke the anger of the gods — how one member had bargained with a *hungan* to induce him to send evil *loa* to the other members of the family, that they might die and his inheritance might be the greater. Before she would consent to descend, all the sacrifices had to be brought for her inspection, and all those possessed were required to go up the hill and dress in clean clothes. Returning in the rain, the freshly dressed women gathered about the base of the tree, exhibiting the sacrificial animals to the *loa*, the chickens held high in the hands of their donors, and the goats and sheep prominently placed. Slowly, very slowly, as the downpour continued, the woman began to descend, and many times she hesitated, so that it was more than ten minutes before she reached the ground.

But even after she was on the ground and the *hungan* was

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78 79 preparing to seek shelter from the rain, new possessions continued, until, saying: "The *loa* are greater than I am," he went on with the ceremony, singing:

[533] [539]

Ossange Damballa Wedo,	Ossange Damballa Wedo,
Laissé coulé, Ossange-o!	Permit coiling, Ossange!
Ai-bobo!	*Ai-bobo!*
Moin entré,	I enter,
M'ap salué loa.	I salute the *loa.*
Ogun, Ogun Achade,	Ogun, Ogun Ashade,
O, Ogun Achade,	O, Ogun Ashade,
Hier soir Ogun fai' yun rêve'-o	Last night Ogun dreamed a dream-o
Rêve' li tourné lègèdé.	Dreamed he turned a spy.

A woman became possessed by Damballa, as did the young man who had "had" Gede the preceding night of the ceremony; the woman was in a gay mood, going about smiling and laughing, while the man threw himself in the water and rolled like a snake. And since the *loa* were coming so strongly, the *hungan* began the ceremony of washing and presenting the sacrificial animals, which this time included two white male goats, one very large and one smaller, a white sheep, and six or seven fowls of various colors. The presentation made, the entire group marched singing up the path to the houses, the flag-bearers saluting with their banners the woman so happy in her possession.

[346] As the procession came up the hill, it passed a newly built small house, intended to serve as the family place of worship for the *loa* now introduced into the habitation, and a framework of brush, or *tonnelle,* that had been erected as a shelter under which the postponed *vodun* dance was to have taken place. Without pausing, they proceeded slowly to the gate-

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way, where a ceremony was held for Legba, the guardian of entrances, that he might permit the other *loa* to pass.

At the direction of the *hungan*, the bars of the gateway were let down as prayers, the Pater Noster and the Ave Maria, were said. Then he sang:

Papa Legba,	Papa Legba,
Fé ou gagné patience	Have patience
Pou' ou service.	At your *service.*
Ago, ago-e!	*Ago, ago-e!*
Papa Legba,	Papa Legba,
Sorti lan Guinée,	Come from Guinea,
Pou' nou' passé.	That we may pass.

As this song and others of similar tenor were sung, the man who had been first possessed by Gede, and earlier in the afternoon by Damballa, strode shouting along the path beside the entrance, into the near-by fire, which was made the hotter as several men blew on it and poured rum into the flames; he stamped in it until he was seized and calmed. The *hungan* once more began to make *verver*, this time at the gateway, as he sang:

Papa Legba,	Papa Legba,
Na pé mandé,	We ask you,
Ça wé la?	What do you see there?
Adoré-é-o	We worship, oh,
A-i bobo!	*A-i bobo!*
Papa Legba,	Papa Legba,
Ouvri barrière pou' nou', ago-ye!	Open the gateway for us, *ago-ye!*
Ouvri chemin pou' moin.	Open the path for me.

As he sang, he passed the red and black cock for Legba over the body of the possessed man sitting in a chair, who thereupon resumed his excited movements, reeling along the path

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and from time to time again tramping in the fire, as these songs were heard:

Legba cuiscuignon,	Legba who limps along,
À la longtemps,	It is a long time
Moin pas wé 'ou.	I have not seen you.
Papa Legba, wé!	Papa Legba, look!
L'ouvri barrière pou' nous passé.	Open the gateway that we may pass.
E-ago-ye!	*E-ago-ye!*
Legba chita lan barrière	Legba who sits on the gate
Ba nou' passé.	Give us the right to pass.
Ago-ye-e!	*Ago-ye-e!*

The chicken was also passed over other members of the family, but without bringing on any new possessions, and was several times presented on both sides of the entrance-way, wings outstretched, the *hungan* occasionally half-kneeling. Finally stepping inside the entrance, he wrung the neck of the animal, which was destined later to be roasted and to hang for several days over the gateway. While the *loa* Legba was dancing in the fire, Gran' Erzilie "came to the head" of a woman who, after violent possession and a great deal of pacing back and forth in company with "Legba," went down on her knees. Still another woman became possessed, by Damballa, and rolled in the mud. Another procession, for the return to the *tonnelle,* was formed as a lilting song was sung, with everyone dancing to it. "Legba," walking backwards, led the way, calling out: "This way, Papa, come this way." The one possessed by Gran' Erzilie followed on her knees, while, some distance behind, "Damballa" rolled from side to side as she moved her body face-downward along the path. After a few moments the woman on her knees began to beat the ground rhythmically as she proceeded, and as "Damballa" caught up with her, she beat this rhythm on the thighs and buttocks

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of the other. Arrived at the *tonnelle,* both were finally induced to come to their feet, to be immediately sent away and freshly dressed. 78 79

Inside the family shrine, on the ground at the right hand as one entered, were the articles of food and drink that usually constitute a "dry" offering, or *mangé sec* — rolls, cassava, cakes, grilled maize, coffee grounds, sirup, and bowls of cornmeal called *acconsan,* with water. The *hungan* made more *verver* just inside this door to honor the gods that were to be worshipped here, as the "ceremony of the sheep," a sacrifice for the Rada *loa* named St. John the Baptist, was begun. A table was placed under the *tonnelle,* and a container of water in which the animal was first washed. He was then made to stand on the table, where a fresh white table-cloth had been spread, while he was combed, powdered, and perfumed. A piece of white cotton cloth was tied about the horns of the animal, and a lighted white candle was held in place on the right horn or at times between the horns by an attendant. While a song honoring Damballa Wedo was sung, the *hungan* went into the small house to care for the two women, who were still in a state of possession. He set them dancing inside and after a few minutes they were led forth by "Legba," each to pour water and to light a candle before the sheep. The two goats were next washed and "dressed," white cloths and soft beeswax candles also being twisted about their horns. Other offerings under the *tonnelle* were a white pigeon for Damballa and a red cock for Ogun. [346]

Each member of the family now took the fowl or animal that was his offering, as all were summoned inside the shrine, where final directions were given regarding the disposal of the sacrifices, and invocations were spoken to the gods. After this they came out, placing the animals before the men who were waiting to see to the killing, which was carried out in a manner even more matter-of-fact than on the first night of the ceremony. By this time it was about half past six o'clock, and

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night had fallen. As before, the men addressed themselves to the task of butchering the animals, the women to that of preparing and cooking the fowls.

It was perhaps five o'clock in the morning before all the food was made ready to serve. The *hungan*, who had been taking a well-deserved rest, was called, and prepared a plate for each *loa*. After giving every member of the family a dish, he arranged them in two rows before the small house of worship, himself heading the group, attended by two *hunsi* with white and red candles and sacred water. First reciting the Pater Noster, the Ave Maria, and the Credo, he announced to the Rada *loa* that their food was ready and that they were invited to come and partake of it. As he said this, each person entered the house as directed, to place the plate he carried on the table, where a cloth, knives, forks, spoons, and condiments already had been arranged. Many members of the family became possessed, an excellent omen that the Rada *loa* were eagerly coming to partake of the offerings. The head of the goat was placed on the floor, the roasted cock was hung above the gate leading to the habitation. Then the door of the house of worship was closed that the *loa* might eat undisturbed, and for several hours people sat quietly by. Finally the *hungan* knocked at the door to announce his entrance and asked if the *loa* had finished. He then called the family to come and eat what the gods had left, and by ten o'clock that morning, everything was consumed.

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CHAPTER X

VODUN WORSHIP: THE DANCE

THE *vodun* dance, the most public aspect of Haitian peasant ritual, has been more frequently observed and reported on than any other rites of the cult. The worship of the *loa* by an individual, the baptism of his *loa*, and the minor periodic sacrifices he makes to it that it may protect him are entirely private in nature, while presence at the *service* for the *loa* is essentially restricted to members of the family. The *vodun* dance, however, is viewed quite differently, for news of it is widely spread by word of mouth, so that, in contrast to the private character of all other rituals, *vodun* dances are important social occasions, and their success is measured by the numbers in attendance and the enthusiasm of the participants which makes a dance *chaud'* — "hot"!

The *vodun* dance may be said to function in several ways. Above all, it is an integral part of the worship of the *loa*, and as such is marked by repeated possessions which indicate the presence of the gods. Yet it also offers an important opportunity for recreation, as is indicated by the fact that in Mirebalais the term *bamboche*, which means a dance at which one merely enjoys oneself, is often applied to it. By no means do all who go to a dance become possessed, for of one hundred to one hundred and fifty persons present, no more than twenty or twenty-five will come under the power of their gods. The old

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171 178 182 tion is a further comment both upon the human traits ascribed to them, and upon the realism with which they take cognizance — as only African gods can — of the financial position of their devotees!

171 178 176 178 It is not only in the immediacy of the Haitian gods to their worshippers and in their human qualities, however, that these beings have retained African traits, for in the full reciprocity that must prevail in the relationship between deities and their followers is to be seen a point of view that is entirely non-European. Between man and the gods the rule of *quid pro quo* must always be in operation; and this rule may only be regarded as but another contribution of Africa toward Haitian religious ideology. While this reciprocal giving flavors all aspects of worship whether it be of the *loa*, the dead, or the twins, it takes a yet more prominent, and more familiar place in the field of magic, since here the *engagement* owes much to European belief, though the element of reciprocity is much more emphasized than was ever the case in medieval European diabolism.

178 176 194 The psychological values of the *vodun* cult, especially the general tone found in the feeling toward the terms *Guinée* or *Rada*, perhaps most convincingly show the attitudes that aided in the retention of things recognizably African. For while the [184] Pétro gods are by no means viewed as altogether bad, or are always held unwelcome, the fact that in Mirebalais, as in Haiti generally, the Rada gods are those least feared, most desired, and in connection with whose cult wrongdoing is most rarely present, is of the greatest significance, especially when the related fact is recalled that the Pétro gods are the more powerful in the matter of evil magic, while the Rada deities are said to exert their power to protect their devotees from the dark forces that may be set in motion against them.

178 176 176 In attitudes toward the gods, then, in the names of the gods themselves, in the manner in which they function in the lives of Haitians, and in the importance of the ceremonial con-

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The falls, therefore, in association with the purely Catholic rituals carried on at the village church, are seen to hold an important if unofficial place in the complex of rites known in the Haitian Church calendar as the Fête of Saut d'Eau.

During the two or three days preceding the fête and on the fifteenth of July itself, an air of great gayety not unlike the carnival spirit accompanying European Church festivals pervades the surrounding country. Camions traverse the almost impassable side road, bringing crowds of people from Port-au-Prince, from the Dominican border, and even from the north, who throng the streets and the shrines and tramp the miles from the village to the waterfalls or visit the nearer sacred sites of St. John's Wood and En bas Palmes, to light candles and ask the satisfaction of their needs. Like the falls themselves, these spots by their very beauty awaken a sense of emotional awareness, and it is not strange that here, as at the falls, many possessions occur. At night, in particular, the great trees with their interlacing serpent-like roots, the gaping earth which at En bas Palmes is witness to the uprooting of the palm trees where the miracle occurred, and the stream of sacred water, all make a scene of indescribable eeriness, heightened by the flickering candles given as offerings, and the open lamps of those who stay the night here to fulfill their vows.

In the town itself gambling and other games go on, and dances of all kinds are held at night, among them *vodun* and *bal*, though at these public dances no possessions are countenanced. One of the most colorful aspects of the scene is the *penitants*, wearing clothing of varied colors in fulfillment of a request by the *loa* they worship or an obligation to them. Such folk are not permitted in church unless the clothing which marks them is covered by ordinary dress, but they walk the streets, often possessed and often using their power to heal those whom they encounter. Possessions by Ogun, by Gede, by Baron Samedi, by Damballa, by Erzilie and other *vodun* deities were observed, particularly at the shrines, where their devotees prophesied and healed the sick.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

one seed from that tomato would ever take root under the hot sun. Some time later, when I knew this man well, I talked to him about the care with which seeds must be planted if they are to grow properly. I told him how *we* grew *our* tomatoes. He listened carefully, nodding his head. When I had finished he said: "Yes, that must be a good way to do things in your country. But here in this valley God is good. He does not forget his children. From the broken tomato many plants will sprout. When God is good to you, you do not have to count the seeds." I suggested that perhaps one should not waste any of the precious seeds that God had provided; and to this he replied: "How is there waste? My garden is made to flourish by Zaka [the country man's special deity]. Some people give Zaka a feast every year, but between times they forget. Zaka helps me in my work, and I don't forget him. When I break the tomato and put it on the ground that way, it is a little taste for Zaka. Whatever I plant, I give him some. He is good to me, I am good to him."

What I learned from many incidents like this one was that the eye does not always see correctly. The old man was not just planting tomatoes, nor was he performing a conventionalized ritual act. It was a highly personalized act of faith in nature and confidence in the deity who shared his work.

A large part of this book deals with Vodoun, the religious practices based on West African traditions. One soon discovers that the songs and dances of Vodoun ritual are not merely music and motion supplementing and decorating more serious affairs. Virtually every aspect of Vodoun ritual is placative or invocational. The songs that are sung and the dances that are danced are direct supplication of various supernatural forces.

Undoubtedly, a number of principles which are put forward in this study do not apply equally to every region of Haiti; but they are, I think, true in general terms. Not until one has accepted the fact that different explanations exist for given phenomena, that the same rites are performed in different fashion in different places, and that the cult priests themselves do not agree on many details, may one begin to work toward a general view of the Haitian scene.

All of Haitian life is not Vodoun. And there are of course some Haitians who are relatively outside the central circle of its influence. But the inner meanings of Vodoun and its relationship to the total view of life permeate the entire scene. Music, too, binds together practically the entire fabric of Haitian existence. It is essential not only to the cult temple but to countless workaday activities. Agrarian work groups often perform their tasks to the accompaniment of a drum. And in the cult temple, the iron hoe of the fields often serves as a percussion instrument.

The Drum and the Hoe is the result of studies made over a period of

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in the services. In the court, the bases of four sacred trees . . . are surrounded by circles of masonry [low brick walls]. These *repouoirs* are inhabited by the *loa* Legba, Ogoun, Loco and Sauge.[5]

There is little in Aubin's description to suggest that hounfors were much different a half century ago from what they are today. He errs in identifying the "thunder stones" solely with Damballa. But his eye for detail was acute. In 1950 a mambo in the neighborhood of this hounfor described by Aubin affirmed that some of the loa stones and old coins which he mentioned are still to be found among the properties of a hounfor in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. Others were lost in one of the cleric-inspired raids which despoiled cult temples of drums and other paraphernalia about fifteen years ago.

Many services are held outside the hounfor and the peristyle. Some rituals, such as animal sacrifices and "talking to the loa below the water," may take place some distance from the cult buildings. Indeed, various Vodoun ceremonies may be held at waterfalls, at the seashore, in sacred groves, in ordinary homes, in a boat at sea,[6] or under a sacred tree.

The rites of the hounfor are almost without number. They are associated with the supplication or conciliation of virtually countless deities, each of which has his own special service. There are services in multitudinous combinations and permutations for the dead, for twins, for albinos, and for unborn children. There are ceremonies for the elevation of hounsi and for initiation, smoke and fire ordeals, and tests of other kinds. There are *mangé loa* (feasts for the deities) and *mangé morts* (feasts for the dead). There are services for the sick, for the crops, and for the harvest. In one context or another, Vodoun relates to nearly every aspect and phase of life—and its counterpart, death. Since every region, every locality, and, in fact, almost every hounfor has developed its own ritual out of the common materials, it is possible to see hundreds of ceremonies without ever seeing precisely the same one twice. Yet the common elements bind them all together.

One such prime element is the possession, the "mounting" of the human body by one of the deities. Possession is a psychological phenomenon common to the rites of many cults throughout the world. It is known in Asia, Africa, Europe, and America. It is not the unique property of the African and his Haitian descendant. In the United States it is a commonplace not only among certain Negro cults but certain white cults as well. The United States Negro had ample West African inspiration for his seizures in the church and at the baptism. The intellectual meaning of these seizures has changed, as have their outward forms to a measurable extent, but their emotional content has not altered.

[5] Translated from the French of Aubin, *En Haiti*, pp. 59-59. Cf. P. 349, Category 116.—Analyst

[6] [Footnote appears on P. 349, Category 116.—Analyst]

2: Courlander 9-5 (1937-1958) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

ing Boyer's administration, 1818–1843, Catholicism was the state religion but the president was its chief. Leyburn notes:

> Every effort of the state failing to provide proper religious leadership, Boyer resigned himself to permitting those who professed to be priests to practice in the republic. There were seventy so-called priests in the country in 1840. Some of them had once been in the holy orders but had been unfrocked: they found in Haiti not only a haven but a fertile field for gain. In addition to these religious renegades came adventurers who knew just enough of ritual and theology to use the priestly garb as a cover for easy graft. . . . They baptized houses, boats, and doorposts, and blessed fetish charms or amulets, all for a fee.[8]

It was not until 1860, after the death of the "Emperor" Soulouque, that Haiti signed a concordat with the Roman Church.

The role of the prêt' savane became defined after the slave revolts of 1791. His cue was taken from the activities of freebooting Europeans who apparently needed neither religious orders nor profound Catholic knowledge for their pseudo-clerical work. And the long period without a responsible priesthood gave the "bush priest" an opportunity to flourish.

The prêt' savane of today has a respected place in the community, though his prestige is not so great as that of the houngan on the one hand or the Catholic priest on the other. His place is guaranteed by his ability to bring to the Vodoun service elements of a competing system which the houngan, operating within the framework of African tradition, does not provide. Acceptance of these Catholic elements as a peripheral part of Vodoun is characteristic of much West African religious thinking, in which new deities and rituals may be added to the old when circumstances require.

The prêt' savane opens many Vodoun services with an *action de grâce*, reads prayers when a death has occurred, participates in marriage rites, and "baptizes" the hounfor, the cult drums, and the sacred rattles—not to mention the loa themselves! But it is the houngan's powers that are paramount. The "bush priest" is in a sense performing a service for the Vodoun priest, whose rituals and administrations are regarded as the effective and vital ones. The prêt' savane is a cultural afterthought.

In certain remote and isolated mountain places the prêt' savane is virtually unknown. But there is no sense of deprivation, for the cult priests —even the poorest and the most rustic—have their own way of dealing with the saints, God, and the forces of nature. An aged houngan of the Morne la Selle region explained it this way:

"In everything that is done, God's permission is asked first. Most houngans in the mountains do not know how to read, and they don't know how to pray. But they know many things. They know where the sun rises,

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

They know where the sun rises,

and they address St. Nicholas, who opens the day, and they know the wish of God. In the name of St. Nicholas they raise a glass of water and ask God for the power to do."

In ordinary usage the Haitian refers to the various cults or "nations" as though they were quite separate and mutually exclusive. He speaks of the *service* Pétro, or *rite* Nago, or the *nanchon* Ibo. Yet in practice the cults are usually bound together into two or three major groups.

The "nations" belonging to the Vodoun (or Dahomey) group include the Arada or Dahomé, the Anago, the Mahi, the Amine, and the Ibo. There is ample evidence that the cults of these "nations" were once separate and apart. Even today in isolated regions of Haiti there are cult centers devoted exclusively to Nago deities. Elsewhere, Mahi or Ibo services are held without the intrusion of "foreign" rites and deities. Some cult centers have several hounfors—one for Dahomé, one for Nago, one for Ibo, and so on, with a separate building for the "dead" spirit Gèdé. More often, however, one finds a single hounfor containing separate altars. Of all the "nations" within the Vodoun group, the Ibo perhaps has the most independent status, and in some regions it is tied in with Pétro rather than Vodoun rites.

The Pétro group also includes numerous "nations," some completely absorbed, others more loosely affiliated. Within this group, which for convenience may be called the Congo-Guinée family, are the Pétro, Bumba, Moundongue, Bambarra, Congo Loangue (Loango), and other "nations." In certain regions the Congo cult, like the Ibo, is regarded as separate and apart. Sometimes the Pétro service is kept distinct from the others, though it has drawn so heavily on them for its roster of deities that the distinction is not easily seen. In places such as Port-au-Prince where the cults have deeply infiltrated one another, major differences between the Vodoun and Congo-Guinée rites have disappeared, and altars to both Pétro and Dahomé deities may be found within the same hounfor.

It is not difficult to detect a certain pattern of regional grouping within the Vodoun and Congo-Guinée families. Within the Vodoun family are gathered "nations" from Dahomey, Togoland, and Nigeria, while in the Congo-Guinée cycle are "nations" from Central Africa, miscellaneous "nations" such as the Bambarra, and the Pétro cult which is regarded as "Haitian" rather than "African," but whose rites and loa have been recruited in large measure from other services.

One often hears of Kitta services, or Chango services, or Legba rites. These are not separate cults but simply rituals for specific loa.

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of the Catholic Church and fused with old folk beliefs of Europe. In Dahomey, which was the wellspring for much of Haiti's culture, there was no supreme deity quite like the one introduced to the slaves by the missionaries. There was a pantheon of gods with Mawu and Lisa at the top. They were children of a common parent, Nananbuluku. None of these deities was strictly comparable to our idea of a supreme being. Nananbuluku survives in Haiti as Nananbouclou or Nananbélécou, one of many loa. Among the neighboring Yoruba the high god was Olorun. Like the Dahomean Mawu and Lisa, Olorun was quite remote from the lives of men. The gods who were invoked and placated were the several hundred *orisha* created by Olorun. The nearby Ashanti people had a simpler pantheon, with the sky god Nyame supreme among them.

In the present Haitian concept of the supernatural, God is at the very apex of the pantheon, though he is distinctly of another order. His power as the supreme source of all things is fully recognized. A Haitian song, associated with Vodoun ritual but of probable recent origin, goes:

> C'est Bondieu qui voyé moin, quand li vlé moin l'apprend. [Ex. 37]
>
> It is God who sent me, when he wants me he'll take me.

Another song, from the Guinée service, goes:

> Oh, Kitta, oh so'tí nan dleau, li tout mouillé!
> Oh, nen point houngan passé Bondieu nan pays-ya! [Ex. 36]
>
> Oh, Kitta comes out of the water, he is dripping wet!
> Oh, there is no houngan in this country greater than God!

Although it is recognized, or at least stated, that God is a supreme force, God is not regarded as the entire supernatural force of the world. In many Vodoun services the houngan may invoke, as separate categories of the unseen, the loa, the dead, the *marassas* (twin spirits), and God. Haitians do not have a consistent schematized picture of the supernatural world. God comes first, but (as in West Africa) he is less immediate than the loa. He is identified with destiny; yet within the framework of that destiny man's lot can be bettered or worsened through dealings with the dead, the baka and lou-garos (demons and vampires), and the cult priests.

In many of the folk tales of Haiti, God appears as another character in a cast which may include as protagonists animals, loa, Christian saints, and ordinary men and women. One such tale is about a visit which all the dogs decided to pay to God. They started off through the woods together, but one of them was distracted by the smell of carrion. He left his friends for a brief time, found the carrion, and ate some of it. Then he hurriedly joined his companions again. Together they came to God's house and were admitted to the parlor, where they sat around making polite conver-

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

tempo. The chorus and leader sing responsively, their parts overlapping in traditional African style. The shoulder movements, foot movements, the way the arms are carried, and the typical posture of feet flat on the ground, bent knees, and swayed back—all are of African derivation. These postures and movements are broad and direct. There are few of the decorative and "fine" movements that one sees in the dances of Indonesia, Cambodia, and India. Where the Javanese lays stress on the pose of the hands and the delicate movements of the fingers, the Haitian dancer is concerned with the position of the arms and the motions of the shoulders. The Indonesian sense of poised balance or suspended movement is absent. In its place there is an attitude of strong frontal assault against natural forces such as gravity, or direct submission to those forces. There is almost always a feeling of solidity and stability in Haitian posture, and of a proximity between the body and the earth, but the total effect is dynamic. Indonesian dancing seems to express a comprehension of the unseen and the supernatural; Haitian dancing seems to express an intimate understanding of nature.

Dancing touches on virtually every aspect of life in Haiti. It plays a part in the supplication of loa, the placation of the dead, and the making of magic; in the consecration of a hounfor, the installation of a houngan, and the initiation of cult members; in planting, harvesting, and house-building. Catholic Church holidays, Nine Nights, baptisms, the election of a new president, and ordinary social gatherings—all are celebrated, in part, at least, by dancing.

Haitian dancing is participative rather than exhibitionistic. It is to join rather than to watch. There are some dances, however, which require special skills, and a few which are highly individualistic. Several types of dances are described elsewhere in this book. Verbal description cannot do justice to an art such as dancing, of course; but some brief sketches may help to suggest the differences between one Haitian dance and another.

In the Congo Mazonne, for example, men and women pair off and dance face to face, making contact occasionally but only briefly. The arms are stretched forward as though to embrace the partner around the waist, but the actual embrace never materializes. The partners dance sometimes as though they are unaware of each other and are simply part of a larger group; then they approach, move as mirrored reproductions, and separate. Loin movement is free, and there is a restrained sexual intensity, though direct sexual implications are not necessarily present. Sometimes the woman holds the hem of her skirt in her hands, while the man holds his jacket open toward his partner.

Rara season two special rattles are used. One of them is made of metal and resembles a tin can with a wooden handle. The metal sometimes is perforated with numerous small holes, and inside are *hoholi* seeds, which act as rattlers. This instrument, known as a *tchancy*, is usually decorated with colorful ribbons when in use. (In northern Haiti the term *tchancy* is used to designate metal wrist rattles worn by drummers.) The other Rara rattle, called *jouconjou* or *joucjou*, is made of three gourds carried on a long pole. One of the gourds is affixed to the end of the pole, and the others are fastened to the terminals of a short crossbar, giving the effect of a cross with bulbous ends. Since many of the Rara processions are dramatizations of the Christ epic, the instrument could be interpreted as a Christian symbol, though its conversion into a noisemaker appears to be an African conception. The *jouconjou* may be a variant of the small rattle-cross which is used by the Abakwa secret society in Cuba.[8]

534 541 [824] [531] [171]

The sacred gourd rattle of the cult priest is called *asson* or *baksor*. It is pear-shaped and covered with a network of beads which act as external strikers. It is used by the houngan to summon the spirits of the dead, to praise or call upon the deities, and to accompany the performance of magic. The asson is of West African derivation, and its counterparts are to be found among the cults of Martinique, Trinidad, Cuba, Brazil, Venezuela, and elsewhere where African traditions have left their mark. The gourds from which the assons are made are grown in a special grove sacred to the loa.

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A large calabash rattle has been reported from several isolated regions of Haiti, primarily from the north. Some rattles of this kind have been described as more than twenty inches in height and covered by a network of external strikers, usually wari beans. The calabash rattles are used in groups of three. They are shaken and thumped against the palm of the hand, producing both deep and high-pitched sounds. These oversize rattles are employed without drums and are said to be associated with Arada-Nago rites. They appear to be a survival of the instrument known among the Yoruba as the *shèkèrè* and are found in Cuba in both Dahomey and Lucumí (Yoruba) cult centers.

534 [184] [171]

Probably one of the oldest of Haitian folk instruments is the earth bow, known as the *tambour maringouin*, or mosquito drum. Traditionally the mosquito drum is made in the following way:

A hole is dug in the earth, perhaps a foot or more deep. It is covered with palm or banana bark, which is pegged firmly all around. A cord is attached to the center of the bark membrane and drawn taut to a bent green sapling, one end of which is buried in the ground at a slight angle. The cord is plucked and snapped with the fingers of one hand, while

8 [See Courlander, "Musical Instruments of Cuba," Musical Quarterly, April, 1942, pp. 233-234. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst)

2: Courlander B-8 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[p. 349]

Notes

Chapter 1: *The Making of the Haitian* (*pp. 1-7*)

[1]The name Ganda survives in Haiti as the name of a deity.

[2]Herskovits, in *The Myth of the Negro Past* (p. 47), provides a tabulation of raw data found in the manifests recorded for slaves shipped to Virginia between 1710 and 1769: 20,564 slaves were reported shipped from "Africa," 3,652 from Gambia, 6,777 from "Guinea," 9,224 from Calabar, 3,860 from Angola, and 1,011 from Madagascar. Of those shipped from the island of Madagascar, 473 were listed as coming from Mozambique.

[3]Bartolomé de Las Casas.

Chapter 2: *Man and the Universe: Vodoun* (*pp. 8-18*)

[1]See Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 7.

[2]Schweinfurth in *The Heart of Africa*, II, 31, says: "In Loango all exorcists and conjurors are called *ganga*." Leo Wiener, in *Africa and the Discovery of America* (Philadelphia: Innes and Sons, 1922), III, 32, reports: "Forms of *ganga* have in Bantu the meaning 'medicine' but also 'magic'—such as Nyika *ganga* and Kongo *nganga*."

[3]Gorer, *Africa Dances*, p. 120; Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 208 ff.

[4]From the Fon *houn-so* or *houn-su*. Among the Arada of Dahomey a *houn-su* was regarded as a spiritual wife of the deity. She was a servant of the cult temple, and in some instances a wife of the cult priest.

[5]Translated from the French of Aubin, *En Haiti*, pp. 57-59.

[6]Deren, in her *Divine Horsemen* (pp. 119 ff.), gives an excellent report of a service for Agwé in a boat at sea. Aubin (*op. cit.*, p. 108) seems to have given the first description of this service at sea for the loa Agwé.

[7]Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. 119.

[8]*Ibid.*, p. 123. Leyburn advances the theory that Vodoun developed during this period as a result of the vacuum left by the Church. Although the Church did in effect leave the field to the African cults, one must assume that the Arada, Congo, and other cults were already organized and possessed of great vitality before the Haitian revolution. Implicit evidence points to a continuity of cult life from the earliest days of the African on Haitian soil. There are no statistics to reveal the extent of cult membership at the end of the eighteenth century, but the content and form of Vodoun today are so overwhelmingly African that it is difficult to think of Haitian cult activity as the product of a renaissance.

Chapter 3: *The Loa: Gods of the Haitian Mountains* (*pp. 19-29*)

[1]The term *vodoun*, used in this precise sense, conforms to the original Fon (Dahomean) usage. The term *hounsi*, also of Fon origin, signifies "spirit" and belongs to the same root

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tized at all, but merely respond to an innate ability to control them. To have a baptized *loa*, then, merely means that the worship of the *loa* is thereafter carried on in regular form. The worshipper learns how to *marré*, or "tie,"[14] his spirit, so as to enjoy the social aspects of a *vodun* dance without fear that his *loa* will come unbidden. He gives it small offerings from time to time, and if it becomes insistent, or if his family is being troubled by its gods, he takes full part in the rituals that are staged.[15]

In native idiom, a person when possessed is "mounted" by his god, and thereafter becomes his *ch'wal*, or "horse." A devotee may come under the influence of a number of spirits during a single ceremony or dance, one *loa* succeeding another. The first deity that ever came to a person, however, for him constitutes the chief of his gods — his *mait' tête* — and the leader of any deities which may subsequently possess him. It is this *loa* alone that is "baptized," and this one alone "taken from his head" at his death; and, as far as he is concerned, all his other gods are under the control of this *mait' tête*, so that any agreement which he may enter into with this principal spirit must be respected by all the others.

Fundamentally, to be possessed by a *loa* means that an individual's spirit is literally dispossessed by that of the god. Personalities undergo radical change in accordance with the nature of the deity,[16] while even the sex of the one possessed is disregarded if it differs from that of the god, so that, for example, a woman "mounted" by Ogun is always addressed as Papa Ogun.[17] One wears the colors of the god and the ornaments he likes, eating and drinking those things he prefers, and otherwise manifesting his peculiar characteristics — rolling on the earth, if possessed by Damballa or chattering incessantly if by Gede.[18]

Not everyone, by any means, is subject to states of possession. If the existence of individual differences in the capacity for religious expression be recognized, it becomes apparent

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that while some react to the supernatural with immediate and overwhelming emotion, and others, though incapable of as deep a response, do sense the mysteries of possession, there are still others who go through life without ever feeling this religious "thrill." In native explanation, it is the former to whom the gods manifest themselves, who become the *ch'wal* of their *loa;* while to the latter the deities never make themselves known. Scientifically, the phenomenon of possession in Negro cultures, at least, is as yet unsatisfactorily explained, largely because of the almost complete absence of adequate reports on the background and incidence of specific cases. Perhaps the most satisfactory approach to its understanding is through a consideration of it in terms of differences in nervous instability, which may be thought of as predisposing different persons to experience the religious thrill in different degrees; or, in other terms, by reference to their differing susceptibility to suggestion. One must reject an hypothesis which attempts to explain the *vodun* cult of Haiti in terms of the neuroses, even when, as in the admirable exposition of Dr. Dorsainvil, the approach neglects neither accepted genetic theory in stressing the inheritance of neurotic tendencies in voduist family lines, nor the important historical forces which have been operative.[10] For in terms of the patterns of Haitian religion, possession is not abnormal, but normal; it is set in its cultural mold as are all other phases of conventional living. That it gives release from psychic tension does not alter the case; neither does the fact that it offers a way to the satisfaction of unfulfilled desires, as when the god, speaking through a woman under possession, demands a necklace or bracelet which, though forever the property of the god, will be worn by his devotee. These facts merely emphasize the compensatory character of the phenomenon. The social situation of the individual also enters; some undoubtedly simulate possession for the attention it brings them, while a person who experiences no serious difficulties in the course of his life is perhaps never

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787 called upon to ask whether or not he is properly serving his
781 gods; is never placed in a situation for which possession would
[114] be a release. Hence to consider all possession as something which falls within the range of psychopathology is to approach it handicapped by a fundamental misconception.

787 The best evidence of the socially normal nature of possession is the existence of rules governing its incidence which are
794 well understood by all. Not everyone who is a *ch'wal* may become possessed at any dance or *service,* for the gods, if properly under control, are permitted to come only to members of the family giving the rite. At one *vodun* dance given by a priest where a number of other *hungans,* present as guests, became possessed, the host was regarded as having taken undue advantage of his visitors by bringing on their possessions. In another case Haitians from the southern peninsula who were temporarily residing in Mirebalais carefully refrained from contact with a certain *vodun* priest lest he bring on possession by their gods. At one dance for the Rada gods, the *loa* Taureau, a Pétro deity, possessed one of the drummers. Because a Pétro *loa* was neither expected nor wanted, the man was immediately removed and, when quieted, sent home. A similar situation developed at another Rada dance where Bosu "came"; the person possessed was at once taken outside the enclosure until his god had left him. If a *loa* persists in dancing at a *vodun* dance given by another family, it is either one of these *loa bossal* already described, or a *loa vagabond,* and may be scolded by the *hungan:* "You must not come here! You are not wanted! Go home where you belong!" The passion with
[781] which a person resists his god when he feels possession coming on at a rite not given by his own family is particularly instructive. Men have been seen holding so tightly to the rafters of the shelter under which the dance was being held that the muscles of their forearms formed great cords, while beads of
[782] perspiration rolled down their foreheads.[20] A person who must live away from his family for a long time usually takes

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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have explained it chiefly by the surprise element of the uprising. But when else in modern history have slaves successfully revolted against their armed masters and become permanently free? Successful revolutions even of people not in bodily slavery have had acknowledged leadership, whereas in Haiti no real leader appeared for the insurgents. Boukman's influence, indeed, at its widest never reached beyond a part of the northern plain; he had about the same range of power as a ward boss in the United States. On the plantations Hallaou, Hyacinthe, Lafortune, and others whose names are unimportant or unknown, Vodun houngans likewise welded slave opinion within their narrow districts. But no single great leader appeared. As the conflict was developed, without plan or unity under the divided and contradictory action of numerous blacks, what held the people together was, negatively, their hatred of the white masters; positively, their Vodun beliefs. Only later in the decade did a true leader, Toussaint L'Ouverture, emerge to consolidate their victory.

As often happens among unsophisticated people convinced of the rightness of their cause, the local Vodun leaders were sure of their own invulnerability through the protection of one or another of the spirits.[8] They convinced their followers as well, to such a degree that when an invulnerable chief fell there were dozens of reasons to explain the unexpected death rather than any disillusion. Usually, failure to follow the rigorous propitiation requirements of the protecting god offered the key to the misfortune. Various ones of them were known to be exacting and troublesome. The leader at Trou-Coffi, Romaine by name, had absorbed enough of the Roman Catholicism in Vodun to feel that the Virgin Mary was his especial patroness.[9] Beyond this specific belief in invulnerability was the general trust that Vodun spirits would lead their devotees to success, would give them a happy issue out of all their distress.

8. A parallel case of belief in invulnerability because of divine protection was that of the North American Indians both at the time of Tecumseh and later in the Sioux outbreaks at the climax of the Ghost-Dance Religion. See James Mooney, *The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890* (Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, 1892–93 [Washington, 1896]), chap. X.

9. The importance of Vodun beliefs in connection with the slave revolt is stressed by Dr. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Vodou et Névrose* (Port-au-Prince, 1931), pp. 33–34. He says of many of the chiefs: "The belief in their invulnerability was not at all the result of calculation, but was a true state of mind, a sort of autosuggestion which explains very well the chronic heroism of certain leaders of the revolution in Saint-Domingue and of the war of independence of 1802–3."

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Vodun, then, was both widespread and powerful enough to be turned to most effective ends in 1791. Contemporary accounts of it still saw it as a meeting ground of superstitions. The French naturalist, Descourtilz, for example, was primarily struck by the use of the occult in connection with Vodun; he especially describes a woman who, under the seizure of her god, took a live coal in her hand without being burnt; a husband who by the use of magic struck his inconstant wife with a languorous malady, effective for half a year; and the knowledge of poison which was combined with the practice of magic. He mentions but one of the Vodun gods by name but implies the existence of many others.[10]

Madiou, Haiti's first historian, likewise always spoke of Vodun as a savage survival; he says of a native general, "Lamour Dérance, plunged in gross errors, put his faith in *sorcery*, in the prophecy of *papas*, or priests of *African fetishism*."[11] In his scornful distaste for the vulgar he clearly indicated by his own italics some conspicuous elements of the developing religion: magic, the use of fetishes, and a Vodun priesthood. His illustration of Dérance's error was his making soldiers believe that bullets could not wound them:

> When he marched to combat he was preceded by bands of Congos, Aradas, Ibos, Nabos, Mandingues, Haoussas, who threw themselves against the French battalions with a prodigious intrepidity, crying that the bullets were but dust. But this courage which *superstition* fed was shattered against the ramparts of . . . the Europeans' square formations.

It is noteworthy that the first three black rulers set themselves against Vodun because of its potentialities for sedition. The plots to overthrow the old régime had come to fruition at apparently innocent Vodun dances. Although the ingenuous aspect of the dance gathering had deceived the white masters, Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe knew the meaning of the assemblies. All three had to drive their people hard and knew that resentment would be an inevitable consequence; it must not have an opportunity to burgeon at nightly gatherings. Toussaint was the strictest of the three, for he forbade all dances and nocturnal assemblage.[12] The other two singled

10. M. E. Descourtilz, *Voyages d'un naturaliste en Haïti, 1799–1803* (Paris, 1935 ed.), pp. 116–118.
11. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, p. 33.
12. In an order of January 4, 1800.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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114 highest idea of power and action. Logically, he could not conceive of the
178 unique God of the Christians, by analogy and by inspiration, except in
776 terms of the sentiment of fear mingled with the awe which the colonist inspired in him. Once this first step was taken, the rest was only the work of time. In the degree that the holy beings of Catholicism were unfolded to them, the creole Negroes everywhere identified these with the *vodun* (spirits) of the Dahomean cult.[19]

771 The Christian God could not stop the "deifying" process, for Vodun
776 must have simple spiritual explanations for daily occurrences. How could a god who ruled the earth clutter his mind with such small details as the mango crop or one's private aches? There was room of necessity for more, and lesser, gods.

771 Orthodoxy and monotheism, then, are alien to Vodun; so likewise
● 781 are the notions of sin and a moral law. These also are refined ideas. The Catholic priests do their best to instill into the minds of the people the Church doctrine on these points, but gluttony, envy, sloth, and other deadly sins are not easy to explain to a people whose worldly goods are pitifully few, whose bellies are never full, and who must work hard to live at all. Just how the simple Haitian interprets the fulminations of the fathers against sin a foreigner can hardly tell, and the priests are not at liberty to reveal the secrets of the confessional.[20] A peasant loves life. His pleasures are simple enough, partly because he lacks money for expensive ones. Puritanical self-searching is alien to the normal Haitian. The touchstone is infallible: so long as life moves along smoothly one need not worry; if misfortune comes, one of the spirits is angry or out of sorts and his worshipers must propitiate him. What spirit could mind a man's dancing, drinking clairin, watching a cockfight, or otherwise indulging himself?

771 Vodun does not conceive life to be a struggle between good and
776 evil. Its conception of spirits is anthropomorphic. No man is wholly good or wholly evil, nor is any god; human beings can generally be persuaded into any mood, and so can the gods; as there is variety in human personality, so likewise the gods are not immutable. Some are more to be feared than others, some may be regarded with tender affection, but all are capable of working both weal and woe.

19. Dorsainvil, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

[783] 20. A priest once told me that a young Haitian girl in sorrow confessed, as her most heinous sin, that she had given food to a dog. Apparently her idea was that food was too precious to be given away to animals; hence she had sinned.

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planted at other times will spoil. Similarly, millet and maize must not be harvested during these periods, or small insects will eat the grain. "No crop whose root is used for food may be planted during the forbidden phases of the moon," say the educated cultivators also, citing experiences of their own or of their neighbors who, being skeptical, planted their potatoes or other tubers during the wrong phase of the moon, only to have them completely spoil. In some instances not only the phases of the moon, but entire months are held unpropitious for planting. Thus July is regarded as a "weak" month for planting potatoes and plantains, while April, May, June, and August are preferred ones.

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As in all Negro cultures, the Haitians dare not ignore the supernatural powers that rule the universe, where the question of getting a living is concerned. In the valley of Mirebalais, if the land where a field is to be made has a stream, a cock must be sacrificed to the spirit that resides in it, together with oil, peas, and some non-intoxicating drink. In making the offering, protection is asked against those who might steal from the field or injure it:

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> *"Maître Source, moin mandé pou' ou gadé jardin moin vini fait ici. Cé pas pou' ou laissé méchant, malfaiteur contrarié tout ça moin mété nan terr'a. Si moin bien récolté, moin va ba ou un pile mangé.* — Master of the Stream, I pray you to protect the garden I have just made here. Do not permit any evil designing person to harm all that I have put into the ground. If I harvest well, I will give you much food."

An invocation such as the following might also be pronounced on this occasion:

> *"Jesu Christ, les Saints, Marassa, les Morts: M'ap' travaillé; m'ap' planté graines-là. Pou' fai'l donné pou' moin, pou' m' join, pou' m' bai' Mystères, les Saintes, les Marassa, les Morts.* — Jesus Christ, Saints, Twins, the

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Dead: I have worked; I have planted this seed. Make it yield for me, that I may make offerings to the Mysteries, the Saints, the Twins, the Dead." 241 782 539

At the entrance to the field the cranium of a horse, a mule, or a burro may be erected on a pole as magic against evil, and a wooden cross to which limes are attached may also be raised to protect against any expression of envy that might place a spell upon the growing plants. Finally, if there is any reason to believe that evil magic may have been invoked against the owner, a *hungan*, or *vodun* priest is summoned to make a charm to ward it off, and, with a little ceremony, he inters this charm in the middle of the garden or at its entrance. 241 789

In addition to this, first fruits must be given as an offering to the supernatural forces whose goodwill has permitted a bountiful yield, particularly in the case of staple crops such as maize and rice. As the first heads of maize are brought in, they are roasted, and the kernels are cut from the cobs. The head of the household then throws them to the four cardinal points either in the garden or before his house, and as he does this, he pronounces an invocation such as the following: 241 782 [823] [539]

> *"Jesu Christ, les Saints, les Marassa, les Morts: M' jet' maï' bai' ou, c'est pou' toujou' m' gagne bai' ou, et pou' m' gagne courai' pou' travai' a'c p'tit' moin, a'c femme moin, a'c parent' moin, a'c toute famille-a. Conserve m' pou' m' pas malade, pou' m' toujours join pou, m' bai' ou.* — Jesus Christ, the Saints, the Twins, the Dead: I throw maize for you, that I may always have some to give, that I may gain courage [strength] to work, and also my children, my wife, my relations, and all my family. Care for me that I do not fall ill, so that I may always have [something] to give you."

After this ritual the new crop is available to its owner for whatever use he may care to make of it.

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241 782 The first of the rice-harvest is pounded in a mortar. A chicken is killed, or, if the farmer is a man of some means, he may offer two chickens, which are stewed together with red beans. The rice, cooked separately, is put on one platter or in a calabash and the stew in another, and these are taken to the field, where they are cast to the four quarters of the earth. Some of this is also given to the spirit residing in any stream which may be on the property. In addition, sacred trees are [778] [824] rewarded for their care over the field with some of this food placed at the foot of each, but only after they have demonstrated their merit by a successful yield. A prayer of thanks, [539] couched in terms such as these, is next pronounced:

> *"Tout ça quitté. Aidé moin à travailler durant l'année, quitté ba moin force, courage. Moin bien content jodi-a, main ça moin porté ba-ou, c'e pou' ca toujou' bon. Ba moin force l'année pou' moin travaille plus l'année prochain. Merci.* — All this remains [here for you]. Help me to work during the year, give me strength and courage. Today I am well satisfied; here is what I bring you that all may always be well with me. Give me strength this year that I may work more next year. Thank you."

The family and their friends who may be present then return to the house and eat the remaining food.

241 782 262 It is also held dangerous to eat yams until the spirits are given the first of the new crop that comes to hand.[1] This is true even though a person may not himself be a farmer, but purchases his yams in the market. Unless this is done: *"Cap' malade, cap' tué même. Marassa kèmbé 'ou, morts, too, et mystères.* — You can become ill, you can even die. Twins will seize (molest) you; the dead, too, and the *mystères.*" The ceremony occurs during November or December, and in addition to the "Guinea" yams — for this ceremony is not performed for the great coarse yams — it is necessary to have imported dried salt fish, fish from Haitian waters which are dried

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in Port-au-Prince, native or "créole" rice, red beans, and olive oil. The rice and beans are cooked separately, as are the yams and the two kinds of salt fish, each being seasoned with oil, salt, and pepper. The ordinary plates or calabashes on which food is offered the *loa*, or African deities, and the characteristic special double plates used in the twin cult, are prepared by rubbing them with olive oil. When the food is ready, it is placed in the proper containers in a closed room, and the family gather and say prayers of the Church — the Pater Noster, the Ave Maria, and the Credo — after which the *loa*, the twins, and the dead are called to come and eat. From midday until after sunset the room remains unopened, so that these beings may partake of the offerings placed there for them. Finally, when darkness has fallen, the family enter, and the food, whose essence is believed to have been consumed by the spirits, is eaten. 241 787 262

At times when a garden yields but little, the owner may suspect that black magic is the cause. He thereupon tries to recall any of his neighbors who might have occasion to feel envious of him, or those with whom he may have quarreled. He does nothing overt at this time except to watch for signs of hostility on the part of the suspect, but when the time for the next planting arrives, he not only obtains a strong charm to protect his own garden, but if he is particularly exercised and thinks his suspicions are well justified, he may set a counter-charm in the field of his neighbor who he believes has harmed him. This would only be done in exceptional cases, where, for instance, the crops of one cultivator had failed when the fields about his had yielded well; for, in the main, garden magic is directed toward protective rather than toward malevolent ends. 241 789

A certain proportion of the harvest is reserved for use at home and the remainder is sold in the markets. Since these markets, which as the primary channel of distribution rank with farming in their importance in Haitian economy, they may next be considered. 433 443

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other evil spirit or evil magic that may be directed against her. If she is a worshipper of the African deities of the *vodun* cult, she may also ask the *vodun* priest to determine by divination what spirit will protect the child, and what her own deity asks to insure his aid. During all her pregnancy she is particularly careful to avoid eating those foods which are "hateful" to her — that is, which cause her to become ill — though in Mirebalais, at least, it is not necessary that she refrain from partaking of the foods "hateful" to her husband. A pregnant woman has privileges and powers not shared with other women, as was evidenced when a Haitian man once appeared with his eye half shut, explaining that the sty was a punishment for his refusal to buy something his pregnant spouse had coveted. "They do not always know they are sending you a sty, but it is a power they have," he made clear.

Shortly before parturition is expected, both the pregnant woman and her husband invoke the aid of the family deities and make them offerings of a *couvert sec*.* The rite is an informal one that need not necessarily take place in the familial house of worship; if it is more convenient, it may be performed inside their own house or in the courtyard. After repeating the Pater Noster and the Ave Maria, a prayer such as the following is pronounced by the woman:

> "*Toutes mystères, tant pour papa que manman, du même de côté mari moin: m'ap mandé ou pou' moin fait un heureuse accouchement, pou' l'ouv'i chemin ba moin.* — All the gods, both of my father and of my mother, as well as those of my husband: I ask that you cause me to have a good delivery, that you open the road for me."

At the same time the family ancestors are not overlooked:

> "*Moin mandé nou' tous pou' nou' vini délivré moin, pou' nou' l'ouvri chemin pou' moin, pou' pas quitté*

* The various types of offerings will be discussed in the next section of this book.

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843 782 539 *malin esprit barré chemin qu'en moment delivrance moin apé rivé. Nou' toutes Invisibles, les Saints, les Morts, Maraisa, vini assisté moin jou'-a.*— I ask you all to come deliver me, that you open the way for me, that you do not allow evil spirits to bar my path when the time of the delivery approaches. May you all, Invisible Beings, the Saints, the Dead, Twins, come to my aid on that day."

843 782 776 Should one of the couple be a devotee of Damballa or Erzilie, both of them jealous gods, a chicken or two is added to the customary offerings, and some gift pleasing to the god, such as a dress or suit of his sacred color, is made him. Nor-
843 mally no further precautions need be taken. If, however, the
789 pregnant woman has had one or two miscarriages, she and her
[793] husband go to a *vodun* priest, preferably a woman, and obtain a "medicine" to be used in bathing the abdominal and vaginal areas as a precaution against *mauvaises aires*, the were-
[755] wolves believed to consume children in the womb. If the preg-
[793] nancy this time terminates successfully, some of the same medicine is rubbed on the child shortly after birth and several times during the ensuing weeks, but should the infant later fall ill, the *vodun* priest brings herbs and makes a smoke-fire to drive away the werewolves that are believed still to be hovering about.

844 782 At the onset of labor, if either the father or the mother of the unborn child is vowed to Damballa, another sacrifice is made to this god and to the spirits of twins, giving a *couvert sec* and one or two chickens and pigeons to each. If a *vodun* priest has determined what deity protects the child, a sacrifice is also given this spirit, and prayers are said to the spirits of twins, the dead of the families of both the man and the woman, and all other supernatural beings, saints of the Church and *vodun* gods alike.

844 Meanwhile the woman has been placed on the ground on

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a mat or a cloth, supported in a reclining position with pillows 844
and cloths, or on a covered box standing about a foot from the ground, with her legs drawn up. No fire is built in the house, all doors and windows are tightly shut, and covers are provided against a chill. A candle stands lighted at the threshold, [788] and holy water is poured beside it; a candle is also often [782] lighted in the church before the statue of the saint who corresponds to the *vodun* deity under whose protection the woman in labor is thought to be. In the room with her is the midwife and as many as six, seven, eight, or nine older women belonging to the families of the woman and her husband. The hands of the woman are made to rest on her knees, but where labor is prolonged, her arms are supported above her head to afford relief. She is three times given very hot tea or a drink made of [757] the stewed leaves of the mango tree and of the *bois lait*. The midwife, with palm oil on her hands, watches the rhythm of labor and presses on the abdomen to facilitate delivery.

If it becomes evident that this will be difficult, a *vodun* 845
priest is at once called to determine by divination whether or 793
not the deities who have been propitiated are satisfied. If the 787
answer is a negative one, he promises future sacrifices or gives 782
minor offerings immediately. Care is also taken to ascertain [775]
whether the trouble is due to the discontent of the family dead who may have been angered by neglect to wear mourning for them, or because sacrifices or a *service* due them have been delayed too long. Inquiries are similarly made to determine whether the spirits of twins might not be displeased, [754] while the possibility that evil magic may have been invoked is not overlooked, especially if the husband has several wives. If the inquiry shows that the magic of a co-wife was responsible, a strong counter-charm is made at once. Should the woman in 845
labor eventually die, however, her death is not considered to 766
be the result of any act of infidelity on her part, and does not, as in other Negro cultures, prevent the usual burial and mourning customs being carried out.

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608 remembrances are expected from them on birthdays or saints' days, while the young person, when older, often brings his problems to them, knowing that they will give him their most disinterested advice. A man may turn to his godparents for aid before asking it of his family, for they are regarded as truest of friends. Nor does he stand in awe of them as he does of his older relations. There is a free joking give-and-take between godparent and godchild, which reflects this attitude of warm affection. A person even stands in a special relationship to the children of his godparents, calling them "baptismal
608 brothers" or "baptismal sisters." Among the peasants, though
582 not among the inhabitants of the larger centers, not only marriage but even those non-Church unions otherwise socially sanctioned are frowned upon between "baptismal brothers and sisters." And Mirebalais has it that when Church marriage is contemplated by two such individuals, special authorization from the Archbishop must first be obtained.[8]

851 Saturday is the day favored for baptisms, permitting as it
852 does the child to be brought to town on a market day. The
608 mother rarely attends, and usually the father is also absent when the godparents bring the infant to the baptismal font, where the priest gives him his name and receives him into the Church. Later in the day the parents are visited by their friends and relatives, who, if they can afford it, bring gifts for the child and partake of the drinks and refreshments that are provided.

851 Following the Church baptism at an interval which varies
852 with differing circumstances, the father and mother and the
782 godfather and godmother present the child to the family deities. Arriving at the family habitation the father says:

[539] *"Mystères-o, nou' même qui te après Grand Maître protège et delivre, moin vin' remercie nou'. Et en même temps main petite la pou' gè'dé pou' moin. Pas quitté mauvaise lewou gagné l'empi' sou' li. Ba li force, santé,*

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et preserve li cont'e tout mal. Ba li couraille pou' moin. Yun jou', c'est li-même qui allé remplacé nou' pou' servi nou' quan' nou' pas pè la. — O spirits, you who after the Great Master protect and deliver, I come to thank you. At the same time here is the child [you are] to protect for me. Do not let werewolves gain power over him. Grant him strength, health, and preserve him against all evil. Give him courage for me. One day he himself will replace us to serve you when we are no longer here." 851 852 539 782

Inasmuch as it is always necessary to invoke all three categories of supernatural beings, a similar invocation is pronounced for the dead and the spirits of twins. The rite, however, may be even simpler than this. If the family house of worship is near by, and the relationship group is one which numbers important members of the *vodun* cult, the child may be taken into this house, water thrown on the ground three times, and a candle lighted. In such cases no invocation is pronounced. 851 852 782 [964]

Most mothers nurse their infants until they are about eighteen months old, though children may be weaned when as young as a year. Weaning is accomplished in a day or two. On the day selected, a bitter plant called *laloi* is spread on the mother's breasts, and when the child asks and is given the breast and refuses it because of the bitter taste, his favorite food is at once offered as a substitute. So efficacious is this method that one day's training is ordinarily enough. As a further precaution the child is not allowed to sleep with his mother for three or four nights after being weaned, so that he cannot take the breast at night, and is only given a place in the mother's bed after her milk has ceased to flow. 862 [824]

The earlier years of a child are in the main free from care, and, with due allowance for the differences in individual temperaments and family traditions, he is given much his own way. Young children make "mud food" and build play-houses. When somewhat older, they organize games of 857 [855]

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584 836 truth, but the matter is recognized as one which concerns only her husband and herself, and if he is willing to keep 836 369 her, it is his own affair. Consensus of opinion in Mirebalais is that the percentage of girls who do not have pre-marital sexual relations is relatively small, but the belief is expressed that chastity is more prevalent among country women than among those of the town, where, in turn, it is more frequent than in larger centers such as Port-au-Prince. Even though 836 848 pre-marital relations are commonplace, however, the pregnancy of an unmarried girl is regarded as both reprehensible and unfortunate, and she is severely beaten for it by her family. In such cases, if the father of the unborn child will take the girl, his parents are sent to bring her, but where the parents of the man refuse to ask for the girl because they do not approve of her, then, if he still desires her, he must himself face the anger of her parents. Should he not wish to come for her, she may either remain with her family or seek work in another community. In any event, her child will be well cared for by her family, and no reproach will attach to it because of the circumstances of its birth.

585 782 776 Before a mating of any type is consummated, the familial spirits must be notified of the approaching event so that they may be well disposed toward it, for no union where this is neglected can enjoy happiness or peace. One Mirebalais woman was pointed out as an object lesson of the necessity of doing this. Though a devotee of several gods, neither she nor her husband was willing to perform the necessary rites for [753] [828] her gods before their marriage. She was suffering from an acute case of melancholia after the birth of her first child, and the prevailing opinion was that she was going mad because of the neglect of her duty toward her deities. Shortly before a woman goes to her husband, therefore, a *couvert sec* for the Rada deities is given both by herself and by her betrothed. If the family of either the young man or the woman possess deities of the powerful Pétro group, more inclusive offerings

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are necessary, and the elders of the family must see to it that these gods are instructed not to trouble the newly married pair. If either or both of them are devotees of deities such as Damballa, Erzilie, Ogun, or Aida Wedo, all of whom are known to be extremely jealous, these gods must be specially placated. 585 782 776

For the actual ceremony the couple appear each with a candle in hand, pour water on the ground in the family house of worship, and kneel and pray. The god may "come to the head" of the girl or the man or some relative of each and advise them. If it asks a gift at this time, it is either given at the moment or a promise is made to fulfill the request later. If the spirit objects to the marriage, it is wooed with offerings. Thus, for example, should the young woman be possessed by the serpent-god Damballa, who, speaking through his devotee, registered an objection to the marriage, the girl would be given such gifts as a white silk dress, white silk stockings, or some other valued object in the sacred color of the god, or some perfume which might also serve to mollify him. Or should the man's deity who registered objection be Ogun, the god of war, a fine red kerchief might be offered in honor of this god, whose color is red.* 585 782 787 [822]

The dead of both families are also notified by means of a visit to the cemetery. The days for these pilgrimages are Mondays or Fridays, and the pilgrimages must be made during either the morning or the early afternoon, since visits at night are only for evil purposes. As candles are lighted, announcement is made to the family dead of the marriage which is soon to take place, and their good offices are asked to bring it happiness. After all the family dead have been invoked, a candle is lighted before the large cross for Baron Samedi, and another behind it for Gede, the first as the ruler of cemeteries and the graves of the dead, and the second as his handy-man. Another candle is lighted for the "abandoned souls" of the family, who have died without consecration, and yet another 585 769 782 [776]

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585 769 782 for the victims of smallpox. If family traditions also tell of those shot, not in war, but as prisoners, perhaps, a candle is lighted for them outside the cemetery wall. Though the couple may perform this ceremony together, each makes this request of the dead of his or her own family as the candles are lighted. This call on the dead is repeated several days after the marriage or later, when candles are again lighted.

591 583 585 769 The sole exception to the performance of these rites before the new household is begun occurs in those cases of *plaçage* where a girl continues to live at her own home. This is rare, however, for the house of a man is usually built near that of his father, and he takes his wife there. But if special circumstances dictate otherwise, the ceremony of notifying and pacifying the family deities may be deferred, though a man must eventually present every woman with whom he lives to his family gods and in turn must be presented to the gods of the woman's family. In similar fashion the dead of both families must be adequately notified.

585 [777] [796] [583] [777] Marriages rarely take place in the months of November and December, the former being disliked because it is "the month of the dead," during which All Saints' Day occurs, and the latter because it ends the year. Except for the Church wedding and less elaborate festivities to celebrate the event, the rites which mark a *plaçage* mating do not greatly differ from those which mark a legal marriage, which may be described in outline. The favorite day for Church marriages is Saturday, "the day of the Virgin," and the time for the ceremony is always early morning, before the heat of the day has set in. If the home of the girl is some distance from Mirebalais, the party come to town the preceding day, the girl spending the night with some friend. Otherwise the bridegroom, accompanied by his relatives and friends, goes to the house of the girl early Saturday morning. Before the couple leave the [782] [788] home of her parents, water must be thrown on the ground in front of them, and also sprinkled by them before the en-

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trance of the house — three times if there is one door (for the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost), three times before each door if there are two entrances, and once before each door if there are three. The wedding procession goes to church on foot. The men, if they are from the countryside, are stiff, uncomfortable, and hot in their unaccustomed "best" clothing and their often painful shoes, while the women are also self-conscious in their new dresses. The elaborateness of the ceremony varies with the fee paid the priest, but at all events the clanging church bell is heard notifying the town and its environs that a marriage is being consecrated.

If the family of the bride or groom are well known in Mirebalais, a wedding reception may be given at their house for friends of the couple and of their parents, but the real festivities are held after the return to the new family home. As the procession approaches it, the "bush-priest," a functionary who, because of his knowledge of French, can read the prayers of the Church, waits at the gate with two aides, small boys or girls, each with a flag, one red and one white. He has sacred water in one hand and a lighted candle in the other, and as he pours this water on the ground three times he intones the Pater Noster, the Ave Maria, the Credo, and other prayers. These concluded, hymns are sung by all the participants, and singing, a procession is formed with the "bush-priest" in the lead, followed by the flag-bearers, the couple who have just been married, arm in arm, the "godfather" and "godmother" of the marriage, as the witnesses are called, the parents of the bride and groom, and other close relatives. As the procession reaches the door of the house, it pauses and water is thrown on the ground three times; the circuit of the house is made twice again, and each time, as the door is reached, water is thrown, until, the third tour completed, the participants solemnly enter.

There coffee, liqueurs, wine, *kola*, and cakes are served to the principals and the more important members of the com-

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the phrase: "This is natural." Children are not spaced, for normally a man resumes intercourse with his wife the second or third month after childbirth. Except for the drinking of coconut milk and salt, which is believed to be effective in preventing conception if taken before intercourse, contraceptives are not known to women, which means that pregnancies follow in rapid succession. Families are not too large, however, despite this, those numbering seven or eight children being rare, even in the hills. The reason for this is a high incidence of infant mortality, which is obvious despite the absence of vital statistics. Abortions are usually resorted to by young women, who sustain the operation done by the uncertain skill of an old woman, in the fear that bearing a child will later stand in the way of a desirable legal marriage. Some men, however, take the precaution of placing a grain of native salt on the tongue while having intercourse during an illicit affair, believing that this will be effective in preventing conception.

A childless woman first goes to a *vodun* priest, to have him determine by divination if a co-wife has not invoked magic against her. If her question receives an affirmative answer, she acquires a "counter-charm" to offset the effect of the other woman's magic. Should such a charm be ineffective, she would offer her prayers before the shrines of the saints and make pilgrimages to such sacred places as Saut d'Eau, there phrasing her petition to the Virgin in some manner such as the prayer overheard as a woman lighted a candle and held it in her hand before placing it on a sacred rock:

> *"Vièrge Miracles, Manman, voilà, depuis six ans depuis qui moins marié; moin apé vivre seul avec pauvre malhereux moin-a. Ça fait trois fois moin vini nan pié ou. Pas 'blié mandé moin fait ou, pour charité, moin ou petit pitite. Moin va minnin li ba ou. Moin apé parti, Manman, s' ou' pli, songé ça pitite m' mandé ou.—*

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Virgin of Miracles, Mother, I have been married for six years; I am still living alone with my poor unfortunate one. This is the third time I come to you. For charity's sake, do not forget to send me a child. I have brought this for you. Now I am about to leave [but], Mother, please think of the little one I ask of you."

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Serpent-worship in Mirebalais

may perhaps be said to have come to this: Adherents of the African cults refrain from killing the snake, and should they do so by accident, the African custom of giving ceremonial burial to any creature having supernatural importance is followed as an atonement. Where this is omitted, difficulties of so serious a nature are felt to threaten that to prevent them a priest of the cult is called upon to offer up a sacrifice and to beg forgiveness even after the little ceremony of burial has been performed.[7]

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Inasmuch as *vodun* flourishes in Mirebalais despite the minor role of serpent-worship, it is evident that in seeking to understand its nature and its philosophy other aspects must be considered. Two historical facts must be kept constantly in mind in making this analysis, for without them, what follows would be meaningless. The first is that *vodun* derives from a background of African theology and ceremonialism. The second is that the Negroes have continuously been subjected to the influence of Catholicism during the centuries that have passed since their introduction into the island.

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Yet another point may prove suggestive in providing a useful point of view for an analysis of the *vodun* cult. This bears upon a difficulty impossible and happily unnecessary to resolve in the field study of religion, which arises out of the degree of variation in answers to questions dealing with the same point. These answers differ not only according to the status of the individual in the cult, since layman and priest have understandably different concepts of the functions of deities based on unequal degrees of expert knowledge, but the extent to which an individual has religious interests or is indifferent to them influences the nature of his responses. A fundamental fallacy results from the fact that except where there is an officially sanctioned theology — which makes for dogma, and often for perfunctory worship, in contrast with the living dynamic nature of Haitian peasant belief and ritual — there are no "real" answers to questions in the field of religion. The

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the one possessed, possessions of this kind mean either that the *loa* needs baptism; or that, being baptized, its devotee has been negligent in serving the god.

No actual rite of baptism of a *loa* — or, as it is also termed, of *lavé tête*, "washing the head" — was witnessed, but the account of the ceremony given here, obtained independently from several persons, represents an adequate exposition of the rite as performed in Mirebalais. A room is prepared where the person whose *loa* is to be baptized must remain for three days. The mat or bed on which the neophyte rests is covered with fresh sheets and pillow-cases, and three changes of clothing are made ready, one of which must be entirely new for the last day of the ceremony. These are in the color of the god being "baptized"; that is, if the *loa* were revealed to be such a one as Damballa, Aida Wedo, or Gran' Erzilie, everything would be white, but if it were Gran' Siligbo, the colors would be blue and white; if Ogun, everything would be red; if Ossange, blue; where the god is one of the Pétro suite, such as 'Ti Kita or Bosu, everything would be black.*

During the three days' "retreat" the one whose *loa* is being consecrated lies alone. All day long the men and women of the family sit in the next room or outside the house, singing and praying, though at night they sleep, since "this is not a wake." They not only sing the songs sacred to the *loa* being baptized, but also the canticles of the Virgin, while prayers of the Church are recited under the leadership of the *prêt' savanne*, the "bush-priest" whose ability to read the prayers makes him an essential figure in all *vodun* rites. They may from time to time have "a little procession" about the room where the novitiate lies, when small banners in the color of the god are carried. Soft drinks and a *mangé sec* — a "dry" offering — are given the god, and white tapers and an oil lamp are

* A detailed listing of the names, attributes, and powers of the more widely worshipped *loa*, the colors, days, and trees or other places sacred to them, and the "squads" into which they are conceived to be formed, will be found in an appendix at the end of this book.

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lighted. Chicken and rice may also be cooked for any god except Gede, while chocolate and rice with milk are favored, since it is said "the *loa* love desserts" — a commentary on the very immediate and human character of these spirits.

The actual baptism, or "washing of the head," is performed on the third day of the ceremony by a *vodun* priest or priestess who is a member of the family, though any member who has important *loa* and the necessary *connaissance* may officiate if the membership of the family includes no priest. As at any baptism, there must be a godfather and godmother, and preference is given those who are the parents of twins or are themselves twins. The officiant must be possessed at the time, since, it is said, "one *loa* baptizes another." Leaves of the basilique tree are steeped in perfumed cold water, and the hands of the one who baptizes are first immersed in the liquid; then, while songs of the *loa* and canticles of the Virgin are sung, he washes the head of the person to be baptized. Possession occurs immediately, and the new devotee lies back, half conscious, while all others kneel, seeking word from the *loa* to learn if it is satisfied. If an affirmative answer is given, all retire, the person possessed remaining in the room to sleep through the night. A "ball," but not a *vodun* dance, may celebrate the event either the next day or later, but this is not obligatory, and most often those present, after eating, quietly disperse. The following day the one who has been baptized goes to the family place of worship and greets those who have helped him. Only one further rite is necessary, and this solely when the *loa bossal* is revealed to be a hostile god. Then the *loa*, after having been baptized, is "restrained" by being placed in a jar and buried, so it cannot later emerge and trouble the family of the one to whom it has come.[12]

The ceremony of baptism, in Mirebalais, is in no sense a first step into any *vodun* hierarchy, for, as will be seen, no such hierarchy exists in this valley. One important priest there derives his power from *loa* that have never been bap-

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tized at all, but merely respond to an innate ability to control them. To have a baptized *loa,* then, merely means that the worship of the *loa* is thereafter carried on in regular form. The worshipper learns how to *marré,* or "tie,"[14] his spirit, so as to enjoy the social aspects of a *vodun* dance without fear that his *loa* will come unbidden. He gives it small offerings from time to time, and if it becomes insistent, or if his family is being troubled by its gods, he takes full part in the rituals that are staged.[15]

In native idiom, a person when possessed is "mounted" by his god, and thereafter becomes his *ch'wal,* or "horse." A devotee may come under the influence of a number of spirits during a single ceremony or dance, one *loa* succeeding another. The first deity that ever came to a person, however, for him constitutes the chief of his gods — his *mait' tête* — and the leader of any deities which may subsequently possess him. It is this *loa* alone that is "baptized," and this one alone "taken from his head" at his death; and, as far as he is concerned, all his other gods are under the control of this *mait' tête,* so that any agreement which he may enter into with this principal spirit must be respected by all the others.

Fundamentally, to be possessed by a *loa* means that an individual's spirit is literally dispossessed by that of the god. Personalities undergo radical change in accordance with the nature of the deity,[16] while even the sex of the one possessed is disregarded if it differs from that of the god, so that, for example, a woman "mounted" by Ogun is always addressed as Papa Ogun.[17] One wears the colors of the god and the ornaments he likes, eating and drinking those things he prefers, and otherwise manifesting his peculiar characteristics — rolling on the earth, if possessed by Damballa or chattering incessantly if by Gede.[18]

Not everyone, by any means, is subject to states of possession. If the existence of individual differences in the capacity for religious expression be recognized, it becomes apparent

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787 781 called upon to ask whether or not he is properly serving his gods; is never placed in a situation for which possession would [114] be a release. Hence to consider all possession as something which falls within the range of psychopathology is to approach it handicapped by a fundamental misconception.

787 794 The best evidence of the socially normal nature of possession is the existence of rules governing its incidence which are well understood by all. Not everyone who is a *ch'val* may become possessed at any dance or *service,* for the gods, if properly under control, are permitted to come only to members of the family giving the rite. At one *vodun* dance given by a priest where a number of other *hungans,* present as guests, became possessed, the host was regarded as having taken undue advantage of his visitors by bringing on their possessions. In another case Haitians from the southern peninsula who were temporarily residing in Mirebalais carefully refrained from contact with a certain *vodun* priest lest he bring on possession by their gods. At one dance for the Rada gods, the *loa* Taureau, a Pétro deity, possessed one of the drummers. Because a Pétro *loa* was neither expected nor wanted, the man was immediately removed and, when quieted, sent home. A similar situation developed at another Rada dance where Bosu "came"; the person possessed was at once taken outside the enclosure until his god had left him. If a *loa* persists in dancing at a *vodun* dance given by another family, it is either one of these *loa bossal* already described, or a *loa vagabond,* and may be scolded by the *hungan:* "You must not come here! You are not wanted! Go home where you belong!" The passion with [781] which a person resists his god when he feels possession coming on at a rite not given by his own family is particularly instructive. Men have been seen holding so tightly to the rafters of the shelter under which the dance was being held that the muscles of their forearms formed great cords, while beads of perspiration rolled down their foreheads.[20] A person who [782] must live away from his family for a long time usually takes

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steps to "feed" his *loa* in order to satisfy it, for it is more important to give offerings to the spirits than to dance for them. He therefore either quietly prepares a sacrifice of cereals and liquor in his own room or sends money home so that his *loa* may be "fed" at the family habitation, and his absence explained to it.[21]

When *vodun* deities are discussed in Mirebalais, most often two "companies" of them are mentioned, the Rada and the Pétro "squads." In one list of gods that was obtained, the word *Rada,* derived from the name of the ancient principality of Allada in Dahomey, called forth the explanation "*qui veut dire Dahomey* — which is to say, Dahomey," though it should be made clear that neither the words *Rada* nor *Dahomey* are any longer recognized in Haiti as place-names, being today simply qualifying designations of *loa.* There are regional differences in the number and ranking of other categories of gods that hold no important place in Mirebalais. The existence of these other categories is, of course, well known, and one person referred to "the seventeen and twenty-one classes of *loa,*" of which, however, only the following were named: Rada, Pétro, Dahomey, Guinée, Congo, Nago, Ibo, and Wangol. Of these the Congo and the Ibo gods are well known, though their worship is chiefly restricted to individual families, while the Nago and Dahomey categories, though significant from the point of view of indicating African origins, are most commonly grouped under the term *Rada.* Guinée also occasionally figures in worship as carried on in individual families, but this term is more often understood as a general designation for all *loa* outside the Rada, Nago, Congo, and Ibo groupings and for certain Pétro gods. Wangol derives from the geographical entity Angola.

From comparatively early times the impression has been given that certain of these classes of gods perform only good, and others evil. Nothing could be further from the truth than this attempt to read European concept into Haitian ideology,

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776 for though some gods are feared far more than others, and
794 some generally regarded with affection, even these latter bring great harm to a neglectful devotee, while the gods whose power validates the most malignant magic may, in certain situations, work for the good of their worshippers. Especially has there been great confusion in discussions of the so-called
[114] Dom Pédro worship. Whether or not the origin of the term as given by St. Mery is correct — that it derives from the name of its founder, a Spanish Negro from Petit-Goâve [22] — the statements that have been made concerning it are in the main
[782] misleading.[23] Thus, it is not true that the Pétro gods are unqualifiedly evil and the Rada deities unqualifiedly good; nor that blood sacrifices are made exclusively at Pétro ceremonies, while the services for other gods are innocent of such sacrificial
776 offerings. The impression gathered in Mirebalais concerning
794 the Pétro gods is that they are principally, though not exclu-
769 sively, derived from the process of deification of powerful ancestors, which in Africa exists in forms that clearly explain the essential tradition that offers a basis for this custom as found in Haiti. This is reinforced by statements to the effect that most of the Pétro "squad" are Créole or native gods as
793 against the Guinée deities in the other groupings. One mem-
794 ber of the *vodun* cult, indeed, made the concept of deifying
776 the powerful dead explicit, saying that Pétro was a great and
769 evil *vodun* priest who had died with the *loa* not "taken from
[775] his head." For while a general principle in the cult of the dead is that in the normal course of events those who die deliver up their souls to God, making the care for these souls primarily a concern of the Church, it is recognized that there are others such as this Dom Pedro who become *loa*. This oc-
[764] curs when an individual, usually a priest or priestess of the *vodun* cult, who during his lifetime was known to possess great supernatural power, dies without having had his *loa*
[775] "withdrawn from his head." Burdened by these spirits, and therefore unable to get to God, his soul goes to the bottom of

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CHAPTER IX

VODUN WORSHIP: THE SERVICE

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THE *loa* make known their desires by means of possessing their devotees and speaking through them, or by divination, and if these desires are not gratified, they will mildly harass the family of their devotees, until, thoroughly angered, they will seek full vengeance for this neglect.[1] Fortunately, the wants of many of the gods are modest, and they are satisfied if a candle is occasionally lighted, some water "thrown away" in the place of worship, and they are kept informed of family happenings. But when the *loa* finally clamor for a sacrifice, the time when it is to be made is deferred until the necessary preparations can be completed, for the attitude of the Haitians toward the gods in such matters, as one explained it, is that "*Mystère c'est 'ti moun, faut les derigé*—The *loa* are like children, and must be told what to do," and." If the *loa* are promised a sacrifice, they must accept the date set by the one who serves them." But when that date arrives, the ceremony must be held or the *loa* will cause their worshippers much trouble. This does not mean that a poor person, or one who has met with reverses, may not plead with his god and count on being permitted to defer the offering if he is unable to provide what is asked.

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employed — do not remain with the drummers. These instruments are ordinarily in the hands of *hunsi,* who join the massed ring of dancers that constantly circles about the center pole. These dancers are not under possession, but are merely enjoying the evening or participating in the social aspect of the dance preparatory to becoming possessed. The rattle is held high above the heads of the dancers, and its sharp, steady notes are produced by quick, short, measured movements of the wrist. The end of a song, which sometimes does not come until fifteen or twenty minutes after its initial statement, is usually marked by a continuous shaking of a rattle, a process which effectually breaks the rhythm and makes it possible to begin a new song. The player of the rattle is an outstanding singer, who usually initiates the fresh refrain and continues to sing its repetitions as soloist in the alternation of solo and chorus which marks Haitian *vodun* singing as it marks most West African and New World Negro religious music.

When a possession occurs, the songs for the deity who has "arrived" are taken up as the drums play the rhythm of the god. As his possession comes on, the devotee falls to the ground, rolling before the drums, or staggers blindly about the dancing-space, or otherwise follows the characteristic behavior attributed to his god. After a time he begins to dance, whereupon a *hunsi* or the *hungan,* taking a calabash of water in one hand and a lighted candle in the other, dances opposite him, saluting the god as he performs his every movement in reverse; if he turns clockwise, the one dancing with him turns counter-clockwise; if he moves to the right, the other moves to the left. Except when executing these turns, the functionary of the cult never takes his eyes from the eyes of the possessed person, almost, as it were, hypnotizing him to help him come to himself. Eventually the possessed one recovers sufficiently to take the candle and the calabash of water in his own hands. Often spilling water as he moves, he makes his way to the central pole, pouring an offering and making the sign of the cross with the candle before it.

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796 tablishment of the family *maison de servitude*, a special ritual
[782] for Legba at the *barrière* was required. The one who took
charge threw some rum on the *boucan* that had been made for
Legba. Taking a candle, he struck the drums with it; then de-
scribed *verver* and placed an egg on the white flour he piled
796 just inside the *barrière*. The rite proceeded no farther, how-
578 ever, for with the appearance of the head of the family, accom-
panied by his wife and son, who was the young man who had
been possessed by Gede the first night of the *service*, a discus-
sion arose which soon developed into a quarrel, because the
family head felt that he had not been notified of this dance in
the manner due his position. Finally with the cry: "If any-
thing happens to the family because of this, I am not respon-
sible," he departed in a rage. This was regarded as serious, be-
cause should a dance which ended an important rite be held
with some of the family absent, the gods might be angered and
serious consequences might follow. The woman, who had
been instrumental in seeing that the *service* was given and had
cared for most of the preparations, bravely decided to con-
tinue with the ritual, however, and the drumming was re-
sumed.

796 Alcohol and flour were thereupon poured on the drum-
533 heads, while a number of songs were sung by all present:
539
[782]

Bonjou' manman, bonjou' papa,	Good-day, mamma, good-day, papa,
Ma p' mandé coumen nou' yè	I ask how are you.
Lan Guinée gangnin dent'.	In Guinea there are teeth.
Moin entré, moin entré,	I entered, I entered,
Ou pas salué moin.	You did not greet me.
Agoue-e, hunto	Agowe, hunto (spirit in the drum)
Agasu-e	Agasu-e
Agoué-e hunto, e-o.	Agowe hunto, e-o.

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845 ample, long before ordinary folk.[3] If promised offerings in the
989 event of an ample harvest, their aid in bringing about this
782 desired end is even more fruitful than that of the *loa* or the
769 dead, who are therefore appealed to only indirectly.

Twins, however, are capricious beings, ready to do harm if they are not humored. Consequently, twins must be given anything they ask for, and it is especially important to provide them with the clothes they covet, when giving a *mangé marassa*. If their father fails to provide these new clothes, they
153 will *kembé* (seize) him, and he may at once have an attack of fever or a bad toothache or earache; or, more likely still, he will be seriously constipated, since this is the punishment particularly favored by the *marassa*, just as the *loa* most frequently send dysentery, and the dead cause headaches. If lack
845 of resources makes it impossible to provide what they demand,
599 a painstaking explanation must be given them or they will
828 drive a person mad in the manner recounted in the following *marassa* myth:

> There were once twins, one good and one evil. They were working a field with another brother, but the evil one refused to help. The other two, therefore, said they would not give him any food. Because of this the evil twin drove the third brother insane. After they had long prayed that he reconsider, he finally agreed to restore sanity to his brother, but insisted on inflicting deafness as a punishment, so that this brother was deaf until he died.

845 At the birth of twins, special "twin plates" are provided
778 when their birth is announced to the *loa* — either before or
769 after their Church baptism — where offerings to the spirits of twins are placed. Usually paired, the plates may be three in number, in which case the third is for the *dosu*, the child born after twins, who is believed to be even more powerful than twins themselves and is thus an important figure in the cult.

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and, wearying of the singing, join the group outside the house, where those playing games and the story-tellers are gathered. One popular game is "forfeits," and a forfeit, if reclaimed by a girl, requires the singing of a *chanson de romance*, or if by a man, calls for the recitation of a poem or a humorous folk-tale. Before a forfeit is returned, all sing to a hand-clapping accompaniment:

C'est bien bon,	It is very good,
C'est bien bon,	It is very good,
Aha!	Aha!

Card-games, such as *mariai* (marriage), *trois-sept*, and *bezique*, are also played. All these games are entered into with zest, for an important purpose in holding the wake is to amuse the dead, whose body lies near by, and thus send him away in good humor. When drinks are passed, the recipients must make three libations before drinking, one explanation holding that this is in accordance with the formula Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, another that the offering is for the *loa*, the dead, and the *maraus*. At about five o'clock in the morning the angelus closes the wake, after which most of those present leave, and only close friends and relatives remain to help with preparations for the funeral. This must take place the day following death, not only because of a legal requirement, but because of the fact that were a body to remain unburied for two nights, the expense of two wakes would have to be met. Before the ceremony of burial takes place, small children are often passed over the coffin three times, in leave-taking, that the spirit of the dead may not return for them.

The funeral itself is held in accordance with the rites of the Church, the difference between funerals consisting principally in the elaborateness of the ritual and the length of time the church bells are tolled, which in turn is determined by the ability of the family of the dead to meet the varying fees. Thus at the funeral of the mother of the *député* from Mire-

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always takes place on a Sunday. The prayers of the novena, whatever week-day they may begin, are recited either by the priest, if in town, or by a *prêt' savanne*. The family and a few friends, who gather to hear the prayers and to sing hymns, take their places about a table covered with a white cloth, on which are placed *images* of the saints, a crucifix, two candles which must burn for the nine days, and two bouquets of flowers. A lamp of oil in a glass with a floating wick must also burn day and night. Each session of the novena lasts some two hours, and no refreshments are served those who attend.

On the day of the *dernière prière* those invited come to help cover the walls of the room with white sheets — sometimes the ceiling is also covered — and hang white curtains over doors and windows. Wreaths are placed on the table and attached to the sheets on the walls, and *images* of the saints are pinned to the white table-cloth as it hangs down. Liquor, cakes, *kola*, *clairin* and other refreshments are made ready, according to the family means, these being held so essential that if the family lacks the funds at the moment to provide them, the novena may be stopped on the eighth day, and the *dernière prière* postponed for a month or even two. The same type of song is sung at this rite as at wakes, and the mourners wail once again, though not so loudly as just after the occurrence of death. At about eleven o'clock, after having recited the last prayer of the novena, a *libera* is sung to "drive the dead from the house," since now they are through with him — followed by an *adoration* for the *prêt' savanne*. Since, unlike the custom at *vodun* ceremonies, these coins are his entire fee for the novena as well as for this evening's ceremony, he sees to it that the song which marks it continues until all members of the family have donated a sum that he regards adequate. The *adoration* over, the refreshments are passed, so that the *dernière prière* most often ends at midnight, though those in attendance sometimes remain until morning, playing games, telling stories, and singing canticles as at wakes.

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The family then take the offer con-
tainer to a crossroad, where it is deposited as an offering for [769]
Legba, and its contents are eaten by the dogs, who signifi- [782]
cantly, in Dahomey are the animals sacred to this deity. Following this, the adults enter the closed room, to feast at the laden table.

Several days after the funeral two gourdes are paid a priest [793]
— "a real one," not a *prêt' savanne* — to chant a *libera* at the [765]
grave, a rite that must be repeated each year on All Saints' Day. Each year, also, food is given the dead, though "not so much as following a funeral." Chickens, beans, rice, and coffee are the principal part of such an offering, for which no priest need be called, as the ceremony is merely to let the dead know that they are not forgotten. Every three or five years, however, [535]
a large *mangé* must be given for all the family dead, and if held on the family habitation, there is social dancing, where such favorites of the ancestors as the *martinique*, the *banda*, the *calebasse*, and the *zesse* are danced.[8]

Differences in procedure mark various modes of death. 766
When a person is killed by lightning, a justice of the peace must be called and the burial is performed at once. Such a one has no "last prayer," because, death by lightning being a punishment of God, it is felt that the dead probably made an oath which he subsequently violated. Those killed by light- [171]
ning or who die of smallpox are not mourned, but no explanation could be obtained for this obvious survival of African custom. If a leper has concealed his disease, mourning is worn for him, though if the cause of death is generally known this is forgone. There is customarily no mourning for suicides, [762]
and never where the regulations of the Church are rigorously applied.

If the dead person was a *vodun* priest or otherwise had 764
strong *connaissance*, steps are taken before his death to "re- 769
move the *loa* from his head" so that his soul will not go under 776
the water, for, as has been explained, such souls are held to 775
be powerful spirits which may cause their family much harm

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to do. The *loa* would come, but they wouldn't give him the same connaissance."

One of the most important of the forces behind all magic is the *Malt' Carrefour*, the Master of the Crossroads. The possible identity of this *loa* with Legba, who guards the entrance to houses and is also thought of as a guardian of the highways, was a question that could not be satisfactorily resolved, though it seems most likely that the two are quite distinct, since Legba is but rarely called upon when magic is being performed. One Haitian versed in magic stated:

> "The *Malt' Carrefour* is like the president. Legba is like a minister. God sent the *Malt' Carrefour*. He commands Baron Samedi. Before going to the cemetery to perform [black] magic you must pass the crossroads, and therefore he is able to restrain you if he is not properly worshipped. He commands Damballa. He commands the Rada and Pétro gods. He commands all the saints because all of these must pass the crossroads. Therefore when one has a *garde carrefour*, a person will die a death sent by God [that is, a natural death] and not one caused by *magie* or the *mystères*."

The *Malt' Carrefour* must be "paid" each year on All Saints' Day, when seven cents in copper coins are given and a white chicken is killed, cooked, and placed in a wooden container with rice, biscuits, cassava, potatoes, bananas, and other kinds of food, both cooked and uncooked, to be deposited at a crossroad with the statement: "Here is food; thank you for having cared for me. If evil *loa* wish to harm me, *Malt' Carrefour*, restrain them." As this is said, a candle is lighted and an invocation pronounced:

> *"Au nom de Malt' Carrefou'; au nom de Malt' Grand Bois; au nom de Baron Cimitière! Jodia, premier la*

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776 782 [539] *Toussaint, voici un couvert moin porté ba ou. Ou gardé vot' enfant, comme vot' père et vot' mère dans la maison.* —In the name of the Master of the Crossroads; in the name of the Master of the Great Forest; in the name of Baron Cemetery! Today, the first of All Saints' Day, here are offerings I bring you. Guard your child as your father and your mother in the house."

[788] *Clairin* is thrown three times at each fork of the crossroads, and some is also sprinkled in the center and at each corner of the container of food. Three bits of earth are finally lifted from the corners of the crossroads and taken to the home of the worshipper. Here they are put in a plate with *clairin*, which is first lighted and then extinguished, so that the members of the family can anoint themselves with it and receive strength with which to face the new year.

789 821 Good magic has many expressions. Thus there is said to be secret knowledge, transmitted in certain families from generation to generation, of how to control the rains. Those who have control of magic of this sort are to be recognized when they are seen to be completely dry while walking in a downpour. Generally such powers are used to insure a rainless day for a *combite* or *service*, or to cause rain to fall the day after a *combite* has made the field ready for hoeing, or when the proper time for planting is at hand. Eventually, it is said, in response to a temptation too great to be resisted, the possessor [784] of such magic will put it to other, evil ends. Then sooner or later the punishment for this abuse of his knowledge is visited upon him, so that in the end he meets his death by being struck by the avenging lightning.

789 The most powerful type of protective magic is known as a *drogue*. One of the most potent of these — of the type referred to by Léger in commenting on the ox-tail carried by Hyacinthe, or such a one as tradition holds Christophe possessed, which gave him immunity from all but silver bullets — makes

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754 776 been made to kill through the use of black magic, Gede refuses to "dig the grave," no matter what measures the *bocor* may take. In such a case the victim may be desperately ill, but will not die. When a *hungan* divines the cause, offerings are made to Gede for having saved him from the *magie* of Baron. For, in the final analysis, "if Gede is in accord with Baron, death can come, but if the two are not in accord, the man against whom a *wanga* has been sent will only suffer."

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such matters as the passing on of the *loa* in families, the duties toward family dead, and the possible inheritance of food taboos are recalled. Like all these survivals, that of food taboos is not as clear in its expression in Haiti as in its aboriginal setting. Its determination is largely by trial and error, so that a mother, before the birth of her child, not only abstains from eating the foods harmful to her, but later carefully tries these on the child to ascertain their effect. Yet the custom, at best, is a tenuous one. Sometimes, if food uncongenial to a parent has ill effects on a person, "he goes on eating it until he becomes accustomed to it"—though this statement brought forth an emphatic dissent from another Haitian: "Not I! If a food harms me once, I am through with it."

Africanisms are particularly marked in the organization of and attitudes toward the ancestral cult. Today the fear of the power of the dead is as living in Haiti as in West Africa, despite the influence of the Catholic Church in changing concepts of the heavenly world of the dead and the role of ghosts on earth. It is quite true that the outer forms of ceremonialism taken by ancestor-worship in West Africa have disappeared; but when the meticulousness with which the rites of death are carried out, and the institution of *mangé morts* are remembered, it is seen that the spirit of African ritual observances has by no means been lost. African elements have survived even in the services for the dead, now largely taken over by the Church. On the anniversary of death a special commemorative mass is sung in the church, which the family of the dead attend in a body. Before they leave the habitation for the mass, however, animals are killed to provide meat for the feast which follows the Church service, and for the *mangé morts*, which also takes place at the same time. Immediately after the mass a reception takes place at the house of some member of the family who lives in town, or at the home of a friend, where cakes and liquors are served. At about noon, however, family and friends proceed to the habitation, where

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makes for deification of the family dead, but constitutes the oldest ancestor of a relationship group one of the great gods and thus causes families to give primary allegiance to a restricted number of deities. The most striking aspect of this tradition preserved in Haiti is that all ceremonies must be given by family groups, and at them only members of the family may with propriety become possessed. Possession itself, and the elements which constitute the possession complex — the use of the drums, the rhythms associated with particular gods, the importance of songs in calling the spirits, the mode of worship through specific dances for specific deities — these make up another series of Africanisms. In the dance itself the use of iron to sound basic rhythms for the drums, the outer form and function of the rattle, and the fact that the circle of participants always rotates in a counter-clockwise direction, are equally African. The modes of behavior to be observed as possession comes on and the psychological release that follows it both derive from the same source, as do the beliefs that rituals must be held on the days sacred to the particular god being worshipped.

Another retention of African tradition is a belief in the importance of sacrifice. It will be remembered that it is held to be more essential to "feed" the gods than to dance for them. This is also the tradition of all peoples of the region from which the slaves were derived, and in a sense reflects the very immediate relationship that obtains between Africans, or Haitians, and their gods. Since in both regions each deity performs the double role of doing good for those who worship it properly and harassing those who neglect it, the importance of giving adequate sacrifices to avert evil is evident. In both Haiti and Africa, however, these may differ with the wealth of the individual giving the offering, with the number of persons who contribute toward the ceremony where offerings are given, or with the seriousness of the situation which the deity is being asked to remedy. That the gods permit such varia-

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171 178 782 tion is a further comment both upon the human traits ascribed to them, and upon the realism with which they take cognizance — as only African gods can — of the financial position of their devotees!

171 178 776 78 It is not only in the immediacy of the Haitian gods to their worshippers and in their human qualities, however, that these beings have retained African traits, for in the full reciprocity that must prevail in the relationship between deities and their followers is to be seen a point of view that is entirely non-European. Between man and the gods the rule of *quid pro quo* must always be in operation; and this rule may only be regarded as but another contribution of Africa toward Haitian religious ideology. While this reciprocal giving flavors all aspects of worship whether it be of the *loa*, the dead, or the twins, it takes a yet more prominent, and more familiar place in the field of magic, since here the *engagement* owes much to European belief, though the element of reciprocity is much more emphasized than was ever the case in medieval European diabolism.

178 776 794 The psychological values of the *vodun* cult, especially the general tone found in the feeling toward the terms *Guinée* or *Rada*, perhaps most convincingly show the attitudes that aided in the retention of things recognizably African. For while the [184] Pétro gods are by no means viewed as altogether bad, or are always held unwelcome, the fact that in Mirebalais, as in Haiti generally, the Rada gods are those least feared, most desired, and in connection with whose cult wrongdoing is most rarely present, is of the greatest significance, especially when the related fact is recalled that the Pétro gods are the more powerful in the matter of evil magic, while the Rada deities are said to exert their power to protect their devotees from the dark forces that may be set in motion against them.

178 776 776 In attitudes toward the gods, then, in the names of the gods themselves, in the manner in which they function in the lives of Haitians, and in the importance of the ceremonial con-

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is ruled by God, it is necessary to invoke God with the ritual of His Church before the rites to placate the *loa* may begin. But the important business of the occasion is to placate the *loa*, and it is only when the *hungan* takes over from the *prêt' savanne* that the series of rituals commence which, for the Haitian, hold emotional force and psychological value.

In the description of the baptism of a *loa* given in a preceding chapter, the use of Church ritual in bringing the African spirits under control will be remembered. No clearer illustration can be given of this merging of traditions than in a detailed account of the manner of making and validating *vodun* drums. These drums are of the characteristic African hollow-log type, with skin heads held in place and tuned by means of pegs, which are tied fast about the drumhead with cord. Before the tree which furnished the bodies was cut, an invocation was pronounced by their maker and an offering — a *mangé sec* — was made, that all the gods might come when called by the finished drums. A candle was lighted and *verver* described about the base of the tree. Eggs, broken against the trunk, were rubbed on the bark; while both soft and alcoholic drinks were given as libations, since not all the gods desire the same refreshment. After the tree had been felled and that part of the trunk that was needed for the drums was cut off, the maker was free to proceed with shaping the bodies of the drums by first gouging out the inside of the trunk, then stripping the bark, and finally carving the characteristic foot at the base. Before the next step of boring the holes for the pegs was taken, *clairin* was poured inside each drum, at the entrance to the habitation of the maker, and toward the man's cornfield. The first hole bored in each drum was carefully marked, for this was the significant *manman*. Here the first peg is inserted; the skin head is first attached here; and here the cord about the head is first knotted; while it is the peg in this hole that must always be first struck when the completed drum is tuned.

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534 782 778 The drumheads were cut from a large ox-hide, purchased in the market place. In the early morning sunlight another "little ceremony" was performed before they were attached. Placing the three unheaded bodies of the drums in a row, with the iron in its place, the maker poured *clairin* before each, and having cut a native candle in three pieces, he took them in his left hand as he crossed himself, saying: "*Au nom d' Père, au nom d' Fils, au nom d' Saint Esprit.*" He then [788] lighted the three wicks, and taking each lighted candle in turn in his right hand, he made the sign of the cross with it and attached it to the "mother peg" of each drum. There the flames were allowed to flicker for a moment before the work of heading the drums began.

534 The hide was first attached to the "mother peg," then to the one opposite, and then to the two at right angles to the first pair. This is hard work, for to obtain the proper degree of initial tautness several men must strain at the resistant hide, and that is why four cuts are made where a peg is to go instead of the three that are needed, for frequently a strip breaks and the extra hole is used to re-thread the peg. The great drum has nine pegs, the one of medium size seven, and the small one six, not five, "because the *boula* is a thief, taking the beat away from the iron." The head was cut away from the rest of the great ox-hide only after it was in place. The final step was to knot the cord — braided the day before, of native sisal — to the *manman* peg of each drum, and then to twine it eight, six, or five times about their bodies.

534 778 788 The drums, now finished, were then put aside for a week to allow the damp heads to dry, awaiting the final sanctification. During this period they could not be played. It was held unwise to do more than tap them lightly with the finger-nail to test their resonance and the extent to which the heads were dry. Meanwhile preparations were being made for the bap- [292] tism. Drums, like human beings, must be clothed when they appear in public, and *rades*, apron-like garments, a white bro-

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The falls, therefore, in association with the purely Catholic rituals carried on at the village church, are seen to hold an important if unofficial place in the complex of rites known in the Haitian Church calendar as the Fête of Saut d'Eau.

During the two or three days preceding the fête and on the fifteenth of July itself, an air of great gayety not unlike the carnival spirit accompanying European Church festivals pervades the surrounding country. Camions traverse the almost impassable side road, bringing crowds of people from Port-au-Prince, from the Dominican border, and even from the north, who throng the streets and the shrines and tramp the miles from the village to the waterfalls or visit the nearer sacred sites of St. John's Wood and En bas Palmes, to light candles and ask the satisfaction of their needs. Like the falls themselves, these spots by their very beauty awaken a sense of emotional awareness, and it is not strange that here, as at the falls, many possessions occur. At night, in particular, the great trees with their interlacing serpent-like roots, the gaping earth which at En bas Palmes is witness to the uprooting of the palm trees where the miracle occurred, and the stream of sacred water, all make a scene of indescribable eeriness, heightened by the flickering candles given as offerings, and the open lamps of those who stay the night here to fulfill their vows.

In the town itself gambling and other games go on, and dances of all kinds are held at night, among them *vodun* and *bal*, though at these public dances no possessions are countenanced. One of the most colorful aspects of the scene is the *penitants*, wearing clothing of varied colors in fulfillment of a request by the *loa* they worship or an obligation to them. Such folk are not permitted in church unless the clothing which marks them is covered by ordinary dress, but they walk the streets, often possessed and often using their power to heal those whom they encounter. Possessions by Ogun, by Gede, by Baron Samedi, by Damballa, by Erzilie and other *vodun* deities were observed, particularly at the shrines, where their devotees prophesied and healed the sick.

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devotees prophesied and healed the sick. Even at the church, however, where all go to offer the prayers that are the central observance of the fête, the many candles placed on the rocks at the entrance are usually for St. Anthony; that same St. Anthony who, it will be recalled, is the *loa* named Legba, the guardian of all entrances.

It is obvious, from the examples given, that the world view held by the Haitian and the motivations which underlie Haitian life cannot be understood unless both the Catholic and the *vodun* contributions to them are held in mind. But certain further questions bearing upon the effect of these two influences present themselves. What proportion of Haitians hold membership in the Church, and how many are affiliated with the *vodun* sect? What attitudes are manifested toward the Church and its priests as contrasted with their attitude toward the *loa* and their ministrants? How does the Church meet the challenge of *vodun*? And how does the Haitian peasant, in his inner life, reconcile these two conflicting forces?

The impression gained from reading available works on Haiti is that voduists and Catholics constitute two distinct groups. While this may obtain in some parts of the Republic, it is not true either in Mirebalais or in those other portions of Haiti which came under direct though brief observation in the course of this study. All discussions with natives that began with the assumption of the existence of two such separate groups led to confusion, and statements which had seemed evasions were not clarified until the incorrectness of such an assumption became apparent. Thus when it was stated that in all Haiti the Pater Noster was one of the first things taught every child, the question: " Is this not true for Catholic families only? " was met with a vigorous denial that was slowly justified as the realization grew that, if not true for all Haitians, such an assertion was certainly valid for the vast majority of them in Mirebalais and probably elsewhere.[18] The identity of membership in the two groups became apparent from ob-

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as a limping old man, clad in tatters, but in his several manifestations has more specific characteristics. Thus Legba Pié Cassé is described as having paralyzed legs, with arms held stiff and crooked before him, and Legba Avardra is spoken of as a *vagabond* who continually wanders the principal highways. Legba must first be summoned before any ceremony may begin, and when it was asked how Legba could be expected to come when called simultaneously to three or four or twenty or fifty places, the parallel given was that of the multiple manifestations of which God or Christ or a saint is capable. Legba, identified with St. Anthony, has Tuesday as his sacred day, and the plum tree is reserved for him. He "eats" a varicolored type of cock known as *poule zinga,* marked like a guinea-fowl, and in this differs from other gods who must indicate through a possessed devotee or a diviner what specific offering among the things they favor is wanted on the occasion of each sacrifice. Though in southern Haiti the smallest chick from each hatching is reserved for Legba, and at least once during his lifetime a man puts aside a bullock or a male goat as a sacrifice for this god, these customs do not prevail in Mirebalais. Here, when an offering to the gods is in prospect, Legba is included among the *loa* to whom a certain animal is promised, and, as in the case of other deities, this animal is thereafter under his protection. But this is the nearest approach to any special offerings for this god.

Damballa, an important Rada god whose symbol is the serpent, is said to bring rain because they sing "*Damballa ian l'eau*—Damballa in the water." The sacred color of this deity, worn by devotees under possession, is white, and the full initiates wear white necklaces as well as white clothing. This god, identified with St. Patrick, is especially worshipped on Thursdays, and shares the white fig tree with Erzilie and Gran' Siligbo. Damballa "eats" sacrifices of white chickens and pigeons, rice, milk, eggs, pineapples, and fig-bananas; and "drinks" *kola* and sweetened coffee. Damballa forms the

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776 [821] rainbow, and this is called an *arc d'alliance* between him and Aida Wedo, his wife, whose characteristic dress is blue and [171] white. Sobo, who in Dahomey is the god of thunder, is also believed in Haiti to give thunder, though he is not thought to live in the sky. As in Africa, his symbol is the ram. Aizan lives in the water, and is a favored deity because he gives his devotees the power of healing and of divining.

Erzilie, a *loa* of considerable importance, is envisaged as a pale, trembling woman who also inhabits the water. She constantly changes her dresses, of which she has many. All agree that she is a fabulously wealthy woman, who wears golden chains about her neck and has many rings, a characterization derived from her identification with Mater Dolorosa, whose chromolithographs depict her with many rich ornaments. As a Rada *loa* she "eats" the same food as Damballa, and wears white, like this other god, but has Friday as her sacred day. In her less pleasant manifestation of Erzilie Gé Rouge, the red-eyed one, she is a member of the Pétro "squad," and is held to be the wife of Simbi d'l'eau, with whom she is believed to get on especially well, since they "eat" different foods. Simbi, who is worshipped on Tuesdays and inhabits the mango and calabash trees, is said to drink heavily, however, and occasionally becomes so boistrous in his cups that he destroys the furniture and otherwise makes himself so objectionable that Erzilie is forced to leave him until he becomes sober.

[171] Ogun, in Haiti as in Nigeria, is the god of war. The Nigerian Shango is also found, though the Haitians conceive Shango as a *loa* who acts as the servant of the Ogun deities, [782] particularly Ogun Badagri and Ogun Batala. Ogun "eats" [822] red cocks and red beans mixed with rice, and his color, red, is worn by his devotees. To this fact may be referred the custom [114] of the Caco warriors who fought against the American Ma- [648] rines in 1918–20 to wear red as their distinguishing color, something referred to by Wirkus (pp. 22 ff.), though he

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776 823 it joins the flooded Artibonite as its master accompanies Clairmé on his way to consult with the great ruler of the sea, Agwe. Actually, at the height of the rainy season the force of the light colored muddy water of the major stream holds back the darker colored flow of its tributaries in a manner which accords with the legend, so that, observing the Tombe River at one such time, the Haitians who were present said: "The Tombe is waiting for its master to pass."

776 [784] [794] Gede, a deity who figures in both the Rada and the Pétro groups as chief functionary under Baron Samedi, ruler of cemeteries, is tolerated rather than favored, though his rewards to his devotees include the refusal to dig a premature [787] grave for them. When Gede possesses a devotee at a dance, Damballa, Ogun, and the other Rada gods "leave" at once, and those who are possessed by them come out of their possessions. For though Gede is no less a *loa* than other gods, "He is a *zombi* and is fed apart"; as the Haitians say: "The *loa* are like human beings. They will not mingle with the dead, [822] and Gede is of the dead." His color is black, and Saturday is his sacred day. He "eats" salt herring, hot peppers, cassava, [782] roasted corn, roasted bananas, and other roasted foods. He drinks *clairin* — much of it — and at great ceremonies a [825] black goat and chickens are killed for him, as well as those chickens with ruffled feathers called *djakati*, which in all the New World, as in Africa, are believed to discover and dig up magic charms set against their owners. He lives in the cemetery, "behind the cross." There are a number of deities whose names are compounded with the name of Gede — Gedenibo, Gedeonsu, Gedehun — and hence the question whether or not this is a generic term or a specific designation is pertinent. There is no agreement on this point, and it could only be established that those *loa* who bear the same name, such as all Ogun or Bosu or Simbi deities, are brothers; but who the parents of these groups may have been is not known.

Associated with Simbi and Gede in the Pétro "squad" are

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the various forms of Bosu and 'Ti Kita. Some hold that Bosu lives in the mountains and the cemeteries, but not in the water; others state that he does not live in the mountains, but in the water and on the plain. As a matter of fact, there is a Bosu of the water, and there would also seem to be one of the plain, of the crossroads, and of the mountains, each with its own name. 'Ti Kita, conceived as a woman, is also associated with the cult of magic and the dead. She is "fed" a goat, which is almost invariably referred to as Maria Louisa, or Louisa.

776
[782]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

one seed from that tomato would ever take root under the hot sun. Some time later, when I knew this man well, I talked to him about the care with which seeds must be planted if they are to grow properly. I told him how *we* grew *our* tomatoes. He listened carefully, nodding his head. When I had finished he said: "Yes, that must be a good way to do things in your country. But here in this valley God is good. He does not forget his children. From the broken tomato many plants will sprout. When God is good to you, you do not have to count the seeds." I suggested that perhaps one should not waste any of the precious seeds that God had provided; and to this he replied: "How is there waste? My garden is made to flourish by Zaka [the country man's special deity]. Some people give Zaka a feast every year, but between times they forget. Zaka helps me in my work, and I don't forget him. When I break the tomato and put it on the ground that way, it is a little taste for Zaka. Whatever I plant, I give him some. He is good to me, I am good to him."

What I learned from many incidents like this one was that the eye does not always see correctly. The old man was not just planting tomatoes, nor was he performing a conventionalized ritual act. It was a highly personalized act of faith in nature and confidence in the deity who shared his work.

A large part of this book deals with Vodoun, the religious practices based on West African traditions. One soon discovers that the songs and dances of Vodoun ritual are not merely music and motion supplementing and decorating more serious affairs. Virtually every aspect of Vodoun ritual is placative or invocational. The songs that are sung and the dances that are danced are direct supplication of various supernatural forces.

Undoubtedly, a number of principles which are put forward in this study do not apply equally to every region of Haiti; but they are, I think, true in general terms. Not until one has accepted the fact that different explanations exist for given phenomena, that the same rites are performed in different fashion in different places, and that the cult priests themselves do not agree on many details, may one begin to work toward a general view of the Haitian scene.

All of Haitian life is not Vodoun. And there are of course some Haitians who are relatively outside the central circle of its influence. But the inner meanings of Vodoun and its relationship to the total view of life permeate the entire scene. Music, too, binds together practically the entire fabric of Haitian existence. It is essential not only to the cult temple but to countless workaday activities. Agrarian work groups often perform their tasks to the accompaniment of a drum. And in the cult temple, the iron hoe of the fields often serves as a percussion instrument.

The Drum and the Hoe is the result of studies made over a period of

793 approval of the candidate's elevation is needed. He is also regarded as
[069] being on more intimate terms with the family ancestors who, likewise,
must be in accord with the proceedings. The candidate for the asson is
[783] confined within the hounfor for a number of days, during which he takes purification baths and participates in other rituals. The rites that take place during this period are prescribed by the elder priest who has assumed responsibility. When the purification is ended, the candidate emerges into the *peristyle* (roofed court) to participate in the general service, and to undergo further tests.

Present during the ceremonies are all the principal houngans of the region—men who will be friendly associates of the new priest or, possibly, unfriendly competitors. The candidate is tested on his knowledge
[789] of how to use the asson and the tiny hand bell, and in the course of the service he is mounted by the loa who is the chief protector of the cult tem-
[782] ple. Animals are sacrificed, and all the loa sacred to the hounfor are invoked and asked for their approval and support. But it is not only the loa
[794] and the dead who must indicate their approval. The elder houngan polls the hounsi kanzo on whether they will accept their new cult chief and fol-
[533] low him. He also asks the chief drummer, who polls his assistant drummers. It is taken for granted that the decision is in the hands of the hounsi. The consensus is known before the actual service, but the formality of asking the question is observed. Should the hounsi refuse to accept the candidate for the asson, the elevation cannot take place.

793 The city and the countryside contain many self-styled houngans and
554 bocors who are not recognized as bona fide by the community, regardless
626 of the route by which they claim to have achieved their station. Sometimes
[791] they are regarded as *pas fort* (not strong); that is, they do not have profound knowledge and understanding. The Haitian is quick to detect the difference between a houngan who knows and one who does not know. Many are stated to be outright fakes. One man who attempted to hold a service in Port-au-Prince aroused such contempt and disgust that a number of persons who had been drawn by genuine interest walked out with remarks that the man should be punished. In fact, his failure to show any
[533] essential qualifications for the houngan's role was commented upon in a song of ridicule that made its appearance at a secular dance that same night. The song noted some of the humorous aspects of the service, such as when the "impostor" struck himself vigorously on the head with the flat of a machete to show his "strength" and virtually incapacitated himself for the rest of the evening.

346 It is easily observed that no two hounfors are exactly alike. They differ

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

776 they say, and "rides" them. What the possessed persons do then depends
787 upon the personality and whim of the loa. Generally they take on the special personal characteristics of the loa. Their voices and manners change and their postures and attitudes undergo transfiguration. They may talk about the "island below the water," about community ancestors, about intimate affairs of the community, or about how things are going back in Africa. Sometimes they utter words or phrases recognized as "African language." And on occasion possessed persons talking *langage* are said to be speaking Greek, Arabic, Hebrew, or Spanish. At the moment of first impact, when the loa enter their heads, they stagger, jerk, and tremble, often falling on the ground. Then, soon afterward, their behavior begins to move in a groove of conventionalized activity.

[346] Most commonly the loa arrive during religious rituals or dances. They
[178] come by way of the *po'teau mitan*, the center pole which supports the roof
[182] of the peristyle. It is around this pole that the sacred vèvès, or flour drawings, are made. At the foot of the pole sacrifices are offered and libations are poured.

787 Yet possession may occur anywhere and at any time. The sound of a
793 certain drumbeat may be the signal for it, or a sudden fright, or an emo-
[533] tional crisis, or any situation to which possession has been conditioned. The houngan or the mambo may facilitate possession, control it, and terminate it. The cult priest is acutely sensitive to the conditions favorable to possession. He knows how to heighten emotional tension and how to soften it. A competent houngan "plays" his service as though it were a delicate instrument. He takes everything in, issues instructions to his servitors from time to time, orders the drum tempo increased or diminished, knows how to change pace. Sometimes he hovers in the background unobtrusively, encouraging the singing and dancing like a benevolent father. At other times he comes to the center of the activities and takes command. He becomes the focus of all eyes. His slightest action is watched with intensity. He may take the hand of one of the servitors, pirouette him about, and compel the loa to enter. When the servitor is "mounted," the houngan may conduct him through ritual activity. At the right moment the houngan may help the loa to leave.

776 The spectators who observe possession in others are usually aware of the
787 identity of the loa who has entered. When the ancient loa Damballa Wèdo comes in, his "horse" falls to the ground, wriggles like a snake, and makes what are considered to be snakelike sounds in his throat. For Damballa is the venerable deity identified with the rainbow, which in ancient Dahomean lore was thought to be the great serpent come out from the underworld to drink after a rain. When the loa Ogoun Chango enters,

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his "horse" may trample in glowing coals, plunge his hands in boiling oil, 776
or play with red-hot iron bars. For Ogoun Chango is a fire-eater—a deity 787
of the forge and of battle. The deity Legba is characterized as a limping old man. A "horse" possessed by Legba may cavort about on a kind of cane-crutch called a Legba stick. Each loa has his distinctive mark. As the Haitians say, "you learn about the loa by watching his horses."

In addition to having homes in Africa or below the water, most loa 776
have special residing places in Haiti, such as stones, caves, trees, waterfalls, 778
or springs. One may come across a boulder or a bamboo grove sacred to [782]
a certain loa, and food offerings are likely to be seen there. Many loa are identified with some specific variety of tree and will "inhabit" all such trees throughout the country. Loa Calbassie, for example, lives in the calabash tree, and Loa Général Brisé in the chardette tree. Offerings to [782]
these deities are set out underneath the tree or hung in its branches, and services may be held around the trunk.

Loa also live in the old Carib and Arawak celts which are found from time to time. These "loa stones," as they are called, are identified by their forms and their ability to pass certain tests. Some Haitians declare the stones must be able to "whistle," to perspire when blown upon, and to "talk." The loa stones ordinarily are passed on from one generation to another, in the hounfor and in the peasant hut alike. In this way the loa who inhabit them are inherited. Sometimes, but rarely, stones are sold; [432]
disposing of a loa stone requires an elaborate ceremony to guarantee that [782]
the seller will not be injured by the loa, who is likely to feel "wounded." In such a ceremony the loa is fed and placated and asked to go his way in peace. The loa stones are sometimes called "thunder stones," in the belief that they were hurled to earth by the deities Kebiosu, Sobo, and Chango [171]
(all of whom had similar functions among the Arada and Yoruba peoples of West Africa). The stones are cared for by their owners with the greatest reverence.

Loa are acquired by individuals in various ways. Many Haitians hold 776
that every infant is born with a *mait' tête*—a spirit who is "master of the head." In this light, no individual is without a loa, although the deity may never manifest interest in the individual by an act of possession. A man may acquire a loa in the course of his life, although in that event the original mait' tête must be retired from his head. The "inherited" loa are usually not the personal deities but the special protectors of the household or the hounfor and are known as "loa of the house" or "family loa."

Should a man acquire a new loa to replace the old as his mait' tête, he 776
must undergo a ceremony known as *lavé tête*—the "washing of the head." 789
The old loa is retired and sent away, leaving the field clear for the new

2: Courlander 3-5 (1937-1938) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

when the dance drums ended, the houngs carried the flags back into the hounfor. Then they sat on the ground while the houngan came forward to the center post to make his ritual flour drawing. Holding the flour in his hand, he allowed a little of it to trickle out in a fine white line. He worked rapidly, with half-closed eyes, speaking *langage*. A complicated white geometric pattern grew on the earth around the center post. Among its intricate designs highly stylized phallic forms were discernible. When the houngan had finished the drawing, he wrote the name of the loa whom they were serving: Ogoun Badagry. Then the other houngans and mambos came forward, one at a time, to add to the design. When the vèvè was completed it covered virtually the entire dance court.

The laplace came from the hounfor with a bundle of brilliantly colored beads. He stood by the houngan at the center post. One by one the hounsi came before the houngan, dropped on their knees, and kissed the ground. Around each hounsi's neck the houngan placed a string of beads. He raised her, pirouetted her first to the right, then to the left. The pirouette was to encourage possession by the loa.

From the hounfor the hounsi now brought herbs and vegetables for the sacrifice. Baskets and bottles were set out neatly on the ground, along with bundles of sticks and the iron pots, or *zins*.

The dance was resumed in a single rotating line around the houngan and the ritual offerings. Two hounsi in the center of the circle built fires, one on each side of the court. Over the fires they set the ritual iron pots. They poured oil into the pots and began the preparation of ritual food balls, like dumplings, from the ingredients at hand. One by one they dropped the dumplings into the oil, which was soon boiling.

The drumming, singing, and dancing were sustained at a high tension. A second team of drummers took over without a break in the music. The dancers now were almost exhausted. With a quick motion, the houngan spilled some rum into one of the boiling pots. A blue alcohol flame shot high into the air. Some of the hounsi screamed but continued to dance. Three of them fell to the ground, their limbs jerking uncontrollably. The loa had entered. Two of the "mounted" hounsi arose and continued to dance, staggering and jerking across the dance court. The third had to be lifted and carried into the hounfor.

The man who was to undergo initiation was waiting in the *djévo*, a special room in the hounfor. For the past seven days he had lain on a mat in the djévo, in virtual isolation except for visits from the houngan and the laplace.

Now the kanzo initiate was brought out, completely covered with a white cloth. Only his hands and feet could be seen. With one hand on the shoulder of the laplace, who preceded him, he moved with the dancers

2: Courlander 8-6 (1937-1950) 1960 8V3 Haiti 8V3

were set out in a row, and before them four *cosit*, the half-gourd bowls used in services to the marassas, the twin spirits.

In the house, at the center of the floor, was a round flat stone about ten inches in diameter and about two inches thick, resembling a millstone. This was the *pierre-mamman*, the mother stone responsible for the coming of the other loa stones and who cared for them in the absence of the family. In this stone, they said, was the spirit of the old loa Nananbouclou. On a mat in the corner of the room two children slept.

Outside, on a chair, his back against the wall of the house, the houngan sat, his rattle and bell in hand. He had come several miles to conduct the service. Most of those who danced were his own hounsi. The houngan was "strong" and well known in the region; people said he had worked for high government officials, including the president himself.

After several rounds of Arada dancing in which children as well as adults took part, the drums stopped. The houngan and his laplace moved up to the building which served for the night as the hounfor. It was up a steep slope, about a hundred feet from the dance court. There they prepared for the sacrifice to Chèbo Profiel, the honored loa of the evening. Passing in and out among the spectators was a woman who would be possessed by Papa Chèbo; since he was the guest of the service, she (or the loa in her head) was free to come and go as she chose, to speak as she pleased, and to do what she wished. Mostly she shook hands with people, a ceremony which continued throughout the night. First she would offer the right hand, then the left; or perhaps both at once, in which case the hands would be shaken downward vigorously three or four times. Someone ignorantly said, "Bon soir, Madame!" and she turned on him to reprimand his insolence. She was not "Madame," she was *l'Autorité*, the Authority.

During the course of the evening the conviction became stronger and stronger in her that she was Chèbo Profiel. From the time we first saw her until the end of the evening her personality underwent marked changes. She "became" Papa Chèbo.

The houngan sat before a small hole, possibly a foot deep and ten inches in diameter, in front of the hounfor. The fresh earth was piled neatly to the side, and an enameled plate was set on top of it. Around the hole were the various dishes to be offered to Chèbo Profiel. The laplace prayed in Latin, a short Catholic service. Then the houngan, shaking his beaded rattle and tinkling his bell, called for Chèbo to "enter." He made a small maize-flour drawing around the hole, and then began the feeding of the loa. The plates arranged for the feast contained roasted maize, roasted peanuts, bread, cassava, rice, and other foods. There were bottles of rum,

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

793 kola (a soft drink), *clairin*, and syrup. The houngan, entreating Chêbo to
796 accept, poured a little *clairin* into the hole. The loa seemed to accept, for
782 the *clairin* was quickly absorbed in the ground. The houngan took rice
787 from the plate with his fingers, about the amount he might place in his
769 own mouth, and put it gently into the hole. He was feeding Papa Chêbo, literally placing the food in his mouth. After the rice, which was dry, the houngan poured in a little more *clairin* to moisten it. He ordered the laplace to break up the bread, and then he placed a small piece in the hole and washed it down with a little rum. The houngan seemed to understand that Papa Chêbo Profiel was hungry, and that he was also an epicure. He allowed him to taste the roasted corn, and then washed it down with a trickle of kola. Then he gave him a taste of the roasted peanuts, and another morsel of bread. Once Chêbo got his mouth too full in his zest for the meal, and the assemblage had to wait for him to finish "coughing." Then the houngan gave him a long drink of kola to clear his windpipe. After that the houngan was more careful in the way he fed him—a little cassava, a drink, a little bread. As the houngan fed the loa, some of the spectators reached over and placed small coins in the empty dish by the hole. These too were for Chêbo. Finally, Chêbo was through eating. The food was gone.

769 The houngan, shaking his rattle and his bell, blew two sharp notes on
794 his whistle. At the door of the hounfor appeared l'Autorité, the hounsi
787 possessed by Papa Chêbo. More than ever she resembled the loa, and less
79 than ever she resembled herself. In one hand she held a saber. Her bodily
[793] movements were spasmodic, as though she was being forced to do things
[534] to which she was not accustomed. She moved slowly into the circle, her eyes almost closed; she leaned backward, then twisted grotesquely around, jerked this way and that, buffeted by the loa. Suddenly she began to whirl.
[793] The houngan called "Tambouyé!" and the drummers beat a slow complicated rhythm, a salute to Chêbo. The loa had really "entered" now. There was no mistaking the jerky, irresponsible movements of the hounsi's head and shoulders. She leaned backward as though about to fall, incredibly kept her balance, rolled forward as though she were going to plunge to the ground, and twisted herself upright once more. The saber passed close to the faces of the spectators, even scratched some of them and cut their clothing. Her movements had a definitely masculine character. Chêbo Profiel was a man.

782 She reached over to seize a chicken that was held out to her. Grasping
787 its legs with her free hand, she continued her spinning, twisting, lurching
794 dance. Then she cradled the chicken, rocking it back and forth until it
796 was in a hypnotic trance. She placed it on the ground before a tiny pile
769

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

of ground maize prepared by the laplace. The chicken, released, sat motionless, making no effort to escape. All watched attentively, the houngan shaking his rattle and bell. Suddenly the chicken cocked its head and, seeming to see the corn for the first time, reached out and pecked at it. This was the loa receiving the sacrifice—a difficult conception if one thinks of the chicken itself as the sacrifice. "Chébo," l'Autorité, snatched the chicken up, danced violently about, the loa in full possession of her body. With a swift movement of the saber, she cut the chicken's throat and caused the first drop of blood to fall into the hole. When the chicken stopped struggling, it was left there, head downward. L'Autorité took up a cock which was given her, cradled him, and set him before the ground maize. When he pecked at it, she picked him up and danced, around and around, jerking, lunging, never quite falling. She took his comb between her teeth, supporting his body gently with her hands, and spun around and around. Then she released him, cut his throat, and placed him in the hole with the chicken.

At the side of the hounfor, waiting, was a goat (called by the ritual name Dogwé). He had a fine silky white coat and a long beard. He was brought in to the place of sacrifice, and l'Autorité dropped to her knees to embrace his neck with her arms. She remained there a moment, her cheek against his, talking to him. Then she arose, a machete in hand instead of a saber, and began to pirouette while three men threw the goat on his side. Then she cut with the machete, and the goat's blood, too, began to run into the hole. For the first time her dance became unquestionably frenzied. She swung strong, full blows of the machete at the goat's neck, finally severing the head. From the hindquarters she cut a piece of red meat and placed it in her mouth.

At a signal from the houngan, three men carried the goat's body away to be dressed and cooked, and a woman came forward to wipe the blood from Papa Chébo's face.

The drums began again, a Dahomé dance, and the people relaxed. Many joined in the dancing while l'Autorité strutted about shaking hands and talking *langage*. She also danced, with gestures and movements wholly masculine. At one point she briefly advanced on another woman, making sexual gestures.

The houngan and his houngénicon retired to the front room of the hut. A new mat had been placed there for the houngénicon. She lay down on it, and the houngan sat in a chair against the wall. This was the beginning of the ceremony of calling *les morts en bas dleau* (the dead below the water).

Meanwhile, before the hounfor, the laplace and a hounsi were building

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Oh, a day will come when they will remember me here, *kélé manyan!*
Oh, Damballa Wèdo *é, kélé manyan.*
Oh, Ayida Wèdo *é, kélé manyan!*
Oh, a day will come for you to remember me here, *kélé manyan!*

During the evening about twenty loa and ancestors came into the *card* to talk. When the last had finished speaking the hills were already light, and the service was over.

Service for Èzilie Fréda and St. Jacques Majeur

This service took place not in the open but under a tonnelle surrounded by four walls, adjoining the hounfor of Alexis Stephan on the west fringes of Port-au-Prince. Separate from the hounfor and dance court was a shrine to the "dead" loa Gèdé Nimbo. The shrine was a small shed open on one side. Within, lighted by flickering oil lamps, was a life-size effigy of Gèdé, a scarecrow-like figure dressed in the loa's traditional attire—black tail coat and trousers, and a tall opera hat. On the otherwise blank face of the figure were smoked glasses with white rims.

The dancing was progressing under the supervision of the houngan's adjutant, the laplace. He wandered among the drummers and dancers, encouraged the singing, and issued orders here and there. No one seemed to take him very seriously. There was a good deal of joking, and the gathering seemed very much like an old-fashioned family reunion. There were perhaps a hundred dancers and spectators—friends, relatives, and devotees of Stephan's hounfor. Everyone was watching with affection an old woman who could not be restrained from dancing. She executed old classical steps and postures with a skill that called for running comment all around her. As each piece came to an end someone would step up to her and say something like: "Woy, Manman, mais ou passé mwé!" (Oh, Mother, you are better than me!). Then they would attempt to get her to sit down again, but she would only shake them off and urge the drummers to get going if they were not too tired.

Eventually, the houngan, Stephan, made a casual entrance through the door of his adjoining hounfor. He held the usual ritual rattle and bell in his hand, and sauntered around to chat with his friends.

Gradually, almost imperceptibly, the dancing became more serious. Soon, only the hounsi, the female servitors, were dancing. The drums played a salute to Legba, the first loa to be called upon in a Vodoun service. For it is Legba who opens all gates and all highways, and who paves the way for communication with other deities. Though he is not the greatest of the loa, he is one of the most ancient. The houngan spilled water on the ground as a libation, and the dancing continued.

243 796 768 769 In the Artibonite Valley, where much rice is grown, a similar ceremony takes place before the rice is gathered from the fields. In this ceremony it is rice that is shared with the family ancestors, who have first rights, and with close friends who have aided with the planting. This feast is called [252] *mangé diri*, or sometimes *gonté diri*, the tasting of the rice. Small amounts of rice are taken from the fields, cooked with red beans or Congo beans, or perhaps made into dumplings. The farmer's friends and relatives gather [524] while the food is still cooking, and play games such as *wari* and *trois-sept*. [538] The children play *gage* games and sing songs, and sometimes a *malt' conte*—a storyteller—comes to entertain them.

When the food is finally ready, the family ancestors are given their share. The farmer takes a calabash bowl of the rice and walks around the house grounds calling upon his immediate ancestors to accept their share. He drops a little food on the ground for the remembered dead, for the unknown dead who preceded them, for the Haitian dead, and for the dead of Africa. He also drops small portions for the dead twins, the dead albinos, the deformed dead, and the dead who have lost limbs, and for the distressed dead who have been improperly buried, or who may not have received the feasts that were due them. Afterward, he offers food to those who died of drowning, or who were lost at sea and never heard of again.

Each course is shared with the ancestors. The farmer takes a pitcher of water, spilling a little here and a little there until the dead have quenched their thirst. He also gives a little of everything to the family loa. Then the calabashes are set out on a bench or table reserved for the dead, and this food is not disturbed. Food for the marassas is set out separately on the ground in three small *conis*, or gourd dishes.

The family ancestors whose good will has made the harvest possible having been taken care of, the food is now shared among the extended family and the friends who helped in the fields. Later there are prayers [788] to the loa, the saints, and God, led by the houngan or a prêt' savane. To [796] finish the affair, there may be Juba-type dances for the older people, while [535] the children watch or play *gage* games.
[524] Only after this service are the farmer and his family and his *coumbite* (mutual labor group), if he belongs to one, free to go out and harvest the rice.[4]

243 243 796 768 171 These feasts of the rice and yam harvests are not of New World origin. Similar harvest festivals for yams or rice are held over a wide area of West Africa. There, as in Haiti, the fundamental concern is with the family ancestors, whose good will must be constantly nourished so that the rains continue to fall, the crops flourish, and human beings remain fertile. Among the Ashanti of Ghana, for example, the yam and rice harvests are

4 [Account given by Jean Ravel Pintro. Cf. P. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

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534 796 778 787 but it wasn't a genuine assotor and the loa didn't come. The drummer beat the assotor, but none of the loa came. As he played, the stick kept falling out of his hand. This was a bad signal (omen). None of the people got loa in their heads. The houngan was in a great sweat, but nothing happened. Another houngan came after the third day and told him to bring the service to an end. He did that. They threw the false assotor away and no one would touch it.

534 796 778 782 787 [776] "To make an assotor, there is first a service. The houngan goes into the woods to find a great tree that is suitable. The trunk must be big enough so that the drum is at least as tall as a man. Most assotors are six feet high or more. The houngan must buy the tree from Maît' Grand Bois, the loa who is Master of the Forest. There is a service under the tree, a goat or a bull is killed, and the houngan places money on the ground for Maît' Grand Bois. Then Maît' Grand Bois mounts his horses. He enters the head of the houngénicon or the laplace. Sometimes he rides the houngan himself. He is very rough with his horses. But if he accepts the money, the houngan has the tree cut down, and he has an assotor drum made. When the drum is finished, a special stick must be made to beat it. Again they go to the woods. They carry the great assotor drum with them. There is singing but no dancing or drumming. They find a tree from which they will cut the drumstick, and there is a service. The houngan must buy the branch from which the drumstick will be made. He offers money to Maît' Grand Bois, the same as before. He spills a little water on the ground for Maît' Grand Bois. He holds a candle in his hand. They sing to Maît' Grand Bois to let them have the stick. Maît' Grand Bois is the master of all the trees, but he is thinking also of the other loa and how they feel about it. On the Island Below the Water he consults with them. If he agrees to give the stick, he makes it known by mounting some of the hounsi, or the houngan, or maybe the man who will be the special assotor drummer. Then they cut down the branch and make the drumstick.

534 778 776 "The assotor drum is not dedicated to Ogoun or Èzilie or any other single loa. If it is baptized, it is given its own name, Assotor. The spirit of the assotor is multiple, for it is the *rappel* for all loa everywhere. The spirit of the assotor is called Assotor, and it is a kind of loa, but it is not one loa but all loa.

534 796 778 776 "In the assotor service, all loa come. Ogoun, Damballa, Legba, Tijean Pétro, Dan Pétro, Gèdé, Maît' Cimitière, they all come. The big loa come and the little loa, the chiefs and their escortes. Every big loa has an escorte of twenty-one smaller loa. Some of the smaller loa have their own escortes. Damballa comes crawling like a snake. Makanda comes crawling like a snake. Ogoun comes fighting, chewing on nails or anything iron. Badé

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comes quietly. Pié Cassé comes crawling because of his broken feet. Each loa comes in his own way. 534 796

"First there is dancing for the Congo and Pétro loa. There is dancing for the Kanga and Ibo nation. Last of all is Dahomé, for the assotor belongs to the Dahomé nation, and Dahomé is the host. 778 776 [184]

"The assotor service is the biggest of all services. It last fifteen days. Old people say that once there were services lasting more than twenty days. Every day, animals are killed—bulls, goats, pigs, chickens, turkeys—all according to the loa who are there to be fed. When Moundongue is fed, a dog's ears are clipped in his honor, because Moundongue is fond of dogs. More happens in the assotor mangé than all the rest of the year. Dahomé is host to the other nations, so the Rada service comes last. But the assotor drum is the host even to Dahomé, and it is fed last of all. [782]

"The assotor drum is dressed in the finest of clothing and kerchiefs during the mangé. It is the king of everything.

"When the mangé assotor is ended, when the drum has been fed, there is an immediate Mass held in church for the souls in purgatory. You don't need to have any special reason, but you must hold the Mass for all the dead. You serve coffee, sandwiches, cake, and other refreshments for all the people. 534 796 769.

"When there is no mangé going on, the assotor is kept in a special place in the hounfor. Every seven or nine months the houngan has a special *rappel* beaten for it on the Rada drums, and rum is spilled on the ground for it. It is a great responsibility to own an assotor. But it does great things for the houngan who owns it." 534 778 796

Service for Maît' Grand Bois at Anse-à-Veau

Orthodox tradition in the region of Anse-à-Veau places the loa Maît' Grand Bois as the most potent and venerable of deities. He is the supreme mystère, whose good will or eccentric whim determines the fortunes of all men. Somewhat subsidiary to Grand Bois, but served within the same rites, are two other non-Dahomé loa—Moundongue (of Congo origin) and Ibo. Older people of Anse-à-Veau regard this trilogy, along with Femme Grand Bois (the wife of Maît' Grand Bois), as the core of "Guinée" ritual. There is also a second group of deities, consisting primarily of Ogoun Feraille, Èzilie, and Fréda Dahomé; these loa are of the Dahomey family and are regarded as somewhat less important. Should services for any of them be held, they follow rites for the Grand Bois constellation. People in this region hold that there is only one Ibo loa, one Moundongue, one Ogoun, and one Èzilie, each of them with many names or manifestations. Legba, the Dahomean spirit of procreation, 184 776

[For footnote, see Category 116, P. 351. --Analyst]

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184 the gate, and the crossroads, is not regarded in the same light as the other
776 loa but as a messenger and interceder, and as the crossroads protector. He it is who helps in the placation of the major gods, and who guards people against accident, chance, and evil spirits on the highway.

796 In traditional form, services for Maît' Grand Bois and Femme Grand
788 Bois are conducted by the family without the aid of a houngan, under
776 the direction of the oldest male member of the family. The rites begin on a Thursday. With a tiny bell in his hand, the elder who directs the service (he is called *grand famille*) calls upon Maît' Grand Bois to come and receive his feast. The procedures are solemn. The grand [787] famille and the family sing. At last Grand Bois enters the head of the old man who is conducting the rites. Then the sacrificial animals are brought forward and killed, and the women take the meat and begin the cooking of the mangé. While the food is cooking, the family sits and waits. Sometimes the grand famille begins a song, in which others join. The cooking takes a long while. Sometime during the night, when the food is ready, it is placed in two baskets—one for Maît' Grand Bois and one for his wife, Femme Grand Bois. Into each basket goes meat, corn meal, rice, bread, cookies, peanut cakes, cassava, and other delicacies. The two baskets are hung by ropes from the roof of the tonnelle, or from the branch of a tree. During the entire night, none of the family eats. Maît' Grand Bois and his wife partake of the feast as they please. At six o'clock in the morning, the baskets are taken down, and the family is free to eat what the loa have left for them.

When the food is gone, the bones that are left are carried to a nearby stream and washed until they are white and shining. The bones are then placed in a large calabash bowl. Sweet-scented leaves from special trees are placed in the bowl with the bones, and water is added. The [783] mixture becomes a ritual lotion, or "bath." The entire family kneels before the liquid, which they rub on their faces, heads, arms, hands, legs, and feet. When the ritual bathing is over, they sing:

[539]

La famille vin' payé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
La famille vin' payé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
Cérémonie là c'est finil [Ex. 41]	The ceremony is finished!

Afterward, each member of the family places a small coin in the calabash dish with the bones and leaves, and the residue is then buried in a deep hole at a crossroads. A heavy post (*borne*) is erected at the site, with [211] markings to indicate the date of the service, and the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, each representing a year. Every year one of the numbers is checked off, and at the end of four years another service for Maît' Grand Bois and Femme Grand Bois is held.

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If it should happen that on the appointed day four years later the family is unable to hold the regular feast for Grand Bois, the grand famille goes to the tree sacred to the loa, with a bottle of *siro'* and other token gifts. He explains the difficulties of the family; he tells the loa that it has been a bad year, that the crops have been poor, and that the family has not been able to accumulate enough money to buy sacrificial animals. He asks Grand Bois for a six-month postponement. The loa agrees to the postponement, making his intentions clear through various signs when the grand famille is possessed. "Grand Bois is a good loa," people say, "but if you fail to meet your obligations to him he will be very stern. If you don't keep your promise to him, he may seize you [i.e., kill you]."

When the rites for Maît' Grand Bois are finished, services for Ogoun and the Dahomé deities may be held, beginning on Friday and running through the week end. The Ogoun service is a festive affair. There is much singing and dancing, and early on Saturday morning the sacrificial bull is dressed and decorated with red and blue kerchiefs. Red and blue ribbons are tied to his horns, and he is led on a grand tour to various places, including Ogoun's tree. The drummers walk behind him, and after them members of the family, some dancing, some singing, and some mounted by the loa Ogoun. The procession passes three times around the cemetery, then heads back toward the family *habitation*. When the participants reach the tree sacred to Legba, they sing to this loa, invoking him to "ouvri bayè pou' moin" (open the gate for me). Finally, when the procession reaches the *habitation*, the sacrificial bull is killed. After Ogoun has been served his mangé, the rites are terminated with an *action de grâce*.

Near Anse-à-Veau there is a dried-up spring. It is said that many years ago during a big service for Maît' Grand Bois a man mounted by this loa rushed to the foot of a large tree and began clawing at the ground. He dug a hole there with his hands, and when it was only a few feet deep, water began to flow. The members of the société later enlarged the hole and lined it with stone. It was discovered that a giant crab was living in this water. One year, a service to Maît' Grand Bois was missed. The crab disappeared from the spring, and soon the water stopped flowing. "Grand Bois gives," the people say, "but if he is not remembered he also takes back."

Possession by the Loa Pinga Maza

On the outskirts of Port-au-Prince there is a hounfor dedicated to the loa Pinga Maza, also known by the name Bakulu Baka. He is a ferocious and fearsome spirit of the Pétro family who is known for his propensity

of Haiti. But the route to it is through water. When the Haitians say "under the water" they do not mean under the sea. The ocean is regarded as the special domain of Agwé, La Sirène, and a few related deities, but it has nothing to do with most loa. "Under the water" specifically means under the springs, the rivers, and the fresh-water lakes. Fresh water has the greatest of significance in relation to most of the Vodoun deities.

When a loa comes to visit his Haitian children he comes by way of the *chimin dleau* (the water road)—that is to say, by way of the river, the waterfall, or the spring. Because the spring is the primary source of fresh water, it is the most direct means of contact with the land of the loa. Tales are heard everywhere of persons who, drawing water from the spring at night, heard the voices of loa or the sound of singing and drumming coming up from somewhere below. And virtually all the tales about human beings who visited the land of the loa describe them as descending into a river or disappearing into a waterfall.

The loa are accustomed to traveling by the "water road." And in all aspects of the Vodoun service, this "water road" is refreshed and replenished. When the road is dry, contact with the loa is diminished. When it is moist, the loa travel easily.

Thus, the houngan constantly uses water to entice and invite the deities. He holds a glass or pitcher of water at the center pole of his peristyle. He extends it toward the four cardinal points. He spills water at the foot of the center pole. He spills water in the hounfor at the foot of the *pé*, or altar. He sets a pitcher of water at the gateway of his *habitation*. And often, during a service, he pours a pathway of water in the dust from his gateway into his peristyle. Within nearly every hounfor there is at least one *bassin*, or pool, dedicated to the loa who is the *malt' caille*, the master of the house. These pools are carefully filled with water drawn from the springs. They are places of rest and refreshment for the deities whose names or portraits are inscribed on the walls above.

Sometimes rites and services are held at the site of the spring, the houngan and his entourage marching down to it from the hounfor for the occasion. So, too, there are annual pilgrimages to waterfalls such as Saut d'Eau, where the loa mount their "horses" in profusion.

Within the hounfor, during a service, the cult priest and the servitors pour "libations" of water on the earth, so that the loa may be refreshed. And virtually without end, the hounfor is the scene of ritual ceremonies in which the loa is bathed and thus "renewed" in the heads of his servitors.

[For footnote, see category 116, p. 351.--Analyst]

The importance of water in Vodoun has a fundamentally West African character. Among the Yoruba and the Ashanti and in Dahomey, for example, water rites are a significant aspect of religious ritual. Herskovits notes the frequency of religious pilgrimages to streams in West Africa.[8]

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In one instance, at Abeokuta, a bedecked procession of worshipers left a shrine atop a high hill, followed a long path to the riverside over two miles away, and returned before the ceremonies could be carried out at the shrine of the god. On one occasion, in Dahomey, the bed of the sacred stream run dry was "filled" from nearby wells so that this water could be ritually redrawn for use in an especially important ceremony. Among the Ashanti, pilgrimages to Lake Bosumtwe and other sacred bodies of water regularly occur. And it is on such occasions that the spirit of the river or lake or sea manifests itself, by "entering the head" of the devotee and causing him to fling himself, possibly possessed, into the water.[9]

So it is also in Haiti, where possession at the river's edge may cause the devotee to leap into the river. At Saut d'Eau, possessed persons plunge into the waterfall without regard for their safety, being in the care of the loa who have mounted them.

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Into this water complex the Christian rite of baptism has been easily absorbed, providing merely a new act of veneration for water and its properties. In the Haitian mind baptism is not far removed from the *lavé tête* ritual, the washing of the head, or the *rafraîchi tête*, the "refreshing" of the head, both of which are acts in propitiation of the loa.[9] So related is the baptismal concept in the Haitian mind, that the term "baptize" is used to describe the lavé tête; it is said that the loa is being "baptized." So also are drums "baptized," not to menton yams, and even the hounfor itself.

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Marriage to a Loa

Although the term *hounsi* (spirit wife, or wife of the spirit) is applied to a large class of servitors of the Vodoun temple, only a small number of servitors ever pass through rites which give them a husband-wife or wife-husband relationship with a loa. Reasons for these mystic marriages vary, but usually the rituals take place upon the prescription of a cult priest who interprets the will of the deities concerned. Most of the mystic marriages of which I have heard have taken place in the general area of Port-au-Prince and the Cul-de-Sac Plain. In some other areas of Haiti it appears that no such rites have taken place locally within the memory of the elder inhabitants. One aged man living near Belladère declared: "It [marriage to a loa] is impossible. People serve loa, they do not marry them. A man does not marry his burro. A loa

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[8] [Herskovits, The Myth of the Negro Past, p. 233. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[9] [It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

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special future help and consideration from the loa (including the cessation of the illnesses or other misfortunes that have led to the marriage). A man (or woman) united with a loa in "matrimony" is "stronger" (*plus fort*) in his relationship to his environment and to other people. For this reason, the initiative for a mystic marriage does not always come from a loa. An ambitious person may seek such a marriage to strengthen his hand, to provide protection against other deities or human enemies, or to gain wealth or position. One observer, Odette Mennesson Rigaud, expresses the opinion that in such instances the marriage "is no longer a religious union of mystic love, but a magic pact."[10] The implicit element of "pact" is so evident in all mystic marriages, even when the initiative comes from the loa, that the distinction is not easily appreciated. However, persons suspected of "pushing" for a marriage with a loa are regarded as presumptuous or reckless, and often they are believed to have hidden motives. It is felt by many that the benefits of such a union can be only temporary and that catastrophe will ultimately follow. 588 554

A human party to marriage with a loa is deeply committed. He is subject to jealousy and anger on the part of his mystic mate. His behavior in the hounfor as in his daily life must be beyond the loa's reproach. He must avoid possession by other loa. And he must fulfill endless obligations. Sometimes the prospect of such binding ties is more than a man (or woman) is ready to face, and through the intercession of a strong houngan the loa may be induced to withdraw his demand for marriage. In that event, a special service is held, in the course of which the person buys his freedom with promises of special gifts and feasts for the deity. 588 782 787

One young man I knew was caught in a special dilemma—the houngan and the loa on one side, the Protestant Church on the other. The man, named Maurice, came from the mountains near Léogane. He was married but had no children. His wife's family, still living in Léogane, was Protestant. Maurice himself was a follower of Vodoun, and nominally a Catholic. When his wife was afflicted with a long series of headaches and earaches, Maurice consulted a houngan of Port-au-Prince. The houngan said that the loa Ayida Wèdo was demanding marriage with Maurice, and that the wife's illnesses were an indication of jealousy. 159 588 753

At the same time, the wife's parents came from Léogane and insisted that the girl's illnesses were brought about by God because Maurice was a follower of Vodoun. They demanded that he sever all his connections with Vodoun and become a Protestant.

After considerable anxiety, Maurice "purged" himself of Vodoun and [783]

10 [Odette Mennesson Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Voudoun 'Loa'," in Appendix A of Deren, Divine Horsemen, P. 264. Cf. P. 351, category 116. -- Analyst]

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6. Songs of the Peristyle

The songs that are sung in the peristyle are virtually numberless and have a wide range of themes. In general, they are in the spirit of supplication or placation. Preponderantly they relate in some way to the deities. A loa may be described, invoked, or called upon to perform certain deeds. He may be cajoled, joked with, and even criticized. But it is all a family affair. The servitors and the *fidèles* are the loa's "children," his "horses," his "leaves in the woods." The loa, the spirits of the dead, and the living members of the cult are all members of the same "nation." Whether supplication or admonition, the songs of the peristyle and the hounfor all have an intimate character. The affairs of the loa are the affairs of the société. What concerns one individual concerns all. 533 782 794 776 [769]

The themes of the songs have to do with the drama of the cult ritual, the coming and going of the deities, sickness and death, the welfare of the dead, and the behavior of the living. 533 794 796 776

The cult service is a dramatic presentation which synchronizes and brings into sharp focus the heritage of religious and folk beliefs. The songs describe and evaluate what is going on. Sometimes they are cryptic and tangent, but to those participating and those watching they are clues. As the action is usually related and progressive, so are the songs. Each song has its own place and its own meaning. One song is not readily interchangeable with another. Each service has its appropriate music. So does each developing phase of the hounfor ritual.

Some of the songs are addressed to the loa; others seem to be the words of the loa themselves. In many of the songs there is an implicit dialogue between one or more loa and the singers. This dialogue is not rendered in a form which is immediately understandable to a stranger. There is a constantly shifting point of view, so that sometimes the words are third-person comments about the loa or the situation,

533 794 796 776 sometimes they are the words of the deity, sometimes words addressed to the deity. The name of the loa may appear anywhere in the song, as both an invocational word and a rhythmic device, with the result that unless one is aware of the song structure he may lose the sense and intent of the words. In these two lines, for example:

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> Master Agwé comes from the sea,
> My cannon is loaded.

The first line describes what happens, from the standpoint of a third person; the second line is a statement by the loa Agwé. Or, take this single line:

> Marie Louise oh, we are mixed up!

Here Marie Louise seems to be the person addressed, but in fact it is Marie Louise who is talking. Again:

> I don't see my blood, Master Ogoun!

It is not Ogoun who is addressed; the words are his own.

As in nonreligious songs, there is a pattern stanza which is repeated over and over again. As the song goes on, there may be variations for interest and certain embellishments, but by and large the form remains constant. In religious singing there are relatively few examples of songs which progress from one idea to another. When the theme has been stated, that is the song.

533 539 794 576 One of the preliminary songs in many ritual services is a greeting to the men and women of the société who are present. It is an *ochan*, or salute of welcome, and comes before the loa themselves are addressed:

Messieurs-dames bonsoir!	Gentlemen and ladies, good evening!
M'apé mandé nou!	I ask you!
Messieurs-dames bonsoir!	Gentlemen and ladies, good evening!
M'apé mandé nou	I ask you
Qui gens nous yé! [Ex. 42]	What people are we?

The answer to the question is implicit, for they are the people of the société, members of the Arada "nation" or Anago "nation," as the case may be.

782 776 533 794 In almost any service of the Dahomey "nation" the first supplicatory song is addressed to Legba, the keeper of the gate, the guardian of the crossroads, and the "go-between" who intercedes with other loa in the affairs of men. The first appeal to Legba is to open the gate, over which he is master, so that the voices of supplication may be heard and understood. The open gate also provides access for other loa to the service.

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Attibon Legba ouvri bayè pou' moin ago!
Ou wè Attibon Legba ouvri bayè pou' moin ouvri bayè!
M'apé rentré quand ma tourné,
Ma salut loa yo!

Attibon Legba, open the gate for me, *ago!*
You see, Attibon Legba, open the gate for me, open the gate!
I will enter when I return,
I salute the loa!

After this appeal, or sometimes while it is being sung, the houngan spills a little water on the earth at the base of the po'teau mitan. It is an inducement for the loa to "enter," for the loa reside "below the water" and their passage into the hounfor is made easier by water. The houngan may spill his water in a long path from the entrance of the peristyle to the po'teau mitan, or extend his pitcher invitingly to the four points of the compass. Then, perhaps, another song is sung to Legba:

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Papa Legba nan hounfor moin!
Papa Legba nan hounfor moin!
Papa Legba nan hounfor moin!
Ou même qui porté drapeau,
C'est ou même ka paré soleil pou' loa yo!
Papa Legba, Papa Legba!

Papa Legba is in my hounfor!
Papa Legba is in my hounfor!
Papa Legba is in my hounfor!
You who carry the flag,
It is you who shade the loa from the sun!
Papa Legba, Papa Legba!

As the ritual gets under way, there may be a general song of welcome to all the loa of the cult, such as this one:

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Bonjou' oh bonjou' bonjou' bonjou' bonjou'!
Bonjou' oh bonjou' bonjou' bonjou' bonjou'!
Oh bonjou' oh bonjou' loa moin! [Ex. 43]

Good day, oh, good day, good day, good day, good day!
Good day, oh, good day, good day, good day, good day!
Oh, good day, oh, good day my loa!

When the service is well in progress, the songs may describe the qualities of the deities—their character, behavior and needs. If it is Balindjo, for example, the song may advertise that persons with this loa in their heads are immune to poison:

Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh Ogoun oh!

Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh, Ogoun, oh!

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Sobo, too, demands his drums as he arrives, as well as all the other paraphernalia for his ritual:

Coté yo coté yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Sobo mandé hounsi 'Llada!	Sobo asks for his Allada hounsi!
Coté yo coté yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Coté yo coté yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Sobo mandé tambou' Rada!	Sobo asks for his Arada drums!
Coté yo coté yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Coté yo coté yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Sobo mandé pouin Allada!	Sobo asks for his Allada magic!
Coté yo coté yo? [Ex. 53]	Where are they, where are they?

When more than one loa comes into the service at the same time there is confusion. Each loa is supposed to await his turn, so that the ritual and the dance may be conducted in an orderly way. Sometimes, however, two or more dieties come in at once, throwing the orderly process out of gear. This song takes note of the simultaneous arrival of the loa Adja, Loko, Sobo, Sedje, and others.

Adja non mélé, oh Adja oh!
Adja non mélé!
Non mélé Papa Loko, non mélé jodi-à!

Adja non mélé, oh Adja oh!
Adja non mélé!
Non mélé Sedje assez non mélé jodi-à!

Adja non mélé, oh Adja oh!
Adja non mélé!
Non mélé kilé oudé Nèg' Sobo non mélé jodi-à! [Ex. 54]

Adja we are mixed, oh, Adja, oh!
Adja we are mixed!
We are mixed Papa Loko, we are mixed up today!

Adja we are mixed, oh, Adja, oh!
Adja we are mixed!
We are mixed Sedje, enough, we are mixed up today!

Adja we are mixed, oh, Adja, oh!
Adja we are mixed!
We are mixed all the time, Nèg' Sobo, we are mixed up today!

When the loa come in en masse this way, some are asked to retire so that the service can proceed smoothly. In a similar instance, the deity Marie Louise is willing to withdraw from the scene but demands that a present or sacrifice be given to her first.

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As the loa Mambo Ayida of the Guinée pantheon leaves the hounfor to return to Africa, her "children" ask her not to stay there too long. And they ask her to bring back to Haiti with her some good magic for use in the hounfor: 533 539 776 794 796

Mambo Ayida é!
Pral nan Guinée-à, pinga ou misé-à m'tendé!
Si ou joind bon ouanga wa po'té!
Si ou joind bon lotion wa po'té! [Ex. 59]

Mambo Ayida *é!*
Go to Africa, take care not to stay, I am waiting!
If you find a good ouanga, bring it!
If you find a good lotion, bring it!

Giving food to the loa is a focal point in religious rituals. Many songs describe the sacrifice, signify that the loa are waiting for their food, or otherwise dramatize this significant activity. In the following song the deity Damballa asks for the goat with which he is to be fed. 533 539 776 794 796 782

Damballa Wèdo oh c'est sang-é!
Damballa mandé tête cabrit,
C'est sang li mandé!
Damballa Wèdo oh c'est sang-é!
Damballa mandé tête cabrit,
C'est sang li mandé!
Damballa Wèdo oh c'est sang li mandé!
Oh assez! [Ex. 60]

Damballa Wèdo, oh, it is blood *é!*
Damballa asks for the head of the goat,
It is blood he asks for!
Damballa Wèdo, oh, it is blood *é!*
Damballa asks for the head of the goat,
It is blood he asks for!
Damballa Wèdo, oh, it is blood he asks for!
Oh, enough!

For Ogoun they sometimes sing:

Papa Ogoun qui gain' yun mangé
Tout moune pas mangé li!
Enhé enhé, oh! [Ex. 61]

It is Papa Ogoun who has a feast,
Not everyone may eat it!
Enhé enhé, oh!

But sometimes Ogoun is dissatisfied that there is no feast ready for him, and he complains.

533 Ogoun é oh moin blessé! — Ogoun é, oh, I am hurt!
539 Ogoun é oh moin blessé! — Ogoun é, oh, I am hurt!
776 A pas m'blessé Ferei, — Now I am hurt, Ferei,
782 M'pas wè sang moin! — I don't see my blood!
794 M'pas wè sang'm Malt Ogoun, — I don't see my blood, Master Ogoun,
796 Moin pas wè sang moin! — I don't see my blood!
M'pas wè sang'm Badagry, — I don't see my blood, Badagry
Moin pas wè sang moin là! [Ex. 62] — I don't see my blood here!

The loa Moundongue, like Damballa, likes goat meat, and it can be cooked in two ways:

Yè yè yè!
Moundongue oh!
Oh Moundongue oh yè yè yè!
Moundongue mangé cabrit boulé,
Moundongue mangé cabrit boucané! [Ex. 63]

Yè yè yè!
Moundongue, oh!
Oh, Moundongue, oh, *yè yè yè!*
Moundongue eats boiled goat,
Moundongue eats roasted goat!

Or again, the servitors may sing:

Coto passé na ba'ou mangé, oh Ti Moundongue nà!
Coto passé na ba'ou mangé, Moundongue nà! [Ex. 64]

Wherever you are, we give you food, oh, Ti Moundongue there!
Wherever you are, we give you food, Moundongue there!

[788] [789] The loa Adja also has animal sacrifices and special dishes for his mangé, but sometimes he—and the "horses" he mounts—will eat broken glass:

Oh Adja mangé bounda dèmijon!
Adja vèco' vèco'!
Adja mangé bounda dèmijon!
Adja vèco' vèco'! [Ex. 65]

Oh, Adja eats the bottom of a bottle!
Adja, old one, old one!
Adja eats the bottom of a bottle!
Adja, old one, old one!

For the loa Ianman Ibo the proper sacrifice is a rooster, and the deity declares:

Nanchon Ibo m'ta mangé gros coq oh nanchon Ibo!
Nanchon Ibo m'ta mangé gros coq!
Nanchon Ibo m'ta mangé gros coq oh nanchon Ibo!
Waille waille waille! [Ex. 66]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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[782]

Ibo nation, I am going to eat a large cock, oh, Ibo nation!
Ibo nation, I am going to eat a large cock!
Ibo nation, I am going to eat a large cock, oh, Ibo nation!
Waille waille waille!

The Ibo service is often a strictly family affair rather than a broad community ritual. The family replies to the Ibo loa in the following song. [184]

La famille vin' payé sang,
Vin' payé sang!
La famille vin' payé sang,
Ibo Lazile volonté! [Ex. 41]

The family comes to pay blood,
Comes to pay blood!
The family comes to pay blood,
It is Ibo Lazile's wish!

The loa Nago frankly tells the people that if they want to come to his house (his shrine, or the hounfor) they will have to pay something for the privilege:

Si nou wè coté'm demeuré,
Si nou wè coté'm demeuré,
Fau'm payé bonbon pou' ça!
Anago Nago!
Vin' wè coté'm demeuré! [Ex. 67]

If you see where I live,
If you see where I live,
You have to give cookies for that!
Anago Nago!
Come see where I live!

The "dead" spirit Gèdé Nimbo, the guardian or master of the cemetery, who often engages in bizarre activities which poke fun at the codes of social behavior, is sometimes regarded as a special protector of children. Precisely because he is overlord of all that has to do with the grave, his good will is sought, particularly in behalf of the young; and in many services of the Nago rites his protection is bought by money gifts:

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[533]

Gèdé main la'gent,
M'apé ba ou la'gent la'gent,
M'apé ba ou la'gent pou' ga'dé zenfants la yo!
M'apé ba ou la'gent pou' ga'dé zenfants la yo!

Gèdé, take the money,
I will give you money, money,
I will give you money to guard the children!
I will give you money to guard the children!

In the course of the ceremonies when, from time to time, the honored loa of the occasion enters into the head of one of the servitors, the houngan will place in the hands of the mounted person a lighted candle and a pitcher of water. The possessed servitor approaches the sacred center post and spills a little water on the ground for the deity. After certain other rituals, the houngan, or one of his assistants, conducts the mounted "horse" into the hounfor to the altar. In the following song, as the possession comes on, there is a call for a lighted candle.

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2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Hait SV3

Trois fé trois citron oh!
Trois fé trois citron oh!
Moin dit rwo, youn jour ou wa besoin moin!
Trois fé trois racine oh!
Moin dit oui, youn jour ou wa besoin moin!
Gainyain bassin moin trois racine tombé ladans,
Quand ou wa' blié fau' ramassé chongé! [Ex. 76]

Three leaves, three lemons, oh!
Three leaves, three lemons, oh!
I say *rwo*, one day you are going to need me!
Three leaves, three roots, oh!
I say yes, one day you are going to need me!
I have my pond into which three roots fall,
When you wish to forget you will have to remember!

In another song the houngan warns against ingratitude on the part of persons for whom special magical services have been carried out:

Ouanga ça oh ouanga chaud!
Ouanga ça ouanga chaud!
Lè pou' payé li pinga ou fâché!
Ou mandé'm ouanga là ou content!
Ou mandé'm ouanga là ou content!
Lè pou' payé li pinga ou fâché! [Ex. 77]

This ouanga, oh, hot ouanga!
This ouanga, oh, hot ouanga!
When it's time to pay for it don't be angry!
You ask me for the ouanga, you are happy!
You ask me for the ouanga, you are happy!
When it's time to pay for it don't be angry!

Somberly and in metaphor, the deity Kitta Démambré speaks of an unhappy event which occurred in the town of Léogane, and warns those concerned that it must not happen again:

Kitta Démambré, pinga ou fai'm ça 'core oh!
Nan Léogane ti poule-là mouri nan zé!
Nan Léogane ti poule-là mouri nan zé oh!
Kitta Démambré, pinga ou fai'm ça encore oh! [Ex. 78]

Kitta Démambré, take care that you don't do that to me again, oh!
In Léogane the little chicken died in its egg!
In Léogane the little chicken died in its egg!
Kitta Démambré, take care that you don't do that to me again!

An unnamed spirit warns that the moment for placation has come and suggests that calling on him after he has gone from the *pavillon* of the houngan Derés would be of no use.

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1950) 1960 8V3 Hall 8V3

The loa Aïson complains more vigorously of the bad behavior of human beings:

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Aïson Aïson!
Dipis tempe y'ap pa'M ave moin!
Coté ça yo gainyain?
Bouche à yo paya paya!
Djoule à yo pèrè pèrè!
Coté ça pou' yo pa'don oh? [Ex. 83]

Aïson, Aïson!
For a long time they have been talking about me!
What's wrong with them?
Their mouths go *paya paya!*
Their jaws go *pèrè pèrè!*
What is the excuse?

Even on routine business the loa are inclined to be petulant, or to protest that they have been mistreated, that their followers gossip about them, or that they are not ardent enough. Here the deity Simbi en des Eaux complains bitterly that she is not loved by her servitors, the "leaves in the woods," and asks a hounsi named Loko for news to take to spirits of the ancestors who live "below the water":

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Fè nan bois con ça nou yè!
Nen point ràmain pas mandè quim!
Fè nan bois con ça nou yè!
Nen point ràmain pas mandè quim!
Simbi en des Eaux,
Qui sorti en bas dlesu!
Gardè ça yo fai moin!
M'dit Loko, ba moin nouvelle pou'm ba yo! [Ex. 84]

Leaves in the woods, that's the way you are!
There is no love that does not ask to end!
Leaves in the woods, that's the way you are!
There is no love that does not ask to end!
Simbi en des Eaux,
Who comes from below the water!
See what they do to me!
I say, Loko, give me the news to give them!

But if the loa complain about the behavior of their followers, the servitors also may complain. Songs sung in the hounfor may chide the deities for antisocial deeds, for forgetting their "children," or for carelessness. In the following song the spirit Malt' Grand Chimin is criticized for mounting his "horses" with such fury that they are thrown about

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2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1963) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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violently. The hounsi complain that Malt' Grand Chimin treats them as though they were flour being ground in a mill:

Temp' changé nouvelle allé!
Bonjou' Papa bonjou' Roi Grand Chimin!
M'manolé Papa ça'm fail
Temp' changé nouvelle allé!
Bonjou' Papa bonjou' Roi Grand Chimin!
M'manolé Papa ça'm fail
Papa m'pas maïs moulin!
Nou dit na bougit moin!
Papa m'pas maïs moulin!
Nou dit na bougit moin! [Ex. 85]

Times change, the news goes out!
Good day, Papa, good day, Roi Grand Chimin!
I ask you, Papa, what did I do?
Times change, the news goes out!
Good day, Papa, good day, Roi Grand Chimin!
I ask you, Papa, what did I do?
Papa, I am not corn flour!
You say you will grind me!
Papa, I am not corn flour!
You say you will grind me!

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When there is sickness within the société there may be songs for the absent ones. Here is a song for an ailing hounsi:

Moin allé wè li, hounsi malade oh!
Moin allé wè ça, hounsi malade oh!
Moin allé wè houngan, hounsi malade oh! [Ex. 86]

I am going to see there, the hounsi is sick, oh!
I am going to see it, the hounsi is sick, oh!
I am going to see, houngan, the hounsi is sick, oh!

Again, the members of the société call upon Ogoun, or St. Jacques, to help one of their number who is sick:

St. Jacques marré cheval li,
Li pas dit personne oh,
Vèyé li pou' moin!
Li met guinguin verre,
Li met guinguin maline nan dos,
St. Jacques oh!
Ba li lavie pou' moin! [Ex. 87]

St. Jacques ties his horse,
He tells no one, oh,
Take care of him for me!
He may have worms,
He may have sores on his back,
St. Jacques, oh!
Protect him for me!

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Ogoun is the dispenser of rum, and in virtually all Ogoun rituals rum is at some time or another in evidence. Sometimes rum is poured into a hot iron pot and bursts into flame. The iron pot is described as Ogoun's

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-AA]

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[782] 37. *A small graveyard in the mountains at Furcy. The little alcoves in the tombs are for food offerings on special anniversaries.*

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[776] 38. *Stone and brick covering of spring on Morne l'Hôpital believed to have been constructed in colonial times. Many persons have testified that here the voices of the lost have been heard bubbling up with the water.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 112-V]

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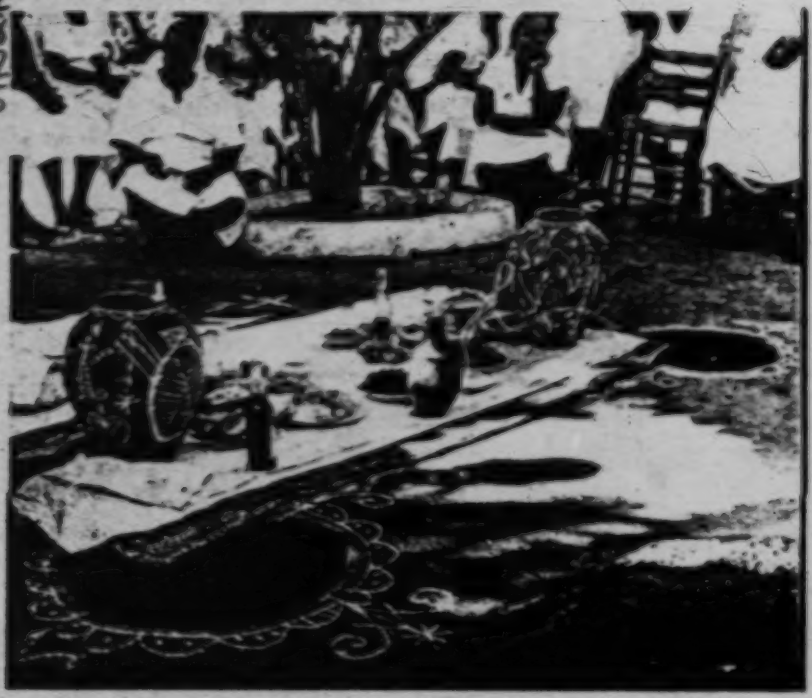
31. *An Ibo service in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. Laid out on the mat is a feast for the Ibo lua. The houngan ritually feeds the deities by placing food in the holes at each end of the mat. Designs on the pots are the symbolic patterns found generally in vévés. The tree in the background, surrounded by a low curbing, is sacred to the lua.*



2: Courlander B-6 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 HaRI SV3

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Qua'm perd' un garçon mein jein' l'aut' oh!
Ma rélé,
Oh qua'm perdit mamman mein ma crié! [Ex. 102]

I cried,
Oh, when I lost my mother I cried!
I cried,
Oh, when I lost my mother I cried!
When I lost a man I found another, oh!
When I lost a man I found another, oh!
I cried,
Oh, when I lost my mother I cried!

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Protest or complaint songs are sometimes directed against no one in particular but simply call the attention of listeners to the singer's misfortunes. In many such songs the president or one of the deities is mentioned by name. The singer in this way implicitly places responsibility for help. In the following song, one complains of hunger, another theme that runs throughout Haitian folklore and Haitian life.

Rwo! President qui voyé rélé'm!
Mein pas bwè mein pas mangé!
M'pas bwè mein pas mangé!
Oh m'pas bwè mein pas mangé!
President qui voyé rélé'm rwo!
M'pas bwè mein pas mangé! [Ex. 103]

Rwo! * The President sends for me!
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!
Oh, I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!
The President sends for me, *rwo!*
I haven't drunk, I haven't eaten!

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[176]
[182]

Here the loa Ogoun Balindjo is called upon to take note of prying, insincere people who come to a person's house, observe what is going on, and go away to gossip:

Ogoun Balindjo
Yo vini ga'dé'm
Pou' y'allé valé oh!
Ogoun Balindjo
Li yé wè bouche pé oh!
Ogoun Balindjo
Pas wè yo vini ga'dé mein? [Ex. 104]

Ogoun Balindjo
They come to look at me

* An exclamation.

To go away and talk, oh!
Ogoun Balindjo
The eyes see, the mouth is closed, oh! *
Ogoun Balindjo
Don't you see they come to look at me?

Or again, the loa Ogoun and Loko Attiso are invoked to witness a person's misery, though in this song the cause is not explained:

Ogoun oh ga'dé misè!
Papa Ogoun ou wa ga'dé misè!
Ga'dé misè oh Lok' Attiso ga'dé misè lì yé! [Ex. 105]

Ogoun, oh, look at my misery!
Papa Ogoun, you will look at my misery!
Look at my misery, oh, Loko Attiso, look at my misery here!

The impulse to criticism most often stems from personal injuries, but on occasion songs are used as a community affair to exert social pressures on an errant member of the neighborhood:

Frè' Jean-Pierre wa quitté bwè tafia!
Frè' Jean-Pierre ti moune yo tounè!

Brother Jean-Pierre, stop drinking tafia! †
Brother Jean-Pierre, the little children are naked!

Although discussions of neighbors' affairs tend to have this moral tone, a vast number of songs are pure gossip and are sung for their ribald or wry humor, as the case may be. In some the objects of ridicule are named; in others the allusions are indirect, so that only those who are familiar with the situation will know the people concerned. Open quarreling often provides amusement and substance for satire. The community can sense petulance, stupidity, and stubbornness through a confusion of charges and countercharges, and is quick to burlesque them. Thus there are public pressures against petty and needless disturbances. The following song refers to a dispute over ownership of an unnamed article.

Moin dit c'est bagaille grand moune! Ciyé!
C'est bagaille grand moune! Ciyé!
Moin dit c'est zaffai grand moune! Ciyé!
C'est bagaille grand moune! Ciyé!
Moin dit n'ap chaché li! Ciyé!
N'ap prend li! Ciyé!
Moin dit c'est bagaille grand moune! Ciyé!
C'est bagaille grand moune! Ciyé! [Ex. 106]

* That is to say, the eyes should see and the mouth should be closed.
† An alcoholic drink.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

776 a "nation" in the Dahomé rites; and the Ibo group, though still distinct,
184 is frequently allied with the Dahomé rites or the Guinée rites.
794 The following list does not pretend to include all the loa known in Haiti. It is doubtful that a complete list could ever be compiled, in view of the continual generation of new deities and the constant cross-
[128] fertilization between "nations." The loa are grouped here according to most widespread usage. There are contradictions from which there is no possible escape, and these general groupings will not necessarily correspond to the concepts and practices of any specific locality. It is intended here to give a broad and generalized view.

128 Under "The Vodoun Pantheon" I have placed constellations of deities
776 of Dahomean and Yoruban origin, along with others that are clearly
794 identified with Vodoun rites. Under "The Congo and Pétro Pantheons" I have listed the Congo-Guinée loa—consisting mainly of deities associated with Central Africa and deities affiliated with the Pétro rites. Ibo and Kanga loa are grouped together, because in many regions of Haiti the two pantheons appear to be interlocked. A separate listing is given for the Simbi family of water deities in view of their ambivalence; they are sometimes found in the Pétro group and sometimes in the Dahomé, according to local practice.

THE VODOUN PANTHEON

776 DAMBALLA WÈDO, or DAN WÈDO. One of the most venerable of Haitian loa. He is
171 generally recognized as the husband of Ayida Wèdo, though occasionally the two deities are merged in a personality called Damballa-Ayida. The concept of a single identity for Damballa and Ayida conforms to Dahomean belief. In both Haiti and West Africa, Damballa is identified with the rainbow and is symbolized as a snake. In Haiti he is associated also with rainfall, springs, and fertility. He is sometimes
[782] described as "white," and the proper food offering to him is a white chicken. Persons
[787] possessed by Damballa usually take on stylized characteristics of snakes. Along with
[177] many other important loa, he has become identified with characters in Christian religious belief. There are, in fact, "two" Damballa Wèdos. One, identified with Moses, comes in talking; the other, identified with St. Patrick, never talks. Food
[782] offerings for the St. Patrick version of Damballa consist of eggs, flour, sugar, and almond syrup. Damballa remains one of the chief gods of the Dahomey cult in Cuba, and he survived into the last century in New Orleans under the name Danny.

[822] AYIDA WÈDO. Generally regarded in Haiti as the wife of Damballa, Ayida is also symbolized by snake and rainbow, and her color, like Damballa's, is "white." In Dahomey and Nigeria, Ayida is known as a male rather than a female spirit and is regarded there as the same divinity as Damballa, or Dji. In Dahomey, Ayida Wèdo was the great serpent who held up the world. According to one myth, the Creator of the World assigned to Ayida the task of holding up the earth to keep it from falling into the sea. The great serpent coiled himself, tail in mouth, and lay below

[Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 345 ff. Cf. P.354, Category 16. -Analyst]

[The Vodoun Pantheon]

the earth like the carrying pad that women wear to support bundles on their heads. Whenever Ayida Wèdo shifted his position there were earthquakes.[3] When the rainbow appeared after a rain it was said that Ayida had come out from under the earth to drink of the fresh water. 776 171 821

DAMBALLA GRAND CHEMIN (Damballa of the Highway). Another manifestation of Damballa as a protector of those on long journeys. 484

DAMBALLA VERRE. Another manifestation of Damballa.

DOMICI WÈDO. Considered to be the daughter of Damballa. The ending of her name (-ci) suggests that at one time she may have been considered a wife rather than a daughter.

DOKI WÈDO. A member of Damballa's family.

AGÃO WÈDO. A member of Damballa's family. Said to be a "work loa" who aids men with their gardens, especially in time of illness. 241

ÈZILIE DOBA, or DOOBA, sometimes spelled ÈZULIE. One of the "big" loa of the Dahomé pantheon, a symbol of purity, and sometimes identified with the Virgin Mary. Her color is white, and services to her include a ritual sweeping and sprinkling of the earth and a perfuming of the air. Food offerings to her include corn meal and eggs. Male "horses" of Èzilie are sometimes bound to her by mystic marriages, and they are obligated to refrain from sexual intercourse on certain days which belong to her. There are a number of Èzilies, regarded as members of the same family or, in some cult centers, as different manifestations of the same deity. Some Haitians regard Èzilie Doba as the ancestor of the Èzilie family and refer to her as Grand Èzilie. Note that there is a Dahomean town named Dogba at approximately 0° 6′ E., 6° 50′ N. 177 822 782 787 834 588

ÈZILIE FRÉDA, or ÈZILIE DAHOMAIN (Dahomé), or ÈZILIE FRÉDA DAHOMAIN. Like Èzilie Doba, she is a symbol of purity and is identified with the Virgin Mary. Mystic marriages are performed with her, and her "horses" are obligated to refrain from sexual intercourse on certain days. She is also a giver of wealth. 177 588 787 834

ÈZILIE WÈDO. A sister or daughter of Èzilie Doba and also related to Damballa.

ÈZILIE MAISOL. A sister of Èzilie Fréda.

ÈZILIE BANDA. A manifestation of Èzilie who is especially fond of the Banda dance.

ÈZILIE JÉROUGE (Red Eyes). A stern and hard Èzilie who is often identified with Pétro rather than Dahomé rites.

AÏSON FRÉDA. A member of the Èzilie escorte, regarded as a market-place protector. In Dahomey, Aïson was a protector of all public gathering places.[4] 443 171

AÏSON BELÉKÉTÉ

AÏSON DLEAU BOLO BOSU

MAÎTRESSE MAMBO. A special form of Èzilie as priestess.

MAÎTRESSE ESPAGNOLE, or 'PAGNOLE. A person mounted by this Èzilie talks only Spanish. 787 791

SOBO, or SOGBO. A thunder deity who hurls stones to the earth when angered. Some of the stones thrown by Sobo are regarded as the sacred residence of various loa. Sobo (or Sogbo) is a member of the original Thunder pantheon of Dahomey. 776 171

SOBO BADÉ, or SOGBO BADÉ, or simply BADÉ. A close relative of Sobo, regarded as the protector of the hounfor (*badé*). In Dahomey, Badé is sometimes referred to as the son of the deity Sobo.[4]

[3] [See Ellis, The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, pp. 47-49; and Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 245ff. Cf. p. 354 Category 116. -- Analyst]

[3] [Ellis, op. cit., p. 52. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[4] [Herskovits, op. cit., pp. 152ff. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]

[The Vodoun Pantheon]

776 Agamé Tonnerre, also pronounced Abomé Tonnerre. Another thunder loa. Abomé (or Aghomé) is the name of an ancient capital of Dahomey.

Badal. The wife of Sobo Badé.

So Narcisse, also called Sogo Narcisse, or simply So. A thunder loa of Dahomean origin. In Dahomey he is regarded as an offspring of Mawu and Lisa, and a member of the Sky pantheon. [171]

Kébiosu, or Kébiosso. A thunder loa who, like Sobo, hurls stones to the earth. In Dahomey he is known as Xevioso and is thought to be the same deity as So. In Haiti, persons killed by lightning are thought to be enemies of Kébiosu and are given special treatment in burial. [171] [166]

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776 782 Agwé Woyo, known also as Croqui-Nan-Mer. He is a loa of the sea; thunder and lightning over the ocean are thought to be Agwé shooting his cannon. He is usually symbolized in pictures by a sailing or steam vessel. His colors are blue and white, and the primary sacrificial animal for him is a male goat. High ceremonies for Agwé are begun in the hounfor and consummated in a sailing boat on the open sea, from which is launched a highly decorated and stylized miniature ship containing food for the deity. This tiny craft is known as the *barque d'Agwé*. Hounfors honoring this spirit usually have a small boat hanging from the rafters. In Dahomey, Agwé is also a sea deity and a member of the Thunder pantheon. [821] [822] [171]

776 Agwitta Woyo. She is thought to be Agwé Woyo's wife, though in Dahomey she was considered to be his daughter. [171]

Agwisu Wandfou. Said to be the son of Agwé.

La Sirène. Another deity of the sea, a latecomer visualized as a mermaid. La Sirène is usually thought of as belonging to a separate family, though she is frequently served along with Agwé. Some sociétés do not recognize her at all.

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776 171 Nanandouclou, or Nanan Boulouvou. A loa of herbs and medicines. In Dahomey this spirit was considered the grandparent of all deities, the progenitor of Mawu and Lisa from whom all demigods are descended. She is still remembered in the Dahomey cults of Cuba.

Lissa or Lisha. Probably the Lisa of Dahomey, child of Nanbouclou.

Attibon Legba, or Legba Sé. One of the most important of Haitian loa, frequently the first one invoked in any service. He is the guardian of the gateway, the crossroads, and the highway. Cocks and male goats are his favorite foods, as in West Africa. In Dahomean tradition, Legba is the youngest offspring of Mawu and Lisa, the progenitors of all Dahomean deities. He is a divine trickster who is both feared and loved, a force that is capriciously malevolent or benevolent. Today, as in earlier times in Dahomey, the image of Legba, made of clay, stands or sits before the entrance to many villages. Sometimes the image is nothing more than a mound or column of earth symbolizing a phallus. Legba's mischief and tricks are directed against the other deities and human beings. In Haiti, as in Dahomey, Legba is not a personal deity. As Herskovits points out, Legba has no "character" and cannot be relied on. He is the intervener between mankind and the deities. It is in this sense that he "opens the gate," providing a channel of communication between man and loa; and it is for this reason that he is often supplicated first in religious ritual. In Dahomean lore, Legba's mischief is often in the realm of sex. In ritual dances for [982] [978] [989]

[Ibid, pp. 101 ff. Cf. P. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[The Vodoun Pantheon]

776

AGÑO LOKO BAYÈ. A crossroads protector of the Loko family.
LOKO DÂI PRÉ

DANSI OSOU. Among the Tshi-speaking people of West Africa there was a spirit called Adansi, a malignant giantess.[171]
OSOU JAMAIN
SOUSOU YÈMAIN

ZOMBRA
MAZOMBRA
MAZOMBRA ENPAKA

AMINE. An aged female loa. Sacrifices to her consist of rice, sugar cane, lima beans, and eggs. As in services for the deity Erzilie, perfumes are used during services for her. [782]
AMINE GATIGAL LAFLAMBO. A member of the Amine family. Amine is the name of a tribe of Dahomey.
AMINE NAGO. Another member of the Amine family.

GÉNÉRAL CLERMEIL, or PRÉSIDENT CLERMEIL. He is said to be the "father" and patron of all light children born to dark parents. Stories are sometimes heard of men who wrongly accused their wives of infidelity because of the lightness of their children, and who were finally mounted and punished by Clermeil. [787]
CLERMÉZINE. The light-skinned daughter of the dark Général Clermeil.

The family relationships or escortes of the following deities are not clear. Some of them may belong to one or another of the foregoing groups, or to still uncited families.

ADJA. A female loa associated with the arts of pharmacy. The Yoruba of Nigeria had a spirit named Adja who carried men and women off into the forest to teach them about the medicinal properties of roots and herbs.[171] In Haiti, Adja's mangé consists of cookies and chicken. Persons possessed by her sometimes eat broken glass. [782] [787]
ADJA BOSU, AKADJA BOSU, or KADJA BOSU. This deity is also known in Dahomey. [171]
AGANMAN. A male deity characterized as a *sandolite*, a small lizard capable of changing colors. A person mounted by Aganman sometimes climbs trees or posts. Some Haitians contend that a person possessed by this loa will change color, from dark to light. [787]
AGASU. In Dahomey, according to Herskovits, Agasu is the name of the panther fetish.[171] Dahomeans regard this deity as of special significance to the royal family. He was remembered among Negroes in Louisiana under the name Agoussou.
AGASU YEMAIN. Related to Agasu.
DADAL. Among the Yoruba, Dadal was a brother of Ogoun and Chango, and was a patron of vegetables.[29]
ATTISOLÉ, also known as ST. SOLEIL. Persons mounted as a result of exposure to the sun are thought to be possessed by this loa. The association of Attisolé with the sun may be a syncretism. [789]
AUCHAUT
AZA. A loa who likes the Juba dance.

[Ellis, The Tshi-Speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa, P.68. Cf P.354, Category 116.--Analyst]
[Ellis, The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples, pp. 79-80, Cf. P 354, Cat. 116.--Analyst]
[Herskovits, Dahomey, I, 165 ff. Ellis, The Ewe-Speaking Peoples, P.83, says that this deity was especially important in the Ashanti Kingdom. Cf. P. 354, Category 116.--Analyst]
[Ellis, The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples, pp. 45, 76. Cf. P.354, Cat. 116.--An.]

776 Simbi Wangol.
Simbi Yenpaka
Simbi Larouzé (The Dew Simbi)
Simbi Devant Bondilu (Simbi Before God)
Simbi Trois Fé (Simbi Three Leaves—the name of a pouin)
Simbi Trois Racines (Simbi Three Roots—the name of a pouin)

THE IBO AND KANGA PANTHEONS

Caplãou. A Kanga loa. His name appears to be a survival of the Caplãou tribe. Some persons feel he is a member of the Pétro group.

Ibo Foula. An Ibo loa. Note that both Ibo and Foula are tribal designations.

Ibo Mariani, or Mariané. An Ibo loa.

Ibo Héquoiké. An Ibo loa.

[782] Ibo Jérouge (Ibo Red Eyes). A malevolent spirit. Food offerings to her consist mainly of pigs and cocks.

Ibo Lazile. An Ibo loa. The food offering to this loa is a goat.

Ibo Lélé, or Ianman Ibo. An Ibo loa.

Kanga. A Kanga loa. A "hard" or "stern" spirit, thought by some people to be the [787] same as Caplãou. Persons mounted by him play with fire and eat hot peppers.

Kanga Trois. A Kanga loa.

Legba Ibo. The Ibo form of the Vodoun Legba.

Mardi Kama, or Ibo Kama. An Ibo loa.

Marie Louise. An Ibo loa.

Nicaise Ibo. An Ibo loa.

Ibo Suament. An Ibo loa.

Ibo Wanème. An Ibo loa.

Nomination. An Ibo loa.

Toument. An Ibo loa.

Barak. An Ibo loa.

Un Pied Un Main Un Jé (One Foot, One Hand, One Eye). An Ibo loa.

Akoupi. An Ibo loa.

De L'Air. An Ibo loa.

Papa Zao. A Kanga loa.

Zao Langé. A Kanga loa.

Kanga Langa. A Kanga loa.

Ça Ou Mangé Con Ça (What Do You Eat Like That). An Ibo loa.

Takwa, or Saint Akwa. An Ibo loa. When he comes in he speaks "unknown" languages.

THE CONGO AND PÉTRO PANTHEONS

Mah' Grand Bois (Master of the Woods). In Congo rites this loa is regarded as one of the most important of deities, holding a place equivalent to that of Damballa in the Dahomé service. When he "comes in" he makes a great din and racket.

Femme Grand Bois. The wife of Mah' Grand Bois.

[The Congo and Pétro Pantheons]

 776

WANGOL (King of Angola). He also appears in other rites.

YAOMBÉ, or MAYAOMBÉ. This name is a tribal designation, referring to the Mayaombés of the Congo region.

WANGOL DLEAU (Wangol of the Water)

MOUNDONGUE. Often considered to be a "hard" loa. Ritual service to him includes, on special occasions, the cutting off of dogs' ears and tails. He is fond of dogs and is benevolent toward them. The name derives from that of a tribe of the upper Congo region. [782]

TI MOUNDONGUE. Said to be a "son" of Moundongue.

MOUNDONGUE MOUSAILLE. A member of Moundongue's family.

BAIACOU, or BÈLÈCOU. A loa identified with the morning star, also called Baiacou. There is also a town in Dahomey by this name.

GANDA, or BAGANDA, also called Nèg' Ganda. A deity taking the name of the Ganda people of Uganda.

CONGO YAMINGAN. A benevolent loa associated with curing and protecting the sick. Certain curative medicine bundles are called *yamingans*. [755]

MACAYA BUMBA, sometimes called Caya. He takes his name from the Bumba people of the upper Congo River region. The Bumbas are near neighbors of the Moundongues.

MANYO BUMBA. One of the Bumba family.

MARIANI MOUNDONGUE. One of the Moundongue family.

ROI LOANGUE (King of Loango). Refers to the old African kingdom of that name.

NANCHOU. A warrior deity.

AVÉLÉKÉTÉ. Known primarily in northern Haiti. [184]

DAN PÉTRO. A rather malevolent loa, from whom the Pétro cult takes its name. The mangé for Dan Pétro is a pig. Early observers speculated that Dan Pétro was originally a powerful houngan of prerevolutionary days.[23] [782] [173]

AYIDA PÉTRO. A Pétro version of the Vodoun Ayida Wèdo.

BAKULU BAKA, known in some regions by the name Pinga Maza. He is a malevolent spirit who "eats"—i.e., destroys—people. Some informants are inclined to believe that Bakulu and Pinga are separate loa, both of a variety akin to baka or démons.

BAKULU BARAK. Related to Bakulu Baka.

BAMBARRA TAIBA. He is visualized as a sea crab. *Taille bas* in Creole means "low hips" and is used to describe a dance posture. The surname Taiba therefore may describe the movements of this loa as he moves about like a crab. [192]

BOLISI BOLISA

BRISÉ GÉNÉRAL, or GÉNÉRAL BRISÉ. He is enormously large and ferocious in appearance. A special loa of the country people. Although stern, he is fond of children. He is symbolized as an owl; his home is in the chardette tree. His physical description suggests that he may be a deification of the epic folklore character Brise Montaigne, or Break Mountains.

CHANGANAN

CONGO JÉROUGE (Congo Red Eyes). A malevolent male spirit. Loa with red eyes are always of bad character.

CONGO MAPIONNE, or MAPIONGOLE. A malevolent spirit.

CONGO SAVANE, or CONGO ZANBOR (Congo of the Plains). Malevolent, fierce, and

23 [Saint-Méry, De la danse, p. 48. Cf p. 354, Cat. 116. --Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

(*Evo évo* is ritual language. Hounsi kanzo are the servitors of the hounfor being addressed by an unidentified loa.) 533 539 [198] [194]

EXAMPLE 136

Achadé, oh, oh!
Achadé, I have no mother here to speak for me!
Achadé, oh!
Achadé, I have no mother here to speak for me!
Oh Achadé, oh!
Ogoun is bad, oh!
Achadé Papa!
Ogoun is bad, oh!
Etc.

(The song is addressed to the loa Achadé; it complains of the behavior of another loa, Ogoun.) [182]

EXAMPLE 137

Beat the drum for me!
I shall . . . , beat the drum for me!
Etc.
Three times after the Angelus, oh!
Three times after the Angelus, oh!

(This appears to be a children's game song. Three "times" after the Angelus would be three hours after six o'clock in the evening.) [524]

EXAMPLE 138

Liberist fell down!
Liberist fell down! *Adiil*
I am sending a whip for his back!
Etc.

(A children's game song.)

EXAMPLE 139

Adaïzo!
Miyennalo Aloko, my Loko, Adaïzo!
Miyennalo Aloko, my Loko, Adaïzo!
Miyennalo my Loko, Adaïzo!
Etc.

(This is a song of supplication to the loa Loko. The word *miyennalo* signifies supplication.) [182]

EXAMPLE 140

Ten cents is not a dollar,
Cousin, don't take cousin, oh, cousin!

(A song for the loa Osange. Literally, the song specifies Osange "in the water," but the sense is "under the water," where the loa reside. 533 539 [192]

EXAMPLE 148

Yabofé my dear, they don't need me!
I will see [enter through] the center post if they *djagwél*
Yabofé my dear, they don't need me!
I will see the center post if they *djagwél*
Ferei doesn't see me any more!
I will see the center post if they *djagwél*

(Yabofé and Ferei are the names of loa. Even though addressed as "Yabofé my dear," it is Yabofé who is speaking. If one thinks of it as "Dear Yabofé says," the shifting point of view becomes less confusing. The term *djagwé* indicates a kind of tension and excitement which builds up before possessions take place. Yabofé says that if the people *djagwé* he is prepared to enter through the center post.) [176]

EXAMPLE 149

Take me (to go), oh!
To the house, oh!

EXAMPLE 150

Damballa! Damballa!
Damballa Wèdo Damballa!
Damballa, *enhé!*
Sacred Damballa! Damballa!

(The song is an invocation to the loa Damballa. The word *enhé* is exclamatory.) [182] [192]

EXAMPLE 151

Ibo Lélé, oh!

(Ibo Lélé is the name of a loa.)

EXAMPLE 152

We thread our way [like a snake],
Damballa Wèdo is a snake, oh!

(The "threading" is a description of conventionalized dance movements suggesting the crawling of a snake. The loa Damballa is identified as a snake.) [535] [176]

EXAMPLE 153

Loko Sindé asks for wind, é!

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Chapter 5: *Services for the Loa and the Family Ancestors* (*pp. 41–74*)

[1]Note that the houngan and the laplace are performing services normally performed by the *petit serane*.
[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 165.
[3]Parsons, *Spirit Cult in Haiti*.
[4]Account given by Jean Ravel Pintro.
[5]Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana.
[6]Account given by Voluska Saintvil. A. W. Cardinall notes in his book *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 69): "Trees are in most cases treated with respect. Before a man dare fell one for a canoe he must and invariably does sacrifice to its spirit and apologizes for the harm he is about to do it."
[7]The rite of *rafraichi lite* is conducted periodically for a *maitre tête* after the original *lavé tête* ceremony. The purpose is to "refresh" the loa and make him content with his residence in the head of the devotee.
[8]Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, p. 233.
[9]It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain Negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form.
[10]Odette Menneson Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Voudoun Loa," in Appendix A of Deren, *Divine Horsemen*, p. 264.

Chapter 6: *Songs of the Peristyle* (*pp. 75–94*)

[1]This theme is further commented on in chap. 13. Compare with the following excerpt from a Surinam song reported by Herskovits in *Suriname Folk-Lore* (p. 689):

> I have no mother there,
> I have no father there,
> I have no sister there,
> I haven't got anybody there.

Chapter 7: *In the Mapou Tree: Magic, Demons, and Compacts* (*pp. 95–104*)

[1]Simpson, "Haitian Magic," *Social Forces*, October, 1940, p. 97.
[2]Note the coincidence of the term *gris-gris* or *grigri* as used in the United States, where it has the same meaning as *mojo*, or "voodoo" charm.
[3]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 303.
[4]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, p. 243.

Chapter 8: *Mardi Gras and Rara: Jugglers, Maypoles, and Kings* (*pp. 105–109*)

[1]Aubin, *En Haïti*, p. 42.
[2]Marionettes of this kind have been observed in both East and West Africa and are well known in the region of Senegal. I saw a phallic marionette, virtually identical with the Haitian version, in the neighborhood of Khartoum, Sudan.

Chapter 9: *Land and Work* (*pp. 110–121*)

[1]Franklin, *The Present State of Haiti*, p. 362.
[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 300 ff., describes Dahomean polygamous marriage in its various forms. Although Dahomean plural marriage is complex in terms of gifts, obligations, and

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P. 112-W]
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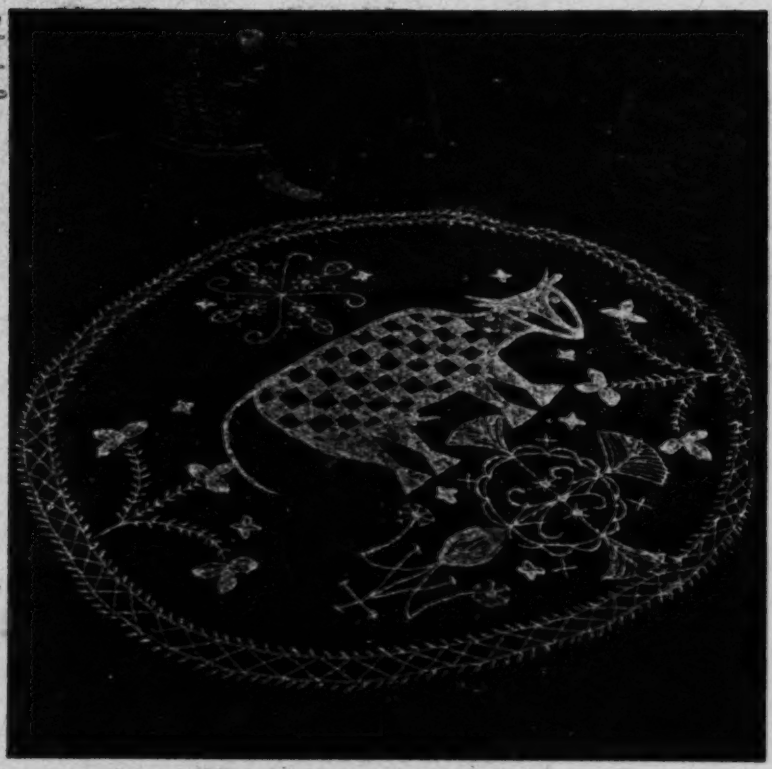

32. *Maize-flour drawing, or vèvè, for the loa Simbi.*

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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have explained it chiefly by the surprise element of the uprising. But when else in modern history have slaves successfully revolted against their armed masters and become permanently free? Successful revolutions even of people not in bodily slavery have had acknowledged leadership, whereas in Haiti no real leader appeared for the insurgents. Boukman's influence, indeed, at its widest never reached beyond a part of the northern plain; he had about the same range of power as a ward boss in the United States. On the plantations Hallaou, Hyacinthe, Lafortune, and others whose names are unimportant or unknown, Vodun houngans likewise welded slave opinion within their narrow districts. But no single great leader appeared. As the conflict was developed, without plan or unity under the divided and contradictory action of numerous blacks, what held the people together was, negatively, their hatred of the white masters; positively, their Vodun beliefs. Only later in the decade did a true leader, Toussaint L'Ouverture, emerge to consolidate their victory.

As often happens among unsophisticated people convinced of the rightness of their cause, the local Vodun leaders were sure of their own invulnerability through the protection of one or another of the spirits.[8] They convinced their followers as well, to such a degree that when an invulnerable chief fell there were dozens of reasons to explain the unexpected death rather than any disillusion. Usually, failure to follow the rigorous propitiation requirements of the protecting god offered the key to the misfortune. Various ones of them were known to be exacting and troublesome. The leader at Trou-Coffi, Romaine by name, had absorbed enough of the Roman Catholicism in Vodun to feel that the Virgin Mary was his especial patroness.[9] Beyond this specific belief in invulnerability was the general trust that Vodun spirits would lead their devotees to success, would give them a happy issue out of all their distress.

8. A parallel case of belief in invulnerability because of divine protection was that of the North American Indians both at the time of Tecumseh and later in the Sioux outbreaks at the climax of the Ghost-Dance Religion. See James Mooney, *The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890* (Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, 1892–93 [Washington, 1896]), chap. X.

9. The importance of Vodun beliefs in connection with the slave revolt is stressed by Dr. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Vodou et Névrose* (Port-au-Prince, 1931), pp. 33–34. He says of many of the chiefs: "The belief in their invulnerability was not at all the result of calculation, but was a true state of mind, a sort of autosuggestion which explains very well the chronic heroism of certain leaders of the revolution in Saint-Domingue and of the war of independence of 1802–3."

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1787 proper control, as they should be. If an unwanted god persists in
114 mounting an individual, the pertinacious one is commanded to go away or the victim himself is sent home until he can recover his own personality. Many people strongly resist possession when it is imminent. Judged by our own standards, possession of the Vodun variety could certainly not be called normal; judged by Haitian standards, however, it would be absurd to call abnormal an experience known and approved by the majority of the community.[29]

1796 Possession occurs either at the service or at the dance. Here again
535 the white man has nothing in his religious experience to enable him
1787 to comprehend the pattern of Haitian religion. The service corresponds nearly enough to the Catholic Mass or to more realistic sacrifices in ancient Jewish rites, but neither of these faiths nor any other the white man knows well has dancing for religion's sake. In Vodun, however, the dance is of equal importance with the service.

1778 In the tiny *houmfort* (also spelled *hounfort*) of the priest, which is
346 little more than a hut with earthen floor, the service begins. To call
796 this structure a temple is at once to make it too imposing and to confuse the white man in his attempt to understand the scene; it is no more of a temple than was a tiny primitive early Christian church. Most houmforts in Haiti would be crowded if twenty people were present. At one end is an altar, more or less resembling the high altar in a Catholic chapel; on it are placed a crucifix, flowers, candles, fruit and food, wine, lithographs of Catholic saints, and whatever other objects, Catholic or Vodun, local practice may dictate and individual taste prefer. Upon the floor are traced formal cabalistic patterns, generally in corn meal, both to fend off evil influences and as required by the particular loa. The officiants may be male or female or both. To the service ordinarily come only the members of the family and their specifically invited guests; neighbors and friends will attend the subsequent dance.

1796 A student of Catholicism would find in the first part of the service
1788 a great deal of ritual borrowed from the Church. The blessing,
177 genuflections, making the sign of the cross, responses, and the like,
782 all clearly show a Catholic background which accords well with
1787 certain objects upon the altar. Imperceptibly the strictly Vodun element obtrudes itself. The loa are asked whether they will accept

29. The statement of the two sides of this controversy may be found in Dorsainvil, *op. cit.*, throughout; and in Herskovits, *op. cit.*, particularly pp. 146–147.

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the sacrifices; food is set before the sacrificial animal, and if this food is eaten by the creature or creatures, it is known that the loa is satisfied. Then comes the actual sacrifice of the animal, a slaying neither ostentatious nor dramatic, since often it does not occur in the houmfort itself. It is at this juncture that possession is looked for. The loa, by seizing one or more of his devotees—or, if possession fails, by the divination of the priest—makes known his desires. The demands of the loa are likely to be modest: a candle, a special article of food, certain specific attentions. Occasionally he insists upon an impressive sacrifice. Whatever his desires, they must be gratified or else the loa will mildly harass the family; long refusal will produce anger and full vengeance. If the god is Rada, his sacrifice will be white, red, or vari-colored; if he is Pétro, he will wish black or gray animals—chickens, turkeys, goats, bullocks.

The service itself, then, is entirely religious in nature, consisting wholly of ceremonies and rituals conducted by officiating priests, with the purpose of restraining or pacifying gods who may have been pursuing a family with misfortune, or gratifying those who have made it happy. The dance following the service apparently expresses the joy of the family at dangers averted and gratitude for blessings bestowed.

In contrast to the private character of the service, the dance has all the appearance of a social event. Invitations to it are sent all over the countryside. People attend for good fellowship, gossip, and the sheer delight of dancing, but in the background one is always aware of a religious element as well. The dance is held in a specially constructed *tonnelle*, a roof of boughs and leaves supported by uprights. Drums are not always used at the earlier service, but no dance could be held without them. The crowd drifts in slowly, so that the dance may be long in getting under way. The best drummers in the community may not arrive until after two or three hours. Three drums of different sizes, all properly baptized, set the rhythms, and sometimes gourd rattles embroider a commentary upon the beat. Whereas at the service possession comes as a result of the priest's invocations, at the dance it is inspired by the drumming. Each loa has his own particular rhythm, so that as soon as it is determined what god has seized upon a dancer the drummers take up the rhythm of that god. The officiant immediately rushes to the mounted person with a calabash of water and a candle; by following the "horse" around and

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796 steadying his attention, he practically hypnotizes him back into full
535 consciousness. As soon as the possessed is normal again, water out of
787 the calabash is poured at the central post and a sign of the cross is made with the candle before it.

796 Contrary to the expectation of thrill-seeking white visitors, the
535 Vodun dance does not merit the name of an orgy. True, the dancers
786 wear their old clothes, for they are going to have violent exercise; true also, those who are possessed give the impression of losing some of their inhibitions. But the dancers do not embrace each other as at a white man's dance; the drinking which occurs is hardly ever excessive; and the climax of a successful dance is a religious experience.
[831] The Haitian is no more obsessed by sex than is the American; indeed, living simply and without many of the artificial restraints of "civilization," he is probably less so. What white visitors sometimes see, under the impression that they are witnessing a Vodun dance, is nothing more than a secular Saturday night social dance. It, too, has drum rhythms instead of an orchestra, musical instruments being rare in Haiti; but the dance has no more religious (or "Voodoo") significance than a barn dance in the United States.

771 Creed and practice go hand in hand in Haiti. The Vodun wor-
776 shiper believes in the loa of his faith and does the things necessary to get in touch with them. These conceptions are the major part of his creed, as the corresponding actions form the bulk of his religious activity.

171 A few articles of the creed remain. "I believe in respect to twins
845 ..." Hundreds of so-called primitive peoples see in twins some special
787 significance, now fortunate, now tragic. Many of the tribes along the Atlantic coast of Africa thought of twins as an omen, so that the presence of ritual regard for them in Haiti is hardly surprising. It is probably incorrect to speak of the worship, or the cult, of twins, for they are not deified, nor is there a common ritual for them: thousands of persons pay them no homage whatever. One family has a high regard for twins because it has numbered them among its ancestors or recent relatives; another family pays respect to all twins because a priest has advised seeking the good luck which comes from *marassa* (twins). There seems to be some confusion of thought about
[782] this aspect of religion: twins are not gods, but merely omens from the gods; yet sacrifices are made to them. Christmas and harvest are the usual seasons for the offering. Food is prepared in the morning

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and set apart on special plates in a separate room for them; in the afternoon the family eats the food. If the twins to whom homage is being offered are still alive, they must wear special clothes at the sacrifice.

"I believe in the careful cult of the dead . . ." Once more it is necessary to renew one's acquaintance with primitive and folk belief to grasp the Haitian attitude. Life is desirable, death is dreaded; both death and the dead are feared. In the actual world, any excursion from the comfortably familiar countryside of one's home leads to confusion and bewilderment. Except in the company of his fellows (on a religious pilgrimage to the waterfalls at Ville-Bonheur, for example), a Haitian almost never leaves his valley or mountainside and market town. Sophisticated people view the unknown with pleasurable excitement, for they have learned by experience that the unfamiliar is not necessarily frightful; it is quite the contrary with simple folk, whose meagre experience with the unfamiliar has been at least somewhat alarming.

Death is the ultimate unknown. The fearsomeness the imagination conceives to lie beyond death seems to exist in almost direct proportion to people's ignorance of the material world. The fear of ghosts is a commonplace among primitive folk, as among the uneducated in the "civilized" world. Where ghosts are considered powerful, one part of any comprehensive cult will certainly deal with the dead.

In Haitian Vodun the teachings of the Catholic Church have exerted more influence upon the cult of the dead than upon any other part of the religion. The preparation of the corpse for burial shows no traces of African practice; the watch (or wake) and wailing over the deceased is familiar; the funeral itself is conducted by a Catholic priest, with burial in consecrated ground. Thereafter, the continual efforts to secure the tranquil repose of the departed bear the earmarks of faithful Catholic practice; it is at this point, however, that the cult begins to assume distinctive features, for it is firmly believed that the dead exert tremendous power in the world of the living. This power comes from God—the Christian God. The case has been put succinctly by Sumner and Keller: "The relation between man and ghost resolves itself . . . into a relation of rights and duties, with all the rights on one side and all the duties on the other."[30] God gives

30. W. G. Sumner and A. G. Keller, *The Science of Society* (New Haven, 1927), II, 829.

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114 776 769 the dead a right to whatever their survivors possess, and moreover gives them the right to return to earth as ghosts.[31]

769 Strict rules of mourning prevail, both as regards clothing and behavior. The slightest lapse in the observation of these rules would 765 cause resentment on the part of the dead; fear of retribution would 775 be quite enough to ensure conformity even if public opinion did not. 782 Ghosts have the power to possess mortals, not as the loa do at a Vodun service or dance, but in the manner understood by American Negroes who say they have been "ha'nted," and so, continually thinking of the dead, live in nervous fear of a streak of bad luck. Such possession is a form of persecution, with continual consequent bad luck until the survivor has carried out all his obligations. It is especially significant, however, that a departed spirit takes vengeance only in matters thought by the Haitian to concern the Church. The ghost is not whimsical in his possession of mortals, and cannot resent treatment which is his due. The kind of treatment given a corpse depends upon the kind of death he died: a person struck by lightning, for example, would have no ceremonies at all, for lightning is an act of God.

787 Where the cult of the dead departs entirely from the teachings of 775 the Church is in the matter of magic, a topic shortly to be treated. It 789 may be briefly stated here that ghosts can be summoned back by special adepts for purposes of divination; that certain corpses are thought to be revivified by evil persons who use these soulless, pathetic automata as slaves (these are the notorious *zombis*); and that black magic—that is, powerful influence for evil—can be worked by sorcerers who know how to command ghosts.

771 All other articles of the Vodun creed not already discussed, except 798 one, come under the heading of magic. That exception is the statement: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." The fact is as simple as the affirmation. If the Catholic priests fight Vodun, preaching frequently against its beliefs and practices, that is unfortunate, think the peasants: Vodun does not retaliate by fighting Catholicism. God and the saints have their province, and the loa theirs. The mind of the Haitian is simple enough to accept both sets of spiritual beings, and not philosophical enough to worry over the contradiction. Practically every Vodun worshiper thinks of himself as a Catholic.[32]

31. See Herskovits, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

32. In this sketch of the Vodun creed, it has been constantly emphasized that each locality has its own variations both in belief and practice. The reader who is interested in pursuing the subject further should consult the works of Price-Mars, Herskovits, Dorsainvil, Parsons, Hurston, et al. See Bibliography.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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4. *Magic*

771 It is difficult enough to make a distinction between religion and superstition; it is practically impossible, in dealing with a people who in their closeness to nature are not accustomed to the refinements of "civilized" thinking, to make one between magic and certain aspects of religion. Underlying both is belief in the supernatural; characteristic of both is a faith which recognizes a higher order of cause and effect operating with the lower one familiar in commonplace matters. Anthropologists hold various theories about magic, some saying that it is the set of practices out of which religion evolved, others that it exists for personal and practical ends and has little to do with religion; still others that it is a development out of religion, paralleling and complementing it.[35]

771 One element which distinguishes religious practice from magic is
789 the attitude toward spirits. In religion, the worshiper pays homage and humbly petitions, preserving meanwhile an attitude of humility
782 to spirits or gods who must be propitiated; in magic, the human being, by coercive words and actions, commands the services of spirits who (if the magical rites have been properly performed) must obey. The distinction is not between good and evil, for a god may have both characteristics and be entirely capable of working harm to mortals. As already noted, in the Haitian system the gods are like men in being mixtures of both principles.

771 Another difference between religion and magic concerns time.
789 Religion is social, open to all worshipers or at least to all of a group or social rank. Its rites are continually and repeatedly performed.
791/2 Magic, on the contrary, though sometimes public and social, is generally private and, since it is for a specific purpose, is performed only when the need arises. A man who was thoroughly conversant with magic might go through his whole life without ever feeling the need of employing it or having to exert himself to fend it off. One turns to magic as a sophisticated man might turn to medicine. Either may be done without; both may be used to excess.

789 In Haitian Vodun, magic interweaves itself with the general faith.

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35. See, for example, Ruth Benedict, "Magic," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, X, 39–44; A. Goldenweiser, *Early Civilization* (New York, 1922), chaps. X–XI; J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (London, 1907–15), *passim*; R. R. Marett, *The Threshold of Religion* (New York, 1914), *passim*; and Sumner and Keller, *op. cit.*, II, chaps. XXIX–XXXI.

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764 if, after a time, an expensive and troublesome ceremony is
766 not performed to bring them out and lodge them in a jar.
776 The *hungan* who performs the rite of removing these *loa* is
775 preferably himself a member of the family and is usually left
764 alone with one or two assistants and an elderly relative of the
766 dead, but if the family includes no *hungan*, the one who is
776 called, even though greatly trusted, is most carefully watched,
793 because a strange priest might take for himself the valued gods of the dead, leaving only the weak ones. The *hungan* stands in place and calls the name of the dead. He puts some of the hair of the dead in the jar or in a calabash, with which the *loa* is supposed to go, and, unless another member of the family, nominated to receive the *connaissance* of the dead, is present, the jar or calabash is sealed until these spirits can be "given" to a successor.

766 No special purification is needed for a house where death
[764] has occurred except when the deceased was tubercular or a
[783] leper, when everything except his money is buried or thrown in some unfrequented place. The body of one who has died of smallpox, though washed, is buried as soon after death as possible without being enclosed in a coffin. Those who die of smallpox or leprosy, suicides, or persons shot as a punishment for crime are not buried in the communal cemetery, but in special sections of the graveyard, the lepers and victims of smallpox being separated from the others, for the Church declares these have died of the plague. One who drowns is buried at the riverside where his body is recovered, though if the corpse is not too badly decomposed, the authorities give permission, and the family of the dead can afford the expense of
[561] transportation, the body may be brought home. Children are
[771] buried in the cemetery, but, on the principle that "the young must serve their elders," the funeral of a child is attended only by those relations who are younger than the dead; for in Haiti, as in Africa, it is not held seemly that the young should be followed to the grave by their elders. At the house, however,

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[Information on the removal of the loa or maît'tête from the head of the deceased will be found in category 764.]

793 approval of the candidate's elevation is needed. He is also regarded as
[769] being on more intimate terms with the family ancestors who, likewise,
must be in accord with the proceedings. The candidate for the asson is
[783] confined within the hounfor for a number of days, during which he takes
purification baths and participates in other rituals. The rites that take
place during this period are prescribed by the elder priest who has as-
sumed responsibility. When the purification is ended, the candidate
emerges into the *peristyle* (roofed court) to participate in the general serv-
ice, and to undergo further tests.

Present during the ceremonies are all the principal houngans of the
region—men who will be friendly associates of the new priest or, pos-
sibly, unfriendly competitors. The candidate is tested on his knowledge
[789] of how to use the asson and the tiny hand bell, and in the course of the
service he is mounted by the loa who is the chief protector of the cult tem-
[782] ple. Animals are sacrificed, and all the loa sacred to the hounfor are in-
voked and asked for their approval and support. But it is not only the loa
[794] and the dead who must indicate their approval. The elder houngan polls
the hounsi kanzo on whether they will accept their new cult chief and fol-
[533] low him. He also asks the chief drummer, who polls his assistant drum-
mers. It is taken for granted that the decision is in the hands of the hounsi.
The consensus is known before the actual service, but the formality of
asking the question is observed. Should the hounsi refuse to accept the
candidate for the asson, the elevation cannot take place.

793 The city and the countryside contain many self-styled houngans and
554 bocors who are not recognized as bona fide by the community, regardless
62 of the route by which they claim to have achieved their station. Sometimes
[791] they are regarded as *pas fort* (not strong); that is, they do not have pro-
found knowledge and understanding. The Haitian is quick to detect the
difference between a houngan who knows and one who does not know.
Many are stated to be outright fakes. One man who attempted to hold
a service in Port-au-Prince aroused such contempt and disgust that a num-
ber of persons who had been drawn by genuine interest walked out with
remarks that the man should be punished. In fact, his failure to show any
[533] essential qualifications for the houngan's role was commented upon in
a song of ridicule that made its appearance at a secular dance that same
night. The song noted some of the humorous aspects of the service, such
as when the "impostor" struck himself vigorously on the head with the
flat of a machete to show his "strength" and virtually incapacitated him-
self for the rest of the evening.

346 It is easily observed that no two hounfors are exactly alike. They differ

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184 the gate, and the crossroads, is not regarded in the same light as the other
796 loa but as a messenger and intercedor, and as the crossroads protector. He it is who helps in the placation of the major gods, and who guards people against accident, chance, and evil spirits on the highway.

796 In traditional form, services for Mait' Grand Bois and Femme Grand
787 Bois are conducted by the family without the aid of a houngan, under
796 the direction of the oldest male member of the family. The rites begin on a Thursday. With a tiny bell in his hand, the elder who directs the service (he is called *grand famille*) calls upon Mait' Grand Bois to come and receive his feast. The procedures are solemn. The grand [787] famille and the family sing. At last Grand Bois enters the head of the old man who is conducting the rites. Then the sacrificial animals are brought forward and killed, and the women take the meat and begin the cooking of the mangé. While the food is cooking, the family sits and waits. Sometimes the grand famille begins a song, in which others join. The cooking takes a long while. Sometime during the night, when the food is ready, it is placed in two baskets—one for Mait' Grand Bois and one for his wife, Femme Grand Bois. Into each basket goes meat, corn meal, rice, bread, cookies, peanut cakes, cassava, and other delicacies. The two baskets are hung by ropes from the roof of the tonnelle, or from the branch of a tree. During the entire night, none of the family eats. Mait' Grand Bois and his wife partake of the feast as they please. At six o'clock in the morning, the baskets are taken down, and the family is free to eat what the loa have left for them.

When the food is gone, the bones that are left are carried to a nearby stream and washed until they are white and shining. The bones are then placed in a large calabash bowl. Sweet-scented leaves from special trees are placed in the bowl with the bones, and water is added. The • [783] mixture becomes a ritual lotion, or "bath." The entire family kneels before the liquid, which they rub on their faces, heads, arms, hands, legs, and feet. When the ritual bathing is over, they sing:

[539]

La famille vin' payé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
La famille vin' payé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
Cérémonie là c'est fail! [Ex.41]	The ceremony is finished!

Afterward, each member of the family places a small coin in the calabash dish with the bones and leaves, and the residue is then buried in a deep hole at a crossroads. A heavy post (*borne*) is erected at the site, with [211] markings to indicate the date of the service, and the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, each representing a year. Every year one of the numbers is checked off, and at the end of four years another service for Mait' Grand Bois and Femme Grand Bois is held.

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special future help and consideration from the loa (including the cessation of the illnesses or other misfortunes that have led to the marriage). A man (or woman) united with a loa in "matrimony" is "stronger" (*plus fort*) in his relationship to his environment and to other people. For this reason, the initiative for a mystic marriage does not always come from a loa. An ambitious person may seek such a marriage to strengthen his hand, to provide protection against other deities or human enemies, or to gain wealth or position. One observer, Odette Mennesson Rigaud, expresses the opinion that in such instances the marriage "is no longer a religious union of mystic love, but a magic pact."[10] The implicit element of "pact" is so evident in all mystic marriages, even when the initiative comes from the loa, that the distinction is not easily appreciated. However, persons suspected of "pushing" for a marriage with a loa are regarded as presumptuous or reckless, and often they are believed to have hidden motives. It is felt by many that the benefits of such a union can be only temporary and that catastrophe will ultimately follow.

A human party to marriage with a loa is deeply committed. He is subject to jealousy and anger on the part of his mystic mate. His behavior in the hounfor as in his daily life must be beyond the loa's reproach. He must avoid possession by other loa. And he must fulfill endless obligations. Sometimes the prospect of such binding ties is more than a man (or woman) is ready to face, and through the intercession of a strong houngan the loa may be induced to withdraw his demand for marriage. In that event, a special service is held, in the course of which the person buys his freedom with promises of special gifts and feasts for the deity.

One young man I knew was caught in a special dilemma—the houngan and the loa on one side, the Protestant Church on the other. The man, named Maurice, came from the mountains near Léogane. He was married but had no children. His wife's family, still living in Léogane, was Protestant. Maurice himself was a follower of Vodoun, and nominally a Catholic. When his wife was afflicted with a long series of headaches and earaches, Maurice consulted a houngan of Port-au-Prince. The houngan said that the loa Ayida Wèdo was demanding marriage with Maurice, and that the wife's illnesses were an indication of jealousy.

At the same time, the wife's parents came from Léogane and insisted that the girl's illnesses were brought about by God because Maurice was a follower of Vodoun. They demanded that he sever all his connections with Vodoun and become a Protestant.

After considerable anxiety, Maurice "purged" himself of Vodoun and

[10] [Odette Mennesson Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Voudoun Loa," in Appendix A of Deren, Divine Horsemen, p. 264. Cf. p. 351, category 11b. -- Analyst]

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159 joined the Protestant Church. Subsequently his wife's illnesses subsided
588 somewhat, but she never bore children. Maurice suspected that the latter
753 misfortune was the result of his spurning his mystic suitor.
783

588 The actual ceremonies by which a mystic marriage is performed carry
over many of the customs and trappings of ordinary mortal marriages.
[1793] The prêt' savane reads prayers and officiates until the two parties are
deemed wed. The loa is represented by a "stand-in," usually a person
possessed by the loa and dressed in appropriate garb. Gold wedding rings
are placed upon the fingers of the couple. There are wedding cakes and
wedding contracts. Nothing appropriate to an ordinary wedding is
omitted.

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never seen again, and after a prêt' savane had read prayers over the spring the people again drew water from it.

Baka more often change themselves into gray or red pigs, but one ingenious baka was said to have transformed himself into a bicycle, which was seen traveling alone at night on the road from Port-au-Prince to Léogane.

Some people wear charms against the baka's malevolence; but the most effective weapon is the cocomacaque stick. The cocomacaque, or monkey palm, is a palm tree that grows only a few feet high. It has magical powers to drive off not only baka but other evil beings as well. When the tree is growing in its natural state, it is said, you must never mention its name in its own presence. Should you say within its hearing, for example, "Look at the cocomacaque," it will wilt and fall over, losing all its vital powers. The trunk of this midget palm is a favorite material for fashioning a walking stick or a short baton. A man going on a long journey into strange country may carry a cococmacaque stick with him to brandish at the crossroads where baka lurk, or to drive off strange animals that may be baka in disguise.

In their relationships with human beings, the baka are not always random. Sometimes, for a terrible price, they will undertake to make a man rich or to "eat" his enemies for him.

In some parts of Haiti, baka seemingly have found their way into the ranks of the loa. In the Congo-Guinée pantheon there is a deity called Bakulu Baka, or Baboku Baka. He is a malevolent spirit who "eats" people in the best baka tradition, and he lives, significantly, in the mapou tree, which is shunned by all good loa.

The *engagements*, or compacts, in which baka sometimes figure are usually made with another sort of creature, the *djab*, or devil. A djab is a manlike being but is superhuman, ferocious, and terrible. Some djab are small, some large, some innocent in appearance, some grotesque. They are supernatural sorcerers who deal out riches in exchange for human beings. A frustrated or desperate man may go to a djab and ask for a favor, which will usually be granted for a heart-rending price. Persons who appear to gain wealth suddenly may be suspected of having entered into an *engagement* with a powerful djab.

One story is about a man of Port-au-Prince who, needing a large sum of money, went to a famous djab who lives in a cave known as Trou Fourban. This powerful djab agreed to provide all the money required, but only on condition that the man deliver to him each year one of his children. The man suddenly came into a large fortune. But when the anniversary of his compact arrived, he did not go to Trou Fourban

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114 highest idea of power and action. Logically, he could not conceive of the
178 unique God of the Christians, by analogy and by inspiration, except in
776 terms of the sentiment of fear mingled with the awe which the colonist inspired in him. Once this first step was taken, the rest was only the work of time. In the degree that the holy beings of Catholicism were unfolded to them, the creole Negroes everywhere identified these with the *vodun* (spirits) of the Dahomean cult."

771 The Christian God could not stop the "deifying" process, for Vodun
776 must have simple spiritual explanations for daily occurrences. How could a god who ruled the earth clutter his mind with such small details as the mango crop or one's private aches? There was room of necessity for more, and lesser, gods.

771 Orthodoxy and monotheism, then, are alien to Vodun; so likewise
781 are the notions of sin and a moral law. These also are refined ideas. The Catholic priests do their best to instill into the minds of the people the Church doctrine on these points, but gluttony, envy, sloth, and other deadly sins are not easy to explain to a people whose worldly goods are pitifully few, whose bellies are never full, and who must work hard to live at all. Just how the simple Haitian interprets the fulminations of the fathers against sin a foreigner can hardly tell, and the priests are not at liberty to reveal the secrets of the confessional.[20] A peasant loves life. His pleasures are simple enough, partly because he lacks money for expensive ones. Puritanical self-searching is alien to the normal Haitian. The touchstone is infallible: so long as life moves along smoothly one need not worry; if misfortune comes, one of the spirits is angry or out of sorts and his worshipers must propitiate him. What spirit could mind a man's dancing, drinking clairin, watching a cockfight, or otherwise indulging himself?

771 Vodun does not conceive life to be a struggle between good and
776 evil. Its conception of spirits is anthropomorphic. No man is wholly good or wholly evil, nor is any god; human beings can generally be persuaded into any mood, and so can the gods; as there is variety in human personality, so likewise the gods are not immutable. Some are more to be feared than others, some may be regarded with tender affection, but all are capable of working both weal and woe.

19. Dorsainvil, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

[783] 20. A priest once told me that a young Haitian girl in sorrow confessed, as her most heinous sin, that she had given food to a dog. Apparently her idea was that food was too precious to be given away to animals; hence she had sinned.

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taken to the *pret' savanne* to be blessed with holy water; in the town the Catholic priest is said to do this. In full mourning, black is worn on Sundays, Mondays, and Fridays, the days sacred to the dead, but since full mourning means that one must be dressed in one's best and it is impossible to wear these clothes all day long even in the first weeks after death, the rule is to remain at home, fully dressed, on Sundays, Mondays, and Fridays, wearing the full mourning outside the house only to Sunday mass. 765

When full mourning for a parent cannot be worn immediately following death, the fulfillment of the obligation is postponed. If this duty is not ultimately met, however, the dead take vengeance, so that a child of the one who was remiss perhaps falls ill, or some other misfortune comes to him. If the negligent one is no longer living, then the penalty for his neglect will be assessed on his children, who, on consulting a diviner, will be told that they must wear mourning not only for their own parents, but for their grandparents as well. Such is the case of a dying woman whose story is recounted, for a diviner ascertained that though she had worn mourning for her own father, he had not worn it for his parent; as soon as she put on full mourning for her grandfather, she is said to have immediately recovered. 765 775 784 [787] [755]

A widower wears mourning for a legally married wife for a year, and a widow for her husband during a similar period, and it is believed that if a man were to remarry before the year has elapsed, his second wife would die, so that a woman will not go sooner to a widower, while it is equally dangerous for a widow to take a husband before the first anniversary of the death of her spouse. Should a *placée* wife die, however, another may be taken in her stead before the year has passed, for it is only in matters where the Church is concerned that the dead take vengeance. Furthermore, a man who has more than one mate may go to his other wives at any time after the death of a spouse, and though he would, of course, not go to them 765 587 [583] [595]

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558 793 685 given him by a third party for whom he had done what was euphemistically called "a piece of work." The evidence clearly showed that the animal, which he had killed to feed a *combite*, had been stolen, and since this *gangan* could not establish his defense that he was an innocent receiver of stolen goods, he was convicted and sentenced to three months in prison, and to pay the owner of the pig the exorbitant sum—sixty-five gourdes—asked as damages. Sympathy was very generally with the *gangan*, but the opinion most often heard expressed was that his power had obviously been lessened by his misuse of the *connaissance* the gods had given him, or they would not have permitted even his arrest, much less his conviction. To reinforce the point, specific reference was repeatedly made to the *hungan* most popular in the valley at the time, about whom it was said that, for example, were he accused before a court, the officers might even enter his house in search of him while he was present, but they would still be unable to see that he was before them.

793 435 564 Other attitudes held toward workers of magic developed in connection with this case. The popular *hungan* was often called on, it was said, because his work was well done and his fees were not too high; it was pointed out that there were renowned *vodun* priests who charged five hundred gourdes for a *service* which this man directed effectively for but little over one hundred; moreover, such men often failed to remove the evil deities which were troubling the family that employed them, but would instead add more, so that their clients would soon have need of them again. Practices such as these, especially that of overcharging, are frowned upon by the *loa*, and if persisted in they "spoil" the power of the priest. This was one of the reasons why, in the opinion of many individuals, the *gangan* in question had been convicted. "He was once a remarkable *gangan*, but he has spoiled his *loa* by using them for evil, and by asking too much money for what he was employed

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to do. The *loa* would come, but they wouldn't give him the same *connaissance*."

One of the most important of the forces behind all magic is the *Malt' Carrefour*, the Master of the Crossroads. The possible identity of this *loa* with Legba, who guards the entrance to houses and is also thought of as a guardian of the highways, was a question that could not be satisfactorily resolved, though it seems most likely that the two are quite distinct, since Legba is but rarely called upon when magic is being performed. One Haitian versed in magic stated:

> "The *Malt' Carrefour* is like the president. Legba is like a minister. God sent the *Malt' Carrefour*. He commands Baron Samedi. Before going to the cemetery to perform [black] magic you must pass the crossroads, and therefore he is able to restrain you if he is not properly worshipped. He commands Damballa. He commands the Rada and Pétro gods. He commands all the saints because all of these must pass the crossroads. Therefore when one has a *garde carrefour*, a person will die a death sent by God [that is, a natural death] and not one caused by *magie* or the *mystères*."

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The *Malt' Carrefour* must be "paid" each year on All Saints' Day, when seven cents in copper coins are given and a white chicken is killed, cooked, and placed in a wooden container with rice, biscuits, cassava, potatoes, bananas, and other kinds of food, both cooked and uncooked, to be deposited at a crossroad with the statement: "Here is food; thank you for having cared for me. If evil *loa* wish to harm me, *Malt' Carrefour*, restrain them." As this is said, a candle is lighted and an invocation pronounced:

[539]

> *"Au nom de Malt' Carrefou'; au nom de Malt' Grand Bois; au nom de Baron Cimitière! Jodia, premier la*

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Toussaint, voici un couvert moin porté ba ou. Ou gardé vot' enfant, comme vot' père et vot' mère dans la maison. — In the name of the Master of the Crossroads; in the name of the Master of the Great Forest; in the name of Baron Cemetery! Today, the first of All Saints' Day, here are offerings I bring you. Guard your child as your father and your mother in the house."

[788] *Clairin* is thrown three times at each fork of the crossroads, and some is also sprinkled in the center and at each corner of the container of food. Three bits of earth are finally lifted from the corners of the crossroads and taken to the home of the worshipper. Here they are put in a plate with *clairin*, which is first lighted and then extinguished, so that the members of the family can anoint themselves with it and receive strength with which to face the new year.

789 821 Good magic has many expressions. Thus there is said to be secret knowledge, transmitted in certain families from generation to generation, of how to control the rains. Those who have control of magic of this sort are to be recognized when they are seen to be completely dry while walking in a downpour. Generally such powers are used to insure a rainless day for a *combite* or *service*, or to cause rain to fall the day after a *combite* has made the field ready for hoeing, or when the proper time for planting is at hand. Eventually, it is said, in response to a temptation too great to be resisted, the possessor of such magic will put it to other, evil ends. Then sooner or later the punishment for this abuse of his knowledge is visited upon him, so that in the end he meets his death by being struck by the avenging lightning.

[784]

789 The most powerful type of protective magic is known as a *drogue*. One of the most potent of these — of the type referred to by Léger in commenting on the ox-tail carried by Hyacinthe, or such a one as tradition holds Christophe possessed, which gave him immunity from all but silver bullets — makes

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it possible for the owner to go to war without being harmed. 789
Even were the possessor of such a *drogue* to be struck by a bullet, the wound would be a minor one; while the thrust of a machete or saber would leave him unscathed, poison placed in drink or food would be impotent, and a trap set against the warrior would be ineffective. Some *drogues*, it is held, allow the owner to disappear when trapped by enemies. For such an important *drogue* a special day, designated by its maker, is set aside for the observance of certain taboos, the most important being the requirement of sexual abstinence on that day.[4] Some men possess as many as seven of these *drogues*, in which case one day every seventh week is reserved for each. Said a man who had taken part in the rebellion of 1918–20 against the Marine occupation: "I have a small, small *drogue*. I had it in the Caco fighting. I have need of a big one." When it was observed that there is no more fighting in Haiti, the reply came promptly: "A man must be prepared. Nobody knows what will come." [784] [834]

The grandfather of this man was said by him to have owned 789
a *drogue* which came from Guinée. He knew how to resuscitate 754
those who had met their death from unnatural — magical — causes; he had only to come to the *barrière* before the house where the body lay, call the name of the victim, and the dead would arise. He was once attacked when he was returning home with a purse filled with money he had won at cards, and his assailants beat him to death and threw him into a well. The next morning, when he was found, he revived in a few moments and asked to be buried beside the well. The following day one of the men who had assaulted him died; the next day another died, and so for five days, until all of them were dead.

Love-charms form an important category of good magic, as 832
also charms to aid in selling in the markets or in keeping a job or to hold the affection of a spouse. Old men are believed 789
to have important magical powers for good, and one such 888

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764 invoked the loa, the pallbearers brought the body forward as though to go straight ahead, but then they began to lurch and sway as though an invisible force were pushing them around. They veered as though to take the right turn, and again they lurched and staggered. At last they turned toward the left, and in this direction they found the road clear. The houngan thanked the Master of the Crossroads, the widow took her place at the head of the procession, and it proceeded on its way to the cemetery.

793 764 762 In the services for a dead houngan described by Simpson, the body is placed in a coffin, which is carried to all the places sacred to the loa of the hounfor before being taken to the cemetery. First it is taken to the sacred trees where the loa reside; then to the sacred spring "whose waters have cured many sicknesses which physicians had pronounced incurable . . . (823) The bearers of the coffin circle the spring several times. The coffin is swung [toward] each of the four cardinal points." Afterward the procession continues its way to the burial ground.[11]

766 174 761 But the treatment given to the dead may vary according to the manner in which they died. Leyburn notes, for example, that "a person struck by lightning . . . would have no ceremonies at all, for lightning is an act of God."[12] It may well be that the Haitian rationale for not holding ceremonies for an individual killed by lightning is that God has already held the final ceremony. But in the Haitian mind all deaths are, in the last analysis, acts of God, even though magic, poison, or accident may have played an immediate part. Why, then, should the corpse struck by lightning be treated so differently? The answer would appear to lie in a custom 174 766 761 of the Yoruba of dispensing with all burial rites for persons killed by lightning, such persons being considered enemies of the lightning deity (174) Chango. In Dahomey, Herskovits reports, the same attitude prevails in regard to persons killed by lightning:

> If a person is killed by lightning he . . . stands convicted by this fact of some grave crime which has incurred the displeasure of the god of the Thunder Pantheon (Xevioso). A person so killed is never buried by his family, but the body is turned over to the chief priest and cult-members of these deities. It is believed that a man killed in this fashion remains upright until the chief priest questions him and forces him to confess the crimes he had committed to be so punished. No one touches any of the belongings of such a man, not even his money. The house in which he lived is allowed to go to ruin, an oath of palm fronds being placed around it to guard against anyone entering it. The movable property of such a man, his clothes, his stools, and his dishes, are thrown away at the crossroads . . .[13]

(K8) (784) (824)

766 The burial of a Haitian who dies of smallpox likewise differs from that of one who dies a "normal" death. The victim of smallpox is buried without a coffin in a segregated part of the cemetery. The reason for this lies

[11] [Simpson, op. cit., p. 161. Cf. P 350 Category 116 -- Analyst]
[12] [Leyburn, The Haitian People, p. 156. Cf. P 350, Category 116 -- Analyst]
[13] [Herskovits, Dahomey, I, 398. Cf. P 350, Category 116 - Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

763 special funds to defray expenses, or even set a day for the "last prayers";
764 and it is said that misfortune is likely to overtake his family if his wishes
are not carried out. Métraux cites a story of a man who had told his wife
763 that if he should happen to die on a Sunday she should hold "last prayers"
764 for him on a Tuesday. It happened to be a Tuesday when the man died.
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They held the burial in the afternoon. As they began the prayers on Wednesday, the last prayer finished on Wednesday week. But as Brother Lédan had always said they should hold his last prayer on a Tuesday, his wife was quite willing to hold it Tuesday. One Tuesday when everyone knew that the last prayer was being held, his wife heard her brother-in-law who told her that wasn't customarily done [that is, shortening the period of prayers]. Then she put off the last prayer.

Thereupon, according to the story, two strangers appeared in the house. They were offered chairs and they sat down. Suddenly, one of the men arose and said that the woman had announced that a last prayer was to be said that day. She said she had put it off. Then the other man got up and said: "Wasn't it today I ordered you to hold the last prayer?" The woman asked, "Who are you?" But both men disappeared. The woman fell unconscious, and died three days later.

769 The cycle of honoring, encouraging, and placating the spirits of the dead moves continuously. There is no beginning and no end. Although those who have died are no longer seen, they are part of the great community which encompasses those whose names are remembered and those who are forgotten, including ancestors who never left the shores
[761] of Africa. Death is merely another aspect of life, and its forces are ever present.

Cf. [Hall and others, op. cit., p. 193. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

Z: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 112-U]

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p. A Christmas service near Léogane: ritual "bathing" in fire. The two young women are bound postmortem by a lua of the Gédé family, probably Jean Zombie. Their nostrils are stuffed with cotton and their jaws are bound in the manner of corpses, in honor of the deity, who is a "dead" lua. In a state of possession they seem to be impervious to the intense heat.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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796 535 men and women exchange gossip and sit about, joining in the songs or merely observing the proceedings; while the young people form part of the singing, dancing circle that revolves almost without pause about the central post of the *tonnelle*, the shelter where the festivities are held.

796 To speak of discipline in connection with these dances is to evoke new and astonishing images for readers familiar with the more popular literature on Haiti. It is admittedly true that as one first witnesses a *vodun* dance, one's reaction is that this is a performance governed solely by the dictates of individual [416] possession. These ceremonies are usually held at night, deep in [291] the bush, lighted only by a small, smoking oil lamp and by the [411] candles fastened to the pegs of the drums, while the participants dress in anything but their best clothing, and in their belts the men carry the machetes always worn by the Haitian [533] peasant. Add to this the effect of the unceasing rhythms of the drumming, the blanket of sound from the unison singing of the participants, the violence of the possessions, and it is not strange that the untrained observer tends to assess what he sees in almost any terms but those of the underlying discipline [154] that defines all activity in the worship of the gods. A release of psychic tension is undoubtedly afforded those who become possessed, and this is also experienced to a lesser degree by all 796 those in attendance. Nevertheless, it must be emphasized, de- ●786 spite so much that has been written to the contrary, that this form of worship of the *loa* is neither unrestrained hysteria nor drunken orgiastic satisfaction of the sex drive. The behavior of the participants, in terms of the accepted patterns of European and American religious decorum, often seems uncouth, vigorous, violent, and even dangerous, when it is merely the expression of a different tradition. And as for the orgiastic aspects of these rites, Haitians have ample opportunity to satisfy their sexual impulses elsewhere, without making this a basic and constant element in the worship of their gods.

796 *Vodun* dances, in Mirebalais as elsewhere, take place on

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

steadying his attention, he practically hypnotizes him back into full consciousness. As soon as the possessed is normal again, water out of the calabash is poured at the central post and a sign of the cross is made with the candle before it.

Contrary to the expectation of thrill-seeking white visitors, the Vodun dance does not merit the name of an orgy. True, the dancers wear their old clothes, for they are going to have violent exercise; true also, those who are possessed give the impression of losing some of their inhibitions. But the dancers do not embrace each other as at a white man's dance; the drinking which occurs is hardly ever excessive; and the climax of a successful dance is a religious experience. The Haitian is no more obsessed by sex than is the American; indeed, living simply and without many of the artificial restraints of "civilization," he is probably less so. What white visitors sometimes see, under the impression that they are witnessing a Vodun dance, is nothing more than a secular Saturday night social dance. It, too, has drum rhythms instead of an orchestra, musical instruments being rare in Haiti; but the dance has no more religious (or "Voodoo") significance than a barn dance in the United States.

Creed and practice go hand in hand in Haiti. The Vodun worshiper believes in the loa of his faith and does the things necessary to get in touch with them. These conceptions are the major part of his creed, as the corresponding actions form the bulk of his religious activity.

A few articles of the creed remain. "I believe in respect to twins . . ." Hundreds of so-called primitive peoples see in twins some special significance, now fortunate, now tragic. Many of the tribes along the Atlantic coast of Africa thought of twins as an omen, so that the presence of ritual regard for them in Haiti is hardly surprising. It is probably incorrect to speak of the worship, or the cult, of twins, for they are not deified, nor is there a common ritual for them: thousands of persons pay them no homage whatever. One family has a high regard for twins because it has numbered them among its ancestors or recent relatives; another family pays respect to all twins because a priest has advised seeking the good luck which comes from *marasse* (twins). There seems to be some confusion of thought about this aspect of religion: twins are not gods, but merely omens from the gods; yet sacrifices are made to them. Christmas and harvest are the usual seasons for the offering. Food is prepared in the morning

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[Information on the bocô or bocor as a diviner will be found in category 791.]

1: Herskovits E-4, 8 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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a mat or a cloth, supported in a reclining position with pillows 844
and cloths, or on a covered box standing about a foot from the ground, with her legs drawn up. No fire is built in the house, all doors and windows are tightly shut, and covers are provided against a chill. A candle stands lighted at the threshold, [788]
and holy water is poured beside it; a candle is also often [782]
lighted in the church before the statue of the saint who corresponds to the *vodun* deity under whose protection the woman in labor is thought to be. In the room with her is the midwife and as many as six, seven, eight, or nine older women belonging to the families of the woman and her husband. The hands of the woman are made to rest on her knees, but where labor is prolonged, her arms are supported above her head to afford relief. She is three times given very hot tea or a drink made of [757]
the stewed leaves of the mango tree and of the *bois lait*. The midwife, with palm oil on her hands, watches the rhythm of labor and presses on the abdomen to facilitate delivery.

If it becomes evident that this will be difficult, a *vodun* 845
priest is at once called to determine by divination whether or 773
not the deities who have been propitiated are satisfied. If the 787
answer is a negative one, he promises future sacrifices or gives 782
minor offerings immediately. Care is also taken to ascertain [775]
whether the trouble is due to the discontent of the family dead who may have been angered by neglect to wear mourning for them, or because sacrifices or a *service* due them have been delayed too long. Inquiries are similarly made to determine whether the spirits of twins might not be displeased, [754]
while the possibility that evil magic may have been invoked is not overlooked, especially if the husband has several wives. If the inquiry shows that the magic of a co-wife was responsible, a strong counter-charm is made at once. Should the woman in 845
labor eventually die, however, her death is not considered to 766
be the result of any act of infidelity on her part, and does not, as in other Negro cultures, prevent the usual burial and mourning customs being carried out.

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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its good health or good looks or some other attribute may unwittingly bring harm to it. For such reasons the child is often burned slightly on the cheek, a ritual carried out by the *vodun* priest in order that the scar may "give one with evil intentions toward the child an 'occupation' to divert his attention, that would otherwise be devoted to carrying out some evil design."

There is some question as to whether, as in so many Negro cultures, the child is given a special name at birth which is regarded as sacred and a thing to be concealed. In one instance it was stated that while one's "real" name was that given at the time of the Church baptism, everyone has a "nickname" (*petit nom*) that is known to the father and mother alone until the child is old enough to guard its secret character. This name is never spoken aloud, for if an enemy came to know it, he might use it for purposes of black magic against its owner. However, no agreement exists in Mirebalais as to this practice, which may represent a survival of a widespread West African custom.[9]

A child born with a caul is believed to be "strong" in combating all evil spirits. The caul is dried and reduced to powder, and the infant is given some of the powder in water two or three days after birth. If a child is born with the navel cord wrapped about his throat, he is believed by some to be destined for leadership, though others do not hold this to be a significant omen. A child born feet-foremost is regarded with distaste, so that where possible, he is turned about in the womb to facilitate a head presentation. If this cannot be done, the child when he grows up is reproached: "You came like a demon." More often, however, if a child with breech presentation is not stillborn, it is not believed that he will long survive. All such occurrences are attributed to bad magic, and the husband does not delay to seek out a diviner to discover for him what supernatural forces had caused the evil.

Breast-feeding begins on the third day, but if the milk does

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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are necessary, and the elders of the family must see to it that these gods are instructed not to trouble the newly married pair. If either or both of them are devotees of deities such as Damballa, Erzilie, Ogun, or Aida Wedo, all of whom are known to be extremely jealous, these gods must be specially placated. 585 782 776

For the actual ceremony the couple appear each with a candle in hand, pour water on the ground in the family house of worship, and kneel and pray. The god may "come to the head" of the girl or the man or some relative of each and advise them. If it asks a gift at this time, it is either given at the moment or a promise is made to fulfill the request later. If the spirit objects to the marriage, it is wooed with offerings. Thus, for example, should the young woman be possessed by the serpent-god Damballa, who, speaking through his devotee, registered an objection to the marriage, the girl would be given such gifts as a white silk dress, white silk stockings, or some other valued object in the sacred color of the god, or some perfume which might also serve to mollify him. Or should the man's deity who registered objection be Ogun, the god of war, a fine red kerchief might be offered in honor of this god, whose color is red.[9] 585 782 787 [822]

The dead of both families are also notified by means of a visit to the cemetery. The days for these pilgrimages are Mondays or Fridays, and the pilgrimages must be made during either the morning or the early afternoon, since visits at night are only for evil purposes. As candles are lighted, announcement is made to the family dead of the marriage which is soon to take place, and their good offices are asked to bring it happiness. After all the family dead have been invoked, a candle is lighted before the large cross for Baron Samedi, and another behind it for Gede, the first as the ruler of cemeteries and the graves of the dead, and the second as his handy-man. Another candle is lighted for the "abandoned souls" of the family, who have died without consecration, and yet another 585 769 782 [776]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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CHAPTER VIII

WHAT IS "VOODOO"?

MORE than any other single term, the word "voodoo" is called to mind whenever mention is made of Haiti. Conceived as a grim system of African practices, it has come to be identified with fantastic and cruel rites and to serve as a symbol of daring excursions into the esoteric. Not only has emphasis been placed on its frenzied rites and the cannibalism supposed on occasion to accompany them, but its dark mysteries of magic and "zombis" have been so stressed that it has become customary to think of the Haitians as living in a universe of psychological terror. 771

What, then, is "voodoo"? "Voodoo," or *vodun*, as it will be termed here, following native pronunciation, is a complex of African belief and ritual governing in large measure the religious life of the Haitian peasantry.[1] It also has an even more restricted meaning in Mirebalais, where the word often simply denotes a form of sacred dance accompanied by spirit-possession or merely a dance which on occasion may take its place along with the *calenda*, the *martinique*, the *zeise*, and other social dances at public celebrations, where an occurrence of possession would be rare and in questionable taste. This latter meaning was recognized by St. Mery: 184 771 635 787

"The Calenda and the Chica are not the only dances in the colony which have come from Africa. There is an- 171 771 535

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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of the dead must be deferred for a later chapter. Similarly, the discussion of the final element in Haitian religion, the belief in magic, must also be reserved for later pages, stressing here only its separate identity from the worship of the *loa*, with which it has been too often confused.[10]

The most striking element in the *vodun* cult is the manner in which the gods possess their devotees. Despite the fact that this is the aspect of Haitian religion that seems to the casual observer its least restrained and least disciplined, possession occurs according to well-defined rules and under specifically defined circumstances. And since it is through an analysis of possession that the clearest understanding can be reached of the meaning of the *loa* to those who worship them, the manner in which they influence the lives of their devotees and exert their powers for good or evil, possession may be treated at some length.[11]

When a person is possessed for the first time, the spirit which is said to animate him is known as a *loa bossal*, an "untamed" god. The word *bossal*, which in the early days was applied to newly arrived Africans,[12] has always been a term of contumely, and today the same feeling-tone is continued through the belief that since all things in the universe are subject to observable regulation, and animals and plants and human beings must all live according to these rules, the *loa*, as members of society, may not manifest the unrestrained and often dangerous traits of unpredictable behavior which characterize them before they have been "baptized" and thus brought under proper control.

Baptism of a deity most often occurs when a boy or girl is possessed by a family *loa*, especially if it is one which gives that knowledge of healing and divination meant by the word *connaissance*. Sometimes, though not always, this possession is violent, and the prospective devotee rages about the house, destroying whatever comes to hand. On occasion, since custom frowns on possession at a ceremony not given by the family of

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the one possessed, possessions of this kind mean either that the *loa* needs baptism; or that, being baptised, its devotee has been negligent in serving the god.

No actual rite of baptism of a *loa* — or, as it is also termed, *of lavé tête*, "washing the head" — was witnessed, but the account of the ceremony given here, obtained independently from several persons, represents an adequate exposition of the rite as performed in Mirebalais. A room is prepared where the person whose *loa* is to be baptised must remain for three days. The mat or bed on which the neophyte rests is covered with fresh sheets and pillow-cases, and three changes of clothing are made ready, one of which must be entirely new for the last day of the ceremony. These are in the color of the god being "baptized"; that is, if the *loa* were revealed to be such a one as Damballa, Aida Wedo, or Gran' Erzilie, everything would be white, but if it were Gran' Siligbo, the colors would be blue and white; if Ogun, everything would be red; if Ossange, blue; where the god is one of the Pétro suite, such as 'Ti Kita or Bosu, everything would be black.*

During the three days' "retreat" the one whose *loa* is being consecrated lies alone. All day long the men and women of the family sit in the next room or outside the house, singing and praying, though at night they sleep, since "this is not a wake." They not only sing the songs sacred to the *loa* being baptized, but also the canticles of the Virgin, while prayers of the Church are recited under the leadership of the *prêt' savanne*, the "bush-priest" whose ability to read the prayers makes him an essential figure in all *vodun* rites. They may from time to time have "a little procession" about the room where the novitiate lies, when small banners in the color of the god are carried. Soft drinks and a *mangé sec* — a "dry" offering — are given the god, and white tapers and an oil lamp are

* A detailed listing of the names, attributes, and powers of the more widely worshipped *loa*, the colors, days, and trees or other places sacred to them, and the "squads" into which they are conceived to be formed, will be found in an appendix at the end of this book.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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lighted. Chicken and rice may also be cooked for any god except Gede, while chocolate and rice with milk are favored, since it is said "the *loa* love desserts" — a commentary on the very immediate and human character of these spirits.

The actual baptism, or "washing of the head," is performed on the third day of the ceremony by a *vodun* priest or priestess who is a member of the family, though any member who has important *loa* and the necessary *connaissance* may officiate if the membership of the family includes no priest. As at any baptism, there must be a godfather and godmother, and preference is given those who are the parents of twins or are themselves twins. The officiant must be possessed at the time, since, it is said, "one *loa* baptizes another." Leaves of the basilique tree are steeped in perfumed cold water, and the hands of the one who baptizes are first immersed in the liquid; then, while songs of the *loa* and canticles of the Virgin are sung, he washes the head of the person to be baptized. Possession occurs immediately, and the new devotee lies back, half conscious, while all others kneel, seeking word from the *loa* to learn if it is satisfied. If an affirmative answer is given, all retire, the person possessed remaining in the room to sleep through the night. A "ball," but not a *vodun* dance, may celebrate the event either the next day or later, but this is not obligatory, and most often those present, after eating, quietly disperse. The following day the one who has been baptized goes to the family place of worship and greets those who have helped him. Only one further rite is necessary, and this solely when the *loa bossal* is revealed to be a hostile god. Then the *loa*, after having been baptized, is "restrained" by being placed in a jar and buried, so it cannot later emerge and trouble the family of the one to whom it has come.[18]

The ceremony of baptism, in Mirebalais, is in no sense a first step into any *vodun* hierarchy, for, as will be seen, no such hierarchy exists in this valley. One important priest there derives his power from *loa* that have never been bap-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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tized at all, but merely respond to an innate ability to control them. To have a baptized *loa*, then, merely means that the worship of the *loa* is thereafter carried on in regular form. The worshipper learns how to *marré*, or "tie,"[14] his spirit, so as to enjoy the social aspects of a *vodun* dance without fear that his *loa* will come unbidden. He gives it small offerings from time to time, and if it becomes insistent, or if his family is being troubled by its gods, he takes full part in the rituals that are staged.[15]

In native idiom, a person when possessed is "mounted" by his god, and thereafter becomes his *ch'wal*, or "horse." A devotee may come under the influence of a number of spirits during a single ceremony or dance, one *loa* succeeding another. The first deity that ever came to a person, however, for him constitutes the chief of his gods — his *maît' tête* — and the leader of any deities which may subsequently possess him. It is this *loa* alone that is "baptized," and this one alone "taken from his head" at his death; and, as far as he is concerned, all his other gods are under the control of this *maît' tête*, so that any agreement which he may enter into with this principal spirit must be respected by all the others.

Fundamentally, to be possessed by a *loa* means that an individual's spirit is literally dispossessed by that of the god. Personalities undergo radical change in accordance with the nature of the deity,[16] while even the sex of the one possessed is disregarded if it differs from that of the god, so that, for example, a woman "mounted" by Ogun is always addressed as Papa Ogun.[17] One wears the colors of the god and the ornaments he likes, eating and drinking those things he prefers, and otherwise manifesting his peculiar characteristics — rolling on the earth, if possessed by Damballa or chattering incessantly if by Gede.[18]

Not everyone, by any means, is subject to states of possession. If the existence of individual differences in the capacity for religious expression be recognized, it becomes apparent

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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that while some react to the supernatural with immediate and overwhelming emotion, and others, though incapable of as deep a response, do sense the mysteries of possession, there are still others who go through life without ever feeling this religious "thrill." In native explanation, it is the former to whom the gods manifest themselves, who become the *ch'wal* of their *loa;* while to the latter the deities never make themselves known. Scientifically, the phenomenon of possession in Negro cultures, at least, is as yet unsatisfactorily explained, largely because of the almost complete absence of adequate reports on the background and incidence of specific cases. Perhaps the most satisfactory approach to its understanding is through a consideration of it in terms of differences in nervous instability, which may be thought of as predisposing different persons to experience the religious thrill in different degrees; or, in other terms, by reference to their differing susceptibility to suggestion. One must reject an hypothesis which attempts to explain the *vodun* cult of Haiti in terms of the neuroses, even when, as in the admirable exposition of Dr. Dorsainvil, the approach neglects neither accepted genetic theory in stressing the inheritance of neurotic tendencies in voduist family lines, nor the important historical forces which have been operative.[19] For in terms of the patterns of Haitian religion, possession is not abnormal, but normal; it is set in its cultural mold as are all other phases of conventional living. That it gives release from psychic tension does not alter the case; neither does the fact that it offers a way to the satisfaction of unfulfilled desires, as when the god, speaking through a woman under possession, demands a necklace or bracelet which, though forever the property of the god, will be worn by his devotee. These facts merely emphasize the compensatory character of the phenomenon. The social situation of the individual also enters; some undoubtedly simulate possession for the attention it brings them, while a person who experiences no serious difficulties in the course of his life is perhaps never

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called upon to ask whether or not he is properly serving his gods; is never placed in a situation for which possession would be a release. Hence to consider all possession as something which falls within the range of psychopathology is to approach it handicapped by a fundamental misconception.

The best evidence of the socially normal nature of possession is the existence of rules governing its incidence which are well understood by all. Not everyone who is a *ch'wal* may become possessed at any dance or *service*, for the gods, if properly under control, are permitted to come only to members of the family giving the rite. At one *vodun* dance given by a priest where a number of other *hungans*, present as guests, became possessed, the host was regarded as having taken undue advantage of his visitors by bringing on their possessions. In another case Haitians from the southern peninsula who were temporarily residing in Mirebalais carefully refrained from contact with a certain *vodun* priest lest he bring on possession by their gods. At one dance for the Rada gods, the *loa* Taureau, a Pétro deity, possessed one of the drummers. Because a Pétro *loa* was neither expected nor wanted, the man was immediately removed and, when quieted, sent home. A similar situation developed at another Rada dance where Bosu "came"; the person possessed was at once taken outside the enclosure until his god had left him. If a *loa* persists in dancing at a *vodun* dance given by another family, it is either one of these *loa-bossal* already described, or a *loa vagabond*, and may be scolded by the *hungan:* "You must not come here! You are not wanted! Go home where you belong!" The passion with which a person resists his god when he feels possession coming on at a rite not given by his own family is particularly instructive. Men have been seen holding so tightly to the rafters of the shelter under which the dance was being held that the muscles of their forearms formed great cords, while beads of perspiration rolled down their foreheads.[20] A person who must live away from his family for a long time usually takes

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neps to "feed" his *loa* in order to satisfy it, for it is more important to give offerings to the spirits than to dance for them. He therefore either quietly prepares a sacrifice of cereals and liquor in his own room or sends money home so that his *loa* may be "fed" at the family habitation, and his absence explained to it.[16]

When *vodun* deities are discussed in Mirebalais, most often two "companies" of them are mentioned, the Rada and the Pétro "squads." In one list of gods that was obtained, the word *Rada*, derived from the name of the ancient principality of Allada in Dahomey, called forth the explanation "*qui veut dire Dahomey* — which is to say, Dahomey," though it should be made clear that neither the words *Rada* nor *Dahomey* are any longer recognized in Haiti as place-names, being today simply qualifying designations of *loa*. There are regional differences in the number and ranking of other categories of gods that hold no important place in Mirebalais. The existence of these other categories is, of course, well known, and one person referred to "the seventeen and twenty-one classes of *loa*," of which, however, only the following were named: Rada, Pétro, Dahomey, Guinée, Congo, Nago, Ibo, and Wangol. Of these the Congo and the Ibo gods are well known, though their worship is chiefly restricted to individual families, while the Nago and Dahomey categories, though significant from the point of view of indicating African origins, are most commonly grouped under the term *Rada*. Guinée also occasionally figures in worship as carried on in individual families, but this term is more often understood as a general designation for all *loa* outside the Rada, Nago, Congo, and Ibo groupings and for certain Pétro gods. Wangol derives from the geographical entity Angola.

From comparatively early times the impression has been given that certain of these classes of gods perform only good, and others evil. Nothing could be further from the truth than this attempt to read European concept into Haitian ideology,

L: Herskovits 8-4,5 (1936) 1937 HV3 Haiti HV3
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a stream, there to remain until, becoming impatient, it demands to be taken out. A ceremony then brings back the tortured soul and makes of it a "*loa nan canarie*—a *loa* in a jar"—which thereafter acts as a guard for its family.

There is little agreement as to the place of residence of the *loa*. In general, it is believed that they come from Guinée each time they are called, returning when they have, in the native idiom, "descended from the heads of their horses"—that is, when the possession of their devotees has ceased. These "under the water," however, being Haitians, remain in Haiti for seven years until the ceremony just mentioned, of putting them *nan canarie*, has been performed, when they, like the other *loa*, return to Guinée. At the same time, all recognize the African character of the *loa*, whether they be gods brought from Africa or the Créole *loa* from Haiti itself.

Worship of the *loa* is directed by priests of the cult. The terms *papaloi* and *mamaloi* as designations for male and female priests, almost universally employed by non-Haitian writers, are practically unknown in Mirebalais, where, as in most regions of Haiti, a priest is called a *hungan*, a priestess a *mambu*.[34] Besides the *hungan* (or *mambu*), and the *gangan*, a term applied to a *hungan* of renown, is the *bocor*, a practitioner of magic, not a member of any *vodun* priesthood, but a man who has acquired his power by the purchase of spirits. He is particularly differentiated from the *hungan* and *mambu* by the fact that the *loa* of their own accord are believed to have given "*connaissance*"—the knowledge of healing and helping, to these latter.[35] Not all gods can endow their devotees with this *connaissance*. Some of the Rada deities, in addition to those of the Ogun group who give it, are Legba, Damballa, Aizan, Bosu, St. Jean, and Agwe Woyo; among the Pétro gods it is conferred by Bosu Trois Cornes, Simbi d'leau, Gede, Ossange, Malt' Gran' Bois, and Malt' Calfou (Carrefour). Simbi en Deux Eaux and Simbi Proméné both give magic power, the former conferring knowledge of excellent protectives against

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793 werewolves as well as of the ingredients to concoct healing
992 baths. Certain priests worship and control a large number of
955 deities, as is shown by those which comprise the personal pantheon of a *gangan* from the valley of Mirebalais: Gedenibo, Erzilie Gé Rouge; 'Ti Kita Demembré; Simbi en Deux Eaux; Bumba Trois Île; Legba; St. Jacques; Ogun Ferraille, Ogun Balandjo, Ogun Ashade; Lemba; Aizan Keleké, Aizan Wedo, Aida Wedo, Damballa Wedo; Baron Samedi, Bosu Trois Cornes; Congo Wangol, Malt' Mapou; Agasu; Agwe, Agweto Woyo; Kadia-Bosu; Sobo Gran'; l'Afrique Guinée. Whatever his ability, the *hungan* can cure only diseases "sent by man" — that is, those caused by magic — and by the *loa*, since against illness sent by God he can do nothing. Gossip
[521] disapprovingly whispers how in more than one instance a *hungan* took advantage of his position and the trust of his clients, falsely to represent himself as able to cure an illness "sent by God" through stating it was due to magic.

793 An important function of the *hungan* or *mambu* is to fore-
● 787 tell the future, and it is as a diviner that the *vodun* priest or priestess is most often employed. No major rite would be considered by a family unless divination were resorted to, but consultation is made for a far wider range of affairs than those of a purely religious nature, and no proposed undertaking of any importance in the secular field is begun without visiting a diviner to discover whether or not the fates are propitious. When divining, the priest is usually under possession by his gods, but other methods, such as gazing into a crystal or basin of water, may also be employed. Several divining séances were visited, but no description of them need be given here, since a number of accounts, including an especially full one by Parsons, are available.[36]

793 Though a certain hierarchy seems to exist among the *vodun*
184 priests in other districts of Haiti, in Mirebalais the organiza-
[955] tion of the cult is informal to an extreme degree.[37] In the
[787] minds of the cult members, various priests in the same region

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CHAPTER IX

VODUN WORSHIP: THE SERVICE

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THE *loa* make known their desires by means of possessing their devotees and speaking through them, or by divination, and if these desires are not gratified, they will mildly harass the family of their devotees, until, thoroughly angered, they will seek full vengeance for this neglect.[1] Fortunately, the wants of many of the gods are modest, and they are satisfied if a candle is occasionally lighted, some water "thrown away" in the place of worship, and they are kept informed of family happenings. But when the *loa* finally clamor for a sacrifice, the time when it is to be made is deferred until the necessary preparations can be completed, for the attitude of the Haitians toward the gods in such matters, as one explained it, is that "*Mystère c'est 'ti moun, faut les derigé*—The *loa* are like children, and must be told what to do," and "If the *loa* are promised a sacrifice, they must accept the date set by the one who serves them." But when that date arrives, the ceremony must be held or the *loa* will cause their worshippers much trouble. This does not mean that a poor person, or one who has met with reverses, may not plead with his god and count on being permitted to defer the offering if he is unable to provide what is asked.

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Simple annual rites are held for the gods in January, each family giving small offerings in its house of worship to its own deities. These minor ceremonies are not to be confused with the extended rituals which a family may perform but once in a decade or a generation. Because of the extensive preparation and large outlay these entail, such rites are often postponed from year to year. According to some, this postponement is sought through an *action de grâce*, based on Church ritual, while others maintain that it is but necessary on his special day to appeal to the deity who is troubling the family, give a small offering — a *mangé sec* — and ask for the desired respite. This may be done several times, until crop failures, sudden deaths, and the loss of valuable property begin to afflict the family, whereupon the family head seeks out a *hungan*, who by divination determines the supernatural forces that are responsible for these misfortunes; and when his statement that the gods have reached the end of their patience is confirmed independently by several other priests who are consulted, active preparations for the major rite are finally set in motion.

Any such important ceremony must be held on the ancestral habitation, and centers in the *maison de servitude*, the family house of service for the gods. The house itself, to be differentiated from the *humfort*, or "temple" of the *vodun* priest, may be elaborate or simple in accordance with the status of family members in the *vodun* cult.[2] At one end of the sacred house is a platform about two and one half feet high on which are placed calabash plates for the *loa*, six for the Créole deities, three for the Mystères Guinée, and a white plate with a "thunder stone," or Neolithic celt, and a necklace for Damballa. Not all *cailles mystères* are painted, but some, it is said, are green "for hope," and some red "for victory," while one was said to have designs of flowers and snakes painted on the wall above the platform.[3] These houses usually have two rectangular rooms, each with a separate entrance and each having its platform at the narrow end facing the doorway. One of

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CHAPTER X

VODUN WORSHIP: THE DANCE

THE *vodun* dance, the most public aspect of Haitian peasant ritual, has been more frequently observed and reported on than any other rites of the cult. The worship of the *loa* by an individual, the baptism of his *loa*, and the minor periodic sacrifices he makes to it that it may protect him are entirely private in nature, while presence at the *service* for the *loa* is essentially restricted to members of the family. The *vodun* dance, however, is viewed quite differently, for news of it is widely spread by word of mouth, so that, in contrast to the private character of all other rituals, *vodun* dances are important social occasions, and their success is measured by the numbers in attendance and the enthusiasm of the participants which makes a dance *chaud'* — "hot"!

The *vodun* dance may be said to function in several ways. Above all, it is an integral part of the worship of the *loa*, and as such is marked by repeated possessions which indicate the presence of the gods. Yet it also offers an important opportunity for recreation, as is indicated by the fact that in Mirebalais the term *bamboche*, which means a dance at which one merely enjoys oneself, is often applied to it. By no means do all who go to a dance become possessed, for of one hundred to one hundred and fifty persons present, no more than twenty or twenty-five will come under the power of their gods. The old

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Saturday nights. This is not because of the especially sacred character of the day, but rather because the Haitian government, in order to assure a continuous working week, refuses permits for other days. The occasions for the dances are varied, as is evident from those given during the course of this field-work. One of these was that of a *hungan* as a compliment to visitors " who knew Dahomey " and was conducted as a serious rite in the worship of the *loa*. Two dances marked the end of *services* for family gods, and were variously interpreted as tributes to the family dead and the twins, who must not be neglected in any religious observance, and as celebrations offered in praise of the gods who were to protect the families, giving the dances, to mark the " restraining " of the evil spirits responsible for their troubles. Two other dances celebrated the " baptism " and initial use of new sets of drums. As has been pointed out, there are also non-religious occasions on which *vodun* dances are given. On days of secular celebrations, such as the anniversary of the declaration of Haitian independence, or the withdrawal of the Marines, the *vodun* dancing is purely social, though the ritual drums are used, the sacred songs are sung, and the steps of the dances are those seen at any Saturday-night gathering. Added to the fact that no possessions or other manifestations of serious worship of the *loa* occur, the " secular " *vodun* dances differ from the others in that they are held away from any family shrine, taking place within towns or cities, something never permitted in their non-social, religious counterparts.

The *vodun* dance — and in the remainder of this chapter only the dance which has significance in the worship of the *loa* will be considered — is patterned like all other ceremonies of the cult.[1] It is held at a family habitation, under an open brush shelter known as a *tonnelle*, constructed for the occasion next to the family *maison de servitude*. If the habitation at which the dance is given is not the one where this house of worship is found, the shelter is built near a hut so that those possessed will have a place to retire.

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skin, are played in batteries of three, the largest being called *manman*,[8] the middle the *seconde*, and the smallest the *bula*.[9] To be used in dances, the drums, like the *loa* of the worshippers, must be "baptized," as will be seen when an account of their making and consecration is given in a later chapter. The iron, or *ogan*, usually consists of the blade of a hoe struck by a large spike, and the rattle, *açon*, in the form most often encountered, is a rounded calabash, containing seeds or pebbles. The iron and the rattles set the basic, steady beat about which the complex drum rhythms play. The smallest drum first takes the time after the iron and the rattles have begun, the notes being played with an accessory figure by means of two thin sticks. The medium-sized drum is next heard, while the *manman*, ritually the most important of the three, comes in last. The *seconde* also has two sticks, one short, thick, and straight, the other a small bow, which gives an added resilience to the notes of the drums' subsidiary rhythms. In playing the great drum, the single crooked stick, called a *baguette*, is held in the right hand, while the left strikes the drumhead with heel or fingers according to the quality of tone desired. The drumstick itself is wielded either against the skin head or against its wooden side, thus permitting a further variation in tone.

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When "salutes" to the gods are called for by the drums, it is the voice of the *manman* that signals the sweeping circular movements of the dancers, dictating with its beat the dips and semi-prostrations of this figure in the ritual dancing, called *asagwé*. The drum rhythms are always distinctive for each type of *loa*, and every devotee knows the rhythms which call his god.

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The drums and iron are the focus of all activity of the dance, especially since those who are possessed dance facing the drums, in whose beat is heard the voice of the gods. Hence the spectators cluster most closely about them, for anything of significance which happens must happen here. The players of the rattles — it is but rarely that more than one rattle is not

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employed — do not remain with the drummers. These instruments are ordinarily in the hands of *hunsi*, who join the massed ring of dancers that constantly circles about the center pole. These dancers are not under possession, but are merely enjoying the evening or participating in the social aspect of the dance preparatory to becoming possessed. The rattle is held high above the heads of the dancers, and its sharp, steady notes are produced by quick, short, measured movements of the wrist. The end of a song, which sometimes does not come until fifteen or twenty minutes after its initial statement, is usually marked by a continuous shaking of a rattle, a process which effectually breaks the rhythm and makes it possible to begin a new song. The player of the rattle is an outstanding singer, who usually initiates the fresh refrain and continues to sing its repetitions as soloist in the alternation of solo and chorus which marks Haitian *vodun* singing as it marks most West African and New World Negro religious music.

When a possession occurs, the songs for the deity who has "arrived" are taken up as the drums play the rhythm of the god. As his possession comes on, the devotee falls to the ground, rolling before the drums, or staggers blindly about the dancing-space, or otherwise follows the characteristic behavior attributed to his god. After a time he begins to dance, whereupon a *hunsi* or the *hungan*, taking a calabash of water in one hand and a lighted candle in the other, dances opposite him, saluting the god as he performs his every movement in reverse; if he turns clockwise, the one dancing with him turns counter-clockwise; if he moves to the right, the other moves to the left. Except when executing these turns, the functionary of the cult never takes his eyes from the eyes of the possessed person, almost, as it were, hypnotizing him to help him come to himself. Eventually the possessed one recovers sufficiently to take the candle and the calabash of water in his own hands. Often spilling water as he moves, he makes his way to the central pole, pouring an offering and making the sign of the cross with the candle before it.

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with the candle before it. He next does the same before the *ogan,* then before each of the drums in order, continuing to dance before the drums, usually with great violence, while the few "social" dancers who still may be circling about the center pole make way so that he may execute his steps. Gradually his dancing becomes calmed, until he is taken either to the *maison de servitude* or to a near-by house, where he rests and if, as often happens, he has rolled on muddy ground during his possession, washes and changes his clothes.

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Several examples of the force of this tradition of being "mounted" by the *loa* may be given. One of these which is of especial interest concerns the possession of a man of good education, in the early thirties, who throughout his childhood and early manhood had had no association with the *vodun* cult, but had been encouraged by his family and his own ambition to promote the activities of the Catholic Church. In discussing his earlier experiences and background with one of his intimates, it seemed that on the side of both father and mother many of his relatives were affiliated with the cult, and it was recounted how, at an important ceremony at his ancestral habitation, some years before, he had become possessed. But it was also made clear that he had not been any the less active in the affairs of the Church because of this transient experience, nor had he affiliated himself in any way with any *vodun* group. Why he wished once more to participate in the *vodun* rituals cannot be said; certainly during the weeks immediately preceding his possession he had become interested in the philosophy of *vodun,* and his non-voduistic, if not anti-voduistic background seemed to accentuate his interest in ascertaining the hold of these rites, which had always been presented to him as repellent, on their followers. As an example of the duality of his interest, it may be stated that though he had remarked how "disgusting" it was to roll in the mud when possessed by Damballa, he had also been im-

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pressed with the temerity of those who danced in the fire for Legba. 796 794 787 159

At a certain dance, however, he volunteered to help in a small way in promoting the activities of the evening, such as serving *clairin* to the drummers, while he himself danced the social dance about the central post of the *tonnelle*. As the tempo of the dance heightened, he became more deeply imbued with the spirit of the occasion and shouted: " If the *loa* comes to me, I will accept it! " as he plunged again into the circle of dancers. When the drums sounded the salute to the gods, he would awkwardly execute the accompanying backward turning movement of the figure.

After a time he left the *tonnelle*, but before many moments had elapsed a commotion was heard at the near-by *barrière*, where he was reeling in the first stage of possession, just inside the gate, while a fully possessed woman in a figured dress stalked back and forth. An *adjanikon*, with candle and calabash of water, was trying to " settle " his possession, but he fell to the ground and rolled on his back, lying prostrate with legs and arms outstretched and twitching. The *adjanikon*, putting aside the candle and water, lifted his limp body to its [533] feet and then slowly, according to the accepted pattern, holding him upright, swayed with him in time to the song that all [539] twelve or fifteen persons present were by now singing, until, staggering, the possessed man was able to support himself:

Damballa-o, Damballa-e,	Damballa-o, Damballa-e,
Damballa-o, Damballa	Damballa-o, Damballa
Wedo,	Wedo,
'Gadé ça ou fait' moin.	See what you have done to me.

Steadily fixing his eyes on the possessed one, the *adjanikon* now danced with him, turning always in the opposite direction as he offered him the candle and the water, which, how-

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796 ever, the man was not yet able to hold. Moving backwards
797 toward the *maison de servitude*, all the spectators continued
787 to sing the song of Damballa, while the man to whom the god
159 had come half-danced and was half-carried up the path to the *tonnelle* and taken into the family house of worship.

[188] When he had sufficiently recovered to be able to hold the candle and the water, he poured the water and unsteadily bowed three times in the accepted manner before the *convert sec* to the Rada gods. He now was enough in control of himself to emerge, and, with the *adjanikon* dancing before him with water and a candle, he once again came into the *tonnelle*, before the drums. As he appeared, the drummers stopped the Ogun rhythm they had been sounding, and in an intense silence all waited for the god to announce himself. Half on his
[538] knees before the drums, the one possessed began to sing in a
[539] cracked voice:

Damballa Wedo,	Damballa Wedo,
Papa m' c'est coulev'-o,	Papa, I am a serpent-o,
Na poi' bois	There is no tree
Moin pa' li monté.	I cannot climb.

With this initial statement, the Damballa rhythm rolled from the drums, as all echoed the song in chorused response, while the possessed figure, in strict conformity to the pattern, first poured water at the central post and then consecutively before the iron and each of the drums. Returning to the central post, he whirled about it, almost but never quite falling, until he could dance before the drums, awkwardly but acceptably, before he disappeared to rest in a near-by house.

796 The explanation offered by this man of the manner in
787 which he became possessed, and his varying attitudes toward
159 his possession, are revealing. On several previous occasions
793 the *hungan* who officiated at the dance had noticed that he was attending *vodun* rites and had joked with him about his interest in them. Once at an earlier dance this *hungan* had

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given him a piercing glance, not without significance, for as the man, who believed himself the victim of the *hungan's* machinations, said, "Whatever you believe, these *hungans* have some kind of power. . . ." On his arrival at the dance where the possession occurred, the *hungan* had encountered this man sitting alone, some distance from the *tonnelle*. Giving him a drink of liquor, the *hungan*, as he pressed his hand in greeting, sportively turned him about in the manner in which possession is induced. After this the man recollected but little; he did not remember having said he would accept the god, or circling backwards, or bowing to the drums when the "salutes" were played. He dimly remembered having been sent to the *barrière* with some liquor for Bosu, who, not a Rada *loa*, had come unauthorized to one of the spectators and, according to custom, had been removed from the dancing-place. He also just recalled that a woman had become possessed by Legba, but did not know that it was when she touched him that his own possession had begun. The remainder of the night's experience was completely blank, even though the actual state of possession occupied only a small part of it.

Later during the dance, when he had returned, he was heard to say: "It was not a pretty trick that the *hungan* played on me" — a feeling not assuaged when, the next morning at mass, the priest in his sermon preached against following false gods and recounted the miseries in store for those who desert the true faith; nor when he reflected that, by his possession, he had in a sense become affiliated with a group whose position in society was anything but such as to enhance his own social status. The *hungan*, however, promised him that he would not bring on another possession, adding, as an aside: "It is good, though, that a Haitian should have this experience." None the less, to make sure that this *loa bossal* would not come to him at awkward moments, it was going to be necessary for him to baptize it, thus continuing the process which

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some termed his "Haitianization." There were those who expressed surprise at the occurrence, but the majority held that though this man had himself been a devout follower of the Church, and his parents before him, Damballa was a *loa* of his family, and therefore it was reasonable that it should come to him when called at a dance.

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Another "unauthorized" possession, that of a woman in mourning, was also witnessed. Like the *service* of one night's duration, which this dance followed, it was but poorly organized and provided for, and in this it reflected the status of the family, which had but few resources, since its head had recently come into the valley and therefore lacked the backing which only his own relationship group could give him. Here there was no *maison de servitude,* and the *tonnelle* had been erected in an open field where the only shelter was offered by a crude hut near by. The *hungan* did not appear until late, while the host lived up to his reputation by drinking more *clairin* than was good for him. None the less, one violent possession by a *loa bossal* occurred relatively early in the evening, though the *loa* concerned did not "announce himself" through the song of the one he had possessed.

The woman in mourning sang continuously as she sat among the spectators, and since she was not supposed to dance, she executed dance movements in place. As the drumming became more and more *chaud* — "hot" — she became correspondingly more excited until, suddenly leaping from her seat, she began a frenzied dance. She refused the water and candle, however, and when finished with her dancing, she fell exhausted into her chair, where she remained in a coma during the next hour. She roused herself later and again joined the singing, but though she was near possession, this never came on. Her *loa,* like the other *loa bossal* that came earlier in the evening, did not "announce itself," and since it was her first — and not unwelcome — possession, she stated that at the termination of her period of mourning she would

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have a *hungan* divine its identity so that she might thereafter worship it and be under its protection. As in the other case discussed, the personality involved here is not without interest. The woman was one of the shrewdest traders in the Mirebalais market, and noted for her hardness. Underneath this, however, the presence of much vital energy could be felt as well as a passionate desire for gayety and attention from members of the other sex. That the essential lack of satisfaction of these drives in her life, as discussed and observed, figured in bringing on her possession cannot be doubted, and, as such, throws significant light on the nature of the psychological aspects of the phenomenon.

These instances, however, must not be thought of as a regular part of the ritual of the dances. Though a dance was attended almost every Saturday night during the course of an entire summer, and a number of *services* and other *vodun* rites in addition, these were the only occasions when a *loa bossal* appeared. In order, therefore, to document the pattern of the *vodun* dance that has already been given, some of the dances witnessed may be described in outline.

The first of these is a dance which, originally intended as the culmination of the *service* described in the preceding chapter, failed to fulfill its end because of a quarrel between two important members of the family. None the less, it proved to be one of the most spirited and typical dances witnessed. The habitation, when reached shortly after six o'clock, was deserted, except for a few people who seemed to be waiting disconsolately. Among them were several *hunsi* in white, and two who carried banners, while the three drums, each "dressed" in its skirt-like covering, stood before the entrance, the drumsticks and the *ogan* lying on the *barrière* itself. Since the *hungan* had not arrived, one or two of the men present took charge as darkness came on. Before this dance began, it was necessary to introduce the drums ceremonially into the compound, and as this was the first *vodun* dance after the es-

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796 A candle was affixed to a peg of each drum, which, with the lantern that hung near the central post, gave unusu-
[354] ally good light. However, as possessions began, the candles
[187] on the drums were extinguished as those possessed fell against them, and no more than one could be kept lighted.

793 With the arrival of the *hungan* at about half past nine, the
796 dancing became even more animated, and Ogun "came" as
539 soon as he took over the *manman* drum, but despite this, the
796 *hungan* continued the ritual invocation to call all the *loa:*

Moin rhelé Papa Legba, St. Jo,	I call Papa Legba, St. Joseph,
Moin rhelé Damballa papa,	I call Papa Damballa,
Moin rhelé Papa Damballa, St. Jo,	I call Papa Damballa, St. Joseph,
Moin rhelé Loko Atinsu, St. Jo.	I call Loko Atinsu, St. Joseph.
La vie nan mains Bon Dieu,	Life is in the hands of God,
Seigneur, moin rhelé Ogun Ferraille, St. Jo.	Master, I call Ogun Ferraille, St. Joseph.
Moin rhelé Damballa Wedo,	I call Damballa Wedo,
Moin rhelé Aida Wedo, Seigneur.	I call Aida Wedo, Master.
La vie nan mains Bon Dieu.	Life is in the hands of God.
Moin rhelé Papa Agasu, St. Jo, Dokwe Agwe,	I call Papa Agasu, St. Joseph, Dokwe Agwe,
Moin rhelé Mait' Ossange,	I call Master Ossange,
Moin rhelé Mait' St. Jean,	I call Master St. John,
Moin rhelé Gran' Siligbo,	I call Gran' Siligbo,
Moin rhelé Agwe Woyo,	I call Agwe Woyo,
Moin rhelé Loa 'Bitation,	I call the *loa* of the habitation,

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Moin rhelé Aizan,	I call Aizan,
Moin rhelé Sobo, St. Jo, Dokwe Agwe,	I call Sobo, St. Joseph, Dokwe Agwe,
Moin rhelé Papa Gede,	I call Papa Gede,
Moin rhelé toutes mystères.	I call all the gods.

When he had ended his song a number of the "salutes" were played on the drums, to which all danced backward in circles, ending the figure in bows before the drums, which were rolling out the call. In the course of the evening a large number of gods were summoned, but, as would be expected, only the *loa* of the family came to this ceremony. Possessions were observed for Legba, Damballa, Ogun Balandjo, Ogun Galloné, Ogun Ferraille, Gede, and Kadya Bosu. St. John, Ossange, Aizan, Ashadé Bokor, Gran' Bosu, Magie, Jean Pétro, Congo, Guinée, Sobo, Bade, and Agwe Woyo, were the *loa* who refused their summons. Though no deity held the center of the stage for too long a time, the evening was notable because it was marked by an unusually large number of Ogun and Damballa possessions, which seemed constantly to alternate. Damballa being the stronger *loa*, his appearance when Ogun was present necessitated the retirement of the latter; but since the possession of Ogun by one woman was particularly persistent, this god returned again and again. As at a number of dances, the *haut chant* for Ogun Galloné, the French marching-song that salutes the "general," was among the songs heard, when those possessed by the god skipped from one end of the *tonnelle* to the other before the drums.

One particularly striking Damballa possession came on suddenly. As a tall, strong man was seized by the god, he gave a great shout and grasped the beams of the *tonnelle*, disappearing upward through the thatch. For a moment it did not seem that he had climbed on the roof of the *tonnelle*, until a head and arms which appeared between the palm fronds showed he

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was there. To bring him down, a *hunsi* holding water and a candle at once began slowly to dance under him, fixing him with the usual unvarying stare. After some five minutes the candle and water were quickly given to those near by, and in a flash the possessed one was safely on the ground, candle in hand, pouring water before the center pole and the drums, and dancing magnificently.

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Shortly after midnight the head of the family and his wife returned to the scene of the dance, the explanation given for this return revealing the native conception of the power of the *hungan*. Before his arrival, it was said he had been told of the quarrel; hence on his way to the dance he passed the *barrière* of the house of the family head, though he did not stop to speak with him. Prior to leaving his home, however, he was supposed to have performed a rite which, soon after he began drumming at the dance, so affected the children of the family head that they became possessed and at once ran to the *tonnelle*. Since their children were present, the father and mother were forced to come, and this was followed by a reconciliation of those who had quarreled. To make doubly sure that the *loa* would take no offense, however, another dance which formally ended the *service* was given jointly by all members of the family several weeks later.

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One phase of the ceremonial always encountered, but unusually frequent on this occasion, was the salutation of the assembled company by the *loa*. One woman, possessed by Ogun, greeted all present first by shaking hands with wrists crossed in the customary manner, and then kissing each person on both cheeks. Another, possessed by Ossange, took the neckerchief from about his neck and wiped the faces of all those present, paying particular attention to the drummers. The son of the family head was again possessed by Gede as at the *service*, and his greeting to the assembled company was especially dramatic. His possession took the form of a hysteri-

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cal, rapid, continuous jumping, with the body held rigid. As he hobbed up and down, holding his candle under his chin so that the light distorted his features and emphasized the vacant stare in his eyes, he monotonously repeated the sharp sounds of his god: "*Ke-ke-ke-ke-ke-ke-ke!*" or "*Hoi! Hoi! Hoi!*" Standing before some, he would greet them by taking their crossed hands in his strong grip and bringing them down in a single movement that shook the entire body. Once he removed the red kerchief he wore, extending it as an indication he wished gifts of money; he used it to wipe the perspiration from the faces of others; while he would merely run his hands through the hair of still others.[6]

As daybreak neared, the crowd thinned, so that by half past five few of the good drummers or important men remained. Persons who had been sleeping roused themselves, and there was a general exodus. Most of those who had been at the dance did not go to sleep, however, for early Sunday morning mass an hour later found them at the church saying their prayers and listening to the sermon of the priest.

In contrast, another dance visited was noteworthy for its many and varied possessions. It was held at the habitation of one of the fathers-in-law of a *hungan*, and began somewhat later, the drums not arriving until almost eight o'clock. Only a minor ceremony was necessary to bring them through this gateway. The host three times poured water inside the gate, while three men played on the drums and a fourth tapped the *ogan* for a moment. The proceedings began when an elderly *hunsi* summoned Legba, invoking in her song Siligbo Vavon, Dahomey, Ogun, Bade, and "all *loa*." The *hungan* who was host himself arrived at nine o'clock, and the excellence of his drumming caused one possession to follow another with great rapidity. The dance was a large one, and by midnight there were at least two hundred persons in attendance, while at one time fifty or more were dancing about the central post and as many as seven or eight were possessed at once.

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many as seven or eight were possessed at once. During the night of this dance the following thirty-one *loa* "came" in the order named:

Ossange Damballa Wedo	Papa Loko Dahomey
Sobo	Ogun Batala
Bumba	Ogun Batagri
Congo	Ogun Balandjo
Si Adaman	Ogun Shango
Simbi Djo	Malt' Ogun
Agasu Tèmèré	Ogun Ferraille
Damballa	Ogun Ashadé
Odamil Yewe	Ibo Lélé
Ogun Ferraille	Ossange
Bosu Trois Cornes	Agau (Malt' Woyo)
Bosu d'l'eau	Malt' Airan
Simbi (nan d'l'eau)	Shango
Damballa Wedo	Damballa
Simbi Kita	Simbi en Deux Eaux
	Bosu

The only deity that was called but failed to respond was Gran' Bra. And it is to be noted that both Rada and Pétro gods "came" in response to the summons, though *loa* of the two categories were not present under the *tonnelle* at the same time. Each person possessed was looked after very carefully, women's ear-rings being taken off so that they would not be lost, the contents of men's pockets being emptied, and knives always being removed from their sheaths. When one man was violently possessed by Papa Loko Dahomey and danced "strongly," attempts were made to wrest from him the walking-stick he carried. They were not successful, however, and all dodged him as he brandished it. The *hungan* host was always present to take the possessed one inside the house which formed one side of the *tonnelle*, to "treat" him.

A number of comments on the possessions by several of the

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gods may be made. Si Adaman, known as a *loa* Dominicaine, possessed a woman who, with another possessed by Sobo, came to greet the white visitors and ask for *kola*, a non-alcoholic drink much desired by Rada gods. The woman possessed by Agasu Tèmèré was also at one time or another during this dance "mounted" by ten other *loa*. On one occasion, when possessed by this Rada deity, she went to the *barrière* because under the *tonnelle* they were dancing for Simbi—"who is not of my family." Asking another dancer to whom Sobo had come to accompany her, she sang "Saddle and bridle my mount for me," and "Sobo goes with Agasu; he stays in my house." Historically this is significant, since Agasu is the deified ancestor of the royal Dahomean sib, and Sobo the Dahomean god of thunder.

Bosu Trois Cornes came violently to a young girl dressed in red. She was taken inside the house against which the *tonnelle* had been erected, and while a number of men held her, the *hungan* worked over her. She was in a dangerous state, for Ti Kita Demembré, who is much feared, often goes with Bosu, and in this instance of what was said to be a first possession was believed to be "not far away" because of the rigidity with which the arms of the girl were held, in positions almost to dislocate them. The *hungan* scolded the *loa*—"Be off! You are not wanted here!" After the girl had been brought far enough through her possession to pour water and take a candle before the drums, she was sent home, carefully attended. It was held absolutely essential that there be no delay before baptizing her *loa* and sending away its harmful companions; otherwise, when possession next occurred, she might do harm to herself.

Early in the morning one of the several visiting *hungans* became possessed by Damballa, and, imitating the serpent, climbed through the roof of the *tonnelle*. The priest who was host, after bringing him down, danced with him, carrying his guest, still possessed, about the dancing-space on his back as

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a great outcry of acclamation was heard from those present. Afterwards the visitor, always under the influence of his god, greeted everyone with the crossed-arm handshake of the *loa*,* and ended by dancing opposite the young woman to whom so many gods came — now possessed by still another deity.

This dance offered an especially striking demonstration of the hold of the Church on the people of Mirebalais. Feeling that motion pictures of an actual *vodun* dance should be made available so that the real nature of the ceremony could be demonstrated and comparisons made between the Haitian and Dahomean practices of which his visitors had told him, the *houngan* himself made all effort to continue the dance until the morning light would permit pictures to be taken; as an inducement to remain, additional *clairin* and biscuits were provided. As daylight approached, however, on one of the few mornings when no early fog obscured the light, the participants began to slip away, so that by sunrise only the usual fifteen or twenty young folk shuffling about the central post were to be seen. Later, in the village, the procession held the first Sunday of each month before the principal mass of the day passed through the square. Many of those who, as dancers or possessed ones, had been active in this *vodun* dance could be seen in it; while next to the priest himself marched the woman who had been possessed by her eleven *vodun* gods during the night just ended.

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twins and the dead make a single chapter for us." This point of view is supported by a study of the twin cult as found in that part of West Africa from which so much of Haitian culture came, where a single category of the supernatural world, comprising all ancestors, includes both twins and the dead, as well as all others "who have passed through the womb of a woman." As might be expected, the concept is more elaborated in West Africa than in Haiti; but the important point is that in Haiti, though less explicitly formulated, it has persisted.

To worship twins it is not necessary either for a family to number them among its members of this generation, or to have included them within the memory of those living, for it is sufficient if a tradition exists that twins had once been born to some member of the family. If the twins are alive or lived in recent times, sacrifices are given both at Christmas and at harvest time; otherwise only at Christmas. Some families, indeed, worship twins because a *houngan* has divined that their unknown ancestors in "*Guinée*" had included them. There are still others who decide to worship the *marasa* without the advice of a diviner, because certain benefits are believed to come to those who worship twins, because of their power for good or evil.[1]

The source of this power is vague; one characteristic answer to a question concerning it was: "Their power comes from God. Do we ourselves know how twins are made?" It is agreed, however, that St. N[i]colas is their spiritual father — an opinion based on the tale of this saint, held to have been a sorcerer who, in very early times, killed three *marasa* (the twins themselves and the *dosu*, or child after twins) and salted them away in a barrel. The mother of the children came to him to offer up her prayers, and, touched by her sorrow, he resuscitated them, since when he has been their "father." The power of twins, whatever its source, is very real to the Haitians. They are believed to be able to predict rain, for ex-

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845 ample, long before ordinary folk.[2] If promised offerings in the
[1887] event of an ample harvest, their aid in bringing about this
1782 desired end is even more fruitful than that of the *loa* or the
1769 dead, who are therefore appealed to only indirectly.

Twins, however, are capricious beings, ready to do harm if they are not humored. Consequently, twins must be given anything they ask for, and it is especially important to provide them with the clothes they covet, when giving a *mangé marassa*. If their father fails to provide these new clothes, they
[153] will *kembé* (seize) him, and he may at once have an attack of fever or a bad toothache or earache; or, more likely still, he will be seriously constipated, since this is the punishment particularly favored by the *marassa*, just as the *loa* most frequently send dysentery, and the dead cause headaches. If lack
845 of resources makes it impossible to provide what they demand,
599 a painstaking explanation must be given them or they will
828 drive a person mad in the manner recounted in the following *marassa* myth:

> There were once twins, one good and one evil. They were working a field with another brother, but the evil one refused to help. The other two, therefore, said they would not give him any food. Because of this the evil twin drove the third brother insane. After they had long prayed that he reconsider, he finally agreed to restore sanity to his brother, but insisted on inflicting deafness as a punishment, so that this brother was deaf until he died.

845 At the birth of twins, special "twin plates" are provided
1778 when their birth is announced to the *loa* — either before or
1769 after their Church baptism — where offerings to the spirits of twins are placed. Usually paired, the plates may be three in number, in which case the third is for the *dosu*, the child born after twins, who is believed to be even more powerful than twins themselves and is thus an important figure in the cult.

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dead must first count them, he can never accomplish this before daylight. From these precautions, it is evident that for the Haitian the reality of existence after death is no fictional one, as is even more vividly illustrated in the answer given to the question whether or not a flute, such as young boys play, would be placed in the coffin of a lad: "What! And have the dead going about all the time blowing it?"

When dressed, the body is placed on a mat or mattress or in a hammock and covered with a clean cloth. A *bande de machoire*, which goes under the chin and over the head to hold the jaw in place, in earlier days, as today in remote sections of the valley, served the double purpose of making possible the identification of a ghost as such, and of keeping the moisture inside the mouth. At present, however, it is usually removed when the body is placed in the coffin. In earlier times also, as today among the peasants in the hills, the nostrils and ears were plugged with cotton. The body and head are shaved of all hair, and the finger- and toe-nails clipped; hair and clippings are later placed in the coffin and buried with the body. The eyes usually close naturally; it is a bad sign if they do not, indicating, as it does, that magic has caused death. Putrefaction, or any unusual sign connected with death such as when a cadaver swells, or a body remains warm and perspires, or, as mentioned, when the eyes remain open, is held to be an indication that the soul has been taken by a sorcerer and the person "sold"—all signalling a "bad" death and requiring that a dagger be struck into the body and burial take place immediately.

Some time later, the *prêt' savanne* comes to read prayers if the death has occurred in the countryside, or the priest of the local Catholic church if in the town or near it. After the prayers have been said and relatives and friends have addressed the dead and "given him commissions," such as "Say good-day to my mother," "Ask my father to help us, for the weather has been bad this year for the crops . . ." the body is

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older relatives participate in the rites as at any death; moreover, the rule *gran' moun pas sui' 'ti moun* holds only where a father, mother, grandparent, or older sister or brother is concerned.[9] 766

Unless the dead was known to be a sorcerer his house is not abandoned. If, unlike most of his kind, a reputed sorcerer is survived by children, they continue to live in his house, and though no gesture of marked social disapprobation is made, few persons attend the funeral and fewer still put foot inside the house afterwards, which means there is little of the habitual calling on the survivors. An abandoned house of this type is called *caille yun moun lou' gawou* — the house of a werewolf. If a stranger were to buy such a house, he would first have to "restrain" the evil spirits who continued there. Generally, however, a man will not buy land unless a diviner ascertains that no evil beings have ever been associated with it. 76 [425] [787]

Such, in outline, are the principal rites for the dead and the outer manifestations of the sanctions which validate the cult for its followers. Fundamentally, these derive from the power which the dead wield in the world of the living — power that is held to come directly from God, who has not only given the dead all the rights of the living, but also the right to return to earth as ghosts. There are several types of dead, two of these being the *vien-viens* and the *zombi*. The *vien-viens* are ordinary ghosts; the latter, who will be discussed in the next chapter, are those whose souls have been "sold" by sorcerers and are therefore doomed to wander the earth until their destined time arrives to return to God. Still another type of dead are the ghosts of children who die before baptism, called *lutins*, who ride young horses, so that when a wild colt with a tangled mane is seen, it is said that a *lutin* has been on his back. The souls of the dead are held first to go to God in the sky, where they are condemned to purgatory or hell or permitted to remain in paradise; "It is God who creates, therefore when someone dies, he returns to Him." And as for the effect of pur- 775

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775 gatory on those who are possessed by *loa* who go unharmed in fire, it is said: " It is the *loa* that go into the fire. The soul is another thing."

All agree that the dead do not possess folk in the manner of the *loa,* as might be expected from the fact that the most important rituals in the cult of the dead are not only dominated by the Church, but carried out by its priest. In the matter of consulting the dead when questions of importance for the family are involved, however, there is no consensus of opinion. The most widespread point of view holds that only those dead whose *loa* have not been removed from their heads can be summoned, and that this is done only to permit them to " go to God," so their souls may be at rest. Otherwise, " when the dead are called, it is a matter of magic, for the dead are never good and one always must fear them." And though a 787 Mait' 'Bitation that is an old, old ancestor may " mount the 775 head " of a member of the family, he would never be specially called and in most cases, if he did come, would be " re- [669] strained." On the other hand, it was recounted how during the Caco rebellion the soul of Dessalines was brought into a jar and asked for his counsel. It is said, however, that he was so angered at the consistent defeats sustained by the Haitians that he struck everyone to earth and roundly scolded them for having lost the liberty with which he endowed them, departing without giving the desired advice. And since the spirits of Christophe and Toussaint are believed to be even stronger, no one had sufficient courage to summon them!

765 The immediate nature of the relation between the dead and the living is best seen in the conventions and attitudes surrounding the wearing of mourning, which is required of all children of the deceased, whether " legitimate " or other- [822] wise. Black is worn twelve months for a father, eighteen months for a mother; and half-mourning — black and white — is worn for a sister, brother, cousin, uncle, or aunt. In the country, before full mourning is put on, the black cloth is

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taken to the *pret' savanne* to be blessed with holy water; in the town the Catholic priest is said to do this. In full mourning, black is worn on Sundays, Mondays, and Fridays, the days sacred to the dead, but since full mourning means that one must be dressed in one's best and it is impossible to wear these clothes all day long even in the first weeks after death, the rule is to remain at home, fully dressed, on Sundays, Mondays, and Fridays, wearing the full mourning outside the house only to Sunday mass. 765

When full mourning for a parent cannot be worn immediately following death, the fulfillment of the obligation is postponed. If this duty is not ultimately met, however, the dead take vengeance, so that a child of the one who was remiss perhaps falls ill, or some other misfortune comes to him. If the negligent one is no longer living, then the penalty for his neglect will be assessed on his children, who, on consulting a diviner, will be told that they must wear mourning not only for their own parents, but for their grandparents as well. Such is the case of a dying woman whose story is recounted, for a diviner ascertained that though she had worn mourning for her own father, he had not worn it for his parent; as soon as she put on full mourning for her grandfather, she is said to have immediately recovered. 765 775 784 [787] [755]

A widower wears mourning for a legally married wife for a year, and a widow for her husband during a similar period, and it is believed that if a man were to remarry before the year has elapsed, his second wife would die, so that a woman will not go sooner to a widower, while it is equally dangerous for a widow to take a husband before the first anniversary of the death of her spouse. Should a *placée* wife die, however, another may be taken in her stead before the year has passed, for it is only in matters where the Church is concerned that the dead take vengeance. Furthermore, a man who has more than one mate may go to his other wives at any time after the death of a spouse, and though he would, of course, not go to them 765 587 [583] [595]

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789 [888] person of great experience was pointed out who was believed able to stop a runaway horse without putting a finger on him. One widely spread type of charm is an *arrêt* against the *mal jok*, or evil eye. Mention has been made of protective charms when the measures taken to guard growing crops were discussed, and also in connection with safeguarding the well-being of infants. The power in this latter type of *garde* often is made to reside in a seed on a string or chain, or a cross of beads sewed on cloth, to represent the four corners of the earth.

789 793 Because charms are the outer symbols of magic, detailed examples of their making will give insight into the nature of charms in general. The first of these which may be described [827] was a *garde*, made by a *mambu*, to relieve a pregnant woman [787] whose milk had begun to flow before the birth of her child [954] — a sign that an evil spirit had been sent her by an enemy, and that her delivery would therefore be fraught with danger. [787] During the séance the *mambu* was continuously possessed by her god, Ogun, whose identity was shown by her whistling. Before the *mambu* as she commenced her incantation were some *clairin*, lighted red candles, a new piece of soap, incense, sulphur, garlic, light brown shoemaker's thread, an empty bottle, a bottle filled with a green, evil-smelling lotion called *baigne de mambu*, a chick, and three iron nails. As she tied the cord in knots she muttered her spell; then, taking the empty bottle, she put in it a bit of the incense, sulphur, garlic, some soap, some *clairin*, and some *baigne de mambu*. With the knotted cord she tied a cross made of two nails to the neck of the bottle, repeating her formula before she put it down. Instructing the pregnant woman to take the bottle, she said: "Speak into it and say everything you wish."

[825] She then took the chick, opened its beak, and wrote on it with a pencil, continuing the incantation the while. With the pencil she also made marks on the thighs, the wings, the upper joints, and the leg joints before she handed it to her client

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term *loup-garou*, or werewolf. From Africa has come the concept of the *baka*, though this he has merged with that of the *démon*, and all operate through the power of Lucifer and the Devil, conceived as two separate beings. In addition, as will be seen, the cult of the dead also contributes to this system, since the *loa* who rule the cemeteries are indispensable for the practice of magic, as it bears especially on the concept of *zombi*, concerning which so much has been made in recent years.

The evil *loups-garous* are women whose real nature is revealed by their red eyes, though some hold that they have a black spot in the corner of the eye. Another word less frequently heard to designate the *loup-garou* is the Dahomean term *azeto*, employed in Africa for witches and vampires, a concept which in Haiti has become merged with that of the werewolf.[8] The *loup-garou*, with her male counterpart, the *démon*, is empowered by the *bocor*. As might be expected, she is greatly feared, and should an old woman suspected of being one of them come to a house, someone will see to it that in an adjoining room two brooms are crossed as the woman's name is pronounced three times, so that if she is actually a *loup-garou*, she cannot escape.[9] Children in particular carry counter-charms both against these women and against demons; one such, for a woman with child, has been mentioned in an earlier chapter,[10] and the making of another *garde* of this type has just been described. With a charm of this kind "you can leave at midnight for Port-au-Prince [instead of waiting for dawn] and fear nothing. You may meet a band of horned demons carrying candles in their hands, but they will stand aside and let you pass."

In Mirebalais, *baka* are usually mentioned when these evil beings are discussed, particularly since it is in connection with them that the term *engagement* is most often heard. An *engagement*, which is more feared than a *wanga*, the word usually encountered in the literature when evil magic is under discussion, designates a pledge made by a person, usually to

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"give" a collateral member of his own family to an evil spirit in return for some important gain to himself. The spirit, however, is insatiable, and never rests content with a single victim. Thus it happens that when one member of a family dies and then another, and another, the *hungans* who are consulted declare such an *engagement* to exist. As soon as this is revealed, all other members take steps to safeguard their houses spiritually — perhaps in the manner of those whose *service* was described in an earlier chapter, which, it will be remembered, was motivated by just such a discovery. Unfailingly, however, the *baka* is there at the appointed hour, clamoring for his due, and proceeds to satisfy himself by turning upon the one who has made the *engagement*, killing his own wife and children, and finally himself.

Why, knowing this, do people enter into such compacts? The answer is usually a shrug of the shoulders, or the statement that human beings are at times driven to such desperation that nothing will restrain them. "A man may even pledge half his own life." Often the reason for such a compact is a craving to advance the status of his children, and that is why when a man who has been consistently unfortunate in worldly matters suddenly becomes affluent, gossip of an *engagement* is heard. But such wealth, it is believed, "passes like the wind."

There are several types of *baka*.[11] Some go about "devouring" men — the term *mangé moun*, in Haiti as in Africa, is idiomatic for sending fatal illness or bringing about an accidental death — while others, who stay in the house of their master, go forth only to procure him riches. These latter are jealous spirits and "make their conditions" — which means that they will ultimately destroy the members of their master's family, particularly his children, or, should a man repent of his bargain and dismiss them, they will return to kill him. To bring wealth to their master, they rob others. Some believe that *baka* are *loa* who change into these creatures from time to

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time, or are animals given power as *baka* by these *loa*. The "squad" of the *baka* includes the following: 776 787 754

'Ti Kita Demembré	Simbi Proméné
'Ti Jean Pié Sèche	Simbi en Deux Eaux
Erzilie Gé Rouge	Simbi Troi' Z'ilé

Baka appear as small bearded human-like figures with flaming eyes, or as cattle, horses, asses, goats, bears(?), and dogs. Sheep never become *baka* because the sheep, as represented on the chromolithographs, is the animal of the Virgin and therefore cannot be a creature of evil. The mule also is never a *baka* for reasons given in the myth explaining how it came to be accursed. 776 825

[773]

> One day Jesus came down a path astride a mule. When he came to a crossroads a snake so frightened the mule that he reared on his hind legs, throwing Jesus to the ground. Jesus became angry and cursed him, saying that from that day onward mules would never bear offspring. He also cursed the snake, saying that thereafter it must forever go about on its belly.

Whether because of this or because of its long, alert ears, the mule is favored for night travel, for this animal is held able to sense these creatures of evil and give his rider warning of them. A black cat can become a *baka*, but there are also good black cats that drive away evil spirits. Even if a black cat-*baka* is sent away, nothing happens to its owner.

A *baka* named Babako, sometimes called Bakuba Baka, is believed to live in the *mapou* tree, where he is "fed" in December. "He is the chief of [evil] magic, is magic itself," it is said, and "*C'est baggai diabolique, gros baka*—he is a thing of the Devil, a great *baka*." For this reason the *mapou* tree is greatly feared, and that is why those who "serve" the gods of the *mapou* do it in secret and are dealt with circumspectly. 776 824

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ABOVE, *At a* vodun *dance: those possessed whirling about the central post.*

BELOW, *Making the* vodun *drum: describing the sign of the cross with lighted candles over the unheaded bodies.*

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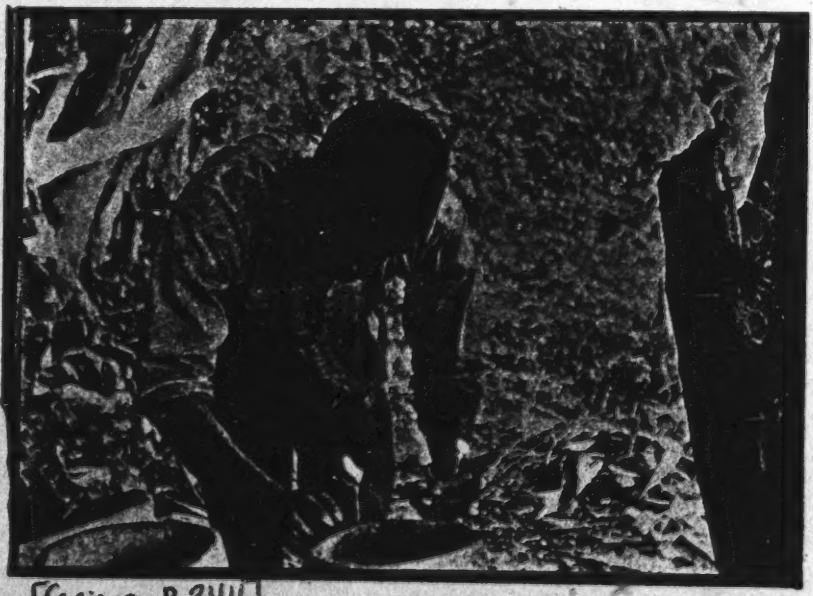

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with it, or the body is made to lie face downwards in the coffin, since the discomfort of this position causes the spirit of the dead to avenge itself on the sorcerer who caused the death. When a man has been killed by magic, his surviving relatives go to a *hungan* or a *bocor* to discover the culprit. The names of those suspected of the deed are called. Before the diviner stands a pottery jar filled with magically treated water. When the unwilling image of the guilty one finally appears, the *hungan* plunges his knife into it, and as the water turns red, those watching know that when the specified number of days have passed, the guilty one will be dead.[12] Should a suspect be innocent, the image of the Virgin Mary or of St. John is sometimes seen when he is called; but if one known to be guilty does not appear, it is proof that his magic is stronger than that used to call him. Recourse is then had to a powerful *wanga*, or poison, or to the spirit of someone dead, an *âme abandonée* who has led a life of evil and himself been a murderer. "They would certainly not send the spirit of the one just killed. He is too green" — to bring death to the killer. If none of these measures prevail, no further acts of revenge are attempted against the suspect, the feeling being that he has supplied himself with too powerful magic to allow effective revenge to be taken.

On occasion, an apparent death is felt not to be a real death, but rather the simulacre of death brought about by the machination of a sorcerer. The corpse is thereupon given poison or stabbed with a dagger, to make certain that an apparent death becomes an actual one, but the person who stabs the body must stand behind it in order that the corpse as slave of the sorcerer may not reveal who had stabbed him when summoned, and thus make of the one who had robbed him of his prey a substitute victim. If poison has not been administered to the corpse, or if the body was not stabbed, after the funeral the sorcerer recovers the body, which, deprived of its soul, works for him as a *zombi*, only returning to the grave when the time decreed by God for his natural death is reached, or if

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754 776 been made to kill through the use of black magic, Gede refuses to "dig the grave," no matter what measures the *bocor* may take. In such a case the victim may be desperately ill, but [782] [782] will not die. When a *hungan* divines the cause, offerings are made to Gede for having saved him from the *magie* of Baron. For, in the final analysis, "if Gede is in accord with Baron, death can come, but if the two are not in accord, the man against whom a *wanga* has been sent will only suffer."

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makes for deification of the family dead, but constitutes the oldest ancestor of a relationship group one of the great gods and thus causes families to give primary allegiance to a restricted number of deities. The most striking aspect of this tradition preserved in Haiti is that all ceremonies must be given by family groups, and at them only members of the family may with propriety become possessed. Possession itself, and the elements which constitute the possession complex — the use of the drums, the rhythms associated with particular gods, the importance of songs in calling the spirits, the mode of worship through specific dances for specific deities — these make up another series of Africanisms. In the dance itself the use of iron to sound basic rhythms for the drums, the outer form and function of the rattle, and the fact that the circle of participants always rotates in a counter-clockwise direction, are equally African. The modes of behavior to be observed as possession comes on and the psychological release that follows it both derive from the same source, as do the beliefs that rituals must be held on the days sacred to the particular god being worshipped.

Another retention of African tradition is a belief in the importance of sacrifice. It will be remembered that it is held to be more essential to "feed" the gods than to dance for them. This is also the tradition of all peoples of the region from which the slaves were derived, and in a sense reflects the very immediate relationship that obtains between Africans, or Haitians, and their gods. Since in both regions each deity performs the double role of doing good for those who worship it properly and harassing those who neglect it, the importance of giving adequate sacrifices to avert evil is evident. In both Haiti and Africa, however, these may differ with the wealth of the individual giving the offering, with the number of persons who contribute toward the ceremony where offerings are given, or with the seriousness of the situation which the deity is being asked to remedy. That the gods permit such varia-

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overturn his memory, overturn his thought, overturn his house, overturn for me my enemies visible and invisible; cause the thunder and the tempest to break them into pieces. And in honor of St. Bouleversé, three Paters and three Ave Marias. . . .[8]

Thus it is seen how Catholicism invades the beliefs and rites of the *vodun* cult. In an analogous fashion *vodun* has not failed to make itself felt in certain festivals of the Church,[9] for while elements of *vodun*, rigidly suppressed inside the Catholic churches, are absent except in so far as they can be carried on surreptitiously, they are nevertheless integral parts of these fêtes in the minds of the folk who make pilgrimages to them. So arresting is the resulting mingling of practices, and so significant for the amalgamation of cultures that has taken place in Haiti, that a detailed discussion will be given of the most prominent instance of this type, the festival in honor of the Virgin of the Palms, which takes place each year on July fifteenth at Ville-Bonheur, or, as it is better known, at Saut d'Eau. The festival of 1926 has been described by Price-Mars;[10] here certain observations made during the fête of 1934 may be given, especially as they have to do with those aspects of the mythology which validate the festival, and as they illustrate the non-Catholic, voduistic phases of the celebration, of importance for the points being considered in this chapter.

Beside the church, Ville-Bonheur has three especially sacred spots, St. John, En bas Palmes, and Saut d'Eau — the falls themselves. At St. John is a large *campêche* tree surrounded by many palms, from beneath which flow streams of water. St. John is said to have appeared here, carrying his scepter as in the chromolithographs, and at that time water began to flow in the sacred springs, and except for one short period has continued ever since as holy water, being used for drinking and bathing, but never for purposes of cooking. The priests

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AT SAUT D'EAU

ABOVE, *Large crowds of worshippers drawn by this fête of the Church.*
BELOW, *Possession coming on as a* vodun *deity "mounts the head" of a devotee who, climbing a tree, exhorts those gathered to hear him.*

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[facing P. 283]

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stationed near by did not at first believe in this miracle, until after several appearances of the saint the higher authorities of the Church gave the fête their sanction. Many tales are recounted of skeptics who, though coming to scoff, became filled with awe when they put foot in the holy place and — significantly for the merging of the two religions — were possessed by *loa* for the first time. A church which has since burned and a small chapel were erected at the site which now is the entrance to the enclosure before the present church. This is the old calvary enlarged, and here the statue of the Virgin, saved when the earlier church burned, is found. Next to this church are the uncompleted walls of the structure which is to be a new and larger church. It is said, however, that this edifice has given much trouble, for each time the walls reach a certain height they fall. The people say: "The Virgin does not like this place," and believe that a simpler church should be built where the old one stood.

The vision of the Virgin at En bas Palmes is believed to have occurred several times, most recently as placed by a lively tradition in the days of the American Marine occupation, when a priest is said to have caused both St. John and En bas Palmes to be closed for several years because, as at present, many who prayed at the church also took occasion to worship their *loa*.

During the fête, however, the tale goes, the Virgin appeared on a palm tree. The people, on their knees worshipping, sent to the priest to come and pray. He declared it merely superstition, however, and called an American Marine captain stationed at Mirebalais to help him suppress this worship. The captain ordered a Haitian sergeant to shoot the vision, but the Virgin merely moved to another tree; another shot, and she moved again. They cut down the tree, and those who looked on with terror saw the vision slowly ascend to the sky. As the priest

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turned to leave, word came that his house had burned and nothing in it was saved. Later he suffered a paralytic stroke from which he never recovered. Some say that the American captain became ill and was sent to the States "as a punishment for what he had done." Several days later the sergeant was found mad, wandering in the woods. Since he had fired under orders, however, his punishment was but temporary, and on being cured he returned to Ville-Bonheur to ask pardon of the Virgin. Today he lives in Mirebalais. When they saw the American ill, the priest paralyzed, the sergeant mad, and the presbytery burned, "public clamor" became so strong that both St. John and En bas Palmes were reopened.[11]

In 1932 a cyclone at St. John tore down trees and houses and hurt but did not kill the worshippers who had gathered there. An eyewitness insisted he had seen the enormous whirling cloud rise from the sacred place. He had no time to reach his house, for with a noise like a cannon-shot the whirlwind came, and an enormous oak tree fell just behind him — "I saw death staring at me." Today he carries two scapularies to the Virgin to protect him.

The third sacred spot is at the falls themselves, where the grandeur and beauty of the scene is such as to induce the religious thrill almost unaided, and where great numbers go in the course of their pilgrimage to Ville-Bonheur. There are two falls, situated at a distance of several miles from the village, one for Damballa and one for Aida Wedo, and it is believed that those who bathe in the sacred streams become possessed. It is said that the palms near by are sacred to the Virgin, but others hold that they are for Damballa. Many visit the falls on the day preceding the fête, but the largest throng hurries there immediately after the principal mass, when the greatest number of possessions and the most violent seizures by the *loa* occur. The falls, therefore, in association

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The falls, therefore, in association with the purely Catholic rituals carried on at the village church, are seen to hold an important if unofficial place in the complex of rites known in the Haitian Church calendar as the Fête of Saut d'Eau.

During the two or three days preceding the fête and on the fifteenth of July itself, an air of great gayety not unlike the carnival spirit accompanying European Church festivals pervades the surrounding country. Camions traverse the almost impassable side road, bringing crowds of people from Port-au-Prince, from the Dominican border, and even from the north, who throng the streets and the shrines and tramp the miles from the village to the waterfalls or visit the nearer sacred sites of St. John's Wood and En bas Palmes, to light candles and ask the satisfaction of their needs. Like the falls them selves, these spots by their very beauty awaken a sense of emo tional awareness, and it is not strange that here, as at the falls, many possessions occur. At night, in particular, the great trees with their interlacing serpent-like roots, the gaping earth which at En bas Palmes is witness to the uprooting of the palm trees where the miracle occurred, and the stream of sacred water, all make a scene of indescribable eeriness, heightened by the flickering candles given as offerings, and the open lamps of those who stay the night here to fulfill their vows.

In the town itself gambling and other games go on, and dances of all kinds are held at night, among them *vodun* and *bal*, though at these public dances no possessions are countenanced. One of the most colorful aspects of the scene is the *penitants*, wearing clothing of varied colors in fulfillment of a request by the *loa* they worship or an obligation to them. Such folk are not permitted in church unless the clothing which marks them is covered by ordinary dress, but they walk the streets, often possessed and often using their power to heal those whom they encounter. Possessions by Ogun, by Gede, by Baron Samedi, by Damballa, by Erzilie and other *vodun* deities were observed, particularly at the shrines, where their devotees prophesied and healed the sick.

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it joins the flooded Artibonite as its master accompanies Clairmé on his way to consult with the great ruler of the sea, Agwe. Actually, at the height of the rainy season the force of the light colored muddy water of the major stream holds back the darker colored flow of its tributaries in a manner which accords with the legend, so that, observing the Tombe River at one such time, the Haitians who were present said: "The Tombe is waiting for its master to pass."

Gede, a deity who figures in both the Rada and the Pétro groups as chief functionary under Baron Samedi, ruler of cemeteries, is tolerated rather than favored, though his rewards to his devotees include the refusal to dig a premature grave for them. When Gede possesses a devotee at a dance, Damballa, Ogun, and the other Rada gods "leave" at once, and those who are possessed by them come out of their possessions. For though Gede is no less a *loa* than other gods, "He is a *zombi* and is fed apart"; as the Haitians say: "The *loa* are like human beings. They will not mingle with the dead, and Gede is of the dead." His color is black, and Saturday is his sacred day. He "eats" salt herring, hot peppers, cassava, roasted corn, roasted bananas, and other roasted foods. He drinks *clairin* — much of it — and at great ceremonies a black goat and chickens are killed for him, as well as those chickens with ruffled feathers called *djakati*, which in all the New World, as in Africa, are believed to discover and dig up magic charms set against their owners. He lives in the cemetery, "behind the cross." There are a number of deities whose names are compounded with the name of Gede — Gedenibo, Gedeonsu, Gedehun — and hence the question whether or not this is a generic term or a specific designation is pertinent. There is no agreement on this point, and it could only be established that those *loa* who bear the same name, such as all Ogun or Bosu or Simbi deities, are brothers; but who the parents of these groups may have been is not known.

Associated with Simbi and Gede in the Pétro "squad" are

heard in Haiti, but descriptive details of the practice abound." Elsewhere (p. 158) she speaks of "this higgledy piggledy pantheon" of *loa*, whose traits "none . . . [were] . . . able to describe . . . at all systematically." Price-Mars (I), 52, however, mentions the existence of a theology based on African beliefs not unlike that described here.

[9] Cf. Parsons (I), 168.

[10] Nowhere is the confusion with which writers on Haiti have approached and presented *vodun* theological concepts better exemplified than in the passage found in Craige, 98–9; or 71, where a charm for working evil magic is spoken of as "something having to do with voodoo."

[11] Despite the importance of possession, one would hesitate before accepting in its entirety the somewhat simplistic approach of Dorsainvil that "*le vodou se ramène à l'idée de la possession*," (I), 113.

[12] St. Mery, i, 35.

[13] Parsons (I), 169, note 2, speaks of baptism, but states "*loi* Pétrou is one you do not baptise, as you do other *loi* when they come . . ." — a custom at variance with Mirebalais procedure.

[14] Cf. Parsons (I), 163, however, where the meaning of *marré* is given "to get the spirit."

[15] See Parsons (I), 164–5, for a description of a "shrine" of a worshipper of the *loa*.

[16] Cf. Dorsainvil (I), 115 ff.

[17] This is undoubtedly the explanation of Seabrook's "hermaphroditic god" called Papa Nebo (Gedenibo), which he shows on pp. 9 and 10 of the plates of his book. As is indicated elsewhere in this volume, Gede, who does not partake of this characteristic in the least, has thus been woefully misunderstood by Seabrook.

[18] Dorsainvil (I), 72–4, describes possession as a *vodun* ceremony, and Wirkus, 173 ff., also gives a description of a possession scene, but his account is pitched so hysterically as materially to lessen its usefulness for serious comparisons.

[19] (I) *passim*, but especially 18–19, 58–61, 86–7, 111–12. A definition of *vodun* more acceptable to those who approach social phenomena from an ethnological and historical point of view is to be found on page 190. Price-Mars (I), 123 ff., gives an extended criticism of Dorsainvil's hypothesis, though from quite a different point of

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view from that given here.

[6] Parsons (I), 171, describes how she witnessed a woman "refuse the visitation of her *loa*."

[7] Price-Mars (I), 34, speaks of the "*obligations annuelles de participer par un acte quelconque aux sacrifices cultuels* . . ." laid on the voduist.

[8] St. Mery, i, 51; see also Dorsainvil (I), 46.

[9] Seabrook's description of a "Pétro" ceremony (pp. 31 ff.) deserves, on the basis of its inner inconsistencies, to be considered a masterpiece of misstatement and misinterpretation. Its effect, and the effect of others like it, have done much to perpetuate this incorrect idea of the Pétro rites.

[10] Dorsainvil, Price-Mars, and Parsons all employ these terms, rather than *papaloi* and *mamaloi*, the designations found in more popular books such as those of Craige, Seabrook, and Wirkus. The latter two of these writers seem confused about these words and fail to make it clear whether or not they mean the same or different functionaries of the *vodun* cult when they use the words *houngen* and *papaloi*.

[11] Compare Dorsainvil (I), 75–7 and 121, where he expresses a low opinion of the *hungan*, holding him unreliable and insincere in his worship, as contrasted to the *vrai serviteur*.

[12] Op. cit., 175–9.

[13] Even though followers of the *vodun* cult are more organized in some parts of Haiti than in Mirebalais, it is arrant nonsense to speak of a "supreme high priestess" of the cult, its *grande mamaloi*, as does Seabrook, 117, or of a "black pope of voodoo" as Wirkus has done (in *Harper's Magazine*, Vol. 168, pp. 38–49, 188–98; December 1933–January 1934).

[14] A sober statement of the degrees of initiation into the cult (although these do not hold for Mirebalais) is to be found in Dorsainvil (I), 168–9, and also 62.

CHAPTER IX

[1] Price-Mars (I), 144, gives a long and excellent list of the reasons for offering sacrifices.

[2] A description of a *humfort* destroyed by the Marines during their occupation, and a detailed account of its

789 all aspects of the natural and supernatural. But the reputable cult priest
791 does not dabble in "black" magic—the kind that maims or destroys hu-
793 man beings. One who does so is said to "work with two hands": one for
754 the loa and one for evil. (The expression *servi dé main*—"serving with two hands"—is also applied to a cult chief who deals with deities of more than one "nation.") Many a cult priest in making his ritual flour drawings on the earth holds his left hand behind his back and draws with his right, giving testimony that he "works with one hand" only.

793 Each cult priest maintains his own cult temple, or *hounfor*. There are
794 no cult officials above him, as there is no formal religious organization
[346] beyond the hounfor itself. Within his own special community he is therefore the chief religious functionary, the apex of an intratemple social organization. Under the cult priest, ordinarily, there are two grades of assistants, and below them two classes of servitors.

793 The cult priest is usually referred to as a *houngan*, a Fon (Dahomean)
787 title signifying "spirit chief." Sometimes he is called *gangan* (a Bantu
171 word meaning "conjuror" or "doctor")[2] or *capla*. He also is known by
791 the title *bocó* or *bocor*, which seems to be derived from *bocono*, the diviner or priest of the Dahomean Fa cult.[3] The bocor is, in fact, sometimes referred to as a *divineur*, and he is regarded by some Haitians as a clairvoyant and a practitioner of magic. As in Dahomey, the bocor in Haiti foretells fate through the throwing of shells or chips, much in the manner of the secular game *mayamba*. He also reads destiny with small sticks or ashes. In earlier days the cult priest was sometimes known by the Yoruba name *babalao*, a title which has been corrupted to *papaloi*. A female cult leader is known as a *mambo*. She is presumed to have, in a general way,
[562] the same powers as the houngan, though in some quarters her *connaissance*, or "understanding," is not regarded so highly, and her status is believed to be somewhat lower.

794 Directly under the houngan is his chief assistant, the *laplace*, and perhaps a little below him on the ladder, the *mambo caille*. The laplace is regarded as the vice-houngan, and he assumes responsibility for running the hounfor in the absence of his chief. The mambo caille, a woman, runs the cult center in the absence of both the houngan and the laplace. One step farther down the ladder is the *houngénicon*, who acts as a sort of chief of the main body of devotees. These high-ranking assistants to the houngan are sometimes called *badjicans*, or keepers of the altar.

[171] The servitors of the cult are known as *hounsi*, or "spirit wives," a name that was given to certain categories of cult servants in Dahomey.[4] There are two main groups of hounsi: *kanzo* (those who have passed through a ritual fire test) and *bossale* (those whose loa are wild or untamed). The

[2] [Footnote appears on p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]
[3] [Gorer, Africa Dances, p. 129; Herskovits, Dahomey, I, 208 ff. Cf. p. 349, Category 116. --Analyst]
[4] [Foot note appears on p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

loa makes his appearance in Vodoun ritual by possessing ("mounting") one or more of the participants. When these possessions first occur, the possessed persons lapse into a kind of frenzy without controls or direction. They may stagger, fall, and go into convulsions. The deity must be controlled so that he will not harm the person whose body he takes over. The houngan eventually establishes a conditioned, formalized response to possession; and once this is achieved, the loa is regarded as having been tamed. The *hounsi bossale* then becomes eligible for elevation to the status of kanzo. The term *kanzo* means "to tie fire"; that is, to conquer or show mastery over fire. Demonstrations of supremacy of possessed persons over flames, hot coals, and red-hot metal characterize many Vodoun rituals. In the kanzo ritual the initiate must undergo the test of boiling oil.

The hierarchy of the cult temple, in general, looks like this:

Houngan (or *Mambo*)—chief of the hounfor
Laplace—first assistant to the houngan
Mambo caille—"mistress of the house"
Houngénicon—topmost of all the hounsi
Hounsi kanzo—the highest grade of hounsi
Hounsi bossale—the lowest grade of hounsi

Among the hounsi there are some who have special duties or functions. There is the *reine silence*, for example, whose job is to maintain order. The one assigned to cook the various sacrifices is called the *hounsi cuisinière*, and so on.

There is no single, clear-cut process for becoming a Vodoun priest. A man with special talents may rise from the rank of hounsi and eventually become a houngan by succession. Or a person with a strong *connaissance* may simply feel the call—sometimes in a dream—and establish himself as a houngan or bocor. If such a man demonstrates that he is "strong," a following will gather around him to constitute his *société*.

When a houngan dies, his cult center may be abandoned, or it may be taken over by another established houngan or by the deceased man's protégé. Frequently the laplace will inherit the cult temple and all that goes with it. Acquisition of a cult center by inheritance is looked upon as a means of keeping an established hounfor intact. The man who wishes to achieve the rank of houngan applies to the oldest and most venerable cult priest in the district and announces that he wishes to receive the *asson* (the ritual rattle) that is, to become a houngan. If the elder priest approves and wishes to sponsor the younger man's elevation, he consults other reputable houngans and arranges for a *grand service* for purification and investiture. The elder cult priest conducts the ceremonies. He is regarded as especially wise because of his age and long experience in dealing with the loa, whose

793 approval of the candidate's elevation is needed. He is also regarded as
[769] being on more intimate terms with the family ancestors who, likewise,
must be in accord with the proceedings. The candidate for the asson is
[783] confined within the hounfor for a number of days, during which he takes purification baths and participates in other rituals. The rites that take place during this period are prescribed by the elder priest who has assumed responsibility. When the purification is ended, the candidate emerges into the *peristyle* (roofed court) to participate in the general service, and to undergo further tests.

Present during the ceremonies are all the principal houngans of the region—men who will be friendly associates of the new priest or, possibly, unfriendly competitors. The candidate is tested on his knowledge
[789] of how to use the asson and the tiny hand bell, and in the course of the service he is mounted by the loa who is the chief protector of the cult tem-
[782] ple. Animals are sacrificed, and all the loa sacred to the hounfor are invoked and asked for their approval and support. But it is not only the loa
[794] and the dead who must indicate their approval. The elder houngan polls the hounsi kanzo on whether they will accept their new cult chief and fol-
[533] low him. He also asks the chief drummer, who polls his assistant drummers. It is taken for granted that the decision is in the hands of the hounsi. The consensus is known before the actual service, but the formality of asking the question is observed. Should the hounsi refuse to accept the candidate for the asson, the elevation cannot take place.

793 The city and the countryside contain many self-styled houngans and
554 bocors who are not recognized as bona fide by the community, regardless
62 of the route by which they claim to have achieved their station. Sometimes
[791] they are regarded as *pas fort* (not strong); that is, they do not have profound knowledge and understanding. The Haitian is quick to detect the difference between a houngan who knows and one who does not know. Many are stated to be outright fakes. One man who attempted to hold a service in Port-au-Prince aroused such contempt and disgust that a number of persons who had been drawn by genuine interest walked out with remarks that the man should be punished. In fact, his failure to show any
[533] essential qualifications for the houngan's role was commented upon in a song of ridicule that made its appearance at a secular dance that same night. The song noted some of the humorous aspects of the service, such as when the "impostor" struck himself vigorously on the head with the flat of a machete to show his "strength" and virtually incapacitated himself for the rest of the evening.

346 It is easily observed that no two hounfors are exactly alike. They differ

in the services. In the court, the bases of four sacred trees . . . are surrounded by circles of masonry [low brick walls]. These *reposoirs* are inhabited by the *loa* Legba, Ogoun, Loco and Saugo.[5]

There is little in Aubin's description to suggest that hounfors were much different a half century ago from what they are today. He errs in identifying the "thunder stones" solely with Damballa. But his eye for detail was acute. In 1950 a mambo in the neighborhood of this hounfor described by Aubin affirmed that some of the loa stones and old coins which he mentioned are still to be found among the properties of a hounfor in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. Others were lost in one of the cleric-inspired raids which despoiled cult temples of drums and other paraphernalia about fifteen years ago.

Many services are held outside the hounfor and the peristyle. Some rituals, such as animal sacrifices and "talking to the loa below the water," may take place some distance from the cult buildings. Indeed, various Vodoun ceremonies may be held at waterfalls, at the seashore, in sacred groves, in ordinary homes, in a boat at sea,[6] or under a sacred tree.

The rites of the hounfor are almost without number. They are associated with the supplication or conciliation of virtually countless deities, each of which has his own special service. There are services in multitudinous combinations and permutations for the dead, for twins, for albinos, and for unborn children. There are ceremonies for the elevation of hounsi and for initiation, smoke and fire ordeals, and tests of other kinds. There are *mangé loa* (feasts for the deities) and *mangé morts* (feasts for the dead). There are services for the sick, for the crops, and for the harvest. In one context or another, Vodoun relates to nearly every aspect and phase of life—and its counterpart, death. Since every region, every locality, and, in fact, almost every hounfor has developed its own ritual out of the common materials, it is possible to see hundreds of ceremonies without ever seeing precisely the same one twice. Yet the common elements bind them all together.

One such prime element is the possession, the "mounting" of the human body by one of the deities. Possession is a psychological phenomenon common to the rites of many cults throughout the world. It is known in Asia, Africa, Europe, and America. It is not the unique property of the African and his Haitian descendant. In the United States it is a commonplace not only among certain Negro cults but certain white cults as well. The United States Negro had ample West African inspiration for his seizures in the church and at the baptism. The intellectual meaning of these seizures has changed, as have their outward forms to a measurable extent, but their emotional content has not altered.

5 Translated from the French of Aubin, En Haiti, pp. 57-59. Cf. p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst

6 [Footnote appears on p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]

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●782 In Haiti the possession takes many forms, according to the nature of the deity who has entered the body, and depending on whether the possessed person has learned to "control" that deity. The possessing, or "mounting," of the possessed individual is manifest proof of the loa's existence and his constant proximity. Vodoun is built upon the premise [771] of the existence of loa, and the possession is the instrument of direct con- [776] tact and of constant proof of the loa's imminence.

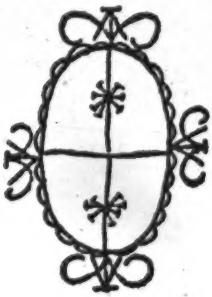
771 Although much of Vodoun is cast in the Dahomean mold, it is no 776 longer what it was originally in Dahomey. Many of the original deities 776 of the Dahomean Earth pantheon, the Sky pantheon, and the Thunder pantheon have survived. Others have been forgotten, but in their place there has grown a vast array of loa, recruited partly from the Yoruba deities and perhaps from deities of other West African tribes. By far the largest group has come into existence in Haiti—loa whose names, at least, probably would go unrecognized in West Africa.

772 There have been prolific intrusions into Vodoun from the rites of the 773 Catholic Church, though they have not affected the general framework 774 of the system. The original Dahomean supreme being, Nananbuluku, is 776 nearly forgotten; in her place the Christian God is named in many a Vodoun service. Yet, though God is the supreme creator, giver, and taker, it 771 is the loa who must be supplicated and mollified. Most important Vodoun 773 rituals are begun under the supervision of the *prêt' savane,* or "bush 774 priest," who leads off with brief prayers from the Catholic rites. While 774 the Catholic Church itself rejects any direct part in Vodoun, the self- 775 tutored prêt' savane, unordained and unsponsored by the Church, brings elements of its theology into the hounfor. The origins of the prêt' savane are not clear. But there is little doubt that his place in Haitian life became assured during the years of conflict between postrevolutionary governments and the Church of Rome. After the slave revolts of 1791, the priests of the French colony fled from the scene or went into hiding along with the other white colonists. From the date of Haitian independence throughout the following half century, Haiti was "in open schism from the Roman Catholic Church."[1] Some Haitian presidents were friendly toward the Catholic Church; others even had the objective of making [659] Catholicism a state religion with the president at its head. Henry Christophe, for example, made the Catholic Church official but stipulated that ecclesiastical decrees must be approved by the president. Alexandre Pétion's constitution for southern Haiti (the country was divided) also established the Church as official but laid upon it strong restrictions.

775 Leyburn points out that in 1814 there were in Christophe's kingdom 659 only three priests, one of whom Christophe had named archbishop. Dur- 773

[1] Leyburn, The Haitian People, p. 119. Cf. p. 349, category 116. -- Analyst]

[P. 19]



3. The Loa: Gods of the Haitian Mountains

The supernatural world of the common people of Haiti is a vast, rich, and unexplored world. It is peopled with thousands of gods who may at any time come down a rocky mountain trail, or up from the bottom of the sea, or out of the springs where people drink, to enter the hounfor of the Vodoun priest or the humblest of thatched huts. The gods—variously called *loa, mystère, hounaié,* or *vodoun*,[1]—may come at strange, unexpected moments to the unlikeliest places. Yet whenever they come they are recognized for what they are. The things they say and do bear the mark of their character and their special powers, and usually there is little disagreement over their identity. 776

The Haitians tell you that the loa live "in Africa," or on "the island below the sea," or "beneath the water," or in a mythological city called La Ville-aux-Camps. The loa are believed to share this residing place with the spirits of certain categories of the dead. What goes on in the land of the loa is no man's knowledge and every man's conjecture. They say that a few privileged people have been able to go down "below the water" and return. 776 772 787

In the region of Gros Morne there is a legend of a woman named Madame Ste Île who went under the water and returned after seven years. There is another widespread tale of a man near La Bai Moustique who, in full public view, walked into the bay and disappeared, and returned in a few hours bearing a cake in his hands—a gift from the loa below the water. And in the hills near Aux Cayes in the south a story is told about a loa named Général Clermeil, who drove up in a fine carriage and carried off a woman to his place below the water. 776 787

On certain occasions the loa come to pass the time among their "children" in Haiti. When a loa comes to the people he enters the body of one or another of them, or he enters many of them at the same time. In cult terminology, these people are his "horses." The loa mounts his horses, as

[1] [For footnote, see category 116, pp. 349-350.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

they say, and "rides" them. What the possessed persons do then depends upon the personality and whim of the loa. Generally they take on the special personal characteristics of the loa. Their voices and manners change and their postures and attitudes undergo transfiguration. They may talk about the "island below the water," about community ancestors, about intimate affairs of the community, or about how things are going back in Africa. Sometimes they utter words or phrases recognized as "African language." And on occasion possessed persons talking *langage* are said to be speaking Greek, Arabic, Hebrew, or Spanish. At the moment of first impact, when the loa enter their heads, they stagger, jerk, and tremble, often falling on the ground. Then, soon afterward, their behavior begins to move in a groove of conventionalized activity.

Most commonly the loa arrive during religious rituals or dances. They come by way of the *po'teau mitan*, the center pole which supports the roof of the peristyle. It is around this pole that the sacred vèvès, or flour drawings, are made. At the foot of the pole sacrifices are offered and libations are poured.

Yet possession may occur anywhere and at any time. The sound of a certain drumbeat may be the signal for it, or a sudden fright, or an emotional crisis, or any situation to which possession has been conditioned. The houngan or the mambo may facilitate possession, control it, and terminate it. The cult priest is acutely sensitive to the conditions favorable to possession. He knows how to heighten emotional tension and how to soften it. A competent houngan "plays" his service as though it were a delicate instrument. He takes everything in, issues instructions to his servitors from time to time, orders the drum tempo increased or diminished, knows how to change pace. Sometimes he hovers in the background unobtrusively, encouraging the singing and dancing like a benevolent father. At other times he comes to the center of the activities and takes command. He becomes the focus of all eyes. His slightest action is watched with intensity. He may take the hand of one of the servitors, pirouette him about, and compel the loa to enter. When the servitor is "mounted," the houngan may conduct him through ritual activity. At the right moment the houngan may help the loa to leave.

The spectators who observe possession in others are usually aware of the identity of the loa who has entered. When the ancient loa Damballa Wèdo comes in, his "horse" falls to the ground, wriggles like a snake, and makes what are considered to be snakelike sounds in his throat. For Damballa is the venerable deity identified with the rainbow, which in ancient Dahomean lore was thought to be the great serpent come out from the underworld to drink after a rain. When the loa Ogoun Chango enters,

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his "horse" may trample in glowing coals, plunge his hands in boiling oil, or play with red-hot iron bars. For Ogoun Chango is a fire-eater—a deity of the forge and of battle. The deity Legba is characterized as a limping old man. A "horse" possessed by Legba may cavort about on a kind of cane-crutch called a Legba stick. Each loa has his distinctive mark. As the Haitians say, "you learn about the loa by watching his horses."

In addition to having homes in Africa or below the water, most loa have special residing places in Haiti, such as stones, caves, trees, waterfalls, or springs. One may come across a boulder or a bamboo grove sacred to a certain loa, and food offerings are likely to be seen there. Many loa are identified with some specific variety of tree and will "inhabit" all such trees throughout the country. Loa Calbassie, for example, lives in the calabash tree, and Loa Général Brisé in the chardette tree. Offerings to these deities are set out underneath the tree or hung in its branches, and services may be held around the trunk.

Loa also live in the old Carib and Arawak celts which are found from time to time. These "loa stones," as they are called, are identified by their forms and their ability to pass certain tests. Some Haitians declare the stones must be able to "whistle," to perspire when blown upon, and to "talk." The loa stones ordinarily are passed on from one generation to another, in the hounfor and in the peasant hut alike. In this way the loa who inhabit them are inherited. Sometimes, but rarely, stones are sold; disposing of a loa stone requires an elaborate ceremony to guarantee that the seller will not be injured by the loa, who is likely to feel "wounded." In such a ceremony the loa is fed and placated and asked to go his way in peace. The loa stones are sometimes called "thunder stones," in the belief that they were hurled to earth by the deities Kebiosu, Sobo, and Chango (all of whom had similar functions among the Arada and Yoruba peoples of West Africa). The stones are cared for by their owners with the greatest reverence.

Loa are acquired by individuals in various ways. Many Haitians hold that every infant is born with a *mait' tête*—a spirit who is "master of the head." In this light, no individual is without a loa, although the deity may never manifest interest in the individual by an act of possession. A man may acquire a loa in the course of his life, although in that event the original mait' tête must be retired from his head. The "inherited" loa are usually not the personal deities but the special protectors of the household or the hounfor and are known as "loa of the house" or "family loa."

Should a man acquire a new loa to replace the old as his mait' tête, he must undergo a ceremony known as *lavé tête*—the "washing of the head." The old loa is retired and sent away, leaving the field clear for the new

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one. Sometimes a loa who is making life too hard for a devotee will be retired without a replacement. The "washing of the head" must be accompanied by ritual safeguards, and all possible circumstances must be taken into account by the officiating cult priest. There are many stories of people who became mentally deranged as a result of the removal of their loa from their heads.

The mait' tête must also be removed from the head of a person who dies. Should this not be done, the spirit of the deceased will go to reside "below the water" and may cause trouble for the family. This loa is usually transferred to a special jar as a temporary resting place, and later perhaps into the head of another member of the family.

Though the loa is a powerful ruling force in the life of the individual, the human "horse" has controls over his deity too. He may reproach or admonish his loa for bad behavior or for failing to protect him. He may expose the loa's irresponsibility in public through the use of songs in religious rites. And though the loa is frequently encouraged to "enter," steps may be taken to restrain him from possession. This is called *marré loa* —"tying the loa." A woman may "tie" her loa by fixing a hairpin in her hair in a special way. A man may do it by placing his hands in cold water.[3]

Nevertheless, the loa are always lurking in the background. They are a constant and dramatic element in the religious life of the people. They may sometimes be controlled by the houngan, but they are an authority stronger than the priesthood. They give advice, courage, consolation, and status to their followers. They add much to an otherwise hard and ungenerous environment and evoke remembrances of Africa from which the Haitians' ancestors were uprooted. They can also cause concern and anxiety; for the loa are not always benevolent, and they are frequently unpredictable.

Many of the loa are ancient deities, sib-founders and ancestors who loom out of a misty, half-forgotten past. Nananbouclou, Legba, and Ayida Wèdo have been known for many lifetimes in Dahomey. Chango, Ogoun, and Loko were old spirits in Nigeria before the first slave ships sailed from Africa to the New World. Their names and many others in present-day Haiti come from an ancient lore. They recall places, tribes, and old kingdoms from Senegal in northwestern Africa to the heart of the Congo. They are a bond which holds the people of Haiti to Africa. In the mountains people sometimes say, "Haiti is the child of Dahomey," or "Haiti is the child of Guinée." The gods divide their time between their Haitian and their African children.

Yet in some respects the Haitians' concept of their loa is no longer purely African. The African religious patterns have been infiltrated by the lore

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The loa, like the rites, vary somewhat according to region and to the practices of the individual cult priests. New concepts spring up, and they thrive in one locality while remaining unheard of in another. Yet many new concepts travel from hounfor to hounfor. As in the old days in Dahomey, the Vodoun priests sometimes make journeys to visit other cult centers. At one service near Jacmel, on the south coast, I met a houngan from Dondon in the far north and heard him discuss with the local cult chief the appropriate behavior of a loa who had mounted a servitor. The Dondon houngan declared that in the north the loa conducted himself differently. The Jacmel houngan parried with the remark that a loa's behavior is consistent. He said there were only two possibilities concerning the possession as described by the cult chief from Dondon: either the loa had been mistakenly identified, or another deity had attempted to impersonate him. Such exchanges hasten the spread of developing theology from one area to another. They also raise contradictions which remain forever insoluble.

776 184 792 794 787

That confusions and contradictions are not merely of Haitian making is made clear by Herskovits' voluminous study of the pantheons of Dahomey.[3] Each of the great cults—the sky cult, the earth cult, and the thunder cult—has its own explanations of the origins and functions of the deities; and even within one cult there are contradicting explanations. The Haitians have taken over, built upon, and diverged from a Dahomean system that contained its own contradictions. In adding to it the system of the Yoruba, with its parallelisms and similarities, they have made the whole picture more complex than ever.

114 794 177

[3] [Herskovits, Dahomey. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

764 father when you were living. Continue to protect your family after death. If you
766 need other services give abundantly to your heirs in order to obtain satisfaction. Oh,
793 good father, good servant, good parent, good friend! Good-bye! Do not forget us as
776 we shall not forget you."[11]
[539]

Then the houngan goes to the canarie, strikes it three times with a piece of palm bark, and chants an invocation to the loa and to God, while members of the family dance where they stand, shaking the green branches they hold. There follows an invocation to twins. After a number of loa [787] have "entered" the service, as manifested by possessions, the houngan undertakes to find out how death came to the deceased man. An assistant brings the sacred divining shells[12] of the dead man, and the officiating houngan throws them on the floor, pours tafia three times, and lights a candle. The shells are then consulted. Three times he goes through the procedure of casting the shells and consulting them. Later he announces that "the death of Boss Marius is not the death of an ordinary man, that [775] he is now resting in La Ville-au-Camp (capital of the loas which is 'under the water'), and that the loas will continue to protect his descendants provided that they show themselves worthy of protection."[13] There is more singing and ritual, and then the canarie is covered. The loa from the head of Marius has found a temporary resting place. A little later in the service "the houngan raises the canari as high as possible, almost as high as his face, as he repeats the last line: 'Where may I find refuge?' With a quick movement the canari is shattered. The food is scattered, the loas are satisfied, and the crowd breaks into disorderly flight. . . ."[14] A few hours later the body of the deceased is buried.

764 It is obvious that these rituals vary a good deal according to regional
184 practices and according to the importance of the persons for whom they
776 are conducted. Furthermore, there is a good deal of difference of opinion among Haitians as to what actually takes place when the mait' tête is taken from the head of the deceased man.

793 Although the prêt' savane (bush priest) is subsidiary to the houngan at
764 death rites, his is nevertheless a conspicuous presence. He may begin the
184 services with prayers for the dead, in which the family joins, while the houngan remains in the background. Later, the houngan takes over. In certain regions, however, the prêt' savane is dispensed with altogther, his function being absorbed by the houngan.

764 As reported by Herskovits, the wake for the dead is one of the most important ceremonies in the death rites. He says:

[766] Wakes are held for all dead, even for very young children if they have been baptized, though if a baby dies before baptism, it is buried without ceremony in a little box in the courtyard of the habitation. . . . The wife and the children either stay

11 [This and the preceding paragraph are from Simpson, Op. Cit., p. 156. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]
12 [For footnote, see Category 116, p. 350. --Analyst]
13 [Simpson, Op. Cit., p. 159. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]
14 [Ibid., p. 161. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]

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[P 41]

5. Services for the Loa and the Family Ancestors

The Ordeal by Fire: Kanzo

To advance beyond the lowest status in the hounfor, the hounsi must undergo the test of fire. This ritual is known as *kanzo,* meaning "to tie fire." In the drama of the hounfor there are many tests and ordeals. When certain loa enter, the mounted persons will eat broken glass. Other loa will cause their "horses" to rub hot pepper in their eyes. Still others will compel possessed persons to cut themselves with machetes. But these are bravado actions of the deities who have entered into the bodies of the servitors. The kanzo test is a formalized and premeditated ritual, in which it is demonstrated that the power of the cult—and the spirit of the individual—is superior to fire. Once having passed through this rite, the ordinary hounsi becomes a *hounsi kanzo.* 794 789 796 787

The kanzo ceremony—or, as it is known in some parts of Haiti, the *brulé zin* (the boiling pot)—is performed in diverse ways according to the tradition of the particular hounfor. But common to all is the dipping of the hands into boiling oil.

The common hounsi, the bossale, is prepared gradually for kanzo. In the course of certain rites she undergoes a smoke ordeal. On all fours, her head close to a fire, she must breathe in smoke without choking or coughing. When these and other tests indicate that she is ready, she will be permitted to undergo the rite of the brulé zin.

Near the town of Thomazeau in the Cul-de-Sac Plain I witnessed one of these rituals. It began with a dance, in which only the hounsi of the cult participated. They were all dressed in white. The chief drummer wore a woman's blouse, a kerchief on his head, and on top of that a woman's straw hat. He played alone while the houngan invoked the loa Legba. [793] Then there were songs for Ogoun, and the dancing resumed.

The dance court was larger than average—about forty feet by sixty.

793 794 787 796 789

Attached to the ever-present po'teau mitan, or center post, were three oil lamps which threw a flickering light. At the entrance to the dance court a glowing-hot iron bar stood erect in a charcoal fire—the symbol of kanzo and of the loa Ogoun.

When the preliminary dances were over, the hounsi retired to one side of the court, where they sat in two rows facing the center.

Ritual rattle and bell in hand, the houngan took his place by the sacred center post. He was an elderly man with a gray beard. He wore a red kerchief like a turban around his head. He smoked a cigar, and in his free hand he held a bottle of rum. The red kerchief, the rum, and the cigar were all in honor of Ogoun. He moved back and forth across the center of the court, talking casually, even joking and laughing. The drums began again, on a signal from the houngan, and a number of visiting houngans and mambos came forward and began a stately Jenvalo dance. The backs of their hands touching their knees, their backs bent low, they moved slowly counterclockwise around the center post. The mambos outnumbered the houngans four to one. The hounsi sitting on the sidelines sang. The song was for Maîtresse Ézilie. The houngan in charge stood by patiently, deep in thought. His assistant, the laplace, kept time with a small rattle and led the singing.

[535]

When the song came to an end, the visiting cult priests and priestesses retired from the dance ground. Again the hounsi danced. Afterward the houngan began to talk *langage*, twirling his bottle of rum about recklessly. He was speaking to a loa. The chief drummer beat out a salute to Ogoun. Then the houngan raised the bottle and placed it to his ear. It gurgled away, some of the liquid trickling down his face. He seemed to be swallowing the rum.

While all the hounsi, with bowed heads, sat on the ground, the houngan recited from the ritual of the Catholic service. Latin words, then Creole words in Latin cadences. After a while the houngan's assistant took over the recitation, and the hounsi answered him responsively.[1] When the prayers were over, the hounsi arose and passed into the hounfor. The drums began a fast Nago rhythm, and the hounsi emerged with brilliant silk flags studded with tiny brass rivets. The houngan's chief assistants—the laplace and the houngénicon—carried military sabers upraised. The dancers circled in single file around the center post, a triumphal military heralding of the deity of war and the forge.

To the accompaniment of a crescendo of drums, the procession suddenly reversed its direction. Watching the upraised saber of the laplace for a signal, the hounsi reversed their direction again.

000 When the dance drama ended, the hounsi carried the flags back into

[1] [Note that the houngan and the laplace are performing services normally performed by the prêt savane. Cf. P. 351, Category 116. -- Analysis]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

when the dance drama ended, the hounsi carried the flags back into the hounfor. Then they sat on the ground while the houngan came forward to the center post to make his ritual flour drawing. Holding the flour in his hand, he allowed a little of it to trickle out in a fine white line. He worked rapidly, with half-closed eyes, speaking *langage*. A complicated white geometric pattern grew on the earth around the center post. Among its intricate designs highly stylized phallic forms were discernible. When the houngan had finished the drawing, he wrote the name of the loa whom they were serving: Ogoun Badagry. Then the other houngans and mambos came forward, one at a time, to add to the design. When the vèvè was completed it covered virtually the entire dance court. 793 794 787 789 796 532

The laplace came from the hounfor with a bundle of brilliantly colored beads. He stood by the houngan at the center post. One by one the hounsi came before the houngan, dropped on their knees, and kissed the ground. Around each hounsi's neck the houngan placed a string of beads. He raised her, pirouetted her first to the right, then to the left. The pirouette was to encourage possession by the loa. 793 794 787 789 796

From the hounfor the hounsi now brought herbs and vegetables for the sacrifice. Baskets and bottles were set out neatly on the ground, along with bundles of sticks and the iron pots, or *zins*. [782]

The dance was resumed in a single rotating line around the houngan and the ritual offerings. Two hounsi in the center of the circle built fires, one on each side of the court. Over the fires they set the ritual iron pots. They poured oil into the pots and began the preparation of ritual food balls, like dumplings, from the ingredients at hand. One by one they dropped the dumplings into the oil, which was soon boiling.

The drumming, singing, and dancing were sustained at a high tension. A second team of drummers took over without a break in the music. The dancers now were almost exhausted. With a quick motion, the houngan spilled some rum into one of the boiling pots. A blue alcohol flame shot high into the air. Some of the hounsi screamed but continued to dance. Three of them fell to the ground, their limbs jerking uncontrollably. The loa had entered. Two of the "mounted" hounsi arose and continued to dance, staggering and jerking across the dance court. The third had to be lifted and carried into the hounfor.

The man who was to undergo initiation was waiting in the *djévo*, a special room in the hounfor. For the past seven days he had lain on a mat in the djévo, in virtual isolation except for visits from the houngan and the laplace.

Now the kanzo initiate was brought out, completely covered with a white cloth. Only his hands and feet could be seen. With one hand on the shoulder of the laplace, who preceded him, he moved with the dancers

794 in a circle around the two boiling pots. On the seventh circuit of the
787 course, the laplace stopped him at the first pot. The houngan grasped the
789 man's free hand and, bending down, dipped it into the boiling oil. There
796 was no visible indication of pain. They moved to the second pot, and the
793 man's hand was dipped again. They proceeded again to the first pot, where the dipping was repeated, then back again to the second pot. The neophyte's hand entered the boiling oil seven times in all. He made no sound, showed no resistance, no reflexes. Then the hounsi took him back to the hounfor. It was all over. After three days of isolation, they said, he would be kanzo.

The houngan peeled an orange, while everyone crowded close to watch. In it he found a two-gourde note. He peeled another orange and found in it a slip of paper with the name of a woman on it. She came forward, and everyone laughed. She was an old woman, the oldest of the hounsi. The houngan held the two-gourde note between his teeth. The old woman took the other end of the note in her teeth, but she had to kiss the houngan before he would let go.

796 The ritual of brulé zin, or kanzo, is of unmistakable West African ori-
794 gin. Herskovits has described a ceremony in Dahomey which in many
171 details could easily have taken place in Haiti. The Dahomean rite was in honor of the gods of the Thunder pantheon. Here, too, we find a pot of boiling palm oil, in which are the sacred dumplings: "When the fire had finally subsided and only a faint column of smoke issued from the pot, the initiate came dancing toward it, thrust her hand into the boiling oil, and lifted out a dumpling. . . ."[2]

Family Rites at Léogane

769 These services for family ancestors took place in the mountains above
796 Léogane at the ancestral home of my friend Libera Borderau. They were
787 conducted on the grounds of his grandmother's house. The ritual began
778 with dancing. Against the wall of the house sat the three drummers with their Arada drums. Near them, leaning against the wall, were the flags of the family loa. Also near by was a long high table serving as a makeshift altar called the *jé*. In the very center of the table in a clean white dish lay eight loa stones—old Carib artifacts. The stones were identical in shape, all of them perfectly symmetrical, resembling small, pointed cigars. In the *pierre-loas* lived the family deities, and much of the ceremony was built around them. The stones had been bathed and polished in oil for the occasion. Set around the plate of stones were numerous small *criches* (French, *cruches*—clay water jugs), glass bottles, and earthenware jars which also contained loa. On the low bench before the table, seven dishes

2 [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 165. Cf. P 351, Cat. 116.—Author]

2: Courlander 3-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

were set out in a row, and before them four *conis*, the half-gourd bowls used in services to the marassas, the twin spirits.

In the house, at the center of the floor, was a round flat stone about ten inches in diameter and about two inches thick, resembling a millstone. This was the *pierre-manman*, the mother stone responsible for the coming of the other loa stones and who cared for them in the absence of the family. In this stone, they said, was the spirit of the old loa Nananbouclou. On a mat in the corner of the room two children slept.

Outside, on a chair, his back against the wall of the house, the houngan sat, his rattle and bell in hand. He had come several miles to conduct the service. Most of those who danced were his own hounsi. The houngan was "strong" and well known in the region; people said he had worked for high government officials, including the president himself.

After several rounds of Arada dancing in which children as well as adults took part, the drums stopped. The houngan and his laplace moved up to the building which served for the night as the hounfor. It was up a steep slope, about a hundred feet from the dance court. There they prepared for the sacrifice to Chébo Profiel, the honored loa of the evening. Passing in and out among the spectators was a woman who would be possessed by Papa Chébo; since he was the guest of the service, she (or the loa in her head) was free to come and go as she chose, to speak as she pleased, and to do what she wished. Mostly she shook hands with people, a ceremony which continued throughout the night. First she would offer the right hand, then the left; or perhaps both at once, in which case the hands would be shaken downward vigorously three or four times. Someone ignorantly said, "Bon soir, Madame!" and she turned on him to reprimand his insolence. She was not "Madame," she was *l'Autorité*, the Authority.

During the course of the evening the conviction became stronger and stronger in her that she was Chébo Profiel. From the time we first saw her until the end of the evening her personality underwent marked changes. She "became" Papa Chébo.

The houngan sat before a small hole, possibly a foot deep and ten inches in diameter, in front of the hounfor. The fresh earth was piled neatly to the side, and an enameled plate was set on top of it. Around the hole were the various dishes to be offered to Chébo Profiel. The laplace prayed in Latin, a short Catholic service. Then the houngan, shaking his beaded rattle and tinkling his bell, called for Chébo to "enter." He made a small maize-flour drawing around the hole, and then began the feeding of the loa. The plates arranged for the feast contained roasted maize, roasted peanuts, bread, cassava, rice, and other foods. There were bottles of rum,

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1965) 1980 SV3 Haiti SV3

kola (a soft drink), *clairin*, and syrup. The houngan, entreating Chébo to accept, poured a little *clairin* into the hole. The loa seemed to accept, for the *clairin* was quickly absorbed in the ground. The houngan took rice from the plate with his fingers, about the amount he might place in his own mouth, and put it gently into the hole. He was feeding Papa Chébo, literally placing the food in his mouth. After the rice, which was dry, the houngan poured in a little more *clairin* to moisten it. He ordered the laplace to break up the bread, and then he placed a small piece in the hole and washed it down with a little rum. The houngan seemed to understand that Papa Chébo Profiel was hungry, and that he was also an epicure. He allowed him to taste the roasted corn, and then washed it down with a trickle of kola. Then he gave him a taste of the roasted peanuts, and another morsel of bread. Once Chébo got his mouth too full in his zest for the meal, and the assemblage had to wait for him to finish "coughing." Then the houngan gave him a long drink of kola to clear his windpipe. After that the houngan was more careful in the way he fed him—a little cassava, a drink, a little bread. As the houngan fed the loa, some of the spectators reached over and placed small coins in the empty dish by the hole. These too were for Chébo. Finally, Chébo was through eating. The food was gone.

The houngan, shaking his rattle and his bell, blew two sharp notes on his whistle. At the door of the hounfor appeared l'Autorité, the hounsi possessed by Papa Chébo. More than ever she resembled the loa, and less than ever she resembled herself. In one hand she held a saber. Her bodily movements were spasmodic, as though she was being forced to do things to which she was not accustomed. She moved slowly into the circle, her eyes almost closed; she leaned backward, then twisted grotesquely around, jerked this way and that, buffeted by the loa. Suddenly she began to whirl. The houngan called "Tambouyé!" and the drummers beat a slow complicated rhythm, a salute to Chébo. The loa had really "entered" now. There was no mistaking the jerky, irresponsible movements of the hounsi's head and shoulders. She leaned backward as though about to fall, incredibly kept her balance, rolled forward as though she were going to plunge to the ground, and twisted herself upright once more. The saber passed close to the faces of the spectators, even scratched some of them and cut their clothing. Her movements had a definitely masculine character. Chébo Profiel was a man.

She reached over to seize a chicken that was held out to her. Grasping its legs with her free hand, she continued her spinning, twisting, lurching dance. Then she cradled the chicken, rocking it back and forth until it was in a hypnotic trance. She placed it on the ground before a tiny pile

2: Courlander / B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

of ground maize prepared by the laplace. The chicken, released, sat motionless, making no effort to escape. All watched attentively, the houngan shaking his rattle and bell. Suddenly the chicken cocked its head and, seeming to see the corn for the first time, reached out and pecked at it. This was the loa receiving the sacrifice—a difficult conception if one thinks of the chicken itself as the sacrifice. "Chébo," l'Autorité, snatched the chicken up, danced violently about, the loa in full possession of her body. With a swift movement of the saber, she cut the chicken's throat and caused the first drop of blood to fall into the hole. When the chicken stopped struggling, it was left there, head downward. L'Autorité took up a cock which was given her, cradled him, and set him before the ground maize. When he pecked at it, she picked him up and danced, around and around, jerking, lunging, never quite falling. She took his comb between her teeth, supporting his body gently with her hands, and spun around and around. Then she released him, cut his throat, and placed him in the hole with the chicken.

At the side of the hounfor, waiting, was a goat (called by the ritual name Dogwé). He had a fine silky white coat and a long beard. He was brought in to the place of sacrifice, and l'Autorité dropped to her knees to embrace his neck with her arms. She remained there a moment, her cheek against his, talking to him. Then she arose, a machete in hand instead of a saber, and began to pirouette while three men threw the goat on his side. Then she cut with the machete, and the goat's blood, too, began to run into the hole. For the first time her dance became unquestionably frenzied. She swung strong, full blows of the machete at the goat's neck, finally severing the head. From the hindquarters she cut a piece of red meat and placed it in her mouth.

At a signal from the houngan, three men carried the goat's body away to be dressed and cooked, and a woman came forward to wipe the blood from Papa Chébo's face.

The drums began again, a Dahomé dance, and the people relaxed. Many joined in the dancing while l'Autorité strutted about shaking hands and talking *langage*. She also danced, with gestures and movements wholly masculine. At one point she briefly advanced on another woman, making sexual gestures.

The houngan and his houngénicon retired to the front room of the hut. A new mat had been placed there for the houngénicon. She lay down on it, and the houngan sat in a chair against the wall. This was the beginning of the ceremony of calling *les morts en bas dleau* (the dead below the water).

Meanwhile, before the hounfor, the laplace and a hounsi were building

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1968) 1969 SV3 Haiti SV3

While those in the front room were singing, l'Autorité, in the inner room, was suddenly thrown about violently by her possession. She raced into one wall of the hut, striking her head, flung herself back against the opposite wall, kicking, trembling, calling out strange *langage*. She crashed into the pé, upsetting the dishes, and then fell across the mat where the children were lying half asleep. One of them, a boy of about four, became hysterical. He knew the woman, but he had never seen her like this. His mother carried him to the front room, where she finally quieted his crying. L'Autorité, spent for the moment, lay across the mat. No one touched her. Later, when the singing was resumed, she got to her feet and made the rounds once more, shaking hands again and again. She was now smoking a pipe.

When the houngan heard the rain subsiding, he again called out "Abobo!" as though he were giving the order to cease, and everyone, himself included, laughed again. When it had definitely stopped, someone went out to shake the water from the canopy. The drums were brought out of their shelter, and although the ground was sticky with mud, the dancing was resumed. The houngan asked for a fast Nago dance, and the front room of the hut was once more emptied of everyone except the houngan and his houngénicon.

The laplace and his assistant went up the hill to put the finishing touches to the *cord*, the temporary structure in which the houngan was going to receive the loa and the dead. From a small chest of chinaware, the houngénicon set a "table" for the loa on the ground where she sat. The sacrifice had been for a single loa, Chébo; the rest of the service was for all the loa served by the family. The houngan, sitting next to the houngénicon, sounded his rattle and spoke *langage*. He sang quietly, a song which only the houngénicon could hear, watching her intently. A large basket of dishes, bottles, and various other paraphernelia was brought by a hounsi. Candles were lighted and set on the ground. The houngan gave a signal, and the hounsi brought a large square of white cotton cloth, which they stretched tight over the houngénicon like a canopy. The candle flame and the silhouette of the houngénicon could be seen through the cloth, but the details of the service were not visible. Sometimes, the houngan, his bell and rattle in hand, would go under the cloth to assist in the calling of the loa. Then, without warning, things began to happen very rapidly.

One of the hounsi who sat before the door began to quiver and make strange noises in her throat: "Ka, ka, k-k-k-k-k-k-a!" Her body shook violently, and her head rolled on her shoulders. Almost simultaneously something began to happen under the cloth where the houngénicon was, and the members of the family crowded up to the *cord* by the hounfor. The houngénicon lay stilly, her eyes closed, the white cloth removed. The

769 houngan carried out the large round basket in which lay the bottles and
793 the pierre-loas. The hounsi gathered around it, ten of them, to carry it to
794 the *caye*. In the bottles were *les morts en bas dleau* (the spirits of the dead
796 from below the water). Carrying the flags, there hounsi danced, singing,
787 up to the *caye*. After them the laplace came, carrying in his left hand a plate of maize flour from which he made vèvès in the line of advance, simple marks symbolizing the crossroads. The drums were beating a special salute to the loa. The ten hounsi carrying the basket danced and sang. As they moved up the hill, they rotated, so that the basket revolved like the
[535] hub of a wheel. Their progress was not smooth, however; they jerked forward and backward as they rotated. Arriving before the *caye*, first one, then a second, was entered by her loa. They fell, jerked, and stumbled. This was all a very good omen. The houngan called "Abobo!" for them to resist such possession, and the hounsi all sat down on the ground. The houngan placed the basket inside the *caye* and entered after it. He called for his little bell, which the laplace passed in to him. The laplace closed the flap down tight, from the outside, and placed the flags against it.

Upon a signal given from within, the hounsi began a song:

[539]

La famille ensèblé,
Oh ensèblé nous!
La famille ensèblé,
Oh nous ensèblé pou nous pa'lé parole nous là!
La famille ensèblé!

The family gathers,
Oh, we gather!
The family gathers,
Oh, we gather to speak our words here!
The family gathers!

769 The laplace took his position, his back to the *caye*, while inside, because
796 of the candle burning there, the houngan could be seen setting out the
787 contents of the basket. The candle went out, and in the *caye* the little bell
[793] began to tinkle. The singing stopped. The houngan was beginning to talk to the dead below the water. First he talked *langage*. Then his voice was heard through the constant sound of the tiny bell, supplicating Papa Loko to talk a little bit with his "children." A faint, tremulous voice, that of a tired old grandfather, was heard to answer. Papa Loko was stirring himself out of a long silence. He talked a long while to the houngan. Sometimes they both spoke at once. Faintly he was heard to say that he had come a long way to see his children, and that he was very tired. But as he talked his strength returned to him, and, asking the houngan to wait, he spoke directly to his "children," who sat, respectfully and awed,

2: Courlander 9-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

around the *cord*. Here everyone participated. This was why they had come. Benevolently Papa Loko greeted them: "Bonjou, ti moune moin yo, c'est Papa Loko" (Good day, all my children, this is Papa Loko). Together they all answered eagerly: "Bon soir, Papa!" "Bon soir, Grand!" "Bon soir, cher Papa!" "Bon soir, cher Loko!" Papa Loko told them about his journey, and persons long dead whom he had seen below the water, and he passed on the news from the island below the sea. Then he began to address them singly, asking questions, giving news of dead relatives, and showing a vital interest in the problems of his "children." They answered him. "Oui, Papa," and "Non, Papa Loko," and took deeply to heart anything he said, whether praise or criticism:

Bon jour, Tifiouman!	Good day, Tifiouman!
Bon soir, Papa!	Good evening, Papa!
Comment nou yé, Tifiouman?	How are you, Tifiouman?
Tout bien, Papa Loko!	Everything is fine, Papa Loko!
C'est ou même qui travaille très dû?	Are you one who works very hard?
Oui, Papa, moin travaille an pile.	Yes, Papa, I work a great deal.
Ou travaille pour' vié maman ou?	You care for your old mother?
Oui, Papa.	Yes, Papa.
Tifiouman, piti moin, faut ou planté jardin ou encore. Graine, li pas bon.	Tifiouman, my child, you will have to plant your garden again. The seeds you planted are no good.
Merci, cher Loko!	Thank you, dear Loko!
Ou pas bliê'm, Tifiouman.	You do not forget me, Tifiouman.
Non, cher Loko.	No, dear Loko.
Yo dit ou prailé travaille en ville.	They say you are going to work in the city.
Li'm capab', Papa.	When I can, Papa.
Pas bliê moune moune yo yo, Tifiouman.	Do not forget the people of the hills, Tifiouman.
Non, cher Loko, m' pas bliê yo.	No, dear Loko, I will not forget them.
Papa ou dit'm ba ou bon soir pou'li.	Your father asked me to say good evening to you for him.
Merci, Papa.	Thank you, Papa.
Papa Loko fini pa'li ou, Tifiouman.	Papa Loko is through talking to you, Tifiouman.
Merci, Papa.	Thank you, Papa.
Chongé 'm, Tifiouman.	Remember me, Tifiouman.

Papa Loko talked in turn to everyone in the family who was present, and inquired, sometimes suspiciously, after those who were absent. After many minutes, Papa Loko said regretfully that he had to go away, and bade them au revoir. They were all sorry he was leaving, because he was well loved. He spoke a few words with the houngan, and then his voice faded away. Only the tinkling of the little bell remained.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

769 796 787 Then, faintly, came the broken voice of an old woman who was crying. The houngan said her children were waiting to see her, and asked her to enter. Moyise had been dead many generations already, but she was still crying over the circumstances of her death, and because she had left her children behind her. The houngan, speaking gently, asked her to try to stop crying because her children were waiting. Little by little she controlled herself. She greeted them all and talked with each member of the family in turn. She showed a special interest in the women and children and was concerned about family problems.

After Moyise went away, Docile, Moyise' daughter, came. She greeted them all and then complained that when she had died she had been buried in a grave near that of a thief; now she wished for her body to be moved. Aïxe, on whose place the grave was situated, promised to take care of the matter, and Docile became placated. Her voice faded away. Inside the *cord*, the houngan talked *langage* and rang his bell.

After Docile came Joseph and his son Jougleau. Joseph and Jougleau timed their entrance badly and came in together, both talking at once. The houngan tried to straighten out the situation, and for a moment the three of them were conversing simultaneously. Then Jougleau withdrew and returned when his father was through. After Jougleau came still later generations, represented by Ti Perci and her children, Na and Bernicia. Bernicia came crying bitterly about something. The houngan asked her to stop, because he could not bear to hear women crying. Everyone laughed, and Bernicia controlled herself.

[796] Then Damballa Wèdo, the ancient loa, came, speaking with an aged and broken voice. Feebly he sang his song in "African" language:

[539]

Ago! Damballa Wèdo!
Oh Damballa Wèdo kian kian!
Oh Damballa Wèdo kian kian!
Oh ha ha ha Damballa Wèdo kian kian!
Oh Damballa Wèdo kian kian! [Ex. 39]

[796] Later, Damballa sang again, calling on Legba to act as witness to his words:

[539]

Ago-é Attibon Legba oh é!
Oh Damballa Wèdo é kélé manyan!
Oh gainyain jou' yo chongé moin là kélé manyan!
Oh Damballa Wèdo é kélé manyan!
Oh Ayida Wèdo é kélé manyan!
Oh gainyain jou' pou' chongé moin là kélé manyan! [Ex. 40]

Ago-é Attibon Legba oh é!
Oh, Damballa Wèdo é, kélé manyan!

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Oh, a day will come when they will remember me here, *kélé manyan!*
Oh, Dumballa Wèdo *é, kélé manyan.*
Oh, Ayida Wèdo *é, kélé manyan!*
Oh, a day will come for you to remember me here, *kélé manyan!*

During the evening about twenty loa and ancestors came into the *card* to talk. When the last had finished speaking the hills were already light, and the service was over.

Service for Èzilie Fréda and St. Jacques Majeur

This service took place not in the open but under a tonnelle surrounded by four walls, adjoining the hounfor of Alexis Stephan on the west fringes of Port-au-Prince. Separate from the hounfor and dance court was a shrine to the "dead" loa Gèdé Nimbo. The shrine was a small shed open on one side. Within, lighted by flickering oil lamps, was a life-size effigy of Gèdé, a scarecrow-like figure dressed in the loa's traditional attire—black tail coat and trousers, and a tall opera hat. On the otherwise blank face of the figure were smoked glasses with white rims.

The dancing was progressing under the supervision of the houngan's adjutant, the laplace. He wandered among the drummers and dancers, encouraged the singing, and issued orders here and there. No one seemed to take him very seriously. There was a good deal of joking, and the gathering seemed very much like an old-fashioned family reunion. There were perhaps a hundred dancers and spectators—friends, relatives, and devotees of Stephan's hounfor. Everyone was watching with affection an old woman who could not be restrained from dancing. She executed old classical steps and postures with a skill that called for running comment all around her. As each piece came to an end someone would step up to her and say something like: "Woy, Manman, mais ou passé mwé!" (Oh, Mother, you are better than me!). Then they would attempt to get her to sit down again, but she would only shake them off and urge the drummers to get going if they were not too tired.

Eventually, the houngan, Stephan, made a casual entrance through the door of his adjoining hounfor. He held the usual ritual rattle and bell in his hand, and sauntered around to chat with his friends.

Gradually, almost imperceptibly, the dancing became more serious. Soon, only the hounsi, the female servitors, were dancing. The drums played a salute to Legba, the first loa to be called upon in a Vodoun service. For it is Legba who opens all gates and all highways, and who paves the way for communication with other deities. Though he is not the greatest of the loa, he is one of the most ancient. The houngan spilled water on the ground as a libation, and the dancing continued.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

796 Then a well-dressed young man entered, and the drummers swiftly
793 changed to the salute reserved for guests of distinction. The hounsi sang,
[554] "Président passe là, l'ap monté au gouvernment!" and waved paper flags
[202] and kerchiefs. The young man was a distant relative of Stephan's; he also was a houngan.

After a while Stephan brought from his hounfor a second asson, or ritual rattle, and another small hand bell, both of which he handed to the
[516] young man. He was extending the courtesy of his hounfor, sharing his instruments of authority and religious power with his fellow houngan. Then followed an exhibition between the two houngans that was half duel and half ballet. They stood face to face, each of them holding the asson in one hand and the tiny bell in the other. Stephan was "testing" the young houngan for the edification of all present. Each tiny move made by Stephan was duplicated simultaneously by his guest, as though he were a mirrored reflection.

Every posture Stephan made was duplicated instantly by his guest. The assons and the bells were agitated constantly. The rattle in the young man's hand did precisely what Stephan's did. The two men looked into each other's eyes with intensity, as though this bound their movements together and unified them. When Stephan twisted to the left, the other houngan twisted to the right. Every contortion of the young man was an exact replica of Stephan's movements. The two assons rattled out the same rhythms and the same signals; so did the bells. The backdrop for this "test" was provided by the drummers. The faces of the two men broke into a sweat from the intense nervous effort. At last it came to an end. A woman came forward and wiped their faces with a colored kerchief. The "testing" ceremony was over. The visiting houngan had been proved.

796 Stephan then made a ritual vèvè, or maize-flour ritual drawing on the
793 ground. Afterward there was more singing and dancing by the hounsi.
● 787 They sang several songs for Ezilie Fréda, the "pure" loa. And Alexis
[532] Stephan went into a trance. It was unexpected. The servitors had not
[794] prepared for it. In this emergency the visiting houngan took over. He
[276] seemed a little anxious. He was unfamiliar with the particular psychological factors at play in this particular hounfor. He was not certain of the character of Stephan's possession. But he took over grimly. The houngénicon, an older woman, stepped forward to help. While the young houngan wielded the asson and bell, the woman issued instructions. Stephan, his head hanging back, his eyes closed, was supported by two of the hounsi. Other servitors hurriedly brought out a white sheet and spread it on the ground. A chair and a table were set upon the sheet, and Stephan was placed in the chair, where he now sat with his head hanging limply on his chest.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Stephan had been mounted by Ezilie Fréda, the deity of whiteness and purity. That was why he was protected from the earth by the white sheet beneath him. While the drums continued to beat, the hounsi placed upon the table a bottle of wine, a clean glass, and a white plate with boiled maize meal, topped by a whole egg. Then they held over Stephan—who had become, for the time being, Ezilie—a second white sheet. The possessed houngan began to bend forward and back with great rapidity, toward the surface of the table and back to an upright position, his arms hanging quietly downward. The hounsi fluttered the covering sheet in such a way that the spectators could not see what was going on beneath it. In less than a minute, Stephan's movements ceased. The sheet was removed. Stephan sat limply, talking *langage*. In the white dish only the broken shells of the egg and a small portion of the meal remained. Some of the wine was gone from the upright bottle. The glass still had a little wine in the bottom. Ezilie had accepted the sacrifice. Not once had Stephan's hands changed from their hanging position or approached the table. The eggshells themselves were clean, but a tiny trickle of liquid yolk ran from the corner of Stephan's mouth. The visiting houngan rattled his asson before Stephan, who arose wearily, with the help of the hounsi, and followed him through the door into the hounfor.

Again there was dancing, and a little while later Stephan emerged from the hounfor in a bizarre military costume of red velvet, wearing black glasses, a blue military cap with a red feather, and a sword. He was almost as weird as the effigy of Gédé that stood outside. The houngan had now become St. Jacques Majeur, or Ogoun, the loa of war and the forge. His personality had undergone a dramatic change. Strictly speaking, Stephan was not in a trance as he had been a little earlier. He was in control of his movements, which were completely conscious, and yet he was certainly not in a "normal" state of mind. Previously Stephan had been in a state of possession; now, one might say, he was in a state of obsession. He had identified himself with St. Jacques. He strode and swaggered like St. Jacques. His bearing was regal, military, and awesome. His costume should have seemed funny, like similar costumes seen during Mardi Gras days, but instead it was unworldly and impressive.

He carried a rum bottle in his hand, and he moved through the gathering making people drink from it. Those who drank from the bottle were sharing with St. Jacques. Stephan poured more rum into an iron pot on the ground and set it afire. The hounsi kanzo, the servitors of the higher order who had been through the fire ordeal, came forward and washed their hands and arms with the burning rum, so that at times their whole arms were aflame, until they quickly snuffed the fire out. Some of the hounsi brought their children forward and washed their arms in the burn-

796 ing rum also, as a foretaste of the kanzo rites they might one day go
787 through.
793
[794] There was dancing again for others besides the hounsi. The tension had passed. The ceremony was over, and the rest of the night was simply for pleasure.

Gèdé Nimbo, the "Dead" Loa

796

Gèdé Nimbo, also known as Baron Samedi, is one of the most powerful deities of the Haitian pantheon. He guards the cemetery and protects the graves, especially those of children. But Gèdé Nimbo is not simply another loa, he is a personification of death. Like death, he is given to whim. He is an intruder. He forces his way into services being held for other deities, behaves badly, and has to be wheedled to depart. He indulges in ribald humor when the mood strikes him, and the most solemn occasions are likely to be disturbed by his pranks. Gèdé Nimbo can be formidable when aroused, as he can be gentle and forbearing when it suits him.

Gèdé is always dressed in black, usually with a tail coat and top hat. He is always represented in this attire in the shrines where effigies of him are to be found. Elsie Clews Parsons, a number of years ago, reported this Haitian description of Gèdé:

> He is a *grande diable*. He makes all kinds of motions to make you laugh, but you must not laugh at him, for if you do he makes you "stop laughing" . . . Anything you touch, he takes and never returns, and you have to give him more and more. He smokes cigarettes, not cigars. He wears a coat and a hat, and carries a stick. He can make himself short or . . . as tall as a mast.[3]

The kind of motions Gèdé makes would in certain other cultures be regarded as obscenities. In Haiti they are merely public violations of social restraints and taboos, things no Haitian would think of doing in public view. But Gèdé, the loa of the graveyard, has special prerogatives. He does not fear criticism. He flouts propriety at will, he embarrasses, provokes, and insults with impunity.

796 At a Nago ceremony which I witnessed near Port-au-Prince, the strong-
787 hold of the Gèdé cult, Gèdé Nimbo entered with such gusto that he virtu-
796 ally made a shambles of the service. The first person to be mounted by the loa was the laplace, the houngan's understudy. He stiffened, twisted, jerked, and thrashed about. As the more violent phase of his possession wore off, he began to make lascivious loin movements, as though copulating with the center post. Afterward, he moved about, shaking hands and greeting various persons with insulting remarks calculated to make others laugh at the indignities. Stopping before a distinguished-looking spectator, Gèdé made a few loin movements in his direction. Grasping another man by the hands, he greeted him vigorously and inquired whether it was

[3] [Parsons, Spirit Cult in Haiti. Cf. p. 351, Col. 116.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

his *zozo* (penis) to which his glasses were affixed. As the dance progressed, the possessions came rapidly. The possessed persons, men and women alike, leaped about the tonnelle, mimicking copulation. They broke drinking glasses on the ground, threw themselves upon the drummers, and careened and crashed into spectators and dancers. In the course of the service there were nearly twenty possessions—all of them noteworthy for their portrayal of Gèdé Nimbo as a loa who has contempt for proprieties. For he is the spirit of the cemetery, the one who laughs last and best. 776 787 796

Near the mountain town of Kenskoff I saw another service for Gèdé, which showed a different aspect of the loa of the graveyard. It took place inside the hut of a rural houngan, who was conducting the affair for his own immediate family and a few close friends. The hut itself was small. Its single room had been partitioned into two by hanging a sheet in the middle. On one side of the sheet a young child was lying on a mat next to the carefully stored Arada drums. On the other side the ceremony was taking place. Great bouquets of red flowers were arranged in a corner; above them hung a colored lithograph of the Christ child; below, on the floor, was a crude oil lamp with a floating wick. The floor area was no more than seven feet square, but at least twelve persons were crowded there, and others clustered in the doorway. Ritual flags leaned against the wall, one of red silk with a gold fringe, another of white silk with blue polka dots. A tiny space remained in the center of the floor for the houngan, whose "possession" by Gèdé was the feature of the service. [793]

The houngan was dressed in a black stovepipe hat, a blue blouse with white polka dots, and a black skirt over black trousers. In his hand he carried a walking stick. He smoked a pipe constantly, a variation of the customary cigarette. In the tiny space in the center of the room, the houngan—or, more properly, Gèdé Nimbo—danced. The houngan's personality had changed—his voice, his postures, all his mannerisms. He spoke only through his nose, for that is the way Gèdé talks, as though he had a cleft palate. 776 787 796 793

He whirled around and around, singing and talking *langage* in turn. His family sang: [539]

> Gèdé-vi yo wè ago-é!
> Gèdé-vi yo wè!
> Papa Gèdé c'est loa!
>
> It is Gèdé-vi they see, *ago-é!* *
> It is Gèdé-vi they see!
> Papa Gèdé is a *loa!*

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* *Ago!* exclamatory, signifying "I am here."

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He was the center of all eyes. Most of the time he danced alone, gyrating recklessly. Sometimes he danced with his houngénicon. Those who watched clapped hands and uttered sounds imitating drums, for drums were not being used in this service. The houngan carried the inevitable *clochette*, or tiny hand bell.

When newcomers arrived, Gèdé greeted them by shaking both their hands downward, vigorously, three times. Then he wiped their faces with his kerchief, a ceremony which he repeated from time to time. He danced with each of them a kind of Jenvalo step, simple, restrained, and dignified. One of the visitors fell to his knees to converse with him.

The entire evening was built around the houngan's representation of Gèdé. Properly speaking, the houngan was not in a trance. He was in full possession of all his normal faculties and was conscious of the slightest inconveniences and disturbances. Several times the clay bowl of his pipe fell from the reed stem, scattering hot ashes on the ground, and each time he paused to allow the houngénicon to clear them away. Yet he was carried away by his certainty that he was Gèdé. The obvious conviction of those who watched seemed to fortify him in his role. As the evening wore on, he became more and more detached from his normal personality. His psychic condition was not that of one who had been "mounted" by a loa; it was, rather, a continuously progressive ecstasy.

Gèdé is, in fact, more than a loa of the cemetery; he is a personification of death in all its macabre, humorous, and unpredictable aspects. Death is not merely a thing dying; it is an entity, a positive force in nature. Death is Gèdé Nimbo. I believe that when the houngan became Gèdé, all who had crowded into his hut felt themselves to be in the presence of death itself. Death, a dynamic, aggressive force, danced and pirouetted among them, talking the language of the dead and of old Africa.

Gèdé is often stern, austere, and forbidding, but he has other aspects. Haitians take amused pleasure at the terror he can strike into the hearts of the mighty. An old Gèdé song goes:

Papa Gèdé bel ga'çon!	Papa Gèdé is a handsome fellow!
Papa Gèdé bel ga'çon!	Papa Gèdé is a handsome fellow!
L'habillé tout en noi'!	He is dressed all in black
Pou'l monté au palais!	For he is going up to the palace!
L'habillé tout en blanc	When he's dressed all in white
Li semblé yun deputé!	He looks like a deputy!
L'habillé tout en noi'!	When he's dressed all in black
Li semblé yun senateur!	He resembles a senator!

According to tradition, the song had its origin in a march on the capital by some houngans many years ago. The story is very old and no one remembers many of the details.

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remembers many of the details. But during the administration of President Louis Borno (1922–1930) there was a reënactment of the original march. There suddenly appeared in the streets of Port-au-Prince a crowd of Gèdé *mystères*—houngans "possessed" by Gèdé Nimbo and attired in Gèdé dress: tall black hats, long black tail coats, smoked glasses, black skirts over their black trousers. They carried flags, waved polka-dot kerchiefs, shook their ceremonial rattles, and paused sometimes to wipe the perspiration from one another's faces. They became the nucleus of a huge, noisy crowd moving up the hill toward the palace. Market women followed instead of going home; street gamins screamed and raced among them. Before they had arrived at the palace grounds they had taken on the semblance of a huge Mardi Gras band. They swerved through the gates of the palace grounds and along the drive, right to the steps of the palace itself. The guards, taken by surprise, waited helplessly for their officers to arrive.

At the palace door, the houngans demanded money from the president. Borno was in a dilemma. He was reputed to be sympathetic to Vodoun ritual but was only surreptitiously so. He feared the houngans, and he feared public opinion. What would the upper class of Port-au-Prince think, the Latin-culture Haitians? With Gèdé's worst manners, the Gèdé mystères cavorted on the palace steps. Finally Borno gave in. He sent the money out to them, and then the crowd of Gèdés marched out of the palace grounds, waving their flags and shaking their rattles.

Service for the Hounsi Bossale

This ritual of calling the loa to speak through the mouth of the Vodoun priest took place in the Bolosse section of Port-au-Prince. The hounfor was situated in a congested slum area of the city, but the grounds around it were spacious. The hounfor itself was small and unpretentious, and except for the adjoining tonnelle would easily have been mistaken for another small wooden house. The houngan was a heavy-set man with a black mustache. Quick to laugh and easy in his movements, he nevertheless commanded solemn respect from the hounsi and the other participants. His soft-spoken voice expressed assurance and authority.

There were a number of possessions in the course of the dancing, all more or less routine. Each time a possession occurred, the houngan came forward with his asson and bell, gave a pitcher of water and a candle to the possessed devotee, and conducted her through a ritual at the foot of the center post.

Later, one of the hounsi came and sat at the houngan's feet. She was not possessed but obviously was in a state of high tension. Other servitors brought from the hounfor a wooden washtub and set it on the ground

793 before the houngan. Staring into the tub, he shook his asson and called
794 upon a certain loa to enter. Then he placed a lighted candle upright in the
796 tub and watched it for a moment. The flame was suddenly snuffed out.
787 The houngan looked concerned. He removed the candle and called for another one. When he placed the new candle in the tub it remained burning. The houngan smiled. The loa had agreed to enter. The houngan and his chief assistant placed the tub upon the head of the waiting hounsi. She trembled violently as though she had received a shock, then leaped to her feet. The loa had mounted her and presumably was sitting in the tub on her head. She began to stagger back and forth across the dance court, while the drums beat a salute. The tub tottered dangerously but did not fall. The possessed hounsi then began to whirl. She stopped, and the tub continued to spin for a few seconds on her head. She twirled again in the opposite direction. Each time she stopped she waited for the tub to stop spinning. The twirling motion was accompanied by a constant jerking and lurching, as though she were about to lose her balance, but she never stumbled or fell. After perhaps five minutes of this violent "riding" by the loa, the houngan approached her with his asson and conducted her into the hounfor, the tub still on her head. Inside the hounfor he removed the tub, sent the loa away, and left the hounsi to rest.

[346] There was more dancing, and after a while the service was transferred to a small temporary cloth-covered structure resembling an American Indian hogan. The hounsi bossale—the servitors whose loa had not been "tamed" or conditioned—lay before the structure on their faces, side by side. There were twelve of them. The other hounsi covered them completely with white sheets. The houngan entered the hogan-like structure (the *card*) with a candle and a bell. He tinkled his bell and began to call upon the loa to speak to the hounsi bossale. Through his mouth, first one spirit and then another made comments. The hounsi under the sheets were tensely quiet, until one of them began to jerk and scream. Several others, as though responding to a trigger, joined in the screaming. Older women came to quiet them. The hysterical reaction of the hounsi bossale was regarded as simply a reflection of their beginners' status. Their loa had not yet been controlled. The ritual continued until the early hours of the morning, the loa and ancient ancestors coming in to speak, one after another.

The First Yams and the First Rice

244 [796] Each year, when the yams are harvested there is a great festival known as the *mangé yam*. Of all things grown in Haiti, the yam is perhaps the most
[262] significant. It is the most vital of all staples, and it is traditional. The yam

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celebrated with elaborate rituals for the dead. As in Haiti, great importance is laid on the presence of all living descendants, whose numbers are calculated to influence the ancestors' behavior. And as in Haiti, the first yams and the first rice are offered to the dead, and only after the family ritual does the family divide the crop.[5]

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Service for the Assotor Drum

The *assotor* drum is the largest and most sacred of all Haitian drums. Around it is built an impressive and elaborate service known as the *mangé assotor*, which, according to local traditions and circumstances, may be held as often as every three years or as infrequently as every twenty-one years. The period between mangés always consists of an odd number of years. A houngan from Jérémie declared the service might properly be held every three, five, or seven years. Another cult priest in the Cul-de-Sac Plain said it could be held every seven, seventeen, or twenty-one years. The assotor is known as the *plus grand moune* (the most venerable "man") of the hounfor. However, few cult centers possess an assotor. "Assotor c'est fort bagaille, c'est pas zaffai tout moune" (The assotor is powerful, it isn't everybody's affair), Haitians say. This is what a man from Jérémie tells about it:

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"The assotor is the greatest of all things in the hounfor. The Rada drums are only for the Dahomey nation. The Congo drums are for the Congo nation. The assotor is a man of Dahomey, but he is for all nations. It is for all loa—Pétro, Congo, Bumba, Dahomey. The assotor belongs to Dahomey, but when there is a great service the assotor is the host to the loa of every rite, the loa of Haiti and of Africa. When the assotor is played, the loa are awakened everywhere. Loa who have been forgotten by the Creoles (Haitians) will come to the service and mount people, and when the loa have gone, many people don't know what loa has been riding them. Some ancient spirits from far away come only to the assotor service, and when it is over they aren't heard of again.

534 796 778 184 787 [796]

"The assotor drum is not for small things, it is for great occasions. For some people there are no occasions in their whole lives great enough for an assotor service. When all other things have failed, it is only then that the assotor is called upon.

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"If a big houngan should have an assotor drum, he can have only one, and it is the chief of the hounfor. All other drums are its servants. You can make an assotor, but it is not necessarily an assotor. It may look like an assotor and not be an assotor. To be an assotor it must not only have the shape of an assotor but it must be accepted by the loa. There was a houngan near Jérémie who made an assotor and held a great service with it,

[5] [Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana. Cf. p. 351, category 116. -- Analyst] [115]

534 796 778 787 but it wasn't a genuine assotor and the loa didn't come. The drummer beat the assotor, but none of the loa came. As he played, the stick kept falling out of his hand. This was a bad signal (omen). None of the people got loa in their heads. The houngan was in a great sweat, but nothing happened. Another houngan came after the third day and told him to bring the service to an end. He did that. They threw the false assotor away and no one would touch it.

534 796 778 782 787 [776] "To make an assotor, there is first a service. The houngan goes into the woods to find a great tree that is suitable. The trunk must be big enough so that the drum is at least as tall as a man. Most assotors are six feet high or more. The houngan must buy the tree from Maît' Grand Bois, the loa who is Master of the Forest. There is a service under the tree, a goat or a bull is killed, and the houngan places money on the ground for Maît' Grand Bois. Then Maît' Grand Bois mounts his horses. He enters the head of the houngénicon or the laplace. Sometimes he rides the houngan himself. He is very rough with his horses. But if he accepts the money, the houngan has the tree cut down, and he has an assotor drum made. When the drum is finished, a special stick must be made to beat it. Again they go to the woods. They carry the great assotor drum with them. There is singing but no dancing or drumming. They find a tree from which they will cut the drumstick, and there is a service. The houngan must buy the branch from which the drumstick will be made. He offers money to Maît' Grand Bois, the same as before. He spills a little water on the ground for Maît' Grand Bois. He holds a candle in his hand. They sing to Maît' Grand Bois to let them have the stick. Maît' Grand Bois is the master of all the trees, but he is thinking also of the other loa and how they feel about it. On the Island Below the Water he consults with them. If he agrees to give the stick, he makes it known by mounting some of the hounsi, or the houngan, or maybe the man who will be the special assotor drummer. Then they cut down the branch and make the drumstick.

534 778 776 "The assotor drum is not dedicated to Ogoun or Èzilie or any other single loa. If it is baptized, it is given its own name, Assotor. The spirit of the assotor is multiple, for it is the *ruppel* for all loa everywhere. The spirit of the assotor is called Assotor, and it is a kind of loa, but it is not one loa but all loa.

534 796 778 776 "In the assotor service, all loa come. Ogoun, Damballa, Legba, Tijean Pétro, Dan Pétro, Gèdé, Maît' Cimitière, they all come. The big loa come and the little loa, the chiefs and their escortes. Every big loa has an escorte of twenty-one smaller loa. Some of the smaller loa have their own escortes. Damballa comes crawling like a snake. Makanda comes crawling like a snake. Ogoun comes fighting, chewing on nails or anything iron. Badé

184 the gate, and the crossroads, is not regarded in the same light as the other
776 loa but as a messenger and interceder, and as the crossroads protector. He it is who helps in the placation of the major gods, and who guards people against accident, chance, and evil spirits on the highway.

796 In traditional form, services for Maît' Grand Bois and Femme Grand
782 Bois are conducted by the family without the aid of a houngan, under
776 the direction of the oldest male member of the family. The rites begin on a Thursday. With a tiny bell in his hand, the elder who directs the service (he is called *grand famille*) calls upon Maît' Grand Bois to come and receive his feast. The procedures are solemn. The grand
[787] famille and the family sing. At last Grand Bois enters the head of the old man who is conducting the rites. Then the sacrificial animals are brought forward and killed, and the women take the meat and begin the cooking of the mangé. While the food is cooking, the family sits and waits. Sometimes the grand famille begins a song, in which others join. The cooking takes a long while. Sometime during the night, when the food is ready, it is placed in two baskets—one for Maît' Grand Bois and one for his wife, Femme Grand Bois. Into each basket goes meat, corn meal, rice, bread, cookies, peanut cakes, cassava, and other delicacies. The two baskets are hung by ropes from the roof of the tonnelle, or from the branch of a tree. During the entire night, none of the family eats. Maît' Grand Bois and his wife partake of the feast as they please. At six o'clock in the morning, the baskets are taken down, and the family is free to eat what the loa have left for them.

When the food is gone, the bones that are left are carried to a nearby stream and washed until they are white and shining. The bones are then placed in a large calabash bowl. Sweet-scented leaves from special trees are placed in the bowl with the bones, and water is added. The
[783] mixture becomes a ritual lotion, or "bath." The entire family kneels before the liquid, which they rub on their faces, heads, arms, hands, legs, and feet. When the ritual bathing is over, they sing:

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La famille vin' payé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
La famille vin' payé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
Cérémonie là c'est fini! [Ex. 41]	The ceremony is finished!

Afterward, each member of the family places a small coin in the calabash dish with the bones and leaves, and the residue is then buried in a deep hole at a crossroads. A heavy post (*borne*) is erected at the site, with
[211] markings to indicate the date of the service, and the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, each representing a year. Every year one of the numbers is checked off, and at the end of four years another service for Maît' Grand Bois and Femme Grand Bois is held.

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If it should happen that on the appointed day four years later the family is unable to hold the regular feast for Grand Bois, the grand famille goes to the tree sacred to the loa, with a bottle of *siro'* and other token gifts. He explains the difficulties of the family; he tells the loa that it has been a bad year, that the crops have been poor, and that the family has not been able to accumulate enough money to buy sacrificial animals. He asks Grand Bois for a six-month postponement. The loa agrees to the postponement, making his intentions clear through various signs when the grand famille is possessed. "Grand Bois is a good loa," people say, "but if you fail to meet your obligations to him he will be very stern. If you don't keep your promise to him, he may seize you [i.e., kill you]."

When the rites for Maît' Grand Bois are finished, services for Ogoun and the Dahomé deities may be held, beginning on Friday and running through the week end. The Ogoun service is a festive affair. There is much singing and dancing, and early on Saturday morning the sacrificial bull is dressed and decorated with red and blue kerchiefs. Red and blue ribbons are tied to his horns, and he is led on a grand tour to various places, including Ogoun's tree. The drummers walk behind him, and after them members of the family, some dancing, some singing, and some mounted by the loa Ogoun. The procession passes three times around the cemetery, then heads back toward the family *habitation*. When the participants reach the tree sacred to Legba, they sing to this loa, invoking him to "ouvri bayè pou' moin" (open the gate for me). Finally, when the procession reaches the *habitation*, the sacrificial bull is killed. After Ogoun has been served his mangé, the rites are terminated with an *action de grâce*.

Near Anse-à-Veau there is a dried-up spring. It is said that many years ago during a big service for Maît' Grand Bois a man mounted by this loa rushed to the foot of a large tree and began clawing at the ground. He dug a hole there with his hands, and when it was only a few feet deep, water began to flow. The members of the société later enlarged the hole and lined it with stone. It was discovered that a giant crab was living in this water. One year, a service to Maît' Grand Bois was missed. The crab disappeared from the spring, and soon the water stopped flowing. "Grand Bois gives," the people say, "but if he is not remembered he also takes back."

Possession by the Loa Pinga Maza

On the outskirts of Port-au-Prince there is a hounfor dedicated to the loa Pinga Maza, also known by the name Bakulu Baka. He is a ferocious and fearsome spirit of the Pétro family who is known for his propensity

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houngan took his place before the small altar and the cross surmounted by the skull. Again he spoke *langage* and rattled his asson. He took from the altar a small-necked bottle containing a white alcoholic liquid and a tight-fitting iron cross. The presence of the iron cross inside the bottle was represented as a magical phenomenon. The houngan took a mouthful of the white liquid and sprayed it out in a fine mist over the skull. Twice more he sprayed the mist, in different directions. Then he poured a little of the liquid directly on the skull. The room was filled with the smell of alcohol. The houngan lighted a candle and sat in a low chair facing the altar. He shook his asson rhythmically and spoke *langage* to Pinga Maza. Suddenly Pinga Maza entered the houngan's head. The houngan became violent. He jerked this way and that, making strange noises in his throat. He seized a machete from the altar, waved it around, and struck the flat of it against his head. He continued for a while to beat his head fiercely with the machete. Gradually he became quiet. His assistants placed Pinga's red jacket on him. Now he spoke in the tired voice of an old man. He complained that he was hungry, that he had not eaten for a long while. His assistant handed him a razor blade. He placed it in his mouth, chewed it up, and swallowed it, washing it down with more of the white liquid in the bottle. He asked for more, and they gave him a second blade to eat. He demanded a third, and ate that, too, spitting out small fragments of steel that caught in his teeth.

His assistant told him there was a man present seeking advice about a pouin. The possessed houngan looked around with half-closed eyes. He asked the man his name, and what he wanted. After hearing the client's story, the houngan took out a deck of cards and placed them one at a time, face up, on a winnowing tray. After studying the cards he said: "You are strong, but not strong enough. You already have some protections, but they do not protect you from the dangers coming your way. You have powerful enemies. You must have a new pouin." The man said yes, he wanted a new pouin, but how much would it cost? Pinga replied through the mouth of the houngan: "Twenty-five dollars." The man said: "I will get the money and return." He went out after placing five gourdes on the winnowing tray with the cards. Pinga became drowsy. The houngan's head fell forward on his chest and he slept. The divining session was ended.

The Water Road

The land where the loa live, the place "below the water," is not thought of as being in the water itself. It is dry and airy, like the countryside of Haiti. But the route to it is through water.

of Haiti. But the route to it is through water. When the Haitians say "under the water" they do not mean under the sea. The ocean is regarded as the special domain of Agwé, La Sirène, and a few related deities, but it has nothing to do with most loa. "Under the water" specifically means under the springs, the rivers, and the fresh-water lakes. Fresh water has the greatest of significance in relation to most of the Vodoun deities.

When a loa comes to visit his Haitian children he comes by way of the *chimin dlean* (the water road)—that is to say, by way of the river, the waterfall, or the spring. Because the spring is the primary source of fresh water, it is the most direct means of contact with the land of the loa. Tales are heard everywhere of persons who, drawing water from the spring at night, heard the voices of loa or the sound of singing and drumming coming up from somewhere below. And virtually all the tales about human beings who visited the land of the loa describe them as descending into a river or disappearing into a waterfall.

The loa are accustomed to traveling by the "water road." And in all aspects of the Vodoun service, this "water road" is refreshed and replenished. When the road is dry, contact with the loa is diminished. When it is moist, the loa travel easily.

Thus, the houngan constantly uses water to entice and invite the deities. He holds a glass or pitcher of water at the center pole of his peristyle. He extends it toward the four cardinal points. He spills water at the foot of the center pole. He spills water in the hounfor at the foot of the *pé*, or altar. He sets a pitcher of water at the gateway of his *habitation*. And often, during a service, he pours a pathway of water in the dust from his gateway into his peristyle. Within nearly every hounfor there is at least one *bassin*, or pool, dedicated to the loa who is the *maît' caille*, the master of the house. These pools are carefully filled with water drawn from the springs. They are places of rest and refreshment for the deities whose names or portraits are inscribed on the walls above.

Sometimes rites and services are held at the site of the spring, the houngan and his entourage marching down to it from the hounfor for the occasion. So, too, there are annual pilgrimages to waterfalls such as Saut d'Eau, where the loa mount their "horses" in profusion.

Within the hounfor, during a service, the cult priest and the servitors pour "libations" of water on the earth, so that the loa may be refreshed. And virtually without end, the hounfor is the scene of ritual ceremonies in which the loa is bathed and thus "renewed" in the heads of his servitors.*

* [For footnote, see category 116, p. 351.--Analyst]

The importance of water in Vodoun has a fundamentally West African character. Among the Yoruba and the Ashanti and in Dahomey, for example, water rites are a significant aspect of religious ritual. Herskovits notes the frequency of religious pilgrimages to streams in West Africa.[8]

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In one instance, at Abeokuta, a bedecked procession of worshipers left a shrine atop a high hill, followed a long path to the riverside over two miles away, and returned before the ceremonies could be carried out at the shrine of the god. On one occasion, in Dahomey, the bed of the sacred stream run dry was "filled" from nearby wells so that this water could be ritually redrawn for use in an especially important ceremony. Among the Ashanti, pilgrimages to Lake Bosumtwe and other sacred bodies of water regularly occur. And it is on such occasions that the spirit of the river or lake or sea manifests itself, by "entering the head" of the devotee and causing him to fling himself, possibly possessed, into the water.[9]

So it is also in Haiti, where possession at the river's edge may cause the devotee to leap into the river. At Saut d'Eau, possessed persons plunge into the waterfall without regard for their safety, being in the care of the loa who have mounted them.

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Into this water complex the Christian rite of baptism has been easily absorbed, providing merely a new act of veneration for water and its properties. In the Haitian mind baptism is not far removed from the *lavé tête* ritual, the washing of the head, or the *rafraîchi tête*, the "refreshing" of the head, both of which are acts in propitiation of the loa.[9] So related is the baptismal concept in the Haitian mind, that the term "baptize" is used to describe the lavé tête; it is said that the loa is being "baptized." So also are drums "baptized," not to menton yams, and even the hounfor itself.

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Marriage to a Loa

Although the term *hounsi* (spirit wife, or wife of the spirit) is applied to a large class of servitors of the Vodoun temple, only a small number of servitors ever pass through rites which give them a husband-wife or wife-husband relationship with a loa. Reasons for these mystic marriages vary, but usually the rituals take place upon the prescription of a cult priest who interprets the will of the deities concerned. Most of the mystic marriages of which I have heard have taken place in the general area of Port-au-Prince and the Cul-de-Sac Plain. In some other areas of Haiti it appears that no such rites have taken place locally within the memory of the elder inhabitants. One aged man living near Belladère declared: "It [marriage to a loa] is impossible. People serve loa, they do not marry them. A man does not marry his burro. A loa

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8 [Herskovits, The Myth of the Negro Past, p. 233. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

9 [It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

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588 does not marry his horse. People marry people. Loa marry loa. A man
588 may have a compact with a loa. That is not a marriage. Some of the
184 things that are going on down there in the Plain are not right. They are not the old way. In the old days we did things differently. We did not always run to the houngan. The grand famille knew how to talk to the loa. Up here we don't do things the way they do them down below in the city. People marry people. Loa marry loa."

588 Nevertheless, the practice in the neighborhood of Port-au-Prince and
776 the Cul-de-Sac Plain is for mystic marriages to take place when deemed
[184] useful, essential, or unavoidable. Foremost among the loa involved in these rites is Ezilie Wèdo, the "pure" one, the deity of love, sometimes identified with the Virgin Mary. Other loa known to have taken part in mystic marriages are Damballa, Ogoun, Ayida, Agwé, Gèdé Nimbo or one of his brothers, Cousin Zaka, and Général Clermeil. All these loa—significantly, I think—have clearly defined personalities; much is known about their character and behavior, their likes and dislikes.

588 A man married to Ezilie has special obligations to her for the dura-
[834] tion of his life. On certain days (especially Thursday, which is sacred to this deity), the mortal "husband" may not have sexual intercourse, even though he has a human wife.

588 Circumstances leading to a mystic marriage vary widely, but in each
755 case it is a cult priest who determines whether the rites should be
793 held. Perhaps a person has been afflicted with a series of illnesses or mis-
776 fortunes. He goes to his houngan, who begins a series of communications with the client's loa or with his own. Sometimes many loa are consulted before the desired information is available. Eventually it is determined that a certain deity, for reasons which may or may not be clear, wishes to have nuptial ties with the client. The illnesses or mis-
[753] fortunes that have been sent are a means of informing or warning the
[777] person concerned.

Sometimes the houngan relies on well-established divining methods to ascertain the cause of the difficulties. He may employ the *gembo* (a shell that slides on a string), ashes, or small shells that are thrown on
[787] the ground. Or he may rely on possession by a loa to provide the information.

If it is found that a loa is demanding marriage, arrangements are then made. The rites that follow may take place in a hounfor or at the house of the human bride or groom. Both a prêt' savane and a houngan officiate.

588 The person directly involved, like the loa, usually has something to
554 gain from a mystic marriage. For one thing, he can reasonably expect

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special future help and consideration from the loa (including the cessation of the illnesses or other misfortunes that have led to the marriage). A man (or woman) united with a loa in "matrimony" is "stronger" (*plus fort*) in his relationship to his environment and to other people. For this reason, the initiative for a mystic marriage does not always come from a loa. An ambitious person may seek such a marriage to strengthen his hand, to provide protection against other deities or human enemies, or to gain wealth or position. One observer, Odette Mennesson Rigaud, expresses the opinion that in such instances the marriage "is no longer a religious union of mystic love, but a magic pact."[10] The implicit element of "pact" is so evident in all mystic marriages, even when the initiative comes from the loa, that the distinction is not easily appreciated. However, persons suspected of "pushing" for a marriage with a loa are regarded as presumptuous or reckless, and often they are believed to have hidden motives. It is felt by many that the benefits of such a union can be only temporary and that catastrophe will ultimately follow.

A human party to marriage with a loa is deeply committed. He is subject to jealousy and anger on the part of his mystic mate. His behavior in the hounfor as in his daily life must be beyond the loa's reproach. He must avoid possession by other loa. And he must fulfill endless obligations. Sometimes the prospect of such binding ties is more than a man (or woman) is ready to face, and through the intercession of a strong houngan the loa may be induced to withdraw his demand for marriage. In that event, a special service is held, in the course of which the person buys his freedom with promises of special gifts and feasts for the deity.

One young man I knew was caught in a special dilemma—the houngan and the loa on one side, the Protestant Church on the other. The man, named Maurice, came from the mountains near Léogane. He was married but had no children. His wife's family, still living in Léogane, was Protestant. Maurice himself was a follower of Vodoun, and nominally a Catholic. When his wife was afflicted with a long series of headaches and earaches, Maurice consulted a houngan of Port-au-Prince. The houngan said that the loa Ayida Wèdo was demanding marriage with Maurice, and that the wife's illnesses were an indication of jealousy.

At the same time, the wife's parents came from Léogane and insisted that the girl's illnesses were brought about by God because Maurice was a follower of Vodoun. They demanded that he sever all his connections with Vodoun and become a Protestant.

After considerable anxiety, Maurice "purged" himself of Vodoun and

[10] [Odette Mennesson Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Voudoun Loa," in Appendix A of Deren, Divine Horsemen, p. 264. Cf. p. 351, category 116. -- Analyst]

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There is a loa who lives in the water,
It is Damballa!
Papa Damballa is the spring!
Papa Damballa is the spring!

Ayida Wèdo, another aspect of Damballa, is also known as a snake and a rainbow. A song describing Ayida's attributes goes:

Ayida c'est arc-en-ciel oh!
Ou ap' vin' fai couléve!
Ayida c'est arc-en-ciel!
Pas wè n'ap fai couléve? [Ex. 47]

Ayida is a rainbow, oh!
You will come in like a snake!
Ayida is a rainbow!
Don't you see I come in as a snake?

Agwé Woyo, one of the major deities of the sea, is believed to be responsible for thunder over the ocean, which is described as the sound of his cannon shooting:

Mak' Agwé so'ti nan la mer,
Canon'm chargé-é!
Mak' Agwé so'ti nan la mer,
Canon'm chargé!
Mak' Agwé so'ti nan la mer,
Canon'm chargé oh!
Canon'm chargé pou'm tiré Mak' A'Woyo! [Ex. 48]

Master Agwé comes from the sea,
My cannon is loaded!
Master Agwé comes from the sea,
My cannon is loaded!
Master Agwé comes from the sea,
My cannon is loaded, oh!
My cannon is loaded to fire, Master Agwé Woyo!

The loa Kitta, or Simbi Kitta, of the Guinée pantheon is one of the water deities. He is described as coming out of the water dripping wet:

Kitta oh so'ti nan dlezu li tou' mouillé!
Oh Kitta oh so'ti nan dlezu li tou' mouillé!
Oh Kitta so'ti nan dlezu li tou' mouillé!
Oh nen point houngan passé Bondieu nan pays-yà! [Ex. 37]

Kitta, oh, comes out of the water, he is all wet!
Oh, Kitta, oh, comes out of the water, he is all wet!
Oh, Kitta comes out of the water, he is all wet!
Oh, there is no houngan in this country greater than God!

Tijean Pétro of the Pétro "nation" is small, and agile even though he has only one foot. (Some people say that Tijean Petro has no feet at all.) This somewhat malevolent deity hides in the leaves of the coconut palm, and from there he sometimes preys on passers-by, particularly children. Persons mounted by Tijean Pétro may move about as though

They have no feet and climb into the highest palm tree. [787]

533	Ogoun é oh mein blood!	Ogoun é, oh, I am hurt!
534	Ogoun é oh mein blood!	Ogoun é, oh, I am hurt!
976	A pas m'blood Peri,	Now I am hurt, Peri,
976	M'pas wè sang mein!	I don't see my blood!
982	M'pas wè sang'm Moh Ogoun,	I don't see my blood, Master Ogoun,
984	Mein pas wè sang mein!	I don't see my blood!
986	M'pas wè sang'm Badagry,	I don't see my blood, Badagry
	Mein pas wè sang mein lè! [Ex. 62]	I don't see my blood here!

The loa Moundongue, like Dumballa, likes goat meat, and it can be cooked in two ways:

Ti yè yè!
Moundongue oh!
Oh Moundongue oh yè yè yè!
Moundongue mangé cabrit bouilli,
Moundongue mangé cabrit boucané! [Ex. 63]

Ti yè yè!
Moundongue, oh!
Oh, Moundongue, oh, yè yè yè!
Moundongue eats boiled goat,
Moundongue eats roasted goat!

Or again, the servitors may sing:

Cote pané ne bo'ou mangé, oh Ti Moundongue nè!
Cote pané ne bo'ou mangé, Moundongue nè! [Ex. 64]

Wherever you are, we give you food, oh, Ti Moundongue there!
Wherever you are, we give you food, Moundongue there!

The loa Adja also has animal sacrifices and special dishes for his mangé, but sometimes he—and the "horses" he mounts—will eat broken glass:

Oh Adja mangé bouteille dévoilée!
Adja vèse' vèse'!
Adja mangé bouteille dévoilée!
Adja vèse' vèse'! [Ex. 65]

Oh, Adja eats the bottom of a bottle!
Adja, ohl ese, ohl ese!
Adja eats the bottom of a bottle!
Adja, ohl ese, ohl ese!

For the loa Ianmon Ibo the proper sacrifice is a rooster, and the deity declares:

Nanchon Ibo m'a mangé gros coq oh nanchon Ibo!
Nanchon Ibo m'a mangé gros coq!
Nanchon Ibo m'a mangé gros coq oh nanchon Ibo!
Wulle wulle wulle! [Ex. 66]

Ibo nation, I am going to eat a large cock, oh, Ibo nation!
Ibo nation, I am going to eat a large cock!
Ibo nation, I am going to eat a large cock, oh, Ibo nation!
Wanlo wanlo wanlo!

The Ibo service is often a strictly family affair rather than a broad community ritual. The family replies to the Ibo loa in the following song.

La famille vin' payé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
Vin' payé sang!	Comes to pay blood!
La famille vin' payé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
Ibo Lanlo volonté! [Ex. 41]	It is Ibo Lanlo's wish!

The loa Nago frankly tells the people that if they want to come to his house (his shrine, or the hounfor) they will have to pay something for the privilege:

Si nous wè ouel'm demeuré,	If you see where I live,
Si nous wè ouel'm demeuré,	If you see where I live,
Fou'm payé bonbon pou' ça!	You have to give cookies for that!
Anago Nago!	Anago Nago!
Vin' wè ouel'm demeuré! [Ex. 67]	Come see where I live!

The "dead" spirit Gòlé Nimbo, the guardian or master of the cemetery, who often engages in bizarre activities which poke fun at the codes of social behavior, is sometimes regarded as a special protector of children. Precisely because he is overlord of all that has to do with the grave, his good will is sought, particularly in behalf of the young; and in many services of the Nago rites his protection is bought by money gifts:

Gòlé main la'gent,
M'apé ba ou la'gent la'gent,
M'apé ba ou la'gent pou' gè'dé *sentants* la yo!
M'apé ba ou la'gent pou' gè'dé *sentants* la yo!

Gòlé, take the money,
I will give you money, money,
I will give you money to guard the children!
I will give you money to guard the children!

In the course of the ceremonies when, from time to time, the honored loa of the occasion enters into the head of one of the servitors, the houngan will place in the hands of the mounted person a lighted candle and a pitcher of water. The possessed servitor approaches the sacred center post and spills a little water on the ground for the deity. After certain other rituals, the houngan, or one of his assistants, conducts the mounted "horse" into the *hounfor* to the altar. In the following song, as the possession comes on, there is a call for a lighted candle.

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Simbi non wè oh!
Simbi djab non wè!
Oh Simbi non wè oh!
Simbi non wè oh!
Simbi wa lumé chandelle pou' clairé moin! [Ex. 68]

Simbi doesn't see, oh!
Stern Simbi doesn't see!
Oh, Simbi doesn't see, oh!
Simbi doesn't see, oh!
Simbi [says] you will light the candle so I can see!

Some of the songs refer to the dancing of the loa who enter the bodies of the servitors. The deity Loko asks for his hounsi, through whom he will dance:

Coté pitits moin yo,
Mainain'm nan hounfor, m'ap djaillé!
Na pas Loko,
Coté pitits moin yo! [Ex. 69]

Where are my children,
Take me into the hounfor, I will *djaillé!*
Now, Loko,
Where are my children!

Another deity, who is not expressly named, tells his "leaves in the woods"—that is, his hounsi—that he has danced since he was a child:

Fé nan bois bélé moin!
Oh dépi'm pitit m'ap danse!
Fé nan bois bé-é!
Fé nan bois bélé moin oh!
Oh fé nan bois bélé moin oh!
Dépi'm pitit m'ap danse!
Fé nan bois bélé moin! [Ex. 70]

Leaves in the woods call me!
Oh, since I was small I have danced!
Leaves in the woods *bé-é!*
Leaves in the woods call me, oh!
Oh, leaves in the woods call me, oh!
Since I was small I have danced!
Leaves in the woods call me!

In the following song the loa Macaya Bumba is called upon by the hounsi to hurry up and get on with his dancing.

Macaya Bumba Bumba!
Lévé danse!
Macaya Bumba!
Bumba mon cher vini danse! [Ex. 71]

Macaya Bumba Bumba!
Get up and dance!
Macaya Bumba!
Bumba my dear, come and dance!

A song for the deity Ianman in the course of the Ibo dancing and ritual goes:

Ibo bélé!
Ibo bélé!
Nanchan Ibo ça ou gainyain ou ça Ibo bélé!

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The loa Aïson complains more vigorously of the bad behavior of human beings:

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Aïson Aïson!
Dipis temps y'ap pa'lé sou moin!
Coté ça yo gainyain?
Bouche à yo paya paya!
Djaule à yo pèrè pèrè!
Coté ça pou' yo pa'dom oh? [Ex. 83]

Aïson, Aïson!
For a long time they have been talking about me!
What's wrong with them?
Their mouths go *paya paya!*
Their jaws go *pèrè pèrè!*
What is the excuse?

Even on routine business the loa are inclined to be petulant, or to protest that they have been mistreated, that their followers gossip about them, or that they are not ardent enough. Here the deity Simbi en des Eaux complains bitterly that she is not loved by her servitors, the "leaves in the woods," and asks a hounsi named Lolo for news to take to spirits of the ancestors who live "below the water":

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Fé nan bois con ça nou yé!
Non point rainain pas mandé quinè!
Fé nan bois con ça nou yé!
Non point rainain pas mandé quinè!
Simbi en des Eaux,
Qui sorti en bas dlève!
Gardé ça yo fai moin!
M'dir Lolo, ba moin nouvelle pou'm ba yo! [Ex. 84]

Leaves in the woods, that's the way you are!
There is no love that does not ask to end!
Leaves in the woods, that's the way you are!
There is no love that does not ask to end!
Simbi en des Eaux,
Who comes from below the water!
See what they do to me!
I say, Lolo, give me the news to give them!

But if the loa complain about the behavior of their followers, the servitors also may complain. Songs sung in the hounfor may chide the deities for antisocial deeds, for forgetting their "children," or for carelessness. In the following song the spirit Malt' Grand Chimin is criticized for mounting his "horses" with such fury that they are thrown about

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violently. The hounsi complain that Mait' Grand Chimin treats them as though they were flour being ground in a mill:

Temp' changé nouvelle allé!
Bonjou' Papa bonjou' Roi Grand Chimin!
M'mandé Papa ça'm fai!
Temp' changé nouvelle allé!
Bonjou' Papa bonjou' Roi Grand Chimin!
M'mandé Papa ça'm fai!
Papa m'pas maïs moulin!
Nou dit na bougit moin!
Papa m'pas maïs moulin!
Nou dit na bougit moin! [Ex. 85]

Times change, the news goes out!
Good day, Papa, good day, Roi Grand Chimin!
I ask you, Papa, what did I do?
Times change, the news goes out!
Good day, Papa, good day, Roi Grand Chimin!
I ask you, Papa, what did I do?
Papa, I am not corn flour!
You say you will grind me!
Papa, I am not corn flour!
You say you will grind me!

When there is sickness within the société there may be songs for the absent ones. Here is a song for an ailing hounsi:

Moin allé wè li, hounsi malade oh!
Moin allé wè ça, hounsi malade oh!
Moin allé wè houngan, hounsi malade oh! [Ex. 86]

I am going to see there, the hounsi is sick, oh!
I am going to see it, the hounsi is sick, oh!
I am going to see, houngan, the hounsi is sick, oh!

Again, the members of the société call upon Ogoun, or St. Jacques, to help one of their number who is sick:

St. Jacques marré chwal li,
Li pas dit personne oh,
Vèyé li pou' moin!
Li met gainyain verre,
Li met gainyain maline nan dos,
St. Jacques oh!
Ba li lavie pou' moin! [Ex. 87]

St. Jacques ties his horse,
He tells no one, oh,
Take care of him for me!
He may have worms,
He may have sores on his back,
St. Jacques, oh!
Protect him for me!

Ogoun is the dispenser of rum, and in virtually all Ogoun rituals rum is at some time or another in evidence. Sometimes rum is poured into a hot iron pot and bursts into flame. The iron pot is described as Ogoun's

The cow was

never seen again, and after a prêt' savane had read prayers over the spring the people again drew water from it.

Baka more often change themselves into gray or red pigs, but one ingenious baka was said to have transformed himself into a bicycle, which was seen traveling alone at night on the road from Port-au-Prince to Léogane.

Some people wear charms against the baka's malevolence; but the most effective weapon is the cocomacaque stick. The cocomacaque, or monkey palm, is a palm tree that grows only a few feet high. It has magical powers to drive off not only baka but other evil beings as well. When the tree is growing in its natural state, it is said, you must never mention its name in its own presence. Should you say within its hearing, for example, "Look at the cocomacaque," it will wilt and fall over, losing all its vital powers. The trunk of this midget palm is a favorite material for fashioning a walking stick or a short baton. A man going on a long journey into strange country may carry a cococmacaque stick with him to brandish at the crossroads where baka lurk, or to drive off strange animals that may be baka in disguise.

In their relationships with human beings, the baka are not always random. Sometimes, for a terrible price, they will undertake to make a man rich or to "eat" his enemies for him.

In some parts of Haiti, baka seemingly have found their way into the ranks of the loa. In the Congo-Guinée pantheon there is a deity called Bakulu Baka, or Babaku Baka. He is a malevolent spirit who "eats" people in the best baka tradition, and he lives, significantly, in the mapou tree, which is shunned by all good loa.

The *engagements*, or compacts, in which baka sometimes figure are usually made with another sort of creature, the *djab*, or devil. A djab is a manlike being but is superhuman, ferocious, and terrible. Some djab are small, some large, some innocent in appearance, some grotesque. They are supernatural sorcerers who deal out riches in exchange for human beings. A frustrated or desperate man may go to a djab and ask for a favor, which will usually be granted for a heart-rending price. Persons who appear to gain wealth suddenly may be suspected of having entered into an *engagement* with a powerful djab.

One story is about a man of Port-au-Prince who, needing a large sum of money, went to a famous djab who lives in a cave known as Trou Fourban. This powerful djab agreed to provide all the money required, but only on condition that the man deliver to him each year one of his children. The man suddenly came into a large fortune. But when the anniversary of his compact arrived, he did not go to Trou Fourban

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with one of his children as he had agreed. That night his oldest child died. The next year to the day, his second child died. And the third year, the third child died. On the fourth anniversary, the man's wife died. On the fifth, he himself died. The djab of Trou Fourban had collected his debt.

Another great djab lives on the northern mountain called Morne Ronde. A man of Cap Haitien was said to have made a compact with him for wealth. One day there was a great hubbub in front of the man's house. A crowd gathered and stood peering inside his door. What they saw was a rain of money falling down from the rafters. The floor was covered with ten-gourde bills. When the *gendarmerie* came to investigate, they stood at the doorway in awe, watching the money float to the floor. The man finally closed the door. That night he moved away, and no one in Cap Haitien ever saw him again.

The djab are insatiable. For their favors—which range from providing wealth and political position to destroying one's enemies—they always demand more in return than the recipient has counted on. Catholic ritual is called upon in some instances to break the djab's chain of demands.

Some tales are told in which human beings outwit the djab, particularly the lesser ones; but more often than not, the djab have the last laugh. During the big hurricane which hit Haiti in 1954, a huge landslide occurred near the place called Bayè Roche in the La Selle Mountains. An entire village was wiped out, covered by the falling rocks. Throughout this region the disaster was attributed to the action of a djab reputed to live in one of the nearby caves. Many lost cattle were found wandering near Bayè Roche, and they were believed to be people whom the malevolent djab had transformed into animals.

The height of bravado is to demand to be confronted with a big djab face to face. There is a song which goes:

> Conduit'm allé oh!
> Conduit'm allé djab nan Trou Fourban!
> Conduit'm allé! [Ex. 91]
>
> Take me, oh!
> Take me to the djab in Trou Fourban!
> Take me!

There are still other supernatural creatures in Haitian lore who must be guarded against, such as the *djablesse*, the *revenant*, and the *lutin*. The *djablesse* is a female ghost who must live in the woods for a number of years before she can enter heaven, as a punishment for the crime of

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days, according to the bocor's prescription. It is also employed to protect an individual against various forms of the ouanga.

Against poisons, the usual protection is the *drogue*, prepared by a bocor or a leaf doctor who specializes in such things. After having drunk a drogue, a man is regarded as immune to poison. Should a man be a "horse" of the loa Ogoun Balindjo, however, no drogue is necessary, for Balindjo's people are regarded as immune even without such precautions.

Foretelling the future and divination take two general forms. In one variety, a bocor or *divineur*, using ritual paraphernalia such as cards, flour, or ashes, takes personal responsibility for the divination. In the other form, the divineur functions only when possessed by a loa, and it is the deity himself who foretells and foresees. An account of this kind of divination is given in chapter 6. "Horses" of the loa Mâit' David when possessed are given packs of cards, for they are reputed to be able to divine the future.

Certain houngans use the instrument known as the *gembo* as a divining device. This is a small shell about the size of a lemon, through which a long cord is passed. When there is no tension on the cord, the shell can easily be slid back and forth. When the cord is taut, the shell will not slide. The houngan holds one end of the cord under his foot, the other end with his hand above it. He starts his divination with the shell at the top and the cord taut. Shaking his asson with the other hand, he talks *langage* and asks questions. To indicate a "yes" answer he relaxes the tension on the cord and the shell slips downward an inch or so. The typical gembo is decorated with beads, old coins, religious medals, snake bones, and a fragment of mirror.

There are several ceremonies for locating a thief or other guilty person. One is called *passage d'alliance*. A ring suspended on a string is held over a person's head. If it moves in a regular pendulous way, the person is innocent; but if it swings in a circle, his guilt is established. Another method is the use of a long stick. The stick is pointed at one man, then another, and when the end vibrates in a circular manner the guilty party has been located. This technique is known as *jugement de baguette*. A third method is the one known as *passé balai*. A man sits in a low chair and small branches and leaves of the *balai* (broom) tree are placed under the chair and fastened to its uprights. A guilty person sitting in this chair will cause the *balai* branches to vibrate and close in on him.

The role of the *docteur fé*—the leaf doctor—straddles the field of magic and pharmacology. Many of his potions are of a mystical and

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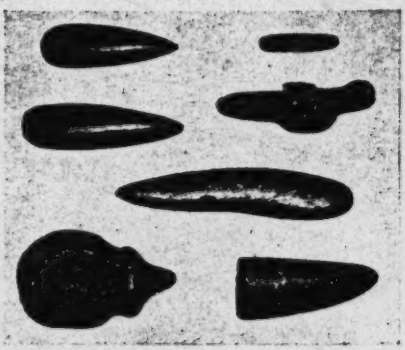
22. *An assortment of stones (Indian artifacts) from the altar of a hounfor in the mountains above Jacmel. All are regarded as thunder stones thrown to earth by the loa Sobo and Kébiosu, or as stones containing the essence of other deities.*



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23. *A houngan of southern Haiti divining with the aid of his asson, bell, and (right) gembo.*

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30. A Christmas service near Léogane: ritual "bathing" in fire. The two young women are hounsi possessed by a loa of the Gèdé family, probably Jean Zombie. Their nostrils are stuffed with cotton and their jaws are bound in the manner of corpses, in honor of the deity, who is a "dead" loa. In a state of possession they seem to be impervious to the intense heat.

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35. *A hounsi in the first stage of possession by a loa.*

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36. *Possessed by the loa Gédé Nimbo, two women dance the deity's favorite step, the Banda.*

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When I want to talk you do not want me to talk!
When I want to sing you do not want me to sing!
Dahomey *y wa*, they do me wrong! *

Another note of criticism within the hounfor concerns a person who has been putting on airs of importance. The song states that he (or she) in reality has not even qualified for the lowest order within the cult, even though he behaves as though he were the cult chief:

Ou poco hounsi oh!	You are not yet a hounsi, oh!
Ou dit'm ou c'est houngan!	You tell me you are a houngan!
Ou poco hounsi!	You are not yet a hounsi!
Ou dit'm ou c'est houngan c'est ça!	You tell me you are a houngan, it is so!
Oh Paille à Terre!	Oh, Straw on Earth! †
Poussé allé!	Push and go!
Oh Allada malade oh! [Ex. 99]	Oh, Allada is sick, oh! ‡

Poverty is so normal in Haitian life that a man who accumulates wealth in any form becomes conspicuous. Ordinarily he does not welcome this conspicuousness. It makes him a target of gossip and rumors, and of those who might wish to collect debts from him, borrow money, or obtain other favors. He becomes a *gros nèg'*, and finds himself increasingly cut off from the community of ordinary, poor people. Needless to say, Haitians, like other people, dream of striking it rich. Wherever poverty has been acute, whether in Europe, Asia, or America, the folklore is full of tales of finding great treasures. Haiti is no exception. Many Haitian folk tales and folk songs deal with this theme, particularly with obtaining wealth by magical or supernatural means. Sometimes riches are obtained through *engagements*, unholy compacts with devils or demons. In some stories loa facilitate the discovery of treasure, in others a powerful bocor accomplishes it through magical practices. If a man suddenly becomes well-to-do, therefore, rumors may spread in regard to how he came by his wealth. If he is suspected of dealings with devils or with a powerful bocor, his apparent success in his venture makes him a neighbor to be feared. To avoid incurring envy and hostility, people tend to play down their financial successes and pretend they have nothing in life but the clothes they wear, their houses, and their gardens. Spreading word that a poor man has hidden money is regarded as a mean and reprehensible act. Numerous folk songs protest against this injustice:

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Désastre tombé nans lacour-wà!
Si m'apé travaille là nans cour-wà,

* Literally: They eat my rights.
† An exclamation, the name of a certain ouanga.
‡ Allada, the name of a town in Dahomey, used in the sense of "people of Dahomey." The line means, "Things are in a bad state of affairs."

776 184 794 a "nation" in the Dahomé rites; and the Ibo group, though still distinct, is frequently allied with the Dahomé rites or the Guinée rites.

The following list does not pretend to include all the loa known in Haiti. It is doubtful that a complete list could ever be compiled, in view of the continual generation of new deities and the constant cross-fertilization between "nations." The loa are grouped here according to [128] most widespread usage. There are contradictions from which there is no possible escape, and these general groupings will not necessarily correspond to the concepts and practices of any specific locality. It is intended here to give a broad and generalized view.

128 776 794 Under "The Vodoun Pantheon" I have placed constellations of deities of Dahomean and Yoruban origin, along with others that are clearly identified with Vodoun rites. Under "The Congo and Pétro Pantheons" I have listed the Congo-Guinée loa—consisting mainly of deities associated with Central Africa and deities affiliated with the Pétro rites. Ibo and Kanga loa are grouped together, because in many regions of Haiti the two pantheons appear to be interlocked. A separate listing is given for the Simbi family of water deities in view of their ambivalence; they are sometimes found in the Pétro group and sometimes in the Dahomé, according to local practice.

THE VODOUN PANTHEON

776 171 Damballa Wèdo, or Dan Wèdo. One of the most venerable of Haitian loa. He is generally recognized as the husband of Ayida Wèdo, though occasionally the two deities are merged in a personality called Damballa-Ayida. The concept of a single identity for Damballa and Ayida conforms to Dahomean belief. In both Haiti and West Africa, Damballa is identified with the rainbow and is symbolized as a snake.λ In Haiti he is associated also with rainfall, springs, and fertility. He is sometimes [782] described as "white," and the proper food offering to him is a white chicken. Persons [787] possessed by Damballa usually take on stylized characteristics of snakes. Along with [177] many other important loa, he has become identified with characters in Christian religious belief. There are, in fact, "two" Damballa Wèdos. One, identified with Moses, comes in talking; the other, identified with St. Patrick, never talks. Food [782] offerings for the St. Patrick version of Damballa consist of eggs, flour, sugar, and almond syrup. Damballa remains one of the chief gods of the Dahomey cult in Cuba, and he survived into the last century in New Orleans under the name Danny.

[822] Ayida Wèdo. Generally regarded in Haiti as the wife of Damballa, Ayida is also symbolized by snake and rainbow, and her color, like Damballa's, is "white." In Dahomey and Nigeria, Ayida is known as a male rather than a female spirit and is regarded there as the same divinity as Damballa, or Dji. In Dahomey, Ayida Wèdo was the great serpent who held up the world. According to one myth, the Creator of the World assigned to Ayida the task of holding up the earth to keep it from falling into the sea. The great serpent coiled himself, tail in mouth, and lay below

λ [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 245 ff. Cf. P.354, Category 16. --Analyst]

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the earth like the carrying pad that women wear to support bundles on their heads. Whenever Ayida Wèdo shifted his position there were earthquakes.[2] When the rainbow appeared after a rain it was said that Ayida had come out from under the earth to drink of the fresh water. [776] [171] [821]

DAMBALLA GRAND CHIMIN (Damballa of the Highway). Another manifestation of Damballa as a protector of those on long journeys. [484]

DAMBALLA VERRE. Another manifestation of Damballa.

DOMICI WÈDO. Considered to be the daughter of Damballa. The ending of her name (*-ci*) suggests that at one time she may have been considered a wife rather than a daughter.

DOKI WÈDO. A member of Damballa's family.

AGÒO WÈDO. A member of Damballa's family. Said to be a "work loa" who aids men with their gardens, especially in time of illness. [?241]

ÉZILIE DOBA, or DOOBA, sometimes spelled EZULIE. One of the "big" loa of the Dahomé pantheon, a symbol of purity, and sometimes identified with the Virgin Mary. Her color is white, and services to her include a ritual sweeping and sprinkling of the earth and a perfuming of the air. Food offerings to her include corn meal and eggs. Male "horses" of Ézilie are sometimes bound to her by mystic marriages, and they are obligated to refrain from sexual intercourse on certain days which belong to her. There are a number of Ézilies, regarded as members of the same family or, in some cult centers, as different manifestations of the same deity. Some Haitians regard Ézilie Doba as the ancestor of the Ézilie family and refer to her as Grand Ézilie. Note that there is a Dahomean town named Dogba at approximately 0° 6′ E., 6° 50′ N. [177] [822] [782] [787] [834] [588]

ÉZILIE FRÉDA, or ÉZILIE DAHOMAIN (Dahomé), or ÉZILIE FRÉDA DAHOMAIN. Like Ézilie Doba, she is a symbol of purity and is identified with the Virgin Mary. Mystic marriages are performed with her, and her "horses" are obligated to refrain from sexual intercourse on certain days. She is also a giver of wealth. [177] [588] [787] [834]

ÉZILIE WÈDO. A sister or daughter of Ézilie Doba and also related to Damballa.

ÉZILIE MAISOL. A sister of Ézilie Fréda.

ÉZILIE BANDA. A manifestation of Ézilie who is especially fond of the Banda dance.

ÉZILIE JÉROUGE (Red Eyes). A stern and hard Ézilie who is often identified with Pétro rather than Dahomé rites.

AÏSON FRÉDA. A member of the Ézilie escorte, regarded as a market-place protector. In Dahomey, Aïson was a protector of all public gathering places.[3] [443] [171]

AÏSON BELÉKÉTÉ

AÏSON DLEAU BOLO BOSU

MAÎTRESSE MAMBO. A special form of Ézilie as priestess.

MAÎTRESSE ESPAGNOLE, or 'PAGNOLE. A person mounted by this Ézilie talks only Spanish. [787] [191]

SOBO, or SOOBO. A thunder deity who hurls stones to the earth when angered. Some of the stones thrown by Sobo are regarded as the sacred residence of various loa. Sobo (or Sogbo) is a member of the original Thunder pantheon of Dahomey. 776 171

SOBO BADÉ, or SOBO BADÈ, or simply BADÉ. A close relative of Sobo, regarded as the protector of the hounfor (*badé*). In Dahomey, Badé is sometimes referred to as the son of the deity Sobo.[4]

[2] [See Ellis, The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, pp. 47-49; and Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 245ff. Cf. p. 354 Category 116. -- Analyst]

[3] [Ellis, op. cit., p. 52. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[4] [Herskovits, op. cit., pp. 152ff. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]

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776 Aboumé Tonnerre, also pronounced Abomé Tonnerre. Another thunder loa. Abomé (or Agbomé) is the name of an ancient capital of Dahomey.

Badisi. The wife of Sobo Badé.

So Narcisse, or simply So. A thunder loa of Dahomean
[171] origin. In Dahomey he is regarded as an offspring of Mawu and Lisa, and a member of the Sky pantheon.

Kébiosu, or Kébiosu. A thunder loa who, like Sobo, hurls stones to the earth.
[171] In Dahomey he is known as Xevioso and is thought to be the same deity as So. In
[166] Haiti, persons killed by lightning are thought to be enemies of Kébiosu and are given special treatment in burial.

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776 Agwé Woyo, known also as Coqui-Nan-Mer. He is a loa of the sea; thunder and
782 lightning over the ocean are thought to be Agwé shooting his cannon. He is usually
[821] symbolized in pictures by a sailing or steam vessel. His colors are blue and white,
[822] and the primary sacrificial animal for him is a male goat. High ceremonies for Agwé are begun in the hounfor and consummated in a sailing boat on the open sea, from which is launched a highly decorated and stylized miniature ship containing food for the deity. This tiny craft is known as the *barque d'Agwé*. Hounfors honoring this spirit usually have a small boat hanging from the rafters. In Dahomey,
[171] Agwé is also a sea deity and a member of the Thunder pantheon.

776 Agwètta Woyo. She is thought to be Agwé Woyo's wife, though in Dahomey
[171] she was considered to be his daughter.

Agwèau Wandéou. Said to be the son of Agwé.

La Sirène. Another deity of the sea, a latecomer visualized as a mermaid. La Sirène is usually thought of as belonging to a separate family, though she is frequently served along with Agwé. Some sociétés do not recognize her at all.

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776 Nananbouclou, or Nanan Bouloucou. A loa of herbs and medicines. In Dahomey
171 this spirit was considered the grandparent of all deities, the progenitor of Mawu and Lisa from whom all demigods are descended.[a] She is still remembered in the Dahomey cults of Cuba.

Lissa or Lisha. Probably the Lisa of Dahomey, child of Nanbouclou.

Attibon Legba, or Legba Sé. One of the most important of Haitian loa, frequently the first one invoked in any service. He is the guardian of the gateway, the
[182] crossroads, and the highway. Cocks and male goats are his favorite foods, as in West Africa. In Dahomean tradition, Legba is the youngest offspring of Mawu and Lisa, the progenitors of all Dahomean deities. He is a divine trickster who is both feared and loved, a force that is capriciously malevolent or benevolent. Today, as in earlier
[178] times in Dahomey, the image of Legba, made of clay, stands or sits before the entrance to many villages. Sometimes the image is nothing more than a mound or column of earth symbolizing a phallus. Legba's mischief and tricks are directed against the other deities and human beings. In Haiti, as in Dahomey, Legba is not a personal deity. As Herskovits points out, Legba has no "character" and cannot be
[189] relied on. He is the intervener between mankind and the deities. It is in this sense that he "opens the gate," providing a channel of communication between man and loa; and it is for this reason that he is often supplicated first in religious ritual. In Dahomean lore, Legba's mischief is often in the realm of sex. In ritual dances for

[a] [Ibid, pp. 101 ff. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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dressed in a black frock coat, black top hat, and black trousers or a blue, white polka-dotted skirt. He carries a cane and smokes a pipe or a cigarette, according to which manifestation of Gèdé he represents. He talks with a strong nasal accent, which is acquired by anyone mounted by him. Gèdé Nimbo is always asking for money. Persons possessed by him may rub hot peppers on their tongues or in their eyes. In some parts of Haiti, Gèdé is thought to be identical with Baron Samedi. In a Vodoun service, no other loa cares to enter while a Gèdé is present; and Gèdé delights in appearing suddenly, uninvited, and obstructing the orderly progress of a ritual. Although Herskovits points out that Gedeonsu, or Gèdé, is a Dahomean totem,[14] it is worth noticing that in Haiti the Gèdé rites are often regarded as belonging to the Nago "nation." [776] [787] [791]

Gèdé Nimbo Mazaka. A Gèdé brother.

Gèdé Ouèsou. A Gèdé brother.

Gèdé L'Oraille. A thunder or storm Gèdé. Like the other Gèdés, he is closely associated with death, and he is considered more of a malefactor than most. He is repulsive in appearance, with a dwarflike stature.

Gèdé Mivèvou. A Gèdé brother.

Gèdé Nansou. A Gèdé brother.

Gèdé Nouvavou. A Gèdé brother.

Gèdé Vi. Said to be a son of Gèdé Nimbo, though some Haitians regard this loa as a female, possibly Gèdé Nimbo's wife.

Gèdé Zeclai. A loa of lightning, thought to be responsible for death by lightning, violent death in general, and destruction of cattle and other property by natural forces. He seems to be a Gèdé version of Kébioso or Sobo. [766]

Jean Zombie. One of the Gèdé brothers, a "dead" spirit.

Gèdé Ti Pisse (Gèdé Little Flea)

Gèdé Rachè (Gèdé Tear Off)

Gèdé Joyeuse (Happy Gèdé)

Tiwawè Gèdé, or Gèdé Tiwawè Panchè. This Gèdé is one that makes mischief as he enters a hounfor service.

Gèdé Zilé (Gèdé of the Island)

Gèdé Yalovi

Gèdé Yabopé

Circlèquitté Gèdé (The Gèdé Who Mows Down)

Jensiman Britisse. A loa who works with the Gèdé family, one of Gèdé Nimbo's graveyard assistants. He is described as having a white skin, suggesting that his surname is a corruption of "British."

Marie Gèdé. A sister of the Gèdé brothers.

Balèrouzé. One of the Gèdé brothers. His name means to "sweep and sprinkle," a ritual activity characteristic of certain Vodoun ceremonies.

Manzè Bridgit, or Manman Bridgit. The mother of the Gèdé brothers.

Malt' Samian. One of the Gèdé escorte.

Baron Samedi. One of a group of Barons who march with the Gèdés. They are so closely identified that some Haitians feel that Baron Samedi is merely another name for Gèdé Nimbo. Persons possessed in cemeteries are thought to be mounted by Baron Samedi or one of his brothers. Like the Gèdés, the Barons are spoken of as "dead" spirits. [787]

Baron Piquant. The loa in charge of grave digging.

[14] Herskovits, Life in a Haitian Valley, p. 267, cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst]

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776 Azagon Lacroix, or Baron Lacroix. Spoken of as "chief" of the cemetery, the one who plants the cross over the grave.

Baron Pouch, or Pouik (Baron Dust)

Baron Sal (Baron Earth, or Dirty Baron)

Baron Chita. The Baron who sits on the graves.

Baron Tikalé

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[775] [776] Azaka Méde, or Zaké Méde. Herskovits reports that Azaka Mélé is the name of the stream which Dahomeans believe all the dead must cross.[15]

Cousin Zaka. The peasant Zaka, special patron of the country farmer and the people of the mountains. He is always portrayed as wearing the blue denim costume of the peasant, carrying the woven peasant knapsack called an *alfor cousin* and a cocomacaque stick, and smoking a clay pipe. Persons possessed by Cousin Zaka are dressed in this way, and they speak in the manner of the mountain man, a style that is heard only in the most remote communities. [787]

Minise Zaka, or Ministre Zaka. An aspect of Cousin Zaka. Ministre Zaka is a sort of Minister of Agriculture and a patron of peasant farmers.

Si Azaka. The wife of Ministre Zaka.

Azaka Tonnere, or Tonnè. The Azaka who brings thunder and rain.

Azaka Baing Baing. One of the Azaka family.

Marassa. The loa of twins. The Marassa family of deities are in a special category, somewhat apart from other spirits. In an important Vodoun service, for example, there are invocations to the loa in general, to the Marassas, to the family ancestors, and to God.

Marassa Doçu. Patron of the first child after twins if it is a boy.

Marassa Doça. Patron of the first child after twins if it is a girl.

Marassa Blanc. Patron of white twins.

Marassa Trois. Patron of triplets.

Marassa Guinée. Patron of twins when one is a boy and one a girl.

Marassa Quat'. Patron of quadruplets, or of two consecutive sets of twins.

Marassa Bois (Marassa of the Woods). He is considered an "unbaptized" or "untamed" loa, and very savage. He likes sweets and never eats salt.

Marassa Dogué, or Marassa Cinq. Patron of consecutive twins and triplets.

Marassa Caille (Marassa of the House). This one eats salt.

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[791] Loko Attisso. He is usually pictured as the protector of the hounfor, or cult temple, and as the keeper of the altar (*pé*). In Dahomey, Loko is a deity of the Sky pantheon and a son of the divine Mawu and Lisa.[16] He is still remembered in the Arara (Dahomey) cults of Cuba. He is also called Sindé or Singé.

Loko Attisogué. Said to be Loko Attisso's wife.

Loko Adäico, or Däico. A member of Loko Attisso's family.

Loko Däifrè. A brother of Loko Adäico (Däico + *frère*).

Loko Däizo

Loko Tokamiwèzo

Loko Dahomé

Loko Bassivé

Tos Loko

15 [Ibid, p. 280. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. --Analyst]

16 [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 108-109. Cf. p. 354, cat. 116. --Analyst]

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AGÃO LOKO BAYÈ. A crossroads protector of the Loko family.
LOKO DÃI PÈ

DANSI OSOU. Among the Tshi-speaking people of West Africa there was a spirit called Adansi, a malignant giantess.[17] [171]
OSOU JAMAIN
SOUSOU YÈMAIN

ZOMBRA
MAZOMBRA
MAZOMBRA ENPAKA

AMINE. An aged female loa. Sacrifices to her consist of rice, sugar cane, lima beans, and eggs. As in services for the deity Èzilie, perfumes are used during services for her. [182]
AMINE GATIGAL LAPLAMBO. A member of the Amine family. Amine is the name of a tribe of Dahomey.
AMINE NAGO. Another member of the Amine family.

GÉNÉRAL CLERMEIL, or PRÉSIDENT CLERMEIL. He is said to be the "father" and patron of all light children born to dark parents. Stories are sometimes heard of men who wrongly accused their wives of infidelity because of the lightness of their children, and who were finally mounted and punished by Clermeil. [187]
CLERMÉZINE. The light-skinned daughter of the dark Général Clermeil.

The family relationships or escortes of the following deities are not clear. Some of them may belong to one or another of the foregoing groups, or to still uncited families.

ADJA. A female loa associated with the arts of pharmacy. The Yoruba of Nigeria had a spirit named Adja who carried men and women off into the forest to teach them about the medicinal properties of roots and herbs.[18] In Haiti, Adja's mangé consists of cookies and chicken. Persons possessed by her sometimes eat broken glass. [171] [182] [187]
ADJA BOSU, AKADJA BOSU, or KADJA BOSU. This deity is also known in Dahomey. [171]
AGANMAN. A male deity characterized as a *zandolite*, a small lizard capable of changing colors. A person mounted by Aganman sometimes climbs trees or posts. Some Haitians contend that a person possessed by this loa will change color, from dark to light. [187]
AGASU. In Dahomey, according to Herskovits, Agasu is the name of the panther fetish.[19] Dahomeans regard this deity as of special significance to the royal family. He was remembered among Negroes in Louisiana under the name Agoussou. [171]
AGASU YÈMAIN. Related to Agasu.
DADAL. Among the Yoruba, Dadal was a brother of Ogoun and Changó, and was a patron of vegetables.[20]
ATTISOLÉ, also known as ST. SOLEIL. Persons mounted as a result of exposure to the sun are thought to be possessed by this loa. The association of Attisolé with the sun may be a syncretism. [189]
AUCHMAUT
AZA. A loa who likes the Juba dance.

[17] [Ellis, The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa, P.68. Cf. P.354, Category 116.--Analyst]
[18] [Ellis, The Yoruba-speaking Peoples, pp.79-80. Cf. P.354, Cat. 116.--Analyst]
[19] [Herskovits, Dahomey, I, 166ff. Ellis, The Ewe-speaking Peoples, P.83, says that this deity was especially important in the Abome. Cf. P.354, category 116.--Analyst]
[20] [Ellis, The Yoruba-speaking Peoples, pp.45, 76. Cf. P.354, Cat. 116.--An.]

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796 AZUL. A snake deity.

BABOULE. A loa who likes the Baboule dance.

CALBASSIE. Loa of the calabash tree.

CHÉBO PROFIÈL. An ancient male deity. Herskovits suggests that he may represent the leopard, *sébo* being the Fon word for that animal. The wildness of the attack on the sacrificial animal by persons possessed by Chébo supports this conjecture. A deity called Dada Segbo is prominent in the Rada Cult of Trinidad. [114] [191]

SIMALO. A male loa who is believed responsible for fine physical proportions and bodily strength in men.

COQUI-NAN-DLEAU. Probably the same as Coqui-Nan-Mer (Agwé).

AKADJA. This loa may well be the King Agadja of Dahomey who was said to be responsible for the coming of *vodu* (loa) into that country. Herskovits tells a legend about a woman named Hwandjile who prevailed upon the king to bring the *vodu* from the kingdom of Adja.[21] Hwandjile herself survives in Haiti under the name [191]

WANILÉ, or HOUANILÉ

LINGLESSOU. A rainbow loa. Persons mounted in sight of a rainbow are thought to be possessed by this deity. [82] [187]

BLINGINSOU. "Marches" with Linglessou.

WANGOL, also called ALOVI WANGOL (King of Angola). This loa appears to be an interpolation from the Congo rites.

ALOVI, or GADALOVI. A masculine, dwarflike spirit who likes to disarrange things and play practical jokes. Persons possessed by Alovi may break up gatherings, discommode spectators and dancers, and generally make a nuisance of themselves. Some Haitians regard this loa as belonging more to the Pétro pantheon than to the Dahomé. [187]

Maîtr' Bois (Master of the Woods). May be an interpolation of Maît' Grand Bois of the Congo-Guinée pantheon.

Maîtr' DLEAU (Master of the Water). May refer to the loa Simbi.

DAN WÈZO, or WÉZO. A loa known in the Artibonite region. The name is possibly a corruption of Dan Wèdo.

DJA KÉKÉ

ÈVO, or NÈO' ÈVO. The name is that of a tribe on the Calabar coast of West Africa.

FABO PIERRE. Said to be the son of Pierre Basice.

GÉNÉRAL YENBATISSE, or JEAN BAPTISTE. Probably the Christian name of some Dahomé loa.

GRAND LESSAIGNE. An aged, dwarflike loa, guardian and protector of children.

GRAND ALABA, or ALOUBA

GRAND ALOUMANDIA, or MANSIAN ALOUMANDIA. Believed to be a loa who was maît' tête of the Emperor Dessalines. Some informants consider this spirit to be a démon or loup-garou rather than a loa.

HOUNTOR. The spirit of the Arada drums. There is a difference of opinion on whether Hountor is a loa in the precise sense or merely a drum spirit. The term is sometimes used to designate the largest drum of the Arada trio.

JEAN BATEAU. A loa well known in the region of Léogane. When he "enters," the possessed persons talk *langage* into a *canarie* (clay water vessel). [184]

Maîtr' DAVID. This loa always talks immaculate French, and persons possessed by him read cards and tell fortunes. [187]

21 [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 104. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116.--Analyst]

Simbi Wangol.
Simbi Yenpaka
Simbi Labouzé (The Dew Simbi)
Simbi Devant Bondieu (Simbi Before God)
Simbi Trois Fé (Simbi Three Leaves—the name of a pwin)
Simbi Trois Racines (Simbi Three Roots—the name of a pwin)

THE IBO AND KANGA PANTHEONS

Capliou. A Kanga loa. His name appears to be a survival of the Capliou tribe. Some persons feel he is a member of the Pétro group.

Ibo Foula. An Ibo loa. Note that both Ibo and Foula are tribal designations.

Ibo Mariani, or Mariané. An Ibo loa.

Ibo Hiquoiré. An Ibo loa.

Ibo Jérouge (Ibo Red Eyes). A malevolent spirit. Food offerings to her consist mainly of pigs and cocks.

Ibo Lazile. An Ibo loa. The food offering to this loa is a goat.

Ibo Léé, or Ibomian Ibo. An Ibo loa.

Kanga. A Kanga loa. A "hard" or "stern" spirit, thought by some people to be the same as Capliou. Persons mounted by him play with fire and eat hot peppers.

Kanga Trois. A Kanga loa.

Legba Ibo. The Ibo form of the Vodoun Legba.

Marie Kanga, or Ibo Kanga. An Ibo loa.

Marie Louise. An Ibo loa.

Nicolise Ibo. An Ibo loa.

Ibo Sumement. An Ibo loa.

Ibo Wanlaze. An Ibo loa.

Nomination. An Ibo loa.

Tourment. An Ibo loa.

Barak. An Ibo loa.

Un Pied Un Main Un Jé (One Foot, One Hand, One Eye). An Ibo loa.

Akoupi. An Ibo loa.

De L'Air. An Ibo loa.

Papa Zao. A Kanga loa.

Zao Langé. A Kanga loa.

Kawia Langa. A Kanga loa.

Ça Ou Manjé Cou Ça (What Do You Eat Like That). An Ibo loa.

Takwa, or Saint Akwa. An Ibo loa. When he comes in he speaks "unknown" languages.

THE CONGO AND PÉTRO PANTHEONS

Maît' Grand Bois (Master of the Woods). In Congo rites this loa is regarded as one of the most important of deities, holding a place equivalent to that of Dumballa in the Dahomé service. When he "comes in" he makes a great din and racket.

Femme Grand Bois. The wife of Maît' Grand Bois.

2: Courlander 3-6 (1937-1953) 1960 8V3 H681 8V3

[The Congo and Dètto Pantheons]

Tijean Pied Cofeve (Tijean Dry Feet). One of the malevolent Tijean brothers. 796
Tirtya Dèssassé, or Kitta Dèssassé. Thought to be the son of Kitta Bayè.
Yamé Lèssa. A deity of Congo origin.
Zio Pèssa
Zara Tonnerre (Zaka Thunder)
Zara Gèwè
Zara L'Orage (Zaka Storm)
Yari Bonnet
Gèssèssèssè
Matiéssèssa
Sèssèssa (Senegal). When this loa enters, the possessed person talks "Arabic." [797 791]

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1938) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[p. 349]

Notes

Chapter 1: *The Making of the Haitian* (pp. 1-7)

[1]The name Canda survives in Haiti as the name of a deity.

[2]Herskovits, in *The Myth of the Negro Past* (p. 47), provides a tabulation of raw data found in the numbers recorded for slaves shipped to Virginia between 1710 and 1769: 20,564 slaves were reported shipped from "Africa," 3,653 from Gambia, 6,777 from "Guinea," 9,224 from Calabar, 3,800 from Angola, and 1,011 from Madagascar. Of those shipped from the island of Madagascar, 473 were listed as coming from Mozambique.

[3]Bartolomé de Las Casas.

Chapter 2: *Man and the Universe: Vodoun* (pp. 8-18)

[1]See Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 3.

[2]Schweinfurth in *The Heart of Africa*, II, 31, says: "In Loango all exorcists and conjurers are called gangas." Leo Wiener, in *Africa and the Discovery of America* (Philadelphia: Innes and Sons, 1922), III, 32, reports: "Fetiches of gangs have in Fanti the meaning 'medicine' but also 'magic'—such as Nyiki gangs and Kongo ngangas."

[3]Carter, *Africa Dances*, p. 120; Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 208 ff.

[4]From the Fon *houn-an* or *houn-on*. Among the Arada of Dahomey a *houn-an* was regarded as a spiritual wife of the deity. She was a servant of the cult temple, and in some instances a wife of the cult priest.

[5]Translated from the French of Aubin, *En Haïti*, pp. 57-59.

[6]Dixon, in her *Divine Horsemen* (pp. 119 ff.), gives an excellent report of a service for Aged in a boat at sea. Aubin (*op. cit.*, p. 108) seems to have given the first description of this service at sea for the lou Aged.

[7]Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. 119.

[8]*Ibid.*, p. 123. Leyburn advances the theory that Vodoun developed during this period as a result of the vacuum left by the Church. Although the Church did in effect leave the field to the African cults, one must assume that the Arada, Congo, and other cults were already organized and possessed of great vitality before the Haitian revolution. Implicit evidence points to a continuity of cult life from the earliest days of the African on Haitian soil. There are no statistics to reveal the extent of cult membership at the end of the eighteenth century, but the content and form of Vodoun today are so overwhelmingly African that it is difficult to think of Haitian cult activity as the product of a renaissance.

Chapter 3: *The Loa: Gods of the Haitian Mountains* (pp. 19-29)

[1]The term vodoun, used in this precise sense, conforms to the original Fon (Dahomean) usage. The term Aowanli, also of Fon origin, signifies "spirit" and belongs to the same root

2: Courlander B-4 (1937-1955) 1960 8V3 Haiti 8V3

as *houngfor*, *houssi*, *houngfaiton*, *hountor*, etc. *Mystère* is of obvious French origin. *Loa* is probably from the Bantu, but it could be from the Yoruba.

[3]Various methods and formulas are employed in "tying" a loa. Sometimes making the sign of the cross is regarded as adequate, or the saying of a prayer. In "The Voduu Service in Northern Haiti" (*American Anthropologist*, XLII, 242–243), George Eaton Simpson reports that the "tying" of a loa sometimes results in a contest between the individual concerned and his houngan. If the houngan wants the *mali' ofo* to come in, he must neutralize the ritual barriers the "horse" has put in the way. "One procedure for bringing on possession in a servant who has tried to 'tie' his chief god is for the priest to stand in front of the person whom he suspects, make the sign of the cross, and strike him on the forehead three times with a sacrificial stone. Usually these blows are hard enough to make blood spurt. The servant then begs the pardon of the angry god, and as soon as possible he unties the knots in his handkerchief [the method he has used for 'tying' his loa]."

[4]Herskovits, *Dahomey*.

CHAPTER 4: *Death Rites* (*pp. 50–51*)

[1]Maurice Delafosse, *L'Ame nègre*. Translation from *Free France*, special issue No. 4, French Press and Information Service, New York, June, 1945.

[2]Leo A. Verwilghen, in booklet describing peoples of the Kwango region, accompanying *Music of the Western Congo*, recordings issued by the Ethnic Folkways Library.

[3]Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu*, pp. 88–89.

[4]W. M. Eiselen and I. Schapera, "Religious Beliefs and Practices," in Schapera, *The Bantu-speaking Tribes of South Africa*, p. 250.

[5]Translated from the French of Aubin, *En Haïti*, p. 212.

[6]Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, pp. 213–214.

[7]Hall and others, *Haitian Creole*, American Anthropological Association, Memoir No. 54, pp. 188–189.

[8]Simpson, "Four Vodun Ceremonies," *Journal of American Folklore*, April–June, 1946, pp. 155–162.

[9]As translated by Courlander from Simpson's Creole text, *ibid.*, p. 156. The preceding paragraph is from p. 155.

[10]Translated by Courlander from the Creole of Simpson's text.

[11]This and the preceding paragraph are from Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

[12]These shells, as indicated elsewhere, are part of the paraphernalia of the Vodoun priest and appear to be an inheritance from the priests of the Fa cult of Dahomey. The divining shells are usually thrown on the ground in fours, and the readings depend upon combinations of "heads and tails." The manner of throwing the shells, as well as the number used, corresponds closely with the Haitian secular gambling game *mayombe* (see Appendix 2), though the purpose is obviously different. In some priestly rites in Haiti, ashes rather than the customary shells are used for divining.

[13]Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

[14]*Ibid.*, p. 161.

[15]Herskovits, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

[16]Herskovits (*ibid.*) notes that persons who die of smallpox, lightning, and certain other phenomena are not buried in coffins. Some of my informants indicated this to be their understanding also, but they said that the dead are buried without coffins for strictly economic reasons as well.

[17]Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

[18]Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. 156.

[19]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 358.

[20]*Ibid.*, pp. 357–358.

[21]Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, p. 214.

[22]Hall and others, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

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Vodun, then, was both widespread and powerful enough to be turned to most effective ends in 1791. Contemporary accounts of it still saw it as a meeting ground of superstitions. The French naturalist, Descourtilz, for example, was primarily struck by the use of the occult in connection with Vodun; he especially describes a woman who, under the seizure of her god, took a live coal in her hand without being burnt; a husband who by the use of magic struck his inconstant wife with a languorous malady, effective for half a year; and the knowledge of poison which was combined with the practice of magic. He mentions but one of the Vodun gods by name but implies the existence of many other.[10]

Madiou, Haiti's first historian, likewise always spoke of Vodun as a savage survival; he says of a native general, "Lamour Dérance, plunged in gross errors, put his faith in *sorcery*, in the prophecy of *papes*, or priests of *African fetishism*."[11] In his scornful distaste for the vulgar he clearly indicated by his own italics some conspicuous elements of the developing religion: magic, the use of fetishes, and a Vodun priesthood. His illustration of Dérance's error was his making soldiers believe that bullets could not wound them:

> When he marched to combat he was preceded by bands of Congos, Aradas, Ibos, Nabos, Mandingues, Haoussas, who threw themselves against the French battalions with a prodigious intrepidity, crying that the bullets were but dust. But this courage which *superstition* fed was shattered against the ramparts of . . . the Europeans' square formations.

It is noteworthy that the first three black rulers set themselves against Vodun because of its potentialities for sedition. The plots to overthrow the old régime had come to fruition at apparently innocent Vodun dances. Although the ingenuous aspect of the dance gathering had deceived the white masters, Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe knew the meaning of the assemblies. All three had to drive their people hard and knew that resentment would be an inevitable consequence; it must not have an opportunity to burgeon at nightly gatherings. Toussaint was the strictest of the three, for he forbade all dances and nocturnal assemblage.[12] The other two singled

10. M. E. Descourtilz, *Voyages d'un naturaliste en Haïti, 1799–1803* (Paris, 1935 ed.), pp. 116–118.
11. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, p. 33.
12. In an order of January 4, 1800.

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776 commentators thought him the most important Vodun god.[24] There are two plausible reasons for this emphasis: Damballa is the bringer of rain, a necessity for good crops but a menace resulting in desolating floods when it is too copious; second, his symbol is the serpent. To Christians this is a symbol of such long standing that it is easy to assume in connection with its appearance in Vodun the guile, diabolism, or occult force which it has at times represented in Christian tradition. Damballa, however, is certainly not evil in the same way as Satan; he is not even generally baleful. To honor him is quite fitting, and this attitude is at poles removed from the diabolism [136] of the Middle Ages. There are practically no snakes in Haiti. Because of Damballa's symbol he is quite naturally associated with Saint Patrick.[25] Like Maîtresse Erzulie, all his sacrificial animals must be white, for this is his color. Like her, too, he is Dahomean in origin and therefore Rada.

These three, Legba, Erzulie, and Damballa, can by no means be conceived as a trinity. On the contrary, it would be easily possible to select an entirely different group from the commonest loa, justifying inclusions and eliminations. There is, for example, Ogun, the god of war, who derives from Nigeria in Africa. Ogun can, if properly persuaded, protect his petitioners against bullets and weapon wounds. Like blood, he is red. This is also his favorite color, and so he prefers sacrifices of red cocks and food offerings of red beans with rice. There are likewise Damballa's wife, Ayida Oueddo, whose symbol is the rainbow; Agwé, god of the sea; Baron Samedi, patron spirit watching over cemeteries; Simbi, who lives in mango and calabash trees and is a bit too fond of drink. In any one country district, certain other loa might far outshine any of those mentioned. The longer one lives among the people, the more clearly he sees the validity of the first article of the creed: "I believe in gods and spirits."

• 787 "I believe that these loa have power to possess their worshipers . . ." It is more difficult to make intelligible to "civilized" people the phenomenon of possession than any other part of Vodun religion. Centuries of training in self-control have made us unwilling to give public vent to our emotions, whether religious or, indeed, of any sort. Not only does our tradition of good manners inhibit such ex-

24. See, for example, Bonneau, op. cit., pp. 23–26 n.
25. He is sometimes also associated with Moses, who "lifted up the serpent in the wilderness."

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pression, but in the case of religion the nature of our worship interposes barriers between us and the manifestation of feeling. Almost every denomination which has risen to prominence, no matter how anti-ritualistic in its beginnings, has grown more formally proper as it moved from simple meeting-houses to churches, or as it began to draw upon the middle and upper classes for its clientèle, if its origin was humble. Not many Americans would care to recall the fact that their own ancestors rolled upon the ground in religious frenzy or were seized with uncontrollable fits of jerking and shouting when "the spirit of the Lord" was upon them; yet such emotional displays were a regular feature of camp meeting revival services in the Ohio Valley frontier region and elsewhere. 787

In order even vaguely to apprehend Vodun possession, one must disburden one's mind of all notions of formalism, for although the priest as officiant has his place in the service, there is direct participation of the people in every Vodun service and dance. The religion is theirs, not the priests'. One must forego the idea of self-restraint, adopting rather the view that the chief end of worship is to establish direct communication with the gods. One must forget the belief that to lose consciousness, roll one's eyes, scream, and speak in a strange voice are signs of mental derangement, and regard all these abnormalities as very desirable achievements in religious life, symptoms to be contemplated with satisfaction by friends and family. A person possessed has no retrospective feeling of shame. Quite the contrary: he has won through to new peace and security, for a god has spoken through his mouth, revealing divine will. 787 796

Vodun possession is therefore something more than the elation of the Holy Roller, and less than the mystical exaltation of the enraptured saints, yet partaking of elements of both. The descending afflatus is more discriminate than in a Holy Roller service, for rarely is more than one out of five worshipers seized by the god; inversely, it is more general than the ecstasy of a saint, whose experience is partly notable because it is rare. Actually, there is in civilized experience no precise parallel to Vodun possession, which runs the gamut of emotions from gay fun to mordant depression. To emphasize the uniqueness of the Haitian variety of possession, it must be noted that it occurs according to definitely understood rules and clearly defined circumstances. If a worshiper in his enthusiasm should let himself be seized "out of turn," so to speak, he would be instantly called to order. 787

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The language of possession is descriptive. When a god seizes a man, he "mounts" him; the possessed person forthwith becomes the god's "horse." The words are accurate, for the god seems to have as much control over his mount as a human rider would have over a horse whose will he dominates. The person mounted does nothing of his own accord while he is possessed. Under the invisible whip of the spirit-rider the "horse" does a great many things, and says even more, that would be unnatural or even impossible to him, unridden.[26]

Possession is more than the affair of a moment. In this respect it differs again from kindred seizures known to whites. A person may have to wait for many years before he is finally mounted, but the first loa who descends upon him is the chief of his deities, taking precedence over any other who might subsequently possess him. The initial seizure is a vitally important experience, corresponding roughly to the conversion or confirmation of persons in other religions. The subject is carefully observed by experts, so that no mistake will be made in the deductions from actions and speech as to the identity of the god. This loa is baptized by sprinkling water on the head of the possessed person. Thereafter the loa is called "*maît' tête*," as a recognition of the subservience of his mount: any agreement the devotee might make with another loa under a particular possession would have to conform to the initial agreement with the maît' tête. At a man's death the loa, which has, like more than a guardian angel, accompanied him through life, is taken from his head so that the man's soul may go to God—the Christian God.[27]

The possessing god may be either male or female. It frequently happens that a male loa mounts a female devotee, in which case she is addressed by a male name, wears male clothes, eats and drinks the things her loa prefers (no matter how distasteful to her ordinarily), and otherwise manifests his characteristics. This extraordinary change of personality is accepted naturally enough by the other participants in the rites, although the transformation is to foreigners a psychological phenomenon of prime interest. Dr. Dorsainvil devotes a book to the neuroses connected with possession; as he says: "One of the first consequences of the Vodoun crisis is the substitution for the

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26. Zora Neale Hurston, in her gaily written *Tell My Horse* (Philadelphia, 1938), has a vivid chapter on the possession effected by the distinctly Haitian loa, Guédé. She entitles this chapter in Créole: "*Parley cheval m'*" (Tell my horse)—the words with which the loa begins to dictate through the mouth of his mount. See pp. 232–250.

27. See Herskovits, *op. cit.*, pp. 146–151.

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normal personality of the subject a second, accidental personality which, except in the cases of conscious simulation, introduces real modifications in the ordinary state of being of the possessed person."[28] The phrase is noteworthy: "except in the cases of conscious simulation." Since the possessing loa frees his mount of his normal personality, certain persons at times try to pretend that they have been mounted in order to gain a desired end, which may be amatory, vindictive, or whatever. The people, however, are well acquainted with the normal penchants of everyone in the community; when they have their doubts about the authenticity of a seizure, they can easily by teasing words arouse the pretender's quite normal anger, by ingenious movements call forth an everyday response and so make the "mount" betray his ruse. 787

Since the main emphasis of this chapter is upon the religious, not the psychological, aspects of possession, no more than a passing reference can be made to the absorbing question of the normality of seizure. Two facts are important: it is confidently expected that possession will occur at every significant service; and it is known beforehand that not every worshiper will be subject to it. Some of the people seem to be definitely incapable of intense religious feeling or expression, others react almost immediately with overwhelming emotion, still a third group senses the mystery but cannot take the final step of inspiration.

Dr. Dorsainvil, a physician and historian, considering the recognized capabilities and limitations of Vodun worshipers with regard to seizure, maintains that possession is a species of neurosis, resulting in part from the historical tradition which makes seizure respectable and desirable and in part from the inheritance of neurotic tendencies in families. Professor Herskovits, an anthropologist and ethnographer, avers on the contrary that possession is, in terms of the patterns of Haitian religion, not abnormal but normal. He would stress the first of the two facts above: seizures occur at all important services. He does not deny the release afforded from psychic tension by yielding to possession; also he grants that the seizure might secure for a man the fulfillment of his suppressed desires for material goods or physical satisfactions. What impresses him, however, is the rules which rigidly govern possession. Gods are permitted to come only to members of the family giving the rite—that is, if the loa are under 114 787

28. Dorsainvil, op. cit., p. 115.

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proper control, as they should be. If an unwanted god persists in mounting an individual, the pertinacious one is commanded to go away or the victim himself is sent home until he can recover his own personality. Many people strongly resist possession when it is imminent. Judged by our own standards, possession of the Vodun variety could certainly not be called normal; judged by Haitian standards, however, it would be absurd to call abnormal an experience known and approved by the majority of the community.[29]

Possession occurs either at the service or at the dance. Here again the white man has nothing in his religious experience to enable him to comprehend the pattern of Haitian religion. The service corresponds nearly enough to the Catholic Mass or to more realistic sacrifices in ancient Jewish rites, but neither of these faiths nor any other the white man knows well has dancing for religion's sake. In Vodun, however, the dance is of equal importance with the service.

In the tiny *hounfort* (also spelled *hounfort*) of the priest, which is little more than a hut with earthen floor, the service begins. To call this structure a temple is at once to make it too imposing and to confuse the white man in his attempt to understand the scene; it is no more of a temple than was a tiny primitive early Christian church. Most houmforts in Haiti would be crowded if twenty people were present. At one end is an altar, more or less resembling the high altar in a Catholic chapel; on it are placed a crucifix, flowers, candles, fruit and food, wine, lithographs of Catholic saints, and whatever other objects, Catholic or Vodun, local practice may dictate and individual taste prefer. Upon the floor are traced formal cabalistic patterns, generally in corn meal, both to fend off evil influences and as required by the particular loa. The officiants may be male or female or both. To the service ordinarily come only the members of the family and their specifically invited guests; neighbors and friends will attend the subsequent dance.

A student of Catholicism would find in the first part of the service a great deal of ritual borrowed from the Church. The blessing, genuflections, making the sign of the cross, responses, and the like, all clearly show a Catholic background which accords well with certain objects upon the altar. Imperceptibly the strictly Vodun element obtrudes itself. The loa are asked whether they will accept

29. The statement of the two sides of this controversy may be found in Dorsinvil, *op. cit.*, throughout; and in Herskovits, *op. cit.*, particularly pp. 146–147.

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the sacrifices; food is set before the sacrificial animal, and if this food is eaten by the creature or creatures, it is known that the loa is satisfied. Then comes the actual sacrifice of the animal, a slaying neither ostentatious nor dramatic, since often it does not occur in the houmfort itself. It is at this juncture that possession is looked for. The loa, by seizing one or more of his devotees—or, if possession fails, by the divination of the priest—makes known his desires. The demands of the loa are likely to be modest: a candle, a special article of food, certain specific attentions. Occasionally he insists upon an impressive sacrifice. Whatever his desires, they must be gratified or else the loa will mildly harass the family; long refusal will produce anger and full vengeance. If the god is Rada, his sacrifice will be white, red, or vari-colored; if he is Pétro, he will wish black or gray animals—chickens, turkeys, goats, bullocks.

The service itself, then, is entirely religious in nature, consisting wholly of ceremonies and rituals conducted by officiating priests, with the purpose of restraining or pacifying gods who may have been pursuing a family with misfortune, or gratifying those who have made it happy. The dance following the service apparently expresses the joy of the family at dangers averted and gratitude for blessings bestowed.

In contrast to the private character of the service, the dance has all the appearance of a social event. Invitations to it are sent all over the countryside. People attend for good fellowship, gossip, and the sheer delight of dancing, but in the background one is always aware of a religious element as well. The dance is held in a specially constructed *tonnelle*, a roof of boughs and leaves supported by uprights. Drums are not always used at the earlier service, but no dance could be held without them. The crowd drifts in slowly, so that the dance may be long in getting under way. The best drummers in the community may not arrive until after two or three hours. Three drums of different sizes, all properly baptized, set the rhythms, and sometimes gourd rattles embroider a commentary upon the beat. Whereas at the service possession comes as a result of the priest's invocations, at the dance it is inspired by the drumming. Each loa has his own particular rhythm, so that as soon as it is determined what god has seized upon a dancer the drummers take up the rhythm of that god. The officiant immediately rushes to the mounted person with a calabash of water and a candle; by following the "horse" around and

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7 96 steadying his attention, he practically hypnotizes him back into full
535 consciousness. As soon as the possessed is normal again, water out of
● 787 the calabash is poured at the central post and a sign of the cross is made with the candle before it.

796 Contrary to the expectation of thrill-seeking white visitors, the
535 Vodun dance does not merit the name of an orgy. True, the dancers
786 wear their old clothes, for they are going to have violent exercise; true also, those who are possessed give the impression of losing some of their inhibitions. But the dancers do not embrace each other as at a white man's dance; the drinking which occurs is hardly ever excessive; and the climax of a successful dance is a religious experience.

[834] The Haitian is no more obsessed by sex than is the American; indeed, living simply and without many of the artificial restraints of "civilization," he is probably less so. What white visitors sometimes see, under the impression that they are witnessing a Vodun dance, is nothing more than a secular Saturday night social dance. It, too, has drum rhythms instead of an orchestra, musical instruments being rare in Haiti; but the dance has no more religious (or "Voodoo") significance than a barn dance in the United States.

771 Creed and practice go hand in hand in Haiti. The Vodun wor-
776 shiper believes in the loa of his faith and does the things necessary to get in touch with them. These conceptions are the major part of his creed, as the corresponding actions form the bulk of his religious activity.

171 A few articles of the creed remain. "I believe in respect to twins
845 ..." Hundreds of so-called primitive peoples see in twins some special
787 significance, now fortunate, now tragic. Many of the tribes along the Atlantic coast of Africa thought of twins as an omen, so that the presence of ritual regard for them in Haiti is hardly surprising. It is probably incorrect to speak of the worship, or the cult, of twins, for they are not deified, nor is there a common ritual for them: thousands of persons pay them no homage whatever. One family has a high regard for twins because it has numbered them among its ancestors or recent relatives; another family pays respect to all twins because a priest has advised seeking the good luck which comes from *marassa* (twins). There seems to be some confusion of thought about
[782] this aspect of religion: twins are not gods, but merely omens from the gods; yet sacrifices are made to them. Christmas and harvest are the usual seasons for the offering. Food is prepared in the morning

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and set apart on special plates in a separate room for them; in the afternoon the family eats the food. If the twins to whom homage is being offered are still alive, they must wear special clothes at the sacrifice.

"I believe in the careful cult of the dead . . ." Once more it is necessary to renew one's acquaintance with primitive and folk belief to grasp the Haitian attitude. Life is desirable, death is dreaded; both death and the dead are feared. In the actual world, any excursion from the comfortably familiar countryside of one's home leads to confusion and bewilderment. Except in the company of his fellows (on a religious pilgrimage to the waterfalls at Ville-Bonheur, for example), a Haitian almost never leaves his valley or mountainside and market town. Sophisticated people view the unknown with pleasurable excitement, for they have learned by experience that the unfamiliar is not necessarily frightful; it is quite the contrary with simple folk, whose meagre experience with the unfamiliar has been at least somewhat alarming.

Death is the ultimate unknown. The fearsomeness the imagination conceives to lie beyond death seems to exist in almost direct proportion to people's ignorance of the material world. The fear of ghosts is a commonplace among primitive folk, as among the uneducated in the "civilized" world. Where ghosts are considered powerful, one part of any comprehensive cult will certainly deal with the dead.

In Haitian Vodun the teachings of the Catholic Church have exerted more influence upon the cult of the dead than upon any other part of the religion. The preparation of the corpse for burial shows no traces of African practice; the watch (or wake) and wailing over the deceased is familiar; the funeral itself is conducted by a Catholic priest, with burial in consecrated ground. Thereafter, the continual efforts to secure the tranquil repose of the departed bear the earmarks of faithful Catholic practice; it is at this point, however, that the cult begins to assume distinctive features, for it is firmly believed that the dead exert tremendous power in the world of the living. This power comes from God—the Christian God. The case has been put succinctly by Sumner and Keller: "The relation between man and ghost resolves itself . . . into a relation of rights and duties, with all the rights on one side and all the duties on the other."[30] God gives

30. W. G. Sumner and A. G. Keller, *The Science of Society* (New Haven, 1927), II, 829.

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114 776 769 the dead a right to whatever their survivors possess, and moreover gives them the right to return to earth as ghosts.[31]

769 765 775 782 Strict rules of mourning prevail, both as regards clothing and behavior. The slightest lapse in the observation of these rules would cause resentment on the part of the dead; fear of retribution would be quite enough to ensure conformity even if public opinion did not. Ghosts have the power to possess mortals, not as the loa do at a Vodun service or dance, but in the manner understood by American Negroes who say they have been "ha'nted," and so, continually thinking of the dead, live in nervous fear of a streak of bad luck. Such possession is a form of persecution, with continual consequent bad luck until the survivor has carried out all his obligations. It is especially significant, however, that a departed spirit takes vengeance only in matters thought by the Haitian to concern the Church. The ghost is not whimsical in his possession of mortals, and cannot resent treatment which is his due. The kind of treatment given a corpse depends upon the kind of death hedied: a person struck by lightning, for example, would have no ceremonies at all, for lightning is an act of God.

787 775 789 Where the cult of the dead departs entirely from the teachings of the Church is in the matter of magic, a topic shortly to be treated. It may be briefly stated here that ghosts can be summoned back by special adepts for purposes of divination; that certain corpses are thought to be revivified by evil persons who use these soulless, pathetic automata as slaves (these are the notorious *zombis*); and that black magic—that is, powerful influence for evil—can be worked by sorcerers who know how to command ghosts.

771 798 All other articles of the Vodun creed not already discussed, except one, come under the heading of magic. That exception is the statement: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." The fact is as simple as the affirmation. If the Catholic priests fight Vodun, preaching frequently against its beliefs and practices, that is unfortunate, think the peasants: Vodun does not retaliate by fighting Catholicism. God and the saints have their province, and the loa theirs. The mind of the Haitian is simple enough to accept both sets of spiritual beings, and not philosophical enough to worry over the contradiction. Practically every Vodun worshiper thinks of himself as a Catholic.[32]

31. See Herskovits, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

32. In this sketch of the Vodun creed, it has been constantly emphasized that each locality has its own variations both in belief and practice. The reader who is interested in pursuing the subject further should consult the works of Price-Mars, Herskovits, Dorsainvil, Parsons, Hurston, et al. See Bibliography.

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Worship of the loa is directed by priests and priestesses. They grow into their positions by a kind of tolerant apprenticeship. Young men and women discover their abilities in dealing with loa or their desire to participate actively in serving them; they assist the officiating priests; they listen carefully to the lore of their elders, keeping their eyes open meanwhile. The priest is generally called a houngan, or sometimes a *papaloi;* the priestess a *mambu* or a *mamaloi.*[33] No ceremony marks the progression of a novice through any set stages to final priesthood; rather, the people in the community simply recognize growing expertness. The more effective and capable a houngan, the greater his prestige and the wider his reputation. There is nothing even vaguely resembling the ordered hierarchy of priests in the Catholic Church, nor is there any control of one houngan over another. No holy robes adorn the officiants, although they occasionally wear certain colors or ornaments to please the loa. Most of the Vodun priests and priestesses are simple peasants, working in the fields and going about the daily round of life. When they are called to perform a ritual, an offering is taken up in the early part of the service to recompense them for their offices.

Actually, the Vodun houngan and mambu correspond much more closely to the primitive medicine man or shaman than to the Catholic priest. They are thought to have power, through certain Rada and Pétro loa, to cure illnesses caused either by adverse magic of one's enemies or by a loa; they are not able, however, to cure sickness sent by the Christian God. Likewise they can remedy or avert misfortune whose origin is magic or the loa. One of their highly important functions is foretelling the future: no important service would be contemplated by a family without previous resort to divination to determine the propitiousness of the time, nor would it be sensible to undertake a secular business of importance without preliminary reassurance by this means. To see into the future effectively, the priest must be possessed by the loa.[34]

33. The second of these names in each case derives from "papa" and "mama," or master and mistress; and from the familiar loa or god. It is not implied that the officiants dominate the loa but only that they deal expertly with them.

34. In addition to the houngans and mambos, there are also *bocors* who specialize in magic without conducting regular religious rites. These bocors probably deserve the name of sorcerers.

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798 chapel, wended their way down the hill and across to a clearing
796 among the trees. On the way many of the women stopped beside
177 the path to pluck a handful of long grass or reached up to break twigs from the smaller trees. At the clearing, primitively decorated with colored cloth, the priest made a short discourse; then he intoned three times, "Notre Dame d'Alta Gracia," and the worshipers, raising their wisps of greenery above their heads, rustled the twigs until the air was filled with a sound like the hissing of many serpents. "*Priez pour nous!*" they responded each time to the rustling accompaniment. The Virgin of Alta Gracia is the miraculous saint of Higuey, as much renowned among Haitians as among the Spanish-speaking Dominicans farther east. The supplication to the Virgin is proper enough to a Catholic feast, but the hissing, reminiscent of Damballa, is an intimation that the Vodun loa is not yet forgotten on his holy hill.

This festival of Notre Dame d'Alta Gracia shows not only the adaptability of Catholicism to Vodun, but likewise that of Vodun to Catholicism. Not even with the will to preserve their faith and practice pure can most men resist the infiltration of surrounding beliefs; in Haiti, the will to resist is itself lacking. This the Church knows, and counts upon for ultimate victory. In other words, there is to be not precisely a conversion of worshipers away from Vodun, but a slow transformation of Vodun itself into a true Catholic faith within the hearts of the people.

In its long experience in adaptability, the Church has in many a country learned to establish a ground of common understanding with lowly folk, while keeping its touch with aristocrats. Following the principle that where a belief or rite is apparently ineradicable it is advisable to turn it to Catholic uses, the Church in Haiti has often made this kind of adjustment, just as in earlier times with the Aztecs, Mayans, and other continental American Indians. An example of it may be observed at Saut d'Eau, near Ville-Bonheur.

787 Here, near the centre of Haiti, in 1884 there appeared in a palm
778 tree the vision of a beautiful Virgin blessing the people. She re-
798 mained so long that according to tradition the whole countryside saw her. The parish priest, unwilling to permit this obsession of the people to continue, came to drive away the apparition. The Virgin departed, apparently of her own will. People saw her no more, but many came to the palm tree and were miraculously cured and

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

marvelously aided in distress. The priest, not willing to allow even this "delusion," tried to cut down the tree but was wounded by his own machete. Eventually, however, the tree was destroyed by natural causes, and a church erected on the site. Fire destroyed the church. Each successive church building has likewise been destroyed, by fire or by lightning. No longer now does the Catholic Church combat the sanctity of Saut d'Eau: after all, it was the Virgin who appeared, not a loa. The great celebrations on every fifteenth of July draw pilgrims from all over Haiti. Although the Church now grudgingly approves the feast it is still recognizably Vodun in character, for devout souls who bathe in the water are "mounted" by loa. The Church has a hard battle ahead of it to win this festival for Catholicism.

Three factors work in favor of the Catholic struggle to win Haitians completely away from Vodun: the world-wide organization of the Church, which can always throw trained reserves into the battle; the superior intellectual equipment of the priests, enabling them to plan their campaign and use psychological weapons; and the plasticity of Vodun itself, which is a conglomeration of human feelings, ideas, and traditions rather than a rigid sect with an inflexible ritual.[3] Even with these advantages, it is still the battle of a few dozen men on one side with the Haitian masses (more than two million) on the other. So far as one is ever justified in prophecy, it seems safe to assume that Vodun will continue to assimilate more and more fragments of Catholicism; that its appeal will remain so long as education and medicine are not extended to the whole countryside; that eventually—it may be centuries hence—Vodun rites may sink back into the status of living folklore, to which the simple turn in their deepest need.

One of the strongest missionary advantages of the Roman Catholic Church has been the breadth given it by two thousand years of experience. In so long a life it has had to be all things to all men; out of necessity it has developed around the central core so wide a variety of belief, doctrine, form, and traditional practice, that there is something for every believer, whether scholarly or untutored, powerfully important or humbly obscure. What the cultivated

3. The absence of any written formulation of Vodun must certainly be a factor in its flexibility. Recorded tradition and written history tend to create definiteness of pattern.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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512 neighbors paying friendly visits and of playing children gradu-
[264] ally become stilled. It is the time for the evening meal. By nine o'clock at the latest all is quiet and Mirebalais, man and beast, is asleep.

796 The *vodun* drums are heard only on Saturday nights, and
527 then the dance must be sufficiently close to the town, and the wind in the right direction, for the sound to be audible.
[856] Permits for these dances must be obtained, and are regularly given by the police officials — or were in 1934 — and word is passed on that on a given Saturday certain households will give *vodun* dances. If the dances are held in the foothills to the west, the Tombe River must be forded, and the existence of such a barrier between the village and the site of the dance makes this a favorite region in which to hold them, even though they may have official sanction. During the rainy sea-
[484] son attendance at dances on the opposite bank of the Arti-
[501] bonite River depends on the height of the stream, for when it is in flood not even the dugout canoes of the Haitians can cross it, while the ferry which Moreau de St. Mery speaks of as having been established in 1749 does not even exist in local tradition.[14] Yet no dance lacks participants or spectators, for these occasions furnish the principal opportunity for recrea-
[798] tion even as they fill their proper religious function. Early in the week discussions can be heard of the dances to be held, and though the official frown of the Catholic priest is always to be reckoned with, the importance of these dances, and the numbers who attend them, do not seem markedly lessened by
[554] this fact. Those whose social position in the community makes them more sensitive to such criticism merely take the precaution to slip quietly out of town after dark.

796 When occasions of local or national significance and church holidays are celebrated, the town is full of country folk and
[788] visitors from the cities. Christmas and New Year's, Mardi Gras and Easter are all periods for such celebrations, while the first Sunday of every month witnesses a religious procession

1; Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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about the square that precedes the principal mass of the day. These processions, however, are as a mere rehearsal for the great procession held during the festival of St. Louis, the patron saint of the town. At that time the statue of the saint, carried by the faithful — among whom can be seen more than one perspiring *vodun* priest and *bocor* — is taken triumphantly through the streets to insure a good year. The nearness of the valley to the village of Ville Bonheur makes the great religious festival of Saut d'Eau, where the "miracle of the Virgin" is believed to have occurred, almost a local matter. And though Saut d'Eau lies well over the mountains, July 15 finds most of the population of Mirebalais away from home celebrating the miraculous revelation with folk from other parts of Haiti. May Day is celebrated as the "Fête de l'Agriculture," and two years ago a new day of rejoicing was added to the calendar of festivals. This is known as the "Festival of the Second Independence," the anniversary of the departure of the American Marines from Haiti, and is marked by the "illumination" of all houses the night before and a solemn discourse from the mayor after a Te Deum has been sung in the church.

Thus life in the valley of Mirebalais continues the course it has followed for the past two hundred years. Though its history, as we can reconstruct it, has been marked by turbulent periods, these have been far from the rule. It is true that because of its position it has always been a point to be defended, and often, both before and after the time of Haitian independence, it has been a region where decisive encounters with those who controlled the Spanish portion of the island have taken place. Not for many years, however, until the Caco uprising against the American Marines, did Mirebalais experience military activities on any considerable scale. After the death of Charlemagne Perrault, when his successor selected the valley as a strategic point to be defended, a large force of Marines was encamped near the confluence of the

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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a mat or a cloth, supported in a reclining position with pillows 844
and cloths, or on a covered box standing about a foot from the ground, with her legs drawn up. No fire is built in the house, all doors and windows are tightly shut, and covers are provided against a chill. A candle stands lighted at the threshold, [788] [782] and holy water is poured beside it; a candle is also often lighted in the church before the statue of the saint who corresponds to the *vodun* deity under whose protection the woman in labor is thought to be. In the room with her is the midwife and as many as six, seven, eight, or nine older women belonging to the families of the woman and her husband. The hands of the woman are made to rest on her knees, but where labor is prolonged, her arms are supported above her head to afford relief. She is three times given very hot tea or a drink made of [757] the stewed leaves of the mango tree and of the *bois lait*. The midwife, with palm oil on her hands, watches the rhythm of labor and presses on the abdomen to facilitate delivery.

If it becomes evident that this will be difficult, a *vodun* 845
priest is at once called to determine by divination whether or 773
not the deities who have been propitiated are satisfied. If the 787
answer is a negative one, he promises future sacrifices or gives 782
minor offerings immediately. Care is also taken to ascertain [775]
whether the trouble is due to the discontent of the family dead who may have been angered by neglect to wear mourning for them, or because sacrifices or a *service* due them have been delayed too long. Inquiries are similarly made to determine whether the spirits of twins might not be displeased, [754] while also possibility that evil magic may have been invoked is not overlooked, especially if the husband has several wives. If the inquiry shows that the magic of a co-wife was responsible, a strong counter-charm is made at once. Should the woman in 845
labor eventually die, however, her death is not considered to 766
be the result of any act of infidelity on her part, and does not, as in other Negro cultures, prevent the usual burial and mourning customs being carried out.

L: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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[585 769 782] for the victims of smallpox. If family traditions also tell of those shot, not in war, but as prisoners, perhaps, a candle is lighted for them outside the cemetery wall. Though the couple may perform this ceremony together, each makes this request of the dead of his or her own family as the candles are lighted. This call on the dead is repeated several days after the marriage or later, when candles are again lighted.

[591 583 585 769] The sole exception to the performance of these rites before the new household is begun occurs in those cases of *plaçage* where a girl continues to live at her own home. This is rare, however, for the house of a man is usually built near that of his father, and he takes his wife there. But if special circumstances dictate otherwise, the ceremony of notifying and pacifying the family deities may be deferred, though a man must eventually present every woman with whom he lives to his family gods and in turn must be presented to the gods of the woman's family. In similar fashion the dead of both families must be adequately notified.

[585 [777] [796] [583] [777] Marriages rarely take place in the months of November and December, the former being disliked because it is "the month of the dead," during which All Saints' Day occurs, and the latter because it ends the year. Except for the Church wedding and less elaborate festivities to celebrate the event, the rites which mark a *plaçage* mating do not greatly differ from those which mark a legal marriage, which may be described in outline. The favorite day for Church marriages is Saturday, "the day of the Virgin," and the time for the ceremony is always early morning, before the heat of the day has set in. If the home of the girl is some distance from Mirebalais, the party come to town the preceding day, the girl spending the night with some friend. Otherwise the bridegroom accompanied by his relatives and friends, goes to the house of the girl early Saturday morning. Before the couple leave the [782 [188] home of her parents, water must be thrown on the ground in front of them, and also sprinkled by them before the en-

L: Sankwin E-4,5 (1934) 1927 SV3 Hall SV3
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trance of the house — three times if there is one door (for the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost), three times before each door if there are two entrances, and once before each door if there are three. The wedding procession goes to church on foot. The men, if they are from the countryside, are stiff, uncomfortable, and hot in their unaccustomed "best" clothing and their often painful shoes, while the women are also self-conscious in their new dresses. The elaborateness of the ceremony varies with the fee paid the priest, but at all events the clanging church bell is heard notifying the town and its environs that a marriage is being consecrated.

If the family of the bride or groom are well known in Mirebalais, a wedding reception may be given at their house for friends of the couple and of their parents, but the real festivities are held after the return to the new family home. As the procession approaches it, the "bush-priest," a functionary who, because of his knowledge of French, can read the prayers of the Church, waits at the gate with two aides, small boys or girls, each with a flag, one red and one white. He has sacred water in one hand and a lighted candle in the other, and as he pours this water on the ground three times he intones the Pater Noster, the Ave Maria, the Credo, and other prayers. These concluded, hymns are sung by all the participants, and singing, a procession is formed with the "bush-priest" in the lead, followed by the flag-bearers, the couple who have just been married, arm in arm, the "godfather" and "godmother" of the marriage, as the witnesses are called, the parents of the bride and groom, and other close relatives. As the procession reaches the door of the house, it pauses and water is thrown on the ground three times; the circuit of the house is made twice again, and each time, as the door is [illegible] participants solemnly enter.

There coffee, liqueurs, wine, kola, and cakes are served to the principals and the more important members of the com-

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the phrase: "This is natural." Children are not spaced, for normally a man resumes intercourse with his wife the second or third month after childbirth. Except for the drinking of coconut milk and salt, which is believed to be effective in preventing conception if taken before intercourse, contraceptives are not known to women, which means that pregnancies follow in rapid succession. Families are not too large, however, despite this, those numbering seven or eight children being rare, even in the hills. The reason for this is a high incidence of infant mortality, which is obvious despite the absence of vital statistics. Abortions are usually resorted to by young women, who sustain the operation done by the uncertain skill of an old woman, in the fear that bearing a child will later stand in the way of a desirable legal marriage. Some men, however, take the precaution of placing a grain of native salt on the tongue while having intercourse during an illicit affair, believing that this will be effective in preventing conception.

A childless woman first goes to a *vodun* priest, to have him determine by divination if a co-wife has not invoked magic against her. If her question receives an affirmative answer, she acquires a "counter-charm" to offset the effect of the other woman's magic. Should such a charm be ineffective, she would offer her prayers before the shrines of the saints and make pilgrimages to such sacred places as Saut d'Eau, there phrasing her petition to the Virgin in some manner such as the prayer overheard as a woman lighted a candle and held it in her hand before placing it on a sacred rock:

> *"Vièrge Miracles, Manman, voilà, depuis six ans depuis qui moins marié; moin apé vivre seul avec pauvre malhereux moin-a. Ça fait trois fois moin vini nan pié ou. Pas 'blié mandé moin fait ou, pour charité, moin ou petit pitite. Moin va minnin li ba ou. Moin apé parti, Manman, é ou' pli, songé ça pitite m' mandé ou.—*

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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employed — do not remain with the drummers. These instruments are ordinarily in the hands of *hunsi*, who join the massed ring of dancers that constantly circles about the center pole. These dancers are not under possession, but are merely enjoying the evening or participating in the social aspect of the dance preparatory to becoming possessed. The rattle is held high above the heads of the dancers, and its sharp, steady notes are produced by quick, short, measured movements of the wrist. The end of a song, which sometimes does not come until fifteen or twenty minutes after its initial statement, is usually marked by a continuous shaking of a rattle, a process which effectually breaks the rhythm and makes it possible to begin a new song. The player of the rattle is an outstanding singer, who usually initiates the fresh refrain and continues to sing its repetitions as soloist in the alternation of solo and chorus which marks Haitian *vodun* singing as it marks most West African and New World Negro religious music.

When a possession occurs, the songs for the deity who has "arrived" are taken up as the drums play the rhythm of the god. As his possession comes on, the devotee falls to the ground, rolling before the drums, or staggers blindly about the dancing-space, or otherwise follows the characteristic behavior attributed to his god. After a time he begins to dance, whereupon a *hunsi* or the *hungan*, taking a calabash of water in one hand and a lighted candle in the other, dances opposite him, saluting the god as he performs his every movement in reverse; if he turns clockwise, the one dancing with him turns counter-clockwise; if he moves to the right, the other moves to the left. Except when executing these turns, the functionary of the cult never takes his eyes from the eyes of the possessed person, almost, as it were, hypnotizing him to help him come to himself. Eventually the possessed one recovers sufficiently to take the candle and the calabash of water in his own hands. Often spilling water as he moves, he makes his way to the central pole, pouring an offering and making the sign of the cross with the candle before it.

1: Herskovits II-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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796 ever, the man was not yet able to hold. Moving backwards
791 toward the *maison de servitude*, all the spectators continued
789 to sing the song of Damballa, while the man to whom the god
159 had come half-danced and was half-carried up the path to the *tonnelle* and taken into the family house of worship.

[788] When he had sufficiently recovered to be able to hold the candle and the water, he poured the water and unsteadily bowed three times in the accepted manner before the *convert sec* to the Rada gods. He now was enough in control of himself to emerge, and, with the *adjunikon* dancing before him with water and a candle, he once again came into the *tonnelle*, before the drums. As he appeared, the drummers stopped the Ogun rhythm they had been sounding, and in an intense silence all waited for the god to announce himself. Half on his [538] knees before the drums, the one possessed began to sing in a [539] cracked voice:

Damballa Wedo,	Damballa Wedo,
Papa m' c'est coulev'-o,	Papa, I am a serpent-o,
Na poi' bois	There is no tree
Moin pa' li monté.	I cannot climb.

With this initial statement, the Damballa rhythm rolled from the drums, as all echoed the song in chorused response, while the possessed figure, in strict conformity to the pattern, first poured water at the central post and then consecutively before the iron and each of the drums. Returning to the central post, he whirled about it, almost but never quite falling, until he could dance before the drums, awkwardly but acceptably, before he disappeared to rest in a near-by house.

796 The explanation offered by this man of the manner in
789 which he became possessed, and his varying attitudes toward
159 his possession, are revealing. On several previous occasions
793 the *hungan* who officiated at the dance had noticed that he was attending *vodun* rites and had joked with him about his interest in them. Once at an earlier dance this *hungan* had

1: Herskovits E-4, 6 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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and, wearying of the singing, join the group outside the house, where those playing games and the story-tellers are gathered. One popular game is "forfeits," and a forfeit, if reclaimed by a girl, requires the singing of a *chanson de romance*, or if by a man, calls for the recitation of a poem or a humorous folk-tale. Before a forfeit is returned, all sing to a hand-clapping accompaniment:

C'est bien bon,	It is very good,
C'est bien bon,	It is very good,
Aha!	Aha!

Card-games, such as *mariai* (marriage), *trois-sept*, and *bezique*, are also played. All these games are entered into with zest, for an important purpose in holding the wake is to amuse the dead, whose body lies near by, and thus send him away in good humor. When drinks are passed, the recipients must make three libations before drinking, one explanation holding that this is in accordance with the formula Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, another that the offering is for the *loa*, the dead, and the *mamma*. At about five o'clock in the morning the angelus closes the wake, after which most of those present leave, and only close friends and relatives remain to help with preparations for the funeral. This must take place the day following death, not only because of a legal requirement, but because of the fact that were a body to remain unburied for two nights, the expense of two wakes would have to be met. Before the ceremony of burial takes place, small children are often passed over the coffin three times, in leave-taking, that the spirit of the dead may not return for them.

The funeral itself is held in accordance with the rites of the Church, the difference between funerals consisting principally in the elaborateness of the ritual and the length of time the church bells are tolled, which in turn is determined by the ability of the family of the dead to meet the varying fees. Thus at the funeral of the mother of the *député* from Mire-

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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Toussaint, voici un couvert moin porté ba ou. Ou gardé vot' enfant, comme vot' père et vot' mère dans la maison. —In the name of the Master of the Crossroads; in the name of the Master of the Great Forest; in the name of Baron Cemetery! Today, the first of All Saints' Day, here are offerings I bring you. Guard your child as your father and your mother in the house."

[788] *Clairin* is thrown three times at each fork of the crossroads, and some is also sprinkled in the center and at each corner of the container of food. Three bits of earth are finally lifted from the corners of the crossroads and taken to the home of the worshipper. Here they are put in a plate with *clairin*, which is first lighted and then extinguished, so that the members of the family can anoint themselves with it and receive strength with which to face the new year.

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Good magic has many expressions. Thus there is said to be secret knowledge, transmitted in certain families from generation to generation, of how to control the rains. Those who have control of magic of this sort are to be recognized when they are seen to be completely dry while walking in a downpour. Generally such powers are used to insure a rainless day for a *combite* or *service*, or to cause rain to fall the day after a *combite* has made the field ready for hoeing, or when the proper time for planting is at hand. Eventually, it is said, in response to a temptation too great to be resisted, the possessor of such magic will put it to other, evil ends. Then sooner or later the punishment for this abuse of his knowledge is visited upon him, so that in the end he meets his death by being struck by the avenging lightning.

[784]

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The most powerful type of protective magic is known as a *drogue*. One of the most potent of these — of the type referred to by Léger in commenting on the ox-tail carried by Hyacinthe, or such a one as tradition holds Christophe possessed, which gave him immunity from all but silver bullets — makes

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the crossroads, where he alone would have to conduct the brief rite that was necessary to complete the making of this *garde*. As he arrived at his destination — this portion of the description is his — the plate was put down with the *kola* beside it, and *clairin* was poured on the ground. The lighted candles were placed near by, and with arms outstretched, he spoke the following formula:

Au nom de Malt' Carrefour,	In the name of the Master of the Crossroads,
Voici un couvert sec deposé jodi-a, Lundi.	Here is an offering placed today, Monday.
Au nom de Malt' Gran' Bois,	In the name of the Master of the Great Forest,
Ce couvert est pou' vous.	This offering is for you.
Malt' Carrefou', pour garde moin, sorti pou' 'ou.	Master of the Crossroads, for [the sake of] my charm, which comes from you.
Moin mandé pou' gardé	I ask that you protect me
Nan tout ces moin capab' trouvé moin	In all I may encounter
Pou' bien, nan pou' mal.	Of good, and of evil.

Before leaving the crossroads, the maker of the *garde* touched the plate and bottles three times to earth, calling the names of Master of the Crossroads, Master of the Great Forest, and Master of the Cemetery.

While the nature and forms of good magic that have been thus far discussed show a characteristic African pattern, the presence of the factor of medieval European magic is evident, though this is not as sharply identifiable here as in the functioning of the less pleasant aspects of these supernatural powers. That this merging of two traditions is fundamental in all Haitian magical practice must nevertheless be patent to all who have had experience with it, unless in their intentness on

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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ABOVE, *At a vodun dance: those possessed whirling about the central post.*
BELOW, *Making the vodun drum: describing the sign of the cross with lighted candles over the unheaded bodies.*

[facing p. 244]

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nected with them, much of African tradition which has carried over into Haitian religious life has been retained in pure form. Yet the intrusion of Catholic custom into these African patterns — often noted, though generally in passing — also must be studied if the significance of the forms of Haitian folk-religion is to be grasped. That this aspect of *vodun* has received the scant attention it has had is probably to be ascribed to two causes.[8] The first takes the Catholic element for granted, so that even where a particularly dramatic element of Catholic practice is seen in an African setting, such as a crucifix or the portraits of the saints on a *vodun* altar, specific mention is made of this without attempting to dissect its historic or psychological role. The second reason for the comparative disregard of Catholic influence is that for Europeans it is a commonplace. Spirit possession and sacrifices, African song and drum rhythms are more "exciting" than prayers or hymns of the Church. Underlying both these causes is the deep-rooted and unquestioned assumption that, in contact with any non-European culture, the patterns that govern European behavior must prevail. Consequently, is it not in the nature of things that Catholicism should have taken root in the *vodun* cult? Is not rather the matter to be stressed that African traditions should have been retained at all? That the process should actually have been one of amalgamation rather than of dominance is rarely taken into account. Yet to go deeper into the significance of this process in Haitian life is to open far-reaching vistas.

An outstanding sanction taken by the *vodun* cult from Catholicism is that of the baptismal rites. Though ceremonies of consecration are a commonplace in Africa, and the African ritual of washing the head — *laver tête*, as it is termed — has not been forgotten, in Mirebalais the importance of baptism as a means whereby human beings obtain their place in this world and in the next has been carried over and applied to all matters of ceremonial significance. Thus just as in the lives of

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the saints of the Church the sacrament of baptism was a crucial rite, so the *loa* must be baptized before they become forces which act in a recognized and predictable manner. Just as the objects used in the rituals of the Church must be sanctified by being blessed and sprinkled with holy water, so in the *vodun* cult a *humfort*, the drums, the iron, and the rattle must all undergo a similar sanctification, not only that they may possess proper supernatural power, but more importantly that they may perform their functions in the very serious and African matter of calling the *loa* and placating the supernatural beings of the *vodun* cult.

Herein lies the importance of the *prêt' savanne*. Since the official representatives of the Church not only have nothing to do with the *vodun* cult, but excoriate it on all occasions, the *prêt' savanne*, as a man who can read the prayers of the Church, plays an indispensable role and to that extent is to be regarded as a functioning member of the *vodun* cult, despite the fact that he has no control over the *loa* and, as far as was observed, does not participate actively in their worship. At the same time, it must not be inferred that in borrowing "baptism" from the Church this rite has been elevated to the most important place in the ritual of the *vodun* cult, for though the *prêt' savanne* must read prayers "from the book" and sprinkle his holy water, the actual "baptizing" is carried out by the *houngen*. In sanctifying a *humfort*, the end in view is to induce the *loa* to come after the baptism and to insure that no unaccountable or untoward deeds may come to pass within it. Similarly, though drums must be baptized with Church prayers and holy water that they may perform their allotted tasks, without the concomitant ritual of the *houngan* they would be no more empowered to call the gods than they were before the prayers of the Church were read over them. An analogous comparison can be made between the role of the *prêt' savanne* and that of the *houngan* in the *service*. Since the world

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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is ruled by God, it is necessary to invoke God with the ritual of His Church before the rites to placate the *loa* may begin. But the important business of the occasion is to placate the *loa*, and it is only when the *hungan* takes over from the *prêt' savanne* that the series of rituals commence which, for the Haitian, hold emotional force and psychological value.

In the description of the baptism of a *loa* given in a preceding chapter, the use of Church ritual in bringing the African spirits under control will be remembered. No clearer illustration can be given of this merging of traditions than in a detailed account of the manner of making and validating *vodun* drums. These drums are of the characteristic African hollow-log type, with skin heads held in place and tuned by means of pegs, which are tied fast about the drumhead with cord. Before the tree which furnished the bodies was cut, an invocation was pronounced by their maker and an offering — a *mangé see* — was made, that all the gods might come when called by the finished drums. A candle was lighted and *verver* described about the base of the tree. Eggs, broken against the trunk, were rubbed on the bark; while both soft and alcoholic drinks were given as libations, since not all the gods desire the same refreshment. After the tree had been felled and that part of the trunk that was needed for the drums was cut off, the maker was free to proceed with shaping the bodies of the drums by first gouging out the inside of the trunk, then stripping the bark, and finally carving the characteristic foot at the base. Before the next step of boring the holes for the pegs was taken, *clairin* was poured inside each drum, at the entrance to the habitation of the maker, and toward the man's cornfield. The first hole bored in each drum was carefully marked, for this was the significant *manman*. Here the first peg is inserted; the skin head is first attached here; and here the cord about the head is first knotted; while it is the peg in this hole that must always be first struck when the completed drum is tuned.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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534 782 778 The drumheads were cut from a large ox-hide, purchased in the market place. In the early morning sunlight another "little ceremony" was performed before they were attached. Placing the three unheaded bodies of the drums in a row, with the iron in its place, the maker poured *clairin* before each, and having cut a native candle in three pieces, he took them in his left hand as he crossed himself, saying: "*Au nom d' Père, au nom d' Fils, au nom d' Saint Esprit.*" He then [788] lighted the three wicks, and taking each lighted candle in turn in his right hand, he made the sign of the cross with it and attached it to the "mother peg" of each drum. There the flames were allowed to flicker for a moment before the work of heading the drums began.

534 The hide was first attached to the "mother peg," then to the one opposite, and then to the two at right angles to the first pair. This is hard work, for to obtain the proper degree of initial tautness several men must strain at the resistant hide, and that is why four cuts are made where a peg is to go instead of the three that are needed, for frequently a strip breaks and the extra hole is used to re-thread the peg. The great drum has nine pegs, the one of medium size seven, and the small one six, not five, "because the *boula* is a thief, taking the beat away from the iron." The head was cut away from the rest of the great ox-hide only after it was in place. The final step was to knot the cord — braided the day before, of native sisal — to the *manman* peg of each drum, and then to twine it eight, six, or five times about their bodies.

534 778 788 The drums, now finished, were then put aside for a week to allow the damp heads to dry, awaiting the final sanctification. During this period they could not be played. It was held unwise to do more than tap them lightly with the finger-nail to test their resonance and the extent to which the heads were dry. Meanwhile preparations were being made for the bap- [782] tism. Drums, like human beings, must be clothed when they appear in public, and rader, apron-like garments, a white bro-

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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cade for Damballa, a red print for Ogun, and a third, a flowered blue material, for all the other gods, were first made. They were ruffled at the bottom, with strips of the material, attached as are apron-strings, to hold them in place. Four eggs, three "native" candles, three white candles, white flour, corn flour, two cassava cakes, two biscuits, three small-sized loaves of bread, two bottles of *kola*, *clairin*, and holy water, were also provided for the baptism. Finally on the appointed day — a Saturday, so that the drums could afterwards be used for a *vodun* dance — the drums, drumsticks, and iron, with the dresses and the food that had been provided for the ceremony, were taken to the scene of the rite, a habitation where a *tonelle* had been built for the accompanying dance. 534 778 282 [292]

The ceremony began at about five o'clock in the afternoon, the drums being dressed by their godmothers Just as a child who is to be baptized in church must have godparents, so drums must have their godparents, and following the logic of this position, since the owner of the drums is regarded as their father, he uses the terms *compère* and *commère* for those who have "stood up" with his drums, just as he would for those who might sponsor his children. The *petit savanne* first called for some twigs from an orange tree and a bit of cotton, as the drums, standing on end, were covered with a clean white cloth. Grouped about them and ranged behind the officiant were the owner and godparents of the drums, holding lighted candles in their hands, with which they made the sign of the cross from time to time. As the prayers began, the participants crossed themselves, and the *petit savanne* sprinkled the drums with holy water, using a spray of orange-leaves. Among his prayers were the Credo, the Ave Maria, the Pater Noster, and the Salve, interspersed with hymns sung by the assembled group. After about half an hour of prayer the officiant, holding an egg in his hand, made the sign of the cross three times over each of the drumheads. Ordinarily the eggs would have been broken, their contents rubbed on the drum- [608] [993]

L: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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534 778 788 heads, and *clairin* poured over these, but on this occasion the rite was postponed, for the eggs would have dampened the drumheads so they could not have been played for the evening's dance. Yet this deviation from the strict ritual did not permit any laxity in meeting the obligation when promised—that is, the day following the dance.

534 778 788 793 The *hungan* took charge as soon as the prayers were finished. Placing the drum to form a triangle on the ground, with the iron, rattles, and sticks near by, he put the offerings inside the space enclosed by the bodies, and with white cornmeal made *vervet* about them, while at the foot of each drum he placed an egg; then, covering the drums with a clean cloth, he threw parched corn on it. From time to time he interrupted his silent invocations by ringing a bell held in one hand, until the arrival of the time for the vehement haggling over the price of his services, which interrupted the ritual. [852] This matter settled, he asked for the names to be given the drums, and proceeded to "christen" the small one Gran' Siligbo, the middle-sized Dumballa, and the great drum Ogun Shango. At this point, were the owner desirous of having special powers given his drums, as is frequently the case, the *hungan* would endow them with a *n'âme*, or soul, at the same time instructing the spirit of the drums, called *hunsôr*, in what was desired of it, and prescribing what must be given the drums by their owner to make their powers effective. But in this case no such *n'âme* was asked, and the ceremony continued.

Summoning the gods, he lifted the cloth over the drums and instructed the "father" to pour water in three places between them, to set the drums on end, and to beat one of them. This was the *serenade*, called Dumballa, and its having been initially struck indicated that the god after whom it was named was most important for this set. This ended the ceremony of baptism, and the drummers took charge so that the 534 778 788 evening's dance might begin, for now the drums were ready

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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for all uses to which those of their type are put. During their making and after their completion they had been sanctified by rites that vividly illustrate the merging of traditions in Haitian religion: by means of offerings to the African gods, and through baptism by the rites of the Church.[8]

The *action de grâce* is another integral part of *vodun* ceremonialism that is essentially Catholic, since its lengthy service is composed entirely of prayers and hymns of the Church. As has been shown, the *action de grâce*, which precedes a *vodun service*, takes place before an "altar" which, important both then and at the later, more African rites, in itself documents in no small measure the combining of Catholicism and *vodun*. One, employed at a *service* not described in the earlier chapters, was covered with a red and white checked table-cloth, on top of which a smaller white cloth was spread.* Pinned to the canopy and to the front of the table-cloth were various chromolithographs of the saints; St. Michael attacking the Devil, Mater Dolorosa, St. James, the Virgin Mary and Jesus (the Assumption), and St. Expeditius. In front of the representation of St. James stood a crucifix with the figure of Jesus, in accordance with the custom of never omitting to have one of these at any *vodun* ceremonial. The table bore many offerings; at the back were four bottles of soft drinks, with cups; while also to be seen were several hard rolls, an ear of corn, a dish containing eggs, and another holding, among other things, rice. One of the containers on the table held holy water, while candles for use both in the *action de grâce* and in the later *vodun* rituals lay beside this. Thus crucifix, candles, pictures of the saints, and holy water were combined in this ceremony with offerings of food and drink to be given the gods that the ancestors had brought from Africa.[9] The songs sung at the vodunistic portions of these *services* also reflect the psychological unity of Catholic and African elements in vodun worship. One of these declares:

* This altar is shown in the illustration facing p. 290.

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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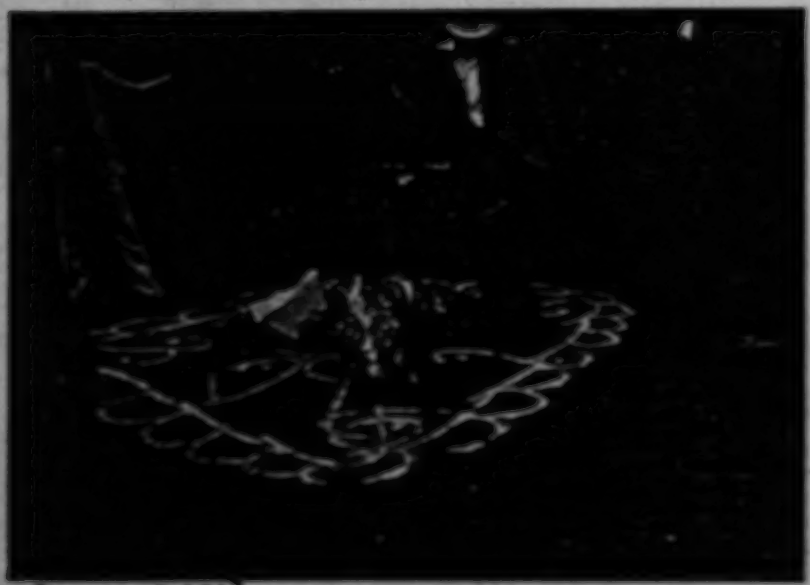
ABOVE, *Consecrating the drums: the "godfathers" and "godmothers" standing by with lighted candles as prayers of the Church are recited.*

BELOW, *The vodun priest employing African rites to complete the consecration of the drums.*



[facing P. 252]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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turned to leave, word came that his house had burned and nothing in it was saved. Later he suffered a paralytic stroke from which he never recovered. Some say that the American captain became ill and was sent to the States "as a punishment for what he had done." Several days later the sergeant was found mad, wandering in the woods. Since he had fired under orders, however, his punishment was but temporary, and on being cured he returned to Ville-Bonheur to ask pardon of the Virgin. Today he lives in Mirebalais. When they saw the American ill, the priest paralyzed, the sergeant mad, and the presbytery burned, "public clamor" became so strong that both St. John and En has Palmes were reopened.[10]

In 1932 a cyclone at St. John tore down trees and houses and hurt but did not kill the worshippers who had gathered there. An eyewitness insisted he had seen the enormous whirling cloud rise from the sacred place. He had no time to reach his house, for with a noise like a cannon-shot the whirlwind came, and an enormous oak tree fell just behind him — "I saw death staring at me." Today he carries two scapularies to the Virgin to protect him.

The third sacred spot is at the falls themselves, where the grandeur and beauty of the scene is such as to induce the religious thrill almost unaided, and where great numbers go in the course of their pilgrimage to Ville-Bonheur. There are two falls, situated at a distance of several miles from the village, one for Damballa and one for Aida Wedo, and it is believed that those who bathe in the sacred streams become possessed. It is said that the palms near by are sacred to the Virgin, but others hold that they are for Damballa. Many visit the falls on the day preceding the fête, but the largest throng hurries there immediately after the principal mass, when the greatest number of possessions and the most violent seizures by the *loa* occur. The falls, therefore, in association

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the voduists this is not regarded as decisive proof of the power of Protestantism, for those immediately concerned it is held sufficient.[9]

What, then, of the attitudes held by voduists toward the Catholic Church? The correlation of Catholic ritual with *vodun* practice made by Haitians is of utmost significance in this connection. In discussing the Church service, it was pointed out that church bells announce mass or any other rite, and this, it was explained, is for Legba — "*Toute cloche c'est pou' Legba, même l'église, oui* — All sounding of bells is for Legba, even in church," for he must be notified so that he can "open the gate" for God, Jesus Christ, and the saints. "*Nou' même nou' connai' ça. C'est Bon Dieu crée tout* — You yourself know that. It is God who created everything." It was also recounted how when the priest preaches, he is possessed by the *mystères* of the sacred Trinity, for does he not gesticulate and become excited like any other possessed person?

Furthermore, it is believed that Gede, Ogun, and Dumballa "are always at the church," often insisting that their worshippers take communion. Indeed, occasionally the *loa* of a woman may demand a Church marriage from a man to whom she is a *placée*. The sacraments of baptism, first communion, marriage, confession, and extreme unction are received by members of the *vodun* cult, though, as will be seen, when voduists confess, they say nothing of their *loa*. The *houngans* themselves "are most often at the sacred table to take communion," and one particular *houngan* not only attended mass, but was seen continually employing his rosary in the *vodun* ceremonies at which he officiated. While Haitians from the southern peninsula stated that the *houngans* there do not go to church, it was pointed out at the same time that all other voduists attend regularly.

The principal resentment held by Mirebalais voduists against the Church is for the cost of Church rites, and for the

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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heard in Haiti, but descriptive details of the practice abound." Elsewhere (p. 158) she speaks of "this higglety pigglety pantheon" of *loa*, whose traits "none . . . [were] . . . able to describe . . . at all systematically." Price-Mars (I), 52, however, mentions the existence of a theology based on African beliefs not unlike that described here.

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He was the center of all eyes. Most of the time he danced alone, gyrating recklessly. Sometimes he danced with his houngénicon. Those who watched clapped hands and uttered sounds imitating drums, for drums were not being used in this service. The houngan carried the inevitable *clochette*, or tiny hand bell.

When newcomers arrived, Gédé greeted them by shaking both their hands downward, vigorously, three times. Then he wiped their faces with his kerchief, a ceremony which he repeated from time to time. He danced with each of them a kind of Jeruzalo step, simple, restrained, and dignified. One of the visitors fell to his knees to converse with him.

The entire evening was built around the houngan's representation of Gédé. Properly speaking, the houngan was not in a trance. He was in full possession of all his normal faculties and was conscious of the slightest inconveniences and disturbances. Several times the clay bowl of his pipe fell from the reed stem, scattering hot ashes on the ground, and each time he paused to allow the houngénicon to clear them away. Yet he was carried away by his certainty that he was Gédé. The obvious conviction of those who watched seemed to fortify him in his role. As the evening wore on, he became more and more detached from his normal personality. His psychic condition was not that of one who had been "mounted" by a loa; it was, rather, a continuously progressive ecstasy.

Gédé is, in fact, more than a loa of the cemetery; he is a personification of death in all its macabre, humorous, and unpredictable aspects. Death is not merely a thing dying; it is an entity, a positive force in nature. Death is Gédé Nimbo. I believe that when the houngan became Gédé, all who had crowded into his hut felt themselves to be in the presence of death itself. Death, a dynamic, aggressive force, danced and pirouetted among them, talking the language of the dead and of old Africa.

Gédé is often stern, austere, and forbidding, but he has other aspects. Haitians take amused pleasure at the terror he can strike into the hearts of the mighty. An old Gédé song goes:

Papa Gédé bel gé'ème!
Papa Gédé bel gé'ème!
L'hobillé ment en noir?
Pou'l monté au palais!

L'hobillé ment en blanc
Li semblé yon deputé!
L'hobillé ment en noir?
Li semblé yon senateur!

Papa Gédé is a handsome fellow!
Papa Gédé is a handsome fellow!
He is dressed all in black
For he is going up to the palace!

When he's dressed all in white
He looks like a deputy!
When he's dressed all in black
He resembles a senator!

According to tradition, the song had its origin in a march on the capital by some houngans many years ago. The story is very old and no one remembers much of the details.

remembers many of the details. But during the administration of President Louis Borno (1922–1930) there was a reenactment of the original march. There suddenly appeared in the streets of Port-au-Prince a crowd of Gédé *mystères*—houngans "possessed" by Gédé Nimbo and attired in Gédé dress: tall black hats, long black tail coats, smoked glasses, black skirts over their black trousers. They carried flags, waved polka-dot kerchiefs, shook their ceremonial rattles, and paused sometimes to wipe the perspiration from one another's faces. They became the nucleus of a large, noisy crowd moving up the hill toward the palace. Market women followed instead of going home; street gamins screamed and raced among them. Before they had arrived at the palace grounds they had taken on the semblance of a huge Mardi Gras band. They swerved through the gates of the palace grounds and along the drive, right to the steps of the palace itself. The guards, taken by surprise, waited helplessly for their officers to arrive.

At the palace door, the houngans demanded money from the president. Borno was in a dilemma. He was reputed to be sympathetic to Vodoun ritual but was only surreptitiously so. He feared the houngans, and he feared public opinion. What would the upper class of Port-au-Prince think, the Latin-culture Haitians? With Gédé's worst manners, the Gédé *mystères* cavorted on the palace steps. Finally Borno gave in. He went the money out to them, and then the crowd of Gédé's marched out of the palace grounds, waving their flags and shaking their rattles.

Service for the Houngan Bossale

This ritual of calling the loa to speak through the mouth of the Vodoun priest took place in the Bolosse section of Port-au-Prince. The houmfor was situated in a congested slum area of the city, but the grounds around it were spacious. The houmfor itself was a tall and unpretentious, and except for the adjoining temeille would easily have been mistaken for another small wooden house. The houngan was a heavy-set man with a black mustache. Quick to laugh and easy in his movements, he nevertheless commanded solemn respect from the hounsi and the other participants. His soft-spoken voice expressed assurance and authority.

There were a number of possessions in the course of the dancing, all more or less routine. Each time a possession occurred, the houngan came forward with his asson and bell, gave a pitcher of water and a candle to the possessed devotee, and conducted her through a ritual at the foot of the center post.

Later, one of the hounsi came and sat at the houngan's feet. She was not possessed but obviously was in a state of high tension. Other servitors brought from the houmfor a wooden washtub and set it on the ground

of Haiti. But the route to it is through water. When the Haitians say "under the water" they do not mean under the sea. The ocean is regarded as the special domain of Agwé, La Sirène, and a few related deities, but it has nothing to do with most loa. "Under the water" specifically means under the springs, the rivers, and the fresh-water lakes. Fresh water has the greatest of significance in relation to most of the Vodoun deities.

When a loa comes to visit his Haitian children he comes by way of the *chèmin dlèwo* (the water road)—that is to say, by way of the river, the waterfall, or the spring. Because the spring is the primary source of fresh water, it is the most direct means of contact with the land of the loa. Tales are heard everywhere of persons who, drawing water from the spring at night, heard the voices of loa or the sound of singing and drumming coming up from somewhere below. And virtually all the tales about human beings who visited the land of the loa describe them as descending into a river or disappearing into a waterfall.

The loa are accustomed to traveling by the "water road." And in all aspects of the Vodoun service, this "water road" is refreshed and replenished. When the road is dry, contact with the loa is diminished. When it is moist, the loa travel easily.

Thus, the houngan constantly uses water to entice and invite the deities. He holds a glass or pitcher of water at the center pole of his peristyle. He extends it toward the four cardinal points. He spills water at the foot of the center pole. He spills water in the hounfor at the foot of the *pó*, or altar. He sets a pitcher of water at the gateway of his habitation. And often, during a service, he pours a pathway of water in the dust from his gateway into his peristyle. Within nearly every hounfor there is at least one *hounin*, or pool, dedicated to the loa who is the *maît' caille*, the master of the house. These pools are carefully filled with water drawn from the springs. They are places of rest and refreshment for the deities whose names or portraits are inscribed on the walls above.

Sometimes rites and services are held at the site of the spring, the houngan and his entourage marching down to it from the hounfor for the occasion. So, too, there are annual pilgrimages to waterfalls such as Saut d'Eau, where the loa mount their "horses" in profusion.

Within the hounfor, during a service, the cult priest and the servitors pour "libations" of water on the earth, so that the loa may be refreshed. And virtually without end, the hounfor is the scene of ritual ceremonies in which the loa is bathed and thus "renewed" in the heads of his servitors.

[For footnote, see category 16, p. 351.--Analyst]

2: Courlander 9-6 (1937-1967, 1969 SV3 HaRi SV3

with one of his children as he had agreed. That night his oldest child died. The next year to the day, his second child died. And the third year, the third child died. On the fourth anniversary, the man's wife died. On the fifth, he himself died. The djab of Trou Fourban had collected his debt.

Another great djab lives on the northern mountain called Morne Ronde. A man of Cap Haitien was said to have made a compact with him for wealth. One day there was a great hubbub in front of the man's house. A crowd gathered and stood peering inside his door. What they saw was a rain of money falling down from the rafters. The floor was covered with ten-gourde bills. When the *gendarmerie* came to investigate, they stood at the doorway in awe, watching the money float to the floor. The man finally closed the door. That night he moved away, and no one in Cap Haitien ever saw him again.

The djab are insatiable. For their favors—which range from providing wealth and political position to destroying one's enemies—they always demand more in return than the recipient has counted on. Catholic ritual is called upon in some instances to break the djab's chain of demands.

Some tales are told in which human beings outwit the djab, particularly the lesser ones; but more often than not, the djab have the last laugh. During the big hurricane which hit Haiti in 1954, a huge landslide occurred near the place called Bayè Roche in the La Selle Mountains. An entire village was wiped out, covered by the falling rocks. Throughout this region the disaster was attributed to the action of a djab reputed to live in one of the nearby caves. Many lost cattle were found wandering near Bayè Roche, and they were believed to be people whom the malevolent djab had transformed into animals.

The height of bravado is to demand to be confronted with a big djab face to face. There is a song which goes:

> Conduit'm ailé ah!
> Conduit'm ailé djab nan Trou Fourban!
> Conduit'm ailé! [Ex. 31]
>
> Take me, ah!
> Take me to the djab in Trou Fourban!
> Take me!

There are still other supernatural creatures in Haitian lore who must be guarded against, such as the *djablesse*, the *revenant*, and the *loup*. The *djablesse* is a female ghost who must live in the woods for a number of years before she can enter heaven, as a punishment for the crime of

2: Courlander B-5 (1927-1958) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

used for wall hangings much as appliquéd cloths are used in Dahomey. Near Cap Haitien, in the north, ceramic workers make crude clay figurines of roosters, pigs, dogs, cows, and people. The "purpose" of these figurines is obscure, but it is likely that they are intended for use in Vodoun ritual, a number of them having been observed in hounfors in the vicinity of the town of Grande Rivière du Nord. In some mountain villages, canes carved with animal and human heads are commonly seen. Nor is the tradition of carving gourds and calabashes, popular in various regions of West Africa, altogether forgotten. The *cayambouque*, a divided calabash with the top ingeniously cut to fit into the lower part so as to form a sealed container, is sometimes covered with carved geometric designs, usually crude and haphazard but on occasion meticulous. Until recent years the common *cha-cha*, or gourd rattle, was similarly carved.

Most of the visible traditional art is to be found in the environs of the cult temple. The inner walls of many hounfors are covered with ritual designs and symbols and portraits of the deities. On the altar, sometimes, crude wood carvings of deities are seen, along with forged iron objects, carved marassa bowls, and grotesquely shaped drumsticks known as *baguettes guinée*. All the wooden objects are characterized by a plainness that relegates them to the category of purely functional and expendable things. The wood carving of a deity is not an image, it is a representation; it can be sold or otherwise disposed of, even thrown away if infested with beetles, and another object can be used to replace it. The only concern of the cult priest in this matter is that the deity concerned should understand the situation properly and not take offense. Thus there is no strong feeling that the wood carving should be a realistic representation or that it should be "beautiful." One relatively antique wood carving, completely West African in style, was found some years ago in a hounfor near Léogane and is now in the collection of the Musée du Peuple Haitien in Port-au-Prince (see fig. 57).

One of the most flourishing arts of the hounfor is the *vèvè*, or ritual drawing made on the earth in the course of a service. Most commonly these beautiful and ornate designs are made with white meal or flour, and in a few of the cults, primarily the Pétro, lampblack and red brick dust are also used. The vèvè is made by the houngan or the mambo. With sure, practiced movements, the cult priest allows the meal to trickle through his fingertips onto the ground where the rites are taking place, usually in the peristyle of the hounfor itself. The drawings he makes are composed of a multiplicity of cabalistic symbols—heart shapes, stars, interlocked V's, flags, abstract phallic forms, crosses, swords,

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV2 Haiti SV2

machetes, circles, mortar shapes, and so on—each with its own specific meaning. Sometimes the vèvè becomes openly pictorial, and there emerges a ship for the loa Agwé, snakes for Damballa and Ayida, a bull for the loa Taureau, a knapsack for the loa Azaka, or even a portrait of a deity, perhaps smoking a pipe or holding a sword.

The vèvè is not a permanent record. It is made as an act of supplication or veneration, and once it is finished it has no further value. In the ensuing ritual and dance, the vèvè is obliterated by the feet that pass across it. At the hands of one houngan, this invocational act results in a crude, even childlike, design. At the hands of another, it produces a drawing of beauty, integration, and highly developed form.

The drum-making craft, too, has offered an unbroken sequence of opportunity for satisfying artistic urges. The drum has a traditional form that cannot be tampered with; its shape is predetermined by its function, by the log from which it is hewn, and by existing standards. And yet, the drum maker has found it an object on which he can devise new decorative motifs, and he may even give it personal uniqueness. Some drums have styles that may be associated with specific regions of the country, others bear the stamp of the individual artist. Paint has been used on Haitian drums for a hundred years or more as a complement to carving. One assotor drum dating from the earliest days of the Republic, and now preserved in a collection owned by the Bureau of Ethnology in Port-au-Prince, is decorated with a medallion showing the Haitian coat of arms, grenadiers, red and yellow snakes, and a sun with a face. This magnificent instrument, apparently the only one of its age and kind to have survived the years, is one of Haiti's art treasures.

The *canis*, or calabash bowl, of the hounfor rites is another object which is decorated with motifs. Abstract designs, ritual symbols, and sometimes human and animal figures are painted on the inner or concave surface of the bowl.

The rural traditional arts of Haiti have had a belated impact on the arts of the city. Within the past fifteen years there have appeared a number of painters, sculptors in wood and ceramics, and ironworkers who constitute an art movement sometimes referred to as the Haitian "renaissance." Many of these artists draw heavily on national lore and legend for inspiration and subject matter. Some of them are men who came only recently from villages or distant farms. Their work adorns many public buildings in Port-au-Prince and is eagerly sought by art collectors. Members of the elite class who once looked with embarrassment on the "primitive" countryside are finding increasing respect for the potentialities of their country cousins.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

proper control, as they should be. If an unwanted god persists in mounting an individual, the pertinacious one is commanded to go away or the victim himself is sent home until he can recover his own personality. Many people strongly resist possession when it is imminent. Judged by our own standards, possession of the Vodun variety could certainly not be called normal; judged by Haitian standards, however, it would be absurd to call abnormal an experience known and approved by the majority of the community.[29]

Possession occurs either at the service or at the dance. Here again the white man has nothing in his religious experience to enable him to comprehend the pattern of Haitian religion. The service corresponds nearly enough to the Catholic Mass or to more realistic sacrifices in ancient Jewish rites, but neither of these faiths nor any other the white man knows well has dancing for religion's sake. In Vodun, however, the dance is of equal importance with the service.

In the tiny *hounfort* (also spelled *heunfort*) of the priest, which is little more than a hut with earthen floor, the service begins. To call this structure a temple is at once to make it too imposing and to confuse the white man in his attempt to understand the scene; it is no more of a temple than was a tiny primitive early Christian church. Most houmforts in Haiti would be crowded if twenty people were present. At one end is an altar, more or less resembling the high altar in a Catholic chapel; on it are placed a crucifix, flowers, candles, fruit and food, wine, lithographs of Catholic saints, and whatever other objects, Catholic or Vodun, local practice may dictate and individual taste prefer. Upon the floor are traced formal cabalistic patterns, generally in corn meal, both to fend off evil influences and as required by the particular loa. The officiants may be male or female or both. To the service ordinarily come only the members of the family and their specifically invited guests; neighbors and friends will attend the subsequent dance.

A student of Catholicism would find in the first part of the service a great deal of ritual borrowed from the Church. The blessing, genuflections, making the sign of the cross, responses, and the like, all clearly show a Catholic background which accords well with certain objects upon the altar. Imperceptibly the strictly Vodun element obtrudes itself. The loa are asked whether they will accept

29. The statement of the two sides of this controversy may be found in Dorsinvil, *op. cit.*, throughout; and in Herskovits, *op. cit.*, particularly pp. 146–147.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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the sacrificer; food is set before the sacrificial animal, and if this food is eaten by the creature or creatures, it is known that the loa is satisfied. Then comes the actual sacrifice of the animal, a slaying neither ostentatious nor dramatic, since often it does not occur in the hounfort itself. It is at this juncture that possession is looked for. The loa, by seizing one or more of his devotees—or, if possession fails, by the divination of the priest—makes known his desires. The demands of the loa are likely to be modest: a candle, a special article of food, certain specific attentions. Occasionally he insists upon an impressive sacrifice. Whatever his desires, they must be gratified or else the loa will mildly harass the family; long refusal will produce anger and full vengeance. If the god is Rada, his sacrifice will be white, red, or vari-colored; if he is Pétro, he will wish black or gray animals—chickens, turkeys, goats, bullocks.

The service itself, then, is entirely religious in nature, consisting wholly of ceremonies and rituals conducted by officiating priests, with the purpose of restraining or pacifying gods who may have been pursuing a family with misfortune, or gratifying those who have made it happy. The dance following the service apparently expresses the joy of the family at dangers averted and gratitude for blessings bestowed.

In contrast to the private character of the service, the dance has all the appearance of a social event. Invitations to it are sent all over the countryside. People attend for good fellowship, gossip, and the sheer delight of dancing, but in the background one is always aware of a religious element as well. The dance is held in a specially constructed *tonnelle*, a roof of boughs and leaves supported by uprights. Drums are not always used at the earlier service, but no dance could be held without them. The crowd drifts in slowly, so that the dance may be long in getting under way. The best drummers in the community may not arrive until after two or three hours. Three drums of different sizes, all properly baptized, set the rhythms, and sometimes gourd rattles embroider a commentary upon the beat. Whereas at the service possession comes as a result of the priest's invocations, at the dance it is inspired by the drumming. Each loa has his own particular rhythm, so that as soon as it is determined what god has seized upon a dancer the drummers take up the rhythm of that god. The officiant immediately rushes to the mounted person with a calabash of water and a candle; by following the "horse" around and

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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themselves and their families economically and socially. Property was important, so they took pains to insure the legitimacy of their heirs; color was crucial, and so they regulated the marriages of their children to be sure there was no reversion to the black strain. They guarded their fortunes solicitously, provided their daughters with dowries large enough sometimes even to lure a white husband, educated their sons in Paris—behaved, in short, as if they had been pillars of society in provincial France. Like the white planters, the male affranchis often had relations with slave women, but even more rarely than whites were they seduced into marriage with women of the lower orders. 175 565 581

When the slave insurrection and its aftermath freed the half-million blacks in Saint-Domingue it was not to be expected that European middle-class morals and practices should suddenly prevail. Modern usage emerges from the womb of tradition. Neither in Africa nor in the colony had tradition taught the blacks respect for monogamy or for marriage entered into by religious ceremony. If the ex-slaves had reverted to their Dahomean, Congolese, or other African background, they might have introduced the bride price; but to pay a bride price is to assume the existence of wealth, an assumption contrary to fact among the ex-slaves in Saint-Domingue of the 1790's, and Haiti of the 1800's. In neither Dahomey nor the Congo was there much ceremony at the union of a couple; what there was consisted mostly of singing and dancing. If, on the other hand, the people went only by what they had observed in slave days, there was no tradition of binding union or strict codes, as we understand them. A man knew when to stay away from another man's woman; children remained near their mother—these two statements almost cover the situation as of 1796 among the newly freed slaves. 175 581 [583] [585] [837] [855]

Toussaint, apparently a conventional person in what concerned social behavior, wished his people to be "moral." He instituted a time of "holy masses, mystic communions, biblical psalms, and divine ecstasies"[2] for his private edification, and recommended the same for his people. He could not possibly have instilled into them a desire for Christian marriage, however; even if he could, priests would not have been available for the wholesale marrying of scores of thousands of men and women. Local records of weddings at this period are very scanty. 175 643 788 582

2. Saint-Rémy, *Pétion et Haïti*, III, 93.

789

789 MAGIC--practices reflecting confidence in the ability to manipulate supernatural forces; magical techniques of weather control (e.g., rain making); magical rites for increasing the food supply; exorcistic practices (e.g., driving off evil spirits with noise); potent formulas, incantations, and spells; curses; miracles; prevalent types of magic (e.g., imitative, contagious); concept of magical force; functions and social significance of magic; nonsupernatural magic (e.g., wonder-working, jugglery, legerdemain, fire-walking); etc. See also:

Magical rites in the food quest 32
Magic rites in agriculture 94
Magic rites in the reproductive cycle 84
Magic as amusement 545
Magic rites in warfare 738
Sorcery, witchcraft, and evil eye 764
Therapeutic magic 751, 756
Magic rites at hunts 784
Luck magic 777
Concept of mana 778
Prevalence of analogical reasoning 811
Relation of magic to science 813
Love magic 838

to speak the special "languages" of their particular cults. One aspect of this initiation,[3] which has been carried over almost unchanged into some parts of Haiti (though not into Mirebalais) is the ordeal by fire, in which the novitiate must plunge his hand into a pot of boiling cornmeal and rest his foot on the red-hot stones which support the pot.

The role of the family deities has already been given; of the third category, that of the personal forces, one finds first of all the soul, of which each individual is conceived as having three. More important is the cult of Fa, or Destiny, which came to Dahomey from the Yoruba, and is a part of a widely spread system of discovering the destiny of a man that characterizes not only West Africa and the remainder of the continent, but most of the Old World. In Dahomey today this end is carried out by assessing the significance of the various permutations and combinations of sixteen palm kernels "thrown" by the diviner. In addition there exist traditionally earlier and less "official" methods of divining, which in the main are those which have survived in the New World. Intimately associated with both the soul and the destiny of man is the deity who is at once a member of the great pantheon and one of the most personal of all the gods, Legba, whose African importance is attested by the extent to which he is today worshipped in many parts of the New World, and by his universality in Haiti. From the point of view of Dahomean philosophy Legba may be regarded as the god of accident, who gives to man a "way out" in a world ruled by an otherwise inexorable fate. Gross in his appetites and capricious, he is, nevertheless, beloved by the Dahomeans, and though his name is usually erroneously translated by the European term "devil," no appellation could be farther from reality. Of particular significance for his role in Haitan life as guardian of the crossroads and of the *barrière* is his place in Dahomean theology, since it is said: "Before the gods can

[3] [i.e., The initiation of devotees by priests into the religious cults of Dahomey - Analyst]

powers which actuate their charms are variously ascribed to Legba, the Earth gods, and, most importantly, the "little folk" of the forest. Acceptance of the power of magic, however, is by no means confined to Africa, for it is characteristic of all the Old World, if not universal. Hence, as will be seen, the belief in magic held by the Africans who were imported into Haiti met with the corresponding beliefs of the Europeans who were their masters, so that today Haitian magic represents almost a complete merging of these two.

This, then, in briefest survey constitutes the culture which predominantly gave the Haitian people the African elements found in Haiti today. But the types of Europeans and of European behavior with which the slaves came into contact are also important and must next be examined, for it was these European patterns that, under contact, impinged upon the African habits of thought and action in such a way that, merging with the aboriginal customs, the Haitian culture found today was eventually shaped.

Lc Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

attitudes of these writers were in the main far from sympathetic toward Haiti, and their interests extended but little to the customs of the great masses of Haitians. That the fear of slavery was still alive in the early part of the nineteenth century is apparent from an incident related by Mackenzie;[44] that, some decades later, the sense of racial differences continued to exist is evident from folk-sayings about the characteristics of whites, mulattoes, and Negroes recorded by St. John.[45] The concept of rank seems to have maintained itself in its full flavor, with no lack of social classes in Haitian urban society and no lack of vigor in perpetuating the earlier prejudices of caste.

The majority of the population remained on the land, for by 1830 the great estates had been completely broken up, and were cultivated in the main by small concessionaires. The dress of these country inhabitants seems to have remained much as it had been under French control, and the emphasis on good manners that so marks African social intercourse had been retained to such an extent that St. John, no admirer of the Haitian people, was forced to remark upon it.[46] Markets which were conducted in African fashion had been established, and these were supplemented by itinerant peddlers. The institution of *plaçage*, a reconciliation of African plural marriage with the monogamy of European custom, of which more will be said in a later chapter, was known in the early days of independence. The rites of birth and death were marked with their special ceremonies, and in both instances it can be seen that the African elements of the cultural heritage were not being forgotten. Dancing continued as the principal form of recreation, and to the traditional dances, which still persist, were added European styles.[47]

Above all, African religious customs were being observed. *Vodun* rites continued to flourish and magic was practiced as in the days preceding independence, as is to be seen from the notorious and all too often repeated tale of the "Congo bean

175 178 221 [189] 175 178 221 235

new,"[17] which has continued current from the time of its publication by St. John until today.[18] Yet African religious practices were being constantly combated by the Catholic Church, for even in the period of revolt the priests had remained largely unharmed, and when Christophe was elevated to the throne, he appointed two archbishops. After the establishment of the Republic, Catholicism continued as the State religion, so that by the early nineteenth century, as Mackenzie mentions, thirty-eight clergy were active in Haiti, all under the control of the Bishop of Santo Domingo, and all presumably nominated and paid by the President of Haiti.[19] Though for a period there was an attempt to develop a national Church, the missionary work done during the colonial days left too strong a tradition of Catholicism to be overcome, and consequently a Concordat was signed with Rome in 1860, which has remained in effect ever since.[20]

178 Though the story of the cultural history of Haiti between 1804 and the present cannot thus be more than sketched, yet the background is known, and enough can be gathered from accounts of Haitian life during this interval to enable us to see that the varied cultural impulses were shaping the lives of the people throughout these years. With some understanding of the roots of the resulting culture in French and African [121] traditions, then, let us once more turn to the valley of Mizhalais and consider the life of the Haitian peasant as it is lived today.

Dead: I have worked; I have planted this seed. Make it yield for me, that I may make offerings to the Mysteries, the Saints, the Twins, the Dead."

At the entrance to the field the cranium of a horse, a mule, or a burro may be erected on a pole as magic against evil, and a wooden cross to which limes are attached may also be raised to protect against any expression of envy that might place a spell upon the growing plants. Finally, if there is any reason to believe that evil magic may have been invoked against the owner, a *hungan*, or vodun priest is summoned to make a charm to ward it off, and, with a little ceremony, he inters this charm in the middle of the garden or at its entrance.

In addition to this, first fruits must be given as an offering to the supernatural forces whose goodwill has permitted a bountiful yield, particularly in the case of staple crops such as maize and rice. As the first heads of maize are brought in, they are roasted, and the kernels are cut from the cobs. The head of the household then throws them to the four cardinal points either in the garden or before his home, and as he does this, he pronounces an invocation such as the following:

"*Jesu Christ, les Saints, les Marassa, les Morts: M' jet' mai' bai' ou, c'est pou' toujou' m' gagne bai' ou, et pou' m' gagne courai' pou' travai' a'c p'tit' moin, a'c femme moin, a'c parent' moin, a'c toute famille'a. Conserve m' pou' m' pas malade, pou' m' toujours join pou, m' bai' ou.* — Jesus Christ, the Saints, the Twins, the Dead: I throw maize for you, that I may always have some to give, that I may gain courage [strength] to work, and also my children, my wife, my relations, and all my family. Care for me that I do not fall ill, so that I may always have [something] to give you."

After this ritual the new crop is available to its owner for whatever use he may care to make of it.

in Port-au-Prince, native or "créole" rice, red beans, and olive oil. The rice and beans are cooked separately, as are the yams and the two kinds of salt fish, each being seasoned with oil, salt, and pepper. The ordinary plates or calabashes on which food is offered the *loa*, or African deities, and the characteristic special double plates used in the twin cult, are prepared by rubbing them with olive oil. When the food is ready, it is placed in the proper containers in a closed room, and the family gather and say prayers of the Church — the Pater Noster, the Ave Maria, and the Credo — after which the *loa*, the twins, and the dead are called to come and eat. From midday until after sunset the room remains unopened, so that these beings may partake of the offerings placed there for them. Finally, when darkness has fallen, the family enter, and the food, whose essence is believed to have been consumed by the spirits, is eaten.

At times when a garden yields but little, the owner may suspect that black magic is the cause. He thereupon tries to recall any of his neighbors who might have occasion to feel envious of him, or those with whom he may have quarreled. He does nothing overt at this time except to watch for signs of hostility on the part of the suspect, but when the time for the next planting arrives, he not only obtains a strong charm to protect his own garden, but if he is particularly exercised and thinks his suspicions are well justified, he may set a counter-charm in the field of his neighbor who he believes has harmed him. This would only be done in exceptional cases, where, for instance, the crops of one cultivator had failed when the fields about his had yielded well; for, in the main, garden magic is directed toward protective rather than toward malevolent ends.

A certain proportion of the harvest is reserved for use at home and the remainder is sold in the markets. Since these markets, which as the primary channel of distribution rank with farming in their importance in Haitian economy, they may next be considered.

Le Herbourg 8-4,1 (1800) 1807 SV3 HAIT SV3
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malin esprit barré chemin qu'en moment délivrance mois apé rivé. Now' toutes Invisibles, les Saints, les Morts, Marassa, vini assisté mois jou'-a.—I ask you all to come deliver me, that you open the way for me, that you do not allow evil spirits to bar my path when the time of the delivery approaches. May you all, Invisible Beings, the Saints, the Dead, Twins, come to my aid on that day."

Should one of the couple be a devotee of Dumballa or Ersilie, both of them jealous gods, a chicken or two is added to the customary offerings, and some gift pleasing to the god, such as a dress or suit of his sacred color, is made him. Normally no further precautions need be taken. If, however, the pregnant woman has had one or two miscarriages, she and her husband go to a *vodun* priest, preferably a woman, and obtain a "medicine" to be used in bathing the abdominal and vaginal areas as a precaution against *mawaises aires*, the werewolves believed to consume children in the womb. If the pregnancy this time terminates successfully, some of the same medicine is rubbed on the child shortly after birth and several times during the ensuing weeks, but should the infant later fall ill, the *vodun* priest brings herbs and makes a smoke-fire to drive away the werewolves that are believed still to be hovering about.

At the onset of labor, if either the father or the mother of the unborn child is vowed to Dumballa, another sacrifice is made to this god and to the spirits of twins, giving a *couvert sec* and one or two chickens and pigeons to each. If a *vodun* priest has determined what deity protects the child, a sacrifice is also given this spirit, and prayers are said to the spirits of twins, the dead of the families of both the man and the woman, and all other supernatural beings, saints of the Church and *vodun* gods alike.

Meanwhile the woman has been placed on the ground on

or to get her feet wet. When possible, however, she waits for from fifteen to twenty days before doing this kind of work, and, in any event, she will not bathe in cold water until more than a month has passed. A week or two after giving birth she may resume her selling in the market, and two months after her child is born she will take up work in her garden.[9]

During this period of the mother's recovery the child is ritually introduced to his world and to the spirits which govern it. Three or four days after the cord drops, the midwife, water and a candle in hand, presents the child to the sun and the four corners of the earth, speaking an invocation which none but women of this profession may know or hear spoken. The child is then carried into the courtyard before the house, though he may not be taken elsewhere for as many as three weeks. When he is taken across the threshold for the first time, he is cradled in the left arm of the one who carries him; in the left hand water is held, while the right hand holds a lighted candle. Water is thrown in three directions, outward from the door and to each side of it, as the child is taken about the outside of the house. This rite is repeated by everyone present at the time, but water is "thrown" only once.

Though it is said by some that a child is not given a charm immediately after birth unless it is ill, it is nevertheless customary to place a cord about the neck of an infant on the day it is born, to remain there until some three or four years later, when it wears out and is lost. There is no difference of opinion, however, on the point that if a baby falls ill soon after birth, steps must be taken to give it spiritual protection. A *vodun* priest is called to make a charm for it to wear, while, in addition, another charm is placed in the house to guard its inhabitants against "all bad things," such as the evil eye—since this tends to give babies convulsions—demons, werewolves, or the "little folk" who bring bad magic. A *jok* against harm resulting from even unconscious envy is also provided, since an individual who admires a baby because of

not come, the mother goes to a woman specialist who knows the herbs which are believed to induce the flow. When the mother is ill or tubercular, the infant is given to a wet-nurse. Once he has begun to nurse, he is fed whenever he cries, and as soon as he can sit up he is given the same food as the mother eats. For the first two or three months after the birth of her child a woman refrains from eating egg-plant, fresh fish — although she may eat salt fish — white beans or any others larger than Congo peas, pork, lard, and all fruit. The ears of a female child are pierced when she is about a month old for the gold ear-rings which are worn by girls and women of all ages. If the parents cannot afford them at the time, however, thread is placed in the holes until a sum sufficient to provide this important trinket has been accumulated.

A child is taught to sit up beginning with the end of the third or fourth month, and by the time he is six or seven months old he can sit quite well; girls are believed to be more precocious than boys in acquiring this skill. When about ten months old, or sooner, an older sister, a little girl, or the father or mother takes the child by the hand and teaches him to walk, later allowing him to hold one end of a stick for support. A child is never left alone, for fear of the evil eye or of werewolves, so that a mother does not even cross the threshold of her house without taking her baby with her, while if for some reason she cannot avoid leaving her child while she is in the yard, an empty bottle is placed near its pillow as a protective device. Teething is a matter of importance, since the attitudes of the parents toward a child may be determined by the first teeth to appear. If these are cut in the upper jaw, it is said that the child's mother will survive his father, and when this occurs, the mother takes every precaution to conceal the fact from her husband, so he will not hate the child. Others hold, however, that the appearance of an upper tooth first denotes that either the father or the mother is soon to die.[4]

Instruction starts early in the life of a child. Beginning with

the phrase: "This is natural." Children are not spaced, for normally a man resumes intercourse with his wife the second or third month after childbirth. Except for the drinking of coconut milk and salt, which is believed to be effective in preventing conception if taken before intercourse, contraceptives are not known to women, which means that pregnancies follow in rapid succession. Families are not too large, however, despite this, those numbering seven or eight children being rare, even in the hills. The reason for this is a high incidence of infant mortality, which is obvious despite the absence of vital statistics. Abortions are usually resorted to by young women, who sustain the operation done by the uncertain skill of an old-woman, in the fear that bearing a child will later stand in the way of a desirable legal marriage. Some men, however, take the precaution of placing a grain of native salt on the tongue while having intercourse during an illicit affair, believing that this will be effective in preventing conception.

A childless woman first goes to a *vodun* priest, to have him determine by divination if a co-wife has not invoked magic against her. If her question receives an affirmative answer, she acquires a "counter-charm" to offset the effect of the other woman's magic. Should such a charm be ineffective, she would offer her prayers before the shrines of the saints and make pilgrimages to such sacred places as Saut d'Eau, there phrasing her petition to the Virgin in some manner such as the prayer overheard as a woman lighted a candle and held it in her hand before placing it on a sacred rock:

"Vièrge Miracles, Manman, voilà, depuis six ans depuis qui moins marié; moin apé viure seul avec pauvre malhereux moin-a. Ça fait trois fois moin vini nan pié ou. Pas 'blié mandé moin fait ou, pour charité, moin ou petit pitite. Moin va minnin li ba ou. Moin apé parti, Manman, s' ou' pli, songé ça pitite m' mandé ou.—

Virgin of Miracles, Mother, I have been married for six years; I am still living alone with my poor unfortunate one. This is the third time I come to you. For charity's sake, do not forget to send me a child. I have brought this for you. Now I am about to leave [but], Mother, please think of the little one I ask of you."

993 993 155 werewolves as well as of the ingredients to concoct healing baths. Certain priests worship and control a large number of deities, as is shown by those which comprise the personal pantheon of a *gangan* from the valley of Mirebalais: Gedeniho, Ernilie Gé Rouge; 'Ti Kita Demembré; Simbi en Deux Eaux; Bumba Trois Île; Legba; St. Jacques; Ogun Ferraille, Ogun Balandjo, Ogun Ashade; Lemba; Aizan Keleké, Aizan Wedo, Aida Wedo, Dambulla Wedo; Baron Samedi, Bosu Trois Corner; Congo Wangol, Malt' Mapou; Agau; Agwe, Agweto Woyo; Kadia-Bosu; Sobo Gran'; l'Afrique Guinée. Whatever his ability, the *hungan* can cure only diseases "sent by man" — that is, those caused by magic — and by the *loa*, since against illness sent by God he can do nothing. Gossip [521] disapprovingly whispers how in more than one instance a *hungan* took advantage of his position and the trust of his clients, falsely to represent himself as able to cure an illness "sent by God" through stating it was due to magic.

993 187 An important function of the *hungan* or *mambu* is to foretell the future, and it is as a diviner that the *vodun* priest or priestess is most often employed. No major rite would be considered by a family unless divination were resorted to, but consultation is made for a far wider range of affairs than those of a purely religious nature, and no proposed undertaking of any importance in the secular field is begun without visiting a diviner to discover whether or not the fates are propitious. When divining, the priest is usually under possession by his gods, but other methods, such as gazing into a crystal or basin of water, may also be employed. Several divining séances were visited, but no description of them need be given here, since a number of accounts, including an especially full one by Parsons, are available.[20]

993 189 Though a certain hierarchy seems to exist among the *vodun* priests in other districts of Haiti, in Mirebalais the organization of the cult is informal to an extreme degree.[21] In the [155] [187] minds of the cult members, various priests in the same region

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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are differentiated according to the types of healing in which they have had the greatest success, and the "miracles" to their credit, such as a *hungan* who had achieved a wide reputation for being able to resuscitate dead children. One *hungan* of the valley is spoken of as having powers which rank him with the greatest in the land, but now that he is old, a nephew of his is being called upon to act in his place. In a relatively short time, say his friendly clients, he will take his place even among great *hungans* elsewhere.

Under the *hungan* and *mambu* are assistants called *hunsi*, or sometimes, in the case of men, termed *adjanikon*. In some parts of Haiti, particularly in the plain of the Cul-de-Sac and the southern peninsula, there are degrees of initiation for the *hunsi*, which include the ordeal by fire that makes them *hunsi kanzo*.[28] In Mirebalais, however, the *kanzo* rite, though known by name, is neither required nor performed. The *hunsi* and *adjanikon* know the rituals in a general way, hold and wave the banners used to salute the gods, sing the songs for the *loa*, aid in bringing the possessed dancers out of their possessions, and perform such other ritual tasks as helping the officiating *hungan*. Some members of the cult group have special ability to sing large numbers of the ritual songs for any *loa* which may be called, while others perform the animal sacrifices. It is among these male assistants that the most expert drummers are found.

This, then, constitutes an outline of that system of belief included under the term *vodun*. Once more, in summary, it may be emphasized that *vodun* is neither the practice of black magic, nor the unorganized pathological hysteria it is so often represented to be. The gods are known to their worshippers, and the duties owed them are equally well understood. The reward for the performance of these duties is good health, good harvests, and the goodwill of fellow-men; the punishment for neglect is corresponding ill fortune. On this basis of belief is erected the ceremonial of worship.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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CHAPTER XII

MAGIC, GOOD AND BAD

In opening any discussion of Haitian magic, the fact must be stressed that magic, though but one of the forces active in the universe, is a system in itself. As such, it is a thing apart from the *vodun* cult, a point which must also be emphasized, for although most writers draw a perfunctory distinction between magic and *vodun*, this distinction, once stated, is too often promptly lost sight of.[1] At the same time, the differences between the worship of the *loa* and the practice of magic must not be so juxtaposed as to name the second as the antibody of the first. For, though some of the *loa* can work harm, and some of them, indeed, are primary forces behind the working of evil rather than beneficial magic, the good and bad they do is general in nature. Magic, on the other hand, whether good or bad, always operates in very specific instances: to cause a given woman to love a given man, or to make a certain field of a certain enemy yield poorly.

Yet these distinctions, when drawn, are found in practice to be neither as sharp nor as consistent as the foregoing statements might imply, especially since the system of magic is empowered and validated by many of the *loa*, as well as being closely affiliated with the cult of the dead. The phenomenon dealt with here, and its not illogical contradictions, arise, however, from the fact that the realistic African world view has by

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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no means given way to that separation of the categories of good and evil that governs much of European thinking. A *loa* that helps a man when friendly toward him may, if slighted or vexed, set about to do him harm, or, at best, merely remain passive when danger is to be averted. For the *loa,* like human beings, are creatures of mood and may take umbrage at some act which had created no displeasure before. Similarly, not all uses of magic are necessarily reprehensible, something at once evident when it is pointed out that much of Haitian folk-medicine derives its psychic force from its magical basis. In short, Haitian belief, of which magic forms a part, does not allow a world view drawn only in blacks and whites. All tones of gray are found, and these merge one into another almost imperceptibly, as the fortunes of a man wax and wane during his lifetime.

That the Haitian envisages his universe in terms other than those of warring and changeless powers of good and evil should not be taken for a moment to mean that he fails to draw a clear distinction between the benevolent and malevolent forces behind the magic employed in specific instances. This realization is reflected in the terminology he gives the charms that are the outer symbols of these supernatural powers, the *garde, arrêt,* and *drogue* protecting him against harm, the *wanga* being the carrier of dark magic, and the antisocial agent. The actuating forces behind these charms come from all important members of all groups of *loa,* to say nothing of God and the saints of the Church; but the charm itself is a thing which results from the control of these by man himself: "*Wanga, moun qui fait ça* — It is men who make *wangas.*"

One other point may here be clarified, since it has made for confusion: namely, the fact that when the Haitian employs the term *magie* he does not mean what the European signifies when using the word "magic." To the student, the vast body of Haitian magico-medical practices, prescribed and administered by both those who know how to manipulate the super-

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natural and those whose remedies are based principally on an 789 ●
inherited knowledge of the curative powers of herbs and roots, are all to be gathered under the rubric of magic. For the native, however, a difference of the first order exists between a *traitement* to heal an illness, and magic employed to gain an end, protect from harm, or injure another, even though the same gods be called upon to validate the healing remedies employed to effect cures as are used to actuate a *garde* or a *wanga*.

The belief in magic figures importantly even in the early 175
writings on Haiti. Thus St. Mery says: 789

> "The Negroes believe in magic and that the power of their fetiches has followed them across the sea. . . . Little rude figures of wood or stone, representing men or animals, are for them things of supernatural power, and they call them *garde-corps*. There are a great number of Negroes who acquire absolute power over the others by this means. . . ."[2]

It is reported that in the early days the black and mulatto concubines of white Haitians often had recourse to reputedly potent charms to insure their attraction for these men and to guard themselves against their white mistresses. One Hyacinthe, a leader in the uprising of 1792, "believed that an ox-tail which he always carried in his hand had the power of preserving him from bullets; he was regarded as invulnerable."[3] And numerous citations could be given to show not only that since that day has the use of charms persisted, but that comment on this use has come to be outstanding in all descriptions of Haitian life.

To understand the various types of practitioners of magic, 789
it is necessary to refer again to the concept that any force habitually actuating evil magic may be directed toward less malevolent ends, while any benevolent supernatural power may exert itself to bring harm. Hence those who make *arrêts* to ward off evil from their clients, or *gardes* to protect them

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from its ill effects after the evil has been exorcised, must also know the forces they are combating if they are to achieve any measure of success. By the same token, practitioners of black magic must know what steps may be taken to counteract their *wangas* so that, if necessary, they can in turn call forth supernatural emissaries to strengthen the evil impulses originally set in motion. In this sense, therefore, the *hungan*, the *gangan*, the *bocor*, and the *caplata* employ essentially the same techniques and operate with the same forces, the difference between them being one of degree rather than of kind. "*Hungan, c'est magazin. Gaigné un pile marchandise* — The *hungan* is like a shop. He has a lot of merchandise," says the Haitian, quoting a well-known proverb as he makes the point.

In the main, it can be said that though the *hungan* and the *gangan* practice magic, their main preoccupation is with the *loa* — the maladies they send to affect a man and his possessions — while the *bocor* is concerned almost exclusively with setting in motion the agents that actuate black magic, and the *caplata* dabbles in anything that is wanted. One important means whereby the sorcerer obtains his powers is the evil *loa*, but there is this essential difference between them: the gods of the *hungan* are family gods who come to him through the natural course of inheritance, endowing him with the *connaissance* that gives him his control over the supernatural world, while the *bocor* buys his gods. And when a god is bought, it is always acquired so as to enhance the position of its owner at all costs, despite the knowledge that the power thus purchased is dearly bought, bringing its own eventual punishment. Sometimes an ambitious *hungan* adds to his familial *loa* other "purchased" gods, but this is resented by the deities who have given him his powers, so that in time these benevolent powers take all means to humble and crush him. Furthermore, gods acquired in this way pass on to unwilling members of their owner's family and, after a generation or two of mischief-making, must be "restrained" or "banished." A number of

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points — or oblique designations — makes clear the distinction between the two, for the *bocor* invariably and certain *hungans* on occasion are called *nèg' mazi maza,* "Negro who wears his back to the front," or, again, those who "serve with both hands." Though by no means shunning the services of the practitioner, the Haitians of Mirebalais nevertheless look upon the working of magic with a cynicism that is reflected in the gossip about happenings that befall all who practice it, in any form, and particularly those who work evil magic. It is said: "The *hungan* often dies an evil death, and the *bocor* who makes *wanga* almost always. These people kill each other by magic"; or one hears of a woman who one day went to the cemetery to obtain materials needed for her unsavory work and was struck and killed by the thunderbolts which are believed to smite sorcerers.

To keep his reputation, a practitioner of magic, good or evil, must make continual demonstration of his powers. For example, in prescribing a magical cure, it is incumbent upon the *hungan* or *mambu* to foresee all eventualities, even where the directions are not followed, a prescription which is regarded as a strong check on the charlatan and is the reason why a practitioner is prudent in refusing to accept a case beyond his power to aid, since persistent failure to achieve cures will lose a *hungan* his reputation and his practice. Naturally, certain practitioners do not fail on occasion to turn the anxiety of a family over a serious illness to their own account, but inasmuch as the cures made by a man are the most adequate proof of his power, the feeling is that his clients have an unquestioned safeguard against chicanery. This point of view, it may be noted, is of undoubted importance in perpetuating a living faith in magic.

An example of how rapidly a practitioner of magic can lose prestige when some mishap occurs to him was encountered when an important *gangan* of the valley was brought into court charged with the theft of a pig which he claimed was

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to do. The *loa* would come, but they wouldn't give him the same *connaissance*."

One of the most important of the forces behind all magic is the *Malt' Carrefour*, the Master of the Crossroads. The possible identity of this *loa* with Legba, who guards the entrance to houses and is also thought of as a guardian of the highways, was a question that could not be satisfactorily resolved, though it seems most likely that the two are quite distinct, since Legba is but rarely called upon when magic is being performed. One Haitian versed in magic stated:

> "The *Malt' Carrefour* is like the president. Legba is like a minister. God sent the *Malt' Carrefour*. He commands Baron Samedi. Before going to the cemetery to perform [black] magic you must pass the crossroads, and therefore he is able to restrain you if he is not properly worshipped. He commands Damballa. He commands the Rada and Pétro gods. He commands all the saints because all of these must pass the crossroads. Therefore when one has a *garde carrefour*, a person will die a death sent by God [that is, a natural death] and not one caused by *magie* or the *mystères*."

The *Malt' Carrefour* must be "paid" each year on All Saints' Day, when seven cents in copper coins are given and a white chicken is killed, cooked, and placed in a wooden container with rice, biscuits, cassava, potatoes, bananas, and other kinds of food, both cooked and uncooked, to be deposited at a crossroad with the statement: "Here is food; thank you for having cared for me. If evil *loa* wish to harm me, *Malt' Carrefour*, restrain them." As this is said, a candle is lighted and an invocation pronounced:

> *"Au nom de Malt' Carrefou'; au nom de Malt' Grand Bois; au nom de Baron Cimitière! Jodia, premier la*

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Toussaint, voici un couvert moin porté ba ou. Ou gardé vot' enfant, comme vot' père et vot' mère dans la maison. —In the name of the Master of the Crossroads; in the name of the Master of the Great Forest; in the name of Baron Cemetery! Today, the first of All Saints' Day, here are offerings I bring you. Guard your child as your father and your mother in the house."

[788] *Clairin* is thrown three times at each fork of the crossroads, and some is also sprinkled in the center and at each corner of the container of food. Three bits of earth are finally lifted from the corners of the crossroads and taken to the home of the worshipper. Here they are put in a plate with *clairin*, which is first lighted and then extinguished, so that the members of the family can anoint themselves with it and receive strength with which to face the new year.

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Good magic has many expressions. Thus there is said to be secret knowledge, transmitted in certain families from generation to generation, of how to control the rains. Those who have control of magic of this sort are to be recognized when they are seen to be completely dry while walking in a downpour. Generally such powers are used to insure a rainless day for a *combite* or *service*, or to cause rain to fall the day after a *combite* has made the field ready for hoeing, or when the proper time for planting is at hand. Eventually, it is said, in response to a temptation too great to be resisted, the possessor of such magic will put it to other, evil ends. Then sooner or later the punishment for this abuse of his knowledge is visited upon him, so that in the end he meets his death by being struck by the avenging lightning.

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The most powerful type of protective magic is known as a *drogue*. One of the most potent of these — of the type referred to by Léger in commenting on the ox-tail carried by Hyacinthe, or such a one as tradition holds Christophe possessed, which gave him immunity from all but silver bullets — makes

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it possible for the owner to go to war without being harmed. 789
Even were the possessor of such a *drogue* to be struck by a bullet, the wound would be a minor one; while the thrust of a machete or saber would leave him unscathed, poison placed in drink or food would be impotent, and a trap set against the warrior would be ineffective. Some *drogues*, it is held, allow the owner to disappear when trapped by enemies. For such an [784]
important *drogue* a special day, designated by its maker, is [834]
set aside for the observance of certain taboos, the most important being the requirement of sexual abstinence on that day.[4] Some men possess as many as seven of these *drogues*, in which case one day every seventh week is reserved for each. Said a man who had taken part in the rebellion of 1918–20 against the Marine occupation: "I have a small, small *drogue*. I had it in the Caco fighting. I have need of a big one." When it was observed that there is no more fighting in Haiti, the reply came promptly: "A man must be prepared. Nobody knows what will come."

The grandfather of this man was said by him to have owned 789
a *drogue* which came from Guinée. He knew how to resuscitate those who had met their death from unnatural — magical — causes; he had only to come to the *barrière* before the house where the body lay, call the name of the victim, and the dead would rise. He was once attacked when he was returning home with a purse filled with money he had won at cards, and his assailants beat him to death and threw him into a well. The next morning, when he was found, he revived in a few moments and asked to be buried beside the well. The following day one of the men who had assaulted him died; the next day another died, and so for five days, until all of them were dead.

Love-charms form an important category of good magic, as 832
also charms to aid in selling in the markets or in keeping a job or to hold the affection of a spouse. Old men are believed 789
to have important magical powers for good, and one such 888

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789 [888] person of great experience was pointed out who was believed able to stop a runaway horse without putting a finger on him. One widely spread type of charm is an *arrêt* against the *mal jok*, or evil eye. Mention has been made of protective charms when the measures taken to guard growing crops were discussed, and also in connection with safeguarding the well-being of infants. The power in this latter type of *garde* often is made to reside in a seed on a string or chain, or a cross of beads sewed on cloth, to represent the four corners of the earth.

789 793 Because charms are the outer symbols of magic, detailed examples of their making will give insight into the nature of charms in general. The first of these which may be described [829] was a *garde*, made by a *mambu*, to relieve a pregnant woman [787] whose milk had begun to flow before the birth of her child [954] — a sign that an evil spirit had been sent her by an enemy, and that her delivery would therefore be fraught with danger. [787] During the séance the *mambu* was continuously possessed by her god, Ogun, whose identity was shown by her whistling. Before the *mambu* as she commenced her incantation were some *clairin*, lighted red candles, a new piece of soap, incense, sulphur, garlic, light brown shoemaker's thread, an empty bottle, a bottle filled with a green, evil-smelling lotion called *baigne de mambu*, a chick, and three iron nails. As she tied the cord in knots she muttered her spell; then, taking the empty bottle, she put in it a bit of the incense, sulphur, garlic, some soap, some *clairin*, and some *baigne de mambu*. With the knotted cord she tied a cross made of two nails to the neck of the bottle, repeating her formula before she put it down. Instructing the pregnant woman to take the bottle, she said: " Speak into it and say everything you wish."

[825] She then took the chick, opened its beak, and wrote on it with a pencil, continuing the incantation the while. With the pencil she also made marks on the thighs, the wings, the upper joints, and the leg joints before she handed it to her client

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with the words: "Tell it what you have to say. Tell it that you are passing on to it all your pain, everything." When she had finished, the *mambu* once again took the chick, holding its head as she described three crosses on the ground with its beak. She now put some of the earth in which she had made the crosses into a white dish, returning the chick to the woman and telling her to speak to it again, and this time to expectorate three times into its open beak as she finished. The *mambu*, holding the fowl in one hand, thereupon poured some of the mixture from the bottle, and some *clairin*, in the plate that contained the earth, lighting the *clairin* with her free hand and directing the patient to rub her nipples with it. Then she returned the bottle to the pregnant woman, telling her to recount her need to it once more, and then to cork it.

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The *mambu* next chewed some of the soap and rubbed it over the cork to "seal" the bottle, saying: "When you send a letter through the mail, you seal it," and instructed the pregnant woman to place the bottle in her house and see to it that it was not uncorked, for in it was contained her life and the life of her child. "Open it before delivery and pass its contents over your abdomen." A cord was put about the waist of the woman and tied tightly, not to be untied until the growing child in her womb should cause it to break of itself. While the *garde* was being made the *mambu* sang this song:

[539] [539]

M' pas 'ti bête,	I am not a little animal,
M' pas 'ti cochon,	I am not a little pig,
Pou' on cové,	That one can confine me,
Pou' on marré moin.	That one can tie me up.
Ça qui fait bien,	He who does good,
Cé bien li wé;	Good he will see;
Ça qui fait mal,	He who does evil,
Cé mal li wé.	Evil he will see.
Côté marré corde moin,	Where I tie my cord,
Yo passa la qui li.	They are stronger than it [the evil?].

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789 825 The chick was released in the open countryside. Were a person to capture and eat it, the evil that had been transferred to the fowl would come to him. Many such fowl live wild in the woods, and no one touches them.

789 There was no hesitation in permitting spectators to witness the making of this charm; rather it was held to be good business to allow anything pertaining to a cure to become widely known. Had the transaction involved evil magic, great secrecy would have been exacted of the principals, and no others would have been present. The operation of sympathetic magic in this case — the fact that the ingredients were either cleansing or evil-smelling, for example, indicates the concept behind the charm. Similarly, the assertion that the [825] chick which figured so prominently in the rite would carry away the *wanga* sent against the pregnant woman shows how the forces of "white" magic are manipulated to combat "black."

Another *garde* had for its purpose the protection of its owner against evil, and, being a *garde Mait' Carrefour*, was especially designed to enable him to go about unharmed at night. Though carefully made, it was not actuated by its power at the end of the séance, nor were extraordinary demands made of it and reciprocal promises of rewards for gratifying them, since it was then explained that it was desired as an example rather than an actively potent charm which, because of the difficulties of properly serving it away from Haiti, might cause its possessor harm. To make this charm the following ingredients were furnished:

One half-ell of red cotton	Roasted maize
A bottle of *kola*	Seven "red" copper sous
Clairin	A candle
Cakes	A spool of black thread
Cassava bread	Some ashes

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In addition, the maker of the charm brought a candle with him, and, more importantly, earth from the four corners of a crossroad. 789

All shutters and doors of the house where the ritual was performed were closed and barred so that no passer-by might report the performance to the authorities, inasmuch as the practice of magic in any form is severely punished and the house was in the town itself. This constituted a departure from the usual practice, for in ordinary cases the rite would have been carried out at a crossroad in the countryside, where chances of detection would be slight.

The maker of the charm began by kneading the earth he had taken from a crossroad into the form of a small pear, about the size of a child's fist. Then taking seven plus seven measures of thread, he first burned the ends and then passed the resulting bundle of fourteen strands repeatedly over one of the native beeswax candles, twisting and doubling it so that it made a length of substantial cord. When completed, he put it to one side and made another like it, saying as he did so: [539]

Au nom de St. Garde,	In the name of St. Garde,
Aujourd'hui, Lundi, nous cordé votre garde.	Today, Monday, we twine your *garde.*
Au nom de Mait' Carrefu',	In the name of the Master of the Crossroads,
Au nom de prière garde,	In the name of the prayer of charms,
Au nom Marie Shango,	In the name of Marie Shango,
Au nom de Gran' Malolu,	In the name of Gran' Malolu,
Qui marche accompagné Mait' Calfu'.	Who goes together with the Master of the Crossroads.

The purpose of this invocation was to summon both the Master of the Crossroads and his wife, Malolu, and the name of [176]

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the *loa* was pronounced as the cord was actually finished. *Clairin* was then poured in three places on the threshold and drunk by all present.

Seated on a mat, the dealer in magic next placed the molded earth near by and put a dish of cassava bread, cake, and corn and a bottle of *kola* beside it, with the seven coppers and the red cotton, while he placed a candle on an empty white plate and lighted it. From his pocket he took a thick white candle of his own, and a razor, with which he cut it into three pieces. He then removed his shoes. After two pieces of the candle had been placed upright against the plate, the red cloth was torn in half and one portion of it, folded once, was laid on the white plate, the molded earth being set down in the center of this piece of cloth with the thread near by, as the officiant intoned:

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Au nom Dieu de Tè'	In the name of the God of the Earth,
Au nom Dieu dit Fils,	In the name of God called the Son,
Au nom Dieu du Cièl,	In the name of God of the Sky,
Au nom de Ste. Vierge,	In the name of the Holy Virgin,
Au nom de St. Louis,	In the name of St. Louis.*
Au nom de Vierge de Ca'mel,	In the name of the Virgin of Carmel,
Voici poin' garde	Here is a *point garde*
Qui pr' allé marré ce soir, Lundi.	Which I am tying this evening, Monday.

He thereupon poured *clairin* on the four corners of the cloth and on the earth, "since the soul of Malt' Carrefour is in the earth."

Taking up the red cloth with the earth in it, he tied it with

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* The patron saint of Mirebalais.

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the cord once over the center, and then at right angles so as to form a cross, crying: "*A-i bobo!*" To hold the cloth in place, he continued to pass the thread about the ball of earth again and again, though according to no special design after the first right angle had been made. As he did this, he sang:

Garde la monté.	This *garde* is fashioned.
Dié nou e-e na coffré yo-o	O God, close them-o.
Moin dit garde la monté.	I say this *garde* is fashioned.
Dié nou e-e na coffré yo-o	O God, close them.
Garde-e, na coffré yo.	*Garde-e*, close them.
Calefou', cé nou minmé,	Crossroads, it is we who are here,
Nou Pemba pa jouè.	Pemba, do not play.
Ça nou minmé.	It is we who are here.
Loa Pemba, joué na joué,	*Loa Pemba*, playing he plays,
Magie loa,	*Loa* of magic,
Magie Calfou',	Magic of the Crossroads,
Ça nou minmé.	It is we who are here.

His singing was interrupted by this invocation:

Au nom de Dieu,	In the name of God,
Au nom de Sainte Vierge,	In the name of the Holy Virgin,
Au nom de St. Louis,	In the name of St. Louis,
Au nom de Marassa,	In the name of the Twins,
Voici poin' garde pou' épargné malin esprits marché dans la nuit.	Here is a charm to foil the evil spirits who walk by night.
Au nom de Saints du Ciél,	In the name of the Saints of the Sky,
Au nom de Saints de Té',	In the name of the Saints of the Earth,

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Au nom de Saints de la Lune,	In the name of the Saints of the Moon,
Au nom de Saints des Étoiles,	In the name of the Saints of the Stars,
Au nom de Saint de Vent,	In the name of the Saint of the Wind,
Au nom de Saint de Tempête,	In the name of the Saint of the Tempest,
Voici yun garde protection pou' marché dans la nuit,	See, here is a *garde* which gives protection as one walks at night,
Pou' Malt' Calefu'.	For the Master of the Crossroads.

(533) The entwining of the *garde* ended with this song:

Zoumba-é, ai papa, ai manman,	*Zumba-é, ai* father, *ai* mother,
Calefu' barré yo,	The Crossroads bars them,
Cimitière barré yo,	The Cemetery bars them,
Moin monté garde moin,	I fashion my *garde,*
Ai manman, ai papa,	*Ai* mother, *ai* father,
Zoumba-é-é.	*Zumba-é-é.*

789 With the specially treated earth from the crossroads now safely enclosed in its red cotton, the officiant placed it in a white plate and made *verver* about it, using cinders which are termed *farine Guinée,* "the flour of Guinea," and lighted two bits of red candle. The *verver* circled the plate, and also described two long straight lines which crossed at right angles at the center of the circle, each being terminated by a candle — two large and two small. On the floor, near one of the large candles, the seven coppers were placed, and four small piles of cinders were heaped inside the circle, in the following manner:

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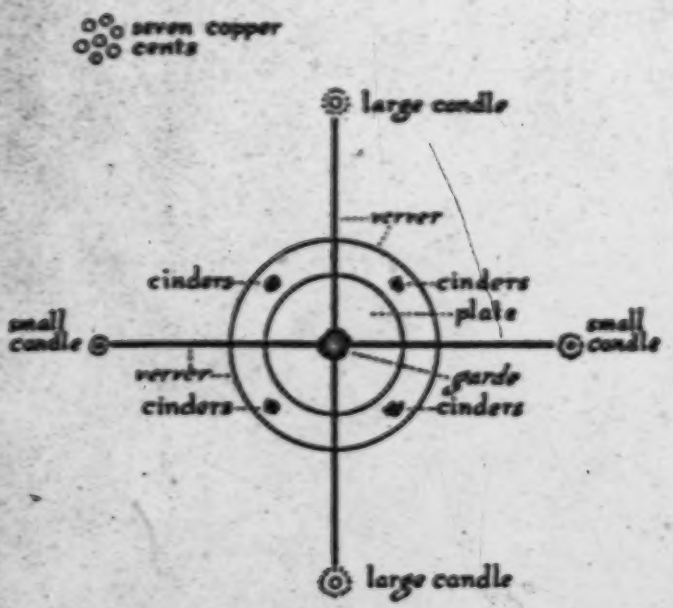

Clairin was sprayed from the mouth of the maker to sprinkle the *garde*, and then another lighted candle was passed four times around the circumference of the plate, this being repeated with the two larger candles on the floor. The food was piled in the plate, and on it the coppers and the *garde* were set, after which, as flame leaped from one wick to another, the sorcerer passed the fire from candle to candle, making circular movements with each as he did so. Taking the other half of the red cloth, he removed the small candles, and changed the large one from 8 to o o, placing the bottles where the candles had stood, while he intoned: "I serve *Maît' Carrefour*, and I take the responsibility on myself for

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789 making this *garde*. I have not obligated anyone else in any way."

789 He now poured *clairin* on the plate, lighted it, and stepped
539 five times over the fire, twice turning the *garde* about in the flame, rubbing his face, hands, and head with the burning liquid, as he pronounced the following invocation:

Au nom de Malt' Grand Bois,	In the name of the Master of the Great Forest,
Qui soldat Malt' Carrefour,	Who is a soldier of the Master of the Crossroads,
Au nom Malt' Cimitière,	In the name of Malolu, of the Cemetery,
Au nom de Malolu,	In the name of Malolu,
Au nom de Kadia-Bosu,	In the name of Kadia-Bosu,
Qui soldat Malt' Carrefour nan toute pays,	Who is the soldier of the Master of the Crossroads in all countries,
Voici un couvert qui preparé ce soir pou' 'ou.	Here is an offering prepared this evening for you.

Extinguishing the *clairin*, he relighted it and repeated what he had just done as another Haitian, a spectator, commented: "If it were not a good *garde*, he would be burned." Finally
[533] he sang the following song, which ended this part of the ceremony:

Garde la wé magie carrefou',	This *garde* sees the magic of the Crossroads,
Moin pralé sond'é point.	I am going to test a charm.
Magie cimitière,	Magic of the cemetery,
Moin pralé sond'é point.	I am going to test a charm.

789 The officiant, gathering up the food, the plate, the candles, and the remaining half of the red cloth, prepared to go to

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the crossroads, where he alone would have to conduct the brief rite that was necessary to complete the making of this *garde*. As he arrived at his destination — this portion of the description is his — the plate was put down with the *kola* beside it, and *clairin* was poured on the ground. The lighted candles were placed near by, and with arms outstretched, he spoke the following formula:

Au nom de Malt' Carrefour,	In the name of the Master of the Crossroads,
Voici un couvert sec deposé jodi-a, Lundi.	Here is an offering placed today, Monday.
Au nom de Malt' Gran' Bru,	In the name of the Master of the Great Forest,
Ce couvert est pou' vous.	This offering is for you.
Malt' Carrefou', pour garde moin, sorti pou' 'ou.	Master of the Crossroads, for [the sake of] my charm, which comes from you.
Moin mandé pou' gardé	I ask that you protect me
Nan tout ces moin capab' trouvé moin	In all I may encounter
Pou' bien, nan pou' mal.	Of good, and of evil.

Before leaving the crossroads, the maker of the *garde* touched the plate and bottles three times to earth, calling the names of Master of the Crossroads, Master of the Great Forest, and Master of the Cemetery.

While the nature and forms of good magic that have been thus far discussed show a characteristic African pattern, the presence of the factor of medieval European magic is evident, though this is not as sharply identifiable here as in the functioning of the less pleasant aspects of these supernatural powers. That this merging of two traditions is fundamental in all Haitian magical practice must nevertheless be patent to all who have had experience with it, unless in their intentness on

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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789 177 esoteric African survivals they have been blinded to the European elements.[8] It was, as a matter of fact, well-nigh impossible to discuss magic, whether good or evil, with a native for any length of time without hearing the names of three pamphlets published in Paris, *Le Grand Albert*, *Le Petit Albert*, and *La Poule Noire*. So portentous do the folk of Mirebalais hold the information contained in these works — though actually, when read, their contents are found to include nothing more dangerous than names of the proper roots and herbs with which to concoct a love-potion, or, far more frequently, magic for preventing wine from turning to vinegar, or for enabling one to gentle a wild colt — that their importation into Haiti is said to be prohibited by law, a statement which was not checked except in so far as inquiries for the pamphlets in Port-au-Prince bookstores proved in vain. The contents of these works on magic differ but little from those of a document written in Créole, said by Seabrook, who reprinted it, to have come from the files of the Marine Corps, where it was deposited after having been taken during the rebellion of 1918–20 from the body of a fallen Caco chief known to have been a *bocor*.[9] The source of inspiration of a large number of these formulas and of many of their objectives is obviously in such European pamphlets.[10]

789 954 Turning now from the more passive, protective, and socially desirable forms of magic, a similar analysis may be made of its aggressive, destructive, and antisocial manifestations. That magic of this latter sort is much feared is a truism; yet that the fear of it goes as far or is as constant as most accounts of its workings state may be marked as gross exaggeration. For just as the practitioner of good magic knows how to bring about evil, so for every force that harms there is a cure, and for every *wanga* there is a *garde*.

954 789 177 The malignant powers in the world of the Haitian are, like other phases of his life, of both European and African derivation. From Europe he has taken the *démon* and the associated

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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term *loup-garou*, or werewolf. From Africa has come the concept of the *baka*, though this he has merged with that of the *démon*, and all operate through the power of Lucifer and the Devil, conceived as two separate beings. In addition, as will be seen, the cult of the dead also contributes to this system, since the *loa* who rule the cemeteries are indispensable for the practice of magic, as it bears especially on the concept of *zombi*, concerning which so much has been made in recent years.

The evil *loups-garous* are women whose real nature is revealed by their red eyes, though some hold that they have a black spot in the corner of the eye. Another word less frequently heard to designate the *loup-garou* is the Dahomean term *azeto*, employed in Africa for witches and vampires, a concept which in Haiti has become merged with that of the werewolf.[8] The *loup-garou*, with her male counterpart, the *démon*, is empowered by the *bocor*. As might be expected, she is greatly feared, and should an old woman suspected of being one of them come to a house, someone will see to it that in an adjoining room two brooms are crossed as the woman's name is pronounced three times, so that if she is actually a *loup-garou*, she cannot escape.[9] Children in particular carry counter-charms both against these women and against demons; one such, for a woman with child, has been mentioned in an earlier chapter,[10] and the making of another *garde* of this type has just been described. With a charm of this kind "you can leave at midnight for Port-au-Prince [instead of waiting for dawn] and fear nothing. You may meet a band of horned demons carrying candles in their hands, but they will stand aside and let you pass."

In Mirebalais, *baka* are usually mentioned when these evil beings are discussed, particularly since it is in connection with them that the term *engagement* is most often heard. An *engagement*, which is more feared than a *wanga*, the word usually encountered in the literature when evil magic is under discussion, designates a pledge made by a person, usually to

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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754 776 575 Novo, Dahomey. The members are, of course, not known, but there is always gossip, and occasionally a man, when quarreling, says: "Take care! You don't know who I am. . . ."

776 *Baka, loups-garous,* and *démons* are not the only supernatural beings that a person may encounter from time to time. Though not all are creatures of magic, and not all are evil, all of them are treated with due caution. Such are the "river [193] people" — children with six fingers, who are believed to belong to the Mait' Source, the Master of the Stream, and are destined to become *hungans* — this being an example of the good that may come from such supernatural association — or persons with light hair. Those with light hair are more dangerous, however, since occasionally such folk are taken for a time under the water, the men by female spirits and the women by males. One person in Mirebalais told of a distant cousin who disappeared as she went to the river to draw water. She was mourned as dead, but returned after a year and was welcomed home. As she began to recount her adventures, however, she was struck dumb, and never recovered her speech. Another spoke of his experience as a boy with such a water-spirit, a *Maîtresse d'Eaux.* With a companion, he was walking along the bank of the Tombe River, when a woman was seen sitting on a rock combing her long light-colored hair. The other lad was invited to help her and went nearer, step by step, until, as he almost touched the comb, he turned and ran. Some time later he died.

754 764 775 Another category of spirits, already referred to in discussing the cult of the dead, are *zombi.* To understand their nature, however, the use of magic to bring about death or its simulacre, and the measures taken to guard against this, must be first considered. In the preceding chapter it was observed how *hoholi* seeds are placed in the coffin of one suspected of an "unnatural" death to prevent the sorcerer from reaping the [199] fruits of his deed. A cross of pine-wood, made by the *hungan* and empowered by him to repel evil, is frequently also put

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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with it, or the body is made to lie face downwards in the coffin, since the discomfort of this position causes the spirit of the dead to avenge itself on the sorcerer who caused the death. When a man has been killed by magic, his surviving relatives go to a *hungan* or a *bocor* to discover the culprit. The names of those suspected of the deed are called. Before the diviner stands a pottery jar filled with magically treated water. When the unwilling image of the guilty one finally appears, the *hungan* plunges his knife into it, and as the water turns red, those watching know that when the specified number of days have passed, the guilty one will be dead.[12] Should a suspect be innocent, the image of the Virgin Mary or of St. John is sometimes seen when he is called; but if one known to be guilty does not appear, it is proof that his magic is stronger than that used to call him. Recourse is then had to a powerful *wanga*, or poison, or to the spirit of someone dead, an *âme abandonée* who has led a life of evil and himself been a murderer. "They would certainly not send the spirit of the one just killed. He is too green" — to bring death to the killer. If none of these measures prevail, no further acts of revenge are attempted against the suspect, the feeling being that he has supplied himself with too powerful magic to allow effective revenge to be taken.

On occasion, an apparent death is felt not to be a real death, but rather the simulacre of death brought about by the machination of a sorcerer. The corpse is thereupon given poison or stabbed with a dagger, to make certain that an apparent death becomes an actual one, but the person who stabs the body must stand behind it in order that the corpse as slave of the sorcerer may not reveal who had stabbed him when summoned, and thus make of the one who had robbed him of his prey a substitute victim. If poison has not been administered to the corpse, or if the body was not stabbed, after the funeral the sorcerer recovers the body, which, deprived of its soul, works for him as a *zombi*, only returning to the grave when the time decreed by God for his natural death is reached, or if

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the *loa*. In one instance a man wore a red shirt with black crosses appliquéd on it; dresses of this type worn by women or children are made of cotton cloth, pieced together patchwork-quilt fashion, of either three, seven, seventeen, or twenty-one different colors or patterns, with reds, blues, and white predominating. These garments are worn for a specified time, also named by the *loa*. The term *pénitence* has been taken from Church terminology, and the motivating sanction derives equally from African and Christian concepts;[4] for example, the wearing of the garment is a compliment to the African deities represented by the colors, while the various rules about abstinence during its term of wearing is the European pattern of "penitence."

The elaborate cicatrizations, or raised designs made by scarifying the body, which marked the slaves newly arrived from Africa have quite disappeared, but a few scars can be discerned on the body or arms of a man by a practiced eye. These represent an African carry-over in the form of a *garde* applied by the injection of some magically endowed substance into a cut which thereafter gives what may be thought of as a kind of spiritual inoculation. African fashions of hair-tying have been retained by the women almost unchanged, and, as in Africa, hair-braiding is a highly developed art, so that the styles in which hair can be braided seem innumerable. This is particularly true of dressing the hair of small girls, whose heads are decorated with braids going the length of the skull, or dividing the scalp into small squares, each with its tuft of hair, or by a part in the middle with lines going at right angles from it across the head. These styles of braiding are not named as in other parts of the New World and in Africa, but the tradition of intricate braiding has lost none of its vigor.

The implements of the Haitian are both of European and African derivation. The ubiquitous machete, a saber-like tool employed in all manner of ways, from chopping down trees

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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cultures, is used not only to point morals for the young but as an expression of the characteristically oblique forms of Negro expression in a quarrel, or in sounding a warning, or in commenting acidly on some social situation. A famous proverb, quoted from the earliest days, is today heard often in Mirebalais: "*Zafai' mouton pas zafai' cabrit*—The affairs of the sheep are not the affairs of the goat"—an injunction against gossip. When a person boasts that no one can harm him, the reply may come: "It is on a narrow path that one has to deal with a difficult horse." Should a man dismiss an experience as of but little consequence to him, he may hear the comment: "Often one pays an ox for a goat." When one person does harm to another, his victim may warn him with the phrase: "Behind the mountains are other mountains." If a man whose fortunes are flourishing attempts to console another who has suffered misfortune, or a rich man jibes at a poor one, the retort may be: "The rock under the water doesn't know how the rock in the sun suffers." To such an extent do proverbs comment on all aspects of life that almost no extended conversation occurs without them. Some of these are of European origin, but both numerically and in their use their character is preponderantly African, as is shown by their specific correspondence to proverbs used today in the regions from which the Negroes of Haiti were derived.[9]

In the practice of magic, and more especially of black magic, it has been noted that African and European traditions have combined into an integrated cultural unit. The outward expression of magic in the charm or "fetish" as an aspect of African life is so obvious that it has been commented on by all observers. In Haiti, though the charms are not prominently displayed and personal charms especially are worn beneath the clothing, this concept of their importance in coping with life has been retained. Yet, as has been seen, Haitian magic is not African alone. For while the forces behind protective magic are primarily the *loa*, and those behind black magic are

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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789 754 177 178 the powers that control the souls of the dead and those creatures of evil whose powers come from Satan — all this being African enough, in the sense that evil magic exists in Africa as elsewhere — the point, which bears repetition, is that the primary sanctions for evil magic have been reinforced by the books of magic handed down from medieval Europe.

789 177 178 In this system, however, not only do European books of magic figure, but the Church also has its place. "The things of the Church are always affairs of magic," remarked one Haitian, meaning that they are best adapted to this purpose and are used when the opportunity is had. It is for this reason that great care is taken to keep all sacred objects in churches from the hands of unauthorized persons. To have something that has come from a church, such as a bit of a priest's robe or a few splinters from the statue of a saint, enlists the power of these on behalf of any objective that the maker of magic has in view, and invests any *garde* made with these with the power of God Himself. Thus the twofold meaning of the proverb: [539] "*Vrai maré corde, vrai wanga, c'est l'Eglise* — The real tying of the cord, the true *wanga*, is the Church," or, similarly: "*Vrai hungan c'est l'Église* — The true *hungan* is the [754] Church." However, whether it be through such African-like practices as the use of colored cloth, or caolin, or the tying of knots, or whether objects filched from the sanctuary of the church be employed, evil magic, derived alike from African and European sources, continues as a potent force of Haitian peasant life. For perhaps in magic more than in any other aspect of his culture has the peasant achieved a synthesis of the two currents that have contributed to his civilization. He has taken from both, and inasmuch as both adhere to a more general pattern which marks all the Old World, neither tradition has had to give way to the other.

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CHAPTER XI

[1] Compare Parsons (I), 173–4, where the cult of twins is discussed and some of its rites described.

[2] Price-Mars (I), 35, mentions this as a power believed to be held by twins.

[3] The phrase "cult of the dead" as employed here must be sharply differentiated from its misuse by Seabrook (82 ff.).

[4] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 34.

[5] Price-Mars (I), 34, speaks of the custom of always burying charms with the dead.

[6] Wakes have been described by Seabrook, 89–91, and others, but in such a manner that it is difficult to dissect out the reality of what was witnessed from the imaginative elements.

[7] Cf. Wirkus, 221–3. The custom of giving the dead food at the grave, which he describes, is not followed when burial occurs in the Mirebalais town cemetery, nor, seemingly, elsewhere in the valley.

[8] See the description of a commemorative rite for the dead in Price-Mars (I) 148–50.

[9] This is a rule followed in West African practice.

CHAPTER XII

[1] An interesting attempt to account for this is found in St. John, 230–1, where he speaks of the "two Vaudoux sects," one good and one evil.

[2] St. Mery, i, 36. The term *garde* is almost entirely absent in later writings, the more sensational *wanga* (*ouanga*) being preferred.

[3] Léger, 55, note 34.

[4] Cf. Dorsainvil (I), 171.

[5] No better summary of this could be had than that in Parsons (I), 179, written after a single séance with a *gangan*.

[6] Pp. 324–31.

[7] Mr. J. C. Trevor informs me that during a recent field-trip to the Virgin Islands he discovered books of magic in common use, obtained from a Chicago dealer.

[8] It is not without interest to note that in the case reported in a Port-au-Prince newspaper and reproduced in facsimile by Seabrook, 334, concerning a woman from the commune of Mirebalais accused of sorcery, the name of the woman was *Azéman*.

[9] Cf. Parsons (II), 596.

[10] See above, pp. 94–5.

[11] The closest correspondence

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[Information on the removal of the loa or maît'tête from the head of the deceased will be found in category 764.]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Vodoun is clearly more than ritual of the cult temple. It is an integrated system of concepts concerning human behavior, the relation of mankind to those who have lived before, and to the natural and supernatural forces of the universe. It relates the living to the dead and to those not yet born. It "explains" unpredictable events by showing them to be consistent with established principles. In short, it is a true religion which attempts to tie the unknown to the known and thus create order where chaos existed before. 771

As in Dahomey, it is not a system imposed from above but one which pushes out from below. It is bred and nurtured in the family, in the towns, and in the fields. It is common law, with deep roots in an unbroken and continuous past. The priests of Vodoun do not control it and direct its course. They, like the least fortunate peasant, simply move about within it and make use of its resources. They are its servants and its interpreters. In their cult centers, the principles of Vodoun are brought into sharp focus and dramatized. Vodoun is democratic in concept. Any man or woman may have direct contact with the deities or dead ancestors without the intervention of the cult priest. There is no place or situation beyond the influence of the loa or beyond the limits of Vodoun. At every crossroads is the spirit of the crossroads guardian, Legba, and on every long trail is the spirit of the Master of the Highway. 771 793 794 776

The cult priest nevertheless plays a significant and essential role. He translates beliefs that otherwise might tend to become amorphous into formalized action. He is a teacher, a repository of cult learning, and a vital catalyst. He gives form to abstraction, and practical meaning to symbols. He is the intellectualizing agency of a tremendous emotional force. Through his knowledge of the substance and forms of Vodoun, his experience in dealing with the loa, and in some instances his capacity to set magical forces into action, the cult priest is a dynamic power within his community. 793 182

Though the making of *pouins* and *magie* (ritual magic) and *ouangas* (aggressive magic directed against individuals) is within the realm of the cult priest's activities, these things are part of Vodoun only in a subsidiary sense. Magic lurks on the periphery of Vodoun. It has little or no place in the placating of the deities or the dead. It concerns the relationship of the living with each other and with *lou-garos* (*loups-garous*) and *baka* (demons). Although cult rituals include various pouin and magie ceremonies, the cult priest draws upon magic as he draws upon other mystic arts and fields of learning—leaf doctoring, divination, Catholic ritual, and Masonic symbolism. He attempts to bring together all thinking that widens the scope of Vodoun, in order to strengthen his hand to deal with 793 789 754 771

789 171 793 954 all aspects of the natural and supernatural. But the reputable cult priest does not dabble in "black" magic—the kind that maims or destroys human beings. One who does so is said to "work with two hands": one for the loa and one for evil. (The expression *servi dé main*—"serving with two hands"—is also applied to a cult chief who deals with deities of more than one "nation.") Many a cult priest in making his ritual flour drawings on the earth holds his left hand behind his back and draws with his right, giving testimony that he "works with one hand" only.

793 794 [346] Each cult priest maintains his own cult temple, or *hounfor*. There are no cult officials above him, as there is no formal religious organization beyond the hounfor itself. Within his own special community he is therefore the chief religious functionary, the apex of an intratemple social organization. Under the cult priest, ordinarily, there are two grades of assistants, and below them two classes of servitors.

793 787 171 791 The cult priest is usually referred to as a *houngan*, a Fon (Dahomean) title signifying "spirit chief." Sometimes he is called *gangan* (a Bantu word meaning "conjuror" or "doctor")[2] or *capla*. He also is known by the title *bocó* or *bocor*, which seems to be derived from *bocono*, the diviner or priest of the Dahomean Fa cult.[3] The bocor is, in fact, sometimes referred to as a *divineur*, and he is regarded by some Haitians as a clairvoyant and a practitioner of magic. As in Dahomey, the bocor in Haiti foretells fate through the throwing of shells or chips, much in the manner of the secular game *mayamba*. He also reads destiny with small sticks or ashes. In earlier days the cult priest was sometimes known by the Yoruba name *babalao*, a title which has been corrupted to *papaloi*. A female cult leader is known as a *mambo*. She is presumed to have, in a general way, [562] the same powers as the houngan, though in some quarters her *connaissance*, or "understanding," is not regarded so highly, and her status is believed to be somewhat lower.

794 Directly under the houngan is his chief assistant, the *laplace*, and perhaps a little below him on the ladder, the *mambo caille*. The laplace is regarded as the vice-houngan, and he assumes responsibility for running the hounfor in the absence of his chief. The mambo caille, a woman, runs the cult center in the absence of both the houngan and the laplace. One step farther down the ladder is the *houngénicon*, who acts as a sort of chief of the main body of devotees. These high-ranking assistants to the houngan are sometimes called *badjicans*, or keepers of the altar.

[171] The servitors of the cult are known as *hounsi*, or "spirit wives," a name that was given to certain categories of cult servants in Dahomey.[4] There are two main groups of hounsi: *kanzo* (those who have passed through a ritual fire test) and *bossale* (those whose loa are wild or untamed). The

[2] [Footnote appears on p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]
[3] [Gorer, Africa Dances, p. 129; Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 208 ff. Cf. p. 349, Category 116. --Analyst]
[4] [Foot note appears on p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

his "horse" may trample in glowing coals, plunge his hands in boiling oil, 776
or play with red-hot iron bars. For Ogoun Chango is a fire-eater—a deity 787
of the forge and of battle. The deity Legba is characterized as a limping old man. A "horse" possessed by Legba may cavort about on a kind of cane-crutch called a Legba stick. Each loa has his distinctive mark. As the Haitians say, "you learn about the loa by watching his horses."

In addition to having homes in Africa or below the water, most loa 776
have special residing places in Haiti, such as stones, caves, trees, waterfalls, 778
or springs. One may come across a boulder or a bamboo grove sacred to [782]
a certain loa, and food offerings are likely to be seen there. Many loa are identified with some specific variety of tree and will "inhabit" all such trees throughout the country. Loa Calbassie, for example, lives in the calabash tree, and Loa Général Brisé in the chardette tree. Offerings to [782]
these deities are set out underneath the tree or hung in its branches, and services may be held around the trunk.

Loa also live in the old Carib and Arawak celts which are found from time to time. These "loa stones," as they are called, are identified by their forms and their ability to pass certain tests. Some Haitians declare the stones must be able to "whistle," to perspire when blown upon, and to "talk." The loa stones ordinarily are passed on from one generation to another, in the hounfor and in the peasant hut alike. In this way the loa who inhabit them are inherited. Sometimes, but rarely, stones are sold; [432]
disposing of a loa stone requires an elaborate ceremony to guarantee that [782]
the seller will not be injured by the loa, who is likely to feel "wounded." In such a ceremony the loa is fed and placated and asked to go his way in peace. The loa stones are sometimes called "thunder stones," in the belief [171]
that they were hurled to earth by the deities Kebiosu, Sobo, and Chango (all of whom had similar functions among the Arada and Yoruba peoples of West Africa). The stones are cared for by their owners with the greatest reverence.

Loa are acquired by individuals in various ways. Many Haitians hold 776
that every infant is born with a *mait' tête*—a spirit who is "master of the head." In this light, no individual is without a loa, although the deity may never manifest interest in the individual by an act of possession. A man may acquire a loa in the course of his life, although in that event the original mait' tête must be retired from his head. The "inherited" loa are usually not the personal deities but the special protectors of the household or the hounfor and are known as "loa of the house" or "family loa."

Should a man acquire a new loa to replace the old as his mait' tête, he 776
must undergo a ceremony known as *lavé tête*—the "washing of the head." 789
The old loa is retired and sent away, leaving the field clear for the new

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

one. Sometimes a loa who is making life too hard for a devotee will be retired without a replacement. The "washing of the head" must be accompanied by ritual safeguards, and all possible circumstances must be taken into account by the officiating cult priest. There are many stories of people who became mentally deranged as a result of the removal of their loa from their heads.

The mait' tête must also be removed from the head of a person who dies. Should this not be done, the spirit of the deceased will go to reside "below the water" and may cause trouble for the family. This loa is usually transferred to a special jar as a temporary resting place, and later perhaps into the head of another member of the family.

Though the loa is a powerful ruling force in the life of the individual, the human "horse" has controls over his deity too. He may reproach or admonish his loa for bad behavior or for failing to protect him. He may expose the loa's irresponsibility in public through the use of songs in religious rites. And though the loa is frequently encouraged to "enter," steps may be taken to restrain him from possession. This is called *marré loa* —"tying the loa." A woman may "tie" her loa by fixing a hairpin in her hair in a special way. A man may do it by placing his hands in cold water.[2]

Nevertheless, the loa are always lurking in the background. They are a constant and dramatic element in the religious life of the people. They may sometimes be controlled by the houngan, but they are an authority stronger than the priesthood. They give advice, courage, consolation, and status to their followers. They add much to an otherwise hard and ungenerous environment and evoke remembrances of Africa from which the Haitians' ancestors were uprooted. They can also cause concern and anxiety; for the loa are not always benevolent, and they are frequently unpredictable.

Many of the loa are ancient deities, sib-founders and ancestors who loom out of a misty, half-forgotten past. Nananbouclou, Legba, and Ayida Wèdo have been known for many lifetimes in Dahomey. Chango, Ogoun, and Loko were old spirits in Nigeria before the first slave ships sailed from Africa to the New World. Their names and many others in present-day Haiti come from an ancient lore. They recall places, tribes, and old kingdoms from Senegal in northwestern Africa to the heart of the Congo. They are a bond which holds the people of Haiti to Africa. In the mountains people sometimes say, "Haiti is the child of Dahomey," or "Haiti is the child of Guinée." The gods divide their time between their Haitian and their African children.

Yet in some respects the Haitians' concept of their loa is no longer purely African. The African religious patterns have been infiltrated by the lore

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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5. Services for the Loa and the Family Ancestors

The Ordeal by Fire: Kanzo

To advance beyond the lowest status in the hounfor, the hounsi must undergo the test of fire. This ritual is known as *kanzo,* meaning "to tie fire." In the drama of the hounfor there are many tests and ordeals. When certain loa enter, the mounted persons will eat broken glass. Other loa will cause their "horses" to rub hot pepper in their eyes. Still others will compel possessed persons to cut themselves with machetes. But these are bravado actions of the deities who have entered into the bodies of the servitors. The kanzo test is a formalized and premeditated ritual, in which it is demonstrated that the power of the cult—and the spirit of the individual—is superior to fire. Once having passed through this rite, the ordinary hounsi becomes a *hounsi kanzo.* 794 789 796 787

The kanzo ceremony—or, as it is known in some parts of Haiti, the *brulé zin* (the boiling pot)—is performed in diverse ways according to the tradition of the particular hounfor. But common to all is the dipping of the hands into boiling oil.

The common hounsi, the bossale, is prepared gradually for kanzo. In the course of certain rites she undergoes a smoke ordeal. On all fours, her head close to a fire, she must breathe in smoke without choking or coughing. When these and other tests indicate that she is ready, she will be permitted to undergo the rite of the brulé zin.

Near the town of Thomazeau in the Cul-de-Sac Plain I witnessed one of these rituals. It began with a dance, in which only the hounsi of the cult participated. They were all dressed in white. The chief drummer wore a woman's blouse, a kerchief on his head, and on top of that a woman's straw hat. He played alone while the houngan invoked the loa Legba. [793] Then there were songs for Ogoun, and the dancing resumed.

The dance court was larger than average—about forty feet by sixty.

793 794 787 796 ●789 Attached to the ever-present po'teau mitan, or center post, were three oil lamps which threw a flickering light. At the entrance to the dance court a glowing-hot iron bar stood erect in a charcoal fire—the symbol of kanzo and of the loa Ogoun.

When the preliminary dances were over, the hounsi retired to one side of the court, where they sat in two rows facing the center.

Ritual rattle and bell in hand, the houngan took his place by the sacred center post. He was an elderly man with a gray beard. He wore a red kerchief like a turban around his head. He smoked a cigar, and in his free hand he held a bottle of rum. The red kerchief, the rum, and the cigar were all in honor of Ogoun. He moved back and forth across the center of the court, talking casually, even joking and laughing. The drums began again, on a signal from the houngan, and a number of visiting houngans [535] and mambos came forward and began a stately Jenvalo dance. The backs of their hands touching their knees, their backs bent low, they moved slowly counterclockwise around the center post. The mambos outnumbered the houngans four to one. The hounsi sitting on the sidelines sang. The song was for Maîtresse Èzilie. The houngan in charge stood by patiently, deep in thought. His assistant, the laplace, kept time with a small rattle and led the singing.

When the song came to an end, the visiting cult priests and priestesses retired from the dance ground. Again the hounsi danced. Afterward the houngan began to talk *langage*, twirling his bottle of rum about recklessly. He was speaking to a loa. The chief drummer beat out a salute to Ogoun. Then the houngan raised the bottle and placed it to his ear. It gurgled away, some of the liquid trickling down his face. He seemed to be swallowing the rum.

While all the hounsi, with bowed heads, sat on the ground, the houngan recited from the ritual of the Catholic service. Latin words, then Creole words in Latin cadences. After a while the houngan's assistant took over the recitation, and the hounsi answered him responsively.[1] When the prayers were over, the hounsi arose and passed into the hounfor. The drums began a fast Nago rhythm, and the hounsi emerged with brilliant silk flags studded with tiny brass rivets. The houngan's chief assistants—the laplace and the houngénicon—carried military sabers upraised. The dancers circled in single file around the center post, a triumphal military heralding of the deity of war and the forge.

To the accompaniment of a crescendo of drums, the procession suddenly reversed its direction. Watching the upraised saber of the laplace for a signal, the hounsi reversed their direction again.

000 When the dance drama ended, the hounsi carried the flags back into

[1] [Note that the houngan and the laplace are performing services normally performed by the prêt savane. Cf. P. 351, Category 116. -- Analys]

When the dance drama ended, the hounsi carried the flags back into the hounfor. Then they sat on the ground while the houngan came forward to the center post to make his ritual flour drawing. Holding the flour in his hand, he allowed a little of it to trickle out in a fine white line. He worked rapidly, with half-closed eyes, speaking *langage*. A complicated white geometric pattern grew on the earth around the center post. Among its intricate designs highly stylized phallic forms were discernible. When the houngan had finished the drawing, he wrote the name of the loa whom they were serving: Ogoun Badagry. Then the other houngans and mambos came forward, one at a time, to add to the design. When the vèvè was completed it covered virtually the entire dance court. 793 794 787 789 796 532

The laplace came from the hounfor with a bundle of brilliantly colored beads. He stood by the houngan at the center post. One by one the hounsi came before the houngan, dropped on their knees, and kissed the ground. Around each hounsi's neck the houngan placed a string of beads. He raised her, pirouetted her first to the right, then to the left. The pirouette was to encourage possession by the loa. 793 794 787 789 796

From the hounfor the hounsi now brought herbs and vegetables for the sacrifice. Baskets and bottles were set out neatly on the ground, along with bundles of sticks and the iron pots, or *zins*. [782]

The dance was resumed in a single rotating line around the houngan and the ritual offerings. Two hounsi in the center of the circle built fires, one on each side of the court. Over the fires they set the ritual iron pots. They poured oil into the pots and began the preparation of ritual food balls, like dumplings, from the ingredients at hand. One by one they dropped the dumplings into the oil, which was soon boiling.

The drumming, singing, and dancing were sustained at a high tension. A second team of drummers took over without a break in the music. The dancers now were almost exhausted. With a quick motion, the houngan spilled some rum into one of the boiling pots. A blue alcohol flame shot high into the air. Some of the hounsi screamed but continued to dance. Three of them fell to the ground, their limbs jerking uncontrollably. The loa had entered. Two of the "mounted" hounsi arose and continued to dance, staggering and jerking across the dance court. The third had to be lifted and carried into the hounfor.

The man who was to undergo initiation was waiting in the *djévo*, a special room in the hounfor. For the past seven days he had lain on a mat in the djévo, in virtual isolation except for visits from the houngan and the laplace.

Now the kanzo initiate was brought out, completely covered with a white cloth. Only his hands and feet could be seen. With one hand on the shoulder of the laplace, who preceded him, he moved with the dancers

in a circle around the two boiling pots. On the seventh circuit of the course, the laplace stopped him at the first pot. The houngan grasped the man's free hand and, bending down, dipped it into the boiling oil. There was no visible indication of pain. They moved to the second pot, and the man's hand was dipped again. They proceeded again to the first pot, where the dipping was repeated, then back again to the second pot. The neophyte's hand entered the boiling oil seven times in all. He made no sound, showed no resistance, no reflexes. Then the hounsi took him back to the hounfor. It was all over. After three days of isolation, they said, he would be kanzo.

The houngan peeled an orange, while everyone crowded close to watch. In it he found a two-gourde note. He peeled another orange and found in it a slip of paper with the name of a woman on it. She came forward, and everyone laughed. She was an old woman, the oldest of the hounsi. The houngan held the two-gourde note between his teeth. The old woman took the other end of the note in her teeth, but she had to kiss the houngan before he would let go.

The ritual of brulé zin, or kanzo, is of unmistakable West African origin. Herskovits has described a ceremony in Dahomey which in many details could easily have taken place in Haiti. The Dahomean rite was in honor of the gods of the Thunder pantheon. Here, too, we find a pot of boiling palm oil, in which are the sacred dumplings: "When the fire had finally subsided and only a faint column of smoke issued from the pot, the initiate came dancing toward it, thrust her hand into the boiling oil, and lifted out a dumpling. . . ."[2]

Family Rites at Léogane

These services for family ancestors took place in the mountains above Léogane at the ancestral home of my friend Libera Borderau. They were conducted on the grounds of his grandmother's house. The ritual began with dancing. Against the wall of the house sat the three drummers with their Arada drums. Near them, leaning against the wall, were the flags of the family loa. Also near by was a long high table serving as a makeshift altar called the *pé*. In the very center of the table in a clean white dish lay eight loa stones—old Carib artifacts. The stones were identical in shape, all of them perfectly symmetrical, resembling small, pointed cigars. In the *pierre-loas* lived the family deities, and much of the ceremony was built around them. The stones had been bathed and polished in oil for the occasion. Set around the plate of stones were numerous small *criches* (French, *cruches*—clay water jugs), glass bottles, and earthenware jars which also contained loa. On the low bench before the table, seven dishes

[2] [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 165. Cf. P 351, Cat. 116.—Author]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

houngan took his place before the small altar and the cross surmounted by the skull. Again he spoke *langage* and rattled his asson. He took from the altar a small-necked bottle containing a white alcoholic liquid and a tight-fitting iron cross. The presence of the iron cross inside the bottle was represented as a magical phenomenon. The houngan took a mouthful of the white liquid and sprayed it out in a fine mist over the skull. Twice more he sprayed the mist, in different directions. Then he poured a little of the liquid directly on the skull. The room was filled with the smell of alcohol. The houngan lighted a candle and sat in a low chair facing the altar. He shook his asson rhythmically and spoke *langage* to Pinga Maza. Suddenly Pinga Maza entered the houngan's head. The houngan became violent. He jerked this way and that, making strange noises in his throat. He seized a machete from the altar, waved it around, and struck the flat of it against his head. He continued for a while to beat his head fiercely with the machete. Gradually he became quiet. His assistants placed Pinga's red jacket on him. Now he spoke in the tired voice of an old man. He complained that he was hungry, that he had not eaten for a long while. His assistant handed him a razor blade. He placed it in his mouth, chewed it up, and swallowed it, washing it down with more of the white liquid in the bottle. He asked for more, and they gave him a second blade to eat. He demanded a third, and ate that, too, spitting out small fragments of steel that caught in his teeth.

His assistant told him there was a man present seeking advice about a pouin. The possessed houngan looked around with half-closed eyes. He asked the man his name, and what he wanted. After hearing the client's story, the houngan took out a deck of cards and placed them one at a time, face up, on a winnowing tray. After studying the cards he said: "You are strong, but not strong enough. You already have some protections, but they do not protect you from the dangers coming your way. You have powerful enemies. You must have a new pouin." The man said yes, he wanted a new pouin, but how much would it cost? Pinga replied through the mouth of the houngan: "Twenty-five dollars." The man said: "I will get the money and return." He went out after placing five gourdes on the winnowing tray with the cards. Pinga became drowsy. The houngan's head fell forward on his chest and he slept. The divining session was ended.

The Water Road

The land where the loa live, the place "below the water," is not thought of as being in the water itself. It is dry and airy, like the countryside of Haiti. But the route to it is through water.

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533 Ogoun é oh moin blessé! — Ogoun é, oh, I am hurt!
539 Ogoun é oh moin blessé! — Ogoun é, oh, I am hurt!
776 A pas m'blessé Ferci, — Now I am hurt, Ferci,
782 M'pas wè sang moin! — I don't see my blood!
794 M'pas wè sang'm Maît Ogoun, — I don't see my blood, Master Ogoun,
796 Moin pas wè sang moin! — I don't see my blood!
M'pas wè sang'm Badagry, — I don't see my blood, Badagry
Moin pas wè sang moin là! [Ex. 62] — I don't see my blood here!

The loa Moundongue, like Damballa, likes goat meat, and it can be cooked in two ways:

Yè yè yè!
Moundongue oh!
Oh Moundongue oh yè yè yè!
Moundongue mangé cabrit boulé,
Moundongue mangé cabrit boucané! [Ex. 63]

Yè yè yè!
Moundongue, oh!
Oh, Moundongue, oh, yè yè yè!
Moundongue eats boiled goat,
Moundongue eats roasted goat!

Or again, the servitors may sing:

Coto passé na ba'ou mangé, oh Ti Moundongue nà!
Coto passé na ba'ou mangé, Moundongue nà! [Ex. 64]

Wherever you are, we give you food, oh, Ti Moundongue there!
Wherever you are, we give you food, Moundongue there!

[787] The loa Adja also has animal sacrifices and special dishes for his
[789] mangé, but sometimes he—and the "horses" he mounts—will eat broken glass:

Oh Adja mangé bounda dèmijon!
Adja véco' véco'!
Adja mangé bounda dèmijon!
Adja véco' véco'! [Ex. 65]

Oh, Adja eats the bottom of a bottle!
Adja, old one, old one!
Adja eats the bottom of a bottle!
Adja, old one, old one!

For the loa Ianman Ibo the proper sacrifice is a rooster, and the deity declares:

Nanchon Ibo m'ta mangé gros coq oh nanchon Ibo!
Nanchon Ibo m'ta mangé gros coq!
Nanchon Ibo m'ta mangé gros coq oh nanchon Ibo!
Waille waille waille! [Ex. 66]

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The cow was

776 never seen again, and after a prêt' savane had read prayers over the
825 spring the people again drew water from it.
[183]
[493] Baka more often change themselves into gray or red pigs, but one ingenious baka was said to ~~have transformed~~ himself into a bicycle, which was seen traveling alone at night on the road from Port-au-Prince to Léogane.

776 Some people wear charms against the baka's malevolence; but the
789 most effective weapon is the cocomacaque stick. The cocomacaque, or
824 monkey palm, is a palm tree that grows only a few feet high. It has magical powers to drive off not only baka but other evil beings as well. When the tree is growing in its natural state, it is said, you must never mention its name in its own presence. Should you say within its hearing, for example, "Look at the cocomacaque," it will wilt and fall over, losing all its vital powers. The trunk of this midget palm is a favorite material for fashioning a walking stick or a short baton. A man going on a long, journey into strange country may carry a cococmacaque stick with him to brandish at the crossroads where baka lurk, or to drive off strange animals that may be baka in disguise.

776 In their relationships with human beings, the baka are not always
789 random. Sometimes, for a terrible price, they will undertake to make a
754 man rich or to "eat" his enemies for him.

184 In some parts of Haiti, baka seemingly have found their way into the
776 ranks of the loa. In the Congo-Guinée pantheon there is a deity called
778 Bakulu Baka, or Babaku Baka. He is a malevolent spirit who "eats" people in the best baka tradition, and he lives, significantly, in the mapou tree, which is shunned by all good loa.

776 The *engagements*, or compacts, in which baka sometimes figure are
789 usually made with another sort of creature, the *djab*, or devil. A djab
787 is a manlike being but is superhuman, ferocious, and terrible. Some
675 djab are small, some large, some innocent in appearance, some grotesque. They are supernatural sorcerers who deal out riches in exchange for human beings. A frustrated or desperate man may go to a djab and ask for a favor, which will usually be granted for a heart-rending price. Persons who appear to gain wealth suddenly may be suspected of having entered into an *engagement* with a powerful djab.

538 One story is about a man of Port-au-Prince who, needing a large sum
776 of money, went to a famous djab who lives in a cave known as Trou
789 Fourban. This powerful djab agreed to provide all the money required,
787 but only on condition that the man deliver to him each year one of
675 his children. The man suddenly came into a large fortune. But when the anniversary of his compact arrived, he did not go to Trou Fourban

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with one of his children as he had agreed. That night his oldest child died. The next year to the day, his second child died. And the third year, the third child died. On the fourth anniversary, the man's wife died. On the fifth, he himself died. The djab of Trou Fourban had collected his debe.

Another great djab lives on the northern mountain called Morne Ronde. A man of Cap Haitien was said to have made a compact with him for wealth. One day there was a great hubbub in front of the man's house. A crowd gathered and stood peering inside his door. What they saw was a rain of money falling down from the rafters. The floor was covered with ten-gourde bills. When the *gendarmerie* came to investigate, they stood at the doorway in awe, watching the money float to the floor. The man finally closed the door. That night he moved away, and no one in Cap Haitien ever saw him again.

The djab are insatiable. For their favors—which range from providing wealth and political position to destroying one's enemies—they always demand more in return than the recipient has counted on. Catholic ritual is called upon in some instances to break the djab's chain of demands.

Some tales are told in which human beings outwit the djab, particularly the lesser ones; but more often than not, the djab have the last laugh. During the big hurricane which hit Haiti in 1954, a huge landslide occurred near the place called Bayè Roche in the La Selle Mountains. An entire village was wiped out, covered by the falling rocks. Throughout this region the disaster was attributed to the action of a djab reputed to live in one of the nearby caves. Many lost cattle were found wandering near Bayè Roche, and they were believed to be people whom the malevolent djab had transformed into animals.

The height of bravado is to demand to be confronted with a big djab face to face. There is a song which goes:

> Conduit'm allé oh!
> Conduit'm allé djab nan Trou Fourban!
> Conduit'm allé! [Ex. 91]
>
> Take me, oh!
> Take me to the djab in Trou Fourban!
> Take me!

There are still other supernatural creatures in Haitian lore who must be guarded against, such as the *djablesse*, the *revenant*, and the *lutin*. The *djablesse* is a female ghost who must live in the woods for a number of years before she can enter heaven, as a punishment for the crime of

2: Courlander 3-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

775 having died a virgin. The *lutin* is the spirit of a child who died before baptism.[1] The *revenant* is a spirit of a dead person who feels he has been mistreated, and who returns to the world of the living to plague their families or their enemies.

776 754 The *lou-garo* (*loup-garou*) is a being of another kind, a vampire. She is human in form but sheds her skin and assumes animal forms at night when she roams the countryside seeking a victim. Salt is her nemesis. Should her human skin be found and salt sprinkled inside it, she would not be able to put it back on and would be destroyed.

776 778 A special form of the lou-garo is the *bizango*, a kind of enormous dog that runs in packs at night seeking people to eat. Also related to the lou-garo is the *démon*, a male creature of amorphous personality and character who can convert himself into an animal at will. There are sociétés of démons which, like those of the baka, meet in the dark of night in their assembly hall inside the mapou tree. Haitians who are conversant with such matters agree that there are many such trees, but that the most notorious of them are Mapou Miteppe in Miragoane, Mapou Simon in Aux Cayes, and Mapou Danpisse at Léogane.

Other fearsome beings such as the *zeauheaups*—human cannibals—also gather in the mapou to conduct their affairs.

789 [776] Against all these creatures, and against black magic in general, there are many magical protections, the most common of which is the *garde corps* (protect the body), or simply the *garde*. It is usually obtained from a bocor and consists of a small bag of mysterious ingredients. The owner wears it around his waist or around his neck. Sometimes it is merely a cord with a number of ritually made knots. The garde corps is made to prescription and protects the wearer against specific things such as a lou-garo, poison, or death from a bullet or knife. In describing a garde corps he had prepared for a client, a bocor revealed that it contained dried chicken blood, extract of *auri* bean, and *gris-gris* powder, among "a thousand and one" ingredients. The *gris-gris* powder is made from a dried *gris-gris* bird.[2]

There is another form of protective magic, broader in scope, called the *arrête*. It is used to protect not merely an individual but an entire household, or even a group of households. In addition to warding off [754] supernatural creatures and protecting people against assassins, the arrête is a neutralizing agent against various forms of black magic such as the ouanga and the *makanda*. The arrête bundle or object is hung in the house or in a nearby tree, or it is buried somewhere on the grounds. Sometimes it is nothing more than a pointed stick placed in a certain way before a door or gate, or at one side of the trail leading to the

[1] [Simpson, "Haitian Magic", Social Forces, October, 1940, p. 97. Cf. p. 351, category 116. --Analyst]
[2] [For footnote, see category 116, p. 351--Analyst]

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

house. A round, polished Indian stone is occasionally used as a *garde habitation*. And old people speak of a very powerful charm known as a *gros arrête* which in former times was placed on the trail to protect entire villages or valleys. 789

Still another potent defensive charm is the *pouin*, which is the product of ritual magic within the cult temple. A pouin may be an actual bundle containing a formula of special ingredients; more often, it is invisible, consisting of magical forces unleashed into space by the houngan. There are many ceremonies in the hounfor devoted to the projecting of these magical forces. They are called *cérémonie pouin* or *cérémonie magie* and are dramatized by special cult songs and dances. Sometimes the magie ceremony is woven into a more generalized cult ritual. The powers of the pouin are regarded as wider and more potent than those of the arrête. Pouins are said to protect an individual or a group not only against other magic but also against natural phenomena and accident. A pouin may ward off lightning, for example, or protect one from falling trees or from shipwreck or drowning. But it is not solely defensive magic. It may bring success in fishing, or produce a good crop in one's garden, or aid human fertility. 789 794 796 [777] [842]

Since the crops and the garden are the substance of life, much attention is given to their protection. An enemy may attack a man or his household through garden magic. He may bury a ouanga in the earth, to bring sickness or ruin. He may poison a tree by performing a special rite at its foot, and its fruits will then carry disease or death to the one who eats them. Or he may make a compact with the earth so that it will dry up and refuse to produce for the one who tills it. Against all these malevolent possibilities, as well as against common thieves, the Haitian peasant has many magical and practical resources. Some people are said to employ zombies as watchmen. These fearsome creatures will capture a trespasser and hold him for the owner of the field.[3] Or perhaps the owner will place special arrêtes in his garden. Occasionally a man will protect his fields by planting *piquettes* in the earth. The *piquette* is a piece of sharpened bamboo or hard wood. Its point is dipped into poison, and it is placed in the ground, sharpened end up. An unwary intruder who steps on a piquette may die of his wound. 789 685 [754] [795]

To counteract the *maljok*, or evil eye, a man may procure from a bocor a special shirt made of wide strips of red, white, and blue cloth sewed together. This shirt, called a *mayo* or *mayo*, is worn for seven days if the *maljok* is a rather ordinary one. If the evil force is a particularly virulent one, however, the *mayo* will be worn as long as twenty-one 754 789 791

[3] [Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy" Journal of Negro History, October, 1940, p. 503. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analist]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

days, according to the bocor's prescription. It is also employed to protect an individual against various forms of the ouanga.

Against poisons, the usual protection is the *drogue*, prepared by a bocor or a leaf doctor who specializes in such things. After having drunk a drogue, a man is regarded as immune to poison. Should a man be a "horse" of the loa Ogoun Balindjo, however, no drogue is necessary, for Balindjo's people are regarded as immune even without such precautions.

Foretelling the future and divination take two general forms. In one variety, a bocor or *divineur*, using ritual paraphernalia such as cards, flour, or ashes, takes personal responsibility for the divination. In the other form, the divineur functions only when possessed by a loa, and it is the deity himself who foretells and foresees. An account of this kind of divination is given in chapter 6. "Horses" of the loa Mâit' David when possessed are given packs of cards, for they are reputed to be able to divine the future.

Certain houngans use the instrument known as the *gembo* as a divining device. This is a small shell about the size of a lemon, through which a long cord is passed. When there is no tension on the cord, the shell can easily be slid back and forth. When the cord is taut, the shell will not slide. The houngan holds one end of the cord under his foot, the other end with his hand above it. He starts his divination with the shell at the top and the cord taut. Shaking his asson with the other hand, he talks *langage* and asks questions. To indicate a "yes" answer he relaxes the tension on the cord and the shell slips downward an inch or so. The typical gembo is decorated with beads, old coins, religious medals, snake bones, and a fragment of mirror.

There are several ceremonies for locating a thief or other guilty person. One is called *passage d'alliance*. A ring suspended on a string is held over a person's head. If it moves in a regular pendulous way, the person is innocent; but if it swings in a circle, his guilt is established. Another method is the use of a long stick. The stick is pointed at one man, then another, and when the end vibrates in a circular manner the guilty party has been located. This technique is known as *jugement de baguette*. A third method is the one known as *passé balai*. A man sits in a low chair and small branches and leaves of the *balai* (broom) tree are placed under the chair and fastened to its uprights. A guilty person sitting in this chair will cause the *balai* branches to vibrate and close in on him.

The role of the *docteur fè*—the leaf doctor—straddles the field of magic and pharmacology. Many of his potions are of a mystical and

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Many of his potions are of a mystical and
semiritual nature; yet from roots and leaves he brews specific medicines 759
for specific illnesses, such as rheumatism, fevers, malaria, worms, and 755
yaws. Sometimes his cures are effective, sometimes they fail. The leaf 757
doctor is consulted for poisons and their antidotes, though many poisons, such as that in the wari bean, may be gathered and dispensed by anyone.

One of the macabre figures in Haitian folk belief is the *zombie*. In 775
the most general sense, the name designates the bland soul of a person who died without the distinction of having a loa in his head. The soul or spirit has no special will. It cannot affect the living in any way, unlike the lutin, the djablesse, and those who were buried possessed of mystéres. It does not harass enemies or importune its descendants. It is an undynamic, simple, otherworldly spirit, a sort of negative afterimage. It does not need to be placated or feared.

But the word *zombie* has another, more popular meaning, signifying 775
a human being who has "died" and been resurrected from the graveyard 789
by members of the Zeaubeaup Society, by a wicked sorcerer, or by some 754
other person who has realized the "power" to perform this act.

The Haitian countryside is full of tales about fresh graves that have been robbed of their bodies by practitioners of this special form of black magic. By a secret formula these soulless "dead" are revived and given a semblance of life. They lack only the power of will. Without that, they are at the complete command of the sorcerer who has disinterred them. They are presumed to be spirited away and put to work at drudgery in some remote place. Stories are told of plantations in the mountains whose entire labor force is made up of zombies, the animated dead. You can tell a zombie when you see him. His eyes are dull and glazed, he gives no sign of recognition to people he once knew, he moves slowly and ploddingly at his tasks, and he takes orders only from his master. He neither sings nor dances, and he eats and drinks without interest. His facial expression never changes. He is emotionally and mentally dead. Neither the rites of the Church nor those of Vodoun can help him. There is only one formula for breaking the spell. If he eats [263] salt he will either regain full life or die a merciful death. The master therefore takes great care that his zombies never have salt.

Haitians have many explanations of this mystical phenomenon. Some [184] hold that the sorcerer has the unique power to revive the dead. Others believe that the victim is not really dead but has succumbed to a virulent poison which numbs all the senses and stops bodily functions but does not truly kill. Upon disinterment, the victim is given an antidote which restores most physical processes but leaves the mind in an inert state, without will or the power to resist.

171 The connection between the Haitian zombie and certain soulless beings
715 of West Africa is quite apparent. Herskovits has observed that in
754 Dahomey there are tales of persons thought to be dead who were found wandering in far-off places. These individuals had no memories of their former lives. "They were soulless beings, whose death was not real, but resulted from the machinations of sorcerers who made them appear as dead, and then, when buried, removed them from their graves and sold them into servitude in some far-away land."*

764 According to stories told by some Haitians, in ceremonies for the
715 dead where there is suspicion that the deceased was the victim of this particular kind of poisoning a close relative stabs the body with a knife before burial to assure that it will not become a zombie. In other instances, close guard is kept over the grave for a number of days and nights, so that the body cannot be stolen.

715 Some members of the elite publicly dismiss the whole business as
789 savage fantasy but privately say something like: "I don't believe in this
184 sort of thing, but how can you explain the case of Marie Zambam in Cap Haitien?" And then they will tell of curious events of which they have firsthand knowledge.

538 There are numerous legends of persons who died and were buried,
715 only to reappear perhaps years later in some mountain village, or in the
789 big city of Port-au-Prince. An educated man in Port-au-Prince declared
754 that a dead cousin of his reappeared one day in the city ten years after her burial. He tried to speak with her, but she answered only haltingly and gave no sign of recognition. After this one appearance, he said, she was never seen again. Another Haitian from the north told of a graveyard watch in his village to prevent disinterment of the grave of a young girl who had just died. The two watchers dozed fitfully, and suddenly awoke to see a man removing the girl's body. When they jumped to their feet and went after him he escaped into the shadows. But the girl staggered about, fell to the ground, and gave birth to a baby. Both the girl and her newborn child were taken to the village and given salt to eat. Both of them recovered.

One villager from the southern mountains reported that in his travels he came upon a coffee plantation on the sparsely populated mountain called Morne la Selle, and found all the laborers to be zombies. They did not sing as they worked, their movements were slow and cumbersome, and they did not sweat in the hot sun. When he asked for a drink of water, no one replied. While he stood trying to converse, the master of the plantation came with a hard leather whip and angrily ordered him to leave.

* [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, p. 243. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

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When they are not working, it is said, zombies are tied with special ropes made from the leaves of the banana tree. One popular song goes:

> Nans Léogane
> Yo marré zombie nans paille fig-banane!
> Abolo wye-oh!
>
> In Léogane
> They tie the zombie with banana straw!
> That is all, *wye-oh!*

Some Haitians tell you they know there are zombies because they have seen them. Not too many years ago a visiting writer stoutly declared that she, too, knew there were zombies because she had seen one—in the mental hospital at Pont Beudet. Although her reasoning was not quite airtight, the possibility that mental defectives are sometimes mistaken for zombies is worth considering.

Houngans who "work with two hands" are reputed to be able to gain permanent control over persons by means of a formula known as *tuyé-lèvé* (kill and raise). Either for himself or a client, the houngan gains power over the victim by "killing" him through special magic and then "removing the soul" (*retiré n'âme*). The victim, presumed to be normally dead, is buried by his family; the houngan then retrieves the body and "restores the soul" (*metté n'âme*). With his soul restored, the victim has, in effect, become a slave of the houngan, who can do with him as he wishes. He differs from a zombie in that he has a soul, whereas the zombie has none.

Some Haitians believe that even one who has died a nonmagic death may be raised from the dead. To accomplish this, the houngan or bocor stands over the body, goes through a specified ritual, and calls out the dead person's name: "Albert Moreau! Albert Moreau! Albert Moreau! Lèvé non! Lèvé non! Lèvé non!" ("Get up! Get up! Get up!") Then, it is said, the dead man may awaken.

It is believed that a houngan may also command the souls of dead persons to perform services for him against an enemy. The souls at his disposal for this work are those which he keeps in earthern jars in his hounfor. Should he wish to plague an enemy, he will send one of these souls to the man's house to make him sick, or lazy, or insane. Usually, the man does not know what is happening to him; but if he becomes aware that a dead soul is working on him, he attempts to find out which houngan has sent it. Perhaps the houngan can be bought off. If not, another houngan may provide relief.

While some believe in the reality of the various demons and specters,

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533
539

Cousin, oh, cousin, oh,
Cousin, don't take cousin, oh, cousin!

[436] (A *gourdain* is one-quarter of a gourde, or the equivalent of five cents in United States money. *Dé gourdain* is ten cents.)

[198] EXAMPLE 141 consists entirely of ritual language.

EXAMPLE 142

Call Damballa, call Domici, call Damballa Wèdo,
Damballa, call Damballa Wèdo, Damballa.

[176] (Damballa and Domici are the names of loa.)

EXAMPLE 143

Ibo, I am a big man, oh!
Ibo, I am a big man, oh!
Ibo, I am the patriarch, oh, I am the patriarch, oh,
I am the chief of my house!

[176] (Ibo is the name of a loa, from whose point of view the song is being sung. Ibo is stating his seniority in his house, or family, for there are other loa related to him. The word *grand* in Creole, as used here, is [192] difficult to translate. It means good or elder, or both. A *grand famille* is the oldest in the extended family, and usually carries the connotation of head or chief.)

EXAMPLE 144

Ibo Ibo é, Samardi Kama!
Etc.

[176] (Samardi Kama is the name of a loa of the Ibo family. The song consists of a repetition of his name, with variations.)

EXAMPLE 145

Ibo Ibo é, Marianni é!
Etc., with variations.

[176] (This is a song to the loa Marianni, of the Ibo family. Except for his name, in various combinations, there are no words.)

[198] EXAMPLE 146 is a song for the making of magic. It is entirely in ritual lan-
[189] guage.

EXAMPLE 147

Call Osange, call Labosan in the water!
Osange, oh, call Osange in the water!
Osange, oh, call Osange in the water!

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Chapter 5: *Services for the Loa and the Family Ancestors* (*pp. 41–74*)

[1]Note that the houngan and the laplace are performing services normally performed by the *prêt' savane*. 000

[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 165.

[3]Parsons, *Spirit Cult in Hayti*.

[4]Account given by Jean Ravel Pintro.

[5]Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana.

[6]Account given by Voluska Saintvil. A. W. Cardinall notes in his book *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 69): "Trees are in most cases treated with respect. Before a man dare fell one for a canoe he must and invariably does sacrifice to its spirit and apologizes for the harm he is about to do it." [534] [798] [796] [171]

[7]The rite of *rafratchi tête* is conducted periodically for a *malt' tête* after the original *lavé tête* ceremony. The purpose is to "refresh" the loa and make him content with his residence in the head of the devotee. [782] [796] [823] [176]

[8]Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, p. 233.

[9]It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain Negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form.

[10]Odette Mennesson Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Voudoun Loa," in Appendix A of Deren, *Divine Horsemen*, p. 264.

Chapter 6: *Songs of the Peristyle* (*pp. 75–94*)

[1]This theme is further commented on in chap. 13. Compare with the following excerpt from a Surinam song reported by Herskovits in *Suriname Folk-Lore* (p. 689): 171 533 539 794 796 776

> I have no mother there,
> I have no father there,
> I have no sister there,
> I haven't got anybody there.

Chapter 7: *In the Mapou Tree: Magic, Demons, and Compacts* (*pp. 95–104*)

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[1]Simpson, "Haitian Magic," *Social Forces*, October, 1940, p. 97.

[2]Note the coincidence of the term *gris-gris* or *grigri* as used in the United States, where it has the same meaning as *mojo*, or "voodoo" charm. [776] [797] [171]

[3]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 303.

[4]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, p. 243.

Chapter 8: *Mardi Gras and Rara: Jugglers, Maypoles, and Kings* (*pp. 105–109*)

[1]Aubin, *En Haïti*, p. 42.

[2]Marionettes of this kind have been observed in both East and West Africa and are well known in the region of Senegal. I saw a phallic marionette, virtually identical with the Haitian version, in the neighborhood of Khartoum, Sudan. [171] [541] [536]

Chapter 9: *Land and Work* (*pp. 110–121*)

[1]Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, p. 362. 583

[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 320 ff., describes Dahomean polygamous marriage in its various forms. Although Dahomean plural marriage is complex in terms of gifts, obligations, and 171 595 423 178

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CHAPTER 12: *Songs of Complaint, Recrimination, and Gossip* (*pp. 137–147*) 000

[1]See Herskovits and Herskovits, *Suriname Folk-Lore*, pp. 23–32.

CHAPTER 13: *Comments on the Mighty: Political Songs* (*pp. 148–162*)

[1]*Léger, Haiti, Her History and Her Detractors.*

CHAPTER 15: *Secret-Society Songs* (*pp. 166–169*)

[1]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, p. 256.

[2]See Courlander, "Abakwa Meeting in Guanabacoa," *Journal of Negro History*, XXIX (1944), 461 ff.

CHAPTER 16: *Folk Tales: Bouki, Malice, and Jean Saute* (*pp. 170–184*)

[1]The theme of throwing magic objects upon the ground to ward off a pursuer is widely known, but the story as told in Africa has special characteristics of its own, such as the elephant hair. In Ashanti tales, the prize is the tail of the queen elephant, which is needed to serve as a coffin. 171 538 [584]

[2]This part of the tale, at least, dealing with the dragon that swallowed the sun, seems to be known in western Europe. Some reports of the tale of Grandmother's Bath have come from France. [177]

[3]Variants of "The President Wants No More of Ananú" are widely known around the world. The story is told among the Somali of East Africa, with the legendary character Abunuwas, a Persian trickster hero, playing the title role. Ananú plays the same part in West Africa, and other trickster heroes are identified with the same adventure in India and Southeast Asia. The tale has been reported also from the West Indian island of St. Martin ("He Meets the King's Conditions," in Parsons, *Folk-Lore of the Antilles, French and English*, Part II). 539 171

[4]The fishing story narrated here, except for the chase, is found in many versions in West Africa. The second part of the tale, the pursuit, has a special Haitian flavor. Bouki chasing Malice through the cult chief's ritual grounds and the church, with Malice trying to make appropriate use of the situation, is a special delight to Haitians. The dialogue between Bouki and Malice's behind is also regarded as very humorous.

[5]Known in virtually all Negro communities in the Americas, the tale of eating the honey (or butter, pork, or lard) seems to have come to the New World by way of Africa, although it is also known in Europe.

[6]The theme of the singing tortoise (or other animal, or an object such as a skull) has appeared in folk tales ranging from West Africa through the Americas to the Far East. This Haitian variant bears a striking resemblance to a tortoise story from the Gold Coast (Ghana). In the Gold Coast variant the tortoise asks the hunter who finds him to keep his singing ability a secret, but the hunter has to tell about his discovery. When the village headman hears about it, he calls for a test. The tortoise refuses to sing, and the hunter is punished. Then the tortoise sings his song, which emphasizes the hunter's bad faith. The philosophical tone of the Haitian tortoise's songs, particularly the last one, is quite similar. The last line of the song is from a Haitian proverb.

CHAPTER 17: *Children's World: Gage Songs and Games* (*pp. 185–188*) 000

[1]The description of this game is from Paul, "Les Jeux à gage," *Bulletin du Bureau d'Ethnologie*, July, 1947, p. 51.

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114 175 669 668 have explained it chiefly by the surprise element of the uprising. But when else in modern history have slaves successfully revolted against their armed masters and become permanently free? Successful revolutions even of people not in bodily slavery have had acknowledged leadership, whereas in Haiti no real leader appeared for the insurgents. Boukman's influence, indeed, at its widest never reached beyond a part of the northern plain; he had about the same range of power as a ward boss in the United States. On the plantations Hallaou, Hyacinthe, Lafortune, and others whose names are unimportant or unknown, Vodun houngans likewise welded slave opinion within their narrow districts. But no single great leader appeared. As the conflict was developed, without plan or unity under the divided and contradictory action of numerous blacks, what held the people together was, negatively, their hatred of the white masters; positively, their Vodun beliefs. Only later in the decade did a true leader, Toussaint L'Ouverture, emerge to consolidate their victory.

[793]

776 793 761 782 781 As often happens among unsophisticated people convinced of the rightness of their cause, the local Vodun leaders were sure of their own invulnerability through the protection of one or another of the spirits.[8] They convinced their followers as well, to such a degree that when an invulnerable chief fell there were dozens of reasons to explain the unexpected death rather than any disillusion. Usually, failure to follow the rigorous propitiation requirements of the protecting god offered the key to the misfortune. Various ones of them were known to be exacting and troublesome. The leader at Trou-Coffi, Romaine by name, had absorbed enough of the Roman Catholicism in Vodun to feel that the Virgin Mary was his especial patroness.[9] Beyond this specific belief in invulnerability was the general trust that Vodun spirits would lead their devotees to success, would give them a happy issue out of all their distress.

[789]

[771] [781] 8. A parallel case of belief in invulnerability because of divine protection was that of the North American Indians both at the time of Tecumseh and later in the Sioux outbreaks at the climax of the Ghost-Dance Religion. See James Mooney, *The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890* (Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, 1892–93 [Washington, 1896]), chap. X.

[114] [781] 9. The importance of Vodun beliefs in connection with the slave revolt is stressed by Dr. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Vodou et Névrose* (Port-au-Prince, 1931), pp. 33–34. He says of many of the chiefs: "The belief in their invulnerability was not at all the result of calculation, but was a true state of mind, a sort of autosuggestion which explains very well the chronic heroism of certain leaders of the revolution in Saint-Domingue and of the war of independence of 1802–3."

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Vodun, then, was both widespread and powerful enough to be turned to most effective ends in 1791. Contemporary accounts of it still saw it as a meeting ground of superstitions. The French naturalist, Descourtilz, for example, was primarily struck by the use of the occult in connection with Vodun; he especially describes a woman who, under the seizure of her god, took a live coal in her hand without being burnt; a husband who by the use of magic struck his inconstant wife with a languorous malady, effective for half a year; and the knowledge of poison which was combined with the practice of magic. He mentions but one of the Vodun gods by name but implies the existence of many others.[10]

Madiou, Haiti's first historian, likewise always spoke of Vodun as a savage survival; he says of a native general, "Lamour Dérance, plunged in gross errors, put his faith in *sorcery*, in the prophecy of *papas*, or priests of *African fetishism*."[11] In his scornful distaste for the vulgar he clearly indicated by his own italics some conspicuous elements of the developing religion: magic, the use of fetishes, and a Vodun priesthood. His illustration of Dérance's error was his making soldiers believe that bullets could not wound them:

> When he marched to combat he was preceded by bands of Congos, Aradas, Ibos, Nabos, Mandingues, Haoussas, who threw themselves against the French battalions with a prodigious intrepidity, crying that the bullets were but dust. But this courage which *superstition* fed was shattered against the ramparts of . . . the Europeans' square formations.

It is noteworthy that the first three black rulers set themselves against Vodun because of its potentialities for sedition. The plots to overthrow the old régime had come to fruition at apparently innocent Vodun dances. Although the ingenuous aspect of the dance gathering had deceived the white masters, Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe knew the meaning of the assemblies. All three had to drive their people hard and knew that resentment would be an inevitable consequence; it must not have an opportunity to burgeon at nightly gatherings. Toussaint was the strictest of the three, for he forbade all dances and nocturnal assemblage.[12] The other two singled

10. M. E. Descourtilz, *Voyages d'un naturaliste en Haïti, 1799–1803* (Paris, 1935 ed.), pp. 116–118.
11. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, p. 33.
12. In an order of January 4, 1800.

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114 776 769 the dead a right to whatever their survivors possess, and moreover gives them the right to return to earth as ghosts.[31]

769 Strict rules of mourning prevail, both as regards clothing and behavior. The slightest lapse in the observation of these rules would 765 cause resentment on the part of the dead; fear of retribution would 775 be quite enough to ensure conformity even if public opinion did not. 782 Ghosts have the power to possess mortals, not as the loa do at a Vodun service or dance, but in the manner understood by American Negroes who say they have been "ha'nted," and so, continually thinking of the dead, live in nervous fear of a streak of bad luck. Such possession is a form of persecution, with continual consequent bad luck until the survivor has carried out all his obligations. It is especially significant, however, that a departed spirit takes vengeance only in matters thought by the Haitian to concern the Church. The ghost is not whimsical in his possession of mortals, and cannot resent treatment which is his due. The kind of treatment given a corpse depends upon the kind of death he died: a person struck by lightning, for example, would have no ceremonies at all, for lightning is an act of God.

787 Where the cult of the dead departs entirely from the teachings of 775 the Church is in the matter of magic, a topic shortly to be treated. It 789 may be briefly stated here that ghosts can be summoned back by special adepts for purposes of divination; that certain corpses are thought to be revivified by evil persons who use these soulless, pathetic automata as slaves (these are the notorious *zombis*); and that black magic—that is, powerful influence for evil—can be worked by sorcerers who know how to command ghosts.

771 All other articles of the Vodun creed not already discussed, except 788 one, come under the heading of magic. That exception is the statement: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." The fact is as simple as the affirmation. If the Catholic priests fight Vodun, preaching frequently against its beliefs and practices, that is unfortunate, think the peasants: Vodun does not retaliate by fighting Catholicism. God and the saints have their province, and the loa theirs. The mind of the Haitian is simple enough to accept both sets of spiritual beings, and not philosophical enough to worry over the contradiction. Practically every Vodun worshiper thinks of himself as a Catholic.[32]

31. See Herskovits, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

32. In this sketch of the Vodun creed, it has been constantly emphasized that each locality has its own variations both in belief and practice. The reader who is interested in pursuing the subject further should consult the works of Price-Mars, Herskovits, Dorsainvil, Parsons, Hurston, et al. See Bibliography.

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4. *Magic*

771 It is difficult enough to make a distinction between religion and superstition; it is practically impossible, in dealing with a people who in their closeness to nature are not accustomed to the refinements of "civilized" thinking, to make one between magic and certain aspects of religion. Underlying both is belief in the supernatural; characteristic of both is a faith which recognizes a higher order of cause and effect operating with the lower one familiar in commonplace matters. Anthropologists hold various theories about magic, some saying that it is the set of practices out of which religion evolved, others that it exists for personal and practical ends and has little to do with religion; still others that it is a development out of religion, paralleling and complementing it.[35]

771 One element which distinguishes religious practice from magic is the attitude toward spirits. In religion, the worshiper pays homage •789 and humbly petitions, preserving meanwhile an attitude of humility 782 to spirits or gods who must be propitiated; in magic, the human being, by coërcive words and actions, commands the services of spirits who (if the magical rites have been properly performed) must obey. The distinction is not between good and evil, for a god may have both characteristics and be entirely capable of working harm to mortals. As already noted, in the Haitian system the gods are like men in being mixtures of both principles.

771 Another difference between religion and magic concerns time. 789 Religion is social, open to all worshipers or at least to all of a group or social rank. Its rites are continually and repeatedly performed. 796 Magic, on the contrary, though sometimes public and social, is generally private and, since it is for a specific purpose, is performed only when the need arises. A man who was thoroughly conversant with magic might go through his whole life without ever feeling the need of employing it or having to exert himself to fend it off. One turns to magic as a sophisticated man might turn to medicine. Either may be done without; both may be used to excess.

789 In Haitian Vodun, magic interweaves itself with the general faith.

791 793

35. See, for example, Ruth Benedict, "Magic," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, X, 39–44; A. Goldenweiser, *Early Civilization* (New York, 1922), chaps. X–XI; J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (London, 1907–15), *passim;* R. R. Marett, *The Threshold of Religion* (New York, 1914), *passim;* and Sumner and Keller, *op. cit.*, II, chaps. XXIX–XXXI.

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Everyone believes in it, though few would make nice distinctions between the two. Starting with extremes, the houngan conducting a service with sacrifice is officiating at a purely religious rite, while the bocor (sorcerer) concocting a love charm is dealing wholly in magic. It is perfectly proper, however, for a respectable houngan to brew a mixture, calling on the loa meanwhile for assistance, to cure a sick person: is this magic? Certainly it is private, specific, practical. A respectable houngan will not permit himself to dabble in evil magic, destined to bring misfortune to someone else;[36] but such work is the stock in trade of the bocor, who knows the dangers of his profession yet is willing to run the risk for the sake of high profit. Between the reputable houngan and the awesome bocor may sometimes be found the *caplata*, a sort of jack-of-all-trades, who professes to be able to achieve whatever is demanded of him in magic, whether beneficial or harmful, but whose reputation is not high enough to make men trust him with important magical enterprises. 789 793 791

There exists one continual check to save the gullible from charlatanism on the part of the practitioner: the performer of any kind of magic must make frequent exhibitions of his powers. If the specialist cannot make his magic work, he soon loses his reputation. The career of magic is not one to be entered lightly. Constant search for medicinal plants, constant experimentation, comparison of practice—the requirements of the profession are as strenuous as those for the successful American doctor. Magic is like a live wire: it cannot be handled with impunity. The slightest slip on the part of the bocor might loose divine wrath on the bungler and quack. It is said that almost every bocor dies an evil death, hoist on his own petard. For the houngan the risk is not so great, since in general he relies upon the might of his own special loa, who of old has been familiar with him. True, he may run the risk of purchasing the services of other loa, but it is a risk, since his family loa, quick to feel insult, might punish him. 789 791

Magic runs the gamut from passive to active, simple to complex. The commonest manifestation of magic in Haitian daily life is one familiar to most peoples in the world—the charm. As in Italy and other southern European countries, the Haitian peasant believes in the evil eye. "Maldioque," it is called—a term not far removed from the Italian "*mal occhio*." The common belief is that certain persons, 789 [171]

36. This is commonly called "black" magic.

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789 generally through no wish of their own, have the uncanny ability to cause evil simply by a glance. One look is enough to do the damage. Although theory is a bit vague on this point, it appears that certain irritable spirits use the agency of the human eye to vent their spleen on mortals who are fortunate: good looks and strokes of luck act, consequently, as lodestones to the fateful glance. And where the [175] glance falls ill luck may spread, harming all within reach. In the days [304] of slavery people had such a fear of the evil eye that they did not hesitate to disfigure infants who at birth seemed to be particularly handsome and so likely to attract attention. Nowadays the practice 777 is to avert the glance by making an *arrêt*. This "halt" may be either a 789 special charm worn on the person or else the mark of a half-moon done with a caustic vegetable substance on the cheek. As with Europeans who believe in the evil eye, certain specialists ply a lucrative trade through their reputation for effective charms against the maldioque.

Other charms may be mentioned. There is the *garde* which protects its wearer against evil of any variety—the near relative of the good-luck charm worn by thousands of "civilized" people. There is the *ouanga*, or *wanga*, compounded to achieve a special end, generally an evil one. Faine remarks that ouanga is

[192] A Créole word of African origin [signifying] a philtre or simple of a special kind, compounded by an *houngan* out of such diverse ingredients as a dead chicken, some grains of indigo and maize, amulets, pieces of money, asafoetida, etc., the whole contained in a half-calabash. . . . The Ouanga, placed in the home of an enemy, is designed to bring him bad luck even to the extent of giving him elephantiasis ("gros pied") when he has inadvertently stepped on the ouanga.[37]

The ouanga is the Haitian equivalent of the hoodoo, for through its influence one may (or so he believes) bring illness, misfortune, or death to an enemy. For every ouanga there is a garde, for every evil a cure. The art lies in finding out the nature of the ouanga causing harm, and then knowing exactly what to do to fend it off.

751 Historically the most interesting garde is that called a *drogue*, 789 which is thought to insulate one against wound by weapons or bullets. Reference has already been made to the utter abandon with which the Negroes, both at the time of the insurrection and later in

37. Jules Faine, *Philologie Créole* (Port-au-Prince, 1937), p. 319.

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the struggle for independence, threw themselves against the formidable weapons of the whites. Whenever in spite of the drogue a man was wounded, there was always the explanation of other potent magic, never a surrender of the belief in drogues. Tradition has it that Christophe wore a drogue giving him immunity against all but silver bullets, and that he kept a silver bullet for suicide in case the need should arise—as it did. Drogues were worn by the caco guerrillas, active from 1919 to 1922, who harassed the Marines during the Occupation of the country. 789 751

Such forms of magic are found among practically every known folk. There are traces of charms in the folklore of most "civilized" people, as well as in actual, if secret, use by many apparent sophisticates.

The next commonest application of magic has to do with disease. Haiti is a poor and prevailingly illiterate country in which there are not enough trained medical doctors to serve adequately even the small population of the towns. People who live in the secluded valleys and on the mountainsides receive practically no medical attention. The disease rate if accurate figures could be obtained would certainly be shockingly high, with hookworm and malaria all but universal; and yaws, elephantiasis, and tuberculosis common. In the case of disease and its treatment, it is fair to say that the Haitian peasant is typically primitive. 759 164 758

Sickness is thought to be caused either as a punishment or a warning by one of the loa, or by evil magic wrought by one's enemies. When a man falls ill, therefore, he sends for the specialist, whether houngan, bocor, or caplata, to discover the responsible loa; next, he must learn whether the loa is angry with him, and if so, for what reason; if it is found that the loa is acting through magical compulsion of an enemy, the treatment of the disease will be different from the case of a loa acting without human compulsion. An angry spirit can be appeased by proper sacrifices; a spirit acting as an agent of evil magic must be fought by another spirit, compelled by the countermagic of the patient's specialist. Sometimes the countermagic is simple exorcism by spells and incantations. At other times it is highly involved and dangerous, requiring exotic plants, continuous attention, even illegal practices such as mutilating a corpse. Casual observation might fail to detect the magical element in some of the operations, for they resemble merely the brews or applications of old wives' tales. 753 755

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generally believed that the compact always results fatally for the man 754
who makes it, why anyone should enter into such an engagement. 776
Craving for money or some other immediate form of power, however, bedims the reason; in the face of all-consuming desire, more than one man has been willing to ignore future pain for present reward.

It would be possible to conjure up a whole phantasmagoria of 789
weird belief in connection with magic, although this would be unjust to the character of the Haitians. These people have their share of dire concepts, but no more than might be expected of a simple folk. One final magical belief must be treated, however, for it has reached the ears of the outside world in grim detail. This is the belief [114]
in the *zombi*. The word, as Faine explains, comes from the Bonda [192]
language of Africa (*zumbi* there), and was probably transmitted to Haiti by Portuguese slave traders. Faine continues:

Zombi . . . designates in general a revenant, a phantom, an otherworldly 114
spirit. In popular belief, certain sorcerers have the power, by means of 754
charms and spells, to cause apparent death to individuals and then to bring them back to life again, even after they have been buried. These resuscitated persons, only half-conscious, are then, isolated in distant parts of the country, utilized for field work. Nourished on food from which salt is rigorously excluded, they are thought to be able to regain their natural senses and all their mental faculties if they taste the least grain of this substance. Such legends, circumstantially garbed and presented as actual facts by certain unscrupulous authors, have served as the theme of books which have made a great commotion in foreign countries. Taking advantage of the credulity of a public avid for exotic matters, for mysteries, for the supernatural, these writers have gained, in certain cases, the greatest success of publicity.[38]

Three attitudes are taken in regard to the zombi. There are skep- 754
tics who deny the existence of zombis altogether, setting down as fable most of the ideas current about them, and as mistaken diagnosis all the remainder. There are the credulous (including practically every peasant) who believe in and quite directly fear this potential fate. And there are those who believe that certain bocors know how to administer a subtle poison to intended victims which will cause suspended animation and give the appearance of death. Men in the prime of life suddenly sicken and die for no apparent reason. Once these pseudo-corpses are safely buried, the sinister person who has

38. *Ibid.*, p. 303.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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pronounced; later the lightning will strike, the disease will come, the child will die: the connection between curse and calamity will seem too obvious for contradiction. About certain persons is a look (some call it an aura) of evil which is almost palpable: folk belief has an explanation. For much of the mysterious coincidence in life a sophisticate will simply shrug his shoulders and attempt no explanation; he accepts his doctor's diagnosis or his lawyer's advice, and when these betray him falls back upon the many insurances of civilization. The Haitian needs an explanation for his ills, for he lacks doctors, lawyers, insurance: the explanation of magic may be incorrect, but it is the only one he has and it is backed up by events often enough to seem true. 754

Life is full of mishaps. The Haitian's loa are as real to him as the mountains and trees of his country. It is not to be wondered, therefore, that the peasant thinks his loa directly responsible for much of the evil that befalls. In this explanation the Haitian is not different from millions of other people, even Christians. It would, however, be a great mistake to emphasize the fear in Vodun faith and in the magic which proceeds from it to such an extent that the bright side is forgotten. The gods are likewise responsible for the good luck of mankind. If a man deeply desires to attain a specific good, there is room in both religion and magic for that also. It may be the love of a girl, money to pay a debt, a propitious day for holding a *coumbite* (or coöperative working bee), the birth of a son instead of a daughter: religion and magic avail for all of these, more with some individuals than with others. When an entire community holds a belief, the magic has a double chance of working. It is easier for a man to win his wife if she knows he is working magic to that end, than to persuade her without magic. This kind of magic is also easier to work than that which depends wholly upon the complaisance of the loa, as when rain is needed for crops at the proper time. 776 789 771

Religion, with its sister magic, is not for the Haitian a matter of special days, vague abstractions, or formal propriety. It is a daily strength for daily needs. 771

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the rooms is consecrated to the *loa*, the other to the spirits of twins and the family dead. If the house is a large one with three rooms, the third will be for the Congo *loa*. It was also said that occasionally such places of worship reserve one room for the Rada deities, a second for the Pétro *loa*, and the third for the Congo gods, the dead and twins being worshipped elsewhere. For the Ibo gods, however, it is agreed in Mirebalais that there is never a separate room. But whether the gods are worshipped in a single-room thatched shelter or a more impressive "temple" with a metal roof, none of the major categories of supernatural powers are neglected.

In the main, large ceremonies are concerned with the task of restraining, or less often of pacifying, deities that have been molesting a family, and of making content those who have been demonstrating their goodwill toward the group. Such rites must be sharply differentiated from the ordinary *vodun* dance which, coming after the family ritual, forms but a part of this complex, and serves to express joy at the dangers averted and gratitude for the good that the friendly *loa* are to bring. At the ceremony drums may or may not be employed; at *vodun* dances they are indispensable. Possession is induced at the ceremony by the *hungan's* invocations; at the dance by the rhythm of the drums. The ceremony is attended only by members of the family and those who are specially invited; invitations to the *vodun* dance are broadcast over the countryside, and all take part in the social phases of the evening. For the ceremony, sacrifices not alone of cereals and drinks but also of the blood of animals are provided; at the *vodun* dance only minor offerings are given. And while both types of ritual are a part of a single functioning religious system, it is at the first where the most important end is achieved, that of obtaining protection from hostile gods and gaining the favor of those who are friendly.

The pattern of the ceremony — called a *service loa* — is sufficiently definite to allow a generalized version to be given,

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based on the rituals that were observed. In every case at least two major officiants are necessary, the *prêt' savanne* and the *hungan*, though the role of the latter is the all-important one. Last-minute preparations are made during the final morning, but what is needed will have been accumulated over a period of many months. Tables to hold offerings — sometimes two, sometimes more — are arranged at the sacred places on the family habitation, usually near streams or great trees where the gods reside. Eggs, cereals, drinks, and cornmeal — the food of the gods — are brought, and the animals to be sacrificed are tethered near by. Early in the afternoon the family, dressed in white, assemble, while the *vodun* priest with cornmeal describes on the ground the cabalistic designs called *verver*, and he sees to it that all has its proper place on the altar, whether it be the ever-present crucifix, or the chromolithographs of the saints, or the bottles of "drink" — usually non-alcoholic — or cereals and flour of various kinds. Consecrated water must be on hand, particularly at the big "altar," as the table covered by a canopy to protect the sacred objects is called.

The first part of the ceremony is an *action de grâce*, which in Mirebalais requires an hour or more, but which is said to last two or three hours in southern Haiti. This ritual, entirely derived from the litany of the Church, must always precede any *vodun* ceremony of the kind being considered here. Its purpose is said "to set the *loa* in movement" and to notify them of the rites that are to come, but psychologically it also serves to assure the participants that they are not proceeding to the worship of African gods without having paid friendly homage to God, the ruler of the universe, and the saints. The songs and prayers are brought to a close by an *adoration*, when offerings of money are made by members of the family to pay the officiant. At this point the songs change to a more African rhythm, and the *vodun* priest takes active charge.

As darkness falls, on the first day of the rite, he summons the

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loa troubling the family, or, if it is the second, those which have helped them, to tell whether or not they are willing to receive the sacrificial animals. The omen which indicates their acceptability to the gods is their nibbling at leaves or pecking at grains of corn and other cereals offered them, after which the gods themselves come, possessing their servitors. At midnight or later, as the violence of the possession recedes, the sacrifices are offered. In Mirebalais, at least, the hysteria said to mark the moment "when the blood flows" is not present. The actual killing of the animals, witnessed in numerous instances, is one of the more routine aspects of the ritual.[4]

[184]

After the animals have been killed, a long period of quiet ensues while the work of dressing and cooking them takes place, the ceremony beginning anew when this is done. If evil deities are to be banished or "restrained," they are called once more, and the priest may have to battle with those possessed by them, for these gods have no desire to be driven away, or incarcerated where they cannot escape. Most of the food given such gods is placed in large pots and buried in the earth with them, but, with characteristic human perversity, if the sacrifices have been for good *loa*, these are only allowed to have small portions. The ceremony closes with the coming of day.[5]

78 79 194 176 184

This pattern varies in details, and to the Haitian these differences are important. This is shown by the response of a person in whose company two similar rites were observed, to the question whether the second would resemble the first. The answer was decisive. "No, the ceremony will not be the same. In the first one the most important spirit lived in a mango tree; in the second, it is in a bamboo." The Pétro gods receive black or gray-colored animal offerings, the Rada deities white, red, and vari-colored ones. Only Bosu Trois Cornes, Pelicon, and Pelib are given bullocks, the first because he, like this animal, is horned; the second because he is even more dangerous than Bosu; and Pelib because as a water-god he will otherwise take

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cattle and all other animals when the river floods. Rituals involving these larger sacrifices, however, are held only on the rarest of occasions, and are thus much less common than the ceremony which, typical of those witnessed, may now be described.

This *service* was held in a habitation southwest of Mirebalais, across the Tombe River in the foothills of the mountains. It was said to be the first ceremony of its kind given by this family, and would not have to be repeated for a generation or more. The immediate cause was the occurrence of numerous illnesses and deaths. When members independently consulted their *hungans* to discover the reason for these misfortunes, they were informed that the family *loa* demanded such a rite. Finally one priest, more powerful than the others, became possessed and described in great detail the type of ceremony that was desired: of how many days' duration, the number and kind of sacrifices, what gods were to be called, which troublesome ones must be "sent away" or "restrained," and those of the friendly *loa* who were to be fed.

The entire ritual was conducted out of doors, and at about half past four in the afternoon of Thursday, 5 July, 1934, when first seen, the *action de grâce* had already begun. It was being chanted by the *prêt' savanne*, a bespectacled, middle-aged man, who read from an old prayerbook, while the *hungan* sat quietly by. The officiant was standing in a cleared space with his back toward a grove of trees, facing the "altar." Opposite was a grassy slope, which was separated from this grove by a brook where the Malt' Source lives who watches over the habitation of the family. A white banner hung high in one of the trees a little behind the altar.

This altar, called the *trône*, was a table covered with a white cloth, spread over a frame to form a canopy sheltering its sides and back. A black cloth was beneath the white covering. Under the table a wooden bowl — a *gamelle* — contained water in which sacred leaves had been steeped; near it was a

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78 79 79 79 calabash filled with bananas, millet, rice, beans, egg-plant, and squash. On the table, under the canopy, were a crucifix and holy water, lighted white candles, a lamp of palm oil in a drinking-glass with a floating wick, food — rice cooked in milk, a stew of rice and beans, cooked chicken — and sweetened drinks — *kola,* and orange drinks among the rest, together with small drinking-glasses containing coffee. In addition, roasted and grilled corn, pineapples, fig-bananas, cassava, and sirup could be seen. Fastened to the inside of the canopy were *images,* chromolithographs depicting the saints, there being represented, among others, the Mater Dolorosa (for Erzilie, in honor of those long dead), Our Mother of Perpetual Aid, St. James and St. Anthony. Some thirty feet away, under a palm tree, was another table, for Simbi, without a canopy, on which also stood various cooked and uncooked foods. Still farther away was the "first" table, the most important in the ceremony, for Bosu. It likewise held food and drink; while near it was a large fire, the all-important *boucan* for Legba. The sacrifices, tethered to trees not far from the *trône,* consisted of animals and fowls: one very large black boar, two smaller black pigs, and a black goat, a black turkey, a guinea-hen, two white pigeons, and several chickens, including a black one with ruffled feathers and a number of varicolored ones.

78 79 79 79 During the Catholic-like ritual the singing, led by the *prêt' savanne,* was desultory. The members of the family, some twenty-five persons, were gathered directly in front of the *trône.* From time to time the leader, holding a lighted candle in his hand, would pour water into a small depression that had been dug directly in front of the altar. All knelt for the prayers, the Pater Noster, the Credo, the Ave Maria, and for the long *adoration* and benediction. Throughout this *action de grâce* and much of the rest of the ceremony, two women *hunsi* in white, members of the family, waved red and white banners before the *trône* or later before the table where rit-

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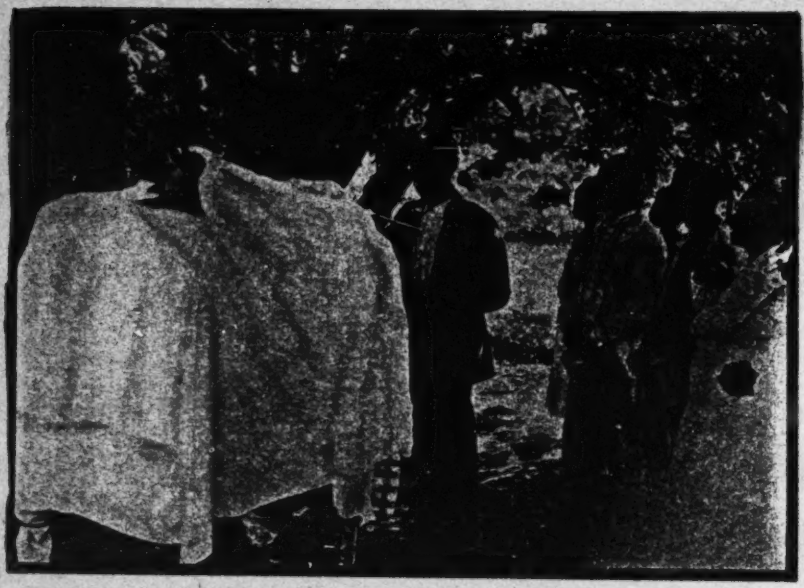

ABOVE, *An* action de grâce *preceding a* vodun *service, when prayers of the Church are read by the* prêt' savanne.

BELOW, *As the* vodun *priest takes over, he twirls a member of the family to bring on possession.*

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[facing P. 160]

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ABOVE, *The possessed woman offering a candle and pouring sanctified water before the altar.*

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BELOW, *The* vodun *priest exhorting the possessed woman.*

[facing P. 161]

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uals were being performed. If they failed to wave their banners vigorously or often enough, the one in charge chided them for their lack of zeal, whereupon their movements would become a kind of dance. During the *adoration* each member of the family was called upon to give coins or candles, the first for the *prêt' savanne*, though this was not his entire fee.

With the benediction, the *action de grâce* came to an end, and the solemn, tired voice of the *prêt' savanne* was heard intoning a hymn, which, in the usual fashion, was repeated by the assembled group until, without interlude, without even a pause, the interpolations of the chorus gradually changed, so that the rhythm became African, and, with the transition, the *vodun* priest took over the leadership. The *hungan* began by repeating several times the phrase which throughout the entire ceremony was to punctuate all its climaxes, "*Grâce* [*et*] *mise'corde*," and the family murmured it in response. He then ordered each member of the family to address himself to the *loa*, telling what troubles had befallen him and what favors he desired. An assistant now took six candles from the *trône*. Proceeding in a counter-clockwise direction, he described a large circle about that part of the meadow where the ceremony was to take place, fixing a candle in the ground at intervals. Four of these were for the four corners of the earth, one was for Mait' 'Bitation — the deity termed Master of the Habitation — and one for the Mait' Source — the Master of the Stream. When the members of the family, each holding a lighted candle, had formed in a line, they were bidden to place these candles in the earth within the area described by the six already there, and as they scattered over the sacred ground, little flickering flames dotted the hillside and the grassy meadow behind the *trône* in the deepening dusk.

Then all returned to the altar, and the *hungan*, taking the first of three plates made ready for him, began to describe *verver*. One plate held white cornmeal flour, one was filled with gray ashes, called Guinea flour, and the third contained

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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78 a black powder of ground, roasted coffee beans. Starting at the
793 tree near the "first" table for Bosu, he traced a white line
796 that, passing the second table and the trees for Simbi, con-
532 tinued to the *trône,* to which subsidiary motifs were then added in gray and black, making of the designs an intricate geometric composition.

78 With bell in hand and a small whistle in his mouth, both of
79 which later were entrusted to his assistants, the *hungan* went
[533] about, blowing the whistle at intervals to call the *loa.* Singing, he directed that a wooden boat-shaped basin containing water be placed in front and a little to the left of the *trône* for washing the feet of the sacrificial animals. Though all the family were present, they were again ritually summoned in song to come with the sacrifices and were ordered to stand near by with lighted candles while the animals were bathed. As they gathered, the *hungan* became possessed by Simbi, who took it upon himself to set the fee for conducting this ceremony at 117.10 gourdes. When he announced this sum, loud pleas of poverty were heard from the family, while speaking through the priest, the god bargained with them until the sum of 110 gourdes was finally agreed upon.

[533] The *hungan* now sang a long invocation, inviting the gods of all those places where Africans live to come. First the feet of the fowl were washed, then those of the pigs, and finally of the goat. Each fowl was passed over the body and head of every
[822] member of the family as it was presented with the requisite song to the proper *loa* — the red and black cock for Legba, the black fowl for Gede, the red one for Ogun, the white for Damballa, and the fowl with ruffled plumage for Congo Zandor. Then each was placed on the ground in front of three small piles of food taken from the *trône.* They were watched with anxiety by all present, for the pecking at the food is a signal that the god accepts the animal given him. The small pigs for 'Ti Kita Demembré, and the boar for Bosu, were offered the same food as the fowls; the goat for Erzilie Gé Rouge was pre-

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sented with the leaves on a branch of the sacred tree. All the animals ate, a favorable omen. 78 79

This ceremony was held during the rainy season, but the usual afternoon rains had held off. At this time, however — about eight o'clock — threatening clouds came up and soon the tropical downpour began. The heavy rain continued for more than an hour and the subsequent drizzle did not end until almost midnight, but this was not permitted to interfere with the proceedings. Now the participants took places before the "first" table, for Bosu, again with their offerings. Inasmuch as Bosu was the deity who had shown the greatest ill will toward the family, those present awaited the decision with heightened tenseness as the goat, frightened by the many people gathered about, hesitated long before he nibbled at the leaves held out to him by the *hungan*. But eventually all the animals ate, meeting this paramount test, and as each partook of the food the *hungan* several times called out "*Grâce mise'corde,*" the family echoing their response with emotion. Now two men who had strong Bosu gods knelt before the table, and the fowls were again and again touched to their heads and passed over their bodies in gestures that described the sign of the cross, in order to induce their gods to come to them.

As the singing became louder and more rhythmical, various [533] members of the family became possessed. The deities who responded to the calls were, in the order of their appearance, [176] Kita, Erzilie, Simbi, Bosu, Damballa, and finally Gede (Papa Gedenibo). The possessions took their characteristic African form, with some of the possessed running about, jumping into the fire for Legba, and stamping on the embers with their bare feet, others reeling with arms waving, still others rolling on the ground, which, as the rain continued, soon became very muddy. Most of those under possession were women, but about nine-thirty one man became possessed by Simbi, and later another by Gede. As the *loa* "came" in ever greater [176]

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78 number, exclamations of pleasure were heard that the gods
79 were responding. Outwardly, the ritual seemed completely
776 disorganized, the "*loa*" and the spectators moving, mud-bespattered, tense, from the table for Bosu to that for Simbi, and back, or to the *trône*.

533 The singing went on without interruption to the accom-
539 paniment of the bell and occasional blasts of the whistle.
78 Among the songs heard during this period of possession were:
79
[534]

Bosu li join' qui chose a tè,	Bosu found something on the ground,
Pas remassé li.	Do not pick it up.
Bosu ma'ché,	Bosu goes about,
Li join qui chose a tè',	He found something on the ground,
Pas remassé li.	Do not pick it up.
Un va entrave	You will come to harm
Si ou ramassé li.	If you pick it up.
Va enragé Bosu.	You will anger Bosu.
Simbi en Deux Eaux,	Simbi en Deux Eaux
M'we fé p'ou,	I do for you,
F'e p'moin,	Do for me,
Fi-a, Congo,	Help, O Congo,
Congo Zandor.	Congo Zandor.
Simbi Kita Kita, travaille pour nous,	Simbi Kita Kita, work for us,
Jodi-a pour nous,	Today for us,
Demain pou' zott'.	Tomorrow for others.
Erzilie, o Lemba,	Erzilie, o Lemba,
M'ap' mandé coté Erzilie ye.	I ask, where is Erzilie.
Mangé a'paré.	The food is ready.
Gedenibo, derrière la croix, Gede,	Gedenibo, behind the cross, Gede.

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Devant Baron, Gede,	Before Baron, Gede,
Derrière la croix, Gede,	Behind the cross, Gede,
Jodi-a m'p' nan sang m'we,	Today I am troubled,
Gedevi, rhele Gede, ça Gede,	Gedevi, call Gede, this Gede,
Jodi-a m'pas nan sang moin.	Today I am troubled.
Balai, rousé, cerclé, quitté.	Cease to sweep, sprinkle, hoe.
Moin pas nan sang, Baron Samedi.	I am troubled, Baron Samedi.

Shortly after eleven o'clock the *hungan* intervened to calm those possessed, for the time was at hand to give the sacrifices. Summoning the family to assemble again before the *trône* with the offerings, he commenced a long ritual in which each creature was prepared by being carefully washed and combed, while the boar for Bosu was also fastidiously perfumed and powdered. At the direction of the *hungan*, the fowls were first offered, the killing taking place at a distance of some thirty or forty feet behind the *trône*. The chickens were held with the two wings and the head in the left hand, so that the neck was exposed. The knife was passed twice over the neck to describe a cross, after which each fowl was cleanly and skillfully dispatched. One of the assistants of the *hungan* held a small calabash in which some of the blood of each animal was caught, and another, knife in hand, sang with him that they were offering this *koklo* to the deity for whom it was intended. As the last of the chickens was being killed, the *hungan* left the *trône* and quietly strangled the pigeons for Damballa. 78 79

All possessions had ceased, except that of a man "mounted" by Gede and a woman by Simbi. The man particularly attracted much attention, for Gede is known as a gossip, and so diverting were his revelations of family scandal that all were too absorbed listening to him to show any interest in the sacrifice of the animals. [776] [521]

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78 fice of the animals. At one point the *adjanikon* holding the
79 calabash in which the blood was caught threw it on the ground
533 in anger, declaring that animals should not be killed for people who were too indifferent to come and sing the songs that accompany the giving of offerings. Some of those present thereupon detached themselves and came to watch the killing of the two small pigs, as the song, repeated over and over, changed to:

[539]

O minmin, moin couteau la,	Oh, here, here is my knife,
Soso na pé tué, soso,	A pig is to be killed, a pig,
Jodi-a.	Today.

78 At this point several other men joined in handling the larger
79 animals, for now the one killing the sacrifices could only hold the mouth of each beast before he cut its throat. And when the boar was to be sacrificed, even more assistance was needed, and a line of rope had to be fastened about his snout before he could be handled at all. The killing was ended when the
[533] sacrificial goat was slaughtered, to the accompaniment of the
[539] song:

Ma'ze Louisa,	Miss Louisa,
M'ap' tué ou jodi-a,	I kill you today,
Pour Erzilie, 'Ti Kita,	For Erzilie, 'Ti Kita,
Gé Rouge, Pié Sèche.	Gé Rouge, Pié Sèche.

The calabash containing the blood was now placed on the *trône,* while the carcasses were gathered in an orderly pile in front of it. The *hungan* described a circle about the massed bodies with cornmeal, also making two white lines in the form
[465] of a cross over them. He then began to sing the *adoration* that follows every killing, while the family and all others present threw coins for him into the dish that rested on the bodies, only a few sous of which he gave to his assistants. This rite ended as the women came to him one by one, each to take a

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chicken for cleaning and cooking; the larger animals were given to the men, who carried them some distance behind the *trône* to dress them. For a time Gede continued to possess the young man, who went about talking nasally, demanding gifts and distributing rum, but all others sat quietly about, talking as they worked.

After the food was cooked, preparations were made for the concluding part of the night's ceremony, when the *loa* who had been troubling the family were to be *renvoyé* (sent away) or *borné* (restrained). Those thus "sent away" and buried were Erzilie Gé Rouge, Bosu Trois Cornes, 'Ti Kita Demembré, and 'Ti Jean Pié Sèche, while Læmba and Simbi djo (Simbi nan d'leau) were "restrained." The head, feet, intestines, heart, liver, kidneys, and some meat of each beast and fowl having been separately prepared, they were placed in proper receptacles, large jars or baskets, each of which also contained a number of needles with broken eyes, and thread. This was to give these undesirable spirits an *occupation*. For the *loa*, when buried, is told that before it may again come to harass the family it must thread the needles, and since it can never insert the thread in an eyeless needle, it can never reappear.

Preparations over, the troublesome *loa* were called to the table for Simbi, and as each entered the head of a devotee, the possessed one fought with the *hungan*, for the *loa*, not wishing to be restrained, offered stubborn resistance. "If the *hungan* had not been masterful, much evil could have happened at this time, because he had to fight three strong *loa*." When they had at last been subdued, the *hungan*, bearing a large wooden cross, walked to a place outside the habitation, where first he made *verver* and then caused a hole to be dug, in which he placed the baskets of food. As he did this he formally announced that this food was for the family's *loa* for whom there was no further need; that having given this food, the family had no further obligation toward them; and they must there-

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fore never return to trouble the living. As witness to this, he was now putting the cross in place, "which causes everything that is evil to flee," to remain until it rotted away.

Simbi djo was "restrained" where the *trône* had been; Lemba under the mango tree near the place of the table for Bosu. Some of the meat of the pigs was buried in these places with all other kinds of cooked food, and the gods were told that they were to repose there for from seven to seventeen years, after which they would again be fed. A cross of iron was buried with the cooked meat, and as each jar, both now and earlier, was put in place, this song was sung:

Poussé allé,	Get you gone,
Poussé allé,	Get you gone,
Icit pas pays ou.	This is not your country.
Ça lan Guinée,	It is Guinée,
Qui pays ou.	That is your country.

A violent rain-storm not only made it impossible to reach the place of the ceremony the following day, but also made it necessary for the family to defer all but a few of the more essential rites. The second day's ritual was thereupon put over to Saturday, when according to original intentions the *vodun* dance that had been planned to close this complex of ceremonies was to have occurred, but which in consequence was postponed until some weeks later.

The ritual of the second day of this *cérémonie* began much earlier than that of the first, for by about one-thirty in the afternoon the *action de grâce* was almost completed. As one approached, a newly dug mound of earth with a cross over it where the troublesome deities had been buried was to be seen just outside the land belonging to the family. The cross was draped with a black cloth, and was itself painted blue and white, while a rosary and a magic *garde* of native twine were suspended from it.

On this afternoon the ritual was performed in two places, a

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spot somewhat farther down the stream than the site of the earlier ceremony, and later at the family habitation on the hill. There was one table arranged as a *trône* and under its canopy, beside the *images*, the candles, and the crucifix, were white foods such as rice and white beans. Instead of Pétro *loa*, this time the ceremony was to bring Rada gods who were to be asked for children, good health, and good fortune. The *trône* was just below the confluence of two brooks, near some great palm trees. Near by was a weir, while in the larger stream, below the point of juncture, were two small natural pools.

When the *action de grâce*, which did not differ from that witnessed earlier, was ended, the *hungan* again made his *verver*, and these were yet richer in design than on the previous occasion. As he finished he took a number of the women of the family by the right hand, spinning each in turn several times to induce possession. The *loa* Damballa Siligwe "came" almost at once, possessing a woman who threw herself into the stream, threshing about as a "serpent." No one troubled himself to attend to her, however, as she emerged and walked about in her wet clothes behind the *trône* and in front of it, so that, according to the *hungan*, the *loa* became angry and would not come, thus making it necessary to sing many more songs of praise and entreaty. As he sang, the *hungan* seized one member of the family after another by the hand, spinning them about and making them kneel before the *trône* to bring the *loa*.

Moin dit Gran',	I say, Gran',
Bonjou', Gran',	Good-day, Gran',
Bonjou', bonjou'.	Good-day, good-day.
Enfants, la yo, Gran',	It is their children, Gran',
Qui ap mandé coumen nous ye-e,	Who ask how you are,
Enfants yo	Their children
Qui ap dit bonjou'.	Who say good-day.

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Damballa Wedo,	Damballa Wedo,
Papa, nan pié boi',	Papa, in the tree,
Moin pa' pe' monté.	I cannot climb.
Papa ou c'é' coulev',	Papa, you are a serpent,
Papa ou c'é' Dagowe.	Papa, you are Dagowe.
Damballa Siligwe, Anvalou,	Damballa Siligwe, Anvalou,
Nous salué ou.	We salute you.
Ça nous dit,	What do you say,
Alada Sisigwe?	Alada Sisigwe?
Papa Damballa moin,	Papa Damballa mine,
Signalé nous,	Show us,
Signalé nous Dahomey.	Show us Dahomey.
Nous acé! Nous acé!	We are here! We are here!
Papa Ogun qui met' pié	Papa Ogun who enters
Nan humfort.	The *humfort*
Ago, ago-e!	*Ago, ago-e!*
Kadia Bosu,	Kadia Bosu,
Nous acé,	We are here,
Kadia Bosu.	Kadia Bosu.

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These songs failed to bring the gods, and the mother of the girl who had been possessed was sternly commanded to take her up the hill to the house and dress her in clean dry clothes. Before she could return, another young woman who, it was later learned, was a member of the family from the region of Grand Bois, some distance away, came running down the hill possessed by Damballa. Crying out for more room, she ordered those sitting near the *trône* to move on as she roughly pulled others toward her. Now the *loa* came rapidly, with six or seven immediate possessions; and even one reluctant girl who stood by nervously, hesitating to soil the fresh white dress trimmed in blue which she, like the other women of the family, was wearing, was soon " mounted " by her *loa*.

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Once again the *hungan* made *verver* and, as he did so, the woman possessed by Damballa, leaping across the brook, climbed into a calabash tree, holding to the near-by palm fronds for support as she shook the tree to punctuate her shouted directions and demands. As she climbed higher and higher, the *hungan* pleaded: "Go no further, Papa. Climb no further," but to no avail. By this time it was after four o'clock, and since this day the rains did not delay, the *hungan* entreated her to descend from the tree, to permit him and the others assembled there to go up the hill out of the downpour. Wooing the "*loa*" with song, he urged: [533] [539]

Verver ci mè' a tè,	Here is *verver* on the ground,
Pinga cé'émonie moin,	Take heed of my ceremony,
Shango, ago-e!	Shango, *ago-e!*

While he sang, he made *verver* about the base of the tree on which the woman was standing and along the bank of the stream. But he still had no success, for she persisted with much violence to recount the wrong that had been done by the family to provoke the anger of the gods — how one member had bargained with a *hungan* to induce him to send evil *loa* to the other members of the family, that they might die and his inheritance might be the greater. Before she would consent to descend, all the sacrifices had to be brought for her inspection, and all those possessed were required to go up the hill and dress in clean clothes. Returning in the rain, the freshly dressed women gathered about the base of the tree, exhibiting the sacrificial animals to the *loa*, the chickens held high in the hands of their donors, and the goats and sheep prominently placed. Slowly, very slowly, as the downpour continued, the woman began to descend, and many times she hesitated, so that it was more than ten minutes before she reached the ground. [532]

But even after she was on the ground and the *hungan* was

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79 preparing to seek shelter from the rain, new possessions continued, until, saying: "The *loa* are greater than I am," he
[533] went on with the ceremony, singing:
[539]

Ossange Damballa Wedo,	Ossange Damballa Wedo,
Laissé coulé, Ossange-o!	Permit coiling, Ossange!
Ai-bobo!	*Ai-bobo!*
Moin entré,	I enter,
M'ap saluè loa.	I salute the *loa.*
Ogun, Ogun Achade,	Ogun, Ogun Ashade,
O, Ogun Achade,	O, Ogun Ashade,
Hier soir Ogun fai' yun rêve'-o	Last night Ogun dreamed a dream-o
Rêve' li tourné lègèdé.	Dreamed he turned a spy.

A woman became possessed by Damballa, as did the young man who had "had" Gede the preceding night of the ceremony; the woman was in a gay mood, going about smiling and laughing, while the man threw himself in the water and rolled like a snake. And since the *loa* were coming so strongly, the *hungan* began the ceremony of washing and presenting the sacrificial animals, which this time included two white male goats, one very large and one smaller, a white sheep, and six or seven fowls of various colors. The presentation made, the entire group marched singing up the path to the houses, the flag-bearers saluting with their banners the woman so happy in her possession.

[346] As the procession came up the hill, it passed a newly built small house, intended to serve as the family place of worship for the *loa* now introduced into the habitation, and a framework of brush, or *tonnelle,* that had been erected as a shelter under which the postponed *vodun* dance was to have taken place. Without pausing, they proceeded slowly to the gate-

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way, where a ceremony was held for Legba, the guardian of entrances, that he might permit the other *loa* to pass. 78 79

At the direction of the *hungan*, the bars of the gateway were let down as prayers, the Pater Noster and the Ave Maria, were said. Then he sang: [539] [533]

Papa Legba,	Papa Legba,
Fé ou gagné patience	Have patience
Pou' ou service.	At your *service.*
Ago, ago-e!	*Ago, ago-e!*
Papa Legba,	Papa Legba,
Sorti lan Guinée,	Come from Guinea,
Pou' nou' passé.	That we may pass.

As this song and others of similar tenor were sung, the man who had been first possessed by Gede, and earlier in the afternoon by Damballa, strode shouting along the path beside the entrance, into the near-by fire, which was made the hotter as several men blew on it and poured rum into the flames; he stamped in it until he was seized and calmed. The *hungan* once more began to make *verver*, this time at the gateway, as he sang: [533] [539]

Papa Legba,	Papa Legba,
Na pé mandé,	We ask you,
Ça wé la?	What do you see there?
Adoré-é-o	We worship, oh,
A-i bobo!	*A-i bobo!*
Papa Legba,	Papa Legba,
Ouvri barrière pou' nou', ago-ye!	Open the gateway for us, *ago-ye!*
Ouvri chemin pou' moin.	Open the path for me.

As he sang, he passed the red and black cock for Legba over the body of the possessed man sitting in a chair, who thereupon resumed his excited movements, reeling along the path 78 79 533 539

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and from time to time again tramping in the fire, as these songs were heard:

Legba cuiscuignon,	Legba who limps along,
À la longtemps,	It is a long time
Moin pas wé 'ou.	I have not seen you.
Papa Legba, wé!	Papa Legba, look!
L'ouvri barrière pou' nous passé.	Open the gateway that we may pass.
E-ago-ye!	*E-ago-ye!*
Legba chita lan barrière	Legba who sits on the gate
Ba nou' passé.	Give us the right to pass.
Ago-ye-e!	*Ago-ye-e!*

The chicken was also passed over other members of the family, but without bringing on any new possessions, and was several times presented on both sides of the entrance-way, wings outstretched, the *hungan* occasionally half-kneeling. Finally stepping inside the entrance, he wrung the neck of the animal, which was destined later to be roasted and to hang for several days over the gateway. While the *loa* Legba was dancing in the fire, Gran' Erzilie "came to the head" of a woman who, after violent possession and a great deal of pacing back and forth in company with "Legba," went down on her knees. Still another woman became possessed, by Damballa, and rolled in the mud. Another procession, for the return to the *tonnelle,* was formed as a lilting song was sung, with everyone dancing to it. "Legba," walking backwards, led the way, calling out: "This way, Papa, come this way." The one possessed by Gran' Erzilie followed on her knees, while, some distance behind, "Damballa" rolled from side to side as she moved her body face-downward along the path. After a few moments the woman on her knees began to beat the ground rhythmically as she proceeded, and as "Damballa" caught up with her, she beat this rhythm on the thighs and buttocks

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of the other. Arrived at the *tonnelle*, both were finally induced to come to their feet, to be immediately sent away and freshly dressed. 78 79

Inside the family shrine, on the ground at the right hand as one entered, were the articles of food and drink that usually constitute a "dry" offering, or *mangé sec* — rolls, cassava, cakes, grilled maize, coffee grounds, sirup, and bowls of cornmeal called *accansan*, with water. The *hungan* made more *vervet* just inside this door to honor the gods that were to be worshipped here, as the "ceremony of the sheep," a sacrifice for the Rada *loa* named St. John the Baptist, was begun. A table was placed under the *tonnelle*, and a container of water in which the animal was first washed. He was then made to stand on the table, where a fresh white table-cloth had been spread, while he was combed, powdered, and perfumed. A piece of white cotton cloth was tied about the horns of the animal, and a lighted white candle was held in place on the right horn or at times between the horns by an attendant. While a song honoring Damballa Wedo was sung, the *hungan* went into the small house to care for the two women, who were still in a state of possession. He set them dancing inside and after a few minutes they were led forth by "Legba," each to pour water and to light a candle before the sheep. The two goats were next washed and "dressed," white cloths and soft beeswax candles also being twisted about their horns. Other offerings under the *tonnelle* were a white pigeon for Damballa and a red cock for Ogun. [346]

Each member of the family now took the fowl or animal that was his offering, as all were summoned inside the shrine, where final directions were given regarding the disposal of the sacrifices, and invocations were spoken to the gods. After this they came out, placing the animals before the men who were waiting to see to the killing, which was carried out in a manner even more matter-of-fact than on the first night of the ceremony. By this time it was about half past six o'clock, and

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night had fallen. As before, the men addressed themselves to the task of butchering the animals, the women to that of preparing and cooking the fowls.

It was perhaps five o'clock in the morning before all the food was made ready to serve. The *hungan*, who had been taking a well-deserved rest, was called, and prepared a plate for each *loa*. After giving every member of the family a dish, he arranged them in two rows before the small house of worship, himself heading the group, attended by two *hunsi* with white and red candles and sacred water. First reciting the Pater Noster, the Ave Maria, and the Credo, he announced to the Rada *loa* that their food was ready and that they were invited to come and partake of it. As he said this, each person entered the house as directed, to place the plate he carried on the table, where a cloth, knives, forks, spoons, and condiments already had been arranged. Many members of the family became possessed, an excellent omen that the Rada *loa* were eagerly coming to partake of the offerings. The head of the goat was placed on the floor, the roasted cock was hung above the gate leading to the habitation. Then the door of the house of worship was closed that the *loa* might eat undisturbed, and for several hours people sat quietly by. Finally the *hungan* knocked at the door to announce his entrance and asked if the *loa* had finished. He then called the family to come and eat what the gods had left, and by ten o'clock that morning, everything was consumed.

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[For information on the curing and magical functions of the hungan, see also category 793.]

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a stream, there to remain until, becoming impatient, it demands to be taken out. A ceremony then brings back the tortured soul and makes of it a "*loa nan canarie*—a *loa* in a jar"—which thereafter acts as a guard for its family.

There is little agreement as to the place of residence of the *loa*. In general, it is believed that they come from Guinée each time they are called, returning when they have, in the native idiom, "descended from the heads of their horses"—that is, when the possession of their devotees has ceased. Those "under the water," however, being Haitians, remain in Haiti for seven years until the ceremony just mentioned, of putting them *nan canarie*, has been performed, when they, like the other *loa*, return to Guinée. At the same time, all recognize the African character of the *loa*, whether they be gods brought from Africa or the Créole *loa* from Haiti itself.

Worship of the *loa* is directed by priests of the cult. The terms *papaloi* and *mamaloi* as designations for male and female priests, almost universally employed by non-Haitian writers, are practically unknown in Mirebalais, where, as in most regions of Haiti, a priest is called a *hungan*, a priestess a *mambu*.[24] Besides the *hungan* (or *mambu*), and the *gangan*, a term applied to a *hungan* of renown, is the *bocor*, a practitioner of magic, not a member of any *vodun* priesthood, but a man who has acquired his power by the purchase of spirits. He is particularly differentiated from the *hungan* and *mambu* by the fact that the *loa* of their own accord are believed to have given "*connaissance*"—the knowledge of healing and helping, to these latter.[25] Not all gods can endow their devotees with this *connaissance*. Some of the Rada deities, in addition to those of the Ogun group who give it, are Legba, Damballa, Aizan, Bosu, St. Jean, and Agwe Woyo; among the Pétro gods it is conferred by Bosu Trois Cornes, Simbi d'leau, Gede, Ossange, Malt' Gran' Bois, and Malt' Calfou (Carrefour). Simbi en Deux Eaux and Simbi Proméné both give magic power, the former conferring knowledge of excellent protectives against

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from its ill effects after the evil has been exorcised, must also know the forces they are combating if they are to achieve any measure of success. By the same token, practitioners of black magic must know what steps may be taken to counteract their *wangas* so that, if necessary, they can in turn call forth supernatural emissaries to strengthen the evil impulses originally set in motion. In this sense, therefore, the *hungan,* the *gangan,* the *bocor,* and the *caplata* employ essentially the same techniques and operate with the same forces, the difference between them being one of degree rather than of kind. "*Hungan, c'est magazin. Gaigné un pile marchandise* — The *hungan* is like a shop. He has a lot of merchandise," says the Haitian, quoting a well-known proverb as he makes the point.

In the main, it can be said that though the *hungan* and the *gangan* practice magic, their main preoccupation is with the *loa* — the maladies they send to affect a man and his possessions — while the *bocor* is concerned almost exclusively with setting in motion the agents that actuate black magic, and the *caplata* dabbles in anything that is wanted. One important means whereby the sorcerer obtains his powers is the evil *loa,* but there is this essential difference between them: the gods of the *hungan* are family gods who come to him through the natural course of inheritance, endowing him with the *connaissance* that gives him his control over the supernatural world, while the *bocor* buys his gods. And when a god is bought, it is always acquired so as to enhance the position of its owner at all costs, despite the knowledge that the power thus purchased is dearly bought, bringing its own eventual punishment. Sometimes an ambitious *hungan* adds to his familial *loa* other "purchased" gods, but this is resented by the deities who have given him his powers, so that in time these benevolent powers take all means to humble and crush him. Furthermore, gods acquired in this way pass on to unwilling members of their owner's family and, after a generation or two of mischief-making, must be "restrained" or "banished." A number of

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points — or oblique designations — makes clear the distinction between the two, for the *bocor* invariably and certain *hungans* on occasion are called *nèg' mazi maza,* "Negro who wears his back to the front," or, again, those who "serve with both hands." Though by no means shunning the services of the practitioner, the Haitians of Mirebalais nevertheless look upon the working of magic with a cynicism that is reflected in the gossip about happenings that befall all who practice it, in any form, and particularly those who work evil magic. It is said: "The *hungan* often dies an evil death, and the *bocor* who makes *wanga* almost always. These people kill each other by magic"; or one hears of a woman who one day went to the cemetery to obtain materials needed for her unsavory work and was struck and killed by the thunderbolts which are believed to smite sorcerers.

To keep his reputation, a practitioner of magic, good or evil, must make continual demonstration of his powers. For example, in prescribing a magical cure, it is incumbent upon the *hungan* or *mambu* to foresee all eventualities, even where the directions are not followed, a prescription which is regarded as a strong check on the charlatan and is the reason why a practitioner is prudent in refusing to accept a case beyond his power to aid, since persistent failure to achieve cures will lose a *hungan* his reputation and his practice. Naturally, certain practitioners do not fail on occasion to turn the anxiety of a family over a serious illness to their own account, but inasmuch as the cures made by a man are the most adequate proof of his power, the feeling is that his clients have an unquestioned safeguard against chicanery. This point of view, it may be noted, is of undoubted importance in perpetuating a living faith in magic.

An example of how rapidly a practitioner of magic can lose prestige when some mishap occurs to him was encountered when an important *gangan* of the valley was brought into court charged with the theft of a pig which he claimed was

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about to eat such food, for he feels a shudder pass through his body, and his arm becomes heavy, as was the case with a woman who three times dropped a piece of "beef" she was about to place in her mouth, before she realized the warning. 775 [776]

It can readily be seen how varied are the manifestations of evil magic. What are the forces behind them? What gives them power? What makes their unsavory ends possible of attainment? Their power comes from God, for, according to belief, everything comes from God, in the sense that God made the world as it exists. Therefore all beings are free to do anything they can contrive to do, though once dead they are called to account for their deeds. "Good and evil are two brothers; life and death are two brothers. All four come from God. They do not come from the *loa*." 754 771 776

But more immediately this power comes in great measure from the dead. Before a *bocor* makes a *wanga*, he asks permission of God, the Devil, Maît' Carrefour, Maît' Cimitière, Maît' Gran Bra, and Maît' d'l'Eau. Baron Samedi, perhaps the most important figure among those who aid in working black magic, lives in the cemetery. Though he is a *loa* and may possess those who appeal to him to work evil, this role is subordinate to his role as the power behind magic that kills. He controls the souls of those whose end has come as a result of magic, and when he is called at midnight, the sound of the clanking of chains is heard as he comes. He is envisaged as a dwarf. After his approval has been purchased for a projected deed, appeal is then made to Gede, for especially where it is a question of killing, though everything may have been made ready with Baron, Gede must "dig the grave." Herein lies the importance of Gede, for he is the court of last resort, the final power in matters of death. 754 776 [791]

Gede, however, is just, and even though Baron has marked a victim, Gede can refuse to concur in his decision. "If you do not merit death, Gede will refuse it," say the Haitians. It therefore sometimes comes about that though all preparations have

789 all aspects of the natural and supernatural. But the reputable cult priest
797 does not dabble in "black" magic—the kind that maims or destroys hu-
793 man beings. One who does so is said to "work with two hands": one for
754 the loa and one for evil. (The expression *servi dé main*—"serving with two hands"—is also applied to a cult chief who deals with deities of more than one "nation.") Many a cult priest in making his ritual flour drawings on the earth holds his left hand behind his back and draws with his right, giving testimony that he "works with one hand" only.

793 Each cult priest maintains his own cult temple, or *hounfor*. There are
794 no cult officials above him, as there is no formal religious organization
[346] beyond the hounfor itself. Within his own special community he is therefore the chief religious functionary, the apex of an intratemple social organization. Under the cult priest, ordinarily, there are two grades of assistants, and below them two classes of servitors.

793 The cult priest is usually referred to as a *houngan*, a Fon (Dahomean)
787 title signifying "spirit chief." Sometimes he is called *gangan* (a Bantu
171 word meaning "conjuror" or "doctor")[2] or *capla*. He also is known by
● 791 the title *bocó* or *bocor*, which seems to be derived from *bocono*, the diviner or priest of the Dahomean Fa cult.[3] The bocor is, in fact, sometimes referred to as a *divineur*, and he is regarded by some Haitians as a clairvoyant and a practitioner of magic. As in Dahomey, the bocor in Haiti foretells fate through the throwing of shells or chips, much in the manner of the secular game *mayamba*. He also reads destiny with small sticks or ashes. In earlier days the cult priest was sometimes known by the Yoruba name *babalao*, a title which has been corrupted to *papaloi*. A female cult leader is known as a *mambo*. She is presumed to have, in a general way,
[562] the same powers as the houngan, though in some quarters her *connaissance*, or "understanding," is not regarded so highly, and her status is believed to be somewhat lower.

794 Directly under the houngan is his chief assistant, the *laplace*, and perhaps a little below him on the ladder, the *mambo caille*. The laplace is regarded as the vice-houngan, and he assumes responsibility for running the hounfor in the absence of his chief. The mambo caille, a woman, runs the cult center in the absence of both the houngan and the laplace. One step farther down the ladder is the *houngénicon*, who acts as a sort of chief of the main body of devotees. These high-ranking assistants to the houngan are sometimes called *badjicans*, or keepers of the altar.

[171] The servitors of the cult are known as *hounsi*, or "spirit wives," a name that was given to certain categories of cult servants in Dahomey.[4] There are two main groups of hounsi: *kanzo* (those who have passed through a ritual fire test) and *bossale* (those whose loa are wild or untamed). The

[2] [Footnote appears on p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]
[3] [Gorer, Africa Dances, p. 129; Herskovits Dahomey, II, 208 ff. Cf. p. 349, Category 116. --Analyst]
[4] [Foot note appears on p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]

793 approval of the candidate's elevation is needed. He is also regarded as
[769] being on more intimate terms with the family ancestors who, likewise,
must be in accord with the proceedings. The candidate for the asson is
[783] confined within the hounfor for a number of days, during which he takes purification baths and participates in other rituals. The rites that take place during this period are prescribed by the elder priest who has assumed responsibility. When the purification is ended, the candidate emerges into the *peristyle* (roofed court) to participate in the general service, and to undergo further tests.

Present during the ceremonies are all the principal houngans of the region—men who will be friendly associates of the new priest or, possibly, unfriendly competitors. The candidate is tested on his knowledge
[789] of how to use the asson and the tiny hand bell, and in the course of the service he is mounted by the loa who is the chief protector of the cult tem-
[782] ple. Animals are sacrificed, and all the loa sacred to the hounfor are invoked and asked for their approval and support. But it is not only the loa
[794] and the dead who must indicate their approval. The elder houngan polls the hounsi kanzo on whether they will accept their new cult chief and fol-
[533] low him. He also asks the chief drummer, who polls his assistant drummers. It is taken for granted that the decision is in the hands of the hounsi. The consensus is known before the actual service, but the formality of asking the question is observed. Should the hounsi refuse to accept the candidate for the asson, the elevation cannot take place.

793 The city and the countryside contain many self-styled houngans and
554 bocors who are not recognized as bona fide by the community, regardless
62 of the route by which they claim to have achieved their station. Sometimes
[791] they are regarded as *pas fort* (not strong); that is, they do not have profound knowledge and understanding. The Haitian is quick to detect the difference between a houngan who knows and one who does not know. Many are stated to be outright fakes. One man who attempted to hold a service in Port-au-Prince aroused such contempt and disgust that a number of persons who had been drawn by genuine interest walked out with remarks that the man should be punished. In fact, his failure to show any
[533] essential qualifications for the houngan's role was commented upon in a song of ridicule that made its appearance at a secular dance that same night. The song noted some of the humorous aspects of the service, such as when the "impostor" struck himself vigorously on the head with the flat of a machete to show his "strength" and virtually incapacitated himself for the rest of the evening.

346 It is easily observed that no two hounfors are exactly alike. They differ

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

house. A round, polished Indian stone is occasionally used as a *garde habitation*. And old people speak of a very powerful charm known as a *gros arrête* which in former times was placed on the trail to protect entire villages or valleys. 789

Still another potent defensive charm is the *pouin*, which is the product of ritual magic within the cult temple. A pouin may be an actual bundle containing a formula of special ingredients; more often, it is invisible, consisting of magical forces unleashed into space by the houngan. There are many ceremonies in the hounfor devoted to the projecting of these magical forces. They are called *cérémonie pouin* or *cérémonie magie* and are dramatized by special cult songs and dances. Sometimes the magie ceremony is woven into a more generalized cult ritual. The powers of the pouin are regarded as wider and more potent than those of the arrête. Pouins are said to protect an individual or a group not only against other magic but also against natural phenomena and accident. A pouin may ward off lightning, for example, or protect one from falling trees or from shipwreck or drowning. But it is not solely defensive magic. It may bring success in fishing, or produce a good crop in one's garden, or aid human fertility. 789 794 796 [777] [842]

Since the crops and the garden are the substance of life, much attention is given to their protection. An enemy may attack a man or his household through garden magic. He may bury a ouanga in the earth, to bring sickness or ruin. He may poison a tree by performing a special rite at its foot, and its fruits will then carry disease or death to the one who eats them. Or he may make a compact with the earth so that it will dry up and refuse to produce for the one who tills it. Against all these malevolent possibilities, as well as against common thieves, the Haitian peasant has many magical and practical resources. Some people are said to employ zombies as watchmen. These fearsome creatures will capture a trespasser and hold him for the owner of the field.[3] Or perhaps the owner will place special arrêtes in his garden. Occasionally a man will protect his fields by planting *piquettes* in the earth. The *piquette* is a piece of sharpened bamboo or hard wood. Its point is dipped into poison, and it is placed in the ground, sharpened end up. An unwary intruder who steps on a piquette may die of his wound. 789 685 [754] [775]

To counteract the *maljok*, or evil eye, a man may procure from a bocor a special shirt made of wide strips of red, white, and blue cloth sewed together. This shirt, called a *mayo* or *manyo*, is worn for seven days if the *maljok* is a rather ordinary one. If the evil force is a particularly virulent one, however, the *mayo* will be worn as long as twenty-one 754 789 791

3 [Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy" Journal of Negro History, October, 1940, p. 503. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

days, according to the bocor's prescription. It is also employed to protect an individual against various forms of the ouanga.

Against poisons, the usual protection is the *drogue*, prepared by a bocor or a leaf doctor who specializes in such things. After having drunk a drogue, a man is regarded as immune to poison. Should a man be a "horse" of the loa Ogoun Balindjo, however, no drogue is necessary, for Balindjo's people are regarded as immune even without such precautions.

Foretelling the future and divination take two general forms. In one variety, a bocor or *divineur*, using ritual paraphernalia such as cards, flour, or ashes, takes personal responsibility for the divination. In the other form, the divineur functions only when possessed by a loa, and it is the deity himself who foretells and foresees. An account of this kind of divination is given in chapter 6. "Horses" of the loa Mâit' David when possessed are given packs of cards, for they are reputed to be able to divine the future.

Certain houngans use the instrument known as the *gembo* as a divining device. This is a small shell about the size of a lemon, through which a long cord is passed. When there is no tension on the cord, the shell can easily be slid back and forth. When the cord is taut, the shell will not slide. The houngan holds one end of the cord under his foot, the other end with his hand above it. He starts his divination with the shell at the top and the cord taut. Shaking his asson with the other hand, he talks *langage* and asks questions. To indicate a "yes" answer he relaxes the tension on the cord and the shell slips downward an inch or so. The typical gembo is decorated with beads, old coins, religious medals, snake bones, and a fragment of mirror.

There are several ceremonies for locating a thief or other guilty person. One is called *passage d'alliance*. A ring suspended on a string is held over a person's head. If it moves in a regular pendulous way, the person is innocent; but if it swings in a circle, his guilt is established. Another method is the use of a long stick. The stick is pointed at one man, then another, and when the end vibrates in a circular manner the guilty party has been located. This technique is known as *jugement de baguette*. A third method is the one known as *passé balai*. A man sits in a low chair and small branches and leaves of the *balai* (broom) tree are placed under the chair and fastened to its uprights. A guilty person sitting in this chair will cause the *balai* branches to vibrate and close in on him.

The role of the *docteur fè*—the leaf doctor—straddles the field of magic and pharmacology. Many of his potions are of a mystical and

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

When they are not working, it is said, zombies are tied with special ropes made from the leaves of the banana tree. One popular song goes:

> Nans Léogane
> Yo marré zombie nans paille fig-banane!
> Abobo wye-oh!
>
> In Léogane
> They tie the zombie with banana straw!
> That is all, *wye-oh!*

Some Haitians tell you they know there are zombies because they have seen them. Not too many years ago a visiting writer stoutly declared that she, too, knew there were zombies because she had seen one—in the mental hospital at Pont Beudet. Although her reasoning was not quite airtight, the possibility that mental defectives are sometimes mistaken for zombies is worth considering.

Houngans who "work with two hands" are reputed to be able to gain permanent control over persons by means of a formula known as *tuyé-lèvé* (kill and raise). Either for himself or a client, the houngan gains power over the victim by "killing" him through special magic and then "removing the soul" (*retiré n'âme*). The victim, presumed to be normally dead, is buried by his family; the houngan then retrieves the body and "restores the soul" (*metté n'âme*). With his soul restored, the victim has, in effect, become a slave of the houngan, who can do with him as he wishes. He differs from a zombie in that he has a soul, whereas the zombie has none.

Some Haitians believe that even one who has died a nonmagic death may be raised from the dead. To accomplish this, the houngan or bocor stands over the body, goes through a specified ritual, and calls out the dead person's name: "Albert Moreau! Albert Moreau! Albert Moreau! Lèvé non! Lèvé non! Lèvé non!" ("Get up! Get up! Get up!") Then, it is said, the dead man may awaken.

It is believed that a houngan may also command the souls of dead persons to perform services for him against an enemy. The souls at his disposal for this work are those which he keeps in earthern jars in his hounfor. Should he wish to plague an enemy, he will send one of these souls to the man's house to make him sick, or lazy, or insane. Usually, the man does not know what is happening to him; but if he becomes aware that a dead soul is working on him, he attempts to find out which houngan has sent it. Perhaps the houngan can be bought off. If not, another houngan may provide relief.

While some believe in the reality of the various demons and specters,

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Worship of the loa is directed by priests and priestesses. They grow into their positions by a kind of tolerant apprenticeship. Young men and women discover their abilities in dealing with loa or their desire to participate actively in serving them; they assist the officiating priests; they listen carefully to the lore of their elders, keeping their eyes open meanwhile. The priest is generally called a houngan, or sometimes a *papaloi;* the priestess a *mambu* or a *mamaloi.*[33] No ceremony marks the progression of a novice through any set stages to final priesthood; rather, the people in the community simply recognize growing expertness. The more effective and capable a houngan, the greater his prestige and the wider his reputation. There is nothing even vaguely resembling the ordered hierarchy of priests in the Catholic Church, nor is there any control of one houngan over another. No holy robes adorn the officiants, although they occasionally wear certain colors or ornaments to please the loa. Most of the Vodun priests and priestesses are simple peasants, working in the fields and going about the daily round of life. When they are called to perform a ritual, an offering is taken up in the early part of the service to recompense them for their offices. 793 [192]

Actually, the Vodun houngan and mambu correspond much more closely to the primitive medicine man or shaman than to the Catholic priest. They are thought to have power, through certain Rada and Pétro loa, to cure illnesses caused either by adverse magic of one's enemies or by a loa; they are not able, however, to cure sickness sent by the Christian God. Likewise they can remedy or avert misfortune whose origin is magic or the loa. One of their highly important functions is foretelling the future: no important service would be contemplated by a family without previous resort to divination to determine the propitiousness of the time, nor would it be sensible to undertake a secular business of importance without preliminary reassurance by this means. To see into the future effectively, the priest must be possessed by the loa.[34] 793 755 787

33. The second of these names in each case derives from "papa" and "mama," or master and mistress; and from the familiar loa or god. It is not implied that the officiant dominates the loa but only that they deal expertly with them. [192]

34. In addition to the houngans and mambu, there are also bokors who specialize in magic without conducting regular religious rites. These bokors probably deserve the name of sorcerers. [791]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

4. *Magic*

771 It is difficult enough to make a distinction between religion and superstition; it is practically impossible, in dealing with a people who in their closeness to nature are not accustomed to the refinements of "civilized" thinking, to make one between magic and certain aspects of religion. Underlying both is belief in the supernatural; characteristic of both is a faith which recognizes a higher order of cause and effect operating with the lower one familiar in commonplace matters. Anthropologists hold various theories about magic, some saying that it is the set of practices out of which religion evolved, others that it exists for personal and practical ends and has little to do with religion; still others that it is a development out of religion, paralleling and complementing it.[35]

771 One element which distinguishes religious practice from magic is
789 the attitude toward spirits. In religion, the worshiper pays homage and humbly petitions, preserving meanwhile an attitude of humility
782 to spirits or gods who must be propitiated; in magic, the human being, by coercive words and actions, commands the services of spirits who (if the magical rites have been properly performed) must obey. The distinction is not between good and evil, for a god may have both characteristics and be entirely capable of working harm to mortals. As already noted, in the Haitian system the gods are like men in being mixtures of both principles.

771 Another difference between religion and magic concerns time.
789 Religion is social, open to all worshipers or at least to all of a group or social rank. Its rites are continually and repeatedly performed.
796 Magic, on the contrary, though sometimes public and social, is generally private and, since it is for a specific purpose, is performed only when the need arises. A man who was thoroughly conversant with magic might go through his whole life without ever feeling the need of employing it or having to exert himself to fend it off. One turns to magic as a sophisticated man might turn to medicine. Either may be done without; both may be used to excess.

789 In Haitian Vodun, magic interweaves itself with the general faith.

791 35. See, for example, Ruth Benedict, "Magic," in *Encyclopædia of the Social Sciences*,
793 X, 39–44; A. Goldenweiser, *Early Civilization* (New York, 1922), chaps. X–XI; J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (London, 1907–15), *passim*; R. R. Marett, *The Threshold of Religion* (New York, 1914), *passim*; and Sumner and Keller, *op. cit.*, II, chaps. XXIX–XXXI.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Everyone believes in it, though few would make nice distinctions between the two. Starting with extremes, the houngan conducting a service with sacrifice is officiating at a purely religious rite, while the bocor (sorcerer) concocting a love charm is dealing wholly in magic. It is perfectly proper, however, for a respectable houngan to brew a mixture, calling on the loa meanwhile for assistance, to cure a sick person: is this magic? Certainly it is private, specific, practical. A respectable houngan will not permit himself to dabble in evil magic, destined to bring misfortune to someone else;[56] but such work is the stock in trade of the bocor, who knows the dangers of his profession yet is willing to run the risk for the sake of high profit. Between the reputable houngan and the awesome bocor may sometimes be found the *caplata*, a sort of jack-of-all-trades, who professes to be able to achieve whatever is demanded of him in magic, whether beneficial or harmful, but whose reputation is not high enough to make men trust him with important magical enterprises.

789 793 791

There exists one continual check to save the gullible from charlatanism on the part of the practitioner: the performer of any kind of magic must make frequent exhibitions of his powers. If the specialist cannot make his magic work, he soon loses his reputation. The career of magic is not one to be entered lightly. Constant search for medicinal plants, constant experimentation, comparison of practice—the requirements of the profession are as strenuous as those for the successful American doctor. Magic is like a live wire: it cannot be handled with impunity. The slightest slip on the part of the bocor might loose divine wrath on the bungler and quack. It is said that almost every bocor dies an evil death, hoist on his own petard. For the houngan the risk is not so great, since in general he relies upon the might of his own special loa, who of old has been familiar with him. True, he may run the risk of purchasing the services of other loa, but it is a risk, since his family loa, quick to feel insult, might punish him.

789 791

Magic runs the gamut from passive to active, simple to complex. The commonest manifestation of magic in Haitian daily life is one familiar to most peoples in the world—the charm. As in Italy and other southern European countries, the Haitian peasant believes in the evil eye. "Maldioque," it is called—a term not far removed from the Italian "*mal occhio*." The common belief is that certain persons,

789 [171]

56. This is commonly called "black" magic.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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[p. 115]

VI

ROMAN CATHOLICISM

1. *French Colonial Backgrounds*

WHEN France was first establishing a foothold in the New World, religion was one of the consuming passions of the French people. Priests accompanied early explorers, missionaries consecrated their lives to conversion of the Indians; monks, nuns, and parish priests were a vital part of the pioneer settlements of New France. Every family in the mother country hoped that at least one of its sons would devote himself to the service of the Church. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were, par excellence, missionary centuries. 175 111

By the time the colony of Saint-Domingue was acquired, however, this religious zeal was on the wane, and just when the colony was becoming prosperous and populous France was entering the phase of her history known as The Enlightenment. Although the growth of the colony is impressive from many points of view, religion is not one of them, for planters intent upon money-making and luxurious living in an exploitative tropical colony gave little energy to spiritual development.[1] The Roman Catholic Church, being the official church of France, was naturally the only important religious organization of the colony; the congregations authorized to send clergy to Saint-Domingue—Carmelites, Capuchins, Dominicans, and Jesuits—divided the territory and work between them. [192]

No doubt the fathers did some assiduous work. Official historians of the Roman Church in Haiti give the definite impression that their task was arduous and not very rewarding.[2] The torrid heat, diseases (especially yellow fever), the long distances and poor means of transportation were discouraging enough; until the middle of the eighteenth century there was the added difficulty of the poor human

1. It is revealing to see what characteristics of the culture of their mother country colonists bring with them to a new region. French Canadians, in contrast to French colonists in Saint-Domingue, kept many more customs of old France. See J. G. Leyburn, *Frontier Folkways* (New Haven, 1935), pp. 54–57. [114] 111 [176]

2. A good account of the inertia of religious life in colonial Saint-Domingue is given in P. A. Cabon, *Notes sur l'histoire religieuse d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1933), chap. I. [114]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 material—Frenchmen who lived "in a deplorable state of morals,
171 too often recalling those of the freebooters and buccaneers" who were their ancestors and predecessors. Even when the calibre of the colonists improved, religion was a minor concern, business and pleasure pushing it well into the background.

There was no great antagonism toward the fathers; indeed, not enough attention was paid to the priests and their work to warrant any very strong feeling. It was indifference and insolence the fathers had to face, or, if they showed too great an interest in the welfare of slaves upon a plantation, suspicion and peremptory curbs. By the old
[671] Code Noir under which the colony theoretically operated, masters were obligated to send their slaves to Mass on Sundays and feast days under penalty of heavy fines; the Code likewise prescribed the baptism of all blacks and their instruction in the Catholic faith. But just as the colonists ignored all parts of the Code antagonistic to their own economic interests, so specifically did they disregard the sections dealing with their religious obligations.

175 Some priests were in any case not too zealous. It was much more
793 agreeable to attend only to external forms, and so participate in the charming life of high society, than to stand firm against laxity. If a
662 priest showed enthusiasm for his duties to his African charges he was
567 almost certain to be accused by the planters of stirring up the slaves
• [792] and undermining the foundations of colonial society. This was, in fact, the very accusation leveled at the Jesuits to bring about their expulsion from the colony in 1764. The example was not lost upon other priests.

175 "The safety of the whites demands that the Negroes be kept in
171 profound ignorance," said one of the later governors in a message to France. This sentiment, perfectly expressing the conviction of the
563 majority of planters, not only prevented any secular education of the blacks, but actually kept many of them from instruction in catechism, creed, or any part of the Catholic faith. If instruction is forbidden, few of the sacraments can be administered, for how can a person be confirmed, confess, do penance, if he know not even the first principles of the faith? Few masters objected to the baptism of slave children; on the other hand, they roundly disapproved of the sacrament of marriage for their blacks, since this might place an obstacle in the way of slave sales, and even open the way for assimilation of blacks and whites in the colony.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Granted these obvious difficulties, there is still little to be said for the zeal or integrity of churchmen in Saint-Domingue. Father Cabon cites a report to Rome in 1794, which, he remarks, "was not designed to be made public, and does not bear the earmarks of passion," and which flatly states that "since the expulsion of the Jesuits, the curés have for the most part led lives so indecent . . . that the citizens and Negroes have lost all the sentiments of religion which the Jesuits gave them."[3] There had been distinguished churchmen in Saint-Domingue before 1750, authors, scientists, teachers of some note, but none appeared thereafter. The rich French colony was not a bright star in the Catholic crown.

Undeterred by those who might have been their spiritual guides, the white people followed the easy path of self-indulgence. The universal testimony of visitors is that, with a few notable exceptions, immorality and cruelty were daily commonplaces. To make a fortune was the prime ambition of every white man, since money made possible the luxurious enjoyment of this world's goods. Protest against money-making or soft living would have been futile. Administrative agents turned public office to their own profit; judges sold justice to the highest bidder; planters drove their slaves to death; and priests dispensed religious solace for a tidy sum.

The freedmen, who in everything patterned their lives after social leaders in the white planter class, had no more concern for religion than their models. They attended Mass occasionally as a social event, where they might see and be seen. When in the latter days of the colony discriminatory legislation required that colored persons sit in separate parts of the church, most of the affranchis simply refrained from attending Mass: their religious zeal was not so great as to make them submit to the public shame of segregation. In their daily lives, likewise, they followed the example of the white planters in pursuing pleasure rather than sobriety, "culture" rather than religious zeal. Like the whites, they were often licentious in their conduct. When it came their turn to direct affairs of state in free Haiti, there was little interest in spiritual matters among them. The intellectuals of the group paid homage to the liberal philosophers of the century rather than to religious thinkers.

If religion was at a low ebb in the prosperous days of the colony, it almost disappeared in the excitement of the years following the

3. Ibid., p. 33. revolt of the slaves (1791).

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 795 346 to try to renovate the old. Gradually the work became established, increasing in scope with the years.

175 795 It is not necessary to present a detailed history of the work of Catholicism in Haiti since 1860. The most striking feature of these years is its relationship to Vodun, which will be treated shortly. The progress made by the Church itself can best be seen by a summary of conditions in 1930.

794 795 162 Haiti is divided into dioceses named after its principal towns and cities. The population statistics are based upon figures of births covering more than fifty years, and although estimates, they are probably as accurate as any other population statistics for Haiti:

Archdiocese of Port-au-Prince	942,700
Diocese of Cap-Haïtien	453,000
Diocese of Les Cayes	628,000
Diocese of Gonaïves	475,000
Diocese of Port-de-Paix	153,590
Total	2,652,290

793 To care for this large and predominantly illiterate population there are 205 priests,[14] only 8 of whom are Haitians; 105 Brothers; and 366 Sisters.[15] The assiduous educational work of these *religieux* will be discussed in another connection.

794 162 The country's 10,200 square miles are divided into 112 parishes, which generally correspond to the political communes, although there are several parishes in the larger centres of population. In the rural sections 465 mission chapels are located at strategic points.[16]

600 Any casual attempt to assess the importance of religion in the daily

[794] 14. Of these, 156 are in charge of parishes or missions (the secular priests). The remaining 49 are regular clergy (that is, belonging to a religious or monastic order). All parishes in the diocese of Port-de-Paix and two in Port-au-Prince are in charge of the regular clergy; the other regular monks are doing educational work or other special service connected with the dioceses.

[793] [792] 15. The Brothers are Frères de l'Instruction Chrétienne; of the number 83 are French, 10 French Canadian, 9 Spanish, and 3 Haitian. The Sisters belong to three congregations: 146 to St. Joseph de Cluny, 198 to Les Filles de la Sagesse, and 22 to Les Filles de Marie.

16. All the figures cited above are drawn from the *Report of the Forbes Commission to Haiti*, 1930, pp. 16–17.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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to the Americans who ruled Haiti through his office. This constitution once more increased the power of the president. 642 [641]

1932. Vincent's constitution, professing to be quite different from the two in effect during the Occupation, but actually closely resembling the 1927 revision with its concentration of power in executive hands. In 1935 an important amendment was added, making it possible for the president to be reëlected. [643]

Despite this welter of constitutions, the essential framework of Haitian government has consisted, except for brief interruptions, of a president, a legislature, and courts. The term of the presidency has varied from four to seven years (in the early days, for life) with the privilege of reëlection being now forbidden, now granted. Two presidents who tried to extend their terms, Salnave and Salomon, were deposed by revolutions for their temerity. Their distinction of being among the few to serve out the allotted term was thus marred by an ignominious end. 642 643

Regularly the president was obligated to "maintain internal peace" —a requirement few heads of state have been able to carry out, since internal peace has been most elusive. To aid him in his task he has been given wide powers: he commands the army (always large until 1915; every president except one between 1804 and 1915 was a general) and the navy (never more than a few ill-conditioned vessels, but these important in the general roadless condition of the country); most constitutions also gave him the right to issue necessary proclamations in order to deal with special crises. He "watches over" tribunals by means of appointed commissioners; by this arrangement he may obviously exert pressure for favorable judgments in cases which interest him. 643 [701] [706] [716] [792]

The one body which might conceivably check the president, namely, the legislature, has generally been composed of the president's men, for the Senate has usually been elected by the lower house from a list of candidates proposed by the president, while the representatives would hardly dare defy the man who controlled the army (which presided over such elections) and could dissolve the legislature. By most of the constitutions the president proposed to the legislature all laws except those concerning taxation; even here, since he directed the receipt and issue of public moneys, he was not really limited. Over foreign affairs the executive had effective control by 643 [646] [646]

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[Information on the bocô or bocor as a diviner will be found in category 791.]

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

[History of Haiti in 17th-18th centuries — The Haitian white population]

Petit-Goave on 25 June 1743, complains that it is unbelievable "what indifference the people of these districts have toward spiritual matters." [46] So little attention was paid to the rites of the Church that when the baptism of an infant was to be performed, it often proved difficult to find a godfather who had taken the sacrament, and many children were therefore never baptized. As might be expected, the churches were in a bad state, often having no more than earthen walls and floors, roofed with thatch, and being used as threshing-floors as well as places of worship. The description which Père Labat has given us of a church at Cap Français,[47] and of the manner in which the communicants conducted themselves during such services as were held, shows the decadence of the one religion that had any place among the white inhabitants. The clergy, too, reflected this same decadence. For though the early libertines who posed as priests were later replaced by members of such orders as the Jacobins, the Jesuits, and the Capucins, even this did not end the scandals that, from the first days of the establishment of the Catholic Church on the island, marked its ministrations.

175 105 181 171 563 [851] [743]

What impression must the Negroes have obtained from their opportunities to observe the life of their masters? What patterns of behavior, what moral codes, what concepts of the way in which the Europeans regulated their own lives and, as officials, regulated the lives of others, must have been stamped on the minds of these Africans? That the present emphasis on the importance of wealth, or that a love of and demand for display, should characterize Haitian life of the cities today is not strange. Nor is it difficult to comprehend how certain other aspects of Haitian life that have so been underscored in the last half-century by those who have written of the Haitians should have developed from this initial stimulus — not to the extent to which this emphasis would lead one to believe, to be sure, but enough to give a basis for the exaggerations which have been published.[48]

17 567 [181] [369]

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

"The Mina Negroes have even been seen to recognize princes of their country . . . prostrating themselves at their feet and rendering them that homage whose contrast to the state of servitude to which these princes have been reduced in the colony offers a striking enough instance of the instability of human greatness." [27]

Yet another group of Africans played a significant role in determining the trends Haitian Negro culture was to take. It is a commonplace among those who have studied New World Negro life that African religion has shown greater resistance to white influence than any other phase of African culture. And to explain this one must again turn to native African tradition. The beginnings of the West African monarchies, whose ruling dynasties eventually came to command great stretches of land, were in tiny principalities that continually "warred" against each other. Tradition has it that the most intransigent of the conquered were the priests of the indigenous local cults, who, because of their activities, were punished with what native idiom still terms "banishment." In the New World these intractable priests continued their rites for their fellow-slaves and instructed the next generation so their knowledge would not be lost to the people. Before their enslavement they had been men of power and influence, and this pattern, carried over in all its strength in the New World, continued them and their descendants as natural leaders. Hence, wherever the opportunity presented itself to strike for liberty, they invoked the spiritual forces to reinforce the power and courage of the military leaders who, like them, had been sold into slavery because their countries had been conquered, or because they had rebelled against the succession in their own lands.

The composition of the slave population as inferred from these traditions is thus seen to be somewhat different from

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

843 782 539 *malin esprit barré chemin qu'en moment delivrance moin apé' rivé. Nou' toutes Invisibles, les Saints, les Morts, Marassa, vini assisté moin jou'-a.*— I ask you all to come deliver me, that you open the way for me, that you do not allow evil spirits to bar my path when the time of the delivery approaches. May you all, Invisible Beings, the Saints, the Dead, Twins, come to my aid on that day."

843 782 716 Should one of the couple be a devotee of Damballa or Erzilie, both of them jealous gods, a chicken or two is added to the customary offerings, and some gift pleasing to the god, such as a dress or suit of his sacred color, is made him. Normally no further precautions need be taken. If, however, the 843 789 pregnant woman has had one or two miscarriages, she and her husband go to a *vodun* priest, preferably a woman, and obtain a "medicine" to be used in bathing the abdominal and vaginal areas as a precaution against *mauvaises aires*, the werewolves believed to consume children in the womb. If the pregnancy this time terminates successfully, some of the same medicine is rubbed on the child shortly after birth and several times during the ensuing weeks, but should the infant later fall ill, the *vodun* priest brings herbs and makes a smoke-fire to drive away the werewolves that are believed still to be hovering about.

844 782 At the onset of labor, if either the father or the mother of the unborn child is vowed to Damballa, another sacrifice is made to this god and to the spirits of twins, giving a *couvert sec* and one or two chickens and pigeons to each. If a *vodun* priest has determined what deity protects the child, a sacrifice is also given this spirit, and prayers are said to the spirits of twins, the dead of the families of both the man and the woman, and all other supernatural beings, saints of the Church and *vodun* gods alike.

844 Meanwhile the woman has been placed on the ground on

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a mat or a cloth, supported in a reclining position with pillows 844
and cloths, or on a covered box standing about a foot from the ground, with her legs drawn up. No fire is built in the house, all doors and windows are tightly shut, and covers are provided against a chill. A candle stands lighted at the threshold, [788]
and holy water is poured beside it; a candle is also often [782]
lighted in the church before the statue of the saint who corresponds to the *vodun* deity under whose protection the woman in labor is thought to be. In the room with her is the midwife and as many as six, seven, eight, or nine older women belonging to the families of the woman and her husband. The hands of the woman are made to rest on her knees, but where labor is prolonged, her arms are supported above her head to afford relief. She is three times given very hot tea or a drink made of [757]
the stewed leaves of the mango tree and of the *bois lait*. The midwife, with palm oil on her hands, watches the rhythm of labor and presses on the abdomen to facilitate delivery.

If it becomes evident that this will be difficult, a *vodun* 845
priest is at once called to determine by divination whether or 793
not the deities who have been propitiated are satisfied. If the 787
answer is a negative one, he promises future sacrifices or gives 782
minor offerings immediately. Care is also taken to ascertain [775]
whether the trouble is due to the discontent of the family dead who may have been angered by neglect to wear mourning for them, or because sacrifices or a *service* due them have been delayed too long. Inquiries are similarly made to determine whether the spirits of twins might not be displeased, [754]
while the possibility that evil magic may have been invoked is not overlooked, especially if the husband has several wives. If the inquiry shows that the magic of a co-wife was responsible, a strong counter-charm is made at once. Should the woman in 845
labor eventually die, however, her death is not considered to 766
be the result of any act of infidelity on her part, and does not, as in other Negro cultures, prevent the usual burial and mourning customs being carried out.

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846 or to get her feet wet. When possible, however, she waits for from fifteen to twenty days before doing this kind of work, and, in any event, she will not bathe in cold water until more than a month has passed. A week or two after giving birth she may resume her selling in the market, and two months after her child is born she will take up work in her garden.[3]

852 [851] During this period of the mother's recovery the child is ritually introduced to his world and to the spirits which govern it. Three or four days after the cord drops, the midwife, water and a candle in hand, presents the child to the sun and the four corners of the earth, speaking an invocation which none but women of this profession may know or hear spoken. The child is then carried into the courtyard before the house, though he may not be taken elsewhere for as many as three weeks. When he is taken across the threshold for the first time, he is cradled in the left arm of the one who carries him; in the left hand water is held, while the right hand holds a lighted candle. Water is thrown in three directions, outward from the door and to each side of it, as the child is taken about the outside of the house. This rite is repeated by everyone present at the time, but water is "thrown" only once.

854 789 Though it is said by some that a child is not given a charm immediately after birth unless it is ill, it is nevertheless customary to place a cord about the neck of an infant on the day it is born, to remain there until some three or four years later, when it wears out and is lost. There is no difference of opinion, however, on the point that if a baby falls ill soon after birth, steps must be taken to give it spiritual protection. A [793] [791] *vodun* priest is called to make a charm for it to wear, while, in addition, another charm is placed in the house to guard its inhabitants against "all bad things," such as the evil eye—since this tends to give babies convulsions—demons, werewolves, or the "little folk" who bring bad magic. A *jok* 854 754 against harm resulting from even unconscious envy is also provided, since an individual who admires a baby because of

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trance of the house — three times if there is one door (for the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost), three times before each door if there are two entrances, and once before each door if there are three. The wedding procession goes to church on foot. The men, if they are from the countryside, are stiff, uncomfortable, and hot in their unaccustomed "best" clothing and their often painful shoes, while the women are also self-conscious in their new dresses. The elaborateness of the ceremony varies with the fee paid the priest, but at all events the clanging church bell is heard notifying the town and its environs that a marriage is being consecrated.

If the family of the bride or groom are well known in Mirebalais, a wedding reception may be given at their house for friends of the couple and of their parents, but the real festivities are held after the return to the new family home. As the procession approaches it, the "bush-priest," a functionary who, because of his knowledge of French, can read the prayers of the Church, waits at the gate with two aides, small boys or girls, each with a flag, one red and one white. He has sacred water in one hand and a lighted candle in the other, and as he pours this water on the ground three times he intones the Pater Noster, the Ave Maria, the Credo, and other prayers. These concluded, hymns are sung by all the participants, and singing, a procession is formed with the "bush-priest" in the lead, followed by the flag-bearers, the couple who have just been married, arm in arm, the "godfather" and "godmother" of the marriage, as the witnesses are called, the parents of the bride and groom, and other close relatives. As the procession reaches the door of the house, it pauses and water is thrown on the ground three times; the circuit of the house is made twice again, and each time, as the door is reached, water is thrown, until, the third tour completed, the participants solemnly enter.

There coffee, liqueurs, wine, *kola*, and cakes are served to the principals and the more important members of the com-

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lighted. Chicken and rice may also be cooked for any god except Gede, while chocolate and rice with milk are favored, since it is said "the *loa* love desserts" — a commentary on the very immediate and human character of these spirits.

The actual baptism, or "washing of the head," is performed on the third day of the ceremony by a *vodun* priest or priestess who is a member of the family, though any member who has important *loa* and the necessary *connaissance* may officiate if the membership of the family includes no priest. As at any baptism, there must be a godfather and godmother, and preference is given those who are the parents of twins or are themselves twins. The officiant must be possessed at the time, since, it is said, "one *loa* baptizes another." Leaves of the basilique tree are steeped in perfumed cold water, and the hands of the one who baptizes are first immersed in the liquid; then, while songs of the *loa* and canticles of the Virgin are sung, he washes the head of the person to be baptized. Possession occurs immediately, and the new devotee lies back, half conscious, while all others kneel, seeking word from the *loa* to learn if it is satisfied. If an affirmative answer is given, all retire, the person possessed remaining in the room to sleep through the night. A "ball," but not a *vodun* dance, may celebrate the event either the next day or later, but this is not obligatory, and most often those present, after eating, quietly disperse. The following day the one who has been baptized goes to the family place of worship and greets those who have helped him. Only one further rite is necessary, and this solely when the *loa bossal* is revealed to be a hostile god. Then the *loa*, after having been baptized, is "restrained" by being placed in a jar and buried, so it cannot later emerge and trouble the family of the one to whom it has come.[18]

The ceremony of baptism, in Mirebalais, is in no sense a first step into any *vodun* hierarchy, for, as will be seen, no such hierarchy exists in this valley. One important priest there derives his power from *loa* that have never been bap-

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tized at all, but merely respond to an innate ability to control them. To have a baptized *loa*, then, merely means that the worship of the *loa* is thereafter carried on in regular form. The worshipper learns how to *marré*, or "tie,"[14] his spirit, so as to enjoy the social aspects of a *vodun* dance without fear that his *loa* will come unbidden. He gives it small offerings from time to time, and if it becomes insistent, or if his family is being troubled by its gods, he takes full part in the rituals that are staged.[15]

In native idiom, a person when possessed is "mounted" by his god, and thereafter becomes his *ch'wal*, or "horse." A devotee may come under the influence of a number of spirits during a single ceremony or dance, one *loa* succeeding another. The first deity that ever came to a person, however, for him constitutes the chief of his gods — his *mait' tête* — and the leader of any deities which may subsequently possess him. It is this *loa* alone that is "baptized," and this one alone "taken from his head" at his death; and, as far as he is concerned, all his other gods are under the control of this *mait' tête*, so that any agreement which he may enter into with this principal spirit must be respected by all the others.

Fundamentally, to be possessed by a *loa* means that an individual's spirit is literally dispossessed by that of the god. Personalities undergo radical change in accordance with the nature of the deity,[16] while even the sex of the one possessed is disregarded if it differs from that of the god, so that, for example, a woman "mounted" by Ogun is always addressed as Papa Ogun.[17] One wears the colors of the god and the ornaments he likes, eating and drinking those things he prefers, and otherwise manifesting his peculiar characteristics — rolling on the earth, if possessed by Damballa or chattering incessantly if by Gede.[18]

Not everyone, by any means, is subject to states of possession. If the existence of individual differences in the capacity for religious expression be recognized, it becomes apparent

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for though some gods are feared far more than others, and some generally regarded with affection, even these latter bring great harm to a neglectful devotee, while the gods whose power validates the most malignant magic may, in certain situations, work for the good of their worshippers. Especially has there been great confusion in discussions of the so-called Dom Pédro worship. Whether or not the origin of the term as given by St. Mery is correct — that it derives from the name of its founder, a Spanish Negro from Petit-Goâve[22] — the statements that have been made concerning it are in the main misleading.[23] Thus, it is not true that the Pétro gods are unqualifiedly evil and the Rada deities unqualifiedly good; nor that blood sacrifices are made exclusively at Pétro ceremonies, while the services for other gods are innocent of such sacrificial offerings. The impression gathered in Mirebalais concerning the Pétro gods is that they are principally, though not exclusively, derived from the process of deification of powerful ancestors, which in Africa exists in forms that clearly explain the essential tradition that offers a basis for this custom as found in Haiti. This is reinforced by statements to the effect that most of the Pétro "squad" are Créole or native gods as against the Guinée deities in the other groupings. One member of the *vodun* cult, indeed, made the concept of deifying the powerful dead explicit, saying that Pétro was a great and evil *vodun* priest who had died with the *loa* not "taken from his head." For while a general principle in the cult of the dead is that in the normal course of events those who die deliver up their souls to God, making the care for these souls primarily a concern of the Church, it is recognized that there are others such as this Dom Pedro who become *loa*. This occurs when an individual, usually a priest or priestess of the *vodun* cult, who during his lifetime was known to possess great supernatural power, dies without having had his *loa* "withdrawn from his head." Burdened by these spirits, and therefore unable to get to God, his soul goes to the bottom of

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a stream, there to remain until, becoming impatient, it demands to be taken out. A ceremony then brings back the tortured soul and makes of it a "*loa nan canarie* — a *loa* in a jar" — which thereafter acts as a guard for its family.

There is little agreement as to the place of residence of the *loa*. In general, it is believed that they come from Guinée each time they are called, returning when they have, in the native idiom, "descended from the heads of their horses" — that is, when the possession of their devotees has ceased. Those "under the water," however, being Haitians, remain in Haiti for seven years until the ceremony just mentioned, of putting them *nan canarie*, has been performed, when they, like the other *loa*, return to Guinée. At the same time, all recognize the African character of the *loa*, whether they be gods brought from Africa or the Créole *loa* from Haiti itself.

Worship of the *loa* is directed by priests of the cult. The terms *papaloi* and *mamaloi* as designations for male and female priests, almost universally employed by non-Haitian writers, are practically unknown in Mirebalais, where, as in most regions of Haiti, a priest is called a *hungan*, a priestess a *mambu*.[50] Besides the *hungan* (or *mambu*), and the *gangan*, a term applied to a *hungan* of renown, is the *bocor*, a practitioner of magic, not a member of any *vodun* priesthood, but a man who has acquired his power by the purchase of spirits. He is particularly differentiated from the *hungan* and *mambu* by the fact that the *loa* of their own accord are believed to have given "*connaissance*" — the knowledge of healing and helping, to these latter.[51] Not all gods can endow their devotees with this *connaissance*. Some of the Rada deities, in addition to those of the Ogun group who give it, are Legba, Damballa, Aizan, Bosu, St. Jean, and Agwe Woyo; among the Pétro gods it is conferred by Bosu Trois Cornes, Simbi d'leau, Gede, Ossange, Malt' Gran' Bois, and Malt' Calfou (Carrefour). Simbi en Deux Eaux and Simbi Promené both give magic power, the former conferring knowledge of excellent protectives against

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793 992 953 werewolves as well as of the ingredients to concoct healing baths. Certain priests worship and control a large number of deities, as is shown by those which comprise the personal pantheon of a *gangan* from the valley of Mirebalais: Gedenibo, Erzilie Gé Rouge; 'Ti Kita Demembré; Simbi en Deux Eaux; Bumba Trois Île; Legba; St. Jacques; Ogun Ferraille, Ogun Balandjo, Ogun Ashade; Lemba; Ainan Keleké, Ainan Wedo, Aida Wedo, Damballa Wedo; Baron Samedi, Bosu Trois Cornes; Congo Wangol, Malt' Mapou; Agasu; Agwe, Agweto Woyo; Kadia-Bosu; Sobo Gran'; l'Afrique Guinée. Whatever his ability, the *hungan* can cure only diseases "sent by man" — that is, those caused by magic — and by the *loa*, since against illness sent by God he can do nothing. Gossip [521] disapprovingly whispers how in more than one instance a *hungan* took advantage of his position and the trust of his clients, falsely to represent himself as able to cure an illness "sent by God" through stating it was due to magic.

793 787 An important function of the *hungan* or *mambu* is to foretell the future, and it is as a diviner that the *vodun* priest or priestess is most often employed. No major rite would be considered by a family unless divination were resorted to, but consultation is made for a far wider range of affairs than those of a purely religious nature, and no proposed undertaking of any importance in the secular field is begun without visiting a diviner to discover whether or not the fates are propitious. When divining, the priest is usually under possession by his gods, but other methods, such as gazing into a crystal or basin of water, may also be employed. Several divining séances were visited, but no description of them need be given here, since a number of accounts, including an especially full one by Parsons, are available.[20]

793 184 Though a certain hierarchy seems to exist among the *vodun* priests in other districts of Haiti, in Mirebalais the organization of the cult is informal to an extreme degree.[21] In the [955] [787] minds of the cult members, various priests in the same region

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are differentiated according to the types of healing in which they have had the greatest success, and the "miracles" to their credit, such as a *hungan* who had achieved a wide reputation for being able to resuscitate dead children. One *hungan* of the valley is spoken of as having powers which rank him with the greatest in the land, but now that he is old, a nephew of his is being called upon to act in his place. In a relatively short time, say his friendly clients, he will take his place even among great *hungans* elsewhere.

Under the *hungan* and *mambu* are assistants called *hunsi*, or sometimes, in the case of men, termed *adjunikon*. In some parts of Haiti, particularly in the plain of the Cul-de-Sac and the southern peninsula, there are degrees of initiation for the *hunsi*, which include the ordeal by fire that makes them *hunsi kanzo*.[20] In Mirebalais, however, the *kanzo* rite, though known by name, is neither required nor performed. The *hunsi* and *adjunikon* know the rituals in a general way, hold and wave the banners used to salute the gods, sing the songs for the *loa*, aid in bringing the possessed dancers out of their possessions, and perform such other ritual tasks as helping the officiating *hungan*. Some members of the cult group have special ability to sing large numbers of the ritual songs for any *loa* which may be called, while others perform the animal sacrifices. It is among these male assistants that the most expert drummers are found.

This, then, constitutes an outline of that system of belief included under the term *vodun*. Once more, in summary, it may be emphasized that *vodun* is neither the practice of black magic, nor the unorganized pathological hysteria it is so often represented to be. The gods are known to their worshippers, and the duties owed them are equally well understood. The reward for the performance of these duties is good health, good harvests, and the goodwill of fellow-men; the punishment for neglect is corresponding ill fortune. On this basis of belief is erected the ceremonial of worship.

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Simple annual rites are held for the gods in January, each family giving small offerings in its house of worship to its own deities. These minor ceremonies are not to be confused with the extended rituals which a family may perform but once in a decade or a generation. Because of the extensive preparation and large outlay these entail, such rites are often postponed from year to year. According to some, this postponement is sought through an *action de grâce*, based on Church ritual, while others maintain that it is but necessary on his special day to appeal to the deity who is troubling the family, give a small offering — a *mangé sec* — and ask for the desired respite. This may be done several times, until crop failures, sudden deaths, and the loss of valuable property begin to afflict the family, whereupon the family head seeks out a *hungan*, who by divination determines the supernatural forces that are responsible for these misfortunes; and when his statement that the gods have reached the end of their patience is confirmed independently by several other priests who are consulted, active preparations for the major rite are finally set in motion.

Any such important ceremony must be held on the ancestral habitation, and centers in the *maison de servitude*, the family house of service for the gods. The house itself, to be differentiated from the *humfort*, or "temple" of the *vodun* priest, may be elaborate or simple in accordance with the status of family members in the *vodun* cult.[3] At one end of the sacred house is a platform about two and one half feet high on which are placed calabash plates for the *loa*, six for the Créole deities, three for the Mystères Guinée, and a white plate with a "thunder stone," or Neolithic celt, and a necklace for Damballa. Not all *cailles mystères* are painted, but some, it is said, are green "for hope," and some red "for victory," while one was said to have designs of flowers and snakes painted on the wall above the platform.[4] These houses usually have two rectangular rooms, each with a separate entrance and each having its platform at the narrow end facing the doorway. One of

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uals were being performed. If they failed to wave their banners vigorously or often enough, the one in charge chided them for their lack of zeal, whereupon their movements would become a kind of dance. During the *adoration* each member of the family was called upon to give coins or candles, the first for the *prêt' savanne*, though this was not his entire fee.

With the benediction, the *action de grâce* came to an end, and the solemn, tired voice of the *prêt' savanne* was heard intoning a hymn, which, in the usual fashion, was repeated by the assembled group until, without interlude, without even a pause, the interpolations of the chorus gradually changed, so that the rhythm became African, and, with the transition, the *vodun* priest took over the leadership. The *hungan* began by repeating several times the phrase which throughout the entire ceremony was to punctuate all its climaxes, "*Grâce* [*et*] *mise'corde*," and the family murmured it in response. He then ordered each member of the family to address himself to the *loa*, telling what troubles had befallen him and what favors he desired. An assistant now took six candles from the *trône*. Proceeding in a counter-clockwise direction, he described a large circle about that part of the meadow where the ceremony was to take place, fixing a candle in the ground at intervals. Four of these were for the four corners of the earth, one was for Mait' 'Bitation — the deity termed Master of the Habitation — and one for the Mait' Source — the Master of the Stream. When the members of the family, each holding a lighted candle, had formed in a line, they were bidden to place these candles in the earth within the area described by the six already there, and as they scattered over the sacred ground, little flickering flames dotted the hillside and the grassy meadow behind the *trône* in the deepening dusk.

Then all returned to the altar, and the *hungan*, taking the first of three plates made ready for him, began to describe *verver*. One plate held white cornmeal flour, one was filled with gray ashes, called Guinea flour, and the third contained

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78 a black powder of ground, roasted coffee beans. Starting at the
793 tree near the "first" table for Bosu, he traced a white line
796 that, passing the second table and the trees for Simbi, con-
532 tinued to the *trône*, to which subsidiary motifs were then added in gray and black, making of the designs an intricate geometric composition.

78 With bell in hand and a small whistle in his mouth, both of
79 which later were entrusted to his assistants, the *hungan* went
[533] about, blowing the whistle at intervals to call the *loa*. Singing, he directed that a wooden boat-shaped basin containing water be placed in front and a little to the left of the *trône* for washing the feet of the sacrificial animals. Though all the family were present, they were again ritually summoned in song to come with the sacrifices and were ordered to stand near by with lighted candles while the animals were bathed. As they gathered, the *hungan* became possessed by Simbi, who took it upon himself to set the fee for conducting this ceremony at 117.10 gourdes. When he announced this sum, loud pleas of poverty were heard from the family, while speaking through the priest, the god bargained with them until the sum of 110 gourdes was finally agreed upon.

[533] The *hungan* now sang a long invocation, inviting the gods of all those places where Africans live to come. First the feet of the fowl were washed, then those of the pigs, and finally of the goat. Each fowl was passed over the body and head of every
[822] member of the family as it was presented with the requisite song to the proper *loa* — the red and black cock for Legba, the black fowl for Gede, the red one for Ogun, the white for Damballa, and the fowl with ruffled plumage for Congo Zandor. Then each was placed on the ground in front of three small piles of food taken from the *trône*. They were watched with anxiety by all present, for the pecking at the food is a signal that the god accepts the animal given him. The small pigs for 'Ti Kita Demembré, and the boar for Bosu, were offered the same food as the fowls; the goat for Erzilie Gé Rouge was pre-

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796 346 will have a place to retire. The *tonnelle*, which is merely a flat brush roof supported by a number of upright posts, must be built strongly enough to withstand the assaults of those possessed, who not only lean heavily on the supports, but sometimes climb through the brush roof to lie for a time on the cross-beams which form the base for this flimsy covering. Its ostensible aim is to protect the participants from what is known as the *neige*, or "snow," as the heavy dew is called, but, as might be expected, the structure has a ceremonial as well as a utilitarian purpose. Of particular importance is the central post, called the *porto cabesse*, or the *porto mita*, because the gods are believed to wait there until their drum rhythms sound, when they use this to descend into the *tonnelle*. The fire which burns during the whole period of the dance near the entrance to the habitation is also characteristic and indispensable. It is for Legba, who, as guardian of the entrance-way must first be worshipped, in order that he may permit the other deities to come.

796 The dances may begin shortly after sundown, but are not fully under way until two or three hours later, and last all night. In no case was a dance witnessed which began while there was daylight, though during the dry months, January and February, when there is no work to be done in the fields, dances open at a somewhat earlier hour. The rectangular dancing-space under the *tonnelle* is lined with spectators, who are seated on such chairs and boxes as the family giving the dance can provide or such others as have been brought by their owners, though, in the main, people stand. The vigor of the dance varies as the night progresses. It is usually slow in starting, people drifting in later as they finish their evening meal, while the best drummers are rarely present at the outset. [993] Unless the dance follows an earlier ceremony, such as the baptism of drums, or a *humfort*, the *hungan* in charge also does not appear until a late hour and even when there has been an earlier rite, such a personage may well go to his home to rest before returning for the night's effort.

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employed — do not remain with the drummers. These instruments are ordinarily in the hands of *hunsi*, who join the massed ring of dancers that constantly circles about the center pole. These dancers are not under possession, but are merely enjoying the evening or participating in the social aspect of the dance preparatory to becoming possessed. The rattle is held high above the heads of the dancers, and its sharp, steady notes are produced by quick, short, measured movements of the wrist. The end of a song, which sometimes does not come until fifteen or twenty minutes after its initial statement, is usually marked by a continuous shaking of a rattle, a process which effectually breaks the rhythm and makes it possible to begin a new song. The player of the rattle is an outstanding singer, who usually initiates the fresh refrain and continues to sing its repetitions as soloist in the alternation of solo and chorus which marks Haitian *vodun* singing as it marks most West African and New World Negro religious music.

When a possession occurs, the songs for the deity who has "arrived" are taken up as the drums play the rhythm of the god. As his possession comes on, the devotee falls to the ground, rolling before the drums, or staggers blindly about the dancing-space, or otherwise follows the characteristic behavior attributed to his god. After a time he begins to dance, whereupon a *hunsi* or the *hungan*, taking a calabash of water in one hand and a lighted candle in the other, dances opposite him, saluting the god as he performs his every movement in reverse; if he turns clockwise, the one dancing with him turns counter-clockwise; if he moves to the right, the other moves to the left. Except when executing these turns, the functionary of the cult never takes his eyes from the eyes of the possessed person, almost, as it were, hypnotizing him to help him come to himself. Eventually the possessed one recovers sufficiently to take the candle and the calabash of water in his own hands. Often spilling water as he moves, he makes his way to the central pole, pouring an offering and making the sign of the cross with the candle before it.

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796 ever, the man was not yet able to hold. Moving backwards
799 toward the *maison de servitude*, all the spectators continued
789 to sing the song of Damballa, while the man to whom the god
159 had come half-danced and was half-carried up the path to the *tonnelle* and taken into the family house of worship.

[788] When he had sufficiently recovered to be able to hold the candle and the water, he poured the water and unsteadily bowed three times in the accepted manner before the *convert sec* to the Rada gods. He now was enough in control of himself to emerge, and, with the *adjunikon* dancing before him with water and a candle, he once again came into the *tonnelle*, before the drums. As he appeared, the drummers stopped the Ogun rhythm they had been sounding, and in an intense silence all waited for the god to announce himself. Half on his [538] knees before the drums, the one possessed began to sing in a [539] cracked voice:

Damballa Wedo,	Damballa Wedo,
Papa m' c'est couleev'-o,	Papa, I am serpent-o,
Na poi' bois	There is no tree
Moin pa' li monté.	I cannot climb.

With this initial statement, the Damballa rhythm rolled from the drums, as all echoed the song in chorused response, while the possessed figure, in strict conformity to the pattern, first poured water at the central post and then consecutively before the iron and each of the drums. Returning to the central post, he whirled about it, almost but never quite falling, until he could dance before the drums, awkwardly but acceptably, before he disappeared to rest in a near-by house.

796 The explanation offered by this man of the manner in
787 which he became possessed, and his varying attitudes toward
159 his possession, are revealing. On several previous occasions
•793 the *houngan* who officiated at the dance had noticed that he was attending *vodun* rites and had joked with him about his interest in them. Once at an earlier dance this *houngan* had

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given him a piercing glance, not without significance, for as the man, who believed himself the victim of the *hungan's* machinations, said, "Whatever you believe, these *hungans* have some kind of power. . . ." On his arrival at the dance where the possession occurred, the *hungan* had encountered this man sitting alone, some distance from the *tonnelle*. Giving him a drink of liquor, the *hungan*, as he pressed his hand in greeting, sportively turned him about in the manner in which possession is induced. After this the man recollected but little; he did not remember having said he would accept the god, or circling backwards, or bowing to the drums when the "salutes" were played. He dimly remembered having been sent to the *barrière* with some liquor for Bosu, who, not a Rada *loa*, had come unauthorized to one of the spectators and, according to custom, had been removed from the dancing-place. He also just recalled that a woman had become possessed by Legba, but did not know that it was when she touched him that his own possession had begun. The remainder of the night's experience was completely blank, even though the actual state of possession occupied only a small part of it.

Later during the dance, when he had returned, he was heard to say: "It was not a pretty trick that the *hungan* played on me"—a feeling not assuaged when, the next morning at mass, the priest in his sermon preached against following false gods and recounted the miseries in store for those who desert the true faith; nor when he reflected that, by his possession, he had in a sense become affiliated with a group whose position in society was anything but such as to enhance his own social status. The *hungan*, however, promised him that he would not bring on another possession, adding, as an aside: "It is good, though, that a Haitian should have this experience." None the less, to make sure that this *loa bossal* would not come to him at awkward moments, it was going to be necessary for him to baptize it, thus continuing the process which

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796 A candle was affixed to a peg of each drum, which,
[354] with the lantern that hung near the central post, gave unusu-
[187] ally good light. However, as possessions began, the candles on the drums were extinguished as those possessed fell against them, and no more than one could be kept lighted.

● 793 With the arrival of the *hungan* at about half past nine, the
796 dancing became even more animated, and Ogun "came" as
539 soon as he took over the *manman* drum, but despite this, the
796 *hungan* continued the ritual invocation to call all the *loa*:

Moin rhelé Papa Legba, St. Jo,	I call Papa Legba, St. Joseph,
Moin rhelé Damballa papa,	I call Papa Damballa,
Moin rhelé Papa Damballa, St. Jo,	I call Papa Damballa, St. Joseph,
Moin rhelé Loko Atinsu, St. Jo.	I call Loko Atinsu, St. Joseph.
La vie nan mains Bon Dieu,	Life is in the hands of God,
Seigneur, moin rhelé Ogun Ferraille, St. Jo.	Master, I call Ogun Ferraille, St. Joseph.
Moin rhelé Damballa Wedo,	I call Damballa Wedo,
Moin rhelé Aida Wedo, Seigneur.	I call Aida Wedo, Master.
La vie nan mains Bon Dieu.	Life is in the hands of God.
Moin rhelé Papa Agasu, St. Jo, Dokwe Agwe,	I call Papa Agasu, St. Joseph, Dokwe Agwe,
Moin rhelé Malt' Ouange,	I call Master Ouange,
Moin rhelé Malt' St. Jean,	I call Master St. John,
Moin rhelé Gran' Siligbo,	I call Gran' Siligbo,
Moin rhelé Agwe Woyo,	I call Agwe Woyo,
Moin rhelé Loa 'Bitation,	I call the *loa* of the habitation,

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Moin rhelé Aizan,	I call Aizan,
Moin rhelé Sobo, St. Jo, Dokwe Agwe,	I call Sobo, St. Joseph, Dokwe Agwe,
Moin rhelé Papa Gede,	I call Papa Gede,
Moin rhelé toutes mystères.	I call all the gods.

When he had ended his song a number of the "salutes" were played on the drums, to which all danced backward in circles, ending the figure in bows before the drums, which were rolling out the call. In the course of the evening a large number of gods were summoned, but, as would be expected, only the *loa* of the family came to this ceremony. Possesions were observed for Legba, Damballa, Ogun Balandjo, Ogun Galloné, Ogun Ferraille, Gede, and Kadya Bosu. St. John, Osange, Aizan, Ashadé Bokor, Gran' Bosu, Magie, Jean Pétro, Congo, Guinée, Sobo, Bade, and Agwe Woyo, were the *loa* who refused their summons. Though no deity held the center of the stage for too long a time, the evening was notable because it was marked by an unusually large number of Ogun and Damballa possesions, which seemed constantly to alternate. Damballa being the stronger *loa*, his appearance when Ogun was present necessitated the retirement of the latter; but since the possesion of Ogun by one woman was particularly persistent, this god returned again and again. As at a number of dances, the *haut chant* for Ogun Galloné, the French marching-song that salutes the "general," was among the songs heard, when those possessed by the god skipped from one end of the *tonnelle* to the other before the drums.

One particularly striking Damballa possesion came on suddenly. As a tall, strong man was seized by the god, he gave a great shout and grasped the beams of the *tonnelle*, disappearing upward through the thatch. For a moment it did not seem that he had climbed on the roof of the *tonnelle*, until a head and arms which appeared between the palm fronds showed he

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796 787 [794] was there. To bring him down, a *hunsi* holding water and a candle at once began slowly to dance under him, fixing him with the usual unvarying stare. After some five minutes the candle and water were quickly given to those near by, and in a flash the possessed one was safely on the ground, candle in hand, pouring water before the center pole and the drums, and dancing magnificently.

796 793 787 593 Shortly after midnight the head of the family and his wife returned to the scene of the dance, the explanation given for this return revealing the native conception of the power of the *hungan*. Before his arrival, it was said he had been told of the quarrel; hence on his way to the dance he passed the *barrière* of the house of the family head, though he did not stop to speak with him. Prior to leaving his home, however, he was supposed to have performed a rite which, soon after he began drumming at the dance, so affected the children of the family head that they became possessed and at once ran to the *tonnelle*. Since their children were present, the father and mother were forced to come, and this was followed by a reconciliation of those who had quarreled. To make doubly sure that the *loa* would take no offense, however, another dance which formally ended the *service* was given jointly by all members of the family several weeks later.

796 787 One phase of the ceremonial always encountered, but unusually frequent on this occasion, was the salutation of the assembled company by the *loa*. One woman, possessed by Ogun, greeted all present first by shaking hands with wrists crossed in the customary manner, and then kissing each person on both cheeks. Another, possessed by Ossange, took the neckerchief from about his neck and wiped the faces of all those present, paying particular attention to the drummers. The son of the family head was again possessed by Gede as at the *service*, and his greeting to the assembled company was especially dramatic. His possession took the form of a hysteri-

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dead must first count them, he can never accomplish this before daylight. From these precautions, it is evident that for the Haitian the reality of existence after death is no fictional one, as is even more vividly illustrated in the answer given to the question whether or not a flute, such as young boys play, would be placed in the coffin of a lad: "What! And have the dead going about all the time blowing it?"[8]

When dressed, the body is placed on a mat or mattress or in a hammock and covered with a clean cloth. A *bande de machoire*, which goes under the chin and over the head to hold the jaw in place, in earlier days, as today in remote sections of the valley, served the double purpose of making possible the identification of a ghost as such, and of keeping the moisture inside the mouth. At present, however, it is usually removed when the body is placed in the coffin. In earlier times also, as today among the peasants in the hills, the nostrils and ears were plugged with cotton. The body and head are shaved of all hair, and the finger- and toe-nails clipped; hair and clippings are later placed in the coffin and buried with the body. The eyes usually close naturally; it is a bad sign if they do not, indicating, as it does, that magic has caused death. Putrefaction, or any unusual sign connected with death such as when a cadaver swells, or a body remains warm and perspires, or, as mentioned, when the eyes remain open, is held to be an indication that the soul has been taken by a sorcerer and the person "sold"—all signalling a "bad" death and requiring that a dagger be struck into the body and burial take place immediately.

Some time later, the *prêt' savanne* comes to read prayers if the death has occurred in the countryside, or the priest of the local Catholic church if in the town or near it. After the prayers have been said and relatives and friends have addressed the dead and "given him commissions," such as "Say good-day to my mother," "Ask my father to help us, for the weather has been bad this year for the crops . . ." the body is

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always takes place on a Sunday. The prayers of the novena, whatever week-day they may begin, are recited either by the priest, if in town, or by a *prêt' savanne*. The family and a few friends, who gather to hear the prayers and to sing hymns, take their places about a table covered with a white cloth, on which are placed *images* of the saints, a crucifix, two candles which must burn for the nine days, and two bouquets of flowers. A lamp of oil in a glass with a floating wick must also burn day and night. Each session of the novena lasts some two hours, and no refreshments are served those who attend.

On the day of the *dernière prière* those invited come to help cover the walls of the room with white sheets — sometimes the ceiling is also covered — and hang white curtains over doors and windows. Wreaths are placed on the table and attached to the sheets on the walls, and *images* of the saints are pinned to the white table-cloth as it hangs down. Liquor, cakes, *kola*, *clairin* and other refreshments are made ready, according to the family means, these being held so essential that if the family lacks the funds at the moment to provide them, the novena may be stopped on the eighth day, and the *dernière prière* postponed for a month or even two. The same type of song is sung at this rite as at wakes, and the mourners wail once again, though not so loudly as just after the occurrence of death. At about eleven o'clock, after having recited the last prayer of the novena, a *libera* is sung to "drive the dead from the house," since now they are through with him — followed by an *adoration* for the *prêt' savanne*. Since, unlike the custom at *vodun* ceremonies, these coins are his entire fee for the novena as well as for this evening's ceremony, he sees to it that the song which marks it continues until all members of the family have donated a sum that he regards adequate. The *adoration* over, the refreshments are passed, so that the *dernière prière* most often ends at midnight, though those in attendance sometimes remain until morning, playing games, telling stories, and singing canticles as at wakes.

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The family then take the offer con-
tainer to a crossroad, where it is deposited as an offering for 769
Legba, and its contents are eaten by the dogs, who signifi- [782]
cantly, in Dahomey are the animals sacred to this deity. Following this, the adults enter the closed room, to feast at the laden table.

Several days after the funeral two gourdes are paid a priest [793]
— "a real one," not a *prêt' savanne* — to chant a *libera* at the [765]
grave, a rite that must be repeated each year on All Saints' Day. Each year, also, food is given the dead, though "not so much as following a funeral." Chickens, beans, rice, and coffee are the principal part of such an offering, for which no priest need be called, as the ceremony is merely to let the dead know that they are not forgotten. Every three or five years, however, a large *mangé* must be given for all the family dead, and if held [535]
on the family habitation, there is social dancing, where such favorites of the ancestors as the *martinique*, the *banda*, the *calebasse*, and the *zesse* are danced.[6]

Differences in procedure mark various modes of death. 766
When a person is killed by lightning, a justice of the peace must be called and the burial is performed at once. Such a one has no "last prayer," because, death by lightning being a punishment of God, it is felt that the dead probably made an oath which he subsequently violated. Those killed by light- [171]
ning or who die of smallpox are not mourned, but no explanation could be obtained for this obvious survival of African custom. If a leper has concealed his disease, mourning is worn for him, though if the cause of death is generally known this is forgone. There is customarily no mourning for suicides, [962]
and never where the regulations of the Church are rigorously applied.

If the dead person was a vodun priest or otherwise had 764
strong *connaissance*, steps are taken before his death to "re- 766
move the *loa* from his head" so that his soul will not go under 792
the water, for, as has been explained, such souls are held to 795
be powerful spirits which may cause their family much harm

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764 766 776 775 764 766 776 773 if, after a time, an expensive and troublesome ceremony is not performed to bring them out and lodge them in a jar. The *hungan* who performs the rite of removing these *loa* is preferably himself a member of the family and is usually left alone with one or two assistants and an elderly relative of the dead, but if the family includes no *hungan*, the one who is called, even though greatly trusted, is most carefully watched, because a strange priest might take for himself the valued gods of the dead, leaving only the weak ones. The *hungan* stands in place and calls the name of the dead. He puts some of the hair of the dead in the jar or in a calabash, with which the *loa* is supposed to go, and, unless another member of the family, nominated to receive the *connaissance* of the dead, is present, the jar or calabash is sealed until these spirits can be "given" to a successor.

766 [764] [785] No special purification is needed for a house where death has occurred except when the deceased was tubercular or a leper, when everything except his money is buried or thrown in some unfrequented place. The body of one who has died of smallpox, though washed, is buried as soon after death as possible without being enclosed in a coffin. Those who die of smallpox or leprosy, suicides, or persons shot as a punishment for crime are not buried in the communal cemetery, but in special sections of the graveyard, the lepers and victims of smallpox being separated from the others, for the Church declares these have died of the plague. One who drowns is buried at the riverside where his body is recovered, though if the corpse is not too badly decomposed, the authorities give permission, and the family of the dead can afford the expense of transportation, the body may be brought home. Children are [561] [771] buried in the cemetery, but, on the principle that "the young must serve their elders," the funeral of a child is attended only by those relations who are younger than the dead; for in Haiti, as in Africa, it is not held seemly that the young should be followed to the grave by their elders. At the house, however,

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from its ill effects after the evil has been exorcised, must also know the forces they are combating if they are to achieve any measure of success. By the same token, practitioners of black magic must know what steps may be taken to counteract their *wangas* so that, if necessary, they can in turn call forth supernatural emissaries to strengthen the evil impulses originally set in motion. In this sense, therefore, the *hungan*, the *gangan*, the *bocor*, and the *caplata* employ essentially the same techniques and operate with the same forces, the difference between them being one of degree rather than of kind. "*Hungan, c'est magazin. Gaigné un pile marchandise* — The *hungan* is like a shop. He has a lot of merchandise," says the Haitian, quoting a well-known proverb as he makes the point.

In the main, it can be said that though the *hungan* and the *gangan* practice magic, their main preoccupation is with the *loa* — the maladies they send to affect a man and his possessions — while the *bocor* is concerned almost exclusively with setting in motion the agents that actuate black magic, and the *caplata* dabbles in anything that is wanted. One important means whereby the sorcerer obtains his powers is the evil *loa*, but there is this essential difference between them: the gods of the *hungan* are family gods who come to him through the natural course of inheritance, endowing him with the *connaissance* that gives him his control over the supernatural world, while the *bocor* buys his gods. And when a god is bought, it is always acquired so as to enhance the position of its owner at all costs, despite the knowledge that the power thus purchased is dearly bought, bringing its own eventual punishment. Sometimes an ambitious *hungan* adds to his familial *loa* other "purchased" gods, but this is resented by the deities who have given him his powers, so that in time these benevolent powers take all means to humble and crush him. Furthermore, gods acquired in this way pass on to unwilling members of their owner's family and, after a generation or two of mischief-making, must be "restrained" or "banished." A number of

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points — or oblique designations — makes clear the distinction between the two, for the *bocor* invariably and certain *hungans* on occasion are called *nèg' mazi maza*, "Negro who wears his back to the front," or, again, those who "serve with both hands." Though by no means shunning the services of the practitioner, the Haitians of Mirebalais nevertheless look upon the working of magic with a cynicism that is reflected in the gossip about happenings that befall all who practice it, in any form, and particularly those who work evil magic. It is said: "The *hungan* often dies an evil death, and the *bocor* who makes *wanga* almost always. These people kill each other by magic"; or one hears of a woman who one day went to the cemetery to obtain materials needed for her unsavory work and was struck and killed by the thunderbolts which are believed to smite sorcerers.

To keep his reputation, a practitioner of magic, good or evil, must make continual demonstration of his powers. For example, in prescribing a magical cure, it is incumbent upon the *hungan* or *mamba* to foresee all eventualities, even where the directions are not followed, a prescription which is regarded as a strong check on the charlatan and is the reason why a practitioner is prudent in refusing to accept a case beyond his power to aid, since persistent failure to achieve cures will lose a *hungan* his reputation and his practice. Naturally, certain practitioners do not fail on occasion to turn the anxiety of a family over a serious illness to their own account, but inasmuch as the cures made by a man are the most adequate proof of his power, the feeling is that his clients have an unquestioned safeguard against chicanery. This point of view, it may be noted, is of undoubted importance in perpetuating a living faith in magic.

An example of how rapidly a practitioner of magic can lose prestige when some mishap occurs to him was encountered when an important *gangan* of the valley was brought into court charged with the theft of a pig which he claimed was

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given him by a third party for whom he had done what was euphemistically called "a piece of work." The evidence clearly showed that the animal, which he had killed to feed a *combite*, had been stolen, and since this *gangan* could not establish his defense that he was an innocent receiver of stolen goods, he was convicted and sentenced to three months in prison, and to pay the owner of the pig the exorbitant sum—sixty-five gourdes—asked as damages. Sympathy was very generally with the *gangan*, but the opinion most often heard expressed was that his power had obviously been lessened by his misuse of the *connaissance* the gods had given him, or they would not have permitted even his arrest, much less his conviction. To reinforce the point, specific reference was repeatedly made to the *hungan* most popular in the valley at the time, about whom it was said that, for example, were he accused before a court, the officers might even enter his house in search of him while he was present, but they would still be unable to see that he was before them.

Other attitudes held toward workers of magic developed in connection with this case. The popular *hungan* was often called on, it was said, because his work was well done and his fees were not too high; it was pointed out that there were renowned *voduu* priests who charged five hundred gourdes for a *service* which this man directed effectively for but little over one hundred; moreover, such men often failed to remove the evil deities which were troubling the family that employed them, but would instead add more, so that their clients would soon have need of them again. Practices such as these, especially that of overcharging, are frowned upon by the *loa*, and if persisted in they "spoil" the power of the priest. This was one of the reasons why, in the opinion of many individuals, the *gangan* in question had been convicted. "He was once a remarkable *gangan*, but he has spoiled his *loa* by using them for evil, and by asking too much money for what he was employed

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to do. The *loa* would come, but they wouldn't give him the same *connaissance*."

One of the most important of the forces behind all magic is the *Maît' Carrefour*, the Master of the Crossroads. The possible identity of this *loa* with Legba, who guards the entrance to houses and is also thought of as a guardian of the highways, was a question that could not be satisfactorily resolved, though it seems most likely that the two are quite distinct, since Legba is but rarely called upon when magic is being performed. One Haitian versed in magic stated:

> "The *Maît' Carrefour* is like the president. Legba is like a minister. God sent the *Maît' Carrefour*. He commands Baron Samedi. Before going to the cemetery to perform [black] magic you must pass the crossroads, and therefore he is able to restrain you if he is not properly worshipped. He commands Damballa. He commands the Rada and Pétro gods. He commands all the saints because all of these must pass the crossroads. Therefore when one has a *garde carrefour*, a person will die a death sent by God [that is, a natural death] and not one caused by *magie* or the *mystères*."

The *Maît' Carrefour* must be "paid" each year on All Saints' Day, when seven cents in copper coins are given and a white chicken is killed, cooked, and placed in a wooden container with rice, biscuits, cassava, potatoes, bananas, and other kinds of food, both cooked and uncooked, to be deposited at a crossroad with the statement: "Here is food; thank you for having cared for me. If evil *loa* wish to harm me, *Maît' Carrefour*, restrain them." As this is said, a candle is lighted and an invocation pronounced:

> "*Au nom de Maît' Carrefou'; au nom de Maît' Grand Bois; au nom de Baron Cimitière! Jodia, premier la*

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789 [788] person of great experience was pointed out who was believed able to stop a runaway horse without putting a finger on him. One widely spread type of charm is an *arrêt* against the *mal jòk*, or evil eye. Mention has been made of protective charms when the measures taken to guard growing crops were discussed, and also in connection with safeguarding the well-being of infants. The power in this latter type of *garde* often is made to reside in a seed on a string or chain, or a cross of beads sewed on cloth, to represent the four corners of the earth.

789 793 Because charms are the outer symbols of magic, detailed examples of their making will give insight into the nature of charms in general. The first of these which may be described [829] was a *garde*, made by a *mambu*, to relieve a pregnant woman 789 whose milk had begun to flow before the birth of her child (154) — a sign that an evil spirit had been sent her by an enemy, and that her delivery would therefore be fraught with danger. [787] During the séance the *mambu* was continuously possessed by her god, Ogun, whose identity was shown by her whistling. Before the *mambu* as she commenced her incantation were some *clairin*, lighted red candles, a new piece of soap, incense, sulphur, garlic, light brown shoemaker's thread, an empty bottle, a bottle filled with a green, evil-smelling lotion called *baigne de mambu*, a chick, and three iron nails. As she tied the cord in knots she muttered her spell; then, taking the empty bottle, she put in it a bit of the incense, sulphur, garlic, some soap, some *clairin*, and some *baigne de mambu*. With the knotted cord she tied a cross made of two nails to the neck of the bottle, repeating her formula before she put it down. Instructing the pregnant woman to take the bottle, she said: "Speak into it and say everything you wish."

She then took the chick, opened its beak, and wrote on it [825] with a pencil, continuing the incantation the while. With the pencil she also made marks on the thighs, the wings, the upper joints, and the leg joints before she handed it to her client

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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with the words: "Tell it what you have to say. Tell it that you are passing on to it all your pain, everything." When she had finished, the *mambu* once again took the chick, holding its head as she described three crosses on the ground with its beak. She now put some of the earth in which she had made the crosses into a white dish, returning the chick to the woman and telling her to speak to it again, and this time to expectorate three times into its open beak as she finished. The *mambu*, holding the fowl in one hand, thereupon poured some of the mixture from the bottle, and some *clairin*, in the plate that contained the earth, lighting the *clairin* with her free hand and directing the patient to rub her nipples with it. Then she returned the bottle to the pregnant woman, telling her to recount her need to it once more, and then to cork it.

The *mambu* next chewed some of the soap and rubbed it over the cork to "seal" the bottle, saying: "When you send a letter through the mail, you seal it," and instructed the pregnant woman to place the bottle in her house and see to it that it was not uncorked, for in it was contained her life and the life of her child. "Open it before delivery and pass its contents over your abdomen." A cord was put about the waist of the woman and tied tightly, not to be untied until the growing child in her womb should cause it to break of itself. While the *garde* was being made the *mambu* sang this song:

M' pas 'ti bête,	I am not a little animal,
M' pas 'ti cochon,	I am not a little pig,
Pou' on cové,	That one can confine me,
Pou' on marré moin.	That one can tie me up.
Ça qui fait bien,	He who does good,
Cé bien li wé;	Good he will see;
Ça qui fait mal,	He who does evil,
Cé mal li wé.	Evil he will see.
Côté marré corde moin,	Where I tie my cord,
Yo pass la qui li.	They are stronger than it [the evil?].

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Novo, Dahomey. The members are, of course, not known, but there is always gossip, and occasionally a man, when quarreling, says: "Take care! You don't know who I am. . . ."

Baka, *loups-garous*, and *démons* are not the only supernatural beings that a person may encounter from time to time. Though not all are creatures of magic, and not all are evil, all of them are treated with due caution. Such are the "river people" — children with six fingers, who are believed to belong to the Malt' Source, the Master of the Stream, and are destined to become *hungans* — this being an example of the good that may come from such supernatural association — or persons with light hair. Those with light hair are more dangerous, however, since occasionally such folk are taken for a time under the water, the men by female spirits and the women by males. One person in Mirebalais told of a distant cousin who disappeared as she went to the river to draw water. She was mourned as dead, but returned after a year and was welcomed home. As she began to recount her adventures, however, she was struck dumb, and never recovered her speech. Another spoke of his experience as a boy with such a water-spirit, a *Maîtresse d'Eaux*. With a companion, he was walking along the bank of the Tombe River, when a woman was seen sitting on a rock combing her long light-colored hair. The other lad was invited to help her and went nearer, step by step, until, as he almost touched the comb, he turned and ran. Some time later he died.

Another category of spirits, already referred to in discussing the cult of the dead, are *zombi*. To understand their nature, however, the use of magic to bring about death or its simulacre, and the measures taken to guard against this, must be first considered. In the preceding chapter it was observed how *boboli* seeds are placed in the coffin of one suspected of an "unnatural" death to prevent the sorcerer from reaping the fruits of his deed. A cross of pine-wood, made by the *hungan* and empowered by him to repel evil, is frequently also put

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he is accidentally fed salt. Though the concept has been presented in recent years with unjustifiable sensationalism to the reading public,[15] it is indisputably a living one. One aspect of it has been responsible for much of the conviction with which positive statements are made of personal knowledge of cannibalism in Haiti, as has been shown most clearly by Dr. Parsons:

> "A *ganga* who keeps a *zombi* may transform him into a stone, perhaps in front of his house, or into any kind of animal. Transforming him into a pig or sheep or cow, he may kill him and sell him in the market. In this belief we have the basis of the gossip and court testimony about human flesh sold in the market. It is *zombi* flesh, not human flesh, that is so disposed of. But foreigners know nothing about *zombi*, nor do the native witnesses explain in court what they have in mind when they are testifying to purchases of meat from the cemetery. 'People does *eat* people at Aux Cayes, I *know* it,' said Sam, as he told of human fingernails found on pigs' feet, explaining *to my question* that the pig had been a *zombi*. Had I not followed up his first statement and learned that he had never heard of anybody killed directly for marketing, an idea which amazed him at that, I would certainly have been left with an impression of cannibalism totally misleading."[16]

Precisely the same concept exists in Mirebalais as in Jacmel, where the foregoing material was collected, except that in its elaboration it underscores the point made in the quotation just given. *Zombi* meat can be recognized by the fact that it rapidly spoils, and when cooked, brings much white foam to the top of the stew, while such meat, sold as beef, turns white like veal; all this warns against eating it, and shows the active distaste with which it is regarded. Indeed, one of the duties of a person's *loa* is said to be that of warning him when he is

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Microfilm

European straight chair, and if peasants often sleep on mats laid on the ground in African fashion, this is only because their resources do not permit them the luxury of beds. The accessory field-house is called an *ajupa*, a designation which represents one of the few recognizable contributions of the aboriginal inhabitants of the island to its present-day culture, since, according to Charlevoix,[2] it was first applied to the huts of the buccaneers, called by them *aioupas*, a name taken over from the Spaniards, who themselves had adapted it from the native Indian term.

Clothing is also of European style. The men, who wear shirt and trousers, long ago discarded the West African loincloth and the covering great-cloth worn toga-fashion, while the hats they wear are of course equally of European type. The absence of shoes, though characteristic of Africa, is not necessarily of significance, for shoes are not only an accepted article of dress, but are symbols of worldliness, and when lacking from the costume, indicate only an inability to purchase them. The dress of women is no less European, though only the old women continue the fashions of the days of St. John, who reported that "the females generally keep to a long white chemise, covered over with a blue cotton dress that reaches to their bare feet, and is drawn in around the waist."[3] As in his time, white is favored for days of festivity, and the head-kerchief is also seen, even if it is less omnipresent than in his day. The younger women who count themselves sophisticated scorn the kerchiefs and wear hats, but elderly women wind white kerchiefs about their heads in the West African manner. The invariable mark of the *mambu*, in addition to her jeweled fingers, is the white kerchief with a very large straw hat worn over it.

One special form of dress that represents a complex merging of European and African secular and religious customs is the *rade de pénitence*. For men this takes the form of a multicolored shirt, for women a dress whose colors are dictated by

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the saints of the Church the sacrament of baptism was a crucial rite, so the *loa* must be baptized before they become forces which act in a recognized and predictable manner. Just as the objects used in the rituals of the Church must be sanctified by being blessed and sprinkled with holy water, so in the *vodun* cult a *humfort*, the drums, the iron, and the rattle must all undergo a similar sanctification, not only that they may possess proper supernatural power, but more importantly that they may perform their functions in the very serious and African matter of calling the *loa* and placating the supernatural beings of the *vodun* cult.

Herein lies the importance of the *prêt' savanne*. Since the official representatives of the Church not only have nothing to do with the *vodun* cult, but excoriate it on all occasions, the *prêt' savanne*, as a man who can read the prayers of the Church, plays an indispensable role and to that extent is to be regarded as a functioning member of the *vodun* cult, despite the fact that he has no control over the *loa* and, as far as was observed, does not participate actively in their worship. At the same time, it must not be inferred that in borrowing "baptism" from the Church this rite has been elevated to the most important place in the ritual of the *vodun* cult, for though the *prêt' savanne* must read prayers "from the book" and sprinkle his holy water, the actual "baptizing" is carried out by the *hungan*. In sanctifying a *humfort*, the end in view is to induce the *loa* to come after the baptism and to insure that no unaccountable or untoward deeds may come to pass within it. Similarly, though drums must be baptized with Church prayers and holy water that they may perform their allotted tasks, without the concomitant ritual of the *hungan* they would be no more empowered to call the gods than they were before the prayers of the Church were read over them. An analogous comparison can be made between the role of the *prêt' savanne* and that of the *hungan* in the *service*. Since the world

3: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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is ruled by God, it is necessary to invoke God with the ritual of His Church before the rites to placate the *loa* may begin. But the important business of the occasion is to placate the *loa*, and it is only when the *houngan* takes over from the *prêt' savanne* that the series of rituals commence which, for the Haitian, hold emotional force and psychological value.

In the description of the baptism of a *loa* given in a preceding chapter, the use of Church ritual in bringing the African spirits under control will be remembered. No clearer illustration can be given of this merging of traditions than in a detailed account of the manner of making and validating *vodun* drums. These drums are of the characteristic African hollow-log type, with skin heads held in place and tuned by means of pegs, which are tied fast about the drumhead with cord. Before the tree which furnished the bodies was cut, an invocation was pronounced by their maker and an offering — a *mangé see* — was made, that all the gods might come when called by the finished drums. A candle was lighted and *vervet* described about the base of the tree. Eggs, broken against the trunk, were rubbed on the bark; while both soft and alcoholic drinks were given as libations, since not all the gods desire the same refreshment. After the tree had been felled and that part of the trunk that was needed for the drums was cut off, the maker was free to proceed with shaping the bodies of the drums by first gouging out the inside of the trunk, then stripping the bark, and finally carving the characteristic foot at the base. Before the next step of boring the holes for the pegs was taken, *clairin* was poured inside each drum, at the entrance to the habitation of the maker, and toward the man's cornfield. The first hole bored in each drum was carefully marked, for this was the significant *manman*. Here the first peg is inserted; the skin head is first attached here; and here the cord about the head is first knotted; while it is the peg in this hole that must always be first struck when the completed drum is tuned.

1: Herskovits E-4,8 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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cade for Damballa, a red print for Ogun, and a third, a flowered blue material, for all the other gods, were first made. They were ruffled at the bottom, with strips of the material, attached as are apron-strings, to hold them in place. Four eggs, three "native" candles, three white candles, white flour, corn flour, two casava cakes, two biscuits, three small-sized loaves of bread, two bottles of *kola*, *clairin*, and holy water, were also provided for the baptism. Finally on the appointed day — a Saturday, so that the drums could afterwards be used for a *vodun* dance — the drums, drumsticks, and iron, with the dresses and the food that had been provided for the ceremony, were taken to the scene of the rite, a habitation where a *tonnelle* had been built for the accompanying dance.

The ceremony began at about five o'clock in the afternoon, the drums being dressed by their godmothers. Just as a child who is to be baptized in church must have godparents, so drums must have their godparents, and following the logic of this position, since the owner of the drums is regarded as their father, he uses the terms *compère* and *commère* for those who have "stood up" with his drums, just as he would for those who might sponsor his children. The *prêt' savanne* first called for some twigs from an orange tree and a bit of cotton, as the drums, standing on end, were covered with a clean white cloth. Grouped about them and ranged behind the officiant were the owner and godparents of the drums, holding lighted candles in their hands, with which they made the sign of the cross from time to time. As the prayers began, the participants crossed themselves, and the *prêt' savanne* sprinkled the drums with holy water, using a spray of orange-leaves. Among his prayers were the Credo, the Ave Maria, the Pater Noster, and the Salve, interspersed with hymns sung by the assembled group. After about half an hour of prayer the officiant, holding an egg in his hand, made the sign of the cross three times over each of the drumheads. Ordinarily the eggs would have been broken, their contents rubbed on the drum-

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

534 heads, and *clairin* poured over these, but on this occasion the
778 rite was postponed, for the eggs would have dampened the
788 drumheads so they could not have been played for the evening's dance. Yet this deviation from the strict ritual did not permit any laxity in meeting the obligation when promised — that is, the day following the dance.

534 The *hungan* took charge as soon as the prayers were fin-
778 ished. Placing the drums to form a triangle on the ground,
788 with the iron, rattles, and sticks near by, he put the offerings
• 793 inside the space enclosed by the bodies, and with white cornmeal made *vevver* about them, while at the foot of each drum he placed an egg; then, covering the drums with a clean cloth, he threw parched corn on it. From time to time he interrupted his silent invocations by ringing a bell held in one hand, until the arrival of the time for the vehement haggling over the price of his services, which interrupted the ritual.

[552] This matter settled, he asked for the names to be given the drums, and proceeded to "christen" the small one Gran' Siligbo, the middle-sized Damballa, and the great drum Ogun Shango. At this point, were the owner desirous of having special powers given his drums, as is frequently the case, the *hungan* would endow them with a *n'âme*, or soul, at the same time instructing the spirit of the drums, called *hunsôr*, in what was desired of it, and prescribing what must be given the drums by their owner to make their powers effective. But in this case no such *n'âme* was asked, and the ceremony continued.

Summoning the gods, he lifted the cloth over the drums and instructed the "father" to pour water in three places between them, to set the drums on end, and to beat one of them. This was the *seconde*, called Damballa, and its having been initially struck indicated that the god after whom it was
534 named was most important for this set. This ended the cere-
778 mony of baptism, and the drummers took charge so that the
788 evening's dance might begin, for now the drums were ready

1: Herskovits E-6, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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ABOVE, *Consecrating the drums: the "godfathers" and "godmothers" standing by with lighted candles as prayers of the Church are recited.*

BELOW, *The vodun priest employing African rites to complete the consecration of the drums.*

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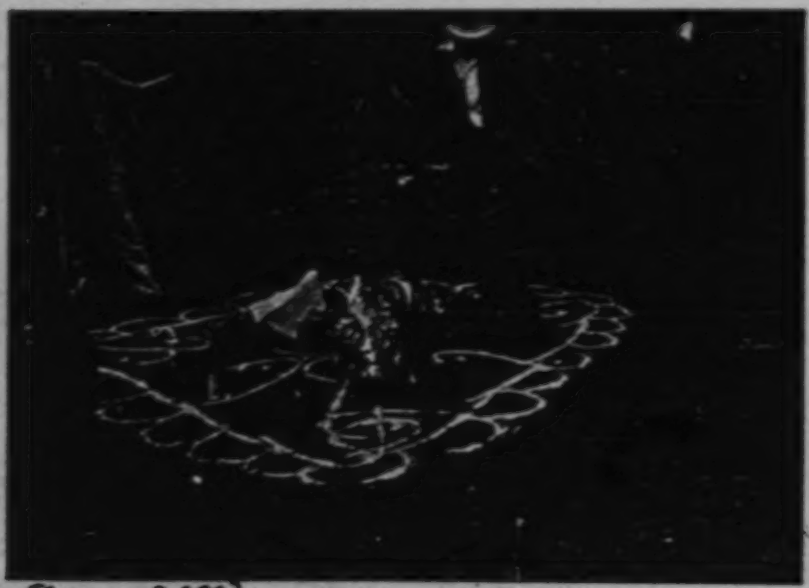

[facing P. 282]

L: Herskovits I-4,5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

the voudists this is not regarded as decisive proof of the power of Protestantism, for those immediately concerned it is held sufficient.[10]

What, then, of the attitudes held by voduists toward the Catholic Church? The correlation of Catholic ritual with *vodun* practice made by Haitians is of utmost significance in this connection. In discussing the Church service, it was pointed out that church bells announce mass or any other rite, and this, it was explained, is for Legba — "*Toute cloche c'est pou' Legba, même l'église, oui* — All sounding of bells is for Legba, even in church," for he must be notified so that he can "open the gate" for God, Jesus Christ, and the saints. "*Nou' même nou' connoi' ça. C'est Bon Dieu crée tout* — You yourself know that. It is God who created everything." It was also recounted how when the priest preaches, he is possessed by the *mystères* of the sacred Trinity, for does he not gesticulate and become excited like any other possessed person?

Furthermore, it is believed that Gede, Ogun, and Damballa "are always at the church," often insisting that their worshippers take communion. Indeed, occasionally the *loa* of a woman may demand a Church marriage from a man to whom she is a *placée*. The sacraments of baptism, first communion, marriage, confession, and extreme unction are received by members of the *vodun* cult, though, as will be seen, when voduists confess, they say nothing of their *loa*. The *hungans* themselves "are most often at the sacred table to take communion," and one particular *hungan* not only attended mass, but was seen continually employing his rosary in the *vodun* ceremonies at which he officiated. While Haitians from the southern peninsula stated that the *hungans* there do not go to church, it was pointed out at the same time that all other voduists attend regularly.

The principal resentment held by Mirebalais voduists against the Church is for the cost of Church rites, and for the

[p. 308 is blank]

APPENDIX I

THE GODS OF THE VODUN PANTHEON

One of the most impressive facts about studies of Haitian peasant belief is the absence of any attempt at systematic treatment of the deities of the *vodun* cult, as concerns either their attributes, their functions, or their relationship to one another. Indeed, there are but two exceptions to this statement: Dorsainvil (I, pp. 174–5) has published a list of the names of gods, placing them in categories according to their African derivations, and Parsons (I, *passim*) has made available her notes on the characteristics of the deities of which she was told while working in the island. Otherwise, one reads merely of "the serpent-god Damballa," or of "Papa Ogun," or some other isolated designation. It therefore seemed of capital importance in making this study to obtain both names of deities and as much information concerning these gods as possible, and the resulting data are presented here. 776 114 [P21]

One reason why perhaps not more of such "systematic theology" of *vodun* as exists has been made available is the great degree of individual variation which confronts the student seeking this kind of information, since differences of opinion are invariably encountered. Even priests do not by any means agree, for these men and women are supreme individualists, each being the worshipper of particular deities and exploiting special skills, with the result that the frame of reference within 776 184 794 [793]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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which a given priest operates differs from that of his colleagues — though, of course, always within the limitations set by the general pattern of the cult.

This range of opinion cannot be better illustrated than by giving, at the outset, three of the lists of *vodun* deities that were obtained, since here only so simple a matter is involved as names of gods. These lists, it must be remarked, were given by people living in the same valley; were they to be compared with lists collected from other parts of the island even greater disparities would appear, as will be evident if the collection of names of *loa* given by Dorsainvil is consulted. Certain deities, whose names recur below and are also to be found in Dorsainvil's list and in Parsons' notes would be included in any enumeration of gods of the cult, since their worship prevails throughout Haiti. Such would be Legba, Damballa, Aida Wedo, Aizan, Ogun, Agwe, Loko, Shango, Ossange, Bosu, Simbi, Wangol, Baron Samedi, Gede, and Erzilie. Others, though not enjoying as widespread a following, are worshipped over large areas. A number, however, either are gods that have resulted from the process of deifying the souls of those who, in a given locality, were renowned for their spiritual power, or represent survivals of regional African deities that have been preserved in certain large family groups.

Turning now to the lists themselves, the first of these was obtained from a woman functionary of the cult. A single asterisk after a name indicates that its exact counterpart is found in the second list presented here, while two asterisks show the precise name was included in the third listing.

Rada	*Pétro*
Damballa Wedo**	Pétro
Aizan Damballa**	Bosu Trois Cornes*
Aida Wedo	Bosu Djo
Ogun Galloné	Gedeonsu*
Ogun Ferraille* **	'Ti Kita Demembré*
Ogun Balandjo* **	'Ti Jean pié sèche*

L: Herskovits E-4, 8 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

view from that given here.

[88] Parsons (I), 171, describes how she witnessed a woman "refuse the visitation of her loa."

[89] Price-Mars (I), 34, speaks of the "*obligations annuelles de participer par un acte quelconque aux sacrifices cultuels* . . ." laid on the vodusiat.

[90] St. Méry, i, 51; see also Dorsainvil (I), 46.

[91] Seabrook's description of a "Pétro" ceremony (pp. 91 ff.) deserves, on the basis of its inner inconsistencies, to be considered a masterpiece of misstatement and misinterpretation. Its effect, and the effect of others like it, have done much to perpetuate this incorrect idea of the Pétro rites.

[92] Dorsainvil, Price-Mars, and Parsons all employ these terms, rather than *papalói* and *mamalói*, the designations found in more popular books such as those of Craige, Seabrook, and Wirkus. The latter two of these writers seem confused about these words and fail to make it clear whether or not they mean the same or different functionaries of the *vodun* cult when they use the words *houngan* and *papalói*.

[93] Compare Dorsainvil (I), 73–7 and 121, where he expresses a low opinion of the *houngan*, holding him unreliable and insincere in his worship, as contrasted to the *vrai serviteur*.

[94] Op. cit., 175–9.

[95] Even though followers of the *vodun* cult are more organized in some parts of Haiti than in Mirebalais, it is arrant nonsense to speak of a "supreme high priestess" of the cult, its *grande mamalói*, as does Seabrook, 117, or of a "black pope of voodoo" as Wirkus has done (*in Harper's Magazine*, Vol. 168, pp. 38–49, 188–98; December 1933–January 1934).

[96] A sober statement of the degrees of initiation into the cult (although these do not hold for Mirebalais) is to be found in Dorsainvil (I), 168–9, and also 62.

CHAPTER IX

[1] Price-Mars (I), 144, gives a long and excellent list of the reasons for offering sacrifices.

[2] A description of a *humfort* destroyed by the Marines during their occupation, and a detailed account of its

Vodoun is clearly more than ritual of the cult temple. It is an integrated system of concepts concerning human behavior, the relation of mankind to those who have lived before, and to the natural and supernatural forces of the universe. It relates the living to the dead and to those not yet born. It "explains" unpredictable events by showing them to be consistent with established principles. In short, it is a true religion which attempts to tie the unknown to the known and thus create order where chaos existed before.

As in Dahomey, it is not a system imposed from above but one which pushes out from below. It is bred and nurtured in the family, in the towns, and in the fields. It is common law, with deep roots in an unbroken and continuous past. The priests of Vodoun do not control it and direct its course. They, like the least fortunate peasant, simply move about within it and make use of its resources. They are its servants and its interpreters. In their cult centers, the principles of Vodoun are brought into sharp focus and dramatized. Vodoun is democratic in concept. Any man or woman may have direct contact with the deities or dead ancestors without the intervention of the cult priest. There is no place or situation beyond the influence of the loa or beyond the limits of Vodoun. At every crossroads is the spirit of the crossroads guardian, Legba, and on every long trail is the spirit of the Master of the Highway.

The cult priest nevertheless plays a significant and essential role. He translates beliefs that otherwise might tend to become amorphous into formalized action. He is a teacher, a repository of cult learning, and a vital catalyst. He gives form to abstraction, and practical meaning to symbols. He is the intellectualizing agency of a tremendous emotional force. Through his knowledge of the substance and forms of Vodoun, his experience in dealing with the loa, and in some instances his capacity to set magical forces into action, the cult priest is a dynamic power within his community.

Though the making of *poudre* and *magic* (ritual magic) and *ouanga* (aggressive magic directed against individuals) is within the realm of the cult priest's activities, these things are part of Vodoun only in a subsidiary sense. Magic lurks on the periphery of Vodoun. It has little or no place in the placating of the deities or the dead. It concerns the relationship of the living with each other and with *loa-garou* (*loups-garous*) and *baka* (demons). Although cult rituals include various poudre and magic ceremonies, the cult priest draws upon magic as he draws upon other mystic arts and fields of learning—leaf doctoring, divination, Catholic ritual, and Masonic symbolism. He attempts to bring together all thinking that widens the scope of Vodoun, in order to strengthen his hand to deal with

all aspects of the natural and supernatural. But the reputable cult priest does not dabble in "black" magic—the kind that maims or destroys human beings. One who does so is said to "work with two hands": one for the loa and one for evil. (The expression *servi di main*—"serving with two hands"—is also applied to a cult chief who deals with deities of more than one "nation.") Many a cult priest in making his ritual flour drawings on the earth holds his left hand behind his back and draws with his right, giving testimony that he "works with one hand" only.

Each cult priest maintains his own cult temple, or *hounfor*. There are no cult officials above him, as there is no formal religious organization beyond the hounfor itself. Within his own special community he is therefore the chief religious functionary, the apex of an intratemple social organization. Under the cult priest, ordinarily, there are two grades of assistants, and below them two classes of servitors.

The cult priest is usually referred to as a *houngan*, a Fon (Dahomean) title signifying "spirit chief." Sometimes he is called *gangan* (a Bantu word meaning "conjuror" or "doctor")[2] or *capla*. He also is known by the title *bocó* or *bocor*, which seems to be derived from *bocono*, the diviner or priest of the Dahomean Fa cult.[3] The bocor is, in fact, sometimes referred to as a *diviner*, and he is regarded by some Haitians as a clairvoyant and a practitioner of magic. As in Dahomey, the bocor in Haiti foretells fate through the throwing of shells or chips, much in the manner of the secular game *mayomba*. He also reads destiny with small sticks or ashes. In earlier days the cult priest was sometimes known by the Yoruba name *babalao*, a title which has been corrupted to *papalai*. A female cult leader is known as a *mambo*. She is presumed to have, in a general way, the same powers as the houngan, though in some quarters her *connaissance*, or "understanding," is not regarded so highly, and her status is believed to be somewhat lower.

Directly under the houngan is his chief assistant, the *laplace*, and perhaps a little below him on the ladder, the *mambo caille*. The laplace is regarded as the vice-houngan, and he assumes responsibility for running the hounfor in the absence of his chief. The mambo caille, a woman, runs the cult center in the absence of both the houngan and the laplace. One step farther down the ladder is the *houngénicon*, who acts as a sort of chief of the main body of devotees. These high-ranking assistants to the houngan are sometimes called *badjicans*, or keepers of the altar.

The servitors of the cult are known as *hounsi*, or "spirit wives," a name that was given to certain categories of cult servants in Dahomey.[4] There are two main groups of hounsi: *kanzo* (those who have passed through a ritual fire test) and *bossale* (those whose loa are wild or untamed). The

[2] [Footnote appears on p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]
[3] [Gorer, Africa Dances, p. 129; Herskovits, Dahomey, I, 208 ff. Cf. p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]
[4] [Footnote appears on p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]

2: Courlander 8-5 (1939-1950) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

loa makes his appearance in Vodoun ritual by possessing ("mounting") one or more of the participants. When these possessions first occur, the possessed persons lapse into a kind of frenzy without controls or direction. They may stagger, fall, and go into convulsions. The deity must be controlled so that he will not harm the person whose body he takes over. The houngan eventually establishes a conditioned, formalized response to possession; and once this is achieved, the loa is regarded as having been tamed. The *hounsi bassale* then becomes eligible for elevation to the status of kanzo. The term *kanzo* means "to tie fire"; that is, to conquer or show mastery over fire. Demonstrations of supremacy of possessed persons over flames, hot coals, and red-hot metal characterize many Vodoun rituals. In the kanzo ritual the initiate must undergo the test of boiling oil.

The hierarchy of the cult temple, in general, looks like this:

Houngan (or *Mambo*)—chief of the hounfor
Laplace—first assistant to the houngan
Mambo caille—"mistress of the house"
Houngbirow—superior of all the hounsi
Hounsi kanzo—the highest grade of hounsi
Hounsi bassale—the lowest grade of hounsi

Among the hounsi there are some who have special duties or functions. There is the *reine silence*, for example, whose job is to maintain order. The one assigned to cook the various sacrifices is called the *hounsi cuisinière*, and so on.

There is no single, clear-cut process for becoming a Vodoun priest. A man with special talents may rise from the rank of hounsi and eventually become a houngan by succession. Or a person with a strong *connaissance* may simply feel the call—sometimes in a dream—and establish himself as a houngan or bokor. If such a man demonstrates that he is "strong," a following will gather around him to constitute his *société*.

When a houngan dies, his cult center may be abandoned, or it may be taken over by another established houngan or by the deceased man's protégé. Frequently the laplace will inherit the cult temple and all that goes with it. Acquisition of a cult center by inheritance is looked upon as a means of keeping an established hounfor intact. The man who wishes to achieve the rank of houngan applies to the oldest and most venerable cult priest in the district and announces that he wishes to receive the *asson* (the ritual rattle) that is, to become a houngan. If the elder priest approves and wishes to sponsor the younger man's elevation, he consults other reputable houngans and arranges for a *grand service* for purification and investiture. The elder cult priest conducts the ceremonies. He is regarded as especially wise because of his age and long experience in dealing with the loa, whose

approval of the candidate's elevation is needed. He is also regarded as being on more intimate terms with the family ancestors who, likewise, must be in accord with the proceedings. The candidate for the asson is confined within the hounfor for a number of days, during which he takes purification baths and participates in other rituals. The rites that take place during this period are prescribed by the elder priest who has assumed responsibility. When the purification is ended, the candidate emerges into the *peristyle* (roofed court) to participate in the general service, and to undergo further tests.

Present during the ceremonies are all the principal houngans of the region—men who will be friendly associates of the new priest or, possibly, unfriendly competitors. The candidate is tested on his knowledge of how to use the asson and the tiny hand bell, and in the course of the service he is mounted by the loa who is the chief protector of the cult temple. Animals are sacrificed, and all the loa sacred to the hounfor are invoked and asked for their approval and support. But it is not only the loa and the dead who must indicate their approval. The elder houngan polls the hounsi kanzo on whether they will accept their new cult chief and follow him. He also asks the chief drummer, who polls his assistant drummers. It is taken for granted that the decision is in the hands of the hounsi. The consensus is known before the actual service, but the formality of asking the question is observed. Should the hounsi refuse to accept the candidate for the asson, the elevation cannot take place.

The city and the countryside contain many self-styled houngans and bocors who are not recognized as bona fide by the community, regardless of the route by which they claim to have achieved their station. Sometimes they are regarded as *pas fort* (not strong); that is, they do not have profound knowledge and understanding. The Haitian is quick to detect the difference between a houngan who knows and one who does not know. Many are stated to be outright fakes. One man who attempted to hold a service in Port-au-Prince aroused such contempt and disgust that a number of persons who had been drawn by genuine interest walked out with remarks that the man should be punished. In fact, his failure to show any essential qualifications for the houngan's role was commented upon in a song of ridicule that made its appearance at a secular dance that same night. The song noted some of the humorous aspects of the service, such as when the "impostor" struck himself vigorously on the head with the flat of a machete to show his "strength" and virtually incapacitated himself for the rest of the evening.

It is easily observed that no two hounfors are exactly alike. They differ

782 In Haiti the possession takes many forms, according to the nature of the deity who has entered the body, and depending on whether the possessed person has learned to "control" that deity. The possessing, or "mounting," of the possessed individual is manifest proof of the loa's existence and his constant proximity. Vodoun is built upon the premise of the existence of loa, and the possession is the instrument of direct contact and of constant proof of the loa's imminence.

Although much of Vodoun is cast in the Dahomean mold, it is no longer what it was originally in Dahomey. Many of the original deities of the Dahomean Earth pantheon, the Sky pantheon, and the Thunder pantheon have survived. Others have been forgotten, but in their place there has grown a vast array of loa, recruited partly from the Yoruba deities and perhaps from deities of other West African tribes. By far the largest group has come into existence in Haiti—loa whose names, at least, probably would go unrecognized in West Africa.

There have been prolific intrusions into Vodoun from the rites of the Catholic Church, though they have not affected the general framework of the system. The original Dahomean supreme being, Nananbuluku, is nearly forgotten; in her place the Christian God is named in many a Vodoun service. Yet, though God is the supreme creator, giver, and taker, it is the loa who must be supplicated and mollified. Most important Vodoun rituals are begun under the supervision of the *prêt' savane*, or "bush priest," who leads off with brief prayers from the Catholic rites. While the Catholic Church itself rejects any direct part in Vodoun, the self-tutored prêt' savane, unordained and unsponsored by the Church, brings elements of its theology into the hounfor. The origins of the prêt' savane are not clear. But there is little doubt that his place in Haitian life became assured during the years of conflict between postrevolutionary governments and the Church of Rome. After the slave revolts of 1791, the priests of the French colony fled from the scene or went into hiding along with the other white colonists. From the date of Haitian independence throughout the following half century, Haiti was "in open schism from the Roman Catholic Church."[1] Some Haitian presidents were friendly toward the Catholic Church; others even had the objective of making Catholicism a state religion with the president at its head. Henry Christophe, for example, made the Catholic Church official but stipulated that ecclesiastical decrees must be approved by the president. Alexandre Pétion's constitution for southern Haiti (the country was divided) also established the Church as official but laid upon it strong restrictions.

Leyburn points out that in 1814 there were in Christophe's kingdom only three priests, one of whom Christophe had named archbishop. Dur-

[1] Leyburn, The Haitian People, p. 119. Cf. p. 349. Category 116. -- Analyst

R. Courlander 8-6 (1837-1843) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV2

ing Boyer's administration, 1818–1843, Catholicism was the state religion but the president was its chief. Leyburn notes:

> Every effort of the state failing to provide proper religious leadership, Boyer resigned himself to permitting those who professed to be priests to practice in the republic. There were seventy so-called priests in the country in 1840. Some of them had once been in the holy orders but had been unfrocked: they found in Haiti not only a haven but a fertile field for gain. In addition to these religious renegades came adventurers who knew just enough of ritual and theology to use the priestly garb as a cover for easy graft. . . . They baptized houses, boats, and dancepoles, and blessed fetish charms or amulets, all for a fee.[6]

It was not until 1860, after the death of the "Emperor" Soulouque, that Haiti signed a concordat with the Roman Church.

The role of the prêt' savane became defined after the slave revolts of 1791. His cue was taken from the activities of freebooting Europeans who apparently needed neither religious orders nor profound Catholic knowledge for their pseudo-clerical work. And the long period without a responsible priesthood gave the "bush priest" an opportunity to flourish.

The prêt' savane of today has a respected place in the community, though his prestige is not so great as that of the houngan on the one hand or the Catholic priest on the other. His place is guaranteed by his ability to bring to the Vodoun service elements of a competing system which the houngan, operating within the framework of African tradition, does not provide. Acceptance of these Catholic elements as a peripheral part of Vodoun is characteristic of much West African religious thinking, in which new deities and rituals may be added to the old when circumstances require.

The prêt' savane opens many Vodoun services with an *action de grâce*, reads prayers when a death has occurred, participates in marriage rites, and "baptizes" the houmfor, the cult drums, and the sacred rattles—not to mention the lua themselves! But it is the houngan's powers that are paramount. The "bush priest" is in a sense performing a service for the Vodoun priest, whose rituals and administrations are regarded as the effective and vital ones. The prêt' savane is a cultural afterthought.

In certain remote and isolated mountain places the prêt' savane is virtually unknown. But there is no sense of deprivation, for the cult priests —even the poorest and the most rustic—have their own way of dealing with the saints, God, and the forces of nature. An aged houngan of the Morne la Selle region explained it this way:

"In everything that is done, God's permission is asked first. Most houngans in the mountains do not know how to read, and they don't know how to pray. But they know many things. They know where the sun rises,

2: Cantender 9-5 (1957-1960) 1960 SV3 HAIS SV3

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and they address St. Nicholas, who opens the day, and they know the wish of God. In the name of St. Nicholas they raise a glass of water and ask God for the power to do."

In ordinary usage the Haitian refers to the various cults or "nations" as though they were quite separate and mutually exclusive. He speaks of the *service* Pétro, or *rite* Nago, or the *sanctuaire* Ibo. Yet in practice the cults are usually bound together into two or three major groups.

The "nations" belonging to the Vodoun (or Dahomey) group include the Arada or Dahomé, the Aizan, the Mahi, the Aminc, and the Ibo. There is ample evidence that the cults of these "nations" were once separate and apart. Even today in isolated regions of Haiti there are cult centers devoted exclusively to Nago deities. Elsewhere, Mahi or Ibo services are held without the intrusion of "foreign" rites and deities. Some cult centers have several hounfors—one for Dahomé, one for Nago, one for Ibo, and so on, with a separate building for the "dead" spirit Gédé. More often, however, one finds a single hounfor containing separate altars. Of all the "nations" within the Vodoun group, the Ibo perhaps has the most independent status, and in some regions it is tied in with Pétro rather than Vodoun rites.

The Pétro group also includes numerous "nations," some completely absorbed, others more loosely affiliated. Within this group, which for convenience may be called the Congo-Guinée family, are the Pétro, Bumba, Moundongue, Bamburra, Congo Lounguc (Lounga), and other "nations." In certain regions the Congo cult, like the Ibo, is regarded as separate and apart. Sometimes the Pétro service is kept distinct from the others, though it has drawn so heavily on them for its roster of deities that the distinction is not easily seen. In places such as Port-au-Prince where the cults have deeply infiltrated one another, major differences between the Vodoun and Congo-Guinée rites have disappeared, and altars to both Pétro and Dahomé deities may be found within the same hounfor.

It is not difficult to detect a certain pattern of regional grouping within the Vodoun and Congo-Guinée families. Within the Vodoun family are gathered "nations" from Dahomey, Togoland, and Nigeria, while in the Congo-Guinée cycle are "nations" from Central Africa, miscellaneous "nations" such as the Bamburra, and the Pétro cult which is regarded as "Haitian" rather than "African," but whose rites and loa have been recruited in large measure from other services.

One often hears of Kitta services, or Changó services, or Legba rites. These are not separate cults but simply rituals for specific loa.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

776 they say, and "rides" them. What the possessed persons do then depends
787 upon the personality and whim of the loa. Generally they take on the special personal characteristics of the loa. Their voices and manners change and their postures and attitudes undergo transfiguration. They may talk about the "island below the water," about community ancestors, about intimate affairs of the community, or about how things are going back in Africa. Sometimes they utter words or phrases recognized as "African language." And on occasion possessed persons talking *langage* are said to be speaking Greek, Arabic, Hebrew, or Spanish. At the moment of first impact, when the loa enter their heads, they stagger, jerk, and tremble, often falling on the ground. Then, soon afterward, their behavior begins to move in a groove of conventionalized activity.

[346] Most commonly the loa arrive during religious rituals or dances. They
[778] come by way of the *po'teau mitan*, the center pole which supports the roof
[782] of the peristyle. It is around this pole that the sacred vèvès, or flour drawings, are made. At the foot of the pole sacrifices are offered and libations are poured.

787 Yet possession may occur anywhere and at any time. The sound of a
793 certain drumbeat may be the signal for it, or a sudden fright, or an emo-
[533] tional crisis, or any situation to which possession has been conditioned. The houngan or the mambo may facilitate possession, control it, and terminate it. The cult priest is acutely sensitive to the conditions favorable to possession. He knows how to heighten emotional tension and how to soften it. A competent houngan "plays" his service as though it were a delicate instrument. He takes everything in, issues instructions to his servitors from time to time, orders the drum tempo increased or diminished, knows how to change pace. Sometimes he hovers in the background unobtrusively, encouraging the singing and dancing like a benevolent father. At other times he comes to the center of the activities and takes command. He becomes the focus of all eyes. His slightest action is watched with intensity. He may take the hand of one of the servitors, pirouette him about, and compel the loa to enter. When the servitor is "mounted," the houngan may conduct him through ritual activity. At the right moment the houngan may help the loa to leave.

776 The spectators who observe possession in others are usually aware of the
787 identity of the loa who has entered. When the ancient loa Damballa Wèdo comes in, his "horse" falls to the ground, wriggles like a snake, and makes what are considered to be snakelike sounds in his throat. For Damballa is the venerable deity identified with the rainbow, which in ancient Dahomean lore was thought to be the great serpent come out from the underworld to drink after a rain. When the loa Ogoun Chango enters,

2: Courlander B-6 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

The loa, like the rites, vary somewhat according to region and to the practices of the individual cult priests. New concepts spring up, and they thrive in one locality while remaining unheard of in another. Yet many new concepts travel from hounfor to hounfor. As in the old days in Dahomey, the Vodoun priests sometimes make journeys to visit other cult centers. At one service near Jacmel, on the south coast, I met a houngan from Dondon in the far north and heard him discuss with the local cult chief the appropriate behavior of a loa who had mounted a servitor. The Dondon houngan declared that in the north the loa conducted himself differently. The Jacmel houngan parried with the remark that a loa's behavior is consistent. He said there were only two possibilities concerning the possession as described by the cult chief from Dondon: either the loa had been mistakenly identified, or another deity had attempted to impersonate him. Such exchanges hasten the spread of developing theology from one area to another. They also raise contradictions which remain forever insoluble.

That confusions and contradictions are not merely of Haitian making is made clear by Herskovits' voluminous study of the pantheons of Dahomey.[3] Each of the great cults—the sky cult, the earth cult, and the thunder cult—has its own explanations of the origins and functions of the deities; and even within one cult there are contradicting explanations. The Haitians have taken over, built upon, and diverged from a Dahomean system that contained its own contradictions. In adding to it the system of the Yoruba, with its parallelisms and similarities, they have made the whole picture more complex than ever.

[3] [Herskovits, Dahomey. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

with the corpse. He wants nothing to do with the domain of the Gèdés. 775
He liberates himself from the corpse at the cemetery and retires "below the 776
water." He is no longer a friend and benefactor of the family. He cannot 764
be inherited by the children of the deceased. Such controls as the deceased once exercised over him are dissipated. He may, in fact, be angered at the treatment he has received and return only to harass the family. Thus, if a family fails to have the mait' tête of one of its members properly removed at death, it may be persecuted afterward by the "spirit" of the dead ancestor and the loa as well.

The rite of dispossessing a deceased person of his loa is called *déssounin*, 764
or *déssouné*. The essence of it is the transference of the mait' tête from the 776
head of the dead person into a special receptacle, an earthen jar called a *govi* or *pot tête*. Sometimes it is transferred to the head of a child in the family, though usually this comes later.

There have been many descriptions of this ritual, and they seem to show that, though the tradition is a constant one, the specific patterns of the services are variable. Different regions, different cult centers, and different houngans conduct the rites in different ways.

Eugene Aubin wrote, for example:

On the day of death, the deceased is placed standing up; the *papaloi* [houngan] [793] conducts the rites which retire the *mystère* [loa] from the body and introduce it into a jar, which is then carefully sealed. On the ninth day, after the feast for the [765] dead, the jar is broken and liberty given to the *loa*.*

Melville Herskovits reported:

If the dead person was a Vodun priest or otherwise had strong *connaissance*, steps are taken . . . "to remove the *loa* from his head" so that his soul will not go under [766] the water, for, as has been explained, such souls are held to be powerful spirits which [775] may cause the family much harm if, after a time, an expensive and troublesome ceremony is not performed to bring them out and lodge them in a jar. . . . The *houngan* [793] stands in place and calls the name of the dead. He puts some of the hair of the dead in the jar or in a calabash, into which the *loa* is supposed to go, and, unless another member of the family, nominated to receive the *connaissance* of the dead, is present, the jar or calabash is sealed until these spirits can be "given" to a successor.*

As Herskovits understands it, it is the "soul" of the dead person that 114
would go to live "under the water," rather than the loa. This would appear 764
to be a fusion of two separate elements—the wandering, troublesome 775
"spirit" of a dead person and the mait' tête who retires "under the water." 776
Actually, Haitians are not always consistent in their explanations of what happens, or of the difference between loa and souls. On the hounfor altar there may be some govis that contain "souls" or "spirits" and others that contain loa; though the distinction is readily appreciated, Haitians are

* [Translated from the French of Aubin, En Haiti, P. 212
cf. P. 350, category 116 -- Analyst]
* [Herskovits, Life in a Haitian Valley, pp. 213-214
cf. P. 350, category 116. -- Analyst]

764 sometimes hard put to explain the similarity of treatment of these two
795 categories.
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Another investigator, Alfred Métraux, has provided a vivid description
764 given by a Haitian of a ceremony of removing the loa. In this instance
796 the corpse was not placed in an upright position as described by Aubin but was laid on a specially prepared bed. Attending the body were the houngan, his hounsi, and a child of the dead man who was to receive the liberated loa.

> The child . . . grasps in his hand a black-and-white or a white cock. On the ground in front of the bed they arrange a fine white napkin. On top of it there are syrup, candles . . . , *safia*, and other things. After they have finished sprinkling water, clapping their hands, singing to the *loa*, they all go around the bed of the dead person. The child, with the cock in his hand, makes the rounds with the *houngan*. They wave the rooster, they wave it back and forth two, three, four, five, six times over the dead person's head. During this time all those present get possessed by the *loa*, sing, clap their hands. The dead person's bed begins to creak. The *houngan* climbs
[793] on the bed and grabs the dead person's two arms. . . . He pulls him to a sitting position. The child (into whose head the *loa* is to be transferred) strikes the chicken three times on the head of the dead person. He lets go the chicken, and the chicken flies up and starts to run all around the room, smashing pots and vessels. They grab the chicken and let it go in the air three times, shouting: *Ai bobo loa à!* Immediately the *loa* goes into the head of the dead person's child.

764 The houngan cited by Métraux is described as pulling the corpse to a
796 sitting position, but more commonly it is believed that the houngan has
793 the power to make the body sit up by itself. A man from Jérémie explained it this way:

> "The body is laid out on a mat. The houngan shakes his asson over the dead man, and talks to the loa in the head. He calls the loa's name: 'Changogolo! Changogolo! Changogolo!' He calls, calls, calls. He doesn't call the dead man's name, he calls the maît' tête. 'Changogolo! Changogolo! Get up! Wake up! Sit up!' The corpse sits up. It even talks. Then the houngan says, 'Lie down!' And the corpse lies down. But it is not the dead man who sits up. The dead man is dead. It is the maît' tête who has forced the body to sit up. After this the houngan takes the loa from the head and puts it in a pot tête. Then the body can be buried. And afterward the loa can be put in the head of someone else or freed. Or the houngan may keep the loa in the pot tête and sell it to someone who needs a loa to work for him. If they buried the corpse without a *déssounin*, the loa would resent it and go away below the water."

764 George Eaton Simpson has written an excellent description of a cere-
766 mony for removal of the loa from the head of a deceased houngan.[8] The
796 [Hall and others, Haitian Creole, American Anthropological
793 Association, Memoir No. 54, pp. 188-189. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[8] [Simpson, "Four Vodun Ceremonies," Journal of American Folklore, April-June, 1946, pp. 155-162. Cf. p. 350, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]

rites took place in the region of Plaisance in northern Haiti. Such a ceremony, Simpson notes, may be attended by several houngans other than the Vodoun priest who is officially in charge. They "share the obligation and pleasure of conducting this service for their colleague, their former rival, and perhaps their former enemy." In a room of the deceased houngan's house is the body, attended by the family, relatives, close friends, and the officiating houngan and his assistants.

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. . . Near the body, which is covered by a sheet, are placed a jug and a new canari (a large earthen jar). The officiating houngan makes the sign of the cross, mumbles a few ritual formulas, and taking a spoon puts some "manger les morts" (special food for the dead) in the canari: plantains, yams, bananas, tairauts, sweet potatoes, corn meal, roasted corn, bread, cakes, rice, millet, meat, chicken, pistachio, chopped coconut, and other kinds of food. He then adds some water and stirs this mixture. . . . The other houngans perform the same rite. The family, friends, and others in the room imitate the acts of the houngans with the green branches which they hold in their hands. In a grave voice and with solemn gestures the officiant then appeals to the *loas* with songs and prayers. He invites them to come to the aid of their faithful servant, to protect him in the other world as they have protected him in this world. Following the songs and prayers the leader pronounces these words:

764 766 793 776 539

"Innocent! A good man has left us!
The mother of the children weeps.
Weep, console yourselves.
Boss Accelon, he was here.
He died.
Master Pierre Jean-Baptiste, he was here.
He died.
General Baptiste, he was here.
He died.
Marius who was left,
He died.
But Brother Joseph survives,
We will cry, we will console ourselves."[9]

The weeping and the cries redouble, but the *père-savane* [pèr' savane] and the houngan carry on. In the other room the *père-savane* solemnly intones:

"I have only one soul
Which must be saved.
By the eternal flame,
I must preserve it."[10]

The officiating houngan speaks directly to the dead man: "Boss Marius, here is a canari that your heirs have especially prepared for you so that in the future you will not have any trouble and demand other sacrifices of them. You others, the dead, are always unreasonable. Because you have peace you forget that the times are hard and that on this earth we unfortunate men are crushed by suffering. Leave your family in peace after this service, Boss Marius. Do not torment them, and do not send illnesses to their children or misery to their older people. You were always a good

9 [As translated by Courlander from Simpson's Creole text, ibid., p. 156. The preceding paragraph is from p. 155. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

10 [Translated by Courlander from the Creole of Simpson's text. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

764 786 793 776 [539] father when you were living. Continue to protect your family after death. If you need other services give abundantly to your heirs in order to obtain satisfaction. Oh, good father, good servant, good parent, good friend! Good-bye! Do not forget us as we shall not forget you."[11]

Then the houngan goes to the canarie, strikes it three times with a piece of palm bark, and chants an invocation to the loa and to God, while members of the family dance where they stand, shaking the green branches they hold. There follows an invocation to twins. After a number of loa [787] have "entered" the service, as manifested by possessions, the houngan undertakes to find out how death came to the deceased man. An assistant brings the sacred divining shells[12] of the dead man, and the officiating houngan throws them on the floor, pours tafia three times, and lights a candle. The shells are then consulted. Three times he goes through the procedure of casting the shells and consulting them. Later he announces that "the death of Boss Marius is not the death of an ordinary man, that [795] he is now resting in La Ville-au-Camp (capital of the loas which is 'under the water'), and that the loas will continue to protect his descendants provided that they show themselves worthy of protection."[13] There is more singing and ritual, and then the canarie is covered. The loa from the head of Marius has found a temporary resting place. A little later in the service "the houngan raises the canari as high as possible, almost as high as his face, as he repeats the last line: 'Where may I find refuge?' With a quick movement the canari is shattered. The food is scattered, the loas are satisfied, and the crowd breaks into disorderly flight. . . ."[14] A few hours later the body of the deceased is buried.

764 184 776 It is obvious that these rituals vary a good deal according to regional practices and according to the importance of the persons for whom they are conducted. Furthermore, there is a good deal of difference of opinion among Haitians as to what actually takes place when the maît' tête is taken from the head of the deceased man.

793 764 184 Although the prêt' savane (bush priest) is subsidiary to the houngan at death rites, his is nevertheless a conspicuous presence. He may begin the services with prayers for the dead, in which the family joins, while the houngan remains in the background. Later, the houngan takes over. In certain regions, however, the prêt' savane is dispensed with altogther, his function being absorbed by the houngan.

764 As reported by Herskovits, the wake for the dead is one of the most important ceremonies in the death rites. He says:

[766] Wakes are held for all dead, even for very young children if they have been baptized, though if a baby dies before baptism, it is buried without ceremony in a little box in the courtyard of the habitation. . . . The wife and the children either stay

11 [This and the preceding paragraph are from Simpson, Op. Cit., p. 156. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]
12 [For footnote, see Category 116, p. 350. --Analyst]
13 [Simpson, Op. Cit., p. 159. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]
14 [Ibid., p. 161. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. --Analyst]

with the corpse or are nearby with friends. The one who bathed the corpse remains constantly at its side as members of the family come and go, since the body must never be alone.[15] 764

But outside the house another kind of activity goes on. There the young people usually gather to sing gay songs, to play games, and to listen to stories. A professional storyteller, or a nonprofessional of repute, is called upon to entertain the children. He may give an entire night to Bouki and Malice stories, or to *contes* with interspersed songs in which the audience participates. Special singing games, stick games, and card games are played. But the drums are silent, both in the dead person's house and in the countryside at large. Rhythms for the game songs are provided by hand-clapping, or by vocal sounds which simulate percussion instruments. 764 584 53

Burial ceremonies vary according to local tradition and the status of the deceased person. Near the little fishing village of Petit Goave in southwestern Haiti, I witnessed a funeral cortege which might have been seen almost anywhere in the country. It was led by the widow of the dead man. She rode on a white horse, followed by four men carrying the dead body on a litter made of plain planks. There was no coffin, the body being covered only by its white shroud.[16] Behind the corpse plodded a group of twelve or fifteen peasants, friends and relatives of the dead man. Some of them had just come in from the fields and still carried their machetes in their hands. Others carried short *cocomacaque* sticks, which are believed useful for warding off baka and other demons who lurk along the path of the traveler. 764 [184]

The woman on the horse lamented loudly. When she came to where other peasants stood respectfully at the road's edge, she stopped her horse and faced them, raising her voice to an anguished pitch, calling on them to take note of her bereavement and of the fine virtues of the dead man. Some of the spectators whom she addressed, standing with their hats in hand, nodded and tried to say consoling words, such as "Oui Manman, li grand moune" (Yes, Mama, he was a fine man), or "Quand Bondieu vlé ou li prend" (When God wants you he takes you). A market woman with a load on her head suddenly became possessed by a loa as the cortege passed her. This seemed to increase the anguish of the widow, who lamented with increased vigor.

The four men carrying the corpse sometimes moved in a zigzag course, first to one side of the road, then to the other. When the procession came to a crossroad it stopped momentarily. The houngan, scarcely distinguishable from the other peasants in blue denim, came forward and stood in the center of the crossroads shaking his tiny hand bell and calling upon Malt' Kalfu (Master of the Crossroads) to grant safe passage. While he [793] [776]

[15] (Herskovits, op. cit., p. 208. Cf. p. 350, Category 116.--Analyst)

[16] [For footnote, see Category 116, p. 350.--Analyst]

764 invoked the loa, the pallbearers brought the body forward as though to go straight ahead, but then they began to lurch and sway as though an invisible force were pushing them around. They veered as though to take the right turn, and again they lurched and staggered. At last they turned toward the left, and in this direction they found the road clear. The houngan thanked the Master of the Crossroads, the widow took her place at the head of the procession, and it proceeded on its way to the cemetery.

● 793 764 766 In the services for a dead houngan described by Simpson, the body is placed in a coffin, which is carried to all the places sacred to the loa of the hounfor before being taken to the cemetery. First it is taken to the sacred trees where the loa reside, then to the sacred spring "whose waters have cured many sicknesses which physicians had pronounced incurable . . . The bearers of the coffin circle the spring several times. The coffin is swung [toward] each of the four cardinal points." Afterward the procession continues its way to the burial ground.[17]

766 174 761 But the treatment given to the dead may vary according to the manner in which they died. Leyburn notes, for example, that "a person struck by lightning . . . would have no ceremonies at all, for lightning is an act of God."[18] It may well be that the Haitian rationale for not holding ceremonies for an individual killed by lightning is that God has already held the final ceremony. But in the Haitian mind all deaths are, in the last analysis, acts of God, even though magic, poison, or accident may have played an immediate part. Why, then, should the corpse struck by lightning be treated so differently? The answer would appear to lie in a custom 171 766 761 of the Yoruba of dispensing with all burial rites for persons killed by lightning, such persons being considered enemies of the lightning deity [174] Chango. In Dahomey, Herskovits reports, the same attitude prevails in regard to persons killed by lightning:

> If a person is killed by lightning he . . . stands convicted by this fact of some grave crime which has incurred the displeasure of the god of the Thunder Pantheon (Xevioso). A person so killed is never buried by his family, but the body is turned over to the chief priest and cult-members of these deities. It is believed that a man killed in this fashion remains upright until the chief priest questions him and forces him to confess the crimes he had committed to be so punished. No one touches any [768] of the belongings of such a man, not even his money. The house in which he lived [784] is allowed to go to ruin, an *asan* of palm fronds being placed around it to guard [824] against anyone entering it. The moveable property of such a man, his clothes, his stools, and his dishes, are thrown away at the crossroads . . .[19]

766 The burial of a Haitian who dies of smallpox likewise differs from that of one who dies a "normal" death. The victim of smallpox is buried without a coffin in a segregated part of the cemetery. The reason for this lies

17 [Simpson, Op. Cit., p. 161. Cf. P. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]
18 [Leyburn, The Haitian People, p. 156. Cf. P. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]
19 [Herskovits, Dahomey, I, 398. Cf. P. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[P 41]

5. Services for the Loa and the Family Ancestors

The Ordeal by Fire: Kanzo

To advance beyond the lowest status in the hounfor, the hounsi must undergo the test of fire. This ritual is known as *kanzo,* meaning "to tie fire." In the drama of the hounfor there are many tests and ordeals. When certain loa enter, the mounted persons will eat broken glass. Other loa will cause their "horses" to rub hot pepper in their eyes. Still others will compel possessed persons to cut themselves with machetes. But these are bravado actions of the deities who have entered into the bodies of the servitors. The kanzo test is a formalized and premeditated ritual, in which it is demonstrated that the power of the cult—and the spirit of the individual—is superior to fire. Once having passed through this rite, the ordinary hounsi becomes a *hounsi kanzo.* 794 789 796 787

The kanzo ceremony—or, as it is known in some parts of Haiti, the *brulé zin* (the boiling pot)—is performed in diverse ways according to the tradition of the particular hounfor. But common to all is the dipping of the hands into boiling oil.

The common hounsi, the bossale, is prepared gradually for kanzo. In the course of certain rites she undergoes a smoke ordeal. On all fours, her head close to a fire, she must breathe in smoke without choking or coughing. When these and other tests indicate that she is ready, she will be permitted to undergo the rite of the brulé zin.

Near the town of Thomazeau in the Cul-de-Sac Plain I witnessed one of these rituals. It began with a dance, in which only the hounsi of the cult participated. They were all dressed in white. The chief drummer wore a woman's blouse, a kerchief on his head, and on top of that a woman's straw hat. He played alone while the houngan invoked the loa Legba. [793] Then there were songs for Ogoun, and the dancing resumed.

The dance court was larger than average—about forty feet by sixty.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

793 Attached to the ever-present po'teau mitan, or center post, were threeoil
794 lamps which threw a flickering light. At the entrance to the dance court
787 a glowing-hot iron bar stood erect in a charcoal fire—the symbol of kaizo
796 and of the loa Ogoun.
789 When the preliminary dances were over, the hounsi retired to one side of the court, where they sat in two rows facing the center.

Ritual rattle and bell in hand, the houngan took his place by the sacred center post. He was an elderly man with a gray beard. He wore a red kerchief like a turban around his head. He smoked a cigar, and in his ree hand he held a bottle of rum. The red kerchief, the rum, and the cigar were all in honor of Ogoun. He moved back and forth across the center of the court, talking casually, even joking and laughing. The drums began again, on a signal from the houngan, and a number of visiting houngans
[535] and mambos came forward and began a stately Jenvalo dance. The backs of their hands touching their knees, their backs bent low, they moved slowly counterclockwise around the center post. The mambos outnumbered the houngans four to one. The hounsi sitting on the sidelines sang. The song was for Maîtresse Ezilie. The houngan in charge stood by patiently, deep in thought. His assistant, the laplace, kept time with a small rattle and led the singing.

When the song came to an end, the visiting cult priests and priestesses retired from the dance ground. Again the hounsi danced. Afterward the houngan began to talk *langage*, twirling his bottle of rum about recklessly. He was speaking to a loa. The chief drummer beat out a salute to Ogun. Then the houngan raised the bottle and placed it to his ear. It gurgled away, some of the liquid trickling down his face. He seemed to be swallowing the rum.

While all the hounsi, with bowed heads, sat on the ground, the houngan recited from the ritual of the Catholic service. Latin words, then Creole words in Latin cadences. After a while the houngan's assistant took over the recitation, and the hounsi answered him responsively.[1] When the prayers were over, the hounsi arose and passed into the hounfor. The drums began a fast Nago rhythm, and the hounsi emerged with brilliant silk flags studded with tiny brass rivets. The houngan's chief assistants—the laplace and the houngénicon—carried military sabers upraised. The dancers circled in single file around the center post, a triumphal military heralding of the deity of war and the forge.

To the accompaniment of a crescendo of drums, the procession suddenly reversed its direction. Watching the upraised saber of the laplace for a signal, the hounsi reversed their direction again.

000 When the dance drama ended, the hounsi carried the flags back into

[1] [Note that the houngan and the laplace are performing services normally performed by the Prêt savane. Cf. P. 351, Category 116. -- Analysis]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

when the dance drama ended, the hounsi carried the flags back into the hounfor. Then they sat on the ground while the houngan came forward to the center post to make his ritual flour drawing. Holding the flour in his hand, he allowed a little of it to trickle out in a fine white line. He worked rapidly, with half-closed eyes, speaking *langage*. A complicated white geometric pattern grew on the earth around the center post. Among its intricate designs highly stylized phallic forms were discernible. When the houngan had finished the drawing, he wrote the name of the loa whom they were serving: Ogoun Badagry. Then the other houngans and mambos came forward, one at a time, to add to the design. When the vèvè was completed it covered virtually the entire dance court.

The laplace came from the hounfor with a bundle of brilliantly colored beads. He stood by the houngan at the center post. One by one the hounsi came before the houngan, dropped on their knees, and kissed the ground. Around each hounsi's neck the houngan placed a string of beads. He raised her, pirouetted her first to the right, then to the left. The pirouette was to encourage possession by the loa.

From the hounfor the hounsi now brought herbs and vegetables for the sacrifice. Baskets and bottles were set out neatly on the ground, along with bundles of sticks and the iron pots, or *zinz*.

The dance was resumed in a single rotating line around the houngan and the ritual offerings. Two hounsi in the center of the circle built fires, one on each side of the court. Over the fires they set the ritual iron pots. They poured oil into the pots and began the preparation of ritual food balls, like dumplings, from the ingredients at hand. One by one they dropped the dumplings into the oil, which was soon boiling.

The drumming, singing, and dancing were sustained at a high tension. A second team of drummers took over without a break in the music. The dancers now were almost exhausted. With a quick motion, the houngan spilled some rum into one of the boiling pots. A blue alcohol flame shot high into the air. Some of the hounsi screamed but continued to dance. Three of them fell to the ground, their limbs jerking uncontrollably. The loa had entered. Two of the "mounted" hounsi arose and continued to dance, staggering and jerking across the dance court. The third had to be lifted and carried into the hounfor.

The man who was to undergo initiation was waiting in the *djévo*, a special room in the hounfor. For the past seven days he had lain on a mat in the djévo, in virtual isolation except for visits from the houngan and the laplace.

Now the kanzo initiate was brought out, completely covered with a white cloth. Only his hands and feet could be seen. With one hand on the shoulder of the laplace, who preceded him, he moved with the dancers

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in a circle around the two boiling pots. On the seventh circuit of the course, the laplace stopped him at the first pot. The houngan grasped the man's free hand and, bending down, dipped it into the boiling oil. There was no visible indication of pain. They moved to the second pot, and the man's hand was dipped again. They proceeded again to the first pot, where the dipping was repeated, then back again to the second pot. The neophyte's hand entered the boiling oil seven times in all. He made no sound, showed no resistance, no reflexes. Then the hounsi took him back to the hounfor. It was all over. After three days of isolation, they said, he would be kanzo.

The houngan peeled an orange, while everyone crowded close to watch. In it he found a two-gourde note. He peeled another orange and found in it a slip of paper with the name of a woman on it. She came forward, and everyone laughed. She was an old woman, the oldest of the hounsi. The houngan held the two-gourde note between his teeth. The old woman took the other end of the note in her teeth, but she had to kiss the houngan before he would let go.

The ritual of brulé zin, or kanzo, is of unmistakable West African origin. Herskovits has described a ceremony in Dahomey which in many details could easily have taken place in Haiti. The Dahomean rite was in honor of the gods of the Thunder pantheon. Here, too, we find a pot of boiling palm oil, in which are the sacred dumplings: "When the fire had finally subsided and only a faint column of smoke issued from the pot, the initiate came dancing toward it, thrust her hand into the boiling oil, and lifted out a dumpling. . . ."[2]

Family Rites at Léogane

These services for family ancestors took place in the mountains above Léogane at the ancestral home of my friend Libera Borderau. They were conducted on the grounds of his grandmother's house. The ritual began with dancing. Against the wall of the house sat the three drummers with their Arada drums. Near them, leaning against the wall, were the flags of the family loa. Also near by was a long high table serving as a makeshift altar called the *jé*. In the very center of the table in a clean white dish lay eight loa stones—old Carib artifacts. The stones were identical in shape, all of them perfectly symmetrical, resembling small, pointed cigars. In the *pierre-loas* lived the family deities, and much of the ceremony was built around them. The stones had been bathed and polished in oil for the occasion. Set around the plate of stones were numerous small *criches* (French, *cruches*—clay water jugs), glass bottles, and earthenware jars which also contained loa. On the low bench before the table, seven dishes

[2] [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 165. Cf. P 351, Cat. 116.—Ayer Inst.]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

were set out in a row, and before them four *couis*, the half-gourd bowls used in services to the marassas, the twin spirits.

In the house, at the center of the floor, was a round flat stone about ten inches in diameter and about two inches thick, resembling a millstone. This was the *pierre-manman*, the mother stone responsible for the coming of the other loa stones and who cared for them in the absence of the family. In this stone, they said, was the spirit of the old loa Nananbouclou. On a mat in the corner of the room two children slept.

Outside, on a chair, his back against the wall of the house, the houngan sat, his rattle and bell in hand. He had come several miles to conduct the service. Most of those who danced were his own hounsi. The houngan was "strong" and well known in the region; people said he had worked for high government officials, including the president himself.

After several rounds of Arada dancing in which children as well as adults took part, the drums stopped. The houngan and his laplace moved up to the building which served for the night as the hounfor. It was up a steep slope, about a hundred feet from the dance court. There they prepared for the sacrifice to Chébo Profiel, the honored loa of the evening. Passing in and out among the spectators was a woman who would be possessed by Papa Chébo; since he was the guest of the service, she (or the loa in her head) was free to come and go as she chose, to speak as she pleased, and to do what she wished. Mostly she shook hands with people, a ceremony which continued throughout the night. First she would offer the right hand, then the left; or perhaps both at once, in which case the hands would be shaken downward vigorously three or four times. Someone ignorantly said, "Bon soir, Madame!" and she turned on him to reprimand his insolence. She was not "Madame," she was *l'Autorité*, the Authority.

During the course of the evening the conviction became stronger and stronger in her that she was Chébo Profiel. From the time we first saw her until the end of the evening her personality underwent marked changes. She "became" Papa Chébo.

The houngan sat before a small hole, possibly a foot deep and ten inches in diameter, in front of the hounfor. The fresh earth was piled neatly to the side, and an enameled plate was set on top of it. Around the hole were the various dishes to be offered to Chébo Profiel. The laplace prayed in Latin, a short Catholic service. Then the houngan, shaking his beaded rattle and tinkling his bell, called for Chébo to "enter." He made a small maize-flour drawing around the hole, and then began the feeding of the loa. The plates arranged for the feast contained roasted maize, roasted peanuts, bread, cassava, rice, and other foods. There were bottles of rum,

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1953) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

kola (a soft drink), *clairin*, and syrup. The houngan, entreating Chébo to accept, poured a little *clairin* into the hole. The loa seemed to accept, for the *clairin* was quickly absorbed in the ground. The houngan took rice from the plate with his fingers, about the amount he might place in his own mouth, and put it gently into the hole. He was feeding Papa Chébo, literally placing the food in his mouth. After the rice, which was dry, the houngan poured in a little more *clairin* to moisten it. He ordered the laplace to break up the bread, and then he placed a small piece in the hole and washed it down with a little rum. The houngan seemed to understand that Papa Chébo Profiel was hungry, and that he was also an epicure. He allowed him to taste the roasted corn, and then washed it down with a trickle of kola. Then he gave him a taste of the roasted peanuts, and another morsel of bread. Once Chébo got his mouth too full in his zest for the meal, and the assemblage had to wait for him to finish "coughing." Then the houngan gave him a long drink of kola to clear his windpipe. After that the houngan was more careful in the way he fed him—a little cassava, a drink, a little bread. As the houngan fed the loa, some of the spectators reached over and placed small coins in the empty dish by the hole. These too were for Chébo. Finally, Chébo was through eating. The food was gone.

The houngan, shaking his rattle and his bell, blew two sharp notes on his whistle. At the door of the hounfor appeared l'Autorité, the hounsi possessed by Papa Chébo. More than ever she resembled the loa, and less than ever she resembled herself. In one hand she held a saber. Her bodily movements were spasmodic, as though she was being forced to do things to which she was not accustomed. She moved slowly into the circle, her eyes almost closed; she leaned backward, then twisted grotesquely around, jerked this way and that, buffeted by the loa. Suddenly she began to whirl. The houngan called "Tambouyé!" and the drummers beat a slow complicated rhythm, a salute to Chébo. The loa had really "entered" now. There was no mistaking the jerky, irresponsible movements of the hounsi's head and shoulders. She leaned backward as though about to fall, incredibly kept her balance, rolled forward as though she were going to plunge to the ground, and twisted herself upright once more. The saber passed close to the faces of the spectators, even scratched some of them and cut their clothing. Her movements had a definitely masculine character. Chébo Profiel was a man.

She reached over to seize a chicken that was held out to her. Grasping its legs with her free hand, she continued her spinning, twisting, lurching dance. Then she cradled the chicken, rocking it back and forth until it was in a hypnotic trance. She placed it on the ground before a tiny pile

2: Courlander 9-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

of ground maize prepared by the laplace. The chicken, released, sat motionless, making no effort to escape. All watched attentively, the houngan shaking his rattle and bell. Suddenly the chicken cocked its head and, seeming to see the corn for the first time, reached out and pecked at it. This was the loa receiving the sacrifice—a difficult conception if one thinks of the chicken itself as the sacrifice. "Chébo," l'Autorité, snatched the chicken up, danced violently about, the loa in full possession of her body. With a swift movement of the saber, she cut the chicken's throat and caused the first drop of blood to fall into the hole. When the chicken stopped struggling, it was left there, head downward. L'Autorité took up a cock which was given her, cradled him, and set him before the ground maize. When he pecked at it, she picked him up and danced, around and around, jerking, lunging, never quite falling. She took his comb between her teeth, supporting his body gently with her hands, and spun around and around. Then she released him, cut his throat, and placed him in the hole with the chicken.

At the side of the hounfor, waiting, was a goat (called by the ritual name Dogwé). He had a fine silky white coat and a long beard. He was brought in to the place of sacrifice, and l'Autorité dropped to her knees to embrace his neck with her arms. She remained there a moment, her cheek against his, talking to him. Then she arose, a machete in hand instead of a saber, and began to pirouette while three men threw the goat on his side. Then she cut with the machete, and the goat's blood, too, began to run into the hole. For the first time her dance became unquestionably frenzied. She swung strong, full blows of the machete at the goat's neck, finally severing the head. From the hindquarters she cut a piece of red meat and placed it in her mouth.

At a signal from the houngan, three men carried the goat's body away to be dressed and cooked, and a woman came forward to wipe the blood from Papa Chébo's face.

The drums began again, a Dahomé dance, and the people relaxed. Many joined in the dancing while l'Autorité strutted about shaking hands and talking *langage*. She also danced, with gestures and movements wholly masculine. At one point she briefly advanced on another woman, making sexual gestures.

The houngan and his houngénicon retired to the front room of the hut. A new mat had been placed there for the houngénicon. She lay down on it, and the houngan sat in a chair against the wall. This was the beginning of the ceremony of calling *les morts en bas dleau* (the dead below the water).

Meanwhile, before the hounfor, the laplace and a hounsi were building

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1953) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

769 the *cavé*, a hogan-like structure made of bent saplings covered with cotton
793 cloth.
794 Rain had been threatening all evening, and now it began. Some people
796 crowded into the hut where the goat was being barbecued. Others came
[346] into the hut where the houngénicon lay; in the back room, with the pé, Chèbo, l'Autorité, strutted and shook hands with the visitors. The straw roof leaked a little, but no one minded very much. The houngan and his houngénicon, who had been under a strain, relaxed. The rain would mark the length of the intermission. Except for the sound of the rain and "Chèbo's" *langage*, there was no noise. No one spoke. Then the houngan,
769 his eyes closed, began to sing an Ibo song.
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Ibo Lazile oh, éya!
Grand gout manqué tuyé moin!
A la yun an six mois m' sous la mer,
Grand gout manqué tuyé moin!

Ibo Lazile, oh, éya!
Hunger has not killed me!
One year and six months I have been under the sea,
Hunger has not killed me!

The others sang responsively:

Ibo Lazile, oh, Ibo!
Ibo grand gout pas tuyé'm, Ibo!

Ibo Lazile, oh, Ibo!
Ibo, hunger has not killed me, Ibo!

After a while the houngan called "Abobo!"—which was the signal to conclude. The rain was still coming down, and he called "Abobo!" for the rain to cease also. But it did not stop, and everyone laughed. He began another song, also Ibo:

Ianman Ibo lélé!
Ianman Ibo lélé!
Pilet pied'm mandé pardon,
Ça pardon wa fai pou moin?
Ça ou gainyan con ça? [Ex. 8o]

Ianman Ibo lélé!
Ianman Ibo lélé!
Step on my foot and ask my pardon,
What will the pardon do for me?
What do you have [what are you doing] like that?

And the others came in, spiritedly:

Ianman, oh, un hunh!
Ianman, con ça'm danse Ibo!
Ianman, oh, un hunh!

Ianman, oh, un hunh!
Ianman, like this I dance, Ibo!
Ianman, oh, un hunh!

2: Courlander B-6 (1937-1950) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

While those in the front room were singing, l'Autorité, in the inner room, was suddenly thrown about violently by her possession. She raced into one wall of the hut, striking her head, flung herself back against the opposite wall, kicking, trembling, calling out strange *langage*. She crashed into the pé, upsetting the dishes, and then fell across the mat where the children were lying half asleep. One of them, a boy of about four, became hysterical. He knew the woman, but he had never seen her like this. His mother carried him to the front room, where she finally quieted his crying. L'Autorité, spent for the moment, lay across the mat. No one touched her. Later, when the singing was resumed, she got to her feet and made the rounds once more, shaking hands again and again. She was now smoking a pipe.

When the houngan heard the rain subsiding, he again called out "Abobo!" as though he were giving the order to cease, and everyone, himself included, laughed again. When it had definitely stopped, someone went out to shake the water from the canopy. The drums were brought out of their shelter, and although the ground was sticky with mud, the dancing was resumed. The houngan asked for a fast Nago dance, and the front room of the hut was once more emptied of everyone except the houngan and his houngénicon.

The laplace and his assistant went up the hill to put the finishing touches to the *cord*, the temporary structure in which the houngan was going to receive the loa and the dead. From a small chest of chinaware, the houngénicon set a "table" for the loa on the ground where she sat. The sacrifice had been for a single loa, Chèbo; the rest of the service was for all the loa served by the family. The houngan, sitting next to the houngénicon, sounded his rattle and spoke *langage*. He sang quietly, a song which only the houngénicon could hear, watching her intently. A large basket of dishes, bottles, and various other paraphernelia was brought by a hounsi. Candles were lighted and set on the ground. The houngan gave a signal, and the hounsi brought a large square of white cotton cloth, which they stretched tight over the houngénicon like a canopy. The candle flame and the silhouette of the houngénicon could be seen through the cloth, but the details of the service were not visible. Sometimes, the houngan, his bell and rattle in hand, would go under the cloth to assist in the calling of the loa. Then, without warning, things began to happen very rapidly.

One of the hounsi who sat before the door began to quiver and make strange noises in her throat: "Ka, ka, k-k-k-k-k-k-a!" Her body shook violently, and her head rolled on her shoulders. Almost simultaneously something began to happen under the cloth where the houngénicon was, and the members of the family crowded up to the *cord* by the hounfor. The houngénicon lay stiffly, her eyes closed, the white cloth removed. The

769 houngan carried out the large round basket in which lay the bottles and
793 the pierre-loas. The hounsi gathered around it, ten of them, to carry it to
794 the *card*. In the bottles were *les morts en bas dleau* (the spirits of the dead
796 from below the water). Carrying the flags, three hounsi danced, singing,
787 up to the *card*. After them the laplace came, carrying in his left hand a plate of maize flour from which he made vèvès in the line of advance, simple marks symbolizing the crossroads. The drums were beating a special salute to the loa. The ten hounsi carrying the basket danced and sang. As
[535] they moved up the hill, they rotated, so that the basket revolved like the hub of a wheel. Their progress was not smooth, however; they jerked forward and backward as they rotated. Arriving before the *card*, first one, then a second, was entered by her loa. They fell, jerked, and stumbled. This was all a very good omen. The houngan called "Abobo!" for them to resist such possession, and the hounsi all sat down on the ground. The houngan placed the basket inside the *card* and entered after it. He called for his little bell, which the laplace passed in to him. The laplace closed the flap down tight, from the outside, and placed the flags against it.

Upon a signal given from within, the hounsi began a song:

[539]

La famille ensèmblé,
Oh ensèmblé nous!
La famille ensèmblé,
Oh nous ensèmblé pou nou pa'lé parole nous là!
La famille ensèmblé!

The family gathers,
Oh, we gather!
The family gathers,
Oh, we gather to speak our words here!
The family gathers!

769 The laplace took his position, his back to the *card*, while inside, because
796 of the candle burning there, the houngan could be seen setting out the
787 contents of the basket. The candle went out, and in the *card* the little bell
[535] began to tinkle. The singing stopped. The houngan was beginning to
[793] talk to the dead below the water. First he talked *langage*. Then his voice was heard through the constant sound of the tiny bell, supplicating Papa Loko to talk a little bit with his "children." A faint, tremulous voice, that of a tired old grandfather, was heard to answer. Papa Loko was staying himself out of a long silence. He talked a long while to the houngan. Sometimes they both spoke at once. Faintly he was heard to say that he had come a long way to see his children, and that he was very tired. But as he talked his strength returned to him, and, asking the houngan to wait, he spoke directly to his "children," who sat, respectfully and awed,

2: Courlander B-5 (1927-1952) 1960 SV3 HARI SV3

Oh, a day will come when they will remember me here, *kôlé mesyan!*
Oh, Damballa Wèdo *é, kôlé mesyan.*
Oh, Ayida Wèdo *é, kôlé mesyan!*
Oh, a day will come for you to remember me here, *kôlé mesyan!*

During the evening about twenty loa and ancestors came into the *cord* to talk. When the last had finished speaking the hills were already light, and the service was over.

Service for Èzèlie Faïna and St. Jacques Majeur

This service took place not in the open but under a tonnelle surrounded by four walls, adjoining the hounfor of Alexis Stephan on the west fringes of Port-au-Prince. Separate from the hounfor and dance court was a shrine to the "dead" loa Gèdé Nimbo. The shrine was a small shed open on one side. Within, lighted by flickering oil lamps, was a life-size effigy of Gèdé, a scarecrow-like figure dressed in the loa's traditional attire—black tail coat and trousers, and a tall opera hat. On the otherwise blank face of the figure were smoked glasses with white rims.

The dancing was progressing under the supervision of the houngan's adjutant, the laplace. He wandered among the drummers and dancers, encouraged the singing, and issued orders here and there. No one seemed to take him very seriously. There was a good deal of joking, and the gathering seemed very much like an old-fashioned family reunion. There were perhaps a hundred dancers and spectators—friends, relatives, and devotees of Stephan's hounfor. Everyone was watching with affection an old woman who could not be restrained from dancing. She executed old classical steps and postures with a skill that called for running comment all around her. As each piece came to an end someone would step up to her and say something like: "*Woy, Manman, mais ou pasé mwé!*" (Oh, Mother, you are better than me!). Then they would attempt to get her to sit down again, but she would only shake them off and urge the drummers to get going if they were not too tired.

Eventually, the houngan, Stephan, made a casual entrance through the door of his adjoining hounfor. He held the usual ritual rattle and bell in his hand, and sauntered around to chat with his friends.

Gradually, almost imperceptibly, the dancing became more serious. Soon, only the hounsi, the female servitors, were dancing. The drums played a salute to Legba, the first loa to be called upon in a Vodoun service. For it is Legba who opens all gates and all highways, and who paves the way for communication with other deities. Though he is not the greatest of the loa, he is one of the most ancient. The houngan spilled water on the ground as a libation, and the dancing continued.

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1965) 1969 SV3 HaBI SV3

796 Then a well-dressed young man entered, and the drummers swiftly
793 changed to the salute reserved for guests of distinction. The hounsi sang,
[554] "Président pase là, l'ap monté au gouvernment!" and waved paper flags
[202] and kerchiefs. The young man was a distant relative of Stephan's; he also was a houngan.

After a while Stephan brought from his hounfor a second asson, or ritual rattle, and another small hand bell, both of which he handed to the young man. He was extending the courtesy of his hounfor, sharing his
[916] instruments of authority and religious power with his fellow houngan. Then followed an exhibition between the two houngans that was half duel and half ballet. They stood face to face, each of them holding the asson in one hand and the tiny bell in the other. Stephan was "testing" the young houngan for the edification of all present. Each tiny move made by Stephan was duplicated simultaneously by his guest, as though he were a mirrored reflection.

Every posture Stephan made was duplicated instantly by his guest. The assons and the bells were agitated constantly. The rattle in the young man's hand did precisely what Stephan's did. The two men looked into each other's eyes with intensity, as though this bound their movements together and unified them. When Stephan twisted to the left, the other houngan twisted to the right. Every contortion of the young man was an exact replica of Stephan's movements. The two assons rattled out the same rhythms and the same signals; so did the bells. The backdrop for this "test" was provided by the drummers. The faces of the two men broke into a sweat from the intense nervous effort. At last it came to an end. A woman came forward and wiped their faces with a colored kerchief. The "testing" ceremony was over. The visiting houngan had been proved.

796 Stephan then made a ritual vèvè, or maize-flour ritual drawing on the
793 ground. Afterward there was more singing and dancing by the hounsi.
787 They sang several songs for Fèlile Fréda, the "pure" loa. And Alexis
[532] Stephan went into a trance. It was unexpected. The servitors had not
[794] prepared for it. In this emergency the visiting houngan took over. He
[796] seemed a little anxious. He was unfamiliar with the particular psychological factors at play in this particular hounfor. He was not certain of the character of Stephan's possession. But he took over grimly. The houngénicon, an older woman, stepped forward to help. While the young houngan wielded the asson and bell, the woman issued instructions. Stephan, his head hanging back, his eyes closed, was supported by two of the hounsi. Other servitors hurriedly brought out a white sheet and spread it on the ground. A chair and a table were set upon the sheet, and Stephan was placed in the chair, where he now sat with his head hanging limply on his chest.

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Stephan had been mounted by Ézilie Fréda, the deity of whiteness and purity. That was why he was protected from the earth by the white sheet beneath him. While the drums continued to beat, the hounsi placed upon the table a bottle of wine, a clean glass, and a white plate with boiled maize meal, topped by a whole egg. Then they held over Stephan—who had become, for the time being, Ézilie—a second white sheet. The possessed houngan began to bend forward and back with great rapidity, toward the surface of the table and back to an upright position, his arms hanging quietly downward. The hounsi fluttered the covering sheet in such a way that the spectators could not see what was going on beneath it. In less than a minute, Stephan's movements ceased. The sheet was removed. Stephan sat limply, talking *langage*. In the white dish only the broken shells of the egg and a small portion of the meal remained. Some of the wine was gone from the upright bottle. The glass still had a little wine in the bottom. Ézilie had accepted the sacrifice. Not once had Stephan's hands changed from their hanging position or approached the table. The eggshells themselves were clean, but a tiny trickle of liquid yolk ran from the corner of Stephan's mouth. The visiting houngan rattled his asson before Stephan, who arose wearily, with the help of the hounsi, and followed him through the door into the hounfor.

Again there was dancing, and a little while later Stephan emerged from the hounfor in a bizarre military costume of red velvet, wearing black glasses, a blue military cap with a red feather, and a sword. He was almost as weird as the effigy of Gèdé that stood outside. The houngan had now become St. Jacques Majeur, or Ogoun, the loa of war and the forge. His personality had undergone a dramatic change. Strictly speaking, Stephan was not in a trance as he had been a little earlier. He was in control of his movements, which were completely conscious, and yet he was certainly not in a "normal" state of mind. Previously Stephan had been in a state of possession; now, one might say, he was in a state of obsession. He had identified himself with St. Jacques. He strode and swaggered like St. Jacques. His bearing was regal, military, and awesome. His costume should have seemed funny, like similar costumes seen during Mardi Gras days, but instead it was unworldly and impressive.

He carried a rum bottle in his hand, and he moved through the gathering making people drink from it. Those who drank from the bottle were sharing with St. Jacques. Stephan poured more rum into an iron pot on the ground and set it afire. The hounsi kanzo, the servitors of the higher order who had been through the fire ordeal, came forward and washed their hands and arms with the burning rum, so that at times their whole arms were aflame, until they quickly snuffed the fire out. Some of the hounsi brought their children forward and washed their arms in the burn-

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ing rum also, as a foretaste of the kanzo rites they might one day go through.

There was dancing again for others besides the hounsi. The tension had passed. The ceremony was over, and the rest of the night was simply for pleasure.

Gèdé Nimbo, the "Dead" Loa

Gèdé Nimbo, also known as Baron Samedi, is one of the most powerful deities of the Haitian pantheon. He guards the cemetery and protects the graves, especially those of children. But Gèdé Nimbo is not simply another loa, he is a personification of death. Like death, he is given to whim. He is an intruder. He forces his way into services being held for other deities, behaves badly, and has to be wheedled to depart. He indulges in ribald humor when the mood strikes him, and the most solemn occasions are likely to be disturbed by his pranks. Gèdé Nimbo can be formidable when aroused, as he can be gentle and forbearing when it suits him.

Gèdé is always dressed in black, usually with a tail coat and top hat. He is always represented in this attire in the shrines where effigies of him are to be found. Elsie Clews Parsons, a number of years ago, reported this Haitian description of Gèdé:

> He is a *grande diable*. He makes all kinds of motions to make you laugh, but you must not laugh at him, for if you do he makes you "stop laughing" . . . Anything you touch, he takes and never returns, and you have to give him more and more. He smokes cigarettes, not cigars. He wears a coat and a hat, and carries a stick. He can make himself short or . . . as tall as a mast.[8]

The kind of motions Gèdé makes would in certain other cultures be regarded as obscenities. In Haiti they are merely public violations of social restraints and taboos, things no Haitian would think of doing in public view. But Gèdé, the loa of the graveyard, has special prerogatives. He does not fear criticism. He flouts propriety at will, he embarrasses, provokes, and insults with impunity.

At a Nago ceremony which I witnessed near Port-au-Prince, the stronghold of the Gèdé cult, Gèdé Nimbo entered with such gusto that he virtually made a shambles of the service. The first person to be mounted by the loa was the laplace, the houngan's understudy. He stiffened, twisted, jerked, and thrashed about. As the more violent phase of his possession wore off, he began to make lascivious loin movements, as though copulating with the center post. Afterward, he moved about, shaking hands and greeting various persons with insulting remarks calculated to make others laugh at the indignities. Stopping before a distinguished-looking spectator, Gèdé made a few loin movements in his direction. Grasping another man by the hands, he greeted him vigorously and inquired whether it was

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his *zozo* (penis) to which his glasses were affixed. As the dance progressed, the possessions came rapidly. The possessed persons, men and women alike, leaped about the tonnelle, mimicking copulation. They broke drinking glasses on the ground, threw themselves upon the drummers, and careened and crashed into spectators and dancers. In the course of the service there were nearly twenty possessions—all of them noteworthy for their portrayal of Gèdé Nimbo as a loa who has contempt for proprieties. For he is the spirit of the cemetery, the one who laughs last and best. 776 787 796

Near the mountain town of Kenskoff I saw another service for Gèdé, which showed a different aspect of the loa of the graveyard. It took place inside the hut of a rural houngan, who was conducting the affair for his own immediate family and a few close friends. The hut itself was small. Its single room had been partitioned into two by hanging a sheet in the middle. On one side of the sheet a young child was lying on a mat next to the carefully stored Arada drums. On the other side the ceremony was taking place. Great bouquets of red flowers were arranged in a corner; above them hung a colored lithograph of the Christ child; below, on the floor, was a crude oil lamp with a floating wick. The floor area was no more than seven feet square, but at least twelve persons were crowded there, and others clustered in the doorway. Ritual flags leaned against the wall, one of red silk with a gold fringe, another of white silk with blue polka dots. A tiny space remained in the center of the floor for the houngan, whose "possession" by Gèdé was the feature of the service. [793]

The houngan was dressed in a black stovepipe hat, a blue blouse with white polka dots, and a black skirt over black trousers. In his hand he carried a walking stick. He smoked a pipe constantly, a variation of the customary cigarette. In the tiny space in the center of the room, the houngan—or, more properly, Gèdé Nimbo—danced. The houngan's personality had changed—his voice, his postures, all his mannerisms. He spoke only through his nose, for that is the way Gèdé talks, as though he had a cleft palate. 776 787 796 793

He whirled around and around, singing and talking *langage* in turn. His family sang: [539]

> Gèdé-vi yo wè ago-é!
> Gèdé-vi yo wè!
> Papa Gèdé c'est loa!
>
> It is Gèdé-vi they see, *ago-é!* *
> It is Gèdé-vi they see!
> Papa Gèdé is a *loa!*

---

* *Ago!* exclamatory, signifying "I am here."

He was the center of all eyes. Most of the time he danced alone, gyrating recklessly. Sometimes he danced with his houngénicon. Those who watched clapped hands and uttered sounds imitating drums, for drums were not being used in this service. The houngan carried the inevitable *clochette*, or tiny hand bell.

When newcomers arrived, Gèdé greeted them by shaking both their hands downward, vigorously, three times. Then he wiped their faces with his kerchief, a ceremony which he repeated from time to time. He danced with each of them a kind of Jenvalo step, simple, restrained, and dignified. One of the visitors fell to his knees to converse with him.

The entire evening was built around the houngan's representation of Gèdé. Properly speaking, the houngan was not in a trance. He was in full possession of all his normal faculties and was conscious of the slightest inconveniences and disturbances. Several times the clay bowl of his pipe fell from the reed stem, scattering hot ashes on the ground, and each time he paused to allow the houngénicon to clear them away. Yet he was carried away by his certainty that he was Gèdé. The obvious conviction of those who watched seemed to fortify him in his role. As the evening wore on, he became more and more detached from his normal personality. His psychic condition was not that of one who had been "mounted" by a loa; it was, rather, a continuously progressive ecstasy.

Gèdé is, in fact, more than a loa of the cemetery; he is a personification of death in all its macabre, humorous, and unpredictable aspects. Death is not merely a thing dying; it is an entity, a positive force in nature. Death is Gèdé Nimbo. I believe that when the houngan became Gèdé, all who had crowded into his hut felt themselves to be in the presence of death itself. Death, a dynamic, aggressive force, danced and pirouetted among them, talking the language of the dead and of old Africa.

Gèdé is often stern, austere, and forbidding, but he has other aspects. Haitians take amused pleasure at the terror he can strike into the hearts of the mighty. An old Gèdé song goes:

Papa Gèdé bel ga'çon!	Papa Gèdé is a handsome fellow!
Papa Gèdé bel ga'çon!	Papa Gèdé is a handsome fellow!
L'habillé tout en noi'!	He is dressed all in black
Pou'l monté au palais!	For he is going up to the palace!
L'habillé tout en blanc	When he's dressed all in white
Li semblé yun deputé!	He looks like a deputy!
L'habillé tout en noi'!	When he's dressed all in black
Li semblé yun senateur!	He resembles a senator!

According to tradition, the song had its origin in a march on the capital by some houngans many years ago. The story is very old and no one remembers many of the details.

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remembers many of the details. But during the administration of President Louis Borno (1922–1930) there was a reënactment of the original march. There suddenly appeared in the streets of Port-au-Prince a crowd of Gèdé *mystères*—houngans "possessed" by Gèdé Nimbo and attired in Gèdé dress: tall black hats, long black tail coats, smoked glasses, black skirts over their black trousers. They carried flags, waved polka-dot kerchiefs, shook their ceremonial rattles, and paused sometimes to wipe the perspiration from one another's faces. They became the nucleus of a huge, noisy crowd moving up the hill toward the palace. Market women followed instead of going home; street gamins screamed and raced among them. Before they had arrived at the palace grounds they had taken on the semblance of a huge Mardi Gras band. They swerved through the gates of the palace grounds and along the drive, right to the steps of the palace itself. The guards, taken by surprise, waited helplessly for their officers to arrive.

At the palace door, the houngans demanded money from the president. Borno was in a dilemma. He was reputed to be sympathetic to Vodoun ritual but was only surreptitiously so. He feared the houngans, and he feared public opinion. What would the upper class of Port-au-Prince think, the Latin-culture Haitians? With Gèdé's worst manners, the Gèdé mystères cavorted on the palace steps. Finally Borno gave in. He sent the money out to them, and then the crowd of Gèdés marched out of the palace grounds, waving their flags and shaking their rattles.

Service for the Hounsi Bossale

This ritual of calling the loa to speak through the mouth of the Vodoun priest took place in the Bolosse section of Port-au-Prince. The hounfor was situated in a congested slum area of the city, but the grounds around it were spacious. The hounfor itself was small and unpretentious, and except for the adjoining tonnelle would easily have been mistaken for another small wooden house. The houngan was a heavy-set man with a black mustache. Quick to laugh and easy in his movements, he nevertheless commanded solemn respect from the hounsi and the other participants. His soft-spoken voice expressed assurance and authority.

There were a number of possessions in the course of the dancing, all more or less routine. Each time a possession occurred, the houngan came forward with his asson and bell, gave a pitcher of water and a candle to the possessed devotee, and conducted her through a ritual at the foot of the center post.

Later, one of the hounsi came and sat at the houngan's feet. She was not possessed but obviously was in a state of high tension. Other servitors brought from the hounfor a wooden washtub and set it on the ground

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793 794 796 787 before the houngan. Staring into the tub, he shook his asson and called upon a certain loa to enter. Then he placed a lighted candle upright in the tub and watched it for a moment. The flame was suddenly snuffed out. The houngan looked concerned. He removed the candle and called for another one. When he placed the new candle in the tub it remained burning. The houngan smiled. The loa had agreed to enter. The houngan and his chief assistant placed the tub upon the head of the waiting hounsi. She trembled violently as though she had received a shock, then leaped to her feet. The loa had mounted her and presumably was sitting in the tub on her head. She began to stagger back and forth across the dance court, while the drums beat a salute. The tub tottered dangerously but did not fall. The possessed hounsi then began to whirl. She stopped, and the tub continued to spin for a few seconds on her head. She twirled again in the opposite direction. Each time she stopped she waited for the tub to stop spinning. The twirling motion was accompanied by a constant jerking and lurching, as though she were about to lose her balance, but she never stumbled or fell. After perhaps five minutes of this violent "riding" by the loa, the houngan approached her with his asson and conducted her into the hounfor, the tub still on her head. Inside the hounfor he removed the tub, sent the loa away, and left the hounsi to rest.

[346] There was more dancing, and after a while the service was transferred to a small temporary cloth-covered structure resembling an American Indian hogan. The hounsi bossale—the servitors whose loa had not been "tamed" or conditioned—lay before the structure on their faces, side by side. There were twelve of them. The other hounsi covered them completely with white sheets. The houngan entered the hogan-like structure (the *card*) with a candle and a bell. He tinkled his bell and began to call upon the loa to speak to the hounsi bossale. Through his mouth, first one spirit and then another made comments. The hounsi under the sheets were tensely quiet, until one of them began to jerk and scream. Several others, as though responding to a trigger, joined in the screaming. Older women came to quiet them. The hysterical reaction of the hounsi bossale was regarded as simply a reflection of their beginners' status. Their loa had not yet been controlled. The ritual continued until the early hours of the morning, the loa and ancient ancestors coming in to speak, one after another.

The First Yams and the First Rice

244 [796] [262] Each year, when the yams are harvested there is a great festival known as the *mangé yam*. Of all things grown in Haiti, the yam is perhaps the most significant. It is the most vital of all staples, and it is traditional. The yam

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776 to "eat" people; that is, to destroy them. To do this he employs such
753 means as disease, insanity, and destruction of crops. If a man serves
828 Pinga Maza well, the loa protects him in return; but for those who anger
731 him, Pinga is a menacing and vengeful creature. People often say, "Pinga, c'est djab" (Pinga is a devil).

346 The Pinga hounfor in Port-au-Prince is called the *Société de la Belle*
353 *Jeune Fleur*. Its peristyle is simple and is hardly distinguishable from
794 those of other small hounfors. Around the base of the center pole is
778 a three-foot-high wall of masonry, decorated with simple cult symbols. The outer room of the hounfor proper also resembles many another. The familiar pot têtes containing loa stand on a wooden altar, and there are Catholic lithographs on the walls. But the inner room belongs exclusively to Pinga Maza. Here are all the accoutrements and objects sacred to the deity. Everything is red. Pinga's clothing and kerchiefs are red. On the walls are painted esoteric designs—hands, skulls, and crosses—all in red. The bottles, magic bundles, and govis on the altar are decorated with red cloth, ribbons, or paint. In the middle of the earthen floor is embedded a heavy wooden cross. On each end of the crossbeam hangs a large calabash resembling a bulbous hand. And on top of the upright is affixed a human skull. The total impression of this hounfor is that of a bizarre aberration, calculated to intimidate and terrify. The houngan himself is relatively young, literate, and city wise. His personality is smooth and sharp, and he lacks the air of sincerity and easy simplicity which most often characterizes the houngan of the mountains.

353 In this inner room, before the skull and the cross, there took place a
754 small service for a client, to determine what kind of magic was needed
755 to fend off malevolent actions of an enemy. On the day of the divining session, there hung from the rafters of the tonnelle a long rope, which extended into a deep hole in the earth near the door. Hanging on the rope, down inside the hole, were two gray dolls tightly bound together. Hanging still farther down were a knife, a fork, and other, unidentifiable objects. This cluster of magic paraphernalia was an *expédition* at work; it was an elaborate pouin, which was working against an enemy who lived far away.

793 Before entering the hounfor, the houngan took a long rope whip
755 from the wall and cracked it seven times before the door. This process, known as *frete cache*, was to "wake up" the loa within. The houngan then entered, followed by the client who was seeking help. They paused briefly in the outer room, where the houngan took up his asson and bell and made a small vèvè on the ground. He spoke briefly in *langage* and then passed on through the door to the inner room. There the

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houngan took his place before the small altar and the cross surmounted by the skull. Again he spoke *langage* and rattled his asson. He took from the altar a small-necked bottle containing a white alcoholic liquid and a tight-fitting iron cross. The presence of the iron cross inside the bottle was represented as a magical phenomenon. The houngan took a mouthful of the white liquid and sprayed it out in a fine mist over the skull. Twice more he sprayed the mist, in different directions. Then he poured a little of the liquid directly on the skull. The room was filled with the smell of alcohol. The houngan lighted a candle and sat in a low chair facing the altar. He shook his asson rhythmically and spoke *langage* to Pinga Maza. Suddenly Pinga Maza entered the houngan's head. The houngan became violent. He jerked this way and that, making strange noises in his throat. He seized a machete from the altar, waved it around, and struck the flat of it against his head. He continued for a while to beat his head fiercely with the machete. Gradually he became quiet. His assistants placed Pinga's red jacket on him. Now he spoke in the tired voice of an old man. He complained that he was hungry, that he had not eaten for a long while. His assistant handed him a razor blade. He placed it in his mouth, chewed it up, and swallowed it, washing it down with more of the white liquid in the bottle. He asked for more, and they gave him a second blade to eat. He demanded a third, and ate that, too, spitting out small fragments of steel that caught in his teeth.

His assistant told him there was a man present seeking advice about a pouin. The possessed houngan looked around with half-closed eyes. He asked the man his name, and what he wanted. After hearing the client's story, the houngan took out a deck of cards and placed them one at a time, face up, on a winnowing tray. After studying the cards he said: "You are strong, but not strong enough. You already have some protections, but they do not protect you from the dangers coming your way. You have powerful enemies. You must have a new pouin." The man said yes, he wanted a new pouin, but how much would it cost? Pinga replied through the mouth of the houngan: "Twenty-five dollars." The man said: "I will get the money and return." He went out after placing five gourdes on the winnowing tray with the cards. Pinga became drowsy. The houngan's head fell forward on his chest and he slept. The divining session was ended.

The Water Road

The land where the loa live, the place "below the water," is not thought of as being in the water itself. It is dry and airy, like the countryside of Haiti. But the route to it is through water.

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588 does not marry his horse. People marry people. Loa marry loa. A man
588 may have a compact with a loa. That is not a marriage. Some of the
184 things that are going on down there in the Plain are not right. They are not the old way. In the old days we did things differently. We did not always run to the houngan. The grand famille knew how to talk to the loa. Up here we don't do things the way they do them down below in the city. People marry people. Loa marry loa."

588 Nevertheless, the practice in the neighborhood of Port-au-Prince and
776 the Cul-de-Sac Plain is for mystic marriages to take place when deemed
[184] useful, essential, or unavoidable. Foremost among the loa involved in these rites is Èzilie Wèdo, the "pure" one, the deity of love, sometimes identified with the Virgin Mary. Other loa known to have taken part in mystic marriages are Damballa, Ogoun, Ayida, Agwé, Gèdé Nimbo or one of his brothers, Cousin Zaka, and Général Clermeil. All these loa—significantly, I think—have clearly defined personalities; much is known about their character and behavior, their likes and dislikes.

588 A man married to Èzilie has special obligations to her for the dura-
[834] tion of his life. On certain days (especially Thursday, which is sacred to this deity), the mortal "husband" may not have sexual intercourse, even though he has a human wife.

588 Circumstances leading to a mystic marriage vary widely, but in each
755 case it is a cult priest who determines whether the rites should be
793 held. Perhaps a person has been afflicted with a series of illnesses or mis-
776 fortunes. He goes to his houngan, who begins a series of communications with the client's loa or with his own. Sometimes many loa are consulted before the desired information is available. Eventually it is determined that a certain deity, for reasons which may or may not
[753] be clear, wishes to have nuptial ties with the client. The illnesses or mis-
[777] fortunes that have been sent are a means of informing or warning the person concerned.

Sometimes the houngan relies on well-established divining methods to ascertain the cause of the difficulties. He may employ the *gembo* (a shell that slides on a string), ashes, or small shells that are thrown on
[787] the ground. Or he may rely on possession by a loa to provide the information.

If it is found that a loa is demanding marriage, arrangements are then made. The rites that follow may take place in a hounfor or at the house of the human bride or groom. Both a prêt' savane and a houngan officiate.

588 The person directly involved, like the loa, usually has something to
554 gain from a mystic marriage. For one thing, he can reasonably expect

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159 588 753 783 joined the Protestant Church. Subsequently his wife's illnesses subsided somewhat, but she never bore children. Maurice suspected that the latter misfortune was the result of his spurning his mystic suitor.

588 The actual ceremonies by which a mystic marriage is performed carry over many of the customs and trappings of ordinary mortal marriages. [1793] The prêt' savane reads prayers and officiates until the two parties are deemed wed. The loa is represented by a "stand-in," usually a person possessed by the loa and dressed in appropriate garb. Gold wedding rings are placed upon the fingers of the couple. There are wedding cakes and wedding contracts. Nothing appropriate to an ordinary wedding is omitted.

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Attibon Legba ouvri bayè pou' moin ago!
Ou wè Attibon Legba ouvri bayè pou' moin ouvri bayè!
M'apé rentré quand ma tourné,
Ma salut loa yo!

Attibon Legba, open the gate for me, *ago!*
You see, Attibon Legba, open the gate for me, open the gate!
I will enter when I return,
I salute the loa!

After this appeal, or sometimes while it is being sung, the houngan spills a little water on the earth at the base of the po'teau mitan. It is an inducement for the loa to "enter," for the loa reside "below the water" and their passage into the hounfor is made easier by water. The houngan may spill his water in a long path from the entrance of the peristyle to the po'teau mitan, or extend his pitcher invitingly to the four points of the compass. Then, perhaps, another song is sung to Legba:

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[778]

Papa Legba nan hounfor moin!
Papa Legba nan hounfor moin!
Papa Legba nan hounfor moin!
Ou même qui porté drapeau,
C'est ou même ka paré soleil pou' loa yo!
Papa Legba, Papa Legba!

Papa Legba is in my hounfor!
Papa Legba is in my hounfor!
Papa Legba is in my hounfor!
You who carry the flag,
It is you who shade the loa from the sun!
Papa Legba, Papa Legba!

As the ritual gets under way, there may be a general song of welcome to all the loa of the cult, such as this one:

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Bonjou' oh bonjou' bonjou' bonjou' bonjou'!
Bonjou' oh bonjou' bonjou' bonjou' bonjou'!
Oh bonjou' oh bonjou' loa moin! [Ex. 43]

Good day, oh, good day, good day, good day, good day!
Good day, oh, good day, good day, good day, good day!
Oh, good day, oh, good day my loa!

When the service is well in progress, the songs may describe the qualities of the deities—their character, behavior and needs. If it is Balindjo, for example, the song may advertise that persons with this loa in their heads are immune to poison:

Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh Ogoun oh!

Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh, Ogoun, oh!

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Bambarra is walking, low hips!
Bambarra is going to walk, low hips!

Damballa Wèdo, being a snake deity, "threads" or "winds" his way like a serpent, and this song describes a serpentine course taken by the dancers as Damballa (here identified as a Nago man) arrives:

Filé na filé, Damballa Wèdo vini wè moin!
Filé na filé, Nèg' Nago vini wè'm là! [Ex. 74]

Wind, we wind, Damballa Wèdo comes to see me!
Wind, we wind, the Nago man comes to see me here!

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After the dancing has been going on for a long while and the pace is fast, there may be a song of banter, such as the following from the Dahomey rites. The dancers sing *laillé, laillé!*, describing a figure of the dance in which the skirts are swirled, and note that they have worn out the drummers. They even offer to carry on their backs those dancers who are ready to fall by the wayside:

Laillé laillé!
Oh laillé laillé oh viéco'!
Tambouyé boukè!
Tambouyé bouké viéco'!
Laillé laillé oh viéco'!
Laillé laillé tambouyé bouké houngan'm!
M'po'té sou corps moin vié sor!
Tambouyé bouké ça!
Laillé laillé! [Ex. 75]

Laillé laillé!
Oh, *laillé laillé*, oh, old people!
The drummers are tired!
The drummers are tired, old people!
Laillé laillé, oh, old people!
Laillé laillé, the drummers are tired, my *houngan!*
I'll carry you on my back, old sister!
The drummers are tired there!
Laillé laillé!

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Interspersed among the songs of the hounfor there are sometimes warnings or admonitions. Usually they are tangent and indirect in statement, and may be from the point of view of the loa or of the houngan. In the following pouin song, which accompanies the ritual of making magic, there is a warning to certain people who will feel the effects of the magic. The ceremony includes, among other things, the dropping of lemons, roots, and leaves by the houngan into his sacred basin or pond. The houngan sings:

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Trois fé trois citron oh!
Trois fé trois citron oh!
Moin dit rwo, youn jour ou wa besoin moin!
Trois fé trois racine oh!
Moin dit oui, youn jour ou wa besoin moin!
Gainyain bassin moin trois racine tombé ladans,
Quand ou wa' blié fau' ramassé chongé! [Ex. 76]

Three leaves, three lemons, oh!
Three leaves, three lemons, oh!
I say *rwo*, one day you are going to need me!
Three leaves, three roots, oh!
I say yes, one day you are going to need me!
I have my pond into which three roots fall,
When you wish to forget you will have to remember!

In another song the houngan warns against ingratitude on the part of persons for whom special magical services have been carried out:

Ouanga ça oh ouanga chaud!
Ouanga ça ouanga chaud!
Lè pou' payé li pinga ou fachè!
Ou mandé'm ouanga là ou content!
Ou mandé'm ouanga là ou content!
Lè pou' payé li pinga ou fachè! [Ex. 77]

This ouanga, oh, hot ouanga!
This ouanga, oh, hot ouanga!
When it's time to pay for it don't be angry!
You ask me for the ouanga, you are happy!
You ask me for the ouanga, you are happy!
When it's time to pay for it don't be angry!

Somberly and in metaphor, the deity Kitta Démambré speaks of an unhappy event which occurred in the town of Léogane, and warns those concerned that it must not happen again:

Kitta Démambré, pinga ou fai'm ça 'core oh!
Nan Léogane ti poule-là mouri nan zé!
Nan Léogane ti poule-là mouri nan zé oh!
Kitta Démambré, pinga ou fai'm ça encore oh! [Ex. 78]

Kitta Démambré, take care that you don't do that to me again, oh!
In Léogane the little chicken died in its egg!
In Léogane the little chicken died in its egg!
Kitta Démambré, take care that you don't do that to me again!

An unnamed spirit warns that the moment for placation has come and suggests that calling on him after he has gone from the *pavillon* of the houngan Deréa would be of no use.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

days, according to the bocor's prescription. It is also employed to protect an individual against various forms of the ouanga.

Against poisons, the usual protection is the *drogue*, prepared by a bocor or a leaf doctor who specializes in such things. After having drunk a drogue, a man is regarded as immune to poison. Should a man be a "horse" of the loa Ogoun Balindjo, however, no drogue is necessary, for Balindjo's people are regarded as immune even without such precautions.

Foretelling the future and divination take two general forms. In one variety, a bocor or *divineur*, using ritual paraphernalia such as cards, flour, or ashes, takes personal responsibility for the divination. In the other form, the divineur functions only when possessed by a loa, and it is the deity himself who foretells and foresees. An account of this kind of divination is given in chapter 6. "Horses" of the loa Mâit' David when possessed are given packs of cards, for they are reputed to be able to divine the future.

Certain houngans use the instrument known as the *gembo* as a divining device. This is a small shell about the size of a lemon, through which a long cord is passed. When there is no tension on the cord, the shell can easily be slid back and forth. When the cord is taut, the shell will not slide. The houngan holds one end of the cord under his foot, the other end with his hand above it. He starts his divination with the shell at the top and the cord taut. Shaking his asson with the other hand, he talks *langage* and asks questions. To indicate a "yes" answer he relaxes the tension on the cord and the shell slips downward an inch or so. The typical gembo is decorated with beads, old coins, religious medals, snake bones, and a fragment of mirror.

There are several ceremonies for locating a thief or other guilty person. One is called *passage d'alliance*. A ring suspended on a string is held over a person's head. If it moves in a regular pendulous way, the person is innocent; but if it swings in a circle, his guilt is established. Another method is the use of a long stick. The stick is pointed at one man, then another, and when the end vibrates in a circular manner the guilty party has been located. This technique is known as *jugement de baguette*. A third method is the one known as *passé balai*. A man sits in a low chair and small branches and leaves of the *balai* (broom) tree are placed under the chair and fastened to its uprights. A guilty person sitting in this chair will cause the *balai* branches to vibrate and close in on him.

The role of the *docteur fé*—the leaf doctor—straddles the field of magic and pharmacology. Many of his potions are of a mystical and

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When they are not working, it is said, zombies are tied with special ropes made from the leaves of the banana tree. One popular song goes:

> Nans Léogane
> Yo marré zombie nans paille fig-banane!
> Abobo wye-oh!
>
> In Léogane
> They tie the zombie with banana straw!
> That is all, *wye-oh!*

Some Haitians tell you they know there are zombies because they have seen them. Not too many years ago a visiting writer stoutly declared that she, too, knew there were zombies because she had seen one—in the mental hospital at Pont Beudet. Although her reasoning was not quite airtight, the possibility that mental defectives are sometimes mistaken for zombies is worth considering.

Houngans who "work with two hands" are reputed to be able to gain permanent control over persons by means of a formula known as *tuyé-lèvé* (kill and raise). Either for himself or a client, the houngan gains power over the victim by "killing" him through special magic and then "removing the soul" (*retiré n'âme*). The victim, presumed to be normally dead, is buried by his family; the houngan then retrieves the body and "restores the soul" (*mettê n'âme*). With his soul restored, the victim has, in effect, become a slave of the houngan, who can do with him as he wishes. He differs from a zombie in that he has a soul, whereas the zombie has none.

Some Haitians believe that even one who has died a nonmagic death may be raised from the dead. To accomplish this, the houngan or bocor stands over the body, goes through a specified ritual, and calls out the dead person's name: "Albert Moreau! Albert Moreau! Albert Moreau! Lèvé non! Lèvé non! Lèvé non!" ("Get up! Get up! Get up!") Then, it is said, the dead man may awaken.

It is believed that a houngan may also command the souls of dead persons to perform services for him against an enemy. The souls at his disposal for this work are those which he keeps in earthern jars in his hounfor. Should he wish to plague an enemy, he will send one of these souls to the man's house to make him sick, or lazy, or insane. Usually, the man does not know what is happening to him; but if he becomes aware that a dead soul is working on him, he attempts to find out which houngan has sent it. Perhaps the houngan can be bought off. If not, another houngan may provide relief.

While some believe in the reality of the various demons and specters,

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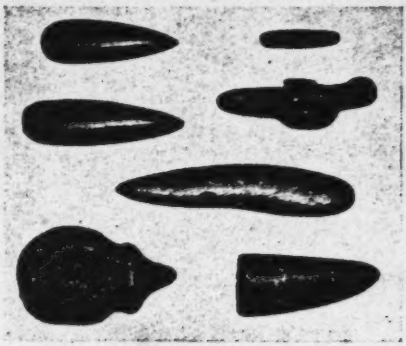
22. *An assortment of stones (Indian artifacts) from the altar of a hounfor in the mountains above Jacmel. All are regarded as thunder stones thrown to earth by the loa Sobo and Kébiosu, or as stones containing the essence of other deities.*



793
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142
302
416

23. *A houngan of southern Haiti divining with the aid of his asson, bell, and (right) gembo.*

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142
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793

24. *A houngan of a small cult center in northern Haiti.*

25. *A prêt' savane. This lay cleric reads the scriptures at appropriate times in the Vodoun rituals.*

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used for wall hangings much as appliquéd cloths are used in Dahomey. Near Cap Haitien, in the north, ceramic workers make crude clay figurines of roosters, pigs, dogs, cows, and people. The "purpose" of these figurines is obscure, but it is likely that they are intended for use in Vodoun ritual, a number of them having been observed in hounfors in the vicinity of the town of Grande Rivière du Nord. In some mountain villages, canes carved with animal and human heads are commonly seen. Nor is the tradition of carving gourds and calabashes, popular in various regions of West Africa, altogether forgotten. The *cayambonque*, a divided calabash with the top ingeniously cut to fit into the lower part so as to form a sealed container, is sometimes covered with carved geometric designs, usually crude and haphazard but on occasion meticulous. Until recent years the common *cha-cha*, or gourd rattle, was similarly carved.

Most of the visible traditional art is to be found in the environs of the cult temple. The inner walls of many hounfors are covered with ritual designs and symbols and portraits of the deities. On the altar, sometimes, crude wood carvings of deities are seen, along with forged iron objects, carved marassa bowls, and grotesquely shaped drumsticks known as *baguettes guinée*. All the wooden objects are characterized by a plainness that relegates them to the category of purely functional and expendable things. The wood carving of a deity is not an image, it is a representation; it can be sold or otherwise disposed of, even thrown away if infested with beetles, and another object can be used to replace it. The only concern of the cult priest in this matter is that the deity concerned should understand the situation properly and not take offense. Thus there is no strong feeling that the wood carving should be a realistic representation or that it should be "beautiful." One relatively antique wood carving, completely West African in style, was found some years ago in a hounfor near Léogane and is now in the collection of the Musée du Peuple Haitien in Port-au-Prince (see fig. 57).

One of the most flourishing arts of the hounfor is the *vèvè*, or ritual drawing made on the earth in the course of a service. Most commonly these beautiful and ornate designs are made with white meal or flour, and in a few of the cults, primarily the Pétro, lampblack and red brick dust are also used. The vèvè is made by the houngan or the mambo. With sure, practiced movements, the cult priest allows the meal to trickle through his fingertips onto the ground where the rites are taking place, usually in the peristyle of the hounfor itself. The drawings he makes are composed of a multiplicity of cabalistic symbols—heart shapes, stars, interlocked V's, flags, abstract phallic forms, crosses, swords,

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Mérisier rété Jacmel,	Mérisier waited at Jacmel.
Li souqué baksor à li.	He shook his sacred rattle.
Li conné ça qui gainyain.	He knew what was going on.
Tout ti trou déjà bouché!	All the small holes were filled.*
Victoire dit con ça,	Victoire said
Quand Florvil ta va mourit	When Florvil dies
Li tap fai youn belle soirée	She will hold a beautiful party
Avec tout ti gens la yo.	With all the young people.
CHORUS	CHORUS
En allé Dodo!	We are going to dance! †
En allé Dodo!	We are going to dance!
En allé ce soir	We are going this evening
Caille la belle Victoire!	To the house of beautiful Victoire! ‡

The legend of Hippolyte's falling hat is preserved in another folk song called "Panama'm Tombé":

Panama'm tombé,	My hat fell down,
Panama'm tombé,	My hat fell down,
Panama'm tombé; ça qui dèyè	My hat fell down; whoever is behind,
Ramassé li ba moin!	Pick it up for me!

Mérisier, the Vodoun priest whom Hippolyte regarded as an enemy, was not pleased with the rumors and talk about him that was going the rounds in the capital. His displeasure is recorded in a protest song with a familiar theme:

Mérisier yo vini ga'dé moin pou' y'allé pa'lé, wo wa é!
Mérisier yo vini ga'dé ça pou' y'allé pa'lé ça!
Kénan moin yo wè!
Kénan yo séré nan mal!
Mérisier pas là, sonné ochan wa wa é!

Mérisier [says] they come to see me to go away and talk, *wo wa é!*
Mérisier [says] they come to see it and go away to talk about it!
What is mine you see!
What is yours you evilly hide!
Mérisier isn't there, sound the salute, *wa wa é!*

Seven days after Hippolyte's death, General Simon Sam was elected to the presidency. His friends and his enemies had different things to say about him. One song makes a tart comment on Sam's administration.

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* That is, the affair was finished.
† *Allé dodo* literally means "to go to sleep," but there was a dance called Allé Dodo.
‡ Hippolyte's young wife.

[p. 349]

Notes

Chapter 1: *The Making of the Haitian* (*pp. 1–7*)

[1]The name Ganda survives in Haiti as the name of a deity.

[2]Herskovits, in *The Myth of the Negro Past* (p. 47), provides a tabulation of raw data found in the manifests recorded for slaves shipped to Virginia between 1710 and 1769: 20,964 slaves were reported shipped from "Africa," 3,652 from Gambia, 6,777 from "Guinea," 9,224 from Calabar, 3,860 from Angola, and 1,011 from Madagascar. Of those shipped from the island of Madagascar, 473 were listed as coming from Mozambique.

[3]Bartolomé de Las Casas.

Chapter 2: *Man and the Universe: Vodoun* (*pp. 8–18*)

[1]See Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 7.

[2]Schweinfurth in *The Heart of Africa*, II, 31, says: "In Loango all exorcists and conjurors are called *ganga*." Leo Wiener, in *Africa and the Discovery of America* (Philadelphia: Innes and Sons, 1922), III, 32, reports: "Forms of *ganga* have in Bantu the meaning 'medicine' but also 'magic'—such as Nyika *ganga* and Kongo *nganga*."

[3]Gorer, *Africa Dances*, p. 129; Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 208 ff.

[4]From the Fon *houn-no* or *houn-su*. Among the Arada of Dahomey a *houn-su* was regarded as a spiritual wife of the deity. She was a servant of the cult temple, and in some instances a wife of the cult priest.

[5]Translated from the French of Aubin, *En Haïti*, pp. 57–59.

[6]Deren, in her *Divine Horsemen* (pp. 119 ff.), gives an excellent report of a service for Agwé in a boat at sea. Aubin (*op. cit.*, p. 108) seems to have given the first description of this service at sea for the loa Agwé.

[7]Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. 119.

[8]*Ibid.*, p. 123. Leyburn advances the theory that Vodoun developed during this period as a result of the vacuum left by the Church. Although the Church did in effect leave the field to the African cults, one must assume that the Arada, Congo, and other cults were already organized and possessed of great vitality before the Haitian revolution. Implicit evidence points to a continuity of cult life from the earliest days of the African on Haitian soil. There are no statistics to reveal the extent of cult membership at the end of the eighteenth century, but the content and form of Vodoun today are so overwhelmingly African that it is difficult to think of Haitian cult activity as the product of a renaissance.

Chapter 3: *The Loa: Gods of the Haitian Mountains* (*pp. 19–29*)

[1]The term *vodoun*, used in this precise sense, conforms to the original Fon (Dahomean) usage. The term *hounsi*, also of Fon origin, signifies "spirit" and belongs to the same root

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as *houngfor*, *houngi*, *houngfuicon*, *houngor*, etc. *Mystère* is of obvious French origin. *Loa* is probably from the Bantu, but it could be from the Yoruba.

[3]Various methods and formulas are employed in "tying" a loa. Sometimes making the sign of the cross is regarded as adequate, or the saying of a prayer. In "The Vodun Service in Northern Haiti" (*American Anthropologist*, XLII, 242–243), George Eaton Simpson reports that the "tying" of a loa sometimes results in a contest between the individual concerned and his houngan. If the houngan wants the *mait' tête* to come in, he must neutralize the ritual barriers the "horse" has put in the way. "One procedure for bringing on possession in a servant who has tried to 'tie' his chief god is for the priest to stand in front of the person whom he suspects, make the sign of the cross, and strike him on the forehead three times with a sacrificial stone. Usually these blows are hard enough to make blood spurt. The servant then begs the pardon of the angry god, and as soon as possible he unties the knots in his handkerchief [the method he has used for 'tying' his loa]."

[4]Herskovits, *Dahomey*.

Chapter 4: *Death Rites* (*pp. 31–41*)

[1]Maurice Delafosse, *L'Ame nègre*. Translation from *Free France*, special issue No. 4, French Press and Information Service, New York, June, 1945.

[2]Leo A. Verwilghen, in booklet describing peoples of the Kwango region, accompanying *Music of the Western Congo*, recordings issued by the Ethnic Folkways Library.

[3]Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu*, pp. 88–89.

[4]W. M. Eiselen and I. Schapera, "Religious Beliefs and Practices," in Schapera, *The Bantu-speaking Tribes of South Africa*, p. 250.

[5]Translated from the French of Aubin, *En Haiti*, p. 212.

[6]Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, pp. 213–214.

[7]Hall and others, *Haitian Creole*, American Anthropological Association, Memoir No. 54, pp. 188–189.

[8]Simpson, "Four Vodun Ceremonies," *Journal of American Folklore*, April–June, 1946, pp. 155–162.

[9]As translated by Courlander from Simpson's Creole text, *ibid.*, p. 156. The preceding paragraph is from p. 155.

[10]Translated by Courlander from the Creole of Simpson's text.

[11]This and the preceding paragraph are from Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

[12]These shells, as indicated elsewhere, are part of the paraphernalia of the Vodoun priest and appear to be an inheritance from the priests of the Fa cult of Dahomey. The divining shells are usually thrown on the ground in fours, and the readings depend upon combinations of "heads and tails." The manner of throwing the shells, as well as the number used, corresponds closely with the Haitian secular gambling game *mayomba* (see Appendix 2), though the purpose is obviously different. In some priestly rites in Haiti, ashes rather than the customary shells are used for divining.

[13]Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

[14]*Ibid.*, p. 161.

[15]Herskovits, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

[16]Herskovits (*ibid.*) notes that persons who die of smallpox, lightning, and certain other phenomena are not buried in coffins. Some of my informants indicated this to be their understanding also, but they said that the dead are buried without coffins for strictly economic reasons as well.

[17]Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

[18]Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. 156.

[19]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 398.

[20]*Ibid.*, pp. 397–398.

[21]Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, p. 214.

[22]Hall and others, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

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565 caste is the only word to describe the effective separation of aristocrats from the masses. The caste system is a vivid fact, for it regulates a person's profession, speech, religion, marriage, family life, politics, clothes, social mobility—in short, his whole life from cradle to grave.

175 Haiti won its freedom from the France of Napoleon in 1804,
648 becoming thus the second independent state in the Western Hemisphere. It had been during the eighteenth century France's most prosperous colony, its wealth depending upon slavery and the planta-
565 tion system. With the whites driven out, social distinctions which
642 actually had their roots in colonial times began immediately to develop among the people, all of whom had some proportion of African blood in their veins. During the course of the next century the criteria for aristocracy slowly assumed recognizable form, so that now even the most casual observer is aware that Haiti cannot by any stretch of the imagination be called a democratic country, with an open class system. The two castes are the élite and the masses. They are as different as day from night, as nobleman from peasant; and they are as separate as oil and water. The élite are generally reckoned [162] to compose at the outside not more than three per cent of the population.

565 The élite do not work with their hands. This is the cardinal rule of Haitian society. Upon it rests the whole economic structure of the
463 country, and to this the course of national history has led. All the [461] professions, most governmental and military offices, and the large business enterprises are effectively closed to young men of the masses. Indeed, so completely accepted are caste rules, so practically difficult would it be for peasant youths to acquire the money and education necessary for such careers, that at birth a boy's future place in economic life is, within narrow limits, already predetermined. For the élite, law is the most popular of the professions, partly because it is the quickest avenue of approach to high political office; government, in turn, is the only career which can make a man rich within a few years. Next in popularity to law comes medicine. Teaching is not lucrative enough to attract many promising youths, and the priests of the Roman Catholic Church are almost all white Frenchmen.[2]

783 2. An effort was once made by the Catholic Church to train native Haitian priests,
797 but the peasants would have none of them after they were ordained. They drove them out, saying, "Go away! How do you expect God to listen to you? You are not white; you don't know anything." And the Haitian priests had to be transferred as missionaries to Africa.

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trary; they were grudgingly respected as superior beings, arbiters of the fate of the outside world, potential destroyers of the privileges of the Haitian élite should they return to the country in force. Although white men might not legally marry Haitian women, it was not every woman who could resist the opportunity of having children lighter than herself. One indication of the ambiguous attitude toward the whites was seen in religion. In 1842 out of sixty or seventy Roman Catholic priests in the island, only one was a Haitian. Many people in the country were well educated, and certainly more than equals in point of scholarship and *savoir-faire* of the rude priests imported generally from Corsica. But a feeling was current among the peasants that "colored baptism will not stick." There is no indication that the European priests, since they were well paid for their services, attacked this particular heresy. As for the élite, they derived a certain satisfaction in being served by white priests. Aside from the churchmen, however, the only white man in any place of prominence in the country was the mayor of Saint-Marc, whose father had befriended Boyer in former times.

Few visitors had kind words to say of social conditions in the Haiti of Boyer. As a Frenchman put it:

> Democracy was the rule; but what a democracy! A hodge-podge of the most heterogeneous ideas, an alliance of the most contrary principles, of American federalism with military control; the sovereignty of the people replaced by the sovereignty of a ruling clique; and finally, all the intellectual vainglory of a people young, inexperienced, and for a long time denied the legitimate manifestation of their own wishes. Added to all these inconsistencies is the antagonism of races.[61]

This antagonism was, indeed, paramount. The habitual hauteur and assumed pretensions of the lighter Haitians were a perpetual thorn in the flesh of the ambitious blacks, and thus the breach was everywhere widened and made permanent. The blacks retaliated against these distinctions by refusing to obey orders from mulattoes in office, or by petty outrages against private citizens among the colored group.

The vital lack of the country, assuming that stability is desirable, was a middle class of any sort. On the base of hundreds of thousands of peasants, illiterate, unambitious, indifferent to progress, was built

61. Lepelletier du Saint-Remy, "La République d'Haïti; ses dernières révolutions; sa situation actuelle," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, XV, No. 4 (Nov., 1845), pp. 681–682.

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[p. 113]

INTRODUCTION

If the visitor to Haiti is first struck by the wide separation between the élite and the peasant masses, the person who knows Haiti only through books is sure to think of it as a country of Voodoo. There is no error of fact here, for Voodoo is characteristic of Haiti. Nevertheless, what the American conjures up in his mind when he uses the word is almost certain to be misleading. In spite of detailed reports of anthropologists the average American clings firmly to his notion that Voodoo is Negro superstition chiefly concerned with charms or spells to "hoodoo" (a variation of the same word) an enemy. Scientists rarely succeed in correcting long-held but incorrect or one-sided impressions of the meaning of terms; they end rather by inventing a new word, or else continue the generally losing fight for precise usage, and so preserve the confusion.[1] 771

Since there is small likelihood of eradicating the inexact connotations of "Voodoo," many recent anthropologists have adopted such spellings as Vodun, Vodou, Vodoun, Vaudou, and Vodûn, all renditions of local pronunciation of the same term. *Vodun* (pronounced Vo-doon) has been chosen for use in this work, in the hope that readers will bear in mind that the folk religion is not mere idle superstition. A grasp of the real and distinctive religious beliefs and cult practices of the Haitian is very necessary to an understanding of the social picture. [104]

Like its caste system, the religious life of Haiti presents far-reaching contrasts. The only approved religion of the country is Roman Catholicism. To this faith all the élite who are religiously inclined, or wish to pay formal homage to the institution of religion, belong. No Protestant sect has ever gained a real foothold in Haiti. Catholic churches are among the imposing edifices in every town; Catholic priests are an everyday sight as they go about their parishes; Catholic brothers and sisters, with state support and approval, direct much of the higher education in the country. 771 195 184 [346] [793] [871]

1. Witness in anthropology the contrast between the popular and the scholarly meaning of *culture*, *race*, *taboo*, and *fetish*; in chemistry of *reaction* (as when a man is asked his "reaction" to an opinion); in psychology of *instinct*, *innate*, and *inherent*; and in sociology of *caste*, *institution*, and *social*.

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175 material—Frenchmen who lived "in a deplorable state of morals,
171 too often recalling those of the freebooters and buccaneers" who were their ancestors and predecessors. Even when the calibre of the colonists improved, religion was a minor concern, business and pleasure pushing it well into the background.

There was no great antagonism toward the fathers; indeed, not enough attention was paid to the priests and their work to warrant any very strong feeling. It was indifference and insolence the fathers had to face, or, if they showed too great an interest in the welfare of slaves upon a plantation, suspicion and peremptory curbs. By the old
[671] Code Noir under which the colony theoretically operated, masters were obligated to send their slaves to Mass on Sundays and feast days under penalty of heavy fines; the Code likewise prescribed the baptism of all blacks and their instruction in the Catholic faith. But just as the colonists ignored all parts of the Code antagonistic to their own economic interests, so specifically did they disregard the sections dealing with their religious obligations.

175 Some priests were in any case not too zealous. It was much more
• 793 agreeable to attend only to external forms, and so participate in the charming life of high society, than to stand firm against laxity. If a
662 priest showed enthusiasm for his duties to his African charges he was
567 almost certain to be accused by the planters of stirring up the slaves
[792] and undermining the foundations of colonial society. This was, in fact, the very accusation leveled at the Jesuits to bring about their expulsion from the colony in 1764. The example was not lost upon other priests.

175 "The safety of the whites demands that the Negroes be kept in
171 profound ignorance," said one of the later governors in a message to France. This sentiment, perfectly expressing the conviction of the
563 majority of planters, not only prevented any secular education of the blacks, but actually kept many of them from instruction in catechism, creed, or any part of the Catholic faith. If instruction is forbidden, few of the sacraments can be administered, for how can a person be confirmed, confess, do penance, if he know not even the first principles of the faith? Few masters objected to the baptism of slave children; on the other hand, they roundly disapproved of the sacrament of marriage for their blacks, since this might place an obstacle in the way of slave sales, and even open the way for assimilation of blacks and whites in the colony.

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Granted these obvious difficulties, there is still little to be said for the zeal or integrity of churchmen in Saint-Domingue. Father Cabon cites a report to Rome in 1794, which, he remarks, "was not designed to be made public, and does not bear the earmarks of passion," and which flatly states that "since the expulsion of the Jesuits, the curés have for the most part led lives so indecent . . . that the citizens and Negroes have lost all the sentiments of religion which the Jesuits gave them."[3] There had been distinguished churchmen in Saint-Domingue before 1750, authors, scientists, teachers of some note, but none appeared thereafter. The rich French colony was not a bright star in the Catholic crown.

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Undeterred by those who might have been their spiritual guides, the white people followed the easy path of self-indulgence. The universal testimony of visitors is that, with a few notable exceptions, immorality and cruelty were daily commonplaces. To make a fortune was the prime ambition of every white man, since money made possible the luxurious enjoyment of this world's goods. Protest against money-making or soft living would have been futile. Administrative agents turned public office to their own profit; judges sold justice to the highest bidder; planters drove their slaves to death; and priests dispensed religious solace for a tidy sum.

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The freedmen, who in everything patterned their lives after social leaders in the white planter class, had no more concern for religion than their models. They attended Mass occasionally as a social event, where they might see and be seen. When in the latter days of the colony discriminatory legislation required that colored persons sit in separate parts of the church, most of the affranchis simply refrained from attending Mass: their religious zeal was not so great as to make them submit to the public shame of segregation. In their daily lives, likewise, they followed the example of the white planters in pursuing pleasure rather than sobriety, "culture" rather than religious zeal. Like the whites, they were often licentious in their conduct. When it came their turn to direct affairs of state in free Haiti, there was little interest in spiritual matters among them. The intellectuals of the group paid homage to the liberal philosophers of the century rather than to religious thinkers.

175 771 184

If religion was at a low ebb in the prosperous days of the colony, it almost disappeared in the excitement of the years following the revolt of the slaves (1791).

175 771

3. Ibid., p. 33.

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to appoint, curés to the vacant parishes. His independence of action could not fail to give offense to Church authorities. One of his first appointees was a black ex-slave, Félix, who had been a drum major in the native army. Félix was made curé in the important town of Saint-Marc.

The constitution of his empire (May, 1805) indicates that Dessalines did not intend to make himself head of the Church, but rather planned a complete separation of Church and State. Article 50 reads: "The law admits no dominant religion"; while the next article grants freedom to all cults and refuses state support to any denomination or minister. No attack was made, therefore, upon Catholicism, yet the disestablishment of that Church was a serious blow to its prestige. Not in the specific provisions regarding religion was the Church most weakened, but rather in the "liberality" of articles dealing with actions upon which the Church had taken a firm moral stand. Thus Article 14 declared that "marriage is an act purely civil and authorized by the government," while Article 15 permits divorce by the state. Early laws of the empire still further undermined the position of Church doctrine. Illegitimate children were granted the same legal rights as legitimate ones—a generous provision which removed one of the strong reasons for marriage; separation of husband and wife except by divorce was forbidden, and this prohibition practically encouraged the divorce disapproved by the Church; finally, the grounds upon which divorce might be allowed were broader than those existing anywhere else in the Western World at the time: mutual consent, application from one party to the marriage, or simple allegation of incompatibility of temperament or character.

From the promulgation of this constitution in 1805 and for the next fifty-five years, Haiti was in open schism from the Roman Catholic Church. The Holy See refused to recognize either the Haitian state or the provisions of its constitution, and it declined to allow priests to enter the country. Certain Haitian presidents were friendly enough to Catholicism, and others were openly desirous of reëstablishing a state religion, but the breach once made was not healed by mere good wishes. The longer the schism endured, the farther the people grew away from the doctrines and practices of a religion in which they had never been firmly grounded. At the moment of independence, when all minds were more open to new

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Christophe had a great deal more to say about religion than any of the other early Haitian rulers. In a speech following the promulgation of his constitution, after severe censure of the government of Dessalines, he said:

175 643 795 659 642

> It is necessary to raise again the dignity of religion, for weakened morals leave young people open to the licenses of their age. Liberty has been assailed by traitors, enemies of their fellow citizens, and sold to our cruelest enemies. It is assured to you now, have no doubt! Shortly you will see these vicious men and their criminal efforts vanish like clouds.
>
> Public education, after religion and liberty the most precious benefit mankind enjoys, will be reanimated and sustained by morality; it will again be held in honor and reverence amongst us. Divorce, that traitor among customs, is rigorously prohibited and proscribed forever.[5]

[871] [586]

Like Pétion, Christophe made the Catholic Church official, but he indicated the dictatorial path he intended to follow by adding that no ecclesiastical decree or law might become effective without the consent of the President.[6] He completely overturned the law of Dessalines concerning illegitimate children; his decree deprived such offspring of any claims of inheritance whatever.[7] In a country where practically no one had been legally married such a ruling was severe, but Christophe hoped that his severity would force his subjects into wedlock, and this the Catholic Church was bound to approve.

[848]

Making the Church official did not strengthen its hold upon the people. In 1814 (seven years after he had promised "to raise again the dignity of religion") the kingdom was served by only three priests, one of whom Christophe had named archbishop. The King was preoccupied with form, and having created a nobility he needed a church to lend dignity to his realm. Consequently in 1811 he reorganized the clergy in his kingdom, establishing an archiepiscopal see and three bishoprics. The reorganization, except for the archbishop, remained a paper plan because the Pope refused to coöperate by giving the schismatic church his approval.

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All the early rulers seem to have been rather innocent in their dealings with Rome. They felt, apparently, that as heads of state they had but to express a desire in order to have His Holiness ap-

5. This speech, made on February 18, 1807, is cited in Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1848), II, 354–355.
6. See the law of March 18, 1807.
7. Law of March 25, 1807.

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prove. Dessalines had sent a small number of Negro youths to Rome to receive consecration and ordination from the Pope, so that they might return to initiate a black priesthood for the black state. Pius VII (through the interference of Napoleon, it was held by the Haitians) refused to consecrate the aspirants to holy orders, and they had to return as they had come. Christophe thought to avoid such a snub by presenting His Holiness with a *fait accompli*. Having in his kingdom a Spanish Capuchin named Brelle who had formerly anointed Dessalines emperor, Christophe made this friar head of his reorganized church as "archbishop of Haiti and grand almoner to the King," giving him a "palace" and a yearly income derived from the revenues of his "see." This achieved he asked papal approval, but had sorrowfully to announce, "*Le roi d'Haïti eut la douleur de ne pas même recevoir une réponse de Sa Sainteté et passa outre.*"

Pétion's legislators were even more naïve. Their constitution of 1816 (of course, really the President's) granted to the President the right to have a bishop come to Port-au-Prince "to elevate to the priesthood those young Haitians who feel called to embrace the ecclesiastical state."[8] It was apparently assumed that without the approval of the Pope any bishop could come in and forthwith "make" priests. The insertion of this article in the constitution confesses the disadvantages of schism. The last surviving priests of the old régime, those few who had remained in spite of the breach with Rome, were dying off; no new priests were being sent in; therefore, if the Catholic Church was to endure in the republic, it must have Haitian priests. Certain clerics fleeing political revolutions in South America came to Haiti, but since they spoke French badly, did not improve the religious situation. It was impossible to get sympathetic priests from France, in view of the relations of the two countries at the time. The provision of the 1816 constitution, however childish, was at least an effort to perpetuate the church in Haiti.

It is nowhere recorded that either Pétion or Boyer had any opportunity to persuade a bishop to come and consecrate the desired priests. Deprived of support by the Papal See, in open schism, the Haitian republic was forced to make all regulations governing religious affairs. Boyer carried on various negotiations with Rome looking toward rapprochement, but the schism endured. Organized

8. Article 50 of the 1816 constitution.

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Organized

religion was never at a lower ebb in Haiti than toward the middle of the nineteenth century, as whole generations of citizens were growing up who had never known the proper forms of ritual, and had no real religious training. The outward shell of the Church covered steadily more "superstition," more homely beliefs and practices, and the long divorce from Rome permitted the growth of a native religion which later could not be eradicated, no matter how assiduous the labors of Catholic priests. 175 795 771

During Boyer's quarter-century the once Roman and Catholic Church remained the official religion of the state, but its head was now the President. Organization simplified as orthodoxy declined. By 1840 there was only one order of priesthood; no archbishop, bishops, canons, curés, or other titled dignitaries, but only "priests." The people were not taxed to maintain the state Church; there were no tithes or forced contributions for the support of public worship or the repair of parish churches, no heavy list of clergy living from levies on the people. However, if the Haitians were not burdened by imposed religious fees, they were still through their own fears subject to steady tolls for services by the degraded men who then called themselves priests. 175 795 771 659 643

Every effort of the state failing to provide proper religious leadership, Boyer resigned himself to permitting those who professed to be priests to practice in the republic. There were seventy so-called priests in the country in 1840. Some of them had once been in holy orders but were now unfrocked: they found in Haiti not only a haven but a fertile field for gain. In addition to these religious renegades came adventurers who knew just enough of ritual and theology to use the priestly garb as a cover for easy graft. Both groups encouraged crude superstition with a view to making money. They baptized houses, boats, and doorposts, and blessed fetish charms or amulets, all for a fee. Immorality was flagrant, and many of the "priests" had mistresses and children. The debauchery of some was so notorious that Secretary-General Inginac had publicly to rebuke them and even to banish a few from the country. A visiting Quaker, benignantly tolerant of most of what he saw in Haiti, was scandalized by the religious situation. He said that the sole aim of most of the clergy was to secure gold and silver "as quickly as they can, to send to Europe for investment." Excepting a very few (notably the priests at Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, and Jacmel), h 175 795 793 [114]

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175 concludes: "With regard to the ecclesiastical institutions of the
● 793 republic we may safely say . . . that if the standing army be one cause
795 of the degradation of the people, the Church is surely another; and
[114] the sooner it can be reformed, the better for religion, for morals, and for the physical well-being of the community."[9]

175 Eventually the state felt it necessary to protect the people from
793 these predatory priests. True, people paid for what they considered
795 to be services performed, but the legislators could not permit unlimited graft in the name of religion. An act of 1840,[10] therefore, set
659 a fee of half a dollar for each baptism;[11] $8 for a marriage with Mass, $4 for one without a Mass; an ordinary Mass, 37 cents; a High Mass, service, or funeral "of the first class" (that is, with choir, sacristan, acolytes, and churchwarden), $60; funerals of the second class, $20; funerals of the third class, $10. Articles of the act specify what shall constitute the three classes of service, and it is then stated, "Neither rectors nor vicars shall receive anything for offices at which they do not assist in person, except in cases of illness." The Haitians were not receiving true religious instruction, but at least their government tried to prevent their being mulcted by the spurious churchmen.

175 Since Haiti had no schools except the few attended by children of
771 the élite, religious instruction of youth was almost nonexistent. The
184 average élite man was openly an unbeliever, for it required little acumen to show him that if the priests represented religion there was nothing to commend it. Hunt in 1860 said: "Many of the educated are about where the French were when they left the island. They believe in Voltaire, whom I have not unfrequently heard them
[562] characterize as the greatest man who ever lived."[12] In contrast to the
[114] men, the women made more of a show of being devout and attentive to the formal duties of religion, but according to Franklin they

are not actuated by any religious feeling. Going to church is a mere matter of parade with them, the sabbath being a day of festivities, and not set aside for religious devotion. The female congregations which frequent the churches in Hayti appear better prepared for an opera, or some other public amusement, than for the sacred duties of offering up their prayers in adoration of the Deity.

9. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 98 ff.
10. Chap. IV, articles 28–31.
11. The figures cited in the Act are in gourdes.
12. Benjamin S. Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans* (Philadelphia, 1860), p. 18.

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175 religious life were not improved and the schism endured. The arch-
795 bishop of Haiti seemed to regard his new title as applying vaguely to
648 the island, not the country, of Haiti, and since all his vicars were
659 Spaniards unable to speak either French or the Créole dialect, they
643 did nothing for religion in the Haitian republic.

[793] Ties broken by a single radical action may require endless patience and persistence to knit together their severed threads. The impetuosity of Dessalines caused the rupture; it was prolonged by indifference to religion, absorption in economic and political matters, fear that France might use to her profit any *rapprochement* with Rome, and a certain complacency in subordinating Church to state. Inertia, however, was the real obstacle in the way of healing the breach. It is much less trouble to let conditions remain as they are than to make a change whose results no one can foretell. But the longer the rupture, the less understanding the people had of steps necessary to reëstablish the Church.

175 When in 1847 Faustin Soulouque, the ignorant, became president,
771 the horizon had never seemed darker for organized religion. The black general, suddenly impelled by a quirk of fortune into high office, was a man of the people in his religious attitudes. All their belief in magic, in the mystical power of certain rites, in charms and spells—all their "superstition" as the Catholics called it—Soulouque shared. For the first time in Haitian history one is aware that the folk beliefs brought over from Africa had become welded into a recognizable form, under the name of Vodun. To colonial writers "Vaudoux" had been primarily a name for certain dances; to the early Haitian élite it seems to have connoted either occult rites or vulgar claptrap compounded of gibberish, old wives' remedies, and sensual dances. But in the long and deepening twilight of Catholicism, the various elements were fused, until by Soulouque's time the Haitian was familiar with the general beliefs, rites, and "priesthood" of Vodun. As Soulouque had broken with the tradition of presidents who wished Haiti to be recognized as one of the community of civilized Western nations, so he allowed the traditional respect for Catholicism to die. As an emperor he was a transplanted African chief; as a believer he was a follower of Vodun. The rites were practiced and the sacrifices made openly now. Men in high places dared to reveal their belief in native tenets. For twelve years Vodun flourished with official approval.

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175 795 346 to try to renovate the old. Gradually the work became established, increasing in scope with the years.

175 795 It is not necessary to present a detailed history of the work of Catholicism in Haiti since 1860. The most striking feature of these years is its relationship to Vodun, which will be treated shortly. The progress made by the Church itself can best be seen by a summary of conditions in 1930.

794 795 162 Haiti is divided into dioceses named after its principal towns and cities. The population statistics are based upon figures of births covering more than fifty years, and although estimates, they are probably as accurate as any other population statistics for Haiti:

Archdiocese of Port-au-Prince	942,700
Diocese of Cap-Haïtien	453,000
Diocese of Les Cayes	628,000
Diocese of Gonaïves	475,000
Diocese of Port-de-Paix	153,590
Total	2,652,290

● 793 To care for this large and predominantly illiterate population there are 205 priests,[14] only 8 of whom are Haitians; 105 Brothers; and 366 Sisters.[15] The assiduous educational work of these *religieux* will be discussed in another connection.

794 162 The country's 10,200 square miles are divided into 112 parishes, which generally correspond to the political communes, although there are several parishes in the larger centres of population. In the rural sections 465 mission chapels are located at strategic points.[16]

500 Any casual attempt to assess the importance of religion in the daily

[794] 14. Of these, 156 are in charge of parishes or missions (the secular priests). The remaining 49 are regular clergy (that is, belonging to a religious or monastic order). All parishes in the diocese of Port-de-Paix and two in Port-au-Prince are in charge of the regular clergy; the other regular monks are doing educational work or other special service connected with the dioceses.

[793] [792] 15. The Brothers are Frères de l'Instruction Chrétienne; of the number 83 are French, 10 French Canadian, 9 Spanish, and 3 Haitian. The Sisters belong to three congregations: 146 to St. Joseph de Cluny, 198 to Les Filles de la Sagesse, and 22 to Les Filles de Marie.

16. All the figures cited above are drawn from the *Report of the Forbes Commission to Haiti*, 1930, pp. 16–17.

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Any casual attempt to assess the importance of religion in the daily

lives of the people is sure to prove erroneous, for in no phase of life are outward appearances so deceptive. What the unsophisticated peasant believes can be ascertained on the whole more accurately than the beliefs of the intelligent élite. To the foreign observer, Roman Catholicism seems to play as large and as small a part in the thinking of the Haitian upper classes as among members of upper-class French society. Outwardly, the élite are professing Catholics or not religious at all. It is considered proper to attend Mass and otherwise to pay respect to religious forms; actually one loses nothing in prestige if he is not a practicing Christian. Society seems to exert no pressure in the matter. Only if a member of the upper class fears for the security of his social position, or knows that rumors are afloat of his addiction to Vodun, does he feel impelled to become assiduous in his open attentions to the Church.

The national sensitiveness to skin color is apparent in the priestly complexions. Since the old tradition lingers that "baptism by a black will not stick," not even the peasants welcome native Catholic priests. The God and saints of Christianity need the intercession of white men, just as the Vodun spirits need that of natives. In the early days peasants stoned Negro priests who tried to administer the Catholic sacraments. Such an attitude toward a black clergy falls in well with the preferences of the élite. If there were Haitian priests, they would probably be drawn from the élite class since this is the educated group; but it might happen that some devout peasant would rise to the priesthood and so have the care of a parish including élite—a contingency unthinkable to the aristocrat. Snobbishness, indeed, affects the usefulness of the town priests, for the élite members of the congregation insist on having sermons in French, a language which only the small minority understand, rather than in the Créole which is the speech of everyone, intelligible to gentry and humble alike. The Mass is consequently celebrated for the people at large in unknown tongues, Latin for the ritual, French for the sermon; the benefit they derive from it must be wholly from their inner communion stimulated by the actions of the service. The town priests are often willing enough to accede to élite pressure in the matter of language, for they know French as their mother tongue and would have to learn Créole; although some of the more devoted priests become adept in native speech, using it in their personal

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ministry and in sermons in country chapels.[17] For the élite, well groomed, sitting with his missal in a seat bearing his name plate, the psychic elation to be derived from hearing a sermon preached in a language which the rabble seated around him does not know must be very great—and very Christian.

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17. I have heard a sermon in the chapel at fashionable Kenscoff preached in Créole, with the President of the republic, himself a master—and a politically astute user—of Créole in the congregation. Likewise, I have met priests who, although they have lived in the country for a generation, have never learned the tongue used by ninety-five out of a hundred of their parishioners all the time, and by a hundred per cent of them some of the time.

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learn the properties of plants, both for healing and for poison. Except for the belief in spiritual beings, this folk knowledge would hardly have been classed as religious, for it was useful in every phase of daily life; the classification is that of the anthropologist, not of the simple black. 771 171 174

If Dahomean beliefs prevailed over others of African origin, it was chiefly because of the numerical preponderance of Dahomeans in the colony, together with the popularity of their religious dances. The Dahomean spirits or gods were Vodun; the dance in which the worshiper sought the inspiration of the spirits was a Vodun dance. Like all but the highly organized religions, this one recognized the validity of other beliefs. Its practitioners were not bigots. No hierarchy existed to keep out new accretions. Imperceptibly these were added to the original basic form: here an Arada spirit, there a Congolese prayer, and in many instances a Catholic saint, until the composite Vodun religion began to take shape. [116] [196] [535]

There is no evidence that during colonial times Vodun was ever considered important by the white ruling class—certainly not as a faith. To most planters the word was the name for a vigorous dance. Judging from Moreau de Saint-Méry's description it was held openly enough, at times being witnessed by the whites as a sort of nocturnal diversion. Moreau knew, as did other whites, that there were "superstitious beliefs" connected with it, yet the offhand use of the word "superstition" was indication enough that the beliefs were not regarded as important. We have seen, however, what profitable use the slaves were able to make of the apparent innocence of their dances. When the idea of revolt began to germinate among them, gathering on each plantation at least once a week they had ample opportunity to hatch their plans. It is known that the campaign for revolt was developed partly under the stimulus of the Negro Boukman, a *houngan* or priest of Vodun. By means of drumbeats, which to the whites merely pounded out the rhythm for dancing but had for centuries been a means of communication at long distance in parts of West Africa, that ripening plot was telegraphed from one plantation to another. Even more important, perhaps, was the unity of feeling made possible, despite all incoherence of tradition and language, by the Vodun background. 174 535 796 [192] [114] 175 669 567 202 793 771 114

The revolt of half a million slaves was a success. This fact has been rather too calmly accepted by historians of Saint-Domingue, who 175 669 668

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114 175 669 668 have explained it chiefly by the surprise element of the uprising. But when else in modern history have slaves successfully revolted against their armed masters and become permanently free? Successful revolutions even of people not in bodily slavery have had acknowledged leadership, whereas in Haiti no real leader appeared for the insurgents. Boukman's influence, indeed, at its widest never reached beyond a part of the northern plain; he had about the same range of power as a ward boss in the United States. On the plantations Hallaou, Hyacinthe, Lafortune, and others whose names are unimportant or unknown, Vodun houngans likewise welded slave opinion within their narrow districts. But no single great leader appeared. As the conflict was developed, without plan or unity under the divided and contradictory action of numerous blacks, what held the people together was, negatively, their hatred of the white masters; positively, their Vodun beliefs. Only later in the decade did a true leader, Toussaint L'Ouverture, emerge to consolidate their victory.

[793]

776 793 761 782 781 As often happens among unsophisticated people convinced of the rightness of their cause, the local Vodun leaders were sure of their own invulnerability through the protection of one or another of the spirits.[8] They convinced their followers as well, to such a degree that when an invulnerable chief fell there were dozens of reasons to explain the unexpected death rather than any disillusion. Usually, failure to follow the rigorous propitiation requirements of the protecting god offered the key to the misfortune. Various ones of them were known to be exacting and troublesome. The leader at Trou-Coffi, Romaine by name, had absorbed enough of the Roman Catholicism in Vodun to feel that the Virgin Mary was his especial patroness.[9] Beyond this specific belief in invulnerability was the general trust that Vodun spirits would lead their devotees to success, would give them a happy issue out of all their distress.

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8. A parallel case of belief in invulnerability because of divine protection was that of the North American Indians both at the time of Tecumseh and later in the Sioux outbreaks at the climax of the Ghost-Dance Religion. See James Mooney, *The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak of 1890* (Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, 1892–93 [Washington, 1896]), chap. X.

[171] [781]

9. The importance of Vodun beliefs in connection with the slave revolt is stressed by Dr. J.-C. Dorsainvil, *Vodou et Névrose* (Port-au-Prince, 1931), pp. 33–34. He says of many of the chiefs: "The belief in their invulnerability was not at all the result of calculation, but was a true state of mind, a sort of autosuggestion which explains very well the chronic heroism of certain leaders of the revolution in Saint-Domingue and of the war of independence of 1802–3."

[114] [781]

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Worship of the loa is directed by priests and priestesses. They grow 793
into their positions by a kind of tolerant apprenticeship. Young men and women discover their abilities in dealing with loa or their desire to participate actively in serving them; they assist the officiating priests; they listen carefully to the lore of their elders, keeping their eyes open meanwhile. The priest is generally called a houngan, or sometimes a *papaloi;* the priestess a *mambu* or a *mamaloi.*[33] No cere- [192]
mony marks the progression of a novice through any set stages to final priesthood; rather, the people in the community simply recognize growing expertness. The more effective and capable a houngan, the greater his prestige and the wider his reputation. There is nothing even vaguely resembling the ordered hierarchy of priests in the Catholic Church, nor is there any control of one houngan over another. No holy robes adorn the officiants, although they occasionally wear certain colors or ornaments to please the loa. Most of the Vodun priests and priestesses are simple peasants, working in the fields and going about the daily round of life. When they are called to perform a ritual, an offering is taken up in the early part of the service to recompense them for their offices.

Actually, the Vodun houngan and mambu correspond much more 793
closely to the primitive medicine man or shaman than to the Catholic 755
priest. They are thought to have power, through certain Rada and 787
Pétro loa, to cure illnesses caused either by adverse magic of one's enemies or by a loa; they are not able, however, to cure sickness sent by the Christian God. Likewise they can remedy or avert misfortune whose origin is magic or the loa. One of their highly important functions is foretelling the future: no important service would be contemplated by a family without previous resort to divination to determine the propitiousness of the time, nor would it be sensible to undertake a secular business of importance without preliminary reassurance by this means. To see into the future effectively, the priest must be possessed by the loa.[34]

33. The second of these names in each case derives from "papa" and "mama," or master and mistress; and from the familiar loa or god. It is not implied that the officiants dominate the loa but only that they deal expertly with them. [192]

34. In addition to the houngans and mambu, there are also *bocors* who specialize in magic without conducting regular religious rites. These bocors probably deserve the name of sorcerers. [791]

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4. *Magic*

771 It is difficult enough to make a distinction between religion and superstition; it is practically impossible, in dealing with a people who in their closeness to nature are not accustomed to the refinements of "civilized" thinking, to make one between magic and certain aspects of religion. Underlying both is belief in the supernatural; characteristic of both is a faith which recognizes a higher order of cause and effect operating with the lower one familiar in commonplace matters. Anthropologists hold various theories about magic, some saying that it is the set of practices out of which religion evolved, others that it exists for personal and practical ends and has little to do with religion; still others that it is a development out of religion, paralleling and complementing it.[35]

771 One element which distinguishes religious practice from magic is
789 the attitude toward spirits. In religion, the worshiper pays homage
782 and humbly petitions, preserving meanwhile an attitude of humility to spirits or gods who must be propitiated; in magic, the human being, by coercive words and actions, commands the services of spirits who (if the magical rites have been properly performed) must obey. The distinction is not between good and evil, for a god may have both characteristics and be entirely capable of working harm to mortals. As already noted, in the Haitian system the gods are like men in being mixtures of both principles.

771 Another difference between religion and magic concerns time.
789 Religion is social, open to all worshipers or at least to all of a group
796 or social rank. Its rites are continually and repeatedly performed. Magic, on the contrary, though sometimes public and social, is generally private and, since it is for a specific purpose, is performed only when the need arises. A man who was thoroughly conversant with magic might go through his whole life without ever feeling the need of employing it or having to exert himself to fend it off. One turns to magic as a sophisticated man might turn to medicine. Either may be done without; both may be used to excess.

789 In Haitian Vodun, magic interweaves itself with the general faith.

791 35. See, for example, Ruth Benedict, "Magic," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*,
●793 X, 39–44; A. Goldenweiser, *Early Civilization* (New York, 1922), chaps. X–XI; J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (London, 1907–15), *passim*; R. R. Marett, *The Threshold of Religion* (New York, 1914), *passim*; and Sumner and Keller, *op. cit.*, II, chaps. XXIX–XXXI.

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789 Everyone believes in it, though few would make nice distinctions
793 between the two. Starting with extremes, the houngan conducting a
791 service with sacrifice is officiating at a purely religious rite, while the bocor (sorcerer) concocting a love charm is dealing wholly in magic. It is perfectly proper, however, for a respectable houngan to brew a mixture, calling on the loa meanwhile for assistance, to cure a sick person: is this magic? Certainly it is private, specific, practical. A respectable houngan will not permit himself to dabble in evil magic, destined to bring misfortune to someone else;[36] but such work is the stock in trade of the bocor, who knows the dangers of his profession yet is willing to run the risk for the sake of high profit. Between the reputable houngan and the awesome bocor may sometimes be found the *caplata*, a sort of jack-of-all-trades, who professes to be able to achieve whatever is demanded of him in magic, whether beneficial or harmful, but whose reputation is not high enough to make men trust him with important magical enterprises.

789 There exists one continual check to save the gullible from charla-
791 tanism on the part of the practitioner: the performer of any kind of magic must make frequent exhibitions of his powers. If the specialist cannot make his magic work, he soon loses his reputation. The career of magic is not one to be entered lightly. Constant search for medicinal plants, constant experimentation, comparison of practice—the requirements of the profession are as strenuous as those for the successful American doctor. Magic is like a live wire: it cannot be handled with impunity. The slightest slip on the part of the bocor might loose divine wrath on the bungler and quack. It is said that almost every bocor dies an evil death, hoist on his own petard. For the houngan the risk is not so great, since in general he relies upon the might of his own special loa, who of old has been familiar with him. True, he may run the risk of purchasing the services of other loa, but it is a risk, since his family loa, quick to feel insult, might punish him.

789 Magic runs the gamut from passive to active, simple to complex.
[171] The commonest manifestation of magic in Haitian daily life is one familiar to most peoples in the world—the charm. As in Italy and other southern European countries, the Haitian peasant believes in the evil eye. "Maldioque," it is called—a term not far removed from the Italian "*mal occhio*." The common belief is that certain persons,

36. This is commonly called "black" magic.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Similarly, in Haitian towns, where the élite speak French

197 and where French is taught in the schools, the Créole is less "pure"
191 than in the untutored countryside. Even there the language is chang-
193 ing, for there is steadily operating that "law of simplification" which reduces the complications of language when it has only an oral tradition.[12] Abridgment occurs more and more frequently, agglutination is more apparent, and words tend toward the monosyllabic.

191 Everyone in Haiti speaks and understands Créole. Nursemaids
197 teach it to their élite charges, so that children know it from infancy; élite lovers lapse into its expressive phrases in order to say something particularly intimate which might sound sentimental in French; priests must use it in their parish work if they are to be understood at all. Even the élite presidents have found it wise to speak often to the countrypeople in their own tongue. The gendarmes would be helpless in their police work without it, as would the agricultural, health, and other governmental services. It is the language in which all the small business of Haiti is conducted.[13] Ernest Douyon has written brilliantly and revealingly about it:

> If, on the one hand, we have a business language, an official tongue, which is French, our true maternal language, on the other hand, that one which we first lisp, that of the country as a whole (I had almost said "of the true country," for such is the case), that of the city people as well as of countryfolk, that of all families whatever their differences in education, the language one hears not only in humble huts but in luxurious villas, not only in offices or among the masses but also in private apartments and salons, that which for the crudest as for the most finely cultivated minds (even when these latter through snobbery try to deny the fact) is at all times the most naturally expressive, that which perfectly translates our deepest sentiments (jubilation, anger, love, or whatever) precisely when these are most strongly felt, that which all of us, all (with the rarest exceptions) use spontaneously—is Créole! I know that it is not considered proper in polite society, that it sometimes lends a certain impression of vulgarity, that it is not the correct language for distinguished people—when they are in public! But who is the man of propriety, who the society woman, who in private does not continually use Créole?[14]

12. See P. Crousset, *Les Poètes remains* (Toulouse, 1929), p. 18.

[196] [193] 13. It must be noted that in the Vodun service the houngan sometimes speaks in langgy, which is not Créole. It purports to be pure African, but is more likely to be mere gibberish.

14. In his Preface to Paine, op. cit., p. v.

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

to speak the special "languages" of their particular cults. One aspect of this initiation,[2] which has been carried over almost unchanged into some parts of Haiti (though not into Mirebalais) is the ordeal by fire, in which the novitiate must plunge his hand into a pot of boiling cornmeal and rest his foot on the red-hot stones which support the pot.

The role of the family deities has already been given; of the third category, that of the personal forces, one finds first of all the soul, of which each individual is conceived as having three. More important is the cult of Fa, or Destiny, which came to Dahomey from the Yoruba, and is a part of a widely spread system of discovering the destiny of a man that characterizes not only West Africa and the remainder of the continent, but most of the Old World. In Dahomey today this end is carried out by assessing the significance of the various permutations and combinations of sixteen palm kernels "thrown" by the diviner. In addition there exist traditionally earlier and less "official" methods of divining, which in the main are those which have survived in the New World. Intimately associated with both the soul and the destiny of man is the deity who is at once a member of the great pantheons and one of the most personal of all the gods, Legba, whose African importance is attested by the extent to which he is today worshipped in many parts of the New World, and by his universality in Haiti. From the point of view of Dahomean philosophy Legba may be regarded as the god of accident, who gives to man a "way out" in a world ruled by an otherwise inexorable fate. Gross in his appetites and capricious, he is, nevertheless, beloved by the Dahomeans, and though his name is usually erroneously translated by the European term "devil," no appellation could be farther from reality. Of particular significance for his role in Haitan life as guardian of the crossroads and of the *barrière* is his place in Dahomean theology, since it is said: "Before the gods can

[2] [i.e., The initiation of devotees by priests into the religious cults of Dahomey—Analyst]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

eat, Legba must be fed" — in other words, Legba is interlocutor between man and gods.

Another figure in this category of personal deities is Dã. Briefly, it would seem that Dã is an abstraction, used to designate anything sinuous, which moves silently, undulates, and cannot be controlled. It is the principle of movement, of energy, of life itself, and, by extension, of fortune. Often spoken of as a serpent, Dã is nevertheless but the principle of mobility. If not cared for, it will weaken, be preyed upon by others of its kind, and a man's fortune will disappear. Why, then, has this Dahomean serpent cult in its Haitian form been given so important a place in the writings on Haitian religion? In the first place, the principle represented by Dã is symbolized by serpents. Again, a myth describes the rainbow serpent to be one of a pair of great snakes, the other of which lies coiled beneath the earth to support its weight, that it may not fall into the sea. But most important of all is the regard for the snake in Whydah, where it is believed to be the mythical animal ancestor of the large relationship group whose center is that coastal city. The rainbow serpent is Dã Aido Wedo, sometimes known as Damballa Wedo, whose importance as a Haitian deity is mentioned in all works which treat of Haitian religion, while Dangbe, so often found in the literature on Haiti, is, however, this Whydah totem which with time has also been adopted more widely. Thus much that has been written of serpent-worship in this region of West Africa — the place of origin of the patterns of most of the religious cults found in Haiti today — is the result of misconception resulting from a failure to analyze this belief to its ultimate significance.

It remains but to speak of magic. Magic in West Africa is not an isolated phenomenon, but is closely integrated with the other aspects of religion. In Dahomey magic charms are sold by professional workers of magic, but the derivation of the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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and another in 1691. The object of this latter rebellion was to massacre all the whites in the district, but it was discovered before the uprising could be effective, and its leaders were executed. Still another incipient revolt in the region of Cap Français was put down in 1704.[26]

In the main, however, there were too few opportunities for united action on the part of the slaves from any considerable area to permit the idea of a general revolt to germinate and grow into action; such rebellions as occurred in the years that followed were local affairs, and were principally the result of specific abuses. Yet the fear of them was always with the planters, and of this fear the *vodun* cult, characterized by St. Mery as being potentially "a terrible weapon" in the hands of the leaders of the cult, was the symbol and crystallizing agent.[27] That there was no lack of realization of the danger to the colonists from slave uprisings is made clear in letters of the period written to France; as early as 1685 M. de Cussy, reporting to the Minister of Colonies in Paris, stated: "In the Negroes we possess a formidable domestic enemy," while a hundred years later an officer of the armies of the King who was also a plantation-owner in Haiti expressed the opinion that "a colony of slaves is a city under constant threat of assault; there one walks on barrels of powder."[28]

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More frequently, however, the expression of protest took the form of *marronage*, of running away to the hills, a phenomenon not restricted to Haiti, since in other regions of the New World, notably Jamaica and Dutch Guiana, the runaways maintained themselves so successfully that they were accorded their independence by formal recognition, as was also done in Haiti in 1784.[29] Figures on the extent to which slaves made off into the mountains tell the measure of their desperation; in 1720 alone, a thousand Negroes gained their freedom in this manner; in 1751, at least 3,500. Some of the leaders of these bands were men of great ability, and the depredations they engaged in caused serious losses to the planters

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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are no customary playmate or joking relationships between grandparents and grandchildren, a man would rather go to his grandparents when in trouble than to his parents or uncles, because of the greater indulgence they show him. 603 593 604

At about the age of seven or eight the children's play-life is invaded by the serious work which they must increasingly assume. According to their sex, they are instructed by father or mother, each parent teaching the child the work he will be most occupied with as he matures. For some children, naturally, this education is deferred longer than for others, but, as a rule, boys of four or five may be seen playing about the field "helping" father by bringing him a leaf with which to light his cigarette, or "hoeing" in company with him, while girls are early permitted the pleasure of accompanying their mothers to market. By observing his father at work and by helping in small tasks the boy gradually learns how to do a man's work, until at about the age of fifteen he himself can cultivate a garden. Two or three years later he is given a field of his own and seed with which to sow it. The produce from it he brings to his mother to sell for him, and she keeps what money it brings, so that he will have his savings when he wishes to marry. Little girls, for whom acquaintance with the techniques of selling in the market is desirable, are given small articles to dispose of, and the proceeds belong to them, though some mothers demand an accounting from the young tradeswomen as a further measure of training. A woman also teaches her daughter to sew, to cook, and to wash and iron, instruction which is continued until a girl, ready to be given in marriage, is able to manage all of a woman's work. 868 [454]

If a family can afford the expense, children begin to be prepared for their first communion at eight or ten years of age; but members of poor families must wait until the money can be found — which means that some classes of candidates include grown men and women. At about the customary age for confirmation the children are informed of the family vodun 852 869 861 869 994

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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869 deities, and they are taught what must be done when a sacrifice is to be given. Parents differ widely in this as in other practices, and while some make it a point to impart this information both at this time and later in the life of the child, others refuse to answer questions, and the child must learn from what he himself observes.

864 Children in the valley of Mirebalais receive little formal sex education. Shortly before marriage young women are told enough of the mechanism of the sexual life to guard against their being frightened when their husbands come to them. As early as seven years of age, however, girls are cautioned not to permit boys to play with them sexually, while a girl who reaches puberty is carefully watched, not being permitted to go for water or firewood or on other errands unless accompanied by some child, usually younger than herself. No explanation for this is given; she is simply forbidden to leave the house alone, though eventually she learns the reasons from other girls. Neither special ritual nor special instruction follows first menstruation; the girl merely apprises her mother of the fact. She herself has learned of the phenomenon by observing her mother and her older friends and consequently is not troubled by her initial menstrual flow, but rather is pleased that she has now become a woman.

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864 This absence of formal sex education does not stand seriously in the way of the young in learning the technique of sexual intercourse. Boys of six and seven surreptitiously "experiment" with girls of their own age in the sex act, despite parental warnings. This ceases, however, as soon as the girls are nubile, for then they are under strict supervision. Young boys are often given information concerning the technique of sexual intercourse by their older brothers or friends, when these gather in groups and discuss among themselves their amorous adventures. Another manner in which the child obtains sex education is by observing the behavior of his parents. Children usually share their parents' bed until they are six or

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of the dead must be deferred for a later chapter. Similarly, the discussion of the final element in Haitian religion, the belief in magic, must also be reserved for later pages, stressing here only its separate identity from the worship of the *loa*, with which it has been too often confused.[20]

The most striking element in the *vodun* cult is the manner in which the gods possess their devotees. Despite the fact that this is the aspect of Haitian religion that seems to the casual observer its least restrained and least disciplined, possession occurs according to well-defined rules and under specifically defined circumstances. And since it is through an analysis of possession that the clearest understanding can be reached of the meaning of the *loa* to those who worship them, the manner in which they influence the lives of their devotees and exert their powers for good or evil, possession may be treated at some length.[21]

When a person is possessed for the first time, the spirit which is said to animate him is known as a *loa bossal*, an "untamed" god. The word *bossal*, which in the early days was applied to newly arrived Africans,[22] has always been a term of contumely, and today the same feeling-tone is continued through the belief that since all things in the universe are subject to observable regulation, and animals and plants and human beings must all live according to these rules, the *loa*, as members of society, may not manifest the unrestrained and often dangerous traits of unpredictable behavior which characterize them before they have been "baptized" and thus brought under proper control.

Baptism of a deity most often occurs when a boy or girl is possessed by a family *loa*, especially if it is one which gives that knowledge of healing and divination meant by the word *connaissance*. Sometimes, though not always, this possession is violent, and the prospective devotee rages about the house, destroying whatever comes to hand. On occasion, since custom frowns on possession at a ceremony not given by the family of

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the one possessed, possessions of this kind mean either that the *loa* needs baptism; or that, being baptized, its devotee has been negligent in serving the god.

No actual rite of baptism of a *loa* — or, as it is also termed, of *lavé tête,* "washing the head" — was witnessed, but the account of the ceremony given here, obtained independently from several persons, represents an adequate exposition of the rite as performed in Mirebalais. A room is prepared where the person whose *loa* is to be baptized must remain for three days. The mat or bed on which the neophyte rests is covered with fresh sheets and pillow-cases, and three changes of clothing are made ready, one of which must be entirely new for the last day of the ceremony. These are in the color of the god being "baptized"; that is, if the *loa* were revealed to be such a one as Damballa, Aida Wedo, or Gran' Erzilie, everything would be white, but if it were Gran' Siligbo, the colors would be blue and white; if Ogun, everything would be red; if Ossange, blue; where the god is one of the Pétro suite, such as 'Ti Kita or Bosu, everything would be black.*

During the three days' "retreat" the one whose *loa* is being consecrated lies alone. All day long the men and women of the family sit in the next room or outside the house, singing and praying, though at night they sleep, since "this is not a wake." They not only sing the songs sacred to the *loa* being baptized, but also the canticles of the Virgin, while prayers of the Church are recited under the leadership of the *prêt' savanne,* the "bush-priest" whose ability to read the prayers makes him an essential figure in all *vodun* rites. They may from time to time have "a little procession" about the room where the novitiate lies, when small banners in the color of the god are carried. Soft drinks and a *mangé sec* — a "dry" offering — are given the god, and white tapers and an oil lamp are

* A detailed listing of the names, attributes, and powers of the more widely worshipped *loa,* the colors, days, and trees or other places sacred to them, and the "squads" into which they are conceived to be formed, will be found in an appendix at the end of this book.

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lighted. Chicken and rice may also be cooked for any god except Gede, while chocolate and rice with milk are favored, since it is said "the *loa* love desserts" — a commentary on the very immediate and human character of these spirits.

The actual baptism, or "washing of the head," is performed on the third day of the ceremony by a *vodun* priest or priestess who is a member of the family, though any member who has important *loa* and the necessary *connaissance* may officiate if the membership of the family includes no priest. As at any baptism, there must be a godfather and godmother, and preference is given those who are the parents of twins or are themselves twins. The officiant must be possessed at the time, since, it is said, "one *loa* baptizes another." Leaves of the basilique tree are steeped in perfumed cold water, and the hands of the one who baptizes are first immersed in the liquid; then, while songs of the *loa* and canticles of the Virgin are sung, he washes the head of the person to be baptized. Possession occurs immediately, and the new devotee lies back, half conscious, while all others kneel, seeking word from the *loa* to learn if it is satisfied. If an affirmative answer is given, all retire, the person possessed remaining in the room to sleep through the night. A "ball," but not a *vodun* dance, may celebrate the event either the next day or later, but this is not obligatory, and most often those present, after eating, quietly disperse. The following day the one who has been baptized goes to the family place of worship and greets those who have helped him. Only one further rite is necessary, and this solely when the *loa bossal* is revealed to be a hostile god. Then the *loa*, after having been baptized, is "restrained" by being placed in a jar and buried, so it cannot later emerge and trouble the family of the one to whom it has come.[13]

The ceremony of baptism, in Mirebalais, is in no sense a first step into any *vodun* hierarchy, for, as will be seen, no such hierarchy exists in this valley. One important priest there derives his power from *loa* that have never been bap-

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tized at all, but merely respond to an innate ability to control them. To have a baptized *loa,* then, merely means that the worship of the *loa* is thereafter carried on in regular form. The worshipper learns how to *marré,* or "tie,"[14] his spirit, so as to enjoy the social aspects of a *vodun* dance without fear that his *loa* will come unbidden. He gives it small offerings from time to time, and if it becomes insistent, or if his family is being troubled by its gods, he takes full part in the rituals that are staged.[15]

In native idiom, a person when possessed is "mounted" by his god, and thereafter becomes his *ch'wal,* or "horse." A devotee may come under the influence of a number of spirits during a single ceremony or dance, one *loa* succeeding another. The first deity that ever came to a person, however, for him constitutes the chief of his gods — his *mait' tête* — and the leader of any deities which may subsequently possess him. It is this *loa* alone that is "baptized," and this one alone "taken from his head" at his death; and, as far as he is concerned, all his other gods are under the control of this *mait' tête,* so that any agreement which he may enter into with this principal spirit must be respected by all the others.

Fundamentally, to be possessed by a *loa* means that an individual's spirit is literally dispossessed by that of the god. Personalities undergo radical change in accordance with the nature of the deity,[16] while even the sex of the one possessed is disregarded if it differs from that of the god, so that, for example, a woman "mounted" by Ogun is always addressed as Papa Ogun.[17] One wears the colors of the god and the ornaments he likes, eating and drinking those things he prefers, and otherwise manifesting his peculiar characteristics — rolling on the earth, if possessed by Damballa or chattering incessantly if by Gede.[18]

Not everyone, by any means, is subject to states of possession. If the existence of individual differences in the capacity for religious expression be recognized, it becomes apparent

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that while some react to the supernatural with immediate and overwhelming emotion, and others, though incapable of as deep a response, do sense the mysteries of possession, there are still others who go through life without ever feeling this religious "thrill." In native explanation, it is the former to whom the gods manifest themselves, who become the *ch'wal* of their *loa*; while to the latter the deities never make themselves known. Scientifically, the phenomenon of possession in Negro cultures, at least, is as yet unsatisfactorily explained, largely because of the almost complete absence of adequate reports on the background and incidence of specific cases. Perhaps the most satisfactory approach to its understanding is through a consideration of it in terms of differences in nervous instability, which may be thought of as predisposing different persons to experience the religious thrill in different degrees; or, in other terms, by reference to their differing susceptibility to suggestion. One must reject an hypothesis which attempts to explain the *vodun* cult of Haiti in terms of the neuroses, even when, as in the admirable exposition of Dr. Dorsainvil, the approach neglects neither accepted genetic theory in stressing the inheritance of neurotic tendencies in voduist family lines, nor the important historical forces which have been operative.[10] For in terms of the patterns of Haitian religion, possession is not abnormal, but normal; it is set in its cultural mold as are all other phases of conventional living. That it gives release from psychic tension does not alter the case; neither does the fact that it offers a way to the satisfaction of unfulfilled desires, as when the god, speaking through a woman under possession, demands a necklace or bracelet which, though forever the property of the god, will be worn by his devotee. These facts merely emphasize the compensatory character of the phenomenon. The social situation of the individual also enters; some undoubtedly simulate possession for the attention it brings them, while a person who experiences no serious difficulties in the course of his life is perhaps never

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787 781 called upon to ask whether or not he is properly serving his gods; is never placed in a situation for which possession would [114] be a release. Hence to consider all possession as something which falls within the range of psychopathology is to approach it handicapped by a fundamental misconception.

787 794 The best evidence of the socially normal nature of possession is the existence of rules governing its incidence which are well understood by all. Not everyone who is a *ch'wal* may become possessed at any dance or *service,* for the gods, if properly under control, are permitted to come only to members of the family giving the rite. At one *vodun* dance given by a priest where a number of other *hungans,* present as guests, became possessed, the host was regarded as having taken undue advantage of his visitors by bringing on their possessions. In another case Haitians from the southern peninsula who were temporarily residing in Mirebalais carefully refrained from contact with a certain *vodun* priest lest he bring on possession by their gods. At one dance for the Rada gods, the *loa* Taureau, a Pétro deity, possessed one of the drummers. Because a Pétro *loa* was neither expected nor wanted, the man was immediately removed and, when quieted, sent home. A similar situation developed at another Rada dance where Bosu "came"; the person possessed was at once taken outside the enclosure until his god had left him. If a *loa* persists in dancing at a *vodun* dance given by another family, it is either one of these *loa bossal* already described, or a *loa vagabond,* and may be scolded by the *hungan:* "You must not come here! You are not wanted! Go home where you belong!" The passion with [781] which a person resists his god when he feels possession coming on at a rite not given by his own family is particularly instructive. Men have been seen holding so tightly to the rafters of the shelter under which the dance was being held that the muscles of their forearms formed great cords, while beads of [782] perspiration rolled down their foreheads.[20] A person who must live away from his family for a long time usually takes

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steps to "feed" his *loa* in order to satisfy it, for it is more important to give offerings to the spirits than to dance for them. He therefore either quietly prepares a sacrifice of cereals and liquor in his own room or sends money home so that his *loa* may be "fed" at the family habitation, and his absence explained to it.[21]

When *vodun* deities are discussed in Mirebalais, most often two "companies" of them are mentioned, the Rada and the Pétro "squads." In one list of gods that was obtained, the word *Rada,* derived from the name of the ancient principality of Allada in Dahomey, called forth the explanation "*qui veut dire Dahomey* — which is to say, Dahomey," though it should be made clear that neither the words *Rada* nor *Dahomey* are any longer recognized in Haiti as place-names, being today simply qualifying designations of *loa.* There are regional differences in the number and ranking of other categories of gods that hold no important place in Mirebalais. The existence of these other categories is, of course, well known, and one person referred to "the seventeen and twenty-one classes of *loa,*" of which, however, only the following were named: Rada, Pétro, Dahomey, Guinée, Congo, Nago, Ibo, and Wangol. Of these the Congo and the Ibo gods are well known, though their worship is chiefly restricted to individual families, while the Nago and Dahomey categories, though significant from the point of view of indicating African origins, are most commonly grouped under the term *Rada.* Guinée also occasionally figures in worship as carried on in individual families, but this term is more often understood as a general designation for all *loa* outside the Rada, Nago, Congo, and Ibo groupings and for certain Pétro gods. Wangol derives from the geographical entity Angola.

From comparatively early times the impression has been given that certain of these classes of gods perform only good, and others evil. Nothing could be further from the truth than this attempt to read European concept into Haitian ideology,

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for though some gods are feared far more than others, and some generally regarded with affection, even these latter bring great harm to a neglectful devotee, while the gods whose power validates the most malignant magic may, in certain situations, work for the good of their worshippers. Especially has there been great confusion in discussions of the so-called Dom Pédro worship. Whether or not the origin of the term as given by St. Mery is correct — that it derives from the name of its founder, a Spanish Negro from Petit-Goâve [22] — the statements that have been made concerning it are in the main misleading.[23] Thus, it is not true that the Pétro gods are unqualifiedly evil and the Rada deities unqualifiedly good; nor that blood sacrifices are made exclusively at Pétro ceremonies, while the services for other gods are innocent of such sacrificial offerings. The impression gathered in Mirebalais concerning the Pétro gods is that they are principally, though not exclusively, derived from the process of deification of powerful ancestors, which in Africa exists in forms that clearly explain the essential tradition that offers a basis for this custom as found in Haiti. This is reinforced by statements to the effect that most of the Pétro "squad" are Créole or native gods as against the Guinée deities in the other groupings. One member of the *vodun* cult, indeed, made the concept of deifying the powerful dead explicit, saying that Pétro was a great and evil *vodun* priest who had died with the *loa* not "taken from his head." For while a general principle in the cult of the dead is that in the normal course of events those who die deliver up their souls to God, making the care for these souls primarily a concern of the Church, it is recognized that there are others such as this Dom Pedro who become *loa*. This occurs when an individual, usually a priest or priestess of the *vodun* cult, who during his lifetime was known to possess great supernatural power, dies without having had his *loa* "withdrawn from his head." Burdened by these spirits, and therefore unable to get to God, his soul goes to the bottom of

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a stream, there to remain until, becoming impatient, it demands to be taken out. A ceremony then brings back the tortured soul and makes of it a "*loa nan canarie*—a *loa* in a jar"—which thereafter acts as a guard for its family.

There is little agreement as to the place of residence of the *loa*. In general, it is believed that they come from Guinée each time they are called, returning when they have, in the native idiom, "descended from the heads of their horses"—that is, when the possession of their devotees has ceased. Those "under the water," however, being Haitians, remain in Haiti for seven years until the ceremony just mentioned, of putting them *nan canarie*, has been performed, when they, like the other *loa*, return to Guinée. At the same time, all recognize the African character of the *loa*, whether they be gods brought from Africa or the Créole *loa* from Haiti itself.

Worship of the *loa* is directed by priests of the cult. The terms *papaloi* and *mamaloi* as designations for male and female priests, almost universally employed by non-Haitian writers, are practically unknown in Mirebalais, where, as in most regions of Haiti, a priest is called a *hungan*, a priestess a *mambu*.[24] Besides the *hungan* (or *mambu*), and the *gangan*, a term applied to a *hungan* of renown, is the *bocor*, a practitioner of magic, not a member of any *vodun* priesthood, but a man who has acquired his power by the purchase of spirits. He is particularly differentiated from the *hungan* and *mambu* by the fact that the *loa* of their own accord are believed to have given "*connaissance*"—the knowledge of healing and helping, to these latter.[25] Not all gods can endow their devotees with this *connaissance*. Some of the Rada deities, in addition to those of the Ogun group who give it, are Legba, Damballa, Aizan, Bosu, St. Jean, and Agwe Woyo; among the Pétro gods it is conferred by Bosu Trois Cornes, Simbi d'leau, Gede, Osange, Maît' Gran' Bois, and Maît' Calfou (Carrefour). Simbi en Deux Eaux and Simbi Proméné both give magic power, the former conferring knowledge of excellent protectives against

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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are differentiated according to the types of healing in which they have had the greatest success, and the " miracles " to their credit, such as a *hungan* who had achieved a wide reputation for being able to resuscitate dead children. One *hungan* of the valley is spoken of as having powers which rank him with the greatest in the land, but now that he is old, a nephew of his is being called upon to act in his place. In a relatively short time, say his friendly clients, he will take his place even among great *hungans* elsewhere.

Under the *hungan* and *mambu* are assistants called *hunsi*, or sometimes, in the case of men, termed *adjanikon*. In some parts of Haiti, particularly in the plain of the Cul-de-Sac and the southern peninsula, there are degrees of initiation for the *hunsi*, which include the ordeal by fire that makes them *hunsi kanzo*.[28] In Mirebalais, however, the *kanzo* rite, though known by name, is neither required nor performed. The *hunsi* and *adjanikon* know the rituals in a general way, hold and wave the banners used to salute the gods, sing the songs for the *loa*, aid in bringing the possessed dancers out of their possessions, and perform such other ritual tasks as helping the officiating *hungan*. Some members of the cult group have special ability to sing large numbers of the ritual songs for any *loa* which may be called, while others perform the animal sacrifices. It is among these male assistants that the most expert drummers are found.

This, then, constitutes an outline of that system of belief included under the term *vodun*. Once more, in summary, it may be emphasized that *vodun* is neither the practice of black magic, nor the unorganized pathological hysteria it is so often represented to be. The gods are known to their worshippers, and the duties owed them are equally well understood. The reward for the performance of these duties is good health, good harvests, and the goodwill of fellow-men; the punishment for neglect is corresponding ill fortune. On this basis of belief is erected the ceremonial of worship.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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CHAPTER IX

VODUN WORSHIP: THE SERVICE

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THE *loa* make known their desires by means of possessing their devotees and speaking through them, or by divination, and if these desires are not gratified, they will mildly harass the family of their devotees, until, thoroughly angered, they will seek full vengeance for this neglect.[1] Fortunately, the wants of many of the gods are modest, and they are satisfied if a candle is occasionally lighted, some water "thrown away" in the place of worship, and they are kept informed of family happenings. But when the *loa* finally clamor for a sacrifice, the time when it is to be made is deferred until the necessary preparations can be completed, for the attitude of the Haitians toward the gods in such matters, as one explained it, is that "*Mystère c'est 'ti moun, faut les derigé*—The *loa* are like children, and must be told what to do," and "If the *loa* are promised a sacrifice, they must accept the date set by the one who serves them." But when that date arrives, the ceremony must be held or the *loa* will cause their worshippers much trouble. This does not mean that a poor person, or one who has met with reverses, may not plead with his god and count on being permitted to defer the offering if he is unable to provide what is asked.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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Simple annual rites are held for the gods in January, each family giving small offerings in its house of worship to its own deities. These minor ceremonies are not to be confused with the extended rituals which a family may perform but once in a decade or a generation. Because of the extensive preparation and large outlay these entail, such rites are often postponed from year to year. According to some, this postponement is sought through an *action de grâce,* based on Church ritual, while others maintain that it is but necessary on his special day to appeal to the deity who is troubling the family, give a small offering — a *mangé sec* — and ask for the desired respite. This may be done several times, until crop failures, sudden deaths, and the loss of valuable property begin to afflict the family, whereupon the family head seeks out a *hungan,* who by divination determines the supernatural forces that are responsible for these misfortunes; and when his statement that the gods have reached the end of their patience is confirmed independently by several other priests who are consulted, active preparations for the major rite are finally set in motion.

Any such important ceremony must be held on the ancestral habitation, and centers in the *maison de servitude,* the family house of service for the gods. The house itself, to be differentiated from the *humfort,* or "temple" of the *vodun* priest, may be elaborate or simple in accordance with the status of family members in the *vodun* cult.[2] At one end of the sacred house is a platform about two and one half feet high on which are placed calabash plates for the *loa,* six for the Créole deities, three for the Mystères Guinée, and a white plate with a "thunder stone," or Neolithic celt, and a necklace for Damballa. Not all *cailles mystères* are painted, but some, it is said, are green "for hope," and some red "for victory," while one was said to have designs of flowers and snakes painted on the wall above the platform.[3] These houses usually have two rectangular rooms, each with a separate entrance and each having its platform at the narrow end facing the doorway. One of

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the rooms is consecrated to the *loa*, the other to the spirits of twins and the family dead. If the house is a large one with three rooms, the third will be for the Congo *loa*. It was also said that occasionally such places of worship reserve one room for the Rada deities, a second for the Pétro *loa*, and the third for the Congo gods, the dead and twins being worshipped elsewhere. For the Ibo gods, however, it is agreed in Mirebalais that there is never a separate room. But whether the gods are worshipped in a single-room thatched shelter or a more impressive "temple" with a metal roof, none of the major categories of supernatural powers are neglected.

In the main, large ceremonies are concerned with the task of restraining, or less often of pacifying, deities that have been molesting a family, and of making content those who have been demonstrating their goodwill toward the group. Such rites must be sharply differentiated from the ordinary *vodun* dance which, coming after the family ritual, forms but a part of this complex, and serves to express joy at the dangers averted and gratitude for the good that the friendly *loa* are to bring. At the ceremony drums may or may not be employed; at *vodun* dances they are indispensable. Possession is induced at the ceremony by the *hungan's* invocations; at the dance by the rhythm of the drums. The ceremony is attended only by members of the family and those who are specially invited; invitations to the *vodun* dance are broadcast over the countryside, and all take part in the social phases of the evening. For the ceremony, sacrifices not alone of cereals and drinks but also of the blood of animals are provided; at the *vodun* dance only minor offerings are given. And while both types of ritual are a part of a single functioning religious system, it is at the first where the most important end is achieved, that of obtaining protection from hostile gods and gaining the favor of those who are friendly.

The pattern of the ceremony — called a *service loa* — is sufficiently definite to allow a generalized version to be given,

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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78 79 776 *loa* troubling the family, or, if it is the second, those which have helped them, to tell whether or not they are willing to receive the sacrificial animals. The omen which indicates their acceptability to the gods is their nibbling at leaves or pecking at grains of corn and other cereals offered them, after which the gods themselves come, possessing their servitors. At midnight or later, as the violence of the possession recedes, the sac- [184] rifices are offered. In Mirebalais, at least, the hysteria said to mark the moment "when the blood flows" is not present. The actual killing of the animals, witnessed in numerous instances, is one of the more routine aspects of the ritual.[4]

After the animals have been killed, a long period of quiet ensues while the work of dressing and cooking them takes place, the ceremony beginning anew when this is done. If evil deities are to be banished or "restrained," they are called once more, and the priest may have to battle with those possessed by them, for these gods have no desire to be driven away, or incarcerated where they cannot escape. Most of the food given such gods is placed in large pots and buried in the earth with them, but, with characteristic human perversity, if the sacrifices have been for good *loa*, these are only allowed to have small portions. The ceremony closes with the coming of day.[5]

78 This pattern varies in details, and to the Haitian these dif- 79 ferences are important. This is shown by the response of a per- 794 son in whose company two similar rites were observed, to the 776 question whether the second would resemble the first. The an- 184 swer was decisive. "No, the ceremony will not be the same. In the first one the most important spirit lived in a mango tree; in the second, it is in a bamboo." The Pétro gods receive black or gray-colored animal offerings, the Rada deities white, red, 78 and vari-colored ones. Only Bosu Trois Cornes, Pelicon, and 796 Pelib are given bullocks, the first because he, like this animal, 794 is horned; the second because he is even more dangerous than 776 Bosu; and Pelib because as a water-god he will otherwise take

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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cattle and all other animals when the river floods. Rituals involving these larger sacrifices, however, are held only on the rarest of occasions, and are thus much less common than the ceremony which, typical of those witnessed, may now be described.

This *service* was held in a habitation southwest of Mirebalais, across the Tombe River in the foothills of the mountains. It was said to be the first ceremony of its kind given by this family, and would not have to be repeated for a generation or more. The immediate cause was the occurrence of numerous illnesses and deaths. When members independently consulted their *hungans* to discover the reason for these misfortunes, they were informed that the family *loa* demanded such a rite. Finally one priest, more powerful than the others, became possessed and described in great detail the type of ceremony that was desired: of how many days' duration, the number and kind of sacrifices, what gods were to be called, which troublesome ones must be "sent away" or "restrained," and those of the friendly *loa* who were to be fed.

The entire ritual was conducted out of doors, and at about half past four in the afternoon of Thursday, 5 July, 1934, when first seen, the *action de grâce* had already begun. It was being chanted by the *prêt' savanne*, a bespectacled, middle-aged man, who read from an old prayerbook, while the *hungan* sat quietly by. The officiant was standing in a cleared space with his back toward a grove of trees, facing the "altar." Opposite was a grassy slope, which was separated from this grove by a brook where the Malt' Source lives who watches over the habitation of the family. A white banner hung high in one of the trees a little behind the altar.

This altar, called the *trône*, was a table covered with a white cloth, spread over a frame to form a canopy sheltering its sides and back. A black cloth was beneath the white covering. Under the table a wooden bowl — a *gamelle* — contained water in which sacred leaves had been steeped; near it was a

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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ABOVE, *The possessed woman offering a candle and pouring sanctified water before the altar.*

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BELOW, *The* vodun *priest exhorting the possessed woman.*

[facing P. 161]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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employed — do not remain with the drummers. These instruments are ordinarily in the hands of *hunsi*, who join the massed ring of dancers that constantly circles about the center pole. These dancers are not under possession, but are merely enjoying the evening or participating in the social aspect of the dance preparatory to becoming possessed. The rattle is held high above the heads of the dancers, and its sharp, steady notes are produced by quick, short, measured movements of the wrist. The end of a song, which sometimes does not come until fifteen or twenty minutes after its initial statement, is usually marked by a continuous shaking of a rattle, a process which effectually breaks the rhythm and makes it possible to begin a new song. The player of the rattle is an outstanding singer, who usually initiates the fresh refrain and continues to sing its repetitions as soloist in the alternation of solo and chorus which marks Haitian *vodun* singing as it marks most West African and New World Negro religious music.

When a possession occurs, the songs for the deity who has "arrived" are taken up as the drums play the rhythm of the god. As his possession comes on, the devotee falls to the ground, rolling before the drums, or staggers blindly about the dancing-space, or otherwise follows the characteristic behavior attributed to his god. After a time he begins to dance, whereupon a *hunsi* or the *hungan*, taking a calabash of water in one hand and a lighted candle in the other, dances opposite him, saluting the god as he performs his every movement in reverse; if he turns clockwise, the one dancing with him turns counter-clockwise; if he moves to the right, the other moves to the left. Except when executing these turns, the functionary of the cult never takes his eyes from the eyes of the possessed person, almost, as it were, hypnotizing him to help him come to himself. Eventually the possessed one recovers sufficiently to take the candle and the calabash of water in his own hands. Often spilling water as he moves, he makes his way to the central pole, pouring an offering and making the sign of the cross with the candle before it.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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789 with the candle before it. He next does the same before the *ogan*, then before each of the drums in order, continuing to dance before the drums, usually with great violence, while the few "social" dancers who still may be circling about the center pole make way so that he may execute his steps. Gradually his dancing becomes calmed, until he is taken either to the *maison de servitude* or to a near-by house, where he rests and if, as often happens, he has rolled on muddy ground during his possession, washes and changes his clothes.

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794 Several examples of the force of this tradition of being
789 "mounted" by the *loa* may be given. One of these which is
159 of especial interest concerns the possession of a man of good education, in the early thirties, who throughout his childhood and early manhood had had no association with the *vodun* cult, but had been encouraged by his family and his own ambition to promote the activities of the Catholic Church. In discussing his earlier experiences and background with one of his intimates, it seemed that on the side of both father and mother many of his relatives were affiliated with the cult, and it was recounted how, at an important ceremony at his ancestral habitation, some years before, he had become possessed. But it was also made clear that he had not been any the less active in the affairs of the Church because of this transient experience, nor had he affiliated himself in any way with any *vodun* group. Why he wished once more to participate in the *vodun* rituals cannot be said; certainly during the weeks immediately preceding his possession he had become interested in the philosophy of *vodun*, and his non-voduistic, if not anti-voduistic background seemed to accentuate his interest in ascertaining the hold of these rites, which had always been presented to him as repellent, on their followers. As an example of the duality of his interest, it may be stated that though he had remarked how "disgusting" it was to roll in the mud when possessed by Damballa, he had also been im-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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pressed with the temerity of those who danced in the fire for Legba. 796 794 787 159

At a certain dance, however, he volunteered to help in a small way in promoting the activities of the evening, such as serving *clairin* to the drummers, while he himself danced the social dance about the central post of the *tonnelle*. As the tempo of the dance heightened, he became more deeply imbued with the spirit of the occasion and shouted: "If the *loa* comes to me, I will accept it!" as he plunged again into the circle of dancers. When the drums sounded the salute to the gods, he would awkwardly execute the accompanying backward turning movement of the figure.

After a time he left the *tonnelle*, but before many moments had elapsed a commotion was heard at the near-by *barrière*, where he was reeling in the first stage of possession, just inside the gate, while a fully possessed woman in a figured dress stalked back and forth. An *adjanikon*, with candle and calabash of water, was trying to "settle" his possession, but he fell to the ground and rolled on his back, lying prostrate with legs and arms outstretched and twitching. The *adjanikon*, putting aside the candle and water, lifted his limp body to its feet and then slowly, according to the accepted pattern, holding him upright, swayed with him in time to the song that all twelve or fifteen persons present were by now singing, until, staggering, the possessed man was able to support himself: [533] [539]

Damballa-o, Damballa-e,	Damballa-o, Damballa-e,
Damballa-o, Damballa Wedo,	Damballa-o, Damballa Wedo,
'Gadé ça ou fait' moin.	See what you have done to me.

Steadily fixing his eyes on the possessed one, the *adjanikon* now danced with him, turning always in the opposite direction as he offered him the candle and the water, which, how-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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796 ever, the man was not yet able to hold. Moving backwards
794 toward the *maison de servitude,* all the spectators continued
789 to sing the song of Damballa, while the man to whom the god
159 had come half-danced and was half-carried up the path to the *tonnelle* and taken into the family house of worship.

[788] When he had sufficiently recovered to be able to hold the candle and the water, he poured the water and unsteadily bowed three times in the accepted manner before the *couvert sec* to the Rada gods. He now was enough in control of himself to emerge, and, with the *adjanikon* dancing before him with water and a candle, he once again came into the *tonnelle,* before the drums. As he appeared, the drummers stopped the Ogun rhythm they had been sounding, and in an intense silence all waited for the god to announce himself. Half on his
[532] knees before the drums, the one possessed began to sing in a
[539] cracked voice:

Damballa Wedo,	Damballa Wedo,
Papa m' c'est coulev'-o,	Papa, I am a serpent-o,
Na poi' bois	There is no tree
Moin pa' li monté.	I cannot climb.

With this initial statement, the Damballa rhythm rolled from the drums, as all echoed the song in chorused response, while the possessed figure, in strict conformity to the pattern, first poured water at the central post and then consecutively before the iron and each of the drums. Returning to the central post, he whirled about it, almost but never quite falling, until he could dance before the drums, awkwardly but acceptably, before he disappeared to rest in a near-by house.

796 The explanation offered by this man of the manner in
787 which he became possessed, and his varying attitudes toward
159 his possession, are revealing. On several previous occasions
793 the *hungan* who officiated at the dance had noticed that he was attending *vodun* rites and had joked with him about his interest in them. Once at an earlier dance this *hungan* had

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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have a *hungan* divine its identity so that she might thereafter worship it and be under its protection. As in the other case discussed, the personality involved here is not without interest. The woman was one of the shrewdest traders in the Mirebalais market, and noted for her hardness. Underneath this, however, the presence of much vital energy could be felt as well as a passionate desire for gayety and attention from members of the other sex. That the essential lack of satisfaction of these drives in her life, as discussed and observed, figured in bringing on her possession cannot be doubted, and, as such, throws significant light on the nature of the psychological aspects of the phenomenon.

These instances, however, must not be thought of as a regular part of the ritual of the dances. Though a dance was attended almost every Saturday night during the course of an entire summer, and a number of *services* and other *vodun* rites in addition, these were the only occasions when a *loa bossal* appeared. In order, therefore, to document the pattern of the *vodun* dance that has already been given, some of the dances witnessed may be described in outline.

The first of these is a dance which, originally intended as the culmination of the *service* described in the preceding chapter, failed to fulfill its end because of a quarrel between two important members of the family. None the less, it proved to be one of the most spirited and typical dances witnessed. The habitation, when reached shortly after six o'clock, was deserted, except for a few people who seemed to be waiting disconsolately. Among them were several *hunsi* in white, and two who carried banners, while the three drums, each "dressed" in its skirt-like covering, stood before the entrance, the drumsticks and the *ogan* lying on the *barrière* itself. Since the *hungan* had not arrived, one or two of the men present took charge as darkness came on. Before this dance began, it was necessary to introduce the drums ceremonially into the compound, and as this was the first *vodun* dance after the es-

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Jean Pétro,	Jean Pétro,
Depuis moin sorti la ville	Since I left town
Moin apé cassé pié moin.	I have broken my foot.
Ça qui fait petit moun fronté.	That is what makes the children impertinent.
Yawé-é-é	Yawé-é-é,
Gedenibo Mazaca	Gedenibo Mazaca,
M'apé rhélé Saints forts	I call the strong saints,
Yawé-é	Yawé-é-é,
Saints forts-é-é	Strong gods-é-é.
P'ti Garçon Lemba,	Little boy Lemba,
P'ti' pilon ça,	A small pestle he,
Na pilé yo, Lemba-o.	Crush them, Lemba-o.

Finally the instruments were lifted over the *barrière*, the *ogan* and rattles first, then the drums in order from smallest to largest, followed by the spectators. Ahead of the procession were *hunsi* with flags, and all continued singing until the *maison de servitude* and the *tonnelle* used during the *service* were reached. 796 [194]

The drums were carried about the house three times in procession before being taken inside. There, facing the place where the food had been offered — for the house was as yet quite bare, with no suggestion of an altar — the drums were beaten and songs sung to the Rada gods whose sanctuary this was. Though at the moment none of the good drummers had arrived, the drums were placed in line with the north end of the house, and the drumming for the dance commenced. Dancing began about the center pole, but no possessions occurred until shortly after eight o'clock. By that time better drummers had come, and the crowd had so increased that the drums were moved to accommodate those dancing, the drummers now having their backs to the front wall of the sacred house. A candle was attached to a peg of each drum, which,

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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796 787 [194] was there. To bring him down, a *hunsi* holding water and a candle at once began slowly to dance under him, fixing him with the usual unvarying stare. After some five minutes the candle and water were quickly given to those near by, and in a flash the possessed one was safely on the ground, candle in hand, pouring water before the center pole and the drums, and dancing magnificently.

796 793 787 593 Shortly after midnight the head of the family and his wife returned to the scene of the dance, the explanation given for this return revealing the native conception of the power of the *hungan*. Before his arrival, it was said he had been told of the quarrel; hence on his way to the dance he passed the *barrière* of the house of the family head, though he did not stop to speak with him. Prior to leaving his home, however, he was supposed to have performed a rite which, soon after he began drumming at the dance, so affected the children of the family head that they became possessed and at once ran to the *tonnelle*. Since their children were present, the father and mother were forced to come, and this was followed by a reconciliation of those who had quarreled. To make doubly sure that the *loa* would take no offense, however, another dance which formally ended the *service* was given jointly by all members of the family several weeks later.

796 787 One phase of the ceremonial always encountered, but unusually frequent on this occasion, was the salutation of the assembled company by the *loa*. One woman, possessed by Ogun, greeted all present first by shaking hands with wrists crossed in the customary manner, and then kissing each person on both cheeks. Another, possessed by Ossange, took the neckerchief from about his neck and wiped the faces of all those present, paying particular attention to the drummers. The son of the family head was again possessed by Gede as at the *service*, and his greeting to the assembled company was especially dramatic. His possession took the form of a hysteri-

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CHAPTER XII

MAGIC, GOOD AND BAD

IN opening any discussion of Haitian magic, the fact must be stressed that magic, though but one of the forces active in the universe, is a system in itself. As such, it is a thing apart from the *vodun* cult, a point which must also be emphasized, for although most writers draw a perfunctory distinction between magic and *vodun*, this distinction, once stated, is too often promptly lost sight of.[1] At the same time, the differences between the worship of the *loa* and the practice of magic must not be so juxtaposed as to name the second as the antibody of the first. For, though some of the *loa* can work harm, and some of them, indeed, are primary forces behind the working of evil rather than beneficial magic, the good and bad they do is general in nature. Magic, on the other hand, whether good or bad, always operates in very specific instances: to cause a given woman to love a given man, or to make a certain field of a certain enemy yield poorly.

Yet these distinctions, when drawn, are found in practice to be neither as sharp nor as consistent as the foregoing statements might imply, especially since the system of magic is empowered and validated by many of the *loa*, as well as being closely affiliated with the cult of the dead. The phenomenon dealt with here, and its not illogical contradictions, arise, however, from the fact that the realistic African world view has by

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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ABOVE, *At a* vodun *dance: those possessed whirling about the central post.*

BELOW, *Making the* vodun *drum: describing the sign of the cross with lighted candles over the unheaded bodies.*

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[facing p. 244]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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171 178 782 tion is a further comment both upon the human traits ascribed to them, and upon the realism with which they take cognizance — as only African gods can — of the financial position of their devotees!

171 178 776 78 It is not only in the immediacy of the Haitian gods to their worshippers and in their human qualities, however, that these beings have retained African traits, for in the full reciprocity that must prevail in the relationship between deities and their followers is to be seen a point of view that is entirely non-European. Between man and the gods the rule of *quid pro quo* must always be in operation; and this rule may only be regarded as but another contribution of Africa toward Haitian religious ideology. While this reciprocal giving flavors all aspects of worship whether it be of the *loa*, the dead, or the twins, it takes a yet more prominent, and more familiar place in the field of magic, since here the *engagement* owes much to European belief, though the element of reciprocity is much more emphasized than was ever the case in medieval European diabolism.

178 776 794 [184] The psychological values of the *vodun* cult, especially the general tone found in the feeling toward the terms *Guinée* or *Rada*, perhaps most convincingly show the attitudes that aided in the retention of things recognizably African. For while the Pétro gods are by no means viewed as altogether bad, or are always held unwelcome, the fact that in Mirebalais, as in Haiti generally, the Rada gods are those least feared, most desired, and in connection with whose cult wrongdoing is most rarely present, is of the greatest significance, especially when the related fact is recalled that the Pétro gods are the more powerful in the matter of evil magic, while the Rada deities are said to exert their power to protect their devotees from the dark forces that may be set in motion against them.

178 776 776 In attitudes toward the gods, then, in the names of the gods themselves, in the manner in which they function in the lives of Haitians, and in the importance of the ceremonial con-

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nected with them, much of African tradition which has carried over into Haitian religious life has been retained in pure form. Yet the intrusion of Catholic custom into these African patterns — often noted, though generally in passing — also must be studied if the significance of the forms of Haitian folk-religion is to be grasped. That this aspect of *vodun* has received the scant attention it has had is probably to be ascribed to two causes.[3] The first takes the Catholic element for granted, so that even where a particularly dramatic element of Catholic practice is seen in an African setting, such as a crucifix or the portraits of the saints on a *vodun* altar, specific mention is made of this without attempting to dissect its historic or psychological role. The second reason for the comparative disregard of Catholic influence is that for Europeans it is a commonplace. Spirit possession and sacrifices, African song and drum rhythms are more "exciting" than prayers or hymns of the Church. Underlying both these causes is the deep-rooted and unquestioned assumption that, in contact with any non-European culture, the patterns that govern European behavior must prevail. Consequently, is it not in the nature of things that Catholicism should have taken root in the *vodun* cult? Is not rather the matter to be stressed that African traditions should have been retained at all? That the process should actually have been one of amalgamation rather than of dominance is rarely taken into account. Yet to go deeper into the significance of this process in Haitian life is to open far-reaching vistas.

An outstanding sanction taken by the *vodun* cult from Catholicism is that of the baptismal rites. Though ceremonies of consecration are a commonplace in Africa, and the African ritual of washing the head — *lavè tête*, as it is termed — has not been forgotten, in Mirebalais the importance of baptism as a means whereby human beings obtain their place in this world and in the next has been carried over and applied to all matters of ceremonial significance. Thus just as in the lives of

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the saints of the Church the sacrament of baptism was a crucial rite, so the *loa* must be baptized before they become forces which act in a recognized and predictable manner. Just as the objects used in the rituals of the Church must be sanctified by being blessed and sprinkled with holy water, so in the *vodun* cult a *humfort*, the drums, the iron, and the rattle must all undergo a similar sanctification, not only that they may possess proper supernatural power, but more importantly that they may perform their functions in the very serious and African matter of calling the *loa* and placating the supernatural beings of the *vodun* cult.

Herein lies the importance of the *prêt' savanne*. Since the official representatives of the Church not only have nothing to do with the *vodun* cult, but excoriate it on all occasions, the *prêt' savanne*, as a man who can read the prayers of the Church, plays an indispensable role and to that extent is to be regarded as a functioning member of the *vodun* cult, despite the fact that he has no control over the *loa* and, as far as was observed, does not participate actively in their worship. At the same time, it must not be inferred that in borrowing "baptism" from the Church this rite has been elevated to the most important place in the ritual of the *vodun* cult, for though the *prêt' savanne* must read prayers "from the book" and sprinkle his holy water, the actual "baptizing" is carried out by the *hungan*. In sanctifying a *humfort*, the end in view is to induce the *loa* to come after the baptism and to insure that no unaccountable or untoward deeds may come to pass within it. Similarly, though drums must be baptized with Church prayers and holy water that they may perform their allotted tasks, without the concomitant ritual of the *hungan* they would be no more empowered to call the gods than they were before the prayers of the Church were read over them. An analogous comparison can be made between the role of the *prêt' savanne* and that of the *hungan* in the *service*. Since the world

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is ruled by God, it is necessary to invoke God with the ritual of His Church before the rites to placate the *loa* may begin. But the important business of the occasion is to placate the *loa*, and it is only when the *hungan* takes over from the *prêt' savanne* that the series of rituals commence which, for the Haitian, hold emotional force and psychological value.

In the description of the baptism of a *loa* given in a preceding chapter, the use of Church ritual in bringing the African spirits under control will be remembered. No clearer illustration can be given of this merging of traditions than in a detailed account of the manner of making and validating *vodun* drums. These drums are of the characteristic African hollow-log type, with skin heads held in place and tuned by means of pegs, which are tied fast about the drumhead with cord. Before the tree which furnished the bodies was cut, an invocation was pronounced by their maker and an offering — a *mangé sec* — was made, that all the gods might come when called by the finished drums. A candle was lighted and *verver* described about the base of the tree. Eggs, broken against the trunk, were rubbed on the bark; while both soft and alcoholic drinks were given as libations, since not all the gods desire the same refreshment. After the tree had been felled and that part of the trunk that was needed for the drums was cut off, the maker was free to proceed with shaping the bodies of the drums by first gouging out the inside of the trunk, then stripping the bark, and finally carving the characteristic foot at the base. Before the next step of boring the holes for the pegs was taken, *clairin* was poured inside each drum, at the entrance to the habitation of the maker, and toward the man's cornfield. The first hole bored in each drum was carefully marked, for this was the significant *manman*. Here the first peg is inserted; the skin head is first attached here; and here the cord about the head is first knotted; while it is the peg in this hole that must always be first struck when the completed drum is tuned.

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APPENDIX I

THE GODS OF THE VODUN PANTHEON

ONE of the most impressive facts about studies of Haitian peasant belief is the absence of any attempt at systematic treatment of the deities of the *vodun* cult, as concerns either their attributes, their functions, or their relationship to one another. Indeed, there are but two exceptions to this statement; Dorsainvil (I, pp. 174–5) has published a list of the names of gods, placing them in categories according to their African derivations, and Parsons (I, *passim*) has made available her notes on the characteristics of the deities of which she was told while working in the island. Otherwise, one reads merely of "the serpent-god Damballa," or of "Papa Ogun," or some other isolated designation. It therefore seemed of capital importance in making this study to obtain both names of deities and as much information concerning these gods as possible, and the resulting data are presented here.

One reason why perhaps not more of such "systematic theology" of *vodun* as exists has been made available is the great degree of individual variation which confronts the student seeking this kind of information, since differences of opinion are invariably encountered. Even priests do not by any means agree, for these men and women are supreme individualists, each being the worshipper of particular deities and exploiting special skills, with the result that the frame of reference within

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which a given priest operates differs from that of his colleagues — though, of course, always within the limitations set by the general pattern of the cult.

This range of opinion cannot be better illustrated than by giving, at the outset, three of the lists of *vodun* deities that were obtained, since here only so simple a matter is involved as names of gods. These lists, it must be remarked, were given by people living in the same valley; were they to be compared with lists collected from other parts of the island even greater disparities would appear, as will be evident if the collection of names of *loa* given by Dorsainvil is consulted. Certain deities, whose names recur below and are also to be found in Dorsainvil's list and in Parsons' notes would be included in any enumeration of gods of the cult, since their worship prevails throughout Haiti. Such would be Legba, Damballa, Aida Wedo, Aizan, Ogun, Agwe, Loko, Shango, Ossange, Bosu, Simbi, Wangol, Baron Samedi, Gede, and Erzilie. Others, though not enjoying as widespread a following, are worshipped over large areas. A number, however, either are gods that have resulted from the process of deifying the souls of those who, in a given locality, were renowned for their spiritual power, or represent survivals of regional African deities that have been preserved in certain large family groups.

Turning now to the lists themselves, the first of these was obtained from a woman functionary of the cult. A single asterisk after a name indicates that its exact counterpart is found in the second list presented here, while two asterisks show the precise name was included in the third listing.

Rada	*Pétro*
Damballa Wedo**	Pétro
Aizan Damballa**	Bosu Trois Cornes*
Aida Wedo	Bosu Djo
Ogun Galloné	Gedeonsu*
Ogun Ferraille* **	'Ti Kita Demembré*
Ogun Balandjo* **	'Ti Jean pié sèche*

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Ogun Sabaho
Legba Avardra
Mon Loa
Solugui
Azao Comble (*or* Coumbe)
Azao Pemba*
Ashade Bokor
Agasu Wedo
Agasu Djeme
Shango
Nago Shango
Acque Fer
Golimé
Agwe Woyo*
Agwesi (*his son*)
Agweta (*his daughter*)
Kadia Bosu
Sobo
Taureau

Congo Zandor* **
Congo Savanne
Congo Wangol
Congo Guinée
Erzilie Mapiangle*
Erzilie Gé rouge* **
Simbi Proméné*
Simbi troi' zilé*
Simbi Wangol
Simbi en Deux Eaux* **
Simbi Galloné
Bakala Baka (*or* Babako Baka)
Lemba Zahou
Bumba*
Gran' Alouba
Gran' Agersi
Gran' Siligbo**
Maît' d'habitation
Maît' Carrefour** (*called* Louis di' fils)
Mari boben
Nangovi
Nangozên
Pélécon*
Ossange Batagri
Ossange Batala
Maît' Mapou (*called* Garçon Mgampé)
Maît' des Eaux
Clairmé
Mme. Clairmé
Clairmézine
Maît' Baleine (Cong' la Mè')

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The second list was given by a woman prominent in the worship of the *loa;* the deities in the preceding list whose names were also included in this (that is, those that were marked with a single asterisk) are not given here, but a double asterisk indicates, as before, that they are also found in the third list.

Rada	*Pétro*
Damballa-Aida-Wedo**	Jean Pétro
Maît' Damballa	Bosu d'l'eaux
Maît' Aizan	Maît' Bosu
Ogun Batagri**	Gedenibo**
Général Ogun	Gedeou
Legba grand-chemin	Maît' Clairmé
Legba nan barrière	Fille Clairmé
Legba Maît' 'bitation	Lemba**
Maît' Azaou	Seli-ho
Maît Ashade	
Maît' Bokor	
Maît' Agasu	
Agweta Woyo	
Sobo-Bade	
Papa Pierre	
Gran' Alouba	
Gran' Aguera	
Gran' nan Canari (*or* Gosen)	
Général Malugué	
Lt. Général Jean Baptiste	
Gran' Erzilie	
Erzilie Freda Dahomey	
Maît' Ossange**	
Maît' Batala	

The third list is that given by a minor functionary of the *vodun* cult, known for his ability as a leader of songs. In ad-

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dition to the *loa* marked with doubled asterisks above, the deities he named were:

Rada	*Pétro*
Aizan	Kita
Aizan Marché	Erzilie
Aizan Marché loko	Papa Simbi
Ogun d'l'eaux	Simbi Gran' Bois
Ogun Batala	Simbi Cimitière
Ogun Ashade	Simbi caille moin
Papa Ogun	Simbi Carrefour
Papa Agasu	Simbi Kita
Agasu Tèmèré	Simbi Magie
Siligbo en bas d'l'eaux	Simbi Pétro
Siligbo Vavou	Simbi Macaya
Loko Kisigwé	Gran' Bois
Loko Yai	Baron Samedi
Pa Loko	Gran' Siligbo
Marassa Nundé	
Loa Créole	
Dahomey Freda	

Some of the inconsistencies and individual variations in the naming of the gods as demonstrated in these lists may be specified. Outstanding are the differences found in the manner of naming a single god, as when Général Ogun is called Ogun Galloné or Papa Ogun, or when Aizan Damballa is listed as two *loa*, Maît' Damballa and Maît' Aizan. Lack of agreement, however, is manifested in other ways. Though Taureau is given as a Rada god, during one *vodun* dance for the Rada deities, when a man was possessed by this *loa*, he was quickly led away and brought out of his possession, since Taureau, regarded by the group giving the dance as a Pétro deity, could not properly come to a rite for gods of another "company." Or again, whereas the second list names Maît' Ossange and Maît' Batala as Rada *loa*, the first list places them

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776 in the Pétro group. The Erzilie gods are put in both cate-
794 gories, while Gran' Siligbo, designated in the first list as Pétro,
184 was assigned to both "companies" by the person who gave the third list, and named as a Rada deity by the one who gave the second. Furthermore, the third list, that of the singer, comprises *loa* whose "names" are undoubtedly the result of the acceptance by this man of certain phrases from his songs as valid designations of gods, especially such names as "Aizan Marché Loko" or "Loko Kisigwé." It is not without interest to speculate on this as a possible mechanism by means of which new names are added to the *vodun* pantheon.

Only one of the lists specifically assigned gods to other than the Rada and Pétro categories. One of these was termed *Guinée* and included the following names of deities:

Kaplaou	Congo
Enwizo	Loa Sinegal
Wango!	Cangaron

The other was the Ibo group, accorded two names, the Loa Mondongue and a *loa* named Ibo Lélé.

776 More variable, however, than classifications of the *loa* are accounts of attributes and interrelationships, and details of their worship. Yet certain traits and functions of the gods and aspects of their ritual can be set forth. One way in which
[533] the Haitians determine such matters is by reference to the songs sung in honor of the gods. Again and again the texts of such songs were cited as authority, suggesting that they are the "holy word" of *vodun* theology and an important device in stabilizing the details of belief. The attributes of the gods which follow are the result of extended discussions with folk who possessed all degrees of knowledge of the details of the cult and who were all active participants in it.

Legba, guardian of the crossroads, the highway, and the *barrière*, the entrance to every house, yard, or garden, is one of the most important *vodun* deities. He is generally conceived

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776 823 it joins the flooded Artibonite as its master accompanies Clairmé on his way to consult with the great ruler of the sea, Agwé. Actually, at the height of the rainy season the force of the light colored muddy water of the major stream holds back the darker colored flow of its tributaries in a manner which accords with the legend, so that, observing the Tombe River at one such time, the Haitians who were present said: "The Tombe is waiting for its master to pass."

776 [784] [794] Gede, a deity who figures in both the Rada and the Pétro groups as chief functionary under Baron Samedi, ruler of cemeteries, is tolerated rather than favored, though his rewards to his devotees include the refusal to dig a premature grave for them. When Gede possesses a devotee at a dance, [784] Damballa, Ogun, and the other Rada gods "leave" at once, and those who are possessed by them come out of their possessions. For though Gede is no less a *loa* than other gods, "He is a *zombi* and is fed apart"; as the Haitians say: "The *loa* are like human beings. They will not mingle with the dead, [822] and Gede is of the dead." His color is black, and Saturday is his sacred day. He "eats" salt herring, hot peppers, cassava, [788] roasted corn, roasted bananas, and other roasted foods. He drinks *clairin* — much of it — and at great ceremonies a [825] black goat and chickens are killed for him, as well as those chickens with ruffled feathers called *djakati*, which in all the New World, as in Africa, are believed to discover and dig up magic charms set against their owners. He lives in the cemetery, "behind the cross." There are a number of deities whose names are compounded with the name of Gede — Gedenibo, Gedeonsu, Gedehun — and hence the question whether or not this is a generic term or a specific designation is pertinent. There is no agreement on this point, and it could only be established that those *loa* who bear the same name, such as all Ogun or Bosu or Simbi deities, are brothers; but who the parents of these groups may have been is not known.

Associated with Simbi and Gede in the Pétro "squad" are

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view from that given here.

[26] Parsons (I), 171, describes how she witnessed a woman "refuse the visitation of her *loa*."

[27] Price-Mars (I), 34, speaks of the "*obligations annuelles de participer par un acte quelconque aux sacrifices cultuels* . . ." laid on the voduist.

[28] St. Mery, i, 51; see also Dorsainvil (I), 46.

[29] Seabrook's description of a "Pétro" ceremony (pp. 31 ff.) deserves, on the basis of its inner inconsistencies, to be considered a masterpiece of misstatement and misinterpretation. Its effect, and the effect of others like it, have done much to perpetuate this incorrect idea of the Pétro rites.

[30] Dorsainvil, Price-Mars, and Parsons all employ these terms, rather than *papaloi* and *mamaloi*, the designations found in more popular books such as those of Craige, Seabrook, and Wirkus. The latter two of these writers seem confused about these words and fail to make it clear whether or not they mean the same or different functionaries of the *vodun* cult when they use the words *houngan* and *papaloi*.

[31] Compare Dorsainvil (I), 75–7 and 121, where he expresses a low opinion of the *hungan*, holding him unreliable and insincere in his worship, as contrasted to the *vrai serviteur*.

[32] Op. cit., 175–9.

[33] Even though followers of the *vodun* cult are more organized in some parts of Haiti than in Mirebalais, it is arrant nonsense to speak of a "supreme high priestess" of the cult, its *grande mamaloi*, as does Seabrook, 117, or of a "black pope of voodoo" as Wirkus has done (in *Harper's Magazine*, Vol. 168, pp. 38–49, 188–98; December 1933–January 1934).

[34] A sober statement of the degrees of initiation into the cult (although these do not hold for Mirebalais) is to be found in Dorsainvil (I), 168–9, and also 62.

CHAPTER IX

[1] Price-Mars (I), 144, gives a long and excellent list of the reasons for offering sacrifices.

[2] A description of a *humfort* destroyed by the Marines during their occupation, and a detailed account of its

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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contents, is given by Wirkus, 178–9.

[2] Compare this description with the *humfort* pictured in Johnston, p. 194.

[3] It is to be emphasized that in the course of the *vodun* rituals witnessed during this field-work, none of the "frenzy of the blood lust" that is so favorite an aspect of these ceremonies with writers of books on Haiti was encountered. As an extreme example of this heightening of the tone with which a ceremony is described, the work of Seabrook may be cited, for phrases such as "blood-maddened, sex-maddened, god-maddened" used by him mark perhaps an all-time record for distortion of the inner discipline of the *vodun* cult.

[4] Cf. Parsons's brief sketch, (I), 172–3, of a *mangé loi*, though the "bloody anointing" of which she speaks was not seen to occur in Mirebalais *services*. Detailed descriptions of what apparently were *services* are given by Wirkus, 168 ff., who, though honest in recounting what he saw, realized nothing of its significance; and Seabrook (pp. 54–70), who reads so much into what he purports to have witnessed that the entire account is rendered useless.

CHAPTER X

[1] Compare Parsons (I), 167–72.

[2] The drunkenness at serious dances reported by Parsons (I), 172, and others, would not be tolerated in Mirebalais.

[3] Price-Mars (I), 208, gives the name of *assotôr* for the great drum.

[4] Much nonsense has been written concerning these drums. Many writers — all non-Haitians — stress the existence of a drum language, which seems to be an assertion of dubious truth.

[5] This is a striking example of what Dorsainvil (I), 73–4 and 131 ff., calls the *masque vôduique* in detailing the effects of possession on the features of the possessed. See also the discussion of possession in Price-Mars (I), 122–3. The Gede possession described by Craige, 73–4, must, on the basis of customary Haitian behavior under possession, be subject to reinterpretation.

[6] Cf. Parsons (I), 170.

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[For a listing of cult and ritualistic dances, see category 116, pp. 134-138.]

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[For a listing of the Vodoun Pantheon, see category 116, pp. 318-327; the ambivalent Simbi family pantheon, pp. 327-328; the Ibo and Kanga pantheons, p. 328; and the Congo and Pétro pantheons, pp. 328-331.]

[P. 8]

2. Man and the Universe: Vodoun

175 When the African slaves stepped ashore in the New World they brought
179 with them highly developed religious beliefs and attitudes toward life.
791 But Africa was a continent of many cultures and nations, and its belief systems varied. The Congo African did not have the same view of the natural and supernatural as the Senegalese, for example; and even neighboring peoples such as the Ibos, the Yorubas, and the Mahis did not have common religious traditions. Yet in the strange new land that was Haiti, the common elements in their religious beliefs were accented. In time a new composite religious system emerged. It was called Vodoun.

175 The preponderance of Africans in Haiti came from the region of Da-
169 homey, Togoland, Nigeria, and the Congo River basin. Among them the
179 Dahomeans were the most numerous, and it was they who provided the
791 framework for the Afro-Haitian religious system.

The word Vodoun itself is Dahomean in origin. Among the Fon-speak-
192 ing people of West Africa it signified "spirit," or "deity." In Haiti the word came to be applied in a general sense to all the activities of cult life, from the ritual of the "temple" to the songs and dances, though in some old songs it still applies specifically to the idea of a supernatural spirit. However, the Congo word *loa* came to be used to designate the deities.[1]

791 In a literal sense, Vodoun in Haiti consists of the rites, beliefs, and prac-
794 tices of the Vodoun cult, built around the similar religious systems of the
197 Dahomeans and the Nagos. In a wider sense it applies to similar but distinct ritual activities of other cults. The Ibo-Kanga rites and dances are in a specific sense "not quite" Vodoun. The rites in the Congo-Guinée cult group—made up of Congo, Bambarra, "Guinée," and miscellaneous elements—have separate practices and deities of their own, and are often regarded as not Vodoun at all. Yet the term Vodoun is used in a generic sense to include all these rites, and examination of the beliefs and activities of these cult groups shows that they have drawn in considerable measure upon a common inheritance.

[1] [See Courlander, Haiti Singing, p. 7. Cf. P349, Category 116.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Vodoun is clearly more than ritual of the cult temple. It is an integrated system of concepts concerning human behavior, the relation of mankind to those who have lived before, and to the natural and supernatural forces of the universe. It relates the living to the dead and to those not yet born. It "explains" unpredictable events by showing them to be consistent with established principles. In short, it is a true religion which attempts to tie the unknown to the known and thus create order where chaos existed before. 771

As in Dahomey, it is not a system imposed from above but one which pushes out from below. It is bred and nurtured in the family, in the towns, and in the fields. It is common law, with deep roots in an unbroken and continuous past. The priests of Vodoun do not control it and direct its course. They, like the least fortunate peasant, simply move about within it and make use of its resources. They are its servants and its interpreters. In their cult centers, the principles of Vodoun are brought into sharp focus and dramatized. Vodoun is democratic in concept. Any man or woman may have direct contact with the deities or dead ancestors without the intervention of the cult priest. There is no place or situation beyond the influence of the loa or beyond the limits of Vodoun. At every crossroads is the spirit of the crossroads guardian, Legba, and on every long trail is the spirit of the Master of the Highway. 791 793 794 776

The cult priest nevertheless plays a significant and essential role. He translates beliefs that otherwise might tend to become amorphous into formalized action. He is a teacher, a repository of cult learning, and a vital catalyst. He gives form to abstraction, and practical meaning to symbols. He is the intellectualizing agency of a tremendous emotional force. Through his knowledge of the substance and forms of Vodoun, his experience in dealing with the loa, and in some instances his capacity to set magical forces into action, the cult priest is a dynamic power within his community. 793 182

Though the making of *ponins* and *magie* (ritual magic) and *ouangas* (aggressive magic directed against individuals) is within the realm of the cult priest's activities, these things are part of Vodoun only in a subsidiary sense. Magic lurks on the periphery of Vodoun. It has little or no place in the placating of the deities or the dead. It concerns the relationship of the living with each other and with *lou-garos* (*loups-garous*) and *baka* (demons). Although cult rituals include various pouin and magie ceremonies, the cult priest draws upon magic as he draws upon other mystic arts and fields of learning—leaf doctoring, divination, Catholic ritual, and Masonic symbolism. He attempts to bring together all thinking that widens the scope of Vodoun, in order to strengthen his hand to deal with 793 789 754 771

all aspects of the natural and supernatural. But the reputable cult priest does not dabble in "black" magic—the kind that maims or destroys human beings. One who does so is said to "work with two hands": one for the loa and one for evil. (The expression *servi dé main*—"serving with two hands"—is also applied to a cult chief who deals with deities of more than one "nation.") Many a cult priest in making his ritual flour drawings on the earth holds his left hand behind his back and draws with his right, giving testimony that he "works with one hand" only.

Each cult priest maintains his own cult temple, or *hounfor*. There are no cult officials above him, as there is no formal religious organization beyond the hounfor itself. Within his own special community he is therefore the chief religious functionary, the apex of an intratemple social organization. Under the cult priest, ordinarily, there are two grades of assistants, and below them two classes of servitors.

The cult priest is usually referred to as a *houngan*, a Fon (Dahomean) title signifying "spirit chief." Sometimes he is called *gangan* (a Bantu word meaning "conjuror" or "doctor")[2] or *capla*. He also is known by the title *bocó* or *bocor*, which seems to be derived from *bocono*, the diviner or priest of the Dahomean Fa cult.[3] The bocor is, in fact, sometimes referred to as a *divineur*, and he is regarded by some Haitians as a clairvoyant and a practitioner of magic. As in Dahomey, the bocor in Haiti foretells fate through the throwing of shells or chips, much in the manner of the secular game *mayamba*. He also reads destiny with small sticks or ashes. In earlier days the cult priest was sometimes known by the Yoruba name *babalao*, a title which has been corrupted to *papaloi*. A female cult leader is known as a *mambo*. She is presumed to have, in a general way, the same powers as the houngan, though in some quarters her *connaissance*, or "understanding," is not regarded so highly, and her status is believed to be somewhat lower.

Directly under the houngan is his chief assistant, the *laplace*, and perhaps a little below him on the ladder, the *mambo caille*. The laplace is regarded as the vice-houngan, and he assumes responsibility for running the hounfor in the absence of his chief. The mambo caille, a woman, runs the cult center in the absence of both the houngan and the laplace. One step farther down the ladder is the *houngénicon*, who acts as a sort of chief of the main body of devotees. These high-ranking assistants to the houngan are sometimes called *badjicans*, or keepers of the altar.

The servitors of the cult are known as *hounsi*, or "spirit wives," a name that was given to certain categories of cult servants in Dahomey.[4] There are two main groups of hounsi: *kanzo* (those who have passed through a ritual fire test) and *bossale* (those whose loa are wild or untamed). The

[2] [Footnote appears on p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]
[3] [Gorer, Africa Dances, p. 129; Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 208 ff. Cf. p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]
[4] [Foot note appears on p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]

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loa makes his appearance in Vodoun ritual by possessing ("mounting") one or more of the participants. When these possessions first occur, the possessed persons lapse into a kind of frenzy without controls or direction. They may stagger, fall, and go into convulsions. The deity must be controlled so that he will not harm the person whose body he takes over. The houngan eventually establishes a conditioned, formalized response to possession; and once this is achieved, the loa is regarded as having been tamed. The *hounsi bossale* then becomes eligible for elevation to the status of kanzo. The term *kanzo* means "to tie fire"; that is, to conquer or show mastery over fire. Demonstrations of supremacy of possessed persons over flames, hot coals, and red-hot metal characterize many Vodoun rituals. In the kanzo ritual the initiate must undergo the test of boiling oil.

The hierarchy of the cult temple, in general, looks like this:

Houngan (or *Mambo*)—chief of the hounfor
Laplace—first assistant to the houngan
Mambo caille—"mistress of the house"
Houngénicon—topmost of all the hounsi
Hounsi kanzo—the highest grade of hounsi
Hounsi bossale—the lowest grade of hounsi

Among the hounsi there are some who have special duties or functions. There is the *reine silence*, for example, whose job is to maintain order. The one assigned to cook the various sacrifices is called the *hounsi cuisinière*, and so on.

There is no single, clear-cut process for becoming a Vodoun priest. A man with special talents may rise from the rank of hounsi and eventually become a houngan by succession. Or a person with a strong *connaissance* may simply feel the call—sometimes in a dream—and establish himself as a houngan or bokor. If such a man demonstrates that he is "strong," a following will gather around him to constitute his *société*.

When a houngan dies, his cult center may be abandoned, or it may be taken over by another established houngan or by the deceased man's protégé. Frequently the laplace will inherit the cult temple and all that goes with it. Acquisition of a cult center by inheritance is looked upon as a means of keeping an established hounfor intact. The man who wishes to achieve the rank of houngan applies to the oldest and most venerable cult priest in the district and announces that he wishes to receive the *asson* (the ritual rattle) that is, to become a houngan. If the elder priest approves and wishes to sponsor the younger man's elevation, he consults other reputable houngans and arranges for a *grand service* for purification and investiture. The elder cult priest conducts the ceremonies. He is regarded as especially wise because of his age and long experience in dealing with the loa, whose

793 approval of the candidate's elevation is needed. He is also regarded as
[969] being on more intimate terms with the family ancestors who, likewise,
must be in accord with the proceedings. The candidate for the asson is
[783] confined within the hounfor for a number of days, during which he takes purification baths and participates in other rituals. The rites that take place during this period are prescribed by the elder priest who has assumed responsibility. When the purification is ended, the candidate emerges into the *peristyle* (roofed court) to participate in the general service, and to undergo further tests.

Present during the ceremonies are all the principal houngans of the region—men who will be friendly associates of the new priest or, possibly, unfriendly competitors. The candidate is tested on his knowledge
[789] of how to use the asson and the tiny hand bell, and in the course of the service he is mounted by the loa who is the chief protector of the cult tem-
[782] ple. Animals are sacrificed, and all the loa sacred to the hounfor are invoked and asked for their approval and support. But it is not only the loa
[794] and the dead who must indicate their approval. The elder houngan polls the hounsi kanzo on whether they will accept their new cult chief and fol-
[533] low him. He also asks the chief drummer, who polls his assistant drummers. It is taken for granted that the decision is in the hands of the hounsi. The consensus is known before the actual service, but the formality of asking the question is observed. Should the hounsi refuse to accept the candidate for the asson, the elevation cannot take place.

793 The city and the countryside contain many self-styled houngans and
554 bocors who are not recognized as bona fide by the community, regardless
62 of the route by which they claim to have achieved their station. Sometimes
[791] they are regarded as *pas fort* (not strong); that is, they do not have profound knowledge and understanding. The Haitian is quick to detect the difference between a houngan who knows and one who does not know. Many are stated to be outright fakes. One man who attempted to hold a service in Port-au-Prince aroused such contempt and disgust that a number of persons who had been drawn by genuine interest walked out with remarks that the man should be punished. In fact, his failure to show any
[533] essential qualifications for the houngan's role was commented upon in a song of ridicule that made its appearance at a secular dance that same night. The song noted some of the humorous aspects of the service, such as when the "impostor" struck himself vigorously on the head with the flat of a machete to show his "strength" and virtually incapacitated himself for the rest of the evening.

346 It is easily observed that no two hounfors are exactly alike. They differ

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in many details. But, in general, the cult establishment consists of a central building of one or more rooms with an adjoining court, or peristyle, over which there is a covering—usually a straw roof. The covering, called the *tonnelle,* is supported by a number of poles, one of which is placed squarely in the center of the court. This center pole—the *po'teau mitan* or *po'teau planté*—is the focus of most of the ritual activities. The loa who descend upon the service enter by way of this pole. The ritual *vèvès,* or flour paintings, are made at its foot. Around it all the dancing takes place. On certain rare occasions when rituals are held in the open, a carefully selected tree becomes the center post—though it is by no means certain that the po'teau mitan is not, in fact, a symbolic tree.

The building adjoining the peristyle contains the inner sanctum. Here are deposited the paraphernalia of the cult, such as ritual bottles and jars, flags of the société, and the iron kettles used in various ceremonies. On the walls there may be primitive paintings of the special loa of the hounfor, or perhaps of his symbol. The loa of the sea, Agwé, may be represented by a ship. Damballa, the serpent-rainbow loa, may be represented by a snake or a rainbow. Usually there are colored lithographs of Catholic saints, who have both Catholic and African names. And there are hand-beaten iron crosses, dishes containing Indian celts in which loa are believed to reside, gourd bowls, and carved wooden double and triple bowls used for services to dead twins and triplets. Upon the altar place, called *badji,* there are the *criches* or *govis,* earthen jars or bottles in which rest the loa removed from the heads of people who have died. Sometimes special niches are built on the hounfor grounds for the deities. Each cult priest designs his hounfor in his own way.

A hounfor belonging to a mambo near the town of Croix des Missions gave the appearance of having a large and prosperous société. Under the tonnelle eight beautifully carved Arada drums were suspended from a single peg. At a respectable distance hung a Martinique drum used only for dances on the occasion of a Nine Night. Inside the hounfor was an impressive display of sacred objects and decorations. One corner of the room was reserved for Symbi Yendézo, a patron loa of drinking water and rainfall. He was portrayed on the wall as a long, thin snake crawling in a maze of crosses. On the ground beneath the picture was a small concrete pool, in which two water snakes swam. Another corner was reserved for Agwé, and on his wall was a picture of a steamship. Along the back of the altar was an impressive array of govis, containing the spirits removed from the heads of deceased persons. There was a large plate of loa stones, and various protective charms stood near by. Flags and sabres

346 794 353 778 were stacked against the wall, and set about in various places were several assons, iron crosses, Catholic lithographs, chains and iron bars for the loa Ogoun, candles set in bottles, and an old forged double bell of African design.

346 353 Some of the hounfors found elsewhere are more elaborate and reflect the richer resources of the immediate community, or the creative impulses of the houngan and his helpers, or the pressure of competition. Some cult temples are prolific with painted designs and symbolic representations of the deities. Others are unpretentious, simple, and even Spartan.

346 [113] In his book *En Haiti,* written approximately fifty years ago, Eugene Aubin describes a hounfor in the Cul-de-Sac Plain, a few miles from Port-au-Prince, as he saw it in 1906:

346 353 794 778 [The] *hounfor* is fronted by a *peristyle,* which is used for the Vodoun dances and services; it is a large area, with a floor of beaten earth, covered with a straw roof. On three sides the walls rise to support the roof; on the fourth there is the inscription:

Société la Fleur de Guinée
Roi d'Engole
[*Flower of Africa Society*
King of Angola]

indicating the name of the patron of the society [the loa Roi Angole, or Wangol], over which the *houngan* presides. The *hounfor* is an ordinary house, a little larger than average. The sanctuary contains a principal *pé* [altar], running the whole length of the room on one side, and another altar, a little smaller, in one of the corners. These *pés* are altars largely made of brick, in which the under part is decorated with hearts and stars in relief; above, draperies hang from the ceiling. The lateral *pé* is divided into three compartments. There are, therefore, four sections in all, consecrated to each of the *loa* served in the *hounfor:* Aguay Aoyo [Agwé Woyo], Damballa, Ogoun Badagry, and Loco [Loko], Nago King. Maître Aguay is represented by the customary little boat; a medallion is consecrated to Monsieur Damballa, shown holding two snakes in his hand; a figure on horseback represents Ogoun Badagry, with a woman at one side holding a flag; Papa Loco is pictured in full uniform, smoking a pipe and fanning himself. The walls are covered with religious paintings [Catholic lithographs]. The back of the altar is occupied by numerous carafes in baked clay, called *canaris,* which contain the . . . *mystères* [spirits taken from the heads of the dead] gathered in the *hounfor;* in front are bottles of wine, liqueurs and vermouth presented to them in homage; then the plates, the cups for the *mangers-marassas* [feasts for the twin spirit], crucifixes, hand bells, *assons* for directing the dance or calling the *loa;* plates filled with polished stones [celts] inherited from the Indians—"thunder stones," symbols of Damballa, which Saugo [Sobo] the god of lightning hurls from the sky into the enclosure of his favorite *papaloi* [*houngan*]. Beside these miraculous stones are many coins of copper or silver [property of the *loa*]. The *loa* . . . possess coins of Joseph Bonaparte, King of Spain, minted in 1811; of Frederick VII of Denmark, 1859; of Charles IV of Spain, 1783, and of President Boyer, dated year 27 and year 30 of Haitian Independence. On the ground there is placed a coconut-oil lamp; in the corner, the flags of the *hounfor* and the saber of the *laplace,* the man who acts as master of ceremonies in the services.

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They know where the sun rises,

and they address St. Nicholas, who opens the day, and they know the wish of God. In the name of St. Nicholas they raise a glass of water and ask God for the power to do."

In ordinary usage the Haitian refers to the various cults or "nations" as though they were quite separate and mutually exclusive. He speaks of the *service* Pétro, or *rite* Nago, or the *nanchon* Ibo. Yet in practice the cults are usually bound together into two or three major groups.

The "nations" belonging to the Vodoun (or Dahomey) group include the Arada or Dahomé, the Anago, the Mahi, the Amine, and the Ibo. There is ample evidence that the cults of these "nations" were once separate and apart. Even today in isolated regions of Haiti there are cult centers devoted exclusively to Nago deities. Elsewhere, Mahi or Ibo services are held without the intrusion of "foreign" rites and deities. Some cult centers have several hounfors—one for Dahomé, one for Nago, one for Ibo, and so on, with a separate building for the "dead" spirit Gèdé. More often, however, one finds a single hounfor containing separate altars. Of all the "nations" within the Vodoun group, the Ibo perhaps has the most independent status, and in some regions it is tied in with Pétro rather than Vodoun rites.

The Pétro group also includes numerous "nations," some completely absorbed, others more loosely affiliated. Within this group, which for convenience may be called the Congo-Guinée family, are the Pétro, Bumba, Moundongue, Bambarra, Congo Loangue (Loango), and other "nations." In certain regions the Congo cult, like the Ibo, is regarded as separate and apart. Sometimes the Pétro service is kept distinct from the others, though it has drawn so heavily on them for its roster of deities that the distinction is not easily seen. In places such as Port-au-Prince where the cults have deeply infiltrated one another, major differences between the Vodoun and Congo-Guinée rites have disappeared, and altars to both Pétro and Dahomé deities may be found within the same hounfor.

It is not difficult to detect a certain pattern of regional grouping within the Vodoun and Congo-Guinée families. Within the Vodoun family are gathered "nations" from Dahomey, Togoland, and Nigeria, while in the Congo-Guinée cycle are "nations" from Central Africa, miscellaneous "nations" such as the Bambarra, and the Pétro cult which is regarded as "Haitian" rather than "African," but whose rites and loa have been recruited in large measure from other services.

One often hears of Kitta services, or Chango services, or Legba rites. These are not separate cults but simply rituals for specific loa.

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The loa, like the rites, vary somewhat according to region and to the practices of the individual cult priests. New concepts spring up, and they thrive in one locality while remaining unheard of in another. Yet many new concepts travel from hounfor to hounfor. As in the old days in Dahomey, the Vodoun priests sometimes make journeys to visit other cult centers. At one service near Jacmel, on the south coast, I met a houngan from Dondon in the far north and heard him discuss with the local cult chief the appropriate behavior of a loa who had mounted a servitor. The Dondon houngan declared that in the north the loa conducted himself differently. The Jacmel houngan parried with the remark that a loa's behavior is consistent. He said there were only two possibilities concerning the possession as described by the cult chief from Dondon: either the loa had been mistakenly identified, or another deity had attempted to impersonate him. Such exchanges hasten the spread of developing theology from one area to another. They also raise contradictions which remain forever insoluble.

That confusions and contradictions are not merely of Haitian making is made clear by Herskovits' voluminous study of the pantheons of Dahomey.[3] Each of the great cults—the sky cult, the earth cult, and the thunder cult—has its own explanations of the origins and functions of the deities; and even within one cult there are contradicting explanations. The Haitians have taken over, built upon, and diverged from a Dahomean system that contained its own contradictions. In adding to it the system of the Yoruba, with its parallelisms and similarities, they have made the whole picture more complex than ever.

[3] [Herskovits, Dahomey. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[P 41]

5. Services for the Loa and the Family Ancestors

The Ordeal by Fire: Kanzo

To advance beyond the lowest status in the hounfor, the hounsi must undergo the test of fire. This ritual is known as *kanzo*, meaning "to tie fire." In the drama of the hounfor there are many tests and ordeals. When certain loa enter, the mounted persons will eat broken glass. Other loa will cause their "horses" to rub hot pepper in their eyes. Still others will compel possessed persons to cut themselves with machetes. But these are bravado actions of the deities who have entered into the bodies of the servitors. The kanzo test is a formalized and premeditated ritual, in which it is demonstrated that the power of the cult—and the spirit of the individual—is superior to fire. Once having passed through this rite, the ordinary hounsi becomes a *hounsi kanzo*. 794 789 796 787

The kanzo ceremony—or, as it is known in some parts of Haiti, the *brulé zin* (the boiling pot)—is performed in diverse ways according to the tradition of the particular hounfor. But common to all is the dipping of the hands into boiling oil.

The common hounsi, the bossale, is prepared gradually for kanzo. In the course of certain rites she undergoes a smoke ordeal. On all fours, her head close to a fire, she must breathe in smoke without choking or coughing. When these and other tests indicate that she is ready, she will be permitted to undergo the rite of the brulé zin.

Near the town of Thomazeau in the Cul-de-Sac Plain I witnessed one of these rituals. It began with a dance, in which only the hounsi of the cult participated. They were all dressed in white. The chief drummer wore a woman's blouse, a kerchief on his head, and on top of that a woman's straw hat. He played alone while the houngan invoked the loa Legba. [793] Then there were songs for Ogoun, and the dancing resumed.

The dance court was larger than average—about forty feet by sixty.

793 794 787 796 789

Attached to the ever-present po'teau mitan, or center post, were three oil lamps which threw a flickering light. At the entrance to the dance court a glowing-hot iron bar stood erect in a charcoal fire—the symbol of kanzo and of the loa Ogoun.

When the preliminary dances were over, the hounsi retired to one side of the court, where they sat in two rows facing the center.

Ritual rattle and bell in hand, the houngan took his place by the sacred center post. He was an elderly man with a gray beard. He wore a red kerchief like a turban around his head. He smoked a cigar, and in his free hand he held a bottle of rum. The red kerchief, the rum, and the cigar were all in honor of Ogoun. He moved back and forth across the center of the court, talking casually, even joking and laughing. The drums began again, on a signal from the houngan, and a number of visiting houngans [535] and mambos came forward and began a stately Jenvalo dance. The backs of their hands touching their knees, their backs bent low, they moved slowly counterclockwise around the center post. The mambos outnumbered the houngans four to one. The hounsi sitting on the sidelines sang. The song was for Maîtresse Ézilie. The houngan in charge stood by patiently, deep in thought. His assistant, the laplace, kept time with a small rattle and led the singing.

When the song came to an end, the visiting cult priests and priestesses retired from the dance ground. Again the hounsi danced. Afterward the houngan began to talk *langage*, twirling his bottle of rum about recklessly. He was speaking to a loa. The chief drummer beat out a salute to Ogoun. Then the houngan raised the bottle and placed it to his ear. It gurgled away, some of the liquid trickling down his face. He seemed to be swallowing the rum.

While all the hounsi, with bowed heads, sat on the ground, the houngan recited from the ritual of the Catholic service. Latin words, then Creole words in Latin cadences. After a while the houngan's assistant took over the recitation, and the hounsi answered him responsively.[1] When the prayers were over, the hounsi arose and passed into the bowfor. The drums began a fast Nago rhythm, and the hounsi emerged with brilliant silk flags studded with tiny brass rivets. The houngan's chief assistants—the laplace and the houngénicon—carried military sabers upraised. The dancers circled in single file around the center post, a triumphal military heralding of the deity of war and the forge.

To the accompaniment of a crescendo of drums, the procession suddenly reversed its direction. Watching the upraised saber of the laplace for a signal, the hounsi reversed their direction again.

000 When the dance drama ended, the hounsi carried the flags back into

[1] [Note that the houngan and the laplace are performing services normally performed by the Prêt savane. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analysis]

when the dance drawing ended, the hounsi carried the flags back into
the hounfor. Then they sat on the ground while the houngan came for- 793
ward to the center post to make his ritual flour drawing. Holding the flour 794
in his hand, he allowed a little of it to trickle out in a fine white line. He 787
worked rapidly, with half-closed eyes, speaking *langage*. A complicated 789
white geometric pattern grew on the earth around the center post. Among 796
its intricate designs highly stylized phallic forms were discernible. When 532
the houngan had finished the drawing, he wrote the name of the loa whom they were serving: Ogoun Badagry. Then the other houngans and mambos came forward, one at a time, to add to the design. When the vèvè was completed it covered virtually the entire dance court.

The laplace came from the hounfor with a bundle of brilliantly colored 793
beads. He stood by the houngan at the center post. One by one the hounsi 794
came before the houngan, dropped on their knees, and kissed the ground. 787
Around each hounsi's neck the houngan placed a string of beads. He raised 789
her, pirouetted her first to the right, then to the left. The pirouette was to 796
encourage possession by the loa.

From the hounfor the hounsi now brought herbs and vegetables for the [782]
sacrifice. Baskets and bottles were set out neatly on the ground, along with bundles of sticks and the iron pots, or *zinc*.

The dance was resumed in a single rotating line around the houngan and the ritual offerings. Two hounsi in the center of the circle built fires, one on each side of the court. Over the fires they set the ritual iron pots. They poured oil into the pots and began the preparation of ritual food balls, like dumplings, from the ingredients at hand. One by one they dropped the dumplings into the oil, which was soon boiling.

The drumming, singing, and dancing were sustained at a high tension. A second team of drummers took over without a break in the music. The dancers now were almost exhausted. With a quick motion, the houngan spilled some rum into one of the boiling pots. A blue alcohol flame shot high into the air. Some of the hounsi screamed but continued to dance. Three of them fell to the ground, their limbs jerking uncontrollably. The loa had entered. Two of the "mounted" hounsi arose and continued to dance, staggering and jerking across the dance court. The third had to be lifted and carried into the hounfor.

The man who was to undergo initiation was waiting in the *djévo*, a special room in the hounfor. For the past seven days he had lain on a mat in the djévo, in virtual isolation except for visits from the houngan and the laplace.

Now the kanzo initiate was brought out, completely covered with a white cloth. Only his hands and feet could be seen. With one hand on the shoulder of the laplace, who preceded him, he moved with the dancers

in a circle around the two boiling pots. On the seventh circuit of the course, the laplace stopped him at the first pot. The houngan grasped the man's free hand and, bending down, dipped it into the boiling oil. There was no visible indication of pain. They moved to the second pot, and the man's hand was dipped again. They proceeded again to the first pot, where the dipping was repeated, then back again to the second pot. The neophyte's hand entered the boiling oil seven times in all. He made no sound, showed no resistance, no reflexes. Then the hounsi took him back to the hounfor. It was all over. After three days of isolation, they said, he would be kanzo.

The houngan peeled an orange, while everyone crowded close to watch. In it he found a two-gourde note. He peeled another orange and found in it a slip of paper with the name of a woman on it. She came forward, and everyone laughed. She was an old woman, the oldest of the hounsi. The houngan held the two-gourde note between his teeth. The old woman took the other end of the note in her teeth, but she had to kiss the houngan before he would let go.

The ritual of brulé zin, or kanzo, is of unmistakable West African origin. Herskovits has described a ceremony in Dahomey which in many details could easily have taken place in Haiti. The Dahomean rite was in honor of the gods of the Thunder pantheon. Here, too, we find a pot of boiling palm oil, in which are the sacred dumplings: "When the fire had finally subsided and only a faint column of smoke issued from the pot, the initiate came dancing toward it, thrust her hand into the boiling oil, and lifted out a dumpling. . . ."

Family Rites at Léogane

These services for family ancestors took place in the mountains above Léogane at the ancestral home of my friend Libera Borderau. They were conducted on the grounds of his grandmother's house. The ritual began with dancing. Against the wall of the house sat the three drummers with their Arada drums. Near them, leaning against the wall, were the flags of the family loa. Also near by was a long high table serving as a makeshift altar called the *jé*. In the very center of the table in a clean white dish lay eight loa stones—old Carib artifacts. The stones were identical in shape, all of them perfectly symmetrical, resembling small, pointed cigars. In the *pierre-loas* lived the family deities, and much of the ceremony was built around them. The stones had been bathed and polished in oil for the occasion. Set around the plate of stones were numerous small *criches* (French, *cruches*—clay water jugs), glass bottles, and earthenware jars which also contained loa. On the low bench before the table, seven dishes

[Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 165. Cf. P 351, Cat. 116.]

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were set out in a row, and before them four *coui*, the half-gourd bowls used in services to the marassas, the twin spirits.

In the house, at the center of the floor, was a round flat stone about ten inches in diameter and about two inches thick, resembling a millstone. This was the *pierre-manman*, the mother stone responsible for the coming of the other loa stones and who cared for them in the absence of the family. In this stone, they said, was the spirit of the old loa Nanzabouclou. On a mat in the corner of the room two children slept.

Outside, on a chair, his back against the wall of the house, the houngan sat, his rattle and bell in hand. He had come several miles to conduct the service. Most of those who danced were his own houmi. The houngan was "strong" and well known in the region; people said he had worked for high government officials, including the president himself.

After several rounds of Arada dancing in which children as well as adults took part, the drums stopped. The houngan and his laplace moved up to the building which served for the night as the hounfor. It was up a steep slope, about a hundred feet from the dance court. There they prepared for the sacrifice to Chébo Profiel, the honored loa of the evening. Passing in and out among the spectators was a woman who would be possessed by Papa Chébo; since he was the guest of the service, she (or the loa in her head) was free to come and go as she chose, to speak as she pleased, and to do what she wished. Mostly she shook hands with people, a ceremony which continued throughout the night. First she would offer the right hand, then the left; or perhaps both at once, in which case the hands would be shaken downward vigorously three or four times. Someone ignorantly said, "Bon soir, Madame!" and she turned on him to reprimand his insolence. She was not "Madame," she was *l'Autorité*, the Authority.

During the course of the evening the conviction became stronger and stronger in her that she was Chébo Profiel. From the time we first saw her until the end of the evening her personality underwent marked changes. She "became" Papa Chébo.

The houngan sat before a small hole, possibly a foot deep and ten inches in diameter, in front of the hounfor. The fresh earth was piled neatly to the side, and an enameled plate was set on top of it. Around the hole were the various dishes to be offered to Chébo Profiel. The laplace prayed in Latin, a short Catholic service. Then the houngan, shaking his beaded rattle and tinkling his bell, called for Chébo to "enter." He made a small maize-flour drawing around the hole, and then began the feeding of the loa. The plates arranged for the feast contained roasted maize, roasted peanuts, bread, cassava, rice, and other foods. There were bottles of rum,

kola (a soft drink), *clairin*, and syrup. The houngan, entreating Chébo to accept, poured a little *clairin* into the hole. The loa seemed to accept, for the *clairin* was quickly absorbed in the ground. The houngan took rice from the plate with his fingers, about the amount he might place in his own mouth, and put it gently into the hole. He was feeding Papa Chébo, literally placing the food in his mouth. After the rice, which was dry, the houngan poured in a little more *clairin* to moisten it. He ordered the laplace to break up the bread, and then he placed a small piece in the hole and washed it down with a little rum. The houngan seemed to understand that Papa Chébo Profel was hungry, and that he was also an epicure. He allowed him to taste the roasted corn, and then washed it down with a trickle of kola. Then he gave him a taste of the roasted peanuts, and another morsel of bread. Once Chébo got his mouth too full in his zest for the meal, and the assemblage had to wait for him to finish "coughing." Then the houngan gave him a long drink of kola to clear his windpipe. After that the houngan was more careful in the way he fed him—a little cassava, a drink, a little bread. As the houngan fed the loa, some of the spectators reached over and placed small coins in the empty dish by the hole. These too were for Chébo. Finally, Chébo was through eating. The food was gone.

The houngan, shaking his rattle and his bell, blew two sharp notes on his whistle. At the door of the hounfor appeared l'Aunerisé, the hounsi possessed by Papa Chébo. More than ever she resembled the loa, and less than ever she resembled herself. In one hand she held a saber. Her bodily movements were spasmodic, as though she was being forced to do things to which she was not accustomed. She moved slowly into the circle, her eyes almost closed; she leaned backward, then twisted grotesquely around, jerked this way and that, buffeted by the loa. Suddenly she began to whirl. The houngan called "Tambouyé!" and the drummers beat a slow complicated rhythm, a salute to Chébo. The loa had really "entered" now. There was no mistaking the jerky, irresponsible movements of the hounsi's head and shoulders. She leaned backward as though about to fall, incredibly kept her balance, rolled forward as though she were going to plunge to the ground, and twisted herself upright once more. The saber passed close to the faces of the spectators, even scratched some of them and cut their clothing. The hounfor had a distinctly [illegible] Chébo Profel was a man.

She reached over to seize a chicken that was held out to her. Grasping its legs with her free hand, she continued her spinning, twisting, lurching dance. Then she cradled the chicken, rocking it back and forth until it was in a hypnotic trance. She placed it on the ground before a tiny pile

2: Courlander 8-6 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

of ground maize prepared by the laplace. The chicken, released, sat motionless, making no effort to escape. All watched attentively, the houngan shaking his rattle and bell. Suddenly the chicken cocked its head and, seeming to see the corn for the first time, reached out and pecked at it. This was the loa receiving the sacrifice—a difficult conception if one thinks of the chicken itself as the sacrifice. "Chèbo," l'Autorité, snatched the chicken up, danced violently about, the loa in full possession of her body. With a swift movement of the saber, she cut the chicken's throat and caused the first drop of blood to fall into the hole. When the chicken stopped struggling, it was left there, head downward. L'Autorité took up a cock which was given her, cradled him, and set him before the ground maize. When he pecked at it, she picked him up and danced, around and around, jerking, lunging, never quite falling. She took his comb between her teeth, supporting his body gently with her hands, and spun around and around. Then she released him, cut his throat, and placed him in the hole with the chicken.

At the side of the *hounfor*, waiting, was a goat (called by the ritual name Dogwé). He had a fine silky white coat and a long beard. He was brought in to the place of sacrifice, and l'Autorité dropped to her knees to embrace his neck with her arms. She remained there a moment, her cheek against his, talking to him. Then she arose, a machete in hand instead of a saber, and began to pirouette while three men threw the goat on his side. Then she cut with the machete, and the goat's blood, too, began to run into the hole. For the first time her dance became unquestionably frenzied. She swung strong, full blows of the machete at the goat's neck, finally severing the head. From the hindquarters she cut a piece of red meat and placed it in her mouth.

At a signal from the houngan, three men carried the goat's body away to be dressed and cooked, and a woman came forward to wipe the blood from Papa Chèbo's face.

The drums began again, a Dahomé dance, and the people relaxed. Many joined in the dancing while l'Autorité strutted about shaking hands and talking *langage*. She also danced, with gestures and movements wholly masculine. At one point she briefly advanced on another woman, making

The houngan and his houngénicon retired to the front room of the hut. A new mat had been placed there for the houngénicon. She lay down on it, and the houngan sat in a chair against the wall. This was the beginning of the ceremony of calling *les morts en bas dleau* (the dead below the water).

Meanwhile, before the *hounfor*, the laplace and a hounsi were building

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

769 the *cord*, a hogan-like structure made of bent saplings covered with cotton
793 cloth.

● 794 Rain had been threatening all evening, and now it began. Some people
796 crowded into the hut where the goat was being barbecued. Others came
[346] into the hut where the houngénicon lay; in the back room, with the pé, Chébo, l'Autorité, strutted and shook hands with the visitors. The straw roof leaked a little, but no one minded very much. The houngan and his houngénicon, who had been under a strain, relaxed. The rain would mark the length of the intermission. Except for the sound of the rain and "Chébo's" *langage*, there was no noise. No one spoke. Then the houngan,
769 his eyes closed, began to sing an Ibo song.
793
796
539

Ibo Lazile oh, éya!
Grand gout manqué tuyé moin!
A la yun an six mois m' sous la mer,
Grand gout manqué tuyé moin!

Ibo Lazile, oh, éya!
Hunger has not killed me!
One year and six months I have been under the sea,
Hunger has not killed me!

The others sang responsively:

Ibo Lazile, oh, Ibo!
Ibo grand gout pas tuyé'm, Ibo!

Ibo Lazile, oh, Ibo!
Ibo, hunger has not killed me, Ibo!

After a while the houngan called "Abobo!"—which was the signal to conclude. The rain was still coming down, and he called "Abobo!" for the rain to cease also. But it did not stop, and everyone laughed. He began another song, also Ibo:

Ianman Ibo kélé!
Ianman Ibo kélé!
Pilet pied'm mandé pardon,
Ça pardon wa fai pou moin?
Ça ou gainyan con ça? [Ex. 80]

Ianman Ibo kélé!
Ianman Ibo kélé!
Step on my foot and ask my pardon,
What will the pardon do for me?
What do you have [what are you doing] like that?

And the others came in, spiritedly:

Ianman, oh, un hunh!
Ianman, con ça'm danse Ibo!
Ianman, oh, un hunh!

Ianman, oh, un hunh!
Ianman, like this I dance, Ibo!
Ianman, oh, un hunh!

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

While those in the front room were singing, l'Autorité, in the inner room, was suddenly thrown about violently by her possession. She raced into one wall of the hut, striking her head, flung herself back against the opposite wall, kicking, trembling, calling out strange *langage*. She crashed into the pé, upsetting the dishes, and then fell across the mat where the children were lying half asleep. One of them, a boy of about four, became hysterical. He knew the woman, but he had never seen her like this. His mother carried him to the front room, where she finally quieted his crying. L'Autorité, spent for the moment, lay across the mat. No one touched her. Later, when the singing was resumed, she got to her feet and made the rounds once more, shaking hands again and again. She was now smoking a pipe.

When the houngan heard the rain subsiding, he again called out "Abobo!" as though he were giving the order to cease, and everyone, himself included, laughed again. When it had definitely stopped, someone went out to shake the water from the canopy. The drums were brought out of their shelter, and although the ground was sticky with mud, the dancing was resumed. The houngan asked for a fast Nago dance, and the front room of the hut was once more emptied of everyone except the houngan and his houngénicon.

The laplace and his assistant went up the hill to put the finishing touches to the *cavd*, the temporary structure in which the houngan was going to receive the loa and the dead. From a small chest of chinaware, the houngénicon set a "table" for the loa on the ground where she sat. The sacrifice had been for a single loa, Chêbo; the rest of the service was for all the loa served by the family. The houngan, sitting next to the houngénicon, sounded his rattle and spoke *langage*. He sang quietly, a song which only the houngénicon could hear, watching her intently. A large basket of dishes, bottles, and various other paraphernelia was brought by a hounsi. Candles were lighted and set on the ground. The houngan gave a signal, and the hounsi brought a large square of white cotton cloth, which they stretched tight over the houngénicon like a canopy. The candle flame and the silhouette of the houngénicon could be seen through the cloth, but the details of the service were not visible. Sometimes, the houngan, his bell and rattle in hand, would go under the cloth to assist in the calling of the loa. Then, without warning, things began to happen very rapidly.

One of the hounsi who sat before the door began to quiver and make strange noises in her throat: "Ka, ka, k-k-k-k-k-k-a!" Her body shook violently, and her head rolled on her shoulders. Almost simultaneously something began to happen under the cloth where the houngénicon was, and the members of the family crowded up to the *cavd* by the hounfor. The houngénicon lay stiffly, her eyes closed, the white cloth removed. The

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 HaRI SV3

769 houngan carried out the large round basket in which lay the bottles and
793 the pierre-loas. The hounsi gathered around it, ten of them, to carry it to
794 the *cord*. In the bottles were *les morts en bas dleau* (the spirits of the dead
796 from below the water). Carrying the flags, three hounsi danced, singing,
787 up to the *cord*. After them the laplace came, carrying in his left hand a plate of maize flour from which he made vèvès in the line of advance, simple marks symbolizing the crossroads. The drums were beating a special salute to the loa. The ten hounsi carrying the basket danced and sang. As they moved up the hill, they rotated, so that the basket revolved like the [535] hub of a wheel. Their progress was not smooth, however; they jerked forward and backward as they rotated. Arriving before the *cord*, first one, then a second, was entered by her loa. They fell, jerked, and stumbled. This was all a very good omen. The houngan called "Abobo!" for them to resist such possession, and the hounsi all sat down on the ground. The houngan placed the basket inside the *cord* and entered after it. He called for his little bell, which the laplace passed in to him. The laplace closed the flap down tight, from the outside, and placed the flags against it.

Upon a signal given from within, the hounsi began a song:

[539]

La famille ensblé,
Oh ensblé nous!
La famille ensblé,
Oh nous ensblé pou nou pa'lé parole nous là!
La famille ensblé!

The family gathers,
Oh, we gather!
The family gathers,
Oh, we gather to speak our words here!
The family gathers!

769 The laplace took his position, his back to the *cord*, while inside, because
796 of the candle burning there, the houngan could be seen setting out the
787 contents of the basket. The candle went out, and in the *cord* the little bell
[794] began to tinkle. The singing stopped. The houngan was beginning to
[793] talk to the dead below the water. First he talked *langage*. Then his voice was heard through the constant sound of the tiny bell, supplicating Papa Loko to talk a little bit with his "children." A faint, tremulous voice, that of a tired old grandfather, was heard to answer. Papa Loko was stirring himself out of a long silence. He talked a long while to the houngan. Sometimes they both spoke at once. Faintly he was heard to say that he had come a long way to see his children, and that he was very tired. But as he talked his strength returned to him, and, asking the houngan to wait, he spoke directly to his "children," who sat, respectfully and awed,

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1938) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Oh, a day will come when they will remember me here, *kélé manyan!* 796
Oh, Damballa Wèdo *é, kélé manyan.* 796
Oh, Ayida Wèdo *é, kélé manyan!* 787
Oh, a day will come for you to remember me here, *kélé manyan!* [539]

During the evening about twenty loa and ancestors came into the *cord* [776] to talk. When the last had finished speaking the hills were already light, and the service was over.

Service for Èzilie Fréda and St. Jacques Majeur

This service took place not in the open but under a tonnelle surrounded 796 by four walls, adjoining the hounfor of Alexis Stephan on the west fringes 796 of Port-au-Prince. Separate from the hounfor and dance court was a 346 shrine to the "dead" loa Gèdé Nimbo. The shrine was a small shed open on one side. Within, lighted by flickering oil lamps, was a life-size effigy [532] of Gèdé, a scarecrow-like figure dressed in the loa's traditional attire— [354] black tail coat and trousers, and a tall opera hat. On the otherwise blank face of the figure were smoked glasses with white rims.

The dancing was progressing under the supervision of the houngan's 796 adjutant, the laplace. He wandered among the drummers and dancers, [794] encouraged the singing, and issued orders here and there. No one seemed to take him very seriously. There was a good deal of joking, and the [522] gathering seemed very much like an old-fashioned family reunion. There were perhaps a hundred dancers and spectators—friends, relatives, and devotees of Stephan's hounfor. Everyone was watching with affection an old woman who could not be restrained from dancing. She executed old classical steps and postures with a skill that called for running comment all around her. As each piece came to an end someone would step up to her and say something like: "Woy, Manman, mais ou passé mwé!" (Oh, Mother, you are better than me!). Then they would attempt to get her to sit down again, but she would only shake them off and urge the drummers to get going if they were not too tired.

Eventually, the houngan, Stephan, made a casual entrance through the [793] door of his adjoining hounfor. He held the usual ritual rattle and bell in [534] his hand, and sauntered around to chat with his friends.

Gradually, almost imperceptibly, the dancing became more serious. 796 Soon, only the hounsi, the female servitors, were dancing. The drums 796 played a salute to Legba, the first loa to be called upon in a Vodoun serv- [794] ice. For it is Legba who opens all gates and all highways, and who paves the way for communication with other deities. Though he is not the greatest of the loa, he is one of the most ancient. The houngan spilled water on [782] the ground as a libation, and the dancing continued.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

796 Then a well-dressed young man entered, and the drummers swiftly
793 changed to the salute reserved for guests of distinction. The hounsi sang,
[594] "Président passe là, l'ap monté au gouvernment!" and waved paper flags
[202] and kerchiefs. The young man was a distant relative of Stephan's; he also was a houngan.

After a while Stephan brought from his hounfor a second asson, or ritual rattle, and another small hand bell, both of which he handed to the
[576] young man. He was extending the courtesy of his hounfor, sharing his instruments of authority and religious power with his fellow houngan. Then followed an exhibition between the two houngans that was half duel and half ballet. They stood face to face, each of them holding the asson in one hand and the tiny bell in the other. Stephan was "testing" the young houngan for the edification of all present. Each tiny move made by Stephan was duplicated simultaneously by his guest, as though he were a mirrored reflection.

Every posture Stephan made was duplicated instantly by his guest. The assons and the bells were agitated constantly. The rattle in the young man's hand did precisely what Stephan's did. The two men looked into each other's eyes with intensity, as though this bound their movements together and unified them. When Stephan twisted to the left, the other houngan twisted to the right. Every contortion of the young man was an exact replica of Stephan's movements. The two assons rattled out the same rhythms and the same signals; so did the bells. The backdrop for this "test" was provided by the drummers. The faces of the two men broke into a sweat from the intense nervous effort. At last it came to an end. A woman came forward and wiped their faces with a colored kerchief. The "testing" ceremony was over. The visiting houngan had been proved.

796 Stephan then made a ritual vèvè, or maize-flour ritual drawing on the
793 ground. Afterward there was more singing and dancing by the hounsi.
787 They sang several songs for Ezilie Fréda, the "pure" loa. And Alexis
[532] Stephan went into a trance. It was unexpected. The servitors had not
[794] prepared for it. In this emergency the visiting houngan took over. He
[776] seemed a little anxious. He was unfamiliar with the particular psychological factors at play in this particular hounfor. He was not certain of the character of Stephan's possession. But he took over grimly. The houngénicon, an older woman, stepped forward to help. While the young houngan wielded the asson and bell, the woman issued instructions. Stephan, his head hanging back, his eyes closed, was supported by two of the hounsi. Other servitors hurriedly brought out a white sheet and spread it on the ground. A chair and a table were set upon the sheet, and Stephan was placed in the chair, where he now sat with his head hanging limply on his chest.

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Stephan had been mounted by Ezilie Fréda, the deity of whiteness and purity. That was why he was protected from the earth by the white sheet beneath him. While the drums continued to beat, the hounsi placed upon the table a bottle of wine, a clean glass, and a white plate with boiled maize meal, topped by a whole egg. Then they held over Stephan—who had become, for the time being, Ezilie—a second white sheet. The possessed houngan began to bend forward and back with great rapidity, toward the surface of the table and back to an upright position, his arms hanging quietly downward. The hounsi fluttered the covering sheet in such a way that the spectators could not see what was going on beneath it. In less than a minute, Stephan's movements ceased. The sheet was removed. Stephan sat limply, talking *langage*. In the white dish only the broken shells of the egg and a small portion of the meal remained. Some of the wine was gone from the upright bottle. The glass still had a little wine in the bottom. Ezilie had accepted the sacrifice. Not once had Stephan's hands changed from their hanging position or approached the table. The eggshells themselves were clean, but a tiny trickle of liquid yolk ran from the corner of Stephan's mouth. The visiting houngan rattled his asson before Stephan, who arose wearily, with the help of the hounsi, and followed him through the door into the *hounfor*.

Again there was dancing, and a little while later Stephan emerged from the *hounfor* in a bizarre military costume of red velvet, wearing black glasses, a blue military cap with a red feather, and a sword. He was almost as weird as the effigy of *Gèdé* that stood outside. The houngan had now become St. Jacques *Majeur*, or Ogoun, the loa of war and the forge. His personality had undergone a dramatic change. Strictly speaking, Stephan was not in a trance as he had been a little earlier. He was in control of his movements, which were completely conscious, and yet he was certainly not in a "normal" state of mind. Previously Stephan had been in a state of possession; now, one might say, he was in a state of obsession. He had identified himself with St. Jacques. He strode and swaggered like St. Jacques. His bearing was regal, military, and awesome. His costume should have seemed funny, like similar costumes seen during Mardi Gras days, but instead it was unworldly and impressive.

He carried a rum bottle in his hand, and he moved through the gathering making people drink from it. Those who drank from the bottle were sharing with St. Jacques. Stephan poured more rum into an iron pot on the ground and set it afire. The hounsi kanzo, the servitors of the higher order who had been through the fire ordeal, came forward and washed their hands and arms with the burning rum, so that at times their whole arms were aflame, until they quickly snuffed the fire out. Some of the hounsi brought their children forward and washed their arms in the burn-

ing rum also, as a foretaste of the kanzo rites they might one day go through.

There was dancing again for others besides the hounsi. The tension had passed. The ceremony was over, and the rest of the night was simply for pleasure.

Gèdé Nimbo, the "Dead" Loa

Gèdé Nimbo, also known as Baron Samedi, is one of the most powerful deities of the Haitian pantheon. He guards the cemetery and protects the graves, especially those of children. But Gèdé Nimbo is not simply another loa, he is a personification of death. Like death, he is given to whim. He is an intruder. He forces his way into services being held for other deities, behaves badly, and has to be wheedled to depart. He indulges in ribald humor when the mood strikes him, and the most solemn occasions are likely to be disturbed by his pranks. Gèdé Nimbo can be formidable when aroused, as he can be gentle and forbearing when it suits him.

Gèdé is always dressed in black, usually with a tail coat and top hat. He is always represented in this attire in the shrines where effigies of him are to be found. Elsie Clews Parsons, a number of years ago, reported this Haitian description of Gèdé:

> He is a *grande diable*. He makes all kinds of motions to make you laugh, but you must not laugh at him, for if you do he makes you "stop laughing" . . . Anything you touch, he takes and never returns, and you have to give him more and more. He smokes cigarettes, not cigars. He wears a coat and a hat, and carries a stick. He can make himself short or . . . as tall as a mast.[8]

The kind of motions Gèdé makes would in certain other cultures be regarded as obscenities. In Haiti they are merely public violations of social restraints and taboos, things no Haitian would think of doing in public view. But Gèdé, the loa of the graveyard, has special prerogatives. He does not fear criticism. He flouts propriety at will, he embarrasses, provokes, and insults with impunity.

At a Nago ceremony which I witnessed near Port-au-Prince, the stronghold of the Gèdé cult, Gèdé Nimbo entered with such gusto that he virtually made a shambles of the service. The first person to be mounted by the loa was the laplace, the houngan's understudy. He stiffened, twisted, jerked, and thrashed about. As the more violent phase of his possession wore off, he began to make lascivious loin movements, as though copulating with the center post. Afterward, he moved about, shaking hands and greeting various persons with insulting remarks calculated to make others laugh at the indignities. Stopping before a distinguished-looking spectator, Gèdé made a few loin movements in his direction. Grasping another man by the hands, he greeted him vigorously and inquired whether it was

[8] [Parsons, Spirit Cult in Haiti. Cf. p. 351 (Gèdé—Amis)]

2: Courlander 8-5 .(1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

remembers many of the details. But during the administration of President Louis Borno (1922–1930) there was a reenactment of the original march. There suddenly appeared in the streets of Port-au-Prince a crowd of Gèdé *mystères*—houngans "possessed" by Gèdé Nimbo and attired in Gèdé dress: tall black hats, long black tail coats, smoked glasses, black skirts over their black trousers. They carried flags, waved polka-dot kerchiefs, shook their ceremonial rattles, and paused sometimes to wipe the perspiration from one another's faces. They became the nucleus of a huge, noisy crowd moving up the hill toward the palace. Market women followed instead of going home; street gamins screamed and raced among them. Before they had arrived at the palace grounds they had taken on the semblance of a huge Mardi Gras band. They swerved through the gates of the palace grounds and along the drive, right to the steps of the palace itself. The guards, taken by surprise, waited helplessly for their officers to arrive.

At the palace door, the houngans demanded money from the president. Borno was in a dilemma. He was reputed to be sympathetic to Vodoun ritual but was only surreptitiously so. He feared the houngans, and he feared public opinion. What would the upper class of Port-au-Prince think, the Latin-culture Haitians? With Gèdé's worst manners, the Gèdé mystères cavorted on the palace steps. Finally Borno gave in. He sent the money out to them, and then the crowd of Gèdé's marched out of the palace grounds, waving their flags and shaking their rattles.

Service for the Hounsi Bossale

This ritual of calling the loa to speak through the mouth of the Vodoun priest took place in the Bolosse section of Port-au-Prince. The *hounfor* was situated in a congested slum area of the city, but the grounds around it were spacious. The *hounfor* itself was small and unpretentious, and except for the adjoining tonnelle would easily have been mistaken for another small wooden house. The houngan was a heavy-set man with a black mustache. Quick to laugh and easy in his movements, he nevertheless commanded solemn respect from the hounsi and the other participants. His soft-spoken voice expressed assurance and authority.

There were a number of possessions in the course of the dancing, all more or less routine. Each time a possession occurred, the houngan came forward with his asson and bell, gave a pitcher of water and a candle to the possessed devotee, and conducted her through a ritual at the foot of the center post.

Later, one of the hounsi came and sat at the houngan's feet. She was not possessed but obviously was in a state of high tension. Other servitors brought from the *hounfor* a wooden washtub and set it on the ground

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1958) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

793 before the houngan. Staring into the tub, he shook his asson and called
794 upon a certain loa to enter. Then he placed a lighted candle upright in the
796 tub and watched it for a moment. The flame was suddenly snuffed out.
787 The houngan looked concerned. He removed the candle and called for another one. When he placed the new candle in the tub it remained burning. The houngan smiled. The loa had agreed to enter. The houngan and his chief assistant placed the tub upon the head of the waiting hounsi. She trembled violently as though she had received a shock, then leaped to her feet. The loa had mounted her and presumably was sitting in the tub on her head. She began to stagger back and forth across the dance court, while the drums beat a salute. The tub tottered dangerously but did not fall. The possessed hounsi then began to whirl. She stopped, and the tub continued to spin for a few seconds on her head. She twirled again in the opposite direction. Each time she stopped she waited for the tub to stop spinning. The twirling motion was accompanied by a constant jerking and lurching, as though she were about to lose her balance, but she never stumbled or fell. After perhaps five minutes of this violent "riding" by the loa, the houngan approached her with his asson and conducted her into the hounfor, the tub still on her head. Inside the hounfor he removed the tub, sent the loa away, and left the hounsi to rest.

[346] There was more dancing, and after a while the service was transferred to a small temporary cloth-covered structure resembling an American Indian hogan. The hounsi bossale—the servitors whose loa had not been "tamed" or conditioned—lay before the structure on their faces, side by side. There were twelve of them. The other hounsi covered them completely with white sheets. The houngan entered the hogan-like structure (the *ceed*) with a candle and a bell. He tinkled his bell and began to call upon the loa to speak to the hounsi bossale. Through his mouth, first one spirit and then another made comments. The hounsi under the sheets were tensely quiet, until one of them began to jerk and scream. Several others, as though responding to a trigger, joined in the screaming. Older women came to quiet them. The hysterical reaction of the hounsi bossale was regarded as simply a reflection of their beginners' status. Their loa had not yet been controlled. The ritual continued until the early hours of the morning, the loa and ancient ancestors coming in to speak, one after another.

The First Yams and the First Rice

244 Each year, when the yams are harvested there is a great festival known as
[796] the *mangé* yam. Of all things grown in Haiti, the yam is perhaps the most
[262] significant. It is the most vital of all staples, and it is traditional. The yam

to "eat" people; that is, to destroy them. To do this he employs such means as disease, insanity, and destruction of crops. If a man serves Pinga Maza well, the loa protects him in return; but for those who anger him, Pinga is a menacing and vengeful creature. People often say, "Pinga, c'est djab" (Pinga is a devil).

The Pinga hounfor in Port-au-Prince is called the *Société de la Belle Jeune Fleur*. Its peristyle is simple and is hardly distinguishable from those of other small hounfors. Around the base of the center pole is a three-foot-high wall of masonry, decorated with simple cult symbols. The outer room of the hounfor proper also resembles many another. The familiar pot têtes containing loa stand on a wooden altar, and there are Catholic lithographs on the walls. But the inner room belongs exclusively to Pinga Maza. Here are all the accoutrements and objects sacred to the deity. Everything is red. Pinga's clothing and kerchiefs are red. On the walls are painted esoteric designs—hands, skulls, and crosses—all in red. The bottles, magic bundles, and govis on the altar are decorated with red cloth, ribbons, or paint. In the middle of the earthen floor is embedded a heavy wooden cross. On each end of the crossbeam hangs a large calabash resembling a bulbous hand. And on top of the upright is affixed a human skull. The total impression of this hounfor is that of a bizarre aberration, calculated to intimidate and terrify. The houngan himself is relatively young, literate, and city wise. His personality is smooth and sharp, and he lacks the air of sincerity and easy simplicity which most often characterizes the houngan of the mountains.

In this inner room, before the skull and the cross, there took place a small service for a client, to determine what kind of magic was needed to fend off malevolent actions of an enemy. On the day of the divining session, there hung from the rafters of the tonnelle a long rope, which extended into a deep hole in the earth near the door. Hanging on the rope, down inside the hole, were two gray dolls tightly bound together. Hanging still farther down were a knife, a fork, and other, unidentifiable objects. This cluster of magic paraphernalia was an *expédition* at work; it was an elaborate pouin, which was working against an enemy who lived far away.

Before entering the hounfor, the houngan took a long rope whip from the wall and cracked it seven times before the door. This process, known as *frete cache*, was to "wake up" the loa within. The houngan then entered, followed by the client who was seeking help. They paused briefly in the outer room, where the houngan took up his asson and bell and made a small vèvè on the ground. He spoke briefly in *langage* and then passed on through the door to the inner room. There the

2: Courlander B-6 (1937-1955) 1960 IV3 Haiti IV3

The importance of water in Vodoun has a fundamentally West African character. Among the Yoruba and the Ashanti and in Dahomey, for example, water rites are a significant aspect of religious ritual. Herskovits notes the frequency of religious pilgrimages to streams in West Africa.

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In one instance, at Abeokuta, a bedecked procession of worshipers left a shrine atop a high hill, followed a long path to the riverside over two miles away, and returned before the ceremonies could be carried out at the shrine of the god. On one occasion, in Dahomey, the bed of the sacred stream ran dry was "filled" from nearby wells so that this water could be ritually redrawn for use in an especially important ceremony. Among the Ashanti, pilgrimages to Lake Bosumtwe and other sacred bodies of water regularly occur. And it is on such occasions that the spirit of the river or lake or sea manifests itself, by "entering the head" of the devotee and causing him to fling himself, possibly possessed, into the water.[8]

So it is also in Haiti, where possession at the river's edge may cause the devotee to leap into the river. At Saut d'Eau, possessed persons plunge into the waterfall without regard for their safety, being in the care of the loa who have mounted them.

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Into this water complex the Christian rite of baptism has been easily absorbed, providing merely a new act of veneration for water and its properties. In the Haitian mind baptism is not far removed from the *lavé tête* ritual, the washing of the head, or the *rafraîchi tête*, the "refreshing" of the head, both of which are acts in propitiation of the loa.[9] So related is the baptismal concept in the Haitian mind, that the term "baptize" is used to describe the lavé tête; it is said that the loa is being "baptized." So also are drums "baptized," not to mention yams, and even the hounfor itself.

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Marriage to a Loa

Although the term *hounsi* (spirit wife, or wife of the spirit) is applied to a large class of servitors of the Vodoun temple, only a small number of servitors ever pass through rites which give them a husband-wife or wife-husband relationship with a loa. Reasons for these mystic marriages vary, but usually the rituals take place upon the prescription of a cult priest who interprets the will of the deities concerned. Most of the mystic marriages of which I have heard have taken place in the general area of Port-au-Prince and the Cul-de-Sac Plain. In some other areas of Haiti it appears that no such rites have taken place locally within the memory of the elder inhabitants. One aged man living near Belladère declared: "It [marriage to a loa] is impossible. People serve loa, they do not marry them. A man does not marry his bwa. A loa

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8 A [Herskovits, The Myth of the Negro Past, p. 233. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

9 A [It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes towards water rites in certain remote areas of the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form. Cf. p. 861, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander 3-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 75]

6. Songs of the Peristyle

The songs that are sung in the peristyle are virtually numberless and have a wide range of themes. In general, they are in the spirit of supplication or placation. Preponderantly they relate in some way to the deities. A loa may be described, invoked, or called upon to perform certain deeds. He may be cajoled, joked with, and even criticized. But it is all a family affair. The servitors and the *fidèles* are the loa's "children," his "horses," his "leaves in the woods." The loa, the spirits of the dead, and the living members of the cult are all members of the same "nation." Whether supplication or admonition, the songs of the peristyle and the *bounfor* all have an intimate character. The affairs of the loa are the affairs of the société. What concerns one individual concerns all. 533 782 794 796 [769]

The themes of the songs have to do with the drama of the cult ritual, the coming and going of the deities, sickness and death, the welfare of the dead, and the behavior of the living. 533 782 794 796

The cult service is a dramatic presentation which synchronizes and brings into sharp focus the heritage of religious and folk beliefs. The songs describe and evaluate what is going on. Sometimes they are cryptic and tangent, but to those participating and those watching they are clues. As the action is usually related and progressive, so are the songs. Each song has its own place and its own meaning. One song is not readily interchangeable with another. Each service has its appropriate music. So does each developing phase of the *bounfor* ritual.

Some of the songs are addressed to the loa; others seem to be the words of the loa themselves. In many of the songs there is an implicit dialogue between one or more loa and the singers. This dialogue is not rendered in a form which is immediately understandable to a stranger. There is a constantly shifting point of view, so that sometimes the words are third-person comments about the loa or the situation,

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1965) 1980 SV3 Haiti SV3

sometimes they are the words of the deity, sometimes words addressed to the deity. The name of the loa may appear anywhere in the song, as both an invocational word and a rhythmic device, with the result that unless one is aware of the song structure he may lose the sense and intent of the words. In these two lines, for example:

> Master Agwé comes from the sea,
> My cannon is loaded.

The first line describes what happens, from the standpoint of a third person; the second line is a statement by the loa Agwé. Or, take this single line:

> Marie Louise oh, we are mixed up!

Here Marie Louise seems to be the person addressed, but in fact it is Marie Louise who is talking. Again:

> I don't see my blood, Master Ogoun!

It is not Ogoun who is addressed; the words are his own.

As in nonreligious songs, there is a pattern stanza which is repeated over and over again. As the song goes on, there may be variations for interest and certain embellishments, but by and large the form remains constant. In religious singing there are relatively few examples of songs which progress from one idea to another. When the theme has been stated, that is the song.

One of the preliminary songs in many ritual services is a greeting to the men and women of the société who are present. It is an *ochan*, or salute of welcome, and comes before the loa themselves are addressed:

Messieurs-dames bonsoir!	Gentlemen and ladies, good evening!
M'apé mandé nous!	I ask you!
Messieurs-dames bonsoir!	Gentlemen and ladies, good evening!
M'apé mandé nous	I ask you
Qui gens nous yé! [Ex. 42]	What people are we?

The answer to the question is implicit, for they are the people of the société, members of the Arada "nation" or Anago "nation," as the case may be.

In almost any service of the Dahomey "nation" the first supplicatory song is addressed to Legba, the keeper of the gate, the guardian of the crossroads, and the "go-between" who intercedes with other loa in the affairs of men. The first appeal to Legba is to open the gate, over which he is master, so that the voices of supplication may be heard and understood. The open gate also provides access for other loa to the service.

R. Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Attibon Legba ouvri bayè pou' moin ago!
Ou wè Attibon Legba ouvri bayè pou' moin ouvri bayè!
M'apé rentré quand ma tourné,
Ma salut loa yo!

Attibon Legba, open the gate for me, *ago!*
You see, Attibon Legba, open the gate for me, open the gate!
I will enter when I return,
I salute the loa!

After this appeal, or sometimes while it is being sung, the houngan spills a little water on the earth at the base of the po'teau mitan. It is an inducement for the loa to "enter," for the loa reside "below the water" and their passage into the hounfor is made easier by water. The houngan may spill his water in a long path from the entrance of the peristyle to the po'teau mitan, or extend his pitcher invitingly to the four points of the compass. Then, perhaps, another song is sung to Legba:

[793]
[823]
[798]

Papa Legba ouvri bayè moin!
Papa Legba ouvri bayè moin!
Papa Legba ouvri bayè moin!
Ou mètre qui porté drapeau,
C'est ou mètre ka paré soleil pou' loa yo!
Papa Legba, Papa Legba!

Papa Legba is in my hounfor!
Papa Legba is in my hounfor!
Papa Legba is in my hounfor!
You who carry the flag,
It is you who shade the loa from the sun!
Papa Legba, Papa Legba!

As the ritual gets under way, there may be a general song of welcome to all the loa of the cult, such as this one:

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Bonjou' oh bonjou' bonjou' bonjou' bonjou'!
Bonjou' oh bonjou' bonjou' bonjou' bonjou'!
Oh bonjou' oh bonjou' loa moin! [Ex. 43]

Good day, oh, good day, good day, good day, good day!
Good day, oh, good day, good day, good day, good day!
Oh, good day, oh, good day my loa!

When the service is well in progress, the songs may describe the qualities of the deities—their character, behavior and needs. If it is Ballindjo, for example, the song may advertise that persons with this loa in their heads are immune to poison:

Ogoun Ballindjo,
Oh Ogoun oh!

Ogoun Ballindjo,
Oh, Ogoun, oh!

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Hall SV3

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Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh Ogoun oh!
C'est pas mangé rangé
Pral tuyé chwal mwin! [Ex. 44]

Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh, Ogoun, oh!
There is no poisoned food
That will kill my horse!

Ogoun Fai, known also by the Christian name St. Jacques, is the deity of war, and this song describes his courage and valor:

St. Jacques Majeur a voyé dit'm ga'çon déjà!
St. Jacques oh voyé dit'm ga'çon déjà!
St. Jacques Majeur a voyé dit'm ga'çon la-guè!
St. Jacques oh voyé dit'm ga'çon la-guè! [Ex. 45]

Major St. Jacques sent to tell me he is already a man!
St. Jacques, oh, sent to tell me he is already a man!
Major St. Jacques sent to tell me he is a man of war!
St. Jacques, oh, sent to tell me he is a man of war!

Should the service be to the loa Dumballa Wèdo, symbolized as a rainbow and a great serpent, this song might be sung, commenting that he cannot be drowned in the water:

Papa Dumballa ou c'est couléve oh!
Pouq'ou pas néyé?
Pouq'ou pas néyé?
Dumballa pouq'ou pas néyé nan dlouz? [Ex. 46]

Papa Dumballa you are a snake, oh!
Why don't you drown?
Why don't you drown?
Dumballa, why don't you drown in the water?

[778] Dumballa, the rainbow, is in fact the source of the water that bubbles
[823] from the earth in springs. He is a patron of the spring, and there he often lives in the form of a water snake. In many a houmfor where Dumballa is specially revered there is a *bassin*, or pool, dedicated to him.
[532] On the wall behind the pool there is usually a painting of Dumballa and Ayida, depicted as great serpents, sometimes with a feathered head-
[231] dress. The pool is kept filled with fresh water from the spring, and here one or more small snakes—symbols of Dumballa and Ayida—reside:

Ala loa marché nan dlouz
C'est Dumballa!
Ala loa marché nan dlouz
C'est Dumballa!
Papa Dumballa c'est ou k dlouz!
Papa Dumballa c'est ou k dlouz!

There is a loa who lives in the water,
It is Dumballa!

2: Courlander 3-5 (1937-1953) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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There is a lua who lives in the water,
It is Damballa!
Papa Damballa is the spring!
Papa Damballa is the spring!

Ayida Wèdo, another aspect of Damballa, is also known as a snake and a rainbow. A song describing Ayida's attributes goes:

Ayida c'est arc-en-ciel oh!	Ayida is a rainbow, oh!
Ou ap' vin' fai couilive!	You will come in like a snake!
Ayida c'est arc-en-ciel!	Ayida is a rainbow!
Pas wè a'ap fai couilive? [Ex. 47]	Don't you see I come in as a snake?

Agwé Weyo, one of the major deities of the sea, is believed to be responsible for thunder over the ocean, which is described as the sound of his cannon shooting:

Mak' Agwé so'i nan la mer,
Canon'm chargé-é!
Mak' Agwé so'i nan la mer,
Canon'm chargé!
Mak' Agwé so'i nan la mer,
Canon'm chargé oh!
Canon'm chargé pou'm tiré Mak' A'Weyo! [Ex. 48]

Master Agwé comes from the sea,
My cannon is loaded!
Master Agwé comes from the sea,
My cannon is loaded!
Master Agwé comes from the sea,
My cannon is loaded, oh!
My cannon is loaded to fire, Master Agwé Weyo!

The lua Kitta, or Simbi Kitta, of the *Guinde* pantheon is one of the water deities. He is described as coming out of the water dripping wet:

Kitta oh so'i nan dlous li tou' mouillé!
Oh Kitta oh so'i nan dlous li tou' mouillé!
Oh Kitta so'i nan dlous li tou' mouillé!
Oh nan pulot houngan pawl Bondieu nan pays-yà! [Ex. 37]

Kitta, oh, comes out of the water, he is all wet!
Oh, Kitta, oh, comes out of the water, he is all wet!
Oh, Kitta comes out of the water, he is all wet!
Oh, there is no houngan in this country greater than God!

Tijean Petro of the Petro "nation" is small, and agile even though he has only one foot. (Some people say that Tijean Petro has no feet at all.) This somewhat malevolent deity hides in the leaves of the coconut palm, and from there he sometimes preys on passers-by, particularly children. Persons possessed by Tijean Petro may move about as though they have no feet and climb into the heaviest palm tree. [587]

2: Courlander 9-5 (1897-1954) 1960 SV3 Hait SV3

they have no feet and climb into the nearest palm tree. This song comments on Tijean's ability to climb with his single foot. (Haitians do not "shinny" up trees, but walk up, bracing the soles of the feet against the trunk.)

Tijean ou pas gainyain pieds,
Tijean ou pas gainyain pieds,
Comment ou fai mantè cocoyè?
Lanu bayè ro Legba, Jean Pèro,
Lanu bayè rel

Tijean, you have no feet,
Tijean, you have no feet,
How do you climb the coconut tree?
By using Legba's gate, Jean Pèro,
By using the gate!

When the loa begin to arrive in the hounfor to participate in the ceremonies, there is usually a song taking note of their coming. Sometimes the words describing the action are the deity's own account of what is happening, as in this song to the loa Sobo:

C'est passé n'ap passé là!
C'est passé ma passé là!
E, hounsi kanzo è yo kanzonin nom mwin!
Yo kanzonin nom mwin yo kanzonin nom mwin!
Yo rélé hounsi kanzo!
Yo rélé Dahomèyin!
Yo rélé mwèl! [Ex. 51]

I am passing through, I am passing through!
I am passing, I am passing here!
E, the hounsi kanzo call my name!
They are calling for me, they are calling for me!
The hounsi kanzo are calling!
Dahomey is calling!
They are calling me!

In another rite one might hear this song about the arrival of the deity Simbo, from the point of view of the servitors rather than of the loa:

Simbo Kitsa vini wè mwin, oh!
Oh Simbo wa vini wè mwin li, oh mèsi yè! [Ex. 52]

Simbo Kitsa comes to see me, oh!
Oh, Simbo will come to see me here, oh mèsi!

When the deity Bouldicha Nago comes in, there is a call for the drums to be played:

Nago 'vini-è,
Bouldicha Nago 'vini-è!
Nago 'vini-è,
Bouldicha Nago 'vini-è!
Li lè li tempo batu li!
Li lè li tempo batu li!
Nago 'vini jodi-è oh ovèè! [Ex. 53]

Nago arrives,
Bouldicha Nago arrives!
Nago arrives,
Bouldicha Nago arrives!
It is time, beat the drums!
It is time, beat the drums!
Nago comes today, oh, ovèè!

2: Courlander 8-5 (1957-1959) 1960 SV3 H481 SV3

Sobo, too, demands his drums as he arrives, as well as all the other paraphernalia for his ritual:

Cotí yo cotí yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Sobo mandé bouteí 'Lindo!	Sobo asks for his Allado bottle!
Cotí yo cotí yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Cotí yo cotí yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Sobo mandé tambour' Rada!	Sobo asks for his Arada drums!
Cotí yo cotí yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Cotí yo cotí yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Sobo mandé pouin Allado!	Sobo asks for his Allado magic!
Cotí yo cotí yo? [Ex. 53]	Where are they, where are they?

When more than one loa comes into the service at the same time there is confusion. Each loa is supposed to await his turn, so that the ritual and the dance may be conducted in an orderly way. Sometimes, however, two or more deities come in at once, throwing the orderly process out of gear. This song takes note of the simultaneous arrival of the loa Adja, Loko, Sobo, Sodje, and others.

Adja non mêlé, oh Adja oh!
Adja non mêlé!
Non mêlé Papa Loko, non mêlé jodi-ô!

Adja non mêlé, oh Adja oh!
Adja non mêlé!
Non mêlé Sodje coura non mêlé jodi-ô!

Adja non mêlé, oh Adja oh!
Adja non mêlé!
Non mêlé bêl ouaiê Nêg' Sobo non mêlé jodi-ô! [Ex. 54]

Adja we are mixed, oh, Adja, oh!
Adja we are mixed!
We are mixed Papa Loko, we are mixed up today!

Adja we are mixed, oh, Adja, oh!
Adja we are mixed!
We are mixed Sodje, enough, we are mixed up today!

Adja we are mixed, oh, Adja, oh!
Adja we are mixed!
We are mixed all the time, Nêg' Sobo, we are mixed up today!

When the loa come in en masse this way, some are asked to retire so that the service can proceed smoothly. In a similar instance, the deity Marie Louise is willing to withdraw from the scene but demands that a present or sacrifice be given to her first.

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 11681 SV3

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Marie Louise oh nous mêlé!	Marie Louise, oh, we are mixed up!
Marie Louise oh nous mêlé!	Marie Louise, oh, we are mixed up!
Cosé ça ou ba mpèin pou'm alé?	Where is my gift so that I can go?

Often, when it is time to leave the service, the deity announces through the medium of the song that he has other affairs to attend to elsewhere. Ogoun Achadé, for example, makes a swift departure:

Ogoun wèl!	Ogoun fleu!
Ansagé	Ansagé
Ogoun wèl Achadé!	Ogoun fleu Achadé!
Ansago Papa! [Ex. 55]	Ansago Papa!

As the deity Général Brisé departs, he tells his servitors that he is "going to God," and that he turns responsibility for their affairs over to them:

> Général Brisé pays ya nan main ah!
> Ago-é! Ago-é-é!
> Général Brisé pays ya nan main ah!
> Pays ya nan main
> M'pral Bondieu djab ah! [Ex. 56]

> General Brisé, the country is in your hands, ah!
> Ago-é! Ago-é-é!
> General Brisé, the country is in your hands, ah!
> The country is in your hands,
> I am going to God, ah!

The loa Bumba, in reply to a query, declares that he must go because he has work to do in his fields:

Bumba qui cous prallé?	Bumba, where are you going?
Bumba qui cous prallé?	Bumba, where are you going?
Bumba qui cous prallé?	Bumba, where are you going?
Bumba qui cous prallé?	Bumba, where are you going?
M'plantè mangal	I am planting mangal
Plantè patate!	Planting potatoes!
Plantè pumpkin!	Planting pumpkins!
Plantè banane!	Planting plantains!
Wallé Bumba qui cous prallé? [Ex. 57]	Wallé Bumba, where are you going?

The deities Malé Bois and Malé Dieu declare as they depart that they are on their way to Africa, and leave the impression that things are pretty nice over there:

Malé Dieu qui w'li nous dlèvé	Malé Dieu who comes out of the woods!
Malé Bois qui w'li nous bois!	Malé Bois who comes out of the woods!
Nan Guinée plaisir-à belle ah!	In Africa pleasure is beautiful, ah!
A n'allé wè yo! [Ex. 58]	We are going to see!

As the loa Mambo Ayida of the *Guinée* pantheon leaves the hounfor to return to Africa, her "children" ask her not to stay there too long. And they ask her to bring back to Haiti with her some good magic for use in the hounfor:

> Mambo Ayida *ô!*
> Prié nan Guinée-à, pingo ou mèd à m'kondé!
> Si ou joind bon mazangu wa pa'ki!
> Si ou joind bon kriim wa pa'ki! [Ex. 39]
>
> Mambo Ayida *ô!*
> Go to Africa, take care not to stay, I am waiting!
> If you find a good mazangu, bring it!
> If you find a good krim, bring it!

Giving food to the loa is a focal point in religious rituals. Many songs describe the sacrifice, signify that the loa are waiting for their food, or otherwise dramatize this significant activity. In the following song the deity Damballa asks for the goat with which he is to be fed.

> Damballa Wèdo oh c'est sang-ô!
> Damballa mandé tête cabris,
> C'est sang li mandé!
> Damballa Wèdo oh c'est sang-ô!
> Damballa mandé tête cabris,
> C'est sang li mandé!
> Damballa Wèdo oh c'est sang li mandé!
> Oh sweet! [Ex. 40]
>
> Damballa Wèdo, oh, it is blood *ô!*
> Damballa asks for the head of the goat,
> It is blood he asks for!
> Damballa Wèdo, oh, it is blood *ô!*
> Damballa asks for the head of the goat,
> It is blood he asks for!
> Damballa Wèdo, oh, it is blood he asks for!
> Oh, enough!

For Ogoun they sometimes sing:

> Papa Ogoun qui gain' yon manger
> Tout' moune pas manger li!
> Eshé eshé, ah! [Ex. 41]
>
> It is Papa Ogoun who has a feast,
> Not everyone may eat it!
> *Eshé eshé*, ah!

But sometimes Ogoun is dissatisfied that there is no feast ready for him, and he complains.

2: Courlander 8-5 (1957-1958) 1960 SV3 Hall SV3

Ogoun é oh mwin blessé!	Ogoun é, oh, I am hurt!
Ogoun é oh mwin blessé!	Ogoun é, oh, I am hurt!
A pas m'blessé Ferri,	Now I am hurt, Ferri,
M'pas wè sang mwin!	I don't see my blood!
M'pas wè sang'm Maît Ogoun,	I don't see my blood, Master Ogoun,
Mwin pas wè sang mwin!	I don't see my blood!
M'pas wè sang'm Badagry,	I don't see my blood, Badagry
Mwin pas wè sang mwin là! [Ex. 62]	I don't see my blood here!

The loa Mounlongue, like Damballa, likes goat meat, and it can be cooked in two ways:

Yè yè yè!
Mounlongue oh!
Oh Mounlongue oh yè yè yè!
Mounlongue mangé cabrit bouillé,
Mounlongue mangé cabrit boussud! [Ex. 63]

Yè yè yè!
Mounlongue, oh!
Oh, Mounlongue, oh, yè yè yè!
Mounlongue eats boiled goat,
Mounlongue eats roasted goat!

Or again, the servitors may sing:

Cote pané na ba'ou mangé, oh Ti Mounlongue nà!
Cote pané na ba'ou mangé, Mounlongue nà! [Ex. 64]

Wherever you are, we give you food, oh, Ti Mounlongue there!
Wherever you are, we give you food, Mounlongue there!

The loa Adja also has animal sacrifices and special dishes for his mangé, but sometimes he—and the "horses" he mounts—will eat broken glass:

Oh Adja mangé bouteille dimitjan!
Adja vèvè' vèvè'!
Adja mangé bouteille dimitjan!
Adja vèvè' vèvè'! [Ex. 65]

Oh, Adja eats the bottom of a bottle!
Adja, old one, old one!
Adja eats the bottom of a bottle!
Adja, old one, old one!

For the loa Ianman Ibo the proper sacrifice is a rooster, and the deity declares:

Nanchon Ibo m'ba mangé gros coq oh nanchon Ibo!
Nanchon Ibo m'ba mangé gros coq!
Nanchon Ibo m'ba mangé gros coq oh nanchon Ibo!
Wulle wulle wulle! [Ex. 66]

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1954) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Ibo nation, I am going to eat a large cock, oh, Ibo nation!
Ibo nation, I am going to eat a large cock!
Ibo nation, I am going to eat a large cock, oh, Ibo nation!
Waille waille waille!

The Ibo service is often a strictly family affair rather than a broad community ritual. The family replies to the Ibo loa in the following song.

La famille vin' payé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
Vin' payé sang!	Comes to pay blood!
La famille vin' payé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
Ibo Lazile volonté! [Ex. 41]	It is Ibo Lazile's wish!

The loa Nago frankly tells the people that if they want to come to his house (his shrine, or the hounfor) they will have to pay something for the privilege:

Si nou wè ceté'm demeuré,	If you see where I live,
Si nou wè ceté'm demeuré,	If you see where I live,
Fau'm payé bonbon pou' ça!	You have to give cookies for that!
Anago Nago!	Anago Nago!
Vin' wè ceté'm demeuré! [Ex. 67]	Come see where I live!

The "dead" spirit Gèdé Nimbo, the guardian or master of the cemetery, who often engages in bizarre activities which poke fun at the codes of social behavior, is sometimes regarded as a special protector of children. Precisely because he is overlord of all that has to do with the grave, his good will is sought, particularly in behalf of the young; and in many services of the Nago rites his protection is bought by money gifts:

Gèdé main la'gent,
M'apé ba ou la'gent la'gent,
M'apé ba ou la'gent pou' ga'dé zenfants la yo!
M'apé ba ou la'gent pou' ga'dé zenfants la yo!

Gèdé, take the money,
I will give you money, money,
I will give you money to guard the children!
I will give you money to guard the children!

In the course of the ceremonies when, from time to time, the honored loa of the occasion enters into the head of one of the servitors, the houngan will place in the hands of the mounted person a lighted candle and a pitcher of water. The possessed servitor approaches the sacred center post and spills a little water on the ground for the deity. After certain other rituals, the houngan, or one of his assistants, conducts the mounted "horse" into the hounfor to the altar. In the following song, as the possession comes on, there is a call for a lighted candle.

Simbi non wè oh!
Simbi djab non wè!
Oh Simbi non wè oh!
Simbi non wè oh!
Simbi wa bouté chandèlle pou' chèré moin! [Ex. 68]

Simbi doesn't see, oh!
Sorry Simbi doesn't see!
Oh, Simbi doesn't see, oh!
Simbi doesn't see, oh!
Simbi [says] you will light the candle so I can see!

Some of the songs refer to the dancing of the loa who enter the bodies of the servitors. The deity Loko asks for his hounsi, through whom he will dance:

Coté pitits moin yo,
Mèmèin'm nan hounfor, m'ap djèllé!
Na pou Loko,
Coté pitits moin yo! [Ex. 69]

Where are my children,
Take me into the hounfor, I will *djellé!*
Now, Loko,
Where are my children!

Another deity, who is not expressly named, tells his "leaves in the woods"—that is, his hounsi—that he has danced since he was a child:

Fè nan bois bélé moin!
Oh dépi'm pitit m'ap danse!
Fè nan bois lé-é!
Fè nan bois bélé moin oh!
Oh fè nan bois bélé moin oh!
Dépi'm pitit m'ap danse!
Fè nan bois bélé moin! [Ex. 70]

Leaves in the woods call me!
Oh, since I was small I have danced!
Leaves in the woods *lé-é!*
Leaves in the woods call me, oh!
Oh, leaves in the woods call me, oh!
Since I was small I have danced!
Leaves in the woods call me!

In the following song the loa Macaya Bumba is called upon by the hounsi to hurry up and get on with his dancing.

Macaya Bumba Bumba!
Lévé danse!
Macaya Bumba!
Bumba mon cher vini danse! [Ex. 71]

Macaya Bumba Bumba!
Get up and dance!
Macaya Bumba!
Bumba my dear, come and dance!

A song for the deity Ianman in the course of the Ibo dancing and ritual goes:

Ibo *lélé!*
Ibo *lélé!*
Nanchon Ibo yo *ou* gainyain ou yo Ibo *lélé!*

2: Contender 2-5 (1937-1938) 1960 8V3 Model 8V3

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Ianman con ça, con ça!
Ianman con ça'm danse Ibo!
Ianman con ça, con ça!
Ianman con ça'm danse Ibo!
Ianman con ça, con ça!
Ianman *d-wa d-wa d-wa!* [Ex. 72]

Ibo *Mbf*
Ibo *Mbf*
Ibo Nation, what are you doing there, Ibo *Mbf*
Ianman, like that, like that!
Ianman, like that I dance the Ibo!
Ianman, like that, like that!
Ianman, like that I dance the Ibo!
Ianman, like that, like that!
Ianman *d-wa d-wa d-wa!*

Another song containing the same zestful appreciation of dancing is for the Ina Kitta. The words "my mother isn't dead" and "my father isn't dead" are simply expressions of good fortune and happiness which embellish the command to do the Kitta steps:

Ai ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!

Manman pas manri ba'm pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!

M'dig pitit ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!

Papa pas manri ba'm pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta! [Ex. 73]

Ai, little man, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps!

My mother is not dead, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps!

I say little man, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps!

My father is not dead, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps!

A song for the Ina Bamburra describes the movements of his dance. Bamburra is symbolized by the crab, and the dance posture with "low hips" is regarded as characteristic of the crab's movements: [535]

Bamburra kap promènè, taille bas!
Bamburra allè promènè, taille bas!

[For footnote, see category 116, p. 351. --Analyst]

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Rumbura is walking, low hips!
Rumbura is going to walk, low hips!

Dumballa Wèdo, being a snake deity, "thrusts" or "winds" his way like a serpent, and this song describes a serpentine course taken by the dancers as Dumballa (here identified as a Nago man) arrives:

Filé na filé, Dumballa Wèdo vini wè mèin!
Filé na filé, Nèg' Nago vini wè'in lè! [Ex. 74]

Wind, we wind, Dumballa Wèdo comes to see me!
Wind, we wind, the Nago man comes to see me here!

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After the dancing has been going on for a long while and the pace is fast, there may be a song of humor, such as the following from the Dahomey rites. The dancers sing *lailié, lailié!*, describing a figure of the dance in which the skirts are swirled, and note that they have worn out the drummers. They even offer to carry on their backs those dancers who are ready to fall by the wayside:

Lailié lailié!
Oh lailié lailié oh vièx'!
Tambouyé bouké!
Tambouyé bouké viéx'!
Lailié lailié oh viéx'!
Lailié lailié tambouyé bouké houngan'na!
M'pa'ié sou corps mèin vié ma!
Tambouyé bouké ça!
Lailié lailié! [Ex. 75]

Lailié lailié!
Oh, *lailié lailié*, oh, old people!
The drummers are tired!
The drummers are tired, old people!
Lailié lailié, oh, old people!
Lailié lailié, the drummers are tired, my *houngan!*
I'll carry you on my back, old sister!
The drummers are tired there!
Lailié lailié!

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Interspersed among the songs of the hounfor there are sometimes warnings or admonitions. Usually they are tangent and indirect in statement, and may be from the point of view of the loa or of the houngan. In the following pouin song, which accompanies the ritual of making magic, there is a warning to certain people who will feel the effects of the magic. The ceremony includes, among other things, the dropping of lemons, roots, and leaves by the houngan into his sacred basin or pond. The houngan sings:

The loa Alizon complains more vigorously of the bad behavior of human beings:

Alizon Alizon!
Dipis tempo y'ap pa'lé sou moin!
Coté ça yo gainyain?
Bouche à yo paya paya!
Djoule à yo pèté pèté!
Coté ça pou' yo pa'dou ok? [Ex. 83]

Alizon, Alizon!
For a long time they have been talking about me!
What's wrong with them?
Their mouths go *paya paya!*
Their jaws go *pèté pèté!*
What is the excuse?

Even on routine business the loa are inclined to be petulant, or to protest that they have been mistreated, that their followers gossip about them, or that they are not ardent enough. Here the deity Simbi en des Eaux complains bitterly that she is not loved by her servitors, the "leaves in the woods," and asks a hounsi named Lolo for news to take to spirits of the ancestors who live "below the water":

Fé nan bois ous ça nou yé!
Nen point ximain pas mandé quim!
Fé nan bois ous ça nou yé!
Nen point ximain pas mandé quim!
Simbi en des Eaux,
Qui sorti ou bas dlève!
Gardé ça yo fai moin!
M'dit Lolo, ba moin nouvelle pou'm ba yo! [Ex. 84]

Leaves in the woods, that's the way you are!
There is no love that does not ask to end!
Leaves in the woods, that's the way you are!
There is no love that does not ask to end!
Simbi en des Eaux,
Who comes from below the water!
See what they do to me!
I say, Lolo, give me the news to give them!

But if the loa complain about the behavior of their followers, the servitors also may complain. Songs sung in the hounfor may chide the deities for antisocial deeds, for forgetting their "children," or for carelessness. In the following song the spirit Malt' Grand Chimin is criticized for mounting his "horses" with such fury that they are thrown about

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violently. The hounsi complain that Maît' Grand Chimin treats them as though they were flour being ground in a mill:

> Temp' changé nouvelle allé!
> Bonjour' Papa bonjour' Roi Grand Chimin!
> M'mandé Papa ça'm fait
> Temp' changé nouvelle allé!
> Bonjour' Papa bonjour' Roi Grand Chimin!
> M'mandé Papa ça'm fait
> Papa m'pas moin moulin!
> Nan dit na bougé moin!
> Papa m'pas moin moulin!
> Nan dit na bougé moin! [Ex. 85]
>
> Times changé, the news gone out!
> Good day, Papa, good day, Roi Grand Chimin!
> I ask you, Papa, what did I do?
> Times change, the news gone out!
> Good day, Papa, good day, Roi Grand Chimin!
> I ask you, Papa, what did I do?
> Papa, I am not corn flour!
> You say you will grind me!
> Papa, I am not corn flour!
> You say you will grind me!

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When there is sickness within the société there may be songs for the absent ones. Here is a song for an ailing hounsi:

> Moin allé wé li, hounsi malade oh!
> Moin allé wé ça, hounsi malade oh!
> Moin allé wé bougan, hounsi malade oh! [Ex. 86]
>
> I am going to see there, the hounsi is sick, oh!
> I am going to see it, the hounsi is sick, oh!
> I am going to see, bougan, the hounsi is sick, oh!

Again, the members of the société call upon Ogoun, or St. Jacques, to help one of their number who is sick:

> St. Jacques marré cheval li,
> Li pas dit personne oh,
> Vèyé li pou' moin!
> Li met gainyain verre,
> Li met gainyain moline nan dos,
> St. Jacques oh!
> Ba li lavie pou' moin! [Ex. 87]
>
> St. Jacques ties his horse,
> He tells no one, oh,
> Take care of him for me!
> He may have worms,
> He may have sores on his back,
> St. Jacques, oh!
> Protect him for me!

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Ogoun is the dispenser of rum, and in virtually all Ogoun rituals rum is at some time or another in evidence. Sometimes rum is poured into a hot iron pot and bursts into flame. The iron pot is described as Ogoun's

2: Courlander 8-6 [1937-1938] 1962 SV3 Haiti SV3

house. A round, polished Indian stone is occasionally used as a *garde hakinion*. And old people speak of a very powerful charm known as a *gros avrite* which in former times was placed on the trail to protect entire villages or valleys. 789

Still another potent defensive charm is the *possin*, which is the product of ritual magic within the cult temple. A possin may be an actual bundle containing a formula of special ingredients; more often, it is invisible, consisting of magical forces unleashed into space by the houngan. There are many ceremonies in the hounfor devoted to the projecting of these magical forces. They are called *cérémonie possin* or *cérémonie magie* and are dramatized by special cult songs and dances. Sometimes the magic ceremony is woven into a more generalized cult ritual. The powers of the possin are regarded as wider and more potent than those of the arrêts. Possins are said to protect an individual or a group not only against other magic but also against natural phenomena and accident. A possin may ward off lightning, for example, or protect one from falling trees or from shipwreck or drowning. But it is not solely defensive magic. It may bring success in fishing, or produce a good crop in one's garden, or aid human fertility. 789 794 796 [777] [342]

Since the crops and the garden are the substance of life, much attention is given to their protection. An enemy may attack a man or his household through garden magic. He may bury a ouanga in the earth, to bring sickness or ruin. He may poison a tree by performing a special rite at its foot, and its fruits will then carry disease or death to the one who eats them. Or he may make a compact with the earth so that it will dry up and refuse to produce for the one who tills it. Against all these malevolent possibilities, as well as against common thieves, the Haitian peasant has many magical and practical resources. Some people are said to employ zombies as watchmen. These fearsome creatures will capture a trespasser and hold him for the owner of the field.[3] Or perhaps the owner will place special arrêtes in his garden. Occasionally a man will protect his fields by planting *piquettes* in the earth. The *piquette* is a piece of sharpened bamboo or hard wood. Its point is dipped into poison, and it is placed in the ground, sharpened end up. An unwary intruder who steps on a piquette may die of his wound. 789 685 [754] [775]

To counteract the *malfok*, or evil eye, a man may procure from a bocor a special shirt made of wide strips of red, white, and blue cloth sewed together. This shirt, called a *mayo* or *mayo*, is worn for seven days if the *malfok* is a rather ordinary one. If the evil force is a particularly virulent one, however, the *mayo* will be worn as long as twenty-one 754 789 791

3 [Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," Journal of Negro History, October, 1940, p. 503. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 BV3 Haiti BV3
[P. 112-CC]

41. Voodoo dancers, northern Haiti. The drums are characteristic of that region. The boy at left, although only twelve or thirteen years old, is an accomplished drummer.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1938) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P.112-N]

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20. A Voodoo altar in northern Haiti, scarcely distinguishable from a Catholic shrine. Houngfors range from the simple to the complex, from the poor to the rich, from the primitive to the sophisticated, and from the bizarre to the artistic.

21. Altar in the houngfor "Société de la Belle Jeune Fleur" in Port-au-Prince dedicated to the loa Ponge Mama. The cross surmounted by the skull represents the deity. Behind the table, leaning against the cross, is the pestle with which the loa "grinds" his enemies. On the other table are razor blades for Ponge Mama to cut.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Hall SV3

[P.112-Q]

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ab. Service for the Ins Agard in a boat at sea. In the center, two bearers hold the model's flags. Bearers then and the hangar in the beautiful barque d'Agard, a mythic monument vessel which will be set adrift. An organ and a drum are at the lower right.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P.112-R]

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29. Saluting the lwa. In the grasse, with sword, is the houngan, flanked by two hounsi carrying sequin-studded flags. In the background, left, is the houngan with his sceptre.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1938) 1964 SV3 Rack SV3

[P.112-U]

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p. A Christmas service near Lalaguna, ritual "bathing" in fire. The two young women are honored possessed by a lua of the Gbili family, probably Juan Zumbo. Their mantels are stuffed with cotton and their paws are hooked to the manner of carpets, in honor of the deity, who is a "dwarf" lua. In a state of possession they come to be impervious to the intense heat.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-Y]

35. *A houngi in the first stage of possession by a loa.*

Mouvauk. In present-day Trinidad there is a Calinda dancer which closely resembles the Mouvauk; Puerto Rico has its Bomba Calindin; and under another name the "battle dance" survives among Negro communities in Surinam. The counterpart of the Calinda in Brazil is the Capoeira, for which musical accompaniment is provided by African-style "belly harps" (musical bows with gourd resonators) called berimbaus. The tradition lingers on in Haiti in modern stick prize-fighting dancers sometimes performed in Rara season.

The stick dancer (*Batonnier*) of the Haitian carnival season, mentioned in chapter 8, is of more than passing interest for the reason that almost identical dancers have been reported from some areas of West Africa. In the Haitian dance (see fig. 73) the baton wielders, all males, for unexplained reasons are attired in women's clothing. A photograph made in 1958 of a baton dancer among the Ewe people of Togoland depicts a scene scarcely distinguishable from a Haitian Rara performance, and it is noteworthy that its all-male cast is in women's dress.[7]

In addition, there remain a number of fragments of dances of the past. In religious ritual, on rare occasions, one may see animal dances in which the performers mimic animal movements, holding in their hands long sticks to simulate front legs. This type of dance has been reported frequently in West Africa, particularly in connection with totemic rituals.

There is a dance in the Arada ritual in which the loa Legba is invoked. A houngi—usually a man—comes onto the dance court wearing a kind of cane-crutch called the *baton* Legba, or Legba stick. The baton is about the length of a cane, with a long, grotesquely twisted "handle" that fits under the crotch of the legs. The dancer wraps one leg around the stick and walks as though he has only one foot. In the dance, he spins around on the stick, leaps, and pirouettes. Identification of the stick as well as the dance with Legba, and its position between the legs, seem clearly to relate it to the phallic sticks used in dances for Legba in Dahomey.

Among the secular exhibitionistic dances of Haiti, there is one in which a man stands on his head and goes through erotic motions to the accompaniment of drums.

In addition to the almost countless dances of African origin or inspiration, there is the ever-popular Meringue, a European-type social dance which is known in many forms. Haitian connoisseurs of this dance believe there are three main forms of the Meringue: the "Meringue de Concert," in which the rhythm is slow and "caressing"; the "dance Meringue," in which the rhythm is quasi-fast and very gay; and the "Meringue Coundjaille," in which the rhythm is very fast. The last

7 [United Nations Photograph no. 62065. Cf P 352, category 116. -- Ana 1957]

533 533 526 576 A protest theme that runs through many a song stems from the feeling of having been slighted or improperly received in the house of another person. The following song airs the complaint of a person who feels he has been treated shabbily. Metaphorically, he says he is used to eating from an earthern bowl but has been served food in a guard dish, from which only the poorest of people eat.

> Mo 'kinsé manjé sur bolle,
> M'pap manjé sur ossin cipé! [Ex. 57]
>
> I'm accustomed to eating from a bowl;
> I'm not going to eat from a cat guard!

574 Or again, there is the story of the unwelcome voyager, a person who travels all the way from Jérémie, far out on the southern peninsula, to the distant town of Arcahaye, only to find that he is not wanted there:

Moin sort' Jérémie!	I come from Jérémie!
Moin passé Aux Cayes!	I pass through Aux Cayes!
M'rivé L'Arcahaye, ours amis!	I arrive in Arcahaye, my friends!
C'est moin sabre yo pas vlé wè yà,	It is me they don't wish to see here,
Moin yo wè!	It is me they see!
C'est moin sabre yo pas vlé wè yà,	It is me they don't wish to see here,
Moin yo wè oh!	It is me they see, oh!
C'est moin sabre yo pas vlé wè yà,	It is me they don't wish to see here,
Moin yo wè oh!	It is me they see, oh!

461 A man complains sometimes of the work that has been foisted upon him by an employer, or by a neighbor with whom he exchanges labor:

> M'pas moleste oh moin pas moleste oh!
> Habitant passé moin pa'lé café!
>
> I'm not a mule, oh, I'm not a mule, oh!
> The farmer takes me to carry coffee!

533 533 194 62 Even the officials of the houmfor may be publicly reproached in song for acts of injustice. In the following example the houngénicon, the Vodoun priest's assistant, is taken to task. The song probably was first heard in the course of a ceremony at which the houngénicon was present:

> Dorsmain y wa, houngénicon oh!
> Dorsmain y wa, 'génicon é!
> Dorsmain y wa, yo fai mangé raison moin!
> Lè moin vlé pa'lé ou pas vlé moin pa'lé!
> Lè moin vlé chanté ou pas vlé moin chanté là!
> Dorsmain y wa, yo fai mangé raison moin! [Ex. 58]
>
> Dahomey *y wa*,* houngénicon, oh!
> Dahomey *y wa*, houngénicon, *é*!
> Dahomey *y wa*, they do me wrong!

* The word Dahomey is frequently used as an exclamation.

When I want to talk you do not want me to talk!
When I want to sing you do not want me to sing!
Dahomey *y ava*, they do me wrong! *

Another note of criticism within the *houngan* concerns a person who has been putting on airs of importance. The song states that he (or she) in reality has not even qualified for the lowest order within the cult, even though he behaves as though he were the cult chief:

Oh poor houngi oh!	You are not yet a houngi, oh!
Oh dit'in ou c'est houngan!	You tell me you are a houngan!
Oh poor houngi!	You are not yet a houngi!
Oh dit'in ou c'est houngan c'est qui	You tell me you are a houngan, it is us!
Oh Pulle à Terre!	Oh, Snow on Earth! †
Pouss! allé!	Push and go!
Oh Allada malade oh! [Ex. 99]	Oh, Allada is sick, oh! ‡

Poverty is so normal in Haitian life that a man who accumulates wealth in any form becomes conspicuous. Ordinarily he does not welcome this conspicuousness. It makes him a target of gossip and rumors, and of those who might wish to collect debts from him, borrow money, or obtain other favors. He becomes a *grou alg'*, and finds himself increasingly cut off from the community of ordinary, poor people. Needless to say, Haitians, like other people, dream of striking it rich. Wherever poverty has been acute, whether in Europe, Asia, or America, the folklore is full of tales of finding great treasures. Haiti is no exception. Many Haitian folk tales and folk songs deal with this theme, particularly with obtaining wealth by magical or supernatural means. Sometimes riches are obtained through *engagements*, unholy compacts with devils or demons. In some stories loa facilitate the discovery of treasure, in others a powerful bocor accomplishes it through magical practices. If a man suddenly becomes well-to-do, therefore, rumors may spread in regard to how he came by his wealth. If he is suspected of dealings with devils or with a powerful bocor, his apparent success in his venture makes him a neighbor to be feared. To avoid incurring envy and hostility, people tend to play down their financial successes and pretend they have nothing in life but the clothes they wear, their houses, and their gardens. Spreading word that a poor man has hidden money is regarded as a mean and reprehensible act. Numerous folk songs protest against this injustice:

Désaster tombé nous lèmor-wè!
Si m'apé travaille li nous ouar-wè,

* Literally: They eat my rights.
† An exclamation, the name of a certain manga.
‡ Allada, the name of a town in Dahomey, used in the sense of "people of Dahomey." The line means, "Things are in a bad state of affairs."

[illegible] of their reputation for [illegible] were deported is a matter of speculation. Bizarre tales told by the colonists, as well as rumors and legends propagated about the societies by nonmembers who feared them, did result in a body of folklore which pictures these groups as malevolent. The societies themselves, no doubt, often supported such beliefs to increase the awe in which they were held.

In modern Haiti, however, there is no secret or fraternal society of the kind that probably existed in prerevolutionary days. Nor is there anything comparable to the Abakwa, or Carabali, as the secret society that has survived in Cuba.[2]

Curiously enough, the most significant noncult organization in Haiti today is the Masonic order. Yet it has not remained distinct from the cults but has become interwoven with them. Many Vodoun and Congo services have rites or dances that are designated as Maconne (Masonic). Houngans often feel that affiliation with the Masonic order offers distinction and prestige for the houngfor that the ordinary cult center does not have.

As for the Calinda, the Cochon Rouge, the Cochon Gris, the Zombeaup, the Vinbindingue, and the Mountdingue societies, they appear to survive in name rather than in fact. The rumors and tales go on, as they do about zombies, devils and loa-garou. It is mostly at carnival time that their names are heard. A Mardi Gras band, appropriately costumed, may herald itself as a Calinda or a Cochon Rouge group. It will sing songs it regards as appropriate to the kind of effect it is trying to achieve. Such groups are not taken seriously. They are merely part of the carnival fun. But to members of older generations they do recall tales about the secret societies that met under the limbs of the mapou tree by torchlight to conduct their nocturnal affairs.

The songs that follow are reputed to belong to the Calinda, Vinbindingue, and Zombeaup societies; but they are infected with a frivolous quality which suggests they may have been heard for the first time in the carnival celebration rather than in the dark shadows of the mapou.

One of the legends concerning the Bolbindingue, or Vinbindingue, is that of the dancing drum. The theme is a special one, but it is related to other stories about dancing calabashes in the Calinda ritual and about dancing hoes. This song describes a gathering at such a dance:

Bolbindingue!
C'est li s'hanme sové yé!
Cimbiline tonnerre!
Bolbindingue!
C'est yon soul tambour qui danse!
Pardon mon pitié
Bolbindingue!
C'est li s'hanme sové yé! [Ex. 124]

[2] [See Courlander "Abakua Meeting in Guanabacoa," Journal of Negro History, XXIX (1944), 461ff. Cf. Cat. 116, p. 353. -- Analyst]

534 of drum making is a very simple one, but the tools are
522 simpler: chisels, machetes, and fire. The core of the log is removed by
[412] burning and gouging, and the outside is shaped with a machete, or
sometimes a hatchet. The wood is selected and processed carefully. Firing
of the core of the log depends a good deal on how dry the wood is,
for the wood must burn slowly. It is believed that wood cut at the right
stage of growth and at the right phase of the moon is resistant to the
[824] ever-present powder-post beetles. Mahogany was once favored because
it was durable and beetle resistant, even though it was heavy. But in
recent decades mahogany has become scarce, and modern drums are
made of lighter woods.

534 Drums made in the nineteenth century not only conformed to the
522 patterns of certain West African prototypes but were also carved and
198 decorated. Some of these old drums are still to be seen, but there are
531 not many left. An ancient carved *assator* drum (previously cited) has
[971] fortunately been preserved by the Bureau d'Ethnologie. But between the
ravages of the powder-post beetles, age, and the periodic orgies of drum
burning by the church and misguided public officials, most of these
[648] ancient works of art have long since disappeared. During the American
occupation of Haiti—from World War I to 1932—American military
personnel also contributed to the mania for drum burning. And as late
as 1941 there was a massive, clerc-inspired drive to wipe out these
instruments as remnants of *sauvage* elements in Haitian life.

534 The effect of this war against the drum was only to improve the
198 business of the professional drum maker. Drums had become expendable,
531 hence they were made simpler. The carved decorations disappeared.
Paint was substituted, and less attention was given to detail. The im-
portant thing was to produce a good functional instrument. But the
creative instincts of the drum makers sometimes still take over, and
many of the modern drums are beautifully proportioned, with delicate
geometric patterns carved around the base, or foot. Among certain
categories of drums the painted decorations consist solely of the name
of the loa to whom the instruments have been dedicated—St. Jacques
perhaps, or Papa Pierre, or Ezilie.

534 Drums differ in design according to the use for which they are in-
191 tended. The Arada or Vodoun drums are used primarily in connection
● 784 with the dances and rituals of the Vodoun cult—the cult built around
196 the gods and rites of Arada and Yoruba theology. They resemble closely
drums which are used today in Dahomey, Nigeria, and Togoland. They
534 usually come in sets of three. The largest, the *manman* (also called
boustor or *boustogri*), may be three to four feet high. The middle-
sized drum, or *second* (also called *grandé* or *moyen*), is about two feet

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 193]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

534 533 the pegs. High notes are achieved by striking the drumhead near the rim, and low notes near the center.

534 516 The drummers usually sit together on a bench or in chairs at one side of the dance court. The larger and middle drums are slightly tipped to keep their "mouths" open; the *bula* stands squarely on its base and is therefore somewhat muted. The player of the *manman* often drums in a standing position, bracing the instrument by means of a cord around his thigh.

534 796 Another drum associated with the Arada rites is the assotor. This drum is usually about six feet high, and may be from two to two and a half feet in diameter. It is played in an upright position, and two or three small "windows" near the base permit the sound to emerge. [794] This big drum is used only for the Assotor service, at which the Dahomey "nation" plays host to the loa of all the various rites. Usually there is only a single drummer, who plays while standing on a bench or raised platform; but on occasion, two or even three drummers play simultaneously on the single drumhead.

534 171 It is interesting to note in passing that most of the Vodoun drums have Dahomean names and are of Dahomean design, despite the fact that Yoruban religious motifs have survived. The Yoruban double-headed *bata* drum, used in Nigeria for invocation of the principal deities, appears to have survived in decadent form on the island of La Gonave, where it is known as *pongué*. Curiously, it is played not like the Yoruban *bata* (one hand on each head) but like another Yoruban instrument, 534 the *dundun*, or pressure drum. The instrument is held under one arm and played only on the forward head. Significantly enough, this drum is said to be used only for Nago (Yoruba) rites. Another drum reserved [794] for Nago services is found in the region of Léogane. It resembles the [796] Arada drum in every respect except that it stands on three carved legs.

Drums associated with the services of the Congo "nation" are distinctly different from those found in Vodoun ritual. No drumsticks are used, and the heads are of goatskin rather than cowhide and are held in place by a system of cords and hoops. The Congo drum seen today stands about three feet high; old people say that within their memory there was a variety of Congo drum as tall as a man. Unlike the Arada [531] drum, the Congo drum usually has no carved or painted decoration. For the "pure" Congo rites, two of these instruments, accompanied by gourd or metal rattles of various kinds, constitutes an orchestra. One typically Congo rattling device, called *mayoyo*, consists of three large gourds containing pebbles, on the top of a long pole.

A variant of the Congo drum is used for Pétro rites. It is similar

[P. 317]
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1. The Pantheons

Most of the loa of Haiti appear to belong to two major cult groupings: the Vodoun (dominated by Dahomé rites and traditions) and the Congo-Guinée (dominated mainly by the Pétro deities). In the Vodoun pantheon one finds deities of Dahomean and Yoruban origin, and others whose names seem to identify them with West African peoples such as the Mahis, the Amines, the Adjas, the Foulas, the Sousous, and the Haoussas. The so-called Congo-Guinée group, in addition to the Pétro escorte, appears to have absorbed many loa from Central Africa. Among the Congo-Guinée loa are such names as Mayombé, Loango, Bumba, Moundongue, Mousondi, Angole, Congo, Baganda, and Solongo, all of them designations of regions or tribes of the Congo area. Also in this pantheon are loa bearing the names Bambarra and Siningal (Senegal), from northwestern Africa. 776 794 184

It is not possible to group the loa in such a way that the system will reflect accurately the tradition and usage in all parts of the country. Had all the old cults or "nations" survived intact, the pantheons might have resembled the following:

Arada or Dahomey loa
Anago or Yoruba loa
Mahi loa
Congo loa (including the Moundongue, the Solongo, the Bumba, etc.)
Ibo loa
Kanga loa
Pétro loa
Etc.

In certain parts of Haiti, in scattered and isolated places, one finds Congo, Ibo, and Nago cults that have resisted absorption; but this pattern does not hold for most of the country. In general, Congo and Pétro tend to "march" together; Anago has become a "nation" within

776 184 794 a "nation" in the Dahomé rites; and the Ibo group, though still distinct, is frequently allied with the Dahomé rites or the Guinée rites.

The following list does not pretend to include all the loa known in Haiti. It is doubtful that a complete list could ever be compiled, in view of the continual generation of new deities and the constant cross-fertilization between "nations." The loa are grouped here according to [128] most widespread usage. There are contradictions from which there is no possible escape, and these general groupings will not necessarily correspond to the concepts and practices of any specific locality. It is intended here to give a broad and generalized view.

128 776 794 Under "The Vodoun Pantheon" I have placed constellations of deities of Dahomean and Yoruban origin, along with others that are clearly identified with Vodoun rites. Under "The Congo and Pétro Pantheons" I have listed the Congo-Guinée loa—consisting mainly of deities associated with Central Africa and deities affiliated with the Pétro rites. Ibo and Kanga loa are grouped together, because in many regions of Haiti the two pantheons appear to be interlocked. A separate listing is given for the Simbi family of water deities in view of their ambivalence; they are sometimes found in the Pétro group and sometimes in the Dahomé, according to local practice.

THE VODOUN PANTHEON

776 171 Damballa Wèdo, or Dan Wèdo. One of the most venerable of Haitian loa. He is generally recognized as the husband of Ayida Wèdo, though occasionally the two deities are merged in a personality called Damballa-Ayida. The concept of a single identity for Damballa and Ayida conforms to Dahomean belief. In both Haiti and West Africa, Damballa is identified with the rainbow and is symbolized as a snake.[h] In Haiti he is associated also with rainfall, springs, and fertility. He is sometimes [782] described as "white," and the proper food offering to him is a white chicken. Persons [887] possessed by Damballa usually take on stylized characteristics of snakes. Along with [177] many other important loa, he has become identified with characters in Christian religious belief. There are, in fact, "two" Damballa Wèdos. One, identified with Moses, comes in talking; the other, identified with St. Patrick, never talks. Food [782] offerings for the St. Patrick version of Damballa consist of eggs, flour, sugar, and almond syrup. Damballa remains one of the chief gods of the Dahomey cult in Cuba, and he survived into the last century in New Orleans under the name Danny.

[822] Ayida Wèdo. Generally regarded in Haiti as the wife of Damballa, Ayida is also symbolized by snake and rainbow, and her color, like Damballa's, is "white." In Dahomey and Nigeria, Ayida is known as a male rather than a female spirit and is regarded there as the same divinity as Damballa, or Dji. In Dahomey, Ayida Wèdo was the great serpent who held up the world. According to one myth, the Creator of the World assigned to Ayida the task of holding up the earth to keep it from falling into the sea. The great serpent coiled himself, tail in mouth, and lay below

h [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 245 ff. Cf. p. 354, category 16. --Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

(*Evo évo* is ritual language. Hounsi kanzo are the servitors of the hounfor being addressed by an unidentified loa.) [533] [539] [198] [794]

EXAMPLE 136

Achadé, oh, oh!
Achadé, I have no mother here to speak for me!
Achadé, oh!
Achadé, I have no mother here to speak for me!
Oh Achadé, oh!
Ogoun is bad, oh!
Achadé Papa!
Ogoun is bad, oh!
Etc.

(The song is addressed to the loa Achadé; it complains of the behavior of another loa, Ogoun.) [782]

EXAMPLE 137

Beat the drum for me!
I shall . . . , beat the drum for me!
Etc.
Three times after the Angelus, oh!
Three times after the Angelus, oh!

(This appears to be a children's game song. Three "times" after the Angelus would be three hours after six o'clock in the evening.) [524]

EXAMPLE 138

Liberia fell down!
Liberia fell down! *Adiff*
I am sending a whip for his back!
Etc.

(A children's game song.)

EXAMPLE 139

Adaïzo!
Miyenvalo Aloko, my Loko, Adaïzo!
Miyenvalo Aloko, my Loko, Adaïzo!
Miyenvalo my Loko, Adaïzo!
Etc.

(This is a song of supplication to the loa Loko. The word *miyenvalo* signifies supplication.) [782]

EXAMPLE 140

Ten cents is not a dollar,
Cousin, don't take cousin, oh, cousin!

2: Courlander B-6 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[7.349]

Notes

Chapter 1: *The Making of the Haitian* (*pp. 1-7*)

[1]The name Ganda survives in Haiti as the name of a deity.

[2]Herskovits, in *The Myth of the Negro Past* (p. 47), provides a tabulation of raw data found in the manifests recorded for slaves shipped to Virginia between 1710 and 1769: 20,364 slaves were reported shipped from "Africa," 3,652 from Gambia, 6,777 from "Guinea," 9,224 from Calabar, 3,880 from Angola, and 1,011 from Madagascar. Of those shipped from the island of Madagascar, 473 were listed as coming from Mozambique.

[3]Bartolomé de Las Casas.

Chapter 2: *Man and the Universe: Vodoun* (*pp. 8-18*)

[1]See Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 7.

[2]Schweinfurth in *The Heart of Africa*, II, 31, says: "In Loango all exorcists and conjurors are called *ganga*." Leo Wiener, in *Africa and the Discovery of America* (Philadelphia: Innes and Sons, 1922), III, 32, reports: "Forms of *ganga* have in Rantu the meaning 'medicine' but also 'magic'—such as Nyika *ganga* and Kongo *nganga*."

[3]Gorer, *Africa Dances*, p. 120; Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 208 ff.

[4]From the Fon *houn-to* or *houn-su*. Among the Arada of Dahomey a *houn-su* was regarded as a spiritual wife of the deity. She was a servant of the cult temple, and in some instances a wife of the cult priest.

[5]Translated from the French of Aubin, *En Haiti*, pp. 57-59.

[6]Deren, in her *Divine Horsemen* (pp. 119 ff.), gives an excellent report of a service for Agwé in a boat at sea. Aubin (*op. cit.*, p. 108) seems to have given the first description of this service at sea for the loa Agwé.

[7]Leyburn, *The Haitian People*, p. 119.

[8]*Ibid.*, p. 123. Leyburn advances the theory that Vodoun developed during this period as a result of the vacuum left by the Church. Although the Church did in effect leave the field to the African cults, one must assume that the Arada, Congo, and other cults were already organized and possessed of great vitality before the Haitian revolution. Implicit evidence points to a continuity of cult life from the earliest days of the African on Haitian soil. There are no statistics to reveal the extent of cult membership at the end of the eighteenth century, but the content and form of Vodoun today are so overwhelmingly African that it is difficult to think of Haitian cult activity as the product of a renaissance.

Chapter 3: *The Loa: Gods of the Haitian Mountains* (*pp. 19-29*)

[1]The term *vodoun*, used in this precise sense, conforms to the original Fon (Dahomean) usage. The term *hounsi*, also of Fon origin, signifies "spirit" and belongs to the same root

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Chapter 5: *Services for the Loa and the Family Ancestors* (*pp. 41–74*)

[1]Note that the houngan and the laplace are performing services normally performed by the *petit serane*.

[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 165.

[3]Parsons, *Spirit Cult in Haiti*.

[4]Account given by Jean Ravel Pintro.

[5]Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana.

[6]Account given by Voluska Saintvil. A. W. Cardinall notes in his book *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 69): "Trees are in most cases treated with respect. Before a man dare fell one for a canoe he must and invariably does sacrifice to its spirit and apologizes for the harm he is about to do it."

[7]The rite of *rafraichi tête* is conducted periodically for a *maît' tête* after the original *lavé tête* ceremony. The purpose is to "refresh" the loa and make him content with his residence in the head of the devotee.

[8]Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, p. 233.

[9]It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain Negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form.

[10]Odette Menescon Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Voudoun Loa," in Appendix A of Deren, *Divine Horsemen*, p. 264.

Chapter 6: *Songs of the Peristyle* (*pp. 75–94*)

[1]This theme is further commented on in chap. 13. Compare with the following excerpt from a Surinam song reported by Herskovits in *Surinaamse Folk-Lore* (p. 689):

> I have no mother there,
> I have no father there,
> I have no sister there,
> I haven't got anybody there.

Chapter 7: *In the Mapou Tree: Magic, Demons, and Compacts* (*pp. 95–104*)

[1]Simpson, "Haitian Magic," *Social Forces*, October, 1940, p. 97.

[2]Note the coincidence of the term *gris-gris* or *grigri* as used in the United States, where it has the same meaning as *mojo*, or "voodoo" charm.

[3]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 503.

[4]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, p. 243.

Chapter 8: *Mardi Gras and Rara: Jugglers, Maypoles, and Kings* (*pp. 105–109*)

[1]Aubin, *En Haïti*, p. 42.

[2]Marionettes of this kind have been observed in both East and West Africa and are well known in the region of Senegal. I saw a phallic marionette, virtually identical with the Haitian version, in the neighborhood of Khartoum, Sudan.

Chapter 9: *Land and Work* (*pp. 110–121*)

[1]Franklin, *The Present State of Haiti*, p. 362.

[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 300 ff., describes Dahomean polygamous marriage in its various forms. Although Dahomean plural marriage is complex in terms of gifts, obligations, and

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Paralleling the accepted form and existing at the same time, is the Vodun religion. To this faith practically every member of the lower caste adheres; but no casual visitor ever sees a Vodun "temple," or would recognize one if he saw it. Vodun "priests" likewise have no characteristic dress to set them apart from their barefoot country neighbors. The state gives absolutely no support to this folk religion, which has no seminaries, no orders, no publishing house, nor even any orthodoxy. One is not a member of the Vodun religion or church; rather one believes and practices Vodun.

The paradox of the religious situation in Haiti lies in the fact that although the masses are Vodun worshipers, most of them are likewise Catholics; that although the élite formally disapprove of Vodun, many of them are profoundly interested in it; that although the state supports the Catholic Church and officially frowns on Vodun, it does not, cannot, and apparently would not if it could, suppress it altogether. The result of these contradictions is a strange intermixture of creed and ritual, mental struggles among certain of the élite, supersensitiveness to foreign opinion in connection with "Voodoo," and a clandestine air which adds to the mystery most strangers are determined to find in Vodun.

An understanding of these religious ambiguities must depend to some degree upon a knowledge of Haitian history, for both Catholicism and Vodun have colonial origins, together with local peculiarities and historical developments, which make them characteristically Haitian.

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175 795 346 to try to renovate the old. Gradually the work became established, increasing in scope with the years.

It is not necessary to present a detailed history of the work of 175 795 Catholicism in Haiti since 1860. The most striking feature of these years is its relationship to Vodun, which will be treated shortly. The progress made by the Church itself can best be seen by a 794 795 summary of conditions in 1930.

Haiti is divided into dioceses named after its principal towns and 162 cities. The population statistics are based upon figures of births covering more than fifty years, and although estimates, they are probably as accurate as any other population statistics for Haiti:

Archdiocese of Port-au-Prince	942,700
Diocese of Cap-Haïtien	453,000
Diocese of Les Cayes	628,000
Diocese of Gonaïves	475,000
Diocese of Port-de-Paix	153,590
Total	2,652,290

793 To care for this large and predominantly illiterate population there are 205 priests,[14] only 8 of whom are Haitians; 105 Brothers; and 366 Sisters.[15] The assiduous educational work of these *religieux* will be discussed in another connection.

794 The country's 10,200 square miles are divided into 112 parishes, 162 which generally correspond to the political communes, although there are several parishes in the larger centres of population. In the rural sections 465 mission chapels are located at strategic points.[16]

650 Any casual attempt to assess the importance of religion in the daily

14. Of these, 156 are in charge of parishes or missions (the secular priests). The remaining 49 are regular clergy (that is, belonging to a religious or monastic order). All parishes in the diocese of Port-de-Paix and two in Port-au-Prince are in charge of the regular clergy; the other regular monks are doing educational work or other special service connected with the dioceses. [794]

15. The Brothers are Frères de l'Instruction Chrétienne; of the number 83 are French, 10 French Canadian, 9 Spanish, and 3 Haitian. The Sisters belong to three congregations: 146 to St. Joseph de Cluny, 198 to Les Filles de la Sagesse, and 22 to Les Filles de Marie. [793] [792]

16. All the figures cited above are drawn from the *Report of the Forbes Commission to Haiti*, 1930, pp. 16–17.

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Vodun, therefore, show the Catholic influence, exerted in the main unconsciously. 771 171

Unlike the great religions, Vodun lacks a formal theology. As has been said, no seminary exists for the training of priests and priestesses, no congress or college of fathers states or amends the creed; there is no church court to discipline the individual enthusiast, or catechism for the young; no scriptures or sermons are printed or read to strengthen the faith. Vodun is an informal religion of action, not a formal one of reason. It flourishes because it is malleable, adaptive, suited to the needs of a people living close to nature and without education. To give a single lucid description of this Haitian folk religion, created as it is by everybody and by nobody, is about as possible as to give one description of home life, which varies according to the couple. We may, however, outline the common elements of creed and practice. 794 771

2. *Formative Days*

To say casually that Vodun is African in origin is to say little more than that it does not stem from the great world religions. There is no unity in Africa today; there was still less in the eighteenth century when slaves were being imported into Haiti. At that period it was possible to find a new dialect and a different set of folkways every few miles along the western seacoast. Two slaves from one geographical region (the Gold Coast, for example) might not understand each other or have the slightest predisposition to sympathize with each other's customs. 771 174

Colonial planters experimented with slaves from various regions in Africa, just as they might compare breeds of horses; setting tractability off against originality, brute strength against skill, intelligence against health. In this quest for a perfect slave, Negroes were imported from all parts of the Dark Continent, from Senegal in the northwest around the five thousand miles of seacoast to Mozambique and Madagascar in the east. Partly because trading conditions were more favorable in the Dahomey and Congo regions, and partly because the qualities of Dahomean and Congolese were preferred, Negroes from these two sections soon came to predominate over others in the colony. Whereas "Congo" was merely a geographical term, implying no community of feeling among the natives living 175 567

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Vodun, then, was both widespread and powerful enough to be turned to most effective ends in 1791. Contemporary accounts of it still saw it as a meeting ground of superstitions. The French naturalist, Descourtilz, for example, was primarily struck by the use of the occult in connection with Vodun; he especially describes a woman who, under the seizure of her god, took a live coal in her hand without being burnt; a husband who by the use of magic struck his inconstant wife with a languorous malady, effective for half a year; and the knowledge of poison which was combined with the practice of magic. He mentions but one of the Vodun gods by name but implies the existence of many others.[10]

Madiou, Haiti's first historian, likewise always spoke of Vodun as a savage survival; he says of a native general, "Lamour Dérance, plunged in gross errors, put his faith in *sorcery*, in the prophecy of *papas*, or priests of *African fetishism*."[11] In his scornful distaste for the vulgar he clearly indicated by his own italics some conspicuous elements of the developing religion: magic, the use of fetishes, and a Vodun priesthood. His illustration of Dérance's error was his making soldiers believe that bullets could not wound them:

> When he marched to combat he was preceded by bands of Congos, Aradas, Ibos, Nabos, Mandingues, Haoussas, who threw themselves against the French battalions with a prodigious intrepidity, crying that the bullets were but dust. But this courage which *superstition* fed was shattered against the ramparts of . . . the Europeans' square formations.

It is noteworthy that the first three black rulers set themselves against Vodun because of its potentialities for sedition. The plots to overthrow the old régime had come to fruition at apparently innocent Vodun dances. Although the ingenuous aspect of the dance gathering had deceived the white masters, Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe knew the meaning of the assemblies. All three had to drive their people hard and knew that resentment would be an inevitable consequence; it must not have an opportunity to burgeon at nightly gatherings. Toussaint was the strictest of the three, for he forbade all dances and nocturnal assemblage.[12] The other two singled

10. M. E. Descourtilz, *Voyages d'un naturaliste en Haïti, 1799–1803* (Paris, 1935 ed.), pp. 116–118.
11. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, p. 33.
12. In an order of January 4, 1800.

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The other two singled

175 out Vodun dances for their bans, permitting the purely social dances.
643 On the eve of the first anniversary of independence, "as soon as
794 retreat was sounded, African dances of all kinds began in the tents
796 and open fields; the Vaudoux dance alone was proscribed; the noise
671 of the drums did not quiet down until morning."[13] Dessalines was
659 more suspicious of Vodun than the other two for, being a superstitious man himself, he feared that some of his growing number of
798 enemies might use sorcery upon him; consequently whenever his
771 active police reported meetings of Vodun worshipers he had the offenders shot if they could be caught. Practically all Haitians knew how to distinguish the rhythms of Vodun drumbeats from those of other dances, so that it was not particularly difficult to track down the meeting places. What Christophe really believed, no one could say. He paid outward homage to Roman Catholicism, of course, but rumor persisted of his great faith in magic and the power of African fetishes.[14]

175 The élite mulatto presidents, Pétion and Boyer, did not deign to
643 dignify Vodun by prohibiting it. No revelation of their attitude
794 toward it survives, but we may note that no law of their thirty-six-
659 year tenure of the presidency mentions it. From their other opinions one concludes that they regarded it as merely another of the people's
798 innocent and harmless aberrations. Not one of the foreigners whose curiosity about the Negro republic led them to report on Haitian
796 life of this period gives an intelligent account of Vodun as it then
771 was. Macaulay, writing in 1831, for example, describes the annual
114 celebration at the source of Grande Rivière de l'Artibonite; he mentions the festive dances (not Vodun) and singing, then says: "Morning ceremonies consisted of a solemn sacrifice at which the blood of victims immolated for the feast were offered, and libations of wine were poured on the spring."[15] This was clearly a Vodun sacrifice. Brown, in 1837, writes as a religious man:

> No race is, more than the African, given to religious feelings, though these being but mere sensations entirely independent of thought and reason, manifest themselves in a display of idle fooleries, or dark and hideous terrors of the imagination. They intermix the legitimate ritual of the Catholic faith with the mysterious adoration paid to their national Fetishes, and the

13. Madiou, *op. cit.*, III, 186.
14. See Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti*, pp. 90–91.
15. Zachary Macaulay, *Haiti* (Paris, 1833), pp. 90–91.

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African obi and the Catholic priest both come in for a share of their respect and homage.[16] 114 796 771

This is the usual tone of the comment on native religion, as when Candler in 1842 speaks of funerals in country places "with the *rites of heathenism*, such as are practised to this day in the heart of Africa."[17] Of these conventional criticisms of Vodun, one of the more thoughtful is Bonneau's:

The shocking phantasmagorias of fetishism paralyzed the intellectual development of the African race for six thousand years; superstition is in some sort inherent in its nature. The [Haitian] people need to break with their past. Catholicism has been prodigiously patient and courageous, but it does not possess the necessary corrective for extirpating the fetishism which immobilizes the black population. The Catholic Church, by fractioning the religious sentiment, by forcing thought to diffuse itself in order to take in a thousand secondary details, by imposing on the people practices without number which tend to materialize the cult, by placing as intermediaries between God and men a multitude of saints and genies, encourages and fortifies the tendencies, even the most deplorable ones, of the black race, whose intellect has been shrouded in mist for centuries precisely because it can grasp only with difficulty the relationships between things and ideas, tending rather to lose itself in details than to rise to general and synthetic conceptions.[18]

If the fixing of periods has any clarifying value, one might set the stages of the development of Vodun as follows: 175 771 794

1730–1790, its Emergence, when the importation of slaves was steadily increasing, with a gradual ascendancy of Dahomean ideas;

1790–1800, its practical Testing in the fires of revolt when, out of apparent innocence and enforced secrecy, Vodun effectively united the slaves in their action for freedom;

1800–1815, its Suppression under the black rulers;

1815–1850, its quiet Diffusion to all the people and assumption of the form it now exhibits.

The middle of the nineteenth century was the turning point. Before then it had been so to speak in gestation; under Soulouque, then ruling, it publicly emerged. Until the mid-century élite people had 175 771 794

16. Dr. J. Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, II, 273.
17. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, p. 166.
18. A. Bonneau, *Haïti: ses progrès—son avenir*, pp. 24–25.

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175 ignored when they did not frown upon it. As we have seen, the
771 aristocratic Madiou spoke of Vaudoux as "the sorcerers of our coun-
794 try districts," and President Riché in 1846 whenever he heard a suspect drum, went himself to silence it. Under Soulouque, on the other hand, the élite did not dare to show contempt for practices so dear to His Imperial (if benighted) Highness; indeed, one priestess of Vodun then boasted, "If I were to beat the sacred drums and march through the city, not one from the Emperor downwards but would humbly follow me."

175 For at least a century Vodun had developed with no real obstacles
771 beyond the twenty-year prohibition of the Three Great Blacks. The
794 white planters in the colonial era had been too indifferent and imper-
798 ceptive to stop it, while the élite of the republic were too proud to concern themselves. The Catholic Church, which might have been its most effective enemy, was too lax and too much hampered in colonial times to curb "slave superstition," while from 1805 until 1860 because of the schism no real Catholic priesthood labored in the country. All this changed after Soulouque: the schism was healed; priests of true missionary spirit came to Haiti; the *Affaire de Bizoton* gave the enemies of Vodun a focal point of attack. Since 1860 the Catholic Church has not ceased its war against the folk religion. Occasionally, as in the days of Toussaint, a ruler has suppressed it. Such executives have probably known, however, that it was much too late to eradicate Vodun. It had decades in which to send down its roots. Efforts against it have about the same effect as the persecution of the early Christians—a strengthening of the faith of believers, an outward submission to restrictive rules but increased devotion to rites now performed secretly, and in the case of Vodun at least, an added attraction to the cult because of this very secrecy. At least one president has been known to be an ardent worshiper. Today, much as the élite turn up their noses at Vodun, there are many who look to it in their hour of need, when the Catholic faith seems to fail or medicine proves helpless.

3. *Vodun Belief*

771 The sincere Vodun worshiper is generally an illiterate peasant or humble laborer who would never bother his mind to formulate a definite statement of his beliefs. Because there is no clearing-house

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[p.166]

VIII

RELIGIOUS BORROWINGS

ROMAN Catholicism in Haiti is, as we have seen, the officially approved, socially proper, and outwardly recognized religion. Vodun, on the contrary, is legislated against and driven into the background by the élite who are ashamed to have foreigners see the power in their country of a folk religion which has its crude side. These two are Haiti's faiths.

No one takes a census in Haiti, for the peasants have their suspicions of officials who pry into personal affairs. There is consequently no way of knowing precisely how many Haitians regard themselves as "belonging" to the Catholic Church. The priests list the whole population of a diocese as Catholic. In so doing they are probably not far wrong, for although not every person gets to confession each year or attends to his other religious duties, certainly nineteen out of twenty Haitians, élite and common folk alike, would claim to be Catholics. On the whole, it may be that the simple people are more sincere in this, for they are not touched with skepticism where things spiritual are concerned.

In the United States censuses of religious bodies, if an individual is listed as a member of one denomination he cannot be listed as a member of another. We are trained to religious exclusiveness: we are *either* Baptists *or* Methodists, Jews *or* Catholics. Not every people, however, has schooled itself to such sharp distinctions. The Japanese Buddhist may regard himself as a worshiper of Shinto as well; the Chinese can be Taoist and Confucian at the same time. By our rigidity we deny ourselves a great deal of inner comfort: I may like the earnest fervor of the Missionary Baptists but like as well the stately ritual of Anglo-Catholicism; I must accept one or the other, however, for if I am a member of the former sect I cannot at the same time be admitted to all the rights and privileges of the latter. There is probably a spiritual compensation resulting from such single-minded allegiance, but we are frequently forced to deny

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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validity to forms and ideas which we know, in our hearts, might sustain us.[1]

The Haitian peasant is not interested in making formal distinctions. If he is critical, it is only of results, rarely of the means used to obtain those results. If he cannot gain his ends in one way he is not too proud to try another, and still a third. Nineteen out of twenty Haitians, then, being Roman Catholics in religion, are likewise worshipers of Vodun. There is so much mystery in the world, so much misfortune, beauty, sorrow, and joy that it would be unthinkable to deny God or the gods: mankind has worship enough for them all, and need enough of them all. There is to the peasant no conflict between Vodun and Catholicism; the two are complementary, even if sometimes the Catholic priests make coöperation impossible.

Let us recall for a moment the earlier history of the country. In the days of slavery one may imagine the Church would have found it difficult, even if its priests and planters had been willing, to train all the blacks as thorough Catholics. Some concepts took root, some rites immediately appealed. Below the surface, however, the African ideas of the preponderant Dahomeans were spreading through the plantations. In the crucial early days of independence, when the customs and social institutions of the Haitians (as Haitians, not as expatriate slaves) were in process of formation, the country's rulers were not deeply religious; moreover the State was in open schism from the Church. For fifty-five years no approved churchman was at work with the people. The seventy men whom some historians mention as priests were on the whole venal and self-seeking, even vicious. Their least concern was to wean the people away from their superstitions, for precisely in these folk beliefs lay the greatest source of gain. By the time the breach between State and Church was healed it was too late to make single-minded Catholics of the Haitian peasants. They would accept what the new and active priests taught them, but not to the exclusion of what they had believed for a century.

With the élite the Church has had more success; assiduous teach-

1. This either-or dichotomy is not limited to religion: we divide ourselves similarly in politics, family life, residence, and so on. If I am a Lutheran, a Republican, a married man with a home in New York, I cannot at the same time be an Episcopalian, a Democrat, and a voter in Chicago with a second spouse and family there. What is impossible and ridiculous for Americans, however, is in some ways the normal course of life for the Haitian.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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175 567 581 when slaves were to be sold. Even when whole families were brought over together from Africa, it was considered discreet in Saint-Domingue to separate the various members at the slave market, so that there would be little chance of combinations and intrigues. [794] Theoretically the Church was in favor of regular marriages between slave men and women, but even if the Africans had understood or desired the "sacrament," the opposition of the white planters would have been enough to curb missionary insistence on this point; the Jesuits had already been expelled from the colony for their too great zeal in plantation reforms.

175 567 588 [843] As a usual thing, then, slaves simply cohabited. It was not against the rules of a plantation for a slave and the woman with whom he consorted to live together in a slave hut with the children born to them; but neither was it against the rules for the overseer to put other slaves into the same hut, or to sell promising slave children as if they were cattle.[1] Little was done to prevent sex relations between slaves, although masters had varying attitudes toward the results of these relations: some planters welcomed births as a stockbreeder welcomes additions to his herd; others resented the pregnancy of slave women as an obstacle to necessary field work. In the former case, a planter's capital was increased; in the latter, abortions resulted when the overseer drove pregnant women to hard work under the tropical sun.

175 567 588 The freedom of the planters with the persons of their attractive female slaves likewise weakened any tendency toward monogamous family life as conceived by bourgeois European society. The relationship between master and slave woman was momentary. Not often was a woman so beguiling that she could be called a concubine; still less often was she a mistress. The latter estate was the height of any female slave's worldly ambition, for not only might she then be freed, but she could live a life of leisure. In rare cases she might hope to persuade her white paramour into marriage. Almost certainly her mulatto children would be free.

175 565 581 In so far as there was any predisposition toward strict observance of European marriage practices, it was most clearly exhibited by the group of affranchis. As freedmen they were intent upon establishing

[567] [581] 1. Under exceptional circumstances slaves found themselves under a benevolent, religious master who allowed them to be married by a priest and thereafter to live together as a family.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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595 spouses. In the hills more than one peasant house was surrounded, as it would have been in Dahomey, by huts in each of which lived a "wife" of the farmer. Matters are not very different nowadays, except that men have learned the wisdom of not having their women live too close to each other.

162 From the guesses of experienced observers, it is probably not far
582 wide of the mark to estimate that only one couple out of a hundred is married according to the approved mode of the Western World.

The State apparently does not care; or, to put it another way, government officials know how impossible it would be to alter a custom confirmed by long usage; one which, moreover, works well enough, since it causes practically no violence or legal cases for the
795 State to attend to. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, is eager
582 to persuade the people to observe the sacrament of holy matrimony. The priests have assiduously endeavored to explore the peasant mind in order to learn what deters the average person from formal marriage. The reasons for the indifference to weddings might be listed as follows:

581 1. Inertia. There is no convincing reason to vary time-honored
178 practice which works well enough, particularly since a wedding is likely to cause a great disturbance of daily routine and even a measure of jealousy on the part of those who have not made the display.

581 2. Suspicion of legal documents and civil officials. People who put
829 their names (or marks) on documents and who call the attention of governmental officials to themselves are almost sure to rue the day. A man knows what can be demanded of him by custom in his informal unions; but who can say what the law would hold him responsible for?

581 3. Expense. The civil license costs; the priest and his assistants
585 must be paid; to be married in church, one should wear shoes; if one wears shoes, one should dress up to them; a church wedding calls for a feast. At least two days must be spent away from work if the proper formalities are carried out.

581 4. Common sense in an inevitable situation. Both State and
595 Church would try to limit a man to one wife; prosperity might demand two or more. Is it sensible to discriminate against a second woman, who might be just as much help to a man as his legal wife?

581 The Church through its priests works unceasingly to answer these
794 arguments, but without notable success. Inertia is hard to overcome;

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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581 suspicion of legal complications is well founded: the priests therefore
794 try to concentrate their attack upon the remaining motives. Thus one priest issued a notice at a certain mountain chapel that he would perform no weddings there for persons who wore shoes; an increase in weddings followed. By such devices, and by constant sermons on the significance of the sacrament, he has persuaded many of his parishioners to be married, yet the vast majority of them continue in plaçage.[4]

581 Informally entered unions among the peasants, then, rest upon a sound, practical, economic basis. If the priests are ever to be successful in their campaign for more weddings, Haitian peasant economy must undergo a change; even then the plurality of women (if indeed it exists), now more or less absorbed by plaçage, will work against the reform.

562 It is confusing to speak of "status" in connection with the domestic
565 life of hard-working people, for status implies law, and law hardly touches peasant life. Custom governs all—inevitably, since the majority of peasant women have not been legally married, and since no peasant would willingly take a case to law. Yet women have a definite status as compared with men.

In almost every detail a peasant woman's life differs from that of élite women. The rule of life in country districts is unremitting labor
462 for the female from childhood up. She cooks and makes clothes,
565 labors in the fields after the men have cleared them, does the family
443 washing in the nearest stream, carries water, does whatever housework is required. Practically every Haitian peasant woman has her experience of going to market to sell the vegetables, trinkets, or
[484] other wares her family may produce, and to buy necessities. This trip to market may be short, or as long as twenty miles. One of the characteristic sights of Haiti is the seemingly endless procession of women coming down from the hills trudging, or rather swinging majestically along, with a great load on the head, or riding on the haunches of a tiny donkey loaded with bulging panniers. Arrived at

4. As a result of his campaign for more weddings he has had some unusual experiences. Once, in the midst of the wedding ceremony, a bride rushed out of the chapel and shortly gave birth to a child; when she was able to move again, the ceremony was resumed. Again, traveling into the mountains to perform a similar ceremony, he found a crowd assembled under a tree, assisting at another birth of an infant to a bride-to-be. Sometimes he encounters the argument by a peasant that he will not consent to a wedding until his spouse has proved her fecundity by bearing a certain number of children.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

175 178 771 [789] 175 178 779 795

stew," which has continued current from the time of its publication by St. John until today.[48] Yet African religious practices were being constantly combated by the Catholic Church, for even in the period of revolt the priests had remained largely unharmed, and when Christophe was elevated to the throne, he appointed two archbishops. After the establishment of the Republic, Catholicism continued as the State religion, so that by the early nineteenth century, as Mackenzie mentions, thirty-eight clergy were active in Haiti, all under the control of the Bishop of Santo Domingo, and all presumably nominated and paid by the President of Haiti.[49] Though for a period there was an attempt to develop a national Church, the missionary work done during the colonial days left too strong a tradition of Catholicism to be overcome, and consequently a Concordat was signed with Rome in 1860, which has remained in effect ever since.[50]

178

Though the story of the cultural history of Haiti between 1804 and the present cannot thus be more than sketched, yet the background is known, and enough can be gathered from accounts of Haitian life during this interval to enable us to see that the varied cultural impulses were shaping the lives of the people throughout these years. With some understanding of the roots of the resulting culture in French and African traditions, then, let us once more turn to the valley of Mirebalais and consider the life of the Haitian peasant as it is lived today.

[121]

The importance of water in Vodoun has a fundamentally West African character. Among the Yoruba and the Ashanti and in Dahomey, for example, water rites are a significant aspect of religious ritual. Herskovits notes the frequency of religious pilgrimages to streams in West Africa. 171 771 823 796 778

In one instance, at Abenkuta, a bedecked procession of worshipers left a shrine atop a high hill, followed a long path to the riverside over two miles away, and returned before the ceremonies could be carried out at the shrine of the god. On one occasion, in Dahomey, the bed of the sacred stream run dry was "filled" from nearby wells so that this water could be ritually redrawn for use in an especially important ceremony. Among the Ashanti, pilgrimages to Lake Bosumtwe and other sacred bodies of water regularly occur. And it is on such occasions that the spirit of the river or lake or sea manifests itself, by "entering the head" of the devotee and causing him to fling himself, possibly possessed, into the water.[8]

So it is also in Haiti, where possession at the river's edge may cause the devotee to leap into the river. At Saut d'Eau, possessed persons plunge into the waterfall without regard for their safety, being in the care of the loa who have mounted them. 823 787 778

Into this water complex the Christian rite of baptism has been easily absorbed, providing merely a new act of veneration for water and its properties. In the Haitian mind baptism is not far removed from the *lavé tête* ritual, the washing of the head, or the *rafraichi tête*, the "refreshing" of the head, both of which are acts in propitiation of the loa.[9] So related is the baptismal concept in the Haitian mind, that the term "baptize" is used to describe the lavé tête; it is said that the loa is being "baptized." So also are drums "baptized," not to menton yams, and even the hounfor itself. 177 797 823 778 782 795 851

Marriage to a Loa

Although the term *hounsi* (spirit wife, or wife of the spirit) is applied to a large class of servitors of the Vodoun temple, only a small number of servitors ever pass through rites which give them a husband-wife or wife-husband relationship with a loa. Reasons for these mystic marriages vary, but usually the rituals take place upon the prescription of a cult priest who interprets the will of the deities concerned. Most of the mystic marriages of which I have heard have taken place in the general area of Port-au-Prince and the Cul-de-Sac Plain. In some other areas of Haiti it appears that no such rites have taken place locally within the memory of the elder inhabitants. One aged man living near Belladère declared: "It [marriage to a loa] is impossible. People serve loa, they do not marry them. A man does not marry his burro. A loa 588 [994]

[8] [Herskovits, The Myth of the Negro Past, p. 233. Cf p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[9] [It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form. Cf p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

mâché carriage or on papier-mâché horses, make their appearance during Rara as well as on the Day of the Kings (*Les Rois*). 541 536

Among the traditional paraphernalia carried by Rara groups are cocomacaque sticks, cha-cha rattles, metal rattles called *tchancy*, a set of rattles on a tall thin pole (called *jouconjou*), candelabra bearing candles or oil lamps (*lampions*), banners and flags, and such miscellaneous musical instruments as the *grage* scraper, bamboo scraping devices, the *basse* finger drum, *assots* (beating boards), and various kinds of secular drums. 541 575 534

The general tone of Rara is nonreligious. The dancing is free from the decorous restraints which characterize most religious ritual, and some early observers of the festival were shocked by what they saw. Some of them went so far as to attribute Haiti's dense population to the "licentious activities" and reckless abandon of the spring carnival. The Catholic Church and some political administrators have sporadically sought to suppress Rara, along with Vodoun ritual. And even today in Port-au-Prince the foreign visitor often is urged to watch the elite Mardi Gras with its floats and mulatto queens as a substitute. 541 [535] [795] [656]

Although Rara has an over-all tone of secular abandon, it has links with both Catholic and Vodoun ritual. Good Friday is given over in good measure to miming the story of Jesus and Judas. A perambulating band may carry an effigy of Judas hanging from a pole. Another will burn the Judas effigy, or drag it in the dust as the crowd moves along the road. In another group a man playing the part of Judas may crawl on his hands and knees along the trail, while Jesus' avengers pursue him with long, cracking whips. 541 177 536

Tying in with Vodoun ritual, virtually all Rara drums and other paraphernalia are "dedicated" or "rededicated" before Lent in special hounfor services. And on the last day of Rara, usually late in the night, prayers are said, the loa are called upon, and some of the festive paraphernalia is thrown into a fire to be consumed. 541 796 534 [778]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 business and personal ties with North Americans and other foreign
643 groups. Among the families of these leaders are Swiss, German, and
66 French nationals, and some Syrians and Lebanese who hold United
States citizenship. The business community had played a part in the
•795 downfall of the Magloire regime, and business strikes were a typical
political instrument for putting pressure on presidential incumbents.
In addition, the clergy—particularly the Catholic clergy—exerted
political influence. Duvalier, while well aware of this, also attended
to the importance of vodoun* in Haiti, and to the influence wielded
by its cult leaders, particularly in the countryside and among the
urban poor. Finally, the President understood the strength of groups
such as the university students, the small but politically aware labor
unions, and certain professional associations, whose political strength
could be felt particularly in times of crisis. The Duvalier regime has
displayed intelligence as well as ruthlessness in dealing with these di-
verse centers of political strength and potential opposition.

175 The official request for a United States Marine Corps mission to
648 "train" the Haitian Army was a brilliant political move by Duvalier,
apparently designed to serve several objectives simultaneously. It is
701 entirely correct that the renewed presence of the Marines in Haiti
702 created considerable rancor in some circles, but it also strengthened
66 Duvalier's hand in his dealings with all sources of internal opposition.
To some extent it apparently reassured the business community; and
it turned out to have reduced, rather than to have increased, the ma-
neuverability of the United States in developing a "corrective" or
"restraining" policy toward the Duvalier regime. Perhaps most im-
portant, it helped Duvalier in his plan to build a praetorian guard to
counterbalance the power of the army itself.

625 The *tonton macoute*—a Creole epithet for the bogeyman—is an ex-
tremely interesting variation on the security police theme. Its mem-
bers wear no official uniform (though blue denim pants and felt hats
[701] are affected). Members of the "TTM" carry out acts of terrorism
against groups and individuals and have seriously weakened the po-
[652] licing function and prestige of the regular army. Some calculations
put the operating costs of the TTM as high as one third of the govern-
mental budget. Though small groups of the TTM are distributed

* Or, as it is more commonly called, "voodoo." Creole words employed in this introduction are transcribed in Laubach orthography (see Hall, 1, 53). It was not possible to extend this transcription to the original Leyburn text, where a "Gallic" orthography is followed.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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throughout the country, the central administration remains in the capital; urban units are dispatched to the countryside at times, if any show of internal political resistance is sensed. TTM members also sometimes engage in struggles with each other over political spoils; but too little is known to analyze internal strains within this paramilitary, secret-police organization. The TTM has proved particularly useful for carrying out the murders of outspoken individual political opponents and for crushing draconically any threat of strikes in the Port-au-Prince business community. 625

Little is known of the antecedents of TTM members. While it is customary among the elite to describe these myrmidons as "trash," some of them are literate, have some education, vaunt a political ideology—a kind of nationalist-*négritude* mystique, with strong Fascist elements—and differ dramatically from the ragged, illiterate followers of the warlords of pre-1915 Haiti. In fact, the TTM lieutenants are a direct, if somewhat deformed, product of the Estimé regime, a decade of structurally unsound prosperity, a culturally nationalistic ideology, and, more remotely, of the United States occupation itself. 178 625

With regard to the army, Duvalier has followed a policy of careful attrition. While the United States Marine Corps "mission" was (probably unknowingly) serving to immobilize opposition, Duvalier began to change the character of the army general staff. In the course of less than seven years he completely revamped the leadership of the army five times; this process not only kept the colonels off balance but allowed the President to reward loyal younger followers—principally those with dark skins, it is said—with rapid promotions. 643 701

The relationship between the Duvalier regime and the Catholic clergy has been one of increasing alienation. At times members of the clergy stood high in the regime, two having even served as members of the cabinet; but not the slightest Church resistance has been tolerated. The low point in Duvalier–Church relations was the interruption of a mass by an armed TTM unit in downtown Port-au-Prince; leading members of the hierarchy later were summarily ejected from the country, and the Jesuit order was banned. Church power has waned significantly, both in the capital and in the countryside, as the regime has consolidated itself. Some observers believe that Duvalier is not so unwise as to aim at the complete elimination of the Church, but that he hopes instead to "nationalize" the clergy on some mutually agreeable basis. 642 795 661

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643 At the same time, the President has expressed his favorable interest
771 in vodoun and is said to practice it; this statement, however, has
795 overtones of malevolence that are not appropriate. Vodoun is a religion, though it lacks a centralized priestly hierarchy or administrative organization. Outside the elite, Catholicism in Haiti has always been colored by vodoun elements. The Haitian people as a whole invest no effort in distinguishing what is "really Catholic" from what is not, in their religious practices; in this regard Haitian countrymen do not really differ from folk practitioners of Catholicism anywhere. By its misreading of the piety of the Haitian masses, and its unceasing hostility to vodoun—quite different from the church policy in the so-called "Indian countries" of Latin America—the Church had failed to secure its influence over the Haitian people. In contrast, Duvalier's understanding of Haitian religious sociology has proved superior, and is consistent with the *authentique* ideology of the 1940s, though doubtless much more extreme in its implications.

642 Finally, the Duvalier regime has invaded such institutions as the
871 National University and the trade unions, and maintains close sur-
467 veillance over any individuals it regards as politically suspicious. Loy-
204 alty oaths are required at the university; a public press no longer ex-
661 ists; the unions, never strong, are now entirely powerless. But it should be clear from this description of the Duvalier regime that repression is not the key to Duvalier power so much as the means for perpetuating that power under Haitian conditions. The key to Du-
642 valier power is to be found instead in the structure of Haitian society,
648 in the social history of the past two decades, and in the policy of the United States, weakened by its inescapable preference for "stability" over "radicalism." In his own way, President Duvalier is as radical as he can be; but he is no Castro. It is now an open secret that Haiti's support for sanctions against Cuba approved at Punta del Este was matched by economic concessions from the United States; that the Marines, knowingly or not, immobilized anti-Duvalier opposition in a period when its supporters could be picked off, driven into exile, or jailed; that the official Duvalier offer of Môle St. Nicholas to the United States as a substitute for Guantánamo, though irrelevant, was warmly reassuring to some North American political thinkers; and that Duvalier, while he employs considerable "blackmail diplomacy" in his dealings with the United States and is now out of favor, is still considered "reliable" in that most important respect.

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[p. 113]

INTRODUCTION

If the visitor to Haiti is first struck by the wide separation between the élite and the peasant masses, the person who knows Haiti only through books is sure to think of it as a country of Voodoo. There is no error of fact here, for Voodoo is characteristic of Haiti. Nevertheless, what the American conjures up in his mind when he uses the word is almost certain to be misleading. In spite of detailed reports of anthropologists the average American clings firmly to his notion that Voodoo is Negro superstition chiefly concerned with charms or spells to "hoodoo" (a variation of the same word) an enemy. Scientists rarely succeed in correcting long-held but incorrect or one-sided impressions of the meaning of terms; they end rather by inventing a new word, or else continue the generally losing fight for precise usage, and so preserve the confusion.[1] 771

Since there is small likelihood of eradicating the inexact connotations of "Voodoo," many recent anthropologists have adopted such spellings as Vodun, Vodou, Vodoun, Vaudou, and Vodûn, all renditions of local pronunciation of the same term. *Vodun* (pronounced Vo-doon) has been chosen for use in this work, in the hope that readers will bear in mind that the folk religion is not mere idle superstition. A grasp of the real and distinctive religious beliefs and cult practices of the Haitian is very necessary to an understanding of the social picture. [104]

Like its caste system, the religious life of Haiti presents far-reaching contrasts. The only approved religion of the country is Roman Catholicism. To this faith all the élite who are religiously inclined, or wish to pay formal homage to the institution of religion, belong. No Protestant sect has ever gained a real foothold in Haiti. Catholic churches are among the imposing edifices in every town; Catholic priests are an everyday sight as they go about their parishes; Catholic brothers and sisters, with state support and approval, direct much of the higher education in the country. 771 795 184 [346] [793] [871]

1. Witness in anthropology the contrast between the popular and the scholarly meaning of *culture*, *race*, *taboo*, and *fetish*; in chemistry of *reaction* (as when a man is asked his "reaction" to an opinion); in psychology of *instinct*, *innate*, and *inherent*; and in sociology of *caste*, *institution*, and *social*.

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revolt of the slaves (1791). Priests fled or went into hiding with the other whites, so that Masses lapsed or were said by religious but unordained mulattoes. Upon his accession to power in Haiti Toussaint L'Ouverture made several attempts to rehabilitate religion in the country, for the Church he felt was a stable institution which might help in giving order to the turbulent land. He tried to accomplish the return of priests to the island parishes and churches. There are indications that Toussaint was not himself deeply religious; his pronouncements are formal, but one cannot say that they appear to be deeply felt. In his proclamation of October 10, 1798, announcing the expulsion of the English, he orders thanks to the God of Hosts, recommends to his chiefs of corps that the soldiers pray morning and evening and faithfully attend Mass on Sundays. In a public address he enjoins upon parents the duty of teaching the catechism to their children.

The use of Catholicism as an aid to statecraft is apparent in his official dealings with the Church. His constitution of May 9, 1801, states that "the Catholic religion, apostolic and Roman, is the sole religion publicly professed." To obtain priests he besought the return of many who had fled the slave insurrection; he likewise turned to France, but France at this time was less than ardent in religion; nor were French priests likely to wish to come to an island ruled by blacks, particularly one which Napoleon was quite obviously planning to subdue. Toussaint addressed himself, therefore, to a schismatic abbé, Grégoire by name, in whom he saw a friend. Whether Grégoire might have helped him to establish the Catholic Church firmly as a part of Haitian life, with only a handful of repatriated colonial priests, we cannot know, for in 1802 the final war of independence began and the island, in convulsion, had no time for spiritual matters.

2. *Catholicism in Independent Haiti*

Dessalines, the passionate, violent, and licentious founder of the new state, although not an enemy of the Church was not its active friend. In his slaughter of whites he spared several priests who had come to the country under Toussaint's persuasion, either because these clerics were obviously inoffensive or might later prove useful to him. Just as he controlled every other detail of Haitian life, he was determined to direct church affairs. He reserved to himself the right to fix the limits of jurisdiction of each priest and to nominate, even

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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to appoint, curés to the vacant parishes. His independence of action could not fail to give offense to Church authorities. One of his first appointees was a black ex-slave, Félix, who had been a drum major in the native army. Félix was made curé in the important town of Saint-Marc.

The constitution of his empire (May, 1805) indicates that Dessalines did not intend to make himself head of the Church, but rather planned a complete separation of Church and State. Article 50 reads: "The law admits no dominant religion"; while the next article grants freedom to all cults and refuses state support to any denomination or minister. No attack was made, therefore, upon Catholicism, yet the disestablishment of that Church was a serious blow to its prestige. Not in the specific provisions regarding religion was the Church most weakened, but rather in the "liberality" of articles dealing with actions upon which the Church had taken a firm moral stand. Thus Article 14 declared that "marriage is an act purely civil and authorized by the government," while Article 15 permits divorce by the state. Early laws of the empire still further undermined the position of Church doctrine. Illegitimate children were granted the same legal rights as legitimate ones—a generous provision which removed one of the strong reasons for marriage; separation of husband and wife except by divorce was forbidden, and this prohibition practically encouraged the divorce disapproved by the Church; finally, the grounds upon which divorce might be allowed were broader than those existing anywhere else in the Western World at the time: mutual consent, application from one party to the marriage, or simple allegation of incompatibility of temperament or character.

From the promulgation of this constitution in 1805 and for the next fifty-five years, Haiti was in open schism from the Roman Catholic Church. The Holy See refused to recognize either the Haitian state or the provisions of its constitution, and it declined to allow priests to enter the country. Certain Haitian presidents were friendly enough to Catholicism, and others were openly desirous of reëstablishing a state religion, but the breach once made was not healed by mere good wishes. The longer the schism endured, the farther the people grew away from the doctrines and practices of a religion in which they had never been firmly grounded. At the moment of independence, when all minds were more open to new

3: .Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 795 648 771 178 175 795 642 643 659

ideas than in later years, the habits of regular attention to religious duties might have been fixed; by 1860 it was too late. Religion existed during those years, but it was a strange gallimaufry of Catholicism and folk belief.

On the whole, the rulers of young Haiti were tolerant of the Catholic Church even to the point of advancing its interests, in so far as these might benefit the state. Their pronouncements and actions, nevertheless, were not those of ardent personal believers. Pétion's constitution of the republic in 1806 once more established Catholicism as the official Church. What it gave with one hand, however, it took away with the other. Thus:

> *Art.* 35. The Catholic, apostolic, and Roman religion being that of all Haitians, is the religion of the state. It and its ministers will be protected.
>
> *Art.* 36. The law assigns to each minister of that religion the extent of his spiritual administration. These ministers may not, under any pretext, form a body within the state.
>
> *Art.* 37. If in the course of time other religions are introduced, no person shall be hindered, so long as he conforms to the laws, in following the cult he has chosen.

The Catholic, then, is the state religion, but only because the Haitians have heretofore been nominal Catholics. It occupies a position of practical fact which it would lose if by the introduction of other cults Haitians should be drawn away from it. Its ministers will be carefully watched to see that they do not, as a group, try to exert political pressure. And what freedom of action is possible to a church whose ecclesiastical parishes can be limited or extended in size by the civil legislature?

Pétion no more fought religion than he fought any other conventional institution approved by civilized people; but he did little to foster it. He received certain Wesleyan missionaries with considerable hospitality, remarking that "education increases the dignity of mankind." He appeased the good Catholics by repealing the law concerning the rights of illegitimate children, substituting for it a more moderate French rule.[4] Likewise, he invited the Catholic Church to participate in the education of Haitian youth.

[848] [871]

[848] 4. The French practice allowed an illegitimate child recognized before a wedding equal rights of inheritance with legitimate offspring, while giving only quarter rights to a child recognized after marriage.

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Christophe had a great deal more to say about religion than any of the other early Haitian rulers. In a speech following the promulgation of his constitution, after severe censure of the government of Dessalines, he said:

175 643 795 659 642

> It is necessary to raise again the dignity of religion, for weakened morals leave young people open to the licenses of their age. Liberty has been assailed by traitors, enemies of their fellow citizens, and sold to our cruelest enemies. It is assured to you now, have no doubt! Shortly you will see these vicious men and their criminal efforts vanish like clouds.
>
> Public education, after religion and liberty the most precious benefit mankind enjoys, will be reanimated and sustained by morality; it will again be held in honor and reverence amongst us. Divorce, that traitor among customs, is rigorously prohibited and proscribed forever.[5]

[871] [586]

Like Pétion, Christophe made the Catholic Church official, but he indicated the dictatorial path he intended to follow by adding that no ecclesiastical decree or law might become effective without the consent of the President.[6] He completely overturned the law of Dessalines concerning illegitimate children; his decree deprived such offspring of any claims of inheritance whatever.[7] In a country where practically no one had been legally married such a ruling was severe, but Christophe hoped that his severity would force his subjects into wedlock, and this the Catholic Church was bound to approve.

[848]

Making the Church official did not strengthen its hold upon the people. In 1814 (seven years after he had promised "to raise again the dignity of religion") the kingdom was served by only three priests, one of whom Christophe had named archbishop. The King was preoccupied with form, and having created a nobility he needed a church to lend dignity to his realm. Consequently in 1811 he reorganized the clergy in his kingdom, establishing an archiepiscopal see and three bishoprics. The reorganization, except for the archbishop, remained a paper plan because the Pope refused to coöperate by giving the schismatic church his approval.

175 795 793 659 648

All the early rulers seem to have been rather innocent in their dealings with Rome. They felt, apparently, that as heads of state they had but to express a desire in order to have His Holiness ap-

5. This speech, made on February 18, 1807, is cited in Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1848), II, 354–355.
6. See the law of March 18, 1807.
7. Law of March 25, 1807.

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175 prove. Dessalines had sent a small number of Negro youths to Rome
795 to receive consecration and ordination from the Pope, so that they
793 might return to initiate a black priesthood for the black state. Pius VII
659 (through the interference of Napoleon, it was held by the Haitians)
648 refused to consecrate the aspirants to holy orders, and they had to return as they had come. Christophe thought to avoid such a snub by presenting His Holiness with a *fait accompli*. Having in his kingdom a Spanish Capuchin named Brelle who had formerly anointed Dessalines emperor, Christophe made this friar head of his reorganized church as "archbishop of Haiti and grand almoner to the King," giving him a "palace" and a yearly income derived from the revenues of his "see." This achieved he asked papal approval, but had sorrowfully to announce, "*Le roi d'Haïti eut la douleur de ne pas même recevoir une réponse de Sa Sainteté et passa outre.*"

Pétion's legislators were even more naïve. Their constitution of 1816 (of course, really the President's) granted to the President the right to have a bishop come to Port-au-Prince "to elevate to the priesthood those young Haitians who feel called to embrace the ecclesiastical state."[8] It was apparently assumed that without the approval of the Pope any bishop could come in and forthwith "make" priests. The insertion of this article in the constitution confesses the disadvantages of schism. The last surviving priests of the old régime, those few who had remained in spite of the breach with Rome, were dying off; no new priests were being sent in; therefore, if the Catholic Church was to endure in the republic, it must have Haitian priests. Certain clerics fleeing political revolutions in South America came to Haiti, but since they spoke French badly, did not improve the religious situation. It was impossible to get sympathetic priests from France, in view of the relations of the two countries at the time. The provision of the 1816 constitution, however childish, was at least an effort to perpetuate the church in Haiti.

It is nowhere recorded that either Pétion or Boyer had any opportunity to persuade a bishop to come and consecrate the desired priests. Deprived of support by the Papal See, in open schism, the Haitian republic was forced to make all regulations governing religious affairs. Boyer carried on various negotiations with Rome looking toward rapprochement, but the schism endured. Organized

8. Article 50 of the 1816 constitution.

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Organized

religion was never at a lower ebb in Haiti than toward the middle of 175
the nineteenth century, as whole generations of citizens were grow- 795
ing up who had never known the proper forms of ritual, and had no 771
real religious training. The outward shell of the Church covered steadily more "superstition," more homely beliefs and practices, and the long divorce from Rome permitted the growth of a native religion which later could not be eradicated, no matter how assiduous the labors of Catholic priests.

During Boyer's quarter-century the once Roman and Catholic 175
Church remained the official religion of the state, but its head was 195
now the President. Organization simplified as orthodoxy declined. 171
By 1840 there was only one order of priesthood; no archbishop, 659
bishops, canons, curés, or other titled dignitaries, but only "priests." 643
The people were not taxed to maintain the state Church; there were no tithes or forced contributions for the support of public worship or the repair of parish churches, no heavy list of clergy living from levies on the people. However, if the Haitians were not burdened by imposed religious fees, they were still through their own fears subject to steady tolls for services by the degraded men who then called themselves priests.

Every effort of the state failing to provide proper religious leader- 175
ship, Boyer resigned himself to permitting those who professed to 795
be priests to practice in the republic. There were seventy so-called 793
priests in the country in 1840. Some of them had once been in holy orders but were now unfrocked: they found in Haiti not only a haven but a fertile field for gain. In addition to these religious renegades came adventurers who knew just enough of ritual and theology to use the priestly garb as a cover for easy graft. Both groups encouraged crude superstition with a view to making money. They baptized houses, boats, and doorposts, and blessed fetish charms or amulets, all for a fee. Immorality was flagrant, and many of the "priests" had mistresses and children. The debauchery of some was so notorious that Secretary-General Inginac had publicly to rebuke them and even to banish a few from the country. A visiting [114]
Quaker, benignantly tolerant of most of what he saw in Haiti, was scandalized by the religious situation. He said that the sole aim of most of the clergy was to secure gold and silver "as quickly as they can, to send to Europe for investment." Excepting a very few (notably the priests at Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, and Jacmel), he

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175 concludes: "With regard to the ecclesiastical institutions of the
793 republic we may safely say . . . that if the standing army be one cause
795 of the degradation of the people, the Church is surely another; and
[114] the sooner it can be reformed, the better for religion, for morals, and for the physical well-being of the community."[9]

175 Eventually the state felt it necessary to protect the people from
793 these predatory priests. True, people paid for what they considered
795 to be services performed, but the legislators could not permit unlimited graft in the name of religion. An act of 1840,[10] therefore, set
659 a fee of half a dollar for each baptism;[11] $8 for a marriage with Mass, $4 for one without a Mass; an ordinary Mass, 37 cents; a High Mass, service, or funeral "of the first class" (that is, with choir, sacristan, acolytes, and churchwarden), $60; funerals of the second class, $20; funerals of the third class, $10. Articles of the act specify what shall constitute the three classes of service, and it is then stated, "Neither rectors nor vicars shall receive anything for offices at which they do not assist in person, except in cases of illness." The Haitians were not receiving true religious instruction, but at least their government tried to prevent their being mulcted by the spurious churchmen.

175 Since Haiti had no schools except the few attended by children of
the élite, religious instruction of youth was almost nonexistent. The
771 average élite man was openly an unbeliever, for it required little
184 acumen to show him that if the priests represented religion there was nothing to commend it. Hunt in 1860 said: "Many of the educated are about where the French were when they left the island. They believe in Voltaire, whom I have not unfrequently heard them
[562] characterize as the greatest man who ever lived."[12] In contrast to the
[114] men, the women made more of a show of being devout and attentive to the formal duties of religion, but according to Franklin they

are not actuated by any religious feeling. Going to church is a mere matter of parade with them, the sabbath being a day of festivities, and not set aside for religious devotion. The female congregations which frequent the churches in Hayti appear better prepared for an opera, or some other public amusement, than for the sacred duties of offering up their prayers in adoration of the Deity.

9. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 98 ff.
10. Chap. IV, articles 28–31.
11. The figures cited in the Act are in gourdes.
12. Benjamin S. Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans* (Philadelphia, 1860), p. 18.

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The men seldom or never go to mass, except on the days particularly set apart by the government as public fêtes. On these occasions the president and all the officers of Hayti go in procession, but the idea of devotion, I believe, never enters their contemplation. Such days are merely set aside for celebrating some particular event, which it is wished should be handed down to posterity. These occasions present only the external symbol of religion, the whole people being either ignorant or careless of its real character. Their manner and appearance during the celebration of the mass shew that they have no inward feelings of piety or devotion.[13]

Catholicism in Haiti, then, had fallen on evil days; Protestantism, on the other hand, was unable to gain any foothold. Boyer, indifferent to all religion, did not even care to tolerate Wesleyan missionaries as Pétion had done, for when certain of them arrived and were met with "persecution and stoning by a mob," it required persuasion to gain his assent to freeing those the police had taken into custody. He forbade any further meetings of Wesleyans, on the ground that they stirred up riots. At the close of Boyer's administration it was estimated that there were only about 1,200 Protestants in the country, mostly Methodists and Baptists, and these primarily Negroes who had come from the United States to settle in the republic.

Although the Haitian government probably derived a certain satisfaction from controlling a state Church, Boyer was impelled both by circumstance and his own temperament to obtain the approval of the Holy See. His own tepid spiritual zeal had nothing to do with the case; Haitian public order would benefit by a superior group of priests, and Haitian prestige would rise, he thought, with recognition by Rome. Having already in 1826 settled the conflict between France and Haiti in the political sphere, Boyer tried assiduously to end the schism from Rome. His propositions were examined with benevolence by the Pope, who conferred upon the primate of the Indies, archbishop of Santo Domingo, the title of archbishop of Haiti. This personage, however, was a Spaniard already established in the comfortable city of Santo Domingo amidst people of his own nationality. He could not be persuaded to move to Port-au-Prince. The failure of Boyer's efforts is due more to this ecclesiastic than to uncoöperativeness on the part of Rome. From 1834 to 1860 the Court of Rome had official representatives in Haiti, but they cannot have been very effective men, for conditions in

13. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 394–395.

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religious life were not improved and the schism endured. The archbishop of Haiti seemed to regard his new title as applying vaguely to the island, not the country, of Haiti, and since all his vicars were Spaniards unable to speak either French or the Créole dialect, they did nothing for religion in the Haitian republic.

Ties broken by a single radical action may require endless patience and persistence to knit together their severed threads. The impetuosity of Dessalines caused the rupture; it was prolonged by indifference to religion, absorption in economic and political matters, fear that France might use to her profit any *rapprochement* with Rome, and a certain complacency in subordinating Church to state. Inertia, however, was the real obstacle in the way of healing the breach. It is much less trouble to let conditions remain as they are than to make a change whose results no one can foretell. But the longer the rupture, the less understanding the people had of steps necessary to reëstablish the Church.

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When in 1847 Faustin Soulouque, the ignorant, became president, the horizon had never seemed darker for organized religion. The black general, suddenly impelled by a quirk of fortune into high office, was a man of the people in his religious attitudes. All their belief in magic, in the mystical power of certain rites, in charms and spells—all their "superstition" as the Catholics called it—Soulouque shared. For the first time in Haitian history one is aware that the folk beliefs brought over from Africa had become welded into a recognizable form, under the name of Vodun. To colonial writers "Vaudoux" had been primarily a name for certain dances; to the early Haitian élite it seems to have connoted either occult rites or vulgar claptrap compounded of gibberish, old wives' remedies, and sensual dances. But in the long and deepening twilight of Catholicism, the various elements were fused, until by Soulouque's time the Haitian was familiar with the general beliefs, rites, and "priesthood" of Vodun. As Soulouque had broken with the tradition of presidents who wished Haiti to be recognized as one of the community of civilized Western nations, so he allowed the traditional respect for Catholicism to die. As an emperor he was a transplanted African chief; as a believer he was a follower of Vodun. The rites were practiced and the sacrifices made openly now. Men in high places dared to reveal their belief in native tenets. For twelve years Vodun flourished with official approval.

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The depths to which Haiti descended under Soulouque made the task of his successor relatively simple. It would prove wise and generally popular to reverse the Emperor's action, in whatever respect. President Geffrard was the more successful as an antidote to the Emperor because of his practical intelligence. The best time to strike for the revival of Catholicism would be immediately after the heyday of Vodun. In 1859, the first year of his incumbency, Geffrard consequently undertook negotiations with the Holy See, sending two plenipotentiaries for the discussions. Because the Haitian delegates persuasively depicted the sorry state of religion in their country, because they showed themselves and their President willing to defer to papal wishes, and because the new Pope was filled with missionary zeal to reclaim Haiti for the Faith, all problems were overcome. An early agreement was reached, and the Concordat, signed in Rome on March 28, 1860, was approved by the Haitian Senate on the first of April. A commission was dispatched to Haiti immediately, one which did thoroughly and well its task of delimiting the boundaries of dioceses, allocating bishops and other clergy, and founding a seminary. An archbishop of Port-au-Prince was consecrated, and the Catholic Church, Roman and apostolic, at long last became officially established once more in the republic. The breach of fifty-five years was healed. 175 795 648 659 643

In one sense the reform had come too late. All the peasants were by this time thoroughly imbued with the ideas of Vodun, as were the lower orders in the towns. Most of the élite either clandestinely practiced Vodun or ignored religion altogether. On the other hand, practically no Haitian was opposed to Catholicism, not even the most ardent devotee of the obscurer cult. The native faith had grown up quietly enough, making its adjustments to the outward forms of Catholicism which still existed in the country. To every Vodun worshiper there were simply two hierarchies of spiritual beings, each with its own powers; to believe in one was not to deny the other. The new Catholic priests, then, met no hostility; what they had to deal with was an ineradicable folk religion which accepted everything and rejected little in the spiritual realm. 175 771

The Archbishop, his band of forty priests, and a small group of Brothers and Sisters set to work with fervor. Nearly everything had to be rebuilt from the ground. Church buildings were in such disrepair that it was considered more economical to erect new ones than 175 795 [346]

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175 795 to try to renovate the old. Gradually the work became established, increasing in scope with the years.

346 It is not necessary to present a detailed history of the work of 175 795 Catholicism in Haiti since 1860. The most striking feature of these years is its relationship to Vodun, which will be treated shortly. The progress made by the Church itself can best be seen by a 794 795 summary of conditions in 1930.

162 Haiti is divided into dioceses named after its principal towns and cities. The population statistics are based upon figures of births covering more than fifty years, and although estimates, they are probably as accurate as any other population statistics for Haiti:

Archdiocese of Port-au-Prince	942,700
Diocese of Cap-Haïtien	453,000
Diocese of Les Cayes	628,000
Diocese of Gonaïves	475,000
Diocese of Port-de-Paix	153,590
Total	2,652,290

793 To care for this large and predominantly illiterate population there are 205 priests,[14] only 8 of whom are Haitians; 105 Brothers; and 366 Sisters.[15] The assiduous educational work of these *religieux* will be discussed in another connection.

794 The country's 10,200 square miles are divided into 112 parishes, 162 which generally correspond to the political communes, although there are several parishes in the larger centres of population. In the rural sections 465 mission chapels are located at strategic points.[16]

550 Any casual attempt to assess the importance of religion in the daily

14. Of these, 156 are in charge of parishes or missions (the secular priests). The remaining 49 are regular clergy (that is, belonging to a religious or monastic order). All parishes in the diocese of Port-de-Paix and two in Port-au-Prince are in charge of the regular clergy; the other regular monks are doing educational work or other special service connected with the dioceses. [794]

15. The Brothers are Frères de l'Instruction Chrétienne; of the number 83 are French, 10 French Canadian, 9 Spanish, and 3 Haitian. The Sisters belong to three congregations: 146 to St. Joseph de Cluny, 198 to Les Filles de la Sagesse, and 22 to Les Filles de Marie. [793] [792]

16. All the figures cited above are drawn from the *Report of the Forbes Commission to Haiti*, 1930, pp. 16–17.

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marvelously aided in distress. The priest, not willing to allow even this "delusion," tried to cut down the tree but was wounded by his own machete. Eventually, however, the tree was destroyed by natural causes, and a church erected on the site. Fire destroyed the church. Each successive church building has likewise been destroyed, by fire or by lightning. No longer now does the Catholic Church combat the sanctity of Saut d'Eau: after all, it was the Virgin who appeared, not a loa. The great celebrations on every fifteenth of July draw pilgrims from all over Haiti. Although the Church now grudgingly approves the feast it is still recognizably Vodun in character, for devout souls who bathe in the water are "mounted" by loa. The Church has a hard battle ahead of it to win this festival for Catholicism.

Three factors work in favor of the Catholic struggle to win Haitians completely away from Vodun: the world-wide organization of the Church, which can always throw trained reserves into the battle; the superior intellectual equipment of the priests, enabling them to plan their campaign and use psychological weapons; and the plasticity of Vodun itself, which is a conglomeration of human feelings, ideas, and traditions rather than a rigid sect with an inflexible ritual.[3] Even with these advantages, it is still the battle of a few dozen men on one side with the Haitian masses (more than two million) on the other. So far as one is ever justified in prophecy, it seems safe to assume that Vodun will continue to assimilate more and more fragments of Catholicism; that its appeal will remain so long as education and medicine are not extended to the whole countryside; that eventually—it may be centuries hence—Vodun rites may sink back into the status of living folklore, to which the simple turn in their deepest need.

One of the strongest missionary advantages of the Roman Catholic Church has been the breadth given it by two thousand years of experience. In so long a life it has had to be all things to all men; out of necessity it has developed around the central core so wide a variety of belief, doctrine, form, and traditional practice, that there is something for every believer, whether scholarly or untutored, powerfully important or humbly obscure. What the cultivated

3. The absence of any written formulation of Vodun must certainly be a factor in its flexibility. Recorded tradition and written history tend to create definiteness of pattern.

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595 spouses. In the hills more than one peasant house was surrounded, as it would have been in Dahomey, by huts in each of which lived a "wife" of the farmer. Matters are not very different nowadays, except that men have learned the wisdom of not having their women live too close to each other.

162 From the guesses of experienced observers, it is probably not far
582 wide of the mark to estimate that only one couple out of a hundred is married according to the approved mode of the Western World.

The State apparently does not care;—or, to put it another way, government officials know how impossible it would be to alter a custom confirmed by long usage; one which, moreover, works well enough, since it causes practically no violence or legal cases for the
● 795 State to attend to. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, is eager
582 to persuade the people to observe the sacrament of holy matrimony. The priests have assiduously endeavored to explore the peasant mind in order to learn what deters the average person from formal marriage. The reasons for the indifference to weddings might be listed as follows:

581 1. Inertia. There is no convincing reason to vary time-honored
178 practice which works well enough, particularly since a wedding is likely to cause a great disturbance of daily routine and even a measure of jealousy on the part of those who have not made the display.

581 2. Suspicion of legal documents and civil officials. People who put
829 their names (or marks) on documents and who call the attention of governmental officials to themselves are almost sure to rue the day. A man knows what can be demanded of him by custom in his informal unions; but who can say what the law would hold him responsible for?

581 3. Expense. The civil license costs; the priest and his assistants
585 must be paid; to be married in church, one should wear shoes; if one wears shoes, one should dress up to them; a church wedding calls for a feast. At least two days must be spent away from work if the proper formalities are carried out.

581 4. Common sense in an inevitable situation. Both State and
595 Church would try to limit a man to one wife; prosperity might demand two or more. Is it sensible to discriminate against a second woman, who might be just as much help to a man as his legal wife?

581 The Church through its priests works unceasingly to answer these
794 arguments, but without notable success. Inertia is hard to overcome;

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To grasp the import of Haiti's problem of
270 over-population one

THE HAITIAN PEOPLE

161 should imagine the number of Vermonters sextupled, working with
433 hand tools and using methods which their great-grandfathers would
171 have considered antiquated; imagine the state with only a hundred
511 miles of paved roads, with no harnessed water power, no substantial fortunes, no middle class; imagine the farms gullied and worn out; ninety-five per cent of the people illiterate and undernourished; the state having no industry and practically no goods imported from New York, Massachusetts, or any other part of the United States. Under such conditions the low standard of living would be readily understandable.

Haiti might also be compared with Mississippi. Less than a quarter the size of that American state, it nevertheless has a larger population. Both Haiti and Mississippi are agricultural, with few towns, although no part of Haiti now has land as richly fertile as that of the Yazoo Delta. The low standard of living of the Mississippi share-cropper, whether Negro or white, is notorious—yet he has access to a few of the perquisites of civilization, whether these be elementary schools or moving pictures; the Haitian peasant lacks even these. In America the undercurrent of feeling is that something should be, probably eventually will be, done to improve the lot of the share-cropper. Certainly there is wealth enough in the country at large to alleviate conditions where they are deemed to be socially unhealthy. Not so in Haiti: the land is poorer, the numbers even greater, the area much smaller; and there is no wealth in the country, nor enough social vision among the upper classes to deal with the relentless increase of numbers.

168 How conceivably might this problem be dealt with? The first answer which would occur to many Americans, namely, birth control, is out of the question at present. Expense would stand in the way of its use by people who hardly ever see money; the peasants, unable to read, suspicious of new-fangled ways, untouched by all efforts to "uplift" them, and with no educational agencies, could hardly be converted to the use of contraceptives; while the Catholic [795] Church, which until now has not had to raise its voice against birth control in Haiti, would fight any proposal to introduce it as it fought the campaign in Puerto Rico.

167 Another possible answer is migration. This solution many Haitians
648 have tried without prompting. With little money available for

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[For information on small scale family ceremonies, see category 78.]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

512 neighbors paying friendly visits and of playing children gradu-
[264] ally become stilled. It is the time for the evening meal. By nine o'clock at the latest all is quiet and Mirebalais, man and beast, is asleep.

796 The *vodun* drums are heard only on Saturday nights, and
527 then the dance must be sufficiently close to the town, and the wind in the right direction, for the sound to be audible.
[656] Permits for these dances must be obtained, and are regularly given by the police officials — or were in 1934 — and word is passed on that on a given Saturday certain households will give *vodun* dances. If the dances are held in the foothills to the west, the Tombe River must be forded, and the existence of such a barrier between the village and the site of the dance makes this a favorite region in which to hold them, even though they may have official sanction. During the rainy sea-
[484] son attendance at dances on the opposite bank of the Arti-
[501] bonite River depends on the height of the stream, for when it is in flood not even the dugout canoes of the Haitians can cross it, while the ferry which Moreau de St. Mery speaks of as having been established in 1749 does not even exist in local tradition.[14] Yet no dance lacks participants or spectators, for these occasions furnish the principal opportunity for recrea-
[798] tion even as they fill their proper religious function. Early in the week discussions can be heard of the dances to be held, and though the official frown of the Catholic priest is always to be reckoned with, the importance of these dances, and the numbers who attend them, do not seem markedly lessened by
[554] this fact. Those whose social position in the community makes them more sensitive to such criticism merely take the precaution to slip quietly out of town after dark.

796 When occasions of local or national significance and church holidays are celebrated, the town is full of country folk and
[788] visitors from the cities. Christmas and New Year's, Mardi Gras and Easter are all periods for such celebrations, while the first Sunday of every month witnesses a religious procession

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

about the square that precedes the principal mass of the day. These processions, however, are as a mere rehearsal for the great procession held during the festival of St. Louis, the patron saint of the town. At that time the statue of the saint, carried by the faithful — among whom can be seen more than one perspiring *vodun* priest and *bocor* — is taken triumphantly through the streets to insure a good year. The nearness of the valley to the village of Ville Bonheur makes the great religious festival of Saut d'Eau, where the "miracle of the Virgin" is believed to have occurred, almost a local matter. And though Saut d'Eau lies well over the mountains, July 15 finds most of the population of Mirebalais away from home celebrating the miraculous revelation with folk from other parts of Haiti. May Day is celebrated as the "Fête de l'Agriculture," and two years ago a new day of rejoicing was added to the calendar of festivals. This is known as the "Festival of the Second Independence," the anniversary of the departure of the American Marines from Haiti, and is marked by the "illumination" of all houses the night before and a solemn discourse from the mayor after a Te Deum has been sung in the church.

Thus life in the valley of Mirebalais continues the course it has followed for the past two hundred years. Though its history, as we can reconstruct it, has been marked by turbulent periods, these have been far from the rule. It is true that because of its position it has always been a point to be defended, and often, both before and after the time of Haitian independence, it has been a region where decisive encounters with those who controlled the Spanish portion of the island have taken place. Not for many years, however, until the Caco uprising against the American Marines, did Mirebalais experience military activities on any considerable scale. After the death of Charlemagne Perrault, when his successor selected the valley as a strategic point to be defended, a large force of Marines was encamped near the confluence of the

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512 grain in her mortar or working in her garden near by. On
[143] market days she takes the produce of the family's fields to the
438 town to sell. If she has young children, she cares for them
855 while she does her other work, but when they are old enough,
857 they help her about the house if they are girls, or, if boys, go with their father to the garden. From time to time, when
[356] house repairs are needed or there are implements to be
[241] mended, the man spends a day at home getting these odd jobs done; otherwise only serious illness in the family keeps him from his fields.

512 The times for meals have not varied since the days when
264 Moreau de St. Mery described the eating-habits of the slaves.[a] In addition to the mid-morning repast, the only other meal is that eaten after the man returns from his field, this being
[562] the largest of the day. A wife does not sit down with her
[593] husband, but usually eats earlier with her small children and holds herself ready to serve him upon his return, when, if he is alone, she remains to tell him the day's gossip. Visitors are
[574] often present, for peasant etiquette demands that all comers
[576] be offered food, and, as one Haitian expressed it, "The peasant would kill you for the insult if you did not share your meal with him." Bedtime, as might be expected, is early.

512 On Sundays and on the days of festivals this routine is in-
527 terrupted, when, if the occasion is of sufficient importance
[796] and the habitation is not too far from town, the peasant and his family attend mass. On Saturday nights there is usually a *vodun* dance, when the early hour for retirement is forgotten and all-night festivities precede Sunday's rest. On such days
[264] the principal meal is eaten at three or four o'clock in the afternoon, and all the adults share it together, while at one side the children are fed from the dishes of their parents in response to the insistent repetition of the demand "*Ba'm pa'm* — give me my portion." *

* This is an example of the elision characteristic of Haitian Créole, it being abbreviated from *Ba moin part moin* or, in French, *Donnez-moi ma part.*

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585 769 782 for the victims of smallpox. If family traditions also tell of those shot, not in war, but as prisoners, perhaps, a candle is lighted for them outside the cemetery wall. Though the couple may perform this ceremony together, each makes this request of the dead of his or her own family as the candles are lighted. This call on the dead is repeated several days after the marriage or later, when candles are again lighted.

591 583 585 769 The sole exception to the performance of these rites before the new household is begun occurs in those cases of *plaçage* where a girl continues to live at her own home. This is rare, however, for the house of a man is usually built near that of his father, and he takes his wife there. But if special circumstances dictate otherwise, the ceremony of notifying and pacifying the family deities may be deferred, though a man must eventually present every woman with whom he lives to his family gods and in turn must be presented to the gods of the woman's family. In similar fashion the dead of both families must be adequately notified.

585 [777] [796] [583] Marriages rarely take place in the months of November and December, the former being disliked because it is "the month of the dead," during which All Saints' Day occurs, and the latter because it ends the year. Except for the Church wedding and less elaborate festivities to celebrate the event, the rites which mark a *plaçage* mating do not greatly differ from those which mark a legal marriage, which may be de-[777] scribed in outline. The favorite day for Church marriages is Saturday, "the day of the Virgin," and the time for the ceremony is always early morning, before the heat of the day has set in. If the home of the girl is some distance from Mirebalais, the party come to town the preceding day, the girl spending the night with some friend. Otherwise the bridegroom, accompanied by his relatives and friends, goes to the house of the girl early Saturday morning. Before the couple leave the [782] home of her parents, water must be thrown on the ground in [788] front of them, and also sprinkled by them before the en-

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the one possessed, possessions of this kind mean either that the *loa* needs baptism; or that, being baptized, its devotee has been negligent in serving the god.

No actual rite of baptism of a *loa* — or, as it is also termed, of *lavé tête,* "washing the head" — was witnessed, but the account of the ceremony given here, obtained independently from several persons, represents an adequate exposition of the rite as performed in Mirebalais. A room is prepared where the person whose *loa* is to be baptized must remain for three days. The mat or bed on which the neophyte rests is covered with fresh sheets and pillow-cases, and three changes of clothing are made ready, one of which must be entirely new for the last day of the ceremony. These are in the color of the god being "baptized"; that is, if the *loa* were revealed to be such a one as Damballa, Aida Wedo, or Gran' Erzilie, everything would be white, but if it were Gran' Siligbo, the colors would be blue and white; if Ogun, everything would be red; if Ossange, blue; where the god is one of the Pétro suite, such as 'Ti Kita or Bosu, everything would be black.*

During the three days' "retreat" the one whose *loa* is being consecrated lies alone. All day long the men and women of the family sit in the next room or outside the house, singing and praying, though at night they sleep, since "this is not a wake." They not only sing the songs sacred to the *loa* being baptized, but also the canticles of the Virgin, while prayers of the Church are recited under the leadership of the *prêt' savanne,* the "bush-priest" whose ability to read the prayers makes him an essential figure in all *vodun* rites. They may from time to time have "a little procession" about the room where the novitiate lies, when small banners in the color of the god are carried. Soft drinks and a *mangé sec* — a "dry" offering — are given the god, and white tapers and an oil lamp are

* A detailed listing of the names, attributes, and powers of the more widely worshipped *loa,* the colors, days, and trees or other places sacred to them, and the "squads" into which they are conceived to be formed, will be found in an appendix at the end of this book.

lighted. Chicken and rice may also be cooked for any god except Gede, while chocolate and rice with milk are favored, since it is said "the *loa* love desserts" — a commentary on the very immediate and human character of these spirits.

The actual baptism, or "washing of the head," is performed on the third day of the ceremony by a *vodun* priest or priestess who is a member of the family, though any member who has important *loa* and the necessary *connaissance* may officiate if the membership of the family includes no priest. As at any baptism, there must be a godfather and godmother, and preference is given those who are the parents of twins or are themselves twins. The officiant must be possessed at the time, since, it is said, "one *loa* baptizes another." Leaves of the basilique tree are steeped in perfumed cold water, and the hands of the one who baptizes are first immersed in the liquid; then, while songs of the *loa* and canticles of the Virgin are sung, he washes the head of the person to be baptized. Possession occurs immediately, and the new devotee lies back, half conscious, while all others kneel, seeking word from the *loa* to learn if it is satisfied. If an affirmative answer is given, all retire, the person possessed remaining in the room to sleep through the night. A "ball," but not a *vodun* dance, may celebrate the event either the next day or later, but this is not obligatory, and most often those present, after eating, quietly disperse. The following day the one who has been baptized goes to the family place of worship and greets those who have helped him. Only one further rite is necessary, and this solely when the *loa bossal* is revealed to be a hostile god. Then the *loa*, after having been baptized, is "restrained" by being placed in a jar and buried, so it cannot later emerge and trouble the family of the one to whom it has come.[15]

The ceremony of baptism, in Mirebalais, is in no sense a first step into any *vodun* hierarchy, for, as will be seen, no such hierarchy exists in this valley. One important priest there derives his power from *loa* that have never been bap-

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tized at all, but merely respond to an innate ability to control them. To have a baptized *loa,* then, merely means that the worship of the *loa* is thereafter carried on in regular form. The worshipper learns how to *marré,* or "tie,"[14] his spirit, so as to enjoy the social aspects of a *vodun* dance without fear that his *loa* will come unbidden. He gives it small offerings from time to time, and if it becomes insistent, or if his family is being troubled by its gods, he takes full part in the rituals that are staged.[15]

In native idiom, a person when possessed is "mounted" by his god, and thereafter becomes his *ch'wal,* or "horse." A devotee may come under the influence of a number of spirits during a single ceremony or dance, one *loa* succeeding another. The first deity that ever came to a person, however, for him constitutes the chief of his gods — his *mait' tête* — and the leader of any deities which may subsequently possess him. It is this *loa* alone that is "baptized," and this one alone "taken from his head" at his death; and, as far as he is concerned, all his other gods are under the control of this *mait' tête,* so that any agreement which he may enter into with this principal spirit must be respected by all the others.

Fundamentally, to be possessed by a *loa* means that an individual's spirit is literally dispossessed by that of the god. Personalities undergo radical change in accordance with the nature of the deity,[16] while even the sex of the one possessed is disregarded if it differs from that of the god, so that, for example, a woman "mounted" by Ogun is always addressed as Papa Ogun.[17] One wears the colors of the god and the ornaments he likes, eating and drinking those things he prefers, and otherwise manifesting his peculiar characteristics — rolling on the earth, if possessed by Damballa or chattering incessantly if by Gede.[18]

Not everyone, by any means, is subject to states of possession. If the existence of individual differences in the capacity for religious expression be recognized, it becomes apparent

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346 the rooms is consecrated to the *loa*, the other to the spirits of
778 twins and the family dead. If the house is a large one with
776 three rooms, the third will be for the Congo *loa*. It was also
794 said that occasionally such places of worship reserve one room
776 for the Rada deities, a second for the Pétro *loa*, and the third for the Congo gods, the dead and twins being worshipped elsewhere. For the Ibo gods, however, it is agreed in Mirebalais that there is never a separate room. But whether the gods are worshipped in a single-room thatched shelter or a more impressive "temple" with a metal roof, none of the major categories of supernatural powers are neglected.

776 In the main, large ceremonies are concerned with the task
778 of restraining, or less often of pacifying, deities that have been
• 796 molesting a family, and of making content those who have
794 been demonstrating their goodwill toward the group. Such rites must be sharply differentiated from the ordinary *vodun* dance which, coming after the family ritual, forms but a part of this complex, and serves to express joy at the dangers averted and gratitude for the good that the friendly *loa* are to bring. At the ceremony drums may or may not be employed; at *vodun* dances they are indispensable. Possession is induced at the ceremony by the *hungan's* invocations; at the dance by the rhythm of the drums. The ceremony is attended only by members of the family and those who are specially invited; invitations to the *vodun* dance are broadcast over the countryside, and all take part in the social phases of the evening. For the ceremony, sacrifices not alone of cereals and drinks but also of the blood of animals are provided; at the *vodun* dance only minor offerings are given. And while both types of ritual are a part of a single functioning religious system, it is at the first where the most important end is achieved, that of obtaining protection from hostile gods and gaining the favor of those who are friendly.

778 The pattern of the ceremony — called a *service loa* — is
779 sufficiently definite to allow a generalized version to be given,

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78 *loa* troubling the family, or, if it is the second, those which
79 have helped them, to tell whether or not they are willing to re-
776 ceive the sacrificial animals. The omen which indicates their acceptability to the gods is their nibbling at leaves or pecking at grains of corn and other cereals offered them, after which the gods themselves come, possessing their servitors. At midnight or later, as the violence of the possession recedes, the sac-
[184] rifices are offered. In Mirebalais, at least, the hysteria said to mark the moment "when the blood flows" is not present. The actual killing of the animals, witnessed in numerous instances, is one of the more routine aspects of the ritual.[4]

After the animals have been killed, a long period of quiet ensues while the work of dressing and cooking them takes place, the ceremony beginning anew when this is done. If evil deities are to be banished or "restrained," they are called once more, and the priest may have to battle with those possessed by them, for these gods have no desire to be driven away, or incarcerated where they cannot escape. Most of the food given such gods is placed in large pots and buried in the earth with them, but, with characteristic human perversity, if the sacrifices have been for good *loa*, these are only allowed to have small portions. The ceremony closes with the coming of day.[5]

78 This pattern varies in details, and to the Haitian these dif-
79 ferences are important. This is shown by the response of a per-
794 son in whose company two similar rites were observed, to the
776 question whether the second would resemble the first. The an-
184 swer was decisive. "No, the ceremony will not be the same. In the first one the most important spirit lived in a mango tree; in the second, it is in a bamboo." The Pétro gods receive black or gray-colored animal offerings, the Rada deities white, red,
78 and vari-colored ones. Only Bosu Trois Cornes, Pelicon, and
776 Pelib are given bullocks, the first because he, like this animal,
794 is horned; the second because he is even more dangerous than
776 Bosu; and Pelib because as a water-god he will otherwise take

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cattle and all other animals when the river floods. Rituals involving these larger sacrifices, however, are held only on the rarest of occasions, and are thus much less common than the ceremony which, typical of those witnessed, may now be described.

This *service* was held in a habitation southwest of Mirebalais, across the Tombe River in the foothills of the mountains. It was said to be the first ceremony of its kind given by this family, and would not have to be repeated for a generation or more. The immediate cause was the occurrence of numerous illnesses and deaths. When members independently consulted their *hungans* to discover the reason for these misfortunes, they were informed that the family *loa* demanded such a rite. Finally one priest, more powerful than the others, became possessed and described in great detail the type of ceremony that was desired: of how many days' duration, the number and kind of sacrifices, what gods were to be called, which troublesome ones must be "sent away" or "restrained," and those of the friendly *loa* who were to be fed.

The entire ritual was conducted out of doors, and at about half past four in the afternoon of Thursday, 5 July, 1934, when first seen, the *action de grâce* had already begun. It was being chanted by the *prêt' savanne*, a bespectacled, middle-aged man, who read from an old prayerbook, while the *hungan* sat quietly by. The officiant was standing in a cleared space with his back toward a grove of trees, facing the "altar." Opposite was a grassy slope, which was separated from this grove by a brook where the Maît' Source lives who watches over the habitation of the family. A white banner hung high in one of the trees a little behind the altar.

This altar, called the *trône*, was a table covered with a white cloth, spread over a frame to form a canopy sheltering its sides and back. A black cloth was beneath the white covering. Under the table a wooden bowl — a *gamelle* — contained water in which sacred leaves had been steeped; near it was a

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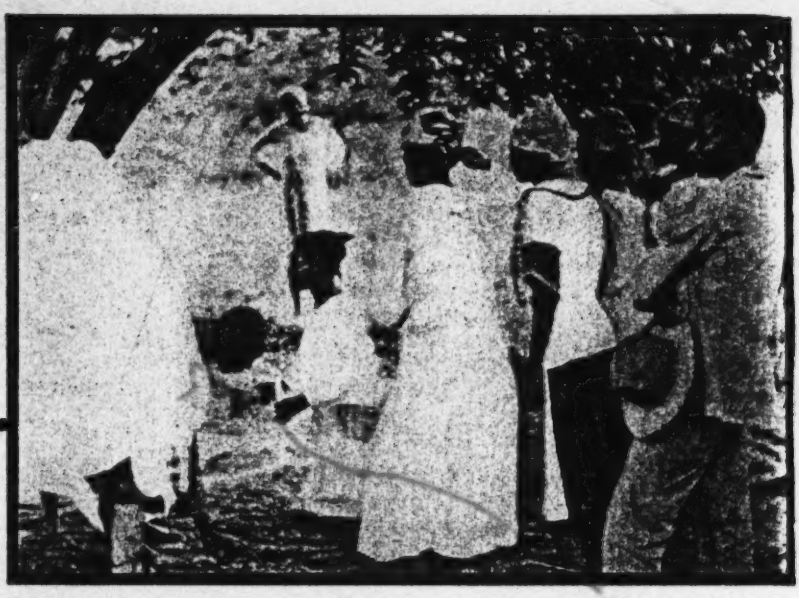

ABOVE, *The possessed woman offering a candle and pouring sanctified water before the altar.*

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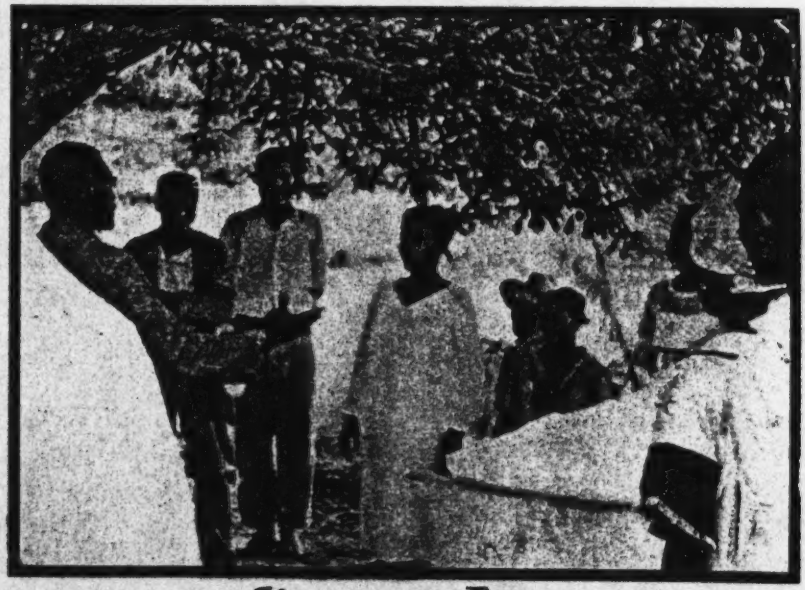
BELOW, *The* vodun *priest exhorting the possessed woman.*



[facing P. 161]

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uals were being performed. If they failed to wave their banners vigorously or often enough, the one in charge chided them for their lack of zeal, whereupon their movements would become a kind of dance. During the *adoration* each member of the family was called upon to give coins or candles, the first for the *prêt' savanne*, though this was not his entire fee.

With the benediction, the *action de grâce* came to an end, and the solemn, tired voice of the *prêt' savanne* was heard intoning a hymn, which, in the usual fashion, was repeated by the assembled group until, without interlude, without even a pause, the interpolations of the chorus gradually changed, so that the rhythm became African, and, with the transition, the *vodun* priest took over the leadership. The *hungan* began by repeating several times the phrase which throughout the entire ceremony was to punctuate all its climaxes, "*Grâce* [*et*] *mise'corde*," and the family murmured it in response. He then ordered each member of the family to address himself to the *loa*, telling what troubles had befallen him and what favors he desired. An assistant now took six candles from the *trône*. Proceeding in a counter-clockwise direction, he described a large circle about that part of the meadow where the ceremony was to take place, fixing a candle in the ground at intervals. Four of these were for the four corners of the earth, one was for Mait' 'Bitation — the deity termed Master of the Habitation — and one for the Mait' Source — the Master of the Stream. When the members of the family, each holding a lighted candle, had formed in a line, they were bidden to place these candles in the earth within the area described by the six already there, and as they scattered over the sacred ground, litt'e flickering flames dotted the hillside and the grassy meadow behind the *trône* in the deepening dusk.

Then all returned to the altar, and the *hungan*, taking the first of three plates made ready for him, began to describe *verver*. One plate held white cornmeal flour, one was filled with gray ashes, called Guinea flour, and the third contained

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78 a black powder of ground, roasted coffee beans. Starting at the
793 tree near the "first" table for Bosu, he traced a white line
796 that, passing the second table and the trees for Simbi, con-
532 tinued to the *trône,* to which subsidiary motifs were then added in gray and black, making of the designs an intricate geometric composition.

78 With bell in hand and a small whistle in his mouth, both of
79 which later were entrusted to his assistants, the *hungan* went about, blowing the whistle at intervals to call the *loa.* Singing,
[533] he directed that a wooden boat-shaped basin containing water be placed in front and a little to the left of the *trône* for washing the feet of the sacrificial animals. Though all the family were present, they were again ritually summoned in song to come with the sacrifices and were ordered to stand near by with lighted candles while the animals were bathed. As they gathered, the *hungan* became possessed by Simbi, who took it upon himself to set the fee for conducting this ceremony at 117.10 gourdes. When he announced this sum, loud pleas of poverty were heard from the family, while speaking through the priest, the god bargained with them until the sum of 110 gourdes was finally agreed upon.

[533] The *hungan* now sang a long invocation, inviting the gods of all those places where Africans live to come. First the feet of the fowl were washed, then those of the pigs, and finally of the goat. Each fowl was passed over the body and head of every
[822] member of the family as it was presented with the requisite song to the proper *loa* — the red and black cock for Legba, the black fowl for Gede, the red one for Ogun, the white for Damballa, and the fowl with ruffled plumage for Congo Zandor. Then each was placed on the ground in front of three small piles of food taken from the *trône.* They were watched with anxiety by all present, for the pecking at the food is a signal that the god accepts the animal given him. The small pigs for 'Ti Kita Demembré, and the boar for Bosu, were offered the same food as the fowls; the goat for Erzilie Gé Rouge was pre-

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CHAPTER X

VODUN WORSHIP: THE DANCE

THE *vodun* dance, the most public aspect of Haitian peasant ritual, has been more frequently observed and reported on than any other rites of the cult. The worship of the *loa* by an individual, the baptism of his *loa*, and the minor periodic sacrifices he makes to it that it may protect him are entirely private in nature, while presence at the *service* for the *loa* is essentially restricted to members of the family. The *vodun* dance, however, is viewed quite differently, for news of it is widely spread by word of mouth, so that, in contrast to the private character of all other rituals, *vodun* dances are important social occasions, and their success is measured by the numbers in attendance and the enthusiasm of the participants which makes a dance *chaud'* — "hot"!

The *vodun* dance may be said to function in several ways. Above all, it is an integral part of the worship of the *loa*, and as such is marked by repeated possessions which indicate the presence of the gods. Yet it also offers an important opportunity for recreation, as is indicated by the fact that in Mirebalais the term *bamboche*, which means a dance at which one merely enjoys oneself, is often applied to it. By no means do all who go to a dance become possessed, for of one hundred to one hundred and fifty persons present, no more than twenty or twenty-five will come under the power of their gods. The old

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796 535 men and women exchange gossip and sit about, joining in the songs or merely observing the proceedings; while the young people form part of the singing, dancing circle that revolves almost without pause about the central post of the *tonnelle*, the shelter where the festivities are held.

796 To speak of discipline in connection with these dances is to evoke new and astonishing images for readers familiar with the more popular literature on Haiti. It is admittedly true that as one first witnesses a *vodun* dance, one's reaction is that this is a performance governed solely by the dictates of individual [416] possession. These ceremonies are usually held at night, deep in [291] the bush, lighted only by a small, smoking oil lamp and by the [411] candles fastened to the pegs of the drums, while the participants dress in anything but their best clothing, and in their belts the men carry the machetes always worn by the Haitian [533] peasant. Add to this the effect of the unceasing rhythms of the drumming, the blanket of sound from the unison singing of the participants, the violence of the possessions, and it is not strange that the untrained observer tends to assess what he sees in almost any terms but those of the underlying discipline that defines all activity in the worship of the gods. A release of [154] psychic tension is undoubtedly afforded those who become possessed, and this is also experienced to a lesser degree by all 796 those in attendance. Nevertheless, it must be emphasized, de- 786 spite so much that has been written to the contrary, that this form of worship of the *loa* is neither unrestrained hysteria nor drunken orgiastic satisfaction of the sex drive. The behavior of the participants, in terms of the accepted patterns of European and American religious decorum, often seems uncouth, vigorous, violent, and even dangerous, when it is merely the expression of a different tradition. And as for the orgiastic aspects of these rites, Haitians have ample opportunity to satisfy their sexual impulses elsewhere, without making this a basic and constant element in the worship of their gods.

796 *Vodun* dances, in Mirebalais as elsewhere, take place on

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Saturday nights. This is not because of the especially sacred character of the day, but rather because the Haitian government, in order to assure a continuous working week, refuses permits for other days. The occasions for the dances are varied, as is evident from those given during the course of this field-work. One of these was that of a *hungan* as a compliment to visitors "who knew Dahomey" and was conducted as a serious rite in the worship of the *loa*. Two dances marked the end of *services* for family gods, and were variously interpreted as tributes to the family dead and the twins, who must not be neglected in any religious observance, and as celebrations offered in praise of the gods who were to protect the families, giving the dances, to mark the "restraining" of the evil spirits responsible for their troubles. Two other dances celebrated the "baptism" and initial use of new sets of drums. As has been pointed out, there are also non-religious occasions on which *vodun* dances are given. On days of secular celebrations, such as the anniversary of the declaration of Haitian independence, or the withdrawal of the Marines, the *vodun* dancing is purely social, though the ritual drums are used, the sacred songs are sung, and the steps of the dances are those seen at any Saturday-night gathering. Added to the fact that no possessions or other manifestations of serious worship of the *loa* occur, the "secular" *vodun* dances differ from the others in that they are held away from any family shrine, taking place within towns or cities, something never permitted in their non-social, religious counterparts.

The *vodun* dance—and in the remainder of this chapter only the dance which has significance in the worship of the *loa* will be considered—is patterned like all other ceremonies of the cult.[1] It is held at a family habitation, under an open brush shelter known as a *tonnelle*, constructed for the occasion next to the family *maison de servitude*. If the habitation at which the dance is given is not the one where this house of worship is found, the shelter is built near a hut so that those possessed will have a place to retire.

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796 346 will have a place to retire. The *tonnelle*, which is merely a flat brush roof supported by a number of upright posts, must be built strongly enough to withstand the assaults of those possessed, who not only lean heavily on the supports, but sometimes climb through the brush roof to lie for a time on the cross-beams which form the base for this flimsy covering. Its ostensible aim is to protect the participants from what is known as the *neige*, or "snow," as the heavy dew is called, but, as might be expected, the structure has a ceremonial as well as a utilitarian purpose. Of particular importance is the central post, called the *porto cabesse*, or the *porto mita*, because the gods are believed to wait there until their drum rhythms sound, when they use this to descend into the *tonnelle*. The fire which burns during the whole period of the dance near the entrance to the habitation is also characteristic and indispensable. It is for Legba, who, as guardian of the entrance-way must first be worshipped, in order that he may permit the other deities to come.

796 The dances may begin shortly after sundown, but are not fully under way until two or three hours later, and last all night. In no case was a dance witnessed which began while there was daylight, though during the dry months, January and February, when there is no work to be done in the fields, dances open at a somewhat earlier hour. The rectangular dancing-space under the *tonnelle* is lined with spectators, who are seated on such chairs and boxes as the family giving the dance can provide or such others as have been brought by their owners, though, in the main, people stand. The vigor of the dance varies as the night progresses. It is usually slow in starting, people drifting in later as they finish their evening meal, while the best drummers are rarely present at the outset. [993] Unless the dance follows an earlier ceremony, such as the baptism of drums, or a *humfort*, the *hungan* in charge also does not appear until a late hour and even when there has been an earlier rite, such a personage may well go to his home to rest before returning for the night's effort.

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before returning for the night's effort. By midnight the dance 796
is in full swing. Though individuals here and there may absent themselves for a time, the attendance remains relatively constant, until as the crowing of cocks marks the approaching dawn, the number of dancers begins to dwindle rapidly, and with full daylight few remain other than members of the family. Only rarely does a *vodun* dance last well into the morning; what one sees after sunrise are the poorer drummers beating their mediocre rhythms for the young people who continue a desultory circling about the central pole. This does not mean that the *vodun* deities shun the daylight. It is merely because the participants must hurry away to get into their Sunday clothes for early mass in the village church.

The obligations of the family giving a dance are clearly established by tradition. Most important is the *tonnelle*, which they must build, and the drums and their accessory gong and rattles, which they must furnish. The drummers are not paid, but are given much attention when the refreshments that must be provided are distributed. These usually take the form of *clairin*, though coffee and bread may also be offered the guests early in the morning. The *clairin*, or raw rum, is passed [273]
from time to time, but not in sufficient quantity to cause inebriation. Those who supplement this with a generous supply of their own, and show the effect of it, are regarded with anything but approval.[3] Other accessories for the dance which must be at hand are the banners used to salute the deities, and the candles and water needed to bring those possessed out of the more violent stages of their seizures. If anything else is [265]
required or the guests desire further refreshments, these may [343]
always be bought from the women who set up their little stands at every dance.

Drums, iron, and rattles are indispensable for a *vodun* 796
dance. The drums, of the characteristic hollow-log African 834
type, tuned with pegs inserted in the sides and reinforced with twine wound about the stretched heads of cow-hide or goat-

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796 534 533 [198] skin, are played in batteries of three, the largest being called *manman*,[3] the middle the *seconde*, and the smallest the *bula*.[4] To be used in dances, the drums, like the *loa* of the worshippers, must be "baptized," as will be seen when an account of their making and consecration is given in a later chapter. The iron, or *ogan*, usually consists of the blade of a hoe struck by a large spike, and the rattle, *açon*, in the form most often encountered, is a rounded calabash, containing seeds or pebbles. The iron and the rattles set the basic, steady beat about which the complex drum rhythms play. The smallest drum first takes the time after the iron and the rattles have begun, the notes being played with an accessory figure by means of two thin sticks. The medium-sized drum is next heard, while the *manman*, ritually the most important of the three, comes in last. The *seconde* also has two sticks, one short, thick, and straight, the other a small bow, which gives an added resilience to the notes of the drums' subsidiary rhythms. In playing the great drum, the single crooked stick, called a *baguette*, is held in the right hand, while the left strikes the drumhead with heel or fingers according to the quality of tone desired. The drumstick itself is wielded either against the skin head or against its wooden side, thus permitting a further variation in tone. 796 796 533 When "salutes" to the gods are called for by the drums, it is the voice of the *manman* that signals the sweeping circular movements of the dancers, dictating with its beat the dips and semi-prostrations of this figure in the ritual dancing, called *asagwe*. The drum rhythms are always distinctive for each type of *loa*, and every devotee knows the rhythms which call his god.

796 534 [199] The drums and iron are the focus of all activity of the dance, especially since those who are possessed dance facing the drums, in whose beat is heard the voice of the gods. Hence the spectators cluster most closely about them, for anything of significance which happens must happen here. The players of the rattles — it is but rarely that more than one rattle is not

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employed — do not remain with the drummers. These instruments are ordinarily in the hands of *hunsi*, who join the *massed ring of dancers that constantly circles about the center* pole. These dancers are not under possession, but are merely enjoying the evening or participating in the social aspect of the dance preparatory to becoming possessed. The rattle is held high above the heads of the dancers, and its sharp, steady notes are produced by quick, short, measured movements of the wrist. The end of a song, which sometimes does not come until fifteen or twenty minutes after its initial statement, is usually marked by a continuous shaking of a rattle, a process which effectually breaks the rhythm and makes it possible to begin a new song. The player of the rattle is an outstanding singer, who usually initiates the fresh refrain and continues to sing its repetitions as soloist in the alternation of solo and chorus which marks Haitian *vodun* singing as it marks most West African and New World Negro religious music.

When a possession occurs, the songs for the deity who has "arrived" are taken up as the drums play the rhythm of the god. As his possession comes on, the devotee falls to the ground, toiling before the drums, or staggers blindly about the dancing-space, or otherwise follows the characteristic behavior attributed to his god. After a time he begins to dance, whereupon a *hunsi* or the *hungan*, taking a calabash of water in one hand and a lighted candle in the other, dances opposite him, saluting the god as he performs his every movement in reverse; if he turns clockwise, the one dancing with him turns counter-clockwise; if he moves to the right, the other moves to the left. Except when executing these turns, the functionary of the cult never takes his eyes from the eyes of the possessed person, almost, as it were, hypnotizing him to help him come to himself. Eventually the possessed one recovers sufficiently to take the candle and the calabash of water in his own hands. Often spilling water as he moves, he makes his way to the central pole, pouring an offering and making the sign of the cross with the candle before it.

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796 787 with the candle before it. He next does the same before the *ogan*, then before each of the drums in order, continuing to dance before the drums, usually with great violence, while the few "social" dancers who still may be circling about the center pole make way so that he may execute his steps. Gradually his dancing becomes calmed, until he is taken either to the *maison de servitude* or to a near-by house, where he rests and if, as often happens, he has rolled on muddy ground during his possession, washes and changes his clothes.

796 794 787 159 Several examples of the force of this tradition of being "mounted" by the *loa* may be given. One of these which is of especial interest concerns the possession of a man of good education, in the early thirties, who throughout his childhood and early manhood had had no association with the *vodun* cult, but had been encouraged by his family and his own ambition to promote the activities of the Catholic Church. In discussing his earlier experiences and background with one of his intimates, it seemed that on the side of both father and mother many of his relatives were affiliated with the cult, and it was recounted how, at an important ceremony at his ancestral habitation, some years before, he had become possessed. But it was also made clear that he had not been any the less active in the affairs of the Church because of this transient experience, nor had he affiliated himself in any way with any *vodun* group. Why he wished once more to participate in the *vodun* rituals cannot be said; certainly during the weeks immediately preceding his possession he had become interested in the philosophy of *vodun*, and his non-voduistic, if not anti-voduistic background seemed to accentuate his interest in ascertaining the hold of these rites, which had always been presented to him as repellent, on their followers. As an example of the duality of his interest, it may be stated that though he had remarked how "disgusting" it was to roll in the mud when possessed by Damballa, he had also been im-

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pressed with the temerity of those who danced in the fire for Legba. 796 794 787 159

At a certain dance, however, he volunteered to help in a small way in promoting the activities of the evening, such as serving *clairin* to the drummers, while he himself danced the social dance about the central post of the *tonnelle*. As the tempo of the dance heightened, he became more deeply imbued with the spirit of the occasion and shouted: " If the *loa* comes to me, I will accept it! " as he plunged again into the circle of dancers. When the drums sounded the salute to the gods, he would awkwardly execute the accompanying backward turning movement of the figure.

After a time he left the *tonnelle*, but before many moments had elapsed a commotion was heard at the near-by *barrière*, where he was reeling in the first stage of possession, just inside the gate, while a fully possessed woman in a figured dress stalked back and forth. An *adjanikon*, with candle and calabash of water, was trying to " settle " his possession, but he fell to the ground and rolled on his back, lying prostrate with legs and arms outstretched and twitching. The *adjanikon*, putting aside the candle and water, lifted his limp body to its feet and then slowly, according to the accepted pattern, holding him upright, swayed with him in time to the song that all twelve or fifteen persons present were by now singing, until, staggering, the possessed man was able to support himself: [533] [539]

Damballa-o, Damballa-e,	Damballa-o, Damballa-e,
Damballa-o, Damballa Wedo,	Damballa-o, Damballa Wedo,
'Gadé ça ou fait' moin.	See what you have done to me.

Steadily fixing his eyes on the possessed one, the *adjanikon* now danced with him, turning always in the opposite direction as he offered him the candle and the water, which, how-

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796 ever, the man was not yet able to hold. Moving backwards
797 toward the *maison de servitude,* all the spectators continued
787 to sing the song of Damballa, while the man to whom the god
159 had come half-danced and was half-carried up the path to the *tonnelle* and taken into the family house of worship.

[188] When he had sufficiently recovered to be able to hold the candle and the water, he poured the water and unsteadily bowed three times in the accepted manner before the *couvert sec* to the Rada gods. He now was enough in control of himself to emerge, and, with the *adjanikon* dancing before him with water and a candle, he once again came into the *tonnelle,* before the drums. As he appeared, the drummers stopped the Ogun rhythm they had been sounding, and in an intense silence all waited for the god to announce himself. Half on his [538] knees before the drums, the one possessed began to sing in a [539] cracked voice:

Damballa Wedo,	Damballa Wedo,
Papa m' c'est coulev'-o,	Papa, I am a serpent-o,
Na poi' bois	There is no tree
Moin pa' li monté.	I cannot climb.

With this initial statement, the Damballa rhythm rolled from the drums, as all echoed the song in chorused response, while the possessed figure, in strict conformity to the pattern, first poured water at the central post and then consecutively before the iron and each of the drums. Returning to the central post, he whirled about it, almost but never quite falling, until he could dance before the drums, awkwardly but acceptably, before he disappeared to rest in a near-by house.

796 The explanation offered by this man of the manner in
787 which he became possessed, and his varying attitudes toward
159 his possession, are revealing. On several previous occasions
793 the *hungan* who officiated at the dance had noticed that he was attending *vodun* rites and had joked with him about his interest in them. Once at an earlier dance this *hungan* had

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given him a piercing glance, not without significance, for as the man, who believed himself the victim of the *hungan's* machinations, said, "Whatever you believe, these *hungans* have some kind of power. . . ." On his arrival at the dance where the possession occurred, the *hungan* had encountered this man sitting alone, some distance from the *tonnelle*. Giving him a drink of liquor, the *hungan*, as he pressed his hand in greeting, sportively turned him about in the manner in which possession is induced. After this the man recollected but little; he did not remember having said he would accept the god, or circling backwards, or bowing to the drums when the "salutes" were played. He dimly remembered having been sent to the *barrière* with some liquor for Bosu, who, not a Rada *loa*, had come unauthorized to one of the spectators and, according to custom, had been removed from the dancing-place. He also just recalled that a woman had become possessed by Legba, but did not know that it was when she touched him that his own possession had begun. The remainder of the night's experience was completely blank, even though the actual state of possession occupied only a small part of it.

Later during the dance, when he had returned, he was heard to say: "It was not a pretty trick that the *hungan* played on me"—a feeling not assuaged when, the next morning at mass, the priest in his sermon preached against following false gods and recounted the miseries in store for those who desert the true faith; nor when he reflected that, by his possession, he had in a sense become affiliated with a group whose position in society was anything but such as to enhance his own social status. The *hungan*, however, promised him that he would not bring on another possession, adding, as an aside: "It is good, though, that a Haitian should have this experience." None the less, to make sure that this *loa bossal* would not come to him at awkward moments, it was going to be necessary for him to baptize it, thus continuing the process which

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796 787 159 some termed his "Haitianization." There were those who expressed surprise at the occurrence, but the majority held that though this man had himself been a devout follower of the Church, and his parents before him, Damballa was a *loa* of his family, and therefore it was reasonable that it should come to him when called at a dance.

796 787 765 159 Another "unauthorized" possession, that of a woman in mourning, was also witnessed. Like the *service* of one night's duration, which this dance followed, it was but poorly organized and provided for, and in this it reflected the status of the family, which had but few resources, since its head had recently come into the valley and therefore lacked the backing which only his own relationship group could give him. Here there was no *maison de servitude,* and the *tonnelle* had been erected in an open field where the only shelter was offered by a crude hut near by. The *hungan* did not appear until late, while the host lived up to his reputation by drinking more *clairin* than was good for him. None the less, one violent possession by a *loa bossal* occurred relatively early in the evening, though the *loa* concerned did not "announce himself" through the song of the one he had possessed.

The woman in mourning sang continuously as she sat among the spectators, and since she was not supposed to dance, she executed dance movements in place. As the drumming became more and more *chaud* — "hot" — she became correspondingly more excited until, suddenly leaping from her seat, she began a frenzied dance. She refused the water and candle, however, and when finished with her dancing, she fell exhausted into her chair, where she remained in a coma during the next hour. She roused herself later and again joined the singing, but though she was near possession, this never came on. Her *loa,* like the other *loa bossal* that came earlier in the evening, did not "announce itself," and since it was her first — and not unwelcome — possession, she stated that at the termination of her period of mourning she would

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have a *hungan* divine its identity so that she might thereafter worship it and be under its protection. As in the other case discussed, the personality involved here is not without interest. The woman was one of the shrewdest traders in the Mirebalais market, and noted for her hardness. Underneath this, however, the presence of much vital energy could be felt as well as a passionate desire for gayety and attention from members of the other sex. That the essential lack of satisfaction of these drives in her life, as discussed and observed, figured in bringing on her possession cannot be doubted, and, as such, throws significant light on the nature of the psychological aspects of the phenomenon.

These instances, however, must not be thought of as a regular part of the ritual of the dances. Though a dance was attended almost every Saturday night during the course of an entire summer, and a number of *services* and other *vodun* rites in addition, these were the only occasions when a *loa bossal* appeared. In order, therefore, to document the pattern of the *vodun* dance that has already been given, some of the dances witnessed may be described in outline.

The first of these is a dance which, originally intended as the culmination of the *service* described in the preceding chapter, failed to fulfill its end because of a quarrel between two important members of the family. None the less, it proved to be one of the most spirited and typical dances witnessed. The habitation, when reached shortly after six o'clock, was deserted, except for a few people who seemed to be waiting disconsolately. Among them were several *hunsi* in white, and two who carried banners, while the three drums, each "dressed" in its skirt-like covering, stood before the entrance, the drumsticks and the *ogan* lying on the *barrière* itself. Since the *hungan* had not arrived, one or two of the men present took charge as darkness came on. Before this dance began, it was necessary to introduce the drums ceremonially into the compound, and as this was the first *vodun* dance after the es-

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tablishment of the family *maison de servitude,* a special ritual for Legba at the *barrière* was required. The one who took charge threw some rum on the *boucan* that had been made for Legba. Taking a candle, he struck the drums with it; then described *verver* and placed an egg on the white flour he piled just inside the *barrière.* The rite proceeded no farther, however, for with the appearance of the head of the family, accompanied by his wife and son, who was the young man who had been possessed by Gede the first night of the *service,* a discussion arose which soon developed into a quarrel, because the family head felt that he had not been notified of this dance in the manner due his position. Finally with the cry: "If anything happens to the family because of this, I am not responsible," he departed in a rage. This was regarded as serious, because should a dance which ended an important rite be held with some of the family absent, the gods might be angered and serious consequences might follow. The woman, who had been instrumental in seeing that the *service* was given and had cared for most of the preparations, bravely decided to continue with the ritual, however, and the drumming was resumed.

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Alcohol and flour were thereupon poured on the drumheads, while a number of songs were sung by all present:

Bonjou' manman, bonjou' papa,	Good-day, mamma, good-day, papa,
Ma p' mandé coumen nou' yè	I ask how are you.
Lan Guinée gangnin dent'.	In Guinea there are teeth.
Moin entré, moin entré,	I entered, I entered,
Ou pas salué moin.	You did not greet me.
Agoue-e, hunto	Agowe, hunto (spirit in the drum)
Agasu-e	Agasu-e
Agoué-e hunto, e-o.	Agowe hunto, e-o.

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Jean Pétro,	Jean Pétro,
Depuis moin sorti la ville	Since I left town
Moin apé cassé pié moin.	I have broken my foot.
Ça qui fait petit moun fronté.	That is what makes the children impertinent.
Yawé-é-é	Yawé-é-é,
Gedenibo Mazaca	Gedenibo Mazaca,
M'apé rhélé Saints forts	I call the strong saints,
Yawé-é	Yawé-é-é,
Saints forts-é-é	Strong gods-é-é.
P'ti Garçon Lemba,	Little boy Lemba,
P'ti' pilon ça,	A small pestle he,
Na pilé yo, Lemba-o.	Crush them, Lemba-o.

Finally the instruments were lifted over the *barrière*, the *ogan* 796
and rattles first, then the drums in order from smallest to largest, followed by the spectators. Ahead of the procession [794]
were *hunsi* with flags, and all continued singing until the *maison de servitude* and the *tonnelle* used during the *service* were reached.

The drums were carried about the house three times in procession before being taken inside. There, facing the place where the food had been offered — for the house was as yet quite bare, with no suggestion of an altar — the drums were beaten and songs sung to the Rada gods whose sanctuary this was. Though at the moment none of the good drummers had arrived, the drums were placed in line with the north end of the house, and the drumming for the dance commenced. Dancing began about the center pole, but no possessions occurred until shortly after eight o'clock. By that time better drummers had come, and the crowd had so increased that the drums were moved to accommodate those dancing, the drummers now having their backs to the front wall of the sacred house. A candle was attached to a peg of each drum, which,

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796 A candle was attached to a peg of each drum, which,
[354] with the lantern that hung near the central post, gave unusu-
[187] ally good light. However, as possessions began, the candles on the drums were extinguished as those possessed fell against them, and no more than one could be kept lighted.

793 With the arrival of the *hungan* at about half past nine, the
776 dancing became even more animated, and Ogun "came" as
539 soon as he took over the *manman* drum, but despite this, the
796 *hungan* continued the ritual invocation to call all the *loa:*

Moin rhelé Papa Legba, St. Jo,	I call Papa Legba, St. Joseph,
Moin rhelé Damballa papa,	I call Papa Damballa,
Moin rhelé Papa Damballa, St. Jo,	I call Papa Damballa, St. Joseph,
Moin rhelé Loko Atinsu, St. Jo.	I call Loko Atinsu, St. Joseph.
La vie nan mains Bon Dieu,	Life is in the hands of God,
Seigneur, moin rhelé Ogun Ferraille, St. Jo.	Master, I call Ogun Ferraille, St. Joseph.
Moin rhelé Damballa Wedo,	I call Damballa Wedo,
Moin rhelé Aida Wedo, Seigneur.	I call Aida Wedo, Master.
La vie nan mains Bon Dieu.	Life is in the hands of God.
Moin rhelé Papa Agasu, St. Jo, Dokwe Agwe,	I call Papa Agasu, St. Joseph, Dokwe Agwe,
Moin rhelé Malt' Ossange,	I call Master Ossange,
Moin rhelé Malt' St. Jean,	I call Master St. John,
Moin rhelé Gran' Siligbo,	I call Gran' Siligbo,
Moin rhelé Agwe Woyo,	I call Agwe Woyo,
Moin rhelé Loa 'Bitation,	I call the *loa* of the habitation,

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AT A VODUN DANCE

ABOVE, *The dancers crowding about the central post of the shelter.*
BELOW, *Drums and drummers.*

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[facing p. 193]

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Moin rhelé Aizan,	I call Aizan,
Moin rhelé Sobo, St. Jo, Dokwe Agwe,	I call Sobo, St. Joseph, Dokwe Agwe,
Moin rhelé Papa Gede,	I call Papa Gede,
Moin rhelé toutes mystères.	I call all the gods.

When he had ended his song a number of the "salutes" were played on the drums, to which all danced backward in circles, ending the figure in bows before the drums, which were rolling out the call. In the course of the evening a large number of gods were summoned, but, as would be expected, only the *loa* of the family came to this ceremony. Possessions were observed for Legba, Damballa, Ogun Balandjo, Ogun Galloné, Ogun Ferraille, Gede, and Kadya Bosu. St. John, Ossange, Aizan, Ashadé Bokor, Gran' Bosu, Magie, Jean Pétro, Congo, Guinée, Sobo, Bade, and Agwe Woyo, were the *loa* who refused their summons. Though no deity held the center of the stage for too long a time, the evening was notable because it was marked by an unusually large number of Ogun and Damballa possessions, which seemed constantly to alternate. Damballa being the stronger *loa,* his appearance when Ogun was present necessitated the retirement of the latter; but since the possession of Ogun by one woman was particularly persistent, this god returned again and again. As at a number of dances, the *haut chant* for Ogun Galloné, the French marching-song that salutes the "general," was among the songs heard, when those possessed by the god skipped from one end of the *tonnelle* to the other before the drums.

796 797 [793] [776] [533]

One particularly striking Damballa possession came on suddenly. As a tall, strong man was seized by the god, he gave a great shout and grasped the beams of the *tonnelle,* disappearing upward through the thatch. For a moment it did not seem that he had climbed on the roof of the *tonnelle,* until a head and arms which appeared between the palm fronds showed he

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796 787 [794] was there. To bring him down, a *hunsi* holding water and a candle at once began slowly to dance under him, fixing him with the usual unvarying stare. After some five minutes the candle and water were quickly given to those near by, and in a flash the possessed one was safely on the ground, candle in hand, pouring water before the center pole and the drums, and dancing magnificently.

796 793 787 593 Shortly after midnight the head of the family and his wife returned to the scene of the dance, the explanation given for this return revealing the native conception of the power of the *hungan*. Before his arrival, it was said he had been told of the quarrel; hence on his way to the dance he passed the *barrière* of the house of the family head, though he did not stop to speak with him. Prior to leaving his home, however, he was supposed to have performed a rite which, soon after he began drumming at the dance, so affected the children of the family head that they became possessed and at once ran to the *tonnelle*. Since their children were present, the father and mother were forced to come, and this was followed by a reconciliation of those who had quarreled. To make doubly sure that the *loa* would take no offense, however, another dance which formally ended the *service* was given jointly by all members of the family several weeks later.

796 787 One phase of the ceremonial always encountered, but unusually frequent on this occasion, was the salutation of the assembled company by the *loa*. One woman, possessed by Ogun, greeted all present first by shaking hands with wrists crossed in the customary manner, and then kissing each person on both cheeks. Another, possessed by Ossange, took the neckerchief from about his neck and wiped the faces of all those present, paying particular attention to the drummers. The son of the family head was again possessed by Gede as at the *service*, and his greeting to the assembled company was especially dramatic. His possession took the form of a hysteri-

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cal, rapid, continuous jumping, with the body held rigid. As he bobbed up and down, holding his candle under his chin so that the light distorted his features and emphasized the vacant stare in his eyes, he monotonously repeated the sharp sounds of his god: "*Ke-ke-ke-ke-ke-ke-ke!*" or "*Hoi! Hoi! Hoi!*" Standing before some, he would greet them by taking their crossed hands in his strong grip and bringing them down in a single movement that shook the entire body. Once he removed the red kerchief he wore, extending it as an indication he wished gifts of money; he used it to wipe the perspiration from the faces of others; while he would merely run his hands through the hair of still others.[8]

As daybreak neared, the crowd thinned, so that by half past five few of the good drummers or important men remained. Persons who had been sleeping roused themselves, and there was a general exodus. Most of those who had been at the dance did not go to sleep, however, for early Sunday morning mass an hour later found them at the church saying their prayers and listening to the sermon of the priest.

In contrast, another dance visited was noteworthy for its many and varied possessions. It was held at the habitation of one of the fathers-in-law of a *hungan*, and began somewhat later, the drums not arriving until almost eight o'clock. Only a minor ceremony was necessary to bring them through this gateway. The host three times poured water inside the gate, while three men played on the drums and a fourth tapped the *ogan* for a moment. The proceedings began when an elderly *hunsi* summoned Legba, invoking in her song Siligbo Vavou, Dahomey, Ogun, Bade, and "all *loa*." The *hungan* who was host himself arrived at nine o'clock, and the excellence of his drumming caused one possession to follow another with great rapidity. The dance was a large one, and by midnight there were at least two hundred persons in attendance, while at one time fifty or more were dancing about the central post and as many as seven or eight were possessed at once.

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many as seven or eight were possessed at once. During the night of this dance the following thirty-one *loa* "came" in the order named:

Ossange Damballa Wedo	Papa Loko Dahomey
Sobo	Ogun Batala
Bumba	Ogun Batagri
Congo	Ogun Balandjo
Si Adaman	Ogun Shango
Simbi Djo	Maît' Ogun
Agasu Tèmèré	Ogun Ferraille
Damballa	Ogun Ashadé
Odansil Yewe	Ibo Lélé
Ogun Ferraille	Ossange
Bosu Trois Cornes	Agau (Maît' Woyo)
Bosu d'l'eau	Maît' Aizan
Simbi (nan d'l'eau)	Shango
Damballa Wedo	Damballa
Simbi Kita	Simbi en Deux Eaux
	Bosu

The only deity that was called but failed to respond was Gran' Bra. And it is to be noted that both Rada and Pétro gods "came" in response to the summons, though *loa* of the two categories were not present under the *tonnelle* at the same time. Each person possessed was looked after very carefully, women's ear-rings being taken off so that they would not be lost, the contents of men's pockets being emptied, and knives always being removed from their sheaths. When one man was violently possessed by Papa Loko Dahomey and danced "strongly," attempts were made to wrest from him the walking-stick he carried. They were not successful, however, and all dodged him as he brandished it. The *hungan* host was always present to take the possessed one inside the house which formed one side of the *tonnelle*, to "treat" him.

A number of comments on the possessions by several of the

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gods may be made. Si Adaman, known as a *loa* Dominicaine, possessed a woman who, with another possessed by Sobo, came to greet the white visitors and ask for *kola*, a non-alcoholic drink much desired by Rada gods. The woman possessed by Agasu Tèmèré was also at one time or another during this dance "mounted" by ten other *loa*. On one occasion, when possessed by this Rada deity, she went to the *barrière* because under the *tonnelle* they were dancing for Simbi—"who is not of my family." Asking another dancer to whom Sobo had come to accompany her, she sang "Saddle and bridle my mount for me," and "Sobo goes with Agasu; he stays in my house." Historically this is significant, since Agasu is the deified ancestor of the royal Dahomean sib, and Sobo the Dahomean god of thunder.

Bosu Trois Cornes came violently to a young girl dressed in red. She was taken inside the house against which the *tonnelle* had been erected, and while a number of men held her, the *hungan* worked over her. She was in a dangerous state, for 'Ti Kita Demembré, who is much feared, often goes with Bosu, and in this instance of what was said to be a first possession was believed to be "not far away" because of the rigidity with which the arms of the girl were held, in positions almost to dislocate them. The *hungan* scolded the *loa*—"Be off! You are not wanted here!" After the girl had been brought far enough through her possession to pour water and take a candle before the drums, she was sent home, carefully attended. It was held absolutely essential that there be no delay before baptizing her *loa* and sending away its harmful companions; otherwise, when possession next occurred, she might do harm to herself.

Early in the morning one of the several visiting *hungans* became possessed by Damballa, and, imitating the serpent, climbed through the roof of the *tonnelle*. The priest who was host, after bringing him down, danced with him, carrying his guest, still possessed, about the dancing-space on his back as

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a great outcry of acclamation was heard from those present. Afterwards the visitor, always under the influence of his god, greeted everyone with the crossed-arm handshake of the *loa*,[8] and ended by dancing opposite the young woman to whom so many gods came — now possessed by still another deity.

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This dance offered an especially striking demonstration of the hold of the Church on the people of Mirebalais. Feeling that motion pictures of an actual *vodun* dance should be made available so that the real nature of the ceremony could be demonstrated and comparisons made between the Haitian and Dahomean practices of which his visitors had told him, the *hungan* himself made all effort to continue the dance until the morning light would permit pictures to be taken; as an inducement to remain, additional *clairin* and biscuits were provided. As daylight approached, however, on one of the few mornings when no early fog obscured the light, the participants began to slip away, so that by sunrise only the usual fifteen or twenty young folk shuffling about the central post were to be seen. Later, in the village, the procession held the first Sunday of each month before the principal mass of the day passed through the square. Many of those who, as dancers or possessed ones, had been active in this *vodun* dance could be seen in it; while next to the priest himself marched the woman who had been possessed by her eleven *vodun* gods during the night just ended.

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ABOVE, *At a* vodun *dance: those possessed whirling about the central post.*
BELOW, *Making the* vodun *drum: describing the sign of the cross with lighted candles over the unheaded bodies.*

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[facing p. 244]

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especially by the drummers. Experience among other Caribbean Negro cultures and in Africa itself has failed to reveal greater skill in calling forth intricate rhythms from batteries of drums than can be found at any Haitian religious gathering. The enthusiasm with which a man takes his place at a drum, the manner in which he loses himself in his drumming, the skill with which he maintains the time of his complex beats in common with two other drummers and those who manipulate the rattles and the iron, bespeak long training and a passionate devotion to the art. The same is true of dancing. The best drummer, the finest dancer, hold positions of esteem in the community, and on occasion their fame will go beyond the valley, an occurrence as unusual as it is valued. The excellence of the drumming and dancing and the concomitant artistry in song can be understood when one considers the age at which training is begun in these arts. At Mirebalais an infant of no more than two years has been seen to dance creditably, while a young boy of six gave a demonstration of drumming that spoke eloquently of his promise as a drummer of talent. Before every *vodun* dance the boys take over the drums while the younger girls dance to their rhythms. They are watched with a critical eye by their elders, who from time to time correct them or praise those who do well.

The accompanying musical forms are almost entirely African in their rhythmic structure, but European influence is traceable in their melodic line, which varies from unchanged European folk-melodies to purely African songs. In the use of the falsetto, however, in the statement of a theme by a leader and its repetition by a chorus, and in the countless modulations introduced into the song, the singing is entirely African, as are the postures struck by those singing.

The importance of the dance is apparent from the large range of dances. Of *vodun* dances there are the *avalou*, or *yanvalou*, a word meaning supplication in the speech of Whydah; the specialized steps for the various Rada and Pétro gods; for

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535 *magie* and for the Congo, Ibo, and Nago *loa;* the *mazon,* as an
177 interlude dance between possessions; and steps of the *asague,*
178 or salute to the gods. There is also the Martinique cycle of sec-
296 ular dances, including the *zesse, callebasse,* and *banda;* the
rara dances found only at Easter time, and the social Congo dances. Finally European dancing, called *bal,* is performed to the sound of a drum, a phonograph record, or a small orchestra. With a qualified exception of the last, the type of dancing in all these is African. The essence of style in these dances lies in the manipulation of feet and the muscles of the body, particularly those of shoulders, hips, and buttocks, the patterns of which have been carried over in their entirety from the aboriginal homeland. For men and women to dance with arms about each other, as do Europeans, is still regarded in Mirebalais as immoral.

538 The trait of African culture that has survived most tena-
178 ciously in all the New World, even where European influence has been strongest, is that of folk-literature — of tales, proverbs, and riddles.[7] Though these have flourished in Haiti as elsewhere, prolonged story-telling sessions, so characteristic of other Negro groups, were not encountered in Mirebalais. It is likely that this is principally a seasonal phenomenon, and the failure to find long evenings of story-telling during the summer months, when the rains are at their height and work in the fields is hardest, may properly be an expression of this seasonal variation. As elsewhere in Negro societies, tales and riddles are told at wakes, though their enjoyment by children and their function as a part of the education of the child are as important as in Africa itself. The familiar types of African animal stories and the tales of human tricksters and magicians are well known, and well told. The figure who corresponds to Br'er Rabbit, or to the spider Anansi, is the little 'Ti Malice, while the foil for his pranks is the great awkward Bouki.[8]

One folkloristic element that gives Haitian life a strong African flavor is the proverb, which, as elsewhere in Negro

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makes for deification of the family dead, but constitutes the oldest ancestor of a relationship group one of the great gods and thus causes families to give primary allegiance to a restricted number of deities. The most striking aspect of this tradition preserved in Haiti is that all ceremonies must be given by family groups, and at them only members of the family may with propriety become possessed. Possession itself, and the elements which constitute the possession complex — the use of the drums, the rhythms associated with particular gods, the importance of songs in calling the spirits, the mode of worship through specific dances for specific deities — these make up another series of Africanisms. In the dance itself the use of iron to sound basic rhythms for the drums, the outer form and function of the rattle, and the fact that the circle of participants always rotates in a counter-clockwise direction, are equally African. The modes of behavior to be observed as possession comes on and the psychological release that follows it both derive from the same source, as do the beliefs that rituals must be held on the days sacred to the particular god being worshipped.

Another retention of African tradition is a belief in the importance of sacrifice. It will be remembered that it is held to be more essential to "feed" the gods than to dance for them. This is also the tradition of all peoples of the region from which the slaves were derived, and in a sense reflects the very immediate relationship that obtains between Africans, or Haitians, and their gods. Since in both regions each deity performs the double role of doing good for those who worship it properly and harassing those who neglect it, the importance of giving adequate sacrifices to avert evil is evident. In both Haiti and Africa, however, these may differ with the wealth of the individual giving the offering, with the number of persons who contribute toward the ceremony where offerings are given, or with the seriousness of the situation which the deity is being asked to remedy. That the gods permit such varia-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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for all uses to which those of their type are put. During their making and after their completion they had been sanctified by rites that vividly illustrate the merging of traditions in Haitian religion: by means of offerings to the African gods, and through baptism by the rites of the Church.[8]

The *action de grâce* is another integral part of *vodun* ceremonialism that is essentially Catholic, since its lengthy service is composed entirely of prayers and hymns of the Church. As has been shown, the *action de grâce*, which precedes a *vodun service*, takes place before an "altar" which, important both then and at the later, more African rites, in itself documents in no small measure the combining of Catholicism and *vodun*. One, employed at a *service* not described in the earlier chapters, was covered with a red and white checked table-cloth, on top of which a smaller white cloth was spread.* Pinned to the canopy and to the front of the table-cloth were various chromolithographs of the saints; St. Michael attacking the Devil, Mater Dolorosa, St. James, the Virgin Mary and Jesus (the Assumption), and St. Expeditius. In front of the representation of St. James stood a crucifix with the figure of Jesus, in accordance with the custom of never omitting to have one of these at any *vodun* ceremonial. The table bore many offerings; at the back were four bottles of soft drinks, with cups; while also to be seen were several hard rolls, an ear of corn, a dish containing eggs, and another holding, among other things, rice. One of the containers on the table held holy water, while candles for use both in the *action de grâce* and in the later *vodun* rituals lay beside this. Thus crucifix, candles, pictures of the saints, and holy water were combined in this ceremony with offerings of food and drink to be given the gods that the ancestors had brought from Africa.[9] The songs sung at the voduistic portions of these *services* also reflect the psychological unity of Catholic and African elements in *vodun* worship. One of these declares:

* This altar is shown in the illustration facing p. 192.

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Je crois en Dieu,	I believe in God,
Oui, Santa Maria.	Yes, St. Mary.
Santa Maria,	St. Mary,
Qui sortę nan Guinée.	Who came from Guinea.
Je crois en Dieu,	I believe in God,
Oui, Santa Maria.	Yes, St. Mary.

Another for the Virgin of Allada, sung in Leogane, is as follows:

Santa Maria la Madaleine,	St. Mary Magdalene
Prié pou' loa yo.	Pray for their *loa.*
O Allada-e,	O Allada-e,
Sonné une sonné pou' moin,	Ring a bell for me,
Pour m'allé.	So I may go.
M'dit, Allada-o,	I say, Allada-o,
Sonné une sonne	Ring a bell
Pou' les pitites nagé.	For the drowned children.

Of these elements, the portraits of the saints, or *images,* offer one of the most vivid instances of the mingling of African and European elements in Haitian belief, for they are the outward symbol of the psychological reconciliation that has been effected between the saints of the Church and the African deities. This is nothing peculiar to Haiti alone. In West Africa, wherever Catholicism has obtained something of a foothold, certain pagan deities are regularly identified with saints of the Church, and the same phenomenon is found in Cuba[a] and Brazil.[a] This identification of saints with the *loa,* whether initiated as a ruse against the detection of African worship or emanating from a reasoned analogy, would seem in Haiti, at least, to act as a device to achieve an adjustment between two conflicting systems by emphasizing the resemblance between Catholic saints and African nature deities. The importance of the *images* as symbolizing the reconcilia-

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overturn his memory, overturn his thought, overturn his house, overturn for me my enemies visible and invisible; cause the thunder and the tempest to break them into pieces. And in honor of St. Bouleversé, three Paters and three Ave Marias. . . .[8]

Thus it is seen how Catholicism invades the beliefs and rites of the *vodun* cult. In an analogous fashion *vodun* has not failed to make itself felt in certain festivals of the Church,[9] for while elements of *vodun*, rigidly suppressed inside the Catholic churches, are absent except in so far as they can be carried on surreptitiously, they are nevertheless integral parts of these fêtes in the minds of the folk who make pilgrimages to them. So arresting is the resulting mingling of practices, and so significant for the amalgamation of cultures that has taken place in Haiti, that a detailed discussion will be given of the most prominent instance of this type, the festival in honor of the Virgin of the Palms, which takes place each year on July fifteenth at Ville-Bonheur, or, as it is better known, at Saut d'Eau. The festival of 1926 has been described by Price-Mars;[10] here certain observations made during the fête of 1934 may be given, especially as they have to do with those aspects of the mythology which validate the festival, and as they illustrate the non-Catholic, voduistic phases of the celebration, of importance for the points being considered in this chapter.

Beside the church, Ville-Bonheur has three especially sacred spots, St. John, En bas Palmes, and Saut d'Eau — the falls themselves. At St. John is a large *campêche* tree surrounded by many palms, from beneath which flow streams of water. St. John is said to have appeared here, carrying his scepter as in the chromolithographs, and at that time water began to flow in the sacred springs, and except for one short period has continued ever since as holy water, being used for drinking and bathing, but never for purposes of cooking. The priests

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AT SAUT D'EAU

ABOVE, *Large crowds of worshippers drawn by this fête of the Church.*

BELOW, *Possession coming on as a* vodun *deity "mounts the head" of a devotee who, climbing a tree, exhorts those gathered to hear him.*

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[facing P. 283]

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turned to leave, word came that his house had burned and nothing in it was saved. Later he suffered a paralytic stroke from which he never recovered. Some say that the American captain became ill and was sent to the States "as a punishment for what he had done." Several days later the sergeant was found mad, wandering in the woods. Since he had fired under orders, however, his punishment was but temporary, and on being cured he returned to Ville-Bonheur to ask pardon of the Virgin. Today he lives in Mirebalais. When they saw the American ill, the priest paralyzed, the sergeant mad, and the presbytery burned, "public clamor" became so strong that both St. John and En bas Palmes were reopened.[11]

In 1932 a cyclone at St. John tore down trees and houses and hurt but did not kill the worshippers who had gathered there. An eyewitness insisted he had seen the enormous whirling cloud rise from the sacred place. He had no time to reach his house, for with a noise like a cannon-shot the whirlwind came, and an enormous oak tree fell just behind him — "I saw death staring at me." Today he carries two scapularies to the Virgin to protect him.

The third sacred spot is at the falls themselves, where the grandeur and beauty of the scene is such as to induce the religious thrill almost unaided, and where great numbers go in the course of their pilgrimage to Ville-Bonheur. There are two falls, situated at a distance of several miles from the village, one for Damballa and one for Aida Wedo, and it is believed that those who bathe in the sacred streams become possessed. It is said that the palms near by are sacred to the Virgin, but others hold that they are for Damballa. Many visit the falls on the day preceding the fête, but the largest throng hurries there immediately after the principal mass, when the greatest number of possessions and the most violent seizures by the *loa* occur. The falls, therefore, in association

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The falls, therefore, in association with the purely Catholic rituals carried on at the village church, are seen to hold an important if unofficial place in the complex of rites known in the Haitian Church calendar as the Fête of Saut d'Eau.

During the two or three days preceding the fête and on the fifteenth of July itself, an air of great gayety not unlike the carnival spirit accompanying European Church festivals pervades the surrounding country. Camions traverse the almost impassable side road, bringing crowds of people from Port-au-Prince, from the Dominican border, and even from the north, who throng the streets and the shrines and tramp the miles from the village to the waterfalls or visit the nearer sacred sites of St. John's Wood and En bas Palmes, to light candles and ask the satisfaction of their needs. Like the falls them selves, these spots by their very beauty awaken a sense of emo tional awareness, and it is not strange that here, as at the falls, many possessions occur. At night, in particular, the great trees with their interlacing serpent-like roots, the gaping earth which at En bas Palmes is witness to the uprooting of the palm trees where the miracle occurred, and the stream of sacred water, all make a scene of indescribable eeriness, heightened by the flickering candles given as offerings, and the open lamps of those who stay the night here to fulfill their vows.

In the town itself gambling and other games go on, and dances of all kinds are held at night, among them *vodun* and *bal*, though at these public dances no possessions are countenanced. One of the most colorful aspects of the scene is the *penitants*, wearing clothing of varied colors in fulfillment of a request by the *loa* they worship or an obligation to them. Such folk are not permitted in church unless the clothing which marks them is covered by ordinary dress, but they walk the streets, often possessed and often using their power to heal those whom they encounter. Possessions by Ogun, by Gede, by Baron Samedi, by Damballa, by Erzilie and other *vodun* deities were observed, particularly at the shrines, where their devotees prophesied and healed the sick.

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devotees prophesied and healed the sick. Even at the church, however, where all go to offer the prayers that are the central observance of the fête, the many candles placed on the rocks at the entrance are usually for St. Anthony; that same St. Anthony who, it will be recalled, is the *loa* named Legba, the guardian of all entrances.

It is obvious, from the examples given, that the world view held by the Haitian and the motivations which underlie Haitian life cannot be understood unless both the Catholic and the *vodun* contributions to them are held in mind. But certain further questions bearing upon the effect of these two influences present themselves. What proportion of Haitians hold membership in the Church, and how many are affiliated with the *vodun* sect? What attitudes are manifested toward the Church and its priests as contrasted with their attitude toward the *loa* and their ministrants? How does the Church meet the challenge of *vodun*? And how does the Haitian peasant, in his inner life, reconcile these two conflicting forces?

The impression gained from reading available works on Haiti is that voduists and Catholics constitute two distinct groups. While this may obtain in some parts of the Republic, it is not true either in Mirebalais or in those other portions of Haiti which came under direct though brief observation in the course of this study. All discussions with natives that began with the assumption of the existence of two such separate groups led to confusion, and statements which had seemed evasions were not clarified until the incorrectness of such an assumption became apparent. Thus when it was stated that in all Haiti the Pater Noster was one of the first things taught every child, the question: " Is this not true for Catholic families only? " was met with a vigorous denial that was slowly justified as the realization grew that, if not true for all Haitians, such an assertion was certainly valid for the vast majority of them in Mirebalais and probably elsewhere.[18] The identity of membership in the two groups became apparent from ob-

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contents, is given by Wirkus, 178–9.

[3] Compare this description with the *humfort* pictured in Johnston, p. 194.

[4] It is to be emphasized that in the course of the *vodun* rituals witnessed during this field-work, none of the "frenzy of the blood lust" that is so favorite an aspect of these ceremonies with writers of books on Haiti was encountered. As an extreme example of this heightening of the tone with which a ceremony is described, the work of Seabrook may be cited, for phrases such as "blood-maddened, sex-maddened, god-maddened" used by him mark perhaps an all-time record for distortion of the inner discipline of the *vodun* cult.

[5] Cf. Parsons's brief sketch, (I), 172–3, of a *mangé loi*, though the "bloody anointing" of which she speaks was not seen to occur in Mirebalais *services*. Detailed descriptions of what apparently were *services* are given by Wirkus, 168 ff., who, though honest in recounting what he saw, realized nothing of its significance; and Seabrook (pp. 54–70), who reads so much into what he purports to have witnessed that the entire account is rendered useless.

CHAPTER X

[1] Compare Parsons (I), 167–72.

[2] The drunkenness at serious dances reported by Parsons (I), 172, and others, would not be tolerated in Mirebalais.

[3] Price-Mars (I), 208, gives the name of *assotôr* for the great drum.

[4] Much nonsense has been written concerning these drums. Many writers — all non-Haitians — stress the existence of a drum language, which seems to be an assertion of dubious truth.

[5] This is a striking example of what Dorsainvil (I), 73–4 and 131 ff., calls the *masque vôduique* in detailing the effects of possession on the features of the possessed. See also the discussion of possession in Price-Mars (I), 122–3. The Gede possession described by Craige, 73–4, must, on the basis of customary Haitian behavior under possession, be subject to reinterpretation.

[6] Cf. Parsons (I), 170.

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[For a listing of cult and ritualistic dances, see category 116, pp. 134-136.]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

in many details. But, in general, the cult establishment consists of a central building of one or more rooms with an adjoining court, or peristyle, over which there is a covering—usually a straw roof. The covering, called the *tonnelle,* is supported by a number of poles, one of which is placed squarely in the center of the court. This center pole—the *po'teau mitan* or *po'teau planté*—is the focus of most of the ritual activities. The loa who descend upon the service enter by way of this pole. The ritual *vèvès,* or flour paintings, are made at its foot. Around it all the dancing takes place. On certain rare occasions when rituals are held in the open, a carefully selected tree becomes the center post—though it is by no means certain that the po'teau mitan is not, in fact, a symbolic tree.

The building adjoining the peristyle contains the inner sanctum. Here are deposited the paraphernalia of the cult, such as ritual bottles and jars, flags of the société, and the iron kettles used in various ceremonies. On the walls there may be primitive paintings of the special loa of the hounfor, or perhaps of his symbol. The loa of the sea, Agwé, may be represented by a ship. Damballa, the serpent-rainbow loa, may be represented by a snake or a rainbow. Usually there are colored lithographs of Catholic saints, who have both Catholic and African names. And there are hand-beaten iron crosses, dishes containing Indian celts in which loa are believed to reside, gourd bowls, and carved wooden double and triple bowls used for services to dead twins and triplets. Upon the altar place, called *badji,* there are the *criches* or *govis,* earthen jars or bottles in which rest the loa removed from the heads of people who have died. Sometimes special niches are built on the hounfor grounds for the deities. Each cult priest designs his hounfor in his own way.

A hounfor belonging to a mambo near the town of Croix des Missions gave the appearance of having a large and prosperous société. Under the tonnelle eight beautifully carved Arada drums were suspended from a single peg. At a respectable distance hung a Martinique drum used only for dances on the occasion of a Nine Night. Inside the hounfor was an impressive display of sacred objects and decorations. One corner of the room was reserved for Symbi Yendézo, a patron loa of drinking water and rainfall. He was portrayed on the wall as a long, thin snake crawling in a maze of crosses. On the ground beneath the picture was a small concrete pool, in which two water snakes swam. Another corner was reserved for Agwé, and on his wall was a picture of a steamship. Along the back of the altar was an impressive array of govis, containing the spirits removed from the heads of deceased persons. There was a large plate of loa stones, and various protective charms stood near by. Flags and sabres

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5. Services for the Loa and the Family Ancestors

The Ordeal by Fire: Kanzo

To advance beyond the lowest status in the hounfor, the hounsi must undergo the test of fire. This ritual is known as *kanzo,* meaning "to tie fire." In the drama of the hounfor there are many tests and ordeals. When certain loa enter, the mounted persons will eat broken glass. Other loa will cause their "horses" to rub hot pepper in their eyes. Still others will compel possessed persons to cut themselves with machetes. But these are bravado actions of the deities who have entered into the bodies of the servitors. The kanzo test is a formalized and premeditated ritual, in which it is demonstrated that the power of the cult—and the spirit of the individual—is superior to fire. Once having passed through this rite, the ordinary hounsi becomes a *hounsi kanzo.*

The kanzo ceremony—or, as it is known in some parts of Haiti, the *brulé zin* (the boiling pot)—is performed in diverse ways according to the tradition of the particular hounfor. But common to all is the dipping of the hands into boiling oil.

The common hounsi, the bossale, is prepared gradually for kanzo. In the course of certain rites she undergoes a smoke ordeal. On all fours, her head close to a fire, she must breathe in smoke without choking or coughing. When these and other tests indicate that she is ready, she will be permitted to undergo the rite of the brulé zin.

Near the town of Thomazeau in the Cul-de-Sac Plain I witnessed one of these rituals. It began with a dance, in which only the hounsi of the cult participated. They were all dressed in white. The chief drummer wore a woman's blouse, a kerchief on his head, and on top of that a woman's straw hat. He played alone while the houngan invoked the loa Legba. Then there were songs for Ogoun, and the dancing resumed.

The dance court was larger than average—about forty feet by sixty.

793 794 787 796 789 Attached to the ever-present po'teau mitan, or center post, were three oil lamps which threw a flickering light. At the entrance to the dance court a glowing-hot iron bar stood erect in a charcoal fire—the symbol of kanzo and of the loa Ogoun.

When the preliminary dances were over, the hounsi retired to one side of the court, where they sat in two rows facing the center.

Ritual rattle and bell in hand, the houngan took his place by the sacred center post. He was an elderly man with a gray beard. He wore a red kerchief like a turban around his head. He smoked a cigar, and in his free hand he held a bottle of rum. The red kerchief, the rum, and the cigar were all in honor of Ogoun. He moved back and forth across the center of the court, talking casually, even joking and laughing. The drums began again, on a signal from the houngan, and a number of visiting houngans [535] and mambos came forward and began a stately Jenvalo dance. The backs of their hands touching their knees, their backs bent low, they moved slowly counterclockwise around the center post. The mambos outnumbered the houngans four to one. The hounsi sitting on the sidelines sang. The song was for Maîtresse Ézilie. The houngan in charge stood by patiently, deep in thought. His assistant, the laplace, kept time with a small rattle and led the singing.

When the song came to an end, the visiting cult priests and priestesses retired from the dance ground. Again the hounsi danced. Afterward the houngan began to talk *langage*, twirling his bottle of rum about recklessly. He was speaking to a loa. The chief drummer beat out a salute to Ogoun. Then the houngan raised the bottle and placed it to his ear. It gurgled away, some of the liquid trickling down his face. He seemed to be swallowing the rum.

While all the hounsi, with bowed heads, sat on the ground, the houngan recited from the ritual of the Catholic service. Latin words, then Creole words in Latin cadences. After a while the houngan's assistant took over the recitation, and the hounsi answered him responsively.[1] When the prayers were over, the hounsi arose and passed into the hounfor. The drums began a fast Nago rhythm, and the hounsi emerged with brilliant silk flags studded with tiny brass rivets. The houngan's chief assistants—the laplace and the houngénicon—carried military sabers upraised. The dancers circled in single file around the center post, a triumphal military heralding of the deity of war and the forge.

To the accompaniment of a crescendo of drums, the procession suddenly reversed its direction. Watching the upraised saber of the laplace for a signal, the hounsi reversed their direction again.

000 When the dance drama ended, the hounsi carried the flags back into

[1] [Note that the houngan and the laplace are performing services normally performed by the prêt savane. Cf. P. 351, Category 116. -- Analysis]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

When the dance drama ended, the hounsi carried the flags back into the hounfor. Then they sat on the ground while the houngan came forward to the center post to make his ritual flour drawing. Holding the flour in his hand, he allowed a little of it to trickle out in a fine white line. He worked rapidly, with half-closed eyes, speaking *langage*. A complicated white geometric pattern grew on the earth around the center post. Among its intricate designs highly stylized phallic forms were discernible. When the houngan had finished the drawing, he wrote the name of the loa whom they were serving: Ogoun Badagry. Then the other houngans and mambos came forward, one at a time, to add to the design. When the vèvè was completed it covered virtually the entire dance court. 793 794 787 789 796 532

The laplace came from the hounfor with a bundle of brilliantly colored beads. He stood by the houngan at the center post. One by one the hounsi came before the houngan, dropped on their knees, and kissed the ground. Around each hounsi's neck the houngan placed a string of beads. He raised her, pirouetted her first to the right, then to the left. The pirouette was to encourage possession by the loa. 793 794 787 789 796

From the hounfor the hounsi now brought herbs and vegetables for the sacrifice. Baskets and bottles were set out neatly on the ground, along with bundles of sticks and the iron pots, or *zins*. [782]

The dance was resumed in a single rotating line around the houngan and the ritual offerings. Two hounsi in the center of the circle built fires, one on each side of the court. Over the fires they set the ritual iron pots. They poured oil into the pots and began the preparation of ritual food balls, like dumplings, from the ingredients at hand. One by one they dropped the dumplings into the oil, which was soon boiling.

The drumming, singing, and dancing were sustained at a high tension. A second team of drummers took over without a break in the music. The dancers now were almost exhausted. With a quick motion, the houngan spilled some rum into one of the boiling pots. A blue alcohol flame shot high into the air. Some of the hounsi screamed but continued to dance. Three of them fell to the ground, their limbs jerking uncontrollably. The loa had entered. Two of the "mounted" hounsi arose and continued to dance, staggering and jerking across the dance court. The third had to be lifted and carried into the hounfor.

The man who was to undergo initiation was waiting in the *djévo*, a special room in the hounfor. For the past seven days he had lain on a mat in the djévo, in virtual isolation except for visits from the houngan and the laplace.

Now the kanzo initiate was brought out, completely covered with a white cloth. Only his hands and feet could be seen. With one hand on the shoulder of the laplace, who preceded him, he moved with the dancers

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794 in a circle around the two boiling pots. On the seventh circuit of the
787 course, the laplace stopped him at the first pot. The houngan grasped the
789 man's free hand and, bending down, dipped it into the boiling oil. There
● 796 was no visible indication of pain. They moved to the second pot, and the
793 man's hand was dipped again. They proceeded again to the first pot, where the dipping was repeated, then back again to the second pot. The neophyte's hand entered the boiling oil seven times in all. He made no sound, showed no resistance, no reflexes. Then the hounsi took him back to the hounfor. It was all over. After three days of isolation, they said, he would be kanzo.

The houngan peeled an orange, while everyone crowded close to watch. In it he found a two-gourde note. He peeled another orange and found in it a slip of paper with the name of a woman on it. She came forward, and everyone laughed. She was an old woman, the oldest of the hounsi. The houngan held the two-gourde note between his teeth. The old woman took the other end of the note in her teeth, but she had to kiss the houngan before he would let go.

796 The ritual of brulé zin, or kanzo, is of unmistakable West African ori-
794 gin. Herskovits has described a ceremony in Dahomey which in many
171 details could easily have taken place in Haiti. The Dahomean rite was in honor of the gods of the Thunder pantheon. Here, too, we find a pot of boiling palm oil, in which are the sacred dumplings: "When the fire had finally subsided and only a faint column of smoke issued from the pot, the initiate came dancing toward it, thrust her hand into the boiling oil, and lifted out a dumpling. . . ."[2]

Family Rites at Léogane

769 These services for family ancestors took place in the mountains above
796 Léogane at the ancestral home of my friend Libera Borderau. They were
787 conducted on the grounds of his grandmother's house. The ritual began
778 with dancing. Against the wall of the house sat the three drummers with their Arada drums. Near them, leaning against the wall, were the flags of the family loa. Also near by was a long high table serving as a makeshift altar called the *pé*. In the very center of the table in a clean white dish lay eight loa stones—old Carib artifacts. The stones were identical in shape, all of them perfectly symmetrical, resembling small, pointed cigars. In the *pierre-loas* lived the family deities, and much of the ceremony was built around them. The stones had been bathed and polished in oil for the occasion. Set around the plate of stones were numerous small *criches* (French, *cruches*—clay water jugs), glass bottles, and earthenware jars which also contained loa. On the low bench before the table, seven dishes

[2] [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 165. Cf. P 351, Cat. 116.—Author]

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were set out in a row, and before them four *conis*, the half-gourd bowls used in services to the marassas, the twin spirits.

In the house, at the center of the floor, was a round flat stone about ten inches in diameter and about two inches thick, resembling a millstone. This was the *pierre-manman*, the mother stone responsible for the coming of the other loa stones and who cared for them in the absence of the family. In this stone, they said, was the spirit of the old loa Nananbouclou. On a mat in the corner of the room two children slept.

Outside, on a chair, his back against the wall of the house, the houngan sat, his rattle and bell in hand. He had come several miles to conduct the service. Most of those who danced were his own hounsi. The houngan was "strong" and well known in the region; people said he had worked for high government officials, including the president himself.

After several rounds of Arada dancing in which children as well as adults took part, the drums stopped. The houngan and his laplace moved up to the building which served for the night as the hounfor. It was up a steep slope, about a hundred feet from the dance court. There they prepared for the sacrifice to Chébo Profiel, the honored loa of the evening. Passing in and out among the spectators was a woman who would be possessed by Papa Chébo; since he was the guest of the service, she (or the loa in her head) was free to come and go as she chose, to speak as she pleased, and to do what she wished. Mostly she shook hands with people, a ceremony which continued throughout the night. First she would offer the right hand, then the left; or perhaps both at once, in which case the hands would be shaken downward vigorously three or four times. Someone ignorantly said, "Bon soir, Madame!" and she turned on him to reprimand his insolence. She was not "Madame," she was *l'Autorité*, the Authority.

During the course of the evening the conviction became stronger and stronger in her that she was Chébo Profiel. From the time we first saw her until the end of the evening her personality underwent marked changes. She "became" Papa Chébo.

The houngan sat before a small hole, possibly a foot deep and ten inches in diameter, in front of the hounfor. The fresh earth was piled neatly to the side, and an enameled plate was set on top of it. Around the hole were the various dishes to be offered to Chébo Profiel. The laplace prayed in Latin, a short Catholic service. Then the houngan, shaking his beaded rattle and tinkling his bell, called for Chébo to "enter." He made a small maize-flour drawing around the hole, and then began the feeding of the loa. The plates arranged for the feast contained roasted maize, roasted peanuts, bread, cassava, rice, and other foods. There were bottles of rum,

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

kola (a soft drink), *clairin*, and syrup. The houngan, entreating Chébo to accept, poured a little *clairin* into the hole. The loa seemed to accept, for the *clairin* was quickly absorbed in the ground. The houngan took rice from the plate with his fingers, about the amount he might place in his own mouth, and put it gently into the hole. He was feeding Papa Chébo, literally placing the food in his mouth. After the rice, which was dry, the houngan poured in a little more *clairin* to moisten it. He ordered the laplace to break up the bread, and then he placed a small piece in the hole and washed it down with a little rum. The houngan seemed to understand that Papa Chébo Profiel was hungry, and that he was also an epicure. He allowed him to taste the roasted corn, and then washed it down with a trickle of kola. Then he gave him a taste of the roasted peanuts, and another morsel of bread. Once Chébo got his mouth too full in his zest for the meal, and the assemblage had to wait for him to finish "coughing." Then the houngan gave him a long drink of kola to clear his windpipe. After that the houngan was more careful in the way he fed him—a little cassava, a drink, a little bread. As the houngan fed the loa, some of the spectators reached over and placed small coins in the empty dish by the hole. These too were for Chébo. Finally, Chébo was through eating. The food was gone.

The houngan, shaking his rattle and his bell, blew two sharp notes on his whistle. At the door of the hounfor appeared l'Autorité, the hounsi possessed by Papa Chébo. More than ever she resembled the loa, and less than ever she resembled herself. In one hand she held a saber. Her bodily movements were spasmodic, as though she was being forced to do things to which she was not accustomed. She moved slowly into the circle, her eyes almost closed; she leaned backward, then twisted grotesquely around, jerked this way and that, buffeted by the loa. Suddenly she began to whirl. The houngan called "Tambouyé!" and the drummers beat a slow complicated rhythm, a salute to Chébo. The loa had really "entered" now. There was no mistaking the jerky, irresponsible movements of the hounsi's head and shoulders. She leaned backward as though about to fall, incredibly kept her balance, rolled forward as though she were going to plunge to the ground, and twisted herself upright once more. The saber passed close to the faces of the spectators, even scratched some of them and cut their clothing. Her movements had a definitely masculine character. Chébo Profiel was a man.

She reached over to seize a chicken that was held out to her. Grasping its legs with her free hand, she continued her spinning, twisting, lurching dance. Then she cradled the chicken, rocking it back and forth until it was in a hypnotic trance. She placed it on the ground before a tiny pile

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

of ground maize prepared by the laplace. The chicken, released, sat motionless, making no effort to escape. All watched attentively, the houngan shaking his rattle and bell. Suddenly the chicken cocked its head and, seeming to see the corn for the first time, reached out and pecked at it. This was the loa receiving the sacrifice—a difficult conception if one thinks of the chicken itself as the sacrifice. "Chébo," l'Autorité, snatched the chicken up, danced violently about, the loa in full possession of her body. With a swift movement of the saber, she cut the chicken's throat and caused the first drop of blood to fall into the hole. When the chicken stopped struggling, it was left there, head downward. L'Autorité took up a cock which was given her, cradled him, and set him before the ground maize. When he pecked at it, she picked him up and danced, around and around, jerking, lunging, never quite falling. She took his comb between her teeth, supporting his body gently with her hands, and spun around and around. Then she released him, cut his throat, and placed him in the hole with the chicken.

At the side of the hounfor, waiting, was a goat (called by the ritual name Dogwé). He had a fine silky white coat and a long beard. He was brought in to the place of sacrifice, and l'Autorité dropped to her knees to embrace his neck with her arms. She remained there a moment, her cheek against his, talking to him. Then she arose, a machete in hand instead of a saber, and began to pirouette while three men threw the goat on his side. Then she cut with the machete, and the goat's blood, too, began to run into the hole. For the first time her dance became unquestionably frenzied. She swung strong, full blows of the machete at the goat's neck, finally severing the head. From the hindquarters she cut a piece of red meat and placed it in her mouth.

At a signal from the houngan, three men carried the goat's body away to be dressed and cooked, and a woman came forward to wipe the blood from Papa Chébo's face.

The drums began again, a Dahomé dance, and the people relaxed. Many joined in the dancing while l'Autorité strutted about shaking hands and talking *langage*. She also danced, with gestures and movements wholly masculine. At one point she briefly advanced on another woman, making sexual gestures.

The houngan and his houngénicon retired to the front room of the hut. A new mat had been placed there for the houngénicon. She lay down on it, and the houngan sat in a chair against the wall. This was the beginning of the ceremony of calling *les morts en bas dleau* (the dead below the water).

Meanwhile, before the hounfor, the laplace and a hounsi were building

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1953) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

769 the *card*, a hogan-like structure made of bent saplings covered with cotton
793 cloth.
794 Rain had been threatening all evening, and now it began. Some people
796 crowded into the hut where the goat was being barbecued. Others came
[346] into the hut where the houngénicon lay; in the back room, with the pé, Chébo, l'Autorité, strutted and shook hands with the visitors. The straw roof leaked a little, but no one minded very much. The houngan and his houngénicon, who had been under a strain, relaxed. The rain would mark the length of the intermission. Except for the sound of the rain and "Chébo's" *language*, there was no noise. No one spoke. Then the houngan,
769 his eyes closed, began to sing an Ibo song.
793
796
539

Ibo Lazile oh, éya!
Grand gout manqué tuyé moin!
A la yun an six mois m' sous la mer,
Grand gout manqué tuyé moin!

Ibo Lazile, oh, éya!
Hunger has not killed me!
One year and six months I have been under the sea,
Hunger has not killed me!

The others sang responsively:

Ibo Lazile, oh, Ibo!
Ibo grand gout pas tuyé'm, Ibo!

Ibo Lazile, oh, Ibo!
Ibo, hunger has not killed me, Ibo!

After a while the houngan called "Abobo!"—which was the signal to conclude. The rain was still coming down, and he called "Abobo!" for the rain to cease also. But it did not stop, and everyone laughed. He began another song, also Ibo:

Ianman Ibo lélé!
Ianman Ibo lélé!
Pilet pied'm mandé pardon,
Ça pardon wa fai pos moin?
Ça ou gainyan ean ça? [Ex. fo]

Ianman Ibo lélé!
Ianman Ibo lélé!
Step on my foot and ask my pardon,
What will the pardon do for me?
What do you have [what are you doing] like that?

And the others came in, spiritedly:

Ianman, oh, un hunh!
Ianman, ean ça'm danné Ibo!
Ianman, oh, un hunh!

Ianman, oh, un hunh!
Ianman, like this I dance, Ibo!
Ianman, oh, un hunh!

2: Courlander 3-4 (1937-1938) 1969 SV3 Haiti SV3

While those in the front room were singing, l'Autorité, in the inner room, was suddenly thrown about violently by her possession. She raced into one wall of the hut, striking her head, flung herself back against the opposite wall, kicking, trembling, calling out strange *langage*. She crashed into the pé, upsetting the dishes, and then fell across the mat where the children were lying half asleep. One of them, a boy of about four, became hysterical. He knew the woman, but he had never seen her like this. His mother carried him to the front room, where she finally quieted his crying. L'Autorité, spent for the moment, lay across the mat. No one touched her. Later, when the singing was resumed, she got to her feet and made the rounds once more, shaking hands again and again. She was now smoking a pipe.

When the houngan heard the rain subsiding, he again called out "Abobo!" as though he were giving the order to cease, and everyone, himself included, laughed again. When it had definitely stopped, someone went out to shake the water from the canopy. The drums were brought out of their shelter, and although the ground was sticky with mud, the dancing was resumed. The houngan asked for a fast Nago dance, and the front room of the hut was once more emptied of everyone except the houngan and his houngénicon.

The laplace and his assistant went up the hill to put the finishing touches to the *cord*, the temporary structure in which the houngan was going to receive the loa and the dead. From a small chest of chinaware, the houngénicon set a "table" for the loa on the ground where she sat. The sacrifice had been for a single loa, Chèbo; the rest of the service was for all the loa served by the family. The houngan, sitting next to the houngénicon, sounded his rattle and spoke *langage*. He sang quietly, a song which only the houngénicon could hear, watching her intently. A large basket of dishes, bottles, and various other paraphernelia was brought by a hounsi. Candles were lighted and set on the ground. The houngan gave a signal, and the hounsi brought a large square of white cotton cloth, which they stretched tight over the houngénicon like a canopy. The candle flame and the silhouette of the houngénicon could be seen through the cloth, but the details of the service were not visible. Sometimes, the houngan, his bell and rattle in hand, would go under the cloth to assist in the calling of the loa. Then, without warning, things began to happen very rapidly.

One of the hounsi who sat before the door began to quiver and make strange noises in her throat: "Ka, ka, k-k-k-k-k-k-a!" Her body shook violently, and her head rolled on her shoulders. Almost simultaneously something began to happen under the cloth where the houngénicon was, and the members of the family crowded up to the *cord* by the hounfor. The houngénicon lay stiffly, her eyes closed, the white cloth removed. The

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

houngan carried out the large round basket in which lay the bottles and the pierre-loas. The hounsi gathered around it, ten of them, to carry it to the *card*. In the bottles were *les morts en bas dlean* (the spirits of the dead from below the water). Carrying the flags, three hounsi danced, singing, up to the *card*. After them the laplace came, carrying in his left hand a plate of maize flour from which he made vèvès in the line of advance, simple marks symbolizing the crossroads. The drums were beating a special salute to the loa. The ten hounsi carrying the basket danced and sang. As they moved up the hill, they rotated, so that the basket revolved like the hub of a wheel. Their progress was not smooth, however; they jerked forward and backward as they rotated. Arriving before the *card*, first one, then a second, was entered by her loa. They fell, jerked, and stumbled. This was all a very good omen. The houngan called "Abobo!" for them to resist such possession, and the hounsi all sat down on the ground. The houngan placed the basket inside the *card* and entered after it. He called for his little bell, which the laplace passed in to him. The laplace closed the flap down tight, from the outside, and placed the flags against it.

Upon a signal given from within, the hounsi began a song:

> La famille semblé,
> Oh semblé nous!
> La famille semblé,
> Oh nous semblé pou nou pa'lé parole nous là!
> La famille semblé!
>
> The family gathers,
> Oh, we gather!
> The family gathers,
> Oh, we gather to speak our words here!
> The family gathers!

The laplace took his position, his back to the *card*, while inside, because of the candle burning there, the houngan could be seen setting out the contents of the basket. The candle went out, and in the *card* the little bell began to tinkle. The singing stopped. The houngan was beginning to talk to the dead below the water. First he talked *langage*. Then his voice was heard through the constant sound of the tiny bell, supplicating Papa Loko to talk a little bit with his "children." A faint, tremulous voice, that of a tired old grandfather, was heard to answer. Papa Loko was stirring himself out of a long silence. He talked a long while to the houngan. Sometimes they both spoke at once. Faintly he was heard to say that he had come a long way to see his children, and that he was very tired. But as he talked his strength returned to him, and, asking the houngan to wait, he spoke directly to his "children," who sat, respectfully and awed,

2: Courlander 9-6 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

around the *card*. Here everyone participated. This was why they had come. Benevolently Papa Loko greeted them: "Bonjou, ti moune moin yo, c'est Papa Loko" (Good day, all my children, this is Papa Loko). Together they all answered eagerly: "Bon soir, Papa!" "Bon soir, Grand!" "Bon soir, cher Papa!" "Bon soir, cher Loko!" Papa Loko told them about his journey, and persons long dead whom he had seen below the water, and he passed on the news from the island below the sea. Then he began to address them singly, asking questions, giving news of dead relatives, and showing a vital interest in the problems of his "children." They answered him. "Oui, Papa," and "Non, Papa Loko," and took deeply to heart anything he said, whether praise or criticism:

Bon jour, Télisman!	Good day, Télisman!
Bon soir, Papa!	Good evening, Papa!
Comment nou yé, Télisman?	How are you, Télisman?
Tout bien, Papa Loko!	Everything is fine, Papa Loko!
C'est ou même qui travaille tres dû?	Are you one who works very hard?
Oui, Papa, moin travaille an pile.	Yes, Papa, I work a great deal.
Ou travaille pou' vié maman ou?	You care for your old mother?
Oui, Papa.	Yes, Papa.
Télisman, piti moin, *fout* ou planté jardin ou encaye. Graine, li pas bon.	Télisman, my child, you will have to plant your garden again. The seeds you planted are no good.
Merci, cher Loko!	Thank you, dear Loko!
Ou poco blié'm, Télisman.	You do not forget me, Télisman.
Non, cher Loko.	No, dear Loko.
Yo dit ou prailé travaille en ville.	They say you are going to work in the city.
Lé'm capab', Papa.	When I can, Papa.
Pas blié moune morne ça yo, Télisman.	Do not forget the people of the hills, Télisman.
Non, cher Loko, m' pas blié yo.	No, dear Loko, I will not forget them.
Papa ou dit'm ba ou ben soir pou'li.	Your father asked me to say good evening to you for him.
Merci, Papa.	Thank you, Papa.
Papa Loko fini pa'lé ou, Télisman.	Papa Loko is through talking to you, Télisman.
Merci, Papa.	Thank you, Papa.
Changé 'm, Télisman.	Remember me, Télisman.

Papa Loko talked in turn to everyone in the family who was present, and inquired, sometimes suspiciously, after those who were absent. After many minutes, Papa Loko said regretfully that he had to go away, and bade them au revoir. They were all sorry he was leaving, because he was well loved. He spoke a few words with the houngan, and then his voice faded away. Only the tinkling of the little bell remained.

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769 796 787

Then, faintly, came the broken voice of an old woman who was crying. The houngan said her children were waiting to see her, and asked her to enter. Moyise had been dead many generations already, but she was still crying over the circumstances of her death, and because she had left her children behind her. The houngan, speaking gently, asked her to try to stop crying because her children were waiting. Little by little she controlled herself. She greeted them all and talked with each member of the family in turn. She showed a special interest in the women and children and was concerned about family problems.

After Moyise went away, Docile, Moyise' daughter, came. She greeted them all and then complained that when she had died she had been buried in a grave near that of a thief; now she wished for her body to be moved. Alise, on whose place the grave was situated, promised to take care of the matter, and Docile became placated. Her voice faded away. Inside the *cord*, the houngan talked *langage* and rang his bell.

After Docile came Joseph and his son Jougleau. Joseph and Jougleau timed their entrance badly and came in together, both talking at once. The houngan tried to straighten out the situation, and for a moment the three of them were conversing simultaneously. Then Jougleau withdrew and returned when his father was through. After Jougleau came still later generations, represented by Ti Perci and her children, Na and Bernicia. Bernicia came crying bitterly about something. The houngan asked her to stop, because he could not bear to hear women crying. Everyone laughed, and Bernicia controlled herself.

[716] Then Damballa Wèdo, the ancient loa, came, speaking with an aged and broken voice. Feebly he sang his song in "African" language:

[539]

Ago! Damballa Wèdo!
Oh Damballa Wèdo kian kian!
Oh Damballa Wèdo kian kian!
Oh ha ha ha Damballa Wèdo kian kian!
Oh Damballa Wèdo kian kian! [Ex. 39]

[716] Later, Damballa sang again, calling on Legba to act as witness to his words:

[539]

Ago-é Atibon Legba oh é!
Oh Damballa Wèdo é kôté manyan!
Oh gainyain jou' yo changé mein li kôté manyan!
Oh Damballa Wèdo é kôté manyan!
Oh Ayida Wèdo é kôté manyan!
Oh gainyain jou' pou' changé mein li kôté manyan! [Ex. 40]

Ago-é Atibon Legba oh é!
Oh, Damballa Wèdo é, kôté manyan!

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Oh, a day will come when they will remember me here, *kfté manyan!*
Oh, Damballa Wèdo *é, kfté manyan.*
Oh, Ayida Wèdo *é, kfté manyan!*
Oh, a day will come for you to remember me here, *kfté manyan!*

During the evening about twenty loa and ancestors came into the *cord* to talk. When the last had finished speaking the hills were already light, and the service was over.

Service for Èzèlie Fréda and St. Jacques Majeur

This service took place not in the open but under a tonnelle surrounded by four walls, adjoining the hounfor of Alexis Stephan on the west fringes of Port-au-Prince. Separate from the hounfor and dance court was a shrine to the "dead" loa Gèdé Nimbo. The shrine was a small shed open on one side. Within, lighted by flickering oil lamps, was a life-size effigy of Gèdé, a scarecrow-like figure dressed in the loa's traditional attire—black tail coat and trousers, and a tall opera hat. On the otherwise blank face of the figure were smoked glasses with white rims.

The dancing was progressing under the supervision of the houngan's adjutant, the laplace. He wandered among the drummers and dancers, encouraged the singing, and issued orders here and there. No one seemed to take him very seriously. There was a good deal of joking, and the gathering seemed very much like an old-fashioned family reunion. There were perhaps a hundred dancers and spectators—friends, relatives, and *devotees of Stephan's hounfor. Everyone was watching with affection an* old woman who could not be restrained from dancing. She executed old classical steps and postures with a skill that called for running comment all around her. As each piece came to an end someone would step up to her and say something like: "Woy, Manman, mais ou passé mwé!" (Oh, Mother, you are better than me!). Then they would attempt to get her to sit down again, but she would only shake them off and urge the drummers to get going if they were not too tired.

Eventually, the houngan, Stephan, made a casual entrance through the door of his adjoining hounfor. He held the usual ritual rattle and bell in his hand, and sauntered around to chat with his friends.

Gradually, almost imperceptibly, the dancing became more serious. Soon, only the hounsi, the female servitors, were dancing. The drums played a salute to Legba, the first loa to be called upon in a Vodoun service. For it is Legba who opens all gates and all highways, and who paves the way for communication with other deities. Though he is not the greatest of the loa, he is one of the most ancient. The houngan spilled water on the ground as a libation, and the dancing continued.

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796 793 [554] [202] Then a well-dressed young man entered, and the drummers swiftly changed to the salute reserved for guests of distinction. The hounsi sang, "Président passe là, l'ap monté au gouvernment!" and waved paper flags and kerchiefs. The young man was a distant relative of Stephan's; he also was a houngan.

After a while Stephan brought from his hounfor a second asson, or ritual rattle, and another small hand bell, both of which he handed to the young man. He was extending the courtesy of his hounfor, sharing his [916] instruments of authority and religious power with his fellow houngan. Then followed an exhibition between the two houngans that was half duel and half ballet. They stood face to face, each of them holding the asson in one hand and the tiny bell in the other. Stephan was "testing" the young houngan for the edification of all present. Each tiny move made by Stephan was duplicated simultaneously by his guest, as though he were a mirrored reflection.

Every posture Stephan made was duplicated instantly by his guest. The assons and the bells were agitated constantly. The rattle in the young man's hand did precisely what Stephan's did. The two men looked into each other's eyes with intensity, as though this bound their movements together and unified them. When Stephan twisted to the left, the other houngan twisted to the right. Every contortion of the young man was an exact replica of Stephan's movements. The two assons rattled out the same rhythms and the same signals; so did the bells. The backdrop for this "test" was provided by the drummers. The faces of the two men broke into a sweat from the intense nervous effort. At last it came to an end. A woman came forward and wiped their faces with a colored kerchief. The "testing" ceremony was over. The visiting houngan had been proved.

796 793 787 [532] [794] [976] Stephan then made a ritual vèvè, or maize-flour ritual drawing on the ground. Afterward there was more singing and dancing by the hounsi. They sang several songs for Ezilie Fréda, the "pure" loa. And Alexis Stephan went into a trance. It was unexpected. The servitors had not prepared for it. In this emergency the visiting houngan took over. He seemed a little anxious. He was unfamiliar with the particular psychological factors at play in this particular hounfor. He was not certain of the character of Stephan's possession. But he took over grimly. The houngénicon, an older woman, stepped forward to help. While the young houngan wielded the asson and bell, the woman issued instructions. Stephan, his head hanging back, his eyes closed, was supported by two of the hounsi. Other servitors hurriedly brought out a white sheet and spread it on the ground. A chair and a table were set upon the sheet, and Stephan was placed in the chair, where he now sat with his head hanging limply on his chest.

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Stephan had been mounted by Èzilie Fréda, the deity of whiteness and purity. That was why he was protected from the earth by the white sheet beneath him. While the drums continued to beat, the hounsi placed upon the table a bottle of wine, a clean glass, and a white plate with boiled maize meal, topped by a whole egg. Then they held over Stephan—who had become, for the time being, Èzilie—a second white sheet. The possessed houngan began to bend forward and back with great rapidity, toward the surface of the table and back to an upright position, his arms hanging quietly downward. The hounsi fluttered the covering sheet in such a way that the spectators could not see what was going on beneath it. In less than a minute, Stephan's movements ceased. The sheet was removed. Stephan sat limply, talking *langage*. In the white dish only the broken shells of the egg and a small portion of the meal remained. Some of the wine was gone from the upright bottle. The glass still had a little wine in the bottom. Èzilie had accepted the sacrifice. Not once had Stephan's hands changed from their hanging position or approached the table. The eggshells themselves were clean, but a tiny trickle of liquid yolk ran from the corner of Stephan's mouth. The visiting houngan rattled his asson before Stephan, who arose wearily, with the help of the hounsi, and followed him through the door into the hounfor.

Again there was dancing, and a little while later Stephan emerged from the hounfor in a bizarre military costume of red velvet, wearing black glasses, a blue military cap with a red feather, and a sword. He was almost as weird as the effigy of Gèdé that stood outside. The houngan had now become St. Jacques Majeur, or Ogoun, the loa of war and the forge. His personality had undergone a dramatic change. Strictly speaking, Stephan was not in a trance as he had been a little earlier. He was in control of his movements, which were completely conscious, and yet he was certainly not in a "normal" state of mind. Previously Stephan had been in a state of possession; now, one might say, he was in a state of obsession. He had identified himself with St. Jacques. He strode and swaggered like St. Jacques. His bearing was regal, military, and awesome. His costume should have seemed funny, like similar costumes seen during Mardi Gras days, but instead it was unworldly and impressive.

He carried a rum bottle in his hand, and he moved through the gathering making people drink from it. Those who drank from the bottle were sharing with St. Jacques. Stephan poured more rum into an iron pot on the ground and set it afire. The hounsi kanzo, the servitors of the higher order who had been through the fire ordeal, came forward and washed their hands and arms with the burning rum, so that at times their whole arms were aflame, until they quickly snuffed the fire out. Some of the hounsi brought their children forward and washed their arms in the burn-

796 ing rum also, as a foretaste of the kanzo rites they might one day go
787 through.
793 There was dancing again for others besides the hounsi. The tension had
[794] passed. The ceremony was over, and the rest of the night was simply for pleasure.

Gèdé Nimbo, the "Dead" Loa

776 Gèdé Nimbo, also known as Baron Samedi, is one of the most powerful deities of the Haitian pantheon. He guards the cemetery and protects the graves, especially those of children. But Gèdé Nimbo is not simply another loa, he is a personification of death. Like death, he is given to whim. He is an intruder. He forces his way into services being held for other deities, behaves badly, and has to be wheedled to depart. He indulges in ribald humor when the mood strikes him, and the most solemn occasions are likely to be disturbed by his pranks. Gèdé Nimbo can be formidable when aroused, as he can be gentle and forbearing when it suits him.

Gèdé is always dressed in black, usually with a tail coat and top hat. He is always represented in this attire in the shrines where effigies of him are to be found. Elsie Clews Parsons, a number of years ago, reported this Haitian description of Gèdé:

> He is a *grande diable*. He makes all kinds of motions to make you laugh, but you must not laugh at him, for if you do he makes you "stop laughing" . . . Anything you touch, he takes and never returns, and you have to give him more and more. He smokes cigarettes, not cigars. He wears a coat and a hat, and carries a stick. He can make himself short or . . . as tall as a mast.[3]

The kind of motions Gèdé makes would in certain other cultures be regarded as obscenities. In Haiti they are merely public violations of social restraints and taboos, things no Haitian would think of doing in public view. But Gèdé, the loa of the graveyard, has special prerogatives. He does not fear criticism. He flouts propriety at will, he embarrasses, provokes, and insults with impunity.

776 At a Nago ceremony which I witnessed near Port-au-Prince, the strong-
787 hold of the Gèdé cult, Gèdé Nimbo entered with such gusto that he virtu-
796 ally made a shambles of the service. The first person to be mounted by the loa was the laplace, the houngan's understudy. He stiffened, twisted, jerked, and thrashed about. As the more violent phase of his possession wore off, he began to make lascivious loin movements, as though copulating with the center post. Afterward, he moved about, shaking hands and greeting various persons with insulting remarks calculated to make others laugh at the indignities. Stopping before a distinguished-looking spectator, Gèdé made a few loin movements in his direction. Grasping another man by the hands, he greeted him vigorously and inquired whether it was

[3] [Parsons, Spirit Cult in Haiti. Cf. p. 351, Col. 1b.--Author]

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his *zozo* (penis) to which his glasses were affixed. As the dance progressed, the possessions came rapidly. The possessed persons, men and women alike, leaped about the tonnelle, mimicking copulation. They broke drinking glasses on the ground, threw themselves upon the drummers, and careened and crashed into spectators and dancers. In the course of the service there were nearly twenty possessions—all of them noteworthy for their portrayal of Gèdé Nimbo as a loa who has contempt for proprieties. For he is the spirit of the cemetery, the one who laughs last and best. 776 787 796

Near the mountain town of Kenskoff I saw another service for Gèdé, which showed a different aspect of the loa of the graveyard. It took place inside the hut of a rural houngan, who was conducting the affair for his own immediate family and a few close friends. The hut itself was small. Its single room had been partitioned into two by hanging a sheet in the middle. On one side of the sheet a young child was lying on a mat next to the carefully stored Arada drums. On the other side the ceremony was taking place. Great bouquets of red flowers were arranged in a corner; above them hung a colored lithograph of the Christ child; below, on the floor, was a crude oil lamp with a floating wick. The floor area was no more than seven feet square, but at least twelve persons were crowded there, and others clustered in the doorway. Ritual flags leaned against the wall, one of red silk with a gold fringe, another of white silk with blue polka dots. A tiny space remained in the center of the floor for the houngan, whose "possession" by Gèdé was the feature of the service. [793]

The houngan was dressed in a black stovepipe hat, a blue blouse with white polka dots, and a black skirt over black trousers. In his hand he carried a walking stick. He smoked a pipe constantly, a variation of the customary cigarette. In the tiny space in the center of the room, the houngan—or, more properly, Gèdé Nimbo—danced. The houngan's personality had changed—his voice, his postures, all his mannerisms. He spoke only through his nose, for that is the way Gèdé talks, as though he had a cleft palate. 776 787 796 793

He whirled around and around, singing and talking *langage* in turn. His family sang: [539]

> Gèdé-vi yo wè ago-é!
> Gèdé-vi yo wè!
> Papa Gèdé c'est loa!
>
> It is Gèdé-vi they see, *ago-é!* *
> It is Gèdé-vi they see!
> Papa Gèdé is a *loa!*

* *Ago:* exclamatory, signifying "I am here."

He was the center of all eyes. Most of the time he danced alone, gyrating recklessly. Sometimes he danced with his houngénicon. Those who watched clapped hands and uttered sounds imitating drums, for drums were not being used in this service. The houngan carried the inevitable *clochette*, or tiny hand bell.

When newcomers arrived, Gèdé greeted them by shaking both their hands downward, vigorously, three times. Then he wiped their faces with his kerchief, a ceremony which he repeated from time to time. He danced with each of them a kind of Jenvalo step, simple, restrained, and dignified. One of the visitors fell to his knees to converse with him.

The entire evening was built around the houngan's representation of Gèdé. Properly speaking, the houngan was not in a trance. He was in full possession of all his normal faculties and was conscious of the slightest inconveniences and disturbances. Several times the clay bowl of his pipe fell from the reed stem, scattering hot ashes on the ground, and each time he paused to allow the houngénicon to clear them away. Yet he was carried away by his certainty that he was Gèdé. The obvious conviction of those who watched seemed to fortify him in his role. As the evening wore on, he became more and more detached from his normal personality. His psychic condition was not that of one who had been "mounted" by a loa; it was, rather, a continuously progressive ecstasy.

Gèdé is, in fact, more than a loa of the cemetery; he is a personification of death in all its macabre, humorous, and unpredictable aspects. Death is not merely a thing dying; it is an entity, a positive force in nature. Death is Gèdé Nimbo. I believe that when the houngan became Gèdé, all who had crowded into his hut felt themselves to be in the presence of death itself. Death, a dynamic, aggressive force, danced and pirouetted among them, talking the language of the dead and of old Africa.

Gèdé is often stern, austere, and forbidding, but he has other aspects. Haitians take amused pleasure at the terror he can strike into the hearts of the mighty. An old Gèdé song goes:

Papa Gèdé bel ga'çon!	Papa Gèdé is a handsome fellow!
Papa Gèdé bel ga'çon!	Papa Gèdé is a handsome fellow!
L'habillé tout en noi'!	He is dressed all in black
Pou'l monté au palais!	For he is going up to the palace!
L'habillé tout en blanc	When he's dressed all in white
Li semblé yun deputé!	He looks like a deputy!
L'habillé tout en noi'!	When he's dressed all in black
Li semblé yun senateur!	He resembles a senator!

According to tradition, the song had its origin in a march on the capital by some houngans many years ago. The story is very old and no one remembers many of the details.

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remembers many of the details. But during the administration of President Louis Borno (1922–1930) there was a reënactment of the original march. There suddenly appeared in the streets of Port-au-Prince a crowd of Gèdé *mystères*—houngans "possessed" by Gèdé Nimbo and attired in Gèdé dress: tall black hats, long black tail coats, smoked glasses, black skirts over their black trousers. They carried flags, waved polka-dot kerchiefs, shook their ceremonial rattles, and paused sometimes to wipe the perspiration from one another's faces. They became the nucleus of a huge, noisy crowd moving up the hill toward the palace. Market women followed instead of going home; street gamins screamed and raced among them. Before they had arrived at the palace grounds they had taken on the semblance of a huge Mardi Gras band. They swerved through the gates of the palace grounds and along the drive, right to the steps of the palace itself. The guards, taken by surprise, waited helplessly for their officers to arrive.

At the palace door, the houngans demanded money from the president. Borno was in a dilemma. He was reputed to be sympathetic to Vodoun ritual but was only surreptitiously so. He feared the houngans, and he feared public opinion. What would the upper class of Port-au-Prince think, the Latin-culture Haitians? With Gèdé's worst manners, the Gèdé mystères cavorted on the palace steps. Finally Borno gave in. He sent the money out to them, and then the crowd of Gèdés marched out of the palace grounds, waving their flags and shaking their rattles.

Service for the Hounsi Bossale

This ritual of calling the loa to speak through the mouth of the Vodoun priest took place in the Bolosse section of Port-au-Prince. The hounfor was situated in a congested slum area of the city, but the grounds around it were spacious. The hounfor itself was small and unpretentious, and except for the adjoining tonnelle would easily have been mistaken for another small wooden house. The houngan was a heavy-set man with a black mustache. Quick to laugh and easy in his movements, he nevertheless commanded solemn respect from the hounsi and the other participants. His soft-spoken voice expressed assurance and authority.

There were a number of possessions in the course of the dancing, all more or less routine. Each time a possession occurred, the houngan came forward with his asson and bell, gave a pitcher of water and a candle to the possessed devotee, and conducted her through a ritual at the foot of the center post.

Later, one of the hounsi came and sat at the houngan's feet. She was not possessed but obviously was in a state of high tension. Other servitors brought from the hounfor a wooden washtub and set it on the ground

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

before the houngan. Staring into the tub, he shook his asson and called upon a certain loa to enter. Then he placed a lighted candle upright in the tub and watched it for a moment. The flame was suddenly snuffed out. The houngan looked concerned. He removed the candle and called for another one. When he placed the new candle in the tub it remained burning. The houngan smiled. The loa had agreed to enter. The houngan and his chief assistant placed the tub upon the head of the waiting hounsi. She trembled violently as though she had received a shock, then leaped to her feet. The loa had mounted her and presumably was sitting in the tub on her head. She began to stagger back and forth across the dance court, while the drums beat a salute. The tub tottered dangerously but did not fall. The possessed hounsi then began to whirl. She stopped, and the tub continued to spin for a few seconds on her head. She twirled again in the opposite direction. Each time she stopped she waited for the tub to stop spinning. The twirling motion was accompanied by a constant jerking and lurching, as though she were about to lose her balance, but she never stumbled or fell. After perhaps five minutes of this violent "riding" by the loa, the houngan approached her with his asson and conducted her into the hounfor, the tub still on her head. Inside the hounfor he removed the tub, sent the loa away, and left the hounsi to rest.

There was more dancing, and after a while the service was transferred to a small temporary cloth-covered structure resembling an American Indian hogan. The hounsi bossale—the servitors whose loa had not been "tamed" or conditioned—lay before the structure on their faces, side by side. There were twelve of them. The other hounsi covered them completely with white sheets. The houngan entered the hogan-like structure (the *card*) with a candle and a bell. He tinkled his bell and began to call upon the loa to speak to the hounsi bossale. Through his mouth, first one spirit and then another made comments. The hounsi under the sheets were tensely quiet, until one of them began to jerk and scream. Several others, as though responding to a trigger, joined in the screaming. Older women came to quiet them. The hysterical reaction of the hounsi bossale was regarded as simply a reflection of their beginners' status. Their loa had not yet been controlled. The ritual continued until the early hours of the morning, the loa and ancient ancestors coming in to speak, one after another.

The First Yams and the First Rice

Each year, when the yams are harvested there is a great festival known as the *mangé yam*. Of all things grown in Haiti, the yam is perhaps the most significant. It is the most vital of all staples, and it is traditional. The yam

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The yam 244 171 192

itself was transplanted from Africa, where in old times as well as in modern it was a staff of life among those who lived by agriculture. The word "yam" is known throughout large parts of Africa, crossing language lines and forests. It signifies the big root on which the African is so dependent, and it also has the general meaning of "eat." In Senegal it is called *nyami*, while across the width of Africa and in the upper Nile region it is called *nyam*.

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In Haiti the yam is a tie with the past and a symbol of fertility. When the yams are plentiful, there is food for the winter months and a sense of well-being. When the yam crop is poor, there is insecurity and even hunger. Whatever occurs, lurking in the background is the shadow of the family ancestors, for it is they who have the power to enhance the crops or blight them. This is the concept around which the mangé yam is built.

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The annual harvest feast, on the twenty-fifth of November, is rooted in the need for placating the ancestors, so that the dead will insure the fertility of the fields. Before the feast, no yams may be eaten, for the crop must be "baptized" first. Should this rule be violated the yams will spoil and those who eat them will become sick. The precise form of the mangé yam varies from region to region. Sometimes it is held on the premises of the cult chief for the community at large. More traditionally it is held on the family *habitation*, with a houngan in attendance. It is felt that an important obligation rests upon those who have wandered away from the homestead to return for the occasion. For the fate of the family depends to a large degree upon the successful appeal to the vast host of the ancestral dead, and the solidarity of the living in this effort is regarded as vital. Even if one belongs to a Christian sect which proscribes Vodoun, he is obligated and ready to come, for the welfare of the family is paramount. Catholics, Adventists, and Protestans alike participate. As the Haitians say, it is an affair for all who eat yams, and that means all Haitians.

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Yams are washed and prepared for eating during the service. They are cut in small portions, placed in dishes or calabash bowls, and offered to the dead, who have prime rights. All categories of the dead are fed—those who are remembered, those who can be recalled only by name, and those whose names are forgotten. The dead of Haiti are invoked, then the dead of Africa. The marassa dead are fed from separate gourds or bowls, and a special table is set for the ancient dead who move slowly because of their age or infirmities, and who may take a long while to arrive at the mangé. A share of the yams is offered to the family loa. Then the members of the family receive symbolic portions. There is singing, drumming, and dancing, and sometimes ritual baths are taken. Afterward, when the yam feast is ended, the crops may be gathered, stored, and eaten.

243 796 769 In the Artibonite Valley, where much rice is grown, a similar ceremony takes place before the rice is gathered from the fields. In this ceremony it is rice that is shared with the family ancestors, who have first rights, and with close friends who have aided with the planting. This feast is called [252] *mangé diri,* or sometimes *goutè diri,* the tasting of the rice. Small amounts of rice are taken from the fields, cooked with red beans or Congo beans, or perhaps made into dumplings. The farmer's friends and relatives gather [524] while the food is still cooking, and play games such as *wari* and *trois-sept.* [538] The children play *gage* games and sing songs, and sometimes a *malt' conte*—a storyteller—comes to entertain them.

When the food is finally ready, the family ancestors are given their share. The farmer takes a calabash bowl of the rice and walks around the house grounds calling upon his immediate ancestors to accept their share. He drops a little food on the ground for the remembered dead, for the unknown dead who preceded them, for the Haitian dead, and for the dead of Africa. He also drops small portions for the dead twins, the dead albinos, the deformed dead, and the dead who have lost limbs, and for the distressed dead who have been improperly buried, or who may not have received the feasts that were due them. Afterward, he offers food to those who died of drowning, or who were lost at sea and never heard of again.

Each course is shared with the ancestors. The farmer takes a pitcher of water, spilling a little here and a little there until the dead have quenched their thirst. He also gives a little of everything to the family loa. Then the calabashes are set out on a bench or table reserved for the dead, and this food is not disturbed. Food for the marassas is set out separately on the ground in three small *conis,* or gourd dishes.

The family ancestors whose good will has made the harvest possible having been taken care of, the food is now shared among the extended family and the friends who helped in the fields. Later there are prayers [782] to the loa, the saints, and God, led by the houngan or a prêt' savane. To [796] finish the affair, there may be Juba-type dances for the older people, while [538] the children watch or play gage games. [524] Only after this service are the farmer and his family and his *coumbite* (mutual labor group), if he belongs to one, free to go out and harvest the rice.[4]

243 243 796 769 171 These feasts of the rice and yam harvests are not of New World origin. Similar harvest festivals for yams or rice are held over a wide area of West Africa. There, as in Haiti, the fundamental concern is with the family ancestors, whose good will must be constantly nourished so that the rains continue to fall, the crops flourish, and human beings remain fertile. Among the Ashanti of Ghana, for example, the yam and rice harvests are

4 [Account given by Jean Ravel Pintro. Cf. P. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

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celebrated with elaborate rituals for the dead. As in Haiti, great importance is laid on the presence of all living descendants, whose numbers are calculated to influence the ancestors' behavior. And as in Haiti, the first yams and the first rice are offered to the dead, and only after the family ritual does the family divide the crop.[5] 243 244 796 769 171

Service for the Assotor Drum

The *assotor* drum is the largest and most sacred of all Haitian drums. Around it is built an impressive and elaborate service known as the *mangé assotor*, which, according to local traditions and circumstances, may be held as often as every three years or as infrequently as every twenty-one years. The period between mangés always consists of an odd number of years. A houngan from Jérémie declared the service might properly be held every three, five, or seven years. Another cult priest in the Cul-de-Sac Plain said it could be held every seven, seventeen, or twenty-one years. The assotor is known as the *plus grand mounne* (the most venerable "man") of the hounfor. However, few cult centers possess an assotor. "Assotor c'est fort bagaille, c'est pas zaffai tout mounc" (The assotor is powerful, it isn't everybody's affair), Haitians say. This is what a man from Jérémie tells about it: 534 796 778

"The assotor is the greatest of all things in the hounfor. The Rada drums are only for the Dahomey nation. The Congo drums are for the Congo nation. The assotor is a man of Dahomey, but he is for all nations. It is for all loa—Pétro, Congo, Bumba, Dahomey. The assotor belongs to Dahomey, but when there is a great service the assotor is the host to the loa of every rite, the loa of Haiti and of Africa. When the assotor is played, the loa are awakened everywhere. Loa who have been forgotten by the Creoles (Haitians) will come to the service and mount people, and when the loa have gone, many people don't know what loa has been riding them. Some ancient spirits from far away come only to the assotor service, and when it is over they aren't heard of again. 534 796 778 184 787 [776]

"The assotor drum is not for small things, it is for great occasions. For some people there are no occasions in their whole lives great enough for an assotor service. When all other things have failed, it is only then that the assotor is called upon. 534 796 778 787

"If a big houngan should have an assotor drum, he can have only one, and it is the chief of the hounfor. All other drums are its servants. You can make an assotor, but it is not necessarily an assotor. It may look like an assotor and not be an assotor. To be an assotor it must not only have the shape of an assotor but it must be accepted by the loa. There was a houngan near Jérémie who made an assotor and held a great service with it,

[5] [Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana. Cf. p. 351, category 116. -- Analyst] [115]

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534 796 778 787 but it wasn't a genuine assotor and the loa didn't come. The drummer beat the assotor, but none of the loa came. As he played, the stick kept falling out of his hand. This was a bad signal (omen). None of the people got loa in their heads. The houngan was in a great sweat, but nothing happened. Another houngan came after the third day and told him to bring the service to an end. He did that. They threw the false assotor away and no one would touch it.

534 796 778 782 787 [776] "To make an assotor, there is first a service. The houngan goes into the woods to find a great tree that is suitable. The trunk must be big enough so that the drum is at least as tall as a man. Most assotors are six feet high or more. The houngan must buy the tree from Maît' Grand Bois, the loa who is Master of the Forest. There is a service under the tree, a goat or a bull is killed, and the houngan places money on the ground for Maît' Grand Bois. Then Maît' Grand Bois mounts his horses. He enters the head of the houngénicon or the laplace. Sometimes he rides the houngan himself. He is very rough with his horses. But if he accepts the money, the houngan has the tree cut down, and he has an assotor drum made. When the drum is finished, a special stick must be made to beat it. Again they go to the woods. They carry the great assotor drum with them. There is singing but no dancing or drumming. They find a tree from which they will cut the drumstick, and there is a service. The houngan must buy the branch from which the drumstick will be made. He offers money to Maît' Grand Bois, the same as before. He spills a little water on the ground for Maît' Grand Bois. He holds a candle in his hand. They sing to Maît' Grand Bois to let them have the stick. Maît' Grand Bois is the master of all the trees, but he is thinking also of the other loa and how they feel about it. On the Island Below the Water he consults with them. If he agrees to give the stick, he makes it known by mounting some of the hounsi, or the houngan, or maybe the man who will be the special assotor drummer. Then they cut down the branch and make the drumstick.

534 778 776 "The assotor drum is not dedicated to Ogoun or Èzilie or any other single loa. If it is baptized, it is given its own name, Assotor. The spirit of the assotor is multiple, for it is the *rappel* for all loa everywhere. The spirit of the assotor is called Assotor, and it is a kind of loa, but it is not one loa but all loa.

534 796 778 776 "In the assotor service, all loa come. Ogoun, Damballa, Legba, Tijean Pétro, Dan Pétro, Gèdé, Maît' Cimitière, they all come. The big loa come and the little loa, the chiefs and their escortes. Every big loa has an escorte of twenty-one smaller loa. Some of the smaller loa have their own escortes. Damballa comes crawling like a snake. Makanda comes crawling like a snake. Ogoun comes fighting, chewing on nails or anything iron. Badé

comes quietly. Pié Cassé comes crawling because of his broken feet. Each loa comes in his own way. 534 796

"First there is dancing for the Congo and Pétro loa. There is dancing for the Kanga and Ibo nation. Last of all is Dahomé, for the assotor belongs to the Dahomé nation, and Dahomé is the host. 778 776 [184]

"The assotor service is the biggest of all services. It last fifteen days. Old people say that once there were services lasting more than twenty days. Every day, animals are killed—bulls, goats, pigs, chickens, turkeys—all according to the loa who are there to be fed. When Moundongue is fed, a dog's ears are clipped in his honor, because Moundongue is fond of dogs. More happens in the assotor mangé than all the rest of the year. Dahomé is host to the other nations, so the Rada service comes last. But the assotor drum is the host even to Dahomé, and it is fed last of all. [782]

"The assotor drum is dressed in the finest of clothing and kerchiefs during the mangé. It is the king of everything.

"When the mangé assotor is ended, when the drum has been fed, there is an immediate Mass held in church for the souls in purgatory. You don't need to have any special reason, but you must hold the Mass for all the dead. You serve coffee, sandwiches, cake, and other refreshments for all the people. 534 796 769.

"When there is no mangé going on, the assotor is kept in a special place in the hounfor. Every seven or nine months the houngan has a special *rappel* beaten for it on the Rada drums, and rum is spilled on the ground for it. It is a great responsibility to own an assotor. But it does great things for the houngan who owns it." 534 778 796

Service for Mait' Grand Bois at Anse-à-Veau

Orthodox tradition in the region of Anse-à-Veau places the loa Mait' Grand Bois as the most potent and venerable of deities. He is the supreme mystère, whose good will or eccentric whim determines the fortunes of all men. Somewhat subsidiary to Grand Bois, but served within the same rites, are two other non-Dahomé loa—Moundongue (of Congo origin) and Ibo. Older people of Anse-à-Veau regard this trilogy, along with Femme Grand Bois (the wife of Mait' Grand Bois), as the core of "Guinée" ritual. There is also a second group of deities, consisting primarily of Ogoun Feraille, Êzilie, and Fréda Dahomé; these loa are of the Dahomey family and are regarded as somewhat less important. Should services for any of them be held, they follow rites for the Grand Bois constellation. People in this region hold that there is only one Ibo loa, one Moundongue, one Ogoun, and one Êzilie, each of them with many names or manifestations. Legba, the Dahomean spirit of procreation, 184 776

[For footnote, see Category 116, p. 351. --Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

184 the gate, and the crossroads, is not regarded in the same light as the other
776 loa but as a messenger and interceder, and as the crossroads protector. He it is who helps in the placation of the major gods, and who guards people against accident, chance, and evil spirits on the highway.

796 In traditional form, services for Maît' Grand Bois and Femme Grand
782 Bois are conducted by the family without the aid of a houngan, under
776 the direction of the oldest male member of the family. The rites begin on a Thursday. With a tiny bell in his hand, the elder who directs the service (he is called *grand famille*) calls upon Maît' Grand Bois to
[787] come and receive his feast. The procedures are solemn. The grand famille and the family sing. At last Grand Bois enters the head of the old man who is conducting the rites. Then the sacrificial animals are brought forward and killed, and the women take the meat and begin the cooking of the mangé. While the food is cooking, the family sits and waits. Sometimes the grand famille begins a song, in which others join. The cooking takes a long while. Sometime during the night, when the food is ready, it is placed in two baskets—one for Maît' Grand Bois and one for his wife, Femme Grand Bois. Into each basket goes meat, corn meal, rice, bread, cookies, peanut cakes, cassava, and other delicacies. The two baskets are hung by ropes from the roof of the tonnelle, or from the branch of a tree. During the entire night, none of the family eats. Maît' Grand Bois and his wife partake of the feast as they please. At six o'clock in the morning, the baskets are taken down, and the family is free to eat what the loa have left for them.

When the food is gone, the bones that are left are carried to a nearby stream and washed until they are white and shining. The bones are then placed in a large calabash bowl. Sweet-scented leaves from special trees are placed in the bowl with the bones, and water is added. The
[783] mixture becomes a ritual lotion, or "bath." The entire family kneels before the liquid, which they rub on their faces, heads, arms, hands, legs, and feet. When the ritual bathing is over, they sing:

[539]

La famille vin' payé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
La famille vin' payé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
Cérémonie là c'est finil [Ex. 41]	The ceremony is finished!

Afterward, each member of the family places a small coin in the calabash dish with the bones and leaves, and the residue is then buried in a deep hole at a crossroads. A heavy post (*borne*) is erected at the site, with
[211] markings to indicate the date of the service, and the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, each representing a year. Every year one of the numbers is checked off, and at the end of four years another service for Maît' Grand Bois and Femme Grand Bois is held.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

If it should happen that on the appointed day four years later the family is unable to hold the regular feast for Grand Bois, the grand famille goes to the tree sacred to the loa, with a bottle of *siro'* and other token gifts. He explains the difficulties of the family; he tells the loa that it has been a bad year, that the crops have been poor, and that the family has not been able to accumulate enough money to buy sacrificial animals. He asks Grand Bois for a six-month postponement. The loa agrees to the postponement, making his intentions clear through various signs when the grand famille is possessed. "Grand Bois is a good loa," people say, "but if you fail to meet your obligations to him he will be very stern. If you don't keep your promise to him, he may seize you [i.e., kill you]."

When the rites for Malt' Grand Bois are finished, services for Ogoun and the Dahomé deities may be held, beginning on Friday and running through the week end. The Ogoun service is a festive affair. There is much singing and dancing, and early on Saturday morning the sacrificial bull is dressed and decorated with red and blue kerchiefs. Red and blue ribbons are tied to his horns, and he is led on a grand tour to various places, including Ogoun's tree. The drummers walk behind him, and after them members of the family, some dancing, some singing, and some mounted by the loa Ogoun. The procession passes three times around the cemetery, then heads back toward the family *habitation*. When the participants reach the tree sacred to Legba, they sing to this loa, invoking him to "ouvri bayè pou' moin" (open the gate for me). Finally, when the procession reaches the *habitation*, the sacrificial bull is killed. After Ogoun has been served his mangé, the rites are terminated with an *action de grâce*.

Near Anse-à-Veau there is a dried-up spring. It is said that many years ago during a big service for Malt' Grand Bois a man mounted by this loa rushed to the foot of a large tree and began clawing at the ground. He dug a hole there with his hands, and when it was only a few feet deep, water began to flow. The members of the société later enlarged the hole and lined it with stone. It was discovered that a giant crab was living in this water. One year, a service to Malt' Grand Bois was missed. The crab disappeared from the spring, and soon the water stopped flowing. "Grand Bois gives," the people say, "but if he is not remembered he also takes back."

Possession by the Loa Pinga Maza

On the outskirts of Port-au-Prince there is a hounfor dedicated to the loa Pinga Maza, also known by the name Bakulu Baka. He is a ferocious and fearsome spirit of the Pétro family who is known for his propensity

of Haiti. But the route to it is through water. When the Haitians say "under the water" they do not mean under the sea. The ocean is regarded as the special domain of Agwé, La Sirène, and a few related deities, but it has nothing to do with most loa. "Under the water" specifically means under the springs, the rivers, and the fresh-water lakes. Fresh water has the greatest of significance in relation to most of the Vodoun deities.

When a loa comes to visit his Haitian children he comes by way of the *chimin dleau* (the water road)—that is to say, by way of the river, the waterfall, or the spring. Because the spring is the primary source of fresh water, it is the most direct means of contact with the land of the loa. Tales are heard everywhere of persons who, drawing water from the spring at night, heard the voices of loa or the sound of singing and drumming coming up from somewhere below. And virtually all the tales about human beings who visited the land of the loa describe them as descending into a river or disappearing into a waterfall.

The loa are accustomed to traveling by the "water road." And in all aspects of the Vodoun service, this "water road" is refreshed and replenished. When the road is dry, contact with the loa is diminished. When it is moist, the loa travel easily.

Thus, the houngan constantly uses water to entice and invite the deities. He holds a glass or pitcher of water at the center pole of his peristyle. He extends it toward the four cardinal points. He spills water at the foot of the center pole. He spills water in the hounfor at the foot of the *pé*, or altar. He sets a pitcher of water at the gateway of his *habitation*. And often, during a service, he pours a pathway of water in the dust from his gateway into his peristyle. Within nearly every hounfor there is at least one *bassin*, or pool, dedicated to the loa who is the *maît' caille*, the master of the house. These pools are carefully filled with water drawn from the springs. They are places of rest and refreshment for the deities whose names or portraits are inscribed on the walls above.

Sometimes rites and services are held at the site of the spring, the houngan and his entourage marching down to it from the hounfor for the occasion. So, too, there are annual pilgrimages to waterfalls such as Saut d'Eau, where the loa mount their "horses" in profusion.

Within the hounfor, during a service, the cult priest and the servitors pour "libations" of water on the earth, so that the loa may be refreshed. And virtually without end, the hounfor is the scene of ritual ceremonies in which the loa is bathed and thus "renewed" in the heads of his servitors.*

* [For footnote, see category 116, p. 351.--Analyst]

The importance of water in Vodoun has a fundamentally West African character. Among the Yoruba and the Ashanti and in Dahomey, for example, water rites are a significant aspect of religious ritual. Herskovits notes the frequency of religious pilgrimages to streams in West Africa.

In one instance, at Abeokuta, a bedecked procession of worshipers left a shrine atop a high hill, followed a long path to the riverside over two miles away, and returned before the ceremonies could be carried out at the shrine of the god. On one occasion, in Dahomey, the bed of the sacred stream ran dry was "filled" from nearby wells so that this water could be ritually redrawn for use in an especially important ceremony. Among the Ashanti, pilgrimages to Lake Bosumtwe and other sacred bodies of water regularly occur. And it is on such occasions that the spirit of the river or lake or sea manifests itself, by "entering the head" of the devotee and causing him to fling himself, possibly possessed, into the water.[8]

So it is also in Haiti, where possession at the river's edge may cause the devotee to leap into the river. At Saut d'Eau, possessed persons plunge into the waterfall without regard for their safety, being in the care of the loa who have mounted them.

Into this water complex the Christian rite of baptism has been easily absorbed, providing merely a new act of veneration for water and its properties. In the Haitian mind baptism is not far removed from the *lavé tête* ritual, the washing of the head, or the *rafraîchi tête*, the "refreshing" of the head, both of which are acts in propitiation of the loa.[9] So related is the baptismal concept in the Haitian mind, that the term "baptize" is used to describe the lavé tête; it is said that the loa is being "baptized." So also are drums "baptized," not to mention yams, and even the hounfor itself.

Marriage to a Loa

Although the term *hounsi* (spirit wife, or wife of the spirit) is applied to a large class of servitors of the Vodoun temple, only a small number of servitors ever pass through rites which give them a husband-wife or wife-husband relationship with a loa. Reasons for these mystic marriages vary, but usually the rituals take place upon the prescription of a cult priest who interprets the will of the deities concerned. Most of the mystic marriages of which I have heard have taken place in the general area of Port-au-Prince and the Cul-de-Sac Plain. In some other areas of Haiti it appears that no such rites have taken place locally within the memory of the elder inhabitants. One aged man living near Belladère declared: "It [marriage to a loa] is impossible. People serve loa, they do not marry them. A man does not marry his burro. A loa

8 A [Herskovits, The Myth of the Negro Past, p. 233. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

9 A [It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain Negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[P 75]

6. Songs of the Peristyle

The songs that are sung in the peristyle are virtually numberless and have a wide range of themes. In general, they are in the spirit of supplication or placation. Preponderantly they relate in some way to the deities. A loa may be described, invoked, or called upon to perform certain deeds. He may be cajoled, joked with, and even criticized. But it is all a family affair. The servitors and the *fidèles* are the loa's "children," his "horses," his "leaves in the woods." The loa, the spirits of the dead, and the living members of the cult are all members of the same "nation." Whether supplication or admonition, the songs of the peristyle and the houngfor all have an intimate character. The affairs of the loa are the affairs of the society. What concerns one individual concerns all.

The themes of the songs have to do with the drama of the cult ritual, the coming and going of the deities, sickness and death, the welfare of the dead, and the behavior of the living.

The cult service is a dramatic presentation which synchronizes and brings into sharp focus the heritage of religious and folk beliefs. The songs describe and evaluate what is going on. Sometimes they are cryptic and tangent, but to those participating and those watching they are clear. As the action is usually related and progressive, so are the songs. Each song has its own place and its own meaning. One song is not readily interchangeable with another. Each service has its appropriate music. So does each developing phase of the houngfor ritual.

Some of the songs are addressed to the loa; others seem to be the words of the loa themselves. In many of the songs there is an implicit dialogue between one or more loa and the singers. This dialogue is not rendered in a form which is immediately understandable to a stranger. There is a constantly shifting point of view, so that sometimes the words are third-person comments about the loa or the situation,

2: Courlander 3-5 (1937-1965) 1969 SV3 Haiti SV3

sometimes they are the words of the deity, sometimes words addressed to the deity. The name of the loa may appear anywhere in the song, as both an invocational word and a rhythmic device, with the result that unless one is aware of the song structure he may lose the sense and intent of the words. In these two lines, for example:

> Master Agwé comes from the sea,
> My cannon is loaded.

The first line describes what happens, from the standpoint of a third person; the second line is a statement by the loa Agwé. Or, take this single line:

> Marie-Louise oh, we are mixed up!

Here Marie Louise seems to be the person addressed, but in fact it is Marie Louise who is talking. Again:

> I don't see my blood, Master Ogoun!

It is not Ogoun who is addressed; the words are his own.

As in nonreligious songs, there is a pattern stanza which is repeated over and over again. As the song goes on, there may be variations for interest and certain embellishments, but by and large the form remains constant. In religious singing there are relatively few examples of songs which progress from one idea to another. When the theme has been stated, that is the song.

One of the preliminary songs in many ritual services is a greeting to the men and women of the société who are present. It is an *ochan*, or salute of welcome, and comes before the loa themselves are addressed:

Messieurs-dames bonsoir!	Gentlemen and ladies, good evening!
M'apé mandé nous!	I ask you!
Messieurs-dames bonsoir!	Gentlemen and ladies, good evening!
M'apé mandé nous	I ask you
Qui gens nous yé! [Ex. 42]	What people are we?

The answer to the question is implicit, for they are the people of the société, members of the Arada "nation" or Anago "nation," as the case may be.

[illegible] Dahomey "Rada" [illegible] supplicatory song is addressed to Legba, the keeper of the gate, the guardian of the crossroads, and the "go-between" who intercedes with other loa in the affairs of men. The first appeal to Legba is to open the gate, over which he is master, so that the voices of supplication may be heard and understood. The open gate also provides access for other loa to the service.

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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they have no feet and climb into the nearest palm tree. This song comments on Tijean's ability to climb with his single foot. (Haitians do not "shinny" up trees, but walk up, bracing the soles of the feet against the trunk.)

Tijean ou pas gainyain pieds,	Tijean, you have no feet,
Tijean ou pas gainyain pieds,	Tijean, you have no feet,
Comment ou fai monté cocoyé?	How do you climb the coconut tree?
Lans bayè ro Legba, Jean Pétro,	By using Legba's gate, Jean Pétro,
Lans bayè ro!	By using the gate!

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When the loa begin to arrive in the hounfor to participate in the ceremonies, there is usually a song taking note of their coming. Sometimes the words describing the action are the deity's own account of what is happening, as in this song to the loa Sobo:

C'est passé n'ap passé là!
C'est passé ma passé là!
É hounsi bossale é yo lommain nom moin!
Yo lommain nom moin yo lommain nom moin!
Yo rélé hounsi kanzo!
Yo rélé Daromain!
Yo rélé mwé! [Ex. 50]

I am passing through, I am passing through!
I am passing, I am passing here!
É, the hounsi bossale call my name!
They are calling for me, they are calling for me!
The hounsi kanzo are calling!
Dahomey is calling!
They are calling me!

In another rite one might hear this song about the arrival of the deity Simba, from the point of view of the servitors rather than of the loa:

Simba Kitta vini wè moin, oh!
Oh Simba wa vini wè moin là, oh saints yà! [Ex. 51]

Simba Kitta comes to see me, oh!
Oh, Simba will come to see me here, oh saints!

When the deity Boulicha Nago comes in, there is a call for the drums to be played:

Nago 'rivé-é,	Nago arrives,
Boulicha Nago 'rivé-é!	Boulicha Nago arrives!
Nago 'rivé-é,	Nago arrives,
Boulicha Nago 'rivé-é!	Boulicha Nago arrives!
Li là li tempo bata là!	It is time, beat the drums!
Li là li tempo bata là!	It is time, beat the drums!
Nago 'rivé jodi-à oh enhé! [Ex. 52]	Nago comes today, oh, *enhé!*

2: Courlander 3-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 HaRi SV3

Sobo, too, demands his drums as he arrives, as well as all the other paraphernalia for his ritual:

Coté yo coté yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Sobo mandé hounsi 'Lada!	Sobo asks for his Allada hounsi!
Coté yo coté yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Coté yo coté yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Sobo mandé tambou' Rada!	Sobo asks for his Arada drums!
Coté yo coté yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Coté yo coté yo?	Where are they, where are they?
Sobo mandé pouvoir Allada!	Sobo asks for his Allada magic!
Coté yo coté yo? [Ex. 53]	Where are they, where are they?

When more than one loa comes into the service at the same time there is confusion. Each loa is supposed to await his turn, so that the ritual and the dance may be conducted in an orderly way. Sometimes, however, two or more deities come in at once, throwing the orderly process out of gear. This song takes note of the simultaneous arrival of the loa Adja, Loko, Sobo, Sodje, and others.

Adja non mêlé, oh Adja oh!
Adja non mêlé!
Non mêlé Papa Loko, non mêlé jodi-à!

Adja non mêlé, oh Adja oh!
Adja non mêlé!
Non mêlé Sodje zouez non mêlé jodi-à!

Adja non mêlé, oh Adja oh!
Adja non mêlé!
Non mêlé kilé ouâl Nêg' Sobo non mêlé jodi-à! [Ex. 54]

Adja we are mixed, oh, Adja, oh!
Adja we are mixed!
We are mixed Papa Loko, we are mixed up today!

Adja we are mixed, oh, Adja, oh!
Adja we are mixed!
We are mixed Sodje, enough, we are mixed up today!

Adja we are mixed, oh, Adja, oh!
Adja we are mixed!
We are mixed all the time, Nêg' Sobo, we are mixed up today!

When the loa come in en masse this way, some are asked to retire so that the service can proceed smoothly. In a similar instance, the deity Marie Louise is willing to withdraw from the scene but demands that a present or sacrifice be given to her first.

2: Courlander . 8-5 (1537-1965) 1960 SV3 HaRi SV3

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Marie Louise oh nou mêlé!	Marie Louise, oh, we are mixed up!
Marie Louise oh nou mêlé!	Marie Louise, oh, we are mixed up!
Coté ça ou ba mwin pou'm allé?	Where is my gift so that I can go?

Often, when it is time to leave the service, the deity announces through the medium of the song that he has other affairs to attend to elsewhere. Ogoun Achadé, for example, makes a swift departure:

Ogoun volé!	Ogoun flies!
Anago!	Anago!
Ogoun volé Achadé!	Ogoun flies Achadé!
Anago Papa! [Ex. 55]	Anago Papa!

As the deity Général Brisé departs, he tells his servitors that he is "going to God," and that he turns responsibility for their affairs over to them:

Général Brisé pays ya nan main oh!
Ago-é! Ago-é-é!
Général Brisé pays ya nan main oh!
Pays ya nan main
M'peal Bondieu djab oh! [Ex. 56]

General Brisé, the country is in your hands, oh!
Ago-é! Ago-é-é!
General Brisé, the country is in your hands, oh!
The country is in your hands,
I am going to God, oh!

The loa Bumba, in reply to a query, declares that he must go because he has work to do in his fields:

Bumba qui coto pralé?	Bumba, where are you going?
Bumba qui coto pralé?	Bumba, where are you going?
Bumba qui coto pralé?	Bumba, where are you going?
Bumba qui coto pralé?	Bumba, where are you going?
M'planté mangas!	I am planting mangas!
Planté patate!	Planting potatoes!
Planté jawmous!	Planting pumpkins!
Planté banane!	Planting plantains!
Wailé Bumba qui coto pralé? [Ex. 57]	Wailé Bumba, where are you going?

The deities Malt' Bois and Malt' Dlesu declare as they depart that they are on their way to *Africa*, and leave the impression that things are pretty nice over there:

Malt' Dlesu qui m'ti nana dlesu!	Malt' Dlesu who comes out of the water!
Malt' Bois qui m'ti nana bois!	Malt' Bois who comes out of the woods!
Nan Guinée plaisi-à belle oh!	In Africa pleasure is beautiful, oh!
A n'allé wè yo! [Ex. 58]	We are going to see!

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

As the loa Mambo Ayida of the Guinée pantheon leaves the hounfor to return to Africa, her "children" ask her not to stay there too long. And they ask her to bring back to Haiti with her some good magic for use in the hounfor:

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> Mambo Ayida *é!*
> Pral nan Guinée-à, pinga ou misé-à m'tendé!
> Si ou joind bon ouanga wa po'té!
> Si ou joind bon lotion wa po'té! [Ex. 59]
>
> Mambo Ayida *é!*
> Go to Africa, take care not to stay, I am waiting!
> If you find a good ouanga, bring it!
> If you find a good lotion, bring it!

Giving food to the loa is a focal point in religious rituals. Many songs describe the sacrifice, signify that the loa are waiting for their food, or otherwise dramatize this significant activity. In the following song the deity Damballa asks for the goat with which he is to be fed.

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> Damballa Wèdo oh c'est sang-é!
> Damballa mandé tête cabrit,
> C'est sang li mandé!
> Damballa Wèdo oh c'est sang-é!
> Damballa mandé tête cabrit,
> C'est sang li mandé!
> Damballa Wèdo oh c'est sang li mandé!
> Oh assez! [Ex. 60]
>
> Damballa Wèdo, oh, it is blood *é!*
> Damballa asks for the head of the goat,
> It is blood he asks for!
> Damballa Wèdo, oh, it is blood *é!*
> Damballa asks for the head of the goat,
> It is blood he asks for!
> Damballa Wèdo, oh, it is blood he asks for!
> Oh, enough!

For Ogoun they sometimes sing:

> Papa Ogoun qui gain' yon manjé
> Tout monde pas mangé li!
> Enhé enhé, oh! [Ex. 61]
>
> It is Papa Ogoun who has a feast,
> Not everyone may eat it!
> *Enhé enhé*, oh!

But sometimes Ogoun is dissatisfied that there is no feast ready for him, and he complains.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

533 Ogoun é oh moin blessé! — Ogoun é, oh, I am hurt!
534 Ogoun é oh moin blessé! — Ogoun é, oh, I am hurt!
776 A pas m'blessé Ferci, — Now I am hurt, Ferci,
782 M'pas wè sang moin! — I don't see my blood!
794 M'pas wè sang'm Mak Ogoun, — I don't see my blood, Master Ogoun,
Moin pas wè sang moin! — I don't see my blood!
796 M'pas wè sang'm Badagry, — I don't see my blood, Badagry
Moin pas wè sang moin là! [Ex. 62] — I don't see my blood here!

The loa Moundongue, like Damballa, likes goat meat, and it can be cooked in two ways:

Yè yè yè!
Moundongue oh!
Oh Moundongue oh yè yè yè!
Moundongue mangé cabrit bouli,
Moundongue mangé cabrit boucané! [Ex. 63]

Yè yè yè!
Moundongue, oh!
Oh, Moundongue, oh, yè yè yè!
Moundongue eats boiled goat,
Moundongue eats roasted goat!

Or again, the servitors may sing:

Cote pané na ba'ou mangé, oh Ti Moundongue nà!
Cote pané na ba'ou mangé, Moundongue nà! [Ex. 64]

Wherever you are, we give you food, oh, Ti Moundongue there!
Wherever you are, we give you food, Moundongue there!

789 789 The loa Adja also has animal sacrifices and special dishes for his mangé, but sometimes he—and the "horses" he mounts—will eat broken glass:

Oh Adja mangé bounda dèmijon!
Adja vèvè' vèvè'l
Adja mangé bounda dèmijon!
Adja vèvè' vèvè'l [Ex. 65]

Oh, Adja eats the bottom of a bottle!
Adja, old one, old one!
Adja eats the bottom of a bottle!
Adja, old one, old one!

For the loa Ianman Ibo the proper sacrifice is a rooster, and the deity declares:

Nanchan Ibo m'a mangé gros coq oh nanchan Ibo!
Nanchan Ibo m'a mangé gros coq!
Nanchan Ibo m'a mangé gros coq oh nanchan Ibo!
Waille waille waille! [Ex. 66]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 HaBI SV3

Ibo nation, I am going to eat a large cock, oh, Ibo nation!
Ibo nation, I am going to eat a large cock!
Ibo nation, I am going to eat a large cock, oh, Ibo nation!
Wanlè wanlè wanlè!

The Ibo service is often a strictly family affair rather than a broad community ritual. The family replies to the Ibo loa in the following song.

La famille vin' payé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
Vin' payé sang!	Comes to pay blood!
La famille vin' payé sang,	The family comes to pay blood,
Ibo Lanlè volonté! [Ex. 41]	It is Ibo Lanlè's wish!

The Ina Nago frankly tells the people that if they want to come to his house (his shrine, or the hounfor) they will have to pay something for the privilege:

Si nou wè ouéf'm demeuré,	If you see where I live,
Si nou wè ouéf'm demeuré,	If you see where I live,
Fau'm payé bonbon pou' ça!	You have to give cookies for that!
Anago Nago!	Anago Nago!
Vin' wè ouéf'm demeuré! [Ex. 67]	Come see where I live!

The "dead" spirit Gèdé Nimbo, the guardian or master of the cemetery, who often engages in bizarre activities which poke fun at the codes of social behavior, is sometimes regarded as a special protector of children. Precisely because he is overlord of all that has to do with the grave, his good will is sought, particularly in behalf of the young; and in many services of the Nago rites his protection is bought by money gifts:

Gèdé main la'gent,
M'apé ba ou la'gent la'gent,
M'apé ba ou la'gent pou' gè'dé zenfants la yo!
M'apé ba ou la'gent pou' gè'dé zenfants la yo!

Gèdé, take the money,
I will give you money, money,
I will give you money to guard the children!
I will give you money to guard the children!

In the course of the ceremonies when, from time to time, the honored loa of the occasion enters into the head of one of the servitors, the houngan will place in the hands of the mounted person a lighted candle and a pitcher of water. The possessed servitor approaches the sacred center post and spills a little water on the ground for the deity. After certain other rituals, the houngan, or one of his assistants, conducts the mounted "horse" into the hounfor to the altar. In the following song, as the possession comes on, there is a call for a lighted candle.

2: Courlander 9-5 (1937-1953) 1960 8V3 Hahl 8V3

Simbi non wè oh!
Simbi djab non wè!
Oh Simbi non wè oh!
Simbi non wè oh!
Simbi wa lumé chandelle pou' clairé moin! [Ex. 68]

Simbi doesn't see, oh!
Stern Simbi doesn't see!
Oh, Simbi doesn't see, oh!
Simbi doesn't see, oh!
Simbi [says] you will light the candle so I can see!

Some of the songs refer to the dancing of the loa who enter the bodies of the servitors. The deity Loko asks for his hounsi, through whom he will dance:

Coté pitits moin yo,
Mainoin'm nan houmfor, m'ap djoillé!
Na pas Loko,
Coté pitits moin yo! [Ex. 69]

Where are my children,
Take me into the houmfor, I will *djoillé!*
Now, Loko,
Where are my children!

Another deity, who is not expressly named, tells his "leaves in the woods"—that is, his hounsi—that he has danced since he was a child:

Fé nan bois bélé moin!	Leaves in the woods call me!
Oh dépi'm pitit m'ap danse!	Oh, since I was small I have danced!
Fé nan bois bé-é!	Leaves in the woods *bé-é!*
Fé nan bois bélé moin oh!	Leaves in the woods call me, oh!
Oh fé nan bois bélé moin oh!	Oh, leaves in the woods call me, oh!
Dépi'm pitit m'ap danse!	Since I was small I have danced!
Fé nan bois bélé moin! [Ex. 70]	Leaves in the woods call me!

In the following song the loa Macaya Bumba is called upon by the hounsi to hurry up and get on with his dancing.

Macaya Bumba Bumba!	Macaya Bumba Bumba!
Lévé danse!	Get up and dance!
Macaya Bumba!	Macaya Bumba!
Bumba mon cher vini danse! [Ex. 71]	Bumba my dear, come and dance!

A song for the deity Ianman in the course of the Ibo dancing and ritual goes:

Ibo lélé!
Ibo lélé!
Nanchon Ibo yo ava gainyain ann yo Ibo lélé!

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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Ianman con ça, con ça!
Ianman con ça'm dansé Ibo!
Ianman con ça, con ça!
Ianman con ça'm dansé Ibo!
Ianman con ça, con ça!
Ianman *é-wa é-wa é-wa!* [Ex. 72]

Ibo *Hé!*
Ibo *Hé!*
Ibo Nation, what are you doing there, Ibo *Hé!*
Ianman, like that, like that!
Ianman, like that I dance the Ibo!
Ianman, like that, like that!
Ianman, like that I dance the Ibo!
Ianman, like that, like that!
Ianman *é-wa é-wa é-wa!*

Another song containing the same zestful appreciation of dancing is for the loa Kitta. The words "my mother isn't dead" and "my father isn't dead" are simply expressions of good fortune and happiness which embellish the command to do the Kitta steps:

Ai ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!

Manman pas manri ba'm pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!

M'dit pitit ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta!

Papa pas manri ba'm pas Kitta!
Kitta Congo oh ti ga'çon ba'm pas Kitta! [Ex. 73]

Ai, little man, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps!

My mother is not dead, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps!

I say little man, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps!

My father is not dead, give me the Kitta steps!
Kitta Congo, oh, little man, give me the Kitta steps! ¾

A song for the loa Bamburra describes the movements of his dance. Bamburra is symbolized by the crab, and the dance posture with "low hips" is regarded as characteristic of the crab's movements: [535]

Bamburra kap pramlad, tulle lou!
Bamburra ébé pramlad, tulle lou!

¾ [For footnote, see category 116, p. 351. --Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Bambarra is walking, low hips!
Bambarra is going to walk, low hips!

Damballa Wèdo, being a snake deity, "threads" or "winds" his way like a serpent, and this song describes a serpentine course taken by the dancers as Damballa (here identified as a Nago man) arrives:

Filé na filé, Damballa Wèdo vini wè moin!
Filé na filé, Nèg' Nago vini wè'm là! [Ex. 74]

Wind, we wind, Damballa Wèdo comes to see me!
Wind, we wind, the Nago man comes to see me here!

After the dancing has been going on for a long while and the pace is fast, there may be a song of banter, such as the following from the Dahomey rites. The dancers sing *laillé, laillé!*, describing a figure of the dance in which the skirts are swirled, and note that they have worn out the drummers. They even offer to carry on their backs those dancers who are ready to fall by the wayside:

Laillé laillé!
Oh laillé laillé oh vidco'!
Tambouyé bouké!
Tambouyé bouké vidco'!
Laillé laillé oh vidco'!
Laillé laillé tambouyé bouké houngan'm!
M'po'té sou corps moin vié sor!
Tambouyé bouké ça!
Laillé laillé! [Ex. 75]

Laillé laillé!
Oh, *laillé laillé*, oh, old people!
The drummers are tired!
The drummers are tired, old people!
Laillé laillé, oh, old people!
Laillé laillé, the drummers are tired, my *houngan!*
I'll carry you on my back, old sister!
The drummers are tired there!
Laillé laillé!

Interspersed among the songs of the hounfor there are sometimes warnings or admonitions. Usually they are tangent and indirect in statement, and may be from the point of view of the loa or of the houngan. In the following pouin song, which accompanies the ritual of making magic, there is a warning to certain people who will feel the effects of the magic. The ceremony includes, among other things, the dropping of lemons, roots, and leaves by the houngan into his sacred basin or pond. The houngan sings:

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Trois fé trois citron oh!
Trois fé trois citron oh!
Moin dit *rwo*, youn jour ou wa besoin moin!
Trois fé trois racine oh!
Moin dit oui, youn jour ou wa besoin moin!
Gainyain hasuin moin trois racine tombé ladans,
Quand ou wa' blié fau' ramassé chongé! [Ex. 76]

Three leaves, three lemons, oh!
Three leaves, three lemons, oh!
I say *rwo*, one day you are going to need me!
Three leaves, three roots, oh!
I say yes, one day you are going to need me!
I have my pond into which three roots fall,
When you wish to forget you will have to remember!

In another song the houngan warns against ingratitude on the part of persons for whom special magical services have been carried out:

Ouanga ça oh ouanga chaud!
Ouanga ça ouanga chaud!
Lè pou' payé li pinga ou fâché!
Ou mandé'm ouanga lì ou content!
Ou mandé'm ouanga lì ou content!
Lè pou' payé li pinga ou fâché! [Ex. 77]

This ouanga, oh, hot ouanga!
This ouanga, oh, hot ouanga!
When it's time to pay for it don't be angry!
You ask me for the ouanga, you are happy!
You ask me for the ouanga, you are happy!
When it's time to pay for it don't be angry!

Somberly and in metaphor, the deity Kitta Démambré speaks of an unhappy event which occurred in the town of Léogane, and warns those concerned that it must not happen again:

Kitta Démambré, pinga ou fai'm ça 'core oh!
Nan Léogane ti poule-lì mouri nan zé!
Nan Léogane ti poule-lì mouri nan zé oh!
Kitta Démambré, pinga ou fai'm ça encore oh! [Ex. 78]

Kitta Démambré, take care that you don't do that to me again, oh!
In Léogane the little chicken died in its egg!
In Léogane the little chicken died in its egg!
Kitta Démambré, take care that you don't do that to me again!

An unnamed spirit warns that the moment for placation has come and suggests that calling on him after he has gone from the *peristyle* of the houngan Derés would be of no use.

533 539 776 782 787

violently. The hounsi complain that Malt' Grand Chimin treats them as though they were flour being ground in a mill:

> Temp' changé nouvelle allé!
> Bonjou' Papa bonjou' Roi Grand Chimin!
> M'mandé Papa ça'm fail
> Temp' changé nouvelle allé!
> Bonjou' Papa bonjou' Roi Grand Chimin!
> M'mandé Papa ça'm fail
> Papa m'pas maïs moulin!
> Nou dit na bougit moin!
> Papa m'pas maïs moulin!
> Nou dit na bougit moin! [Ex. 85]
>
> Times change, the news goes out!
> Good day, Papa, good day, Roi Grand Chimin!
> I ask you, Papa, what did I do?
> Times change, the news goes out!
> Good day, Papa, good day, Roi Grand Chimin!
> I ask you, Papa, what did I do?
> Papa, I am not corn flour!
> You say you will grind me!
> Papa, I am not corn flour!
> You say you will grind me!

533 539 794 795

When there is sickness within the société there may be songs for the absent ones. Here is a song for an ailing hounsi:

> Moin allé wè li, hounsi malade oh!
> Moin allé wè ça, hounsi malade oh!
> Moin allé wè hougan, hounsi malade oh! [Ex. 86]
>
> I am going to see there, the hounsi is sick, oh!
> I am going to see it, the hounsi is sick, oh!
> I am going to see, hougan, the hounsi is sick, oh!

Again, the members of the société call upon Ogoun, or St. Jacques, to help one of their number who is sick:

> St. Jacques marré cheval li
> Li pas dit personne oh,
> Vèyé li pou' moin!
> Li met gainyain verre,
> Li met gainyain malinn sur dos,
> St. Jacques oh!
> Ba li lavie pou' moin! [Ex. 87]
>
> St. Jacques ties his horse,
> He tells no one, oh,
> Take care of him for me!
> He may have worms,
> He may have sores on his back,
> St. Jacques, oh!
> Protect him for me!

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Ogoun is the dispenser of rum, and in virtually all Ogoun rituals rum is at some time or another in evidence. Sometimes rum is poured into a hot iron pot and bursts into flame. The iron pot is described as Ogoun's

house, which is on fire. But there is no grief, because Ogoun is the master of fire: 796 776 273

Pierre, Pierre Narcisse oh!	Pierre, Pierre Narcisse, oh!
Yago *mouloé*!	Yago *mouloé*!
Caille Ogoun boulé!	Ogoun's house is burning! [539]
Gilbive Ogoun bel Di	Ogoun's distillery is beautiful! [533]
Na consolé! [Ex. 88]	We console ourselves!

Some of the ritual songs that have persisted through the years have lost their explicit meaning but continue to survive because of beautiful melodies and perhaps the strange images they evoke. Such a song is this one to the lwa Atti Daï, from the Dahomey service: 533 539 776 [178]

Atti Daï oh!	Atti Daï, oh!
Yo voyé dit moin	They sent to tell me
Min soléil malade!*	The sun was sick!
Quan'm ti rivé	When I arrived
Moin joind soléil mouri!	I found the sun had died!
Quan'm ti rivé	When I arrived
Moin joind soléil mouri!	I found the sun had died!
C'est regrettant ça	What grief it was
Pou'm enterré soléil! [Ex.89]	For me to bury the sun!

One of the truly lovely songs of the Dahomey rites, both in melody and in lyrics, is the following one to the deity Ezilie. It shows clear evidence of Catholic ritual influence in both its text and its music. Ezilie Fréda, who seems to be speaking most of the lines, is identified with the Virgin Mary, and the tone of this piece casts her more in her Catholic role than her African. The deity is speaking from Yaguza, a place described as being "on the other side of the water." In form the song is atypical in that it has more than one movement and progresses from one idea to another. [177]

Ezilie Nainain oh!
Ezilie Nainain oh!
Ezilie oh, c'est moin Yaguza!

Ezilie n'ap marché n'ap ouvri n'ap parlé pou' tempo y'ap parlé pandin moin!
Ezilie n'ap marché n'ap ouvri pou' tempo y'ap parlé pandin moin!
Ezilie Nainain oh!
Ezilie Fréda oh Nainain oh!
Ezilie Fréda oh, c'est moin Yaguza!

Mandinou ah yo chiro nou ouille li yo vié djoillé oh tout tempo soléil pou lévé!
Mandinou yo pawé yo tombé ch à gbonou y'apé phinnin le tout yo!

---

*Some Haitian informants worded this *soléil* meant "sun." Others felt that this word in the song was really Lolé, a diminutive of *Soleil*, another name for Atti Daï. [114] [115]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[p. 95]

7. In the Mapou Tree: Magic, Demons, and Compacts

It is said by many Haitians that the loa are inclined to shun the mapou tree, for it is the secret rendezvous of countless kinds of demons. On certain nights, they say, you may see a chink of light showing through the trunk of the great mapou, indicating that the demons are in macabre session. 796 778 824

Sometimes it is the baka who meet there to feast and discuss their blood-curdling plans. The baka are described as small and evil creatures, human in form, with red eyes, and legs or arms covered with skin but no flesh. They change into animals at will and may roam the countryside as cats, dogs, or cattle. The baka are notorious sorcerers, and they perform only malevolent acts. They are reputed to "eat people," literally as well as figuratively. Stories are heard of such-and-such a man or child who disappeared and was presumed to have been eaten at a feast in the mapou tree. One man who passed a mapou in the dark of night reported that he heard muffled singing coming from within its trunk, accompanied by the pounding of mortars in which a gruesome feast was being pulverized. But the baka "eat" people also in the sense that they destroy them. It is said sometimes that a person with a withered arm or leg has been "eaten" by a baka. Perhaps he was an innocent victim; possibly he struck a horse or dog which was really a baka; or perhaps he simply brushed against a baka in the market place. Sometimes the baka directs his evil in the most indiscriminate sort of way, "eating" whatever human being he meets. Animals which behave strangely are suspected of being baka in disguise, and they are given wide berth. 776 [732] 796 825

A cow once found within an old brick-covered spring was taken to be a baka because no cow could have passed through the small doorway of the spring. It was assumed that she had entered as a small baka and had then changed to her animal form. The spring went unused for days, until some children reported that the baka had vanished. The cow was

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

house. A round, polished Indian stone is occasionally used as a *garde habitation*. And old people speak of a very powerful charm known as a *gros arrête* which in former times was placed on the trail to protect entire villages or valleys. 789

Still another potent defensive charm is the *pouin*, which is the product of ritual magic within the cult temple. A pouin may be an actual bundle containing a formula of special ingredients; more often, it is invisible, consisting of magical forces unleashed into space by the houngan. There are many ceremonies in the hounfor devoted to the projecting of these magical forces. They are called *cérémonie pouin* or *cérémonie magie* and are dramatized by special cult songs and dances. Sometimes the magie ceremony is woven into a more generalized cult ritual. The powers of the pouin are regarded as wider and more potent than those of the arrête. Pouins are said to protect an individual or a group not only against other magic but also against natural phenomena and accident. A pouin may ward off lightning, for example, or protect one from falling trees or from shipwreck or drowning. But it is not solely defensive magic. It may bring success in fishing, or produce a good crop in one's garden, or aid human fertility. 789 794 796 [777] [842]

Since the crops and the garden are the substance of life, much attention is given to their protection. An enemy may attack a man or his household through garden magic. He may bury a ouanga in the earth, to bring sickness or ruin. He may poison a tree by performing a special rite at its foot, and its fruits will then carry disease or death to the one who eats them. Or he may make a compact with the earth so that it will dry up and refuse to produce for the one who tills it. Against all these malevolent possibilities, as well as against common thieves, the Haitian peasant has many magical and practical resources. Some people are said to employ zombies as watchmen. These fearsome creatures will capture a trespasser and hold him for the owner of the field.[3] Or perhaps the owner will place special arrêtes in his garden. Occasionally a man will protect his fields by planting *piquettes* in the earth. The *piquette* is a piece of sharpened bamboo or hard wood. Its point is dipped into poison, and it is placed in the ground, sharpened end up. An unwary intruder who steps on a piquette may die of his wound. 789 685 [754] [775]

To counteract the *maljok*, or evil eye, a man may procure from a bocor a special shirt made of wide strips of red, white, and blue cloth sewed together. This shirt, called a *maye* or *mayo*, is worn for seven days if the *maljok* is a rather ordinary one. If the evil force is a particularly virulent one, however, the *maye* will be worn as long as twenty-one 754 789 791

[3] [Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy" Journal of Negro History, October, 1940, p. 503. Cf. p. 351, category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

mâché carriage or on papier-mâché horses, make their appearance during Rara as well as on the Day of the Kings (*Les Rois*). 541 536

Among the traditional paraphernalia carried by Rara groups are cocomacaque sticks, cha-cha rattles, metal rattles called *tchancy*, a set of rattles on a tall thin pole (called *jouconjon*), candelabra bearing candles or oil lamps (*lampions*), banners and flags, and such miscellaneous musical instruments as the *grage* scraper, bamboo scraping devices, the *hasse* finger drum, *assots* (beating boards), and various kinds of secular drums. 541 575 534

The general tone of Rara is nonreligious. The dancing is free from the decorous restraints which characterize most religious ritual, and some early observers of the festival were shocked by what they saw. Some of them went so far as to attribute Haiti's dense population to the "licentious activities" and reckless abandon of the spring carnival. The Catholic Church and some political administrators have sporadically sought to suppress Rara, along with Vodoun ritual. And even today in Port-au-Prince the foreign visitor often is urged to watch the elite Mardi Gras with its floats and mulatto queens as a substitute. 541 [535] [795] [656]

Although Rara has an over-all tone of secular abandon, it has links with both Catholic and Vodoun ritual. Good Friday is given over in good measure to miming the story of Jesus and Judas. A perambulating band may carry an effigy of Judas hanging from a pole. Another will burn the Judas effigy, or drag it in the dust as the crowd moves along the road. In another group a man playing the part of Judas may crawl on his hands and knees along the trail, while Jesus' avengers pursue him with long, cracking whips. 541 177 536

Tying in with Vodoun ritual, virtually all Rara drums and other paraphernalia are "dedicated" or "rededicated" before Lent in special houngfor services. And on the last day of Rara, usually late in the night, prayers are said, the loa are called upon, and some of the festive paraphernalia is thrown into a fire to be consumed. 541 796 537 [778]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Raiti SV3

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26. Service for the loa Agwé in a boat at sea. In the center, our houngan holds the sacrificial c flags. Bonsoyo there and the houngan is the hounfogi houngan d'Agwé, a rightfully substituter vessel which will be an adwija. Aka vapor and a drum are at the lower right.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P-112-R]
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23. *Saluting the lua. In the center, with sword, is the houngan, flanked by two houns carrying sequin-studded flags. In the background, left, is the houngan with his sword.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P 112-5]

18. A yam harvest festival. The men are carrying the yams into the peristyle of the houngfor to be cut up and shared with the family ancestors and the loa.

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2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-T]

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29. *The lain de Noël, or Christmas bark. The men are pulverizing leaves in the mortar, to the accompaniment of singing by the houngi and drumming. Later, a "loiase" will be made of the powdered leaves, and all will share it.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1964 SV3 Haiti SV3

[P. 112-U]

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p. A Christmas service near Léogane; ritual "healing" in fire. The two young women are honored possessed by a loa of the Gédé family, probably Jean Zombie. Their materials are stuffed with cotton and their paws are heated in the manner of corpses, in honor of the deity, who is a "dead" loa. In a state of possession they know no be impervious to the intense heat.

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

tempo. The chorus and leader sing responsively, their parts overlapping in traditional African style. The shoulder movements, foot movements, the way the arms are carried, and the typical posture of feet flat on the ground, bent knees, and swayed back—all are of African derivation.

These postures and movements are broad and direct. There are few of the decorative and "fine" movements that one sees in the dances of Indonesia, Cambodia, and India. Where the Javanese lays stress on the pose of the hands and the delicate movements of the fingers, the Haitian dancer is concerned with the position of the arms and the motions of the shoulders. The Indonesian sense of poised balance or suspended movement is absent. In its place there is an attitude of strong frontal assault against natural forces such as gravity, or direct submission to these forces. There is almost always a feeling of solidity and stability in Haitian posture, and of a proximity between the body and the earth, but the total effect is dynamic. Indonesian dancing seems to express a comprehension of the unseen and the supernatural; Haitian dancing seems to express an intimate understanding of nature.

Dancing touches on virtually every aspect of life in Haiti. It plays a part in the supplication of loa, the placation of the dead, and the making of magic; in the consecration of a hounfor, the installation of a houngan, and the initiation of cult members; in planting, harvesting, and house-building. Catholic Church holidays, Nine Nights, baptisms, the election of a new president, and ordinary social gatherings—all are celebrated, in part, at least, by dancing.

Haitian dancing is participative rather than exhibitionistic. It is to join rather than to watch. There are some dances, however, which require special skills, and a few which are highly individualistic. Several types of dancers are described elsewhere in this book. Verbal description cannot do justice to an art such as dancing, of course; but some brief sketches may help to suggest the differences between one Haitian dance and another.

In the Congo Matonne, for example, men and women pair off and dance face to face, making contact occasionally but only briefly. The arms are stretched forward as though to embrace the partner around the waist, but the actual embrace never materializes. The partners dance sometimes as though they are unaware of each other and are simply part of a larger group; then they approach, move as mirrored reproductions, and separate. Loin movement is free, and there is a restrained sexual intensity, though direct sexual implications are not necessarily present. Sometimes the woman holds the hem of her skirt in her hands, while the man holds his jacket open toward his partner.

2: Courlander B-6 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Mousondi. In present-day Trinidad there is a Calinda dance which closely resembles the Mousondi; Puerto Rico has its Bomba Calindán; and under another name the "battle dance" survives among Negro communities in Surinam. The counterpart of the Calinda in Brazil is the Capoeira, for which musical accompaniment is provided by African-style "belly harps" (musical bows with gourd resonators) called *berimbau*. The tradition lingers on in Haiti in modern mock prize-fighting dances sometimes performed in Rara season. 171 535 [178]

The stick dance (*Battonie*) of the Haitian carnival season, mentioned in chapter 8, is of more than passing interest for the reason that almost identical dances have been reported from some areas of West Africa. In the Haitian dance (see fig. 73) the baton wielders, all males, for unexplained reasons are attired in women's clothing. A photograph made in 1958 of a baton dance among the Ewe people of Togoland depicts a scene scarcely distinguishable from a Haitian Rara performance, and it is noteworthy that its all-male cast is in women's dress.[7]

In addition, there remain a number of fragments of dances of the past. In religious ritual, on rare occasions, one may see animal dances in which the performers mimic animal movements, holding in their hands long sticks to simulate front legs. This type of dance has been reported frequently in West Africa, particularly in connection with totemic rituals.

There is a dance in the Arada ritual in which the loa Legba is invoked. A hounsi—usually a man—comes onto the dance court wearing a kind of cane-crutch called the *baton* Legba, or Legba stick. The baton is about the length of a cane, with a long, grotesquely twisted "handle" that fits under the crotch of the legs. The dancer wraps one leg around the stick and walks as though he has only one foot. In the dance, he spins around on the stick, leaps, and pirouettes. Identification of the stick as well as the dance with Legba, and its position between the legs, seem clearly to relate it to the phallic sticks used in dances for Legba in Dahomey. 796 794 535 171

Among the secular exhibitionistic dances of Haiti, there is one in which a man stands on his head and goes through erotic motions to the accompaniment of drums. 535 [831]

In addition to the almost countless dances of African origin or inspiration, there is the ever-popular Meringue, a European-type social dance which is known in many forms. Haitian connoisseurs of this dance believe there are three main forms of the Meringue: the "Meringue de Concert," in which the rhythm is slow and "caressing"; the "dance Meringue," in which the rhythm is quasi-fast and very gay; and the "Meringue Coundjaille," in which the rhythm is very fast. The last [171]

7 [United Nations Photograph no. 67065. Cf p 352, category 116. -- Analyst]

534 322 [412] The craft of drum making is a very skilled one, but the tools are simple: chisels, machetes, and fire. The core of the log is removed by burning and gouging, and the outside is shaped with a machete, or sometimes a hachet. The wood is selected and processed carefully. Firing of the core of the log depends a good deal on how dry the wood is, for the wood must burn slowly. It is believed that wood cut at the right stage of growth and at the right phase of the moon is resistant to the [824] ever-present powder-post beetles. Mahogany was once favored because it was durable and beetle resistant, even though it was heavy. But in recent decades mahogany has become scarce, and modern drums are made of lighter woods.

534 178 [531] 071 Drums made in the nineteenth century not only conformed to the patterns of certain West African prototypes but were also carved and decorated. Some of these old drums are still to be seen, but there are not many left. An ancient carved assotor drum (previously cited) has fortunately been preserved by the Bureau d'Ethnologie. But between the ravages of the powder-post beetles, age, and the periodic orgies of drum burning by the church and misguided public officials, most of these [648] ancient works of art have long since disappeared. During the American occupation of Haiti—from World War I to 1932—American military personnel also contributed to the mania for drum burning. And as late as 1941 there was a massive, cleric-inspired drive to wipe out these instruments as remnants of *savage* elements in Haitian life.

534 178 531 The effect of this war against the drum was only to improve the business of the professional drum maker. Drums had become expendable, hence they were made simpler. The carved decorations disappeared. Paint was substituted, and less attention was given to detail. The important thing was to produce a good functional instrument. But the creative instincts of the drum makers sometimes still take over, and many of the modern drums are beautifully proportioned, with delicate geometric patterns carved around the base, or foot. Among certain categories of drums the painted decorations consist solely of the name of the loa to whom the instruments have been dedicated—St. Jacques perhaps, or Papa Pierre, or Ézilie.

534 191 784 796 534 Drums differ in design according to the use for which they are intended. The Arada or Vodoun drums are used primarily in connection with the dances and rituals of the Vodoun cult—the cult built around the gods and rites of Arada and Yoruba theology. They resemble closely drums which are used today in Dahomey, Nigeria, and Togoland. They usually come in sets of three. The largest, the *manman* (also called *hounsor* or *hountogri*), may be three to four feet high. The middle-sized drum, or *second* (also called *grondé* or *moyen*), is about two feet

[Text continues on p. 193]

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high. The smallest—the *bula*, or *bèbé* (sometimes called *dundun*)—is 534
about eighteen or twenty inches high. They are all called sometimes by the Yoruba name *bata*, originally applied to a two-headed instrument.

Arada drumheads are of cowhide, held in place by hardwood pegs set into the bodies of the drums at an angle. The drums are tuned by [171]
driving in or loosening the pegs. Even the slitting of the skins where the pegs pass through them is African in pattern. In Cuba the drums of the Arada (there called Arara) cult are made in precisely the same way, though they are used in batteries of four rather than three.

In a variation of the peg type of fastening, the skin is attached to a 184
hoop, which, in turn, is held in place by ropes laced to the pegs. Each 534
drum maker has his own preference as to the angle and size of the pegs, the proportions of the drums, and the wood from which they are made. One drum maker near Léogane claimed to be able to identify the region from which a drum came by examination of the pegs and the carvings around the base.

The small Arada drum, the *bula*, is usually "whipped" with two long 534
thin sticks to provide a sharp and penetrating sound. The middle-sized 171
drum is played with one bare hand and a stick. The stick may be straight or bowed. The bowed drumstick is known as an *egida*, the name used for the same type of stick in Dahomey.[1] On infrequent occasions the *mayew* drum is played with two sticks—one straight and one bowed. The large drum, the *mawman*, is played by the most accomplished of the drummers in the orchestra. He plays with one bare hand and one stick, which may be of various forms. It may be straight, have a hook-shaped head, or be mallet-shaped; or it may be the grotesquely twisted stick known as a *baguette Guinée*. All these forms are known in Dahomey and elsewhere in West Africa.

The three Haitian Arada drums, supplemented by an African-style 171
bell known as an *ogan* and small gourd rattles (cha-chas), form the 178
standard orchestra for most dances of the Vodoun cult. The *ogan*—the 534
forged iron bell with an external striker—has all but disappeared in 796
recent years, along with the institution of the village forge. In its place one may see any kind of metallic object, such as a hoe blade, a link of chain, or a length of pipe, all of which are referred to by the old name *ogan*. In Cuba the Arada cult preserves the bell, both in single and double form, under the same name. The word *ogan* probably derives from the Yoruba term for this instrument, *eganran*.

Playing in concert, the three Arada drums produce a range of tones, 533
and the player of the *mawman*—the chief of orchestra—adds to the 534
effect by frequently striking his stick against the side of the drum above

[1] [Herskovits and Herskovits, Suriname Folk-Lore, p. 89. The stick is also known in Suriname. Cf. p. 353, Category 116. -- Analyst]

534 533 the pegs. High notes are achieved by striking the drumhead near the rim, and low notes near the center.

534 516 The drummers usually sit together on a bench or in chairs at one side of the dance court. The larger and middle drums are slightly tipped to keep their "mouths" open; the *bula* stands squarely on its base and is therefore somewhat muted. The player of the *manman* often drums in a standing position, bracing the instrument by means of a cord around his thigh.

534 796 Another drum associated with the Arada rites is the assotor. This drum is usually about six feet high, and may be from two to two and a half feet in diameter. It is played in an upright position, and two or three small "windows" near the base permit the sound to emerge. [794] This big drum is used only for the Assotor service, at which the Dahomey "nation" plays host to the loa of all the various rites. Usually there is only a single drummer, who plays while standing on a bench or raised platform; but on occasion, two or even three drummers play simultaneously on the single drumhead.

534 171 It is interesting to note in passing that most of the Vodoun drums have Dahomean names and are of Dahomean design, despite the fact that Yoruban religious motifs have survived. The Yoruban double-headed *bata* drum, used in Nigeria for invocation of the principal deities, appears to have survived in decadent form on the island of La Gonave, where it is known as *pongwé*. Curiously, it is played not like the Yoruban *bata* (one hand on each head) but like another Yoruban instrument, 534 the *dundun*, or pressure drum. The instrument is held under one arm and played only on the forward head. Significantly enough, this drum [794] is said to be used only for Nago (Yoruba) rites. Another drum reserved [796] for Nago services is found in the region of Léogane. It resembles the Arada drum in every respect except that it stands on three carved legs.

Drums associated with the services of the Congo "nation" are distinctly different from those found in Vodoun ritual. No drumsticks are used, and the heads are of goatskin rather than cowhide and are held in place by a system of cords and hoops. The Congo drum seen today stands about three feet high; old people say that within their memory there was a variety of Congo drum as tall as a man. Unlike the Arada [531] drum, the Congo drum usually has no carved or painted decoration. For the "pure" Congo rites, two of these instruments, accompanied by gourd or metal rattles of various kinds, constitutes an orchestra. One typically Congo rattling device, called *mayoyo*, consists of three large gourds containing pebbles, on the top of a long pole.

A variant of the Congo drum is used for Pétro rites. It is similar

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Except for the "aperture for the escape of the sound," the Boggo instrument is identical with the Haitian earth bow. The resemblance of the instrument to a spring snare strongly suggests that it may have been developed from some such device for catching game. This possibility is strengthened by the use of the earth bow among certain of the Bambarra hunters of the French Sudan as a game lure, the music played upon it being thought to have magical properties to attract animals to the region of the hunt.[9] A "portable" type of spring snare used among the Ashanti of Ghana is strikingly similar in form to the Haitian "portable" earth bow (see fig. 80).[Qu]

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This instrument has survived not only in Haiti but in the United States as well. The washtub device that is an important part of American Negro folk music is a clear development of the earth bow. The washtub is inverted and a cord is attached to the tin bottom. The other end of the cord is fastened to a stick which is braced against the lip of the bottom side of the tub. The stick and the cord are manipulated precisely like the Haitian and African instruments. There is implicit evidence that the role of the washtub has been taken over in modern jazz orchestras by the double-bass fiddle.

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Another device of African provenience is the Haitian *marimba* (also called *malimba*, *manimba*, and *marimbula*). It consists of a wooden box upon which a series of metal strips is mounted in such a way that they may be plucked with the fingers. In the face of the box, directly behind the keys, there is an aperture to permit the escape of the sound. The number of keys varies from three to seven or more, though some of them may produce duplicate tones. The instrument is usually about the size of a soap box. The musician sits upon it, facing the same way as the keyboard, and plays with his hands between his knees. The marimba is used for carnival music and for dances of the secular types, frequently in combination with a guitar, claves, and a cha-cha. It is a West Indian development of the small African *m'bila* or *sansa*, or "thumb piano." Several examples of the smaller instruments played with the thumbs have been found elsewhere in the West Indies, notably in Cuba,[10] and large forms of the sansa have been reported in recent years in Africa.

Among the instruments more or less restricted to religious service are whistles and small hand bells, which are used for invoking and saluting the loa and the dead. *Canaries* (large clay water vessels) also enter into ritual use. They are sung into, tapped with sticks, and on some occasions are covered with goatskin heads and played like a drum.

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[Qu] [Fig 80 appears on p. 112-55. -- Analyst]
[9] [Informant: Sobihas Tore, Bamako. Cf. p. 354, [115] category 116. -- Analyst]
[10] [See Courlander, Op. Cit., p. 239. Cf. p. 354 cat. 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1950) 1960 893.Haiti 893

CHAPTER 5: *Services for the Loa and the Family Ancestors* (*pp. 41–74*)

[1]Note that the houngan and the bokor are performing services normally performed by the *petit serviteur*.

[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 165.

[3]Parsons, *Spirit Cult in Haiti*.

[4]Account given by Jean Revel Pierre.

[5]Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana.

[6]Account given by Yolanda Salnavil. A. W. Cardinall notes in his book *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 69): "Twins are in most cases treated with respect. Before a man does [illegible] one for a course he must and invariably does sacrifice to its spirit and apologizes for the harm he is about to do it."

[7]The *rite of rafraîchi* also is conducted periodically for a *mort* after the original *lavé* ceremony. The purpose is to "refresh" the loa and make him content with his residence in the head of the devotee.

[8]Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, p. 235.

[9]It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water even in certain Negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form.

[10]Odette Mennesson Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Vaudoun Loa," in Appendix A of Deren, *Divine Horsemen*, p. 264.

CHAPTER 6: *Songs of the Peristyle* (*pp. 75–94*)

[1]This theme is further commented on in chap. 13. Compare with the following excerpt from a Surinam song reported by Herskovits in *Surinaamse Folk-Lore* (p. 689):

I have no mother there,
I have no father there,
I have no sister there,
I haven't got anybody there.

CHAPTER 7: *In the Mapou Tree: Magic, Demons, and Conjure* (*pp. 95–104*)

[1]Simpson, "Haitian Magic," *Social Forces*, October, 1940, p. 87.

[2]Note the coincidence of the term *grigris* or *grigri* as used in the United States, where it has the same meaning as *mojo*, or "voodoo" charm.

[3]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 303.

[4]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, p. 243.

CHAPTER 8: *Mardi Gras and Rara: Jugglers, Maypoles, and Kings* (*pp. 105–109*)

[1]Aubin, *En Haïti*, p. 42.

[2]Marionettes of this kind have been observed in both East and West Africa and are well known in the region of Senegal. I saw a phallic marionette, virtually identical with the Haitian version, in the neighborhood of Khartoum, Sudan.

CHAPTER 9: *Land and Work* (*pp. 110–121*)

[1]Franklin, *The Present State of Haiti*, p. 362.

[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 300 ff., describes Dahomean polygamous marriage in its various forms. Although Dahomean plural marriage is complex in terms of gifts, obligations, and

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The men seldom or never go to mass, except on the days particularly set apart by the government as public fêtes. On these occasions the president and all the officers of Hayti go in procession, but the idea of devotion, I believe, never enters their contemplation. Such days are merely set aside for celebrating some particular event, which it is wished should be handed down to posterity. These occasions present only the external symbol of religion, the whole people being either ignorant or careless of its real character. Their manner and appearance during the celebration of the mass shew that they have no inward feelings of piety or devotion.[13]

Catholicism in Haiti, then, had fallen on evil days; Protestantism, on the other hand, was unable to gain any foothold. Boyer, indifferent to all religion, did not even care to tolerate Wesleyan missionaries as Pétion had done, for when certain of them arrived and were met with "persecution and stoning by a mob," it required persuasion to gain his assent to freeing those the police had taken into custody. He forbade any further meetings of Wesleyans, on the ground that they stirred up riots. At the close of Boyer's administration it was estimated that there were only about 1,200 Protestants in the country, mostly Methodists and Baptists, and these primarily Negroes who had come from the United States to settle in the republic.

Although the Haitian government probably derived a certain satisfaction from controlling a state Church, Boyer was impelled both by circumstance and his own temperament to obtain the approval of the Holy See. His own tepid spiritual zeal had nothing to do with the case; Haitian public order would benefit by a superior group of priests, and Haitian prestige would rise, he thought, with recognition by Rome. Having already in 1826 settled the conflict between France and Haiti in the political sphere, Boyer tried assiduously to end the schism from Rome. His propositions were examined with benevolence by the Pope, who conferred upon the primate of the Indies, archbishop of Santo Domingo, the title of archbishop of Haiti. This personage, however, was a Spaniard already established in the comfortable city of Santo Domingo amidst people of his own nationality. He could not be persuaded to move to Port-au-Prince. The failure of Boyer's efforts is due more to this ecclesiastic than to uncoöperativeness on the part of Rome. From 1834 to 1860 the Court of Rome had official representatives in Haiti, but they cannot have been very effective men, for conditions in

13. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 394–395.

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Any casual attempt to assess the importance of religion

in the daily lives of the people is sure to prove erroneous, for in no phase of life are outward appearances so deceptive. What the unsophisticated peasant believes can be ascertained on the whole more accurately than the beliefs of the intelligent élite. To the foreign observer, Roman Catholicism seems to play as large and as small a part in the thinking of the Haitian upper classes as among members of upper-class French society. Outwardly, the élite are professing Catholics or not religious at all. It is considered proper to attend Mass and otherwise to pay respect to religious forms; actually one loses nothing in prestige if he is not a practicing Christian. Society seems to exert no pressure in the matter. Only if a member of the upper class fears for the security of his social position, or knows that rumors are afloat of his addiction to Vodun, does he feel impelled to become assiduous in his open attentions to the Church.

The national sensitiveness to skin color is apparent in the priestly complexions. Since the old tradition lingers that "baptism by a black will not stick," not even the peasants welcome native Catholic priests. The God and saints of Christianity need the intercession of white men, just as the Vodun spirits need that of natives. In the early days peasants stoned Negro priests who tried to administer the Catholic sacraments. Such an attitude toward a black clergy falls in well with the preferences of the élite. If there were Haitian priests, they would probably be drawn from the élite class since this is the educated group; but it might happen that some devout peasant would rise to the priesthood and so have the care of a parish including élite—a contingency unthinkable to the aristocrat. Snobbishness, indeed, affects the usefulness of the town priests, for the élite members of the congregation insist on having sermons in French, a language which only the small minority understand, rather than in the Créole which is the speech of everyone, intelligible to gentry and humble alike. The Mass is consequently celebrated for the people at large in unknown tongues, Latin for the ritual, French for the sermon; the benefit they derive from it must be wholly from their inner communion stimulated by the actions of the service. The town priests are often willing enough to accede to élite pressure in the matter of language, for they know French as their mother tongue and would have to learn Créole; although some of the more devoted priests become adept in native speech, using it in their personal

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ministry and in sermons in country chapels.[17] For the élite, well groomed, sitting with his missal in a seat bearing his name plate, the psychic elation to be derived from hearing a sermon preached in a language which the rabble seated around him does not know must be very great—and very Christian.

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17. I have heard a sermon in the chapel at fashionable Kenscoff preached in Créole, with the President of the republic, himself a master—and a politically astute user—of Créole in the congregation. Likewise, I have met priests who, although they have lived in the country for a generation, have never learned the tongue used by ninety-five out of a hundred of their parishioners all the time, and by a hundred per cent of them some of the time.

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175 567 along that river. Dahomey was the name of a powerful kingdom under a political administration which embraced a fair amount of interchange of ideas and similarity of social institutions, including religion.

175 567 178 Discretion made the planters separate slaves who knew each other, in order to minimize opportunities for revolt among them. This policy, although it prevented the rapid growth of "slave" customs, at the same time dispersed Dahomeans all over the colony; beliefs and practices held in common among the slaves were likely to take on a Dahomean cast. Since their work was directed, their freedom of movement limited, and their family life broken up, there was practically no opportunity for the outcropping of *any* African ideas relating to economic life, government, property, education, or 175 178 marriage. The one sphere in which it was possible for Old World beliefs to continue was the religious. No slave dealer could penetrate 796 the minds of his workers or silence their folk tales and folk songs in 771 535 the evening when work was done; even the strictest plantation owners allowed dances in the slave quarters on Saturday nights and Sunday. It is the dance, a vital part of Dahomean religion, which seems to have formed the nucleus around which the diverse beliefs of African tribesmen grouped themselves, for it was a form of action which need not involve anything more than amusement or emotional release, if the participant were not religiously inclined. In the beginning, as Goethe observes, was the Act. To this simple Act of dancing, the Word, with thought behind it, could easily be added later. Practically all African tribesmen danced; and the numerous Dahomeans had a dance which was ostensibly for diversion but could be turned to a religious purpose as well.

771 171 174 Here, then, was the skeleton of a slave religion. Although every single African tribe had its own beliefs and ritual, each (so far as we know) had common elements with every other one. For example, all slaves, whether Senegalese or Angolese, believed in a multiplicity of spiritual beings, some of whom controlled the aspects of nature—lightning and storms, the sea, the sky. They thought that disease and other ill fortune came from spirits who must be placated in order to win back health and well-being. All felt that the normal course of events could be altered by magical spells, formulae, or charms; that one could bring misfortune to an enemy, luck to oneself, or ward off otherwise inevitable fate. Most of them had been accustomed to

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learn the properties of plants, both for healing and for poison. Except for the belief in spiritual beings, this folk knowledge would hardly have been classed as religious, for it was useful in every phase of daily life; the classification is that of the anthropologist, not of the simple black. 971 171 174

If Dahomean beliefs prevailed over others of African origin, it was chiefly because of the numerical preponderance of Dahomeans in the colony, together with the popularity of their religious dances. The Dahomean spirits or gods were Vodun; the dance in which the worshiper sought the inspiration of the spirits was a Vodun dance. Like all but the highly organized religions, this one recognized the validity of other beliefs. Its practitioners were not bigots. No hierarchy existed to keep out new accretions. Imperceptibly these were added to the original basis form: here an Arada spirit, there a Congolese prayer, and in many instances a Catholic saint, until the composite Vodun religion began to take shape. [116] [196] [535]

There is no evidence that during colonial times Vodun was ever considered important by the white ruling class—certainly not as a faith. To most planters the word was the name for a vigorous dance. Judging from Moreau de Saint-Méry's description it was held openly enough, at times being witnessed by the whites as a sort of nocturnal diversion. Moreau knew, as did other whites, that there were "superstitious beliefs" connected with it, yet the offhand use of the word "superstition" was indication enough that the beliefs were not regarded as important. We have seen, however, what profitable use the slaves were able to make of the apparent innocence of their dances. When the idea of revolt began to germinate among them, gathering on each plantation at least once a week they had ample opportunity to hatch their plans. It is known that the campaign for revolt was developed partly under the stimulus of the Negro Boukman, a *houngan* or priest of Vodun. By means of drumbeats, which to the whites merely pounded out the rhythm for dancing but had for centuries been a means of communication at long distance in parts of West Africa, that ripening plot was telegraphed from one plantation to another. Even more important, perhaps, was the unity of feeling made possible, despite all incoherence of tradition and language, by the Vodun background. 174 535 796 [92] [114] 175 669 567 202 793 771

The revolt of half a million slaves was a success. This fact has been rather too calmly accepted by historians of Saint-Domingue, who 114 175 669 666

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Vodun, then, was both widespread and powerful enough to be turned to most effective ends in 1791. Contemporary accounts of it still saw it as a meeting ground of superstitions. The French naturalist, Descourtilz, for example, was primarily struck by the use of the occult in connection with Vodun; he especially describes a woman who, under the seizure of her god, took a live coal in her hand without being burnt; a husband who by the use of magic struck his inconstant wife with a languorous malady, effective for half a year; and the knowledge of poison which was combined with the practice of magic. He mentions but one of the Vodun gods by name but implies the existence of many others.[10]

Madiou, Haiti's first historian, likewise always spoke of Vodun as a savage survival; he says of a native general, "Lamour Dérance, plunged in gross errors, put his faith in *sorcery*, in the prophecy of *papas*, or priests of *African fetishism*."[11] In his scornful distaste for the vulgar he clearly indicated by his own italics some conspicuous elements of the developing religion: magic, the use of fetishes, and a Vodun priesthood. His illustration of Dérance's error was his making soldiers believe that bullets could not wound them:

> When he marched to combat he was preceded by bands of Congos, Aradas, Ibos, Nabos, Mandinguas, Haoussas, who threw themselves against the French battalions with a prodigious intrepidity, crying that the bullets were but dust. But this courage which *superstition* fed was shattered against the ramparts of . . . the Europeans' square formations.

It is noteworthy that the first three black rulers set themselves against Vodun because of its potentialities for sedition. The plots to overthrow the old régime had come to fruition at apparently innocent Vodun dances. Although the ingenuous aspect of the dance gathering had deceived the white masters, Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe knew the meaning of the assemblies. All three had to drive their people hard and knew that resentment would be an inevitable consequence; it must not have an opportunity to burgeon at nightly gatherings. Toussaint was the strictest of the three, for he forbade all dances and nocturnal assemblage.[12] The other two singled

10. M. E. Descourtilz, *Voyages d'un naturaliste en Haïti, 1799–1803* (Paris, 1935 ed.), pp. 116–118.
11. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, p. 33.
12. In an order of January 4, 1800.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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The other two singled

175 out Vodun dances for their bans, permitting the purely social dances.
648 On the eve of the first anniversary of independence, "as soon as
794 retreat was sounded, African dances of all kinds began in the tents
796 and open fields; the Vaudoux dance alone was proscribed; the noise
671 of the drums did not quiet down until morning."[13] Dessalines was
659 more suspicious of Vodun than the other two for, being a superstitious man himself, he feared that some of his growing number of
798 enemies might use sorcery upon him; consequently whenever his
771 active police reported meetings of Vodun worshipers he had the offenders shot if they could be caught. Practically all Haitians knew how to distinguish the rhythms of Vodun drumbeats from those of other dances, so that it was not particularly difficult to track down the meeting places. What Christophe really believed, no one could say. He paid outward homage to Roman Catholicism, of course, but rumor persisted of his great faith in magic and the power of African fetishes.[14]

175 The élite mulatto presidents, Pétion and Boyer, did not deign to
643 dignify Vodun by prohibiting it. No revelation of their attitude
794 toward it survives, but we may note that no law of their thirty-six-
659 year tenure of the presidency mentions it. From their other opinions
798 one concludes that they regarded it as merely another of the people's innocent and harmless aberrations. Not one of the foreigners whose
796 curiosity about the Negro republic led them to report on Haitian
771 life of this period gives an intelligent account of Vodun as it then
114 was. Macaulay, writing in 1831, for example, describes the annual celebration at the source of Grande Rivière de l'Artibonite; he mentions the festive dances (not Vodun) and singing, then says: "Morning ceremonies consisted of a solemn sacrifice at which the blood of victims immolated for the feast were offered, and libations of wine were poured on the spring."[15] This was clearly a Vodun sacrifice. Brown, in 1837, writes as a religious man:

> No race is, more than the African, given to religious feelings, though these being but mere sensations entirely independent of thought and reason, manifest themselves in a display of idle fooleries, or dark and hideous terrors of the imagination. They intermix the legitimate ritual of the Catholic faith with the mysterious adoration paid to their national Fetishes, and the

13. Madiou, *op. cit.*, III, 186.
14. See Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti*, pp. 90-91.
15. Zachary Macaulay, *Haïti* (Paris, 1835), pp. 90-91.

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African obi and the Catholic priest both come in for a share of their respect and homage.[16]

This is the usual tone of the comment on native religion, as when Candler in 1842 speaks of funerals in country places "with the *rites of heathenism*, such as are practised to this day in the heart of Africa."[17] Of these conventional criticisms of Vodun, one of the more thoughtful is Bonneau's:

The shocking phantasmagorias of fetishism paralyzed the intellectual development of the African race for six thousand years; superstition is in some sort inherent in its nature. The [Haitian] people need to break with their past. Catholicism has been prodigiously patient and courageous, but it does not possess the necessary corrective for extirpating the fetishism which immobilizes the black population. The Catholic Church, by fractioning the religious sentiment, by forcing thought to diffuse itself in order to take in a thousand secondary details, by imposing on the people practices without number which tend to materialize the cult, by placing as intermediaries between God and men a multitude of saints and genies, encourages and fortifies the tendencies, even the most deplorable ones, of the black race, whose intellect has been shrouded in mist for centuries precisely because it can grasp only with difficulty the relationships between things and ideas, tending rather to lose itself in details than to rise to general and synthetic conceptions.[18]

If the fixing of periods has any clarifying value, one might set the stages of the development of Vodun as follows:

1730–1790, its Emergence, when the importation of slaves was steadily increasing, with a gradual ascendancy of Dahomean ideas;

1790–1800, its practical Testing in the fires of revolt when, out of apparent innocence and enforced secrecy, Vodun effectively united the slaves in their action for freedom;

1800–1815, its Suppression under the black rulers;

1815–1850, its quiet Diffusion to all the people and assumption of the form it now exhibits.

The middle of the nineteenth century was the turning point. Before then it had been so to speak in gestation; under Soulouque, then ruling, it publicly emerged. Until the mid-century élite people had

16. Dr. J. Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo*, II, 273.
17. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, p. 166.
18. A. Bonneau, *Haïti: ses progrès—son avenir*, pp. 24–25.

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for Vodun theology, nor any established order for the service, 771
variety is one of its chief characteristics. Impossible as it is to cite a definitive list of Vodun beliefs, those most generally held might be combined into a Creed, which would run about as follows:

I believe in scores of gods and spirits, guardians of earth and sky, and of all things visible and invisible;

I believe that all these vodun (who are called "loa" or "mysteres") are potent, although less majestic than *le bon Dieu* of the Christians; that some of them came with our ancestors from our former home in Africa, while others we have learned about in our Haitian fatherland; that these loa have power to possess us, their worshipers, informing us by inspiration of their needs and desires, which we must faithfully satisfy; that these loa, like us, are capable of good and evil, gentleness and anger, mercy and revenge;

I believe in the efficacy of sacrifice; in the pleasures of living; in respect due to twins; in the careful cult of the dead, who may return to our abodes; in the spiritual causation of diseases and misfortune; in the dance through which we may be "mounted" by our loa; in the possibility of interfering with the normal flow of events by means of magic; in the efficacy of charms and spells; and in the Holy Catholic Church.

Those who conceive of religion in terms of a rigid orthodoxy, 771
monotheism, sin, a moral law, eternal rewards or punishments, will 177
not understand Haitian Vodun. It is as hospitable to new spiritual 776
conceptions as any faith could be, requiring only that the additions be applicable to life as it is lived in the Haitian hills and valleys, and that they adapt their shape and terminology to the native penchant. Monotheism is rarely the practical belief of simple people, but rather of prophets and scholars. It is easy enough to believe in an all-powerful god but much more difficult to arrive at a conception of a unique God. In Dahomey the people had reached some such stage of belief in omnipotence but not of uniqueness. When later, in slavery, transplanted Africans heard the Catholic doctrine of a god who ruled creation by the fiat of his conquering will, they assimilated the idea with a significant change: the Christian God became the Great Master of the other gods. The slaves very simply placed Him at the head of their pantheon. Even today, the first words of a Vodun [796]
service are the request for permission from the Great Master to go on 114
with the service. As Dorsainvil says: 178

This term chosen to designate the supreme God was imposed on them by 776
their environment. The colonist, the master, incarnated for the slave the

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pension, but in the case of religion the nature of our worship interposes barriers between us and the manifestation of feeling. Almost every denomination which has risen to prominence, no matter how anti-ritualistic in its beginnings, has grown more formally proper as it moved from simple meeting-houses to churches, or as it began to draw upon the middle and upper classes for its clientele, if its origin was humble. Not many Americans would care to recall the fact that their own ancestors rolled upon the ground in religious frenzy or were seized with uncontrollable fits of jerking and shouting when "the spirit of the Lord" was upon them; yet such emotional displays were a regular feature of camp meeting revival services in the Ohio Valley frontier region and elsewhere. 787

In order even vaguely to apprehend Vodun possession, one must disburden one's mind of all notions of formalism, for although the priest as officiant has his place in the service, there is direct participation of the people in every Vodun service and dance. The religion is theirs, not the priests'. One must forego the idea of self-restraint, adopting rather the view that the chief end of worship is to establish direct communication with the gods. One must forget the belief that to lose consciousness, roll one's eyes, scream, and speak in a strange voice are signs of mental derangement, and regard all these abnormalities as very desirable achievements in religious life, symptoms to be contemplated with satisfaction by friends and family. A person possessed has no retrospective feeling of shame. Quite the contrary: he has won through to new peace and security, for a god has spoken through his mouth, revealing divine will. 787 796

Vodun possession is therefore something more than the elation of the Holy Roller, and less than the mystical exaltation of the enraptured saints, yet partaking of elements of both. The descending afflatus is more discriminate than in a Holy Roller service, for rarely is more than one out of five worshipers seized by the god; inversely, it is more general than the ecstasy of a saint, whose experience is partly notable because it is rare. Actually, there is in civilized experience no precise parallel to Vodun possession, which runs the gamut of emotions from gay fun to mordant depression. To emphasize the uniqueness of the Haitian variety of possession, it must be noted that it occurs according to definitely understood rules and clearly defined circumstances. If a worshiper in his enthusiasm should let himself be seized "out of turn," so to speak, he would be instantly called to order. 787

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proper control, as they should be. If an unwanted god persists in mounting an individual, the pertinacious one is commanded to go away or the victim himself is sent home until he can recover his own personality. Many people strongly resist possession when it is imminent. Judged by our own standards, possession of the Vodun variety could certainly not be called normal; judged by Haitian standards, however, it would be absurd to call abnormal an experience known and approved by the majority of the community.[29]

Possession occurs either at the service or at the dance. Here again the white man has nothing in his religious experience to enable him to comprehend the pattern of Haitian religion. The service corresponds nearly enough to the Catholic Mass or to more realistic sacrifices in ancient Jewish rites, but neither of these faiths nor any other the white man knows well has dancing for religion's sake. In Vodun, however, the dance is of equal importance with the service.

In the tiny *hounfort* (also spelled *houmfort*) of the priest, which is little more than a hut with earthen floor, the service begins. To call this structure a temple is at once to make it too imposing and to confuse the white man in his attempt to understand the scene; it is no more of a temple than was a tiny primitive early Christian church. Most houmforts in Haiti would be crowded if twenty people were present. At one end is an altar, more or less resembling the high altar in a Catholic chapel; on it are placed a crucifix, flowers, candles, fruit and food, wine, lithographs of Catholic saints, and whatever other objects, Catholic or Vodun, local practice may dictate and individual taste prefer. Upon the floor are traced formal cabalistic patterns, generally in corn meal, both to fend off evil influences and as required by the particular loa. The officiants may be male or female or both. To the service ordinarily come only the members of the family and their specifically invited guests; neighbors and friends will attend the subsequent dance.

A student of Catholicism would find in the first part of the service a great deal of ritual borrowed from the Church. The blessing, genuflections, making the sign of the cross, responses, and the like, all clearly show a Catholic background which accords well with certain objects upon the altar. Imperceptibly the strictly Vodun element obtrudes itself. The loa are asked whether they will accept

29. The statement of the two sides of this controversy may be found in Dorsainvil, *op. cit.*, throughout; and in Herskovits, *op. cit.*, particularly pp. 146–147.

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the sacrifices; food is set before the sacrificial animal, and if this food is eaten by the creature or creatures, it is known that the loa is satisfied. Then comes the actual sacrifice of the animal, a slaying neither ostentatious nor dramatic, since often it does not occur in the hounfort itself. It is at this juncture that possession is looked for. The loa, by seizing one or more of his devotees—or, if possession fails, by the divination of the priest—makes known his desires. The demands of the loa are likely to be modest: a candle, a special article of food, certain specific attentions. Occasionally he insists upon an impressive sacrifice. Whatever his desires, they must be gratified or else the loa will mildly harass the family; long refusal will produce anger and full vengeance. If the god is Rada, his sacrifice will be white, red, or vari-colored; if he is Pétro, he will wish black or gray animals—chickens, turkeys, goats, bullocks.

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The service itself, then, is entirely religious in nature, consisting wholly of ceremonies and rituals conducted by officiating priests, with the purpose of restraining or pacifying gods who may have been pursuing a family with misfortune, or gratifying those who have made it happy. The dance following the service apparently expresses the joy of the family at dangers averted and gratitude for blessings bestowed.

796 535 [782]

In contrast to the private character of the service, the dance has all the appearance of a social event. Invitations to it are sent all over the countryside. People attend for good fellowship, gossip, and the sheer delight of dancing, but in the background one is always aware of a religious element as well. The dance is held in a specially constructed *tonnelle*, a roof of boughs and leaves supported by uprights. Drums are not always used at the earlier service, but no dance could be held without them. The crowd drifts in slowly, so that the dance may be long in getting under way. The best drummers in the community may not arrive until after two or three hours. Three drums of different sizes, all properly baptized, set the rhythms, and sometimes gourd rattles embroider a commentary upon the beat. Whereas at the service possession comes as a result of the priest's invocations, at the dance it is inspired by the drumming. Each loa has his own particular rhythm, so that as soon as it is determined what god has seized upon a dancer the drummers take up the rhythm of that god. The officiant immediately rushes to the mounted person with a calabash of water and a candle; by following the "horse" around and

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796 steadying his attention, he practically hypnotizes him back into full
535 consciousness. As soon as the possessed is normal again, water out of
787 the calabash is poured at the central post and a sign of the cross is made with the candle before it.

796 Contrary to the expectation of thrill-seeking white visitors, the
535 Vodun dance does not merit the name of an orgy. True, the dancers
786 wear their old clothes, for they are going to have violent exercise; true also, those who are possessed give the impression of losing some of their inhibitions. But the dancers do not embrace each other as at a white man's dance; the drinking which occurs is hardly ever excessive; and the climax of a successful dance is a religious experience.
[831] The Haitian is no more obsessed by sex than is the American; indeed, living simply and without many of the artificial restraints of "civilization," he is probably less so. What white visitors sometimes see, under the impression that they are witnessing a Vodun dance, is nothing more than a secular Saturday night social dance. It, too, has drum rhythms instead of an orchestra, musical instruments being rare in Haiti; but the dance has no more religious (or "Voodoo") significance than a barn dance in the United States.

771 Creed and practice go hand in hand in Haiti. The Vodun wor-
776 shiper believes in the loa of his faith and does the things necessary to get in touch with them. These conceptions are the major part of his creed, as the corresponding actions form the bulk of his religious activity.

171 A few articles of the creed remain. "I believe in respect to twins
845 ..." Hundreds of so-called primitive peoples see in twins some special
787 significance, now fortunate, now tragic. Many of the tribes along the Atlantic coast of Africa thought of twins as an omen, so that the presence of ritual regard for them in Haiti is hardly surprising. It is probably incorrect to speak of the worship, or the cult, of twins, for they are not deified, nor is there a common ritual for them: thousands of persons pay them no homage whatever. One family has a high regard for twins because it has numbered them among its ancestors or recent relatives; another family pays respect to all twins because a priest has advised seeking the good luck which comes from
[782] *marassa* (twins). There seems to be some confusion of thought about this aspect of religion: twins are not gods, but merely omens from the gods; yet sacrifices are made to them. Christmas and harvest are the usual seasons for the offering. Food is prepared in the morning

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4. *Magic*

771 It is difficult enough to make a distinction between religion and superstition; it is practically impossible, in dealing with a people who in their closeness to nature are not accustomed to the refinements of "civilized" thinking, to make one between magic and certain aspects of religion. Underlying both is belief in the supernatural; characteristic of both is a faith which recognizes a higher order of cause and effect operating with the lower one familiar in commonplace matters. Anthropologists hold various theories about magic, some saying that it is the set of practices out of which religion evolved, others that it exists for personal and practical ends and has little to do with religion; still others that it is a development out of religion, paralleling and complementing it.[35]

771 One element which distinguishes religious practice from magic is
789 the attitude toward spirits. In religion, the worshiper pays homage
782 and humbly petitions, preserving meanwhile an attitude of humility to spirits or gods who must be propitiated; in magic, the human being, by coercive words and actions, commands the services of spirits who (if the magical rites have been properly performed) must obey. The distinction is not between good and evil, for a god may have both characteristics and be entirely capable of working harm to mortals. As already noted, in the Haitian system the gods are like men in being mixtures of both principles.

771 Another difference between religion and magic concerns time.
789 Religion is social, open to all worshipers or at least to all of a group or social rank. Its rites are continually and repeatedly performed.
796 Magic, on the contrary, though sometimes public and social, is generally private and, since it is for a specific purpose, is performed only when the need arises. A man who was thoroughly conversant with magic might go through his whole life without ever feeling the need of employing it or having to exert himself to fend it off. One turns to magic as a sophisticated man might turn to medicine. Either may be done without; both may be used to excess.

789 In Haitian Vodun, magic interweaves itself with the general faith.

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793 35. See, for example, Ruth Benedict, "Magic," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, X, 39–44; A. Goldenweiser, *Early Civilization* (New York, 1922), chaps. X–XI; J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (London, 1907–15), *passim*; R. R. Marett, *The Threshold of Religion* (New York, 1914), *passim*; and Sumner and Keller, *op. cit.*, II, chaps. XXIX–XXXI.

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565 ing since 1860 has had its effect upon the children of the upper classes.
771 Two hundred churchmen working with a population of more than two million cannot distribute their benefits equally. Teachers must devote themselves to those whose minds are educable, who have access to schools, and who can afford time for daily classes. An element of social snobbishness entered as well. Catholicism was socially accepted in the Western World whose approval the élite coveted, where Vodun if known at all was regarded as a mere superstition. To prove his separation from the peasant black, the élite person was therefore Catholic or nothing.

[797] It would have required many times two hundred teaching brothers and sisters, all with the zeal of fanatics and the energy of dynamos, to convert the masses away from Vodun. In acquainting the peasants with Church forms and certain beliefs the priests have been entirely successful; in making exclusive Catholics of them they have had no success at all.

771 Every vital social institution is continually in a process of change.
177 Vodun, a very living faith, has steadily borrowed more and more from Catholicism, the only other religion with which the people come in close contact. When one can go from a Saturday night Vodun sacrifice and dance to a Sunday morning Catholic Mass with no feeling of incongruity, it is obvious that the minds of the worshipers are actively predisposed to assimilation of creed and ritual.

796 We have suggested in a previous chapter some traces of the Catholic Mass in Vodun ceremony. The Vodun service regularly begins with a long ritual which the observer who knows both the Créole language and the Catholic liturgy recognizes as being almost entirely Roman. While the Vodun houngan sits quietly by, a special officiant known as the *prêt' savanne* (bush priest) reads or pretends to read from the Catholic prayer book. For the Pater Noster, the creed, the Ave Maria, the Salve Regina, and the prayers, the worshipers kneel or stand as they would in church. Candles burn, water is sprinkled, the sign of the cross is made, the chants are sung. When the benediction completes this part of the service, the houngan takes over to conduct the purely African rites; yet his first words are, "*Grâce mise'-corde,*" and many Catholic interpolations appear even in this second part of the service.

[778] The Vodun ritual is conducted before an altar, in Haitian Créole
[192] called a "trône," which is a perfect marriage between Vodun and

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Catholicism. I have seen such an altar, with its adjacent table, bearing a crucifix, candles, (holy) water, lithographs of the "Assumption of the Virgin," "St. George and the Dragon," the "Adoration of the Kings," and certain unrecognized but distinctly European saints; in addition to these objects, however, were such unecclesiastical articles as bananas, rice, beans, squash, various bottles of drinks, and plates of food. Near by were the sacrificial animals. 796 [778] [192]

Vodun makes use frequently of one sacrament of the Church—baptism. Needless to say, this rite is not a monopoly of Christianity, and its use in the folk religion may very well have come from Africa. Constant witnessing of the rite in church must nevertheless have influenced its adoption for all important Vodun ceremonials. The drums used in the dance are baptized; so also is the first loa to possess a devotee; at many other special times the rite is likewise performed, generally with a set of prayers which invoke Catholic saints and Vodun loa alike. [177]

Mention has already been made of the identification of Rada and Pétro loa with certain saints and martyrs of the Church. Such identifications are not uniform, but vary in different parts of the country. Legba is generally associated with Saint Anthony, but often (and to the Christian, more understandably) with Saint Peter who traditionally guards the gates of heaven; the Virgin Mary quite obviously is related, whether as Queen of Heaven, as the Sorrowing Mother, or as the innocent Virgin, with numerous manifestations of Maîtresse Erzulie; Damballa, whose symbol is the serpent, is sometimes Moses (whose brother's rod became a serpent consuming other serpents, and who by lifting up a serpent in the wilderness cured the people of their snake bites) and sometimes Saint Patrick (whose association with snakes is well known). Other identifications are numerous, showing the penchant of the people for combining what they know of both religions.[2] 776 177 [184]

Many of the loa have, like the Catholic saints, their symbols, their special days, colors, and other associations. Some like white, some red; the serpent, the rainbow, the crossroads are among the symbols; sacred days occur weekly, Tuesday being Legba's, Wednesday Ogun's, Friday Erzulie's, and Saturday Baron Samedi's. It may be

2. The distinguished Haitian ethnographer, sociologist, and historian, Dr. Jean Price-Mars, has made a list of some of these identifications in his *Ainsi parla l'oncle*, pp. 180-181.

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A Catholic chapel had been erected in recent years upon a hilltop

long respected as a favorite haunt of the loa Damballa. Apparently this was no slight, for Vodun gods are not monopolistic. On the hill, however, once stood a tree in which a snake made his home, symbol of Damballa. Many years earlier a forthright Catholic priest had ordered his parishioners to fell the tree, an insult direct to the loa which none of the faithful dared give. The determined cleric therefore performed the task himself, but left a sizable stump on which has now been placed a small statue of the popular Catholic Saint Anthony.

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The feast day was well attended, and while the Mass and sermon were proceeding in the crowded chapel dozens of men and women who could not get into the building, or who preferred not to try, remained outside. Many were simply standing about in groups, chatting; others were more significantly engaged. Some kneeled before the tree stump at whose foot many candles were burning; there, as at a shrine, they prayed. Were their prayers Catholic petitions to Saint Anthony or Vodun prayers to Damballa? At another corner of the church under the shade of a tree sat a venerable woman dispensing a liquid concoction, which seemed particularly popular with the women and children. Holding out their hands they received a palmful each of the syrupy substance, which they then smeared upon their bodies; on the eyes or face, on their legs, or on more private parts. The Catholic priest later explained the liquid as a "Voodoo brew," and again as a charm; more accurately, it was a garde to turn away illness from the parts of the body rubbed with it.

The officiating priest knew perfectly well that not all the candles burning at the tree stump were for Saint Anthony; he was also aware of the woman dispensing her liquid, yet took no steps to stop her. He assumed that with the small statue of Saint Anthony on the stump, there were already children growing up unaware of Damballa's connection with the place. He hoped to find money for a larger, more imposing statue so that as generations passed the memory of the loa, as related to worship on this hill, would be supplanted. As for the woman, why bother to drive her away? It would merely cause antagonism, and would certainly not stop the practice. Her being there might draw a few more peasants to the feast, where they would have an opportunity to learn the true Word.

As soon as the Mass in the chapel was finished, the people poured out and began to form a line of march. Headed by the priest the whole congregation, including many who had not penetrated to the

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798 chapel, wended their way down the hill and across to a clearing
796 among the trees. On the way many of the women stopped beside
177 the path to pluck a handful of long grass or reached up to break twigs from the smaller trees. At the clearing, primitively decorated with colored cloth, the priest made a short discourse; then he intoned three times, "Notre Dame d'Alta Gracia," and the worshipers, raising their wisps of greenery above their heads, rustled the twigs until the air was filled with a sound like the hissing of many serpents. "*Priez pour nous!*" they responded each time to the rustling accompaniment. The Virgin of Alta Gracia is the miraculous saint of Higuey, as much renowned among Haitians as among the Spanish-speaking Dominicans farther east. The supplication to the Virgin is proper enough to a Catholic feast, but the hissing, reminiscent of Damballa, is an intimation that the Vodun loa is not yet forgotten on his holy hill.

This festival of Notre Dame d'Alta Gracia shows not only the adaptability of Catholicism to Vodun, but likewise that of Vodun to Catholicism. Not even with the will to preserve their faith and practice pure can most men resist the infiltration of surrounding beliefs; in Haiti, the will to resist is itself lacking. This the Church knows, and counts upon for ultimate victory. In other words, there is to be not precisely a conversion of worshipers away from Vodun, but a slow transformation of Vodun itself into a true Catholic faith within the hearts of the people.

In its long experience in adaptability, the Church has in many a country learned to establish a ground of common understanding with lowly folk, while keeping its touch with aristocrats. Following the principle that where a belief or rite is apparently ineradicable it is advisable to turn it to Catholic uses, the Church in Haiti has often made this kind of adjustment, just as in earlier times with the Aztecs, Mayans, and other continental American Indians. An example of it may be observed at Saut d'Eau, near Ville-Bonheur.

787 Here, near the centre of Haiti, in 1884 there appeared in a palm
778 tree the vision of a beautiful Virgin blessing the people. She re-
798 mained so long that according to tradition the whole countryside saw her. The parish priest, unwilling to permit this obsession of the people to continue, came to drive away the apparition. The Virgin departed, apparently of her own will. People saw her no more, but many came to the palm tree and were miraculously cured and

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marvelously aided in distress. The priest, not willing to allow even this "delusion," tried to cut down the tree but was wounded by his own machete. Eventually, however, the tree was destroyed by natural causes, and a church erected on the site. Fire destroyed the church. Each successive church building has likewise been destroyed, by fire or by lightning. No longer now does the Catholic Church combat the sanctity of Saut d'Eau: after all, it was the Virgin who appeared, not a loa. The great celebrations on every fifteenth of July draw pilgrims from all over Haiti. Although the Church now grudgingly approves the feast it is still recognizably Vodun in character, for devout souls who bathe in the water are "mounted" by loa. The Church has a hard battle ahead of it to win this festival for Catholicism.

Three factors work in favor of the Catholic struggle to win Haitians completely away from Vodun: the world-wide organization of the Church, which can always throw trained reserves into the battle; the superior intellectual equipment of the priests, enabling them to plan their campaign and use psychological weapons; and the plasticity of Vodun itself, which is a conglomeration of human feelings, ideas, and traditions rather than a rigid sect with an inflexible ritual.[3] Even with these advantages, it is still the battle of a few dozen men on one side with the Haitian masses (more than two million) on the other. So far as one is ever justified in prophecy, it seems safe to assume that Vodun will continue to assimilate more and more fragments of Catholicism; that its appeal will remain so long as education and medicine are not extended to the whole countryside; that eventually—it may be centuries hence—Vodun rites may sink back into the status of living folklore, to which the simple turn in their deepest need.

One of the strongest missionary advantages of the Roman Catholic Church has been the breadth given it by two thousand years of experience. In so long a life it has had to be all things to all men; out of necessity it has developed around the central core so wide a variety of belief, doctrine, form, and traditional practice, that there is something for every believer, whether scholarly or untutored, powerfully important or humbly obscure. What the cultivated

3. The absence of any written formulation of Vodun must certainly be a factor in its lability. Recorded tradition and written history tend to create definiteness of pattern.

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Similarly in Haitian towns, where the élite

 speak French

197 and where French is taught in the schools, the Créole is less "pure"
191 than in the untutored countryside. Even there the language is chang-
193 ing, for there is steadily operating that "law of simplification" which reduces the complications of language when it has only an oral tradition.[12] Abridgment occurs more and more frequently, agglutination is more apparent, and words tend toward the monosyllabic.

191 Everyone in Haiti speaks and understands Créole. Nursemaids
197 teach it to their élite charges, so that children know it from infancy; élite lovers lapse into its expressive phrases in order to say something particularly intimate which might sound sentimental in French; priests must use it in their parish work if they are to be understood at all. Even the élite presidents have found it wise to speak often to the countrypeople in their own tongue. The gendarmes would be helpless in their police work without it, as would the agricultural, health, and other governmental services. It is the language in which all the small business of Haiti is conducted.[13] Ernest Douyon has written brilliantly and revealingly about it:

> If, on the one hand, we have a business language, an official tongue, which is French, our true maternal language, on the other hand, that one which we first lisp, that of the country as a whole (I had almost said "of the true country," for such is the case), that of the city people as well as of countryfolk, that of all families whatever their differences in education, the language one hears not only in humble huts but in luxurious villas, not only in offices or among the masses but also in private apartments and salons, that which for the crudest as for the most finely cultivated minds (even when these latter through snobbery try to deny the fact) is at all times the most naturally expressive, that which perfectly translates our deepest sentiments (jubilation, anger, love, or whatever) precisely when these are most strongly felt, that which all of us, all (with the rarest exceptions) use spontaneously—is Créole! I know that it is not considered proper in polite society, that it sometimes lends a certain impression of vulgarity, that it is not the correct language for distinguished people—when they are in public! But who is the man of propriety, who the society woman, who in private does not continually use Créole?[14]

12. See P. Crouzet, *Les Ponts romains* (Toulouse, 1929), p. 18.

[796] [793] 13. It must be noted that in the Vodun service the houngan sometimes speaks in *langage*, which is not Créole. It purports to be pure African, but is more likely to be mere gibberish.

14. In his Preface to Faine, *op. cit.*, p. v.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

tinuation of African cultural traditions was not easy, certain things did persist. While the material facts of the life of the slaves was at once subordinated to European patterns — in dress and implements and to a certain extent in housing, for example [33] — yet in other matters they could live as they had lived in Africa. Thus one account of the time, quoted by de Vassière,[34] tells how the slaves carried on communal hoeing, timing their strokes to the rhythms of songs that begged some favor of their visitor, or to songs of praise (and, when the white observer was not present, undoubtedly also singing songs of derision), in the characteristic African fashion that, as will be seen, has survived in Haitian peasant life to this day. Similarly their traditions of cooking, of eating, of fixing the time for their meals (despite St. Mery's comment that "the Negro has no other rule of eating than the demands of his appetite"), of respect for their elders; their attitudes toward death and their rituals of burial, their dances, their songs, and, above all, their non-Christian religious beliefs, all continued to be stamped with the mark of Africa.[35] On the other hand, opportunities to learn and imitate French customs were by no means neglected, for the prestige of the masters filtered through the ranks of the slaves until it reached even the field-hands, for the nearer in service the Negro was to the person of his master, the more Europeanized was his behavior and the prouder he was and the more he exploited his opportunities to follow European patterns of habit.[36] Not only did the house-servants imitate French dances,[37] but we are told how in Martinique, for example, all the slaves were taught these figures.[38] In the field of religion, also, the efforts of the Church to capitalize the royal edicts which made baptism of the slaves compulsory were far from vain, at least in so far as the outward manifestations of their acceptance of the faith were concerned. Writings of the time, however, do not omit comment on the discouragement of the missionizing Fathers who seriously undertook this task, because too often

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

the baptism of their converts was followed by serious lapses from the faith, especially under conditions of stress.[79]

One of the most revolting aspects of the institution of slavery, wherever found, is the cruelty with which the suppression of human individuality is prosecuted. In this the French colony of Santo Domingo was no exception, as the list of more ingenious punishments, aside from the more usual ones such as whipping, which were devised to keep the slaves in line, demonstrates.[80] What is more important here are the defenses the Negroes built up against them. Recourse to suicide was especially common, and though the popularly accepted explanations for this range between the desire of the slave to destroy himself because he knew he was valuable property of his master, and the conviction that suicide was one way of achieving his return to the African homeland,[81] there is no reason to assume that, following African tradition, the belief that the ghost of a helpless slave could through suicide become powerful for evil and thus wreak his vengeance did not also figure.[82] But equally widespread in all the New World were the allied weapons of revolt and escape.

Both in the experience of the individual slaves and in the history of New World slavery this tendency to revolt began early. In the former case, many tales are told of how on the march to the African coast, or in the slave barracoons, or on board the slave-ship, the possibility of a desperate dash for freedom had always to be guarded against.[83] Concerning the latter, it is not generally known how early in the history of Negro slaving revolts did occur. The Negro slave-trade began with shipments of slaves to Haiti in 1510; the first slave uprising in Haiti, in 1522, thus took place only twelve years after the commencement of the traffic.[84] In the New World possessions of Spain eleven other rebellions are recorded between the years 1522 and 1553, of which those of 1533, 1537, and 1548 occurred in Santo Domingo.[85] During the following century two revolts took place, one at Port de Paix in 1679

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

servation when, for example, the baptismal rites which received into the Church the children of known active participants in *vodun* ceremonies were witnessed. It became even more convincing when experience taught that the best place to encounter an elusive *hungan* or *mambu* was at early Sunday-morning mass. Only when it was realized that no dichotomy exists in Mirebalais between Catholicism and *vodun*, but that both are necessary if all the supernatural beings that control man and man's destiny are properly to be worshipped, was a true perspective obtained.[13]

There are certain Protestant sects which have been increasingly successful in making converts among the Haitian people, particularly in the north, whose adherents stand in strong hostility to *vodun*. A type of Protestantism that has had the best reception is one comparable to the "shouting" sects of the United States and the British West Indies, where the appeal through patterns of possession, dancing, and other aspects of ritual close to the familiar African forms of behavior is evident and relatively little psychological shift is needed to make membership in such a church acceptable.[14] The Protestant church in Mirebalais, however, is more sober. It commands only a very small proportion of the townspeople, and draws even fewer from the surrounding countryside, while the Catholic voduists look upon it with a scorn that is exemplified in the answer to a question about the ritual of Protestant funerals: "*Moun chita, chanté zhymnes*—People sit, and sing hymns!" Two or three well-substantiated cases of conversion to Protestantism came about because, despite the sacrifices made to the inherited *loa* and the prayers to the saints, these individuals continued to experience ill fortune, until in desperation the Protestant minister had been called to banish the family *loa*, to cut down the sacred trees on the family habitation, and to destroy the house of worship, with the objects in it. These deeds of "desecration" were, however, followed by no renewed disasters, and while from the point of view of

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

the voduists this is not regarded as decisive proof of the power of Protestantism, for those immediately concerned it is held sufficient.[18]

What, then, of the attitudes held by voduists toward the Catholic Church? The correlation of Catholic ritual with *vodun* practice made by Haitians is of utmost significance in this connection. In discussing the Church service, it was pointed out that church bells announce mass or any other rite, and this, it was explained, is for Legba — "*Toute cloche c'est pou' Legba, même l'église, oui* — All sounding of bells is for Legba, even in church," for he must be notified so that he can "open the gate" for God, Jesus Christ, and the saints. "*Nou' même nou' connai' ça. C'est Bon Dieu crée tout* — You yourself know that. It is God who created everything." It was also recounted how when the priest preaches, he is possessed by the *mystères* of the sacred Trinity, for does he not gesticulate and become excited like any other possessed person?

Furthermore, it is believed that Gede, Ogun, and Damballa "are always at the church," often insisting that their worshippers take communion. Indeed, occasionally the *loa* of a woman may demand a Church marriage from a man to whom she is a *placée*. The sacraments of baptism, first communion, marriage, confession, and extreme unction are received by members of the *vodun* cult, though, as will be seen, when voduists confess, they say nothing of their *loa*. The *hungans* themselves "are most often at the sacred table to take communion," and one particular *hungan* not only attended mass, but was seen continually employing his rosary in the *vodun* ceremonies at which he officiated. While Haitians from the southern peninsula stated that the *hungans* there do not go to church, it was pointed out at the same time that all other voduists attend regularly.

The principal resentment held by Mirebalais voduists against the Church is for the cost of Church rites, and for the

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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And yet the things that survived were able to do so, in certain respects, because of the particular brand of thinking of the colonial masters. Why has so much of the African past survived in Haiti when it has been all but obliterated in the United States? The answer lies primarily in the Catholic background of the Europeans who controlled the colony—first the Spanish, and then the French. The Catholic Church regarded every slave as a soul to be saved, as a complete and finished man except for salvation. And though it was an official of the Church who is alleged to have suggested African slavery in the New World,[3] the Church itself took the view that the differences between the slave owner and the slave were only worldly and transient things. The Church did not insist on washing out of the African mind everything that was there. It regarded its mission as that of supplying the single quality that was lacking—salvation. Its attitudes during the past four hundred years in Haiti have been vacillating and erratic; it has often pressed for destruction of the African cults; but on the whole it has been satisfied with conversion.

The Protestant churches in Haiti, on the contrary, have demanded that their converts become new people. They have forbidden their adherents to take any part in non-Christian rituals or other activities—including even the dance. They have presented them with a simple and painful choice.

These were the essential attitudes that prevailed during slavery days in the United States. In the beginning, while plantation owners fought against church activities among the Negroes, the church and the plantation owners were largely united in their war against "heathen" practices. Africanisms which might have either died in due course or persisted were stamped out with Puritan fervor. Significantly, it was in French-Catholic Louisiana that African-style drumming, singing, and dancing survived in the United States to the beginning of this present century.

The Catholic attitude of tolerance-by-necessity in Haiti won for it most of the country's four million souls. Today, many a Haitian who participates in the rites of Vodoun on Saturday worships in a Catholic chapel on Sunday.

Such sporadic efforts as were made to wipe out African memories in Haiti were unsuccessful. Slowly the uprooted slaves found a common denominator. The peoples of different origins developed a common language based on the French spoken by the masters. Their different religious systems merged one into another.

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The necessity for adaptation and amalgamation produced a cultural hybrid of an energetic and vital kind. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the people of African descent in Haiti were a cultural alloy, fired

3 [Bartolomé de Las Casas. Cf. P. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

in the services. In the court, the bases of four sacred trees . . . are surrounded by circles of masonry [low brick walls]. These *reposoirs* are inhabited by the *loa* Legba, Ogoun, Loco and Saugo.[5]

There is little in Aubin's description to suggest that hounfors were much different a half century ago from what they are today. He errs in identifying the "thunder stones" solely with Damballa. But his eye for detail was acute. In 1950 a mambo in the neighborhood of this hounfor described by Aubin affirmed that some of the loa stones and old coins which he mentioned are still to be found among the properties of a hounfor in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. Others were lost in one of the cleric-inspired raids which despoiled cult temples of drums and other paraphernalia about fifteen years ago.

Many services are held outside the hounfor and the peristyle. Some rituals, such as animal sacrifices and "talking to the loa below the water," may take place some distance from the cult buildings. Indeed, various Vodoun ceremonies may be held at waterfalls, at the seashore, in sacred groves, in ordinary homes, in a boat at sea,[6] or under a sacred tree.

The rites of the hounfor are almost without number. They are associated with the supplication or conciliation of virtually countless deities, each of which has his own special service. There are services in multitudinous combinations and permutations for the dead, for twins, for albinos, and for unborn children. There are ceremonies for the elevation of hounsi and for initiation, smoke and fire ordeals, and tests of other kinds. There are *mangé loa* (feasts for the deities) and *mangé morts* (feasts for the dead). There are services for the sick, for the crops, and for the harvest. In one context or another, Vodoun relates to nearly every aspect and phase of life—and its counterpart, death. Since every region, every locality, and, in fact, almost every hounfor has developed its own ritual out of the common materials, it is possible to see hundreds of ceremonies without ever seeing precisely the same one twice. Yet the common elements bind them all together.

One such prime element is the possession, the "mounting" of the human body by one of the deities. Possession is a psychological phenomenon common to the rites of many cults throughout the world. It is known in Asia, Africa, Europe, and America. It is not the unique property of the African and his Haitian descendant. In the United States it is a commonplace not only among certain Negro cults but certain white cults as well. The United States Negro had ample West African inspiration for his seizures in the church and at the baptism. The intellectual meaning of these seizures has changed, as have their outward forms to a measurable extent, but their emotional content has not altered.

[5] [Translated from the French of Aubin, En Haiti, pp. 57-59. Cf. p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]

[6] [Footnote appears on p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]

In Haiti the possession takes many forms, according to the nature of the deity who has entered the body, and depending on whether the possessed person has learned to "control" that deity. The possessing, or "mounting," of the possessed individual is manifest proof of the loa's existence and his constant proximity. Vodoun is built upon the premise of the existence of loa, and the possession is the instrument of direct contact and of constant proof of the loa's imminence.

Although much of Vodoun is cast in the Dahomean mold, it is no longer what it was originally in Dahomey. Many of the original deities of the Dahomean Earth pantheon, the Sky pantheon, and the Thunder pantheon have survived. Others have been forgotten, but in their place there has grown a vast array of loa, recruited partly from the Yoruba deities and perhaps from deities of other West African tribes. By far the largest group has come into existence in Haiti—loa whose names, at least, probably would go unrecognized in West Africa.

There have been prolific intrusions into Vodoun from the rites of the Catholic Church, though they have not affected the general framework of the system. The original Dahomean supreme being, Nananbuluku, is nearly forgotten; in her place the Christian God is named in many a Vodoun service. Yet, though God is the supreme creator, giver, and taker, it is the loa who must be supplicated and mollified. Most important Vodoun rituals are begun under the supervision of the *prêt' savane,* or "bush priest," who leads off with brief prayers from the Catholic rites. While the Catholic Church itself rejects any direct part in Vodoun, the self-tutored prêt' savane, unordained and unsponsored by the Church, brings elements of its theology into the hounfor. The origins of the prêt' savane are not clear. But there is little doubt that his place in Haitian life became assured during the years of conflict between postrevolutionary governments and the Church of Rome. After the slave revolts of 1791, the priests of the French colony fled from the scene or went into hiding along with the other white colonists. From the date of Haitian independence throughout the following half century, Haiti was "in open schism from the Roman Catholic Church."[1] Some Haitian presidents were friendly toward the Catholic Church; others even had the objective of making Catholicism a state religion with the president at its head. Henry Christophe, for example, made the Catholic Church official but stipulated that ecclesiastical decrees must be approved by the president. Alexandre Pétion's constitution for southern Haiti (the country was divided) also established the Church as official but laid upon it strong restrictions.

Leyburn points out that in 1814 there were in Christophe's kingdom only three priests, one of whom Christophe had named archbishop. Dur-

[1] Leyburn, The Haitian People, p. 119. Cf. p. 349, category 116. -- Analyst]

one. Sometimes a loa who is making life too hard for a devotee will be retired without a replacement. The "washing of the head" must be accompanied by ritual safeguards, and all possible circumstances must be taken into account by the officiating cult priest. There are many stories of people who became mentally deranged as a result of the removal of their loa from their heads.

The maît' tête must also be removed from the head of a person who dies. Should this not be done, the spirit of the deceased will go to reside "below the water" and may cause trouble for the family. This loa is usually transferred to a special jar as a temporary resting place, and later perhaps into the head of another member of the family.

Though the loa is a powerful ruling force in the life of the individual, the human "horse" has controls over his deity too. He may reproach or admonish his loa for bad behavior or for failing to protect him. He may expose the loa's irresponsibility in public through the use of songs in religious rites. And though the loa is frequently encouraged to "enter," steps may be taken to restrain him from possession. This is called *marré loa* —"tying the loa." A woman may "tie" her loa by fixing a hairpin in her hair in a special way. A man may do it by placing his hands in cold water.[3]

Nevertheless, the loa are always lurking in the background. They are a constant and dramatic element in the religious life of the people. They may sometimes be controlled by the houngan, but they are an authority stronger than the priesthood. They give advice, courage, consolation, and status to their followers. They add much to an otherwise hard and ungenerous environment and evoke remembrances of Africa from which the Haitians' ancestors were uprooted. They can also cause concern and anxiety; for the loa are not always benevolent, and they are frequently unpredictable.

Many of the loa are ancient deities, sib-founders and ancestors who loom out of a misty, half-forgotten past. Nananbouclou, Legba, and Ayida Wèdo have been known for many lifetimes in Dahomey. Chango, Ogoun, and Loko were old spirits in Nigeria before the first slave ships sailed from Africa to the New World. Their names and many others in present-day Haïti come from an ancient lore. They recall places, tribes, and old kingdoms from Senegal in northwestern Africa to the heart of the Congo. They are a bond which holds the people of Haiti to Africa. In the mountains people sometimes say, "Haiti is the child of Dahomey," or "Haiti is the child of Guinée." The gods divide their time between their Haitian and their African children.

Yet in some respects the Haitians' concept of their loa is no longer purely African. The African religious patterns have been infiltrated by the lore

2: Courlander B-6 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

of the Catholic Church and fused with old folk beliefs of Europe. In Dahomey, which was the wellspring for much of Haiti's culture, there was no supreme deity quite like the one introduced to the slaves by the missionaries. There was a pantheon of gods with Mawu and Lisa at the top. They were children of a common parent, Nananbuluku. None of these deities was strictly comparable to our idea of a supreme being. Nananbuluku survives in Haiti as Nananbouclou or Nananbélécou, one of many loa. Among the neighboring Yoruba the high god was Olorun. Like the Dahomean Mawu and Lisa, Olorun was quite remote from the lives of men. The gods who were invoked and placated were the several hundred *orisha* created by Olorun. The nearby Ashanti people had a simpler pantheon, with the sky god Nyame supreme among them.

In the present Haitian concept of the supernatural, God is at the very apex of the pantheon, though he is distinctly of another order. His power as the supreme source of all things is fully recognized. A Haitian song, associated with Vodoun ritual but of probable recent origin, goes:

> C'est Bondieu qui voyé moin, quand li vlé moin l'apprend. [Ex. 37]
>
> It is God who sent me, when he wants me he'll take me.

Another song, from the Guinée service, goes:

> Oh, Kitta, oh so'ti nan dleau, li tout mouillé!
> Oh, nen point houngan pasé Bondieu nan pays-ya! [Ex. 36]
>
> Oh, Kitta comes out of the water, he is dripping wet!
> Oh, there is no houngan in this country greater than God!

Although it is recognized, or at least stated, that God is a supreme force, God is not regarded as the entire supernatural force of the world. In many Vodoun services the houngan may invoke, as separate categories of the unseen, the loa, the dead, the *marassas* (twin spirits), and God. Haitians do not have a consistent schematized picture of the supernatural world. God comes first, but (as in West Africa) he is less immediate than the loa. He is identified with destiny; yet within the framework of that destiny man's lot can be bettered or worsened through dealings with the dead, the baka and lou-garos (demons and vampires), and the cult priests.

In many of the folk tales of Haiti, God appears as another character in a cast which may include as protagonists animals, loa, Christian saints, and ordinary men and women. One such tale is about a visit which all the dogs decided to pay to God. They started off through the woods together, but one of them was distracted by the smell of carrion. He left his friends for a brief time, found the carrion, and ate some of it. Then he hurriedly joined his companions again. Together they came to God's house and were admitted to the parlor, where they sat around making polite conver-

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV2 HARI SV2

The importance of water in Vodoun has a fundamentally West African character. Among the Yoruba and the Ashanti and in Dahomey, for example, water rites are a significant aspect of religious ritual. Herskovits notes the frequency of religious pilgrimages to streams in West Africa.[8]

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In one instance, at Abenkuta, a bedecked procession of worshipers left a shrine atop a high hill, followed a long path to the riverside over two miles away, and returned before the ceremonies could be carried out at the shrine of the god. On one occasion, in Dahomey, the bed of the sacred stream run dry was "filled" from nearby wells so that this water could be ritually redrawn for use in an especially important ceremony. Among the Ashanti, pilgrimages to Lake Bosumtwe and other sacred bodies of water regularly occur. And it is on such occasions that the spirit of the river or lake or sea manifests itself, by "entering the head" of the devotee and causing him to fling himself, possibly possessed, into the water.[9]

So it is also in Haiti, where possession at the river's edge may cause the devotee to leap into the river. At Saut d'Eau, possessed persons plunge into the waterfall without regard for their safety, being in the care of the loa who have mounted them.

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Into this water complex the Christian rite of baptism has been easily absorbed, providing merely a new act of veneration for water and its properties. In the Haitian mind baptism is not far removed from the *lavé tête* ritual, the washing of the head, or the *rafraîchi tête*, the "refreshing" of the head, both of which are acts in propitiation of the loa.[9] So related is the baptismal concept in the Haitian mind, that the term "baptize" is used to describe the lavé tête; it is said that the loa is being "baptized." So also are drums "baptized," not to mention yams, and even the hounfor itself.

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Marriage to a Loa

Although the term *hounsi* (spirit wife, or wife of the spirit) is applied to a large class of servitors of the Vodoun temple, only a small number of servitors ever pass through rites which give them a husband-wife or wife-husband relationship with a loa. Reasons for these mystic marriages vary, but usually the rituals take place upon the prescription of a cult priest who interprets the will of the deities concerned. Most of the mystic marriages of which I have heard have taken place in the general area of Port-au-Prince and the Cul-de-Sac Plain. In some other areas of Haiti it appears that no such rites have taken place locally within the memory of the elder inhabitants. One aged man living near Belladère declared: "It [marriage to a loa] is impossible. People serve loa, they do not marry them. A man does not marry his burro. A loa

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[8] [Herskovits, The Myth of the Negro Past, p. 233. Cf p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[9] [It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form. Cf p. 851, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1837-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

175 In the early
178 years of independence, Emperor Henry Christophe in the north and
311 President Pétion in the south tried to stem the disintegration of the
[643] magnificent plantations. Christophe's measures in the region he con-
[256] trolled were sometimes stern, according to legend; but the plantation system and the plantations themselves gradually fell into decay, along with the aqueducts, the warehouses, and the sugar mills. For the Haitian had returned to a tradition of landholding antedating his enslavement.

175 Europe's loss of the Pearl of the Antilles aroused bitter words from
648 Frenchmen and Englishmen for the better part of the century. They
181 accused the Negro of laziness and lack of ability, repeating endlessly that only as a colony could Haiti ever be of any use to anybody. The London *Times* deplored the Haitian's unwillingness to work for wages, speculating that he had "no desire for property strong enough to induce him to labor with sustained power." In the United States, antiabolitionist enthusiasts cited the Haitian situation as an example of what would happen to the American economy if the slaves were freed.

464 The Haitian's reluctance to work for wages did not reflect an aversion
423 to owning property, however, as the London *Times* supposed. On the
311 contrary, it was engendered by his desire for property. The land was there and waiting, only needing a house to be built upon it, and to be cleared and tilled. The typical Haitian wanted not dubious, seasonal wage work but a farm of his own. The more ambitious peasant aspired to two farms, or even three, with a homestead and a family on each.

423 If a man worked hard and made a success of one plot, he could put
595 away money and eventually buy a second. The additional land might be
178 separated by some miles from the original farm. On the new ground
583 the man would build another house and take another wife to take care of it in his absence. Known as *plaçage*, this arrangement had complete community sanction. A man whose energies and good fortune made an extra household possible was expected to make such an arrangement. It was not a new institution bred in the chaos following the
• [997] Revolution, nor was it, as some missionaries held, an evidence of moral deterioration of the Haitian character. It was simply a persisting concept of West African life.[2] The woman who occupied the second or third household was not a concubine. Like the first wife, she had enhanced prestige in her community. She had authority and responsibility. Her work, her position, and her rewards were not essentially different from those of the first wife.[3] It is true that her marriage was not consecrated by a church or civil ceremony, but, ordinarily, neither was that of the
[581] first wife. Contrary to European misconceptions, such unions were true marriages in the sense that they had full sanction of the community.

[2, 3] [Footnotes appear in Category 116, pp. 351-352. --Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

565 *caste* is the only word to describe the effective separation of aristocrats from the masses. The caste system is a vivid fact, for it regulates a person's profession, speech, religion, marriage, family life, politics, clothes, social mobility—in short, his whole life from cradle to grave.

175 648 Haiti won its freedom from the France of Napoleon in 1804, becoming thus the second independent state in the Western Hemisphere. It had been during the eighteenth century France's most prosperous colony, its wealth depending upon slavery and the plantation system. With the whites driven out, social distinctions which 565 642 actually had their roots in colonial times began immediately to develop among the people, all of whom had some proportion of African blood in their veins. During the course of the next century the criteria for aristocracy slowly assumed recognizable form, so that now even the most casual observer is aware that Haiti cannot by any stretch of the imagination be called a democratic country, with an open class system. The two castes are the élite and the masses. They are as different as day from night, as nobleman from peasant; and they are as separate as oil and water. The élite are generally reckoned [162] to compose at the outside not more than three per cent of the population.

565 The élite do not work with their hands. This is the cardinal rule of Haitian society. Upon it rests the whole economic structure of the 463 country, and to this the course of national history has led. All the [161] professions, most governmental and military offices, and the large business enterprises are effectively closed to young men of the masses. Indeed, so completely accepted are caste rules, so practically difficult would it be for peasant youths to acquire the money and education necessary for such careers, that at birth a boy's future place in economic life is, within narrow limits, already predetermined. For the élite, law is the most popular of the professions, partly because it is the quickest avenue of approach to high political office; government, in turn, is the only career which can make a man rich within a few years. Next in popularity to law comes medicine. Teaching is not lucrative enough to attract many promising youths, and the priests of the Roman Catholic Church are almost all white Frenchmen.[2]

793 797 2. An effort was once made by the Catholic Church to train native Haitian priests, but the priestess would have none of them after they were ordained. They drove them out, saying, "Go away! How do you expect God to listen to you? You are not white; you don't know anything." And the Haitian priests had to be transferred as missionaries to Africa.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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The men seldom or never go to mass, except on the days particularly set apart by the government as public fêtes. On these occasions the president and all the officers of Hayti go in procession, but the idea of devotion, I believe, never enters their contemplation. Such days are merely set aside for celebrating some particular event, which it is wished should be handed down to posterity. These occasions present only the external symbol of religion, the whole people being either ignorant or careless of its real character. Their manner and appearance during the celebration of the mass shew that they have no inward feelings of piety or devotion.[13]

Catholicism in Haiti, then, had fallen on evil days; Protestantism, on the other hand, was unable to gain any foothold. Boyer, indifferent to all religion, did not even care to tolerate Wesleyan missionaries as Pétion had done, for when certain of them arrived and were met with "persecution and stoning by a mob," it required persuasion to gain his assent to freeing those the police had taken into custody. He forbade any further meetings of Wesleyans, on the ground that they stirred up riots. At the close of Boyer's administration it was estimated that there were only about 1,200 Protestants in the country, mostly Methodists and Baptists, and these primarily Negroes who had come from the United States to settle in the republic.

Although the Haitian government probably derived a certain satisfaction from controlling a state Church, Boyer was impelled both by circumstance and his own temperament to obtain the approval of the Holy See. His own tepid spiritual zeal had nothing to do with the case; Haitian public order would benefit by a superior group of priests, and Haitian prestige would rise, he thought, with recognition by Rome. Having already in 1826 settled the conflict between France and Haiti in the political sphere, Boyer tried assiduously to end the schism from Rome. His propositions were examined with benevolence by the Pope, who conferred upon the primate of the Indies, archbishop of Santo Domingo, the title of archbishop of Haiti. This personage, however, was a Spaniard already established in the comfortable city of Santo Domingo amidst people of his own nationality. He could not be persuaded to move to Port-au-Prince. The failure of Boyer's efforts is due more to this ecclesiastic than to uncoöperativeness on the part of Rome. From 1834 to 1860 the Court of Rome had official representatives in Haiti, but they cannot have been very effective men, for conditions in

13. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 394–395.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

565 ing since 1860 has had its effect upon the children of the upper classes.
771 Two hundred churchmen working with a population of more than two million cannot distribute their benefits equally. Teachers must devote themselves to those whose minds are educable, who have access to schools, and who can afford time for daily classes. An element of social snobbishness entered as well. Catholicism was socially accepted in the Western World whose approval the élite coveted, where Vodun if known at all was regarded as a mere superstition. To prove his separation from the peasant black, the élite person was therefore Catholic or nothing.

●[797] It would have required many times two hundred teaching brothers and sisters, all with the zeal of fanatics and the energy of dynamos, to convert the masses away from Vodun. In acquainting the peasants with Church forms and certain beliefs the priests have been entirely successful; in making exclusive Catholics of them they have had no success at all.

771 Every vital social institution is continually in a process of change.
177 Vodun, a very living faith, has steadily borrowed more and more from Catholicism, the only other religion with which the people come in close contact. When one can go from a Saturday night Vodun sacrifice and dance to a Sunday morning Catholic Mass with no feeling of incongruity, it is obvious that the minds of the worshipers are actively predisposed to assimilation of creed and ritual.

796 We have suggested in a previous chapter some traces of the Catholic Mass in Vodun ceremony. The Vodun service regularly begins with a long ritual which the observer who knows both the Créole language and the Catholic liturgy recognizes as being almost entirely Roman. While the Vodun houngan sits quietly by, a special officiant known as the *prêt' savanne* (bush priest) reads or pretends to read from the Catholic prayer book. For the Pater Noster, the creed, the Ave Maria, the Salve Regina, and the prayers, the worshipers kneel or stand as they would in church. Candles burn, water is sprinkled, the sign of the cross is made, the chants are sung. When the benediction completes this part of the service, the houngan takes over to conduct the purely African rites; yet his first words are, "*Grâce mise'-corde,*" and many Catholic interpolations appear even in this second part of the service.

[778] The Vodun ritual is conducted before an altar, in Haitian Créole
[192] called a "trône," which is a perfect marriage between Vodun and

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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marvelously aided in distress. The priest, not willing to allow even this "delusion," tried to cut down the tree but was wounded by his own machete. Eventually, however, the tree was destroyed by natural causes, and a church erected on the site. Fire destroyed the church. Each successive church building has likewise been destroyed, by fire or by lightning. No longer now does the Catholic Church combat the sanctity of Saut d'Eau: after all, it was the Virgin who appeared, not a loa. The great celebrations on every fifteenth of July draw pilgrims from all over Haiti. Although the Church now grudgingly approves the feast it is still recognizably Vodun in character, for devout souls who bathe in the water are "mounted" by loa. The Church has a hard battle ahead of it to win this festival for Catholicism.

Three factors work in favor of the Catholic struggle to win Haitians completely away from Vodun: the world-wide organization of the Church, which can always throw trained reserves into the battle; the superior intellectual equipment of the priests, enabling them to plan their campaign and use psychological weapons; and the plasticity of Vodun itself, which is a conglomeration of human feelings, ideas, and traditions rather than a rigid sect with an inflexible ritual.[3] Even with these advantages, it is still the battle of a few dozen men on one side with the Haitian masses (more than two million) on the other. So far as one is ever justified in prophecy, it seems safe to assume that Vodun will continue to assimilate more and more fragments of Catholicism; that its appeal will remain so long as education and medicine are not extended to the whole countryside; that eventually—it may be centuries hence—Vodun rites may sink back into the status of living folklore, to which the simple turn in their deepest need.

One of the strongest missionary advantages of the Roman Catholic Church has been the breadth given it by two thousand years of experience. In so long a life it has had to be all things to all men; out of necessity it has developed around the central core so wide a variety of belief, doctrine, form, and traditional practice, that there is something for every believer, whether scholarly or untutored, powerfully important or humbly obscure. What the cultivated

3. The absence of any written formulation of Vodun must certainly be a factor in its flexibility. Recorded tradition and written history tend to create definiteness of pattern.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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[p.265]

XV

HAITIAN PROBLEMS

FOR a citizen of the United States or a European country, national problems have to do with external as well as internal affairs. Foreign relations, armaments, international trade, treaties and commitments, loom as large as do unemployment, business depression, labor troubles, and social maladjustment. Political parties rise and fall with their promises or failures to deal successfully with matters arising from the country's position relative to world movements. In Haiti such generalizations do not hold. Her international relations have been and are comparatively minor, while her internal problems have been of a different order from those which trouble most of the rest of the Western World. This is not meant to imply that a world depression leaves Haiti unscathed, or that the country does not suffer when its trade in coffee is interrupted, but rather that its persistent problems would continue to exist whatever the state of world politics and economics. 178 66 648

Contacts of the Haitian people with the outside world between 1804 and 1915 were meagre. The slaughter of whites by Dessalines, the economic decline of the country, unwillingness of white nations to treat with a Negro state, the schism in the Catholic Church, restrictive legislation against white foreigners, general illiteracy of the people—all these shut Haiti off from the world. Christophe, it is true, invited in a few English schoolmasters and agricultural experts, but these remained only a short while and had little influence even among the élite. For a century Haiti saw no foreigners except the few traders at seaports, an occasional Wesleyan missionary, a limited number of consuls and ministers, certain travelers interested in odd corners of the earth, and, after 1860, Catholic priests and sisters. For the peasants there ceased to be any knowledge of the world outside of Haiti; for the élite France once more became the centre of the social universe, as it had been for the affranchis in colonial times. From Boyer's time onward élite youths went to Paris for an education, if they could afford it; the "culture" they acquired there had little relationship to Haitian problems. 175 648 [871] [242] [797] [871]

Foreign relations, in the political sense, revolved during most of

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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for the élite, and was purely cultural. By 1828 there were lower schools in six towns of the country, but only one higher school in the whole of Haiti.[13] 175 871

A report on the condition of education in 1842 showed that the Lycée still existed, its curriculum now limited to French, English, Spanish, Latin, mathematics, composition, history, and fencing.[14] Only 150 students were enrolled. By 1843 there were eleven secondary schools. The question was even raised whether Boyer's failure to promote education during the twenty-five tranquil years of his rule might not have been deliberate, on the principle that it is easier to govern ignorance than knowledge.[15] Actually, however, there was little pressure for education, and so Boyer did nothing.

Geffrard more than any other president of the nineteenth century encouraged education, with the result that almost 20,000 children received some kind of schooling. The census of 1875 made the following estimates:[16]

4 lyceums	with	543 pupils	[162]
6 girls' high schools		563	
5 girls' secondary schools		350	
165 primary schools		11,784	
200 rural schools		5,939	
1 medical school		25	
1 school of music		46	
Total		19,250 pupils	

To these must be added a few pupils in private schools and in the recently established Catholic schools of the Frères de l'Instruction Chrétienne and the Sisters of Cluny. [797]

Toward the turn of the century, when reformers were writing books while the whole country seemed to be slowly dying under its stupid presidents, many a proposal was made which hit squarely upon the need of education and the necessity of a specifically practical curriculum. Joseph Justin[17] urged technical training by experts, and many others hammered away at the same idea. A small sum

13. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti*, I, 83, 120–122, 158.
14. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 74 ff.
15. Mark B. Bird, *The Black Man* (New York, 1869), p. 140.
16. Cited by Sir Spenser St. John, *Hayti, or The Black Republic*, p. 293.
17. *Étude sur les institutions haïtiennes* (Paris, 1894–95), 2 vols.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

512 neighbors paying friendly visits and of playing children gradu-
[264] ally become stilled. It is the time for the evening meal. By nine o'clock at the latest all is quiet and Mirebalais, man and beast, is asleep.

796 The *vodun* drums are heard only on Saturday nights, and
527 then the dance must be sufficiently close to the town, and the wind in the right direction, for the sound to be audible.
[656] Permits for these dances must be obtained, and are regularly given by the police officials — or were in 1934 — and word is passed on that on a given Saturday certain households will give *vodun* dances. If the dances are held in the foothills to the west, the Tombe River must be forded, and the existence of such a barrier between the village and the site of the dance makes this a favorite region in which to hold them, even though they may have official sanction. During the rainy sea-
[484] son attendance at dances on the opposite bank of the Arti-
[501] bonite River depends on the height of the stream, for when it is in flood not even the dugout canoes of the Haitians can cross it, while the ferry which Moreau de St. Mery speaks of as having been established in 1749 does not even exist in local tradition.[14] Yet no dance lacks participants or spectators, for these occasions furnish the principal opportunity for recreation even as they fill their proper religious function. Early in
[798] the week discussions can be heard of the dances to be held, and though the official frown of the Catholic priest is always to be reckoned with, the importance of these dances, and the numbers who attend them, do not seem markedly lessened by
[554] this fact. Those whose social position in the community makes them more sensitive to such criticism merely take the precaution to slip quietly out of town after dark.

796 When occasions of local or national significance and church holidays are celebrated, the town is full of country folk and
[788] visitors from the cities. Christmas and New Year's, Mardi Gras and Easter are all periods for such celebrations, while the first Sunday of every month witnesses a religious procession

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

servation when, for example, the baptismal rites which received into the Church the children of known active participants in *vodun* ceremonies were witnessed. It became even more convincing when experience taught that the best place to encounter an elusive *hungan* or *mambu* was at early Sunday-morning mass. Only when it was realized that no dichotomy exists in Mirebalais between Catholicism and *vodun*, but that both are necessary if all the supernatural beings that control man and man's destiny are properly to be worshipped, was a true perspective obtained.[13]

There are certain Protestant sects which have been increasingly successful in making converts among the Haitian people, particularly in the north, whose adherents stand in strong hostility to *vodun*. A type of Protestantism that has had the best reception is one comparable to the "shouting" sects of the United States and the British West Indies, where the appeal through patterns of possession, dancing, and other aspects of ritual close to the familiar African forms of behavior is evident and relatively little psychological shift is needed to make membership in such a church acceptable.[14] The Protestant church in Mirebalais, however, is more sober. It commands only a very small proportion of the townspeople, and draws even fewer from the surrounding countryside, while the Catholic voduists look upon it with a scorn that is exemplified in the answer to a question about the ritual of Protestant funerals: "*Moun chita, chanté zhymnes*—People sit, and sing hymns!" Two or three well-substantiated cases of conversion to Protestantism came about because, despite the sacrifices made to the inherited *loa* and the prayers to the saints, these individuals continued to experience ill fortune, until in desperation the Protestant minister had been called to banish the family *loa*, to cut down the sacred trees on the family habitation, and to destroy the house of worship, with the objects in it. These deeds of "desecration" were, however, followed by no renewed disasters, and while from the point of view of

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the voduists this is not regarded as decisive proof of the power of Protestantism, for those immediately concerned it is held sufficient.[18]

What, then, of the attitudes held by voduists toward the Catholic Church? The correlation of Catholic ritual with *vodun* practice made by Haitians is of utmost significance in this connection. In discussing the Church service, it was pointed out that church bells announce mass or any other rite, and this, it was explained, is for Legba — *" Toute cloche c'est pou' Legba, même l'église, oui* — All sounding of bells is for Legba, even in church," for he must be notified so that he can " open the gate " for God, Jesus Christ, and the saints. *" Nou' même nou' connai' ça. C'est Bon Dieu crée tout* — You yourself know that. It is God who created everything." It was also recounted how when the priest preaches, he is possessed by the *mystères* of the sacred Trinity, for does he not gesticulate and become excited like any other possessed person?

Furthermore, it is believed that Gede, Ogun, and Damballa " are always at the church," often insisting that their worshippers take communion. Indeed, occasionally the *loa* of a woman may demand a Church marriage from a man to whom she is a *placée*. The sacraments of baptism, first communion, marriage, confession, and extreme unction are received by members of the *vodun* cult, though, as will be seen, when voduists confess, they say nothing of their *loa*. The *hungans* themselves " are most often at the sacred table to take communion," and one particular *hungan* not only attended mass, but was seen continually employing his rosary in the *vodun* ceremonies at which he officiated. While Haitians from the southern peninsula stated that the *hungans* there do not go to church, it was pointed out at the same time that all other voduists attend regularly.

The principal resentment held by Mirebalais voduists against the Church is for the cost of Church rites, and for the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

refusal to accord Church burial to certain faithful followers 779
because of the inability of their surviving relations to pay for 798
their funeral masses. As expressed most clearly, it is felt that the Church is expensive, exacting fees for baptisms, marriage ceremonies, and funerals, while *vodun* worship, on the other hand, costs but little: a bit of *clairin*, the animals one must sacrifice — only, however, to insure the help of the *loa* in causing the remaining ones to increase in number — and the "presents" to be given the gods, costs the less oppressive because they are usually shared by all members of one's family. Another source of discontent is said to be the failure of the Church to adhere to its agreement in the Concordat to "Haitianize" the clergy. This has been emphasized in Mirebalais because the priest of its church is one of the relatively few in Haiti who is himself a Haitian. One of the sentiments about the Church most frequently heard during this field-work, coming as it did just at the end of the American occupation, was: "The *Garde* has finally been Haitianized. Now it is the turn of the Church."

The attitude of the Church toward *vodun* is one of intran- 798
sigent hostility. The anger with which the priest preached 648
his sermon on the Sunday morning following a *vodun* dance held close enough to town so that the sound of the drums, plainly audible, "disturbed" him the night long, clearly indicates how deeply the priests of the Church resent the worship of the African gods. In Mirebalais they tell how, at the instance of the Church, *vodun* rites were unmercifully suppressed by the Americans during the occupation, to whom it was represented as a potential focus for revolt. In the *place* huge bonfires were made of *vodun* drums painted and "dressed" in elaborate manner. Everything found in the *humforts* and the private houses of worship was confiscated, and the "thunder stones," necklaces of the devotees, and other sacred objects that would not burn were thrown into the Artibonite River. Today the Church takes full advantage 000

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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779 Today the Church takes full advantage
798 of its status as the only recognized religious organization in Haiti to dictate the official position of government toward *vodun*. Permission for *vodun* dances and for *services* must be obtained from the officer commanding the local detachment of the Garde d'Haiti, and this is not always granted. Penalties [688] for illicit dances and ceremonies are severe, and because gossip is ubiquitous and no man lacks enemies, apprehension is prompt. Thus in the instance of one *service*, a misunderstanding regarding the permit was sufficient to cause the detention for some hours of the one responsible for the rite.

771 Is it possible, then, for a person to be a communicant of the
178 Church and partake of the sacrament without feeling this
177 weight of spiritual and official disapprobation? More particularly, is it possible for him to omit from his confession all allusion to his worship of "false" gods? It is here that one encounters a singularly tenacious survival of African traditional belief. In Africa the conquest of one people by another meant the mutual interchange and acceptance of the respective deities. The conquerors added to their own pantheons the gods of those whom they had overcome so that these forces might not wreak a supernatural vengeance upon them; while to the conquered the power of the gods of those who had defeated them was self-evident. If the worship of the Christian God and of the saints of the Church intruded on the aboriginal religious patterns of the Negroes brought to Haiti, the acceptance of such worship did not imply rejection of the old gods. Nor does membership in the Church today mean such complete acquiescence in its doctrines and pronouncements that the worshipper of the *loa* will offer himself for the malediction of the priest by confessing his adherence to their cult. The situation somewhat parallels that in Africa itself, where the first effort of Protestant missionaries is directed toward inducing their converts to abjure polygyny. This dictum is complied with readily enough on the surface, so that a man will have but one wife — in one village! In Haiti the

534 322 [412] The craft of drum making is a very skilled one, but the tools are simple: chisels, machetes, and fire. The core of the log is removed by burning and gouging, and the outside is shaped with a machete, or sometimes a hachet. The wood is selected and processed carefully. Firing of the core of the log depends a good deal on how dry the wood is, for the wood must burn slowly. It is believed that wood cut at the right stage of growth and at the right phase of the moon is resistant to the ever-present powder-post beetles. Mahogany was once favored because it was durable and beetle resistant, even though it was heavy. But in recent decades mahogany has become scarce, and modern drums are made of lighter woods. [824]

534 798 [531] [171] Drums made in the nineteenth century not only conformed to the patterns of certain West African prototypes but were also carved and decorated. Some of these old drums are still to be seen, but there are not many left. An ancient carved assotor drum (previously cited) has fortunately been preserved by the Bureau d'Ethnologie. But between the ravages of the powder-post beetles, age, and the periodic orgies of drum burning by the church and misguided public officials, most of these ancient works of art have long since disappeared. During the American occupation of Haiti—from World War I to 1932—American military personnel also contributed to the mania for drum burning. And as late as 1941 there was a massive, cleric-inspired drive to wipe out these instruments as remnants of *sauvage* elements in Haitian life. [648]

534 178 531 The effect of this war against the drum was only to improve the business of the professional drum maker. Drums had become expendable, hence they were made simpler. The carved decorations disappeared. Paint was substituted, and less attention was given to detail. The important thing was to produce a good functional instrument. But the creative instincts of the drum makers sometimes still take over, and many of the modern drums are beautifully proportioned, with delicate geometric patterns carved around the base, or foot. Among certain categories of drums the painted decorations consist solely of the name of the loa to whom the instruments have been dedicated—St. Jacques perhaps, or Papa Pierre, or Ezilie.

534 171 794 996 534 Drums differ in design according to the use for which they are intended. The Arada or Vodoun drums are used primarily in connection with the dances and rituals of the Vodoun cult—the cult built around the gods and rites of Arada and Yoruba theology. They resemble closely drums which are used today in Dahomey, Nigeria, and Togoland. They usually come in sets of three. The largest, the *manman* (also called *hounfor* or *hountogri*), may be three to four feet high. The middle-sized drum, or *second* (also called *grondé* or *moyen*), is about two feet

[Text continues on p. 193]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

534 [177] the Haitian word for "twins." They are used primarily for secular music of the Cuban type, and may in fact be an importation from Cuba. The marassa is one of the few drums on which a finger technique is used; that is, striking with individual fingers rather than with grouped fingers. Marassas are often played in concert with guitars and marimbas.

The *basse* is the shallow finger drum resembling what in the United States is called the tambourine. Constructed in the pattern of an African prototype, its head is usually fifteen or eighteen inches in diameter and made of goatskin. Small metal disks sometimes are inserted in the frame [314] to act as rattles. The head is kept well coated with resin or beeswax and [237] is tapped and rubbed with the fingers. The *basse* is used only for secular music, except in the rare instances when it is used in Congo services. Some Haitians believe that the name of the instrument comes from the word *Basque*.

534 202 It is reported that signal drums were still in use a decade ago in remote sections of the southwestern peninsula. One of these instruments, according to description, is distinguished mainly by its large belly and small mouth; like the Juba drum, it is played on its side. Another style of signal drum has a slit in the side and is played erect, much like an African slit-log drum standing on end.

534 [171] Another percussion instrument is the bamboo stamping tube, called the *ganbo* or *ti kanmbo*. It is African in origin and probably takes its name from the Loango term for the same device, *dikanmbo*.[2] The stamping tube is simply a length of bamboo, open at one end and closed at the other by a natural joint membrane. The closed end is struck sharply upon the ground, and the tone comes from the open top. The device works like an inverted drum, the closed end functioning like a drumhead. A battery of four or five ganbos may provide the percussion music otherwise played by drums. The musician corresponding to the *bulatier* of the drum orchestra plays two small stamping tubes, one in each hand. The other musicians have one each, thicker and longer than the bulatier's and producing deeper tones. Cupped hands are manipulated over the open ends for varying the sounds. This instrument [171] has survived in various parts of the New World where Africans were settled, particularly other West Indian islands, Brazil, and Venezuela. In Venezuela the stamping tubes are called *quitiplas*.[3] They have recently been reported from various areas of West Africa, including French Equatorial Africa.[4]

534 648 798 The ganbos had a singular burst of popularity in Haiti during the United States military occupation of the country after the first World War, when drums were often seized and destroyed. Drums could not [115]

[2] [Informant: Joseph Lengo, Brazzaville. Cf. P.354, Category 116. --Analyst]

[3] [Library of Congress album, Folk Music of Venezuela. Cf P. 354 Category 116. --Analyst]

[4] [Pamphlet accompanying recording Music of Equatorial Africa (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1950). Cf. P. 354, Cat. 116. --Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

easily be hidden, but the ganbos were simply slipped into the straw 534
roofs and thus put out of sight. Moreover, by some strange process of 648
reasoning, military authorities regarded the bamboos as "harmless," 798
though they were used for the same purposes as the contraband drums.

There are numerous other kinds of simple percussion devices. One 534
such instrument, now less commonly seen than previously, is a length of open bamboo laid in the crotches of two Y-shaped sticks set in the ground. Like other *catas,* the bamboo is beaten with two sticks. Some Haitians believe that in former days such bamboos were played in batteries like a xylophone.

Sometimes a light-weight wooden cylinder, or perhaps a drum de- [461]
nuded of its playing head, is carried by the timekeeper of a coumbite. [476]
It, also, is played on the side with sticks.

Wooden mortars for pulverizing grain take on the character of musical 534
instruments when used in combination with voices. When two or more 533
mortars are used, with two men or women wielding the long polelike 412
pestles in each mortar, the rhythmic effects can become fairly complicated.

The *claves* or *palos* (small hardwood sticks) are used primarily in 534
connection with secular dances of a Cuban type, or to accompany such 535
instruments as the guitar and the marimba. One stick is held loosely in [177]
the natural fold of the hand, so that it is free to vibrate, and is struck
sharply with the second stick. The tone is almost metallic because of [824]
the hardness of the wood, usually lignum vitae. The name of the instrument is recognizable as a form of *clavar,* or *clavo,* Spanish for "peg"
or "nail." It is thought that wooden shipbuilding pegs provided the [171]
name for this device, which has equivalents in West Africa.

Among the folk instruments there are various kinds of horns and 534
trumpets. Cows' horns are played musically in some parts of the southern 184
peninsula, though usually they are used as ritual instruments and signaling devices. Wooden trumpets called *pistons* are carved from the stems [824]
of the papaya tree. Conch-shell trumpets, known as *lambis,* are com- [202]
monly used as signaling devices by fishermen. They are also to be
found among the coumbites, in Rara festivities, and occasionally in
rituals, where they are usually identified with sea deities. In carnival [541]
times the old fashioned phonograph horn makes its appearance as a com- [216]
bined trumpet and voice amplifier.

Probably the most important of the trumpets is the one made of 534
bamboo. It is called a *vaccine* or *bois bourrique.* Both names have in- 755
teresting origins. The cow's horn was at one time used for magico- [237]
medical purposes. The leaf doctor used it as an "applicator" of powders
and potions. A small opening was made in the point of the horn, and
[See plate 8, P. 112-F. -- Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Vodun, then, was both widespread and powerful enough to be turned to most effective ends in 1791. Contemporary accounts of it still saw it as a meeting ground of superstitions. The French naturalist, Descourtilz, for example, was primarily struck by the use of the occult in connection with Vodun; he especially describes a woman who, under the seizure of her god, took a live coal in her hand without being burnt; a husband who by the use of magic struck his inconstant wife with a languorous malady, effective for half a year; and the knowledge of poison which was combined with the practice of magic. He mentions but one of the Vodun gods by name but implies the existence of many others.[10]

Madiou, Haiti's first historian, likewise always spoke of Vodun as a savage survival; he says of a native general, "Lamour Dérance, plunged in gross errors, put his faith in *sorcery*, in the prophecy of *papas*, or priests of *African fetishism*."[11] In his scornful distaste for the vulgar he clearly indicated by his own italics some conspicuous elements of the developing religion: magic, the use of fetishes, and a Vodun priesthood. His illustration of Dérance's error was his making soldiers believe that bullets could not wound them:

> When he marched to combat he was preceded by bands of Congos, Aradas, Ibos, Nabos, Mandingues, Haoussas, who threw themselves against the French battalions with a prodigious intrepidity, crying that the bullets were but dust. But this courage which *superstition* fed was shattered against the ramparts of . . . the Europeans' square formations.

It is noteworthy that the first three black rulers set themselves against Vodun because of its potentialities for sedition. The plots to overthrow the old régime had come to fruition at apparently innocent Vodun dances. Although the ingenuous aspect of the dance gathering had deceived the white masters, Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe knew the meaning of the assemblies. All three had to drive their people hard and knew that resentment would be an inevitable consequence; it must not have an opportunity to burgeon at nightly gatherings. Toussaint was the strictest of the three, for he forbade all dances and nocturnal assemblage.[12] The other two singled

10. M. E. Descourtilz, *Voyages d'un naturaliste en Haïti, 1799–1803* (Paris, 1935 ed.), pp. 116–118.
11. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, p. 33.
12. In an order of January 4, 1800.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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The other two singled

175 out Vodun dances for their bans, permitting the purely social dances.
643 On the eve of the first anniversary of independence, "as soon as
794 retreat was sounded, African dances of all kinds began in the tents
796 and open fields; the Vaudoux dance alone was proscribed; the noise
671 of the drums did not quiet down until morning."[13] Dessalines was
659 more suspicious of Vodun than the other two for, being a superstitious man himself, he feared that some of his growing number of
798 enemies might use sorcery upon him; consequently whenever his
771 active police reported meetings of Vodun worshipers he had the offenders shot if they could be caught. Practically all Haitians knew how to distinguish the rhythms of Vodun drumbeats from those of other dances, so that it was not particularly difficult to track down the meeting places. What Christophe really believed, no one could say. He paid outward homage to Roman Catholicism, of course, but rumor persisted of his great faith in magic and the power of African fetishes.[14]

175 The élite mulatto presidents, Pétion and Boyer, did not deign to
643 dignify Vodun by prohibiting it. No revelation of their attitude
794 toward it survives, but we may note that no law of their thirty-six-
659 year tenure of the presidency mentions it. From their other opinions
798 one concludes that they regarded it as merely another of the people's innocent and harmless aberrations. Not one of the foreigners whose
796 curiosity about the Negro republic led them to report on Haitian
771 life of this period gives an intelligent account of Vodun as it then
114 was. Macaulay, writing in 1831, for example, describes the annual celebration at the source of Grande Rivière de l'Artibonite; he mentions the festive dances (not Vodun) and singing, then says: "Morning ceremonies consisted of a solemn sacrifice at which the blood of victims immolated for the feast were offered, and libations of wine were poured on the spring."[15] This was clearly a Vodun sacrifice. Brown, in 1837, writes as a religious man:

> No race is, more than the African, given to religious feelings, though these being but mere sensations entirely independent of thought and reason, manifest themselves in a display of idle fooleries, or dark and hideous terrors of the imagination. They intermix the legitimate ritual of the Catholic faith with the mysterious adoration paid to their national Fetishes, and the

13. Madiou, *op. cit.*, III, 186.
14. See Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti*, pp. 90–91.
15. Zachary Macaulay, *Haiti* (Paris, 1835), pp. 90–91.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 ignored when they did not frown upon it. As we have seen, the
771 aristocratic Madiou spoke of Vaudoux as "the sorcerers of our coun-
794 try districts," and President Riché in 1846 whenever he heard a suspect drum, went himself to silence it. Under Soulouque, on the other hand, the élite did not dare to show contempt for practices so dear to His Imperial (if benighted) Highness; indeed, one priestess of Vodun then boasted, "If I were to beat the sacred drums and march through the city, not one from the Emperor downwards but would humbly follow me."

175 For at least a century Vodun had developed with no real obstacles
771 beyond the twenty-year prohibition of the Three Great Blacks. The
794 white planters in the colonial era had been too indifferent and imper-
● 798 ceptive to stop it, while the élite of the republic were too proud to concern themselves. The Catholic Church, which might have been its most effective enemy, was too lax and too much hampered in colonial times to curb "slave superstition," while from 1805 until 1860 because of the schism no real Catholic priesthood labored in the country. All this changed after Soulouque: the schism was healed; priests of true missionary spirit came to Haiti; the *Affaire de Bizoton* gave the enemies of Vodun a focal point of attack. Since 1860 the Catholic Church has not ceased its war against the folk religion. Occasionally, as in the days of Toussaint, a ruler has suppressed it. Such executives have probably known, however, that it was much too late to eradicate Vodun. It had decades in which to send down its roots. Efforts against it have about the same effect as the persecution of the early Christians—a strengthening of the faith of believers, an outward submission to restrictive rules but increased devotion to rites now performed secretly, and in the case of Vodun at least, an added attraction to the cult because of this very secrecy. At least one president has been known to be an ardent worshiper. Today, much as the élite turn up their noses at Vodun, there are many who look to it in their hour of need, when the Catholic faith seems to fail or medicine proves helpless.

3. *Vodun Belief*

771 The sincere Vodun worshiper is generally an illiterate peasant or humble laborer who would never bother his mind to formulate a definite statement of his beliefs. Because there is no clearing-house

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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114 776 769 the dead a right to whatever their survivors possess, and moreover gives them the right to return to earth as ghosts.[31]

769 Strict rules of mourning prevail, both as regards clothing and behavior. The slightest lapse in the observation of these rules would 765 cause resentment on the part of the dead; fear of retribution would 775 be quite enough to ensure conformity even if public opinion did not. 782 Ghosts have the power to possess mortals, not as the loa do at a Vodun service or dance, but in the manner understood by American Negroes who say they have been "ha'nted," and so, continually thinking of the dead, live in nervous fear of a streak of bad luck. Such possession is a form of persecution, with continual consequent bad luck until the survivor has carried out all his obligations. It is especially significant, however, that a departed spirit takes vengeance only in matters thought by the Haitian to concern the Church. The ghost is not whimsical in his possession of mortals, and cannot resent treatment which is his due. The kind of treatment given a corpse depends upon the kind of death he died: a person struck by lightning, for example, would have no ceremonies at all, for lightning is an act of God.

787 Where the cult of the dead departs entirely from the teachings of 775 the Church is in the matter of magic, a topic shortly to be treated. It 789 may be briefly stated here that ghosts can be summoned back by special adepts for purposes of divination; that certain corpses are thought to be revivified by evil persons who use these soulless, pathetic automata as slaves (these are the notorious *zombis*); and that black magic—that is, powerful influence for evil—can be worked by sorcerers who know how to command ghosts.

771 All other articles of the Vodun creed not already discussed, except one, come under the heading of magic. That exception is the state- ● 798 ment: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church." The fact is as simple as the affirmation. If the Catholic priests fight Vodun, preaching frequently against its beliefs and practices, that is unfortunate, think the peasants: Vodun does not retaliate by fighting Catholicism. God and the saints have their province, and the loa theirs. The mind of the Haitian is simple enough to accept both sets of spiritual beings, and not philosophical enough to worry over the contradiction. Practically every Vodun worshiper thinks of himself as a Catholic.[32]

31. See Herskovits, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

32. In this sketch of the Vodun creed, it has been constantly emphasized that each locality has its own variations both in belief and practice. The reader who is interested in pursuing the subject further should consult the works of Price-Mars, Herskovits, Dorsainvil, Parsons, Hurston, et al. See Bibliography.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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validity to forms and ideas which we know, in our hearts, might sustain us.[1]

The Haitian peasant is not interested in making formal distinctions. If he is critical, it is only of results, rarely of the means used to obtain those results. If he cannot gain his ends in one way he is not too proud to try another, and still a third. Nineteen out of twenty Haitians, then, being Roman Catholics in religion, are likewise worshipers of Vodun. There is so much mystery in the world, so much misfortune, beauty, sorrow, and joy that it would be unthinkable to deny God or the gods: mankind has worship enough for them all, and need enough of them all. There is to the peasant no conflict between Vodun and Catholicism; the two are complementary, even if sometimes the Catholic priests make coöperation impossible.

Let us recall for a moment the earlier history of the country. In the days of slavery one may imagine the Church would have found it difficult, even if its priests and planters had been willing, to train all the blacks as thorough Catholics. Some concepts took root, some rites immediately appealed. Below the surface, however, the African ideas of the preponderant Dahomeans were spreading through the plantations. In the crucial early days of independence, when the customs and social institutions of the Haitians (as Haitians, not as expatriate slaves) were in process of formation, the country's rulers were not deeply religious; moreover the State was in open schism from the Church. For fifty-five years no approved churchman was at work with the people. The seventy men whom some historians mention as priests were on the whole venal and self-seeking, even vicious. Their least concern was to wean the people away from their superstitions, for precisely in these folk beliefs lay the greatest source of gain. By the time the breach between State and Church was healed it was too late to make single-minded Catholics of the Haitian peasants. They would accept what the new and active priests taught them, but not to the exclusion of what they had believed for a century.

With the élite the Church has had more success; assiduous teach-

1. This either-or dichotomy is not limited to religion: we divide ourselves similarly in politics, family life, residence, and so on. If I am a Lutheran, a Republican, a married man with a home in New York, I cannot at the same time be an Episcopalian, a Democrat, and a voter in Chicago with a second spouse and family there. What is impossible and ridiculous for Americans, however, is in some ways the normal course of life for the Haitian.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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776 that Catholic practice in these matters did no more than to fortify
177 an African tendency already in evidence; indeed, it is a common tendency of folk religions anywhere to associate days and colors with their honored spirits. The very similarity of conventions indicates the ease with which borrowing of religious ideas might occur.

798 Every Catholic priest is well aware of the hold Vodun has upon the people, just as all desire to see the ultimate triumph of the Church. The battle is unending, but the method of attack varies. Open firmness is the approach favored by some priests, subtle indirection by others. Sermons against Vodun do little good apparently, for the faith of the worshipers is sufficient to maintain in their own minds the validity of what the preachers inveigh against. When zealous clerics cut down trees sacred to Damballa or try otherwise to eradicate signs and symbols of the loa, the people have rarely tried to stop them; but when the slightest bad luck comes to the iconoclasts—and misfortune comes to every man sooner or later—the people are quick to interpret the stroke as the loa's punishment for the desecration of holy things. On one occasion a shrine was destroyed, the priest calling in an American officer to shoot at a supposed apparition of the Virgin: shortly thereafter the priest's house was burned to the ground, the priest himself suffered a paralytic stroke from which he never recovered, and the captain was ordered back to the United States, "as a punishment for what he had done," said the people. *Post hoc ergo propter hoc*—what followed was a direct consequence of what had gone before; this has been the basis of belief from time immemorial. Who shall say it was not cause and effect? Similar cases have been numerous. One concludes that the method of direct assault will never achieve its purpose.

Subtlety of attack, on the other hand, requires infinite patience, infinite willingness to compromise for the present. Both are qualities which the Catholic Church has amply demonstrated in times past. Certain of the priests whose parishes include country districts are masters in the art of patient indirection, willing to accept apparent failure in their lifetime in the hope of ultimate victory for the Church. Their method is to discover which Vodun practices are of prime importance and, ignoring minor beliefs and practices, slowly lure—not intellectually persuade—the people away from them. This process may be clearly illustrated by a service in the hills in 1937.

A Catholic chapel had been erected in recent years upon a hilltop

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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A Catholic chapel had been erected in recent years upon a hilltop

long respected as a favorite haunt of the loa Damballa. Apparently this was no slight, for Vodun gods are not monopolistic. On the hill, however, once stood a tree in which a snake made his home, symbol of Damballa. Many years earlier a forthright Catholic priest had ordered his parishioners to fell the tree, an insult direct to the loa which none of the faithful dared give. The determined cleric therefore performed the task himself, but left a sizable stump on which has now been placed a small statue of the popular Catholic Saint Anthony. 798 796 177

The feast day was well attended, and while the Mass and sermon were proceeding in the crowded chapel dozens of men and women who could not get into the building, or who preferred not to try, remained outside. Many were simply standing about in groups, chatting; others were more significantly engaged. Some kneeled before the tree stump at whose foot many candles were burning; there, as at a shrine, they prayed. Were their prayers Catholic petitions to Saint Anthony or Vodun prayers to Damballa? At another corner of the church under the shade of a tree sat a venerable woman dispensing a liquid concoction, which seemed particularly popular with the women and children. Holding out their hands they received a palmful each of the syrupy substance, which they then smeared upon their bodies; on the eyes or face, on their legs, or on more private parts. The Catholic priest later explained the liquid as a "Voodoo brew," and again as a charm; more accurately, it was a garde to turn away illness from the parts of the body rubbed with it.

The officiating priest knew perfectly well that not all the candles burning at the tree stump were for Saint Anthony; he was also aware of the woman dispensing her liquid, yet took no steps to stop her. He assumed that with the small statue of Saint Anthony on the stump, there were already children growing up unaware of Damballa's connection with the place. He hoped to find money for a larger, more imposing statue so that as generations passed the memory of the loa, as related to worship on this hill, would be supplanted. As for the woman, why bother to drive her away? It would merely cause antagonism, and would certainly not stop the practice. Her being there might draw a few more peasants to the feast, where they would have an opportunity to learn the true Word.

As soon as the Mass in the chapel was finished, the people poured out and began to form a line of march. Headed by the priest the whole congregation, including many who had not penetrated to the

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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798 chapel, wended their way down the hill and across to a clearing
796 among the trees. On the way many of the women stopped beside
the path to pluck a handful of long grass or reached up to break
177 twigs from the smaller trees. At the clearing, primitively decorated with colored cloth, the priest made a short discourse; then he intoned three times, "Notre Dame d'Alta Gracia," and the worshipers, raising their wisps of greenery above their heads, rustled the twigs until the air was filled with a sound like the hissing of many serpents. "*Priez pour nous!*" they responded each time to the rustling accompaniment. The Virgin of Alta Gracia is the miraculous saint of Higuey, as much renowned among Haitians as among the Spanish-speaking Dominicans farther east. The supplication to the Virgin is proper enough to a Catholic feast, but the hissing, reminiscent of Damballa, is an intimation that the Vodun loa is not yet forgotten on his holy hill.

This festival of Notre Dame d'Alta Gracia shows not only the adaptability of Catholicism to Vodun, but likewise that of Vodun to Catholicism. Not even with the will to preserve their faith and practice pure can most men resist the infiltration of surrounding beliefs; in Haiti, the will to resist is itself lacking. This the Church knows, and counts upon for ultimate victory. In other words, there is to be not precisely a conversion of worshipers away from Vodun, but a slow transformation of Vodun itself into a true Catholic faith within the hearts of the people.

In its long experience in adaptability, the Church has in many a country learned to establish a ground of common understanding with lowly folk, while keeping its touch with aristocrats. Following the principle that where a belief or rite is apparently ineradicable it is advisable to turn it to Catholic uses, the Church in Haiti has often made this kind of adjustment, just as in earlier times with the Aztecs, Mayans, and other continental American Indians. An example of it may be observed at Saut d'Eau, near Ville-Bonheur.

787 Here, near the centre of Haiti, in 1884 there appeared in a palm
778 tree the vision of a beautiful Virgin blessing the people. She re-
798 mained so long that according to tradition the whole countryside saw her. The parish priest, unwilling to permit this obsession of the people to continue, came to drive away the apparition. The Virgin departed, apparently of her own will. People saw her no more, but many came to the palm tree and were miraculously cured and

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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marvelously aided in distress. The priest, not willing to allow even this "delusion," tried to cut down the tree but was wounded by his own machete. Eventually, however, the tree was destroyed by natural causes, and a church erected on the site. Fire destroyed the church. Each successive church building has likewise been destroyed, by fire or by lightning. No longer now does the Catholic Church combat the sanctity of Saut d'Eau: after all, it was the Virgin who appeared, not a loa. The great celebrations on every fifteenth of July draw pilgrims from all over Haiti. Although the Church now grudgingly approves the feast it is still recognizably Vodun in character, for devout souls who bathe in the water are "mounted" by loa. The Church has a hard battle ahead of it to win this festival for Catholicism.

Three factors work in favor of the Catholic struggle to win Haitians completely away from Vodun: the world-wide organization of the Church, which can always throw trained reserves into the battle; the superior intellectual equipment of the priests, enabling them to plan their campaign and use psychological weapons; and the plasticity of Vodun itself, which is a conglomeration of human feelings, ideas, and traditions rather than a rigid sect with an inflexible ritual.[3] Even with these advantages, it is still the battle of a few dozen men on one side with the Haitian masses (more than two million) on the other. So far as one is ever justified in prophecy, it seems safe to assume that Vodun will continue to assimilate more and more fragments of Catholicism; that its appeal will remain so long as education and medicine are not extended to the whole countryside; that eventually—it may be centuries hence—Vodun rites may sink back into the status of living folklore, to which the simple turn in their deepest need.

One of the strongest missionary advantages of the Roman Catholic Church has been the breadth given it by two thousand years of experience. In so long a life it has had to be all things to all men; out of necessity it has developed around the central core so wide a variety of belief, doctrine, form, and traditional practice, that there is something for every believer, whether scholarly or untutored, powerfully important or humbly obscure. What the cultivated

3. The absence of any written formulation of Vodun must certainly be a factor in its lasting. Recorded tradition and written history tend to create definiteness of pattern.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Boulicha Nagó, or Boulicha of the Nagos; Èzilie Wèdo and Èzilie Doba, possibly from Wèdo and Doba in Dahomey; Tijean Pied Chêche (Tijean Dry Feet), a loa of bad character, "dry feet" signifying malevolence; and Legba Grand Chimin, or Legba of the Highway. 776 171 552

Identification of loa is often made difficult by the use of the generic or family title only. The term Nago covers all the loa associated with this "nation" (Nago Piment, Amine Nago, Boulicha Nago, etc.), but in a song or service any one of them is as likely as not to be referred to simply as Nago, with no clue to his exact identity. Each listener takes the name to designate the Nago loa with whom he is most familiar, unless possession occurs and the loa is otherwise identified by the behavior of his "horse." 776 552

On the whole, it appears that there was in the beginning a strong awareness of regional origins. There are names among the cult pantheons which indicate Senegal, Dahomey, Nigeria, Congo, and Angola origins. Many loa bear the names of African towns. Among the Ogoun family of loa, for example, are such regional designations as Badagry and Jèkkè, the first being a town in Nigeria and the second in Dahomey. It is clear that a detailed geographical knowledge of certain West African regions would considerably illuminate a study of Haitian loa. 776 174 552

Local shrines, too, doubtless enter into the naming system. Badagry is the name of a town in Nigeria, and it is also a Dahomean word designating the structure in which young men used to be circumcised and initiated into the secrets of warriors. In this particular light, the loa Ogoun Badagry might be regarded as the deity of that particular ritual center. 346 174 776 552

In discussing the complicated relationship of their loa, Haitians sometimes say: "There are seven of everything. There are seven Marassas, seven Ogouns, seven Èzilies. There are seven brothers and sisters in every family of loa." Or they say something such as: "There is only one Legba, but there are seven. There is only one Ogoun, but he has many moods and names. There is only one Èzilie, but she has seven faces." This concept is also held by the Arara (Arada) cult of Cuba. It is interesting to note the extent to which duplications and new generations of loa have been set up into family households in the most literal sense. Those families are still growing. In the Gèdé family I have counted more than thirty seemingly distinct individuals (see Appendix I)[1]; Herskovits mentions a number of others, and still more have been cited by other writers on the subject. When I pointed out to some Haitians that the Gèdé family numbered far more than seven individuals, they were unable to account for the situation. Other Haitians took the vast army of Gèdés as a matter of course. The Ogoun family, too, is large and growing. Twenty-seven Ogouns are listed in the compilation in Appendix I. Still more have been recorded elsewhere. 776 801

1 [See p. 317ff., Category 116.-- Analyst]

776 Another factor that may explain some of the confusion over which rites a loa is attached to is the concept of the *escorte*, a kind of army or association of loa which may include deities of different nations. In discussing the loa Wanilé, for example, one Haitian noted:

"Wanilé is neither Rada nor Dahomé, but Pétro. She is an escorte, and she walks with Dahomé. In the escorte, Dahomé and Pétro walk together. A big loa—a loa with a big name—has many other loa who walk with him. In an escorte there are twenty-one in all. The escorte has a chief, and under the chief there are soldiers—that is, smaller loa who must do what the chief says.

776 754 "For example, a man goes to a houngan and gets him to send a strong loa against you to hurt you in some way—to make you sick or lose your crop. Your own loa may be a strong one, but the houngan has sent a still stronger one against you, and so your own loa can't really protect you. So he will go away and send in his place one of his escorte. This smaller loa is not as strong perhaps as the one he is replacing, but he is stronger in that the houngan did not calculate on him. He has certain abilities which he can use to help you. And it isn't suspected that he is your protector. So in this way he is in a better position than your own loa.

776 "The smaller loa go together in an escorte. Many people may have a certain loa, and he is busy all the time. If someone needs him and he can't go, he will send one of his escorte, the next one below him.

776 753 754 "If you are made sick by a loa, there are so many in his escorte you don't know which one made you sick, so you can't do anything about it. It is difficult sometimes to identify the loa that is hurting you. You really have to dig to find out who he is. You have to give a *mangé*. There is a big ceremony, and you have to be bought back from the loa. But some loa who are persecuting you won't sell you back. They won't go away. Rather than leave you alone they would see you die. Perhaps the person who sent this loa against you sent him to kill. If your own loa can't protect you he will send one of his escorte to do it. *Gainyain connain passé connain* [There is knowledge that surpasses knowledge]. *Si fer pas coupé fer, machoquette pas gainyain travaille* [If iron didn't cut iron, the blacksmith would have no work to do]."

776 This concept of the escorte, some of whose members may be Rada and some Pétro, helps to explain why certain deities are identified with rites [801] of different "nations." For the Haitian himself it provides a way of accounting for "families" that have grown beyond the ritual number seven. Yet there are some Haitians who declare that every member of an escorte is simply a different manifestation of a single deity.

600 The loa, like the rites, vary somewhat according to region and to the

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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American masters, had nearly stood still. For almost a century, Haiti's elite had taken justifiable pride in their ancestors' triumph over Napoleonic France, even while they remained enthralled by French culture. This strange ambivalence would no longer do. In effect, the United States occupation compelled Haitian scholars to rediscover what it meant to be Haitian.

As the writing of Jean Price-Mars (1928) expressed that identity culturally, so the regime of Dumarsais Estimé began to express it politically. For the first time, Africa, and not simply France, became an important part of the nationalist dialogue. The Creole language began to be studied in its own right, and a program to end illiteracy through education in Creole was launched. Folkloristic studies, emphasizing the African component in Haitian rural life, especially as expressed in religion, came into vogue. Haitians began to explore their own society as a synthesis that was as much African as it was French—and as a synthesis, rather than as a mechanical alignment of two distinct traditions. The term *authentique* was employed to express what was "truly Haitian," and Haiti herself was viewed as a unique and original blending of two pasts. Under Estimé, rural folk of promise—and they were, in the nature of things, predominantly dark-skinned—were given greater opportunities, especially to be educated and to enter government service. Moreover, these developments took place at a time when Haiti's economic situation was relatively good, and Estimé enjoyed a measure of popular support rare in Haiti's entire history.

Furthermore, it was during the Estimé regime that Haitian cultural life reached some sort of climax. In the 1920s young Haitian intellectuals had been deeply shaken by the United States occupation and had begun to formulate their own answers to the questions it raised. Not only did Africa come into view as the wellspring of much that was Haitian but Haiti's status as an occupied though once-sovereign power dramatized the need for a social and political philosophy that fitted with hemispheric and international realities. French intellectual currents figured importantly in Haitian political thinking, both because the intellectuals of the French Antilles of the time were inspired by Haitian history and interested in Haiti, and because those islands and Haiti shared a curious affinity in their "Gallo-African" cultures. Anticolonial and Marxist points of view were espoused by a few Haitians, but these perspectives were complicated by changing

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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attitudes toward French culture in all of its expressions, and by a new feeling of kinship for the peoples and cultures of Africa.

The variety of views expressed by Haitian intellectuals was colored by differences no more subtle than those characteristic of the intellectuals of any other country in the Caribbean region—even though North American observers unfortunately persist in treating such differences as politically irrelevant. There were those spokesmen who continued to embrace French culture and to reject "Africanism," only deploring the North American presence in Haiti. Others embodied their views in a staunchly Haitian nationalism and, as they began to view their country in a new light, invested the Haitian folk with an unrealistically romantic picturesqueness. Still others fastened upon the African theme with special intensity, and thereby gave a strong racist tinge to their nationalism.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, anthropology came to be seen as an important means for giving Haitians an accurate—that is, an "inside"—picture of their own society; a number of young ethnologists, mainly self-trained, began to publish works on Haitian culture. Soon anthropology was pressed into a political mold, anticipating similar developments in other "colonial" countries. The first novels purporting to deal with the common people, though sometimes tinged with idealized preconceptions of rural society, were published; and an impressive number of competent young poets devoted themselves to aesthetic explorations of the Haitian spirit. Haitian cultural and intellectual life, in short, was taken up with the rediscovery of Haiti and its people.

But the Estimé regime did not produce changes in the economic structure of Haitian society of importance proportionate to the national cultural renascence. Even those modifications in the class structure for which Estimé is sometimes given credit might not have occurred, were it not for educational reforms that had begun in the 1920s and the beneficial effects of Haiti's prosperity of the mid-1940s. What Estimé could do was to open the ranks of an inefficiently large bureaucracy to able, if sometimes inadequately trained, newcomers of poor rural antecedents.

At the same time, as the Comhaire-Sylvains have suggested (1959: 179–89), a qualitatively different class group was beginning to emerge in Port-au-Prince during Estimé's presidency, and the presence of such a group suggests that new economic forces were feebly stirring.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

in at the same time, while calabashes and melon vines are planted where the ash of the fires that consumed the cleared brush can fertilize them. Rice, which grows some four months before it matures, is planted between May and August in special patches reserved for this crop. Millet, planted in July, August, and September, can be harvested in January. Potatoes and manioc are put in the earth the latter quarter of the year and are harvested during the next dry season. Bananas, according to their species, are planted between April and September. Red beans, which mature twice a year and are cultivated high on the mountains surrounding the valleys, where it is cool, are planted in January and February and in August and September; they are harvested in June and January. 241

Sugar-cane is almost as important today as it was in the earliest days of Haitian agriculture. It is planted from May to July and gathered a year later, two fields being necessary if an annual crop is to be harvested. Once the cane is in the ground, however, it gives crop after crop without the need of preparing the fields or planting new shoots each year. Yams and *malangan* are cultivated on the mountainsides, the land often being worked by a system of share-cropping whereby a farmer who lives in the valley but owns mountain land employs a near-by peasant to work for him, providing him with the necessary supplies and entering into an agreement that the crop will be divided equally between them. This system, however, is said by the landowning Haitians to be unsatisfactory, since there is no way to verify the yield without spending an excessive amount of time. The Haitian farmer grows other produce: cabbage, squash, onions, garlic, peanuts, peppers, papaya, and spices, while the trees near the houses give coconuts, oranges, avocados, mangos, guavas, and other fruits. [427]

Crops are not planted during the first quarter of the moon, the preferred time in Mirebalais being from eight days after the new moon until the full moon. It is held that anything 241 821

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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planted at other times will spoil. Similarly, millet and maize must not be harvested during these periods, or small insects will eat the grain. "No crop whose root is used for food may be planted during the forbidden phases of the moon," say the educated cultivators also, citing experiences of their own or of their neighbors who, being skeptical, planted their potatoes or other tubers during the wrong phase of the moon, only to have them completely spoil. In some instances not only the phases of the moon, but entire months are held unpropitious for planting. Thus July is regarded as a "weak" month for planting potatoes and plantains, while April, May, June, and August are preferred ones.

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As in all Negro cultures, the Haitians dare not ignore the supernatural powers that rule the universe, where the question of getting a living is concerned. In the valley of Mirebalais, if the land where a field is to be made has a stream, a cock must be sacrificed to the spirit that resides in it, together with oil, peas, and some non-intoxicating drink. In making the offering, protection is asked against those who might steal from the field or injure it:

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> *"Maître Source, moin mandé pou' ou gadé jardin moin vini fait ici. Cé pas pou' ou laissé méchant, malfaiteur contrarié tout ça moin mété nan terr'a. Si moin bien récolté, moin va ba ou un pile mangé.* — Master of the Stream, I pray you to protect the garden I have just made here. Do not permit any evil designing person to harm all that I have put into the ground. If I harvest well, I will give you much food."

An invocation such as the following might also be pronounced on this occasion:

> *"Jesu Christ, les Saints, Marassa, les Morts: M'ap' travaillé; m'ap' planté graines-là. Pou' fai'l donné pou' moin, pou' m' join, pou' m' bai' Mystères, les Saintes, les Marassa, les Morts.* — Jesus Christ, Saints, Twins, the

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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Toussaint, voici un couvert moin porté ba ou. Ou gardé vot' enfant, comme vot' père et vot' mère dans la maison. — In the name of the Master of the Crossroads; in the name of the Master of the Great Forest; in the name of Baron Cemetery! Today, the first of All Saints' Day, here are offerings I bring you. Guard your child as your father and your mother in the house."

[788] *Clairin* is thrown three times at each fork of the crossroads, and some is also sprinkled in the center and at each corner of the container of food. Three bits of earth are finally lifted from the corners of the crossroads and taken to the home of the worshipper. Here they are put in a plate with *clairin*, which is first lighted and then extinguished, so that the members of the family can anoint themselves with it and receive strength with which to face the new year.

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Good magic has many expressions. Thus there is said to be secret knowledge, transmitted in certain families from generation to generation, of how to control the rains. Those who have control of magic of this sort are to be recognized when they are seen to be completely dry while walking in a downpour. Generally such powers are used to insure a rainless day for a *combite* or *service*, or to cause rain to fall the day after a *combite* has made the field ready for hoeing, or when the proper time for planting is at hand. Eventually, it is said, in response to a temptation too great to be resisted, the possessor of such magic will put it to other, evil ends. Then sooner or later the punishment for this abuse of his knowledge is visited upon him, so that in the end he meets his death by being struck by the avenging lightning.

[784]

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The most powerful type of protective magic is known as a *drogue*. One of the most potent of these — of the type referred to by Léger in commenting on the ox-tail carried by Hyacinthe, or such a one as tradition holds Christophe possessed, which gave him immunity from all but silver bullets — makes

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gory is St. John the Baptist, worshipped as *loa* St. Jean Baptiste, who sends the thunder and lightning. The power and irresponsibility which characterize him contrast strangely with the gentle child holding a lamb, shown on the *image*. The connection becomes apparent in the light of African mythology, however, where the ram is the emblem of the god of thunder, while following this same belief lambs are sacrificed to St. Jean Baptiste in Haiti. The following myth is told of him:

> On a given day of the year God permits each saint to have control over the universe. St. John the Baptist, however, is so irresponsible, and his rage so violent, that God fears the consequences if he were allowed to exert his power on his day. By plying him with drink the day before, he is therefore made so drunk that when he falls asleep he does not awaken for five days. When he is told his day has already passed, his rage is so terrible that great storms flay the earth, and it is a commonplace in Mirebalais that this day is marked by thunder and lightning storms of almost hurricane proportions. Though he can do some damage, his power is now limited, however, to his own sphere.

In the second category are the forces of nature personified and worshipped as saints. Among those specifically named were St. Soleil (St. Sun), St. la Lune (St. Moon), Sts. Étoiles (St. Stars), and St. la Terre (St. Earth). Even more striking is the concept that the power capable of bringing reverses is to be worshipped, as a copy of an *oraison* to St. Bouleversé which was obtained clearly shows:

> St. Bouleversé, you who have the power to overturn the earth, you are a saint and I am a sinner. I invoke you, and I take you for my patron from today onward. I send you to seek out such-and-such a one; overturn his head,

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as a limping old man, clad in tatters, but in his several manifestations has more specific characteristics. Thus Legba Pié Cassé is described as having paralyzed legs, with arms held stiff and crooked before him, and Legba Avardra is spoken of as a *vagabond* who continually wanders the principal highways. Legba must first be summoned before any ceremony may begin, and when it was asked how Legba could be expected to come when called simultaneously to three or four or twenty or fifty places, the parallel given was that of the multiple manifestations of which God or Christ or a saint is capable. Legba, identified with St. Anthony, has Tuesday as his sacred day, and the plum tree is reserved for him. He " eats " a varicolored type of cock known as *poule zinga,* marked like a guinea-fowl, and in this differs from other gods who must indicate through a possessed devotee or a diviner what specific offering among the things they favor is wanted on the occasion of each sacrifice. Though in southern Haiti the smallest chick from each hatching is reserved for Legba, and at least once during his lifetime a man puts aside a bullock or a male goat as a sacrifice for this god, these customs do not prevail in Mirebalais. Here, when an offering to the gods is in prospect, Legba is included among the *loa* to whom a certain animal is promised, and, as in the case of other deities, this animal is thereafter under his protection. But this is the nearest approach to any special offerings for this god.

Damballa, an important Rada god whose symbol is the serpent, is said to bring rain because they sing " *Damballa ian l'eau* — Damballa in the water." The sacred color of this deity, worn by devotees under possession, is white, and the full initiates wear white necklaces as well as white clothing. This god, identified with St. Patrick, is especially worshipped on Thursdays, and shares the white fig tree with Erzilie and Gran' Siligbo. Damballa " eats " sacrifices of white chickens and pigeons, rice, milk, eggs, pineapples, and fig-bananas; and " drinks " *kola* and sweetened coffee. Damballa forms the

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776 [821] rainbow, and this is called an *arc d'alliance* between him and Aida Wedo, his wife, whose characteristic dress is blue and [171] white. Sobo, who in Dahomey is the god of thunder, is also believed in Haiti to give thunder, though he is not thought to live in the sky. As in Africa, his symbol is the ram. Aizan lives in the water, and is a favored deity because he gives his devotees the power of healing and of divining.

Erzilie, a *loa* of considerable importance, is envisaged as a pale, trembling woman who also inhabits the water. She constantly changes her dresses, of which she has many. All agree that she is a fabulously wealthy woman, who wears golden chains about her neck and has many rings, a characterization derived from her identification with Mater Dolorosa, whose chromolithographs depict her with many rich ornaments. As a Rada *loa* she "eats" the same food as Damballa, and wears white, like this other god, but has Friday as her sacred day. In her less pleasant manifestation of Erzilie Gé Rouge, the red-eyed one, she is a member of the Pétro "squad," and is held to be the wife of Simbi d'l'eau, with whom she is believed to get on especially well, since they "eat" different foods. Simbi, who is worshipped on Tuesdays and inhabits the mango and calabash trees, is said to drink heavily, however, and occasionally becomes so boistrous in his cups that he destroys the furniture and otherwise makes himself so objectionable that Erzilie is forced to leave him until he becomes sober.

[171] Ogun, in Haiti as in Nigeria, is the god of war. The Nigerian Shango is also found, though the Haitians conceive Shango as a *loa* who acts as the servant of the Ogun deities, [782] particularly Ogun Badagri and Ogun Batala. Ogun "eats" [822] red cocks and red beans mixed with rice, and his color, red, is worn by his devotees. To this fact may be referred the custom [114] of the Caco warriors who fought against the American Ma- [648] rines in 1918–20 to wear red as their distinguishing color, something referred to by Wirkus (pp. 22 ff.), though he

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the earth like the carrying pad that women wear to support bundles on their heads. [776] Whenever Ayida Wèdo shifted his position there were earthquakes.[2] When the rainbow appeared after a rain it was said that Ayida had come out from under the earth to drink of the fresh water. [171] [821]

Damballa Grand Chimin (Damballa of the Highway). Another manifestation of Damballa as a protector of those on long journeys. [484]

Damballa Verre. Another manifestation of Damballa.

Domici Wèdo. Considered to be the daughter of Damballa. The ending of her name (*-ci*) suggests that at one time she may have been considered a wife rather than a daughter.

Doki Wèdo. A member of Damballa's family.

Agão Wèdo. A member of Damballa's family. Said to be a "work loa" who aids men with their gardens, especially in time of illness. [241]

Êzilie Doba, or Dooba, sometimes spelled Ezulie. One of the "big" loa of the Dahomé pantheon, a symbol of purity, and sometimes identified with the Virgin Mary. Her color is white, and services to her include a ritual sweeping and sprinkling of the earth and a perfuming of the air. Food offerings to her include corn meal and eggs. Male "horses" of Êzilie are sometimes bound to her by mystic marriages, and they are obligated to refrain from sexual intercourse on certain days which belong to her. There are a number of Êzilies, regarded as members of the same family or, in some cult centers, as different manifestations of the same deity. Some Haitians regard Êzilie Doba as the ancestor of the Êzilie family and refer to her as Grand Êzilie. Note that there is a Dahomean town named Dogba at approximately 0° 6′ E., 6° 50′ N. [177] [822] [782] [787] [834] [588]

Êzilie Fréda, or Êzilie Daromain (Dahomé), or Êzilie Fréda Daromain. Like Êzilie Doba, she is a symbol of purity and is identified with the Virgin Mary. Mystic marriages are performed with her, and her "horses" are obligated to refrain from sexual intercourse on certain days. She is also a giver of wealth. [177] [588] [787] [834]

Êzilie Wèdo. A sister or daughter of Êzilie Doba and also related to Damballa.

Êzilie Maisol. A sister of Êzilie Fréda.

Êzilie Banda. A manifestation of Êzilie who is especially fond of the Banda dance.

Êzilie Jérouge (Red Eyes). A stern and hard Êzilie who is often identified with Pétro rather than Dahomé rites.

Aïson Fréda. A member of the Êzilie escorte, regarded as a market-place protector. In Dahomey, Aïson was a protector of all public gathering places.[3] [443] [171]

Aïson Belékété

Aïson Dleau Bolo Bosu

Maîtresse Mambo. A special form of Êzilie as priestess.

Maîtresse Espagnole, or 'Pagnole. A person mounted by this Êzilie talks only Spanish. [787] [191]

Sobo, or Soobo. A thunder deity who hurls stones to the earth when angered. Some of the stones thrown by Sobo are regarded as the sacred residence of various loa. Sobo (or Sogbo) is a member of the original Thunder pantheon of Dahomey. 776 171

Sobo Badé, or Sobo Badè, or simply Badé. A close relative of Sobo, regarded as the protector of the hounfor (*badé*). In Dahomey, Badé is sometimes referred to as the son of the deity Sobo.[4]

2 [See Ellis, The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, pp. 47-49; and Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 245ff. Cf. p. 354 Category 116. -- Analyst]

3 [Ellis, op. cit., p. 52. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst]

4 [Herskovits, op. cit., pp. 152ff. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]

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776 Agomé Tonnerre, also pronounced Aromé Tonnerre. Another thunder loa. Abomé (or Agbomé) is the name of an ancient capital of Dahomey.

Badisi. The wife of Sobo Badé.

So Narcisse, also called Sogo Narcisse, or simply So. A thunder loa of Dahomean origin. In Dahomey he is regarded as an offspring of Mawu and Lisa, and a member of the Sky pantheon. [171]

Kébiosu, or Kébioso. A thunder loa who, like Sobo, hurls stones to the earth. In Dahomey he is known as Xevioso and is thought to be the same deity as So. In Haiti, persons killed by lightning are thought to be enemies of Kébiosu and are given special treatment in burial. [171] [166]

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776 782 821 822 Agwé Woyo, known also as Coqui-Nan-Mer. He is a loa of the sea; thunder and lightning over the ocean are thought to be Agwé shooting his cannon. He is usually symbolized in pictures by a sailing or steam vessel. His colors are blue and white, and the primary sacrificial animal for him is a male goat. High ceremonies for Agwé are begun in the hounfor and consummated in a sailing boat on the open sea, from which is launched a highly decorated and stylized miniature ship containing food for the deity. This tiny craft is known as the *barque d'Agwé*. Hounfors honoring this spirit usually have a small boat hanging from the rafters. In Dahomey, Agwé is also a sea deity and a member of the Thunder pantheon. [171]

776 [171] Agwètta Woyo. She is thought to be Agwé Woyo's wife, though in Dahomey she was considered to be his daughter.

Agwètu Wandéou. Said to be the son of Agwé.

La Sirène. Another deity of the sea, a latecomer visualized as a mermaid. La Sirène is usually thought of as belonging to a separate family, though she is frequently served along with Agwé. Some sociétés do not recognize her at all.

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776 171 Nananbouclou, or Nanan Bouloucou. A loa of herbs and medicines. In Dahomey this spirit was considered the grandparent of all deities, the progenitor of Mawu and Lisa from whom all demigods are descended.[5] She is still remembered in the Dahomey cults of Cuba.

Lissa or Lisha. Probably the Lisa of Dahomey, child of Nanbouclou.

Attibon Legba, or Legba Sé. One of the most important of Haitian loa, frequently the first one invoked in any service. He is the guardian of the gateway, the crossroads, and the highway. Cocks and male goats are his favorite foods, as in West Africa. In Dahomean tradition, Legba is the youngest offspring of Mawu and Lisa, the progenitors of all Dahomean deities. He is a divine trickster who is both feared and loved, a force that is capriciously malevolent or benevolent. Today, as in earlier times in Dahomey, the image of Legba, made of clay, stands or sits before the entrance to many villages. Sometimes the image is nothing more than a mound or column of earth symbolizing a phallus. Legba's mischief and tricks are directed against the other deities and human beings. In Haiti, as in Dahomey, Legba is not a personal deity. As Herskovits points out, Legba has no "character" and cannot be relied on. He is the intervener between mankind and the deities. It is in this sense that he "opens the gate," providing a channel of communication between man and loa; and it is for this reason that he is often supplicated first in religious ritual. In Dahomean lore, Legba's mischief is often in the realm of sex. In ritual dances for [982] [978] [987]

[5] [Ibid., pp. 101 ff. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst]

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776 Azui. A snake deity.

Baboule. A loa who likes the Baboule dance.

Calbassie. Loa of the calabash tree.

[114] [171] Chébo Profiel. An ancient male deity. Herskovits suggests that he may represent the leopard, *zébo* being the Fon word for that animal. The wildness of the attack on the sacrificial animal by persons possessed by Chébo supports this conjecture. A deity called Dada Segbo is prominent in the Rada Cult of Trinidad.

Simalo. A male loa who is believed responsible for fine physical proportions and bodily strength in men.

Coqui-Nan-Dleau. Probably the same as Coqui-Nan-Mer (Agwé).

[171] Akadja. This loa may well be the King Agadja of Dahomey who was said to be responsible for the coming of *vodu* (loa) into that country. Herskovits tells a legend about a woman named Hwandjile who prevailed upon the king to bring the *vodu* from the kingdom of Adja.[21] Hwandjile herself survives in Haiti under the name

Wanilé, or Houanilé

[82] [187] Linglessou. A rainbow loa. Persons mounted in sight of a rainbow are thought to be possessed by this deity.

Blinginsou. "Marches" with Linglessou.

Wangol, also called Agowi Wangol (King of Angola). This loa appears to be an interpolation from the Congo rites.

[187] Alovi, or Gadalovi. A masculine, dwarflike spirit who likes to disarrange things and play practical jokes. Persons possessed by Alovi may break up gatherings, discommode spectators and dancers, and generally make a nuisance of themselves. Some Haitians regard this loa as belonging more to the Pétro pantheon than to the Dahomé.

Malt' Bois (Master of the Woods). May be an interpolation of Malt' Grand Bois of the Congo-Guinée pantheon.

Malt' Dleau (Master of the Water). May refer to the loa Simbi.

Dan Wèzo, or Wézo. A loa known in the Artibonite region. The name is possibly a corruption of Dan Wèdo.

Dja Kéké

Ewo, or Nègi' Ewo. The name is that of a tribe on the Calabar coast of West Africa.

Faro Pierre. Said to be the son of Pierre Basico.

Général Yenratisse, or Jean Baptiste. Probably the Christian name of some Dahomé loa.

Grand Lessaigne. An aged, dwarflike loa, guardian and protector of children.

Grand Alara, or Aloura

Grand Aloumandia, or Manman Aloumandia. Believed to be a loa who was malt' tête of the Emperor Dessalines. Some informants consider this spirit to be a démon or loup-garou rather than a loa.

Hounton. The spirit of the Arada drums. There is a difference of opinion on whether Hounton is a loa in the precise sense or merely a drum spirit. The term is sometimes used to designate the largest drum of the Arada trio.

[184] Jean Bateau. A loa well known in the region of Léogane. When he "enters," the possessed persons talk *langage* into a *canarie* (clay water vessel).

[187] Malt' David. This loa always talks immaculate French, and persons possessed by him read cards and tell fortunes.

21 [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 104. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116.--Ancl/BT]

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584 in the same district, the background of the young man is well enough known so that no investigation is necessary, though unfailingly a long and formal discussion of the suitor, his qualities, and his prospects ensues. If his home is some distance away, however, meticulous inquiries are made not only concerning the young man and his immediate family, but of
584 his ancestry as well. Should the suitor live near the home of
212 the young woman, as usually happens, his own parents come with a *lettre de demand*. In earlier days the "letter" was written on flowered paper with a lacy border, but today plain colored paper does very well. When presented, it is wrapped
[603] in a green silk handkerchief, "for hope" — the handkerchief
[822] costs about five gourdes, and a similar amount is given the scribe — and is usually carried by the oldest man of the family; that is to say, the paternal grandfather if living, or if he is dead, the father, accompanied by the mother and perhaps the other grandparents. Today it is said that in the
[178] valley of Mirebalais the custom of presenting these letters of request is often disregarded, but is by no means extinct.[7]

The family of the girl is always apprised of the exact time of the visit, and refreshments are on hand. No reply is given at the time of the delivery of the "letter," since the families of both the father and the mother of the girl must consent to the match before it can be finally approved. However, at the stage of the courtship which the presentation of a "letter" implies, this delayed answer is a matter of form, for if the proposal had not been acceptable, the girl would not have been allowed to see the suitor. The refusal of a "letter" has
[578] been known to occur, but this is regarded as a deadly insult, and deep enmity between the families follows. Should the family of the girl, not wishing to be abrupt, accept the "letter" and proffer refreshments to its bearers, but later return the same "letter" as a sign of rejection, even this would be
584 bitterly resented. Under such circumstances the young man
832 takes steps to obtain revenge by providing himself with a
578

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love-charm designed to insure the young girl's coming to him. He then uses all persuasion to give her a child and, this achieved, abandons her to show his contempt for the family that has formally refused to accept him as a son-in-law.

Usually, however, the visit is returned by the family of the girl, bearing a "response" of acceptance wrapped in a red silk handkerchief, "for victory." And just as the family of the young woman had known in advance of the coming of her suitor's relatives, word of the favorable verdict is now sent through indirect channels, so that the family of the young man may also be prepared to receive the emissaries who come on behalf of the girl.

With this formal acceptance of the young man's suit, the wedding waits until he has accumulated the requisites for a household. Custom dictates that even should he be prepared, the ceremony must be delayed for several months while he remains in a probationary state, to assure the family of his fiancée of his worthiness. The young woman is also under surveillance during this time, when she may be asked to help her future mother-in-law with the housework, and particularly with the washing and ironing of linens. Generally a period of from two to three years elapses before the bridegroom accumulates enough to fulfill his obligations in marriage. During this time the family of the young woman is acquiring the things she is expected to bring to her husband: linens and dishes — though in the poorer peasant families these items would not be provided her — cooking utensils, water-containers, knives, forks, and other things needed for the household. Her father also presents her with a horse, a donkey, six or seven pigs, the same number of goats, as well as chickens, guinea-hens, and turkeys.

Tokens of virginity are not demanded before the match, since Mirebalais custom requires that the girl tell before her marriage whether she has had relations with other men. She may be sent away if it is discovered that she has told an un-

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are necessary, and the elders of the family must see to it that these gods are instructed not to trouble the newly married pair. If either or both of them are devotees of deities such as Damballa, Erzilie, Ogun, or Aida Wedo, all of whom are known to be extremely jealous, these gods must be specially placated. 585 782 776

For the actual ceremony the couple appear each with a candle in hand, pour water on the ground in the family house of worship, and kneel and pray. The god may "come to the head" of the girl or the man or some relative of each and advise them. If it asks a gift at this time, it is either given at the moment or a promise is made to fulfill the request later. If the spirit objects to the marriage, it is wooed with offerings. Thus, for example, should the young woman be possessed by the serpent-god Damballa, who, speaking through his devotee, registered an objection to the marriage, the girl would be given such gifts as a white silk dress, white silk stockings, or some other valued object in the sacred color of the god, or some perfume which might also serve to mollify him. Or should the man's deity who registered objection be Ogun, the god of war, a fine red kerchief might be offered in honor of this god, whose color is red.[8] 585 782 787 [822]

The dead of both families are also notified by means of a visit to the cemetery. The days for these pilgrimages are Mondays or Fridays, and the pilgrimages must be made during either the morning or the early afternoon, since visits at night are only for evil purposes. As candles are lighted, announcement is made to the family dead of the marriage which is soon to take place, and their good offices are asked to bring it happiness. After all the family dead have been invoked, a candle is lighted before the large cross for Baron Samedi, and another behind it for Gede, the first as the ruler of cemeteries and the graves of the dead, and the second as his handy-man. Another candle is lighted for the "abandoned souls" of the family, who have died without consecration, and yet another 585 769 782 [776]

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the one possessed, possessions of this kind mean either that the *loa* needs baptism; or that, being baptized, its devotee has been negligent in serving the god.

No actual rite of baptism of a *loa* — or, as it is also termed, of *lavé tête*, "washing the head" — was witnessed, but the account of the ceremony given here, obtained independently from several persons, represents an adequate exposition of the rite as performed in Mirebalais. A room is prepared where the person whose *loa* is to be baptized must remain for three days. The mat or bed on which the neophyte rests is covered with fresh sheets and pillow-cases, and three changes of clothing are made ready, one of which must be entirely new for the last day of the ceremony. These are in the color of the god being "baptized"; that is, if the *loa* were revealed to be such a one as Damballa, Aida Wedo, or Gran' Erzilie, everything would be white, but if it were Gran' Siligbo, the colors would be blue and white; if Ogun, everything would be red; if Ossange, blue; where the god is one of the Pétro suite, such as 'Ti Kita or Bosu, everything would be black.*

During the three days' "retreat" the one whose *loa* is being consecrated lies alone. All day long the men and women of the family sit in the next room or outside the house, singing and praying, though at night they sleep, since "this is not a wake." They not only sing the songs sacred to the *loa* being baptized, but also the canticles of the Virgin, while prayers of the Church are recited under the leadership of the *prêt' savanne*, the "bush-priest" whose ability to read the prayers makes him an essential figure in all *vodun* rites. They may from time to time have "a little procession" about the room where the novitiate lies, when small banners in the color of the god are carried. Soft drinks and a *mangé sec* — a "dry" offering — are given the god, and white tapers and an oil lamp are

* A detailed listing of the names, attributes, and powers of the more widely worshipped *loa*, the colors, days, and trees or other places sacred to them, and the "squads" into which they are conceived to be formed, will be found in an appendix at the end of this book.

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78 a black powder of ground, roasted coffee beans. Starting at the
793 tree near the "first" table for Bosu, he traced a white line
796 that, passing the second table and the trees for Simbi, con-
532 tinued to the *trône*, to which subsidiary motifs were then added in gray and black, making of the designs an intricate geometric composition.

78 With bell in hand and a small whistle in his mouth, both of
79 which later were entrusted to his assistants, the *hungan* went about, blowing the whistle at intervals to call the *loa*. Singing,
[533] he directed that a wooden boat-shaped basin containing water be placed in front and a little to the left of the *trône* for washing the feet of the sacrificial animals. Though all the family were present, they were again ritually summoned in song to come with the sacrifices and were ordered to stand near by with lighted candles while the animals were bathed. As they gathered, the *hungan* became possessed by Simbi, who took it upon himself to set the fee for conducting this ceremony at 117.10 gourdes. When he announced this sum, loud pleas of poverty were heard from the family, while speaking through the priest, the god bargained with them until the sum of 110 gourdes was finally agreed upon.

[533] The *hungan* now sang a long invocation, inviting the gods of all those places where Africans live to come. First the feet of the fowl were washed, then those of the pigs, and finally of the goat. Each fowl was passed over the body and head of every
[822] member of the family as it was presented with the requisite song to the proper *loa* — the red and black cock for Legba, the black fowl for Gede, the red one for Ogun, the white for Damballa, and the fowl with ruffled plumage for Congo Zandor. Then each was placed on the ground in front of three small piles of food taken from the *trône*. They were watched with anxiety by all present, for the pecking at the food is a signal that the god accepts the animal given him. The small pigs for 'Ti Kita Demembré, and the boar for Bosu, were offered the same food as the fowls; the goat for Erzilie Gé Rouge was pre-

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775 gatory on those who are possessed by *loa* who go unharmed in fire, it is said: " It is the *loa* that go into the fire. The soul is another thing."

All agree that the dead do not possess folk in the manner of the *loa*, as might be expected from the fact that the most important rituals in the cult of the dead are not only dominated by the Church, but carried out by its priest. In the matter of consulting the dead when questions of importance for the family are involved, however, there is no consensus of opinion. The most widespread point of view holds that only those dead whose *loa* have not been removed from their heads can be summoned, and that this is done only to permit them to " go to God," so their souls may be at rest. Otherwise, " when the dead are called, it is a matter of magic, for the dead are never good and one always must fear them." And though a 785 Mait' 'Bitation that is an old, old ancestor may " mount the 775 head " of a member of the family, he would never be specially called and in most cases, if he did come, would be " re- [669] strained." On the other hand, it was recounted how during the Caco rebellion the soul of Dessalines was brought into a jar and asked for his counsel. It is said, however, that he was so angered at the consistent defeats sustained by the Haitians that he struck everyone to earth and roundly scolded them for having lost the liberty with which he endowed them, departing without giving the desired advice. And since the spirits of Christophe and Toussaint are believed to be even stronger, no one had sufficient courage to summon them!

765 The immediate nature of the relation between the dead and the living is best seen in the conventions and attitudes surrounding the wearing of mourning, which is required of all children of the deceased, whether " legitimate " or other- [822] wise. Black is worn twelve months for a father, eighteen months for a mother; and half-mourning — black and white — is worn for a sister, brother, cousin, uncle, or aunt. In the country, before full mourning is put on, the black cloth is

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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as a limping old man, clad in tatters, but in his several manifestations has more specific characteristics. Thus Legba Pié Cassé is described as having paralyzed legs, with arms held stiff and crooked before him, and Legba Avardra is spoken of as a *vagabond* who continually wanders the principal highways. Legba must first be summoned before any ceremony may begin, and when it was asked how Legba could be expected to come when called simultaneously to three or four or twenty or fifty places, the parallel given was that of the multiple manifestations of which God or Christ or a saint is capable. Legba, identified with St. Anthony, has Tuesday as his sacred day, and the plum tree is reserved for him. He "eats" a varicolored type of cock known as *poule zinga*, marked like a guinea-fowl, and in this differs from other gods who must indicate through a possessed devotee or a diviner what specific offering among the things they favor is wanted on the occasion of each sacrifice. Though in southern Haiti the smallest chick from each hatching is reserved for Legba, and at least once during his lifetime a man puts aside a bullock or a male goat as a sacrifice for this god, these customs do not prevail in Mirebalais. Here, when an offering to the gods is in prospect, Legba is included among the *loa* to whom a certain animal is promised, and, as in the case of other deities, this animal is thereafter under his protection. But this is the nearest approach to any special offerings for this god.

Damballa, an important Rada god whose symbol is the serpent, is said to bring rain because they sing "*Damballa nan l'eau*—Damballa in the water." The sacred color of this deity, worn by devotees under possession, is white, and the full initiates wear white necklaces as well as white clothing. This god, identified with St. Patrick, is especially worshipped on Thursdays, and shares the white fig tree with Erzilie and Gran' Siligbo. Damballa "eats" sacrifices of white chickens and pigeons, rice, milk, eggs, pineapples, and fig-bananas; and "drinks" *kola* and sweetened coffee. Damballa forms the

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776 [821] rainbow, and this is called an *arc d'alliance* between him and Aida Wedo, his wife, whose characteristic dress is blue and [171] white. Sobo, who in Dahomey is the god of thunder, is also believed in Haiti to give thunder, though he is not thought to live in the sky. As in Africa, his symbol is the ram. Aizan lives in the water, and is a favored deity because he gives his devotees the power of healing and of divining.

Erzilie, a *loa* of considerable importance, is envisaged as a pale, trembling woman who also inhabits the water. She constantly changes her dresses, of which she has many. All agree that she is a fabulously wealthy woman, who wears golden chains about her neck and has many rings, a characterization derived from her identification with Mater Dolorosa, whose chromolithographs depict her with many rich ornaments. As a Rada *loa* she "eats" the same food as Damballa, and wears white, like this other god, but has Friday as her sacred day. In her less pleasant manifestation of Erzilie Gé Rouge, the red-eyed one, she is a member of the Pétro "squad," and is held to be the wife of Simbi d'l'eau, with whom she is believed to get on especially well, since they "eat" different foods. Simbi, who is worshipped on Tuesdays and inhabits the mango and calabash trees, is said to drink heavily, however, and occasionally becomes so boistrous in his cups that he destroys the furniture and otherwise makes himself so objectionable that Erzilie is forced to leave him until he becomes sober.

[171] Ogun, in Haiti as in Nigeria, is the god of war. The Nigerian Shango is also found, though the Haitians conceive Shango as a *loa* who acts as the servant of the Ogun deities, [782] particularly Ogun Badagri and Ogun Batala. Ogun "eats" [822] red cocks and red beans mixed with rice, and his color, red, is worn by his devotees. To this fact may be referred the custom [114] of the Caco warriors who fought against the American Ma- [648] rines in 1918–20 to wear red as their distinguishing color, something referred to by Wirkus (pp. 22 ff.), though he

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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776 823 it joins the flooded Artibonite as its master accompanies Clairmé on his way to consult with the great ruler of the sea, Agwe. Actually, at the height of the rainy season the force of the light colored muddy water of the major stream holds back the darker colored flow of its tributaries in a manner which accords with the legend, so that, observing the Tombe River at one such time, the Haitians who were present said: "The Tombe is waiting for its master to pass."

776 [184] [794] Gede, a deity who figures in both the Rada and the Pétro groups as chief functionary under Baron Samedi, ruler of cemeteries, is tolerated rather than favored, though his rewards to his devotees include the refusal to dig a premature [781] grave for them. When Gede possesses a devotee at a dance, Damballa, Ogun, and the other Rada gods "leave" at once, and those who are possessed by them come out of their possessions. For though Gede is no less a *loa* than other gods, "He is a *zombi* and is fed apart"; as the Haitians say: "The *loa* are like human beings. They will not mingle with the dead, [822] and Gede is of the dead." His color is black, and Saturday is his sacred day. He "eats" salt herring, hot peppers, cassava, [782] roasted corn, roasted bananas, and other roasted foods. He drinks *clairin* — much of it — and at great ceremonies a [825] black goat and chickens are killed for him, as well as those chickens with ruffled feathers called *djakati*, which in all the New World, as in Africa, are believed to discover and dig up magic charms set against their owners. He lives in the cemetery, "behind the cross." There are a number of deities whose names are compounded with the name of Gede — Gedenibo, Gedeonsu, Gedehun — and hence the question whether or not this is a generic term or a specific designation is pertinent. There is no agreement on this point, and it could only be established that those *loa* who bear the same name, such as all Ogun or Bosu or Simbi deities, are brothers; but who the parents of these groups may have been is not known.

Associated with Simbi and Gede in the Pétro "squad" are

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776 184 794 a "nation" in the Dahomé rites; and the Ibo group, though still distinct, is frequently allied with the Dahomé rites or the Guinée rites.

The following list does not pretend to include all the loa known in Haiti. It is doubtful that a complete list could ever be compiled, in view of the continual generation of new deities and the constant cross-fertilization between "nations." The loa are grouped here according to most widespread usage. There are contradictions from which there is no possible escape, and these general groupings will not necessarily correspond to the concepts and practices of any specific locality. It is intended here to give a broad and generalized view. [128]

128 776 794 Under "The Vodoun Pantheon" I have placed constellations of deities of Dahomean and Yoruban origin, along with others that are clearly identified with Vodoun rites. Under "The Congo and Pétro Pantheons" I have listed the Congo-Guinée loa—consisting mainly of deities associated with Central Africa and deities affiliated with the Pétro rites. Ibo and Kanga loa are grouped together, because in many regions of Haiti the two pantheons appear to be interlocked. A separate listing is given for the Simbi family of water deities in view of their ambivalence; they are sometimes found in the Pétro group and sometimes in the Dahomé, according to local practice.

THE VODOUN PANTHEON

776 171 Damballa Wèdo, or Dan Wèdo. One of the most venerable of Haitian loa. He is generally recognized as the husband of Ayida Wèdo, though occasionally the two deities are merged in a personality called Damballa-Ayida. The concept of a single identity for Damballa and Ayida conforms to Dahomean belief. In both Haiti and West Africa, Damballa is identified with the rainbow and is symbolized as a snake.[1] In Haiti he is associated also with rainfall, springs, and fertility. He is sometimes [782] described as "white," and the proper food offering to him is a white chicken. Persons [87] possessed by Damballa usually take on stylized characteristics of snakes. Along with [177] many other important loa, he has become identified with characters in Christian religious belief. There are, in fact, "two" Damballa Wèdos. One, identified with Moses, comes in talking; the other, identified with St. Patrick, never talks. Food [782] offerings for the St. Patrick version of Damballa consist of eggs, flour, sugar, and almond syrup. Damballa remains one of the chief gods of the Dahomey cult in Cuba, and he survived into the last century in New Orleans under the name Danny.

[822] Ayida Wèdo. Generally regarded in Haiti as the wife of Damballa, Ayida is also symbolized by snake and rainbow, and her color, like Damballa's, is "white." In Dahomey and Nigeria, Ayida is known as a male rather than a female spirit and is regarded there as the same divinity as Damballa, or Dji. In Dahomey, Ayida Wèdo was the great serpent who held up the world. According to one myth, the Creator of the World assigned to Ayida the task of holding up the earth to keep it from falling into the sea. The great serpent coiled himself, tail in mouth, and lay below

1 [Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 245 ff. Cf. p. 354, category 116. --Analyst]

[The Vodoun Pantheon]

the earth like the carrying pad that women wear to support bundles on their heads. [776] Whenever Ayida Wèdo shifted his position there were earthquakes.[2] When the rainbow appeared after a rain it was said that Ayida had come out from under the earth to drink of the fresh water. [171] [821]

Damballa Grand Chimin (Damballa of the Highway). Another manifestation of Damballa as a protector of those on long journeys. [484]

Damballa Verre. Another manifestation of Damballa.

Domici Wèdo. Considered to be the daughter of Damballa. The ending of her name (*-ci*) suggests that at one time she may have been considered a wife rather than a daughter.

Doki Wèdo. A member of Damballa's family.

Agão Wèdo. A member of Damballa's family. Said to be a "work loa" who aids men with their gardens, especially in time of illness. [241]

Èzilie Doba, or Dooba, sometimes spelled Ezulie. One of the "big" loa of the Dahomé pantheon, a symbol of purity, and sometimes identified with the Virgin Mary. Her color is white, and services to her include a ritual sweeping and sprinkling of the earth and a perfuming of the air. Food offerings to her include corn meal and eggs. Male "horses" of Èzilie are sometimes bound to her by mystic marriages, and they are obligated to refrain from sexual intercourse on certain days which belong to her. There are a number of Èzilies, regarded as members of the same family or, in some cult centers, as different manifestations of the same deity. Some Haitians regard Èzilie Doba as the ancestor of the Èzilie family and refer to her as Grand Èzilie. Note that there is a Dahomean town named Dogba at approximately 0° 6′ E., 6° 50′ N. [177] [822] [782] [787] [834] [588]

Èzilie Fréda, or Èzilie Dahomain (Dahomé), or Èzilie Fréda Dahomain. Like Èzilie Doba, she is a symbol of purity and is identified with the Virgin Mary. Mystic marriages are performed with her, and her "horses" are obligated to refrain from sexual intercourse on certain days. She is also a giver of wealth. [177] [588] [787] [834]

Èzilie Wèdo. A sister or daughter of Èzilie Doba and also related to Damballa.

Èzilie Maisol. A sister of Èzilie Fréda.

Èzilie Banda. A manifestation of Èzilie who is especially fond of the Banda dance.

Èzilie Jèrouge (Red Eyes). A stern and hard Èzilie who is often identified with Pétro rather than Dahomé rites.

Aïson Fréda. A member of the Èzilie escorte, regarded as a market-place protector. In Dahomey, Aïson was a protector of all public gathering places.[3] [443] [171]

Aïson Belèkété

Aïson Dekau Bolo Bosu

Maîtresse Mambo. A special form of Èzilie as priestess.

Maîtresse Espagnole, or 'Pagnole. A person mounted by this Èzilie talks only Spanish. [787] [191]

Sobo, or Sooso. A thunder deity who hurls stones to the earth when angered. Some of the stones thrown by Sobo are regarded as the sacred residence of various loa. Sobo (or Sogbo) is a member of the original Thunder pantheon of Dahomey. [776] [171]

Sobo Badé, or Sobo Badè, or simply Badé. A close relative of Sobo, regarded as the protector of the hounfor (*badé*). In Dahomey, Badé is sometimes referred to as the son of the deity Sobo.[4]

[2] [See Ellis, The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, pp. 47-49; and Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 245ff. Cf. p. 354 Category 116. -- Analyst]

[3] [Ellis, op. cit., p. 52. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst]

[4] [Herskovits, op. cit., pp. 152ff. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]

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776 AGOMÉ TONNERE, also pronounced ABOMÉ TONNERE. Another thunder loa. Abomé (or Agbomé) is the name of an ancient capital of Dahomey.

BADISI. The wife of Sobo Badé.

[171] SO NARCISSE, also called Sogo Narcisse, or simply So. A thunder loa of Dahomean origin. In Dahomey he is regarded as an offspring of Mawu and Lisa, and a member of the Sky pantheon.

[171] [766] KÉBIOSU, or KÉBIOSO. A thunder loa who, like Sobo, hurls stones to the earth. In Dahomey he is known as Xevioso and is thought to be the same deity as So. In Haiti, persons killed by lightning are thought to be enemies of Kébiosu and are given special treatment in burial.

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776 782 [821] [822] AGWÉ WOYO, known also as COQUI-NAN-MER. He is a loa of the sea; thunder and lightning over the ocean are thought to be Agwé shooting his cannon. He is usually symbolized in pictures by a sailing or steam vessel. His colors are blue and white, and the primary sacrificial animal for him is a male goat. High ceremonies for Agwé are begun in the hounfor and consummated in a sailing boat on the open sea, from which is launched a highly decorated and stylized miniature ship containing food for the deity. This tiny craft is known as the *barque d'Agwé*. Hounfors honoring this spirit usually have a small boat hanging from the rafters. In Dahomey, [171] Agwé is also a sea deity and a member of the Thunder pantheon.

776 [171] AGWÈTTA WOYO. She is thought to be Agwé Woyo's wife, though in Dahomey she was considered to be his daughter.

AGWÈSU WANDÉOU. Said to be the son of Agwé.

LA SIRÈNE. Another deity of the sea, a latecomer visualized as a mermaid. La Sirène is usually thought of as belonging to a separate family, though she is frequently served along with Agwé. Some sociétés do not recognize her at all.

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776 171 NANANBOUCLOU, or NANAN BOULOUCOU. A loa of herbs and medicines. In Dahomey this spirit was considered the grandparent of all deities, the progenitor of Mawu and Lisa from whom all demigods are descended.[5] She is still remembered in the Dahomey cults of Cuba.

LISSA or LISHA. Probably the Lisa of Dahomey, child of Nanbouclou.

ATTIBON LEGBA, or LEGBA SÉ. One of the most important of Haitian loa, frequently the first one invoked in any service. He is the guardian of the gateway, the [782] crossroads, and the highway. Cocks and male goats are his favorite foods, as in West Africa. In Dahomean tradition, Legba is the youngest offspring of Mawu and Lisa, the progenitors of all Dahomean deities. He is a divine trickster who is both feared and loved, a force that is capriciously malevolent or benevolent. Today, as in earlier [778] times in Dahomey, the image of Legba, made of clay, stands or sits before the entrance to many villages. Sometimes the image is nothing more than a mound or column of earth symbolizing a phallus. Legba's mischief and tricks are directed against the other deities and human beings. In Haiti, as in Dahomey, Legba is not a personal deity. As Herskovits points out, Legba has no "character" and cannot be relied on. He is the intervener between mankind and the deities. It is in this sense [787] that he "opens the gate," providing a channel of communication between man and loa; and it is for this reason that he is often supplicated first in religious ritual. In Dahomean lore, Legba's mischief is often in the realm of sex. In ritual dances for

5 [Ibid, pp. 101 ff. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst]

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Legba in Dahomey, the performers hold a carved phallus between their legs and perform copulating movements. The Haitian Legba is depicted as an aged limping loa, and the carved phallus has become a grotesque crutch-cane that fits into the crotch of the legs. The Dahomean Legba is remembered elsewhere in the New World, notably in Dutch Guiana, Brazil, and Cuba. Until relatively recent times he was known among the Negroes of Louisiana by the name Papa Lebat.[1] 776 179 [831]

Legba Grand Chemin (Legba of the Highway). A special manifestation of Legba who guards the highway.

Legba Kalfu (Legba of the Crossroads). A special manifestation of Legba who guards the crossroads.

Legba Maît' 'Bitation (Legba Master of the Household). The Legba who protects the house and its grounds.

Legba Lafleurondé. One of the Legba family.

Legba Kévé. One of the Legba family.

Legba Aguator. Said to be a "Nago" deity.

Attibon Kéké. One of the Legba family.

Attibon Samardi. One of the Legba family.

Azombo Kidi. One of the Legba family.

Ogoun Feraille, often referred to as Maît' Ogoun. The chief and ancestor of a large family of loa whose activities have to do with blacksmithing and war, which are closely related. Ogoun Feraille is a patron of warriors and the forge; his symbol is a piece of forged iron, such as a machete, a hoe blade, a saber, or a piece of iron chain. In West Africa, Ogoun is considered a patron of hunters as well.[2] He was widely known by various peoples in Dahomey and Nigeria. In Dahomey he was considered a child of the divine Mawu and Lisa,[3] and among the Yoruba of Nigeria he was regarded as a brother of Chango and Dada,[4] two spirits who survive in the Haitian pantheon. An altar to Ogoun Feraille, like that of the loa Chango, may consist of a pile of iron scrap, perhaps a broken sugar vat. In Cuba, Ogoun Feraille is a prominent deity in both the Arara (Dahomey) and the Lucumí (Yoruba) cults. Although absorbed exclusively into the Dahomé family of rites in Haiti, Ogoun Feraille and his entire family and escorte are designated as belonging to the Nago "nation." Their color, like that of heated iron, is red. Ogoun Feraille survived until recent times in Louisiana as Joe Feraille.[10] [822] 776

Ogoun Fer (Ogoun Iron). He is sometimes called Ogoun St. Jacques, St. Jacques Majeur, or simply St. Jacques, being identified with the saint of that name. 776

Ogoun Mashoquette (Ogoun Blacksmith).

Ogoun Bakala. One of the Ogoun brothers.

Ogoun Baltaza Misho. One of the Ogoun brothers.

Ogoun Jénison, or Jérison. One of the Ogoun brothers.

Ogoun Badagry, or Batagri. Said to be a "grandson" of Maît' Ogoun. He is a "work" loa, as well as an ironworker and a warrior, and helps in the fields, especially in time of sickness. Badagry is the name of a town near the mouth of the Ogoun River in western Nigeria. According to a priest of the Cuban Dahomé cult, the word *batagri* was used to designate the circumcision house in Dahomey. Ogoun Badagry thus may have been associated with that shrine. 776 179

Chango, or Ogoun Chango. A member of the Ogoun family and, like most of his brothers, a warrior and ironworker. Chango's altar is usually a pile of scrap iron, or

1 [Ibid., pp. 201ff. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst]
2 [Ellis, The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, p. 67. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst]
3 [Herskovits, Op. Cit., pp. 105ff. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]
4 [Ellis, The Yoruba-speaking Peoples, pp. 45, 67ff. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]
10 [Library of Congress Recording, No. 101. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]

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Maît' Grand Chemin (Master of the Highway). Probably Legba. [176]

Makanda. Believed to be the spirit of the famous houngan Makandal, who lived during the revolutionary period. He is symbolized as a snake which lives in the ground. Some informants think he is a Pétro rather than a Dahomé loa. [175]

Mamio Çaça

Tijean Dantor (Ancient Tijean)

Wetydah Walo. Whydah is the name of a seacoast town in Dahomey.

Zo. A fire deity of clear Dahomean origin.[22]

Olocha

Oial, or Oianor. Known also among the Lucumí cults of Cuba. May be any one of the Oianges mentioned by Herskovits. [171]

Oianor Léléé

Ogodjaré

Papa Dahomé

Pierre Basico. This loa is sometimes identified with St. Peter. [177]

Pierre Damballa, Damballa, or Damballa. Sometimes identified with St. Peter.

Pierre Walo. Related to Whydah Walo.

Poula, or Foula. This name is probably a tribal designation.

Sabaya. Described as a loa of ancient times. Sabata or Sagbata is the so-called smallpox group of deities of Dahomey.

Sèla. A female deity, thought by some to belong to the Ezilie Fréda family.

Silibo Gwèto. In Dahomey, according to Herskovits, Silibo is an ancient sib-founder. [171]

Silmja

Taureau

Ti Chab. This is a "false name"; this loa keeps his real name a secret.

THE AMBIVALENT SIMBI FAMILY

This group of loa in certain regions has attached itself to the Vodoun pantheon, elsewhere to the Congo-Guinée pantheon; but it has not maintained any kind of independent or semi-independent status. The deity Simbi and his family are of Congo origin. [171]

Simba. A male deity, patron of rain and drinking water. Said to be the father of the Simba brothers.

Simbi Dleau. The best known of the Simbi family. Like his father, he is the patron of fresh water, is associated with the spring, and usually is symbolized as a snake. The color sacred to him is white. Altars to Simbi Dleau usually are found at the spring or the well. Sometimes ponds are constructed for him within the houmfor. [823] [822] [178]

Simbi Kitta

Simbi Yewodo, or Simbi Nan Dé Zeaux (Simbi in Two Waters). Symbolized as a water snake who lives in the "upper" waters and the "lower" waters.

Grand Simba. The parent of Simba, and ancestor of the entire family of water loa.

Simbi Trois Zilé (Simbi of Three Islands)

Simbi Macaya

Simbi Grand Bois (Simbi of the Forest)

[22] [Ellis, The Ewe-Speaking Peoples, pp. 71-74. Cf. p. 354, category 116.--Analyst]

[The Congo and Pétro Pantheons]

776 [822] [971]

strong, he is a man-eater; constant reference is made to his mortar in which he grinds people. His ritual color is white; some people believe that his skin is also white. The grinding of a person in a mortar is an African symbolism. A bas-relief in Dahomey reported by Gorer[24] shows King Glele pounding a vanquished king's head in a mortar.

Bosu Trois Cornes

Bosu Yèmain

Bosu Swi Yèmain Yèmain

Dada Èzilie

Ezilie Boucan

Èzilie Un Main Un Pied Un Jé (Èzilie One Hand, One Foot, One Eye)

Èzilie Balianne

Èzilie Dankéké

Èzilie Jérouge (Èzilie Red Eyes). A malevolent spirit.[25]

Èzilie Maphonne, or Mapiongle. A malevolent spirit.

Èzilie Femme Pétro

Ezilie Acoupi

Grand Assonglo

Jean Pierre Pounguè

Limba Zäo. A deity of Congo origin.

Damballa Laflambeau

Malt' Pimba. Said to be father of Zäo Pimba.

Mambo Avida (Priestess Ayida). A Pétro version of the Vodoun Ayida.

Marinette Congo. A malevolent female loa.

Marinette Pied Chèche (Marinette Dry Feet). Sister to Marinette Bras Chèche, and equally malevolent.

Ogoun Jérouge (Ogoun Red Eyes). A malevolent spirit. A Pétro form of the Vodoun deity, with a different character.

Ogoun Dleau (Ogoun of the Water). Brother of Ogoun Jérouge.

Ogoun Laflambeau. A fire loa. When he comes in he plays with hot coals, hot iron, and flames.

Ogoun Pétro. He is malevolent and "eats" men.

Pimba, or Pemba

Quançon Fer (Iron Pants)

Kitta Banda (Chic Kitta)

Kitta Bayè (Kitta of the Gate). A gateway guardian.

Kitta Congo

Kitta Kanga

Kitta Legba. Possibly the same as Kitta Bayè.

Racine

Rigal. A brother to Général Brisé. A benevolent loa.

Roi Grand Chimin (King of the Highway). May refer to Legba or to another highway loa.

Sililiwo Boquomé

Taureau Pétro. A Pétro version of the Vodoun Taureau.

Tijean Pétro. A malevolent loa who preys on children from the foliage of the coconut palm.

Tijean Pied Fin (Tijean No Feet). Brother to Tijean Pétro.

24 [Gorer, Africa Dances, P. 188. Cf. P.354, Cat. 116. --Analyst]

25 [For footnote, see Cat. 116, P.354. --Analyst]

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Dead: I have worked; I have planted this seed. Make it yield for me, that I may make offerings to the Mysteries, the Saints, the Twins, the Dead." 241 782 539

At the entrance to the field the cranium of a horse, a mule, or a burro may be erected on a pole as magic against evil, and a wooden cross to which limes are attached may also be raised to protect against any expression of envy that might place a spell upon the growing plants. Finally, if there is any reason to believe that evil magic may have been invoked against the owner, a *hungan*, or *vodun* priest is summoned to make a charm to ward it off, and, with a little ceremony, he inters this charm in the middle of the garden or at its entrance. 241 789

In addition to this, first fruits must be given as an offering to the supernatural forces whose goodwill has permitted a bountiful yield, particularly in the case of staple crops such as maize and rice. As the first heads of maize are brought in, they are roasted, and the kernels are cut from the cobs. The head of the household then throws them to the four cardinal points either in the garden or before his house, and as he does this, he pronounces an invocation such as the following: 241 782 [823] [539]

> *"Jesu Christ, les Saints, les Marassa, les Morts: M' jet' mai' bai' ou, c'est pou' toujou' m' gagne bai' ou, et pou' m' gagne courai' pou' travai' a'c p'tit' moin, a'c femme moin, a'c parent' moin, a'c toute famille-a. Conserve m' pou' m' pas malade, pou' m' toujours join pou, m' bai' ou.* — Jesus Christ, the Saints, the Twins, the Dead: I throw maize for you, that I may always have some to give, that I may gain courage [strength] to work, and also my children, my wife, my relations, and all my family. Care for me that I do not fall ill, so that I may always have [something] to give you."

After this ritual the new crop is available to its owner for whatever use he may care to make of it.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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combines an explanation having an element of correctness — "a charm against harm" — with entire misunderstanding when he speaks of the color as symbolizing a "declaration of a holy war against wrong and oppression." Some, but not all of the Ogun *loa* drink Haitian rum. Ogun himself is identified with St. James the Elder, and his sacred day is Wednesday. This *loa* is a *Nèg' défence* and protects his worshippers from bullets or wounds inflicted by weapons. Ogun Balandjo guards travelers, though he is not as strong as such others of the Ogun group as Ogun Badagri and Ogun Batala, with whom he shares the bamboo tree as a habitation. The former gives *connaissance* — knowledge — which permits those he possesses to prohesy; the latter endows with the ability to prepare healing baths. The Ogun *loa* Erzilie and Damballa are jealous gods. On the day sacred to each, a devotee puts fresh linen on his bed, places powder, soap, and a comb near by, and sleeps alone. If the devotee is a woman, her husband sleeps elsewhere; if a man, his wife must seek another place; otherwise the transgressor would die.

Agwe Woyo is god of the sea, but, as might be expected, neither he nor his son and daughter, Agweto and Agweta Woyo, figures as importantly in Mirebalais as in coastal areas. For the folk of Mirebalais the river-gods, particularly the spirit of the Artibonite River, are of much greater importance. This last-mentioned *loa*, named Clairmé, a Pétro deity like his wife and daughter, Mme. Clairmé and Clairmézine, lives in the deepest part of the stream with the other members of his "family." Similarly, the deepest parts, or *bassins*, of tributary streams hold the spirits of those waters. And since all these tributaries flow into the Artibonite, and the Artibonite empties into the ocean, it is said that when the river is in flood, Clairmé is engaged in inspecting his domain, being greeted by the spirits of all the smaller rivers as he passes their mouths. At this time the flow of the water in each tributary is arrested until he has gone by, when, in a great swirl,

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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776 823 it joins the flooded Artibonite as its master accompanies Clairmé on his way to consult with the great ruler of the sea, Agwe. Actually, at the height of the rainy season the force of the light colored muddy water of the major stream holds back the darker colored flow of its tributaries in a manner which accords with the legend, so that, observing the Tombe River at one such time, the Haitians who were present said: "The Tombe is waiting for its master to pass."

776 [784] [794] Gede, a deity who figures in both the Rada and the Pétro groups as chief functionary under Baron Samedi, ruler of cemeteries, is tolerated rather than favored, though his rewards to his devotees include the refusal to dig a premature [787] grave for them. When Gede possesses a devotee at a dance, Damballa, Ogun, and the other Rada gods "leave" at once, and those who are possessed by them come out of their possessions. For though Gede is no less a *loa* than other gods, "He is a *zombi* and is fed apart"; as the Haitians say: "The *loa* are like human beings. They will not mingle with the dead, [822] and Gede is of the dead." His color is black, and Saturday is his sacred day. He "eats" salt herring, hot peppers, cassava, [782] roasted corn, roasted bananas, and other roasted foods. He drinks *clairin* — much of it — and at great ceremonies a [825] black goat and chickens are killed for him, as well as those chickens with ruffled feathers called *djakati*, which in all the New World, as in Africa, are believed to discover and dig up magic charms set against their owners. He lives in the cemetery, "behind the cross." There are a number of deities whose names are compounded with the name of Gede — Gedenibo, Gedeonsu, Gedehun — and hence the question whether or not this is a generic term or a specific designation is pertinent. There is no agreement on this point, and it could only be established that those *loa* who bear the same name, such as all Ogun or Bosu or Simbi deities, are brothers; but who the parents of these groups may have been is not known.

Associated with Simbi and Gede in the Pétro "squad" are

764 invoked the loa, the pallbearers brought the body forward as though to go straight ahead, but then they began to lurch and sway as though an invisible force were pushing them around. They veered as though to take the right turn, and again they lurched and staggered. At last they turned toward the left, and in this direction they found the road clear. The houngan thanked the Master of the Crossroads, the widow took her place at the head of the procession, and it proceeded on its way to the cemetery.

793 764 766 In the services for a dead houngan described by Simpson, the body is placed in a coffin, which is carried to all the places sacred to the loa of the hounfor before being taken to the cemetery. First it is taken to the sacred trees where the loa reside, then to the sacred spring "whose waters have cured many sicknesses which physicians had pronounced incurable . . . [823] The bearers of the coffin circle the spring several times. The coffin is swung [toward] each of the four cardinal points." Afterward the procession continues its way to the burial ground.[17]

766 174 761 But the treatment given to the dead may vary according to the manner in which they died. Leyburn notes, for example, that "a person struck by lightning . . . would have no ceremonies at all, for lightning is an act of God."[18] It may well be that the Haitian rationale for not holding ceremonies for an individual killed by lightning is that God has already held the final ceremony. But in the Haitian mind all deaths are, in the last analysis, acts of God, even though magic, poison, or accident may have played an immediate part. Why, then, should the corpse struck by lightning be treated so differently? The answer would appear to lie in a custom 171 766 of the Yoruba of dispensing with all burial rites for persons killed by 761 lightning, such persons being considered enemies of the lightning deity [174] Chango. In Dahomey, Herskovits reports, the same attitude prevails in regard to persons killed by lightning:

> If a person is killed by lightning he . . . stands convicted by this fact of some grave crime which has incurred the displeasure of the god of the Thunder Pantheon (Xevioso). A person so killed is never buried by his family, but the body is turned over to the chief priest and cult-members of these deities. It is believed that a man killed in this fashion remains upright until the chief priest questions him and forces him to confess the crimes he had committed to be so punished. No one touches any [768] of the belongings of such a man, not even his money. The house in which he lived [784] is allowed to go to ruin, an *asan* of palm fronds being placed around it to guard [824] against anyone entering it. The moveable property of such a man, his clothes, his stools, and his dishes, are thrown away at the crossroads . . .[19]

766 The burial of a Haitian who dies of smallpox likewise differs from that of one who dies a "normal" death. The victim of smallpox is buried without a coffin in a segregated part of the cemetery. The reason for this lies

[17] [Simpson, Op. Cit., p. 161. Cf. p. 350 Category 116. -- Analyst]
[18] [Leyburn, The Haitian People, p. 156. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]
[19] [Herskovits, Dahomey, I, 398. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

of Haiti. But the route to it is through water. When the Haitians say "under the water" they do not mean under the sea. The ocean is regarded as the special domain of Agwé, La Sirène, and a few related deities, but it has nothing to do with most loa. "Under the water" specifically means under the springs, the rivers, and the fresh-water lakes. Fresh water has the greatest of significance in relation to most of the Vodoun deities.

When a loa comes to visit his Haitian children he comes by way of the *chimin dlèau* (the water road)—that is to say, by way of the river, the waterfall, or the spring. Because the spring is the primary source of fresh water, it is the most direct means of contact with the land of the loa. Tales are heard everywhere of persons who, drawing water from the spring at night, heard the voices of loa or the sound of singing and drumming coming up from somewhere below. And virtually all the tales about human beings who visited the land of the loa describe them as descending into a river or disappearing into a waterfall.

The loa are accustomed to traveling by the "water road." And in all aspects of the Vodoun service, this "water road" is refreshed and replenished. When the road is dry, contact with the loa is diminished. When it is moist, the loa travel easily.

Thus, the houngan constantly uses water to entice and invite the deities. He holds a glass or pitcher of water at the center pole of his peristyle. He extends it toward the four cardinal points. He spills water at the foot of the center pole. He spills water in the hounfor at the foot of the *pé*, or altar. He sets a pitcher of water at the gateway of his *habitation*. And often, during a service, he pours a pathway of water in the dust from his gateway into his peristyle. Within nearly every hounfor there is at least one *bassin*, or pool, dedicated to the loa who is the *maît' caille*, the master of the house. These pools are carefully filled with water drawn from the springs. They are places of rest and refreshment for the deities whose names or portraits are inscribed on the walls above.

Sometimes rites and services are held at the site of the spring, the houngan and his entourage marching down to it from the hounfor for the occasion. So, too, there are annual pilgrimages to waterfalls such as Saut d'Eau, where the loa mount their "horses" in profusion.

Within the hounfor, during a service, the cult priest and the servitors pour "libations" of water on the earth, so that the loa may be refreshed. And virtually without end, the hounfor is the scene of ritual ceremonies in which the loa is bathed and thus "renewed" in the heads of his servitors.*

* [For footnote, see category 116, p. 351.--Analyst]

2: Courlander 8-8 (1937-1952) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

The importance of water in Vodoun has a fundamentally West African character. Among the Yoruba and the Ashanti and in Dahomey, for example, water rites are a significant aspect of religious ritual. Herskovits notes the frequency of religious pilgrimages to streams in West Africa.

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In one instance, at Abeokuta, a bedecked procession of worshipers left a shrine atop a high hill, followed a long path to the riverside over two miles away, and returned before the ceremonies could be carried out at the shrine of the god. On one occasion, in Dahomey, the bed of the sacred stream was dry was "filled" from nearby wells so that this water could be ritually redrawn for use in an especially important ceremony. Among the Ashanti, pilgrimages to Lake Bosumtwe and other sacred bodies of water regularly occur. And it is on such occasions that the spirit of the river or lake or sea manifests itself, by "entering the head" of the devotee and causing him to fling himself, possibly possessed, into the water.[8]

So it is also in Haiti, where possession at the river's edge may cause the devotee to leap into the river. At Saut d'Eau, possessed persons plunge into the waterfall without regard for their safety, being in the care of the loa who have mounted them.

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Into this water complex the Christian rite of baptism has been easily absorbed, providing merely a new act of veneration for water and its properties. In the Haitian mind baptism is not far removed from the *lavé tête* ritual, the washing of the head, or the *rafraîchi tête*, the "refreshing" of the head, both of which are acts in propitiation of the loa.[9] So related is the baptismal concept in the Haitian mind, that the term "baptize" is used to describe the lavé tête; it is said that the loa is being "baptized." So also are drums "baptized," not to menton yams, and even the hounfor itself.

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Marriage to a Loa

Although the term *hounsi* (spirit wife, or wife of the spirit) is applied to a large class of servitors of the Vodoun temple, only a small number of servitors ever pass through rites which give them a husband-wife or wife-husband relationship with a loa. Reasons for these mystic marriages vary, but usually the rituals take place upon the prescription of a cult priest who interprets the will of the deities concerned. Most of the mystic marriages of which I have heard have taken place in the general area of Port-au-Prince and the Cul-de-Sac Plain. In some other areas of Haiti it appears that no such rites have taken place locally within the memory of the elder inhabitants. One aged man living near Belladère declared: "It [marriage to a loa] is impossible. People serve loa, they do not marry them. A man does not marry his bwa. A loa

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8 [Herskovits, The Myth of the Negro Past, p. 233. Cf p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

9 [It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form. Cf p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

Attibon Legba ouvri bayè pou' moin ago!
Ou wè Attibon Legba ouvri bayè pou' moin ouvri bayè!
M'apé ressré quand ma tourné,
Ma salut loa yo!

Attibon Legba, open the gate for me, *ago!*
You see, Attibon Legba, open the gate for me, open the gate!
I will enter when I return,
I salute the loa!

After this appeal, or sometimes while it is being sung, the houngan spills a little water on the earth at the base of the po'teau mitan. It is an inducement for the loa to "enter," for the loa reside "below the water" and their passage into the hounfor is made easier by water. The houngan may spill his water in a long path from the entrance of the peristyle to the po'teau mitan, or extend his pitcher invitingly to the four points of the compass. Then, perhaps, another song is sung to Legba:

Papa Legba nan hounfor moin!
Papa Legba nan hounfor moin!
Papa Legba nan hounfor moin!
Ou même qui porté drapeau,
C'ex ou même ka paré soleil pou' loa yo!
Papa Legba, Papa Legba!

Papa Legba is in my hounfor!
Papa Legba is in my hounfor!
Papa Legba is in my hounfor!
You who carry the flag,
It is you who shade the loa from the sun!
Papa Legba, Papa Legba!

As the ritual gets under way, there may be a general song of welcome to all the loa of the cult, such as this one:

Bonjou' oh bonjou' bonjou' bonjou' bonjou'!
Bonjou' oh bonjou' bonjou' bonjou' bonjou'!
Oh bonjou' oh bonjou' loa moin! [Ex. 43]

Good day, oh, good day, good day, good day, good day!
Good day, oh, good day, good day, good day, good day!
Oh, good day, oh, good day my loa!

When the service is well in progress, the songs may describe the qualities of the deities—their character, behavior and needs. If it is Balindja, for example, the song may advertise that persons with this loa in their heads are immune to poison:

Ogoun Balindja,
Oh Ogoun oh!

Ogoun Balindja,
Oh, Ogoun, oh!

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Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh Ogoun oh!
C'est pas mangé rangé
Pral tuyé chwal mein! [Ex. 44]

Ogoun Balindjo,
Oh, Ogoun, oh!
There is no poisoned food
That will kill my horse!

Ogoun Fai, known also by the Christian name St. Jacques, is the deity of war, and this song describes his courage and valor:

St. Jacques Majeur a voyé dit'm ga'çon déjà!
St. Jacques oh voyé dit'm ga'çon déjà!
St. Jacques Majeur a voyé dit'm ga'çon la-guè!
St. Jacques oh voyé dit'm ga'çon la-guè! [Ex. 45]

Major St. Jacques sent to tell me he is already a man!
St. Jacques, oh, sent to tell me he is already a man!
Major St. Jacques sent to tell me he is a man of war!
St. Jacques, oh, sent to tell me he is a man of war!

Should the service be to the loa Damballa Wèdo, symbolized as a rainbow and a great serpent, this song might be sung, commenting that he cannot be drowned in the water:

Papa Damballa ou c'est coulève oh!
Pouq'ou pas néyé?
Pouq'ou pas néyé?
Damballa pouq'ou pas néyé nan dlèau? [Ex. 46]

Papa Damballa you are a snake, oh!
Why don't you drown?
Why don't you drown?
Damballa, why don't you drown in the water?

[778] Damballa, the rainbow, is in fact the source of the water that bubbles
[823] from the earth in springs. He is a patron of the spring, and there he
often lives in the form of a water snake. In many a hounfor where Dam-
balla is specially revered there is a *bassin*, or pool, dedicated to him.
[532] On the wall behind the pool there is usually a painting of Damballa
and Ayida, depicted as great serpents, sometimes with a feathered head-
dress. The pool is kept filled with fresh water from the spring, and
[231] here one or more small snakes—symbols of Damballa and Ayida—reside:

Ala loa marché nan dlèau
C'est Damballa!
Ala loa marché nan dlèau
C'est Damballa!
Papa Damballa c'est tête à dlèau!
Papa Damballa c'est tête à dlèau!

There is a loa who lives in the water,
It is Damballa!

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1958) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Maît' Grand Chemin (Master of the Highway). Probably Legba. 176

Makanda. Believed to be the spirit of the famous houngán Makandal, who lived during the revolutionary period. He is symbolized as a snake which lives in the ground. Some informants think he is a Pétro rather than a Dahomé loa. 175

Mambo Çaça

Tijean Dantor (Ancient Tijean)

Wittbah Walo. Whydah is the name of a seacoast town in Dahomey.

Zo. A fire deity of clear Dahomean origin.

Olicha

Oxal, or Oxanor. Known also among the Lucumí cults of Cuba. May be any one of the Oxanges mentioned by Herskovits. 171

Oxange Léléé

Ogodjaré

Papa Dahomé

Pierre Basico. This loa is sometimes identified with St. Peter. 177

Pierre Damballa, Dambarra, or Dambada. Sometimes identified with St. Peter.

Pierre Walo. Related to Whydah Walo.

Poula, or Foula. This name is probably a tribal designation.

Sabata. Described as a loa of ancient times. Sabata or Sagbata is the so-called smallpox group of deities of Dahomey.

Sàila. A female deity, thought by some to belong to the Exilie Fréda family.

Silibo Gwèto. In Dahomey, according to Herskovits, Silibo is an ancient sib-founder. 171

Silidja

Taureau

Ti Chat. This is a "false name"; this loa keeps his real name a secret.

THE AMBIVALENT SIMBI FAMILY

This group of loa in certain regions has attached itself to the Vodoun pantheon, elsewhere to the Congo-Guinée pantheon; but it has not maintained any kind of independent or semi-independent status. The deity Simbi and his family are of Congo origin. 171

Sèèba. A male deity, patron of rain and drinking water. Said to be the father of the Simbis brothers.

Simbi Dlèau. The best known of the Simbi family. Like his father, he is the patron of fresh water, is associated with the spring, and usually is symbolized as a snake. The color sacred to him is white. Altars to Simbi Dlèau usually are found at the spring or the well. Sometimes ponds are constructed for him within the houmfor. 823 822 178

Simbi Kitta

Simbi Yèmèdan, or Simbi Nan Dè Zeaux (Simbi in Two Waters). Symbolized as a water snake who lives in the "upper" waters and the "lower" waters.

Grand Sèèba. The parent of Simbis, and ancestor of the entire family of water loa.

Simbi Trois Zilé (Simbi of Three Islands)

Simbi Magata

Simbi Grand Bois (Simbi of the Forest)

[Elkin, The Ewe-Speaking Peoples, pp. 91-94. Cf. p. 354, Category 116.--Anchist]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Chapter 5: *Services for the Loa and the Family Ancestors* (*pp. 41–74*)

[1]Note that the houngan and the laplace are performing services normally performed by the *petit serane*.

[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 165.

[3]Parsons, *Spirit Cult in Haiti*.

[4]Account given by Jean Ravel Pintro.

[5]Informant: Albert Kofi Prempeh, Ghana.

[6]Account given by Voluska Saintvil. A. W. Cardinall notes in his book *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 69): "Trees are in most cases treated with respect. Before a man dare fell one for a canoe he must and invariably does sacrifice to its spirit and apologizes for the harm he is about to do it."

[7]The rite of *rafraichi tête* is conducted periodically for a *maît' tête* after the original *lavé tête* ceremony. The purpose is to "refresh" the loa and make him content with his residence in the head of the devotee.

[8]Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past*, p. 233.

[9]It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain Negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form.

[10]Odette Menneson Rigaud, "Notes on Two Marriages with Voudoun Loa," in Appendix A of Deren, *Divine Horsemen*, p. 264.

Chapter 6: *Songs of the Peristyle* (*pp. 75–94*)

[1]This theme is further commented on in chap. 13. Compare with the following excerpt from a Surinam song reported by Herskovits in *Suriname Folk-Lore* (p. 689):

> I have no mother there,
> I have no father there,
> I have no sister there,
> I haven't got anybody there.

Chapter 7: *In the Mapou Tree: Magic, Demons, and Compacts* (*pp. 95–104*)

[1]Simpson, "Haitian Magic," *Social Forces*, October, 1940, p. 97.

[2]Note the coincidence of the term *gris-gris* or *grigri* as used in the United States, where it has the same meaning as *mojo*, or "voodoo" charm.

[3]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1940, p. 303.

[4]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, p. 243.

Chapter 8: *Mardi Gras and Rara: Jugglers, Maypoles, and Kings* (*pp. 105–109*)

[1]Aubin, *En Haïti*, p. 42.

[2]Marionettes of this kind have been observed in both East and West Africa and are well known in the region of Senegal. I saw a phallic marionette, virtually identical with the Haitian version, in the neighborhood of Khartoum, Sudan.

Chapter 9: *Land and Work* (*pp. 110–121*)

[1]Franklin, *The Present State of Haiti*, p. 362.

[2]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 300 ff., describes Dahomean polygamous marriage in its various forms. Although Dahomean plural marriage is complex in terms of gifts, obligations, and

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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bean country, and perhaps fewer than in any country in Latin America. The agriculture itself, with the exceptions now of those very few large-scale plantations in sisal and sugarcane, is adapted to small plots and is worked with intensive labor and few tools on hilly land. Compared with agricultural production, especially of cash crops, in most mainland Latin American countries, productivity is low. The yeomanry is conservative in its agricultural practices, and not ready to change unless the changes entail minimal risk and the gains to be realized are clearly demonstrable (Erasmus, 1952:20–26). Yeomen cultivate with three goals in mind: cash income from world-market commodities (for instance, coffee, sisal, vetiver); cash income from items produced for local sale and consumption; and subsistence. While they are heavily involved in production for sale, their crop choices and land-use patterns rest fundamentally on a subsistence orientation. All grow a substantial part of their own food, especially sorghum, maize, sweet potatoes, taro, manioc, malanga (*Xanthosoma sagittifolium* Schott), plantains and bananas, fruits and vegetables, and rice where possible. The land is invested with considerable affect: gods live in it; it is the ultimate security against privation; family members are buried in it; food and wealth come from it; and it is good in itself, even if not cultivated. While such attitudes are common in yeoman societies, Haiti's history of slavery, and of access to land through revolution, has given a special symbolic significance to landowning. Land is valued above all else and is sometimes held "uneconomically"—that is, even when the capital and labor power to work it are lacking.

Leyburn describes better than any other writer the history of land acquisition by the yeoman after 1804. The French plantations lay in ruins, never to recover, while early authoritarian attempts to restore the prerevolutionary economy under native Haitian leadership soon failed. In the course of a century, the Haitian people laid claim to their own soil, while population growth and the adoption of the French tradition of equal inheritance progressively reduced the average size of holdings. In spite of some plantation development after the United States occupation, most agricultural land in Haiti is still employed in small holdings, and "land reform" in the conventional sense—the breaking-up of large estates and the creation of a class of small landholders—is nearly irrelevant to Haiti's needs.

As today's yeomanry cultivates, so its womenfolk market. Nearly

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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241 782 The first of the rice-harvest is pounded in a mortar. A chicken is killed, or, if the farmer is a man of some means, he may offer two chickens, which are stewed together with red beans. The rice, cooked separately, is put on one platter or in a calabash and the stew in another, and these are taken to the field, where they are cast to the four quarters of the earth. Some of this is also given to the spirit residing in any stream which may be on the property. In addition, sacred trees are rewarded for their care over the field with some of this food placed at the foot of each, but only after they have demonstrated their merit by a successful yield. A prayer of thanks, couched in terms such as these, is next pronounced:

[778] [824] [539]

> *"Tout ça quitté. Aidé moin à travailler durant l'année, quitté ba moin force, courage. Moin bien content jodi-a, main ça moin porté ba-ou, c'e pou' ca toujou' bon. Ba moin force l'année pou' moin travaille plus l'année prochain. Merci.* — All this remains [here for you]. Help me to work during the year, give me strength and courage. Today I am well satisfied; here is what I bring you that all may always be well with me. Give me strength this year that I may work more next year. Thank you."

The family and their friends who may be present then return to the house and eat the remaining food.

241 782 262 It is also held dangerous to eat yams until the spirits are given the first of the new crop that comes to hand.[1] This is true even though a person may not himself be a farmer, but purchases his yams in the market. Unless this is done: *"Cap' malade, cap' tué même. Marassa kèmbé 'ou, morts, too, et mystères.* — You can become ill, you can even die. Twins will seize (molest) you; the dead, too, and the *mystères.*" The ceremony occurs during November or December, and in addition to the "Guinea" yams — for this ceremony is not performed for the great coarse yams — it is necessary to have imported dried salt fish, fish from Haitian waters which are dried

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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844 The child is delivered on a mat or cloth placed on the ground, and the navel cord is cut with scissors, leaving a length of three finger-breadths. The end of the cord is cauterized with a red-hot iron, treated with oil, and bandaged with a piece of cloth. If the infant emits no cry after birth, the midwife shakes it or strikes it smartly to start its breathing, but should this be insufficient, a large *gammelle*, or wooden bowl used to serve food at feasts, is overturned so as to cover the child, and this is beaten for a few moments, a procedure which is held both to awaken the child and to give it needed warmth. After being bathed in tepid water in which calabash [278] leaves have been steeped,[1] about a teaspoonful of muscat, [824] palm oil, and sugar is fed the infant. An abdominal band is put on in place, and the child is dressed in a nightgown tightly pinned, so as to envelop its form and cause it to grow 846 straight-limbed and firm of muscle. The process of moulding 856 the head is begun at once, pressure being applied once a day for the first three days of life. The nostrils are pinched every few moments during the first day of life and several times each of the succeeding days, to cause them to be narrow. This matter of shaping the head and compressing the nostrils is sufficiently important to have figured in the accounts of birth conventions as given by a number of persons, though there is some disagreement as to the details of the practice, some maintaining that the head is shaped every eight days for two months and the nostrils compressed many times a day for a period of eight days. The baby continues to be bathed in tepid water, and, if born during the winter months, a fire always burns in the house.

844 The placenta is buried in a special hole dug in the room where the birth occurred, the preferred places for this being beneath the bed or at the threshold. Any of the women in attendance may bury the placenta, though usually the midwife sees to its disposal. If delivery takes place during the day, it is buried immediately after ejection, but if the birth has oc-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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curred during the night, they wait for daylight. Salt is added to the hole, "so that the evil eye cannot take it (for magic purposes), for with salt it spoils very quickly." Neither the hole nor its contents are held to be of future importance, and though the child may be shown where the cord and placenta were buried, by that time nothing will remain of it which might be of use to a maker of charms. After three or four days the cord falls off and muscat powder is applied to heal the wound cleanly. The bit of cord is saved, and if the child becomes ill, this is boiled and the water given as a drink. Occasionally an entire umbilical cord is dried and retained; and one woman spoke of the cord of her mother as still being in existence.

The mother is also bathed in water in which calabash leaves and other ingredients have been steeped, and after being carefully dried, a band is tightly tied about her abdomen to give her support. A cloth is placed to cover the vagina, which is not cleansed until the following day, though after that the vaginal region is washed twice daily for some forty days. Red wine is given to women immediately after delivery to sustain them until food can be prepared. Bananas, salt fish, milk, chocolate, and a dish of stew made of chicken and rice are offered, and in most instances the women eat heartily.

The cloths used during childbirth are carefully guarded, the woman herself or a trusted member of her family seeing to the task of washing them, so as to prevent their being used for evil magic. If a miscarriage occurs, the fetus is buried in a hole dug in the floor of the woman's house while the woman herself is bathed and otherwise cared for as in the case of a normal delivery.

A woman is usually up and about three or four days after the birth of her child, or sooner if there is no one to help her with her household duties, in which case she may even be obliged to perform the heavy work of going to the river for water within the week, though she is careful not to bend down

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et preserve li cont'e tout mal. Ba li couraille pou' moin. Yun jou', c'est li-même qui allé remplacé nou' pou' servi nou' quan' nou' pas pè la. — O spirits, you who after the Great Master protect and deliver, I come to thank you. At the same time here is the child [you are] to protect for me. Do not let werewolves gain power over him. Grant him strength, health, and preserve him against all evil. Give him courage for me. One day he himself will replace us to serve you when we are no longer here." 851 852 539 782

Inasmuch as it is always necessary to invoke all three categories of supernatural beings, a similar invocation is pronounced for the dead and the spirits of twins. The rite, however, may be even simpler than this. If the family house of worship is near by, and the relationship group is one which numbers important members of the *vodun* cult, the child may be taken into this house, water thrown on the ground three times, and a candle lighted. In such cases no invocation is pronounced. 851 852 782 [764]

Most mothers nurse their infants until they are about eighteen months old, though children may be weaned when as young as a year. Weaning is accomplished in a day or two. On the day selected, a bitter plant called *laloi* is spread on the mother's breasts, and when the child asks and is given the breast and refuses it because of the bitter taste, his favorite food is at once offered as a substitute. So efficacious is this method that one day's training is ordinarily enough. As a further precaution the child is not allowed to sleep with his mother for three or four nights after being weaned, so that he cannot take the breast at night, and is only given a place in the mother's bed after her milk has ceased to flow. 862 [824]

The earlier years of a child are in the main free from care, and, with due allowance for the differences in individual temperaments and family traditions, he is given much his own way. Young children make "mud food" and build play-houses. When somewhat older, they organize games of 857 [855]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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lighted. Chicken and rice may also be cooked for any god except Gede, while chocolate and rice with milk are favored, since it is said "the *loa* love desserts" — a commentary on the very immediate and human character of these spirits.

The actual baptism, or "washing of the head," is performed on the third day of the ceremony by a *vodun* priest or priestess who is a member of the family, though any member who has important *loa* and the necessary *connaissance* may officiate if the membership of the family includes no priest. As at any baptism, there must be a godfather and godmother, and preference is given those who are the parents of twins or are themselves twins. The officiant must be possessed at the time, since, it is said, "one *loa* baptizes another." Leaves of the basilique tree are steeped in perfumed cold water, and the hands of the one who baptizes are first immersed in the liquid; then, while songs of the *loa* and canticles of the Virgin are sung, he washes the head of the person to be baptized. Possession occurs immediately, and the new devotee lies back, half conscious, while all others kneel, seeking word from the *loa* to learn if it is satisfied. If an affirmative answer is given, all retire, the person possessed remaining in the room to sleep through the night. A "ball," but not a *vodun* dance, may celebrate the event either the next day or later, but this is not obligatory, and most often those present, after eating, quietly disperse. The following day the one who has been baptized goes to the family place of worship and greets those who have helped him. Only one further rite is necessary, and this solely when the *loa bossal* is revealed to be a hostile god. Then the *loa*, after having been baptized, is "restrained" by being placed in a jar and buried, so it cannot later emerge and trouble the family of the one to whom it has come.[13]

The ceremony of baptism, in Mirebalais, is in no sense a first step into any *vodun* hierarchy, for, as will be seen, no such hierarchy exists in this valley. One important priest there derives his power from *loa* that have never been bap-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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764 to which orange leaves and alcohol have been added, and soap are used to bathe the corpse, though limes are substituted for [198] orange leaves if the dead was tubercular.[4] In earlier days caolin (white lime) — sacred in Africa — was mixed with the water, but this is no longer done. The corpse is turned on its face to permit the washing of side and back, and the body is dried with a towel, while the soiled water is either thrown into a small ravine or into a hole dug for the purpose.

764 The corpse is next dressed in new clothing, unless the one 775 who died owned a wardrobe which included black garments. No buttons or pins are used on new clothes, which are sewn into place, and if the body is dressed in clothing he wore while alive, the pockets are torn so that nothing can be [198] carried away in them. Shoes were at one time put into the coffin — or sandals in the country — beside the dead, rather than on his feet, so that he would not be tempted to walk, but today in Mirebalais and the surrounding country the dead are buried barefoot or in stocking feet, since, as it was explained, "otherwise they make too much noise as they go about." Black stockings are always used. In the coffin are placed a rosary, a scapulary, soap, a comb, a handkerchief, a pipe (if the dead had been a smoker), and face powder; but no strong drink is included because, were the spirit of the dead person to become drunk, this would be dangerous; and no money, for if so much as a single sou were given the dead, he would return and take the rest of the family wealth. Similarly no food is put in the coffin, for otherwise it is believed that the ghost would be so busy eating he would never find the route to the sky. Pins are carefully excluded, because if the dead were given sharp objects, he would return to prick 764 the family. If it is suspected that death had been caused by 775 sorcery, and the soul of the dead may later be taken to aid in 754 working black magic, some plants of the type called *hoholi* 824 are placed in the coffin with the body. These plants are said to contain so many seeds that since one who comes to take the

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dead must first count them, he can never accomplish this before daylight. From these precautions, it is evident that for the Haitian the reality of existence after death is no fictional one, as is even more vividly illustrated in the answer given to the question whether or not a flute, such as young boys play, would be placed in the coffin of a lad: "What! And have the dead going about all the time blowing it?"

When dressed, the body is placed on a mat or mattress or in a hammock and covered with a clean cloth. A *bande de machoire*, which goes under the chin and over the head to hold the jaw in place, in earlier days, as today in remote sections of the valley, served the double purpose of making possible the identification of a ghost as such, and of keeping the moisture inside the mouth. At present, however, it is usually removed when the body is placed in the coffin. In earlier times also, as today among the peasants in the hills, the nostrils and ears were plugged with cotton. The body and head are shaved of all hair, and the finger- and toe-nails clipped; hair and clippings are later placed in the coffin and buried with the body. The eyes usually close naturally; it is a bad sign if they do not, indicating, as it does, that magic has caused death. Putrefaction, or any unusual sign connected with death such as when a cadaver swells, or a body remains warm and perspires, or, as mentioned, when the eyes remain open, is held to be an indication that the soul has been taken by a sorcerer and the person "sold"—all signalling a "bad" death and requiring that a dagger be struck into the body and burial take place immediately.

Some time later, the *prêt' savanne* comes to read prayers if the death has occurred in the countryside, or the priest of the local Catholic church if in the town or near it. After the prayers have been said and relatives and friends have addressed the dead and "given him commissions," such as "Say good-day to my mother," "Ask my father to help us, for the weather has been bad this year for the crops . . ." the body is

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time, or are animals given power as *baka* by these *loa*. The "squad" of the *baka* includes the following: 776 787 754

'Ti Kita Demembré	Simbi Proméné
'Ti Jean Pié Sèche	Simbi en Deux Eaux
Erzilie Gé Rouge	Simbi Troi' Z'ilé

Baka appear as small bearded human-like figures with flaming eyes, or as cattle, horses, asses, goats, bears(?), and dogs. Sheep never become *baka* because the sheep, as represented on the chromolithographs, is the animal of the Virgin and therefore cannot be a creature of evil. The mule also is never a *baka* for reasons given in the myth explaining how it came to be accursed. 776 825

[773]

> One day Jesus came down a path astride a mule. When he came to a crossroads a snake so frightened the mule that he reared on his hind legs, throwing Jesus to the ground. Jesus became angry and cursed him, saying that from that day onward mules would never bear offspring. He also cursed the snake, saying that thereafter it must forever go about on its belly.

Whether because of this or because of its long, alert ears, the mule is favored for night travel, for this animal is held able to sense these creatures of evil and give his rider warning of them. A black cat can become a *baka*, but there are also good black cats that drive away evil spirits. Even if a black cat-*baka* is sent away, nothing happens to its owner.

A *baka* named Babako, sometimes called Bakuba Baka, is believed to live in the *mapou* tree, where he is "fed" in December. "He is the chief of [evil] magic, is magic itself," it is said, and "*C'est baggai diabolique, gros baka*—he is a thing of the Devil, a great *baka*." For this reason the *mapou* tree is greatly feared, and that is why those who "serve" the gods of the *mapou* do it in secret and are dealt with circumspectly. 776 824

764 invoked the loa, the pallbearers brought the body forward as though to go straight ahead, but then they began to lurch and sway as though an invisible force were pushing them around. They veered as though to take the right turn, and again they lurched and staggered. At last they turned toward the left, and in this direction they found the road clear. The houngan thanked the Master of the Crossroads, the widow took her place at the head of the procession, and it proceeded on its way to the cemetery.

793 764 766 In the services for a dead houngan described by Simpson, the body is placed in a coffin, which is carried to all the places sacred to the loa of the hounfor before being taken to the cemetery. First it is taken to the sacred trees where the loa reside, then to the sacred spring "whose waters have cured many sicknesses which physicians had pronounced incurable . . . [823] The bearers of the coffin circle the spring several times. The coffin is swung [toward] each of the four cardinal points." Afterward the procession continues its way to the burial ground.[17]

766 174 761 But the treatment given to the dead may vary according to the manner in which they died. Leyburn notes, for example, that "a person struck by lightning . . . would have no ceremonies at all, for lightning is an act of God."[18] It may well be that the Haitian rationale for not holding ceremonies for an individual killed by lightning is that God has already held the final ceremony. But in the Haitian mind all deaths are, in the last analysis, acts of God, even though magic, poison, or accident may have played an immediate part. Why, then, should the corpse struck by lightning be treated so differently? The answer would appear to lie in a custom of the Yoruba of dispensing with all burial rites for persons killed by lightning, such persons being considered enemies of the lightning deity Chango. In Dahomey, Herskovits reports, the same attitude prevails in regard to persons killed by lightning:

171 766 761 [174]

> If a person is killed by lightning he . . . stands convicted by this fact of some grave crime which has incurred the displeasure of the god of the Thunder Pantheon (Xevioso). A person so killed is never buried by his family, but the body is turned over to the chief priest and cult-members of these deities. It is believed that a man killed in this fashion remains upright until the chief priest questions him and forces him to confess the crimes he had committed to be so punished. No one touches any of the belongings of such a man, not even his money. The house in which he lived is allowed to go to ruin, an *azan* of palm fronds being placed around it to guard against anyone entering it. The moveable property of such a man, his clothes, his stools, and his dishes, are thrown away at the crossroads . . .[19]

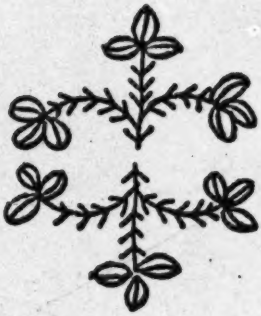
[768] [784] [824]

766 The burial of a Haitian who dies of smallpox likewise differs from that of one who dies a "normal" death. The victim of smallpox is buried without a coffin in a segregated part of the cemetery. The reason for this lies

17 [Simpson, Op. Cit., p. 161. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]
18 [Leyburn, The Haitian People, p. 156. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]
19 [Herskovits, Dahomey, I, 398. Cf. p. 350, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-8 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[p. 95]



7. In the Mapou Tree: Magic, Demons, and Compacts

It is said by many Haitians that the loa are inclined to shun the mapou tree, for it is the secret rendezvous of countless kinds of demons. On certain nights, they say, you may see a chink of light showing through the trunk of the great mapou, indicating that the demons are in macabre session. 796 778 824

Sometimes it is the baka who meet there to feast and discuss their blood-curdling plans. The baka are described as small and evil creatures, human in form, with red eyes, and legs or arms covered with skin but no flesh. They change into animals at will and may roam the countryside as cats, dogs, or cattle. The baka are notorious sorcerers, and they perform only malevolent acts. They are reputed to "eat people," literally as well as figuratively. Stories are heard of such-and-such a man or child who disappeared and was presumed to have been eaten at a feast in the mapou tree. One man who passed a mapou in the dark of night reported that he heard muffled singing coming from within its trunk, accompanied by the pounding of mortars in which a gruesome feast was being pulverized. But the baka "eat" people also in the sense that they destroy them. It is said sometimes that a person with a withered arm or leg has been "eaten" by a baka. Perhaps he was an innocent victim; possibly he struck a horse or dog which was really a baka; or perhaps he simply brushed against a baka in the market place. Sometimes the baka directs his evil in the most indiscriminate sort of way, "eating" whatever human being he meets. Animals which behave strangely are suspected of being baka in disguise, and they are given wide berth. 776 [732] 796 825

A cow once found within an old brick-covered spring was taken to be a baka because no cow could have passed through the small doorway of the spring. It was assumed that she had entered as a small baka and had then changed to her animal form. The spring went unused for days, until some children reported that the baka had vanished. The cow was

The cow was

never seen again, and after a prêt' savane had read prayers over the spring the people again drew water from it.

Baka more often change themselves into gray or red pigs, but one ingenious baka was said to have transformed himself into a bicycle, which was seen traveling alone at night on the road from Port-au-Prince to Léogane.

Some people wear charms against the baka's malevolence; but the most effective weapon is the cocomacaque stick. The cocomacaque, or monkey palm, is a palm tree that grows only a few feet high. It has magical powers to drive off not only baka but other evil beings as well. When the tree is growing in its natural state, it is said, you must never mention its name in its own presence. Should you say within its hearing, for example, "Look at the cocomacaque," it will wilt and fall over, losing all its vital powers. The trunk of this midget palm is a favorite material for fashioning a walking stick or a short baton. A man going on a long journey into strange country may carry a cococmacaque stick with him to brandish at the crossroads where baka lurk, or to drive off strange animals that may be baka in disguise.

In their relationships with human beings, the baka are not always random. Sometimes, for a terrible price, they will undertake to make a man rich or to "eat" his enemies for him.

In some parts of Haiti, baka seemingly have found their way into the ranks of the loa. In the Congo-Guinée pantheon there is a deity called Bakulu Baka, or Babaku Baka. He is a malevolent spirit who "eats" people in the best baka tradition, and he lives, significantly, in the mapou tree, which is shunned by all good loa.

The *engagements*, or compacts, in which baka sometimes figure are usually made with another sort of creature, the *djab*, or devil. A djab is a manlike being but is superhuman, ferocious, and terrible. Some djab are small, some large, some innocent in appearance, some grotesque. They are supernatural sorcerers who deal out riches in exchange for human beings. A frustrated or desperate man may go to a djab and ask for a favor, which will usually be granted for a heart-rending price. Persons who appear to gain wealth suddenly may be suspected of having entered into an *engagement* with a powerful djab.

One story is about a man of Port-au-Prince who, needing a large sum of money, went to a famous djab who lives in a cave known as Trou Fourban. This powerful djab agreed to provide all the money required, but only on condition that the man deliver to him each year one of his children. The man suddenly came into a large fortune. But when the anniversary of his compact arrived, he did not go to Trou Fourban

2: Courlander B-8 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

When they are not working, it is said, zombies are tied with special ropes made from the leaves of the banana tree. One popular song goes:

> Nans Léogane
> Yo marré zombie nans paille fig-banane!
> Abobo wye-oh!
>
> In Léogane
> They tie the zombie with banana straw!
> That is all, *wye-oh!*

Some Haitians tell you they know there are zombies because they have seen them. Not too many years ago a visiting writer stoutly declared that she, too, knew there were zombies because she had seen one—in the mental hospital at Pont Beudet. Although her reasoning was not quite airtight, the possibility that mental defectives are sometimes mistaken for zombies is worth considering.

Houngans who "work with two hands" are reputed to be able to gain permanent control over persons by means of a formula known as *tuyé-lèvé* (kill and raise). Either for himself or a client, the houngan gains power over the victim by "killing" him through special magic and then "removing the soul" (*retiré n'âme*). The victim, presumed to be normally dead, is buried by his family; the houngan then retrieves the body and "restores the soul" (*metté n'âme*). With his soul restored, the victim has, in effect, become a slave of the houngan, who can do with him as he wishes. He differs from a zombie in that he has a soul, whereas the zombie has none.

Some Haitians believe that even one who has died a nonmagic death may be raised from the dead. To accomplish this, the houngan or bocor stands over the body, goes through a specified ritual, and calls out the dead person's name: "Albert Moreau! Albert Moreau! Albert Moreau! Lèvé non! Lèvé non! Lèvé non!" ("Get up! Get up! Get up!") Then, it is said, the dead man may awaken.

It is believed that a houngan may also command the souls of dead persons to perform services for him against an enemy. The souls at his disposal for this work are those which he keeps in earthern jars in his hounfor. Should he wish to plague an enemy, he will send one of these souls to the man's house to make him sick, or lazy, or insane. Usually, the man does not know what is happening to him; but if he becomes aware that a dead soul is working on him, he attempts to find out which houngan has sent it. Perhaps the houngan can be bought off. If not, another houngan may provide relief.

While some believe in the reality of the various demons and spectors,

534 322 [412] of drum making is a very skilled one, but the tools are simple: chisels, machetes, and fire. The core of the log is removed by burning and gouging, and the outside is shaped with a machete, or sometimes a hachet. The wood is selected and processed carefully. Firing of the core of the log depends a good deal on how dry the wood is, for the wood must burn slowly. It is believed that wood cut at the right stage of growth and at the right phase of the moon is resistant to the ever-present powder-post beetles. Mahogany was once favored because [824] it was durable and beetle resistant, even though it was heavy. But in recent decades mahogany has become scarce, and modern drums are made of lighter woods.

534 798 [531] [171] Drums made in the nineteenth century not only conformed to the patterns of certain West African prototypes but were also carved and decorated. Some of these old drums are still to be seen, but there are not many left. An ancient carved assotor drum (previously cited) has fortunately been preserved by the Bureau d'Ethnologie. But between the ravages of the powder-post beetles, age, and the periodic orgies of drum burning by the church and misguided public officials, most of these [648] ancient works of art have long since disappeared. During the American occupation of Haiti—from World War I to 1932—American military personnel also contributed to the mania for drum burning. And as late as 1941 there was a massive, cleric-inspired drive to wipe out these instruments as remnants of *sauvage* elements in Haitian life.

534 178 531 The effect of this war against the drum was only to improve the business of the professional drum maker. Drums had become expendable, hence they were made simpler. The carved decorations disappeared. Paint was substituted, and less attention was given to detail. The important thing was to produce a good functional instrument. But the creative instincts of the drum makers sometimes still take over, and many of the modern drums are beautifully proportioned, with delicate geometric patterns carved around the base, or foot. Among certain categories of drums the painted decorations consist solely of the name of the loa to whom the instruments have been dedicated—St. Jacques perhaps, or Papa Pierre, or Ezilie.

534 171 794 796 Drums differ in design according to the use for which they are intended. The Arada or Vodoun drums are used primarily in connection with the dances and rituals of the Vodoun cult—the cult built around the gods and rites of Arada and Yoruba theology. They resemble closely drums which are used today in Dahomey, Nigeria, and Togoland. They 534 usually come in sets of three. The largest, the *manman* (also called *hountor* or *hountogri*), may be three to four feet high. The middle-sized drum, or *second* (also called *grandé* or *moyen*), is about two feet

[Text continues on p. 193]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1938) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

easily be hidden, but the ganbos were simply slipped into the straw roofs and thus put out of sight. Moreover, by some strange process of reasoning, military authorities regarded the bamboos as "harmless," though they were used for the same purposes as the contraband drums. 534 648 798

There are numerous other kinds of simple percussion devices. One such instrument, now less commonly seen than previously, is a length of open bamboo laid in the crotches of two Y-shaped sticks set in the ground. Like other *catas*, the bamboo is beaten with two sticks. Some Haitians believe that in former days such bamboos were played in batteries like a xylophone. 534

Sometimes a light-weight wooden cylinder, or perhaps a drum denuded of its playing head, is carried by the timekeeper of a coumbite. It, also, is played on the side with sticks. [461] [476]

Wooden mortars for pulverizing grain take on the character of musical instruments when used in combination with voices. When two or more mortars are used, with two men or women wielding the long polelike pestles in each mortar, the rhythmic effects can become fairly complicated. 534 533 412

The *claves* or *palos* (small hardwood sticks) are used primarily in connection with secular dances of a Cuban type, or to accompany such instruments as the guitar and the marimba. One stick is held loosely in the natural fold of the hand, so that it is free to vibrate, and is struck sharply with the second stick. The tone is almost metallic because of the hardness of the wood, usually lignum vitae. The name of the instrument is recognizable as a form of *clavar*, or *clavo*, Spanish for "peg" or "nail." It is thought that wooden shipbuilding pegs provided the name for this device, which has equivalents in West Africa. 534 535 [177] [824] [171]

Among the folk instruments there are various kinds of horns and trumpets. Cows' horns are played musically in some parts of the southern peninsula, though usually they are used as ritual instruments and signaling devices. Wooden trumpets called *pistons* are carved from the stems of the papaya tree. Conch-shell trumpets, known as *lambis*, are commonly used as signaling devices by fishermen. They are also to be found among the coumbites, in Rara festivities, and occasionally in rituals, where they are usually identified with sea deities. In carnival times the old fashioned phonograph horn makes its appearance as a combined trumpet and voice amplifier. 534 184 [824] [202] [541] [216]

Probably the most important of the trumpets is the one made of bamboo. It is called a *vercine* or *bois bourrique*. Both names have interesting origins. The cow's horn was at one time used for magico-medical purposes. The leaf doctor used it as an "applicator" of powders and potions. A small opening was made in the point of the horn, and 534 755 [237]

[See plate 8, P. 112-F. -- Analyst]

Rara season two special rattles are used. One of them is made of metal and resembles a tin can with a wooden handle. The metal sometimes is perforated with numerous small holes, and inside are *boboli* seeds, which act as rattlers. This instrument, known as a *tchancy*, is usually decorated with colorful ribbons when in use. (In northern Haiti the term *tchancy* is used to designate metal wrist rattles worn by drummers.) The other Rara rattle, called *jouconjou* or *joucjou*, is made of three gourds carried on a long pole. One of the gourds is affixed to the end of the pole, and the others are fastened to the terminals of a short crossbar, giving the effect of a cross with bulbous ends. Since many of the Rara processions are dramatizations of the Christ epic, the instrument could be interpreted as a Christian symbol, though its conversion into a noisemaker appears to be an African conception. The *jouconjou* may be a variant of the small rattle-cross which is used by the Abakwa secret society in Cuba.[8]

534 54 [82] [531] [171]

The sacred gourd rattle of the cult priest is called *asson* or *baksor*. It is pear-shaped and covered with a network of beads which act as external strikers. It is used by the houngan to summon the spirits of the dead, to praise or call upon the deities, and to accompany the performance of magic. The asson is of West African derivation, and its counterparts are to be found among the cults of Martinique, Trinidad, Cuba, Brazil, Venezuela, and elsewhere where African traditions have left their mark. The gourds from which the assons are made are grown in a special grove sacred to the loa.

534 78 171 178

A large calabash rattle has been reported from several isolated regions of Haiti, primarily from the north. Some rattles of this kind have been described as more than twenty inches in height and covered by a network of external strikers, usually wari beans. The calabash rattles are used in groups of three. They are shaken and thumped against the palm of the hand, producing both deep and high-pitched sounds. These oversize rattles are employed without drums and are said to be associated with Arada-Nago rites. They appear to be a survival of the instrument known among the Yoruba as the *shékèré* and are found in Cuba in both Dahomey and Lucumí (Yoruba) cult centers.

534 [184] [171]

Probably one of the oldest of Haitian folk instruments is the earth bow, known as the *tambour maringouin*, or mosquito drum. Traditionally the mosquito drum is made in the following way:

A hole is dug in the earth, perhaps a foot or more deep. It is covered with palm or banana bark, which is pegged firmly all around. A cord is attached to the center of the bark membrane and drawn taut to a bent green sapling, one end of which is buried in the ground at a slight angle. The cord is plucked and snapped with the fingers of one hand, while

[8] [See Courlander, "Musical Instruments of Cuba," Musical Quarterly, April, 1942, pp. 233-239. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst)

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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171 other one which has been known there for many years,
771 principally in the west, which bears the name of *Vau-*
535 *doux*. . . . But it is not only as a dance that the *Vaudoux* merits consideration, for it occurs under circumstances which assign to it a place among the institutions where superstition and bizarre practices play a considerable part."[9]

171 In Dahomey, whence the term has come, *vodun*, as has al-
771 ready been stated, signifies "god" and is a general name for
776 all deities. This source of the word has likewise long been
[142] known, as a reading of St. Mery shows:

> "According to the Arada Negroes, the real followers of *Vaudoux* in the colony . . . *Vaudoux* signifies an all-powerful and supernatural being on which depend all the events that come to pass on this globe."[9]

171 Similarly, de Vassière[9] quotes with approval a parallel defini-
771 tion from Peytraud, while modern Haitian writers also em-
776 phasize its Dahomean origin.[9] This meaning of the word had
192 however, undergone a change in its new home even during
138 pre-Revolutionary times, for, according to St. Mery, the "all-
825 powerful and supernatural being" had come to be a non-venomous serpent that stood as a symbol "for all those who
184 professed this same doctrine." Today in Mirebalais even this
771 identification is a thing of the past, though the prominence
776 given serpent-worship in Haiti by most writers[9] would make
825 it reasonable to suppose that elsewhere in the island serpents are maintained by priests of the *vodun* cult and play an important role in the rites at which the gods are worshipped. Indeed, one priest from Arcahaie encountered in Mirebalais mentioned the fact that in his own temple he kept such a snake. Yet in our valley no worship of serpents as such was encountered, and there were even those who declared that they had no hesitation in killing any snake, though these brave assertions could not be tested. Serpent-worship in Mirebalais

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may perhaps be said to have come to this: Adherents of the African cults refrain from killing the snake, and should they do so by accident, the African custom of giving ceremonial burial to any creature having supernatural importance is followed as an atonement. Where this is omitted, difficulties of so serious a nature are felt to threaten that to prevent them a priest of the cult is called upon to offer up a sacrifice and to beg forgiveness even after the little ceremony of burial has been performed.[1]

Inasmuch as *vodun* flourishes in Mirebalais despite the minor role of serpent-worship, it is evident that in seeking to understand its nature and its philosophy other aspects must be considered. Two historical facts must be kept constantly in mind in making this analysis, for without them, what follows would be meaningless. The first is that *vodun* derives from a background of African theology and ceremonialism. The second is that the Negroes have continuously been subjected to the influence of Catholicism during the centuries that have passed since their introduction into the island.

Yet another point may prove suggestive in providing a useful point of view for an analysis of the *vodun* cult. This bears upon a difficulty impossible and happily unnecessary to resolve in the field study of religion, which arises out of the degree of variation in answers to questions dealing with the same point. These answers differ not only according to the status of the individual in the cult, since layman and priest have understandably different concepts of the functions of deities based on unequal degrees of expert knowledge, but the extent to which an individual has religious interests or is indifferent to them influences the nature of his responses. A fundamental fallacy results from the fact that except where there is an officially sanctioned theology — which makes for dogma, and often for perfunctory worship, in contrast with the living dynamic nature of Haitian peasant belief and ritual — there are no "real" answers to questions in the field of religion. The

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[789 [788] person of great experience was pointed out who was believed able to stop a runaway horse without putting a finger on him. One widely spread type of charm is an *arrêt* against the *mal jòk*, or evil eye. Mention has been made of protective charms when the measures taken to guard growing crops were discussed, and also in connection with safeguarding the well-being of infants. The power in this latter type of *garde* often is made to reside in a seed on a string or chain, or a cross of beads sewed on cloth, to represent the four corners of the earth.

[789 793 Because charms are the outer symbols of magic, detailed examples of their making will give insight into the nature of charms in general. The first of these which may be described [827 787 was a *garde*, made by a *mambu*, to relieve a pregnant woman whose milk had begun to flow before the birth of her child [954 — a sign that an evil spirit had been sent her by an enemy, and that her delivery would therefore be fraught with danger. [787 During the séance the *mambu* was continuously possessed by her god, Ogun, whose identity was shown by her whistling. Before the *mambu* as she commenced her incantation were some *clairin*, lighted red candles, a new piece of soap, incense, sulphur, garlic, light brown shoemaker's thread, an empty bottle, a bottle filled with a green, evil-smelling lotion called *baigne de mambu*, a chick, and three iron nails. As she tied the cord in knots she muttered her spell; then, taking the empty bottle, she p[illegible] in it a bit of the incense, sulphur, garlic, some soap, some *cl[illegible]*, and some *baigne de mambu*. With the knotted cord she tied a cross made of two nails to the neck of the bottle, repeating her formula before she put it down. Instructing the pregnant woman to take the bottle, she said: "Speak into it and say everything you wish."

[825 She then took the chick, opened its beak, and wrote on it with a pencil, continuing the incantation the while. With the pencil she also made marks on the thighs, the wings, the upper joints, and the leg joints before she handed it to her client

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with the words: "Tell it what you have to say. Tell it that you are passing on to it all your pain, everything." When she had finished, the *mambu* once again took the chick, holding its head as she described three crosses on the ground with its beak. She now put some of the earth in which she had made the crosses into a white dish, returning the chick to the woman and telling her to speak to it again, and this time to expectorate three times into its open beak as she finished. The *mambu*, holding the fowl in one hand, thereupon poured some of the mixture from the bottle, and some *clairin*, in the plate that contained the earth, lighting the *clairin* with her free hand and directing the patient to rub her nipples with it. Then she returned the bottle to the pregnant woman, telling her to recount her need to it once more, and then to cork it.

The *mambu* next chewed some of the soap and rubbed it over the cork to "seal" the bottle, saying: "When you send a letter through the mail, you seal it," and instructed the pregnant woman to place the bottle in her house and see to it that it was not uncorked, for in it was contained her life and the life of her child. "Open it before delivery and pass its contents over your abdomen." A cord was put about the waist of the woman and tied tightly, not to be untied until the growing child in her womb should cause it to break of itself. While the *garde* was being made the *mambu* sang this song:

M' pas 'ti bête,	I am not a little animal,
M' pas 'ti cochon,	I am not a little pig,
Pou' on cové,	That one can confine me,
Pou' on marré moin.	That one can tie me up.
Ça qui fait bien,	He who does good,
Cé bien li wé;	Good he will see;
Ça qui fait mal,	He who does evil,
Cé mal li wé.	Evil he will see.
Côté marré corde moin,	Where I tie my cord,
Yo passa la qui li.	They are stronger than it [the evil?].

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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789 825 The chick was released in the open countryside. Were a person to capture and eat it, the evil that had been transferred to the fowl would come to him. Many such fowl live wild in the woods, and no one touches them.

789 There was no hesitation in permitting spectators to witness the making of this charm; rather it was held to be good business to allow anything pertaining to a cure to become widely known. Had the transaction involved evil magic, great secrecy would have been exacted of the principals, and no others would have been present. The operation of sympathetic magic in this case — the fact that the ingredients were either cleansing or evil-smelling, for example, indicates the concept behind the charm. Similarly, the assertion that the [825] chick which figured so prominently in the rite would carry away the *wanga* sent against the pregnant woman shows how the forces of "white" magic are manipulated to combat "black."

Another *garde* had for its purpose the protection of its owner against evil, and, being a *garde Malt' Carrefour*, was especially designed to enable him to go about unharmed at night. Though carefully made, it was not actuated by its power at the end of the séance, nor were extraordinary demands made of it and reciprocal promises of rewards for gratifying them, since it was then explained that it was desired as an example rather than an actively potent charm which, because of the difficulties of properly serving it away from Haiti, might cause its possessor harm. To make this charm the following ingredients were furnished:

One half-ell of red cotton	Roasted maize
A bottle of *kola*	Seven "red" copper sous
Clairin	A candle
Cakes	A spool of black thread
Cassava bread	Some ashes

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time, or are animals given power as *baka* by these *loa*. The "squad" of the *baka* includes the following: 776 787 754

'Ti Kita Demembré	Simbi Proméné
'Ti Jean Pié Sèche	Simbi en Deux Eaux
Erzilie Gé Rouge	Simbi Troi' Z'ilé

Baka appear as small bearded human-like figures with flaming eyes, or as cattle, horses, asses, goats, bears(?), and dogs. Sheep never become *baka* because the sheep, as represented on the chromolithographs, is the animal of the Virgin and therefore cannot be a creature of evil. The mule also is never a *baka* for reasons given in the myth explaining how it came to be accursed. 776 825 [773]

> One day Jesus came down a path astride a mule. When he came to a crossroads a snake so frightened the mule that he reared on his hind legs, throwing Jesus to the ground. Jesus became angry and cursed him, saying that from that day onward mules would never bear offspring. He also cursed the snake, saying that thereafter it must forever go about on its belly.

Whether because of this or because of its long, alert ears, the mule is favored for night travel, for this animal is held able to sense these creatures of evil and give his rider warning of them. A black cat can become a *baka*, but there are also good black cats that drive away evil spirits. Even if a black cat-*baka* is sent away, nothing happens to its owner.

A *baka* named Babako, sometimes called Bakuba Baka, is believed to live in the *mapou* tree, where he is "fed" in December. "He is the chief of [evil] magic, is magic itself," it is said, and "*C'est baggai diabolique, gros baka*—he is a thing of the Devil, a great *baka*." For this reason the *mapou* tree is greatly feared, and that is why those who "serve" the gods of the *mapou* do it in secret and are dealt with circumspectly. 776 824

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754 Some *baka* are believed to be " doubles " of sorcerers who take
776 animal form and roam at night doing evil. Pigs encountered
825 at night are especially dreaded because of this, and those of a gray color, held to be more potent for evil than those of any other shade, are sedulously avoided. The tale is told of a man who, having encountered a gray pig at midnight which passed between his legs at great speed, was ill for months afterwards. It is also recounted how several men of uncommon bravery waited for one such pig and beat it, and how the next morning an old woman was found on whose bent back wounds inflicted
776 by sticks could be seen. It is because of stories such as this that it is held important to worship the good *loa*. For if the devotee of a *loa* meets a *baka* at night, the *loa* comes to his head and the *baka* flees in terror. An autobiographical incident was related to make this point. When a lad, the man who told the tale joined his playmates in an escapade which had as its aim to frighten some young women returning home late from a *vodun* dance. Draped in white sheets they stationed themselves near a bridge, turning about before lighted candles in the ground. The young women were possessed by their *loa* the instant they caught sight of these apparitions, who promptly fled the scene to avoid capture by those who came running in reply to the songs and cries emitted by the protecting gods!

776 *Baka* are often employed to guard buried money. " In this
454 country, when you find money buried in jars, it is an affair of *baka*. There is never one jar, but always two or three, and you must call a *hungan* to find out which one you may take and which you must not touch. Generally the finder is allowed to take half of the treasure, for if he took all, he would be tormented by the *baka* who had been left as guardian." Such jars, it is said, are usually found with human bones beside them or under them, and tradition has it that the slave-owners who are believed to have been strong in magic customarily killed the most evil slave on a plantation that his spirit might keep watch over the jars. If the owner never returned, the spirit of the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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slave, as a "sold *baka*," remained to wreak vengeance upon anyone who dared disturb his charge. 776 464

The reality of the *baka* to the Haitian was made dramatically vivid by an incident involving an old blind and deaf horse. It occurred one night on the principal streets of the town of Mirebalais itself. The horse was first noticed as the sun set, groping his way along, and finally circling the turn of the road. Though people shouted at the animal, he would not give way. As darkness came and doors and windows were barred, the horse blundered into the small veranda of a house inhabited by an elderly woman, her daughter, and her grandchildren. The younger woman cried out with fright when, timidly peering about the side of the house, she saw their visitor, but the older woman, whose age made her fearless in the face of this supernatural danger, opened a window and vigorously attacked the animal with a heavy stick, while he unhurriedly tried to get clear of the blows and finally moved on to the next veranda, and so from house to house down the street. On this night the habitual tranquillity did not settle over the town, and all of the next day and many days thereafter there was quiet talk of the danger that had been abroad, and much speculation of its intended destination. 776 825

The *baka* are sometimes confused with the *démons*, as is seen in the fragmentary information that was obtained about the existence of secret societies, so feared by Mirebalais folk because of their reputation for working all kinds of evil that it was with difficulty that even the names of two of them could be learned — the "Bissago," whose members appear at night wearing horns and holding candles, and "Les Cochons sans Poils." The former, termed *démons*, are believed to be able to change into animals when they do their evil work, a feat which would seem to make them *baka*. The societies all meet in the open country at night, and each has a small drum. They are called together by the beating of one rock against another in a manner reminiscent of the Zangbeto society of Porto Novo, Dahomey. 754 776 575 [202] [171]

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776 823 it joins the flooded Artibonite as its master accompanies Clairmé on his way to consult with the great ruler of the sea, Agwe. Actually, at the height of the rainy season the force of the light colored muddy water of the major stream holds back the darker colored flow of its tributaries in a manner which accords with the legend, so that, observing the Tombe River at one such time, the Haitians who were present said: "The Tombe is waiting for its master to pass."

776 [784] [794] Gede, a deity who figures in both the Rada and the Pétro groups as chief functionary under Baron Samedi, ruler of cemeteries, is tolerated rather than favored, though his rewards to his devotees include the refusal to dig a premature grave for them. When Gede possesses a devotee at a dance, [784] Damballa, Ogun, and the other Rada gods "leave" at once, and those who are possessed by them come out of their possessions. For though Gede is no less a *loa* than other gods, "He is a *zombi* and is fed apart"; as the Haitians say: "The *loa* are like human beings. They will not mingle with the dead, [822] and Gede is of the dead." His color is black, and Saturday is his sacred day. He "eats" salt herring, hot peppers, cassava, [782] roasted corn, roasted bananas, and other roasted foods. He drinks *clairin* — much of it — and at great ceremonies a [825] black goat and chickens are killed for him, as well as those chickens with ruffled feathers called *djakati*, which in all the New World, as in Africa, are believed to discover and dig up magic charms set against their owners. He lives in the cemetery, "behind the cross." There are a number of deities whose names are compounded with the name of Gede — Gedenibo, Gedeonsu, Gedehun — and hence the question whether or not this is a generic term or a specific designation is pertinent. There is no agreement on this point, and it could only be established that those *loa* who bear the same name, such as all Ogun or Bosu or Simbi deities, are brothers; but who the parents of these groups may have been is not known.

Associated with Simbi and Gede in the Pétro "squad" are

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

[p. 95]

7. In the Mapou Tree: Magic, Demons, and Compacts

It is said by many Haitians that the loa are inclined to shun the mapou tree, for it is the secret rendezvous of countless kinds of demons. On certain nights, they say, you may see a chink of light showing through the trunk of the great mapou, indicating that the demons are in macabre session. 776 778 824

Sometimes it is the baka who meet there to feast and discuss their blood-curdling plans. The baka are described as small and evil creatures, human in form, with red eyes, and legs or arms covered with skin but no flesh. They change into animals at will and may roam the countryside as cats, dogs, or cattle. The baka are notorious sorcerers, and they perform only malevolent acts. They are reputed to "eat people," literally as well as figuratively. Stories are heard of such-and-such a man or child who disappeared and was presumed to have been eaten at a feast in the mapou tree. One man who passed a mapou in the dark of night reported that he heard muffled singing coming from within its trunk, accompanied by the pounding of mortars in which a gruesome feast was being pulverized. But the baka "eat" people also in the sense that they destroy them. It is said sometimes that a person with a withered arm or leg has been "eaten" by a baka. Perhaps he was an innocent victim; possibly he struck a horse or dog which was really a baka; or perhaps he simply brushed against a baka in the market place. Sometimes the baka directs his evil in the most indiscriminate sort of way, "eating" whatever human being he meets. Animals which behave strangely are suspected of being baka in disguise, and they are given wide berth. 776 [732] 776 825

A cow once found within an old brick-covered spring was taken to be a baka because no cow could have passed through the small doorway of the spring. It was assumed that she had entered as a small baka and had then changed to her animal form. The spring went unused for days, until some children reported that the baka had vanished. The cow was

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

The cow was

never seen again, and after a prêt' savane had read prayers over the spring the people again drew water from it.

Baka more often change themselves into gray or red pigs, but one ingenious baka was said to have transformed himself into a bicycle, which was seen traveling alone at night on the road from Port-au-Prince to Léogane.

Some people wear charms against the baka's malevolence; but the most effective weapon is the cocomacaque stick. The cocomacaque, or monkey palm, is a palm tree that grows only a few feet high. It has magical powers to drive off not only baka but other evil beings as well. When the tree is growing in its natural state, it is said, you must never mention its name in its own presence. Should you say within its hearing, for example, "Look at the cocomacaque," it will wilt and fall over, losing all its vital powers. The trunk of this midget palm is a favorite material for fashioning a walking stick or a short baton. A man going on a long journey into strange country may carry a cococmacaque stick with him to brandish at the crossroads where baka lurk, or to drive off strange animals that may be baka in disguise.

In their relationships with human beings, the baka are not always random. Sometimes, for a terrible price, they will undertake to make a man rich or to "eat" his enemies for him.

In some parts of Haiti, baka seemingly have found their way into the ranks of the loa. In the Congo-Guinée pantheon there is a deity called Bakulu Baka, or Babaku Baka. He is a malevolent spirit who "eats" people in the best baka tradition, and he lives, significantly, in the mapou tree, which is shunned by all good loa.

The *engagements*, or compacts, in which baka sometimes figure are usually made with another sort of creature, the *djab*, or devil. A djab is a manlike being but is superhuman, ferocious, and terrible. Some djab are small, some large, some innocent in appearance, some grotesque. They are supernatural sorcerers who deal out riches in exchange for human beings. A frustrated or desperate man may go to a djab and ask for a favor, which will usually be granted for a heart-rending price. Persons who appear to gain wealth suddenly may be suspected of having entered into an *engagement* with a powerful djab.

One story is about a man of Port-au-Prince who, needing a large sum of money, went to a famous djab who lives in a cave known as Trou Fourban. This powerful djab agreed to provide all the money required, but only on condition that the man deliver to him each year one of his children. The man suddenly came into a large fortune. But when the anniversary of his compact arrived, he did not go to Trou Fourban

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dead must first count them, he can never accomplish this before daylight. From these precautions, it is evident that for the Haitian the reality of existence after death is no fictional one, as is even more vividly illustrated in the answer given to the question whether or not a flute, such as young boys play, would be placed in the coffin of a lad: "What! And have the dead going about all the time blowing it?"

When dressed, the body is placed on a mat or mattress or in a hammock and covered with a clean cloth. A *bande de machoire*, which goes under the chin and over the head to hold the jaw in place, in earlier days, as today in remote sections of the valley, served the double purpose of making possible the identification of a ghost as such, and of keeping the moisture inside the mouth. At present, however, it is usually removed when the body is placed in the coffin. In earlier times also, as today among the peasants in the hills, the nostrils and ears were plugged with cotton. The body and head are shaved of all hair, and the finger- and toe-nails clipped; hair and clippings are later placed in the coffin and buried with the body. The eyes usually close naturally; it is a bad sign if they do not, indicating, as it does, that magic has caused death. Putrefaction, or any unusual sign connected with death such as when a cadaver swells, or a body remains warm and perspires, or, as mentioned, when the eyes remain open, is held to be an indication that the soul has been taken by a sorcerer and the person "sold"—all signalling a "bad" death and requiring that a dagger be struck into the body and burial take place immediately.

Some time later, the *prêt' savanne* comes to read prayers if the death has occurred in the countryside, or the priest of the local Catholic church if in the town or near it. After the prayers have been said and relatives and friends have addressed the dead and "given him commissions," such as "Say good-day to my mother," "Ask my father to help us, for the weather has been bad this year for the crops . . ." the body is

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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term *loup-garou*, or werewolf. From Africa has come the concept of the *baka*, though this he has merged with that of the *démon*, and all operate through the power of Lucifer and the Devil, conceived as two separate beings. In addition, as will be seen, the cult of the dead also contributes to this system, since the *loa* who rule the cemeteries are indispensable for the practice of magic, as it bears especially on the concept of *zombi*, concerning which so much has been made in recent years.

The evil *loups-garous* are women whose real nature is revealed by their red eyes, though some hold that they have a black spot in the corner of the eye. Another word less frequently heard to designate the *loup-garou* is the Dahomean term *azeto*, employed in Africa for witches and vampires, a concept which in Haiti has become merged with that of the werewolf.[8] The *loup-garou*, with her male counterpart, the *démon*, is empowered by the *bocor*. As might be expected, she is greatly feared, and should an old woman suspected of being one of them come to a house, someone will see to it that in an adjoining room two brooms are crossed as the woman's name is pronounced three times, so that if she is actually a *loup-garou*, she cannot escape.[9] Children in particular carry counter-charms both against these women and against demons; one such, for a woman with child, has been mentioned in an earlier chapter,[10] and the making of another *garde* of this type has just been described. With a charm of this kind "you can leave at midnight for Port-au-Prince [instead of waiting for dawn] and fear nothing. You may meet a band of horned demons carrying candles in their hands, but they will stand aside and let you pass."

In Mirebalais, *baka* are usually mentioned when these evil beings are discussed, particularly since it is in connection with them that the term *engagement* is most often heard. An *engagement*, which is more feared than a *wanga*, the word usually encountered in the literature when evil magic is under discussion, designates a pledge made by a person, usually to

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1958) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Chapter 18: *Musical Instruments* (*pp. 189–202*)

[1]Herskovits and Herskovits, *Suriname Folk-Lore*, p. 87. The stick is also known in Surinam.

[2]Informant: Joseph Lengo, Brazzaville.

[3]Library of Congress album, *Folk Music of Venezuela*.

[4]Pamphlet accompanying recordings, *Music of Equatorial Africa* (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1950).

[5]See Courlander, "Musical Instruments of Cuba," *Musical Quarterly*, April, 1942, pp. 233–234.

[6]Cambaire Sylvain, *Les Contes haïtiens*, pp. 97–98.

[7]Curt Sachs, *Geist und Werden der Musikinstrumente* (Berlin, 1929), pp. 60–61.

[8]Schweinfurth, *The Heart of Africa*, I, 287.

[9]Informant: Sobihas Toré, Bamako.

[10]See Courlander, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

Appendix 1: *The Pantheons* (*pp. 335–349*)

[1]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 245 ff.

[2]See Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa*, pp. 47–49; and Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 245 ff.

[3]Ellis, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

[4]Herskovits, *op. cit.*, pp. 152 ff.

[5]*Ibid.*, pp. 101 ff.

[6]*Ibid.*, pp. 201 ff.

[7]Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa*, p. 67.

[8]Herskovits, *op. cit.*, pp. 105 ff.

[9]Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, pp. 45, 67 ff.

[10]Library of Congress Recording No. 101.

[11]Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, p. 47; W. R. Bascom, in Introduction to record album *Drums of the Yoruba of Nigeria* (New York: Ethnic Folkways Library, 1950).

[12]Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, pp. 38 ff.

[13]Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples*, pp. 71–74; Herskovits, *op. cit.*, I, 37.

[14]Herskovits, *Life in a Haitian Valley*, p. 267.

[15]*Ibid.*, p. 280.

[16]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 108–109.

[17]Ellis, *The Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa*, p. 68.

[18]Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, pp. 79–80.

[19]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, I, 165 ff. Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples*, p. 83, says that this deity was especially important in the town of Agbome.

[20]Ellis, *The Yoruba-speaking Peoples*, pp. 45, 76.

[21]Herskovits, *Dahomey*, II, 104.

[22]Ellis, *The Ewe-speaking Peoples*, pp. 71–74.

[23]Saint-Méry, *De la danse*, p. 48.

[24]Gorer, *Africa Dances*, p. 188.

[25]Red eyes as a symbol of malevolence appear in the folklore of many Negro cultures. Our own American ballad about the gambler Stackalee states:

> "The judge says, 'Stackalee, I would spare your life,
> But I know you're a bad man, I can see it in your red eyes.'"

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1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

[789 [788] person of great experience was pointed out who was believed able to stop a runaway horse without putting a finger on him. One widely spread type of charm is an *arrêt* against the *mal jòk*, or evil eye. Mention has been made of protective charms when the measures taken to guard growing crops were discussed, and also in connection with safeguarding the well-being of infants. The power in this latter type of *garde* often is made to reside in a seed on a string or chain, or a cross of beads sewed on cloth, to represent the four corners of the earth.

789 793 Because charms are the outer symbols of magic, detailed examples of their making will give insight into the nature of charms in general. The first of these which may be described [829] was a *garde*, made by a *mambu*, to relieve a pregnant woman [789] whose milk had begun to flow before the birth of her child [954] — a sign that an evil spirit had been sent her by an enemy, and that her delivery would therefore be fraught with danger. [787] During the séance the *mambu* was continuously possessed by her god, Ogun, whose identity was shown by her whistling. Before the *mambu* as she commenced her incantation were some *clairin*, lighted red candles, a new piece of soap, incense, sulphur, garlic, light brown shoemaker's thread, an empty bottle, a bottle filled with a green, evil-smelling lotion called *baigne de mambu*, a chick, and three iron nails. As she tied the cord in knots she muttered her spell; then, taking the empty bottle, she put in it a bit of the incense, sulphur, garlic, some soap, some *clairin*, and some *baigne de mambu*. With the knotted cord she tied a cross made of two nails to the neck of the bottle, repeating her formula before she put it down. Instructing the pregnant woman to take the bottle, she said: "Speak into it and say everything you wish."

[825] She then took the chick, opened its beak, and wrote on it with a pencil, continuing the incantation the while. With the pencil she also made marks on the thighs, the wings, the upper joints, and the leg joints before she handed it to her client

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

584 587 836 truth, but the matter is recognized as one which concerns only her husband and herself, and if he is willing to keep her, it is his own affair. Consensus of opinion in Mirebalais 836 878 879 is that the percentage of girls who do not have pre-marital sexual relations is relatively small, but the belief is expressed that chastity is more prevalent among country women than among those of the town, where, in turn, it is more frequent than in larger centers such as Port-au-Prince. Even though 836 848 848 pre-marital relations are commonplace, however, the pregnancy of an unmarried girl is regarded as both reprehensible and unfortunate, and she is severely beaten for it by her family. In such cases, if the father of the unborn child will take the girl, his parents are sent to bring her, but where the parents of the man refuse to ask for the girl because they do not approve of her, then, if he still desires her, he must himself face the anger of her parents. Should he not wish to come for her, she may either remain with her family or seek work in another community. In any event, her child will be well cared for by her family, and no reproach will attach to it because of the circumstances of its birth.

585 782 796 Before a mating of any type is consummated, the familial spirits must be notified of the approaching event so that they may be well disposed toward it, for no union where this is neglected can enjoy happiness or peace. One Mirebalais woman was pointed out as an object lesson of the necessity of doing this. Though a devotee of several gods, neither she nor her husband was willing to perform the necessary rites for her gods before their marriage. She was suffering from an [953] acute case of melancholia after the birth of her first child, and [828] the prevailing opinion was that she was going mad because of the neglect of her duty toward her deities. Shortly before a woman goes to her husband, therefore, a *convert see* for the Rada deities is given both by herself and by her betrothed. If the family of either the young man or the woman possess deities of the powerful Pétro group, more inclusive offerings

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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845 ample, long before ordinary folk.[2] If promised offerings in the
887 event of an ample harvest, their aid in bringing about this
782 desired end is even more fruitful than that of the *loa* or the
769 dead, who are therefore appealed to only indirectly.

Twins, however, are capricious beings, ready to do harm if they are not humored. Consequently, twins must be given anything they ask for, and it is especially important to provide them with the clothes they covet, when giving a *mangé marasa*. If their father fails to provide these new clothes, they
153 will *kembé* (seize) him, and he may at once have an attack of fever or a bad toothache or earache; or, more likely still, he will be seriously constipated, since this is the punishment particularly favored by the *marasa*, just as the *loa* most frequently send dysentery, and the dead cause headaches. If lack
845 of resources makes it impossible to provide what they demand,
889 a painstaking explanation must be given them or they will
828 drive a person mad in the manner recounted in the following *marasa* myth:

> There were once twins, one good and one evil. They were working a field with another brother, but the evil one refused to help. The other two, therefore, said they would not give him any food. Because of this the evil twin drove the third brother insane. After they had long prayed that he reconsider, he finally agreed to restore sanity to his brother, but insisted on inflicting deafness as a punishment, so that this brother was deaf until he died.

845 At the birth of twins, special "twin plates" are provided
778 when their birth is announced to the *loa* — either before or
769 after their Church baptism — where offerings to the spirits of twins are placed. Usually paired, the plates may be three in number, in which case the third is for the *dosu*, the child born after twins, who *is* believed to be even more powerful than twins themselves and is thus an important figure in the cult.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

one. Sometimes a loa who is making life too hard for a devotee will be retired without a replacement. The "washing of the head" must be accompanied by ritual safeguards, and all possible circumstances must be taken into account by the officiating cult priest. There are many stories of people who became mentally deranged as a result of the removal of their loa from their heads.

The malt' tête must also be removed from the head of a person who dies. Should this not be done, the spirit of the deceased will go to reside "below the water" and may cause trouble for the family. This loa is usually transferred to a special jar as a temporary resting place, and later perhaps into the head of another member of the family.

Though the loa is a powerful ruling force in the life of the individual, the human "horse" has controls over his deity too. He may reproach or admonish his loa for bad behavior or for failing to protect him. He may expose the loa's irresponsibility in public through the use of songs in religious rites. And though the loa is frequently encouraged to "enter," steps may be taken to restrain him from possession. This is called *marré loa* —"tying the loa." A woman may "tie" her loa by fixing a hairpin in her hair in a special way. A man may do it by placing his hands in cold water.[3]

Nevertheless, the loa are always lurking in the background. They are a constant and dramatic element in the religious life of the people. They may sometimes be controlled by the houngan, but they are an authority stronger than the priesthood. They give advice, courage, consolation, and status to their followers. They add much to an otherwise hard and ungenerous environment and evoke remembrances of Africa from which the Haitians' ancestors were uprooted. They can also cause concern and anxiety; for the loa are not always benevolent, and they are frequently unpredictable.

Many of the loa are ancient deities, sib-founders and ancestors who loom out of a misty, half-forgotten past. Nananbouclou, Legba, and Ayida Wèdo have been known for many lifetimes in Dahomey. Chango, Ogoun, and Loko were old spirits in Nigeria before the first slave ships sailed from Africa to the New World. Their names and many others in present-day Haiti come from an ancient lore. They recall places, tribes, and old kingdoms from Senegal in northwestern Africa to the heart of the Congo. They are a bond which holds the people of Haiti to Africa. In the mountains people sometimes say, "Haiti is the child of Dahomey," or "Haiti is the child of Guinée." The gods divide their time between their Haitian and their African children.

Yet in some respects the Haitians' concept of their loa is no longer purely African. The African religious patterns have been infiltrated by the lore

2; Courlander B-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

to "eat" people; that is, to destroy them. To do this he employs such means as disease, insanity, and destruction of crops. If a man serves Pinga Maza well, the loa protects him in return; but for those who anger him, Pinga is a menacing and vengeful creature. People often say, "Pinga, c'est djab" (Pinga is a devil).

The Pinga hounfor in Port-au-Prince is called the *Société de la Belle Jeune Fleur*. Its peristyle is simple and is hardly distinguishable from those of other small hounfors. Around the base of the center pole is a three-foot-high wall of masonry, decorated with simple cult symbols. The outer room of the hounfor proper also resembles many another. The familiar pot têtes containing loa stand on a wooden altar, and there are Catholic lithographs on the walls. But the inner room belongs exclusively to Pinga Maza. Here are all the accoutrements and objects sacred to the deity. Everything is red. Pinga's clothing and kerchiefs are red. On the walls are painted esoteric designs—hands, skulls, and crosses—all in red. The bottles, magic bundles, and govis on the altar are decorated with red cloth, ribbons, or paint. In the middle of the earthen floor is embedded a heavy wooden cross. On each end of the crossbeam hangs a large calabash resembling a bulbous hand. And on top of the upright is affixed a human skull. The total impression of this hounfor is that of a bizarre aberration, calculated to intimidate and terrify. The houngan himself is relatively young, literate, and city wise. His personality is smooth and sharp, and he lacks the air of sincerity and easy simplicity which most often characterizes the houngan of the mountains.

In this inner room, before the skull and the cross, there took place a small service for a client, to determine what kind of magic was needed to fend off malevolent actions of an enemy. On the day of the divining session, there hung from the rafters of the tonnelle a long rope, which extended into a deep hole in the earth near the door. Hanging on the rope, down inside the hole, were two gray dolls tightly bound together. Hanging still farther down were a knife, a fork, and other, unidentifiable objects. This cluster of magic paraphernalia was an *expédition* at work; it was an elaborate pouin, which was working against an enemy who lived far away.

Before entering the hounfor, the houngan took a long rope whip from the wall and cracked it seven times before the door. This process, known as *frete cache*, was to "wake up" the loa within. The houngan then entered, followed by the client who was seeking help. They paused briefly in the outer room, where the houngan took up his asson and bell and made a small vèvè on the ground. He spoke briefly in *langage* and then passed on through the door to the inner room. There the

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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114 treatment. In the absence of sufficient analytic material on the inter-
121 vening years since his book was written, a prefatory note such as this can do little more than comment on Haitian society, either in terms of its present design or in terms of the recent events that may have modified it.

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114 The central thesis of Leyburn's book is that Haitian society is sharply
565 divided into two segments, and that the national institutional struc-
[178] ture is such that no significant alteration in that division has occurred in the entire course of Haiti's history as a sovereign nation. At the base of the society is the rural agricultural sector, making up perhaps as much as 95 per cent of the population; at the top the elite, which dominates the governmental apparatus and all national institutions. These two segments of the society differ, in Leyburn's view, in all important regards: level of income, source of income, education, language, religion, social forms, values and attitudes, and all else. By carefully describing the history of Haitian society from the eve of the revolution until the midst of the United States occupation, he reveals both the origin of this vast social cleavage and the various means employed for its perpetuation. Leyburn was so impressed by the gap which separated yeomanry and elite that he chose to label these social segments castes rather than classes. Members of the elite earn their livings as rentiers, merchants, professionals, and in government, and never engage in manual labor of any sort. They are predominantly urban in residence; their sons attend private lower schools, and then
[191] go on to higher education, usually abroad. They are French-speaking,
[197] although they also speak Creole, Haiti's national language. Elite re-
[58] ligion is Catholicism, elite forms of marriage and domestic organiza-
[59] tion are "legitimate" and "western." Elite members view themselves
[829] as a kind of aristocracy, and feel little commonality in their sharing of Haiti and of Haitian history with the yeomen.

114 In sharp contrast, the yeomanry is rural, poor, works the land, is
565 illiterate and Creole-speaking only, believes in *vodoun* rather than in
191 orthodox Catholicism, usually marries by common law and is some-
771 times polygynous, and remains substantially isolated from the outer
583 world. Finally and importantly—though its particular significance is
595 changing—the elite differs from the rural sector in that the country-
144 man is predominantly negroid in phenotype, while members of the elite are prevailingly lighter-skinned.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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American masters, had nearly stood still. For almost a century, Haiti's elite had taken justifiable pride in their ancestors' triumph over Napoleonic France, even while they remained enthralled by French culture. This strange ambivalence would no longer do. In effect, the United States occupation compelled Haitian scholars to rediscover what it meant to be Haitian.

As the writing of Jean Price-Mars (1928) expressed that identity culturally, so the regime of Dumarsais Estimé began to express it politically. For the first time, Africa, and not simply France, became an important part of the nationalist dialogue. The Creole language began to be studied in its own right, and a program to end illiteracy through education in Creole was launched. Folkloristic studies, emphasizing the African component in Haitian rural life, especially as expressed in religion, came into vogue. Haitians began to explore their own society as a synthesis that was as much African as it was French—and as a synthesis, rather than as a mechanical alignment of two distinct traditions. The term *authentique* was employed to express what was "truly Haitian," and Haiti herself was viewed as a unique and original blending of two pasts. Under Estimé, rural folk of promise—and they were, in the nature of things, predominantly dark-skinned—were given greater opportunities, especially to be educated and to enter government service. Moreover, these developments took place at a time when Haiti's economic situation was relatively good, and Estimé enjoyed a measure of popular support rare in Haiti's entire history.

Furthermore, it was during the Estimé regime that Haitian cultural life reached some sort of climax. In the 1920s young Haitian intellectuals had been deeply shaken by the United States occupation and had begun to formulate their own answers to the questions it raised. Not only did Africa come into view as the wellspring of much that was Haitian but Haiti's status as an occupied though once-sovereign power dramatized the need for a social and political philosophy that fitted with hemispheric and international realities. French intellectual currents figured importantly in Haitian political thinking, both because the intellectuals of the French Antilles of the time were inspired by Haitian history and interested in Haiti, and because those islands and Haiti shared a curious affinity in their "Gallo-African" cultures. Anticolonial and Marxist points of view were espoused by a few Haitians, but these perspectives were complicated by changing

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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attitudes toward French culture in all of its expressions, and by a new feeling of kinship for the peoples and cultures of Africa.

The variety of views expressed by Haitian intellectuals was colored by differences no more subtle than those characteristic of the intellectuals of any other country in the Caribbean region—even though North American observers unfortunately persist in treating such differences as politically irrelevant. There were those spokesmen who continued to embrace French culture and to reject "Africanism," only deploring the North American presence in Haiti. Others embodied their views in a staunchly Haitian nationalism and, as they began to view their country in a new light, invested the Haitian folk with an unrealistically romantic picturesqueness. Still others fastened upon the African theme with special intensity, and thereby gave a strong racist tinge to their nationalism.

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Not surprisingly, perhaps, anthropology came to be seen as an important means for giving Haitians an accurate—that is, an "inside"—picture of their own society; a number of young ethnologists, mainly self-trained, began to publish works on Haitian culture. Soon anthropology was pressed into a political mold, anticipating similar developments in other "colonial" countries. The first novels purporting to deal with the common people, though sometimes tinged with idealized preconceptions of rural society, were published; and an impressive number of competent young poets devoted themselves to aesthetic explorations of the Haitian spirit. Haitian cultural and intellectual life, in short, was taken up with the rediscovery of Haiti and its people.

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But the Estimé regime did not produce changes in the economic structure of Haitian society of importance proportionate to the national cultural renascence. Even those modifications in the class structure for which Estimé is sometimes given credit might not have occurred, were it not for educational reforms that had begun in the 1920s and the beneficial effects of Haiti's prosperity of the mid-1940s. What Estimé could do was to open the ranks of an inefficiently large bureaucracy to able, if sometimes inadequately trained, newcomers of poor rural antecedents.

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At the same time, as the Corvaire-Sylvains have suggested (1959: 179–89), a qualitatively different class group was beginning to emerge in Port-au-Prince during Estimé's presidency, and the presence of such a group suggests that new economic forces were feebly stirring.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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I

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR COUNTRY

IN the ten thousand square miles of Haiti's mountains and valleys more than two and a half million people—some say more than three million—are crowded together. Some are black, some light-skinned, but less than five thousand are white, and these are almost all recent immigrants to the country. Modern Haiti has its racial roots primarily in Africa, but its social roots lie as much in Europe as in Africa; if it is "American" at all, geography and a few fairly superficial characteristics are the only American qualities it displays.

Carrying our own cultural interpretations with us when we visit our Caribbean neighbor, we are likely to misunderstand what we see in Haiti, for it is very easy to think of all colored people in terms of our own. To do so is to remain completely ignorant of Haiti. Whereas in the United States we use "Negro" and "colored" indiscriminately as synonyms, making a real distinction only between "black" and "mulatto," all four terms are taboo in polite society in Haiti. A new descriptive vocabulary, an entirely new frame of reference, must be acquired by the friendly foreign visitor to this West Indian republic.[1]

Probably the most striking phenomenon in the country is its division into two social groups. So rigidly are the class lines set that

1. No greater error of tact can be made by visitors to Haiti than to use such commonly accepted American terms as Negro, colored, mulatto, blacks, Africans. Whereas in the United States such words are employed to describe people with a greater or less degree of Negro blood, in Haiti they are generally regarded as opprobrious epithets, emphasizing the color of the epidermis as all important, while ignoring the essential matters of culture, standard of living, and social background. Not many Haitians would have the grace to reply, as President Pétion suggested to a subaltern who was incensed at a white man for calling him "un nègre," "Why, then, did you not call him 'un blanc'?" Probably the most offensive of all the terms is *noirs*, for it calls attention to miscegenation in the family. The educated people in general regard themselves as darker Frenchmen, not as transplanted Africans. Books about Haiti which refer to the "black republic" seem to them to ignore the important fact that the blacks, though numerically preponderant, do not rule. The visitor must accordingly acquire a new vocabulary of color. It is safer not to make any allusion at all to the matter; but if occasion demands, one speaks of "jaune" and "brun," not white and black.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

several generations of ancestors, there can be little question of its high social position. 565 581

Religion affords still another distinction between high and low. Haiti has a folk religion which American tourists call Voodoo (a name which makes them think immediately of superstitious emotionalism or some kind of occult balderdash), but which is more properly called Vodun. It is a true religion in that it answers for the native the questions arising in the world he knows, while giving him confidence to face the crises of life. Vodun is African in origin, Créole in its language, and homely in its creed and practice; none of these makes it any less a religion. The official religion of the country, on the other hand, is Roman Catholicism. Few members of the élite, however their hearts may yearn for the consoling securities of Vodun, dare openly either to acknowledge their "atavism" or to participate in the cult. They must be Catholics or agnostics. It is often remarked that below the surface many a professing Catholic aristocrat cherishes Vodun beliefs; the important fact is that he keeps his folk worship secret. Because the outside world ridicules Vodun as superstition, and because the approved Catholic Church fights it, government restrictions effectively keep its ritual out of the public gaze. All the discriminatory laws, however, have not weakened its hold upon the masses. It is because Vodun is a *folk* religion that the élite cannot permit themselves to adhere to it openly. 565 771

The final and most complicated distinction between the two castes is skin color. Any generalization on this matter is open to numerous exceptions; moreover, the whole question of color in Haiti touches the most sensitive nerves of the upper classes. One must begin by such casual observations as these: the vast majority of the lower orders are definitely dark or even black; the lighter the skin, the more likely a person is to belong to the élite. It is true that there are black aristocrats, and it is equally true that numbers of peasants have light complexions. At almost any function in high society, however, the proportion of dark-skinned persons is decidedly small. Among the youth, the tendency is always to select a spouse whose skin color is light; marriages are often made between aristocrats and white foreigners resident in Haiti, so that the children may lighten the family complexion. While it is therefore inaccurate to assert that no full-blooded Negroes belong to the élite, it is also clear that lighter persons tend to have social advantages. 565 829 581 144

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 565 took their place in the business life of the towns, sending their children to parish schools. Colored youths served in the colonial constabulary and in the militia, acquiring a knowledge of arms and warfare later to be useful to them.

175 565 423 567 162 Estimates of their wealth vary. Some say that in 1791 they owned a third of all the land in the colony and a fourth of all the slaves; others more conservative put the figure at one fifth of each. Even this is impressive enough to account for much of the growing jealousy of their position. And by 1791 the whites outnumbered them only ten to seven.[5]

562 595 563 175 581 White women in general added their support to a movement instigated by the petits blancs for discrimination against all gens de couleur. Many wives felt resentment against the colored people because of the frequency with which their husbands took colored mistresses.[6] Moreover, the wealth of the colony attracted an immigration of Frenchwomen with marriageable but undowered daughters—in the candid French phrase, "*de filles à marier et sans dot*"—who seem to have assumed that young planters would want white French wives, even though impecunious ones. It was a shock to quite a number of them to discover that a colonial youth might prefer a colored girl who brought a dowry with her.[7]

175 565 829 Indiscreet affranchis often gave additional grounds for resentment against their group. Wishing to dissociate themselves altogether from their Negro ancestry and to be assured of social eminence, some accounted for their dark complexions by reference to obscure Indian progenitors. On this ground many secured letters patent from local government officials, of course on payment of a fee, legally estab-

162 5. The census listed 40,000 whites to 28,000 colored. L. E. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description . . . de la partie française . . . de Saint-Domingue* (Philadelphia, 1797), I, 285, gave the following figures for 1790:

	Square Leagues	*Population*	*Whites*	*Affranchis*	*Slaves*
North	480	195,000	16,000	9,000	170,000
West	820	194,000	14,000	12,500	168,000
South	186	130,000	10,000	6,500	114,000
Totals	1,486	519,000	40,000	28,000	452,000

6. One governor reported to Paris that he considered sexual jealousy the greatest cause of unrest in the colony.

7. See Sir Harry H. Johnston, *The Negro in the New World* (New York, 1910), p. 141.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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lishing their freedom from the taint of any black admixture. Having entered white society by such means, and further diluted their Negro blood by judicious marriages, these social climbers frequently became the most pitiless masters of slaves in the colony, the most rigid sticklers for a color line, ruthless enemies of recent freedmen and of those who acknowledged the dark strain in their blood; and having now "passed over" as whites, they snubbed the petits blancs.

The rising tide of color prejudice became apparent in the passage of discriminatory laws. The first of any importance was enacted by the representative Council of the colony, sitting at the capital, Cap Français, in 1758. It prohibited all colored people, except police and militiamen, from carrying swords, sabres, or other side arms—thus denying them one of the outward marks of gentlemen. Four years later the prohibition was extended to the bearing of all firearms, except in service, while in 1767 the sale of munitions to colored persons was forbidden unless ordered by a white officer. Obviously the instigators of prejudice had by this time won a number of ruling grands blancs to the notion that the presence of numerous people of color might constitute a menace to the physical safety of the whites.

Louis XV, the reigning monarch, took no steps to enforce the liberal provisions of the Code Noir of his grandfather; on the contrary, he seems to have favored the passage of discriminatory laws. He made it difficult for colored planters to travel freely in France. The colonial perpetrators of indignities to the gens de couleur, seeing the success of their first efforts, began to propose increasingly severe restrictions, and were gratified by Louis XV's official "Instructions to Administrators" (1771), which stressed the necessity of maintaining a line between the two races which colored people and their descendants might never cross.

For the next two decades the affranchi had to face openly avowed discrimination. One by one his rights in the Code were abrogated. He might not fill any responsible office either in the courts or the militia, for that would elevate him above white persons. Certain careers, such as goldsmithing, were closed to him, because they brought wealth; others, notably medicine and the apothecary's art, were forbidden on the ground that whites might be poisoned;[8] law and religion were barred to him because of their public and honorific

8. It was a common belief in slave colonies that all persons with Negro blood had some "instinctive" knowledge of the science and art of poisoning.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 nature.[9] Colored women were forbidden in 1768 to marry white
563 men. In 1779 began a series of laws designed to humiliate the colored
565 person in public: his clothes must be of a different material and cut
671 from the white person's; he must be indoors by nine o'clock in the evening; he might not sit in the same section of churches and theatres with whites.[10]

175 Just at the moment when prejudice and hatred seem to have
648 reached their most menacing proportions, when even moderate
829 white planters began to feel that such passions had been aroused
[649] among both white and colored folk that only brutal severity could
[565] hold them in check, the Revolution began in France. Both sides in the colony hoped to make use of it. The whites saw in the mother country's confusion an opportunity to win self-government for the colony—with themselves, of course, as the untrammeled rulers. The gens de couleur, taking to heart the noble Declaration of the Rights of Man, hoped to regain their full rights as French citizens, guaranteed to them in Louis XIV's Code, but now in abeyance.

175 During the fateful years 1788 to 1793 colonial affairs were inter-
646 twined with developments in France. Men and messages went back
648 and forth between Cap Français and Paris, following the startling
671 announcement that after a lapse of 150 years the States-General would be convoked in May, 1789. At a meeting of the colonial assembly in September, 1788, called to nominate delegates, the group of grands blancs who controlled colonial affairs decided on two daring steps, which later proved to be blunders: first, they named thirty-seven deputies to represent Saint-Domingue; second, they drew up a *Cahier des Doléances*—a list of grievances whose sole palliation, it was implied, would be the granting of permission to the white planters to govern the colony without interference from France. These two decisions, be it said, were not unanimously approved in the assembly at Cap Français; cautious minds warned against pretentious demands which might do nothing more than attract concentrated attention to the state of affairs in Saint-Domingue: it might be wiser, they argued, to let sleeping dogs lie, and ignore the convocation of the States-General. The cautious were outvoted.

[565] 9. A colored lawyer might win a case against a white man; a colored priest might
[829] have to hear the confession of a white woman.

[565] 10. When certain mulattoes arrived at church in Cap Français wearing clothes of the same texture as the whites', constables tore the garments from the backs of male and female alike, leaving them "with no other veil than their shame."

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However, as regards caste itself we can now see that after a hundred years practically nothing has changed, even through the Occupation. In the essential structure of the Haitian social system there is still a twofold division. In the mind of élite persons the peasant exists only as a very necessary but essentially stupid part of the country's economic life. The casual visitor who, after two weeks in Port-au-Prince and its environs, has met a few distinguished Haitians, has already sensed the barriers of caste which exist between élite and the lower orders. If the sojourner remains longer and is accepted into the drawing rooms of the élite, he will hear exciting and brilliant discussions of such questions as whether Haitian civilization has in it anything of the African,[6] whether it might not be wise for Haiti to throw over both French and Créole and adopt a new language, and whether the people of the North are not superior to those of the South;[7] however, no self-satisfied member of the élite, in an expan-

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6. See, for example, the article by Lorimer Denis and Dr. François Duvalier, "La Civilisation haïtienne: notre mentalité est-elle africaine ou gallo-latine?" in *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti*, VII, No. 23 (May, 1936), pp. 1–31. Anthony Froude, in his *English in the West Indies* (New York, 1888), tells of an American consul asking a Haitian why the island was not cultivated more intensely. "The dusky soldier laid his hand upon his breast and waved his hand. 'Ah!' he said, 'that might do for English or Germans or Franks; we of the Latin race have higher things to occupy us!'"

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7. This last sentiment was noted by Sir Spenser St. John (*Hayti, or the Black Republic* [London, 1889], p. 14), who calls it a popular idea at the time he wrote and for years before, the élite of the North explaining it by the tradition of industry instilled during Christophe's reign. But Moreau de Saint-Méry had already pointed out that in colonial times there was greater fertility, more abundant rain, more intelligence in management of plantations, more slaves, more distinction and polish among the masters, in the North than in the South. Auguste Magloire (in *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social*, p. 263) thinks the North infinitely superior to the South; it did not participate in the violence of political change in the early days, yet when it did intervene it took the lead. He stated however that the North seemed to be losing its social superiority, and certainly its economic superiority, because of its cultural subordination to France: this made French ideas prevail, and one of the chief French ideas is that political power is supremely important; the North consequently came to seek political superiority when it should have preserved cultural and social preëminence. Paulème Sannon, on the other hand (*Essai historique sur la Révolution de 1843* [Aux Cayes, 1905], pp. 5–9), regards the South as considerably more advanced intellectually. It has never, he says, been able to submit to the absolutist yoke of government, not because of the French influence, for the South was least developed under the colonial régime, but because of its geographical situation, with its long broken coast line, its ports, cities, tribunals, customs-houses, schools, and the like. Those who have outside connections are always more open minded and progressive, he says, than inhabitants of the interior. There is no important town in the South which is not on the sea. Nowhere were the affranchis more numerous or richer than in the South, and these men led the revolution. (See Beauboun Ardouin, *Études sur l'histoire d'Haïti* [Port-au-Prince, 1853–60], I, 93.) All these influences made for a democratic spirit, but also for one of agitation.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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sive mood, will speak of the peasant and his contributions to Haiti; he thinks only in terms of his own caste.[8] Upper-class Haitians dread the sight of tourists taking pictures of native scenes, fearing that the travelers will return to their own country and label these pictures, "Typical Haitian Scenes," when, as anyone should know, typical Haiti is upper-class Haiti.[9]

The American Occupation failed of many of its ends because it did not recognize the social situation and its implications; or, realizing them, did not consider them worthy of attention. Roads, telephones, mail service, and improved agricultural methods seemed patently desirable to progressive Americans; to install them for the Haitians seemed generously wise. Yet many well-meant efforts came to grief, for the mass of people, lacking a tradition of orderly free government, did not always understand what the Americans were about, while the élite saw in the activities of the Marines a threat to their own dominance as rulers of the country.[10]

The antiquated, but prevalent, notion of the superior mentality of the white race also flourishes in certain quarters among the élite. Many of them say that the Negro can never originate a civilization, and that with the best of education he remains an inferior man, utterly unfitted for government, utterly incapable of making prog-

8. Witness Marthe Oulié's paragraph (*Les Antilles, filles de France* [Paris, 1935], p. 254): "My amiable host (a member of the élite) was triumphant at my surprise and enchantment. 'You did not expect to find a civilized country. What have the spiteful wits told you? That the Haitians worshipped serpents and made human sacrifices? True, the peasants on the mountain-sides are still very primitive and ignorant, but in the cities you will find many families like ours, cultivated in letters and music, careful and proud of their French culture, and absolutely set against American de-civilization.'"

9. "Should you like a European to take pictures of the slums of your American cities and of the most degraded of your share-croppers, and then circulate these photographs as typical American scenes?" asked one sensitive Haitian.

10. See the *Report of the Forbes Commission to Haiti*, 1930, pp. 18–19. "Illiteracy keeps the peasant masses politically inarticulate, except in case of mobs or bandit gangs, which formerly infested the countryside and often furnished the forces of revolution. These bandit gangs have been broken up and have disappeared under American rule, but the social forces that created them still remain—poverty, ignorance, and the lack of a tradition or desire for orderly free government. It has been the aim of the American Occupation to try to broaden the base of the articulate proletariat and thus make for a sounder democracy and ultimately provide for a more representative government in Haiti. Hence its work in education, in sanitation, in agencies of communication such as roads, telephones, telegraph lines, and regular mail routes. These things naturally are deemed of secondary importance by the élite, who see in the rise of a middle class a threat to the continuation of their own leadership."

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840 563 ● 829 ress. Others point out the difference between the lower-class Negro of the large commercial towns and the black peasants who live in the plains and mountains. The former, in contact with the roughest of white sailors, are a disgrace to any people, while the countryfolk, seeing only a select few of the whites, appear "to have an innate idea of the white man's superiority," and so treat him with respect. The peasants, according to these speakers, have all the virtues and vices of "wild races": they may acquire a kind of French varnish, but they are "essentially an African people removed from their parent country."[11]

565 186 There are among the élite broad-minded, tolerant, and cultured persons. The average member of the caste, however, like the average American, is full of prejudices of all kinds. Travel produces a superficial polish; their patriotism consists of antagonism toward the outside world and an effort to secure position for themselves; they are sure that Haiti's laws are sounder, her culture superior, her schools more advanced, her civilization in general higher, than those of most other nations (France generally excepted).

563 829 There are evidences also of certain psychological twists. It used to be said that mulatto Haitians "hate their fathers and despise their mothers," meaning that in colonial times and for a short time after the élite did not like to remember that they derived from a master-slave union. They realize nowadays that they would be accepted as social equals in few countries, and this makes them protest by self-assertion. Certainly a majority of the élite would be completely unwilling to admit that things are anywhere better done than in Haiti.

184 565 181 829 One generation after the wars which led to independence, the greater number of Haitians had practically forgotten that there was an outside world. Haiti was all they knew. With no standard of comparison for their lot in life the peasants ate, slept, raised their families, fell ill, and died without bothering their heads about such academic abstractions as equality. This uncomplaining acceptance of life, routine, and fate seems to be the essence of peasant existence. The Haitian peasant has been bound to the soil by mental inertia and by tradition more effectively than ever by law. When he has revolted it has been through conviction that someone was trying to change the old familiar ways, or because of physical maltreatment. Peasants have been bribed and paid to revolt, but as mercenaries they have entered only half-heartedly into warfare.

11. The phrases quoted here are fragments of statements made by Haitian élite to the author.

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Any casual attempt to assess the importance of religion

lives of the people is sure to prove erroneous, for in no phase of life are outward appearances so deceptive. What the unsophisticated peasant believes can be ascertained on the whole more accurately than the beliefs of the intelligent élite. To the foreign observer, Roman Catholicism seems to play as large and as small a part in the thinking of the Haitian upper classes as among members of upper-class French society. Outwardly, the élite are professing Catholics or not religious at all. It is considered proper to attend Mass and otherwise to pay respect to religious forms; actually one loses nothing in prestige if he is not a practicing Christian. Society seems to exert no pressure in the matter. Only if a member of the upper class fears for the security of his social position, or knows that rumors are afloat of his addiction to Vodun, does he feel impelled to become assiduous in his open attentions to the Church.

The national sensitiveness to skin color is apparent in the priestly complexions. Since the old tradition lingers that "baptism by a black will not stick," not even the peasants welcome native Catholic priests. The God and saints of Christianity need the intercession of white men, just as the Vodun spirits need that of natives. In the early days peasants stoned Negro priests who tried to administer the Catholic sacraments. Such an attitude toward a black clergy falls in well with the preferences of the élite. If there were Haitian priests, they would probably be drawn from the élite class since this is the educated group; but it might happen that some devout peasant would rise to the priesthood and so have the care of a parish including élite—a contingency unthinkable to the aristocrat. Snobbishness, indeed, affects the usefulness of the town priests, for the élite members of the congregation insist on having sermons in French, a language which only the small minority understand, rather than in the Créole which is the speech of everyone, intelligible to gentry and humble alike. The Mass is consequently celebrated for the people at large in unknown tongues, Latin for the ritual, French for the sermon; the benefit they derive from it must be wholly from their inner communion stimulated by the actions of the service. The town priests are often willing enough to accede to élite pressure in the matter of language, for they know French as their mother tongue and would have to learn Créole; although some of the more devoted priests become adept in native speech, using it in their personal

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ministry and in sermons in country chapels.[17] For the élite, well groomed, sitting with his missal in a seat bearing his name plate, the psychic elation to be derived from hearing a sermon preached in a language which the rabble seated around him does not know must be very great—and very Christian.

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17. I have heard a sermon in the chapel at fashionable Kenscoff preached in Créole, with the President of the republic, himself a master—and a politically astute user—of Créole in the congregation. Likewise, I have met priests who, although they have lived in the country for a generation, have never learned the tongue used by ninety-five out of a hundred of their parishioners all the time, and by a hundred per cent of them some of the time.

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595 spouses. In the hills more than one peasant house was surrounded, as it would have been in Dahomey, by huts in each of which lived a "wife" of the farmer. Matters are not very different nowadays, except that men have learned the wisdom of not having their women live too close to each other.

162 From the guesses of experienced observers, it is probably not far
582 wide of the mark to estimate that only one couple out of a hundred is married according to the approved mode of the Western World.

The State apparently does not care; or, to put it another way, government officials know how impossible it would be to alter a custom confirmed by long usage; one which, moreover, works well enough, since it causes practically no violence or legal cases for the
795 State to attend to. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, is eager
582 to persuade the people to observe the sacrament of holy matrimony. The priests have assiduously endeavored to explore the peasant mind in order to learn what deters the average person from formal marriage. The reasons for the indifference to weddings might be listed as follows:

581 1. Inertia. There is no convincing reason to vary time-honored
178 practice which works well enough, particularly since a wedding is likely to cause a great disturbance of daily routine and even a measure of jealousy on the part of those who have not made the display.

581 2. Suspicion of legal documents and civil officials. People who put
● 821 their names (or marks) on documents and who call the attention of governmental officials to themselves are almost sure to rue the day. A man knows what can be demanded of him by custom in his informal unions; but who can say what the law would hold him responsible for?

581 3. Expense. The civil license costs; the priest and his assistants
585 must be paid; to be married in church, one should wear shoes; if one wears shoes, one should dress up to them; a church wedding calls for a feast. At least two days must be spent away from work if the proper formalities are carried out.

581 4. Common sense in an inevitable situation. Both State and
595 Church would try to limit a man to one wife; prosperity might demand two or more. Is it sensible to discriminate against a second woman, who might be just as much help to a man as his legal wife?

581 The Church through its priests works unceasingly to answer these
794 arguments, but without notable success. Inertia is hard to overcome;

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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to his demands for revision and for his selection as president for life, retained the constitution they had written and chose Pétion president in his stead, the rupture was instant and complete. 175 642 [667]

Dictator as against restricted president, strong man as against class or group rule, Negro against mulatto, army against civil government, executive against legislature, North against South—these are the phases of the subsequent dichotomy in Haitian politics. 175 665

A good case can easily be made for the advocates of force in Haitian government, particularly in its early days. For years the majority of men had lost the habit of steady work on the land; a strong hand was needed to reestablish in the countryside that economic order without which liberty shrivels. The people had become accustomed to taking orders from their military leaders, and these from their commanding officer. Those, moreover, were times of crisis, when France might suddenly descend again upon her former colony: few crises can be dealt with by debating societies. Looking back on the course of Haitian history, one may point out also that the country prospered under the dictatorships of Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe as it never did under the limited presidencies.[4] 175 642 433 656

In 1806, therefore, the aristocratic party got its wish, although only at the price of splitting the country in two. They established a government with a president of their own and a Senate filled with their representatives. The earliest legislation naturally enough favored their own landholding group. When prosperity did not result, Pétion began to recommend to the Senate a division of the land. More and more, although the representative form was preserved, Pétion ruled as a dictator. He was mild enough not to arouse antagonism; as is always the case when freedom of speech is curbed and summary legislation required, the plea of crisis was used to justify extraordinary measures. 175 642 665 646 643

The legislative party was firmly in the saddle by 1820 when Boyer reunited North and South, and shared his power with the Senate. 175 642 643

4. The arguments for dictatorship is familiar to the modern world. A defense of "revolutionism," published in 1816 by authority of Christophe (then King Henry I), is amusingly like certain European utterances of the nineteen-thirties: "The King has the sweet satisfaction of seeing that the cultivators [who were forced to work on the land whether they wanted to or not], being everywhere regularly paid [though the sum might be tiny], are praising the freedom they enjoy." And again: "Hayti chose a kingdom in order to shun forever that chaos, that confusion and perpetual clashing, which beside from those monstrous associations known under the name of *popular bodies*." *Anon., Haytian Papers* (1816), pp. 109, 113. [829]

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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quarantine: "Haiti for the Haitians." At first the prohibition on white ownership of land and financial investment in the country was attributable to a fear of reënslavement; then to a fear that financial commitments (which no Haitian really understood) would somehow lead to political subjection; and always the feeling of pride, combined with a desperate need of self-justification, made the Haitians want to keep their country entirely under control of their own people. It is, of course, possible that if white people had been allowed free access to the country, they might have destroyed the "Black Republic"; excluding white men altogether, however, seriously curtailed economic activity.

2. Overmilitarization. The army, numerous out of all proportion to the population, took the ablest men out of production, drained the treasury, and was a constant source of revolutionary activity.

3. Poor methods of agriculture. Critics often complained that Haiti ought to return to the system of large estates and forced labor; it apparently occurred to no one to suggest that education of the peasants might have made the land productive once more, by teaching the people new methods. Dividing up the land was an inevitable necessity unless every ruler were as willing as Christophe to be a dictator and as capable; but to keep the peasants in ignorance was not a necessity. Peasant landowners in Europe frequently tend their acres with skill, while in Haiti, with neither experience nor instruction in methods of tillage on small farms, the people developed steadily more destructive ways of farming.

4. Inefficient marketing. Assuming Haiti's dependence upon the staple crop of coffee and the handling of this crop by foreign merchants, every government seemed intent upon putting obstacles in the path of efficient marketing procedure.[15] The white trader could deal only with Haitians (who were ignorant in matters of international trade); although the foreigner had to pay a huge license fee in order to deal at all in Haitian products, he got no security in return, for he might not own land or obtain a lien on the real property of a citizen.[16] Banking and exchange facilities were wholly lacking.

15. In 1833 Boyer thought to "encourage" Haitians to commercial effort by gradually expelling foreign traders, refusing to grant them any new licenses to trade. His scheme failed, for the files were not interested. Indeed, the actual effect of his plan was to disrupt the steady flow of exports and increase discontent with Boyer on the part of the files plantation owners whose small profits were momentarily interrupted.

16. See James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 374 ff.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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XVI

PROBLEMS OF THE ÉLITE

TO associate for any length of time with the upper classes of Haitian society is to be aware of a deep unrest, which social charm may cover for the most part, but which inadvertently reveals itself. One discovers a large number of topics which had better not be discussed at all, for they bring a look of distress, wariness, or nervous tension to the face of one's host. To generalize from personal experience is dangerous, if not futile; the present section, therefore, must be read with skepticism. The writer has rarely passed more thoroughly delightful and stimulating hours than in the homes of Haitians. It must not be considered any reflection upon these kindly persons, consequently, if he notes that many of them seemed always to be taking care to guard their faces and their words, lest by look or speech they might be betrayed. What lies behind that guard? What worries the élite? 565

Sensitivity to the opinion of the white world, first of all. The cultured Haitians know that white people generally are inclined to think of all dark-skinned people as Negroes, all originally from Africa, the Dark Continent of superstition, cannibalism, and savagery; they know it to be commonly held that the Negro is mentally inferior to the white, incapable of first-rate achievement in any art or science, always on the verge of a lapse back into barbarism; and they know that in large parts of the white world social lines are firmly held against the Negro. On the other hand, they have been brought up in cultured homes, where stress has always been laid upon things of the intellect. Good manners, correct speech, decorum, social *savoir-faire*—all these and other ingredients of gentle living the élite children have known since infancy, in their homes and in their social circle. It is expected that a person will know what is going on in Paris, will have read the new novels, will be able to talk about philosophical tendencies and intellectual currents. 565 829

In other words, the élite man knows that he is a cultured gentleman in the truest sense. For years he has seen tourist ships landing hundreds of Americans each week at Port-au-Prince and Cap-Haïtien; he has seen the mad revelry of some of these whites, their

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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565 ill-mannered vulgarity, their superficiality of mind, their poor taste.
829 He knows well enough that it is not fair to judge a whole nation by a few representatives, yet it is clear to him that these raucous whites regard themselves, and are by others regarded, as lords of creation who need never worry about social acceptance. The Haitian knows himself the superior of most of these white people, whether the test be intellectual or on the basis of gentility. Nevertheless, the white inferior is preferred by all the world to his Haitian superior. The white American can go anywhere and, with his carefree self-assurance, see all doors open to him; the cultured Haitian can go few places away from home, and in even those few many doors are yet closed in his face.

Whether the result of his reflections, which must be provoked anew each time the tourist invasion begins, leads him to bitterness or to cynical acceptance depends upon his temperament. It would be almost impossible not to envy the assurance of the white man. And what must life be like when the thought of one's birth, over which one had no control, forever rises as a spectre to haunt one's daily awareness?

Distress of mind may lead the élite in public to impassioned defense of Haitian achievement, but in private he will be all the while imitating the white man and accepting his judgments. The word "ambivalence" is descriptive of his attitude: he wishes to go both ways, to justify Haiti, yet to be regarded as white. Haitian tradition pulls him in one direction, white superiorities the other. There is probably not a single member of the élite who does not feel as if half life's burdens would disappear if only one were white. The darker complexion is one of those hard facts which simply cannot be got around. But one's children can be lighter, and one's grandchildren lighter still, if one marries wisely.

565 This is a hope of the future. Meantime there is a pattern of be-
55 havior for the present. What has made the white man master of the Western World seems to have been a combination of money, political power, intellectual attainment, and social domination of inferiors. After these, therefore, the proper youth must strive indefatigably. Since these aims are common to the élite they are hardly mentioned; indeed, one wonders sometimes whether even the people themselves are aware of the foundations of their ambition.

No élite man in Haiti ever made money by working with his

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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hands. In colonial times fortunes came to plantation owners, and since then have come only to political officeholders. With money one can go to France where he will be accepted as a human being, not turned aside as a Negro; with money one can get an education, live a life of leisure, acquire luxuries. Hence the popularity of law as a profession, for it is the career by which one enters politics. That a president should begin life as an impecunious barrister and end it as a well-to-do landlord, the owner of several villas and motorcars, seems praiseworthy, natural, logical. The American success story is "from log cabin to White House," but with no implication of monetary gain from such progress; the Haitian success story is rather "from penury to plutocracy."

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It is not enough, however, to aim high in the material sphere. In proportion to their numbers the élite are extraordinarily ambitious for intellectual achievement. A distinction is sometimes made between the social élite and the intellectual élite, the former being decidedly more numerous.[1] Conversation in a Haitian drawing room is likely to be on about the same intellectual plane as in America except in specifically literary and artistic circles. Poetry, philosophy, literary trends, historical speculation are staples of discussion in more than a few homes. A recent president wrote many metaphysical poems. An American author, attending a social function consisting chiefly of secretaries of state, was amazed to find the group absorbed in a dispute about poetry.[2]

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Aristocrats have always kept the lower orders at a distance socially. In Haiti this rule is observed with rigor. To suggest that a possible reason for such harshness of attitude and behavior toward servants and working people might be fear lest white visitors should class all persons of color together would be unkind, though not unsound. In general, there is a deep conviction that the masses are stupid. Although persons of culture exist who are generally solicitous for the betterment of their life, there is really no comparison which will make clear to the white reader the ordinary attitude of mind of

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1. This distinction is clearly made in John Lobb, "Caste and Class in Haiti," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLVI, No. 1 (July, 1940), p. 30 ff.

2. W. B. Seabrook, *The Magic Island*, p. 161. "On my way home from the palace," concludes the author, "I reflected how queer it would seem for a group of cabinet ministers and Treasury officials at the White House to be earnestly discussing the poetry of an American anthology which included metaphysical love-lyrics by Calvin Coolidge."

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élite toward *les noirs*. The mildest expression of general opinion is that it would be a waste of time to try to educate the masses, for they are so nearly like animals that they could not absorb even the simplest education. Peasants eat when they are hungry, rise and go to sleep with light and darkness, are unable to count, like animals sense changes in weather; peasants are kindly but stupid, like donkeys: this is the kind of summary one hears from the mouths of the élite. It is possible that the élite are merely imitating the attitude toward the Negro of many white people they have seen.

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Treatment of servants is revealing. They are often reviled for their thickheadedness. When one remonstrates with an employer for his frequent upbraiding of workmen, there is sure to be a look of pained surprise. Said one man: "You can no more hurt the feelings of a peasant than you can hurt the feelings of a mule." Servants simply do not feel as human beings do, but must be "broken," like a horse. This is not to say that many kindly employers do not exist, but rather that working people are not regarded as belonging to the higher orders of nature. A Catholic priest who devoted a good part of his time to work in the hills was told by some of his élite parishioners that this was a waste of time, for such dull people could not possibly benefit from his teachings.

Thoughtful men, on the other hand, know well enough that it is possible to improve the lot of the people. But if the peasant should be well educated he would become ambitious; where then would be the monopoly which is now held by the aristocrats on wealth, government, education? Merest self-interest prompts one to defend the status quo. This definitely worries many of the upper group. Aware that so long as conditions remain as they are Haiti will be poor and backward, they are nevertheless not ready to promote what would be a thoroughgoing social revolution. If any government should become oversolicitous for the well-being of the masses, it would soon find itself bitterly opposed by the upper class. In the long run, what will be the result of keeping things as they are? Élite who know their history can find several possible answers, no one of which appeals to them: a peasants' revolt, a Reign of Terror, intervention by a foreign power. They are on the horns of a dilemma: if as rulers they promote material welfare, they lose their present positions of security; if they do not promote a change, violent change will unseat them.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Probably no white man will ever succeed in fathoming the heart-ache of a sensitive individual of a people not highly regarded. To be born white gives one, as matters stand at present, a head-start in the world; to be a citizen of a world power means security upon which one can depend. The Haitian wants to be accepted in the outside world, but his skin color puts up one high barrier against him, and his citizenship in Haiti is no great recommendation to special consideration. The intellectual man comes to feel that he exists almost in a vacuum. Haiti is in the Western Hemisphere, yet is the only independent country in that hemisphere which has French as its official language and France as its cultural mother. Whereas the intellectual of the United States feels a common bond with the whole English-speaking world, and the intellectual of Spanish America speaks the language of seventeen neighboring states, the Haitian savant is not often honored in France nor yet by learned compeers in the Western Hemisphere. The more he looks to France as the centre of the cultural world, the greater will be his isolation in Latin America.'

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1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

he is assured of more solicitous care from her and more deferential treatment from her children. And though when this has occurred his "legal" wife may at his death come with a justice of the peace to claim his body and his effects, this move is anticipated, so that what he has given the *placée* wife and her children is usually well out of the way. "Often they find only the four walls of the house."

A certain number of unmarried men result from this system of plural matings, some of whom remain single by preference, particularly in the cities, where the incidence of homosexuality far exceeds that found in the country. In Mirebalais itself, when the final withdrawal of the American Marines from Haiti was being celebrated, a dance called *manuba*, significantly enough the only one held indoors, was one in which male dancers danced together in couples. The sexual problem of the younger unmarried men is more often solved by means of liaisons with married women, though this has its dangers in the countryside, where the movements of every individual are known and the least tendency to unsanctioned social behavior is soon the subject for widespread gossip. Prostitutes are found everywhere, and they are by no means visited by unmarried men alone. On the whole, sex "adventures" are more indulged in by men than women, even allowing for the tendency of some women to have affairs with youths. A belief widely held, that plural wives tend so to exhaust the virility of a man that he must seek "remedies" of a magical nature from the priests of the *vodun* cult and from sorcerers, must also be mentioned. Frigidity is a principal cause for female homosexuality, and, because of a wife's reluctance to satisfy her husband, it not infrequently happens that she is sent back to her parents, where she may seek out other women. The most prevalent Haitian attitude toward homosexuality in either sex, it may be remarked, is one of derision rather than vindictiveness, as the term applied to effeminate men, *commères*, may suggest.

541 half-demon cannibals who meet in secret in the hollow heart of the mapou tree. Some are dressed in comic ancient military attire, replete with swords, epaulets, medals, and outlandish beards, representing "the Generals." Others, under the name Bande Autophonique, follow a human phonograph—a leader singing through an antique Edison horn.

541 53 And there are bands of male *rubaniers*, or Maypole dancers, some of them attired as women, weaving their colored ribbons around portable poles, to the accompaniment of guitars, marimbulas, and cha-chas. Male stick dancers known as *batonni*, dressed in women's clothing, crouch in circles and perform baton-tapping dances to the accompaniment of drumming and singing. Other small bands wander about impersonating characters from folklore or politics in grotesque homemade costumes. One might see, for example, a fanciful bocor driving before him a band of zombies, wielding a whip, and barking out weird raucous commands.

After the cataclysmic grand finale of the Mardi Gras at Shrovetide there is the briefest of lulls, and then the country is in the throes of Rara. The day of the *roi* Lwalwadi (the King of Lwalwadi) has arrived. Hundreds of Rara bands move through the towns and villages, each with its orchestra of bamboo trumpets or conch-shell horns and its "king"—an ornately clad dancer or baton juggler. The Rara bands move from place to place, dance, sing, exhibit their featured performers, and then move on, pressed perhaps by other bands behind them or jostled by another group moving in the opposite direction. When darkness comes, the bands light their way with wooden torches or candelabra [416] of tiny oil lamps. Every week end for seven weeks, in the heat of day and the darkness of night, the mountain trails are alive with these processions.

541 The Rara festivities reach their climax on Good Friday week end, and by Easter morning they are ended. During these final days there is a last grand display, with troupes coming in from the mountains and the plains to the larger cities and towns. One of the traditional Rara convocation centers in the south is the town of Léogane. On Good Friday week end, Léogane is transformed into a milling, surging, trumpeting mass of celebrating country people.

[533] The songs heard during Rara are full of praise or derision for well-
[831] known personalities. Some of them are boldly ribald or licentious. And
[535] often the dancing itself is openly sexual in its implications. Haitians humorously refer to this kind of dancing as *enragé* (enraged, crazy).

541 675 Early in January, even while the Mardi Gras is in progress, each community gets down to the business of organizing its Rara group. It may be organized in one of several ways. In certain communities there

and covered with tiny mirrors or bits of colored glass. The towering headdress of antlers or papier-mâché sculpture unavoidably recalls similar headdresses in West Africa. Each roi has his own style of dance, which is usually accompanied by drums. It may be a belly dance, a dance of delicate balance, or one of complicated footwork and semiacrobatics such as the imitation of a pair of scissors at work. Throughout the dancing the headdress remains majestically erect.

In addition to the roi Lwalwali and the mâit' Rara (who is constantly in the midst of things, blowing his whistle), there are other traditional Rara personalities: the *major jour*, who juggles with a metal baton (sometimes two or three of these jugglers work together), and the *jongleur*, a juggler or strong man who performs such feats as dancing while holding a fully set table off the ground with his teeth.

On the southwest peninsula, in the region around Jérémie, there is a splurge of wrestling exhibitions during Rara days. Known as *pingé*, this festival wrestling is done with a background of excited drumming and has a striking resemblance to wrestling traditions in West Africa. Local "champions" will invade a neighboring community, sometimes traveling considerable distances to make a challenge. As in West Africa, some of these wrestlers take their own musicians with them. The musicians often are provided by the village in which the events take place. If a challenge is accepted, the spectators form a large circle, with the wrestlers in the center and the musicians to one side. There may be drums and bamboo flutes, occasionally supplemented by large earthern jars and lengths of bamboo beaten with sticks. The wrestlers are dressed only in shorts. When a man is thrown, the event is over, and another pair of wrestlers takes over. Sometimes a "champion" will take on a series of opponents until he is tired. Afterward he may move on to another community to find new competition, perhaps accompanied by a large group of friends and supporters from his own village. When the Rara season comes to an end, pingé is over for the year. It is one of the few athletic sport activities of the Haitian peasant.

And now and then during Rara a *debois* is seen. The *debois* is a carved wooden marionette with a short handle below. Its arms and legs are moved by pulling a string. It is usually painted, and sometimes it is dressed. One debois observed was provided with a loose dresslike costume; when the string was pulled, a large phallus hinged into view in an erect position. This marionette was an object of endless funmaking among spectators.*

Another type of marionette is the "Two Kings," made of papier-mâché and operated with strings. The "Two Kings," sitting in a papier-

* [Footnote appears in Category 16, p. 351. --Analyst]

2: Courlander B-4 (1937-1939) 1960 SV3 HaBI SV3

One such observer, commenting upon the dances of the elite and of the peasant declared: 114 535

> All the more undisguised is the crude sensuality among the lower classes of the Haitian population. Here every motion is obscene; and I am not at all considering the popular merrymakings or dance festivals secretly held partly in open, partly in forests, which are more like orgies, in which the African savagery, which has outlived centuries, has unbridled expression.[1]

Whatever the Haitian dance is, it is none of these things. The Haitian himself is neither obscene nor unbridled. His dancing, like his everyday life, is governed by social controls. He would be as surprised and offended by a sexual orgy as most Europeans. But he is not burdened with abstract concepts of chastity. Sex impulses are as fundamental and as taken for granted as rain, drought, and sunlight. The Haitian finds no virtue in living according to standards that have no relation to his realities. 535 831 [183]

The Haitian, like the West African, is undoubtedly a less tormented creature, so far as sex is concerned, than his European and American cousins. Since he is less tormented he can be more frank. And it was an expression of this frankness in certain of the Haitian secular dances that once aroused dismay among foreign chroniclers, and that still stirs the curiosity of tourists.

Yet if you were to witness fifty Haitian dances in their natural setting, you still might not see any direct sex-expression. You might see more sex play and display in a dance hall or night club in New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, or Los Angeles. That is not to say that there are no sexual allusions in Haitian dancing. In the ordinary Saturday night *bamboche*, or social dance, there may be a good deal of loin movement and suggestion. In Haitian context, however, it is no more significant than two persons of opposite sexes pressing close together to the music of a dreamy orchestra at the "Roseland." In Haitian religious dancing, sexual motifs may occasionally emerge, but they are integral parts of ritualistic symbolism.

One of the deficiencies of early literature on the dances of Haiti is that it did not differentiate between religious and secular dances. Furthermore, it is evident that writers tended to use a single name, such as Chica or Bamboula, to cover virtually any kind of dance festivity, much as many white Cubans refer today to all sorts of Afro-Cuban cult dances as Bembé. Because the terminology of ill-informed planters was adopted by the chroniclers, we are now able to form only some very general notions of Haitian dancing of the eighteenth century and before. Of all the reporters on the dance, Moreau de Saint-Méry seems to have been aware of differences, though his frequent departures into specula- 114 535

[1] [Quoted in Courlander, Haiti Singing, p. 73. Cf. P. 352, Category 116 -- Analyst]

2: Courlander 9-5 (1937-1959) 1968 SV3 Hait SV3

tempo. The chorus and leader sing responsively, their parts overlapping in traditional African style. The shoulder movements, foot movements, the way the arms are carried, and the typical posture of feet flat on the ground, bent knees, and swayed back—all are of African derivation. These postures and movements are broad and direct. There are few of the decorative and "fine" movements that one sees in the dances of Indonesia, Cambodia, and India. Where the Javanese lays stress on the pose of the hands and the delicate movements of the fingers, the Haitian dancer is concerned with the position of the arms and the motions of the shoulders. The Indonesian sense of poised balance or suspended movement is absent. In its place there is an attitude of strong frontal assault against natural forces such as gravity, or direct submission to those forces. There is almost always a feeling of solidity and stability in Haitian posture, and of a proximity between the body and the earth, but the total effect is dynamic. Indonesian dancing seems to express a comprehension of the unseen and the supernatural; Haitian dancing seems to express an intimate understanding of nature.

Dancing touches on virtually every aspect of life in Haiti. It plays a part in the supplication of loa, the placation of the dead, and the making of magic; in the consecration of a hounfor, the installation of a houngan, and the initiation of cult members; in planting, harvesting, and house-building. Catholic Church holidays, Nine Nights, baptisms, the election of a new president, and ordinary social gatherings—all are celebrated, in part, at least, by dancing.

Haitian dancing is participative rather than exhibitionistic. It is to join rather than to watch. There are some dances, however, which require special skills, and a few which are highly individualistic. Several types of dances are described elsewhere in this book. Verbal description cannot do justice to an art such as dancing, of course; but some brief sketches may help to suggest the differences between one Haitian dance and another.

In the Congo Mazonne, for example, men and women pair off and dance face to face, making contact occasionally but only briefly. The arms are stretched forward as though to embrace the partner around the waist, but the actual embrace never materializes. The partners dance sometimes as though they are unaware of each other and are simply part of a larger group; then they approach, move as mirrored reproductions, and separate. Loin movement is free, and there is a restrained sexual intensity, though direct sexual implications are not necessarily present. Sometimes the woman holds the hem of her skirt in her hands, while the man holds his jacket open toward his partner.

2: Courlander 8-6 (1937-1955) 1960 510 Haiti 573

Moussouli. In present-day Trinidad there is a Calinda dance which closely resembles the Moussouli; Puerto Rico has its Bomba Calindin; and under another name the "battle dance" survives among Negro communities in Surinam. The counterpart of the Calinda is Brazil is the Capoeira, for which musical accompaniment is provided by African-style "belly harps" (musical bows with gourd resonators) called berimbau. The tradition lingers on in Haiti in modern mock prize-fighting dancers sometimes performed in Rara season.

The stick dance (*Battonie*) of the Haitian carnival season, mentioned in chapter 8, is of more than passing interest for the reason that almost identical dances have been reported from some areas of West Africa. In the Haitian dance (see fig. 73) the baton wielders, all males, for unexplained reasons are attired in women's clothing. A photograph made in 1958 of a baton dance among the Ewe people of Togoland depicts a scene scarcely distinguishable from a Haitian Rara performance, and it is noteworthy that its all-male cast is in women's dress.[1]

In addition, there remain a number of fragments of dances of the past. In religious ritual, on rare occasions, one may see animal dances in which the performers mimic animal movements, holding in their hands long sticks to simulate front legs. This type of dance has been reported frequently in West Africa, particularly in connection with totemic rituals.

There is a dance in the Arada ritual in which the Ia Legba is invoked. A houngi—usually a man—comes onto the dance court wearing a kind of cane-crutch called the *Aston* Legba, or Legba stick. The baton is about the length of a cane, with a long, grotesquely twisted "handle" that fits under the crotch of the legs. The dancer wraps one leg around the stick and walks as though he has only one foot. In the dance, he spins around on the stick, leaps, and pirouettes. Identification of the stick as well as the dance with Legba, and its position between the legs, seem clearly to relate it to the phallic sticks used in dances for Legba in Dahomey.

Among the secular exhibitionistic dances of Haiti, there is one in which a man stands on his head and goes through erotic motions to the accompaniment of drums.

In addition to the almost countless dances of African origin or inspiration, there is the ever-popular Meringue, a European-type social dance which is known in many forms. Haitian connoisseurs of this dance believe there are three main forms of the Meringue: the "Meringue de Concert," in which the rhythm is slow and "caressing"; the "dance Meringue," in which the rhythm is quasi-fast and very gay; and the "Meringue Counaljaille," in which the rhythm is very fast. The last

[1] [United Nations Photograph no. 62065. Cf p. 352, category 116. -- Analyst]

The 1951

535 form, is heard most often during carnival days. In all variations of the Meringue, the dance is performed by couples in ballroom style. Among
[831] the elite, it is restrained. Elsewhere it is much more animated, with free and uninhibited pelvic motions similar to those seen at the Saturday
171 night *bombarde*. Although the Haitian regards his Meringue as a national
199 popular dance, Spanish-type music has infiltrated heavily from the Do-
53 minican Republic, Cuba, and other islands of the West Indies. Thousands of Haitians returning from contract labor in Cuba have brought with them not only Cuban songs and rhythms but Cuban instruments as well. It has not been a one-way affair, however, for the Arada cults of eastern Cuba have been built substantially around immigrants from Haiti, and in the Cuban mountains you may hear music and see dances of Afro-Haitian origin.

Still other kinds of dances are to be found in remote villages of Haiti—the old folk dances of Europe. The villagers still know and perform the waltz, the polka, the mazurka and the quadrille, usually to the accompaniment of violins or guitars, or possibly an accordion.

But the influences are not all ancient ones. Jazz has infiltrated the Meringue. And some years ago a small boy asked me with some concern whether I had taken proper account of a very important dance called *le Mark button*.

535 Following is a list of dances known to Haitians today. Some of them
[178] are found throughout Haiti, some are known only regionally, and a few are on the verge of extinction.

Dances Connected with Vodoun Ritual

Arada, or Rada: One of the main dances of the Vodoun service, named after the Dahomean city and cult center, Allada.

Anago, or Nago: Named after the Nagos, a branch of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria. For deities of Nago origin.

Mahi: Named after the Mahi people of Dahomey.

Dérédé: A Mahi dance of northern Haiti.

Parigale: Another Mahi type of dance. Possibly from *pas régal* (royal step).

Jeuvale, or Yeuvale: A supplication dance, variously called Jeuvale Dobo (*dos bas*, low back), Jeuvale Jénou (*genoux*, knees), and Dobado.

Zépaule: A supplication dance in which the movements are made primarily by the shoulders (*les épaules*). It is sometimes called Jeuvale Zépaule or Jeuvale Débout (standing Jeuvale).

Pharoredoun: Another type of shoulder dance known in the north.

Banda, or Chire: A gay and sometimes ribald dance, said to be much favored by the loa Cousin Zaka and the loa Gédé.

Manoune Rada: The "Masonic" Rada dance; often danced for the loa Gédé.

Cambinne or Crabinne: A rest dance, interpreted into long-drawn-out Arada
2/4 [i.e., the "Meringue Coupé-jaille" in which the rhythm is very fast. -- Analyst]

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I say it belongs to the old man! *Ciyé!* *
It's the old man's thing! *Ciyé!*
I say it's the old man's affair! *Ciyé!*
It's the old man's thing! *Ciyé!*
I say I'll look for it! *Ciyé!*
I'm going to take it! *Ciyé!*
I say it belongs to the old man, *Ciyé!*
It's the old man's thing, *Ciyé!*

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Another burlesque of a quarrel concerns a mother who has sent her daughter down to the river to do the washing. Some question arises as to whether the girl went down to the river at all, or whether she went elsewhere. There is implicit suggestion that the girl may have been at a rendezvous. The mother and the girl argue back and forth:

Mòn voyé Lanmòzi nan dlèvo,	I sent Lanmòzi to the water,
Li pas alé!	She didn't go!
Mòn voyé Lanmòzi nan dlèvo,	I sent Lanmòzi to the water,
Li pas alé!	She didn't go!
Mòn voyé Lanmòzi nan dlèvo,	I sent Lanmòzi to the water,
Li pas alé!	She didn't go!
Mòn voyé Lanmòzi nan dlèvo,	I sent Lanmòzi to the water,
Li pas alé!	She didn't go!
Lanmòzi ceté ou té yé?	Lanmòzi, where are you?
Li'm té yé!	I was there!
Li'm té yé!	I was there!
Li'm té yé!	I was there!
Li'm té yé!	I was there!
Li'm! [Ex. say]	There!

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Most of the scandal songs are fragmentary and tangent, though clear in implication, like this one:

C'est pas faute moin!
C'est pas faute moin!
C'est pas faute moin!
C'est pas faute moin!
C'est pas faute moin manman!
C'est pas faute moin!
Gainyain mouse t'ap marché dèyè bien!
Rwo woyo!
Gainyain mouse t'ap marché dèyè bien!
Gainyain mouse nin lacour à,
Fromé nouvelle ah, oi! [Ex. call]

It wasn't my fault!
It wasn't my fault!
It wasn't my fault!

* Used as an exclamation.

2: Courlander 3-5 (1937-1952) 1960 SV3 Hait SV3

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It wasn't my fault!
It wasn't my fault mother!
It wasn't my fault!
There was a man looking for a bargain!
Ave ayyal *
There was a man looking for a bargain!
There was a man in the yard,
Carry the news, oh, *ai!* †

Another scandal song, spiced with ridicule, refers tangently to a specific situation and points a moral:

Coulé li yé wuille-o! Coulé li yé wuille-o!
Coulé li yé wuille-o! Coulé li yé wuille-o!
Si ou pend yon femme pas vlé lavé pied
Ou pas besoin mandé qui gen li yé! [Ex. 109]

Now she is there, *wuille-o!* Now she is there, *wuille-o!* ‡
Now she is there, *wuille-o!* Now she is there, *wuille-o!*
If you take a woman who doesn't want to wash her feet
You don't have to ask what kind she is!

[515] The practice of washing one's feet before an intimacy enters into numerous gossip songs. In the following one, the woman asks her friend Pierre for water to wash with so that she may take advantage of Joseph's absence in the city:

Ba moin dlesu nig' moin pou' moin lavé pied moin!
Mandé dlesu moin chè' Pierre pou' moin lavé pied moin!
Mandé dlesu pou' moin lavé pied moin!
Joseph danger pas là, l'allé laville oh!
Joseph danger pas là, l'allé laville oh!

Give me water, my fellow, to wash my feet!
I ask for water, my dear Pierre, to wash my feet!
I ask for water to wash my feet!
Joseph who is dangerous is not here, he has gone to the city!
Joseph who is dangerous is not here, he has gone to the city!

Another bit of gossip with perhaps a more graphic account of the woman's deceit tells what happens in Achélo's house when he isn't home:

Viré do' allé!
Oh viré do' allé!
Achélo viré do' allé!
Viré do' allé!
Oh viré do' allé!

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* Exclamatory.
† Exclamatory.
‡ Exclamatory.

2: Courlander 3-5 (1937-1953) 1960 SV3 Hoist SV3

Achélo viré dé' allé!
A la papa viré gi'yan ennd man chamb'!
A la papa viré gi'yan mmmé calmé! [Ex. 110]

Turns his back and goes!
Oh, turns his back and goes!
Achélo turns his back and goes!
Turns his back and goes!
Oh, turns his back and goes!
Achélo turns his back and goes!
When papa turns, a man goes into his room!
When papa turns, a man climbs into his bed!

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But a note of sympathy for Achélo creeps into the last stanza:

Viré dé' allé!
Viré dé' allé!
Achélo ou pas man ennce ok!

Turns his back and goes!
Turns his back and goes!
Achélo, you are not in the joke, ok!

In the following song, a young man confesses to having despoiled a girl and blemished the family's reputation, but he tells the father and mother not to worry about it.

Bonjou' bonjou' Mamman Sonn,
Fille ou c'est perdu.
Bonjou' bonjou' Papa Sonn,
Ti fille ou c'est perdu.
Pé, ma ba ou l'a'gent.

Good evening, good evening Mother Sonn,
Your daughter is ruined.
Good evening, good evening Father Sonn,
Your little daughter is ruined.
Don't say a word, I will pay you for it.

An elderly gentleman named Alman fails to come out of his adventure with the same self-assurance, and the community takes full note of the details:

Alman allé bombilé,
Alman allé bombilé,
Alman allé bombilé,
Li retou'né pied cassé!
Pas pa'lé parole çila.
Si ou pa'lé parole çila,
Gain yon grand monsie
Qui va facher!

Alman went on a spree,
Alman went on a spree,
Alman went on a spree,
He came home with a broken foot!
Don't say a word about it.
If you say anything about it
There is an old gentleman
Who will be angry!

S: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1940) 1960 893 Hab 893

[The Vodoun Pantheon]

Legba in Dahomey, the performers hold a carved phallus between their legs and perform copulating movements. The Haitian Legba is depicted as an aged limping Ioa, and the carved phallus has become a gnarled crutch-cane that fits into the crutch of the legs. The Dahomean Legba is remembered elsewhere in the New World, notably in Dutch Guiana, Brazil, and Cuba. Until relatively recent times he was known among the Negroes of Louisiana by the name Papa Lebat.[4]

Legba Gbaxu Gunsou (Legba of the Highway). A special manifestation of Legba who guards the highway.

Legba Kalfu (Legba of the Crossroads). A special manifestation of Legba who guards the crossroads.

Legba Malv' Bexexoe (Legba Master of the Household). The Legba who protects the house and its grounds.

Legba Lapelewood. One of the Legba family.

Legba Kiri. One of the Legba family.

Legba Aguawo. Said to be a "Nago" deity.

Attibon Kiri. One of the Legba family.

Attibon Samarri. One of the Legba family.

Aziondo Kiri. One of the Legba family.

Ogoun Feraille, often referred to as Malv' Ogoun. The chief and ancestor of a large family of loa whose activities have to do with blacksmithing and war, which are closely related. Ogoun Feraille is a patron of warriors and the forge; his symbol is a piece of forged iron, such as a machete, a hoe blade, a saber, or a piece of iron chain. In West Africa, Ogoun is considered a patron of hunters as well.[1] He was widely known by various peoples in Dahomey and Nigeria. In Dahomey he was considered a child of the divine Mawu and Lisa,[2] and among the Yoruba of Nigeria he was regarded as a brother of Changa and Dada,[3] two spirits who survive in the Haitian pantheon. An altar to Ogoun Feraille, like that of the loa Changa, may consist of a pile of iron scrap, perhaps a broken sugar vat. In Cuba, Ogoun Feraille is a prominent deity in both the Arara (Dahomey) and the Lucumí (Yoruba) cults. Although absorbed exclusively into the Dahomé family of rites in Haiti, Ogoun Feraille and his entire family and escorte are designated as belonging to the Nago "nation." Their color, like that of heated iron, is red. Ogoun Feraille survived until recent times in Louisiana as Joe Feraille.[4]

Ogoun Fer (Ogoun Iron). He is sometimes called Ogoun St. Jacques, St. Jacques Majeur, or simply St. Jacques, being identified with the saint of that name.

Ogoun Maconquette (Ogoun Blacksmith).

Ogoun Barala. One of the Ogoun brothers.

Ogoun Baltaza Mugu. One of the Ogoun brothers.

Ogoun Jénnon, or Jannon. One of the Ogoun brothers.

Ogoun Badagry, or Batagri. Said to be a "grandson" of Malv' Ogoun. He is a "work" loa, as well as ironworker and a warrior, and helps in the fields, especially in time of sickness. Badagry is the name of a town near the mouth of the Ogoun River in western Nigeria. According to a priest of the Cuban Dahomé cult, the word Asogri was used to designate the circumcision house in Dahomey. Ogoun Badagry thus may have been associated with that shrine.

Changa, or Ogoun Changa. A member of the Ogoun family and, like most of his brothers, a warrior and ironworker. Changa's altar is usually a pile of scrap iron, or

1 [Thiès, pp. 201ff. Cf. p. 354 Category 116. --Analyst]
2 [Ellis, The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, p. 67. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. --Analyst]
3 [Herskovits, Op. Cit., pp. 105ff. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. --Analyst]
4 [Ellis, The Yoruba-Speaking Peoples, pp. 45, 69ff. Cf. p. 354 Cat. 116. --Analyst]
4 [Library of Congress Recording, No. 101. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. --Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

796 steadying his attention, he practically hypnotizes him back into full
535 consciousness. As soon as the possessed is normal again, water out of
787 the calabash is poured at the central post and a sign of the cross is made with the candle before it.

796 Contrary to the expectation of thrill-seeking white visitors, the
535 Vodun dance does not merit the name of an orgy. True, the dancers
786 wear their old clothes, for they are going to have violent exercise; true also, those who are possessed give the impression of losing some of their inhibitions. But the dancers do not embrace each other as at a white man's dance; the drinking which occurs is hardly ever excessive; and the climax of a successful dance is a religious experience.
• [134] The Haitian is no more obsessed by sex than is the American; indeed, living simply and without many of the artificial restraints of "civilization," he is probably less so. What white visitors sometimes see, under the impression that they are witnessing a Vodun dance, is nothing more than a secular Saturday night social dance. It, too, has drum rhythms instead of an orchestra, musical instruments being rare in Haiti; but the dance has no more religious (or "Voodoo") significance than a barn dance in the United States.

771 Creed and practice go hand in hand in Haiti. The Vodun wor-
776 shiper believes in the loa of his faith and does the things necessary to get in touch with them. These conceptions are the major part of his creed, as the corresponding actions form the bulk of his religious activity.

171 A few articles of the creed remain. "I believe in respect to twins
845 . . ." Hundreds of so-called primitive peoples see in twins some special
787 significance, now fortunate, now tragic. Many of the tribes along the Atlantic coast of Africa thought of twins as an omen, so that the presence of ritual regard for them in Haiti is hardly surprising. It is probably incorrect to speak of the worship, or the cult, of twins, for they are not deified, nor is there a common ritual for them: thousands of persons pay them no homage whatever. One family has a high regard for twins because it has numbered them among its ancestors or recent relatives; another family pays respect to all twins because a priest has advised seeking the good luck which comes from *marassa* (twins). There seems to be some confusion of thought about
[72] this aspect of religion: twins are not gods, but merely omens from the gods; yet sacrifices are made to them. Christmas and harvest are the usual seasons for the offering. Food is prepared in the morning

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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[p. 177]

IX

HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDS

TOLERANT understanding of the ways of alien people is rare in matters relating to sex. Occasionally we may regard marital and sexual practices which differ from our own as amusing or ridiculous; more frequently we find them distasteful and disgusting. A long religious heritage has implanted in us a definite personal morality, familiar in Puritanism and in the codes of the great majority of early American pioneers. Accompanying and dominated by this religious aspect has been the legal idea of sexual morality. A middle-class tradition of private property, hence of orderly marriages legally recognized, has schooled us for centuries to approve certain moral and sexual rules: monogamic marriage, children born in wedlock, a public wedding ceremony by approved authorities, ensure of sexual relations which might confuse the passage of property. Although sympathetic tolerance for foreign ways has never been an outstanding American characteristic, it is least evident in connection with divergent sexual practices. We do not remind ourselves of the utilitarian basis of a part of our own sexual codes.

Where people have economic and social backgrounds different from those of Western Europe and the United States, other codes will prevail. Elements which have made American moral standards what they are were lacking or appeared in different form in Haiti. Instead of middle-class European tradition there was African tribal practice; instead of diffused small private properties there was slavery; instead of the Puritan notion that sex relations were in general sinful was the less rigorous view that sexual intercourse was entirely normal; instead of the example of monogamous family life constantly before the minds of children growing up, there was the example of libertinage among lofty whites and laxness among the blacks.

Nothing in the experience of the slave régime could have predisposed toward orderly marriage these people, soon to become Haitians. Certain masters actually prohibited weddings among their slaves, while most others discouraged it, since the development of family ties among the blacks would only have made for complication

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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The truth is, marriage and moral conditions differ from economic and political conditions in that they are not so immediate and pressing in their effect upon individual lives. If these are not attended to today, tomorrow will find our bellies empty and our state overrun by enemies. But sex relations go on willy-nilly, and children are born into families: there will still be marriage and a moral problem to attend to when order has been brought into practical affairs. Toussaint was involved in a diplomatic battle in which the participants were the best minds of France, England, and the United States. Beside these mighty problems upon which depended the economic and political future of his people, the question of a standard of sex conduct was definitely secondary.

So it must have seemed to Dessalines, the founder of the state and first "law-giver" of Haiti. By his official actions it is evident that the economy of the country was his primary concern, with defense against a return of the French a close second. In his pronouncements he bowed respectfully to religion and then postponed action until some more convenient season. He pronounced likewise some very proper sentiments on marriage and morals, calling attention to the benefits of wedlock, piously deprecating sensuality and voluptuousness. His imperial constitution of 1805 encouraged lawful unions, treating marriage as a socially virtuous state to be cultivated.

This was all words, however, and came strangely from the black general who was, as everyone knew, a notorious libertine. He lectured his people on the danger of yielding to their passions, yet showed no intention of controlling his own impulses or those of his favorites. He was, indeed, the last man in Haiti to make a gesture toward sexual morality among the people, for although he was married his daily life was a complete negation of moral precept. In every town he habitually visited he established mistresses, bestowing large sums of money upon them. He employed every sort of seduction, honor, and gift to conquer the virtue of females who valued their "respectability." Actually, he did not often need to use violence, for the prevailing moral tone was not so high but that most young and attractive women would yield to their Emperor.

The sternly upright Haitian historian, Madiou, has a formidable paragraph on the vices of Dessalines. He tries partially to excuse him on the grounds of his fury at discovering conspiracies against his authority among his colored lieutenants, asserting that his early gen-

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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erosity and equity now gave way to malevolence and personal license: 114

Putting no restraint upon his passions, he travelled about, followed by actors, dancers, musicians, and courtesans. An indefatigable dancer, as soon as he arrived in a place he gave a ball. Under Toussaint Louverture, in order to please the Governor-General everyone approached the holy altar; under Dessalines one gained glory by dancing well. The Emperor, giving himself up to scandalous pleasures, forgot that he was head of the state. The greatest immorality reigned about him. With a gaiety sometimes grotesque, he told the ladies who frequented his court how much he admired their beauty, no matter how ugly they actually were. Following his example, his major officers of state kept concubines in every town in the empire. . . . When the emperor entered a town, the honest women were gravely disturbed, for their virtue was menaced not only by him but also by his officers of state. Many mothers kept their daughters shut up to keep them from the notice of those who were powerful enough to take them, with impunity, by violence.[1] 643 159 831

Marriage, then, looked at from the standards of any white Western country, was in a sorry state in Haiti. Continued warfare had broken up many even of the families which, though unrecognized by the white planters, had nevertheless been formed during slavery; and the camp life of soldiers roaming the countryside confirmed the casual attitude of the people toward sex. Every ex-slave was a hero, and liberty was sweet. Under Dessalines it was scarcely wise for a prominent man to marry an attractive wife, the Emperor might so soon set himself to seduce her. Above all, there was no tradition of formal marriage. This was the chief factor to bear upon future marriage and sexual customs of the Haitians; and in appraising them is the paramount fact to keep in mind. 175 831 581

Meanwhile, children were being born. Their mothers were known, but often the fathers were not, for the vast majority of infants were born out of wedlock. Dessalines, a realist except in matters which touched his vanity, saw the necessity of establishing a status for these children, not on grounds of morality but for economic expediency, to avoid future disputes over inheritance. French precedent did not serve his need, for according to French law an illegitimate child may not inherit: a parent in France is not free to leave his property as he will, but must pass it on to his legitimate heirs. 175 848 428

1. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 239.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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[p. 186]

X

HOME LIFE OF THE ÉLITE

565 581 ONE brief characterization of the élite might be that they are those who carefully observe the proprieties. The proprieties are those of France, and among them is "common sense" in marriage.

175 565 831 581 People of privilege in colonial times, which were the fountainhead of élite tradition, lived at ease and did not concern themselves with manual labor. Nor were they burdened by puritanical codes of sexual morality, but on the contrary enjoyed sex relations with whatever attractive women came their way. But they would have thought it sheer folly to allow momentary delight to interfere with the very practical matter of choosing a wife. Marriage meant increasing one's fortune, strengthening one's social position and connections, establishing one's children. Romance was as irrelevant to all this as to choosing a business partner. This attitude of the French planters, current even in France of the present day, was the standard for freedmen.

175 565 588 581 Even when wealth was most plentiful in colonial society it had not been always easy to find the proper wife for an affranchi youth. For a man to remain single, however, did not mean that he remained celibate. He might, on the contrary, contract a fairly permanent informal union of love, while discreetly refraining from a marriage which would jeopardize his own or his family's status. Such informal unions were not generally regarded as immoral. Good taste, it was felt, was a sufficient guide in all matters of sex outside of marriage.

175 565 581 The unsettled condition of the colony between the slave insurrection of 1791 and the achievement of independence in 1803–4 did not change the affranchi concept of suitable marriage. During the brief two-year rule of Dessalines, the ideal of propriety in marriage remained the same in spite of the Emperor's efforts to undermine the importance of legal weddings and the legitimacy of children. Pétion, upon his accession in 1806, showed himself a true member of the mulatto aristocratic group—indifferent to the morals of the masses so long as custom settled their problems for them, and content with the marriage traditions of the élite. He said publicly what was neces-

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Parents are generally kind to their children, so far as physical
855 punishment is concerned. The average peasant child can hardly
861 properly be said to be "brought up": he merely grows, eats whatever
152 his family eats or whatever fruits he can pick up, and learns his place in the community as he matures. In anger, parents are likely to use in correction the first thing that comes to hand. There is a surprising callousness to pain among these generally kindly people: they beat their donkeys unmercifully, and strap harness over open sores; they carry chickens, head down and feet tied together and mouths gaping, for miles in the sun; they revel in gory cockfights. If, therefore, a parent is minded to beat his child, he will probably do a thorough
[578] job of it. A peasant woman, pommeling her son with a broomstick, replied to the protests of a white passer-by, "*Li nègue; li pas fait li mal.*" ("He's a Negro; it won't hurt him.") The interference of a stranger in the beating of a wife by her man, armed with a club, was resented by both man and woman as an interference with a purely family quarrel.

831 The concept of sexual continence is lacking among the peasants.
834 Sex, indeed, hardly enters the realm of morality except in connection
864 with adulterous dalliance of one man with another's woman. There is no virtue in abstaining from sex relations when the sexual urge is strong. Mothers tell love stories in all their frank details to their young daughters, and some who care about such matters are adept in all lore connected with stimulating and satisfying a man's desire.[5]
[342] Since huts are small and the whole family sleeps in the same room, children have ample opportunity to observe the sexual life of their parents. If a girl, as a result of her own experiments, has a child born to her, there is no disgrace. Practically every peasant is "illegitimate," so that the term means nothing; a baby will soon be old enough to assist in the work of the home, thus becoming an asset. It is expected that as soon as a youth grows up he will find a mate and begin a family of his own.

241 The family is as important an element of peasant life as formal
439 marriage is unimportant. It is the economic unit. Ever since the days
593 of Pétion Haitian economy has been one of small things: even the crops are small subsistence crops of maize, millet, beans, rice, yams, and frequently trees of bananas, plantains, and coffee, which require no particular cultivation. Enough coffee has been produced in Haiti for annual export ever since 1804, but until recent years the beans

5. See Zora Neale Hurston, *Tell My Horse*, pp. 22 ff.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

584 in the same district, the background of the young man is well enough known so that no investigation is necessary, though unfailingly a long and formal discussion of the suitor, his qualities, and his prospects ensues. If his home is some distance away, however, meticulous inquiries are made not only concerning the young man and his immediate family, but of
584 his ancestry as well. Should the suitor live near the home of
212 the young woman, as usually happens, his own parents come with a *lettre de demand*. In earlier days the "letter" was written on flowered paper with a lacy border, but today plain colored paper does very well. When presented, it is wrapped
[603] in a green silk handkerchief, "for hope" — the handkerchief
[822] costs about five gourdes, and a similar amount is given the scribe — and is usually carried by the oldest man of the family; that is to say, the paternal grandfather if living, or if he is dead, the father, accompanied by the mother and perhaps the other grandparents. Today it is said that in the
[178] valley of Mirebalais the custom of presenting these letters of request is often disregarded, but is by no means extinct.[1]

The family of the girl is always apprised of the exact time of the visit, and refreshments are on hand. No reply is given at the time of the delivery of the "letter," since the families of both the father and the mother of the girl must consent to the match before it can be finally approved. However, at the stage of the courtship which the presentation of a "letter" implies, this delayed answer is a matter of form, for if the proposal had not been acceptable, the girl would not have been allowed to see the suitor. The refusal of a "letter" has
[578] been known to occur, but this is regarded as a deadly insult, and deep enmity between the families follows. Should the family of the girl, not wishing to be abrupt, accept the "letter" and proffer refreshments to its bearers, but later return the same "letter" as a sign of rejection, even this would be
584 bitterly resented. Under such circumstances the young man
832 takes steps to obtain revenge by providing himself with a
578

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

love-charm designed to insure the young girl's coming to him. He then uses all persuasion to give her a child and, this achieved, abandons her to show his contempt for the family that has formally refused to accept him as a son-in-law. 584 832 578

Usually, however, the visit is returned by the family of the girl, bearing a "response" of acceptance wrapped in a red silk handkerchief, "for victory." And just as the family of the young woman had known in advance of the coming of her suitor's relatives, word of the favorable verdict is now sent through indirect channels, so that the family of the young man may also be prepared to receive the emissaries who come on behalf of the girl. 212 822

With this formal acceptance of the young man's suit, the wedding waits until he has accumulated the requisites for a household. Custom dictates that even should he be prepared, the ceremony must be delayed for several months while he remains in a probationary state, to assure the family of his fiancée of his worthiness. The young woman is also under surveillance during this time, when she may be asked to help her future mother-in-law with the housework, and particularly with the washing and ironing of linens. Generally a period of from two to three years elapses before the bridegroom accumulates enough to fulfill his obligations in marriage. During this time the family of the young woman is acquiring the things she is expected to bring to her husband: linens and dishes — though in the poorer peasant families these items would not be provided her — cooking utensils, water-containers, knives, forks, and other things needed for the household. Her father also presents her with a horse, a donkey, six or seven pigs, the same number of goats, as well as chickens, guinea-hens, and turkeys. 583 584

Tokens of virginity are not demanded before the match, since Mirebalais custom requires that the girl tell before her marriage whether she has had relations with other men. She may be sent away if it is discovered that she has told an un- 584 836

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

CHAPTER XII

MAGIC, GOOD AND BAD

In opening any discussion of Haitian magic, the fact must be stressed that magic, though but one of the forces active in the universe, is a system in itself. As such, it is a thing apart from the *vodun* cult, a point which must also be emphasized, for although most writers draw a perfunctory distinction between magic and *vodun*, this distinction, once stated, is too often promptly lost sight of.[1] At the same time, the differences between the worship of the *loa* and the practice of magic must not be so juxtaposed as to name the second as the antibody of the first. For, though some of the *loa* can work harm, and some of them, indeed, are primary forces behind the working of evil rather than beneficial magic, the good and bad they do is general in nature. Magic, on the other hand, whether good or bad, always operates in very specific instances: to cause a given woman to love a given man, or to make a certain field of a certain enemy yield poorly.

Yet these distinctions, when drawn, are found in practice to be neither as sharp nor as consistent as the foregoing statements might imply, especially since the system of magic is empowered and validated by many of the *loa*, as well as being closely affiliated with the cult of the dead. The phenomenon dealt with here, and its not illogical contradictions, arise, however, from the fact that the realistic African world view has by

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

it possible for the owner to go to war without being harmed. 789
Even were the possessor of such a *drogue* to be struck by a bullet, the wound would be a minor one; while the thrust of a machete or saber would leave him unscathed, poison placed in drink or food would be impotent, and a trap set against the warrior would be ineffective. Some *drogues*, it is held, allow the owner to disappear when trapped by enemies. For such an [784] important *drogue* a special day, designated by its maker, is [834] set aside for the observance of certain taboos, the most important being the requirement of sexual abstinence on that day.[4] Some men possess as many as seven of these *drogues*, in which case one day every seventh week is reserved for each. Said a man who had taken part in the rebellion of 1918–20 against the Marine occupation: "I have a small, small *drogue*. I had it in the Caco fighting. I have need of a big one." When it was observed that there is no more fighting in Haiti, the reply came promptly: "A man must be prepared. Nobody knows what will come."

The grandfather of this man was said by him to have owned 789
a *drogue* which came from Guinée. He knew how to resuscitate those who had met their death from unnatural — magical — causes; he had only to come to the *barrière* before the house where the body lay, call the name of the victim, and the dead would arise. He was once attacked when he was returning home with a purse filled with money he had won at cards, and his assailants beat him to death and threw him into a well. The next morning, when he was found, he revived in a few moments and asked to be buried beside the well. The following day one of the men who had assaulted him died; the next day another died, and so for five days, until all of them were dead.

Love-charms form an important category of good magic, as 832
also charms to aid in selling in the markets or in keeping a job or to hold the affection of a spouse. Old men are believed 789
to have important magical powers for good, and one such 888

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

he is assured of more solicitous care from her and more deferential treatment from her children. And though when this has occurred his "legal" wife may at his death come with a justice of the peace to claim his body and his effects, this move is anticipated, so that what he has given the *placée* wife and her children is usually well out of the way. "Often they find only the four walls of the house."

A certain number of unmarried men result from this system of plural matings, some of whom remain single by preference, particularly in the cities, where the incidence of homosexuality far exceeds that found in the country. In Mirebalais itself, when the final withdrawal of the American Marines from Haiti was being celebrated, a dance called *manuba*, significantly enough the only one held indoors, was one in which male dancers danced together in couples. The sexual problem of the younger unmarried men is more often solved by means of liaisons with married women, though this has its dangers in the countryside, where the movements of every individual are known and the least tendency to unsanctioned social behavior is soon the subject for widespread gossip. Prostitutes are found everywhere, and they are by no means visited by unmarried men alone. On the whole, sex "adventures" are more indulged in by men than women, even allowing for the tendency of some women to have affairs with youths. A belief widely held, that plural wives tend so to exhaust the virility of a man that he must seek "remedies" of a magical nature from the priests of the *vodun* cult and from sorcerers, must also be mentioned. Frigidity is a principal cause for female homosexuality, and, because of a wife's reluctance to satisfy her husband, it not infrequently happens that she is sent back to her parents, where she may seek out other women. The most prevalent Haitian attitude toward homosexuality in either sex, it may be remarked, is one of derision rather than vindictiveness, as the term applied to effeminate men, *commères*, may suggest.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

the phrase: "This is natural." Children are not spaced, for normally a man resumes intercourse with his wife the second or third month after childbirth. Except for the drinking of coconut milk and salt, which is believed to be effective in preventing conception if taken before intercourse, contraceptives are not known to women, which means that pregnancies follow in rapid succession. Families are not too large, however, despite this, those numbering seven or eight children being rare, even in the hills. The reason for this is a high incidence of infant mortality, which is obvious despite the absence of vital statistics. Abortions are usually resorted to by young women, who sustain the operation done by the uncertain skill of an old woman, in the fear that bearing a child will later stand in the way of a desirable legal marriage. Some men, however, take the precaution of placing a grain of native salt on the tongue while having intercourse during an illicit affair, believing that this will be effective in preventing conception.

A childless woman first goes to a *vodun* priest, to have him determine by divination if a co-wife has not invoked magic against her. If her question receives an affirmative answer, she acquires a "counter-charm" to offset the effect of the other woman's magic. Should such a charm be ineffective, she would offer her prayers before the shrines of the saints and make pilgrimages to such sacred places as Saut d'Eau, there phrasing her petition to the Virgin in some manner such as the prayer overheard as a woman lighted a candle and held it in her hand before placing it on a sacred rock:

> *"Vièrge Miracles, Manman, voilà, depuis six ans depuis qui moins marié; moin apé vivre seul avec pauvre malhereux moin-a. Ça fait trois fois moin vini nan pié ou. Pas 'blié mandé moin fait ou, pour charité, moin ou petit pitite. Moin va minnin li ba ou. Moin apé parti, Manman, s' ou' pli, songé ça pitite m' mandé ou.—*

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

it possible for the owner to go to war without being harmed. 789
Even were the possessor of such a *drogue* to be struck by a bullet, the wound would be a minor one; while the thrust of a machete or saber would leave him unscathed, poison placed in drink or food would be impotent, and a trap set against the warrior would be ineffective. Some *drogues*, it is held, allow the owner to disappear when trapped by enemies. For such an important *drogue* a special day, designated by its maker, is set aside for the observance of certain taboos, the most important being the requirement of sexual abstinence on that day.[4] Some men possess as many as seven of these *drogues*, in which case one day every seventh week is reserved for each. Said a man who had taken part in the rebellion of 1918–20 against the Marine occupation: "I have a small, small *drogue*. I had it in the Caco fighting. I have need of a big one." When it was observed that there is no more fighting in Haiti, the reply came promptly: "A man must be prepared. Nobody knows what will come." [784] [834]

The grandfather of this man was said by him to have owned a *drogue* which came from Guinée. He knew how to resuscitate those who had met their death from unnatural — magical — causes; he had only to come to the *barrière* before the house where the body lay, call the name of the victim, and the dead would arise. He was once attacked when he was returning home with a purse filled with money he had won at cards, and his assailants beat him to death and threw him into a well. The next morning, when he was found, he revived in a few moments and asked to be buried beside the well. The following day one of the men who had assaulted him died; the next day another died, and so for five days, until all of them were dead. 789 754

Love-charms form an important category of good magic, as also charms to aid in selling in the markets or in keeping a job or to hold the affection of a spouse. Old men are believed to have important magical powers for good, and one such 832 789 888

2: Courlander 835 (1937-1955) 1960 . SV3 Hait SV3

588 does not marry his horse. People marry people. Loa marry loa. A man
588 may have a compact with a loa. That is not a marriage. Some of the
184 things that are going on down there in the Plain are not right. They are not the old way. In the old days we did things differently. We did not always run to the houngan. The grand famille knew how to talk to the loa. Up here we don't do things the way they do them down below in the city. People marry people. Loa marry loa."

588 Nevertheless, the practice in the neighborhood of Port-au-Prince and
772 the Cul-de-Sac Plain is for mystic marriages to take place when deemed
[184] useful, essential, or unavoidable. Foremost among the loa involved in these rites is Ezilie Wèdo, the "pure" one, the deity of love, sometimes identified with the Virgin Mary. Other loa known to have taken part in mystic marriages are Damballa, Ogoun, Ayida, Agwé, Gèdé Nimbo or one of his brothers, Cousin Zaka, and Général Clermeil. All these loa—significantly, I think—have clearly defined personalities; much is known about their character and behavior, their likes and dislikes.

588 A man married to Ezilie has special obligations to her for the dura-
[834] tion of his life. On certain days (especially Thursday, which is sacred to this deity), the mortal "husband" may not have sexual intercourse, even though he has a human wife.

588 Circumstances leading to a mystic marriage vary widely, but in each
755 case it is a cult priest who determines whether the rites should be
793 held. Perhaps a person has been afflicted with a series of illnesses or mis-
776 fortunes. He goes to his houngan, who begins a series of communications with the client's loa or with his own. Sometimes many loa are consulted before the desired information is available. Eventually it is determined that a certain deity, for reasons which may or may not
[753] be clear, wishes to have nuptial ties with the client. The illnesses or mis-
[777] fortunes that have been sent are a means of informing or warning the person concerned.

Sometimes the houngan relies on well-established divining methods to ascertain the cause of the difficulties. He may employ the *gembo* (a shell that slides on a string), ashes, or small shells that are thrown on
[787] the ground. Or he may rely on possession by a loa to provide the information.

If it is found that a loa is demanding marriage, arrangements are then made. The rites that follow may take place in a hounfor or at the house of the human bride or groom. Both a prêt' savane and a houngan officiate.

588 The person directly involved, like the loa, usually has something to
554 gain from a mystic marriage. For one thing, he can reasonably expect

2: Courlander 8-5 (1937-1938) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

533 477 178 461 rhythmically, to the accompaniment of drums, *catas*, or horns, while a singing leader composes topical songs in which the laborers join.

171 412 The tools which a rural Haitian chooses, and the way he uses them, often are in a West African tradition. He performs a multitude of tasks with his machete, or bush knife: weeding a garden, peeling an orange, cutting down a tree, making a drum or mortar, opening a coconut. It is an all-purpose tool, as it is in Africa. Until a few years ago it was supplemented by the extra-long, heavier, "double machete." The axe and the chisel are known and used too, but the machete is supreme. 492 The hoe is the tool for tilling the soil, even in the flat country, and even [341] though the Haitian has horses and cattle which could pull a plow. [412] Horses are for riding and not for pulling. In carrying loads, the Haitian peasant still prefers the head to the shoulders. If he has a donkey, the [538] donkey will carry for him. An old Haitian proverb goes: "Meçi Bondieu pou' bourrique là, si nous pas gainyain bourrique là faut Haitien po'té tout bagaille" (Thank God for the donkey, if we didn't have the donkey the Haitian would have to carry everything)." Generally speaking, the 489 491 493 rough and rocky terrain of Haiti and inadequate secondary roads have done nothing to encourage the use of carts or wagons.

171 Corn is stored in the trees, as in West Africa, or in granaries built [25] upon stilts, also as in West Africa. The Haitian makes his fire in the [372] African fashion, with several long sticks or poles meeting point-to-point in the heart of the fire. As the ends are consumed, the sticks are pushed [252] toward the center. Grain is pulverized in large wooden mortars, as [229] in West Africa, and winnowed in a woven tray. Fish traps are some- [226] times woven in the traditional West African manner, and fishermen often set their nets in converging spirals and beat the water with sticks to [501] drive the fish to the center. And on the rivers and lakes are to be seen dugout canoes of a kind familiar on the inland waters of West Africa.

171 241 The folklore of the fields contains many themes known to the West African. One old Haitian farmer, discussing the spiritual relationship of the planter to the earth, declared that a man must be strong and potent when he plants, else the crops will be vitiated and sickly. For [834] this reason, he said, a man must not plant seeds the day after he has had sexual intercourse, because he has been temporarily drained of his life-giving powers.[9]

171 538 The tale of the hoe that worked by itself in the fields is also widespread. It enters many animal and Bouki stories, and also is known in a form that is familiar in West Africa. In this story, there was once a man who owned a hoe which worked by itself whenever a magical formula was pronounced. It would stop working whenever the magical

9 [For footnote, see Category 116, P 352.-- Analyst]

[The Vodoun Pantheon]

the earth like the carrying pad that women wear to support bundles on their heads. 776
Whenever Ayida Wèdo shifted his position there were earthquakes.[3] When the rain- 171
bow appeared after a rain it was said that Ayida had come out from under the 821
earth to drink of the fresh water.

Damballa Grand Chemin (Damballa of the Highway). Another manifestation 484
of Damballa as a protector of those on long journeys.

Damballa Verre. Another manifestation of Damballa.

Dorzèl Wèdo. Considered to be the daughter of Damballa. The ending of her name (-zi) suggests that at one time she may have been considered a wife rather than a daughter.

Doki Wèdo. A member of Damballa's family.

Aclò Wèdo. A member of Damballa's family. Said to be a "work loa" who aids 241
men with their gardens, especially in time of illness.

Èzilie Doba, or Dogba, sometimes spelled Ezulie. One of the "big" loa of the 177
Dahomé pantheon, a symbol of purity, and sometimes identified with the Virgin 822
Mary. Her color is white, and services to her include a ritual sweeping and spar- 782
kling of the earth and a perfuming of the air. Food offerings to her include corn 787
meal and eggs. Male "horses" of Èzilie are sometimes bound to her by mystic 834
marriages, and they are obligated to refrain from sexual intercourse on certain 588
days which belong to her. There are a number of Èzilies, regarded as members of the same family or, in some cult centers, as different manifestations of the same deity. Some Haitians regard Èzilie Doba as the ancestor of the Èzilie family and refer to her as Grand Èzilie. Note that there is a Dahomean town named Dogba at approximately 0° 6′ E., 6° 50′ N.

Èzilie Fréda, or Èzilie Dahomain (Dahomé), or Èzilie Fréda Dahomain. Like 177
Èzilie Doba, she is a symbol of purity and is identified with the Virgin Mary. 588
Mystic marriages are performed with her, and her "horses" are obligated to re- 787
frain from sexual intercourse on certain days. She is also a giver of wealth. 834

Èzilie Wèdo. A sister or daughter of Èzilie Doba and also related to Damballa.

Èzilie Manol. A sister of Èzilie Fréda.

Èzilie Banda. A manifestation of Èzilie who is especially fond of the Banda dance.

Èzilie Jèndòcè (Red Eyes). A stern and hard Èzilie who is often identified with Pétro rather than Dahomé rites.

Alòn Fréda. A member of the Èzilie escorte, regarded as a market-place protector. 443
In Dahomey, Alòn was a protector of all public gathering places.[4] 171

Alòn Balèkèté

Alòn Dlèau Bolo Bosu

Maîtresse Manbo. A special form of Èzilie as priestess.

Maîtresse Espagnole, or 'Pagnole. A person mounted by this Èzilie talks only 787
Spanish. 191

Sobo, or Sogbo. A thunder deity who hurls stones to the earth when angered. 776
Some of the stones thrown by Sobo are regarded as the sacred residence of various 171
loa. Sobo (or Sogbo) is a member of the original Thunder pantheon of Dahomey.

Sobo Badé, or Sobo Badè, or simply Badé. A close relative of Sobo, regarded as the protector of the houngfor (*badé*). In Dahomey, Badé is sometimes referred to as the son of the deity Sobo.[5]

[3] [See Ellis, The Ewe-speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast of West Africa, pp. 47-49; and Herskovits, Dahomey, II, 245ff. Cf. p. 354 Category 116. -- Analyst]
[4] [Ellis, op. cit., p. 52. Cf. p. 354, Category 116. -- Analyst]
[5] [Herskovits, op. cit., pp. 152ff. Cf. p. 354, Cat. 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

relations between the husband and the wife's family, it is nevertheless commonplace for men who can afford it to have more than one wife.

[184] [428]

[8]Simpson, in "Sexual and Familial Institutions in Northern Haiti," *American Anthropologist*, October-December, 1942, p. 656, observes that in northern Haiti there are three distinct types of plaçage. "A *femme-caille* shares her mate's house, while a *maman pitite* is a woman who has been children for a man without living in his house. A *femme plaçée* does not live in her consort's house, and she has given him no children." Although none of these women has any legal rights of inheritance, Simpson notes, "moral claims to a man's property stand in descending order for these three classes of plaçées."

[9]Johnston, *The Negro in the New World*.

[10]UNESCO, *The Haiti Pilot Project*, p. 18.

[11]Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," *Journal of Negro History*, October, 1945, p. 315.

[12]The group work patterns of Haiti show a common ancestry with Negro gang work patterns in the United States. While nothing so formalized as the coumbite persists among American Negroes, similarities are striking. The emphasis on rhythm, the swinging of hammers or picks in unison, the need for a singing leader, the responsive chorus, and the frequent use of some kind of percussion to keep time, all derive from a common concept of the nature of group work.

[13]Herskovits, "Some Aspects of Dahomean Ethnology," *Africa*, Vol. V (July, 1932), pp. 266–276.

[14]Cardinall, *Tales Told in Togoland* (p. 109), observes that among the Krachi people of Togoland "no man may have sexual intercourse with a woman for seven days before he goes hunting."

[15]An Ashanti story told by Rattray in *Akan-Ashanti Folk-Tales* credits the hedgehog with owning the original hoe; according to this version, the hoe escaped across the sea to the country of the white men, who then possessed the secret. Afterward, the white men brought many hoes to Ashanti.

Chapter 11: *Dancing and Dance Drama* (*pp. 126–136*)

[1]Quoted in Courlander, *Haiti Singing*, p. 73.

[2]Actually a banjo-like instrument of African provenience. The similarity of the word *hanse* to *banjo* appears to be more than a coincidence.

[3]Saint-Méry, *De la danse*, as translated by Lillian Moore in "Moreau de Saint-Méry and 'Dance,'" *Dance Index*, October, 1946, p. 238.

[4]Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[5]Brandy or rum with gunpowder is sometimes drunk by persons possessed by the loa Ogoun, deity of war.

[6]Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[7]United Nations photograph no. 62265.

[8]Students of United States Negro life will recognize the word *coundjaille* as a variant of *coonjine*, a dance known on the lower Mississippi. According to one observer, Dr. Willis James of Spelman College, Atlanta, small Negro boys on the docks used to call to the boat passengers:

> "Throw me a nickel
> Throw me a dime
> If you want to see me
> Do the coonjine."

The term *coonjine* is still used to mean hand-loading of cotton bales on river boats. When this loading was done mainly by hand some years ago, the stevedores worked rhythmically in a line and sang. An old man from Louisiana testified that within his own memory the dockside *coonjine* was accompanied by makouhitt drums and other percussion.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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Parents are generally kind to their children, so far as physical
855 punishment is concerned. The average peasant child can hardly
861 properly be said to be "brought up": he merely grows, eats whatever
152 his family eats or whatever fruits he can pick up, and learns his place in the community as he matures. In anger, parents are likely to use in correction the first thing that comes to hand. There is a surprising callousness to pain among these generally kindly people: they beat their donkeys unmercifully, and strap harness over open sores; they carry chickens, head down and feet tied together and mouths gaping, for miles in the sun; they revel in gory cockfights. If, therefore, a parent is minded to beat his child, he will probably do a thorough
[578] job of it. A peasant woman, pommeling her son with a broomstick, replied to the protests of a white passer-by, "*Li nègue; li pas fait li mal.*" ("He's a Negro; it won't hurt him.") The interference of a stranger in the beating of a wife by her man, armed with a club, was resented by both man and woman as an interference with a purely family quarrel.

831 The concept of sexual continence is lacking among the peasants.
834 Sex, indeed, hardly enters the realm of morality except in connection
864 with adulterous dalliance of one man with another's woman. There is no virtue in abstaining from sex relations when the sexual urge is strong. Mothers tell love stories in all their frank details to their young daughters, and some who care about such matters are adept in all lore connected with stimulating and satisfying a man's desire.[5]
[342] Since huts are small and the whole family sleeps in the same room, children have ample opportunity to observe the sexual life of their parents. If a girl, as a result of her own experiments, has a child born to her, there is no disgrace. Practically every peasant is "illegitimate," so that the term means nothing; a baby will soon be old enough to assist in the work of the home, thus becoming an asset. It is expected that as soon as a youth grows up he will find a mate and begin a family of his own.

241 The family is as important an element of peasant life as formal
439 marriage is unimportant. It is the economic unit. Ever since the days
593 of Pétion Haitian economy has been one of small things: even the crops are small subsistence crops of maize, millet, beans, rice, yams, and frequently trees of bananas, plantains, and coffee, which require no particular cultivation. Enough coffee has been produced in Haiti for annual export ever since 1804, but until recent years the beans

5. See Zora Neale Hurston, *Tell My Horse*, pp. 22 ff.

1; Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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eight years old, and the same room until they are ten or twelve. They are counted on to sleep soundly enough, but it happens that a child sometimes awakens and, unknown to his parents, observes them. Though brothers and sisters sometimes continue to sleep together until the age of puberty, it is said that attempts at intercourse between them rarely occur, for, according to Haitians, the children gradually sense that this is regarded as bad, and a boy approaching puberty who wishes to satisfy his desire for sex play goes to find a "little neighbor." Later, when the nubile girls are withdrawn from the company of the boys, the latter play with younger girls who have not yet reached puberty, or carry on "affairs" with those older than themselves; indeed, it is from these latter that they obtain full knowledge of sexual procedure.

What has been said concerning the growth and training of children applies mainly to those who live with their parents. No discussion of the development of the child, however, can neglect to mention the widespread institution of a form of quasi-adoption, found not only in Mirebalais, but in all other parts of Haiti. By this is not meant legal adoption, though that, too, is known and at times occurs. Quasi-adoption involves children who are called "*'ti moun qui 'reté à caille 'ous* — small folk who stay at your house," or, more briefly, *'ti moun*. They are the children, often of peasants, "given" to friends who live in a town or, as is the case with some families of Mirebalais, "given" to friends or acquaintances living in the capital. To what extent this relationship offers a means for the exploitation of children in other parts of Haiti cannot be said, though tales of abuses of it, especially in Port-au-Prince, are heard. To give a person a child in this manner is in Mirebalais regarded as a token of friendship, and such children as were observed, though poorly clothed, were fed not much differently from the children of the families with which they were sent to live. When the *'ti moun* grows older, he leaves and returns to his own home, though the relationship between

1: Herskovits E-4, 3 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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love-charm designed to insure the young girl's coming to him. He then uses all persuasion to give her a child and, this achieved, abandons her to show his contempt for the family that has formally refused to accept him as a son-in-law. 584 [832] [578]

Usually, however, the visit is returned by the family of the girl, bearing a "response" of acceptance wrapped in a red silk handkerchief, "for victory." And just as the family of the young woman had known in advance of the coming of her suitor's relatives, word of the favorable verdict is now sent through indirect channels, so that the family of the young man may also be prepared to receive the emissaries who come on behalf of the girl. [212] [822]

With this formal acceptance of the young man's suit, the wedding waits until he has accumulated the requisites for a household. Custom dictates that even should he be prepared, the ceremony must be delayed for several months while he remains in a probationary state, to assure the family of his fiancée of his worthiness. The young woman is also under surveillance during this time, when she may be asked to help her future mother-in-law with the housework, and particularly with the washing and ironing of linens. Generally a period of from two to three years elapses before the bridegroom accumulates enough to fulfill his obligations in marriage. During this time the family of the young woman is acquiring the things she is expected to bring to her husband: linens and dishes — though in the poorer peasant families these items would not be provided her — cooking utensils, water-containers, knives, forks, and other things needed for the household. Her father also presents her with a horse, a donkey, six or seven pigs, the same number of goats, as well as chickens, guinea-hens, and turkeys. 583 584

Tokens of virginity are not demanded before the match, since Mirebalais custom requires that the girl tell before her marriage whether she has had relations with other men. She may be sent away if it is discovered that she has told an un- 584 836

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

584 truth, but the matter is recognized as one which concerns
836 only her husband and herself, and if he is willing to keep
836 her, it is his own affair. Consensus of opinion in Mirebalais
369 is that the percentage of girls who do not have pre-marital sexual relations is relatively small, but the belief is expressed that chastity is more prevalent among country women than among those of the town, where, in turn, it is more frequent than in larger centers such as Port-au-Prince. Even though
836 pre-marital relations are commonplace, however, the preg-
848 nancy of an unmarried girl is regarded as both reprehensible and unfortunate, and she is severely beaten for it by her family. In such cases, if the father of the unborn child will take the girl, his parents are sent to bring her, but where the parents of the man refuse to ask for the girl because they do not approve of her, then, if he still desires her, he must himself face the anger of her parents. Should he not wish to come for her, she may either remain with her family or seek work in another community. In any event, her child will be well cared for by her family, and no reproach will attach to it because of the circumstances of its birth.

585 Before a mating of any type is consummated, the familial
782 spirits must be notified of the approaching event so that they
776 may be well disposed toward it, for no union where this is neglected can enjoy happiness or peace. One Mirebalais woman was pointed out as an object lesson of the necessity of doing this. Though a devotee of several gods, neither she nor her husband was willing to perform the necessary rites for her gods before their marriage. She was suffering from an
[753] acute case of melancholia after the birth of her first child, and
[828] the prevailing opinion was that she was going mad because of the neglect of her duty toward her deities. Shortly before a woman goes to her husband, therefore, a *couvert sec* for the Rada deities is given both by herself and by her betrothed. If the family of either the young man or the woman possess deities of the powerful Pétro group, more inclusive offerings

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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est. It was brought over from Africa apparently as early as 1509.[7] Oviedo describes it in 1526 as "a terrible pustular disease."[8] It so closely resembles syphilis that it has often been mistaken for that malady.[9] Untreated or wrongly treated it ravages the bodies of its victims, making them loathesome to behold. In the neighborhood of Port-au-Prince the Rockefeller staff found, out of 2,564 persons examined, 78 per cent affected with yaws. What is even more disturbing is that the young are afflicted. Dr. Lhérisson's investigations in one district revealed that 61.1 per cent of the cases were of children under ten. 164

An American, Dr. Paul Wilson, in 1922 first called yaws the primary physical curse of Haiti. He insisted "that the first need of rural Haiti was soap, salvarsan, and sunshine, and that the good Lord would furnish the sunshine."[10] The Haitian government immediately began to spend large sums to combat the disease. In the Jacmel region in one year (1925–26) 167,267 cases of yaws were treated; in 1926 over 200,000 injections of arsenicals against the disease were administered throughout the republic; and by 1931 the Public Health Service had given in twelve years 2,655,386 injections. Progress has been swift, but the fight against yaws is one which has to be waged continually. 164 744

It would probably be not far from the truth to say that for two centuries the majority of Haitian Negroes have been afflicted to a greater or less degree with malaria, hookworm, and yaws, either singly or together. Next to these dire diseases comes a group which seems to have affected from a tenth to one half the population: tuberculosis, dysentery, enteritis, and granular conjunctivitis. Tuberculosis progresses rapidly when it appears. The people have never developed a specific immunity to it, and promiscuous sex relations play their part in spreading the disease by contagion. In seven hundred autopsies performed in one year at the General Hospital of Port-au-Prince, twenty-six per cent of the deaths were due to tuberculosis. Spring water in the country districts is frequently pol- 164 [836] [837] [165]

7. M. G. Levacher, *Guide médical des Antilles* (Paris, 1847), p. 280.
8. Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdés, *La Historia natural y general de las Indias* (Madrid, 1558).
9. Dr. Parsons, *History of Haitian Medicine*, p. xviii, speaks of it as "blood brother of European syphilis, if not the same disease modified by age incidence, social environment, and racial difference."
10. *Ibid.*, p. xviii.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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563 567 175 155 858 571

maintain adequate hygienic conditions, the health of these children was usually poor, so that from earliest infancy they were spoiled by their parents and servants; their least wishes were gratified, and their least complaints immediately rectified so as to make them petty tyrants in their households. This tyranny was most often exercised over the family slaves. Regardless of the assiduous care these young despots received, and despite the adulation lavished upon their young charges, the Negro servants were seldom sufficiently prompt or adequate in their attentiveness to escape the punishments, often severe, that were meted out to them at the behest of their young masters. This tyranny extended to the play-life of the young Haitian-born white. Surrounded only by the slave children of the plantation, he commanded his contemporaries even more imperiously than his parents commanded the grown slaves.

> " Whatever he saw, he wanted, whatever was shown him he demanded; and if some fatality brought it about that one of his small companions resisted him and he became irritated, they would hurry from all sides in response to his cries and those of the young unfortunate, who, his color having destined him for submission, learned soon enough that he would be forced to give way, perhaps even being meted some punishment to penalize the disobedience of one who had not yet the instinct for servitude." "

175 563 567 571 [839]

Grown to manhood, the young Créole continued to act as master of all he surveyed. Imperious, quick-tempered, spoiled, his life lived in large part among slaves, when his sex drive stirred, he took what slave women pleased him. Eventually he married, to be tormented with the thoughts of the possible infidelity of his wife; the more tortured because of his extreme vanity and because, while demanding faithfulness from his spouse, he was continuing his affairs with his Negro women. [157] Yet he had some excellences of character, as well. " Frank,

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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themselves and their families economically and socially. Property was important, so they took pains to insure the legitimacy of their heirs; color was crucial, and so they regulated the marriages of their children to be sure there was no reversion to the black strain. They guarded their fortunes solicitously, provided their daughters with dowries large enough sometimes even to lure a white husband, educated their sons in Paris—behaved, in short, as if they had been pillars of society in provincial France. Like the white planters, the male affranchis often had relations with slave women, but even more rarely than whites were they seduced into marriage with women of the lower orders. 175 565 581

When the slave insurrection and its aftermath freed the half-million blacks in Saint-Domingue it was not to be expected that European middle-class morals and practices should suddenly prevail. Modern usage emerges from the womb of tradition. Neither in Africa nor in the colony had tradition taught the blacks respect for monogamy or for marriage entered into by religious ceremony. If the ex-slaves had reverted to their Dahomean, Congolese, or other African background, they might have introduced the bride price; but to pay a bride price is to assume the existence of wealth, an assumption contrary to fact among the ex-slaves in Saint-Domingue of the 1790's, and Haiti of the 1800's. In neither Dahomey nor the Congo was there much ceremony at the union of a couple; what there was consisted mostly of singing and dancing. If, on the other hand, the people went only by what they had observed in slave days, there was no tradition of binding union or strict codes, as we understand them. A man knew when to stay away from another man's woman; children remained near their mother—these two statements almost cover the situation as of 1796 among the newly freed slaves. 175 581 [583] [585] [837] [855]

Toussaint, apparently a conventional person in what concerned social behavior, wished his people to be "moral." He instituted a time of "holy masses, mystic communions, biblical psalms, and divine ecstasies"[2] for his private edification, and recommended the same for his people. He could not possibly have instilled into them a desire for Christian marriage, however; even if he could, priests would not have been available for the wholesale marrying of scores of thousands of men and women. Local records of weddings at this period are very scanty. 175 643 788 582

2. Saint-Rémy, *Pétion et Haïti*, III, 93.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

562 The male, by contrast, is master in all matters, including those pertaining to home life. Obviously, he is much freer in his sexual life than is his wife.

586 Divorce is comparatively rare, thanks to the careful solicitude of all parties before formal marriage is contracted, and to the disapproval of the Catholic Church. Since the husband is not, by custom or by public opinion, bound to limit his sexual attentions to his legal wife, one of the common causes of divorce is removed. The code [837] allows formal divorce to the husband for the wife's adultery, and to the wife for her husband's adultery "when he shall bring his concubine into the common dwelling house." Both spouses may secure divorce for excess, for injurious cruelty, for life sentences imposed by [587] a court—"*peines afflictives et infamantes.*" A woman whose marriage has been dissolved by divorce cannot remarry before the expiration of one year, nor is she permitted to remarry her former husband. [562] The opposition of the Church to divorce is a distinct deterrent to élite [771] women who crave freedom, for women are generally the more devout members of the Church.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

est. It was brought over from Africa apparently as early as 1509.[7] Oviedo describes it in 1526 as "a terrible pustular disease."[8] It so closely resembles syphilis that it has often been mistaken for that malady.[9] Untreated or wrongly treated it ravages the bodies of its victims, making them loathesome to behold. In the neighborhood of Port-au-Prince the Rockefeller staff found, out of 2,564 persons examined, 78 per cent affected with yaws. What is even more disturbing is that the young are afflicted. Dr. Lhérisson's investigations in one district revealed that 61.1 per cent of the cases were of children under ten. 164

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10. *Ibid.*, p. xviii.

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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he is assured of more solicitous care from her and more deferential treatment from her children. And though when this has occurred his "legal" wife may at his death come with a justice of the peace to claim his body and his effects, this move is anticipated, so that what he has given the *placée* wife and her children is usually well out of the way. "Often they find only the four walls of the house."

A certain number of unmarried men result from this system of plural matings, some of whom remain single by preference, particularly in the cities, where the incidence of homosexuality far exceeds that found in the country. In Mirebalais itself, when the final withdrawal of the American Marines from Haiti was being celebrated, a dance called *manuba*, significantly enough the only one held indoors, was one in which male dancers danced together in couples. The sexual problem of the younger unmarried men is more often solved by means of liaisons with married women, though this has its dangers in the countryside, where the movements of every individual are known and the least tendency to unsanctioned social behavior is soon the subject for widespread gossip. Prostitutes are found everywhere, and they are by no means visited by unmarried men alone. On the whole, sex "adventures" are more indulged in by men than women, even allowing for the tendency of some women to have affairs with youths. A belief widely held, that plural wives tend so to exhaust the virility of a man that he must seek "remedies" of a magical nature from the priests of the *vodun* cult and from sorcerers, must also be mentioned. Frigidity is a principal cause for female homosexuality, and, because of a wife's reluctance to satisfy her husband, it not infrequently happens that she is sent back to her parents, where she may seek out other women. The most prevalent Haitian attitude toward homosexuality in either sex, it may be remarked, is one of derision rather than vindictiveness, as the term applied to effeminate men, *commères*, may suggest.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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CHAPTER V

BIRTH, CHILDHOOD, AND ADOLESCENCE

●842 THE LOVE of children, and the prestige which a man gains as head of a large family, are factors that go far to explain the desire for a numerous progeny. In this not only is he aided by his own sophistication in matters of sex — for in Haitian peasant culture, one encounters no such conventionalized naïveté as the ignorance of physiological paternity found in certain other, non-African societies — but his desire is furthered as well by the absence of contraceptives, and the emphasis laid by Church, State, and African tradition on the desirability of many offspring. Though situations do arise when, because of illicit relations between a man and woman that result in conception, an abortion is held necessary, usually as soon as a woman discovers that she has conceived, she proceeds to take the necessary protective measures. First she goes to the old women of her own family, who give her herbs for the "three baths" she must take on each of the three succeeding days. This accomplished, she next visits a priest or priestess of the *vodun* cult who has the confidence of her family or of her husband's, and procures other herbs also for the purpose of preparing baths, and, in addition, a magic charm to wear about her neck or about her waist. This charm protects both herself and the child in her womb against the evil eye or any

843 [847]

[951]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

000 the phrase: "This is natural." Children are not spaced, for
842 normally a man resumes intercourse with his wife the second
163 or third month after childbirth. Except for the drinking of
833 coconut milk and salt, which is believed to be effective in preventing conception if taken before intercourse, contraceptives are not known to women, which means that pregnancies
162 follow in rapid succession. Families are not too large, how-
165 ever, despite this, those numbering seven or eight children being rare, even in the hills. The reason for this is a high incidence of infant mortality, which is obvious despite the
847 absence of vital statistics. Abortions are usually resorted to by young women, who sustain the operation done by the uncertain skill of an old woman, in the fear that bearing a child will later stand in the way of a desirable legal marriage.
842 Some men, however, take the precaution of placing a grain
263 of native salt on the tongue while having intercourse during an illicit affair, believing that this will be effective in preventing conception.

842 A childless woman first goes to a *vodun* priest, to have him
789 determine by divination if a co-wife has not invoked magic
782 against her. If her question receives an affirmative answer, she
[791] acquires a "counter-charm" to offset the effect of the other
[595] woman's magic. Should such a charm be ineffective, she would
[788] offer her prayers before the shrines of the saints and make
[539] pilgrimages to such sacred places as Saut d'Eau, there phrasing her petition to the Virgin in some manner such as the prayer overheard as a woman lighted a candle and held it in her hand before placing it on a sacred rock:

> *"Vièrge Miracles, Manman, voilà, depuis six ans depuis qui moins marié; moin apé vivre seul avec pauvre malhereux moin-a. Ça fait trois fois moin vini nan pié ou. Pas 'blié mandé moin fait ou, pour charité, moin ou petit pitite. Moin va minnin li ba ou. Moin apé parti, Manman, s' ou' pli, songé ça pitite m' mandé ou.—*

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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Virgin of Miracles, Mother, I have been married for six years; I am still living alone with my poor unfortunate one. This is the third time I come to you. For charity's sake, do not forget to send me a child. I have brought this for you. Now I am about to leave [but], Mother, please think of the little one I ask of you."

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

house. A round, polished Indian stone is occasionally used as a *garde habitation*. And old people speak of a very powerful charm known as a *gros arrête* which in former times was placed on the trail to protect entire villages or valleys. 789

Still another potent defensive charm is the *pouin*, which is the product of ritual magic within the cult temple. A pouin may be an actual bundle containing a formula of special ingredients; more often, it is invisible, consisting of magical forces unleashed into space by the houngan. There are many ceremonies in the hounfor devoted to the projecting of these magical forces. They are called *cérémonie pouin* or *cérémonie magie* and are dramatized by special cult songs and dances. Sometimes the magie ceremony is woven into a more generalized cult ritual. The powers of the pouin are regarded as wider and more potent than those of the arrête. Pouins are said to protect an individual or a group not only against other magic but also against natural phenomena and accident. A pouin may ward off lightning, for example, or protect one from falling trees or from shipwreck or drowning. But it is not solely defensive magic. It may bring success in fishing, or produce a good crop in one's garden, or aid human fertility. 789 794 796 [777] [842]

Since the crops and the garden are the substance of life, much attention is given to their protection. An enemy may attack a man or his household through garden magic. He may bury a ouanga in the earth, to bring sickness or ruin. He may poison a tree by performing a special rite at its foot, and its fruits will then carry disease or death to the one who eats them. Or he may make a compact with the earth so that it will dry up and refuse to produce for the one who tills it. Against all these malevolent possibilities, as well as against common thieves, the Haitian peasant has many magical and practical resources. Some people are said to employ zombies as watchmen. These fearsome creatures will capture a trespasser and hold him for the owner of the field.[3] Or perhaps the owner will place special arrêtes in his garden. Occasionally a man will protect his fields by planting *piquettes* in the earth. The *piquette* is a piece of sharpened bamboo or hard wood. Its point is dipped into poison, and it is placed in the ground, sharpened end up. An unwary intruder who steps on a piquette may die of his wound. 789 685 [754] [775]

To counteract the *maljok*, or evil eye, a man may procure from a bocor a special shirt made of wide strips of red, white, and blue cloth sewed together. This shirt, called a *mayo* or *manyo*, is worn for seven days if the *maljok* is a rather ordinary one. If the evil force is a particularly virulent one, however, the *mayo* will be worn as long as twenty-one 754 789 791

3 [Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," Journal of Negro History, October, 1940, p. 503. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

167 175 [648] a massacre in the western part of the Dominican Republic which took the lives of an estimated five thousand to fifteen thousand Haitians. The survivors fled homeward, and many were settled in frontier areas by the government. Even so, today there are believed to be some sixty or seventy thousand Haitians still living east of the border. Large numbers of Haitians, particularly men, migrated to Cuba in the years following World War I, in search of better wages in the cane fields. By 1931 there were more than eighty thousand Haitians in that country. But resentment by local Cuban labor and the onset of the depression combined to force the repatriation of great numbers of them. Thirty thousand Haitians came home from Cuba in the years 1936 and 1937 alone.

16 [842] Solution of Haiti's problem of overpopulation does not seem imminent. The obvious answers would seem to be birth control, emigration, wiser use of natural resources, and industrialization. Since the country is predominantly Catholic, and since much social value is placed on children, birth control seems unlikely. And as health facilities become more widespread and infant mortality drops, the pressure will become more acute. Emigration seems to offer no hope, since neighboring islands and countries [311] on the mainland give no encouragement. The Haitian may yet learn to conserve his land and to get more out of it, to stock his lakes with fish, and to [47] bring more fish in from the sea. But this will not suffice. Nothing is left but industrialization, and that seems to be a thing of the far-distant future.

181 167 461 Nevertheless, the character of Haitian life remains essentially agrarian. The displaced peasant, whether he is now a hotel "houseboy," a taxi driver, or a cane cutter, dreams of returning to the land some day and growing bananas, coffee, and cotton that will make him independent. In far-off places such as Havana and New York, Haitians work and save money with the expectation that one day they will come home, buy fifteen or twenty acres of ground, build a new house, and live out their lives as decently prosperous *habitants*. The traditions of the agricultural [128] society, along with Vodoun, continue to play a significant role in the life of the people.

476 241 One such tradition is the institution of the *coumbite*, a loosely knit coöperative work party of neighbors and friends. The word itself probably comes from the Spanish *convide*, or *convite*, meaning "to invite." A member of the group holds a coumbite by notifying his fellow members that on such-and-such a day his fields will require clearing or hoeing. There are several variants of the work gathering. One, called *carré* or *corvée*, meets at irregular intervals and only on special invitation. There are no regular reciprocal obligations in the *corvée*; the workers are

[Simpson, "Haitian Peasant Economy," Journal of Negro History, October, 1940, p. 515. Cf. p. 352, Category 116. --Analyst)

CHAPTER V

BIRTH, CHILDHOOD, AND ADOLESCENCE

842 THE LOVE of children, and the prestige which a man gains as head of a large family, are factors that go far to explain the desire for a numerous progeny. In this not only is he aided by his own sophistication in matters of sex — for in Haitian peasant culture, one encounters no such conventionalized naïveté as the ignorance of physiological paternity found in certain other, non-African societies — but his desire is furthered as well by the absence of contraceptives, and the emphasis laid by Church, State, and African tradition on the desirability of 843 [847] many offspring. Though situations do arise when, because of illicit relations between a man and woman that result in conception, an abortion is held necessary, usually as soon as a woman discovers that she has conceived, she proceeds to take the necessary protective measures. First she goes to the old women of her own family, who give her herbs for the "three baths" she must take on each of the three succeeding days. This accomplished, she next visits a priest or priestess of the [951] *vodun* cult who has the confidence of her family or of her husband's, and procures other herbs also for the purpose of preparing baths, and, in addition, a magic charm to wear about her neck or about her waist. This charm protects both herself and the child in her womb against the evil eye or any

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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other evil spirit or evil magic that may be directed against her. If she is a worshipper of the African deities of the *vodun* cult, she may also ask the *vodun* priest to determine by divination what spirit will protect the child, and what her own deity asks to insure his aid. During all her pregnancy she is particularly careful to avoid eating those foods which are "hateful" to her — that is, which cause her to become ill — though in Mirebalais, at least, it is not necessary that she refrain from partaking of the foods "hateful" to her husband. A pregnant woman has privileges and powers not shared with other women, as was evidenced when a Haitian man once appeared with his eye half shut, explaining that the sty was a punishment for his refusal to buy something his pregnant spouse had coveted. "They do not always know they are sending you a sty, but it is a power they have," he made clear.

Shortly before parturition is expected, both the pregnant woman and her husband invoke the aid of the family deities and make them offerings of a *couvert sec*.* The rite is an informal one that need not necessarily take place in the familial house of worship; if it is more convenient, it may be performed inside their own house or in the courtyard. After repeating the Pater Noster and the Ave Maria, a prayer such as the following is pronounced by the woman:

> "*Toutes mystères, tant pour papa que manman, du même de côté mari moin: m'ap mandé ou pou' moin fait un heureuse accouchement, pou' l'ouv'i chemin ba moin.* — All the gods, both of my father and of my mother, as well as those of my husband: I ask that you cause me to have a good delivery, that you open the road for me."

At the same time the family ancestors are not overlooked:

> "*Moin mandé nou' tous pou' nou' vini délivré moin, pou' nou' l'ouvri chemin pou' moin, pou' pas quitté*

* The various types of offerings will be discussed in the next section of this book.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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843 782 776 Should one of the couple be a devotee of Damballa or Erzilie, both of them jealous gods, a chicken or two is added to the customary offerings, and some gift pleasing to the god, such as a dress or suit of his sacred color, is made him. Normally no further precautions need be taken. If, however, the 843 789 pregnant woman has had one or two miscarriages, she and her 793 husband go to a *vodun* priest, preferably a woman, and obtain a "medicine" to be used in bathing the abdominal and vaginal areas as a precaution against *mauvaises aires*, the werewolves believed to consume children in the womb. If the preg- 755 nancy this time terminates successfully, some of the same 793 medicine is rubbed on the child shortly after birth and several times during the ensuing weeks, but should the infant later fall ill, the *vodun* priest brings herbs and makes a smoke-fire to drive away the werewolves that are believed still to be hovering about.

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such matters as the passing on of the *loa* in families, the duties toward family dead, and the possible inheritance of food taboos are recalled. Like all these survivals, that of food taboos is not as clear in its expression in Haiti as in its aboriginal setting. Its determination is largely by trial and error, so that a mother, before the birth of her child, not only abstains from eating the foods harmful to her, but later carefully tries these on the child to ascertain their effect. Yet the custom, at best, is a tenuous one. Sometimes, if food uncongenial to a parent has ill effects on a person, "he goes on eating it until he becomes accustomed to it"—though this statement brought forth an emphatic dissent from another Haitian: "Not I! If a food harms me once, I am through with it."

Africanisms are particularly marked in the organization of and attitudes toward the ancestral cult. Today the fear of the power of the dead is as living in Haiti as in West Africa, despite the influence of the Catholic Church in changing concepts of the heavenly world of the dead and the role of ghosts on earth. It is quite true that the outer forms of ceremonialism taken by ancestor-worship in West Africa have disappeared; but when the meticulousness with which the rites of death are carried out, and the institution of *mangé morts* are remembered, it is seen that the spirit of African ritual observances has by no means been lost. African elements have survived even in the services for the dead, now largely taken over by the Church. On the anniversary of death a special commemorative mass is sung in the church, which the family of the dead attend in a body. Before they leave the habitation for the mass, however, animals are killed to provide meat for the feast which follows the Church service, and for the *mangé morts*, which also takes place at the same time. Immediately after the mass a reception takes place at the house of some member of the family who lives in town, or at the home of a friend, where cakes and liquors are served. At about noon, however, family and friends proceed to the habitation, where

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3
[1804-1843]

175 A cultivator who loafs on his assigned job shall spend twenty-four
566 hours in jail for his first offense and lose his wages; for a second
671 offense he must work on public projects. Field labor shall be regu-
24 larly carried on from Monday morning until Friday evening, except for legal holidays; work begins at dawn, continues except for a half-hour at breakfast until noon, stops then for two hours, and is
[843] once more resumed until sunset. Pregnant females are to be assigned to light work only, and after the fourth month of pregnancy need
[846] do no field work. Four months after delivery, a mother is to return to field work, but with three hours a day less than before, until she has weaned her child. Disobedience and insult to overseers are punishable by imprisonment. Since Saturdays, Sundays, and holi-
[527] days are free, there is to be no dancing or any other festivity by night or day from Monday through Friday.

175 On each estate is to be a hierarchy of directors, all of whom the
671 workers shall obey. In ascending order, these men are drivers (or
473 squad foremen),[40] jobbers, sublessees, lessees, proprietors and man-
24 agers, overseers of districts, and police.

In establishing a system of remuneration Boyer kept the accus-
175 tomed method of allotting a proportion of the marketed crop to the
465 workers in lieu of hourly or daily wages. In any season from a
24 quarter to a half of the gross receipts of the estates was to go to the laborers, the exact proportion in any year to be determined by the government. It was assumed by Boyer and Inginac that there would be an added inducement to work if the laborers' share were distributed not equally, but rather in proportion to the merit and worth of the individual, these evaluations to be made by the recommendation of overseers.

175 Enforcement of the Code was placed in the hands of local justices
692 and the army. Soldiers were to be assigned to each plantation, re-
24 ceiving their living from it, in return preserving order and routine. Although the whip was once more prohibited, steady labor might still be enforced by other means; the law definitely stated that soldiers were to discipline the lazy, the lawless, and the vagrant. Local justices were to deal with any civil difficulties arising in the execution

[192] 40. The word "driver" was commonly used in West Indian slave colonies with no other meaning than that attached to the word when one speaks of a man "driving" his horses. It is not necessary to beat a horse to make it go properly; a word of direction may suffice.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

175 when slaves were to be sold. Even when whole families were brought
567 over together from Africa, it was considered discreet in Saint-
581 Domingue to separate the various members at the slave market, so that there would be little chance of combinations and intrigues.
[794] Theoretically the Church was in favor of regular marriages between slave men and women, but even if the Africans had understood or desired the "sacrament," the opposition of the white planters would have been enough to curb missionary insistence on this point; the Jesuits had already been expelled from the colony for their too great zeal in plantation reforms.

175 As a usual thing, then, slaves simply cohabited. It was not against
567 the rules of a plantation for a slave and the woman with whom he consorted to live together in a slave hut with the children born to
588 them; but neither was it against the rules for the overseer to put
[843] other slaves into the same hut, or to sell promising slave children as if they were cattle.[1] Little was done to prevent sex relations between slaves, although masters had varying attitudes toward the results of these relations: some planters welcomed births as a stockbreeder welcomes additions to his herd; others resented the pregnancy of slave women as an obstacle to necessary field work. In the former case, a planter's capital was increased; in the latter, abortions resulted when the overseer drove pregnant women to hard work under the tropical sun.

175 The freedom of the planters with the persons of their attractive
567 female slaves likewise weakened any tendency toward monogamous
588 family life as conceived by bourgeois European society. The relationship between master and slave woman was momentary. Not often was a woman so beguiling that she could be called a concubine; still less often was she a mistress. The latter estate was the height of any female slave's worldly ambition, for not only might she then be freed, but she could live a life of leisure. In rare cases she might hope to persuade her white paramour into marriage. Almost certainly her mulatto children would be free.

175 In so far as there was any predisposition toward strict observance of
565 European marriage practices, it was most clearly exhibited by the
581 group of affranchis. As freedmen they were intent upon establishing

[567] 1. Under exceptional circumstances slaves found themselves under a benevolent,
[581] religious master who allowed them to be married by a priest and thereafter to live together as a family.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

Spring water in the country districts is frequently

164 [364] [272] polluted by all sorts of excreta; the watering of milk is a common practice, and samples of milk have been generally found to contain many times the normal amount of bacilli. The cases of tuberculosis are practically always complicated by malaria.

Dysentery, when caused by bacilli, is epidemic in nature. In Haiti this form, known as "colerin," annually affects about a quarter of the rural population. Another type, caused by a variety of amoeba, affects another ten or twenty per cent, according to the region. [146] [273] Enteritis is less serious than dysentery but just as prevalent, being caused by protozoa and intestinal worms. Poor diet, the abuse of alcohol, premature weaning, and unwise nursing are also responsible. [853] Granular conjunctivitis affected sixteen per cent of the children examined by the Rockefeller Foundation.

Cancer seems to strike only a normal number of Haitians; goitre is common in the mountain districts; leprosy has become a menace in the West and South; elephantiasis is present, particularly in the South; gusarola (characterized by patches of skin assuming different color) is fairly common in the Cul-de-Sac plain; chicken pox, influenza, and meningitis epidemics are occasionally serious.

164 462 482 145 The health of the peasant women is seriously and continuously endangered by their mode of life and work. It is customary for females, from girlhood onward, to carry heavy burdens on their heads—over steep paths in the mountains, along rocky trails, up hill and down. The commonest sight in Haiti is to see a woman swinging along with a great load of fuel, a tin of water, a bundle of building material, a basket of fruit, on her head. Cranial bones are flattened, the spine is bent, internal organs are strained or damaged. For ill-nourished persons to carry heavy weights for long distances with [461] little rest means undue pressure on the heart and lungs, and so an increasing tendency to cardiac and pulmonary infections as well as [843] chronic anemia. Overwork frequently results in miscarriages.

P44 As has been said, childbirth often occurs by the roadside, on the way to market, or in the market place. In no case can a peasant [846] woman remain in bed for a proper period either before or after (164) parturition. Midwives are untrained; they use primitive methods which inevitably result in defective development of infants, lessened P53 resistance to disease, high infant mortality, and a prevalence of abdominal diseases in women. Pressure of work, whether in the field or on the way to market, makes a mother soon stop nursing her

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a mat or a cloth, supported in a reclining position with pillows 844
and cloths, or on a covered box standing about a foot from the ground, with her legs drawn up. No fire is built in the house, all doors and windows are tightly shut, and covers are provided against a chill. A candle stands lighted at the threshold, [788]
and holy water is poured beside it; a candle is also often [782]
lighted in the church before the statue of the saint who corresponds to the *vodun* deity under whose protection the woman in labor is thought to be. In the room with her is the midwife and as many as six, seven, eight, or nine older women belonging to the families of the woman and her husband. The hands of the woman are made to rest on her knees, but where labor is prolonged, her arms are supported above her head to afford relief. She is three times given very hot tea or a drink made of [757]
the stewed leaves of the mango tree and of the *bois lait*. The midwife, with palm oil on her hands, watches the rhythm of labor and presses on the abdomen to facilitate delivery.

If it becomes evident that this will be difficult, a *vodun* 845
priest is at once called to determine by divination whether or 793
not the deities who have been propitiated are satisfied. If the 787
answer is a negative one, he promises future sacrifices or gives 782
minor offerings immediately. Care is also taken to ascertain [775]
whether the trouble is due to the discontent of the family dead who may have been angered by neglect to wear mourning for them, or because sacrifices or a *service* due them have been delayed too long. Inquiries are similarly made to determine whether the spirits of twins might not be displeased, [754]
while the possibility that evil magic may have been invoked is not overlooked, especially if the husband has several wives. If the inquiry shows that the magic of a co-wife was responsible, a strong counter-charm is made at once. Should the woman in 845
labor eventually die, however, her death is not considered to 766
be the result of any act of infidelity on her part, and does not, as in other Negro cultures, prevent the usual burial and mourning customs being carried out.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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844 The child is delivered on a mat or cloth placed on the ground, and the navel cord is cut with scissors, leaving a length of three finger-breadths. The end of the cord is cauterized with a red-hot iron, treated with oil, and bandaged with a piece of cloth. If the infant emits no cry after birth, the midwife shakes it or strikes it smartly to start its breathing, but should this be insufficient, a large *gammelle*, or wooden bowl used to serve food at feasts, is overturned so as to cover the child, and this is beaten for a few moments, a procedure which is held both to awaken the child and to give it needed warmth. After being bathed in tepid water in which calabash leaves have been steeped,[1] about a teaspoonful of muscat, palm oil, and sugar is fed the infant. An abdominal band is put on in place, and the child is dressed in a nightgown tightly pinned, so as to envelop its form and cause it to grow straight-limbed and firm of muscle. The process of moulding the head is begun at once, pressure being applied once a day for the first three days of life. The nostrils are pinched every few moments during the first day of life and several times each of the succeeding days, to cause them to be narrow. This matter of shaping the head and compressing the nostrils is sufficiently important to have figured in the accounts of birth conventions as given by a number of persons, though there is some disagreement as to the details of the practice, some maintaining that the head is shaped every eight days for two months and the nostrils compressed many times a day for a period of eight days. The baby continues to be bathed in tepid water, and, if born during the winter months, a fire always burns in the house.

[278] [824] 846 856

844 The placenta is buried in a special hole dug in the room where the birth occurred, the preferred places for this being beneath the bed or at the threshold. Any of the women in attendance may bury the placenta, though usually the midwife sees to its disposal. If delivery takes place during the day, it is buried immediately after ejection, but if the birth has oc-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

curred during the night, they wait for daylight. Salt is added to the hole, "so that the evil eye cannot take it (for magic purposes), for with salt it spoils very quickly." Neither the hole nor its contents are held to be of future importance, and though the child may be shown where the cord and placenta were buried, by that time nothing will remain of it which might be of use to a maker of charms. After three or four days the cord falls off and muscat powder is applied to heal the wound cleanly. The bit of cord is saved, and if the child becomes ill, this is boiled and the water given as a drink. Occasionally an entire umbilical cord is dried and retained; and one woman spoke of the cord of her mother as still being in existence.

The mother is also bathed in water in which calabash leaves and other ingredients have been steeped, and after being carefully dried, a band is tightly tied about her abdomen to give her support. A cloth is placed to cover the vagina, which is not cleansed until the following day, though after that the vaginal region is washed twice daily for some forty days. Red wine is given to women immediately after delivery to sustain them until food can be prepared. Bananas, salt fish, milk, chocolate, and a dish of stew made of chicken and rice are offered, and in most instances the women eat heartily.

The cloths used during childbirth are carefully guarded, the woman herself or a trusted member of her family seeing to the task of washing them, so as to prevent their being used for evil magic. If a miscarriage occurs, the fetus is buried in a hole dug in the floor of the woman's house while the woman herself is bathed and otherwise cared for as in the case of a normal delivery.

A woman is usually up and about three or four days after the birth of her child, or sooner if there is no one to help her with her household duties, in which case she may even be obliged to perform the heavy work of going to the river for water within the week, though she is careful not to bend down

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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000 [4] Price-Mars (I), 206, note 1, and Wirkus, 215, define the term *combite*.

[114] [5] Wirkus, 51, 288, differentiates these work-drums from other types.

[6] Wirkus, 191, has described the efficiency with which an organized Haitian work-group accomplished its task on the road.

[7] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 146–8.

[8] A good description of a Haitian market as observed in 1835 is to be found in Hanna, 53–6.

[9] Compare Mackenzie, i, 28–9.

[10] The poverty of the Haitians is often exaggerated, and especially the concept of wealth as held by the peasant is caricatured in a way that accentuates a misunderstanding of his economic psychology. For an extreme instance of this see Craige, 42–3.

CHAPTER V

[852] [1] Price-Mars (I), 34, speaks of the need immediately after birth of "immersing the new-born infant in a lustral bath carefully concocted by the *vodun* priest who consecrates the child to the divinity that can preserve him against the evil-doing of malignant spirits, and rescue him from 'the power of supernatural ills.'"

[845]

[844] [2] Craige, 68–9, and Wirkus, 97–9, both give accounts of wayside births in which the mothers resumed their journeys immediately after bearing their children.

[608]

[3] Price-Mars (I), 34, says: "It is forbidden to speak aloud the 'baptismal' name of a child under certain circumstances, above all during the night."

[4] Parsons (I), 174, notes that "an infant born with teeth is one whose birth has been delayed so long by the *marassa* [twins] that the teeth have developed."

[5] Price-Mars (I), 235, derives the importance of the godmother from the conditions of slavery, when a child was often cared for by a foster-mother. See also St. Mery, i, 35–6, and Mackenzie, i, 273–4.

CHAPTER VI

[1] The institution of *plaçage* is mentioned in passing by Craige, 203–4, and, with complete lack of understanding, by Wirkus, 75 and 307.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

the market, the women sit all day in the broiling sun, and in Port-au-Prince at least, sometimes sleep near by for the night, in order to complete their purchases and sales and to get their fill of companionable gossip. They are often accompanied by the youngest of their children, some of whom have to be carried. 462 565 443

Some observers profess to see evidences of a matriarchate among the peasants, for as a general rule the woman attends to the business dealings of the market place, handles the money, directs her children, and manages the household. If the man has more than one placée spouse, complete control of the farm is the woman's during the absence of her man. It is a superficial judgment, however, to speak of the peasant mother as a matriarch. The man owns the land, chooses his women, calls for help at the moment he pleases for preparation of the ground for planting; and when he knows his end to be near, summons all his families and disposes of his property as he sees fit. His decision is final. But he is no more a patriarch than his woman is a matriarch: they are economic partners in a struggle for existence. 562 593 592

By our standards, the woman is inferior to the man not only in rights but in being one spouse of several. He may contract several unions, while she may have only one. She does more steady, if not more actual, physical labor than the man. When he is at home, she must offer him the best of the food. As usual in simple societies, however, the issue rarely arises as to superiority or inferiority of the sexes. Customary behavior is followed without much question. 562

There is one great contrast between élite and peasant women, in the matter of childbirth. The élite mother takes as much care of herself during pregnancy and parturition as would an American woman in well-to-do circles. The peasant mother, on the contrary, cannot allow herself the luxury of medical attention, nor can she spare the time to rest quietly. Like many so-called "primitive" women, she apparently finds herself little incommoded either by pregnancy or birth. Babies are born frequently in the market place, the mother having come down from the hills only that day with her goods. It is not unusual to hear of the birth of a child in a roadside ditch or in a grove by the path to and from the market town. The care given mother and infant is primitive: the navel cord is cut with a sharp stone or a piece of broken glass; a short rest is thought sufficient before the mother resumes her task. As might be expected, the death rate from infection is high and women age prematurely. 565 844 846 [165] [145]

Parents are generally kind to their children, so far as physical

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

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a mat or a cloth, supported in a reclining position with pillows 844
and cloths, or on a covered box standing about a foot from the ground, with her legs drawn up. No fire is built in the house, all doors and windows are tightly shut, and covers are provided against a chill. A candle stands lighted at the threshold, [788] and holy water is poured beside it; a candle is also often [782] lighted in the church before the statue of the saint who corresponds to the *vodun* deity under whose protection the woman in labor is thought to be. In the room with her is the midwife and as many as six, seven, eight, or nine older women belonging to the families of the woman and her husband. The hands of the woman are made to rest on her knees, but where labor is prolonged, her arms are supported above her head to afford relief. She is three times given very hot tea or a drink made of [757] the stewed leaves of the mango tree and of the *bois lait*. The midwife, with palm oil on her hands, watches the rhythm of labor and presses on the abdomen to facilitate delivery.

If it becomes evident that this will be difficult, a *vodun* 845 priest is at once called to determine by divination whether or 793 not the deities who have been propitiated are satisfied. If the 787 answer is a negative one, he promises future sacrifices or gives 782 minor offerings immediately. Care is also taken to ascertain [775] whether the trouble is due to the discontent of the family dead who may have been angered by neglect to wear mourning for them, or because sacrifices or a *service* due them have been delayed too long. Inquiries are similarly made to determine whether the spirits of twins might not be displeased, [754] while the possibility that evil magic may have been invoked is not overlooked, especially if the husband has several wives. If the inquiry shows that the magic of a co-wife was responsible, a strong counter-charm is made at once. Should the woman in 845 labor eventually die, however, her death is not considered to 766 be the result of any act of infidelity on her part, and does not, as in other Negro cultures, prevent the usual burial and mourning customs being carried out.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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its good health or good looks or some other attribute may unwittingly bring harm to it. For such reasons the child is often burned slightly on the cheek, a ritual carried out by the *vodun* priest in order that the scar may "give one with evil intentions toward the child an 'occupation' to divert his attention, that would otherwise be devoted to carrying out some evil design."

There is some question as to whether, as in so many Negro cultures, the child is given a special name at birth which is regarded as sacred and a thing to be concealed. In one instance it was stated that while one's "real" name was that given at the time of the Church baptism, everyone has a "nickname" (*petit nom*) that is known to the father and mother alone until the child is old enough to guard its secret character. This name is never spoken aloud, for if an enemy came to know it, he might use it for purposes of black magic against its owner. However, no agreement exists in Mirebalais as to this practice, which may represent a survival of a widespread West African custom.[8]

A child born with a caul is believed to be "strong" in combating all evil spirits. The caul is dried and reduced to powder, and the infant is given some of the powder in water two or three days after birth. If a child is born with the navel cord wrapped about his throat, he is believed by some to be destined for leadership, though others do not hold this to be a significant omen. A child born feet-foremost is regarded with distaste, so that where possible, he is turned about in the womb to facilitate a head presentation. If this cannot be done, the child when he grows up is reproached: "You came like a demon." More often, however, if a child with breech presentation is not stillborn, it is not believed that he will long survive. All such occurrences are attributed to bad magic, and the husband does not delay to seek out a diviner to discover for him what supernatural forces had caused the evil.

Breast-feeding begins on the third day, but if the milk does

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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CHAPTER XI

THE CULT OF TWINS AND OF THE DEAD

SHARING powers and prerogatives with the *loa* in the supernatural world are the souls of the dead, the spirits of twins, and, in a specialized sense, magic, all working parts of a universe the ultimate force in which is God, who is sometimes spoken of as its Gran' Mait'. Their relative importance, however, is not easy to determine; and much less the manner in which the supernatural personalities in these divisions are linked with one another. Therefore, when such problems are presented to a group of Haitians, as whether or not the dead become *loa*, or the spirits of twins are related to those of the dead, or whether twins are the equivalent of the *loa*, or what the role of all these in magic may be, different opinions will always be heard.

One of these matters was explained by an elderly *hunsi* as follows: "*Marassa gagné morts longtemps, li deviennent loa* — Twins who have been dead a long time become *loa*," and "*Gagné gran' moun morts longtemps, deviennent loa* — There are those long dead who become *loa*," and she added: "But how this happens, I do not know." Despite a flat contradiction of this opinion by a man who was present, and a heated discussion between them, she persisted in maintaining the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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correctness of her view, while making an honest avowal of her inability to explain how this came about. On another occasion discussion turned upon the manner in which the powers of these supernatural beings are conceived in various parts of Haiti. Said one *hungan:* " Twins are stronger than the saints (the *loa*) . The *marassa* are the mothers of the saints. So it is said at Arcahaie." The reply came: " In Mirebalais they say the saints are stronger."

During a lively discussion of the point by a group of active voduists the suggestion was made by one that the relative power of the *loa,* the dead, and the twins might be determined if the numerical strength of the following of each cult could be roughly ascertained. Since all give sacrifices for the dead — even strict Church members — and all who worship the *loa* give for the *loa* and the dead, while only some of this latter group give for the *loa,* the twins, and the dead, the person who had suggested this line of inquiry concluded that the dead were therefore strongest, because no one dared ignore them. Still another opinion, though in agreement with this, was based rather on the fact that the *loa* always exhibit fear before manifestations of death, as at dances where persons possessed by Damballa or Aida Wedo avoid those possessed by Gede, since he stands so close to the dead. However, it was pointed out by others in Mirebalais that the most costly and elaborate offerings are for the *loa,* that those for the dead are smaller, and those given the twins are least impressive, which was evidence enough for them that the *loa* are the most powerful of these three categories. All agreed, however, in ascribing to the twins the least power of the three, though what the *marassa* do for good or evil they do with intensity and dispatch.

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There is ample justification, on both theological and historical grounds, for placing twins and the dead in a single general category. For, as one educated Haitian put it in pointing out that both twins and dead are worshipped on the same day, "*Marassa et morts font une chapitre pour nous* — The twins and the dead make a single chapter for us."

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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twins and the dead make a single chapter for us." This point of view is supported by a study of the twin cult as found in that part of West Africa from which so much of Haitian culture came, where a single category of the supernatural world, comprising all ancestors, includes both twins and the dead, as well as all others "who have passed through the womb of a woman." As might be expected, the concept is more elaborated in West Africa than in Haiti; but the important point is that in Haiti, though less explicitly formulated, it has persisted.

To worship twins it is not necessary either for a family to number them among its members of this generation, or to have included them within the memory of those living, for it is sufficient if a tradition exists that twins had once been born to some member of the family. If the twins are alive or lived in recent times, sacrifices are given both at Christmas and at harvest time; otherwise only at Christmas. Some families, indeed, worship twins because a *hungan* has divined that their unknown ancestors in "Guinée" had included them. There are still others who decide to worship the *marassa* without the advice of a diviner, because certain benefits are believed to come to those who worship twins, because of their power for good or evil.[1]

The source of this power is vague; one characteristic answer to a question concerning it was: "Their power comes from God. Do we ourselves know how twins are made?" It is agreed, however, that St. Nicholas is their spiritual father —an opinion based on the tale of this saint, held to have been a sorcerer who, in very early times, killed three *marassa* (the twins themselves and the *dosu*, or child after twins) and salted them away in a barrel. The mother of the children came to him to offer up her prayers, and, touched by her sorrow, he resuscitated them, since when he has been their "father." The power of twins, whatever its source, is very real to the Haitians. They are believed to be able to predict rain, for ex-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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845 ample, long before ordinary folk.[8] If promised offerings in the
[889] event of an ample harvest, their aid in bringing about this
[782] desired end is even more fruitful than that of the *loa* or the
[769] dead, who are therefore appealed to only indirectly.

Twins, however, are capricious beings, ready to do harm if they are not humored. Consequently, twins must be given anything they ask for, and it is especially important to provide them with the clothes they covet, when giving a *mangé marassa*. If their father fails to provide these new clothes, they
[153] will *kembé* (seize) him, and he may at once have an attack of fever or a bad toothache or earache; or, more likely still, he will be seriously constipated, since this is the punishment particularly favored by the *marassa*, just as the *loa* most frequently send dysentery, and the dead cause headaches. If lack
845 of resources makes it impossible to provide what they demand,
889 a painstaking explanation must be given them or they will
828 drive a person mad in the manner recounted in the following *marassa* myth:

> There were once twins, one good and one evil. They were working a field with another brother, but the evil one refused to help. The other two, therefore, said they would not give him any food. Because of this the evil twin drove the third brother insane. After they had long prayed that he reconsider, he finally agreed to restore sanity to his brother, but insisted on inflicting deafness as a punishment, so that this brother was deaf until he died.

845 At the birth of twins, special "twin plates" are provided
778 when their birth is announced to the *loa* — either before or
[769] after their Church baptism — where offerings to the spirits of twins are placed. Usually paired, the plates may be three in number, in which case the third is for the *dosu*, the child born after twins, who is believed to be even more powerful than twins themselves and is thus an important figure in the cult.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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Preferably, these cult objects are made of pottery, joined by a ligature in twos or threes, as required. The plates rest in a box or on a small table which stands in a corner of an inner room of the house. If the family worshipping the twins is a poor one, joined calabashes or wooden plates are acceptable, and such are found more often in the valley of Mirebalais than pottery plates. The "altar" made by the plates is completed by an *image* — a chromolithograph — of the twin saints, Comas and Damien, placed on the wall above them. 845 778 [776]

The principal rite of the twin cult is the *mangé marassa*. A minor ceremony, if the family has living twins or twins recently dead, it is held, as has already been said, at Christmas and at harvest time; otherwise only at Christmas. Yams and salt fish are separately cooked, and a dish of beans mixed with olive oil is provided. In the morning this food is taken to a closed room, where it is deposited both in the *marassa* plates and in ordinary containers placed for those who attend the rite. As the offering is made, songs such as the following are sung: 845 769 845 769 533 539

Marassa, m'a pé mandé,	Spirit of twins, I ask,
Ça wé la si 'ou content?	Are you content with what you see there?
Ago-e-e.	*Ago-e-e.*
Adoré nan pié Damballa,	Worship at the tree of Damballa,
Ago-e-e.	*Ago-e-e.*
Marassa bra,	Twins of the forest,
Marassa carrefour,	Twins of the crossroad,
M'a pé mandé,	I ask,
Ça wé la si 'ou content?	Are you content with what you see there?
Adoré nan pié humfort,	Worship at the *humfort,*
Assuré-e, ago!	Care for us, *ago!*
Marassa dé, trois, quatre,	Twins two, three, four,

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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845 [769] [533] [539]

M'a pé mandé,	I ask,
Ça wé la si 'ou content?	Are you content with what you see there?

The food is eaten the same afternoon. If the twins are actually alive, everything they wear must be new and they must have identical clothes. At the sacrifice of the January harvest, native rice, cakes, okra, bananas, and one, two, or three chickens, designated by the twins themselves, are offered. The food is put in place, and as songs are sung it is left until the following day, when it is eaten. The worship of [184] twins differs markedly in various parts of Haiti. In Leogane, for example, some have such a ceremony only at harvest time, and have a greater *mangé marassa* every five years, when a goat and a chicken are killed and offered with the usual non-animal foods.

845 Twins stand in a peculiarly intimate relation to each other, [171] as might be expected from the traditional African belief that [184] twins share a single soul, which, as far as could be determined, only survives in attitude in Mirebalais. Should one die, the [769] living twin must put aside a bit of all food he eats, or a small part of any gift given him, for the other. If the twins are both girls, the attempt is usually made to have them betrothed and married at about the same time. If the female twin of a pair is married, she must give a present to her twin brother, and similarly her husband sees to it that his wife's male twin also receives a substantial gift from him as a peace offering, for it is dangerous to wait until the other decides on some overt mischief. The perplexing factor in dealing with twins is that they themselves often do not consciously will the trouble they bring. For example, should the twin of a married woman not feel friendly toward his sister's husband, though he might make a conscious effort to overcome this dislike, his spirit might proceed to use its full power to harass the man in such a way as to trouble the relationship of the couple.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 5V3 Haiti 5V3
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[600] [114]

[6] Price-Mars (I), 206, note 1, and Wirkus, 215, define the term *combite*.

[7] Wirkus, 51, 288, differentiates these work-drums from other types.

[8] Wirkus, 191, has described the efficiency with which an organized Haitian work-group accomplished its task on the road.

[9] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 146–8.

[10] A good description of a Haitian market as observed in 1835 is to be found in Hanna, 53–6.

[9] Compare Mackenzie, i, 28–9.

[10] The poverty of the Haitians is often exaggerated, and especially the concept of wealth as held by the peasant is caricatured in a way that accentuates a misunderstanding of his economic psychology. For an extreme instance of this see Craige, 42–3.

CHAPTER V

[852] [845] [844] [608]

[1] Price-Mars (I), 34, speaks of the need immediately after birth of "immersing the newborn infant in a lustral bath carefully concocted by the *vodun* priest who consecrates the child to the divinity that can preserve him against the evil-doing of malignant spirits, and rescue him from 'the power of supernatural ills.'"

[2] Craige, 68–9, and Wirkus, 97–9, both give accounts of wayside births in which the mothers resumed their journeys immediately after bearing their children.

[3] Price-Mars (I), 34, says: "It is forbidden to speak aloud the 'baptismal' name of a child under certain circumstances, above all during the night."

[4] Parsons (I), 174, notes that "an infant born with teeth is one whose birth has been delayed so long by the *marassa* [twins] that the teeth have developed."

[5] Price-Mars (I), 235, derives the importance of the godmother from the conditions of slavery, when a child was often cared for by a foster-mother. See also St. Mery, i, 35–6, and Mackenzie, i, 273–4.

CHAPTER VI

[1] The institution of *placage* is mentioned in passing by Craige, 203–4, and, with complete lack of understanding, by Wirkus, 75 and 307.

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

offending them. They are also vain and capricious, can be conciliated by prayers and gifts, and propitiated by sacrifices. This animistic religion . . . includes many variants of the worship of countless spirits of men's ancestors and innumerable spirits of nature, all ranking as gods.[1] 775 171

Another observer, speaking of the Bapindi, the Babunda, and other related tribes of the western Congo draws quite similar conclusions:

The people of these tribes recognize a supreme deity, Nzambi, creator of all things. But this supreme spirit is too distant from men to enlist active worship on their part. The basic worship is to the ancestors of the clan. The clan is in effect a community consisting of all the living and the dead descended from a common ancestor. Towards the dead it is necessary to make offerings as a mark of deference when one wishes to consult them on problems. The dead are spoken to through the chief, who uses a special drum for this purpose. The dead have the responsibility of protecting their descendants.[2]

Among the Bantu people of South Africa, also, the worship of ancestors is based upon the belief that when a man dies he continues to influence the lives of his relatives remaining on earth. He is as interested as ever in descendants who remain "outside on the earth," but indifferent to members of other communities unless they bear them some grudge. The characters of people who die are not changed by death. They are as prone to jealousy in death as in life, and as rancorous toward descendants who wound their vanity, flout their wishes, squander their bequests, or infringe the ancient laws and customs of their clans; but they are also as willing as ever to help those of their lineage who treat them with becoming respect and obedience.[3] The affairs of mankind in general do not concern them; they are exclusively interested in their own family and tribe, and without their help and guidance their living descendants cannot hope to flourish. As long as the moral code is strictly followed, they confer blessings and abundance; but if offended by any breach of custom, they can also send drought, cattle plague, tribal or personal disaster, sickness, or death.[4] 171 769 775

This deeply rooted concept of the relationship of the family to its ancestors continues to motivate the Haitian in his observance of services for the dead. 769 775

In addition to the ordinary dead with whom the Haitian has to deal, there are the spirits of twins, known as *marassas*. As there are feasts for the ordinary family dead, the mangé morts, so there are feasts for living and dead twins, the mangé marassas. Twins are believed to have special powers, and even when alive they are given more than usual consideration. The spirits of dead twins are especially willful and capricious, and unless properly placated they may cause illness and misfortune. Once each year, on dates fixed by local custom, special services are held for the marassas. 769 775 845

[1,2] [Footnotes appear on p. 350, Category 116.--Analyst]
[3] [Willoughby, The Soul of The Bantu, pp. 88-89. Cf. p. 350 Category 116.--Analyst]
[4] [Footnote appears on p. 350, Category 116.--Analyst]

769 845 The dead twins are offered food in special earthen or gourd bowls. In any market place where pottery is sold you will find the joined marassa double or triple bowls. The annual rites for the marassas are routine, but once every five years there is a *grande service* for them.

It is not merely the twins of one's immediate family that are served, but twins—that is, the spirit of twins—in general. They are supplicated even when a family knows of no incidence of twins. In part, this precaution is a recognition that there may have been twins among ancestors long dead and forgotten. It is also recognition of a twin spirit as a separate force affecting all people. The twin spirit has been personified in the loa named Marassa. The child born after twins is believed by many Haitians to be even "stronger" and more to be placated than twins themselves. He is known as a *doçu* if a boy, *doça* if a girl. Their patron loa are known as [776] Marassa Doçu and Marassa Doça. The patron loa of triplets is Marassa Trois. Triplets are regarded as a special category of twins. Some Haitians, in fact, believe that the twins are merely a partial manifestation of the group of three, which is completed on the birth of the doçu or doça. In the marassa feast, triplets are served in the triple clover-leaf bowl, as are twins in combination with their doçu or doça. It is also believed by some that the child born before twins is "weak" both in physical vitality and psychic powers, because his strength has been sapped by the marassas who have followed him.

776 768 [184] For some Haitians the loa Marassa is the most potent of forces to be placated at the time of death. They hold that he is only incidentally the patron of twins and triplets. His significance is said to lie in the fact that he is the spirit of the first of all human children who died. And as the child precedes the man, Marassa is the first and foremost of all loa. When a service is held for Marassa, he is given foods and beverages that all children love.

769 Rites for the dead continue endlessly for the living. Before a child is witness to a death in his own family he may observe many rituals for the family ancestors, twins, and the unknown dead. For those who are a part of Vodoun, the cycle is a perpetual one in an endless system of integration and continuity.

775 776 764 Special rites are held to remove the loa from the head of a deceased person. It is believed that the spirit of a person who has not had his loa removed will be restive and perhaps will even cause difficulties for his family and his descendants. And there is also the matter of the loa's welfare. The *maît' tête* is, in a sense, a captive in the head of the person who has died. The head is his home. But should the corpse be taken to the graveyard without the loa's having been removed, the loa would refuse to be buried

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

7 96 steadying his attention, he practically hypnotizes him back into full
535 consciousness. As soon as the possessed is normal again, water out of
787 the calabash is poured at the central post and a sign of the cross is made with the candle before it.

796 Contrary to the expectation of thrill-seeking white visitors, the
535 Vodun dance does not merit the name of an orgy. True, the dancers
786 wear their old clothes, for they are going to have violent exercise; true also, those who are possessed give the impression of losing some of their inhibitions. But the dancers do not embrace each other as at a white man's dance; the drinking which occurs is hardly ever excessive; and the climax of a successful dance is a religious experience.
[831] The Haitian is no more obsessed by sex than is the American; indeed, living simply and without many of the artificial restraints of "civilization," he is probably less so. What white visitors sometimes see, under the impression that they are witnessing a Vodun dance, is nothing more than a secular Saturday night social dance. It, too, has drum rhythms instead of an orchestra, musical instruments being rare in Haiti; but the dance has no more religious (or "Voodoo") significance than a barn dance in the United States.

771 Creed and practice go hand in hand in Haiti. The Vodun wor-
776 shiper believes in the loa of his faith and does the things necessary to get in touch with them. These conceptions are the major part of his creed, as the corresponding actions form the bulk of his religious activity.

171 A few articles of the creed remain. "I believe in respect to twins
845 ..." Hundreds of so-called primitive peoples see in twins some special
787 significance, now fortunate, now tragic. Many of the tribes along the Atlantic coast of Africa thought of twins as an omen, so that the presence of ritual regard for them in Haiti is hardly surprising. It is probably incorrect to speak of the worship, or the cult, of twins, for they are not deified, nor is there a common ritual for them: thousands of persons pay them no homage whatever. One family has a high regard for twins because it has numbered them among its ancestors or recent relatives; another family pays respect to all twins because a priest has advised seeking the good luck which comes from *marassa* (twins). There seems to be some confusion of thought about
[782] this aspect of religion: twins are not gods, but merely omens from the gods; yet sacrifices are made to them. Christmas and harvest are the usual seasons for the offering. Food is prepared in the morning

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

and set apart on special plates in a separate room for them; in the afternoon the family eats the food. If the twins to whom homage is being offered are still alive, they must wear special clothes at the sacrifice.

"I believe in the careful cult of the dead . . ." Once more it is necessary to renew one's acquaintance with primitive and folk belief to grasp the Haitian attitude. Life is desirable, death is dreaded; both death and the dead are feared. In the actual world, any excursion from the comfortably familiar countryside of one's home leads to confusion and bewilderment. Except in the company of his fellows (on a religious pilgrimage to the waterfalls at Ville-Bonheur, for example), a Haitian almost never leaves his valley or mountainside and market town. Sophisticated people view the unknown with pleasurable excitement, for they have learned by experience that the unfamiliar is not necessarily frightful; it is quite the contrary with simple folk, whose meagre experience with the unfamiliar has been at least somewhat alarming.

Death is the ultimate unknown. The fearsomeness the imagination conceives to lie beyond death seems to exist in almost direct proportion to people's ignorance of the material world. The fear of ghosts is a commonplace among primitive folk, as among the uneducated in the "civilized" world. Where ghosts are considered powerful, one part of any comprehensive cult will certainly deal with the dead.

In Haitian Vodun the teachings of the Catholic Church have exerted more influence upon the cult of the dead than upon any other part of the religion. The preparation of the corpse for burial shows no traces of African practice; the watch (or wake) and wailing over the deceased is familiar; the funeral itself is conducted by a Catholic priest, with burial in consecrated ground. Thereafter, the continual efforts to secure the tranquil repose of the departed bear the earmarks of faithful Catholic practice; it is at this point, however, that the cult begins to assume distinctive features, for it is firmly believed that the dead exert tremendous power in the world of the living. This power comes from God—the Christian God. The case has been put succinctly by Sumner and Keller: "The relation between man and ghost resolves itself . . . into a relation of rights and duties, with all the rights on one side and all the duties on the other."[30] God gives

30. W. G. Sumner and A. G. Keller, *The Science of Society* (New Haven, 1927), II, 829.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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844 The child is delivered on a mat or cloth placed on the ground, and the navel cord is cut with scissors, leaving a length of three finger-breadths. The end of the cord is cauterized with a red-hot iron, treated with oil, and bandaged with a piece of cloth. If the infant emits no cry after birth, the midwife shakes it or strikes it smartly to start its breathing, but should this be insufficient, a large *gammelle,* or wooden bowl used to serve food at feasts, is overturned so as to cover the child, and this is beaten for a few moments, a procedure which is held both to awaken the child and to give it needed warmth. After being bathed in tepid water in which calabash [278] leaves have been steeped,[1] about a teaspoonful of muscat, [824] palm oil, and sugar is fed the infant. An abdominal band is put on in place, and the child is dressed in a nightgown tightly pinned, so as to envelop its form and cause it to grow 846 straight-limbed and firm of muscle. The process of moulding 856 the head is begun at once, pressure being applied once a day for the first three days of life. The nostrils are pinched every few moments during the first day of life and several times each of the succeeding days, to cause them to be narrow. This matter of shaping the head and compressing the nostrils is sufficiently important to have figured in the accounts of birth conventions as given by a number of persons, though there is some disagreement as to the details of the practice, some maintaining that the head is shaped every eight days for two months and the nostrils compressed many times a day for a period of eight days. The baby continues to be bathed in tepid water, and, if born during the winter months, a fire always burns in the house.

844 The placenta is buried in a special hole dug in the room where the birth occurred, the preferred places for this being beneath the bed or at the threshold. Any of the women in attendance may bury the placenta, though usually the midwife sees to its disposal. If delivery takes place during the day, it is buried immediately after ejection, but if the birth has oc-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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curred during the night, they wait for daylight. Salt is added to the hole, "so that the evil eye cannot take it (for magic purposes), for with salt it spoils very quickly." Neither the hole nor its contents are held to be of future importance, and though the child may be shown where the cord and placenta were buried, by that time nothing will remain of it which might be of use to a maker of charms. After three or four days the cord falls off and muscat powder is applied to heal the wound cleanly. The bit of cord is saved, and if the child becomes ill, this is boiled and the water given as a drink. Occasionally an entire umbilical cord is dried and retained; and one woman spoke of the cord of her mother as still being in existence.

The mother is also bathed in water in which calabash leaves and other ingredients have been steeped, and after being carefully dried, a band is tightly tied about her abdomen to give her support. A cloth is placed to cover the vagina, which is not cleansed until the following day, though after that the vaginal region is washed twice daily for some forty days. Red wine is given to women immediately after delivery to sustain them until food can be prepared. Bananas, salt fish, milk, chocolate, and a dish of stew made of chicken and rice are offered, and in most instances the women eat heartily.

The cloths used during childbirth are carefully guarded, the woman herself or a trusted member of her family seeing to the task of washing them, so as to prevent their being used for evil magic. If a miscarriage occurs, the fetus is buried in a hole dug in the floor of the woman's house while the woman herself is bathed and otherwise cared for as in the case of a normal delivery.

A woman is usually up and about three or four days after the birth of her child, or sooner if there is no one to help her with her household duties, in which case she may even be obliged to perform the heavy work of going to the river for water within the week, though she is careful not to bend down

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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846 or to get her feet wet. When possible, however, she waits for from fifteen to twenty days before doing this kind of work, and, in any event, she will not bathe in cold water until more than a month has passed. A week or two after giving birth she may resume her selling in the market, and two months after her child is born she will take up work in her garden.[2]

852 [851] During this period of the mother's recovery the child is ritually introduced to his world and to the spirits which govern it. Three or four days after the cord drops, the midwife, water and a candle in hand, presents the child to the sun and the four corners of the earth, speaking an invocation which none but women of this profession may know or hear spoken. The child is then carried into the courtyard before the house, though he may not be taken elsewhere for as many as three weeks. When he is taken across the threshold for the first time, he is cradled in the left arm of the one who carries him; in the left hand water is held, while the right hand holds a lighted candle. Water is thrown in three directions, outward from the door and to each side of it, as the child is taken about the outside of the house. This rite is repeated by everyone present at the time, but water is "thrown" only once.

854 789 Though it is said by some that a child is not given a charm immediately after birth unless it is ill, it is nevertheless customary to place a cord about the neck of an infant on the day it is born, to remain there until some three or four years later, when it wears out and is lost. There is no difference of opinion, however, on the point that if a baby falls ill soon after birth, steps must be taken to give it spiritual protection. A [793] *vodun* priest is called to make a charm for it to wear, while, [994] in addition, another charm is placed in the house to guard its inhabitants against "all bad things," such as the evil eye—since this tends to give babies convulsions—demons, werewolves, or the "little folk" who bring bad magic. A *jok* 854 754 against harm resulting from even unconscious envy is also provided, since an individual who admires a baby because of

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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853 Breast-feeding begins on the third day, but if the milk does
[789] not come, the mother goes to a woman "specialist" who
[854] knows the herbs which are believed to induce the flow. When the mother is ill or tubercular, the infant is given to a wet-nurse. Once he has begun to nurse, he is fed whenever he cries, and as soon as he can sit up he is given the same food as
846 the mother eats. For the first two or three months after the
262 birth of her child a woman refrains from eating egg-plant, fresh fish — although she may eat salt fish — white beans or any others larger than Congo peas, pork, lard, and all fruit.
304 The ears of a female child are pierced when she is about a
301 month old for the gold ear-rings which are worn by girls and women of all ages. If the parents cannot afford them at the time, however, thread is placed in the holes until a sum sufficient to provide this important trinket has been accumulated.

856 A child is taught to sit up beginning with the end of the
854 third or fourth month, and by the time he is six or seven months old he can sit quite well; girls are believed to be more precocious than boys in acquiring this skill. When about ten months old, or sooner, an older sister, a little girl, or the father or mother takes the child by the hand and teaches him to walk, later allowing him to hold one end of a stick for sup-
[754] port. A child is never left alone, for fear of the evil eye or of
[789] werewolves, so that a mother does not even cross the threshold of her house without taking her baby with her, while if for some reason she cannot avoid leaving her child while she is in the yard, an empty bottle is placed near its pillow as a pro-
856 tective device. Teething is a matter of importance, since the
855 attitudes of the parents toward a child may be determined by
763 the first teeth to appear. If these are cut in the upper jaw, it is said that the child's mother will survive his father, and when this occurs, the mother takes every precaution to conceal the fact from her husband, so he will not hate the child. Others hold, however, that the appearance of an upper tooth first denotes that either the father or the mother is soon to die.[4]

856 Instruction starts early in the life of a child. Beginning with
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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

[1804-1843]

175 A cultivator who loafs on his assigned job shall spend twenty-four
566 hours in jail for his first offense and lose his wages; for a second
671 offense he must work on public projects. Field labor shall be regu-
24 larly carried on from Monday morning until Friday evening, except for legal holidays; work begins at dawn, continues except for a half-hour at breakfast until noon, stops then for two hours, and is
[843] once more resumed until sunset. Pregnant females are to be assigned to light work only, and after the fourth month of pregnancy need
[846] do no field work. Four months after delivery, a mother is to return to field work, but with three hours a day less than before, until she has weaned her child. Disobedience and insult to overseers are punishable by imprisonment. Since Saturdays, Sundays, and holi-
[527] days are free, there is to be no dancing or any other festivity by night or day from Monday through Friday.

175 On each estate is to be a hierarchy of directors, all of whom the
671 workers shall obey. In ascending order, these men are drivers (or
413 squad foremen),[40] jobbers, sublessees, lessees, proprietors and man-
24 agers, overseers of districts, and police.

In establishing a system of remuneration Boyer kept the accus-
175 tomed method of allotting a proportion of the marketed crop to the
465 workers in lieu of hourly or daily wages. In any season from a
24 quarter to a half of the gross receipts of the estates was to go to the laborers, the exact proportion in any year to be determined by the government. It was assumed by Boyer and Inginac that there would be an added inducement to work if the laborers' share were distributed not equally, but rather in proportion to the merit and worth of the individual, these evaluations to be made by the recommendation of overseers.

175 Enforcement of the Code was placed in the hands of local justices
692 and the army. Soldiers were to be assigned to each plantation, re-
24 ceiving their living from it, in return preserving order and routine. Although the whip was once more prohibited, steady labor might still be enforced by other means; the law definitely stated that soldiers were to discipline the lazy, the lawless, and the vagrant. Local justices were to deal with any civil difficulties arising in the execution

[192] 40. The word "driver" was commonly used in West Indian slave colonies with no other meaning than that attached to the word when one speaks of a man "driving" his horses. It is not necessary to beat a horse to make it go properly; a word of direction may suffice.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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the market, the women sit all day in the broiling sun, and in Port-au-Prince at least, sometimes sleep near by for the night, in order to complete their purchases and sales and to get their fill of companionable gossip. They are often accompanied by the youngest of their children, some of whom have to be carried. 462 565 443

Some observers profess to see evidences of a matriarchate among the peasants, for as a general rule the woman attends to the business dealings of the market place, handles the money, directs her children, and manages the household. If the man has more than one placée spouse, complete control of the farm is the woman's during the absence of her man. It is a superficial judgment, however, to speak of the peasant mother as a matriarch. The man owns the land, chooses his women, calls for help at the moment he pleases for preparation of the ground for planting; and when he knows his end to be near, summons all his families and disposes of his property as he sees fit. His decision is final. But he is no more a patriarch than his woman is a matriarch: they are economic partners in a struggle for existence. 562 593 592

By our standards, the woman is inferior to the man not only in rights but in being one spouse of several. He may contract several unions, while she may have only one. She does more steady, if not more actual, physical labor than the man. When he is at home, she must offer him the best of the food. As usual in simple societies, however, the issue rarely arises as to superiority or inferiority of the sexes. Customary behavior is followed without much question. 562

There is one great contrast between élite and peasant women, in the matter of childbirth. The élite mother takes as much care of herself during pregnancy and parturition as would an American woman in well-to-do circles. The peasant mother, on the contrary, cannot allow herself the luxury of medical attention, nor can she spare the time to rest quietly. Like many so-called "primitive" women, she apparently finds herself little incommoded either by pregnancy or birth. Babies are born frequently in the market place, the mother having come down from the hills only that day with her goods. It is not unusual to hear of the birth of a child in a roadside ditch or in a grove by the path to and from the market town. The care given mother and infant is primitive: the navel cord is cut with a sharp stone or a piece of broken glass; a short rest is thought sufficient before the mother resumes her task. As might be expected, the death rate from infection is high and women age prematurely. 565 844 846 [165] [145]

Parents are generally kind to their children, so far as physical

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Spring water in the country districts is frequently

164 not-
[364] luted by all sorts of excreta; the watering of milk is a common
[272] practice, and samples of milk have been generally found to contain many times the normal amount of bacilli. The cases of tuberculosis are practically always complicated by malaria.

Dysentery, when caused by bacilli, is epidemic in nature. In Haiti this form, known as "colerin," annually affects about a quarter of the rural population. Another type, caused by a variety of amoeba, affects another ten or twenty per cent, according to the region. Enteritis is less serious than dysentery but just as prevalent, being
[146] caused by protozoa and intestinal worms. Poor diet, the abuse of
[273] alcohol, premature weaning, and unwise nursing are also responsible.
[853] Granular conjunctivitis affected sixteen per cent of the children examined by the Rockefeller Foundation.

Cancer seems to strike only a normal number of Haitians; goitre is common in the mountain districts; leprosy has become a menace in the West and South; elephantiasis is present, particularly in the South; gusarola (characterized by patches of skin assuming different color) is fairly common in the Cul-de-Sac plain; chicken pox, influenza, and meningitis epidemics are occasionally serious.

164 The health of the peasant women is seriously and continuously
462 endangered by their mode of life and work. It is customary for
482 females, from girlhood onward, to carry heavy burdens on their heads—over steep paths in the mountains, along rocky trails, up hill
145 and down. The commonest sight in Haiti is to see a woman swinging along with a great load of fuel, a tin of water, a bundle of building material, a basket of fruit, on her head. Cranial bones are flattened, the spine is bent, internal organs are strained or damaged. For ill-nourished persons to carry heavy weights for long distances with
[461] little rest means undue pressure on the heart and lungs, and so an
[843] increasing tendency to cardiac and pulmonary infections as well as chronic anemia. Overwork frequently results in miscarriages.

P44 As has been said, childbirth often occurs by the roadside, on the way to market, or in the market place. In no case can a peasant
[846] woman remain in bed for a proper period either before or after
(164) parturition. Midwives are untrained; they use primitive methods which inevitably result in defective development of infants, lessened
853 resistance to disease, high infant mortality, and a prevalence of abdominal diseases in women. Pressure of work, whether in the field or on the way to market, makes a mother soon stop nursing her

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

CHAPTER V

BIRTH, CHILDHOOD, AND ADOLESCENCE

842 THE LOVE of children, and the prestige which a man gains as head of a large family, are factors that go far to explain the desire for a numerous progeny. In this not only is he aided by his own sophistication in matters of sex — for in Haitian peasant culture, one encounters no such conventionalized naïveté as the ignorance of physiological paternity found in certain other, non-African societies — but his desire is furthered as well by the absence of contraceptives, and the emphasis laid by Church, State, and African tradition on the desirability of 843 many offspring. Though situations do arise when, because of [847] illicit relations between a man and woman that result in conception, an abortion is held necessary, usually as soon as a woman discovers that she has conceived, she proceeds to take the necessary protective measures. First she goes to the old women of her own family, who give her herbs for the "three baths" she must take on each of the three succeeding days. This accomplished, she next visits a priest or priestess of the [751] *vodun* cult who has the confidence of her family or of her husband's, and procures other herbs also for the purpose of preparing baths, and, in addition, a magic charm to wear about her neck or about her waist. This charm protects both herself and the child in her womb against the evil eye or any

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

the phrase: "This is natural." Children are not spaced, for normally a man resumes intercourse with his wife the second or third month after childbirth. Except for the drinking of coconut milk and salt, which is believed to be effective in preventing conception if taken before intercourse, contraceptives are not known to women, which means that pregnancies follow in rapid succession. Families are not too large, however, despite this, those numbering seven or eight children being rare, even in the hills. The reason for this is a high incidence of infant mortality, which is obvious despite the absence of vital statistics. Abortions are usually resorted to by young women, who sustain the operation done by the uncertain skill of an old woman, in the fear that bearing a child will later stand in the way of a desirable legal marriage. Some men, however, take the precaution of placing a grain of native salt on the tongue while having intercourse during an illicit affair, believing that this will be effective in preventing conception.

A childless woman first goes to a *vodun* priest, to have him determine by divination if a co-wife has not invoked magic against her. If her question receives an affirmative answer, she acquires a "counter-charm" to offset the effect of the other woman's magic. Should such a charm be ineffective, she would offer her prayers before the shrines of the saints and make pilgrimages to such sacred places as Saut d'Eau, there phrasing her petition to the Virgin in some manner such as the prayer overheard as a woman lighted a candle and held it in her hand before placing it on a sacred rock:

> *"Vièrge Miracles, Manman, voilà, depuis six ans depuis qui moins marié; moin apé vivre seul avec pauvre malhereux moin-a. Ça fait trois fois moin vini nan pié ou. Pas 'blié mandé moin fait ou, pour charité, moin ou petit pitite. Moin va minnin li ba ou. Moin apé parti, Manman, s' ou' pli, songé ça pitite m' mandé ou.—*

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

584 836 truth, but the matter is recognized as one which concerns only her husband and herself, and if he is willing to keep her, it is his own affair. Consensus of opinion in Mirebalais 836 369 is that the percentage of girls who do not have pre-marital sexual relations is relatively small, but the belief is expressed that chastity is more prevalent among country women than among those of the town, where, in turn, it is more frequent than in larger centers such as Port-au-Prince. Even though 836 pre-marital relations are commonplace, however, the preg- 848 nancy of an unmarried girl is regarded as both reprehensible and unfortunate, and she is severely beaten for it by her family. In such cases, if the father of the unborn child will take the girl, his parents are sent to bring her, but where the parents of the man refuse to ask for the girl because they do not approve of her, then, if he still desires her, he must himself face the anger of her parents. Should he not wish to come for her, she may either remain with her family or seek work in another community. In any event, her child will be well cared for by her family, and no reproach will attach to it because of the circumstances of its birth.

585 782 776 Before a mating of any type is consummated, the familial spirits must be notified of the approaching event so that they may be well disposed toward it, for no union where this is neglected can enjoy happiness or peace. One Mirebalais woman was pointed out as an object lesson of the necessity of doing this. Though a devotee of several gods, neither she nor her husband was willing to perform the necessary rites for her gods before their marriage. She was suffering from an [753] acute case of melancholia after the birth of her first child, and [828] the prevailing opinion was that she was going mad because of the neglect of her duty toward her deities. Shortly before a woman goes to her husband, therefore, a *couvert sec* for the Rada deities is given both by herself and by her betrothed. If the family of either the young man or the woman possess deities of the powerful Pétro group, more inclusive offerings

1: Herskovits E-4, 8 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

595 533 market place, quarreling is invariably heard; or if one of them sings *point* — derisive songs — against the other and goes so far as to name the object of derision, fighting and court action follow.

58 595 684 Though many cases of *plaçage* are the result of affairs between young people which result in conception, it is essential in any event that the consent of the families of the man and the woman concerned be obtained to give the mating social validity. When the union is once entered upon, divorce occurs only with the abandonment or mistreatment of the woman, or her infidelity, for in these *plaçage* matches, the moral support of her family makes a man reluctant to send his wife away without ample justification. When a man does divorce a *placée* wife for reasons of infidelity, she may either go to another man or return to the home of her parents, where she supports herself. If after a period of years she has not established a household with another man, it often happens that her husband takes her back. Most frequently, however, where children have been born to a mating, a woman's infidelity is punished merely by beating; and proof that a wife is a wife whether or not she is legally "married" is offered by the Haitian man in this fact that a *placée* is beaten for this and less serious reasons as readily as a legal wife. Prompt [754] action is taken against the adulterer, which, though it may on occasion be as drastic as murder, generally takes the form of [848] recourse to magic charms. Women who carry on illicit relationships take all care, therefore, to guard unceasingly against the birth of offspring.

595 593 Many men, at least, hold that a man is often much closer to a *placée* than to a legal wife, for the former is more attentive and less demanding than the wife with her legally assured status and permanence of tenure. Thus it comes about that [454] *placée* spouses are frequently given generous money gifts, to be saved for the future of their children, while as a man grows older he may take up his residence with a *placée* wife, where

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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595 The fact that Haitian law recognizes only monogamy in-
593 troduces numerous overtones into the daily life of the people.
671 If a church-wed wife discovers that her husband makes periodic visits to another woman, whether *placée* or not, serious quarreling between the legal wife and her husband follows. The "wife" may refuse to give food to her husband or to speak to him, and will upbraid him before their children, calling him *vagabond* — a strong word of opprobrium to the Haitian — and other terms which her facile tongue readily finds at hand. The status of the children under this dual family system is another reflection of the values it engenders. And though the account of this given in Mirebalais represents a folk-reaction rather than official procedure — for according to officials in the capital it does not exist in Haitian law — its value as a living belief which gives insight into the relevant attitudes outweighs its possible lack of validity in a legal sense.

858 In Mirebalais it is held that there are what may be spoken of as three classes of offspring. The first, which may be termed "natural" children, are those born to a man by his *placée* wife or wives before his Church marriage, or to a *placée* woman whose mating with him was later legalized by the rites of Church and State. The second class, the "legitimate" children, comprises those born to couples married in the strict legal sense of the word. Finally, a third category consists
[848] of those who may be called "illegitimate" children, and includes all the offspring of any *placée* spouse of a man taken by him after his Church marriage, or children of any of his earlier *placée* wives born subsequent to this marriage. None of these classes of children are at any special social disadvantage, and all not only inherit the African deities of their father, but must also fulfill their spiritual obligations toward him after his death by wearing mourning and performing all other required rituals.

582 Legally, however, the matter is different, for only the chil-
671 dren born to a marriage recorded by the justice of the peace
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1; Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

belong to the father, who, in turn, is the legally recognized 582
father of all the offspring of his wife unless he divorces her — 671
something which, because of Church regulations, occurs but 858
rarely. Children born outside legal marriage have no right to 851
the name of their father. Such a one is entered under his moth- 848
er's name in the record of births, though he may and often does 858
take his father's name in school or later in life, this ultimately 551
becoming the name by which he is known and which he hands
on to his children. It is in the inheritance of the father's prop- 428
erty that children born of the various types of matings are 858
said to be most strongly differentiated, though it was particu- 848
larly with this method of distributing heritable goods re-
ported in Mirebalais that officials in the capital disagreed.
The assertion is made that while the children of a "legal"
wife inherit three quarters of the estate, and the other "nat-
ural" children receive one fourth, the "illegitimate" off-
spring have no legal right to any of the dead man's property.
They must either be provided for by their father before his
death or be aided on occasion by a natural brother who has
inherited from their common father and feels a moral obliga-
tion toward these children of their father. Children of plural 595
wives call each other by the terms "brother" and "sister," 593
and in some instances they get on fairly well together. More [601]
generally, however, their attitudes toward one another are
colored by those of their mothers, so that verbal if not physical
encounters may take place when they meet.

Where, as perhaps in the majority of cases, there is a 593
monogamous union, "legal" or "*placée*," cemented by
mutual affection and mutual interest in the future of the
children, life goes on calmly. Each spouse performs the tasks
allotted by custom, and the children are reared in an atmos-
phere which varies with the fortunes and temperaments of
those who make up the household. Fathers are said to prefer
their daughters, and mothers their sons, among their children,
but for this the Haitian has no explanation other than
the phrase: "This is natural."

857 868 handle it; lighter work first, heavier work later. Small boys tend cattle and help the men in the fields.

178 511 The Haitian *habitant* (the peasant) is poorer and hungrier today than he was fifty years ago, or even twenty years ago. In 1955 I visited a number of peasant families I had known since 1932, and with hardly an exception I found them worse off than they had been before. Their [134] tiny landholdings had shrunk. Some land that had been lush had dried up and eroded. Little groves of trees had disappeared. Clothes had become shabby, and many of the men could no longer afford to wear the inexpensive traditional blue denim costume that was once so common. In the cities there is evidence that some of the elite have improved their life. But in a large part of the countryside the peasants are finding that the old system that served them for a hundred and fifty years can no longer feed them adequately.

423 178 One of the adverse forces is the shrinking of landholdings. Once a peasant family may have owned and worked fifty or seventy acres of ground. But it is traditional that on a man's death his land is divided [428] among the heirs. If a man with fifty acres of land has two sons, each son inherits approximately twenty-five acres. On their deaths, the land 423 is again subdivided. But even this is not the whole story. A UNESCO 427 survey of the Marbial Valley region in south Haiti in 19[illegible]-1949 reported:

> At the turn of the century there were numerous peasant families who lived in relatively easy circumstances, and who possessed as much as thirty to forty *carreaux* * [425] of land planted with coffee and subsistence crops. The heirs of these lands, when they found themselves in straitened circumstances, would sell some parcels of it in the hope of being able to increase their holdings again later on. In the worst cases they became the tenants of absentee landlords who lived in the cities. Nowadays, not only is the size of holdings very small, sometimes only one-eighth of a *carreau*, but they are also scattered, and most peasants are obliged to go from one place to another to cultivate their various owned, rented, or share-cropped fields.[§A]

691 595 423 848 Haitian law—the civil code—does not recognize the rights of illegitimate children born after a legal marriage. But Haitian custom does. As a result, a Haitian who has a *placée* wife in addition to his "legal" wife may circumvent the law by deeding to her a portion of his gardens during his lifetime, thereby diminishing his holdings.

423 691 Furthermore, many landholdings are not clearly defined. There are few accurate surveys, and often the boundaries are vague. Titles to many of the holdings cannot be clearly established, and as a result there are constant lawsuits. To pay the expenses of defending his interests in court, a Haitian may have to sell a strip of his land.

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* A carreau is about three and a third acres.

§A [UNESCO, The Haiti Pilot Project, p. 18. Cf P352, category 116. -- Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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to appoint, curés to the vacant parishes. His independence of action could not fail to give offense to Church authorities. One of his first appointees was a black ex-slave, Félix, who had been a drum major in the native army. Félix was made curé in the important town of Saint-Marc.

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The constitution of his empire (May, 1805) indicates that Dessalines did not intend to make himself head of the Church, but rather planned a complete separation of Church and State. Article 50 reads: "The law admits no dominant religion"; while the next article grants freedom to all cults and refuses state support to any denomination or minister. No attack was made, therefore, upon Catholicism, yet the disestablishment of that Church was a serious blow to its prestige. Not in the specific provisions regarding religion was the Church most weakened, but rather in the "liberality" of articles dealing with actions upon which the Church had taken a firm moral stand. Thus Article 14 declared that "marriage is an act purely civil and authorized by the government," while Article 15 permits divorce by the state. Early laws of the empire still further undermined the position of Church doctrine. Illegitimate children were granted the same legal rights as legitimate ones—a generous provision which removed one of the strong reasons for marriage; separation of husband and wife except by divorce was forbidden, and this prohibition practically encouraged the divorce disapproved by the Church; finally, the grounds upon which divorce might be allowed were broader than those existing anywhere else in the Western World at the time: mutual consent, application from one party to the marriage, or simple allegation of incompatibility of temperament or character.

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From the promulgation of this constitution in 1805 and for the next fifty-five years, Haiti was in open schism from the Roman Catholic Church. The Holy See refused to recognize either the Haitian state or the provisions of its constitution, and it declined to allow priests to enter the country. Certain Haitian presidents were friendly enough to Catholicism, and others were openly desirous of reestablishing a state religion, but the breach once made was not healed by mere good wishes. The longer the schism endured, the farther the people grew away from the doctrines and practices of a religion in which they had never been firmly grounded. At the moment of independence, when all minds were more open to new

3: .Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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ideas than in later years, the habits of regular attention to religious duties might have been fixed; by 1860 it was too late. Religion existed during those years, but it was a strange gallimaufry of Catholicism and folk belief.

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On the whole, the rulers of young Haiti were tolerant of the Catholic Church even to the point of advancing its interests, in so far as these might benefit the state. Their pronouncements and actions, nevertheless, were not those of ardent personal believers. Pétion's constitution of the republic in 1806 once more established Catholicism as the official Church. What it gave with one hand, however, it took away with the other. Thus:

> *Art. 35.* The Catholic, apostolic, and Roman religion being that of all Haitians, is the religion of the state. It and its ministers will be protected.
>
> *Art. 36.* The law assigns to each minister of that religion the extent of his spiritual administration. These ministers may not, under any pretext, form a body within the state.
>
> *Art. 37.* If in the course of time other religions are introduced, no person shall be hindered, so long as he conforms to the laws, in following the cult he has chosen.

The Catholic, then, is the state religion, but only because the Haitians have heretofore been nominal Catholics. It occupies a position of practical fact which it would lose if by the introduction of other cults Haitians should be drawn away from it. Its ministers will be carefully watched to see that they do not, as a group, try to exert political pressure. And what freedom of action is possible to a church whose ecclesiastical parishes can be limited or extended in size by the civil legislature?

Pétion no more fought religion than he fought any other conventional institution approved by civilized people; but he did little to foster it. He received certain Wesleyan missionaries with considerable hospitality, remarking that "education increases the dignity of mankind." He appeased the good Catholics by repealing the law concerning the rights of illegitimate children, substituting for it a more moderate French rule.[4] Likewise, he invited the Catholic Church to participate in the education of Haitian youth.

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[848] 4. The French practice allowed an illegitimate child recognized before a wedding equal rights of inheritance with legitimate offspring, while giving only quarter rights to a child recognized after marriage.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

Christophe had a great deal more to say about religion than any of the other early Haitian rulers. In a speech following the promulgation of his constitution, after severe censure of the government of Dessalines, he said:

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> It is necessary to raise again the dignity of religion, for weakened morals leave young people open to the licenses of their age. Liberty has been assailed by traitors, enemies of their fellow citizens, and sold to our cruelest enemies. It is assured to you now, have no doubt! Shortly you will see these vicious men and their criminal efforts vanish like clouds.
>
> Public education, after religion and liberty the most precious benefit mankind enjoys, will be reanimated and sustained by morality; it will again be held in honor and reverence amongst us. Divorce, that traitor among customs, is rigorously prohibited and proscribed forever.[5]

[871] [586]

Like Pétion, Christophe made the Catholic Church official, but he indicated the dictatorial path he intended to follow by adding that no ecclesiastical decree or law might become effective without the consent of the President.[6] He completely overturned the law of Dessalines concerning illegitimate children; his decree deprived such offspring of any claims of inheritance whatever.[7] In a country where practically no one had been legally married such a ruling was severe, but Christophe hoped that his severity would force his subjects into wedlock, and this the Catholic Church was bound to approve.

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Making the Church official did not strengthen its hold upon the people. In 1814 (seven years after he had promised "to raise again the dignity of religion") the kingdom was served by only three priests, one of whom Christophe had named archbishop. The King was preoccupied with form, and having created a nobility he needed a church to lend dignity to his realm. Consequently in 1811 he reorganized the clergy in his kingdom, establishing an archiepiscopal see and three bishoprics. The reorganization, except for the archbishop, remained a paper plan because the Pope refused to coöperate by giving the schismatic church his approval.

175 795 793 659 648

All the early rulers seem to have been rather innocent in their dealings with Rome. They felt, apparently, that as heads of state they had but to express a desire in order to have His Holiness ap-

5. This speech, made on February 18, 1807, is cited in Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1848), II, 354–355.
6. See the law of March 18, 1807.
7. Law of March 25, 1807.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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erosity and equity now gave way to malevolence and personal license: 114

Putting no restraint upon his passions, he travelled about, followed by 643
actors, dancers, musicians, and courtesans. An indefatigable dancer, as soon 159
as he arrived in a place he gave a ball. Under Toussaint Louverture, in 831
order to please the Governor-General everyone approached the holy altar; under Dessalines one gained glory by dancing well. The Emperor, giving himself up to scandalous pleasures, forgot that he was head of the state. The greatest immorality reigned about him. With a gaiety sometimes grotesque, he told the ladies who frequented his court how much he admired their beauty, no matter how ugly they actually were. Following his example, his major officers of state kept concubines in every town in the empire. . . . When the emperor entered a town, the honest women were gravely disturbed, for their virtue was menaced not only by him but also by his officers of state. Many mothers kept their daughters shut up to keep them from the notice of those who were powerful enough to take them, with impunity, by violence.[3]

Marriage, then, looked at from the standards of any white Western 175
country, was in a sorry state in Haiti. Continued warfare had broken 831
up many even of the families which, though unrecognized by the 581
white planters, had nevertheless been formed during slavery; and the camp life of soldiers roaming the countryside confirmed the casual attitude of the people toward sex. Every ex-slave was a hero, and liberty was sweet. Under Dessalines it was scarcely wise for a prominent man to marry an attractive wife, the Emperor might so soon set himself to seduce her. Above all, there was no tradition of formal marriage. This was the chief factor to bear upon future marriage and sexual customs of the Haitians; and in appraising them is the paramount fact to keep in mind.

Meanwhile, children were being born. Their mothers were 175
known, but often the fathers were not, for the vast majority of 848
infants were born out of wedlock. Dessalines, a realist except in 428
matters which touched his vanity, saw the necessity of establishing a status for these children, not on grounds of morality but for economic expediency, to avoid future disputes over inheritance. French precedent did not serve his need, for according to French law an illegitimate child may not inherit; a parent in France is not free to leave his property as he will, but must pass it on to his legitimate heirs.

3. Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti*, III, 239.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 While the broad problems of marriage, inheritance, and legiti-
512 macy were not to be solved by the official act of any ruler, the efforts made, particularly those by Dessalines and Christophe, had their effect upon the development of the marital institution in Haiti.

671 "Whereas," begins the preamble of Dessalines' law of May 28,
●848 1805, "it is necessary to fix in immutable order the status and rights of children born out of wedlock, and whereas it is important to reconcile what nature and society owe them with the political interests of the state," therefore it behooves the government to lay
[581] down the specific rules which follow. Nothing in the law pushes the people toward marriage, but every provision strengthens the family, which they had known both in Africa and in the slave régime of the colony.

175 Henceforth no stigma is to attach to the fact of illegitimacy, nor is
671 there to be discrimination in favor of children born in wedlock. The
848 status of a child will depend upon recognition by its parents. If a
428 child's maternal connection is established, he has rights in her property; if the father likewise recognize his offspring, the child has rights in the paternal property; even if the recognition of a child is so long delayed that the parents die, that child who can prove his descent is to receive the name and his own share of property from the deceased. There is but one single provision in which an illegitimate child has an inferior status: should a couple decide to be legally married, they must recognize the natural offspring of either party before or during the wedding ceremony, if such children are to have full claims of inheritance; delay until after the ceremony cuts their claim to only one fourth that of children born legitimately; refusal to recognize the natural child disinherits him, unless he can prove his descent.

[422] Since the Emperor was already engaged upon his campaign to
[423] acquire lands for the state, the property rights guaranteed would refer chiefly to personal property, and only secondarily to land still owned by individuals. Both men and women owned personal property, however, and must therefore pass on this property, a definite percentage going to each son and daughter.

The law is weak in some of its details. It does not specify, for example, how an unmarried father shall leave his property—whether by name to each child he has recognized as his own, or by name to the mothers of his children. It is strong in that it is simple: property

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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must pass to an illegitimate child if recognition is accorded. It is likewise strong in its harmony with actual conditions: in the absence of legal marriage among the people, it would have been manifestly unfair to favor a few fortunate children. Dessalines argued that the revolution had legitimized all Haitians; that it was unjust to prevent a child's inheriting from the person who had given him life; and that since all Haitians had come out of slavery and degradation into freedom, no new inequalities should be instituted.[4]

If this law encouraged family life, it weakened marriage both of the civil and religious kind: where was the sense in the expensive luxury of a wedding when children were just as legitimate without it? By conforming to folk practice the Emperor confirmed it. Only the aristocrats disliked his law, for it seemed to make light of one of the distinctions they cherished—the formal wedding. It irked them to have the State place a casual child upon an equal plane with one born after proper marriage.

At still another point the law accorded with living conditions at the time. During the years of fighting many men had been killed, and always the large standing army kept thousands of others away from settled farm life. Home, then, was for a child the abode of his mother—a fact recognized by the law's insistence upon maternal relationship rather than paternity. Such a word as "matriarchate" has no place here; but from the days of Dessalines to modern times, the lowly Haitian thinks of his home primarily as where his mother lives.

As if the advantages of formal wedding were not already sufficiently weakened by this law, other enactments of the empire struck at other phases of marriage. Divorce was permitted for adultery, for incompatibility of temperament or character, and by mutual consent. Such provisions not only broke away completely from Catholic practice, but made getting out of wedlock a casual matter of taking an oath. The complaint of incompatibility need be made by only one spouse; "mutual consent" as a ground for divorce was probably not allowed in 1805 in any other country of the Western World.

Dessalines did not appear to care one whit for the good opinion of white foreigners. It sufficed for him if Haiti endured, whatever Europeans thought of her. Christophe, on the other hand, was extremely sensitive to foreign disapproval. Many of his official acts can

4. According to the testimony of Madiou, *op. cit.*, III, 216.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 643 648 be explained only as efforts to win outside respect for his kingdom of blacks. He was aware of the scorn in which white people held the apparent absence of all sexual morality in Haiti, and so set about introducing reforms. Even as a general he had opposed the dissoluteness of Dessalines.

175 643 582 671 581 [595] In an early pronouncement Christophe proscribes concubinage (by which he meant the unmarried unions of the people), libertinage, and "all those disorders which weaken the family." To proscribe an evil is not necessarily to put an end to it, however, and so he tried also to persuade and educate his people to the habit of full legal marriage. His steps at persuasion were various. In speeches he urged weddings upon his subjects; yet a man could see little reason for tying himself to one woman for life, assuming *legal* responsibilities at an expense, when already from experience he knew that he could have a woman's loyalty without the ceremony. Although weddings somewhat increased after 1806, Christophe's verbal campaign was a failure. He next tried force. In one town he made all the females assemble in the public square; then, separating the married from the unmarried, commanded his royal guards to advance, each to select an unmarried woman who should become his wife. At other times he selected young men and women by lot and had them married "by their King's authority." No nobleman in the kingdom could long remain unwed: indeed, Queen Victoria might have approved Christophe's solicitude for the moral uprightness of the Haitian court.

175 671 848 428 Another means by which Christophe forced his people into formal marriage was the indirect one of attacking property rights. Realizing that Dessalines' law by guaranteeing inheritance to natural children encouraged people to remain unmarried, he rescinded it by one of the first acts of his rule.[5] This act reëstablished French practice, making it all but impossible for illegitimate children to inherit anything. Most persons of property found this law persuasive where words had left them cold. Madiou thought the law "excessively severe in a country where nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of the population were born out of wedlock,"[6] and he spoke of its disharmony with general practice at the time. Actually,

5. Law of March 25, 1807.
6. Madiou, *op. cit.*, III, 411.

it seems not radically to have affected the masses but only the fairly well-to-do.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Another observation must be set

588 alongside this professional testimony: many men, both aristocrats
162 and common folk, have more than one placée, yet there seem to be enough women for Haitian men.

595 Although peasants in Haiti are rarely married by formal ceremony,
565 the family is a dominant characteristic of peasant life. This sums up the domestic situation among the masses.

When it is recalled that the Negro, from the time he was taken from Africa on slave ships, had almost no experience of the European tradition of conventional marriage, one has a partial explanation of the absence of peasant weddings. For the rest the people are realists, arguing that a man should have as many women as he needs to carry on the economy of his land holdings; the law forbids polygamy, but exerts no control over plural unions which are entered without formal ceremony. It has therefore come to be regularly accepted in the mores that practical need should determine the number of women to one man. If a peasant increases his land holdings, if he buys or inherits a second farm on the other side of the mountain, it is only common sense for him to take a second woman, raise a family by her, and thus have an overseer and a labor supply resident on each of his properties. Everyone in the community knows what women belong to what man, and custom strongly taboos any tampering with another man's spouses.

162 Only the Catholic Church has statistics to reveal the infrequency
581 of marriages among the masses. The story was the same a century ago as now. In the important parish of Gonaïves in 1825 the propor-
163 tion of marriages to births was as 1 to 62; in 1826 they were as 1 to 54.[3] Both figures include marriages and births among the élite, and Gonaïves is a town: in the countryside the proportion of marriages would be much lower. The parish priest of Carrefours, which numbers about a thousand households, stated that in 1936 there had been only ten marriages among his six or eight thousand parishioners.
[848] Another parish priest estimated that only one half of one per cent of the baptisms performed were of children born to parents legally married. Even in the parish of Pétionville, home of many élite, a priest estimates that less than one child in five is born to married
595 parents. A century ago a commandant at Léogane, speaking of a high army officer, said, "He is my brother-in-law: I live with his sister." Near Port-au-Prince lived a rural police captain with six plaçage

3. Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, II, 119–120.

spouses.

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[History of Haiti in 17th-18th centuries — The Haitian white population]

Petit-Goave on 25 June 1743, complains that it is unbelievable "what indifference the people of these districts have toward spiritual matters." [86] So little attention was paid to the rites of the Church that when the baptism of an infant was to be performed, it often proved difficult to find a godfather who had taken the sacrament, and many children were therefore never baptized. As might be expected, the churches were in a bad state, often having no more than earthen walls and floors, roofed with thatch, and being used as threshing-floors as well as places of worship. The description which Père Labat has given us of a church at Cap Français,[87] and of the manner in which the communicants conducted themselves during such services as were held, shows the decadence of the one religion that had any place among the white inhabitants. The clergy, too, reflected this same decadence. For though the early libertines who posed as priests were later replaced by members of such orders as the Jacobins, the Jesuits, and the Capucins, even this did not end the scandals that, from the first days of the establishment of the Catholic Church on the island, marked its ministrations.

What impression must the Negroes have obtained from their opportunities to observe the life of their masters? What patterns of behavior, what moral codes, what concepts of the way in which the Europeans regulated their own lives and, as officials, regulated the lives of others, must have been stamped on the minds of these Africans? That the present emphasis on the importance of wealth, or that a love of and demand for display, should characterize Haitian life of the cities today is not strange. Nor is it difficult to comprehend how certain other aspects of Haitian life that have so been underscored in the last half-century by those who have written of the Haitians should have developed from this initial stimulus — not to the extent to which this emphasis would lead one to believe, to be sure, but enough to give a basis for the exaggerations which have been published.[88]

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846 or to get her feet wet. When possible, however, she waits for from fifteen to twenty days before doing this kind of work, and, in any event, she will not bathe in cold water until more than a month has passed. A week or two after giving birth she may resume her selling in the market, and two months after her child is born she will take up work in her garden.[8]

852 During this period of the mother's recovery the child is ritu-
[851] ally introduced to his world and to the spirits which govern it. Three or four days after the cord drops, the midwife, water and a candle in hand, presents the child to the sun and the four corners of the earth, speaking an invocation which none but women of this profession may know or hear spoken. The child is then carried into the courtyard before the house, though he may not be taken elsewhere for as many as three weeks. When he is taken across the threshold for the first time, he is cradled in the left arm of the one who carries him; in the left hand water is held, while the right hand holds a lighted candle. Water is thrown in three directions, outward from the door and to each side of it, as the child is taken about the outside of the house. This rite is repeated by everyone present at the time, but water is "thrown" only once.

854 Though it is said by some that a child is not given a charm
789 immediately after birth unless it is ill, it is nevertheless customary to place a cord about the neck of an infant on the day it is born, to remain there until some three or four years later, when it wears out and is lost. There is no difference of opinion, however, on the point that if a baby falls ill soon after birth, steps must be taken to give it spiritual protection. A
[793] *vodun* priest is called to make a charm for it to wear, while,
[994] in addition, another charm is placed in the house to guard its inhabitants against "all bad things," such as the evil eye—since this tends to give babies convulsions—demons, were-
854 wolves, or the "little folk" who bring bad magic. A *jok*
754 against harm resulting from even unconscious envy is also provided, since an individual who admires a baby because of

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his fourth or fifth month, he is reprimanded for laziness if late in sitting up, and when he is taught to walk his parents call out: "Come, lazy one! Come on!" He receives no physical punishment, however, until somewhat older. Thus, for example, if after a child can crawl he is told not to go beyond the threshold, he is scolded the first two or three times he disobeys, but after this he is beaten with a small stick on the buttocks or thighs. Similar means are used to teach him at the same age not to go near the fire, to avoid the thorny cacti used to fence gardens, not to put things in his mouth, and — especially because of black magic — not to pick up anything from the ground. Training for bowel and bladder control is begun shortly after birth and is continued at every opportunity the mother may have to pick up the child, so that he is usually fairly well trained when a year old, though complete control is achieved only after two years or more. A child who wets his mat is beaten, but "not too hard."

Baptism takes place when all is in readiness for the ceremony, a matter of a month or two after birth, unless the child is seriously ill, in which case he is baptized immediately. The fee of 2.50 gourdes to the civil officer who registers the birth is paid by the father. The godfather pays a similar amount to the priest for baptizing the infant, and in adddition, if he desires and is able, he may both aid the godmother in meeting the expenses of dressing the child and give the mother a gift. The godmother furnishes the child with a shirt, a dress, a bonnet — "a pretty one" — stockings, shoes, and, if she can afford it, silk for a ribbon-trimmed coverlet. These gifts are obligatory, and even where a hasty baptism of a sick child has made it impossible to provide properly for his outfitting, if he survives, his mother is given a present of money by both godparents so she can procure this finery.

As in most Catholic countries, the godparents play an important role in the life of their godchild. Not only do they "stand in the place of father and mother" at his baptism, but

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608 remembrances are expected from them on birthdays or saints' days, while the young person, when older, often brings his problems to them, knowing that they will give him their most disinterested advice. A man may turn to his godparents for aid before asking it of his family, for they are regarded as truest of friends. Nor does he stand in awe of them as he does of his older relations. There is a free joking give-and-take between godparent and godchild, which reflects this attitude of warm affection. A person even stands in a special relationship to the children of his godparents, calling them "baptismal brothers" or "baptismal sisters." Among the peasants, though 608 582 not among the inhabitants of the larger centers, not only marriage but even those non-Church unions otherwise socially sanctioned are frowned upon between "baptismal brothers and sisters." And Mirebalais has it that when Church marriage is contemplated by two such individuals, special authorization from the Archbishop must first be obtained.[3]

851 852 608 Saturday is the day favored for baptisms, permitting as it does the child to be brought to town on a market day. The mother rarely attends, and usually the father is also absent when the godparents bring the infant to the baptismal font, where the priest gives him his name and receives him into the Church. Later in the day the parents are visited by their friends and relatives, who, if they can afford it, bring gifts for the child and partake of the drinks and refreshments that are provided.

851 852 782 Following the Church baptism at an interval which varies with differing circumstances, the father and mother and the godfather and godmother present the child to the family deities. Arriving at the family habitation the father says:

[539] *"Mystères-o, nou' même qui te après Grand Maître protège et delivre, moin vin' remercie nou'. Et en même temps main petite la pou' ga'dé pou' moin. Pas quitté mauvaise lawou gagné l'empi' sou' li. Ba li force, santé,*

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et preserve li cont'e tout mal. Ba li couraille pou' noin. Yun jou', c'est li-même qui allé remplacé nou' pou'servi nou' quan' nou' pas pè la. — O spirits, you who after the Great Master protect and deliver, I come to thank you. At the same time here is the child [you are] to protect for me. Do not let werewolves gain power over him. Grant him strength, health, and preserve him against all evil. Give him courage for me. One day he himself will replace us to serve you when we are no longer here." 851 852 539 782

Inasmuch as it is always necessary to invoke all three categories of supernatural beings, a similar invocation is pronounced for the dead and the spirits of twins. The rite, however, may be even simpler than this. If the family house of worship is near by, and the relationship group is one which numbers important members of the *vodun* cult, the child may be taken into this house, water thrown on the ground three times, and a candle lighted. In such cases no invocation is pronounced. 851 852 782 [764]

Most mothers nurse their infants until they are about eighteen months old, though children may be weaned when as young as a year. Weaning is accomplished in a day or two. On the day selected, a bitter plant called *laloi* is spread on the mother's breasts, and when the child asks and is given the breast and refuses it because of the bitter taste, his favorite food is at once offered as a substitute. So efficacious is this method that one day's training is ordinarily enough. As a further precaution the child is not allowed to sleep with his mother for three or four nights after being weaned, so that he cannot take the breast at night, and is only given a place in the mother's bed after her milk has ceased to flow. 862 [824]

The earlier years of a child are in the main free from care, and, with due allowance for the differences in individual temperaments and family traditions, he is given much his own way. Young children make "mud food" and build play-houses. When somewhat older, they organize games of 857 [855]

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595 The fact that Haitian law recognizes only monogamy in-
593 troduces numerous overtones into the daily life of the people.
671 If a church-wed wife discovers that her husband makes periodic visits to another woman, whether *placée* or not, serious quarreling between the legal wife and her husband follows. The "wife" may refuse to give food to her husband or to speak to him, and will upbraid him before their children, calling him *vagabond* — a strong word of opprobrium to the Haitian — and other terms which her facile tongue readily finds at hand. The status of the children under this dual family system is another reflection of the values it engenders. And though the account of this given in Mirebalais represents a folk-reaction rather than official procedure — for according to officials in the capital it does not exist in Haitian law — its value as a living belief which gives insight into the relevant attitudes outweighs its possible lack of validity in a legal sense.

858 In Mirebalais it is held that there are what may be spoken of as three classes of offspring. The first, which may be termed "natural" children, are those born to a man by his *placée* wife or wives before his Church marriage, or to a *placée* woman whose mating with him was later legalized by the rites of Church and State. The second class, the "legitimate" children, comprises those born to couples married in the strict legal sense of the word. Finally, a third category consists [848] of those who may be called "illegitimate" children, and includes all the offspring of any *placée* spouse of a man taken by him after his Church marriage, or children of any of his earlier *placée* wives born subsequent to this marriage. None of these classes of children are at any special social disadvantage, and all not only inherit the African deities of their father, but must also fulfill their spiritual obligations toward him after his death by wearing mourning and performing all other required rituals.

582 Legally, however, the matter is different, for only the chil-
641 dren born to a marriage recorded by the justice of the peace
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belong to the father, who, in turn, is the legally recognized 582
father of all the offspring of his wife unless he divorces her — 671
something which, because of Church regulations, occurs but 858
rarely. Children born outside legal marriage have no right to 851
the name of their father. Such a one is entered under his moth- 848
er's name in the record of births, though he may and often does 858
take his father's name in school or later in life, this ultimately 551
becoming the name by which he is known and which he hands
on to his children. It is in the inheritance of the father's prop- 428
erty that children born of the various types of matings are 858
said to be most strongly differentiated, though it was particu- 848
larly with this method of distributing heritable goods reported in Mirebalais that officials in the capital disagreed. The assertion is made that while the children of a "legal" wife inherit three quarters of the estate, and the other "natural" children receive one fourth, the "illegitimate" offspring have no legal right to any of the dead man's property. They must either be provided for by their father before his death or be aided on occasion by a natural brother who has inherited from their common father and feels a moral obligation toward these children of their father. Children of plural 595
wives call each other by the terms "brother" and "sister," 593
and in some instances they get on fairly well together. More [601]
generally, however, their attitudes toward one another are colored by those of their mothers, so that verbal if not physical encounters may take place when they meet.

Where, as perhaps in the majority of cases, there is a 593
monogamous union, "legal" or "*placée*," cemented by mutual affection and mutual interest in the future of the children, life goes on calmly. Each spouse performs the tasks allotted by custom, and the children are reared in an atmosphere which varies with the fortunes and temperaments of those who make up the household. Fathers are said to prefer their daughters, and mothers their sons, among their children, but for this the Haitian has no explanation other than the phrase: "This is natural."

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764 placed in the coffin, which must always be used for burial. Even if a person is poor, "he can always borrow a plank from a neighbor, for people are charitable in matters of death," or, if a family cannot immediately afford to have carpenters make the coffin, they are paid later, a few gourdes at a time. This [767] also holds for the professional bather of corpses, who receives three to five gourdes in the countryside, fifteen gourdes in Mirebalais, and, it is said, perhaps fifty in Port-au-Prince. A pig or a goat is killed to feed those who dig the grave and carry the coffin, "so they can do their work well." Otherwise these men receive no payment, for "people do such things for each other."

The wake,[a] which takes place on the night of death, is one of the most important ceremonies in the cycle of rites for the [766] dead. Wakes are held for all dead, even for very young chil- [851] dren if they have been baptized, though if a baby dies before baptism, it is buried without ceremony in a little box in the courtyard of the habitation. During the wake the body lies in the second room of the house, the long white candle used at the deceased's first communion standing lighted at his feet. If the dead was not a communicant, newly bought candles are placed at his head and feet. The wife and children either stay with the corpse or are near by with friends. The one who bathed the corpse remains constantly at its side as the members of the family come and go, since the body must never remain alone. Wailing goes on all night, and as more relatives arrive, those already there echo their cries.

On a table in another room a white cloth is spread, and a crucifix, images of the saints, flowers, lighted candles, and a [533] lamp of oil are placed on it. The singers bring their song-books, since the canticles of the Church are almost the only songs heard. At times songs are specially composed for the occasion, but these always concern themselves with death. Those who stand before the table, principally women, lead the singing, the others acting as a chorus. People come and go

The importance of water in Vodoun has a fundamentally West African character. Among the Yoruba and the Ashanti and in Dahomey, for example, water rites are a significant aspect of religious ritual. Herskovits notes the frequency of religious pilgrimages to streams in West Africa.

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In one instance, at Abenkura, a bedecked procession of worshipers left a shrine atop a high hill, followed a long path to the riverside over two miles away, and returned before the ceremonies could be carried out at the shrine of the god. On one occasion, in Dahomey, the bed of the sacred stream run dry was "filled" from nearby wells so that this water could be ritually redrawn for use in an especially important ceremony. Among the Ashanti, pilgrimages to Lake Bosumtwi and other sacred bodies of water regularly occur. And it is on such occasions that the spirit of the river or lake or sea manifests itself, by "entering the head" of the devotee and causing him to fling himself, possibly possessed, into the water.[9]

So it is also in Haiti, where possession at the river's edge may cause the devotee to leap into the river. At Saut d'Eau, possessed persons plunge into the waterfall without regard for their safety, being in the care of the loa who have mounted them.

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Into this water complex the Christian rite of baptism has been easily absorbed, providing merely a new act of veneration for water and its properties. In the Haitian mind baptism is not far removed from the *lavé tête* ritual, the washing of the head, or the *rafraîchi tête*, the "refreshing" of the head, both of which are acts in propitiation of the loa.[9] So related is the baptismal concept in the Haitian mind, that the term "baptize" is used to describe the lavé tête; it is said that the loa is being "baptized." So also are drums "baptized," not to mention yams, and even the hounfor itself.

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Marriage to a Loa

Although the term *hounsi* (spirit wife, or wife of the spirit) is applied to a large class of servitors of the Vodoun temple, only a small number of servitors ever pass through rites which give them a husband-wife or wife-husband relationship with a loa. Reasons for these mystic marriages vary, but usually the rituals take place upon the prescription of a cult priest who interprets the will of the deities concerned. Most of the mystic marriages of which I have heard have taken place in the general area of Port-au-Prince and the Cul-de-Sac Plain. In some other areas of Haiti it appears that no such rites have taken place locally within the memory of the elder inhabitants. One aged man living near Belladère declared: "It [marriage to a loa] is impossible. People serve loa, they do not marry them. A man does not marry his burro. A loa

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9 [Herskovits, The Myth of The Negro Past, p. 233. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

9 [It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain Negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

846 or to get her feet wet. When possible, however, she waits for from fifteen to twenty days before doing this kind of work, and, in any event, she will not bathe in cold water until more than a month has passed. A week or two after giving birth she may resume her selling in the market, and two months after her child is born she will take up work in her garden.[3]

852 [851] During this period of the mother's recovery the child is ritually introduced to his world and to the spirits which govern it. Three or four days after the cord drops, the midwife, water and a candle in hand, presents the child to the sun and the four corners of the earth, speaking an invocation which none but women of this profession may know or hear spoken. The child is then carried into the courtyard before the house, though he may not be taken elsewhere for as many as three weeks. When he is taken across the threshold for the first time, he is cradled in the left arm of the one who carries him; in the left hand water is held, while the right hand holds a lighted candle. Water is thrown in three directions, outward from the door and to each side of it, as the child is taken about the outside of the house. This rite is repeated by everyone present at the time, but water is "thrown" only once.

854 789 Though it is said by some that a child is not given a charm immediately after birth unless it is ill, it is nevertheless customary to place a cord about the neck of an infant on the day it is born, to remain there until some three or four years later, when it wears out and is lost. There is no difference of opinion, however, on the point that if a baby falls ill soon after birth, steps must be taken to give it spiritual protection. A [793] *vodun* priest is called to make a charm for it to wear, while, [994] in addition, another charm is placed in the house to guard its inhabitants against "all bad things," such as the evil eye—since this tends to give babies convulsions—demons, werewolves, or the "little folk" who bring bad magic. A *jok* 854 against harm resulting from even unconscious envy is also 754 provided, since an individual who admires a baby because of

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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his fourth or fifth month, he is reprimanded for laziness if late in sitting up, and when he is taught to walk his parents call out: "Come, lazy one! Come on!" He receives no physical punishment, however, until somewhat older. Thus, for example, if after a child can crawl he is told not to go beyond the threshold, he is scolded the first two or three times he disobeys, but after this he is beaten with a small stick on the buttocks or thighs. Similar means are used to teach him at the same age not to go near the fire, to avoid the thorny cacti used to fence gardens, not to put things in his mouth, and — especially because of black magic — not to pick up anything from the ground. Training for bowel and bladder control is begun shortly after birth and is continued at every opportunity the mother may have to pick up the child, so that he is usually fairly well trained when a year old, though complete control *is achieved only after two years or more. A child who wets his* mat is beaten, but "not too hard."

Baptism takes place when all is in readiness for the ceremony, a matter of a month or two after birth, unless the child is seriously ill, in which case he is baptized immediately. The fee of 2.50 gourdes to the civil officer who registers the birth is paid by the father. The godfather pays a similar amount to the priest for baptizing the infant, and in addition, if he desires and is able, he may both aid the godmother in meeting the expenses of dressing the child and give the mother a gift. The godmother furnishes the child with a shirt, a dress, a bonnet — "a pretty one" — stockings, shoes, and, if she can afford it, silk for a ribbon-trimmed coverlet. These gifts are obligatory, and even where a hasty baptism of a sick child has made it impossible to provide properly for his outfitting, if he survives, his mother is given a present of money by both godparents so she can procure this finery.

As in most Catholic countries, the godparents play an important role in the life of their godchild. Not only do they "stand in the place of father and mother" at his baptism, but

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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608 remembrances are expected from them on birthdays or saints' days, while the young person, when older, often brings his problems to them, knowing that they will give him their most disinterested advice. A man may turn to his godparents for aid before asking it of his family, for they are regarded as truest of friends. Nor does he stand in awe of them as he does of his older relations. There is a free joking give-and-take between godparent and godchild, which reflects this attitude of warm affection. A person even stands in a special relationship to the children of his godparents, calling them "baptismal
608 brothers" or "baptismal sisters." Among the peasants, though
582 not among the inhabitants of the larger centers, not only marriage but even those non-Church unions otherwise socially sanctioned are frowned upon between "baptismal brothers and sisters." And Mirebalais has it that when Church marriage is contemplated by two such individuals, special authorization from the Archbishop must first be obtained.[8]

851 Saturday is the day favored for baptisms, permitting as it
852 does the child to be brought to town on a market day. The
608 mother rarely attends, and usually the father is also absent when the godparents bring the infant to the baptismal font, where the priest gives him his name and receives him into the Church. Later in the day the parents are visited by their friends and relatives, who, if they can afford it, bring gifts for the child and partake of the drinks and refreshments that are provided.

851 Following the Church baptism at an interval which varies
852 with differing circumstances, the father and mother and the
782 godfather and godmother present the child to the family deities. Arriving at the family habitation the father says:

[539] *"Mystères-o, nou' même qui te après Grand Maître protège et delivre, moin vin' remercie nou'. Et en même temps main petite la pou' ga'dé pou' moin. Pas quitté mauvaise lawou gagné l'empi' sou' li. Ba li force, santé,*

1: Herskovits E-4, 8 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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et preserve li cont'e tout mal. Ba li couraille pou' moin. Yun jou', c'est li-même qui allé remplacé nou' pou' servi nou' quan' nou' pas pè la. — O spirits, you who after the Great Master protect and deliver, I come to thank you. At the same time here is the child [you are] to protect for me. Do not let werewolves gain power over him. Grant him strength, health, and preserve him against all evil. Give him courage for me. One day he himself will replace us to serve you when we are no longer here."

851 852 539 782

Inasmuch as it is always necessary to invoke all three categories of supernatural beings, a similar invocation is pronounced for the dead and the spirits of twins. The rite, however, may be even simpler than this. If the family house of worship is near by, and the relationship group is one which numbers important members of the *vodun* cult, the child may be taken into this house, water thrown on the ground three times, and a candle lighted. In such cases no invocation is pronounced.

851 852 782 [764]

Most mothers nurse their infants until they are about eighteen months old, though children may be weaned when as young as a year. Weaning is accomplished in a day or two. On the day selected, a bitter plant called *laloi* is spread on the mother's breasts, and when the child asks and is given the breast and refuses it because of the bitter taste, his favorite food is at once offered as a substitute. So efficacious is this method that one day's training is ordinarily enough. As a further precaution the child is not allowed to sleep with his mother for three or four nights after being weaned, so that he cannot take the breast at night, and is only given a place in the mother's bed after her milk has ceased to flow.

862 [824]

The earlier years of a child are in the main free from care, and, with due allowance for the differences in individual temperaments and family traditions, he is given much his own way. Young children make "mud food" and build play-houses. When somewhat older, they organize games of

857 [855]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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hide-and-seek and enjoy story-telling sessions, when the tales of 'Ti Malice and Bouki are recounted. Still older ones make drums out of jars and "arrange a dance." Little girls play with dolls made for them by the older children, while boys with sticks for horses organize themselves into "armies" with their seniors as officers. When a child's teeth fall out, a minor ceremony is performed. As each tooth is detached, the child throws it on the roof of the mother's house, saying:

"Rat, rat, rat,	"Rat, rat, rat,
M'jet' yun bel' 'ti dent ba 'ou,	I give you a nice little tooth,
Ba'm yun vieille dent."	Give me an old tooth."

At this same time a beginning of formal education is made, especially if the child lives in the town or near enough to it to allow him to reach one of the schools there. These schools are under both secular and Catholic auspices, and in them the pupil is instructed in the rudiments of European education, learning to read and write and to do simple problems in arithmetic. If he shows proficiency and the means of his family permit, he may go on to a secondary school at Port-au-Prince or some other center; in the main, however, this schooling is all he ever receives, if he is permitted this much.

It is not to be supposed that a child is allowed to grow up without learning how to conduct himself in accordance with the traditional code of Haitian behavior, for the punishment that follows departures from this code is always both prompt and extremely painful, beating with sticks being the mode of correction most often employed. The mechanisms of education and control operate the more effectively because they are exercised by a fairly large group of persons, which includes not only the father and mother of the child, but also his grandparents, his uncles and aunts on both sides of the family, and his older brothers, sisters, and cousins. Less restraint is exercised before grandparents than other relations, for while there

1; Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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are no customary playmate or joking relationships between grandparents and grandchildren, a man would rather go to his grandparents when in trouble than to his parents or uncles, because of the greater indulgence they show him.

At about the age of seven or eight the children's play-life is invaded by the serious work which they must increasingly assume. According to their sex, they are instructed by father or mother, each parent teaching the child the work he will be most occupied with as he matures. For some children, naturally, this education is deferred longer than for others, but, as a rule, boys of four or five may be seen playing about the field "helping" father by bringing him a leaf with which to light his cigarette, or "hoeing" in company with him, while girls are early permitted the pleasure of accompanying their mothers to market. By observing his father at work and by helping in small tasks the boy gradually learns how to do a man's work, until at about the age of fifteen he himself can cultivate a garden. Two or three years later he is given a field of his own and seed with which to sow it. The produce from it he brings to his mother to sell for him, and she keeps what money it brings, so that he will have his savings when he wishes to marry. Little girls, for whom acquaintance with the techniques of selling in the market is desirable, are given small articles to dispose of, and the proceeds belong to them, though some mothers demand an accounting from the young tradeswomen as a further measure of training. A woman also teaches her daughter to sew, to cook, and to wash and iron, instruction which is continued until a girl, ready to be given in marriage, is able to manage all of a woman's work.

If a family can afford the expense, children begin to be prepared for their first communion at eight or ten years of age; but members of poor families must wait until the money can be found — which means that some classes of candidates include grown men and women. At about the customary age for confirmation the children are informed of the family *vodun*

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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[600] [4] Price-Mars (I), 206, note 1, and Wirkus, 215, define the term *combite*.

[114] [5] Wirkus, 51, 288, differentiates these work-drums from other types.

[6] Wirkus, 191, has described the efficiency with which an organized Haitian work-group accomplished its task on the road.

[7] Cf. Price-Mars (I), 146–8.

[8] A good description of a Haitian market as observed in 1835 is to be found in Hanna, 53–6.

[9] Compare Mackenzie, i, 28–9.

[10] The poverty of the Haitians is often exaggerated, and especially the concept of wealth as held by the peasant is caricatured in a way that accentuates a misunderstanding of his economic psychology. For an extreme instance of this see Craige, 42–3.

CHAPTER V

[852] [1] Price-Mars (I), 34, speaks of the need immediately after birth of "immersing the new-born infant in a lustral bath carefully concocted by the *vodun* priest who consecrates the child to the divinity that can preserve him against the evil-doing of malignant spirits, and rescue him from 'the power of supernatural ills.'"

[845] [2] Craige, 68–9, and Wirkus, 97–9, both give accounts of wayside births in which the mothers resumed their journeys immediately after bearing their children.

[844] [608]

[3] Price-Mars (I), 34, says: "It is forbidden to speak aloud the 'baptismal' name of a child under certain circumstances, above all during the night."

[4] Parsons (I), 174, notes that "an infant born with teeth is one whose birth has been delayed so long by the *marassa* [twins] that the teeth have developed."

[5] Price-Mars (I), 235, derives the importance of the godmother from the conditions of slavery, when a child was often cared for by a foster-mother. See also St. Mery, i, 35–6, and Mackenzie, i, 273–4.

CHAPTER VI

[1] The institution of *plaçage* is mentioned in passing by Craige, 203–4, and, with complete lack of understanding, by Wirkus, 75 and 307.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1337 SV3 Haiti SV3
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853 Breast-feeding begins on the third day, but if the milk does
[789] not come, the mother goes to a woman "specialist" who
[854] knows the herbs which are believed to induce the flow. When the mother is ill or tubercular, the infant is given to a wet-nurse. Once he has begun to nurse, he is fed whenever he cries, and as soon as he can sit up he is given the same food as
846 the mother eats. For the first two or three months after the
262 birth of her child a woman refrains from eating egg-plant, fresh fish — although she may eat salt fish — white beans or any others larger than Congo peas, pork, lard, and all fruit.
304 The ears of a female child are pierced when she is about a
301 month old for the gold ear-rings which are worn by girls and women of all ages. If the parents cannot afford them at the time, however, thread is placed in the holes until a sum sufficient to provide this important trinket has been accumulated.

856 A child is taught to sit up beginning with the end of the
854 third or fourth month, and by the time he is six or seven months old he can sit quite well; girls are believed to be more precocious than boys in acquiring this skill. When about ten months old, or sooner, an older sister, a little girl, or the father or mother takes the child by the hand and teaches him to walk, later allowing him to hold one end of a stick for sup-
[754] port. A child is never left alone, for fear of the evil eye or of
[789] werewolves, so that a mother does not even cross the threshold of her house without taking her baby with her, while if for some reason she cannot avoid leaving her child while she is in the yard, an empty bottle is placed near its pillow as a pro-
856 tective device. Teething is a matter of importance, since the
855 attitudes of the parents toward a child may be determined by
763 the first teeth to appear. If these are cut in the upper jaw, it is said that the child's mother will survive his father, and when this occurs, the mother takes every precaution to conceal the fact from her husband, so he will not hate the child. Others hold, however, that the appearance of an upper tooth first denotes that either the father or the mother is soon to die.[4]

856 Instruction starts early in the life of a child. Beginning with
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3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

Spring water in the country districts is frequently

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[364] luted by all sorts of excreta; the watering of milk is a common
[272] practice, and samples of milk have been generally found to contain many times the normal amount of bacilli. The cases of tuberculosis are practically always complicated by malaria.

Dysentery, when caused by bacilli, is epidemic in nature. In Haiti this form, known as "colerin," annually affects about a quarter of the rural population. Another type, caused by a variety of amoeba, affects another ten or twenty per cent, according to the region. Enteritis is less serious than dysentery but just as prevalent, being
[146] caused by protozoa and intestinal worms. Poor diet, the abuse of
[273] alcohol, premature weaning, and unwise nursing are also responsible. Granular conjunctivitis affected sixteen per cent of the children
[853] examined by the Rockefeller Foundation.

Cancer seems to strike only a normal number of Haitians; goitre is common in the mountain districts; leprosy has become a menace in the West and South; elephantiasis is present, particularly in the South; gusarola (characterized by patches of skin assuming different color) is fairly common in the Cul-de-Sac plain; chicken pox, influenza, and meningitis epidemics are occasionally serious.

164 The health of the peasant women is seriously and continuously
462 endangered by their mode of life and work. It is customary for
482 females, from girlhood onward, to carry heavy burdens on their heads—over steep paths in the mountains, along rocky trails, up hill
145 and down. The commonest sight in Haiti is to see a woman swinging along with a great load of fuel, a tin of water, a bundle of building material, a basket of fruit, on her head. Cranial bones are flattened, the spine is bent, internal organs are strained or damaged. For ill-nourished persons to carry heavy weights for long distances with
[461] little rest means undue pressure on the heart and lungs, and so an
[843] increasing tendency to cardiac and pulmonary infections as well as chronic anemia. Overwork frequently results in miscarriages.

As has been said, childbirth often occurs by the roadside, on the
844 way to market, or in the market place. In no case can a peasant
[846] woman remain in bed for a proper period either before or after
[164] parturition. Midwives are untrained; they use primitive methods which inevitably result in defective development of infants, lessened
853 resistance to disease, high infant mortality, and a prevalence of abdominal diseases in women. Pressure of work, whether in the field or on the way to market, makes a mother soon stop nursing her

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 - (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

baby: when she does she substitutes a mode of feeding on fruits and solids which favors digestive disturbance and nutritive diseases in the infant. 853

At the age when children of the élite would be starting to school, peasant children are beginning work in the fields, hoeing, weeding, and carrying, always under the tropical sun. Cuts and bruises, sometimes serious, are improperly treated when they occur and so lead to tetanus or to enormous ulcers. 857 752 184 164

Hard work and a simple mode of outdoor life prove, in Haiti at least, not to be the keys to good health which a romantic might fancy them. Haiti has been one of the unhealthiest places in the world. One feels that it has been lucky to escape such scourges as typhus, cholera, and bubonic plague; that smallpox has not been violent in its epidemics, and that the people developed an immunity to yellow fever. It has, indeed, been luck rather than cleanliness and proper medical care which has protected the people in these instances. 164

In 1838 Boyer founded a hospital school at Port-au-Prince, giving it the name of The National School of Medicine. It did not function as a school, however, until 1860 when Geffrard reorganized it and gave it life. Geffrard also sent young men to Europe to study, installed laboratories of physics and chemistry in the upper schools of the capital, and made possible the appearance of an intellectual élite.[11] 874

The next burst of energy in matters of hygiene came around 1890 when, under the influence of Dr. Léon Audain, the first health records were kept, and the spirit of scientific research reached Haitian medicine. 744 742

From 1804 to 1860, then, there was practically no proper care for sick people. In the latter years of the century a few trained physicians, with sadly deficient equipment, practiced in the towns. Not until after the Occupation was the rural mass of the population even touched by the medical knowledge which had been developing all over the civilized world for decades. Clinics, wholesale vaccinations and inoculations, and campaigns of enlightenment have in the past twenty years worked wonders. The Vodun practitioner, however, still is the "expert" who treats most illnesses, and healing remains one of his major functions. 744 759 756

11. Geffrard established schools of law, music, painting, and navigation. The latter two collapsed. The same president founded the high schools of Port-au-Prince, Jacmel, and Gonaïves. [873]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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its good health or good looks or some other attribute may unwittingly bring harm to it. For such reasons the child is often burned slightly on the cheek, a ritual carried out by the *vodun* priest in order that the scar may "give one with evil intentions toward the child an occupation" to divert his attention, that would otherwise be devoted to carrying out some evil design."

There is some question as to whether, as in so many Negro cultures, the child is given a special name at birth which is regarded as sacred and a thing to be concealed. In one instance it was stated that while one's "real" name was that given at the time of the Church baptism, everyone has a "nickname" (*petit nom*) that is known to the father and mother alone until the child is old enough to guard its secret character. This name is never spoken aloud, for if an enemy came to know it, he might use it for purposes of black magic against its owner. However, no agreement exists in Mirebalais as to this practice, which may represent a survival of a widespread West African custom.[8]

A child born with a caul is believed to be "strong" in combating all evil spirits. The caul is dried and reduced to powder, and the infant is given some of the powder in water two or three days after birth. If a child is born with the navel cord wrapped about his throat, he is believed by some to be destined for leadership, though others do not hold this to be a significant omen. A child born feet-foremost is regarded with distaste, so that where possible, he is turned about in the womb to facilitate a head presentation. If this cannot be done, the child when he grows up is reproached: "You came like a demon." More often, however, if a child with breech presentation is not stillborn, it is not believed that he will long survive. All such occurrences are attributed to bad magic, and the husband does not delay to seek out a diviner to discover for him what supernatural forces had caused the evil.

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1: Herskovits E-4, 8 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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512 grain in her mortar or working in her garden near by. On
[413] market days she takes the produce of the family's fields to the
[438] town to sell. If she has young children, she cares for them
[355] while she does her other work, but when they are old enough,
[359] they help her about the house if they are girls, or, if boys, go with their father to the garden. From time to time, when
[356] house repairs are needed or there are implements to be
[241] mended, the man spends a day at home getting these odd jobs done; otherwise only serious illness in the family keeps him from his fields.

512 The times for meals have not varied since the days when
264 Moreau de St. Mery described the eating-habits of the slaves.[8] In addition to the mid-morning repast, the only other meal is that eaten after the man returns from his field, this being
[562] the largest of the day. A wife does not sit down with her
[573] husband, but usually eats earlier with her small children and holds herself ready to serve him upon his return, when, if he is alone, she remains to tell him the day's gossip. Visitors are
[574] often present, for peasant etiquette demands that all comers
[576] be offered food, and, as one Haitian expressed it, "The peasant would kill you for the insult if you did not share your meal with him." Bedtime, as might be expected, is early.

512 On Sundays and on the days of festivals this routine is in-
524 terrupted, when, if the occasion is of sufficient importance
[196] and the habitation is not too far from town, the peasant and his family attend mass. On Saturday nights there is usually a *undun dance*, when the early hour for retirement is forgotten and all-night festivities precede Sunday's rest. On such days
[264] the principal meal is eaten at three or four o'clock in the afternoon, and all the adults share it together, while at one side the children are fed from the dishes of their parents in response to the insistent repetition of the demand "*Ba'm pa'm* — give me my portion." *

* This is an example of the elision characteristic of Haitian Creole, it being abbreviated from *Ba mois part mois* or, in French, *Donnez-moi ma part.*

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1207 SV3 Haiti SV3
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163 said that the child's mother will survive his father, and when this occurs, the mother takes every precaution to conceal the fact from her husband, so he will not hate the child. Others hold, however, that the appearance of an upper tooth first denotes that either the father or the mother is soon to die.[4]

956 Instruction starts early in the life of a child. Beginning with
861

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

et preserve li cont'e tout mal. Ba li courville pou' main. Yun jou', c'est li-même qui allé remplacé nou' pou' servi nou' quan' nou' pas pè la. — O spirits, you who after the Great Master protect and deliver, I come to thank you. At the same time here is the child [you are] to protect for me. Do not let werewolves gain power over him. Grant him strength, health, and preserve him against all evil. Give him courage for me. One day he himself will replace us to serve you when we are no longer here." 851 852 539 782

Inasmuch as it is always necessary to invoke all three categories of supernatural beings, a similar invocation is pronounced for the dead and the spirits of twins. The rite, however, may be even simpler than this. If the family house of worship is near by, and the relationship group is one which numbers important members of the *vodun* cult, the child may be taken into this house, water thrown on the ground three times, and a candle lighted. In such cases no invocation is pronounced. 851 852 782 [764]

Most mothers nurse their infants until they are about eighteen months old, though children may be weaned when as young as a year. Weaning is accomplished in a day or two. On the day selected, a bitter plant called *laloi* is spread on the mother's breasts, and when the child asks and is given the breast and refuses it because of the bitter taste, his favorite food is at once offered as a substitute. So efficacious is this method that one day's training is ordinarily enough. As a further precaution the child is not allowed to sleep with his mother for three or four nights after being weaned, so that he cannot take the breast at night, and is only given a place in the mother's bed after her milk has ceased to flow. 862 [824]

The earlier years of a child are in the main free from care, and, with due allowance for the differences in individual temperaments and family traditions, he is given much his own way. Young children make "mud food" and build play-houses. When somewhat older, they organize games of 857 [855]

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

fact that a family will often strike out for itself, deserting the parental home, show a European independence foreign to native African thought. Yet the arrangement of meal-times, and the fact that a wife rarely eats with her husband, are African, as are the modes of correction, especially the feeling that flogging with a stick is the best disciplinary method. Indeed, the characteristic snap of the fingers employed by the Haitian to indicate a beating is exactly that which is used in Dahomey to signify beheading! In the attitude toward children African traditions have been warped by European custom, which has introduced a certain hardness of feeling that, whatever the cost, children must be brought in line with social convention, together with a resulting harshness of treatment that is anything but African.

Another important facet of Haitian life in which the effect of contact is telling includes art and recreational activities. Perhaps because of the conditions of slavery, or the difficulties of life after independence had been attained, much of these forms of African tradition has been lost, not to be replaced by corresponding borrowings from European sources. Wood-carving, an outstanding element in the æsthetic life of West Africa, is almost entirely absent. Near Mirebalais lives a man who can carve a pipe in the likeness of a human face, but there is no similarity between the products of his craft and West African figurines or masks, and he is thought of as an unusual person whose carving is an interesting but not socially significant innovation. It was stated, though without adequate corroboration, that before the Marine occupation Mirebalais boasted *vodun* drums on which heads "like the ones on these pipes" had been carved. Today the only form of decorative work in wood to be seen is the scroll-work designs which act as ventilating devices over doorways. They are done with the jigsaws of the carpenters, and no fertility of conception or felicity in composition marks these artistically crude efforts.

Other African crafts, which, though essentially utilitarian

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

themselves and their families economically and socially. Property was important, so they took pains to insure the legitimacy of their heirs; color was crucial, and so they regulated the marriages of their children to be sure there was no reversion to the black strain. They guarded their fortunes solicitously, provided their daughters with dowries large enough sometimes even to lure a white husband, educated their sons in Paris—behaved, in short, as if they had been pillars of society in provincial France. Like the white planters, the male affranchis often had relations with slave women, but even more rarely than whites were they seduced into marriage with women of the lower orders. 175 565 581

When the slave insurrection and its aftermath freed the half-million blacks in Saint-Domingue it was not to be expected that European middle-class morals and practices should suddenly prevail. Modern usage emerges from the womb of tradition. Neither in Africa nor in the colony had tradition taught the blacks respect for monogamy or for marriage entered into by religious ceremony. If the ex-slaves had reverted to their Dahomean, Congolese, or other African background, they might have introduced the bride price; but to pay a bride price is to assume the existence of wealth, an assumption contrary to fact among the ex-slaves in Saint-Domingue of the 1790's, and Haiti of the 1800's. In neither Dahomey nor the Congo was there much ceremony at the union of a couple; what there was consisted mostly of singing and dancing. If, on the other hand, the people went only by what they had observed in slave days, there was no tradition of binding union or strict codes, as we understand them. A man knew when to stay away from another man's woman; children remained near their mother—these two statements almost cover the situation as of 1796 among the newly freed slaves. 175 581 [583] [585] [837] [855]

Toussaint, apparently a conventional person in what concerned social behavior, wished his people to be "moral." He instituted a time of "holy masses, mystic communions, biblical psalms, and divine ecstasies"[2] for his private edification, and recommended the same for his people. He could not possibly have instilled into them a desire for Christian marriage, however; even if he could, priests would not have been available for the wholesale marrying of scores of thousands of men and women. Local records of weddings at this period are very scanty. 175 643 788 582

2. Saint-Rémy, *Pétion et Haïti*, III, 93.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

Parents are generally kind to their children, so far as physical
855 punishment is concerned. The average peasant child can hardly
861 properly be said to be "brought up": he merely grows, eats whatever
152 his family eats or whatever fruits he can pick up, and learns his place in the community as he matures. In anger, parents are likely to use in correction the first thing that comes to hand. There is a surprising callousness to pain among these generally kindly people: they beat their donkeys unmercifully, and strap harness over open sores; they carry chickens, head down and feet tied together and mouths gaping, for miles in the sun; they revel in gory cockfights. If, therefore, a parent is minded to beat his child, he will probably do a thorough
[578] job of it. A peasant woman, pommeling her son with a broomstick, replied to the protests of a white passer-by, "*Li nègre; li pas fait li mal.*" ("He's a Negro; it won't hurt him.") The interference of a stranger in the beating of a wife by her man, armed with a club, was resented by both man and woman as an interference with a purely family quarrel.

831 The concept of sexual continence is lacking among the peasants.
834 Sex, indeed, hardly enters the realm of morality except in connection
84 with adulterous dalliance of one man with another's woman. There is no virtue in abstaining from sex relations when the sexual urge is strong. Mothers tell love stories in all their frank details to their young daughters, and some who care about such matters are adept in all lore connected with stimulating and satisfying a man's desire.[5]
[342] Since huts are small and the whole family sleeps in the same room, children have ample opportunity to observe the sexual life of their parents. If a girl, as a result of her own experiments, has a child born to her, there is no disgrace. Practically every peasant is "illegitimate," so that the term means nothing; a baby will soon be old enough to assist in the work of the home, thus becoming an asset. It is expected that as soon as a youth grows up he will find a mate and begin a family of his own.

241 The family is as important an element of peasant life as formal
439 marriage is unimportant. It is the economic unit. Ever since the days
593 of Pétion Haitian economy has been one of small things: even the crops are small subsistence crops of maize, millet, beans, rice, yams, and frequently trees of bananas, plantains, and coffee, which require no particular cultivation. Enough coffee has been produced in Haiti for annual export ever since 1804, but until recent years the beans

5. See Zora Neale Hurston, *Tell My Horse*, pp. 22 ff.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

844 The child is delivered on a mat or cloth placed on the ground, and the navel cord is cut with scissors, leaving a length of three finger-breadths. The end of the cord is cauterized with a red-hot iron, treated with oil, and bandaged with a piece of cloth. If the infant emits no cry after birth, the midwife shakes it or strikes it smartly to start its breathing, but should this be insufficient, a large *gammelle*, or wooden bowl used to serve food at feasts, is overturned so as to cover the child, and this is beaten for a few moments, a procedure which is held both to awaken the child and to give it needed warmth. After being bathed in tepid water in which calabash leaves have been steeped,[1] about a teaspoonful of muscat, palm-oil, and sugar is fed the infant. An abdominal band is put on in place, and the child is dressed in a nightgown tightly pinned, so as to envelop its form and cause it to grow straight-limbed and firm of muscle. The process of moulding the head is begun at once, pressure being applied once a day for the first three days of life. The nostrils are pinched every few moments during the first day of life and several times each of the succeeding days, to cause them to be narrow. This matter of shaping the head and compressing the nostrils is sufficiently important to have figured in the accounts of birth conventions as given by a number of persons, though there is some disagreement as to the details of the practice, some maintaining that the head is shaped every eight days for two months and the nostrils compressed many times a day for a period of eight days. The baby continues to be bathed in tepid water, and, if born during the winter months, a fire always burns in the house.

844 The placenta is buried in a special hole dug in the room where the birth occurred, the preferred places for this being beneath the bed or at the threshold. Any of the women in attendance may bury the placenta, though usually the midwife sees to its disposal. If delivery takes place during the day, it is buried immediately after ejection, but if the birth has oc-

1: Herskovits E-4, 8 (1934) 1237 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

853 Breast-feeding begins on the third day, but if the milk does not come, the mother goes to a woman "specialist" who [789] knows the herbs which are believed to induce the flow. When [854] the mother is ill or tubercular, the infant is given to a wet-nurse. Once he has begun to nurse, he is fed whenever he cries, and as soon as he can sit up he is given the same food as 846 the mother eats. For the first two or three months after the 262 birth of her child a woman refrains from eating egg-plant, fresh fish — although she may eat salt fish — white beans or any others larger than Congo peas, pork, lard, and all fruit. 304 The ears of a female child are pierced when she is about a 30 month old for the gold ear-rings which are worn by girls and women of all ages. If the parents cannot afford them at the time, however, thread is placed in the holes until a sum sufficient to provide this important trinket has been accumulated.

856 A child is taught to sit up beginning with the end of the 864 third or fourth month, and by the time he is six or seven months old he can sit quite well; girls are believed to be more precocious than boys in acquiring this skill. When about ten months old, or sooner, an older sister, a little girl, or the father or mother takes the child by the hand and teaches him to walk, later allowing him to hold one end of a stick for sup- [754] port. A child is never left alone, for fear of the evil eye or of [789] werewolves, so that a mother does not even cross the threshold of her house without taking her baby with her, while if for some reason she cannot avoid leaving her child while she is in the yard, an empty bottle is placed near its pillow as a pro- 856 tective device. Teething is a matter of importance, since the 855 attitudes of the parents toward a child may be determined by 763 the first teeth to appear. If these are cut in the upper jaw, it is said that the child's mother will survive his father, and when this occurs, the mother takes every precaution to conceal the fact from her husband, so he will not hate the child. Others hold, however, that the appearance of an upper tooth first denotes that either the father or the mother is soon to die.[4]

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1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

his fourth or fifth month, he is reprimanded for laziness if late in sitting up, and when he is taught to walk his parents call out: "Come, lazy one! Come on!" He receives no physical punishment, however, until somewhat older. Thus, for example, if after a child can crawl he is told not to go beyond the threshold, he is scolded the first two or three times he disobeys, but after this he is beaten with a small stick on the buttocks or thighs. Similar means are used to teach him at the same age not to go near the fire, to avoid the thorny cacti used to fence gardens, not to put things in his mouth, and — especially because of black magic — not to pick up anything from the ground. Training for bowel and bladder control is begun shortly after birth and is continued at every opportunity the mother may have to pick up the child, so that he is usually fairly well trained when a year old, though complete control is achieved only after two years or more. A child who wets his mat is beaten, but "not too hard."

Baptism takes place when all is in readiness for the ceremony, a matter of a month or two after birth, unless the child is seriously ill, in which case he is baptized immediately. The fee of 2.50 gourdes to the civil officer who registers the birth is paid by the father. The godfather pays a similar amount to the priest for baptizing the infant, and in adddition, if he desires and is able, he may both aid the godmother in meeting the expenses of dressing the child and give the mother a gift. The godmother furnishes the child with a shirt, a dress, a bonnet — "a pretty one" — stockings, shoes, and, if she can afford it, silk for a ribbon-trimmed coverlet. These gifts are obligatory, and even where a hasty baptism of a sick child has made it impossible to provide properly for his outfitting, if he survives, his mother is given a present of money by both godparents so she can procure this finery.

As in most Catholic countries, the godparents play an important role in the life of their godchild. Not only do they "stand in the place of father and mother" at his baptism, but

1: Herskovits E-4, 8 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

512 grain in her mortar or working in her garden near by. On
[443] market days she takes the produce of the family's fields to the
[438] town to sell. If she has young children, she cares for them
[855] while she does her other work, but when they are old enough,
[857] they help her about the house if they are girls, or, if boys, go with their father to the garden. From time to time, when
[856] house repairs are needed or there are implements to be
[241] mended, the man spends a day at home getting these odd jobs done; otherwise only serious illness in the family keeps him from his fields.

512 The times for meals have not varied since the days when
264 Moreau de St. Mery described the eating-habits of the slaves.[8] In addition to the mid-morning repast, the only other meal is that eaten after the man returns from his field, this being
[562] the largest of the day. A wife does not sit down with her
[593] husband, but usually eats earlier with her small children and holds herself ready to serve him upon his return, when, if he is alone, she remains to tell him the day's gossip. Visitors are
[574] often present, for peasant etiquette demands that all comers
[576] be offered food, and, as one Haitian expressed it, "The peasant would kill you for the insult if you did not share your meal with him." Bedtime, as might be expected, is early.

512 On Sundays and on the days of festivals this routine is in-
527 terrupted, when, if the occasion is of sufficient importance
[796] and the habitation is not too far from town, the peasant and his family attend mass. On Saturday nights there is usually a *vodun* dance, when the early hour for retirement is forgotten and all-night festivities precede Sunday's rest. On such days
[264] the principal meal is eaten at three or four o'clock in the afternoon, and all the adults share it together, while at one side the children are fed from the dishes of their parents in response to the insistent repetition of the demand "*Ba'm pa'm* — give me my portion." *

* This is an example of the elision characteristic of Haitian Créole, it being abbreviated from *Ba mois part mois* or, in French, *Donnez-moi ma part*.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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et preserve li cont'e tout mal. Ba li couraille pou' moin. Yun jou', c'est li-même qui allé remplacé nou' pou' servi nou' quan' nou' pas pè la. — O spirits, you who after the Great Master protect and deliver, I come to thank you. At the same time here is the child [you are] to protect for me. Do not let werewolves gain power over him. Grant him strength, health, and preserve him against all evil. Give him courage for me. One day he himself will replace us to serve you when we are no longer here." 851 852 539 782

Inasmuch as it is always necessary to invoke all three categories of supernatural beings, a similar invocation is pronounced for the dead and the spirits of twins. The rite, however, may be even simpler than this. If the family house of worship is near by, and the relationship group is one which numbers important members of the *vodun* cult, the child may be taken into this house, water thrown on the ground three times, and a candle lighted. In such cases no invocation is pronounced. 851 852 782 [764]

Most mothers nurse their infants until they are about eighteen months old, though children may be weaned when as young as a year. Weaning is accomplished in a day or two. On the day selected, a bitter plant called *laloi* is spread on the mother's breasts, and when the child asks and is given the breast and refuses it because of the bitter taste, his favorite food is at once offered as a substitute. So efficacious is this method that one day's training is ordinarily enough. As a further precaution the child is not allowed to sleep with his mother for three or four nights after being weaned, so that he cannot take the breast at night, and is only given a place in the mother's bed after her milk has ceased to flow. 862 [824]

The earlier years of a child are in the main free from care, and, with due allowance for the differences in individual temperaments and family traditions, he is given much his own way. Young children make "mud food" and build play-houses. When somewhat older, they organize games of 857 [855]

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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857 hide-and-seek and enjoy story-telling sessions, when the tales of 'Ti Malice and Bouki are recounted. Still older ones make drums out of jars and "arrange a dance." Little girls play with dolls made for them by the older children, while boys with sticks for horses organize themselves into "armies" with their
852 seniors as officers. When a child's teeth fall out, a minor ceremony is performed. As each tooth is detached, the child throws it on the roof of the mother's house, saying:

[539]

"Rat, rat, rat,	"Rat, rat, rat,
M'jet' yun bel' 'ti dent ba 'ou,	I give you a nice little tooth,
Ba'm yun vieille dent."	Give me an old tooth."

871 At this same time a beginning of formal education is made, especially if the child lives in the town or near enough to it to
872 allow him to reach one of the schools there. These schools are under both secular and Catholic auspices, and in them the pupil is instructed in the rudiments of European education, learning to read and write and to do simple problems in arith-
873 metic. If he shows proficiency and the means of his family permit, he may go on to a secondary school at Port-au-Prince or some other center; in the main, however, this schooling is all he ever receives, if he is permitted this much.

861 It is not to be supposed that a child is allowed to grow up
593 without learning how to conduct himself in accordance with
602 the traditional code of Haitian behavior, for the punishment that follows departures from this code is always both prompt and extremely painful, beating with sticks being the mode of correction most often employed. The mechanisms of education and control operate the more effectively because they are exercised by a fairly large group of persons, which includes not only the father and mother of the child, but also his grandparents, his uncles and aunts on both sides of the family, and
603 his older brothers, sisters, and cousins. Less restraint is exer-
593 cised before grandparents than other relations, for while there
604

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

others only half believe, and many look upon these creatures as imaginary but exciting to talk about.

The zombie finds a favored place in the tales children make up to tell one another, and the traditional song played by children on the earth bow or mosquito drum goes:

Maringouin pinga zombie oh, Bobo Maria!
Maringouin pinga zombie!
Maringouin pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie, pinga zombie!
Maringouin pinga zombie! [Ex. 92]

Mosquito beware the zombie, oh, Bobo Maria!
Mosquito beware the zombie!
Mosquito beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie, beware the zombie!
Mosquito beware the zombie!

Or they may sing with great bravado, to the clapping of hands.

Chaingadaing, nou pral mangé zombie!
Chaingadaing, teau teau!
Chaingadaing, nou pral mangé zombie!
Chaingadaing, colocotal!
Chaingadaing, nou pral mangé zombie!
Chaingadaing, kalainkaintaing! [Ex. 93]

Chaingadaing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingadaing, teau teau!
Chaingadaing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingadaing, colocotal!
Chaingadaing, we are going to eat a zombie!
Chaingadaing, kalainkaintaing!

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-RR]

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77. *Playing Théâtre.*

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78. *Playing Bèèsèè Yaya.*

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Like their ancestors in preslavery days, the Haitians had a clear-cut and equitable division of labor between the sexes which was particularly suited to the agrarian life. The pattern of work sharing seems to have been misunderstood by nineteenth-century chroniclers, many of whom complained that the Haitian male napped in the shade while the women performed all the labor. It is quite true that the Haitian peasant woman is a relentless toiler. It may even be, as Sir Harry Johnston declared early in the twentieth century, that "the women are the best part of the Haitian nation." This Englishman wrote glowingly of the Haitian woman's fortitude and energy:

462 [114]

> In the face of all discouragements, with which a bad government clouds their existence the women of Haiti . . . continue to toil, to raise poultry and cattle, till the fields, see to their gardens, make pottery and mats. They cannot stop to reason, but must go on working from three years old to the end of their lives. Such industry (which is almost equally supplemented by that of the peasant husbands) protected should make Haiti one of the richest countries in the world for its size and population.[2]

But as Johnston surmised, the Haitian man, too, treads an unstopping wheel. Although it is the women who are seen crowding the trails and roads on market days, behind the produce they vend is the work of the men. For it is primarily the men who break the ground and plant, cultivate, and harvest the crops. It is the men who cut timber and build the houses, who dig and process lime for plastering the walls, and who thatch the roofs. And the houses do not last forever but must be rebuilt time and again. It is the men who cut and transport wood for fuel, dig red clay from the clay beds for pottery, make the mortars in which the grain is pulverized, build terraces for the gardens, make charcoal, go to sea for fish, and work at the village forge. On the plantations they cut the cane and the sisal. In the city they carry the heavy coffee and sugar bags, load the ships, make bricks, and build roads.

The women, for their part, run the household, care for the children, carry water from the springs, launder at the river's edge, cook, sew, play a supporting role in the field work, carry the crops to market, sell them, and bring back things which the garden does not produce. The woman may be the business manager of the household, and sometimes from the proceeds of special projects she may be able to put aside small savings of her own.

Children slip into their work roles at an early age. Boys and girls as young as three or four may be seen carrying small tins of water on their heads, on their way from the springs, usually in groups with older girls or women. Young girls assume woman's work as soon as they can

857 868

[2] [Johnston, The Negro in The New World. Cf P. 352, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

857 868 handle it; lighter work first, heavier work later. Small boys tend cattle and help the men in the fields.

178 517 The Haitian *habitant* (the peasant) is poorer and hungrier today than he was fifty years ago, or even twenty years ago. In 1955 I visited a number of peasant families I had known since 1932, and with hardly an exception I found them worse off than they had been before. Their tiny landholdings had shrunk. Some land that had been lush had dried [134] up and eroded. Little groves of trees had disappeared. Clothes had become shabby, and many of the men could no longer afford to wear the inexpensive traditional blue denim costume that was once so common. In the cities there is evidence that some of the elite have improved their life. But in a large part of the countryside the peasants are finding that the old system that served them for a hundred and fifty years can no longer feed them adequately.

423 178 One of the adverse forces is the shrinking of landholdings. Once a peasant family may have owned and worked fifty or seventy acres of ground. But it is traditional that on a man's death his land is divided [428] among the heirs. If a man with fifty acres of land has two sons, each son inherits approximately twenty-five acres. On their deaths, the land 423 is again subdivided. But even this is not the whole story. A UNESCO 427 survey of the Marbial Valley region in south Haiti in 1948–1949 reported:

> At the turn of the century there were numerous peasant families who lived in relatively easy circumstances, and who possessed as much as thirty to forty *carreaux* * [425] of land planted with coffee and subsistence crops. The heirs of these lands, when they found themselves in straitened circumstances, would sell some parcels of it in the hope of being able to increase their holdings again later on. In the worst cases they became the tenants of absentee landlords who lived in the cities. Nowadays, not only is the size of holdings very small, sometimes only one-eighth of a *carreau*, but they are also scattered, and most peasants are obliged to go from one place to another to cultivate their various owned, rented, or share-cropped fields.[§]

671 895 Haitian law—the civil code—does not recognize the rights of illegitimate children born after a legal marriage. But Haitian custom does. 423 As a result, a Haitian who has a *placée* wife in addition to his "legal" 848 wife may circumvent the law by deeding to her a portion of his gardens during his lifetime, thereby diminishing his holdings.

423 691 Furthermore, many landholdings are not clearly defined. There are few accurate surveys, and often the boundaries are vague. Titles to many of the holdings cannot be clearly established, and as a result there are constant lawsuits. To pay the expenses of defending his interests in court, a Haitian may have to sell a strip of his land.

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* A carreau is about three and a third acres.

§ [UNESCO, The Haiti Pilot Project, p. 18. Cf. P352, Category 116. -- Anglist]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

baby: when she does she substitutes a mode of feeding on fruits and solids which favors digestive disturbance and nutritive diseases in the infant. 853

At the age when children of the élite would be starting to school, peasant children are beginning work in the fields, hoeing, weeding, and carrying, always under the tropical sun. Cuts and bruises, sometimes serious, are improperly treated when they occur and so lead to tetanus or to enormous ulcers. 857 752 184 164

Hard work and a simple mode of outdoor life prove, in Haiti at least, not to be the keys to good health which a romantic might fancy them. Haiti has been one of the unhealthiest places in the world. One feels that it has been lucky to escape such scourges as typhus, cholera, and bubonic plague; that smallpox has not been violent in its epidemics, and that the people developed an immunity to yellow fever. It has, indeed, been luck rather than cleanliness and proper medical care which has protected the people in these instances. 164

In 1838 Boyer founded a hospital school at Port-au-Prince, giving it the name of The National School of Medicine. It did not function as a school, however, until 1860 when Geffrard reorganized it and gave it life. Geffrard also sent young men to Europe to study, installed laboratories of physics and chemistry in the upper schools of the capital, and made possible the appearance of an intellectual élite.[11] 874

The next burst of energy in matters of hygiene came around 1890 when, under the influence of Dr. Léon Audain, the first health records were kept, and the spirit of scientific research reached Haitian medicine. 744 742

From 1804 to 1860, then, there was practically no proper care for sick people. In the latter years of the century a few trained physicians, with sadly deficient equipment, practiced in the towns. Not until after the Occupation was the rural mass of the population even touched by the medical knowledge which had been developing all over the civilized world for decades. Clinics, wholesale vaccinations and inoculations, and campaigns of enlightenment have in the past twenty years worked wonders. The Vodun practitioner, however, still is the "expert" who treats most illnesses, and healing remains one of his major functions. 744 759 756

11. Geffrard established schools of law, music, painting, and navigation. The latter two collapsed. The same president founded the high schools of Port-au-Prince, Jeanel, and Gonaïves. 873

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

[History of Haiti in 17th-18th Centuries — The Haitian white population]

cannot read the extended narrative of the young Comte de C***, reprinted by de Vassière, without questioning this myth of the idyllic life of the Haitian Créole, even though allowing for the disdain with which an exiled Parisian dandy of 1730 would regard the inhabitants of outlying possessions, and allowing also for the savory wit of the man, which undoubtedly led him to underscore the more diverting situations which he encountered.[24] 175 181 563

Mention must be made at this point of the two great divisions of the white population which, as the colonizing period continued, were created by the distinction between those born on the island and those who had migrated there. These divisions cut across the two categories of urban and country dwellers, both of which numbered Haitian-born and native European members. At the time of the French Revolution about three quarters of the whites on the island had been born outside the colony, while of those born in the colony, women comprised the major portion.[25] Haitian-born persons were known by the designation *Créole*, which, according to a definition of the period, included all those "who have first seen the light of day in Santo Domingo" and was, as it is today, a term employed in all the West Indies and in Louisiana.[26] This designation was by no means restricted to the whites, however, for there were Créole Negroes as well as Créole whites; at the present time in Haiti a distinction is even drawn between locally grown "créole" rice and that which is imported! 175 563

It is common knowledge that slavery not only affects those who are held in bondage, but deeply influences the master-class as well. In Haiti the role played by the institution of slavery in the formation of the character and personalities of Créole children brought up in a setting of servility, cupidity, brutality, and terror must have been of the utmost importance. The bad temper and domineering nature of Créole youths is commented on again and again by writers of the period. Owing to the unhealthy climate and the failure to 567 175 155 563 858 571

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

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563 567 175 155 858 591

maintain adequate hygienic conditions, the health of these children was usually poor, so that from earliest infancy they were spoiled by their parents and servants; their least wishes were gratified, and their least complaints immediately rectified so as to make them petty tyrants in their households. This tyranny was most often exercised over the family slaves. Regardless of the assiduous care these young despots received, and despite the adulation lavished upon their young charges, the Negro servants were seldom sufficiently prompt or adequate in their attentiveness to escape the punishments, often severe, that were meted out to them at the behest of their young masters. This tyranny extended to the play-life of the young Haitian-born white. Surrounded only by the slave children of the plantation, he commanded his contemporaries even more imperiously than his parents commanded the grown slaves.

> "Whatever he saw, he wanted, whatever was shown him he demanded; and if some fatality brought it about that one of his small companions resisted him and he became irritated, they would hurry from all sides in response to his cries and those of the young unfortunate, who, his color having destined him for submission, learned soon enough that he would be forced to give way, perhaps even being meted some punishment to penalize the disobedience of one who had not yet the instinct for servitude."[27]

175 563 567 591 (859)

Grown to manhood, the young Créole continued to act as master of all he surveyed. Imperious, quick-tempered, spoiled, his life lived in large part among slaves, when his sex drive stirred, he took what slave women pleased him. Eventually he married, to be tormented with the thoughts of the possible infidelity of his wife; the more tortured because of his extreme vanity and because, while demanding faithfulness from his spouse, he was continuing his affairs with his Negro women.

(159) Yet he had some excellences of character, as well. "Frank,

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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595 The fact that Haitian law recognizes only monogamy in-
593 troduces numerous overtones into the daily life of the people.
671 If a church-wed wife discovers that her husband makes periodic visits to another woman, whether *placée* or not, serious quarreling between the legal wife and her husband follows. The "wife" may refuse to give food to her husband or to speak to him, and will upbraid him before their children, calling him *vagabond* — a strong word of opprobrium to the Haitian — and other terms which her facile tongue readily finds at hand. The status of the children under this dual family system is another reflection of the values it engenders. And though the account of this given in Mirebalais represents a folk-reaction rather than official procedure — for according to officials in the capital it does not exist in Haitian law — its value as a living belief which gives insight into the relevant attitudes outweighs its possible lack of validity in a legal sense.

858 In Mirebalais it is held that there are what may be spoken of as three classes of offspring. The first, which may be termed "natural" children, are those born to a man by his *placée* wife or wives before his Church marriage, or to a *placée* woman whose mating with him was later legalized by the rites of Church and State. The second class, the "legitimate" children, comprises those born to couples married in the strict legal sense of the word. Finally, a third category consists
[858] of those who may be called "illegitimate" children, and includes all the offspring of any *placée* spouse of a man taken by him after his Church marriage, or children of any of his earlier *placée* wives born subsequent to this marriage. None of these classes of children are at any special social disadvantage, and all not only inherit the African deities of their father, but must also fulfill their spiritual obligations toward him after his death by wearing mourning and performing all other required rituals.

532 Legally, however, the matter is different, for only the chil-
[illegible]
858
851 dren born to a marriage recorded by the justice of the peace

J: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

belong to the father, who, in turn, is the legally recognized 582
father of all the offspring of his wife unless he divorces her — 671
something which, because of Church regulations, occurs but 858
rarely. Children born outside legal marriage have no right to 851
the name of their father. Such a one is entered under his moth- 848
er's name in the record of births, though he may and often does 858
take his father's name in school or later in life, this ultimately 551
becoming the name by which he is known and which he hands
on to his children. It is in the inheritance of the father's prop- 428
erty that children born of the various types of matings are 858
said to be most strongly differentiated, though it was particu- 848
larly with this method of distributing heritable goods re-
ported in Mirebalais that officials in the capital disagreed.
The assertion is made that while the children of a "legal"
wife inherit three quarters of the estate, and the other "nat-
ural" children receive one fourth, the "illegitimate" off-
spring have no legal right to any of the dead man's property.
They must either be provided for by their father before his
death or be aided on occasion by a natural brother who has
inherited from their common father and feels a moral obliga-
tion toward these children of their father. Children of plural 595
wives call each other by the terms "brother" and "sister," 593
and in some instances they get on fairly well together. More [601]
generally, however, their attitudes toward one another are
colored by those of their mothers, so that verbal if not physical
encounters may take place when they meet.

Where, as perhaps in the majority of cases, there is a 593
monogamous union, "legal" or "*placée*," cemented by
mutual affection and mutual interest in the future of the
children, life goes on calmly. Each spouse performs the tasks
allotted by custom, and the children are reared in an atmo-
sphere which varies with the fortunes and temperaments of
those who make up the household. Fathers are said to prefer
their daughters, and mothers their sons, among their children,
but for this the Haitian has no explanation other than
the phrase: "This is natural."

1: Herskovits E-4, 8 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

596 parents are friendly toward each other, so that the conflict
581 that might result from a division of authority rarely develops.
603 Were it otherwise, it could easily happen that a person who had been ordered, or forbidden, to do something against his own wishes by the head of his paternal family would plead with the head of his mother's group and receive support to justify his disobedience. To most Haitians such a hypothetical incident was amusing to contemplate, for the elders are said always to work together. Rare is the occasion when one interferes with the decision of another, and never to the knowledge of the subject of such a decision.

596 A family elder who has no sons to care for him is well
888 looked after by the other members of the group "until the
626 grave." Fear as well as a moral obligation prompts this. "He might curse you," it is explained, or "He might say: 'Watch out for your own old age! You mistreated me in my old age, and you will suffer in yours.'" Such pronouncements are greatly dreaded, especially because of his control over the supernatural forces that aid or harm the family and its members.

428 The closeness of the tie between social institutions and economic life is most evident in the matter of inheritance. For though the prestige that accrues from the possession of wealth makes for strong competition through the exercise of individual initiative, yet supporting the struggle of an individual for the augmentation of his holdings are the forces of family sanction and family aid, while his very start in life is obtained primarily through the help of his relatives during their lifetime or the property he inherits from them at their death.

428 As has been suggested, all a man's children by a "legally"
858 married wife inherit from him, or, if he has not espoused a wife by a Church wedding, the children of his *placée* wife or wives receive his property. Whether or not it is true that the
428 "legitimate" children inherit three quarters of the posses-
858 sions of their father, the "natural" children one fourth, and
769

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

the "illegitimate" none, it would seem that the children of the legal marriage have a "social duty" to care for those of a *placée* wife who receive nothing, a moral obligation which is met because of a far stronger sanction than the fear of gossip. The belief holds that the dead will deeply resent an injustice to any of his children and will cause misfortune to befall a man who does not fulfill his duty toward those who should have shared in the property of their father.

Those who do inherit divide the land, flocks, herds, and all other possessions of the deceased equally, regardless of age or sex. If a man is wealthy, he may draw up a will providing for the disposal of such items of his property as under Haitian law it is not mandatory to apportion among his children. Where there is not enough land to permit each of the survivors to work an individual plot, this may be sold and the money distributed, or those who retain the land may buy an equivalent acreage elsewhere for the others, so that some of the members of the family leave the habitation to make new homes of their own in the manner already described. Similarly, though in dividing the land it is customary to allot a good parcel to the son who has worked it, if the other land is much worse and the division is disputed, an arrangement paralleling the one described may be made to allow of a fairer division. When an heir who, for instance, has taken up permanent residence in Port-au-Prince wishes to dispose of his share instead of returning to work it or of having it cultivated for him, he sells it to his brothers and sisters, or, rarely, to a stranger, for all effort is made to retain ancestral land within the family. Similarly, a part of the property of the dead may be sold to meet claims on his estate—debts or funeral costs or the expense of erecting a tomb. This would be particularly true if these expenses had been met by one of the heirs, in which case he must be compensated before the estate may be divided. Consultation with the family elders always precedes such action, however.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

597 foster-father and child may continue friendly if the young person has been well treated. Such a child repays the cost of keeping him by helping in the garden and by running errands. If his parents wish him to receive uninterrupted schooling at the secular or Catholic school, they must recompense the person responsible for the child for any cost this may be to him.

86 It is in a manner such as described in this chapter, then, that the children of Mirebalais and, to a large degree, of other parts of Haiti are born and live the earlier years of their lives, completing the training which equips them for participation in their culture. The boy has learned how to farm or to carry on whatever other calling he will inherit from his father, while the girl has been prepared for marriage and the work of the household. By means of their play-life both boys and girls have learned the technique of sex behavior. In the matter of attitudes toward other members of the family and toward the ancestral spirits, as well as in their relations to the saints of the Church and the gods of the *vodun* cult, they are also prepared, having in the latter case learned to sing and dance, and, if young men, to play the drums that sound the rhythms of the *vodun* rites. It is at this point in their lives, then, that these young people as adults take their proper places in their society, establishing their own families and carrying on the tradition of their people.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1397 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

853 [illegible] not come, the mother goes to a woman specialist who
[989] knows the herbs which are believed to induce the flow. When
[854] the mother is ill or tubercular, the infant is given to a wet-nurse. Once he has begun to nurse, he is fed whenever he cries, and as soon as he can sit up he is given the same food as
846 the mother eats. For the first two or three months after the
262 birth of her child a woman refrains from eating egg-plant, fresh fish — although she may eat salt fish — white beans or any others larger than Congo peas, pork, lard, and all fruit.
304 The ears of a female child are pierced when she is about a
30 month old for the gold ear-rings which are worn by girls and women of all ages. If the parents cannot afford them at the time, however, thread is placed in the holes until a sum sufficient to provide this important trinket has been accumulated.

856 A child is taught to sit up beginning with the end of the
861 third or fourth month, and by the time he is six or seven months old he can sit quite well; girls are believed to be more precocious than boys in acquiring this skill. When about ten months old, or sooner, an older sister, a little girl, or the father or mother takes the child by the hand and teaches him to walk, later allowing him to hold one end of a stick for sup-
[754] port. A child is never left alone, for fear of the evil eye or of
[769] werewolves, so that a mother does not even cross the threshold of her house without taking her baby with her; while if for some reason she cannot avoid leaving her child while she is in the yard, an empty bottle is placed near its pillow as a pro-
856 tective device. Teething is a matter of importance, since the
855 attitudes of the parents toward a child may be determined by
763 the first teeth to appear. If these are cut in the upper jaw, it is said that the child's mother will survive his father, and when this occurs, the mother takes every precaution to conceal the fact from her husband, so he will not hate the child. Others hold, however, that the appearance of an upper tooth first denotes that either the father or the mother is soon to die.[6]

856 Instruction starts early in the life of a child. Beginning with
861

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

his fourth or fifth month, he is reprimanded for laziness if late in sitting up, and when he is taught to walk his parents call out: "Come, lazy one! Come on!" He receives no physical punishment, however, until somewhat older. Thus, for example, if after a child can crawl he is told not to go beyond the threshold, he is scolded the first two or three times he disobeys, but after this he is beaten with a small stick on the buttocks or thighs. Similar means are used to teach him at the same age not to go near the fire, to avoid the thorny cacti used to fence gardens, not to put things in his mouth, and — especially because of black magic — not to pick up anything from the ground. Training for bowel and bladder control is begun shortly after birth and is continued at every opportunity the mother may have to pick up the child, so that he is usually fairly well trained when a year old, though complete control is achieved only after two years or more. A child who wets his mat is beaten, but "not too hard."

Baptism takes place when all is in readiness for the ceremony, a matter of a month or two after birth, unless the child is seriously ill, in which case he is baptized immediately. The fee of 2.50 gourdes to the civil officer who registers the birth is paid by the father. The godfather pays a similar amount to the priest for baptizing the infant, and in addition, if he desires and is able, he may both aid the godmother in meeting the expenses of dressing the child and give the mother a gift. The godmother furnishes the child with a shirt, a dress, a bonnet — "a pretty one" — stockings, shoes, and, if she can afford it, silk for a ribbon-trimmed coverlet. These gifts are obligatory, and even where a hasty baptism of a sick child has made it impossible to provide properly for his outfitting, if he survives, his mother is given a present of money by both godparents so she can procure this finery.

As in most Catholic countries, the godparents play an important role in the life of their godchild. Not only do they "stand in the place of father and mother" at his baptism, but

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

hide-and-seek and enjoy story-telling sessions, when the tales of 'Ti Malice and Bouki are recounted. Still older ones make drums out of jars and "arrange a dance." Little girls play with dolls made for them by the older children, while boys with sticks for horses organize themselves into "armies" with their seniors as officers. When a child's teeth fall out, a minor ceremony is performed. As each tooth is detached, the child throws it on the roof of the mother's house, saying:

"*Rat, rat, rat,*	"Rat, rat, rat,
M'jet' yun bel' 'ti dent	I give you a nice little
ba 'ou,	tooth,
Ba'm yun vieille dent."	Give me an old tooth."

At this same time a beginning of formal education is made, especially if the child lives in the town or near enough to it to allow him to reach one of the schools there. These schools are under both secular and Catholic auspices, and in them the pupil is instructed in the rudiments of European education, learning to read and write and to do simple problems in arithmetic. If he shows proficiency and the means of his family permit, he may go on to a secondary school at Port-au-Prince or some other center; in the main, however, this schooling is all he ever receives, if he is permitted this much.

It is not to be supposed that a child is allowed to grow up without learning how to conduct himself in accordance with the traditional code of Haitian behavior, for the punishment that follows departures from this code is always both prompt and extremely painful, beating with sticks being the mode of correction most often employed. The mechanisms of education and control operate the more effectively because they are exercised by a fairly large group of persons, which includes not only the father and mother of the child, but also his grandparents, his uncles and aunts on both sides of the family, and his older brothers, sisters, and cousins. Less restraint is exercised before grandparents than other relations, for while there

1: Herskovits E-4, 6 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

17 fact that a family will often strike out for itself, deserting [584] the parental home, show a European independence foreign to native African thought. Yet the arrangement of meal-times, [864] and the fact that a wife rarely eats with her husband, are [593] African, as are the modes of correction, especially the feeling [841] that flogging with a stick is the best disciplinary method. Indeed, the characteristic snap of the fingers employed by the [201] Haitian to indicate a beating is exactly that which is used in [681] Dahomey to signify beheading! In the attitude toward children African traditions have been warped by European custom, which has introduced a certain hardness of feeling that, [855] whatever the cost, children must be brought in line with social convention, together with a resulting harshness of treatment that is anything but African.

17 Another important facet of Haitian life in which the effect of contact is telling includes art and recreational activities. 322 Perhaps because of the conditions of slavery, or the difficulties of life after independence had been attained, much of these forms of African tradition has been lost, not to be replaced by corresponding borrowings from European sources. Wood-carving, an outstanding element in the æsthetic life of West Africa, is almost entirely absent. Near Mirebalais lives a man who can carve a pipe in the likeness of a human face, but there is no similarity between the products of his craft and West African figurines or masks, and he is thought of as an unusual person whose carving is an interesting but not socially significant avocation. It was stated, though without adequate corroboration, that before the Marine occupation Mirebalais boasted *vodun* drums on which heads "like the ones on these pipes" had been carved. Today the only form of decorative work in wood to be seen is the scroll-work designs which act as ventilating devices over doorways. They are done with the jigsaws of the carpenters, and no fertility of conception or felicity in composition marks these artistically crude efforts.

Other African crafts, which, though essentially utilitarian 000

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

Parents are generally kind to their children, so far as physical
855 punishment is concerned. The average peasant child can hardly
861 properly be said to be "brought up": he merely grows, eats whatever
his family eats or whatever fruits he can pick up, and learns his place
152 in the community as he matures. In anger, parents are likely to use in correction the first thing that comes to hand. There is a surprising callousness to pain among these generally kindly people: they beat their donkeys unmercifully, and strap harness over open sores; they carry chickens, head down and feet tied together and mouths gaping, for miles in the sun; they revel in gory cockfights. If, therefore, a parent is minded to beat his child, he will probably do a thorough
[578] job of it. A peasant woman, pommeling her son with a broomstick, replied to the protests of a white passer-by, "*Li nègre; li pas fait li mal.*" ("He's a Negro; it won't hurt him.") The interference of a stranger in the beating of a wife by her man, armed with a club, was resented by both man and woman as an interference with a purely family quarrel.

831 The concept of sexual continence is lacking among the peasants.
834 Sex, indeed, hardly enters the realm of morality except in connection
864 with adulterous dalliance of one man with another's woman. There is no virtue in abstaining from sex relations when the sexual urge is strong. Mothers tell love stories in all their frank details to their young daughters, and some who care about such matters are adept in all lore connected with stimulating and satisfying a man's desire.[5]
[342] Since huts are small and the whole family sleeps in the same room, children have ample opportunity to observe the sexual life of their parents. If a girl, as a result of her own experiments, has a child born to her, there is no disgrace. Practically every peasant is "illegitimate," so that the term means nothing; a baby will soon be old enough to assist in the work of the home, thus becoming an asset. It is expected that as soon as a youth grows up he will find a mate and begin a family of his own.

241 The family is as important an element of peasant life as formal
431 marriage is unimportant. It is the economic unit. Ever since the days
593 of Pétion Haitian economy has been one of small things: even the crops are small subsistence crops of maize, millet, beans, rice, yams, and frequently trees of bananas, plantains, and coffee, which require no particular cultivation. Enough coffee has been produced in Haiti for annual export ever since 1804, but until recent years the beans

5. See Zora Neale Hurston, *Tell My Horse*, pp. 22 ff.

I: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

et preserve li cont'e tout mal. Ba li courville pou' moin. Yun jou', c'est li-même qui allé remplacé nou' pou' servi nou' quan' nou' pas pè la. — O spirits, you who after the Great Master protect and deliver, I come to thank you. At the same time here is the child [you are] to protect for me. Do not let werewolves gain power over him. Grant him strength, health, and preserve him against all evil. Give him courage for me. One day he himself will replace us to serve you when we are no longer here."

851 852 539 782

Inasmuch as it is always necessary to invoke all three categories of supernatural beings, a similar invocation is pronounced for the dead and the spirits of twins. The rite, however, may be even simpler than this. If the family house of worship is near by, and the relationship group is one which numbers important members of the *vodun* cult, the child may be taken into this house, water thrown on the ground three times, and a candle lighted. In such cases no invocation is pronounced.

851 852 782 [764]

Most mothers nurse their infants until they are about eighteen months old, though children may be weaned when as young as a year. Weaning is accomplished in a day or two. On the day selected, a bitter plant called *lalai* is spread on the mother's breasts, and when the child asks and is given the breast and refuses it because of the bitter taste, his favorite food is at once offered as a substitute. So efficacious is this method that one day's training is ordinarily enough. As a further precaution the child is not allowed to sleep with his mother for three or four nights after being weaned, so that he cannot take the breast at night, and is only given a place in the mother's bed after her milk has ceased to flow.

862 ● [824]

The earlier years of a child are in the main free from care, and, with due allowance for the differences in individual temperaments and family traditions, he is given much his own way. Young children make "mud food" and build play-houses. When somewhat older, they organize games of

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his fourth or fifth month, he is reprimanded for laziness if late in sitting up, and when he is taught to walk his parents call out: "Come, lazy one! Come on!" He receives no physical punishment, however, until somewhat older. Thus, for example, if after a child can crawl he is told not to go beyond the threshold, he is scolded the first two or three times he disobeys, but after this he is beaten with a small stick on the buttocks or thighs. Similar means are used to teach him at the same age not to go near the fire, to avoid the thorny cacti used to fence gardens, not to put things in his mouth, and — especially because of black magic — not to pick up anything from the ground. Training for bowel and bladder control is begun shortly after birth and is continued at every opportunity the mother may have to pick up the child, so that he is usually fairly well trained when a year old, though complete control is achieved only after two years or more. A child who wets his mat is beaten, but "not too hard."

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1: Herskovits 2-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

869 [1934] deities, and they are taught what must be done when a sacrifice is to be given. Parents differ widely in this as in other practices, and while some make it a point to impart this information both at this time and later in the life of the child, others refuse to answer questions, and the child must learn from what he himself observes.

864 Children in the valley of Mirebalais receive little formal sex education. Shortly before marriage young women are told enough of the mechanism of the sexual life to guard against their being frightened when their husbands come to them. As early as seven years of age, however, girls are cautioned not to permit boys to play with them sexually, while a girl who reaches puberty is carefully watched, not being permitted to go for water or firewood or on other errands unless accompanied by some child, usually younger than herself. No explanation for this is given; she is simply forbidden to leave the house alone, though eventually she learns the reasons from other girls. Neither special ritual nor special instruction follows first menstruation; the girl merely apprises her mother of the fact. She herself has learned of the phenomenon by observing her mother and her older friends and consequently is not troubled by her initial menstrual flow, but rather is pleased that she has now become a woman.

864 881

864 This absence of formal sex education does not stand seriously in the way of the young in learning the technique of sexual intercourse. Boys of six and seven surreptitiously "experiment" with girls of their own age in the sex act, despite parental warnings. This ceases, however, as soon as the girls are nubile, for then they are under strict supervision. Young boys are often given information concerning the technique of sexual intercourse by their older brothers or friends, when these gather in groups and discuss among themselves their amorous adventures. Another manner in which the child obtains sex education is by observing the behavior of his parents. Children usually share their parents' bed until they are six or

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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eight years old, and the same room until they are ten or twelve. They are counted on to sleep soundly enough, but it happens that a child sometimes awakens and, unknown to his parents, observes them. Though brothers and sisters sometimes continue to sleep together until the age of puberty, it is said that attempts at intercourse between them rarely occur, for, according to Haitians, the children gradually sense that this is regarded as bad, and a boy approaching puberty who wishes to satisfy his desire for sex play goes to find a "little neighbor." Later, when the nubile girls are withdrawn from the company of the boys, the latter play with younger girls who have not yet reached puberty, or carry on "affairs" with those older than themselves; indeed, it is from these latter that they obtain full knowledge of sexual procedure.

What has been said concerning the growth and training of children applies mainly to those who live with their parents. No discussion of the development of the child, however, can neglect to mention the widespread institution of a form of quasi-adoption, found not only in Mirebalais, but in all other parts of Haiti. By this is not meant legal adoption, though that, too, is known and at times occurs. Quasi-adoption involves children who are called "*'ti moun qui 'reté à caille 'ous* — small folk who stay at your house," or, more briefly, *'ti moun*. They are the children, often of peasants, "given" to friends who live in a town or, as is the case with some families of Mirebalais, "given" to friends or acquaintances living in the capital. To what extent this relationship offers a means for the exploitation of children in other parts of Haiti cannot be said, though tales of abuses of it, especially in Port-au-Prince, are heard. To give a person a child in this manner is in Mirebalais regarded as a token of friendship, and such children as were observed, though poorly clothed, were fed not much differently from the children of the families with which they were sent to live. When the *'ti moun* grows older, he leaves and returns to his own home, though the relationship between

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

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855 punishment is concerned. The average peasant child can hardly
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in correction the first thing that comes to hand. There is a surprising
callousness to pain among these generally kindly people: they beat
their donkeys unmercifully, and strap harness over open sores; they
carry chickens, head down and feet tied together and mouths gaping,
for miles in the sun; they revel in gory cockfights. If, therefore, a
parent is minded to beat his child, he will probably do a thorough
[578] job of it. A peasant woman, pommeling her son with a broomstick,
replied to the protests of a white passer-by, "*Li nèguè; li pas fait li mal.*"
("He's a Negro; it won't hurt him.") The interference of a stranger
in the beating of a wife by her man, armed with a club, was resented
by both man and woman as an interference with a purely family
quarrel.

The concept of sexual continence is lacking among the peasants.
831 Sex, indeed, hardly enters the realm of morality except in connection
834 with adulterous dalliance of one man with another's woman. There
● 864 is no virtue in abstaining from sex relations when the sexual urge is
strong. Mothers tell love stories in all their frank details to their
young daughters, and some who care about such matters are adept
in all lore connected with stimulating and satisfying a man's desire.[5]
[342] Since huts are small and the whole family sleeps in the same room,
children have ample opportunity to observe the sexual life of their
parents. If a girl, as a result of her own experiments, has a child born
to her, there is no disgrace. Practically every peasant is "illegitimate,"
so that the term means nothing; a baby will soon be old enough to
assist in the work of the home, thus becoming an asset. It is expected
that as soon as a youth grows up he will find a mate and begin a
family of his own.

241 The family is as important an element of peasant life as formal
431 marriage is unimportant. It is the economic unit. Ever since the days
593 of Pétion Haitian economy has been one of small things: even the
crops are small subsistence crops of maize, millet, beans, rice, yams,
and frequently trees of bananas, plantains, and coffee, which require
no particular cultivation. Enough coffee has been produced in Haiti
for annual export ever since 1804, but until recent years the beans

5. See Zora Neale Hurston, *Tell My Horse*, pp. 220 ff.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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175 581 588 family and to make only "sensible" marriages, was a fact rarely glimpsed by the critics. A good example of their attitude is the statement of the pious English Quaker, John Candler, in 1842:

[114] But few of the merchants or principal inhabitants are married men: concubinage is common, and unhappily, regarded as not dishonorable. Whenever a ball is given, or a large party invited, the invitation is equally extended to "Monsieur and Madame ——" or to "Monsieur —— and his lady"; and by this compounding of moral distinctions among the upper classes, the evil descends to the lower ranks and becomes perpetuated.[3]

[167] And later Candler accuses Haitian mothers of being "utterly dead to all moral considerations," because they do not take pains to instill (middle-class English) ideals of morality, or teach the young the evils of "wayward passion."

175 114 581 588 592 Not even Haitian authors were willing to accept placage as a desirable practice. Beaubrun Ardouin explained that the color prejudice of colonial times was responsible for what he clearly considered an evil.[4] "The aristocracy of skin" made placage prevail over "divine law," for whites would not often in colonial times marry colored women. The same prejudice in the republic kept light-colored men from marrying darker women, but not from living with them. Ardouin believed that Haiti would gain infinitely by adopting "*les bonnes mœurs*," not on moral grounds, but for practical reasons. With regular marriage, he says, there would result a greater fixity of the conjugal state and more confidence on the part of the women, "who too often discover that they are only the satisfaction of a whim"; also the men would reflect more upon the consequence of an infidelity which, in dividing families, might separate children from father or mother and so greatly weaken the delicate relations of paternal love and filial piety. Still another consideration was political: the dispersion which resulted in the inheritance of property when many mothers and children compete. Because of placage unions, quite a number of estates had been reduced to almost nothing.

175 581 588 643 As the century progressed, the custom of placage prevailed from the President down to the humblest peasant. The women of the President were visited publicly by him; sometimes he was accompanied on his visits by a staff or selected officers of state. The critical

3. *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 24, 25.
4. *La Géographie de l'Île d'Haïti*, pp. 181, 96 ff.

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
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489 mind dust, ruts, and a steady succession of bumps. To travel in the
[49] average hired car, driven by a Haitian, is one of the grim experiences of life. The driver speeds as if pursued by a demon, while the peasant pedestrians leap for safety into the ditches; the unfortunate passenger is moved to close his eyes to avoid seeing the inevitable crash which does not come. The most comfortable means of travel if one is going
[36] only to towns is by ship, for practically all of Haiti's towns are seaports.

162 To know the towns is still not to know Haiti, however, for two
577 million or more Haitians live in the rural regions. These are the people. And if they are ignorant and not too clean, they are nevertheless models of kindly generosity. It is the proud boast even of the *élite* that one may travel the length and breadth of the land in perfect safety, in no danger of life or of personal property.

105 Many homely sights linger in the mind: women washing the family clothes in the stream, laughing and gossiping with their neighbors; men and women talking in animated fashion to themselves, arguing, cajoling, explaining as they walk along; individuals carrying a single flower, simply because it is beautiful; barefoot women, gnarled of hand and lined of face, kneeling in the Catholic church at prayer; taxi drivers who cruise by, hissing in order to attract the attention of a visitor who obviously can afford to ride instead of walk; an apparently ceaseless procession of patient donkeys, always laden, sometimes ridden by women, sometimes urged along from behind; the so-called buses each with its witty or its florid name (Plaisance, Éclair, Grâce-à-Dieu, Polichinelle, Sauve-qui-peut, Montparnasse), which like glorified buckboards jostle woodenly from the town to country hamlets; the winsome, open smile and gay laughter of a peasant boy; the ingratiating charm of a sleeping baby in the noise of the market place. To know the average Haitian is to feel a warm affection for him. His life is never easy, yet he bears it all with true beauty of spirit. If *le bon Dieu* sends distress, he will also make it possible for distress to be borne.

576 The people are polite, whether to each other or to strangers. A younger person greets an older one as *compère* or *commère*—literally, godfather or godmother; to his equal he says "*frère*" or "*m'sieu*."
● [367] Sometimes one sees a local patriarch instructing little children in
[604] "deportment." This courtesy extends to hospitality: a stranger is almost sure to be offered shelter and food wherever he stops.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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are no customary playmate or joking relationships between grandparents and grandchildren, a man would rather go to his grandparents when in trouble than to his parents or uncles, because of the greater indulgence they show him. 603 593 604

At about the age of seven or eight the children's play-life is invaded by the serious work which they must increasingly assume. According to their sex, they are instructed by father or mother, each parent teaching the child the work he will be most occupied with as he matures. For some children, naturally, this education is deferred longer than for others, but, as a rule, boys of four or five may be seen playing about the field "helping" father by bringing him a leaf with which to light his cigarette, or "hoeing" in company with him, while girls are early permitted the pleasure of accompanying their mothers to market. By observing his father at work and by helping in small tasks the boy gradually learns how to do a man's work, until at about the age of fifteen he himself can cultivate a garden. Two or three years later he is given a field of his own and seed with which to sow it. The produce from it he brings to his mother to sell for him, and she keeps what money it brings, so that he will have his savings when he wishes to marry. Little girls, for whom acquaintance with the techniques of selling in the market is desirable, are given small articles to dispose of, and the proceeds belong to them, though some mothers demand an accounting from the young tradeswomen as a further measure of training. A woman also teaches her daughter to sew, to cook, and to wash and iron, instruction which is continued until a girl, ready to be given in marriage, is able to manage all of a woman's work. 868 [454]

If a family can afford the expense, children begin to be prepared for their first communion at eight or ten years of age; but members of poor families must wait until the money can be found — which means that some classes of candidates include grown men and women. At about the customary age for confirmation the children are informed of the family vodun 852 869 869 794

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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especially by the drummers. Experience among other Caribbean Negro cultures and in Africa itself has failed to reveal greater skill in calling forth intricate rhythms from batteries of drums than can be found at any Haitian religious gathering. The enthusiasm with which a man takes his place at a drum, the manner in which he loses himself in his drumming, the skill with which he maintains the time of his complex beats in common with two other drummers and those who manipulate the rattles and the iron, bespeak long training and a passionate devotion to the art. The same is true of dancing. The best drummer, the finest dancer, hold positions of esteem in the community, and on occasion their fame will go beyond the valley, an occurrence as unusual as it is valued. The excellence of the drumming and dancing and the concomitant artistry in song can be understood when one considers the age at which training is begun in these arts. At Mirebalais an infant of no more than two years has been seen to dance creditably, while a young boy of six gave a demonstration of drumming that spoke eloquently of his promise as a drummer of talent. Before every *vodun* dance the boys take over the drums while the younger girls dance to their rhythms. They are watched with a critical eye by their elders, who from time to time correct them or praise those who do well.

The accompanying musical forms are almost entirely African in their rhythmic structure, but European influence is traceable in their melodic line, which varies from unchanged European folk-melodies to purely African songs. In the use of the falsetto, however, in the statement of a theme by a leader and its repetition by a chorus, and in the countless modulations introduced into the song, the singing is entirely African, as are the postures struck by those singing.

The importance of the dance is apparent from the large range of dances. Of *vodun* dances there are the *avalou*, or *yanvalou*, a word meaning supplication in the speech of Whydah; the specialized steps for the various Rada and Pétro gods; for

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

Like their ancestors in preslavery days, the Haitians had a clear-cut and equitable division of labor between the sexes which was particularly suited to the agrarian life. The pattern of work sharing seems to have been misunderstood by nineteenth-century chroniclers, many of whom complained that the Haitian male napped in the shade while the women performed all the labor. It is quite true that the Haitian peasant woman is a relentless toiler. It may even be, as Sir Harry Johnston declared early in the twentieth century, that "the women are the best part of the Haitian nation." This Englishman wrote glowingly of the Haitian woman's fortitude and energy:

> In the face of all discouragements, with which a bad government clouds their existence the women of Haiti . . . continue to toil, to raise poultry and cattle, till the fields, see to their gardens, make pottery and mats. They cannot stop to reason, but must go on working from three years old to the end of their lives. Such industry (which is almost equally supplemented by that of the peasant husbands) protected should make Haiti one of the richest countries in the world for its size and population.[1]

But as Johnston surmised, the Haitian man, too, treads an unstopping wheel. Although it is the women who are seen crowding the trails and roads on market days, behind the produce they vend is the work of the men. For it is primarily the men who break the ground and plant, cultivate, and harvest the crops. It is the men who cut timber and build the houses, who dig and process lime for plastering the walls, and who thatch the roofs. And the houses do not last forever but must be rebuilt time and again. It is the men who cut and transport wood for fuel, dig red clay from the clay beds for pottery, make the mortars in which the grain is pulverized, build terraces for the gardens, make charcoal, go to sea for fish, and work at the village forge. On the plantations they cut the cane and the sisal. In the city they carry the heavy coffee and sugar bags, load the ships, make bricks, and build roads.

The women, for their part, run the household, care for the children, carry water from the springs, launder at the river's edge, cook, sew, play a supporting role in the field work, carry the crops to market, sell them, and bring back things which the garden does not produce. The woman may be the business manager of the household, and sometimes from the proceeds of special projects she may be able to put aside small savings of her own.

Children slip into their work roles at an early age. Boys and girls as young as three or four may be seen carrying small tins of water on their heads, on their way from the springs, usually in groups with older girls or women. Young girls assume woman's work as soon as they can

[1] [Johnston, The Negro in The New World. Cf P. 352, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

857 handle it; lighter work first, heavier work later. Small boys tend cattle
868 and help the men in the fields.

178 The Haitian *habitant* (the peasant) is poorer and hungrier today than
511 he was fifty years ago, or even twenty years ago. In 1955 I visited a number of peasant families I had known since 1932, and with hardly an exception I found them worse off than they had been before. Their tiny landholdings had shrunk. Some land that had been lush had dried [134] up and eroded. Little groves of trees had disappeared. Clothes had become shabby, and many of the men could no longer afford to wear the inexpensive traditional blue denim costume that was once so common. In the cities there is evidence that some of the elite have improved their life. But in a large part of the countryside the peasants are finding that the old system that served them for a hundred and fifty years can no longer feed them adequately.

423 One of the adverse forces is the shrinking of landholdings. Once a
178 peasant family may have owned and worked fifty or seventy acres of ground. But it is traditional that on a man's death his land is divided [428] among the heirs. If a man with fifty acres of land has two sons, each son inherits approximately twenty-five acres. On their deaths, the land
423 is again subdivided. But even this is not the whole story. A UNESCO
427 survey of the Marbial Valley region in south Haiti in 1948–1949 reported:

> At the turn of the century there were numerous peasant families who lived in relatively easy circumstances, and who possessed as much as thirty to forty *carreaux* * [425] of land planted with coffee and subsistence crops. The heirs of these lands, when they found themselves in straitened circumstances, would sell some parcels of it in the hope of being able to increase their holdings again later on. In the worst cases they became the tenants of absentee landlords who lived in the cities. Nowadays, not only is the size of holdings very small, sometimes only one-eighth of a *carreau*, but they are also scattered, and most peasants are obliged to go from one place to another to cultivate their various owned, rented, or share-cropped fields.[§]

671 Haitian law—the civil code—does not recognize the rights of illegiti-
595 mate children born after a legal marriage. But Haitian custom does.
423 As a result, a Haitian who has a *placée* wife in addition to his "legal"
848 wife may circumvent the law by deeding to her a portion of his gardens during his lifetime, thereby diminishing his holdings.

423 Furthermore, many landholdings are not clearly defined. There are
691 few accurate surveys, and often the boundaries are vague. Titles to many of the holdings cannot be clearly established, and as a result there are constant lawsuits. To pay the expenses of defending his interests in court, a Haitian may have to sell a strip of his land.

* A carreau is about three and a third acres.

§ [UNESCO, The Haiti Pilot Project, p. 18. Cf. P352, category 116. -- Analyst]

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

"The Mina Negroes have even been seen to recognize princes of their country . . . prostrating themselves at their feet and rendering them that homage whose contrast to the state of servitude to which these princes have been reduced in the colony offers a striking enough instance of the instability of human greatness." [11]

Yet another group of Africans played a significant role in determining the trends Haitian Negro culture was to take. It is a commonplace among those who have studied New World Negro life that African religion has shown greater resistance to white influence than any other phase of African culture. And to explain this one must again turn to native African tradition. The beginnings of the West African monarchies, whose ruling dynasties eventually came to command great stretches of land, were in tiny principalities that continually "warred" against each other. Tradition has it that the most intransigent of the conquered were the priests of the indigenous local cults, who, because of their activities, were punished with what native idiom still terms "banishment." In the New World these intractable priests continued their rites for their fellow-slaves and instructed the next generation so their knowledge would not be lost to the people. Before their enslavement they had been men of power and influence, and this pattern, carried over in all its strength in the New World, continued them and their descendants as natural leaders. Hence, wherever the opportunity presented itself to strike for liberty, they invoked the spiritual forces to reinforce the power and courage of the military leaders who, like them, had been sold into slavery because their countries had been conquered, or because they had rebelled against the succession in their own lands.

The composition of the slave population as inferred from these traditions is thus seen to be somewhat different from

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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869 [794] deities, and they are taught what must be done when a sacrifice is to be given. Parents differ widely in this as in other practices, and while some make it a point to impart this information both at this time and later in the life of the child, others refuse to answer questions, and the child must learn from what he himself observes.

864 Children in the valley of Mirebalais receive little formal sex education. Shortly before marriage young women are told enough of the mechanism of the sexual life to guard against their being frightened when their husbands come to them. As early as seven years of age, however, girls are cautioned not to permit boys to play with them sexually, while a girl who reaches puberty is carefully watched, not being permitted to go for water or firewood or on other errands unless accompanied by some child, usually younger than herself. No explanation for this is given; she is simply forbidden to leave the house alone, though eventually she learns the reasons from other girls. Neither special ritual nor special instruction follows first menstruation; the girl merely apprises her mother of the fact. She herself has learned of the phenomenon by observing her mother and her older friends and consequently is not troubled by her initial menstrual flow, but rather is pleased that she has now become a woman.

864 881

864 This absence of formal sex education does not stand seriously in the way of the young in learning the technique of sexual intercourse. Boys of six and seven surreptitiously "experiment" with girls of their own age in the sex act, despite parental warnings. This ceases, however, as soon as the girls are nubile, for then they are under strict supervision. Young boys are often given information concerning the technique of sexual intercourse by their older brothers or friends, when these gather in groups and discuss among themselves their amorous adventures. Another manner in which the child obtains sex education is by observing the behavior of his parents. Children usually share their parents' bed until they are six or

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 was put into the national budget to be used for schools, but it seems
871 generally to have been used as a fund for presidential patronage. There were even "school teachers" who could not read, but were nevertheless paid a regular monthly stipend. The principal of the Lycée at Gonaïves could neither read nor write, the music teacher there knew not a note of music, and the medical director could not name the simplest drugs.[18] Dantès Bellegarde, one of Haiti's notable intellectuals, as a minister under Nord Alexis (1902–8) made definite proposals which, had they been carried out, would have gone far toward effecting a radical reform. Minister again under Oreste (1913–14), he succeeded in building up an educational fund, but before he could spend it properly Oreste was deposed and the money used by his successor, Zamor, for military purposes.[19]

175 By 1915, before the Occupation began, the country had about
• 87 730 public schools. Of these, 6 gave advanced courses in medicine, law, applied science, and commerce; 10 offered a secondary classical education; 8 were special secondary boys' schools; and 15 were special secondary girls' schools. The teachers all got their training in Haiti, and the curricula and methods were almost entirely French.[20] Bellegarde had divided the country into 14 school districts, and by 1919 the official figures showed the following enrollment:[21]

[162]

387 elementary rural schools	with	21,960 pupils
206 elementary urban schools		13,881
105 presbyterial schools		4,836
49 mixed private schools		825
29 Catholic girls' schools		5,141
8 Catholic boys' schools		2,576
10 mixed popular schools		1,009
2 girls' professional schools		133
1 manual training school		555
60 national high schools		2,012
Private elementary schools		5,481
Private high schools		2,904
Total		61,313 pupils

18. See Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 276.
19. Dantès Bellegarde, *Pour une Haïti heureuse* (Port-au-Prince, 1929), pp. 100 ff.
20. Dantès Bellegarde, *Un Haïtien parle*, p. 31.
21. *Livre bleu d'Haïti*, 1919–20 (Port-au-Prince, 1920), pp. 21–22.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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These figures seem moderately impressive by comparison with those of 1875; but a government report of 1931 states[22] that of the 361 rural schools visited by investigators, 89 had no seats for their pupils, and 157 had only from one to three benches; 122 had neither desks nor tables upon which the pupils might work; 341 had no maps. Of the total number of 977 benches found in all the rural schools, 303 were almost unusable, and of the 26 maps in existence, 13 were entirely beyond use. Of the 355 teachers examined, 257 could not read, and 278 could not add, subtract, multiply, or divide. The average monthly salary was 32.07 gourdes, or $6.21. Of the 17,679 pupils enrolled in rural schools, only 4,022 attended. In this same report President Vincent claims to have made a radical reform in all these matters. His rural teachers are trained, many of them at the government agricultural school at Damien; school equipment has been distributed; salaries have been raised to 65 gourdes, or $13.

The American Occupation showed itself keen to assist education, but unintentionally the measures taken by the whites ran afoul of politics to a serious degree. The excellent agricultural experiment school at Damien was filled with élite students who attended it, in the opinion of many, chiefly in order to receive the scholarships offered; moreover, the class question was raised and bitterly argued: Should peasant students live and study with the élite, and should the curriculum be the same for both? Finally, education was one of the few matters not specifically included in the treaty between Haiti and the United States as under American direction. The result was unhappy: the Occupation was accused of setting up a rival educational "system" to that of the government. Even Bellegarde, most of whose ideas the Americans were trying to carry out, found himself in opposition, chiefly as a result of methods and political implications involved.

If only the budget of the country could be increased, one feels that the rural educational problem might be dealt with, for more and more people are aware of what education might do for the country. Even so, there are still many élite who betray their fear that with education the masses will desert the land and cease to be subservient.

That the élite, who in fact control the country, should receive a training which would fit them for technical skills is a proposal often

22. "*L'Oeuvre d'éducation rurale du gouvernement du Président Vincent*" (Imprimerie de l'État, Port-au-Prince, 1936).

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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857 hide-and-seek and enjoy story-telling sessions, when the tales of 'Ti Malice and Bouki are recounted. Still older ones make drums out of jars and "arrange a dance." Little girls play with dolls made for them by the older children, while boys with sticks for horses organize themselves into "armies" with their
852 seniors as officers. When a child's teeth fall out, a minor ceremony is performed. As each tooth is detached, the child throws it on the roof of the mother's house, saying:

[539]

"Rat, rat, rat,	"Rat, rat, rat,
M'jet' yun bel' 'ti dent ba 'ou,	I give you a nice little tooth,
Ba'm yun vieille dent."	Give me an old tooth."

871 At this same time a beginning of formal education is made, especially if the child lives in the town or near enough to it to
872 allow him to reach one of the schools there. These schools are under both secular and Catholic auspices, and in them the pupil is instructed in the rudiments of European education, learning to read and write and to do simple problems in arith-
873 metic. If he shows proficiency and the means of his family permit, he may go on to a secondary school at Port-au-Prince or some other center; in the main, however, this schooling is all he ever receives, if he is permitted this much.

861 It is not to be supposed that a child is allowed to grow up
593 without learning how to conduct himself in accordance with
602 the traditional code of Haitian behavior, for the punishment that follows departures from this code is always both prompt and extremely painful, beating with sticks being the mode of correction most often employed. The mechanisms of education and control operate the more effectively because they are exercised by a fairly large group of persons, which includes not only the father and mother of the child, but also his grandparents, his uncles and aunts on both sides of the family, and
603 his older brothers, sisters, and cousins. Less restraint is exer-
593 cised before grandparents than other relations, for while there
604

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3 [P-112-L]

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18. Young Haitians in school. After a century and a half of independence, education remains one of Haiti's most acute problems. Only a small percentage of the country's children are in schools.

[P. 338]

4. Notes on Orthography

104 The problem of putting the Creole language into writing has confronted
191 Haitian and non-Haitian scholars and writers for some time. During
87 the past decade the problem has been an acute one for education au-
114 thorities in Haiti. While there developed a consensus that teaching the
[212] largely illiterate population would have to be done in Creole and not in French, there remained a controversy about the system of orthography that should be used. One of the first attempts to teach Haitian children in their own language was made by Christian Beaulieu, a Haitian educator who worked out a written method based on traditional French orthography.[1] Subsequently, a simpler system was devised by a clergyman, the Reverend H. Ormond McConnell. Although it had numerous detractors among those who favored French orthography, it was found to be far more suitable for educational purposes. The American linguist Robert A. Hall, Jr., carried out a study, the findings of which supported the McConnell method as "perfectly phonemic and at the same time wholly practicable in that it uses only characters already available in print shops and on typewriters."[2]

104 Some Creole texts from Haiti and other West Indian islands, taken down by researchers and scholars, have been transcribed in the McConnell orthography, or in a modified one known as the McConnell-
[114] Laubach system. It is my opinion that although the system is admirable for teaching purposes, and adequate for recording texts for scholarly needs, it is a disadvantage to a reader who has a French vocabulary at his command but who is not familiar with the McConnell orthography. The extent to which this system can disguise a language is easily seen if it is used, for example, to transcribe Jamaican speech. The effect is identical on French words or words of French origin. The Haitian proverb "Run from the rain, fall into the big river" is written by Hall in the McConnell-Laubach orthography: *Kouri poulapli, tôbê nd-grd*

1 [UNESCO, The Haiti Pilot Project, P. 9. Cf. P. 355, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2 [Ib. d. Cf. P. 355, Category 116. -- Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

elite and the yeomanry. For instance, he calls attention to one unanticipated (but inevitable) result of the occupation in this connection: the large number of children whose fathers were United States Marines, and whose mothers were members of the Haitian rural masses. In this way the occupation contributed to the growth of the physically intermediate population of Haiti, especially among rural folk, and thus perhaps to some bridging of the gap between yeomen and elite. Much more important, by its contributions to a broadening of the educational system, the occupation enabled talented black-skinned youths to improve themselves and to acquire new aspirations.

Recent economic and political developments in Haiti, through the period 1941–57, have contributed grounds for modification of the Leyburn interpretation. Though Leyburn predicted that "for the present and near future it is safe to say that there will be no more black non-élite presidents" (p. 101), subsequent developments soon proved him wrong. In January 1946, the government of elite member Elie Lescot fell under military pressure. A junta consisting of Franck Lavaud, Antoine Levelt, and Paul Magloire facilitated the installation of Dumarsais Estimé as president. Estimé was a dark-skinned man from the countryside (the village of Verettes, near St. Marc, in west-central Haiti), who had received a good education, served as a minister in the Vincent cabinet and, as a deputy, married a lighter-skinned woman whose family's elite membership was secure. Estimé might well be considered a self-made member of the elite, but he was not born into it, and his accession to power was the political expression of new possibilities in Haitian life.

The changes Estimé's regime symbolized were rooted in the intellectual resistance to the United States occupation and in the search for a Haitian identity in the face of that occupation. The strangely easy domination that the United States wielded over Haitian society for several decades, and the relatively unexploitative but patronizing administration it provided, ended forever a fantasy that had gripped Haitian intellectuals for more than a century. The world of 1804, when a bloodied but defiant Haiti could bar by force of arms Napoleon's dreams of a New World empire (and assist indirectly thereby in the territorial expansion of a still weak United States) had vanished. The time when a Pétion could aid, protect, and politically influence a sick and tired Simón Bolívar was long gone. The world had changed, while Haiti, the Haitians learned under their North

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American masters, had nearly stood still. For almost a century, Haiti's elite had taken justifiable pride in their ancestors' triumph over Napoleonic France, even while they remained enthralled by French culture. This strange ambivalence would no longer do. In effect, the United States occupation compelled Haitian scholars to rediscover what it meant to be Haitian.

As the writing of Jean Price-Mars (1928) expressed that identity culturally, so the regime of Dumarsais Estimé began to express it politically. For the first time, Africa, and not simply France, became an important part of the nationalist dialogue. The Creole language began to be studied in its own right, and a program to end illiteracy through education in Creole was launched. Folkloristic studies, emphasizing the African component in Haitian rural life, especially as expressed in religion, came into vogue. Haitians began to explore their own society as a synthesis that was as much African as it was French—and as a synthesis, rather than as a mechanical alignment of two distinct traditions. The term *authentique* was employed to express what was "truly Haitian," and Haiti herself was viewed as a unique and original blending of two pasts. Under Estimé, rural folk of promise—and they were, in the nature of things, predominantly dark-skinned—were given greater opportunities, especially to be educated and to enter government service. Moreover, these developments took place at a time when Haiti's economic situation was relatively good, and Estimé enjoyed a measure of popular support rare in Haiti's entire history.

Furthermore, it was during the Estimé regime that Haitian cultural life reached some sort of climax. In the 1920s young Haitian intellectuals had been deeply shaken by the United States occupation and had begun to formulate their own answers to the questions it raised. Not only did Africa come into view as the wellspring of much that was Haitian but Haiti's status as an occupied though once-sovereign power dramatized the need for a social and political philosophy that fitted with hemispheric and international realities. French intellectual currents figured importantly in Haitian political thinking, both because the intellectuals of the French Antilles of the time were inspired by Haitian history and interested in Haiti, and because those islands and Haiti shared a curious affinity in their "Gallo-African" cultures. Anticolonial and Marxist points of view were espoused by a few Haitians, but these perspectives were complicated by changing

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regime. That President Duvalier has been able to stay in power in spite of internal dissaffection, sometime hostile United States propaganda, a dire economic situation, personal ill health, and other woes, is a tribute to his political acumen, if not to his principles. None of this means, of course, that such consummate skill will continue to work; Haitian governments have a way of falling suddenly, and the Duvalier regime will probably not prove an exception. 175 642 648 643

Dr. Duvalier's success indicates that he has made certain correct assessments, not only of Haiti's social and political structure but also of United States policy with regard to Haiti. The occupation was notable for its failure to make any telling alterations in the economic structure or level of development of the country. Many beneficial changes were made, as Leyburn demonstrates, particularly in the areas of health and health services, communications, government administration, education, and transport (though the use of corvée labor on the roads led to serious abuses, and stimulated sanguinary guerilla warfare). But most significantly, the United States institutionalized the army and police forces. The ragged bands of political mercenaries of the past were dissolved; the officer-ridden army was transformed into a small, well-trained, and well-organized force. Eventual firm control by this force of weaponry, communications, and transport ended the era of presidential succession by invasion, turned the army into the major locus of nonelectoral, president-making power, and may have ended forever the possibility of an agrarian revolt against the central authority. Another political effect of the occupation was the importance it imparted to the United States ambassador, whose political opinions thereafter would matter significantly in the transmission of power at the top of the Haitian governmental system. The Duvalier regime has continuously taken full account of the consequences of United States interest; and its leaders have been able to watch the operation of that interest in the political events occurring between the fall of the Lescot government and the present. 175 648 433 114 744 20 871 489 175 648 701 643 669 625

In the view of one acute observer, President Duvalier, in order to consolidate his power, had to cope with three other loci of political strength in addition to the army and the United States ambassador. The business community, located for the most part in Port-au-Prince, had strongly supported Déjoie's candidacy during the interregnum; its leaders were mainly members of the elite, and many had strong 175 643 66

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643 771 795 At the same time, the President has expressed his favorable interest in vodoun and is said to practice it; this statement, however, has overtones of malevolence that are not appropriate. Vodoun is a religion, though it lacks a centralized priestly hierarchy or administrative organization. Outside the elite, Catholicism in Haiti has always been colored by vodoun elements. The Haitian people as a whole invest no effort in distinguishing what is "really Catholic" from what is not, in their religious practices; in this regard Haitian countrymen do not really differ from folk practitioners of Catholicism anywhere. By its misreading of the piety of the Haitian masses, and its unceasing hostility to vodoun—quite different from the church policy in the so-called "Indian countries" of Latin America—the Church had failed to secure its influence over the Haitian people. In contrast, Duvalier's understanding of Haitian religious sociology has proved superior, and is consistent with the *authentique* ideology of the 1940s, though doubtless much more extreme in its implications.

642 871 467 204 661 Finally, the Duvalier regime has invaded such institutions as the National University and the trade unions, and maintains close surveillance over any individuals it regards as politically suspicious. Loyalty oaths are required at the university; a public press no longer exists; the unions, never strong, are now entirely powerless. But it should be clear from this description of the Duvalier regime that repression is not the key to Duvalier power so much as the means for perpetuating that power under Haitian conditions. The key to Duvalier power is to be found instead in the structure of Haitian society, in the social history of the past two decades, and in the policy of the United States, weakened by its inescapable preference for "stability" over "radicalism." In his own way, President Duvalier is as radical as he can be; but he is no Castro. It is now an open secret that Haiti's support for sanctions against Cuba approved at Punta del Este was matched by economic concessions from the United States; that the Marines, knowingly or not, immobilized anti-Duvalier opposition in a period when its supporters could be picked off, driven into exile, or jailed; that the official Duvalier offer of Môle St. Nicholas to the United States as a substitute for Guantánamo, though irrelevant, was warmly reassuring to some North American political thinkers; and that Duvalier, while he employs considerable "blackmail diplomacy" in his dealings with the United States and is now out of favor, is still considered "reliable" in that most important respect.

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The distinction between castes on the basis of occupation is nowhere more clearly seen than in the feminine sphere. The peasant woman, from childhood onward, is an indefatigable laborer, absolutely indispensable to the economic life of the country. She not only performs the usual domestic functions but works in the fields as well. She carries marketable goods, sometimes for miles, to the town for sale. The aristocratic woman, on the other hand, is rarely active in business. Indeed, until very recent years no career was open to her outside the home, nor would custom have allowed her to follow one; even now, teaching and a few clerical positions in government service are her only business opportunities. She directs the household economy but has servants if she can possibly afford them. Her place is definitely in the home. 565 562

The second infallible test of membership in the élite caste is education and an ability to speak French. When Haiti was a slave colony belonging to France, the hundreds of thousands of blacks imported from Africa had no common tongue, coming as they did from wide stretches of the continent; the French spoken by their overseers, a development of the Norman dialect,[3] became their one language, known as Créole. Every Haitian, high and low, knows and uses this language, for nursemaids speak it to the upper-class children in their charge, and all servants speak it. The élite consequently learn it at a tender age, and must use it in all their dealings with the lower orders. Among themselves, however, they speak French. The official language of the country is French. To speak correct French is an immediate announcement that one has had the advantage of schooling and has been in contact with the aristocracy. Theoretically, Haitian education is free and democratic; actually, no peasant child could be spared from labor long enough for schooling, or find money for proper clothes to go to school in. 565 197 [87]

Inevitably the standard of living is a reflection of caste membership. "The élite wear shoes," explained General Butler laconically to the United States Senate investigating committee, when asked what characterized the classes of Haiti. His elliptical remark is true. Peasants, indeed, could not afford to purchase shoes, but more particularly they could not afford to dress up to the standard set by the shoes. When a man of the masses dons the castoff shoes of some aristocrat, the logical assumption by everyone is that this man is pre- 565 511

3. See chap. XVIII.

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tiny communities, some of them designating "villages" of only four or five houses. For numbers of peasants hidden away in the valleys or on mountain farms, the only contact with the larger world comes through visits to the nearest market town—which itself may count only a thousand souls. The peasant is thus effectively isolated. The American Financial Adviser to the Government has estimated the average *annual* income of the Haitian at $20 a head.[8] The smallness of the sum limits the material contacts of the peasant with the outside world. Rural schools are few,[9] consequently all but a small percentage of the rising generation is growing up illiterate. Lack of mental stimulus completes the isolation. Bound to the soil by the need of wresting a livelihood from rocky, gullied, and increasingly unproductive land, harassed by ill-health, and governed by a group whose own security would be threatened by improving his lot, it is little wonder that the peasant is unprogressive, or that he struggles along at a bare subsistence level.[10]

Haiti is rural and agricultural, then, with a population density of about 250 per square mile. The people, living without machine industry and with very little foreign trade, must get their living from 10,000 square miles, not of lush tropical soil but of rocky, mountainous country which, after a century and a half of poor farming, has been stripped of most of its forests and much of its topsoil.

A glance at a relief map of the West Indies would show clearly that the islands are the tops of a mountain range, whose lowlands were long since submerged by the Caribbean Sea. Looked at from above, Haiti seems a jumbled mass of mountains running in all directions.[11] Down their slopes flow many small streams which after

8. Dr. W. W. Cumberland, cited by Paul H. Douglas, "The American Occupation of Haiti," *Political Science Quarterly*, XLII (1927), 258.

9. The average monthly salary of $13 (until recently only $6) for rural schoolteachers would not draw many wide-awake young men, even if schoolhouses existed for classes. The salary, indeed, is so small that only inferior persons are attracted, often men who know little more than their pupils. See chap. XV, 3.

10. Mrs. Blair Niles, in *Black Haiti* (New York, 1926), pp. 185–186, tells of a prisoner who preferred to remain in jail rather than be freed. "When he gets out," she quotes the officer as saying, "he'll be in again. You'll see. Here he gets nine cents a day for food, an' that's more than the average Haitian ever has."

11. One can well believe the story (told by Ebenezer D. Bassett, *Haiti* [Washington, 1893], p. 3) of the English admiral who, asked by George III for a description of the island, crumpled a sheet of paper, threw it on the table, and said: "Sire, Haiti looks like that." The same tale is told of Puerto Rico, with a Spanish admiral speaking to Queen Isabella.

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to ally himself with the ruling family. When Dessalines shortly discovered his daughter's condition, he burst into maledictions against all mulattoes, saying that they had plotted this disgrace to him and to his family. He went so far as to speak of having them all executed. 175 563 643

The Emperor's determination, and all his measures, could not quench the social ambition of his leading subjects. They bore what must be borne, conspiring meanwhile to get rid of him. They still had the advantage over the masses of a superior education, and they knew the path to eminence, once the obstacle of the Emperor was removed.

Nothing was done during the reign of Dessalines to cultivate the minds of the laboring class. Discipline backed by force was the guiding principle in dealing with them. Instead of trying to educate his people to understand their duties and to take an active part in statecraft, Dessalines—his generals and counselors, mulatto and black alike, thoroughly approving—used only compulsion. There was actually little difference between the attitude of this ruling clique toward the mass of laborers and that of their former white owners. Both looked upon them as cattle. A few of his advisers tried to persuade the Emperor to provide moral and religious education for the people so that they would not be seduced into completely evil ways, but the Emperor replied, "You are wrong: the laborers can be controlled only by fear of punishment and even death; I shall lead them only by these means; my 'morale' shall be the bayonet." 175 643 661 641 [871]

In short, between 1804 and 1806 no prominent figure in Haitian life seems even to have dreamed of "liberal" institutions. Those who had education, knowledge, and culture preserved them carefully for themselves. The wisdom, even the possibility, of enlightening the masses was doubted. Most Haitians remained in complete ignorance of what went on in the outside world. 175 565 641

Dessalines was killed by ambush near Port-au-Prince on October 17, 1806. The mulattoes were generally supposed to have planned the assassination, for it was well known that they had no cause to be fond of him. His callousness had raised up enemies in all walks of life. The cultivators were glad he was gone, because of his harshness. They were virtually slaves again in all but name; it was reported that upon his personal estates he had made unsatisfactory workers run the gauntlet between lines of soldiers armed with thorny switches, and 175 643 661

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vengeance but the utter extermination of that race."[12] He even ordered the execution of a mulatto woman in Gonaïves because she had prayed for the success of Pétion.

During the latter years of his reign his personal popularity waned somewhat, owing to his relentless insistence upon efficiency and to his increasing tendency to lose his temper. Defections to the South occurred almost daily. The cultivators, comparing their never-ceasing toil on Northern plantations with the reported liberty and leisure of life in the South, continually drifted away. So alluring was the paradise of ease (and poverty) of the neighboring realm that Christophe found it necessary to keep a cordon of soldiers along the borders of his kingdom to prevent desertions. His administration now embarked on actual persecution of colored people. Inflammatory pamphlets were spread abroad, designed to make the Negroes think that the mulattoes were planning to enslave them once again. Under this campaign of propaganda many light-skinned Northerners had to go into hiding.

Despite all discrimination, the important line was drawn between cultivators who formed nine tenths of the population, and aristocrats who, with the army, made up the remainder. The nobility, the directors of landed estates, and the generals directed the activities of other people, so that the colonial prejudice against manual labor was strengthened. Here lay the basis of a persistent Haitian attitude of mind: to work with one's hands is to show oneself a member of the masses; to direct others is the distinction of the upper class. Education, neglected under Dessalines altogether, was fostered by Christophe. He established a few schools, inviting as schoolmasters certain Englishmen familiar with the then popular methods of the Lancasterian system; but since the cultivators were busy on the plantations, only the children of aristocrats benefited by the limited educational system and the social distance between classes was increased.

A French commentator says that Christophe showed unusual insight in devising for his kingdom "the only organization of which an African society was capable," namely, a combination of military despotism with certain benevolent inclinations, and territorial feudalism based upon a nobility created by the King. Actually, it suited not so much the African background of the people, which lay

12. Dr. Jonathan Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo* (Philadelphia, 1837), II, 197.

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171 feudal holdings to absolute ownership of land by the influential. It is
175 strangely paradoxical that an aristocrat, the light-skinned Pétion,
631 representing the cultured group in society, broke the economic power of his own aristocratic class and made the former slaves not serfs but peasants. It is doubtful whether he intended either result.

175 Alexandre Pétion was the antithesis of Haiti's three eminent blacks
643 in all but military skill. Toussaint's genius as a fighter lay in his surprise moves, Dessalines' in his recklessness, Christophe's in his
159 bulldog determination; but Pétion was a great general because he knew when to retire and so lead his enemy into an exposed position. The three Negroes had been born in slavery; Pétion, coming of a cultured and sophisticated affranchi family, grew up in France. Dessalines was a crude ruffian by comparison, while in the face of Pétion's suavity Christophe's impetuousness seemed rankly uncouth. Where they bludgeoned, Pétion persuaded; where they hacked their way through opposition in the determination to gain an end, he graciously yielded and so won new friends. Tactful at every point, he survived even such contretemps as his refusal of the hand of the Emperor's daughter.

As leader of a young nation, Pétion might almost be said to have had too broad an understanding of human nature. He was a gentle ruler over his people; when they erred he did not punish or upbraid, but excused their misdeeds by assuming the cause to be some fatal compulsion over which they momentarily had no control. He had no wish to drive the nation to "success." Neither did he care to use his position for personal aggrandizement. His mind was supple and practical, disdainful of abstractions, undeluded by resounding slogans, fertile in compromise, not finical as to means, always unsurprised, exquisitely tactful. When crises arose to dismay his ministers, Pétion's philosophic calm was undisturbed.

Cynically tolerant, he gave office to political enemies if they chanced to be able. A representative of the topmost class of society,
[648] he managed to moderate antagonisms based on color. He gave sanctuary and financial succor to the Spanish-American liberator,
[87] Simón Bolívar; he established the foundations of an educational
[423] system; he defended the state against Christophe's power; he ruled constitutionally; and he gave land to his people, even to the humblest of them. When he died, his subjects for miles around came into Port-au-Prince, where they stood weeping about his palace, refusing

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Next to the agricultural system, the state of education in the republic probably had as much to do as anything with fixing the caste system upon Haiti. So long as the mass of people were not only black but illiterate as well, they would have no means of reaching a social status beyond the one in which they existed. Certainly the aspiring Negroes would not wish to enlighten them, for to stir up the whole people would destroy the very possibility of distinction. As W. S. Gilbert puts it, "When everyone is somebody, then no one's anybody." Public education, consequently, hardly advanced a step during Boyer's twenty-five years. It had had a feeble enough beginning under Pétion and remained, as it had been, a prerogative of the well-to-do.[58]

Under the complaisant rule of Boyer, accordingly, the people of color came to regard themselves as the unquestioned élite. Their claim was shared, though not always acknowledged, by a small number of blacks (mostly from the North) who had been anciens libres in colonial Saint-Domingue or noblemen under Christophe; who were literate, or whose wealth and ambition attracted attention. Boyer's boast that "all the feelings and prejudices, either of olden times or of national origin, have been superseded by an intense patriotism" was pure buncombe, as he certainly knew.

If only the best brains of the colored group had been content to serve the government, Haiti might have profited from her situation; but lesser government offices were merely springboards for foreign trade in coffee and mahogany, or for the manipulation of business deals. Not "intense patriotism," as Boyer liked to think, but financial gain was the motivating force of the élite, as it had been from colonial times. The man who could amass a modest fortune, so that his children might be educated and their security assured, had done his duty, and he would have been regarded as quixotic to renounce business opportunities for the dubious honor of minor political office. As a consequence of this natural search for gain, the government during Boyer's administration became less and less efficient. Relatives of élite businessmen were given posts because the President could not afford to offend important families. These minor officials then performed their duties awkwardly, or neglected them, in "the unfailing obliquity of dullness."

Skin color became the obsession of high society. Those who had no other merit of which to boast could still revel in their complex-

58. See chap. XVI.

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[p. 113]

INTRODUCTION

If the visitor to Haiti is first struck by the wide separation between the élite and the peasant masses, the person who knows Haiti only through books is sure to think of it as a country of Voodoo. There is no error of fact here, for Voodoo is characteristic of Haiti. Nevertheless, what the American conjures up in his mind when he uses the word is almost certain to be misleading. In spite of detailed reports of anthropologists the average American clings firmly to his notion that Voodoo is Negro superstition chiefly concerned with charms or spells to "hoodoo" (a variation of the same word) an enemy. Scientists rarely succeed in correcting long-held but incorrect or one-sided impressions of the meaning of terms; they end rather by inventing a new word, or else continue the generally losing fight for precise usage, and so preserve the confusion.[1] 771

Since there is small likelihood of eradicating the inexact connotations of "Voodoo," many recent anthropologists have adopted such spellings as Vodun, Vodou, Vodoun, Vaudou, and Vodûn, all renditions of local pronunciation of the same term. *Vodun* (pronounced Vo-doon) has been chosen for use in this work, in the hope that readers will bear in mind that the folk religion is not mere idle superstition. A grasp of the real and distinctive religious beliefs and cult practices of the Haitian is very necessary to an understanding of the social picture. [104]

Like its caste system, the religious life of Haiti presents far-reaching contrasts. The only approved religion of the country is Roman Catholicism. To this faith all the élite who are religiously inclined, or wish to pay formal homage to the institution of religion, belong. No Protestant sect has ever gained a real foothold in Haiti. Catholic churches are among the imposing edifices in every town; Catholic priests are an everyday sight as they go about their parishes; Catholic brothers and sisters, with state support and approval, direct much of the higher education in the country. 771 795 184 [346] [793] [871]

1. Witness in anthropology the contrast between the popular and the scholarly meaning of *culture*, *race*, *taboo*, and *fetish*; in chemistry of *reaction* (as when a man is asked his "reaction" to an opinion); in psychology of *instinct*, *innate*, and *inherent*; and in sociology of *caste*, *institution*, and *social*.

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175 795 648 771 178 ideas than in later years, the habits of regular attention to religious duties might have been fixed; by 1860 it was too late. Religion existed during those years, but it was a strange gallimaufry of Catholicism and folk belief.

175 795 642 643 659 On the whole, the rulers of young Haiti were tolerant of the Catholic Church even to the point of advancing its interests, in so far as these might benefit the state. Their pronouncements and actions, nevertheless, were not those of ardent personal believers. Pétion's constitution of the republic in 1806 once more established Catholicism as the official Church. What it gave with one hand, however, it took away with the other. Thus:

> *Art. 35.* The Catholic, apostolic, and Roman religion being that of all Haitians, is the religion of the state. It and its ministers will be protected.
>
> *Art. 36.* The law assigns to each minister of that religion the extent of his spiritual administration. These ministers may not, under any pretext, form a body within the state.
>
> *Art. 37.* If in the course of time other religions are introduced, no person shall be hindered, so long as he conforms to the laws, in following the cult he has chosen.

The Catholic, then, is the state religion, but only because the Haitians have heretofore been nominal Catholics. It occupies a position of practical fact which it would lose if by the introduction of other cults Haitians should be drawn away from it. Its ministers will be carefully watched to see that they do not, as a group, try to exert political pressure. And what freedom of action is possible to a church whose ecclesiastical parishes can be limited or extended in size by the civil legislature?

Pétion no more fought religion than he fought any other conventional institution approved by civilized people; but he did little to foster it. He received certain Wesleyan missionaries with considerable hospitality, remarking that "education increases the dignity of mankind." He appeased the good Catholics by repealing the law [848] concerning the rights of illegitimate children, substituting for it a [871] more moderate French rule.[4] Likewise, he invited the Catholic Church to participate in the education of Haitian youth.

[848] 4. The French practice allowed an illegitimate child recognized before a wedding equal rights of inheritance with legitimate offspring, while giving only quarter rights to a child recognized after marriage.

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Christophe had a great deal more to say about religion than any of the other early Haitian rulers. In a speech following the promulgation of his constitution, after severe censure of the government of Dessalines, he said:

175 643 795 659 642

> It is necessary to raise again the dignity of religion, for weakened morals leave young people open to the licenses of their age. Liberty has been assailed by traitors, enemies of their fellow citizens, and sold to our cruelest enemies. It is assured to you now, have no doubt! Shortly you will see these vicious men and their criminal efforts vanish like clouds.
>
> Public education, after religion and liberty the most precious benefit mankind enjoys, will be reanimated and sustained by morality; it will again be held in honor and reverence amongst us. Divorce, that traitor among customs, is rigorously prohibited and proscribed forever.[5]

[871] [586]

Like Pétion, Christophe made the Catholic Church official, but he indicated the dictatorial path he intended to follow by adding that no ecclesiastical decree or law might become effective without the consent of the President.[6] He completely overturned the law of Dessalines concerning illegitimate children; his decree deprived such offspring of any claims of inheritance whatever.[7] In a country where practically no one had been legally married such a ruling was severe, but Christophe hoped that his severity would force his subjects into wedlock, and this the Catholic Church was bound to approve.

[848]

Making the Church official did not strengthen its hold upon the people. In 1814 (seven years after he had promised "to raise again the dignity of religion") the kingdom was served by only three priests, one of whom Christophe had named archbishop. The King was preoccupied with form, and having created a nobility he needed a church to lend dignity to his realm. Consequently in 1811 he reorganized the clergy in his kingdom, establishing an archiepiscopal see and three bishoprics. The reorganization, except for the archbishop, remained a paper plan because the Pope refused to coöperate by giving the schismatic church his approval.

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All the early rulers seem to have been rather innocent in their dealings with Rome. They felt, apparently, that as heads of state they had but to express a desire in order to have His Holiness ap-

5. This speech, made on February 18, 1807, is cited in Thomas Madiou, *Histoire d'Haïti* (Port-au-Prince, 1848), II, 354–355.
6. See the law of March 18, 1807.
7. Law of March 25, 1807.

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of the parish church to which each party belongs, and no ceremony may be performed by a priest without the presentation of the certificate of the civil marriage. 585

According to the legal code, as well as actual practice of the upper classes, woman is man's definite inferior in rights.[7] The Haitian code follows closely that of Napoleon, and both conform in general to practice common among substantial people in the Haiti and France of the early nineteenth century. Spouses equally owe to each other fidelity, succor, and assistance; the husband owes protection to his wife, the wife obedience to her husband. Although the wife must live with her husband wherever he chooses, he conversely must receive her when she comes to live with him, and must provide food for her. No wife may purchase, sell, give, or otherwise alienate property without the consent of her husband; moreover, the husband alone has the administration of goods coming in the dowry, so long as the union endures. 562

The modern movement for women's rights has hardly touched Haiti.[8] Women may not vote, nor may they hold public office. Among the élite, in theory and in practice woman's place is in the home, caring for the household and the children. One might imagine himself in provincial France as he sees the daily life of upper-class Haitian women: the ordering of meals, directing of servants, sewing, shopping, visiting, party going, occasional novel reading, driving in the family car. Different from French practice, however, is the taboo against most manual labor: this is the task of servants only. The élite housewife may cook but not sweep, sew but not launder, bargain with a huckster but not carry home her purchases. A woman of the upper classes would demean herself to enter business. Since the American Occupation, as a matter of fact, a few women have been daring enough to become secretaries and stenographers, but there seems to be nothing like a concerted movement for the "emancipation" of élite women. There are schools for girls, but these do not reach as far as the schools for boys; women are not admitted to the law school or medical school, for a woman lawyer or doctor would be unthinkable in Haitian society. [463] [871] [463]

7. See Louis Borno, *Code civil d'Haïti annoté* (Port-au-Prince, 1892), chap. VI, articles 196–201.

8. See, however, Madeleine G. Sylvain, "The Feminist Movement in Haiti," *Bulletin of the Pan-American Union*, LXXIII, No. 6 (June, 1939), 313–321. [113]

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Boyer was overthrown by the Revolution of 1843, by all odds the

most important of Haitian upheavals. Since its effects were to be felt for the next seventy years in the extinction of representative government and the eclipse of the élite as political rulers, it is worthy of special attention. Paradoxically, it was a revolution fomented by the élite themselves. Its background and outcome reveal the power in word, and the impotence in deed, of this group by 1843. 175 669

The constitution of 1816, devised by Pétion's henchmen, had granted the president initiative in all laws except those concerning taxation. After the agreement of 1825 with France,[6] however, Boyer, hard pressed by the need of paying the indemnity each year, began to restrict the number of officials, diminish their salaries, and veto all projects favorable to the development of public instruction and improvement which might cause further expenditure. By temperament he was an autocrat.[7] Every valuable measure must come from him alone; whatever another person proposed he would find a thousand reasons to discard. Sarcastic and vain, he did not know how to smooth ruffled feelings or make conflicting groups reconcile their differences. His personal weaknesses of character alienated the sympathies of many once-devoted officials. 175 642 643 652 661

During his long presidency Boyer also systematically ignored the younger generation, men who admired the efforts of Pétion, ardent reformers who wished to devote their energies to the improvement of Haiti. The military career had no attraction for them: the higher ranks, alone bringing sufficient salary for a congenial way of life, were too few and one could achieve them only with difficulty, for since 1825 advancement had been submitted to rigorous rules. On the other hand, the paths of administration were severely guarded by those admirable great functionaries left over from the government of Pétion—men like Inginac and Imbert. But age had slowed their activity, and still Boyer kept them on. The younger generation mocked this "gerontocracy" and supported the parliamentary opposition. 175 643 665

The youth of the élite class continued to go to France for their education, returning to Haiti to take part in the lively political discussions which made one of their chief occupations. During the first decade of Boyer's administration they generally supported him, for 175 665 871 664

6. By which France recognized the independence of Haiti in return for the payment of a large annual indemnity.

7. "In everything, he wishes to dominate," Pétion had said of him.

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175 he seemed to be leading the country to progressive action; about
665 1830, however, a group better educated and more ambitious than
664 their predecessors arose. Nourished on ideas acquired in France, they
871 were shocked on their return by the miseries and governmental inaction which prevailed in Haiti. True, when Boyer pressed them to suggest constructive measures of reform they had little to suggest. Like many other critics they were better at tearing down than at building up.

175 By the constitution of 1816 they had the right of free speech and
642 press, and made use of it to publish journals of criticism—*Le Phare*,
204 *Le Télégraphe*, *La Feuille de Commerce*. Their sustained criticism kept
208 alive the parliamentary opposition and gave it a focus; they were at
665 least partially responsible for the Revolution of 1843. In spite of their diatribes, Boyer did not suppress these newspapers. If he had done so it is possible the Revolution might have come sooner. Not every dictator-president would permit such boldness as the following paragraph which appeared in 1843 in *Le Patriote*, an adversary of Boyer's own journal *Le Temps:*

> Let one look well at the things which are happening among us and then say whether, considering our first steps along the path, our progress has not been constantly slowed up now for some time, and whether this does not lead to a state of things in our country in which the most vital part of our civilization is struck by an immobility, almost a paralysis. Haiti is stationary, is retrograde: we need no other proof of it than this frightful uncertainty about the future which so deeply disturbs all serious minds and sincere patriots.

175 In 1838 Hérard Dumesle, president of the Chamber and a leader of
665 the opposition, drew up and secured the passage of an "Address to
646 the President of the Republic," which expressed certain just ideas of
643 progress and pointed out that failure to achieve it was due to the
664 mistakes of the administration. It was a bitterly critical and sometimes passionate document. Boyer was intensely angry and proceeded to violate the constitution: relying on the majority always at his disposal in the Chamber, he excluded from among the deputies those most hostile to his government.[8] But at the election of 1842 the communes of Les Cayes, Aquin, and Jérémie reëlected the expelled representatives, so confirming their criticism of the President.

8. Hérard Dumesle, Laudun, Lartigue, and David Saint-Preux.

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Even Geffrard the reformer,

175 643 661 ably the ablest president in the second half-century, who was pledged to reduce the expenses of government (a promise which, since he was accustomed to a life of penury, should have been easy to fulfill), increased his own salary to $50,000 a year, and allowed himself $20,000 more annually for secret service and a similar sum "for the encouragement of arts and sciences." He bought two estates with government money; the meat bill of his family was charged to the budget of his bodyguard, and the family champagne bill to a hospital. After Geffrard, the presidency was openly regarded as the juiciest financial plum in Haiti which, if one could pluck it, would justify the necessary expenditures for a revolution. It seems from contemporary comment, indeed, that Geffrard's actions aroused not censure but rather envy, as if every ambitious Haitian would have welcomed the opportunity to do likewise. The bitingly critical Englishman, Sir Spenser St. John, railed with some justice, "Every Haitian appears fully persuaded that his countrymen never seek office except for the purpose of improving their private fortunes."[15]

175 643 646 The legislature was never a real check upon the President. It was useful to him at times when he wished to delay action on some embarrassing imbroglio with a foreign power, for by referring a measure to the Senate he could stall it in tedious debate. Almost without exception, however, the legislature consisted of the President's men. Its halls were palaces of idle oratory. One whole session was devoted to a discussion of fitting the hall with cushioned seats; another to the propriety of appointing an interpreter for representatives who understood only Créole and not French. To make a man a Senator was a satisfactory way of paying a political debt. To be a Senator was to have social prominence, a salary of $1,600 (decidedly a competence in nineteenth-century Haiti), an opportunity to speak before an audience—and no real responsibility.

178 One may grant without debate the difficulties facing this small and poor country, a Negro state with great white neighbors who regarded it with something less than deference. Yet Haiti in its early days had real promise. Wherein lay its defects? Haitian thinkers knew the answers, and frequently indicted themselves.

175 871 565 658 The want of education was a basic weakness. Those who believe in democracy need no rehearsal of the benefits of popular enlightenment. Because the great Negro heads of state were themselves im-

15. *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, p. 185.

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perfectly educated, and because other matters seemed infinitely more pressing than the setting up of schools, the early Haitians, united in 1804, fell apart within a single generation. On one hand were the élite and a few other townspeople who knew at least something of the outside world; on the other the masses of toiling countryfolk to whom tiny Haitian valleys were the whole universe. The young men of these two classes coming to power could not understand each other; they could not make concessions to each other; and as they fought for what they held true, each grew suspicious of the other if not permanently hostile. The lack of common understanding might still have been repaired in any one generation, but no single president had the vision to inaugurate universal education. Aside from the expense, certain powerful élite citizens often expressed their doubts as to the educability of the peasants; as property owners they would undoubtedly have objected to the unsettling of the economic order, which was based upon the work of an ignorant mass of blacks.[16]

175 871 565 658

Without education, the political sphere went unenriched by any flow of new blood from the people. Politics existed in a vacuum. The earthy, candid criticisms of a politically conscious folk never invigorated the discussion of national affairs. Without education, the people had no standards of comparison of Haiti with other nations, and were the easy dupes of whatever insurrectionary agitator could persuade them that their daily woes were caused by the current administration. Without education, high political office became a prerogative of the few, a contest between the Ins and the Outs, a path to personal wealth. Without education, Haiti could never be more than a dictatorship by a man or a clique, her stability endangered with the downfall of each incumbent, for dictatorships rarely provide for continuity in government.

175 871 64 66

Another great weakness was the notion that national happiness could be achieved by political means primarily. After the germinal ideas of Christophe and Pétion, which had a basis in economic behavior, hardly another important concept came out of a century of presidents. Haitian politicians have been great arrangers: they have given the country eighteen constitutions and innumerable codes, all admirable in their loving solicitude for precise detail. The common feeling of political aspirants has been, "If we are given power, all will

175 181 178

16. This argument is clearly stated in Madiou, *op. cit.*, III, 176 ff.

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[p.265]

XV

HAITIAN PROBLEMS

FOR a citizen of the United States or a European country, national problems have to do with external as well as internal affairs. Foreign relations, armaments, international trade, treaties and commitments, loom as large as do unemployment, business depression, labor troubles, and social maladjustment. Political parties rise and fall with their promises or failures to deal successfully with matters arising from the country's position relative to world movements. In Haiti such generalizations do not hold. Her international relations have been and are comparatively minor, while her internal problems have been of a different order from those which trouble most of the rest of the Western World. This is not meant to imply that a world depression leaves Haiti unscathed, or that the country does not suffer when its trade in coffee is interrupted, but rather that its persistent problems would continue to exist whatever the state of world politics and economics. 178 66 648

Contacts of the Haitian people with the outside world between 1804 and 1915 were meagre. The slaughter of whites by Dessalines, the economic decline of the country, unwillingness of white nations to treat with a Negro state, the schism in the Catholic Church, restrictive legislation against white foreigners, general illiteracy of the people—all these shut Haiti off from the world. Christophe, it is true, invited in a few English schoolmasters and agricultural experts, but these remained only a short while and had little influence even among the élite. For a century Haiti saw no foreigners except the few traders at seaports, an occasional Wesleyan missionary, a limited number of consuls and ministers, certain travelers interested in odd corners of the earth, and, after 1860, Catholic priests and sisters. For the peasants there ceased to be any knowledge of the world outside of Haiti; for the élite France once more became the centre of the social universe, as it had been for the affranchis in colonial times. From Boyer's time onward élite youths went to Paris for an education, if they could afford it; the "culture" they acquired there had little relationship to Haitian problems. 175 648 [871] [242] [797] [871]

Foreign relations, in the political sense, revolved during most of

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not find herself constantly embroiled with European states and American financial interests. The Haitian debt was funded, and a financial adviser remained in the country even after the Occupation came to an end. It is expected that by 1943 the last debt will be paid; the financial adviser, however, withdrew in 1941. Since the Occupation, although the republic has been free to manage her own affairs, she has consulted frequently with the State Department in Washington. 175 648 [457]

Nineteen years of occupation ended the century of Haitian isolation. The Americans built roads, conducted health campaigns, made their presence felt even in remote hamlets and valleys. American authors, political, romantic, and sensational, discovered the Antillean republic. Steamship companies stopped their cruises for a few hours at Cap-Haïtien to allow tourists to visit the Citadel, and at Port-au-Prince to see the sights of the capital. Every Haitian now realizes that there is a world outside. 175 648 [491] [744]

Whatever crises have arisen in Haitian affairs, certain problems have persisted. For whom do they constitute a source of worry? Since the government has always been a dictatorship, limited or absolute, subject to no party control, the incumbents of office have never had the experience of being constantly reminded by their opponents of the misery or daily worries of the population. After a hundred years the people have learned that relief is not to be expected from politicians. Occasionally a dramatic revolutionary leader has persuaded some of the people that the officials in power were responsible for their distress, and so worked up a following; yet even when such movements succeeded, the masses never benefited. To most governments of the past century Haiti's problem has been only one: to frustrate insurrection. There is evidence that recent administrations have busied themselves assiduously with the country's internal problems, although none of them has been adequately solved. The élite, at least as a group, do not feel any apparent responsibility for the maladjustments, nor obligation to effect the necessary reforms. A few patriots, and those almost without exception not in office, know what ails the country and say so; a smaller number propose reasonable solutions. The problems remain. Of these the three outstanding are overpopulation with all its accompanying ills, health, and education. 175 642 65 [669] [669] [161] [164] [871]

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3. *Education*

871 To a people like the Americans who accept democracy as desirable, and regard universal education as a necessary basis for democracy, it would seem a simple matter for the Haitians to build schools all over the countryside, pass laws requiring attendance, and so within a decade, or at the outside a generation, reform the whole country. To the American, education is the fount from which all democratic blessings flow. For the Haitian the problem is neither so clearly defined nor so simply solved.

565 871 The élite, who are solidly in control of the government, are aristocrats partly (largely, one might even say) because they are educated. Because of the maxim of Haitian life since the beginning that a literate man should not do manual labor, any program which proposed universal education would cut the ground from under the present social structure by giving the masses equal opportunities with the élite, and at the same time ruin the economic organization by making peasants want to desert field labor for professions and business. An ordinary degree of self-interest is quite sufficient to explain the lack of enthusiasm of the ruling class when the subject of general education is broached.

871 Good reasons are often given by people in lieu of real reasons for their actions. One of the good reasons advanced by Haitian ministries for the failure of the government to promote universal education is its cost. Those American states whose population is prevailingly rural know the validity of this reasoning. With children [369] scattered over the rural regions—and nine out of ten Haitians do not live in towns or large villages—it would require thousands of new school buildings to reach the prospective students. Salaries of teachers, purchase of supplies, and general upkeep would have to be added annually to the national budget in addition to the initial outlay for the erection of school buildings. Here one comes up immediately against the unyielding fact of the puny national income. Its $7,000,000 could under no circumstances be stretched to cover an architectural program commensurate with Haiti's educational needs.

871 178 Another good reason for the failure of democratic education is the demonstrated apathy of the masses. In the zeal for improvement during the early days of the Occupation, rural schools were estab-

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lished in many parts of the country. Attendance was fair for a few days, then rapidly declined. It is obviously a task requiring patience, persistence, originality, and tact on the part of the teacher to keep the students interested enough in school to make them attend regularly, for certainly the parents, who themselves have had no education, will not force their children to attend. On the contrary, the average peasant parent feels it much more important for his children to be at work in the fields, doing something useful, than to waste time learning to read and write—accomplishments which peasants have done without from time immemorial. Forced attendance is clearly out of the question. Obviously, too, at the small wages paid to country teachers the necessary qualities of personality are uncommon, to say the least. Five thousand men and women with the consecration of missionaries would be required even to begin the work of general education. 871 178 [875]

A practically insoluble problem, given current attitudes, is that of the language to be used in rural schools, assuming that these are built. The only official language of Haiti is French; the only language understood by the masses is Créole, which in spite of its French origin is as different from that tongue as Dutch from German. Now every Haitian, high and low, knows Créole, so that the question immediately arising is: Why should not the rural teachers teach in Créole? The answer involves every sort of inward prejudice, yearning, and instilled doctrine. The teacher is almost sure to be struggling up to the élite class, and to require him to deny himself the luxury of speaking French (to him almost a patent of nobility) would be heart-rending. Likewise, he would have his "good" reason for teaching school in French: the unity of the country demands a single language; all schoolbooks are in French, none in Créole; and Créole has no literature, nor even an accepted spelling. The fact remains that except in rare instances all schoolteachers use French to their pupils, and not one peasant out of a hundred can even guess what is being said in that language. 871 191 875 184

Assuming that schools were available, as well as trained teachers willing to speak the folk language, the next problem would be the curriculum. The whole tradition of élite education is literary, not practical. Teachers trained in this tradition might teach Racine and Montaigne, but not soil conservation and new methods of planting. Peasants with a knowledge of French literature would, of course, be 871

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no longer peasants. What good would a literary education do them? Yet those who have advocated a technical or practical curriculum have been met with a perfect storm of opposition. Such training would, it has been argued, merely augment and perpetuate the social stratification of the country; moreover, since no Haitian élite have been technically trained nor had any desire to be, the teaching of the whole rural mass would have to be in the hands of aliens—white Americans, more than likely. Once again, it is a matter of current attitudes: the rural teacher keen to rise out of the masses into the upper class would, if the curriculum were technical, be required to abandon the gratifying display of his literary knowledge, and devote his talents instead to the manual skills from which he had been trying to escape.

It is hardly necessary to mention the insuperable problem of training the teachers and persuading them to dedicate their lives to rural education: to live away from the amenities of urban life, at a minute salary, among an ignorant peasantry. Only the devotion of rare patriots would prompt such complete self-sacrifice, even if the government had a tithe of the funds necessary for educating teachers for their jobs and paying them a living wage.

A glance at Haitian history will also help to explain the sorry state of education. In 1804, of course, there was not a single school in the country, and Dessalines was too much preoccupied with other affairs to give the matter a thought; besides, being illiterate himself, he may well have thought learning unimportant, or at least, embarrassing. Both Christophe and Pétion showed an exemplary zeal for education, although the results accomplished by them seem small enough. They were both impressed by the Lancasterian method then in vogue in England, and modeled the few schools they sponsored upon it. Christophe, always an Anglophile, established five "*grandes écoles nationales*" at Cap-Henry, Port-de-Paix, Sans Souci, Gonaïves, and Saint-Marc, with English masters at the head of each.[12] Pétion established at Port-au-Prince a Lycée Haïtien in 1816, and assigned an "instructeur" in every parish. The curriculum of the Lycée—ancient and modern languages, rhetoric, logic, ethics, elements of mathematics, ancient and modern history, geography, and drawing—is an indication of the limited scope of the program. It was purely

12. Placide Justin, *Histoire politique et statistique de l'île d'Haïti, Saint-Domingue*, pp. 314–315.

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for the élite, and was purely cultural. By 1828 there were lower schools in six towns of the country, but only one higher school in the whole of Haiti.[13] 175 871

A report on the condition of education in 1842 showed that the Lycée still existed, its curriculum now limited to French, English, Spanish, Latin, mathematics, composition, history, and fencing.[14] Only 150 students were enrolled. By 1843 there were eleven secondary schools. The question was even raised whether Boyer's failure to promote education during the twenty-five tranquil years of his rule might not have been deliberate, on the principle that it is easier to govern ignorance than knowledge.[15] Actually, however, there was little pressure for education, and so Boyer did nothing.

Geffrard more than any other president of the nineteenth century encouraged education, with the result that almost 20,000 children received some kind of schooling. The census of 1875 made the following estimates:[16]

4 lyceums	with	543 pupils	[162]
6 girls' high schools		563	
5 girls' secondary schools		350	
165 primary schools		11,784	
200 rural schools		5,939	
1 medical school		25	
1 school of music		46	
Total		19,250 pupils	

To these must be added a few pupils in private schools and in the recently established Catholic schools of the Frères de l'Instruction Chrétienne and the Sisters of Cluny. [797]

Toward the turn of the century, when reformers were writing books while the whole country seemed to be slowly dying under its stupid presidents, many a proposal was made which hit squarely upon the need of education and the necessity of a specifically practical curriculum. Joseph Justin[17] urged technical training by experts, and many others hammered away at the same idea. A small sum

13. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Haiti*, I, 83, 120–122, 158.
14. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Haiti*, pp. 74 ff.
15. Mark B. Bird, *The Black Man* (New York, 1869), p. 140.
16. Cited by Sir Spenser St. John, *Haiti, or The Black Republic*, p. 203.
17. *Étude sur les institutions haïtiennes* (Paris, 1894–95), 2 vols.

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175 was put into the national budget to be used for schools, but it seems
871 generally to have been used as a fund for presidential patronage. There were even "school teachers" who could not read, but were nevertheless paid a regular monthly stipend. The principal of the Lycée at Gonaïves could neither read nor write, the music teacher there knew not a note of music, and the medical director could not name the simplest drugs.[18] Dantès Bellegarde, one of Haiti's notable intellectuals, as a minister under Nord Alexis (1902–8) made definite proposals which, had they been carried out, would have gone far toward effecting a radical reform. Minister again under Oreste (1913–14), he succeeded in building up an educational fund, but before he could spend it properly Oreste was deposed and the money used by his successor, Zamor, for military purposes.[19]

175 By 1915, before the Occupation began, the country had about
87 730 public schools. Of these, 6 gave advanced courses in medicine, law, applied science, and commerce; 10 offered a secondary classical education; 8 were special secondary boys' schools; and 15 were special secondary girls' schools. The teachers all got their training in Haiti, and the curricula and methods were almost entirely French.[20] Bellegarde had divided the country into 14 school districts, and by 1919 the official figures showed the following enrollment:[21]

[162]

387 elementary rural schools	with	21,960 pupils
206 elementary urban schools		13,881
105 presbyterial schools		4,836
49 mixed private schools		825
29 Catholic girls' schools		5,141
8 Catholic boys' schools		2,576
10 mixed popular schools		1,009
2 girls' professional schools		133
1 manual training school		555
60 national high schools		2,012
Private elementary schools		5,481
Private high schools		2,904
Total		61,313 pupils

18. See Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 276.
19. Dantès Bellegarde, *Pour une Haïti heureuse* (Port-au-Prince, 1929), pp. 100 ff.
20. Dantès Bellegarde, *Un Haïtien parle*, p. 31.
21. *Livre bleu d'Haïti, 1919–20* (Port-au-Prince, 1920), pp. 21–22.

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These figures seem moderately impressive by comparison with those of 1875; but a government report of 1931 states[22] that of the 361 rural schools visited by investigators, 89 had no seats for their pupils, and 157 had only from one to three benches; 122 had neither desks nor tables upon which the pupils might work; 341 had no maps. Of the total number of 977 benches found in all the rural schools, 303 were almost unusable, and of the 26 maps in existence, 13 were entirely beyond use. Of the 355 teachers examined, 257 could not read, and 278 could not add, subtract, multiply, or divide. The average monthly salary was 32.07 gourdes, or $6.21. Of the 17,679 pupils enrolled in rural schools, only 4,022 attended. In this same report President Vincent claims to have made a radical reform in all these matters. His rural teachers are trained, many of them at the government agricultural school at Damien; school equipment has been distributed; salaries have been raised to 65 gourdes, or $13. 175 87

The American Occupation showed itself keen to assist education, but unintentionally the measures taken by the whites ran afoul of politics to a serious degree. The excellent agricultural experiment school at Damien was filled with élite students who attended it, in the opinion of many, chiefly in order to receive the scholarships offered; moreover, the class question was raised and bitterly argued: Should peasant students live and study with the élite, and should the curriculum be the same for both? Finally, education was one of the few matters not specifically included in the treaty between Haiti and the United States as under American direction. The result was unhappy: the Occupation was accused of setting up a rival educational "system" to that of the government. Even Bellegarde, most of whose ideas the Americans were trying to carry out, found himself in opposition, chiefly as a result of methods and political implications involved. 648 871 [565]

If only the budget of the country could be increased, one feels that the rural educational problem might be dealt with, for more and more people are aware of what education might do for the country. Even so, there are still many élite who betray their fear that with education the masses will desert the land and cease to be subservient. 871 565

That the élite, who in fact control the country, should receive a training which would fit them for technical skills is a proposal often

22. "*L'Oeuvre d'éducation rurale du gouvernement du Président Vincent*" (Imprimerie de l'État, Port-au-Prince, 1936).

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871/565

heard among the more thoughtful.[23] The whole country is teeming with opportunities for engineers, doctors, foresters, agronomists, for scientists and specialists of all kinds. Instead of training themselves for such careers the average young men still hanker after the purely honorific career of law, which may lead to governmental posts. A cultured Haitian in 1920 told Dr. Carl Kelsey: "Those of us who have been trained have never been trained to work physically; we do not believe in it; we have no respect for it. We have got to go into the government service; that is the only outlet for any large number of us."[24] And so the average élite boy goes on with his classical training which fits him for nothing but cultured leisure.[25]

23. See especially J. Price-Mars, *La Vocation de l'élite* (Port-au-Prince, 1919), pp. 51 ff.

24. Quoted in Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

[871]
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25. In the examinations there is often bribery and other dishonesty, according to credible informants. Some of the élite youths seem to feel that because their fathers hold governmental posts they themselves should be passed, no matter what their showing; and not all teachers have fortitude enough to resist the pressure of important parents, for they fear reprisals in the form of dismissal.

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

hide-and-seek and enjoy story-telling sessions, when the tales of 'Ti Malice and Bouki are recounted. Still older ones make drums out of jars and "arrange a dance." Little girls play with dolls made for them by the older children, while boys with sticks for horses organize themselves into "armies" with their seniors as officers. When a child's teeth fall out, a minor ceremony is performed. As each tooth is detached, the child throws it on the roof of the mother's house, saying:

"Rat, rat, rat, *M'jet' yun bel' 'ti dent ba 'ou,* *Ba'm yun vieille dent."*	"Rat, rat, rat, I give you a nice little tooth, Give me an old tooth."

At this same time a beginning of formal education is made, especially if the child lives in the town or near enough to it to allow him to reach one of the schools there. These schools are under both secular and Catholic auspices, and in them the pupil is instructed in the rudiments of European education, learning to read and write and to do simple problems in arithmetic. If he shows proficiency and the means of his family permit, he may go on to a secondary school at Port-au-Prince or some other center; in the main, however, this schooling is all he ever receives, if he is permitted this much.

It is not to be supposed that a child is allowed to grow up without learning how to conduct himself in accordance with the traditional code of Haitian behavior, for the punishment that follows departures from this code is always both prompt and extremely painful, beating with sticks being the mode of correction most often employed. The mechanisms of education and control operate the more effectively because they are exercised by a fairly large group of persons, which includes not only the father and mother of the child, but also his grandparents, his uncles and aunts on both sides of the family, and his older brothers, sisters, and cousins. Less restraint is exercised before grandparents than other relations, for while there

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Mirebalais

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[539]

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604

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baby: when she does she substitutes a mode of feeding on fruits and solids which favors digestive disturbance and nutritive diseases in the infant. 853

At the age when children of the élite would be starting to school, peasant children are beginning work in the fields, hoeing, weeding, and carrying, always under the tropical sun. Cuts and bruises, sometimes serious, are improperly treated when they occur and so lead to tetanus or to enormous ulcers. 857 752 184 164

Hard work and a simple mode of outdoor life prove, in Haiti at least, not to be the keys to good health which a romantic might fancy them. Haiti has been one of the unhealthiest places in the world. One feels that it has been lucky to escape such scourges as typhus, cholera, and bubonic plague; that smallpox has not been violent in its epidemics, and that the people developed an immunity to yellow fever. It has, indeed, been luck rather than cleanliness and proper medical care which has protected the people in these instances. 164

In 1838 Boyer founded a hospital school at Port-au-Prince, giving it the name of The National School of Medicine. It did not function as a school, however, until 1860 when Geffrard reorganized it and gave it life. Geffrard also sent young men to Europe to study, installed laboratories of physics and chemistry in the upper schools of the capital, and made possible the appearance of an intellectual élite.[11] The next burst of energy in matters of hygiene came around 1890 when, under the influence of Dr. Léon Audain, the first health records were kept, and the spirit of scientific research reached Haitian medicine. 874 744 742

From 1804 to 1860, then, there was practically no proper care for sick people. In the latter years of the century a few trained physicians, with sadly deficient equipment, practiced in the towns. Not until after the Occupation was the rural mass of the population even touched by the medical knowledge which had been developing all over the civilized world for decades. Clinics, wholesale vaccinations and inoculations, and campaigns of enlightenment have in the past twenty years worked wonders. The Vodun practitioner, however, still is the "expert" who treats most illnesses, and healing remains one of his major functions. 744 759 756

11. Geffrard established schools of law, music, painting, and navigation. The latter two collapsed. The same president founded the high schools of Port-au-Prince, Jacmel, and Gonaïves. [873]

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tiny communities, some of them designating "villages" of only four or five houses. For numbers of peasants hidden away in the valleys or on mountain farms, the only contact with the larger world comes through visits to the nearest market town—which itself may count only a thousand souls. The peasant is thus effectively isolated. The American Financial Adviser to the Government has estimated the average *annual* income of the Haitian at $20 a head.[8] The smallness of the sum limits the material contacts of the peasant with the outside world. Rural schools are few,[9] consequently all but a small percentage of the rising generation is growing up illiterate. Lack of mental stimulus completes the isolation. Bound to the soil by the need of wresting a livelihood from rocky, gullied, and increasingly unproductive land, harassed by ill-health, and governed by a group whose own security would be threatened by improving his lot, it is little wonder that the peasant is unprogressive, or that he struggles along at a bare subsistence level.[10]

Haiti is rural and agricultural, then, with a population density of about 250 per square mile. The people, living without machine industry and with very little foreign trade, must get their living from 10,000 square miles, not of lush tropical soil but of rocky, mountainous country which, after a century and a half of poor farming, has been stripped of most of its forests and much of its topsoil.

A glance at a relief map of the West Indies would show clearly that the islands are the tops of a mountain range, whose lowlands were long since submerged by the Caribbean Sea. Looked at from above, Haiti seems a jumbled mass of mountains running in all directions.[11] Down their slopes flow many small streams which after

8. Dr. W. W. Cumberland, cited by Paul H. Douglas, "The American Occupation of Haiti," *Political Science Quarterly*, XLII (1927), 258.

9. The average monthly salary of $13 (until recently only $6) for rural schoolteachers would not draw many wide-awake young men, even if schoolhouses existed for classes. The salary, indeed, is so small that only inferior persons are attracted, often men who know little more than their pupils. See chap. XV, 3.

10. Mrs. Blair Niles, in *Black Haiti* (New York, 1926), pp. 185–186, tells of a prisoner who preferred to remain in jail rather than be freed. "When he gets out," she quotes the officer as saying, "he'll be in again. You'll see. Here he gets nine cents a day for food, an' that's more than the average Haitian ever has."

11. One can well believe the story (told by Ebenezer D. Bassett, *Haiti* [Washington, 1893], p. 3) of the English admiral who, asked by George III for a description of the island, crumpled a sheet of paper, threw it on the table, and said: "Sire, Haiti looks like that." The same tale is told of Puerto Rico, with a Spanish admiral speaking to Queen Isabella.

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lished in many parts of the country. Attendance was fair for a few days, then rapidly declined. It is obviously a task requiring patience, persistence, originality, and tact on the part of the teacher to keep the students interested enough in school to make them attend regularly, for certainly the parents, who themselves have had no education, will not force their children to attend. On the contrary, the average peasant parent feels it much more important for his children to be at work in the fields, doing something useful, than to waste time learning to read and write—accomplishments which peasants have done without from time immemorial. Forced attendance is clearly out of the question. Obviously, too, at the small wages paid to country teachers the necessary qualities of personality are uncommon, to say the least. Five thousand men and women with the consecration of missionaries would be required even to begin the work of general education.

A practically insoluble problem, given current attitudes, is that of the language to be used in rural schools, assuming that these are built. The only official language of Haiti is French; the only language understood by the masses is Créole, which in spite of its French origin is as different from that tongue as Dutch from German. Now every Haitian, high and low, knows Créole, so that the question immediately arising is: Why should not the rural teachers teach in Créole? The answer involves every sort of inward prejudice, yearning, and instilled doctrine. The teacher is almost sure to be struggling up to the élite class, and to require him to deny himself the luxury of speaking French (to him almost a patent of nobility) would be heart-rending. Likewise, he would have his "good" reason for teaching school in French: the unity of the country demands a single language; all schoolbooks are in French, none in Créole; and Créole has no literature, nor even an accepted spelling. The fact remains that except in rare instances all schoolteachers use French to their pupils, and not one peasant out of a hundred can even guess what is being said in that language.

Assuming that schools were available, as well as trained teachers willing to speak the folk language, the next problem would be the curriculum. The whole tradition of élite education is literary, not practical. Teachers trained in this tradition might teach Racine and Montaigne, but not soil conservation and new methods of planting. Peasants with a knowledge of French literature would, of course, be

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871 no longer peasants. What good would a literary education do them? Yet those who have advocated a technical or practical curriculum have been met with a perfect storm of opposition. Such training would, it has been argued, merely augment and perpetuate the social stratification of the country; moreover, since no Haitian élite have been technically trained nor had any desire to be, the teaching of the whole rural mass would have to be in the hands of aliens—white Americans, more than likely. Once again, it is a matter of [875] current attitudes: the rural teacher keen to rise out of the masses into the upper class would, if the curriculum were technical, be required to abandon the gratifying display of his literary knowledge, and devote his talents instead to the manual skills from which he had been trying to escape.

871 875 It is hardly necessary to mention the insuperable problem of training the teachers and persuading them to dedicate their lives to rural education: to live away from the amenities of urban life, at a minute salary, among an ignorant peasantry. Only the devotion of rare patriots would prompt such complete self-sacrifice, even if the government had a tithe of the funds necessary for educating teachers for their jobs and paying them a living wage.

175 871 A glance at Haitian history will also help to explain the sorry state of education. In 1804, of course, there was not a single school in the country, and Dessalines was too much preoccupied with other affairs to give the matter a thought; besides, being illiterate himself, he may well have thought learning unimportant, or at least, embarrassing. Both Christophe and Pétion showed an exemplary zeal for education, although the results accomplished by them seem small enough. They were both impressed by the Lancasterian method then in vogue in England, and modeled the few schools they sponsored upon it. Christophe, always an Anglophile, established five "*grandes écoles nationales*" at Cap-Henry, Port-de-Paix, Sans Souci, Gonaïves, and Saint-Marc, with English masters at the head of each.[12] Pétion established at Port-au-Prince a Lycée Haïtien in 1816, and assigned an "instructeur" in every parish. The curriculum of the Lycée—ancient and modern languages, rhetoric, logic, ethics, elements of mathematics, ancient and modern history, geography, and drawing—is an indication of the limited scope of the program. It was purely

12. Placide Justin, *Histoire politique et statistique de l'île d'Hayti, Saint-Domingue*, pp. 534–535.

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

869 [784] deities, and they are taught what must be done when a sacrifice is to be given. Parents differ widely in this as in other practices, and while some make it a point to impart this information both at this time and later in the life of the child, others refuse to answer questions, and the child must learn from what he himself observes.

864 Children in the valley of Mirebalais receive little formal sex education. Shortly before marriage young women are told enough of the mechanism of the sexual life to guard against their being frightened when their husbands come to them. As early as seven years of age, however, girls are cautioned not to permit boys to play with them sexually, while a girl who reaches puberty is carefully watched, not being permitted to go for water or firewood or on other errands unless accompanied by some child, usually younger than herself. No explanation for this is given; she is simply forbidden to leave the house alone, though eventually she learns the reasons from other girls. Neither special ritual nor special instruction follows first menstruation; the girl merely apprises her mother of the fact. She herself has learned of the phenomenon by observing her mother and her older friends and consequently is not troubled by her initial menstrual flow, but rather is pleased that she has now become a woman.

864 881

864 This absence of formal sex education does not stand seriously in the way of the young in learning the technique of sexual intercourse. Boys of six and seven surreptitiously "experiment" with girls of their own age in the sex act, despite parental warnings. This ceases, however, as soon as the girls are nubile, for then they are under strict supervision. Young boys are often given information concerning the technique of sexual intercourse by their older brothers or friends, when these gather in groups and discuss among themselves their amorous adventures. Another manner in which the child obtains sex education is by observing the behavior of his parents. Children usually share their parents' bed until they are six or

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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596 parents are friendly toward each other, so that the conflict
[581] that might result from a division of authority rarely develops.
[603] Were it otherwise, it could easily happen that a person who had been ordered, or forbidden, to do something against his own wishes by the head of his paternal family would plead with the head of his mother's group and receive support to justify his disobedience. To most Haitians such a hypothetical incident was amusing to contemplate, for the elders are said always to work together. Rare is the occasion when one interferes with the decision of another, and never to the knowledge of the subject of such a decision.

596 A family elder who has no sons to care for him is well
888 looked after by the other members of the group "until the
626 grave." Fear as well as a moral obligation prompts this. "He might curse you," it is explained, or "He might say: 'Watch out for your own old age! You mistreated me in my old age, and you will suffer in yours.'" Such pronouncements are greatly dreaded, especially because of his control over the supernatural forces that aid or harm the family and its members.

428 The closeness of the tie between social institutions and economic life is most evident in the matter of inheritance. For though the prestige that accrues from the possession of wealth makes for strong competition through the exercise of individual initiative, yet supporting the struggle of an individual for the augmentation of his holdings are the forces of family sanction and family aid, while his very start in life is obtained primarily through the help of his relatives during their lifetime or the property he inherits from them at their death.

428 As has been suggested, all a man's children by a "legally"
858 married wife inherit from him, or, if he has not espoused a wife by a Church wedding, the children of his *placée* wife or wives receive his property. Whether or not it is true that the
428 "legitimate" children inherit three quarters of the posses-
858 sions of their father, the "natural" children one fourth, and
969

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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it possible for the owner to go to war without being harmed. 789
Even were the possessor of such a *drogue* to be struck by a bullet, the wound would be a minor one; while the thrust of a machete or saber would leave him unscathed, poison placed in drink or food would be impotent, and a trap set against the warrior would be ineffective. Some *drogues*, it is held, allow the owner to disappear when trapped by enemies. For such an [784] important *drogue* a special day, designated by its maker, is [834] set aside for the observance of certain taboos, the most important being the requirement of sexual abstinence on that day.[4] Some men possess as many as seven of these *drogues*, in which case one day every seventh week is reserved for each. Said a man who had taken part in the rebellion of 1918–20 against the Marine occupation: "I have a small, small *drogue*. I had it in the Caco fighting. I have need of a big one." When it was observed that there is no more fighting in Haiti, the reply came promptly: "A man must be prepared. Nobody knows what will come."

The grandfather of this man was said by him to have owned 789
a *drogue* which came from Guinée. He knew how to resusci- 754
tate those who had met their death from unnatural — magical — causes; he had only to come to the *barrière* before the house where the body lay, call the name of the victim, and the dead would arise. He was once attacked when he was returning home with a purse filled with money he had won at cards, and his assailants beat him to death and threw him into a well. The next morning, when he was found, he revived in a few moments and asked to be buried beside the well. The following day one of the men who had assaulted him died; the next day another died, and so for five days, until all of them were dead.

Love-charms form an important category of good magic, as 832
also charms to aid in selling in the markets or in keeping a job or to hold the affection of a spouse. Old men are believed 789
to have important magical powers for good, and one such 888

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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789 [888] person of great experience was pointed out who was believed able to stop a runaway horse without putting a finger on him. One widely spread type of charm is an *arrêt* against the *mal jok*, or evil eye. Mention has been made of protective charms when the measures taken to guard growing crops were discussed, and also in connection with safeguarding the well-being of infants. The power in this latter type of *garde* often is made to reside in a seed on a string or chain, or a cross of beads sewed on cloth, to represent the four corners of the earth.

789 793 Because charms are the outer symbols of magic, detailed examples of their making will give insight into the nature of charms in general. The first of these which may be described [829] was a *garde*, made by a *mambu*, to relieve a pregnant woman [787] whose milk had begun to flow before the birth of her child [954] — a sign that an evil spirit had been sent her by an enemy, and that her delivery would therefore be fraught with danger. [787] During the séance the *mambu* was continuously possessed by her god, Ogun, whose identity was shown by her whistling. Before the *mambu* as she commenced her incantation were some *clairin*, lighted red candles, a new piece of soap, incense, sulphur, garlic, light brown shoemaker's thread, an empty bottle, a bottle filled with a green, evil-smelling lotion called *baigne de mambu*, a chick, and three iron nails. As she tied the cord in knots she muttered her spell; then, taking the empty bottle, she put in it a bit of the incense, sulphur, garlic, some soap, some *clairin*, and some *baigne de mambu*. With the knotted cord she tied a cross made of two nails to the neck of the bottle, repeating her formula before she put it down. Instructing the pregnant woman to take the bottle, she said: "Speak into it and say everything you wish."

[825] She then took the chick, opened its beak, and wrote on it with a pencil, continuing the incantation the while. With the pencil she also made marks on the thighs, the wings, the upper joints, and the leg joints before she handed it to her client